



**VOLUME 1**

**REPORT OF THE  
TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION**

Truth and Justice Commission - November 2011

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Truth and Justice Commission Act was constituted in March 2009, as a result of the enactment of the Truth and Justice Act, No. 28. of 2008.

The Commission had, as its mandate in terms of Section 3(2) and Section 4 to:

- (a) make an assessment of the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present;
- (b) conduct inquiries into slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius during the colonial period and, for that purpose, gather information and receive evidence from any person;
- (c) determine appropriate reparative measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured labourers;
- (d) enquire into complaints, other than a frivolous and vexatious complaints, made by any person aggrieved by a dispossession or prescription of any land in which he/she claimed to have an interest; and
- (e) prepare a comprehensive report of its activities, research and findings, based on factual and objective information and evidence received by it and submit the report to the President.

The Mandate of the Commission was tenable for a period of 24 months with a three-month period for preparatory work. In view of the delay experienced by the Commission to finalise its works, a further period of five months was given.

As soon as the designated Chairman and the Commissioners appointed were sworn in before the President of the Republic, the Commission started its activities.

In accordance with Section 3(2) of the Act, the Commission hereto submits its observations, findings and recommendations.

The Commission has, therefore, focused, in the first instance, on the continuities in history up to the present, especially, from an economic and social perspective, and then, on specific themes relating to colonialism, slave trade, slavery and indenture. We shall, therefore, elaborate on the resulting observations and findings before elaborating on the recommendations.

We shall elaborate on our observations on slavery and indentured labour first and then comment on the work undertaken to elucidate all cases of dispossession of land.

### SLAVERY

As regards slavery, it may be pointed out that there had never been any real inquiry instituted during the whole British occupation on the fate of ex-slaves and their descendants, in spite of the precarious situation in which they live up to this day.

For long, there has been a dearth of literature on the real history of slavery in Mauritius. The history of the colony of Mauritius was first viewed as the history of the ruling class consisting of French *colons* and their descendants. Most of the descendants of ex-slaves live in such total ignorance of the history of their ancestors, that an attempt to unveil their history is very recent. Further, it is not easy to assess the exact number of citizens who claim ancestry of slaves of African

and Malagasy origins, as these are lumped in the group of 'General Population'. The Housing and Population Census of 2000, however, indicates that this group of citizens should number well above 250,000. Our historical research has demonstrated convincingly that the process of exclusion of descendants of slaves, prevailing today, originated at the time of abolition of slavery. The cheap labour policy adopted then by the plantocracy and the Colonial State, contributed into their leaving the plantations. Further development in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries would confirm this trend. Following applied research, in depth inquiries and oral testimonies, it is evident that people of slave descent are among, as a consequence, the less envious citizens of the Republic on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Mauritius in that:

- (i) they are poorly housed, in that a majority of them live in housing estates, devoid of bare amenities and in over crowdedness;
- (ii) literacy is rampant in their milieu, schooling of children needs re-thinking to be effective; due to their low level of education and poor performance at school, few can get employed in Government services and parastatals;
- (iii) marked absence in agricultural occupation, as a result of circumstances arising from the aftermath of slavery;
- (iv) marked absence in the fields of trade and commerce, and especially in the small and medium enterprises sector;
- (v) over-concentration of employment in hard manual work;
- (vi) contrary to the other communities, they have no real effective pressure groups to make their voices heard in higher and political quarters, most of their grievances remained unheard;
- (vii) for these and other reasons, they are poorly represented in all spheres of public life and in Government institutions; and
- (viii) the Commission has also undertaken for the first time, a psycho-sociological analysis to better understand the various factors which impede progress, and the following relevant reports and recommendations highlight new strategies to be adopted in the future.

Few places bear the name of people of African and Malagasy descent, although slaves outnumbered their masters in the proportion of 10 to 1.

Even today, no monument has been erected to remind us of their contribution to history and to the development of the country.

### *INDENTURED LABOUR*

There is the perception that Indo Mauritian Hindus and Indo Mauritian Muslims who hailed from India after the abolition of slavery under the indentured trade have had a better life as compared to their slave counterparts during the whole British occupation.

The reality is that the treatment meted out to the flow of Indian workers who came to Mauritius between 1834 and 1842 was very harsh. Their recruitment, transportation, housing and conditions of work left much to be desired. The condition of work was so appalling that the authorities decided to suspend further recruitment.

Although a lot of shortcomings were attended to, when the authorities decided to allow the resumption of immigration of Indian labour, there was still much room for abuse: wages were on the low side, housing conditions were poor and hours of work unregulated. Indian immigrants who refused to renew their employment contract with the same employers were arrested under Vagrancy Laws, imprisoned and inflicted corporal punishment.

Frustration continued to gather momentum until 1871 when a mass petition was sent to Queen Victoria praying for redress. The petition resulted in the setting up of the Royal Commission of

1872. The recommendations of the Commission formed the basis of new legislations which were enacted to improve much of their conditions of work, wages, allocation of food and housing.

Land acquisition by Indian immigrants was greatly facilitated by sugar estates owners in order to put to use much of the marginal lands held to maximize sugar production. The massive purchase of uneconomic plots of land through *morcellement* was another way to plough back whatever savings had been made by immigrant workers thanks to great personal sacrifice and hard work. It is true that by the year 1900 around 40% of the land surface under cane cultivation were held by Indian immigrants and their descendants; production was however on the low side less than 20 % of national output in sugar. But much of the land acquired were uneconomic in spite of invisible labour provided by the small planters themselves. This emerging class of small planters represented hardly a third of the bulk of Indian- Mauritians, the rest until the second half of the last century continued to lead a precarious life as labourers on sugar estates or as unemployed.

With the drop in prices of sugar on the world market and in absence of support prices from the European Union, the future of cane cultivation by descendants Indian planters holding small plantation look very bleak indeed. Already many are selling off their much cherished plot of lands or leaving them idle in anticipation of better days. The need for group action to prevent further contraction from this agricultural activity appears evident.

The sugar unrest in 1937 and the labour unrest of 1943 mostly by Indian labour workers and small sugar planters are here to attest of the struggle to change their precarious living and working conditions.

The centralization of sugar estates and sugar mills throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century has brought in its wake much loss of employment whose conditions of work and wages left much to be desired. Many have been laid off without any form of compensation.

To the credit of the Indian immigrants and later on of their descendants is the faith which they had in the promotion of their children through education. Education was and continues to be the priority. The privileged position held by people of Indian origin in government institutions is due to investment made in higher education for their children.

The inside story of Indian immigrants and of their descendants continued to be marred by caste prejudice. Class demarcation was even encouraged on sugar estates when it came to appoint labour supervisors (*sirdars*). On sugar estates until recently the *sirdars* emerged as a class of employees who wielded considerable power and received higher wages and could thus acquire the best plots of land from estate managers. In spite of the fact that connection with India has been severed more than a century, caste prejudice continues to dominate much of the religious, social and political life among people of Indian origin while such prejudices become exacerbated at election time.

## ECONOMY

The slave trade allowed many in Mauritius and France, to accumulate wealth. This paved the way for investment in estates, land and business. The fortunes of many today were built on the prosperity of those who traded and used slave labour in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; cheap, indentured labour in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued cheap labour in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The contribution of slaves, indentured labourers and their descendants towards wealth creation has been amply demonstrated in chapter one. Yet, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social and economic progress though impressive in many respects is still lacking in certain aspects: land ownership is still skewed in favour of the economic elite while certain groups, particularly of Afro-Malagasy origin, are landless. Recommendations towards a more equal redistribution of land for a more sustainable future Mauritius constitute a form of reparations for loss of land.

But the landless today were not always so. The pioneering work of Dr. Richard Allen, in highlighting the landownership of ex-slaves has shown how after abolition many ex-slave families purchased land during what he terms the 'early morcellement' period. Their subsequent dispossession of land manifested by the hundreds of land claims received at the Commission as well as visits and meetings with dozens of families is testimony to the fact that people of Afro-Malagasy origin were

not always landless. Many families of Indian indentured origin also obtained lands in the 19<sup>th</sup> century subsequently lost them in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Those of mixed European and Asian and African descent termed 'Gens de Couleur' and many poorer whites also lost most of their land by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It is not clear either why the Maurice Ile Durable project omitted the critical issue of land ownership or preservation of peoples' cultures as part of its agenda despite this being on UNESCO's list for culture as one of the pillars of sustainable development. How this was not raised and discussed in its public consultations is beyond the understanding of the Commission who has witnessed the flow of hundreds of families at the Commission, searching for long lost land.

Labour, which has constituted the bulk of population since the early days of Mauritius, must be given due consideration that it deserves in a democratic society. There is a need to define a new social contract whereby the labouring classes are not considered as mere factors of production, but as human beings with fundamental rights and participating fully in wealth creation of the country. The State should do the needful, in terms both of introducing new legislation, and of contributing in the development of a new mindset both in the public and private sectors.

There is a need to adopt a new approach to co-operative development. The influence of the State since the inception of the co-operative movement of the new elite espousing values and practice contrary to co-operative principles and values have had a negative effect on the co-operative movement. Co-operative development, which respects the co-operative values and principles, provides for a genuine empowerment of everyone, and certainly, the poor and needy ones. The Co-operative Sector should be able to coexist effectively together with the Public and Private Sectors. For this to be possible there is a need for a new leadership and professional management which adheres to co-operative values and principles.

Land speculation, poverty, greed of some family members, the corruption of officials and professionals, an ever encroaching sugar industry and laws that protect the traditional economic structure have ensured that landownership remains in the hands of the same traditional economic elite who have today been joined by members of the state bureaucracy, politicians and the new business community. There is no justice in Mauritius for those who cannot afford lawyers, notaries, land surveyors and attorneys. The Commission's request for funds already earmarked since 2009 to help a few deponents survey their land was turned down by the authorities. Our Recommendations for Reparations for Mauritians who have been victims of land dispossession requires no less than a profound rethinking by this elite of its role in Mauritius and whether it wants to continue defending the morally corrupt system that exists. The writing is on the wall.

# INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER BORAINÉ, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION

## THE MANDATE OF THE TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION

The Mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission was defined in the Truth and Justice Commission Act of 2008. The first four sections of the Act which define the mandate of the Act are hereto reproduced.

### An Act

**To enable His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mauritius to establish a Commission to promote social justice and national unity**

ENACTED by the Parliament of Mauritius, as follows -

**1. Short title**

This Act may be cited as the **Truth and Justice Commission Act 2008**.

**2. Interpretation**

In this Act - "Commission" means the Truth and Justice Commission established by the President under section 3;

"member" -

- (a) means a member of the Commission; and
- (b) includes the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

**3. Truth and Justice Commission**

The President shall establish a Truth and Justice Commission whose objects shall be to make an assessment of the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present.

The Commission shall make recommendations to the President on measures to be taken following its assessment and its findings with a view to achieving social justice and national unity,

The Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and 3 other members who shall be appointed by the President on such terms and conditions as the President may determine.

The members shall be persons having wide experience in the field of history, anthropology, culture, economics or law and shall perform their functions independently of the control or authority of any person or body and in an impartial manner.

Every member shall, prior to assuming office, take and subscribe before the President, the oath set out in the Schedule.

**4. The Commission shall perform such functions as are necessary to enable it to achieve its objects and, in particular, shall -**

conduct inquiries into slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius during the colonial period and, may, for that purpose, gather information and receive evidence from any person;

determine appropriate measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured labourers;

enquire into a complaint other than a frivolous and vexatious complaint, made by any person aggrieved by a dispossession or prescription of any land in which he claims he had an interest; and

prepare a comprehensive report of its activities and findings, based on factual and objective information and evidence received by it and submit the report to the President.

In the Second Reading of the Truth and Justice Commission Bill, the Prime Minister, Dr the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam stated “The Commission shall make recommendations to the President on measures to be taken following its assessments and its findings with a view to achieving social justice and national unity.”

In urging support for the Bill, the Prime Minister added:

*“The history of our country is based on a continuous quest for freedom and social justice. Our past has been marked by the forcible removal of thousands of people from the mainland of Africa, Madagascar and Asia. These are the darkest and most shameful pages of our history. The introduction of indentured labour under slavish conditions was no less shameful and evil.”*

Finally, the Prime Minister stated his hope that:

*“This Commission will pave the way to reconciliation, social justice and national unity through the process of re-establishing the historical truth. It is the legitimate expectation of everyone to know our true history. It is only after we have been faced with this reality that we can consolidate unity in our country. It is important therefore that we recognise our past history and lay that past to rest so that we can move on to reconciliation, justice and national unity.”*

In passing the Truth and Justice Commission into law, the Assembly has followed in the footsteps of a number of diverse countries around the world which have conducted Truth Commissions over the past 25 years. In total, there have been 40 such Commissions, with several more in the offing. Without fail, all stressed the importance of dealing with the past and the moral duty to assist those who had suffered through policies and actions in the past. There is no one size that fits all. Each country is unique in its history, its political systems and its culture. Nevertheless, there are striking similarities in each country’s search for Truth and Justice. There is always violence present in the histories of all of these countries, and there are always victims who have suffered from this violence. There is also always denial. There are many in each of these countries who have sought to deal with the past, as well as people who opposed it and who favoured amnesia rather than remembering. They argued that it was better to turn the page, not to disturb the past, but to move forward. Fortunately, there have also always been those who believe that it is impossible to build a democracy and a human rights culture in any country without taking seriously the past of that country. As George Santana put it, “Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it”. Thus, it is possible to learn from the experiences of widely differing Commissions without duplicating their journey.

The Mauritian Commission is unique in its focus. Mauritius is the only country in the world to have succeeded in establishing a Truth Commission relating to Slavery and Indenture. It is the only Commission which has investigated the history and consequences of Slavery and Indenture. There are many countries in Africa, such as Liberia, Senegal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, who have never addressed the grotesque acts of forcing people into slavery. Certainly, those Arab countries which, hundreds of years ago, traded in slavery have never come to terms with that evil either. It is well known that the United States of America has never ever attempted to deal concretely with the consequences of slavery in that country. This is true also of the Caribbean. Hopefully, these countries, and many others, more especially Madagascar and Mozambique, will learn from the Mauritian experience. Mauritius has indeed set an example to the world.

Despite good intentions, the road to the setting up of the Truth and Justice Commission was a long and difficult one. Tribute should be paid to the Michel brothers of the *Verts Fraternels* Party who have urged and pleaded for such a commission over many years. In early 1999, the Government’s attempt to establish a “committee on reparations for slavery” failed as days after this committee was established, bloody riots broke out in Mauritius and the Chairman of the committee was appointed to head an investigation into the riots. As a consequence, this early attempt never got off the ground. The aim of this committee was “to consider compensation for slaves, its appellation and terms of reference”.

Specific areas of study were outlined by this committee, much more specific than the present Commission. These were the capture and procurement of slaves, the transport of slaves to Mauritius, the sale and acquisition of slaves as chattel, the treatment of slaves and a demographic, historical and sociological study of slaves and their descendants. It was also meant to examine the extent to which private and public bodies and Colonial Authorities supported slavery and its continuation, and how far the same restricted efforts of freed slaves went to rediscover their roots. It was also asked to consider whether any form of compensation should be granted, and who should be the beneficiaries.

In 2002, another attempt was made by the party of Mr Sylvio Michel, who was then in Government in coalition. R. J.C Armance, Third Member for Grand River North West and Port Louis West, One laid a private motion asking for a Commission to look into the 'all aspects of damages sustained by slaves and by indentured labourers and their descendants and to make such recommendations as it thinks appropriate on the mode of obtaining financial compensation from parties concerned for the prejudice suffered (Private Member's Motion Debate No 26 of 26.07.2002). However no Commission was ever set up. By this time, claims for reparation were being made also by States, particularly in the 2001 Durban World Conference on racism. In Resolution 56/266, acknowledging slavery as a crime against Humanity, indentured labourers were also included as people who had suffered. Mr. Michel stated in Parliament that Mauritius was far ahead, as it was the first African country to discuss such a motion.

In August 2007, a task force was set up to work out the terms of reference of a Truth and Justice Commission. The members were: Professor Robert Shell, the Most Rev. Ian Ernest, Dr. Vijaya Teelock, Associate Professor Reddi, Mr. Benjamin Moutou and Mr. Lindsay Morvan. Its terms of reference were not vastly different from the first committee, except that the committee did not retain the objective of "identification of institutions and individuals responsible". At this stage, there was no mention of inquiries to be conducted on land issues. The scope of the measures for reparations was to be for structural reforms, more particularly to "set up institutions that would redress the injustice caused to the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers".

When the Bill was finally presented in 2008, the Government had added a new objective concerning the land. This intensified the enormous challenge facing the Commission, bearing in mind that the subject of land is always contentious, and that unless there is the relevant documentation, it is extremely difficult to determine the true owner of the land in question. Nevertheless, the Commission accepted the added objective concerning land dispossession very seriously and has included a full report in a separate volume.

As soon as the Truth and Justice Commission Act was promulgated, Professor Robert Shell was appointed as Chairman of the Commission and four additional Commissioners were appointed: Dr. Vijayalakshmi Teelock (Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Benjamin Moutou, Dr. Paramaseeven Veerapen, Mr. Lindsay Morvan. On 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010, Mr. Morvan resigned from the Commission and the President of the Republic appointed Mr. Jacques David on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010 to fill the vacancy. Premises were obtained in the capital, Port Louis, and a plan of action was drawn up. This included a communications policy, a website, and a brochure in four languages, English, French, Creole and Bhojpuri (the text was drafted by Mr. Morvan and translated by Mr. Robert Furlong, Dr. Police-Michel and Ms. Suchita Ramdin). There was also a logo competition and a workshop which focused on major themes such as Gaps and Silences in the History of Slavery and Indentured Labour, Methodology and Approaches, Achieving Justice and Equality. A notice was published, inviting the public to participate in the work of the Commission and to send in documents. Contact was made with the media, which resulted in extensive coverage on television, radio and in the print media.

In order to fulfil its mandate and to offer as many opportunities as possible to Mauritians from all walks of life, a series of public hearings was organised, and these were open to the public as well as to the media. Most of the hearings were held in the headquarters of the Commission, but a few were held on site.

The Mauritian Commission suffered the same problems as many other commissions in the appointment of appropriate staff, identifying accommodation, developing of a relationship between the Prime Minister's Office and the Commission, the drawing up of budgets, meant that progress, initially, was very slow. This was not helped by the fact that the Commissioners were part-time

which, with hindsight, was a mistake, but was later corrected when the three Commissioners were appointed full-time. Another factor which caused some delay was the fact that unfortunately, Professor Shell, the Chairman, was not able to continue in this capacity and the Commission was without a Chairman for many months. Professor Alex Boraine was appointed Chairman only in January 2010. During the period of establishing the Commission and the months without a Chairman, Dr. Teelock was Acting Chairperson and performed excellently, with the assistance of her fellow Commissioners and a growing number of consultants and staff.

It was further decided that there would be three broad areas of research; firstly, the revision of History from 1723 to 2009 (slavery, indentured labourers and identification of elements of History which have not been studied yet or hidden or not known, i.e., the caste system, post-1835 situation of ex-slaves, etc); secondly, the consequences of slavery and indentured labour on society. Thirdly, measures to achieve Social Justice. In addition, a number of critical specialist studies were undertaken on land, reparations, the role of religion and the collecting of views of people who are not so visible or vocal through Oral History.

There were a number of project teams established. These included Slave Trade and Slavery; the Indentured Experience; Mauritian Economic History; Culture, Ethnicity, Memory and Identity; Health; Education; Towards a Just Society; Rodrigues, Agalega, Chagos and St. Brandon Islands; Recommendations.

Several workshops were conducted which brought together experts from different fields, including Slavery, Education, Economics, Law and Indentured Labour.

From the outset, a very specific focus was on Recommendations in each of the above areas, and a broad set of recommendations was drawn up, in order to try and respond to the suffering, the degradation and exclusion of people of slave and indentured labour descent.

The challenge facing the Commission was formidable. Slavery was abolished 176 years ago and the vast gap between then and now presented almost overwhelming challenges to the Commission and its staff. This was further exacerbated by the fact that many of those who deponed before us often lacked even the most basic documentation needed to prove their ownership of land. Many, many hours and days were spent in the archives attempting to trace the missing documents, often without success because the state of the archives left much to be desired.

By far the overwhelming number of those who appeared before us claimed that they had been dispossessed of their land. The Commission scrupulously investigated each claim presented to us, but there is no doubt that this will be an ongoing task well beyond the life of the Commission, and we have included recommendations to Government concerning future ongoing attempts to be of assistance to those who still feel strongly that land is owing to them.

The Commission considered very carefully, and debated at length, what its Reparations Policy should be in light of its findings. We listened with sympathy and appreciation to a wide cross-section of community and religious organisations, as well as many individuals and families who deponed before the Commission. In addition, we studied a large number of written manuscripts which were handed in to the Commission. Further, we considered policies adopted by the many countries who have instituted Truth Commissions. The Commission has received several memoranda highlighting the need for compensation to slave descendants, in view of the damaging after-effects of slavery during the past 176 years. Many such requests refer to cash compensation. In the past, payment of cash compensation to people banished from the Diego Archipelagos has proved damaging. Given the difficulty to identify broadly people of slave descent from among the general population, this exercise can end up in frustration. Reparation by way of positive discrimination and an integrated rehabilitation plan concerning schooling of children, better housing conditions, elimination of discrimination on the employment market, whether in the public and private sector, review of the electoral system in order to pave the way for better representation in electoral constituencies of Creoles was considered the better and more enduring option. In other words, the Commission has resolved that the focus should be on the median long-term, rather than short-term, solutions. Our recommendations therefore are directed towards Social Justice for all.

The Commission is aware that however substantial our Recommendations are, they cannot adequately respond to the hurt, the suffering and loss of dignity which many Mauritians have experienced in the past. We cannot bring back the dead, but if the measures we propose are implemented, it will markedly improve the quality of life for descendants of both slaves and indentured labourers who have suffered during the colonial period.

I now submit our recommendations which are the result of in-depth studies carried out between 2009 and 2011 for which we have secured the collaboration of a number of experts in several fields. These recommendations, if applied, would, we are sure, bring about fundamental changes in the life of Mauritians in the Republic of Mauritius, whose ancestors have suffered from the consequences of slavery and indenture and whose descendants bear the scourge of a most inhuman treatment. In spite of the hardships endured by them, they have been the pillars of the development of modern Mauritius and contributed largely to the economic prosperity of the islands and its social institutions.

The aim of the Truth and Justice Commission is to find the path to social justice and national unity, and hence to national reconciliation. We have demonstrated how economic and social justice can be brought about through the reform of economic, social and ideological structures and creation of new institutions.

Mauritians have come from different corners of the world to settle, many forcibly. Each wave of migration has been characterised by specific linguistic cultural and religious traditions. All these groups, in one way or another, have serviced the colonial economy and continue to do so in modern Mauritius. The outstanding question to be dealt with is how to best address the fundamental class, ethnic and gender divisions that still exist in Mauritian society today. The question remains: what are the forces that benefit from divisions? Who works against national unity? In this, the Mauritian economic elite is joined by the intellectual community and the established political class.

The Commission has found that dividing the working classes has always been the strategy of the elite. The general tendency since the 19<sup>th</sup> century was to portray those of African origin as lazy and anti-agricultural labour while those of Indian origin were portrayed as frugal minded and hard working. The religious factor also can be added as one group became heavily Christianised while the other retained their Hindu and Muslim faith. The Creole working class, is today made up of people of mainly of mixed African and Indian origin, and are mostly Christians. In the wake of independence being conferred, there were two opposing forces. The Creoles happened to align themselves in the anti-independence faction, while the Indo-Mauritians were in favour of independence. This episode has embittered relations between the two groups since.

The strategy of 'divide and rule' has not, however, been always been successful. The period leading to independence provides a good example of this situation. Before the 1960s, there is no evidence that there were 'divisions' between the working classes. The decades of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were years of intense class battles between the British colonial authorities, the local economic elite and the working classes.

With moves being made for independence -government, the traditional fear of the economic elite of the working classes uniting against it, was shared by the British colonial government. The fear was now that Mauritian working classes would unite and fight for independence and introduce a more democratic society and economy. The work of division takes on a new turn.

Not all Whites and not all members of the *Gens de Couleur* were against Independence. Many were led to believe that Independence would bring about economic chaos and Hindu domination. However, many joined hands with leaders of the working classes to fight for better conditions for Mauritians. Part of the *Gens de Couleur* recognized that the move towards Independence was a positive development. In this context, they created the *Sentinelle* group and launched the *L'Express* newspaper, inspired from Rémy Ollier's newspaper of the 1840s. The oligarchy and part of the elite of the *Gens de Couleur* for their part identified with the Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate (PMSD) who campaigned against independence.

The British, in their wish to have control over governments, continued to practise divide and rule tactics and encouraged the creation of religious and communal parties. The Trustam Eve

Commission of 1958 was an example of this. Division on religious grounds between Hindu and Muslims now entered the scene and religiously-inspired parties emerged.

Communal hatred was thus accelerated from the early 1960s and has lasted, to some extent, to this day. This feeling that there was 'domination by the majority community' was now fully embedded in the minds of part of the working classes. Part of the PMSD electorate were dissatisfied when the latter joined the Labour Party in a Coalition Government with the Labour Party, integrated the newly formed 'Marxist' party, the Mouvement Militant Mauricien. The MMM was also joined part of the electorate of the Labour Party.

The apprehension still exists among the ruling class that the working classes of all communities will one day get together and deprive them of their position and power. The Creole and Indian working classes appear divided along ethnic lines but are little aware of their common origins. Many Creoles are of Indian origin and many Indians are mixed linguistically, regionally, and caste-wise. *Métissage* is a fact of life, but little recognized or accepted by the many Mauritians.

Mauritians have much more in common than they think they have and are much more united than they think they are. They accept and respect the cultural traditions of others in their daily life.

The Independent State has never had a road map towards nation-building and reconciliation and has therefore been weak in efforts to encourage a national identity and culture and in securing more economic democracy.

Not enough has been done to encourage a national spirit in the minds of the people. The media have failed lamentably in infusing a sense of national unity and practising an inclusive policy.

#### 1. Apology

The Commission recommends:

- (i) that in the light of injustices suffered by descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, the Republic of Mauritius and other institutions make an official apology through the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and private institutions connected with slavery and indenture, such as the Catholic Church, the Chamber of Commerce and the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association.
- (ii) That a resolution to this effect be made and passed at a Special Session of the National Assembly.

#### 2. Memorials

The slaves who were brought to Mauritius were brought against their will. The inhuman treatment they endured was a crime against Humanity; they received no payment for their arduous hard work. Indentured labourers were also treated very badly, but at least, they came of their own free will and were paid, albeit a very low wage. We recommend that a Slave Museum be built, honouring the memory of all slaves who underwent horrific treatment under their masters and in recognition of the contribution which they made to the development of Mauritius.

The Commission further recommends that consideration be given to commemorating 23<sup>rd</sup> August (UNESCO Day of Remembrance of Abolition of Slave Trade) as a Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation which will more fittingly honour both slaves and their descendants, as well as the descendants of indentured labourers. The Commission also recommends that a monument be erected on the Caudan Waterfront as a reminder of the arrival of slaves.

3. The Commission recommends the immediate Proclamation and Implementation of the Equal Opportunities Act. This will go a long way towards creating a more just society for all citizens, irrespective of race, ethnic religion, caste, religion, culture and social background.
4. The Commission recommends the establishment of an audit of public and private employment. Our findings show that Creoles are the last to be employed and the first to be retrenched. There ought to be penalties for unfair discrimination in all employment opportunities.

5. The Commission is aware that part of the reason for the non-employment of Creoles is that many lack the necessary qualifications. Therefore, the Commission urges Government to embark on establishing enhanced Technical Colleges which will enable those who do not complete High School to be trained as artisans in different fields.
6. Working-class families are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of the language medium of instruction presently practised in schools. It is strongly recommended that Creole be introduced as a medium of instruction at all levels as a matter of urgency (see Further Recommendations under Education Project).

It further recommends that all National Examinations before Form V be abolished. This causes undue stress on children, parents and teachers and has no pedagogical value whatsoever.

#### 7. Race Discrimination

However, the Commission has no doubt that race discrimination against Creoles, in particular, is a further reason for Creole people to feel “left behind”. Therefore, the Commission recommends that discrimination, at any level, on the basis of race, colour, gender, caste and religion should be outlawed. Anti-Discrimination legislation should be introduced to give teeth to the rooting out of discrimination which exists in Mauritius.

#### 8. Land

One of the most vexing and complex challenges faced by the Commission was to try and be of material assistance to deponents who believe they have been unjustly dispossessed of their land. Many of those who have come before us have inadequate documentation and, in most cases, our search of the archives has not produced the missing documentation. In some instances, we have discovered that the land has been sold or prescribed. The Commission has also noted, with alarm and dismay, that some land consultants, some Notaries, some Lawyers and some Land Surveyors have misled, or have made promises on payment of money to, some of those who appeared before the Commission, and have never delivered.

The Commission is strongly of the opinion that a Land Monitoring and Research Unit be established as a matter of urgency. This Unit should be a permanent body whose main task will be to assist citizens to establish the facts concerning their search for land which they believe is rightly theirs. Unnecessary bureaucracy should be avoided at all costs.

The Commission recommends that the State considers granting small parcels of land to deserving cases. It further recommends that legislation be introduced which will give greater protection against those Land Consultants, Notaries and Lawyers who are a disgrace to their profession and unscrupulous in their dealings with those who seek their assistance.

#### 9. Housing

The Commission recognises that successive administrations have provided low-cost housing to those who need it most. However, it is clear that many of the citizens of Mauritius are living in degrading circumstances. Some well-intentioned schemes have failed and some families are living in overcrowded, unkempt housing, and many in absolute squalor.

The Commission recommends that immediate plans be introduced to audit existing housing estates with a view to upgrading and, where necessary, to embarking on new decent (not low-cost) housing projects.

Many housing estates have buildings constructed with asbestos, a toxic substance which is damaging to health. These houses should be pulled down on a phase to phase basis and other units constructed with proper material. Many housing estates, now known as residences, are devoid of kindergarten, playgrounds and some are without community centres. These shortcomings should be addressed.

## 10. Senior Citizens

With improved health care and better quality of life, life expectancy is bound to give rise to a generation of senior citizens. These elders are often left out in the process of modern life. In the poor man's milieu, elderly citizens are the most to be pitied. The Old Age Pension for those who are over 70 should be increased substantially as many are left stranded by their sons and daughters who have migrated and who cannot themselves cater for their own needs. People of 70 and above should benefit from home medical care on a regular basis.

## 11. Responsibility of Colonial Powers

Lord Gifford, on that 14<sup>th</sup> March 1996, rose to ask Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom:

*"whether they will make appropriate reparation to African nations and to the descendants of Africans for the damage caused by the slave trade and the practice of slavery".*

*The Lord Gifford argued:*

*"My Lords, the Question raises an issue which is being debated with increasing vigour and intensity by African people around the world; and by African people, I mean people of African descent, wherever they live, whether in Africa itself, in the United States, in Great Britain or in former British Colonies".*

*"The issue is this. The under-development and poverty which affect the majority of countries in Africa and in the Caribbean, as well as the ghetto conditions in which many black people live in the United States and elsewhere, are not, speaking in general terms, the result of laziness, incompetence or corruption of African people or their governments. They are in a very large measure the consequences the legacy - of one of the most massive and terrible criminal enterprises - in recorded human history; that is, the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery".*

*"The thesis that I advance tonight is that in accordance with international law and with basic human morality, measures of atonement and reparation are due from the successors of those who instigated and carried out the trade and who profited massively from it to the descendants of the victims of the criminal enterprise who still suffer in many different ways from the effects of the crime".*

*"The horrendous nature of the enterprise of African slavery is well-known and documented. Around 20 million young people were kidnapped, taken in chains across the Atlantic and sold into slavery in the plantations of the New World. Millions more died in transit in the dungeons of the castles such as Gorée, Elmina and Cape Coast, or in the hell holes under the decks of the slave ships. It was without doubt, in the fullest sense of the term, a crime against humanity. A vast proportion of sub-Saharan Africa from Senegal right around to Angola and on the other side from Mozambique into Malawi and Tanzania was depopulated. Its young men and women were taken away".*

*"African governments today, who have tried to rectify the under-development which they have inherited from history, have borrowed from the financial institutions of the West and are now in a virtually uncontrollable spiral of debt. In reality - and in morality - I suggest that it is the West which is in debt to Africa, not Africa which is debt to the West".*

*"On the other side of the Atlantic, the African captives were cut off from their families, their land and their language. They were forced to be owned as chattels and to work as beasts of burden. When finally, emancipation day came - in the British colonies, in 1838 - the ex-slaves received nothing. It was the ex-slave owners who were compensated for the loss of their property".*

*"The slavery experience has left a bitter legacy which endures to this day in terms of family breakdown, landlessness, under-development".*

*“As well as the consequences in Africa and the Caribbean, there is a further element in the legacy of the slave trade which is the damage done within Britain, within the United States and other Western societies. The inhuman philosophy of white supremacy and black inferiority was inculcated into European peoples to justify the atrocities which were being committed by a Christian people upon fellow human beings. That philosophy continues to poison our society today”.*

*“African people, too, have a massive and long-standing grievance. It is no use saying that it all happened a long time ago, and we should just forget about it. “But the wrongs have not been forgotten. The peoples of Africa live with their consequences still .....”.*

(As quoted by Jacques David in *MAURITIUS-THE SLAVE LEGACY*, 2010)

The Commission strongly supports the undisputable truths, as stated so powerfully by Lord Gifford. In particular, the Commission underlines the need for former Colonial Powers to accept responsibility for the wretched system of slave trade in Mauritius. Further, the Commission endorses Lord Gifford’s statement that “the inhuman philosophy of white supremacy and black inferiority was inculcated into European peoples to justify the atrocities which were being committed by a Christian people upon fellow human beings. That philosophy continues to poison our society today.”

We therefore recommend, in this spirit, that the Government of Mauritius approaches the former Colonial Powers, Holland, France and the United Kingdom, to accept their several responsibilities for the slave trade, slavery and its consequences still experienced today in Mauritius.

Although the conditions were not the same, the Commission further recommends that the Mauritius Government approach the former Colonial Power, the United Kingdom, to accept its responsibility for indentured immigration after the abolition of slavery.

The recommendations made by the Truth and Justice Commission, if implemented, will be costly, and it is the view of the Commission that a substantial part of these costs should be borne by Holland, France and the United Kingdom.

Because of the intensity of our experience and the never-ending calls on our time and energy, closure was always going to be difficult. Closure in respect of the TJC brought with it particular and peculiar problems. How does one stop seeking the truth? Yet, we had to draw the line and accept that truth-telling and truth-seeking cannot be confined to a particular Commission. The search for Truth and a commitment to Truth must be undertaken by the entire nation made up of ordinary people, politicians, government agencies, poets, film-makers, writers, academics and whoever cares about the future of Mauritius. The Commission has given a focus to what must now become a common endeavour. Transparency, accountability and Truth are essential ingredients in any nation which seeks integrity, the consolidation of democracy and a culture of human rights. So the search cannot end; it must be deepened and broadened to include all concerned Mauritian citizens.

How do we bring to an end to the search for a just society? Justice has to be sought for, fought for and won. Justice is never a once-off; it must be as fresh as every new day. In our Recommendations, we have pointed the way to help achieve Social Justice, but unless these recommendations are implemented by the Public and the Private Sectors alike, they will signify nothing. Justice must permeate every part of society, in Government, in the Public Service, in the job market, in education and training, in living conditions. It is never nebulous; it must impact on the daily lives of all citizens, irrespective of race, ethnicity, colour or gender. Justice means equal opportunity for all.

How do we bring an end to the elusive search for reconciliation and unity? Of course, it must not stop, but a single Commission made up of a handful of Commissioners and a dedicated staff, working for a limited amount of time, with limited resources, cannot on its own find the reconciliation which is so desperately needed in Mauritius’s deeply-divided society. Perhaps the TJC’s greatest contribution in this regard has been its strong emphasis on the notion that reconciliation is never easy, is never cheap and remains a constant challenge. In our work, we have discovered a few building blocks on which many other institutions, structures and individuals will be

able to build. Reconciliation is a process which engaged the energy of the Commission but will always remain the responsibility of the entire nation.

In considering the life and work of many Commissions around the world, we are impressed with the contribution which these Commissions have made in the search for Truth and Justice. However, all too often, many of their recommendations were either delayed or simply ignored. Our appeal to the President and to the Prime Minister is that they take our recommendations seriously and act upon them expeditiously. One way forward would be the appointment of a representative task force to examine every recommendation and to formulate a specific plan of action linked with a concrete timeline.

I would like to express my personal thanks to my fellow Commissioners and to all staff members and consultants. In particular, I would like to commend the rich contribution made by Vice Chairperson Dr. Vijaya Teelock.

The Commission would like to place on record its warm thanks to the President for appointing us to this daunting task and to the Prime Minister for his unfailing encouragement and support. We would also place on record our thanks to the Prime Minister's Office, and in particular to Mrs. Fong Weng-Poorun.

Very especially, we wish to thank all those who appeared before the Commission. Without their depositions, this report could not have been written.

**Professor Alexander Boraine,**  
**Chairperson**



## **MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**



## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the recommendations contained in the introduction are not reproduced in this section; those included are presented in a more elaborate manner.

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### 1. MEMORIALISING SLAVERY

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1. Works started by the Truth and Justice Commission to be continued by competent authorities and empowering young Mauritians through foreign scholarships and training programmes where expertise is lacking: The **Slave Trade Voyages database**, ethnographic studies of descendants of slaves.
2. Better memorialisation of the economic contribution of slaves to Mauritius.
3. To assess the quantitative value of the labour by future researchers trained in Economic History and historical statistics.
4. A review of case of Ratsitanina by the State Law Office.
5. A 'Museum of Slavery' to be created in the capital city of Port Louis for greater visibility along the lines outlined in following Museum proposal. Although one 'Interpretation Centre' is projected at Le Morne, this should reflect the Maroonage aspect rather slavery which was a national phenomenon.
6. Recognition of the following sites and histories as National heritage:

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### 2. FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF, AND A MORE INCLUSIVE, MAURITIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

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7. INTRODUCTION OF MAURITIAN HISTORY AT ALL LEVELS in the School Curriculum and for all categories of Mauritians.
8. A PROGRAMME OF EDUCATION IN CIVIC, HUMANISTIC AND MORAL VALUES:  
aimed at strengthening bonds between communities, should be introduced at all levels, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. A series of manuals, with gradual and varying contents, should be prepared to this end by teams of educators.
9. CREATION OF A CONSERVATION INSTITUTE  
to train Mauritians in preservation of paper and digital documents to avoid further deterioration and loss of these crucial Civil Status information.
10. REVIEW OF POLICY, STAFFING AND FUNCTIONING OF ALL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS
  - i. Staffing screening: the appointment of political nominees, persons with known racist and communal views or with ethnic, religious biases to cease with immediate effect.
  - ii. Management structure to be reviewed and revised to reflect international professional norms and standards.
  - iii. Management Vision and policy to be in-line with national priorities and with other institutions.
11. THE PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER AND THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION TO SET THE EXAMPLE TO OTHER POLITICIANS AND PLEDGE TO STOP USING CULTURE AND RELIGION AS TOOLS FOR

GAINING POPULARITY AND VOTES

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**3 A BETTER AND INCREASED PROTECTION OF MAURITIAN HERITAGE**

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12. THERE IS A NEED FOR NATIONAL POLICIES to be formulated that are based on full public and professional consultations and to cover cultural and natural - tangible and intangible. This would set the base for the development of an integrated management of heritage in Mauritius.
13. THE POPULATION SHOULD BE CONSULTED to consider their vision of heritage considering Mauritian diversity.
14. THE CREATION OF A GREEN PAPER fostering consultations with all segments of the population
  - i. would be an initiative enabling to gather views on values invested in heritage by all Mauritians;
  - ii. The policy for heritage would support the reinforcement of the legislation for the protection and promotion of museum collections and heritage;
  - iii. this to allow for an optimal management and also the integration of existing policies for Tourism, environmental and cultural.
15. NO PROJECTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT A PROPER CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND A SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION.

MUSEUMS

**THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL INVENTORY OF ALL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS** and sites that would be accessible to all, by using latest software technologies adapted to the heritage and museum environment.

**NEW EXHIBITION SPACES TO BE CREATED** to support the restitution of the national past to the population after conclusions of this reflection. This might be for example a Museum focusing on Anthropology, including intangible heritage; the creation of a National Museum of Immigration to provide a nationwide sense of belonging, among others.

**Specific Recommendations for the Improvement of the Management of the Mauritius Museums Council**

16. The elaboration of a collections policy;
17. The elaboration of a conservation policy including restoration policy;
18. The setting up a professional collections management system;
19. Computerization of catalogues and use of a museum collection management software;
20. The training of staff in collection management must be a priority;
21. The organisation of workshops and training courses in Mauritius with other professionals to foster capacity building;
22. The establishment of a national professional network helping the development of capacity building;

23. The establishment of a detailed documentation on collections including detailed documentation of their acquisition, descriptions and photographs;
24. That research be conducted on collections to expand existing documentation;
25. The publication of a catalogue of collections also available on website.

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#### 4 A LESS RACIST AND ELITIST SOCIETY

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26. FUNDING FOR REPARATIONS BE SOUGHT BY THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT from the historical slave trading nations, namely, the United Kingdom and France, for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of communities and settlements where slave descendants are in the majority.
27. REPARATIONS BE PROVIDED TO POOR INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES in terms of social reparations such as housing and education so that this community and its descendants are better able to create a more stable social and economic existence going into the future.
28. THAT A SYSTEM AND POLICY OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION be implemented in Mauritius to address the social and economic imbalances created and fostered under Slavery, Indenture and Colonialism.
29. DISCRIMINATION AT ANY LEVEL IN OUR SOCIETY MUST BE MADE ILLEGAL. This includes any real or perceived discrimination in treatment at hospitals (crucial, especially at general hospitals), government offices, education facilities, workplace interviews, shops, marketplace or place of worship etc.
30. CREATION OF AN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION UNIT to ensure:
  - i. Hate speech is not tolerated. No one should have the right to publicly offend the other by using racial epithets
  - ii. The exact process of reporting and recording of these offences needs to be established. The commission recommends three levels of reporting (local community representative, ADU, then Ombudsman). The exact operational characteristics of this unit can be thought through by a selected group of stakeholders.
  - iii. To follow up on complaints from the public and from Government regarding such infringements. The ADU will also be tasked with maintaining a deeper respect for diversity as well as democracy.
  - iv. Positive discussion on the contribution of Creoles to the making of Mauritian society to be initiated verbally and financially by Government *via* the proposed Anti-discrimination Unit.
  - v. Together with the relevant Ministries dealing with youth, gender issues and leisure (Tourism), the ADU will offer advice, implement workshops and discussion forums to effect dialogue on parenting, gender relations and equality, the image of Mauritius to the tourist world and issues of discrimination in the leisure space.
  - vi. To work closely with social work organisations and entities, Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and units, teachers, recently-qualified therapists, counsellors, community representatives and other individuals working with the broader public, to inform and discuss matters relating to discrimination and marginalisation in our society. The objective of this is to ensure that there is ongoing public dialogue on these matters and that people feel free to express their opinions and to talk about their experiences in our society.
  - vii. To also scrutinise social and economic policies emerging from government, advising the latter on sections or parts of policies which may, in fact, promote discriminatory practices.

- viii. To make recommendations to the Government regarding such policies and how to make these more socially inclusive.

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## 5. A MORE DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC LIFE

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- 31. THE 'PROTECTION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE INDIVIDUALS', EMBODIED IN SECTION 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION, SHOULD BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS.
- 32. PROMOTION OF MULTICULTURAL COMPOSITION OF ALL BOARDS AND INSTITUTIONS.

Reconciliation to be promoted and all boards, and trusts, parastatal to be multicultural: any board composed of 65 % or more of one ethnic and/or religious groups to be reviewed and revised.

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## 6. TO EMPOWER MAURITIANS OF AFRICAN AND MALAGASY ORIGIN

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- 33. OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF DISTINCTIVE AFRICAN AND MALAGASY REFERENCES IN ALL STATE INSTITUTIONS AND THAT CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN:

- i. To mass popular culture rather than elite culture in the population of African and Malagasy descent and to use global culture that is inspired by African culture, if necessary to construct a more positive self-image and identity.
- ii. To open up to larger interpretations and opinions in intellectual, political, economic and social space.
- iii. To introduce "socio-biography" of groups and life histories of individuals, with particular emphasis on History and the forging of patterns in values, attitudes and behaviours. This is also a form of narrative therapy.
- iv. To change the feelings of shame and hurt which have been brought about as a result of inherited or internalized negative associations with slavery and other forms of exploitation.

- 34. SETTING UP OF A TRUST FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO SEARCH FOR 'BLACK DIAMONDS'

- i. To operate cognitive recomposition regarding education and training, changing negative perceptions among children and parents and self-defeating behaviors;
- ii. To work at village and town level for a "designation" process by all parties, including families, re-affirming the importance of formal education and lending meaning to school institutions;
- iii. In order to foster positive role models, not only "funny and entertaining" models and raise aspirations, particular attention should be given to the search for "Black Diamonds" and education. Gifted children could be encouraged within a stable, studious environment to concentrate on their studies and serve as role models for others;
- iv. Grants, sponsorships, scholarships to alleviate extra financial burdens on the family or even temporary shelters when house conditions are not favorable could be set up;
- v. Mentors on a volunteer basis could monitor progress on a regular basis;
- vi. Teachers could be offered incentives to work with young children of deprived areas on non-traditional ways of learning;
- vii. Kindergartens, as well as specialized schools for the handicapped children, with participation of families, could respond to real needs.

- 35. TO UNDERTAKE A DETAILED DISAGGREGATION OF DATA FOR A MORE OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FORMULATION OF NEW SOCIAL POLICIES BY:

1. Gathering and analyzing statistical data over a long period of time, taking into account criteria of gender and ethnic communities in their disaggregation with detailed historical analysis of social, political and administrative structures;
2. Paying particular attention to the field of Psychiatry, delinquency and crime;
3. Assessing ( over time) with more precision, ways of living and equal access of Creoles to
  - i. land and housing;
  - ii. labour;
  - iii. social and economic networks ( from day-to-day survival to powerful lobbies);
  - iv. education from pre-school to tertiary education, rates of failure / success and drop-outs;
  - v. savings and earnings ( from traditional to new);
  - vi. family structures, dynamics and evolutions ( evolutions of roles, expectations, frustrations, gratifications, inter-generational relationships).

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**7 FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUALITY**

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**36. THE CREATION OF A LAND BANK** with plots of land for farming and other entrepreneurial activities so that anyone who is a **descendant of slave and indentured who has never owned land before** and who wishes to engage in an activity that promotes autonomy be allocated a plot.

**37. A JUNIOR SAVINGS ACCOUNT TO BE OPENED BY EVERY PARENT FOR ALL CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN EVERY CITE OR HOUSING ESTATE OR POVERTY POCKETS TO GIVE THEM A HEAD START IN LIFE WHEN THEY GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY.**

1. The starting sum to be decided by the Implementation Arm of the Commission and funded by all business enterprises, sugar estate owners, all IRS and ERS owners and from EU money given to Sugar Industry and for gender-related activities.
2. Parents should contribute, and accounts should be frozen until the young person has graduated or until the age of 18.
3. Parents must not be allowed to take money from their children's accounts.

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**8 LAND ISSUES**

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**38. SETTING UP OF A LAND MONITORING AND RESEARCH UNIT**

A land monitoring and research unit should be set up to conduct enquiries, settle disputes or refer matters to Court. This important Authority will be called upon to monitor all land transactions, to receive complaints from genuine persons who have lost, or have been dispossessed of their property, and to assist the applicant to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and civil status, as well as investigate all Notarial deeds.

**39. FOR A NOTARIAL ACTS DATABASE PROJECT**

The Commission has already started the Notarial Acts Database Project, a guideline to decipher and interpret the language in old French, which will help and better serve researchers, Notaries and Attorneys.

**THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:**

- i. That the work initiated by the Notarial Acts Database (outline of which follows) be continued by the proposed Land Research and Monitoring Unit as a matter of urgency.
- ii. That the server to host the database be the Linux Operating system (Open source) which is reliable, highly performing and resilient. The server has been configured to allow only authenticated users to connect to and use the system.
- iii. Training: Users (research assistants) to be trained at each stage of prototype deployment. However those having been trained by the Commission can be used to train others and to continue this database.

**40. A LAND DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT**

Land Division of the Supreme Court should be set up in order to expedite matters.

Moreover, as regards the surveying issues, no amendment boundaries are to be accepted unless they are based on a proper survey supported by plans of acceptable standards and the satisfaction to the Land Monitoring and Research Unit.

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**9. FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**41. THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT SHOULD COME INTO FORCE.**

Its implementation will go a long way towards guaranteeing equal rights for citizens, irrespective of ethnic, political, sex and religious appartenances.

**42. POSTS TO BE ADVERTISED AND SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT IN A MORE TRANSPARENT MANNER AND BY COMPETENT STAFF**

For example, when selecting technical and research staff, a senior technical person or researcher in the relevant discipline must be part of selection Team.

**43. CREATION OF PARASTATAL APPOINTMENTS AND APPEALS TRIBUNAL**

in line with the Civil Service Appeal Tribunal for public officers to review appointments, promotions and improper appointments and ensure that such exercises are solely based on merit and qualifications.

**44. A THOROUGH REVISION OF MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM WORK HOURS**

must also be implemented so as to curtail exploitative work conditions, especially for those who are poor in our society.

**45. INTRODUCTION OF A COMPREHENSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT SCHEME**

after a thorough study has been undertaken of all sectors of employment, schemes already in place and existing legislation.

**46. THE PRESENT RATE OF OLD AGE PENSION SHOULD BE REVISED**

especially for those reaching the age of 70 or more. The present rate of Rs. 3,200, allocated to people without resources, is a cause of extreme poverty, especially for those who do not enjoy any retirement benefits. This rate should be upgraded to Rs. 4,000.

## SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS

### 47. A SPECIAL SCHEME TO BE DEvised TO MAKE THEM CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR PENSION SCHEME.

Certain categories of workers who are self-employed do not always contribute to the National Pension Scheme, and may in their old age find themselves in a difficult situation.

### 48. TO SET UP CO-OPERATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

- i. which have proved to be essential tools in spite of their defects, to extirpate small producers, whether in the field of agriculture and livestock.
- ii. Fishermen, pig-breeders cannot be left to fend for themselves. Many of them fall into the grip of unscrupulous middle men and usurers.
- iii. Throughout the world, Credit Unions, whether community-based or industry-based, have proved that they can inculcate the habit of saving and provide short-term credit at concessionary rates to their members in times of dire need.
- iv. Management assistance and recruitment of dedicated social workers, co-operative development officers are essential to see to it that the affairs of such co-operatives are run on a sound basis.

### 49. TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO RESIDENTS OF HOUSING ESTATES BY THE RECRUITMENT OF A NEW CLASS OF PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGISTS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

- i. and in such other areas where poverty is rampant.
- ii. A special class of trainers in small business enterprises should be appointed to support an emerging class of small entrepreneurs in the management of their ventures.

### 50. MORE EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO GIVE SOCIAL WORK ITS PROPER STANDING, INCLUDING ADEQUATE REMUNERATION, AND TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTARY WORK AS WORTHWHILE.

Often linked with charity work, social work and psychological and sociological support are essential elements to bring about a new mind-set in people living in housing estates and in similar milieux. Voluntary work should be encouraged among Mauritian citizens, and especially among young people.

### 51. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAMMES AIMED AT ADDING VALUE TO MANUAL AND TECHNICAL JOBS.

Too much emphasis is laid on white-collar jobs. In addition, entrepreneurship and subsistence farming should be further encouraged.

### 52. LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEMES FOR FARMING, LIVESTOCK-KEEPING, INCLUDING PIG-BREEDING, TO BE MADE AVAILABLE.

### 53. PROVISION OF AN 'ETHNIC SENSITIVE SERVICE' IN ALL GOVERNMENT SERVICES,

be it in the hospitals, the Police Department and in Government offices. Officers should be trained in better public relations to this effect.

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## 10. CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

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54. Unless there is strong reinforcement of the protection service, the situation will deteriorate from bad to worse.

55. Unless strict measures are taken to stop further degradation of the marine substrate, the very existence of fishermen will be threatened.

56. The Fisheries Protection Service needs to be reorganized and rendered more efficient and better-equipped to chase off defrauders.
57. Allowances in times of unfavorable fishing days need to be increased and should be extended to all categories of fishermen.
- i. The need to ensure a regular supply of fresh fish to the population and to the Tourism Industry can only be realized, if the sector can attract the young generation of fishers to it.
  - ii. There should be better control of activities of unregistered fishermen and amateurs should not remain unchecked.
58. Already such people, who have other sources of income, contribute to strip whatever meagre resources are left in the lagoon and offshore. Proper legislation should regulate their activities, as is the case in many countries.
59. **SMALL PLANTERS IN THE SUGAR SECTOR**
60. Small planters should adopt new visions in order to adapt to the new trends in business activity, for example, the setting up of cane distilleries to maximise revenue;

#### **PIG BREEDERS**

61. A separate organization must be set up to regulate pig production.
- This to avoid a glut and the imports of pork products.
62. Government must strongly consider the request of breeders for a processing plant, with an *atelier de découpe*, to service chain stores and the hotel and catering industry.
63. Such an organization, if set up, must, however, not be left in the hands of amateurs but supervised by professionals with the necessary expertise to exercise sound management.

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### **11. RECONSTITUTING THE MAURITIAN FAMILY**

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#### **64. CREATION OF A NATIONAL GENEALOGY CENTRE**

- i. To assist Mauritian families, many of whom are descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, in their quest for identity, to reconstruct their family tree.
- ii. Provide Mauritians with all the data required, free of charge, to reconstruct this family tree in recognition of the numerous difficulties faced by ordinary Mauritians to collect relevant and accurate data concerning their family history.

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### **12. FOR A MORE JUST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

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65. **EDUCATION SYSTEM BE INSTITUTED THAT CATERS FOR PEOPLE INTEREST AND WISHES** rather than wishes of employers as there is a clear mis-match between people expectations of work and life and what employers have to offer.
66. **CREATION OF TECHNICAL SCHOOLS FOR ARTISANS** as well as other specialized occupations which are currently neglected.
67. The model of *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) delivered by Technical Schools in countries like France, Australia, etc. should be adopted, thereby ensuring quality work by artisans and other private skilled workers.
68. **AVOIDANCE OF LARGE ANONYMOUS CENTRALIZED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS** and

overbearing authorities which do not take into account specificities of localities and to promote more flexible curriculum

69. SPECIFIC SCHOOLS IN EACH ZONE CATERING FOR SPECIALIZATIONS: Art, music, cultural, professional, technical subjects THAT ARE RECOGNIZED OVERSEAS,

rather than all subjects being Cambridge Examinations Syndicate oriented

70. MILK, BREAD AND FRUIT TO BE PROVIDED TO ALL CHILDREN OF LOW INCOME PARENTS at school or nearby facility as part of positive discrimination for 10 years.

71. BETTER SELECTION OF TEACHERS

- i. and accompanied by a policy of creating incentives for better-qualified teachers to enrol at the schools in the South so that a better level of education can be obtained.
- ii. A system of teacher re-deployment may be created to partly achieve this goal, as might an additional stipend for teachers in these areas.

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### 13 FOR OUR CITÉS

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72. A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE CITÉS BASED ON THE TJC STUDY OF MIVOIE.

73. SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The State should ensure that every child in the housing estate enjoys the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

74. HOUSING CONDITIONS

- i. The Commission recommends a full environmental and medical survey in Cité La Mivoie and other housing estates to ensure that incidences of ill-health and mortality in the *Cités* are not asbestos-related.

75. CHILD PROTECTION

- i. When the case is reported at the Police Station, especially at night, Officers of the Child Development Unit might take approximately 1½ hours to be at the Police Station.
- ii. Some Police Officers already start questioning the victim without prior psychological assessment and support.
- iii. Children, victims of abuse (sexual/physical/gross neglect/ill-treatment) and who are placed at shelters (NGOs) are at times placed at the RYC at a very young age, given their behavioural problems - there is a need for proper assessment and psychological intervention and close follow-up at such cases so that they get the necessary caring and supportive environment to help them grow and deal with their past history.
- iv. At times, assistance is given after many hours and, in cases where sexual abuse took place much earlier, the victim unnecessarily waits at the Police Station. The P.C.P treatment which should be carried out within 72 hours may get delayed.
- v. Children-abused-parents/other family members who ask for these children - need for more guidance with parenting and coping skills.
- vi. Posting of A TRAINED OFFICER at the Ministry's Shelter DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF overcrowded shelter.

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### 14. CONCERNING THE CASTE SYSTEM

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76. MONITORING OF ACTIVITIES OF SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS:

That the existence, activity and financing (through subsidies) of so-called “socio-religious associations” needs to be more strictly controlled.

77. PENALIZING CASTE DISCRIMINATION

That discrimination based on caste should be penalized. The nation should have the legal means to sue any individual or organization promoting casteism in the official sphere, whether it is in official political discourses, or in the media, or in professional contexts. The use of pejorative, and insulting, caste terminologies should be equally penalized.

- i. That the role of political and religious leaders and their potential for reinforcing casteism, should be carefully monitored.
- ii. That canvassing on the basis of caste appartenance for vote-catching purposes must be closely monitored and sanctioned.
- iii. That caste discrimination in the selection and promotion of employees be penalised and meritocracy should be promoted in the professional sphere.

78. BREAKING THE TABOO OF CASTE IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE

- iv. That Government should allow and encourage scientific research on caste system to be pursued and publicized.
- v. That a better knowledge of the role of caste in India and its differences with the Mauritian situation is required, and this understanding may lead to better mutual understanding between different castes.
- vi. A truer and more scientific ‘tracing of roots’ to show the authentic heterogenous roots of the popular culture of most indentured ancestors, far from any Sanskritic or Brahmanic pretentions.
- vii. Promotion of the Indentured heritage as a reason for pride: that ancestors and descendants of migrant populations did succeed, despite all the difficulties and contribute to the nation.
- viii. Castes to be presented as a secondary, residual system that needs to be fought against in modern Mauritius.
- ix. The promotion of free marriages through a global awareness campaign

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15. FOR LE MORNE VILLAGE HISTORY AND HERITAGE

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**As a form of *restorative justice*, reparations to be given in the form of:**

79. A formal and written apology from the Government for the prejudice the former inhabitants of former Le Morne village have suffered.
80. The **inhabitants** of Le Morne and neighbouring areas are given agricultural land jointly held by them to engage in agricultural practices to enable them to increase their daily revenue and be autonomous as they used to be.
81. That the area known as **Trou Chenille** be officially recognised as a site of former settlement by inhabitants, many of whom are descendants of slaves having lived there for generations (and not as squatters) and that their removal be recognised as ‘forced removal’.
82. The links between the Le Morne Brabant, the forests of the Black River Gorges and Baie du Cap, be fully studied and the maroon trails and sites fully protected from developers, coming up with commercial projects

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## 16. ARCHIVES

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83. **A NATIONAL EFFORT IS REQUIRED.** Nothing short of a national effort is required to find global and conclusive solutions to the preservation of the original documents found in the National Archives. Training of staff and funding for the Archives are absolutely essential components.

84. The Commission also feels that the proposal of a Culture House incorporating the National Library and National Archives should be implemented urgently. However, security concerns lead us to question the appropriateness of locating both institutions in one building.

85. **THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL INVENTORY**

This must be also an intrinsic part of the process,

86. **TRAINING IN CONSERVATION OF DOCUMENTS**

87. The creation of a Cultural Heritage Institute or a Conservation Institute

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## 17. FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE AND JUDICIOUS USE OF ENVIRONMENT

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88. **COMPLETE INDEPENDENT AND TRANSPARENT REVIEW OF ALL SALES, LEASES AND PROJECTS** and their modes of assessment approved by Ministries of Housing, Environment and Agro-Industry and whether they are really sustainable or not.

89. **TO ESTABLISH VEGETABLE GARDENS AND SMALL FARMS ATTACHED TO SCHOOLS TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR MANUAL LABOUR AND/OR PRODUCERS OF HAND MADE PRODUCTS.**

Visits by schools to be reintroduced to farms, factories, nature reserves in smaller groups than at present to enhance enjoyment of the site.

90. **THE CURRENT APPROACH OF PROVISION OF LOW-COST SOCIAL HOUSING SHOULD BE REVIEWED.**

91. **A CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT** be undertaken at the cost of promoter for any commercial project in Mauritius that involves change in green spaces or structures over 50 years old.

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## 18. TJC AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MAURICE ILE DURABLE)

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92. **FULL CONSULTATIONS DOWN TO COMMUNITY LEVEL.**

Ground-level input, meaning society at its broadest, provides the groundswell support and the credibility that will be necessary, when it comes to the implementation of a MID Policy, soon and in the years to come.

93. Culture must occupy an essential place in the MID Policy and Action Plan.

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## 19. LAND ISSUES

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94. It is in the light of these findings that the creation of a Land Bank be envisaged as a panacea to land management.

95.

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**FOR A BETTER METHOD OF REGISTRATION OF TITLE OF LAND**

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96. Grouping together of all activities now concerned with land title matters into one Central Authority.
97. The introduction of the principles of title to land and the creation and maintenance of a Cadastral Map.
98. To avoid duplication of staff and work, the Central Authority should be housed in one building.
99. The Cadastral Map will be a map compiled at a sufficient large scale to show clearly each parcel in the territory. This also applies for Rodrigues Island.
100. Surveyors' field-notes will be retained. All plans, field-notes and computations should be properly filed and numbered.
101. The use of microfiches and microfilms should be introduced to archival existing land registration volumes and other archival documents such as concession plans.
102. It is high time that the Authorities find ways and means of keeping a record of all Wills and Testaments. One such way could be to make an entry in the "*Répertoire*" kept by the Conservator of Mortgages of the existence of a Will and Testament. This is possible for the authentic Wills and Testaments which are drawn up by two Notaries in the presence of the two witnesses or by one Notary in the presence of four witnesses.
103. The registration concerning "*Testament olographe*" and '*Testament mystique*', as provided for in Articles 969 and following of the *Code Civil*, cannot be done and this will give rise to problems in future, unless an amendment is made to the existing laws.
104. The Notaries should ensure that the conditions laid down in Articles 913 and following of the *Code Civil* are observed fully.
105. The Commission hopes that new laws should be implemented in order to protect, the spouses, the children, the family, the society and the country.

**PRESCRIPTION IN MAURITIUS**

106. To do away with the whole procedure of affidavit and to provide for an alternative way to effect the transcription of prescribed plots of land.
107. It is the opinion of the Commission that the appropriate Protocol would be to exercise more control upon the averments of a person alleging to have prescribed a plot of land. There should be an institution which will ensure the truth of the said averments and which shall have the powers to investigate upon the veracity of these averments. Further, before the same institution, an appropriate memorandum of survey would be required with the possibility of putting questions to the Surveyor.

Although this system would not be foolproof, it will minimize the risks of frauds.

Also, it must be borne in mind that the creation of a single institution may result in it being overburdened, which might hamper a quick and efficient process. This is the reason why it has been deemed appropriate to share this role amongst our Local Authorities, although the possibility of one central institution remains.

Below is a proposal for a new system where the affidavit of prescription has been replaced by a prescription permit. To cater for these, the Affidavit of Prescription Act can be amended or simply repealed and the following added to the Local Government Act.

To conclude, the legislator needs add the appropriate penalties for non compliance or frauds.

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The creation of a **Land Research and Monitoring Unit** which shall cater for the technical side of the search and an appropriate Tribunal to give legal sanction to a valid claim.

The functions, powers and of this Unit are outlined below:

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## **FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE LAND RESEARCH AND MONITORING UNIT**

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**The functions of the Land Research and Monitoring Unit would be:**

108. To receive legitimate complaints from persons who allege that they, or their family, have lost or have been dispossessed of their property;
109. To carry out an in-depth investigation concerning an alleged complaint or hold an enquiry into land issues, out of its own initiative or at the instance of interested parties;
110. To advise the applicant, after thorough investigation and enquiry, on his claim and any other relevant issues;
111. To assist the applicant to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and Civil Status documents and in collaboration with other appropriate institutions, to draw up genealogical trees;
112. To study plans of *grants*, relevant Notarial Deeds and any other relevant documents related to land movement;
113. To provide, within statutory limits, assistance, financial or otherwise, to claimants as regards land surveys or other necessary actions;
114. To submit or refer the matter to Mediation and to promote amicable settlements which shall be binding upon all the parties; and
115. Where appropriate, to refer the case to a specialized Tribunal.

The Commission wishes to stress that, in its considered opinion, a two-fold approach is recommended, since neither the proposed Unit nor the suggested Tribunal would be effective on its own.

The Commission has purposely refrained from making specific suggestions as to where the Unit should be set up, or its composition, or as to whether the Tribunal should, for example, be a Division of the Supreme Court or an *ad hoc* Tribunal. That is because, on the one hand, the Government may wish to consider including the Unit in an existing framework such as those catered for in the LAVIMS (Project Implementation) Act or the Cadastral Survey Act 2011 and, on the other hand, the Government may prefer to consult the Chief Justice as to how he feels that the Judiciary could best lend its support to the scheme.

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**FOR A NOTARIAL ACTS DATABASE**

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1. That the work initiated by the Notarial Acts Database (outline of which follows) be continued by the proposed Land Research and Monitoring Unit **as a matter of urgency**.
2. That the server to host the database be the Linux Operating system (Open source) which is reliable, highly performing and resilient. The server has been configured to allow only authenticated users to connect to and use the system.
3. Training: Users (research assistants) to be trained at each stage of prototype deployment. However those having been trained by the Commission can be used to train others and to continue this database.

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**20. RODRIGUES**

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It is thus suggested that the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be amended to include information on the searches, made by the Surveyor, relating to the last known owner of the land being prescribed.

The legal status of land either in Mauritius or Rodrigues falls under three categories:

116. State Land;
117. *Domaine Public* inclusive of *Pas Géométriques*; and
118. Private Land

All State Land is imprescriptible under the Law as per Section 35 of the State Land Act.

The *Domaine Public* is a category of land which belongs to the public at large by nature of its use: roads, beaches, sea, rivers and which are imprescriptible and inalienable.

The Private land is lands under private ownership which at a certain point in time either during the French occupation or the British occupation has been conceded/ granted to someone.

There is thus no such thing as ownerless land.

Any professional being a Land Surveyor, Attorney or Notary should be able to trace back the owner of any land in Mauritius or Rodrigues.

It must be made mandatory for any Notice of Affidavit of Prescription to be transcribed to contain the name of the last known owner.

At the same time, any Notice under the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be published with its appropriate location plan that will help in the identification of the land by the former owner.

No Notice of Affidavit of Prescription should be transcribed, if one of the adjoining owners is unknown. Thus, no prejudice could be caused if every endeavour is made to find its owner, or at least, its occupier.

Furthermore, any potential applicant for any prescription should make a formal declaration to the nearest police station to this effect and submit all particulars of his two witnesses, including names, residential addresses and identity card numbers. And an investigation should be made as to establish the credibility of any witness.

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## OTHER LAND AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN RODRIGUES

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### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

119. Adoption of a Physical Development Plan and of a Land use Plan.
120. Finalise the Land Information System
121. Ensure that projects are in line with defined strategies for land use development.
122. Provide accurate information on state land ownership status and development at any point in time.
123. Align and revise rental of land in accordance with market rates.
124. Improve legal framework for town & country planning and land use.
125. Regularise all eligible occupiers of State lands.
126. Respond to the land requirements of all Commissions for timely implementation of public projects.
127. Planning clearances for residential and commercial/industrial projects on state land prior and after lease of land.
128. A digitalised Cadastre of all State lands in the island of Rodrigues effectively established and updated.
129. Review of State land leases effectively for optimising Government revenue.
130. Grant of lease to applicants occupying state land.
131. Effective vesting of State lands and acquisition of private land for public projects.
132. Land Use Planning and management processes in place and promoting improved and sustainable land use
133. Effective land administration services in place, accessible to all and protecting the land rights of all citizens.
134. Lack of an endorsed framework for land planning and land use, thus encouraging a scattered pattern of settlements.
135. An efficient management of land resources with a view to achieving economic prosperity, social equity and preserving the natural beauty of the island.

### OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is an urgent need to revisit the whole social and economic development for Rodrigues from the point of view of future developmental needs. A National Physical, Social and Economic Development Plan should take the following into consideration:

### TOURISM

136. Increase accessibility, visibility and attractiveness of Rodrigues as a tourist destination and improve visitor authentic experience through sustainable destination management;
137. Strategic alignment of tourism policy, investment, and sustainable development through the implementation of a Tourism Strategic Plan (to increase tourism yield, export revenue, and livelihoods from the industry in a sustainable manner);
138. Regulate tourism activities in Rodrigues and market/promote Rodrigues worldwide using a powerful brand;
139. Develop capacity, capability, and professionalism of the sector;
140. Develop and maintain competitive partnerships between stakeholders, both in Rodrigues and Mauritius.

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## 21. AGALEGA

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- 140 Human promotion and community development rehabilitate the individual and his family in his dignity and upgrade the status of the population. To reach this goal, Integral Education, training, communication, information and participation in the development are the Key Concepts.

The Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, OI DC, Island Council, ‘Les Amis d’Agalega’ and ‘Mouvement Diocésain, 1<sup>er</sup> février’ and/or other interested parties/stakeholders (Civil Aviation, Education, Health, Meteorological Officers, the Police, Telecom Officers and others) should coordinate their efforts for an integrated development in Agalega.

The Resident Manager has a prominent role to play and should be referred to as the Representative of the Government on the Islands. His participation and that of the representative of the inhabitants are important to motivate action. A workshop or a round table thereon, with all stakeholders *in situ*, would help.

- 141 **Incentive for a comeback**

Agaleans have never possessed any land or houses on Agalega, so dispossession does not apply. In his statement in front of the TJC, on 18 August 2010, Mr. Soopramanien said that the Agaleans are not in search of money as compensation but of social services as Mauritians (TJC Hearing N0.381 - 396). However, Agalean descendants, who have been deported, and want to come back to be reinstated and recover their rights of earning their living on what they consider their *mother land*, or the land of their ancestors, should be given priority in contractual work according to their competence especially in the field of fishing, construction, agriculture, cultural and social activities etc. (Ref statement of Gino Alfred & Co. on 18/08/10. No.126, 155, 166, 252, 353, 391). An addendum can be made to the note on Article 3.10, p. 8 of Collective Agreement (Document II) as follow: *This is not an agreement to exclude employees residing in the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues. It should be applied on the basis of priority of consideration to interested and eventually qualified Agaleans and/ or Agalean descent residing outside Agalega.*

4.3.2 of C.A (Doc. II) will automatically apply:

As there is no *Home* for elders in Agalega, housing should be made available, on a humanitarian basis, to old and faithful retired workers of the Corporation, who are not entitled to a lease, to have a residence in Agalega close to their children. One or two are, indeed, in a destitute condition in Mauritius. The Ministry of Social Security, through their representative in the Legislative Assembly, could attend to this issue.

- 142 **Education and Training**

- i. The basis of all development is Education. Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Schools exist on the Islands (Ref.8.2.9). A proper screening should be made before sending teachers to Agalega. Even if they receive re-location allowance, as do other Government officers, they should be properly briefed before assuming their duties, equipped and sustained by the Ministry of Education. On the islands, they should meet on a regular basis to support each other in their duties and socially. They are the *artisans* of the progress of Agalega. Much could be done through them. Some are doing very well. Frequent visits of Officials of Parent Ministry would be appreciated. A special case should be made to recruit Teaching Assistants among Agaleans (Doc. II 3.9), with special training in Mauritius, as it was the case in the past for Rodrigues.
- ii. A common Parent Teachers Association of the three institutions combined would be beneficial. As it is actually the case, motivation must come from the schools' administration.
- iii. Scholarships for students in further studies in Mauritius and for upgrading the capacities of the employees in Agalega, should be envisaged. Beneficiaries should be strictly Agaleans or of Agalean descent. A proviso to serve Agalega for a given period should be inserted in an agreement between the provider and the beneficiaries.
- iv. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, OI DC should look into it for the provision of an annual budget.
- v. Training in related fields should be given to interested candidates to implement recommendations of the C.A. Award 2009 (Art. 3.9, Doc. II):
- vii. Furthermore, training in handicraft (coconut shells, fibre...), Home Economics, Leadership (formation of formators) and in all other fields aimed at boosting up the progress of the persons and the community, would be of the utmost importance and restore the dignity and confidence of the Agaleans.
- vi. To facilitate visits to both Islands, training in basic Hospitality Management would be an important contribution to the host families and to the island. This will facilitate local visits from one island to another for those who have no family or relatives on the visited island and will provide great support to visitors and officers on official visits to Agalega. At present, the Resident Manager caters for all visiting officials during the hectic time when the ship is in Port. In March /April 2011, the Resident Manager had to cater for some 40 visitors, and provide board and lodging for them, as there is no hotel or hostel on both Islands.
- vii. Training in Hospitality Management is a prelude to *Table d'hôte, Bed and Breakfast Hostels, Restaurants on a small scale basis*. (Ref.10.9.3)
- viii. An in-depth study must be carried out before introducing Tourism on a large scale, because of the sensitive ecosystem of the islands. A fishing stopover station is preferable. Consultation with the inhabitants, prior to any project, is fundamental.
- ix. In relation to 10.3.4, Organisations such as EWF, NEF, CSR, Women Entrepreneurs, etc. should be tapped. OI DC should be fully involved. The OI DB, the Island Council, 'Les Amis d'Agaléga' and the 'Comité Diocésain, 1er février' and all stakeholders, should work together for its implementation and monitoring, pending a Master Plan.
- x. History of Agalega should be taught from Primary level onwards. The book of Father Dussercle *Agaléga Petite Île* is an excellent manual for secondary students.
- xi. A museum, with what is left of the ancient establishment and families, will be a living memory of traditions and culture, and an open book of history.
- xii. (Ex. 'marmite quinze', measures and scales for weekly food ration, 'la cloche l'appel', Radio "Sailor", anchors of ancient ships wrecked on the coast of Agalega, Blacksmith tools etc.).

- xiii. Ancient buildings should also be repaired and furniture refurbished.
- xiv. In the near future, Education and Training should introduce a Village Council in each village, elected by the residents for the residents.

**143 Health**

- i. Modernity is not exempt from difficulties. Not long ago, daily work performed in the coconut fields, as at home, was enough to replace physical exercise. The population was kept healthy. Today, with modern trends, physical exercises is necessary in all lifestyles.
- ii. The sophisticated apparatus for physical exercise, in the Tsunami Centre ('Arche de Noé'. Ref picture 8.2.6) is under-utilised. No qualified physical instructor is available on both Islands. An Officer of the Police/ SMF/Coast Guard and or any outstanding staff with a good knowledge in the concerned fields, can certainly help, pending the arrival of an official instructor. It is important to train two Agaleans in this field and later, they can become Physical Instructors at schools during school hours and attend to others in the afternoon, on a roster basis.
- iii. Medical care is an important issue in Agalega and much has been said thereon. It is true that the population on the islands amount to some 300 persons only. Investment in human resources should not be exaggerated. However, where life is concerned, in order to preserve it, all facilities should available, regardless of money. The question of maternity is a complex one (Ref statement of Mr. Gino Alfred & Co. on 18/08/10. NO.189) An in-depth study is imperative to see to it. An incentive to increase the birth-rate in Agalega is recommended in the Collective Agreement of November 2009 (Doc. II 4.7.4/5) (Ref. 8.3.9).
- iv. Support from the 'Society for Aid to Children Inoperable in Mauritius' (SACIM) could be sought for the three handicapped children (Ref. 8.3.9).
- v. Water tanks, to collect rainwater, have been installed, especially for kitchen purposes. Pigeons soil the roofs of the houses and are sources of streptococci. They should be eradicated, especially where they flocked in the South. In case of drought, water pumped from wells is utilised. Poultry-keeping on large scale should be kept away from this source of water.
- vi. Both islands are infested with mosquitoes and rats (Appendix V 8.4.3). With the help of the Medical Staff, a proper sustainable campaign to keep the environment clean is urgently required. There is a close interaction between Health and the environment.

**144 Agriculture**

- i. Vegetables must be selected very carefully in Agalega, because of the poor sandy soil and climatic conditions prevailing. Actually, pests have spread all over the islands, and chemicals should not be used because of the fragility of the eco-system.
- ii. However, pumpkin, greens, lettuces, creepers etc. can be grown in particular conditions. An Agricultural Officer of AREU is setting up a Food Program in Agalega
- iii. An intensive training program, adapted to the island conditions, and starting at school level, could be launched. Very often, experts learn through the experience of local people. The contribution and advice of elders, with their experience of Agalega, should thus be sought, and plots of land, on a symbolic rental basis, could be allocated to interested families, for gardening and/or farming.
- iv. *Bassin Capucin*, the only pool in the North, can be exploited for farming, especially the breeding of ducks. A place in the South called *tranche*, can also be exploited. Training in this connection is needed.
- v. Seychelles expertise could be sought in farming. Sharing between Agaleans and Seychellois in different fields would be beneficial.

**145 Environment**

- i. People are usually moody, living with a dull environment, whereas a good environment makes the inhabitants cheerful and enthusiastic. With intense cleaning and planning, Agalega could become a natural garden.
- ii. Empty bottles, plastic, rusting iron sheets, old vehicles and thick bushes where mosquitoes and rodents nest can be seen here and there, on both islands, in spite of the goodwill of the administration (Appendix XII A).
- iii. A proper campaign to preserve the environment is imperative.
- iv. A cleaning campaign for a better Agalega may bring the inhabitants together and arouse their sense of civics duty and patriotism.
- v. An 'Agalega Day/Week' involving all Departments on the islands, can be organised to clean up Agalega, as a form of social activity. It can culminate with Independence Day and end with a Sports day and a Public performance by local artists.
- vi. There are different coconut fields with different names. Their delimitation, with their proper names, will be a practical exercise in pedagogy to teach the History of Agalega to all the population, particularly young students. Names of streets and avenues should also be marked. This measure will reinstate the dignity of the people: from Camp Noir to Avenue, from hut to bungalow.
- vii. Motor cycles, vehicles and the supply of power on the islands are sources of pollution. To reduce the high consumption of FUEL and thus emission of CO<sub>2</sub>, wind-powered energy and photovoltaic would help. Coconut oil, as FUEL, helps to reduce the importation of petrol in Agalega, but further studies should be done on how to control pollution.
- viii. Relatively speaking, Agalega should have the same privileges, in relevant fields, as Mauritius and Rodrigues (Ref. Gino Alfred Statement on 18/08/2010 N0.108 to 115; and Soopramanien No.310 - 313). This is why Gino Alfred in his hearing of 18/08/2011, claimed to name Mauritius as an Archipelago (Ref. Gino Statement on 18/08/2010 N0.697 to 703).

**146 Security**

- i. A Refugee Centre has been constructed in the North. Another in South island will be constructed soon. The population should be briefed from time to time, on how Management will proceed and what is expected from them, in the event of a tsunami, a cyclone or other calamities. The contribution of the Police and Coast Guard should be guaranteed well in advance.
- ii. Jetty at Port St. James is important. A study should be undertaken to devise safety measures for disembarking and embarking passengers. It is a blood-curdling manoeuvre for new visitors, especially when sea is rough. There must be an alternative disembarking point somewhere in the South, in case of an emergency. Consultation with the locals is essential.
- iii. As there are no traffic signs on the island, all drivers, including motorcyclists, should follow a Code of Conduct. Police should take its role seriously to prevent accidents. With the increasing number of motorcycles, the establishment of this Code of Conduct in the absence of road signs, is very important. All owners of motorcycles should be obliged to follow these instructions.

**147 Sport and Culture**

- i. (Ref. 10.3.1-2) Sport is one of the best means to fight anti-social habits. Drinking is on the rise. Boys and girls are prone to early sexuality. Idleness and lack of education are the main causes of this.
- ii. All facilities should be given to outdoor and indoor activities. The Ministry of Sport and Culture should extend its activities on Agalega, a territory of Mauritius. Agaleans could represent Mauritius in some athletic fields and in swimming, if given proper training.
- iii. With the help of the Coast Guard and the elders, regatta should be introduced. This will allow youngsters to develop their skills in canoeing, sailing, rowing, as their elders did. This practice will also help to develop skill in case of shortage of fuel or any breakdown or shortages on the island.
- iv. There are many talented artists in Agalega. Like diamond, they need polishing. Training in all fields is needed.
- v. Musical and sound system instruments are available in the Refugee Centre. Training to operate and maintain these instruments is needed.
- vi. Singing, Slam, sketches, Drama, Theatre are new avenues to exploit. This will contribute to fight against social ills and boost up the personalities and discipline of many young people.
- vii. Police Officers could provide important help in the field of indoor and outdoor games. The fitness apparatus in the Tsunami Centre could be then best utilised under their guidance.

**148. Services**

- i. With the increased storage of gas and fuel on the islands for different services, especially Jet Fuel for Civil Aviation and petrol and gas for Meteorological Station, and the local Management, security measures should be reinforced.
- ii. It is highly recommended that qualified Fire Officers from Mauritius should train young volunteers on Agalega. Discipline, drill and maintenance of equipment, sanctioned by a test, should be included. Successful candidates could wear uniforms. This would not give them the right to neglect or abandon their employment with the OI DC. A roster system and a work arrangement should be established between the OI DC and those concerned (Doc. II 3.9).
- iii. At present, in Agalega, there is only one qualified skipper, trained in Mauritius. With the development of the Islands and the promotion of the self-esteem of the workers, more skilled boatmen/skippers are needed, especially to work on the embarkation and disembarkation exercises. Training is given at Naval School of Mauritius. Interested candidates could be sent there for training. Working arrangements, as indicated above, could be negotiated with Management.
- iv. Facilities should be available, in Polytechnic School, *Ecole hôtelière* etc., to follow courses in fields likely to help Agalega.
- v. More and more visitors from Mauritius are keen to visit this remote Mauritian territory. No hotel, restaurant or *Table d'Hôte* exist because this was thought to be of no avail. With modern communication and access facilities, a system of restaurants or Bed and Breakfast will soon become necessary. This will also be useful for residents on visits to another island or to Officers on duty. Training courses should be made available to interested parties (Ref.10.3.4).

149 **Religion and social**

- i. Religion is not only a question of spirituality, but it also helps in the promotion of Integral Human Development.
- ii. Since the very beginning of the development of Agalega, the Catholic Church was present, and it has helped to introduce religious and moral values to the people (Soopramanien statement of 18/08/2010 N0,579 to 603). The remoteness of the island did not allow the Diocese to send a permanent priest, but Missionaries were sent, as and when possible.
- iii. In 1972, the two schools on Agalega were set upon a permanent basis by the Roman Catholic Education Authority, with the help of the Mauritian Government. The couple of teachers, who were sent, and their successors also catered for upgrading the social life, sporting and cultural activities. Today, the presence of two nuns is vital to family counseling and house-keeping.
- iv. As 100% of the Agaleans are Christians the presence of the Church should play an important roll in the development of the population. As it has a long experience in the field of training and in Human Development, facilities should be given to the Church to assist in the development of the islanders and their islands. On application, the Bishop of Port-Louis can send couples or qualified trainers for a certain period, in agreement with the OI DC to conduct training courses on Leadership and Community Development. All projects should be done in consultation with the residents. The PRO of the OI DC has a prominent role to play in the field of diffusing information about, and in the monitoring of projects.

150 **Discipline**

- i. The implementation of a good Code of Conduct is a sign of good Management. A whole detailed chapter (Doc II; N0.5 P. 20-24), referring to Disciplinary Procedures, is inserted in the Collective Agreement signed on 24 November 2009 between the OI DC and the Employees of the OI DC residing at Agalega. But still, the inhabitants would like to have a visiting Magistrate occasionally on Agalega to hear Police Cases, instead of transferring the presumed accused to Mauritius for trial (TJC hearing; Soopramanien No. 354 - 376).

151 **Economy**

- i. With the sudden and unexpected rise in salaries, due to a long struggle since February 1981 (Ref. *Pétition des habitants d'Agaléga*, Appendix XV), some families have entered into a spiral of uncontrolled consumption. As employees of the Corporation, they are now entitled to obtain loans from the Mutual Aid. Motorcycles, TV and Video sets, Refrigerators, Washing Machines and other domestic appliances, are bought on hire purchase at any cost. Some families have even their own generators, in case of power cuts. A Counselor in Consumer's Protection is needed, to advise the population properly.
- ii. In the event of producing handicrafts with local materials, and other by-products derived from coconut trees, and/or sea shells, a Cooperative Craft Industry could be opened and articles sent to Mauritius for sale. The OI DC can open a shop for Agalega craft products. SMIDO can sustain such projects. A OI DC Public Relations Officer, together with the Purchasing and Marketing Officer, should be put to work.
- iii. Selling cakes, sandwiches and drinks are sold here and there on both islands. The setting up of small businesses is of interest to some families. The shops, run by the OI DC, can later become a cooperative shop run by Agaleans. Training of the whole population in a Credit Union Society is very important.
- iv. Now that currency is present on the island and that modern trends are not a secret through TV, hairdressing, dressmaking, shoemaking courses could be run by resource persons found on the islands. Those interested can also follow courses in Mauritius (Doc. II 3.9; 4.4.7). These issues are important for the construction of a stable society.

- v. Those coming events will certainly bring more students to Mauritius. The OI DC should continue to make provision for them and for those who come on medical grounds. The PRO will have much to do.
- vi. The term ‘any resident’ should be extended to ‘any Agaleans or Agalean descendants’.

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## 22. FOR BETTER REPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES AND UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

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- 141. That a review of the present electoral boundaries must be undertaken in order to ensure the better representation of ethnic minorities.
- 142. Under-representation of ethnic minorities at the level of Parliament and Cabinet is a cause of frustration and may lead to political instability.
- 143. Some functions of the Public Service Commission, the Local Government Service Commission and the Discipline Forces Commission, should be revisited. The practice of delegation of powers through the appointment of minor grade officers to different Ministries continues to give rise to frustration and has resulted in the exclusion of minorities, more particularly for creoles.
- 144. The abolition of the Best Loser System should only be envisaged in the context of an overall review of the Constitution which would ensure a fair and equal representation of ethnic minorities.
- 145. Consideration be given to all Mauritians living abroad, in other countries, who emigrated, either at the time of Independence or more recently, be encouraged to return to the motherland to help in the development process.
- 146. To perpetuate the memory of the first Indo-Christians who came under the Indentured immigration, that the Parish Hall constructed in 1872, and located within the precinct of the St. Anne Catholic Church in Stanley Rose Hill, be proclaimed as a site of memory and be scheduled as a National Heritage Site.

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## 23. INDIAN IMMIGRATION ARCHIVES

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### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

- 147. That the political decision to block access be reversed as it is now antiquated and has no place in 21<sup>st</sup> century Mauritius.
- 148. That a full inventory is carried out and compared to original lists of documents and artifacts compiled during the transfer. The missing registers and artifacts to be officially reported.
- 149. That the Archives be returned to the National Archives as soon as National Archives are located in an appropriate building.
- 150. That the computerised data be fully verified and be made accessible online to the public
- 151. That the management rethinks its access policy and increase space available to researchers pending relocation as this is likely to take time.
- 152. The genealogical service provided by the Institute be separated from the Archive and be conducted elsewhere as the Archive is a ‘historical’ archive not a ‘civil status’ office
- 153. Urgent measures to conserve the most fragile documents are taken especially the photos which have become unglued from their pages. Here too the technical assistance of the Government of India and China can be sought given the close ties between these countries

and Mauritius

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### 23. RECONCILIATION

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154. That the Education System, which has promoted division rather than unity, review its agenda and rethink its role in Mauritius;
155. An Institute for Intercultural Affairs be created by the Government;
156. With regard to the relationship between politics and religion, Government and political parties should not associate with religious bodies;
157. In this way, the Government will be protected against undue interference from religious organizations;
158. Freedom of expression should continue to be encouraged and liberalisation of television channels should be considered.



The Commission wishes to express its gratitude to His Excellency, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, President of the Republic, for appointing us as Commissioners and to the Hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister for his unfailing support throughout the work of the Commission.

Our thanks also goes to Mrs K. O Fong Weng Poorun, Permanent Secretary and her staff for facilitating our laborious work.

We cannot conclude this report without placing on record the excellent work performed by the Secretary Mrs. Reshma Damoree and the administrative staff, Mrs Colette Lechartier, the Research Coordinator, as well as all the consultants, research staff, volunteers and technical persons who have facilitated our task in spite of the numerous constraints along the way.

We now have the privilege and pleasure to submit this our report as provided under section 13 (1) of the Act to the consideration of your Excellency.

Alexander Boraime Chairperson  
Vijayalakshmi Teelock Vice-Chairperson  
Parmaseeven Veerapen, Member  
Raphael Benjamin Moutou, Member  
Jacques David, Member

Reshma Damoree  
Secretary to the Commission  
20 November 2011



## METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

Part of the Mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission requires the assessment of the consequences of slavery and indenture. The task of assessing these consequences entails, *inter alia*, a review of 350 years of Mauritian History. As pointed out by the Chairman in his introduction, the Commission has, therefore, focussed on three aspects: History; consequences, and how to achieve a more just society.

### 1. METHODOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES FACING THE COMMISSION

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1. Establishing the 'Truth' about History is not an easy task. Firstly, there is the professional historians' point of view that there is no such thing as 'permanent truth', since new research will change what has been accepted. There is also 'public history' which often contains 'perceptions of truth'. This is the truth that the TJC has attempted to deal with. In addition to this mandate, the TJC also had an underlying mandate which was to promote reconciliation. In Mauritius, reconciliation was seen by many as being possible, only if one did not talk about one's history. This was no longer possible in contemporary Mauritius. Although some institutions and individual Mauritians have understood this, the TJC did clash with several institutions that possessed important repositories of documents but did not wish to open them to the TJC or to the public. Summons were issued and, in some cases, the access issues were resolved. Whether the access to the public will continue, is a matter which the TJC has, no control over. The TJC is, at least, sure that the public is fully aware that these archives exist, the Mauritian public has every right to access them, and that the State has the responsibility of preserving these documents and not allowing private appropriation of these documents. Opening access and a more forceful policy of encouraging historical research and an open debate, rather than engaging in parallel debates, will lead further to national reconciliation in the future.
2. The TJC has held 212 hearings at its offices and outside Port Louis. These also constitute the TJC archives as they show clearly public perceptions about Mauritian History and lives of Mauritians. They are, however, representative of the most vocal sections of Mauritians, rather than the voiceless. The TJC endeavoured to collect the views of Mauritians whose voices had no chance of being heard in Port Louis, and it embarked on a massive oral history collection exercise. The TJC feels that we have reached a wide cross-section of the Mauritian community and covered a variety of historical experiences of Mauritians living in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These are personal experiences of contemporary Mauritians and reveal their personal interpretations of their history. The statements, when taken together, are amazingly similar, and a full study was undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of Historians, Anthropologists, Sociologists and Ethnographers. The results are presented in the technical papers in Volumes 3 and 4 of the Report. The evidence shows even more clearly how many Mauritians know so little about Mauritian history and their family history. What Mauritians have preserved about their own history is limited, although this is to some extent understandable, because most Mauritians have led difficult lives. However, it is clear that their approach to life differs considerably, depending on their culture, religion (or absence of it), class and economic status in life.

The TJC cannot claim to have rewritten the whole history of slavery and indenture, but it has, at least, given a conceptual and structural version of Mauritian history free from political and racial agendas. It is now incumbent on future scholars and community groups to reflect and build on this and continue the work accomplished. The TJC has provided the tools and the sources where the historical material may be found, and civil society must now take this further. TJC's version of history cannot be considered as the 'official' history, but the beginning of a new 'national' history, in the sense that TJC recognises the fact that there are different perspectives and approaches.

What is the truth? Does factual evidence alone provide an indication of the truth? It is clear that the methodology of professional historians differs from other approaches to finding the truth. Critical evaluation of all available sources and their interpretation, as well as constructing a coherent narrative, are the classic processes of professional historians. However, there are other ways to arrive at 'truths' since a degree of subjectivity is inherent in the process of interpretation, and, hence, other interpretations are possible. There is, thus, not one objective Truth that the TJC has proposed. Truth is not necessarily the outcome of this Commission as not all facts are available, but rather part of the Truth. Much more needs to be done to uncover the whole Truth. Seeking the Truth is an ever-ending task.

3. A third issue that the TJC has dealt with, has been the suspicion and concern expressed in many quarters about academic history not reaching the local population. The TJC attempted, therefore, to bring together, through its historical projects, scholars, community groups and the local population. There was, we believe, frank discussions where community views were able to feed on the work of scholars, (local and foreign) who were able to voice their views, share their knowledge and arrive at a consensus. The TJC feels it was the start of a new historical 'adventure' and hopes that this approach will be continued in the future. It is hoped that the historians involved, have recognized the value of this work. TJC thus avoided what has become common elsewhere, where Western academic scholarship has clashed with community-based' histories. TJC has also ensured that other forms of historical research have been used, in particular oral history and that archaeological and ethnographic research has been used and promoted in the various studies. Such studies finally aroused a great deal of public attention, and this is indeed very encouraging for the future. It is clear, however, that the gap between academic history and communities being researched needs to be narrowed even further. TJC has devised a policy that will guarantee access to most of the data collected (archival, oral, ethnographic, and archaeological) to the public as well as the academic community.

Knowledge production is still an issue as people from particular ethnic groups tend to read what historians from their own ethnic groups write, even though it may not be completely objective and scientific in its approach. The class, caste and gender approaches need also to be incorporated into Mauritian History. These historians and communities would benefit from sharing their perspectives, and this would go a long way towards a shared history and a shared heritage in the future. Academic historians need, therefore, to popularize their writings. They also need to relate their findings to the contemporary situation.

4. How one faces the past was another area of concern. Will apologies and forgiveness heal the wounds of the past? Some believe so. TJC believes it is not enough and that public institutions must ensure that the debate about our history never ends, because history is always being written and rewritten. Although many wish to close the book, this will not be possible. Rather, TJC invites Mauritians to continue uncovering the Truth, and not to forget that Injustice can always recur and that Mauritians must be vigilant.
5. A fifth issue that TJC has grappled with has been that the Commission was mandated to enquire into analyzing the consequences of slavery and indenture, both of which occurred centuries ago. What followed in the period from the abolition of slavery to today was not considered. As TJC has stated many times, the period in between cannot be ignored as this period too impacts on contemporary Mauritius. A conceptual analytical gap exists in the minds of people who believe that there is a direct link between slavery and indenture on the one hand, and the situation of descendants today. TJC finds that the link is not direct; although there are structural continuities in the system of slavery, indenture and the modern Capitalist System, in which Mauritius finds itself. In the light of extensive *métissage* in Mauritius which has occurred in this period, the TJC has undertaken a number of genealogical and anthropological studies, and is recommending a National Genealogy Centre to further assist with the process of reconstruction of slave and indentured families. It is clear that the perception of having been a slave or indentured is stronger than the biological realities and that this is as potent a logic in Mauritius today for the construction of identity and has an impact on self-esteem and self-identity.
6. The truth about one's real origins is difficult to accept for many Mauritians who, up to now, have lived with many myths and stereotypes of their real ancestry. Mauritians need to face their

history and their past but to do this, they need not to be harassed by religious, political, social and cultural ‘leaders’ giving instructions on how they should behave, talk, dress because this is how certain communities are ‘supposed to behave’. In other words, identities should not be imposed upon them. The variety of our origins is omnipresent in our identity, and there is not one, two or three groups (as defined by the existing Constitution), but many more.

## 7. Expectations

The TJC was not mandated to judge, but to state the facts as they are, according to the evidence available and make recommendations. The Commission could not, in any way, substitute itself for the politician or the priest who feel they have the ability and mandate to judge and express opinions, even if not all facts are at hand.

In dealing with land issues, for example, public perceptions of dispossession have been investigated with the same guidelines, and this was the role of the Commission. It had no mandate to declare ownership but rather to reveal the strategies and mechanisms by which land had been lost or stolen, if at all, and suggest remedies. But it must be remembered that these structures and institutions have been in existence for centuries, and TJC alone will not budge established institutions that have benefitted materially, either directly or indirectly, from the enslaving and indenturing hundreds of thousands of people. This was achieved, let us remind ourselves, not only through theft, kidnapping, deception and fraud, but also by very legal means.

## 2. OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

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The Commission met once a week at the Prime Minister’s Office and at Belmont House, in the absence of the Chairman, Professor Shell, who was still in South Africa. Regular communication with him was maintained through email correspondence, until his departure from the Commission.

During the first few Commission meetings, a number of actions were planned and policies discussed. The initial plan, proposed by Professor Shell, was implemented as far as it was possible depending on local resources available. In some critical areas, some foreign expertise was sought. These are as follows:

### 2.1 Communications Policy

- 1.1. Members agreed that they should be on the same wavelength, while making any statement, especially to the press.
- 1.2. A website to be designed to include the following: -the Act, Members of the Commission with their CVs, a bibliography of slavery and indentured labourers, a chronology of Mauritian History and links to other institutions.
- 1.3. A brochure on TJC in the 4 languages in use in Mauritius, English French Creole and Bhojpuri. The text was drafted by Mr. Morvan and translated by Mr. Robert Furlong, Dr. Police-Michel, and Ms. Suchita Ramdin.
- 1.4. A logo Competition.
- 1.5. First Workshop of which the main themes would be:
  - 1.5.1. Gaps and Silences in the History of Slavery and Indentured Labour;
  - 1.5.2. Methodology and Approaches;
  - 1.5.3. Achieving Social Justice and Equality.
- 1.6 A notice to be published informing the public of the coming into operation of the Commission and inviting depositions;
  - 1.6.1 Broadcasting of a monthly programme on the TV;

Having one producer to look after matters relating to the Commission.

## 2.2 Enquiries

As the Act mandates the Commission to enquire into the History of slavery and indenture and study its consequences, a number of enquiries were proposed:

2.1 There would be three broad areas of research:

1. Revision of History from 1723 to 2009 (slavery, indentured labourers, and identification of elements of History which have not yet been studied, is hidden or not known, i.e. the caste system, post-1835 situation of ex-slaves, etc.);
2. Consequences of slavery and indentured labourer for Society;
3. Measures to achieve Social Justice.

2.2 In addition, a number of critical specialist studies to be undertaken on:

1. Land;
2. Reparations;
3. Church;
4. Collecting views of people who are not so visible or vocal through collection of Oral History.

2.3 Sub-Committees were created to manage these projects:

1. Landownership and dispossession;
2. Educational system;
3. Measures to further Social Justice and National unity;
4. Housing Policy;
5. Historical issues relating to slavery and indentured labour;
6. The particular situation of ex-slaves after 1835;
7. Culture and Identity.

To empower Mauritians to research their own History, the Commission has focussed on:

1. The collection of data with the aim of dissemination for future scholars and the public at large;
2. Pointing to new and innovative ways of looking at Mauritian History by some selective and in-depth studies which will also guide future policies in History Education and Teaching;
3. Encouraging institutions to open up their collections rather than preserve it for the select few.

For the data-collection phase, the TJC relied heavily on young graduates who spent much time collecting historical and other data from various sources in Mauritius and overseas. These documents constitute the TJC's digital archives and copies will be given to libraries for public consultation. The TJC did not wish to repeat the mistake of Truth Commissions where the documents, all donated to the Archives, were not accessible to the public.

### **2.3 Public consultation**

The TJC started its public consultations in July 2009. These consultations proved to be invaluable and informed very considerably the Methodology adopted by the Commission (appendix 3).

Further, by empowering representatives in this way, allowed them to express their concerns and fear that the Commission would be yet another academic exercise which would not impact on serious social issues which still exist in Mauritius. The Commission took to heart the many valuable points which were raised as can be seen by the methodology we adopted.

### **2.4 Hearings**

It was decided to start hearings in August 2009, and the Chairman, Professor Shell, was requested to come to Mauritius for this. Unfortunately, he was not able to do so.

A Screening committee was set up to organize hearings. The members decided that a guide should be prepared for the screening committee which should be able to offer advice and guidance on how to initiate individual research, when and where necessary, for example, on the collection of birth and death certificates and other relevant information from the Civil Status Office. The Commission noted that the procedure to collect information from the Civil Status Office takes about 10 days. Members agreed that the Civil Status Office should be contacted with regard to providing the necessary assistance. They also suggested that it was desirable that the Civil Status Office assigned an Officer to do same.

The members stated that there should be some psychological support in respect of persons who would be heard before the Commission.

There was a need to have the services of a Legal Adviser.

A hearing room should be set up. The Solicitor General's Office was asked to offer advice.

### **2.5 Research Management and Data Access Policy**

Due to the volume of research being commissioned, it was necessary for the TJC to devise a policy, guidelines and framework for research projects. These were amended from time to time, as a result of various consultations with researchers, public and private institutions about confidential/personal/oral data. Two workshops were successfully held: one on Oral History and another on Data Protection. The Commission also decided to create Digital Archives, given the number of audio, film and other iconographic data collected. Conditions of access also needed to be specified for this for the future. This policy is to be found in Appendices One and Two.

### **2.6 Appointment of Staff**

Since all projects in hand could not be undertaken without appropriate staff, a request was made for appointments of staff. Basic and essential staff required were: Administrative Secretary, Research Coordinator, Consultants and Research Assistants. However, this process proved to be an extremely lengthy and cumbersome one. Despite a number of letters being exchanged between the PMO and the TJC, a team was not operational until 2010.

Recruitment of suitable personnel was made, and work got under way with many amendments to the original plans.

### **2.7 Description of Projects**

All projects were placed under specific Commissioners to monitor progress and ensure that the aims and objectives of the TJC were being met. However, due to various factors, in all projects, Commissioners were forced to step in and take part in the research themselves so as to ensure continuity and provide team leadership. The workload on Commissioners has been very heavy, to put it mildly.

a. Summary of projects initiated in 2009 with aims and objectives:

Project No. 1 Slave Trade and Indentured Immigration:

- a. To compile a slave trade and an indentured Immigration database and make it publicly accessible;
- b. To hold an International Slave trade Workshop to discuss findings and make recommendations;
- c. To research and input data into a database from the Mauritius Archives and French archives;
- d. Analysis of data to uncover unresolved questions about the slave trade and indentured immigration.

Project No. 2 Economics of Slavery and Indenture:

- a. Historical/statistical study of compensation money given to slave owners;
- b. Study of local and British insurers, merchants, shipping corporations, banks etc. involved in the slave trade, slavery and indentured immigration;
- c. Study of economics of slavery and indenture;
- d. Analysis of data to uncover unresolved questions about the slave trade and indentured immigration;
- e. Reparations in USA and applicability to Mauritius.

Project No. 3 Land issues:

- a. To analyse the problems of landownership and dispossession among slaves, indentured and descendants;
- b. Creation of land transactions database;
- c. To enquire into cases of dispossession of land.

Project No. 4 Culture, Ethnicity and Identity:

- a. Sub project 1 Race Discourse;
- b. Sub project 2 Caste system among the indentured descendants;
- c. Sub project 3 Coloured population;
- d. Sub project 4 Cité Mivoie;
- e. Sub project 5 Port workers;
- f. Sub project 6 Church History;
- g. Sub-project 7 Memory and Representation;

Project No. 5 Study of Health of Slaves and Indentured:

- a. Health of slaves and indentured up to the 1920s;
- b. Conceptualisation of health and illness;
- c. Diet patterns and diseases (includes excavations in Morne);
- d. Contributions to traditional medicine and healing;
- e. Effects on the health of descendants today;
- f. Assessment of current health care institutions;
- g. Psychological impact of slavery and indenture;
- h. Rodrigues - gender and health;

Project No. 6 Education:

- a. Study of education of slaves and indentured;
- b. Education as Reparation;
- c. Effect of Illiteracy on Landownership.

Project No. 7 Demographic History and Spatial Distribution

- a. Demographic database of slave and indentured population;
- b. Demographic study of slave and indentured population;
- c. Family reconstruction;
- d. Web-based Mauritian Family Database as part of a Reconciliation project.

Project No. 8 Monitoring TJC , Communications and Archiving:

- a. Better presentation of TJC to public;
- b. Assessment of impact of implementation of projects on TJC objectives;
- c. TJC Archives, including transcription and translation of hearings, Oral History interviews.

Project No. 9 Social Justice:

- a. Studies on Historical evolution of social justice.

Project No. 10 Oral History of Descendants of Slaves and Indentured Labourers:

- a. Collection and analysis of Oral History of descendants of slaves by the University of Mauritius;
- b. Analysis of Interviews of descendants of indentured labourers collected by the AGTF.

Project No. 11 Rodrigues, Chagos, Agalega and St Brandon Islands.

### 3. PROGRESS OF WORK

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In January 2010, a new Chairman, Professor Alex Boraine, was appointed by the President of the Republic. By this time, some staff had begun to be appointed and some projects had started.

As expected, modifications to projects were required in the course of research, and to deal with exigencies and multiple problems cropping up along the way. However, there were also unexpected opportunities that presented themselves. The TJC seized on them to further its enquiries on slavery and indenture. A particularly successful campaign of archaeological excavations was held, leading to widespread public interest in an abandoned cemetery at Le Morne.

Less successful and less popular were the treatment of cases dealing with land issues, and these proved the most intractable of issues and met with mixed success.

Management of controversies were also part of the TJC's work, particularly over Archives access. Here, too, widespread public interest was aroused in Mauritius and among Mauritians overseas, following heated debates on various online discussion fora over access to caste-related data.

The focus of public interest had been over slavery and indenture and what had been hidden. However, the expected resistance to the opening up of archives did not occur, and full access was given to the TJC by, for example, the Catholic Church. Unexpected resistance came from public institutions that appeared to have become private domains, such as the Immigration Archives.

It was not understood by these institutions that the aim of collecting these documents was two-fold: (a) to enable an objective and comprehensive study to be made, and (b) to make these documents available to the Mauritian public so they may study their own history and, in so doing, dispel the many myths and misconceptions that abound in Mauritian History. As stated above, it is a fact and this was confirmed during hearings held at the TJC, that most Mauritians are not familiar with basic facts about their own history. They must, in future, be given the tools with which to be able to judge the veracity and objectivity of what they hear and read which unfortunately, more often than not, is only partial information, often not objective and also ethnically-inspired.

## ORGANISATION OF REPORT

The Report consists of 6 volumes to be made public and a 7<sup>th</sup> volume containing Administration and Finance which will be submitted to the PMO as the TJC Administrative Archive. Four volumes are produced in paper format and three in digital format as they contain audio and film material.

**Volume I** contains the Commission's report and covers all topics falling under the mandate of the Commission, namely the history of the slave trade, slavery and indenture; the economics of slavery and indenture; legacies, consequences and continuities; racism and casteism; education and health, land reform, social justice, ending with main findings and recommendations. The last part of the recommendations is a consolidated version with those considered high priority on top of the list. A time-frame for implementation is also included.

**Volume Two** consists of papers prepared by the Land Team on Land issues in Mauritius, as well as the results of the analysis by the same Team on the 340 claims concerning land dispossession. It is divided into a History of Land Tenure section, detailed studies on selected topics such as Lack of capital, prescription and a summary of each case and the main findings of the Land Team. As Commissioners were not Land experts, the Commission has borrowed heavily (but not exclusively) from the Report of the Land Team to make its general findings on cases being heard before the Commission.

**Volumes Three and Four** consist of technical papers, research reports and surveys conducted by a team of consultants, researchers and research assistants. It is divided thematically. Volume Three consists mainly of studies of contemporary Mauritius and surveys which Mauritians had expressed themselves or participated in. Volume Four consists mainly of studies by specialists in the field of History, Economics, Anthropology, Psychology, using an immense amount of archival material. Both volumes also contain the recommendations of the persons or teams undertaking the study and a substantial set of references.

**Volume Five** in digital format, is the collection of all audio and film material collected by the Commission and is divided into: a Hearings Section, where the audio and the transcriptions are included; the oral history interviews that were not confidential and their transcripts; a press cuttings database and photos and film strips covering the work of the Commission during field-trips, surveys and site visits.

**Volume Six** consists of the databases created by the Commission for use by the institutions that the Commission has recommended be created, such as the Genealogy Centre; the Land Research Unit; the Conservation Institute; the Slave Trade and Indentured Immigration Database. It also contains the numerous data collected by the Commission, in the form of digital photos of documents and reports.

**STAFF****TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION****LIST OF PERSONS APPOINTED AS COMMISSIONERS, CONSULTANTS, RESEARCHERS AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

SN	Title	First Name	Surname	Designation
1.	Dr	Alexander	Boraine	Chairperson
2.	Dr	Vijayalakshmi	Teelock	Vice-Chairperson
3.	Professor	Robert Carl-Heinz	Shell	former Chairperson
4.	Mr	Jacques	David	Commissioner
5.	Mr	Raphael Benjamin	Moutou	Commissioner
6.	Dr	Parmaseeven P.	Veerapen	Commissioner
7.	Mr	Lindsay	Morvan	Former Commissioner
8.	Mrs	Resmah Bibi	Damoree	Secretary
9.	Dr	Jagdis Chundur	Mohith	Consultant
10.	Mrs	Lew Fai	Paula	Consultant
11.	Mr	Vakil	Rajcoomar	Consultant
12.	Dr	Ameenah Bibi	Soreefan	Consultant
13.	Prof	Charles	Villa-Vicencio	Consultant
14.	Mr	Sinclair	Stephane	Consultant
15.	Prof	Rivière	Marc Serge	Consultant
16.	Prof	Jocelyn	Chan Low	Consultant
17.	Mr	Amit Kumar	Mishra	Consultant (part time)
18.	Mr	Benigna	Zimba	Consultant (part time)
19.	Dr	Richard B.	Allen	Consultant (part time)
20.	Mrs	Paula Carmen	Atchia	Consultant (part time)
21.	Dr	Rosabelle	Boswell	Consultant (part time)
22.	Prof	Sheila	Bunwaree	Consultant (part time)
23.	Mr	Max Edgar	Derblay	Consultant (part time)
24.	Mr	Abdullah Goolam	Dustagheer	Consultant (part time)
25.	Ms	Joyce	Fortune	Consultant (part-time)
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29.	Dr	Danielle	Palmyre	Consultant (part time)
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31.	Dr	Thomas	Vernet	Consultant (part time)
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34.	Mr	Jean Burty	François	Legal Advisor
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41.	Mr	Leo	Couacaud	Researcher
42.	Ms	Corinne Emmanuelle	Forest	Researcher
43.	Ms	Smita	Gya	Researcher
44.	Mr	Jimmy	Harmon	Researcher
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46.	Mr	Jean Claude	Fleury	Researcher
47.	Ms	M. Fabienne Sophie	Le Chartier	Researcher
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99.	Miss	Kamini	Bhutoor	WPO
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101.	Mrs	K.	Babajee	Proposed Secretary

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### INSTITUTIONS

Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund  
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Mauritius Sugar Industry Institute  
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Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Land Use Division)  
Ministry of Housing and Lands  
Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection  
Ministry of Arts and Culture  
M.S.I.R.I  
National Archive  
Nelsons Mandela Centre for African and Creole Culture  
Registrar General  
Rodrigues Regional Assembly  
Sugar Industry Fund Board  
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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **THE ECONOMICS OF COLONIALISM, SLAVERY AND INDENTURE**



## 1. COLONIALISM AND MAURITIUS

The emergence of Capitalism as an economic system in Britain and in other European countries created the conditions for the development of Colonialism. Colonial expansion and colonial wars were essentially economic in character: the spice trade with Asia, the quest for markets for the industrial produce of the Colonial Powers, the development of plantation economies and societies in the colonies to produce cheap goods for European countries, the resulting demand for unwaged labour of enslaved people and, later, for cheap labour of indentured labourers, and finally the demand for raw materials. Underlying these historical processes was the insatiable pursuit of profits and capital accumulation by the Colonial Powers, in particular the traders, the emerging mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie and later by the financial bourgeoisie, of the European Colonial Powers.

Under these circumstances, Colonial Powers developed labour systems in the colonies most appropriate for their interests: the enslavement of peoples across the world, especially of the African peoples and, thereafter, indentured labour. But slavery was more than a labour system: it was the most exploitative and socially and culturally oppressive of all economic and social systems. Indentured labour imported from British India and elsewhere was part and parcel of the transformation of the slave system into the new emerging capitalist system: still exploitative and oppressive, though to a lesser extent than slavery, and with wages, albeit very minimal.

### Dutch Period (1598-1710)

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Holland was the first European power to colonise Mauritius. During these centuries, overseas trade was one of the successes of Holland in its intense rivalry with Spain and Portugal. In particular, it competed with Portugal for the trade with the East Indies. At that time the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was considered as the greatest trading organization. Moreover, given the distances involved and the time taken for voyages between Holland and the East Indies, there was a need to supply fresh food and water to the ships of the VOC along the way. As a result, the Dutch, in a rather erratic manner, used Mauritius as a base. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 1598, Vice-Admiral Wybrant Warwijck and his men landed in Mauritius, but did not settle. They regularly used Mauritius as a port of call; they also cut ebony trees which were taken either to the East Indies or Europe and on the shores of Mauritius, they collected ambergris which was used in Europe for making perfumes. It was only in 1638 that the VOC decided to colonise Mauritius owing to the decision to exploit the ebony forests for export and to the threat of British occupation.<sup>1</sup>

Both the British and the French were interested in ebony cargo. Woodcutters, convicts from Batavia (in the East Indies) and slaves were the main forms of labour used by the Dutch. However, in 1658 the VOC decided to leave Mauritius because they found that, overall, the settlement was not profitable and that the Cape of Good Hope was becoming their strategic refreshment station. Shipwrecks brought the Dutch to Mauritius during the period 1658 to 1664. In 1664, the uncertainties associated with the threats of the French and British and the demand for ebony trees prompted the Dutch East India Company to settle in Mauritius for a second time. This second period of colonisation lasted until 1710. Initially, there was an attempt to develop the potentially profitable trade in slaves, ambergris and ivory on the East coast of Africa and in the neighbouring islands. But the Third Anglo-Dutch War of 1672-1674, the war with France of 1672-78 and the presence of European pirates were unfavourable to the development of such commercial endeavours, although the trade in ebony with Holland and Batavia was evolving successfully. Given the constraints and the fact that the Cape of Good Hope was an efficient establishment and a good stopover for the ships, in 1706 the Dutch East India Company decided to end its establishment in Mauritius; by 1710, that decision was implemented and the Dutch left Mauritius for good.

The Dutch had, in effect, started a set of historical processes which would dominate the history of Mauritius: the introduction of sugarcane (though to produce arrack and rum only), using enslaved people from Madagascar, India and South-East Asia as labour, developing slave trade in the region, developing trade between Madagascar and Mauritius, using Mauritius as a strategic position in the

Indian Ocean, in Holland's rivalry with Portugal, for trade with Asia and later with Britain and France, using Mauritius as a port of call for its ships, and finally using Mauritius as an export base for ebony, while causing severe environmental damage in the process. Simultaneously, the enslaved people developed resistance to exploitation and oppression, and they marooned and moved into the forests, ready to attack the Dutch settlements, whenever necessary.

### French Colonial Period (1715-1810)

In 1715, the French took possession of Mauritius and renamed it Isle de France, thus following in the footsteps of Dutch Colonialism. There was no settlement until 1721, and up to 1735, Isle de France was administered from Réunion Island, then known as Bourbon.<sup>1</sup> The island was also ceded to the French East India Company.<sup>2</sup> By 1726, land grants were made to the colonists; the upper classes (i.e., *l'état major de l'île*) obtained 126 hectares (i.e., 312 *arpents* or multiples of it) known as "grande concession", whilst soldiers and workers obtained 63 hectares (156 *arpents*) known as "petite concession."<sup>3</sup> Any attempt to develop agriculture created an increasing demand for labour. There was a third category of land grants: smaller areas of land within conglomerations.

Regulations governing the grants included asking colonists to cultivate their land within a period of 3 years, failing which, they would lose it. Each colonist was also given 20 slaves. In return, the colonists had to pay yearly one tenth of their produce to the French East India Company. Any attempt to develop agriculture created an increasing demand for labour. According to Loughon, 156 ships called at Mauritius between 1721 and 1735, prior to the arrival of Labourdonnais, most of them being Company ships.<sup>4</sup> A total of 650 slaves, according to Filliot, were brought to Mauritius from Madagascar, Mozambique, India and West Africa.

International trade and, in particular, long-distance trade, developed to a great extent in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century; by the 1780s, France was the largest trading maritime power in Europe.<sup>5</sup> The total value of French long-distance trade with Africa, Asia, America and re-exports to the rest of Europe was equal to £25 million, whilst that of Britain was only £20 million. This state of affairs explained the growing importance of Port Louis as a centre of *entrepôt* trade. Among the French colonists, the lure of easy money and the importance of commercial activities contributed to their lack of interest in agriculture. Slave trade, both legal and illegal, was an important aspect of the French international trade in the Indian Ocean. According to J.F. Dupon, the growth of speculative transactions thwarted the establishment of relatively permanent estates and plantations.<sup>6</sup> A class of traders and merchants (or *négociants*) developed and thrived.

The period between 1735 and 1746 was characterised by the administration of Mahé de Labourdonnais who, because of a secure harbour, chose Isle de France, rather than Bourbon, as his base of operations to expand French influence in the Indian Ocean. On the one hand, slave trade was significantly enhanced and, on the other hand, vast infrastructural works were undertaken to transform Port Louis into a capital, port, warehousing and commercial centre. The labour of the enslaved peoples was the dominant form of labour but additionally, French contractual workers (*engagés*) and artisans from Madagascar and India were brought in. When Labourdonnais arrived in Mauritius in 1735, there were 638 slaves in a population of 838. According to Filliot, 1,200 to 1,300 slaves were brought annually so that, within five years, the number of slaves had quadrupled to 2,612, while the number of French had barely doubled.

Port Louis harbour became the centre of intense maritime activity during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the island was reclaimed by the French Crown in 1767. The French Crown took control of Isle de France and Bourbon, after having bought the two islands from a bankrupt French East India Company in 1764 for the sum of 1.6 million *livres*.<sup>7</sup> Pierre Poivre, as the first *Intendant*, encouraged large-scale production of cash crops like cotton, indigo and spices, but his attempt to transform Mauritius into a plantation economy failed. Even in the days of Labourdonnais, agriculture was developed only to a certain extent, especially sugar cane plantations and indigo factories. However, there was no major development in the years following the end of Labourdonnais' administration.

Under the Royal administration, major changes were introduced which created the right conditions for the development of international trade. By 1769, the French East India Company had lost the monopoly of Asian trade and by 1787, Port Louis was designated as a free port open to ships and traders of all nationalities. An economic boom ensued. According to Toussaint, visitors in those

days described the harbour as being crowded with ships of every nation lined, with holds filled with provisions and merchandise from various countries, and with colonial produce, with a general appearance of abundance and prosperity.<sup>8</sup>

This state of affairs also stimulated agricultural development. The merchant class became the dominant force in Mauritius, and commerce partially financed agricultural production.

In 1769, 785 ships berthed at Port Louis; there came 176 in 1783, 203 in 1789, 266 in 1791 and 347 in 1803. The number of arrivals declined sharply during the Napoleonic Wars: 177 ships arrived in 1806, 76 in 1809 and 25 only in 1810.<sup>9</sup> Many merchants in Mauritius became *armateurs* and invested large amounts of money in equipping vessels and crews for privateering expeditions and generally acquired substantial wealth from these activities, in spite of the high risks. According to Allen, the French privateers preyed on British and allied shipping during the War of American Independence, of the French Revolutionary period and of Napoleonic era. The total value of the prizes is difficult to ascertain but large sums were involved. Toussaint has estimated the value of prizes taken between 1803 and 1810 at almost 50,000,000 francs.<sup>10</sup>

Due to the British blockade in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of the money was directed to agriculture, especially to the production of foodstuffs. Following the Revolution in St Domingue, the demand for sugar in France and Europe increased significantly, prompting some investment in the emerging sugar industry by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, until around 1806. Sixty sugar mills were in operation at that time and sugar production by 1806 was around 4,000 metric tons.<sup>11</sup> M. Vaughan expressed a similar view, when she wrote:

*“Furthermore, increased French commercial interest in the island combined with the profits of privateering and the collapse of sugar production in St Domingue, were helping to finance the island’s nascent sugar industry. Finally, the island seemed to have arrived at a situation in which commerce was financing agricultural production.”<sup>12</sup>*

As far as the slave population was concerned, the slaves were defined as chattel labour (*‘biens-meuble’*) according to the 1723 *Code Noir*, and they were considered as the private property of their owners. They had no right to property of their own. The *Code Noir* effectively ensured that the enslaved peoples remained as coerced, unwaged labour and their labour power was reproduced to sustain the slave system. The *Code Noir* had included the definition of slaves as *‘biens-meuble’* so slaves could be insured and inherited as fixed assets. In case of loss of slaves during a revolt, bad weather or disease, compensation could be claimed.

The slave population grew steadily in size during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, from 2,533 in 1746 to 15,027 in 1767, to 33,832 in 1787, to 60,646 in 1806, to reach 63,821 by 1810, prior to the British conquest. Their occupations consisted mainly of agricultural labourers, household servants, fishermen, artisans, port workers and sailors. The enslaved people faced a harsh regime. Charpentier-Cossigny, an Engineer, in 1753, noted that “the company was hiring slaves, then starving them to death”.<sup>13</sup> According to him, “for every skilled slave in an ‘atelier’, there were another ten or so manual labourers performing the essential back-breaking tasks of breaking and carrying stones, digging trenches, loading and unloading ships, building roads.” This ‘vast army’ of Government slaves included many women.<sup>14</sup>

There was much resistance by the enslaved peoples through maroonage; at times, very violent campaigns were led to defeat the maroon community, for example by Mahé de Labourdonnais who used ‘maroon detachments’.

During a brief spell of the French Revolution in Isle de France, the merchant class, the *‘négociants’*, took the leadership and vehemently opposed the abolition of slavery. The post-revolutionary period, known as the Napoleonic years, brought a regression of conditions for enslaved peoples and the *Gens de couleur*.

Colonial rivalries between the two dominant Colonial Powers, Britain and France, was particularly intense in the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and culminated in the defeat of France in 1810, when Britain took possession of Isle de France. France lost territories in India but was allowed to keep its outposts like Pondicherry, following the Treaty of Paris of 1814.

**British Colonial Period (1810-1968)**

British Colonialism was the most powerful economic, military and naval force in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It pursued the same path of economic exploitation undertaken by both Dutch and French Colonial Powers. As the most advanced capitalist society, it decided to bring about certain changes to the prevailing colonial system during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For a better understanding of the role of British Colonialism in Mauritius and in the Indian Ocean, it is necessary to have a brief overview of the different phases of British Colonialism worldwide.

The first wave of British Colonialism took place when Britain undertook the colonization of North America and the Caribbean Islands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. But labour supply was a major issue. For various reasons, native Americans could never be incorporated in the colonists' plan. European indentured labour and convict labour from England were brought to work on the plantations and to provide for badly-needed specialized craftsmanship, such as those of the carpenter, tinsmith, etc.

In the Caribbean, the British business community found that indentured British labourers were not capable of satisfying the demand for sugarcane cultivation in the Tropics. Furthermore, British planters wanted to maximize their investment in labour and recoup the costs of the transport of labour as quickly as possible by working the indentured very hard. This policy acted as a deterrent to prospective workers back in Britain, so much so that labour shortage became somewhat permanent by mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. Convict labour from Britain provided short-term relief, but this measure was not sustainable.

The solution to what appeared as the intractable problem of labour shortage was found: coerced African unpaid slave labour. Gradually, Africans were enslaved and replaced European indentured labour on plantations, producing sugar, cotton, tobacco, coffee, amongst other crops. It was the triumph of the 'most powerful driving force' of Colonization, that of the pursuit of profit. This driving force underpinned the intense intercolonial rivalry and colonial wars in the Americas and the outrageous economic and social exploitation of the enslaved African peoples. In Mauritius, this motive is hardly mentioned and the major contribution of the enslaved African peoples to the creation of wealth has been conveniently ignored, both during the French and British periods of Colonisation.

But British Colonialism, having triumphed over its various rival Colonial Powers, was defeated by its own colonists in the American War of Independence. This defeat created the conditions necessary for a second wave of British Colonialism: Asia (especially India and China), Australia and hence, the Indian Ocean and the Cape of Good Hope became the new targets of expansionism, trade and investments. The sea routes to Asia acquired major significance and Mauritius turned out to be of major strategic importance to Britain. Anglo-French rivalry dominated the struggle for the control of sea routes to India, Asia and Australia, and thus for the control of the Indian Ocean. This culminated in the British conquest of Mauritius in 1810 and also of Cape of Good Hope.

For the sake of completeness, it is worth noting that the third wave of British Colonialism reflected the changes happening in the industrial and financial developments of the European Colonial Powers. The demand for raw materials, labour and land became more and more important, leading to a scramble for Africa.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Britain brought changes to the colonial system, made possible by various factors, the main one being the consolidation of Britain as an advanced economic, industrial and financial power in the world. Slavery was abolished in most possessions of the British Empire in the 1830s. But the plantocracy needed labour and, where necessary, it looked elsewhere for cheap labour. Thus, cheap indentured labour on a massive scale progressively replaced the labour of the enslaved peoples so that the maximization of profits and capital accumulation might be perpetuated. The solution, then, was to turn to those vast reservoirs of cheap labour, India and China, respectively a colony and semi-colony of Britain.

Slavery and indentured labour were, amongst other things, labour systems created and nurtured by French and British Colonialisms in Mauritius to serve their economic interests. For an understanding

of these two systems and their consequences on contemporary Mauritius, it is necessary to investigate how they developed and evolved under colonialism.

The economic system developed by the Colonial Powers necessitated, for its sustainability, an oppressive social and political system, a biased institutional and legal system, and an ideology with racism as one of its pillars. Whilst the Colonial State succeeded in preserving the status *quo* for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, resistance to the system prevailed and cracks in the system occurred. A rigid class and racial hierarchy was sustained rather successfully during French Colonialism. During British Colonialism, major changes like the abolition of slavery were initiated but resistance and the internal dynamics of the system, together with an imperial strategy of the British State and of the industrial/commercial bourgeoisie, and the fast-developing financial bourgeoisie, caused the system to evolve differently.

### **Conclusion**

Colonialism, whether Dutch, French and British, was never interested in the development of the enslaved peoples, the indentured labourers and other forms of labour. The quest for profit and capital accumulation brought them to Mauritius and led them to wage colonial wars among themselves and against indigenous peoples across the world for centuries until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This quest has been systematically and conveniently underplayed. The Colonial Powers developed societies which were characterized by extreme economic exploitation and by unparalleled social and cultural oppression. Economic and social structures and corresponding policies were developed to ensure that their objectives were met. There has been a striking continuity underlying these historical processes: development for the Colonial Powers and the colonists but underdevelopment for the colonized peoples and, in particular, for labour. Inclusion and material wealth for them, as opposed to exclusion and minimal welfare to ensure the reproduction of labour, if not outright poverty, for others.

In fact, the economy grew, from the very beginning, as part of the overall Colonial Empire, the centre of which was Europe. An extreme international specialization within the Colonial Empire had produced a vulnerable, fragile export-oriented economy. The consequences are still felt more than forty years after Independence in Mauritius.

## 2. THE SLAVE SYSTEM AND THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

### 1.2.1 The Slave System under French Colonialism

French Colonialism in Isle de France was characterized by major fluctuations in the economic ‘development’ of the island. International trade, with the slave trade (both legal and illegal) as one of its main aspects, was the driving force of the economy. Agriculture was developed to some extent, together with an emerging Sugar Industry. A merchant class and a planter class dominated the economic, social and political life of Isle de France.

The labour system that prevailed relied mainly on the slave system, with contractual workers from India and France.

The rigid class and racial hierarchy was further consolidated and worsened during the Napoleonic period under the governorship of Decaën (1803-1810). Landownership was concentrated in the hands of the French colonists. Environmental damage was done as a result of the use of fire to clear land for the export of wood.

The Colonial State in Isle de France used the *Code Noir* and other legislative measures to exclude the non-Whites from mainstream economic, social and political life, with a particularly oppressive system for the enslaved population.

### 1.2.2 Slavery and the Sugar Industry (1823-1835): Value of Slave Labour

Following the British conquest of Mauritius in 1810, Mauritius became a Crown colony in 1815 and had access to the British market for its sugar. However, the sugar planters in Mauritius had to pay an additional 10 shillings per cost duty for their sugar compared to the planters from the British Caribbeans. By 1825, there was the equalization of tariffs which gave a major boost to the sugar production. The land under sugarcane cultivation more than doubled for the period 1821 to 1830, from 10,504 hectares (26,000 *arpents*) to 24,038 hectares (59,500 *arpents*) between 1844 to 1850. Sugar production doubled from 10.9 metric tons in 1825 to 21.2 metric tons in 1826 and reached 41 metric tons in 1840. It was the beginning of the monocrop economy which was to prevail unchallenged in Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and for more than half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The sugar planters developed into an active force in local politics, in high finance and the Judiciary. The political influence lay in the hands of the social and economic elite and contributed to the emergence of the Sugar Industry oligarchy which consolidated its hold over Mauritian society. British Governors were reluctant to challenge this new oligarchy and its entrenched, local economic interests. On the contrary, the Colonial State turned a blind eye to the illegal slave trade, with the Government officials sometimes involved in that trade. The sugar oligarchy felt strong enough to challenge the amelioration measures in favour of the enslaved population.

By 1832, they confronted British rule head on, with the use of physical force. It was estimated that some 1,000 men formed part of the ‘armed resistance’. Peter Burroughs wrote:

*“Equipped with muskets and swords, accoutred in the uniform of the French National Guard, and led by their elected colonel, Henri Adam, a former Bonapartist Officer, the volunteers began policing the streets of the capital.”<sup>15</sup>*

The social and economic forces in Mauritius, at that time, wielded much political influence. The planter community were predominantly of French origin, with some British planters. There was, moreover, an important presence of British traders and financiers, either through a company, representing their interests, or through an office set up in Mauritius. They provided credit to the planters to such an extent that around three-quarters of the sugar estates were owned by them in the early 1830s.<sup>16</sup>

A strategic alliance was formed between the planters of French origin and British origin and the British financiers. Both opposed the introduction of slave amelioration laws. The British Governor did little to oppose this alliance. The enslaved population continued to provide the badly-needed

labour to contribute to wealth creation. The Free Coloured People was very much present, with one or two being prominent planters and slave owners; similarly, there were one or two such planters/slave-owners of Indian origin.

The economy was thriving and the enslaved population were forced to work harder than ever before to ensure the expansion of the Sugar Industry. Their contribution to the creation of wealth in the period 1823 to 1835 was very significant. The value of slave labour for that period was assessed by the Commission, using a micro economic model of slave prices, developed with age, sex, ethnicity occupation of the slaves and sugar output and time (quarter) as explanatory variables. Once an estimate of slave prices was obtained, a political-economic model of asset-pricing was used to assess the value of slave labour. Assuming a working life of 10 years for the slaves and a discount rate of 7%, the aggregate value of slave labour per year obtained for the corresponding period:

(i)	1823-1825	-	£1.0 million
(ii)	1826-1830	-	£3.0 million
(iii)	1831-1835	-	£2.0 million

The standard approach to econometric modeling is to develop an appropriate model, then collect a relevant sample of data/information to produce appropriate estimates for the variables of interest. Moreover, the estimates obtained are valid for the population under consideration, as a whole, which is the slave population of Mauritius in this case.

The main source of information/data was the Notarial Acts in the General Inventory of Notaries which are located at the Mauritius Archives in Coromandel, Mauritius. Data and information were collected for the period 1823 to 1835 from all Notaries. However, data on all variables of interest used in our analysis were available only for 8 Notaries, as well as for a few others not specified in the Notarial Acts. The Acts document the sale of 5,580 slaves during auctions over the period under examination.

To assess the representativeness of the sample, it was compared to the slave population, as given in the 1826 census, which can be considered as one of the most reliable among registration returns compiled on the slave population in Mauritius. The sample has the same age and ethnic characterization as those of the slave population. However, the sample differs somewhat from the 1826 Census, since the male-female ratio 62.2% of the slaves are males in the census, while this percentage is 77.6 in the sample.

The results give the aggregate value of slave labour for the slave population as a whole. Moreover, the modeling exercise took into consideration the fact that certain key events had an impact on slave prices and on the value of slave labour. When tariffs were equalised in 1825, this provided a major boost to the expansion of the Sugar Industry and, hence, on slave prices and the value of slave labour. In the early 1830s, there was much public debate on the forthcoming abolition of slavery, which, in turn, had an impact on slave prices and on the value of slave labour. Hence, the value of slave labour is estimated for three different periods as given above. For the period 1823 to 1825, the value of slave labour, as a whole for each year, is estimated at £1.0 million; similarly for periods 1826 to 1830 and 1831 to 1835, that value is respectively £3.0 million and £2.0 million. (See Volume 4 Part VIII of TJC Report: The Economics of Colonialism, Slavery and Indenture for more details).

### 1.2.3 The Economics and Politics of Abolition of Slavery

On 28<sup>th</sup> August 1833, the House of Commons passed ‘An Act for the Abolition of slavery throughout the British colonies; for promoting the industry of the manumitted slaves, and for compensating the persons hitherto entitled to the services of such slaves.’ Nevertheless, the title of this Act is very misleading in one respect in particular; this twenty-three pages Act states on the last page, as per Clause LXIV, the following:

*“And be it further enacted, that nothing in this Act contained doth or shall extend to any of the Territories in the possession of the East India Company, or to the island of Ceylon, or to the island of St Helena.”*

This Clause clearly contradicts the title which refers to abolition “throughout the British colonies”. British companies had major economic interests both in India and Ceylon, India being one territory in the possession of the East India Company. Slavery was only abolished in India, 10 years later in 1843. This matter reflects clearly the duplicity of the British Imperial Government in its policy on the abolition of slavery; the non-abolition of slavery in India may have had a bearing on the development of the situation in Mauritius.

From the mid-1830s onwards, Indian indentured labourers were imported into Mauritius from a reservoir of very cheap labour in British India. British policies in India on land had already caused an increase in landless peasants and internal migration. With the maintenance of slavery in India, there is no doubt that, to some extent at least, this had contributed to the depression of wages of the Indian labour force; in turn, the prospective indentured labourers would be in a position to accept very low wages.

Thus, the following question arises: By not abolishing slavery in India, did the British Imperial Government, possibly indirectly, contribute to the refusal of planters in Mauritius to pay decent wages to the emancipated enslaved people and, hence, contribute to the latter having to leave the plantations “en masse?”

Moreover, in the end, the British Imperial Government decided to provide £20 million as compensation to the slave owners together with a so-called apprenticeship of six years for praedial slaves. That apprenticeship turned out to be very similar to slavery with the emancipated enslaved labourers working for no wages during their normal working hours. They were subject to very harsh conditions and heavy penalties for non-performance or ill-performance of their duties.<sup>17</sup> The slave owners, and in particular the plantocracy in Mauritius, both British and French, together with the British credit houses, obtained £ 2.1 million.

There is no doubt that the Mauritius Bank, with A d’Epinay as Director, and the British credit houses received an important share of the compensation money that was paid during the years 1836 and 1837. A new bank, the Mauritius Commercial Bank, opened its doors on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1838. Just as Mauritius Bank founded in 1832, the driving force behind the creation of the Mauritius Commercial Bank was the British business community, in particular the traders based in Port Louis or the London trading houses, with offices in Mauritius. The main company was Blyth Brothers which played an important role in the payment of the compensation money. Equally, planters and planters/traders contributed to the initial share capital of the Bank. For example, the planter/slave owner, Paul Froberville received financial compensation of £9,020 in 1837 for 282 slaves. There were other planters and slave masters, such as Hunter, Chapman, Arbuthnot, who contributed to the initial share capital. A letter addressed to the editor of *Le Mauricien* of 28 February 1838, further provides evidence of the use of compensation money in the launching of the Bank. It stated the following:

*“Quant à la Banque actuelle, créée pour des opérations de finance sur note indemnité, et pour liquider les propriétaires obérés, elle a atteint également son but, avec l’applaudissements de tout le monde [.....].”*

*(Eng : trans : As for the present Bank, created for financial transactions, with regard to compensation, and to put an end to the activities of insolvent owners, it has also achieved its objective, with the approval of all and sundry [...])*

#### 1.2.4 The Aftermath of Emancipation and the Arrival of Indentured Labour

For quite some time, it has been claimed that, both in Mauritius and the Caribbean Islands, the emancipated enslaved people chose to leave the plantations as a consequence of the inhumane treatment and of the economic exploitation which they suffered during the days of slavery. Whilst this was an issue influencing the movement of some of the ex-enslaved people away from the plantations, the situation appears to have been somewhat different for the ex-enslaved people in general. This is an important and ongoing debate.

Research on the Caribbean Islands revealed that firstly, the prevailing rates of wages and local market prices played an important role in influencing the withdrawal of the emancipated enslaved people from the plantations. There are different lines of thought, different variants of post-

emancipation outcome and much debate on the issues; moreover, the paper of Douglas Hall (1978) takes into consideration the conditions prevailing on the plantations at the time of emancipation and, in particular, the case of British Guiana which is rather similar to the case of Mauritius. According to Douglas Hall in his paper “The flight from the estates reconsidered: The British West Indies” (1978),

*“By 1842, the immediate reactions of both planters and ex-slaves to the emancipation had occurred, and although some measure of stability had been achieved in labour relations, there was general complaint on the part of employers of the scarcity, the unreliability and the high price of estate labour”.*<sup>18</sup>

Thus, in British Guiana, the withdrawal of the emancipated enslaved peoples reflected for more positive reactions to prevailing rates of wages and local market prices and their desire to preserve their freedom. In fact, almost all the ex-slaves remained on the estates of the planter Henry Barkly.

Secondly, the emancipated enslaved people perceived their freedom in terms of retaining their rights to free housing and to cultivating plots of land allocated to them during the days of slavery for years. The abolition of slavery could only mean a betterment of their living conditions, together with reasonable wages. Instead, they were asked to surrender these rights in the name of freedom. In his paper, Douglas Hall reproduced the following statement by H. Barkly, in response to a question from Mr. G. Berkeley, a member of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on the West India Colonies in 1842:

*“I was told by the negroes on Highbury estate, when I went there, that it was all nonsense that the Queen made them free without giving them a free house and land, and they called upon me to carry out that proposition, by giving up the houses and grounds.”*

In Mauritius, attention has been given to the notion of freedom of slaves as defined by the owners and Imperial Britain; the notion of freedom by the ex-enslaved peoples has been given very little attention. It is appropriate that the notion of freedom of the enslaved peoples by those very peoples be given due consideration in the light of the views and feelings of the enslaved peoples themselves. Is it not legitimate and logical that the emancipated enslaved peoples wanted not only freedom, but the minimum conditions necessary to make that freedom effective? They made it clear that shelter in the form of a house and food in the form of a piece of land, which they could cultivate, were those minimum conditions. Yet, they contributed significantly to wealth creation for the slave-owners and for the British Empire. Indeed, they were ahead of their time in terms of economic and social rights of peoples across the world and across time, duly recognised today.

In Mauritius, the planters paid the apprentice labourers less than one-quarter of the wages paid in Jamaica. On the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1837, Lord Glenelg wrote:

*“The employers generally declared themselves satisfied with the Indian’s work and conduct as well as they might be, the Indians by the employers’ own admission, doing the work equally well with the apprentices and receiving only 2 dollars fifty cents and rations while the apprentices would not work for less than eight or ten dollars and rations so that the employers had good reasons for saying that they would not if they could help it keep a single apprentice on the establishment.”*

Even the British Imperial Government found the wages for extra-service as “mesquin”, i.e., as petty. The following article from *Le Mauricien* of 12 February 1838 gives the details:

*“[...] Chez nous on a mieux procédé. Il est vrai que nous avons un terme de comparaison: les gages des laboureurs indiens. C’est sur ces gages que l’on a basé le prix de l’extra-service actuel et la transition s’opérera naturellement sur la plupart des propriétés...”*

*(Eng. Trans «Here, it was better handled. It is true that there was a point of comparison: the pay of indentured labourers. It is on this pay that has been calculated the remuneration for ‘extra service’, and the transition will be a natural one on most estates.»)*

But the British Imperial Government, having itself allowed the continuation of slavery in India, did not take any measures to remedy the situation. Thus, the British Imperial Government, the Colonial

Government of Mauritius, the French plantocracy and the British traders/financiers converged consciously in implementing a cheap labour policy which knowingly would do much harm to the emancipated enslaved peoples. The latter were excluded from the mainstream economy, deprived of any wages and of any land and housing in an increasingly monetised capitalist economy. The subsistence economy, to which the apprentices were used, was threatened by the capitalist economy and by increasing pressure on land by the expanding Sugar Industry. Their marginalisation and exclusion would be accelerated with the massive importation of indentured labour. It is important to note that the importation of indentured labour started in the late 1820s somewhat scantily. Moreover, in 1834, before the abolition of slavery and the end of the apprenticeship period, indentured labourers from India were imported on a rather large scale and worked side by side with the slaves and later with emancipated slaves: the low wages of the latter depressed those of the apprentices for their extra-service. By 1839, by the end of the period of apprenticeship, about 25,000 indentured labourers had been brought in.

The emancipated slaves were logically bargaining for reasonable wages for extra service during the apprenticeship period. But the planters, who were always aiming at maximising their profits, developed strategies to counter that bargaining of the emancipated slaves. In 1834, one plan submitted to the Mauritian Chamber of Commerce demonstrated the cheapness of Indian labour over local labour.<sup>19</sup> In 1993, the historian, Marina Carter, expressed the opinion that the planters' decision and both the Imperial and Colonial governments' approval to import several thousand of Indian indentured labourers as from 1834, prior to the abolition of slavery, effectively drove the emancipated slaves away from the plantations. She wrote

*“Whilst the continuous labour which the migrant under contract was obliged to undertake, the cheapness of importation and the dependency of the new arrivals provided the preconditions for the adoption of the immigration strategy, it was the arrival of several thousand Indians during the 1830s which sealed the fate of the local workforce.”<sup>20</sup>*

It is of importance to take note of the following two self-explanatory quotes.

Remy Ollier, in ‘*La Sentinelle de Maurice*’, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1844, wrote on the day the apprenticeship came to an end:

*“Ce jour là, il furent inhumainement chassés de presque toutes les propriétés qu’ils avaient fécondés de leur sueur. Ce jour même, bons et mauvais sujets, on les vit descendre vers la ville, leur ménage sur la tête - les femmes trainant les enfants par la main, ne sachant où aller et demandant une hospitalité que l’on ne se montrait pas disposer à leur accorder.”*

There is evidence that the elderly slaves, women and children, considered to be unproductive, were indeed expelled from the plantations.

From Marina Carter’s paper, the following quote from Nicholas Pike, an American resident in Mauritius confirms the disarray in which the apprentices found themselves:

*“When the ex-apprentices were freed in 1839, scenes of riot and disturbance took place all over the island. The ex-slaves refused to work, alleging, for one reason, that they had been ill-treated by the former masters having sent to India for labourers.”<sup>21</sup>*

Moreover, opposite views were expressed in the written press and by other authors. But, the article of *Le Mauricien* of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1838 referred to above, revealed an optimistic view of the future with regards to the transition from slavery to indentured labour and some self-satisfaction in the policies adopted in spite of criticisms from the Imperial Government:

*“Nous pouvons donc en conclure que la position du maître vis-à-vis ses apprentis n’éprovera pas un changement assez notable pour détruire l’équilibre actuel; reste à savoir si le travail obtenu sera le même, et il n’est guère possible d’en douter.*

*[...] Ceci nous explique une demande qui a été faite dernièrement par le Gouverneur aux Juges spéciaux de la colonie, au sujet du prix de l’extra service. La métropole trouvait le salaire de l’extra service un peu mesquin: nous comprenons son scrupule si elle avait les états de la Jamaïque sous les yeux.”*

However, the planters and other European observers at that time were projecting a negative image, if not a racist image, of the apprentices, alleging that they refused to work and were lazy. This representation of the apprentices' reaction to the planters' cheap labour strategy serves to cover up the true motives of the planters as well as of the Colonial government. Further, from the Colonial office, the reactions were not better, except from James Stephen who

*“warned in vain that the introduction of a large migrant work force would be likely to ‘throw a great mass of people out of profitable employment’, arguing that Indians had been brought for the express purpose of rendering the proprietors independent of the existing supply of labour.”<sup>22</sup>*

This cheap labour strategy would later on be used to depress wages of the Indian labourers and would render unemployment and poverty endemic in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### 1.2.5 Labour Systems

In both French and British periods of colonization, colonies could not survive without labour and, in particular, without a continuous supply of plentiful unpaid labour.

Several types of labour co-existed. Slave labour was the dominant form but some non slave labour, convict labour and indentured labour, mainly from British India were also used. Additionally, there was the indentured labour of Liberated Africans who were captured from slave ships on the high seas by British ships, in the context of fighting illegal slave trade.

Skilled labour was needed to cater for certain occupations such as those of masons, carpenters, tinsmiths etc; this was provided by *engagés*. They were most important, especially at the beginning of colonization under French rule, since the enslaved peoples were required to work on the plantations and as domestic servants, and there was a lack of specialized skills required for factories, workshops and public infrastructures.

Moreover, with the expanding Sugar Industry, with the abolition of slavery and the seasonal character of sugar production, the demand for labour was very pronounced. The British Empire provided the different forms of labour to satisfy this varying seasonal demand. Convict labour was cheap, controllable and easily replaced.<sup>23</sup> The labour of convicts played a most important role “in building the communications necessary for the development of the sugar industry which was to place Mauritius at the centre of global trading networks”.<sup>24</sup> From 1815 to 1837, there was a regular supply of mainly Indian convicts from Bombay and Bengal; from Ceylon, there were about 1,500 in all.

Indentured labour, especially during the British period, would become the dominant form of labour by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, there was the labour of the ‘recaptives’ or the ‘liberated slaves’. Following the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire in 1807, the British Government sent its Navy to seize enslaved peoples on board French and other ships. Those slaves were referred to as ‘liberated Africans’, a misnomer as they were far from free. In effect, they were given to private employers or a Government Officer as apprentices or indentured labour for a period of up to fourteen years.

During the period 1811 to the early 1840s, given the rapid expansion of the Sugar Industry and given the abolition of slavery and the uncertainties associated with the importation of indentured labour, these liberated slaves or ‘recaptive’ Africans played a most important part in helping to mitigate the unavailability of a sufficient labour force, somewhat like the Indian convicts. Moreover, the employment of ‘recaptive’ Africans kept going until the late 1860s; by then, the Sugar Industry started facing a severe crisis due to international competition and local factors, such as epidemics and cyclones, and the need for the ‘recaptive’ Africans was no longer felt. It must be noted, too, that they were not freed at the time of abolition of slavery but continued to work until the full term of their apprenticeship.

Moreover, the ‘recaptive’ Africans had a very mixed experience although, according to the laws and regulations, they were supposed to have better working conditions than the previous enslaved population; there was a high death rate on the one hand; on the other hand a high percentage of them marooned. This may explain why certain observers at the time described the so-called

'benevolent' attitudes/policies of British Colonial Authorities towards the 'recaptive' Africans as a disguised slave trade and as a pool of cheap labour readily available, as and when required.

The different forms of labour used by the Colonial powers and the corresponding legislations developed to control the different forms of labour were essential ingredients for the success of colonisation. The consequences for the labouring classes were not given due consideration.

#### **1.2.6 Other aspects of the period 1810-1839**

The period 1810-1839 in the history of Mauritius saw the creation of a mono crop economy, with the destruction of the cultivation of other crops. The economy became equally resolutely export-oriented, with little consideration being given to the development of productive forces for a balanced perspective.

Moreover, the Capitulation Treaty underlying the British conquest of Mauritius in 1810, created the conditions, not only for the continuation of slavery until 1835, but also for extensive corruption of the State apparatus. With an illegal slave trade, the British Colonial State was in connivance with the planters and merchants of both French and British origin. The civil servants, whether of British or of French origin, were generally biased in favour of the planters/slave-owners. The Judiciary was not spared. The various institutions served the interests of the planters and merchants class.

There prevailed an ideology to justify this state of affairs, and racism constituted a pillar of that ideology. Those who resisted, in some way or other, were considered as lazy or indolent, or even vagrants. Labour was expected to be tied to the plantations in the economic interest of the plantocracy; any deviation from this policy was perceived and presented as linked to some form of innate insufficiency.

The foundations of a resulting fragile economy and racist ideology were set up during the period of slavery and the early years of British Colonialism.

### 3. INDENTURED LABOUR AND BRITISH COLONIALISM

#### 1.3.1 The International Context

Post-slavery Mauritius witnessed the development of the capitalist economy based on cheap indentured labour from British India on the one hand, and on the free trade policy of the British Imperial State on the other hand. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the defeats of the French in the Anglo-French colonial wars, Britain emerged as the most powerful economic, industrial, financial and military power in the world.

The internal economic and political development of Britain interacted intimately with the international interests of the British Empire, in such a manner that the interests of the British Imperial State and of its varied economic and financial forces were safeguarded. The British colonies were marginalized as and when those interests needed them to be safeguarded; the British Caribbean Islands and Mauritius would be among such marginalized colonies. The British Colonial Business Community adapted and moved around within the British Empire: some British sugar companies left the Caribbean region to invest in the fast-developing Sugar Industry in British India during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Structurally, the economic system in these colonies would be geared towards British interests, with a dominant export orientation, and the labouring classes would face unemployment and increasing poverty. The Colonial State in these colonies developed strategies to control the population at large and the labouring classes in particular: a mix of political institutions, social and economic measures/policies, repressive policies and educational policies. Thomas B. Macaulay's 'Minute on Indian Education of 1835, is very revealing indeed, as it applies to the British Empire as a whole:

*"We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, words and intellect."*

The consequences of such a policy would be felt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were intense debates in Britain between those defending free trade and the supporters of protective tariffs. As the first Industrial Power in the world and as the most advanced economic country, free trade would benefit Britain in its broad interests in trade and finance. In particular, by 1846, the Anti-Corn Law League brought the Government of the day to repeal the Corn Laws, that is trade in barley, wheat, oats etc. were open to foreign competition. Later in the same year, the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 was passed, thereby doing away with preferential tariffs for colonial sugar and 'non-slave' sugar. The free traders, in alliance with the Agro-Industry (involved in the production of jam, marmalade, confectionery), defended "a cheap breakfast table" for the British population and cheap raw material for the Agro-Industry.

However, following the economic crisis of 1847, there was a brief revival of an imperial preference for colonial sugar, but by 1874, all sugar tariffs were dismantled. Mauritius then went through some very tough times from the 1880s till the 1940s. On top of low sugar prices, stiff international competition demanded that costs of production should be reduced. German subsidies depressed world prices which applied to transactions in all markets. Competition from Java, and even Germany and Austria, in the main markets of Mauritius required a significant lowering of costs of production. This meant capital investment in the modernisation of factories and an improvement in terms of sugar-cane cultivation. In the latter case, very cheap labour was of great help to the plantocracy. In the former case, there was the 'grand morcellement', whereby the plantocracy mobilised funds by selling land to traders, middlemen, *sirdars* and ex-indentured labourers. Further, there was the merger of factories which had already started since the 1860s; this process is typical of the Capitalist System, as highlighted at the Mauritius Sugar Industry Conference of 1927 by the following statement:

*"In relation to the reduction in the number and the increase in the size of factories, it is to be remarked that this tendency is a manifestation of the natural law of development whereby smaller and less efficient units tend to become absorbed by the larger and more powerful units."*

In fact, the family-owned sugar estates and factories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century would progressively merge to form ever bigger sugar companies.

Moreover, in the 1870s, Europe was in the grip of a depression in Europe, with prices of commodities in general going down. But the main threat to sugar came from the producers of beet sugar in Europe. Wheat from the USA and Russia was invading Europe as a result of free trade, and European farmers found in beet root production a convenient way to face this threat. Germany emerged with a very 'low cost of production', thanks to various types of subsidies, in spite of free trade. In fact, British free trade accommodated slave-produced sugar as well as sugar subsidised by other exchequers. The cost of delivery of beet sugar from Germany to Britain was somewhat less than that of cane sugar from the British colonies. Further, the factory performance of Germany was much better than that of Mauritius for both output and sugar recovery.

Britain, the great Colonial Power, gave first consideration to its own economic interests, rather than to those of its colonies; free trade meant cheap essential commodities for her, and she did not apply countervailing duties against beet sugar bounties from Germany. The Caribbean Islands, particularly, found themselves in a very difficult situation; Mauritius managed to adapt to the situation thanks to new destinations, such as British India, Australia and South Africa, which provided markets for Mauritian sugar. Mauritian sugar exports to Britain decreased from 70,000 tons in 1870-74 to 14,000 tons in 1895-1899, and to 17,000 tons in 1900-1904. On the other hand, Germany and Austria-Hungary supplied Britain with 4 % of its sugar in 1870-74, and then 58 % in the early years of 1900 and 70 % just before World War I.

Moreover, Mauritian exports to British India were made sustainable, when the Government of British India imposed countervailing duties on beet sugar to protect its traditional suppliers, including Mauritius, which the Imperial Government had previously chosen not to do. The pattern of sugar exports from Mauritius at the end of the nineteenth century, showed clearly the decrease of exports to Britain and the considerable increase to India. But the Caribbean Islands did not enjoy the relationship/proximity which Mauritius had with British India, and a Royal Commission of Enquiry was appointed in 1896 in the Caribbean Islands.

### **1.3.2 Indentured Labour**

Sustained importation of indentured labourers from India started in 1834, prior to the abolition of slavery on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1835 although Indian labourers were introduced privately as early as 1826. Whilst the indentured system provided for wages to be paid to the labourers and did not deny them the right to own land as opposed to the slave system, the living and working conditions of the indentured labourers were very harsh.

Following the suspension of the importation of indentured labourers in 1839 until 1842 and the related uncertainties with respect to the supply of labour, planters did their best to ensure that labourers were bound to the sugar estates by controlling them in various ways. Legislation, accordingly, was passed, from 1844 until 1867, some of which was very repressive indeed.

Thus, Ordinance 40 of 1844, approved by Governor Gomm, made provision for powers to be given to planters to imprison labourers, without going through magistrates. This piece of legislation was disallowed by the British Imperial Government. However, in June 1844, Ordinance 42 of 1844, a new Vagrancy Law, was enacted whereby indolence by itself was made a criminal offence. It meant that a man who had no permanent home or visible means of support, and who could not explain how he lived, was liable to be apprehended as a vagabond and sentenced to hard labour for twenty-eight days. Further legislation, like extending one-year contract to three years and finally to five years, meant that the indentured labourer could not sell his labour to the highest bidder. The planters, on the other hand, wanted to keep their right to sell their sugar on the London market to the highest bidder.

The overall consequence of the legislation was to depress wages of indentured labourers. This process culminated in the 1867 Labour Law, whereby all Indian immigrants had to carry a pass, thus extending the coercive laws of the "Old Immigrants". The overall objective was to keep old immigrants tied to sugar estates and hence to depress further the wages of the labourers.

British Imperial Government policy of free trade meant that sugar producers had to reduce their costs of production and, in particular, their labour costs, while optimizing their respective benefits. Hence, the labourers were paid the price financially and lost their various 'freedoms', whilst both the British State and the planters respectively enjoyed free trade and the freedom to maximize their profits by selling their sugar to the highest bidder.

This policy of double standards would characterize the British Imperial Government, the Colonial State in Mauritius and the plantocracy.

### 1.3.3 Transformation of the Sugar Industry

The impact of international competition, especially with the development of European beet sugar and Britain's policy of free trade was such that the Sugar Industry had to innovate, to bring in new machinery, to improve upon the manufacture of sugar, to develop new cane varieties and to improve field work. In particular, this process demanded a restructuring of the Industry; small family-owned sugar estates and factories merged to produce company owned sugar estates. A process of centralization of factories and concentration of capital began. This process demanded much capital and the parcellisation of land provided the means by which capital could be mobilized. The sales of plots of land to *Sirdars*, traders, middlemen, free Indian passengers and ex-indentured labourers occurred during the *grand morcellement* as from the 1870s; this process gained momentum in the 1880s and the 1890s.

The economic transformation of the Sugar Industry through land parcellisation brought about the creation of a class of Indian small planters. Whilst initially, about 1,500 such planters became landowners, thereafter in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that number would increase dramatically to about 40,000, when more than 30% of sugar cane land was owned by this new class of planters.

Concurrently, the transport and presence of indentured labourers had a major impact on trade and shipping between Mauritius and British India. On the one hand, the demand for textile products and foodstuffs from India grew considerably as the number of indentured labourers from India increased substantially in the 1840s up to the 1860s. On the other hand, the uncertainty of the international sugar market and the British policy of free trade created conditions for the export of sugar to British India.

As business opportunities opened up, many Indian commercial houses established branches in Port Louis. Some of the traders went back to India after some time, whilst others settled in Mauritius.

However, labourers on the sugar estates faced harsh conditions, so much so that now and then, they reacted. In particular, in the 1870s, with the help of the planter A. de Plevitz, they sent a petition to the Governor, expressing their discontent. Thereafter, the British Colonial Government brought some improvements in their working conditions, following the recommendations of a Commission of Enquiry set up to look into their discontent. But, in practice, new legislations were not being implemented as expected. Moreover, wages of sugar estate labourers were generally low during the 1870s and well until the 1930s. In terms of paid wages, the *Sirdars* earned about three to four times the wages of labourers. (See Volume 4 Part VIII, p. 351.)

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, social stratification of the Indian immigrants was very prominent. A commercial bourgeoisie had already settled, together with a growing middle class of job contractors, *Sirdars*, traders, middlemen, moneylenders, intellectuals, free migrants and medium planters. However, the labourers and small planters/labourers constituted the vast majority.

## 4. BRITISH COLONIALISM IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### 1.4.1 Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The economic system prevailing in Mauritius by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by regular crises as a result of the uncertainties of the international sugar market, and internal factors such as natural calamities (e.g. cyclones), diseases (e.g. cholera) and strained relations between labour and capital. Crises were equally common in the economic system prevailing and fast developing in the world, culminating in the great depression of the 1930s.

Moreover, the sustained Free Trade Policy by the British Imperial Government and the cheap labour policy of the plantocracy contributed to depress the wages of the labourers of the Sugar Industry. In particular, the continuation of the importation of Indian labourers, though on a small scale, by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century created unemployment and allowed the plantocracy to make profits and to sustain their way of life.

Yet, the Colonial State caused the further impoverishment of the labouring classes through a taxation system which made these same labouring classes contribute more than other social classes in terms of the proportion of their wages and salaries. Thus, for the period 1905-1908, out of an average total revenue of Rs. 9,780,055, the excise duty on rum for home consumption was Rs. 1.67 per litre, bringing the sum of Rs. 1,169,464 to Government revenue, the third biggest contribution after customs duties and the revenue from Government railways. Spirits carried the same level of import duty of Rs. 1.67 per litre. The labouring classes and the poor were the main consumers of rum, whilst the middle and upper classes were the main consumers of spirits. Similarly, the import duty on tea was 60 cents per kilo, whilst that on coffee was only 8 cents per kilo. Again, tea was consumed mainly by the labouring classes, whilst the other classes consumed coffee.

Both the Colonial State and the plantocracy converged in their policies of extracting as much as possible from the labouring classes, whether in the sugar cane fields or in the form of taxes. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, unemployment and poverty were on the increase and there were a large number of applicants for Poor Law relief. The estate owners wanted, at all costs, an abundant supply of cheap labour during harvest time so that the price of labour, that is, mainly wages, could be kept down. In turn, wages outside the plantation were equally depressed. Unemployment and poverty were engineered and sustained by the plantocracy and the Colonial State to ensure the availability of cheap labour.

This is well illustrated by the following exchange between sugar estate owners and the Commission. To the question from a Commissioner “Do you pay indentured coolie a much lower wage than the free coolie?”, Hon. P.E. de chazal answered ‘Yes, because they came under an agreement’.

Similarly, the following questions and answers between the Commissioners and Hon. E.C. Fraser are very revealing indeed.

*“Question: If you have a surplus population unemployed, you would naturally have a large number of applicants for Poor Law relief, and if you import all you want at a time you are hard pressed for labour and keep them here, you are liable to that?”*

*Hon. Fraser: Yes, but I do not see that you can help it.*

*Question: You would prefer the expense of Poor Law to stopping immigration?*

*Hon. Fraser: I am afraid to say that there is a great deal of money spent on the relief of the poor, but I do not see that we can get over it; not at present at any rate.”*

The Colonial State maintained this state of affairs, as this in turn contributed to keeping the price of sugar low on the international sugar market. In fact, the Royal Commission of 1909 provided support to the plantocracy by recommending that loans should be granted for the rehabilitation of Government railways and for the improvement of cultivation, factory machinery or mechanical tractions and for a remunerative irrigation scheme. There was no recommendation for labour per

se. The Royal Commission did not even try to mitigate the plentiful cheap labour policy. Nor did the Commissioners recommend any help for small planters who lost their limited capital (caught animals) as a consequence of the *surra* epidemic; yet, they referred to the issue in their report. The only recommendation in favour of small planters was the allocation of a sum of £15,000, that is, Rs. 225,000, to assist in the setting up of Cooperative Credit Societies. These were certainly useful to the small planter community but, a careful analysis of the implementation of the recommendation revealed that its impact was to ensure that as much sugar cane as possible was provided to the sugar factories for processing and for sugar manufacture. This was particularly important for the factory-owners as the centralization of factories needed sufficient cane to process to make it possible to recoup the investments made.

It is of interest to note that by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Britain was relying mainly on Germany and Austria for its supply of sugar. Its sugar colonies had their sugar exports to Britain drastically reduced. Moreover, during the First World War, the two abovementioned countries were its enemies. After the war, Britain had to review its policy, and she introduced a preferential system of tariffs for her colonies, a system linked to world sugar prices and its Free Trade Policy started collapsing. But still, Britain did not find it appropriate then to have a comprehensive policy on sugar prices and markets which would involve its colonies in some meaningful manner. Unemployment and poverty in her colonies did not mean much to her. The colonized peoples were under control; there was no need to bring changes. On the other hand, the new élite was accommodating and adapted to the colonial set-up.

The Royal Commission did not find it appropriate to mention the negative impact of the free trade policy of the British Empire and the cheap labour policy on the economy and the society of Mauritius. Instead, they found it proper to cover up this state of affairs by sowing the seeds of division, somewhat subtly, among the people of Mauritius by reproducing the stereotypes regarding the ex-apprentices which were used at the time of abolition of slavery and the importation of indentured labour; they referred to the “indolent character of the coloured creoles.”

#### 1.4.2 The Sugar Industry and the Depression of the 1930s

With the First World War, there was a temporary shortage of sugar on the world market and prices shot up in 1921. The sugar estate factory-owners invested accordingly in sugar manufacture. The small planter community bought more land in the hope of increasing its revenue. But the boom was temporary; the finances of the Sugar Industry were strained and many small planters had to abandon their land by the end of the 1920s.

The British Imperial Government once more came to the rescue of the plantocracy. In 1926, they obtained a loan of Rs. 6 million from the Colonial Government; in 1927, they obtained a loan of £200,000 from the British Imperial Government and Rs. 3 million from the Colonial Government. Further, in 1930, the Colonial Government lent Rs. 3 million to the plantocracy; and finally, in 1931, following a severe cyclone, another loan of £500,000 was granted by the British Imperial Government to make good the loss of property and crop. Thus, by 1931, the plantocracy had accumulated loans amounting to Rs. 20 million. Moreover, there was no relief in sight to small planters or to the labouring classes.

In 1929, the British Government sent Sir Francis Watts to enquire into the conditions of the Sugar Industry; and two years later in 1931, two Financial Commissioners, I.D. Elliott and N.G. Loughnane, were dispatched to Mauritius. The former recommended assistance to the Sugar Industry; the latter found that some sugar estates were making profits over the years, whilst some were operating at losses, having been badly managed at the time of the boom year of 1921. They wrote in their report that:

*“A considerable part of the profits is said to have disappeared in purely private expenditure and some of it to have found investment outside the colony”<sup>25</sup>.*

Concurrently, the wages of the labourer were reduced, allegedly to face the depression. Between 1927 and 1931, the overall reduction for Mauritius was 17.6 per cent, whilst for some key districts like Pamplemousses, Flacq and Savanne, the reduction was respectively 25.1 per cent, 27.5 per cent and 28.6 per cent.

The double standards within the Sugar Industry prevailed even in such severe crisis periods. There was overall progress for the estate owners; some could even afford capital exodus, let alone sustain their way of life. But poverty, unemployment and overall underdevelopment persisted for the labouring classes.

### 1.4.3 Labour, Poverty and Resistance

The reduced wages of Sugar Industry labourers, together with heavy taxation raised by the Colonial Government, made their lives very difficult indeed. The depression had a general effect of increasing unemployment and depressing wages, thus causing an increase in the level of poverty among the laboring classes and the poor. This resulted in the impoverishment of the labouring classes in the 1930s on the one hand, and in the emergence of the Labour Party, through its public meetings, on the other hand. All this created conditions for the development of resistance by these classes. In effect, the 15 per cent decrease in the prices of the Uba cane variety by some sugar estates in 1937 triggered off protests, processions, strikes, marches and generally demands for better wages and against unemployment. In the process, shots were fired by the management of the Union - Flacq Sugar Estate, owned by the Gujadhur family, new sugar magnates of Indian origin, killing four labourers/small planters.

Those events of 1937 are landmarks in the History of Mauritius. Further, in 1938, there were strikes in Port Louis by the dockers and in 1943, Sugar Industry labourers in the North, with three of them shot dead by the police. This unprecedented wave of protests and resistance by the laboring classes forced the Colonial Government to shake off its lethargy and indifference with regard to the laboring classes.

The Colonial State reacted by means of a mix of approaches. There was a policy of severe repression of workers and their leaders on the one hand and of control of the labouring classes through legislation and through the setting up of the Labour Department and other institutions, including some to address the problems of small planters. The founder and leader of the Labour Party, Dr M. Curé was placed under house arrest, whilst, the trade unionist E. Anquetil, a close collaborator of Dr M. Curé, was deported to Rodrigues. Some strikers were imprisoned. For the dockers' strikes of 1938 in Port Louis, the Colonial State used 'black legs' to break the strike in close collaboration with the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate. In fact, the Governor, Sir Bede Clifford asked Mr Jules Leclézio of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate "to arrange for the sugar syndicate to get into immediate touch with a selected number of estates to collect all the suitable labour required for unloading the trains and loading the lighters....."<sup>26</sup>

Two Commissions of Enquiry were instituted; they made recommendations which the Colonial Government implemented to a large extent. Moreover, in the "Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the disturbances which occurred in the North of Mauritius in 1943", criticisms of the estate owners and their quest for cheap labour were voiced. In particular, the Commissioners wrote:

*"Some employers failed to appreciate the labourers' claim to a higher standard of living, their new sense of non-economic values and their rising demand for leisure and better conditions of employment, but on the contrary, still believed in cheap labour of low standard and forgot the human side of the problems of industry".*

Nevertheless, there were some initiatives by the Colonial State to satisfy the demands of the small planters community; for example, the setting up of 'The Sugar Millers and Planters' Central Arbitration and Control Board', which dealt with the apportionment of sugar to the small planters when they sent their canes to the sugar millers. Furthermore, there was the Land Settlement Scheme in the 1940s; the cooperative movement was enhanced as from the late 1940s.

As far as the labourers were concerned, some improvements were made in their working conditions.

### 1.4.4 On the eve of Independence

On the eve of Independence, the monocrop economy still dominated the economic, social and political life of Mauritius. There was, however, the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement of 1952 which

provided for a guaranteed market for the sugar of Mauritius at reasonably negotiated prices. This agreement created conditions for the development of the Sugar Industry, especially for the sugar estate and factory-owners. Again, they reaped most of the benefits of the agreement and they accumulated sufficient capital to allow them to diversify their investments in the Tourist Industry and the export processing zone later in the 1970s.

Moreover, whilst there were some improvements in the conditions of the labouring classes, their fate was that of relative underdevelopment. The continual policy of cheap labour consolidated the exclusion of those found outside the Sugar Industry, given that this policy had an impact on the labour market. Unemployment and poverty still dominated the lives of the laboring classes in Mauritius. The cooperative movement represented an attempt which could have helped these classes, but, unfortunately, it did not rise to expectations. The value and belief system behind the new Capitalist System tended to predominate among the Indian elite and the middle class, killing the fundamental cooperative principles and values.

Overall, the economy grew from the very beginning of the colonial era as part of the Colonial Empire, whether French or British, the centre of which was Europe. An extreme international specialization within the British Empire had produced a vulnerable, fragile economy. The plantation economy gave rise to a very rigid hierarchical, racialised and class-ridden society, which would dominate the future of independent Mauritius.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY IN ISLE DE FRANCE**



## Introduction

The slave trade permitted many in Mauritius and France, to make small or big fortunes. That latter were invested in estates, land and businesses. The fortunes of many today were built on the prosperity of those who traded and used slave labour in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. To more fully document this trade for present and future generations, a Slave Trade database was started and is recommended to be an on-going project which TJC has requested the University of Mauritius and the Nelson Mandela Centre to continue jointly. It will hopefully continue to link up with existing scholars and institutions, such as Thomas Vernet, Benigan Zimba and Richard Allen, to name a few, to pursue the analysis of the slave trade. Younger scholars need to be trained to take up the task and scholarships provided to go overseas.

As far as slavery is concerned, as Hubert Gerbeau has said, the methodologies to be used in studying slavery have to be multidisciplinary, and this is precisely what the TJC has attempted to do. The traditions and culture of Mauritians of African and Malagasy origin are currently being erased from our physical and cultural landscapes through tourist, ecotourism and IRS projects. There are also many questions that Mauritians continue to ask themselves, and hold many perceptions that may not have conformed to the archival evidence. The TJC has addressed these issues.

Among these were:

### **Where do I come from?**

It is generally felt that of all groups in Mauritian society, those descended from slavery are unable to trace their ancestry. The Origins Project based at the Nelson Mandela Centre has gone some way to answer this question in Mauritius but more needs to be done to attempt to identify more precisely the villages from where slaves came and their cultural origins. Academic historians have not yet been able to find such information in archival sources. The TJC has sought to resort to other techniques to do so, using the names given by slaves during registration and using DNA testing.

In addition we are accumulating as many Civil Status Records as possible on the slave population, with the help of Mr. Patrick Drack in France and recommend the establishment of a National Genealogy Centre in Mauritius. The TJC has laid the groundwork for this by bringing institutions together that may be able to set this up and host it, and copying some of the more fragile data from institutions.

### **Where did slaves disembark?**

This has been a perennial question, and with good reason. Public perception goes thus: The French can claim to have first landed in Vieux Grand Port, the Indians at Port Louis at Aapravasi Ghat, but what of slaves? There is no memorial, except a memorial at Pointe Canon chosen for no obvious reason, it would seem, than availability of space. Research has been undertaken in the past in the Archives, and no specific point identified. The TJC has attempted basic research in other sources located outside Mauritius, such as the French National Archives which contain the most important collection on Mauritius outside Mauritius. It is important to memorialize, and the TJC has made a recommendation towards the creation of a Museum of slavery and a monument for the Unknown Slave in a central location.

### **How many slaves came to Mauritius?**

This is a question that has never been answered and about which academic historians have stated that it was impossible to find specific slave ships that carried slaves to both Mauritius and Reunion. The attempt to disaggregate figures is being attempted by the TJC with the help of Thomas Vernet and compile at same time a slave trade database, so that Mauritians can access, at the click of a mouse on the internet, all ships arriving in Mauritius, as well as those undertaking coastal shipping i.e. from Souillac, Mahebourg and Port Louis.

There is a huge discrepancy between official figures and actual arrivals of slaves due to illegal practices since the beginning of colonization. Greed for easy profits, desire to bypass official duties and taxes or frustration with lengthy bureaucratic procedures have contributed to illegal practices. Thus for the period of Labourdonnais, although Company ships officially brought only 2,000 slaves, in reality, Filliot has estimated over that 10,000 slaves were brought in.

The need to know as accurately as possible is important, if one wants to study the demographics of the slave population. Thus these figures will be juxtaposed with Census records, Civil Status records and other records. This is important information also for those who wish to study the proportion of slaves arriving from different parts of the world and what happened to them.

**What was the importance of the slave trade and slavery for, and in, Mauritius? What was the contribution of slaves to the economy and society of Mauritius?** Slavery is often considered in Mauritius to be a separate institution from whatever else was going on in Mauritius; it is rarely seen as a product of colonial society and economy nor are slaves seen an intrinsic part of Mauritian society in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. How important was slavery to the economy of Mauritius and what was the value of slave labour? What was the extent of their participation in the economy? What ideology did slavery create in Mauritius? Why was there so much opposition to the abolition of the slave trade? Who benefited from the slave trade? What was the extent of Government participation in the slave trade? Why was there such a big increase in the slave trade in the 1770s?

**What kind of society and economy did slavery and the slave trade create? What is left today? What was the impact of emerging sugar economy and indenture on ex-slaves?**

This has been answered in Chapter Two, where the economic history of the island has been reviewed from the Dutch period to the present, and where the conclusions are manifest. Continuities in economic systems are clear, as are the economic legacies that slavery and indenture have left us. It is of much concern that an island which has known such repressive labour systems and exploited populations from Madagascar, Mozambique India and China should continue to import cheap labour from the very same countries, in conditions which, in many cases, are deplorable.

**What impact did abolition have on Mauritian society? Did slaves desert the plantations? Why?**

The TJC believes that it is important to answer this question, not because of any major breakthrough in archival research, but because it is continually being referred to and there is much misinformation and stereotyping. It is important not to treat slaves as one homogenous group, as has been stated several times, and it is important to understand that there were multiples experiences lived by slaves, not one uniform experiences. There is not one direct route taken by slaves from the plantation to the coast, where many can be found, and nor can we assume today that is where they all decided to settle there. The situation is far from being so simple.

**What was the fate of ex-slaves after abolition?**

This has been one of the most intractable questions, given the lack of information. Here too, one must refrain from treating all ex-slaves as one uniform mass of persons. However, it is not so much how they travelled but where they ended up at different times in history, up to today. What was their trajectory? The TJC used the migration pattern of inhabitants of one village to attempt to reconstruct this history. More family histories need to be undertaken nationwide to assess the full extent of the mobility of ex-slaves and their families across Mauritius from 1835 to the 1940s. One must not forget, however, those who were free before that date and their trajectories in life.

**What is the proportion of Mauritians of slave origin left in Mauritius? Are all those with African phenotype of slave origin? Or are they descendants of Liberated Africans? How many?**

Studies of immigration after abolition has revealed the presence of many Malagasies, Mozambicans, Comorians etc in Mauritius among passengers, and so what appears to be a person of African phenotype may not necessarily be of slave origin, but of indentured or free African immigrant. Further study is required. The search for authenticity of slave origins has been strated but is not

exhaustive. Whether one is of slave origin is immaterial as discrimination against persons of African origin does not distinguish between descendants of slaves and descendants of free Africans.

**Did racism create slavery? Does racism exist today? Why? Who is racist? What is racism in Mauritius? What is the difference between racism and communalism?**

Racism existed before colonial slavery, became amplified during colonial slavery and has continued after the abolition of slavery.

#### Organisation of Report

As stated, the aim is not to review the entire history of slavery, rather to look at lesser-known aspects which deserve to be better known.

The slavery report is, therefore, divided into two parts: the first part in Chapter Two covers the historical period of slavery, slave trade focussing particularly on aspects of the French period of slavery. The second part in Chapter Four examines briefly the transition that ex-slaves experienced. This topic has been the subject of study by many historians and much comparative work has been undertaken within the Caribbean, the USA and South Africa. Mapping the mobility must be strongly recommended as evidence points to land dispossession of large numbers over the years but defining moment for the ex-slaves which sealed their fate has not been done yet. Their mass conversion to Catholicism, particularly during the epidemics, and the continued hold of the Church on directing the actions of ex-slaves and their cultural orientation are briefly examined as one possible defining moment. The Church has played an important part in legitimizing the actions of plantation owners which resulted in curtailing the cultural freedom and physical mobility of descendants of slaves. The chapter also analyses how the population changed from being 'Afro-Malagasy' to becoming 'Creole'. Did they become citizens?

Recommendations relating to the history of slavery and slave trade are contained at the end of this volume in a consolidated chapter of recommendations.

## 1. THE SLAVE TRADE TO MAURITIUS FROM THE 1720S TO 1820S

### 1.1 The Indian Ocean is not the Atlantic

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The study of slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean has, more often than not, been based on previous studies of the Atlantic world. Yet these were, and are, two vastly different worlds.

As far as Mauritius is concerned, it is the specificity of the nature of European slave trading in the Indian Ocean that interests us as well as the differences with the Atlantic world. Given the short time span available to the Commission, searches have been concentrated on selected themes in relation to the slave trade. Recommendations for further studies are made. Because the focus of slave trade studies was on the Atlantic, the ports which traded in slaves, from among those heavily involved in this Atlantic trade, have been studied in far greater depth and publicised. The Indian Ocean trade, and in particular the Mascarenes trade, have been neglected even though Mauritius, with its excellent and safe harbour (compared to Réunion), became in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the headquarters for the European slave trade.

Some of the differences need to be highlighted before looking at Mauritius proper. In the Atlantic, Britain was the largest trading power, while in the Southwestern Indian Ocean, the French dominated the slave trade. The Mascarene Islands were used as a base to engage in the slave trade, with slaves being taken from Madagascar, India and Eastern Africa to the Mascarene Islands, but also to South Africa, South East Asia and the Caribbean.<sup>27</sup> France was without question the largest slave trading nation in the Indian Ocean at the end of the 1780s. According to Daudin, the total value of its long-distance trade – trade with Africa, Asia, America and re-exports to the rest of Europe – was equal to £25 million. The total value of British long-distance trade was only £20 million. The growth of French long-distance trade from the 1710s had been faster than the growth of English trade.<sup>28</sup> It is also contended by some historians that the main support to long-distance trade, the plantation system, was larger and more efficient in the French colonies than in the British ones.

In past research, the methodology traditionally employed in studying the French slave trade in the Indian Ocean was based on studies of the Atlantic trade. The structure of the slave trade, the itineraries, financing, arming, networking and type of trading were studied. However, this ignored the fact that while the slave trade was a specialist's activity for the British, French ships were, by contrast, used both for the slave trade and direct trade with the West Indies. In the Americas, the French needed slaves for their plantations and so, according to Daudin, "as buying slaves was the main reason why plantation owners in the West Indies had to go into debt, the slave trade was more prone than other trades to long repayment periods. As the financial position of plantation owners declined continuously during the eighteenth century, their debts were more and more difficult to recover for French traders.

The slave trade has often been described as a 'triangular trade' and this refers mainly to the Atlantic. This was not necessarily the case in the Indian Ocean or for Mauritius. Evidence of 'quadrangular trade' appears more and more in recent literature.<sup>29</sup>

While we can find the list of ships arriving in Port Louis or departing from French ports, we do not know yet how many of these went to East Africa and Madagascar and procured slaves as most of the time, the cargo is not listed. The sources relating to these will have to be studied as well.

### The Disaggregation of figures

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Up to 2009, it was not possible to say exactly how many slaves came to Mauritius. Figures were always aggregated with Réunion Island. Disaggregation of figures for Mauritius and Réunion has been started under the TJC and must continue. It will only be possible to arrive at a disaggregated figure, once entries in the database are complete. Only then, when the total number of slaves

actually bought and sold in Mauritius is known, will we be better able to understand and assess the social, economic, demographic and cultural impact of slavery on the island.

To allow for a better assessment of the slave trade, the TJC has recommended **the creation of a slave trade database** to unite all disparate data. It is important to assess the slave trade and to do so, knowledge of French commerce and trade is also necessary. However, because sometimes the slave trade was activity carried out surreptitiously, it is not always known whether ships carried slaves or not, as they are not listed as ‘passengers’, but as cargo. We need to know and determine how many ships in general traded with, and arrived in Mauritius, and assess which may have brought slaves. The differences in figures between the various works of historians and others are largely due to different sources being tapped in different countries.

There exists no single study that has so far collected and put these various sources together and attempted a holistic analysis. At the Truth and Justice Commission, in Mauritius, we have initiated this work and we expect that this work will be continued by institutions and scholars in the future in Mauritius. Several scholars have aided in this process: Thomas Vernet from France and Benigna Zimba from Mozambique, and we expect these two persons to be closely connected to future projects on the slave trade. Thomas Vernet, Anwar Chuttoo and Sharonne Philips have designed, and contributed to the beginning of a database of all ships arriving in Mauritius since 1721, and in the search for additional information on potential ‘slave’ ships. Jean-Yves Le Lan has voluntarily contributed his database on Lorient.

The aim therefore is to collect, as far as possible, all potential slave voyages from the various repositories in France, Mauritius, Portugal, India and the UK. Currently, the TJC has focused its research on material available in Mauritius and France.

## 1.2. The place of the French in the Indian Ocean Slave Trade

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Of the total estimated by Allen in 2010, the French slave trade is still by far the most substantial in the Indian Ocean:

Portuguese total	41,875 - 83,750
Dutch total	43,965 - 66,465 slaves
British total	10,525 - 12,539 slaves
French total	334,936 - 384,040 slaves

However, this figure **does not include**:

- those slaves who never made it on board the ships;
- those who were captured or traded but did not survive the march or the captivity in the slave depot.

These are not accounted for and cannot be accurately calculated as yet, given the lack of information, but their history deserves to be remembered.

The historical ties between Mozambique and Mauritius deserve to be better known and need to be studied further by Mauritians and Mozambicans, It is recommended that joint projects be initiated, funded by Mauritians, public and private, especially Mauritian companies currently operating in Mozambique and using Mozambican labour.

The cultural relationships including lineages, languages, and traditions, which, from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, emerged in the slave trade and slavery and after, in the region, need to be better known by Mauritians. The Commission has initiated this by undertaking a preliminary study of Mozambique-Mauritius slave trade to better understand the full extent of our cultural origins and our history. This must be continued.

The French ports need to be known too, in particular the port of Bordeaux. The largest number of ships left from Bordeaux, and not from Breton ports such as Lorient etc., for the Indian Ocean. In Toussaint's list, the numbers of ships leaving French ports were as follows:

Bordeaux	267
Lorient	166
Marseille	129
St. Malo	54
Nantes	40

Most studies have concentrated on the periods for which most data is available fairly easily, i.e. after 1767, when the Royal Government took over the island. We know very little on the pre-1767 slave trade and on the illegal trade after 1810.

Only Le Lan has focused on Company Trade and he has generously provided the Commission with a list of ships belonging to the FEIC which practised the slave trade between 1720 and 1756 and thus was the second, after Albert Lougnon, to attempt to examine the pre-1767 period. For departures from Lorient and from the Mascarenes up to 1760, he uses Filliot and Mettas: 46,000 slaves were traded in total, without counting those ships starting from the Mascarenes.

Finally, Mauritius played a central role in the expansion of the French slave trade in the Indian Ocean. Yet, the role of Mauritius in this is little known; it was much larger than previously believed.

Economic and accounting historians of the slave trade study slavery and the slave trade from an economist's or financial analyst's perspective. However, historians cannot focus only on what is quantifiable, but have to look at the unquantifiable: the 'intangible' issues of history, such as identity or culture loss, mental and physical stress, mobility, laws, consequences on family life or the sense of loss felt as a result of being removed from one's homeland.

### **1.3. The slave trade and the mercantile system of the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

French Mercantilism in the Indian Ocean began in earnest after the establishment of the East India Company. Colbert was given the task of creating this Company and take over all 'affaires de la Marine'.<sup>30</sup> Out of the 15 million *livres* worth of shares, the King himself owned 3 million, with others going to the French Authorities and Officers of the Finance Ministry. The merchants were in a minority, with Nantes possessing some 200,000 *livres* worth of shares, Bordeaux 400,000 *livres*, and Lyons, 1,000,000 *livres*.<sup>31</sup>

In Jean Meyer's *La France et l'Asie: Essai de statistiques (1730-1785). Etat de la question*, it is estimated that over 1,000 trips were made from France to the Indian Ocean: at least 493 ships went to India and China, while about 397 ships were bound for the Mascarenes between 1730 and 1785.<sup>32</sup> Meyer estimates that Weber and Dermigny have underestimated figures for India. Weber, for example, counted only 179 ships. China was not as much of a destination as the Mascarenes and India, since it was less profitable.

The French East India Company participated directly and indirectly in the slave trade. When it was not profitable for the Company to engage in it, they relinquished their rights to private traders from whom they also derived financial benefits in the form of a duty of 13 *livres* per slave introduced in the islands. Because they had a monopoly over trade in Asia, they were able to obtain goods used in the slave trade at very cheap prices and sell these to the slave traders who needed goods to exchange for slaves, as well as to clothe them.<sup>33</sup> Indian textiles were preferred by slave traders to French textiles.<sup>34</sup>

There were three main destinations for the slaves: Louisiana, St. Domingue and the Mascarenes. The King instructed Captains to bring back certificates for each slave arriving and for each slave sale, to enable the Company to receive 13 or 15 *livres* raised by the King for every slave. In exchange, they benefited from exemptions for port duties and duties on goods used in the slave trade, as well as on sugar.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, the Company also owned slaves who worked in various capacities. When the King took over the island in 1767, the slaves belonging to the Company were ceded to the King. There were in 1769: 162 Malagasies, 436 Guineans, 345 Creoles, 254 Mozambicans, 25 Indians, 2 Creoles from Bourbon, 1 from Pondicherry and 3 from Macao for a total of 1,228 slaves. They were divided into 662 men, 139 boys, 21 young male children, 271 women, 126 girls and 9 nine female infants.<sup>36</sup>

French slave trading in the Southwest Indian Ocean was started in Madagascar to supply slaves to Bourbon Island, colonised earlier. The slaves engaged in agriculture and the women among them married, or cohabited with French men, due to the shortage of French women. Indian prisoners were also left there. Distinctions between French on the one hand, and Malagasy and Indian people on the other, appeared some years later in 1674, when an Ordinance of Jacob de la Haye (Article 20) ordered that there would be no marriages between French and *négresses* or between *noirs* and white women. The term 'slave' also appears for the first time in Bourbon.<sup>37</sup> It is there that slavery, as it is understood in Mauritius, became established with maroon hunts, separate Parish Registers and domestic servants being treated as property.<sup>38</sup>

#### 1.4. Chronology of the trade

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**1723** In Mauritius, the *Code Noir* is often quoted as a measure introduced to protect slaves and thereby, the humanity of this law is often applauded. This view is not justified, if one analyses the reasons why it was introduced. The logic was purely financial and responded to the need to declare slaves as a *good* which could be insured so that any loss of slaves could be compensated for.

McWatters has analysed the relationship of the slave trade with the Mercantile System that was emerging in 18<sup>th</sup>-century France; the '**Ordonnance de Commerce**' of 1673, according to her, brought together the private sector and the State to regulate trade and to protect legitimate businesses from bankruptcies or remove some of the obstacles in obtaining credit.<sup>39</sup> However, when it was found that the *Ordonnance* did not allow the insuring of human beings, the *Code Noir* was introduced to declare slaves as '*bien meuble*' (Article XLIV); in other words, possessions which could be insured and inherited as fixed assets. In case of loss of slaves during a revolt, bad weather or disease, compensation could be claimed.

**1741** In 1741, the Company authorized the Governor General to permit all French citizens to purchase their own goods and to procure slaves from Mozambique, Madagascar and India. However, this permission according to Filliot, was 'illusory' as there was an insufficient number of boats on the island to engage in trade. The Company not only lent out its boats, but taxed all arrival of goods, causing French inhabitants to claim a return to the pre-existing situation.

Free trade was abolished in 1746.<sup>40</sup>

**From 1746 to 1767**, there is less precise information available on the slave trade. There appears to be a decrease in the slave trade, probably due to the Wars of Succession in Europe. After 1750, the slave trade resumed, and some 1,300 to 1,400 slaves were brought every year to the Mascarenes. There also appears to be more slaves being brought from Mozambique than Madagascar. For the period 1762 to 1766, so far very little information has been obtained, as far as numbers of slaves arriving. Filliot feels that this is because illegal slave trading was going on.<sup>41</sup>

**From 1767 to 1790**, the Royal Government ruled the island directly. The Company's monopoly was abolished and an economic boom ensued for the islands. Thousands of slaves were needed to work in the ports and to supply passing ships. A Director for Slave Trading was appointed e.g. Maudave and Benyowski. There was subsequently a huge increase in the slave trade which has been studied and interpreted in various ways by historians.<sup>42</sup> The effects on slave trade were felt soon after in Isle de France. The ratio of slaves to free in Mauritius jumped from 1:5 in 1767 to 1:9 in 1783.

Both the French East India Company and the French Government were very much involved, directly and indirectly, in the slave trade from the beginning. In the Indian Ocean, they turned a blind eye to the hostilities occurring between different European powers in Europe. Thus, despite official hostilities between France and Portugal, in the Indian Ocean, officials of both countries engaged in

an extremely lucrative trade which included slaves. This had been the case since the period of Labourdonnais. Frauds were also known, but not suppressed nor investigated fully. Thus, despite the official relations that may have existed between European countries and their desire to separate their trading spheres, ship Captains, slave traders, merchants did not care too much for these imperial ambitions and carried on contraband trade, whenever possible.

According to Roman, the system of *primes* was at the heart of the slave trading system. However, not all trading ventures were profitable and as elsewhere, profits were calculated as the difference between the cost of outfitting a ship and the amount collected during sales of slaves. Profits took a long time to accrue as planters never paid for their slaves on time.<sup>43</sup>

The slave trade could never be profitable for the King, unless France had a monopoly over the slave trade with the Madagascar. There were too many people bringing in slaves illegally. If this had been stopped, profits would have been greater. A letter of 3 September 1771 outlines this problem clearly: Governor “Desroches n’a pas signé une instruction pour la flûte du Roy *La Normandie* que M. Poivre m’adressa pour le Capitaine de recevoir 8000 piastres à bord et d’en acheter des noirs pour le compte des particuliers nommément du Sr. Amat qui était dès lors parti pour Batavia [...] concurrence des particuliers qui font la fraude” [...] “qui ne paient ni frais d’armement, ni les autres charges des vaisseaux équipés aux frais et risques des particuliers” [...] “le commerce a procuré 7,000 noirs à la Colonie depuis mai 1770 jusqu’à mai 1771. En cette année si la fraude reprend, on n’en traitera peut-être pas 700.”<sup>44</sup>

Apart from the fact that free trade was established, the boost to the slave trade came also in 1776 from the *prime* paid per slave traded beyond the Cape of Good Hope. In October 1784, an *Arrêté* of 26 October replaced the exemption of *demi-droit* by a ‘gratification’ of 40 *livres* per *tonne jauge*.<sup>45</sup> The aim was ‘to revitalize the trade’. It was essentially a ‘bounty’ system “consisting of State subsidies paid in function of ton burden and could amount to more than one-quarter of the initial investment.”<sup>46</sup> In his Memoirs, Angenard, Second Lieutenant on board a slaving ship, writes that he obtained a monthly salary of 25 *piastres*, 2 slaves for himself, a commission of one *franc* per every slave that he traded.<sup>47</sup> The *Arrêté du 5 juin 1785* further gave 4 *livres* per head of slave introduced into Mauritius.

According to Roman, the Government almost ‘invited’ fraud in slave trading, when it gave a 40-*livres prime* for every *tonne jauge* of a slave ship: ‘miraculously’ ships’ tonnage increased. The *Baron Binder* of 450 to 602 *tonnes*,<sup>48</sup> the *Saturne* initially listed as being 350-tonne, when built suddenly, reappeared as a 475-tonne ship at this time.<sup>49</sup> According to Roman, “à vrai dire les hésitations et les atermoiements du gouvernement s’apparentent à de la tolérance, voire de l’approbation tacite.”<sup>50</sup>

From 1787, the inhabitants of Isle de France could trade anywhere in Madagascar. This must have further contributed to the numbers of slaves arriving.

From the 1790 to 1803, the Revolutionary Government took over. It is believed by historians that from 1790, sugar-cane cultivation expanded because of the revolt in Saint-Domingue. This, it is claimed, led to a rise in the slave trade. However, there are no corresponding figures to show a rise in sugar exports from Mauritius to France. The slave trade was also declared illegal. Despite the ban on the slave trade by the Revolutionary Government in France, slave trading continued fraudulently in the Indian Ocean. Corsairs were particularly active in continuing this illicit trade.

### Corsairs *cum* traders

Another feature of the colonial slave trade in the Indian Ocean was that those practising it did not engage solely in it. They transported other goods as well and, according to Villiers, they very easily shifted from one kind of trade to another. Corsairs turned slave traders when the need arose, and then became planters and merchants, the most famous example being Robert Surcouf. The reconversion *course-traite-commerce* could be practised in the Indian Ocean. Corsair activity became prevalent when regular trading was no longer possible. That there was a human cargo was immaterial to the traders. The French Marine had given them its blessing to trade through the ‘*lettres de marque*’ and indirectly blessed also the slave trade. *Le Coureur*, recently written about, also participated in this type of trade.

Various tactics were employed to circumvent the ban on slave trade. For example, merchants falsified official destinations: the *Sans Culotte*, armed by Marouf and Le Môme, though officially going to Madagascar to purchase rice, went instead to Mozambique and took on 340 slaves bound for Réunion island.<sup>51</sup>

**1803 - 1810** Under the Napoleonic regime, on 30 Floreal An X (20 Mai 1802), the slave trade was permitted again on the grounds that cultivation and prosperity were suffering.<sup>52</sup> Napoleon had concluded a Peace Treaty with the British at Amiens on March 26 1802. During the month of April, he received in Paris a delegation of Deputies from Nantes, Bordeaux and Marseille, to whom he promised the re-authorization of slave trade.<sup>53</sup>

On the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1802, the Colonial Assembly of Isle de France legalized the slave trade; the same decision was taken by the Colonial Assembly of Bourbon Island on September 28.<sup>54</sup> This period was marked by a fierce revival of the French slave trade activities in Mozambique. Eric Saugera<sup>55</sup> states that:

*“La fièvre négrière échauffa les esprits: on arma partout en quelques mois des dizaines de navires pour la Côte d’Afrique. Ce retour à la légalisation du trafic négrier comble les vœux du négoce métropolitain qui souhaitait sa reprise officielle, pour l’humanité, même la morale, et pour nos colonies qui la réclament indispensablement.”*

Saugera has outlined the slaving activities of *La Confiance*. The *Confiance* was armed in Bordeaux for Isle de France on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1802, with Captain Sr. Paul Castagnet and as *armateur*, Jacques Conte. On 10<sup>th</sup> August 1802, in Mozambique, the Captain declared that he was in possession of 15,000 ‘*patacas espanholas*’ for the slave trade and other goods that would be sold in Isle de France. 516 slaves were disembarked from the ship in Isle de France on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1802. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of the same month, the sale of the slaves from the *Confiance* was already advertised in a local newspaper, “*s’adresser à Icery, à l’établissement Monneron au bord de la mer, où est la traite, tandis que les officiers vendent leurs noirs de port permis à bord du navire.*” During this period, at least twelve Portuguese ships arrivals in Port Louis, Isle de France have been recorded between 1802 and 1807.<sup>56</sup>

## 1.5. Was the slave trade in the Indian Ocean a triangular trade?

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It is clear that for the Indian Ocean, the classic picture presented of the slave trade and for the Atlantic, of a ‘triangular’ slave trade is not quite accurate. It was traditionally believed that ships left France laden with European goods, went to Africa to exchange them for slaves and then on to the Americas to sell the slaves for colonial goods which were then taken back to Europe. Even for the Atlantic Ocean, this classic picture has its flaws. The reality, as Pétré-Grenouilleau has shown, is that they did not simply import slaves; they also exported them. The same situation existed for the Indian Ocean, as Richard Allen has recently clearly demonstrated.

Historians have concluded that to understand better the slave trade and the issue of profitability beyond the figures, one must not rely on the official itinerary of a ship, but one must actually follow the real trajectory and pay close attention to the timing of the voyages, their tonnage and the goods that they contained and country for which they were *really* destined.

The practice of diverting ships bound for the Indies, or going back to Europe for short slave trading voyages to Madagascar and Eastern Africa, started as early as 1723, according to Filliot.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, voyages, officially listed as going to China, meant also stops at Mauritius and Réunion and included trips to the Malagasy and East African coasts. The ships leaving France contained a cargo destined for the Mascarenes where they could be sold easily. Trips destined to India and China, which stopped at the Mascarenes. Those stopovers, should not therefore be viewed as simple transit stops, but rather as ones which could yield substantial profits as these goods did not necessarily sell well in India or China. Indians, according to a *mémoire*, ate little, dressed with cloth made locally. Thus, European goods were not purchased by Indians, but rather by Europeans and others who had settled in the Mascarenes. Thus, in the *mémoire*, it was seen as beneficial as the profits of sale of European goods were made in Mauritius.<sup>58</sup>

High-tonnage ships bound for China also stopped at the Mascarenes and on the East African coast and Madagascar. It appears, therefore, that stopping at the Mascarenes was important for the longer voyages to China and India to be profitable. For the East India Company, an anonymous pamphlet written in 1785 states: “one can afford to lose in India because the benefits of the islands are between 100 and 200%”.

Meyer uses the example of two ships, *L’Auguste*, 990-tonne, and heavily armed with 22 canons, which departed on 18 November for China with 175 men. The cost was 776,252 *livres*. Of this amount, the cargo destined for Pondicherry was worth 511,229 *livres*, while the cargo for China was worth only 420 *livres*. By contrast, the *Puysieux* weighing 700 tonnes, with 20 canons and 144 men, with a cargo worth 601,090 *livres*, left Lorient on 21 October 1752. 66,437 *livres* worth of goods were bound for Bourbon, 108,377 *livres* for Isle de France and 188,402 *livres* for China.<sup>59</sup>

An innovation brought by French East India Company ships coming into the Indian Ocean was that they did not use French textiles in the slave trade; Indian textiles were far cheaper and so, when they brought French textiles, they sold it off in the Mascarenes where they were bought at high prices by the French settler population. Indian textiles were also purchased in India and then exchanged for slaves destined for the Mascarenes and the Americas.

More evidence of the distinctiveness of the Mascarenes and Indian Ocean trade comes from the research of Max Guerout who has also been examining the history and shipwreck of the *Utile* which left Malagasy slaves stranded on Tromelin Island for several years. He describes the trade as a ‘*double traite*’ (double trade). He believes that historians have ignored the shorter trips made by the same ships that made long-distance voyages.<sup>60</sup> Both Toussaint and Mettas missed these short trips in their lists. Richard Allen has come to the same conclusion and is also substantially reviewing Toussaint’s and Filliot’s figures. Thus, during the Seven Years War (1756-1763), when the Governor based in Mauritius banned the slave trade, his orders were ignored by the Captain of the *Utile*, Jean de Lafarge, who embarked, not only cattle and rice from Madagascar, but slaves also. Many other such cases abound. East Indian Company ships also carried slaves during the ban, but this information never entered Company’s account books. One example is the *Jesus Maria Jose* which, in 1761, carried 210 slaves from Mozambique to Mauritius. When the ship reached Mauritius, the Company had to buy the slaves at 55 *piastres* each.

**Double traite** also occurred with ships going from France to Mozambique. The *Constance Pauline*, belonging to Frabaud & Co from Marseille, went from France to Mozambique but also made other trips: between August 1788 and July 1789, to Isle de France and back. The same occurred from Bordeaux: *La Victoire* left on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1783, reached Mauritius on 8 November, then to Kilwa, where it bought 200 slaves and then on to Bombetoc (Madagascar), when it bought 80 slaves. We do not know yet how many reached Mauritius. The same ship went back to Mozambique, bought 162 slaves and went on to the Cape and Haiti. Cochon Trop Long owned the *Oiseau* which left Bordeaux 2 March 1786, made 5 voyages, 4 of which were between Mauritius and East Africa. His last trip was to the USA. According to Guerout, there was perfect ‘synchronism’ in activities between Marseilles and Bordeaux between 1781 and 1792.

### Outfitting the slave ship

The ‘success’ of a slaving voyage depended on the careful planning and the work of three individuals on board the ship: the barrel-maker (‘*tonnelier*’), the carpenter and the cook. The carpenter had to rebuild the interior of the hold to accommodate as many slaves as possible; the comfort of slaves not being a major consideration. But the ship also had to accommodate other items: provisions, water, cargo etc. The barrel-maker had to supply abundant fresh water, particularly for long distances or lengthy voyages.

The financing of slave voyages was a high-risk venture. French long-distance trade, including slave trade voyages, was an expensive high-risk venture. Either only the wealthy could engage in it, or those who had also invested in other ventures. Long-distance trade could generate very high profits because of *arbitrage* and because the costs of high investment declined as distances increased. The financing of the slave trade has, however, been little studied generally, even though evidence points to the fact that banks and international commerce did finance the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>61</sup> Whether the same occurred in the Indian Ocean remains to be established.

Our findings indicate that for the Indian Ocean, much of the capital required was financed through the ‘sociétés’ (companies) created, and where various groups and individuals provided the funds with the main person retaining the majority of shares. Moreover, those who financed the slave voyages were, more often than not, from existing merchant families, i.e., in St. Malo. When they did not have sufficient funds, they associated with merchants from other ports or even with the nobility.<sup>62</sup> In Mauritius (Isle de France), one of the early companies to be created and to engage in slave trading was no less than one created by Mahé de Labourdonnais himself, on the ships *Aigle* and *Parfaite* in 1742 and *Jupiter* and in 1744.

In Mauritius, the emergence of a trading bourgeoisie has been well-documented by Auguste Toussaint in his various works, but the links between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds have yet to be studied. Some preliminary studies have been carried out, in comparing efficiencies of British versus French traders, with British traders being considered more efficient, because of the ‘personal nature’ of French business structure.<sup>63</sup>

## 1.6. Profits, ports and prices

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As far as ports and profits are concerned, the differences between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean’s experience of the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century are quite stark. Two examples will suffice: in the Caribbean the Haitian revolution led to a fall in plantation production and a decrease in long-distance trade ‘for a generation’. In Mauritius, sugar and plantation production increased exponentially. Secondly, the impact of European wars were not necessarily detrimental to the slave trade or trade in general<sup>64</sup> in the Indian Ocean as corsair activity, in particular, proved very profitable.

Thus, although “War changed the way trade investments were conducted, but it did not shut down all opportunities for profitable operations.” The Mascarenes, where the bulk of the maritime traffic was centred, also served as a naval base. It was rare to find any voyages specifically destined for the Mascarenes, unless they were small ships with small tonnages, where the investment resembled one in *droiture*.

A third area of difference between the two oceans is the profits derived from the slave trade which was possibly more consequential in the Indian Ocean than in the Atlantic. However this deserves further study.

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### PROFITS

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The profits emanating from the slave trade have been the subject of study in the Atlantic Ocean for a long time by pre-industrial economists and cliometricians. According to Daudin, there are three methods to study slave trade profits: first, theoretical results from competition theory; secondly, theoretical reconstruction of profit rates, and thirdly, examination of traders’ accounts.<sup>65</sup> The different estimates of annual profit rates, based on the second method, range between 7.1 % and 30 %.<sup>66</sup> Estimates of annual profit rates, based on the third method, range between 8 % and 10 %.<sup>67</sup>

For the Indian Ocean, it would appear from the Literature that there was a greater chance of the Indian Ocean slave trade being, in the long run, more profitable than in the Atlantic for the period after 1780s. Daudin’s study thus recommends the use of Private Archives to calculate the profits of the slave trade; in other words, to examine the aggregate data of one *armateur* and one vessel. There are, however, few detailed studies of voyages relevant to giving a conclusive answer. We are better able to understand the mechanism and operation of the slave trade through recent works of French historians published by the *Anneaux de la Mémoire Association* in Nantes.

Research so far on sources on Mauritius does not reveal much about profits derived from the slave trade: in the 1760s, profits from Madagascar were considered negligible for locals, according to a letter from Governor Dumas on the ‘Bénéfices de la traite à Madagascar’ in 1768:

“Si la traite produit des esclaves il faut en compléter les ateliers du Roy et ce complet va au moins à 300, après quoi il faut encore les distribuer aux habitants à peu près au prix qu’ils

*reviendront et recevoir en payement leurs denrées, de tout cela peut-il entrer un sol dans la caisse? ”<sup>68</sup>*

However, on other occasions, profits were clearly made. Captain Francois Remi Cotte of the *Saturne* wrote to the *armateurs* that he had made a 92% profit from trading 503 slaves at 760 *livres* per slave in and selling them for 1600 *livres*.

A word about currency is necessary here. ‘*Livres*’ were used in public offices since the foundation of the island. The *Livre* was a ‘nominal coin value of about one-fifth to about one-tenth of the value of the Spanish dollar and *doublons* (the latter being legally current at 16 Spanish dollars). However, individuals and companies and Customs kept accounts and subscribed engagements in Spanish dollars. One *livre* was about \$10 (Spanish) in the 1790s. With the Imperial Government Rule, the currency used was *francs*, at the rate of five *francs* 50 *centimes* for the Spanish dollar. By 1810, 200 hundred *sous*, ten *livres* or two rupees of colonial money made one dollar.<sup>69</sup>

Where did the funding come from? Historians seem to concur on this point that most had have been quite wealthy to have engaged in the slave trade. Wealth could have come from inherited fortune or through marriage to a rich family or to have accrued from accumulated profits during trade. We do not have enough information about the genealogies of families to study this in depth.

Agents and *armateurs* were the principal persons involved in the economic side of the trade: agents received commissions for the sale of slaves for all transactions. Captains too benefited, while the *armateur*, often sitting in La Rochelle or Nantes etc. had to wait for the profits to materialise slowly from the time the slaves were sold, since plantation owners took their time to pay. Profits were thus long-term profits. This no doubt led Garesché to write: “Expeditions for the slave trade only make victims now [...]. Captains, agents are the only ones to benefit from it, and the *armateur* is forced to bear loss or grow old waiting for profits.”<sup>70</sup> Risks involved in those days included shipwrecks, revolts, disease etc. in the Atlantic, as in Indian Ocean, or seizures of ships by the enemy, notably the British.

Finally, according to McWatters, most research about the Atlantic underscores the fact that trade was not highly profitable, but provided modest market returns. Indeed, an individual voyage could be interpreted as a lottery in which the possibility for great profits (or losses) existed, depending on the confluence of a number of market and political factors, but this is not conclusive because of the absence of detailed accounts.<sup>71</sup>

Pétre-Grenouilleau notes: “[...] que la durée d’amortissement du prix d’un captif est courte (un an et demi à la Barbade anglaise, vers 1645), que l’individu en question représente un capital toujours disponible, et qu’il ajoute au prestige de son propriétaire”.<sup>72</sup> The return from slaves, in terms of production, was also discussed in various reports to the Chambre de Commerce at Nantes. For instance, in the Archives Départementales, the amount of sugar produced is discussed, relative to the cost of slaves in different years.<sup>73</sup>

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## PORTS

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It is also important to look at the role of specific ports engaged in the slave trade to the Indian Ocean and the Mascarenes specifically, as there are significant differences between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic. Five main ports were engaged in the Indian Ocean.

The percentage of slaves taken away from their homeland by the ships leaving these ports has been estimated as: Nantes 41.3 %, Bordeaux 11.4 %, La Rochelle 11.3 %, and the Havre 10.8 %. There are no final figures yet for the Indian Ocean.

### Bordeaux

Between 1672 and 1837, some 480 ships left Bordeaux for the French Caribbean and carried 150,000 or more Africans from their homeland.<sup>74</sup> **The first ship to arrive in Mauritius from Bordeaux carrying slaves was the *Bretagne* from Pondicherry.** As Bordeaux came late to the slave trade, it faced tough competition from other ports, and this may have been a reason why it switched its source to the Eastern African coast. It developed rapidly, having a rich hinterland and

producing wine. Thus trade flourished, including slave trade. It became France's second slaving port after Nantes. Out of 386 slaving ships, the destinations were as follows:

270	St. Domingue (Haiti)
31	Martinique
13	Guadeloupe
14	Cuba (19 <sup>th</sup> century)
37	Mauritius. <sup>75</sup>

According to the Bureau des Douanes in Bordeaux, it was not a triangular trade but rather a quadrangular trade.<sup>76</sup> This confirms what was stated earlier about the *double trade*. However, Bordeaux found in the slave trade a complement to her existing trade which began to make her the second slave port of France, next to Nantes. In the estimation of scholars, the trade involved 130,000 to 150,000 slaves taken away in 480 expeditions, thus representing 11.4 % of the total leaving French ports.<sup>77</sup> The figure of 480 ships is higher than the estimate of Saugera. It was not a specialist's activity and, according to the Conservatoire, the ship Captains undertook many other voyages other than slave voyages. Ships used at first were small ships, sloops, goëlettes and corvettes, but after 1763, ships had a higher tonnage, 250 to 500 tonnes.

Our knowledge of slave trading from Bordeaux is partly limited, due to the fire that occurred in the Port Archives in 1919.<sup>78</sup> The *Journaux de bord* are our only detailed source for daily events occurring during a slave trade voyage. The log book of the *Patriote* from Bordeaux to Mauritius, for example, shows that there was not a simple triangular trade: It left Mauritius on 10 April 1789 and arrived in Bordeaux on 17 February 1791. Numerous slave trading stops took place along the way.<sup>79</sup> The voyage of *Licorne* is also interesting: although the slaves were destined for the Atlantic voyage, this ship made a stopover in Mauritius, according to Toussaint, on 4 June 1787, before going to Mozambique to procure slaves, and then on to the Cape of Good Hope where some slaves were disembarked before making the Atlantic voyage.<sup>80</sup>

From 1783 to 1793, in total, some 262 slaving voyages were made out, of which 80 ships to the Indian Ocean went from Bordeaux, increasing its share of the slave trade from 5 to 12 %.

The first ships from Bordeaux appear to have arrived as early as 1773, clearly having come to engage in the slave trade, judging from their destinations in the South West Indian Ocean (see database): the *Aventurier*, a 150-tonne *senau*, made one voyage in 1773-4 from Bordeaux to the Indian Ocean. It made several trips within the region: to Kerimba, Madagascar, Bourbon and Mauritius, and back to Bordeaux.<sup>81</sup> It was commanded by Brugevin. The *Affiches, Annonces [...]* of 13 January 1773 noted that the ship made two stops in Kerimba and Madagascar, before arriving in Port Louis on 9 January 1773, loaded with slaves for Mr. de la Maretty. It then went to Bourbon in March 1773. Another trip was made to Mozambique in 1774. It arrived in Port Louis on 22 June 1774, but the future owner of slaves was not mentioned in the records.

Two further trips were made to India but no cargo was listed in the *Affiches, Annonces et Avis divers*.<sup>82</sup>

The *Bourbonnaise*, commanded by Descormiers, arrived in Mauritius in December 1773 from Kerimba. This originally privately-owned *goëlette* had previously made several trips from Port Louis to Black River District, transporting wood, then made longer trips as a King's ship to Bourbon and, by the end of December, it was going again as a private ship to Kerimba. As for the *Alliance*, it arrived in Mauritius in September 1774 from Bordeaux, but there are no records of stops in Africa or Madagascar.

Not much activity occurred in the 1770s from Bordeaux to the Indian Ocean. In the 1780s, many more ships arrived only to stop again from 1794 to 1795, probably because of the abolition of the slave trade. Corsairs and non-French ships continued supplying Mauritius with slaves illegally. A large number of American ships left Bordeaux to come to the Indian Ocean in this period of 1794-5, but there were no French ships from Bordeaux, it would appear.

## Lorient

In Jean Meyer's study, *La France et l'Asie*, it is estimated that over 1,000 trips were made from France to the Indian Ocean. From 1730-1734, according to him, only one *armement* of the East India Company left Lorient. This increased considerably after 1746 but dwindled again a few years later. Latest figures, compiled by Le Lan for the recent Slave Trade Conference organized by the TJC, at the University of Mauritius, estimated at about 92,000, the number of slaves whom the Company exiled, using Lorient as a base. **The first ship from Lorient to bring slaves to Mauritius was *La Meduse* which embarked 237 slaves from Juda.** Between 1728 and 1756, all ships appear to have gone to West Africa to procure slaves.

Haudrère has stated that the slaving voyages, with 630 slaves on board, between 1729 and for 1730 were a total failure because of the high mortality rate. He has described these voyages as a 'hecatomb'.<sup>83</sup> In one ship, out of the 200 slaves, 35 died before reaching the Cape and another 30 died in transit at the Cape, due to the cold and not being properly clothed. 93 more died en route to the Mascarenes. 42 disembarked, out of whom 11 died during disembarkation. The FEIC had two main trading posts in West Africa: Juda in Dahomey and Gorée in Senegal. In Gorée, a fort had been built where French traders, their slaves and goods were 'secure'. According to Le Lan.

« *la Compagnie avait de nombreuses implantations de traite en Afrique, dont deux importantes: un fort à l'île de Gorée au Sénégal et un à Juda au Dahomey ainsi que de nombreux points de contact baptisés escales. Un fort était une infrastructure mettant à l'abri les ressortissants français, les captifs et les marchandises, des vétilités adverses alors que les escales n'étaient que des parcelles de terrain sur lesquels les chefs indigènes avaient autorisés les français à commercer.* »<sup>84</sup>

In addition to these ships, the **C4 series** mentions another ship, the *Fleury*, which was to bring slaves from Senegal.<sup>85</sup> Le Lan has analysed the 19 voyages mentioned by Mettas to Isle de France between 1769 and 1791. He found that of the 19 ships, only 3 definitely came to Mauritius, while 5 others probably came; the others went to on to sell the slaves in the Caribbean. Twelve companies undertook these 19 trips, trading some 6,205 slaves and some 2,910 slaves to Mauritius alone between 1771 and 1791.

### Marseilles

Marseilles developed a powerful set of merchants in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, from 250 merchants to over 750 by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. According to latest figures, most of these went to the Americas, and it was only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> that they came to the Mascarenes.<sup>86</sup> Many reasons have been advanced for the lack of interest before this period, all the more intriguing as voices were raised against the slave trade: lack of knowledge of the Atlantic compared to other ports, lack of freight (they only had wines and cloth).<sup>87</sup> They were also more used to quicker returns, having traded with Mediterranean countries for so long.

On Toussaint's list was the *Félicité* on 9 July 1793. Although trade resumed after 1803, only a few ships made it to Mauritius from Marseilles; the last ship was the *Paquebot de Marseilles* whose Captain was Chauvin in 20 September 1805. But the main reason for the rise of Marseilles in the slave trade was the *prime* offered in colonies for every head of slave brought as from 1784.

### St. Malo

In the French slave trade, St. Malo ranks as perhaps the fifth port and deserves its appellation as the port of corsairs. It started slave trading later than other ports and began when trade restrictions were imposed by peace treaties; it preferred more traditional activities. The biggest trader was Magon de la Balue between 1717 and 1744, but it is between 1748 and 1788 that there was a real boom, with the largest fortunes made in Marseilles. Magon armed several slave trading ships, *Zélé*, *Le duc de Choiseul*, *Le Duc de Praslin*, *Le Modeste*. Charles Carrière has compiled a list of some 40 merchants engaged in the slave trade.

Between 1773 and 1819, 129 ships set sail from Marseilles to the Mascarenes alone, according to Toussaint. Buti says that it was because of the terms of the Seven Years War and the Treaty of Paris, that the sugar islands in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean became more important and the plantation economies started emerging.<sup>88</sup>

Some of the Huguenot traders among them, according to Carrière,<sup>89</sup> also belonged to Freemason Societies, La Loge Saint Jean d'Ecosse, in particular. Names of ships reflect this freemason influence: *Les Bons Amis*, *La Concorde*, *l'Union*. Among famous names of traders were Aenaud, Beaussier, Bigaud, Chauvet, Dallest, Mathieu, Solier, Martin and Salavy. Many were also academics. Between 1767 and 1785, Rambert lists 18 ships bound for Mascarenes. For 1785 to 1789, 33 ships are listed. Dermigny, in *Cargaison Indiennes*, lists 6 voyages from Marseilles between 1781 and 1791. How many of these engaged in slave trading remains to be determined.

For Mauritius, in the early years of French colonization, St. Malo was the first port to supply slaves regularly, and many 'Malouins' were actively engaged in the slave trade to Mauritius and Réunion. The best known (Malouin) is Governor Labourdonnais himself. Other Governors, such as Bouvier de Lozier and Rene Magon, also contributed to the slave trade and expansion of the slave population on the island.

From Port Louis, several other voyages were made to procure slaves in India, Madagascar, and Mozambique, while Company ships brought slaves from West Africa. Many of these ships' Captains and traders were from St. Malo. Corsairs were active in periods of war, but during peace time, they were active in trading and in commerce, of which the slave trade played a vital part. How important for the Indian Ocean, and particularly for Mauritius, was corsair activity, has not yet been estimated by historians, who have chosen to study the more 'heroic' past of St. Malo and its people than its corsair and maritime activities. There was no barrier between the different maritime activities. People engaged in all maritime activities, depending on the circumstances. The existence of '*négociants/négriers*' or merchant/slavers was a reality; in other words, people who were merchants were also involved in the slave trade. In St. Malo, the best example and the most famous of these persons was Mesle de Grandclos, whose biography has been written.

Captains trading after 1763 included: Jean Baudry, Paul Hardy, Jean Francois Corbille, Merven. Grandclos employed Nicolas Le Gue, Joseph Daniel des Landes, Dominique Jallobert, Baudran de Maupertuis, Louis Athanase Ohier, Toussaint Leforestier, Charles Ozelle and Pierre Carre.

St. Malo's trade in slaves appears to decline after 1770. In later years, many traders abandoned slave trading. Many relocated to other ports. Pottier de la Houssaye continued, as did Mesle de Grandclos. But the others, Hercouet, Deshaies, Harrington, Dubois and Fichet Desjardins, abandoned the trade.

### Nantes

Although much written about, Nantes was not as important for the Mauritius slave trade as for the Atlantic. We have little information yet on how many ships arrived in Mauritius before the end of Company rule. The latest research on Nantes-Mauritius slave trade comes from Alain Romaine who noted some 15 ships registered with the *Amirauté* and who went to Mozambique to procure slaves.<sup>90</sup> According to McWatters, who has studied trade from this port for the period 1763 to 1792, the total number of ships 'outfitted' at Nantes rose from 127 to 230 per year; the average tonnage increased from 182.28 to 235.97 tonnes.

During the period between 1773 and 1810, studied by Toussaint, a total of 43 ships came from Nantes to the Mascarenes. How many traded in slaves is not yet clear. Between 1772 and 1778, only 7 ships were armed for the East African coast between 1772 and 1778. Between 1783 and 1793, only 14 or 15 arrived between 1783 and 1793, as against 80 from Bordeaux. It appears that there were cash-flows and liquidity problems, and they could not supply Arab and Portuguese intermediaries with the required amount of *piastres*. They thus preferred to engage in trade with partners who could purchase Nantese or French products.

### La Rochelle

Although according to Deveau<sup>91</sup> who has focused on the Caribbean, 427 ships left La Rochelle to engage in slave trading, it is not for certain how many came to Mauritius.<sup>92</sup> For the Revolutionary period, 39 ships are listed by Toussaint, with the last ship arriving in 1790. Twenty-two of these are said to have carried Captains, who engaged in multiple voyages, included Robin, Lalande, Desplannes/De planne. The boost to trade as with other ports, came in 1784 with a *prime* of 40 *livres* given to every *tonne jauge*.

La Rochelle is of interest to Mauritius because of the activities of a few individuals. When trade was dwindling during the Revolutionary Period and ending with Haiti by 1792, the slave traders organized lobbies to maintain the trade and were supported by metal and textile manufacturers who were supplying slave ships. They sent a representative, Jean Baptiste Nairac, operating in Isle de France, to defend their cause in the National Assembly on the grounds that lack of trade would bring ruin to the port. The slave trade was maintained.<sup>93</sup>

### **Brest, Le Havre et Honfleur, Rochefort**

There was very little slave trading between these Ports and Mauritius. However, the last slave trading ship, the *Épervier* from Brest, went to the Indian Ocean and to Mauritius; it made its slave trading journey from Ibo, disembarking on 3 January 1785. Although the records showed a Brest to Brest trip, they fail to mention the slave trading trip to Ibo. We do not know yet how many slaves came to Mauritius. From Brest also came some well-known names in MAuritiuS, such as the Trebuchet family. According to Eric Saunier, the Hague and Honfleur saw the start of about 500 slaving voyages,<sup>94</sup> But according to Toussaint, only one came to the Indian Ocean between 1773 and 1803 from the Hague and 7 from Honfleur. None appear to have come during Company rule. Although the hinterland at Rochefort was ideal for trading and it supplied the crew required for long-haul voyages, the slave trade was not that important. The *Boulongne* and the *Boutin*, both of equal tonnage, arrived on the same day in Mauritius (see slave trade database 1729-1765). Whether they carried slaves is not known yet.

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### **PRICES**

Accounting historians have been investigating how the accounts of the slave trade were kept. A unique journal, the *Guide du commerce*, written by Gaignat de l'Aulnais in 1771, has led to a detailed and equally unique historical study by Cheryl McWatters.<sup>95</sup> In this journal, McWatters highlights the basic documents required for a slave trading expedition, according to Gaignat. These were: “*Le journal de traite, le livre de factures, le journal de vente des noirs et achats en retour et enfin le grand livre*” (Eng trans: *The slave trading journal, the receipt book, the sales of slaves book, and purchases book and finally the big book*). Although written for Atlantic voyages, it seems unlikely that it would have been any different in the Indian Ocean, since many of the ships and Captains were the same. A greater search of the accounts of slave traders might reveal as yet unknown facets of the history of slavery and the slave trade. For example, it is currently impossible to quantify the volume of trade carried on in the interior: those who were simply captured and kidnapped from their villages and where no trading took place. Oral traditions in Mozambique exist and deserve further study. Benigna Zimba, Mozambican historian, has recommended that memorialistaion of this part of the history of the slave trade should also be included in future representations of slavery in Mauritius.

The medium of exchange was at first textiles, rum and muskets. But in Madagascar, the Malagasy increasingly began to demand hard currency, in Spanish *piastres*. By 1807, the French trader, Sylvain Roux, wrote that slaves cost 45 *piastres*, as well as 2 bales of blue cloth. i.e., forming 80% of the transaction.<sup>96</sup> The French Government believed such trade could only be profitable, if it had exclusive rights over Madagascar slave trading, because it could not compete with private traders. It appears that traders had goods produced in India, which Malagasy traders did not want, and they were forced to ask for hard currency in *piastres*.<sup>97</sup> Thus currencies were increasingly used but one must also bear in mind the multiplicity of currencies at the time and fluctuations in the value of each currency during wars, for example, or depending on the economic fortunes in France and in Europe generally. *Piastres* or *livres* were the currency used in Mauritius.

Prices ranged widely according to the country of origin at the time. Prices mentioned here refer to a male adult slave, the typical slave sought after for the various tasks being undertaken in Mauritius.<sup>98</sup> In the early years of Isle de France, slaves could be procured for 100 *livres*. In 1732, the East India Company bought Indian slaves at 3-4 *piastres* per head in India. Within Mauritius, however, in 1738, slaves were being sold for far more at 200 *piastres* per slave.<sup>99</sup> This was still the case in 1745 for Mozambican and Malagasy slaves, while West African slaves were the most preferred and sold at 250 *piastres* per slave.<sup>100</sup> By 1758, this had gone up to 400 *piastres* for a slave from Madagascar.<sup>101</sup>

In 1763, it was stated that the Company was selling slaves cheaper than private traders: Malagasy and Mozambican slaves at 25-30 *piastres* per slave, while those from Goa fetched 40-45 *piastres*.<sup>102</sup> On 30 November 1767, M. Poivre provided details of prices of slaves:<sup>103</sup>

Pièce d'Inde and from Guinea:	720	Mozambique:	540
Madagascar:	360	Indian:	300

Prices fluctuated in the country of origin and according to traders, or so it would seem.

### 1.7. How were slaves sold in countries of origin?

**Madagascar:** Through the collective works of Gwym Campbell, Pier Larson and Richard Allen, we have learnt much about internal dynamics of slave trading to Mauritius from Madagascar.

**Mozambique:** We know less about Mozambique as far as Mauritius is concerned. Benigna Zimba's field work in the slave trade route has been crucial in adding to our knowledge to the TJC's attempt to understand local routes within Mozambique and Eastern Africa leading to Mauritius. A film directed by Benina Zimba, and co-produced by the TJC and the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Centre, is in the making which TJC expects to be launched by the Nelson Mandela Centre in the not too distant future. It will be the first time that Mauritians will see the interior of the Mozambique slave route and hear Mozambican descendants of slaves and traders talk about their ancestors memories of the slave trade.

The **places** from which slaves were taken such as the Mozambican regions of Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Zambézia, Delagoa Bay, and Inhambane. These need to be studied further as well as the local powers that developed some of the most significant slave systems of Eastern Africa. Rebuilding of genealogies of families of slaves and/or descendants of slave masters need to be undertaken in both countries. In Mozambique, for example, the influence of well-known dynasties such as the Mataca, which played a major role in the export of slaves from the hinterland to the Islands of the Indian Ocean, including Mauritius.

Merchants gathered slaves gradually over days and weeks. In Inhambane, French slave traders were known as *Mafutres*. Within Eastern Africa, the main agents involved in the slave trade need to be better known. These include Africans, Arabs and Indians involved in the process of capture and internal selling, before slaves embarked at the ports of the exportation.

- Agents in Mozambique include: the Yao, Xeiques from Afro Islamic kingdoms such as Quitangonha, Sancul, Sangage and Angoche), *prazeiros* from the Zambeze Valley, Portuguese colonialists from Inhambane, Nguni groups that dominated in Delagoa Bay and Barra do Limpopo in Gaza.
- Agents outside Mozambique but in Eastern Arica include: Xeiques from Afro Islamic territories such Zanzibar, East Africa, Kenya, Somalia, French, Portuguese and Indians.

The main ports for the exports of slaves include:

- Ilha de Moçambique, Ilha do Ibo, Túngué, Angoche, Quelimane, Sofala, Inhambane, and Delagoa.

It is important to distinguish between the place of capture and the ports of sale and departure. In this period, slaves came mainly from:

- **Niassa**, regions inhabited by the **Macua** - Lomué, Xeicados of Sancul, Sangage, Quitangonha, and Angoche, Inhambane, Delagoa.

The **Yao States** have played a crucial part in slave exports from Northern Mozambique to the Indian Ocean for centuries.

In Northern Mozambique, Mataca and Makanjila were two of the most important African States which played a crucial role in the enslavement of trade of the local population. During the period between the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century and the first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ilha do Ibo was

negatively affected by frequent attacks of the Sakalavas and the Makhuwa resistance against trade and the enslavement of the local population. This situation changed from 1820 onwards, when Ilha do Ibo became an important port of slave exports. Until *circa* 1830, Yao merchants traded exclusively with French slave traders. After 1830, the Yao slave trade from Ilha do Ibo extended to the Americas.<sup>104</sup>

The slaves were not only transported on foot to the ports but were also carried on small boats (*pangaios*) from satellite ports and/or other far away located points of concentration. They were then transported to bigger ports and onto the bigger ships that we are familiar with. French traders had 6 to 10 *pangaios* responsible for bringing slaves in small numbers from satellite ports. From these satellite ports they then transported slaves in bigger ships towards, Comores, Nosibe, Anjouan, Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles. Local merchants known as *Mujojo* (or *Ajojo*) were responsible for the capture and the sale of the slaves transported in *pangaios*, in small numbers. The *Mujojo* traded in slaves and cloth known as *fazenda* and *fazenda cafreal* (Kaffir cloth). The *Mujojo* also used to steal slaves from one place to another and redirect the trade of slaves, according to the needs of the owners of ships that transported the slaves to the Mascarenes.<sup>105</sup>

Another group in Mozambique that deserves our attention is the “Baneane.” *Baneane* were Indian merchants originally from Surat and Cambay, who settled in Diu and Damao. They first started commercial transactions with Eastern Africa, by the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>106</sup> Both the *Mujojo* and *Baneane* deserve the attention of historians and are part of Mozambican-Mauritius connection.

Connections between Southern Mozambique and Mauritius and the Indian Ocean are more frequent in the nineteenth century and during the last stages of the slave trade. However, it continued with other countries, particularly Réunion until the 1850s.

It is important also to know that trading with Mozambique did not end with the abolition of the slave trade. According to the Cape Archives, Delagia Bay served as a meeting point for ships from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, Mauritius and Madagascar and South Africa.<sup>107</sup>

It is unfortunate that we have been unable so far to trace the origins of names of slaves from Mozambique, but this study must continue. The difficulty has been because some slaves were already baptized, from the 1760s onwards and were given Christian names.<sup>108</sup> According to Zimba, in a number of cases, baptized slaves did not know their birth names. However, all is not lost as according to Mozambican tradition, the names of the regions were also very often the same as those of the people.

The French slave trade existed between the 1720s to the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century without significant interruption. However, although important to Mauritius, the slave trade to Mauritius was small compared to the large slave trade emerging after 1810. For the French traders, however, it was a lucrative business, The Portuguese insisted that French ships should declare, to the port's Customs Services, all merchandise on board. In 1796, the French destroyed the Portuguese factory in Lourenço Marques; this event strongly impacted the ongoing slave trade.<sup>109</sup>

## 1.8. How were slaves sold in Mauritius?

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Slaves were sold in various ways, if they were introduced legally.

- Slaves brought by the Company would be ‘distributed’ between the various inhabitants who required them.
- Others would be sold by the Notary usually in his office
- Slaves were also sold at auctions. One recorded site of sale was at the Place d’Armes.
- In the 1790s, because of the smallpox epidemic, slaves were sold on board after being vaccinated. This occurred on the *Saturne* whose voyage has been described in detail by Alain Romaine.<sup>110</sup>

Because duties had to be paid on every slave, and officers received a reward for every slave brought alive, the slaves had to be brought to be assessed by the Customs for duty. Many traders tried to avoid this by hiding slaves on board. Others landed slaves at other points of the island, such as at Bel Ombre, where they could be easily hidden in the numerous caves in that area. These areas deserve as much memorialisation as official slave sale sites in Port Louis.

In the 1760s, according to Law, information about the arrival of slaves on ships was given to the public by a poster appearing on walls. Private archives may contain some of the posters but none so far have been located in public archives nor in some private archives opened to us such as the MCB Archives.

When Liberated Africans were brought in the nineteenth century, they too passed through the same Customs House as slaves. A certain continuity thus existed in the sites used for disembarkation of slaves, Liberated Africans and indentured. After formalities had been completed, the Liberated Africans were taken to the Immigration Depot where they would be registered as indentured immigrants, just like the indentured labourers who were being brought from India. These sites, the Customs and the site of the Immigration Office (today a World Heritage Property) need to be adequately memorialised. However a new symbolical site needs to be identified to memorialise in a permanent way a site relating to the landing of slaves in Mauritius. While other landing places exist for people who have come as immigrants, such as the Salines or at the Apravasi Ghat, a memorial place for those people brought as ‘cargo’ is also necessary so that the Mauritian population may see and understand the full breadth of the trade and all facets of how forced immigration has occurred in Mauritius.

## 1.9. The Slave voyage

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### a. Trauma during the passage

Much has been written about revolts and mortality on board ships and very little will be said of this here. More recently, attention has been focused on the state of mind of slaves during the wait in the slave depot, and during the transportation on ships and the psychological trauma that ensued. If narratives of the passage abound for immigrants later in the century, they are sorely missing from the slavery records in the Indian Ocean; only the acts of slaves give us some indication of their state of mind.

The journal of the *Espérance* also shows the psychological trauma endured by the enslaved through the case of one female slave who allowed herself to die. She was described as being ‘tracassée’ or worried; ‘roulant d’un bord sur l’autre et chantant ensuite, [elle] est tombée dans un assoupissement dont elle est morte’.<sup>111</sup>

In some cases, the crew took the trouble to avoid any additional trauma for the slaves. Again, on the *Espérance*, when a baby and mother died, they were thrown overboard, with the baby being later found in the belly of a shark. This discovery was hidden from the slaves for fear of upsetting them, lest this might lead to a revolt.<sup>112</sup>

What enslaved peoples felt and thought as they boarded the ship taking them away can only be guessed at by us today. One can only imagine those moments through accounts of people who witnessed this departure. Henry Salt, witness to these moments, reflected on this:

*“I subsequently saw several dances of the same kind, in the slave-yards on the island of Mozambique; but on these occasions it appeared to me that the slaves were compelled to dance. I shall never forget the expression of one woman’s countenance, who had lately, I understood, been brought from the interior. She was young, and appeared to have been a mother, and when constrained to move in the circle, the solemn gloom that pervaded her features, spoke more forcibly than any language, the misery of her forlorn condition. If there be a sceptic who hesitates to approve of the abolition of the slave trade, let him visit one of these African slave-yards, a short time before a cargo of these wretched beings is exported, and if he have a spark of humanity left it will surely strike conviction to his mind”.*<sup>113</sup>

One has yet to calculate the numbers who died during the long walk to the coast, from the interior to the Mozambique for example; Epidariste Colin estimated it to be half:

*“Les négociants ont des agents qui pénètrent jusqu’à 250 et 300 lieues dans les terres pour faire les premiers achats et expédier les noirs par bandes de 4 à 500, sous la conduite d’un chef [...] accompagné de noirs ladines (civilisés). Et la troupe marche à petites journées, et bien souvent pendant la nuit. Durant ce voyage, où l’on traverse des déserts, la troupe manque quelquefois de provisions, et ne se nourrit alors que de racines et de plantes qu’elle rencontre sur son chemin: elle arrive enfin à Mozambique, diminuée au moins de la moitié. Ces esclaves alors sont accablés de fatigue et de besoin, et ont déjà quelques symptômes de dysenterie”.*<sup>114</sup>

#### b. Mortality and Revolt

Slave mortality on board ships has yet to be quantified accurately by statisticians and demographers. Estimates range from 10% to 50%, depending on the length of the voyage, supplies on board, disease, resistance of slaves etc. From East Africa, the figure was 21%. From West Africa, mortality was estimated to be between 25 to 30%.<sup>115</sup> According to Richard Allen, the ‘overall mortality’ appeared higher than for the Atlantic.<sup>116</sup>

The voyage from Madagascar took about 21 days and mortality rates were about 12%, while Mozambique voyages which took longer had on average a 28% death rate.

However, as Gerbeau reminds us, distance does not necessarily explain levels of mortality since other factors may be responsible: the illegal status of the voyage, for example, and the need to cram as many slaves on board, the spread of disease etc. In the 1790s, this had not changed. The *Saturne*, however, registered 9 % mortality during its voyage, in November 1793, from Kilwa, a lower percentage than the 14% figure provided by Allen and Filliot.<sup>117</sup>

When the French East India Company administered the island, it rewarded officers for bringing slaves alive.<sup>118</sup> According to Le Lan, this is because it hoped to make huge profits on the slave trade. Regulations were established for this purpose. Rewards were given to the Captain, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant for every slave brought alive to Mauritius. Thus, in June 1724, the Company acknowledged that Officers were undertaking perilous missions that required intelligence and dedication, if slaves were to be brought alive. In addition to recommending that the best Officers be engaged in this trade, a list of remuneration, according to the grade of Officers, was established. The lower orders, sailors etc., did not receive anything.

By 1749, this reward had increased to 25 *livres* per slave brought alive and 70 *livres* for every cargo exceeding a certain number.<sup>119</sup> Thus, for a ship carrying 400 slaves and with a mortality rate of 25%, this reduced the slave cargo to 300 slaves. On the first 200 slaves alive, 25 *livres* per head would be given, totalling 5,000 *livres*. On the 100 remaining, 70 *livres* per slave i.e., 7,000 *livres* were paid. Total rewards thus would amount to 12,000 *livres*

However, the fact that revolts often caused the deaths of slaves means that, a small part of the mortality can be attributed to these. It was disease, ill-health and change of diet that caused heavy mortality.

#### c. Revolt and escape

The revolts of slaves on board have been studied to some extent by several authors: Peerthum, Allen, Filliot. Both revolt and escape occurred on board and appeared to have been expected, when the ship was being outfitted for voyage i.e. extra strong fences, more guards etc. were provided. For ships bound for Mauritius, a number have been documented in earlier studies: Allen’s database of voyages lists only 23 voyages with revolts. Vernet’s transcription of the journal of the *Espérance* also shows that escapes occurred among women as well.

Epidariste Colin, who was on board these slaving voyages, made several observations on the voyages to the Mascarenes: “Je dirai d’abord qu’on embarque trop d’esclaves sur les navires de traite.” On the one which he observed, a ship of 100 tonnes, there were 318 slaves; only 128 reached Mauritius alive. Had it taken only 200 slaves, he commented, mortality would have been much less.<sup>120</sup> He was also against the practice of putting the strongest men in irons. This practice made the people more likely to revolt.

The change in diet proved fatal for many slaves; it was months before they were fed on vegetables. There was little variety as they were fed on rice twice a day, and rarely had maize or millet. The worst feature of the voyage on board, according to Colin, was the excrement piling up in barrels and which was only seldom changed at every quarter: the smell itself made slaves more ill. Ventilation was a huge problem, despite incense being burnt to counter the putrid smells. Dysentery was the greatest killer.<sup>121</sup>

Attempts to abolish the slave trade during the French period had been aborted by the slave traders themselves. But in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was less possible. In French ports, the *commerçants* of the Hague attracted all those traders, French and British, and it became the centre of opposition to the abolition of the slave trade. The Hague refused any extension of Human Rights in 1791 to free the Coloured population of the port. This has earned the port a notoriety for defending slavery. Freemasonry was also closely linked to both the slave trade and its abolition, as many traders were members of the freemason societies, as well as of the *Amis des Noirs*.

After 1815, it is almost impossible to trace the trade between Mozambique and Mauritius, since the slave trade was officially abolished in Mauritius and everything was carried out in an even more surreptitious manner than before. An illegal slave trade ensued. Estimates of the illegal slave trade are based on material wherever this information is provided accidentally i.e. when a ship was seized or sunk or a revolt occurred. Sometimes, as Laurent Pavlidis has shown, it came from ports that had little to do with the slave trade. Accurate figures have not been compiled as yet, but the most recent estimate is that 52,550 slaves were illegally imported for the Mascarenes as a whole. For Mauritius only, figures need to be compiled when the Database is completed. So far, one can only state that Mozambican slaves formed the majority of slaves (60%) before 1806-1808. After that period, illegal trading led to more Malagasy slaves being brought in. The percentage of Malagasy slaves of the total slave population rose from 25.1% to 36.8 % in 1826.

## 1.10. Memory, Identity and Representation

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The slave traders: The slave trade involved slaves and their buyers and sellers but in Mauritius it is only the slaves that are mentioned and rarely the traders, who are represented in their other roles rather than their slave trading roles. According to Daudin, there was a relatively closed network of people involved in it. The merchants and traders did not seek external funds; hence it was a 'close circuit' network. This was corroborated by Meyer's analysis: "L'examen des parts de navires nous conduit à admettre une circulation des capitaux en vase clos."<sup>122</sup> Often friends or family were recruited in these trading ventures. Most agree that the family connections were important in the slave trade, being the business of fathers, sons, uncles etc., as well as relatives by marriage. However, this appears to be less so in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>123</sup> The fact that, by then, there was already a member of the family settled in the colonies was an added factor in facilitating the slave trade.

The ownership of many sugar estates of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be traced to the days of slave trading when the captains of those ships were also trading in slaves and benefitted materially from them. The names of captains and some armateurs can be found in the names of owners of estates established in the early years of sugar estates being established. Many of course never survived the various economic crises and restructuring that occurred in Mauritius throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and closed down.

Stein argues that the personal nature of business structures in the French Atlantic impeded the development of an efficient organization and prevented merchants, reluctant to work in sectors where they lacked a commercial network, from adapting to new opportunities. Carrière's study of the Marseilles merchants, although not focussed on the slave trade, clearly demonstrates this. Of the 76 merchants in Marseilles, who were studied, 71% married among themselves. They did not take each other to court but resolved matters amicably (*règlement à l'amiable*).

According to Carrière's study of merchants in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Marseilles, the classic company was:

*"a family enterprise with perhaps one brother serving as a silent partner and the other actively managing the "affaire." An average firm would employ about four clerks or commis, who would handle the books and ecritures, though rarely the strongbox, which stayed in the*

*possession of the head of the firm. Some, usually sons of negociants, would eventually make their way to full partnerships. Surprisingly, there is little evidence of travel abroad by either young apprentices or full partners. Travel expenses, like fixed assets, were rarely listed in the account books and no doubt were minimal [...] A suspicion of parochialism is also suggested by the absence of foreign languages in the training of apprentices and by a lack of commercial manuals [...] On the other hand, the account books (grands livres) - those of the Roux and Bruny firms, for example, were superb specimens of legibility and clarity, with double entries and indexes".<sup>124</sup>*

There has also been some work on the origins of the families involved. As in La Rochelle and Bordeaux, there was a large number of Protestants, and many slave traders consequently were Protestant. In other ports, such as St. Malo, they were all Catholic. The slave trade would also appear to involve a family network, which linked the port to colonial-based companies. In Marseilles, 15% of merchants were Protestants, most of whom intermarried. The Swiss connection meant that financing was more readily secured for their ventures than others.<sup>125</sup>

We have few detailed individual studies of slave traders operating in the Mascarenes. By the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some of the trading was carried on from Mauritius. A total of 72 merchants and traders are listed in Port Louis and a good number were involved in the slave trade. Allen has quoted, for example, Messrs. Closnard, Cloupet, Collique, Drieux, Geoffriou, De La Rochelle, Le Blanc, Rolland, Le Bouchet, Le Bourdé, Dahuy Solminiac, La Corte, Laurent Raphaël, d'Hotman and Vally. Louis Monneron also had family links with merchants in India, while Morice focused on slave trading with Zanzibar. Apart from the traders there are also the captains of ships, many of whom have descendants today in Mauritius. Many were also corsairs and this is publicly stated. However they are less public about the slave trading involvement of that ancestor. In France, "Si le titre de corsair est loin de déplaire dans nos annales de famille, ce n'est pas sans regret que nous trouvons celui de négrier."<sup>126</sup> The same could be said of many families in Mauritius where some parts of family histories are thought best left hidden or conveniently forgotten.

It needs be remembered by these families, however, that the slave trading network involved not only French but a long string of other people in the chain and involving other nationalities: Indian financiers, Arab traders as well as chiefs of African kingdoms. Guilt if there is to be any today must be equally shared.

**The slaves:** The challenge for descendants of slaves on what origin to look back to help to uncover lost or forgotten identities is of a different nature. The slave registration returns do not show the original names but adopted names in Mauritius. With the mixing of slave populations and absence of adequate civil status records, it is a difficult task to reconstruct one's family history and identity.

Thus for about a third of the slave population, as there are no slave registers for the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most have Mauritius as their country of origin and none other. They are the '**Créole de Maurice**' as listed in the registers. **Mozambiques** form the second largest group including, as in 1765, all those from the Eastern Africa coast and mainland; **Malgaches** are the third largest group among slaves, also comprising all different groups in Madagascar, including a certain number of Mozambicans exported to Madagascar. In addition there are several smaller groups listed such as **Créole de Bourbon**, **Créole des Seychelles**, **Indian**, **Malay**, **Diégo Garcia**, **Anjouan**, **Guinea**, **Woloff**, **Rio de Janeiro**, **Malabar**, **Créole of Goa**, **Créole of Providence Island**, **Créole of Rodrigues**, **Arabe Mozambique**, **Créole des Six îles**, **Arab**, **Cochin**.

In a few years, if the collection of data continues on the slave trade in Mauritius and in France, it may be possible to trace the ships by which slaves arrived, even though we may not find the actual place of origin. By combining data from slave registers, an examination of the real itinerary, information about the sale of slaves obtained from Notarial records, we believe a complete picture for some families can be put together.

Over the years, identities fused: thus a slave from the East African coast became known as 'Mozambique' and a **Mozambique** was therefore anyone from Eastern Africa. The definition of what was a **Mozambique** appears at this time, as "noir Mozambique qui comprendra toute la côte orientale d'Afrique d'Abyssinie d'Egypte, depuis le Cap de Bonne Espérance jusqu'au port Suez".<sup>127</sup> Although it has been stated in the secondary literature, that stereotypes of slaves started, when

the slave trade increased in the 1760s onwards, the evidence from the French National Archives shows stereotyping and categorizing of various ethnicities in one group quite early in the slave trade. Thus 'Mozambican' slaves became trusted as were West African slaves; in fact, they were considered trustworthy enough to be recruited for the defence of the island. Women slaves from Mozambique were also appreciated for their reproductive capacity. Statements made at the time smack of breeding attempts: "Nombre trop modique de négresses Mozambique ou Bengalie [...] chaque vaisseau en apporte 12 ou 15 [...] elles peuplent plus et sont moins debauchées."<sup>128</sup>

**Branding and baptism:** Part of the identity markers at the time included the fact that the slave was a possession and was branded as such. Bodily marks in addition to his traditional tribal marks would be part of his identity. The religion of the slave was also another marker. These two 'actions' branding and baptism marked the formal 'entry' of the slave into the colonial slave world. Branding was the seal of his status as a 'good', as property, while the baptism signified that entry of the slave into the Christian kingdom. According to Filliot, slaves in Madagascar were branded at the site of trading itself, or if they had been purchased in the name of the King, they bore the mark of the King. This was usually the letter 'R' for 'Roi'. Those being sold to private individuals had the initials of the patronyms of the future owner. Drawings of many of these initials have been found in the slave registration returns and deserve to be studied.

In addition to the branding of initials of the owner, slaves in Mauritius were also found to have scarification patterns on them. Preliminary analysis reveals that some appear to be colonial scars, while others were traditional scarification marks. Further research is required on this and would link these scars to particular ethno-linguistic groups. The slave registration returns of 1826 indicate that many slaves from Eastern Africa were listed as having tattoo marks. According to information obtained from Benigna Zimba, the Makonde were the ones who performed extensive tattooing on their faces and bodies. Makonde were the group that practised scarification rather than other groups in Mozambique.

There are visible common traits between known Makonde tattoos and those found on slaves. According to Lars Krutak, the face and other parts of the body "contained chevrons, angles, zigzag and straight lines with an occasional circle, diamond, dot, or animal figure." He states: "After the cuts have been made with the traditional tattoo implements (chipopo), vegetable carbon [was] rubbed into the incisions producing a dark blue color." This blue colour was also observed on the bodies of slaves in the 1826 registration returns. Henry Salt's and Epidariste Coin's descriptions of tattoo marks on different groups need to be compared with the marks found on slaves arriving in Mauritius.

Makua are described as 'strong athletic race'. At the time of his list, the fashion was to "make a stripe down the forehead along the nose to the chin, and another in a direct angle across from ear to ear, indented in a peculiar way." They file their teeth to a point: "[...] they are likewise fantastic in the mode of dressing their hair; some shave only one side of the head, others both sides, leaving a kind of crest, extending from the front to the nape of the neck, while a few are content to wear simply a knot on the top of their foreheads."<sup>129</sup>

We also find out that they were "fond of music and dancing, [...] and have a favourite instrument called the *ambira* formed by a number of thin bars of iron, of different lengths, highly tempered and set in a row in a hollow case of wood."

Epidariste Colin's description echoes that of Salt; he refers to the preference of colonists for Makuhuwa slaves. Tattoos consisted of an oval mark on the temples and a smaller oval between the eyes. The Monjavas could be recognised by the star-shaped tattoos on the body and on the cheeks, as well as 2-3 horizontal marks above the temples. They were less robust than the Makhuwa tribe.

However, they were exhausted by the time they reached the coast and many perished once on board. Colin also noted their love of music and the similarity with the *tsega* found in the Mascarenes. The music was full of sweetness, and he even reproduced some musical notes:

Figure 5: Musical notes from a Monjava song



Source: Epidariste Colin, *Travels [...]*, p. 322.

Tattoos for Colin represented the 'caste' identity of the different ethnic groups, many of which came to Mauritius. Women of the Sofala group also pierced their upper lip and their tattoos consisted of curved lines from their foreheads to temples, and there were points on the cheeks and body.

Another 'cultural mark' was the baptism of slaves, as they filed into the slave ships prior to embarkation. This was the practice before embarkation in Madagascar and Mozambique, according to researchers in both countries. Machado added another dimension in his study of the competition between Portuguese and Asian traders on the Mozambican coast. They did not want slaves to be taken by Arabs and Indians because they were not Christian. Neither did they want them taken to non-Christian countries, such as India and the Persian Gulf.<sup>130</sup> However, this was quite difficult to control. Despite this, one also sees in the registration returns, mention of non-Christian slaves.

## Conclusion

When we have understood the importance of the French slave trade in the Indian Ocean and the accounting, mechanics and economics of the slave trade, the numbers involved in the slave trade needs to be better assessed. The numbers of slaves present in all ships that left the African and Malagasy coasts need to be compiled and an aggregate figure arrived at. How many left the interior and where they came from? How many reached the coast, and how many were embarked on board ships? How many died or escaped on the way and how many actually arrived? This needs to be studied to quantify the full extent of the slave trade.

Many Mauritians of African and Malagasy descent regret the fact that they do not know where they come from. It was thus essential to address this issue, and the TJC has done so in its recommendations. The approach has been multidisciplinary, but it is not possible to locate exact origins through archival search, as these mainly yield the port of departure from Africa and Madagascar, and not the origin of the slave. To undertake this study, DNA testing of a sample of Mauritians, believed to be of African and Malagasy origin, is required.

Justification for this approach may be sought in the words of one historian of the slave trade, Deveau:

*"S'il est temps d'écrire une histoire mondiale, prenant en compte l'ensemble des peuples (la redondance est parfois nécessaire [...]), il faut aller la chercher là où, jusqu'ici, l'historien s'est peu aventuré. Familier de la source écrite jusqu'à la virtuosité dans ses analyses, il semble, en revanche, complètement démuné devant d'autres types de sources comme la*

*mémoire orale, ou la mémoire gestuelle que la chorégraphie peut abondamment livrer, pour ne rien dire de l'analyse musicale. C'est pourtant là qu'il faut aller chercher l'histoire des esclaves. Mais avant d'y arriver, un immense travail de déculpabilisation reste à faire pour délier les langues qui n'osent pas évoquer un passé considéré comme dévalorisant, une sorte de tache indélébile qui collerait aux gènes familiaux et que l'on s'efforce de dissimuler. D'autre part ce type d'informations complètement déconnectées de leur cadre chronologique demande des méthodes d'analyse qui restent encore largement à mettre au point. Des croisements avec les sources écrites ou les données archéologiques donneront en particulier d'excellents résultats."*

## 2. SLAVERY IN ISLE DE FRANCE

### Introduction

Slavery in Isle de France is lesser known than slavery in British Mauritius largely, because historians have had greater access to its sources and because of the importance of the expansion of sugar and focus on the amelioration and abolition of slavery. The Commission has therefore chosen to highlight the salient points which deserve to be better known and be fully researched by scholars. Funding must be ensured for such research works to be carried out in the future and we must acquire documents from overseas and interact with scholars overseas. A good example of this was the Slave Trade Conference organised by the TJC in April 2010 which brought scholars and community leaders and members of the public together to share views. The Commission has, in the short time available, managed to collect part of the C4 series found in the French National Archives which contains the bulk of the official records of Isle de France, but certainly not the totality. Maroonage appears as a real problem as evidenced by the numerous volumes devoted to it in the C4 series; it has been also treated extensively in Mauritian historiography and will not here be discussed at any great length.

### 2.1 The nature of slavery

How was slavery established? This is important when one assesses consequences and continuities with the present systems and determines whether there was a continuous flow of concepts and ideology that continued up to the present day. Perusal of the C4 documents has allowed the Commission to observe and discern continuity in certain mentalities and modes of conduct.

Despite claims to the contrary, the most severe system of repression was put in place in Mauritius, belying the claim in 1766 that slavery in isle de France was 'mild'. According to the Governor,

*'L'esclavage à l'Isle de France est «doux»: laborieux et fidèle, l'esclave peut toujours espérer sa liberté de la bonté de ses maitres'*<sup>131</sup>

(Eng. Trans. Slavery in Isle de France is mild: hardworking and loyal, the slave can always hope for freedom from the goodness of his masters).

Yet the laws belie this assertion. The following article, for example, outlining the measures to be taken to receive the reward for capture of maroon slaves: the Detachment would have to produce the left hand of the maroon slave.

*Article du 2 Juin 1726 à l'égard de 3 nègres pris pour détachement: «tous les noirs marron qui seront pris en vie pour détachement lui appartiendront et si les noirs sont tués dans la poursuite, la Compagnie paie 100 livres par main gauche de noir qui sera rapportée.*<sup>132</sup>

Slaves caught stealing pistols and bullets were ordered to be hung.<sup>133</sup> The *Article 20* mentions the slave of Charles Pignolet who stole 1 gun and 6 bullets in 1730. Even Free persons could not query too much. A Free man showing disrespect and attacking Europeans could be returned into slavery. In one case, the 'Coloured' person did not know that the person he had insulted was the Intendant of the island. It was later recommended that French administrators wear uniform to distinguish themselves from other persons. It did not stop the harsh sentence imposed on him.

#### 1777 Extrait des registres du Conseil Supérieur

Procès criminel contre le nomme Benoit Giraud Mulâtre et le nomme César, noir esclave du nomme Deslandes habitant : Convaincu d'injures et d'attentat prémédité en la personne de M Foucault Intendant

-Condamne à être pendu et étranglé a la potence dresse a la place des exécutions, ses biens, si aucun sont, confisques au profit de Sa Majesté.<sup>134</sup>

#### Lettre du 30 juin 1777

-Informant le monseigneur que le mulâtre Hector a été pendu.

-Hector ne savait pas qu'il était Intendant et qu'il avait l'habit d'un bourgeois quand il l'a insulté.

Recommande que l'administration doit avoir un uniforme pour se distinguer des autres. 'les rues sont continuellement pleines d'esclaves, de noirs ou mulâtres libres, de soldats, de matelots, d'ouvriers...d'arsenal et d'étrangers qui sous prétexte qu'ils ne reconnaissent pas un chef se croient tout permis.'<sup>135</sup>

But in 1775, an insightful comment made by Governor Ternay showed the inherent difficulties of maintaining a colony based on slavery. It was an expensive venture and he felt that a nation of small cultivators should instead have been promoted rather than have a small number of colonists and masses of slaves:

1 Aout 1775 Lettre du Chevalier de Ternay Concernant le Commerce particulier

Elle [isle de France] ne sera jamais une colonie de commerce..  
L'introduction des noirs est peut être un des plus grands fautes qu'ait jamais fait la Compagnie; il ne fallait que pour son service...il ne fallait que de petits habitants cultivateurs comme je l'ai souvent répété'.

L'Isle de France se soutient 'grâce à de dépenses énormes'<sup>136</sup>

Rather than import small farmers and cultivators from France, the Company and Government had favoured 'gentleman farming', (Labourdonnais had also envisaged this), with large estates owed by one European colonist using the labour of African, Malagasy and Indian slaves.

The ratio of white to slave began to preoccupy officials. Official concern was expressed concerning the proportion of European to slave: in 1735 there were 69 colonists and 940 slaves. By 1739, there were 107 colonists and 1,249 slaves. Five inhabitants out of 107 owned 1/6<sup>th</sup> slaves in the island.<sup>137</sup> Concentration of ownership of slaves and other property was thus already emerging in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

There was also tension between colonists and the Company over allocation of slaves and competition for the labour of slaves started early on; there was resentment that the Company was keeping the 'best' slaves for itself. Some 12-15 slaves were recommended per inhabitant.

The Company had also, as shown earlier, began to differentiate between different groups of slaves and their potential to be 'good' slaves: '*Les tirer de Madagascar plutôt que de Guinée car ceux de Madagascar sont meilleurs ouvriers, plus intelligents. Les noirs de Guinée ont tendance au marronnage et à la perfidie.*'<sup>138</sup>

The separation of groups on colour and ethnic lines was also planned from the beginning. This was begun by Mahe de Labourdonnais when planning the construction of the Military Hospital.

Extrait des ordres particuliers donnés à M. de la Bourdonnais: construction d'un hôpital pour éviter que blancs et noirs ne soient confondus :  
«construire deux salles, l'une pour mettre les noirs et l'autre pour les malabars indiens avec vue grande cour, le tout construit en pierre»<sup>139</sup>

Although all French laws were applicable in Mauritius, local practices and exigencies necessitated new laws. In practice, it was difficult to separate people whose fate had brought them together on this tiny island. Indian, African, Malagasy and European peoples intermingled, often illicitly. It became necessary from very early on to enact specific legislation for the island.

On the question of marriages for example, the Company had legislated but what of the mixed marriages? The Company then provided a definition of the term 'Creole' to regulate future marriages on the island and to define this new category of person that was emerging.<sup>140</sup> Thus a 'Creole' was someone born on the island but not of white parents of a white male with a woman of mixed parentage:

«filles métisses provenant d'un sang noir meslé avec le blanc et non les filles nées de blancs et de blancs»

Stratification also began to emerge among slaves: there were skilled and unskilled slaves; those being paid a 'gratification' and those not; there were slaves working for the Government and others

for private owners, there were rural and urban slaves etc. Slave commanders received a salary, as did skilled slaves. This cost the Government in 1762 6,000 *piastres*.

Living and material conditions differed greatly among slaves in each of these groups and it would be wrong to generalize on their conditions. The conditions on the estate of Rostaing who owned nearly 800 slaves, for example, were not matched elsewhere. All had a house and a garden all lined up in a row and guarded by black overseers.<sup>141</sup>

## 2.2 Treatment and behaviour of slaves

By the 1760s, quite a few slaves had been born on the island and knew no other life than the one in Mauritius. This was not the case for those having been imported and who longed to return to their countries. It affected their whole outlook on life and behaviour. Official opinion was that slaves were neglected and that a different treatment was required for those born on the island compared to those born outside. Those born on the island did not feel the nostalgia, according to officials, of their original home.<sup>142</sup>

Officials also observed that those who behaved differently were those slaves who were religious. According to the Governor, those who had been baptised and instructed in the Christian religion were more docile and less prone to marronage.<sup>143</sup> But few owners took the trouble to allow slaves to engage in religious activities, even in Catholic Church activities. On 3 December 1765, M. Anthoine wrote a letter to the *Conseil Supérieur* where he asked for spiritual education to be given to slaves on the grounds that Christianity only tolerated slavery, if it helped in the propagation of the religion.<sup>144</sup>

### *Slavery under Royal administration*

To what extent did slavery under Royal administration differ from slavery under Company rule? Were slaves better treated?

## Manumission

As far as manumission was concerned, there appeared to be lessening of restrictions. Nevertheless, the Governor's permission was required; without it, any manumission was nullified and the slave taken away.

Ordonnance du Roi concernant les affranchissements des nègres esclaves aux Isles de France et Bourbon, 20 Août 1766

- Adopter les mêmes dispositions que pour les colonies françaises de l'Amérique
- Article 1<sup>re</sup>: une permission d'affranchir doit être obtenue préalablement auprès du Gouverneur, Lieutenant général et de l'Intendant
- Article 2: tout affranchissement sans cette permission est considéré comme nul - les maitres seront privés de leur esclaves qui seront vendus au profit de Sa Majesté.

The principle was maintained of giving slaves their manumission as a reward: one of the famous examples was the slave Charles Rama, an Indian slave who had contributed to producing the first bunch of cloves in the Pamplémousses Garden. He was freed together with his wife Catherine and daughters Marie. He was also given 2 Creole slaves belonging to the Government.<sup>145</sup>

Manumission, as reward, was also given to slaves having participated in the Maroon Detachment who went to 'hunt' maroons. Poivre complained bitterly about the freedom given to these slaves as Maroonage had started once again. The Governor had freed the whole Maroon detachment as well as their wives and children and given land to cultivate.<sup>146</sup>

## Inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships

A study of manumission shows the various types of inter-ethnic relationships emerging in the third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Further laws were thus introduced concerning the relationship between religion and children of mixed parentage, but also preventing the marriage of a European and a slave (Article 7).

Christianity was also reinforced.

Thus only children of freed mothers could be baptized; children, who had been baptized even though their mothers were slaves, would be taken away from their owners and sold. We do not know, however, how many slave children were affected in this way. Further research is required as numerous 'slave' children were thus deprived of the right to inherit the property of the father who may have been the slave-owner or a free person.

- Article 3: Ne sont autorisés à être baptisés comme libres que les enfants de gens de couleurs ou de sang mêlé dont la mère est reconnue affranchie
- Article 4: les enfants baptisés comme libres ayant une mère esclave sont considérés comme esclaves - les maîtres en seront privés et condamnés à une amende - les esclaves vendus au profit de Sa Majesté<sup>147</sup>

Further regulations were introduced after Governor Dumas and Intendant Poivre came to the island.<sup>148</sup> One ordinance prevented the sale of bread to slaves, for example. The Ordinance of 27 September was, however, far-reaching. It reinforced the hold of Christianity on the lives of slaves and imposed on colonists and slaves the task on Christianising slaves. Christian slaves could be named *Commandeur* (head of section), but not a non-Christian slave (Art. 4); Christian slaves could not be sold to a 'gentile or Muslim' owner (Art. 6). One cannot but point to similar situations in the hierarchy for the technical personnel of sugar estates in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries where Christians become heads in the sugar factory.

## Social and economic life

The social and cultural life of slaves and of all free persons who were not of European ancestry or cultural background was controlled on the island: no slave or Free Black was permitted to meet to play cards or bet (Art. 8); all music (described as *tam tam* etc.) was to cease after 11 p.m. (Art. 20).

Economic activities of slaves were also strictly controlled: a slave could not sell his goods freely and had to seek permission from his owner or Head of Unit (Art. 11 and 13). The 'civilising mission' was also at work and was reflected in the laws: A Christian slave could not be bought by a non-Christian (Art.6):

### Ordonnance concernant la police des nègres, 29 Septembre 1767

- Article 1: devoir de faire instruire et baptiser les esclaves dans les 3 ans suivant leur acquisition
- Article 2: devoir des maîtres de rapporter au Syndic le certificat du curé attestant que leurs esclaves non baptisés ont été envoyés au catéchisme
- Article 3: en cas de vente d'un esclave non chrétien, le propriétaire doit fournir à l'acheteur le certificat du curé attestant l'instruction au catéchisme
- Article 4: ne peut être commandeur noir à la direction des nègres qu'un noir de religion catholique apostolique et romaine
- Article 5: il est interdit de faire travailler les nègres les dimanche et jours de fêtes
- Article 6: il est interdit aux particuliers de vendre un esclave chrétien à un gentil ou mahometan
- Article 7: il est défendu à tout sujet du Roy de contracter mariage avec un noir ou pour les sujets blancs, noirs affranchis ou nés libres de vivre en concubinage avec un esclave - s'ils sont maîtres et esclave, les enfants ne pourront être affranchis - s'il s'agit d'un noir affranchi ou libre en concubinage, il épousera son esclave qui sera alors affranchie et les enfants rendus libres et légitimes.
- Article 8: défense à tout noir, malabar, lascar, noir libre ou noir esclave de jouer ou de s'assembler pour jouer de l'argent ou des bardes
- Article 9: il est interdit au noir de porter une arme offensive, ou gros bâtons ou couteaux flamand sauf au noir munis d'un billet de leur maître expliquant le motif du port d'arme
- Article 11: il est interdit aux noirs de vendre des marchandises sans billet mentionnant la permission de leur maître
- Article 12: il est interdit d'acheter aux esclaves non porteurs de billet de leur maître des marchandises telles que bardes, nippes ou meuble
- Article 13: il est interdit aux noirs du Roy et de la Compagnie qui auront élevé volaille ou cabris de les vendre sans permission du conseiller chargé de la police
- Article 14: il est ordonné au maître de fournir 2 livres de mahis ou autre denrée équivalente par jour à leurs esclaves ainsi que l'habillement nécessaire par année.

- Article 15: les esclaves infirmes par vieillesse, malades ou autres doivent être nourris et entretenus par leur maître- s'ils doivent être admis à l'hôpital, les maîtres devront payer 6 sols par jour pour la nourriture et entretien de chaque esclave
- Article 16: les esclaves non nourris et entretenus par leur maître pourront se plaindre auprès du Procureur Général de sa Majesté
- Article 17: il est interdit de donner plus de 30 coups de fouets à son esclave
- Article 18: les esclaves qui partent en commission pour leur maître sans billet en marque de reconnaissance et sans lumière seront condamnés au fouet et aux travaux publics pendant un mois
- Article 19: il est interdit à tout habitant, malabar, lascar, noir libre de donner retraite ou d'attirer à leur service un noir ne leur appartenant pas
- Article 20: tout lascar, malabar indien, et autres noirs cesseront leurs danses et tamtam à onze heures du soir, rentreront chez eux sous peine de punition exemplaire

## 2.3 Women

The section of the C4 series consulted by the TJC is unfortunately silent, for the most part, on the situation of enslaved women. The instances where they appear are when they are cited in criminal cases; e.g. in cases when they refused to bear children or in reference to marriage partners and concubines. They also appear, when accounting of the value of slaves was undertaken. More intense searches in archival records are required. Only a few points will be made here.

- **Categorising women**

The same criteria used by colonial society to differentiate between male slaves applied in the case of female slaves: females were categorised according to their capacity for various occupations, based on presumed ethnic traits. Officials also continually complained about women who did not want to bear children and about Malagasy women, in particular, who used traditional medicine to abort. Indian and Guinean slaves were considered better breeders. By the sheer fact of mentioning the reproductive capacity of women slaves, it was clear that officials saw high birth rate as being beneficial since it would reduce the need to obtain more slaves through slave trading.<sup>149</sup>

- **Maternal and child health**

Despite the wish to populate the island naturally, maternal and child health, on the other hand, did not appear to be of great concern to individual owners or to much of colonial society. High infant mortality was the norm among slaves, whether they were privately-owned or owned by the Royal Government.

According to reports found in C4 series, there was no decent place for slave women to give birth and many lost their babies during childbirth.<sup>150</sup> Despite the official neglect of health, the call continued for slaves to be better treated so that they would reproduce: 'Les Noirs, il faut encore veiller à leur conservation et à leur propagation'. Inhabitants did not quite understand this need to 'conserve' slaves to avoid the unnecessary expense of slave trading. Measures were recommended to encourage couples to bear large numbers of children by a system of rewards.

In the attempt to reform slavery, to reform administration of the management of concessions to make them more productive, owners were requested to mix men and women and to marry slaves early; pour «accorder des récompenses pour exciter chez eux la propagation». Rewards included getting 2 days off per month, if they bore 6 live children; 4 days off, if they bore 9 children and freedom for the parents, only if they bore 12 children. It was also recommended that heavy loads not be carried by slaves from one district to another.<sup>151</sup> Whether these reforms ever got off the ground remains to be researched by an intensive demographic study. By the 1770s, this may not have succeeded, if it was at all implemented as the slave trade was expanding.

An extraordinary measure was recommended years later to prevent women from performing abortions, thereby indicating that the situation may not have improved. An Act dating from 1556 was introduced in the islands and included the **death penalty** for those convicted of ending their pregnancies.

7 juillet 1778

«Qui ordonne que l'édit du Roi Henry II du mois de février 1556 concernant les femmes grosses et le receles de grossesse sera lu et publié de trois en trois mois aux prônes des messes paroissiales.

Mesures prises pour la sûreté des enfants conçus par des moyens déshonnêtés ... Ces lois ne doivent plus être négligées.»

Edit de 1556: Peine de mort pour une femme qui serait convaincue de cesser la grossesse de son enfant.

C'est un parricide, elle prive à la fois le religion d'un chrétien et l'état d'un citoyen<sup>152</sup>

### Work of women

Women were involved in various tasks related to domestic work and often performing the same work as men. In one unique document relating to the employment of women on Vigoureux's establishment, the Governor doubted whether women should be given the same work as men. In Vigoureux establishment, some women were pregnant, some worked with children on their backs, others were still breastfeeding and others were employed in cooking food for the entire workshop of slaves. He recognized their social value and felt that, although it was desirable to have women in the workforce, it was an additional expense for the Government to pay Vigoureux for the maintenance of the slaves.

#### Case study: Vigoureux establishment

The Vigoureux establishment provides an interesting case study. Not only did he obtain a contract to supply slaves to the Company, but he also hired slaves to the Government to undertake a number of works. On Vigoureux's establishment, the following numbers were slaves were to be found in April 1754, whose maintenance was paid for by Government:

Of	Alive	Died	Marooned
Male slaves	377	18	10
Female slaves	212	10	0
	589	28	6

Of the 377 males in his possession, there were 22 young boys of 12 to 1 years; they were returned by the Company to Vigoureux who exchanged them for adult slaves *pièce d'Inde*. Among those who had marooned, was one La Grenade who was eventually hunted down and killed in the area of Port Sud Est (today Mahébourg). Three others were in chains and were working on Ile aux Tonneliers. The last one, Jouan, was punished and his ears were cut off: "*Le nommé Jouan fut fustigé au pied de la potence, où il eut les orilles coupées le 23 d'avril. Il était, dit-on, dans la bande de ceux qui commirent il y a 5 ou 6 semaines un assassinat à Flack.*"<sup>153</sup>

## 2.4 State of Health and of the 'Hopital des Noirs'

Although slaves accounted for more than 75% of the island's population between the 1730s and the 1820s, information about most aspects of slave life remains sketchy, especially during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, not much was known about food and its relationship to health and disease. However, the nutritional requirements of slaves and indentured labourers in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, were similar to what people require today, and they too needed a balanced diet. Slaves and indentured supplemented their diet with food from provision grounds, fishing or gathering wild vegetables and fruits, although both groups frequently complained of inadequate or irregular food rations provided by the owners.

### Diet and nutrition during French Slavery 1721-1810

#### *Le Code Noir* and Food Rations

During French occupation, the Island never attained food self-sufficiency and relied on other countries for its food supplies, including rice, salted meat and fish, beans, oils and fats, biscuits and wine. The *Code Noir* of 1685 stipulated that slave-owners should provide food rations to their slaves: adult slaves were to be provided every week 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 'pots, *mesure de Paris*' of manioc flour or three cassava roots weighing at least 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pounds each, or equivalent foods, with 2 pounds of salted beef or 3 pounds of fish, or other foods in similar proportion. Provision of alcoholic drinks to slaves for subsistence was prohibited. Children from weaning age to 10 years received <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> of the above food ration. This ration provided only about 1,000 Kcal daily (500 kcal for children) and was inadequate to meet the total daily needs of the slaves who, therefore, had to produce or look for additional foods to supplement their rations.

Although conditions surrounding the land grants stipulated that 1/3 of the land had to be planted in provisions for slaves, the fact that the *Code Noir* contained clauses relating to punishments for stealing food products and animals suggests that the foods rations were insufficient and that slaves had to steal for their subsistence. However, most of the time, rations were inadequate and slaves had to fend for themselves to feed their families and themselves. The revised *Code Noir* of 1723 did not specify a food ration in quantitative terms but left it to the local administrators to decide, although their recommendations had to receive the prior approval of the French King before implementation.

Mauritius was an uninhabited island until the arrival of the Dutch in 1638 with a detachment of 25 men. By 1652, the free and slave population amounted to 100. Settlement of population gained impetus under the administration of French Governor La Bourdonnais (1735-46). However, records on population increase show that, during the period 1767-1810, the growth was not gradual as mortality, through epidemics, carried a heavy toll of lives, showing the fluctuations in growth. For example in 1792, 4,000 lives were lost through smallpox.

### **Agriculture and food supplies**

In an attempt to make the colony self-sufficient in food supplies and protect the inhabitants from famine, Labourdonnais introduced manioc or cassava (from Brazil and the Island of St. Jago) as a strategic staple food: cheap, abundant, and relatively secure from destruction by cyclones, as well as from the risk of capture in transit. He promoted the expansion of agriculture by the introduction of other products (rice, wheat, beans, oats and many other plants) from every known region of the tropical world. Salted beef, rice and other grains were imported from Madagascar.

By 1766, less than 200,000 of the island's 400,000 cultivable *arpents* had been distributed to colonists, and less than one-fourth of all granted land had been brought into production.

### **Diet of slaves**

Slaves were generally fed on high carbohydrate foods like manioc, sweet potatoes and maize, and for protein foods, they relied on lagoon fishing for fish, and some raised livestock for animal produce. According to Bernardin de St. Pierre, slaves were given 3 lbs of manioc daily (about 2,000 Kcal, negligible protein) or 2 lbs of maize (3,500 Kcal, moderate in protein). Usually, the slaves started work at day-break, with only a meal of boiled maize or manioc cake. After having laboured the whole day, the slave was obliged to search for his food in the woods and lived on unwholesome roots. White inhabitants did not eat maize or manioc, giving these instead to slaves, cattle and poultry. Slaves and non-White populations were not allowed to eat bread.

Dazille linked the poor health of slaves to the tasteless, monotonous and hard to digest diet based on manioc (often poorly cooked) and *brèdes*, and only a few could afford a *curry* of some animal and vegetable products with chillies. The Indian culinary was introduced early into the colony, as early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Island then housed many Indian, as well as African, Malagasy and Malayan slaves. About 10% of the colony's slaves were of Indian origin, although there was also a community of Indian merchants, artisans and craftsmen.

### **British Slavery 1810-1835**

In the late 1820s, sugar began to dominate the island's economy. The local slave regime became more oppressive as the cultivation of sugar spread, the aim of the colonists being to extract from the slave the maximum amount of labour.

### **Food imports and supplies to slaves**

The shift to a single cash crop economy was accompanied by much increased imports of rice and wheat from Madagascar, India, South Africa and other countries. On many estates, slaves were temporarily given plots on which they were allowed to farm vegetables and rear animals. They were also provided with rations every day of every week. None of these could actually ensure an adequate supply and variety of food to slaves. Owners who preferred to distribute rations depended on their availability and their own financial liquidity, quite apart from their own willingness to follow the legal requirements which were quite low. Moreover, locally-grown supplies were often destroyed by cyclones and drought, causing serious shortages bordering on famine. It is not known what each estate actually produced and whether this was sufficient.

A 70-kg male slave working on a rice plantation is estimated to expend about 4,400 kcal during an "easy day" of repair work and 8,700 kcal on a "hard day" during the harvest, making an average energy expenditure of 5,500 kcal over the year in order to maintain the slave's body weight and strength (Blogen 2004). So, if we suppose that a male adult slave in Mauritius weighed 60 kg., he would need between 3,800 to 7,500 kcal per day, with an average of 4,700 kcal. It is known that work on the sugar plantations was more intense compared to other cultivations. The duration and amount of labour required by each slave varied with the season; hence, the slaves' energy expenditure also changed with seasons.

Therefore, the rations provided were barely sufficient, and slaves had to produce, steal or gather in the wild, foods to supplement their rations. The task system allowed slaves, who finished early and still had the strength, time to look for food; they were able to attend to personal tasks like gardening, fishing or gathering wild foods to supplement their diets. However, the system was unfair to the weaker or older slaves. But there is no evidence of the types and amounts of those supplemental foods. These supplements allowed the slaves a more varied diet than just the rationed food they were given.

Protein was available in the form of meat during hunting or fish caught, but it was infrequent. Typical festive provisions for New Year's day were a bowl of salt, three bowls of rice, a little meat and a glass of 'arrack' for each slave. Rice and maize were the two principal food items in the slave diet. The sheer monotony of the diet was indeed the commonest impression at that time. The manioc cake was quite unpalatable and had to be gulped down by drinking large quantities of water.

With all its minor variations, the diet of slaves seriously threatened their physical well-being. The slave diet was deficient in the calories necessary for physical labour, in protein needed to rebuild and repair body tissues and in vitamins to ward off infections and deficiency diseases. If the slaves' diet ever approached adequate standards for maintaining health and sustaining hard labour, it was through their own efforts rather than through their masters' indulgence. Protein was much more likely to come from fishing or from livestock such as pigs and fowls reared in their own time, than from their masters' food allowances. Green vegetables, which they grew themselves, were the likeliest sources of vitamins and other nutrients.

Manioc cakes were less nutritious than rice. On the other hand, a diet too dependent on rice increased the risk of beriberi; in Mauritius, beriberi was identified, even though its dietary causes were not known (at that time). Indeed, Charles Telfair (1830) referred to its ravages on an 'epidemic' scale.

### **Food rations**

The 2 lbs of maize given in the 'French'<sup>1</sup> period were converted by the British equivalent to 5 lbs of manioc or 30 ounces of prepared manioc, or 5 lbs of sweet potato (*patate*) which was not available in the rainy season between October and February. When these were not available, it was replaced by 1/2 lbs of rice. On some estates, rations would be distributed straight after work in the evenings, so that slaves could begin preparing dinner. Sundays were also ration days. This daily ration provided

2,500 to 3,500 kcal of high bulk and high carbohydrate food. Telfair claimed he provided each slave with 600 pounds of rice or 1,000 pounds of maize per year, i.e. equivalent to 3,000 to 5,000 kcal per day, apart from vegetables, yams, *cambaras*, sweet potatoes, and groundnuts grown on his estate. But the slave ration, consisting of only 1.25 pounds of maize or 3 pounds of manioc, was also commented upon by Governor Cole in 1825.

Rice was given when other foods were not available. On some estates, rice was given once a week on Sundays, while on weekdays, they were fed manioc. Aside from manioc, slaves received half a herring and 1 lb of salt every Sunday. Disputes with owners occurred over the measurement of rations, with complaints being lodged about smaller measures being used. On large plantations, slaves also received salt, 2 ounces of salted fish or meat (occasionally) and a cup of 'arrack'. On some estates, slaves could take as much cane juice as they liked. Women who were nursing were fed from 'the master's table' for 2-3 months. Slaves also grew their own provisions: *brèdes* (greens), while those in forest estates could hunt for the *tandrac* (hedgehog). Coastal estates had many slaves employed as fishermen and others picking 'bambaras' (sea slug). If food supplies to slaves on small estates were deficient, it was felt that this was compensated for by the less strenuous work of cultivating manioc, grain and vegetable gardens and transporting these goods to market. Some slaves had access to provision grounds, while others were permitted to engage in petty trade.

### **Cash crop v/s staple foods**

By the 19th century, the practice of reserving one-third of estate land for planting food provisions for slaves was not widespread and many estates were in a state of abandon. The area of cultivation of manioc or cassava (a staple of the slave diet) had been more than halved. Far more spectacularly, the area under cultivation of the various grain crops almost disappeared. Therefore, when required, sugar estate owners bought food supplies from the Government or small estates to feed their slaves. The smallest estates produced only what was necessary for subsistence. The living conditions of the slaves and owners were not vastly different and many of the owners were themselves destitute and could not feed slaves. On smaller estates, that had enough land, it was common practice to allow slaves as much as they liked.

On sugar estates, slaves were allowed to consume sugar cane and sugar, adding considerable calories to their diet. So, despite their heavy work, they were reported to appear 'well-nourished'. On some estates, slaves freely drank molasses and cane juice with a marked increase in their calorie intake, as carbohydrate-rich sugar provides considerable energy.

### **Women and children**

Males outnumbered females and only a small proportion of adult slaves lived in family groups, with the majority headed by single-parents, overwhelmingly female-headed. Slave women faced immense difficulties to be able to care for, or even feed, their young children. Slave women often complained of ill-treatment and sexual exploitation; they were obliged to work unduly long hours despite having young children to care. And the insecurity of women necessarily increased the vulnerability of children and the impermanence of family life. If babies suffered from inadequate maternal care, they did not remain babies for long. As children, they soon directly faced mistreatment (e.g. they were put in chains, flogged) which had made maternal care so difficult. Clearly, the nature of the power structure meant that children could not rely on support from parents who were themselves so vulnerable to their masters.

Slave women had to carry out their domestic tasks in addition to their agricultural work. According to a study in Nyasaland, on average, every woman spent about 7 hours daily on such routine domestic tasks as preparing cereals, fetching water and collecting fuel and leaves from the bush for food and food preparation.

### **Complaints and punishments regarding food**

Between 1832 and 1835, common complaints registered related to lack of proper food (in quantity and/or quality) meal times, overwork, Sunday work and ill-treatment. The biggest culprits were in the richest districts on the island, in particular, the large owners. Priority was given to work, and meal times were shortened or very often done away with altogether. Some owners supplied cooked food and others uncooked food to reduce the time allowed for meal break so that slaves

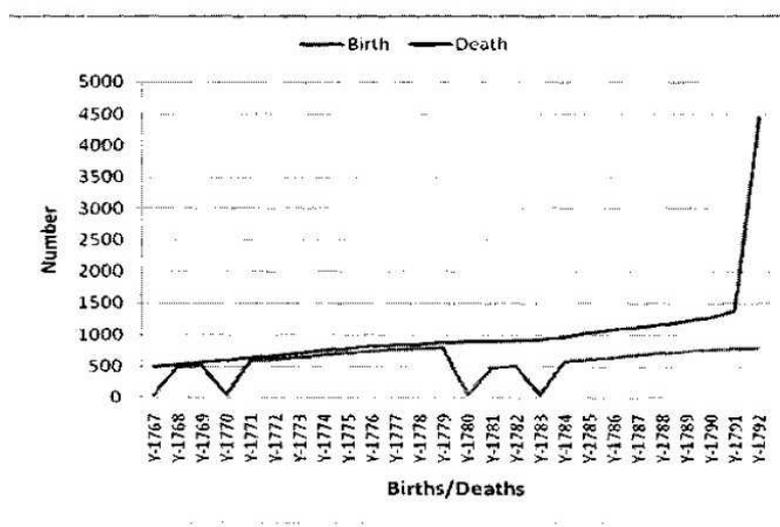
would not waste time preparing it, although the slaves would have preferred otherwise. There were also many complaints relating to punishment (flogging with leather hide) for stealing or allegedly stealing food (mostly for personal consumptions or that of friends, and rarely for sale). Punishments were also meted out to children for stealing or alleged stealing, or even to slaves for complaining. On some estates, the denial of food became a form of punishment. Slaves, placed in stocks or in prison, for example, often went days with nothing other than manioc root and water.

### Health services

Writing about the health of slaves in 1772, D'Azille postulated that long hours of work, poor nutrition, insalubrious water and their in-adaptation to the humid and torrid climate pushed slaves physical resistance to fatigue to the limit. Little time was allowed for recuperation and they often fell victims to, and suffered from, irascibility. They could not resist exhaustion and succumbed to a host of diseases. Most common diseases were typhoid, worm infestations, bronchial infections, intestinal affectations of diarrhea and dysentery and depression. To overcome these maladies and to let off the steam, the slaves spent their little night time unwinding with sex and alcohol. The result was a vicious cycle of hard work, exhaustion and free lifestyle. The most common form of treatment, applied by Dazille as was prevalent in Europe, was bleeding the body of toxins: "Il est presque toujours nécessaire de faire précéder tous les remèdes d'une ou plusieurs saignées, soit du bras, soit du pied, parce que la fièvre est ordinairement beaucoup plus forte" and the use of emetics.

Figure 1 No. Births and Deaths Slave Population

Graph 9: Number of Births and Deaths in the slave population 1767-1792



In both the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, doctors wrote about the high mortality among slaves. Dazille, a Surgeon for all the King's Hospitals in Mauritius in the 1770s, and Amédée Bonsergent<sup>154</sup>, a doctor in charge of the North of the island, who also wrote a thesis on illnesses among slaves in 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, disagreed on the causes. While Dazille reported without expressing his personal views on slavery, Bonsergent wrote expressly to counter accusations of the Anti-Slavery Society, that the sugar estates were responsible for the poor health of the slaves. He criticised slaves severely for their habits which, he believed, led to ill-health: drinking, making poorly cooked food, having multiple partners, selling clothes etc.

Dazille did not comment on the habits of slaves but focused instead on the quality of services provided by the Government. He deemed these to be insufficient: there were poorly trained medical staff, some who could not even read, while the diet of slaves left much to be desired inside hospitals.<sup>155</sup> He felt the mortality could be avoided, if certain measures were taken. These measured were outlined in another report.<sup>156</sup>

Photo 1

Cover of Thesis of Amédée Bonsergent on illnesses of slaves in Mauritius

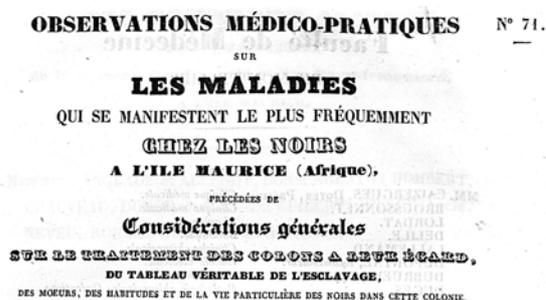
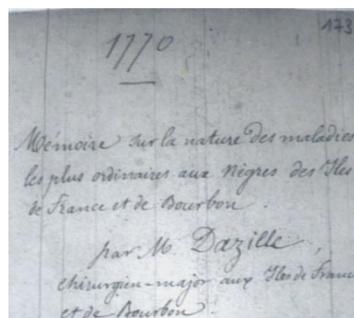


Photo 2

Cover of Surgeon Dazille's Report of 1770<sup>157</sup>



Dazille was interested in finding out about the causes of high mortality. He had been appointed surgeon of all the King's Hospitals and was thus well placed to study this. Slaves in 18<sup>th</sup> century, according to Dazille, ate food with very little variety. (Bonsergent, writing later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stated the opposite). Manioc was eaten 'grossièrement pilées' in the form of cakes with greens (*brèdes*). Some added a 'cary' ('curry') with it, which he described as a 'substance composed of mainly vegetables and hot pepper'. The most common cause of death was tetanus as well as venereal diseases.

Although a hospital for slaves was recommended by most Governors, the treatment to be given in them to slaves differed considerably from that given to free people and Whites. Moreover, medical knowledge was poor among the 'doctors' and inhabitants, who did not make use of local plants and products. Governor Desroches noted that medical remedies were imported from France but after such a long journey, they had lost their potency:

Article 11 Connaissance des produits naturelles

*J'ai trouvé les deux colonies dans l'ignorance la plus profonde sur toutes les productions naturelles de leur sol'[...] les médecins eux-mêmes, au milieu des plantes les plus salutaires n'employaient pour le traitement des malades que des herbes, des racines, des écorces desséchées, transportés de France et qui avaient perdu toute propriété par un si long transport'[...] les Colons voyaient périr sous leurs yeux, faute de remède, de malheureux esclaves.*<sup>158</sup>

Thus, although owners were bound to maintain old and sick slaves in the hospital at the rate of 6 sols per day, the hospital left much to be desired. The first hospital, before the arrival of Chevreau, was described as being composed of a room which was dark and where very little fresh air penetrated. *ir - obscurité»*

The newer one was no better: «M. Chevreau a accordé pour l'hôpital des noirs une salle qui servait autrefois de magasin à l'artillerie qui a 18 toises de longueur, 7 toises de largeur et 9 pieds de hauteur, elle laisse passer l'air des deux côtés, elle est par conséquence mal faite.»

It was also located out of the hospital compound and was therefore not practical. Furthermore, it was not fortified, and so security was a problem as slaves received from friends and family other unauthorized foods, fruit and even drinks through the window. Patients with different illnesses could not be separated. The slaves themselves did not like the hospital and tried to avoid being sent there. They preferred to be treated by traditional practitioners or 'consulted Indians'.

Finally it was felt that a stone building should be provided:<sup>159</sup>

*"On peut sur l'emplacement qui servait avant d'hôpital de blancs, élever un bâtiment en pierres qui servira d'hôpital pour les noirs. Ce sera en quelque sorte une dépendance de l'hôpital des blancs et avoir un lieu en commun, les secours seront plus faciles, plus prompts et moins dispendieux."*

Apart from every day illnesses, epidemics also caused high mortality. The 1792 epidemic has been written about in earlier historiography.<sup>160</sup> Epidemics also broke out earlier, however. In November 1771, a smallpox epidemic broke out when slave trader, Brayeur, arrived on board *Le Florentin*

carrying 300 slaves from Mozambique. The officers on board had hidden 4 infected slaves from the authorities, which led to the disease spreading in Port Louis. Twelve slaves died in one day and a small hospital had to be established in a warehouse near the harbour, containing some 200 beds.<sup>161</sup>

### Diseases

During the whole French occupation, Isle de France was reputed to be a sanitarium. Few epidemics are known to have prevailed, except for the outbreak of smallpox in 1792 which caused 4,000 deaths. Leprosy, which is not necessarily a communicable disease, was introduced from Madagascar.

But the food consumed by the slaves consisted of Cassava mixed with vegetables and meat cooked under unhygienic conditions. The daily intake of this insipid food was a possible source of ill-health. The climate, with frequent passage from hot to cold weather and *vice versa* was another common cause of illness among the slaves who did not wear appropriate protective clothing. Their lifestyle, which included abuse of alcoholic drinks and having multiple sex partners, was also detrimental to their health. Furthermore, they were subjected to harsh working conditions, and their workload was well beyond their physical capacity, resulting in exhaustion.

The clinical manifestations of common diseases prevalent among the slaves in Mauritius, as described by Dazille\* in 1772, are summarised as follows: -

- (a) Fevers associated with respiratory infections, including pneumonia, or with signs and symptoms of what is now known as typhoid fever or with spasms of voluntary muscles signalling tetanus; reflecting a hostile disease environment with exposure to infectious diseases.
- (b) Digestive disorders with diarrhoea, dysentery, scurvy and worm infestations, which relate to consumption of food that was either contaminated or deficient in essential nutrients or both.
- (c) Venereal diseases, such as gonorrhoea and syphilis, were common with urinary and ophthalmic complications. The prevalence of these conditions was connected with the practices and behaviour of individuals.

### Leprosy

Leprosy came to Mauritius in 1770 with the slaves from Madagascar; it had been introduced from Mozambique. In 1781, a commission was set up to inquire into the prevalence of the disease and in 1803, the lepers were exiled to Ile Curieuse, from where many escaped to Seychelles.

In Mauritius, cases of smallpox were reported as far back as 1771. But the first major epidemic occurred in June 1792, when a slave ship from South India reached Port Louis with smallpox on board. The disease spread rapidly among the population, amidst heated debate over the practice of inoculation. Some slave owners asserted their right to inoculate their slaves, while others were vehemently against this practice because of the possibility of the inoculated person developing a severe infection and transmitting smallpox to others. Megan Vaughan of Nuffield College Oxford, writing on Social History of Medicine, has made the following observations on the attitude adopted by the colonists:

*"Eighteenth-century colonial medicine was largely geared to keeping the bodies of slaves and workers productive and useful, but formal medicine never had a monopoly. Slaves on Isle de France brought with them a rich array of medical beliefs and practices from Africa, India, and Madagascar. We have little direct historical evidence for these, but we do know that many slaves came from areas in which forms of smallpox inoculation were known and practised." By September 1792, the death toll from the smallpox epidemic had risen to 4,000 in a total population of 98,000. The authorities were alarmed with this turn of events and decided on the inoculation of all the slaves. By January 1793, the epidemic was finally brought under control."*

### Alcohol Consumption and Slaves

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Alcohol consumption by slaves and its effects on the slave population have been widely discussed in literature on slavery in the Americas as well as the 'Slave Health Deficit Syndrome'. Few studies, if any, have ever been conducted in Mauritius on this issue or on the issues of the impact of alcohol consumption on the possible genetic propensity to alcohol consumption. Results of research are not conclusive, but it is important to show the importance of alcohol consumption in the life of the island, as well as its significance for slaves and owners' production and consumption.

Alcohol consumption was, first of all, unrestricted to whites and the free population. There were no fines for drunkenness by these persons, but only for slaves. It was also difficult for slaves to procure it legally and so, consequently, there was much illicit alcohol production and sales. For slaves, it was considered as a luxury item. It became important only because it was forbidden.

Police reports from the 1780s indicate an 'assembly of blacks' on Pont Rouge every afternoon, in Pamplémousses, in one of the camps. These were secret but noisy meetings, where alcohol flowed freely. The Government slaves (*esclaves du Roi*) also attended. It appears that when caught, they were flogged at the Bazaar in public. (MNA: Z2B)

Canteen ownership was also reserved for Whites at this time; so slaves procured from the *Gens de couleur*. In 13 Messidor An 10, Babet Vevard, a free Black woman, was condemned because she had given drinks to 2 slaves, Jacmin and Sebastien (MNA: E 102). A new law on 14 Ventose An 6 declared 3 months imprisonment for illicit liquor sale. Babet got 100 *piastres* fine, as well as having his material confiscated.<sup>162</sup> Many women from the *Gens de couleur*, who cohabited with poor whites, also opened canteens through their partners who gave them the capital to start the business. Adeline, a Free black woman, was imprisoned for 8 days for having 'kept' the Chevalier Peron and 3 other sailors and given them alcohol to drink in the house of Citoyen Mottel (MNA E 102, p. 32).

### 3. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY CONTRIBUTION OF SLAVES TO MAURITIUS

#### INTRODUCTION

It is to be regretted that the economic contribution of slaves to the establishment and success of the French colony between 1721 and 1810 is so little known and so little publicised in public representations of slavery.

Despite being visible everyday around us, this economic contribution must not be ignored anymore and needs to be brought to the forefront through memorial plaques and publications and be incorporated in cultural tourism and educational activities, for without slavery, there would have been no 'isle de France'.

In 1764, just before the island fell under Royal administration, the slowing down of construction work was noted and a plan of action formulated. The reasons for the slowing down was that slaves, belonging to the Company, were no longer used for what they had been bought for and were sold and dispersed throughout the island between March and July. However, if no one went in October, one could find 500 to 600 trained slaves, used to the island who, by March 1765, would be able to start work. Slaves were needed in great numbers it was felt, « pour être vendus aux habitants, pour les ouvrages, pour la défense de l'île et en temps de guerre. »<sup>163</sup> As early as 1733, Maupin advised Cossigny to pay colonists to hire out their slaves to the Company.<sup>164</sup> However, Article 8 prescribed the fees for renting of slaves at 15 *piastres*, instead of the desired 20 *soldes*.<sup>165</sup>

Slaves were in short supply at first, however, and on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1754, Cossigny wanted all slaves who had arrived that year for his works, even though they were small in number. They came from all over the Indian Ocean: «*Les esclaves nouvellement arrivés de Bengale, de Mozambique, de Madagascar quoiqu'en modique quantité, me donne lieu de les demander tous pour être appliqués aux travaux dont je me suis chargé [...]*». <sup>166</sup>

The *corvée* system was used by the *Compagnie* to extract labour from slaves belonging to private individuals. Slave-owners were required to provide two days labour per year per slave above 14 years old.<sup>167</sup>

Slaves were involved in numerous activities from the very beginning. By the time of the Royal Government, in 1767, the slaves were divided into several occupational categories. Shortage of labourers was felt at this time. The slave trade that ensued after the Royal Government took over resulted in a rise of the labour force on the island. From 19,000 slaves, the working population rose to 31, 908 slaves in 1785.<sup>168</sup>

Only a sample of the economic and other activities is given here to show the variety of work performed by slaves in Isle de France.

#### 1. Clearing of land for settlement and agriculture

Without clearance of land, there would have been no colonial settlement. Land needed to be cleared to build the first houses and offices, cultivate the land and build roads and bridges. Slaves were given to colonists to undertake this 'colonization' of the land. In the 1730s, the first land was cleared by 12 to 15 slaves using axes to cut down the forest which covered the whole island at that time. Genicourt recommended using Malagasy slaves who were 'better workers' because 'Guinean' slaves had a tendency to maroon. Later, however, this view of Malagasy slaves changed drastically. There was also dissatisfaction that the Company was keeping the best slaves for itself.<sup>169</sup>

No better direct evidence of the crucial importance of slave labour for the expansion of the colonial economy is available than the report based on the census carried out in 1763. The relationships between land, labour and capital is clearly shown (Table 2). Distribution of slaves, after a slaving voyage, was not carried out efficiently with the result that many large estates with potential for cultivation could not do work to maximum capacity because they received an

insufficient number of slaves. In other cases, estate owners had small acreages but large numbers of slaves.

Table 1 No. of slaves in Mauritius 1766 and 1785 involved in economic activities

Regions and establishments in 1766	Number of slaves	No. of labourers among them	1785
Quartiers en général	2,270	1,206	Pamplemousses 6,140 Black River 3,157
La montagne Longue	1,525	8,06	
Rivière du Rempart	775	413	2,668
Flacq	2,050	1,092	3,537
Port Bourbon	550	293	19
Moka	1,700	905	2,372
Plaines Wilhems	3,000	1,597	2,843
King	2,400	0	3,126
Port-Louis	2,000	0	5,446
L'établissement des forges	800	0	
Maudave Establishment	400	0	
Sugar mill	530	0	
Private entrepreneurs in wood	1,000	0	
Labour force in non-agricultural activities	7,130	<b>Agricultural: 6,312</b>	
<b>Total slave population</b>	<b>19,000</b>		<b>31,908</b>

The census revealed that of the 67,389 *arpents* of land granted, 3,708 were uncultivated due to the absence of slaves. Since the establishment of the colony, it was found that those who had the most slaves were not those who were contributing to expanding the stock of food on the island. Some slave-owners did not even own any land.

In Plaines Wilhems, for example, it was reported that, even though there were many companies and associations of whites (*Société de Blancs*) they only had 2, 3, or 4 slaves.<sup>170</sup>

Denomination	Number of inhabitants	Of which no. without slaves	Of which no. without habitation	Remaining - with slaves and estate	Acreage and land	Male slaves	Female slaves	Boys	Girls	Cattle
Employees	80	588								
Officers	63					183	183	87	50	
Bourgeois	86					155	109	78	31	
Women & widows	26					38	29	15	6	
Workers	149					49	32	14	15	
Sergeants	10					10	10	7	8	
Soldiers	15					11	11	11	1	
Free Blacks	38					10	18	15	6	
Malabars	121					5	3			
Lascards	63		129							
Peons	66									
	<b>717</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>588</b>			<b>461</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>117</b>	
Inhabitants										
Pamplemousses	36	2	3	31	9695	721	542	147	117	387
Montagne Longue	35	2	2	31	3871	381	282	131	91	197
Riviere des Calebasses	22				3432	114	87	34		11
Maison Blanche	21	ROSTAING 35	6	15	6938	602	373	151	104	1643
Rivière-du-Rempart	36	9	4	20	6025	185	130	66	38	
Rivière des Lataniers	17	3		14	3109	207	120	48		
Moka	27	2	5	20	4689	314	261	119	53	211
Plaines Wilhems	31	1	3	27	14732	622	441	218	141	378
Flack	103		21	82	14898	369	448	203	142	154
Port Sud Est	20			17		166	133	53	57	399
	<b>348</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>67389</b>	<b>3971</b>	<b>2817</b>	<b>1170</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>3546</b>
Grants of estates uncultivated due to absence of slaves					3708					
The 10 <i>quartiers</i> below and which did not have estates						750	509	208	170	
... that are cultivated					69681	3221	2308	962	632	

## 2. Contribution to Infrastructure

An enormous amount of construction work was begun when Governor Labourdonnais came to Mauritius in 1735. The whole infrastructure of Port Louis in the 18<sup>th</sup> century could be said to have been built mainly by slaves. However, the contribution of French *engagés* and free skilled people from various parts of the world. The first colonists were not keen on engaging in construction work, and so a large number of slaves were brought from India, Madagascar, West Africa and Mozambique to furnish the labour power required.

Labourdonnais organized workshops, each supplying a different product. These were headed by skilled free persons who trained slaves for work in different trades. By 1738, stonemasons, carpenters, blacksmiths, brick makers, basket-makers were among those forming part of workshops.<sup>171</sup>

By 1761, there were a large number of slaves working for the Company and involved in these various workshops.

No of Slaves working for the Company in 1761	
Male and female slaves from Guinea, Mozambique	
Madagascar, America, Macao, Creoles, India and Manila	878
Children less than 14 years	48
Younger slaves not yet put to work	191
In Port Sud-Est (today Mahébourg)	329
In the Navy	552
From Census of 1761, the Iron works of Mr. Rostaing	645
<b>Total</b>	<b>2021</b>

Source: *Extrait de la lettre du Conseil Supérieur de l'Isle de France du 4 Septembre 1761*, COL-C4-13 Corr. Gén., Boucher.

## 1. Hospital Construction

In 1734, Labourdonnais was given instructions to start the construction of a hospital but to avoid mixing white and black; hence, two sections were to be built. Two rooms, one for slaves and another for 'malabars indiens' with a view on the 'grande cour', were built. They were built in stone which required skilled work. These were only one of the many structures erected in this period by slaves and which still stand today 270 years later.

## 2. Road and canal construction

A large number of roads and bridges were built using *corvée* labour, while many were repaired by the slaves, but the numbers employed in this work were never sufficient. Several hundred more were needed. The Governor noted with concern that many European families were leaving the islands at this time, and he needed to give them more encouragement to stay. Giving them carts pulled by 4-5 oxen would be one incentive, so that slaves could be released for work on the farms rather than in transporting goods to town. Hence the need for good roads :

*«J'ai fait réparer les principaux chemins cette année avec ce qui était de corvées, mais ce mois ne suffit pas, il faut en employer de plus forts pour faire une bonne fois tout les chemins, après quoi, les corvées \_\_\_\_ pour l'entretien dans chaque quartier, il faudrait deux à trois cents noirs attachés uniquement a ce travail.»<sup>172</sup>*

In 1739, under Engineer Cossigny's supervision, slaves also built the canal taking water from Grande-Rivière to the Loge in the centre of town of Port Louis.<sup>173</sup>

### 3. Manufacturing and industry

Under both Company and Royal rule, workshops were established to process and manufacture various goods for use in construction: wood, lime and brick became the most required material for the various infrastructural works required.

A Memorial on civil works shows regulations regarding the organization of works. Article 1 fixed the number of Government slaves to be used in 1754: 1,872, of whom 880 were male slaves, and 558 female. Article regulated the numbers of slaves working on each product: stone work workshop to be composed of 10 European stone-masons and 90 slaves; for bricks: 2 European brick-makers and 10 slaves to produce ordinary bricks.<sup>174</sup>

#### Lime

Slaves were employed producing the thousands of tons of lime required for construction.

#### Wood

Carpenters were used to produce planks of wood at rate of 2 slaves, with an English saw per day, for 90 pieces of planks.<sup>175</sup>

#### Salt

In 1747, there existed the first salt pans worked at this time, unlike today, by male slaves. The initiator was a M. Meygnier who had wanted to establish this salt-making establishment, employing slaves and training them to make salt and salt pans.<sup>176</sup> He had been the Surgeon Major on board the Company ship the *Apollon*. His salt pan was located in the Tortoise Park (*Parc des Tortues*). He was provided with 2 commanders as well as 20 adult male slaves, 2 young male slaves (*négrillons*), as well as all the utensils he needed. In exchange, he undertook to sell to the Company a pound of salt for one *sol* and train enough slaves within 3 years, after which the salt pan would revert to the Company. At this time, salt was used extensively in food preservation and the Company needed at least 200 barrels per year for this purpose.<sup>177</sup>

Slaves, working for in the Headquarters of the Company (*La Loge*) and in the area of Grande Rivière, were also sent to collect fodder everyday. Some were housed, wherever repairs to roads needed to be made. Breaking stone and preparing it in a block of 3 x 4 x 2 feet would take 8 days for 2 slaves and cost the Company 21 *piastres* per month.<sup>178</sup>

### 4. Iron works

The iron works in Mauritius were probably one of the largest establishments on the island in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, employing hundreds of slaves. Rostaing obtained the contract for the supply of iron; his iron furnace required 50 slaves to build, in addition to the ironsmiths, stone masons, carpenters etc. at the Forges de Mon Désir. It was later transformed into a gunpowder-making factory.<sup>179</sup>

Part of this site of the *Moulin à Poudre* in Pamplemousses District is fortunately not yet covered in other buildings, and there is still scope for some recuperation of artefacts from this period. It is considered to be a rich archaeological site and one of the few remaining 18<sup>th</sup>-century European style industrial sites.

The *Forges de Rostaing* employed some 800 slaves, of whom 720 were Indian and two-thirds male, working and living under the supervision of 'commandants nègres'. By 1760, it contained, according to Article 29 concerning the Census of 1761, 645 slaves and 40 Whites.<sup>180</sup> Most were skilled slaves such as all types of ironsmiths, nail-makers, locksmiths, charcoal-makers, the male slaves needed sarongs, shirts, pants and handkerchiefs, while females had 2 skirts each. Foundry workers needed 2 sarongs. Commanders and workers were also financially rewarded (gratifications) and this cost some 6000 *piastres*.<sup>181</sup> Their rations, aside from food, consisted also of wine and *eau de vie*.<sup>182</sup>

### 5. Packing and Storage of goods

In order to prevent famine, warehouses were built to stock grain and other foodstuffs of the Company. These godowns ('*hangars*') used large numbers of slaves for all activities relating to:

processing of goods, packing, carting, transport, drying, preventing damage by rats, etc. Coffee storage, for example, required 40 to 50 slaves to put 5-6 thousands of unshelled coffee seeds in the sun which wasted over 2 hours' labour everyday. Such numbers were required because there were few mechanical methods devised, and slaves were used for every type of activity that could be done manually. This approach was criticized by the Company itself:

*«Pour y mettre 5 à 6 milliers de café en coque au soleil avec 40 ou 50 esclaves, il se passe plus de 2 heures perdues quoique absolument précieuses à un colon. Je crois avoir gagné ce temps par le moyen de ma trappe, sous laquelle j'attache l'ouverture d'une manche qui se conduit de dessous mon hangar sous ma plate-forme ainsi que je désire, ce tuyau de ma manche est posée sur une planche qui l'a conduit dehors de l'agar et des pelles de bois jeter continuellement dans cette pelle de manche, le café qui va tomber sur la plate-forme, ou plusieurs esclaves avec des râteaux achèvent de l'étendre tandis que 2 ou 3 autres conduisent le bout de manche [...]»<sup>183</sup>*

Slaves were needed for the weighing and filling of sacks of wheat but here too, labour was insufficient as one inhabitant complained:

*«La petite quantité de noirs que nous avons tant pour la pesée que pour l'emplissage des sacs occasionne une lenteur dont nous ne sommes certainement pas responsables ; le reste des noirs étant divisés et répartis entre divers objets qui, quoique différents, n'en sont pas moins relatifs aux travaux de l'Escadre.»<sup>184</sup>*

## 6. Transport and Shipping

Slaves were involved in a number of activities relating to the port. During the period of Labourdonnais, port activities were assigned to slaves. In 1738, Labourdonnais gave a description of events on the island. He wrote that slaves were being trained to work as carpenters, *calfats* and blacksmiths for construction. Slaves also completed the *curage* of the port: removing *debris* and carcasses of ships as well as silt from the harbour.

They also performed all construction works for docks, wharves, as well as loading and unloading goods from the ship to warehouses.<sup>185</sup> By 1783, they were still employed in workshops in the port for constructing *radoubs* as carpenters and caulkers (*calfats*).

Governor David continued the practice of using West African slaves in the port, rather than any other slaves of other origin:

*« Il est important d'avoir des noirs du Sénégal dans la marine des deux îles car ils peuvent suppléer aux matelots, calfats d'Europe, charpentiers et aux lascars de l'Inde. ne peuvent être suppléés par aucun autre noir.»<sup>186</sup>*

There were particular hesitations about using Malagasy slaves in the port. In 1766, Mozambican and West African slaves were preferred. West Africa was not only too far away to tempt slaves to steal an embarkation and run away, but the slaves were also cheaper:

*«On ne peut employer les noirs de Madagascar dans le port à cause de la proximité avec leur patrie et danger qu'il y a à ce qu'ils enlèvent les embarcations-on peut les confier aux Mozambiques mais ceux de Guinée valent infiniment mieux et coûteront bien moins au Roi »<sup>187</sup>*

Within Mauritius, they carried goods from the interior estates and loaded them onto boats and coasters going to Port Louis. A large numbers of boats were involved in this local *petit cabotage*. According to the *corvée*, one-fifth of the slaves on each estate were retained to transport wood to the coast for shipping to Port Louis where port and various works were also in demand. Whether slaves were chained on board is not quite clear, as there are conflicting reports.

## 7. Security and defence of the colony

A very large number of slaves were also needed for the security and defence of the islands. Although there were qualms about using and arming slaves to defend the colonies, there was not much choice, given the shortage of free European labour and soldiers.

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## MAROON DETACHMENT

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Maroons represented the 'internal' enemy, while the British and Dutch were the 'external' enemies. Labourdonnais found an ingenious way to hunt and capture maroon slaves by using slaves with a knowledge of the terrain and scouting skills to track maroons down. 24 loyal slaves were first used to hunt maroons and the Maroon Detachment grew gradually in size.<sup>188</sup> But 'success' was mitigated as maroonage could never be completely stopped, despite the harsh punishments which followed.

By the 1760s, this detachment were still being used: 28 slaves made up the *Maréchaussée*. Even this was not sufficient as attacks on inhabitants and plantations continued, when maroons searched for food, arms and clothes. By this time, slaves were entrusted with a gun and a *mousqueton*. Their numbers also increased to 50.

Reports detailing all the maroon hunting expeditions constitute some of the most gruesome pieces of writing which one encounters, when consulting documents on slavery in Isle de France. Not only were the details of the deaths of maroons provided, but also the manner in which the left hand of the slave was cut in order to collect the reward. It was not clear, on many occasions, whether the Maroon Detachment waited for the death of the slave to cut off his left hand. In 1762, 'Maconte' (maconde?) slaves were used. Between 15 November 1759 and 1762, 234 maroons were killed by the *Marechaussée* and 429 Maroons were killed by slaves of private owners. According to correspondence of Governor Boucher, they were all married and Christian.<sup>189</sup>

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## SQUADRON

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Slaves were also trained to form part of the Naval Squadron as there were not sufficient numbers of free inhabitants and soldiers. The *Conseil Supérieur* had agreed to Labourdonnais' proposal, in 1745, to requisition slaves from inhabitants to be embarked on the *Favorite*. About 500 were required. West African slaves were preferred as there existed a spirit of solidarity among them. If any deaths occurred, the owners would be compensated to the tune of 200 *piastres* per slave.<sup>190</sup>

These West African slaves were expected to supplement the 'matelots d'Europe', carpenters et 'lascars d'Indes' (European sailors, Indian carpenters and seamen).<sup>191</sup>

In 1760, there were still many working on board ships. The French Squadron employed 227 slaves in their ships and in those for China at this time. Many were brave slaves.<sup>192</sup>

*«Les équipages de nos vaisseaux ayant été complétés de noirs, tant ici que de Madagascar. Il n'y aurait cette année aucunes difficultés sur nos moyens si simples de vous armer, d'autant plus que ces noirs sont très braves et que les vaisseaux qui se sont le plus battus conviennent que ces gens ont montré la plus grande fermeté. Avions-nous, Monsieur, qu'après avoir cent fois renversé les dispositions, les matières de la marine et le port dont vous avez l'absolue disposition ; après avoir retardé un vaisseau pour en presser un autre, abandonner celui-ci pour en reprendre un autre.»*

They also learnt to march, to fire canons and shoot.<sup>193</sup> Numerous expeditions were mounted to fight against the 'enemy' in which the slaves participated fully in defence of French strategic interests in the Indian Ocean. 216 slaves, bought by the Company, were embarked on the *Cendéand Expédition*. Only 118 came back. Those who had become invalids were given work and hunted maroons.<sup>194</sup> The best slaves brought from Madagascar were placed on the *Centaure* carrying also 64 canons and 76 soldiers.<sup>195</sup>

*«Le 31 juillet, «La Pénélope» est arrivée de Foulpointe avec deux cent-soixante-cinq noirs en cargaison de trente-neuf de fraude qui ont été confisqués au profit de la Compagnie. J'ai fait choix d'une centaine des plus beaux qui seront placés sur le vaisseau «le Centaure.»*

## FORTIFICATIONS

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Corvée labour was also used to build fortifications all over the island:<sup>196</sup>

«Nous avons fourni à la Compagnie de la part de M. David, 18 noirs pour travailler à titre de corvée aux fortifications de l'Isle, ils y ont été retenus depuis le 7 août 1747, jusques et compris le 7 février et la présente année 1748. Nous avons cru qu'après une déduction de la quantité de journées qui acquittent en ce qui nous concerne, les corvées dont nous sommes redevables pour la dernière année et celle-ci, il nous serait tenu compte, du surplus, fait en argent, fait à notre [\_\_\_\_\_] sur les livres de comptoir, ce qui nous est indifférent et nous nous fondions sur ce raisonnement qui nous paraît juste.»

In 1753, slaves were still building fortifications. Moreover, as Megan Vaughan observes “the slaves placed at Charpentier-Cossigny’s disposal for the building, of the fortifications included as many women as men, all of them engaged in hard manual labour.”

Slaves were also used in other activities relating to the defence of the colony, such as manning military posts. Instead of bringing in 700 to 800 French troops, slaves were introduced. It was, however, quite expensive to procure slaves, but as it was considered absolutely necessary to defend the colony, Malagasy slaves were brought because they cost the least.<sup>197</sup>

However, manning posts was not so easy and Grand Port District, for example, was ‘riddled’ with maroons because no slaves were available to patrol the area, their services having been requisitioned by Fusée Aublet at the Château du Réduit.<sup>198</sup>

This was still a problem years later. Officials complained that there were insufficient troops and slaves. In Grand-Port, the ratio of free slaves was to be 50: 50. Their duties were to patrol the coast, observe the enemy fleet, use movements to create suspicion, and delay descent by the enemy.<sup>199</sup>

It appears that slaves preferred to work for the Company as *Commandeurs* and ‘ouvriers’ since they could get a salary.

In addition to their being allocated to workshops, slaves were categorised into groups depending on their presumed loyalty and ability. Thus, there were *Noirs fusiliers*, considered to be the most reliable and loyal ‘class’; the *Noirs lanciers* who were not well-trusted and were ‘mediocre’ and from the *Noirs pionniers*, one would not obtain anything.<sup>200</sup>

### 8. Medical care

Despite what one reads about slave-owners and Whites fearing their slaves and fearing being poisoned, slaves in Mauritius were also entrusted with the care of the sick in hospital and in the homes of the owners. The number of manumissions (*affranchissements*) given by grateful owners to their slaves who had nursed them and looked after during their old age, is sufficient testimony to this worthwhile and essential social occupation: care of the old and sick and tending to the health of their owners and their families.

Slaves also worked in the hospital. On 10 November 1759, the journal of Governor Desforges Boucher refers to his visit to the hospital in the company of Mr. Candos, where the number of slaves to be employed in hospital was finalised.<sup>201</sup>

### 9. Slaves in the Market Economy

A large number of slaves were also involved in the market economy. Their owners sent them regularly to the market to sell the produce of the estate. They were the ‘*noirs et negresses de journée*’.<sup>202</sup> They were very mobile slaves, and some even got their owner’s permission to live in the town although the owners lived in the countryside. This allowed the slaves an important degree of freedom but, as Megan Vaughan reminds us, this should not be confused with ‘autonomy’.

According to a letter of Desroches and Poivre of 4 July 1769, one of the problems of sending slaves to the market to sell the goods of the owners was that many did not know how to read; thus they could not distinguish the value of notes which looked alike:

*«Tous les billets étant d'une même forme et d'une même grandeur et les négresses qui seules portent des denrées au bazar et qui en achètent une grande partie, ne sachant pas lire, ne peuvent pas distinguer un papier de 20 de celui de 10.»<sup>203</sup>*

## 4.A UNIQUE GROUP: GOVERNMENT SLAVES

Although we are aware of the existence of slaves belonging to Government, not much is known about them and how their situation differed from other privately-owned slaves. Megan Vaughan and Corinne Masson have both written on these, Megan Vaughan as part of a general study of French slavery in Isle de France, while Corinne Masson focussed on the British Imperial period (1803-1810). Satyendra Peerthum has dwelt on the slaves owned by the Government during the British period of administration. Here, an overview of the French period is given as it is less known and understood in Mauritius. Why was there a need for the Government to maintain slaves? Who were they? How many were there? What did they do? What was their status, compared to that of private slaves? What happened to them? These are some of the basic and fundamental questions one must try to answer.

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### 1721-1767

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Although it is believed that slaves were only ‘owned’ by Government after 1767, this is not strictly true. When the French East India Company traded in slaves, it was not only to supply inhabitants, but to use a number of slaves to its own ends. This, as stated before, was not to the liking of some inhabitants who felt the Company was keeping the best slaves for itself: “Il faut empêcher la Compagnie de garder les meilleurs noirs au détriment des habitants de la colonie” (Eng, summary: We must stop the Company from keeping the best slaves).<sup>204</sup>

Slaves could also become the property of the State, when the Company confiscated them, if for example, they had been brought illegally without ‘entry fees’ being paid. On 13 July 1758, for instance, the 100 best were recruited for the squadron the *Centaure*.<sup>205</sup>

Labourdonnais informed the Company’s Directors in 1737 that he was keeping only 10 masons and 10 stone-masons and a few others.<sup>206</sup> In addition to the skilled work engaged by the *Compagnie*, there were also those slaves recruited for the *Maréchaussée* in charge of hunting Maroons. Of the 24 making up this *Maréchaussée*, 17 belonged to the Company: “*Ils sont tous mariés et chestiens depuis longtemps,*” added Labourdonnais.

Slaves preferred to work for the *Compagnie*, as indicated earlier, because some of them were paid.

The Company brought slaves for its use from different countries. In the 1740s, many of them came from West Africa. It was stated that “*les noirs Yolof, Bambara et Guinée sont beaucoup plus robustes*<sup>207</sup> *et Vigoureux.*”<sup>208</sup>

By 1758 there were 2,651 slaves who belonged to the Company.<sup>209</sup> They had achieved a status that few other slaves could, even though they remained slaves. The number belonging to the *Maréchaussée* was increased by 50 and the slaves were given arms. Those in the Navy were divided up into 3 groups to defend the island. They were thus protecting the very authority that had deprived them of their freedom.<sup>210</sup>

Although they were considered to be an elite among slaves, often their conditions were no better than other private slaves. Food shortages, for example, also afflicted them as in 1760, when Mr. Candos, Commander of Port Sud-Est (today Mahébourg) wrote of the absence of any food for the Slaves of the Company. Yet, they were required to continue working on the construction of fortifications in the port.<sup>211</sup> In 1760, there were, in addition to free persons, 1,850 male and female slaves belonging to the Company. Although they normally consumed approximately 110,000 lbs of maize per month because of the shortage of maize, they were given bread instead. This was not normally given to slaves. By the end of December 1760, the situation had become critical; the Governor reported:

«*À la fin de ce mois, plus de riz pour les noirs, malabares et même pour les blancs à qui on en fournit.*»<sup>212</sup>

(“At the end of this month, no more rice for the slaves, malbarsand even for the whites that we supply.”)

Those Company slaves, who had been sent overseas in the squadron of D’Estaing, were not so fortunate either; of the 216 sent with him, only 118 returned and of these most were not in good shape and had to be given light work. They could not be used as was hoped to hunt maroons.<sup>213</sup>

There is a slight discrepancy in the figures which deserves to be studied, since in 1761, it is noted that there were 2,021 slaves. These were made up of the following nationalities and ages:

- From Guinea, Mozambique, Madagascar, American, Ma... (?), Créoles, India and Manila : 878
- Children under 14 years: 48
- Younger children not yet serving: 191
- At the Port S.E : 329
- In the Navy: 552.<sup>214</sup>

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### 1767-1790

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When the Royal Government took over in 1767, it was decided to purchase the Company slaves as they were workers; Some 500-600 were purchased to undertake the various works on the island. In 1767, there were 2,400 Government Slaves. None worked in agriculture. The Company, at this time, sold slaves at the following rates:

*Pièce d’Inde* and from Guinea: 720 *piastres*  
Mozambique: 540 *piastres*  
Madagascar: 360 *piastres*  
Indian: 300 *piastres*<sup>215</sup>

Thus, at this time too, West African slaves were the most sought after, in terms of ethnicity.

Slaves working in the South-East of the island numbered 157 and were used in the lumber workshops. On 10<sup>th</sup> November 1767, there were 86 male slaves, 38 female slaves, 18 boys and 15 girls. Each one was given 60 lbs of maize.

Their conditions, though slightly better on the whole, did no change concerning the mortality rate. It was approximately at this time 5% costing the Government some 1,500 *piastres* in losses. There appears to be a considerable amount spent on the upkeep of Government slaves, if one is to believe the correspondence of administrators. This was worrying to them, and they sought to economise as much as possible; it proved expensive to maintain slaves, though this was absolutely essential, as inhabitants would not do this work. At one point, it was even envisaged to bring in convicts.

By the 1770s the Colonial Government was confronted with the same difficulty as the Company previously, concerning the upkeep of Government slaves and of European workers. The workshops absorbed a huge amount of the revenue in terms of provision of food, clothing etc. Poivre even observed that it might have been cheaper to recruit 100 French workers than maintain slaves, since according to his calculations, each slave cost 1000 *écus* and not 20 *sols* per day, as was claimed.<sup>216</sup> He envisaged selling all Government Slaves, to reduce government expenses.<sup>217</sup>

Labour required by Government was carried out using *corvée* labour. For road construction, in 1771, each inhabitant had to supply 4 days of *corvée* per slave.<sup>218</sup> But by 1772, more slaves were being sought by the Government. In October 1772, Poivre requested that one-tenth of all slave cargo should go to the King/Government.<sup>219</sup> These were now required for maintenance of public buildings civil and military. In 1776, a list was published of the slaves in the King’s service.<sup>220</sup> Maintenance of a Government slave cost the Government 6 *sols* per day. According to Poivre, many slaves had started taking a liking to their job because he had allowed them to choose their trade:

*«Plusieurs avaient pris goût parce que je ne les avais pas forcés à choisir leur métier [...]. C'est avec douleur que je vois sortir 72 jeunes beaux noirs pour faire de tambours [...]. On sentira la différence. Il faudra prendre des blancs très chers»<sup>221</sup>*

In January 1778, a survey of the state of slaves, who belonged to the King, was made, and details given on the heads of workshops. There were 3,084 slaves among whom were 1,732 males, 765 females, 349 boys and 238 girls. An assessment was made of their exact value: out of the 3,084, there were 381 who were either infirm or unfit to work because of fatigue. No strenuous work could be given to them. Some were old and needed care in order not to worsen their infirmities. They tended to be left to themselves most of the time, and the rest of the time, they were given what was the equivalent of children's' work. The boys and girls, up to 9-10 years, were not given any work either. The women, though fit for work, were allowed to stay home and look after their children. It was, therefore, on the male slaves, according to reports, that all the burden of work fell. Even among them, however, some were ill or had marooned. The Government therefore bought 180 more slaves from private persons for the dredging of the Port.<sup>222</sup>

By 11 July 1780, the census revealed that the King had a total of 3,206 slaves and had lost 58 slaves in 2 years.<sup>223</sup> The expenses incurred for the maintenance of the 'Royal' slaves provided the justification for the King to instruct the Government in Mauritius to sell off the non-effective slaves. Thus, only effective labour and their families would be retained, and all others sold.

Photo 1 Document listing the number of the badges worn by Government slaves (Extract from COL C4-60 *Etat des Noirs*..).

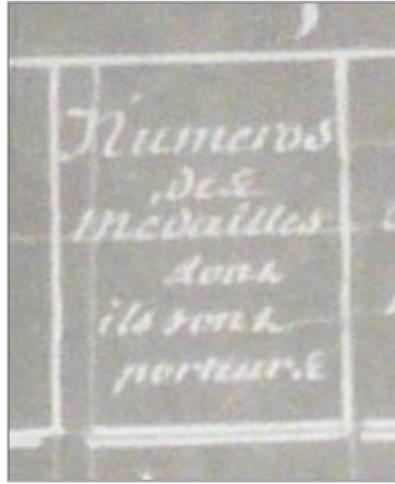
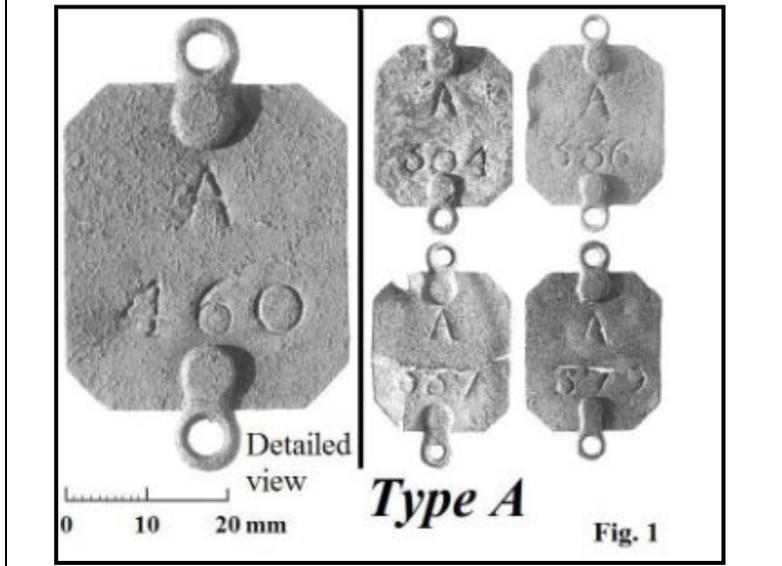


Photo 2 Badges found at the site of the Powder Mills by Richard Ramsawmy.



More expense occurred for the Government during the French wars against the British in India: some 1,600 slaves were sent to India, costing the Government a huge sum of 2 million *livres* as they had to be bought or rented from one inhabitant. Of these slaves, however, only 228 came back. Efforts by the Government through the French traders, Monneron and Coutenceau, were also fruitless. Yet, as the Governor remarked, it was not a small loss since this amount would have to be reimbursed to their owners. It was reported that they might have been killed, died, or run away.

A detailed picture of the state of Government slaves is given in the documents found in the French and Mauritian National Archives, which allows for more detailed studies to be carried out in the future. On the lists, the slaves' names, families, countries of origin, castes and occupations are given, as well as clothes, rations and numbers of medals which they were supposed to wear (see below). There were also personal details, such as whether they were married or not, deceased or marooned. The rations given to them was as follows:

- A driver (*commandeur*) would get 1/4 salted meat, 2 livres of rice or maize per day and 3 of salt per month
  
- Ordinary slaves would get 2 *livres* of unshelled rice or maize per day and 2 of salt per month.

Utensils were also provided:

- For a driver: 1 maize mill, 1 *pilon* for the rice, 1 cooking pot of 4 pts, 2 wooden spoons, 2 Flemish daggers, 2 mats for slaves bedding;
  
- For sub-commanders: 1 maize mill, 1 *pilon* for the rice, 1 cooking pot of 4 pts, 2 wooden spoons, 2 Flemish daggers, 4 mats for slaves bedding.

Thus, for 100 slaves, 10 maize mills, 10 pestles for the husked rice, 10 *marmites de dimension* (pots that could hold), 10 pts, 100 wooden spoons, 100 Flemish daggers, 100 mats for bedding would be needed.

The blacksmiths (*Forgerons du Roi*), carpenters, wood-workers, port-workers, those in the Engineering Department (*Génie*) and Artillery also had their names and badges number. In addition, every two months, a surgeon examined them. A *grande médaille* (big badge) was also given to the Commander while the sub-commander got a *petite médaille*.<sup>224</sup>

By the 1780s, however, there was a rethink on the part of the Government regarding those 'ineffective' slaves. Although it was an expense for the Government, there was unwillingness to sell the old and sick slaves, and their contribution to the island's economy was acknowledged:

***"L'humanité s'oppose à vendre des invalides dont presque tout le temps de la vie ont été employés aux travaux les plus pénibles."***

(Eng. Trans. Humanity does not allow us to sell invalids who have spent their lifetime in hard labour)

***"Les femmes, dont l'utilité pour la plus grande partie se réduit à porter des pierres sur leur tête pour les travaux [...]"***

(Eng. Trans. the women whose usefulness, for the most part, is confined to carrying stones on their head during works).

***"Il y a celles qui sont enceintes ou nourrices, lesquelles ne rendent aucun service toute une partie de l'année, il faut au moins les loger, les nourrir, les habiller et leur donner des ustensiles."***

(Eng. Trans. there are those who are pregnant or nursing, and do not provide any service for part of the year, we have to nevertheless to house, feed, clothe them and give them utensils).

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## 1803-1810

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Government slaves continued to be used up to the end of the occupation of the island by the French. Masson estimates that 4.5 to 5% of the total slave population in 1807 were in this category.<sup>225</sup> A large number, at this time, were involved in port activities, given Anglo-French rivalry at this time and the need to cater for the number of squadrons arriving in Port Louis. The purchase of private slaves from inhabitants continued: in the period 1803-3 357 slaves were bought from 6 different inhabitants. A large number appeared to have directly come from slave trading and were not born in Mauritius.

Despite the harsh laws introduced by Decaen restricting freedoms, the Slaves belonging to the Government benefitted from certain liberties not given to private slaves: being in Port Louis, they circulated more freely in the town, did not always require written permission, what seems an anomaly under slavery until then, and received a salary. This would have been unthinkable a decade earlier in 1800 Isle de France, when Poivre had proposed something similar and had been vehemently opposed. Reform of slavery seemed, therefore, on the agenda already. It is to be noted that one punishment meted out to Government slaves was the withdrawal of this salary payable in '*centimes de poche*' and in clothing.

The necessity of reconciling the various archives spread all over the world can be gauged by the questions posed by Ramasawmy, during his archaeological search at the site of the Forges, where so many slaves worked: he wonders what the badges he discovered (photo 1) were for and who wore them.

Had the French National Archives documents been available to him (photo 2), these questions would have been answered. It is imperative that authorities pay attention to the urgent need to obtain copies of all documents found overseas pertaining to Mauritian slavery. These are important, not only for historical records, but also for memorialisation purposes and allow Mauritians to better research their history.<sup>226</sup>

### Recommendation:

1. The contribution of slaves to the establishment of port and shipping activities must be given more visibility in Port Louis. The whole area of the Caudan, up to Trou Fanfaron, was an area where slaves worked lived and built the port.
2. Documents found in France need to be repertoried, copied and brought to Mauritius

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## Indian Slaves

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The existence of Indian slaves has been little acknowledged in Mauritius as popular imagination associates slavery with Africans and Malagasies. Yet, Indian slaves and free persons have been part of the landscape since the beginning of French rule.

Historians, such as Muslim Jumeer, who have conducted in-depth research into Indians living in Mauritius during the French period, have regrettably not published their works. Amédée Nagapen has published short texts which highlight the invisibility, today, of these first Indians on Mauritian soil.

Indian men and women were brought both as slaves and as free workers as far back as 1729. Among the free men, were either skilled artisans, poor fishermen, *peons* (*pions*) or sailors. It is also reported that those in skilled trades transmitted their knowledge to their children and thus continued in the same trade for generations.<sup>227</sup> The first Indian worker on contract was brought in 1734, although workers had been arriving well before that date (MNA: NA 6/1A, quoted in Jumeer).

The only work which they refused to undertake, according to official reports, was to cultivate the land. No doubt they did not want to be associated with slaves, even though they were not all materially better off.

According to Jumeer, many Indian slaves were women. Many did not declare the fathers of their children because these were European. This situation is explained by Jumeer as resulting from shortage of European women on the island. The children were known as the 'Noirs Libres' (Jumeer: 105-7). Moreover, among the manumitted, many were Indian women. Their children formed a privileged group being 'Eurasian'.

Finally, there were also those Indian slave women bought by '*petits blancs*' (poor whites). These have been partly studied by Jumeer but further work is required (Jumeer: 114).

As far as their religious background was concerned, they were either Muslim, Hindu or Christian. Although the Muslim and Christian communities are still in existence, those who were Hindu have disappeared, as most converted to Christianity. Why so little of Indian culture remains in this population needs to be researched. Part of the answer may lie in the fact that being a Christian meant possible promotion prospects for those in employment. There was also the fact that many practices were not allowed in Mauritius at that time, as shown earlier. Cremation was not allowed, for example, and Indians adopted the practice of burial. Neither were certain foods imported so that the diet also underwent a change. Singing and dancing were curtailed after certain hours, as shown already. In 1793, there was an attempt to change the dress habits of Indian soldiers who had worn their turbans, as this allegedly shamed the uniformity of the French army. It was thus decided to separate them. It was clear also that French culture could not tolerate 'rival' cultures.

Furthermore, according to Jumeer, *métissage* led to an erosion of Indian culture in French Mauritius. Decaen's period (1803-1810) saw the formalization of residential segregation as Indians were consigned to the Eastern Suburb or the *Camp des Mascars et des Malabars*. Studies have yet to be carried out on the level of conversion at specific times. According to Nagapen, however, although they showed visible signs of adopting Western culture, in the privacy of their homes, Tamil was spoken. However, over 2-3 generations, even this was lost. On the whole, therefore, Amédée Nagapen concludes that there was 'deculturation'.

Among the slaves, as there was a negative male-female ratio, marriages took place outside the group. There were numerous instances of mixed marriages. According to Nagapen, they became Creole slaves first (being born here and being of mixed marriages) and then Catholic.

Among the women, they were among the first to obtain manumission as numerous liaisons existed with European owners and other non-Indian slaves. According to Nagapen, slavery was "*un agent pollueur terriblement efficace*" (Eng. trans. a very efficient polluting agent).<sup>228</sup>

Today, there are a few families who can trace their ancestry back to the French period, but for the majority, this knowledge of their origins has been lost. According to Jumeer, their separation from those descended from African slaves, and calling themselves Créole at the time, was not so much racial as cultural. The main dividing factor was between all those who identified with European culture and those who sought to retain their Indian identity.

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## The last years of slavery in Isle de France (up to 1810)

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The last years of slavery under French rule are considered by historians as representing one of the harshest periods of slavery. The period of Decaen's regime have been well documented by Prentout in his book, and it is not necessary to repeat the same facts here. The harshness of the laws relating to manumission etc. have also been highlighted. These were all the more anomalous as the Rights of Man were being propounded across France, in the rest of Europe and the United States.

We have not yet considered the impact and significance of some of these clauses, first for institutionalising not only the notion of 'population', but the *inequality* of populations before the

Law. Even more significant for the Commission's work, was the impact on property-ownership by non-Whites.

When we consider the number of land claims being made before the Commission, by the non-White population of Mauritius, laws that prevented or blocked property-ownership by non-Whites became even more significant. The official policy to stop free non-Whites or slaves having any say or controlling any part of the property of white children was very strong, and this provided the philosophy behind the additional clauses brought by Decaen to the French laws.

A full study of the revoking of manumissions and land transactions by non-Whites, through the implementation of the Colonial Civil Code of Napoleon, needs urgently to be undertaken. This Code was promulgated in Mauritius on 3 September 1805. Another supplement, on 23 October 1805, was specially designed for the colonies and made provisions for exceptions and additions.<sup>229</sup>

For the first time, the inequality of groups on the basis of colour was legally established under the Law, making it unique in French legal history, and institutionalizing what amounts to a 'racial apartheid' system, according to Laurent Sermet. Significantly, too, it was also intended to prevent 'racial dispersion' of property.<sup>230</sup>

The *Code Civil* thus formally created three groups of persons categorized on the basis of the colour of their skin: the White, the Coloured and the Black Slave.

It was significant that when the British took over, one of the first acts preceding the abolition of slavery was the removal of discrimination against all free persons of African and Indian descent. The *Code Decaen* and the *Code Noir*, in particular Clauses 51 of the *Code Noir* and Clauses 67 and 68 of the Supplementary CCC, were abolished as they had collectively prevented Whites from donating property to free Coloured or freed slaves.

The Muslim part among the French India population has been studied by Emrith and Jumeer. Most had come from from Bengal. Their history needs to be further researched using notarial records and Civil Status records. Although there was reluctance to use non-Christian labour, the shortage of labour had forced Governors to engage Indian Muslim sailors. They were all Urdu speaking, according to Jumeer. We know from research, conducted with one family who has traced their ancestry to the French period, although they have kept the memory of their family origins that they seem to reject their Indian ancestry. In 1805, they secured from Governor Decaen a plot of 250 toises to build a mosque, an unthinkable act in an island where Catholicism was the only authorized religion. However, it fitted in well with the principle of segregation of races, as envisaged by Decaen and so, may not seem so incongruous an action, in hindsight. The separate cemetery created at Rivière Lataniers was also symbolic of the separation of cultures at this time, demanded by part of the population itself and allowed by French Authorities. It is among this group that the first Yamse religious festival was held in 1765 (Emrith: 9).

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, the people living in Mauritius presents an interesting and rich panoply of cultural traditions, some better known than others. There were non-Europeans who have never known slavery, such as the Marmittes from Madagascar who inhabited the *Camp des Noirs Libres*; there were those of Indian origin who inhabited the Camp des Lascars et Malabars. In this group, there was gradual separation between Muslim and Christian elements.

#### The *Petit Blancs*

A study of slavery in Isle de France would not be complete without mention of the slave owners and other French inhabitants. As stated before, Mauritius abounds in stereotypes, and those associated with Europeans or 'blan' ('white') no less so. The stereotype is that all slave owners were rich and white. Nothing could be further from the truth. Although, the bulk of slave owners at the time of emancipation in 1835 consisted of Indians, *Gens de couleur* and poor Whites. But the majority of slaves were owned by white sugar plantation owners.

Whiteness was a condition that was imposed on all European, whether they wished for this or not. Just like one became a 'Mozambique' during the slave trade and slavery, so one became a 'White'.

Furthermore, they were not all wealthy inhabitants; 50% of Europeans were '*petit blancs*', made up of artisans, workers, carpenters, stone-masons. In the rural areas, the men might be overseers, and the women employed as domestics. As the Free Black population emerged, the Whites relinquished these roles. They did not lead easy lives, as often portrayed. In many respects, they were the '*nègres blancs*' (Eng trans.'white negroes'). They defied the laws which prohibited them from marrying black slaves and cohabited with them. But this only drove them further and further away from the rest of the 'White' society which was emerging.<sup>231</sup>

As with most neglected histories, they come to light only when the criminal records mention them. Thus Delpont, probably the most famous of them all was accused of multiple crimes: receiving stolen goods, encouraging slaves to steal and giving them resources to steal, squatting on 'unconceded' land etc.<sup>232</sup> Despite all this, they did enjoy the benefits that having a whiter skin colour proffered on them. A black skilled worker would never be equal to a white skilled worker in French Mauritius.<sup>233</sup>

## 5. SLAVES AND SUGAR 1815-1835

The lives of slaves under the sugar regime have been documented in *Bitter Sugar*, using the testimonies of some 647 slaves making formal complaints to the Protector of Slaves between 1832 and 1835. The complaints emanated mainly from slaves on sugar estates and provide a detailed picture of what life for slaves was like under the period of sugar expansion. Sugar expansion is documented in Chapter One. Following the ending of the slave trade and the resulting 'shortage' of labour to meet the needs of an expanding economy, the slaves endured even more hardships, and their lives became much more stressful between 1815 and 1835. This also impacted on their families as many were either sold or transferred to other estates and districts, causing a dislocation of families.

Slaves who had hitherto engaged in occupations not requiring hard physical labour were brought into plantation work and many did not survive this shift. Women, who had traditionally stayed at home or were working in domestic service, were also forced to shift to plantation work. Children and the elderly were brought in and given lighter work on the plantation (*'petite bande'*) and in herding cattle. That itself, although not requiring hard physical labour, meant much longer hours of work and a 7-day working week.

Anyone familiar with sugar plantation work knows full well the immense effort required to clear land for sugar; that this was done manually without any modern equipment is today unthinkable. Yet, this was the case from 1815 to 1835. Mechanisation occurred in the mill but hardly on the plantation field itself. The human and material costs to the slave population at the time and the consequences for the slaves will be summarized here.

### Material conditions of slaves

- Increased mortality among slaves, despite better rations;
- Increased alcohol consumption as slave owners provided alcohol to encourage slaves to work;
- Longer hours in the mill and on the plantation during harvest time;
- Increasing use of physical violence, as documented by the number of complaints made to the Protector of Slaves and resulting prosecutions.

### Socio-Psychological Conditions

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- Aversion to plantation work after the abolition of slavery;
- Creation of propensity to alcohol consumption in individual slaves and possible impact on children;
- Trauma caused by a sudden change of occupations - from tailor to plantation work, for example;
- Trauma caused by the dislocation of families, as plantation slaves were sold/hired to other owners of plantations;
- Trauma caused by fear of physical punishment and humiliation of publicly-administered punishment;
- Fear of the 'White' man, of authority, further instilled by threat of physical punishment.

### Health of Slaves

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#### Height of slaves

Height-for-age of children is accepted as an indicator of the long-term (chronic) nutritional status in childhood. There is evidence that the nutrition of Mauritian slaves was inadequate. Adult human height is the result of both genetic and nutrition: height is affected by occurrences in childhood, as well as by genetic inheritance. A lack of suitable food, disease and too much physical activity - such as overwork - in childhood, all reduce the nutrients available to the growing body, and result in

decreasing average heights. A comparison of the heights of 3,739 slave children aged 4 to 18 years, with the NCHS<sup>2</sup> Growth Charts made in 1826, showed that the heights of Mauritian slave children were significantly below the NCHS reference throughout the age range studied. These differences in heights may have a genetic component, particularly since some Mauritian children had Indian and Malay ancestry, but it seems likely that malnutrition, disease, and hard work played a part in keeping the slave children short in stature. At 18 years of age, boys were about 25 cm shorter and girls about 15 cms shorter than the NCHS reference for the respective sex. Both slave boys' and girls' growth curves started to level off much earlier than the NCHS growth curves, indicating that the nutrition of slave children was inadequate to support growth, as well as hard physical labour to which they were subjected at a young age. Figure 1 compares the heights of Mauritian Creole slaves (i.e. born in Mauritius), and modern-day Mauritian Creole adults and US adults. It is obvious that Creole slaves were shorter than even their modern-day descendants, as a result of the chronic under nutrition, hard labour and disease prevalence which they experienced during the slavery days.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, how far had the situation changed? Sugar expansion no doubt changed much but the illnesses remained the same. Bonsergent occupied a unique position, being a medical doctor of the District of Rivière-du-Rempart, as well as having treated and observed many slaves in the District. He was there when the cholera epidemic occurred in 1825. This epidemic resulted in the deaths of 22,000 slaves according to him.<sup>234</sup>

In written sources on Mauritius, there is little information on the slave camps. Bonsergent no doubt visited a few as he gave a description of a slave camp. According to him, it resembled a small village where everyone had a hut and a garden:

Photo 3

Extract from Bonsergent's thesis

**logement particulier lui était assigné dans le *camp des noirs*, c'est ainsi que l'on nomme le lieu où tous les noirs sont *casernés* dans chaque établissement : c'est une espèce de petit village où chacun a sa maison et son jardin, dont les dimensions varient en raison de l'accroissement des familles. Chaque établissement possède aussi un**

Food consisted of Bengal rice, manioc, maize, sweet potato, as well as fish, salted meat and dry vegetables. Rations consisted of 1½ lbs rice as is well known. Fresh vegetables were available on the estate as well as a plot. However complaints of slaves abounded as was noted from the complaints made to the Protector of Slaves. Plots were cultivated with *bredes*, tomatoes, *bringelle* and *petit piment*. Those by the sea got sea shells and fish. Some also got what was left from the owner's table.

Extra rations were received by slaves on New Year's Day and some families sold the cattle they had reared during the year. Bonsergent observed that some earned up to 200 *piastres* from the sale of goods. For him, there was no doubt that slavery was very mild and that a European cultivator would readily exchange his free position for that of a slave.

The aged and infirm were given work as guards on sugar estates to watch out for fire and theft, but Bonsergent saw many who were neither infirm nor sick but who stole from the estate huge bags of goods. He claimed that every Sunday, slaves went to the canteen. He also described the situation in February and March 1835 when slavery was being abolished. All those slaves in prison were authorised to leave: however, they were all infected with skin infections which led to numerous other slaves being infected on those estates. Proprietors were forced to open makeshift hospitals on their estates to isolate the cases. This occurred at the time of the harvest, and many owners were deprived of the labour of their slaves.<sup>235</sup>

Concerning women, he observed that many young girls had multiple partners by the age of 12.

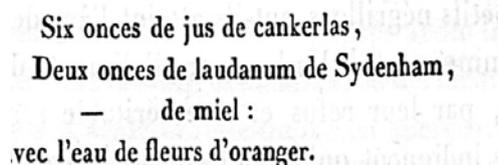
In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, according to him, tetanus was also the most important killer. It killed 1/5<sup>th</sup> of slave babies within the first 15 days of birth. Mothers were placed in poorly ventilated alcoves inside their huts and lighting a fire and a change of temperature caused a child to get

tetanus, according to Bonsergent. Adults who contracted it were give cold washes and *ayapana* leaves as treatment.

Another common and poisonous injury was caused by a particular wood, *Bois de ronde*. A splinter caught in one's skin could lead to tetanus.

Slave fishermen '*noirs pecheurs*' were affected by the fish known as *laff*: if tetanus was contracted, death resulted, especially if the fisherman was alone. If an old fisherman was nearby, traditional remedies could be applied that included roots of wild 'ipeca, veloutier, gingembre, safran...' Another traditional remedy on the island for tetanus was controlled doses of opium:

Photo 4



Six onces de jus de cankerlas,  
Deux onces de laudanum de Sydenham,  
— de miel :  
vec l'eau de fleurs d'oranger.

Indigestion was also a common problem. Infant slaves were overfed by 2 years causing stomachs to be overloaded and causing indigestion. They were treated with leeches. Worms also affected slave children, especially during the changes of seasons from warm to cool, despite anti-worm medicine being given. He gave the example of the fishing establishment of Mr. Faoulez, where 300 slaves worked as fishermen. Despite the excellent management, slaves still fell sick every week.

Bonsergent's statements need to be treated with circumspection, given that his aim in writing the thesis was to show that the illnesses of slaves were not due to their enslavement, but to the slaves' own 'vices'. Much contrary evidence exists that the regulations concerning rations and clothing were not being followed and that many slaves were neglected by their owners, who were sometimes in no position to feed themselves. But the elite also neglected their slaves, as complaints against many wealthy inhabitants demonstrate in both French and British periods.<sup>236</sup>

If poor settlers owning slaves could be 'excused' for not providing basic necessities to slaves, the same judgement cannot be made of the French East India Company who also neglected their slaves. Thus although owners complained about their slaves and some officials tried to manage the slave-based economy more efficiently, they were caught in a contradictory situation: slaves were supposed to be '*bien meuble*', but despite being treated as chattel, the slaves' humanity showed up in their every action. That was both the essence and tragedy of slavery. It was never efficient and, indeed, could never be because slave 'human' behaviour could never be predicted and be organised in the way for example, cattle could be.

## Amelioration of slaves

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How far did slave amelioration policies work in Mauritius and how far did sugar expansion prove to be an obstacle to amelioration?

The Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry (1828), which included recommendations for improving lives of slaves, went every far but was also very scathing on the behaviour of public officials and their connivance with slave owners and planters. Although it could not find evidence, it was convinced of the complicity of civil servants in the illegal slave trade and in covering up illegally introduced slaves in the slave registry.

This was to be expected, however: in a tiny island where there was only a small number of French families, they would be found in all sectors: economic activities property owners, courts, local politics of which Adrien d'Epinay was the perfect example; he was a big sugar estate owner, the editor of newspaper, a banker, a local politician, a lawyer with a brother as *Procureur*. The same applied to the elite among the Coloured population. Links were everywhere, and British officials from very early on, had learnt to be wary. Some even intermarried with local French families.

Nevertheless, changes were brought in which altered the lives of some slaves and gave hope to others. Through the Ordinance for the protection of slaves consisting of 45 articles; it set up the following:

- The Office of the Protector of slaves was established, owners were prosecuted (even though fines were rarely collected and punishments rarely enforced);
- Exhibition of chabouc or Whip was forbidden, when supervising slaves at work;
- No more than 25 lashes per day (Art 12);
- Slaves were also allowed to own property (Art 25): “buy acquire possess moveable and immoveable property” but if slaves died without heirs, owner became the heir;
- Establishment of a Savings Bank (Art 26);
- Manumission by purchase by slaves and no more taxes on manumission (Art 29 and 30);
- Slaves could give evidence in court (Art 36).

The Commissioners also recommended that certain laws of the *Code Noir* be kept, as for example, the appointment of slaves as tutors for owners’ children (Art 50 of the *Code Noir*).

Discrimination against the slaves during their life was oppressive. Even after their deaths, on a visit to Mauritius and South Africa in March 1844, James Blackhouse wrote:

*‘The place of sepulture is divided into several compartments, to accommodate the prejudices of the living, for these even separate the ashes of the dead. The main burial-ground is surrounded by a wall, and another separates the portion occupied by persons of white skin, professing Christianity, from that in which the coloured people are interred! So strong is the prejudice that slavery has nursed’.*

## **Memorialisation: Remembering the Slaves**

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We cannot, in any manner, do justice today to the innumerable, unquantifiable and unjustifiable harm that has been caused to enslaved populations and their immediate descendants in Mauritius. No amount of reparation, financial or otherwise, can unmake the injustices of the past.

What we must do is to ensure that their stories are not forgotten by successive generations and their economic, social and cultural contribution to Mauritius recognized and publicized in permanent and public spaces by all.

We must not forget, in the process, that slavery was both about the slaves and the slave owners, for the slave was primarily a ‘possession, good’ owned by another person. Both groups, in different ways, were victims of a system.

Reconciliation is thus about descendants of slaves, slave owners and the State, jointly and publicly acknowledging that a grave injustice was committed to African and Malagasy populations. Our recommendations on memorialisation of slavery, therefore, need to be openly and firmly supported by all these groups. These recommendations are to be found in the final section on Findings and Recommendations.

As it is impossible to ascertain, with exact figures, how many endured colonial slavery and the slave trade and even more impossible to capture what slaves felt, thought and lived through from 1721 until 1839, no amount of reparation will ever repair the damage done to those who endured slavery and the slave trade. What modern society can do is to ensure that such actions never occur again in whatever form and the justifications (philosophical, religious, ideological, economic, biological etc.) that were used to establish colonial slavery and the slave trade are not used to institute new forms of servitude. Modern society needs to honour the memory of all slaves destined for Mauritius, including those who never reached Mauritius.

It needs to pay special attention to those persons descended from slavery as they continue to endure several forms of injustice, incompatible with principles of democracy and natural justice in the Republic of Mauritius.

We recommend that public and private institutions rethink their cultural policies and incorporate the ancestral values of African and Malagasy peoples; that increased funding for memorialisations of slavery and the consequences of the slave trade in public places and especially in places where slaves have lived, died and worked be provided to all institutions undertaking such work; Increased funding for research in all aspects of slavery and the slave trade, to be conducted in a professional and impartial manner, and covering all groups who were enslaved and existing works to be continued and fully supported by public institutions financially and logistically. Moreover the Commission wishes that all works started by the Truth and Justice Commission to be continued by competent authorities and empowering young Mauritians through foreign scholarships and training programmes where expertise is lacking: slave trade database, ethnographic studies of descendants of slaves.

Sites need to be listed as national heritage sites are also given in the section on recommendations such as Trou Chenille; Slave Cemetery at Le Morne; Le Morne village ; Trois Cavernes ; Bassin des Esclaves ; site where Pedro Coutoupa's head was publicly exhibited; Maroon caves; illegal slave trading on Bel Ombre sugar estate ; execution site of Ratsitatanina.

The Commission also recommends the continuation of an inventory of documents found in France and elsewhere and the continuation of input into the Slave Trade Database. The aim is to establish a list of all ships and their cargo in order to better document the slave trade and arrive at an improved assessment of the volume of the slave trade to Mauritius, and the actual number of slaves having been disembarked in Mauritius. It is also necessary to include in calculations, those ships/persons/slaves destined for Mauritius but who never arrived, due to revolts, shipwrecks, disease etc. This information will be inserted in the database. Scholars from overseas working on the slave trade to Mauritius, in their respective countries, need to be included in this project, such as Thomas Vernet and Benigna Zimba. It is further recommended that this database work be continued by the University of Mauritius in partnership with other institutions with an interest in the slave trade and slavery. The University possesses both history and computer science departments who can collaborate with minimal cost with each other to maintain the database. It also has a pool of students every year who can be initiated and trained in historical research and data entry. However, appropriate funding must be provided and this work is to be shared with the public through an online database.

The Commission recommends the establishment of an Intercontinental Slavery Museum on the Port Louis Waterfront as a permanent reminder of the existence of slavery and the contribution of slaves to the history of Mauritius. We recommend that the Project be initiated and supervised by the Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with related institutions. Being located in the capital city Port Louis will ensure the history of slavery is given its due importance and also to ensure financial sustainability for the Museum once it is opened.

Finally the Commission recommends a NATIONAL GENEALOGY CENTRE, which will help numerous Mauritians, many of whom of African and Malagasy descent, who faced enormous difficulties in tracing their family history and genealogy. This has also caused much distress in families, and some believed they had lost property as a result. These families were unable to furnish basic information on their ancestors to the TJC. Consequently, the TJC helped a large number of families in recreating their genealogical trees and, during this process, it was able to verify for itself the difficulties mentioned by these families.



# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **THE INDENTURED EXPERIENCE**



## INTRODUCTION

Indenture cannot be studied in isolation from other systems of labour prevailing in Mauritius and the world and, consequently, it was considered important to look at the legacy of slavery in Mauritius and how it affected the situation of a new type of labour being brought in: indentured labour. We further observed how different labour systems (slavery, convict labour and contract system) coexisted between 1826 and 1839, leading one to conclude that the shortage of labour was felt long *before* abolition of slavery because the Sugar Industry had started expanding after 1815, when Mauritius became a Crown Colony. The colony also witnessed the ageing of the slave population, due to ending of the slave trade and no decrease in slave mortality rates. In *Bitter Sugar*, the huge workload physically imposed on slaves on plantations, the disruption in family life, caused by forced migration within Mauritius, have been documented. However, what needed to be further explored was the wishes, desires and attitudes of former plantation slaves. Did they or did they not wish to continue with plantation labour after abolition? Despite planters attempting to control the labour movement of ex-plantation slaves, on some plantations, there is evidence of slaves being chased away, as planters did not wish to maintain ex-slaves and their families on plantations and at higher wage rates, when they could recruit single male Indians and at lower wages. This part of the legacy of slavery in economic terms, as well as the economic situation of indentured, will be discussed in Part Two '*Legacies*' which follows this chapter.

We believe the Commission's role was also to examine the many perceptions which people had about indenture. We find that the popular and official perceptions of indenture and of Mauritians of Indian origin contrast significantly with the available documentary evidence in many respects. For example, Mauritians of Indian origin are typically classified as belonging to Hindi-speaking, Tamil-speaking, Telugu-speaking and Marathi-speaking. There is even some token recognition of Gujerati-speakers.<sup>237</sup> The reality under indenture was very different, and it is important to acknowledge the existence of a multitude of other groups who have been left out of the current memorialisation policies. It is also regrettable that many Mauritians are not even aware of their own origins and of the richness of the cultural heritage which their ancestors brought with them to Mauritius. Moreover, the richness of the Immigration Archives, regrettably, has not been allowed to be fully exploited through archaic beliefs and regulations which control access in those institutions.

The Commission has also addressed the continuing discussion (albeit sterile) about whether indenture was similar to slavery. This debate is summarized here and an explanation offered as to why these perceptions have held good, despite documentary evidence to the contrary. Ignorance of basic facts of one's history and concepts appear to be rampant in Mauritius, in spite of the high rate of literacy of its population.

What were the conditions of indentured labourers on estates? Did all indentured labourers work on sugar estates? Were all indentured labourers Indian or Hindu? Did all indentured labourers obtain land and become educated in *baithkas*? These are some questions we have answered through fundamental research on demography, landownership and education, as well as detailed histories of families and their lives in Mauritius. Just as it has been stated that one cannot generalize for the slave population, so one cannot do so for the indentured population: the family and life histories presented in Volumes 3 and 4 here show the immense variety of indentured experience, and it is clear that more such family histories, using interdisciplinary methodologies, need to be compiled.

It has been common in public and official discourse to demarcate, along clear lines, the slaves from indentured immigrants; yet, Mauritius at the time was not divided into these two groups: due to the extreme shortage of female immigrants, intermarriage and cohabitation occurred. Intercaste, interregional and interethnic marriages occurred, as evidenced by the family histories compiled. Many, if not most, Mauritian families have undergone a higher rate of *métissage* than they care to admit.

Did the conditions on estates impact negatively on the immigrants and their descendants? The Commission studied both the perceptions of descendants and the documentary evidence. Osteoarchaeological analysis was not possible during this Commission's lifetime, partly because of the difficulty of obtaining skeletons, and due to fact that Hindus cremate bodies. Recent research show that Indian immigrants, moving away from estates, fared worse in some cases as they received no rations.

Landownership has also been a sensitive issue in Mauritius, but Indian immigrant's acquisition of land has only studied in depth by Richard Allen. *Métayage* was another form of 'landownership' but what proportion of indentured labourers, out of the presumed 453,000 who arrived, actually owned land is still not clear. Today, this group of landowners, commonly referred to as 'small planters' and *métayers*, are facing a crisis as sugar estates reaffirm their control over their land. As these close down, *métayers* turn to other occupations. It has not been easy for these vulnerable groups to cope with the rapid social and economic changes, where the services which they provided to the Sugar Industry since the 19<sup>th</sup> century are no longer required in the new economy. Financial Compensation given by sugar estates, and Government subsidies to retrain do not compensate for the sense of loss felt by many of the descendants and even of the loss of identity which had been defined through their attachment to land and the cultivation of sugar. The Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), introduced to help sugar industry workers face the restructuring of the Sugar Industry, is also analysed in the Conclusion below and in Volume 4, 6.6.2.10-11.

How far as descendants still 'Indian'? It is clear that what we can identify as visibly Indian (type of dress, religion, food etc) yields only a superficial similarity. There has been, in cultural habits and customs, an immense amount of 'borrowing' from other cultures, but it is unfortunate that anthropological and ethnographic studies have not analysed these changes and evolution over a long period of time. Only microcosmic studies focused only on contemporary culture, while very little context work has been undertaken. The Commission undertook a 6-month period of consultation into the caste system and its operation in Mauritius. Detailed studies on several localities were carried out. How caste impacts on modern society today has been partially studied, but official reluctance to discuss the caste system in Mauritius openly is partly responsible.

While the educated elite among descendants proudly assert its Indianness, whether mass of descendants see themselves with hyphenated identities (Indo-mauritian) is open to question. While they distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups, they do not necessarily see themselves as Indian, but as Mauritians of a different group. The sense of 'Mauritianness' appears more pronounced among the underclass of Mauritius than among the elite. Elderly descendants of all groups continually refer to the days when everyone lived in harmony, and most decry the activities of politicians and sociocultural religious groups who are believed to be mainly responsible for dividing the Mauritian population.

Are these consequences of indentured labour or the actions of Mauritians in post Independence Mauritius? The choice to maintain a caste system and to maintain division of ethnic groups in census is clearly a choice of independent Governments since Independence, and it is difficult to see how the indentured system could be held responsible. The choice not to teach a common history rather than a compartmentalised history, and for political and religious leaders to make public speeches where the failure of one ethnic group to achieve in one particular field is underlined, is a dangerous policy to tolerate. Over the years, this has led to increased social and cultural fractures. To avoid further divisions, these need to be stopped and should no longer sanctioned officially.

It needs to be acknowledged that there are still many vulnerable sections among descendants of indentured immigrants: the lower castes, the propertyless, the poorly-trained, the single mothers, the ex-VRS. These issues are addressed in the number of report found in Volumes 3 and 4. The common culture that emerged in the Mauritian village, with Creole Chinese and Indians speaking the same language, seems to be disappearing forever. Should Bhojpuri be the medium in those pre-primary schools in rural areas or should it be Kreol or English? or French? The fact is that there is not one maternal language in Mauritius, but several. As people become conscious of their cultural roots, there is a desire to learn the original languages of the forbears. Should this be encouraged at the expense of English and French which could bring greater benefits in terms of employment rather than a vernacular language? These issues will be discussed in the Chapter on education of indentured immigrants and their descendants.

## 1. FRENCH *ENGAGÉS* IN ISLE DE FRANCE

In Mauritius, it is commonly believed that indenture started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Mauritius. Far less is known about the first indentured migration occurring in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries to the United States from England or about the first *engagés* to come to Mauritius from France. There is no direct translation of the term 'indenture' and so the term *engagés* is used to denote all those on 'contract'. It is befitting that the site of the Immigration Depot today known as the Aapravasi Ghat has become a World Heritage site as the first *engagé* no doubt also landed in the same bay of Trou Fanfaron.

In France, a complete inventory of all French *engagés* arriving to Mauritius has already been undertaken and published, and it is not necessary to list all of them. Their history, however, is little known in Mauritius, as many returned to France and have left no descendants. A reading of their conditions is strangely reminiscent of indenture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in many respects. Their names were often misspelt and they did not speak French but Breton, and their names are spelt differently on several documents. Their conditions were not always good as one might think, despite the wages. For example, fines were imposed for absences: Antoine Aimé, soldier and locksmith, is described as 24 years, 5'1", with curly brownish hair, square face, small grey eyes. He arrived on the *Badine* on 8 June 1731, worked for a year and left for Bourbon. As his contract included fines, a fine was imposed on him for a day's absence for which he paid 3 *livres*.

A few profiles are given to show the variety of persons arriving as *engagés*: Pierre Avril arrived on the *Maurepas* on 8 December 1733 but engaged in Mauritius on 13 May 1735 for 3 years at 270 *livres* per year, with ordinary rations as *matelot*. His contract in to be found in NA 6 No.72. Michel Ally was a sailor from Hennebont, engaged at Lorient for Mauritius at the end of 1743, for 3 years at 8 *livres* a month. He was 18 years old, of medium height and arrived in Mauritius on 5 May 1744. One of the earliest was Noel Adam, a blacksmith (*forgeron*), lock maker (*serrurier*) *armurier* who engaged at Lorient on 2 April 1723 for 3 years at 360 *livres* per year. From St. Malo, he arrived on board the *Triton* on 21 September 1723 and travelled widely. He went to China in 1730 as *armurier* for 18 *livres* per month. He re-engaged for Mauritius in 1732 as blacksmith at 650 *livres* per year and was 34 years old by that time. Pierre Balancy was a stone-mason from Bayonne who engaged on 27 October 1752 for 3 years at 400 *livres* with half rations. He was 25 years, 5'3" and had small-pox marks.

Apart from skilled workers, the French East India Company also brought frauders (*faux sauniers*) on contract and even some convicts. These were not always allowed back in France. Between 1717 and 1770, some 1,718 'engagements' were signed for a variety of occupations. Apart from French, Indian sailors were also sent on contract. They worked in shipping-related activities and constituted crews on board ships. They were mainly from Bengal between 1729 and 1739. Wages consisted of 2 *pagodes* in gold, 1 lb of *ghee*, 3 oz. pepper, 1 lb. Salt and a free return passage. However, due to many complaints, most were sent back by 1743.<sup>238</sup> Another group of 97 Indian *engagés* were recruited from Chandernagore.

Thus Indian, French, Mozambican, West African and Malagasy worked side by side in workshops on board ships in Port Louis, but also in various agricultural pursuits, such as indigo and on other crops. Wages, rations and conditions were, however, different. The wages of those from Chandernagore, for example, were half that of French *engagés* but the same as French sailors.<sup>239</sup>

In addition to free French and Indian *engagés*, non-slave forced labour was also used in the form of convicts from France and, later in the British period, from India. Women *engagées* were also recruited, but in smaller numbers. French children, mostly orphaned, were also brought in and placed as apprentices in Isle de France.

### Recommendation

The Commission recommends that further study be undertaken on French *engagé* labour, men, women and children as well as on the orphaned children brought to Isle de France to work.

There are many links between slavery and indenture and many continuities. This is perfectly understandable, given that one could not expect that persons, who were once opposed to abolition or even amelioration of slaves' lives, i.e. the future employers, would suddenly change overnight and see or treat the new labour force any differently. It is worth examining some of these continuities as these have been overlooked in debates and discussions on slavery and indenture. This helps one to understand the situation better in post-emancipation Mauritius.

## 2. INDENTURED AFRICANS

Although the stereotypical image of the ‘indentured labourer’ is that of the Indian, dressed in a ‘dhoti’ and laboring away on the cane fields, ‘other’ indentured labourers also existed in Mauritius: those working in the ports, and various types of employment in urban centres as well as those working with private individuals. There was also a large group of Africans, Malagasies and Comorians also brought before and after abolition of slavery to work on contract in Mauritius. Some had been freed from slave ships illegally trading in slaves, hence the term ‘Liberated Africans’ being applied to them. They did not benefit from the Act of Abolition of Slavery in 1833 and continued to work with their employers until their contract had expired. The Commission is indebted to two young historians of the Nelson Mandela Centre and the Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund who have shared their work on the Liberated Africans with us during the recently organized Conference on Slave Trade organized by the Commission. Their contributions are reproduced in part in Volume 4 of the TJC report and will be published in full in the Conference Proceedings by the University of Mauritius.

### Brief History

*The Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade* in 1807 outlawed the importation of slaves into British slave colonies and set down regulations for slaves captured on high seas. In March 1808, an Order-in-Council was passed by King George III, which stipulated that Africans seized on slave ships by the British Royal Navy would be forfeited to the British Crown as ‘prize negroes’. They were also given other appellations such as: ‘Liberated Africans’, ‘Government Apprentices’, ‘Government Blacks’, ‘African Recaptives’ and ‘Prize Slaves’. The trade thus continued and involved many of the islands further out in the Indian Ocean such as Rodrigues and Seychelles where slaves could be better hidden. This history has yet to be written using sources found in all these countries and would need a concerted regional effort, currently lacking.

In his report on Liberated Africans in Mauritius, in 1826, P. Salter, the Ag. Collector of Customs, we learn that between 1813 and 1826, out of 2,998 Liberated Africans brought to Mauritius, some 291 had died even before being apprenticed. Women constituted only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of them. More than 9% of the Liberated Africans died within less than a month after landing, dying of dysentery, cholera, and the small pox, as well as from severe cases of malnutrition and dehydration which prevailed on the slave vessels sailing between Madagascar and East Africa to Mauritius and its dependencies. The state of the ships was confirmed by Captain Dorval, who had commanded one of them, *Le Coureur*, involved in illegal slave trading. He described the state of the slave vessels which were always extremely overcrowded, with diseases being rampant and the high mortality rate. Thus we find that more had died before reaching Mauritius.

According to Richard Allen’s latest figures, between 1811 and 1827, between 50,000 and 65,000 slaves were illegally introduced into the Mascarenes. Using this figure this would mean that only between 4 to 6% of the total number of slaves illegally landed in the Mascarenes are known to us and the others merged with the slave population.

### The contract

The contract lasted for a period of 14 years, the same amount of time proposed by slave owners for the slaves to be freed after the abolition of slavery and who were to undergo the apprenticeship system. It would appear therefore that what they did not obtain from the British Government for their legal slaves, they did obtain for illegally-landed slaves.

The purpose of this indenture was as expected always ‘laudable’: to ‘train’ the Liberated Africans or Prize Negroes for a specific employment, so that they would be able to support themselves in the future and eventually become free and productive members of colonial society. The employer was required to enter into contractual obligations or an ‘indenture agreement’, a process known as ‘articling’, with the Collector of Customs. The employer agreed to provide the apprentice with sufficient food, clothing, medical assistance and to instruct him or her in a trade or ‘other useful employment.’ The apprentice also was to be baptized and be instructed in the Christian religion.

The indenture agreement was signed by four individuals, the Collector of Customs, the apprentice, the employer and a witness.

The reality for most was quite the opposite.

### The work

By 1839, they could be found in three groups: around 1,979 Africans employed privately by mostly British officials, British residents and some local planters. For example, Charles Telfair had 91 of them. Another group was employed in the Offices of the local British administration and the third were enlisted in the land and sea forces. Governor Farquhar and the members of his inner circle hired 560 apprentices, or just over 23% of them.<sup>240</sup>

Their economic contribution to Mauritius has yet to be quantified and officially acknowledged today. The Commissioners of Enquiry (1826) reporting on this stated that the state owed them much more than they received as salary:

*'...the ordinary rate of colonial hire for the labour of a negro in one year, and considering the number of years these negroes have laboured, the severity of that labour, and the profits of the sugar plantations for some years past, a compensation might justly be due to the negro for past service rather than any claim of indemnification be asserted by the master for his present release.'*

(Extract from Report of the Commissioners of Eastern Enquiry upon the Slave Trade at Mauritius (June 1829))

For them more than any other group in Mauritius, life was 'nasty, brutish and short'.

59 of the 206 Liberated Africans employed by the local British Government died while in service, representing a death rate of more than 28%. Among those hired to Colonel Draper, the death rate was 50%; for Reverend Jones of the London Missionary Society, it was 43%; for Charles Telfair the death rate was 39% and for Governor Farquhar, it was 39%.

32% or almost one-third of all the Liberated Africans died. In 1830, Captain Vicars, in charge of the Government Apprentices for several years during the 1820s, confirmed that the death rate among the Liberated Africans was much higher than those among the Mauritian slave population. He stated that it was common for them to be overworked and treated worse than slaves. Three years earlier, P. Salter, the Acting Collector of Customs commented that

*'it is to be observed that many of the inhabitants do not in their declarations distinguish between slaves and Prize Negroes.'*

The import of more African Malagasy and Comorian labourers continued after abolition of apprenticeship in 1839 and the banning of emigration from India. Madagascar, the Comoros Islands, and East Africa were tapped instead for labour. Planters were asked to contribute to a fund and to make known the numbers of labourers each wished to obtain. The local Government was entirely agreeable to this proposal and the task of administering this went to British and local merchants. The Queen of Madagascar and the Imam of Muscat were contacted. Although the Anti-Slavery Society did not approve of these labour schemes, several groups of Malagasy people were recruited on one-year and two-year contracts, amongst which were the 'Marmittes' who were already regularly involved in the cattle trade. In the same logic, the local Government allowed in 1840, the 'Lily' to be brought from Mozambique and disembark 59 Liberated Africans. 324 had embarked and the rest had died.

Labourers were also brought in from both east and west coast of Madagascar: legally from the east and illegally from the west by dealing privately with the Saklava.

The Sultan of Muscat also sent 'Baluchis' - strong men from Muscat, carrying goods about the town loading and unloading ships'.<sup>241</sup> This emigration was however stopped when the Sultan decided to send his slaves. Lambert & Co. even created a special company 'Compagnie Anglo-Française de la Mer des Indes' to import labourers from Aden for both Mauritius and Réunion. The British

Government condemned their activities and their two ships, the *'Mascareignes'* and the *'Governor Higginson'* were seized. In 1856, the *'Mascareignes'* in Port-Louis was seized with 325 people from Ibo island and the *'Governor Higginson'* seized in Anjouan in May 1857 with 400 labourers bound for Réunion.<sup>242</sup>

In 1841, some 200 Comorian labourers came from the island of Johanna after an agreement was reached with the Sultan of Johanna. More came in 1843.

Between 1839 and 1857, some 4,601 Malagasy workers had arrived as well as 320 from the African coast, 433 from Aden, 206 from Comoros Islands and 2,739 Chinese. 'Liberated Africans' continued to arrive up to the 1860s. They, unlike, Indian immigrants did not benefit from return passages, although it was reported that many were afraid to return in case they were recaptured as slaves. One of the last ships to bring in Africans was the *'Manuella'* in September 1860. She had on board 730 Africans most of whom were children and were apprenticed out to planters.

These documents concerning the Liberated Africans are to be found at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and specifically located in the 'Indian Immigration Archive.'

### **Recommendation**

1. The Commission recommends that appropriate memorials be established in the vicinity of the Customs House to honour the Liberated Africans.
2. The Commission recommends that the Ministry of Arts and Culture reclaim all historical documents given to Mahatma Gandhi Institute concerning Liberated Africans and currently incorrectly labelled 'Indian Immigration Archives', so that the descendants, professional researchers and others may research their history in full freedom without the administrative and political constraints imposed on them at this institution.

### 3. INDIAN INDENTURE

#### Setting up the System

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##### 1. Private recruitment

The first labour immigrants were brought in under private recruitment, and that is when many cases of abuses led to it being described as ‘new system of slavery’. The prevailing ethos was:

- Cheap labour

The labourers were there simply to supply cheap labour for the expanding sugar economy. This search for labour was no different from the cheap labour required for infrastructural and agricultural works in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When the slave trade was abolished from 1810 onwards, planters did not wait for the abolition of slavery to start importing labour; they did so from 1825, 10 years before abolition. Hands were needed for work, and there was little concern for family relationships, cultural habits and wants.

- Families were not required

Women would be brought in to service male labourers/slaves, to undertake domestic duties, such as cooking and cleaning, and satisfy sexual needs:

*"In Demerara," Mr. Gladstone stated, "the females are employed in the field as well as the men; and if the female Coolies will engage to work there, a larger proportion may be sent, say two women to three men, or, if desired, equal numbers; but if they will not engage to work there, then the proportion sent to the Isle of France, of one female to nine or ten men, for cooking and washing, is enough".<sup>243</sup>*

Thus numbers of women would only be increased, if their labour was required. It is only when problems arose that more women were allowed to come. As the company named Gillanders needed labour, Gladstone complied.

- The people with ‘no civilization’

One should also never forget that the colonial officials and planters did not have much respect for the ‘people’ they were bringing in. The first labourers to be recruited were described as such:

*"The ‘Dhangars’ are always spoken of as more akin to the monkey than the man. They have no religion, no education, and, in their present state, no wants, beyond eating, drinking and sleeping; and to procure which, they are willing to labour."*

- Surreptitiously

The first indentured immigration began in the same way that the slave trade ended: illegally. At this time, Mauritian planters were desperate for cheap labour and engaged in fraudulent practices, by hiding importation of labourers from India. The labourers were forced into prison-depots where they waited for ships to arrive, and where they were:

*"then—hurried on board—put under hatches and guards—robbed and pillaged of the advances made to them by the Mauritian agents in Calcutta — shipped in large numbers on board vessels, without the requisite accommodation, food, or medical attendance — brought under the most fraudulent contracts to labour for years on scanty wages, and scanty fare — separated from their families and from their homes — compelled to perform the hardest agricultural labour known, at the discretion of their masters — and without the protection of an upright, impartial, and efficient magistracy."*

This, in 1839, was Hugon’s report on the ships which he had visited and where 450 men were confined in a space of 50 feet by 35 feet in breadth.<sup>244</sup>

It is to be regretted that the records of the first immigrants arriving in Mauritius have not been kept, according to international conservation norms, and have not even been entered into the database as the document was too damaged.<sup>245</sup> The Commission scanned the document and has given copies to relevant institutions for research purposes.

- The pass system

In 1839, Hugon reported that immigrants needed to obtain a pass (*Billet de passe*) to leave the estate. He noted that the apprenticeship system was still going on and on many estates, the pass system had already been abandoned, and hence apprentices were no longer required to have one. It was to him an 'abrogation of personal liberty to which the labourer would never have acceded to' and was not part of his contract.<sup>246</sup>

## 2. Government Recruitment

Under the system of Government recruitment, which followed private recruitment schemes, there was little change in attitudes at first.

- Plantation Discipline, use of violence and intimidation

Among the consequences of slavery, was the use of violence and intimidation to control labour movements and to enforce strict discipline at work. Although slavery had been abolished, this did not imply an end to employers using violence and intimidation, and this continued for many years afterwards. The excuse given was that these same punishments existed elsewhere in Britain and India for criminals.

Thomas Hugon remarked on this situation in his report in 1839: he showed how this was counterproductive as the Indian immigrants had not been used to it in India and would certainly not be interested in staying on in Mauritius. He urged planters to change their ways and to learn the habits and customs of the immigrants. The continued visible presence of stocks on plantations, for example, reminded Indian immigrants that slavery had only just been abolished and did not endear plantation owners to them: "These should be discretely removed", he advised.<sup>247</sup>

This mode of behavior was linked to how one conceived of the new so-called 'free' labour. It was indeed difficult for the former slave-owner to separate attitudes to slaves and attitudes to indentured labour; there was, in effect, a continuation of slave mentalities and ideologies. This no doubt convinced the British Government that it had to end the 'bounty' system and take over recruitment and shipping of indentured labourers to Mauritius. The correspondence, published in the Parliamentary Papers, makes for interesting reading in this respect. These abuses thus led the Indian Government to put a temporary ban on immigration in 1839, but it was resumed in 1842. However, many labourers continued to be introduced from French possessions in India.

## 3. Increased labour needs

In early 1840s, the labour needs for the Sugar Industry and for the production of other food was estimated by the Immigration Committee at 30,000 to 35,000, and it was expected that 25,000 immigrants would have reached Mauritius by 1843.

However by this time, Mauritian planters represented in the Immigration Committee also wished to have permanent immigrants, and not temporary ones, as 6,000 immigrants had already left Mauritius by 1844. To do this, however, would have necessitated the introduction of a greater number of women and families.<sup>248</sup> It was not thought necessary to import much more after that year. It was felt that to undertake Government-controlled recruitment and shipping, this could be more efficiently supervised by a Government Emigration Agent based in Calcutta. Furthermore, this was also where rice supply for Mauritius was procured. By October 1843, the Protector of Emigrants reported that the labour needs of the Colony had been met: about 29,000 labourers would have been introduced of whom 2,700 were women and 700, children.<sup>249</sup>

- Emigration of women

After 1842, it appears that officially, about 12 women to every 100 were to be brought, including some children, but in fact, many more were brought. On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1843, the first boat load of

immigrants with wives and children were disembarked, “a very rare occurrence up to the period of the prohibition.”<sup>250</sup> Employers preferred women below the age of 20, and up to 30. However, it was not easy to find more females: according to the European view of Indian women, the tendency was to think that “respectable females of the working class in India will not go abroad.”<sup>251</sup>

However, Hugon had different views: he stated that there was no real objection to women accompanying their husbands, even to work, since women, among the Hill people, had a different attitude to work. Tribal women worked, while those ‘of Hindostan’ did not. But, due to increased landlessness and unemployment, he did not feel that even this would be an obstacle for women. The real obstacle was the fact that in Mauritius, there was no law guaranteeing that the wives would stay with their husbands as religious marriages were not recognized.<sup>252</sup>

- Madras and Bombay ports

Although many of the first immigrants came from Madras and Bombay, the Indian Government was not agreeable to other ports in India being used by the Mauritian Government because immigration could be better checked, nor could abuses, (‘under the eye of the Supreme Government’). From Calcutta, it was also possible to ensure that more women embarked, as very few women embarked from Madras and Bombay.<sup>253</sup>

The aim of this section is to show continuities in how labour was procured, and similarities in attitudes towards slave and indentured labour. It is important to state, however, that one of the most important difference between immigrant labour recruitment and slave trade is that the immigrant, were allowed to return, at least in the early years. This fact is often overlooked by Mauritians who assume that all immigrants settled in Mauritius. The activities at the Immigration depot concerning returnee migrants were so important that the Office had to be extended to accommodate both immigration as well as departure procedures.

From the much quoted figure of 453,000 believed to have come to Mauritius, about one-third returned to India, while another 1/3 did not survive their indenture and did not leave any descendants. This makes the request by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, which houses the Immigration Archives even more ridiculous, when they ask researchers to ‘get the permission’ of descendants, before embarking on tracing family histories. It appears they are not aware that the bulk of immigrants never left descendants and are now consigned to oblivion in Mauritian History books, because of uninformed and unscientific based policies.

Mauritians, thus, still needs, to do justice to the history of these immigrants.

#### 4. THE EARLY YEARS, 1825-1839

Although indenture is associated with the abolition of slavery and the year 1834, it is little known that Indian labourers were brought in as early as 1825 into Mauritius. A first batch was brought by no less a person than Adrien d'Épinay, the champion of slave compensation for slave owners, 10 years *before* slavery was abolished. On his estate at Haute-Rive in Rivière-du-Rempart District, it appears that Indian labourers worked side by side with slaves in the sugarcane fields. According to d'Épinay, he wanted to show his slaves that free men did not consider it a 'dishonour' to perform manual labour in the cane fields. This could be considered as the 'first experiment' with indentured Indian labour. The next recruitment came in 1828, when more labourers were brought in. The following year, the Commercial Agents of Gaillardon & Co., a Mauritian trading company, went to India with the objective of importing cheap Indian labour. They had the firm support of the British Colonial Government of Mauritius and so, on 21<sup>st</sup> September, the *Albion* dropped anchor in Port Louis harbour with 500 male labourers, 9 females, and one child on board. A further 600 labourers were brought in that year in smaller groups. By mid-October 1829, there were already over 1,100 Indian labourers in Mauritius.

These early experiments do not appear to have been successful, as wages were considered too low. The employers did not honour the agreements which they had made, and most of the Indians wanted to terminate their contracts. A large number deserted the sugar plantations and showed increasing signs of 'insubordination'. By late October 1829, John Finiss, the Chief of Police, ordered the repatriation of these rebellious labourers. Between the end of October 1829 and May 1830, they were returned to Calcutta and Madras in small groups.

Between 1830 and 1834, there was only a trickle of immigrants arriving between 1830 and 1834. About 10 labourers were introduced in 1830 and another 29 between 1831 and 1832 by Mr. Bickajee, a wealthy businessman. In 1833, another 29 labourers were introduced. In 1834, on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1834, the newspaper *La Balance* announced the arrival, on 1<sup>st</sup> August, of the *Sarah* in Port Louis, with 29 Indian workers. The arrival of these labourers served as a prelude to the start of large-scale Indian immigration, with the coming of the *Atlas* on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. It is worth noting that the Commission has been unable to find which *Atlas* came to Mauritius as there were several ships bearing this name: *Atlas I*, *Atlas II*, *Atlas III* etc. At least one of the *Atlas* was also used to carry convicts to Australia. Further research is required.

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 1834, 36 'Hill Coolies' of the *Dhangar* group (originally from the hills of Bihar in Eastern India who were then living in Calcutta) signed a five-year labour contract with Arbuthnot and Co. Their labour contract was written in Bengali. The salary for the males was Rs. 5 per month, while for female labourers, it was Rs. 4 Rupees per month. The *sirdar's* salary was Rs. 10 per month and the assistant *sirdar* around Rs. 8 per month. They all received six months' pay in advance before boarding the *Atlas*. One rupee was deducted by Hunter Arbuthnot & Company to pay for the return passage to India. They had paid for the immigrants' journey from Calcutta to Port Louis. They were also to be provided with food, clothing, lodging and medical care. The ship also carried a large cargo of rice. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Monday morning, Arbuthnot wrote to Governor Nicolay, requesting that: "they be allowed to land 36 Hill Coolies from the ship *Atlas*, whom they intend to employ on their Estate, under guarantee that they shall not become a charge on the Colony." Permission was granted. These first Indian labourers were, according to Brenda Howell, "the pioneers of a migration which was eventually to transform the character of Mauritian life and industry." Between November 1834 and April 1839, during the first wave of Indian immigration, around 25,468 Indians were introduced, amongst whom were around 23,281 males, 727 females and 175 children. Almost 15,000 came from Calcutta and Bombay and over 9,000 from Madras and modern-day Andhra Pradesh. More than half of these first Indian immigrants belonged to rural tribes, known as the Oraons, the Mundas, Bhumjis, and the Santals. In his report, Hugon categorised the 14,500 from Calcutta, but not from 'Hindustan', as follows:

Figure 2 Region of Origin for early immigrants 1843

Region of origin	No of immigrants
North Western provinces	7,000
Bengalis, West of Ganges, principally from Cuttack, Midnapur, etc.	2,500
Bengalis from Calcutta and neighbouring provinces	3,000
Hill tribes, West of Ganges	2,000

In May 1839, immigration from India was suspended, only to be renewed in January 1842, when it became 'State controlled' and 'State sponsored' by the British Governments of India and Mauritius. A Protector of Immigrants was also appointed in Mauritius.

### The Recruitment process

Of all the countries importing Indian labour, Guyana (Demerara), Trinidad, Jamaica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Nevis, Natal, Fiji, Réunion, Cayenne, Guadeloupe, Martinique St. Croix Surinam, Mauritius was the only colony to recruit immigrants all the year round.

There were Central Depots in each Port (Calcutta, Madras and Bombay) as well as sub-depots. The district and sub-district depots were headed by the Chief Recruiter and Sub-Recruiter respectively. The sub-depot was much smaller and the role of Sub-Recruiter to keep his emigrants well fed and *khush* (happy), according to Grierson.<sup>254</sup> Uncooked food was provided by a *banian*.

Unusually, the Sub-Recruiters in North-Western provinces were Jewish, but in other areas, recruiters were drawn from all castes, from Brahmans to Chamars, and from *chaprassis* or higher domestic servants to cloth-sellers, labourers and peons.

Those in charge of registering immigrants often made mistakes, and these were reproduced in the registers found in Mauritius. Transcription errors by copyists transferring data from one register to another, unfamiliarity with the language, employment of semi-literate persons, as well as sheer laziness, were responsible for the multitude of errors found by Grierson during his inspection.

These errors have inevitably found their way to Mauritius in registers found at the Archives. The task of correcting these errors today is a daunting, but a necessary one. Thus, the clerks, who could not read English, sometimes inserted the village for the heading marked *Zillah* or the opposite; sometimes, a fictitious *Zillah* was written down and the name of the *pargannah* almost invariably wrongly written.

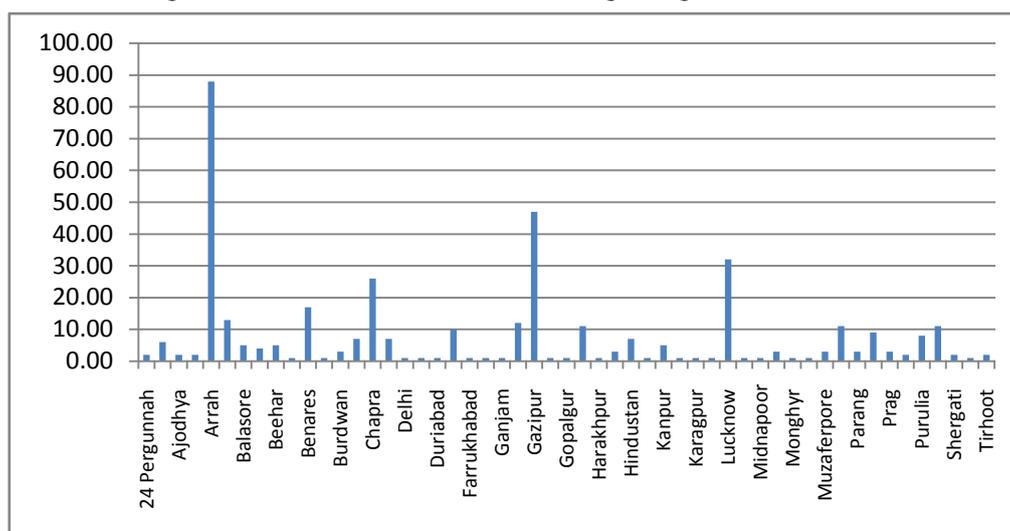
By the time the registers, or 'hash', as Grierson preferred to call them, reached Calcutta, where Bengali was the language- clerks did not understand Bihari names- more errors had crept in. Despite all this, it was quite surprising to Grierson that the registers seemed, nevertheless, on the whole quite correct.<sup>255</sup> The perception, in Mauritius, that European officials wrote down names which they were not familiar with is thus slightly exaggerated as the language barriers and problems among Indians themselves, at source, are the factors which caused the discrepancies and errors in writing down names.

It is to be regretted that up to now, there has been no attempt to explain this to Mauritians who seek to trace their ancestry and discover that names, castes and districts are not the same as they believe them to be. Mauritians have thus been left with incomplete, undigested and unexplained information by custodians of the Archives. Had this information and educational exercise been undertaken, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute would have saved itself many acrimonious contestations over these registers over the past years. Other identifiers, however, helped to locate the immigrant: in well-organised depots, the name of ships, and the number of the immigrant on board the ship would be the surest way to identify an immigrant. This is the reference used today to trace the ancestry of many descendants.

## Northern India

George Grierson's report of 1883 is one of the most comprehensive surveys of recruitment procedures in Northern India. We have not found a similar document for Southern India, and so the focus of this section will be on recruitment from Northern India, to form an idea of what recruitment consisted of. From Grierson, we have some information on recruiters for Mauritius. They were almost all Brahmin, Muslims or Rajputs. The recruiter in Arrah District was a man named Jhumman Khán. He had originally started out as a recruiter, become a labourer in Mauritius and returned to India and began recruiting again.<sup>256</sup> The MGI database collection on a sample of 209,000 immigrants confirms that Arrah District was one of the main recruitment centres. Apart from Arrah, immigrants also came from Ghazipur, Lucknow, Chapra Districts.

Figure 3 Districts in Northern India sending immigrants to Mauritius



This confirms the areas mentioned by Grierson: Shahabad, Saran and Patna Districts. All three were also located at the confluence of the River Ganges and other rivers. The most important recruiting districts were those located along the Ganges. Shahabad was considered one of the most successful centres of recruiting at this time.<sup>257</sup>

Patna was another of the districts sending large numbers of immigrants to Mauritius. The chief recruiter there was a man named Chunni. Recruiters were encouraged to put up posters showing the advantages of emigration, "in kaithi character and in simple language by thousands throughout the district."<sup>258</sup> However, between 1879 and 1882, when Grierson had visited, only 110 emigrants had left for Mauritius, out of 717 leaving Patna, and emigration was dwindling. Chunni worked alone, according to Grierson and had a *pakka* sub-depot in Patna. One rarely encounters women in the recruiting process, but Sukhiya deserves mention as she provided food to the emigrants and had lived in Mauritius for 12 years. She set up a 'Railway refreshment room' for emigrants. She stated that she encouraged people to go to Mauritius.<sup>259</sup>

The returnee emigrants played a crucial role, according to Grierson, in encouraging potential emigrants. A study is required on those who returned and their experiences of Mauritius. According to Grierson, the total number of emigrants in Mauritius entitled to a free return passage was 215,713 immigrants. Of these, 80,007 returned to India.<sup>260</sup> Figures for the rest, who paid their own return passage, need to be compiled.

#### Factors affecting numbers emigrating

1. **Myths and taboos:** The *Mimiai ká tel* myth: In some districts, where there was less emigration, rumours of horrendous treatment scared away people. For example, it was believed that in French colonies, labourers were hung upside down and oil extracted from their heads (*mimiai ká tel*). There was also the rumour that they would be forced to become Christians and eat beef.

*Kala pani* or *tapu*: In almost all districts, recruiters were asked *not* to refer to colonies as ‘*kala pani*’ (the black waters), but as *Tápú* in order not to dissuade potential migrants. Finally, another reason, noted by Grierson for reluctance to emigrate, was the ‘longing for home’ or *janambhúmi*.<sup>261</sup>

Over the years, it would seem that the term *kalapani* was not used. Grierson had also noted a change in the caste mentality about travelling overseas. A new caste rule appears to have emerged. Thus, on the ship, eating ‘everything’ was no longer taboo, as the ship represented the *Temple of Jagannáth*.<sup>262</sup>

**2. Economic factors:** The labour market prevailing at a particular time, the price of rice on the market, the harvest times, existence of large-scale public works and density of population in a particular area, also influenced departure from a particular district. In Northern India, the Darbhanga, Saran, Motihari and Muzaffarpur Districts, where there was a high density of population, the construction of the Maharaja’s palace and three railway lines reduced the numbers willing to emigrate. There was also Northward migration into Assam and Nepal. Saran District sent quite a few overseas, but these were not registered as from Saran, but from East Bengal and Calcutta, where they had gone to look for work. Further down in Patna and Shahabad Districts, there were no major public works and so, much recruitment took place there, particularly from the Northern sub-districts of Arrah and Baksar.

**3. Price of food:** According to Grierson, the correlation between the price of food and emigration was very close. The famine years of 1874, and again 1878-9, led to a corresponding rise in emigration. In the South Gangetic Districts, the 24 Pergunnahs, high food prices led to increased emigration.

**4. Availability of local work:** In non-famine years, what influenced emigration was the availability of work: Patna and Shahabad Districts were compared; during the harvest season (October to December), there was less recruitment as employment was not a problem. Recruitment started again in January, only to drop in February, when cutting of spring crops started. Thus, the months of April to July were recruiting seasons.<sup>263</sup>

**4. The Indian Mutiny:** Although not yet fully researched and perhaps, as hinted by Carter, purposefully ignored by local British officials in India and the sugar colonies, the emigration of sepoys who had taken part in the Indian Mutiny must also be considered for the period after 1857. According to Carter,

*the regional breakdown of the figures was striking: in 1857-58, of 9,864 adults who embarked for Mauritius, 2,229 came from Shahabad, and 1,658 from Ghazipur. In 1858-59, of 20,166 adults who emigrated, 5,522 came from Shahabad, and 2,921 from Ghazipur. The inference is clear: a region that was closely linked to heavy recruitment of sepoys was also sending emigrants in massive numbers to Mauritius. Yet it seems that no investigation was made at the time, either in Calcutta or in Mauritius, to check whether fugitive rebels were among the number. This was not for want of experienced colonial officials to undertake such enquiries. On the contrary, many of the senior police and magistrates serving in Mauritius at this time were former Indian army officers.<sup>76</sup> Instead, it is noteworthy that high-ranking officials took steps to discredit any notion that sepoys might have had a commonality of interest with the legions of ‘coolies’ departing for or already settled in the sugar colonies.<sup>264</sup>*

Furthermore, in Mauritius, the ‘greed of colonial capitalists [that] kept the existence of any itinerant sepoys carefully under wraps’. Emigration of sepoys and possible repercussions on Indian immigrants already in Mauritius was therefore avoided at the time. One has still to fully understand the huge rise in emigration from India for the period 1858 and 1859. However the role of the Mutiny must not be discounted. Further research in the UK, India and the colonies are required on this issue.

**5. Reasons in Mauritius:** The economic history of sugar and impact of immigration is more fully discussed in chapters 1 and 4. However for the period of 1858 and 1859 which witnessed the highest rates of emigration was in part due to the huge rise in sugar prices and consequent increase in sugar cultivation.

## 5. ORIGINS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS

The database, compiled by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, was 'cleaned' and uniformised before embarking on this preliminary statistical analysis. At the time of writing, it was not possible to complete a similar exercise for the ports and recruitment Districts of Bombay and Madras. However, all copies of data collected by the Commission has been given to research institutions, so that they might continue the task of researching the origins of Mauritian and make the data available to the Mauritian public.

It is to be regretted that no further information was forthcoming on how this database was constructed, as all data from the volumes were not fully inserted and no indication is given why one volume was preferred over another. It invariably leads one to assume that it reflects the personal research interests of the custodian. It is also to be regretted that categorising of the data has been done according to less than scientific criteria. Thus, the 'Tribals' are listed in a new category created by the MGI 'Hindu', which is a very misleading and incorrect assumption made by the authorities there.

From the sample database thus obtained, the proportion of 'Hindus' among the 209,000+ immigrants in the database is about 75%, while non-Hindus comprise 12%. For some 15% of the immigrants, their religion is not specified. The immigrants can be further categorised into Tribals, Christians, Muslims, Sidis, Africans and Arabs, the latter three having emigrated from the port of Bombay (today Mumbai).

Figure 4 Proportion of Hindus and non Hindus

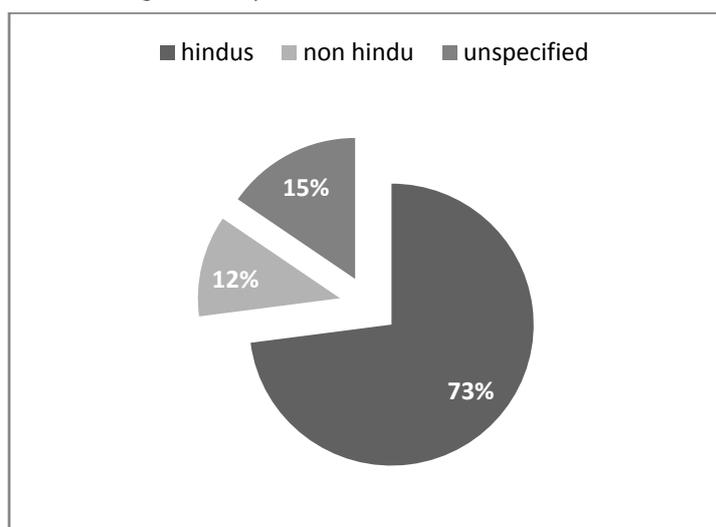


Figure 5 Further Categorisation of Immigrants according to ethnic and religion categories

HINDUS (but includes tribals listed as Hindus)	152,505	152,505
MUNDA	1,398	
ORAON	1,132	
DHANGAR	1,009	
SANTAL	246	
	<b>3,785</b>	<b>3,785</b>
MUSLIMS	23,258	
CHRISTIANS	888	
SIDIS	85	



In India, the principal tribal regions, today, cover the Districts of Hazaribagh, Ramghur, Ranchi, Midnapur, Purulia, Jobburpur, Bancoora, Nagpur and Gaya. However, from the information derived from Immigration Registers in Mauritius, the regions of Nagpur, Ramghur, Ranchi and Hazaribagh were the particular districts tapped for Mauritian emigration between 1843 and 1844, while in the 1850s, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Midnapur, Purulia Districts were tapped.

Comparatively more tribals were brought from Calcutta than from Madras and Bombay. Between the years 1843 and 1844, tribals could be found on every ship leaving Calcutta. One of the reasons for their bad experiences on board ships was the change in diet; while in India, their diet was extremely varied, on board they were restricted to a few items. In India, meat, fish, turtles, eggs, crabs, and bivalves were consumed, as well as root crops, tubers, fruits and honey,<sup>265</sup> all products found in hills and forests. On board, by contrast, they were provided with only rice, salted fish and water. The higher mortality rate among them may thus be explained.

The gender ratio must also be mentioned (Fig. 6). Under private importation, no women or children were brought in. Later, of the 512 tribals sampled who came between the years 1843 and 1844, 75% were men and 16% women, the rest being children or unknown. The percentage of women was higher than for other immigrants, since women of other groups, it seems, were reluctant to travel.

The age group is also significant and shows clearly a preference for young able-bodied persons. Only 1% was above the age of 40, while 28% were between 11 and 20, and 51% between 21 and 30 years of age. This profile matches closely those being brought during the Slave Trade.

We have very little knowledge of their lives in Mauritius. Some details can be gleaned from the records, but a more in-depth search is needed. Shreemutty, No. 41293, was photographed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1881 (see Vol. 3.I.6). She had migrated from Ranchi at the age of 24, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April in 1844. She was accompanied by her husband, Nundoo. Bissonauth No. 41416, who arrived at the age of 14 in 1844, was photographed many years later as an adult in 1884. He had migrated from Ranchi and had been employed as a labourer. Pandoo, No. 40335, was also photographed in 1890. A Dhangar, he had arrived in February 1844 at the age of 25 from Nagpur and worked for Mr. Hunter and Arbuthnot as a labourer.

Apart from Dhangars, *Mundas* were another tribal group arriving in Mauritius in the early days of indenture. Rusum No. 92424 from Ranchi, arrived with Bunode his wife in 1851. Bissoo, No. 92973, also emigrated with his wife Randhee, also a Munda, from Ranchi in 1851. They were one of the few couples who were also accompanied by their two daughters, Roopnah and Deepun.

From the sample of 543 immigrants, only half of them can be traced through the records. Of these, 125 died and an almost equal number, 116, returned to India. What happened to the other half is unknown; they are expected to have survived their indenture and possibly left descendants. Some died during the malarial epidemics that ravaged the island, such as Sonatun, No. 39479, a Dhangar, who migrated from Hazaribagh in February 1844 and died in 1863 from fever. A peculiarity concerning his case is that he is registered twice under different numbers, which leads one to conclude that the real immigration numbers may be not quite as high as the oft-quoted figure of 453,000, if there have been numerous cases of double or triple counting of immigrants.

Also of interest is Etwah, No. 40415, a Dhangar who migrated from Ranchi in 1844 with his father, Jhoopah, No. 40411. He worked for Hunter and Co. as a labourer. Etwah died at Plaines Wilhems in June 1864 from fever; he is not listed as a Dhangar on his death certificate, but as a Hindu. His place of birth is also wrongly written as being Calcutta. Transformations in identity from 'tribal' to 'Hindu', due to clerical errors, seem to be a fact of life for Indian immigrants.

Figure 7: Arrival of tribals in Mauritius in 1851

No	Name	Name of father or mother	Sex	Age	Tribal group	District	Movements
92188	Boyjoo	Bhautoo	M	21	Oraon	Hazaribagh	Distributed to Lanougarede on 9.4.1856
92196	Soophul	Boodhoo	M	27	Munda	Hazaribagh	
92203	Boodhoo	Bheekhoo	M	22	Munda	Ranchi	Distributed to Mr. Pierre on 20.4.1866. Died Flacq 12.7.1866
92237	Dhurwah	Bucktowar	M	21	Oraon	Ranchi	Tax paid up to 2.4.56
92239	Loudyel	Unknown	M	45	Oraon	Ranchi	Distributed to Mr. Duhamel 14.4.56
92248	Jourah	Faugooa	M	24	Oraon	Ranchi	Distributed to Mr. Duhamel 14.4.56 Died Moka 10.11.1873
92268	Meetoo	-	M	19	Munda	Ranchi	-
92274	Soorjun	Unknown	M	45	Munda	Ranchi	Engaged to Mr. Wilson. Died at Plaines Wilhems 14.9.73
92282	Perul	Dinnoo	M	35	Santal	Purulia	
92373	Rughoo	Gobin	M	21	Santal	Purulia	
92374	Gungadhun	Khoodyram	M	24	Santal	Midnapur	
92375	Kaulloo	Kawol	M	25	Santal	Midnapur	Distributed to Mr. Blancard on 21.4.1856. Died 9.2.1906 Black River
92376	Poorun	Choytun	M	27	Santal	Midnapur	
92447	Muncheea	Ram	F	15	Khol	Hazaribagh	Died at Plaines Wilhems 10.3.1873
92424	Rasur	Bheekha	F	25	Munda	Ranchi	Died 9.7.53 Savanne
92426	Pudery	Sunrah	F	21	Munda	Hazaribagh	
92446	Whinthaly	Chingoro	F	16	Khol	Hazaribagh	Died in May 1851
92452	Tauramony	Roopnarain	F	24	Munda	Purulia	

(Source: Compiled by Sheetul Ramchurn from IIA PE 36 series)

The lack of interest in tribal history on the part of Indo-Mauritians is disturbing. During the course of TJC work, many Mauritians did not want to even talk about this subject. It is perhaps the association in India and reinforced by the current elitist policies of assigning Tribals to the lower caste category, even they are outside the caste system which has created this.

However for Mauritius, this has important consequences: medical research linking genetic origin and particular diseases affecting populations such as diabetes type 2 may be hampered if people do not reveal their real origins. Tribal communities appear to have a different genetic make-up from the rest of the Indian population.

Also lost are the particular cultural habits and traits which were quite evident in the early years of indenture and were observed and possibly adopted by some ex-slaves.

## Other Origins

Time constraints were one of the factors which did not make it possible to undertake detailed studies of all the groups that came to Mauritius and a fuller study of these groups is required. There are however existing studies which are perhaps little known and which deserve to be better published and publicised. Excellent doctoral theses and publications have been produced by a generation of scholars. For Telugu-speaking immigrants, the pioneering work of Ananda Nirsimloo was followed by Nagamah Gopauloo's work at the MGI and recently by Tatayah; for the Tamil-speaking community, Rama Sooriamurthy's work was supplemented by Huguette Ly Tio Fane's *Lured Away* and a host of studies since. A major work on Tamils also seems to be in the making at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute by V. Govinden. Moomtaz Emrith's work *Muslims in Mauritius* covered many topics, and his work is being continued by an impressive list of scholars: Cader Kalla, Amenah Jahanger-Chojoo (*La Rose et le Henné*). It is not known why Muslim Jumeer has not published his work on Indian Muslims in the French period, despite the interest in this study.

Apart from the Tribals, the neglected groups in Mauritian historiography include: the Christian and Bengali communities. Research is, however, ongoing on these communities in several institutions, such as the University of Mauritius and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund.

Due to many misconceptions about caste and identity in modern Mauritius, and the persistence of caste issues among descendants of Northern Indian immigrants, the Commission has sought to investigate this more fully. However, results are not fully conclusive, due to lateness in accessing the database compiled at the MGI.

The bulk of immigrants, as is well known, came from what is today known as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkand and Bengal Provinces. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these were regrouped roughly into the United Provinces and Bengal Presidency. Thus, in the Immigration Archives, Bengal refers to the Presidency rather than the State it now is and covers also Jharkand, Bihar and part of Uttar Pradesh.

Out of a sample size of 209,000 immigrants, the following information is derived from the database available at the MGI,

- 120, 518 from Bengal Presidency
- 69, 194 from Madras Presidency
- 19, 225 from Bombay Presidency
- 63 from districts today found in Burma

Furthermore, among those embarked from Bombay Presidency, 48 were from Arab and 48 were African.

## Bengal Presidency

Grierson's report, little-known in Mauritius, provides one of the most comprehensive reports on castes, religions, villages and district origins of immigrants from Bengal Presidency, the province sending the largest number of immigrants to Mauritius.<sup>266</sup> He visited Shahabad, Saran, Gaya, Patna, Darbhanga, Muzaffapur, Champaran, the 24 Parganas and some sub-divisions as well. He did not look at Chota Nagpur as no emigration had taken place in the last few years, prior to his visit, due to many Tribals suffering on the long journey by sea and preferring inland migration.

From a sample derived from 1835 to 1874 approximately, the districts from where recruitment took place were:

Figure 8 Detailed list of districts supplying immigrants to Mauritius, 1835-1873

Arrah	21,538	Midnapur	870	Dacca	132
Gaya	13,647	Burdwan		Sherghati	131
Gazipur	9,830	Monghyr	753	Purnia	116

Patna	5340	Hooghly	586	Dinapur	114
Chapra	4,906	Calcutta	511	Ramgarh	110
Hazaribagh	4,473	Mirzapore	472	Murshida bad	97
Purulia	4,019	Ganjam	458	Agra	89
Azamgarh	3,090	Allahabad	361	Hawalli	76
Ranchi	3,042	Bhagalpur	358	Faridpur	70
Benares	2,610	Nagpur	333	Farukhabad	70
Bankura	1,952	Balasore	296	Sylhet	62
Lucknow	1716	Beehar	242	Bhojpur	59
Muzaffarpur	1705	Madafarpur	232	Jessore	59
Gorakhpur	1689	Birbhum	229	Kishnagar	49
Sahibganj	1459	Cassee	217	Nepal	45
24 Pergunnah	1320	Kanpur	184		
Jaunpur	1216	Nadia	143		
Cuttuck	921	Faizabad	138		

## Madras Presidency

Madras Presidency, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, included what is today known as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. In Mauritius nowadays, descendants from the immigrant groups are known as Tamil-speaking or Telugu-speaking, depending on which State they came from. However, this has obscured the other 19<sup>th</sup>-century languages that were spoken by the immigrants arriving from these areas, such as Oriya, Bengali and other dialects. The following summary, therefore, separates Tamil-speaking and Telugu-speaking, for the sake of clarity, for those not familiar with 19<sup>th</sup>-century Indian administrative/political boundaries and their linguistic diversity. From Madras Presidency, the districts which sent many immigrants are as follows:

Figure 9 Main Districts in Madras Presidency sending immigrants to Mauritius 1835-1873\*

Today Tamil Nadu		Today Andhra Pradesh	
Tanjore	24376	Chittoor	2865
Trichinopoly	7900	Hyderabad	156
Kombakonam (Kubakonam)	5499	Gentoor	129
<b>Chingleput</b> (Chengalpatu)	3021	<b>Coimbatore</b>	109
		Vizagapatam	4201
<b>Madras</b>	2072	Nellore	611
Madura	2997	Vizanagaram	102
<b>Cuddalore</b>	1782	Cuddapah	201
Tiruvallur	52	Perungudi	85
Rajahmundry	909	<b>Tinnevelly</b>	84
Manarcoil (Nagarcoll)	65	Negapatam	78
Kattoor (Kerala)	35	Mysore	68
<b>Salem</b>	464	Godavari	65
Arcot	412	Palamcottah	60
Bangalore (Karnataka)	347	Kanjeevaram	45
Masulipatam	322	Vellore	34
<b>Pondicherry</b> (Pudukottai)	275	<b>Ganjam</b>	2948
Tharangambadi	227	Chicacole (Srikakulam)	31
Bellary (Karnataka)	89	Berhampur ,today Brahmapur Orissa	34

\*In brackets are the modern names for these districts and areas

Figure 10: District Map of Modern Tamil Nadu, showing most districts found in fig. 9)

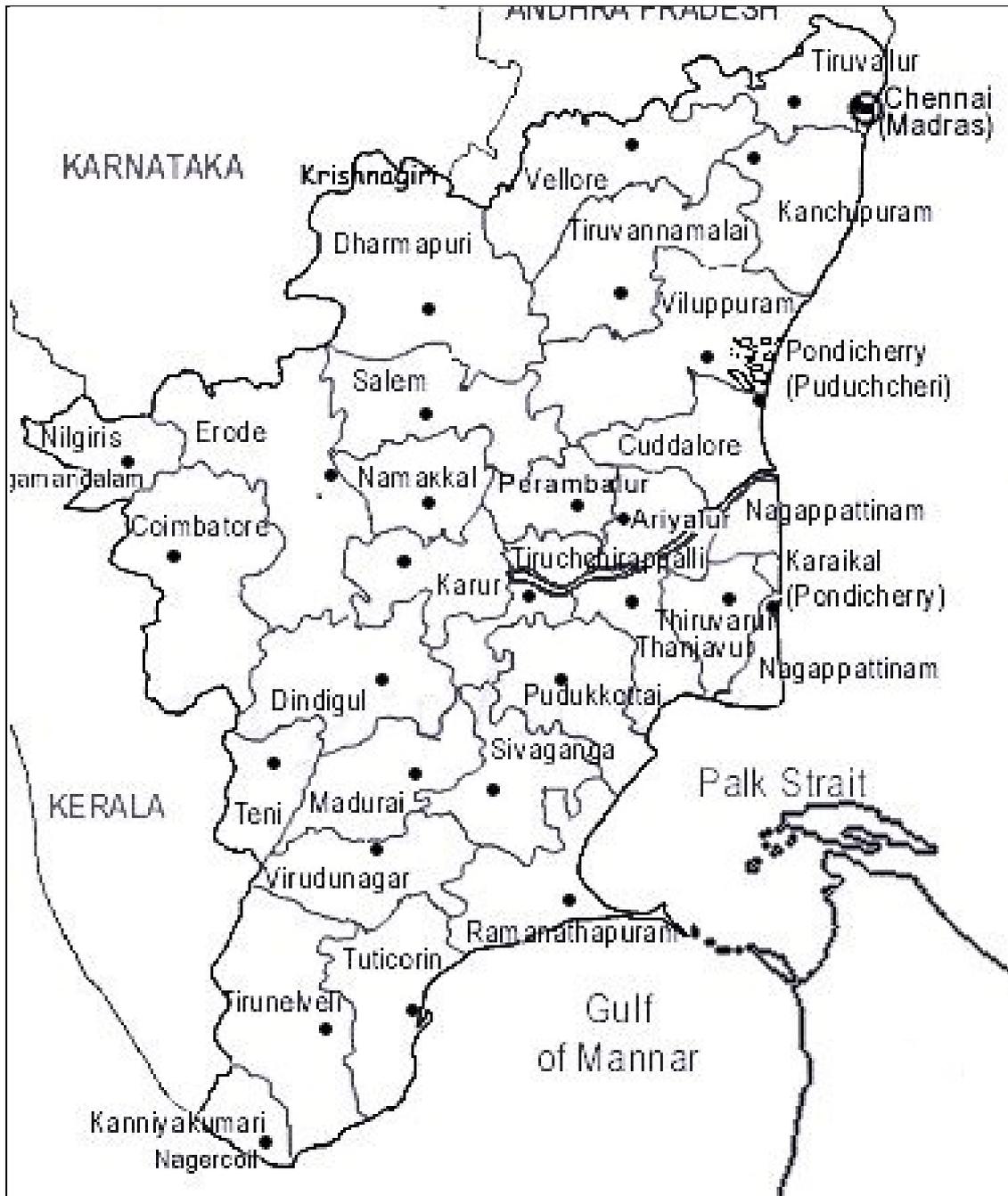


Figure 11: District map of Kerala, showing most districts found in fig. 9



As will be noted, many names have not changed substantially. However, the ports where immigrants embarked went as far north as Orissa, Kattoor (suburb) in Kerala, and as far south as Tinnevelly (Tirunelveli today), Coimbatore, on the West coast.

The caste origins of Southern Indian indentured immigrants also reflected similar trends as in the North Indian indentured labour migration. However, in the South, the bonded labour system was strong. Despite the abolition of slavery in 1843 in India, many ex-slaves were sent to Mauritius. This is reflected in the names that are attached to caste names, or by names of individuals, such as Pallan (also spelt Pallen and Pallinin immigration records), Paria, and so on. These came mainly from the Kombakonumr Regions of Madras Presidency.

By way of an illustration, it was calculated from the MGI database, that out of the 209,000 immigrants listed, and 69,194 arriving from Madras Presidency, 5,499 came from one area, Kombakonum alone. From there, 4,144 were listed as Malabars (4,044), 1037 were Paria, Gentoo or Pallan.

The most striking fact, however, in this case, was not only the caste, but the fact that the bulk, 4,938 immigrant labourers, came in the year of the abolition of slavery in 1843. Many explanations are possible, but none is conclusive, as yet. Did they want to leave of their own accord to escape or were they encouraged to leave, as they were now free, or were they forced out?

### **IMMIGRANTS FROM TELUGU-SPEAKING DISTRICTS**

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Although today it is collectively known as Andhra Pradesh and is known as a Telugu-speaking province, there are many important differences in this province which could be roughly divided into three. The areas around Hyderabad, today, are known as 'Telangana' and contrasts sharply with more prosperous coastal Andhra Pradesh. In Mauritius, Telugu-speaking people represent more a minority among Hindus, somewhat wedged between the Tamil-speaking South and the Hindi-speaking North. This is reflected in their status in Mauritius nowadays, and the practice of both 'Pan Hindu, Tamil and Hindi-speaking rituals.'<sup>267</sup> Despite their small numbers, they have not disappeared; like so many other minor groups. According to Anenden, the Telugu identity has been maintained, chiefly from the preservation of marriages and alliances which she has described in great detail.<sup>268</sup>

Figure 12: Modern map of Andhra Pradesh showing some of the districts sending immigrants to Mauritius, 1835-1873



## Bombay Presidency

From Bombay Presidency, the following districts were tapped. It must be noted that a number of Africans and Arabs were also embarked and recruited as indentured labourers from Bombay District. Africans may be of the Sidi community, into which more research is required. Thus, out of 19,225 immigrants, the following districts were sourced. Some of these areas are in fact, not in the districts, but in other countries and regions, for example in Afghanistan, Delhi, Punjab etc. These places need to be seen in conjunction with other maps of different regions of India.

Figure 13: Districts in Bombay Presidency sending immigrants to Mauritius, 1835-1873

<b>Ratnagiri</b>	2642	Karnataka	25
Konkan	2534	Goreygaum	24
Deccan	2345	Salse	21
<b>Satara</b>	1729	Trichinopoly	21
<b>Poona (Pune today)</b>	887	Jaunpur	18
<b>Tanna (Thane)</b>	791	Madura	18
Sawantwadi	726	Mysore	18
<b>Kolapur</b>	540	Alibag	17
Lucknow	388	Kharepatan	17
<b>Bombay (Mumbai)</b>	379	Mirzapur	17
Khair	328	Bancote	16
Hindustan	305	Colaba	16
Nizampur	282	Jubalpur	15
Malvan	258	Sahibganj	14
Hubran	224	<b>Sangelly (Sangli today)</b>	14
Moglae	217	Carnatic	13
Gujrat	128	<b>Jalna</b>	13
<b>Solapur</b>	126	Mandesh	13
Rajapur	115	Tasgaon	13
Chiplun	94	Anjelwel	12
Dharwar	94	Farrukhabad	12
<b>Sitarrah (Sitara)</b>	93	Juvanpur	12
Hurnay	90	Maligaon	12
Meerut	86	Fatapur	11
Delhi	70	Halsan	11
Bancoora	68	Jognuddy	11
Malabar Coast	51	Barsey	10
Arabia	50	Nagotna	10
Mahar	50	Sultanpur	10
Goa	49	Tellungan	10
Africa	48	Fultan	9
Kanpur	47	Jungera	9
<b>Nashik (Nasik)</b>	45	Mangalore	9
Prag	42	Ahmedabad	8
Tanjore	36	Ajmere	8
Surat	35	Baroda	8
Joonder	34	<b>Gonda</b>	8
Savendrug	34	Gungthuree	8
Panvel	33	Gwalior	8
Belgaum	31	Kurrad	8



The social origins of immigrants from Maharashtra, using the MGI sample, were as follows:

Caste/religion/occupation	Number
Maratha (Soldier, cultivator and service)	191
Mahar (Weaver and labourer)	34
Purdasee	21
Hindu	24
Purwaree	25
Cambattee	12
Muslim	50

Gender-wise, there was a preponderance of men: out of 441 immigrants, 358 were males and only 83 were women. Immigration, according to the database, was most intense before 1853, with the bulk of immigrants arriving in 1852. Reports do indicate that recruiters found it hard to recruit women.

Figure 15: Sample size per year

Year	No.of immigrants
1834	40
1843	23
1844	79
1847	1
1852	186
1854	34
1856	63
1857	38
1858	33
1859	12
1860	8
1861	12

Further research is required into what prompted immigrants to leave their district and whether the reasons for leaving are the same. As for other provinces, it is imperative to correlate data in India with what is available in Mauritius.

## MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS

Mention has been made earlier of Muslim workers brought in during the French period as sailors, artisans, masons. Their place of residence for those who decided to stay was Port Louis. During indenture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their role and place of residence were totally different since they were now recruited for plantation labour. They were collectively known as the *Calcuttyas* as they had embarked from Calcutta and were, for the most part, Sunni Muslims. By contrast, the trading community which came as free immigrants, were from Gujerat and were made up of *Surtis*, *Mehmans*, *Bohras*, *Khojas* and *Ahmadists*. A smaller group came from the Konkan currently in Maharashtra District. The story of the trading community has been well-documented, but not so for those with indentured ancestry. There are also class and social status differences between them, although, as Amenah Chojoo remarks, these were less among those of indentured origin. The indentured Muslims formed about 17% of the population, according to Chojoo. Shiploads sometimes brought in immigrants who were all of the Muslim faith, and others, of mixed religions. The

*Minerva*, cited by Chojoo, brought in, not only a majority of Muslims, but all from the same village in Arrah District in Bihar.<sup>269</sup> Their status could also be gauged from their names: those with the Syed, Shaikh prefixes would be of high rank or caste. Indian Muslims, thus, also had ‘caste’, and this is evident from the immigrant registers where Muslims are listed as MAleea, Rajput, Pathan, and so on.

The history of Calcuttiya Muslims was no different to that of other labourers on plantations. Housing arrangements were made, when they did not want to live near pig-breeders among the labourers families. But, in general, they went through the same evolution. After indenture, many became small planters, share-croppers (known as *métayers* in Mauritius) and others migrated to the town of Port Lous and opened textile shops, some of which are still in existence today. It is not known yet how many returned, but one family story does not confirm that there were immigrants who returned after the indenture. Many left families in Mauritius since those born in Mauritius, were not eligible for return passages. One immigrant returned to India, kept up a correspondence with his family, but remarried and reindentured to Guyana and was lost from view from then on.<sup>270</sup>

Out of the 209,000 names in the MGI database, 23,257 Muslims were located:

#### Origins

Bengal Presidency	20,265
Madras Presidency	1,565
Bombay Presidency	1,406

#### Main Districts in Bengal Presidency supplying Muslim immigrants before 1873

Arrah	4,075
Ghazipur	2,005
Chapra	1,675
Patna	874
Azamgarh	679
Muzaferpore	442
Burdwan	233
Gorakhpur	316
Jaunpur	216
Lucknow	282
Monghyr	214
24 Pergunnahs	455
Calcutta	283
Dacca	103
Allahabad	85
Unspecified	3,509
<b>Tribal districts</b>	
Gaya	1,920
Hazaribagh	494
Midnapur	123
<b>Madras Presidency</b>	
Tanjore	222
Madras	210
Chenglepet	86
Chittoor	196
Hyderabad	134
Trichinopoly	124
Madura	93
Kombakonum	38
<b>Gender</b>	
Male immigrants	23,233
Female immigrants	5,480
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	5,346 of which 2,774 were

Widow	546	women
Not specified	17,203	of which 542 were women
		this included a large
		number of males and
		children of both genders
Single	31	

In terms of language those who came from the North of India and from Bhojpuri regions, spoke Bhojpuri and many, especially of those of a higher status, could also speak and write Urdu. With 'Islamisation', many have rejected this Bhojpuri/Indian culture and it is mainly the elderly alone in rural areas who continue to speak it. Many have opted for a more 'Arab-style' culture. The celebration of the *Muharram* festival, called in Mauritius the *Ghoon* or *Yamse*, which has existed in Mauritius since 1790s and where many Calcuttiya Muslims has joined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is also frowned upon today as being 'unIslamic'. However, among the younger generation of historians, there are interesting studies being carried out on family histories and their evolution as Mauritians. These studies deserve to be incorporated into a larger study and published.<sup>271</sup> The Bengali language also spoken among those originating from district located around Calcutta are unknown to descendants interviewed.

As many Hindus become more 'Indianised' and reject the 'Mauritianness' of their Hinduism, so do many *Calcuttiya* Muslims reject the Indianness of their culture.

Sufism brought by the immigrant Muslims, however, has not totally disappeared.

## BENGALI IMMGRANTS

The Bengali-speaking immigrants have received no recognition yet in History books, despite the large numbers emigrating to Mauritius and despite the evidence of emigration from what is today Bangladesh, Dacca, the 24 Pergunnahs, all Bengali-speaking territory. Various 'Camp Bengali' existed in Mauritius and many families up to the 1980s still had members of families speaking Bengali.

## CHRISTIAN INDIANS

It appears that about 1% of indentured immigrants were Christians. In the MGI database, there are, however, only a total of 882 Christian immigrants, out of the 209,000 immigrants listed. Of these:

Bombay Presidency:	116	with the bulk arriving after 1859
Bengal Presidency	40	
Madras Presidency	725	

It will be observed that, in contrast to other groups, not only were many more women present on board ships but many more were married. The category marked 'unspecified' might also contain married persons.

### Marital Status

Male	579
Female	302
Married	193
Widow	4
Not specified	662

### Origins

The bulk in this small sample came mostly from Tanjore, but this would need to be cross-checked from the completed database.

<b>Madras Presidency</b>	
Tanjore	338
Trichinopoly	132
Madras	103
<b>Bombay Presidency</b>	
Ratnagiri	19
Chittoor	18
Goa	16
Malabar Coast	14

## 6. CASTE ORIGINS OF BIHAR AND BENGAL IMMIGRANTS

Attention has been given to the caste origins of indentured labourers from Northern India, given the controversies that arose when the Commission decided to request a copy of the MGI database for the exercise of tracing the Indian origins of Mauritians. The study of the caste background of immigrants had however not been the original intention of the Commission in seeking access to the Immigration Archives. It became necessary however to make a few points concerning the caste origins of immigrants. Further study is required. The database has been reworked and additional information added to conduct this preliminary analysis.

Grierson, who toured all the recruiting districts in 1880s, did not find any reason to think that some castes did not want to migrate. There did not seem to be any hostility to emigration as far as caste was concerned. According to him, higher castes were fully represented among the indentured immigrants. This would appear to match the database.

Out of 175 persons emigrating from one district, the following 'higher' castes were registered by him:

Chhatri	51
Ahír	32
Koeri	17
Kahár	16
Kurmi	10
Bráhmin	7

The various lists, which he compiled from the districts visited, was compared with the Mauritian MGI database, consisting of some 209,000 immigrants, and his findings would appear to be compatible with the database. The caste categories, listed by him, were also compared with MGI data of 209,000 immigrants. A total of some 34,736 persons were analysed (figure 16).

The 'position' given to each caste shown below, following Grierson, although some writers have put some castes in other categories; Koiri (or Koeri), for example, is listed by others as an 'aboriginal low caste', while Grierson places this group in 'Medium' position.

Figure 16: numbers arriving from caste categories listed by Grierson	
<b>'Higher' positions castes</b>	
Chhatri	553
Brahman	2480
Rajput	4873

<b>'Medium' position castes</b>	
Gowala	6,943
Koiri	6,489
Kurmi	6,981
Kahar	9,706
Mali	94
Teli	1,070
Naipali	
Kaesth	99
Kalwar	299
Baniya	845
Ghatwal	1,731
Sonar	409
Dhanukh	70
Others	
<b>'Lower' position castes</b>	
Chamar	15,516
Dusadh	7,539
Bhar	1,050
Hajam	894
Nunia	1,252
Kaibarta	244
Dhobi	949
The higher, medium and lower descriptions refer to those cited by Grierson at the time of writing (1883) and do not reflect current statuses in India or Mauritius.	

According to the Grierson report, there were very few castes which did not wish to emigrate: this included the *Kayasths* and *Tirhutiya* Brahmins. As the database shows, this would indeed appear to be the case for Mauritius as only 99 *Kayasths* emigrated in the sample. According to his own survey of 1,500 persons, two-thirds belonged to people of higher and middle castes. Here too, Grierson's analysis matches the Mauritian database.

Figure 17: Proportion of castes emigrating

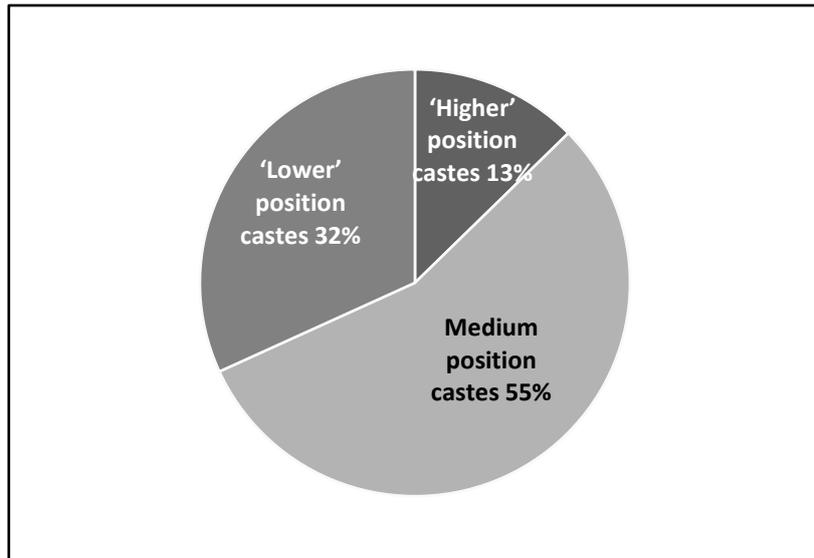


Figure 18: Proportion of 'higher position' sub-castes emigrating

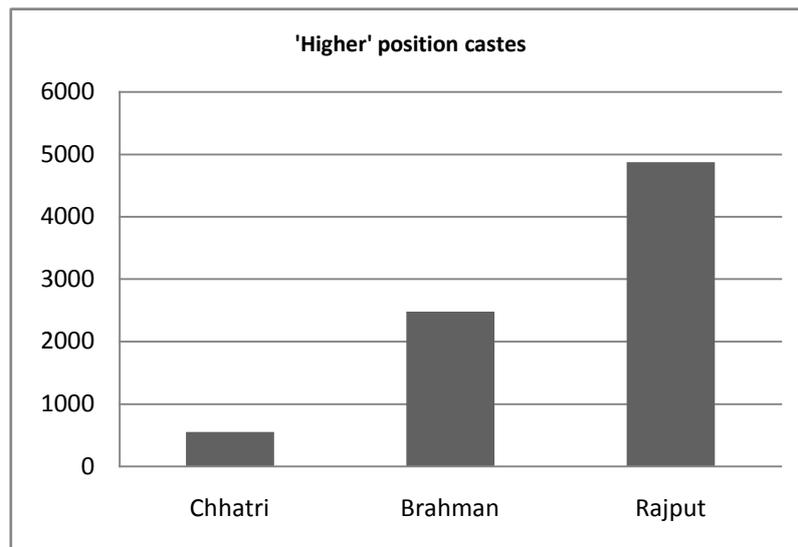


Figure 19: Proportion of 'medium position' sub-castes emigrating

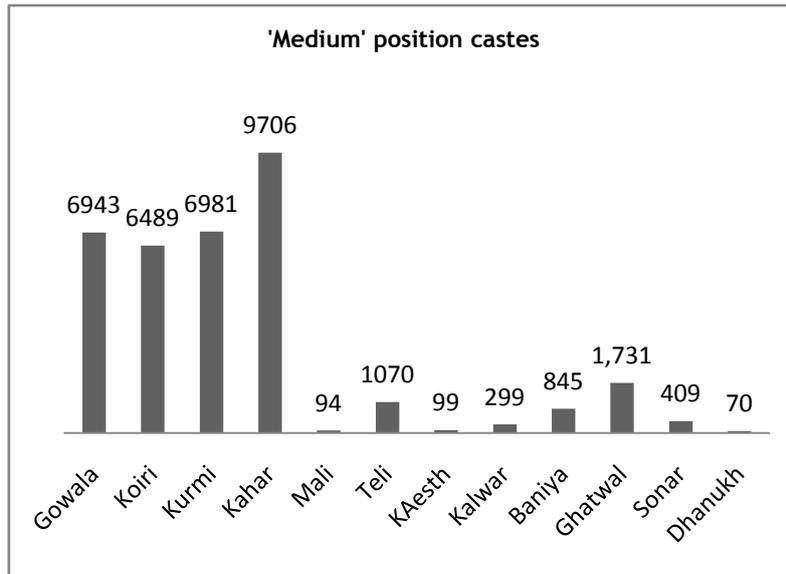
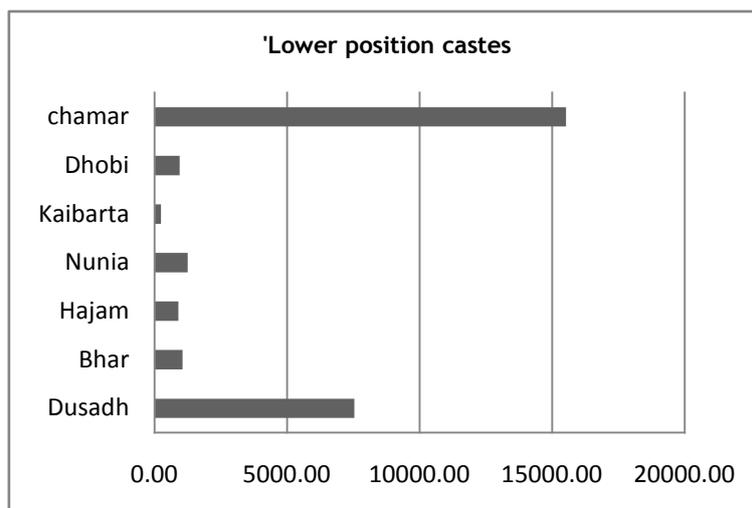


Figure 20: Proportion of 'lower position' sub-castes emigrating



A more thorough study, however, is required, combining Indian and Mauritian data to correlate the data since many discrepancies have been noted between data collected in India, data collected in Mauritius and those of other indentured countries. The database, compiled at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, needs to be cleaned up and contrasted with Indian Immigration data, as well as confronted with the Surinamese and other data available online.

Furthermore, if Tribal communities are included, the proportions change drastically. In India, Tribals are included as 'Scheduled Tribes' and considered as part of 'Lower' position groups. Whether Mauritians wish to officially categorise Tribals *as lower position as in India*, remains to be seen.

The Commission believes that the principle of self-identity needs to be respected. In other words, it is up to the individual or the group to decide what category he or she wishes to be recognised as. It is not the State, and certainly not the historian, who should decide this. However, this is not the prerogative either of the politician or of the small group of persons at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. Public consultation and open debate must be the order of the day.

## 7. LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS ON SUGAR ESTATES

The control of indentured labourers by wages cuts, by laws restricting labour mobility as well as physical mobility has been discussed in Chapter 1. By the 1870s, as analysed by Mishra, just as the planters had found maintaining slaves expensive, when amelioration laws were passed, so by the 1870s, planters found that when numerous laws were passed to improve conditions of labourers, their revenues might decrease as a result of more spending on social services for labourers. The planters' strategy was what it had always been: change the terms and conditions of the labour system. Thus, now, they no longer wanted labourers on the estates on a permanent basis, but rather on contract for only the work required. As for ex-slaves, the changing labour conditions impacted on the immigrants' decisions to settle in Mauritius and return to India. In Mauritius, the popular tendency is to focus on those who stayed and label them as 'successful' immigrants. But most Mauritians have chosen to ignore those who left and who never survived their indenture. Nor has there been an examination of the reasons which prompted immigrants to return to Mauritius. When ALL the immigrants' experiences are taken into consideration, the picture is less rosy than is usually presented.

Sugar estates needed, not only to maintain sugar production, but to expand, and so it was crucial to maintain Indians in sugar production as no one else would do it. Manual work was despised and no *Gens de couleur* would deign to labour the land. Sugar estates, thus, sold or leased to the Indian immigrants so that they could continue producing sugar and supply it to the sugar estate. This intimate relationship between planter and labourer, turned small planter, emerged, and to this day this remains a highly problematic one. The *métayers'* dependence on the good-will of the mill and estate owners for land leases was always, and is up to today, fraught with difficulties. Despite political will, it does not appear that the *métayers* and small planters have benefitted as much as the big planters/millers from the millions given by the European Union to palliate the negative effects of abolition of a guaranteed EU market for Mauritian sugar.

Roland Lamusse, the most Senior Economist in Mauritius today, has titled his book the *Twilight of the Sugar Industry*. Indeed, many feel Mauritius has now come full circle as far as sugar is concerned: slavery, then indenture, then VRS, symbolises the end of the reign of sugar.

### The Findings of the 1875 Royal Commission

As part of their enquires, conducted between 1872-1874, the Royal Commissioners interviewed various witnesses and visited 51 sugar estates and consulted the record books of estates to determine the validity of the accusations made by the petitioners and de Plevitz. (Vol 3.1.7 Coucaud).

The pertinent parts that concern us today are the complaints concerning the non-payment of wages and planters and *sirdars* or job-contractors making illegal deductions from the wages of labourers, or planters failing to provide adequate lodgings and sanitary conditions in estate camps.

These abuses continued after the end of the indentured labour period and are clearly visible in the oral testimonies of elderly sugar estate workers themselves.

### Wages

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According to the 1875 Royal Commission, the non-payment of wages constituted one of the worst abuses of the indentured labour system, as reflected in the large number of complaints brought before the Courts by both Old and New Immigrants (Frere and Williamson 1875:582). Apart from keeping wages in arrears often for two to three months or more, the Royal Commissioners drew attention in particular to the "double-cut", a method used by planters to reduce the wages of labourers two days for every day on which they were recorded as being illegally absent. The Royal Commissioners pointed out that the "double-cut" was not in itself illegal, as originally viewed by the British Colonial Authorities with some degree of apprehension, when it was first proposed by the planter-dominated Legislative Council and then, eventually passed into law with the passing of Ordinance No. 16 of 1862.<sup>272</sup> What was not legal was the manner in which the "double-cut" was

used by planters, *sirdars* and job-contractors, to make deductions from wages, by recording labourers as absent when they did not complete a set task.<sup>273</sup>

The “double-cut” enabled planters to save enormous sums of money on wages,<sup>274</sup> but worse was that immigrants, who went to lodge a complaint with the Authorities or were imprisoned for an offence, were fined a further two days of wages for everyday they were absent. In many cases, it was used as justification to prolong their contracts or to force them to re-indenture. This was exactly what happened to slaves when they had to complain to the Protector of Slaves: they were flogged for absenting themselves without permission of the owner. This illegal use of the “double-cut” had become customary amongst planters and encompassed a wide range of deductions ranging from fining labourers for the theft of thatch or the loss of tools and even for collecting grass or *brèdes* from rivers and streams without permission.<sup>275</sup> But it was with respect to marking labourers as absent, when they did not complete set tasks and making deductions from their wages, without recourse to the decision of a Magistrate, which the Royal Commissioners found particularly objectionable. This “fiction”, as it was described by one prominent Colonial Official who was interviewed by the Royal Commissioners, consisted of marking a labourer as “sick” for not completing a set task, even despite the fact that the labourer had, in fact, worked on that day:

*“Regarding deductions for unfinished tasks, we have been generally informed that men are required to complete their tasks next day; and that, failing to do so, they are marked sick, or have some other marks put against their names, signifying “malade travail,” and are cut as if sick. The grounds on which this fiction, as the Surveyor-General calls it, is defended, are, that if the man has been put to taskwork and cannot finish his task, he is supposed to be sick in proportion to the work left unfinished; thus a day’s work upon the roads being to break 25 baskets of stones, or 150 baskets in the week, he is supposed to have been sick for two days, and fined accordingly.”*<sup>276</sup>

What confirmed how widespread this illegal practice was for the Royal Commissioners was when they consulted the pay books of sugar estates. Upon inspecting these books, such as those of a member of the Chamber of Agriculture, whose conduct the Commissioners presumed should have been more exemplary than others, they found clear evidence that the proprietor of the estate had been fudging his records.<sup>277</sup> Apparently it was common practice for planters to mark labourers as absent for unfinished tasks in the columns of their books, but when asked by the Royal Commissioners for permission to inspect their books and pay-sheets, it was evident that pencil notations had been deliberately rubbed out to mislead the Commissioners.

However, we should not be deluded into thinking that the illegal use of the “double-cut” to make deductions from wages of labourers was only restricted to the planters. Although mention is often made in the literature on indentured labour in Mauritius, of the usurious rates of interest charged on loans to labourers by *sirdars* and job-contractors, rarely do we find any reference to the fact that *sirdars* and job-contractors also took advantage of labourers and “robbed” them of their wages.<sup>278</sup> The 1875 Royal Commission seems to be less clear about the evidence against *sirdars*, who, like job-contractors, were resented by planters because they could not control them and also because they were highly dependent upon them. With respect to job-contractors, however, which the Royal Commissioners point out in their report is “closely connected with the Sirdar system-the Sirdar being, in fact, a job-contractor under another name”, the evidence is much clearer. The Commissioners cite a report by a Stipendiary Magistrate, named Mr. Daly, who, based on his half-yearly inspection of estates in the District of Savanne claimed that

*“[J]ob contractors are, of all employers, the most unscrupulous in endeavouring to profit by the curtailing of their servants’ wages, as he had, within the first six months, detected a system of illegal and unjust marking as absent, men whose amount of work or task did not satisfy the employing job contractor. He also, on the next page, mentions two cases, one at “Beauchamp,” and another at “La Flora,” where job contractors had marked for the forfeiture of wages, as if the labourer had been really absent, men who had not performed their allotted task.”*<sup>279</sup>

There is also evidence of job-contractors resorting to the “double-cut” in order to prolong the contracts of labourers in their gangs and make false records in their pay-books. Just like planters, job-contractors were able to take advantage of the 1862 Labour Ordinance to mark as absent

labourers who had to walk five miles to work and thus spent half their time walking rather than working, or of being able to gain one month of work at no expense, if a labourer was absent 14 days in a month.<sup>280</sup> One of the reasons why planters resented job-contractors was because they were able to gain these benefits without having to provide the same kind of facilities that planters were required to by law. Yet, there is evidence that some job-contractors owned or ran their own estate camps and of even providing rudimentary medical care in some cases.

## Lodgings

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According to the Royal Commissioners, it was not until a new Ordinance was introduced in 1867 that planters were required by Law to provide lodgings for their labourers, as the provision of lodgings had, until then, depended upon the contractual agreement signed between the parties prior to the immigrant leaving India. But it had in fact become customary for indentured immigrant labourers from India to be housed by planters, and, initially, it would appear that many were housed in the former lodgings of ex-slaves.

The Royal Commissioners state that most dwellings in estate camps were made of thatch and straw, but they also visited several estates that had stone range barracks, among them “Mont Choisy”, “Bois Rouge”, “Trianon”, “Antoinette”, “Esperance”, “Bel Air”, “Benares”, and “Labourdonnais”, which struck the Commissioners as being superior to the more common thatch and straw huts.<sup>281</sup> However, some of the labourers preferred thatch and straw huts to stone range barracks, the reason presumably being, according to one medical expert, that thatch and straw huts were healthier because “you cannot get contagion out of stone walls”. It apparently never struck this medical expert or the Royal Commissioners that labourers preferred thatch and straw huts because they would not have been nearly as hot as the stone range barracks which were made no doubt of local volcanic stone and were less well-ventilated than thatch and straw huts.

Some labourers were also forced by planters to build their own dwellings. Yet this does not mean that labourers were unwilling to avail themselves to lodgings provided for them at the expense of planters, after being required by Law. After Ordinance No. 31 of 1867 was introduced, servants had brought 75 complaints against masters, but only 11 were proved because of the ambiguous wording of the Law.<sup>282</sup>

## Sanitary conditions

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The 1875 Royal Commission was much less equivocal perhaps because of the recent malaria epidemic that claimed thousands of lives several years before. The Commissioners were emphatic about the need to maintain sanitary conditions in estate camps and to ensure that planters complied with regulations to reduce the risk from pestilence. They complained about the numerous untidy camps that they saw on their estate visits, of pigs and other livestock running amok amongst piles of refuse that had not been properly disposed of, and of inadequate latrine provision:

*“On 206 estates from which we have received returns, there are only 13 on which there are any arrangements whatever for conservancy in the camps. At “Providence,” as mentioned before, we found one camp swarming with pigs and filth, but the other as clean and neat as could be wished. So also at “Beauchamp,” where the people were certainly well-treated, the camp was in bad repair, dirty, untidy, and swarming with pigs. The very excellent camp at “Labourdonnais” was dirty, notwithstanding that there was a most suitable “parc a cochons” for the pigs; and while the planters object to Government appointing the medical men, because it will sever the connection between the labourers and their employers and put an end to the interest the planters take in their labourers, they will not hear of being made answerable for state of the camps, in which they lodge their labourers and foster the causes of sickness, because if they should trouble themselves upon those subjects, the labourers will leave them, and go to other estates where they are allowed to do more as they please.”<sup>283</sup>*

The general view at the time, both amongst planters and British Colonial Officials, was that Indian immigrants cared little about hygiene and would have refused to re-engage if planters interfered and forced them to maintain cleaner dwellings. The Royal Commissioners seem to have seen through this ruse, however, and suggested it was more likely that planters used this reasoning as a convenient excuse to avoid having to pay the cost of improving sanitary conditions in estate camps.

As the Commissioners point out in their report, they had evidence before them that Indian immigrants were willing to use latrines, when planters made these available in estate camps (Frere and Williamson 1875:351). And upon asking a Stipendiary Magistrate who conducted half-yearly inspections of estates if he thought that sanitary conditions were worse in camps or the villages of Indian immigrants, they were told that conditions seemed more preferable in villages than estate camps (Frere and Williamson 1875:350).

The Royal Commissioners did not reject out of hand the planters' argument that Indian immigrants were less conscientious about hygiene than Europeans seemed to be, pointing in particular, to their propensity to use cane fields, when latrines were not available. Nonetheless, they were adamant that planters should be held to account and "made answerable, not only for the health of their labourers, but that their habits do not tend to injure, not only their own health, but that of others." The Commissioners made a number of recommendations regarding how planters might improve sanitary conditions in estate camps, the introduction of a system of latrines being one of the most important conditions which they identified.<sup>284</sup> They also recommended that inspectors be empowered to enforce compliance with sanitary regulations and to penalise offending parties without the need to resort to police intervention.<sup>285</sup> The Commissioners were no doubt unaware of how prescient their recommendations would later turn out to be.

In the early 1920s, J.F. Kendrick, a medical expert working for the International Health Board, a philanthropic organisation funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, came to Mauritius and wrote a report in which he urged the Colonial Government to tackle the hookworm epidemic gripping the colony. Until Kendrick's Report, which was released in 1920, it was not generally known how many people suffered from hookworm disease; but according to Kendrick, as many as two-thirds of the population were suffering from this parasitic form of disease.<sup>286</sup> Kendrick's report left no doubt that failing to address the island's sanitation problem, in particular the shortage of latrines in rural areas, would have disastrous long-term consequences for the health of the wider population. Yet in spite of these recommendations, sugar estates continually failed to tend to this problem well into the twentieth century.

## Women under indenture

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If slavery and indenture as economic systems have received due attention on the part of scholars, the lesser-known aspects deserve also mention. Indentured labourers like slaves, brought with them their cultures, life-styles which they were in varying degrees able to keep. In the case of Indian labourers, how were their cultures and social life transformed by indenture? In other words, what was the impact on their non-working lives? Women have been recognised in Mauritian history as having kept the traditions brought from India. This was possibly because they stayed at home, unlike other labour immigrants and so were able to provide the nurturing roles. The absence of women, for example, in the early years deserve mention, as this was a matter of concern for authorities.

As Marina Carter (1992:115-116) has pointed out, Mauritius was exceptional, insofar as after 1842, it was the

*"only [British] colony which failed to engage Indian women as indentured labourers. The numbers of women formally employed on estates was consequently never very high, even in the principal sugar-growing districts ... In 1846 9% of the total Indian female population was registered as part of the plantation labour force. At the time of the malaria epidemic in 1867, less than 100 women were reported as working on the sugar estates. By 1871, when the next census was taken, this figure had risen, even so, only 7% of women [or 1,808 Indian females out of a total estate population of 24,425] were officially employed as plantation workers."<sup>287</sup>*

## Marriage patterns

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One consequence of indenture, because of the relative scarcity of women, was to raise the 'marriageable value' of women and, in so doing, transform their social power. Women were crucial for the early indentured as they were imported solely and clearly to look after men's needs in the barracks: provision of food and domestic chores. Rather than requesting a dowry, men now paid parents, thus reversing an age-old Indian tradition. Doyal of Flacq paid a huge sum of \$137 to get

married to *Bagmanea*. This practice of paying the bride's price was not limited to any particular section of the Indian immigrants, and another immigrant *Virapatim*, of South Indian origin, paid several hundred rupees to get married to *Taylamen*.<sup>288</sup> This should not necessarily be interpreted as an example of women's emancipation, since there is some evidence of this resembling a 'sale' of daughters rather than being a celebration.

Another consequence of indenture was the non-respect of Indian marriage. The Indian Government was concerned that the cohabitation of the Indian population living in Mauritius was declared as immoral and illegal by the State, even though they had married according to religious rites. Thus, under existing Marriage Laws in Mauritius, most Indian children in the Colony were illegitimate.<sup>289</sup> The figures spoke for themselves: there were relatively very few numbers of registered (legally recognised) marriages among Indians. In 1866, the Protector reported only 112 marriages and 166 marriages in 1867.<sup>290</sup> By 1872, the situation had not improved. By 1893, Muir-Mackenzie, deputed by the Government of India to enquire into the conditions of the Indian population in Mauritius, was still concerned: "an unmerited stigma is cast on the morality of the Indians, and injury results to their self-respect and moral character." In 1909, in a representation to the Royal Commission of 1909, Manilal Doctor demanded the recognition of marriages performed among the Indian communities according to their religious rites.<sup>291</sup> Finally, the 'Civil Status (Indian Marriages) Amendment Ordinance, 1912' was passed, aimed at making better provision for the registration of Indian marriages, this Ordinance recognised the validity of marriages solemnised according to the religious traditions of immigrants and conducted by the Indian priests (both Hindu and Muslims). The effect was immediate: the rise in Indian marriages and for the first time, the Census of 1921 recorded religious marriages of Indians.

Instability of marriages was also a consequence of the imbalance in sexes: there were reports of wives being enticed away by other immigrants and women moving out of the matrimonial alliances, according to Mishra, for 'more attractive' options.<sup>292</sup> Archival records show that this was one of the primary concerns of the male population in Mauritius who requested the Authorities to restore their wives. However, due to the fact they were no 'legally married', the Police could not intervene.

### **Children under indenture**

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During the period of indentured immigration, children were also brought either accompanying their parents or came alone. There are many ways in which a child could have ended up on a ship alone. A parent may have died in the Depot or abandoned children being an easy prey for unscrupulous recruiters would be enticed into the ship. Their stories will probably never get into the History books as so little written evidence has survived. What we do have today are the few descendants who have kept alive their family history and recounted how their ancestors arrived as children.

Whatever the individual story of migration, once on the estate, children were often put to work by estate and/or by their parents. Orphans ended up running away and roaming the streets in Port Louis or were taken to the Orphan Asylum. The Poor Law reports are full of stories of children found roaming around the island, of having been beaten or abused, or not having been paid their wages.

A 'child' was officially, according to the Blue Book of 1870, a person below 10 years of age. In 1860 a minimum wage was prescribed depending on the age of the child, thus:

Figure 21 Wages of children

Age of labourer on day of engagement	1 <sup>st</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	2 <sup>nd</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	3 <sup>rd</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	4 <sup>th</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	5 <sup>th</sup> Yr- Shilling per month
7 - 9 inclusive	2	4	6	7	8
10 - 12	4	6	8	9	10
13 - 16	6	8	10	11	12
17 - 20	8	10	11	12	13
21 upwards	10	11	12	13	14

Source: MNA:B2/Blue Book/1860

Child labour continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Labour Act of 1908 which banned child labour. However, a ‘minor’ of the age of thirteen and upwards up to sixteen shall be free to engage under written contract of service for one year only with the consent previously obtained of the parents or guardian’.<sup>293</sup> Poverty kept many at work especially as this Law did not cover domestic service. The attraction for parents was the wage which the children received and also the rations which were sometimes given in lieu of wages. This tradition of parents of ‘forcing’ the child to work to bring revenue to the family has continued up to this day for daughters are encouraged to go to work as maids for example, instead of being in school.

Indian children particularly, also tended to be viewed by colonial society as persons who would take over from their parents in field labour and domestic work. Thus, education would change the mentality of children, and it is not surprising that many resisted such education for their children. Many plantation owners, for their part, used the same arguments as under slavery, and expressed fear that education might lead to rebellion. Knowledge was considered ‘a dangerous thing’.<sup>294</sup> The fear was as real as it had been during slavery.

### Indian ‘traditions’ under indenture

How far indenture altered the culture of indentured immigrants has yet to be adequately understood, as there has been a tendency to believe that the rites and rituals practised today among the population of Indian origin is what was practised under indenture. It must be remembered, however, that there is a gap of several decades between the end of indenture and the descendants who are visible and vocal, as well as several other substantial influences present to affect the evolution of Mauritian/Indian culture. These include the type of formal education received, the political situation in Mauritius, the Empire and decolonisation, amongst other determining influences.

It is still not that clear whether it is Westernisation or indenture, whether it was self-change or imposed change, which modified/changed Indian traditions in Mauritius. Anthropologists have given their views but there has been little attempt to study the evolution diachronically, in other words over time, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The difficulty has been that, although much historical data is available on material conditions of immigrants, their cultural and social life remains largely unknown. Although in India, reformist movements were also advocating changes, in Mauritius it is not clear whether the changes that occurred were imposed by plantation conditions or Colonial Officials’ intervention through laws or whether the immigrants themselves abandoned them. The practice of *sati* (widow burning) dowry were understandably no longer practicable in a period of shortage of women but for other practices, the situation is less clear: human sacrifice, polygyny, child marriage etc. There is no indication when these died out, if they ever existed at all. From interviews with elders, it is clear that child marriages existed, as did the heavy expenditure during marriage that parents endured.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when most immigrants became settled and ‘Mauritian’, some of those responsible for these changes were from the emerging elites from among the indentured immigrants. They played an ambivalent role: on the one hand, being intermediaries with what was

perceived as a 'hostile' outside world and facing the stigma of siding with British, but, on the other hand, 'defending' and 'protecting' their fellow Indians: these were the *sirdars*, the wealthier planters, the literate, those working as interpreters, recruiters those converted to Christianity and all those who came into contact with officials and planters. They also represented the most modernised among the indentured Indians and had to face the more orthodox traditional leaders among the indentured.

Also at the forefront were the caste groups which reorganised, with some moving themselves up the social ladder but without changing the system. As for tribals, it is not clear, when they became 'Hindus', which caste group they placed themselves in. Thus, 'fusion' rather than 'fission' has occurred but, at the same time, creating larger groups which had a deeper cleavage. This fusion has not yet been studied fully nor have the deeper cleavages that emerged as a result of democratisation of politics. The fact that these processes were also occurring in India leads one to suggest that it is modernisation, rather than indenture, that has led to these changes.

Thus caste mobility occurred throughout Indian and in Mauritius and should be accepted as part as the evolution of Mauritian Hinduism.

In India, the caste categorisations show clearly the upward movement of castes. There is no reason why it should not have occurred in Mauritius as well. However, who decided who moved where is at issue: while in India, this was considered by Census Commissioners. In Mauritius, by contrast, no such provision for caste categories existed in Mauritius in 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is little mention of the existence of distinct castes in the census reports. Thus emerged the caste 'sabhas' in India and Mauritius to make the claims and/or approve or disapprove. In India, the Mocha who were in 191 Census *baidya rishi* in 1921 became, by 1931, included in Kshatriya caste.

The Nar who were barbers and thakurs in 1921 Census became Brahmin by 1931 Census; the chamar who were tanners and Baidya rishi in 1921 census became Kshatriya in 1931 census.

Upward mobility thus is a phenomenon which appears to continue. However, it appears that some dominant castes or those with very traditional views did not wish for this to happen and thus protested officially against changes in castes' alignments. In Mauritius, a Supreme Court ruling is still awaited following the objection of Brahmin to non-Brahmins officiating as priests.

### ***Before Indenture***

Claveyrolas *et al* recommend examining the individual's perceptions, before they arrived in Mauritius. It is thus necessary to analyse them in the light of their Indian pre-indenture experience. However, as there is no one 'typical' indentured immigrant, but more a series of typologies: the Sepoys fleeing colonial repression, the indebted peasant and unemployed weaver, the son-in-law fleeing parents-in-laws, the migrant looking for a better future.

Our research, among mainly Bhojpuri-speaking groups in particular, has led to some conclusions. In India, the caste hierarchy is more flexible among Indian Bhojpuris. Bhojpuri Brahmins are not the fierce defenders of socio-religious orthodoxy which they are in other, more territorialized, regions such as Mithila, for instance (Servan-Schreiber 1999). Many institutions are opened to all, and Bhojpuri leaders do not promote an elite and Brahminic culture. Bhojpuri leaders more often address the unifying power of the language in their speeches. In Bhojpuri land, so they stress, it is as important to speak Bhojpuri as to be Muslim or Hindu, or to be Chamar (low caste leather worker) or Brahmin.

In Mauritius, the real caste identity of indentured labourers may be different to what is listed in official registers of immigrants for reasons well studied by historians. Individuals are declared under caste names (Ahir) but also with sub-caste names, professions, or regional origins (Bengali). We cannot be sure how far the British Officials understood all the 'caste' terminologies of potential immigrants. Secondly, emigration offered an opportunity for upgrading one's caste status. But opposite strategies were also used: to secure the right to emigrate, one had to prove one had experience at field work: the British started inspecting the hands of emigrants to check for signs of the immigrants having performed manual labour. The registers thus show a multi-caste type emigration, quite representative of the Indian caste distribution (Deerpalsingh 2000; Servan-

Schreiber 2010). True enough, peasant castes were over-represented, but such is already the case in India itself (Tinker 1974).

The same gross percentage seems to have been prevalent in India, and in indenture, with a huge majority of Untouchables and Shudra, some Vaishya and Kshatriya, and a very small minority of Brahmins. This parallel between castes, percentage in India and in indenture is also true of religions: approximately 15% of Indians were Muslims (Servan-Schreiber 1999) and 15% of the Bhojpuri indentured were Muslims (Deerpalsingh 2000).

In the 1830s to 1850s, the indentured population also consisted of Tribal groups who gradually became merged with the Hindu population. This is evident from a sample study of Civil Status Records of this population. In their new identity papers, they did not put down any caste. A new identity thus appears to emerge in Mauritius, that of casteless Hindus, due to indenture.

One can infer that the so-numerous 'Vaish', identified in Mauritius today, probably belonged to other castes before indenture. This is to be regarded as another example of upward caste mobility. Some 'jatis' belonging to lower castes in India have been 'upgraded' in the Mauritian caste system. But such upward mobility often goes hand in hand with temptations to deny the popular origins they shared with other indentured labourers. This reluctance to acknowledge their real history may explain the MGI's insistence that caste information of indentured should not be revealed to public. This attitude is reminiscent of descendants of slaves in Mauritius as well as descendants of convicts in Australia. In Mauritius, however, this is tied up with claims of political representation and caste quotas.

Upward mobility was also possible through intercaste marriages. Numerous examples exist in family histories. Loss of caste identity occurred at several stages apart from the Emigration and Immigration Depot in Calcutta and Mauritius.

### *The ship voyage*

The crossing of 'Black Waters' or the *kala pani* was incompatible with caste purity requirements, according to the 'legend'. However, alternative concepts of the caste system have, however, emerged as a result of indenture. Recruiters were asked not to use these terms but to use the rod '*tapu*' instead.

It is, as a consequence of this, necessary to re-focus on castes as both structural and flexible. One must remember the original flexibility of the Indian system, naturally enhanced in exceptional contexts. Indian Hindus are familiar with example of such occasions. The association of losing one's caste with the sea voyage constitutes a Brahminic vision of caste and Hinduism. Thus, by continuing to use this perspective, we are perpetuating an ultra-minority elite perspective and applying to the experience of the majority of the population who was not of that origin. Leaving India was probably never a taboo for non-Brahmins. Similarly, Tribals, Muslims and Christians did not have any reason to bother about the taboos of leaving Indian territory and crossing the sea.

Caste regulations were, however, not totally absent from the boat. Brahmins and high castes managed to keep their purity by refusing to eat cooked meals on board or benefiting from certain occupational exemptions (Carter 1995). Thus we learn that on board the *William Wilson*, one caste 'refused eating any cooked food afloat.'<sup>295</sup> They lived on water and 'undressed gram' but became so incapacitated that the Captain was afraid that they may not survive their quarantine. The passengers of the *Indian Oak* in quarantine in Fort George Minute of the governor of 19<sup>th</sup> April 1837 to report of the Medical Board of 10<sup>th</sup> April 1837 Governor turned down a proposal for quarantine.

Another example of maintenance of caste distinctions on board ships and at the Depot was the case of immigrants, reported in the letter of Emigration Agent Laird to Colonial Secretary of Mauritius. According to him, the Indian emigrants brought their own cooking utensils to cook their food on deck during the passage. Dholl, salt fish, curry for South Indians were provided by the Captain. The emigrants used to constitute themselves in groups. This started at the time of their departure from their villages to the depot at the port of embarkation. People from the same caste flocked together. Even the *jahaji bhai* system did not work, as again according to him, *jahaji* (or *Zahazi*) brotherhood did not cut across caste divisions. Groups continued being constituted at the depot, at

the time of embarkation and on board. Even in the face of adversity, unity did not cross caste barriers. It was perpetuated when they were already there.<sup>296</sup>

### **Estate camps**

The first Indians to arrive in the 1830s and 1840s, shared the same living and working spaces as the ex-slave population still on the estates. Ritual purity and occupational specialization were left behind during the sea voyage and the installation in camps. These spaces have been cited as presenting obstacles to the reproduction of the Indian caste system in Mauritius by Hazareesingh and Benoist, among others, who stated that Indian indentured labourers waited until they left the estates to settle in villages (in the 1880) to reproduce the Indian social structure.

In the camps, the absence of spatial segregation and of occupational specialization is presented as incompatible with castes' rules and regulations. But detailed reports from sugar estates show that, when requested, estate owners acceded to high-caste immigrants', and Muslims', desire to be housed separately from other (lower caste) immigrants breeding pigs. Thus, the caste system did survive in spatial arrangements on estates and as important criteria in private life, especially as far as marriages were concerned. As for settling regulations when it comes to acquiring land, Allen notes that "it was not uncommon for persons of the same or comparable caste status to purchase land near one another in a specific locality" (167), adding that other criteria were to be considered, such as religious affiliations and *jahaji bhai* relationships.

Regional origins were yet another important identity marker. The historical records show "a certain propensity for immigrants from the same home district in India to settle near one another" (Allen, 167). Marina Carter (1995) also explains how the strategies of 'returnees' for recruiting new labourers reinforced the process of bringing together people from the same district and villages. This strategy, based on the returnee's social network enabling him to contact and convince new candidates, was bound to help maintain caste solidarity and logic.

Castes with the largest numbers of individuals, such as the Ahir, the Chamar or the Dusadh, were probably more prone to endogamy and, consequently, to a reinforcement of their caste identity, whereas castes with fewer members, incapable of maintaining endogamy, were probably led to re-negotiate their status in the local hierarchy through new marriages and life-style strategies. The universe of plantation estates was not at all unknown to Bhojpuri labourers, as these existed in India as well. The estate camps would not necessarily represent a major rupture with the compulsory conditions of the caste system.

To conclude, indentured immigrants from Bihar were able to leave their native region and thus were not necessarily prone to caste identity loss. Neither were they, as individuals, submitted to a fixed caste logic unable to adapt to new living and working conditions or to contact with other cultures. Indenture for this group did necessarily involve the loss of the caste system.

### **Education**

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Orphaned children of indentured immigrants or who had arrived on board ships carrying indentured immigrants were often taken to the Orphan Asylum. The Asylum was also full of children who were not real orphans: many had families whose situation was too precarious to afford keeping their children at home.

It is this same poverty which made parents 'sell' their daughters and marry them off at a very early age. In some cases, when the parents situation got better, they claimed the guardianship back from the Government Orphan Asylum. For example, the children, Natamoney, Ponnedy and Vurdarajooloo, were given back to their father Balkistnen No. 376828.<sup>297</sup> This institution opened its doors at the height of indentured immigration in 1859,

Figure 22: Origins of orphan children

Children's Origins	Males	Females	Total
Indian immigrant	98	44	142
Europeans	1	4	4
Africans	28	5	33
Mauritian of Indian or African extraction	37	19	56
Total	164	71	235
Creoles of African origin	10	1	11
Total	174	78	252

Source: MNA: B6/Blue Book/1864

The life of the children there gives us a rare insight into colonial thinking about children, as information on non-orphaned children is scarce. They were all given a Christian education, many at their request. But there were different languages taught; so they did not lose touch altogether with their maternal language. Education involved the preparation of those orphans for their lives at a time when they would leave the GOA; they received tuition in English, Tamil or Hindustani, Arithmetic and Geography.<sup>298</sup> Some even became teachers at the Asylum when they grew up. A gendered approach also existed in education, as all the boys and girls were 'apprenticed to useful trades and occupations'.<sup>299</sup> The tasks assigned went according to gender: boys were trained in manual work and could exhibit their work in workshops which were found at the GOA, and some of their products were sold. On the other hand, girls performed well in cooking, ironing and sewing. In both cases, the students were efficient. Just as for other girls, marriage was considered as an outlet for orphaned girls. When the girls were grown up, they were allowed to get married with the Reverend's permission. Numbers at the asylum began to drop, but it is not clear why; was there stricter control of emigration and selection of immigrants? It is also possible that with opening up of other orphanages and school, numbers dwindled.

Education of the children of immigrants posed a problem for the authorities. Not only did the type of education to be provided to an immigrant population, who would be returning, pose a problem, but the issue became embroiled with the English /French debate.

The Government of India objected to imposing compulsory education on the Indian population in the French medium on the grounds that it did not include their mother tongue and would lead to creolisation of the Indian population.<sup>300</sup>

Furthermore the motives of the British in promoting education was far from humanitarian. It was essentially based on the 'civilising mission' and the need to pacify populations. Illiterate immigrant labourers were seen as 'barbaric' and possible threats to the 'civilised order of plantations'. Education would transform them into peaceful citizens.

The immigrants' own languages were ignored for the most part, except under the Governorship of Phayre who introduced vernacular schools. Most children either did not go to school or went for half a day until end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Parents, as we have seen, preferred to send their children to work or stay home to look after younger children.

The Government of Mauritius was not in favour of including Indian vernacular languages. The main argument for insisting on Creole was the familiarity of Indian children (the majority of whom were born in Mauritius) with the Creole *patois*, and they were supposed to live their lives in Mauritius. Another reason for the opposition was the high expenditure in obtaining teachers from India to teach in vernacular mediums.

As far as the colonial authorities were concerned, despite this awareness about the lack of education among the immigrants, the need to provide education to the labourers and their children did not fit into the scheme of things for planters, neither did it attract the attention of the administrators in the first few decades because, for Mauritian authorities, Indian indentured

labourers were primarily 'transient sojourners' who had come to Mauritius as labourers to work on plantations and would eventually return to their homelands. Therefore, there was no logic or requirement to provide education for them. The more fundamental reason for this slackness towards providing education was the inherent logic of capitalist production system which does not permit any investment for which there was no material return. Since performing menial labour in the cane fields did not require any specific knowledge, there was no motivation for planters to invest resources in making arrangements for the education of immigrant labourers or their children. Even the missionaries, who were considered to be very active in providing education to the underprivileged classes, somehow did not get involved in the 'mission' of educating the Indian immigrants. Superintendent of Schools, R. H. Walsh, noted this inaction of missionaries in 1859 for which he put the blame on ignorance of missionaries in languages spoken by the Indian immigrants,

He argued for English as the main language of learning at secondary level, and that the second language had be optional between French or an Indian language.<sup>301</sup>

Suspicion on the part of immigrants towards schools also existed, as these were seen as sites of proselytisation missions. This situation continued long after indenture and lasted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the numerous oral histories conducted with elderly Mauritians show, with girls suffering the most from this exclusion.

Teaching of French and English was also viewed suspiciously. Although this attitude changed decades later, when social and economic mobility was seen to be possible through acquiring Western style education. Reformist movements, as well as activities of emerging political leaders and intellectuals, further transformed the initial hostility to Western style education. The proliferation of *baithkas* and *madrassas* and other informal learning centres is also considered as a major development in the lives of immigrant children, as well as in maintaining the cultural baggage they had arrived in Mauritius with.

Nevertheless, education was never made compulsory, and this affected the numbers attending school, compared to other countries, such as Trinidad and Guyana where 20% of the total number of children among the immigrant community went to school. For Mauritius, as reported by Muir Mackenzie in 1893, only about 7% of Indian children went to school.<sup>302</sup>

Parents of Indian children became more attentive towards the need for a basic education but also gradually sought access to more specialised and highly professional education, like Medicine and Law. In a petition to the Governor, members of Indian community highlighted the discrepancies between the Mauritian and Indian Education System and demanded that special facilities be offered to the Indians for their entry into Indian universities, especially in Law and Medical Education.<sup>303</sup>

This was, indeed, a very big jump for the first and second generation of descendants of immigrants who were, by this time, firmly implanted in Mauritius and had no intention of returning to India. Their attitudes were not like those of their parents or grandparents who had known India and whose affinities lay clearly with her. The relationship of the descendants was more intellectual and spiritual than emotional.

There was also a class factor involved and J. F. Trotter, Protector of Immigrants, did comment on this: according to him, only the 'better class of Indians' wished to educate their children.<sup>304</sup> Manilal Doctor, in his statement to the Royal Commission, stated that education was beyond the reach of poor parents, even with regard to scholarships. All the scholarships for Higher Education were awarded on the basis of qualifying examinations which needed extra learning; therefore, only the children of prosperous Indians would qualify for these scholarships, as their parents could afford private tuition for their children. Even if a poor parent wanted to send his child to a secondary school, it was most unlikely that the child would qualify for it.<sup>305</sup>

## HEALTH

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Much is known about the health of immigrants due to the unhealthy state of the island and also because great care was taken to ensure that indenture was not compared to slavery. The colonial administration generated an innumerable amount of reports and correspondence on the issue of health and sanitation. Since then, numerous books and articles have also been written on colonial

health, while for Mauritius, Raj Boodhoo's work published in 2010, provided many details of the health of immigrants. A few salient points will be made here (see Vol 3, Part V 16).

### Food production and supplies

On some estates, Indians cultivated vegetables and reared animals such as cows, goats or pigs. Estate owners allowed the rearing of animals inside the camp, in order to encourage labourers to stay on their estates. In the same way, some planters provided land to labourers for them to cultivate gardens. Rice and *dhol* and other Indian food items were imported. Rice was imported from Madagascar and Java, and increasingly from Bengal, when Indian immigration intensified. The quantity of rice imported and supplied to the workers depended sometimes on food prices abroad. The 1860s were particularly difficult when the price of rice shot up in India, because of poor harvests caused by floods. In the second half of the century, Indians could buy certain food items from the shops on the estates or from hawkers. There were complaints about the high prices of foods such as poultry, pigs, goat, fruits and vegetables.

Many Indians had other food resources which they produced themselves, such as milk, poultry, meat and vegetables. The sale of animals brought a substantial increase in their revenue. This trend, which started in the mid 1850s, accelerated in the decades that followed, as Indians moved to set up independent enterprise, as soon as they terminated their contracts with the estates. However, not all estates on the island provided facilities to Indians to keep animals or cultivate gardens. Indians could improve their consumption of vegetables and milk following the *morcellement*, when they moved to the Indian villages and produced vegetables and reared cows, apart from growing sugar cane (Boodhoo 2010).

### Indian diet

Most of the Indians came from rice-and-flour eating areas in India. On the estates, they were provided with food items that were familiar to them: rice, flour and *dhol*. They refused to consume manioc and maize or food unknown to them. Rice remained the main ingredient in any meal, but it sometimes happened that its importation was affected by poor production in India, the main supplier. Immigrants, drawn from different parts of the subcontinent, had many variations in cooking and eating customs (often based on the caste requirements). Due to their various taboos, their food at first was simple and monotonous. Some variations became possible only on some estates, where they were allowed to do some gardening, and rear animals and poultry. When shops were opened on the estates, more Indian food items, such as spices, became available.

### Food rations of indentured labourers

One of the regulations of Ordinance No.6 of 1845 defined the weekly provision of food rations. Before 1842, 'usual rations' were mentioned without giving any details. Indians complained of food items that were unfamiliar to them. Employers had, therefore, to provide Indian food items such as rice, ghee (clarified butter), *dhol*, salted fish, tamarind, salt and sometimes tobacco. Attempts to provide local food items like manioc and maize to Indians failed. Planters also preferred to distribute imported rice, instead of cultivating local foodstuffs on their estates. The Indians, who formed the bulk of the population (in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), were mostly semi-vegetarians, whereas ex-slaves consumed mainly rice, *brèdes* (greens), salted fish or boiled salted beef. The Whites ate rice, salted beef and fish, and a lot of vegetables. The Typical Indian meals included rice, *dhol*, vegetable curry and salted fish, garnished with *chutney*.

Food rations were provided to indentured labourers in lieu of part of their wages, i.e. they received five rupees or ten shillings a month as wages and food and a clothing allowance, in addition to free housing on the estates and free medical attendance. The daily rations were as follows: two pounds of rice for one man, one and a half pounds for one woman, half a pound of *dhol*, two ounces each of salt, mustard, oil and tamarind. This was a ration high in carbohydrate, moderate in protein, low in fat, with low levels of B-vitamins. The ration (if provided in full and regularly) was slightly more than adequate for an adult's needs; however, it often had to be shared with other members of the family. Labourers who freely drank cane juice experienced a marked increase in calories as carbohydrate-rich sugar provided considerable energy (Boodhoo 2010, Mishra 2009).

Estate owners often provided either salted fish or *dholl*, but not both, saying that Indians preferred *dholl* to fish. However, this ration did not cover the needs of labourers with families, women and children too young to work. Those who became sick, while at work, received the whole ration, while those who did not attend work at all did not receive any ration. Rations were distributed on Saturdays during the '*entrecoupe*' (non-harvest) season and on Sundays during the harvest season. Rations and wages were given to labourers who fell sick or had an accident at work. Those who were sick and absent from work did not receive any wages or rations. But working conditions varied widely from estate to estate.

Food rations remained a major issue throughout indenture as rations were often reduced or stopped altogether for those absent from work or sick, thus causing great difficulties to workers and their families. Labourers complained about food ration distribution as being irregular or insufficient (Boodhoo 2010).

The average height of 120 adult Indians (aged 20 to 39 years), who arrived from Calcutta in 1843, was 159.2 centimetres (calculated from data available at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute) compared to 167.5 centimetres for contemporary Indo-Mauritian male adults (MOH 2004). This indicates that the Indian immigrants were chronically undernourished, even before their arrival to Mauritius.

### Mortality

During the malaria epidemics of the mid-1860s, it was observed that many Indians (especially those coming from Calcutta) could not resist the onslaught of various fevers, and they died because they were already exhausted by hard work in the cane fields. They were found to be weak and vulnerable to disease, due to poor nutrition believed to be related to their religious food taboos. Quinine was the main medicine for fever. In 1905, one Official wrote: "Indians are old at fifty". They suffered from various other diseases like bronchitis, pneumonia and heart disease. Indians were already in deplorable physical conditions when they arrived from India.

It should be noted that, in the 1870s/1880s, although it was compulsory for men (Indian labourers) to attend the estate hospital when ill, women and children often did not, either due to ignorance or cultural norms or poor hospital conditions (including food not being to their liking). Children were often not vaccinated. Women would not deliver in hospitals and gave birth in their huts with the assistance of traditional midwives (*dais*). They attended hospitals only in case of complications. This resulted in high child and maternal mortality on the estates. But things gradually improved, when medical care and living conditions in estate hospitals improved.

In the 1920s, about a third of total deaths was among under five year olds, indicating that malnutrition among under 5's was an important contributing factor, apart from infectious diseases.

The table shows an increase of 36.5 per cent deaths over a three year period (1858-1860) on board ships from the port in Calcutta. Over the same period infant deaths increased by 57.2%, 77.5% and 72.5% respectively from the ports of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. There was necessity for greater vigilance in the examination of infants presented for embarkation.

Figure 23: Death Rates on board ships between 1858-1860

Port	Year		
	1858	1859	1860
Calcutta	2.62	2.56	4.14
Madras	.49	.60	.76
Bombay	.57	.99	.76
Calcutta (Infants)	12.40	9.79	28.99
Madras (Infants)	1.30	2.87	5.78
Bombay (Infants)	1.96	2.88	7.14

The Report found 'the Hospital Ordinance (No 29 of 1865) to be incomplete, unless supplemented by the regulations' that ought to be so' by the General Board of Health, but was not framed as should have been. According to the Ordinance No 29, there should be:

- A hospital with accommodation at least 4 beds and with certain space in proportion to each bed.
- A medical attendant visiting the hospital once or twice a week according to the size of the estate.
- Store such medicines as may be considered necessary by the Stipendiary Magistrate.
- A hospital attendant qualified to attend the sick and to keep a Hospital Register.

Enquiries had also shown that there was hardly a Hospital in the Island (except one at Midlands), that could be considered complete. The buildings were considered excellent in structure but were such in 'character as for it to be a gross misnomer to call them hospitals at all'.

As regards the hospital attendants, in vast majority of cases they had no qualifications that made them fit for their duty of attending the sick. The Report found the Registers as simply valueless for the purposes of statistics or as evidence of stay in hospitals.

In the 1870s, the sanitary conditions of the Island had reached a deplorable state. Application of Health Ordinances was often not observed much to the detriment of the sick needing medical care. A tug-of-war type of mentality existed between the Council of Government, the planters and the Indian immigrants on the provision of hospital care (Boodhoo).

In 1909, the Royal Commission investigations had observed that in a Military Report dated 1905, there was much scope for improvement in the sanitary condition of the Island. Malaria, dysentery, enteric fever, tubercle, and syphilis were prevailing extensively. During the 15 months that the Commission was working, the diseases were on the increase. Most of the food consumed in the Island was imported. With custom duty applied on all foodstuffs, prices were high to the detriment of the working classes. Scarcity and dearness of the food were, according to the Commission members, some of the causes of high sick and death rates.

In 1908, Dr. Ronald Ross submitted his comprehensive report on measures for the prevention and control of Malaria. In the summary of facts regarding the amount of Malaria, the report mentioned the abnormally high death rates in the population and the costs to government, loss of labour, labourers' loss of wages and losses to the general community.

Of particular interest was the observation of a high number of children found with enlargement of the spleen, 62,000 out of 182,000. How sustained Malaria-related morbidity affected the young population's health and the plausible generational effects on chronic metabolic diseases need further investigation.

### **Diseases and Epidemics**

There was little or no understanding of the disease among the people and the health workers. Ignorance resulted into panic and disarray in the population. The 1854 epidemic raged over the Island with an extreme violence, killing more than 12, 000 people in a population of 181, 000. The population was at a loss to comprehend what was happening. There was despair and desolation everywhere. Two eminent personalities participated actively in bringing support and assistance to the victims of cholera. They were Dr. Edouard Brown Sequard, famous physician who later became a member of "College de France", and Father Jacques Désiré Laval, Catholic missionary who devoted his life, to the welfare of the poor and the destitute.

It was observed that the epidemic was occurring during the hot season, which coincided with the intensification of cholera in India. The infested ships were put on quarantine at the mouth of Grand River North-West. But quite often there were infringement of quarantine laws, as local people used

to communicate with those on board the ship, thus contributing to the spread of the germs inland. As from 1862 the quarantine laws were tightened and observed rigorously. It is significant that some pertinent observations were made in medical reports on the cholera epidemics. It was observed that the invasion by cholera was mild in the well-watered district of Moka, which had streams with swift course to the sea. It is also reported that the fatal power of the epidemic did not affect persons who lived on Montagne Chamarel situated 1000 feet above sea level and rather isolated from the populous areas. Another observation concerns the Chinese population of the island, who suffered the least from cholera epidemics because they never drank any liquid except tea, infused in hot water. The medical profession modestly admitted that, being uncertain of the actual cause of the disease, they could only combat the symptoms. Their remedies consisted of Purgatives 'to drive out the vitiated contents of the bowels' which contained the cholera poison; emetics and fluids were administered to assist Nature in getting rid of the poison; opium was given to soothe the abdominal cramps and check excessive evacuation.

Significant outbreaks of Malaria occurred in 1856 - 1859, 1862 and 1865. But the first serious epidemic struck the Island in 1867. It was a major calamity causing 40, 000 deaths in a population of 333, 000. Ronald Ross qualified the epidemic as the greatest disaster in Mauritian history. Thereafter, Malaria remained endemic in Mauritius until 1950's. The result was a serious source of wastage in terms of manpower and money, through deaths and reduction of population; loss of manual labour in plantations, factories, farms etc; sickness among labourers and officers, incapacitation and deaths among higher officials and soldiers.

## 8. END OF INDENTURE

Official immigrant registers listing arrivals show 1910 to be the last year when indentured immigrants arrived. However, Protector's Reports indicate that there arrivals as late as 1924 and 1925. Indentured labour Immigration in Mauritius dwindled rather than ended abruptly, and it is still not clear whether to consider as 1910 or 1925 as the end of immigration. 1910 was the official end but immigration actually ended in 1925. For memorial purposes, both years need to be mentioned.

There were multiple causes why it dwindled to an end in Mauritius while immigration increased in other colonies. First, in 1909, the Council of Government of Mauritius requested for a Royal Commission of Inquiry in order to secure a loan for the revival of the local economy. The Royal Commissioners discovered that there were still widespread abuses in the sugar industry such as the "double cut" system, the non-payment of wages of the indentured workers and mistreatment.

The Swettenham Commission had felt that the importation of indentured immigrants to Mauritius from India should be permanently abolished. Consequently, in 1910, a Special Committee was appointed to investigate the social and economic conditions of indentured workers This Committee recommended that the indentured labour immigration cease.

While focus has been on those who stayed in Mauritius, many decided not to. These figures need to be compiled. What prompted those who stayed to do so and those who left to do so will be for future historians to research. Available figures so far show that between 1906 and 1910, more than twice as many of those who arrived, left, either to go back to India or on to other colonies such as Natal, Guyana and Fiji. The movements of these last migrants show they were seasoned travellers, many of whom had been to other British colonies and were not 'new' migrants from India. This was the case for the period between 1923 and 1924 for some of the 1,395 labourers or so, most of whom decided to return to India.

Maharaj Singh's arrival in 1925 was unique in that he was the first ethnic Indian to come to study Indian situation in Mauritius. The question was again, whether further immigration was necessary. He recommended it should not and that was the end of the immigration. 1925 would seem to be therefore a seminal date.

### **The last indentured: Rodriguan migration to Réunion Island**

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Despite the ending of indentured system in Mauritius, few people are aware that it continued elsewhere and in the most unlikely of places: in Rodrigues, where sugar was not grown. Sugar production thus continued to produce 'victims'.

In the 1930s, Rodriguans were recruited and sent to Réunion Island to work in sugar cane plantations. Why anyone would go all the way to recruit Rodriguans who had never work on sugar plantations is not quite understood. The role of the de Villiers family has been mentioned as people who knew of the work capacity of Rodriguans. However this was not new: many Rodriguans were also recruited to work in Mauritian plantations in the 1940s and 1950s.

Of the 'bann driguais' as they were called in Réunion island who lived out their indenture to the end find themselves today in an anomalous situation in not being able to obtain French citizenship. A report on their situation was prepared by Mr Emmanuel Suffrin '*Histoires des Engages et Ouvriers sur les Quartiers Cafrines et Grand Bois*'. However it appears he spent only two days in the Archives and so the historical documentation is sparse. He has however conducted many interviews with the remaining survivors. A summary of their situation is given here to highlight their situation and make recommendations.

The first Rodriguan indentured labourers arrived in Réunion island on 10 August 1933. They had been brought there through the intervention of Mr. de la Giroday who had recruited them after mass outside the Church in Port Mathurin.

On arrival in Réunion, they were placed in the Quarantine Station at La Possession. They were then sent to different estates where they started working in sugar plantations. Later, other works were given to them. Their engagement was to last 3 years and in 1933, 800 workers were recruited as indentured. Other nationalities were among this group. Their working week lasted from Monday to Sunday morning when there was compulsory Mass. There were no fixed hours of work.

Some were housed together with the cattle and horses and food rations were sparse: 3 lbs peas, 5 pints rice, and 3 pints beans per week. Others were housed in structures dating from the period of Indian indentured labour immigration which had survived. According to Mr. Suffrin, these structures may possibly even date to the period of slavery although this has not been confirmed yet. Rodriguans were, however, the last occupiers of the 'Cabanons' as these structures are known today.

Many of them broke their contract and returned to Rodrigues as they were not happy there. Some, however, stayed. In the 1980s, sugar mills started closing down in Réunion, and it seems with very little preparation or social plan for the employees.

The Rodriguans who had stayed have not up to today been able to acquire French nationality, nor do they have the right to vote and their legal status is unsure. It is unclear however how many people are in this situation.

## Conclusion

Is the Mauritian Sugar Industry culpable for its past actions, and how has it treated its workforce since the end of slavery and indenture?<sup>306</sup> Comparisons of the Eastern Enquiry Commission of 1826 and of the 1875 Royal Commission and the situation in a post-slavery and post-indenture Mauritius need to be compared. The situation of descendants of slaves most of whom were forced to leave or left of their own accord, due to unacceptable working conditions is in contrast to descendants of the indentured labourers who stayed in Mauritius and continued to rely heavily on the Sugar Industry for a livelihood. We know little about the experiences of both these groups for the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For descendants of indenture, for the Commission, their living conditions needed to be known as reports have been produced on their working conditions (Vol 3, Part 1). The oral testimonies of elderly sugar estate workers collected by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund were extremely useful, and the Commission is indebted to this institution for having provided them to the Commission.

One is tempted to ask why another Commission was necessary when so many other Commissions have been set up in Mauritius, precisely with the aim of investigating conditions of sugar estate workers. It has become clear that many of the recommendations were never implemented whether by the sugar estates or by the Governments who had commissioned the reports.

Regrettably, the problems remained and continued up to the present day.

The first Commission was in 1875, when a Royal Commission was convened by the Colonial Government after receiving several thousand petitions from Indian immigrants collected by Adolphe de Plevitz. The terms of the contract which they had signed were not being followed by their employers: basic wage, free housing, medical assistance and rations. Instead, withholding of wages in order to try and re-indenture them, less than adequate medical attention, and reduction of rations in addition to being forced to carry a ticket in order to allow them to travel beyond the radius of the sugar estate where they were housed and worked. Although the 1875 Royal Commission confirmed the existence of abuses and made a number of recommendations to rectify this situation, many sugar estates did not meet their legal responsibilities, even after the end of the indentured labour period.

Two subsequent Commissions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were held: the Hooper and Moody Commissions. How far the official enquiries by the British Colonial Authorities were impartial or conducted as thoroughly as they might have been has been questioned (Vol 3, Part I). Discrepancies exist. Similar discrepancies have been noted in the reports of Labour Departments since 1938. The 1938 Hooper

Commission declared, for example, that housing conditions in sugar estate camps were satisfactory and that planters were doing all they could to comply with the necessary Labour Ordinances and the Department's regulations. The 1943 Moody Commission Report, written only a few years later, affirmed that sugar estate housing conditions in the North of the island left much to be desired, and that hospitals and medical dispensaries on sugar estates were often poorly equipped.

Did employers in the Mauritian Sugar Industry meet their legal responsibilities during indenture and since the end of indenture? It can be categorically stated that the Mauritian Sugar Industry does appear to be culpable for the reckless, and at times callous, manner in which it has treated its workforce. It can be accused of flouting its legal responsibilities under existing labour laws. However, this does not apply to all sugar estates in Mauritius. Some sugar estates went beyond what was required by the Law to provide decent conditions of living to its work force.

#### *Small planters*

The contribution of the small planters to the Sugar Industry is a phenomenon since they did not lag behind but, instead, struggled till today; they recovered from a succession of hardships, such as natural calamities, pests and diseases, the reduction of sugar prices, the centralisation of sugar factories, the lack of a labour force, the low payment for canes, and many other problems. It is understood that various difficulties, faced by these small cane growers, have a direct impact on the economy of the country.

In 2006, the Mauritian Government proposed the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy for the Action Plan 2006-2015 indicated that small planters, i.e. those cultivating less than 10 hectares, cultivated some 26% of land under cane in 2006. This percentage would come down as a result of land conversion and cane abandonment, but this category of producers would still cultivate some 20 % of the total area under cane. This statement proves to be partially the truth nowadays, with the frequent land abandonment issues by small planters, due to high costs of production, a rise in unemployment and agricultural lands being converted into residential properties, used for construction purposes, and with the great pace of urbanisation. The sustainability of the small planters (cultivating 10 hectares or less) and the reliability of the supply of their canes, hold the key to the future viability of the sugar cane cluster.

#### *Métayers - A Forgotten Community*

*Métayage*, also known as sharecropping, emerged in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Mauritius after the abolition of slavery and again after indenture. *Métayers* were ex-slaves and ex-indentured labourers who were provided with a plot of land on the sugar estate where they resided, with the clear agreement that they grew sugar cane for delivery to the estate factory. They did not pay any type of rent money for the estate land where they grew the sugar cane, "but they received less than the ruling market rate for the cane supplied, which was equivalent to payment of a concealed ground rent in kind."<sup>307</sup> Estate owners did not give land to anybody; it was usually as elect group whom they knew very well and had worked for them for several years.<sup>308</sup> By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of the *métayers* were monthly workers who had worked for many years on the same sugar estate and had resided for years in the estate camp and in the nearby villages.<sup>309</sup> From the 1920s onwards, however, the importance of the *métayers* declined. Today, they form a very small class of small sugarcane growers with their numbers diminishing each year.<sup>310</sup>

At that time, most land was marginal land but today, with irrigation and expansion of Tourism, this marginal land has become highly profitable. Hence, the desire of the sugar estates to reclaim this land and sell it to a foreign clientele or undertake tourist-related activities. Despite the enactments of various laws, judgements and even a Privy Council ruling, authorities have been lukewarm in their attempts to protect historic rights of the *métayers* when sugar estates wanted to reclaim the land leased.

#### *From Indenture to VRS*

As far as living conditions are concerned, the irony, as pointed out by Couacaud, is that those sugar estates who neglected to abide by their legal responsibilities and to improve sanitary conditions in

estate camps, not only endangered the health of their workforce, but also handicapped their own economic prosperity. However, as noted by the same author, one of the most outstanding achievements of Mauritians is “their ability to persevere and lift themselves up by their own bootstraps.”

As a result of further pushes to mechanize the Industry and retrench full-time workers, the Sugar Industry has been fully helped in this by Authorities who proposed, and pushed workers to accept, Voluntary Retirement Schemes (VRS). The result today is that many have been re-employed with job-contractors under less favourable terms than when they were permanent employees. Not only are they forced to sacrifice many of the benefits that they used to enjoy as full-time workers, but they are also being paid less than they were before and their bargaining power has been completely diminished. Thus, one is tempted to question just how beneficial VRS redundancy packages actually are for the average sugar estate worker in Mauritius. One is also tempted to compare the situation of labourers today with their indentured forbears.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**LEGACIES, CONTINUITIES AND  
CONSEQUENCES OF  
SLAVERY AND INDENTURE**



## Introduction

Among one of the conclusions of our review of the history of slavery and indenture is the fact that slavery and indenture, as they evolved in Mauritius, were in many ways continuations of an economic system based on the exploitation of unpaid or cheap, plentiful and docile or coercible labour. The Mauritian experience of slavery and indenture contrasts singularly with the Atlantic world in several respects.

There was continuity in the flow of such labour for several reasons: Mauritius was geographically close to sources of cheap labour: Madagascar and India, both countries had traditionally supplied labour. Thus, despite the abolition of slavery, Africa and Madagascar was again tapped for sources of contractual labour and the experience of this new contractual labour, the Liberated Africans, in many ways did not differ from their fellow Africans and Malagasies who had come as slaves almost a century before.

Secondly, the continuity arose from the fact that capital to finance economic activities was generated locally. This was not the case in the Caribbean, with a large presence of absentee labour, while the USA was similar to Mauritius. Of course, generous grants from Colonial Governments were forthcoming as well as relaxations in the duties and taxes relating to commodities and goods being exported and imported into the country. The original owners of the large tracts of land grants of the 18<sup>th</sup> century merged and intermarried with new arrivals from France during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and a gradual consolidation of ownership of land occurred during various phases of the economic development of the island. The trading and merchant community of the 18<sup>th</sup> century merged with rural owners of land over the course of the latter quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and reinvented itself into a powerful force during the period of sugar expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, owning land, influencing, if not controlling, political decisions and being the driving force to economic and social activities occurring on the island for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When viewed with hindsight and from a distance, it is indeed remarkable how such a tiny community, this ‘most refractory little community’, as one British official described it, was able to control the destiny of so many people and even intimidate and dictate to the British Government represented by the Governor and a few British administrators.

Thirdly, there has been continuity in the laws, treaties and conventions adopted by the country which have served these economic interests so well. From the *Code Noir* in 1723, established to categorise one group of human beings as ‘goods’, in order for the owner of these goods to be able to obtain insurance money and compensation in case of loss of his ‘goods’, to the Capitulation Treaty of 1810 which guaranteed the protection of these ‘goods, passing through the *Civil Code* of Decaen which once more not only reaffirmed that ownership of property would remain in the hands of this group, but, this time, clearly introducing a racial component in the Law concerning ownership of property. These amendments to the French Civil Code are described a ‘unique’ in French Law and reserved only for French colonies, in order to maintain the control of French inhabitants over property in the colonies. And what of the Compensation money, over £2.1 million to compensate owners for ‘loss of property’ but not the slaves for having sacrificed life, labour and freedom for Mauritius? Abolition of slavery, ironically, financially benefitted the owners of slaves rather than the slaves.

It is therefore ownership and control of property, above all matters, that dominated the laws, the economy, and ideology of the island for most of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Human beings, used as labour, continued to be seen as ‘property’ over which only the former owners should have control. Discouraging any independent economic activity became part of the tradition which many civil servants were only too happy to assist in.

Similarly, property ownership had to be controlled: small independent proprietors were a bane depriving the island of potential hands. How many times has the Commission heard these words: ‘Kreol pa kapav ena later!’ (‘Creoles can’t own land’!) being repeated by members of the public when they went to search for documents in public institutions. Few of those working in these offices are aware that, at a certain point of time, many thousands of ex-slaves did own land. It has been difficult for Commissioners to acknowledge that most who owned land have lost their land

‘legally’, but it is even more difficult to acknowledge that there is very little possibility of redress or getting any more land in the current economic and political structure of Mauritius.

This ideology of control and ownership of property by a tiny elite persists to this day and continues to pervade all our institutions, private and public though in not as visible form as it was in the past. How far is the economic vision established by Government, the vision of the people of Mauritius, most of whom are descendants of slaves and indentured labourers or how far is it the vision of the powerful economic interests of a few? It is perhaps true that ethnicity is no longer the issue as our ‘rainbow nation’, as most ethnic and religious groups are fully represented in this elite, although some may be more visible than others due to their phenotype.

Despite attempts to ‘democratise’ society and economy, institutions in Mauritius remain geared to protecting the wealthy and powerful, and that with full connivance and collusion of the ‘respectable’ professions. They will no doubt recognise themselves, should they take the trouble to read this.

While the above may be seen as an analysis of society from a political economy perspective, this is not to say that the human, individual agency or perspective is being ignored. Indeed it has been a source of wonder to the Commission to observe how throughout centuries, many ordinary men and women have been able to make full use of the few opportunities offered to them to break free from a system that attempted to control their economic, social and cultural being and limit their economic and social mobility. Human agency is real, but whether it changed the fundamental economic and political structures that dominated Mauritius is to be doubted. How far will attempts in recent times to ‘democratise’ Mauritius succeed remains to be seen.

The Commission thus recommends measures that encourages the holders of economic and political power to morally and materially repair the harms and injustices of the past in order that will benefit not only the presumed descendants of slavery and indenture but the Mauritian nation as a whole so that Mauritius can be finally at peace with its history.

## 1. THE ECONOMY

### 1.1 The Sugar Industry

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The history of Mauritius has been characterized and fundamentally determined by the evolution of the Sugar Industry during the era of British Colonialism and later of British Imperialism. Two key events were the turning points in the evolution from economic and financial perspectives: (a) as Crown Colony, Mauritius was given access to the British sugar market as from 1815; (b) in 1825, the tariffs imposed by Britain on sugar imports from Mauritius and from the Caribbean were equalised.

The understanding of the consequences for contemporary Mauritius of these key events would be largely insufficient unless a holistic view of history is adopted. The Commission finds that there is a continuous evolution of economic exploitation, social and cultural oppression. This has led to contradictions between British Imperialism, the plantocracy of both French and British origin on the one hand and, on the other hand, labour (the enslaved, the indentured and their descendants). The wealth created throughout Mauritian history is the result of the impressive contribution of labour on the one hand and the capital and know-how of colonists and British Imperialism on the other hand. However most of this wealth has been appropriated by colonists and the British Imperial and Colonial States, whilst large proportion of the laboring classes faced unemployment and poverty during the Colonial era ending in 1968. The intermediate social and economic classes such as traders, merchants, middlemen and medium planters were able to retrieve some of the wealth. There have been thus two complementary historical processes: development and substantial material advancement for the few and underdevelopment for the many constituting the labouring classes.

#### The Sugar Industry in 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The sugar industry has been facing an unprecedented crisis following the 36 percent decrease in the price of sugar during the period 2006 to 2009 by the European Union.

In June 2005, the European Commission published legislative proposals to reform the Common Market Organisation for sugar, which called for severe reduction in EU sugar prices and an end to the current system of national quotas.

The reforms impacted severely on the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) sugar supplying States, including Mauritius, and inevitably led to the destruction of century-old traditions of sugar production with devastating socio-economic consequences. Mauritius, being the biggest quota holder under the Sugar Protocol, was the most affected country. The bulk of the exports for Mauritius were 507,000 tonnes under the Sugar Protocol and 20,000 tonnes under Special Preferential Sugar Agreement. Under the new EU sugar regime, which lasts from 1 July 2006 to 30 September 2015, Mauritius will lose up to €895 million and suffers a permanent loss of €95 million annually. The reduction in prices in the EU implies a shortfall in export earnings of €782 million over the period 2006-2015. However, the effective loss to the economy is much higher when the social and environmental multiplier effects of the Sugar Industry are accounted for.

#### The Multi Annual Adaptive Strategy (MAAS)

In April 2006, the Government, after consultation with the Sugar industry and with the approval of the European Commission, published the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy (MAAS) and the Action Plan 2006-2015. The objective of the MAAS was to ensure the commercial viability and sustainability of the sugar sector for it to continue fulfilling its multi-functional role in the Mauritian economy. This objective could only be met through five major broad initiatives; the transformation of the Sugar Industry into a sugarcane cluster, production of electricity from bagasse/coal and ethanol from molasses, fulfillment of the trade commitments of the country, reduction of the dependency on the import of fossil fuels generally and in oil on particular, and the continuation of the multifunctional role of sugar with the support to national environment and social objectives.

As per the MAAS, measures had to be designed and funds found to ensure adaptation. In this context, the EU allocated €40 million for 2006 as an interim measure for ACP States and then €1244 million as Accompanying Measures for the period 2007-2013; the allocation for Mauritius for the period 2007-2010 is €128 million.

However, the market environment has changed significantly from the time the MAAS was envisioned. Whilst the MAAS anticipated the major price decrease, it did not envision the phasing out of the “quantity and duration guarantees”. Accordingly, in 2010, there was a Mid-Term Review of the MAAS. This review highlighted the fact that the 520,000 tonnes of sugar envisioned as an average production was unattainable, and that 450,000 tonnes to be more realistic over the next five years for various reasons.

Key features of the MAAS included centralization, decrease of the labour force and creation of a so-called “flexible” workforce and the mechanisation of field operations. Whilst these measures were meant to ensure the economic and financial viability of the sugar industry, the social costs, especially for the labouring classes descended from slavery and indenture have been enormous.

### **From slavery and indenture to VRS (Voluntary Retirement Scheme)**

The implementation of the measures prescribed by MAAS has led to a large reduction of the labour force of the Sugar Industry. A compensatory package for the loss of employment was agreed between the Government and the Sugar Industry. This led to the establishment of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), as part of MAAS.

The package offered was applicable to all employees “wishing” for an early retirement and included cash compensation as well as a plot of land of 300 m<sup>2</sup>. This policy had started since 2001 with the participation of some 8000 employees and is referred to as VRS I. In 2007, the VRS Scheme was amended and implemented; about 7,000 employees have ultimately joined the scheme, referred to as VRS II. The salient feature of the amendment of VRS for agricultural workers is the lowering the age of retirement from 50 years to 45 for female workers and from 55 years to 50 for male workers. The cash compensation is two months/year of service for both VRS I and VRS II. Employees who accept the VRS are entitled to the early receipt of the contributory retirement pension but at an actuarially calculated reduced rate. Thus, a person aged 50 would receive 60 percent of his/her retirement pension.

One of the immediate consequences of the labour retrenchment policy is that most of the retired labourers have gone back to work for the sugar estates as casual labourers, doing the same job they did as permanent employees. They do not have the fringe benefits that they used to as permanent workers, and have a lower rate of pay. Descendants of indentured labourers fought in the 1930s and 1940s for permanent employment and benefits in the sugar industry. Today the children of these descendants find themselves in a similar situation as their forbears in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Section 20 of the Employment Rights Act clearly stipulates that there must be equal remuneration for work of equal value and thus this Section 20 was not being respected in the case of those new casual labourers having opted for VRS. It appears an agreement has been reached to respect the Employment Rights Act.

A second aspect of VRS, is that younger labourers and some aged even below 50 years (40 or 45 years) are finding it difficult to cope with the cost of living, especially when they have to cater for their children.

From a sample survey conducted early in 2011 among 283 labourers who participated in the VRS II scheme, 70.3% of the labourers are working, with 78.3% among the women and 68.2% among the men. It is to be noted that the number of men and women labourers in the sample is respectively 183 and 60 given a ratio of 3:1 as per the population of labourers having opted for VRS II. Further, among those working and the 150 men and 45 women who responded to the required question, 74% of the men and 84.4% of the women are on contract with the sugar estates or with the job contractors of sugar estates, thus going back to a system that existed under indenture.

The prevailing income among the respondents is very low indeed. About 62% of them earn between Rs 1,000 to Rs 6000; and women labourers are worse off with 68% of them being in that income bracket.

A 're-skilling programme' had also been planned for the labourers. From the sample, 72% of men and 82% of women either had not benefitted from any training whatsoever or did not attend the training session. Among those who did attend, only 17% found it beneficial. It is obvious that the training provided did not satisfy the objective of re-skilling as defined in MAAS.

It was also noted that among the retired labourers, the women face a particularly difficult situation. The reduced pension, referred to earlier on, impacts more severely on them for three reasons. Firstly, their basic salary is lower than that of men on account of wage packages and remuneration orders prevailing in the Sugar Industry. Secondly, they retire at a younger age than the men, at 45 or 50 years and the actuarial factors used to compute retirement pension are lower. Thirdly, they may be widows or are the only bread earner in cases where the husband is unable to work.

To provide support to women affected by the VRS, an amount of Rs. 800 million was included in the Action Plan 2006-2015 for adaptation and empowerment. These funds were destined for the safety nets, possibly in a revamped Social Aid Programme. However, this specific project has not been implemented.

By May 2011, at the time of the survey, around 89% of the respondents had not obtained their plots of land to which they were entitled. Some were expecting to build a house on that land, but by 2011, much of their funds had already been spent.

There is a major shortcoming of MAAS, and a disturbing one. The issue of water rights has been overlooked. Sugar factories were given special water rights in the past for obvious reasons. But, with their closure, there was the need to re-examine the issue, given especially the prevailing problem of accessibility to water.

Finally, in the case of métayers, particularly those in the South of Mauritius, were unhappy that the option of possible buying of their land, as provided in MAAS, was not presented and explained to them fully by the authorities.

While the labourers may have obtained a deal which, most probably, would not be offered in other sectors of the economy, nevertheless, in the long run, with the massive labour redundancy, the labouring classes are on the losing side.

### **Long term benefits for the Sugar Industry**

As far as the Sugar Estates are concerned, it appears that VRS II is not financially attractive in the short term. But in the medium and long run, the labour costs will be reduced considerably and, at the same time, the estates will be able to mechanise field operations given the considerably reduced labour force. Over time, it is expected that the number of seasonal (i.e., casual) employees will be reduced. Moreover, the cost of the VRS forms part of the accompanying EU measures and is financed by both the EU and the sugar cane producers/private sector.

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## **1.2 The Cheap Labour Policy of the Post-Independence Period**

### **The Export Processing Zone (EPZ)**

In 1970, the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) was established in Mauritius and the Export Processing Zone Act was passed. The Act provided major incentives to manufacturers catering for foreign markets. Moreover, firms within the EPZs equally benefited from the availability of cheap labour which came from unemployed workers and women who were outside the labour force at that time.<sup>311</sup> In his paper, Ali Zafar elaborated as follows

“According to interviews with textile executives located in the EPZ, 80 per cent of workers in the EPZs in the 1980s were women. The rate has decreased somewhat in the 1990’s and 2000’s, but women continue to be more than 60 per cent of the workers in the zones. The lower wages that were paid to the workers in the EPZs in the early years allowed the firms to accumulate capital and reinvest the earnings into the firm’s expansion.”

History has repeated itself. About one hundred and thirty years ago, the plantocracy recruited indentured labourers from a vast reservoir of cheap labour found in British India. As a result, the plantocracy accumulated capital which was partly siphoned off to financiers/ investors abroad (Britain and France mainly) and partly reinvested in modernising the sugar factories. The new dimension, this time, lies in the fact that the reservoir of cheap labour came from within Mauritius: women and the unemployed. Unemployment and poverty were the direct consequences of policies of free trade by British Imperial Government and of cheap labour policy of the Colonial Government and the plantocracy.

For this process of capital accumulation to be successful, there was a need to control the labour force and, even to coerce it into accepting special working conditions applicable in the EPZ and not applicable in other sectors of the economy. Certain key features of the EPZ Act of 1970 are highlighted to illustrate the point.

Firstly, the notorious policy of ‘double-cut’ for absenteeism which was prevalent in the Sugar Industry during the period of indentured labour was re-introduced in the EPZ Act. It stipulated:

*“An employee who without his employer’s consent or without good and sufficient case absents himself from work on a day which immediately proceeds or follows a public holiday, shall forfeit one normal day’s pay in the next following week or if he is entitled to paid holidays the amount which would have been accrued to him in respect of the next ensuing paid holiday.”<sup>312</sup>*

Secondly, new legislation, not in line with existing legislation and practice, was included on the issue of severance allowance and termination of service. Section 14, paragraph 18 stipulated

*“When an employee reckons not less than three years continuous service with an employer and his services are terminated, he shall be entitled to receive compensation which shall be equivalent to not less than two weeks’ wages for each year of service he reckons with an employer.”<sup>313</sup>*

The Legislation prevalent in other sectors of the economy provided for the payment of severance allowance after twelve months of continuous service with an employer. With respect to termination of service, section 14 paragraph 9, stipulated that

*“The provisions of the termination of contracts of service ordinance 1963 shall not apply to any contract of employment between an employee and his employer.”*

Thirdly, the working week for workers of EPZ was of forty-five hours duration and overtime work for ten hours was, in practice, made compulsory. The Act provided for the following clauses:

- a) *“An Employee shall not be made to work overtime for more than ten hours per week.*
- b) *An employee may be required to work for more than the normal number of hours on any day other than a public holiday and no payment for overtime shall thereupon accrue to the employee if the number of hours of actual work in the week does not exceed forty-five.”*

Overtime work was made compulsory on the one hand, and worse still, was payable only after a working week of forty-five hours. In many sectors of the economy, overtime work was paid on a daily basis where necessary. Ali Zafar summed up succinctly the situation prevailing at that time in the EPZ:

*“Firms within the EPZ were subject to general labour laws (including minimum wages) but were free to fire workers, to demand compulsory overtime work, and to penalise workers heavily for absenteeism.”<sup>314</sup>*

There is no doubt that with the establishment of the EPZ in the 1970s and its expansion in the 1980s, unemployment was reduced considerably and the economy benefited substantially, with the

growth rate of the EPZ's value added being close to 30% annually between 1983 and 1988. Moreover, employment fluctuates over the years. But the major issue is that this was done in a manner similar to the growth of the Sugar Industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries whereby the workers' share in the wealth created was minimal and their working conditions were such that it was to a certain extent like coercible labour.

The Export Oriented Enterprises (as the EPZ is to be known as from 2006) employed, by March 2001, 93,218 workers of whom 30,783 and 62,435 were respectively males and females, giving a ratio of nearly 1:2 in favour of female workers. With the restructuring of the sector, there were many redundancies so that by June 2009, there were 58,066 workers of whom 24,451 and 33,615 were respectively males and females, giving a ratio of 1:14 or 5:7 in favour of female workers. Of the 35,000 workers made redundant, about 29,000 were women and about 6,000 were men. Thus women are the most vulnerable group in the labour force in that sector.

In the process of restructuring, wages went up compared to the 1980s; but nevertheless, in the textile sector, monthly wages in March 2002 went down from Rs. 7,039 to Rs. 6,236 in March 2008 in real terms (using 2001 as base year). The wages reached its March 2002 level in March 2009. As wages go up, the share of females in the labour force in this sector goes down. The obvious question is: "What happened to the 35,000 workers made redundant and, in particular, to the 29,000 women?"

### **Migrant Labour**

There are essentially three sets of problems faced by migrant labour. Firstly, the dormitories provided to the migrant workers are not up to standard and the established criteria are not respected. Secondly, in certain cases, working conditions are not respected. Thirdly, very often migrant workers have two contracts; one which they get in their country of origin which usually provides very favourable conditions (e.g., wages); then another contract, the real one, which they obtain in Mauritius.

Whilst it may be rather difficult for the State to intervene in the third problem mentioned above, it is indeed disturbing that Mauritius, having had the experience of both the labour of enslaved people and indentured labour, should allow such conditions to prevail. Migrant workers represent an asset to employers because of their understandable 'flexibility' to work many hours in a given week, as opposed to Mauritian workers.

It is the duty of the State not to allow conditions prevailing during indenture period to be reproduced, if only on a limited scale, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## **1.3 The New Labour System and Labour Struggles**

### **1.3.1 Labour Struggles**

In Chapter 1 it was stated that the driving force for some improvement in the living conditions and wages of the labouring classes was the struggle of the same labouring classes. From the 1840s to 1860s, there were various legislations which created harsh working and general living conditions for the sugar industry labourers. It was only through their struggles in particular, through their petition of 1871 with the help of Adolphe de Plevitz, that there are some improvements in their working conditions, following the setting up of a Royal Commission. Similarly, in the 1930s, the labourers' wages in the sugar industry were drastically reduced and they faced unemployment and poverty. Their protests and strikes in 1937, of dockers and other workers in 1938, and of the sugar industry labourers in 1943 led to two Commissions of Enquiry being set up to look into the various problems and issues and to make recommendations.

The Colonial State was also however very repressive: trade union leaders were deported or placed under police surveillance and strikers were imprisoned. Nevertheless, a system of industrial relations was developed. It helped to control the situation on the one hand and to bring certain

reforms on the other hand. Moreover, the Colonial State used 'divide and rule' tactics, especially during the dockers' strike of 1938.

In the years following independence, Mauritius inherited social and economic structures which were favourable to the plantocracy and to the emerging elite at the expense of the labouring classes. Still trapped by a monocrop economy, Mauritius faced a somewhat high level of unemployment and of poverty. Under these conditions, the working classes reacted as in the 1930s and the 1940s in their quest for decent wages and decent working conditions; there was equally a political party, the Mouvement Militant Mauricien which contributed significantly in that quest of the labouring classes.

As from 1970 and 1971, there were strikes on a small scale in different economic sectors like the tea industry, the sack factory, the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and the power sector (Central Electricity Board). In late 1971, there were strikes in Public transport (by bus) employees; in November 1971, there was a strike by the dockers. By December 1971, as strike started by the dockers this led to a general strike involving many key sectors of the economy: Public Transport, the CEB, the Sugar Industry, amongst others. The State declared a state of emergency and the Riot Unit of the Police Force intervened to break up public gatherings. The general strike was called off with many Trade Union leaders of the new trade union federation, General Workers Federation, being put in prison.

The aftermath of these strikes of 1971 was harsh for the workers in particular and for the population at large in so far that certain basic democratic rights were being threatened and even denied. Two acts, the Public Order Act (POA) and the Industrial Relations Act (IRA), were indicative of the new repressive legislation. C. Bhagiruty of the Plantation Workers Union wrote:

*'Cette vague de repression allait laisser des séquelles des années après, quand le gouvernement vota deux lois iniques, le Public Order Act (POA) qui interdit les rassemblements publics sans autorisation préalable de la police et l'Industrial Relations Act (IRA) véritable écharde dans les pieds du mouvement syndical, puisqu'il rend toute grève pratiquement illégale par de longues et fastidieuses procédures bureaucratiques.'*

The above brief description of the POA and the IRA sums up the fundamental aspects of these two 'legislations'. In spite of these laws, further strikes occurred in 1973 and in the later half of 1970s.

Another sector where workers were dissatisfied with their wages and working conditions was the Export Processing Zone (EPZ).

### 1.3.2 Labour Legislation and Labour System

The Labour Legislation and Labour System prevailing in the 1970s was that set up during the colonial period. During the 1950s and the 1960s, there were some positive developments in the enactment of some labour legislation. In particular, there were firstly the Trade Dispute Ordinance (GN 36) of 1954 which provided for the unrestricted right to strike, except for employees in essential services. Then, secondly, the Trade Union Ordinance of 1965 provided for the right to declare a strike if there is a deadlock at the level of negotiations/conciliation.

The enactment of the Industrial Relations Act of 1974 unfortunately turned the clock backwards in terms of certain basic rights of workers, especially the right to strike, when compared to the legislations of 1954 and 1965. Two examples would suffice to illustrate the point. Section 92 rendered the right to strike ineffective, since the Trade Union concerned had to give a notice of 21 days to the Minister of Labour who, in turn, could refer the case to the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal. The latter could take sometimes two years to sort out the matter. Further, Section 102 provided for severe penal measures against those who called for, or who participated in, an 'illegal' strike: fines and terms of imprisonment up to one year.

In its report in 1983, the Select Committee on the Industrial Relations Act wrote:

- i. *"The unanimous opinion of the witnesses before your committee was that the Industrial Relations Act had hindered the development of harmonious industrial*

*relations in Mauritius and had been the root-cause of increased antagonism between employers and employees.”<sup>315</sup> Among the witnesses, there were the main trade union federations.*

- ii. *Through the compulsory intervention of third parties, the Industrial Relations Act has discouraged negotiation between social partners and brought about a breakdown of communication.”*
- iii. *“More generally, Your Committee are of the opinion that the Industrial Relations Act is based on fundamentally anti-democratic options, **constraining the basic right of workers to organise themselves as a socio-economic force not only for the achievement of better terms and conditions of employment, but also in the process of the economic development of the country as a whole. Your Committee consider the Industrial Relations Act to be a piece of repressive legislation which creates in the individual worker a feeling of fear - fear of being dismissed, victimised and imprisoned on the sole ground that he has striven for better conditions of life.”***

For an industrial relations system to be fair and reasonable, all disputes should, in the first place, be the subject of negotiation between the Trade Union and the employer; i.e. there must be collective bargaining. The Committee highlighted that “Your Committee feel that the introduction of effective bargaining procedures coupled with expedition and effective conciliatory machinery should result in peaceful settlement of disputes, thereby lessening recourse to strike actions as a method of dispute settlement.”<sup>316</sup>

The Committee considered the right to strike as a fundamental Human Right. Thus it wrote:

*“Your Committee strongly consider that, irrespective of the nature and functions of industrial relations machinery, the right to strike should, as a **fundamental human right**, remain the ultimate weapon of the worker in the furtherance of his rights.”*

The Select Committee made recommendations for a new approach to the industrial relations system and proposed a new legislation to be called ‘Trade Unions and Labour Relations Act’. However, there was no follow up to the Report of the Select Committee. It was only in 2008 that the Industrial Relations Act would no longer be on the Statutes Book, and it was replaced by the Employment Relations Act of 2008.

It is appropriate to note that, in 1975, the Labour Act was passed and dealt with essentially the rights of the labouring classes. In particular, the Termination of Contracts of Service Board (TCSB) was established within the framework of the Labour Act. That board had the power to enquire into any ‘economic’ redundancy and make recommendations. It provided for a safeguard for the workers against arbitrary redundancy; but the most common criticism against the TCSB is that it may take a long time before making a recommendation. The Labour Act was replaced by the Employment Rights Act in 2008 and the TCSB had been done away with altogether.

The Employment Relations Act has brought about some improvements in Industrial Relations Legislation. It no longer imposes compulsory arbitration, as used to be the case with the Industrial Relations Act, and it provides for collective bargaining. It reintroduced in some way the right to strike, and provided for instantaneous strike under certain conditions. Section 76 of Part 7, subsection (2) stipulates:<sup>317</sup>

*“Notwithstanding subsection (1), a worker shall have the right to strike where -*

- a) *The strike relates to a major health and safety issue that may jeopardise the life and security of any worker, unless the worker has been transferred forthwith to another workplace which is safe and without risks to health; or*
- b) *More than 50% of the workers of an enterprise have not been paid remuneration within the prescribed period,*

*and the Minister has been notified and remedial action has not been taken by the employer within a reasonable delay fixed by the Minister.”*

This right of instantaneous strike, as defined by Section 76, is obviously most appropriate, especially in the light of recent labour relations crisis in the sector of Business Process Outsourcing.

Overall, the Employment Relations Act provides for the right to negotiate and make provision for conciliation and mediation through the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation. The Employment Rights Act has introduced flexibility, as defined, for example, by normal working hours in Section 14. One feature of this ‘flexibility’ is particularly detrimental to the worker, when it deals with overtime Section 14, Subsection (2) reads as follows,<sup>318</sup>

*“A worker other than a part-time worker or a watchperson and an employer may agree that the worker works in excess of the stipulated hours without added remuneration, if the number of hours covered in a fortnight does not exceed 90 hours, or such lesser number of hours as may be specified in an agreement.”*

Further, there is the gloomy side to the mediation process; in practice, it happens that no conclusion is reached and there is no decision taken. In the field of work related to information and communication technology, and, in particular, in Business Process Outsourcing, there is an entirely new system of organisation of work, for which no legal framework has been defined yet. And, as revealed in the recent crisis in a company involved in BPO, the basic rights and dignity of the employees were not respected. Many employees did not receive their wages/ salaries for months. The relationship between the employers and employees is such that there have been reports in the press of major abuses by the employers. There are international norms and standards which are not respected. The employees have had to go on hunger strike to have their basic rights respected to a certain extent.

This state of affairs is very disturbing in the year 2011 when the workers’ rights are considered as Human Rights. One is tempted to compare this with the past. Call centres, the main activity of BPO, represent problems linked to Occupational Health and Safety. Some of these problems are:<sup>319</sup>

- i. Occupational stress like visual fatigue and vocal fatigue;
- ii. Working postures; musculo skeletal disorders;
- iii. Noise related problems like hearing/ acoustic shock.

Given the very specific demands on the employees, the work organisation has to take them on board. For example, the intensity of work in call centres requires that regular rest/breaks away from telephone are essential to protect the health of employees. The absence of a legal framework to regulate the working conditions of employees and the absence of fair Industrial Relations is a matter of concern. In this new sector in the age of information and communication technology, by not defining an appropriate legal framework for Industrial Relations and the organisation of work, is the State allowing the companies to yet again accumulate capital at the expense of the employees?

Similarly, in the period 1982/83, the *Code Napoléon* was amended so that when a factory is closed, priority should be given to the payment of wages and salaries to workers. But later, this decision was reversed. The recent case of workers going on a hunger strike to ensure the payment of a few months of wages in the BPO sector is a consequence of that decision-reversal.

Another major issue facing the labouring classes is the retirement gratuity, whenever there is a factory closure. With respect to export-oriented enterprises, factory closure tends to be a major issue for the labouring classes. A worker may find himself/herself having worked for five factories in his/her working-life. Each time, the factory closes down; the worker loses his/her retirement gratuity. The latter is paid only at the time of retirement. But then, at that time, the worker might have worked for a short time at the factory, say five years, and then obtains retirement gratuity only for these five years. The State needs to look into the matter.

#### **1.4 Sugar Cane Land Ownership**

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An idea of the structure of ownership of sugarcane land can be obtained from the figures published by the Sugar Industry Fund Board. The following data for the years 1990, 2000-01 and 2009 show that the number of planters has been decreasing consistently as from 1990 overall, as well as in all categories of acreage of land.

Figure 24 Distribution of land among planters (1990-2009)

Acreage of Land (Hectares)	Number of Planters		
	1990	2000-2001	2009
Up to 0.49	20,052	15,408	11,489
0.5 to 0.99	7,108	7,058	5,347
1.0 to 1.99	4,210	3,599	2,835
2.0 to 4.99	2,100	1,823	1,440
5 to 9.99	412	364	245
10 to 99.99	221	150	98
100 and above	27	45	38
Millers*	-	14	6
Total	34,130	28,461	21,498

\* The SIFB reports do not give the breakdowns for 'millers' for 1990; they are included in 'Above 236.9'. Moreover, for 200-01 and 2009, the extent of land owned by millers is not given.

Note: 1 hectare = 2.474 arpents

#### 4.1.5 Income Distribution

As data on income distribution for the population of Mauritius are not published, the Household Budget Survey carried out by the Central Statistics Office at regular five-year intervals is the best source of information on the issue. The last such survey was carried out in 2006/2007 when a national random sample of 6,720 households was used. The findings should provide a reliable estimate of income distribution for the whole population.

The extent of inequality in income distribution is measured usually by the so-called Gini Coefficient. When there is "perfect equality", the Coefficient would be 0; when it is equal to 1, this indicates the worst possible degree of inequality in income distribution. Thus, for the years 1996/1997, 2001/2002 and 2006/2007, it was 0.387, 0.371 and 0.388 respectively. There was less inequality in 2001/2002 compared to the other two years. By 2006/2007, it was almost 0.4.

The income share of different income groups gives a somewhat more useful picture of the inequalities in income distribution. Thus, for 1996/1997, 2001/2002 and 2006/2007, the shares of the lowest 20% of households and the highest 20% are as follows:-

Figure 25 Income distribution 1996-2007

Percentage of Income giving to:	1996/1997	2001/2002	2006/2007
Lowest 20% of households	5.9	6.4	6.1
Highest 20% of households	46.2	44.6	45.7

Thus the disparity in the income share is evident. In 2006/2007, the lowest earning 20% of households have a share of 6.1% of total income whilst the highest earning 20% of households have a share of 45.7%, which is 7.5 times that of the lowest earning 20% of households. In 1996/1997, that ratio was 7.8, which means there was then greater inequality.

It is also important to note that between 2001/2002 and 2006/2007, there was no "significant change, after adjusting for inflation" in average monthly household income and median monthly household income. For the former, it was respectively Rs 10,709 and Rs 10,703; for the median monthly household income, it was respectively Rs 8,390 and Rs 8,211.

Whenever the inequalities in income distribution become more severe, then this state of affairs may lead to poverty, especially if the less well paid have low income levels, as is the case for Mauritius. In Mauritius, there is no official poverty line; moreover a relative poverty line defined as half the median salary is commonly used. From the Household Budget Survey of 2006/2007, it is

found that the proportion of poor households is 8%, with 26,900 such households. The estimated number of poor persons is 106,100 giving a proportion of 8.7%.

## 1.6 The Cooperative Movement

### 1.6.1 The first phase - Pre-independence period

The development of the cooperative movement is of major importance in so far that it represented a genuine attempt to empower the labouring classes. In spite of its failures, that experience is of relevance for the future; moreover, there have been successes as well.

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1909, the Colonial Government appointed Mr S. Wilberforce, from the Indian Civil Service, equipped with the experience in setting up of Cooperative Credit Societies in India, to “investigate the possibilities of establishing cooperative banks in Mauritius”<sup>320</sup>, for the small planters. From the outset, Wilberforce wondered about the interest of the wealthy from among the planters’ community in these cooperative banks. He found that “it is doubtful if any rich Indians - whose interests are mainly opposed to the movement - will assist the banks..... Moreover, few wealthy Indians will become members.”<sup>321</sup>

There was some concern that, with the social stratification among the Indian immigrant population, a conflict of interest of the wealthy against the poor small planters might jeopardise the emerging cooperative movement. Unfortunately, history would prove this concern to be a very valid one indeed.

In fact, the threats and obstacles facing the Cooperative Credit Societies, as the proposed cooperative banks were known, would soon prevail. As early as in 1914, some money lenders were proposing to lend money at reduced rates in localities with newly-established Cooperative Credit Societies, with the obvious objective of killing the societies as competitors.<sup>322</sup> By 1915, the threat of the wealthy shareholders materialised, as some of them took the maximum allowable number of shares. Then, they got at least double the amount invested by them as loans from the Cooperative Credit Society, thus depriving the poorer shareholders of the chance of taking loans.<sup>323</sup> The conflict between, on the one hand, the sense of solidarity and cooperation characteristic of Cooperative Societies and on the other hand, the values of selfishness of the capitalist world recurred again and again in the historical development of the cooperative movement.<sup>324</sup>

The cooperative movement grew progressively and reached 29 credit societies by the late 1920s, with a total membership of 2,350. However, by 1932, the amount of overdue loans increased substantially. This state of affairs was the result of bad management and malpractices prevailing in some of the credit societies, as well as inefficient legislation. The main defect at the level of management was “the granting of loans by committees to their friends and relatives with excessive liberality and for non-productive purposes and taking inadequate security.”<sup>325</sup>

Whilst, in the 1930s, new legislation and improvement in the inspection of the societies brought a consolidation of the cooperative movement, they were facing certain major problems. In his report of 1945, Mr W.K.H. Campbell, Cooperative Adviser to the Government of Mauritius, found that:

*“The Societies, so far in existence, are not only confined to credit and to one community but also to one particular occupation only, namely sugar cultivation, and to those who own or occupy land suitably for this purpose.”*

Another issue of importance was the exaggerated role of the state in the manning of the Co-operative Credit Societies. Mr W.K.H. Campbell proposed that the cooperative movement should move out of cane cultivation and engage in a wide range of economic activities. Subsequently, in 1945, the Co-operative Societies Ordinance No. 15 was enacted and came into operation on 01 October 1946, whereby registration was extended to all types of cooperative societies. Thereafter, a wide range of Co-operative Credit Societies was set up in the 1950s and 1960s prior to the Independence of Mauritius in 1968.

### 1.6.2 The Post-independence period

In the first years following independence, there was some progress in the number of Cooperative Societies and their membership. In fact, the number of societies increased from 342 in 1970-1971 to 420 in 1972-1973, representing an increase of 22.8%. Similarly, the membership of the co-operative societies increased by 24.2% from 39,551 to 49,137 in the same period.

Moreover, in June 1983, the Ministry of Information and Co-operatives produced a White Paper on Co-operative Development, which produced a good insight in the movement at that time and made bold proposals. One key proposal was that the cooperative movement should gradually reduce its dependence on Government support and eventually develop a self-reliant people's cooperative movement; it was emphasised that the movement should not be the domain of a privileged few. It found that the movement tended to restrict to single-purpose, small and unviable societies. Instead, it proposed that multi-purpose societies should be developed. Unfortunately, these proposals were not implemented. Yet, during decades, the writing was on the wall: bad management, dependence on government and the prevailing value and belief systems of the leadership were doing harm to the movement.

That state of affairs prevailed, in particular, at the Mauritius cooperative Central Bank Ltd (MCCB) and the MCCB collapsed in the 1990s. In December 1993, a Commission of Enquiry was set up to inquire into the operations and management of the MCCB. The report of the Commission confirmed the prevalence of malpractices, poor management and detrimental influence of certain key members of the Board of Management of the MCCB. By 1995, the Government decided to close the bank.

The collapse of the MCCB had a major impact on the cooperative movement; between 1985 and 2009, the member of planters forming part of the Cooperative Credit Societies has been decreasing from 24,832 or 71.7% of all planters to 9,919 or 46.1% of all planters. It should be noted that the number of sugarcane planters has been decreasing substantially from 34,634 in 1985 to 21,498 in 2009.

Moreover, there has been a revival of the Cooperative Movement. In particular, there are three successful cooperative societies which were included in "The passion of the people: Successful Cooperative Experiences in Africa" (2008). Lately, following a joint initiative involving Ministry of Business, Enterprises and Cooperatives, Ministry of Agro Industry, Mauritius Sugar Syndicate, the Mauritius Sugar Authority and OIM group (The Consultants for Fair Trade), small sugar planters are being encouraged to undergo a Fair Trade Certification process which takes into consideration sound internal management and sustainable development. This would hopefully contribute to the revival of the Cooperative Movement.

The value and belief systems of the old society have survived in the new society to such an extent among the new elite, and the new ruling class that such a potential tool for the empowerment of the labouring classes, as the cooperative movement, has been stifled and used instead to prevent the holistic development of these same labouring classes.

### 1.7 Concluding Remarks

The economic and social structure of Mauritian society has not fundamentally changed from the point of view of labouring classes: although there is a longer multi-ethnic bourgeoisie, and a larger multi-ethnic middle class, the economic and social structures are such that wealth and, more generally, the ownership of means of production (land, banks, trade/commerce, factories, etc.) has been restricted to a rather small minority involving both the old and new bourgeoisie.

The social stratification, which has evolved since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has produced a new middle class, a new elite and a new bourgeoisie. The latter forms part of the ruling class of Mauritius. It controls State Power and has been consolidating its economic power progressively.

## 2. THE 'UNFINISHED BUSINESS' OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Why did the ex-slaves not benefit from freedom as they should have, after having worked for free all their lives? Why was he not given a compensation from European governments for they were responsible for legalising and tolerating an unjust, repressive system of labour? The answer to this is also the answer to understanding why up to today, many descendants of ex-slaves and persons with an African phenotype in Mauritius continue to face unnecessary hardships and lead stressful lives. We need to focus attention on a few key developments occurring immediately after the abolition of slavery:

### **The role of the British Government and the nature of the freedom granted to slaves by the British Government**

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It was a freedom that came without any preparation, or plan to bring ex-slaves into civil society.

One could even question the sincerity of the British Government in freeing the slaves, when one considers the numerous laws introduced to restrict the freedom of movement of ex-slaves, as well as the efforts to restrict their wish for an autonomous lifestyle. It is possible that it is this planter-conceptualised 'freedom' that drove ex-slaves further and further away from the plantation and out of public view, because they could see that neither the local planter, nor the British Government had any genuine desire to give them real freedom.

Local Colonial Officials, including the Governor and sugar planters, had no wish either to have ex-slaves free to roam around in Mauritius on to market their labour, and laws were enacted to severely curb the mobility of ex-slaves and any children they may have later. A Census was advocated only to obtain data on the working population, with a view to transforming the whole island into a labour force for the sugar plantations. This was the view of Lord Glenelg who disallowed two orders in Council, Ordinance 16, for example, in which the planters sought to define a 'vagabond' as simply someone with 'with no employment'. Thus, anyone found not working could be arrested and imprisoned.

The conclusion of the British Government was that the measures being proposed for Mauritius

*"[...] if passed into a law [...] [would] subject the whole labouring population of the island and especially persons who might be introduced there from the eastward, to restraints and penalties of so extremely onerous a nature as nearly to revive, under a new name, the former servile condition of the great body of people."<sup>326</sup>*

It was no wonder that the ex-slaves sought to live as far away from plantations, since they could be arrested at any time and sent to work on a plantation.

When apprentices were freed prematurely, no preparation was made for their shelter, education and employment : they were forced to leave their homes and plots of land, and families were dispersed. No advice or training programme was established, other than those which tried to lure them back into working for their former owners. This was confirmed by the Special Magistrate for Plaines Wilhems and Moka Districts, Mr. Cunningham, who explained about the lawlessness and drunkenness of apprentices:

*"This permission to wander has been most pernicious (never looking to the future when they will be thrown on their own resources, and must depend on their individual industry for the support of themselves and families thereafter)."<sup>327</sup>*

Unlike the situation in the Caribbean, little provision was made for the education of apprentices or their children. James Backhouse the Quaker missionary, who toured the island in 1836, wrote extensively, on the lack of education of apprentices and the reluctance of owners to send them to school.

Moreover, the Committee, set up to supervise education on the island, the Committee on Public Instruction even proposed to the Government to impose a heavy penalty, with 6 months'

imprisonment upon anyone who taught more than the rudiments of education to 'lower orders'.<sup>328</sup> Fortunately, the British Government did not accept this proposal, and the Committee was requested to confine itself to managing the Royal College. No further Government action was taken, except by private persons to educate apprentices or their children.

This is, therefore, the 'unfinished business' of the British Government.

## Compensation

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Compensation was given by the British Government to owners, but not to slaves who had lost a lifetime of freedom, worked for free during their entire lives and endured enslavement over generations of their families.

Slave-owners, with substantial numbers of slaves, received hefty compensation, as agricultural labourers and skilled slaves were valued highly. As most of these owned slaves worked in the sugar estates, these fetched the highest compensation:

Overseers, *Commandeurs*, skilled slaves fetched £142 and £137 each while an agricultural labourer, £93 each (listed as *praedial slaves*). Slaves that were not attached to any particular plantation, fetched roughly the same amount. Domesticity, who were also crucial to the life of the estate, fetched £119 per head domesticity while junior domesticity fetched £63. Owners even received compensation for the old and sick slaves, as well as children, £29 was paid for a child, totaling some £88, 132, while the old and sick, numbering some 2,302, fetched £25,752. The total number of slaves for which compensation was paid amounted to 66, 517, including the dependencies. (MNA:BIB 1881)

Not brought into the equation are the thousands of slaves brought illegally, and for whom the slave owners also obtained compensation, instead of being prosecuted. Due to lack of evidence, the RCE was unable to pinpoint particular owners who harboured illegal slaves, although they had a fair idea who these people were. The question of compensation for slave-owners must be also examined. Not only have numerous Mauritians questioned the validity and morality of this action on the part of the British Government, but they have also questioned what was done with this compensation money. Finally, another question was why compensation was given to owners and not to slaves.

In Mauritius, regrettably, the legal profession has never questioned past French or British Laws, when it came to slavery or indenture, or any Law that went against the rights and interests of the common people. Indeed, one is at pains to find one lawyer who defends, in practice and principle, the extension of property rights. Indeed, there are few scholars in the legal profession and, despite an academic institution dispensing legal studies, re-examining the history of the country, through its Laws of slavery, has never aroused much interest.

In neighbouring Réunion island, this has attracted the attention of Law students and scholars alike, and it is worth examining their views on the compensation given to owners in French colonies.

### *Compensation in French colonies*

When compensation was given, it was not stated on what basis this was being given: the Parliament recognised the right of the owner to compensation, but it never stated on what basis this compensation was due. But in France, the issue of compensation was not new. In the 1780s, and during the philosophical debates surrounding slavery, Condorcet had stated:

*« Nous avons montré que le maître n'a aucun droit sur son esclave ; que l'action de le retenir en servitude n'est pas la jouissance d'une propriété, mais un crime ; qu'en affranchissant l'esclave, la loi n'attaque pas la propriété, mais cesse de tolérer une action qu'elle aurait dû punir par une peine capitale. Le souverain ne doit donc aucun dédommagement au maître des esclaves, de même qu'il n'en doit pas à un voleur qu'un jugement a privé de la possession d'une chose volée. La tolérance publique d'un crime absout de la peine, mais ne peut former un véritable droit sur le profit du crime ».*<sup>329</sup>

As a result, the Act abolishing slavery in the French colonies in 1794 (the Decree of 16 *pluviose*), *no compensation* was envisaged.

A philosophical/legal question was also posed. Was slavery a right or a status? According to Bleriot, depending on the answer, one would have a right to compensation. Before abolition, slavery was legal; after abolition, it was illegal. Opinions were mixed on the issue. The French colonists in Réunion stated that slavery was founded on a right, i.e., the right to property, and that legally, any privation of that right leads to compensation.<sup>330</sup> Thus, this is what led them to claim compensation. From the French Government's perspective, it was also felt that abolition would be accepted better by the colonists, and so compensation was a necessary corollary to emancipation.

The *colons* (the term used at the time) referred to the *Code Noir* (1723), where it was stipulated that the slave was a *bien meuble* (Art. 39). Thus, they saw abolition of slavery as an expropriation of their property, and not as a humanitarian gesture. The Commission appointed in Réunion to oversee the emancipation process, saw matters rather differently:

1. It did not believe that the notion of property applied to a human being's ownership of another human being.
2. It saw in slavery, not an 'institution de droit', but a social 'disorder': it acknowledged that it was the State that had committed this crime (of allowing the possession of one human being by another).
3. It felt that, as it was the State which had introduced slavery, compensation was payable to those who suffered, as much as to those who enjoyed the labour freely and who had profited. Thus, the State had to pay the country, for the future well-being of the owner and the slave.

Victor Schoelcher had also recognised the need for slaves to obtain compensation. He had gone even further: he had advocated giving a plot of land to every slave and the expropriation of all lands obtained by *colons* from the beginning of colonisation. All of these were rejected, however, by the Provisional Government.

Others in Réunion were of the opinion that no compensation should be paid to owners because slavery was an unjust system. Rather, the French Government should pay the country to re-launch the economy and pay for the education of slaves and improve morality: equal benefits should go to the slave population and the owners. Thus, according to a proposition by Ménard in the National Assembly, the 30 million *francs* should go, not to individual owners, but to a fund to stimulate economic activities, and the other half of 30 million *francs* to a fund for the slaves to improve the condition of the ex-slave population. A semblance of desire for 'reconciliation' seemed to be at heart of this proposition, to ensure future social cohesion. It concerned the future of three types of relationships: the slave/*colon* relationship, the State/slave relationship and the State/*colon* relationship.

The first Decree proposed by the French Government on 23 August 1848 was founded on the principle that there was a droit: (a right), but not strong right to ownership of one human being over another ("pas de droit rigoureux pour une possession de l'homme par l'homme"), but a recognised right to an indemnity. 90 million *francs* was estimated to be the cost of compensation, for the benefits of not only the *colons*, but that of the whole colony and new citizens.

The problem, according to Bleriot, was between the legality (*légalité*) and legitimacy (*légitimité*) of the Act. Before 1848, slavery was legal but unnatural (*illégitime*). Thus in 1845, under Louis Philippe, the status of the slave changed by the Law of 18 July, whereby the slave becomes a subject with limited legal personality: the slave is a non-emancipated minor. He is no longer an 'objet de droit'. Illegally introduced slaves would not be compensated for.

Thus, Réunion Island obtained 2, 055, 200 of the 6 million *francs*. One-eighth was allocated to set up a lending and savings bank. It represented, as in British colonies, 40 % of the total value of slaves.<sup>331</sup>

According to Blériot, if compensation appeared to be as a transition to a new society, the fact remained that the newly-emancipated population was forgotten in this new Law of 30 April 1849. As Victor Schoelcher so eloquently put it:

*«Commettrions-nous le sacrilège de nous dire, dans le secret de nos coeurs, que c'est assez pour le noir d'être émancipé, que pour les années de souffrance, de servitude, il ne lui est rien dû?.»*<sup>332</sup>

This 'cri de coeur' (cry from the heart) of Schoelcher, according to Bleriot, was never heard. The only compensation given was to the *colons* and the spirit of the Law could be summarised as follows: the right to emancipation for the slaves and the right to compensation for the slave-owners.

For some, slave compensation and pouring this money into a bank, effectively financed the Reunionese transition from slavery to capitalism. There appears to be no difference between the Mauritian case and the Reunionese case. Owners, particularly the big owners, received a compensation which they reinvested in their sugar estates and deposited in the banks and assured their transition to a 'free' society.

By contrast, Mauritian slaves obtained 'nothing but freedom' in 1839.

### 3. FROM SLAVES TO SQUATTERS: DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

What was the situation prevailing Mauritius after the abolition of slavery? It is important first to understand clearly who were those living in Mauritius at the time and their relative numbers on the island. Some groups have largely been forgotten and deserve mention. The census categories also deserve mention, as the same term often implies different groups of persons and are misleading for those who do not read the reports and fine print of the censuses enumerators. A thorough demographic history of the Mauritian population deserves to be written and constitutes one of the recommendations of the Commission.

#### The Apprentices

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The apprenticeship system has been researched in some depth in Mauritian Historiography, as well as the opposition to it coming from abolitionists who saw it as not being much different from slavery. The complicity of the local Government in creating a system that was no different from slavery and ensured that labour stayed on estates until contract labour system was established, while owners enjoyed the compensation money and invested in their sugar estates. Apprentices were quick to see they had been duped of their freedom. They expressed this disapproval of this 'new system of slavery' in several forms. Some marooned and were hunted in exactly the same manner as they had been under slavery. When caught they were flogged in the same manner. Others chose to withdraw from plantation labour (but not from agriculture), knowing full well that this is what would strike at the heart of plantation's operation. Others still bought their freedom from apprenticeship, just as, when slaves, they had bought their manumission. They were still advertised as slaves for hire, even though slavery had been abolished. While the stereotype of women is that they were downtrodden people, the number of applications for freedom from apprenticeship are very revealing. These women's history must not be forgotten and deserves further study.

Moreover, those who had wanted to be free before 1839 had to pay. It is to be regretted that the certificates of freedom from apprenticeship have been so badly preserved. These documents testify to the pride of people who did not want to be 'given' freedom, but who wanted to pay for it. It is a highly symbolic action.

The attitudes of the planters also deserve mention: they did not want to reduce their hold over their former slaves and influenced Government to keep slaves in or near estates. They had attempted to bring slaves under their control ideologically and they have never forgiven ex-slaves and descendants for abandoning them: the master-slave relationship still persists according to some today, when people continue to be deferent to the 'bourgeois'.

A discrepancy exists in the Census of 1835 between the numbers freed and those declaring them to be ex-apprentices in the census of 1846. Although there were 61,022 slaves in 1835 in Mauritius, there were only 38,049 who declared themselves to be ex-apprentices in 1846. The discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that many had been freed before the actual end of apprenticeship and many had not wished to declare themselves as ex-apprentices. There had also been an annual mortality rate of 3.2%.

#### Post-apprenticeship

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The 1846 Census gives a fair idea of where ex-apprentices were and what they were doing in 1846, since ex-apprentices are specifically mentioned as a category. Unfortunately, as stated earlier, this does not include those who had bought their freedom earlier, who had marooned or who had been manumitted under slavery. These are merged in the General Population category.

The figures in 1847:

	General Population	Ex-apprentices	Indians	Total
Persons under 15	40%	26%	9%	25%
Persons between 15 and 50	52%	56%	89%	66%
Persons above 50	8%	18%	2%	9%

Their post-emancipation experience is characterized thus by:

1. Decreasing numbers as it was already an ageing population: nearly 40% in 1846 were over the age of 40, and few young people (26%). 40% consisted of males, in the 15-50 age group.
2. High mobility, given the fact they had no particular place of employment.
3. No pension or retirement scheme was put in place for the elderly, no educational programmes for the young and no employment opportunities offered to the ex-slaves who could work at anything other than the plantation activities.
4. Increasingly Creolised population as only ¼ were left as had been African-born
5. Out of 49,365 ex-apprentices, 6,096 mostly male, had been born in Madagascar and an almost equal number in Mozambique, also mostly male, i.e. 6,260. These most probably represent the illegally brought in slaves after 1807. 35,746 were born in Mauritius and 633 in Asia, excluding India. None had been born in India.

Where were the ex-apprentices who agreed to be listed as such in 1846? What were their occupations? While there have been several studies on this, it is worth refreshing our memories as to occupations engaged in by ex-apprentices. For those who had been skilled under slavery, these same occupations were practised. The most common were among the boot-and shoe-makers, blacksmiths, sack-and mat-making, masons, carpenters and brick-layers, tombstone cutters. In transport, a large number were employed as carters, grooms and boatmen. A large number were not skilled and uneducated and untrained and were employed, consequently, as non-agricultural labourers and workers. Few worked on sugar estates, but did work in other sectors of agriculture.

There was some significant regional variations. The number of independent proprietors was significantly low in Port Louis, only 8; and 3 in Flacq. By contrast, in Plaines Wilhems and Grand Port Districts there were 712 and 844, respectively. In Savane and Black River, although there were lower population figures, there were 66 and 101 independent proprietors respectively and in Moka, 205 proprietors. It should be noted that the highest number of independent proprietors are in areas where the Sugar Industry was not yet dominant.

Carpenters and wood working occupations were prevalent in Port Louis and in Savane Districts reflecting the activities on the 'forest' estates and the need for skilled work.

**For Port Louis**, there is a far greater variety of occupations engaged in by the ex-apprentice population. There are a large number of women employed as seamstresses in skilled work, but twice as many working as domestics.

**Black River** in particular the Southern part, had the highest proportion of fishermen/ex-apprentices.

The statistics are silent on other sectors: there is no mention of port workers, however, a fact which has not been explained as yet. Although not included in official statistics, because there were no licences, nor strictly legal perhaps, our own research in documents shows other occupations not being listed: a large number engaged in occupations such as charcoal-making, selling wood bundles, midwifery, as traditional healers, and hunting. Large numbers were employed informally by estate owners and worked as guards, domestics and clearing out land. As fishing was

a traditional occupation engaged in by ex-slave population, this sector deserves the attention of scholars.

As has been stated before, it is important to grasp the mindset of the slave population *before* the abolition of slavery in order to understand their actions afterwards, given the *paucity* of information as to their whereabouts, after slavery was abolished. Only, then, can we understand the ex-slave population's movements after slavery: what did they think of 'freedom'? Was it individual liberty? Was it their intention to regroup somewhere? Was it education, and what about employment? Was it their wish to be near the former owners of the sugar plantations? Did women want to continue to labour on sugar estates or in the kitchen of the owners? This is all the more necessary as there have been numerous sweeping statements made in public discourse, concerning their movements which continue to impact on public perceptions and discourse. Some of these sweeping statements and perceptions are:

- Ex-Slaves did not want to work in agriculture;
- Ex-Slaves were chased off the plantations;
- Ex-Slaves went to live on the coast after abolition;
- Ex-slaves were lazy.

More importantly, there is no differentiation made between the slaves. Just as under slavery, a hierarchy existed, there were also as many differences among ex-slaves: their ethnic origins and whether they were Mauritian-born or foreign-born; whether they lived in rural or urban areas; whether they were skilled or manual workers; whether they were males or females. Some were Government slaves, others had been private slaves, some had families who had lived for generations on one estate, while other slaves (termed unattached) had been moved from estate to estate all their lives; some had marooned, others had been manumitted many years before. Their age influenced their movements, as has been seen in the case of VRS today. In other words, each had their own perceptions of what they wanted out of freedom. Thus, a female slave who had been forced to leave her children and forced to work on a plantation during the era of sugar expansion, had no desire to return to work there, but this does not mean that she would not have appreciated a small plot of land to build a house and farm some vegetables after abolition. Similarly, a skilled slave, earning wages, would not necessarily wish to leave the sugar mill: under slavery, he would have been one of the few slaves to have earned a wage, be allowed to marry whoever he wished and have a surname.

The Magistrates, visiting the districts, also confirmed that slaves went for activities that they had been denied under slavery and rejected those activities which they had been forced to do and did not like to do. They wished to wear shoes, eat bread, own a plot of land, be autonomous, live as far away as possible from the sugar plantations.

The evidence, available so far, points to multiple actions undertaken by slaves at the time of abolition and during apprenticeship, and these events need to be studied more closely than has been the case hitherto and juxtaposed with existing Laws and their implementation. So far what can one say for certain?

#### **Maroon apprentices (1835-1839)**

The number of maroon apprentices numbering 9,000 is a clear indication of what apprentices felt about the new apprenticeship system that had been introduced. For them, this was the 'new system of slavery' *par excellence* and ex-slaves were fully aware of this.

#### **Apprentices purchased their freedom (1835-1839)**

The number of apprentices who bought their freedom must also be acknowledged in Mauritian History. This phenomenon has yet to be analysed by historians. However, the interpretation of the motive of the apprentice is doing so is currently not conclusive. We know that 9,000 did not want to be 'given' freedom; they wanted to buy their freedom. For some observers, it was a matter of

pride to them that they purchased their own freedom. Special Magistrate Fitzpatrick also noted that slaves did not trust the Act of Emancipation as, for them, it was not a 'secure state of liberty' and preferred to buy their freedom. The Commissioner of Police, for his part, noted that among slaves in Port Louis, it was considered a 'dishonour', if they did not effect their own emancipation before the general abolition. This consequently, according to him, was the cause of the rise in thefts in Port Louis. Some, as Therese Batterie, slave of Aristide Labutte, purchased her freedom *one month before* apprenticeship ended.<sup>333</sup> The registers of these 'liberations from apprenticeship' (the IF series), many of them female, require the attention of historian.<sup>334</sup>

### **Migration and mobility (1840s-1860s)**

Reports in 1845 of the whereabouts of the slave population indicate a high rate of mobility between regions: in Black River, for example, 1/3 of the slave population left the district, only to be replaced by others entering it.<sup>335</sup> This too deserves further attention. TJC's research into family histories is a pioneering venture in that it helps to determine the exact location of families and how they moved from one region to another, after abolition of slavery. This has been the most challenging part of the TJC's work: to retrace family genealogies between 1840s and 1860s, which appear to be periods of high mobility among the ex-slave population. Yet, here unfortunately, the records are deficient. Large numbers of Civil Status registers for ex-slaves, in particular, are missing from the institution concerned, making the task of Family History reconstruction extremely difficult.

It was also observed, however, that many did not move at all from the districts after slavery, and stayed in the area. These were evident in the Black River region; in three successive studies, (a) in the context of the Corniche Bay IRS Project; (b) numerous studies, undertaken in the Le Morne area, by a succession of researchers since 1999; and (c) by TJC's archaeological, genealogical and historical work in the Morne village and cemetery. Genealogical research from Cité La Mivoie to Le Morne village shows a family link between all these families settled there today, and their settlement in this region since the days of slavery. However, many of the families are not aware of this.

Port Louis seems also to have been the place where many went to look for work, and settlements all around the capital emerged after abolition of slavery. With sugar expansion, there were numerous opportunities as the 1847 Census shows. Over a quarter of ex-slaves were living in Port Louis after abolition. The fate of the elderly among them, however, was not good as many perished in the epidemics that struck the island in the 1850s and 1860s.

Elsewhere in Mauritius, the ex-slave population, which did not own land, was shifted from camp to camp, depending on the whim of employers who tended to be those owning large estates and needed land for clearing the woods for sugar cultivation. Informal and verbal arrangements were made with owners concerning the length of stay in any particular area, and many considered the camp as 'home'. The detailed study of censuses, combined with Family History research, and Oral History work conducted in the past few years by various institutions and individuals are sufficient evidence of the numerous camps that existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which have survived up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century; this indicates constant mobility and shifting of 'home'.

Displacement of persons of African and Malagasy origin, whether as slaves, ex-slaves or descendants appears to be a continuing and apparently constant feature of Mauritian History and custom. The history of the former inhabitants of the original Le Morne Village/Trou Chenille, as well as the History of the Chagossians, are some of the most publicized of cases, but such displacement continues in 'modern' Mauritius.

### **Land ownership (1839-1846)**

The desire for land by ex-slaves has been amply and very ably demonstrated in the work of Richard Allen, and it is not necessary to repeat the details here: in the period of the '*petit morcellement*', large numbers of ex-slaves purchased plots. How and why they had lost much of this by the 20<sup>th</sup> century is being investigated, but already, it is possible to say that absence of capital to manage the land, greed of neighbouring estates and encroachment during the period of sugar expansion are some of the reasons. The illiteracy of persons across Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, extending well

into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is also much in evidence; this was shown by an inability to read and comprehend legal and notarial documents, or even to value written documents and preserve them.

### **Desire for Autonomy (1839-)**

Occupations, preferred by ex-slaves, were those which gave them autonomy and those which procured the basic necessities on the one hand, but also goods that they had been denied under slavery: shoes, jewellery and clothing. It would be wrong for us today to judge these actions. However, what was obvious was the lack of preparation provided to ex-slaves at the time of abolition by the Colonial Government. There was no willingness on the part of the British Government to address the wishes and interests of the slave population, although it must be recognized that a few officials did acknowledge this desire for autonomy.

### **Relationship with Indian indentured immigrants**

There was also a conflictual relationship between newly-arrived immigrants and ex-apprentices as Indians were paid lower than apprentices. Yet, this is not in evidence in the Magistrates reports, nor when considering the fact the ex-apprentices may not have wanted to remain as agricultural labourers on plantations. It was true, however, that cheaper wages prevented any attempt by ex-apprentices to wage bargaining.

What has not been examined is the situation on each estate in order to ascertain the labour needs of each. At the time of emancipation, the effective labour force amounted to only some 25,000, out of the population of 61,022 slaves. Some estates had been desperately short of labour even before abolition, as they had either expanded or had an ageing population or with numerous families and not enough able-bodied men. Only on some estates, did ex-slaves wish to work, as has been pointed out.

Thus, the potential for conflictual relations would only arise when there was open competition for employment on such estates. How many estates were in this situation, at this stage, has not been established by any study. It was employers fighting among themselves, rather than ex-slaves and indentured fighting each other for employment on sugar estates.

Furthermore, it must be noted that a small number of ex-apprentices were employed on sugar estates, not as labourers, but in higher positions. Among clerks, for example, in Pamplemousses, out of a total estate population of 196 clerks in South Pamplemousses, 38 were ex-apprentices; in Flacq, out of a population of 127 clerks, 25 were ex-apprentices; in Grand Port, out of 103 clerks, 24 were ex-apprentices; in Savane out of 100 clerks, 41 were ex-apprentices, while in Plaines Wilhems, out of 161 clerks, 40 were ex-apprentices.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the number ofn'pure' Africans remaining was estimated by Census Commissioners in 1901 as a few thousand. Many were to be found along the coast (Kuczinski: 803). Intermarriages were prevalent among Creoles and Indians since the 1921 Census reveals 2,419 children were born out of marriages or cohabitation between General Population and Indians.

## 4. FROM AFRO-MALAGASY TO CREOLE

We find that a scientific study of cultural marginalisation of Afro-Malagasy populations, descended from slavery, is required in the future.

Up to today, there is very little encouragement given to popularisation of African or Malagasy cultures in any public institution or through private initiative. Even among socio-cultural organisations, regrouping descendants of slaves, there is only token acknowledgment of African and Malagasy religions, language and culture. Few have claimed that the Malagasy and African religions, language and philosophy, be taught in schools or universities; yet, these constitute the ancestral cultures of slaves.

This situation needs to be reversed.

### 1835-1880

Although at the time of abolition, there was some ‘replenishment’ of cultural loss with the introduction of Liberated Africans, Malagasy *Marmittes* and indentured workers from Comores, Madagascar and Mozambique, the culture language and religions of these groups remained not only ignored, but denigrated.

The ‘Scramble for the Souls’ of Africans and Malagasy between the Anglican and Catholic Church did not help the situation. However, in this ‘scramble’, the Protestant approach stands in stark contrast to Catholic attempts at evangelisation. The work of Reverend Lebrun and Père Laval have been compared in studies. In stark contrast to the work of Reverend Lebrun, who taught children of ex-slaves to read and write, Père Laval failed to educate slaves. The results are clear: Lebrun’s ‘children’ rose up to become the first island’s lawyers, doctors and journalists and led the struggle for civil rights in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Numerous studies have pointed out the various cultures, languages and religions, existing in Mauritius after abolition of slavery. French ethnographer, Eugene Froberville, not only observed and talked to Mozambicans in Port Louis, but even drew a linguistic map of Mozambique from his interviews in Mauritius. Baissac documented proverbs and stories he had heard in Mauritius. Similarly and more recently, Larsson has shown, through detailed studies of archival evidence, how in Port Louis, about 30% of the population spoke in Malagasy, in addition to Creole, French and Indian languages, in the 1830s.

### 1880s

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, what had survived of the Malagasy and Mozambican cultures languages and religions? Fortuné, through the oral history of elderly persons of Afro-Malagasy descent in Mauritius, has collected a large number of the surviving practices and rituals. However, as noted, the criminalisation of non-Christian practices led most ritual to be performed surreptitiously, and such is still the case today.

Coincidentally (or perhaps not), this criminalisation of traditional cults (Article 3 in 1843 Ordinance of June 10, 1843) occurred at the same time as Père Laval started his evangelisation mission. Fortuné suggests that criminalizing the activities of people “who actively practice healing and spirits worship” led them, in order to escape prosecution, to adopting South Indian deities. This syncretism could thus be “a response to the prohibition upon Afro-Malagasy forms of worship.”

Many studies have also been conducted on the contribution of Malagasy slaves to our knowledge and use of plants for medicinal purposes. These contributed to treatment of the numerous ailments of slaves, Malagasy and others, during the period of slavery.

The pioneering work of Père Martial, who has conducted much research into the adoption of Christianity by Malagasy ex-slaves of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is illuminating. For those Christians of Malagasy origin, he believes that there is no contradiction between their traditional faith and practices and Christianity and that both can coexist and be practised. According to him, most

Malagasy are profoundly religious, as were the ex-slaves in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, as he notes, Père Laval relied on Malagasy ex-slaves to help spread Christianity among ex-slaves. Most of the Malagasy, baptized and married, were in their 40s and 50s. His conclusion is that the European priests were against the '*creolisation*' of Christianity or its '*malgachisation*' at that time (Martial: 170).

Neither was this '*malgachisation*' or '*creolisation*' of Christianity liked by the elite at that time, and many cases of racial discrimination in Church practices were tolerated by the Church hierarchy well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>336</sup>

It is time today to finally recognize the Malagasy contribution to the spread of Christianity and to formally acknowledge that Malagasy and African traditional practices have their rightful place in the society and culture of Mauritius. As Fortuné recommends, it is now also necessary to decriminalize practices that may be linked to traditional rituals.

To do justice to the restoration of the culture of slaves and their descendants, the Malagasy and Mozambican languages should be researched and studied, and their contributions to the Creole language and culture scientifically studied. There is no reason why the Malagasy language should not be taught at the same level as other languages at the University, or even in schools.

## 5. FROM NOTHINGNESS TO PRIDE AND RESILIENCE

Housing and education are fundamental assets; they suppose that equal access is given to all. They suppose also social conditions in which individuals operate, which allow projections, representations of proportionate rewards for self and group. When these conditions are broken *nou perdan touzour*, resignation brings closure.

In fact, housing conditions, poor conditions of living, low access to education and health, precarious jobs and unemployment are structural causes that generate poverty and deprivation. Poverty cycles are reproduced, hindering social and economic integration. Reports stress psychological problems that children encounter, reduced vertical mobility, risks of sexual exploitation and high occurrence of risk behaviour.

According to the report “Poverty in Mauritius, 1998”,

*“Poverty, multi-faceted, cuts across all communities. It is an extremely difficult exercise to pin-point what is its exact link with slavery. However, what can be said from studies done on this subject from structural trends and indicators, as well as field studies, mentioned before, is that an aggregate of indicators show more massive marginalisation processes affecting Creole communities”. (Poverty in Mauritius, 1998)*

Effectively, centralisation and mechanisation in the Sugar Industry, disappearance of and extractors, decrease of demands on small artisans or employees in the construction sector through the emergence of bigger firms/groups offering the same services, and less recruitment in the EPZ sectors are indicators that the labour market is offering less opportunities to the Creole communities.

Furthermore, the risks of downward social mobility and poverty, though associated with structural reasons mentioned, are also strongly connected with discriminatory practices/measures.

Thus, explicit or unconscious discrimination on the basis of origins starts in the selection of CVs through criteria of family names and colour and results in bias in interviews. Similarly, social discrimination on the basis of residential areas involving stereotypes, concerning *bons quartiers* and “difficult areas” prevails; people locate in “difficult areas” are stigmatised and negative evaluation tends to operate in their recruitment. Hence, there develop the negative attitudes towards education and work; the value of education, already low in the social environment, decreases rapidly since *pas sir gagne travail*. On the other hand, parents who have made the necessary efforts and sacrifices and who are now faced with the changing conditions of entrance on the labour market, feel cheated. With the rising costs of living, such changes give rise to frustration and to a sense of helplessness. There develops a culture of the immediate.

This culture of the immediate leads to a vicious cycle of further deprivation in the long term. More emphasis is laid on life-styles, on options for the present, instead of the future. The whole population is socialised in consumption patterns which are widely publicised through all types of media and through progressively more aggressive marketing; there is increased pressure to look ‘ordinary’. There are increasing risks of falling into poverty and high levels of frustration. And these factors lead to unfortunate predictable patterns of “social misbehaviour”, among the young generations.

History has its part to play in this state of affairs. The History of slavery which has been repressed does not ‘disappear’; it forms part of the subconscious. Absence of a sense of belonging and a sense of personal history induce life-styles and ways of spending which penalise whole families. Living on credit and overspending on occasions of celebrations (weddings and first communion) are ways of positioning self and the family, acquiring respect and dignity, whatever the price to pay.

It is to be noted that strategies implying self-sacrifices, individual as well as collective, as observed among a large sections of Asisan communities are significantly related to a strong notice of self, past, present and future.

Moreover, the relationship to space and time has to be structured since early childhood and is due to many socialisation processes, which are transmitted from generation to generation. But when the past does not form part of History, when “lineage” cannot exist, projection into the future is blocked and the present overwhelms all perceptions. Strategies cannot be set up, specially in the absence of assets, financial and cultural; hope does not exist.

A fragmented social identity scatters inner resources and, instead of favouring resilience, it increases sense of loss and despair. Compensating lack of inner resources may take different forms, including overspending.

From anthropological studies made in Africa and Madagascar, the importance of lineage, ancestors and the dead ones, in the definition of Self, is duly recognised. Such is the case of some Asian societies as well. Self in traditional agrarian societies expresses itself through family roots and, most importantly, from the encounter of two lineages. Social cohesion is pursued and valued in that it fosters self-esteem. In the case of slavery, the ruptures in the succession of generations through the dysfunction of families and absence of reference to ancestry laid the basis for dispossession of Self. It is known that transmission of values across generations foster resilience and help to project oneself in the future.

Identification mechanism through lineage and community, cannot operate, resulting in the deterioration or destruction of identity, loss of reference and dysfunction of Self. Threats and fear are generated, not only from the social system, but also from dislocations of the personality system, resulting in incapacity to think in terms of self-protection.

Under the circumstances, “reversal into the opposite is a well-known defence mechanism”, according to S. Freud. Research in the unconscious foundations of “anti-social behaviour” is somewhat lacking, there is the need to look into this area. Otherwise, various strategies to overcome the vicious situation of poverty and related problems would prove to be insufficient.

Anti-African prejudices and stigmatisation have prevailed for centuries in Mauritius; they still exist across all communities, including the Creole community.

On the one hand, reconstruction of Self demands not only change in the Other’s perception but also change in social norms.

On the other hand, racism had been internalised by the very victims of racism. Studies have found a positive correlation between internalised racism and alcohol consumption, lower self-esteem, lower ego identity, lower emotional intelligence among children; other studies have revealed that the stigma of inferiority can negatively affect one’s self-efficiency and confidence in performing various tasks. These studies show that internalised racism is potentially as harmful as institutionalised racism, due to their profound psychological and mental effects. Without a collective sensitisation and opposition from victims, it is known that individual perceive themselves as responsible to their situation through an internalisation process, giving more value and importance to the causative role of Self instead of situational factors.

According to J. G. Leary (2005), the psycho-social dynamics, generated at the time of slavery, have produced, as with black communities in the West-Indies, Brazil or U.S.A., an ‘implosion’ of Creole communities. Violence against the dominant system is represented and transformed in violence against Self.

In this state of affairs, social competition and social comparison make things worse for such communities. The upward mobile-class tends not to identify itself with the root community. The recurrent fear of being left out with the same dreary life conditions is strongly felt, while the system is reinforced by the recuperation of the brightest among the community. Conflict between loyalty to the community and not having to identify with the powerful is a major source of inner tension.

### **Leadership**

The consequences of the above analysis impact particularly on the leadership which emerges among the communities concerned. It has been observed in Mauritius, among those working with poor

Creole population that, at some point of collective mobilisation for better life conditions, for example, in a community based or mutual aid organisation, solidarity does not last long. Social combat with leaders from the community find its objectives rerouted towards the quest of self rewards, inflation of the ego, narcissism, search for limelight. Simultaneously, grassroots members are disappointed and tend to fall into social reclusion. The fear of informants and traitors to the community from the days of slavery seems to be reactivated. On the other hand, during slavery, slave leaders were eliminated, isolated, killed or ridiculed. Thus, the resulting leader was nothing more than the master's pawn; slaves developed defence mechanisms to survive, but at their own expense. Playing the clown saved slaves from feeling the wrath of their masters. Being entertaining was a coveted status because, from nothingness, slaves could emerge in the master's favour. It appears that this identification process is still ongoing, to a great extent, through comedy or entertainment rather than in the intellectual sphere. However, counter role-models, not confined to the entertaining stereotype and encompassing other skills than athletics are gradually rebuilding aspirations of the younger generations.

Until this rebuilding is complete, at all levels, grass not or at upper echelon of social involvement, in political parties, leadership is very often subject to intra community misinterpretation, rivalry, dissensioln and constant threat of being illegitimate. Long term objectives are re-oriented according to short-sighted status competition. Empowerment of leaders within Creole communities, therefore, goes hand in hand with empowerment of the whole community. Significant other (leaders, opinion leaders) in the political economic and social spheres use this inherited weakness, and today as in the years of slavery, "congenital inferiority" implicitly underlines many social discourses and actions.

### **The family and disjointed quality of relationships**

Slavery has affected the family institution the most. The selective breeding of the biggest and strongest slaves was a profitable endeavour for the slave-owner but devastated the family structure. It was a method that reinforced the idea that slaves were little more than human livestock, which were to be used and/or abused at their owners' whim. The psychological impact that the practice of selective breeding took on slaves is immeasurable, and a valuable tool with which to wage psychological warfare against slaves. Due to selective breeding, some slaves were deprived of the right to develop monogamous family relationships. Psychologically, selective breeding influenced slaves to believe that family relationships were of little value, and fostered insecurity and anxiety within the slave psyche concerning the stability of a family unit. The destruction of the role of the father during slavery would have a major impact decades and centuries later.

The consequences are expressed in different ways:

Single-parent households and isolation of the males. And for the males, matters are made more difficult by exclusion from the new mainstream Capitalist System and the major segments of the labour market following the abolition of slavery and the arrival of indentured labour.

### **Conclusions, challenges and Recommendations**

In order to achieve control or maintain hegeneouly, dominant groups construct fictions and homogeneity relating to various intra community group. Myth, legend and history as fictions against others enable the crafting and reinforcement of power. Struggle between the desire to obtain an "essential" identity that makes for political currency among the dominant groups, and the experience of new cultural values, transiting in all ethnic communities, has been and is still a main issue for power relationships.

#### **Recommendations**

3. More openness is needed in reflections on History to loosen existing controls over meaning and identity.
4. Political will not to reify ethnic groups on bounded whole, unified and undifferentiated, allowing unsettling recombination of identity and society.

5. Myths of purity and their procedure in the collective unconscious should be deconstructed. Self-referential beliefs and real knowledge systems should be promoted in all fairness within a trans-cultural approach to life and society, fostering real pride and resilience. This a first challenge for the whole of Mauritian society.
6. For descendants of slave origin,
  - (a) There is the need to give recognition of distinctive African and Madagascar references;
  - (b) Setting up of specific historical and cultural programs for a sense of belonging;
  - (c) Setting up of a Trust for Education and Training;
  - (d) To discard fragmented ineffective efforts and to build both political and economic strength from a position of strength, instead of thinking in terms of targeted victimisation and pawns.

## 6 THE SITUATION OF DESCENDANTS OF INDENTURE

After indenture, many immigrants returned to India. Exact figures still need to be compiled. However, it is believed that about one-third returned to India, while another third did not survive their indenture. Some went elsewhere to British and other colonies.

For those who stayed in Mauritius and who are the focus of this Commission's study, general histories have been written which have become stereotypical: labourer becomes *sirdar* or recruiter, saves money and purchases a plot of land. Children become educated, are employed as civil servants or professionals and are considered a success. This picture of the supposed typical 'experience' of the trajectory of the indentured labourer is reproduced regularly by those of non-indentured ancestry, by those who create the myths of the success story etc.

However, it ignores the other reality: those who never obtained land, those who were never highly educated, those who never became urbanized, and were still working on sugar estates until a decade ago. The Commission has investigated both of these sets of experiences through detailed family histories, life histories and in-depth interviews. Hundreds of descendants have been consulted and the results published in Volumes 3 and 4.

While the trend can be confirmed for many: that of today being satisfied of their achievements and their ameliorated lives, due to Independence, it is clear that their previous lives were far from easy.

Indians were never considered as 'Mauritians', not in the eyes of the elite, who defined the term 'Mauritian' as someone who was Westernised and Christian. The stubbornness to retain their culture and religion was seen as a stumbling block to 'progress and civilization.' The 'Cultural struggle' was just as tough as the economic battles being fought in the 1930s and 1940s to resist wage cuts in the Sugar Industry, as well as other issues. The class divisions appear more stark here than at any other time.

### Living Conditions of Descendants on Sugar Estates after Indenture<sup>337</sup>

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For the average sugar estate worker living in an estate camp in the earlier part of the twentieth century, the day began like most other days, rising at 5-6 a.m. to go to work, after being awakened by the "Lappel", a man charged with waking up all the workers, or even as early as 1-2 a.m., if it was the harvest season. How early they rose depended not only on how far the estate camp was from the field where they had to work, but also on whether the estate provided a lorry to transport them, or if they had to walk there or were lucky enough to hitch a ride on a passing bullock-drawn cart. Most workers took breakfast before they set off for work, usually consisting of tea and bread, and sometimes a little left over curry, and if they had sufficient time, they would offer a prayer for the hard day of work ahead. Women normally woke up somewhat earlier than men did, as they also had to prepare breakfast for their husbands and the other members of the family. After brushing their teeth either with charcoal, or by using either their fingers or a piece of guava stick for this purpose, they would set off for work, came back after midday and ate something prior to commencing their daily chores. Women and children were the ones who were primarily responsible for carrying out these household chores, which normally consisted of fetching water and washing clothes, and collecting wood for cooking and grass for any cows or livestock that they kept.

These chores took up most of their afternoons, as the estate camps often lacked potable water and bathing facilities, thus forcing them to walk several miles in order to collect it from a river or to bathe in.

The camps themselves, or "*langar*", is a Creole term for barracks, were usually made of *ravenal* and had thatch roofs and earthen floors.<sup>338</sup> They might also be made of a combination of materials, consisting, for example, of wood, stone-walls and corrugated iron. Over the course of the twentieth century though, concrete housing and semi-detached dwellings became more common in estate

camps. Camp inhabitants describe “polishing” earthen floors with cow dung every week or once a fortnight, and red clay was particularly sought after with women prepared to walk several miles in order to collect it. It is conceivable that some of the camp inhabitants would have built these structures themselves, and there is also evidence that they kept livestock in close proximity to their dwellings, much like their forefathers had done during the days of indenture. Of course, back in those days, there was no electricity to begin with, so most camp inhabitants relied on candles and kerosene lamps for lighting, and if the camp inhabitants were fortunate enough, a regular supply of water could be accessed through a public tap or a well in the camp. Cooking facilities varied, with some camp inhabitants opting to cook on their verandahs, or even inside their own dwellings over a pile of stones referred to as a “*foyer*” by the informants, sometimes resulting in fires that destroyed dwellings. While others preferred to cook in a makeshift kitchen located outside their dwellings and used either wood or sugarcane for these purposes. The informants also state that toilets and bathing facilities were usually not attached to their dwellings and were at some distance from where they lived and were used by all of the camp’s inhabitants. Some estates had schools, medical dispensaries, crèches, and transported workers to the nearest district hospital if required, or failing, that camp inhabitants were forced to walk to school and the nearest hospital by foot, or gave birth with the help of a midwife in their own dwellings.<sup>339</sup>

Complaints are many about crowded living conditions and the filthy state of some estate camps.<sup>340</sup> It appears that most estate camps offered very poor toilet provisions as many informants state that they were forced to go in the cane fields while others indicated that they had no choice but to build their own toilets when estates failed to provide them.<sup>341</sup> Informants also pointed out that roads in estate camps were sometimes unshpalted and muddy and that camp inhabitants went into disputes over having to wait in line in order to collect water from public taps.<sup>342</sup> The cramped living conditions that characterised estate camp life also fostered disputes between neighbours, and the best that they could do to create a sense of privacy in their barracks was to erect makeshift barriers with either a sheet of corrugated iron or a partition made out of jute bags or *ravenal*, as the case may have been. Furnishings were usually quite sparse and consisted of little more than wooden beds to sleep on and mattresses made of grass, or people slept on jute bags and used them to cover their bodies to keep warm at night. The only other possessions that estate camp inhabitants seemed to own was the utensils that they used for cooking and, according to one official report (ARLD 1945:3), most estate camp inhabitants kept very few possessions because of the frequency of fires. Others tried to make do with the little that they had and decorated their homes with pages from newspapers that they plastered on their walls.<sup>343</sup> Some estate camps also had football fields and shops run by “Chinese” shopkeepers who offered credit to their clientele; as well as *baitkas*, temples, chapels and madrasses to serve the religious needs of their workers. According to one informant,<sup>344</sup> estate camp life was very pleasant, as all the facilities were free, but she also stated that others looked down upon people who lived in estate camps. She pointed out she could not find brides for her sons as they were living in a camp and did not own their own homes.

According to Benedict, the standard of living in estate camps during the 1950s was generally lower than that of most villages and appealed most strongly to the poor. This is because living in estate camps offered the advantages of steady employment, free housing, and possible concessions from estates for planting vegetables and gathering fodder for livestock. He points out that most camps consisted of “rows of small barrack-like cubicles of wattle and daub” and that some camps had “recently constructed semi-detached dwellings of cement”. Benedict draws attention, in particular, to the poor state of housing and lack of amenities, a finding that was still being echoed by ad hoc committees that were commissioned to enquire into estate camp housing conditions 30 years later.<sup>345</sup>

Except on a very few estates, the housing offered was very poor. The buildings were of poor quality insufficiently ventilated and illuminated. The cubicles were small. Latrines were often very unsatisfactory, built in a row some distance away. Paths were often muddy and drainage was usually poor. Some camps had small shops, but for most of his needs the camp dweller must walk to the nearest village which might be some distance away. Unlike villages, camps were rarely located on bus routes. Cinema and other forms of recreation, as well as schools, were not to be found in camps, but in villages and towns (Benedict 1961:54).

In addition to a number of other drawbacks, such as the lack of privacy, property and tenure, and obligation to work, Benedict states that living in estate camps had come to be associated with low status because it was believed that crowded living conditions promoted promiscuity. Yet, despite noting that these living conditions appealed primarily to the poor who, according to Benedict, were drawn to estate camps because of free housing and steady employment, he also seems to have been under the general impression that “the pattern of moving from the estate camp to the village persists” and that only monthly workers were allowed to live in estate camps (1961:27, 54). As alluded to above, the Annual Reports of the Labour Department indicate there was back and forth movements between villages and estate camps, and hence there is every reason to believe that sizeable numbers of impoverished villagers resettled in estate camps a generation after the first waves of indentured labourers moved off the estates. This is confirmed by the oral testimony of one elderly sugar estate worker,<sup>346</sup> who stated it was only poor people, who did not own property, who went to live in estate camps. Nor was it unheard of for some estates to allow daily or casual workers to live in their camps (cf. ARLD 1961:19-20, 50).<sup>347</sup>

Although the feeling is that life was very difficult in the past, or wracked by “*boukou mizer*”, as many informants described it in creole, that does not mean estate camp life was viewed only negatively. Actually, many of the informants looked back on estate camp life with a certain degree of fondness and described inter-ethnic relations as being harmonious, and everyone was living like a “family”. Holidays were often opportunities for families to get together, and depending on the occasion, a goat would be sacrificed and consumed, or a special meal of canned fish curried with tomatoes was cooked to celebrate the occasion, if finances permitted. During the harvest season, rituals were also performed and offerings made to the goddess Kalimai to ensure a good harvest, and more often than not, it was conducted with the active support and participation of estate managers and was usually led by *sirdars*. Masses and prayers were also organised for Christian and Muslim workers. The informants also described estate managers distributing presents to children at Christmas time and receiving bonuses during harvest season. And parents told their children stories at night in the absence of modern-day forms of entertainment, such as radio and television. Nonetheless, these reminiscences were tempered by the view that “Christians”, or in other words, skilled Creole artisans and their families,<sup>348</sup> lived in superior housing and sometimes looked down upon the inhabitants of estate camps. The paucity of reflections on the family life of white managerial staff points to a certain amount of social and possibly racial distance between employers and estate camp inhabitants.

### **Living Conditions of Descendants in Villages after Indenture**

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Living conditions in villages were superior to those in estate camps because the quality of housing was generally better. Housing varied, but according to Benedict (1961:55), there were three basic types: the wattle and daub hut with a thatched roof and clay floor; the galvanized sheet iron house built upon a wooden frame and usually with a wooden or cement floor, and the more ambitious wooden, stone or cement house, built on a concrete foundation, with wooden or concrete floors.

The more ‘lavish’ type of housing could be found in some villages as “*lakaz tol vitrinn*”<sup>349</sup> and the people who owned it as living like “tourists”. Yet it would also appear there were not all that many differences between most village dwellings and the type of housing found on estate camps prior to the 1960s. As Benedict (1961:55) points out, huts made of wattle and daub were quite common, as were earthen floors laid over stone foundations, and while poor families did their cooking on verandahs, others did it in a “separate hut of sheet iron located in the yard”, and apparently housing in villages was also crowded (cf. Benedict 1961:12).<sup>350</sup> Similarly, although most village dwellings had their own yards, something that estate camp inhabitants could not claim to have was pit latrines, and the bucket system were the most common methods of conservancy, and it is likely that in the absence of these, villagers would have used nearby cane fields. Benedict also states that household chores were primarily the responsibility of women and children,<sup>351</sup> and that these included doing such things as replastering earthen floors with red clay and cow dung, collecting water from the village fountain or nearby rivers and streams, if fountains were lacking (cf. ARLD 1945:3), and walking long distances to collect wood for cooking and fodder for livestock. Rearing cows and selling milk in order to generate additional sources of income also seem to have been quite common in villages and were primarily the responsibility of women,

Living conditions in villages were also superior to those in estate camps because they were less isolated and enjoyed access to social services and recreational facilities funded and maintained by Government and Village Councils. Some of these amenities included public fountains, medical dispensaries, Government schools, agricultural services, public transport, electricity, police and fire protection, shops, cooperative credit societies for small planters, post offices, social welfare centres, football fields, cinemas, and religious organisations and edifices. But as Benedict (1961:56) points out, even in spite of these advantages, the economic fortunes of most villagers in Mauritius were still principally derived from labouring in cane fields

Most of the elderly sugar estate workers interviewed began working as “*chokra*” or child labourers, and like their forefathers before them, they worked as sugar estate workers until they retired. This had two important ramifications. Firstly, it meant that during the inter-crop season, when work was scarcer and wages were lower, labourers had to find other ways to make ends meet. One way of doing this was to find ways of turning agricultural and natural products into cash. Mention has been made of rearing livestock and selling cow’s milk, but arranging concessions from estates to plant vegetables in between lines of sugar cane or collecting *brèdes* from the banks of rivers and streams and ravenal fronds from forests was one way of doing this, as was renting land from other villagers to grow cane and cash crops or planting market gardens in one’s own yard.<sup>352</sup> According to Benedict (1961:74-76), however, the proceeds from these efforts were always converted into cash, because the average Mauritian required cash to purchase what would satisfy almost all of his basic needs, thus suggesting to him that there was little evidence of subsistence farming in Mauritius.

The susceptibility of labourers to the seasonal cycles of the sugar estates had another important ramification. It made them reliant on credit to tie them over during the inter-crop season (Benedict 1958; cf. Balogh 1963:60). Some of the most pertinent examples of these credit relations include Sino-Mauritian shopkeepers extending credit to their clientele and the loans that *sirdars* and job-contractors made to labourers to bind them more effectively to them. Benedict states he found no evidence of job-contractors charging high interest rates on these loans. But he (Benedict 1958:217) also points out that “a man who accepts a loan from a job contractor would feel obliged to work for him.” He adds that job-contractors recovered their money by making deductions from the wages of labourers during the crop season, and if the oral testimony of the elderly sugar estate workers quoted earlier is anything to go by, this may have offered another opportunity to make further deductions from the wages of labourers at usurious rates. According to Benedict (1958:217), *sirdars* employed on estates had “much the same relations of borrowing and lending” with monthly workers, and that this arrangement ensured *sirdars* had an interest in employing labourers to whom they loaned money. Thus, some villagers had better housing and enjoyed access to Government-funded social services and recreational facilities.

However, how far sugar estate workers themselves benefited from the post-war boom in sugar production because, as the Balogh Commission (1963:30-31, 53) stressed, real wages rose very little between 1939-1957 and this was one of the main complaints aired by sugar estate workers who testified before the Commissioners. What is more, the Balogh Commission (1963:61, 128-130) raised doubts as to whether funds allocated to help sugar estate workers to build homes, with interest free loans by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, reached its designated target.<sup>353</sup> “The picture is [...] that of a poorly-paid, undernourished, sickly population, capable of only such limited output of work that an increase of wages offers little promise of improved performance.” Only two years later, the Director of Labour was issuing further warnings about the sickly state of Mauritian sugar estate workers in the 1945 Annual Report of the Labour Department:

*When a group of labourers in the sugar industry is seen, when their appearance is noted, their bare feet, their ragged clothes, their eye-balls yellow with fever, their small stature, their emaciated limbs with outstanding bony joints, their shins often scaly as a result of malnutrition ... it is possible to ask whether the higher cost is paid by the purchaser of the sugar or by the producer of it (ARLD 1945:8-9).*

It was only with Major Orde Browne’s 1943 report on labour conditions in Mauritius, that the subject of the malnutrition of the Sugar Industry’s workforce began to receive more sustained attention. According to Major Orde Browne, the diet of Mauritian sugar estate workers was noticeably deficient in protein and showed a marked dependence on rice and carbohydrates. The budget of the average labourer working in the Sugar Industry was the small proportion of their

wages which they spent on protein. Apart from fish, goat's meat was the principal form of animal protein consumed by the average sugar estate worker. The informants stated they mostly ate rice and various types of vegetables, and could only afford to eat meat on special occasions

Andrew Balfour's report on medical and sanitation matters in Mauritius was printed in 1921; he read a report written only one year earlier by a medical expert working for the International Health Board, a philanthropic organisation funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, named J. F. Kendrick. Kendrick discovered that more than two-thirds of the colony's population was suffering from *ankylostomiasis*, or hookworm disease, as it is more commonly known as, and that the highest rates of infections were recorded amongst the labouring classes in the colony's rural areas (cited in Balfour 1921:18). Kendrick urged the Colonial Authorities in Mauritius to cooperate with the International Health Board in trying to eradicate the disease, and it appears that the British did not hesitate in taking up the generous offer of financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, after being actively encouraged to do so by Balfour.

Hookworm disease seems to have escaped their attention because its symptoms were not as readily discernible as malaria's. The number of deaths attributed to *ankylostomiasis* in Mauritius in the year 1920 was only 16, but Balfour (1921:15) questions the accuracy of these figures in his report. It was probably responsible for raising the island's death rate, due in part to the fact that it weakens "resistance to disease".<sup>354</sup> Yet, although hookworm disease may not lead to as many observable deaths as malaria, its effects have been shown to be just as lethal, as it not only leads to a higher incidence of foetal mortality rates, but has also been implicated in stunting growth and impairing cognitive development, as well as increasing susceptibility to other diseases. According to Kendrick's report, one of the primary causes of the spread of hookworm disease was poor sanitary conditions, and, in particular, the inadequate provision of latrine systems, indeed the very type of conditions that were noticeably deficient in estate camps and rural areas (cited in Balfour 1921:18).<sup>355</sup>

But in his report, Balfour also drew attention to the effect that the use of human manure as a fertilizer in the Sugar Industry, or the *Engrais system* as it was referred to in French, had in broadcasting the disease amongst the Mauritian population.<sup>356</sup> Balfour made it quite clear, in his report, that the Mauritian Sugar Industry could no longer continue to use human manure in the cultivation of its cane fields. He even went so far as to say that those who continued to ignore the health of the population, out of pecuniary considerations, would not only be morally culpable, but should also be held legally accountable (Balfour 1921:81-89). It seems the Sugar Industry took Balfour's recommendations seriously, because according to Alfred North-Coombes who wrote a comprehensive account of the Mauritian Sugar Industry in 1937, the *Engrais* system had been discontinued at the time of his writing his account of the industry.<sup>357</sup>

The newly-appointed Director of Labour, Mr. R.C. Wilkinson, who assumed his duties in 1944, claimed that even if provided with suitable sanitary conveniences, labourers would prefer to use "neighbouring cane fields" (ARLD 1944:4). But as Mr. James Stirling, who replaced Wilkinson as Labour Commissioner in 1951, pointed out in the ARLD of 1954, after sugar estates had built more detached concrete dwellings for families with kitchens, bathrooms and toilets, labourers took a keen interest in their proper maintenance and were making effective use of the bathrooms and camp latrines (ARLD 1954:11). And as alluded to earlier, Benedict also drew attention to the poor conditions of latrines in estate camps in his ethnography, the fieldwork for which, it is important to bear in mind, was conducted at the end of the 1950s, showing that not much had improved in that time.<sup>358</sup>

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## Working Conditions of Mauritian Sugar Estate Workers after Indenture

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The working conditions of sugar estate workers in Mauritius have changed quite considerably since the end of the indentured labour period. The construction of large factories and, in particular, the mechanization of tasks that used to be done by hand has radically transformed the industry, leading to massive reductions in the size of the workforce.

However, there has been continuity in cultivation and planting techniques for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: descriptions of cultivation and planting techniques summarised in the 1875 Royal Commission (Frere and Williamson 1875:289-292) match with those of the Hooper Commission,

written 60 years later in 1937 (Hooper 1937:113-118), even the tools that labourers used do not appear to have changed very much. Tools, such as the *pioche* (hoe), *pince* (crowbar), and *gratte* (scraper), were still being used in the first half of the twentieth century, to carry out tasks such as removing rocks and weeds that were being performed in the nineteenth century.

**Neither Commission mention that labourers were also working in the cane fields bare-footed and without any form of protective clothing**

The tasks may be divided into two categories: that of planting and reaping virgin canes in the first place, and that of growing and reaping ratoon canes in the second. The majority of the operations prior to cutting and loading the canes are performed in the inter-crop season.

**(a) Virgin canes**

Dealing with virgin canes first, we find that the first task is that of *désavannage* and *parement*. The operation of *désavannage*, *parement* and *déchicotage* in the case of land not free from stones, taken together, consists of clearing the land generally, uprooting all ratoons which may be growing in the soil, and arranging the stones in lines. This operation is followed by ‘fossoyage’ or holing. *Désavannage* *parement* and *fossoyage* are tasks making a very heavy demand upon the physical capacity of the worker, *fossoyage* or holing being perhaps the heaviest of the three. All three are sometimes performed as one operation.

**‘Épierrage’**

The next task is *épierrage* or clearing the land of stones and rocks. This is occasional work and does not always form part of the normal work of a labourer on a sugar estate. This is followed by *pinçage*, which consists of removing the stones from the holes with a *pince* or crowbar.

**Planting cane tops**

The land having been prepared for planting, the next operation is that of putting the cane tops into the soil. As soon as the labourer is in possession of the tops he makes them ready for planting, that is to say, he pulls off all superfluous leaves from the top and puts it in the hole, arranging it in such a manner that it sprouts easily; at the same time, he puts in manure and then covers the tops with earth.

**Weeding**

The next operation to be performed is that of weeding. Weeding is the task of removing all necessary grass which has grown up round the cane and is known as *nettoyage*. It is divided into several operations. The first weeding takes place about one month after planting is followed by the operation known as *repiquage* which consists of placing fresh tops in the holes where the top previously planted has not taken root. This work is paid for at rates by the day, according to the amount of work to be done: there is a special rate for each of the operations.

**Manuring and subsequent weeding**

Then comes the operation of manuring. This consists of spreading pen or artificial manure over the soil according to the needs of the cane. It is considered to be a light task. The task of manuring is then followed by the second weeding, which takes place about two months after the first weeding, though the exact time would depend on seasonal variations of rain and heat, to be followed in turn by as much as five or six weedings and this is followed by a last weeding known as *dépaillage* which consists of removing the straw from the cane. *Dépaillage*, which is sometimes required on two occasions, is generally done some fifteen or twenty days before cutting. The above constitute the number of tasks which are performed during the inter-crop season with reference to virgin canes.

**Cutting the cane**

The next task is the first task of the crop season, which consists of cutting the cane, which is the principal task of all. It is generally admitted that the cutting of virgin canes is a harder task than the cutting of ratoon canes and higher rates are correspondingly paid for cutting virgin than for ratoon canes. It is estimated that a strong labourer can cut three tons per day, though this would

not apply to B.H.10/12, the limit being two or two and a half tons per day, owing to the fact that the cane is of crooked growth and is tougher than the ordinary cane. This task includes that of carrying the cut canes to the railway line where the truck is standing; or to the path where the cut canes will be loaded onto carts to be taken to the factory, in the absence of a railway line. In the case of most small planters, there is no railway line in existence and the cut canes have to be carried to the pathway in order to be loaded there on to a cart. It should be borne in mind, however, that if the place where the canes are being cut is situated a long way from the place to which the canes have to be carried in order to be loaded on to the cart, the task becomes increasingly difficult of performance and, in all probability, a man who could cut a maximum of three tons per day when the task is situated near to the point to which he has to carry the canes to have them loaded on the railway trucks or cart, could not cut more than a maximum of two and a half tons a day. The task of cutting is frequently paid for at so much per *galette*, or measure of ten French feet.

### **Loading and transport**

The next task is that of loading and transport. This is one single task. The canes are picked up and loaded on to railway trucks standing near by and then taken by stream traction to the factory.

### **(b) Ratoon canes**

The first task to be performed in connection with ratoon canes is that of *revelage*, which consists of arranging the straw in the interlines separating two lines of canes after the crop has been cut. This is a task usually performed by women. It is not regarded as a task making very severe demands upon the physical powers of the workers. This task is followed by that of manuring, which consists of spreading pen or chemical manure, or both, according to the estimated needs of the soil. The spreading of chemical fertilizers is frequently performed by small boys, and is an operation that can be finished at any time.

### ***Buttage* or earthing up; *nettoyage***

Manuring is followed by an operation known as *buttage* or earthing up which consists of covering the manure placed on the ground with soil. This is also considered to be an easy task. The next task in connection with ratoons is that of *nettoyage* which may consist of as many as six operations as in the case of virgin canes.

### ***Dépaillage***

The operation of *nettoyage* is usually followed by *dépaillage*, which is carried out just before cutting begins. *Dépaillage* consists of removing all superfluous leaves adhering to the cane. 'Dépaillage' completes the number of operations performed during the inter-crop and is followed by the work of cutting and transporting the cane, the conditions of work being the same in respect of ratoons, as in the case of virgin canes, subject to the proviso that rates for cutting ratoons are slightly lower than in the case of virgin canes, as the work is considered to be of a slightly lighter nature. These are the principal operations performed on a large estate, from the clearing of land preparatory to planting, up to the operation of crushing the cane in the factory.

## 7. WOMEN LABOURERS

The treatment of gender differences must be mentioned as it is an issue that women have felt strongly about but which has been ignored.

The main criterion used to distinguish men's and women's work is the physical strength required to do arduous tasks. Lighter tasks such as manuring, weeding and removing straw from cane was usually performed by women or a third group of workers consisting of women, children and invalids and was used as justification for paying them less than men (cf. Hooper 1937:166). However, in practice (confirmed by oral testimonies), women were required to perform more physically demanding tasks that men normally performed and were perhaps better suited to doing such as cutting cane, loading it, and the removal of stones. Thus although paid less, women have had to work in equally physically demanding tasks: "We had to walk on the 'mardier' [wooden plank] to put the cane in the 'corbeil' [cane barrow]. It was ... very exhausting work for ladies like us. We had to put the cane on our head and walk along the 'mardier', which was very high. We used to fall down too (Sooben 2009:17)."

In Mauritius, since the early days of slavery, the *Grande Bande* and the *Petite Bande* was the way to organise workers into teams who are responsible for performing specific tasks. These groups are still used in the Mauritian Sugar Industry today, the main criterion used is still to distinguish the tasks that each group should perform based on the physical strength required to perform certain tasks. This criterion has been and is used as further justification to determine the wage levels of workers in the two groups, with the obvious ramification that labourers who work in the *Grande Bande* are paid more than those working in the *Petite Bande* (or "granban" and "tiban" in the Creole language).

Yet while it does not appear that women were exempt from doing physically demanding tasks such as cutting and loading cane for instance, tasks often described by both male and female informants, as being the province of men who worked in the *Grande Bande* and which they accordingly rationalized was the reason men were paid more than women. The ALDR of 1945 indicates that women who worked in the *Grande Bande* were being paid less for doing tasks that appear to be little different to that which men who worked in the *Petite Bande* performed (ARLD 1945:24-26). According to the ARLD of 1945 men who work in the *Grande Bande* are "required to perform any sort of unskilled or semi-skilled labour on a sugar estate", while men who work in the *Petite Bande* are "required to perform the same sort of labour [...] but with a reduced task and not bound to do holing". This sounds like the same type of tasks that women who worked in the *Grande Bande* were expected to perform, and indeed if we compare the ARLD of 1956, which reproduces a copy of a collective agreement reached between the Mauritius Amalgamated Labourer's Association and the Mauritius Sugar Producer's Association, it states that women working in this group were not expected to cut or load cane.

*Women, Class, I, Grande Bande.-Labourers capable of performing and required to perform any task appertaining to unskilled labour, but not bound to do holing, uprooting, forking, crowbar work, loading, cutting, heaving cleaning, heavy buttage, [and] manuring involving the carrying of a load of more than 18 kilos of manure per basket" (ARLD 1956:21-22).*

Thus, it is entirely conceivable that female sugar estate workers who were not covered by this agreement would have been paid less than men were. And by the same token, we should not rule out the possibility that those female sugar estate workers, who were covered by this Agreement, were also paid less than men for doing similar types of tasks if their employers failed to abide by the Collective Agreement.

The Labour Laws that have been enacted over the course of the twentieth century have also affected female sugar estate workers. Until 1973, no law delineated what types of tasks female labourers were expected to perform.<sup>359</sup> Although the Minimum Wage Ordinance of 1934 stipulated the rates of pay and types of tasks to be done by both male and female labourers, the amendment the Colonial Government made to the Ordinance in 1944 was principally aimed at ensuring that sugar estates complied with the law and paid labourers the wages they were entitled to, as one of the main conclusions to stem from the 1943 Moody Commission Report was that the failure of the Industry to implement minimum wage rates was one of the chief causes of the 1943 strike.

This neglect of the rights of female labourers, which probably goes some way towards explaining why they were paid less for doing some of the same types of tasks as men, may also reflect their marginal position in the Mauritian Sugar Industry since the days of indenture. Few women were 'indentured' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but with the end of indenture, the rate of women's participation rates in the Sugar Industry's workforce gradually increased. The Great Depression, widowed women, poverty are some of the reasons cited but this needs to be more fully researched. Surra epidemics may also have been responsible as many women had previously stayed home to rear cattle.

Whatever be the reasons, by the end of the Second World War, female labourers accounted for almost half of the Mauritian Sugar Industry's workforce, or a maximum of 18,126 female labourers at the height of the crop season in 1945 (ARLD 1945:46). It is important to note, however, that more female labourers tended to be employed during the inter-crop period whereas men made up the bulk of field labourers during both the inter-crop and crop periods. The same logic used to determine how much men and women should be paid for the types of tasks which they performed, also seems to account for the Industry's preference to employ more women to do lighter tasks between crops and for men to do heavier tasks such as harvesting cane when the crop has to be harvested.

The most poignant testimonies have been furnished by the elderly female sugar estate workers. For instance, one informant<sup>360</sup> complained that she would hurt herself when she had to remove straw from the sugarcane just prior to it being cut by male labourers (the process described as *dépaillage* in the Hooper Commission's summary above). She also says that she used to wear *linz lakaz*, that is, her everyday clothes to work, and that workers were not provided with uniforms, boots, gloves and masks until after Independence. Similarly, in Pamela Sooben's (2009: 16-17) undergraduate dissertation, the elderly female sugar estate workers she interviewed complained of having to remove straw from sugarcane. In order to protect themselves, they wore long socks over their hands, but that still did not prevent the straw from piercing their old socks and drawing blood from their hands: "When the sirdar asked us to remove 'divet' from sugarcane, especially 'canne coulou', we would run away because these 'divet' pierced our old socks, hands and fingers. We also used to get rashes". These women also complained of finding it difficult to cook for themselves after a day's work because of the injuries they sustained to their hands, while working in the cane fields without gloves (Sooben 2009:8).

After Independence, laws were finally introduced restricting the types of tasks female sugar estate workers were allowed to perform. Sugar estates were also required to provide workers with protective clothing.<sup>361</sup> This issue demonstrates the callous attitude of the Mauritian Sugar Industry towards its workforce, for it appears that most sugar estates would not have felt compelled to do anything until forced to do so by the intervention of Trade Unions and the subsequent ratification of these demands by the National Government.

We have not understood why protective clothing against injuries were not introduced before, especially as the 1931 Workmen's Compensation Ordinance covered workers who were incapacitated as a result of a work-related injury for a period of more than seven consecutive days. There was also the Factories (Safety of Workers) Ordinance which was enacted in 1939, but this did not cover female plantation workers, only factory workers.

It was only in 1960 that the Labour Department provided a detailed breakdown of the type of injuries which field labourers complained about to labour inspectors. Inspectors had finally decided to broaden their enquiry to include statistics of different industries, "cause of injury", "nature of injury", "location of injury", and "duration of incapacity". As the statistics illustrate, out of a total of 3,152 work-related injuries, recorded for the Sugar Industry in 1960, a majority of these injuries were of short duration, affected the upper and lower extremities, resulted in contusions, abrasions, and punctured wounds, and were caused by stepping on, or striking against, objects and the use of hand tools. In other words, the kind of injuries that field-labourers who are not provided with protective clothing are likely to sustain (ARLD 1960:53-57).<sup>362</sup>

## 8. NON PAYMENT OF WAGES

This long-term pattern of labour exploitation by non-payment of wages can only be ascribed to Mauritian slavery where owners never paid slaves and continued to be reluctant to pay full amount due to workers.

Illegal deductions continued, as under indenture, from the wages of indentured labourers (Hooper 1937:166-167; Balogh 1963:149-151). Complaints pertaining to illegal deductions made from wages primarily apply to job-contractors, but also to field supervisors, *markeurs* (i.e., pay-roll clerks) and estate managers. Despite the laws introduced, the practice of marking labourers as absent when they had done a day's work, or *maron*, in the words of the elderly sugar estate workers themselves, and making illegal deductions from the wages of labourers was not, however, discontinued.

The Labour Department, later renamed the Ministry of Labour in 1962, and the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations in 1974, started documenting the complaints of labourers in their annual reports as early as 1938, and complaints pertaining to the non-payment or under-payment of wages are one of the most common complaints that appear in their reports.<sup>363</sup> As can be seen from their reports between the years of 1951-1980/81, which actually document the sums involved, the sums of money are quite significant, but it is also important to bear in mind that not all of these complaints would have applied to the Sugar Industry, and that a large number of the complaints were eventually resolved and, in most cases, labourers were reimbursed for lost wages.<sup>364</sup>

An informant,<sup>365</sup> who rose from being a field labourer to work as a marker himself, also describes *sirdars* engaging in these illegal practices, referring to it in French as *trucages*. Describing his responsibilities as a *sirdar*, another informant<sup>366</sup> said that at the sugar estate where he worked, the *kolom* (or field supervisor) would check on the work of *sirdars* and labourers and that if he was not satisfied with the quality of the work, he would mark labourers as *ena sans al maron*<sup>367</sup> and that they *pa gagn zot kas*<sup>368</sup>. Similarly, another informant<sup>369</sup> states that the manager of the estate where he worked would order *sirdars* to tell the labourers to redo their work if he was not satisfied with the quality of their work, even if they had done it properly. As the informant points out, *misie-la* (the estate manager) would come and check on the labourer's work after two days, hence by this time some of the weeds could have grown back, making it easier for him to find an excuse to tell the labourers to redo their work and deduct their wages. The informant added that he and his workmates could not contest the orders of the estate manager and they had no choice but to complete the *latas* (or load of work), even if they found it too difficult. Of course, this would have also made it easier to deduct the wages of labourers on the pretext that they had failed to complete the task required of them.

It should be pointed out that a number of informants confirm that there were instances of labourers not doing their work properly and describe *sirdars* and other estate personnel whom they worked under as being very reasonable and pleasant to work with. But that should not detract from the fact that abuses have taken place, and that practices that one would expect to be more characteristic of the indentured labour period, continued after the end of indenture.<sup>370</sup> Complaints pertaining to the non-payment of wages, and in particular job-contractors, appear in the reports of various Commissions of Enquiry convened to investigate working conditions in the Mauritian Sugar Industry since the end of indenture, but the problem never appears to have been stamped out.

## 9. JOB CONTRACTORS

The Mauritian Sugar Planter's Association, the main organisation representing millers and large planters have strenuously denied the allegations and assured the Commissioners that it was inconceivable that these abuses were taking place, as measures had specifically been put in place to "exclude such malpractices" along the lines first recommended by the Hooper Commission. Yet, it is interesting to note that, at least with respect to ensuring that estates and job-contractors kept accurate records of hours and wages earned by labourers after the 1938 Labour Ordinance passed into law, the Labour Department was continually turning up evidence of poor recording keeping practices and for which labour inspectors often fined them.

The protestations of innocence are hard to believe, given the poor track record of honouring legal agreements and which appear to be directly implicated in perpetuating these abuses.

The sugar estates have always had a vested interest in making sure the job-contracting system was not abolished, as it would have put an end to one of their main means of recruiting workers, particularly since the Industry has consistently been moving towards the employment of casual workers and the retrenchment of monthly or full-time workers for the greater part of the twentieth century.

In line with the findings of the Hooper Commission, the Balogh Commission proposed that the best way to eliminate these abuses was for the estates to pay labourers directly. But in contrast to the 1961 Meade Economic Report, it stopped short of calling for the abolition of the job-contracting system, even though the Commissioners stated that they hoped "eventually the job-contracting will be replaced by more conventional methods of labour recruitment" (Balogh 1963:151).

All Commissions recognized the role of the job-contracting system in securing workers for the sugar estates and they all desisted from making any recommendations that would hamper the ability of the Industry to hire workers. Even the 1983 Manrakhan Commission of Enquiry into the Mauritian Sugar Industry, alluded to this complaint very briefly.



# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES**



## INTRODUCTION

Slavery and indenture were primarily economic systems responsible for many ills. Both were also ideological cultural social institutions which created a particular society that many believe to be unique. There may be a case for 'Mauritian exceptionalism'. The particular situation Mauritius was in (geography proximity, existence of local capital, insularity, highly mixed populations, coupled with huge interest of the powers in Mauritius has led to the creation to new communities in the midst of the existing populations. Some of them marked Mauritian history as indelibly as the colonists, slaves and indentured labourers without being any one of these groups or perhaps being a bit of all of these groups. They have been labelled a 'transitional' group or a 'dying' group or even people who did not fit in any category.

In the Commission's attempt to be as inclusive as possible and to cover a wide range of experiences occurring under slavery and indenture, it has focussed some attention on those groups who are neither slaves nor indentured, nor pure ex-slaves nor pure ex-indentured. These are for example the *Gens de Couleur* because they emerged out of the interaction of slaves, indentured and colonists, the fishermen and pig-breeders who refused to bow to plantation labour and become the unidentified mass living and eking out miserable existences in Port Louis, but chose activities that made them autonomous, the *métayers* who did not fit into the category of labourers who rose from 'rags to riches' (the traditional stereotype of indentured labourer history). There are also the Indian Christians, who are still struggling to find a place for themselves and who appear to be both rejected or ignored by both mainstream Hindu and Catholic communities.

### 1. THE GENS DE COULEUR

The *Gens de Couleur* are part of the intermediate and unique categories that emerged from slavery and indenture but have been forgotten by History because they do not fit into the all-encompassing categories that officials and scholars alike, and Mauritians in general, have created throughout Mauritian History in order to classify Mauritians. As a 'minority within a minority', and because of their higher social position, they have been ignored, if not undermined at times, for their association with the elite. As stated above, however, as a group which emerged directly from slavery and indentured immigration, it was felt they deserved the attention of the Commission.

Several terms have been used throughout Mauritian History to describe this group: 'Coloured Population', 'Libres de Couleur', 'Gens de Couleur', 'Free Population', 'Creoles Ferblan', 'Mulatres' etc. We have chosen the term *Gens de Couleur* as it implies a certain social status whether neither of the other terms do. Their ethnic and social composition was varied: European, Indian, Malagasy, African, Chinese as well as having slave, free and indentured origins. However, not all these origins have been recognized equally by them and the tendency has been to be Westernised and reject the non-European ancestry. In the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and part of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when relationships between different groups were forbidden or frowned upon, their relationships were not hidden from public view. However, painful this is for the population to admit, it must also be stated that some were the product of sexual exploitation and rape of slave and indentured women on plantations and in urban areas by owners and employers and heads of establishments. They occupied a unique social and economic status which, only in the past few years, is being uncovered, as more and more family histories are brought to light.

Politically, many were also they were victims of repressive measures and injustice during the French occupation (1715-1810) as descendants of slaves and later, in the nineteenth century, of indentured labourers because they were not 'pure white'. After the capture of Isle de France by the British in 1810, there ensued a long, hard fight by the *Gens de Couleur* for their rights, as regards educational rights, the right to political representation and the right to land ownership.

Today, there is no longer the stigma of being 'mixed', and people in Mauritius do talk openly about their mixed origins and no longer feel ashamed of stating they are of Indian or African or Malagasy extraction. However for some, this is still something to be hidden: heads of children are shaven, if the 'curliness' of the hair is too pronounced; 'darker' members of the family are hidden from view, or hands not shaken and endogamy is still practiced in some families. It could be said that the richness of this community is only now being 'exploited' in the world of 'cultural industry': fusion

music, dance, literature are promoted as a 'genre', and being of mixed blood is no longer something to be ashamed of. It is also uniquely Mauritian.

More importantly, among this population, the imagined 'fear' of being 'swamped' by Indian or the 'ti Kreol' no longer exists in the same manner that led to the massive exodus of *Gens de Couleur* in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, towards Australia, the U.K., Canada and South Africa, even though social mingling may still be problematical for some. Although a cultural and social void was created, the emerging *Gens de Couleur* today have, according to Rivière, abandoned their former spirit of ghettos, or 'cloisonnement' (erecting barriers), against this imagined invasion by other communities, especially *Ti-Créoles*. The young envision the future with optimism and an openness that augur well for a multicultural and unified nation. Professions are open to all, and the persons interviewed by the Commission were not in dread of 'cultural nepotism' that their ancestors deplored. Women appear more open and more enlightened in respect of inter-communal marriages and socialising with other communities.

No person should have to fight inch by inch for equal rights, equal education, and equal political representation. The waves of emigration of the 1960s and 1970s were, partly at least, caused by the leaders of the Creoles insisting on their 'malaise' and instilling fear into a community. Once the *Gens de couleur* had left to ensure "a better life for their children", Mauritian cultural life suffered a serious blow. Yet, others grew stronger to take the place of our artists, singers, writers, teachers and intellectuals who had emigrated. Today, *Gens de Couleur* today are expecting that in a spirit of reconciliation, Mauritians in Mauritius ensure that those Mauritians who have emigrated, and continue to do so for family and professional reasons, are not branded as 'traitors' - a sad term used during a Diaspora convention a few years ago.

Numbers, especially numbers of votes, should matter less, if we are to evolve as a nation; smaller communities, such as the 'General Population', and the *Gens de Couleur* within it, and Sino-Mauritians, may not have the numbers. However, the Mauritian people must recognise the fact that all communities have made a vital contribution to our history, irrespective of their origins. "History is philosophy teaching by examples," declared Lord Bolingbroke. Educating the young through the teaching of a balanced History of Mauritius is the way forward. Only then, can cultural memory take on its true significance for young Mauritians - seeing the present through the past and envisioning the future through the present. Otherwise, old *clichés* will persist.

### **Definitions and origins of the *Gens de Couleur***

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Chaudenson's definition of the term 'Creole' has influenced a generation of local scholars, but this definition does not have any grounding today as we have more empirical and historical evidence than when he was writing. For Chaudenson, this appellation is reserved for those *métis* or to individuals of the Malagasy or African type, with relatively clear physical features.<sup>371</sup> The definitions ignores, however, the Asian element which has been part of the Mauritian cultural landscape since the beginning of French colonisation and is an intrinsic part of the Creole. This definition suited well those eager to separate and ignore the Asian part of the ancestry which was also not Christian. And fell into the trap of the plantocracy policy of divide and rule. The Creole of slave ancestry was reserved for the Catholic Church and no Protestant, Hindu or Muslim had a right to it.

But categorising the Creole as of only African phenotype means ignoring that their Indian roots which may be also part of this phenotype. Furthermore, it ignores the official definition given to the term 'créole' by the local authorities, and prefers to refer to a dictionary meaning. The *Conseil Supérieur* in Isle de France provided an official definition when it began to observe the extent of *métissage* occurring on the island and attempted to limit it.

Thus the definition of the term 'Creole' must now be redefined to incorporate more historically and demographically correct information. By denying one part of one's origins in favour of another, is one not deliberately embarking on another type of 'cultural genocide'?

In Mauritius, a distinction was made between 'Creoles' (Europeans born on the island, or individuals of European descent) and *métis* or individuals of mixed blood or 'mulattoes'. The different shades

of *métis* or mulattoes in Mauritius was commented upon by Auguste Billard, during his visit to the island in 1817 in a letter of 27 February of that same year:

*“It is easy, up to a point, to distinguish the pure-blooded Europeans from the blood that is mixed with African blood; a brown or olive complexion, especially under the eyes always betrays doubtful origins [...]”*

The most accurate profile seems to be that of Brunet in *Voyage à l’Ile-de-France, dans l’Inde et en Angleterre* (1825):

*“I would divide them into three classes: firstly the Whites; secondly, the mulattoes and the freed slaves; thirdly, the mulattoes and the Black slaves [...] The Coloured people may be divided into mulattoes, born of Black people and free Whites; freed slaves; and mulattoes or Coloured people from India [...] The third class, or that of slaves, is very large and more varied than perhaps in any other colony.”*<sup>372</sup>

The mixed traits which created beautiful complexions and features were the bane of European women who did not like the way the mixed women enticed their husbands and men away from them. Rose Freycinet wrote about :

*‘those pretty and well-shaped girls are kept by the rich men, young and old, of Mauritius. I shall add, to the great shame of men, even fathers lavish on those wretches luxuries which their own children often go without. Can you believe, dear friend, that one would not find two men here who do not keep one of those girls in fine quarters, fine clothes and served by five or six black servants [...]’...Some men even set up home with these women, have a dozen children by them and have no other house but theirs; these men are not married. By their actions, they are forced to withdraw from society, for these women are never received publicly. They provide a good education for their children, who are almost white; several even send them to England and France [...]*<sup>373</sup>

*Libertinage* and *concubinage* are part of our heritage and should no longer be stigmatised or use in hushed tones. It was a fact of colonial life since the French period, and this perception of *Libertinage* inspired the repression of mixed unions, loose and represented young men from France being lured by easy access to female slaves.

Many French merchants, settling in the Isle de France, cohabited with female slaves or Coloured women. Some married freed slaves - such later on was the case of Benoît Ollier from the Lyon region, who arrived in 1789 and later married Julie, a freed slave born in Mauritius; they gave birth to Rémy Ollier, who was to become one of our greatest journalists, in 1816.<sup>374</sup>

The *Mésalliances* and *de facto* relationships were also the direct result of an imbalance between settler men and women. In 1778, there were 1,727 white women out of a total white population of 4,417; in 1809, white women numbered 2,671 out of a white population of 6,227. Rampant promiscuity and *mésalliances* led to the emergence of a mulatto and *métis* class. Free Indian contractual workers and Indian free settlers as well as freed Indian slaves contracted liaisons or marriages with *petits blancs* or Coloured individuals.

Many *petits blancs*, who subsisted in poverty, married freed slaves, although this created a gap between the so-called pure Whites and the *petits blancs* and coloured offsprings, a gap which grew wider.<sup>375</sup> Thus by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this intermediate category, the *Gens de Couleur* was in existence.

Europeans, however, distinguished between ‘mulattoes’ and *métis*. According to this classification, “mulattoes were of mixed blood but the products of Whites’ relationships with African slaves, while the word *métis* designated the mixture of White and Indian bloods.”<sup>376</sup> The appellation *mulâtre* [mulatto] or *métis* was, and is still today, hurled as pejorative terms and abuses - at least, it was commonly the case from the 1950s and 1960s, up to recently.

The Chinese must not be forgotten in this rich mosaic of cultures at the source of the *Gens de Couleur*. A number of Chinese artisans, marine carpenters and sailors, had settled in Isle de France before, and during, La Bourdonnais’ governorship.<sup>377</sup> No doubt, despite the absence of archival evidence, there were mixed marriages, or various degrees of cohabitation, between the early

Chinese workers or settlers and individual women belonging to the freed slave or Coloured community, but a detailed study is required on this.

Creole or Coloured, thus, has, from the beginning, all cultural origins, and not just African and European origins. Embroiled in this, from mid-nineteenth century, was the struggle to prevent the Asiatification of Mauritius embarked upon by those of European origin. It was felt that as Indian labourers came to Mauritius and settled, the existing religions would be influenced by pagan religions. Evangelisation policy was implemented more fully, first against Malagasy religions, and later against Asian religions. Palmyre's statement that the "professionals of the middle class from towns in colonial Mauritius, were often the descendants of black female slaves and white masters, had pale skin, were free and educated, but did not possess land:" is therefore not correct.

## Discrimination

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Prejudices survived from the French colonial days during the British period; for example, an Ordinance of 1779 prohibited entry by the Whites into the 'Quartier des Libres' and punished any infringement by fines.<sup>378</sup> Yet, Indian women, not deterred by the coloured status of their children, had them baptized, without naming their fathers, according to Jumeer.<sup>379</sup> But, this did not secure access into 'good society'; in fact, these children were ostracized both by the Whites and the Indians. A similar story unfolded, when it came to Coloured children with freed slave mothers. Even though their numbers increased, hostility between the White and 'Coloured Population', as Rose de Freycinet noted,<sup>380</sup> increased in the early nineteenth century. The causes of this white antagonism was, partly, rivalry between the two groups of women, White and Coloured, but, above all, it can be explained by the abolition of the status description in the Ordinance of 1829.

The most shocking example of racial prejudice and an 'apartheid' policy, was the funereal rites and practices for the White and Coloured or Slave Populations. The Church's discriminatory practice of underlining, through funerals, the inferiority of the Black and 'Coloured' populations right up to the 1830s. Coffins of slaves and free Coloured individuals were placed on two stones, at some distance from the Church and exposed to the gazes of passers-by and to the mercy of the elements. Moreover, the case of M. Betuel, in 1823, who wished to be buried alongside his Coloured son in the 'Coloured' cemetery, is recalled by Noël as having shocked the 'Coloured Population'. The trustee, Mr. Chrétien, followed his instructions but was helpless, when white relatives appealed and had the body exhumed. The *Procureur Général* gave in to their pleas that this burial had brought shame on the family. Thus, even the great leveler, Death, became a pretext for clear 'apartheid' practices, manifestly supported by the Catholic Church.<sup>381</sup> A few days later, the Appeal Court Judges upheld the decision of the *Procureur Général*.

Evenor Hitié expressed indignation:

*"One can understand that men, imbued with prejudices, could contribute to this Ordinance, but how could members of the Mauritian Clergy sanction it, since it went against the very fundamental principles of a religion which they professed?"*<sup>382</sup>

On 30 July, 1830, a petition was presented to Governor Sir Lowry Cole on this occasion, and it dealt with the need for a Central College for Coloured children, but it also touched upon a number of recent cases of interment; for instance, in February 1826, Mlle. Bussac having died, her father had given instructions that she be buried in the Cemetery for Whites. When the *cortège* arrived at the gate, the watchman refused it entry on the grounds that he had orders from the Commissioner of Police *not* to allow the remains of 'Coloured people' to be buried in the 'Cimetière des Blancs', without his authorization. Told of this, the father, a white man, appealed, but to no avail.<sup>383</sup> A second instance of such blatant violation of Human Rights occurred on 4 June, 1826, when Mlle. Boucherat, a Coloured person, passed away. Once more, her father wanted her to be buried in the 'Cimetière des Blancs', but the watchman resisted and declared that he had no official permission from the Police Commissioner: "The parents of the young dead person resisted; the watchman resisted in turn; finally, the parents gave in, out of respect for the sacred grounds where they were."<sup>384</sup> The petition concluded in 1830:

*"If we have objected to the existence of a separating wall forcefully, it is because we wished to underline the odious nature of this demarcation line that still exists [...] Thus, a thick wall*

*separates our mortal remains from those of our fathers, while perhaps a ditch separates a respectable Coloured man from a white criminal whose head fell under the executioner's axe [...]*<sup>385</sup>

Other prejudices and unfair practices in the Church are objected to in Petitions of 1826 and 1830; a revolting distinction was made between Whites and Black/Coloured people at the time of Communion, when they received the host at different tables. Moreover, the Church persisted in having two separate registers for baptisms, marriages and deaths, despite the Ordinance of 16 December, 1829.

Another example of racial prejudices against *Gens de Couleur* occurred at the Theatre in Port Louis in 1830. Henri Bruils, who was employed as a clerk at the 'Greffe au Tribunal de première instance', worked on the case of several *Gens de Couleur* who had been refused entry to the Theatre's *Café*, owned by M. Coignet. Resigning his job at the *Greffe*, Bruils took up the challenge in court.

However, although *Gens de Couleur* resented these prejudices, they themselves were perhaps guilty of practising it: Remy Ollier was typical of the emerging *Gens de Couleur*, making a distinction between themselves and ex-slaves. He stated that there '30,000 mulattoes and 30,000 Black people' - an indication of the prejudices of the *Gens de Couleur* themselves towards the *Ti-créoles*.<sup>386</sup>

## Religion and Education

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What was the impact of Indian immigration, made up of different religion Hindu Muslim onto the *Gens de Couleur*? This has not been studied with much objectivity in Mauritius as yet.

Most Christians, if not all, were Catholic in French Mauritius. These could be classed as: (a) Mauritians of French origin (b) Mauritians of African, Malagasy or Indian origins; (c) of Indian origin (d) 'Hommes de couleur'; (e) Christians of Chinese origin.<sup>387</sup> What was the real role of the Père Laval' (1841-1864), and of the religious renewal that occurred with the arrival of Mgr. Collier (Bishop, 1841-1847), both of whom "regenerated Catholicism in depth and in a lasting manner?"<sup>388</sup>

Despite their numerical majority the *Gens de Couleur* and ex-slaves could not appropriate the Church which remained controlled by the European element and was closely linked to the economic power. As in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, racial practices pervaded the Catholic Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: "The use of two crucifixes, one in bronze for the blacks, one of silver for the Whites, the administration of communion in order of races, remained the practice even after the legal abolition of racial discrimination in 1829."<sup>389</sup>

The Catholic religion, however, provided a moral strong anchor for the *Gens de Couleur*. But educational opportunities were still lacking. The first real attempts to open up Education (primary especially) to the *Gens de Couleur* occurred after Reverend Jean Le Brun had arrived in 1814. He was to found the first free primary school in Port Louis and, subsequently, other primary schools for boys and girls across the island. These establishments were initially founded by the London Missionary Society, and later by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. But the financial difficulties encountered by Reverend Le Brun were enormous; several of his schools failed, notably in Port Louis, Piton and Camp Yoloff.<sup>390</sup> The less than generous Sir Lowry Cole, who never entirely espoused the Coloured cause, does not appear to have acceded to requests for additional funds.<sup>391392</sup>

As a result of Reverend Le Brun's efforts, a number of primary schools were founded and blossomed by 1851. Le Brun was, at the time, in Hitié's opinion, looked upon by the freed slaves and the 'Coloured Population', as "the architect of their intellectual emancipation."<sup>393</sup> However, the political struggle for access to Education for the disadvantaged Coloured went on alongside Le Brun's endeavours.

In the 1820s, their representatives demanded their 'common rights', since they felt despised and side-lined by the British Government, at least up to 1826. For a total population of 100,000, there were few free schools. On 16 January, 1826, Augustin Icery presented a petition to Sir Lowry Cole that stated strongly the case for greater access to Education: "The limited education, received by

Coloured young people, will not enable them to better themselves in the future and acquire an in-depth knowledge of the abstract sciences.” A Central College for Coloured youths was required, and as soon as the Governor approved this, a Prospectus was to be issued.<sup>394</sup> Deprived of any opportunity of educational advancement, leaders of the *Gens de Couleur* came back to the charge in 1830, when the governorship had passed to Sir Charles Colville.

Despite the Ordinance of 1829 stipulating that, in future, there would be only two categories of people, Free and Slaves, the rights of the *Gens de Couleur* continued to be ignored. The two petitions of 1826 and 1830 had been largely ignored by two unsympathetic Governors, Lowry Cole and Colville, who rejected the 1830 address, while showing his personal antipathy to the leaders of the *Gens de Couleur*.<sup>395</sup>

It was only in 1835 that Michel Severimoutou opened a Colonial Academy for boys and girls in Plaine-Verte.<sup>396</sup> From 1818, the ‘so-called’ English scholarships were opened to white boys only and allowed them to become lawyers and doctors at U.K. Universities. The British supported the ‘Coloured people’ against the Franco-Mauritians in the 1830s,<sup>397</sup> which led to the admission of *Gens de Couleur* boys to the Royal College, this, in spite of Governor Colville who did not approve of this open policy.

## The Political Contribution

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The *Gens de Couleur* have played a preponderant role in politics since the French period. For a short period following the abolition of slavery in 1793, the Colonial Assembly of Isles de France and Bourbon relaxed the laws concerning *Gens de Couleur*. In 1791, even before the first Abolition, the *Assemblée Coloniale* of 8 September had declared that: “Coloured people, born of free fathers and mothers, will be admitted to all future parish and colonial assemblies, if they have the required qualifications.”<sup>398</sup> The same Assembly affirmed that Municipalities would register as electors “Coloured citizens born of free fathers and mothers, who meet all the criteria stipulated by the Constitution.” It proclaimed: “All Citizens are equal in the eyes of the Law.”<sup>399</sup> However, under Napoleonic rule, these rights were removed. Even though many among them were landowners and possessed slaves, they retained an inferior status in French Mauritius.<sup>400</sup>

The British had abolished all discrimination in Ordinance No. 57 of 1829. There would be only two different status: free persons, whether by birth or enfranchisement, and the other, the slave population. But in the Council of Government, established in 1825, there were no nominated *Gens de Couleur* in the 1820s, but only people of European descent - chief landowners and merchants.

Rémy Ollier and Reverend Le Brun left a trail of educated, socially conscious and practically motivated men and women who were to take up battle for liberal reforms. The influence of Rémy Ollier continued long after he had passed away. The first lawyer emerging from this group, significantly, was in post in 1842, Athanase Volcy Hitié, and the first notary, G. Lalandelle, qualified in the same year. By 1852, the Royal College was open to all sections of the population,<sup>401</sup> but very few Indian boys attended. Although in the *Sentinelle* of April 1843, Rémy Ollier pledged to redress injustices borne by whatever class and by people of whatever colour, he was more committed to fighting prejudices that prevailed against the *Gens de Couleur*, in the first instance. *La Sentinelle*, a new ‘political newspaper’, was to ‘signal abuses’ and “call all Mauritians to an intelligent unity.”<sup>402</sup>

Education remained at the forefront of the political debate, thanks to Rémy Ollier’s preoccupation with it. He himself had opened a school at d’Entrecasteaux St., Port Louis, and another at Plaine-Verte in the 1830s.<sup>403</sup> On 3 June, 1843, Ollier published a major article, ‘La Population de couleur’ in *La Sentinelle*, in which he proclaimed: “We are the equals of white men in our hearts and intelligence.”<sup>404</sup>

Rémy Ollier wrote a petition to the British and stated that the *Gens de Couleur* wished to be represented on the Council of Government; they wanted to have access to the Civil Service; they asked for a Municipality to administer Port Louis; and they wished that the Royal College would take in more Coloured boys.<sup>405</sup> The small number of Coloured electors at the Municipal Elections aroused the indignation of this community. On 4 February, 1859, *La Sentinelle* rallied the *Gens de Couleur* to register and vote.<sup>406</sup>

On 3 June, 1843, Remy Ollier stated: “Our aim is to defend the ignored rights of part of the Mauritian population.”<sup>407</sup> Though passionate about the *Gens de Couleur*, Ollier was also fighting for what he called “the fusion of all classes”, which he deemed to be vital for the children of a united country. As a result of Ollier’s previous campaigns, Hippolyte Lemièrre had become the first representative of the *Gens de Couleur* to be nominated to the Council, followed by Léchelle.

The participation of the *Gens de Couleur* in political life increased dramatically in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the campaign for representative government and for a Constitution. Sir William Newton (1842-1915), was described as the ‘greatest Coloured man in Mauritius’.

The animosity between the whites and the *Gens de Couleur* owes its origin in the early days of the British occupation when Ordinance 57 of 1829 put both communities on the same footing.

The quest for equal treatment in all spheres of activities - entry of children at the Royal College, employment in the civil service were bones of contention throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Things further exacerbated with the reform of 1885 which allowed the coloured to be elected at the Legislative Assembly. While for the election of 1886, the coloured community managed to elect Dr. O. Beaugard as the first member for Port Louis, tension continued to rise between the whites and coloured elite. In 1911, the election of Eugène Laurent over William Newton, a candidate of the oligarchy brought fire to the flame.

An incident in Curepipe Road between the followers of Eugène Laurent and Armand Esnouf, elected member for Plaine Wilhems was to trigger into a riot in Port Louis. Things could have ended in dramatic form, had it not been for the prompt intervention of British troops at the Victoria stations in Port Louis, where an angry crowd had assembled and determined to confront white people disembarking from the incoming passenger train.

Surprisingly, after this episode of confrontation between the whites and the coloured creole, these two communities were to bury the hatchet and united their forces in the move for the Retrocession of the colony to France. This move foiled as the sugar barons, in spite of their profound attachment with France feared to lose all their privileges and the guaranteed price which they enjoyed under the British flag.

Education too was progressing among the *Gens de Couleur*. Returns under ‘Education’ in the *Blue Book* (1885) showed that many children from the *Gens de Couleur* won the English Scholarships from 1882 to 1885, alongside their white counterparts.<sup>408</sup> The years 1885 and 1886, and the 1880s in general, appear to have been a culmination of years of endeavour to put the Coloured community on the political and educational map, and they indeed marked a turning point in its national status as an *élite*, both intellectual and political.

To understand how they became alienated is important. They sought to forge an identity within French culture<sup>409</sup> and sought for Mauritius to be returned to France (the Retrocession Movement). But the population, who was not so anti-British, voted against them in elections.<sup>410</sup>

Further contributors from the *Gens de Couleur* to Mauritian politics are well-known: Emmanuel Anquetil, Eugène Laurent, Dr. Maurice Curé, Guy Rozemont and Raoul Rivet, to name a few. The ‘culmination’ of waves of political action of this community was the arrival upon the scene of the ‘King of Creoles’, Gaëtan Duval, a brilliant lawyer, and Leader of the ‘Parti Mauricien’. However, by falling under the anti-Indian propaganda and projecting themselves against independence of Mauritius and choosing to emigrate in great numbers, the *Gens de Couleur* further marginalised themselves. Gaëtan Duval had spread the fear, wrongly, that they could not envisage a stable and peaceful existence in their homeland. Between 1961 and 1982, some 11,792 individuals left.

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## Landownership

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The *Gens de Couleur* started to have access to land possession in the 1770s. Most of the ‘Coloured’ landowners were then persons with a privileged position within the Colonial Administration. Under the ‘concession’ system, the ‘Libres de couleur’ were allowed to buy their plots of land (while the Whites were granted land for free). Freed slaves could also be granted a plot of land by their former owners. According to Richard Allen, the percentage of concessions granted to ‘Libres de couleur’ between 1770 and 1789 varied from 9 to 23%.<sup>411</sup>

The limited access of *Gens de Couleur* to the land and the privileged position of buyers contributed to the integration of the *Gens de Couleur* into the land elite during the French period.<sup>412</sup> This integration in the elite was to be embodied in the political sphere during the French Revolution, on the ground of a common interest for the fight against maroonage (as both groups were slave-owners).

As a result of their combined acquisition of land and demographic expansion, the *Gens de Couleur* group became an important economic force island between 1806 and 1830.<sup>413</sup> In 1822, the *Gens de Couleur* represented 38 to 48% of landowners, while they composed 69% of the free population.

When sugar cultivation became a mono-culture after 1825, there was fierce competition for land between the two groups, the Franco-Mauritians and the 'Libres de couleur'. But gradually the Franco-Mauritians monopolized the sugar economy. In 1831, the Whites owned 92.5% of sugar mills and 82.4% of sugar land, while they represented only 31% of the free population. The *Gens de Couleur* had no choice but to give up the sugar industry and concentrate on 'cultures vivrières' (manioc, grains, coffee, cotton). Though they were more than half of the free population, they possessed less than 15% of land. However, they did manage to increase their share of cane land from 0.4% in 1806 to 7.5% in 1830, and their share of sugar mills from 3.2% in 1806 to 17.6 % of the sugar mills in 1830.

During the rapid subdivision of land that took place from the 1840s to 1880s, recently-freed ex-slaves joined the ranks of the *Gens de Couleur* and purchased land.<sup>414</sup> However, few were able to retain them for various reasons to the point that they barely possess any land today. Unwillingness to labour land themselves, as it was seen as an activity for 'slaves' or unable to procure labour, and little access to capital are cited as some of the reasons. The *Gens de Couleur* became predominant in the factories and the building industry. In 1952, 49.5% of the 'Coloured' and Creole workforce were employed in these two sectors.<sup>415</sup> There was the perception of constant threats from the 'Whites' (Franco-Mauritians), and eventually from the Indo-Mauritians, to properties which belonged to a small number of Coloured families in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, it gradually lost its economic position and was forced to sell to either 'Franco-Mauritians' or Indo-Mauritians in the twentieth century. The result is that the 'Coloured people' became employees on sugar estates, rather than owners; to day, only one or two Coloured families are holding on to relatively large areas of land.

The *Gens de Couleur* constituted an intermediary elite within the 'General Population'. Their position was the result of the following main factors: race (the closest position to the Franco-Mauritians within the racial hierarchy) and wealth (which conditioned economic partnerships with the Franco-Mauritians).<sup>416</sup> They shared some ethnic markers with the Whites - the French language and culture - those ethnic markers were mobilized in order to emphasize the cultural continuum between the two groups and justify their political alliances, especially against Indians and Chinese.

## 2. CREOLE WORKERS AND ENTREPRENEURS 1839-2011

With the focus on Sugar Industry, finding information on ex-slaves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one is faced with a dearth of research materials. While there is an abundance of work on slavery, little has been written on the evolution of ex-slaves in the field of employment over the past 175 years after the abolition of slavery and indenture. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, descendants of slaves and Liberated Africans were left to fend for themselves and were forced to 'recycle' themselves continuously in a range of activities. Urban ex-slaves, in 1835, continued to work in the port, in the maintenance of fortifications, in the building industry in road construction and a variety of hard labour and were not necessarily laid off.<sup>417</sup>

This is a testimony to their resilience in the face of colonial neglect and adversity and must be fully acknowledged by Mauritian society.

While the descendants of skilled slaves and Liberated Africans continued employment as artisans, skilled and unskilled workers in sugar factories and workshops, others, such as male plantation slaves invented themselves as fishermen, pig-breeders, artisans, craftsman, porkers, loaders etc. By the end of the Second World War (1945), they were omnipresent as carpenters, joiners, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, shoemakers, cobblers, marine carpenters, etc.

In recent years, in the wake of new technologies and innovations, most activities in which they were involved, have undergone drastic changes. Fishing and pig-breeding are examples of two activities which are presently threatened and on which action is required. The term 'Creole' is used here to refer to both descendants of slaves, as well descendants of Liberated Africans who have become merged throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the earlier part of the twentieth century. Most are also Christian. However, it is difficult to differentiate the population clearly as censuses, over the years, have labeled all ex-slaves, Liberated Africans, baptized Indians, those of French ancestry and *Gens de Couleur* in one category. The only guide rests in the Housing and Population Census of the year 2000 which makes mention of the religious appurtenances of citizens. Among the 413,000 individuals who claim to belong to the Christian faith, according to a study of Alain Romaine in his thesis in theology *Religions Populaire et Pastorale Creole* presented in 2003, this category of individuals mostly Catholics should number around 175,000 including Rodrigues(3).<sup>418</sup>

On the eve of the abolition of slavery, there were some 66, 613 slaves in Mauritius, excluding slaves in other islands.

Figure 26: Population of slaves in 1835

Population and estate slaves	26,830
Other plantation slaves	7,504
Workers and servants	22,275
Children and old persons	7,612
Old aged and handicapped	2,302
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,613</b>

Source: *L'économie de l'île Maurice*, Maurice Paturau

### Economic Contribution of Creoles to the Sugar Industry

Creoles continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to work in sugar factories. Their presence as skilled workers in sugar factories has remained a tradition to this day. Many places in rural Mauritius still bear the name of *Camp Créole* remind us of the time when this category of workers used to live, or continue to live there, although their services were no longer required as factory workers. Many have since migrated to the Port Louis and Plaines Wilhems Districts.

Figure 27 No. of Factories from 1835 to 2011

Year	No. of factories
1833	167
1838	203
1843	230
1848	244
1853	260
1858	288
1863	303
1868	276
1873	223 *
1892	104
1908	66
1939	40
2011	7

Source: Mauritius Sugar Industry Conference Report & Mauritius Almanach 1939<sup>419</sup>

Following the completion of the railway network around the year 1864, the transport of heavy engines, boilers etc. in train-wagons was made possible. This marked the beginning of centralization of sugar factories into larger industrial plants, until, around the year 1911, the number of sugar factories had gone down to 40.<sup>420</sup> During this process of centralization, Creole workers were not offered any alternative jobs. Evidence

Through successive generations, the rural Creoles seem to be more successful than Creoles in urban areas whose services were no longer required after the abolition of slavery and who migrated to the sub-urban areas and large villages and led a precarious life.

As a side income, many rural Creoles continued the tradition of pig-and poultry-breeding, and some even started cultivating vegetables. As they were also fervent Catholics, they maintained a close relationship with the Church and took an active part in the activities of the Church and even on the Committee of Management of the different *fabriques*.<sup>421</sup> Many are home-owners and their children are generally more successful in life than those living in CHA housing estates. A few have successfully climbed the social ladder to become technicians and professionals.

### Creoles as artisans and skilled and unskilled workers

Although, the posts of engineers and other technicians continue to be held by Franco-Mauritian and *Gens de Couleur* generally, in spite of the advent of new technologies, Creole workers continue, as a tradition, to be an essential cog in the running of existing factories. Creole workers still perform the heavy manual work and adapt very easily to the work environment. Out of the existing 40 sugar factories in operation at the beginning of the last century, only 7 continue to operate today although sugar production has gone down by only 30%. The skills of a number of mechanics and other artisans of factory workers have made it possible for a few of them to be employed in many African countries where sugar factories have been set up.

#### 1. Infrastructure

##### The railway network

Many Creoles were involved in the construction of the railway network from 1859 to 1864. The Mauritius Railways constitute one of the greatest infrastructural projects to have been undertaken in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The railway system enabled the Sugar Industry to boost its production and economise on transport costs. On the whole, it gave a new spur to the Sugar Industry. Some 234 kms of railway tracks were laid in Mauritius in less than half a decade, mainly by skilled and unskilled Creole workers.<sup>422</sup>

The Railway Department, set up in 1859, was the largest Government employer until the first half of last century. All railway workshops were located at Plaine-Lauzan, and this office was in charge of the maintenance of the 232 \*miles of railway tracks.

In the wake of the introduction of light railways in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and at the peak in sugar production, artisans and general workers enlisted in Trade Union organizations and wielded considerable bargaining power. Together with stevedores and dockers in the port, they brought the country to a stand-still in 1938, as was the case during the first General Strike of 1938. The grave of Emmanuel Anquetil the founder of the Trade Union Movement of Mauritius was erected from the contributions of workers grouped in the Artisans and General workers Union.<sup>423</sup> (13)

The railways, still in 1962, employed mostly Creole workers. Railway employees were laid off without any compensation in the wake of the closure of the Railway Department in 1962. They all had to be satisfied with a small gratuity for the rest of their life.<sup>424</sup> No real study has yet been undertaken to highlight the immense contribution of Creole workers, mostly descendants of ex-slaves, the Sugar Industry and in the Aloe Fibre Industry, nor has any attempt been made to collect oral archives on their history.

## OTHER INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS

By 1911, Creoles were still present in industrial occupations as shown by Table 3. Creoles were included in Category 'General Population'.

Table 3: Main areas of economic activity according to population category, 1911

Occupation	General Population	Indo-Mauritians	Chinese
Professionals	3479	1579	-
Domestic servants	5877	5296	1
Commercial	3725	10152	2901
Industrial	16,892	7743	4

Source: Macmillan Illustrated, 1913, pp.11-14

This figure includes artisans and general workers at the level of sugar factories, aloe fibre factories, but also railway employees, and other category of skilled and unskilled workers.

## 2. Aloe Fibre Industry

The leaves of the *Sisal* plant, which contain an excellent solid fibre was used in the manufacture of all kinds of ropes and strings in Mauritius in the days of sailing vessels, in the construction of thatched houses and in a wide range of other activities. The French period was marked by an expansion of the industry. An Avenue in Port-Louis, Rue de la Corderie, reminds us of an important factory, *Les Corderies du Roi*, operating there. In 1732, another variety of aloe fibre was introduced, the *fourcoya gigantea*.

The Black River District was particularly appropriate for cultivation of aloe. In 1951, the cultivation of aloe plant, in its natural state, covered more than 12,000 *arpents* in the scrubs and forests region, but some 3,087 *arpents* were cultivated for the production of selected leaves.

This industry employed a considerable number of persons, mostly Creoles and mostly women for the cutting of leaves and processing of these into fibre. Men were used at the level of the spinning plants, *filatures d'aloès*. By 1979, there were still some 80 aloe fibre factories in operation, employing quite a considerable number of workers.<sup>425</sup>

By 1932, an export market was secured for *sisal* and aloe products. Aloe fibre sacks were not necessarily used only in the sugar industry for export of sugar, although Mauritius produced some 700,000 tons\* of raw sugar. Instead, jute bags were imported from Bengal as the British wanted to protect their industry in India at the same time.<sup>426</sup>

In 1932, the Mauritius Hemp and Weaving Factory Ltd. was created to centralize all processing activities. This led to the loss of quite considerable employment in the aloe spinning industry. This industry was estimated to employ, at its peak, some 1,200 workers, although figures are not always available concerning the occupation of cutting leaves and processing of fibre.<sup>427</sup>

After World War II, the aloe fibre industry was given a new lease of life, when India obtained its Independence. From 1947 to 1979, all sugars produced were henceforth baled in aloe fibre sacks of 50 kg. This marked a new departure, but this surge did not last long as the Bulk Sugar Terminal came into operation in 1980. Sugar from sugar factories were conveyed to the terminal in lorries equipped with special sliding containers.

All employees in the aloe fibre industry, whether on the plantations or at the Central factory, located in Quatre-Bornes, were laid off; with little or no compensation. The closure of the aloe fibre industry has been a great blow to this category of workers, and especially to Creole women.

### **3. Impact of industrialization and new technologies**

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With the phasing out of carts and carriages following introduction of light railways and the automobile industry at the beginning of the last century, the traditional blacksmiths simply disappeared. Furthermore, the plastics industry caused the disappearance of the traditional tinsmith. Some crafts, such as carpentry and joinery, needing investment in the form of sophisticated equipment, have also witnessed the phasing out of workers who were mainly Creole. With no collateral, the workers have been unable to obtain equipment due to inaccessibility of term loans. Imported furniture has also contributed to further contraction of Creoles in an industry in which they excelled as craftsmen. This partly caused the migration, around the 1980s, of some skilled Creole workers to France and the UK.

### **4. Contribution to Construction and Building industry**

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The rise of the Tourist Industry and the setting up of Export Processing Zones were a boon to the Creole proletariat in late 1970s and 1980s. Many Creole workers, more especially Creole women, found employment in both industries, although their male counterparts were less fortunate in this respect. Illiteracy, which was still prevalent in their *milieu*, however, impeded accessibility to secretarial and administrative jobs.<sup>428</sup>

There is still an overwhelming presence of Creole workers in the building and construction industry. Unless labour is imported from overseas, as it is a fast expanding industry, this category of workers will remain employed. The early cash incentive in this occupation is one of the reasons for the early drop-outs of Creole children at secondary level. The problem is that when recession occurs, the workers will be unemployed.

There is a need, therefore, to encourage proper schooling for Creole children to pave the way for employment in other economic sectors.<sup>429</sup>

## 5. The Civil Service - Absence of Creoles

Enforced illiteracy during slavery and continued neglect of education by Colonial Authorities, has led to the undervaluing of education in the Creole community. Moreover, as has already been shown, economic activities with short-term financial gain has further encouraged this trend away from education, since these activities did not require any basic academic qualifications.

Many poor Creole parents found it hard to ensure the proper schooling of their children, even at primary level. This explains why only a few among them have been able to accede to appointments in Government services,<sup>430</sup> even after the massive departure of *Gens de Couleur* to Australia and Canada after Independence (1968). From today, the Government services and parastatals are characterized by a marked absence of Creole persons.<sup>431</sup>

## 6. The Artisanal Fisheries Sector

In Mauritius today, around 3,000 persons earn a livelihood from fishing. Generally, fishermen are considered to be the most depressed class of workers. A few live a hand to mouth existence during the winter, when fishing activities are few. Over the years, and for various reasons, this artisanal occupation has witnessed a regression and is now characterized by an ageing population. Those who are still active in it constitute the poorest of the poor and may be classified in the following categories:

Table 4: Categories of fishermen

Type	Number
Lagoon and off-lagoon	2303
Semi industrial and St. Brandon	90
Banks Outer islands excluding Rodrigues	500
Other categories	107
<b>Total</b>	<b>3000</b>

Source: Annual Report, Ministry of Fisheries, 2009

### Short History

Artisanal fishing has existed since the days of slavery and was practised by all categories of persons. Estates located on the coast used slaves for fishing activities although it is not certain whether the slaves were free to fish for themselves. After slavery, ex-slaves, who wanted autonomy, found in fishing the perfect economic activity. Marooned slaves on the run waited for dusk to install *batatran*, a sort of creeper growing in the coastal region in passages to catch certain varieties of fish, entering the lagoon at night, thus ensuring a diet rich in protein content for those living by the sea.<sup>432</sup> Fishing is, thus, is closely associated with the history of slavery and freedom. Trou Chenille in the Le Morne region and many of the coastal fishing villages, Le Morne, Tamarin, La Gaulette on the Black River coast, was one of the reknowned places for fishing and also where ex-slave communities established themselves. This area has great symbolical value for descendants of ex-slaves today.<sup>433</sup> Other coastal settlements, inhabited by Creoles,<sup>434</sup> are Mahebourg, Trou d'Eau Douce and Grand Gaube, Grand Baie, Poudre d'Or and Poste de Flacq.

In the not too distant past, these fishermen's villages consisted of some of the poorest in Mauritius. They were left unattended as children of a lesser god during the whole British occupation, as they did not form part of the Sugar Plantation Economy, many have been decimated during the great epidemics which struck the country, namely cholera (1854), malaria (1867 and onwards), the plague (1899) and the influenza epidemic of 1919.

The coastal areas were notorious for the prevalence of acute malaria and were deserted by their residents. It was not before the middle of the last century that the whole coastal area of the island was declared malaria-free; and this paved the way for the surge of the new residents and tourist resorts.<sup>435</sup>

Illiteracy was also rampant, as most fishermen's villages had no primary schools. The authorities argued, in a report in 1898, that the lack of interest of the parents for schooling of their children, led to their being illiterate. Those persons of French origin, who had catered for the provision of fishing tools, left this artisanal occupation to become more involved in the Sugar Industry and other more lucrative business activities. They were replaced by the *Banians* who acted as middle men for marketing the fish. Under the *Banians*, the fate of fishermen fared even worse.<sup>436</sup>

The report of James Hornell, Director of Fisheries in 1928, shows this clearly:

on living conditions of fishermen:

- *“Generally, fishermen are spendthrift and given to drink. The results is that a majority among them lives in extreme poverty and are entirely dependant on the middlemen known as Banian for all financial assistance whether during the low fishing season or for the repairs of their fishing vessels, for the renewal of their seine nets and for term advances to run the house hold.”*
- *“This state of dependency on the middlemen results in a state of apathy that destroys in them all spirit of self help, self-reliance and mutual aid. A situation that causes the fishermen to be entirely dependant on the latter for the disposal of their catches. It thus results in these intermediaries being essential elements in this very industry.”<sup>437</sup>*

Hornel concluded that the setting up of Co-operatives might be a solution to easing the situation of fishermen. Unfortunately, at that time, the Co-operative Societies Ordinance of 1913, governing co-operatives, only provided for the interest of cane growers. It was not until 1945 that the Law was amended to provide for the registration of all other types of Co operatives. The recommendations of James Hornell thus remained unattended to.

Lack of a spirit of self-help, self-reliance and mutual aid has allowed for further exploitation.<sup>438</sup> One other characteristic of fishermen villages is the presence of Chinese shops which became essential selling points and vital to the very existence of artisanal fishermen. In times of dire need, it is thanks to the generosity of the Chinese that many fishermen could procure goods on credit to feed their households. Inevitably, however, all sums due had to be paid back during the high fishing season.

### Co-operatives

Before the expansion of Tourism and the creation of EPZ factories, the wives of fishermen were very often employed as maids in the bungalows, on the seafront, of their wealthy Franco-Mauritians. Because the hours of work and conditions of service of such employees were unregulated at that time, many remained at work until late at night and left their children unattended. The elder children had to look after the younger ones; this, partly at least, explains the absence of such children at school, even at primary level.

In 1948, however, an attempt was made to organize a group of *seine* net fishermen of Vieux Grand-Port in a large “*seine* net enterprise.” The move was a complete failure through lack of funds; fishermen could not mobilize the necessary capital for the acquisition of fishing gear and tackles.<sup>439</sup>

It was in the wake of Constitutional Reform in 1958, with universal suffrage, that politicians became conscious of the state of poverty prevalent in the fishing villages. The reality is that, in many ‘maritime’ constituencies, fishermen’s votes might have some impact. In 1958, all registered full-time fishermen were awarded a bad-weather allowance for days when fishing could not take place. Although this allowance was a mere pittance - 68 cents per day - it did assist the worse off among them.

### Fishermen in the era of independence

After Independence in 1968, Government became more conscious of the state of absolute poverty in the fishing villages. In the early seventies, in order to extirpate fishermen from the grip of middle men and usurers, the Government agreed to extend its blanket cover on loans granted to *seine* net fishermen grouped in co-operatives. These loans allowed many such enterprises to acquire fishing equipment, namely boats, outboard engines and *seine* nets. Such co-operatives were not, however, equipped to dispose of their catches directly to consumers and could not, therefore, get fishermen's co-operatives to pay back their loans through deduction at source from the proceeds of their catches. The result is that the middle men continued to maintain their grip on such fishermen. 'Trap and line' fishermen fared no better.

In the early 80s however, an integrated project was set up with foreign help in three specific areas, namely in Back River, on the North-West coast and in Grand-Port. In addition to assistance for the purchase of gears and tackles given to *seine* net fishermen enterprises and a number of 'trap and line' off-lagoon fishermen, provision was also made to market all catches direct to consumers. This was made possible by the construction of fishermen centres, better known as *Maison des pêcheurs*, equipped with cold and refrigeration facilities and the provision of refrigerated fish-trucks for the conveyance of fish to market places

To ensure success, an intensive campaign of sensitization was undertaken which led, for the first time, to the registration and operation of genuine co-operatives. The project was a resounding success; a direct link had successfully been established between production and consumption. But this success was short-lived, in that as soon as dedicated Government Officials dropped out of the scheme and left management in the hands of fishermen themselves, the project saw a sharp decline.

The idea was that co-operatives were organizations owned and managed by their members. This concept could not be applied to fishermen in Mauritius for various reasons. Apart from illiteracy, other conditions are absent to ensure the success of business enterprises among fishermen. There is a lack of spirit of self-reliance, self-help and mutual aid. It was clear that, left without proper management support, such fishermen's enterprises were bound to collapse, and this is precisely what happened.

### Low performance of children at school

The continued low performance of children in ZEP schools located (*Zone d'Education Prioritaire*) near fishing villages for the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E) is revealing (Fig. 25).

Figure 28: CPE results in ZEP Schools, 2010

Location	Name of ZEP school	% C.P.E results
1 Black River	Black River Govt	29.0
2 Grand Gaube	St Leon R.C.A	45.3
3 Baie du Tombeau	Serge Coutet	6.7
4. Pointe-aux-Piments	Pointe- aux-Piments	33.7
5. Pointe aux sables	Pointe aux Sables	26.7
6 Roches Bois	Cité Briqueterie	12. 1

Source: Mauritius Examination Syndicate, 2010

### Over exploitation and degradation of the lagoon

An alarming situation faces this category of workers, and their problems need to be addressed by Authorities.

Over the years, the lagoon of Mauritius and its outer reefs have been over-exploited, so much so that, presently, the average catch per fishermen is estimated at 6.4 kg. This represents, on the basis of 180 fishing days, an income of only Rs. 3,000, one of the lowest in the country. The allowance granted to professional fishermen in times of bad weather, and during the close season

for net fishers, is far from sufficient for a decent living. This Sector is thus witnessing desertion by the young generation of fishermen.

Two other factors have also contributed to the further deterioration of the situation. First is the situation of *laissez faire* in the early 1960s in that illegal fishing during the close fishing season was fully practised, and many poachers were not prosecuted. The use of explosives was not uncommon. Irreversible damage was caused to the marine environment. Sadly, these illegal practices continue on a smaller scale up to today.

Secondly the Tourism Industry has caused widespread damage to the fishing industry Initiated in the early 1980's, and while providing employment it has also led to mammoth construction of 4 and 5 star hotels increasing pressure on the lagoon area. Activities, such as surfing, kite surfing, motor surfing, canoeing and incessant traffic in the lagoon by motor engines, have all contributed to damage the marine substrate etc. Furthermore, the creation of marine protected areas and marinas and floaters on bathing grounds have all reduced fishing space in the lagoon. The lagoon has also suffered from effluents emanating from EPZ dyeing factories. The constant vigilance required never materialised to prevent further damage to the environment already polluted by the sugar industry through dumping of chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and fungicides. All this was carried to the lagoon causing irreversible pollution not conducive to marine life.

### **Measures taken by the Government**

Some laudable initiatives which have, over the past decades, helped to improve the fate of fishermen need to be placed on record:

- 1) The creation of the Fishermen Welfare Fund in 2000, whose main functions was to come to the help of needy fishers, in the event of accidents and disappearance at sea, allocation of scholarships to children and organization of seminars.
  
- 2) Since 2000 fishermen contribute to the National Pension Scheme, thus ensuring some form of income at retirement. This has been made possible by deductions of allowances paid during unfavorable fishing days.
  
- 3) A Fishermen Training School (FIP), to initiate fishermen in the art of fishing inside and outside the lagoon, and in deep-sea fishing and on their safety and security at sea. So far, 1,297 fishermen have been trained.
  
- 4) Provision of safety and security equipment to fishermen whether lagoon, or off shore and in deep-sea fishing.
  
- 5) Installation of Fishing Aggregative Devices in oceanic depths to attract pelagic fish and lessen pressure both in, and outside, the lagoon area, 22 such FADS have been placed at distances ranging between 2 to 12 nautical miles from the mainland.

These costly sophisticated devices (FAD) have so far met with a mitigated success as the rocketing price of fuel oil makes it, sometimes, uneconomical to venture on such fishing trips in search of pelagic fish, mainly tuna, but also due to the perilous nature of the enterprise.

Presently, this new activity has attracted only 400 fishers. This new mode of fishing may represent a hope for the new generation of young and dynamic fishermen as revenue in the high fishing season can be substantial, the average catch being around 27 kg, as opposed to 6.4, for off lagoon fishers.

6) As matters stand, the very existence of the artisanal fisheries sector depends on Government assistance. In 2009, assistance to fishermen, by way of bad weather allowance and close season allowance, was Rs. 56,000,000.

## **8. Bank fishermen**

The report would be incomplete without a mention of the bank fishermen. These are a class of contractual workers, hard, daring young men who are engaged in hand line fishing on the banks located on the outer island of Mauritius, namely at St. Brandon, Nazareth, Saya de Malha Soudan, Albatross and Chagos, all located between 70 nm. to 1050 nm. from Port Louis. Most of them are Creoles and many originate from Rodrigues.

The Fishing vessels equipped with cold and refrigeration facilities, which can accommodate up to 60 fishers, in addition to the crew, remain at sea for over 2 months in extraneous conditions. The nature of their work is one of the toughest known. In 2009, there were 10 vessels employing 495 fishermen.

### **Work condition of banks fishermen**

On arrival on the banks, teams of four to five fishers get access on small crafts and start fishing. Conditions of work are extremely perilous and accidents, involving disappearances at sea, are not uncommon. Some fishermen cumulate up to 12 hours in the open sea in the blazing tropical sun.

Fishermen are reattributed on the poundage of catches landed. The Fish have, then, to be eviscerated and gutted and stored in deep freezers. Cramped like sardines in their respective alcoves, the fishermen retreat after dinner. Conditions on board are indescribable, especially when the sea is rough, on account of the frail nature of the vessels These fishermen constitute a well knit community of workers who live, for most of the time, cut off from family life and who make the best of a bad situation. Fishing companies find it hard to enlist such a category of workers and tend to have recourse to foreign workers from Madagascar who agree to work for lower wages and thus compete unfairly with their Mauritian counterparts. Any increase of wages for such fishermen is influenced by prices of imported fish, and bank-fishing companies have to remain competitive, if they do not want to contract from the Industry. About 50% of the fish caught in Mauritian waters comes from the banks about 4,462 tons.

## **Observations**

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The Fishing Industry in Mauritius, including Rodrigues, contributes to less than 45 % of our requirements in fish and marine produce around 8,900 tons so that an additional 11,000 tons of chilled, frozen and canned fish and marine produce have to be imported to satisfy an ever-increasing demand.

While tuna fishing in, and outside, Mauritian waters is carried out by foreign vessels and offers great employment opportunities, in the field of canning and processing, the local fishermen must remain abreast of developments.

- a. Fresh fish which, at one time, constituted the cheapest source of protein in this country has now become a scarcity. For reasons adduced above, catches landed over the years have gradually decreased. Unless strict measures are taken to stop further degradation of the marine substrate, the very existence of fishermen will be threatened.
- b. The Fisheries Protection Service needs to be reorganized and rendered more efficient and better-equipped to chase defrauders.
- c. Diversification in the field of aquaculture in floating cages, which has proved to be successful, should be further expanded. This sector can offer employment opportunities. The Pointe-aux-Feuilles project in Mahebourg already employs some 100 workers and produces some 500 tons of fish, the majority being exported.

- d. Allowances in times of unfavorable fishing days need to be increased and should be extended to all categories of fishermen. The need to ensure a regular supply of fresh fish to the population and to the Tourism Industry can only be realized if the sector can attract the young generation of fishers to it.
- e. Activities of unregistered fishermen and amateurs should not remain unchecked. Already such people who have other sources of income contribute to strip whatever resources are left in the lagoon and off-shore. Proper legislation should regulate their activities, as is the case in many countries.
- f. When properly managed by professionals, without political interference in their affairs, fishermen's co-operatives have proved that they can be powerful tools to extirpate fishermen from the grip of unscrupulous middlemen and provide fish to consumers at fair and reasonable prices.

## 7. Pig-breeders

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Pig-breeding is one of the oldest farm occupations in Mauritius. During the Dutch occupation, pig meat was one of the main sources of animal protein to the small colony of European and slaves. This activity was further intensified during the French occupation, as the population increased. Slaves were assigned the task of feeding the animals on sweepings, left-overs and root crops such as sweet potatoes, manioc etc. Livestock and goat-keeping were also undertaken by slaves. Pig back-yard rearing continued to be a common feature throughout the island without restriction. With the advent of the indentured labour immigration, Muslims and some Hindus being non-pork eaters, care was taken to restrict pig-breeding near them. Most sugar estates continued, however, to keep large sties, and this occupation was assigned to Creole workers. During the period covered by slavery, the noblest parts of pork carcasses were destined to the masters and the rest of the animal to the slaves who had the right to a diet consisting of meat once a week. Pig production and consumption are a tradition which has stood the test of time. Many slaves were initiated in the art of pig-processing by their French masters; many recipes originating from Brittany, were introduced by the French colons and are still in use to this day, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

After the abolition of slavery, pig-rearing was passed on to Creole workers and members of the family as a side occupation. It was a common feature on the outskirts of towns and in big villages where many Creoles lived. Many Creole families relied on pig-breeding as a side income. Many breeders would fatten their animals and dispose of them at the end of the year to pork-traders. Hence, the Creole expression *to in van to cochon* (Eng Trans. you have sold your pig), meaning that he has used the money received from the sale of his farm animals to buy himself a new suit. Pig and pig products were, and continue to be, the main stay in the diet of Creole families during festive occasions.

### Restriction on pig-breeding

By the first half of last century, however, with the end of the malaria epidemic, the population both in urban, suburban and in the rural areas, witnessed a spectacular surge. In-built areas were such that back-yard pig-rearing became a problem, causing serious environmental problems. Cyclone *Carol* of 1960 and *Gervaise* in 1975, with their devastating effects, led to the construction of housing estates by the Government, mainly destined to the Creole proletariat. The rehabilitation of the Creole proletariat on such housing estates dealt a further blow to the tradition of pig-breeding.

By the early 1970s, pig-breeding was confined to a few areas such as Roche Bois, the outskirts of Beau-Bassin and Rose-Hill and other regions such as Grand Gaube, Mahébourg, Trou d'Eau Douce and Grand Gaube. Roche Bois, having been annexed to the township of Port Louis, pig-breeding became unlawful. The reaction of pig-breeders against such arbitrary regulations was fierce. In the region of Roche Bois and Pointe aux Sables alone, there were more than 300 heads of household for whom pig-breeding was the main source of income, notwithstanding twice as many such breeders

who depended on pig-breeding as a side income. The protest of such breeders led to the setting-up of the first Pig Credit and Marketing Co-operative Society in Roche Bois in 1971. As protests from residents in sub-urban and rural areas against pig-breeding built up, in view of the unsanitary conditions of pig sties and the pronounced odours emanating from them, the sanitary authorities had no alternative but to serve notices for cessation of breeding activity.

### **Pig breeding Co-operatives**

The initiative of pig-breeders of Roche Bois to set up a Co-operative Society was followed by breeders in a few other localities, and a Federation of Pig-Breeders was set up. As a result of formal registration, the voice of pig-breeders made itself heard. The Port Louis Municipality decided to grant a pork stall to the Federation for the sale of pork meat. This was a great landmark in the history of pig-breeders, a class of producers who had, for generations, been the subject of shameful exploitation by butcher/ traders *bouchersabattant*. For the first time, a direct link between producers at farm gate and consumers had successfully been established. The Port-Louis Market is the main centre for the sale of fresh pork. Every day, a Chinese tradesmen would sell pork at the pork stalls to people in quest of fresh pork. The operation of the co-operative stall came to break the cartel of unscrupulous traders/butchers, and the move was considered as a laudable initiative.

### **Decrease in number of large pig breeders**

To fill the void in the short supply of fresh pork and pork products, a few big entrepreneurs, including sugar estates, decided to go in for pig-breeding on a large scale. Their venture was, however, short-lived in view of the sharp increase in the price of imported feed and fierce competition from imports of pork carcasses and processed pork products. As returns on investment became more and more unattractive, contraction in this farm occupation became inevitable.

### **Integrated Pig Marketing Project**

Encouraged, however, by the success of the Mauritius Pig-Marketing Federation, the Government agreed to put up a processing plant in order to cut down imports and help to maintain a direct link between production at farm gate and consumption, whether fresh or in a processed form.

The plant was put up at Bois Marchand, with the assistance both of technical and managerial people from France under the Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération. The Terre Rouge Meat-Processing plant, thus, became operational in 1982 and started successfully.

At the same time, for the first time in the history of pig-breeding, Government agreed to release a plot of State Land of 25 *arpents* on long-term lease for a small holding pig farm. The lease was granted to the Plaisance Pig Credit and Marketing Co-operative Society in 1984 to be onlet to its *bona fide* pig breeders.

In view of the innovative character of the project, few people, at that time, believed that the project had any chance of success. Surprisingly, it did. By making provision for common roads and alleys and space for a common water tank etc., each breeder received an average 28 perches of land, on which a pig sty, with a feed store and absorption pit, was constructed.

While a few breeders would concentrate on fattening porkers, others would go in both for reproduction and fattening. This project has stood the test of time and would produce, in a good year, around 4,000 heads of pigs for slaughter, around 40% of national requirements.

### **Management crisis**

Like the fishermen, pig-breeders had no ability to manage their enterprise by themselves. So long as the activities of the Mauritius Pig-Marketing Federation remained under the close monitoring of dedicated Government Officials, at the level of the Ministry of Cooperative, things went on smoothly. But based on the understanding that co-operatives were owned and managed by their members, it was decided to allow breeders to manage their affairs. This move proved catastrophic.

It did not take long before both the Terre Rouge Meat-Processing Plant and the pork stall in Port Louis had to close down, after sustaining accumulated losses. Poor management skills, coupled with a conflict of interest between producers at farm gate and management of the plant, witnessed a slow disaffection of breeders, paving the way for private traders to come on their own again. Although vested interests in the importation of pork products and the operation of a private processing plant have contributed to the collapse of the Federation's activities, the interest in pig-breeding has not been destroyed.

The La Ferme St. Martin small holding co-operative farm continues to be the main source of supply of fresh pork to the market. A similar project has also been implemented at Bassin-Requin in Poste de Flacq on a plot of State Land and groups some 15 professional breeders. While the La Ferme St. Martin catered solely for the reinsertion of breeders on the outskirts of the township of Beau-Bassin /Rose-Hill, at long last, a further plot of 10 *arpents* has been released this time to accede to a long-time request of breeders in Roche Bois. This project is ongoing and will, during a first phase, allow the construction of some 30 sties. Further breeders are expected to obtain clearance for the construction of additional sties, as soon as proper infrastructures have been put up for waste disposal. Although the La Ferme St. Martin region is far from human habitations, pig-breeding, on a large scale, was bound to create a problem of waste disposal. Government is conscious of the environmental problems posed and is presently putting up the necessary infrastructures for the disposal of waste.

#### **Present situation of pig-industry and recommendations:**

State Land was made available under the small holding scheme for the rehabilitation of pig-breeders, and it is hoped that this age-long farm occupation will be maintained. The prevalence of African swine fever in Mauritius could have witnessed the disappearance of pig-breeding altogether, had not the authorities acted promptly in providing both technical and financial assistance to breeders. Thanks to the operation now in its second phase of the La Ferme St. Martin small holding project and the contribution of a few other breeders, Mauritius can well reach self-sufficiency in pig meat and processed pork products, around 1,500 tons, by 2015. The soaring Tourist Industry is a good omen for an increase in demand of pork products, but the quality of animals at Farm Gate must be good, if imports are to be substituted.

A separate organization must, however, be set up to regulate pig production to avoid a glut and the imports of pork products. The request of breeders for a processing plant, with an *atelier de découpe*, to service chain stores and the hotel and catering industry deserves full consideration. Such an organization, if set up, must, however, not be left in the hands of *amateurs*, but supervised by professionals with the necessary expertise to excise sound management.

### 3. PORT WORKERS<sup>440</sup>

Port activities today represent a vital economic sector because of the insularity of Mauritius and the fact that all imports and exports transit through Port Louis, making it into a strategic activity. Any disruption in its running undeniably affects the economy of the island. The port is a place of business and all its activities revolve around it; without the port, the city is in peril. In Mauritian History, the contribution of the port workers to the history, political life and economy of Mauritius has not been recognized. They are the builders of Modern Mauritius alongside slaves and indentured labourers. To date only a short history has been produced by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, extracts of which are reproduced here. The Commission is not aware of any other study on the history of port workers.

Work in the port was, and still is, male-centered. It was not until the 1990s that the port authorities hired women in administration. This section was written based on interviews of port workers and represents their thoughts about their lives.<sup>441</sup> This is as yet the unwritten history of the port.

#### Working lives

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Port workers were divided in different categories:

- the Kouder/Kouser
- the Water lily workers
- the Dockers
- the Zenfan Balye
- the Lumpers
- the Arrimers
- the Shoreworkers
- the Carpenters
- the Ferblantier
- the Gunway

Despite the fact that they were underpaid, either directly or indirectly, they ensured the smooth running of the port. Regardless of their importance, they still had to give a portion of their wages to pay the supervisor/foreman. The port workers were also stereotyped as being drunks, lazy, spendthrift and riotous. This is due to the fact that they went to bars and restaurants on week-days or on Saturdays to socialize, eat and consume alcohol. But the Port workers' version needs to be heard as well. For them, it was necessary to drink and socialise to relieve the 'aches and pains' of the day. However, they were fully conscious of the fact that their contribution to the Mauritian economy far outweighed the drinking on Saturday nights.

#### Dockers

The Dockers was those who were employed in carrying bags of sugar on their backs, from the wharf to the lorry and back. When the bags were loaded in the warehouse, the Dockers had to unload and stack the merchandise in the warehouse. The docker on the lorry would lift the bag with a large hook and roll it in place. One or two Dockers were posted on the lorry to receive the bags the other docker brought. They worked without protective gear such as goggles, masks and gloves. They carried the bags on their bare backs or sometimes on their heads. They started work at 4 a.m. and carried on till 9 a.m. They could get permission to leave the worksite for a 20-minute break. During the period of the sugar harvest time, the dockerss worked round the clock with the night shift relaying the day shift. Daily pay was especially hard for them; Mr. Perrine stated that his income was so low that he had to undertake other menial jobs such as charcoal-making. Daily wages had

far reaching implications on the Dockers' lives: accumulation of savings was impossible because the wages were barely enough for their daily subsistence. It was a hand-to-mouth existence that was hard to sustain.

At the end of a day's work, Dockers from Albion Docks strolled on the wharf, to the nearest bathroom where they would clean themselves before going home. The interviewees stated that there was not a sufficient number of bathrooms at the Albion Docks for everyone to have a shower. The Dockers especially had to be careful not to show signs of alcohol intoxication at the workplace, because they would be immediately sent home. The rhythm of work was very precise; the men could break for a sip of water also called '*bwar dilo*', break at 9 a.m. They were given 45 minutes at lunch-time and from 3 p.m. to 3.20 p.m. they had tea time ('*ler dite*'). There were no toilet breaks and no toilets close to the wharf; so they relieved themselves in a corner on the site itself.

### **Zenfan Balye**

A *Zenfan Balye* means in Kreol, a 'Child who sweeps'. This occupation was considered as the most lowly in the port area and reserved only for younger men or young boys who did not have much bodily strength to become a *debarder*, stevedore or shoreworker. These young men were engaged in sweeping the quay and gathering the material that fell from the bags into a heap. According to a former *zenfan balye*, this constituted a major saving for the Docks. The *Zenfan Balye* and stevedores could not leave their worksite because they worked on cargo ships moored in the middle of the harbour. The *Zenfan Balye* were polyvalent; they could be working on ships one day, cleaning the hold and, the next day, on the wharf with the Dockers sweeping the floor. In theory, they could go out of the port to buy food and drink. The work of the *Zenfan Balye* was considered as among the most tedious of occupations. They were unskilled workers and were highly mobile in the port. They were generally employed to sweep the wharf, granaries or warehouses, but sometimes they were also asked to clean the cargo space of the ship. They were also used to sweep the 'Red Granary'; they collected the sugar which fell from the bags, and they separated dirt from sugar and filled the bags with it. The *Zenfan Balye* then handed to the *Kouder* who sewed them shut.

Sometimes, they were called upon to *trim* sugar; their status then changed to '*Trimer*', i.e. one who toils. They had to breathe in stuffy, stale air, while working in a hot cargo hold. The temperature in which they worked was very high and they had to shovel the sugar, or else they would be asphyxiated. They could not stop working because they had to create air gaps by shovelling the sugar on the side and at the same time, they would be hot and gasping for fresh air. They did not receive gloves, goggles, or face masks to protect themselves from the fine sugar powder which eventually led to irritations in their lungs and eyes.

### **Kouder**

*Kouder* or *kouser* means 'one who sews'. The *Kouzer* or *Kouder* were a group of employees whose job was to mend and recycle torn bags. The mended bags were handed back to the *Zenfans Balye* who filled them with the scattered grains from the torn bags.

### **Stevedores**

The Stevedores' task was to 'pour' down the sugar, which landed in conical piles in the hold, while the *Trimers* had to shovel the sugar to the side to flatten the surface. To flatten the surface, the Stevedores continued to pour the sugar; as soon as they saw a gap, they did so again, their objective being to fill the ship as much as possible since it brought them more money. They worked on the board ships anchored in the middle of the harbour.

### **The Bato Dilo/Water lily worker**

This was possibly the most tedious of all occupations. The 'water lily' was a small motorboat equipped with a water tank; its duty was to ply between the larger ships in the harbour, bringing their provision of clean water. The status of the 'water lily worker' was inferior to the *Zenfan Balye* because their salary was lower and their work was supposedly 'lighter', as opposed to Dockers and Stevedores. It is true that working more than the imposed quota was the goal for all the employees, since it was their only way of making a bit more money at the end of the day.

The workers had an informal help system; if a worker was sick or could not come to work for some reasons, the co-workers would clock in for him. This enabled the absent worker to receive his wages for the work he did not do. This enhanced solidarity among them. Teamwork was also important for safety reasons; the *trimers*, for instance, relied heavily on their teammates because the work conditions were so harsh that they could be asphyxiated in the hold; each man watched for his own life as well as for his co-worker's. Even the *Kouder*, *ferblantier* (tinsmith) and carpenters worked in teams because they had a quota to fill.

Work in the port revolved around the arrival of ships; sometimes there were too few ships and too many employees. The workers had a system called '*la monai deluile*', which meant that they gave the foreman a portion of the day's wages so that they would be chosen for work the next day. The bribe appears high: in 1966, for a *zenfan balye*, the foreman took 80 cents from the daily wages of Rs.1.80.

### **The Employers**

The Association of Port Employers regrouped large companies such as the Albion Docks, Mauritius Docks, Desmarais, Blyth, Taylor & Smith, and Scott & Co Ltd., among others. The 1970s witnessed a merger between the Albion Docks and the Mauritius Docks, both of which handled sugar exports exclusively. Blyth, Desmarais and Taylor & Smith merged into one big company, which dealt with the rest of the cargo and some of the sugar. Scott & Co Ltd. imported rice and other consumer goods until the advent of the State Trading Corporation in the 1980s.

The *Vrac* was salutary for the dock companies and the sugar estates; it enabled, among other things, higher productivity, the fulfillment of international quota and employment of a smaller workforce, which translated into huge profits for the companies. However, port workers saw the creation of the *Vrac* in a very different light. The last Dockers from Albion/Mauritius Docks were dismissed in 1981 and shortly after that, in 1982, the Cargo Handling Corporation rose from the ashes of the Blyth, Desmarais and Taylor & Smith conglomerate. This major re-configuration was, in fact, an electoral promise between the MMM and its electorate, which, at the time, consisted mainly of working class families. The 1971 strike and the massive lay-off in 1979, 1980 and 1981 were still fresh in people's memories and the prominence of the MMM in all of the major Trade Unions had most probably a lot to do with the legendary '60 zero' victory in the 1982 elections. Few of the formerly discharged workers were recalled to work for the newly-minted Cargo Handling Corporation.

### **Political Contribution**

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The 1938 strike was the first General Strike ever to occur in Mauritius and was started by port workers. Their example was followed by many others: sugar workers in 1938 and 1943 and many successive ones years later. Since the strike of 1938, Unions meet employers to discuss terms and conditions for reforms for the employees.

The strikes of 1971 brought the political presence of port workers to the level of national awareness. The strikes spread from the sugar estates to aloe sack factories and other sectors of the economy. This forced the Labor Government to declare a state of emergency; trade unionists were arrested and imprisoned without trial, and all the GWF activities were suspended. In 1982, the political savviness of port workers was felt even more strongly when the Coalition Government of MMM, MSM and PSM came to power.

As a result of this strike, the decision to create the Bulk Sugar Terminal emerged. In Mauritius, it was commonly called the *VRAC*,<sup>442</sup> which is another attestation of the many changes incurred in the port and Sugar Industry. With *VRAC*, the sugar was pumped directly into the ship, rendering Dockers and associate port workers obsolete.

The role of Trade Unions must also be highlighted as they have not always worked in the best interests of the port workers. Before 1971, the Trade Union for the Port Workers, *The Port Authority and Other Workers Union (PAOWU)* had signed a contract in 1968, with the Association of the Port Employers that there would not be any litigious relations between them and the Union, which went against the employees' interest. The reluctance of Eliezer Francois, the leader and the

PAOWU, to take any action concerning the employees' complaints led to the creation of the *Port Louis Harbour and General Workers' Union*, founded by the leader of the MMM,<sup>443</sup> Paul Berenger, who called for a General Strike in the port in solidarity with the workers in Transport Industry.

The 1971 strike, more than any other event, was crucial for the future of harbour workers. Even if the strike did not start in the port itself, one of the employees' objectives was the readjustment of their pay. This strike demonstrated the political and economic significance of the port and its repercussions on other sectors. This strike was necessary and inevitable because employers were not in favour of demands made by workers.

Although the 1970s are considered as glorious years of Trade Union activity, there is another history yet to be written concerning the emergence of communalism and division among the working classes, which emerges ironically at the same time. According to Fortune, a full historical investigation is required into the political movement of the 1970s and 1980s and whether it was responsible, among other things, for the propaganda concerning race and the supposed 'labour aristocracy' status of port workers. Was it done as a deliberate move to curtail the port workers' political strength in Mauritian society? Fortune questions how a political movement as such which gathered itself under the slogan 'One People, One Nation' and was sustained entirely upon working class efforts would create racially charged dissension as a means of political strategy.

In this propaganda, race and the supposed wealth of Creole port workers, mostly urban dwellers, was pitched against the much documented stark poverty of rural field labourers, rekindling old tension between these two communities. The propaganda worked well, according to Fortune, in the already racially charged atmosphere of Mauritius of late 1970s and early 1980s, with the riots of 1965 and 1968 only a decade or so ago. The racial discourse concerning the riots of 1965 between Hindus and Creoles, and 1968 between Creoles and Muslims, the strikes of 1971 and the elections of 1982 and how the subject of race was addressed or excluded in the political discourse are part of the history of neglect of port workers. This deserves further study. Furthermore, the ethnic composition of the population working in the port was used to justify the supposed racial homogeneity that the Trade Unions of the 1970s and the elections of the 1980s had brought back to the surface. The historical literature available, however, paints a picture of the port as a racially diverse sector since the early days of the Colony. To think therefore, that in the 1970s and 1980s, the port suddenly became racially homogenous is rather hard to believe. The Trade Union leader of the port workers in 1938 was no less than Sandivi, of Indian origin as were many port workers and in his grandson's words, a 'Creole Malbar'.<sup>444</sup>

## 4. CHINESE IMMIGRATION

The migration pattern of the Chinese can be characterized as tropical, coastal and urban. This is due to economic opportunities available in the Southeast Asia and the Caribbean “because of European exploitation and investment in these areas during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>445</sup> The proximity of China and Southeast Asia and the climatic similarity of the Tropics to the South China provinces may have contributed to the concentration of Chinese in those areas. Furthermore, the restriction imposed on Chinese immigrants in countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA and South Africa, limited the Chinese immigrant’s choice. The tendency for Chinese immigrants to move towards the South may be due to the historical fact that invasion was from the North, and migration towards the South. This was probably natural to some ethnic communities, such as the Hakka people, a group who trekked historically from the North towards the Southeast coast. The North, in the minds of the Chinese, often signified danger and the South prosperity: “The Southeast Asia along the shore of the Gulf of Siam, the west coast of Malaya and the western part of the North coast of Java is the largest concentrations of Chinese. In the Caribbean, they found mostly in Cuba, Jamaica and Trinidad. In Africa, the Chinese population is far more numerous on the islands of Mauritius and Madagascar than on the continent itself.”<sup>446</sup>

### First Presence of the Chinese in Mauritius

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When the Dutch arrived, labour was brought from Batavia, which at the time was mostly composed of Chinese immigrants, traders and victims of kidnapping.<sup>447</sup> However “there are no known descendants on the island from this period.”<sup>448</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, colonized by the French and the British, Mauritius became a colony deeply dependent on slave labor for its plantation workforce. The presence of Chinese slaves in the history of the country is specific to a short period of time and a small group of individuals. Only two persons from Macao are listed on the Register of the Government slaves. In 1792, a 60-year old male Chinese slave is recorded as having died in Flacq. “Another, Jean Benoit, born on the Isle de France of Chinese parents, is reported as having died in the same region, in 1791.”<sup>449</sup> Louis Vigoureux, a slave-owner manumitted two Chinese slaves, Gratia and Pauline from Canton, in 1745.<sup>450</sup> The manumission of Chinese slaves created a free Chinese community in the Isle de France.<sup>451</sup> “But they became gradually absorbed into the Creole population.”<sup>452</sup> Some other 300 Chinese slaves were also captured and brought to Mauritius.<sup>453</sup>

### Chinese Coolies

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There were several attempts, during the British period, to import Chinese labourers to the island. Unfortunately, many of them were unsuccessful. In July 1811, Governor Farquhar asked the Governor of Java, Sir Stanford Raffles, to send Chinese labourers. When the Chinese arrived in Mauritius, Governor Farquhar found himself faced with a “parcel of vicious and vagabond Chinese artisans and outcasts,”<sup>454</sup> instead of the hardworking men he expected. They were eventually sent back. Around 1828, another attempt was made to recruit Chinese labourers. The scheme, established by William Gordon, who ascertained that Chinese could be hired without difficulty as indentured agricultural servants, was put into practice. “A number of labourers were recruited from Penang and Singapore, but when they arrived in Mauritius, they were not satisfied with the terms and conditions of their contracts. They eventually abandoned their work and became vagrants.”<sup>455</sup>

An increasing flow of Chinese immigrants occurred from 1840 to 1844, when emigration was temporarily suspended in India, and the Government turned towards the Chinese as a source of labour despite its past negative experiences with the latter. During that period, 8,000 Chinese landed in Mauritius, 3,000 between December 1840 and July 1843 and 5,000 up to 1844. The Chinese were then “seen as the saviours of the sugar economy,”<sup>456</sup> but cases of bad attitude and/or ill-treatment were still very present. James Ng and Marina Carter (2009) remarked that in a few cases, they found that the Chinese were not seen as ‘victims’ but rather as ‘instigators’ of disorder,<sup>457</sup> for example, the case of 18 Chinese working on the Queen Victoria Estate. The latter complained of ill-treatment on the part of an Indian *Sirdar* and a Creole overseer, but they were punished with 8 days in prison and a salary deduction for acting in a threatening manner. Other

incidents did take place: in December 1843, “Ajee, a Chinese carpenter employed by Bestel in Plaines Wilhems complained of assault by a group of Indians.”<sup>458</sup>

### **Chinese Presence in Commerce and Free Chinese immigrants**

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According to Ly-Tio-Fane-Pineo (1985), the foundations for a permanent Chinese settlement in Western Indian Ocean were laid by Robert Farquhar, the first British Governor of Mauritius. He believed that Chinese immigrants would greatly contribute to the development of the country. In parallel with the importation of Chinese labour, came free Chinese migrants. The arrival of this type of migrant coincided with a boom in the economic expansion of Mauritius for the next century.

It all started, when Hayme, a Chinese who settled in Mauritius petitioned in 1821 to recruit Chinese at his own expenses; he received the full support of the Governor Farquhar. The latter gave him “the assurances that the immigrants he would bring back would be welcomed to the government.”<sup>459</sup> By 1826, Hayme returned back with 5 associates: Whampoo, Hankee, Nghien, Hakkim and Ahim. The men Hayme brought in Mauritius were clearly merchants and traders.<sup>460</sup> During the war in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Nanking Treaty 1842, small traders were ruined by the Traid organisation. These traders either had to associate with the “Traid” or move to Canton to work in port activities. Knowing that his men were not coolies, but business men, and that a labourer was the lowest social class, Hayme made sure to restrict community activities to retail trading since working as a labourer would “lower the social placement of the community.”<sup>461</sup> A list of 26 Chinese in the Faubourg de l’Est in the year 1828 shows the activities of the Chinese. Of the 26, 10 of them were “*colporteurs*”, 12 were merchants, 2 dressmakers and one waterman (*batelier*) and carpenter.<sup>462</sup>

Most immigrants came with the intention of doing commerce. They would request a permit of two to six months, which allowed them enough time to sell their merchandise brought along to Mauritius. James Ng also referred to a category of Chinese immigrants as “*les voyageurs de commerce*”. This category of individuals’ tasks was to make sure that the goods ordered from Asia reached their destination and were in good condition. Once their job was accomplished, they would, most of the time, be employed by merchants, as “*commis*” until the expiring date of their stay in Mauritius. At the end of their residential permit, some would extend their permits, while others would either continue working for big merchants such as Hayme, who employed them, or they would be self-employed.<sup>463</sup>

Chinese businessmen, such as Hayme and Ahine, were very autonomous and resourceful.<sup>464</sup> They engaged in activities that were exclusively done by the Whites. They would import goods in large quantities together with some Chinese labour. Their shops were never out of stock and their prices would defy any competition.<sup>465</sup> Furthermore, the social transformation which occurred in Mauritius from the 1830s, with the liberation of slaves and the arrival of indentured labourers, offered more trade prospects to the Chinese. The Chinese set up their businesses at strategic points and received a type of clientele who “were not readily accepted by the Europeans.” In Port Louis, they settled between “le camp des noirs” and “le camp des Malabar”<sup>466</sup> and traded between these two local communities.

Their commerce expanded through rural, as well as urban, areas. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese population was geographically well distributed: “The network of village and estate shops was so extensive that small groups of Chinese were presented in almost every hamlet on Mauritius.”<sup>467</sup> They would engage in various activities but retail trading remained the most prominent.

The economic rise of the Chinese created a certain phobia and jealousy among the White population. On the 27 October 1843, a petition was signed by most traders of European origins about the suspicious provision of goods by the Chinese. The petition did not get through, as it was said to be unfounded. However, some Chinese entered into other illegal or rather, as a journalist of *Radical* (Newspaper) described them, ingenious activities. The system of retailing introduced by the Chinese demonstrated their ability to do business with other people and adapt themselves to the local way of living.

## Success of Chinese Commerce

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The success and ability of the Chinese in doing business is believed to lie in their unique family, community and kinship ties. There were different strategies which the Chinese have established to help their fellow countrymen. The “cycle” was a form of credit organization where a group of people would contribute a fixed amount monthly, which would then be lent to the person offering the highest interest or to each person, in turn, according to the participants’ names which had been drawn. The “cycle” was used to help an individual who wanted to open a shop at the beginning of his career.<sup>468</sup> Furthermore, Chinese shops in Port Louis would help to accommodate a Chinese retailer coming from rural areas who had come to Port Louis to purchase their goods. Having done so, he would stay at a “Kou-on”, a place where he could keep his purchases and spend the night before returning to his shop. People, having the same patronym, would usually stay together and, over time, each clan would have their own “Kou-on.”<sup>469</sup> The Chief, representing the Chinese community known as the “Kapitan”, was a very important element among the Chinese community. He stood for the community in the presence of the Governor and ensured that his compatriots were being provided with necessary facilities. The contribution of the clans was vital to the construction of the Chinese community.

The Chinese community appeared to be a well-knit and homogenous one. Nevertheless, divisions existed and each group had different customs, spoken languages, and ways of living. The majority of the Chinese came from the Province of Kwangtung, whose capital is Canton; others came from the Province of Fukien and Hainam Island. The people who came from Kwantung were divided into two groups. The Nam-Shun originated from Nam Hoi and Shuntack, and the Hakkas originated from Cahin Chu, also known as Keh-Long: “The Hakkas are considered as people of mixed blood and are called “Macayah.”<sup>470</sup>

Before the arrival of the Hakkas in Mauritius, the Cantonese and the Fukienese were the only ones holding political and cultural power. The death of Afan Tank Wen, the second leader after Hayme in June 1900, provided the opportunity to the Hakkas to challenge the hegemony established by the Cantonese. Each group wanted to fight to gain leadership over Cohan Tai pagoda, the religious and political headquarters of the community. The fight for power and leadership among the different ethnic groups caused great disturbance of the public peace. The conflict required the arbitration of the Supreme Court which issued a decree on the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1906. It was decided that 15 members of different ethnic groups would manage the pagoda; 5 of these would always be from the Canton tribe, 5 of the Hakka tribe and 5 of the Fukien tribe. According to Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo (1985), the sharing of power caused a “break with the tradition which vested absolute authority in an elected leader” and “destroyed the delicate mechanism by which unity within the community was maintained; it also curtailed the leader’s prestige in conducting his negotiations with the government.”<sup>471</sup> The fierce division and competition among the community itself led to the gradual loss of the Chinese power in Mauritius.

## Success v/s Decline of the Chinese Community

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Today, faced with the rapid changes that Mauritius is undergoing, many Chinese, particularly of the older generation, feel nostalgic about their past life in Mauritius. The loss of their “Chineseness” is decried. Furthermore, the division into ethnic groups and competition between different clans for political power marked the beginning of a profound change in the community’s functioning. The change had other consequences for the ways Chinese people live, “causing them to lose more and more their culture”, and adopt a more “European” way of life. These changes are very visible and members of the Chinese community are rather desperate about the situation as their fellow countrymen turn a blind eye on their millennium of culture and traditions and emigrate to other countries for better economic prospects.

The Chinese present an interesting contrast to the situation of the *Gens de Couleur*, discussed earlier. The Chinese did not emigrate massively at Independence (1968) and there appears to be less concern about how others view them. Emigration has occurred in the past few years, as with other communities, due to what is perceived as low salaries. There is also a note of despair among some: “I find that the Chinese are losing their culture, it breaks our hearts.”<sup>472</sup> Furthermore, they associate their community’s decline with the economical and social development of the community;

*"[...] unfortunately today, what do we find, the Chinese community is disappearing. Formally we were 30,000, today it is 18,000. It is because of what? Because of brain drain. There is no meritocracy; they feel that [...] what's the use of investing in Pound Sterling, in Euros, Dollars, US Dollars in university studies and come back with meek salary of Mauritian devalued money. So they prefer to stay abroad. It is said that outside Mauritius, you have more Sino-Mauritians than inside today."<sup>473</sup>*

However, those who remember these sufferings have preserved and transmitted to their children their culture, especially their strong attachment to their ancestors' country of origin: *"Fortunately, we were not cut off from our roots in the Mei Xian. There still exists a tradition which specifies that when a boy is born in Mauritius, he should be also registered in the region of his ancestors. We are also aware of where our parents and grandparents lived and grew up."<sup>474</sup>* These links were at the very heart of the Chinese culture. The recognition and respect of the young for the older generations have not changed: *"They have prolonged the road for us, pouring their sweat and their tears, the least we can do now is to pay tribute to them. They contributed to what made Mauritius what it is today."<sup>475</sup>*

The new generations, born in Mauritius, also bear traces of the colonial influences in their naming pattern. The Chinese, looking for social mobility, needed to be accepted by the rest of the population. They needed to gain access to education and other facilities for that to happen. In almost every facet of their lives, they had to "forget" their ancestral culture and adopt the norms of the Colonial Powers.

*"Whenever they had to open a shop, they had to seek the blessing of the oligarchy. This where we found the Chinese, most of them were Christianised. Some of you will not agree with me when I say that most of the Chinese were not converted "à leur propre gré". Indirectly [...] was imposed on them. Because the doors of the Lorettes, the doors of Priest running colleges. If you don't bear the name, the Christian name, you will not gain access to such colleges."<sup>476</sup>*

*"Many Chinese converted because they had to have access to education; otherwise, they would be condemned to stay in the shop. From generation to generation, they would be the same shopkeepers; there would be no social mobility. That's why, in spite of being converted, they still retain their Chineseness, they still retain their souls."<sup>477</sup>*

The willingness to change even their identity was influenced by the need to escape through education the form of "slavish" life they lived. Behind the doors of the lucrative Chinese shops hid unspoken sufferings. In colonial times, anyone other than the Europeans and their descendants was a victim of their domination and the Chinese felt they were prejudiced against in the same way as any member of the other communities. Most of them suffered the dominations of the sugar magnate.

*"We suffer the same faith, we suffer the same destiny, we get the same destiny. The liberated slaves, indentured labour and the free immigrants shared the same common destiny. When the wipe of colonialism is slashed, no one was spared. Even the Chinese shopkeeper, he has to bear. Do you know what injustices the Chinese suffered when they run a shop? [...] you can't collect your money at the end of the year, the sugar magnates, you have to provide them with gifts. You must provide them with "cadeau l'année". The contribution of the shopkeepers cannot be underestimated. They have introduced the system of credit, "carnet la boutik", to feed the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers"<sup>478</sup>*

*"The shopkeeper is a sort of adviser, banker, moral support to them. So they shared the same faith. The Chinese shopkeepers, they work day and night to feed the hungry population. It is not true to say that the Chinese have been privileged. It is not true because, they, too, were looked down upon by the colonial powers [...] today, if we have seen the disappearance of the Chinese shops in the villages, it is because they have considered it a sort/form of slavery. Life in the shop is a sort of slavery; day and night, he has to feed the whole village. He is the first to wake up and the last to go to bed."<sup>479</sup>*

These Chinese shops have greatly contributed to the development of rural areas and their contribution cannot be underestimated;

*“As a Minority in Mauritius, the contribution of the Chinese Community has often been overlooked. It nevertheless brought enormous changes in terms of knowledge of the land, innovative ideas, leadership and enhanced our local cultural and religious diversity.”<sup>480</sup>*

Till now, these shops were among the most visible monuments of the Chinese cultural heritage. Their involvement in the wider community was very important; they provided the basic necessities of poor villages, helped in their development and contributed to a “modern Mauritius”. They were completely integrated in the local context at the risk of losing their own culture and becoming a “true” Mauritian:

*« S’il y a une valeur culturelle chinoise qui se perd à Maurice selon lui, c’est la « la langue des ancêtres [...] ce n’est pas négatif à 100% car cela veut dire que les Mauriciens Chinois vivent plus comme des Mauriciens que comme des Chinois »<sup>481</sup>*

## CONCLUSION

The contribution of the Chinese, in the view of more than one, was seen as unsung in the economic development of the country. Their apparent economic success shadows came from labour, callous living conditions and dominations which they had to endure for almost two centuries during their presence in Mauritius. The new generations of Sino-Mauritians have been spared all these sufferings, at the cost of “forgetting” their roots and culture. The contribution of this community lies beyond the field of economic development; they nurtured relationships both within and outside their communities and contributed to the well-being of every Mauritian. They lived within every community of the island, irrespective of ethnic barriers, making their own contribution to the development of the country through innovative ways of helping people and developing business.

However, while looking forward to the younger generations moving up the social ladder, the community has been faced with a loss of memory, relegating its past sufferings and conditions. To some extent, the community preserves only the legendary hardworking capacities of the Chinese people. History itself has played a role in this parody of a depiction of this community which has often been limited to hard labour or to distinctive figure of the Chinese and their astonishing economic development over the last two centuries. These people fled their countries to form new communities all over the world. Most of them would not return to China after the Communist take-over and found no other solution, but to stay, and secure their future, in their adopted countries.

Nowadays, after an incredible economic success, the Chinese seem to witness a decline in their community due to various factors. Many young Sino-Mauritians are looking for better prospects elsewhere in the world; turning a blind eye to what their parents and grandparents had built through will-power and hard work. There is an outcry in the community that they should be given due recognition for their contribution to the overall development of the country; a recognition by all Mauritians for their history and past sufferings in the hope that they may revive the community, by convincing younger generations to stay and build a bright future for this country, to which they now belong.

## 5. INDIAN CHRISTIANS

### Introduction

According to the 1952 census, 9,000 persons were registered as belonging to the group of Indo-Christians, forming around 3½% of the population; Whether this figure has remained constant is difficult to say; since 1982, no mention is made of ethnic denominations in the Census.<sup>482</sup> The bare fact is that out of 413,000 persons, registered as Christians in the Housing and Population Census of 2000,<sup>483</sup> it is clear that a good many among them are of strong Indian descent, when they do not claim ancestry as Chinese or Europeans, the remaining Christians being more akin to people of African and Malagasy descent in varying degrees. According to the Indo-Mauritian Catholic Association (IMCA), an association founded in 1952 which claims to represent persons of the Catholic faith, but who have in no way given up the cultural appartenance proper to the land of their ancestors, these should be around 50,000. This short stay aims to trace the epic story of persons of Indian origin who have, throughout Mauritian history, been converted to Christianity

### Presence of Christians in the early years

#### *Dutch period*

The presence of Christians of Indian origin can be traced back to the early days of colonization on the island. These were individuals recruited from Dutch outposts in India and converted into Christians, bearing such names as Anna of Bengal, Simon of Ceylon and John of Goa, to quote but a few. The treatment meted out to them did not differ from that suffered by Malagasy slaves. No wonder they were the first among the freedom fighters to rise against their masters during the uprising which occurred in 1695 and 1706 and which led to the evacuation of the island by the Dutch in 1710.<sup>484</sup>

#### *French occupation (1715 - 1810)*

Besides the presence of African and Malagasy slaves, the French occupation was characterized by the arrival of both free workers, but also slaves from French outposts in India; they originated from Pondicherry, Karikal, Yanaon and Bengal. J.M. Filliot estimates that some 12% slaves and free workers were brought in from the sub-continent during the French occupation.<sup>485</sup>

Madagascar	36,000	40%
West Africa	2,700	3%
East African coast	40,500	45%
India	<u>10,800</u>	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>90,000</u></b>	

(Source: Filiot, 'Traité des esclaves vers les Mascareignes au 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle').

Some of them were Christians by birth, being given that Christianity had been introduced in India by St. Thomas, one of the apostle of Jesus Christ, as far back as 52 AD; Others were, *de facto*, converted to Christianity and had to abandon their native religions, since Roman Catholicism was the only religion to be practised.<sup>486</sup> This was in accordance with the *Letters Patents* of 1723, which read as follows (Article 2): "*interdisons tout exercice d'autres religions que catholique romaine.*"<sup>487</sup> On the other hand, in accordance with Article 1 of the same *Code Noir* enacted in 1724, all slaves had to be converted : « *Tous les esclaves qui se trouvent dans les îles de Bourbon et de l'Isle de France et autres établissements voisins seront instruits dans la religion catholique apostolique et romaine et baptisés.* »

Being slaves they, *de facto*, had no right to their family names, but only first names "*l'esclave au même titre que l'enfant naturel n'a droit qu'au prénom,*"<sup>488</sup> and these names had invariably to be of European resonance. As slaves, they changed their eating habits and traditional dress and gradually forwent their linguistic heritage. The process of "deculturation" was thus complete.

Indian slaves won fame for their ability to prepare food and were preferred to their African counterparts as domestic servants and often spared from hard labour. Free slaves, recruited since Mahé de Labourdonnais as skilled workers and artisans, proved to be essential in the building and construction sector. Throughout the whole French occupation, slaves of Indian origin were not differently treated to other slaves, and some joined the ranks of the maroons. The history of marooned slaves bears witness to an extract of *Le Nouvelliste*, dated 1st May 1802.

« Un homme Caesar de caste indienne âgé d'environ 30 ans, est absent de l'habitation de madame Gimel depuis environ deux mois on le soupçonne du côté de la grande rivière ; le dit noir se dit quelque fois libre. On prie les personnes qui en auraient connaissance d'en donner avis à la dite dame Gimel ou au cite du port il y aura récompense<sup>489</sup> »

Although all non-Whites were assimilated as slaves, manumitted and enfranchised slaves could buy land and maintain slaves themselves. Article 53 of the *Code Noir* reads as follows: “Octroyons aux affranchis les memes droits, privilegès et immunités dont jouissent les personnes nées libres”.<sup>490</sup>

(Eng. Trans. “We grant freed slaves the same rights and privileges and freedoms enjoyed by people born free”).

Enfranchised and manumitted slaves were more numerous amongst slaves of Indian origin and their descendants.

In his work on land acquisition by slaves and indentured labour, Richard Allen has highlighted on the ownership of land by the *gens de couleur*, a majority of whom were free Indians from Pondichery. For the period covering 1766 - 1809, 17,460 *arpents* were owned by free Africans and Indians classified as *gens de couleur*.<sup>491</sup> The enactment of the law of Emancipation of 1767 in the code *Delaleu* gives recognition to the presence of a third category of individuals, as opposed to the whites and the slaves. A majority of the people falling in this category were of Indian origin. Due to gender imbalance, many Indian slaves had no alternative but to marry women slaves, both of Malagasy and Mozambican origins.

On the other hand, in view of the privileged position held by female slaves of Indian origin as maid servants, many became concubines of their white masters; their off-springs gave rise to anew class of Indo-Europeans who later joined the ranks of ‘White Creoles’, known as *Gens de Couleur*. No wonder the free people, who in 1767 stood at 587 individuals, had increased to 5,912, in less than 40 years.<sup>492</sup> During the second and last part of the French occupation, free Indians, mostly originating from Pondichéry, continued to be encouraged to settle in isle de France; These were a special class of workers engaged as artisans in the construction of fortifications and public buildings and other special areas such as boat-building, joiners, craftsmen and soon emerged as a new class of people.

In the main, they settled on the Northern outskirts of Port Louis and developed the pattern of a south Indian village to the extent that it became known as *Camp des Malabars* where a place of worship was built in 1778. The free Christians from Pondichery won the appreciation of the Authorities and were granted concessions, not only in the *Camp des Malabars*, but in other districts as well. Soon, a new elite sprung among the educated and well-off among them. The Nalletamby family had a splendid colonial manor at Bourbon Street, which was requisitioned by Governor Isidore Decaen in 1806 to house the Commander of the French forces, General M. Vandermarsen.

For long, although Christians, the inhabitants of the *Camp de Malabars*, continued to be dressed in their traditional costumes and lived in endogamy, while others contacted marriages with the *petits blancs*, their off-springs emerged as an elite in the class of *Gens de Couleur*. Education was a priority, Marcelin Savrimoutou was the first person of Indian origin to become Laureate in 1896. In 1912, Louis Gyanadicrayen Arlanda was appointed as nominee to sit in the Legislative Assembly, but following protest by representative of Indian immigrants, Dr. Hassen Sakir was appointed in his place.<sup>493</sup> Soon also, Dr. Xavier Nalletamby, a descendant of the Catholics of Pondicherry, who studied Medicine at Edinburgh, was appointed as nominee in 1901.<sup>494</sup>

As regards the descendants of slaves who came from India during the whole French occupation, the process of assimilation to their masters’ culture and inter-marriages with slaves of African and

Malagasy origin was such that, according to Hazareesing,<sup>495</sup> when the first Indian indentured labourers landed, they hardly noticed any trace of Indian culture among them.

### **Indo-Christians, in the context of indentured labour, 1829-1923**

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The British occupation, unlike the French, was to witness the surge of massive immigration from India, so much so that in less than three-fourths of a century, Indian immigrants and their descendants formed some 2/3 of the population of the colony. In fact, out of the 452,000 workers and their families, who came under the indentured immigration, only 167,000 left at the end of their contracts of service.<sup>496</sup>

One noticeable characteristic was that only a small minority among them were Christians, for most belonged to the Hindu faith, and some 14 % among them professed the Muslim faith. The fact that a majority of immigrants hailed from North-Eastern Provinces, where Christianity was not generally followed, explains this. According to the 1911 Census, only 3.1% of immigrants were registered as Christians, and most of these originated from Southern India. Although the British had conquered India, unlike the Portuguese, and later on the French, they did not have for set policy to convert the inhabitants to Christianity.<sup>497</sup> This explains, according to historians, the success of the East India Company whose set objective was trade and commerce.<sup>498</sup> Officially, in the Colony of Mauritius, the British had the same policy. In 1837, Reverend Dean of the Anglican Church stated in the wake of steady arrival of Indian immigrants:

*“Twelve thousand workers have arrived and ten thousand others are awaited; they are adults of different age, but I keep little hope of their conversion into Christians. In any case, any attempt to interfere in their practices, which all interested parties hold in respect, can put fire to the flames.”<sup>499</sup>*

However, two decades after the immigration had started, in 1856, the Anglican Diocese was assisted in its task by the appointment of Reverend Stephen Hobbes and Paul Ansorgé to preach the Gospel to Indian immigrants. This marked the beginning of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The mission of CMS was clearly defined “as to operate for the benefit of the coolie immigrants.”<sup>500</sup>

The mission operated in the Orphan Asylum and Orphanage and other charitable organizations and put strong emphasis on primary education. By 1899, 29 primary schools were being run under the ambit of the CMS. These Anglican schools were later on to be transferred to the Government and became known as Government schools, as opposed to Roman Catholic Schools, RCA. In spite of considerable efforts over half a century, only 1895 persons were converted as Christians by the Anglican Church.<sup>501</sup> The mitigated success of the CMS can partly be explained by the fact that by 1861, the Catholic diocese, under Catholic Bishop W.A.B Collier, set up in its turn a Catholic Indian Mission. The desire for mass conversion of Indian immigrants to Christianity continued to be a pious vow. In 1875, the *Cernéen* wrote: “To introduce Christianity among all these pagans is the surest way to get them civilized, rather than introducing compulsory education. The first objective would illuminate their spirit by revealing the Truth, the second objective might well get them out of the darkness with which their minds are burdened”.<sup>502</sup>

The *Mission Indienne*, of the Catholic Diocese, succeeded in maintaining its presence in certain areas of the island, more especially among Tamil estate workers in areas such as Mont Roches, Stanley, Flacq, Quartier Militaire, L’Espérance, Poudre d’Or and Souillac.<sup>503</sup>

In 1872, the Indo-Catholics in the area of Stanley set up a small chapel on a plot of land donated to the Port Louis Diocese by the former Stanley Sugar Estate owner and Manager, Sir Cécilcourt Antelme. It was, according to Amédée Nagapen, a small building (130’ X 100’) with a roof made of thatched grass and a floor and walls plastered with cow dung. The hall was built, as a result of the collective efforts of the older generation of Indo-Christian immigrants from what is today, Tamil Nadu. This hall became a meeting place for Indo-Catholics where Father Puchinelli, who had served in South India, celebrated mass in Tamil and gave religious instruction. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new chapel was built to meet the needs of an ever-increasing number of parishioners. The building was pulled down to make way for the construction of the new Parish Church of St. Anne in 1971.<sup>504</sup> The Old Chapel, built in 1872, was also renovated to serve as Parish Hall and stands in front of the new Church.

It is also in Stanley that a group of hard core Indo-Christians set up, in 1952, the Indo-Mauritian Catholic Association (IMCA) under the leadership of John Thivy, a former Indian Commissioner. Through the Association, certain rituals, proper to the Orthodox Church of Southern India, are celebrated during certain festivities of the Catholic Church. Tamil Christians all wear the proper traditional dress in Southern India. Certain Indian festivals which are not connected with the Hindu rituals such as Divali are also celebrated.<sup>505</sup>

This association is currently making a plea for the chapel to be declared as a '*lieu de mémoire*' (place of memory) and its rightful place on the National Heritage list.

#### **Recommendation**

1. To perpetuate the memory of the first Indo-Christians, who came under Indentured immigration, the Parish Hall, constructed in 1872 and located within the precincts of the St. Anne Catholic Church in Stanley Rose Hill, be proclaimed as a site of memory and be proposed as a National Heritage Site.

## 6. THE MÉTAYERS AND ORIGINAL RICHE TERRE PLANTERS

The history of the *métayers* (share croppers) was brought to the Commission's attention as a result of representations made by *métayers* in the South of Mauritius. The Commission decided to investigate further for several reasons. First, although they have grown sugar since the days of indenture (1840s), they have never owned the land and can be evicted at any time. They have, like many other groups in Mauritius, been the victims of restructuring of the Sugar Industry. A history of metayage appears in Volume 2 and in Volume 4. In the past, eviction could occur at any time, when their leases ended, when sugar was no longer required, or when the land was required for other more profitable purposes. What is the future of *métayers* in the new economic configuration? What future do they have? Today, the lands which they occupy and have been associated with for generations, considered 'marginal' at the time, have been 're-labelled' 'strategic' zones today, and are worth millions. The sugar estates have played their historic role, as they always have; they have disposed of labour when no longer required, and shifted labour where work was required, intimidated and used all the legal arsenal at their disposal to maintain their property. What is reprehensible is the role of Public Officials who have failed in their commitment to maintain the 'public interest' and even disregarded Privy Council judgements.

A much publicized agreement was signed between the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association and the Government before the elections of 2010. The Commission learnt that the *métayers* in the South had not participated in discussions, nor even seen the Agreement, signed on their behalf, with the exception of the Secretary of the Association who had not informed his members or the President of the Association. A meeting of *métayers* in the South was convened. The *métayers* felt they had been abandoned by the Democratisation Committee and by a Member of Parliament at that time, who had represented them before. According to them, some of their members have been "bought" by the sugar estate to accept less better terms. None were aware of the terms of the Agreement signed on their behalf. They felt that, had it not been for the '*vendeurs*' (traitors), they would have got the land that they wanted. Some have an emotional attachment to the land which they have worked on for generations; they did not want any other land. Some of the lands proposed for swapping were too far away. Other lands were being given on hilly land and on hunting land which was not flat and which makes harvest difficult and impossible to mechanise. They felt very strongly about their land. They had cleared and planted it, made it rich and valuable land for many years. The sugar estates have made much profit from their labour, when selling sugar, but none of this counted in assessing the value of land. The role of Surveyors and Notaries in depriving people of their land was decried.

It is clear that the judgements of the Supreme Court, presided by Judges Lallah and Boolell, as well as that of the Privy Council of 1995, were ignored by those negotiating and signing the new Agreement.

Despite the fact they were advised not to sign the Agreement with the sugar estate, many did so and regret it today. Today the *métayers* want reparations for having performed labour for the sugar industry over many generations; now, they are being asked to '*lev pake ale*' (pick up their bags and go). They also stated they had been victims of intimidation: pigs and deer have been let loose on their land to force them to leave as crops were destroyed, and fire has been set to their canes.

Many are descendants of immigrants from India who arrived in Mauritius during the period of indenture. This particular group included indentured labourers as well as free immigrants. Both were considered together, as the two groups endured the same conditions. Some families have been in *métayage* since the days of indenture. Today, as these families, under *métayage*, face a possible loss of land worked on from the indenture period.

There were three kinds of *métayers* in the area currently: the first are those who have become old and want their compensation; the second category consists of those who want to continue as *métayers*, and a third category are the younger group who wants to become the owners of the land.<sup>506</sup> In the case of Bel Ombre, according to one deponent, Mr. Ramtohul, out of 14 who had not signed the agreement, 5 or so wanted to buy the land; 3 or 4 others had accepted land swapping. Some, who accepted land swapping, did not get equal amounts: they gave up 25 *arpents* but were

offered 14 *arpents*.<sup>507</sup> In the case of the *métayers* of Bel Ombre and St. Felix, and unlike *métayers* in other areas, they were not given any option. They were convinced to accept only one offer: that of buying back their rights.

They agreed, however, that the situation had gradually improved. Many years ago, they had to give up their whole crop, while today, they give only up to 14 kilos. Previously, they only obtained part of sugar proceeds and never part of molasses or *bagasse*.<sup>508</sup>

Today, the Control Board regulates, and watches over, this process; so there is no abuse.”<sup>509</sup>

It appears that sugar estates have offered land on lease to *métayers* but have arbitrarily taken land back, without explanation or offering land in return. The case of Sewpal is one of several where 40 *arpents* of land were taken away from his father in an area called *Chazal*, causing huge loss of income to the family, a loss from which the family never recovered. The *métayers* were too poor to be able to afford Lawyers, and were unable to defend themselves.<sup>510</sup> It appears that for several years, despite an Independent State, the situation has not changed much in Mauritius.

On 16 July 2009, the *métayers* were told to go back to the sugar estate and ask to buy the land.<sup>511</sup>

They were also promised a land valuation. This report has never been circulated. Sugar Authority Officials did go there for a meeting, but *métayers* were encouraged to ‘*signer, signer*’ (‘sign, sign’). Little in the Agreement was explained to them.<sup>512</sup> There was no mention of any valuation being used to calculate compensation. Of those who have signed, many regret it.

According to one deponent,

*“Zotte pa kon zot drwa, zotte inn all signer betman maintnan ena bocoup pre regreter zotte acte ki zotte fin fer. Parski dapres mon guette conditions, li enn chos ki ti binding. Inn mette, full and final.”*<sup>513</sup>

(Eng.trans. ‘They do not know their rights and they have just signed. Now most of them are regretting having signed that document. I think the conditions-it is something that is binding, where it is full and final’).<sup>514</sup>

Why Government did not better protect the *métayers* and obtain better compensation for them in this region, is a question that the TJC was unable to answer. It was clear that many *métayers* did not know their full rights and have been unable to negotiate on a sound and equal footing. Years after the Privy Council ruling, *métayers* in Bel Ombre and St. Felix still appear to be the most vulnerable group.

According to Mr. Chauveau, the Officer responsible for small planters and *métayers* in Bel Ombre SE, the terrain was one of the most difficult.<sup>515</sup> He stated that most *métayers* were ready to disappear, due to high costs of labour and transport. To make a profit, according to him, one needed to produce about 30 tons of cane, but most were producing 14, 12, 15 tons, others 20 tons, with great difficulty.<sup>516</sup>

While it appears to be true that the future of small planters and *métayers* involved in sugar production is bleak, and especially in Bel Ombre/St. Felix, adequate compensation should have been given to the *métayers* to transfer to another field of work or other crops, at least for those still able to or willing to.<sup>517</sup>

The Mauritius Sugar Authority does not appear to have played its role fully in advising the *métayers*. When questioned however, the representative put the blame squarely on his Ministry and the Democratisation Commission. When asked about the role of the MSA in the famous Agreement, he explained that the MSA was one of three institutions represented: the Democratisation Committee, the MSPA and the State Law Office and Ministry of Agro-Industry. It was a Committee set up by the Government. MSA had the task of explaining the three options to the *métayers*.

The Committee had undertaken a preliminary evaluation of the land because the Government was ‘in a hurry’ to complete an agreement before the elections, but the representative did not have a copy of it. He also stated that Mr. Cader Sayed Hossen of the Democratisation Committee had met

with the President of the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association alone, but he was not aware of the contents of their discussion. The Agreement was signed soon after the meeting between the two persons. He also stated that a copy of the Agreement had been sent to one person in each region: Messrs. T. Ujodha, D. Mahadeo, Nuckchady and Jugoo, being members of various associations. But he was not aware whether they had circulated it to other *métayers*. He did not know whether all *métayers* knew the contents of the Agreement signed with Bel Ombre, St. Felix, or even whether they had read the Agreement before signing it. He stated further that a Technical Officer was in charge of the *métayers*, and he did not know whether he had explained all three options to the *métayers*. When asked what would happen to those who did not sign the Agreement with Bel Ombre, he stated that they would keep to the original Agreement.

It has become clear that the *métayers*, as a group, had not been consulted about the Agreement which concerned them, neither were they informed of all three options, but only of one option, option 3, 'buying back of *métayers*' rights' was pursued because it was in the best interest of the sugar estate. It appears also that there is no record of the meeting between Mr. Cader Sayed Hossen and the MSPA representative.

The Ministry of Agro-Industry stated the valuation of the land had been carried out in a transparent manner, and the Agreement was drafted with expert advice of the State Law Office. Moreover, it stated that all complaints received by *métayers* were forwarded to the MSA or Chairperson of the Democratisation Commission for their comments. It also stated that the MSA had received a copy of the valuation report for them to 'work out the figures.'<sup>518</sup>

The Agreement, signed between the Government and the MSPA, was an '*accord cadre*', (a general agreement) and this general agreement forms the basis of individual agreements that have been, or are to be, entered between individual sugar estates and their *métayers*.<sup>519</sup> The response of the Ministry, when questioned on whether it was fair that *métayers* were given only two days' notice to come and sign the Agreement, after receiving their compensation payments, the exact amount of which they were not aware, it stated that 'any reasonable person' would consider this 'a bit unfair.'<sup>520</sup>

However, the Agreement is 'monumentally vague', thus "permitting sugar estates not to make very precise commitments with respect to the historic rights of the *métayers*."<sup>521</sup>

The then Chairman of the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy stated that his role was also to review the Mauritian 'economic model.' One major activity was to advise on the future of small planters and *métayers*. He felt there was no future in sugar for small planters, and that they should abandon it, but the sugar estates wished them to continue. He defended the position of the Government and stated that had the Government not intervened in favour of *métayers*, they would never have obtained any compensation at all. He stated that he was aware that there had been cases of intimidation and that the situation in Bel Ombre was not the 'best' situation. The *métayers* deserved better conditions and better compensation, he stated. However, he added that as 'institutional memory' existed at the Ministry of Agro-Industry, if Bel Ombre decided to request permission for luxury projects, this may not be favourably viewed.<sup>522</sup>

He stated that the three options had been explained and offered to the *métayers* during meetings which he had held at Bel Ombre.<sup>523</sup> He added that this responsibility devolved to the Sugar Authority which was the implementing Agency concerning *métayers*, not the Ministry of Agro-Industry. Despite his categorical statement-"I repeat again, there is nothing which could compel a *métayer* to leave the land he is working upon if he does not wish to" it is clear that some *métayers* have been forced to leave the land without any compensation.<sup>524</sup> On the question of the *métayers* of Bel Ombre and St. Felix, he concluded that he was personally not happy with the outcome, and did not think the *métayers* of Bel Ombre had obtained a fair deal.

The Commission believes a fairer form of compensation would have been to take into account the historic rights of the *métayers* and the years of labour spent working the cane fields, clearing, weeding and maintaining it for the owners. The *métayers* deserve an apology from the State, for not having defended them appropriately and for the callous manner in which they were convened. The TJC's recommendations, therefore, go in this direction. Little can be done for those who were forced to leave before the new laws were introduced, and who left without any form of compensation. This history must, however, be documented and enter the History books.

It is regrettable that other groups have also been treated in such a cavalier fashion. The plight of the original Riche Terre planters also comes to mind.<sup>525</sup> In this case, they were sold land by a sugar estate which came soon after was compulsorily acquired by the colonial Government. A question could be posed: did the sugar estates know in advance that the land was to be compulsorily acquired? The small planters consider they were given a minimal compensation. They also stated to the Commission that they were verbally informed that they would be returned the land when the Government no longer needed it. Years later, this same plot of land was given to a group of planters and despite all their protests to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, their voices were ignored by the same Ministry. This same land now has been given to a Chinese business group. The new Riche Terre planters who were removed have since attracted much attention and been given land elsewhere, but the original Riche Terre planters have been totally ignored. Since the loss of their land, although some were able to continue on with their lives, others faced extreme financial difficulties. It appears that the 'verbal' commitment given by the Colonial Government was not considered at all by authorities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. A fairer and more just compensation be given to *métayers* based on a in-depth study and a full multidisciplinary (including historical, financial and economic) re-evaluation and assessment of their contribution to the Sugar Industry over generations since the arrival of indentured labourers to Mauritius.
2. In the case of Bel Ombre and St. Felix sugar estates, where the *métayers* have undergone severe emotional, psychological stress due to loss of land, to lack of understanding and ability to adapt to rapid and changing economic policies in their locality;
  - a. not been provided with sufficient information, advice and guidance in order that to allow them to make informed decisions and benefit from all the options present in the spirit of the various Sugar Efficiency Acts and Privy Council rulings on the issue, which was to improve the weak position of *métayers* in Mauritian economy and society and to provide greater access to land;
  - b. been left at the mercy of plantation owners who were in a stronger legal, social and economic position to impose their views.

Commission recommends reparation payments by Government and the St. Felix Sugar Estate, for moral damages, loss of historic rights and loss of income on the part of *métayers*.

3. For the original Riche Terre Planters We recommend therefore that land be given to them to set up an agricultural Cooperative as many are still in need of assistance.

### 3. Justification

- Historic rights have not been considered in the assessment of compensation for loss of land to cultivate.
- There is a strong emotional attachment to the land farmed by forefathers.
- Immense amount of agricultural activities, carried out prior to sugar cane planting and maintenance of land which the same sugar estates are now benefitting from and which have not been included in the compensation calculation.
- Property rights are not the only consideration as *métayage* has immensely benefitted the sugar estate owner: cheap labour, sugar produced on land that he would find difficult to farm (poor soil, sloping or rocky land).
- Calculation of compensation was based only on crop years.

- Absence of transparency on part of both Government, sugar estate and MSPA concerning the Agreement signed before elections between Government and representatives of Sugar producers. Numerous examples can be provided: unwillingness to divulge contents of agreement (docs.), not inviting *métayers* to take part in Agreement discussions (docs.), not sharing the results of Valuation Committee Reports (docs.).
- Unwillingness on the part of Government authorities to pursue all options possible for *métayers* or to inform them all of their rights and choosing a few hand picked 'yes men' as a screen to show that the *métayers* had been informed and contacted.
- Utter disregard for the *métayers* by the sugar estate which has such a prestigious name. The letters to come to receive compensation were sent with no names and not registered. At least one was delivered in a market and not even in an envelope.<sup>526</sup>

**CHAPTER SIX**

**RACISM, COMMUNALISM,  
CASTEISM AND OTHER DISCRIMINATORY  
PRACTICES**



## 1. RACISM

### Introduction

At a time when Mauritius is celebrated for its protection of political and economic liberties, many Mauritians still seek social justice and long for an honest reflection on the past, as well as an honest account of the present. No society can claim to have ‘progressed’, if it has a significant percentage of its population either living in poverty and/or experiencing racial or other marginalisation on a daily basis. The negative legacies of slavery and indenture are still evident in Mauritius and continue to impede social justice and, consequently, undermine political and economic liberty. This, coupled with the historical and contemporary denigration and/or ignorance of slave/indentured labourer contributions to the society, perpetuates stereotyping, racism, underdevelopment, poverty and cultural amnesia.

The Commission has investigated racism in Mauritius. In-depth qualitative primary and secondary documentation research was conducted to find out why a substantial proportion of slave descendants and persons of African and Malagasy origin are still experiencing poverty in Mauritius.

### The Construction of Racial Identity

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The term ‘discourse’ is used to describe ways of speaking which are commonly practised and specifically situated in a social environment. Identity construction, and especially the construction of racial identity, is very complex in Mauritius. Many racial identity labels have emerged from Colonialism and these continue to be used to the extent that they appear to be natural. Yet, race is a ‘social construct’; it is not something conferred at birth or by religion and is affected by social, political and cultural practices.

Descendants of slaves and persons of African and Malagasy origin continue to experience significant marginalisation and poverty in Mauritius, but these experiences vary. This is partly because Mauritius has experienced significant inter-ethnic mixing since the abolition of slavery, and partly because there were differences, to begin with, between different groups of slaves and indentured labourers. Many can trace their ancestry back to slavery and indenture, and many others cannot. Thus these identities, as well as the experiences that flow from these, are real. The Commission has also studied genealogies of many people and, therefore, can safely state that there are descendants of slaves and descendants of indentured labourers in Mauritius. The experiences of these groups are real, and such people do experience discrimination, marginalisation and poverty on the basis of their historical identity.

The Commission finds that Mauritians are deeply conscious of Culture, and diversity is celebrated. However, this also emphasises cultural difference and separation. Potentially, therefore, the celebration of diversity can divide society because the popular representation of diversity can concretise cultural difference as something that is real. The Commission has also found that there is a tendency to place groupings in a hierarchy. This establishes groups which are more valued and groups which are less valued in the nation. There is a grave danger that those less valued occupy the economic and political margins of society, whereas those most valued are offered benefits in the form of jobs, opportunities and networks usually denied to others. Our recommendations say that fair and equal opportunities in the world of work, amongst others, are pivotal in breaking entrenched racially biased hierarchies in Mauritius.

The Commission believes that the complexity of racial identity must be addressed in redressing racialised inequalities. However, the aim is not to reify<sup>527</sup> such categories and further entrench them. Greater care must be taken in the use of particular category names. Race is not fixed among Mauritians although there is agreement that certain phenotype or physical markers clearly indicate an individual’s racial identity. The history of slavery, indenture and Colonialism has been significant in the classification of individuals in Mauritius, creating enduring categories of ‘oppressors’ and ‘victims’, whose connotations have endured in contemporary society, due to enduring social stratification<sup>528</sup> based on racial classification. Thus, while our findings show that not all Franco-Mauritians perpetuate racism, it is interesting to note the extent to which racist ideas have permeated the community. Differences between groups are believed to be so substantive that it is

difficult, if not impossible, to socialise or engage with those of a different race. This was especially noted in the discussion of one Franco-Mauritian who felt that they could not really engage someone from the *cit * because their ‘worlds’ were so different. The use of biological/phenotypical<sup>529</sup> racism in language must be strongly sanctioned and treated as a form of hate speech. Such language is no longer acceptable in modern society.

There are also groups whose specific cultural identity has been ignored, in particular the *Gens de Couleur*, for example, or Indian Christians who have not had due recognition. In the case of *Gens de Couleur*, who live in a society in which whiteness is privileged and treated as the identity to aspire to, they were caught in a double-bind. They wanted to be with the ‘Whites’, but they could not because they have been identified as ‘black’. They cannot be with the ‘Blacks’ because they are judged there to be *too* white. Moreover, their ambivalence towards blackness makes it difficult for them to associate with darker-skinned Creoles. The language of class (i.e. references to class and social differences), is used to explain why that communication and interaction with darker-skinned Creoles is not possible.

### **How far are experiences of racism prevalent among the youth?**

The Commission finds that racism and the experience of race is especially important to young people in Mauritius and that experiences and practices of racism vary across identifiable ethnic groups. Online blogs, formal interviews, informal conversations and observations have led to the conclusion that the youths are frustrated by the continuation of a ‘pigmentocracy’ (social hierarchy based on the privileging of whiteness) in Mauritius. They are also frustrated by the lack of civil society’s commitment to challenging the continued construction of Mauritius as a racialised space. Experiences of racism vary across different groups, and while many young people reported friendships across ethnic and colour lines, there was definite knowledge of the racial divisions within Mauritian society. Among Creoles and those who openly accepted the designation of being a slave descendant, an important view was that the situation of Creoles was negatively affected by the majority/minority politics in the country. The view articulated was that, as a significant minority, Creoles could never obtain advantages or even basic rights in Mauritian society.

We find that race consciousness begins at a very early age, and schools are one such space where knowledge about race is formulated. The existence of racially/ethnically homogenous schools is an important issue, for it reveals some of the embedded stereotyping that filters through to young people attending such institutions. The policy of regionalisation of education has not helped to improve this situation.

Stereotyping, whether positive or negative, creates an unequal educational climate, which influences learning and experiences of diversity, as well as future vocational opportunities. For instance, we find institutional powers (either religious or civil) promoting the creation of such homogeneous schools in Mauritius. This means that some learners from certain schools being negatively stereotyped because they attend a majority Creole institution. On the other hand, students attending formerly ‘Star Colleges’, with a majority Indo-Mauritian middle-class pupils, have positive stereotyping.

It is common knowledge that the years of negative stereotyping have influenced the negative view of people of African descent in Mauritius. These still exist for many reasons. Self deprecating views of Creole identity persist amongst contemporary youths, because of the invisibility of positive Creole representation in the school curriculum and in society. In other words, Creoles need more positive role models, not only drawn from Mauritian society, but also from among African diaspora people beyond Mauritius. Many pupils, for example, did not know who Martin Luther King was and did not know about the Civil Rights Movement in America, nor had they heard of the historical struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In responding to these perceptions of self, it will be important for Government and Civil Society to create and support programmes that assist in the critical evaluation of schools and the ways in which these might become spaces for the promotion of equality and mutual respect. This is especially important when one considers that the experience of racism does not have to be direct, for the individual to feel that his or her potential is limited or restricted.

The Commission believes that racially-homogeneous schools, areas of residence and leisure activities should be discouraged as they hamper Democracy in Mauritius. At present, these serve to reinforce the racialised socialisation of youth. The stigma associated with residence in majority Creole areas, such as *cités*, means that the Creoles and members of the working class are *confined* to, and expected to participate in, class and 'race' specific leisure activities. Conversely, leisure activities in affluent areas have elite participants who, by association with such materials of mean gain positive stereotyping. Economic barriers (prohibitively expensive sports such as golf, windsurfing and sailing) and class barriers (exclusive sporting and leisure clubs that cater for Whites, under the auspices of exclusive membership requirements) still cause segregation amongst youths in leisure activities. Similarly, sports such as football and boxing are today associated with Creoles. Thus our research showed that race is intimately tied to class and behaviour. Expensive leisure activities, on the one hand and some popular sports attain a racial exclusivity that creates an air of superiority which reinforces racialised notions of a superior sense of taste and habits. Spaces where young people can share in activities based on mutual interest, as opposed to race, can be beneficial in lifting this veneer of superiority of taste and start to create relationships based on mutual interests.

Marriage patterns also reflect this tendency. Across all population groups of Mauritius, preoccupation with marrying the 'right' name, class, religion or race was important in maintaining one's racial identity. In other groups religious and caste identity was also important. One's name and associated pedigree are significant in determining identity, which, in turn, determines access to differently privileged kinds of spaces. And, interestingly, even among those individuals who appear to be 'white' Franco-Mauritians, not all possess the right social and economic connections which help to further validate their whiteness. Parents play an important role in maintaining racial, ethnic, class and caste boundaries. Interestingly, while a young person may not necessarily be denied a friendship with a person of a different religion or 'race', the moment when marriage is being considered, then the young person is pressurised into finding someone of his or her own 'kind'.

Socialisation, from a very young age, plays a major role in determining the experiences of slave descendants and descendants of indentured labourers. Their social lives are also constrained by the expectations of the older generation, the religious authorities, the school context and the places where they reside. Thus, all these factors conspire to foster a relatively restricted existence for the youths of Mauritius. Indeed, in the school context itself, it was found that the youths are able to experience a measure of freedom from these constraints. But once outside the school context, they are expected to conform and perform their assigned 'racial' or ethnic roles. Conflict arises when the individual does not conform according to the expectations of family, friends and religious communities.

Much more substantial work has to be done by the Government and society, in general, to encourage the contribution of the youths in Mauritius to the creation of a unified and mutually respectful society. At present, the social organisations and structures of our society, while seeking to preserve diversity, are in fact emphasising and encouraging segregation. These various social organisations need to be monitored as regards their mode of operation. Government should initiate awareness campaigns to help Mauritians see their society in a more democratic light.

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### **Class, gender and racial experiences**

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Class mobility can temporarily elevate the status of an individual, otherwise treated as a member of an inferior racial group or caste. However, economic mobility is no guarantee of 'progress'. There is a need for greater equality to exist in Mauritius and for it to challenge racial myths.

There is significant heterogeneity or diversity within the Franco-Mauritian group; yet, it is the *historical* perception of the Franco-Mauritians as a wholly white group which prevails. In this, they are all seen as wealthy and spendthrift members of the elite class of Mauritian society. However, members of this 'community' also see themselves as possessing inherent qualities that enable them to achieve prosperity. This myth of intellectual and ultimately racial superiority pervades the discussion on Franco-Mauritian achievements. There is the stereotyped and racist belief that Whites are better at investing and safeguarding their assets. Some Franco-Mauritians believe that they

obtained their wealth with very ‘little’ support, in the days of slavery and colonisation, and only obtained ‘plots’ of land. The Commission notes that the Franco-Mauritians are diverse and that they are not all wealthy; not all of them are accepted by the very rich. The Government must promote discussion around class diversity in Mauritius and work with the media and with schools and other public entities to dispel racial myths.

Socioeconomic decline among the Franco-Mauritians (the historical socioeconomic elite) and the rise of elites in other ethnic groups have become a reality for Mauritius. Racialised class discourse is most visible in this instance, and we can see how the use of historical privilege continues to have an important effect on Mauritian society, where some Franco-Mauritians still benefit from the positive, and sometimes negative, stereotypes of wealth and elitism. The symbols of a once elite Franco-Mauritian community are changing, and interviewees spoke about some Franco-Mauritian shifting from their inherited mansions to simple bungalows. Further research on the social construction of bungalows would be very interesting, as these are also presented to the public as symbols of elitism. While Whites no longer control political power in Mauritius, they still wield considerable economic and cultural power.

An elite mystique was maintained among Franco-Mauritians and some *Gens de Couleur*. This was an intangible aspect of being white or nearly white that others, despite class mobility, could not achieve. White Franco-Mauritian women also practised a particular kind of racism, one involving association and dissociation. Specifically, the women participate actively in charity and volunteer work with the poor, but often do so as a way of achieving a particular identity, one which valorises charitable acts among women as a sign of morality. Charity is also a way of dissociating from the poor (and ultimately the blacks) because it structures the relationship with them, without allowing them to fully engage with the self (i.e., Whites). Furthermore, it also stereotypes the poor because it publicly constructs them as people in need and as dependents who are unable to help themselves. While not all philanthropic acts are done with such motives, we argue that there is a powerful religious-racial discourse at play in Mauritius, one which socially constructs the white woman as the epitome of physical and moral purity. By participating in such acts of moral purification (charity) and doing this in defined social spaces, the white woman manages to support and perpetuate this discourse of purity and also controls the purity of home space - as she does not ‘recevoir’ or receive blacks as equals into this home space. It would seem to us (as a general trend) that, as far as the white Franco-Mauritian men were concerned, it was important for them to maintain the purity of spaces in the public sphere. Thus, they tend to control access to leisure spaces and to jobs and opportunities, by doing so in various ways, consciously (deliberate barring of access) and unconsciously (through micro-aggressions or in references to the prospective black employee in the company not being suitable for the job).

A strong myth of racial superiority is maintained among some Franco-Mauritians. Not only are they perceived as the elite by others, but they themselves also seek to perpetuate this myth. A closer look at this myth reveals that it includes references to superior intellectual capacity and economic management and class. There is significant heterogeneity within the group, but that there is also diversity in terms of intellectual capabilities and money management. Increasing poverty is degrading racial cohesion within this group. They appear to no longer ‘speak to one another’ and social networks, though still relevant, are falling apart. The last spaces in which racial cohesion can be maintained is in leisure spaces, where symbols of racial power persist and where an individual, regardless of his or her achievements, can be routinely excluded on the basis of his or her dark skin. Nevertheless, class mobility is encouraging racial integration. Friendships develop *via* shared class aspirations and activities.

These friendships are, however, mostly still masculine, as it is men who tend to occupy the public spheres in Mauritius. With regard to the complex issue of gender, racial myths and stereotypes have permeated gendered categories. For Franco-Mauritian women, there is pressure to maintain a high level of propriety and morality. They participate in a range of charity work, not only because they are fully aware of poverty in Mauritius, but also because this validates their position in the social hierarchy as pure, moral beings. In this sense, they are juxtaposed to the Creole or black women, who are deemed to occupy the lowest rung of the society, being stereotyped as drug dealers and sex workers. Assumptions about the nature of Indian descendants are legion. For instance, women of Hindu origin were being employed, and Creole women were not being employed, at one factory because the idea was that there was inevitable ethnic solidarity among Hindu women. This view

does not take into consideration the fact that these women might choose to differentiate between themselves on the basis of age, class, caste, interest or home location.

Amongst Creoles, it has been difficult to achieve cross-cutting ties. There were perceptions of division between poor and wealthy Creoles, the former feeling that the latter were snobs and unhelpful in promoting other Creoles. This is still occurring in a context where nepotism is rife and deemed to be a major offence and a source of social tension amongst Creoles. These cross-cutting identities of race and class make simplistic assertions of 'victims' and 'oppressors' clearly problematic.

The establishment of social networks at a very early age and the role which such networks play in establishing privilege for individuals, are other important factors in understanding race discourse in Mauritius. A point often made by Creole informants is that Creoles are unable to progress in this society because they lack the networks that Indians and Franco-Mauritians benefit from.

Some informants pointed out that, even though slavery has been abolished, the Afro-Creoles are still being treated as slaves, because they are exploited by their employers. Hence, their working conditions are harsh; they are underpaid and work long hours to earn a meagre salary, sufficient for subsistence only. The culture of nepotism or 'backing' enables those with the right networks, be they racial or family links, to progress in areas where those without such networks are excluded, such unconstitutional favouritism means that social mobility remains determined by race.

The Commission finds that black-skinned, young Creole, or slave descendant, women in Mauritius experience the worst form of racism. They are often the ones harassed and harangued. They receive the poorest levels of service. They are most discriminated against in public and Government spaces. They are the targets of racism from family members and in their marriages (from their in-laws). They find it difficult to obtain decently-paid work and are encouraged by a positive discourse on whiteness (the privileging of whiteness) to alter their appearance (straighter hair and light skin) and language (from speaking to Kreol to French) so as to appear more white.

### **Understanding the Burdens of Racism**

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It is possible that descendants of slaves may continue to experience post-traumatic slave disorder (PTSS) a variation of the well-known syndrome of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). No attention has been given to the consequences of slavery in Mauritius previously and so little is known of PTSS. There is a growing number of people who are affected by complex sociopathologies in Mauritius and this is because of racism and differentiation that exist in Mauritius, and many people are finding it very difficult to cope with these. The majority of those affected come from the Creole community or at least, the more impoverished communities on the island.

Inherent in the logic of the concept of democracy is the premise that the more directly people are able to participate in political decision-making about things that affect their lives, the more those decisions will be acceptable to their needs, values, cultures and environmental situation. Thus, implementation of such decisions (having broadly-based support in both majority and minority needs, culture and social values) receives maximum popular support. Many Creoles feel that the notion of democracy in Mauritius seems to be non-existent. Those interviewed referred to a lack of political representation in national government as a contributing factor to Creole marginalization; Creoles do not have a political voice.

The political system is said to favour Indo-Mauritians who are in the majority, and Creoles talked at length about privileges afforded to Indo-Mauritians. These advantages range from greater to easier access to positions of social influence and political power, to the presumption that Indians, when seeking employment or in other social situation, will always have their needs met. Job opportunities in public service were mentioned as one area which should represent the multi-ethnic nature of Mauritian society. Participants indicated that Creoles were underrepresented in both private and public sector positions, and education was not seen as the only issue for their unemployment but also their skin colour and names. Interestingly, the waning political representation of Franco-Mauritians was also found to be an area of contention. However, such experiences of marginalisation in the political sphere is qualitatively different to that of Creoles, due to continued economic supremacy of Franco-Mauritians.

The Commission feels that having a fixed identity and known heritage is very important in Mauritian society and is considered significant in the kind of contribution that an ethnic group can make to the construction of the nation. If Creoles are deemed not to have an identity, then they are generally perceived as unimportant and as having nothing of value to offer in the making of the society in which they live. This can have devastating consequences for an individual or a group because what they do offer is not publicly valued and, in general, they are perceived as not 'useful' to the society. The disregard generates poor self-esteem and self-doubt.

It was found that Creoles, who are currently defined as slave descendants, routinely experienced racist attacks. This experience is cumulative because very few seek assistance or counselling for these incidents. Research into racist events (large-scale ones at least) suggest that victims tend to repress their emotional, and other, responses to such events. They also 'endure' day-to-day micro-aggressions - verbal insults, invalidations and stereotyping.

It is possible to argue that this is because responding to racial discrimination involves the public assertion (and 'owning') of an identity (i.e. black identity) that is not positively valued. Any response could involve additional humiliation. Furthermore, it may be very difficult for the public to empathise with the victims because the negative racial discourse about them and the political clout of the 'racial' majority encourages the favouring of perpetrators' accounts.

Examples of 'racist' events include biased bureaucratic reports, hidden inquests, empty review procedures, the touting of equality policies never enforced, denial of earned recognition, exclusionary socialising, and covert maintenance of housing segregation. In terms of the victims' experience of racist events, living in a modernising society such as Mauritius, where a powerful national discourse is that this is a society with 'no problems', compels victims to repress emotional reactions to many racist events. To be 'emotional' in a democratic, modern state might imply the irrationality and social immaturity of the person expressing their outrage and hurt. There is no universal, so-called cut and dry response to psychological distress. Individual differences in personality, resilience, coping style, unique personal experiences, strength of ethnic self-determination, family closeness may buffer, or mediate, responses to psychologically toxic events.

The problem of racism has not ended with the abolition of slavery, the achievement of Independence from Colonial Rule or even the various amendments to the Mauritian Constitution. The economic legacies of slavery (economic inequality, lack of access to the means of production and ownership), continue today. In fact, a worsening of the situation is occurring as Mauritius becomes a more economically liberal society in which maximum profits are to be made. It is our view that this rather uncontrolled accommodation of capitalism will have disastrous consequences for our country because we have not yet dealt with the legacy of inequality in our society and will be compounding our problems by making the society more hierarchical in class and monetary terms. The Tourism Industry, our third pillar of the economy, has brought many benefits to Mauritius. However, we still feel that this sector needs careful monitoring by Government and civil society because it risks replicating the same structures of inequality present in the era of colonisation.

There appears to be social cohesion in Mauritius, but this is at the surface-level only. At a deeper-level, Mauritius is an openly racist and bigoted country. It was found that there is a discourse of 'comfort zone' and fair discrimination in promoting communalism and ultimately racism under the guise of protecting institutional cohesion. This justified employers in employing Europeans in high positions above qualified Creole counterparts in order to maintain or achieve 'comfort', and such actions were not thus seen as an infringement of the rights safeguarded by the Mauritian Constitution.

The burdens of racism are many. These are highlighted in the report on Race Discourse. The impact of the emotional and psychological burden of racism cannot, in our view, be underestimated. To many people of slave descent and also those of indentured descent, racism imposes continuous experiences of inadequacy, inferiority and marginality on the least privileged in our society. Slave descendants and the least favoured among the indentured descendants need to continually respond to this victimisation in an attempt to salvage their dignity. This victimisation happens, despite the guarantee of basic human rights to dignity and equality in the Mauritian Constitution. We argue

that the Government, together with civil society and international institutions interested in supporting our country to achieve true democracy, need to address, not only issues of structural, but also social inequality in Mauritius.

The Commission has given the opportunity to many Mauritians to express themselves openly and without fear of reprisal. Mauritians need to continue to have such space to express their views. A multi-pronged approach is required in the hope that the issues of continuing poverty, poor self-esteem and marginalisation in our society will be taken seriously. We look forward to a workable set of solutions to the problems and difficulties experienced by Mauritians. Special attention must be paid to the infringement of Constitutional Rights in Mauritius and the necessary action to prevent infringements of the said rights, should be taken.

## 2. THE CASTE SYSTEM IN MAURITIUS

### Introduction

Although the terms ‘caste’ can be found in archival records dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the term ‘caste’ being referred to in this report relates to the Sanskrit terms, *varna* and *jati*, and most particularly to the second term. The Indian caste system is well-known and needs no introduction here. It is the Mauritian variant that is at issue and its transformation through indenture, to the present day. The relevance of caste in Mauritian society and politics is high, as evidenced by an unnecessary tug-of-war in which the Commission became embroiled: that of access to caste data found in the Indentured Immigration Archives.

It is important to understand the Indian caste system, first in order to understand the Mauritian system, for it still has an enormous impact on the Mauritian system. A fuller discussion of this is to be found in the research report of Claveyrolas *et al.*

In India, belonging to a *jati* is considered a natural fact. Through his birth, each one owns characteristics that are shared by the members of the same *jati*, and not by others. One is born in one's caste (*jati*) and one dies in it.

Within the relations between the *jati*, there is a link between separation (in order to avoid risks of being stained by a caste with lower status) and complementarity (between economic and ritual tasks). Exchanges of food and water transmit the characteristics of the one who gives them, and they are carefully controlled. Each one refuses to accept what comes from people with lower status (but, on the other way, they can give, without risks). In the same way, marriages in India are mostly still arranged by parents today and they carefully avoid all misalliance between *jati*.

In Mauritius, the lines were never so clear-cut, nor were they, in the beginning, at the Emigration or Immigration Depot, on board the ship. In India, caste was and is hereditary and endogamous, not always so in Mauritius. Much intermingling of castes and *jati* has occurred because of the emigration process itself and subsequent mixing on plantations.

Changes in the caste system in India, caused by Sanskritisation and Westernization (Srinivas: Change: Chs 1 & 2) have also occurred in Mauritius. ‘Bourgeoisification’ has also occurred so that, today, names have been changed, habits, diet and clothing transformed in an attempt to upgrade oneself. This is, however, common in all immigrant societies and is not peculiar to the Mauritian Indian immigrants.

The 1950 Constitution in India abolished ‘Untouchability’. There exists also a policy of ‘reservations’ which includes quotas for employment in the public sector, reserved places for Untouchables and Tribal populations in Universities, so that higher castes would not keep highly-qualified jobs for themselves. Today, the ‘caste-certificate’ has become a very useful document for becoming a civil servant. Non-Untouchable low castes also claim quotas, which they get, for an electoral purpose. Thus, instead of disappearing, the castes have crystallized and have become passports for employment in the Public Sector. Some individuals and some castes even get away with declaring themselves more ‘impure’ than they are, hoping to be included in quotas. This is a good example of how a provision, meant to be ‘generous’ like ‘positive discrimination’ in the USA, can be used in another manner altogether. More importantly, the policy of quotas has reinforced the impact of *birth* on the allocation of jobs.

For Mauritius, there are clear dangers: what is not acceptable today is the dissimulation of one's real identity and history and the invention of tradition and castes to obtain promotion, political power and public funds.

What is also not acceptable is the continued downgrading of some castes by others, said to be higher, and the obvious maintenance of inferiority and superiority complexes which are still very prevalent. Moreover, Sanskritisation and copying Indian Hinduism threaten to revive a caste system which Mauritians once prided themselves in having almost abolished.

Notions of purity are also very prevalent in India, as in Mauritius. These have found in Mauritian society which is enamoured with the concept of purity of race; anyone with mixed blood was considered neither pure white, nor pure black, and not accepted.

One of the consequences in India of such a logic of purity is discrimination and/or spatial segregation. Indeed in India, in many villages, 'high' castes, the 'pure', Brahmins or farmers for example, live in the heart of the village. Around them, reside the service castes (craftsmen). Far away from them, reside the 'Untouchables', whose members are not allowed to collect water from the pond or the local well, nor allowed to have tea in the village's common places or to enter the other castes' houses. How far did this exist on ships, on Mauritian estates? And how far does this persist today?

In India the religious territory of a village is divided into several shrines, each of them being patronized and frequented by one or several castes. Even though the Untouchables have long been forbidden to enter the 'high' castes' shrines, their own worshipping habits were necessary to the prosperity and the protection of the whole village. Once again, the Commission enquired whether this existed in Mauritius, and whether it still exists.

In India, Capitalism has added a new dimension, the 'class dimension'. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an Indian elite appeared and became the core of the Independence and Nationalist movements. This elite has characteristics other than caste criteria. Education, jobs, and relationships with the Colonial Powers were important criteria required to be met to belong to this elite. Hence, the discourse by this elite that prevailed during Nationalist struggles against the Colonial Powers and then through the destiny of independent India, adopted a great part of the vision of a modern India that would leave behind the structure of castes, thought to be archaic and confined to village life. However, it is difficult to ignore the fact that many of this elite belonged to the higher castes.

Castes and classes thus present different realities, and social handicaps tend to reinforce one another. Lower castes are still the poorest and the most oppressed in Indian society. Whether this is the case in Mauritius remains to be determined.

Historically, 'lower' castes have attempted to break free from the caste system by Sanskritisation, by marrying upwards and by conversion to Christianity, Islam or Buddhism. The end of animal sacrifice during worship, the presence of a Brahmin priest, the transformation to vegetarianism especially, are evidence, one generation later, of practices compatible with claiming a higher caste status. Once this is achieved, it becomes possible to marry off daughters (preferably rich ones) to sons (less rich) from higher castes.

However, this does not change the attitude of other castes towards those upwardly mobile. Consequently, those Untouchables, recently converted to Buddhism, to Islam or to Catholicism, are still considered Untouchables. That they reject the way they are called and replace it with another appellation does not prevent the high castes of the village from refusing to share their meals, for example.

In Mauritius, conversion has continued throughout History, right up to today. Pentecostalism is proving attractive to many Hindus, and it is not known how many are low caste among converts.

Despite all this, it would not be correct to portray the caste system as uniformly harmful and ideologically racist. To start with, as a social structure, it also creates social links and, to a lesser extent, it represents units of solidarity. In India, caste networks are indispensable to the liberal economy, as well as to the growth of most regional political parties.

Until recently in India, the caste logic also rested on a network of relationships called *jajmani*. The village barber worked for the same patron as his father. Hereditary networks, even though they were organized into their own hierarchy, represented vertical solidarities that reached beyond caste antagonism. Revolts, militancy and pressure groups (including those with vote-catching objectives) have long formed such 'factions', i.e. the multi-castes vertical section of the village society that brings together the dominating and the dependent.

It can be said that political circumstances (Colonialism, vote-catching in modern democracy) have partly manipulated caste hierarchies in order to support identity claims or access to privileges. Thus, portraying castes as having a totally negative effect and highlighting their hierarchical function and freezing their inherent stability are proofs that the caste system and its logical tenets are still misunderstood in Western and Westernised circles.

We have to bear in mind that the intrinsic logic of the caste system draws its inspiration from religion. It is the relative purity of individuals and groups that remains the determining criterion. As such, the caste system probably works in the same way as discrimination in the racial sense: you are not allowed to discriminate on the basis of race (or caste), but one is not forbidden to claim one's loyalty to one's ethnic group.

### The 'caste system' today in Mauritius

#### Continuity

The 'caste system' is still present in Mauritius, among descendants of indentured labourers, when it comes to wedding arrangements, commensality, devotional practices (low castes sacrifice pork, high castes sacrifice goat or have stopped animal sacrifices) and politics (for national and local, or even student elections, most of all in vote-catching strategies engineered by candidates).

Where caste has ceased to matter during and after indenture is in friendships and estate working conditions. In Mauritius, as in India, the caste hierarchy is not fossilized. The identification of each caste's place in the overall system is permanently debated and negotiable. Much depends on the context and in definitions of 'caste'. As this flexibility existed in the original Indian system, it is not really possible to state conclusively that fluidity in caste relationships in Mauritius is the result of indenture and/or of a possible slowing down of casteism in the contemporary Mauritian context.

#### Social mobility

It is fair to say that indentured migration has contributed to social mobility for some castes; those who wished for a higher caste identity were able to achieve this through changing patronymics or caste names. Bhojpuri territory and its traditions of migration offer many such examples, whether this consists in adopting the name of a superior caste or attaching it to the original caste name, or adopting a generic name which is not a caste name. In India, for example, the *Kurmi* asked to be recognized as *Kshatriya Kurmi*. The *Teli* asked to be recognized as *Vaishya* and low-caste *Noniya* want to become *Cauhan* (a *Rajput* - i.e. *Kshatriya* - clan name). Most interestingly, the untouchable *Dusadhs* decided in Lahore in 1923 (during the *Dusadh Mahasabha*) to become *Rajput*. Mauritian *Dusadhs* followed the trend and are also known as *Rajput* (a *Kshatriya* caste) today.

#### Caste as *Varna*

At first sight, Mauritians seem mainly concerned with caste as '*varna*':

People are then classified as follows:

*Maraz*, corresponding to the *Brahmin varna*  
*Babujee*, corresponding to the *Kshatriya varna*  
*Vaish*, corresponding to the *Vaishya varna*.

These three categories are better known as '*Grand nation*', while all others are '*Ti nation*'. '*Grand nation*' correspond to the Indian 'twice-born' population. *Maraz and Babujee* are sometimes referred to as 'high castes', and *Vaish* as 'intermediary castes', while others correspond to 'low castes'. Depending on the context, *Vaish* can also be 'high castes'.

Certain terminologies refer to occupational specialization: *Dhobi* are still associated with laundry workers, *Chamar* with leather workers, etc. In Mauritius, many even exclusively associate a caste name with an occupation. The *Brahmin* will then be the priest, even if many priests (in India and in Mauritius) are of a lower caste. Even the funeral specialist, bound to be a lower caste, because dealing with the impurities of death, is called *katha maraz* only because dealing with ritual matters, notwithstanding the fact he is not a Brahmin.

Until a few years ago, high-caste persons would share neither their food, nor drink water, with low-caste persons, if prepared by low castes, or in low-caste houses. During low-caste wedding ceremonies, if a high-caste individual were invited, he would only offer a gift, without drinking or eating. During high-caste marriages, food will be prepared by high-caste members, and if low castes were invited, they would be served last, and eat separately.

In the estate camps, river water was shared by all, even if it seems probable that high-caste people would be served first, and would bathe upstream. All castes were supposed to use the same taps, but certainly not the same containers for water. Certain wells were located close to high-caste houses, and were reserved for them.

### **Purity**

The purity factor was prevalent in Mauritius among indentured laborers and their descendants, leading to a caste hierarchy.

Although, as in India in recent decades, the issue of physical contact with other castes is less important, people still have stories of high-caste individuals bathing soon after they had been touched by a low-caste person. Commensality regulations, based on purity factors, have also been prevalent in Mauritius. High-caste members, for example, certainly bought uncooked food (and food that was probably accepted from low-caste members, but never cooked food. The very Hindu criterion of ‘cooking’ (transforming the food by incorporating the very nature of the individuals cooking it) prevails in Mauritius too. The *pacca* (cooked)/*kaccha* (raw) duality, which translates this cooking terminology, sometimes appears in Mauritian conversation. But in contemporary Mauritius, very few higher castes refuse to socialize with so-called lower castes in public life. However, in the private space, inter-caste taboos are still alive. High-caste in-laws typically refuse to eat at their lower-caste daughter-in-law’s place, or the meal that she prepares, would often create familial tensions.

### **Visible features of caste belonging**

There are few visible markers of caste belonging present today in Mauritius. Tattoos, for example, (known as *godna*) used to be caste-bound; the form and the place of the tattoo strictly depended on one’s caste. There is poor knowledge or memories of *godna* in the Mauritian population which indicates that its influence has all but disappeared. In the same way, clothes (length of dhoti, type of turbans) and jewellery which formerly indicated one’s caste have all but disappeared. These items, although still worn, have lost their traditional value in categorizing Hindus.

Mauritians have retained some of the stereotypical occupational specializations which categorized Hindus in India, such as the fact that *Chamars* were leatherworkers, or *Ahirs* were cattle-rearers and *Brahmins* were priests. Behind this stereotypical occupational specialization, associated with each caste group, lies the hierarchy of the whole system, according to purity criteria. What underlies it is a type of discrimination: *Dusadhs* rear and sacrifice pigs, and they eat pork meat; high castes rear cattle and sacrifice or eat, chicken or mutton. Pork is intrinsically associated, in India and still more, it seems, in Mauritius, with dirt and impurity. The recurrent reluctance, or even revulsion, of most interviewees, when asked to comment on pig-rearing and pork meat, on sacrificing or consumption habits, or even to pronounce the word ‘pig’, are linked to their repugnance to evoke lower-caste persons. It is clear that activities considered ‘impure’ are linked with so-called ‘impure’ castes. But the logic can be inverted; the low castes are considered ‘dirty’ and ‘impure’ *because* they work in activities considered ‘impure’.

Patronymics also reflect caste identity. Even when *Dusadhs* call themselves ‘Rajputs’, if they keep their original patronymics, traditionally associated with the *Dusadh* caste, the identification will remain: they would still be considered ‘lower caste’ by the upper castes.

## Taboo

The taboos remain the most visible and problematic marker of the operation of the caste system in Mauritius. The very first reaction of almost every person approached by the Commission was to deny the existence of castes in Mauritius or to refuse to speak about them. Many expressed fears of speaking freely about the subject and requested anonymity. Others requested that the interview not be recorded or be erased. Upper-caste persons were proud of their identities. A wife will associate herself with her husband's caste, whenever it is superior to the one she was born in. She will proudly retain her birth caste, whenever she married into a lower caste. Conversely, and as expected, most lower-caste persons interviewed claimed not to know their caste belonging.

All, low or high castes, were embarrassed about evoking low castes. Concerning family histories, neighbours were sometimes brought in to 'recall' the history of a family member who had married into a lower-caste family. It is also true, in a general manner, when it comes to recognizing the very existence of castes known as 'low'. The term '*Chamar*' or '*Dusadh*' or the associated occupational or devotional habits such as rearing or sacrificing pork (which is associated with *Dusadh* in India) is expressed in a derogatory manner.

## Discrimination

Believing that caste belongingness refers to a hierarchy based on natural criteria seems to be losing ground in contemporary Mauritius. The local, more universal, versions of such conceptions appeared when people stated that the only caste is that of 'God', or that there are only two castes, men and women. As a consequence, the most overt and/or violent forms of discrimination, whether physical (low-caste individuals being slapped for entering a temple) or psychological (in-laws refusing food from lower-caste daughter-in-laws) are cited, but only as examples from the past. However, it is to be noted that temples still bar members of certain castes from entering. This must be condemned. However, castes are still, in Mauritian popular beliefs, associated with a certain type of character, which can be described as discriminatory and derogatory. Thus, the stereotype of *Chamar* is that of an alcoholic and quarrelsome person. When an inter-caste marriage is broken up, one often uses such classifications as a cause. When one criticizes a quarrelsome individual, or when one wants to insult him, one will accuse him of being a '*Chamar*', or a '*Dusadh*'. This, in India, is a punishable offence, but not in Mauritius.

Religious Hindu Authorities in Mauritius are not univocally pro-caste. Public speeches, including in religious spheres, criticize Indian Hinduism for precisely this reason, that it validates casteism. Mauritian Hinduism is often promoted as more modern and liberal, compared with Indian Hinduism described as archaic and degenerate. But, in reality, there appears to be a trend towards reintroducing caste-based social organisations.

Mauritius and Mauritians must, therefore, guard against tendencies to revive the caste system. The replacement of Mauritian ritual structures by an architecture imported from India, conceived and built by architects and artists brought from India, is one example. Mauritian Tamil temples, for instance, are more and more monumental structures reserving a specific space (*garbhagriha*) for the deities. This space is increasingly forbidden to others beside religious specialists, and common devotees cannot touch the divine images any more. The overall logic, justifying this new religious organization of the ritual space, lies in purity, the need to preserve the pure divine image, and the risk which impure individuals represent for the deity.

Although the 'traditional' *kalimaya* were also hierarchized spaces, from which certain individuals, thought impure, were excluded, they were also 'self-service' places where each individual could perform rites according to his personal knowledge, needs and preferences. *Kalimayas* are, slowly but surely, disappearing from the Mauritian landscape, and are being replaced by monumental Indian-style temples. There is a need to protect the original *kalimayas*, and monitor their 'renovation'. Restoration to a style closer to the Mauritian *kalimaya* tradition would help keep Mauritians Hindus away from renewed reinforcement of the caste logic.

Hindu Mauritians need to better respect their local roots, and be proud of their original, Mauritian Hinduism, rather than copy modern Indian Hinduism. Thus, Mauritian Hinduism needs to be promoted as such.

# CHAPTER 7

## EDUCATION AND HEALTH

## 1. EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR REPARATION

### Consequences and Education as a Tool for Reparation

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Among the many questions which the Commission has sought to answer has been that of the consequences of slavery on ex-slaves and their descendants concerning education. It is, however, the *absence* of the provision of education to the slave population and the ex-slave population that has the greatest impact on their lives and that of their children in the post-emancipation period. Furthermore as previous chapters have demonstrated, the need for a docile labour force, tied to the sugar sector, meant that the type of education envisaged for the slaves and ex-slaves was focussed on providing vocational education. The absence of education was deplored, but only because it did not fit the employers' needs. Reverend Lebrun, the apostle of public education, was the only person in Mauritius aiming to teach the children of ex-slaves to read and write thus paving the way for a generation of professionals.

By contrast, the absence of educating ex-slaves in even basic literacy skills pursuits meant that they lived without understanding the value of the written word. The absence of this knowledge meant safeguarding of documents was almost inexistent, leading to many cases of land dispossession due to fraudulent documents, inability to trace one's family tree, because documents were not preserved and so on. Functional illiteracy, enforced by the plantation system, caused irreparable harm to the ex-slave population.

What of the consequences for descendants today? The consequences and continuities of the slave system remain with us in many ways: in the manner we treat persons of African and Malagasy origin, discrimination, negative stereotypes which impact on self-esteem and contribute to failures. The system has not yet incorporated African and Malagasy cultures in the educational field. But rather, it has sought to bring all descendants into the Christian fold.

As far as indentured immigrants are concerned, although there were concerns about the type of education to be dispensed in the early years, by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Indian children were going to school. Parents had overcome their original hostility to Western-type schools and were sending boys to schools. Education was highly sought after and many sacrifices were made by parents to secure a place in school. Oral histories abound with such stories. Education was also seen by many as a way out of the sugar sector and into white collar jobs. Discrimination, however, against Indian children existed in schools as few schools were willing to offer a place to Indian children in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, many schools, private and public, were later opened and these were made full use of by the descendants.

The impact of slavery on descendants of slaves and persons with an African phenotype is believed to be more strongly felt on descendants of slaves than the impact of indenture on descendants of indentured immigrants as far as the lack of educational provision during those period is concerned. Racism and prejudices against persons of African descent exist in Mauritius and influences perceptions of those in charge of education. Many children endure abuse and denigration of their culture at school at the hands of other children and teachers.

However, the fact that ethnicity is no longer used as a 'category' in the Official Census and data is often not collected along ethnic lines, makes it difficult to collect statistics concerning children with African phenotype. argue in favour of any kind of Affirmative Action for the Creoles.

There is enough evidence collected in numerous surveys, including those conducted by the Commission, which show that Creoles are discriminated against and do not enjoy the same fruits of development to the same extent as others do. As several surveys undertaken by the Commission indicate, discrimination and racial stereotyping also persist. The work of Bunwaree (1997), Eriksen (2007) and Geetanjalee Gill (2010) also highlight this.

Education is usually seen as a means to get people out of poverty, a vector of social mobility, a tool for peace and reconciliation, but when education fails to do the above, social cohesion is threatened and instabilities of diverse kinds are bound to arise. Multicultural Mauritius, whilst peaceful on the surface, has all the ingredients necessary for a social explosion, but only if

managed carefully and if its education system is organised and delivered in a manner that permits and ensures genuine equal and equitable opportunities for the children of the descendants of slaves and indenture. This would go a long way towards the creation of durable peace in the country. Peace, as Martin Luther King notes, is not about the absence of conflicts, but the presence of justice. Can Mauritian education ensure social cohesion and justice? Education in the post-Independence period has no doubt been informed by the history of the country, and this history has had ramifications for the different segments and communities of Mauritian society, including Rodrigues and the Outer Islands. The democratisation of education during the post-colonial period opened up several windows of opportunity, but discriminations and inequities persist. Several legislations marked educational developments both in the colonial and post-colonial period, but legislations are not enough to create equitable outcomes

The Commission proposed to examine the provision of education and how it can be used as a tool for reparation, thereby thus mitigating the tensions and injustices resulting from a history of injustice and oppression.

Whilst post-colonial education has contributed to producing a greater pool of expertise and relevant manpower in the country, several types of injustices, such as curriculum injustice, linguistic injustice, socio-economic injustice have continued to mar the educational system. The greatest aberration of the system is that it makes demands of Mauritian children, are unable to meet - that which they based on, the cultural and linguistic capital, and remnants of a Eurocentric model of education. In short, the Mauritian school does not cater for the heterogeneous cultures, diverse talents and multiple intelligence of the country. The system has, for many years, been failing the disadvantaged children, particularly those of Creole background.

Whilst 'illiteracy' is no longer enforced, as during the slave period, the former still prevails amongst a relatively important section of the population. Enforced illiteracy had several consequences such as: a lack of opportunity to acquire assets, dispossession of land, denial of political rights, and these have impacted on future generations in multiple ways. But illiteracy is the result of a system failing the children. Children fail the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E) exams without having mastered the skills of reading and writing. Schooling in Mauritius has not favoured an oral culture, which is generally closely tied to the 'being' of the child. Working-class children, particularly those of slave descent, have experienced multiple forms of identity repression and denial, making it hard for them to connect to schools with middle-class values and ethos.

Failure rates are concentrated in the deprived zones of the country where ZEP (*Zones d'Education Prioritaire*) schools have been set up. The deprived zones have important conglomerations of families of both indentured and slave descent but the latter are more predominant. Given the high failure rates, the State has opened up a number of pre-vocational classes/schools to cater for those who do not make it in the last year of primary schooling. The fact that Pre-vocational Education (PVE) schools capture large numbers of children from both slave and indenture descent, particularly those belonging to the working class, the education team also undertook a survey of the PVE schools to establish the extent to which these schools actually provide a second chance to the more deprived. The reality of the PVE School, however, is a sad one. The way in which education is organised and delivered shows that the emphasis is on access, with little concern, if at all, for equitable outcomes.

The PVE was studied in depth by the Commission through a survey of a selected number of schools. The methodology is outlined in Volume 3 and only the conclusions are presented here.

## **The Prevocational Sector**

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The Prevocational Sector, in Mauritius, caters for around 4,000 students left out of the primary cycle, as a result of their inability to meet the established benchmark for promotion to the mainstream in the secondary sector. As there is no other well-organized system or structure to provide for further learning opportunities and equal facilities to this category of students, a new Prevocational Education Scheme was launched in 2001, with a view to providing the necessary environment for the growth and development of these children, and also for developing learnability

to eventually help them live a socially acceptable and economically self-sufficient life-style (Ministry of Education & Human Resources, 2011).

The new scheme was aimed at ensuring equity in educational services. It offered learning opportunities with a view to mastering essential competencies in order to ensure Functional Literacy and Numeracy and basic learning competencies for further achievements.

The Prevocational Education Scheme proposes a shift in the pattern of traditional academic elitist educational goals to a more child-centered and need-based learning. However, the actual praxis is different in educational institutions governed by the State and Private sectors. Prevocational classes in State Secondary Schools tend to be more academic, while in Bureau d'Education Catholique (BEC) schools, much emphasis is laid on an inclusive pedagogy, where students are encouraged to participate in the various activities tailored according to the needs of those students, for example, cookery classes for both b the study attempts to examine the various in-school and out-of-school processes, affecting students attending PVE, so as to understand the scope of their integration into mainstream society.

Whether the PVE Sector provides assistance towards the establishment of a more cohesive society is a question that needs to be posed. In order to answer these broad concerns, a survey of some 35 schools having PVE classes, based in diverse locations, particularly the poverty-stricken zones, were chosen and some 35 focus group discussions (with one in each school) were carried out.

The specific objectives of the study were to examine the extent to which teachers were equipped to teach children from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those of slave descent and indentured labour descent attending the PVE; to assess whether in-school and out-of-school processes within the PVE sector were empowering the children and actually providing a second chance; to explore the different avenues available, and which **could** be used in assisting towards ensuring better futures for children attending the PVE sector. Focus Group discussions were carried out with a diverse student population within the PVE Sector in different geographical areas around the island. Questions and topics raised with students were mainly related to their identities, past and current school experiences, daily life experiences, their family life and parent involvement in their studies, and their knowledge of topics such as citizenship, 'Ile durable', patriotism. FGDs and other interviews assisted in obtaining some kind of triangulation.

## **Main findings**

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The main findings of the discussions were:

**1. On questions of Identity of students and the perceptions of slavery and indentured labour,** many students described themselves as 'Creoles' or 'Indians'. Some of the Creole children called themselves Catholic but very few could actually connect with their slave or indentured past. Creole students reported that certain 'pejorative' (sometimes seen as racist) terms were used by other non-Creole groups in describing and/or addressing them.

**2. On the experiences of past and current schooling,** students could not describe their primary school experiences as a wonderful one. Many of them were labelled as 'good for nothing' and stereotypes of diverse kinds were often used by teachers. They were considered as failures and their seats were often reserved in a far corner and in backrow of the classroom. Some students reported that their teachers used racist terms in class like 'Mazambik', 'Noireau'. Creole students reported that Hindu teachers would 'guet zenfant malbar plis', 'Pas pren nu conte'.

Students also reported the bad treatment that they received from their teachers and this included physical, as well as verbal, abuse. One of the students even reported that her punishment was to kneel down on 'filao' seeds, while others were often beaten with a stick.

Some of the terms used by teachers to describe the students included:

- **Sa bann zanfan la bizin fout zot dan enn kwin**
- Eng trans. These children should be thrown in a corner
- **Aret vinn lekol. All zet le kor**

- Eng trans. Stop coming to school. Go commit suicide.
- 
- **Ale travay dan kamion salte, al netoy twalet parski zot pa konn lir**
- Eng trans. Go to work in garbage collection, go to clean toilets because you dont know how to read
  
- **Resamble zako**
- Eng trans. You look like a monkey
  
- **Mazambik, sinois nef**
- Eng trans. Mozambique, new Chinese ??
  
- **Vinn barr zanf an so plas, vinn sof sez dan lekol, vinn pran dipain al lakaz**
- You have taken someone more deserving's place, you come to warm the seat, take the bread and go home
  
- **Miss la get nek sa bann indien la, pa get bann kreol dutou**
- The 'Miss' cares only for the Hindu, does not care for the Creole at all

3. On what they feel the '*prevoc*' was doing for them, the students without any hesitation showed a preference for Prevocational classes, as compared to primary schooling. They enjoyed a better treatment by their class teachers and for them, this was a great relief as to what they were compelled to bear in primary schools. In some well-organised schools, students even felt privileged to have activities tailored to their specific needs and this acted as a positive reinforcement to boost their desire to attend school and to dream of a better future. In the other schools, there were one or two activities reserved for the Prevocational students, like swimming and music, **but** those activities were not practised on a regular basis. In general, students were satisfied with the way their time-tables were planned, with a good balance between academic and non-academic subjects.

Their relationship with mainstream students, as well as teachers, was also discussed. The responses varied from one school to another. Some reported being well-treated both by the students as well as teachers from the mainstream, while others described their relationship as being warm with the students, but quite unfriendly with teachers, who had already formed a prejudiced opinion of them. Others described their relationship with their mainstream friends as being hostile, **since** they were looked down upon as being 'zelev prevoc' (prevoc students). Few mentioned joint activities organized for both mainstream and Prevocational students.

4. On their aspirations and expectations of life, students answered 'IVTB'. Some of the well-informed ones even corrected as 'MITD'. They were observed to have low expectations. Most cited their technical courses at IVTB as if from a predefined list, namely mechanic, plumbing, electric, carpentry, while those living in the coastal regions added the broad term 'travay lotel', with a few mentioning the job of waiter. Some students even said that they would prefer to enter the job market immediately after their Prevocational classes, while a handful would like to pass C.P.E and integrate mainstream and later get a good job.

For the girls, the aspirations were somehow different and varied from one school to another. In very few distinct institutions, most of the students wanted to pass C.P.E., integrate mainstream and have a good job. Those aspirations simply reflected the quality of education they are receiving at school. In those same schools, those who preferred to enter the labour market, had very original ideas of what they will be doing in the future. A student mentioned operating a day-care centre, while another said that she would create her own jewelries and sell them. Another one said that she wanted to operate a florist shop. In schools where students do not have great aspirations, 'hairstylist' was on the top list for future jobs.

5. On the question of whether they knew what generally happened to students who leave *prevoc*, only a minority knew about them. They stated that these had gone through Prevocational Education, completed IVTB training successfully and were now in employment. Those students tended to take these people as models, and they tended to choose the same career paths as their models. In some deprived regions of Mauritius, the Team found out that unsuccessful Prevocational students had become drunkards, drug addicts and even delinquents.

**6. On the issue of whether students understood the concepts of “Citizenship, Patriotism and Ile Durable”,** it was observed that these terms were quite popular. Students acknowledged having heard these words, but failed to explain or give definition of same. Overall, the response to this part of the FGD was poor. However, students, from most of the schools visited, claimed that teachers had never come up with discussions/ explanations around these topics.

**7. On the issue of ‘Creole’ as a medium of instructions and as a full-fledged language to be introduced in the school,** students were happy with the use of ‘Creole’ as a medium of instruction in class as they were less able or some even failed to understand English and French. They claimed that the use of ‘Creole’ in class enabled them to better understand concepts. However, they also admitted that English and French were also very important to learn, as they would have to deal with a wide range of clients, according to the field of their professions. Almost all students welcomed the idea of introducing ‘Creole’ as a subject, as they feel more at ease with ‘Creole’ and above all it was their mother tongue’. It should be noted that in some private schools, students were taught ‘Creole’ as a fully-fledged language.

**8. On the issue of their parents’ involvement in their education,** it was observed that most of the students came from broken families, single-parent families, had absent parents. A handful lived in shelters. Very few obtained assistance from their parents at home, while doing homework and other activities. This is due to illiteracy among parents or due to a lack of time, because of overtime at work. Some of them got help from elder siblings. Parents rarely came to enquire about students’ performances at school. Parents even failed to share basic knowledge on sexual reproductive health. Student stated that in the case of any query about their biological growth or any other related issues, they preferred to discuss with friends or opt for self-exploration, as these issues were rarely discussed by teachers and parents. However, girls stated that their mothers used to inform them about their physical and biological changes, but this information was very restricted, as they felt reluctant to discuss such issues. Almost all students were aware of HIV/AIDS, but had little information about how to protect them from such a disease. Most of the schools visited did not have a permanent School Counselor, but from time to time, specialists would intervene on a case to case basis.

**9. On their reading and study habits,** students said that they liked reading, but unfortunately, they did not know how to read English and French. A handful admitted that they hated reading because it was boring and tedious. They preferred books with colourful pictures which were more appealing to them. Few students said that they did not have access to a school library, as it was meant for mainstream students or they had been banned from entering the library, because of few students who would disrupt the silence and make a mess of the materials in the library. Very few stated that teachers did reading practice in class, but they read the text and explained it in ‘Creole’ to students.

**10. On the Curriculum and Subject they were studying,** students were more or less happy with the PVE curriculum. They looked forward to obtaining a certificate at the end of their PVE schooling. They saw their subjects as a stepping-stone to their future career. However, they would have preferred more practical classes in subjects such as: Food and Nutrition, Computer, Agriculture, Science, Fashion and Fabrics, Wood-work, Sports, Music and Basic Electricity. Unfortunately, schools did not make space for PVE students to use the specialist rooms.

Our conclusion is that, while the PVE Sector was initiated to provide a second chance to those who have failed the C.P.E, very few of the students actually got this second chance. The learning experiences and the assessment proposed to pupils persisted in not drawing from the personal experiences of the children, nor do they relate to their specific learning styles. In short, what is learnt, how it is taught and how it is assessed has not changed much from the Primary School except in a few of the Prevocational Schools. Resources, especially those relating to practical classes, are often not available for children attending *prevoc*. Many of them complete their three years at PVE without knowing where they will land up; some do end up at NTC Foundation Course, but there is no research available to know what exactly happens to those young people after the few years of post-primary schooling.

Can one speak of Justice under these conditions? If young people are made to internalise their failures and to believe that something is wrong with them, when actually it is the nature of the

curriculum content, the pedagogy and the culture of the school - often with all of those forming part of a dominant culture - there is an urgent need to rethink, revisit and repair all the wrong, much of which has been largely informed by the Colonial History of the island.

## 2. THE EVOLUTION OF HEALTH CARE IN MAURITIUS

### Introduction

In 18th and 19th centuries, ill-health took a heavy toll of lives of slaves and indentured immigrants. High mortality amongst slaves reflected their harsh living and working conditions, and they often did not live longer than middleage. Indentured labourers too were characterised as weak and subject to premature ageing as a result of hard work, poor nutrition and disease. Access to health services was not easily and adequately available. Often denied adequate food and a balanced diet, proper sanitation and shelter and harsh labour conditions caused undue harm to their physical and mental health. Some timid measures to improve living conditions were undertaken by the Colonial Administration in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, lagging behind on health services development in Britain.

### 1. Nutrition and Malnutrition

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The Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire (1939) noted that malnutrition was one of the main cause of the excessive mortality in most Colonial territories and that the single most striking feature was the absence of milk and animal products from most tropical diets. In post-slavery and post-indenture Mauritius, too, infant mortality rates were very high (although they fell considerably after malaria was brought under control in the 1950s) and the main causes were malnutrition and repeated infectious diseases (including malaria and intestinal worm infestation). Inadequate infant feeding, especially weaning, was a cause of malnutrition and high infant mortality.

Apart from poor diet and the high prevalence of infectious diseases in Mauritius during the colonial period, the underlying causes of malnutrition were, most importantly, the low standard of living followed by lack of awareness, coupled with certain prejudices. The low standard of living of the labourers was the result of inadequate food rations, low wages insufficient to supplement their rations and too little food provisions from family production or gathering in the wild. The economic policy prioritising the production of cash crop (sugar cane) for export further decreased available land for food production.

After the Second World War, improved sanitation as well as maternal and child health care service, coupled with health/nutrition education, primary school and pre-school feeding programmes, and food subsidy (after Independence) were implemented to combat malnutrition among both children and the general population.

There is no evidence, however, of consequences today on the population of the poor health of the slave and indentured. As a result of chronic malnutrition and hard physical labour at a young age, slave children were subjected to severe growth retardation, as evidenced by their short stature by age 18. The heights of Mauritian slaves' children (both boys and girls) (in 1826) were far below the World Health Organisation (WHO) Reference throughout the age range 5 to 18 years, while contemporary Mauritian children (Creoles and Indians) (in 2004) have caught up with the WHO Reference. It is known that stunted growth among children is related to chronic protein-energy deficiency as well as to repeated episodes of infectious diseases.

In 1942, however, primary school children were found to weigh much below European norms at that time and Indian children had lower weight-for-height than Creole children. Newly-arrived Indian adult male immigrants were also less tall than male Creole slaves, although the heights of contemporary adult male Creoles and Indians are nearly the same. That is, early generations of Creole slaves and Indian immigrants were of short stature (an indicator of chronic malnutrition) but the descendants of both groups gained several centimetres by 2004 and both nearly caught up with the WHO norms.

### Nutritional deficiency diseases

Studies and hospital records since the Second World War have revealed that the labouring class commonly suffered from iron, thiamine and riboflavin deficiencies and, less commonly, from

vitamin C, niacin and vitamin A deficiencies, thus causing nutritional deficiency diseases such as anaemia, beriberi, pellagra and various other forms of avitaminosis.

Outbreaks of beriberi occurred in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the local population (particularly among Indians) following the importation of refined rice (deficient in B1 vitamin). Subsequently, parboiled rice (richer in B1 vitamin) was imported to control the problem and beriberi virtually disappeared by the 1950s.

Although anaemia was a serious problem during the 1900s until the 1960s, generally affecting the lower-income groups of the population, it was particularly common among the Indian section of the population and affected mostly women of child-bearing age and young children. The disease was generally associated with malaria as well as hookworm infection. With the eradication of malaria, improved sanitation, public health measures (including iron supplementation and free shoes or boots to school children and labourers) and improved nutrition, anaemia ceased to be a major public health problem by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition to the overt signs of vitamin and mineral deficiencies, chronic sub-clinical deficiencies of vitamins (A, Bs and C) could also have resulted in fatigue and increased susceptibility to infection. Chronic caloric deficit coupled with B-vitamins and iron deficit caused muscle weakness, loss of appetite and fatigue, leading to low working efficiency of the labouring population.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the eradication of malaria, improvement in primary health care, sanitation and water supply, improvement in the standard of living and continued improvement in food supplies (including food subsidies and supplementary feeding programmes for the vulnerable groups), malnutrition, vitamin deficiency diseases and anaemia gradually declined, so that by end of the century, the country began to face the emerging problem of non-communicable diseases and obesity, although anaemia is still common among adolescent girls and underweight persists among young children. The mostly non-vegetarian diet is high in energy, fat, sugar and salt, and low in fibre contents. Although vegetables and fruit consumption trebled from 1961 to 2007, the present level (of about 300 grams *per caput* per day) is still far below current recommendations. Increasing alcohol intake and decreased level of physical activity further contribute to the development of obesity. This tendency is worsened by the increasing consumption of 'fast-foods' and packaged snacks, and adoption of sedentary leisure activities (mostly television and electronic gadgets) by the younger population.

Therefore, the evolution of the diet and nutritional status of the inhabitants of the Island Mauritius can be summarised as follows:

- a. The slaves of African origin were on a mostly vegetarian high bulk diet having high carbohydrate and low protein content, with occasional consumption of salted fish or meat. Alcohol abuse was a problem among slaves. Their caloric intake barely met their high energy needs for intensive labour resulting in chronic under nutrition of both adults and children as evidenced by stunted height of both adults and children. The diet was monotonous and deficient in various vitamins and minerals. Total mortality was very high and life expectancy very low (hardly reaching middleage).
- b. The Indian indentured labourers were mostly vegetarian with occasional consumption of animal protein and little milk. Their diet was high bulk, high carbohydrate and low to moderate in protein. Vegetable consumption was higher than for slaves. B-vitamins deficiencies and iron deficiency anaemia was prevalent. Their caloric intake barely met minimal needs resulting in chronic under nutrition. Both overall and infant mortalities were high and life expectancy was low. Indian labourers in the 1940s had poor physique and low work performance related to their poor diet and recurrent diseases, and suffered premature ageing. The prevalence of malnutrition coupled with malaria and other infectious diseases (including hookworm infestation) gave rise to a sick and debilitated population.
- c. From 1950s to 1980s, malaria eradication and improvement in water and sanitation and socio-economic measures led to improved health and nutrition status of the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers. Their nutritional status improved with increased protein intake, a more varied diet, free distribution of food supplements to the vulnerable groups and

Government subsidies on staple foods. Prevalence of vitamin deficiencies decreased gradually although anaemia among adolescent girls is still common and prevalence of child underweight (particularly among Indo-Mauritians) remained relatively high. The average diet remained relatively high in refined carbohydrate although the fat content had increased considerably. Infant mortality was rapidly decreasing and life expectancy was increasing as a result of better health and nutrition.

d. After the 1980s the population is faced with the problem of overconsumption and dietary imbalance with increasing per capita caloric supply as well as increasing fat content of the diet; although the carbohydrate content of the diet gradually decreased from 1936 onwards, carbohydrate to energy ratio remained elevated. High consumption of alcoholic beverages and fatty/salty foods, and inadequate consumption of vegetables and fruits is a serious concern, as well as increasing consumption of alcohol and low level of physical activities. Obesity and non-communicable diseases started as a public health problem among adults. The height growth of children below 18 years has reached the World Health Organisation norms and obesity is becoming an emerging problem among children; although underweight still persists among young children. Mauritius is now reaching the level of human development indicators of emerging market economies with low level of infant mortality and relatively high life expectancy with concomitant high prevalence of non-communicable diseases (including diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and cancer).

## **2. Disease pattern**

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Health and illness in a population are associated with factors that relate to the surrounding environment, the climate, the housing and sanitary conditions, the food habits, the quality of water and the working conditions of the people. The disease pattern at a given point in time is not only the biomedical disorders caused by ill-health, but also a reflection of the harm done by the prevailing social, economic and political environments.

### **2.1 Alcohol Consumption, Production and import**

Rum being derived from molasses existed as an industry wherever sugar was made. In Mauritius, prior to 1895, a distillery was attached to almost every sugar estate, and over 100,000 litres were produced per month, bringing a high amount of revenue to the Government. But with decreasing exports to Madagascar and East Africa, the revenue from the sale of rum fell significantly, and most of the distilleries closed their doors, thus greatly decreasing the level of alcohol consumption on the Island (Anderson 1918). In the early 20th century, liquor consumed in the colony was either imported or manufactured locally. Imported liquors included whisky, brandy, gin, vermouth, rum (in very small quantities), liqueurs and cordials, wine of every description, ale beer, porter and cider. The local product was rum, obtained by the distillation of sugar cane molasses. It was generally consumed as it came from the distillery, or after having been artificially coloured or flavoured,

Following the distillation (*Rhum prepare*). Later, large quantities of "prepared rum" on the market were replaced in the form of local "brandy" or "liqueurs" (Balfour 1921). By the mid-20th century, wine or country liquor were manufactured mainly from imported dried raisins and on a small scale from local fruits, such as guavas, prunes and bananas. There were 13 wine factories in Port Louis (MHD 1949). Local production of beer started in 1963, using imported malted barley from Australia and Europe.

### **Sale of alcohol**

Retailers, hotels and inn-keepers, as well as taverns, restaurants, refreshment rooms and public billiard rooms, were authorised to sell alcoholic beverages, but the opening hours and authorisation to consume "on" or "off" premises were strictly regulated for each facility. Chinese shops, scattered all over the Island, supplied their customers, who belonged mostly to the working classes, with liquor, principally rum, in pints (*chopines*), and in small measures, popularly known as *topettes* or *petits baquets*, which are consumed on the premises. The maintenance of control and order over drink shops or drunken men was carried out by the Police (Balfour 1921). The health and social consequences of this overindulgence raised concerns among the authorities. This affected mainly the working-class population (fishermen, artisans, agricultural and dock labourers, and the lower

classes) although it also became noticeable among the younger generation and the Indian population. To address the problem, the authorities decided to strengthen control on sales of liquor, prohibit the giving of liquor as payment for salaries and wages, or as a gratuity, and promote awareness on the dangers of alcoholism (Balfour 1921).

### **Alcohol Consumption**

There was an alarming increase in the consumption of rum from 1909 to 1920. During the period 1909-19, the average annual consumption of rum was 1,022,785 litres. In the year 1919-20, it reached 1,832,589 litres, i.e. exceeding the average of the preceding 10 years by nearly 80%. Therefore, within a period of about 10 years, the per capita annual rum consumption increased from 2.74 to 4.95 litres (Balfour 1921, Kuczynski 1949).

High alcohol consumption had been the cause of sickness and mortality among slaves, apprentices and troops. During the 1825-40 period of sugar expansion, the widespread distribution of liquor to slaves as an incentive to work proved to be detrimental as slaves turned into alcoholics. The amount and frequency of arrack distribution differed on each estate but ranged from as little as once a week to several glasses a day. Liquor became cheap and freely available as slaves began to distil it in their huts and sell it to other slaves. Alcohol consumption increased dramatically during the crop season and affected both men and women. It led to various social ills, including fighting among slaves, general disorderliness, theft, lateness at work, insubordination, accidents and, even sometimes, suicides. There were also many unlicensed liquor shops in the districts (Teelock, 1998).

Alcohol abuse also became the cause of great concern during indenture period, when an increase in drunkenness caused a reluctance to work among Indians. On some estates in the 1840s, rum was even distributed free together with the rations. It was realised that high alcohol consumption was detrimental but the Government was reluctant to increase taxes on arrack production as this would be unpopular among distillers, and it took no measures to decrease consumption as sale of rum-generated important revenue for Government (Teelock 1998, Boodhoo 2010). High-sales of rum and locally-made wine, both almost exclusively consumed by the Coloured population, were regarded, to some extent, as symptomatic of low vitality and limited interests in work (HMSO 1943).

Consumption of alcoholic beverages increased by 50% from 1961 to 2007. Energy supplies from alcoholic beverages increased from 29 kcal *par caput* per day in 1961 to 44 kcal *par caput* per day in 2007, i.e. equivalent to about 4 and 6 grams of alcohol *par caput* per day respectively. While in 1961 alcohol consumption was mostly in the form of spirits followed by beer and wine, in 2007 that pattern has changed to mostly beer, followed by spirits and wine (FAO 1961, 2007).

## **2.2 Diseases under control**

The prevailing diseases in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20th centuries have been controlled, if not eradicated in Mauritius. Some of these are:

### **Leprosy**

In 1924, the 27 Leprosy patients from St. Lazare were transferred to the Powder Mills which became the Leper Hospital. In 1970, it was integrated into the Skin Disease Unit of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital with 40 beds and an average of 34 occupied throughout the year. The responsibility for medical care was taken over by specialist dermatologists. Throughout history, lepers were ostracized by their communities and families. This age-old stigma associated with the disease, was an obstacle to self-reporting and early treatment. The final assault on *Mycobacterium Leprae* was made in 1980s and the multidrug therapy was the key element in the strategy to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem in the Republic of Mauritius. The leper hospital was closed in 2006.

### **Smallpox**

The last indigenous case was reported in 1913. However, vaccination against smallpox was maintained until 1981, when it was stopped after the global eradication was certified by the World Health Organisation and subsequently endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 1980.

### **Malaria**

Ross' recommendations focussed on Treatment of the sick with anti-Malarial: House protection to exclude Anopheles mosquitoes, through wire netting and other means; Mosquito reduction through destruction of breeding sites and drainage of marches. A Malaria unit was created to coordinate all works connected with Malaria. In 1948, Mauritius launched a three-year project with the view to eradicating Malaria by residual spraying of houses with D.D.T and hexachlorocyclohexane. There was a remarkable decrease in the incidence of the disease but one could not talk of eradication because, Malaria was still present, although at a much reduced rate. The final assault was made in 1960. The last indigenous case was found in 1965. In 1972, a seroepidemiological survey confirmed the absence of local Malaria transmission since 1965. The World Health Organisation (WHO) certified that the eradication of Malaria from Mauritius was an established fact. This was a remarkable public health achievement. However, Malaria came back to Mauritius in 1975, after devastation caused by cyclone Gervaise. Malaria transmission peaked in 1982 with 623 indigenous cases. The last indigenous case of Malaria in Mauritius was detected in 1997. But being in an unstable Malaria zone, the Malaria vector is present in the island. The risks of re-introduction of the disease are real. Hence, very strict measures are taken to prevent a resurgence of Malaria.

### **Diphtheria**

As from 1961, Mauritius is protected against diphtheria, through a vaccination programme that also includes immunization against pertussis, tetanus and poliomyelitis.

### **Dengue Fever**

A second epidemic occurred in June 2009 when around 250 cases were recorded. Once introduced in the country, dengue fever is very difficult to eradicate and tends to recur periodically. Furthermore, there are many high risk environmental pockets in the island, favouring the spread of imported viruses of the disease in the local mosquito population. In addition, Mauritius has extensive trade and travel links to dengue endemic zones. Hence, there is a real need for a plan to prevent and control dengue fever. The disease load in the population is not fully reflected in the official health services reports, because many episodes of illnesses were dealt with at home by traditional healers: the *dais*, the healers, the priests and the sorcerers also called "*Ojhas*".

### **Pulmonary Tuberculosis (TB)**

Tuberculosis was a fatal disease until the late 1940s, when effective anti-tuberculosis treatment was introduced. A World Health Organisation (WHO) assisted tuberculosis project became operational in 1965. Curative, as well as, preventive activities including health education, case finding and B.C.G vaccination were developed.

### **Poliomyelitis**

In February 1945, Mauritius witnessed its first polio epidemic. It was a sudden outbreak of acute Poliomyelitis. Assistance for the rehabilitation of polio cripples was sought from United Kingdom. A hospital was established at Floreal to cater specifically for polio cases. An epidemiological investigation was also carried out. It concluded that the epidemic was an outbreak of an endemic disease. Malnutrition, overcrowding and an increased prevalence of intestinal disease were present all over the Island. A second outbreak of polio epidemic occurred in June 1959. It lasted 14 weeks and left 99 paralysed victims. A Sabin vaccination campaign was launched in August 1959. This marked the beginning of polio eradication programme in Mauritius.

### **Schistosomiasis**

The first case reported in Mauritius was in 1890. In 1933, it was established that *Schistosoma haematobium*, a Trematode worm was the parasite that caused the disease and the snail, *Bulinus Cernicus* was the intermediate host. Five yearly statistics of attendances at dispensaries and hospital outpatients are given below to show the evolution of Schistosomiasis in Mauritius from 1928 to 1962. From 1960s onwards, the prevalence of the disease continued its downward trend. By 1975, Schistosomiasis was limited to 3 districts - Pamplemousses, Port Louis and Grand Port. It was gradually reduced because of outpatient treatment, improvement of water supplies and sanitation, including environmental management initiated with Malaria control activities. By 1986, no patient was admitted to hospital with a primary diagnosis of Schistosomiasis, and Mauritius was heading towards elimination status.

### **Filariasis**

Filariasis was present all over the Island, although the infection was very low in some districts but alarmingly high in the Districts of Black River and Port Louis, where the rate of infection varied between 21% and 28%. The study also confirmed that mosquitoes were the main vectors. The incidence of the disease began to decline after 1950 - 1951, which coincided with spread D.D.T spraying for Malaria control. In fact, filariasis disappeared from Mauritius without any specific intervention.

### **Typhoid**

The discovery of chloramphenicol, a very effective antibiotic in controlling the disease, led to its control. In February 1956 a small epidemic of typhoid broke out in Grand Port District. Health education, sanitation campaign, mass inoculation with TAB vaccine and treatment with Chloromycetin succeeded in controlling the situation within one month. Any programme aimed at preventing the development of typhoid in a population, must include measures to improve sanitation and food hygiene, which are closely linked to socio-economic development.

### **Scabies**

Scabies was a serious problem and a nuisance, causing suffering especially to children and embarrassment to other members of the family because of overcrowding.

### **Conclusion**

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is obesity and non-communicable diseases that have become a public health problem among adults. The height growth of children below 18 years has reached the 2007 World Health Organisation norms, and obesity is an emerging problem among children, although underweight still persists among young children. Mauritius is now reaching the level of human development indicators of emerging market economies, with a low level of infant mortality and a relatively high life expectancy, with concomitant high prevalence of non-communicable diseases (including diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and cancer). Few countries have achieved so much in so short a time.

The main achievements of modern Mauritius can be listed as follows: the eradication of Malaria; the supply of clean pipe water throughout the island; the control of population growth and introduction of Family Planning methods have led to planned families; improvement of health by an integrated approach of control of Hookworm and Amoebiasis, provision of shoes to school children and boots to labourers and supply of school meals and milk to school children; regionalisation of Health Services and distribution of resources equitably to all parts of the island; introduction of specialised care like cardiology services, neurosurgery, dialysis centres and dental care; the increase in the number of doctors and nurses has led to an easily accessible health service and visits of foreign teams in cardiac surgery, neurosurgery and renal transplant have greatly helped in the training of local doctors and nurses. Today, complicated cases are being dealt with by local teams.

An increase in life expectancy leads to a gradual ageing of the population resulting in an insidious development of chronic degenerative diseases. With Independence on 12th March 1968, Health

Services were regionalised, the existing structures improved and new centres built to provide health care to every part of the island. Two new regional hospitals were built, the S.S.R.N Hospital at Pamplémousses in 1968 and the Jawaharlall Nehru Hospital at Rose Belle in 1990. Many Primary Health Care Centres were opened, such as Community Health Centres, Area Health Centres, Dental Clinics, Family Planning Centres, and Mediclinics. Special operation units like the Cardiac Surgery Centre, the Renal Transplant Unit and the Neurosurgery Unit, all based at SSRNH were commissioned. The setting of those centres marked the beginning of the development of high tech medicine in the country.

On the other hand, this change in lifestyle has also led to greater access to cars and machinery. Mauritians started to lead sedentary lifestyles, coupled with more and more day-to-day stress resulting in a dramatic rise in the mortality rate due to Non-Communicable Diseases such as Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Diseases and Cerebro-vascular diseases. Leading authors like KIRKLIN have described a phenomenon in developing countries and which is verified in Mauritius, that countries with fast growing economies, experience a rise in the prevalence of Non-Communicable diseases coupled with a decrease in the prevalence of infectious diseases.

Mortality rates are no longer due to communicable diseases but to NCDs There is a five-fold increase in deaths caused by Diabetes mellitus. This is caused by an increase in rise in standard of living, consumption of high glycaemic index food, leading a more stressful life and less daily physical activities. There is no relation with the history of slavery, indenture or colonialism. The prevalence of hypertension has also increased from 30.2 % in 1987 to 37.9 % in 2009. This is due partly to modern lifestyle with stress at work and on the road or because financial and social tensions, again little to do with the history of slavery or indenture.

Obesity in adults and children is related to a more sedentary lifestyle than before, consumption of rich food and alcohol and greater access to cars. Cancer has become the third major health threat after diabetes and cardiovascular diseases in the Republic of Mauritius. Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV is transmitted in Mauritius mainly through needle exchange among drug users.

Thus in post-Independence Mauritius, there has been a significant improvement in public health measures and services within the welfare state concept, leading to a decline in, and levelling of, morbidity and mortality across all ages and population groups. However, having successfully managed the demographic and epidemiological transitions, Mauritius has missed the opportunity of managing the risk transition in between the two phases, thereby getting trapped in Non-Communicable Diseases. The concept of Primary Health Care (PHC) was applied in Mauritius since Independence (1968). The essential components of PHC are integrated in the health care system and covers health education for the control and prevention of diseases, supply of food and nutrition, safe water and basic sanitation, maternal and child health care, including family planning, immunization against major infectious diseases, prevention and control of endemic diseases, treatment of diseases using appropriate technology, promotion of mental health and provision of essential drugs in relation to the prevailing pathologies. In line with the policy of the Government to improve the health status of the population, Mauritius has achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals ahead of the target date of 2015.

Within a short period of time, the life expectancy of the population increased from 33 years in 1944 to 51 years in 1952 and within the next ten years, it increased by a further 10 years to reach an average of 61 years in 1962. Thereafter, life expectancies of males and females increased more gradually with more gains on the female side. In 2008, the figures for males and females were 69.3 and 76.5 years. The downside of the entrenchment of chronic diseases in the population is an increase in the burden of diseases in later life. Statistics on healthy life expectancy for 2007 show figures of 62.3 and 69.5 years for males and females respectively, indicating a deficit in the quality of life of 7 years.

## **CHAPTER 8**

# **FAMILY, CULTURE, ETHNICITY, MEMORY AND IDENTITY**



## 1. SEARCHING FOR THE MAURITIAN FAMILY

### Introduction

The mission of the Truth and Justice Commission was to uncover the truth about the Mauritian past and its consequences for contemporary Mauritius. Compiling Mauritian family trees has been one of the activities that have emerged as a key and crucial component to understanding the failure of families to connect with one another, unite and make common claims to property. Out of the 300 or landownership cases deposited at the TJC, more than half have highlighted the need for Mauritian families to be more aware of their ancestry and compile their family trees. Retracing one's ancestry is also being used by some to make demands for 'reparations' and to insist on more justice.

Retracing one's family history in Mauritius required, in addition to papers, research using Oral History as knowledge about families has been transmitted orally. The University of Mauritius' oral History Project shows clearly that many more families than those who submitted land claims at the Commission have knowledge of their family's past ownership of land. Today, it is virtually impossible to obtain lost land without a genealogical tree. This section, therefore, provides a survey of how genealogical research has been conducted in Mauritius through the experiences and difficulties encountered by deponents coming to the TJC. For most retracing their family is nothing less than an immense hurdle compounded by inadequate and antiquated laws and bored and petty-minded Officers.

As land speculation has increased and the problems were never addressed, the result has been an absolutely unhealthy atmosphere prevailing in this sector: there is a proliferation of fraudulent affidavits, an increase of 'courtiers' (people taking money from those needing certificates/ etc.), corruption, multiple errors in data (such as people being declared dead when they are not, or having different names registered at the Civil Status), disappearance of certificates and useless decentralisation, time-and money-consuming procedures. This has led to growing public resentment towards CSO Officers and Archives Officers.

There is thus an urgent need to address these problems, and it does not appear that anybody, public or private, before the Commission's investigations has been able to address these issues. The Commission has attempted to identify the key problem areas and recommend sound and efficient short-term, mid-term and long-term solutions, which can directly and indirectly help to solve many other related issues.

The value of professional genealogical research is to:

- allow one's lineage to be traced for legal issues;
- if structured diminish consequently frauds and dishonest land and property sales and less land will be lost belonging to ordinary Mauritians who cannot afford expensive lawyers;
- provide important information that will be of use to retrace landownership;
- prove lineage and ascertain equality of rights among family members;
- more equity;
- allow family (re)-construction.

## 2. Summary of discussions held with institutions and individuals

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Three two-hour meetings with institutions were held on 17 September, 3 November and 30 November 2010. Intensive discussions were also held with the Civil Status Office during 2010.

### 1. Purpose of NGC

Access to information and the creation of a Centre would allow families to prepare accurate information for their affidavits, as currently they were certified by a Notary without the information provided being verified at the Civil Status Office or Mauritius National Archives. The NGC would be a kind of 'one-stop shop' for genealogical searches and would be a Centre which would cater for all Mauritians of all cultures, religions and backgrounds.

## **2. Contribution of Mr. Drack**

The TJC was immensely fortunate to obtain the advice and voluntary services of Mr. Patrick Drack, a French National of Mauritian ancestry who, through his personal search for his own family history, has digitized, in France and in Mauritius, many Civil Status documents and assisted Mauritian families abroad in their searches. Mr. Drack has prepared the project for such a Centre which the Commission was happy to endorse whilst respecting his wish that there be no compartmentalisation of the Mauritian population.

## **3. Digitisation**

Extent of digitization was reviewed. Digitisation was in progress at the CSO for the modern period. At the MGI, according to the Head Librarian, 30% documents had been digitized. The National Archives stated that by next year, 5,000 out of its 100,000 documents would be digitized. All the documents would be available online at the Government Online Centre, where it would be more secure. It was agreed that the NGC would have copies of all these documents, but not keep original documents.

## **4. Conservation of documents**

This was considered by all to be a major issue as many documents are not only deteriorating, but are not being handled properly by Officers. Furthermore, institutions in Mauritius were not all financially able to undertake the conservation of documents in a professional manner. Digitisation did not solve the problem as digital records also needed preservation and the value of preserving original documents as part of the Nation's memory could not be measured in quantitative terms or be ignored. It was proposed that a National Conservation School or Institute be also created, perhaps by the UoM, to train staff of all institutions and individuals in conservation, where the latest techniques could be learnt, and also where conservation of documents could take place. The Institute could service the conservation needs of the country. The quality of paper being used also needs to be addressed, as most institutions did not use acid-free paper, and this would mean that most documents would deteriorate with time and could not be conserved. The Civil Status Office, the National Archives and the Diocese all stated they were ready to receive any advice on conservation methods.

In light of urgent recommendation of the Committee concerning conservation, TJC appointed Mr. Stephan Sinclair to undertake a survey of conservation issues in selected institutions to assess the state of documents, their conservation and evaluate the needs of institutions. This survey would provide technical support material for TJC's recommendation for the setting up of a Conservation Institute. The duties of the proposed consultant were recommended as consisting of: a survey of the institutions' holdings and their state of conservation; the nature and type of documents; the dangers facing the documents and long-term and short-term preventative measures. From the assessment, he would devise the functions of a future Conservation Institute. The following institutions were short-listed for the survey: National Archives, Civil Status Office, National Library, Museum Council, Archives of Diocese of Port Louis, Museum Council, Registrar General, Selected government repositories

The wish was also expressed that the Conservation institute could also be a training Institute for all types of conservation: paper, art works, artifacts etc. However, this issue may be considered at a later date by the University of Mauritius and the Museum Council jointly.

## **5. Common referencing system**

It was also observed that the type of referencing of documents differs in all institutions and, consequently, searches are undertaken, according to different criteria. At the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, searches for individuals were made through the number of the immigrant, and not the name of the person. At the CSO and MNA, the search would start when the name, date of event (birth, marriage or death) and district were available. Currently Civil Status are referenced differently at CSO and MNA. It was felt that the future Centre could create its own unique referencing system, regrouping all documents and prepare a guide to the different referencing systems.

## **6. Size and Location of the future Centre**

According to Ag. Deputy Director of Archives, if the National Archives were able to have a purpose-built building; the Centre might be located there. However, as this project had not gotten under way, there was general agreement that NGC should be located under PMO, until it was fully operational.

The surface area required for the proposed centre was of some 1000 m<sup>2</sup> and considered reasonable for a start as for the facilities proposed to be offered.

## **7. Modern outlook required**

It was agreed that institutional philosophy and laws must keep pace with modern outlook and not maintain archaic attitudes towards one's origins. Thus laws regarding confidentiality of documents must be reviewed as Mauritius had not evolved in this sector. Regulations governing access to Civil Status information, dating from Napoleonic times, were still in force. At the MGI, Mauritians had no access to the historical documents themselves, and information was compiled by an Officer. At the MNA, anyone had access to indexes. It was agreed that documents, less than 100 years old, could not be put on the Internet, but that any material before 1910 could be made public.

## **8. Database and website**

A database, with partial information, should be provided to the public who could search for basic information and then come to the Centre or other institutions for more detailed information. All information should, and could not, be put on the internet. Discussions concerning a website were kept in abeyance, as all issues concerned with access to a web-based information would be resolved when the Genealogy Centre issues and legal framework were finalized.

## **9. Slave Registers**

There was much concern about to the disappearance of all slave Civil Status certificates although Mr. Drack remained convinced, they were still in existence somewhere. Both the Civil Status Office and the National Archives stated that no other store existed in their institutions where these might be found. The search continues. To overcome this absence, several suggestions were made: the documents found at the Diocese, such as baptism, marriage Parish Registers for the period 1822-1836 might be consulted, although they were in a bad state. Slave demographic information was also available in the Slave Registers at the National Archives where mutations in slave population had been recorded. It was, however, acknowledged that collection of this data was a time-consuming exercise which could be carried out at a later stage by the NGC.

## **10. Courses in Genealogy**

Courses in Genealogy should be dispensed to train Mauritians in assisting the public in their searches and in order to have a pool of licensed genealogists.

## **11. Data Storage**

There was agreement on the need for a flexible, portable data storage system, with good back-up facilities and a team to upgrade hardware and software.

## **12. Budget**

The draft estimate for setting up of the NGC was considered reasonable.

## **13. Private genealogists and access to archives**

All agreed that public access to archives must be guaranteed in Law, and the new bill must also guarantee this. There was also concern about private genealogists making a business out of the information collected by NGC. Whether this could be avoided, however, was doubtful. It was decided that registered genealogists would refer to NGC licensed genealogists and no others.

#### **14. Mahatma Gandhi Immigration Registers**

Request was also made to the MGI for a copy of their database. As access to these documents is highly restricted for some reason which was not clearly stated, Research Assistants (RAs), Mrs. Pamela Sooben and Miss Pooja Ramchurn, were allowed only to copy part of the archives: lists of immigrants, arrivals with the following details: caste, age, place of birth, port of embarkation, date of arrival, etc. Pamela Sooben digitized part of the marriage certificates of indentured immigrants in Mauritius for the period 1850-60. However, the MGI Archives was closed for renovation from October to February 2011, and this hampered part of the digitization effort. Furthermore, the RAs encountered hostility on the part of the archivist in charge, and this matter was reported to the Prime Minister's Office and to MGI authorities.

### **3. Reconstructing family trees: problems and possibilities**

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The Technical Reports found in Volume 3 contains a draft National Genealogy Centre Bill which has incorporated some of the comments made by the Ministries concerned and individuals, as well all the information required for the setting up of a National Genealogy Centre and a Conservation Institute, as well as background papers explaining the process that led to the recommendation and a summary of discussions held in the context of setting up of National Genealogy Centre, the list of civil status documents found in the CDs and digitized by Patrick Drack and Sharon Ng; a Technical Report on current organization and management of Civil Status documents in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega and lists of members of the Genealogy team and of the National Genealogy Centre Committee and notes of meetings. A summary is given here.

The creation of a National Genealogy Centre is strongly and urgently recommended, A draft Bill has been prepared, as well as an organigramme and an estimated budget. Utmost care and consideration were given to the writing up of the draft of National Genealogy Centre Bill and related documents. Consultations were held over a number of four months, from August to December 2010, with key concerned institutions and their top personnel, as well as key individuals capable of driving this project forward. A consensus has been reached on the structure and *modus operandi* of the National Genealogy Centre.

Previous efforts at creating such a Centre, and issues and problems arising out of these previous endeavours were taken into consideration. The Ministry of Arts and Culture, which spearheaded this initiative some years ago, did not follow up with this for reasons unknown to the Commission. It was noted, however, that the Bill, as envisaged by the Ministry, focused essentially on cultural issues of identity and origins of Mauricians. This current Bill has been designed to address these cultural issues but also to give the possibility to the NGC to create legally acceptable documents. The structure and organization of the NGC needs to be flexible, and it must function as a 'public service' in the true sense of the word, rather than as a 'Department' of Government with the bureaucratic mentality that has pervaded so many public institutions. It needs to be driven by trained technical and professional staff as well as individuals with experience in the field.

The Commission, with the help of Mr. Patrick Drack, started the process of digitizing Civil Status documents and to train Civil Status Officers in digitizing documents. To date, 80,000 certificates have been digitized and are enclosed in a CD in Volume 6. A copy has also been given to the Civil Status Office, as this will be of immediate use to them.

Amendments to existing laws will also be necessary to give public access to documents over 75 years old.

Stricter control needs to be exercised over Public Officials working in institutions which hold Civil Status documents, due to several accusations of corrupt practices by a few officials and the presence of '*courtiers*' operating in the vicinity of the CSO who do not hesitate to exploit innocent persons.

Many institutions and individuals, present at meetings, expressed a desire for the creation of a Conservation Institute, as there is an acute need to train Mauritians in the preservation of paper and digital documents to avoid future deterioration and loss of this crucial Civil Status information.

The possibility of undertaking DNA tests to establish family links must be provided, given the absence of documents for many people and the absence of a proper conservation plan up to now, for documents in public and private repositories. This absence has worked in favour of the economically less wealthy sections of society who cannot afford to pay huge sums to persons to undertake document searches for them.

Of particular concern was the disappearance of Civil Status documents relating to the slave population. Our attempts, spearheaded by Patrick Drack, led to only a few volumes being found buried under stacks of others. These have been digitized. But the disappearance of the bulk leaves is a cause for concerns this appears to have taken place in the 1960s. A hearing *in camera* was held where the Commission learnt that most of these documents were stacked in the cells of the old Prison building, open to all the vagaries of nature. We also learnt, but this could not be verified as the persons are now deceased, that a 'factory' producing fake documents existed in Curepipe. Part of the information was verified and found to be correct, such as that, a Mr. Signolet, a former employee of the Railways Department and transferred to the Civil Status Office, was aware of the existence of this 'factory'. A police investigation is required.

#### **4. Current organization and management of Civil Status documents in the Republic of Mauritius**

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The Central Civil Status Office is the custodian of Civil Status Indexes (Index section) and Civil Status original certificates (Record section). The Record section is further sub-divided into the Old section (1811 to 1920 registers) and the 'New' section (1920 up to today). The registers for both the Index and the Record sections are classified as follows:

1. District-wise (Port-Louis, Plaines Wilhems, etc.);
2. Region-wise (Plaines Wilhems, Rose-Hill) - *For the Record section only*;
3. Type (Birth, death, marriage)- *Often older registers include all three*;
4. Year (there can be many volumes per year).

The registers are then put on compartment shelves, and only authorized staffs have access to these registers. Due to an absence of appropriate policy and resources, these documents are not in the best storage conditions and usage. This vacuum further contributes to damage to these **unique** registers which are almost the only way to prove a person's identity.

On the other hand, indexes have been copied and (incomplete) series of them can be found at the Mauritius National Archives and in various regional Civil Status Offices. Indexes are of the public domain and can be consulted by any members of the public; however, direct access to the index registers is no longer allowed at the Central Civil Status Office because people have torn out pages or/and written on the registers themselves. Request must be made to the Index section officers who then search for the reference, give it to the Record section officers who, in turn, search for the certificate, give it to the computer section to be inputted into their database, then to the photocopying section, which will either make a copy of the certificate or give a computerized version of the certificate.

Concerning the referencing of Civil Status documents, no proper inventory has been undertaken. The last inventory dates back to some 50 years ago and is now obsolete. It is based on the later inventory that registers have been catalogued. For example, in one volume for the year 1886, the register is marked with the year 1886, the district PW, and the volume number if any, i.e., vol.2 and another number relative to the said what said reference (438). The next volume in the shelf, however, will not be volume 3 for 1886/ PW/ vol.3. It may be 1886/PW/490. The gap (438 to 490) was explained as existing because the inventory includes other documents such as legal testimony. Given the advanced state of damage of some documents from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and with the full cooperation of the CSO, which is also very concerned by this situation, the Commission proceeded

to photograph the most damaged documents. As stated previously, a copy was given to the CSO in November 2011.

## **6. Recommendations for National Genealogy Centre**

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1. **Creation of a National Genealogy Centre;**
2. **Amendment to laws to permit greater access to Civil Status information and documents;**
3. **Stricter control over public officials and ‘courtiers’ in custody of Civil Status documents; and in vicinity of Civil Status Offices.**

### **Justification for a National Genealogy Centre**

- A. To assist Mauritian families, many of whom are descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, to reconstruct their family trees in a more credible manner than hitherto possible. This is in recognition of the numerous difficulties faced by ordinary Mauritians to collect relevant and accurate data concerning their family history due to :
1. Family papers not having been preserved;
  2. Illiteracy of persons and inability to read documents presented to them to verify veracity of documents they may be asked to sign or agree to;
  3. Division within families for various reasons: colour, ethnicity, greed, ignorance etc.;
  4. Unscrupulous persons abusing of the credibility of Mauritians and constructing false or inaccurate affidavits in order to extort money;
  5. Corruption of officials in private and public sector who falsify documents thus, willingly or unwillingly, deprive other members of families of their property;
  6. Unexplained disappearance of bulk of Civil Status certificates relating to slaves;
- B. Many people feel an emotional need to search for their origins and some especially when they see others being able to trace their family origins going far back several generations and even to the original family in Asia or Europe.
- C. For those of slave descent and, to a certain extent, persons of indentured descent arriving in early years of indenture, changes of names have resulted and identification and contact with original home, village etc not possible. The consequence has been ‘cultural’, ‘family and kin’ loss and ‘identity’ loss. However, once in Mauritius, with a new name, it may be possible to trace several generations within Mauritius, and this may help to palliate this sense of loss that exists within families.
- D. DNA testing may in future may even be able to do this.

## **7. Creation of a Conservation Institute / Cultural Heritage Institute**

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Creation of a Conservation Institute to train Mauritians in the preservation of paper and digital documents to avoid future deterioration and loss of crucial Civil Status information.

### **Justifications**

The proposal for the creation of a Conservation Institute raised some doubts as to the necessity of one more institution to be created at public expense. It was felt that this should be set up under an existing institution. However, the Commission observed the lack of collaboration between institutions belonging to different Ministries and parastatals, particularly between the Education/Research/Secondary/Tertiary sector on the one hand, and the Culture Sector on the other, despite the fact that much of the subject-matter, the materials and tools used in the research and education sector are found in the Culture section: archives, historical and archaeological sites and so on. It is a highly anomalous situation and has given rise to many problems. It means that staff in institutions falling under two different Ministries have been unable to establish a formalized, continuous and professional relationship and are either unable to, or not willing, to benefit from the services of the other. The TJC’s own efforts to bring institutions together under the Le Morne Cemetery investigations have not been followed up by the Ministry,

and no further collaboration has ensued since the excavations. A proposed MoU in 2010 between two institutions has remained a dead letter.

The Commission, therefore, supports the recommendation of creating a Conservation Institute or a 'Cultural heritage Institute', to be placed under the *aegis* of the University of Mauritius where young persons of all disciplines can be trained in the interdisciplinary framework which is so essential in cultural heritage preservation (Engineering, Computer Science, History, Chemistry and Natural Sciences) rather than at the Ministry of Arts and Culture, heavily staffed by administrators and only a few specialists in cultural fields. Scientific disciplines are represented in even less numbers.

## 2. STATE OF ARCHIVES

As a result of the investigations conducted by the TJC, it has been observed that:

### Generally,

1. The preservation of Mauritian documentary heritage i.e., during the French period, is mediocre but stable.
2. The situation concerning the British and post-Independence periods is extremely disturbing (1810-1980) and has repercussions for the History of Mauritius, as well as for the principle of freedom of information that all Mauritians have a right to.
3. The documentary heritage found in private hands is not well known and this subject to private sales and to being divided up, which is contrary to good archival practice.
4. Attempts by the staff of Archives in the past decade to suggest improvements have fallen on deaf ears, and even the Ministry of Arts has not been able to convince the Ministry of Finance, who controls all funds.

### More specifically,

There has been much 'exaggeration' involved in the past concerning Mauritian documentary heritage, and many feel a 'nostalgia' for the good old days when many cultural institutions flourished and an intellectual 'life' existed. However, little was done to train future generations to protect this literary and scientific heritage. Climatic conditions and insects have had their effect but it is also true that modern generations are less interested in the Arts and Literature and have allowed subdivision and sales of the collections (re: recent Leclezio Papers). A few points deserve mention concerning the archives.

### 1. Dismemberment of the Archives

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- Regrettably, many collections have been sold abroad as public institutions did not see the value in keeping them.
- In Public archives, two successive colonisations have led to the archives being dispersed in the countries of the governors: Decaen, in 1810, took back the archives of his administration, while Governor Farquhar, in 1823 did the same. Most of the Irish priests went away with the archives which are today found in their congregations.
- More recently. independent Governments have not kept up the practice of maintaining archives. There is no concern over how succeeding generations will write the History of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- If archives are allowed to be dismembered, there is no policy or clear guidelines on who will control archival policy and access. Contradictory statements were made, for example, by the Deputy Director of Archives, stating that access to MGI Archives was public, while the Director of MGI stated they were confidential!

## 2. Conservation of documents

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The budget allocated for conservation of documents is, to say the least, abysmal and is a shame on modern Mauritius

## 3. Moving archives

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The constant moving of the archives has had a detrimental effect on the archives. More recently, the transfer of the newspapers is one of the worst results of mismanagement by non-technicians in Mauritius: these newspapers are today no longer legible and Mauritius has lost a precious documentary heritage through political pressure being applied on the Ministry to dismember the newspaper collection at the National Archives. This is another example where professionals should have been listened to; instead, administrators and politicians contributed to the transfer and are guilty of its destruction. At the National Library, there exists no professional Archivist. This transfer could be qualified as a national disaster in terms of heritage management.

## 4. Funds

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Despite the lack of funds, huge funds have been spent on expensive equipment and Computer Technology which the staff is unable to use or maintain.

## 5. Administrative confusion

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Confusion reigns in the administrative sections (*Registrar of Civil Status or Registrar General*), where documents of immense historical interest are mixed with modern records. They are rotting and are mishandled every day. There is no concern for these documents which are considered 'old documents'. No personnel there is trained in conservation.

## 6. Communalism

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Communalism: Part of the cause of destruction is the result of some claiming that 'it is not part' of their heritage and, therefore, do not need to feel concerned. Private persons and institutions are thus allowed to dictate archival policies and practices.

## 7. Long term vision and proactiveness

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- There is no long-term plan of acquisitions, conservation and management of the archives (to date).
- There are too many institutions and norms which block the path of dynamism and proactive persons.
- The National Archive Act is obsolete.

The National Archive Act came into operation with a 40-year delay and was modelled from the Archives Act of UK dating from 1958. However, the UK National Archive Act was itself revised in 2000! It is hoped that Mauritians will not have to wait another 40 years for another revision. This has had 2 negative consequences:

- The non-access to documents, covered by a uniform policy of 30 years. This has been revised in UK when today, in the contemporary world, access to information is judged to be primordial and a right of every human being.
- Private and electronic archives are only mentioned in passing.

## 8. Recommendations for Archives

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1. **A NATIONAL EFFORT IS REQUIRED:** Nothing short of a national effort is required to find global and conclusive solution to the preservation of the original documents found in the National Archives. Training of staff and funding for the Archives are absolutely essential components.

The Commission also feels, however, that this has to be accomplished with as little funds as possible. This is entirely possible, given that huge funds have already been spent and achieved little, not according to norms. There has also been a proliferation of institutions entailing huge expenses for the Mauritian taxpayer with little visible benefit.

### 2. THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL INVENTORY

- This must be also an intrinsic part of the process, even if it means acknowledging finally and formally, that some of this documentary heritage has disappeared or been stolen under the very eyes of people working there. A good example is that photocopies in MGI Library and National Library have replaced original books in the Mauritiana Section and the staff are not even aware of this, nor do they know where and when the originals disappeared. Had there been a National Inventory, this may not have occurred.
- The National Inventory will help set priorities relating to digitisation and conservation. However, this should not be transformed into an expensive venture for the National Archive and become a profitable business venture for companies.
- Some guidelines and issues to be considered for this inventory are proposed in the Technical Report (Vol 4 Part X 25) and are summarised here:

#### Inventory - conceptualisation phase

1. Define what constitutes Mauritian documentary heritage.
  - Chronological parameters.
2. Medium, nature and origin of documents.
3. Lieu of conservation of documents.
4. Define in detail indexing norms:
  1. [BIB17] easy as there are international norms in this respect and reutilisation of notices taken overseas is guaranteed;
  2. [ARC18] harder because local electronic inventory not well constructed so far
  3. Define how to link digital documents to the list.
5. Conceptualise and demonstrate clearly which information system to be used in the inventory and why
  1. Use free software tried and tested in other archives (such as at UNESCO, ICA, etc.).
  2. Respect technical norms of interchange ability adopted in other countries for inventorying and cataloguing of cultural heritage collections.

### 3. REVISION OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES ACT CONCERNING :

1. Management of archives: there is a need to include recruitment of trained personnel.
2. Open access to modern documents.
3. Revision of time-frame of making documents accessible: 30-year rule not necessary for all documents.

4. National policy on record management to be devised and included.
5. Introduce concept of 'missions' to recover archives of departments etc.
7. Revise composition of Appraisal Committee so that there is a bigger role for historians and professional archivists.
8. More rigorous law concerning sale of private archives i.e., the creation of a private archive inventory, upon declaration by private custodians.

#### 4. TRAINING IN CONSERVATION OF DOCUMENTS

The creation of a Cultural Heritage Institute or a Conservation Institute at the University of Mauritius (UoM), which will include the preparation of a Master's Degree in Conservation of Mauritian Heritage; this could be part of both History programmes as well as Librarians' courses and even Sciences programme, as a multidisciplinary staff (Sciences Chemistry Entomology Mycology) is also required etc.

- An MA in Heritage Conservation should cover all aspects of Conservation in Mauritius but start with paper Conservation, and then move to other types of Heritage.
- Specialists should be invited, who are recognised in the field, for short intensive courses to boost the work of local full-time lecturers
- The course should aim first at those already in service as well as a few not in service, to ensure continuity of skills
- Provision for *Auditeurs libres* (fee-paying) should be made.
- The Programmes should cater for international and regional students.

#### 5. PROACTIVE POLICY TO BE ADOPTED FOR PROTECTION OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

- Comparison of Auguste Toussaint's inventory and new additions must be identified. The missing items also need to be investigated and the 'borrowers' asked to return them.
- A Police Section to be set up and trained to be in charge of cultural theft.
- Periodic assessment by international consultants to be undertaken, but not in the manner currently being undertaken, which is in an *ad hoc* manner. There should be regular and periodic reporting and permanent communication established with foreign specialists to keep abreast of new developments, as this is currently not done formally, but through personal contacts.
- Review of the project of building a seven-storey building housing both National Archives and Library, and whether the country can afford to fund such an expensive building. If funds exist, they should go towards recruitment and training and adequate equipment.



## **CHAPTER NINE**

# **THE MAURITIAN ARCHIPELAGO: MAURITIUS, RODRIGUES, AGALEGA, CHAGOS AND ST BRANDON ISLANDS**

## 1.CHAGOS : 500 YEARS OF POWER GAME

For more than five hundred years, various powers have fought for control over the Indian Ocean. During much of this time, the islands have played little part, if any. Formerly, all the territories, including Rodrigues, Saint-Brandon, the Chagos Archipelago, as well as Tromelin, formed part of Mauritius before Independence. Although Mauritius has retained Rodrigues, Agaléga and Saint-Brandon in 1968, Tromelin and the Chagos Archipelago still constitute a bone of contention between Mauritius and two of the former colonial powers, namely France and Great Britain which excised these territories. Today, the Republic of Mauritius has an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.9 million km<sup>2</sup>. The particular histories of Rodrigues and Agaléga have been discussed in Volume IV (Part IX) of this Report. The Chagos Archipelago, however, is more than a local issue; it is an international issue and is the object of an important power game in this part of the world.

Saint-Brandon, or the Cargados Carajos Group of Islands, situated at approximately 450 kms. to the North of Mauritius, was first chartered by the Portuguese in 1546 who regrouped the islets under the appellation of “*Sao Brandao*” and “*Gados Charades*”. In 1742, Mahé de Labourdonnais sent a ship to explore the islets and Abbé de Rochan mapped out the archipelago in 1769. These islets had been leased to private companies since the colonial days, until 1901, for the exploitation of guano. The lease of 15 of the islets expired in May 1992 and has not been renewed since then, whilst the lease of the other 13 islets has come to an end in October 2000. However, the former lessee, namely Raphael Fishing Company Limited, has been authorized to continue its activities pending further negotiations.

According to the Domain of Register of Crown Properties, Saint-Brandon is made up of 28 islets and some of these islets are mere sandy cays which tend to change their shape and position after tidal waves or during cyclonic conditions. The total area of these islets is about 500 *Arpents* and they spread over an area of approximately 1,000 square kilometres.

There is no permanent population on Saint-Brandon, but only fishermen working there on a temporary basis. These fishermen are based mainly on Ile du Sud, Ile-aux-Cocos and Raphael. The absence of portable water sources on the majority of the islets does not favour the development of human settlement. However, birds are present in the highest numbers during the cool season, with an estimated population of 80,000 birds on Sirène, 40,000 on Poulailier, and some 5,000 on Puits-à-Eaux.

An area of tension between France and Mauritius relates to the Mauritian’s claim to Tromelin Island, some 550 kilometres Northwest of Mauritius, which France retained when Mauritius acceded to Independence. Tromelin had been governed by France from Mauritius during the colonial period, and for a number of years, Mauritius has raised the question of the return of the one-square kilometre island, where France has a meteorological observation station. When French President François Mitterrand visited Mauritius in 1990, the Government raised its claim; despite several subsequent discussions, the matter has not been resolved. In 2010, the issue was once more officially discussed between Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam and the French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Both Mauritius and France agreed to “*maintain the dialogue over a shared administration till a satisfactory conclusion is reached*” between the two parties.

The Chagos Archipelago, subject to a claim by Mauritius, has been kept as Crown property and is administered from London by a Commissioner. Ignored by the Europeans over more than five centuries, Diego Garcia, the V- shaped area of 44 sq km, with its two arms enclosing a large deep lagoon, which is the main island of the Archipelago, has turned out to be the key base of operations for the latest super power in the region, the United States of America.

Most of the islands - Diego Garcia, Six Islands, Three Brothers, Salomon’s’ Islands, Peros Banhos (22 smaller islands) and Legour Island, which comprise the Chagos Archipelago - only the main island of Diego Garcia and the island of Peros Banhos have had significant permanent settlements. Others have been occupied by smaller number of people, for limited period, or are not large enough to support settlement.

The islands around Mauritius were seen as being of too little importance for any economic development, so much so that both the French and the British tried to turn Rodrigues into a leprosy centre and to use the Chagos as a prison. Diego Garcia was, subsequently, turned into an asylum for leprosy till the British discovered years later in the 1960s that it could be something else.

*“One important decision that needs to be noted is that, upon his arrival at Isle de France, General Decaen immediately decided to evacuate the settlers from Rodrigues to counter the British influence. He was convinced and he was right that the British found in Rodrigues a source of supply for their ships on blockade duty around Isle de France. As leprosy was becoming a real threat at Isle de France at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Arrêté of 30<sup>th</sup> July 1800 made provision for segregation in special asylums of persons affected:*

*“Those amongst the persons affected who shall be found to be incurable, shall, by the first opportunity, be sent to a place that shall be fixed, the colony shall see to their being settled, and to their keeping and maintenance during the period of six months”. (Article VI of the Arrêté).*

*General Decaen thought that Rodrigues would be ideal place and that would also scare the British away.*

*For the interest of Isle France and Bourbon, Rodrigues would have been sacrificed and turned into an asylum for the lepers”<sup>530</sup>.*

Thirty-eight years later, under British rule, the fate of the islands was to be once more decided. William Nicolay, through the then Colonial Secretary, Georges Dick, in a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> June 1838, sent Special Magistrate Charles Anderson on a special assignment to the islands:

*“Independently of your immediate duty as a Special Magistrate, it will be desirable that you should acquire as much general information as possible with regards to the islands themselves - the soil, climate, rains, woods, etc; their capability of cultivation, facility of approach, nature of anchorage and all other such facts connected with them, as may be useful to enable the Government to come to an accurate conclusion as to their value and the future advantages that may be derived from them, this observation applies specifically to Rodrigues.*

*The Governor would also wish particularly to know which would be likely the most eligible place for a modified Penal Settlement where prisoners could be sent to undergo their sentence of hard labour and confinement instead of in a goal in the Colony... a measure which, both in a moral and political view, His Excellency considers an object of great importance”<sup>531</sup>.*

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## FRENCH AND BRITISH RIVALRY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

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The islands of the Chagos were first chronicled by Portuguese sailors who stumbled across them, while sailing for other destination. For centuries, they were little known and were little more than a navigation hazard. As sailing technology and knowledge improved, the islands became more accessible.

Over the course of the 1600s, the British gained in strength in the Indian Ocean, while the Portuguese and the Dutch were relegated to secondary powers. The British were forging ahead into the Indian Ocean, lured by profits. The struggle amongst the European nations for control of the Indian Ocean had begun in earnest.

This British-French rivalry led to a greater interest in the Diego Garcia and the Chagos Archipelago by the mid-1700s.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century passed almost as quietly as the 16<sup>th</sup> in the Chagos Archipelago. Even well into the 1700s, the islands were largely ignored and avoided.

During their crossings from the Isles of France and Bourbon to India, the French had conceived an insuperable dread of the Archipelago which extends from the North to the North-East of Madagascar.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal was no longer the dominant naval power in the Indian Ocean, nor were the Dutch any longer in contention for the place of preeminence. Instead, the English and the French had expanded both their interests and their rivalry in the Indian Ocean. This rivalry led to a renewed interest in once neglected locations like the Chagos Archipelago. In their reasoning, even if a nation was not interested in owning and exploiting some island, its rival might. Thus, both the French and English began to look upon the Chagos and Diego Garcia, in particular, in a new light. In order to carry out their naval strategies, these nations needed information which was gathered and analyzed.

The British in the Indian Ocean were represented largely by two entities: the Royal Navy and the East India Company (EIC). The East India Company was far more than simply a business. Indeed, it operated a navy of its own. From its foundation in 1600, to its eventual demise in 1874, the EIC played a key role in the British presence in the Indian Ocean. At times, the Company served as the *de facto* government of India and held incredible influence over British Government's policy in the region. Service to the Company offered great opportunities. Even before the British settled in the Americas, and long after its colonies there had rebelled, the East India Company was a cornerstone of British Colonial strength.

The period of escalating British-French rivalry in the Indian Ocean reached its crescendo, with the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic wars. It was during this time that the island of Diego Garcia got its first permanent settlement. While the French and English Governments had decided that the Chagos were not fit to serve as significant military bases, several enterprising French businessmen on the island of Mauritius saw an opportunity to make money by exploiting the island of Diego Garcia. By the late 1780s, the French administration in Mauritius had given "concessions" to two men: Le Normand to harvest coconuts and M. Dauget to fish. In fact, the same Pierre Marie Le Normand and his wife lived in Le Morne in 1769. His domain in Mauritius extended from Cape Brabant to la Prairie, stretching over some 2,155 *Arpents*. By the late 1780s, Le Normand had also set up operations on Diego Garcia, to harvest coconuts on the island.

By 1808, M. Dauget and M. Cayeux had joined M. Lapotaire who had produced coconut oil on the island, for export to Mauritius, since 1794.

At the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, oil was a valuable substance; it not only lit lamps, but was being used as lubrication for an increasingly mechanized world. If whale oil was one of the main sources, coconuts were another source of oil. Harvested, shelled, dried, and then pressed, they provided valuable, high quality oil. The key to the economic processing of coconuts was cheap labor, and the French in Mauritius had this in the form of slaves. Lapotaire had more than 100 slaves on Diego Garcia, providing for 12 mills, while Cayeux had an operation half as large.

The coconut oil exploitation soon gave rise to strong business competition, as two other men (one a former Cayeux employee) imported 20 slaves and set up a couple of mills of their own. There were disagreements over precisely who had the legal right to do what. This competition gave rise to a second bigger problem, since the British had begun to show interest in the oil business, while there was concern that the English could be tempted to plunder the island.

Governor Decaen, from Isle de France, subsequently decreed that all established businesses would get a share of the island, but no one could make finished coconut oil on the island. Instead, the island would only produce *copra* (dried coconut) for exportation to Mauritius and refining there. The idea was that if there were no oil on the island, the English would not attack the plantations.

At the same time, Governor Decaen decided that Diego Garcia should become a settlement for all lepers. Thus, the island became a land of exile for lepers who continued to be deported there, even during the British period.

With the rise of Napoleonic wars against the British, the Isle de France's strategic location in the Southwest Indian Ocean made it important once again. An island of considerable size and population, it served as an excellent place from which to terrorize British sea routes from Africa to

India and the Far East. The French Navy was never strong enough to directly challenge the British in the Indian Ocean's so French warships, as well as privateers and corsairs, sailed from Mauritius to attack British shipping and took captured ships and booty back to Mauritius for sale. The island quickly attracted profit-minded merchants from around the world. Among these, were merchants from the new United States of America.

Between 1786 and 1810, some 600 American ships visited Mauritius, and the U.S. established a Consulate on the island in 1794.

In the 1820s and 1830s, the British had set the stage for yet another extension of their worldwide maritime dominance. Slavery officially ended in Mauritius in 1835. At this time, most of the residents of Diego Garcia were indeed former slaves. Many had come from Africa *via* slave-trading centers on Madagascar and in Mozambique.

Diego Garcia continued to exist in relative obscurity. The island's plantations' main export was still coconut oil, although whole coconuts were shipped out as well. The island also exported small amounts of various products: dried and salted fish, turtles and turtle shells, coconut fiber and cordage coir.

The Royal Navy had a marked presence in the Indian Ocean following the slave illegal trade. Moreover, the Navy undertook to survey Diego Garcia for steam navigation. In 1881, the Orient Steam Navigation Company closed its coaling station in Aden and transferred all its operations to Diego Garcia in 1882. At the time, the Orient Company had 12 ships running the England-Australia route *via* the Suez Canal.

In 1888, the Orient Steam Navigation Company ceased its operations on Diego Garcia, after offering the British Government an opportunity to take over. The land which the company had leased reverted to the Government.<sup>532</sup>

In 1905, Diego Garcia and the other Chagos islands were again visited by a scientific expedition. It visited various islands in the Chagos, anchoring at Diego Garcia from July 7 to the 13, and it gathered much interesting scientific information about the region.

The period between the World wars was relatively uneventful for Diego Garcia. British authorities on Mauritius noted the difficulties of policing the remote Chagos islands, as well as the fact that sometimes, the people sent to manage the plantations were less than suited for the task.

One continuing problem was that the owners of the plantations resided on Mauritius and saw Diego Garcia and the other Chagos Islands as little more than a source of easy income. There was a perennial shortage of capital for investment, and many ambitious plans for development were wrecked on the shoals of fiscal austerity. Mauritian Colonial Authorities felt that the owners should pay for required services and the upkeep, while the owners, in turn, felt that such costs were the responsibility of the Colonial Authorities. Compounding the geographic isolation of Diego Garcia was the complex social hierarchy of Mauritius.

In 1933, the John Murray Expedition led another expedition to survey of the Archipelago.

In 1936, it was suggested to set up a wireless on the island, as a wireless would allow the islanders to hear emergency broadcasts from Nairobi, Bombay, and Colombo, but neither the owners, nor the Colonial Authorities accepted to foot the bill. The island got a radio only in 1941, when the Royal Air Force began using the island as a base. Suggestions for more significant reforms were shelved, as well. For example, in one message to the Colonial Office, it was suggested that the Chagos should be administered, not from Mauritius, but from the Seychelles islands and that goods for the islands should be shipped to Colombo instead of Mauritius. The British noted, however, that Diego Garcia and the Chagos were a Mauritian "*family business*" and that any attempt to change the status quo would be opposed.

During these decades, the Chagos Islands were only intermittently visited. Perhaps three or four times a year, a large steamer from Mauritius visited Diego Garcia, dropping off supplies for the island and picking up its exports, mainly coconut related.<sup>533</sup>

In October 1941, following a reconnaissance by the Indian Army, the Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies commented on the development of the Diego Garcia base.<sup>534</sup>

In October 1942, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into the War, the British War Cabinet issued top level plans for Diego Garcia. The British had no plans to utilize the native plantation workers.

The end of the war saw Diego Garcia once again left to its own devices. Although there were some changes, such as the installation of a permanent radio station and the opening of a school for the children, life returned to normal with coconut harvesting and fishing. The military simply packed up and left, taking whatever could be carried.

In 1953, as the British considered the increasingly tenuous position of their Empire, they decided to investigate the possibility of keeping control of the Indian Ocean from bases on remote and isolated islands, instead of from large nations like India.

In 1957, Admiral Jerauld Wright, Commander-in-Chief of the US Atlantic Fleet, "inspected" Diego Garcia from a U.S. ship.

In May 1960, the Director of the Long Range Objectives Group proposed that the British be asked to "detach" Diego Garcia from Mauritius, when that colony was given Independence.

In early 1959, the Liaison Officer for African Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in London contacted the British with a proposal. The U.S. Navy has started to study the possibility of a U.S. naval task force operating in the Western Indian Ocean. In order to further planning, it was proposed that a team visit and survey the British ports that might function as logistics bases.

The British Foreign Office welcomed the U.S. interest. They noted the importance of protecting the oil routes, as well as the potential benefits of having the U.S. dependant on the British. The political situation in Kenya had started to become "*complicated*," however, and therefore Mombasa was not an ideal choice. Similarly, Mauritius was likely to get self-government in the near future and the British could not make a long-term commitment there.

On June 12, 1959, the Admiralty had sent out a message announcing that Her Majesty's Government had given permission for the U.S. to send a small, low-profile, survey team to the Indian Ocean region.

In 1961, the British prepared a paper for the Chiefs of Staff on the subject of U.S. facilities in the Indian Ocean<sup>535</sup>.

Prior to 1962, a Mauritian company, Diego Garcia Limited, became the owner of various islands in the Indian Ocean, including the Chagos Archipelago, writes d'Unienville.<sup>536</sup> In 1962, the Chagos Agaléga Limited was incorporated in the Seychelles, to acquire the assets of the Mauritian Company Diego Garcia Limited.

Even if it was said that the Chagos were private lands owned by the private company, most probably, it was only on lease, as the atolls and the dependencies of Mauritius were still Crown Land. The Chagos Company Limited was allowed to exploit the coconut plantations and the copra manufactures until 1967, when the British closed all copra exploitations and paid financial compensation of some £ 1,35 millions to the Company.

Fr. Dussercle wrote that the Company directors were only administrators and represented the British Administration on the islands.<sup>537</sup> Roger Dussercle was a French priest with a missionary bent. He had served earlier as a chaplain to the French army in Morocco and then, eventually, had been assigned by the Catholic Church to work on Mauritius. The island was already predominately Catholic, and well-served with churches and priests. The outlying islands, however, the "*lesser dependencies*", including Diego Garcia and the Chagos, had no assigned priests and often went for years without religious guidance. Dussercle not only made a point of visiting the islands, but he also wrote books about his adventures.

In late 1963, the Americans began to think about the possibility of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet operating in the Indian Ocean, as a counter-measure to perceived communist Chinese expansionism.

In January 1964, the U.S. discovered that there was a “*power vacuum*” in the Indian Ocean. In July of that year, as talks with the British intensified, another survey team was sent to Diego Garcia.

## THE CHAGOSSIANS VICTIMS OF THE SUPERPOWERS

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Few Mauritians knew much about Diego Garcia or the rest of the Chagos Archipelago. Mauritius was more geared, at the time, to the issue of independence.

On 8<sup>th</sup> November 1965, the British issued the BOIT order, establishing for the first time a political entity known as the British Indian Ocean Territory, comprising of Diego Garcia and the rest of the Chagos, as well as a few other Indian Ocean Islands, mainly the Aldabra and Farquhar Islands and Ile Desroches, excised from the British Crown Colony of the Seychelles. The BIOT order was issued by the Queen of England as an “*Order in Council*”, under the authority of the Colonial Boundaries Act of 1895.

On 10<sup>th</sup> November 1965, the British publicly announced the creation of the BIOT. The announcement was intentionally low key, as the British were trying to avoid political and legal complications, particularly from the United Nations.

The United States agreed to pay the British, for detaching Diego Garcia, a sum not exceeding \$14 million, as the United States Law requires that spending be approved by Congress, but in this case, no congressional scrutiny was required, so a new method of payment was created.

Visibly, there was a notable lack of consultation, by any party, with the people living on the island of Diego Garcia or the other Chagos islands. The islanders had coexisted with military facilities before, and no one told them that they were all to be evicted from the Chagos in its entirety.

The British Government was intent on satisfying U.S. demands for an unpopulated island, however, and it was not going to be deterred. The British began a quiet policy to reduce the population on the islands. As the Chagos were remote and primitive, many people who lived there travelled to Mauritius and the Seychelles for healthcare, schooling, visiting relatives, marriage, and other sundry reasons. The British began simply denying people, who left the island, passage back, often leaving them stranded away from what they considered their home. The British kept this practice as secret as possible, and would later carry out the final mass expulsion by surprise.<sup>538</sup>

But the British were caught in a self-inflicted legal and political trap. They had detached the BIOT from Mauritius and then given Mauritius its Independence. The British simply did not “resettle” the *Ilois*. They exiled them. As citizens of a British Colony, there was no legal means to force them to move to what was now another nation. In theory, if they could not remain on the islands, then they should have been allowed to settle elsewhere in Britain. The British Government clearly did not want that, for political as well as fiscal reasons.

On 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1970, the U.S. Administration announced its intention to go ahead and construct a joint military facility on Diego Garcia.<sup>539</sup>

In September 1971, the *MV Nordvaer*, the island’s normal supply ship, arrived at Diego Garcia from Mauritius. The remaining *Ilois* and other plantation workers were told that the ship was not going to resupply the island, but would be carrying them off the island.

On 28<sup>th</sup> September, the last 35 of the 1, 200 people who were in the Chagos carried their own baggage aboard the overcrowded vessel, forced to leave behind their most valuable possessions. The evicted Chagossians had been dumped in Mauritius and most of them headed for life in urban slums.

In October 1972, the U.S. and Britain signed a formal agreement to establish a joint “limited communication facility” on the island.

The resettled *Ilois* languished on Mauritius. Cyclone “*Gervaise*” had left more than 90,000 Mauritians homeless, and unemployment during the period was running at about 20%. Those few remaining *Ilois* on islands other than Diego Garcia were shipped to Mauritius by the end of 1973.

The British Government had agreed to give Mauritius an additional £650,000 for a “*full and final*” settlement of resettlement costs.

By March 1973, the Naval Communications Station opened for business, with about 200 assigned personnel.

## MAURITIAN CLAIMS

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If the French and British conflict around 1800 helped lead to the island’s settlement, the U.S. and Soviet conflict in the 1960s led to the island’s depopulation. Unfortunately, many of the island’s residents, whose ancestors were slaves, had become attached to what they thought was their island. Unprepared for the termination of their primitive island lifestyle, they found themselves to be an impoverished and unwanted minority. Approximately 1,200 residents of the islands, living as agricultural workers, had been relocated by the British Government to Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Upon Independence from Britain in 1968, Mauritius made immediate claims to the Chagos Archipelago and requested the resettlement of all indigenous populations. Subsequently, Britain transferred a number of the BIOT islands to the Seychelles, when it attained independence in 1976. The BIOT is now made up of the six main island groups comprising the Chagos Archipelago.

Britain had thus leased the island of Diego Garcia to the United States for a 50-year period until 2016, with a 20-year extension available, if both parties agree to continuation. The U.S. controls the total Great Chagos Bank which covers some 22,000 square miles (56,995 square km) of the Indian Ocean.

After its installation on the Chagos, the United States began to transform Diego Garcia into a naval support facility that soon included deep-water docks and an expanded runway.

In the 1980s, the United States increased its presence on Diego Garcia by building new airfield facilities, and an air force satellite detection and tracking station, initiating long-range bomber operations, improving navigational aids, and increasing the port capabilities. The United States still maintains a large amount of ground combat equipment on maritime prepositioning ships (MPSs) stationed in Diego Garcia. The United States has built an extensive military support complex that is operated jointly with the British. The facility and its capabilities are operationally invaluable to the U.S. military doctrine of global force projection and its current military operations in the Middle East, South Asia, and throughout the Indian Ocean.<sup>540</sup>

In the mid-1970s a member of the Chagossian community in Mauritius started legal proceedings against the British Government in the English Courts, claiming, among other things, that he had been wrongfully removed from the islands. Under an agreement reached in 1982, the legal proceedings were withdrawn and the UK made an *ex gratia* payment of £4 million for the benefit of the Chagossian community in Mauritius.

In 1998, another member of the Chagossian community instituted judicial review proceedings challenging the validity of BIOT’s Immigration Ordinance 1971, which prohibited the entry of any person into any part of the Territory, unless he obtained a permit to do so. The judgment in November 2000 held that the 1971 Ordinance was indeed invalid and it was replaced by a new Ordinance that allows the Chagossians to return and reside in any part of the Territory except (for defence reasons) Diego Garcia.

No Chagossians have returned to the islands to live since the new Ordinance was enacted. The islands, other than Diego Garcia, are still uninhabited and have no facilities on them to support a settled population. There are a few remains of buildings from the copra plantation days, but these are unusable. There is no clean water supply, no power and no transport.

In February 2002, the Chagos Refugees Group applied to the UK Courts for further compensation and assisted resettlement on all of the islands, including Diego Garcia. The Court case started in October 2002 and, in October 2003, the Courts found in favour of the UK Government but allowed the Chagossians to appeal on some of the issues.

In June 2004, the British Government passed an Order in Council banning the Chagossians from the Chagos Islands, and the islanders then applied for a Judicial review of the Order in Council.

In May 2006, the British High Court overturned this Order in Council, giving the Chagossians the right to return.

In May 2007, the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court's decision ruling that the methods used in banning the islanders from returning to the islands was unlawful. In November 2007, the UK House of Lords gave the UK Government permission to challenge the Court of Appeal's ruling, with the proviso that the Government should cover the cost of the appeal, whatever the outcome.

In October 2008, the British Law Lords upheld the British Government's Appeal, denying the Chagossians the right to return to the Archipelago.<sup>541</sup>

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, the British declared that a Marine Protected Zone (MPA) around the Chagos Archipelago - where all fishing and extractive activities (oil and gas exploration) are banned - was unlawful.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Mauritius initiated proceedings against the United Kingdom under the dispute settlement provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) The dispute, to be submitted to an Arbitral Tribunal (since both States have opted for different dispute settlement methods under UNCLOS), concerns the creation by the United Kingdom of a Marine Protected Area up to the outer limit of the exclusive economic zone of the Chagos Archipelago. According to the notification and statement of claim, Mauritius requests the Annex VII Arbitral Tribunal to declare, in accordance with the provisions of UNCLOS and the applicable rules of international Law not incompatible with the Convention, that, in respect of the Chagos Archipelago:

- The 'Marine Protected Area' is not compatible with the 1982 Convention, and is without legal effect; and/or
- The United Kingdom is not a 'coastal state' within the meaning of the 1982 Convention and is not competent to establish the 'Marine Protected Area'; and/or
- Only Mauritius is entitled to declare an exclusive economic zone under Part V of the 1982 Convention, within which a marine protected area might be declared.<sup>542</sup>

In fact, on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Wikileaks document had already uncovered that an absolute ban on fishing in the area might "*be the most effective long-term way to prevent any of the Chagos Islands' former inhabitants or their descendants from resettling [...]*."<sup>543</sup>

## 2. RODRIGUES: SOCIAL CHALLENGES

The Island of Rodrigues faces serious social challenges that require urgent attention of all Rodriguans, and in particular the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Indeed, as land resources are the major assets of Rodrigues, inappropriate land use contributes to soil erosion and land degradation that affect agricultural productivity and is, therefore, a major factor in food security and poverty. This is a huge responsibility that the RRA cannot downplay, even though the State lands are leased to private individuals for a specific number of years, depending on the purpose of the development project which are approved by the State Lands Committee. Thus, the strategy to be proposed rests heavily on environmental mainstreaming in policy and in key economic sectors. The adoption of a sustainable land resources, solid waste, and coastal zone-management system is viewed as critical in order to successfully transform, in the longrun, the current situation of land degradation, soil loss, and impoverished ecosystems into diverse cultural landscapes of outstanding aesthetic, economic, and ecological value.

Land resources in Rodrigues are affected whenever one or more of the above five components (that is, Agricultural and grazing lands, Forestry & Forest Biodiversity, Management of Caves, Botanical Gardens and Built-up area- settlements etc.) are under threat. Indeed, poor land management has resulted in low economic returns from agriculture. This is due to high soil erosion which is itself a result of bad agricultural and grazing practices; past deforestation; poor building practices (especially the dispersed nature of settlements); steep topography; and high intensity rainfall (rainfall intensities of up to 150 mm per hour is not uncommon). Besides reducing the agricultural potential of the land, soil erosion has affected rivers and dams as well as the lagoons and coral reefs. Soil erosion has also been due to poor building practices. In this respect, Rodrigues has been able to deal with the problems of land squatting with the setting up of a Land Squad under the Environment Unit. However, the problem of scattered housing, due to the dispersed nature of settlements, has led to the loss of agricultural land, as well as a reduction in the aesthetic appeal of the country side.

There is a total lack of an endorsed framework for land planning and land use on the island as the Planning Development Act 2004 is not applicable to Rodrigues and the National Development Strategy is not statutory to Rodrigues. The RRA needs to endorse a national strategy around which all future planning initiatives will revolve in a transparent manner. There is an absence of a database and unsustainable land management; likewise, there is an absence of detailed information regarding land resources. This lack of information makes it difficult for the authorities to come up with proper strategies with regards to the environment.

One of the main problems in infrastructure development and provision lies in the haphazard settlement pattern. Indeed, the very striking feature about the human settlement pattern in Rodrigues is its dispersed nature. Rodriguans have tended to build their houses on agricultural land leased to them, so as to make it easier to look after their crops and cattle which roam freely. Consequently, houses are scattered and isolated, which typify the Rodriguan way of living. Another reason for same is the absence of an appropriate housing policy, of declared zones, delays in approving housing leases and building permits, and lack of enforcement.

Due to the hilly terrain and scattered houses, the Authorities find it difficult to provide services such as water supply, telephone, transport, and so forth, to all isolated settlements. Some people have to walk long distances to get to schools, hospitals and other facilities.

### **Social Justice**

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While Rodriguans enjoy a happy social and family life, there are several problems facing the society. Family/female poverty, alcoholism, growing numbers of delinquency, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy, and to a limited extent, the threat of HIV/AIDS propagation, are among the most important and have the most disruptive and permanent consequences for society. There has not been a great decline in the number of teenage pregnancies, although the range of educational facilities, employment opportunities, including opportunities for entrepreneurship has been rising. The problem of alcoholism and teenage pregnancy are related to lifestyles and are very personal,

and tackling these social issues requires the full collaboration of social partners. As in Mauritius, overt and extreme poverty is not in evidence in Rodrigues. However, irrespective of the way it is measured, the issues of poverty and other social ills have to be dealt with immediately in Rodrigues because the process of modernisation and development, as promised by the Authorities, and which is bound to take place, can only accentuate the existing inequalities.

## **Social Exclusion**

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The problem of poverty is associated with social exclusion and marginalisation of some sections of the society. In Rodrigues, family poverty among groups, such as single women heads of households and teenage mothers, is accentuated by their lack of association with formal networks in the society. A Qualitative Study on Family Problems in Rodrigues, undertaken by the University of Mauritius, Ministry for Rodrigues and UNICEF in 1993, found that these groups of women, in most cases, do not belong to any associations, movements or community groupings. Some 20 years after that study, it should be noted that an extensive network of associations and organisations exists in Rodrigues and that these actively participate in the development of the island and cooperate in the identification and execution of community-based projects. Single women heads of households and teenage mothers are, however, not widely integrated into this network of organisations. The Study noted that the absence of single women heads of households could partly be attributed to feelings of uneasiness in taking part and a concern with being socially looked down upon by other association members.

## **Poverty**

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Poverty was estimated at 37.5% of households by the World Bank. There is a legitimate need to reduce the level of income poverty. The main thrust would be through improving productivity and creating employment, and not by increasing Social Aid which would continue to be targeted for the old, the vulnerable and the neediest. The policy would be to put in place a proper system of assistance in terms of loans, technical advice and support and market outlets for those who are unemployed or underemployed.

Single-headed female households are among the poorest in Rodrigues. Some studies also seem to indicate that external circumstances often result in such households finding themselves in a vicious circle of poverty from one generation to another. Teenage pregnancy also leads to unstable relations and poverty. Once again, it is only through education, sensitisation and direct empowerment that the vicious circle of early pregnancy, lack of education, poverty and unstable family relationships can be broken. It is to be acknowledged that the Commission for Child Development, Family Welfare and Women's Rights is currently implementing its action plan relating to the sensitisation and direct empowerment of vulnerable groups, especially teenage mothers. The action plan addresses the recommendations of the Report on Teenage Pregnancy under three headings, that is, Prevention, Empowerment, and Integration.

The social network system and legal framework has been laid down to cater for the elderly. What is now required is a proper follow-up and monitoring. Improving the quality of life would include better facilities for sports, recreation and self improvement. Much infrastructure already exists. What needs to be done is to improve the utilisation of these facilities and ensuring a wider coverage of the population.

## **Single female-headed households**

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When the Rodrigues Council of Social Services carried out a survey of villages in Rodrigues in 1996, the findings indicated that 86% of single female headed households had a monthly income of Rs 2,000 or less, while the equivalent figure for the totality of surveyed households was 49%. This relatively higher income of single female headed households is not specific to Rodrigues, but concerns the whole Republic. As it has been asserted in the study on *'Patterns and Trends in the Feminisation of Poverty in Mauritius'*, there are considerable gender disparities in the incidence of poverty specified by status of households with female headed households more likely to be poor than male headed households. The Qualitative Study paid particular attention to the difficulties of female headed households, but pointed out that not all of them were vulnerable. The Study mentioned that the female heads of households are mainly divorced, separated, widowed or

unmarried women who often face difficulties in obtaining an adequate income. The causes of the women's income poverty were attributed to a lack of employment opportunities for women in Rodrigues, large families, lack of education and problems in accessing land. In addition, single female heads of households are often marginalised in terms of not being involved in the extensive network of associations and movements that exist in Rodrigues.

### **Social Aid and Safety Nets**

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The State is the most important provider of social benefits to the population of which more than 90% are non-contributory. The State provided assistance, in 2003/04, to some 4,790 beneficiaries of whom 70% were over 60 years of age and were receiving retirement pensions. The figure of 4,790 is on the high side as it does not take into account the fact that some beneficiaries could be receiving more than one form of assistance. The amount of Rs 1,900 per month received by the majority of old age pensioners represents around 50% of the monthly income as per the Household Budget Survey which has been used as a proxy for a poverty line. The provision of social aid in its various forms is the single main expenditure in the recurrent budget. This form of social transfer is an important source of income for Rodriguans in the lower income groups. While the basic retirement pension has remained universal, some form of means testing and case by case assessment is undertaken for other forms of assistance. As indicated in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Annual Report 69, the majority of the requests for Social Aid, Book Loans, Basic Retirement Pension or Severely Handicapped (Retirement) have been met. In three particular cases, those of Basic Invalidity Pension, Severely Handicapped Pension and Carer's Pension, around 51%, 63 % and 15.9 % requests for assistance were rejected respectively.

### **Poverty alleviation programmes**

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In addition, various poverty alleviation programmes are in place to cater for those who find themselves in need unexpectedly, or are in a semi-permanent state of need. The most important of these are the 'The Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups' which has financed 256 projects in Rodrigues between 2001 and 2003 (UNDP, 2003). The programme 'A Nou Diboute Ensam' was implemented jointly by the European Union and the Government of Mauritius in 1999 and has, since 2001, approved 16 projects in Rodrigues in areas such as income generation, social infrastructure and education, vocational training and capacity-building. Also, 'Leve Diboute' is a programme that was set up by UNDP in 1999 with the aim of improving income generating capacity and living standards of Rodriguans with an income of less than Rs 2,000 per month.

### **Support for the elderly**

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Apart from financial support, the Government has set up a legal and administrative framework for greater protection and assistance to elderly persons with the passing of the Protection of Elderly Persons Act (Act No 16 of 2005). The Act provides for the setting up of a Rodrigues Committee for the Elderly consisting of the Commissioner responsible for senior citizens,

*“who shall be the Chairperson, the departmental head of the Commission responsible for senior citizens, who shall be the Vice-Chairperson and representatives of the relevant departments”* such as health, arts and culture, family welfare as well as Chief Officer of Police and the Senior Citizen Welfare Association and other NGOs. Provision has also been made for the *“setting up of an Elderly Persons' Protection Unit which shall organise public awareness and sensitisation campaigns on the rights of elderly persons and the need to provide them with assistance and protection; receive complaints from elderly persons who are in need of protection or assistance and take such measures as may be necessary, apply to the Court for a protection order where it deems it necessary in circumstances where there is a real danger to, or threat on, the life of an elderly person, assist in arranging for the admission of an elderly person to a residential care home, where required, ensure that every Elderly Watch and other appropriate bodies or authorities get a proper feedback on the situation of elderly persons who are, or may be, in need of protection or assistance.”*

The Act empowers an Officer of the Unit to intervene with a legal warrant of a Magistrate to enter any premises to make inspections, if he reasonably believes that an elderly person is being abused. An Elderly Watch will be established in every region designated by the Monitoring Committee to promote the welfare of elderly persons in the region for which it is responsible and report cases of repeated abuse of an elderly person to an officer of the Unit.

## **The Care of Elderly Persons**

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In line with the trend for the Republic of Mauritius, the population structure in Rodrigues is gradually changing towards an increasingly larger number of elderly persons. The age structure in the Republic has changed considerably in the past four decades. In Rodrigues, the number of persons aged 60 or above increased by 65% from 1990 to 2004. At the same time, the share of population above the age of 60 grew from 5.9% to 9.1%. The ageing population poses new challenges to the society, particularly in terms of care arrangements. Wider societal changes, such as the abandoning of the extended family system, increasing labour market participation of women and the gradual disappearance of the female care-giver model, all add impetus to the need for society to arrange for care of the elderly. In view of these changes and given the growth in the elderly population, it is important to set up facilities that can accommodate elderly persons who are not able to live with the family or on their own and elderly who are in need of day care services. The population projections, detailed below, indicate that the elderly population in Rodrigues will grow rapidly over the next 40 years and that the elderly population will come to constitute an increasingly larger share of the islands inhabitants.

### **Support systems for elderly persons**

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With a growing elderly population, appropriate planning needs to be initiated to ensure that care arrangements can be offered to elderly persons in need of these services. As elderly persons live longer, it is also important to cater for the essential and recreational needs of this age group who will have more spare time. A particular challenge in the care of elderly is to cater for the social and economic needs of elderly women who constitute the majority of elderly persons, but who are often in a disadvantaged position with lower income than their male counterparts.

### **Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

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From discussions held with various social organisations, it was noted that alcohol abuse is a major problem across the island and even amongst secondary school students. The HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for Rodrigues 2004-2007 even confirms this state of affairs. However, little credible statistics exist to provide a precise update on the situation. Alcohol abuse can have several consequences on society, namely, disruption of the family, promotion of delinquency, poor performance at schools and at work, increased rate of accidents on the roads and at work, increased rate of absenteeism at work, poor health status of the population, increased work burden on the health sector and more cases of unsafe sex leading to propagation of Sexually Transmitted Infections, HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies.

Alcohol abuse needs to be considered as a significant problem and not merely as a specificity of the island. Concrete efforts must be made to tackle this problem which can have far-reaching effects on the society at large. The help of the NATReSA needs to be sought so that an Action Plan can be defined. A survey needs to be carried out and the ultimate aim is to develop a National Alcohol Control Policy in which issues, such as the control at sale points, workplaces and schools, education of the population on the negative effects of alcohol over-indulgence, rehabilitation procedures, counseling and treatment. The support of local NGOs like CRAC needs to be taken on board to ensure success of the control programme. Another survey needs to be carried out on alcohol consumption across all segments of the population. This would provide the basic information which will be vital for the formulation of the National Alcohol Control Policy. Reliable data regarding substance abuse must also be obtained from surveys among the workforce. Presently, there are around 14,000 people in employment. The workforce is relatively stable in terms of its size, making it easier to identify cases at an early stage amongst workers, so that intervention strategies can be implemented in a better way in the workplace. Also schools present unique opportunities as the support of teachers and PTAs can easily be available.

## Existing Projects

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Rehabilitation for alcohol and drug abuse in Rodrigues is set up at NGO level. The organisation CRAC is one of the active organisations concerned with the problem of alcohol and drug abuse. Since 1995, the organisation operates the '*Centre D'Alcoologie Paille En Queue*' which offers inpatient detoxification and relapse prevention programmes to alcohol and drug abusers.

The building of the centre was funded by the European Union and operating costs are provided by the RRA and the '*National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers*'. The European Union has also funded, through the programme '*A Nou Diboute Ensam*', the setting up of a number of activities for the persons that are following treatment in the Centre. The activities, which include sewing, embroidery, gardening and vegetable growing, are intended to aid the social integration of the centre's patients by assisting them to obtain the means for earning a living.

## Teenage Pregnancy

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Teenage pregnancy is a problem frequently noted in reports on social problems in Rodrigues. Although the problem is not specific to Rodrigues, it requires the intervention because of its serious negative consequences. As noted in the Qualitative Study, teenage pregnancy has serious negative health, social and economic consequences, and, in poorer regions where there is a lack of educational and employment opportunities and adequate welfare support systems, the consequences are even more serious.

- For 2004, the marriage rate was 13.5 and the mean age for child-bearing mothers was 26.7 years. However, 20% of the first child-bearing mothers were aged 15-19 years. It is to be noted that 8.2% of all children born in Rodrigues came from unwed mothers. This high rate of teenage pregnancy among Rodriguans is of great concern. It could be one of the main causes for infant deaths.
- Teenage mothers tend to drop out of school and are often unable to find steady jobs or enjoy a secure family life. The Rodriguan Authorities are conscious of the fact that this issue needs to be addressed with all seriousness because in future, the society may be faced with an unbearable burden. The population projections have been based on a reduction of teenage pregnancy from 62.9 per thousand females for the age group 15-19 years in 2005- 2010, to 55.7 in 2025 - a reduction of 11.5%.
- Age-specific fertility rates reveal that the number of live births among mothers aged 15 to 19 is higher in Rodrigues than in the Island of Mauritius. In 2004, there were 77 live births per 1,000 women aged between 15 and 19 in Rodrigues, compared to 36 in the Island of Mauritius (CSO, 2005b). In an international perspective, Rodrigues can be clustered among countries that fall somewhere mid-way in between relatively high and relatively low adolescent fertility rates.

Data from Rodrigues reveal that fertility rates among women aged 15 to 19 gradually decreased between 1990 and 1997 and then reached a low of 47 live births per 1,000 women. The rate has, thereafter, increased to reach 77 in 2004 (CSO, 2005a). In 2002, a Contraceptive Prevalence Survey revealed that one in five teenage girls in Rodrigues aged 15 to 19 are mothers or pregnant with their first child (*Ministry of Health and Quality of Life*). Data such as these provide some information on childbearing among teenagers, but it is important to note that the exact number of teenage pregnancies is difficult to estimate since some teenagers resort to abortion and data are not available on abortion rates.

- The results from the University Of Mauritius Study conducted in 2006 have uncovered a considerable degree of distress and even tragedy in families and young people facing the consequences of teen parenthood. Their findings and recommendations are given hereunder. The Study has thrown up other, deeper, problems of social and economic exclusion, extreme poverty, dysfunctional educational systems, family structures and a disoriented values system. A policy of sustainable development for Rodrigues cannot ignore these issues. The services and programmes, currently available in Rodrigues with regard to sex and relationship education, however commendable, must now be revisited, by taking a client-centred approach. Work must also include a targeted approach to high-risk and

vulnerable groups of young girls. In terms of managing consequences, the State must decisively step in to support pregnant teenagers and teenage parents and help them re-integrate in the economy and society;

- Teenage mothers in Rodrigues are reported to come from varied backgrounds and all parts of the island and have different levels of education ranging from no formal schooling to upper levels of secondary school (*Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development, 2001*). Interviews carried out as part of the Baseline study conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development in 2001, however, revealed that the problem of teenage pregnancy is perceived to be more prevalent in the poorest areas, among girls who lack education and job prospects. The participant views from the Baseline Study also suggest that many cases of teenage pregnancy are linked to prostitution and that many teenage pregnancies occur in families where the girl's mother also had a teenage pregnancy. The authors of the Qualitative Study of family problems in Rodrigues judged it difficult to test the validity of a correlation between mother and daughter teenage pregnancy, but report that interviewed teenage mothers, in many cases, came from families where there was instability in terms of the mother not having a steady partner.

#### **The key recommendations for prevention are:**

- Mainstreaming citizenship and responsible thinking and conduct into the educational system;
- Improved educational and youth counselling programmes with regard to managing sexual health and relationships;
- Improved monitoring of school attendance;
- Re-orientation of community outreach programmes, tailoring these to the local needs of parents, young boys and young girls separately;
- Targeted approach of services and programmes reaching the most vulnerable groups for longer-term impact.

#### **The key recommendations for managing consequences are:**

- An increase in Social Security Pension for the first three years of the child's life, attaching the benefit to the parent's commitment to a course of financial independence;
- State assistance in education, training, medical and nutritional care, child-care, and employment and self-employment;
- Psychological and parental support.

### **Sexuality and reproduction**

Sexual activity among teenagers in Rodrigues is reported to start as early as the age of 12 - 13 for some girls, and 14 - 15 for some boys. Since pre-marital sexual activity is severely condemned by parents and the society at large, it occurs surreptitiously. A notion of sexuality as a taboo subject prevails and the topic is rarely one that parents discuss with their children. The school system also appears to provide insufficient information on reproductive processes, and there is as a result a lack of, or confused, knowledge about procreation among teenagers (*Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development, 2001*).

#### **Use of contraception**

The lack of knowledge of reproduction among teenagers and the prevailing attitudes towards pre-marital sexual activity affect the use of contraception among teenagers in Rodrigues. As such, the non-use of contraception among some sexually active teenagers can be attributed to the absence of information, while, among others who do have some awareness, the non-use is a consequence of not being able to access contraception. Religious beliefs also impact to some extent on the use of contraceptives and the Qualitative Study on family problems in Rodrigues reports that some

teenage mothers and school girls displayed an inner conflict between the practicality of contraceptive use and their religiously formed beliefs of objectionable methods of contraception.

### **Support systems for teenage mothers**

According to the Qualitative Study on family problems in Rodrigues, teenage mothers on the island suffer from significant social isolation as they have left school and are a group that is neither viewed as children, nor as adults and do not belong to any associations or movements. One existing support system, however, is that of Community Health Workers. Teenage mothers are visited in the home by Community Health Workers who provide primary health care advice and services, such as vaccination for the babies.

## **Disabled Persons**

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At the 2000 Population Census, there were 1,150 disabled persons in Rodrigues (CSO, 2000). A disabled person was in the census defined as someone 'who experiences any limitation in performing a daily-life activity in a manner considered normal for a person of his age, because of a long-term physical condition, mental condition or health problem' (CSO, 2000:6). The number of reported disabled persons increased drastically from the 1990 Census to the 2000 Census. An increase in the disabled population in the Island of Mauritius can also be noted during the same inter-censal period but the increase in the Island of Mauritius was 46.3%, while the increase in Rodrigues was 52.3%. The CSO estimates that part of the higher prevalence is a result of changes in the age structure of the population between 1990 and 2000, although this does not fully account for the increase (CSO, 2000). In Rodrigues, as well as in the Island of Mauritius, the female disabled population has been growing more rapidly than the corresponding male population. While the number of disabled males increased by 41.5% in Rodrigues, the number of females increased by 63.4%.

The Situation Analysis of Children and Women (1998) and a report on the present socioeconomic status and support services in Rodrigues (Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development, 2001) point out that, with a few exceptions, there are not many support services and facilities available for disabled persons in Rodrigues. Nationwide, disability is a main area of vulnerability which has not received adequate attention. While developments have taken place in the area in recent years, there is much that remains to be done in terms of support facilities for disabled persons and mechanisms to enhance their employability.

### **Support systems**

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Support systems for disabled persons in Rodrigues exist mainly at the level of NGOs with only a few organisations providing services in this field. Craft Aid is one particularly active organisation. Since 1998, Craft Aid has run a school for persons with visual and hearing impairment. The organisation, which receives support from the European Union, also operates as a workshop that refines and packs honey for export and produces craft products. Honey production is very successful and has been recognised internationally, as evidenced by awards obtained. The organisation's artisanal activities provide training and also employment opportunities for disabled persons. Craft Aid has now become a private company limited by guarantee called CARECO (Rodrigues) Co Ltd. The turnover of the company was Rs 2.4 million in February 2004/2005 with the cost of sales being Rs 0.64 million and Management and Administrative expenses Rs 2.05 million leaving a net loss of Rs 0.35 million. However the company had total assets of Rs 7.65 million, more than 90% of which were property, plant and equipment; most of these have been obtained through donations. Since the company had no debts or loan commitments, its finances can be considered to be stable. At present, 28 disabled persons coming from the whole island are finding full time, paid employment with the company at the Workshop and another 115 disabled bee keepers are using the Resource Centre for their activities. Older children are also learning bee keeping. Fund-raising and donations from abroad are important sources of income.

Notwithstanding the above, there are opportunities and challenges that the Authorities, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues, have to reflect upon in order to bring the Rodriguans on the same level

playing field. Rodrigues forms part of Mauritius. Thus, the island should be given the same treatment and support that each citizen expects from the Republic of Mauritius.

Given that there is a lack of support services and facilities available for disabled persons in Rodrigues, there is an urgent need for further provision. The Social Centre that caters for disabled children cannot accommodate other age groups due to lack of space, staff and facilities, and Craft Aid also has a limited capacity to receive disabled persons.

At the same time, however, it is of significant importance to intensify efforts to improve quality and to professionalise the provision of services for disabled persons. In an interview reported in the publication *'Rodrigues et L'Union Européenne: 20 Ans de Coopération (1982-2002)'*, the Head of Craft Aid attributes the organisation's ability to successfully assist disabled persons to the fact that the organisation receives aid to work with experts. He also pointed out that it is necessary for other groups working with disabled persons in Rodrigues to receive aid in order for them to work under the guidance and advice of an expert. He added that better guided training for disabled children helps these young persons to integrate into the society, but without the expertise, organisations are not able to provide the necessary training.

Part of the challenge ahead in terms of improving services and facilities for disabled persons is to **professionalise social work**. Currently, Rodrigues has an impressive set-up of a large number of social and community services organisations, which mainly operate on a voluntary basis, but as the Situation Analysis of Children and Women mentions, the sustainability and viability of organising this work, mainly on a voluntary basis, are questionable.

On the whole, in spite of all these social ills, the vision for Rodrigues is that of an island of happy, contented and energetic people working hard and intelligently for the prosperity of their native land. Apart from what have been discussed above, this calls for empowerment, job creation, widening of the circle of opportunities, and a considerable degree of advocacy and IEC programmes informing the population on different ways about how their lives could become more productive.

## **The way forward for Gender**

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The overarching goal is to move towards greater equality by empowering both women and men to reach fully their potential and use their creativity and entrepreneurial spirit through the provision of adequate infrastructure services, opportunities and training, thereby enabling them to move away from low-productivity agriculture and fisheries sectors to other more productive activities thereby raising their incomes.

Two core objectives are:

- Adoption of policies for 'gender mainstreaming.'
- The latter implies, as defined by UNDP as early as in 1997,

*"a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated."*

Doing so would imply making significant progress towards ensuring that equality between men and women is fair and right.

- Increasing economic participation and the likelihood that women would find decent and productive jobs so as to increase their economic autonomy, hence allowing them to escape poverty;
- Deliberate promotion of women empowerment so as to enable them to:
  - move up the employment ladder, namely by moving away from the 'unpaid contributing family members' and 'low-income own-account workers' to wage and salaried employment.

One of the proposed strategies is to fight the “discouraged workers” phenomenon by eliminating discrimination, as well as structural, social and cultural barriers;

- develop and enhance their skills and to be re-skilled;
- develop and make use of their creativity and artistic expression by being actively involved in cultural and sports activities.

## **Safety nets and social ills**

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The share of the budget allocated to the social sectors and to social welfare is high: 15%. The focus is to move from expansion and increasing financial input in this sector, to increasing efficiency and output from the investment being made in the social sectors, be it education, health or social welfare, mechanisms for target setting, monitoring and evaluation of projects/programmes have to be set up so that all expenditure is fully accounted for and the targets are met.

## **Sensitisation programmes**

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The setting up of a Media unit to coordinate all IEC and promotion activities is a prerequisite for bringing about a change in the mindset of the population. The Church and other religious organisations should form an integral part of the system to help sensitise the population to the fact that some lifestyle changes are critical for reducing some of the social ills threatening Rodrigues.

The NGO sector is strong; the main challenge facing the society is to channel the outburst of modernity and youth culture which has penetrated the Rodriguan society to productive uses.

Unless the various partners - including the Church, NGOs, associations of employers, businessmen/women and other social leaders - work together for a common purpose of changing the economy and social structure and making it more productive and resilient to meet the expectations of the youth, the island runs the risk of being totally overwhelmed by external influences. No amount of outside aid - from the central government or outside will help unless these social challenges are dealt with. A highly dynamic Health Education Unit working closely with the Family Planning section of the Department of Health, all social partners and NGOs like the Mauritius Family Welfare and Planning Association and the Action Familiale is required. There is the need to sensitise and empower girls to take the necessary precautions themselves and to bear upon their partners to do so as well. The Church and religious leaders have an important role to play in the sensitisation campaigns.

The majority of the cases of poverty can be viewed as cases of breakdown of the economic system to provide gainful employment; thus poverty can be reduced by pinpointing the economic obstacles to employment creation, employment accessibility or being qualified or trained for employment and taking remedial action. The rest of the cases of poverty are due to old age, disability or personality aberrations. These are cases where outright grants and support can be justified. These numbers especially that of disability and personality aberrations could be kept to the minimum as programmes are put to increase employability of people having disability or personality problems, over a period of time.

Targets for social security benefits should be set and the numbers carefully followed up with the focus being on not allowing situations to arise which can lead to a case of poverty. In short, prevention rather than providing financial support after the person becomes unfit for work should be the strategy. Cases of teenage pregnancy, for example, could have been prevented, kept to the minimum or not allowed to increase if the girls and boys/men were properly informed or motivated to take the necessary precautions. It is understandably more difficult to put targets for the social security sectors but with the improvements in living conditions and more job opportunities is expected to bring down the number of cases requiring direct assistance from the State.

## Observations and recommendations

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There is an urgent need to revisit the whole social and economic development for Rodrigues from the point of view of future developmental needs. A National Physical, Social and Economic Development plan should take the following into consideration:

### Human development

- Citizens claim they are not fully aware of their rights;
- Rodrigues is not adequately represented at regional organisations, such as SADC and COMESA;
- There exist a perception of political interference in public administration;
- There is sub-optimal utilisation of human resources in the public service.  
As well as poor building practices leading to soil erosion;

### Tourism

- The low tourist arrivals affect the island economy;
  - There is limited air access; and the price of air ticket is too expensive;
  - Handicrafts products are not enough competitive;
  - Associations of tourist operators are not well organised;
  - Inadequate budget for development of the Tourism sector;
  - Lack of cohesion in marketing strategies;
  - Existing entertainment and attraction facilities are not well developed;
  - Lack of norms and regulations regarding '*gîtes*' and '*tables d'hôte*'.
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- Increase accessibility, visibility and attractiveness of Rodrigues as a tourist destination and improve visitor authentic experience through sustainable destination management;
  - Strategic alignment of Tourism policy, investment, and sustainable development through the implementation of a Tourism Strategic Plan (to increase tourism yield, export revenue, and livelihoods from the industry in a sustainable manner);
  - Regulate Tourism activities in Rodrigues and market/promote Rodrigues world-wide using a powerful brand;
  - Develop capacity, capability, and professionalism of the sector;
  - Develop and maintain competitive partnerships between stakeholders, both in Rodrigues and Mauritius.

### Industrial Development

- Rodrigues remains essentially a natural resource intensive economy subject to the vagaries of nature;
- Initial conditions and endowments (physical and human resources), which matter for economic development to take place, have remained unfavourable;
- No major export product or service driving the economy;
- Geographic isolation;

- Frequent natural calamities, relatively poor infrastructures, a relatively insignificant private sector (with no industrial structure);
- Brain drain over the years;
- Production is based on traditional farming systems using little inputs and adds little value;
- The 3 core pillars of the economy (Agriculture, Tourism and Micro-enterprises) are underdeveloped. The Rodriguans face serious constraints as they operate in isolation, with little upstream and downstream linkages.

#### **Fishing**

- Over-fishing in lagoons;
- Lack of know-how for sustainable exploitation of resources;
- Weak law enforcement;
- Insufficient conservation and management measures applicable to the Banks fisheries;
- Difficulty in re-orientation of artisanal fishers;
- Poor stock assessment;
- Fragmented administration;
- Project-driven approach rather than a holistic work programme developed on a strategic approach;
- No formal fisheries management plans;
- Lack of training facilities;
- Lack of knowledge of available yields;
- Lack of semi-industrial fishing boats;
- Some regional stocks e.g. yellow fin, big eye and swordfish already heavily exploited.

#### **Water production and resources**

- The whole system of water resources management and development is archaic, unsustainable and inefficient and severely inhibits the development of the Island;
- Inappropriateness of the water distribution and management system;
- Inappropriate institutional, regulatory and organisational frameworks for;
- Inadequate capacity that limits knowledge of the water cycle in Rodrigues, prevents the proper monitoring of quantity and quality of water, thus thwarting decision-making by stakeholders; and
- Inadequate cooperation and collaboration of end-users and lack of a proper institutional set up for '*concertation*' on water issues.

### 3. AGALEGA

#### AGALEGA: AN ATOLL IN A FORGOTTEN SEA

Nothing is permanent, except change. For long Agaléga has remained an atoll in a forgotten sea. The installation of American naval forces in Diego Garcia, as from 1966, has changed the geo-political and strategic situation of Agaléga. Inevitably, Agalega becomes on the forefront. The Republic of Mauritius is conscious of this new configuration

Agaléga, an atoll situated at about 1,100 Kms North of Mauritius and 563 Kms South of Seychelles, is made up of two small islands, the North and the South, Tamarind and Avocado-shaped respectively. Separated by a narrow stretch of about 2 Kms channel formed by reefs on two sides, it is crossed by foot, with ankle deep of water, and occasionally by a trailer drawn by tractor at low tide; by boat at high tide, and it is impracticable when the sea is rough. Formerly, the channel was crossed by carriage/cart pulled by horses, or by boat equipped with oars or sails.

The remoteness of Agalega, the restricted availability of transport to visit the Islands, the limited accessibility constitutes the main difficulty for those who want to go to the atoll

Agalega is different to Mauritius in many respects. The environment and living conditions are specific. Money does not make a man happy. There is a feeling of dissatisfaction among the small population of 300 inhabitants. Nevertheless, they are passionate about their Islands and leaving it is not easy. An in-depth social study should be carried out to analyse the feelings of the inhabitants, as there is much to be done in the field of social events, and this present study is far from exhaustive. To carry out a more thorough study, one will have to spend at least three months on both islands, the interval between the visits of two ships, using this report as a base.

Ever since its discovery, the bravest of Captains has always feared to approach the coast due to the unpredictable change of the wind and waves. On the other hand, the coral barrier, acting as a close protection belt to the islands, was so feared by sailors, because of the surf and swells that they considered Agaléga a pitfall to avoid. Furthermore, it lies in the region of the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone and is not spared by cyclones.

However, Man likes challenges. Following the wreckage of SS. *Wajao* in 1933, Port Sainte Rita, in the South, was transferred to the North during the same year. This port was blessed by Mgr. James Leen in 1936, and is named Port St. James. The channel, in the coral reef, was enlarged to ferry passengers and for embarkation and disembarkation manoeuvres.

Only privileged witnesses like birds can tell the story of ancient visitors. Nevertheless, they cannot disclose whether the Malays, the Arabs or the Portuguese were lucky enough to set foot on one of the islands before the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In spite of some speculations, it is commonly accepted that in 1501, the famous navigator, Juan de Nova, nicknamed Gallego, who was employed by the Portuguese, discovered the islands and dedicated them to his homeland, Galicia (*Galice* in French). This is why Father Dussercle, in his famous book *Agalega Petite Île*, named its inhabitants “*Agaliciens*”. The local people accepted it and made reference to this appellation publicly. By a decision, in Parliament, of the late James Burty David, former Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, the inhabitants of Agalega are now called *Agaléens/ Agaleans*.

Between 2001 and 2005, several attempts have been made to attract foreign investment to develop the atoll. The Mauritian government was in presence of a preliminary project proposal from the South African firm Arcon for Agaléga valued at USD 450 million. The tourism development project included a wind energy plant, a waste water treatment plant, and a waste disposal facility. It also contained administrative block, bungalows, a marina, restaurants, and shops. Arcon planned to produce hydroponic vegetables. It would also upgrade the islands schools, health centers, and sports facilities.

The project was turned down as a plan for the construction of the villa eco-tourism project on the island had been seen as being too fragile to support.

End of 2005, Mauritian newspapers started to be filled with speculation over a report in that negotiations have been initiated between the governments of India and Mauritius for the latter to cede Agaléga islands to India.

In fact, during a State visit to India in October 2005, the Prime Minister, Navin Ramgoolam had asked Prime Minister Singh India's assistance for an assessment of Agaléga. The request was renewed during Indian President Kalam's visit to Mauritius in March 2006. A three-person survey team from India visited the islands in October 2006.

Responding to a Private Notice Question on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2006, the Prime Minister, Navin Ramgoolam categorically denied any intention to cede the islands to India. He said India's role in Agaléga, if it materialized, would be limited to economic development and infrastructure improvements. The Prime Minister insisted in his answer that the Government of India was willing to develop an economic development plan for the islands focused on coconuts, fisheries, and agricultural diversification. It also might improve the currently unusable landing strip. It was further noted that on its own initiative India carried out a hydrographic survey of the Agaléga region at no cost to Mauritius.

Nevertheless, in spite of denial of any intention of Mauritius to cede Agaléga islands to India, as alleged in an Indian newspaper report. Indian newspaper continued to suspect that India wanted to use Agaléga for strategic purposes, possibly by establishing a military or naval base or an eavesdropping station.

Local newspaper opines that Oil is another possibility of India's interest in Agaléga. One newspaper cited several differing views of Texaco's 1975 exploration of the Saya de Malha zone

A Report on OIIC in January 1996 stipulated that:

*“Agaléga has a fragile eco-system that requires a balanced development that would not bear undue stress on the environment. Development should, therefore, be strictly controlled, the more so that in the long term, the two islands would be at risk because of the universal effect of global warming resulting from the depletion of the ozone layer.*

*The island should be envisaged as an outpost, with activities limited to agriculture, forestry, livestock and fishing. There is, however, some scope for a minimum level of tourism on the islands.”*

# CHAPTER TEN

## TOWARDS LAND REFORM



## INTRODUCTION

Under Sections 3 and 4 (c) of the Truth and Justice Commission Act of 2008, the Commission had as a mandate, to, *inter alia*, “enquire into a complaint other than frivolous and vexatious complaint made by any person aggrieved by dispossession or prescription of any land in which he claims he had an interest”. The Commission had, further, the task to submit a comprehensive report on its findings, based on factual and objective information and evidence received by it. A Team was appointed to lead this enquiry into land dispossession and suggest recommendations to the Commission.

This mandate has also been read in conjunction with other clauses in the Act relating to the history of slavery and indenture and its consequences. Hence, it could not adopt a purely technical or legal approach and has considered the land dispossession issue in a more holistic manner than has been attempted so far in Mauritius. However, the time-frame proposed (two years) is much too short to be able to produce a comprehensive report as many documents are not available easily and extensive and in-depth searches were required. Recommendations for additional work on the cases are made towards the setting up of institutions to democratise access to technical persons and professionals, so that the members of the public not in possession of vast reserves of cash can fight, on a more equal basis, the holders of economic power who take them to Court.

The Commission had set for itself the following tasks:

1. create a Database of land purchases and sales;
2. examine policy and laws relating to acquisition of land from 1723 onwards;
3. examine the extent of landownership by freed slaves and ex-slaves, indentured and descendants and misappropriation of land;
4. investigate the reasons for obstacles to landownership;
5. examine land issues brought before the Commission; and
6. advise and assist persons in obtaining documents in order to allow them to recover their land where possible.

## 1. HEARINGS ON LAND

The first task of the Commission was to invite the public to submit particulars regarding their holdings or possessions which they feel they have been deprived of. In view of the technicalities of each individual case, a Sub-Committee was set up, consisting of professionals in the field to study each case. The Committee was composed of: One Senior Attorney, One Bar-at-Law, Two Land Surveyors, One Land Consultant and several Research Assistants.

From July 2009 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010, 230 applications, containing 300 claims (given that some applicants submitted more than one case to the Commission) were received from people from all walks of life in Mauritius and Rodrigues. Each case brought before the Commission was then subject to an in-depth study, and relevant searches were carried out at the Conservator of Mortgages Office, the National Archives, the Archives of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and at the Registry of the Supreme Court. In most cases, deponents were convened for clarifications on documents.

The Committee perused all the 230 cases received, drew up a comprehensive list of all these cases, received people for interview and undertook research, not only to prepare the *dossiers* for different hearings, but also to look into missing documents, to put the cases into shape.

It was observed that in most cases, the land information data submitted to enable the Committee to make a proper assessment and appraisal was not sufficient. The information given was very sparse and skeletal in nature. In many cases, no title deed, no “concession” plan, no Survey Report, no Constat/ Investigative Report was submitted in support of these claims. The absence of a family tree to justify a deponent’s claim made it more difficult to understand the mechanism of dispossession. In other cases, claimants had difficulty in establishing the origin of the title justifying their claims.

Our recommendation to create a National Genealogy Centre should not fall on deaf ears as this will greatly relieve the population of the unnecessary burden of travelling up and down the country in search of documents.

The first hearing of the Commission was held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009 and the last hearing on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The Commission held 212 hearings sessions in all. The purpose was to elicit more information, thus allowing Commissioners to better comprehend a case. The hearings helped to clarify many issues and to encourage those were unwilling to submit documents to do so. All sessions of the Commission in Mauritius were held, either in public, or in camera and the press and other media were invited to attend. Some persons invited before the Commission chose to ignore same and had to be summoned, as provided under Section 5(d) of the Act. The Commission heard people from all walks of life, from Chief Executive Officers of sugar estates, Heads of Ministries, Departments and parastatal bodies as well as private individuals and professionals. It is also to be noted that more than one hearing was necessary to clarify a number of cases brought before the Commission. Some parties were assisted by their legal advisers or Land Surveyors.

By July 2010, after a preliminary assessment in each case, a certain number of complainants were advised to initiate legal action to recover their property. The Commission did not investigate a number of cases which were already pending before the competent Court for a decision. However, the Commission did examine other evidence that were not necessarily made available to Courts. Twenty-two such cases were recorded. One such case examined by the Commission was, thereafter, lodged before the Supreme Court which referred it for mediation.

Out of the 230 cases, brought before the Commission, 46 could not be fully investigated due to a lack of information or a lack of response to pursue the matter further. The rest was categorised for purposes of analysis and to search for trends in the mechanisms by which people had been dispossessed.

It was clear, however, that there was plenty of overlapping between these cases and, this was a stronger reason to treat the cases in a holistic manner. This was attempted for a number of cases by the Commissioners, and numerous persons competent in fields other than Land-related professions, but it was not possible for all cases. The Commission has pointed the way for future searches to be conducted and for dispossession to be better controlled.

**Tables showing preliminary categorisation for a number of cases**

Sugar Estates	Prescriptions	Métayers	Central Housing Authority	Court Cases
3 Tancrel	28 Begue Ronald	213 Ramtohul	112 Anthonimootoo	5 Frichot
4 Kisorbo	61 La Victoire	217 Tatteea	53 Riacca	14 Marion
9 Lebrasse	109 Medan	218 Sreepaul	67 Madhoo	18 Jolicoeur
47 Ramphul	110 Seetul	220 Ramchurn	79 Gukhool	21 Nanette
15 Harmon	111 Ramsamy	221 Goburdhun	86 Colfir	31 Capiron
20 Dumazel	115 Beeharry	229 Perrine	103 Labonté	39 Ramnauth
46 Webb	125 A. Ujoodha		196 Marceline	63 Soopaul
27 Ram Nauris	138 Chedumbrum		225 Latire	66 Typhis
153 Toulet	144 Aunacha			78 Coonjoobeeharry
158 Laridain	156 Moolchand			114 Rioux
231 Babylone	173 Dhunoo			130 Patron/Prudent
223 Permal	180 Crouche			140 Charmante
227 Romeo	194 Magon			145 Netta
73+80+84+1074	197 Jaddoo			148 Medar
+141 Perticot	201 R. Bago			157 Unjore
	202 Ramkalawon			170 Madeleine
	260 Goodur			172 Evremont
	201 Naraisse			106 Thelva
	212 Rago			186 Castor
				193 Hoybun
				195 D. Philippe
				203 Mandeea
				205 Gubbo
				206 Dooknah

Miscellaneous	State Land	Sale by Levy	Dispossession	Succession	Wills
8 Lemiere 22 Mohun 29 Suhawon 31 Capiron 35 Fortuno 37 Barry 113 Perrine 131 Rebet 132 Gontran 141 Perticot Florila 146 Auchombit 150 Charlot 159 Herry	6 François 123 Besagne	116 Cathan Padayachy 137 Dasani - SICOM 139 Gateaux 174 Poplineau 178 Lotun 51 Fortuno 191 Dalmond	30 Patient 31 Capiron 118 La Butte 121 Suhawon 134 Berthelot 142 Clementine 154 Clementine 171 Goteea 44 Grenade 48 Lamarque 56 La Seringue 88 Velin- Lamarque 188 Franchin 192 Joramun 208 Devanny 215 Seerutun	33 Mosaufee 126 Toolsy 129 Figaro 147 Camangne 149 Balison 161 Preaudet 166 Gimbeau 168 R. Gopaul 169 Ragoonundun 175 Mangalkhan 177 Boodoo 186 Castor 37 Barry 49 Huet 55 Couronne 57 Munogee 76 Matombe 87 Toussaint 90 Rioux 92 Elizabeth 99 Brasse	31 Capiron 120 Verny/Clency 151 Espiegle 155 Gouranna 45 Busawon 82 Olympe

'Frivolous'	
7 Paulin 10 Martial 16 Celine 11 Driba/Jeanot 12 Amoina 13 GoodSir 17 Hoseny 19 Roopsing 23 Isabelle 24 Laviolette 25 Malgache 26 Malgache 32 Romeo 34 Frivolous 36 Bernard 152 Boodeny 160 Batour 162 Arugam 163 Friquin	113 Alex 117 Le Cerf 122 Sookarry 124 Ramsay 136 Ramsay 127 Hannelas 128 Paul Geneviève 133 Agath 143 Taken 164 Pascal 165 Potie 167 Defoix 176 Feliciano 42 Cornet Noel

As will be noted from the preliminary categorisation, for example, a large number of complaints were received, involving large plots of land, alleged to have been prescribed or occupied by Sugar Companies. A majority of the complaints emanated from people who, through ignorance or lack of financial resources, have left their ancestral lands undivided or unoccupied. Most such lands have subsequently been appropriated by other parties, including the sugar estates through prescription, wrapping ups, and so on. Other cases refer to litigation among heirs and family conflicts.

It became apparent to the Commission that a lot of people were ignorant of the basic laws and procedures regarding the preparation of affidavits of succession, acquisition and other procedures to be adopted to safeguard their rights. They thus fell prey to unscrupulous self-appointed 'land experts'.

Most cases brought before the Commission only serve to show that illiterate people have, for successive generations, been exploited and misguided by intermediaries, and even by Law Practitioners and their supporting staff. This practice regrettably still prevails.

The Commission, whose mandate includes Rodrigues, held 30 working sessions on the island. Given that only 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the land surface in Rodrigues is privately-owned land, being former land grants ("*concessions*"), there is a lure for prescriptive acquisition on the part of the heirs. This has given rise to family conflicts which, sometimes, have led to interested parties being dispossessed.

The Commission has submitted relevant recommendations for necessary amendments to be made to Land Laws, especially concerning procedures for affidavits and prescription.

The Commission has observed that the costs involved for the recovery of land are an impediment to most people who feel they have been dispossessed of their property. In this connection, the Commission has made recommendations for the setting up of a **LAND MONITORING AND RESEARCH UNIT**. This unit will have the responsibility of examining any request for assistance, be it financial or legal. This recommendation is further developed in this Chapter.

The Commission also recommends that, once its Report will have been made public, all complainants be informed of its findings, with regard to their respective representation.

## 2. LAND REFORM

### OBSERVATIONS

After the perusal of various cases heard before the Commission, and after a thorough analysis of the different claims submitted, the Commission reached certain findings, as a result of which the Commission has made certain recommendations. However, at this stage, the Commission wishes to make certain observations:

- The Commission has noted with great concern of cases where ancestors have been able to sell and/or transfer and/ or donate their immovable properties to one child, or some of the children, but not to all of them.
- While most Notaries take the precaution of insisting that all children intervene in the Notarial Deed, a few Notaries have carelessly or purposely ignored to do so. Such variations have given rise to Court action among heirs, thereby creating conflicts in the family.
- The Commission recommends that all Notaries should be reminded of their obligation to ensure the intervention, consent/ authorization of all *ayant droits* the children (*“héritiers présomptifs”*) in the deed of sale/ donation by an ascendant to anyone of his descendants.
- The Commission has come across many cases where the heirs/successors had no knowledge of the existence of any Will and Testament. Some have been made aware of the existence of these documents after the partition of the assets of the deceased had taken place.
- In this context, the Commission recommends that an entry, without giving details, should be made in the Register of the Conservator of Mortgages (*“Case hypothécaire”*) of the person making the Will and Testament, the date and name of the Notary Public. This will help the heirs and successors, Notaries and interested parties to know the existence of the Will and Testament left by the deceased persons.
- The Commission has also arrived at certain findings in relation to landownership and land dispute in Rodrigues. There have been a number of fraudulent practices throughout time. As a result, the Commission has made a number of recommendations by way of amendments to the laws regulating landownership, land dispute and prescription in Rodrigues. These recommendations are more fully laid down in **CHAPTER 3 of volume 2**.
- As regards the collection of relevant information and documents, the Commission has found that there were certain shortcomings at the Office of the Conservator of Mortgages and/or the National Archives Department. To cater for this situation, the Commission recommends that access to documents should be better controlled through camera surveillance.
- Concerning the issue of land administration, the Commission finds that there is a need to change from the Deed Registration System to the parcel-based Deed Registration System. The Land Administration, Valuation and Information System (LAVIMS) Project will go a long way towards streamlining and modernizing land transactions in Mauritius.
- This new system is being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and, therefore, the Commission recommends harmonization, and makes proposals for other modifications. This is laid down more fully in **CHAPTER 7 of volume 2**.
- On the issue of prescription, the Commission has found that there were a certain number of malpractices and loopholes in our legislations, as a result of which the Commission has made certain recommendations with a view to reinforcing control over the prescription procedures. Further, the Commission has also found that certain areas have a high incidence of prescriptions. The Commission has therefore recommended restricting the procedure of prescription in the said areas. These recommendations are more fully described in the Affidavit of Prescription Legislation in **CHAPTER 6 of volume 2**.
- As a result of various cases heard and claims studied, the Commission finds that there have been a certain number of allegations as regards the ethics and conduct of certain Legal Practitioners, Land Surveyors and land consultants. The Commission has held several hearings with the governing bodies of the above professions. As a result of this, the

Commission has made certain recommendations which are more fully laid down in **CHAPTER 5 of volume 2..**

- As regards the numerous cases of land dispossession and the various obstacles to recovering the same, the Commission wishes to recommend that a **Land Research and Monitoring Unit** be set up to cater for these obstacles. Further, the Commission recommends that a Land Division of the Supreme Court be set up to expedite matters in relation to land matters.

Furthermore, the Commission has also observed some disturbing factors which should be highlighted:

- The demand for more land and the rapid development of real estate has opened the door to a new breed of “*Récupérateurs de terres*”. These individuals open and run modern offices, invest huge sums of money to better attract their clients, establish deals through fake societies (‘*société écrans*’) on the basis of 49%/51% or vice-versa, to retrieve lands with the promise of a better future for those who are in search of their heritage.
- Furthermore, some Land surveyors, seconded by certain Attorneys and Notaries are rapidly prescribing plots of land which are quickly sold, overnight, to new companies set up with the help of foreigners/ investors looking for greener pastures in Mauritius.
- Moreover, persons who have prescribed plots of land and who know that they could be challenged in Court have secured the help of some militia in order to prevent real owners to have access to their properties, (**Christian Grenade** - File TJC/L/0044) and **Goodur Abdool Reshad** - File TJC/L/M/0210). In the case of Grenade, the Commission views with concern that even a request made to the Commissioner of Police to give police protection to the heirs to clean up their land at Le Bouchon has remained unattended.

Concern has been expressed regarding the backlog of cases standing before the Supreme Court. It is to be noted that in the past, the closure of the Land Tribunal and the *Tribunal Terrier* in 1873, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, has contributed to the frustration of all those who could resort to this institution to seek redress.

Fraudulent practices, lack of financial resources, ignorance of the law, as well as the inaccessibility to documents and misapplication of the law, and the lack of information concerning land transactions have largely contributed to depriving people of their property.

In this context, the Commission recommends some measures that could alleviate people’s sufferings and trauma. A LAND MONITORING AND RESEARCH UNIT, is being recommended to conduct enquiries, settle disputes or refer matters to Court. This important Authority will be called upon to monitor all land transactions, to receive complaints from genuine persons who have lost, or have been dispossessed of their property, and to assist the applicant to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and civil status, as well as investigate all Notarial deeds. The Commission has already started the Notarial Acts Database Project, a guideline to decipher and interpret the language in old French, which will help and better serve researchers, Notaries and Attorneys.

#### **Duties of the land monitoring unit**

The Land Monitoring and Research Unit will be called upon to carry out an in-depth investigation into any complaint and establish the genealogical tree of the claimants, to advise the applicants after investigation and to offer Mediation to all parties. If an agreement is reached, it should be binding upon all parties, wherever appropriate, to sign the agreement. In case of disagreement, the case will be referred to the Supreme Court.

In this connection, a Land Division of the Supreme Court with additional judges and supporting staff attached to it should be set up in order to expedite matters.

Moreover, as regards the surveying issues, no amendment boundaries are to be accepted unless they are based on a proper survey supported by plans of acceptable standards and the satisfaction to the Land Monitoring and Research Unit

Furthermore, there is a need to regroup all activities, now concerned with land title matters into one central Authority, introduce the principles of title to land and the creation and maintenance of a Cadastral map. There is also a need to make use of the Cadastral map. This will be a map compiled on a sufficient large scale to show clearly each parcel in the territory. This also applies to Rodrigues Island.

The Surveyors' field-notes will be retained. All plans, field-notes and computations should be properly filed and numbered. The use of microfiches and microfilms should be introduced to record existing land registration volumes and other archival documents such as concession plans.

There is a necessity to avoid duplication of staff and work, the land Monitoring and Research Unit should be housed in one building.

The Commission highly recommends that prescriptions be immediately frozen till the setting-up of the Land Monitoring and Research Unit and the introduction of new amendments to the legislation pertaining to the Affidavits of Prescription Act.

### 3. CREATION OF A LAND BANK

#### THE COMMISSION FINDS

The control of the use of land is a major problem to Governments. In both developed and developing countries, local and central authorities have tried in a variety of ways to shape the physical layout and contour of their cities and other areas in the realization that how land is used has profound consequences for the well being of their citizens.

As it is, land management is intertwined in a patchwork of overlapping authorities with diverse sources of authority.

The Ministry of Housing and Land Development plays a key role in land development and land use. Any development on State Land requires the approval of the Planning Division which acts on behalf of Government as lessor. Their activity is not restricted to Government owned land since their advice is sought by local and parastatal bodies for development on private owned land as well as "aménagement des territoires".

Under the Town and Country Planning Act, any development requires a permit. The Local Authority must ensure, before issuing a development permit that the proposed development is conformed to an approved Outline Scheme. In complex cases, the local authority refers the file to the Town and Country Board which in turn refers it to the Planning Division for technical advice before giving its own recommendations. In addition to a proposed development, developers need also a building permit under the Building Act or a morcellement permit under the Roads Act. In municipal areas, the local authorities are responsible for the issuing of Building Permits on behalf of District Councils. On morcellement matters, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure advises the developers to obtain clearance from the Central Electricity Board and the Central Water Authority that power and water are available and then consults the Planning Division before issuing the relevant permit.

D. Griggs in "The Harsh Lands-A Study in Agricultural Development" writes:-

*"Any plan for agricultural development should be essentially an essay in economic ecology. Agriculture is influenced by interdependent variables of the economic and the ecological environment and no policy that ignores either agronomic or economic problems can possibly succeed"*.

Available areas by itself will not be sufficient to solve the problems of raising agricultural productivity. The cost of setting new land, of reclaiming land from the onslaught of the sea or of bringing derelict land into productive use is rarely justifiable, however socially desirable it may be. New plans for development should concentrate upon intensifying output criteria for agricultural areas. Due to shortage of funds and the non-availability of recoverable lands, it is wisest to concentrate capital over trained personnel in areas which are likely to give reasonable returns on investment.

It is in the light of these reflections that the creation of a Land Bank is envisaged as a panacea to land management.

The Land Bank is a Central Land Authority which coordinates within a single institution all the functions and powers presently vested in a number of different corporations' authorities, department and ministries relating to the organization and management, especially in the context of land reform and environmental development.

Land being a scarce commodity, every attempt should be made not to endanger the aspirations of future generations by plundering this meager resource.

When contemplated in a context of land scarcity with possible conflicting land use, the Land Bank, if properly formulated by a comprehensive land use policy will ultimately control all forms of land development and will ensure a judicious allocation of lands needed for the island's development.

#### **THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS**

It is in the light of these findings that the creation of a Land Bank be envisaged as a panacea to land management.

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When contemplated in a context of land scarcity with possible conflicting land use, the Land Bank, if properly formulated by a comprehensive land use policy will ultimately control all forms of land development and will ensure a judicious allocation of lands needed for the island's development.

The functions of that agency can *inter-alia* be summarised thus:-

- (1) Buying and selling of agricultural land so as to foster its distribution among small holders and the landless persons;
- (2) Purchasing of land for development for national projects;
- (3) Expediting the purchase and transfer of land so as to avoid administrative delays and allow the steady release of developable land;
- (4) Managing of stock Government-owned land;
- (5) Reducing land speculation and curtailing the increase in land value; and
- (6) Organising and regulating of a real estate market.

#### 4. FOR A BETTER METHOD OF REGISTRATION OF TITLE OF LAND

In many countries, the deed registering system has been abandoned in favour of a new system of registration of title supported by a Cadastral Map. The advantages may be listed as follows:-

1. Better basic records management, including better administration and accounting arrangement.
2. Standardization of forms and procedures to expedite the routine processing of documents.
3. Physical improvements to record keeping and documents storage so that there is easier access.
4. The use of microfilm for both archiving and retrieving of data.
5. Computerisation of the abstracts of Titles to provide quicker access to information.

There are three distinct areas where recent developments in surveying technology have created a need for radical change in outlook:

1. Electronic Magnetic Distance measurements techniques ranging from the short distance infrared devices to the very long base Interferometer (VLBI).
2. Satellite technology both for position fixing and thematic purposes.
3. Digital techniques for both the acquisition of data and its storage and subsequent processing.

**The Commission recommends:**

1. Grouping together of all activities now concerned with land title matters into one Central Authority.
2. The introduction of the principles of title to land and the creation and maintenance of a Cadastral Map.
3. To avoid duplication of staff and work, the Central Authority should be housed in one building.
4. The Cadastral Map will be a map compiled at a sufficient large scale to show clearly each parcel in the territory. This also applies for Rodrigues Island.
5. Surveyors' field-notes will be retained. All plans, field-notes and computations should be properly filed and numbered.
6. The use of microfiches and microfilms should be introduced to archival existing land registration volumes and other archival documents such as concession plans.

## 5. CONSTRAINTS FACING SMALL PLANTERS

With the effect of centralisation, many small planters are having transport problems, as they need to send their canes far away to the factory area. They also pay high prices for transport. Over and above what the sugar mills refunds.

Long queuing problems at the sugar mills arises because of the closure of small factories. Invariably the mills take long hours to crush higher tonnages of canes from the entire region. This is a deterrent to the small cane planting community.

Nowadays, the new generation of small planters is not interested in enduring the same hardships as their ancestors. Instead, education is seen a key to a better living and white-collar jobs.

It must be also noted that due to a 36% decrease in sugar prices in 2010, the revenue of planters was also reduced; there was an increase in the price of fertilizers. Thus, many small planters prefer to abandon their lands.

Many small planters now have no time, nor enough resources to manage the irrigation of their fields.

## 6. DISPOSSESSION

The Commission has observed that affidavits have been sworn by witnesses who do not know the deceased person and the persons who are entitled to apprehend the estate and succession of the deceased person. These persons are called “*professional fake witnesses*” and swear affidavits upon payment of a sum of money. These persons are found lurking near the officers of Attorneys and Notaries and offer their services whenever needed.

The Commission has also observed that some affidavits have been drawn up without verifying the Civil Status Acts. The dates of deaths are inaccurate and the numbers of the Civil Status Acts are fictitious. However, due to the new Rules and Regulations made by the Conservator of Mortgages, the affidavits drawn up, sworn and transcribed nowadays are accurate, well-drafted and contain precise information.

It is a matter of concern that there is no Registry or Record kept for Wills and Testaments. Law Practitioners, heirs and successors and members of the public cannot thus know the existence of any Will and Testament left by a deceased person.

This state of affairs gives rise to doubtful and inaccurate affidavits being drawn up. At times the legal heirs and successors are left out. At other times, the persons who have been bequeathed with properties are discarded in the affidavit.

In such cases the parties are engaged in long and costly legal battles which take several years before the Court pronounces on the subject.

The Commission has come across Wills and Testaments in which the Notary or the party making the Will has failed to mention the reserved portion of his properties, ‘*Quotité disponible*’. The testator has also failed to mention that he has other children. All the properties have been bequeathed to one person, instead of bequeathing the share which he can dispose of according to law.

Representation has also been made to the Commission concerning the sale/donation/transfer of all properties by the father/mother to one/two children only, thus depriving the other children of a share in their parents’ property.

In such cases the heirs / successors who have not received any property or who have been discarded/deprived of their rights, have to enter cases before the Supreme Court against their own brothers/sisters in order to get their shares either in cash or in kind.

It has been observed that some Notaries would not draw up such deeds. However, it is a matter of regret that others Notaries still draw up such deeds which eventually leads to animosities between among heirs.

The coming into force of the *Code Napoléon* (Amendment) Act No 8 of 1980 on the 8<sup>TH</sup> June 1980 has simplified the succession laws and has brought new hopes. Acknowledged natural children and legitimate children have the same shares and rights. It has also given to surviving spouse a share in the deceased property. The surviving spouse has also been attributed a right of *usufruct* on all the movables effects and the house which was used as the main residence of the family.

It is high time that the Authorities find ways and means of keeping a record of all Wills and Testaments. One such way could be to make an entry in the “*Répertoire*” kept by the Conservator of Mortgages of the existence of a Will and Testament. This is possible for the authentic Wills and Testaments which are drawn up by two Notaries in the presence of the two witnesses or by one Notary in the presence of four witnesses.

The registration concerning “*Testament olographe*” and ‘*Testament mystique*’, as provided for in Articles 969 and following of the *Code Civil*, cannot be done and this will give rise to problems in future, unless an amendment is made to the existing laws.

The Notaries should ensure that the conditions laid down in Articles 913 and following of the *Code Civil* are observed fully.

The Commission hopes that new laws should be implemented in order to protect, the spouses, the children, the family, the society and the country.

## 7. RODRIGUES - LAND ISSUES

### PRESCRIPTION

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All the applicants - Private and Government Land Surveyors, Attorneys and Notaries, Chief Planner - invited to give their views before the Truth and Justice Commission (*See attachments*) readily admitted that the Law has been respected in all circumstances. Yet, it must be observed that the information contained in the Notice for the Transcription of an Affidavit as per the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act are not precise enough to allow the real owner to know whether the subject-site under prescription is his property or forms part of his property, and would thus allow him to lodge the appropriate objection for transcription of the affidavit. For example, in certain Notices, the description given is so vague. In so many Notices, mention is often made “*On the first side by a public road*”, “*on the second side by an unknown proprietor*”, “*on the third side, proprietor is unknown*”, etc. The law is clear as to the “*precise description*”, “*the exact location*”, “*the precise description of the land surveyed and the exact extent of the land mentioning the nature of the occupation and value of the land.*” *It is very difficult to believe that the person who has been occupying a plot of land since 30 years does not know the name of his neighbours.*

There have been cases where Notices have been published in a Chinese daily.

It has also been observed that the very person who prescribes a plot of land does not have to swear the affidavit. Only the two witnesses take the whole responsibility. He just gives instructions to swear the affidavit but does not participate in the procedure.

It may happen that a person accused of having prescribed a plot of land might later say that he was not aware that this land had been prescribed in his name.

The Commission thus recommends that the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act be amended to include information on the searches, made by the Surveyor, relating to the last known owner of the land being prescribed.

The legal status of land either in Mauritius or Rodrigues falls under three categories:

- State Land;
- Domaine Public inclusive of Pas Géométriques; and
- Private Land

All State Land is imprescriptible under the Law as per Section 35 of the State Land Act.

The *Domaine Public* is a category of land which belongs to the public at large by nature of its use: roads, beaches, sea, rivers and which are imprescriptible and inalienable.

The Private land is lands under private ownership which at a certain point in time either during the French occupation or the British occupation has been conceded/ granted to someone.

There is thus no such thing as ownerless land.

Any professional being a Land Surveyor, Attorney or Notary should be able to trace back the owner of any land in Mauritius or Rodrigues.

It must be made mandatory for any Notice of Affidavit of Prescription to be transcribed to contain the name of the last known owner.

At the same time, any Notice under the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be published with its appropriate location plan that will help in the identification of the land by the former owner.

No Notice of Affidavit of Prescription should be transcribed, if one of the adjoining owners is unknown. Thus, no prejudice could be caused if every endeavour is made to find its owner, or at least, its occupier.

Furthermore, any potential applicant for any prescription should make a formal declaration to the nearest police station to this effect and submit all particulars of his two witnesses, including

names, residential addresses and identity card numbers. And an investigation should be made as to establish the credibility of any witness.

## **OTHER LAND USE AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN RODRIGUES**

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### **THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS**

- Adoption of a Physical Development Plan and of a Land use Plan.
- Finalise the Land Information System
- Ensure that projects are in line with defined strategies for land use development.
- Provide accurate information on state land ownership status and development at any point in time.
- Align and revise rental of land in accordance with market rates.
- Improve legal framework for town & country planning and land use.
- Regularise all eligible occupiers of State lands.
- Respond to the land requirements of all Commissions for timely implementation of public projects.
- Planning clearances for residential and commercial/industrial projects on state land prior and after lease of land.
- A digitalised Cadastre of all State lands in the island of Rodrigues effectively established and updated.
- Review of State land leases effectively for optimising Government revenue.
- Grant of lease to applicants occupying state land.
- Effective vesting of State lands and acquisition of private land for public projects.
- Land Use Planning and management processes in place and promoting improved and sustainable land use
- Effective land administration services in place, accessible to all and protecting the land rights of all citizens.
- Lack of an endorsed framework for land planning and land use, thus encouraging a scattered pattern of settlements.
- An efficient management of land resources with a view to achieving economic prosperity, social equity and preserving the natural beauty of the island.

### **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is an urgent need to revisit the whole social and economic development for Rodrigues from the point of view of future developmental needs. A National Physical, Social and Economic Development Plan should take the following into consideration:

#### **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

- Citizens claim they are not fully aware of their rights;
- Rodrigues is not adequately represented at regional organisations such as SADC and COMESA;
- There exist a perception of political interference in public administration;
- There is sub-optimal utilisation of human resources in the public service.

As well as Poor building practices leading to soil erosion;

**TOURISM**

- The low tourist arrivals affect the island economy;
  - There is limited air access; and the price of air ticket is too expensive;
  - Handicrafts products are not enough competitive;
  - Associations of tourist operators are not well organised;
  - Inadequate budget for development of the tourism sector;
  - Lack of cohesion in marketing strategies;
  - Existing entertainment and attraction facilities are not well developed;
  - Lack of norms and regulations regarding '*gîtes*' and '*tables d'hôte*'.
- Increase accessibility, visibility and attractiveness of Rodrigues as a tourist destination and improve visitor authentic experience through sustainable destination management;
  - Strategic alignment of tourism policy, investment, and sustainable development through the implementation of a Tourism Strategic Plan (to increase tourism yield, export revenue, and livelihoods from the industry in a sustainable manner);
  - Regulate tourism activities in Rodrigues and market/promote Rodrigues worldwide using a powerful brand;
  - Develop capacity, capability, and professionalism of the sector;
  - Develop and maintain competitive partnerships between stakeholders, both in Rodrigues and Mauritius.

**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Rodrigues remains essentially a natural resource intensive economy subject to the vagaries of nature;
- Initial conditions and endowments (physical and human resources), which matter for economic development to take place, have remained unfavourable;
- No major export product or service driving the economy;
- Geographic isolation;
- Frequent natural calamities, relatively poor infrastructure, a relatively insignificant private sector (with no industrial structure);
- Brain drain over the years;
- Production is based on traditional farming systems using little inputs and adds little value;
- The 3 core pillars of the economy (Agriculture, Tourism and Micro enterprises) are underdeveloped. The Rodriguans face serious constraints as they operate in isolation, with little upstream and downstream linkages.

**FISHING**

- Over-fishing in lagoons;
- Lack of know-how for sustainable exploitation of resources;
- Weak law enforcement;
- Insufficient conservation and management measures applicable to the Banks fisheries;
- Difficulty in re-orientation of artisanal fishers;
- Poor stock assessment;
- Fragmented administration;

- Project-driven approach rather than a holistic work programme developed on a strategic approach;
- No formal fisheries management plans;
- Lack of training facilities;
- Lack of knowledge of available yields;
- Lack of semi-industrial fishing boats;
- Some regional stocks e.g. yellow fin, big eye and swordfish already heavily exploited.

#### **WATER PRODUCTION AND RESOURCES**

- The whole system of water resources management and development is archaic, unsustainable and inefficient and severely inhibits the development of the Island;
- Inappropriateness of the water distribution and management system;
- Inappropriate institutional, regulatory and organisational frameworks for;
- Inadequate capacity that limits knowledge of the water cycle in Rodrigues, prevents the proper monitoring of quantity and quality of water, thus thwarting decision-making by stakeholders; and
- Inadequate cooperation and collaboration of end-users and lack of a proper institutional set up for '*concertation*' on water issues.

## 8. PRESCRIPTION IN MAURITIUS

### OBSERVATIONS

No deed, whether authentic or under private signatures, witnessing the sale or transfer of, or the constitution of any privilege, mortgage or servitude or right of use over, an immovable property the title to which is derived from acquisition by prescription witnessed by affidavit of prescription, shall be valid unless the affidavit has been transcribed, and a reference to the particulars of such transcription is endorsed on the deed.

The above refer only to the transcription of an affidavit of prescription, be it the requirements or the objection, the substantive law of prescription is to be found in the civil code.

The delay for the objection does not at no time preclude any interested party to contest the validity of the prescription itself before the Supreme Court.

After having reviewed the numerous laws regarding prescriptions, the Commission recommends to do away with the whole procedure of affidavit and to provide for an alternative way to effect the transcription of prescribed plots of land.

It is the opinion of the Commission that the appropriate Protocol would be to exercise more control upon the averments of a person alleging to have prescribed a plot of land. There should be an institution which will ensure the truth of the said averments and which shall have the powers to investigate upon the veracity of these averments. Further, before the same institution, an appropriate memorandum of survey would be required with the possibility of putting questions to the Surveyor.

To summarise, any person who claims to have occupied a plot of land, with all the requisites of acquisitive prescription, shall have the burden of proving same, with at least two witnesses to corroborate the claim. Be it the applicant or the witnesses, they would face a panel who would query them on their averments.

Although this system would not be foolproof, it will minimize the risks of frauds.

Also, it must be borne in mind that the creation of a single institution may result in it being overburdened, which might hamper a quick and efficient process. This is the reason why it has been deemed appropriate to share this role amongst our Local Authorities, although the possibility of one central institution remains.

Below is a proposal for a new system where the affidavit of prescription has been replaced by a prescription permit. To cater for these, the Affidavit of Prescription Act can be amended or simply repealed and the following added to the Local Government Act.

To conclude, the legislator needs add the appropriate penalties for non compliance or frauds.

1. There shall be established in every Local Authority, a committee to be known as the Prescription Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”), which shall consist of the Chief Executive or his representative as Chairperson, the head of the planning department, the legal adviser of the Local Authority, a government Land Surveyor and a representative of the Ministry of Housing and Lands
2. The Chief Executive shall also designate an officer of the Local Authority to act as Secretary to the Committee.
3. The authority for execution of the Committee shall be the local authority of the respective town or district where the land to be prescribed is situated.
4. The Committee shall disseminate clear and transparent guidelines for the application, processing and issue of prescription permits.
5. The Committee shall examine, process and approve applications for prescription permits without having to refer the matter to the Council and such approval shall be deemed to have been made under the authority of the Chief Executive.

6. The Minister may make regulations to prescribe such other conditions as he deems necessary for the purposes of this Act. Any regulations made under Section (6) may provide that any person who contravenes them shall commit an offence, and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding [...] rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [...] years.
7. Where any member of the Committee or his spouse or next of kin has any direct or indirect interest in relation to any matter before the Committee, he shall -
  - a. disclose, at or before the meeting convened to discuss that matter, the nature of his interest;
  - b. not take part in any deliberation or any decision-making process in relation to that matter;
  - c. A disclosure of interest made under this Section shall be recorded in the minutes of the committee; and
  - d. Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of this Section shall commit an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees and to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years.
8. All applications for prescription permits shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive who shall refer same to the Committee within a period of fifteen days. The Committee shall hold a hearing within 3 weeks of the end of the period of 6 months as provided by Section 12.
9. The application for a prescription permit shall:
  - a) state the date on which the occupation started and the open market value of the property at the time of completion of the statutory period for prescription;
  - b) be accompanied by a memorandum of survey by a surveyor setting out the situation, description and exact boundaries of the immovable property forming the subject matter of the application and the adjoining properties; and
  - c) in respect of the party alleged to have acquired the immovable property by prescription
    - i. his names in small letters and his surname in capital letters;
    - ii. his date of birth, the Birth Certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the birth was registered, his National Identity Card; and
    - iii. where applicable, his date of marriage, the matrimonial regime governing the marriage, the Marriage Certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the marriage was registered;
10. Notice of the application shall be published once in the Gazette and on 3 consecutive days in 3 daily newspapers in Mauritius, of which two at least shall be approved by the Chief Executive. Further, the notice shall be affixed on the notice board of the relevant Local Authority.
11. The notice shall be in the form specified in the Schedule.
12. Any person claiming to be the owner or part owner of, or to have an interest in, the whole or part of the immovable property in respect of which an application for a prescription permit has been made, may, within 6 months of the last publication of the notice required under Section 10 object to the granting of the application by the Committee by serving upon the Chief

- Executive and upon the applicant a notice setting out the grounds of his objection.
13. In the event of an objection under Section 12, the Committee shall not proceed with the application unless it is ordered to do so under Section 15.
  14. Any interested party may, within 3 months of the date of service on the Chief Executive of a notice of objection under Section 12, apply to a judge in Chambers for an order setting aside the objection.
  15. Where, after hearing the parties and later considering the grounds on which the objection is based, the Judge is of opinion that the objection is frivolous and unjustified, he shall make an order setting aside the objection and refer the application back to the Committee or he shall otherwise refer the parties to the competent Court.
  16. At the hearing of the Committee -
    - a) The applicant shall be accompanied by -
      - i. at least two witnesses; and
      - ii. the land surveyor who has signed the memorandum of survey referred to in Section 9 (b).
    - b) The Committee shall examine the applicant and the witnesses present as to
      - The date and length of occupation;
      - i. The nature of the occupation; and
      - ii. The knowledge of the witnesses as regards the applicant's contention.
    - c) The Committee may examine the Land Surveyor on his memorandum of survey.
    - d) The Committee shall, if it deems necessary, summon any other witnesses more specifically, the owners of adjoining plots of land.
  17. The Committee shall within 4 weeks of the hearing referred to in Section 16, grant or refuse to grant a prescription permit. In case of refusal, the Committee shall give notice in writing to the applicant setting out the reasons thereof.
  18. Any applicant for a prescription permit under this Act may, within 30 days of the date on which the notice of refusal under Section 17 is given, apply to the Judge in Chambers for a summons calling upon the local authority to show cause why his application should not be granted.
  19. An application to the Judge in Chambers under Section 18 shall be made in the presence of the local authority and the Judge may grant any application on such terms and conditions as he may deem fit or reject it.
  20. The prescription permit shall henceforth be drawn up, on a prescription deed, by an Attorney or a Notary.
  21. No person shall cause a prescription deed to be transcribed nor shall the Conservator of Mortgages transcribe a prescription deed unless -
    - a) he is the holder of a prescription deed issued under this Act authorising him to do so;
    - b) he has an order of the Judge granting the application and has subsequently drawn up the prescription deed; or
    - c) he has a certified copy of the judgment of a competent Court deciding the issue against the objector which has subsequently been drawn up in the prescription deed.
  22. A prescription deed shall be transcribed on production by the applicant to the Conservator of the copies of documents mentioned in Section 21 and on payment of the transcription fees.

23. No deed, whether authentic or under private signatures, witnessing the sale or transfer of, or the constitution of any privilege, mortgage or servitude or right of use over, an immovable property the title to which is derived from acquisition by prescription witnessed by a prescription permit, shall be valid unless the prescription permit has been transcribed, and a reference to the particulars of such transcription is endorsed on the deed.
24. Any person who draws up a deed in contravention of Section 22 shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding [...] rupees.
25. The transcription of a prescription permit shall not confer on any party any rights on any immovable property which but for this Act such party would not have possessed.

The Commission is of opinion that Notarial deeds witnessing the acquisition by prescription of landed property should bear the same conditions as laid down in the proposed Affidavit of Prescription Act, more fully described above.

As per the Prescription of Landed Property Act 41 of 1969 - November 1969 and amended by RL 4/253 -24 April 1982, someone who is acquiring land by prescription needs not to swear an affidavit of prescription, but has to comply with the other conditions. The procedure remains the same.

The amendments in the Affidavit of Prescription Act, as proposed by the Truth and Justice Commission, would thus apply *de facto* to the Prescription of Landed Property Act.

The Commission recommends that the Prescription of the Landed Property Act be repealed which will thus prevent any confusion as to the procedure of prescription.

## 9. CASES OF LAND DISPOSSESSION

From the numerous cases heard before the Commission and significant research carried out, the Commission has come to the conclusion that on a general basis, cases of dispossession often arise because claimants are illiterate, without sufficient financial resources and face the uphill task of collecting the required documents.

In order to tackle any case of dispossession, a claimant needs first of all to collect the relevant documents, be it title deeds or establishment of succession rights through affidavits and secondly to bring the matter before the competent Court in order to have a judicial decision that shall validate his claim.

As stated earlier, the whole process requires assistance, be it on a financial basis or competence to find and collect the appropriate and relevant documents.

The Commission thus recommends the creation of a **Land Research and Monitoring Unit** which shall cater for the technical side of the search and an appropriate Tribunal to give legal sanction to a valid claim.

### **FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE LAND RESEARCH AND MONITORING UNIT**

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1. To receive legitimate complaints from persons who allege that they, or their family, have lost or have been dispossessed of their property;
2. To carry out an in-depth investigation concerning an alleged complaint or hold an enquiry into land issues, out of its own initiative or at the instance of interested parties;
3. To advise the applicant, after thorough investigation and enquiry, on his claim and any other relevant issues;
4. To assist the applicant to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and Civil Status documents and in collaboration with other appropriate institutions, to draw up genealogical trees;
5. To study plans of *grants*, relevant Notarial Deeds and any other relevant documents related to land movement;
6. To provide, within statutory limits, assistance, financial or otherwise, to claimants as regards land surveys or other necessary actions;
7. To submit or refer the matter to Mediation and to promote amicable settlements which shall be binding upon all the parties; and
8. Where appropriate, to refer the case to a specialized Tribunal.

The Commission wishes to stress that, in its considered opinion, a two-fold approach is recommended, since neither the proposed Unit nor the suggested Tribunal would be effective on its own.

The Commission has purposely refrained from making specific suggestions as to where the Unit should be set up, or its composition, or as to whether the Tribunal should, for example, be a Division of the Supreme Court or an *ad hoc* Tribunal. That is because, on the one hand, the Government may wish to consider including the Unit in an existing framework such as those catered for in the LAVIMS (Project Implementation) Act or the Cadastral Survey Act 2011 and, on the other hand, the Government may prefer to consult the Chief Justice as to how he feels that the Judiciary could best lend its support to the scheme.

## 10. FOR A NOTARIAL ACTS DATABASE

**The Commission recommends** that the work initiated by the Notarial Acts Database project initiated by the Commission be continued by the proposed Land Research and Monitoring Unit **as a matter of urgency**. The details of this project are to be found in Volume 2 and the database compiled so far in volume 5. A copy has been given to the Ministry of Housing and Lands as well as to the University of Mauritius where students are trained in French and British palaeography and can therefore read notarial acts and participate in this project.

The Commission further recommends the use of free software rather than the voluminous, non user friendly software and expensive that appears to be popular in some public institutions. For example the server used by the Commission to host the database be the Linux Operating system (Open source) which is reliable, highly performing and resilient. The server should also be configured to allow only authenticated users to connect to and use the system.

Training is recommended for users (research assistants) at each stage of prototype deployment. However those having been trained by the Commission can be used to train others and to continue this database.



# **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

## **TOWARDS A JUST SOCIETY**



## INTRODUCTION

In its short 400-year-old history, Mauritius has known one of the worst forms of injustice, marked by the establishment of slavery and a not-so-perfect post-emancipation period where indentured labour was brought in. Today, Mauritius is now considered as one of the most *avant-gardiste* in the field of Social Justice. Yet a Truth and Justice Commission was set up, indicating that all was not well.

Slavery was legalized, following the enactment of the *Lettres Patentés (Code Noir, 1723)*. Studies carried out in both French and British periods show that slavery was far from being ‘mild’. Slaves were chattel in the eyes of the Law, as well as being movables and they could be sold, hired out and transferred at any time in their lifetime. Slaves had no right to property, to a stable family, to a legal personality, or even to a surname. Slavery was also marked by the denigration of African and Malagasy culture and religion. Today, slavery is officially recognized as a “crime against humanity.” When abolition of slavery occurred in 1835 and was replaced by wage labour, mainly from India, this was considered as a major advancement. However, this new immigrant contractual labour was far from being ‘free’, and numerous restrictions were placed on their mobility. Health and sanitary conditions on estates were far from satisfactory and on many sugar estates, there was heavy mortality.

The Commission’s mandate was to look at the consequences, if any, of this history of slavery and indenture and make recommendations to this effect to increase social justice. While the history of slavery and indenture, the post-emancipation period has been examined and continuities and consequences outlined, the question remains: how does one increase social justice? It is important to first examine briefly the philosophical precepts underlying the task before the Commission in order to provide a basis for understanding what needs to be done and, above all, enable the Mauritian public to understand what, and why, particular recommendations are being made.

What concepts of justice existed in colonial Mauritius? How did this conflict, or correlate with, and contradict, concepts of justice elsewhere? Debates among thinkers about the nature and types of justice continue today. The abolition of slavery and its replacement by wage labour, was considered by some political thinkers as a major landmark in advancement of social justice. But what was considered to be ‘just’? Was there any social justice for the ex-slaves and indentured labourers? To answer this would require explanations of what the TJC’s concept of justice is and where it stands in the debate. The following explanation must be based, not only in consideration of public global debate on social justice, but also on the situation existing in Mauritius.

The Commission has thus been faced with acknowledging that the lives of most people living in Mauritius in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were ‘nasty, brutish and short’ (Hobbes) and that ‘fairness’ was indeed in ‘short supply’. This evaluation of how Mauritian society can become more just is based on the extent of social justice that existed before and exists today.

The Commission, from the outset of its operations in 2009, has favoured the ‘justice is fairness’ approach, and this principle was maintained throughout among members of the Commission. However, it was clear that this concept is not shared by all those it had to interact with.

Part of the TJC’s Mandate was to look at structural changes that could be brought into play to increase ‘social justice’. A second precept was that of institutional responsibility and, in particular, the role and behaviour of individuals in those institutions. No changes can ever take place unless the people in those institutions change. The examination of Mauritian society from various perspectives: economy, social, historical, psychological, indicated that this is the fundamental problem and indeed the reason for the failure of many attempts to increase social justice. In the words of Amartya Sen, there is a need for a ‘combination of ideal institutions and corresponding ideal behaviour’.<sup>544</sup>

The Legal System, the Judiciary, and other such institutions, though guaranteeing many basic liberties, can also produce or promote specific social and economic structures which may not act for the general good. Sometimes, they are insensitive to the daily realities of life and thus

completely fail to protect people. It also does happen that the institutions produce a particular social structure that does not violate individual liberties, but produce a structure and results that are not just or fair.

It is also important to consider, in any evaluation of programmes aimed at more social justice, the 'capability' of the person to use the opportunities that are available. The TJC's evaluation of whether a particular program works or not should be based, not only on the institutions, but on whether the person can make use of the freedom to choose or not between alternatives. Thus, while the list may be long as far as social justice, measures are concerned in the post-Independence period, the capability of people to make informed choices, as to which direction to choose and how to make use of opportunities presented, are also important to consider. In the evaluation of social justice measures, therefore, already undertaken, this is the analysis that is required.

## **1. Brief History of Actions and Measures leading to Social Justice, 1880s-1930s**

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### Political reform

In 1885, an important event took place in the democratic field, when free elections were held. But unfortunately, voting rights were restricted to only a few persons, as stringent conditions regarding property, rent and revenue, debarred some 96% of the population from taking part. The result is that only the sugar elite and a few members of the *Gens de Couleur* and Indians could vote. The Constitution of 1885 (Pope Hennessy Reform) continued up to 1948. Needless to say, the great majority of descendants of indentured labourers and ex-slaves were debarred from taking any active part in politics.

Further, the riots of 1911 demonstrated clearly the resentment that existed between the White plutocracy and the Coloured people. This is also another desire to enfranchise part of the population out of the grip of the white plutocracy. In spite of the restrictions imposed by the *vote sensitaire*, a new elite emerged in the Indian community. At the Elections of 1926, 2 Indo-Mauritians, namely Rajcoomar Gujadhur in Flacq and Dunputh Lallah in Savanne, were elected.

Following the cyclone of 1892, the Sugar Industry was seriously hit and in need of capital for reconsolidation and expansion. Requests for assistance from the United Kingdom met with reticence. In 1909, however, the Colonial Office appointed a three-man Commission, headed by Sir Frank Swettenham, to enquire into the financial situation of the country and all problems connected with labour and immigration. The Commission submitted various recommendations and showed its apprehension concerning the idea that, in spite of the overwhelming majority of people of Indian origin in the colony, these were not represented in the legislature. Although the Royal Commission of 1909 recommended the cessation of labour recruitment from India, this did not take place until Maharaj Singh also recommended it years later. This marked a new era in Mauritian History. The First World War (1914-1918) did not slow down the fighting spirit of the emerging class of politicians which, hitherto, comprised part of the Indian elite.

## **2. Protest by artisans, labourers and small planters and the rise of Trade Unionism**

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It was not until 1936 that Mauritian society underwent a profound transformation in terms of the rising consciousness of workers. This occurred with the advent of the introduction of trade unions and the foundation of the Labour Party by Dr. Maurice Curé and Emmanuel Anquetil. This came about because of very low wages, and the indifference of the Government of the day more inclined towards the preservation of sugar interests. Several strikes by workers struck the island claiming justice. Protests also came from small planters as it had become difficult to survive with the meager revenue from the cultivation of sugarcane. In the absence of regulations concerning the purchase and sale of cane in different factory areas, a drastic cut of 150% in the price of cane belonging to the *Uba* variety was effected. This added fire to the flames. There was a loss of life as a result of shots being fired from the premises of the sugar estates.

The Labour Party campaign had a tremendous impact on the mind-set of the people, and it was the first time that an open confrontation took place between the sugar elite and the masses, which

culminated into mass protest at l'Union Flacq, where an angry crowd wanted to damage the factory. All the labour disturbances and protests led to the setting up of the Hooper Commission which published its Report in March 1938. Similarly, the Moody Report was published in 1943 to shed light on the reasons for the labour unrest which occurred at Belle Vue Harel in the same year. It was during the confrontation of labourers and police that Anjalay Coopen and 3 other workers were shot dead. The Commission, headed by Moody, recommended legislation governing the purchase and sale of cane, the setting up of an Industrial and Arbitration Tribunal and an increase in wages by 10%. The first half of last century was thus marked by labour consciousness and opened the way for more social reform and better bargaining power accruing the labouring class, including artisans and general workers.

### **3. Major developments from the 1940s till Independence**

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This period in the History of Mauritius witnessed a drastic change in the way the British Government viewed its colonies and their inhabitants. Following the publication of the Hooper Report in 1938 and the passing of the Colonial and Development Welfare Act 1940, major changes took place in the fields of education, housing, and healthcare. These decisions also laid down the foundations of the Mauritian Welfare State.

#### **The laying of the Foundation of a more egalitarian society**

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In their manifesto of 1948, the Labour Party had plans to introduce Social Security, Old Age Pension, compulsory education, low-cost housing and expansion of co-operatives for small planters. Further reforms in education and health services were also advocated.

The beginning of a more humane society was being foreseen by the new political leaders through Constitutional Reforms and the involvement of an intellectual elite dedicated to the cause of workers, artisans and small planters in Mauritius.

For the first time in the history of the island, elections were held in 1959 on the basis of universal suffrage. This marked an era of emancipation of the whole population in its fight for social justice.

In the field of healthcare, malaria had practically been eradicated which was taking a huge toll on the population. There was a marked balance between economic power in the hands of the plutocracy, and political power in the hands of the population at large.

The first breakthrough in the field of education was brought about by the Education Act of 1941, when the administration of schools, primary, secondary, aided and non-aided, was centralized. A common VI<sup>th</sup> Standard examination was introduced and, under the pressure of the political class, primary education was expanded which paved the way for the enrolment of nearly of all children, although in many areas primary schools were non-existent. The country also witnessed the establishment of the University of Mauritius in 1965. Furthermore, following cyclone *Carole*, a new housing policy for the poor was implemented which provided housing facilities to the most needy. Many of the measures taken to reinforce Social Justice were inspired by reports of economists Meade and Titmuss.

### **4. Review of post-1968 social measures**

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Measures taken by the State in the area of health, housing, education, social security and employment, have been great landmarks in Mauritian History. What is remarkable is that all successive Governments, which have been in office since Independence, while striving hard towards economic consolidation and expansion, have at the same time never relegated the poor and the vulnerable to the periphery of society. This philosophy has contributed to Social Justice and improved the overall quality of life of the people.

#### **Overall Achievements**

One of the most remarkable features characterizing post-Independence Mauritius is its set philosophical basis of policy-making, inspired by Fabians and the ethical Socialism of today.

However, as from 2005, major structural changes took place in the vision and application of Social Justice in the wake of global changes in the political, social and economic configuration.

Fundamentally, there have been profound structural changes on the level of the economy as well; Mauritius has been able to move from an agricultural economy based solely on sugar, to new areas such as Tourism, export-processing, fish-processing, financial services and Communication Technology.

### **Keynesian Economics, Fabianism and the Welfare State**

The carving of Social Justice in Mauritius was the direct result of the political philosophy of the Founding Fathers of Mauritian Democracy. Major political figures, such as Maurice Curé, founder of the Labour Party, Emmanuel Anquetil, Guy Rozemont and Dr. S. Ramgoolam the country's first Prime Minister, profoundly influenced policies towards Social Justice.

### **Achievements in the field of Health**

Providing a good healthcare is one of the means of preventing poverty through the prevention of sickness. The Government Medical Service has its origins in the provision of medical care under the Poor Law. Prior to Independence, there were 8 general hospitals, with 1642 beds and 46 dispensaries. There also existed 24 sugar estate dispensaries, with a total capacity of 494 beds. Over time, the sugar estate hospitals were phased out and in 1991, the Government Medical Service had four Regional Hospitals, five District Hospitals and four Specialized Hospitals. Private and Public Health Care also exist side by side; the former is serviced by about 50% of the physicians in the country.

Today, Mauritius has a highly developed free health service, modelled mainly on the British system. However, the disease profile has changed, from the diseases of poverty, such as malaria to the diseases of affluence, such as hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Following Independence, high priority was given to preventive health and primary healthcare, including ante-natal and maternal healthcare. Moreover, much attention was also given to supplying clean drinking water and proper disposal of human waste and the collection of refuse in both urban and rural areas.

Government today provides a comprehensive, high-tech health service free of charge to the population. This serves as a basis for giving social wages to the poor and vulnerable since, despite low wages, people are able to maintain an optimal health, as the health service is free and efficient on demand. Amongst others, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life carries out measures for the promotion of health which include the prevention of diseases; the treatment of diseases; a controlling practice of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, and providing facilities for the training of paramedical personnel.

### **Achievements in the field of Housing**

Housing is another sector which has greatly contributed to the quality of life of vulnerable groups. Mauritius, being a small tropical island with limited availability of space, is prone to cyclonic weather, and this has had a bearing on the policies of the Government. Following the cyclone 'Carole', the Central Housing Authority was established in November 1960. It has, to this day, built 19,440 low-cost and cyclone-proof houses. The Mauritius Housing Corporation (MHC), which was set up in 1963, catered for the housing of the middle classes. Initially assisted by a loan from the Commonwealth Development Corporation, and loans from local Insurance Companies, it started operating as a Private Limited Company in 1989 to become a major player in the provision of loan facilities in the construction sector.

In 1972, the MHC launched the Exceptional Savings Scheme, and then the *Plan Epargne Logement* (PEL) in 1988, to encourage savings for the purpose of the construction of a house. A new Savings Scheme was launched in 2009 - the Junior PEL Savings Scheme with a unique package of benefits designed for babies and children of up to the age of 18. Since 1986, as part of its programme to help lower-income groups, the MHC has been offering them Government-sponsored loans.

To date, the MHC Ltd. proudly claims to have helped more than 75,000 families in Mauritius and Rodrigues to become house-owners.

The National Housing Development Company (NHDC) was set up in March 1991 to plan and implement a National Social Housing Programme with special consideration given to the most vulnerable groups in Mauritian Society. To date, some 12,000 housing units have already been constructed, with a total investment of about 4 billion Rupees. In addition to the costs of constructing the housing units, Government provides land and all the infrastructural facilities, such as roads, electricity, water supply and sewage facilities. Provision is also made for open space and green areas in these housing complexes, with the possibility of nurseries, schools and community centres. In order to achieve the goal of providing each family with a decent housing unit in Mauritius, the Government intends to build another 10,000 housing units for the poor and the vulnerable.

### **Achievements in the field of Education**

After the country achieved Independence, it is observed that the different National Development Plans of 1971-75; 1975-80; 1980-82; 1984-986; 1988-1990; 1992-1994, all stressed the need for an Education System geared towards the socio-economic needs of the country. The first National Development Plan, which coincided with the implantation of the Export Processing Zone in the country, emphasized the need to move from academic to more Technical and Vocational Orientations. Under the formal recommendation of the UNESCO/UNDP for Curriculum Development, Teacher Education and Research, the Mauritius Institute of Education was established in 1973. Secondary Education was made free in 1976, after which the Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA) was established. Tertiary Education became free in 1988.

Three important Commissions on Education need to be mentioned in this review: The Glover Report (1978); the White Paper on Education (1984) and the Ramdoyal Report (1990).

The Glover Report (1978) reviewed the post-primary and secondary sectors. It identified various problems, including infrastructures, overcrowding in schools, lack of equipment, poorly-qualified teachers, the language issue and private tuition. The White Paper (1984) stressed the efficiency of the Education System and underlined the high number of failures at the Primary level and the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E). The White Paper also gave clear indications that those C.P.E drop-outs could follow technical and vocational courses. Finally, the Ramdoyal Report (1990) considered issues discussed under previous reports, but also dealt with the problem of private tuition and the pre-primary sector.

Despite several debates, plans and Commissions on Education, two main issues remained unsolved: too much academic orientation and a considerable number of drop-outs from the system.

The 1991 Education Sector Master Plan (ESMP) was a breakthrough in modernising the Education System, making it more adaptable to future needs. The main thrust was on the streamlining of C.P.E failures towards Vocational Training which provided a solution to the high drop-out rate. Unfortunately, one of the most important recommendations of making nine-year schooling compulsory was not put into practice.

The Social Fabric Study<sup>1</sup> observed that, in spite of efforts to expand, outcomes of the System remained modest and were mostly to the benefit of advantageous groups. S. Bunwaree<sup>545</sup> repeatedly laid stress on the importance of Cultural Capital in scholastic achievements, which includes linguistic competence, literacy in the home, reading habits, availability of reading materials etc. She argues that this is what makes the Education System less equitable, especially for the disadvantaged groups.

In March 1998, another plan for the Education Sector was published: Action Plan on Education (1998) which revealed great similarities with the previous plan published in 1991. However, some positive points were: decentralization, compulsory nine-year schooling and the elimination of exclusion in school.

One of the darkest spots in Primary Education is the 'rat race' to secure admission in 'star Secondary Schools' in Mauritius. However, in 2002, there was a major reform in the primary and

secondary sectors. The ranking system was abolished and a new grading system replaced it. Regionalisation of education was implemented. Education was made compulsory till the age of 16. Many schools were constructed, including in deprived areas. Nevertheless, 'pressure' put on students is indeed very high in seeking admission in a 'good' secondary school.

In an effort to deal with the problem of C.P.E and school drop-outs, the Government came up with the concept of inclusive Education: the ZEP (*Zone Education Prioritaire*) schools where several measures were taken to improve the performance of pupils from poorer sections of Mauritian society. Till now, the results have been rather 'mixed'.

The Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008 - 2020<sup>3</sup>, published in 2009, is a document stressing the Government's firm intention to bring about fundamental reforms in Education. Two key words are: creativity and innovation as the basis of reforms which are essential for meeting the needs of a growing economy. The plan covers all sectors: Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary, Technical and Vocational and Tertiary. Focus has also been put on major pillars of a good Education System, namely Increased Access, Improved Quality and Morally-Binding Equity.

### **Achievements in the field of Income Maintenance and Social Security**

Social Security has its origins in the Poor Laws of Colonial Mauritius, all enacted under the guidance and approval of the Colonial Office. It was as a result of pressure from the Labour Party that much legislation came into force in the Colony in this field.

Although many measures were taken at the beginning of the 1950s, with the means-tested Old Age Pension at the age of 60, Family Allowance in 1961, the most important piece of legislation was the National Pensions Act 1976 which introduced Social Insurance for Private Sector employees, through payment of contributions, and the payment of pensions on a universal basis. Other important measures were: the Unemployment Hardship Relief Act 1983, the Employees' Welfare Fund Act, 1991 and the National Savings Fund Act, 1995. Unemployment hardship relief provided assistance to unemployed heads of households. The Employees' Welfare Fund was created for the welfare of all employees from the Private and Public Sectors.

In a spirit of growing concern for vulnerable groups, several measures were taken in favour of the elderly, the disabled and abandoned children.

As at date, the Social Security Scheme under the National Pensions Act of 1976 has the following coverage: Universal (Non-Contributory) Benefits; Social Insurance (Contributory Benefits) and Compensation for injured workers. This Act provided a comprehensive Pension Scheme for the protection of all categories of people.

Universal Benefits comprise Basic Retirement; Basic Widow's Pension; Basic Invalid's Pension; Basic Orphan's Pension; Guardian's Allowance; Child's Allowance; Inmate's Allowance; Carer's Allowance for Beneficiaries of Basic Retirement Pension and Carer's Allowance for Beneficiaries of Basic Invalid's Pension.

Contributory Benefits comprise: Contributory Retirement Pension; Contributory Widow's Pension; Contributory Invalid's Pension and Contributory Orphan's Pension.

Compensation for injured workers (or their dependents) is normally paid to workers who are injured on duty. It is also known as Industrial Injury Benefits. Such compensation comprises Industrial Injury Allowance; Disablement Benefit; Survivor's Pension; Dependent's Pension and Orphan's Industrial Injury Allowance.

Universal Benefits are paid in a spirit of Social Justice, and despite pressure from international Institutions to do away with some of the measures in times of depression, the Government has maintained them. For example, in the case of Basic Retirement Pensions, at one stage of policy-making, it was decided to target it, but subsequently, it was reinstated. Social Security Benefits absorb the biggest chunk of Welfare spending.

### **Greater Social Justice fostered through the Trade Union Movement**

At the very source of employment policy in Mauritius is the pressure put on the Colonial Government by the general working-class consciousness and the growth of Trade Unions, especially after the Second World War.

In 1965, there were about a hundred Unions registered in Mauritius, as opposed to only about 25 in 1948.<sup>546</sup> The first Law which revolutionized labour / employment relations in Mauritius was the Security of Employment (Sugar Industry) Ordinance which came into force in November 1963. It was a measure against growing unemployment which provided for work by employers in the Sugar Industry and provided for employment during the intercrop season. The Act was further amended in 1966 to consolidate the provision of work during the intercrop season.

The second Law which revolutionized Employment Relations and the protection of workers was the Termination of Contract of Service Ordinance which came into force in November 1963. This Law provided for the payment of a severance allowance to a worker whose employment was terminated by an employer.

Wages Councils for both agricultural and non-agricultural workers were set up to review the *quantum* of wages, and the application of their recommendations did contribute immensely to the increase of wages and the improvement of the standard of living.

Regulations were also made in relation to termination of contract by the Industrial Relations Act (IRA) 1973 and the Labour Act 1975. The Export Processing Zone Act was passed in 1970 for employees in the Export Processing Zone Sector. This Act was replaced by the Industrial Expansion Act (IEA) 1993.

Termination of contract of Public Sector workers was regulated by special regulations for the Public Service and the Constitution and which were enforced by special bodies such as the Civil Service Industrial Relations Commission and the Civil Service Arbitration Board. In all cases, the burden of proof of dismissal rests with the employer.

In 1988, the Employment of Disabled Persons Act came into force. This Act provided for the employment of disabled persons. During the same year, the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act which regulated health, safety and welfare standards in the work environment came into force.

The two most recent pieces of legislation in the field of Employment in Mauritius are the Employment Rights Act, 2008 and the Employment Relations Act, 2008, which replaced the former Labour Act, 1975 and the Industrial Relations Act of 1973, respectively. These Acts came in at a crucial moment in the history of the island in order to respond to the new work environment, as a result of forces of globalization.

However, there have been widespread protests against these two Laws, by Trade Unions since 2008. Recently, Government has agreed to make amendments to the Acts. Nevertheless, many positive results have ensued such as the registration of Trade Unions for Officers of the Fire Services Department and the Prisons Department.

## **5. Claims of Injustices in the Country: Poverty and Exclusion**

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The track record of Mauritius in the field of Social Justice is impressive. It has won recognition the world over. Contrary to the opinion of Meade and Titmus, Mauritius has made its Social Justice policies a success.<sup>547</sup> One of the cornerstones of success is undoubtedly the peaceful coexistence of the various ethnic groups in a vibrant democracy. Fabian Socialism, inspired by the British Labour Party, even prior to Independence, has had a tremendous influence on policy-making, and all Mauritian Governments to date have openly professed economic growth with Social Justice.

However, sadly, as is usually observed in several democracies, there are cries of Injustice, which have become louder during the past two decades. Those cries of Injustice have come mainly from Creoles who feel that they are disproportionately represented in the main seats of power.

## 6. Major structural Changes in Mauritian Society

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Mauritius has been traditionally an agricultural economy based on sugarcane cultivation. When Meade and Titmus painted a very bleak picture of the future of Mauritius, the decision-makers, with the help of international institutions, helped to move the country from a mono-crop economy to one with several pillars, each substantially contributing to the national growth. The implantation of the Export Processing Zone, the Tourism Industry, the Financial Services Sector, the Fish Hub, Information and Communication Technologies Sectors has brought profound changes in the society. In terms of efforts, one must acknowledge the contribution of all Mauritians, irrespective of their ethnic background. Indeed, the review of the Social Policies since Independence bears testimony to this commitment. While many multicultural countries have fallen apart, or are beset by conflicts, Mauritian multiculturalism has been spared from such situations.

In its development, Mauritius has also constantly adapted to the changes in the global economy. While initially, it was the Keynesian ‘demand side management’ of the economy that prevailed, since 1983 there has been a gradual shift towards a ‘supply side management’ of the economy. Market forces have come into play, along with development, in order to encourage investment and earn foreign exchange earnings.

## 7. Cries of Injustice in the Republic of Mauritius - The Chagos Saga

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In the wake of an independent Mauritius, the British, contrary to U.N resolution regarding the dismantling of territories of any future State, decided to separate the Chagos Archipelago as part and parcel of the Colony of Mauritius. The Chagos Archipelago, very much like Rodrigues and Agalega, was inhabited by people of slave descent who laboured in the Coconut and Fishing industry in extremious conditions. The decision of the then Colonial Office to sever connections with the Mauritius mainland is a dark spot in Colonial History of the British Empire. As a consequence of the British decision, in 1970, thousands of Chagossians were deported to Seychelles and to Mauritius. They were uprooted from their motherland, Peros Bahnos and Salomon Islands, in the Chagos Archipelago, Diego Garcia. Following an agreement between USA and UK, shortly afterwards, Diego Garcia was ceded to USA for the establishment of a military base with sophisticated armaments. In 1972, the British Government paid a sum of £ 650,000 to the Mauritian Government destined for the displaced Chagossians. In 1982, the UK Government paid a further sum of Rs. 100 million to the Chagossians.

The exiled Chagossians are today dispersed in Mauritius, Seychelles and the U.K. In 2002, the Chagossians, who are presumed to be *de facto* British citizens, were allowed into the UK. These people, on their own, have fought to return to their native island and are presently awaiting the decision of the European Court of Justice for Human Rights over their right to return in their homeland. The tragedy is that it is nearly after 40 years that the Government of Mauritius has challenged Britain’s decision to excise part of its territory. The argument is that the Chagos Archipelago was ceded to Britain in exchange for the rejection of certain proposals concerning the mode of electoral representation in a matter of long-standing debate.

In Mauritius, most of the Chagossians, who were living in Cité Ilois, Baie du Tombeau, have sold their property and left for the UK. Presently, there are about 150 families left in Mauritius.

## 8. The ‘Malaise Créole’: The Social Exclusion of the Creole Community

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The term ‘Malaise Créole’ was used for the first time by the Creole Catholic priest, Father Roger Cerveau, in the year 1993. He used the term to describe a situation where the Creole community, particularly the Afro-Creoles descendents of slaves, were not able to integrate the mainstream of Mauritian society in terms of education, health services, employment and housing. Their situation, in comparison with other ethnic groups, was relatively bad, and it was felt that something should have been done about it. In the words of Sewlyn Ryan<sup>548</sup>:

*“Creoles are the most economically and politically marginalized group in Mauritius. They are the dockers, the fishermen, the lorry’s assistants, home and construction workers and in some cases lower level clerks and factotum in the public and private sector.”*

The *Malaise Créole* had also to do with the history of the Creoles: the dispossession and suffering associated with slavery and its aftermath, the consequences of which can be seen in the persistence of poverty, social problems and political marginalization.

Despite the panoply of measures to bring about Social Justice in the country by successive Governments, widespread discontent persists in the Creole milieu. The malaise also had certain physical and spatial characteristics. Social Housing Projects across the State are now better known as the *cités* and over the years of their existence, some of these popular residences have become breeding grounds for all sorts of problems besetting Mauritian Society: unemployment, poverty, delinquency, prostitution, child abuse, criminality etc.

The most violent and open expression of this '*malaise Créole*' occurred in 1999, when violent protests broke out when Kaya, a well-known singer, died in police custody. It was an expression of the inability to integrate into the mainstream of Mauritian Society. Conscious of the wide discontent of the Creole community, the Government decided to adopt further measures to improve the situation: the introduction of *Zone d'Education Prioritaire* (ZEP schools), poverty eradication programmes, such as *Anou Dibout Ensam* and a Trust Fund for the Vulnerable and reinforce measures for housing accessibility. The creation of a separate a Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Development, to look after the poorest of the poorest of Mauritian society, represented undoubtedly also a powerful effort towards the eradication of absolute poverty.

The past affects, and gives shape to, problems manifested in the present and such non-conscious phenomena affect individual functioning and, for many, has become a source of strain, discord and strife. Preliminary studies were undertaken by the Commission to study this phenomenon from a psycho-sociological perspective but further studies are required.

## **9. New Approaches: Empowerment, Inclusion and Responsible Citizenship**

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Thus, despite efforts made to initiate and reinforce measures to combat Social Injustice within a socio-democratic environment, poverty, social exclusion and other social ills still persist. Many people continue to live in poverty and in deprived conditions, despite the rising standard of living of the average Mauritian. The Government of the day has not remained insensitive to this situation, and several measures are being initiated to reinforce Social Justice.

### **Poverty in Mauritius**

Following rapid progress on the economic and social fronts in the 1980s and 1990s, there have been visible signs of a better standard of living for the average Mauritian.

Various Ministries were involved directly and indirectly in programmes aiming at reducing social exclusion and alleviating poverty. In addition, several Local Authorities, Co-operative Societies, and NGOs and grassroots organizations made efforts towards poverty alleviation. Despite efforts made between 1985 and 2005, absolute poverty still exists. According to the Central Statistics Office,<sup>549</sup> Mauritius has about 23,700 poor households, with a population of about 93,200 poor persons. Although there is no official poverty line in Mauritius, there have been several attempts to quantify poverty.

### **Post February 1999 Poverty Alleviation Programmes**

Following the February 1999 riots, the Government adopted a new approach to alleviate poverty. This was a participatory approach where the poor would be empowered with relevant skills to get out of the poverty trap. Various programmes were adopted along these lines.

In 1999, the *Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups* (TRSIVG) was set up and operated under the *aegis* of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. A sum of Rs. 500 million was earmarked to finance community development projects, micro credit schemes, loans to needy students, and improvement on housing infrastructure.

The *Anou Diboute Ensam* (ANDE) programme, funded by the European Union, to the tune of Rs. 100 million, focused on social infrastructural, income generating and technical assistance projects. This

lasted between 1999 and 2004. However, both projects seem to have yielded mitigated results due to lack of support by social workers.

Similarly, the Rural Diversification Programme (RDP) of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) had two components: *Micro Enterprise and Micro-Finance Development and Community Development* which focussed on land irrigation and in the fisheries sector.

In the year 2006, the Government embarked on an Empowerment Programme spread over a period of five years to the tune of Rs. 5 billion. The National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) superseded the Empowerment Programme in 2008. In the same year, the Eradication of Absolute Poverty (EAP) Programme to the tune of Rs. 395 million was voted in the Budget. This aimed at providing outreach facilities in the 229 pockets of poverty identified in the country, in terms of increasing access and equity in education, health, environment etc.

The *La Valette* very low-cost integrated housing project is an example of the new approach in the reduction of absolute poverty and the Foundation intends to go ahead with five similar projects in several parts of the island. However, although the annual payment is very low (less than a thousand rupees) nearly 30% of the beneficiaries do not care to honour their engagement.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an established policy whereby companies in Mauritius have a legal obligation to contribute 2% of their profit after tax towards CSR-listed activities. However, there seems to be many weaknesses in the CSR programme.<sup>550</sup> Indeed, as highlighted in its survey report in April 2011, of the Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF) argues that the Government's approach to CSR differs from the generally-accepted voluntary definition of CSR by reiterating the fact that "*CSR is voluntary and cannot be governed by legislation*" and by arguing the fact that the "*regulatory requirements are somewhat tedious*". There is also the added criticism that not only have the funds not reached those who deserve them, but they have been used to fund NGOs created and administered by friends and families of the CEOs.

In order to tackle the problem of extreme poverty and seek permanent solutions with a new approach, a separate Ministry has been created. The Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Development is the new organ which is responsible for coordinating and monitoring funds made available by private companies to the tune of 2% of their profit after tax. This will account for quite a substantial amount of funds to be collected for implementation of short-and long-term projects. The new Ministry is encouraged to work in close collaboration with all stake-holders so that there is a judicious use of funds.

## 10. From compensation to slave owners to reparations for slavery

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### Introduction

The campaign to abolish colonial slavery started in the same countries that had started it, namely Britain and France. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1794, the French National Convention set up in the wake of the French revolution (1789) abolished slavery in all French colonies under the sacrosanct republican principle that all men are born free and equal. All slaves were to become free citizens. But the French slave owners in isle de France had no intention of abolishing slavery and the authorities in Paris dispatched a regiment of 1200 soldiers under the command of Vice Admiral de Sercey and appointed two delegates namely Messrs. Baco de la Chapelle et Burnel to see that its resolution be enforced. But they underestimated the power of the French *colons*. The soldiers joined forces with the rebels, while the delegates of the Convention were compelled to quit the island *manu militari*.

The argument was that they were the owners of the slaves and that unless compensation was to be paid for the loss of their “property” they were not prepared to liberate them. The colons further held that slaves constituted the only source of labour on the island. Abolition would thus bring about the ruin of the colony and bring about all activities into a standstill. Hence the term “*Sans esclaves point de colonie*’ (Eng. Trans, ‘no slaves, no colony’).

In Britain, the campaign against the slave trade had started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and finally culminated in 1807. However in Mauritius, it continued illegally and some 50,000 slaves or so are believed to have continued to be imported in the Mascarenes after 1807. When the British signed the Capitulation Treaty, they also sealed the fate of the slaves by guaranteeing to the slave-owners that their ‘property’ would be ‘safe’. Abolition would not come until 1833 when the House of Commons passed an historic resolution to abolish slavery in all British colonies. The Act for the Abolition of Slavery became effective in Mauritius on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1835. This marked an end to 112 years of uninterrupted slavery regime on the Island (1723 -1835). The 67,500 slaves on the island thus became free citizens of the colony.

As a result of the abolition of slavery in its colonies, the British Government decided to compensate all slave owners in the colonies. A sum of £ 20,000,000 was thus voted. Most of the beneficiaries were British investors in the Caribbean. Mauritius however was the only colony where the most important beneficiaries were the descendants of French colons and owners of sugar estates and businesses. A sum of £ 2,112,642 was received as compensation for the loss of 67,500 slaves in Mauritius. Slaves received nothing for the loss of freedom and for having performed unpaid labour for centuries.

No action plan was put up in order to prepare the newly liberated slaves for their new life nor was there any rehabilitation plan put up. The result was that the ex-slave population was left to fend for itself, without a home, land, money or suitable employment and in some cases, with the family separated. Many families became destitute, were left without medical care. Many however bought or squatted on small plots of land but subsequently lost them.

What really took place after the proclamation of the order of liberation of slaves in Mauritius has not been fully researched. But one tactic of employers becomes clear and that was the need to depress wages as ex-slaves and quite rightly so, expected to be given decent employment and paid a decent wage. Depression of wages occurred by importing thousands of contract labourers from overseas. Ex-slaves continued to be employed however as mechanics, artisans and skilled workers in the sugar factories, a tradition which exists up to this day. In many places in rural Mauritius, certain localities still bear the name of ‘*Camp Creole*’ to remind us that these were the localities formerly inhabited by artisans and skilled and unskilled factory workers. There were also the port workers, many of whom were people of Afro-Malagasy origin. Thus the contribution of ex-slaves and their descendants to the sugar industry did not stop after the abolition of slavery. Despite this, they were stigmatized as being lazy and worthless individuals by employers and colonial officials.

For generations ex- slaves and their descendants continued to suffer from all kinds of prejudices to debar them from acquiring land or be employed in agricultural activity and be granted portions of state lands in small holding schemes sponsored by government in the second half of last century.

They evolved as unwanted citizens or ‘movable subjects’. The death toll as a result of epidemics and other calamities was heavier among the population of ex-apprentices as malnutrition and ill health was a fact of life.

Rodrigues Island provides an interesting contrast to Mauritius as there has never been any cane production in view of the nature of the soil and lack of precipitation. There the post emancipation outcome was different as there was no divorce from the land and liberated slaves did not abandon agricultural activity because they were given land to farm after abolition. Agriculture continues to be the mainstay of the economy on the Island up to this day.

### The time of consciousness

Despite the fact that many became educated in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an absence of an educated class that was in tune with the needs and interests of mass of descendants of ex-slaves, who make up part of the working classes of Mauritius. A leadership and intellectual elite in tune with the masses only emerged after the 1950s, influenced by the wave of decolonisation sweeping British colonies. This was further strengthened in the 1980s when a wave of consciousness surged in their milieu of the descendants of ex slaves asking for justice and redress. However, the years 1960 to 1980 were marked by the debate about constitutional safeguards for minority groups. In the 1990s, the debate was launched by a new generation of Creole Catholic priests protesting at the ‘marginalization’ of the Creole population of Mauritius. The term *malaise creole* was coined by Roger Cerveaux, a Catholic priest on the occasion of the 157<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of slavery at the parish church in Grand Gaube.

For long, the Creole population had not had any pressure group worthy of its name. For too long, their natural aspirations have been assimilated to the whole Christian community or the ‘General Population’ where they were included with descendants of French colons and the Gens de Couleur. However they, (as the Indian Christians), have a specificity inside the General Population and inside the Catholic Church, which was not recognized.

The first lesson learnt was that the Creole community had to fight its own battle to gain respectability. It needed to be economically strong and this gave rise to the emergence of small business enterprises such as co-operatives. These had mitigated success. Group action thus emerged with the creation of the first organization of people of African and Malagasy origin in Mauritius under the leadership of the Michel brothers. The Organisation Fraternelle (OF) was set up in 1968.

The struggle of the Organization Fraternelle (OF) deserves special mention. Although it has been a long battle for the Michel brothers, many of their demands, made since the 1960s and 1970s have today been taken up by Governments and by younger Creole leaders. For the last four decades in spite of their very limited means, they have laboured hard for greater recognition of the Creole specificity as an important component in the Mauritian kaleidoscope. They have shown that the Creoles are not a minority because they represent some 50 % of the Christian population of the country that is around 200,000. They have fought for and succeeded in obtaining the introduction of a daily creole news bulletin in both radio and television, in the official commemoration of the abolition of slavery on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February; recognition of the Le Morne Brabant as a place of memory and the introduction of the teaching of the Creole language in schools. Their most important claim is for financial compensation for damages caused to the descendants of slaves who suffer the consequences of slavery.

Many other groups have emerged since and submitted representations to the Commission. A summary is given here. Their entire submissions will be found in subsequent volumes of the Commission’s report.

The following organisations submitted representations:

1. Sylvio and Elie Michel for the *Verts Fraternels*
2. The *Comité Diocésain 1<sup>er</sup> février*
3. Jean Yves Violette for the *Union pour le Progrès*

4. The late Mario Flore for the *Mouvement Malgache et Créole Africain*
5. Gaëtan Jacquette for the *Rassemblement des Organisations Créoles*
6. Jocelyn Minerve, former Minister for Social Security and social worker
7. Jonathan Ravat, social worker and involved in activities of the Catholic Church and at the Institut Cardinal Margeot
8. Jimmy Harmon, Head of Applied Pedagogy of the Institut Cardinal Margeot
9. Lindsay Descombes for the *Association des Descendants d'Esclaves Malgaches et Africains*
10. José Rose for the Rastafari movement
11. Serge Antoine for the *Mouvement National Mauricien*
12. Yola Argot-Nayekoo of Le Morne Village Trou Chenille
13. Ollier Précieux, social worker and member of the FCM
14. Alfred Gino of Agalega, Chairman Island Council assisted by R Soobramanien, former Island Resident Manager

#### 1. Sylvio and Elie Michel for the *Verts Fraternel*s

This was the most elaborate document submitted. The memorandum written in the Creole language in May 2009 by Sylvio Michel, leader of the Verts Fraternel is a well knit plea for reparation for the wrong done to the population of slaves and their descendants in Mauritius and highlights on the need for the payment of adequate financial compensation. A second paper submitted on 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 elaborates further on the whole issue of compensation payable by all stake holders identified.

- i. Given that slavery was practiced during the Dutch, (1538-1710) French (1710-1810) and British occupation (1810-1835) these ex-colonial powers should be made to pay for the crime done to the slaves and their descendants,
- ii. The descendants of slave owners who have inherited considerable fortune through free labour of their slaves and who have treated them most inhumanly. Their contribution to be to the order of 70%
- iii. Government should be a partner in the whole scheme of compensation payable to the descendants of slaves who are in dire need as a mode of positive discrimination in order to strive for a more equitable society. Government contribution: 30%.

Towards that end a fund should be set up by the Government to regulate payment to all *bona fide* beneficiaries. Over and above rehabilitation plans and various laudable actions to create a more egalitarian society, the OF insists on financial compensation to be paid to the more vulnerable segments of the Creole community.

The beneficiaries according to OF should be based on criteria proposed:

- i. Only people of slave descent of age and who are born in Mauritius should qualify, these should not however be owner of any asset worth Rs 2 M or more,
- ii. Cash payment of Rs 1 M,
- iii. A portion of land,
- iv. A Firinga type residence,
- v. Shares in an enterprise,
- vi. Award of scholarship training and for children of beneficiaries

It is to be noted that the memorandum does not indicate on the method to be used to identify of a *bona fide* person of slave descent. There is no estimated cost worked out for the implementation of the proposed scheme and there is no estimated figure as regards the number of beneficiaries either.

**2. The Comité 1er février** was represented by Father Maurice Labour Dean of the Catholic Church and Dr Daniel Florigny-Palmyre and others. The claim consisted of the following:

1. Better safeguard of archival records and documents pertaining to the history of slavery so that a holistic version of the history of people of creole origin can be undertaken,
2. Preservation of all heritage sites,
3. Introduction of creole tongue as a medium in the school curricula
4. Receive apologies from descendants of slave owners, institutions and ex-colonial powers having practiced slavery
5. Legislate in order to eradicate all forms of invert and overt racism when it comes to employment of people of African and Malagasy origin
6. Change of present appellation of General Population in the Population census and in the Schedule A of the Mauritius Constitution for creole
7. Bring about major changes in the Constitution so that a better representation of Creoles can be ensured in Parliament and in Government institutions
8. Facilitate a more meaningful role of Creoles in the economic affairs of the country under the set policy of Government for greater democratization of the Economic environment, thereby creating a more egalitarian society

Memoranda nos. 3-12 is quite repetitive and only the differences between them are noted here:

### **3. L'Union pour le Progrès**

1. The history of Mauritius should be taught from primary to tertiary level in order to foster better inter- ethnic relations.
2. Ensure that recruitment in the civil service and parastatals be made in full transparency so as to avoid frustration and pave the way for a more conducive atmosphere among the different ethnic groups
3. State lands to be made available to creoles able and willing to go in for agricultural activity
4. Introduce proportional representation to ensure better representation of people of African descent and
5. Under take psycho sociological study to assess damages caused by slavery on people of African and Malagasy origin in Mauritius

### **4. MMKA by late Mario Flore**

The author of the memorandum has passed away and was a strong militant for the Creole cause. The gist of his *exposé* may be summarized as under:-

1. A survey should be carried out to identify areas of extreme poverty in the Creole milieu and bring early remedial action
2. Foster cultural links with counties of origin such as the Republic of Mozambique and Madagascar
3. Make two banking organizations namely Mauritius Commercial Bank and the Barclays Banks participate in the compensation scheme payable to descendants of slaves.

### **5. ROC by Gaëtan Jacqueline**

This was a well-knit memorandum where the author recalls the treatment meted out to the slave population during the whole French and British occupation and the circumstances of their being laid off after the abolition of slavery from the sugar estates. Given the distressed situation of the Creoles, descendants of former slaves, and having suffered all kinds of prejudice from the early days of slavery to the present day, the author recommends:

the creation of a ministry for social integration for the implementation of an over all plan embracing all economic social and cultural aspects

1. Financial compensation should be extended to all people of slave descent.

**6. Jocelyne Minerve, Ms. A Laboudeuse, C.J Clair, M. Constant and J.D Pondar**

Miss Jocelyne Minerve, the main deponent, is a well know personality in Mauritius. She is a former Member of Parliament, Minister of Social Security and Mayor of the Township of Beau Bassin/ Rose Hill. She is a strong militant devoted to the cause of the down trodden. The Comité Diocesain du Monde Ouvrier is representative of various movements set up by the Catholic Diocese to come to the assistance of the most depressed class of people. Some of these organizations date to the 1960s as in the case of the JOC - Jeunesse Ouvrière de l'Action Catholique, and the LOAC the Ligue Ouvriere de l'Action Catholique (LOAC).

Miss Minerve and other deponents stated that:

1. Many Creoles live in an environment not conducive for promotion in that poverty is rampant due to insecurity of employment. Many live from hand to mouth and housed in ramshackle premises, where illiteracy is rampant. In spite of facilities of free schooling parents do not believe that education will better the lot of their children.
2. The setting up of housing estates while providing a descent lodging to most Creoles have over the years become the haunt of drug addicts and prostitutes.
3. The different deponents have all depicted a society which needs immediate care and no peace meal solutions will ever improve the lot of the poorest among the poorest. So much hope rests on the Truth and Justice Commission for a new deal

**7. Collectif Organisation de lutte contre la pauvreté represented by Jonathan Rawat, Ms. P. A. Félicité, J.P de Chazal and Father Fanchette.**

The above organization has close links with the Catholic Diocese Mr. J. Rawat, is at the head of the Cardinal Jean Margeot Institute which gives courses to social workers destined to train potential workers in poverty-stricken areas. The target group consists of the poorest of the poorest mainly the Creoles all descendants of the former slave population who for various reasons live very often in absolute poverty.

He provided his views:

1. It is in these pockets of poverty that his group try to bring solace and prepare volunteers to participate in what ever action implemented for the benefit of the most needy
2. The problems to which the Creole population is confronted to be varied and many. Apart from illiteracy which is rampant in the Creole milieu, there is insecurity of employment and very often chronic unemployment due to discrimination and overt racism.
3. Creoles who live in housing estates live in an environment which is not conducive to promotion. They believe that the future will always be bleak and have lost confidence not only in the authorities but in their own ability to improve their lot.
4. Housing estates which have been put up since the past decades and following massive destruction of houses by a series of unprecedented cyclones in the 60'and 70' last century, have turned out to be vicious places where alcoholism, drug trafficking, prostitution and other social ills have become features of everyday life
5. The task set before the authorities and the Truth and Justice Commission is considerable and piece meal solutions will simply be not effective

Ms Félicité and Mr. de Chazal reiterated the same.

Ms. Félicité is a social worker born in one of the suburbs of Port Louis where poverty and all the ills of a society prevail. In spite of the odds, she has managed to emerge as a militant who has had the

opportunity to be trained both inland and overseas in the techniques and strategies adopted to extirpate people in their state of absolute poverty. Her tasks are to empower people and make them conscious of their role in a society and convince them to play a more meaningful role to improve their lot.

**Mr. de Chazal** is the spokesman of the Justice and Peace Commission, an organ of the Port Louis diocese. Its task is to arouse the attention of the authorities on the problems of Mauritian society. People forming part of the Commission are well known professionals who claim experience in various fields. At election time, the Justice and Peace Commission issues *documents of reflection* which are read and widely commented in all Catholic churches and in the press to make known their opinion on the issues. The documents put up are mainly addressed to the various classes of politicians and all potential leaders of the country

**Father P. Fanchette** presently Chairman of the Nelson Mandela for African Culture claims a long experience as a militant for the rehabilitation of the Creole community. He stated:

1. Racism and other discriminatory measures are the root causes for the sad situation prevailing in the Creole milieu. The Catholic Church has at the very onset treated Creoles as 'children of a lesser god.' Although the Catholic Diocese has done pioneering work in the field of education, these institutions were not always accessible to the Creole proletariat creating in them a sentiment of inferiority.
2. The use of the French language in the Catholic Church and at school, have contributed to alienate Creole children.
3. Only time and strong determination for an overall change of policy both by the Church and the Government can bring about significant change and pave the way for a new deal.
4. The introduction of Creole in the school curricula will no doubt help for a better take off.

#### **8. Jimmy Harmon**

Jimmy Harmon is an academic and claims to be a militant engaged in the promotion of the Creole community. He has indeed devoted his life to the study of the behavioral attitude of Creoles towards education and their relations with the Catholic Church and Government. His interest in the history of Mauritius has enlightened him on the circumstances which have led to the 'marginalization' of the Creole community to which he claims to belong. His struggle in favour of the rehabilitation of the Creoles during his 22-year career as an educationist has led him to conclude that racism and the worst method of discrimination are the root causes for the situation in which the descendants of slaves find themselves today. He is fully conscious that the struggle for restorative justice is not an easy one, but he believes that the Truth and Justice Commission has a sacrosanct task to make major recommendations to bring about a drastic change of policy by government to better the fate of the Creole community in Mauritius. He also stated:

1. The Catholic Church has left out the children of ex-slaves in favour of an elite among the whites and the Coloured. Class and colour prejudices have been the guiding principles which have turned out to the detriment of the descendant of ex-slaves.
2. Overt and covert racism have always characterized the behavior of the authorities towards the descendants of ex-slaves.
3. The language barrier has been a major impediment for Creole children. Like Father P. Fanchette, Mr Jimmy Harmon believes that the use of French at school and in church have served to alienate Creole children. Their low performance even at primary level, the performance of Creole children at the CPE speaks for itself.
4. The introduction of the Creole language at school is a must.
5. Regarding ZEP schools, he believes that these institutions should fall under the umbrella of the Bureau d'Éducation Catholique, as Government primary school teachers are not motivated to care for such children.

6. Underrepresentation of creoles at the level of Government institutions is flagrant. The Equal Opportunity Act must be implemented to ensure more transparency in the selection of employees both in the public and private sectors.
7. Nothing has been done to really promote ancestral culture for Creoles. He quotes the Mahatma Gandhi Institute created in 1963 as an institution to foster Indian and African cultures has done nothing concrete to promote the ancestral culture of ex-slaves and their descendants. A similar institution should be created to promote research on African culture.
8. This can be seen in the field of education whether at pre - primary and secondary level. This policy of exclusion for promotion of the creoles has left deep scars.
9. Even to day in spite of all facilities offered in the field of education, by the government, there are other factors which continue to impede the school career of children coming in this milieu'
10. The root causes are varied and many. At the level of the family there is chronic unemployment and uncertainty of income. Barriers for accessibility of employment both in the private and public sectors do not always rests on lack of academic and technical capabilities
11. There is a definite set policy to prevent some citizens from getting access to specific employment.

**9. ADEMA Association des amis descendants d'esclaves Africain Malgaches - Lyndsay Descombes**

1. The deponent made a strong plea for the rehabilitation of the Creole community victims of the aftermath of slavery in Mauritius:
2. The various economic and socio cultural problems to which people of African and Malagasy origin are confronted to have now been identified and must be attended to as a matter of national priority.
3. Government must give its full support for the elaboration of a national policy destined to rehabilitate the descendants of slaves who 175 years after the abolition of slavery still constitute the most depressed class of citizens of this country.
4. The problems to which the Creole community is confronted to are historical, economic, social and cultural and must be the subject of a well knit plan involving the former colonial powers, the private sector, the religious authorities and the State
5. Towards that end, the creation of a Trust Fund to tap financial, social and technical support must first and foremost be set up
6. The aftermath of slavery has had damaging effects on the descendants of people of African and Malagasy origin and can hardly be underestimated they uncover a wide field of human behaviour.
7. All stake holders must be fully involved so as to extirpate the Creole community in its present state of poverty and social deprivation
8. No stone should be left unturned to ensure that the young generation be initiated to proper schooling and avoid drop outs. Full support from pre-primary up to tertiary level must be extended. Legislation to stamp out discrimination and overt racism both in the public and private sector is enacted in time. Positive discrimination is implemented to avoid frustration and ensure proper representation in national institutions.
9. Due recognition of Creole identity and cultural heritage
10. A national council should be set up to monitor the various rehabilitation schemes being implemented

**10. Jose Rose of the Rastafari movement**

The Rastafari movement, constitutes a small group of Afro-Malagasy Mauritians established in Chamarel. They have been victims of racial prejudice in their history, because of their lifestyle. They feel they are not lesser citizens of the country. They have been dispossessed of their ancestral land and claim to be the poorest among the poorest class of descendants of former slaves.

**11. Serge Antoine**

The author claims to be a strong militant for the rehabilitation of the Creoles victims of racism. He believes that assistance from the countries which have practiced slavery in Mauritius as well as the big landowners and other possessors of wealth should be sought in order to put up a rehabilitation plan. He has to that effect corresponded with various international organizations in order to sensitize authorities concerned on the plight of the descendants of former slaves in Mauritius. Education is the greatest priority and no stone should be left unturned to ensure that Creole children benefit from proper schooling since early childhood up to tertiary level.

**12. Yola Argot-Nayekoo of Le Morne Village Trou Chenille**

A young University cadre, she claims ancestry from the first liberated slaves in the le Morne region. As a student in sociology/ and social anthropology, she made a strong plea for the recognition of Trou Chenille as a place of memory. The place covers an area of some 25 arpents located between a former concession and the *pas geometriques*. The first slaves settled there after abolition of slavery. Her contention is that this place is unique and has strong symbolic importance in that a colony of liberated slaves had set up a village of their own there and lived almost undisturbed until they were forcibly removed.

**13. Alain Precieux - member of the FCM**

The author of this memorandum is an active member of the Federation des Organization Creoles (FCM), although he did not claim to be a spokesman of this central organization. He stated that:

1. Creole should gain the status of national language and recognized as such in the Constitution
2. Whatever monies received from various sources in lieu of compensation for damage done to the slaves and their descendants, should be used for improved Education facilities, better housing conditions, improvement of health care and strong campaign against alcoholism and drug addiction.
3. He was not in favour of cash compensation

**14. Alfred Gino of Agalega, Chairman Island Council assisted by R Soobramanien, former Island Resident Manager**

Mr. Alfred Gino recalled the slave history of Agalega.

Things have improved since the management of the island by the Outer Island Development Cooperation OI DC. But in the view of the deponent much more needed to be done:

1. There is a need to improve the air strip to facilitate the landing of planes while the jetty must be improved to facilitate the loading and unloading of goods,
2. more regular maritime and air traffic to and from the island,
3. improve standard of education at pre-primary, primary and secondary level, and facilities for students who wish to pursue tertiary education
4. better facilities for those Mauritian citizens who wish to visit their ancestral land to pay homage to their ancestors buried on the island,
5. preservation of heritage sites namely the church and cemetery,

6. allocation of plots of land under a small holding scheme, to facilitate cropping and animal farming
7. introduction of Mozambique and Malagasy languages in the school curricula
8. Change of the name of the place called *Village Vingt Cinq* as this name helps to perpetuate the time of slavery on the island where slaves were brought in and administered with 25 lashes for the slightest offence.

### General Comments

There is unanimity by all parties concerned for redress to the Commission on the following points:-

1. Reparation to descendants of slaves through financial compensation or otherwise
2. Inclusion of Creole Language in schools and as an official language at par with English and French
3. Change of appellation of General Population in the Constitution for the term Creole
4. Preservation of historical sites and archival records and need of a holistic version of the history of people of slave descent
5. Better educational facilities at pre-primary and primary levels to facilitate access to secondary and tertiary education
6. Improve legislation to prevent overt and covert racism and other forms of discrimination
7. Affirmative action to facilitate better integration of creole population in both private and public institutions
8. Constitutional amendments and review of electoral boundaries to ensure better representation of the Creole population in Parliament and in the affairs of the State.
9. Accessibility to better housing and allocation of state lands for cultivation and for livestock keeping
10. Creation of a Fund for the provision of financial assistance to the most needy in the Creole community with strong accent on education up to tertiary level and award of scholarships.



# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



**FOR PROMOTING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY, FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE**

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1. Memorialising Slavery
2. A better understanding of, and a more inclusive, Mauritian history and culture
3. A better and increased protection of Mauritian heritage
4. A less racist and elitist society
5. A more democratic public life
6. Empower Mauritians of African and Malagasy origin

**FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

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7. Increased economic and social equality
8. Economy and social justice
9. Co-operative societies
10. Reconstituting the Mauritian Family

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

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11. For a more just educational system
12. For our 'cités'
13. Concerning the caste system
14. Le Morne village history and heritage and Southern Mauritius
15. Metayers and Riche Terre Planters
16. Archives

**LAND ISSUES**

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17. A more sustainable, equitable and judicious use of the environment
18. The TJC and *MAURICE ILE DURABLE* project
19. Land Issues

**ECONOMY**

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20. Economics, labour and employment

**CHAGOS, RODRIGUES AND AGAEGA**

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- 21 Rodrigues
22. Agalega

**RECONCILIATION**

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23. For a better representation of minorities and under-represented groups
24. Indian Immigration Archives
25. Reconciliation

## 1. MEMORIALISING SLAVERY

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- We cannot in any manner justify today to the innumerable, unquantifiable and unjustifiable harm that has been caused to enslaved populations and their immediate descendants in Mauritius. No amount of reparation, financial or otherwise, can unmake the injustices of the past.
- What we must do is to ensure that their stories are not forgotten by succeeding generations and their economic, social and cultural contribution to Mauritius recognized and publicized in permanent and public spaces and ways by all.
- We must not forget, in the process, that slavery was both about the slaves and the slave owners, for the slave was primarily a ‘possession, good’ owned by another person. Both groups, in different ways, were victims of a system.
- Reconciliation is thus about descendants of slaves, slave owners and the State, jointly and publicly acknowledging that a grave injustice was committed to African and Malagasy populations. Our recommendations on memorialisation of slavery, therefore, need to be openly and firmly supported by all these groups.
- It is impossible to ascertain with exact figures how many endured colonial slavery and the slave trade. It is even more impossible to capture what slaves felt, thought and lived through from 1721 and 1839. No amount of reparations will ever repair the damage done to those who endured slavery and the slave trade.
- What modern society can do is to ensure that such actions never occur again in whatever form and the justifications (philosophical, religious, ideological, economic, biological etc.) that were used to establish colonial slavery and the slave trade are not used to institute new forms of servitude.
- Modern society needs to honour the memory of all slaves destined for Mauritius, including those who never reached Mauritius.
- It needs to pay special attention to those persons descended from slavery as they continue to endure several forms of injustice incompatible with principles of democracy and natural justice in the Republic of Mauritius.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

1. Public and private institutions rethink their cultural policies and incorporate the ancestral values of African and Malagasy peoples.
2. Increased funding for memorialisations of slavery and the slave trade in public places, and especially in places where slaves have lived, died and worked.
3. Increased funding for research in all aspects of slavery and the slave trade conducted in a professional and impartial manner and covering all groups who were enslaved
4. Existing works to be continued and fully supported by public institutions both financially and logistically
5. Works started by the Truth and Justice Commission to be continued by competent authorities and empowering young Mauritians through foreign scholarships and training programmes where expertise is lacking: The Slave Trade Voyages database, ethnographic studies of descendants of slaves.
6. Increased and facilitated travel to ancestral countries for descendants and interested Mauritians
7. Actions towards national unity and reconciliation to include joint collaborative events where descendants of slave owners and of slaves can interact and share histories, such as that carried

- out on the Ball plantation in the USA. Sites of former slave plantations are ideal for this purpose.
8. Better memorialisation of the economic contribution of slaves to Mauritius.
  9. Increased contacts with countries from where slaves were brought from so as to understand ancestral cultures and traditions which could be revived.
  10. It is crucial that facts concerning slavery and slave trade are known and acknowledged and that memorialisation in daily and permanent ways is established.
  11. It will allow for more targeted historical research and memorialisation policies and for research to be more equitably undertaken covering all sections of the Mauritian population.
  12. To assess the quantitative value of the labour by future researchers trained in Economic History and historical statistics.
  13. As so many sources that exist are located abroad, these need to be copied and brought to Mauritius and access to these given free of charge.
  14. In-depth multidisciplinary studies of micro populations in selected areas to understand their aspirations and world view
  15. A review of case of Ratsitanina by the State Law Office.
  16. The '*Maurice Ile Durable*' project or National Strategy for Sustainable Development should include protection of the culture of people in the physical landscape of Mauritius and of ensuring access to sites of great emotional and spiritual value to descendants of slaves and to Mauritians generally.
  17. A 'Museum of Slavery' to be created in the capital city of Port Louis for greater visibility along the lines outlined in following Museum proposal. Although one 'Interpretation Centre' is projected at Le Morne, this should reflect the Maroonage aspect rather slavery which was a national phenomenon.
  18. Online historical data to be freely available on slavery and the slave trade to enable all Mauritians to access their History.
  19. The dozens of reports on slavery and Maroonage produced at public expense, containing an even greater number of recommendations to be implemented by the relevant institutions and other public institutions if the trained staff is not available. These include the Maroon Archaeological Investigation Report, the Management Plan of Le Morne Cultural Landscape reports at the National Heritage Fund, the Historical and Anthropological Survey of La Gaulette/Coteau Raffin, to name a few.
  20. Recognition of the following sites and histories as National heritage:
    - Memorialisation of the islet where infected slaves were disembarked on the Ilot du Morne/Pointe Marron, forming today part of Hotel Paradis.
    - Trou Chenille - home of ex-slave population forcibly removed. The Le Morne Trust Fund must document and publish this history.
    - Slave Cemetery at Le Morne.
    - Le Morne village should be included in the World Heritage Landscape as the inhabitants are the moral and spiritual guardians of the World Heritage Property. It should also be listed as a heritage village and other heritage villages need to be identified across Mauritius.
    - Trois Cavernes - the only documented Maroon cave with visible signs of occupation needs to be better preserved and the owner requested by Government to establish an

interpretation centre there.

- Bassin des Esclaves in Pamplémousses and a memorial plaque/interpretation centre concerning the slave contribution to Pamplémousses village and Garden to be designed by artists.
- Slave Prison at Belle Mare to be taken over by the State and opened to public and an exhibition space created.
- The National Heritage Fund to locate all sugar estates using slave labour from 1815 to 1835 and a memorial plaque placed outside each of them with all slave names found from the 1826 and 1835 registers.
- Memory to Pedro Coutoupa, maroon leader beheaded and whose head was publicly exhibited near where he was caught.
- The Maroon caves to be identified on public and private properties, and knowledge about them to be disseminated to the public and entrance to be allowed.
- Symbol of the left hand of maroon slave to be used in memorialisations by institutions such as LMHTF and NMCAC.
- A Monument to illegal slave trading on Bel Ombre Sugar Estate at the cost of the sugar estate.
- A monument to be erected in Plaine Verte Garden to be erected to remember the execution of Ratsitanina and many other slaves hung there.
- The prison building and historical buildings in the vicinity, situated next to NPF building, to be fully restored according to international conservation norms and current modern additions (concrete and corrugated iron) to be removed by the Ministry of Arts and Culture.
- Artefacts to be returned to Mauritius: from Réunion, such as the piece of cloth used in slave trade given to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs of La Réunion.
- Committee to study the history of Indians in French period and how to better memorialize their history and heritage in contemporary Mauritius.
- All Village Councils to undertake historical and cultural heritage surveys and restore and protect slave tangible and intangible heritage in their localities.

## 2. FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF, AND A MORE INCLUSIVE, MAURITIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- There is a low level of understanding of Mauritian History exhibited by Mauritians from all walks of life and irrespective of educational background. There is thus a need for research and the promotion of History
- Boards and Trusts appointed by Governments in power are often composed of political nominees and administrative staff of Ministries. Many suffer from a chronic absence of vision and ability to implement decisions speedily and in the spirit and purpose in which decisions were taken.
- There is an absence of intercultural communication, a continuation of compartmentalisation and communalization of culture, despite all efforts made.
- There exists no cultural policy for Mauritius that is agreed to by all sections of society.
- Stereotypical attitudes concerning descendants of slaves and slave owners, Europeans, Africans, indentured labourers, Indians are prevalent among public officials, private companies and the public at large, and especially those in charge of policy-making and decision-taking.
- There is increasing bureaucratisation and politicization of culture and an absence of professionals and community members with sound practical and local knowledge present in decision-making and in executive positions.
- There is an absence of honesty in reporting real cultural or ethnic origins in view of obtaining public funds such as subsidies or to obtain position and political power.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

21. Authorities to encourage reflection on 'National History'.
22. Identification of so far neglected groups and further research:
  - For example, Malagasy, Mozambican slaves, Bengali, Gujerati, Christian and Muslim indentured, amongst others.
23. Introduction of Mauritian history at all levels in the School Curriculum and for all categories of Mauritians.
24. Publication of books and dissemination of information gathered, through TV and popular media.
25. A programme of education in civic, humanistic and moral values:
  - aimed at strengthening bonds between communities, should be introduced at all levels, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. A series of manuals, with gradual and varying contents, should be prepared to this end by teams of educators.
  - A similar public programme of Citizenship should be available to adults at large.
26. In-depth cultural surveys of the whole island
  - To be undertaken by professional staff with appropriate qualifications and experience, and not with poorly-trained and low-paid staff as is the case currently.
27. State funding for further scientific research into slavery and indenture and Mauritian history in general.
28. Programme of training of Mauritians in all fields of cultural resources management.
29. Creation of a Conservation Institute

- to train Mauritians in preservation of paper and digital documents to avoid further deterioration and loss of these crucial Civil Status information.
  - Appointment of trained cultural practitioners in all fields review of policy, staffing and functioning of all cultural institutions
  - Staffing screening: the appointment of political nominees, persons with known racist and communal views or with ethnic, religious biases to cease with immediate effect.
  - Management structure to be reviewed and revised to reflect international professional norms and standards.
  - Management Vision and policy to be in-line with national priorities and with other institutions.
30. Ensure proper technical and professional recruitment in cultural institutions and for such staff to have executive responsibilities
31. No appointments for cultural institutions to be made by ministers
- to ensure autonomy of institutions and acts to be amended to reflect this autonomy.
32. Collaboration between institutions and individuals working in the same field.
- sharing skills and knowledge and creating new opportunities
33. The President, Prime Minister and the Leader of Opposition to set the example to other politicians and pledge to stop using culture and religion as tools for gaining popularity and votes

### 3. A BETTER AND INCREASED PROTECTION OF MAURITIAN HERITAGE

#### A. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

34. There is a need for national policies to be formulated that are based on full public and professional consultations and to cover cultural and natural, tangible and intangible. This would set the base for the development of an integrated management of heritage in Mauritius.
35. The population should be consulted to consider their vision of heritage considering Mauritian diversity.
36. The creation of a green paper fostering consultations with all segments of the population
  - would be an initiative enabling to gather views on values invested in heritage by all Mauritians;
  - The policy for heritage would support the reinforcement of the legislation for the protection and promotion of museum collections and heritage;
  - this to allow for an optimal management and also the integration of existing policies for Tourism, environmental and cultural.
37. To privilege the scientific approach for the documentation of heritage and museum collections in order to recreate a link to the past.
  - The scientific approach supports the appropriation of the past by the population at large.
38. Promote history and other disciplines involved in heritage documentation and research to provide the nation with scientific vision of the past thus allowing the dissemination of knowledge.
39. An independent audit of heritage which has disappeared, stolen or entered private domain.
40. The continued destruction and dispersal of Mauritian heritage to cease.
41. No projects to be undertaken without a proper cultural heritage impact assessment and a scientific evaluation.
42. Better supervision and physical protection and policing of sites
  - Of documentary and intangible heritage;
  - Customs Personnel to be trained to detect cultural theft.

#### B SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

43. There is an urgent need for trained resources and professional management of Mauritian heritage.
  - The current management of museums and heritage sites shows the necessity to consolidate, if not create, a strong technical pool empowered to preserve, manage and promote heritage.
44. Training of all staff and capacity-building to create a national technical pool of technicians in heritage field and Museum management and conservation.

- The administrative management of heritage institutions should be complemented by strong technical competence to optimize the functioning of the institutions; it would also ensure the sustainability of heritage institutions and an optimal preservation of national heritage.
45. Heritage and museums need to be managed by a scientific and technical personnel having clear knowledge and experience in this field.
  46. Such institutions would benefit from a better development and organisation by empowering the technical and scientific staff to become managers of such institutions instead of the traditional administrative line of authority, not versed in such specialised fields.
  47. Revalorization of the heritage field by providing better conditions to employees:
  48. There should be a valorisation of technical and scientific staff as they are the appropriate resources to manage heritage places or museums, thus leading to an optimal management of resources and a better management of heritage sites and museums.
  49. **To create an integrated management system for heritage** led by a pool of technicians centralizing all heritage data and ensuring the coherence of projects undertaken for effective results and optimize resource management.
  50. **To be in line with international conservation standards** and to provide for regular updating of technical and professional staff skills through attendance at conferences and seminars overseas and organization of such events locally.

## C. MUSEUMS

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

There is a need for a National Policy for museums to set out objectives and guidelines for Museum Management, and for museums to be managed according to current international norms and standards.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

51. **The creation of a national inventory of all heritage collections** and sites that would be accessible to all, by using latest software technologies adapted to the heritage and museum environment.
52. **The establishment of proper research schemes for the study and documentation of museum collections**; full documentation on museum collections should be established to help their interpretation, their presentation to the public in the perspective of their historical context and allow retracing their provenance for better monitoring and management.
53. **The consolidation of the existing structures for museum and heritage management** by providing professional training leading to internationally recognised certification in the field of heritage management and museology.
54. **Establish a communication policy** to respond to public expectations: regular audience surveys, publications of the catalogue of collections, publication on the museums and their main masterpieces, creation of website.
55. **Establish a communication strategy for all museums** to better promote their collection and also, disseminate knowledge as stated in ICOM definition of museum, as a fundamental role for museums. Since they are established with public funds and present national collections, therefore, they should serve the public interest by having a dynamic public programme and educational activities attracting visitors from all walks of life.
56. **New exhibition spaces to be created** to support the restitution of the national past to the population after conclusions of this reflection. This might be for example a Museum

focusing on Anthropology, including intangible heritage; the creation of a National Museum of Immigration to provide a nationwide sense of belonging, among others.

**D. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MAURITIUS MUSEUMS COUNCIL**

57. The elaboration of a collections policy;
58. The elaboration of a conservation policy including restoration policy;
59. The setting up a professional collections management system;
60. Computerization of catalogues and use of a museum collection management software;
61. The training of staff in collection management must be a priority;
62. The organisation of workshops and training courses in Mauritius with other professionals to foster capacity building;
63. The establishment of a national professional network helping the development of capacity building;
64. The establishment of a detailed documentation on collections including detailed documentation of their acquisition, descriptions and photographs;
65. That research be conducted on collections to expand existing documentation;
66. The publication of a catalogue of collections also available on website.

## 4. A LESS RACIST AND ELITIST SOCIETY

### THE COMMISSION FINDS

- The experience of slavery has had particularly negative effects on people of African descent in Mauritius.
- People with an African phenotype and of African descent experience discrimination at various levels in contemporary Mauritius.
- Funding of socio-cultural organisations fosters social division as no equality of funding allocations can be achieved. Leaders of socio-cultural organisations use their connection Government in order to launch their own political careers.
- In some areas mostly inhabited by persons of African descent, investment is less, as well as in some colleges where the management of schools is an issue.
- Teachers are not giving their best in their classes, reserving the crucial information needed by scholars for the time of private lessons. Poorer members of society are not able to pay for these additional classes. This produces poorer examination results among this cohort. The system of private lessons also infringes on the students' constitutional right to education and ultimately their right to play as children in our society.
- Discrimination prevents access to the wide range of resources presently available in our society. Those perceiving/experiencing discrimination must have access, not only to the Ombudsman but also a secondary reporting officer in their own communities.
- Many descendants of slaves and indentured labourers live below the poverty line.
- There is a continuity in economic system (slave trade, slavery, indenture) which produces exclusion, unemployment and poverty.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

67. Funding for reparations is sought by the Mauritian government from the historical slave trading nations, namely, the United Kingdom and France, for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of communities and settlements where slave descendants are in the majority.
68. Reparations be provided to poor individual families in terms of social reparations such as housing and education so that this community and its descendants are better able to create a more stable social and economic existence going into the future.
69. That a system and policy of affirmative action be implemented in Mauritius to address the social and economic imbalances created and fostered under Slavery, Indenture and Colonialism.
  - This system and policy of affirmative action must take into account women of slave and indentured descent. While it is acknowledged that it is presently difficult to define who is slave/indentured labour descendant, policy-makers (and Government) should ensure that positive discrimination occurs.
70. Discrimination at any level in our society must be made illegal. This includes any real or perceived discrimination in treatment at hospitals (crucial, especially at general hospitals), government offices, education facilities, workplace interviews, shops, marketplace or place of worship etc.
  - The funding of culturally-based social organisations should be abolished.

## 71. Creation of an anti-discrimination unit to ensure:

- Hate speech is not tolerated. No one should have the right to publicly offend the other by using racial epithets
- The exact process of reporting and recording of these offences needs to be established. The commission recommends three levels of reporting (local community representative, ADU, then Ombudsman). The exact operational characteristics of this unit can be thought through by a selected group of stakeholders.
- To follow up on complaints from the public and from Government regarding such infringements. The ADU will also be tasked with maintaining a deeper respect for diversity as well as democracy.
- Positive discussion on the contribution of Creoles to the making of Mauritian society to be initiated verbally and financially by Government *via* the proposed Anti-discrimination Unit.
- Together with the relevant Ministries dealing with youth, gender issues and leisure (Tourism), the ADU will offer advice, implement workshops and discussion forums to effect dialogue on parenting, gender relations and equality, the image of Mauritius to the tourist world and issues of discrimination in the leisure space.
- To work closely with social work organisations and entities, Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and units, teachers, recently-qualified therapists, counsellors, community representatives and other individuals working with the broader public, to inform and discuss matters relating to discrimination and marginalisation in our society. The objective of this is to ensure that there is ongoing public dialogue on these matters and that people feel free to express their opinions and to talk about their experiences in our society.
- To also scrutinise social and economic policies emerging from government, advising the latter on sections or parts of policies which may, in fact, promote discriminatory practices.
- To make recommendations to the Government regarding such policies and how to make these more socially inclusive.

## 72. Institutions must desist from promoting the celebration of difference in our society.

- Especially that which confirms fundamental or primordial difference between Mauritians.
- To this end (while recognising diversity), it needs to pay careful attention to primordial discourse. Any reference to the fundamental qualities of indentured descendants versus slave descendants vs colonial descendants should be avoided. Such primordial 'talk' emphasises racial distinctions and promotes discrimination.

## 73. Members of our political leadership must set the example by not using hate speech involving racial epithets and/or discussions on the fundamental racial or ethnic qualities of our population. Hate speech must become illegal.

74. **Positive discussion on diversity as well as the commonalities** that Mauritians share should be made available online, in the written and audio-visual media.

## 5. A MORE DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC LIFE

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- Many Mauritians often do not feel free to express themselves openly;
- There is a silent majority whose views, interests and life views are rarely considered;
- A top-down approach is mainly used in undertaking policies, surveys and studies;
- The Mauritian population is unaware of laws of Mauritius and needs to understand the importance of respecting fundamental rights;
- The population is not sufficiently empowered with consumer protection knowledge.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

75. The 'protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of the individuals', embodied in section 2 of the constitution, should be amended to include economic, social and cultural rights.
76. Aggressive campaigns on the promotion human rights should continue to be carried out
  - through various media, including media and school. Similarly, Consumer Laws should be tightened to provide sufficient protection to consumers, and sensitization campaigns should be carried out.
77. The promotion of interculturalism should be encouraged
  - as it helps to maintain national unity. Such a policy will undoubtedly further help the Mauritian nation to strengthen a common civic culture, based on the values of freedom, belonging, patriotism, and of human rights, while encouraging intercultural exchange.
78. Promotion of multicultural composition of all boards and institutions.
  - Reconciliation to be promoted and all boards, and trusts, parastatal to be multicultural: any board composed of 65 % or more of one ethnic and/or religious group to be reviewed and revised.
79. Public funds should not go to those institutions public or private that practice discrimination.
80. All institutions and private companies seeking funding from government should show evidence of having a multicultural staff at all levels.
81. And if they do not have this, they should show evidence of having a positive discrimination policy to increase multicultural staffing in future
82. The voice of all Mauritians, not only of sociocultural groups, to be listened to and incorporated in cultural policies.
83. The cultural values of population of African and Malagasy ORIGIN to be incorporated in economic and social policies rather than being solely dominated by European and Asian models.
84. Full participatory democracy
  - Democratisation of policy-making process and management or to be introduced at all Ministries and Departments;
  - Listening to Mauritians should be a priority.
85. Recommendations in TJC's Mivoie study to be adopted and used as a blueprint for future

socioeconomic and cultural surveys of other localities

86. Religion and the nation: stressing a vigilant neutrality:

- The Mauritian State must play a less partial role and be neutral on religious issues.

87. The Welfare state should be promoted as this best guards against communalism.

## **6. TO EMPOWER MAURITIANS OF AFRICAN AND MALAGASY ORIGIN**

### **THE COMMISSION FINDS:**

- In Mauritius, there has been a negative stereotypical portrayal of persons of African and Malagasy origins, and this has had a detrimental effect on their psyche. By being constantly bombarded with negative and demeaning images of themselves, it has been historically impossible for these persons to resist the psychological onslaught and many have succumbed to accepting the negative portrayals as truths.
- It has created instability, confusion, self-loathing, low self-esteem and image, feelings of inadequacy and has created, within this community, a climate of envy, distrust, disloyalty and hatred.
- This internalized racism is potentially as harmful as institutionalized racism.
- Shame of one's origins, especially when it remains repressed, is a powerful weapon of destruction - of others and/or self. One can lose powers of judgment and become depersonalized. There is less inner control.
- There is a possible correlation between the above and the high incidence of schizophrenia among members of the General Population found in mental institutions. However, to our knowledge, this has never been studied in Mauritius in any great depth.
- Coping with negative stereotypes has led to several actions and modes of behavior, which is negatively viewed by others and, thus, is seen as 'confirming' existing views of the Creole population.
- Collective sensitization of all Mauritians has therefore to take place.
- There has been a dissonance if not a contradiction, between the development of Mauritian Christianity on the one hand, and popular Creole culture inspired from non-Christian sources.
- The non-recognition of African and Malagasy religions by Mauritian Christianity has had repercussions for the population of African and Malagasy population. This has manifested itself through beliefs and practices being performed in less visible corners of Mauritius and more recently, in adherence to new religious branches or sects which have provided, legitimately or illegitimately, an 'alternative' to the traditional 19<sup>th</sup>-century Mauritian Christianity. This, however, merits intensive scientific research and should not be easily dismissed by Authorities.
- Rites, pilgrimages, sanctuaries have been ways for the older generations of Creole Christians to cope with fear and threats. However, the younger generation of Creole Christians, are no more empowered than their parents and grandparents. The same pattern of fear, fragility, imagined sense of persecution from unknown threat exists. This fear is being exploited by international organizations/sects, under the cover of charity and using entertainment and dramatization. Creation of new myths has occurred. This merits urgent, intensive, scientific study and should be monitored by the Authorities, as there is a potential anti-national agenda in the making.
- In Mauritius specifically, and not in Rodrigues, Chagos and Agalean communities, there is competition between 'Asian' and 'Creole' perceptions of each other concerning entrepreneurial activity, agriculture and education. Asians are perceived by many Creoles as being more business-minded, money-grabbing and dishonest. Agricultural activities are also looked down by

Creoles due to negative stereotyping of Indian indentured immigrants. These activities are associated with Asian culture and are in a sense rejected by many Creoles. Consumerism is seen as compensation for the bitter life endured and is projected as an anti-model, a way to assert one's difference with Asians' hoarding and sacrificing for the future, for generations to come. This is the same for education.

- These attitudes do not exist in Rodrigues, however, where there is no negative connotation associated with education, entrepreneurial activity or agriculture. Mauritians have thus much to learn from Rodriguans.

#### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

88. Official recognition of distinctive African and Malagasy references in all state institutions and that consideration is given:
  - To mass popular culture rather than elite culture in the population of African and Malagasy descent and to use global culture that is inspired by African culture, if necessary to construct a more positive self-image and identity.
  - To open up to larger interpretations and opinions in intellectual, political, economic and social space.
  - To introduce "socio-biography" of groups and life histories of individuals, with particular emphasis on History and the forging of patterns in values, attitudes and behaviours. This is also a form of narrative therapy.
  - To change the feelings of shame and hurt which have been brought about as a result of inherited or internalized negative associations with slavery and other forms of exploitation.
89. The setting up of specific historical and cultural programs to foster a sense of belonging
  - i. Community-based organizations should be identified or created, if they do not exist, and supported by the State to offer parents and youngsters sensitizing sessions on their social, cultural, spiritual, artistic heritage through story-telling sessions, cultural workshops in order to anchor identity;
  - ii. Public and private research institutions and individuals to be asked to study the association between Christianity and Creole identity, with a view to separating social identity from religious identity. This to be undertaken in a scientific and objective manner;
  - iii. Relevant institutions to collaborate and
    - organize talks in educational institutions, involving teachers and students in order to counter images and the sense of being dominated, to challenge inferiority complexes and superiority associated with White / Western culture;
    - To design specific programs on parenting skills and socializing processes which anchor identity on the assertion of values centered on the family as a unit. This, if conducted properly and accompanied by structural changes in the economic future of the family, will reduce the 'mobility' that is so prevalent in the family;
    - To work with children on specific themes related to slavery and resilience;
    - To offer to youngsters identity support programs, adapted to meet their needs and rituals on entering into adulthood. Identity construction and healthier management of identity crisis would be ensured instead of transiting through gangs, delinquency, violence, misbehaviors;

- To develop clear strategies which will facilitate process of cohesion and sense of responsibility within the communities;
- To recognize the importance of the “invisible world” and its impact on coping behaviours.

Relevant institutions to

- Recognize and develop knowledge about conceptions of health, ills and traditional cures in an holistic approach;
- Acknowledge and know better the importance of the body, energy, rhythm and skills;
- Collect and share information on essential questions such as suffering, ills, death, according to popular beliefs.

90. Setting up of a trust for education and training to search for ‘black diamonds’

- To operate cognitive recomposition regarding education and training, changing negative perceptions among children and parents and self-defeating behaviors;
- To work at village and town level for a “designation” process by all parties, including families, re-affirming the importance of formal education and lending meaning to school institutions;
- In order to foster positive role models, not only “funny and entertaining” models and raise aspirations, particular attention should be given to the search for “Black Diamonds” and education. Gifted children could be encouraged within a stable, studious environment to concentrate on their studies and serve as role models for others;
- Grants, sponsorships, scholarships to alleviate extra financial burdens on the family or even temporary shelters when house conditions are not favorable could be set up;
- Mentors on a volunteer basis could monitor progress on a regular basis;
- Teachers could be offered incentives to work with young children of deprived areas on non-traditional ways of learning;
- Kindergartens, as well as specialized schools for the handicapped children, with participation of families, could respond to real needs.

91. The state to work on discriminations, stereotypes, internalization of negative images, building of self and group esteem

- i. To conduct research on explicit or implicit structural discrimination and social stereotypes and prejudices affecting slave descendants;
- ii. To empower institutions financially and, in terms of staffing, to empower persons of African and Malagasy descent requesting assistance in public institutions, such as Citizens Advice Bureaus, to foster self-and group-esteem through cognitive restructuring, deconstruction of stereotypes, restoring self-confidence, pride and resilience through regular focused group meetings with help of social specialists/ therapists;
- iii. To encourage public servants in all public institutions and parastatals to rethink how they approach the public of African descent as some current behaviour is unacceptable in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Mauritius. Most probably, training and monitoring will be required for both affected person and personnel on the fact that:

- racism emotionally cripples the community and that alleviation of inferiority complexes is required;
  - minds must be freed from cognitive blindness and mental paralysis, through regular focused group meetings with help of social specialists/therapists.
92. To undertake a detailed disaggregation of data for a more objective analysis of social justice and formulation of new social policies by:
- i. Gathering and analyzing statistical data over a long period of time, taking into account criteria of gender and ethnic communities in their disaggregation with detailed historical analysis of social, political and administrative structures;
  - ii. Paying particular attention to the field of Psychiatry, delinquency and crime;
  - iii. Assessing (over time) with more precision, ways of living and equal access of Creoles to
    - land and housing;
    - labour;
    - social and economic networks ( from day-to-day survival to powerful lobbies);
    - education from pre-school to tertiary education, rates of failure / success and drop-outs;
    - savings and earnings ( from traditional to new);
    - family structures, dynamics and evolutions (evolution of roles, expectations, frustrations, gratifications, inter-generational relationships).

**FOR INCREASED  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**



## 7. FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- The British Government abandoned newly-freed slaves in 1835 to their fate without providing them with a home, plot of land, education and training.
- Had ex-slaves and their families been alive today, a plot of land, a house and a Savings Account, opened for all children living in 1835 would have been recommended to the British Government to be given to all slaves found in the Slave Register of 1826, comprising some 66,000 slaves.
- Slaves' desire for land and autonomy were not considered at the time of emancipation, and this constitutes the most important 'unfinished business' of the British Government regarding slavery and abolition.
- There is a need to satisfy the land hunger of Mauritians, particularly of ex-slaves and their descendants.
- Failing this as the British Government is long since gone and slaves long since dead.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

93. **The creation of a Land Bank** with plots of land for farming and other entrepreneurial activities so that anyone who is a **descendant of slave and indentured who has never owned land before** and who wishes to engage in an activity that promotes autonomy be allocated a plot.
94. The creation of a Land Research and Monitoring Centre to monitor all land transactions, fraudulent activities.
95. No more state land to be allocated to those who already have land and non-continuation of hunting and water leases to private persons and companies.
96. **Purchase of private land** and more land to be allocated for public parks, hunting.
97. Strong support and encouragement to be given to co-operative activities, including co-operative factories, as envisaged in the Balogh Report.
98. **A Junior Savings Account** to be opened by every parent for all children under 18 in every *cite* or housing estate or poverty pockets to give them a head start in life when they graduate from college or university.
  - The starting sum to be decided by the Implementation Arm of the Commission and funded by all business enterprises, sugar estate owners, all IRS and ERS owners and from EU money given to Sugar Industry and for gender-related activities.
  - Parents should contribute, and accounts should be frozen until the young person has graduated or until the age of 18.
  - Parents must not be allowed to take money from their children's accounts.

## 8. FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### EMPLOYMENT

#### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- A source of poverty is the unemployment of former Export Processing Zone workers;
- The restructuring of the Sugar Industry at various periods has caused unemployment among certain categories.

#### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

99. A thorough revision and amendment of employment policy.
100. The Government of Mauritius has a duty to be seen to, but also to genuinely, erase *nepotism* that leads, for example, to individuals being appointed, or promoted, on the basis of “whom you know”. This approach and attitude are especially divisive and prevalent in the Civil Service and Ministries. Until it is eradicated, no Justice or Truth will prevail, and no Trust will exist in those in power. Nepotism is, in effect, a form of corruption, and a system of appeal procedures, against either a lack of promotion, or not being appointed, should exist in the country’s Civil Service.
101. The equal opportunity act should come into force.
  - Its implementation will go a long way towards guaranteeing equal rights for citizens, irrespective of ethnic, political, sex and religious appurtenances.
102. Employers should be prosecuted
  - if found contravening constitutional rights in relation to the right to employment.
103. Posts to be advertised and selection and recruitment in a more transparent manner and by competent staff
  - For example, when selecting technical and research staff, a senior technical person or researcher in the relevant discipline must be part of selection Team.
104. Creation of Parastatal Appointments and Appeals Tribunal
  - in line with the Civil Service Appeal Tribunal for public officers to review appointments, promotions and improper appointments and ensure that such exercises are solely based on merit and qualifications.
105. A thorough revision of minimum and maximum work hours
  - must also be implemented so as to curtail exploitative work conditions, especially for those who are poor in our society.
106. Introduction of a minimum wage policy
  - so as to ensure that Mauritians are not being exploited
107. An active intensive job creation programme to be initiated by the State
  - in cooperation with the Private Sector.
108. Creation of a National Employment Agency.
109. Introduction of a comprehensive unemployment benefit scheme
  - after a thorough study has been undertaken of all sectors of employment, schemes already in place and existing legislation.
110. The present rate of old age pension should be revised

especially for those reaching the age of 70 or more. The present rate of Rs. 3,200, allocated to people without resources, is a cause of extreme poverty, especially for those who do not enjoy any retirement benefits. This rate should be upgraded to Rs. 4,000.

#### CIVIL SERVICE

111. Empowerment of technical and professional staff in all institutions
- and executive powers to be vested in them in institutions. Currently Civil Servants, with only low level administrative or clerical skills, are empowered to take decisions. This imbalance must be redressed.

#### SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS

112. A special scheme to be devised to make them contribute to their pension scheme.
- Certain categories of workers who are self-employed do not always contribute to the National Pension Scheme, and may in their old age find themselves in a difficult situation.
113. To set up co-operative organizations
- which have proved to be essential tools in spite of their defects, to extirpate small producers, whether in the field of agriculture and livestock.
  - Fishermen, pig-breeders cannot be left to fend for themselves. Many of them fall into the grip of unscrupulous middle men and usurers.
  - Throughout the world, Credit Unions, whether community-based or industry-based, have proved that they can inculcate the habit of saving and provide short-term credit at concessionary rates to their members in times of dire need.
  - Management assistance and recruitment of dedicated social workers, co-operative development officers are essential to see to it that the affairs of such co-operatives are run on a sound basis.
114. To provide assistance to residents of housing estates by the recruitment of a new class of psycho-sociologists and social workers
- and in such other areas where poverty is rampant.
  - A special class of trainers in small business enterprises should be appointed to support an emerging class of small entrepreneurs in the management of their ventures.
115. More efforts should be made to give social work its proper standing, including adequate remuneration, and to recognize voluntary work as worthwhile.
- Often linked with charity work, social work and psychological and sociological support are essential elements to bring about a new mind-set in people living in housing estates and in similar milieux. Voluntary work should be encouraged among Mauritian citizens, and especially among young people.
116. Establishment of programmes aimed at adding value to manual and technical jobs.
- Too much emphasis is laid on white-collar jobs. In addition, entrepreneurship and subsistence farming should be further encouraged.
117. Land settlement schemes for farming, livestock-keeping, including pig-breeding, to be made available.
118. Provision of an 'ethnic sensitive service' in all government services,
- be it in the hospitals, the Police Department and in Government offices. Officers should be trained in better public relations to this effect.

## 9. CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

119. A great reform is needed in co-operatives to formulate new policies, strategies, rules and regulations along with new trends;
120. Reinforce regular audit control in all co-operatives to avoid fraud and bankruptcy;
121. The Mauritian Co-operative Movement should work with International Co-operative Institutions to acquire skills in good management;
122. Other institutions, besides those set up under Sugar Industry, should help towards the upliftment of the Co-operative Societies in general
123. Multi-purpose Co-operatives: Interesting activities should be performed inside the Co-operatives Societies to attract new generations, especially youngsters;
124. Interco-operative activities should be encouraged to attract a new generation of youngsters.

### *Fishermen co-operatives*

#### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- The Fishing Industry in Mauritius, including Rodrigues, contributes to less than 45 % of our requirements in fish and marine produce around 8,900 tons so that an additional 11,000 tons of chilled, frozen and canned fish and marine produce has to be imported to satisfy an ever-increasing demand.
- While tuna-fishing in, and outside, Mauritian waters is carried out by foreign vessels and offers great employment opportunities, in the field of canning and processing, the artisanal fisheries must remain abreast of developments.
- There has been a laissez faire in the artisanal fishing industry by defrauders, with the result that the lagoon substrate has suffered irreversible damage.

#### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

125. Unless there is strong reinforcement of the protection service, the situation will deteriorate from bad to worse.
126. Unless strict measures are taken to stop further degradation of the marine substrate, the very existence of fishermen will be threatened.
  - The Fisheries Protection Service needs to be reorganized and rendered more efficient and better-equipped to chase off defrauders.
127. Diversification in the field of aquaculture in floating cages, which has proved to be successful, should be further expanded.
  - This Sector can offer employment opportunities. The Pointe-aux-Feuilles project in Mahébourg already employs some 100 workers and produces some 500 tons of fish, the majority being exported.
128. Allowances in times of unfavorable fishing days need to be increased and should be extended to all categories of fishermen.
  - The need to ensure a regular supply of fresh fish to the population and to the Tourism Industry can only be realized, if the sector can attract the young generation

of fishers to it.

- There should be better control of activities of unregistered fishermen and amateurs should not remain unchecked.
129. Already such people, who have other sources of income, contribute to strip whatever meagre resources are left in the lagoon and offshore. Proper legislation should regulate their activities, as is the case in many countries.
130. When properly managed by professionals, without political interference in their affairs, fishermen's co-operatives have proved that they can be powerful tools to extirpate fishermen from the grip of unscrupulous middlemen and provide fish to consumers at fair and reasonable prices.

***Small planters in the sugar sector***

131. Small planters should adopt new visions in order to adapt to the new trends in business activity, for example, the setting up of cane distilleries to maximise revenue;
132. The small planters must unite in order to acquire modern agricultural technology, to purchase or lease irrigation equipment etc;
133. The small planters need to regroup themselves into larger groups to obtain capital investments and sponsorship from co-operatives, companies and sugar institutions ;
134. Small co-operative units should merge so as to create more efficient organization and enlist professionals to ensure professional management of their enterprises
135. An alternative cropping system could be implemented in the Sugar Industry or interline vegetable cultivation;
136. With the fall in sugar prices, there is - danger of contraction of small planters by selling off their lands. They have no choice, or they would perish than to adapt to modern trends in group action acquisition of common facilities and equipment, transport, purchase of agricultural implements.

***Pig Breeders***

137. A separate organization must be set up to regulate pig production.
- This to avoid a glut and the imports of pork products.
138. Government must strongly consider the request of breeders for a processing plant, with an *atelier de découpe*, to service chain stores and the hotel and catering industry.
- Such an organization, if set up, must, however, not be left in the hands of amateurs but supervised by professionals with the necessary expertise to excise sound management.

## 10. RECONSTITUTING THE MAURITIAN FAMILY

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- There is a quest for identity on the part of many Mauritians.
- That many Mauritians feel an emotional need to search for their origins and in multicultural Mauritius, this should be possible for all groups in Mauritius. When persons of Afro-Malagasy descent see others being able to trace their family origins going far back several generations and even to the original family in Asia or Europe, and try to reconstruct their own history, this is far less easier.
- It is expensive and time-consuming for the average Mauritian to search for his roots and construct his genealogical tree.
- For those of slave descent and to a certain extent, persons of indentured descent arriving in early years of indenture, change of names has resulted, and the identification and contact with original home, village etc. are not possible. The consequence has been 'cultural', 'family and kin' loss and 'identity' loss. However, once in Mauritius, with a new name, it may be possible to trace several generations within Mauritius, and this may help to palliate this sense of loss of identity that exists within families.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

139. Creation of a National Genealogy Centre
- To assist Mauritian families, many of whom are descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, in their quest for identity, to reconstruct their family tree.
  - Provide Mauritians with all the data required, free of charge, to reconstruct this family tree in recognition of the numerous difficulties faced by ordinary Mauritians to collect relevant data

### *RELATED RECOMMENDED ACTIONS*

- i. DNA testing in future should be considered to make the link with the past origins.
- ii. amend laws to permit greater access to civil status information and documents, especially those over 100 years old.
- iii. Introduce strict control over public officials in custody of civil status documents - such as camera surveillance, bag searches.
- iv. introduce strict control over intermediaries and 'courtiers' circulating and operating in vicinity of Civil Status Offices. If evidence is found of wrongdoing, to prevent access to them into offices.
- v. to encourage training of genealogists and licensed genealogists. This could be a niche employment opportunity

## 11. FOR A MORE JUST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- Standards are in reality decreasing, even though numbers of passes are increasing on paper;
- Poor training of educational staff at all levels due to ill-trained trainers;
- Cultural bias against those of African and Malagasy origin;
- Politicisation of educational issues to the detriment of the best interests of the child;
- The two-tier system (teacher undertaking private tuition, as well school teaching) should be abolished outright as it does not help poor children;
- Parents, teachers and students not consulted in any major decisions. Centralised system put in place is not working to the benefit of educational institutions as absence of freedom to innovate and independent activities by schools;
- Regionalisation has not worked in bringing down cultural social and economic barriers between children. It may indirectly have reinforced these barriers;
- Mauritianisation of curriculum has led to absence of general knowledge of world in general, juxtaposing current youth's natural openness to global culture through internet and other media. In other words, the education system and curriculum have not kept pace with medium that youths use.
- Parents are too busy working and do not spend quality time with children.
- The absence of extended family, including grandparents, due to nuclearisation of families lives has not worked for the benefit of children. Valuable family and educational resources are lost as a result or for the local community in general.
- Meritocracy not strictly enforced in appointments, promotions and award of scholarships: nepotism is very much present in appointments, as well as in awarding scholarships: bureaucrats and politicians have first choice of posts and scholarships.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

140. **Education system be instituted that caters for people interest and wishes** rather than wishes of employers as there is a clear mis-match between people expectations of work and life and what employers have to offer.
141. **Creation of Technical schools for artisans** as well as other specialized occupations which are currently neglected.  

The model of *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) delivered by Technical Schools in countries like France, Australia, etc. should be adopted, thereby ensuring quality work by artisans and other private skilled workers.
142. **Establishment of an intercultural curriculum** including African, Malagasy and Bhojpuri cultures in all publicly-funded institutions
143. **Secular public education** to be promoted and schools to be renamed.
144. **Avoidance of large anonymous centralized educational institutions** and overbearing authorities which do not take into account specificities of localities and to promote more flexible curriculum
145. No subsidies or public funds for any society or organization that promotes exclusivity in

terms of gender, race, caste, religious or sect.

146. **Global education** to be promoted and Mauritius' place in it to be studied.
147. Specific schools in each zone catering for specializations: Art, music, cultural, professional, technical subjects that are recognized overseas,
  - rather than all subjects being Cambridge Examinations Syndicate oriented
148. **Parents support groups** required and employers required by Law to allow parents time off from work to attend school meetings.
149. Activities promoted to bring older and younger generation together.
150. **More activities for youth:** Insufficient number of activities for youth during holidays.
151. **Milk, bread and fruit to be provided to all children of low income parents** at school or nearby facility as part of positive discrimination for 10 years.
152. There should be a thorough and critical survey of resources allocated for education per region.
  - This is apparent in the South of the island.
  - Better selection of teachers and accompanied by a policy of creating incentives for better-qualified teachers to enrol at the schools in the South so that a better level of education can be obtained.
  - A system of teacher re-deployment may be created to partly achieve this goal, as might an additional stipend for teachers in these areas.
153. A thorough interrogation of education in less well-resourced areas is also required.
  - Parents in these regions and communities must be supported in their efforts to educate their children.
  - Where necessary, child support grants must be instituted so as to offer stipends for educational purposes.
  - That a programme of *Affirmative Action or positive discrimination*, in the educational area, be launched in Rodrigues to allow young Rodriguans better access to the latest material and resources. The lack of educational resources in Rodrigues is apparent to all, and a relevant Tertiary College, based on the current urgent needs of Rodriguans, should be set up. Education is the key to progress in Rodrigues but it must be offered on their door-step - not only in Mauritius.

## 12. FOR OUR CITÉS

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- That authorities and the private sector need to work harder in line with various international conventions, signed by Mauritian Government, concerning health, housing, education, environmental and human rights;
- Regarding housing estates, put up by the C.H.A where 19,400 householders reside - roughly 125,000 individuals - there exists a serious problem of overcrowding. For instance, a 3-room apartment can sometimes accommodate as many as 12 individuals. Besides, many of the housing estates do not provide amenities such as playgrounds, kindergarten and do not have any community hall. This is not conducive to the welfare of the young generation who tends to be idle and demotivated.
- Certain housing estates (residences) have been constructed with asbestos, a substance known as a serious health hazard. Such houses should be pulled down on a phase by phase basis, and new apartments allocated to such residents.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

154. A thorough study of the cités based on the tjc study of mivoie.
  - that the methodology used for the mivoie study be used for the study of other cités.
155. preservation of cultural heritage of mivoie inhabitants
  - The sites identified in the cultural map of Cité Mivoie to be listed as constituting the natural, tangible and intangible local heritage.
  - The stories of these sites, the origins of these place names and of the local traditional knowledge should be inventoried to be passed on to the future generations.
  - These sites should be listed as local heritage sites as they are an integral part of the heritage of the local residents who have lived in this region for generations.
156. family patterns and gender relations
  - There is need to carry an in-depth study on the impact of slavery on the contemporary family and social problems, especially gender relations and family dysfunction.
  - Sex education should be mandatory but should also promote the norm that sex should take place in intimate relationships of mutual respect and gender equality.
157. land settlement
  - Democratising access to property ownership through the construction of low-cost residential developments/*Morcellement* for the working classes. It also implies implementing measures to protect and defend the land rights of the vulnerable groups, such as women and working-class families. The land allocated should contain sufficient space for agricultural activities with the accompanying training.
158. social organisation
  - The State should ensure that every child in the housing estate enjoys the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
  - It is the State's obligation to take appropriate measures to assist parents in the *Cités*

and other responsible parties to implement this right and, in case of need, provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing, in accordance with the set needs of Mauritian citizens.

159. housing conditions

- The Commission recommends a full environmental and medical survey in Cité La Mivoie and other housing estates to ensure that incidences of ill-health and mortality in the *Cités* are not asbestos-related.
- As a solution to the problem of space in the *Cité*, the Government should come up with a long-term affordable housing programme for working classes. These houses should be within the financial means based on the household disposable income of individuals.
- To facilitate access to long-term affordable housing, grants and subsidised loans with monthly mortgage payments and low fixed interest rates can be proposed to working class based on the household disposable income so as to avoid foreclosure.
- However these will only work if accompanied by training and integrated in the long term into educational curriculum in schools
- There is need to develop financial and money management programmes, life-skills and leadership programmes to change the residents' mind-set and develop a culture of money management and saving and new set of attitudes.
- Based on the approach 'Culture as Treatment', instead of designing self-empowerment programmes based on Western models, traditional self-empowerment programmes should be designed for the residents that are culturally sensitive and that take into consideration their social and historical background.

160. land dispossession

In line with the various United Nations treaties, Government should promote 'effective and democratic land, property and natural resources governance, management and practices' including decisions on access to land, natural resources and property; land and property rights, land use, and land and property development.

It is the duty of the Government to support citizens who do not have access to land and adequate shelter. Since market forces will not naturally alleviate the situation, land reforms should be proposed to reduce the structural inequalities and medium- and long-term measures for housing and land rights need to be put in place to support social stability.

161. child protection

- When the case is reported at the Police Station, especially at night, Officers of the Child Development Unit might take approximately 1½ hours to be at the Police Station.
- Some Police Officers already start questioning the victim without prior psychological assessment and support.
- Children, victims of abuse (sexual/physical/gross neglect/ill-treatment) and who are placed at shelters (NGOs) are at times placed at the RYC at a very young age, given their behavioural problems - there is a need for proper assessment and psychological intervention and close follow-up at such cases so that they get the necessary caring and supportive environment to help them grow and deal with their past history.
- At times, assistance is given after many hours and, in cases where sexual abuse took place much earlier, the victim unnecessarily waits at the Police Station. The P.C.P treatment which should be carried out within 72 hours may get delayed.

- Children-abused-parents/other family members who ask for these children - need for more guidance with parenting and coping skills.
- Posting of A TRAINED OFFICER at the Ministry's Shelter DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF overcrowded shelter.

### 13. CONCERNING THE CASTE SYSTEM

#### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- That ultra liberal policies harden the competition for social advantages and, consequently, stimulate the tendency of citizens to gather in pressure groups along ethnic and caste lines available in order to secure advantages.
- That the use of caste identity, as well as religious identity, could, at times, work against Mauritians who do not belong to the Hindu caste system.
- Many persons of so-called 'lower castes' suffer from a sense of inferiority but are unable to express this openly, in contrast to those of so-called 'higher castes' who express their sense of superiority openly.
- In the interests of reconciliation, there is a need to break the taboo about discussing the issue of caste in the public sphere in Mauritius.
- Mauritian society is full of pride and pretensions, and this transcends all ethnic and religious groups.
- The Commission believes that the Welfare State is one of the main obstacles to communalism and that combating communalism in Mauritius will have a direct and long-term impact on casteism.
- The Commission is also opposed to any categorization on caste for quota policies.
- The more private and religious dimensions of the caste system should not be interfered with.

#### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

162. Monitoring of activities of socio-religious organisations:
  - That the existence, activity and financing (through subsidies) of so-called "socio-religious associations" needs to be more strictly controlled.
163. Penalizing caste discrimination
  - That discrimination based on caste should be penalized. The nation should have the legal means to sue any individual or organization promoting casteism in the official sphere, whether it is in official political discourses, or in the media, or in professional contexts. The use of pejorative, and insulting, caste terminologies should be equally penalized.
  - That the role of political and religious leaders and their potential for reinforcing casteism, should be carefully monitored.
  - That canvassing on the basis of caste appartenance for vote-catching purposes must be closely monitored and sanctioned.
  - That caste discrimination in the selection and promotion of employees be penalised and meritocracy should be promoted in the professional sphere.

164. Education for a shared history, identity and culture in the school system and media
- That long-term education programs be introduced to promote the shared dimension of all Mauritians' history and identity.
  - That the school system (*via* text books and national programs) should be revised to incorporate more recent approaches of the Mauritian History.
  - That research into comparative analysis of slavery and indenture be accompanied by research highlighting their common historical fate in Mauritius, and their shared living and working conditions on the estates that resulted in common representations and practices.
  - That the shared popular culture of indentured and slave descendants be promoted rather than the Sanskritised, elitist and orthodox culture that is currently being promoted and which does not represent the true heritage of the labouring classes.
  - Heritage sites and commemorations should be mobilized to promote this shared concept of identity.
165. Breaking the taboo of caste in the private sphere
- That Government should allow and encourage scientific research on caste system to be pursued and publicized.
  - That a better knowledge of the role of caste in India and its differences with the Mauritian situation is required, and this understanding may lead to better mutual understanding between different castes.
  - A truer and more scientific 'tracing of roots' to show the authentic heterogenous roots of the popular culture of most indentured ancestors, far from any Sanskritic or Brahmanic pretensions.
  - Promotion of the Indentured heritage as a reason for pride: that ancestors and descendants of migrant populations did succeed, despite all the difficulties and contribute to the nation.
  - Castes to be presented as a secondary, residual system that needs to be fought against in modern Mauritius.
  - The promotion of free marriages through a global awareness campaign
166. Promoting a distinctly Mauritian tradition of Hinduism
- That authentic Mauritian Hinduism be promoted as it is more modern and liberal.
  - That official protection of traditional architecture of the *kalimaya* is required as this constitutes Mauritian indentured heritage. These structures need to be documented throughout Mauritius and restored.
  - Other land can be found to construct monumental Indian-style temples.
  - To encourage Hindu Mauritians to study and recognize their local roots and not just blindly follow what exists in India. This will allow them to be proud of their original Mauritian Hinduism.

## 14. FOR LE MORNE VILLAGE HISTORY AND HERITAGE

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- The principle of Restorative justice should be applied to the case of Le Morne inhabitants removed forcibly from their homes located in the original Le Morne village.
- There has been intense communalization, politicization and undue influence of developers and local elite on public institutions.
- Recommendations contained in numerous studies undertaken at public expense have not been implemented by the institutions concerned.
- The results of studies have not been made available to the Mauritian public or to inhabitants of the neighbouring villages.
- There is possible collusion between some Civil Servants, some board members with the private commercial concerns operating in the area.
- There exists less than transparent procedures being adopted when decision-making concerning development permits in the Buffer Zone of Le Morne, have been made.
- The village inhabitants are kept in the dark about huge projects occurring in their backyard and about which they have not been consulted.
- Marathi culture in Le Morne has been neglected in the management of Le Morne Cultural heritage, even though they form an important section of the village. This has a divisive effect on village life.
- The Black River Gorges constitute not only a natural site, but also a huge cultural site as maroon activity was intense in this area. These historical links between the Le Morne Brabant, the forests of the Black River Gorges, Baie du Cap etc. have not been publicized enough. Again, the possibility of collusion with private interests, so as to suppress new historical and archaeological discoveries that may harm private commercial projects, cannot be discarded by the Commission.
- The Mauritian public has no access to Le Morne Cultural landscape, unless it pays a small fortune to private tourist operators who secure permission to enter site from the private owners.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

As a form of *restorative justice*, reparations to be given in the form of:

167. A formal and written apology from the Government for the prejudice the former inhabitants of former Le Morne village have suffered.
168. The inhabitants of Le Morne and neighbouring areas are given agricultural land jointly held by them to engage in agricultural practices to enable them to increase their daily revenue and be autonomous as they used to be.
169. Implementation of recommendations contained in numerous studies by a pool of trained professionals, irrespective of gender, race, religion or political creed.
170. The communalization, politicization and influence of developers and local elite on public institutions to cease, and not be tolerated at any cost in this region. It does not reflect the culture of the people living there.
171. A full historical and archaeological survey of Le Morne summit and slopes, as well as neighbouring areas and its links with neighbouring villages, to be undertaken by the LMHTF in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of professionals and to make the results of this researches available to the Mauritian public through books, films, drama, songs dance and curriculum materials for schools.

172. The principle must be adopted that any research and activity, funded by public money, should go back to the public, and not remain in the drawers of officials of those institutions.
173. The inhabitants of Le Morne and neighbouring villages to be brought in on the activities of Le Morne Heritage Fund in managerial, technical and professional posts, and appropriate training given to them to fulfill their duties professionally.
174. That the area known as **Trou Chenille** be officially recognised as a site of former settlement by inhabitants, many of whom are descendants of slaves having lived there for generations (and not as squatters) and that their removal be recognised as ‘forced removal’.
175. Commission recommends they be compensated, accordingly, for the loss of home, revenue and inability to continue their occupations and traditions.
176. The Commission further recommends that their history be written before it is forgotten and the oral testimonies of those who lived there be recorded and made available in a public Oral Archive without any time restrictions.
177. The inhabitants be given full access to their former village and a space where they can remember their former lives, be created there. The model of District Six Museum in Cape Town to be used.
178. **LMHTF BOARD**
- The composition of the LMHTF Board must be amended to reflect both professional and community representatives.
  - They need to be chosen among persons of moral and professional integrity, and not associated with communal or commercial operators operating in the area.
  - There should be a reduction in the number of administrators on this Board.
  - Given the fact that in Mauritius the pool of professional experts is small, there needs to be better interaction between different institutions, where these competencies exist, to ensure public funds are not being used unnecessarily in activities that duplicate those of other institutions.
179. **MINISTRY OF ARTS AND CULTURE**
- Similarly, at the Ministry of Arts and Culture under which, specialists in slavery, indenture and in heritage management, Archaeology, History and Anthropology must be appointed to better monitor these institutions.
  - Connivance of Civil Servants, Board Members and staff with private developers must be expected and, therefore, controlled and closely monitored by the Ministry and transparent procedures adopted concerning approval of permits.
  - The Ministry and Le Morne Heritage Fund to ensure that other heritage found in Le Morne is not neglected, i.e. Marathi culture and a harmonious and sharing relationship between the two cultures is promoted.
180. The links between the Le Morne Brabant, the forests of the Black River Gorges and Baie du Cap, be fully studied and the maroon trails and sites fully protected from developers, coming up with commercial projects

## 15. METAYERS AND RICHE TERRE PLANTERS

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### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- In the case of Bel Ombre and St. Felix sugar estates, the *métayers* have undergone severe emotional, psychological stress due to loss of land, to lack of understanding and ability to adapt to rapid and changing economic policies in their locality;
- They have not been provided with sufficient information, advice and guidance in order that to allow them to make informed decisions and benefit from **all the options** present in the spirit of the various Sugar Efficiency Acts and Privy Council rulings on the issue, which was to improve the weak position of *métayers* in Mauritian economy and society and to provide greater access to land;
- They have been left at the mercy of plantation owners who were in a stronger legal, social and economic position to impose their views.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

181. A fairer and more just compensation be given to *métayers* based on an in-depth study and a full multidisciplinary (including historical, financial and economic) re-evaluation and assessment of their contribution to the Sugar Industry over generations since the arrival of indentured labourers to Mauritius.
182. Reparation payments by Government and the St. Felix Sugar Estate, for moral damages, loss of historic rights and loss of income on the part of *métayers*.

#### For the original Riche Terre Planters

183. Land be given to them to set up an agricultural Cooperative as many are still in need of assistance.

## 16. ARCHIVES

### 184. A NATIONAL EFFORT IS REQUIRED.

- Nothing short of a national effort is required to find global and conclusive solutions to the preservation of the original documents found in the National Archives. Training of staff and funding for the Archives are absolutely essential components.
- The Commission also feels that the proposal of a Culture House incorporating the National Library and National Archives should be implemented urgently. However, security concerns lead us to question the appropriateness of locating both institutions in one building.

### 185. THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL INVENTORY

- This must be also an intrinsic part of the process, even if it means acknowledging, finally and formally, that some of this documentary heritage has disappeared or been stolen under the very eyes of people working there. A good example is that photocopies in MGI Library and National Library have replaced original books in the Mauriana section, and the staff are not even aware of this or know where and when the originals disappeared. Had there been a National Inventory, this may not have occurred.
- The National Inventory will help to set priorities relating to digitisation and conservation. However should not be transformed into an expensive venture for the National Archives and become a profitable business venture for companies.
- Some guidelines and issues to be considered for this inventory are proposed in the Technical Report (Vol. 4, Part X 25) and are summarised here:

#### Inventory - Conceptualisation phase:

1. (a) Define what constitutes Mauritian documentary heritage.
1. (b) Chronological parameters.
2. Medium, nature and origin of documents.
3. Lieu of conservation of documents.
4. Define in detail indexing norms:
  1. [BIB17] easy as there are international norms in this respect and re-utilisation of notices taken overseas as guaranteed;
  2. [ARC18] harder because local electronic inventory not well constructed so far;
  3. Define how to link digital documents to the list.
5. Conceptualise and demonstrate clearly which information system is to be used in the inventory and why:
  1. Use free software tried and tested in other Archives (such as at UNESCO, ICA, etc.).
  2. Respect technical norms of interchange ability adopted in other countries for inventorying and cataloguing of cultural heritage collections.
6. Revision of National Archives Act concerning:
  1. Management of archives: There is a need to include recruitment of trained personnel.
  2. Open access to modern documents.
  3. Revision of time-frame of making documents accessible: 30 years' rule not necessary for all documents.
  4. National policy on record management to be devised and included.
  5. Introduce concept of 'missions' to recover archives of departments etc.
7. Revise composition of Appraisal Committee so that there is a bigger role for historians and professional archivists.
8. More rigorous law concerning sale of private archives i.e., creation of a private archive inventory, upon declaration by private custodians.

## 186. TRAINING IN CONSERVATION OF DOCUMENTS

- The creation of a Cultural Heritage Institute or a Conservation Institute at the University of Mauritius (UoM) which will include the preparation of a Master's in Conservation of Mauritian Heritage. This could be part of both History programmes, as well as Librarians' courses and even Sciences programme as a multidisciplinary staff (Sciences, Chemistry, Entomology, Mycology) are also required etc.
- An MA in Heritage Conservation should cover all aspects of conservation in Mauritius, but start with paper conservation, and then move to other types of heritage.
- Specialists should be invited who are recognised in the field for short, intensive courses to boost the work of local full-time lecturers.
- The course should aim first at those already in service, as well as a few not in service to ensure continuity of skills.
- Provision for *Auditeurs libres* (fee-paying) should be made .
- The Programmes should cater for international and regional students.

## 187. PROACTIVE POLICY TO BE ADOPTED FOR PROTECTION OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

- Comparison of Auguste Toussaint's inventory and new additions to be identified. The missing items also need to be investigated and the 'borrowers' asked to return them.
- A Police Cell to be set up and trained to be in charge of cultural theft.
- Periodic assessment by international consultants to be undertaken but not in the manner currently being undertaken which is in an *ad hoc* manner. There should be regular and periodic reporting and an permanent communication established, with foreign specialists, to keep abreast new developments as this is currently not done formally, but through personal contacts.
- Review of the project of building a seven-storey building housing both National Archives and Library. If funds exist they should go for recruitment and training and adequate equipment. Security equipment to monitor public use of documents is absolutely vital for the Archives.

# LAND ISSUES

## 17. FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE AND JUDICIOUS USE OF ENVIRONMENT

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- Current environmental policies have failed due to public institutions not being sufficiently strong to withstand the onslaught of private sector, commercial projects, pressure on the environment: Sugar Industry, then Tourism and now IRS and shopping projects.
- Immense damage has been done to the environment and this is unlikely to stop.
- The *Maurice Ile Durable* project or Sustainable Development Project has so far favoured large commercial concerns and mega projects. Many companies and professionals are jumping on the MID bandwagon to obtain funds, while public participation is minimal and local population's interests in the environment and heritage not considered.
- Commercial projects have been disguised as Ecotourism projects and are a farce.
- The notion of public interest, under the label of public interest, has more a nuisance than an intrinsic value in public policy.
- Free public access to the mountains, woods and forests, rivers and streams and beaches, seas of Mauritius needs to be created, with expropriation, if necessary, if Mauritius does not want to face growing social unrest in the country.
- The role of the Co-operative Sector in the preservation of environment has been neglected.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

188. A **moratorium** on sales of lands to foreign companies and individuals until land hunger in Mauritius has been satisfied.
189. Complete **independent and transparent review** of all sales, leases and projects and their modes of assessment approved by Ministries of Housing, Environment and Agro-Industry and whether they are really sustainable or not.
190. To establish vegetable gardens and small farms attached to schools to promote respect for manual labour and/or producers of hand made products.
191. Visits by schools to be reintroduced to farms, factories, nature reserves in smaller groups than at present to enhance enjoyment of the site.
192. To fund and encourage small-scale enterprise to produce hand-made products, using natural sustainable products, as far as, is beneficial to health and better environment.
193. The current approach of provision of low-cost social housing should be reviewed.

The cheapest alternative is **not** to be used and architecture is to reflect the climatic factors, as well as social and cultural traditions of Mauritians.

Style that promotes community cohesion and acreage around houses granted that promotes food self-sufficiency, incorporated in architectural styles and land planning.

194. A Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment be undertaken at the cost of promoter for any commercial project in Mauritius that involves change in green spaces or structures over 50 years old.

## 18. TJC AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MAURICE ILE DURABLE)

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- Both the quest for a more Sustainable Mauritius (*Maurice Ile Durable Project*, MID) and more Social Justice (TJC) have the potential to place the islands on a more sustainable trajectory. A National Policy is to be formulated for MID, informed by working groups that were established on the 5 Es, namely Equity, Empowerment, Education, Environment and Energy.
- There is a clear relationship between the work of the TJC and that being done under the MID programme.
- Building of functional linkages between the two processes will help to create powerful synergies that will benefit all Mauritians, the most important being land use and equity.
- For some unknown reason, Culture, which has been widely accepted as an additional pillar of sustainable development, including by UNESCO, has not been accepted as so by MID.
- Equity and sustainability cannot be addressed separately nor without pervasively addressing the land issues. In its opening paragraph, the Final Report of the Working Group on Equity rightly states: *“The move toward a sustainable society needs to be based on environment and social justice. Equity is a crucial element when rethinking development, as economic development without taking into account the views and aspirations of the community to a fairer society will inevitably lead to turmoil in the long run”*. However, there is no mention of **land equity** in its Report. It is not clear why the Equity Working Group Final Report omitted land issues.
- Large sections of the population are squashed into a limited space, while there is available space that is not being used to the best advantage.
- Mauritius is already about 23% built-up and there is a rising need to provide additional land for economic growth, job creation and other uses, and to open up landownership to ex-patriates. The majority of Mauritians are thus gradually being priced-out of the property market.
- Current land uses and ownership are directly derived from our island’s short and turbulent past of slavery and indenture. The TJC Report may come in very useful to add the essential historical perspective to the MID work that it currently lacks, as well as provide input on how people feel about land issues; as a process, MID is very much looking to the future; yet planning for the future can scarcely proceed without a profound understanding of the past, and how it influences the present.
- Land issues, as well as access to natural resources, including inshore marine resources, strongly influence the ability of local communities to sustain themselves and their quality of life in general.
- Though praise-worthy and visionary in its objectives, the current pursuit of a Sustainable Mauritius might fail, if these issues are not considered.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

#### 195. FULL CONSULTATIONS DOWN TO COMMUNITY LEVEL.

Ground-level input, meaning society at its broadest, provides the groundswell support and the credibility that will be necessary, when it comes to the implementation of a MID Policy, soon and in the years to come.

More national consultations, particularly at the local community level, are required by MID.

196. MID policy must take the ‘views and aspirations of the community’, cited in the Green Paper phase, as crucial to building a solid foundation for a MID Policy, together with the experts views.

197. The TJC’s work, based on thorough consultation on land issues, can and should inform the MID process.

This would be a step towards the social fabric of Mauritius becoming founded on more equitable grounds. While TJC submissions will soon draw to a close, the MID policy formulation process is still ongoing; therefore, the opportunity still exists to draw land issues into the pursuit of sustainability, without shying away from the difficult ones. Even if answers may not be ready at hand, programmes can be put in place to find solutions, and in so doing, translate the principles of sustainability into action plans.

198. The process of taking the TJC report into account should be formal and systematic.

Policy frameworks, devised without widespread consultation first, can be a dangerous exercise. Therefore, much care should be taken to ensure that the 5Es framework, and the setting of sub-themes under them, do lead to the exclusion of dimensions and perspectives that may be essential in the formulation of a sustainable trajectory for Mauritius.

199. Culture must occupy an essential place in the MID Policy and Action Plan.

Despite the fact that Mauritius boasts two World Heritage Sites, whose outstanding universal values are based on our colonial past, the MID cannot ignore culture and needs to work very closely with the Ministry of Culture and other stakeholders in ensuring the cultural aspects are not forgotten.

200. The people involved in the MID policy process, for which the highly competent Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MoESD), is the lead Ministry, must be further empowered by the multiple studies conducted by the TJC.

## 19. LAND ISSUES

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- The Commission recommends some measures that could alleviate people's sufferings and trauma.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

#### 201. Setting up of A LAND MONITORING AND RESEARCH UNIT

- A land monitoring and research unit should be set up to conduct enquiries, settle disputes or refer matters to Court. This important Authority will be called upon to monitor all land transactions, to receive complaints from genuine persons who have lost, or have been dispossessed of their property, and to assist the applicant to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and civil status, as well as investigate all Notarial deeds.

#### 202. Continuation of a NOTARIAL ACTS DATABASE PROJECT

- i. The work initiated by the Notarial Acts Database (outline in Volume 2) be continued by the proposed Land Research and Monitoring Unit as a matter of urgency.
- ii. That the server to host the database be the Linux Operating system (Open source) which is reliable, highly performing and resilient. The server has been configured to allow only authenticated users to connect to and use the system.
- iii. Training: Users (research assistants) to be trained at each stage of prototype deployment. However those having been trained by the Commission can be used to train others and to continue this database.

#### 203. Setting up of a LAND DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT

Land Division of the Supreme Court should be set up in order to expedite matters.

Moreover, as regards the surveying issues, no amendment boundaries are to be accepted unless they are based on a proper survey supported by plans of acceptable standards and the satisfaction to the Land Monitoring and Research Unit.

- i. Furthermore, there is a need to regroup all activities, now concerned with land title matters into one central Authority, introduce the principles of title to land and the creation and maintenance of a Cadastral map. There is also a need to make use of the Cadastral map. This will be a map compiled on a sufficient large scale to show clearly each parcel in the territory. This also applies to Rodrigues Island.
- ii. The Surveyors' field-notes will be retained. All plans, field-notes and computations should be properly filed and numbered. The use of microfiches and microfilms should be introduced to record existing land registration volumes and other archival documents such as concession plans.
- iii. There is a necessity to avoid duplication of staff and work, the land Monitoring and Research Unit should be housed in one building.

#### 204. Regroup all activities, now concerned with land title matters into one central authority

## LAND USE

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- The control of the use of land is a major problem to Governments. In both developed and developing nations, local and central authorities have tried in a variety of ways to shape the physical layout and contour of their cities and other areas in the realization that how land is used has profound consequences for the well being of their citizens.
- Land being a scarce commodity, every attempt should be made not to endanger the aspirations of future generations by plundering this meagre resource.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

#### 205. CREATION OF A LAND BANK

- The Commission recommends the creation of a Land Bank as a panacea to land management. In a context of land scarcity with possible conflicting land use, the Land Bank, if properly formulated by a comprehensive land use policy will ultimately control all forms of land development and will ensure a judicious allocation of lands needed for the island's development.

## FOR A BETTER METHOD OF REGISTRATION OF TITLE OF LAND

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- In many countries, the deed registering system has been abandoned in favour of a new system of registration of title supported by a Cadastral Map. The advantages may be listed as follows:-
- Better basic records management, including better administration and accounting arrangement.
- Standardization of forms and procedures to expedite the routine processing of documents.
- Physical improvements to record keeping and documents storage so that there is easier access.
- The use of microfilm for both archiving and retrieving of data.
- Computerisation of the abstracts of Titles to provide quicker access to information.

There are three distinct areas where recent developments in surveying technology have created a need for radical change in outlook:

- Electronic Magnetic Distance measurements techniques ranging from the short distance infrared devices to the very long base Interferometer (VLBI).
- Satellite technology both for position fixing and thematic purposes.
- Digital techniques for both the acquisition of data and its storage and subsequent processing.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

206. Grouping together of all activities now concerned with land title matters into one Central Authority.
207. The introduction of the principles of title to land and the creation and maintenance of a Cadastral Map.
208. To avoid duplication of staff and work, the Central Authority should be housed in one building.

209. The Cadastral Map will be a map compiled at a sufficient large scale to show clearly each parcel in the territory. This also applies for Rodrigues Island.
210. Surveyors' field-notes will be retained. All plans, field-notes and computations should be properly filed and numbered.
211. The use of microfiches and microfilms should be introduced to archival existing land registration volumes and other archival documents such as concession plans.

#### NEW RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE CONSERVATOR OF MORTGAGES AND ARCHIVING

##### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- The Commission has observed that affidavits have been sworn by witnesses who do not know the deceased person and the persons who are entitled to apprehend the estate and succession of the deceased person. These persons are called "*professional witnesses*" and swear affidavits upon payment of a sum of money. These persons are found lurking near the offices of Attorneys and Notaries and offer their services whenever needed. It has also been observed that some affidavits have been drawn up without verifying the Civil Status Acts. The dates of deaths are inaccurate and the numbers of the Civil Status Acts are fictitious. However, due to the new Rules and Regulations made by the Conservator of Mortgages, the affidavits drawn up, sworn and transcribed nowadays are accurate, well-drafted and contain precise information.
- It is a matter of concern that there is no Registry or Record kept for Wills and Testaments. Law Practitioners, heirs and successors and members of the public cannot know the existence of any Will and Testament left by a deceased person. This state of affairs gives rise to doubtful and inaccurate affidavits being drawn up. At times the legal heirs and successors are left out. At other times, the persons who have been bequeathed with properties are discarded in the affidavit.

##### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

212. It is high time that the Authorities find ways and means of keeping a record of all Wills and Testaments. One such way could be to make an entry in the "*Répertoire*" kept by the Conservator of Mortgages of the existence of a Will and Testament. This is possible for the authentic Wills and Testaments which are drawn up by two Notaries in the presence of the two witnesses or by one Notary in the presence of four witnesses.
213. The registration concerning "*Testament olographe*" and '*Testament mystique*', as provided for in Articles 969 and following of the *Code Civil*, cannot be done and this will give rise to problems in future, unless an amendment is made to the existing laws.
214. The Notaries should ensure that the conditions laid down in Articles 913 and following of the *Code Civil* are observed fully.
215. The Commission hopes that new laws should be implemented in order to protect, the spouses, the children, the family, the society and the country.

#### PRESCRIPTION IN RODRIGUES

##### THE COMMISSION FINDS

- The information contained in the Notice for the Transcription of an Affidavit as per the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act are not precise enough to allow the real owner to know whether the subject-site under prescription is his property or forms part of his property, and would thus allow him to lodge the appropriate objection for transcription of the affidavit.
- It has also been observed that the very person who prescribes a plot of land does not have to swear the affidavit. Only the two witnesses take the whole responsibility. He just gives instructions to swear the affidavit but does not participate in the procedure.

- It may happen that a person accused of having prescribed a plot of land might later say that he was not aware that this land had been prescribed in his name.

**THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:**

216. It is urgent that the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be amended to include information on the searches, made by the Surveyor, relating to the last known owner of the land being prescribed.
217. Any professional being a Land Surveyor, Attorney or Notary should be able to trace back the owner of any land in Mauritius or Rodrigues.
218. It must be made mandatory for any Notice of Affidavit of Prescription to be transcribed to contain the name of the last known owner.
219. At the same time, any Notice under the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be published with its appropriate location plan that will help in the identification of the land by the former owner.
220. No Notice of Affidavit of Prescription should be transcribed, if one of the adjoining owners is unknown. Thus, no prejudice could be caused if every endeavour is made to find its owner, or at least, its occupier.
221. Furthermore, any potential applicant for any prescription should make a formal declaration to the nearest police station to this effect and submit all particulars of his two witnesses, including names, residential addresses and identity card numbers. And an investigation should be made as to establish the credibility of any witness.

**PRESCRIPTION IN MAURITIUS**

**THE COMMISSION FINDS:**

- No deed, whether authentic or under private signatures, witnessing the sale or transfer of, or the constitution of any privilege, mortgage or servitude or right of use over, an immovable property the title to which is derived from acquisition by prescription witnessed by affidavit of prescription, shall be valid unless the affidavit has been transcribed, and a reference to the particulars of such transcription is endorsed on the deed.
- The above refer only to the transcription of an affidavit of prescription, be it the requirements or the objection, the substantive law of prescription is to be found in the civil code.
- The delay for the objection does not at no time preclude any interested party to contest the validity of the prescription itself before the Supreme Court.

**THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:**

222. After having reviewed the numerous laws regarding prescriptions, the Commission recommends to do away with the whole procedure of affidavit and to provide for an alternative way to effect the transcription of prescribed plots of land.
223. It is the opinion of the Commission that the appropriate Protocol would be to exercise more control upon the averments of a person alleging to have prescribed a plot of land. There should be an institution which will ensure the truth of the said averments and which shall have the powers to investigate upon the veracity of these averments. Further, before the same institution, an appropriate memorandum of survey would be required with the possibility of putting questions to the Surveyor.

## 20. ECONOMICS, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

224. The Colonial Powers, Holland, France and Britain, must be asked by the Government of Mauritius to pay compensation for implementing the slave system, and later the indenture system, and thus bringing underdevelopment for the majority of the people of Mauritius.
225. **The Creation of a Special Fund to be managed independently of the Yearly Budgetary Exercise:** Some of the sources of the Fund would be the revenues obtained by increasing the Corporate Tax from 15% to 20%. Another source of the fund would be a 2% tax on profits of the banks which have benefitted a lot from various policy decisions lately.
226. **Firstly, a decent wage for decent work policy should be adopted.**
227. Discriminatory wage rates against women and generally occupational segregation should be done away with.
228. The Cooperative Sector should be able to co-exist effectively together with the Public and Private Sectors. For this to be possible, there is a need for a new leadership which adheres to cooperative values and principles.
229. **Low-Cost Housing:** More low-cost housing on the model used in Valetta, should be implemented. Four hundred and four hectares (1000 *arpents*) out of the eight hundred and eight hectares (2000 *arpents*) to be provided by MSPA could be used for that purpose. It is understood that, so far, only 162 hectares (400 *arpents*) have been used.
230. In the not too distant past, the Sugar Industry underwent other phases of restructuring, when the railway lines were closed in the 1960s and when exports in bulk sugar were initiated in the late 1970s, then, the employees have had only cash compensation. Additionally, given the poor plight of their descendants and especially among the descendants of dockers, we recommend that the descendants of each employee should be given a plot of land (per employee at that time), in the spirit of the compensation in cash and in kind currently applicable in the Sugar Industry.
231. The **Employment Rights Act** should be amended so that there is not a license to 'hire and fire'.
232. Whenever there are no valid reasons for economic redundancy, the Law should be amended to provide for reinstatement of the redundant workers.
233. The *Code Napoléon* is to be amended so that, whenever there is a factory closure, first priority should be given to the payment of wages and salaries of all employees.
234. Government should introduce a **portable retirement gratuity** by creating a Special Fund. Each time a factory closes, the employer should place in that Special Fund the entire retirement gratuity to which the redundant workers are entitled. Thus, by the time of his/her retirement, the worker would obtain his/her due as gratuity retirement.
235. The right to strike by workers should be considered as a fundamental Human Right. The possibility of incorporating this right in the Constitution should be given serious consideration.
236. Workers should be paid for their overtime work on a daily basis, not after forty-five or ninety hours of work as prevalent in the EPZ and some other sectors.

## **RODRIGUES, AGALEGA**

## 21. RODRIGUES

### LAND AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN RODRIGUES

#### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- There is an urgent need to revisit the whole social and economic development for Rodrigues from the point of view of future developmental needs. A National Physical, Social and Economic Development Plan should take the following into consideration:
- Citizens claim they are not fully aware of their rights;
- Rodrigues is not adequately represented at regional organisations such as SADC and COMESA;
- There exist a perception of political interference in public administration;
- There is sub-optimal utilisation of human resources in the public service. As well as poor building practices leading to soil erosion.

#### TOURISM

- The low tourist arrivals affect the island economy;
- There is limited air access; and the price of air ticket is too expensive;
- Handicrafts products are not enough competitive;
- Associations of tourist operators are not well organised;
- Inadequate budget for development of the tourism sector;
- Lack of cohesion in marketing strategies;
- Existing entertainment and attraction facilities are not well developed;
- Lack of norms and regulations regarding '*gîtes*' and '*tables d'hôte*'.
- Increase accessibility, visibility and attractiveness of Rodrigues as a tourist destination and improve visitor authentic experience through sustainable destination management;
- Strategic alignment of tourism policy, investment, and sustainable development through the implementation of a Tourism Strategic Plan (to increase tourism yield, export revenue, and livelihoods from the industry in a sustainable manner);
- Regulate tourism activities in Rodrigues and market/promote Rodrigues worldwide using a powerful brand;
- Develop capacity, capability, and professionalism of the sector;
- Develop and maintain competitive partnerships between stakeholders, both in Rodrigues and Mauritius.

#### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Rodrigues remains essentially a natural resource intensive economy subject to the vagaries of nature;
- Initial conditions and endowments (physical and human resources), which matter for economic development to take place, have remained unfavourable;
- No major export product or service driving the economy;
- Geographic isolation;
- Frequent natural calamities, relatively poor infrastructure, a relatively insignificant private sector (with no industrial structure);
- Brain drain over the years;
- Production is based on traditional farming systems using little inputs and adds little value;
- The 3 core pillars of the economy (Agriculture, Tourism and Micro enterprises) are underdeveloped. The Rodriguans face serious constraints as they operate in isolation, with little upstream and downstream linkages.

#### FISHING

- Over-fishing in lagoons;
- Lack of know-how for sustainable exploitation of resources;
- Weak law enforcement;
- Insufficient conservation and management measures applicable to the Banks fisheries;
- Difficulty in re-orientation of artisanal fishers;

- Poor stock assessment;
- Fragmented administration;
- Project-driven approach rather than a holistic work programme developed on a strategic approach;
- No formal fisheries management plans; Lack of training facilities; Lack of knowledge of available yields; Lack of semi-industrial fishing boats;
- Some regional stocks e.g. yellow fin, big eye and swordfish already heavily exploited.

#### **WATER PRODUCTION AND RESOURCES**

- The whole system of water resources management and development is archaic, unsustainable and inefficient and severely inhibits the development of the Island;
- Inappropriateness of the water distribution and management system;
- Inappropriate institutional, regulatory and organisational frameworks for;
- Inadequate capacity that limits knowledge of the water cycle in Rodrigues, prevents the proper monitoring of quantity and quality of water, thus thwarting decision-making by stakeholders; and
- Inadequate cooperation and collaboration of end-users and lack of a proper institutional set up for '*concertation*' on water issues.

#### **THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS**

237. Adoption of a Physical Development Plan and of a Land use Plan.
238. Finalise the Land Information System
239. Ensure that projects are in line with defined strategies for land use development.
240. Provide accurate information on state land ownership status and development at any point in time.
241. Align and revise rental of land in accordance with market rates.
242. Improve legal framework for town & country planning and land use.
243. Regularise all eligible occupiers of State lands.
244. Respond to the land requirements of all Commissions for timely implementation of public projects.
245. Planning clearances for residential and commercial/industrial projects on state land prior and after lease of land.
246. A digitalised Cadastre of all State lands in the island of Rodrigues effectively established and updated.
247. Review of State land leases effectively for optimising Government revenue.
248. Grant of lease to applicants occupying state land.
249. Effective vesting of State lands and acquisition of private land for public projects.
250. Land Use Planning and management processes in place and promoting improved and sustainable land use
251. Effective land administration services in place, accessible to all and protecting the land rights of all citizens.
252. Lack of an endorsed framework for land planning and land use, thus encouraging a scattered pattern of settlements.
253. An efficient management of land resources with a view to achieving economic prosperity, social equity and preserving the natural beauty of the island.

## 22. AGALEGA

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- Agalega has a bright future ahead. T
- The residents may hold the key to their own success, but alone, they will never succeed.
- A material change has occurred in the life of every family.
- Agalega has a fragile eco-system that requires a balanced development that would not bear undue stress on the environment. Development should, therefore, be strictly controlled, the more so that in the long term, the two islands would be at risk because of the universal effect of global warming resulting from the depletion of the ozone layer
- The threat of foreign powers using Agalega as a base is a possibility as Chagos was in the 1960s.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

254. Human promotion and community development rehabilitate the individual and his family in his dignity and upgrade the status of the population. To reach this goal, Integral Education, training, communication, information and participation in the development are the Key Concepts.
255. The Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, OI DC, Island Council, 'Les Amis d'Agalega' and 'Mouvement Diocésain, 1<sup>er</sup> février' and/or other interested parties/stakeholders (Civil Aviation, Education, Health, Meteorological Officers, the Police, Telecom Officers and others) should coordinate their efforts for an integrated development in Agalega.

The Resident Manager has a prominent role to play and should be referred to as the Representative of the Government on the Islands. His participation and that of the representative of the inhabitants are important to motivate action. A workshop or a round table thereon, with all stakeholders *in situ*, would help.

256. Incentive for a comeback
- i. Agaleans have never possessed any land or houses on Agalega, so dispossession does not apply. In his statement in front of the TJC, on 18 August 2010, Mr. Soopramanien said that the Agaleans are not in search of money as compensation but of social services as Mauritians (TJC Hearing NO.381 - 396). However, Agalean descendants, who have been deported, and want to come back to be reinstated and recover their rights of earning their living on what they consider their *mother land*, or the land of their ancestors, should be given priority in contractual work according to their competence especially in the field of fishing, construction, agriculture, cultural and social activities etc. (Ref statement of Gino Alfred & Co. on 18/08/10. No.126, 155, 166, 252, 353, 391). An addendum can be made to the note on Article 3.10, p. 8 of Collective Agreement (Document II) as follow: *This is not an agreement to exclude employees residing in the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues. It should be applied on the basis of priority of consideration to interested and eventually qualified Agaleans and/ or Agalean descent residing outside Agalega.*
    - i. of C.A (Doc. II) will automatically apply:
  - ii. As there is no *Home* for elders in Agalega, housing should be made available, on a humanitarian basis, to old and faithful retired workers of the Corporation, who are not entitled to a lease, to have a residence in Agalega close to their children. One or two are, indeed, in a destitute condition in Mauritius. The Ministry of Social

Security, through their representative in the Legislative Assembly, could attend to this issue.

#### 257. Education and Training

- i. The basis of all development is Education. Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Schools exist on the Islands (Ref.8.2.9). A proper screening should be made before sending teachers to Agalega. Even if they receive re-location allowance, as do other Government officers, they should be properly briefed before assuming their duties, equipped and sustained by the Ministry of Education. On the islands, they should meet on a regular basis to support each other in their duties and socially. They are the *artisans* of the progress of Agalega. Much could be done through them. Some are doing very well. Frequent visits of Officials of Parent Ministry would be appreciated. A special case should be made to recruit Teaching Assistants among Agaleans (Doc. II 3.9), with special training in Mauritius, as it was the case in the past for Rodrigues.
- ii. A common Parent Teachers Association of the three institutions combined would be beneficial. As it is actually the case, motivation must come from the schools' administration.
- iii. Scholarships for students in further studies in Mauritius and for upgrading the capacities of the employees in Agalega, should be envisaged. Beneficiaries should be strictly Agaleans or of Agalean descent. A proviso to serve Agalega for a given period should be inserted in an agreement between the provider and the beneficiaries.
  1. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, OI DC should look into it for the provision of an annual budget.
    - i. Training in related fields should be given to interested candidates to implement recommendations of the C.A. Award 2009 (Art. 3.9, Doc. II):
      - b. Furthermore, training in handicraft, (Home Economics, Leadership and in all other fields aimed at boosting up the progress of the persons and the community, would be of the utmost importance and restore the dignity and confidence of the Agaleans.
- ii. To facilitate visits to both Islands, training in basic Hospitality Management would be an important contribution to the host families and to the island. This will facilitate local visits from one island to another for those who have no family or relatives on the visited island and will provide great support to visitors and officers on official visits to Agalega. At present, the Resident Manager caters for all visiting officials during the hectic time when the ship is in Port. In March /April 2011, the Resident Manager had to cater for some 40 visitors, and provide board and lodging for them, as there is no hotel or hostel on both Islands.
- iii. Training in Hospitality Management is a prelude to *Table d'hôte, Bed and Breakfast Hostels, Restaurants on a small scale basis*.
  - a. An in-depth study must be carried out before introducing Tourism on a large scale, because of the sensitive ecosystem of the islands. A fishing stopover station is preferable. Consultation with the inhabitants, prior to any project, is fundamental.
    - i. In relation to 10.3.4, Organisations such as EWF, NEF, CSR, Women Entrepreneurs, etc. should be tapped. OI DC should be fully involved. The OI DB, the Island Council, 'Les Amis d'Agaléga' and

the ‘Comité Diocésain, 1<sup>er</sup> février’ and all stakeholders, should work together for its implementation and monitoring, pending a Master Plan.

- ii. History of Agalega should be taught from Primary level onwards. The book of Father Dussercle *Agaléga Petite Île* is an excellent manual for secondary students.
- iii. A museum, with what is left of the ancient establishment and families, will be a living memory of traditions and culture, and an open book of history.

Ancient buildings should also be repaired and furniture refurbished.

In the near future, Education and Training should introduce a Village Council in each village, elected by the residents for the residents.

#### 258. Health

- i. Modernity is not exempt from difficulties. Not long ago, daily work performed in the coconut fields, as at home, was enough to replace physical exercise. The population was kept healthy. Today, with modern trends, physical exercises is necessary in all lifestyles.
- ii. The sophisticated apparatus for physical exercise, in the Tsunami Centre (‘Arche de Noé’. Ref picture 8.2.6) is under-utilised. No qualified physical instructor is available on both islands. An Officer of the Police/ SMF/Coast Guard and or any outstanding staff with a good knowledge in the concerned fields, can certainly help, pending the arrival of an official instructor. It is important to train two Agaleans in this field and later, they can become Physical Instructors at schools during school hours and attend to others in the afternoon, on a roster basis.
- iii. Medical care is an important issue in Agalega and much has been said thereon. It is true that the population on the islands amount to some 300 persons only. Investment in human resources should not be exaggerated. However, where life is concerned, in order to preserve it, all facilities should be available, regardless of money. The question of maternity is a complex one (Ref statement of Mr. Gino Alfred & Co. on 18/08/10. NO.189) An in-depth study is imperative to see to it. An incentive to increase the birth-rate in Agalega is recommended in the Collective Agreement of November 2009 (Doc. II 4.7.4/5) (Ref. 8.3.9).
- iv. Support from the ‘Society for Aid to Children Inoperable in Mauritius’ (SACIM) could be sought for the three handicapped children (Ref. 8.3.9).
- v. Water tanks, to collect rainwater, have been installed, especially for kitchen purposes. Pigeons soil the roofs of the houses and are sources of streptococci. They should be eradicated, especially where they flocked in the South. In case of drought, water pumped from wells is utilised. Poultry-keeping on large scale should be kept away from this source of water.
  - a. Both islands are infested with mosquitoes and rats (Appendix V 8.4.3). With the help of the Medical Staff, a proper sustainable campaign to keep the environment clean is urgently required. There is a close interaction between Health and the environment.

#### 259. Agriculture

- i. Vegetables must be selected very carefully in Agalega, because of the poor sandy soil and climatic conditions prevailing. Actually, pests have spread all over the islands, and chemicals should not be used because of the fragility of the eco-system.

However, pumpkin, greens, lettuces, creepers etc. can be grown in particular conditions. An Agricultural Officer of AREU is setting up a Food Program in Agalega

An intensive training program, adapted to the island conditions, and starting at school level, could be launched. Very often, experts learn through the experience of local people. The contribution and advice of elders, with their experience of Agalega, should thus be sought, and plots of land, on a symbolic rental basis, could be allocated to interested families, for gardening and/or farming.

- ii. *Bassin Capucin*, the only pool in the North, can be exploited for farming, especially the breeding of ducks. A place in the South called *tranche*, can also be exploited. Training in this connection is needed.
- iii. Seychelles expertise could be sought in farming. Sharing between Agaleans and Seychellois in different fields would be beneficial.

#### 260. Environment

- i. People are usually moody, living with a dull environment, whereas a good environment makes the inhabitants cheerful and enthusiastic. With intense cleaning and planning, Agalega could become a natural garden.
- i. Empty bottles, plastic, rusting iron sheets, old vehicles and thick bushes where mosquitoes and rodents nest can be seen here and there, on both islands, in spite of the goodwill of the administration (Appendix XII A).
- ii. A proper campaign to preserve the environment is imperative.
- iii. A cleaning campaign for a better Agalega may bring the inhabitants together and arouse their sense of civics duty and patriotism.
- iv. An '**Agalega Day/Week**' involving all Departments on the islands, can be organised to clean up Agalega, as a form of social activity. It can culminate with Independence Day and end with a Sports day and a Public performance by local artists.
- v. There are different coconut fields with different names. Their delimitation, with their proper names, will be a practical exercise in pedagogy to teach the History of Agalega to all the population, particularly young students. Names of streets and avenues should also be marked. This measure will reinstate the dignity of the people: from *Camp Noir* to *Avenue*, from *hut* to *bungalow*.
- vi. 10.6.4 Motor cycles, vehicles and the supply of power on the islands are sources of pollution. To reduce the high consumption of FUEL and thus emission of CO<sub>2</sub>, wind-powered energy and photovoltaic would help. Coconut oil, as FUEL, helps to reduce the importation of petrol in Agalega, but further studies should be done on how to control pollution.
- vii. 10.6.5 Relatively speaking, Agalega should have the same privileges, in relevant fields, as Mauritius and Rodrigues (Ref. Gino Alfred Statement on 18/08/2010 N0.108 to 115; and Soopramanien No.310 - 313). This is why Gino Alfred in his hearing of 18/08/2011, claimed to name Mauritius as an Archipelago (Ref. Gino Statement on 18/08/2010 N0.697 to 703).

#### 261. Security

- i. A Refugee Centre has been constructed in the North. Another in South island will be constructed soon. The population should be briefed from time to time, on how Management will proceed and what is expected from them, in the event of a tsunami, a cyclone or other calamities. The contribution of the Police and Coast Guard should be guaranteed well in advance.
- ii. Jetty at Port St. James is important. A study should be undertaken to devise safety measures for disembarking and embarking passengers. It is a blood-curdling manoeuvre for new visitors, especially when sea is rough. There must be an alternative disembarking point somewhere in the South, in case of an emergency. Consultation with the locals is essential.
- iii. As there are no traffic signs on the island, all drivers, including motorcyclists, should follow a Code of Conduct. Police should take its role seriously to prevent accidents. With the increasing number of motorcycles, the establishment of this Code of Conduct in the

absence of road signs, is very important. All owners of motorcycles should be obliged to follow these instructions.

#### 262. Sport and Culture

- i. 1 (Ref. 10.3.1-2) Sport is one of the best means to fight anti-social habits. Drinking is on the rise. Boys and girls are prone to early sexuality. Idleness and lack of education are the main causes of this.
- ii. All facilities should be given to outdoor and indoor activities. The Ministry of Sport and Culture should extend its activities on Agalega, a territory of Mauritius. Agaleans could represent Mauritius in some athletic fields and in swimming, if given proper training.
- iii. With the help of the Coast Guard and the elders, regatta should be introduced. This will allow youngsters to develop their skills in canoeing, sailing, rowing, as their elders did. This practice will also help to develop skill in case of shortage of fuel or any breakdown or shortages on the island.
- iv. There are many talented artists in Agalega. Like diamond, they need polishing. Training in all fields is needed.
- v. Musical and sound system instruments are available in the Refugee Centre. Training to operate and maintain these instruments is needed.
- vi. Singing, Slam, sketches, Drama, Theatre are new avenues to exploit. This will contribute to fight against social ills and boost up the personalities and discipline of many young people.
- vii. Police Officers could provide important help in the field of indoor and outdoor games. The fitness apparatus in the Tsunami Centre could be then best utilised under their guidance.

#### 263. Services

- i. During the dry season, bush fire is frequent in Agalega. The local male workers used to control fires in an archaic method, which is dangerous and time-consuming. With the increased storage of gas and fuel on the islands for different services, especially Jet Fuel for Civil Aviation and petrol and gas for Meteorological Station, and the local Management, security measures should be reinforced.
- ii. It is highly recommended that qualified Fire Officers from Mauritius should train young volunteers on Agalega. Discipline, drill and maintenance of equipment, sanctioned by a test, should be included. Successful candidates could wear uniforms. This would not give them the right to neglect or abandon their employment with the OI DC. A roster system and a work arrangement should be established between the OI DC and those concerned (Doc. II 3.9).
- iii. At present, in Agalega, there is only one qualified skipper, trained in Mauritius. With the development of the Islands and the promotion of the self-esteem of the workers, more skilled boatmen/skippers are needed, especially to work on the embarkation and disembarkation exercises. Training is given at Naval School of Mauritius. Interested candidates could be sent there for training. Working arrangements, as indicated above, could be negotiated with Management.
- iv. Facilities should be available, in Polytechnic School, *Ecole hôtelière* etc., to follow courses in fields likely to help Agalega.
- v. More and more visitors from Mauritius are keen to visit this remote Mauritian territory. No hotel, restaurant or *Table d'Hôte* exist because this was thought to be of no avail. With modern communication and access facilities, a system of restaurants or Bed and Breakfast will soon become necessary. This will also be useful for residents on visits to another island or to Officers on duty. Training courses should be made available to interested parties (Ref.10.3.4).

#### 264. Religion and social

- Religion is not only a question of spirituality, but it also helps in the promotion of

#### Integral Human Development.

- Since the very beginning of the development of Agalega, the Catholic Church was present, and it has helped to introduce religious and moral values to the people (Soopramanien statement of 18/08/2010 N0,579 to 603). The remoteness of the island did not allow the Diocese to send a permanent priest, but Missionaries were sent, as and when possible.
- In 1972, the two schools on Agalega were set upon a permanent basis by the Roman Catholic Education Authority, with the help of the Mauritian Government. The couple of teachers, who were sent, and their successors also catered for upgrading the social life, sporting and cultural activities. Today, the presence of two nuns is vital to family counseling and house-keeping.
- As 100% of the Agaleans are Christians the presence of the Church should play an important roll in the development of the population. As it has a long experience in the field of training and in Human Development, facilities should be given to the Church to assist in the development of the islanders and their islands. On application, the Bishop of Port-Louis can send couples or qualified trainers for a certain period, in agreement with the O IDC to conduct training courses on Leadership and Community Development. All projects should be done in consultation with the residents. The PRO of the O IDC has a prominent role to play in the field of diffusing information about, and in the monitoring of projects.

#### 265. Discipline

- The implementation of a good Code of Conduct is a sign of good Management. A whole detailed chapter (Doc II; N0.5 P. 20-24), referring to Disciplinary Procedures, is inserted in the Collective Agreement signed on 24 November 2009 between the O IDC and the Employees of the O IDC residing at Agalega. But still, the inhabitants would like to have a visiting Magistrate occasionally on Agalega to hear Police Cases, instead of transferring the presumed accused to Mauritius for trial (TJC hearing; Soopramanien No. 354 - 376).

#### 266. Economy

- i. With the sudden and unexpected rise in salaries, due to a long struggle since February 1981 (Ref. *Pétition des habitants d'Agaléga*, Appendix XV), some families have entered into a spiral of uncontrolled consumption. As employees of the Corporation, they are now entitled to obtain loans from the Mutual Aid. Motorcycles, TV and Video sets, Refrigerators, Washing Machines and other domestic appliances, are bought on hire purchase at any cost. Some families have even their own generators, in case of power cuts. A Counselor in Consumer's Protection is needed, to advise the population properly.
- ii. In the event of producing handicrafts with local materials, and other by-products derived from coconut trees, and/or sea shells, a Cooperative Craft Industry could be opened and articles sent to Mauritius for sale. The O IDC can open a shop for Agalega craft products. SMIDO can sustain such projects. A O IDC Public Relations Officer, together with the Purchasing and Marketing Officer, should be put to work.
- iii. Selling cakes, sandwiches and drinks are sold here and there on both islands. The setting up of small businesses is of interest to some families. The shops, run by the O IDC, can later become a cooperative shop run by Agaleans. Training of the whole population in a Credit Union Society is very important.
- iv. Now that currency is present on the island and that modern trends are not a secret through TV, hairdressing, dressmaking, shoemaking courses could be run by resource persons found on the islands. Those interested can also follow courses in Mauritius (Doc. II 3.9; 4.4.7). These issues are important for the construction of a stable society.

- v. Those coming events will certainly bring more students to Mauritius. The OI DC should continue to make provision for them and for those who come on medical grounds. The PRO will have much to do.
- vi. It is the dream of some Agaleans to find, one day, one of theirs occupying a permanent posts in the Office of the OI DC in Port Louis. With proper training and qualifications, it is obvious that this dream will, eventually, become reality. The Collective Agreement of 2009 stipulates:
  - a. *“The Corporation shall set down an employment application list. Any resident interested to work for the OI DC shall submit his application accordingly. This registration unit will serve the purpose of an employment bureau. Recruitment on the OI DC establishment shall be made from that list. Otherwise the names of the applicants may be communicated to other employers” (Doc. II; 2.2.5).*
  - b. The term ‘any resident’ should be extended to ‘any Agaleans or Agalean descendants’.

# RECONCILIATION

## 23. FOR BETTER REPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES AND UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

There are many groups, linguistic and cultural who are neglected in official national events and who also deserve to have their history and contribution to Mauritius recognized. These include, for example, the *Gens de Couleur*, tribal groups from India, Indo-Christians, Agaleans, Rodriguans, and so on.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

267. That a review of the present electoral boundaries must be undertaken in order to ensure the better representation of ethnic minorities.
268. Under-representation of ethnic minorities at the level of Parliament and Cabinet is a cause of frustration and may lead to political instability.
269. Some functions of the Public Service Commission, the Local Government Service Commission and the Discipline Forces Commission, should be revisited. The practice of delegation of powers through the appointment of minor grade officers to different Ministries continues to give rise to frustration and has resulted in the exclusion of minorities, more particularly for creoles.
270. The abolition of the Best Loser System should only be envisaged in the context of an overall review of the Constitution which would ensure a fair and equal representation of ethnic minorities.
271. Consideration be given to all Mauritians living abroad, in other countries, who emigrated, either at the time of Independence or more recently, be encouraged to return to the motherland to help in the development process.
272. To perpetuate the memory of the first Indo-Christians who came under the Indentured immigration, that the Parish Hall constructed in 1872, and located within the precinct of the St. Anne Catholic Church in Stanley Rose Hill, be proclaimed as a site of memory and be scheduled as a National Heritage Site.

## 24. INDIAN IMMIGRATION ARCHIVES

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- The political decision to block public access to caste data has led to the effective closure of this public archive to the public, Mauritian historians and students and those of indentured ancestry
- The Immigration Archives are located in an institution named after Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of 'Truth' and 'Non-Violence'. The Institute has stated that access to the 'truth' in the archives would cause riots.
- The Creole population is largely made up of people with at least one grandparent of Indian origin but when attempting to trace ancestry are not made welcome at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute
- The State of Mauritius and Ministry of Arts and Culture has abdicated its role and responsibility for the professional management of these Archives yet is applying to UNESCO for Memory of the World Register
- There is no professionally-prepared Management or Conservation plan for these Archives only hurriedly concocted ones.
- There is no professional archivist in charge of the Archives.
- There is insufficient space for researchers and an absence of professional courtesy on the part of the staff.
- The staff belongs to an NGO which also undertakes research and publishes their work privately. There is thus a conflict of interest as the same staff decides on access for other researchers.
- The form given to members of the public concerning their ancestral data does not contain all information on that ancestor that is available in the documents. Moreover this information is often not fully verified by a second person.
- The close relationship between the management with socio-religious associations is a matter of grave concern.
- The Institute has never bothered to undertake an educational campaign to explain the nature of archives, how registration of immigrants was carried out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, why peoples' castes may have been listed, and why people have chosen to change castes at registration time and so on. This has led to unnecessary court cases.
- The Institute does not allow names and numbers of indentured immigrants to be published
- The Institute wrongly labels tribal immigrants as 'Hindu' in its database
- Many public funds are going into expensive software without any proper supervision, monitoring and discussion as to how data is selected, collected.
- The Immigration Archives functions currently only as a genealogical centre.
- The diversity of opinions expressed requires an honest and open debate. Some of these include:
  - 'Casteism no longer exists and there is no need to show the caste background of people'
  - 'Casteism exists only in politics, it is not acceptable but it exists. Let the topic remain unresearched, as it only comes up only every 5 years'

- ‘Casteism still exists (marriage, politics, temple entry and rituals) and must be researched and brought out in history books. Cases of discrimination must be brought out’
- ‘All data on caste should be public as any other data concerning ancestors as Hindus are mature enough to accept their origins’
- ‘Only politicians and sociocultural groups want to hide their origins’
- ‘TJC should be allowed to access any data as they are not anarchists intent on destroying Mauritian society’
- ‘Other groups show their real ancestry nowadays, and it is accepted that Mauritians are not what they say they are, why not Hindus?’
- ‘Mahatma Gandhi Institute can deny access on grounds that the truth will cause riots’
- ‘We did not give access because there are many errors in the database and there was a problem of cabling and it will cause social unrest’
- ‘I wrote the letter to SIL not to give access because I do not agree to give access as I acted in good faith the interests of my institution’
- ‘Vaish people want to hide that they were low caste when they came and/or they were not majority at the time of immigration yet are the majority today’
- ‘Rajput (formerly Dosadh) want to hide they were low caste’
- ‘High caste want to hide they gave wrong information in order to be allowed to emigrate and were listed wrongly as low caste’
- ‘Mrs. Teelock has no experience and will cause havoc in this country, Mr. Moutou says some groups don’t have a fair share of the national cake’
- ‘I am ashamed to be Indian’
- ‘Showing real caste will send quite a few Indo Mauritians to Cardiac Unit’

#### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:

273. That the political decision to block access be reversed as it is now antiquated and has no place in 21<sup>st</sup> century Mauritius.
274. That a full inventory is carried out and compared to original lists of documents and artifacts compiled during the transfer. The missing registers and artifacts to be officially reported.
275. That the Archives be returned to the National Archives as soon as National Archives are located in an appropriate building.
276. That the computerised data be fully verified and be made accessible online to the public
277. That the management rethinks its access policy and increase space available to researchers pending relocation as this is likely to take time.
278. The genealogical service provided by the Institute be separated from the Archive and be conducted elsewhere as the Archive is a ‘historical’ archive not a ‘civil status’ office
279. That the Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund currently the *only* institution to be legally entrusted with the preservation of the history and heritage of indentured immigrants be consulted concerning the management of the Immigration Archives and access to them.

280. That existing competent graduate staff within the Institute be seconded to manage the Archives rather than appointment of school leavers. It can very easily request the Indian Government for scholarships to send these staff for additional training at the National Archives of India.
281. The Management ceases immediately blocking access to caste data.
282. Urgent measures to conserve the most fragile documents are taken especially the photos which have become unglued from their pages. Here too the technical assistance of the Government of India and China can be sought given the close ties between these countries and Mauritius.

## 25. RECONCILIATION

### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

- Reform of economic, social and ideological structures and creation of new institutions must take place to increase social justice, and for any reconciliation to take place.
- Mauritians have come from different corners of the world to settle, many forcibly. Each wave of migration has been characterised by specific linguistic cultural and religious traditions. All these groups, in one way or another, have serviced the colonial economy and continue to do so in modern Mauritius.
- Fundamental class, ethnic, caste and gender divisions still exist in Mauritian society today.
- The Mauritian economic elite, the intellectual community and the established political class have contributed to this state of affairs.
- The media and the intellectual community have played a negative role in dividing the population, by encouraging compartmentalisation of cultures. They have collectively fostered ignorance of how others live and do not show the real unity that exists in Mauritius and among Mauritians. The Commission has been made acutely aware of this fact through the hundreds of interviews it has collected in the past two years. There is much more interaction at the grassroots level than is projected in the media.
- Dividing the working classes of Mauritius has always been the strategy of the elite, past and present, and characteristics were assigned to different groups who were placed in competition with each other.
- The strategy of 'divide and rule' has not always been successful, and the period leading to Independence provides a good example of this. After independence, the work of division took on a new turn, with division on religious and caste grounds being added to the mix. New parties emerged as a result of this and communal hatred was thus accelerated; the new generations born of this communalism are unaware of the common origins.
- *Métissage* is a fact of life, but little recognized or accepted by most Mauritians. Mauritians have much more in common than they think they have and are much more united than they think they are.
- The Independent State has never had a road map towards nation-building and reconciliation and has, therefore, been weak in efforts to encourage a National Identity and Culture and in securing more economic democracy.
- Little, or not enough, has been done to encourage a national spirit in the minds of the people.
- Despite the proliferation of institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Empowerment, Sports and Parastatals, these have failed in their mission to promote a national spirit and the possibility of reconciliation.
- The media has failed lamentably in infusing a sense of national unity and practising an inclusive policy.
- There is an absence of any intellectual debate. Debate in the media is, instead, focused on politicians and their antics.
- Nation-building does not appear to be the priority of the media.
- There is, thus, a difference between what is officially portrayed and what exists at grassroots level.

**THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:**

283. That in the light of injustices suffered by slaves and indentured labourers and their descendants, the Republic of Mauritius and other institutions make an official apology through the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and private institutions connected with slavery and indenture, such as the Catholic Church, the Chamber of Commerce and the Mauritius Sugar industry
284. That a resolution be made and passed at a Special Session of the National Assembly.

**THE COMMISSION FURTHER RECOMMENDS, IN THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION:**

285. That the media actively promote a better knowledge of the culture of others through high quality programmes ;
286. That the true origins of Mauritians be revealed;
  - That the factors that unite Mauritians be highlighted, rather than their superficial differences;
287. That the Education System, which has promoted division rather than unity, review its agenda and rethink its role in Mauritius;
288. An Institute for Intercultural Affairs be created by the Government;
289. With regard to the relationship between politics and religion, Government and political parties should not associate with religious bodies;
  - In this way, the Government will be protected against undue interference from religious organizations;
290. Freedom of expression should continue to be encouraged and liberalisation of television channels should be considered.

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- <sup>37</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 29.
- <sup>38</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 33.
- <sup>39</sup> Cheryl. S. McWatters, 'Investment returns and la trait negrière: evidence from 18th-century France', *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, 18,2, July 2008, 162-163.
- <sup>40</sup> Filliot, Tome II, p.44.
- <sup>41</sup> Filliot, Tome II, p.75.
- <sup>42</sup> Before the 1970s, those researching included Alpers, Toussaint and Loughn. After this came the work of Jean Michel Filliot whose excellent work is being supplemented by a number of scholars such as Richard Allen, Thomas Vernet and Pier Larson and Satyendra Peerthum.
- <sup>43</sup> Deveau, La Rochelle, p. 21-22.
- <sup>44</sup> COL -C4-28 1771 -29, 3 septembre 1771, *Traite des noirs sur le vaisseau du Roy*
- <sup>45</sup> Roman, St Malo, p.42.
- <sup>46</sup> Forestier, Principal-Agent.
- <sup>47</sup> Roman, St Malo, p.251.
- <sup>48</sup> Roman, St Malo, p.256.
- <sup>49</sup> Case reported by Alain Romaine, 'Sur les traces enfouies d'un négrier : Le Saturne', Paper presented at the International Conference, Slave Trade, Slavery and Transition to indenture in Mauritius and the Mascarenes 1715-1848 11-13 April 2011, Truth and Justice Commission in collaboration with the University of Mauritius and Cemaf/Paris 1. He quotes from ANF F12 1653. One must distinguish between Alain Roman French historian and Alain Romaine, Mauritian anthropologist.
- <sup>50</sup> Roman, St Malo, p.256.
- <sup>51</sup> Quoted from the Memoirs of Angenard, in Roman, St Malo, p.251.
- <sup>52</sup> Filliot, tome II, 84.
- <sup>53</sup> Saugera Eric. 'La traite des noirs en trente questions.' Document downloaded from, <http://hgc.ac-creteil.fr>. Editions Geste. 2003. Pg. 34.

- <sup>54</sup> Gerbeau Hubert. 'L'Océan Indien n'est pas L'Atlantique. La Traite illégale à Bourbon au XIX siècle.' Un article publié dans *Outre-mer*, No 336-337, Décembre 2002, Paris, p. 79-108 (Coordination du dossier thématique 'Traites et esclavages : vieux problèmes, nouvelles perspectives?' Par Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, p.1-282).
- <sup>55</sup> Saugera Eric. 'La Traite des noirs sous le Consulat (1800-1804), une approche méthodologique'. Extrait de 'La Traite Négrière Coloniale, Océans Atlantique et Indien, Regards Croisés, Europe, Afrique et Amérique.' Colloque ADEN, Dakar/Gorée. 15-18 Novembre 2007. Page 2-6.
- <sup>56</sup> Toussaint, *Route*, p.263-73.
- <sup>57</sup> Filliot Tome II, 66.
- <sup>58</sup> Lacretelle, Pierre-Louis de. Mémoire à consulter, et consultation pour les négocians faisant le commerce des marchandises des Indes; contre la nouvelle Compagnie des Indes. Paris, 1786, 91 pages et 32 pages de pièces justificatives, quoted in Meyer, 'France et Asie'.
- <sup>59</sup> Meyer, 'France et Asie', 304.
- <sup>60</sup> Max Guerout, *Le navire négrier 'Utile' et la traite Française aux Mascareignes'*, Cahiers des Annales de la Mémoire, no. 9, Nantes 2006.
- <sup>61</sup> Petre Grenouilleau, *Les Traites négrières*, 2004, 328.
- <sup>62</sup> Roma, *St Malo au temps des négriers*, 76.
- <sup>63</sup> Forestier quoting Peter Stein, 26.
- <sup>64</sup> Analysis of Teelock.
- <sup>65</sup> Guillaume Daudin, 'Profitability of slave and long-distance trading in context: the case of Eighteenth-century France', *The Journal of Economic History*, 64, 1, March 2004, 147.
- <sup>66</sup> Daudin, 'Profitability', 145.
- <sup>67</sup> Daudin, 'Profitability', 145.
- <sup>68</sup> COL-C4-20 Isle de France Corr. Gén. M. Dumas '1768' Lettre de M. Dumas sur les bénéfices de la traite à Madagascar.
- <sup>69</sup> State of currency in Mauritius, Sub-Committee's report on currency and exchange, 26 November 1834.
- <sup>70</sup> Forestier, 'Principal-Agent, 12.
- <sup>71</sup> McWatters, 'Investment returns', 162-5.
- <sup>72</sup> Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les négoce maritimes français XVIIe - XXe siècle*. Paris: 1997, 29.
- <sup>73</sup> A.C.M., 4J 1610, letter of 15th July 1780.
- <sup>74</sup> Silvia Marzagali, *Bordeaux et la Traite Négrière*, 146.
- <sup>75</sup> D. Binaud, *Conservatoire de l'Estuaire de la Gironde, Le Trafic Négrier de Bordeaux*, 1.
- <sup>76</sup> Musée National des Douanes, 'Le commerce colonial bordelais au 18e siècle', Bordeaux, La porte des Antilles, www.musee-douanes.fr.
- <sup>77</sup> See also, Laurent FORCARI, 'Nantes et l'océan Indien, 1783-1810', Mémoire de Maîtrise, octobre 1995; See also D Binaud, *Conservatoire de l'estuaire de la Gironde, Le Trafic Négrier de Bordeaux*.
- <sup>78</sup> A number of works however have been published on Bordeaux slave trade, but little on Indian Ocean: P Butel, *Les Négociants Bordelais, l'Europe et les îles au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne, 1974; P Davigo, *Le lancement de la Traite Négrière à Bordeaux entre 1729-1743, ou la formation du capital négrier Bordeaux*, Institut d'Études Politiques, 1990; P Butel, *Négoce et industrie en France et en Irlande au XVIIIe et au XIXe siècle*, Paris CNRS 1980, 65-73; Marzagalli et Bonin, *Ports, Négoce, Océans au XVI au XXe siècles*, PUB, 1999, 297-301. P. Viles., *The Shipping Interest of Bordeaux 1774-1793*, Harvard University Press, unpublished Phd, 1965.
- <sup>79</sup> This *Journal de bord* is in the Société Archeologique de Bordeaux. Other accounts include the document on La Licorne from Bordeaux to Mozambique edited by Gabriel Debien, in *Le journal de traite de La Licorne au Mozambique 1778-1788*, Études Africaines offertes à Brunschwig Paris, EHESS, 1983, 91-116.
- <sup>80</sup> Silvia Marzagalli, *Bordeaux et la Traite Négrière*,
- <sup>81</sup> Toussaint, *Route*; *Annonces et Affiches* of 8 December 1773.
- <sup>82</sup> See *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers* of 27 July 1774 and 17 August 1774.
- <sup>83</sup> Haudrière, *Projets et échecs de la Compagnie des Indes dans le commerce des esclaves au XVIIIe siècle*, 79.
- <sup>84</sup> Le Lan, 3. For more information on the French slave trade with West Africa, see Philippe Haudrière and G. Le Bouëdec, *Les Compagnies des Indes*, Collection Ouest-France, 2001 and Patrick Villiers, 'Les établissements français et les débuts de la station navale française sur les côtes occidentales d'Afrique de 1755 à 1792' in *A la découverte de l'Afrique noire par les marins français (XV<sup>e</sup> - XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Rochefort et la mer, Vol 12, Publications à l'Université Francophone d'Été-Jonzac, 1998.
- <sup>85</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 Correspondances générales M. de la Bourdonnais, gouverneur 1739 M. de Cossigny, ingénieur.
- <sup>86</sup> Gilbert Buti, *Commerce honteux pour négociants vertueux*, p. 210.
- <sup>87</sup> Buti, 203.
- <sup>88</sup> Gilbert, *Marseille Port Négrier au XVIIIe siècle*, Anneaux, p.173.
- <sup>89</sup> Buti, *Commerce honteux*, p. 215.
- <sup>90</sup> Romaine, 'Sur les traces'.
- <sup>91</sup> Deveau, *La Rochelle*, p.120-121.
- <sup>92</sup> Deveau, *La Rochelle second port négrier français*, p.117.
- <sup>93</sup> Deveau, *La Rochelle*, p.124.
- <sup>94</sup> Saunier Eric, 2007, p.23.
- <sup>95</sup> McWatters & Yannick LEMARCHAND, 'Comptabilité et traite négrière. Le Guide du commerce de Gagnat de l'Aulnais, 1718-1791', 210.
- <sup>96</sup> Larson, 45.
- <sup>97</sup> COL-C4-20 Corr. Gén. Dumas Copie présente à M. Poivre le 15 May 1768. A Monsieur Poivre commissaire Général de la Marine faisant fonction d'Intendant aux Isles de France et de Bourbon.
- <sup>98</sup> COL-C4-(24) 1758 Corr. Gén. Magon, Gouverneur, *Lettres au Conseil Supérieur*, Lettre du 21 septembre 1758.
- <sup>99</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 Corr. Gén. de M. de la Bourdonnais, Gouverneur 1738, *Fourniture de chaux pour l'île de France*.
- <sup>100</sup> COL-C4-4 (58-59) 1740-1745 Corr. Gen. M. de la Bourdonnais, Lettre du 13 avril 1745.
- <sup>101</sup> COL-C4-10 1758 Corr. Gen. Magon.
- <sup>102</sup> COL -C4-15 1763-1765 Corr. Gén.M. Desforges Boucher, *Mémoire sur les noirs*.
- <sup>103</sup> COL -C4-18-420 1767 Corr. Gén.M. Poivre, intendant, 30 novembre 1767, M. Poivre.

- <sup>104</sup> Eduardo Medeiros, *As Etapas Da Escravatura No Norte De Moçambique*, (Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1988, pp.27-28.
- <sup>105</sup> Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha do Ibo, 1850 to 1860; Benigna Zimba. "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles: Southern Mozambique, Ca. 1720 to Ca. 1830." Ph.D. Michigan, 1999, pp.322-341.
- <sup>106</sup> Carlos Serra. "O Capital Mercantil Indiano Em Moçambique (1687/1835) - Um Sistema De Pilhagem." Departamento de História, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1978. (Unpublished).
- <sup>107</sup> Mapa da entrada e saída dos navios na Baía de Lourenço Marques, 17 de Julho de 1826; Ships Arrival and Departures 1818, "Port Captains," PC 3/1, SABD, Cape Town; Ships Arrival and Departures 1823-25, "Port Captains," PC 3/2, SABD, Cape Town; Benigna Zimba. "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles." pp.172-175.
- <sup>108</sup> See "Escravos de Inhambane, " 1762, in *Relações de Moçambique setentrista*, ed. António Alberto de Andrade (Lisboa Portugal: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1955), p.212.
- <sup>109</sup> Lacamichande Motichande a Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, "Cx 90, " Doc 4, AHU, Lisboa.
- <sup>110</sup> Romaine, *Sur les traces*.
- <sup>111</sup> Vernet, *La première traite française à Zanzibar*, p.495.
- <sup>112</sup> Vernet, *La première traite française à Zanzibar*, p.517.
- <sup>113</sup> Henry Salt, *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p.37.
- <sup>114</sup> Epidariste Colin, *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*, 1809, p.312.
- <sup>115</sup> See Filliot, *La Route for a detailed study of the slave trade to the Mascarenes*.
- <sup>116</sup> R. Allen, p.15.
- <sup>117</sup> Romaine, *Sur les Traces*, 469 slaves arrived alive in Mauritius out of 515 embarked in Kilwa.
- <sup>118</sup> Service Historique de la Marine de Lorient (SHML) - Recueil des contrats du 17/12/1727 au 23/03/1740 - 1 P 74, folio 41, reproduced in Le Lan, p.10.
- <sup>119</sup> SHML - Registre des délibérations - 1 P 305 - liasse 69 ff 106 verso and 107 recto, quoted in Le Lan, p.11.
- <sup>120</sup> Colin, *Annales*, p.325.
- <sup>121</sup> Colin, *Annales*, p.326-328.
- <sup>122</sup> Jean Meyer, *La France et l'Asie : essai de statistiques - 1730-1785 : état de la question, Histoire, économie et société*, 1, 2, 1982, p.297 - 312, available online on website of Le Ministère de la Jeunesse, <http://www.persee.fr>, p.11.
- <sup>123</sup> Meyer, *La France et l'Asie*, p. 304.
- <sup>124</sup> Forster, *Review of Carriere*, *The Journal of Modern History*, p.165.
- <sup>125</sup> Forster, *Review of Carriere*, *The Journal of Modern History*, p.164.
- <sup>126</sup> Roman, *St Malo*, in particular ch. 10, p.274.
- <sup>127</sup> COL C4 -7 *Mémoire concernant les îles de France et Bourbon 1753*
- <sup>128</sup> COL -C4-15 1763-1765 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, *Mémoire relatif à l'Isle de France*.
- <sup>129</sup> Salt, *Travels*, p.42.
- <sup>130</sup> Pedro Machado, *Journal of Slavery and Abolition*
- <sup>131</sup> COL-C4-17 1767 Corr. Gén. Dumas, Commandant general, 590.
- <sup>132</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén. MM De Nyon, Dumas, de Maupin, gouverneurs.
- <sup>133</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén. Ordonnance du 29 avril contre le nommé Antoine, esclave de Charles Pignolet condamné à être pendu 1730 *Mémoire concernant le gouverneur M. de Maupin; Article 20 - mention de l'esclave de Charles Pignolet qui a volé 1 fusil à poudre et 6 balles à son maître*.
- <sup>134</sup> COL-C4-46 1777 *Extrait des registres du Conseil Supérieur, Procès criminel contre le nommé Benoit Giraud Mulâtre et le nommé César, noir esclave*.
- <sup>135</sup> COL-C4-44-917.
- <sup>136</sup> COL-C4-43 Corr. Gén. 1 Aout 1775, *Lettre du Chevalier de Ternay 254, ff 165-166*.
- <sup>137</sup> COL-C4-15 1763-1765 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, gouverneur. *Mémoire sur les colons blancs*.
- <sup>138</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén. 1732 *Requêtes au Roi par M Teinturier de Gennicourt, habitant de l'Isle de France*.
- <sup>139</sup> COL-C4-2 1733-1737 Corr.gén. MM. de Maupin, de la Bourdonnais, gouverneurs, *Extrait des ordres particuliers donnés à M. de la Bourdonnais*.
- <sup>140</sup> COL-C4-8-1 1754 Corr. Gén. M.de Lozier Bouvet, gouverneur. *Lettre du 1er Mars de la Compagnie à l'occasion du mariage des employés, sur le terme « créole ».*
- <sup>141</sup> COL-C4-14-2 1762 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, *Etat actuel de l'établissement de M. de Rostaing et Hermans*.
- <sup>142</sup> COL-C4-15 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, *Mémoire relatif à l'Isle de France - La population de l'Isle de France: « La population de noirs a toujours été négligée. On aurait dû traiter différemment ceux qui sont nés dans l'isle de ceux qu'on y amène. Ces derniers perdent difficilement le souvenir de leur pays. Ils savent que les vents sont généraux pour Madagascar, que quelques uns de leur compatriote y sont retournés sur des chaloupes, aussi cherchent-ils la plupart à s'évader par la même voye.»*
- <sup>143</sup> COL-C4-15 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, 1764.
- <sup>144</sup> COL-C4-16 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, 1766.
- <sup>145</sup> COL-C4-41 Corr. Gén. Maillart, Intendant 8 septembre 1776, *Au sujet des girofliers du Jardin du Roy, Visite de Ternay et La Brillane au jardin de Monplaisir pour voir des girofliers en fruit ff 292-4*.
- <sup>146</sup> COL-C4-30 *Agriculture 7 avril 1772 Lettre de Poivre ff 282-3*.
- <sup>147</sup> COL-C4-16 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, 1766 *Législations pour les colonies des îles de France et Bourbon*.
- <sup>148</sup> COL-C4-17 1767 Corr. Gén. M. Dumas, Commandant general, MM. Dumas et Poivre, *Lettres communes Ordonnance concernant le prix provisoire du pain; Ordonnance concernant la police des nègres, 29 Septembre 1767*.
- <sup>149</sup> COL-C4-18 1767 Corr. Gén. M. Poivre, intendant 30 Novembre 1767, M. Poivre.
- <sup>150</sup> COL-C4-58-1 1782 Corr. Gén. Vicomte de Souillac *Mémoire présenté à M. le Vicomte de Souillac et à M. Chevreau, sur la nécessité absolue d'un bâtiment en pierre pour y établir l'hôpital des esclaves malades par le commissaire préposé au détail des hôpitaux, le 16 Octobre 1782*.
- <sup>151</sup> Col C4 15 *Mémoire sur les Noirs*, 60.
- <sup>152</sup> COL-C4-47, *Arret du Conseil Supérieur 1778*.
- <sup>153</sup> COL-C4 8 2 17 *Etat de la fourniture que le Sr Vigoureux a faite à la Compagnie en septembre et octobre 1753, en consequence du marché accepté par le Conseil le 24e de la meme année*.

- <sup>154</sup> Bonselgent, A. (1837, June 23). Observations médico-pratiques sur les maladies qui se manifestent le plus fréquemment chez les noirs à l'île Maurice, (Afrique) précédées de considérations générales sur le traitement des colons à leur égard... Th. : Méd. : Montpellier: 1837. (i. d. Moisand, Ed.) Montpellier.
- <sup>155</sup> See Megan Vaughan and V Teelock.
- <sup>156</sup> Dazille, Chirurgien-major aux îles de France et de Bourbon. "Projet sur la manutention des hôpitaux de l'Isle de France." Government, 1770.
- <sup>157</sup> Mémoire sur la nature des maladies les plus ordinaires aux Nègres des Îles de France et de Bourbon par M Dazille, Chirurgien-major aux îles de France et de Bourbon, 1770.
- <sup>158</sup> COL-C4-30 Corr. Desroches 1772 Liste de tous les ouvrages rendus, ff 247-249.
- <sup>159</sup> COL C4-58-1 1782 Corr. Gén. Souillac, Mémoire présenté à Souillac, (222) ff. 1666 recto à C4-58-1 (298) f.o 169 recto.
- <sup>160</sup> See Megan Vaughan.
- <sup>161</sup> COL-C4-29-48
- <sup>162</sup> Muslim Jumeer, p. 87.
- <sup>163</sup> COL-C4-15-1763-1765 Corr. Gén., Desforges Boucher, Gouverneur, Mémoire sur les travaux Civils, Militaire et de la Marine; Essai d'un projet pour les îles de France et Bourbon, 26 Juin 1764.
- <sup>164</sup> COL-C4-2, 1733, Maupin to Cossigny and COL-C4-2-005, « Que la compagnie donne 20 soldes à chaque noirs d'habitant qu'on loue pour les travaux de l'Isle de Bourbon parce que le soldat conviendrait mieux parce qu'ils serviront à se défendre en cas d'attaque des ennemis. »
- <sup>165</sup> COL-C4-2 Conseil Supérieur de l'Isle de France. Règlement. « Il ne sera payé par la compagnie lorsqu'on lui fournira, dans ses besoins des noirs que 15 soldes par jours pour chaque noirs et les habitants qui les loueront les uns aux autres ne pouvant en exiger d'avantage, à peine de concession... ».
- <sup>166</sup> COL-C4-8-02 Over Lozier Bouvet)
- <sup>167</sup> COL-C4-8-2 1754 Corr. Gén., Bouvet, Ecrits entre le Conseil et M. Cossigny - Lettres relatives du Conseil à la Compagnie, Lettre du 11 mars 1754.
- <sup>168</sup> COL-C4-60 Mémoires de Vicomte de Souillac & de M. Chevreau, Tableau général et abrégé de la population de l'Isle de France, suivant les recensements de Janvier 1785, (40) ff. 21 recto à (44) ff. 23 verso.
- <sup>169</sup> Col-C4-1, 1732, Requête de M. Teinturier de Gennicourt, habitant de l'Île de France, 'Fournir aux habitants des noirs en quantité suffisantes au moins au nombre de 12 à 15 maniant haches en égard à la quantité de bois dont l'Île est entièrement recouverte »
- <sup>170</sup> COL- C4 - 15 (56) Memoire sur les noirs
- <sup>171</sup> COL-C4-15-1763-1765 Corr. Gén., Desforges Boucher, Gouverneur, Mémoire sur les travaux Civils, Militaire et de la Marine.
- <sup>172</sup> COL-C4-15-246-247
- <sup>173</sup> COL-C4-3 Corr Gén. Cossigny Ingenieur Projet de conduire l'eau a la Grande Riviere
- <sup>174</sup> COL -C4-15 1763-1765 Corr. Gén., Desforges Boucher, Mémoire de M. Godeheu, 1763 Mémoire sur les travaux Civils, Militaire et de la Marine.
- <sup>175</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 Corr. Gén. 1738 M. de Cossigny, ingénieur Concernant le bois.
- <sup>176</sup> COL-C4-5 1747 Letter to Conseil Supérieur Issue of M. Meygnier, Extrait de la lettre du Conseil du jour, de l'Isle de France du 9 Janvier 1747 Carton 161, No 4 (11 pièces).
- <sup>177</sup> COL-C4-5 1746-1748 Corr. Gén. M. David, gouverneur. 1747 Affaire de M. Meygnier, chirurgien-major, propriétaire d'un marais à sel à l'Isle de France; Lettre au Conseil Supérieur de l'Isle de France.
- <sup>178</sup> COL-C4-9 1755-1757 Corr. Gén. 1756 M. de Candos 20 Février 1756- recrutement des noirs de la Compagnie.
- <sup>179</sup> COL-C4-2 1753 Conseil Superieur, Extraits des ouvrages faits par Cossigny.
- <sup>180</sup> COL-C4-13 1761 Corr. Gén. M. Desforges Boucher, gouverneur - Extrait de la lettre par apostille du Conseil Supérieur de l'Isle de France du 4 Septembre 1761 répondant à celles de la Compagnie depuis Janvier 1760 jusqu'au 21 Mars 1761.
- <sup>181</sup> COL-C4-14-2 1762 Corr. Gén., M. Desforges Boucher, gouverneur.
- <sup>182</sup> COL-C4-14-2 1762 Corr. Gén. Frais de régie actuelle, engage d'européens et autres dépenses.
- <sup>183</sup> COL-C4-6 1749-1750 Corr. Gén. M. David, 1750 Mémoires divers : Réflexions anonymes pour l'intérêt de la Compagnie des Indes au sujet des Isle de France et de Bourbon.
- <sup>184</sup> COL-C4-11 - 1759, Reponses de M. Gosse à la letter et memoire de Magon, 10 June 1759
- <sup>185</sup> COL -C4-15 1763-1765 Corr. Gén., Boucher, 1764 Mémoires; Renseignements divers.
- <sup>186</sup> COL-C4-7-2 1751-1753 Corr. Gén. David, de Lozier Bouvet, gouverneurs, Mémoire 31 octobre 1753.
- <sup>187</sup> COL-C4-17 1767 Corr. Gén. Dumas, Copie du Réquisitoire de M. le Procureur Général à Messieurs du Conseil Supérieur de l'Isle de France, 22 Octobre 1767.
- <sup>188</sup> COL-C4-4 Corr gen. Article 3.
- <sup>189</sup> COL-C4-14-1 1762 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, Etat des noirs marron tués et pris tant par les noirs de la Maréchaussée que par les noirs.
- <sup>190</sup> COL-C4-4 1740-1745 Corr.Gén. Labourdonnais, Gouverneur Délibération du Conseil.
- <sup>191</sup> COL-C4-7-2, 1751-53.31 Octobre 1753 Mémoire, Art. 1.
- <sup>192</sup> COL-C4-12-2, Journal de Desforges Boucher, Réponse à la lettre de M. le Comte D'Aché au Conseil, 2 Aout 1760.
- <sup>193</sup> COL-C4-15 1763-1765 Corr gén, M. Desforges Boucher Mémoire de M. Godeheu, 1763 Mémoire sur la défense des îles de France et de Bourbon, Paris, le 20 Mai 1763.
- <sup>194</sup> COL-C4-13 1758, Corr. Desforges Boucher, letter of 4.9.1761.
- <sup>195</sup> COL-C4-10-014 Magon Corr, Gen, Lettre du 21 septembre 1758.
- <sup>196</sup> Col-C4-5 Letter of M. de Rostaing to Conseil Superieur, 25-3. 1748.
- <sup>197</sup> C4-7-1, 1751-1753, Corr. David. et au lieu d'aller chercher des noirs bien loin et a grands frais, on en prendrait a Madagascar parce que comme on vient de le dire, la perte et les sentinelles redoubles empêcherait le marronnage
- <sup>198</sup> COL-C4-11-088 1759 Corr. Gén. Magon, Lettre de M. Cossigny.
- <sup>199</sup> COL-C4-14-2-223 Mémoires et projets, renseignements divers, Mémoire du Comte d'Estaing : Nottes sur l'Isle de France, 11 Mars 1762.
- <sup>200</sup> COL-C4-12-01 1760 Journal de M. Desforges Boucher, Partage des noirs de la Marine en 3 classes pour servir à la défense de l'île, 'J'ai partagé les noirs de la Marine pour servir a la défense de l'Isle, comme les feront un peu tout ceux les habitants. Ce seront trois corps dont les a composé de noirs fusiliers, c'est-à-dire les noirs les plus surs et les plus

- fideles, le second des noirs lanciers auxquels on ne peut accorder qu'une médiocre confiance et le troisième des noirs pionniers ; dont on ne pourrait tirer aucune autre sorte de service, mais qu'il est essentiel d'employer afin de ne laisser personne inutile.'
- <sup>201</sup> C4-12-11760 Journal de M. Desforges Boucher, gouverneur, à commencer du 28 mai 1759 jusqu'au 1<sup>er</sup> octobre inclus.
- <sup>202</sup> Megan Vaughan. *The Labours of Slaves in eighteenth century Mauritius*, Paper presented at the Truth and Justice Commission International Conference Slave Trade, Slavery and Transition to Indenture in Mauritius and the Mascarenes 1715-1848, 11-13 April 2011.
- <sup>203</sup> COL-C4-24 -177 Lettre de M.M. Desroches et Poivre du 2 aout 1769
- <sup>204</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén. MM De Nyon, Dumas, de Maupin, gouverneurs 1732 Requêtes au Roi par M Teinturier de Gennicourt.
- <sup>205</sup> COL-C4-10 1758 Corr. Gén. M. Magon Lettre du 21 septembre 1758.
- <sup>206</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 Corr. Gén. M. de Labourdonnais, gouverneur, Détail de tout ce qui s'est passé dans l'île dans le courant de l'année 1737.
- <sup>207</sup> COL-C4-4 1740-1745 Corr. Gén. M. de la Bourdonnais, gouverneur Etat des esclaves de la Compagnie
- <sup>208</sup> COL-C4-8 2 17 Etat de la fourniture que le Sr Vigoureux a faite à la Compagnie en septembre et octobre 1753, en conséquence du marche accepte par le Conseil le 24<sup>e</sup> de la meme année.
- <sup>209</sup> COL-C4-10 1758 Corr. Gén. M. Magon, Recensement des gens qui prennent leurs vivres dans les magasins de la Compagnie.
- <sup>210</sup> COL-C4-12-1 1760 Journal de M. Desforges Boucher 11 novembre 1759.
- <sup>211</sup> COL-C4-12-1 1760 Journal de M. Desforges Boucher, gouverneur, à commencer du 28 mai 1759 jusqu'au 1<sup>er</sup> octobre inclus C4-12-17 Juillet 1760 Etat de la consommation par mois par personne, juin 1760
- <sup>212</sup> COL-C4-12-2 Lettre de M. Moudion à Mrs Les Syndics et Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes, 20
- <sup>213</sup> COL-C4-13 Corr. Gén. M. Desforges Boucher, gouverneur Lettre du 4 septembre 1761
- <sup>214</sup> COL-C4-13 Corr. Gén. M. Desforges Boucher, gouverneur Extrait de la lettre par apostille du Conseil Supérieur de l'Isle de France du 4 Septembre 1761 répondant à celles de la Compagnie depuis Janvier 1760 jusqu'au 21 Mars 1761 Art. 2
- <sup>215</sup> COL-C4-18 1767 Corr. Gén. M. Poivre, intendant 30 Novembre 1767, Prix courant de la compagnie pour un noir.
- <sup>216</sup> COL-C4-28 Correspondance générale Chevalier Desroches Gouverneur général 1771-28 3 septembre 1771
- <sup>217</sup> COL-C4-28 1771 -93 Etat des dépenses de l'année 1771
- <sup>218</sup> COL-C4-29 1771 Corr. Gén. M. Poivre, intendant 4 aout 1771
- <sup>219</sup> COL C4-32-20, 31 1772 Corr. Gén. Maillart
- <sup>220</sup> COL C4-41 suite Corr. Gén. Maillart, Intendant 1776
- <sup>221</sup> COL C4-41-775 1776 9 septembre 1776 Lettre concernant Les dépenses faites
- <sup>222</sup> COL-C4-47-110,12 janvier 1778 Etat général des esclaves du Roy existant et réflexions a cet égard
- <sup>223</sup> COL-C4-52-1 1780 Corr. Gén. le Vte de Souillac 11 Juillet 1780 recensement des esclaves du Roi au 1er Mai 1780
- <sup>224</sup> Corinne Masson,, "Les esclaves de l'État a L'Île de France 1803-1810 - Le cas des Noirs de la direction d'artillerie. 109
- <sup>225</sup> Masson, p.102. We need to remember the discrepancies of the data on the slave population between different sources for 1806 ranging from 60,646 to 68,655 for 1806, for 1809 from 67,310 to 72,610.
- <sup>226</sup> Masson, R. "The Powder Mills Artefacts: Slave Identification Badges?" Truth and Justice Commission International Conference on Slave Trade, Slavery and Transition to . 2011.
- <sup>227</sup> Henri Prentout, L'Isle de France sous Decaen, p.131.
- <sup>228</sup> Amedee Nagpapen, Les Indiens a l'Isle de France, acculturation ou Deculturation.
- <sup>229</sup> Laurent Sermet, Esclavage et libertés : le Code civil colonial, Truth and Justice Commission, International Conference on Slave Trade , Slavery and and transition to indenture in Mauritius and the Mascarenes 1715-1848,
- <sup>230</sup> Sermet.
- <sup>231</sup> MNA: E2B no 168.
- <sup>232</sup> MNA: D/10C.
- <sup>233</sup> Jumeer, p.153 onwards.
- <sup>234</sup> Bonsergent, p.7.
- <sup>235</sup> Bonsergent, p.22.
- <sup>236</sup> See Vaughan and Teelock.
- <sup>237</sup> Census returns, electoral lists.
- <sup>238</sup> Jean Michel Andre, *Les Engages de la Compagnie des Indes Marins et Ouvriers*, Service Historique de la Marine, p.93.
- <sup>239</sup> Andre, Engages de la Compagnie, p.129.
- <sup>240</sup> MNA:IB 25/No.59, Letter from Charles Telfair to HM Commissioners of Inquiry, 24th March 1827;List of All Prize Negroes Apprenticed to Mr. Charles Telfair, March 1827.
- <sup>241</sup> Letter from the Free Labour Association to the Imam of Muscat, 8 June 1840, MA: IA/26; quoted in H. Ly Tio Fane, 'Aperçu d'une Immigration Forcée', 10.
- <sup>242</sup> Ly Tio Fane, 'Aperçu d'une Immigration Forcée', 11.
- <sup>243</sup> John Scoble, Hill coolies: a brief exposure of the deplorable condition of the hill coolies in British Guiana and Mauritius, and of the nefarious means by which they were induced to resort to these colonies. Wilson Anti-Slavery Collection, (1840) Electronic resource: URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60227718> Accessed: 05/01/2010 01:02
- <sup>244</sup> House of Commons, BPP online, Report of Thomas Hugon Upon the subject of Indian Emigration, 29 July 1839, encl. 9, no.2 in Sir William Nicolay to Lord John Russell, 13 January 1840, p. 185.
- <sup>245</sup> At the time of writing, TJC has learnt that this volume has just been sent for conservation!
- <sup>246</sup> Report of Hugon, Indian Emigration, p. 188.
- <sup>247</sup> Report of Hugon, Indian Emigration, p. 188-9.
- <sup>248</sup> Proposed despatch of EIC to GG India January 1844, p.362.
- <sup>249</sup> Anderson to GG 27 October 1843, p.364
- <sup>250</sup> Sessional Papers, session 1844, despatch no 16, Governor Gomm to Lord Stanley, 320.
- <sup>251</sup> Colonial Secretary to C Anderson Ag Prot of Emigrants, 362.
- <sup>252</sup> Report of Hugon, Indian Emigration, p.191.
- <sup>253</sup> Minute from GG 2 November 1843, 367.
- <sup>254</sup> Grierson, p. 8.
- <sup>255</sup> Grierson, p. 25.

- <sup>256</sup> Grierson, p. 12.
- <sup>257</sup> Shahabad district was later divided into three areas today known as Bhojpur and Rothas districts.
- <sup>258</sup> Grierson, p.5 of Diary.
- <sup>259</sup> Diary of grierson, p.9.
- <sup>260</sup> George, Grierson. Report on Colonial Emigration from the Bengal Presidency, 1883, p.40.
- <sup>261</sup> Grierson, p. 18.
- <sup>262</sup> Grierson, p. 19.
- <sup>263</sup> Grierson, p. 22.
- <sup>264</sup> Marina, Carter and Crispin Bates, Empire and locality: a global dimension to the 1857 Indian Uprising, *Journal of Global History* (2010) 5, p. 68, doi:10.1017/S1740022809990337.
- <sup>265</sup> Bose Nirmal Kumar, *Tribal life in India* (New Delhi Press, 1971), p.8.
- <sup>266</sup> Grierson, Report on Colonial Emigration.
- <sup>267</sup> A. Devi Nirsimloo-Anenden, *The primordial link Telegu Ethnic identity in Mauritius*, MGI, 1990, pgs. 122 and 126 for diagrammatic representation of northern and southern Indian rituals practised by Telugu-speaking descendants.
- <sup>268</sup> Nirsimloo-Anenden, *The primordial link*, p.135,
- <sup>269</sup> La Rose et le Henne, p. 17
- <sup>270</sup> Yassin Karimullah, Mapping of Migration, Memory and Family History in Port Louis and Vallée-Pitot, MA Dissertaion, Unlversity of Mauritius, 2011.
- <sup>271</sup> See for example the preliminary but pioneering undergraduate thesis of Nazia Dilbur on Muslim marriages or MA dissertation of Yassin Karimullah from the University of Mauritius.
- Mapping of Migration, Memory and Family History in Port Louis and Vallée-Pitot
- <sup>272</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p.303-311. Analysis of Leo Coucaud.
- <sup>273</sup> According to the Royal Commissioners, it actually worked out that labourers were fined two days wages and one-fifth of a third day for every day they were marked as being illegally absent or sick.
- <sup>274</sup> See pages 323-324 of the report for an attempt by the Royal Commissioners to estimate for the year 1871 the amount of money planters allowed themselves to save through the illegal use of the double-cut.
- <sup>275</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p. 310-311.
- <sup>276</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p.310.
- <sup>277</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p.312
- <sup>278</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p.403.
- <sup>279</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p.414
- <sup>280</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p.416, 418
- <sup>281</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875, p.353
- <sup>282</sup> According to the said ordinance planters were required to provide “sufficient and wholesome lodging according to the usage of the colony” which as the Commissioners pointed out could have been interpreted any number of ways.
- <sup>283</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875,p.351.
- <sup>284</sup> Frere and Williamson, 1875,p.591.
- <sup>285</sup> These recommendations were legally enshrined in the Labour Ordinance of 1878.
- <sup>286</sup> Cited in Balfour, 1921, p.15.
- <sup>287</sup> In her later work, Carter (1994, 1995 states that a number of female indentured labourers were employed on a temporary basis or verbal contracts that did not appear in the official figures. She also points out that those women who were not officially employed often helped their male partners to complete set tasks or spent their time sowing vacoas bags or rearing livestock for their families.
- <sup>288</sup> PRO: CO 167/283, Gomm to Grey, dt. 11 June 1847.
- <sup>289</sup> OIOC: L/PJ/6/79, File No 1285/1882.
- <sup>290</sup> Report of H.N.D. 7 June 1869 in PP C.151/1870.
- <sup>291</sup> Deposition of Manilal Doctor, *Report of Royal Commission 1909*, Pt II, Appendix B, pp.157-165.
- <sup>292</sup> Amit Mishra, Regulating the marriages among the indentured labourers and their descendants in Mauritius, p.32.
- <sup>293</sup> Ordinance 1908 - The Labour Law Amendment Ordinance
- <sup>294</sup> MNA: B2/IR Report of Mitchell on Wolmar estate/1872.
- <sup>295</sup> MNA: RA 561, letters concerning indenture Dr Steward to George F. Dick 14th Jan. 1837 “... A certain number of coolies on board the Letter from Rowlandson of Feb 28th 1837 to A. Steward.
- <sup>296</sup> MNA:RC series 29, Letters concerning Immigration,re: Immigration Agents, 12 December 1844. Information kindly supplied by Satyendra Peerthum.
- <sup>297</sup> MNA: PB series 14 Letters sent - Superintendent Powder Mills.
- <sup>298</sup> MNA: Blue Book 1864.
- <sup>299</sup> MNA: B2/PIR/1876.
- <sup>300</sup> Bissoondoyal, Uttama, ‘Education and Multicultural Agenda’ in Nirsimloo-Gayan, S., (ed. *Towards the Making of a Multicultural Society*, MGI, Mauritius, 2000, p.149; Kalla, C., ‘A Review of the Schooling of Indian Labouring Class (1850-1900 in Mauritius)’ in Bissoondoyal, U., (ed. *Indians Overseas: The Mauritian Experience*, MGI, Mauritius, 1984. p.187.
- <sup>301</sup> Statement of Manilal Doctor, Report of Royal Commission, 1909, Pt. II, p.160.
- <sup>302</sup> J.W.P. Muir Mackenzie, Report of the Conditions of Indian Immigrants in Mauritius.1893, p.39.
- <sup>303</sup> PRO: CO/167/806, File Nos 22-36.
- <sup>304</sup> Statement of J. F. Trotter, Report of Sanderson Committee, 1910, Pt. II, p.356.
- <sup>305</sup> Statement of Manilal Doctor, Report of Royal Committee, Part B, p.160.
- <sup>306</sup> Question posed by Coucaud, Vol 3.
- <sup>307</sup> Daniel North-Coombes, ‘Struggles in the Cane Fields: Small Cane Growers, Millers, and the Colonial State in Mauritius, 1921-1937’ in M.Daniel North=Coombes, Ed.W.M Freund, *Studies in the Colonial Economy of Mauritius* (MGI, Moka, 2000, p.144.
- <sup>308</sup> Analysis of Satyendra Peerthum.
- <sup>309</sup> See Colony of Mauritius: Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbance which occurred in the North of Mauritius in 1943 (London,1944, p.26-27.

- <sup>310</sup> Alfred North-Coombes, *A History of Sugar Production*, p.33.
- <sup>311</sup> Ali Zafar, *Mauritius: An economic success 2011. Africa Success stories project, World Bank.*
- <sup>312</sup> EPZ Act 1970.
- <sup>313</sup> EPZ Act 1970.
- <sup>314</sup> Ali Zafar 2011, *op. cit.*
- <sup>315</sup> Report of the Select Committee on the Industrial Relations Act, April 1983.
- <sup>316</sup> Report of the Select Committee on the IRA, *op. cit.*
- <sup>317</sup> *Employment Relations Act, 2008.*
- <sup>318</sup> *Employment Rights Act, 2008.*
- <sup>319</sup> *Australian Services Union - Good Practice Guide for Occupational Health and Safety in Call Centres.*
- <sup>320</sup> Report by S. Wilberforce, July 1913
- <sup>321</sup> S. Wilberforce *op. cit.*
- <sup>322</sup> Report on the working of Cooperative Credit Societies, 1914
- <sup>323</sup> Report on the working of Cooperative Credit Societies, 1915
- <sup>324</sup> Burrenchobay, Cooperatives in Mauritius, 1957
- <sup>325</sup> Burrenchobay, *op.cit.*
- <sup>326</sup> PRO: CO 167/188, Despatch no 290 of Lord Gelnelg to Governor Nicolay, 25 May 1836, p. 230-234.
- <sup>327</sup> PRO: CO 167/182, Papers relate to the Abolition of Slavery, Letter of Superintendent Special Justice to Colonial Secretary 22 April 1835, p.213.
- <sup>328</sup> James Backhouse, pgs. 54-55.
- <sup>329</sup> Condorcet, sous le nom Schwartz (J.), *Réflexions sur l'esclavage des nègres, 1781*, quoted in Laurent Blériot, quoted in 'La loi d'indemnisation des colons du 30 avril 1849 : aspects juridiques', p.148.
- <sup>330</sup> Blériot, p. 152.
- <sup>331</sup> Blériot, p. 160
- <sup>332</sup> Quoted in Bleriot, p. 161.
- <sup>333</sup> Karishma Bundhooa, Female apprentices in Mauritius, University of Mauritius BA dissertation, UoM. 2010, 19.
- <sup>334</sup> Bundhooa, Female apprentices, .
- <sup>335</sup> MNA: Report of Civil Commissary Lavers to Colonial Secretary, 1 December 1845.
- <sup>336</sup> Joseph Martial Rasolonjatovo, CENDRES MALGACHES À L'ÎLE MAURICE, unpublished manuscript. TJC is indebted to Pere Martial for allowing us to reproduce some information from his manuscript.
- <sup>337</sup> For fuller account, see Vol 3 and 4.
- <sup>338</sup> The informants often describe them as "lakaz lapaille" in their interviews.
- <sup>339</sup> See interview 09/383/01 for example.
- <sup>340</sup> See interview 09/112/0 for example.
- <sup>341</sup> See interview 09/449/01 for example.
- <sup>342</sup> See interview 09/52/01 for example.
- <sup>343</sup> See interview 09/149/01 for example.
- <sup>344</sup> Interview 09/160/01.
- <sup>345</sup> I am referring to the "ad hoc" committees convened in 1978 and 1982 to investigate the condition of housing and amenities in estate camps (cited in Manrakhan 1983:121-123).
- <sup>346</sup> Interview 09/278/01.
- <sup>347</sup> According to this report the dwellings of casual labourers were "either built by the management at some time in the past or built by the estate habitants, often with estate help. In many cases the management declined responsibility for the upkeep of such dwellings, on the grounds that the inhabitants were non-entitled and could leave if they wished".
- <sup>348</sup> The interviews also indicate that not all skilled artisans were Creoles, as a good many were also Hindu and Muslims.
- <sup>349</sup> This means house made of corrugated iron sheets with windows.
- <sup>350</sup> This is no doubt partly related to the fact that Mauritian families were much larger in early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- <sup>351</sup> Girls seemed to have shouldered a greater burden in the performance of household chores than boys did. This disparity in rates of school attendance between boys and girls is reflected in the ARLD of 1938, showing that out of 20,078 "Indian" children that went to primary school, only 5,908 were girls.
- <sup>352</sup> Benedict describes the family life of some wealthier small planters living in villages who derived a substantial proportion of their income from growing cane and were not required to sell their labour to make ends meet. According to Daniel North-Coombes (1987:9), however, a majority of small planters were not able to solely rely on this type of livelihood as their main source of income and worked as labourers on sugar estates at different times of the year.
- <sup>353</sup> According to the Balogh Commission's estimates of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund's accounts to the end of 1961, although it had amassed Rs 43 million from the annual levy on sugar exports to the United Kingdom and investments and rental fees, it only spent Rs 17 million of that amount on housing and community welfare programmes. Most of the difference, amounting to some Rs 25 million, had been invested in fixed-term deposits for 10 years.
- <sup>354</sup> Evidence of the presence of *ankylostomiasis* was recorded in Mauritius prior to Kendrick's report. But according to Balfour, it was only after advent of the use of microscopes to examine stool samples that it was possible to determine the true extent of infection rates. This raises an important question: was *ankylostomiasis* brought to Mauritius by slaves or indentured labourers? It could not have existed in Mauritius prior to human settlement, as it has evolved in symbiosis with human populations and cannot survive without a host to reproduce itself. And evidence indicates that of the two types of *ankylostomiasis* that exist, that is, *Necator americanus* and *Ancylostoma duodenale*, neither are found in Europe or colder regions of the world, as these parasites can only survive in tropical climates. It is most likely then that African or Indian slaves brought it to Mauritius or that it was brought by indentured labourers from India, Africa or China.
- <sup>355</sup> I was not able to get my hands on Kendrick's report, as it is not available in the National Library or National Archives of Mauritius. I have had to rely on Balfour's account of it instead.
- <sup>356</sup> In one passage of his report, Balfour (1921:88) describes barefooted "Indian" children stranding on top of a manure heap on a sugar estate and watering it, making it very likely they would have contracted hookworm disease if they did not already have it.

- <sup>357</sup> Despite spending several pages describing the history of the use of manure as a fertilizing agent on Mauritian sugar estates over the past one hundred years, North-Coombes (1993:76-82) only writes one line on the *Engrais* system and the use of human manure to cultivate cane plants. “[H]uman excreta”, he says, “has ceased to be employed owing to the dissemination of Hook Worm”. Andrew Balfour’s (1921:87-88) report indicates the practice was very widespread at the time he visited Mauritius, which is why he singled out its discontinuation as one of the most important ways to combat the spread of hookworm disease, also pointing out that these conditions “probably have not their parallel in any other part of the world. The main industry in Mauritius is sugar cane cultivation. The cane requires fertiliser and as Victor Hugo said, possibly with some truth, “the most fertilising and effective of manures is human manure.” Unfortunately in the tropics it is also the most dangerous. This fact was not recognised.”
- <sup>358</sup> The ARLD of 1950 provides a comprehensive summary of living conditions in estate camps in Mauritius confirming many of the assertions made in this report (ARLD 1950:83-85).
- <sup>359</sup> See the amendment to the Regulation of Wages and Conditions of Employment Ordinance 1961, as enshrined in Government Notice No. 134 of 1973. This is despite the fact that the Annual Reports of the Labour Department and Ministry of Labour prior to 1973 indicate that women should be paid “equal wages for doing equal work” in their various labour ordinances.
- <sup>360</sup> Interview 09/234/01.
- <sup>361</sup> See amendments made to the Industrial Relations Act of 1973 and the Sugar Industry Regulations 1983. Certain categories of field labourers were in fact provided with protective clothing prior to 1973, but it was only after the ratification of the aforementioned laws that protective clothing was made available to all monthly and casual workers.
- <sup>362</sup> A review of the subsequent Annual Reports of the Labour Department shows that the number of work-related injuries recorded continued to steadily increase over the coming years, with the sugar industry consistently accounting for most of these work-related injuries, and as per usual the majority of injuries were of the sort described above. After 1975 however when employers were finally required by law to provide all monthly workers with protective clothing, one begins to discern a noticeable decrease in the number of work-related injuries of field labourers recorded in the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations as it had then become known by.
- <sup>363</sup> The informants’ claims are lent further support by the other contraventions listed in the Annual Reports of the Labour Department and Ministry of Labour which include not only “[i]rregular keeping of account books”, “[f]alse entries in books of accounts”, “[j]ob contractors failing to provide weekly pay sheets”, “[j]ob contractors failing to make entries in book”, but also “[a]sking [workers] to do work over again after many days”, “[u]sing false gaulette [or method of measurement]”, “[d]educting fine from wages due for work”, “[f]ailing to credit labourers with full amount of work done”, and “[f]ailing to credit labourers with full amount of wages due”.
- <sup>364</sup> After 1981, the Ministry of Labour stopped compiling and releasing annual reports so it is not possible to determine if these abuses have continued.
- <sup>365</sup> Interview 09/449/01.
- <sup>366</sup> Interview 09/104/01.
- <sup>367</sup> In creole this means they might be put absent.
- <sup>368</sup> In creole this means they would not receive their salary.
- <sup>369</sup> Interview 09/77/01.
- <sup>370</sup> The complaints listed above only constitute a small fraction of what is in fact a much larger number of complaints made by sugar estate workers pertaining to the non-payment or under-payment of wages in the interviews. Names of sugar estates have been removed.
- <sup>371</sup> R. Chaudenson, *Des Hommes, des îles, des langues* (1992), p. 9.
- <sup>372</sup> Paris: 1825, pt. II, pp. 26-27 - our translation.
- <sup>373</sup> M.S. Rivière, *A Woman of Courage*, p. 34.
- <sup>374</sup> Dictionary of Mauritian Biography [hereafter D.M.B.], p. 894.
- <sup>375</sup> De l’Estrac, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 113-115.
- <sup>376</sup> De l’Estrac, op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 172.
- <sup>377</sup> De l’Estrac, op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 213.
- <sup>378</sup> De l’Estrac, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 191.
- <sup>379</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 192.
- <sup>380</sup> See above.
- <sup>381</sup> K. Noël, *L’Esclavage*, Paris: Two Cities, p. 69.
- <sup>382</sup> Ibid., p. 200.
- <sup>383</sup> Mauritius Archives: H.A 80, folio 1.
- <sup>384</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>385</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>386</sup> Ibid., p. 232.
- <sup>387</sup> Ibid., p. 37.
- <sup>388</sup> Ibid., p. 105 - our translation.
- <sup>389</sup> Chan Low and Reddi, op.cit., p. 231.
- <sup>390</sup> Hitié, op.cit., p. 91.
- <sup>391</sup> MNA: HA 16.
- <sup>392</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>393</sup> Hitié, op.cit., p. 92 our translation.
- <sup>394</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>395</sup> Hitié, op.cit., p. 88.
- <sup>396</sup> Nagapen, *Histoire de la Colonie*, p. 75.
- <sup>397</sup> De Sornay, p. 104.
- <sup>398</sup> Le Cernéen, No. 115 (22 February, 1833) - our translation.
- <sup>399</sup> Ibid. - our translation.
- <sup>400</sup> Hitié, op.cit., p. 91.
- <sup>401</sup> De Sornay, pp. 445-446.
- <sup>402</sup> O.J. Bijoux, *Rémy Ollier. Sa vie et son œuvre*, Port Louis p. 153.

- <sup>403</sup> D.M.B., p. 895.
- <sup>404</sup> Bijoux, op.cit., p. 262 - our translation.
- <sup>405</sup> B. Moutou, *Ile Maurice*, p. 56.
- <sup>406</sup> La Sentinelle, 4 February, 1850, No. 1001.
- <sup>407</sup> Bijoux, op.cit., p 170 - our translation.
- <sup>408</sup> There were only 2 scholarships awarded annually.
- <sup>409</sup> Chan Low and Reddi, op.cit., p. 232.
- <sup>410</sup> D.M.B., p. 434.
- <sup>411</sup> R.B. Allen, *Creoles, Indian Immigrants and the Restructuring of Society and Economy in Mauritius, 1767-1885*, 293, 1983, pp. 111-113.
- <sup>412</sup> C. Boudet, *Les Franco-Mauriciens entre Maurice et l'Afrique du Sud : identité, stratégies migratoires et processus de recommunaurisation*, Ph. D. Bordeaux, France), 2004, p. 59.
- <sup>413</sup> J.F. Dupon, *Contraintes insulaires et fait colonial aux Mascareignes et aux Seychelles : étude de géographie humaine*, Ph. D. Thesis, University of Lille III, 1977, p. 546.
- <sup>414</sup> R. Allen, op. cit., p. 170-176.
- <sup>415</sup> H.C. Brookfield, 'Pluralism and geography in Mauritius', *Geographical Studies*, vol. V, N° 1, pp. 10-11.
- <sup>416</sup> C. Boudet, op. cit., p. 79.
- <sup>417</sup> Philippe Hein, *L'économie des entreprises de la zone franche*, p.32.
- <sup>418</sup> Dr Moal R.A., *Problèmes posés par le développement et l'organisation des pêches Mauricienne 1975*.
- <sup>419</sup> Arthur Jessop., *A history of the Mauritius Government railways 1864-1964*, p.18.
- <sup>420</sup> Kuczinsky, *Demographic History*, Mauritius, 1.
- <sup>421</sup> Moutou Benjamin., *Les co-opératives d'éleveur de porc à Maurice au regard de l'expérience française*, 41-46
- <sup>422</sup> R. Longridge., *Report on the Mauritius Railways 1859*, p.10.
- <sup>423</sup> Benjamin Moutou., *Mémoire de fin de stage*, Université de Lempdes Clermont Ferrand, p.47.
- <sup>424</sup> Benjamin Moutou., *Rivière Noire : 400 ans d'histoire 2006*, p.15-17.
- <sup>425</sup> Benjamin Moutou., *Ile Maurice : Récit de son histoire contemporaine*, 2000.
- <sup>426</sup> Benjamin Moutou., *Ile Maurice : 25 leçons d'Histoire*, 1998, p.27.
- <sup>427</sup> Benjamin Moutou., *La situation de la pêche artisanal à l'île Maurice et a l'île Rodrigues au regard d'un système coopératif intégré*. Thèse de maîtrise. Ecole de haute étude en science sociale, pgs.24-29.
- <sup>428</sup> Maurice Paturau., *L'histoire économique de l'île Maurice*, 1988, pgs. 4,8.
- <sup>429</sup> Rivalentz Quenette., *Emmanuel Anquetil*, 1985, p. 13.
- <sup>430</sup> Alain Romaine., *Religion populaire et pastorale Creole*, thesis in theology 33
- <sup>431</sup> Rouillard Guy et Géoho : *Les Plantes de l'île Maurice et leur histoire*.
- <sup>432</sup> Auguste Toussaint., *Port Louis 2 siècles d'histoire*, p. 5.
- <sup>433</sup> *Agricultural Digest Central Statistics Office 2010*.
- <sup>434</sup> *Annuaire du diocèse de Port Louis*. 12
- <sup>435</sup> *Annual report: Ministry of Fisheries 2008 and 2009*. 23 36, 37, 40
- <sup>436</sup> Correspondence chief officer of police Finnis to secretary of state for the colonies.
- <sup>437</sup> *Housing and population census 2000*. 2, 9
- <sup>438</sup> *Housing and population census 2000*. 2, 9
- <sup>439</sup> *Ministry of Co-operatives: An evaluation of fishermen co-operatives 2010*.
- <sup>440</sup> This section is extracted from Joyce Fortune's work for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, report produced in 2005.
- <sup>441</sup> Interviews were carried out by Ms Joyce Fortune (from 5th generation port worker family) for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund in 2005 with Benoit Perrine, Mr. Dorval, Mr. Vurdien. Mr Amirthasawmy Pather, Mr Philippe Clémentine, Joseph Fortune. To our knowledge no other major interviews have taken place of port workers.
- <sup>442</sup> VRAC: Kreol word meaning to lay out on a large surface without a wrapper.
- <sup>443</sup> MMM: Mouvement Militant Mauricien, a 'Neo-Marxist' political party founded by a group of young university graduates. The MMM has now renounced to its Marxist ideal and instead tends towards conservatism.
- <sup>444</sup> TJC Interview with the grandson of Sandivi, Mario Joseph Sandivi.
- <sup>445</sup> Sen-Dou Chang, *The Distribution and Occupations of Overseas Chinese*, pp. 97-100.
- <sup>446</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>447</sup> Ibid., M 20-21.
- <sup>448</sup> Carter & Ng Foong Kwong. *Abacus and Mah Jong*, p.20-21.
- <sup>449</sup> Ibid., p. 25.
- <sup>450</sup> Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo. H, *Chinese Diaspora in Western Indian Ocean* (Editions de l'Océan Indien and Chinese Catholic Mission, 1985) p.. 78
- <sup>451</sup> Carter & Ng Foong Kwong. *Abacus and Mah Jong*, p.. 25.
- <sup>452</sup> Ibid., p. 27.
- <sup>453</sup> Wong Kee Ham. E, *La Diasporas Chinoise aux Mascareignes: Le Cas de la Réunion*, p.21.
- <sup>454</sup> Carter.M & Ng Foong Kwong. J, *Abacus and Mah Jong*, pp. 29 - 33.
- <sup>455</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>456</sup> Ibid., pp. 38 - 39.
- <sup>457</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>458</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>459</sup> Ly-Tio-Fane-Pineo. H, *Chinese Diaspora in Western Indian Ocean*, p. 69.
- <sup>460</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>461</sup> Ibid., p. 74.
- <sup>462</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>463</sup> Ng Foong Kwong. J, *Mutations sociales et développement du commerce chinois au XIXe siècle*, *Journal of Mauritian Studies* (New series) Vol. 1 No.1, (MGI, Mauritius, 2001), pp. 32-54.
- <sup>464</sup> Ahine is well- known to have successfully established many shops in the capital.
- <sup>465</sup> Ng Foong Kwong. J, *Mutations*, p. 38.
- <sup>466</sup> Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo. H, *Chinese Diaspora in Western Indian Ocean*, pp. 76-77

- <sup>467</sup> Carter & Ng Foong Kwong. *Abacus and Mah Jong: Sino-Mauritian Settlement and Economic Consolidation*, p. 88.
- <sup>468</sup> Carter & Ng., J, *Abacus and Mah Jong*, p. 115.
- <sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>470</sup> Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo. H, *Chinese Diaspora in Western Indian Ocean*, p. 94.
- <sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- <sup>472</sup> TJC/H/Philippe L.C.H./18.08.10/Mc line213
- <sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, line 261 to 267
- <sup>474</sup> *News on Sunday*, Feb; 22, 2007, Mr Chan Kam Lon.
- <sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, Mr. Philip Li Ching Hum.
- <sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, line 108 to 112.
- <sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, Line 201 to 205.
- <sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 124 to 239.
- <sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, 147 to 136.
- <sup>480</sup> Feb 23 March 2007, *Yannick Rivet*.
- <sup>481</sup> *Le Mauricien- samedi 28 Janvier 2006*, La Fête du Printemps a Maurice, Percy Yip Tong.
- <sup>482</sup> Report of the Trustam /Eve Commission of 1958.
- <sup>483</sup> Housing and Population Census 2000.
- <sup>484</sup> P. J. Moree, *Dutch Mauritius*, 2000.
- <sup>485</sup> J.M. Filliot, *La traite des Esclaves vers les Mascareignes au 18ème siècle*, 1974.
- <sup>486</sup> B. Moutou, *Les Chrétiens de l'île Maurice*, 1956.
- <sup>487</sup> Code Noir et Lettres Patentes, Septembre 1724.
- <sup>488</sup> Code Noir 1724.
- <sup>489</sup> Quoted by Nagapen, *Le Marronnage*
- <sup>490</sup> Code Noir 1724.
- <sup>491</sup> Relevé du cadastre général de l'Isle de France fait pour l'année 1809.
- <sup>492</sup> B. Moutou, *Les Chrétiens de l'île Maurice*.
- <sup>493</sup> K. Hazareesing, *L'histoire des Indiens à l'île Maurice*, 1982.
- <sup>494</sup> *Annuaire du Diocèse Catholique*, 2000.
- <sup>495</sup> K. Hazareesing, *L'histoire des Indiens à l'île Maurice*, 1982.
- <sup>496</sup> *Annuaire du Diocèse Catholique*, 2000.
- <sup>497</sup> Correspondence to Governor General of India in 1897.
- <sup>498</sup> Choudary, *The wonder that was India*.
- <sup>499</sup> Rev Gislain Emmanuel, *The Anglican Church*, 1972.
- <sup>500</sup> Uttama Bissondoyal (ed) *Indians Overseas: The Mauritian experience*, MGI, 1985.
- <sup>501</sup> *Indian overseas*.
- <sup>502</sup> Rev Gislain Emmanuel, *The Anglican Church*,
- <sup>503</sup> A. Nagapen, *La Paroisse de St Anne*.
- <sup>504</sup> A. Nagapen, *La Paroisse de St Anne*.
- <sup>505</sup> B. Moutou, *Les Chrétiens de l'île Maurice*.
- <sup>506</sup> Hearing of Mr. K Sreepaul, 30 June 2010, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line1132-1134.
- <sup>507</sup> Hearing of Ramtohul, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line1353-1365.
- <sup>508</sup> Hearing of Mr.Sewpal, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line986-987.
- <sup>509</sup> Hearing of Sewpal, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line 999-1001.
- <sup>510</sup> Hearing of Mr.K Sreepaul, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line 52-75.
- <sup>511</sup> Hearing of Mr.K Sreepaul, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line 52-75.
- <sup>512</sup> Sewpal, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line 607.
- <sup>513</sup> Hearing of Mr. Ramtohul, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/MC, line 1385-1387.
- <sup>514</sup> Official translation, hearing of Ramtohul, TJC/H/Sreepaul/300610/Me, line1102-1106.
- <sup>515</sup> Chauveau hearing, TJC/H/Chauveau./14.07.10/Af, line 24.
- <sup>516</sup> Chauveau hearing, line 35-41.
- <sup>517</sup> Chauveau hearing, line 83-85.
- <sup>518</sup> Tacouri hearing, TJC/H/Tacouri D./14/07.10/Ae, line127-128; Ramsamy hearing, TJC/H/Ramsamy VL/040810Ae, line 79-80.
- <sup>519</sup> Ramsamy hearing, line 101-103.
- <sup>520</sup> Ramsamy hearing, line 176-177.
- <sup>521</sup> Ramsamy hearing, line 288-291.
- <sup>522</sup> Cader Sayed Hossen hearing, TJC/H/MrHossenC.S/010910, line 418-422.
- <sup>523</sup> Cader Sayed Hossen hearing, line 211-215.
- <sup>524</sup> Cader Sayed Hossen hearing, line 330-331.
- <sup>525</sup> Hearing of Riche Terre planters represented by Mr V. Jhurry, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010.
- <sup>526</sup> Hearing of Sreepaul, line 330-332.
- <sup>527</sup> Reify: to make (something abstract) more concrete or real
- <sup>528</sup> Social stratification: arranging the members of a society into a pattern of superior and inferior ranks
- <sup>529</sup> A phenotype is any observable characteristic or trait of an organism.
- <sup>530</sup> Part IX, *Rodrigues, Agaléga and the Outer Islands*, pages 528, 529.
- <sup>531</sup> The Anderson Papers - Dispatch No.105, of 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1838.
- <sup>532</sup> British Public Records Office CO 167/638, 1888.
- <sup>533</sup> British Public Records Office CO 167/861/10, 167/867/13, 167/893/4, 167/896/16.
- <sup>534</sup> British Public Records Office CO 167/861/10, 167/867/13, 167/893/4, 167/896/16.
- <sup>535</sup> British Public Records Office CO 167/861/10, 167/867/13, 167/893/4, 167/896/16.
- <sup>536</sup> R.M. D'Unienville, 2002, *Legal opinion in Re. The Chagos Islanders*, Port- Louis.
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- <sup>541</sup> <http://www.un.org/documents/>
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- <sup>548</sup> Ryan Sewlyn(1994) Blacks out in the cold, in *5 Plus* Newspaper, 8 June 1994.
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## APPENDIX ONE GUIDELINES ON MANAGEMENT AND STORAGE OF TJC RESEARCH DATA

### INTRODUCTION

The Truth and Justice Commission came into operation since 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009. It aimed at assessing the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present to make recommendations to the President of the Republic of Mauritius on measures to be taken to achieve social justice and national unity.

To achieve its objectives, the Commission conducted various researches. It has the responsibility and obligation regarding the retention and access to research materials gathered during its mandate.

Hence, the imperative for guidelines that address the ownership of, storage of and access to research data after the mandate of the Commission. This document is divided into three sections: **Section 1** introduces the research conducted by the Commission to justify the need for a guideline on the management of research data and secondary materials compiled during the mandate of the Commission. In addition, the main concepts set out in this document are interpreted for a better reading of the document. **Section 2** Justifies the need for Truth and Justice Commission guidelines for ethical and good management of the research material. Sub-Section 2.02 presents the various types of data collected and Sub-section 2.03 describes the various data categories and the criteria used to categorise the data. Sub-section 2.04 presents the special data collected during the Commission mandate and Sub-section 2.05 make recommendations regarding access priority and ownership rights respectively. **Section 3** Ends with a list of repository institutions and reasons why they were chosen.

During the mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission various investigations were undertaken and collection of data conducted with and about people using collecting oral testimonies and documentary information. The Commission gathered primary and secondary evidences enabling inquiries into slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius.

A responsible conduct of research includes ethical considerations specific to the scope of the research, research methods including fieldwork, research/data subjects, project governance, dissemination of research findings and proper management and retention of research data.

Primary and secondary data compiled might be all that will remain of the research at the end of the mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission and hence, this document is about the management and retention of secondary research data that is an important stage in research work.

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### 1.01 JUSTIFICATION FOR GUIDELINE

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Each institution should have a policy on the management and storage of secondary materials and research data that should be consistent with existing legislations, codes and guidelines. Data retention and management constitute good research practice and thus institutions should provide archival facilities for the safe and secure storage and maintenance of research data.

Consequently, these guidelines on ownership of and access to secondary materials and research data was drafted in line with the existing archival requirements, legislation, privacy rules and other guidelines is necessary to ensure the ethical and lawful processing of the research materials gathered by the Commission.

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## 1.02 DEFINITION OF MAIN TERMS

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For a better reading and comprehension of this document, a definition of the main terms is given in this chapter. The definitions are in line with the Data Protection Act 2004 and the Copy Right Act 1997.

**Adverse Action:** means any action that may adversely affect the person's rights, benefits, privileges, obligations or interests.

**Commission:** refers to the Truth and Justice Commission

**Consent:** refers to freely given specific and informed indication of the wishes of the data subject by which he signifies his agreement to process the information he/she provided to the researcher

**Copyright:** means an economic right subsisting in a work

**Data:** means recorded information, regardless of the form or medium on which it information is recorded. It includes writings, films, sound recordings, pictorial reproductions, graphic representations, statistical records, and other research data."

**Data Subject:** refers to a person that has consented to participate in the research. He/she is also referred to as a research participant.

**Human Research:** means research conducted with or about people, or their data or tissue. Human participation in research is therefore to be understood broadly, to include the involvement of human beings through: (i) taking part in surveys, interviews or focus groups; (ii) undergoing psychological, physiological or medical testing or treatment; (iii) being observed by researchers; (iv) researchers having access to their personal documents or other materials; (v) the collection and use of their body organs, tissues or fluids (e.g. skin, blood, urine, saliva, hair, bones, tumour and other biopsy specimens) or their exhaled breath; (vi) access to their information (in individually identifiable, re-identifiable or non-identifiable form) as part of an existing published or unpublished source or database.<sup>1</sup>

**Processing:** means any operation or set of operations performed on the data including (i) collecting, organising or altering data, (ii) retrieving, consulting, using, storing or adapting the data, (iii) disclosing the data by transmitting, disseminating or otherwise making it available and (iv) aligning, combining, blocking, erasing or destroying the data.

**Research:** refers to 'work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.'<sup>2</sup>

**Relevant filing system:** means a structured set of information relating to individuals that, although it is not in a form capable of being processed, is structured either by reference to any individual or by reference to criteria relating to the individual in such a way that the structure allows ready accessibility to information relating to that individual.

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<sup>1</sup>National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee 2007.

<sup>2</sup>British Research Assessment Exercise cited in National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee 2007

## 2.01 JUSTIFICATION FOR TJC ARCHIVE

Written documents (transcripts, questionnaires, census recording and other written sources), audio-visual recordings (oral interviews and hearings) and other research materials should be retained and made accessible not only for legal reasons but for future research purposes as well.

Firstly, sufficient materials and data should be retained to justify the outcomes of the research and to defend them if they are challenged. Secondly, the public and scholarly community should be given access to research data collected for research purposes and to avoid duplication of data collection. Thirdly, the Commission has an implicit duty to disseminate research data to encourage research and promote a culture of research. In line with conventions elsewhere, such as in UK, publicly funded research must be made accessible to other scholars.

Consequently, a Truth and Justice Commission archive was set up composed of the secondary research data compiled during the mandate of the Commission that are listed below in Sub-section 2.02 that should be made accessible to the public and especially the scholarly community (researchers and students).

To ensure good research practice and ethical use of the above archives, the curators should:

1. Keep the archives in a safe and secure place. The computer and/or hardware should be password protected
2. Store the confidential research data separate in a secure place and under lock
3. A catalogue of the TJC archives should be available in an accessible form
4. Manage the archives according to the relevant legislation and guidelines

The archives should be administered by the respective repositories identified in Section III. The repositories should be responsible for the storing and maintenance of the archives and informing the public and scholarly community of the existence of the archives.

## 2.02 TYPES OF DATA COLLECTED

Data compiled during the mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission can be sorted out into two groups, administrative data and research data. In line with the National Archives Act 1999, the National Archives shall be the repository of the Commission's administrative archives to the same status as the government archives.

Guiding principles were drafted on the management and storing of the oral research data and hence, this document focuses essentially on the management and storage of secondary research data.

<b>Written records</b>	Photocopies of archival documents found in public repositories Photocopies of archival documents found in private repositories Photocopies and printed copies of journal articles, manuscripts, surveys, legal documents and other publications Books, manuscripts, reports and other secondary sources of information Land documents (Land deeds, site plans, Civil Status Office documents and other legal papers) Photocopies of maps
<b>Visual images</b>	Digital photos of Civil Status documents, notarial acts Digital photos of archival documents Photos Maps

**DATA CATEGORIES**

The secondary research materials compiled during the mandate of the TJC were collected from the private and public archives in Mauritius and abroad. Technical, research and official documents were also collected from other private, public and research institutions such as libraries, Ministries, Civil Status Office, Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the University of Mauritius.

The materials were categorised as per their format. Two categories were set:

1. Soft copies (in JPEG, PDF, Doc and Xls formats) including digitised copies of documents
2. Hard copies including books, manuscripts and photocopies of documents

Two levels of confidentiality were identified according to whether the archives are of the public domain or are confidential data. There

Confidentiality Level	Data Classification	Classification Type of Data Format	TJC Project	Archival Documents
<b>Level 2</b> 	Confidential	Hard copy Soft copy	Proposed National Genealogy Centre  Proposed Land Research Centre	Digitised copies of Civil Status Office documents and notarial acts  Land documents containing individuals family trees and notarial documents. Also in this collection are title deeds, transcribed volumes of from registrar office general; Legal documents from notaries, affidavit, <i>casier hypothécaire</i> , private correspondence. and other documents.
<b>Level 1</b> 	Public Access	Hard copy Soft copy	Project data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slave trade and indentured immigration</li> <li>• Economics of slavery and indenture</li> <li>• Race Discourse</li> <li>• Coloured population</li> <li>• Cite La Mivoie</li> <li>• Port Workers</li> <li>• Church History</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Project</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Social Justice</li> <li>• Outer Islands</li> </ul>	French National Archives & others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C4 Series</li> <li>• Monneron files</li> <li>• Diocese of Port Louis Archives</li> <li>• Journal Articles</li> <li>• National Archives</li> <li>• Central Statistics Office</li> <li>• Apollo Bramwell's skeleton scans</li> <li>• Public surveys, reports and maps from Ministries and public institutions</li> </ul>

Special Data

**Genealogical Data including DNA Consent Forms**

As the research is not complete, the DNA cannot be destroyed. The consent forms will be kept by the Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture which has been associated with this project.

**LAND DOCUMENTS**

The documents will be placed under the responsibility of the Prime Minister’s Office until the implementation phase begins.

Access Priority

Type of Data	Conditions of access to TJC researchers and justification	Conditions of access to public or rest of scholarly community
Archival data from National Archives and other public institutions	Accessible to public. No restrictions.	No restrictions
Archival data found in private repositories	Written Consent of the private repository required	Written Consent of the private repository required
Biological data (DNA, medical tests)	No access.	No Access

**REPOSITORIES OF TJC ARCHIVE**

Since the Commission was set up for a specific period of time, after the disbanding of the Commission, the following institutions with an interest in research were identified as repositories of the TJC non-administrative archives.

The aim of having these archives is to make available the secondary research materials accessible to the public and scholarly community to facilitate, promote and encourage research. Therefore, to ensure that the archives do not remain dormant and/or underutilised, the repositories should be research institutions that promote the culture of ethical and responsible research conduct.

Furthermore, to ensure that the research data will be accessible to the public and to scholarly community, these institutions should not ‘practise retention of information’ but on the contrary should certify optimum use of the databanks in keeping with the guidelines set up the Truth and Justice Commission.

In this respect, these institutions have been identified as repositories of the respective archives:

- ***Slave Trade Databases and copies of archival documents and secondary sources:***  
 University of Mauritius  
 Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture  
 Le Morne Heritage Fund
- ***Indentured Immigration Databases and copies of archival documents and secondary sources:***  
 University of Mauritius  
 Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund  
 Mahatma Gandhi Institute

- ***Oral Data***

Given that to date, only the University of Mauritius among research institutions and repositories, possesses a Research Ethics Committee which will be able to formulate and make informed decisions on conditions of access in a scientific manner, all oral data will be housed there until a National Oral Data Archive is created with appropriate ethical procedures put in place with qualified personnel recruited.

## APPENDIX 2 GUIDELINES ON ORAL DATA MANAGEMENT AND STORAGE

### INTRODUCTION

The Truth and Justice Commission came into operation since 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009. It aimed at assessing the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present to make recommendations to the President of the Republic of Mauritius on measures to be taken to achieve social justice and national unity.

To achieve its objectives, the Commission conducted various researches. The Commission has the responsibility and obligation regarding the retention and access to primary materials and research data gathered during its mandate.

Hence, the imperative for a guideline that addresses the ownership of, storage of and access to the research data after the mandate of the Commission. This document has three sections with multiple chapters.

**Section 1:** Introduces the research conducted by the Commission to justify the need for a guideline on the management of research data and primary materials compiled during the mandate of the Commission. In addition, the main concepts set out in this document are interpreted for a better reading of the document.

**Section 2:** Justifies the need for Truth and Justice Commission databanks and guidelines for ethical and good management of the databanks. Chapter 2.02 presents the various types of data collected and Chapter 2.03 describes the various data categories and the criteria used to categorise the data. In chapters 2.04 and 2.05 recommendations are made regarding access priority and ownership rights respectively.

**Section 3:** Ends with a list of repository institutions and reasons why they were chosen.

During the Truth and Justice Commission mandate various investigations were undertaken and human research was conducted with and about people comprising of collecting oral testimonies and genealogical information including DNA consent. The Commission: (a) gathered primary and secondary evidences enabling inquiries into slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius; (b) determined appropriate measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured labourers; (c) enquired into complaints of land dispossession and/or prescriptions given before the Commission and (d) submitted a comprehensive report of its activities and findings based on evidences gathered.

A responsible conduct of research includes ethical considerations specific to the scope of the research, research methods including fieldwork, research/data subjects, project governance, dissemination of research findings and proper management and retention of research data.

Primary and secondary data compiled might be all that will remain of the research at the end of the mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission and hence, this guideline is about the management and retention of research data that is an important stage in research work.

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### 1.1 JUSTIFICATION FOR GUIDELINES

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Each institution should have a policy on the management and storage of primary materials and research data that should be consistent with existing legislations, codes and guidelines. Data retention and management constitute good research practice and thus institutions should provide recording-keeping facilities for the safe and secure storage and maintenance of data including a conducive environment and technical assistance for long-term preservation of the database and protection from any risk of damage and destruction

When conducting research, the research participants establish a trustworthy relationship and, sometimes, comradeship with the researcher and this relationship forms the basis of the research and, particularly, fieldwork process. Participation in human research is, most of the time, from a voluntary and altruistic concern.

Thus, the nature of this relationship adds to the ethical responsibility borne by those in whom it is placed and underscores the importance of protecting the research participants and researchers.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the Data Protection Act 2004 explicitly states the duty of protecting the data subjects from adverse actions that might affect the person's rights, benefits, privileges, obligations or interests.

Consequently, a principle guideline on ownership of and access to primary materials and research data that is consistent with the existing confidentiality requirements, legislation, privacy rules and other guidelines is necessary to ensure the ethical and lawful processing of the research materials gathered by the Commission.

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## 1.1 DEFINITION OF MAIN TERMS

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For a better reading and comprehension of this document, a definition of the main terms is given in this chapter. The definitions are in line with the Data Protection Act 2004 and the Copy Right Act 1997.

**Adverse Action:** means any action that may adversely affect the person's rights, benefits, privileges, obligations or interests.

**Commission:** refers to the Truth and Justice Commission

**Consent:** refers to freely given specific and informed indication of the wishes of the data subject by which he signifies his agreement to process the information he/she provided to the researcher

**Copyright:** means an economic right subsisting in a work

**Data:** means recorded information, regardless of the form or medium on which it information is recorded. It includes writings, films, sound recordings, pictorial reproductions, graphic representations, statistical records, and other research data."

**Data Subject:** refers to a person that has consented to participate in the research. He/she is also referred to as a research participant.

**Human Research:** means research conducted with or about people, or their data or tissue. Human participation in research is therefore to be understood broadly, to include the involvement of human beings through: (i) taking part in surveys, interviews or focus groups; (ii) undergoing psychological, physiological or medical testing or treatment; (iii) being observed by researchers; (iv) researchers having access to their personal documents or other materials; (v) the collection and use of their body organs, tissues or fluids (e.g. skin, blood, urine, saliva, hair, bones, tumour and other biopsy specimens) or their exhaled breath; (vi) access to their information (in individually identifiable, re-identifiable or non-identifiable form) as part of an existing published or unpublished source or database.<sup>4</sup>

**Personal data** refers to data that relates to an individual who can be identified from those data and/or data or other information including an opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the data, information or opinion.

**Processing:** means any operation or set of operations performed on the data including (i) collecting, organising or altering data, (ii) retrieving, consulting, using, storing or adapting the data, (iii) disclosing the data by transmitting, disseminating or otherwise making it available and (iv) aligning, combining, blocking, erasing or destroying the data.

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<sup>3</sup>National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee 2007

<sup>4</sup>National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee 2007

**Research:** refers to ‘work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.’<sup>5</sup>

**Relevant filing system:** means a structured set of information relating to individuals that, although it is not in a form capable of being processed, is structured either by reference to any individual or by reference to criteria relating to the individual in such a way that the structure allows ready accessibility to information relating to that individual.

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## 2.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR TJC DATABANK

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Written documents (transcripts, questionnaires, census recording and other written sources), audio-visual recordings (oral interviews and hearings) and other research materials should be retained and made accessible not only for legal reasons but for future research purposes as well.

Firstly, sufficient materials and data should be retained to justify the outcomes of the research and to defend them if they are challenged. Secondly, the public and scholarly community should be given access to research data and primary materials collected for research purposes and to avoid duplication of data collection. Thirdly, the Commission has an implicit duty to disseminate research data to encourage research and promote a culture of research.

Consequently, a Truth and Justice Commission Oral Data Archive was set up composed of the primary materials and research data compiled during the mandate of the Commission. It regroups the: (i) oral interviews, (ii) written records and (iii) visual images.

This databank consists of the primary materials and research data sources listed below in 2.02 that should be made accessible to the public and especially the scholarly community (researchers and students) in accordance with the guidelines set by the TJC.

To ensure good research practice and ethical use of the above database, the repository institution should:

5. Identify a curator responsible for the administration and maintenance of the databank
6. Keep the databank in a safe and secure place. The computer and/or hardware should be password protected
7. Store the highly confidential and confidential research data separate in a secure place and under lock
8. The consent forms should be kept separately and under lock
9. A catalogue of the primary materials and research data should be available in an accessible form
10. Manage the databank according to the relevant legislation and guidelines. This includes making sure that the public and scholarly community are aware of and abide to confidentiality and moral rights agreements

The databank should be administered by the respective repository identified in Section III. The repository should be responsible for the storing and maintenance of the database and informing the public and scholarly community of its existence.

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<sup>5</sup>British Research Assessment Exercise cited in National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council & Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee 2007

In addition, it should manage access to the data stored in the databank in line with the TJC recommendations and hence should respect the level of confidentiality, access and processing of research data set by the Commission.

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## 2.1 TYPES OF DATA COLLECTED

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Data compiled during the mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission can be sorted out into two groups, administrative data and research data. In line with the National Archives Act 1999, the National Archives shall be the repository of the Commission’s administrative archives to the same status as the government archives. Hence, this document focuses essentially on the management and storage of primary research data (oral interviews, hearings, transcriptions and consent forms).

Types of Data	Data Description
Oral Interviews	Audio-taped interviews comprising personal data on data subject  Videos of focus group discussions
Written records	Transcriptions of oral interviews
Public and Private (In-Camera) Hearings	Audio and video recordings of hearings held at in-door and out-door.  Transcriptions of the hearings

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## 2.1 DATA CATEGORIES

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As per the Data Protection Act 2004, sensitive personal data are information concerning a data subject and consist of information as to: (i) racial or ethnic origin, (ii) political opinion and/or adherence, (iii) religious belief and/or other belief of a similar nature, (iv) membership to a trade union, (v) physical and/mental health, (vi) sexual preferences and/or practices and (vii) the commission and/or alleged commission of an offence.

In addition to the above, information as to a data subject’s: (i) caste background, (ii) experience and/or perception of racial and/or ethnic discrimination and prejudices and/or other forms of discriminations and prejudices and (iii) personal opinions of prominent social, political and economic actors were also considered as sensitive data.

The research data confidentiality graduation was established based on the level of data ‘identifiability’ and sensitivity as set above and the potential defamatory nature of the information gathered. To maintain data confidentiality and anonymity, it implies that only the researcher can identify the data subject, that the former should guarantee that no one outside of the project can connect data subjects with their research data and that he/she does not collect individually identifiable data.

The National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee (2007) have established three sets of mutually exclusive data ‘identifiability’ that can be used in the present context:

1. Individually identifiable data: where the identity of a specific individual can reasonably be ascertained. The identifiers are, for example, the data subject name, date of birth and residential address
2. Re-identifiable data: where identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code but the data subject can be re-identified by, for example, linking the code to the data set
3. Non-identifiable data: which have never been labelled with individual identifiers or from which identifiers have been permanently removed and of which no specific individual can be identified

Confidentiality protections minimise the risk of misuse of data and the potential risk of harm from breaches of confidentiality to data subject. Five levels of confidentiality were identified and the level of access to the databanks was decided based on the degree of confidentiality set:

Appendix

Confidentiality Level	Data Classification	Classification Type of Data	Classification Characteristics/ Justification	Level of access and processing	TJC Project
Level 4 	Highly Confidential (HC)	Oral Interviews Transcriptions In-camera hearings	<i>Extremely sensitive personal data and identifiable data information that could cause significant harm to a data subject and that can be prejudicial to the TJC if disclosed and/or processes that would adversely affect the research subject and the TJC</i> <i>Data subject consented to be anonymous. In instances when data subject agreed not to remain anonymous, yet anonymity should be maintained</i> <i>Data Subject minor (under 18 yrs of age)</i>	Access and processing should be denied for a period set by the National Archives Act (30 years as from the creation of the document) After 30 years research data should be classified as confidential so as to protect the descendants of the data subject from potential adverse action	Race Discourse Caste System
Level 3 	Confidential [C]	Oral Interviews Transcriptions	<i>Very sensitive personal data and re-identifiable data</i> <i>Potentially defamatory data and information prejudicial to the TJC</i> <i>Data subject consented to be anonymous. In instances when data subject agreed not to remain anonymous, yet anonymity should be maintained</i>	Access and processing of research data should be restricted Access granted after signature of a confidentiality form Need consent of data subject for processing of data Access to the transcriptions and audio interviews should be restricted. Sensitive and identifiable data should be deleted from the transcription. In the audio-interviews, access to the corresponding section (s) should be limited Potentially defamatory data should be deleted from the transcription and in the audio-interviews access to the corresponding section(s) should be limited	Race Discourse Caste system
Level 2 	Restricted [R]	Oral Interviews Transcriptions	<i>De-identifiable and non-confidential data</i> <i>Data subject wished to remain anonymous</i>	Open access to data Restricted processing of data with consent of data subject	Coloured population Cite La Mivoie Education Social Justice
Level 1 	Unrestricted (U)	Oral Interviews Transcriptions	<i>De-identifiable and non-confidential data</i> <i>Data subject consented not to remain anonymous</i>	Open access to data Restricted processing of data with consent of data subject	Coloured population Cite La Mivoie Education Social Justice Public Hearings

It is important to stress that children and young people less than 18 years of age need special protection. Their participation requires the consent of both parents or where applicable of the guardian or caregiver or their standing consent to their child's involvement in projects in the school setting.

All research data gathered without parental consent or standing consent were classified as highly confidential and therefore should neither be disclosed nor processed. The legal age of informed and lawful consent is 18 years old and hence all research data gathered from minors without parental consent or standing consent was considered as unlawful research data.

Furthermore, all data pertaining to children under 18 years old that were gathered with the adequate consent were also classified as highly confidential and should not be disclosed nor processed because of children vulnerable status.

Researchers are expected to be proactive in designing and conducting research to guarantee that the dignity, welfare and privacy of research participants are protected and that information about an individual remains confidential. Protecting the confidentiality of information collected about data subjects and the latter's rights are inherent to ethical and good research conduct.

For this reason, a protocol of access to highly confidential and confidential primary materials and research data should be devised to ensure that the data in the databank are not processed to the detriment of the data subjects. It is the duty of the curator to make sure that people that have access these data respect and maintain the confidentiality.

Since the primary materials and research data were collected under specific conditions (for research conducted by the Commission), before processing the data in the databank, the researcher should have the consent of the respective data subject. Hence, prior to granting access to the databank, the curator should ensure that the researcher signs an agreement certifying that he/she will act accordingly and that the data are processed in ways agreed by the data subjects and the repository.

In some instances, the curator should consider denying access to the databank to people who do not comply with the confidentiality agreement and protocol of access.

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## 2.1 ACCESS PRIORITY

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Type of data	Conditions of access to TJC researchers and justification	Conditions of access to public or rest of scholarly community
Research data (Oral and Written) classified as restricted and unrestricted	First 3 years (from the time of donation) priority given to researcher who collected data After first 3 years, for a period of two years priority given to researchers and who worked for the TJC	After five years unrestricted
Research data (Oral and Written) classified as confidential	First 3 years (from the time of donation) priority given to researcher who collected the data After first 3 years, for a period of two years priority given to researchers who worked for the TJC	After five years unrestricted
Research data (Oral and Written) classified as Highly confidential	No Access	No Access

Access to the TJC databank should be granted after the repository institution and the TJC conjointly have designed a protocol of access and the principles set in the guidelines.

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## 2.1 OWNERSHIP

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In line with Section 8 of the Copyright Act 1997, the Truth and Justice Commission is the copyright owner and as a general rule, at the end of a project, materials and research data are the property of the institution that hosted the project.

However, in the present instance, since the Commission was set up for a specific period of time, after disbanding the Commission, the ownership of the primary materials and research data and subsequently the copyright should be transferred to the repository institution and, where applicable, to the author(s) of the work.

Hence, regarding the oral interviews, the copyright should be shared between the repository institution and the author(s) of the interviews.

Even though, according to the above-mentioned Act, the data subject does not own any economic rights on the oral interviews (the act excludes expressions of folklore including oral traditions, rituals and other traditional practices), yet, any person who wishes to process the data found in the databank should seek the consent of the respective data subject as well.

The public and scholarly community have a moral right to seek the consent of copyright owners and of the data subjects.

As stated earlier, in the present instance, since the Commission was set up for a specific period of time, after disbanding the Commission, an independent institution with an interest in research should be repository of the databank.

The aim of having this databank is to make primary materials and research data accessible to the public and scholarly community to facilitate, promote and encourage research. Therefore, to make sure that the databank does not remain dormant and/or underutilised, the repository should be a research institution that promotes the culture of ethical and responsible research conduct.

Furthermore, to ensure that the research data will be accessible to the scholarly community, the institution should not 'practise retention of information' but on the contrary should certify optimum use of the databank in keeping with the guidelines set up the Truth and Justice Commission (A concise list of the recommendations is attached).

In this respect, the University of Mauritius has been identified as repository the databank mentioned in Chapter 2.01 The Centre for Research on slavery and indenture should be the repository of the oral history databank for the following reasons:

- The archives should be available for general use such as teaching and research. Hence, the database should not remain dormant and/or underutilised
- The database regroups primary materials and research data on slavery and indentured-ship and hence it is sensible decision to deposit the database at the Centre
- Oral history is a new field of research in Mauritius and oral history archives should be set to promote oral history research

### **Concise list of recommendations to UoM for archiving and management of TJC Oral interviews**

The following suggestions are made:

1. The UoM set up a human research ethical committee. In this respect ethical standards and procedures should be established for research in social sciences and other fields involving human beings as research participants
2. A computer accessible data storage device should be provided for the archiving of the interviews and routine maintenance should be anticipated for the long-term preservation of the databank
3. The TJC databank should be stored in a safe and secure place that is not accessible to the public. The computer and/or hardware should be password protected and be accessible to authorised people only
4. The databank should be stored in a conducive environment for long-term preservation and be protected from any risk of damage and destruction
5. The level of confidentiality and access set by the TJC should be respected. In this respect, the highly confidential research data should be stored separately in a secure place and under lock. These data should neither be accessed nor released before the time prescribed by the law and in line with the TJC level of confidentiality
6. The consent forms accompanying the databank should be kept separately and under lock
7. The aim of constituting this databank is to promote ethical research hence, to make sure that the data will not be underutilised a catalogue should be devised to inform the scholarly community of the existence of the databank
8. Firstly, to guarantee that the dignity, welfare and privacy of research participants are protected and secondly, to minimise the risk of misuse of data and the potential risk of harm from breaches of confidentiality/anonymity to data subjects, it is the duty of the UoM to make sure that the people that have access to the oral interviews respect and maintain the confidentiality/anonymity of the research participants. For this reason, the UoM and the TJC conjointly should establish a research protocol
9. To ensure that the data are not processed to the detriment of the data subjects, one of the roles of the ethical committee might be to make the material available to certain types of researchers such as to forbid access to politicians, lawyers and journalists and limit access to academic and research use only
10. The scholarly community should be aware of and abide to confidentiality and moral rights agreements including information about copyright ownership, access and processing restrictions and anonymity rights. Hence, to ensure that the data will be processed and disseminated in an ethical way, the research protocol mentioned above should provide that, prior to granting access to the databank, the UoM should ensure that the researcher signs an agreement certifying that he/she will respect the conditions set in the protocol when accessing and processing the data. These conditions should cover: (i) anonymity of data subjects, (ii) re-negotiating the consent of the data subjects who restricted the publication of their interviews and (iii) that the data are processed in ways agreed by the data subjects and the UoM. In some instances, the UoM should consider denying access to the databank to people who do not comply with the conditions set in the protocol

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2. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee 2007, *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, Australian Government, view 8 March 2011, < <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au> >
3. The Copyright Act 1997
4. The Data Protection Act 2004
5. The National Archives Act 1999

### APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS JULY 2009

The TJC started its public consultations in July 2009.

A workshop was held on July 2009 at the University of Mauritius with some 50 members of civil society. A summary of the issues of the discussions is given here as they formed an important part in the future methodology and approach used by the TJC for the next two years. Various other consultations were held throughout the two years which drew upon the issues raised during the July workshop. It was a unique opportunity for the TJC to collect views, perceptions and suggestions by various sections of the community.

#### Views expressed at the workshop

##### 1. The Language of Discourse

From the beginning of consultations, it was clear there was a fear expressed by several groups particularly from the Creole community that the TJC would be no more than an academic exercise where the real issues concerning the Creole community would not be discussed. The Language of the discourse to be used was questioned from the very beginning and the fear was that the choice of terms / words was crucial in describing the experiences of slaves and indentured and their descendants. Does one for example, use the term cultural genocide to describe slavery or cultural transformations? Were there other terms that were more appropriate? Daniella Police felt that a scientific discourse developed out of Mauritius was not necessarily better than one developed locally.

##### 2. Landownership and dispossession

The cause of the absence of land ownership among descendants of ex-slaves was widely discussed. It was made clear however that ex-slaves had not always been property less and Dr. Allen's work clearly showed the extent of land acquisitions not only after abolition of slavery but property ownership and entrepreneurial activity among manumitted slaves. The question was therefore: if ex-slaves had owned land and businesses, how did they lose them? Were they the only groups to lose them? Is there any possibility for any of them to obtain this land?

Related to this was the mechanism by which people in full possession of title deeds were unable to access their land because of fraudulent activities having been carried out using peoples ignorance of laws, language used in the system.

*Transparency in land transactions* - current sales, transfers recorded in a public space: internet etc). Reference was made to the backlog of cases and whether a Land Court would help to accelerate matters. While TJC could not correct errors, it could assist a Land court in providing information. It was also important to look at how people's relationship to land was treated by authorities. There was concern that those who occupied someone else's land could do so very easily due to defects in the application of the law. The closure of the Land Court in the 1880s was noted as well as the Tribunal Terrier and these needed to be revived in a new form.

##### *Slave/indentured land seizures*

Some believed that Indian immigrants had obtained the land of ex-slaves and others that private individuals and institutions had appropriated state land.

*The inequality in land ownership* was highlighted. It was stated that while those of French origin were given through the system of *concessions*, land, slaves and capital to start their enterprises, non-Europeans received nothing of the kind so that an economic head start was obtained by those of European origin in Mauritius.

*Access to information concerning all land transactions:* Much needed to be achieved.

Information as well as laws and regulations need to be distributed and freely accessible so all could understand them. This was vehemently supported by Dr Richard Allen who was present at the workshop who stated that 'knowledge is power'. All land transactions needed to be accessible to the public.

It was agreed that the way forward was a complete review of laws, procedures and judicial issues governing land ownership and the creation of a Land court, staffed by professionals to ensure the independence of the Land Court and a dedicated personnel to serve it. It was also recommended that the cadastral exercise (LAVIMS) currently going on in the country at that time should be frozen.

### **3. Culture Identity Racism**

On this issue too, there was concern that the TJC not get bogged down in academic discussions and a specific methodology needed to be devised in order to be more publicly oriented. The Commission, it was felt, should go to the community rather than the inverse, especially as far as the descendants of slaves were concerned and should listen to the experiences of the population. Any recommendations should lead to 'actionable outcomes'. In particular attention needed to be paid to racism policy, Identity discourses and practices, and racism experiences to be documented. The evolution needed to be documented: while the youth would not speak so freely about slavery because of new globalised identities and even though they may suffer aversive racism and not about direct racism. The TJC should take into account gendered experiences across a group, rather than as individuals.

#### *Education and human rights*

Human rights education was considered a priority by participants. Teachers should be trained in HR education. It was highlighted that actual differences between human beings were only minute yet were bloated out of proportion.

The system as it existed in Mauritius resembled apartheid but practiced more efficiently. A name could be the cause of handicap in recruitment in employment.

#### *Approaches and methodologies*

It was considered very important for TJC in its formulation of methodology to understand discourse and understand the discourse of descendants. A Multidisciplinary approach was necessary and the inclusion of an oral culture needed to be recognized. In approaching the Creole community, an oral approach was required.

Identity needed to be studied as an original construction and seen as a heritage but also as an original construction by Mauritians. Discussion needed to take place on what made up the Mauritian nation. History education was important but in a more dynamic way/

Relationships between culture and management of resources were important to look at. How far were values determinant in the management of the economy? And of knowledge. It was clear that there were different systems of values operating, some more dominant than others. The role of freemasonry in early colonial days and its association with slavery needed to be examined. In particular the cultural values of descendants of slaves and why they cannot integrate in modern economy. Why has this not been discussed?

#### *The short history of Mauritius and the development of a Creole Culture*

Culture of descendants of slaves has been largely oral throughout the three centuries. It is still an embryonic culture and is still essentially oral. Is there a place for it in the education system?

### *Mauritianism/nationalism*

There are two discourses: a 'Mauritianism' discourse and an 'ethnic' discourse. Creoles have been 'mutilated' in this discourse as ethnic discourse is considered negative. The ethnic discourse is a reality and is not less valid than others.

However it was also pointed out that identity construction is constantly being reinvented, defined, and redefined and what is a Mauritian, what is a Creole etc? One must not fall into the danger of reading the past into the present and also make analogies where there are none. Comparing Mauritius and the USA i.e., in the American situation and racism: slavery is not the source, it was abolition: Jim Crow issue. The risks in doing 'ethnic' research in Mauritius needed to be considered. When introducing the concept of racism and asking people about racial experiences: encourage people to think in racial terms. The outcomes needed to be thought of.

### *Politics and the 'malaise créole'*

The political discourse since the 1950s and the link between communities When Eugene Laurent worked with Manilal Doctor. Political parties representing majority and minority have united to ensure victory. This is dangerous trap because it means some minorities are absorbed

### *Religious subsidies*

Abolition of religious subsidies to reduce racism should be considered and explanation provided i.e., that it perpetuated divisions of caste, ethnicity and was used for political leverage. It was of concern that those who had originally proposed to talk on casteism chose not to do so.

### *Outcomes for community*

There must be tangible outcomes for the community. Policies must be put in place to achieve equality such as the Equal Opportunity Act. Other actions included: Develop community outreach programs, Must include all actors

## **4. Education**

A very large number of views were expressed on education and the need for reform. These are summarized here: educational programmes to fight racism must be put in place and for schools to be aware of the various conventions; the need for stereotypes of occupations for descendants to be countered; the destigmatisation of those who did not vote for independence; the study of the history of education; choice of English by the descendants of indenture while those of slaves had no choice: French was the language of Catechism and was chosen. New language developed by the new Creole elite emerging: Creole. Creole needed to be introduced for descendants of slaves as a cultural, part of linguistic /cultural rights. High failure rate needed to be examined.

### *Training*

The training of those who teach needed to be looked into. What was the social mindset of teachers: is it a colonial mindset? Those who had experience in education stated that of those who failed school: 10% go into drugs, 10% in alcohol and 20% remained in trades. This had started affecting other ethnic groups as well.

### *Education and malnutrition*

In some areas of Mauritius, children cannot be part of education as they were malnourished. There was child prostitution and high rate of teenage pregnancies.

### *Values*

Descendants of slaves should not be seen as a homogenous group as many had different values. There was a willingness to acquire education.

### *Alcohol consumption*

It was important to educate children about alcohol and health. They should study fetal alcohol syndrome and how it affects the intellectual development of children. The psychosocial consequences of discrimination of racism must be studied by TJC and

Provide therapy.

### *Transparency in education required*

Billions are spent on education yet only 6,000 students reach HSC. The curriculum of education needs to include culture, sports, and skills. The ratio of student to teacher needs to be improved.

### *Elitism in education*

Elitism needs to be removed. One cannot create opportunities otherwise. A holistic approach to identity and culture needs to be considered. For example, class issues must be addressed, not just ethnic issues. There is a correlation of ethnicity with class and a link with discrimination. But in some areas, class issues predominate.

## **5. History**

On this topic, much was said and is summarized here.

*Approaches and methodologies:* oral histories needed to be incorporated with archival studies

*Gaps in the study of history:* post 1830s 1840s 1850s - experience of slaves and descendants

*Comparisons of Rodrigues* (without a sugar industry) and Mauritius to show different evolution for Mauritius were possible with a different development plan.

#### APPENDIX 4 SLAVE TRADE DATABASE

The aim is to establish a list of all ships and their cargo to better document the slave trade and arrive at an improved assessment of the volume of the slave trade to Mauritius, and the actual number of slaves having been disembarked in Mauritius.

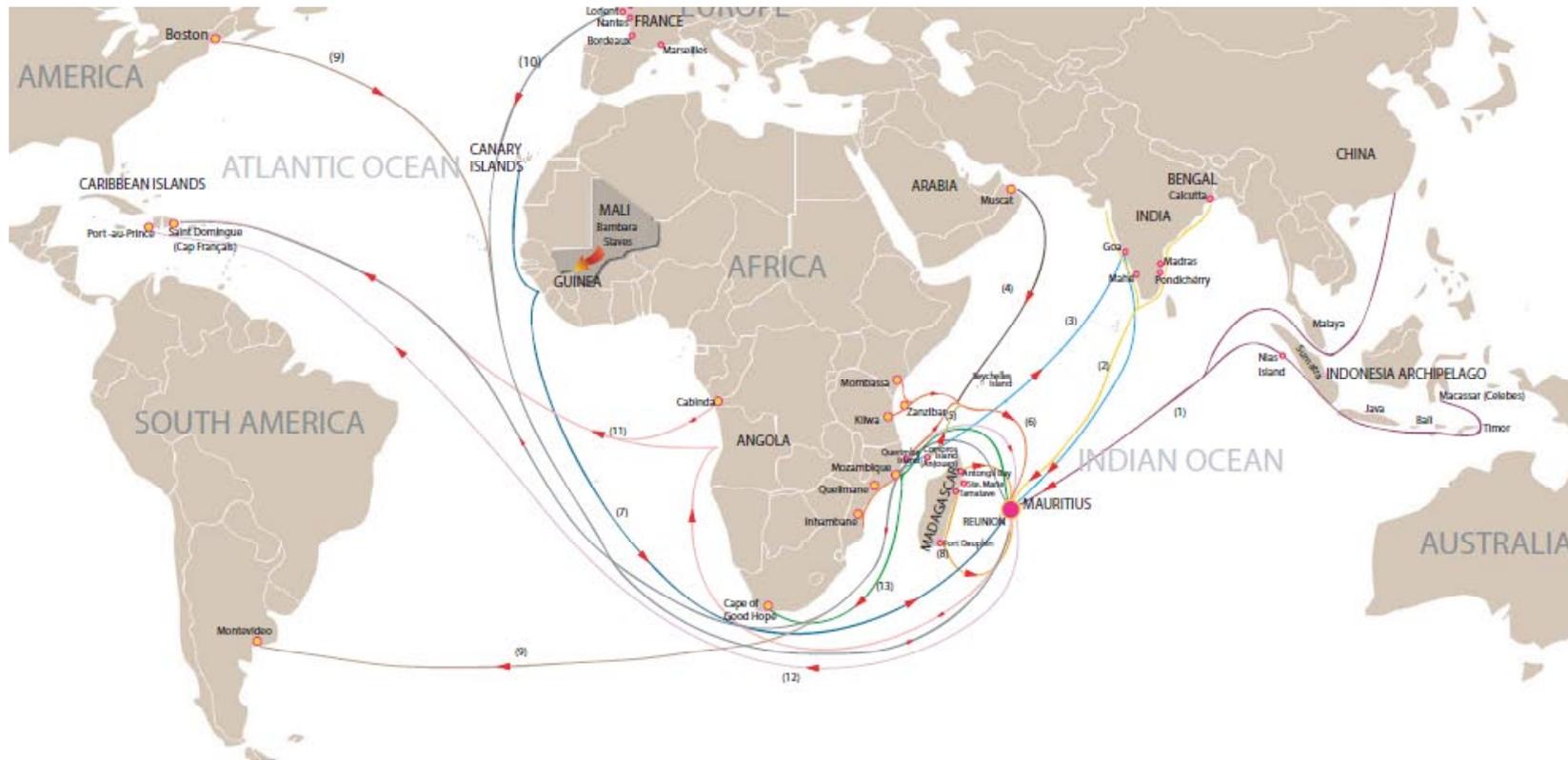
It is also necessary to include in calculations, those ships/persons/slaves destined for Mauritius but who never arrived, due to revolt, shipwreck, diseased etc.

Scholars from overseas working on the slave trade to Mauritius in their respective countries need to be included in this project, such as Thomas Vernet and Benigna Zimba.

- The simple database started by the TKC should be continued by the University of Mauritius in partnership with other institutions which have an interest in the slave trade and slavery. The University possesses both history and computer science departments who can collaborate with minimal cost with each other to maintain the database. It also has a pool of students every year who can be initiated and trained in historical research and data entry.
- Appropriate researchers be given the funds to continue this work.
- This work is to be shared with the public through an online database.
- Inputs should also come from various institutions and individuals in Mauritius and overseas particularly in France and Portugal where the main repositories for the slave trade are to be found.
- Research should be continued in France and elsewhere and French and other Governments approached to partially fund this research overseas.

**RECOMMENDATION INTERCONTINENTAL SLAVERY MUSEUM**

*Map showing strategic location of Mauritius in Intercontinental Slave Trade*



(Source: adapted from map of the slave trade of Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund)

## APPENDIX 5 INTERCONTINENTAL SLAVERY MUSEUM PROJECT

### I. History, Geography, Contextualization and Justification

The idea for a Slavery Museum originated as early as 2000 during discussions for the Origins Project in Mauritius and during the Conference of Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa in 2004.

In both Mozambique and Mauritius, despite all efforts, for various reasons, no museum ever saw the light of day.

In 2009 the Truth and Justice Commission began its activities. One of the key components was research towards the memorialisation of the slave trade, slavery and indentured immigration. The idea was thus re-launched and discussions to finalise this project resumed in 2010.

In April 2011, the Truth and Justice Commission organized an International Conference on the Slave Trade. This presented the ideal opportunity and appropriate forum to collect the views of many persons from all walks of life on the subject of slavery, the slave trade and representations and allowed the conceptors of this project to update the project and infuse it with a new dynamism.

A few countries in South Eastern Africa already house slavery museums: the Rabai Museum in Mombasa, Kenya and the Museu da Escravatura in Luanda, Angola are some examples.

Our research through the various projects undertaken since 2000 (Origins Project, Slave Routes Project, Truth and Justice Commission, etc) has concluded that there is a need for an intercontinental museum linking the countries such as Mozambique, Mauritius and Madagascar, as they all formed part of the slave trade network in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

They are also the countries that have played a key role in the Indian Ocean Slave trade. Conservative estimates are that Madagascar exported over 125,325 slaves and Eastern Africa, over 180,000 slaves. France traded the bulk of these slaves (over 335,000) followed by the other European countries, Portugal, Holland and England approximately between 10,000 to 60,000 each.

Mozambique and Mauritius are, therefore, the two most appropriate places to host the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, and ideal places to give more visibility to the phenomenon of slavery and slave traffic in the Indian Ocean under colonial rule (Portuguese, French, British, Dutch).

Furthermore, Mauritius is the first country in Africa and the world to have a Truth and Justice Commission investigating the history of slavery and its consequences and to accept the principle that reparations are required.

Mauritius has currently also all the required conditions (moral, rationale, logistics, infrastructural and official government support) to be the first to house the first intercontinental museum in Africa.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum endeavors to be primarily, an institution directed towards cultural preservation and studying the phenomenon of slavery and slave trade in the Indian Ocean.

In addition, various factors explain the main function, usefulness and historical value of this institution:

- (i) the *SlaveryMuseum* aims to be an institution to promote cultural exchange, the culture of peace and union among peoples of several continents involved in this process;
- (ii) this institution will strive to develop its enormous educational potential to promote curricular development, scientific research, as well as the production of educational and pedagogical materials;
- (iii) the *Slavery Museum* will constitute a driving factor for developing cultural tourism and the construction of economic and social infrastructures;
- (iv) from the scientific point of view, the Project seeks to stimulate curricula development and the

production of pedagogical material related to this topic, a process which is currently in course in most of the African continent.

## II. RELEVANCE AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL SLAVERY MUSEUM

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum will highlight the deep transformations that this tragedy caused at economic, social, political, cultural, and ideological levels in all continents, with particular emphasis to Africa and Africans. It will also create opportunities to conduct in-depth and extensive studies of the phenomenon of “slavery and slave trade” on a regional scale and global level. It will also promote investigations and studies en route for the thematic “slavery and slave trade” in Mauritius, Mozambique and Madagascar, in the region, and in the context of the former colonial empires.

Beneficiaries of the Slavery Museum will be:

- (i) students of all educational levels;
- (ii) educational institutions;
- (iii) communities that are part of the slave routes itinerary;
- (iv) researchers, teachers and academicians;
- (v) governmental institutions such as the ministry of tourism;
- (vi) civil society
- (vii) Countries in the region directly and indirectly affected by the Slave trade and slavery will be able to gain from increased understanding and knowledge of this process and how it continues to affect our societies today.
- (viii) International visitors and tourists

## III. Components, Strategy, and Methods of Implementing the Project

The Project will cover six components including the Scientific, Educational, and Cultural constituents, and endeavors among other aspects:

- (i) to give logical continuity to the first phase of the Slave Routes Project in Mozambique and Origins Project in Mauritius. Both projects included book publications (*‘History, Memory, Identity’* and *‘Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa’*, audiovisuals and other materials; and
- (ii) to be an inclusive institution in time and space, hence the reason and justification for the use of the term “intercontinental museum.”

## IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE SLAVERY MUSEUM

Considering the role of future generations in social and cultural development of the continent, the main goal of this Project, is to rescue the history of slavery and the slave traffic in southeastern Africa. In this context, the gathering, collection and preservation of oral traditions; as well as the promotion of cultural diversity and cultural tourism, and of a whole range of activities interconnected to this phenomenon, are crucial to this Project.

## V. Implementation

Concerning implementation, we recommend that the Project be initiated and supervised by the Prime Minister’s Office in collaboration with related institutions.

## VI. Site of Museum

The conceptors of this Project recommend that the Museum be located in the capital city Port Louis. Apart from giving the history of slavery its due importance it is also appropriate that it should be placed in a location that is reminiscent of slavery and related to slavery. Furthermore as the historic parts of the city are frequently visited by tourists and Mauritians alike, this will ensure financial sustainability for the Museum once it is opened.

The site par excellence is the complex on the eastern side of Port Louis comprised of historical buildings all found on State land and currently neglected. It is part of the Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property. The Military Hospital complex will provide sufficient space for this and especially as one wing will house the National Art Gallery, a project also to be initiated by the Prime Minister's Office. This Hospital was built by slaves and indeed housed sick slaves on one floor. It is surrounded by other buildings of direct relation to slavery: the Post Office on which site existed the Bagne for Maroon slaves, the Granary where port workers (descendants of slaves) loaded and unloaded rice, the Customs House where slaves and Liberated Africans passed through when they first arrived in Mauritius in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, amongst others. Ratsitanina, the Malagasy Prince, exiled to and executed in Mauritius was imprisoned in the Bagne.

## VII. BUDGET (US \$) ESTIMATE BY OBJECTIVE

(Time frame: 18 months from start date)

CATEGORY	US\$
<b>Objective 1:</b> To carry out preparatory activities for the establishment of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum	
Consultancy fees: (60,000=2,500x12mtsx2)	101,700
Airfare: every quarter=1000x4x1 for Mozambican consultant;1000x2x1 for Mauritian)	
trips and accomodation/per diem: Mozambican consultant each visit: 15 days 350x15x4=21,000; for Mauritian consultant 350x2x21=14,700; for Preparatory Phase	
Field research in Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius and language courses	25,000
Visits to the following countries: Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius	15,000
Training workshop in Museology, conservation and others	10,000
Equipment to supply the Slavery Museum's preliminary offices in Maputo and Mauritius	20,000
<b>SUB TOTAL OBJECTIVE 1</b>	<b>161,700</b>
<b>Objective 2:</b> To establish and institutionalize the Intercontinental Slavery Museum	
Survey studies that include topographic analyses	2,000
Architectural and engineering design, including air conditioning and water system	70,000
Preparing tender process	8,000
Restoration works	600,000
Supervision of works	30,000
Training of museum staff	50,000
Equipment of the museum with office and museum supplies	250,000
<b>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 2</b>	<b>1,010,000</b>
<b>Objective 3:</b> To stimulate research on the slave routes in South West Indian Ocean and to contribute to the gradual revision of school	

Appendix

manuals and curricula at all educational levels of schools in regions concerned	
Revision of manuals and programs, at primary, secondary and university levels;	75,000
Scientific trips	60,000
Production of maps	50,000
Development of partnerships with countries and institutions related to slavery	30,000
<b><i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 3</i></b>	<b>215,000</b>
<b><i>Objective 4:</i></b> To preserve written documentation on the slave routes in South West Indian Ocean, and to catalog tangible heritage	
Creation of a Website, and compilation of physical and digital archive-files	60,000
Inventory of tangible heritage	20,000
Lectures and international conferences	40,000
Production of informative material	110,000
<b><i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 4</i></b>	<b>230,000</b>
<b><i>Objective 5:</i></b> To organize joint activities with institutions to promote cultural programs related to slavery and slave trade	
Cultural festival	100,000
Permanent Exhibition	100,000
Itinerant Exhibition	200,000
<b><i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 5</i></b>	<b>400,000</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>2,016,700.00</b>  two million sixteen thousand seven hundred US\$

## 6.1 THE MAURITIUS GENEALOGY CENTRE BILL (DRAFT)

### **Explanatory Memorandum**

The object of this Bill is to provide for the establishment of a Mauritius Genealogy Centre which will promote genealogical research within the Mauritian population with a view to assisting Mauritians, or people of Mauritian origin, in finding their origins.

### **THE MAURITIUS GENEALOGY CENTRE BILL**

#### **ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES**

##### **PART I - PRELIMINARY**

1. Short title
2. Interpretation

##### **PART II - THE CENTRE**

3. Establishment of Centre
4. Objects of Centre
5. Functions of Centre
6. Powers of the Centre to obtain documents
7. Access of documents to the public
8. Restrictions of access of documents to the public
9. The Mauritius Genealogical Centre online database
10. Designated Institutions
11. Access to genealogical materials

##### **PART III -ADMINISTRATION**

12. The Council
13. Meetings of Council
14. Director
15. Delegation
16. Disclosure of interest
17. Powers of Minister

18. Appointment of employees
19. Conditions of service of employees
20. Protection from liability

**PART IV - FINANCIAL PROVISIONS AND ACCOUNTS**

21. General Fund
22. Donations and exemptions
23. Estimates for the Mauritius Genealogy Centre
24. Execution of documents
25. Annual report

**PART V - MISCELLANEOUS**

26. Regulations
27. Commencement

**A BILL**

**To provide for the establishment of the Mauritius Genealogy Centre**

ENACTED by the Parliament of Mauritius, as follows -

**PART I - PRELIMINARY**

**1. Short Title**

This Act may be cited as the Mauritius Genealogy Centre Bill 2011

**2. Interpretation**

In this Act-

“Centre” means the Mauritius Genealogy Centre

“Council” means the Mauritius Genealogy Centre Council referred to in section 12;

“Chairperson” means the Chairperson of the Council appointed under section 12;

“Designated institution” means any person, body or institution designated by the Council under section 10 and listed in the first schedule;

“Director” means the Director of the Council appointed under section 14;

“Historical materials” means any documents or records of historical value which may have any

value for a genealogical search;

“Index entries” means Indices found at the Mauritius National Archives and in the Civil Status Offices containing the basic references of the individuals, including name and surname, date of registration of the Civil status document, Civil Status Office District, the Register Number and the folio number of the civil status entry;

“Member” -

- (a) means a member of the Council appointed under section 12; and
- (b) includes the Chairperson;

“Minister” means the minister to whom responsibility for the Mauritius Genealogy Centre is assigned;

“Prescribed fees” means fees chargeable by the Centre and as listed in the second schedule;

“Relevant genealogical documents” means any document of genealogical value, including civil status certificates.

## PART II - THE CENTRE

### 3. Establishment of the Centre

- a. There is established for the purposes of this Act the Mauritius Genealogy Centre;
- b. The Centre shall be a body corporate;
- c. The principal place of business of the Centre shall be at such place as the Council may determine.

### 4. Objects of the Centre

In pursuance of its functions under the Act, the objects of the Centre shall be to -

- a. collect, acquire, store, digitize, preserve and restore genealogical and historical materials;
- b. foster interest in research and development in relation to genealogy;
- c. develop and maintain a database of institutions and individuals concerned with the origins of the Mauritian population;
- d. provide assistance to facilitate Mauritians or people of Mauritian origins who wish to have their genealogical research and trace their origins;
- e. create awareness and disseminate information in the field of genealogy;
- f. promote and encourage the study of genealogy, research and support projects and publications related to genealogy;
- g. promote a conservation protocol, in line with the National Archives; and

- h. promote links between countries with a shared heritage and to attain the objects of the Centre

**5. Functions of the Centre**

The Centre shall have such functions as are necessary to further its objects most effectively and shall, in particular -

- a. conduct genealogical surveys of the Mauritian diasporas in order to establish links and ties within the Mauritian nation;
- b. hold conference, lectures and exhibitions on genealogy, carry out research activities and give advice or other information to pursue the objects of the Centre;
- c. act as a facilitator with researchers for genealogical research;
- d. establish links with, organizations engaged in similar activities locally and internationally in order to trace Mauritian ancestry;
- e. conduct any searches, for the purpose of a genealogical search, in order to establish the family history, including interviews, historical materials and other sources of oral traditions;
- f. establish a research protocol as regards researches made in relation to genealogical research;
- g. carry out the digitization of any documents in relation to genealogical research from documents under custody of the designated institutions;
- h. pending the creation of a Conservation Institute, the Centre shall promote a conservation protocol, train its personnel in conservation matters and assist in the creation of a Conservation Institute;
- i. provide for the separate housing of films, sound recordings and other machine readable records in relation to genealogy on which the Centre is undertaking research;
- j. publish an annual report on the activities of the Centre and its contribution in genealogy;
- k. provide for the training of the staff of the Centre or other persons in the field of genealogy;
- l. provide for the recording and keeping of oral history archives in relation to genealogy and family history;
- m. produce and publish documentary materials for educational purposes and for the public at large;
- n. to finance the publication of such research work of genealogical value produced by the Centre;
- o. to consider funding for publication of manuscripts of private individuals who have made extensive research in the genealogical field;
- p. advise the Minister on the formulation and implementation of policies in respect to genealogy and other related aspects;
- q. do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of its objects under this Act.

**6. Powers of the Centre to obtain documents**

The Centre shall have such powers as are necessary to attain its objects and discharge its objects and functions effectively and in particular -

- a. Notwithstanding any other legislations, more specifically the Civil Status Act 1981 and the National Archives Act 1999, the Centre shall, upon request duly signed by the Chairperson of the Council, be communicated with any copies of Relevant genealogical documents or in electronic format found in the custody of designated institutions for the purpose of genealogical research and digitization;
- b. Where the Centre has made a request for the disclosure of a document which is the subject-matter of a confidentiality provision under an enactment and the person having the custody of the document does not consent to the disclosure thereof, the Centre may, notwithstanding the provisions of that enactment, make an application to the Judge in Chambers asking for an order of disclosure of the document;
- c. Where the Judge in Chambers is satisfied that a document is material to the functions of the Centre and any prejudice likely to arise from its disclosure will be outweighed by the Centre being authorised to use the document to pursue its functions under this Act, he may order the disclosure of the document; and
- d. The relevant genealogical documents mentioned above shall be for the internal use of the Centre and shall be made available to the public only as provided in sections 7 and 8 below

**7. Access of documents to the public**

In furtherance of its functions and objects under the Act and subject to section 8 below, the Centre, after payment of the prescribed fees to the Centre, shall:

- a. Provide to the public any relevant genealogical documents to facilitate genealogical research; and
- b. At the conclusion of a genealogical research, provide to the applicant a family tree which shall establish the relationship of the applicant to his ancestor's, as complete and accurate as possible, based on civil status documents and oral history. The family tree shall be accompanied with copies:
  - i. For the period of less than 75 years from the date of the search, copies of all the index entries references' of the Civil Status Acts; and
  - ii. For the period of more than 75 years from the date of the search, digitized copies of the Civil Status acts.
- c. For the purpose of section 7(b) above, the family tree shall not be deemed to have any conclusive value before any Courts of law or tribunal.

**8. Restrictions of access of documents to the public**

- a. The Centre shall only communicate to the public, copies of civil status documents or entries of not less than 75 years old;
- b. Notwithstanding section 8(a) above, the Centre may communicate names and reference numbers from the index entries of less than 75 years old; and
- c. In all cases, the Centre shall also communicate to the public any relevant materials.

**9. The Mauritius Genealogical Centre online database**

There is established a Mauritius Genealogical Centre online Database which shall be made available to

the public, subject to:

- a. The online database shall contain only information relating to index entries or other information as approved by the Council;
- b. The online database shall also contain the results of previous genealogical searches carried out by the centre with respect to other applicants. The referred results of previous genealogical searches shall be stored in the database under such conditions as may be prescribed by the Council;
- c. With respect to sub section (b) above, the Centre shall, upon an application made before it, inform the applicant the result of their genealogical search shall be made available to the Centre and on the online database;
- d. Access to the results mentioned in subsection (b) above shall be given only after prior approval by the Centre and this under the terms and conditions as deemed fit by the Council; and
- e. The Centre shall, as it deems fit, make available any relevant genealogical documents of more than 75 years old.

**10. Designated Institutions**

- a. The Council may designate any organization or private individuals which possesses or has in its custody genealogical materials or engages in genealogical research as a designated institution;
- b. The list of Designated Institutions shall be found in the first schedule and can be amended by the Council upon its decision and after publication in the Government Gazette.

**11. Access to genealogical materials**

- a. no person shall have access to genealogical materials unless he is registered as a genealogical researcher with the Council;
- b. Every person who wishes to be registered as a genealogical researcher shall submit a written application to the Director;
- c. The Council shall consider the application and where it is satisfied that the person is suitable to act as a genealogical researcher, it shall register him on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit;
- d. The Council shall keep and maintain a register of registered genealogical researchers;
- e. In case of misconduct or unprofessional behavior, the Council shall, after having given an opportunity to answer any charge, cause the name of that person to be removed from the register of registered genealogical researchers.
- f. No person shall disclose any information in relation, to any genealogical materials without the written authorization of the Council;
- g. Any person who contravenes subsection (f) above shall commit an offence and shall on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees and to imprisonment not exceeding 12 months;
- h. Notwithstanding section 11(a) above, anyone who wishes to make a genealogy search without the services of a registered genealogist, shall, after payment of the prescribed fees, be allowed to do so by the Centre but under the same restrictions as provided by section 8 above;

- i. Nothing in this Act shall prevent anyone, not employed by the Centre, to apply for registration as a Registered Genealogist under the conditions set down by the Council and after payment of the prescribed fees. The said person would be governed by the same restrictions as provided by section 8 above;
- j. Any person, registered as genealogical researcher at the Centre or any individual as provided by subsection (h) above, shall make available a copy of all genealogical searches, made by him using materials from the Centre, to the Centre.

### PART III - ADMINISTRATION

#### 12. The Council

- a. The Centre shall be administered and managed by a Council, to be known as the Mauritius Genealogy Centre Council, which shall consist of -
  - i. a Chairperson, to be appointed by the Minister;
  - ii. a Vice-Chairperson, to be appointed by the Minister;
  - iii. a representative of the Prime Minister's Office;
  - iv. a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of Culture;
  - v. a representative of the Civil Status Office;
  - vi. a representative of the National Archives; and
  - vii. 2 persons having wide experience in matters relating to genealogy and genealogical research, to be appointed by the Minister;
- b. Every member appointed under subsection (a) shall hold office for a period of 2 years and may be eligible for reappointment.
- c. The Council may co-opt such other person who may be of assistance in relation to any matter before the Council and the co-opted member shall -
  - i. have no right to vote at any meeting of the Council; and
  - ii. be paid such fees and allowances as the Council thinks fit
- d. Any member may be removed or suspended from office by the Minister in any of the circumstances described in section 37(3) (b) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Act and, for the purpose of this subsection, the reference to the expression "in the opinion of the person who has the power to appoint him" in section 37(3)(b)(iii) to (v) shall be deemed to be reference to the opinion of the Minister.
- e. Where a vacancy occurs in the membership of the Council, the vacancy shall be filled by a person appointed by the Minister, who shall hold office for the remainder of the term of office of that member.
- f. Every member shall be paid by the Council such fees or allowances as the Prime Minister may determine.

- g. No member shall engage in any activity which may undermine the integrity of the Council or the Centre.

**13. Meetings of the Council**

- a. The Council shall meet as often as is necessary but at least once every three months at such time and place as the Chairperson thinks fit.
- b. In the absence of the Chairperson at a meeting of the Council, the Vice-Chairperson shall act as Chairperson for that meeting.
- c. The Chairperson shall convene a meeting of the Council on request made by not less than 3 members.
- d. Four members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Council.
- e. Subject to this section, the Council shall regulate its meetings in such manner as it thinks fit

**14. The Director**

- a. There shall be a Director of the Centre who shall be appointed, by the Council on such terms and conditions as the Council thinks fit.
- b. The Director shall, in the exercise of his functions -
  - i. be responsible for the execution of the policy of the Council and for the control and management of the day-to-day business of the Centre;
  - ii. act in accordance with such directives as he may receive from the Council; and
  - iii. submit to the Council a report in relation to the activities and finances of the Centre every 3 months.
- c. The Director shall, unless otherwise directed by the Council, attend every meeting of the Council and may take part in its deliberations, but shall not have the right to vote.

**15. Delegation**

Subject to such instructions as it may give, the Council may delegate to the Director such of its powers and functions as may be necessary for the effective management of the day-to-day business and activities of the Centre, other than the power to -

- a. borrow money; or
- b. enter into any transaction in respect of capital expenditure which exceeds 100,000 rupees

**16. Disclosure of interest**

Where any member or any person related to him by blood or marriage has a pecuniary or other material interest in relation to any matter before the Council, that member shall -

- a. disclose the nature of the interest at or before the meeting convened to discuss that matter; and
- b. not take part in any deliberations of the Council relating to that matter.

**17. Powers of Minister**

- a. The Minister may give such written directions of a general character to the Council, not inconsistent with this Act, as he considers to be necessary in the public interest, and the Council shall comply with those directions;
- b. The Council shall -
  - i. supply to the Minister with such information relating to its activities as the Prime Minister may require; and
  - ii. keep the Minister informed of the general conduct of its activities, and of any significant development in its activities.

**18. Appointment of employees**

- a. The Council may, appoint on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, such other employees as may be necessary for the proper discharge of its functions under this Act; and
- b. Every employee referred to in subsection (a) shall be under the administrative control of the Director.

**19. Conditions of service of employees**

The Council shall make provision to govern the conditions of service of its employees and in particular to deal with -

- a. the appointment, dismissal, discipline, pay and leave of, and the security to be given to, employees;
- b. appeals by employees against dismissal and other disciplinary measures; and
- c. the establishment and maintenance of provident and pension fund schemes and the contribution payable to those schemes and benefits derived from the employees.

**20. Protection from liability**

No liability, civil or criminal, shall be incurred by the Centre or any member or any employee in respect of any act done or omitted in the execution in good faith of its or his functions or duties under this Act.

**PART IV - FINANCIAL PROVISIONS AND ACCOUNTS**

**21. General Fund**

The Centre shall set up a General Fund -

- a. into which all monies received from any source by the Centre shall be paid;
- b. out of which all payments required to be made by the Centre shall be effected;
- c. There shall be paid annually into the Fund such sum of money as may be appropriated by the National Assembly;
- d. Any money received as donations and legacies by the Committee shall be paid into the General Fund; and
- e. Any money received from activities organised with the approval of the Council shall be paid into the Fund.

**22. Donations and exemptions**

- a. Article 910 of the Code Civil Mauricien shall not apply to the Centre; and
- b. Notwithstanding any other enactment, the Authority shall be exempt from payment of:
  - i. any registration duty, fee or charges in respect of any document under which the Centre is the sole beneficiary or where immovable property is acquired; and
  - ii. any other duty, rate, charge, fee or tax

**23. Estimates for the Mauritius Genealogy Centre**

- a. For the purposes of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act, the period extending from the commencement of this Act to June, next following shall be deemed to be the first financial year of the Centre;
- b. Section 7(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall not apply to the first financial year of the Centre;
- c. The Centre shall, not less than 3 months before the end of every financial year, submit to the Minister an estimate of the income and expenditure of the Centre for the next financial year for his approval.
- d. Where the Minister gives his approval under subsection (c) above, the Minister may-
  - i. Approve part only of the expenditure under any item; and
  - ii. Direct the Centre to amend the estimates in respect of any other item in such manner as he thinks fit.

**24. Execution of documents**

No deed, cheque or other document shall be executed or signed by or on behalf of the Centre unless it is signed by the Chairperson and the Director or, in the absence of these two, any other member appointed by the Council for that purpose.

**25. Annual report**

- a. The Council shall, not more than 4 months after the end of a financial year, submit to the Minister an annual report together with an audited statement of accounts on the operations of the Centre in respect of that financial year;
- b. The Minister shall, at the earliest available opportunity, lay a copy of the annual report and audited accounts of the Centre on the table of the Assembly.
- c. The auditor to be appointed under section 5(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall be the Director of Audit.

#### **PART V - MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **26. Regulations**

The Minister may make such regulations as he considers necessary for the purposes of this Act.

##### **27. Commencement**

- a. Subject to subsection (b), this Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation;
- b. Different dates may be fixed for the coming into operation of different sections.

## APPENDIX 6.2 LIST OF CIVIL STATUS DOCUMENTS DIGITIZED BY PATRICK DRACK AND TJC TEAM

## CSO PHOTOGRAPHED INDEXES

Type of information	Location	Period	From-to (alphabetical order)
B,D,M	All districts	1811 to 1815	A-Z
B,D,M	All districts	1816 to 1820	A-Z
B,D,M	All districts	1821 to 1825	L- Z
B,D,M	All districts	1825 to 1830	A- J
B,D,M	All districts	1826 to 1830	A-Z
B,D,M	All districts	1831 to 1835	A-Z
B,D,M	All districts	1836 to 1838	A- Z
B,D,M	All districts	1839 to 1860	A-Z
B,D,M	All districts	1861 to 1871	A-Z
B	All districts	1871 to 1881	A to D
(1861-1871/ 1871-1881 done at the National Archives) / (B- Birth, D- death, M- marriage)			

These indexes have been sub-classified as such (in folders of an average of 70 photos):

1. **1810 to 1815- Ao to Fo- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ao to Fo** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1810 to 1815, for all districts.
2. **1810 to 1815- Fo to Ne- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Fo to Ne** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1810 to 1815, for all districts.
3. **1810 to 1815- Ni to Zo- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ni to Zo** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1810 to 1815, for all districts.
4. **1810 to 1854- Divers feuillets isolées (Loose pages):** Indices of various surnames for irregular years from 1810 to 1854.
5. **1816 to 1820- Ai to Fu- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ai to Fu** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1816 to 1820, for all districts.
6. **1816 to 1820- Ga to Pe- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ga to Pe** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1816 to 1820, for all districts.
7. **1816 to 1820- Pe to Ze- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Pe to Ze** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1816 to 1820, for all districts.
8. **1821 to 1825- Aa to De- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Aa to De** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1821 to 1825, for all districts.
9. **1821 to 1825- De to Ho- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **De to Ho** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1821 to 1825, for all districts.

10. **1821 to 1825- Hu to Me- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Hu to Me** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1821 to 1825, for all districts.
11. **1821 to 1825- Me to Ro- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Me to Ro** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1821 to 1825, for all districts.
12. **1821 to 1825- Ro to Yo- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ro to Yo** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1821 to 1825, for all districts.
13. **1826 to 1830- Ae to Ca- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ae to Ca** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1821 to 1825, for all districts.
14. **1826 to 1830- Ca to Do- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ca to Do** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1826 to 1830, for all districts.
15. **1826 to 1830- Do to Jo- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Do to Jo** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1826 to 1830, for all districts.
16. **1826 to 1830- L to Re- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **L to Re** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1826 to 1830, for all districts.
17. **1826 to 1830- Re to Va- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Re to Va** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1826 to 1830, for all districts.
18. **1826 to 1830- Va to Zo- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Va to Zo** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1826 to 1830, for all districts.
19. **1831 to 1835- Ae to Ca- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ae to Ca** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1831 to 1835, for all districts.
20. **1831 to 1835- Ca to Hy- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ca to Hy** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1831 to 1835, for all districts.
21. **1831 to 1835- Hy to Ku- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Hy to Ku** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1831 to 1835, for all districts.
22. **1831 to 1835- La to No- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **La to No** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1831 to 1835, for all districts.
23. **1831 to 1835- Nu to Zi- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Nu to Zi** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1831 to 1835, for all districts.
24. **1836 to 1838- Ae to Des- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ae to Des** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1836 to 1838, for all districts.
25. **1836 to 1838- Der to Iv- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Der to Iv** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1836 to 1838, for all districts.
26. **1836 to 1838- Ja to Ma- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ja to Ma** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1836 to 1838, for all districts.
27. **1836 to 1838- Ma to Ro- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ma to Ro** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1836 to 1838, for all districts.
28. **1836 to 1838- Ro to Ze- (BDM) all districts:** Indices of surnames **Ro to Ze** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1836 to 1838, for all districts.
29. **1836-PL-Birth- JU only:** Indices of surnames **Ju** for the year 1836 in Port-Louis for birth only.
30. **1837- Divers feuillets (Loose pages) - AE:** Indices for **Ae** surnames for the year 1837.
31. **1839 to 1847- PL- (D) - A to Du:** Indices of surnames **A to Du** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1847, for Port-Louis.
32. **1839 to 1847- PL- (D) - Du to Ko:** Indices of surnames **Du to Ko** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1847, for Port-Louis.
33. **1839 to 1847- PL- (D) - L to Po:** Indices of surnames **L to Po** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1847, for Port-Louis.

34. **1839 to 1847- PL- (D) - Po to Zo:** Indices of surnames **Po to Zo** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1847, for Port-Louis.
35. **1839 to 1849- PL- (B) - A to De:** Indices of surnames **A to De** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1849, for Port-Louis.
36. **1839 to 1849- PL- (B) - De to Jo:** Indices of surnames **De to Jo** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1849, for Port-Louis.
37. **1839 to 1849- PL- (B) - L to Pe:** Indices of surnames **L to Pe** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1849, for Port-Louis.
38. **1839 to 1849- PL- (B) - Pe to Z:** Indices of surnames **Pe to Z** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1849, for Port-Louis.
39. **1839 to 1860- BR- (BDM) - A to J:** Indices of surnames **A to J** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Black River.
40. **1839 to 1860- BR- (BDM) - J to R:** Indices of surnames **J to R** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Black River.
41. **1839 to 1860- BR- (BDM) - R to Y:** Indices of surnames **R to Y** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Black River.
42. **1839 to 1860- FL- (BDM)- A to C:** Indices of surnames **A to C** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Flacq.
43. **1839 to 1860- FL- (BDM) - D to K:** Indices of surnames **D to K** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Flacq.
44. **1839 to 1860- FL- (BDM) - L to P:** Indices of surnames **L to P** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Flacq.
45. **1839 to 1860- GP- (BDM) - A to C:** Indices of surnames **A to C** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Grand Port.
46. **1839 to 1860- GP- (BDM) - C to K:** Indices of surnames **C to K** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Grand Port.
47. **1839 to 1860- GP- (BDM)- L to N:** Indices of surnames **L to N** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Grand Port.
48. **1839 to 1860- GP- (BDM) - N to S:** Indices of surnames **N to S** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Grand Port.
49. **1839 to 1860- GP- (BDM) - S to Z:** Indices of surnames **S to Z** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Grand Port.
50. **1839 to 1860- M- (BDM) - A to K:** Indices of surnames **A to K** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Moka.
51. **1839 to 1860- M- (BDM) - L to Z:** Indices of surnames **M** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Moka.
52. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - A to C:** Indices of surnames **A to C** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
53. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - C to G:** Indices of surnames **C to G** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
54. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - G to K:** Indices of surnames **G to K** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
55. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - L to M:** Indices of surnames **L to M** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
56. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - Ma to Mu (Part 2 of L-M):** Indices of surnames **L to M** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
57. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - N to R:** Indices of surnames **N to R** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
58. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - R to T:** Indices of surnames **R to T** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
59. **1839 To 1860- PAM- (BDM) - T to Z:** Indices of surnames **T to Z** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Pamplemousses.
60. **1839 to 1860- PL- (M) - A to D:** Indices of surnames **A to D** in chronological order concerning marriages of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
61. **1839 to 1860- PL- (M) - D to K:** Indices of surnames **D to K** in chronological order concerning marriages of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
62. **1839 to 1860- PL- (M) - L to P:** Indices of surnames **L to P** in chronological order concerning marriages of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Port-Louis.

63. **1839 to 1860- PL- (M) - P to Z:** Indices of surnames **P to Z** in chronological order concerning marriages of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
64. **1839 to 1860- PW- (BDM) - A to G:** Indices of surnames **A to G** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Plaines Wilhems.
65. **1839 to 1860- PW- (BDM) - H to W:** Indices of surnames **H to W** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Plaines Wilhems.
66. **1839 to 1860- RR- (BDM) - A to K:** Indices of surnames **A to K** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Rivière du Rempart.
67. **1839 to 1860- RR- (BDM) - L to P:** Indices of surnames **L to P** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Rivière du Rempart.
68. **1839 to 1860- RR- (BDM) - P to V:** Indices of surnames **P to V** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Rivière du Rempart.
69. **1839 to 1860- S- (BDM) - A to L:** Indices of surnames **A to L** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Savanne.
70. **1839 to 1860- S- (BDM) - L to W:** Indices of surnames **L to W** in chronological order concerning the birth, marriage and death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1839 to 1860, for Savanne.
71. **1848 to 1860- PL- (D) - D to M:** Indices of surnames **D to M** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1848 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
72. **1848 to 1860- PL- (D) - M to P:** Indices of surnames **M to P** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1848 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
73. **1848 to 1860- PL- (D) - P to S:** Indices of surnames **P to S** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1848 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
74. **1848 to 1860- PL- (D) - S to Z:** Indices of surnames **S to Z** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1848 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
75. **1849 to 1860- PL- (D) - A to C:** Indices of surnames **A to C** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1849 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
76. **1849 to 1860- PL- (D) - C to I:** Indices of surnames **C to I** in chronological order concerning death of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1849 to 1860, for Port-Louis.
77. **1851 To 1860- PL- (B) - C to K:** Indices of surnames **C to K** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1851 to 1860, for Port-Louis
78. **1871 to 1880- All districts- (B) - Ab to At:** Indices of surnames **Ab to At** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1871 to 1880, for all districts.
79. **1871 to 1880- All districts- (B) - At to Be:** Indices of surnames **At to Be** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1871 to 1880, for all districts.
80. **1871 to 1880- All districts- (B) - Be to Br:** Indices of surnames **Be to Br** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1871 to 1880, for all districts.
81. **1871 to 1880- All districts- (B) - Br to Ch:** Indices of surnames **Br to Ch** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1871 to 1880, for all districts.
82. **1871 to 1880- All districts- (B) - Ch to De:** Indices of surnames **Ch to De** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1871 to 1880, for all districts.
83. **1871 to 1880- All districts- (B) - De to Dy:** Indices of surnames **De to Dy** in chronological order concerning birth of the population of Mauritius for the period of 1871 to 1880, for all districts.

**CSO certificates for Rodrigues:**

Type (B, D, M)	Year
B,D,M	1840-1859
B	1860-1863
D	1860-1863
M	1860-1863
B	1864
M	1864
D	1864
B	1865
M	1865

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D	1865
D	1866
B	1866
M	1866
B	1867
M	1867
D	1867
M	1868
D	1868
B	1868
B	1869
M	1869
D	1869
B	1870
D	1870
B,D,M	1871
M	1871-1872
M	1872
M	1872-1874
D	1872
M	1873
D	1873
B	1874
M	1874
D	1874
M	1875
B	1875
D	1875
B	1876
D	1876
B	1877
M	1877
D	1877
B	1878
M	1878
D	1878
B	1879
M	1879
D	1879
B	1880
M	1880
D	1880

CSO certificates for Agalega (Registers contain some certificates for Diego Garcia and other Lesser Dependencies):

Type	Year
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Appendix

(B, D, M)	
B	1881-1905 in same volume after 1905: 1881-1890 for Agalega and other islands
D	1886-1887 (including Diego Garcia and other Lesser Dependencies)
D	1889-1890
M	1883-1884
M	1889
M	1890
M	1890-1891

CSO certificates for the main island (Mauritius) per district:

District	Type (B, D, M)	Year
PL	B, D, M	1835-1836 (vol.3)
PW	B, D, M	1811-1813 (vol.1 / <i>blancs</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1811-1813 ( <i>libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1811 (slaves)
PW	B, D, M	1811-1812 (slaves)
PW	B, D, M	1838-1839
PW	B, D, M	1818-1821 ( <i>libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1822-1824 ( <i>blancs</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1811-1818 (19 bis) / ( <i>blancs &amp; libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1811-1813 (29 Ter)
PW	B, D, M	1813-1821 ( <i>blancs</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1822-1829 ( <i>blancs</i> ) / missing 1825
PW	B, D, M	1825-1829 (no. 29) / ( <i>libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1822-1829 ( <i>libres de couleur</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1825-1829 ( <i>blancs</i> ) / (no.21 Ter)
PW	B, D, M	1822-1826
PW	B, D, M	1813-1821 (no. 23) / ( <i>blancs</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1813-1821 ( <i>libres de couleur</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1837
PW	B, D, M	1836-1837 (no. 33)
PW	B, D, M	1830-1833 (no. 30) / ( <i>blancs</i> ) 1832 ( <i>libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1843 (no.41)
PW	B, D, M	1840 (no.37)
PW	B, D, M	1830-1835 (no.31) : 1830, 1831, 1832, 1834, 1835 ( <i>blancs</i> ) 1833 ( <i>libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1834-1836 ( <i>blancs</i> ) / (no.32)
PW	B, D, M	1845
PW	B, D, M	1853
PW	B, D, M	1822-1824 ( <i>blancs</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1830-1835 (excluding 1833- <i>blancs</i> ) 1833 ( <i>libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M, A	1830-1834 (excluding 1833- <i>blancs</i> ) 1833 ( <i>libres</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1850
PW	B, D, M	1836-1837
PW	B, D, M	1841
PW	B, D, M	1841 (vol.2)
PW	B, D, M	1844
PW	B, D, M	1846
PW	B, D, M	1847
PW	B, D, M	1848
PW	B, D, M	1849
PW	B, D, M	1851

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PW	B, D, M	1852
PW	B, D, M	1853 (March to May, <i>en vrac</i> )
PW	B, D, M	1854
PW	B	1855 (vol.1)
PW	B	1855 (vol.2)
PW	B	1855 (vol.3)
PW	M	1855
PW	D	1855
PW	D	1855 (vol.2)
PW	D	1856 (vol.1)
PW	D	1856 (vol.2)
PW	D	1856 (vol.3)
PW	M	1856
PW	B	1856 (vol.1)
PW	B	1856 (vol.2)
PW	D	1857 (vol.1)
PW	D	1857 (vol.2)
PW	D	1857 (vol.3)
PW	M	1857 (vol.1)
PW	M	1857 (vol.2)
PW	D	1858 (vol.1)
PW	D	1858 (vol.2)
PW	D	1859 (vol.1)
PW	D	1859 (vol.2)
PW	D	1859 (vol.3)
PW	D	1860 (vol.1)
PL	B, D, M	1813-1814 ( <i>blancs &amp; libres</i> )
PL	B, D, M	1814-1815 (B & L)
PL	B, D, M	1815-1816 (L)
PL	B, D, M	1815-1818 ( vol.3/ B)
PL	B, D, M	1816-1817 (L)
PL	B, D, M	1817-1818 (vol.2 / L)
PL	B, D, M	1818-1819 (L)
PL	B, D, M	1819 ( <i>Population de couleur</i> )
PL	B, D, M	1819-1821 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1819-1821 (B, L, A)
PL	B, D, M	1825 (vol.1 / L)
PL	B, D, M	1825 (vol.2)
PL	B, D, M	1825 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1827 (L)
PL	B, D, M	1827-1828 (S)
PL	B, D, M	1829 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1834 (vol.2 / B & L)
PL	B, D, M	1821-1822 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1821-1822 (B & L)
PL	B, D, M	1823-1824
PL	B, D, M	1822-1824 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1822-1823 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1826 (L)
PL	B, D, M	1824 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1828 (L)
PL	B, D, M	1828 (B)
PL	B, D, M	1829 (L)
PL	B, D, M	1827
PL	B, D, M	1830-1831 (B)
PL	B, D, M, A	1831 (vol.1 /B & L)
PL	B, D, M, A	1831-1832 (vol.2 / B & L)
PL	B, D, M, A	1832- Not digitized because very damaged and need urgent restoration.
PL	B, D, M, A	1833 (vol.1)
PL	B, D, M, A	1833 (vol.2 / B &L)
PL	B, D, M, A,	1834 (vol.3)
PL	B, D, M, A	1834 (vol.4) [an index at the end of the volume]

## Appendix

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PL	B, D, M	1835
PL	B, D, M	1838 (vol.1)
PL	B, D, M	1836 (vol.1)
PL	B, D, M	1836 (vol.2)
PL	B, D, M	1836 (vol.3)
PL	B, D, M	1837 (vol.1)
PL	B, D, M	1837 (vol.2)
PL	B, D, M	1837 (vol.3)
PL	B, D, M	1837 (vol.4)
PL	B, D, M	1838 (vol.2)
[Abbreviations: PW- Plaines Wilhems, PL- Port Louis/ B-Blancs/ whites, L-libres/ free, S-slaves/esclaves, A- Actes d'Affranchissement		

**26,369** photos were made, in all, for the month of July 2010 where Mr. Drack came to start the digitization; thus some **80,000** Civil Status certificates have been digitised.

## APPENDIX 6.3 CSO INDEXING DATABASE USER MANUAL

The CSO Indexing Database is designed to contain details about indexes in the CSO. It has been built around Open Source Technologies, namely Apache [2], MySQL [3] and PHP [4].

To deploy the application, MoWeS Portable II [1], has been used and provides for setup of WAMP on any Windows system. To launch the database, Open the contents on the pen-drive provided and double-click on “TJC-DoubleClickMe”. This will launch the different services (Apache and MySQL) and the application will start as shown in Figure1 below.

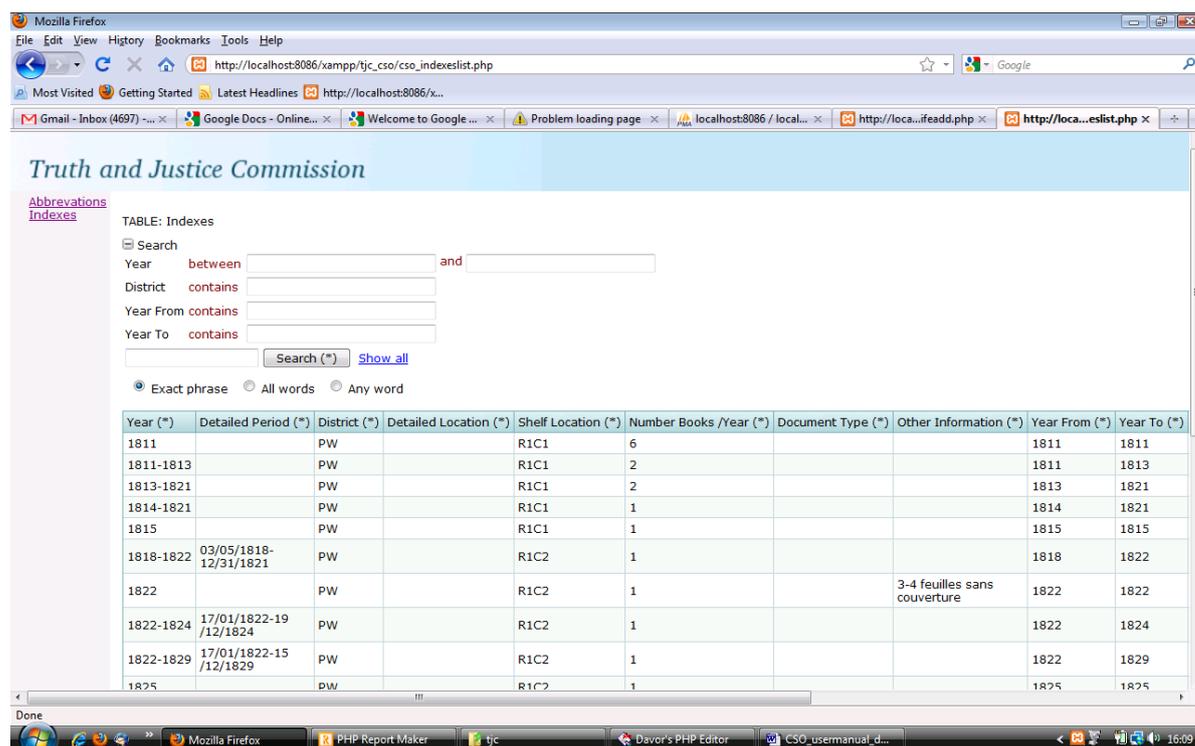


Figure 1: CSO Database

The menu on the left allows the users to navigate to different pages of the system. All the pages are modeled in a consistent way: the user is presented with a list of existing entries and she can view, edit or delete the entry, while she can also add a new entry.

The indexes page allows users to filter records according to Year, District, YearFrom and YearTo Fields

#### Technical notes:

- The CSO database was populated by extracting data entered into different Excel sheets and sanitizing the data.
- Although the database has been distributed via MoWeS, the different services (Apache, MySQL, PHP)

can be installed on a computer and the relevant files restored as appropriate. This can give better performance.

- The port on which the Apache within MoWes is listening is port 8085. If this port is already in use in your system, modify the configuration for Apache to listen to a different port.

**References:**

[1] : <http://www.chsoftware.net/en/mowes/mowesportable/mowes.htm> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

[2]: <http://www.apache.org> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

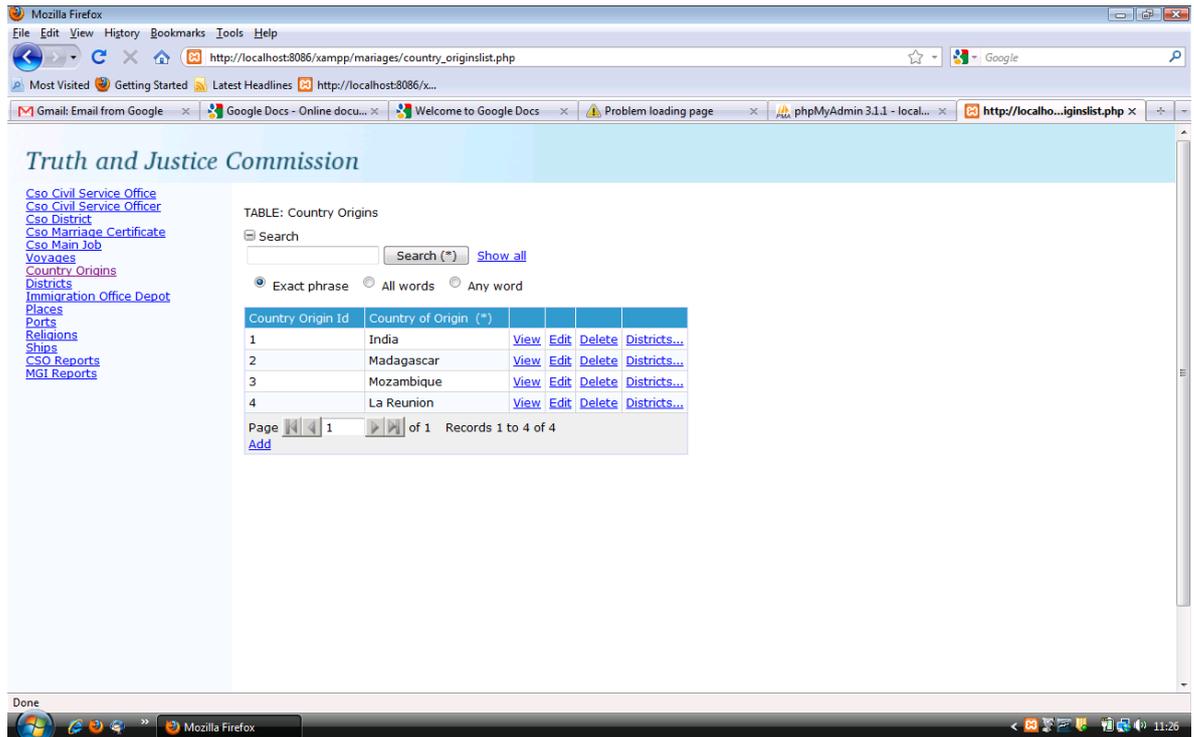
[3]: <http://www.mysql.com/> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

[4]: <http://www.php.net/> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

**Marriages Database User Manual**

The Marriage Database is designed to contain details about marriages. It is made of two parts: 1) MGI records marriages, which should contain marriage records of immigrants embarking for Mauritius, and 2) CSO records dealing with marriages occurring in Mauritius. The Marriage Database has been built around Open Source Technologies, namely Apache [2], MySQL [3] and PHP [4].

To deploy the application, MoWeS Portable II [1], has been used and provides for setup of WAMP on any Windows system. To launch the database, Open the contents on the pen-drive provided and double-click on “TJC-DoubleClickMe”. This will launch the different services (Apache and MySQL) and the application will start as shown in Figure1 below.



**Figure 1: Marriage Database**

The menu on the left allows the users to navigate to different pages of the system. All the pages except for “CSO\_Reports” and “MGI\_Reports” are modeled in a consistent way: the user is presented with a list of existing entries and she can view, edit or delete the entry, while she can also add a new entry.

The different pages for CSO records are: “Cso\_Civil\_Service\_Office”, “Cso\_Civil\_Service\_Officer”, “Cso\_District”, “Cso\_Marriage\_Certificate”, “Cso\_Main\_Job”. The pages for the MGI records are “Voyages”, “Country\_Origins”, “Districts”, “Immigration\_Office\_Depot”, “Places”, “Ports”, “Religions”, “Ships”.

**CSO pages**

The CSO forms are organized as follows:

The main page is the “Cso\_Marriage\_Certificate” page. It contains details of records available at the CSO as shown in Figure 2 below:

TABLE: Cso Marriage Certificate

Search:  Search (\*) Show all

Exact phrase  All words  Any word

Certificate Number (*)	District	Year (*)	Month (*)	Day (*)	Certificate Non Marriage (*)	Husband Name (*)	Husband Age (*)	Husband Religion	Husband Profession (*)	Husband ID
DSC00511	Flacq	1859	03	26	x	Samalie	31	Parian	labourer	13626
DSC07599	GrandPort	1857	07	11	x	Nagapah	30	Pagan	Washerman	
DSC07598	GrandPort	1857	07	04	x	Sunassy	24	Pagan	labourer	
DSC07613	GrandPort	1858	10	07	x	Chinnapah Allagen	25	Pagan	carrier	9518/6
DSC07715	Plaine Wilhems	1855	07	18	x	Sooahun	18	Not mention	labourer	x
DSC00338	Port Louis	1857	12	19	X	Jaulim Sughur	33	Not mention	Barman	X
DSC00138	Port Louis	1851	05	16	x	veerapen	30	Not mention	No profession	x
DSC06176	Savanne	1852	08	07	x	Narainsing	30	Not mention	labourer	6104
DSC06175	Savanne	1852	08	07	x	Bungshy	25	Not mention	No profession	10859
DSC06173	Savanne	1852	06	04	x	veerapen	30	Not mention	No profession	10857

Figure 2: Cso\_Marriage\_Certificate

The other pages, namely, “Cso\_Civil\_Service\_Office”, “Cso\_Civil\_Service\_Officer”, “Cso\_District”, “Cso\_Main\_Job” are used to enter data that will be used as drop down lists for the “Cso\_Marriage\_Certificate”. For example, on adding a new Cso\_Marriage\_Certificate, Drop down lists for District, Religion, Native\_Country, Civil\_Service\_Office etc are available as shown in Figure 3. These are populated from records entered for the different pages mentioned above.

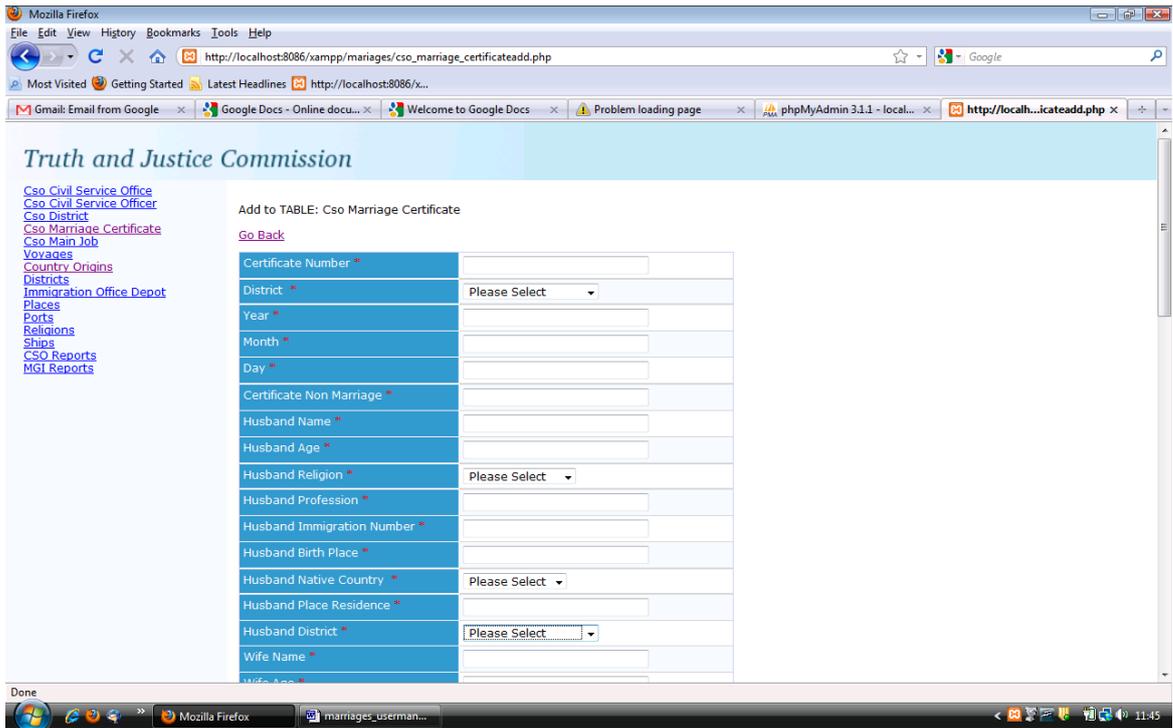


Figure3: Illustrating addition of a new Cso\_Marriage\_Certificate

The above mechanism allows the system to be extensible in the future, by allowing new parameters to be entered into the system. The different reports created for the system will be automatically modified accordingly.

CSO\_Reports are used to analyse the different data entered into the system. Each of the report can be viewed by choosing it from the drop down list “Reports” as shown in Figure4. These reports are dynamic and will reflect all the data entered into the system.

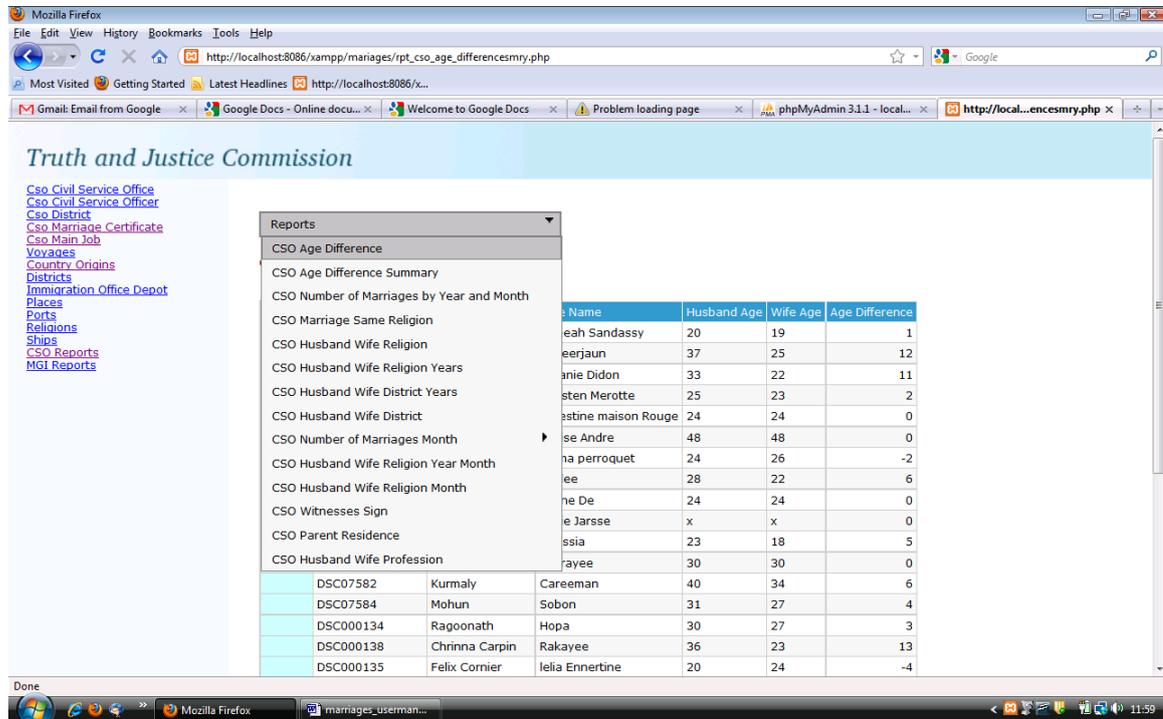


Figure4: CSO reports

For example, the “*CSO Husband Wife District*” is a crosstab report illustrating the number of marriages involving wife and husband districts as shown in Figure 5.



Figure5: Husband and Wife district distribution

The data accessed via the different reports can be exported to Excel, Word or HTML with the menu removed, by clicking on the “Export to Excel”, “Export to Word”, “Printer Friendly” links respectively. This allows the data to be easily extracted from the system.

The reports also contain diagrammatic representations of the data (line charts and pie charts), as shown in Figure 6:

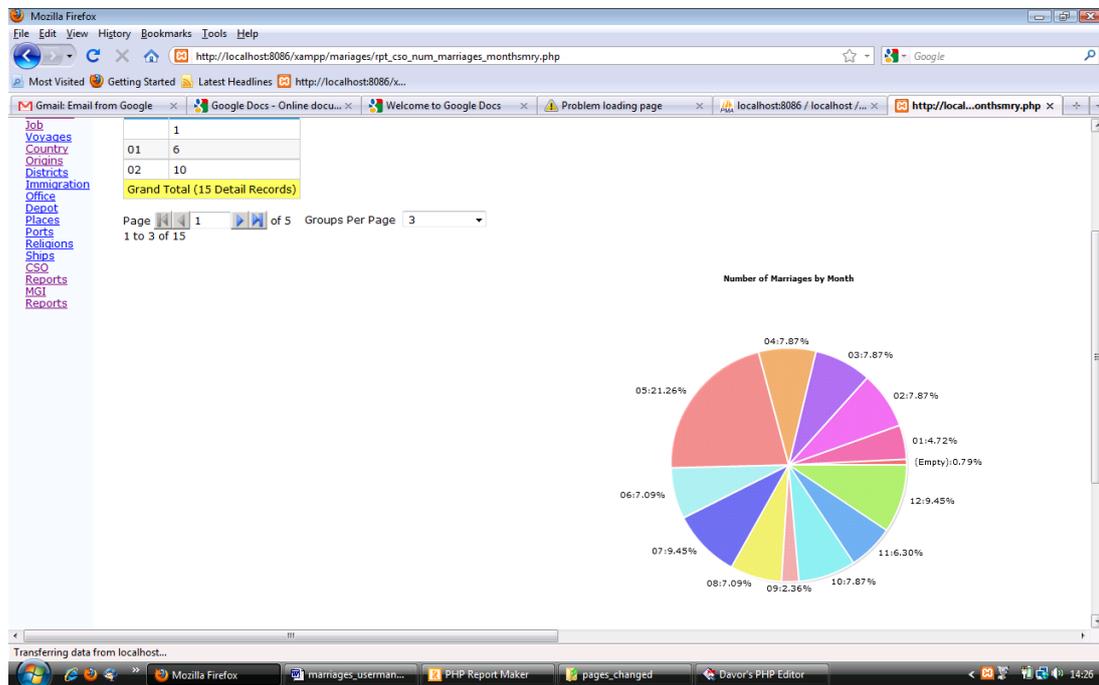


Figure 6: Showing sample Pie Chart

All the reports created in the system are dynamic. That is, they reflect the actual content of the database. If new data are added, the reports will change accordingly.

**Immigration Pages**

The Indentured Immigration pages consist of the “Voyages”, “Country Origins”, “Districts”, “Immigration Office Depot”, “Places”, “Ports”, “Religions”, “Ships” pages. The main entry into the system is the Voyages page as shown in Figure 7.

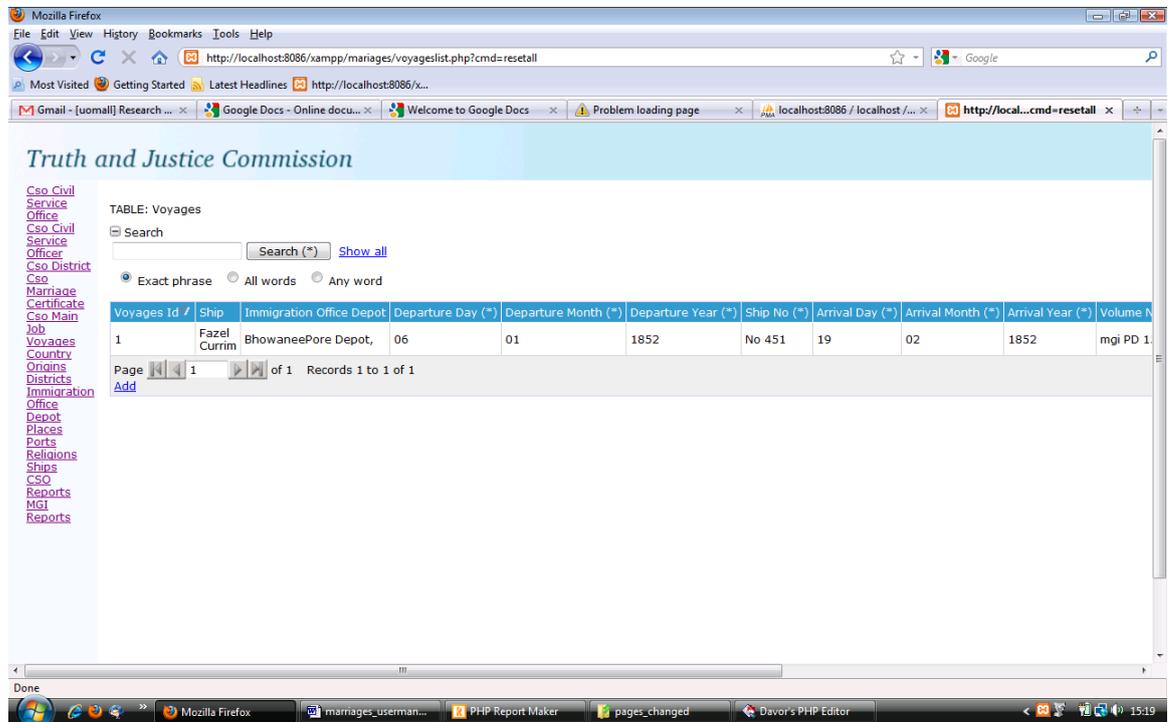


Figure7: Voyages page

A new voyage can be entered in clicking on the Add link and the user is presented with the form as illustrated in Figure8 below:

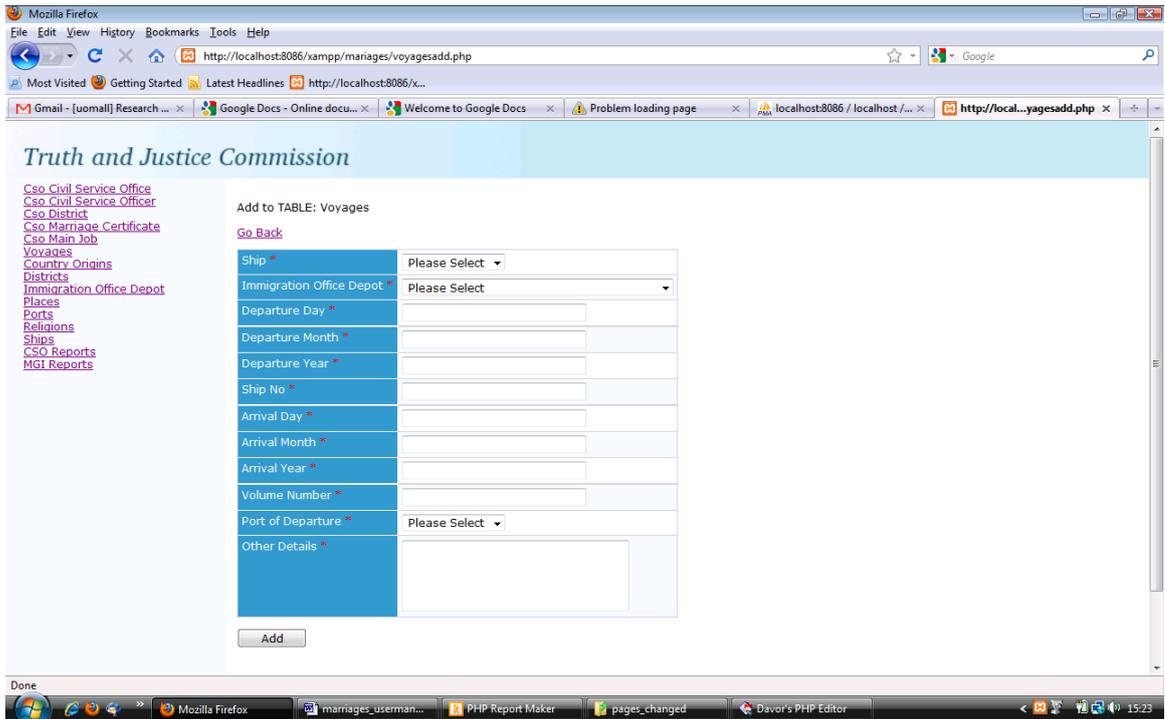


Figure 8: Adding a voyage

The “ship”, “Immigration Office Depot” and “Port of Departure” drop down lists are populated from entries mentioned above. Once a new voyage has been added, the “Marriage Certificates” can be added by scrolling to the right and clicking on “Marriage Cert...” Link. This gives the form for all the marriage certificates entered for that voyage as shown in Figure 9.

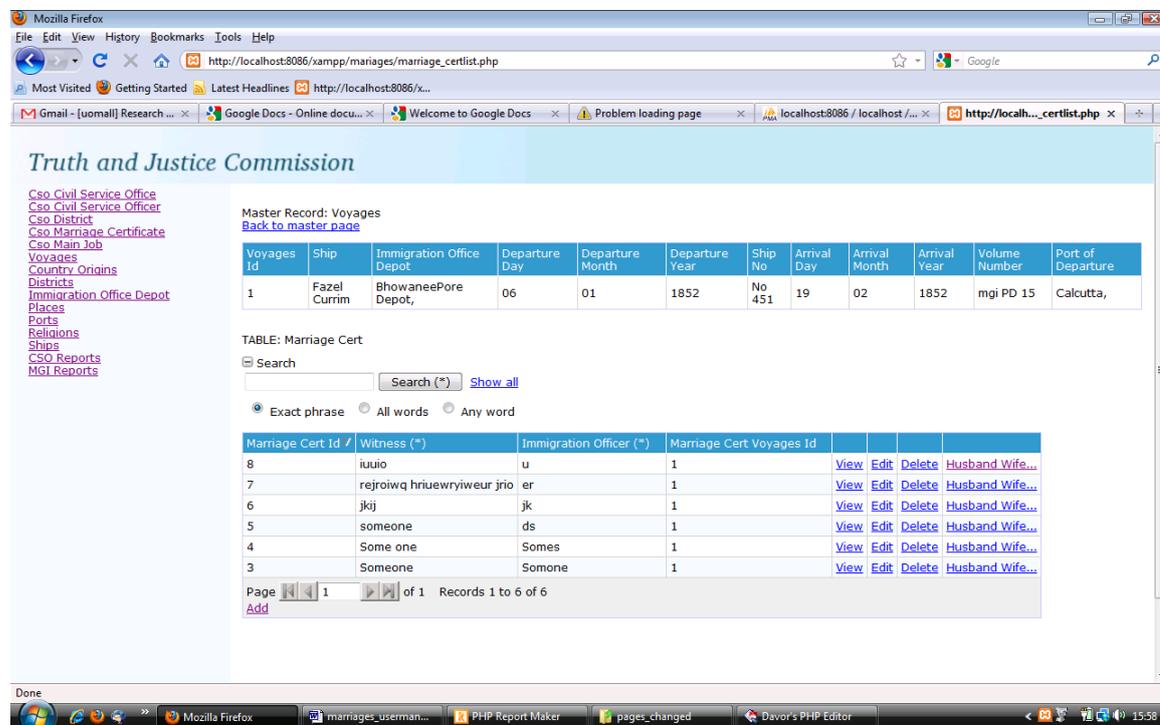


Figure 9 : SampleMarriage Certificates

A new Marriage Certificate can be added by clicking on the “Add” link. Once the new Marriage Certificate has been added, the Husband/Wife details can be added by clicking on the “Husband Wife” link. This gives details about the husband and wife involved in the marriage certificate. The system is modeled as such, since a marriage certificate can involve more than two parties. A new husband/wife can be added by clicking on the “Add” link, where the details can be added as shown in Figure 10.

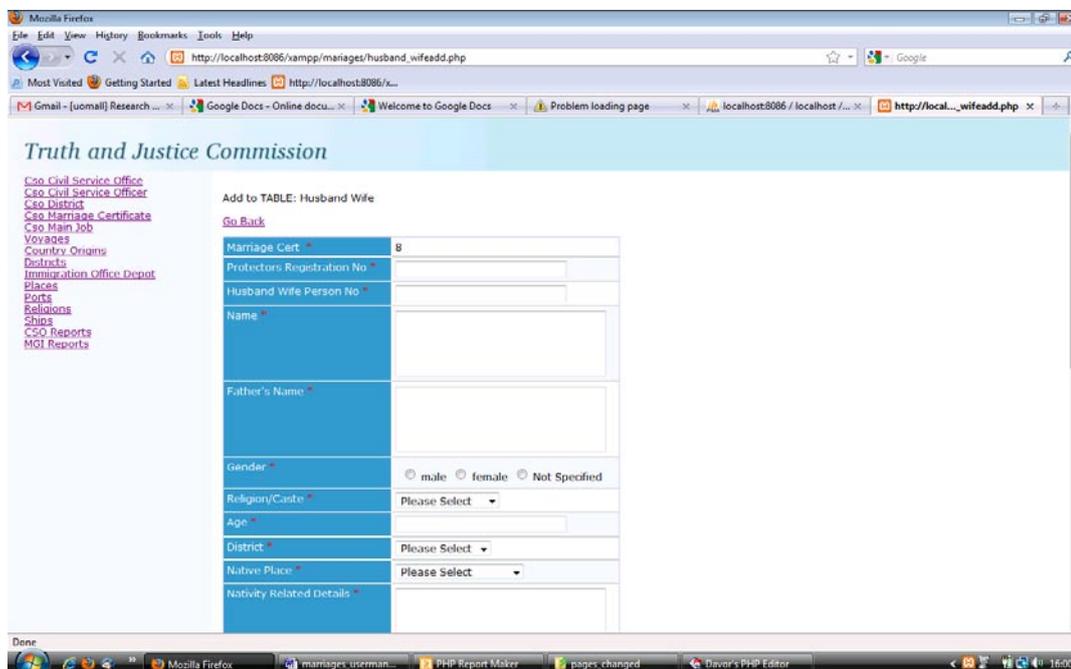


Figure 10: Adding Husband/Wife details

Once again, drop down lists for “Religion”, “Place” and “District” are populated by filling details in the respective pages.

**Technical notes:**

- Although the database has been distributed via MoWeS, the different services (Apache, MySQL, PHP) can be installed on a computer and the relevant files restored as appropriate. This can give better performance.
- The port on which the Apache within MoWeS is listening is port 8085. If this port is already in use in your system, modify the configuration for Apache to listen to a different port.

**References:**

[1] : <http://www.chsoftware.net/en/mowes/mowesportable/mowes.htm> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

[2]: <http://www.apache.org> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

[3]: <http://www.mysql.com/> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

[4]: <http://www.php.net/> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)



**TRUTH & JUSTICE  
COMMISSION**

**VOLUME 2**

**LAND REFORM**

**LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS**

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**GLOSSARY**

<i>Acte authentique</i>	instrument drawn up by a Notary or by a Public authority
<i>Acte de donation entre vifs</i>	deed of gift
<i>Acte de notoriété</i>	certificate, affidavit
<i>Acte de vente</i>	agreement for sale
<i>Affidavit de succession</i>	affidavit of inheritance
<i>Barchois</i>	pond
<i>Brevet de vente</i>	contract delivered by a Notary in the original
<i>Case hypothécaire</i>	mortgage record
<i>Constat Report</i>	official report
<i>Depossession, Dessaisir, Expropriation</i>	dispossession
<i>Mutation de propriété</i>	change or transfer of ownership
<i>Récépissé</i>	acknowledgement of receipt
<i>Règlement à l'amiable</i>	amicable arrangement
<i>Répertoire</i>	catalogue, index
<i>Sous seing privé</i>	private agreement, contract
<i>Vente à l'amiable</i>	private sale



## INTRODUCTION

JACQUES DAVID  
COMMISSIONER

### DEALING WITH DISPOSSESSION: THE HUMAN FACTOR

This Volume deals essentially with land issues brought to the Commission by different persons. It highlights the analysis, conclusion and consolidated report of all the claims submitted to the Truth and Justice Commission at the very start of the work of the Commission in 2009 up to June 2010, according to its objective of inquiring into land dispossession. Eighty-eight cases received by the Commission were referred to the Land Team after the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 which was the deadline for submission of claims. Despite all the efforts made by the Land Team, it has not been possible to process each of those cases. The Commission recommends that all these cases be looked into by a Land Research and Monitoring Unit, should the creation of such a unit be approved and set up by the Government.

### MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION

Section 4 (c) of the TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION ACT 2008 (FUNCTIONS OF COMMISSION) empowers the Commission to "*enquire into a complaint other than a frivolous and vexatious complaint, made by any person aggrieved by a dispossession or prescription of any land in which he claims he had any interest*".

### WHAT IS DISPOSSESSION?

For the purpose of this exercise, DISPOSSESSION means

- (i) To oust from possession, especially with regard to real estate;
- (ii) To *excise*;
- (iii) To eject;
- (iv) To dislodge;
- (v) To deprive.

The work undertaken by the Commission has been laborious, given the short span of time available to probe into more than 300 years of History since the first land grant (*concession*) was given officially in 1726 to Pierre Christophe Lenoir, a French *colon*, *Director of Pondichéry*. Moreover, the task was delicate as it concerned people who have a profound emotional attachment to land they believe they have lost. Working sessions with hundreds of persons from all walks of life, have aroused mixed feelings. People were led to believe that the Commission was a centre where they could be registered on a list to obtain compensation, either as descendants of slaves or indentured labourers; others firmly believed that the Commission was set up to help them recover plots of land which, they felt, their ancestors possessed at one point in time and which have been misappropriated.

The Commission witnessed the intense emotion expressed by deponents who felt that their ancestors have, over time, been the victims of a system whereby those in power have used their

privileged position to dispossess their ancestors of their property, because the privileged could read and write, draft title deeds, using a technical jargon not accessible to the common man, draw site plans, easily ‘wrap up’ plots of land, deprive them of access, use the “*divide and rule*” strategies among family members, corrupt them with small gains, with the ultimate aim of appropriating large plots of land for their own benefit. Some victims have invariably fallen prey to self-appointed consultants hiding behind beautifully-presented visiting cards, such as “*Récupérateurs des terres*”, having access to documents either at the National Archives, the Mortgages Office, the Registration Office and the National Library and para-statal bodies such as the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund.

### METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

In pursuance of its set objectives, the Commission categorised the different types of dispossessions as under :

- family problems;
- prescription;
- professional negligence;
- illegal occupation;
- impersonation;
- wrongly-drafted affidavits of succession;
- misinterpretation of wills and testaments; and
- sugar estates.

There was also the need to address the issue of how thousands of ex-slaves had lost their land. A Notarial Acts Database, on the recommendation of Dr. Richard Allen, who has written extensively on land acquisition by ex-slaves, was commissioned and 5 Research Assistants were trained to read Notarial Acts and input them in a database. A copy of this will be, as a priority be handed over to the Ministry of Housing and Lands. It is strongly recommended that this work undertaken be continued.

The Commission examined closely the cases on land dispossession from 1721 to 2011, conducted an in-depth study of Land Surveyors’ reports, title deeds and deeds of concessions in order to clarify all inconsistencies with a view to better investigating and understanding the mechanism of dispossession. Extensive research was undertaken to analyse the dynamics of centralisation and mergers of the sugar estates and factories over the various eras.

Nevertheless, the setting up of the Truth and Justice Commission has been the catalyst to the claims referred by hundreds of families who feel that they have been dispossessed of their lands for generations. It was not surprising therefore that people flocked to the Commission to seize the opportunity to make themselves heard and explain what, for years, had been their struggle towards understanding and living the process of their ancestral dispossession. In a majority of cases, people were at a loss due to their inability to produce a valid land claim, a title deed, a site plan, a genealogical tree or a Notarial deed. Very often, there was either insufficient, or no valid, information or a total lack of financial means on the part of complainants to attain their ultimate objective of proving their ownership of land. People relied mostly on their memory, focusing on the oral history transmitted by past generations, but many were unable to explain the mechanism that led to the dispossession of their lands.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF LANDOWNERSHIP

The system of land grants, coupled with the forced labour easily acquired through slavery, are at the very heart of development and the creation of wealth across the island for those who were at the forefront of the development of the agricultural sector. The system consolidated itself between 1760 and 1810, when Mauritius under French rule gained prestige and wealth. The island's population increased and the planters grew rich. Agricultural prosperity was achieved mainly by an intensive exploitation of slave labour. Between 1767 and 1797, the population had increased to 59,000 inhabitants, including 6,200 whites, 3,700 free persons and 49,100 slaves. The population, in each category, more than doubled during the period. Port-Louis opened to free trade after the demise of the French East India Company saw a major increase in shipping, not only from Europe but also from North America. From 1786 to 1810, almost 600 ships from America called at Mauritius, so much so that an American Consulate was established in Port Louis as early as in 1794. Under the Dutch (1638-1710) there was no allocation of land made to settlers, as the Dutch had no strategy for permanent settlement. At most, a few acres were given on lease to vryburghers.

French efforts to colonize the island were more successful than the Dutch. Around 1638, the French had already taken the island of Rodrigues. They had occupied Bourbon Island since 1642. Through this strategy, they increased their foothold in the Indian Ocean region and turned their attention to Mauritius. The French East India Company moved to occupy Mauritius in 1715. They sent some French planters from neighbouring Bourbon Island to Mauritius. The Company ruled the island until 1764, when, after a series of inept Governors and bankruptcy, Mauritius became a Crown colony. In less than no time, the agents of the French East India Company fell out of favour. The administration of the island was entrusted to different Governors, who did not know how to go about the development of the settlement, until it fell upon Mahé de Labourdonnais to use Mauritius as "*headquarters*". The island developed to become a most influential post for the "*Governor-General of all French possessions beyond the Cape*". During his tenure of office from 1735 to 1746, Labourdonnais presided over many improvements of the island's infrastructures. He promoted its economic development, built up Port-Louis and strengthened the Sugar Industry.

The Company, which had a marked presence in Bourbon and in Louisiana, enjoyed a monopoly of trade between North America, India, China and the West Coast of Africa. The Company was not very convinced of what to do with the island. If the Central Government in Paris saw it more in terms of colonization, the French East India Company wanted to use it as a simple "*comptoir*".

Despite instructions from the French East India Company to grow crops and to supply the Company with spices, De Nyon was unable to meet the demand on the island. "*Sans nègres, point de colonies*", had written the settlers. Many difficulties arose. Cyclones and rats ravaged Mauritius. In spite of strict orders to develop Port Louis, the Governor decided to set up his headquarters and port in Vieux Grand Port, which he named "*Port Bourbon*" (Mahébourg). Life proved so difficult that the settlers decided to leave the island and to draw back to Bourbon Island.

The development and production of sugar plantations gained momentum when large portions of land were granted as "*grants*" to some families coming from different regions of France. Labourdonnais and successive administrative authorities of the island, under Magon, Poivre and Cossigny, adopted the same policy of land grant and, eventually, offered land incentives to all those who wanted to settle with their families in Isle de France, to engage not only in sugar plantation and production, but also to cultivate rice, potatoes, maize, ginger, groundnuts, cotton, indigo, coffee and spices, as well as other vegetables on a commercial basis. Even the rearing of bulls of the Charolais and Brahman breed was on the list of activities.

## LAND GRANTS DURING FRENCH OCCUPATION

At the end of De Nyon's administration, there were only 200 people and two small settlements. If there were officers, workers and some slaves, there were no farmers. Isle de France under his administration had become "*l'enfer de Isle de France*".

For most of the settlers, "*l'enfer de Isle de France*" did not change in spite of the successive arrival of three other Governors, Brousse (1725-1728), Dumas (1727-1729) and Maupin (1729-1735), all employed by the French East India Company. Most of the inhabitants depended almost entirely on fishing and deer hunting. Moreover, cyclones, thefts and droughts caused severe food shortages. The French East India Company began to make grants of land, varying in area from 146 *Arpents* to twice or four times this size to some settlers. But the choice of people to whom grants of land were made was often discriminatory. Not all groups were given land: for example, the officers got the best terms and the French soldiers and ordinary settlers, the worst. Slaves were not allowed to receive land grants. Some officers could get up to 1000 *Pas Géométriques*, while others had practically half that amount.

About 40 land grants were made between 1726 and 1729 in the areas known as *L'Enfoncement des Hollandais*, Saint-Martin, *L'Enfoncement Bambous*, Treize Cantonnes and Anse Jonchée. On the Northern embankment near Trois Ilots, some 20 land grants were completed. Land was given on the condition that coffee, cinnamon and other spices and plants, likely to be used for medicinal purposes, be produced. In addition, owners of the land were also bound to give up the equivalent of one-tenth of their produce, that is, "*one sol in silver and one hen for each Arpent*". These regulations changed every two years. Didier de Saint-Martin, for example, was bound to give, for every *Arpent*, 100 pounds of rice, 100 pounds of maize and 4 ounces of coffee to the Company.

Furthermore, the French East India Company reserved for itself the absolute right to a trade monopoly. The settlers were compelled to purchase all their requirements from the Company, to which they had been forced to sell all their products. The tariffs at which the products were bought from the settlers were continually being altered, and most of the farmers felt they had to face an uncertain future. Time and again, the French East India Company or the French Crown changed their plans, and the settlers were ordered either to plant food crops or devote their energies to cattle-herding or horse-breeding. Suddenly, they were ordered to plant spices, coffee, cotton or indigo.

On the one hand, abhorred by such sudden changes of plans and, on the other, discouraged by the prices being too low, the settlers never settled down with a will to establish their agricultural industries on strong and permanent foundations. Most of them looked on Mauritius as a "*lieu de passage*", rather than a permanent place of residence. They primarily wanted to grow rich very quickly, and the sooner they could return to France or to Bourbon Island, the better.

In addition, matters were getting worse between the Civil and Military Administrations. Governor de Brousse quarrelled with members of the Provincial Council. After his two years of service, de Brousse left the island and was replaced by Governor Dumas. But he, also, took much pleasure in remaining in Réunion Island most of the time. By 1731, the French East India Company was very reluctant to maintain a presence in Mauritius.

The situation began to change with the arrival of Governor Maupin. Civil and military administrations were combined. But he was most discouraged by what he saw. He ordered that the headquarters be moved from Port Bourbon (Mahébourg) to Port Louis. He left the island to go on a mission to Madagascar and, upon his return, anarchy prevailed. The Company could not decide if the capital would be Port Louis.

Maupin thought otherwise and, in spite of conflicting relations and reports, his choice finally rested on Port Louis. This decision won him the hostility of the people of the South-East of the island. Port Bourbon began to decline in importance.

As the garrison was moved from Mahébourg to the areas around Port Louis, the settlers were left without any protection, and Anse Jonchée, Plaine Saint-Martin and *La Table à Pérot* were left deserted. These areas of Grand Port retained only the names of the early settlers: Jonchée de la Golleterie, Didier de Saint-Martin and François Pérot. History recalls that Jacques Thomas de Jonchée de la Golleterie, "*Capitaine des vaisseaux de la Compagnie des Indes*" became, on 15th December 1726, "*le premier concessionnaire de l'Isle de France*". Didier de Saint-Martin formed a partnership with Mahé de Labourdonnais and Pierre Moulinot de la Plaine to create, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1743, a sugar factory at Ferney, after having obtained a "*concession*" of some 1,766 *Arpents* - which consisted of Rivière Saint Martin, Montagne des Hollandais and Montagne du Grand Port - out of which some 210 *Arpents* were covered with sugar cane.

As in the case of the registered "*concession*" granted, in 1726, in the Saint-Martin area, District of Grand Port, to Philippe Christophe Lenoir, Director of Pondichéry, the East India Company tried to regulate the situation of land grants by deciding that 132 *Arpents* were to be given to married settlers, workers and soldiers and, in return, 16 hens were to be contributed for each *Arpent*. The Company Officials and Officers were granted 625 *Arpents*, and they were to supply 32 hens to the Company. If the land had not been cultivated within 6 years, it had to be returned to the Company. It was also agreed that, in exchange for the land, the settlers had to give up part of their produce. Since the Company held the monopoly of trade, the settlers had to take the whole produce to the Company stores where nine-tenths were to be returned to them in the form of money or other goods.

.....  
**Title deed for one of the first registered "concession" made on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1726**  
***Concession de terre accordée à Pierre Christophe Lenoir, Commandant des forts et établissements français dans les Indes Orientales, Président des Conseil supérieurs et provinciaux dans les dits établissements, et Gouverneur de Pondichéry.***  
**5 Juin 1726**

*Nous Denis Brousse lieutenant de roy de l'Isle de France et y commandant pour le roy et la Compagnie des Indes Orientales, seigneur a perpétuité en toute propriété justice et seigneurie de la d. isle et autres de sa dépendance, président du Conseil provincial qui y est etably.*

*Salut*

*Le Sieur Pierre Christophe le Noir commandant des forts et établissement françois dans les Indes Orientales, president des Conseils tant superieure que provinciaux dans les établissements et gouverneur de Pondichery, nous ayant requis de luy concéder et a ses héritiers nez et à naitre de legitime mariage ou ayant cause un terrain situé au quartier de St. Martin contenant mil pas en quarre géométrique de cinq pieds chaque pas, lequel sera borne du costé par la Riviere de Mons. De Nyon et de l'autre par l'habitation des hollandais et montagne françois et d'un bout par la mer à l'exception des cinquante pas de la Compagnie et de l'autre bout par les montagnes.*

*Le Conseil Provincial de cette Isle assemblé et consulté de son avis et consentement pour le bien et l'utilite de la Compagnie et de la collonie, en vertu du pouvoir que la Compagnie nous donne, nous avons concédé et concédons au d. Sr Lenoir et a ses heritiers nez et a naitre de legitime mariage ou ayans cause les cy devant bornées qui sont actuellement vaines vagues et sans culture pour par le d. Sr Le Noir et ses legitimes herittiers ou ayans cause, en jouir en toute propriété roturiere la Compagnie se reservant tous droits de seigneurie directe de bannalites chasse, et pesche, et en outre aux conditions suivantes et non autrement.*

**Article 1**

*Que le d. Sieur Lenoir sera tenu de faire cultiver les d.terres et les ensemancer de grains et autres fruits quelles seront jugees capables de recevoir, en sorte que dans trois années à compter du jour de la datte de la presente concession, le tout soit en culture, telle que la nature du terrain requerra, a faute de quoy les d. terres reviendront a la Compagnie sans aucune formalite de*

*justice, seront reunies et consolidees de plain droit a son domaine sans qu'ils puissent pretendre aucun dedommagement pour raison d'une portion des d. terres qui auroient estes deffrichées ou ensemenées.*

**Article 2**

*Qu'il sera paye par chaque concessionnaire le dixiesme en nature des caffés, poivriers, canneliers, drogueries et epiceries fines et autres plantes arbres et arbustes servant a la teinture et a la medecine qui pouroient croistre sur les terres ; a l'effet de quoy chaque "concessionnaire sera tenu d'apporter aux magasins de la Compagnie tout ce qu'il aura recueilly chaque année des productions cy dessus pour estre le dixiesme prélevé au proffit de la Compagnie et le surplus estre paye aux d. concessionnaires en argent ou marchandises sur le pied du tarif, et seront les d. concessionnaires exempt pendant trois annees entieres des d. dixieme à compter du jour de la datte de leur concession.*

**Article 3**

*Qu'il sera paye au garde magasin de la Compagnie dans l'Isle tous les ans et dans le mois de janvier de chaque année pour chaque arpent de terre un sol soit en argent soit en d'entrées de pareille valeur au choix du concessionnaire, et en outre une poulle à peine de soixante sols damende contre ceux qui ne payeront pas dans le d. mois de janvier.*

**Article 4**

*Que ceux qui acqueront du Sr. Lenoir ses heritiers ou ayans cause le tout ou partie des terres concédées, soit a son prix d'argent échange ou rentes de toutes espèces seront tenus d'en notifier au greffe du Conseil le contract ou acte dacquisition dans vingt jours de la datte à peine trois livres damende, de presenter ensuite le contract ou acte aus sus d. garde magasin et de luy payer vingt deniers pour livre du prix de lacquisition, la Compagnie se reservant la faculte de reunir des terres à son domicile a chaque vente en remboursant à lacquereur le prix porte par le contract ou l'acte d'acquisition.*

**Article 5**

*Que la presente concession sera enregistrée au greffe du Conseil Provincial au pied de coppie de laquelle qui servira de minute le d. Sieur Lenoir s'obligera d'exécuter les conditions cy dessus dont il fournira trois expéditions au greffier du dd. Conseil qui en gardera une pour en composer un registre, une pour le duplicata ou double du registre, et le troisième pour estre envoyée à la compagnie pour la ratiffier et approuver, le tout à la peine de nullite de la presente concession et de reunion des d. terres au domaine de la Compagnie, en l'etat quelles seront sans aucun remboursement des ameliorations, maisons, et constructions qui pourroient si trouver, donne au Port Louis dans l'Isle de France, le cinquieme juin mil sept cent vingt six.*

GAST DHAUTERIVE

ST. MARTIN

.....

These conditions provoked so much dissatisfaction among the settlers that the Company was forced to abandon the one-tenth requirement and, instead, claimed 4 ounces of coffee or spice per *Arpent*. This arrangement, as well, did not satisfy both parties. Other forms of regulations were passed in an attempt to bring the settlers to produce more in terms of agricultural crops and spices. This time, the Company offered a plot of 50 *Pas Géométriques* to those workers after the expiry of their contract. Besides, they were to obtain some tools and 2 slaves, half their pay and rations, with the overall facilities of loans to be repaid within 5 years. The soldiers were encouraged to settle on the island, and the Company went to the extent of looking for suitable brides for them. Not only were marriage expenses paid, but soldiers were also given a dowry of 100 *piastres*. To create a pool of labourers, the Company engaged in slave trade.

The French East India Company hoped to encourage the production of grains and vegetables, pepper, coffee, indigo, cotton, sugar, maize and manioc, but to no avail. They never succeeded; the "*grants*" depreciated very quickly as the land was never used for cultivation. Flour, wheat, wine, as well as materials for the naval yard, ammunitions, clothes and utensils, were imported from France. Since these did not reach the island regularly, the settlers had recourse to the French possessions in India to provide the needful. Cattle were imported from Bourbon, India, Madagascar, the Cape, and even Senegal.

Because the Company had the monopoly of trade and commerce - as was the case in all French possessions - the articles of consumption were sold at a very huge profit, which put most of the settlers in an extremely difficult situation. Life in Isle de France became very expensive. The situation was indeed very bleak in the 1730s. The early settlers either went back to France or ran away with their slaves into the woods and lived off hunting.

Isle de France experienced four different types of administration during the 95 years of French presence, between 1715 and 1810: the first administration of the East India Company as from 1720, then the second administration under the Royal Government (1764), followed by the Royal Administration as from 4<sup>th</sup> July 1767, until the establishment of the Revolutionary French Government from 1790 onwards. The imperial phase of the French administration was to last till 1810.

In November 1723, the country had a breakthrough, with the setting up of a plan for a sensible reorganisation and a better administration: the Royal Edict created a "*Conseil Supérieur*" for Bourbon Island and a "*Conseil Provincial*" for Isle de France. These "*Conseils*" functioned as administrative bodies and also meted out Justice. If the Dutch East India Company benefited from all the support of Central Government from Holland, this was not entirely the case with the French East India Company.

In 1726, when Pierre Christophe Lenoir, Inspector of the Company, arrived in Mauritius to set up the "*Conseil Provincial*", he appointed a Director-General of Trade. The first one was Pierre Benoit Dumas. The latter spent most of his time and energy in Bourbon Island. Two years later, in 1728, it was decided that civil and military powers were to be combined and the "*Commander*" became subservient to Dumas. De Maupin was appointed in Mauritius, but very soon, he proved to be extremely unpopular with the French settlers on the island and a rebellion was put down. The Royal Edict of 1734 put an end to the "*Conseil Provincial*" subservient to Bourbon Island and created a "*Conseil Supérieur*" composed of the Governor General, the Director of Commerce and four Councillors. A "*Procureur Général*" (Attorney General) was appointed to head the Judiciary.

The "*Conseil Supérieur*" granted land, money and tools to the settlers. As most of them were either sailors or military men - so, far from being "*agriculteurs*" - they continually complained of not getting enough goods in time, as well as about the low prices paid for their products to the French East India Company. The colony was always short of money.

The Royal Edict of 25<sup>th</sup> September 1766 brought other changes in the administration of the country. The greatest change was the formidable power given to the Governor. Indeed, as from the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1767, the "*Conseil Supérieur*" ceased to exist and the Governor took into his hands all Legislative, Executive and Judicial functions.

A new post was created, that of "*L'Intendant*". The latter acted more as a Financial Controller and took control of the budget, taxes and trade.

On 14<sup>th</sup> July 1767, Isle de France became a Crown Colony of France. The island enjoyed the status of a French province situated overseas. It was given the same type of political and administrative structure which characterized the French colonies of the *Ancien Régime*. Supreme power rested in the person of the King at the Court of France. When power was delegated locally, it was distributed among the King's men. So, the two Administrators chosen from the King's appointees, Dumas and Pierre Poivre, became Governor and "*Intendant*" respectively. The relations between the two most important men to govern the island depended very much on their personalities. Dumas was recalled in less than no time and, even his successor, Governor Desroches, did not stay long in Mauritius. Neither Poivre, nor the two successive Governors could agree on most things, whether on the dossier of administration or the importance to be given to agriculture.

It was definitely Pierre Poivre who had the upper hand over both Governors. He left his imprint on the Royal Administration. In one of this first speeches to the settlers, Pierre Poivre made it clear that free trade was established, money was introduced into the country, and settlers would be supplied with whatever goods they wanted from Europe. Moreover, he applied a tariff control in order to cut down prices. He reinforced the idea of Labourdonnais about the free trade. He decreed and put an end to monopolistic commercial activities. He thus liberalized trade on the island. In order to encourage more production on the island, he decided to repay all debts incurred by the French East India Company. Poivre's real power resided in his capacity to keep, at the King's expense, some ships to allow transportation of cattle from Madagascar for the inhabitants of the island.

Poivre introduced some new measures and contributed enormously in terms of technology, thus setting up the three watermills which produced some 6,000 pounds of flour. Then, he created a bakery to provide bread for the garrison and the ships, organised a granary sufficiently large enough to contain reserve stock of up to 400,000 pounds of wheat, 400,000 pounds of flour and 150,000 pounds of rice.

The other administrative bodies, like the "*Tribunal Terrier*" (Land Tribunal) and the "*Conseil de fortifications*" were reactivated. The Land Tribunal advised the Administrators about the "*concession*" (Land grants). But, in spite of "*concession*" facilities, the land was left unattended. In 1788, some 210,884 *Arpents* were granted, but only 72,845 were used.

The new administration of the island established the "*Conseil de Commune*", thus creating the system of district administration. Each "*Commune*", or District, was administered by the principal inhabitants of each region which, actually, meant the wealthiest and the white inhabitants. Eight "*Communes*" (districts) were established: Port Louis, Port Bourbon (Mahébourg), Flacq, Rivière-du-Rempart, Rivière Noire, Moka, Plaines Wilhems and Savanne.

Land and slave-ownership were indicators of economic and social status on the island. Besides the French colonists who possessed large areas "*concessions*", the '*Gens de Couleur*', the soldiers (*Noirs de Détachement*) who participated in "*Maroon Detachments*", were given 5 *Arpents* each. Contrary to the French colonists, they were not allowed to cultivate cash crops such as spices (cocoa, cinnamon, pepper, nutmeg or cloves) on their lands. The only cultivation allowed were food crops. The '*Gens de Couleur*' gradually developed other activities: buying and selling, renting land and warehouses. They borrowed money to purchase property. As far as slave-ownership was concerned, most of the '*Gens de couleur*' owned domestic slaves. Some slave women ended up as partners of the masters.

## BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

The need for finance to boost up agriculture and trade made itself felt acutely under the British administration. Sir Robert Townsend Farquhar, appointed as Governor of Mauritius, was not only a soldier, but also a capable diplomat and an organizer of commerce.

He managed to obtain financial help from public funds, but this did not please the British Government which made it clear that the colony had to fend for itself and try to devise ways and means to create economic development. The leading inhabitants endeavoured to find a solution to the thorny problem of finance by founding the Bank of Mauritius, with 200 shares of £1000 each. Hence, planters and traders could be provided money by the bank.

From this date, the Mauritian economy was to depend entirely on the development of the Sugar Industry. Under British rule, this progress was indeed a steady and uninterrupted one. The Sugar Industry was encouraged and the planters' work was greatly facilitated in every possible way. The conditions of naval struggle changed drastically when the British took over, the French influenced having been annihilated.

Under Governor Farquhar, agriculture received considerable encouragement. Sugar was destined to become the main industry of the country. Farquhar realized that, since cotton and spices were always severely damaged by cyclones and hurricanes, sugar cane was preferable.

The economic benefits did not always accrue to the planters. The situation of the inhabitants was extremely difficult. Sugar and other commodities, exported towards Great Britain, carried the same duties as on the same products imported from India. An additional duty of 10 shillings per 100 pounds, as compared to the Caribbean, was paid on Mauritian sugar when it entered the London market. On 27<sup>th</sup> June 1825, this extra charge was removed as Sir Robert Farquhar who, after his departure from Mauritius, was elected as Member of the British Parliament, continued to intervene in favour of Mauritius.

The removal of the additional tax had an immediate effect on Mauritian sugars: the rise in production knew no bounds. From little over 9, 000 *Arpents* in 1810, the area put under cultivation reached 27,800 *Arpents* by 1825, to a total of some 51, 000 *Arpents* in 1830. Sugar production rose from 10, 870 tonnes in 1825 to reach 33, 960 tonnes in 1830. For the first time since the foundation of the colony, commerce became less important than agriculture. At the same time, the local planters had another stroke of good fortune. Prices of sugar rose substantially from 1823 to 1827.

## EXPANSION OF SUGAR INDUSTRY

There was a fivefold increase from 1810 to 1830. Around 1825, the plantations were worked by 17 000 slaves, at a time when the cultivated area reached about 25,000 acres.

Alongside with the sugar production, there was an increase in the number of sugar mills over the following years.

Period	No. of Sugar factories	Area under cultivation	Production (m t.)
1753	3	-	-
1798	10	10 000	-
1806	10	9 000	-
1812-20	10	26 000	13.7
1821-30	157	40 000	34
1831-40	176	50 000	53
1841-50	230	59 000	72.5
1851-60	260	110 000	117.3
1861-70	303	124 000	129.2
1870-80	223	123 000	115
1881-90	103	123 000	120.3
1891-00	99	123 000	115
1901-08	79	127 000	161
1909-13	58	143 000	221.6
1914-18	55	165 000	235.9
1919-23	50	169 000	225.1
1924-28	42	155 000	225.2
1929-33	42	135 000	226.4
1936-	38	143 000	300.3

### SETTING UP OF THE “SUGAR DISTRICTS”

It is appropriate to know that the emergence of the sugar districts had its origin in the French period. Between 19<sup>th</sup> December 1729 and March 1740, some well-to-do families came to Isle de France under Mahé de Labourdonnais during his term of office, some left after a few years. Amongst the well-known families who have left their names and offsprings in Mauritian folklore were the Autard de Bragard, Boucher de Boucherville, Dioré de Périgny, d'Emmerez de Charmoy, De Guardia de Ponté, Le Juge de Segrais, de La Hausse de La Louvière, De Peteaux de Saint Romain, Poupinelle de Valencé, Rocherie de Marceney, De la Roche de Ronzet, De Saint Félix de Mauremont, Sinarel de Pitray, Vigoureux de Kermorvan and Blandain de Chalain.

### EMERGENCE OF THE FIRST LANDOWNERS

After 1731, in spite of the difficult situation, areas like Port Louis, Montagne Longue and Pamplemousses slowly began to acquire some importance. Land grants were made in the area of Tombeau River. The early beneficiaries were Louis François Ferry, a merchant and a draper; Charles Millon, a Captain; François Perrault, Jean Capieux and Guillaume Dabadie. They were the first settlers to establish important estates like “*Mon Plaisir*”, “*Villebague*”, the “*Forges de Mon Désir*”, “*Mon Goust*” and “*Pignolet*”. Pierre de Roma, for instance, who was granted a plot of land in the District of Pamplemousses, formed a partnership with his neighbour, another settler and founded a company with his future mother-in-law, of the Pignolet family. Later on, they signed a contract under Labourdonnais' governorship to furnish wood planks for port activities. They were given each 25 slaves and a loan equivalent to 6,000 *piastres* and 40 heads of cattle to engage in cattle-rearing.

**Figure 1 The Rivière-du-Rempart & Pamplemousses main "grants"**

- i. The "concession" grant given to Mahé de Labourdonnais in 1743
- ii. The "concession" given to Jacques Le Roux Kermorseven in 1795
- iii. The "concession" given to Rostaing & Hermans in 1745
- iv-viii The other plots form part of the "Réserves de Bois Rouge & de Poudre d'Or"

The advent of Bertrand François Mahé de Labourdonnais as Governor General of the "Isles de France et de Bourbon", on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1735, completely changed, not only the "morose" environment of the island, but also the history of the country.

Apart from being a strong proponent of the expansion of French colonial power in the Indian Ocean, Mahé de Labourdonnais succeeded where others failed. He was the first Governor and colonial administrator to stimulate trade and industry. The Sugar Industry, indeed, flourished under his governorship. His first move was to promote Mauritius as the "headquarters of the French forces in the region". As this coincided with the decline of the French influence in India, Isle de France became the base of the "Governor General of all French possessions beyond the Cape". At the outset, Labourdonnais reviewed the whole situation. It was reported to him that there were no hospital, no store, no fortifications, no army or navy.

Historian Saint Elme Le Duc, in a report about the situation on the island, described the population thus:

*"Les habitants de Isle de France s'occupent peu de la culture des terres; ils ne songent qu'à faire une fortune rapide par toutes les voies qu'ils croient permises, monopole, usure, contrebande, marchés captieux, traites secrètes, et quelquefois partagés par les administrateurs : rien n'est respecté par eux, leur seul but est de s'enrichir et revenir promptement en France".*

Mahé de Labourdonnais, therefore, took up the task of reorganizing the island and established what he believed to be a proper colony and settlement. Between 1735 and 1746, Mahé de Labourdonnais administered Mauritius in such a way that he was to imprint his vision of development. He cleared the way for his successors who built on these solid foundations and, thus, created a country.

In his book *Island of Swan*, Michael Malim pointed out that the improvements made by Labourdonnais and the prospect of a pleasant, pastoral life, unclouded by the imminence of duns, attracted considerable numbers of settlers from good French families, ruined by the collapse of the Mississippi Bank, and the credit edifice known as the System Law. These newcomers secured land in the interior of the island and settled down to live in seclusion on their estates, only visiting Port Louis for an occasional ball, a festival of the Church or when business compelled them to. They quickly formed a community apart, aloof and contemptuous of the rabble of petty officials, brokers and low-class adventurers who thronged the port and, thereby, laid the foundations of a social structure which has persisted to this day, with its characteristic snobberies.

Under Labourdonnais, their ranks were steadily swelled by officers of the Company's army, who either retired or handed in their papers, out of disgust, over the mishandling of one enterprise after another that came to a disastrous end in India. Ultimately, they were joined by a fair number of aristocratic refugees from the French Revolution.

Mahé de Labourdonnais was the first Governor to give to Mauritius an infrastructure for its development, while exploiting slaves beyond all limits. He gave a boost to sugar cane cultivation. When he first arrived at the Isle de France, sugar cane was grown solely for the purpose of making arrack. The two factories, created at Pamplemousses and Vieux Grand Port, were followed later on by more. The impulse given by the Governor to agriculture resulted, within a very short period of time, in the establishment of some 114 plantations of various kinds. In fact, the immediate successors of Labourdonnais followed the same line of development and promoted sugar cane cultivation. By 1750, the sugar factories yielded a net profit equivalent to £60,000.

He was also the first Governor to understand that the destiny of the island resided in trade and commerce. He encouraged agriculture. His understanding of the importance of the island is shown in his decision to make of Mauritius the post for "*all French possessions beyond the Cape*". At once, he discovered that the local wood could be used in shipbuilding. Woodcutting operations began in full swing under his administration. He decided to concentrate all his efforts and energy in the cultivation of indigo, sugar, coffee and spices. Montagne Longue and Pamplemousses soon became one of the most active and populous districts, whereas a big "*indigoterie*" was established near Pieter Both. He wanted the farmers to act like "*little lords*", thus establishing the tradition of "*gentlemen farmers*". He set the example on "*Mon Plaisir*", where he created the first Botanical Garden. Very quickly, an active and industrious environment was to be imposed in the areas of Calebasses, Maison Blanche and Rivière-du-Rempart. Large establishments and farms with stables, barns, pigsties, poultry and pigeon breeding were set.

*"Le 12 mai 1759, une habitation de 468 arpents aux Pamplemousses, connue sous le nom de Maison Blanche, et formée de la réunion de 3 terrains de 156 arpents, concédée à M. Dusset, capitaine d'infanterie, à la charge par ce dernier de payer à la Compagnie (des Indes) 48 poules ou chapons, par année, deux journées de corvée par chaque tête de noir au-dessus de 15 ans, applicables à la confection des grands chemins, ou selon les indications de la Compagnie, qui, outre la redevance exigée, s'était réservé la coupe des bois, et le droit de chasse et de pêche",* wrote Adolphe Macquet, a Notary Public living at Mahébourg.

But, in 1804, in the aftermath of the Slave Revolution in Haïti, some 313, 026.61 *Arpents*, out of the 432, 680 *Arpents* of cultivable land of the island, at that time, were given as "*grants*" which would give rise to a frenzied and hectic development of the agricultural production, mainly sugar, over a short period as demonstrated below:

Districts	Arpents
Moka	36 264.85
Plaines Wilhems	40 832.56
Rivière Noire	35 937. 63
Savanne	42 737.08
Grand Port	45 036.36
Flacq	39 383. 05
Riv. -du-Rempart	30 637.05
Pamplemousses	42 203. 26
<b>Total in Arpents</b>	<b>313 026.61</b>

### THE MERGER SYSTEM

After 1825, a new class of landowners emerged and which ultimately developed into a 'plantocracy' involved in sugar production.

By 1850, there were some 259 sugar factories on the island, with an average annual production of 130, 000 tonnes in the year 1858. However, the number of sugar factories over the last 200 years was dramatically reduced, following modernisation or mergers which formed part of the ongoing process of centralization and streamlining of the Mauritian Sugar Industry. In the North of the island, Governor Magon had set up the first sugar mill at Ville-Bague in 1756, and the introduction of steam as a driving force for the mill, which took place some years later, was considered as the greatest achievement of that period.

### PAMPLEMOUSSES DISTRICT

Jean Baptiste Ogendias, who obtained his land at Petit Bois, commonly known as The Mount, sold it to Antoine Drouët in 1771. In 1795, the estate representing two "*grants*" of an extent of 312 *Arpents*, under wheat and indigo cultivation, was purchased by Claude François Chastel. The latter erected thereon a sugar factory. In 1834, the factory was sold to Hunter, Arbuthnot & Company and was named "*The Mount*".

The Plessis Estate and La Grande Rosalie, which belonged to Mahé de Labourdonnais, were merged in 1743. In 1759, La Petite Rosalie, owned by Denius Morcy, was also merged. André Rufeveuille, who owned Nicolière or Albert Estate and California, sold his estate in 1741. In 1825, Armand Esnouf also sold Constance. The estate merged into Petite Rosalie in 1910. By 1947, all these estates were subsequently merged into Rosalie California. La Lucia Estate had also been merged into Antoinette in 1877. Antoinette or Belle Alliance, which had belonged to the Chevalier de Chermont in 1783, was merged into the Compagnie Sucrière d'Antoinette in 1939.

As early as 1745, the Beau Plan Estate also in the North had originated as a "*fragment*" of the "*Forges de Mon Désir*" establishment that was created primarily for the manufacture of iron, cast iron and gunpowder. The iron business flourished for some years, but due to shortage of wood, the iron works closed down and "*Mon Désir*" was sold.

Of the estate's 4,524 *Arpents*, the new owner retained a portion of only 740 *Arpents*. As from 1775, this small area was named *Beau Plan*.

While in 1794, indigo was the main crop grown on the estate land, it was rapidly replaced by sugar cane. The land acquired by Beau Plan Sugar Estate Company was 448 *Arpents*, but the area increased during the period 1882 to 1961. In 1920, 175 *Arpents* were bought from *Souvenir* Estate. Subsequently, 400 *Arpents* were bought from *Fair Fund* in 1921, 275 *Arpents* from *Vallombreuse* Estate in 1941, 602 *Arpents* from *Maison Blanche* Estate in 1946, and 150 *Arpents* from *Espérance* Estate in 1961. Later on, during that same year, 77 more *Arpents* were bought from Mon Goût Estate.

### **RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICT**

Arriving from Saint-Omer, France, Jérôme Pilot, obtained a "*concession*" at Rivière-du-Rempart in 1774 to create what is known today as Mon Loisir. The land granted was situated in the middle of an estate of 875 *Arpents*, on which land his heirs built the *Mon Loisir* factory in 1820. The factory was made of "*wood and not stone.*" Apart from human labour, donkeys and oxen were also used. Over the years, subsequent land purchases and several centralization processes transformed this sugar cultivation area into a very large estate. The most important land acquisition was that of Beau Séjour in 1947, with a centralized sugar factory at Mon Loisir.

### **SAVANNE DISTRICT**

Following the same trend, Bel Ombre had started its development in 1765, the year in which a "*concession*" of 2,200 *Arpents* was granted to Simon Remirac and Claude de La Roche du Ronzet. The factory was built around 1807 by Calixte de Chantoiseau who, in turn, sold it to Charles Telfair in 1816. Telfair sold part of the estate to Blancard, Waugh and Lesage, but kept an interest in the business until his death in 1833, by which time, through mergers and acquisition, the estate reached an extent of 5,000 *Arpents*. The heirs of Charles Telfair had, in the meantime, sold their shares to Gaston d'Emmerez de Charmoy. In 1823, the Bel Ombre Sugar Estate Company was created to purchase Bel Ombre, Beau Champ and Sainte-Marie.

These two estates belonged to Arthur Lucas. The new company, thus, became the owner of a larger estate which extended over 8,233 *Arpents*. Three years later, the company was dissolved as it became the property of Belouguet and Monville. Beau Champ was taken over by Simeon, Paul and Auguste Eynaud, while Sainte Marie became the property of Jules Rampal. In 1886, the Government bought some 2,175 *Arpents* of Bel Ombre forest.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1910, A. Wilson, Eugène de Rosnay, Edouard Rouillard, Emile Sauzier and Oscar Pilot formed the "*Compagnie de Bel Ombre Limitée*" and bought Bel Ombre, Beau Champ and Sainte-Marie for the sum of Rs. 747,000. In 1914, the Company also bought Frédérica Estate and, in 1934, Bon Courage Estate. The same Company purchased Case Noyale of an extent of 7, 600 *Arpents* for Rs. 3,2 millions in 1961, the entire Company passed under the control of the "*South West Tourism Development Company*", a subsidiary of the Rogers Group of Companies, in 1971.

A series of mergers of adjoining lands ensued over several years.

### **FLACQ DISTRICT**

The estate on which the Flacq United Estates Limited stands was acquired early in 1816, when Pierre Régnard bought from Jean Auguste Lacroix a plot of land to the extent of 280 *Arpents* which

was previously a “*concession*” of Jacques Poivre. By 1827, there already existed a sugar plantation in the area which was sold to Frederick Berthelot. At that time, the estate was known as Montalieu. After a series of mergers, the estate increased in capacity and volume. The first merger was made in 1836 by the then owner, Victor Lanougarède.

In 1948, the last mergers were made through the acquisition of Sans Souci and Victoria. These two factories, however, continued to crush canes until they closed down in 1949 and 1954 respectively. On the occasion of the merger of Union or Union Flacq in 1948, the estate was completely reorganised. The Flacq United Estates Limited, the largest sugar entity on the island, founded by Fernand Leclézio, carried its sugar milling activities up to 5<sup>th</sup> December 1995, when it was taken over by the Flacq United Estates Sugar Milling Company.

The company continued its expansion until 1968, when it took over Médine Sugar Estates Company Limited.

### **WEST EAST MERGERS**

In 1968, Médine was the second largest sugar estate of the island, producing more than 20% of the total sugar output of Mauritius. In 1969, another company, the West East Limited, was created with a view to coordinating the activities of Flacq United Estates Limited and Médine, and to financing their own development. West East Limited purchased the Trianon Estate Limited in 1970.

Rapid progress ensued in many fields: cultivation of potatoes, ground nuts, tea, peas, rice, carrots, beans, oysters, fish and fresh water prawns, cattle and stag-rearing, production of alcohol, rum and vinegar, manufacture of concrete blocks and macadams and the development of Tourism. The tourist complex of *Hôtel des Iles Limited* at Trou d'Eau Douce, on the Eastern coast of the island, including the Touessrok Hotel and the tourist resort of Ile-aux-Cerfs as well as La Pirogue Hotel, on the Western part of the island, are landmarks in the Tourism Industry.

The estate, known as the Réunion Sugar Estate, is the property of the Médine Sugar Estate and Réunion Limited, commonly known as Société Reufac. Following centralization, the estate, situated on the Southern outskirts of the town of Vacoas, consisting of Tamarind, Trianon, Henrietta and Réunion proper. Flacq United Estates Limited, invested in two new subsidiaries, Flacq United Estates Steam and Power Generation Company and Agronat Ltée. The estate's power station, operational since 1994, supplies some 78.3 GWh of electricity on the national grid. With the installation, in 1998, of an additional 100 tonnes *bagasse*/coal boiler and of an 18.8 megawatt condensing/pass out turbo alternator, it boosted up power generation capacity to some 160 GWh. In 1999, West East Limited disinvested, significantly, in Rogers Group and increased its stake in New Mauritius Hotels to 14.5%. During the same year, West East Limited invested Rs. 133.35 millions in *Companhia de Sena SARL*, a Mozambican Company, which now owns the Sena Sugar Estates.

More sugar factories were founded in the East and the centre of the island in the early 1800s. The Constance Sugar Estate, established in the District of Flacq, was bought by Thomy d'Arifat on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1844. It is the heirs of the latter who set up the company, *The Constance - La Gaieté Sugar Estate Company Limited*, in 1882. The estate was, subsequently, extended by the acquisition of adjoining lands. If the Company diversified in normal agricultural activities, for example, by producing ground nuts, garlic, ginger, maize, tobacco, it added other aquaculture activities like oyster culture, pisciculture and “*camaron*” (shrimp) culture. It also tried its luck in Tourism with the creation of the Belle Mare Plage Hotel.

Today, a new company, the Constance Hotel Services, is positioned in the high class segment of hotel business in Mauritius and Seychelles. After the opening of *Le Prince Maurice* in 1998, the

Lemuria Resort of Praslin, Seychelles, was launched in late 1999. A major redevelopment and extension plan for The Belle Mare Plage Hotel was also scheduled.

### GRAND PORT DISTRICT

In 1834, 325 *Arpents* were conceded to Jérôme Jean de Rochecouste and Donald de Rochecouste to create the *Compagnie de Beau Vallon* which regrouped Beau Vallon and Riche-en-Eau, two of the oldest sugar estates in the South of the island. They cultivated the 325 *Arpents* of sugar cane which was crushed in a three-roller mill, driven by a hydraulic wheel, through iron pinions and gears. The factory had only one building with stone walls and a straw roof. Riche-en-Eau was conceded in 1853 to Gabriel Alexandre Gaston de Bissy and was running practically on the same lines as Beau Vallon. The Beau Vallon factory closed down in 1959, when all the sugar cane of both estates was sent to Riche-en-Eau. This factory had been enlarged and modernised.

The factory set up at Mon Désert, situated in the South-East of the island, goes back to 1850, when the first crushing plant was set up by the Cloupet Family. Very quickly, mergers followed when, in 1881, Mon Trésor was taken over; then Sauveterre, in 1934, Union Vale, in 1944 and Deux Bras during the following year.

The Mon Désert Estate, originally situated on the "*concession Mon Désert*", was granted to Jeanne Gallet, at Saint-Pierre, in 1747, under the French Governor David. The land was, subsequently, purchased in 1827 by Martial Noël who increased the acreage of 220 *Arpents*, bringing it to some 880 *Arpents* at the time of his death in 1869. The present Mon Désert Alma factory was created in 1947, after the merger of the Alma factory. Other mergers took place which added to the increasing size of the estate: Beau Bois closed down in 1875, Helvetia in 1882, L'Agrément in 1885, Minissy in 1917, La Laura in 1922 and Alma in 1947.

Rose-Belle Sugar Estate which bears the name of the locality, was built in 1855 by G. Rochery. Like the other 259 small mills producing 130,000 tonnes of sugar, the output of Rose Belle Sugar Factory amounted, in those days, to some 500 tonnes. The railways had just been inaugurated on the island and the factory was thus advantageously situated at the important junction of the Grand Port and Savanne lines and on the Mahébourg main road.

During practically a hundred years that followed its foundation, the factory area of Rose Belle Sugar Estate increased considerably through mergers. The adjoining estate of Hangar closed down in 1858 and was taken up by the Rose-Belle Sugar Estate. The same trend happened: Mare d'Albert and New Grove in 1884, Astroea (1885), Cluny (1886), Eau Bleue in 1889, Union Park in 1905 and Le Val in 1943.

The Government of Mauritius purchased the factory from Garthwaite & Ors in 1973. It became the first ever State-owned sugar concern.

These settlements in the vicinity of the estates later became the present towns and villages of Mauritius.

The Pamplemousses District was among the first districts to be settled in the French period. By 1832, some 10,231 slaves lived in this district, mostly on large plantations. In the vicinity of each estate, the slaves settled in camps away from the owners of the estate house. These slave camps were made up of small huts made of straw. Between 400 and 500 slaves or more lived and worked on estates like Mont Choisy, founded and owned by Charles Millien in 1827.

## LANDOWNERSHIP

Historians, researchers, Land surveyors, Attorneys, Notaries, Barristers cannot research properly land transactions which may have occurred at different periods of history because of the absence or bad state of these documents. It is also common knowledge that most people are unable to easily access all the Archives relating principally to land transactions. This situation must change. Furthermore, the practice of acquiring, exchanging or selling plots of land through private signature ("*sous seing privé*") has, in many cases, deprived researchers of opportunities to explain the state of affairs prevailing at that time. The layman, being ignorant of the Law, might have seen in this practice an easy way to undertake land transactions without having recourse to the service of a Notary Public.

Europeans were not the only people to acquire land during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Even if Europeans and other settlers benefited largely from the policy of land grants and "*concessions*" so generously granted to them, the sale of public land by the Colonial Government was also exploited by Africans and Asians at that time. Supporting documents (See R. Allen, "*Land ownership by persons of African and Asian origin and descent in colonial Mauritius*") can prove that slaves, manumitted slaves, ex-apprentices and "*Gens de couleur*" had a profound attachment to the cultivation and exploitation of land, as was the case in African societies before slavery, and as is still the case in Rodrigues.

## OBSERVATIONS

After the perusal of various cases heard before the Commission, and after a thorough analysis of the different claims submitted, the Commission has reached certain findings, as a result of which the Commission had made certain recommendations at **CHAPTER 9**, under the heading of “**MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**”. However, at this stage, the Commission wishes to make certain observations:

- The Commission has noted with great concern that ancestors have been able to sell and/or transfer and/ or donate their immovable properties to one child, or some of the children, but not to all their children.
- Some Notaries take the precaution of asking the other children to intervene in the Notarial Deed, but a few have carelessly ignored to do this. Such cases have given rise to Court action between brothers and sisters, thereby creating conflicts in the family.
- The Commission recommends that all Notaries should be reminded of their obligation to ensure the intervention, consent/ authorization of all the children (“*héritiers présomptifs*”) in the deed of sale/ donation by an ascendant to anyone of his descendants.
- The Commission has come across many cases where the heirs/ successors had no knowledge of the existence of any Will and Testament. Some have been made aware of the existence of these documents after the partition of the assets of the deceased.
- In this context, the Commission recommends that an entry, without giving details, should be made in the Register of the Conservator of Mortgages (“*Case hypothécaire*”) of the person making the Will and Testament, the date and name of the Notary Public. This will help the heirs and successors, Notaries and interested parties to know the existence of the Will and Testament left by the deceased persons.
- The Commission has also arrived at certain findings in relation to landownership and land dispute in Rodrigues. There have been a number of fraudulent practices throughout time. As a result, the Commission has made a number of recommendations by way of amendments to the laws regulating landownership, land dispute and prescription in Rodrigues. These recommendations are more fully laid down in **CHAPTER 3**.
- As regards the collection of relevant information and documents, the Commission has found that there were certain shortcomings at the Conservator of Mortgages and/or the Archives. To cater for this situation, the Commission recommends that access to documents should be better controlled through camera surveillance.
- Concerning the issue of land administration, the Commission finds that there is a need to change from the Deed Registration System to the parcel-based Deed Registration System. The Land Administration, Valuation and Information System (LAVIMS) Project will go a long way towards streamlining and modernizing land transactions in Mauritius.
- This new system is being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and, therefore, the Commission recommends harmonization, and makes proposals for other modifications. This is laid down more fully in **CHAPTER 7**.

- On the issue of prescription, the Commission has found that there were a certain number of malpractices and loopholes in our legislations, as a result of which the Commission has decided to make certain recommendations with a view to reinforcing control over the prescription procedures. Further, the Commission has also found that certain areas have a high incidence of prescriptions. The Commission has therefore recommended restricting the procedure of prescription in the said areas. These recommendations are more fully described in the Affidavit of Prescription Legislation in **CHAPTER 6**.
- As a result of various cases heard and claims studied, the Commission finds that there have been a certain number of allegations as regards the ethics and conduct of certain Legal Practitioners, Land Surveyors and land consultants. The Commission has held several hearings with the governing bodies of the above professions. As a result of this, the Commission has made certain recommendations which are more fully laid down in **CHAPTER 5**.
- As regards the numerous cases of land dispossession and the various obstacles to recovering the same, the Commission wishes to recommend that a **Land Research and Monitoring Unit** be set up to cater for these obstacles. Further, the Commission shall also recommend that a Land Division of the Supreme Court be set up to expedite matters in relation to land dispute.

Concern has been expressed regarding the backlog of cases standing before the Supreme Court. It is to be noted that in the past, the closure of the Land Tribunal and the *Tribunal Terrier*, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, has contributed to the frustration of all those who could resort to this institution to seek redress.

Fraudulent practices, lack of financial resources, ignorance of the law, as well as the inaccessibility to documents and misapplication of the law, and the lack of information concerning land transactions have largely contributed to depriving people of their property.

In this context, the Commission recommends some measures that could alleviate people's sufferings and trauma. A LAND MONITORING AND RESEARCH UNIT, should be set up to conduct enquiries, settle disputes or refer matters to Court. This important Authority will be called upon to monitor all land transactions, to receive complaints from genuine persons who have lost, or have been dispossessed of their property, and to assist the applicant to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and civil status, as well as investigate all Notarial deeds. The Commission has already started the Notarial Acts Database Project, a guideline to decipher and interpret the language in old French, which will help and better serve researchers, Notaries and Attorneys.

The Land Monitoring and Research Unit will be called upon to carry out an in-depth investigation into any complaint and establish the genealogical tree of the claimants, to advise the applicants after investigation and to offer Mediation to all parties. If an agreement is reached, it should be binding upon all parties, wherever appropriate, to sign the agreement. In case of disagreement, the case will be referred to the Supreme Court.

In this connection, a Land Division of the Supreme Court should be set up in order to expedite matters.

Moreover, as regards the surveying issues, no amendment boundaries are to be accepted unless they are based on a proper survey supported by plans of acceptable standards and the satisfaction to the Land Monitoring and Research Unit

Furthermore, there is a need to regroup all activities, now concerned with land title matters into one central Authority, introduce the principles of title to land and the creation and maintenance of a Cadastral map. There is also a need to make use of the Cadastral map. This will be a map compiled on a sufficient large scale to show clearly each parcel in the territory. This also applies to Rodrigues Island.

The Surveyors' field-notes will be retained. All plans, field-notes and computations should be properly filed and numbered. The use of microfiches and microfilms should be introduced to record existing land registration volumes and other archival documents such as concession plans.

There is a necessity to avoid duplication of staff and work, the land Monitoring and Research Unit should be housed in one building.

The Commission highly recommends that prescriptions be immediately freezed till the setting-up of the Land Monitoring and Research Unit and the introduction of new amendments to the legislation pertaining to the Affidavits of Prescription Act.

## CHAPTER ONE

# HOW DISPOSSESSION HAS TAKEN PLACE

## HOW DISPOSSESSION HAS TAKEN PLACE

In pursuance of its mandate, the Truth and Justice Commission has been concerned with dispossession of land and real estate. Dispossession has taken place in many ways as specified below:

### I. NON-PAYMENT OF THE PURCHASE PRICE OR THE BALANCE REMAINING DUE ON THE PURCHASE PRICE

The Commission has noted that people have purchased large portions of land on credit and, on the same day, an Inscription has been registered at the Mortgage Office in favour of the vendor. It appears that the sale price or balance of the sale price has not been paid as the Inscriptions have not been erased. This means that the purchaser has not paid the balance of the purchase price. It is possible that the vendor may have taken back the possession of the property sold. It has been observed that in the Répertoire of the Conservator of Mortgages, the lands purchased are still registered in their names and the inscription has not been erased. This has made the heirs and successors believe that the land still belonged to them. In some cases, it has been noted that some sales were made under certain conditions, more especially "*vente à réméré*". "*Vente à réméré*" means that the vendor may re-acquire the property sold after the delay mentioned in the deed. If he does not pay, the land will remain the property of the purchaser.

### II. NON-OCCUPATION OF THE LAND BY THE HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS

In some cases, the Commission has observed that the owners and/or heirs and successors have not occupied their lands over a long period of time. This may be due to financial constraints, lack of interest among the heirs or inability to occupy or maintain the plantation. The owners have not abided by the terms and conditions mentioned in the deed of "*concession*", as a result of which the land was taken back by Government. Leaving the land unoccupied and idle has led the neighbouring owners, more especially the sugar estates, to step in and occupy those lands.

### III. FALSE AND INACCURATE AFFIDAVITS OF NOTORIETY

In some cases, the complainants have declared that, although heirs and/or successors, they have been discarded in the division in kind of the land of their ancestors. This has occurred in cases of acknowledged natural children or children of another union or marriage. It happened that while giving instructions to Attorneys and Notaries, some heirs have deliberately omitted to hand over Civil Status Acts of those children whom they did not want to inherit the land.

### IV. MISINTERPRETATION OF WILLS AND TESTAMENTS

Whenever a Will or Testament is drawn up by a Notary Public in the presence of four witnesses or by two Notaries and two witnesses, it is very clearly stated that the testator is bequeathing "*all the properties, movable or immovable which the law permits him to dispose of and which he would leave at the time of his death*". The Law permits any person to dispose of a portion of his property defined as "*quotité disponible*", which is equivalent to a share of a descendant. In the case

when he has no descendant or ancestorst, he may dispose of the whole property. He must keep a reserved portion for his children, depending on the number of children. In some cases, it has been noted that the Testator has disposed of all his properties.

The Commission has further observed that in some cases, the universal legatee has disposed of all the properties of the testator, to the detriment of the rights of the "*héritiers réservataires*". This has occurred because he (the legatee?) has been wrongly advised that he is entitled to all the properties of the deceased by the Will and Testament.

In other instances, the Commission has observed that the person named in the Will or Testament has forcefully taken possession of all the properties of the "*de cujus*", thereby depriving all the other heirs and successors of their rights.

#### **V. CONFLICT AND MISUNDERSTANDING AMONG THE HEIRS**

In many cases, the Commission has observed that some people have been deprived of their properties through their own faults and negligence.

Instead of joining forces and resources to fight the ones who have dispossessed them of their properties, they have fought among themselves.

Unscrupulous persons, taking advantage of this disagreement among the heirs, have illegally and forcefully taken possession of the latter's lands. The unscrupulous persons have, since, occupied exclusively those lands in contravention of the Law.

In other cases, due to the great number of heirs and successors, it becomes difficult to gather them together for concerted action to preserve their property rights. This has occurred where there are children of different unions or marriages, the children of one union having never been in good terms with the other union. The animosity has increased with time to such an extent that no reconciliation has been possible. Heirs have been quarrelling constantly, thereby leaving property unoccupied. This has led other people to squat on this property, and with the passage of time, the legal heirs and successors have, through their own fault, lost their property.

#### **VI. LACK OF ACCESS TO PROPERTY**

Many complaints have been made by individuals to the effect that, although they hold proper title deeds title deeds, they have been unable to occupy their lands. These are often found in remote areas and are surrounded by Sugar Estate. Access to lands in some instances has been blocked by neighbouring landowners, thereby preventing the rightful owners of access to their lands which have been occupied by Sugar Estates.

#### **VII. LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM**

During the course of hearings, and while scrutinizing the case files, the Commission has noted with great concern and deep regret that some persons have been deprived and /or dispossessed of their properties, due to the fault and negligence

of a few Attorneys, Land Surveyors, Notaries and Barristers, Officers of para-statal bodies, Local Governments and Governmental Bodies.

A few professionals have regrettably failed to discharge their duties and obligations. It may have happened that these professionals, with the connivance of some Land promoters and/or financiers and/or prospective purchasers, have been accessory for dispossessing people of their Land.

Furthermore, these professionals have failed to conduct and handle the cases entrusted to them in an appropriate manner, as a result of which the adverse parties and/or their legal advisers have seized the opportunities presented to them to the detriment of the real owners.

Another example of dishonesty on the part of certain professionals who have helped unscrupulous persons prescribed land which belongs to owners who hold valid title deeds.

#### **VIII. PRESCRIPTION**

The Law of prescription is governed by the Civil Code whereas the procedure to transcribe an acquisitive prescription is laid down in the Affidavit of Prescription Act 1957. The public at large, particularly those who feel that they have been victimized by a prescription, tends to believe that there are flaws in the Law.

Yet, there is *per se* no fault in the substantive Law of prescription, as contained in the Civil Code, for the reasons spelt out in **CHAPTER 6** on acquisitive prescription. However, as has been shown during the hearings or in the numerous cases presented to the Commission, it is the procedures linked to Affidavits of prescription which have given rise to a number of abuses and fraudulent actions.

In fact, the Affidavit of Prescription Act does contain numerous loopholes which, over the past years, have encouraged people, who have not occupied a plot of land, without fulfilling all the requisites of acquisitive prescription, to swear false affidavits of prescription, transcribe these and end up having a legal title to the said plot of land. This situation thereby enables the same persons to dispossess the rightful owners or sell the plot of land, unless challenged.

As matters stand, with the existing legislation, two major flaws contribute to this fraudulent system.

In its final recommendations at the end of **CHAPTER 6**, the Commission points to certain modifications that can be brought to the "*Procedures of Affidavits Act*".

## THE SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

Mauritius has an Exclusive Economic Zone of 1.9 million square kilometres, including Rodrigues (surface area of 108 km<sup>2</sup>), Agalega and the Outer Islands, the Chagos and Diego Garcia, covering a surface area of 20,040 square kilometres and spread as follows:

### STRUCTURE OF LAND USE INMURITIUS

Whole island	186, 500
Agriculture	80, 674
Sugar cane	72, 000
Other agricultural activities	8, 674
Forest scrubs & grazing land	47, 200
Reservoirs, ponds, swamps & rocks	2, 900
Roads & footpaths	4, 500
Built-up areas	46, 500
Abandoned cane fields	4, 726

(Source: Central Statistical Office, 2010)

The purpose of this section is to highlight the evolution of land tenure from the early days of the French occupation (1715) up to the present.

Land has always been a fundamental concern of every community in the world, since people's livelihood and material wealth often depend on it. The administration and management of this basic asset has not been ignored by early Legislators. For this commodity to be properly managed there must be some mechanism to identify landownership or arrive at an orderly inventory of ownership and interest, especially as settlements began to radiate and sprawl into grazing grounds.

Referring to this institutional concern in his book, *Land Reform and Economic Development*, Professor P. Dorner wrote "of the legal, contractual or customary arrangements whereby individuals or organisations gain access to economic and social opportunities through land."

Since land was "available" in abundance but, at times, it was inhospitable. Administrative efforts were more directed at criminal matters rather than to civil ones. It is understandable, therefore, that the need for meticulous attention to demarcation lines, acreage, description and records may have seemed unimportant.

Land Tenure was regulated in Mauritius by *French Civil Code (Decaen)*, commonly known as "*Code de l'Isle de France*". They were decrees, Ordinances promulgated in France and applied here in the name of the Monarch, Louis XV and later the Emperor.

### **THE EARLY "CONCESSIONS" (GRANTS)**

The first land grant was made on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1726 to Pierre Christophe Lenoir, *Commandant des Forts et Etablissements Français dans Les Indes Orientales et Gouverneur de Pondichéry*. In 1724,

land concessions were freely given to those who wanted to settle on the island and to cultivate spices.

These grants, which were under the responsibility of the then Provincial Council, consisted of 3 types:

- *Terrain Simple* (simple holding) translation please or *Petite Habitation* (small estate) covering up to 156 *arpents* 25 *perches*; conversion please
- *Terrain Double* (two-fold holdings) or *Moyenne Habitation* (medium-sized estate) of 312 *arpents* 50 *perches*;
- *Terrain Quadruple* (four-fold holdings) or *Grande Habitation* (large estates) of 625 *arpents*.

Two conditions *inter alia* were attached to these grants:

- The maintenance of sufficient land under forests;
- The Development of the rest of the land within 3 years.

These grants of large estates obviously accounted for the large number of sugar factories in the early times, each owner of a large area having his own factory to process his own crop. Due to economic reasons, the sugar plantations started to merge and consolidate with one another or to be parcelled out and sold to sugar labourers. As a result of those estates merging and being parcelled out, there are today (2011) only seven sugar estates, with large factories and a large number of sugar plantations.

#### **THE LAND TRIBUNAL (TRIBUNAL TERRIER)**

In 1767, when Mauritius ceased to be a possession of the French East India Company to become a French Crown Colony, the powers of the Superior Council were modified and its responsibilities limited to those of a Court of Justice. The administrative powers it had hitherto exercised were transferred to the Governor and *Intendant*, while a new body known as *Tribunal Terrier* was appointed to deal with all questions pertaining to landed property.

The Judiciary Ordinance No. 96 of 25<sup>th</sup> September 1766, from *Code Delaleu* (Article 2) states that the Superior Council is invested with all authority over the location, extent and demarcation of conceded lands, as well as all other legal actions pertaining to the civil propriety and to the general enjoyment of land grants.

An important Ordinance was passed in 1773 (Ordinance 118 of the *Tribunal Terrier*), stating that following the request of the *Procureur du Roi* relating to complaints received from holders and occupiers of grants who could not claim ownership over lands which they were occupying for the following reasons:

- Those who have been granted the rights to settle on the land by the French East India Company;
- Those possessing a simple request to settle by the representative of the company;
- Those possessing a request as well as an order to survey their lands;
- Those possessing the request, the order and also the memorandum of survey.
- Those possessing all the above-mentioned documents, but having their title of grant signed by only one authority.
- Owners, whose lands had already been consolidated by the Crown, such as:

- Holders of *Concession Authentique* who had not satisfied the clauses of the contract of concession;
- Holders of *Concession Authentique* who had been guilty of serious abuse as to render their title doubtful.

For the above mentioned reasons, it was?? expedient that the "*interested parties*" should swear an affidavit, which should be signed by their two nearest neighbours to their possession, and contain a description of their building etc., with a view to adjudicating the land to rightful owner.

### **FIRST MAPPING OF THE ISLAND**

The first mapping of the island dates back to Governor Denis De Nyon's map of 1722, but it lacks accuracy, was not properly tied up and was poorly detailed. It was not until 1754, that the first satisfactory map was provided from the triangulation work of the great French Astronomer, Abbé Nicolas de la Caille, a member of the French Royal Academy of Sciences. The next triangulation was carried out in 1880 by Connal, the British Surveyor-General. It served as a basis for the Descubes map of 1881, which is a master plan, indicating the locations of the different grants tied to the road networks, rivers, canals, mountains and other natural features.

### **NOTARIAL DEEDS**

During the early years of the French settlement, the original Notarial Deeds were preserved in the Registry of the Supreme Court ("*Conseil Supérieur*").

As a result of a cyclone in 1731, most of the deeds, to that date, were lost. Subsequently, the deeds were preserved in the Notarial Offices and the Notaries had the option, but not the obligation, of placing them in the Archives. Thereafter, they were transferred to the Mauritius Archives around 1866.

From 1775, the duplicates were sent to France. During the French Revolution, this practice had to be discontinued and the Notaries were required to deposit their duplicates in the Executive Council. These were subsequently placed in the custody of different Offices:

- The Office of the Commissioner of Justice during the administration of Decaen;
- The Office of the Registrar of the Tribunal of First Instance after 1810;
- The Office of the Colony's Archivist, following the Proclamation of the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1824.

An important Ordinance was passed in 1955 (Ord. 11 of 1955), whereby the deposit of all original deeds up to 1896, still held by Notaries, was made compulsory. By the end of 1957, all such deeds were deposited, together with all original indexes and summaries that were available. Up to 1955, Notarial Deeds were drawn up in duplicate.

### **THE CIVIL CODE MAURICIEN AND ITS APPLICATION**

The last official edition of the Civil Code in force in Mauritius was the one which was promulgated in France on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1804, under the name of *Code Civil des Français*. The Code was re-promulgated, with modifications, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1807, under the name of *Code Napoléon* published in the *Law Bulletin*, No. 154 bis.

By Proclamation of the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1808, the *Code Napoléon* was extended to Mauritius. Several subsequent amendments were made. It is known as *Code Civil Mauricien* and contains 2,283 Articles pertaining to laws concerning people, their rights to a private life, name, domicile, marriage, divorce, adoption, property, succession, division in kind, donation, will and testament, contracts, sale, lease, society mortgage and inscriptions and prescription, among others.

*Articles du Code Napoléon, Code Civil, Code Civil Mauricien:*

- 7- 22           Personnes, droits, respect de la vie
- 23- 48         nom
- 102 - 111     domicile
- 144 - 228     mariage
- 229 - 279     divorce
- 312 - 342     paternité - filiation
- 343- 370      adoption
- 371 - 387     autorité parentale
- 388 - 478     minorité - tutelle
- 488 - 515     majorité - protection des mineurs
- 516 - 543     biens
- 544 - 636     propriété - usufruit
- 718 - 815     succession
- 816 - 842     partage
- 893 - 1100    donation - testament
- 1101- 1369    contrats - obligation
- 1387- 1480    contrat de mariage
- 1582- 1701    vente
- 1764           bail
- 1832- 1873    société
- 1983           contrat d'assurance
- 2137- 2203    privilège - hypothèques
- 2219- 2283    prescription

**AGREEMENT OF CAPITULATION OF 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 1810**

Article 8 of the Deed of Capitulation, signed between the French and English Commanders, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1810 preserved the religion, laws, rights and customs of the people of Isle de France (Mauritius). This property included land and slaves.

The new Government did not, therefore, alter the Civil Rights of the people of Mauritius.

This Article was the basis for maintaining the *Code Napoléon* in Mauritius. This gave rise to several disputes which started from the very first year of British Rule/ Administration. Governor Robert Farquhar pretended that the *Traite des Noirs* should be maintained as preserved customs protected by Article 8 of the Deed of Capitulation.

**COLONIAL SURVEYORS**

Because of the scarcity of natural features, attention was given, when the parcel of concession was delineated, to the quality of ground marking. Boundary stones or *bornes* were carefully placed. No doubt, within the confines of the early settlement, such marking and measurements satisfy the needs and the immediate requirements of the time. It is to be observed that although the method of counting paces, "*Pas Géométriques*" or perambulation, was rather primitive and empirical, the preoccupation of the Legislators was to exercise control over the alienation of property. From a very early date, land matters, as well as property litigation and boundary disputes, known as "*contestations foncières*", were settled by the Land Tribunal.

As grants grew up in number, a need was felt to give more security and protection to land holdings. Surveyors were called from France to demarcate properties, by a method of metes and bounds. Properties were demarcated by fixing boundaries, and stones were correctly placed. The colonial Surveyors were bound to submit memoranda of survey, after duly assigning the neighboring owners

to their operations and calling upon them to submit their concession deeds and documents to enable the surveyors to carry out, mark and fix the exact corners. The memoranda of survey were registered, and to give more authenticity and publicity the above instruments, Public Notaries were appointed to act as conveyancing officers.

Arrêté No 120 of 18<sup>th</sup> November 1773 relates to the arrival of Surveyors:

*“It has been reported to the Land Tribunal that many land owners of the region of Terre Rouge have complained that their land parcels have not been properly established, their boundaries not opened because the survey works have not been carried out, consequently they ignored the exact location and extent of their lots. With a view to clarify the situation, the land Tribunal ordained that grantees of grants in the above region should have their lands surveyed, the limits opened and boundary stones placed, in a delay to be prescribed, in default of which they would forfeit their grants and their lands would be returned to the crown.*

*The Tribunal ordered that within a delay of three months from the day of the present publication all owners of conceded lands in the region of Terre Rouge must have their grants measured and surveyed by Messrs. Bataille and Saucet, land surveyors deputed to that effect. The owners are requested to keep their boundaries opened and to respect the limits set down by the land Surveyors, in default of which their lands would revert to the Crown.”*

*(Editor’s Note: Translated from original text in French)*

Similar Ordinances were enacted in other parts of the land covering all the *quartiers*. The first proper Survey Office was set up in 1803 and was part of the archives Department. When the British annexed Mauritius, the Survey Office became known as the Surveyor-General’s Department. In 1904, this was replaced by the Department of Public Works and Surveys, of which the Survey Office became a branch.

There is no Land Department in Mauritius, or anything like the “*Service de la Carte*” in French Colonies. The nearest approach to such an organization is the Land Registry of the Archives Department which inherited, at the beginning of the British rule, all the papers and documents of the Land Tribunal and is also the repository of all memoranda drawn up, by sworn Land Surveyors—the Survey Office being concerned with Crown Lands. This collection of memoranda of survey includes some 100,000 plans from about 1753 to date and can be classified as follows:

BOOK	REGISTRY	PERIOD	DATE
LA	1 TO 3	FRENCH RULE	1787-1807
	4 TO 14	BRITISH RULE	1811-1879
LB	1 TO 4	Land Court minutes	1767-1846
LC	1 TO 22	Land Grants	1726-1810
	23 TO 33	BRITISH RULE	1811-1871
LD	LAND GRANTS (EXTRACTS AND DUPLICATES)		

## THE ARCHIVES

When Isle de France was surrendered to British Forces on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1810, the Archives were excluded from the terms of the Treaty of Capitulation. The Archives were taken back to France. After the Treaty of Paris (30<sup>th</sup> April 1814), Sir Robert Townsend Farquhar, the first British Governor

of Mauritius, appointed Baron Marier d'Unienville to perform the duties of Colonial Archivist. Confusion prevailed when Heads of Department were authorized to remove documents. D'Unienville himself depleted the archives and took away many documents to his sugar estate in the South of the island. At the death of D'Unienville, the post was abolished and from 1833 to 1873, the title was not borne by anybody.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1874, Mr. Henry Finiss was appointed "*to be Custodian of the Archives and to perform the duties formerly entrusted to the Colonial Archivist*". Mr. H. Finiss submitted a report on the state of the Archives in which he dealt, at some length, with the unwise policy of allowing documents to be removed from the Office he had held before.

*"The inevitable result was confusion and disorder. Records, which ought to be in one office, are to be found in another, searches are tedious and uncertain and valuable plans and titles are not to be found and a great deal of litigation has followed to the detriment not only of Government but also of private parties."*

A Royal Commission was appointed in 1909 to review the existing situation. Its recommendations regarding the Archives, Registration and Mortgage Departments were that it would be more economical to combine them under one Head of Department. The Colonial Secretary had this to say to the Colonial Archivist in his report:

*"In his Excellency's examination of the Archives Office, it seemed to him that under the existing system, too much reliance was imposed on the extraordinary memory and unique knowledge of the records which you possess and that the Department stands in need of a more systematic arrangement of the Archives with simple but comprehensive system of indexing which would enable another officer to assume charge in your absence."*

Indexing of documents started in 1923 and the Archives became autonomous in 1950. In 1951, Notaries were finally induced to deposit regularly in the archives all their original deeds more than 60 years old and to contribute to the cost of preservation of these records.

In 1956, legal action was initiated against private Land Surveyors who did not comply to the provisions of the Land Surveyors Act. It was confirmed that most so-called Memoranda of surveys, deposited in the past, were not in compliance with the provisions of the Act. In 1966, an important legislation was enacted (Ordinance No. 6 of 1966) wherein the Sworn Land Surveyors Ordinance was amended to bring about important changes in regulating land surveys.

As a result, Section 5 of the above Ordinance was amended which reads as follows:

*"The Chief Archivist shall, as soon as practicable after the coming into force of this Ordinance, transfer to the Permanent Secretary's office all memoranda of survey, deposited at the Archives Department under the provisions of the Principal Ordinance."*

The records pertaining to land surveys were handed over to the Permanent Secretary as stated in Section (4) of the Ordinance which reads as follows:

*"The Permanent Secretary (of the Ministry of Housing and Land development) shall have the care, control and custody of all memoranda deposited in his office and it shall be his duty to ensure the physical protection of all such memoranda entrusted to his care and to make them available to the public for research purposes."*

With the introduction of the Ministerial System in 1957, the Archives Department was placed under the control of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, subsequently, the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands opened a search room within its premises to which the public has access to any report in its custody.

The Archive Department comprises four main divisions:

- Manuscript Records (Repository);
- Maps and Records (Map Room);
- Printed Records (Library);
- Special Materials (Library)

The bulk of records are available for public inspection in the Search-Room, subject to Archives Regulations and to official instructions regulating access to public records. The following dates are important "LANDMARKS":

- 1721 PROCLAMATION OF ISLE DE FRANCE
- 1773 CONSTITUTION OF TRIBUNAL TERRIER
- 1778 ORDINANCE ENFORCING NOTARIES TO KEEP RECORDS OF DEEDS
- 1783 PUBLICATION OF THE CIVIL CODE OF ISLE DE FRANCE
- 1795 APPOINTMENT OF THE CONSERVATOR OF MORTGAGES
- 1796 COLONIAL ASSEMBLY TO REVIEW CROWN LAND AND THE REGISTRATION OF DEEDS
- 1803 DELIMITATION OF DISTRICT BOUNDARIES;  
APPOINTMENT OF CURATOR OF VACANT ESTATES
- 1805 PROCLAMATION ABOUT LEGAL PROCEDURES ON LANDED MATTERS

### CROWN LAND CLASSIFICATION

According to the Report of the Fact Finding Committee on Crown Lands (Ramkissoon Report, dated June 1985), the total extent of Crown Lands in Mauritius is 40,500 Hectares or 95,875 *arpents* and represents approximately twenty-two percent of the total island area. It is divided into the following categories:

- Pas Géométriques, reserves, proclaimed villages, former War Department lands----7.9%
- Crown Forest lands-----73%
- Former Railway lands----- 0.8%
- Other Crown Lands, including State-owned Rose-Belle Sugar Estate-----15.8%
- Islets----- 2.5%

Crown Forest Lands can be further divided into 5 main categories:

- Mountain Reserves (43, 424 Acres)

These lands are excluded from cultivation, largely in productive being mountain regions with steep slopes.

- National Reserves (4, 520 Acres)

These are areas of indigenous vegetation and endemic species which it is intended to retain as such and to preserve in perpetuity; they are excluded from cultivation and from commercial forestry. Their management is carried out by the National Reserves Board.

- Catchment Areas (10, 602 Acres)

They comprise the catchment areas of the main reservoirs which are Mare-aux-Vacoas, Mare Longue, Nicolière and Piton du Milieu. These areas are excluded from settlement and cultivation.

- Forest (23,859 Acres)

These are areas outside the other categories and which are more or less suitable for commercial forestry, though not necessarily for agriculture.

- Miscellaneous (4, 746 Acres)

This category consists of lands which have already been set aside for specific purposes and comprises land leased to various Authorities, Board and Corporations.

**The following have not been included in the above classification:**

- Land utilized specially for highway Engineering works for roads, avenues, accesses pertaining to the "Domaine Public".

These are inalienable and imprescriptible and amount to 1560 Hectares.

- The twenty-four State-owned *Barachois* and ponds which amount to 325 Hectares.

**MÉTAYAGE**

Land tenure among small planters is either freehold or land held under a system of sharecropping, in Mauritius known as *MÉTAYAGE*, under which the planter gives to the owner of the land a portion of the crop produced on the land, in lieu of rent. The *Métayer* is a person leasing agricultural land under conditions which entitle the landlord to a share of the crop or any commodities produced from the crop.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1949, a motion in the then Legislative Council was tabled on the subject of land Tenure, stating that the Government should appoint a fully representative Committee to prepare an Agricultural Legislation regulating the relations between Landlords and Tenants.

The following was confirmed from the Minutes of the meeting, chaired by Honourable H.R.Vaghjee:

- That, in principle, there should be a restriction on the recovery of possessions and that the landlord would be able to obtain possession under certain defined conditions;
- That, to prevent hardship among tenants through their inability to prove their title to the land, recourse should be had first to registration, when the lease is for a long period;
- That contracts between *métayers* and landlords should purely and simply be registered with the Central Board;
- That the proposed Legislation would contain provisions whereby compensation for improvement of land would become payable, in accordance with the improved and increased value of the land;
- That in the event of cession of interest of the landlord, the new landlord would have to allow the tenant to remain on the land, until he has reaped his full crop. In the case of a sugar-cane planter, he should be allowed to harvest up to a specified number of ratoon crops, unless he is given compensation; and
- That, in the event of the death of a tenant, priority should be given to his heirs to remain on the land.

## LAND GRANTS IN MAURITIUS UNDER THE FRENCH AND BRITISH OCCUPATION

1715 - 1968

Before addressing the Land Grants System (Land Distribution, Occupation and Ownership) during the French and British occupation, it is imperative to set the historical background and the contextual environment of that period of colonisation to understand the levers and factors that influenced and determined land tenure system and landownership in Mauritius.

Land tenure system and landownership have been the most important components that have shaped the political, social and economic history of Mauritius since the Portuguese first put the Island on the world map in 1505.

### THE BACKGROUND

Discovered by the Portuguese in 1507, Mauritius was subsequently held by the Dutch and the French before becoming a British colony in 1810. Mauritius became an independent state within the Commonwealth in 1968 and a Republic in 1992.

When first discovered by the Portuguese the Island has no indigenous inhabitants. The Dutch were the first to exploit the Island's resources but they did not plan to settle a colony, so they did not introduce any system of land tenure.

### THE FRENCH (1715-1810)

Five years after the departure of the Dutch, the French took possession of Mauritius in the name of the King of France in 1715 and renamed the Island 'Isle de France.' They did not occupy the island immediately but visited it occasionally.

In 1721 the '*Conseil Supérieur*' de Bourbon, while debating the firm intention of the French to occupy the Isle de France, after the King of France conceded the Island to the '*Compagnie des Indes Orientales*' argued: "*qu'il fallait en effet pourvoir le pays en femmes que l'on marierait aux soldats et aux ouvriers, afin de les exciter à demeurer dans l'île.*"»

Denis Denyon, an Engineer from the French colony of Pondichéry, was the first Governor appointed to administer the Island. Denyon sailed for the Isle de France accompanied by 234 settlers landed in the island in April 1722, where some officers of the '*Compagnie*' and some settlers coming from Bourbon Island had preceded him.

The French decided to settle both in Port Louis and in Grand Port, started construction to accommodate the administration and the settlers, and allocated some plots of land - '*concessions et emplacement*' to the few settlers who dared to accompany him on that adventurous enterprise in the name of the '*Compagnie des Indes Orientales*'. The grants of the first settlers were not officially registered.

The start was very difficult in as much as the administration had no sustained support from the '*Compagnie*'. The colony was always in short of supply of all kinds of goods. The lack of equipment, tools and scanty resources impeded development. In addition, unfavourable climatic

condition, pests and attacks by maroon slaves left on the island since the departure of the Dutch did not forecast a promising future for the colony.

Those migrants brought to the island were not motivated settlers or *entrepreneurs*, but soldiers, unskilled workers, tradesman, labourers, '*plus chasseurs qu'agriculteurs*' and whose ambition and main concern were certainly not to be pioneers settlers or colonists. Most land allocated was left unattended. The few grants under cultivation yielded poor results.

After three years when Denyon left, and according to a survey which he carried on the 12 October 1724, there were in the Isle de France 213 persons, including 100 soldiers.

#### THE POPULATION AS AT 12 Oct 1725

Officers	20
Soldiers	100
Tradesmen	28
Household personnel	5
Women	13
Children	13
Slaves for the Company	24
Slaves owned by the private	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>

*Four years after the occupation of the Island, 1725 (Source M.Lagesse)*

Some grants and *emplacements* were allocated, but very few were cultivated. All the settlers depended on the Company for supply of food, clothes, tools, and equipment.

After the departure of Denyon, Pierre Christophe Lenoir, who was commissioned by the Company to carry out an inspection of the island, took the lead. He constituted the '*Conseil Provincial*'. He took various measures and started to give land grants to the inhabitants. He regularized a few land grants allocated by the previous Governor.

Lenoir started registration and allocated land on terms and conditions that were in force in the French colonies of the West Indies and America. He was granted the first official land grant of the Ile de France on the 5 June 1726 (Ref Vol. LC 1/1).

#### “LES SEIGNEURS FROM FRANCE”

*“Concession”* was a form of land distribution and occupation introduced by the French in their colonies, principally in the West Indies, in Louisiana and New France, the present Canada. It was inspired by the feudal system established in France and which has proved to function adequately; it involved the personal dependency of the tenant - called the '*habitant*' in the colony - on the '*Seigneur*', substituted in the colony by the '*Compagnie*'. The colonial imperative was to clear

land of dense forests to undertake agricultural activities. The objective, in the short term, was to become self-sufficient to feed the colonists, the administration including the militia as well as the slave population and to ensure supply of food stuffs and provisions for the increasing number of ships calling in the port on their way to India and the Far East.

It is worth noting how the land grants were inspired, influenced and governed by the feudal system:

In the Act of Concession, the Isle de France and its dependencies are described as a '**Seigneurie**'. Though the grant was allocated to the habitant to '*jouir en toute propriété*' the company reserved the feudal seigneurial rights: '*tous droits de seigneurie directe de bannalités chasse et pesche*'.

In the five Articles of the Act, Feudal Law governs no less than nine conditions.

The Grants System of Land Tenure was pivotal to the French colonisation policy. The institutional system has played a major role in shaping the colonial economy, exclusively agricultural, solidly anchored on cheap labour procured by slavery. The scheme opened the way to an agricultural society and established the regime of plantation economy.

The philosophy behind this was to encourage individuals or '*habitant*' to start businesses on their '*habitations*' geared on agricultural mass production of a few staple products. In the long term, they would be encouraged to join forces and to associate with other '*habitants*' to progress towards bigger estates and plantations. Land that were conceded not profitable was retrieved from the '*habitant*' without compensation and annexed to the company's domain and, subsequently, reallocated to other settlers or sold to the highest bidders.

The Company would then target the exploitation of other resources and establish commercial activities and exportation to Europe, of goods of high economic value like sugar, coffee, cocoa and other similar products and minerals.

In 1726, Pierre Christophe Lenoir, the President of the 'Conseil Provincial', decided to give a boost to the production of various crops and agricultural produces, spices as well as to breeding and cattle-rearing. He particularly targeted the production of coffee, peppercorns, cinnamon, fine spices and tinctures plant, drugs and medicinal plants, for exportation and such other products as maize, wheat, vegetables and other plants of interest for local consumption.

To encourage the development of agriculture, he granted to those settlers, willing and capable to invest in such ventures, land in the form of concession called "**terrain d'habitation**" accredited by a notarised contract called '*actes de concession*'. The act set out the rights and obligations of each party.

Conditions attached to the grants, particularly '*les terrains d'habitations*,' were advantageous. Any '*habitant of a terrain d'habitation*' has the right to a quota of slaves, to an appropriate quantity of seedlings and plants in proportion to the acreage of his land. In addition, the company had to supply sufficient rations of food to the *cessionnaire* and his family as well as all his slaves for one year until he became self-sufficient.

The grantee or *cessionnaire* had a moratorium of three years to make his land profitable and to start paying to the Company an annual sum equivalent to 10% of the crops harvested on his land.

The typical grants were made on conditions that land conceded should be cleared, planted and maintained with agricultural activities. The documents provided for the forfeiture of the grants and the re-possession of the land by the '*Compagnie*' in the event of breach. (*Ref Act of concession to Christophe Lenoir*)

Originally, there were two types of grants: the large and the small grants. The first ones of 1000 '*Pas Géométriques*' or 312 *arpents* were generally allocated to the high-ranking officers. The small grants of 500 '*Pas Géométriques*' or 156 *arpents* were allocated to soldiers and workmen and people of lower rank.

Later, another type of land grant '*Le terrain quadruple of 625 arpents*' was added to the list. This type of grant was generally offered to high-ranking officers of the East India Company. In special circumstances, grants of wider acreage were allocated.

The "*habitant*", on the other hand, wherever he had a concession as '*terrain d'habitation*' was also entitled to a plot of land, in town, free of charge, for the construction of a house '*pour en jouir pour luy et ses enfants ou ayant cause, dans une pleine et entière liberté [...]*'

Another type of land grant was the '*Emplacement*' with smaller area, *allocated* for trade and commercial activities.

During the period, 1721-1735, there were no real developments in the country, despite some progress in the settlement of new migrants and the arrival of more women likely to marry the increasing single settlers.

### LAND GRANTS VERSUS 'ENTREPÔTS'

Under Mahé de Labourdonnais, many plants were introduced in the country. He also reactivated agricultural development, and revived the Sugar Industry. He encouraged settlement and provided women with a dowry to marry settlers. The value of land appreciated greatly with new grants.

Labourdonnais turned Port Louis into a naval base offering various harbour activities and encouraged the development of '*entrepôts*' - Bonded warehouse - which consist in the importation of products of high demand as textile, spices, porcelains and luxury goods from India and China and to stock same for sales to ships of any nationality without restriction. The Isle de France became Emporium of Eastern goods.

The strategy of Labourdonnais to turn the Isle de France into a free port was successful, but it halted the plantations' economic development and diverted resources, particularly slaves to '*entrepôts*'. Many planters invested in '*entrepôts*' and to make a fortune, they reinvested in the Sugar Industry under British occupation, when activities of '*entrepôts*' were reduced. Labourdonnais left the Island in 1746.

In 1754, Abbé de la Caille came to Ile de France and made a survey of all grants allocated from 1721 to 1754. All the grants were located, identified, and then registered by names on a map. The works of Abbé de la Caille proved to be very helpful to the French administration and even to the British afterwards, when they tried to put some order in lands distribution and management.

In 1765, after going bankrupt, the Compagnie des Indes returned the Island to the Crown of France. A survey carried out in 1767 showed that 426 grants totalling 375,000 *arpents* of land, the equivalent of 2/3 of the surface of the island had been allocated by the '*Company des Indes*' before its liquidation.

Many grants were not maintained or were poorly managed. This led the Crown to take severe action. It was enacted that on each grant of 156  $\frac{1}{4}$  *arpents*, a minimum labour force of 20 slaves was to be employed and at least 50 cattle reared. On double-size grants of 312 $\frac{1}{2}$  *arpents* there should be 30 slaves and 80 cattle; while on each grant at a quadruple size of 625 *arpents*, 40 slaves should be employed and 120 cattle reared. After period of two years, to meet these conditions, fields not worked by the numbers of slaves or containing the prescribed cattle, were to be retrieved and annexed to the domain.

In 1767, Pierre Poivre was appointed as 'Intendant'. In spite of all efforts to develop spice cultivation trade and other agricultural product, he did not succeed in establishing a plantation economy

### **FROM CHATTEL TO CITIZEN**

Though slaves had no right to own lands, in practice, on all '*terrains d'habitation*' the colonists used to allocate to their slaves a portion of land called the '*plantage*' where they were authorised to cultivate a garden, rear poultry, goats and pigs. They were allowed to sell their products to make some money. The granting of the '*plantage*' was not at all an act of generosity; it rather served the purpose of the colonists. When the slaves became self-sufficient, where food was concerned, with the products of their '*plantage*', they depended less on the colonist who were supposed to supply them with their daily rations. An important number of slaves bought their freedom with revenue accrued from the '*plantage*'.

Experience gained has permitted some to start their own business or to trade in the sector. After the abolition of slavery, many slaves left the plantation or colonist's house to trade in vegetables, poultry or pork.

### **LES «GENS DE COULEUR» AND LANDOWNERSHIP**

In 1729, with the development of Port-Louis many free craftsmen and artisans were recruited in India and came to work in the Isle de France; many more came with Labourdonnais afterwards. These people constituted the first free non-European workers and add a new category of person to the population: The '*Gens de Couleur*' or coloured people. These people had the right of access to land if they could afford to pay.

No black person or *gens de couleur*, even if they were free, is known to have been granted land grants in form of '*terrain d'habitation*' in the early period of French colonization.

The first '*gens de couleur*' to acquire a '*terrain d'habitation*' was Princess Bety, the daughter of the king of Madagascar. She was allocated a concession in the region of Vacoas in 1758. (Reg. LC 4/133). Many '*Gens de Couleur*' became landowners in the period of Labourdonnais and during the post-French revolution period. It is estimated that from 1750 to 1810, more than 18,000 *arpents* or

8% of private land belonged to the *gens de couleur*. From 1810 to 1830 under the British occupation the acreage owned by the *gens de couleur*, more than double to reach 36,500 *arpents* in hectares representing around 14% of private land. The acquisition of land by the *Gens de couleur* was limited because they did not have access to capital and also because of the on and off enforcement of rules and regulations limiting the purchase of land by this category of people.

### BRITISH COLONISATION 1810-1968

When, in 1810, Mauritius was taken by force of arms by Britain, the articles of capitulation confirmed to the inhabitants, in accordance with British constitutional practice, the continuance of their own laws as stipulated in article VII and VIII of the Capitulation document signed in 1810:

**Art. VII. The property of the inhabitants shall be respected.**

**Art. VIII. The inhabitants shall preserve their religion, laws and customs.**

As explained earlier, the *Code Napoléon* has remained the common law subject of Mauritius, though amendments were introduced from time to time.

As land tenure is concerned, the facts that feudalism had been abolished in France in 1789, forfeitures of land to the Feudal Lord were abolished with the abolition of the feudal system.

Under the *Code Napoléon*, land was treated as purely allodial, capable of being disposed of as freely as any other property. During the post-Revolutionary period, many *cessionnaires* availed themselves of the clauses to become *de facto* fully-fledged owners of the land they occupied before the revolution.

In Mauritius however, the system of land tenure based on the concession system remained in force for a long time. Under the British Administration, the lands of the colony, unconceded as at 1810, together with the lands of the French establishment, were enlisted as Crown Land. Those colonists that cannot prove their ownership found their lands annexed to the Crown Domain.

During the period 1790 - 1814, a fair number of grants were allocated. A survey in 1814 showed that 278,154 *arpents* had been allocated all over the island of which 24,800 *arpents* for the district of Port Louis.

However, in 1816, the Surveyor General reported that for the whole island 432,680 had been distributed but only 281,476 *arpents* were registered

### LAND OCCUPATION IN 1816

Land occupied by the township of Port-Louis	1,050 <i>arpents</i>
Land occupied by the Port and harbour of Port-Louis	964
Land allocated in the suburb for secondary houses	610
Mountain reserves	3,523
Grants allocated with registered deeds	311,630
Land under review	37,019
Unidentified land	87,254
<b>Total</b>	<b>432,680 <i>arpents</i></b>

The practice of encouraging land development by means of the grant of grants was continued by the British after 1810. One of the types of concession that was granted, first by the French and then by the British, was the “*jouissance*”, a term defined in the Council of Europe French-English Legal Dictionary as meaning the “right to receive the produce of property either in kind or indirectly and the right to enjoy”. A *jouissance* could be granted either for a limited or for an unlimited period.

#### LAND OCCUPATION IN 1813

Land Registered	315,677 <i>arpents</i>
Conceded land	315,904 <i>arpents</i>
Unconceded Land	116.765 1/3

The nature of land tenure in Mauritius became a matter of concern to the Colonial Authorities, and a number of amendments and regulations were enacted from time to time.

Regulations of 26 January 1853 stipulated that Crown lands “[...] *shall be sold in perpetuity, or leased at the discretion of the Governor, but may not be alienated from the Crown by free grants*”.

With the view of abolishing the uncertain tenure of grants ‘*en jouissance*’, the Government proposed to substitute grants in perpetuity, or leases for longer terms of years, according to the nature of the property, object, purpose and terms of the original grant.

In a report dated 1<sup>st</sup> June 1863, the Surveyor General of Mauritius expressed concern to the Colonial Secretary on the unsatisfactory nature of the tenure of existing grants. He highlighted the great loss of revenue to the Colony consequent of poor tenure and the absolute necessity for reform.

Paragraph 30 invited “*all persons holding grants en jouissance*” to apply to the Government for the substitution, in place of their *jouissances*, “*of grants in perpetuity or leases on the above terms*”.

In July 1864, new Regulations replaced the 1853 Regulations. The new Regulations prohibited the disposal of Crown lands “*by free grant*” but made an exception “*in the case of land required for religious, charitable, educational or other purposes of a public nature*”.

***The new Regulations contained the amended Provision: “Persons holding existing ‘jouissances’ will be required to exchange them for grants in perpetuity, or in lease, as the Governor shall determine after report by the Surveyor General; due regard being had to the terms of their Title of Jouissance”. For the first time the distinction was introduced between limited and unlimited ‘Jouissances’, in the “Deeds of lease” to be issued on terms and conditions in accordance with those of the original ‘Jouissance’, but subject to the approval of the Governor, in the case of unlimited ‘jouissances’.***

Further, it was contemplated that such title deeds might be issued subject to terms or conditions which would continue to bind the holder: “[...] *in default of the performance by the grantee of any of the foregoing conditions, the grant to be made in terms of this notice shall be absolutely null and void, and ipso facto reunited to the Crown domain*”.

By letter dated 12 July 1872, five Commissioners were appointed to make an enquiry into the extent, tenure and management of Crown Lands in the Colony, and their eventual Report constitutes Appendix No. 1 to Minutes No. 3 of 1874 of the Governor’s Executive Council. Chapter II of the Report dealt with the then existing forms of tenure of Crown land and paragraph 3 of the Chapter with *jouissances*. After referring to the requirement in the 1864 Regulations for *jouissances* to be exchanged for grants in perpetuity or leases, the Commissioners commented that:

*“...there are still in existence, a large number of grants of this class” and that “it would appear that the intention of the authorities in making this provision has not been fully understood”. They urged upon the Governor “... the expediency of immediate measures being taken to remove this element of uncertainty and indefiniteness in the titles of land belonging to the Crown. They proposed either by the holders ceding their rights on receiving compensation, or acquiring an absolute grant on favourable terms, or, where neither of these courses is possible, by requiring them to accept, in lieu of their grants ‘en jouissance’, lease rights.”*

Despite the attempts of the British Authorities to reform land distribution, they did not have much success. Their promise of respect for the laws of the country and the difficulty to master the *Code Napoléon* and the *Code Decaen* allowed for abuses and malpractices on the part of the colonists. It is only after the law of 1874, following the reports of a Commission that amendments were brought for a better system of Land tenure.

### **THE WORK OF DESCUBES**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1874 the Governor Sir Arthur Gordon appointed A. Descubes as Draughtsman in the Public Works Department. His duties were to constitute a database for a better management of land. This led him all over the island to update ancient maps and plans and to make copies of ancient plans. On 3 August 1875, at a sitting of the Land Tribunal, he produced his copy of a map showing the beneficiaries of water rights.

Descubes was appointed as Cartographer in 1877. He used the Connal’s triangulation work to prepare, for the needs of the intelligence branch of the Quartermaster General’s Department, a map of Mauritius showing the principal lines of communication. He then produced a first edition of what would become his masterpiece: a complete map of Mauritius (towns, villages, mountains, rivers, districts, roads and railways).

A. Descubes is known for his Map of Grants where all these were located with the names of owners at the date of the survey. He merged the data of the Map of Abbé de la Caille with his own work and produced a map that was used by the British Administration and thereafter by the Mauritian Administration. At the present time, the map of Descubes is a reference for researchers to trace ancient grants.

Following A. Descubes’ work, the 1874 Ordinance was enacted on 20 November 1874 to make better provision for the protection and disposal of Crown lands. Clause 44 and Schedule A of the Ordinance

expressly repealed "all parts of Colonial Laws, Proclamations, Notices and Ordinances which may be contrary to or inconsistent with" its provisions, and so replaced the previous Regulations.

Section 1 says that "*The Crown lands may be sold at the discretion of the Governor in Executive Council*" but excepts from this power, *inter alia*, the "*Pas Géométriques*", "*a strip of land of at least fifty geometrical paces of five French feet each*" measured "*from the line of the seashore reached by high water at Spring Tide*".

Section 11 of the 1874 Ordinance was more restrictive than Paragraph 2 of the 1864 Regulations; the grants or leases for charitable purposes were authorised but 'shall be conditional on the land being or continuing to be applied to the purposes for which the grants or leases have been made.' It is implicit in this provision that if the condition were to be broken the land would revert to the Crown domain'.

Regulations also provides: "*that Persons holding existing Jouissances for an unlimited period of tenure, shall be required to exchange the same for permanent grants or leases as the Governor shall determine*". Such grants or leases being as much as possible in accordance with the terms and conditions of the original "*Jouissances*" and compensation being given to the holder of such "*Jouissances*" whenever the original terms and conditions have to be modified to the prejudice of such holder.

When existing *Jouissances* now held for a limited period determine by efflux of time, such *Jouissances* shall not be renewed, but may be converted into a sale or a lease as the Governor shall deem fit." Sections 25 to 27 develop and amend the clear distinction between the treatment of, limited and unlimited *jouissances*. Unlimited *jouissances* were to be exchanged by permanent grants or leases being as much as possible in accordance with the terms and conditions of the original. Limited "*Jouissances*" were to be allowed to determine by effluxion of time, and then be converted into a sale or a lease as the Governor should deem fit.

The Ordinance was published in French in *Government Gazette* of 15 August 1874.

The Commissioners' Report of 1874 supports that "Lands which have been the subject of concession, have in some instances been re-annexed to the Crown, in consequence of the grantees having failed to comply with the clauses and conditions of their Deeds of Concession. The forfeiture of such lands is established and the re-annexation declared by means of a judgment of the Land Court, which, setting aside as it does, the deed divesting the Crown, forms its title to such lands tenure and would be incompatible with landownership under the Civil Code."

According to its title, the purpose of the 1874 Ordinance was, *inter alia*, to make better provision for the disposal of Crown Lands. It envisages that, with certain specified exceptions, the Crown Lands may be "*sold*" at the discretion of the Governor in Executive Council. It also provides that the "*Pas Géométriques*" may be "*leased*".

*Section 11 provides "No portion of any Crown Land shall be disposed of by free grant or at any other than its full value as herein after or provided for, except in the case of Land required for Religious, Charitable or Educational purposes. The Governor may, upon the advice of the Executive Council that the purposes for which the Land is required are bona fide Religious, Charitable or Educational,*

*grant a concession or a lease of such Land on payment of a nominal price or rent. All such grants or leases shall be conditional on the Land being or continuing to be applied to the purposes for which the grants or leases have been made.”*

Section 12 provides that all sales of Crown Lands shall be by public auction, while Section 13 makes provision for leases of Crown land.

## CONCLUSION

The history of land grants in Mauritius stretched over a period of 285 years, started with the first Act of concession witnessing land conceded to Pierre Christophe Lenoir in 1726 by the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, governed by the Feudal Laws. It encompasses the struggle of the colonists for a better system of land tenure, the struggle of the slaves for freedom and justice and for their recognition as citizens capable of holding lands. And the fight of the ‘*gens de couleur*’ for a better comprehension of their aspirations to acquire land and take part in the set up and consolidation of a ‘pieds-à-terre’ common to all. Where everyone can celebrate and chant the *Code Civil*: “*La propriété est le droit de jouir et disposer des choses de la manière la plus absolue, pourvu qu’on n’en fasse pas un usage prohibé par les lois ou par les règlements.*”

***Code Civil*: “la propriété est le droit de jouir et disposer des choses de la manière la plus absolue, pourvu qu’on n’en fasse pas un usage prohibé par les lois ou par les règlements.”**

(Eng. Trans. Property is the right to enjoy, and dispose of things in the most absolute manner, so long as one does use of these in a manner forbidden by the Law or Regulations in force. »)

### THE RIGHT TO PROPERTY BY NON-EUROPEANS

Moreover, it is important to understand who those who could not have access to land. In accordance with the "*Lettres Patentes*" enacted under the *Code Noir* in 1723, no person of colour be him black or of mixed blood could benefit from any concession or grant of land in conformity with the stipulation of article 21 of the said *Code Noir* which reads as follows-

*«Déclarons les esclaves ne pouvoir rien avoir qui ne soit a leur maitres; et de tout ce qui leur vient par industrie ou par la liberalité d'autre personnes ou autrement, à quelque titre que ce soit, être acquis en pleine propriété à leur maitres sans que les enfants des esclaves, leurs pères et mères, leurs parents ou tous autres libres esclaves puissent rien prétendre par succession, disposition entre eux ou à cause de mort. Lesquelles dispositions nous déclarons nulles, ensemble toutes les promesses et obligations qu'ils auraient faites comme étant faits par gens incapables de disposer et de contracter de leur chef».* Code xxi

In 1767, the enactment of the *Loi d'Emancipation* recognizes the existence of a third category of citizens between whites and slaves. This new category of individual comprised manumitted slaves, people of colour mostly mulattos, free Indians. These people could henceforth hold property, maintain slaves and enjoy all rights bestowed on white subjects but could not herit from or receive from white citizens. Any donation or succession in their favour would be declared null and void, in accordance with articles Li & Liii of the code.

*«Déclarons les affranchissement faits dans les formes ci-devant prescrites, tenir lieu de naissance de nos dites iles, et les affranchis n'avoir besoin de nos lettres de naturalité pour jouir des avantages de nos sujets naturels dans notre royaume, terres et pays de notre obéissance, encore qu'ils soient nés dans les pays étrangers; déclarons cependant lesdits affranchis, ensemble les nègres libres, incapables de recevoir des blancs aucune donation entre vifs a cause de mort, ou autrement ; voulons qu'en cas qu'il leur en soit fait aucune, elle demeure nulle a leur égard, et soit appliquée au profit de l'hôpital le plus prochain».* Code Li

The Convention proclaimed in 1794 that all men are created equal. This infers that slavery was *de facto* abolished in isle de France. Unfortunately, the French colons of isle de France registered a strong protest and opposed to the application of the law so that the decision of the Convention was a dead letter. Otherwise, free people of colour, emancipated slaves would have the right to acquire property. Although when Napoleon Bonaparte became Emperor in France in 1802, he reestablished slavery and even denied the privilege of right to property conferred to emancipated persons namely free people of colour to include Indians, mulattoes and enfranchised slaves. But in practice, free people continued to acquire property as evidence from registers of concession kept at the Mauritius Archives.

In so far as the right of natural children or free people to accede to succession or donation. The *disposition* of the law of 1823 reiterated their incapacity to accede to succession or donation from their natural parents.

*«Les gens de couleurs libres ou affranchis sont également incapable de recevoir de personnes de la population blanche aucune donation ou legs.»*

However, the enactment of Ordinance 27 of 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1829 declared null and void any previous law preventing people of colour to accede to the succession or receive donation from white persons.

In fact, following the enactment of Ordinance 57 of 1829 -

*«Toute personne de naissance ou d'origine indienne ou Africaine sont soumises quoi que libre à des incapacités ou restriction civile et militaire qui ne sont pas imposées aux personnes libres de naissance ou d'origine européenne seront et chacun ou chacune d'icelle ou d'iceux sont par le présent abolies et annulées.»*

In regards to slaves in spite of their liberation on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1835 and the end of apprenticeship in April 1839, their status as full citizens was only realized following the enactment of Ordinance 28 of 1853.

The coming into force of Ordinance 21 of 1853 repealed Ordinance 57 of 1829 so that it was not after 18 years from the date of their liberation that the ex-slaves could acquire property, receive donation, accede to succession of natural parents and also be registered in the civil status as free citizens of the colony of Mauritius.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LAND**

#### **A SOURCE OF OPPORTUNITIES**

## LAND OWNERSHIP BY PERSONS OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN ORIGIN AND DESCENT

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Access to and control of land was a major factor that shaped the social and economic history of colonial Mauritius during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and much of the twentieth century. Soon after it colonized the island in 1721, the *French Compagnie des Indes* inaugurated a policy of making substantial grants of land to attract European settlers and encourage the production of the foodstuffs, naval stores, and other commodities needed to support the French political and naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Following the advent of royal rule in 1767, the Colonial Government continued this policy until the late 1780s when it began to sell public land, usually at a very reasonable price, to the colony's inhabitants. The properties, granted or sold to French and other European colonists during the eighteenth century, provided the nucleus around which many of the colony's sugar estates were subsequently built during the early nineteenth century. However, Europeans were not the only Mauritian residents to acquire landed property. Significant numbers of the colony's residents of African and Asian origin or descent also purchased, or otherwise acquired access to or use of land during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Their ability to do so similarly played an important role in shaping the course of the country's social and economic history.

### FREE PERSONS OF COLOUR

The Mauritian population comprised three principal components during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: persons of European origin or ancestry, free persons of African, Malagasy, and Asian origin or ancestry, and slaves of African, Malagasy, Indian, and Southeast Asian origin or ancestry. Slaves, who regularly accounted for the overwhelming majority of the colony's population during this period, were legally prohibited from owning property by Section twenty-one of the *Code Noir*, promulgated in December 1723. No such restrictions applied, however, to the island's free coloured residents. These individuals, commonly referred to as *Gens de couleur libres* in the archival record and studies of the country's history, included both freeborn persons of African or Asian origin or ancestry and manumitted slaves.

The origins of the Mauritian '*Gens de Couleur*' of colour date to 1729 when the first of a small but steady stream of Indian immigrants, many of whom were skilled craftsmen and artisans recruited at Pondichéry on India's Coromandel Coast to work in the colony under contract for specified periods of time, reached the island. Exactly how many of these contractual workers arrived in the colony during the eighteenth century is unknown, but they continued to do so until at least the late 1790s. How many of these craftsmen and artisans chose to remain on the island following completion of their contracts is also unknown, but significant numbers appear to have done so. Small numbers of Indian *banians* or merchants also reportedly reached the island no later than the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Freeborn Malagasy men and women, including individuals known as *marmites* who facilitated the rice, cattle, and slave trade from Madagascar to Mauritius, likewise, took up residence in the colony.<sup>2</sup> So did Lascar and "Malay" sailors who served on the numerous French and

other European ships that plied the Indian Ocean, as well as occasional free coloured immigrants from French colonies in the Americas such as Grenada and Saint-Domingue.

Manumitted slaves constituted the second major component of the island's free coloured population. These freedmen came from diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds; those manumitted between 1768 and 1789, for example, included Guineans, Lascars, Malabars, Malagasies, Malays, Mozambicans, and a Canary Islander.<sup>3</sup> Slaves manumitted between 1789 and 1810 came from equally diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and included persons described as Chinese, Guinean, Indian, Malagasy, Malay, Mozambican, and Muslim, as well as Créole (i.e., Mauritian-born).<sup>4</sup> Detailed data on the ethno-cultural origins of slaves manumitted between 1811 and 1835, when slavery was abolished in the colony, have yet to be developed. The archival records shed no light on what percentage of the colony's *Gens de couleur* were either manumitted slaves or of emancipated slave origin at various points in time. What is clear, however, is that by the mid-1820s, three-fourths or more of the colony's *Gens de couleur* appear to have been Mauritian-born. These individuals, moreover, had developed a distinctive sense of corporate social identity as a result of increasing rate of cross-cultural marriages and the blurring of the kinds of ethno-cultural boundaries and distinctions that had existed during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

In Mauritius, as in slave plantation colonies in the Americas, the acquisition of real property was crucial to free coloureds' attempts to establish a significant place for themselves in colonial society. Mauritian *Gens de couleur* acquired such property in various ways: through grants or purchases of public land, as gifts and bequests from family, friends, and former masters, and by private purchase. The total number of these transactions is impossible to determine, in part because many of them were handled privately (*sous seing privé*) and remain hidden from our view.

Between 1748 and 1810, however, the Colonial Land Office recorded approximately 410 grants and sales of public land to free persons of colour that provide a vantage point from which to begin reconstructing the history of landownership by free(d) persons of African and Asian origin or ancestry. These documents reveal that only a handful of free persons of colour received grants of public land before *Compagnie* rule ended in 1767. Most of these grantees were individuals of some consequence to the colony's social, economic, or political life. Elizabeth Sobobie Béty (or Bétia), who received the first land grant made to a non-European in 1758, was the daughter of the King, and later herself briefly the Queen, of Foulpointe, an important slave trading centre on the East coast of Madagascar.<sup>6</sup> Other early free coloured recipients of these grants, such as Louis LaViolette, an interpreter for the *Compagnie* in Madagascar, and Manuel Manique, a former *Maître d'hôtel du gouvernement*, were also persons of economic or administrative importance to the colony's well-being.<sup>7</sup>

The number of grants made to *Gens de couleur* began to increase significantly after the establishment of royal rule in 1767. Like the *Compagnie des Indes*, the royal régime used land grants to create and maintain the support of some segments of the free coloured population. One-half of the land grants made to free men of colour during the 1770s, for example, were made to *noirs de détachement* charged with capturing fugitive slaves. Other recipients of such grants included interpreters, Government servants and Civil Servants, and important seamen. While many more such grants were made during the 1780s to persons with no apparent ties to the Colonial Government, at least one-fourth of the *hommes de couleur* who received grants during this decade were or had been in Government service.

While grants such as these helped to lay the foundation upon which free coloured social and economic mobility ultimately rested, this foundation remained a modest one into the early nineteenth century. *Gens de couleur* received only 15 percent of land grants made during the 1770s and 1780s, and their acquisition of such public lands remained limited, when these lands began to

be sold by the Colonial Government in the early 1790s. No more than 17 percent of all such sales between 1807 and 1810, for example, were made to free persons of colour. The arpentage in free coloured hands remained even less than these percentages might otherwise suggest. In 1788, *Gens de couleur* owned a mere 3.5 percent of all inventoried land in the colony; in 1806, after almost forty years of actively acquiring real estate, free persons of colour held only 7.1 percent of all inventoried land (see Table 1). The size and location of these grants and sales underscore the fact that Mauritian *Gens de couleur* possessed only limited economic resources at the beginning of the nineteenth century. More than four-fifths of the properties in question encompassed less than one *arpent*. Approximately two-thirds of these properties were located in Port Louis or Mahébourg where most of these *terrains* covered no more than several hundred toises, an area large enough only for the erection of a house, workshop or store and the planting of a modest garden.

Mauritian *Gens de couleur* also began to acquire real property during the mid-eighteenth century as gifts and bequests and by private purchase. As noted earlier, the full extent of this activity is impossible to ascertain because many of these transactions were handled *sous seing privé*. On numerous occasions, however, free persons of colour called on notaries to formalize these transactions. The survival of tens of thousands of notarial acts executed by *Gens de couleur* during this era affords a opportunity to chart the general outlines of free coloured land acquisition and ownership and, equally important, to discern how these men and women mobilized the financial resources they need to acquire and develop ever greater quantities of land over time.

Year	Arpents Owned	% All Privately Owned Land	Arpents en valeur <sup>a</sup>	% All Land en valeur
1776	2,734	1.3	625	1.1
1780	4,739	2.3	1,182	1.9
1788	7,611.5	3.6	2,079.67	2.9
1806	15,877	7.1	5,481	7.7
1809	17,460	7.4	6,224	9.1
1825	31,105.75 <sup>b</sup>	11.3	10,384.17 <sup>b</sup>	14.4
1830	36,418.75	13.4	9,717.25	13.0

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Under cultivation or otherwise developed.  
<sup>b</sup> Acres.

Sources:  
 CAOM: G<sup>1</sup> 473 - Recensement général de l'Isle de France, 1776; G<sup>1</sup> 474 - Recensement général de l'Isle de France, 1780; G<sup>1</sup> 505, no. 9 - Relevé du cadastre général de l'Isle de France fait pour l'année 1809 d'après les Recensemens fournis par les habitans.  
 MNA: KK 46 - Recensement de l'Isle de France, 1788.  
 Milbert 1812, vol. 2, p. 233 *bis*.  
 Colony of Mauritius, *Blue Book for 1825*, p. 291.  
 D'Unienville 1885-86, vol. 1, pp. 52-227.

The Notarial records reveal that free persons of colour first purchased houses and occasional plots of land on their own account no later than the late 1740s. A sample of 543 transactions drawn from the acts of six notaries active between 1737 and 1820 indicates that free coloured involvement in the local real estate market remained rather limited until the 1790s. A substantial majority of the property transfers recorded before 1780 involved the sale of small houses (*cases*) and out-buildings such as kitchens and sheds which were frequently situated on public land (*terrain non-concédé*) in Port Louis. While some of the buildings changing hands had been in their owner's possession for years, others were clearly regarded as investments to be bought and then sold quickly if a reasonable profit could be made on the sale. Both Whites and *Gens de couleur* dealt in these structures. Between 1748 and 1779, for example, five notaries documented seven sales in which

free persons of colour purchased buildings from white colonists, twelve sales in which they purchased buildings from other *Gens de couleur*, and seventeen transactions in which they sold buildings to white colonists.

While *Gens de couleur* occasionally purchased land on their own account during the mid-eighteenth century, the real beginnings of free coloured involvement in the local real estate market date to the 1770s. The notarial records indicate that the pattern of these private transactions was much the same as it had been for their acquisition of public land; transactions involving small plots in the colony's urban centres, and especially Port Louis, outnumbered those involving larger tracts in the rural districts by a substantial margin. This activity continued on a rather modest scale until the 1790s, when the number of private transactions involving free persons of colour began to increase dramatically. This increase is not unexpected; between 1788 and 1806, the free coloured population tripled in size. However, population growth was not the only factor that contributed to this development. The notarial records indicate that growing numbers of *Gens de couleur* ventured into the local real estate market because they possessed the capital resources to do so. The increasing regularity with which these men and women paid the full purchase price for land at the time of a sale's formal completion suggests more specifically that, especially after the 1780s, more and more *Gens de couleur* controlled greater economic resources and enjoyed a certain degree of financial independence.

*Gens de couleur* obtained the funds they needed to purchase land, houses, and other property such as slaves from various sources. In some instances, manumitted slaves were the beneficiaries of generous gifts or bequests from their former masters. On 28 December 1763, for example, François Desveau not only confirmed the freedom of Hélène, the daughter of Roze, *négresse de caste indienne*, but also bequeathed Hélène the impressive sum of 20,000 livres.<sup>8</sup> The following year, Nicolas Auclair's last will and testament not only freed Susanne, *négresse de caste malgache*, and her six children on the day of his death, but also stipulated that she was to receive his plantation together with all of his slaves, livestock, furniture, and other personal possessions.<sup>9</sup> In other instances, individuals such as Louis LaViollette enjoyed lifetime annuities from former masters or employers.<sup>10</sup> Colonists such as Antoine Codère also loaned money to *Gens de couleur* such as Jacques Lambert, *noir libre créole de l'Amérique*, to facilitate the purchase of houses, land, or slaves.<sup>11</sup>

It is difficult to determine the extent to which the economic fortunes of the island's '*Gens de Couleur*' in general, and the ability of Mauritian *Gens de couleur* to acquire land in particular, rested on Whites' largesse. The notarial records reveal that the long-term economic well-being of some free persons of colour and their families and descendants clearly rested on the actions of former masters or other white benefactors. The case of Marie Rozette, an Indian freedwoman who owned 156 *arpents* and had 113,000 livres in cash assets at her disposal in 1790, is a stunning case in point.<sup>12</sup> In other instances, however, the notarial records suggest that many more *Gens de couleur* received only modest financial or other economic support from local Whites, and often none at all. A survey of the slave manumissions recorded by the Notary Antoine Gombaud between 5 November 1790 and 4 December 1795, for instance, suggests that most manumitted slaves received no more than 3,000 livres from their masters at the time of their emancipation. The loans recorded by five notaries between 1748 and 1819 provide additional evidence of this general state of affairs; white colonists were the lenders of record in only nineteen of the fifty-seven acts in which *Gens de couleur* borrowed money.

Free persons of colour, accordingly, looked elsewhere for the capital they needed to participate in the local real estate market. Those who already owned land, houses, or slaves drew on the profits that could be made from the sale of unwanted property. Certain kinds of employment could be very remunerative for those fortunate enough to obtain it. Vivien de Carmasson, for example, agreed

that Baptiste, *noir malabar libre*, would receive one-half of his estate's produce in return for managing the estate.<sup>13</sup> Rents were another important source of income for individuals such as Marie Louise Eléonore Volatsara, *négresse libre de l'isle de Madagascar*, who acknowledged receipt, on 28 January 1786, of 8,830 livres from Sieur Delaux Verogue on the Ile de Bourbon for the use of her slaves.<sup>14</sup> As the numerous land grants and sales to members of the Pitcha or Pitchen family between 1774 and 1807 attest, *Gens de couleur* also drew on familial financial resources or capitalized on quasi-familial ties to secure the funds they needed.

While cases such as these demonstrate that some *Gens de couleur* were able to acquire the means that allowed them to purchase land, including extensive tracts in the rural districts, the modest amount of land in free coloured hands in 1806 indicate that the capital resources available to the free coloured population, as a whole, remained rather limited well into the early nineteenth century. Even when *Gens de couleur* managed to purchase large tracts of land, they were often unable to mobilize the funds they needed to clear their land and bring it fully into production. Their inability to do so stemmed in part from the fact that this population had to rely heavily on its own financial resources for developmental capital. The necessity of doing so is suggested by the fact that thirty-three of the fifty-seven loans involving *Gens de couleur* mentioned earlier entailed free coloured borrowers going to other *Gens de couleur* for the money they needed. However, even when *Gens de couleur* willing and able to loan money could be found, it is apparent that most of these persons had limited capital resources at their disposal. This state of affairs reflected the fact that a great majority of Mauritian *Gens de couleur* depended on the colony's service sector for their livelihood during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and that many, if not most, of these individuals possessed little or no property of consequence.

Census data from this era highlight the extent to which a free coloured household's control of financial resources and ability to acquire land depended, at least to a certain extent, on whether the household in question was headed by a man or a woman. *Femmes de couleur*, who frequently outnumbered *Hommes de couleur* by a substantial margin, not only acquired a disproportionately small number of the public lands granted or sold to free persons of colour before 1810 but also often received substantially smaller tracts than did free coloured men.<sup>15</sup> The subdivision of the *Grande Réserve* during the first decade of the nineteenth century graphically illustrates this fact of economic life; only seven of the twenty-four tracts sold to *Gens de couleur* were purchased by women. Data from the 1825 Plaines Wilhems census confirm that male-headed households probably controlled a disproportionately large percentage of free coloured economic resources in the island's rural districts by the mid-1820s, if not before.<sup>16</sup>

The economic fortunes of Port Louis's free coloured residents, like those of *Gens de couleur* who lived in the rural districts, varied widely. Almost 30 percent of the city's free coloured households owned no taxable property in 1806, while another 41 percent of these households possessed either real property or slaves, but not both. Even those free coloured persons fortunate enough to own both real property and slaves were often persons of rather modest means as the appraised value of their land and/or buildings attests. Of the 664 households whose property was appraised, 9.6 percent owned only a house, usually described as a straw hut (*paillote*) of no value, 50.5 percent owned property valued at less than 250 *piastres* (\$), 17.8 percent held property valued from \$250 to \$499, and 22 percent owned property valued at \$500 or more. The value of free coloured real property in the city that year totalled \$247,879 compared to \$2,582,765 for the city's white residents.<sup>17</sup>

By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, *Gens de couleur* had become an integral part of the island's economic landscape, owning more than 7 percent of all inventoried land. Their ability to carve out this small, but distinct, place for themselves may be traced to several developments. One of these was their ever-increasing involvement in agriculture; by 1809, free

persons of colour were farming more than 9 percent of all cultivated land in the colony. It is impossible to determine the value of free coloured possessions or economic activity at this point in time with any precision, but estimates of the value of the land, slaves, and livestock they owned and the value of their agricultural production suggests that *Gens de couleur* accounted for approximately 10 percent of the island's agricultural and related wealth in 1806.<sup>18</sup>

The 1810s and 1820s witnessed a steady increase in free coloured land ownership. By 1825, *Gens de couleur* owned 11.3 percent of all inventoried land compared to 7.1 percent in 1806; by 1830, that figure had climbed still further to 13.4 percent. *Gens de couleur* also owned a steadily increasing percentage of land under cultivation; in 1825, they possessed 14.3 percent of all such land, compared to 9.1 percent in 1809. These changes were linked closely to the development of the sugar industry. The transformation of white-owned estates into sugar plantations, especially after the 1825 equalization of the tariff on Mauritian and West Indian sugar entering Britain revolutionized the sugar industry, offered *Gens de couleur* an opportunity to become increasingly important as producers of basic foodstuffs needed in the colony. The only production figures we have from this era provide some sense of how important this activity had become by the late 1820s. In 1829, free coloured agriculturalists produced 36 percent of the island's maize, 23 percent of its potatoes, 19 percent of its manioc, 10 percent of its wheat, and 19.5 percent of its garden produce and miscellaneous grocery items.<sup>19</sup> *Gens de couleur* also began to grow sugar cane; in 1825, they accounted for 4.1 percent of all land planted in cane, a figure that rose to 7.5 percent in 1830.<sup>20</sup>

By 1830, the last year for which relatively comprehensive information about free coloured economic activity exists, *Gens de couleur* controlled perhaps as much as one-fifth of the colony's agriculturally related wealth, including 13.4 percent of all inventoried land. The Commission of Eastern Enquiry, appointed in 1826 to investigate the colony's condition, would acknowledge the increasingly important role *Gens de couleur* played in shaping the contours of the colony's social and economic life, the importance of which would become even more apparent following the abolition of slavery in 1835 and the collapse of the apprenticeship system in 1839.

## **EX-APPRENTICES AND THE POST-EMANCIPATION ERA**

According to the terms of the Act that abolished slavery in Mauritius in 1835, the colony's new freedmen were required to continue serving their former masters as "apprentices" for a period not to exceed six years. Termination of the apprenticeship system on 31 March 1839 removed the last legal impediments to the colony's former slaves' ability to reap the fruit of their own labor. As the archival records make clear, the economic fortunes of many of these new freedmen and women rested on their ability to mobilize capital, acquire land, and exploit the economic opportunities that existed during the late 1830s and 1840s.

Contemporary sources indicate that the great majority of the colony's new freedmen left the estates on which they had lived and worked immediately after the end of the apprenticeship system. Surveyor General Captain J.A. Lloyd, for one, distinguished four "classes" of ex-apprentices in 1840: those wandering from one part of the island to another with no settled place of residence, those residing in Port Louis or Mahébourg and along the island's roads, those squatting on public lands near the seashore, and those who had migrated to the colony's lesser dependencies.<sup>21</sup> Census data reveal that the propensity before 1839 for apprentices or freedmen to gravitate to Port Louis soon gave way to a movement away from Port Louis and heavily cultivated districts such as Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart to less developed districts on the island. According to the commissioners who conducted the 1851 census, their reason for doing so was simple and straightforward: the areas in question were ones "in which they can purchase plots of ground at a cheaper rate, or find it easier to occupy them without purchase."<sup>22</sup> Scattered reports by local planters and District Authorities confirm this trend. On 29 April 1839, for instance, Th. Cordouan

informed Armand Hugnin, Civil Commissioner for Plaines Wilhems, that ex-apprentices formerly in his service were living on small properties, some of which were near his own estate.<sup>23</sup> Two weeks later, William Saunders advised Hugnin not only that large numbers of ex-apprentices were settling near Vacoas, but also that several apprentices in his service now resided on a nearby property without the owner's consent.<sup>24</sup>

These various reports indicate that the movement by ex-apprentices onto the land was a complex process, one aspect of which was that some new freedmen simply squatted on unoccupied public and privately owned land. It is impossible to determine how many former apprentices did so, but substantial numbers seem to have been involved. Early in May 1839, Armand Hugnin was asked to investigate reports that two or three thousand ex-apprentices were illegally occupying land in Plaines Wilhems. Hugnin found these reports to be exaggerated, but did not elaborate further.<sup>25</sup> Squatting remained a serious issue the following year, when Surveyor General Lloyd observed that the largest of the four classes of former apprentices he identified was composed of "numberless" trespassers to be found on the *pas géométriques*.<sup>26</sup>

The details of this activity remain largely hidden from our view. Some ex-apprentices apparently moved quickly to formalize their occupation of a particular piece of land, but the number who did so is unknown. With respect to the leasing of Crown lands by ex-apprentices, Surveyor General Lloyd noted only that title deeds had been made out and that the lands in question had been occupied despite the fact that the lessees had neither paid the costs of having such deeds executed or paid any annual rent.<sup>27</sup> The extent to which squatting on privately-owned land was formalized in a similar manner is even more difficult to ascertain. The records of four notaries active at this time, for example, contain only a few private leases, none of which identified ex-apprentices as the lessees of land.

This lack of documentation does not mean, of course, that planters did not lease, or otherwise attempt to control, the land being squatted on. There is reason to believe that informal understandings or oral contracts became a regular part of life in the rural districts immediately after emancipation. If leases made during the mid-1840s are any kind of guide to the terms of these agreements, both squatters and landowners may have sought to protect their respective interests by entering into *de facto* sharecropping arrangements. An 1845 report on Grand Port district confirms that such agreements were not unknown during the early 1840s.<sup>28</sup>

If significant numbers of ex-apprentices squatted on vacant properties or leased plots of land, those described by contemporary observers of colonial life as being of a "better class" soon began to purchase tracts on which to raise maize, vegetables, and poultry.<sup>29</sup> Once again, it is impossible to determine how many ex-apprentices fell into this category, but reports from the mid-1840s regularly mention these small landowners. The Reverend A. Denny, for one, observed that while many ex-apprentices lived in and around Port-Louis, "the majority occupy small allotments of land in remote parts of the island."<sup>30</sup> District officials echoed his observation.

The plots in question tended to be small, usually encompassing only one or two *arpents*, although occasionally former apprentices purchased tracts of twenty or more *arpents*. The price of these properties varied widely, from as little as ten *piastres* an *arpent* in more remote parts of the island to \$100 for an *arpent* of uncleared land and \$200 for an *arpent* of cultivated land in rich and well developed agricultural districts such as Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart. A striking feature of these sales is that the plots being sold were frequently described as being part of a larger property. The size of these *terrains plus considérables* or *plus étendus* varied widely. The two *arpents* that Colas, *ci-devant apprenti de Mr. Collard*, purchased from Mr. Jean Leclair in 1839 were part of a forty-*arpent* tract, while the one *arpent* that Pierrine Arlequin, *ci-devant apprenti de Mr. Bruniquel*, bought from Mr. Pierre Severin in 1841 came from a seven-*arpent* tract.<sup>31</sup> In some

cases, the *terrain plus considérable* covered an *arpent* or less. In still other instances, these plots came from large and well established estates such as 'Mon Repos' in Plaines Wilhems, 'Minissy' in Moka, and 'St. Félix' in Savanne. 'Minissy' covered 650 *arpents* in 1837 while 'St. Félix' contained 496 *arpents* in 1831.<sup>32</sup>

The subdivision of established estates and other properties that began in 1839 heralded the beginning of what has been characterized as the *petit morcellement*.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, the archival records contain few official references to this activity. In 1845, when the colony's Civil Commissioners and Stipendiary Magistrates were asked to report on landownership and other aspects of ex-apprentice life, most reports echoed that of South Pamplemousses' Stipendiary Magistrate, Peter Heyliger, who declared simply that "Settlements of half an acre, to two and three, have in almost every part of the District been made, and that at high prices."<sup>34</sup> Only Moka's Civil Commissioner, Denis Beaugendre, noted that some of these plots had been acquired as a result of estate *morcellement*.<sup>35</sup> Just two officials reported on the extent of ex-apprentice landownership. According to F. Giblot Ducray, 577 of the 2,526 ex-apprentices living in Savanne were proprietors who tilled their own land.<sup>36</sup> Jonathon Davidson, in turn, observed that ex-apprentices had purchased 161 acres in Grand Port over the preceding three years at a cost of almost £1,392 (\$6,960), "all of which has been paid, together with the expenses of the deed of sale and title, with very few exceptions [...]"<sup>37</sup>

Notaries were also keenly aware of these developments. The late 1830s and early 1840s witnessed a veritable explosion in the number of land sales being handled by their offices, many of which involved the subdivision of estates and other large properties. A sample of more than 900 transactions drawn from the acts of four notaries active at this time indicates that while the large-scale subdivision of properties that characterized the *petit morcellement* did not begin before late 1838, some proprietors were contemplating such activity several years prior to the end of the apprenticeship system. Mme. Jeanne Françoise Sollied, for example, started to sell off portions of a seventy-two-*arpent* estate in Pamplemousses late in 1836, with the first two plots being purchased by Hypolite Le Bon *dit* St. Aulaire and Charles Agathe, both of whom were probably *Gens de couleur*.<sup>38</sup> As the end of the apprenticeship system approached, the subdivision of properties began in earnest as estate owners, such as Mme. Eugène Giblot Ducray; started to sell off one- and two-*arpent* plots from a 104-*arpent* property she owned in Plaines Wilhems in October 1838.<sup>39</sup> The scale of this activity increased dramatically after April 1839.

The notarial records indicate that this *morcellement* process, which began in earnest during 1839 and 1840, accelerated rapidly during 1841 and 1842, after which the pace of this activity became somewhat less hectic. In 1847, the intense activity that characterized the years from 1839 to 1846 began to wane noticeably and by 1850, the *petit morcellement* had run its course. Various properties continued to be subdivided during the 1850s and 1860s (see below), but this activity remained intermittent and modest in scale.

Although the notarial records are silent about why estate owners decided to subdivide their properties, it is clear that their decision to do so was a deliberate one. In some instances, some of the sales made to ex-apprentices were undoubtedly intended to formalize their ownership of land which they already claimed, or at least viewed, as their own. Historians have appreciated for some time that the struggle for control of slaves' provision grounds was an important factor that shaped life during the post-emancipation era in some colonies in the Caribbean.<sup>40</sup> The extent to which Mauritian slaves had access to such grounds is unknown, but scattered references to slaves owning large numbers of pigs, goats, and chickens and trusted slaves being allowed to market fruits, vegetables, and other produce,<sup>41</sup> suggest that substantial arpentage may have been allocated to slaves as provision grounds, continued control of which was undoubtedly a matter of serious concern to the island's new freedmen and women.

If some freedmen sought to acquire legal titles to land in which they already had a vested interest, others opted to acquire uncleared or vacant land, often in more remote parts of the island.<sup>42</sup> Their decision to do so stemmed, at least in part, from their desire to remove themselves from the places associated with their former servitude.<sup>43</sup> However, such sentiments and the actions that apparently flowed from them must be carefully qualified. More specifically, while many Mauritian ex-apprentices clearly changed their places of residence after 1839, the notarial records indicates that at least 75 percent of those who purchased land during the *petit morcellement* already resided in the same district in which the land they were buying was to be found.

This propensity of Mauritian ex-apprentices to reside in the general vicinity of the small properties they purchased is not unexpected. Post-emancipation Caribbean history is replete with examples of former apprentices who, despite an intense desire to dissociate themselves from all vestiges of their former condition, nevertheless continued to live in relatively close proximity to the estates on which they had once labored. Their reasons for doing so are not difficult to discern. Complex webs of social, economic, and psychological ties that had been created over the years were not easily or readily dismantled. Moreover, many estates included large areas of uncleared or unused arpentage, precisely the kind of land that estate-owners were inclined to sell and former apprentices were inclined to acquire, especially if they had lived on or near the land in question.

The ability of ex-apprentices to acquire such properties stemmed in part from the fact that some of these men and women apparently possessed substantial amounts of cash. Exactly how much money ex-apprentices held cannot be determined with any precision, but considerable sums seem to have been involved. The cost of acquiring an adult apprentice's services between 1835 and 1839 ranged from \$200 to \$250, a fact which suggests that the 9,000 apprentices, who reportedly purchased their freedom before emancipation, spent at least \$1,800,000 to do so. The ability of slaves to accumulate sizeable sums of money is attested to in other ways. Commenting on the demise of a short-lived government-backed Savings Bank in 1831, Protector of Slaves R.H. Thomas not only reported the names of a Government slave and a Government apprentice who had funds in the bank, but also acknowledged that slaves who had saved some money were financially astute enough to appreciate that the 12 percent interest they could expect, when their masters held their funds, was far superior to the 5 percent offered by the Savings Bank.<sup>44</sup> The notarial records likewise confirm that individual ex-apprentices possessed, or had access to, significant financial resources. During the first two years of the *petit morcellement* (1839-40), 75 percent of those who purchased land paid the full purchase price at the time of the sale's formal completion, a figure that rose to 83 percent during 1841-42 and then to more than 90 percent during the remaining years of the *petit morcellement*.<sup>45</sup>

That some Mauritian apprentices commanded such financial resources comes as no surprise. Many slaves either had skills that could be used to generate income on their own account, or had access to provision grounds and were able to market their produce. Approximately 40 percent of those purchasing land during the *petit morcellement* reported their occupation as a craftsman or artisan, while another 20-25 percent engaged in agriculture or described themselves as landowners.<sup>46</sup> The value of this kind of activity remains unknown, but its possible magnitude is suggested by information on slave production in the Caribbean at this time. Jamaican slaves, for example, not only dominated local food production on the island by 1832, generating 94 percent of the £900,000 realized by this sector of the colony's economy, but also accounted for more than one-fourth of the colony's gross domestic product of £5,500,000 sterling.<sup>47</sup> Slaves in the Windward Islands, likewise, exercised a virtual monopoly over local food, fuel, and fodder markets, and may have held as much as one-half of all money in circulation.<sup>48</sup>

That some Mauritian ex-apprentices had significant financial resources at their disposal may also be inferred from the speculative nature of some early *morcellement* activity. One of the more striking features of the *morcellement* process before 1843 is the relatively large number of properties that had been in their owners' hands for only a short period of time before undergoing subdivision. Of the thirty-six properties in the sample under consideration, twelve had been purchased less than a year before the onset of *morcellement*, while eighteen belonged to their owners for less than a year before subdivision began.

The financial incentives to subdivide an estate or other property could be considerable. Returns of 100 to 200 percent on original investments were common for both large and small landowners who engaged in *morcellement* activity. M. and Mme. Pierre Leclos, for example, realized \$2,506 between mid-1840 and early 1847 from the sale of 42.5 of the 62 *arpents* they purchased in October 1838 for \$1,000. The demand for land by ex-apprentices and others and the financial rewards for satisfying that demand often encouraged further subdivisions of the small plots created by the *morcellement* process. Emile Zéphir's activities are a representative case in point. On 18 May 1841 Zéphir paid \$125 to M. and Mme. Eugène Dombreu for a five-*arpent* tract from the *terrain plus considérable* the Dombreus had started to subdivide earlier that same year. The following year, Zéphir sold four of the five *arpents* in question for a total of \$250. This process of sub-*morcellement* often continued still further. On 25 May 1841, Fidale Robin purchased 3.5 *arpents* from the Dombreus for \$140 cash.<sup>49</sup> The following January, he sold 1.5 *arpents* from this tract to Mlle. Phrasie Ariotte, who paid \$50 down toward the purchase price of \$75.<sup>50</sup> Two and a half months later, Mlle. Ariotte sold two portions (each encompassing one-half *arpent*) of this 1.5 tract to Benjamin Moujava and Mlle. Geneviève Félix, each of whom paid \$32.50 for their half-*arpent*.<sup>51</sup>

The colony's ex-apprentices were not the only participants in the *petit morcellement*. The countryside housed a large free coloured population by the 1830s, and the notarial records indicate that *Gens de couleur* also actively bought and sold land during this process. The full extent of this activity is difficult to gauge because notarial acts ceased specifying the socio-legal background or status of the persons involved after 1830. As such, *Gens de couleur* can often be distinguished from ex-apprentices only on the basis of problematic criteria such as surnames, occupations, places of residence, and details about the land in question. With this cautionary thought in mind, we may note that sixteen of the ninety-six subdivided properties in the sample under consideration, or approximately one-sixth of these properties, apparently belonged to free persons of colour. These properties varied greatly in size, from as few as four *arpents* to almost ninety-two *arpents*, with more than two-thirds of them encompassing an area of twenty-five *arpents* or less.

Although local authorities observed that "many" former apprentices held land by the mid-1840s, any sense of the number who did so cannot be ascertained before 1846. The Census conducted that year reported 2,388 "independent proprietors" among the colony's ex-apprentices who accounted for 4.9 per cent of the total ex-apprentice population and 58 per cent of all such proprietors.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, the criteria used to distinguish "independent" proprietors from other landowners were not reported; neither is the use to which these properties were put. The 1851 Census reported that the number of ex-apprentice independent proprietors had declined dramatically, to just 778 individuals who accounted for 1.6 per cent of all ex-apprentices and 24.8 per cent of all such proprietors.<sup>53</sup> Contemporary sources are silent about the reasons for this decline, but there is good reason to believe that it was linked to the limited capital resources at the disposal of many former apprentices and to the severe economic crisis that afflicted the colony after four of the five London banking houses that financed the local sugar industry failed in 1848.<sup>54</sup>

Ex-apprentices disappear as a readily identifiable population in the archival records after 1851. Colonial officials, preoccupied with the tens of thousands of Indian immigrants arriving in the colony, paid less and less attention to this community. Annual reports on the colony during the

early 1850s, for example, make no reference to free coloured land ownership or economic activity and usually do little more than note the number of ex-apprentice births and deaths; after 1857, even these data ceased being reported. By 1861, the difficulties of distinguishing ex-apprentices from the colony's other non-Indian residents led the Commissioners appointed to conduct the Colonial Census that year to decide to count all remaining former apprentices as members of the "General Population."<sup>55</sup>

## INDIAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

Access to, and control of, land were as crucial to attempts by Indian immigrants to enhance their status and standing in Mauritian society and economy as it had been for the colony's *Gens de couleur* and ex-apprentices. The archival records reveal that former indentured immigrants numbered among the colony's landowners by the early 1840s. Because notaries did not regularly identify "Old Immigrants" (i.e. indentured immigrants who had completed the required five years of "industrial residence") as such until the mid-1850s, the point in time when former indentured Indian immigrants first purchased land is difficult to ascertain with certainty. A survey of approximately 10,000 acts recorded by three notaries from 1838 through 1849 suggests that one of the earliest such transactions may date to 1841 when Moutou Daca purchased two of the 6.95 *arpents* owned by Jean Louis L'Herminette.<sup>56</sup> Purchases of land by persons who may reasonably be presumed to have been Old Immigrants began to be recorded no later than mid-1843 when Seckzorip, identified as a laborer and native of Nassirabad, and Seckmarali, a laborer from Dakka, purchased portions of a twenty-two-arpent tract in Grand Port.<sup>57</sup> Other Indian laborers soon followed in their footsteps. Like Seckzorip and Seckmarali, a few of these individuals purchased sections of larger properties that were being subdivided but, in general, Old Immigrants do not appear to have participated actively in the *petit morcellement*.

Indian immigrant involvement in the local real estate market increased noticeably beginning in late 1847 and 1848 as many of the first wave of post-1842 immigrants completed their industrial residence, acquired Old Immigrant status, and left the sugar estates to earn their living in business, commerce, domestic service, and other forms of employment. The notarial records reveal that these individuals continued to purchase small plots of land, usually encompassing less than two *arpents*, at a sustained but modest rate during the 1840s, 1850s, and early 1860s. The various natural disasters that befell the island during the mid-1860s, especially the malaria epidemic of 1867-68, slowed this process, but by the early 1870s, Old Immigrants were not only actively purchasing land once again, but also doing so in numbers that heralded the advent of what has become known as the *grand morcellement* of estates and properties that continued well into the early twentieth century.

The notarial records indicate that the *grand morcellement* continued the process of estate and property subdivision that began during the *petit morcellement*. Although the *petit morcellement* came to an end by 1850, properties continued to be subdivided and sold, albeit on a much smaller scale than before, during the 1850s and early 1860s. The notaries Adolphe Macquet and Elisé Liénard, for example, recorded the subdivision during the 1850s of at least nine properties ranging from six to 140 arpents in size. The late 1850s and early 1860s witnessed an increase in this activity. Macquet and his colleague, Laurent Raoul, for instance, facilitated the subdivision of fourteen properties in various parts of the island between 1860 and 1865. Many of these properties, like those subdivided during the 1850s, tended to be rather modest; half of the tracts in question contained fewer than ten *arpents*, with the largest covering seventy-eight *arpents*. As the circumstances surrounding the subdivision of properties such as "Le Hochet," the "Terrain Ganet," and "La Ménagerie" attest, some of this activity was closely associated with the rapid growth of the Old Immigrant population residing in and around Port-Louis. Most of the sales from these three properties consisted of small house plots.

The *grand morcellement* began *circa* 1875. The notarial records reveal that Indian immigrants were actively involved in this process, not only as purchasers of the plots in question, but also as *de facto* agents for Franco-Mauritian estate owners and as large landowners in their own right. The notarial records, likewise, attest that careful thought and planning went into the subdivision of these properties. When Seewoodharry Bhaguth, an Old Immigrant who arrived in the colony in 1855, purchased a 312-*arpent* tract from Augustin Perrier in 1875, for example, he declared his intention of subdividing the land in question. Perrier agreed on condition that the land had to be sold for at least \$50 an *arpent*.<sup>58</sup> The sale of large properties to other Indian entrepreneurs at this time frequently contained similar declarations and terms.

The *morcellement* process steadily gained momentum during the 1880s and early 1890s. As early as 1881, the increasing number of transactions involving Indians led the Director of the Colonial Government's Registration and Mortgage Department to observe that his staff was having difficulty keeping up with the requisite paperwork; two years later, he reported that the increasing number of property transfers in which Indians were involved "will make it impossible for the present staff to keep up the work."<sup>59</sup> By 1895, the scale of this activity was such that Acting Governor C.A. King Harman not only characterized its increasing pace as "inevitable," but also noted that the colony's sugar factories were being improved to handle the canes produced by the growing number of Indian small planters.<sup>60</sup> In 1897, the President of the Chamber of Agriculture acknowledged that the parceling out of estates was proceeding on a large scale, an observation supported by a Protector of Immigrants' report that Indians had added 23,243 *arpents* worth more than Rs. 4,600,000 to their holdings between 1894 and 1896.<sup>61</sup>

The extent of this activity is also attested to by the rapidly increasing value of the real property acquired by Indian immigrants and their Indo-Mauritian descendants. Indian/Indo-Mauritian investment in land skyrocketed during and after the late 1880s and early 1890s; between 1888 and 1894, immigrants spent Rs. 8,519,676 for land, or almost 60 per cent more than the Rs. 5,342,760 that they had spent on similar purchases between 1864 and 1887. Indian involvement in the local real estate market continued to increase as the nineteenth century drew to a close; between 1895 and 1900, immigrants and their descendants invested another Rs. 10,297,509 in land. The advent of a new century witnessed immigrants and Indo-Mauritians continuing to invest significant sums in land well into the 1920s (see Table 2).

Census data confirm these trends. The number of Indian "independent proprietors" in the colony climbed from 314 in 1871 to 701 in 1881 and then to 1,074, or almost one-half of all such persons, by 1891. As noted earlier, unfortunately the criteria used to distinguish these proprietors from other landowners were not specified. The ranks of immigrants identified as "gardeners" also swelled, from 7,513 in 1871 to 10,014 in 1881. The 1891 Census noted specifically that the 8,822 Indian gardeners enumerated that year were "very frequently landowners."<sup>62</sup> Other reports, likewise, highlight the ever increasing amount of land in immigrant and Indo-Mauritian hands. Indian smallholders had 27,928 *arpents* planted in cane in 1910, or approximately one-fifth of the area devoted to sugar cultivation. By 1920, Indian smallholders and estate-owners had 54,000 *arpents* in cane compared to 35,480 *arpents* just six years earlier.

Table 2 VALUE OF LAND ACQUIRED BY INDIAN IMMIGRANTS AND INDO-MAURITIANS, 1864-1931			
Average Annual Value of Property Acquired			
Period	Total Value (Rs.)	% TVPCH <sup>a</sup>	Net Value (Rs.)
1864-1887	222,615	---	---
1888-1894	1,217,097	---	---
1895-1900	1,716,251	---	---
1901-1904	1,529,489	33.6	+465,102 <sup>b</sup>
1905-1909	1,242,931	24.5	+466,264
1910-1914	2,415,678	29.4	+495,305
1915-1919	5,370,588	33.3	+1,387,896
1920-1924	9,311,477	37.0	+2,794,595
1925-1929	4,027,622	35.2	-376,589
1930-1931	1,783,980	35.7	-601,542

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Total value of property changing hands.  
<sup>b</sup> For 1904 only.

Sources: PP 1901 CVI [Cd. 4984], pp. 78-81; PP 1902 LXV [Cd. 788-5] (Annual Report for 1900, p. 6); PP 1914-16 LXXXIX [Cd. 7786], pp. 90-93; PP 1924 XXIV [Cmd. 2247], pp. 99-102; PP 1929-30 [Cmd. 3434], pp. 141-42; PP 1937-38 [Cmd. 5582], p. 148; RMD 1904-31.

Indian immigrants and their descendants gained access to land in other ways as well. The notarial records reveal that Old Immigrants began to lease land no later than 1850. While most of these early leases covered the use of one- or two-*arpent* plots for just a year or two, in some instances Old Immigrants rented substantial tracts of land for extended periods of time. In one of the earliest such transactions on record, Nayena, a labourer who had arrived during the immigration of 1834-38, secured the use of twenty-five *arpents* already planted in cane for four years for an annual rent of \$150.<sup>63</sup> Other Old Immigrants, such as Mungroo, who held ticket no. 5324/54,248, were soon renting even larger properties for longer periods of time. When Marie and Clémence Morel came to terms with him in April 1859, Mungroo acquired the use of forty-nine *arpents* for nine years for \$4,171.50.<sup>64</sup> The total value of these leases cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty, but the scale of this activity is suggested by the 1872 Royal Commission of Enquiry's Report that 5,256 Indians had leased land to or from another party between 1864 and 1871, and that the value of these transactions was estimated to be £122,000 (\$610,000/Rs. 1,220,000).<sup>65</sup>

Still other immigrants and their descendants gained access, albeit a highly circumscribed and problematic form of access, to land by means of *métayage* or sharecropping. Information on this activity remains limited. Colonial authorities first reported on *métayage* in 1887 and continued to do so only through 1918, and never included important information on this practice such as the number of persons who earned their living in this manner in their reports. The data at our disposal indicate that the *arpentage* being sharecropped increased steadily, rising from an annual average of 1,835 *arpents* from 1887-89 to 6,645 *arpents* from 1900-04 and then to 23,509 *arpents* from 1911-14 before peaking at 34,190 *arpents* from 1915-18.<sup>66</sup>

As had been the case with the island's free coloured and ex-apprentice residents, Indian immigrants and their descendants financed their purchases of land in various ways including drawing upon personal financial resources. The amount of money held by the immigrant population as a whole cannot be ascertained, but various data indicate that some immigrants controlled

significant cash resources. The Annual Reports of the Government Savings Bank, established in 1837 to encourage “the lower classes of society” to engage in provident financial practices, reveal that the average value of an Indian laborer’s savings account between 1851 and 1855 ranged from £18 to £21 (\$90 to \$105) a year and that the total value of such deposits by Indian labourers averaged £11,399 (\$56,995) a year during this period.<sup>67</sup> The fact that an average of 76 per cent of Indian immigrant non-*morcellement* land purchases between 1840 and 1889 entailed their paying the full purchase price at the time of the sale’s formal completion, likewise, suggests that some immigrants had ready access to significant sums of cash, as does the fact that this payment-in-full rate rose to 87.8 per cent for *morcellement* plots acquired during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s.<sup>68</sup>

In other instances, the financing of these purchases depended on immigrants’ ability to secure loans from local planters, financial institutions, and Indian businessmen who had established themselves in the colony. The extent to which planters underwrote such ventures is difficult to determine, but individual estate owners, such as André Bougault du Coudray, were not averse to doing so. On 9 January 1877, for instance, du Coudray loaned \$4,000 to Indur, no. 203,901, a peddler, and his wife, Downtuteea, no. 188,248, so they could pay off the balance due on fifteen *arpents* they had purchased a day earlier.<sup>69</sup> Seven years later, Soobanah, no. 290,024, persuaded The Mauritius Fire Insurance Company to loan him Rs. 40,000 for various purposes. The following year, Soobanah and his partner, Adeed Reddy, secured the loan of an additional Rs. 26,000 from Henry Smith, a Plaines Wilhems landowner.<sup>70</sup> In other instances, Indian businessmen were the source of needed capital. In an early example of such activity, on 24 July 1835 Annassamy, *négoçiant indien*, acknowledged receiving a loan of \$20,000 from Rama Tiramoudy, with whom he shared ownership of “Bon Espoir” Estate in Rivière du Rempart.<sup>71</sup> Other Indian merchants subsequently demonstrated that they possessed the capital resources that permitted them to make loans if they chose to do so. Early in 1860, for example, Mylapoor Moonisamy, a merchant and landowner who resided in Port-Louis, loaned \$12,000 to Jean François Chavrimoutou and Tatouvon Maniacara to cover their sugar estate production costs; later that year, Moonisamy advanced another \$6,000 to Chavrimoutou for the same purpose.<sup>72</sup> Fifteen years later, Essack Mamode, a Port-Louis merchant, would advance \$18,400 to four Indian entrepreneurs already involved, or soon to be in estate *morcellement*.<sup>73</sup>

## LAND OWNERSHIP IN CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVE

Significant scholarly research in recent years has explored the nature, dynamics, and patterns of land ownership in colonial Mauritius. This research rests on extensive examination and careful analysis of archival materials in Mauritius (especially the exceptional collection of notarial acts held by the National Archives) and the United Kingdom (especially Colonial Office Records at The National Archives, Kew) and a broad range of other sources including: Colonial Censuses during the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries; the reports of royal commissions of inquiry appointed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to investigate various aspects of colonial social and economic life; Governors’ annual reports on the colony’s social, economic, and financial condition and their accompanying Blue Books of statistics; Annual Reports of Government Departments including the Government Savings Bank, the Protector of Immigrants/Immigration Department, and the Registration and Mortgage Department; and reports produced by institutions such as the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture. Although these rich and diverse sources shed considerable light on the ways in which the colony’s residents acquired, and made use of, land, it is important to remember that the sometimes problematic nature of these documents means that reconstructing the history of land ownership in Mauritius as fully or as completely as we would like is a difficult and time-consuming undertaking. That nineteenth-century censuses did not report the criteria used to distinguish “independent” proprietors from other landowners is one example of these problems, while the fact that annual reports on the colony stopped reporting on the extent of landholding by different segments of the island’s population during the 1930s is another.

These sources confirm that many persons of African, Indian, Southeast Asian, and other non-European origin or descent actively bought, sold, and otherwise sought to gain access to, and control, land in colonial Mauritius. The first to do so were members of the colony's '*Gens de Couleur*' of colour, composed of both freeborn persons of African, Malagasy, Indian, and Southeast Asian origin and manumitted slaves of equally diverse ethno-cultural origin, whose acquisition of ever greater arpentage was a major factor in their ability to play an increasingly important role in shaping social and economic life on the island during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Following the termination of the apprenticeship system in 1839, significant numbers of these former slaves also sought to acquire land by various means. Many Old Immigrants and their descendants followed in their footsteps.

These sources demonstrate the ability of *Gens de couleur libres*, ex-apprentices, and Old Immigrants to participate actively in the local real estate market depended on various factors: the talents, abilities, and initiative of individual men and women; the ability of these individuals to acquire, or generate the money needed to purchase or lease, land; the development and maintenance of personal, business, and other socio-economic relationships with others of the island's inhabitants, both within and across different communities; their willingness to exploit economic opportunities; and the consequences of the island's dependency on sugar as the mainstay of its economy from the mid-1820s until well into the twentieth century. The sugar industry's heavy reliance on domestically-generated capital not only played a crucial role in shaping major developments such as the *grand morcellement*,<sup>74</sup> but also highlights the extent to which access to investment and working capital and financial services influenced the extent to which the colony's residents were able to acquire, and retain control of, land. Changes in the composition of the colony's "gardener" population during the late 1840s and 1850s illustrate the consequences that could flow from an inability to amass, or have access to, capital resources. More specifically, the notarial records indicate that many of the small plots sold during the *petit morcellement* remained undeveloped and were subsequently sold to Old Immigrants by their original purchasers because they possessed only limited financial resources, an economic fact of life that left many of these men and women struggling to hold their own during the increasingly difficult economic times that characterized the late 1840s and early 1850s.<sup>75</sup> Access to working capital would be equally crucial to the success of the class of Indian/Indo-Mauritian small planters that came into existence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a result of the *grand morcellement*.<sup>76</sup>

The extent to which access to capital is central to understanding the history of landownership in colonial Mauritius is revealed in other ways. The increasing incidence of sharecropping during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may be traced, in so small measure, to the financial problems facing the local sugar industry at this time. Economic considerations also compelled men and women to squat on publically, or privately-owned land. Many ex-apprentices did so because they lacked the money needed to secure legal title to land. The illegal occupation of public lands, especially mountain and river reserves and the *pas géométriques*, by impoverished men and women of all ethno-cultural backgrounds remained a problem for the Colonial Government throughout the nineteenth century. Information on the extent of this activity and those who engaged in it remains frustratingly scarce, but in 1906, the colony's Conservator of Forests noted some of factors that made dealing with the alienation of these lands so problematic: the absence of detailed and accurate maps of the lands in question; the passage of laws such as Ordinance No. 30 of 1895 which essentially destroyed the inalienability of the *pas géométriques*; and the difficulties that arose from the fact that Indian and Creole small proprietors, many if not most of whom were illiterate, had often purchased land in Government reserves "in ignorance and good faith."<sup>77</sup> In so doing, he underscores the need for scholars, Government officials, and the general public to appreciate the complexities - social, economic, and political - that coming to grips with the nature, dynamics, and problems of land ownership in Mauritius, both past and present, entails.

## SMALL PLANTERS:

### A SHORT HISTORY

Riteshwaree CHACOORY

#### INTRODUCTION

Mauritius is chiefly reputed for its sugar for centuries, when sugar cultivation remained the main component of the agricultural sector. History has revealed that the settlement of Indian immigrants, who worked as labourers in Mauritius, has given rise to the class of small planters, known initially as 'Indian small planters'. The Wilberforce Report in 1913 indicated that there were around 7,500 Indian farmers and 19,720 independent planters. This was made possible through the parcelling of estate lands during the *petit* and *grand morcellement* systems. Through savings, purchasing land, cultivation of crops, some small planters even moved away from estates to towns and villages to settle down and have an independent life. As a result, at present, Mauritius has a total of 19,228 planters, out of whom more than 70% belong to the class of small planters. Thus, a majority of Mauritian planters are from the group of 'small planters'.

According to the MSIRI Report of 1986, a small planter is defined as follows:

*"A 'small planter' can be defined as a planter who could possess as little as 0.1 hectares and up to 4.2 hectare of land".*

Although the small planters are classified as the lowest class of planters in the hierarchy of planters, these planters never lost hope, even if they held an inferior plot of lands, lower yields than larger and miller planters. It must be noted that in 2009, the small cane cultivators were registered in great numbers, with a population of around 21,000, compared to 400 medium and large planters and with only 6 miller planters on the whole island.

On the other hand, the establishment of cooperatives in Mauritius was a boon for the small planters and allowed them to expand their agricultural lands and made their land more productive through soft loans. The presence of the cooperative movement has existed since 1913, with the setting up of Cooperative Credit Societies in the colony which funded small planters' agricultural needs. The major part of cooperative planters are said to be small planters. Yet, some constraints have halted the development and reform of the Cooperative Societies. As a matter of fact, the drop in sugar production in 1990 has brought a constant decline in the number of cooperative planters from 1990 to 2009 which, therefore, reduced sugar production to a large extent. (Appendix 1, Table 1). As a result, a decline was due to a drop in sugar prices and a rise in the cost of fertilizers, diversification to other crops and sectors, and other problems.

However, the Sugar Industry of Mauritius has faced various challenges over the years and, as a result, has affected the sugarcane cultivators who belonged to the small planter community. The annual sugar production target is 600,000 tonnes but this target is not achieved, due to natural calamities such as floods, droughts and cyclones. Therefore, in most cases, around 460,000 tonnes of sugar are produced annually. Historically, the GDP has played a vital role in the Sugar Industry; between 2006 and 2009, there has been a fall from 3.7% to 2.2%; the number of small planters decreased by 13.4%, and the area harvested by small planters decreased by 23.1% (MIP AMSP, 2011).

Moreover, Mauritius has been the victim of an EU reform regime through the reduction of sugar prices by 36%. The Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy of 2006-2015 underlined the challenges faced in the Sugar Industry, with a continuous rise in oil prices and the dismantling of the Multifibre Agreement and the World Trade Organisation's negotiations on Non-Agricultural Market Access which adversely impacted on the textile sectors.

The contribution of the small planters to the Sugar Industry is a unique phenomenon since they have not lag behind but, instead, have struggled on till today; they recovered from a succession of hardships, such as natural calamities, pests and diseases, the reduction of sugar prices, the centralisation of sugar factories, the lack of a labour force, the low payment for canes, and many other such problems.

In 2006, the Mauritian Government proposed the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy for the Action Plan 2006-2015 indicated that small planters (i.e. those cultivating less than 10 hectares) cultivated some 26% of land under cane. This percentage came down as a result of land conversion and cane abandonment, but this category of producers still cultivates a fifth of the total area under cane. This statement proves to be partially true nowadays, with frequent land abandonment issues by small planters.

The sustainability of small planters (cultivating 10 hectares or less) and the reliability of the supply of their canes, hold the key to the future viability of the sugar cane cluster.

#### **EMERGENCE OF SMALL PLANTERS FROM THE INDIAN COMMUNITY**

Before the arrival of Indians in this country, lands were not easily valuable, since these were left uncultivated and deserted. Their landing in Mauritius and their hard work were symbolic and exemplary for the inhabitants of the Colony, in terms of respect for the land and the cultivation processes of sugarcane. This emotional attachment to land ultimately became their greatest strength, and they ceaselessly worked in the Sugar Industry. The salaries of immigrants were relatively low; however, they managed to make small savings till the boom of *Morcellement* and Village Banks. After long years of hard work, Indian Immigrants had a unique opportunity to purchase lands through the parcelling system around 1880, and to work for themselves on their own plots of land.

Mr. Benjamin Moutou, the author of *Pamplemousses Rivière du Rempart* in 2007, wrote:

*"Pour l'immigrant indien venu à Maurice pour un meilleur devenir, la possession de la terre était considérée comme une promotion sociale non-négligeable. Il faut ajouter que c'est grâce à leur sens poussé de l'épargne, mêlé d'un esprit de self-help et d'un esprit mutualiste que les immigrants indiens et, plus tard, leurs descendants réussirent petit à petit à sortir de l'ornière."*<sup>4</sup>

The appointed Royal Commissioners in 1909 reported:

*"Estate owners, unable in times of increasing competition to make their estates pay, when carried on the old lines, and unable or unwilling to modernise their methods and appliances, divided up the whole or portions of their land into small planters and offered them for sale, generally allowing payment by instalments. These small holdings have been taken up almost entirely by Indian Immigrants and their descendants. The total area cultivated in canes by small holders is estimated at about 40,000 acres or 30 per cent of the total area under sugar in 1909. The total area under sugar cultivation in 1909 held by Indians was about 56,025 acres."*<sup>78</sup>

According to R. Virasawmy in his 1984 paper, 'A form of Liberation', published in the book entitled *Indian Overseas*, compared to the 1870s, when land was not available to 'Indian immigrants', they moved on to a situation where they were given access to landownership. Thereafter, there was a new reversal trend where the labourers were part and parcel of the property-owning class in newly-developed villages outside estate boundaries.

Cane cultivation was practised as far back as 1876, with the emergence of *morcellement* system when plots of lands were sold to Indians. In 1913, Indian small planters occupied around one-third of the total area under sugarcane cultivation. This was a good step taken by Indians during their stay in the country, with their limited rights and freedom: "*Estates which were not very profitable have thus been parcelled out and the inferior portions of other estates.*" (Wilberforce, 1913). These inferior plots of land had not been productive for Indian small planters, as their cane yield was less than the yield for estate owners.

However, because of their situations, small Indian planters had no choice but to accept the offer and be dependent on large estates for processing their canes right up to the marketing of their sugar. It was also a fact that most of the small Indian planters, at that time, were illiterate and poor; thus they were influenced by estate owners in their desire to have a sense of belonging through landownership and residential properties in Mauritius. The Meade report, of 1960, rightly pointed out the level of illiteracy among the growers as follows: "*It is most unfortunate that no one seems to have educated the growers to look for sugar per 'arpent,' the real determination of their income when it comes in selecting cane and how to grow it*".

Coombes noted that small Indian growers were having difficulties prior to 1909:

*"To the extent "Morcellement" has been an obstacle to the further progress of the Sugar Industry prior to 1909, as there are no figures available showing the area cultivated by the Indians."*

It could be concluded that before 1909, there were very few small Indian growers who produced sugarcane; these might not have been registered for their areas under cultivation of sugarcane. Since many of them had scattered around the country, it would have been difficult to know exactly what plantation of crops was being developed by those Indians in those small lots, due to a lack of monitoring, control and improper use of technology.

<b>Interval</b>	<b>% of Total area under sugarcane cultivated by Indians</b>
1909-13	32.9
1914-18	41.6
1919-23	45.1
1924-28	44.2
1929-33	39.9
1936	35.7

Source: *History of sugarcane cultivation in Mauritius*, 1993. p. 36

However, small Indian cane cultivators increased their areas under cultivation to approximately by 10% from 1913-1914. So, it may be concluded that the establishment of Cooperative Credit Societies in Mauritius in 1913, had promoted the expansion of sugarcane plantation through their extensive support to the small Indian community. In 1936, there was a slight drop in sugar prices.

## LAND ACQUISITION BY SMALL INDIAN PLANTERS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

In the Report entitled 'A form of liberation (camp to villages)' by R. Virasawmy, we find much evidence of the sale of lands to Indian planters during the *grand morcellement*:

- ❖ **1884-1885:** (1) 28 *arpents* and 82 *perches*, parcelled out into small plots (50 *Perches*-7 *arpents*) were sold to would-be small planters.
- (2) A large lot of 87 *arpents* sold to presumably an Indian entrepreneur
- ❖ **After 1892:** Larger lots were further fragmented and many small planters acquired small plots of lands.
- ❖ **From 1913 onwards:** *Morcellement* of some of these large lots into small lots which were bought by small planters.

According to Mr. Raj Virasawmy, one may assume that the large plots, purchased by the Indians went to an Indian entrepreneur in 1884-85. Therefore, it was difficult to distinguish this unknown Indian entrepreneur from white landowners and traders.

The subdivision of parcelled lands to small planters in 1884-85 gave rise to the class of very small planters, with small holdings. It must be noted that there was a peak in 1892 in the purchase of lands by small planters.

The Wilberforce Report of 1913 elaborated the facilities given to Indians to acquire proprietary rights to lands as follows by:

- (1) Often no payment;
- (2) Sometimes small payments;
- (3) Paying the whole price or the greater part, by instalments over 4 to 5 years.

In spite of these facilities of payment allowed to Indians, after the advent of parcelling system, they were severely affected, since there were also some constraints that led to an increase in the unemployment rate. The Report of Agrarian Reform 1979 revealed that although parcelling gave rise to small landowners, yet 50% of holdings were less than one *arpent* (0.4 hectare) which did not provide enough employment in fields. Thus landowners had to seek outside employment. Some very small planters supplemented their income by working as labourers and *sirdars*.

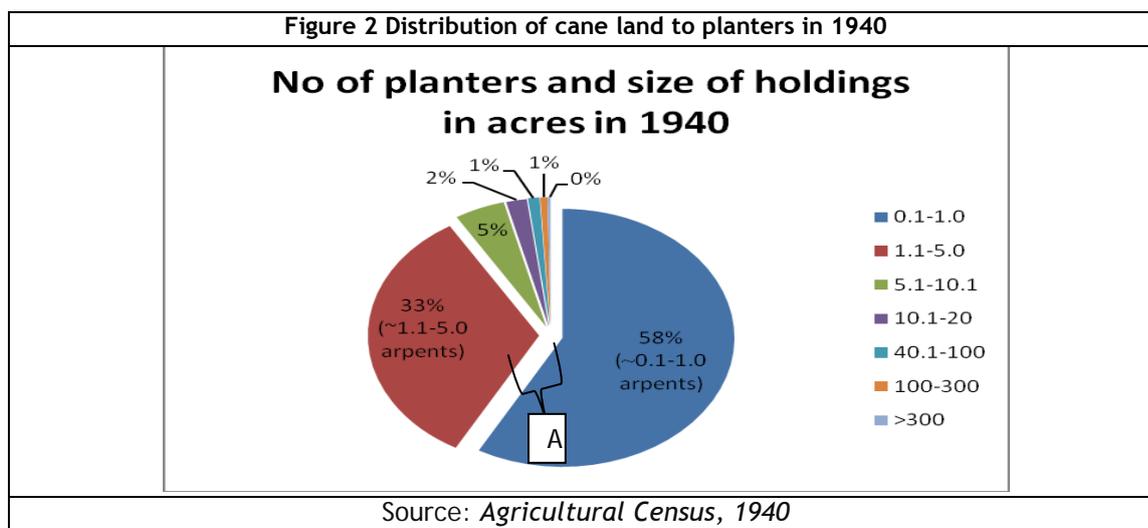
	Indian planters off sugar estates	Acreage grown by Indian planters	Non-Indian planters off sugar estates	Acreage grown by non-Indian planters	Average grown by head Indian planters	Average grown per head by Non-Indian planters
Whole island	13,597	38,258	626	5,558	2.9	8.9
%	95.6	87.3	4.4	12.7	-	-

Source: Report of Agricultural Census, 1940

This Census Report of 1940 has categorised two types of estates, according to a particular criterion compared to previous reports which classified as 'Estate' and 'Off Estates' as an association of permanent names with the properties. The influence of the *Morcellement* system had not only affected the Indian community, but also the Non-Indians. The distribution pattern of cane fields outside the estates shows that they were massively cultivated (95.6%) by Indian planters,

representing 38,258 acres, while the rest 4.4% were cultivated by Non-Indians. The average area per head by Non-Indians was higher than by Indians. This Census Report of 1940 did not indicate any criteria or categories among the Non-Indians. Thus, the Non-Indians, one can presume, were mostly made up of planters, independent proprietors and very few Creoles. In his book entitled *Indians in a plural society*, Benedict Burton showed in 1961, that “In La Vallée, a single plot of land was owned by a Creole and the small cane planters of Mauritius were Indians born Hindus, Muslims, Tamils and Telugus.”<sup>79</sup>

The Agricultural Report of 1940 elaborated about the small holdings of cane lands and the number of planters distributed in various districts. Under this, it could be noted that there were about 75% of small planters who possessed less than 1 *arpent* of land in the Districts of Flacq, Plaines Wilhems, Grand-Port and Savanne. In the Northern plain, the small planters had generally between than 1 to 5 *arpents*.



The earliest distribution pattern of sizes of holdings by planters had been accurately fragmented in the *Agricultural Census of 1940*. Figure 2.0 shows that 58% of planters had cane fields less than 1 *arpent*, while 33 % of planters occupied between 1 and 5 *arpents*. Despite the fact that the largest size of holdings was distributed to the least distinct category A, at that time in Mauritius, 87% of cane cultivators were small cane planters, with a population of 12,408. This shows that access to land was easy for the lower class of people, with facility of different sources of finance. It can also be noted that the estates owners accounted for 2% holding greater than 40 *arpents*.

**Table 5 Trend of landownership by small planters with a holding less than 10 *arpents*.**

Year	No. of Small planters owing less than 10 <i>arpents</i>	Acreage owned by small planters owing less than 10 <i>arpents</i>	% of Total Cane Area
1949	15,994	31,017	19
1953	19,675	37,635	20.4
1958	19,675	37,635	20.4
1963	26298	44,015	21.5
1971	27,447	44,525	21.6
1974	28,708	46,440	22.6
1985	33,838	-	-

1990	31,370	-	-
1995	27,819	-	-
2009	19,671	-	-

Source: Agrarian Reform Rural Development, 1979; Annual Reports of SIFB.

The rise in the number of small planters continued till 1995. In 1974, as Table 7 draws attention to 28,708 small planters occupying 46,440 acres of cane lands. The Agrarian Reform Report in 1979 briefly mentioned that 45% of cane lands were cultivated by 32,000 small growers who each possess less than one *arpent*. Later on, from 1990 to 2009, there was a fast decline in the number of small planters.

The overall acreage of land owned by small planters has declined with time. During 1985, there was a sharp rise in land owned by small planters in the second category. (Less than 1 *arpent* and 5 *arpents*). Therefore, it could be concluded that small planters had purchased more lands during this period or simply acquired lands through inheritance. For the period 1985-1990, the industrial sector was predominant and greatly contributed to the economy of the country, but it did not affect the small planters. Another fact is that small planters were receiving financial help from cooperatives and banks, as well as Government and private organisations, such as SPMPCC which came to the aid of small planters. Between 2000-2009, the country faced a financial crisis, small planters had to deal with the high costs of fertilisers, the reduction of the price of sugar by 36 %, and a high rate of unemployment.

#### Examples of crises faced by small planters in 1900s are:

##### 1. In 1904, Transport problem (lack of carts):

*“On nous rapporte que plus de 300 arpents de cannes appartenant aux petits ‘planteurs’ vont rester sur pied à la Nouvelle Découverte, La plaine des Calebasses et à Congoma pour le manque de charettes; c’est un véritable désastre pour ces malheureux petits cultivateurs, les cannes sont à dessécher dans les champs. Quelques usines ont coupé les cannes pour planter du manioc et des ananas, d’autres y ont mis le feu, C’est vraiment navrant de voir abandonner des cannes de 8 à 10 pieds de haut qui pourraient rapporter douze milliers à l’arpent”.* (L.Gujadhur, 2008)

##### 2. In 1937: “Uba” Cane Crisis

The Report of Commission of Enquiry presided by C. A. Hooper demonstrated that on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1937, when the weighbridge at Rich Fund was opened to receive the canes of small planters, a notice from the Manager of Sans Souci, shocked the whole small planting community through the reduction of 15% on the sugarcane variety called ‘Uba’. This was due to the lack of sufficient sugar. Planters in Lallmatie, Bon Accueil, Brisée Verdière and adjoining districts were the ones most affected. They were forced, through the factory area system, to send their canes to only one mill-owner or through intermediaries cane dealers.

The planters had doubts about the mill-owner’s motivation, since the factory had crushed this cane variety for seventeen years which had passed without any grudges. Now, planters were facing problems due to the sugar level of this cane variety. Small planters understood that factory-owners wanted to discourage them from planting productive ‘Uba’ cane that could made 15 to 20 tons per acre. Moreover, the mill-owners did not want to give 2/3 sugar extracted to them. In such a tense situation, many small planters did not unload their trucks at the weighbridge. In addition, there was a lack of provision for checking the weight of canes brought by them to the weighbridge. Many strikers had also been killed by rifle-fire during this crisis; thus planters and labourers signed

petitions and went to lodge complaints against mill-owners to the Protector of Immigrants. Actions were taken by the Commissioner of Police, once a report had been submitted by the Protector of Immigrants to the Government. An Agreement was further reached by the estates for the limitation of the area system, with either small planters either individually or through their representatives.

### **Great Wars (World Wars I and II)**

During World War I, in the presence of Governor of the Colony of Mauritius, Mr. Heskell Bell, sugar was sold at five times its usual value to England for about Rs. 240 million or £20,000,000. There were great changes and a development in the social life of people. Many of them were suddenly rich; the labourers had a good earning and spent usefully, while other labourers spent their money on liquor, such as rum (A. Toussaint, p. 214). Extra money from wages was used to buy plots of lands and cattle to become independent farmers and have some savings for the future. In addition, some labourers went to settle in towns and villages. Thus, arose a class of small planters among the labourers and descendants of labourers. Shortly after World War I, sugar prices fell; this practically ruined small Indian planters who lost their lands and had to look for other jobs. Some had to return to their old jobs in the fields of sugar estates. A few Indians managed to continue as small planters, although they had sustained great losses. (M. Varma, p. 220)

The *Short History of Mauritius* by Toussaint has elaborated on the World War II period, when the colony was seriously affected by famine, especially in 1941. Then Mauritius could not import rice from Burma, due to the war in Japan. So, the Government had to be very strict and established special War Laws. Therefore, Sugar Estates Managers were obliged to cultivate foodcrops from an initial value of one-fortieth up to one-quarter of their fields. This law was also applied to small planters.

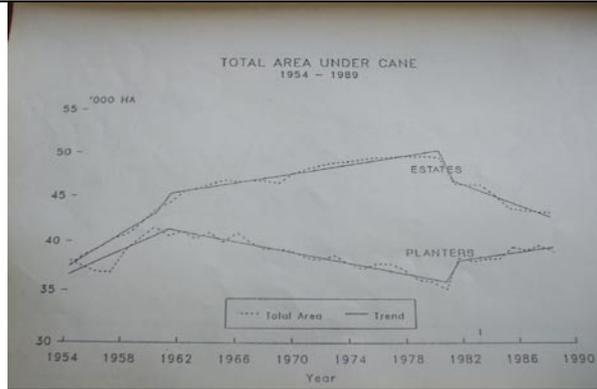
### **Labour Crisis in 1970s**

The 1970s were a crucial period when a real development was observed in the country. There was a growth in the economy, as well as industrial development and good financial returns. Around 1974, after the establishment of Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool (SPMPC), many planters, including small planters, took advantage of the introduction of the derocking of sugarcane fields, through mechanical services. At the same time, many sugar estates increased their use of mechanisation by buying cane harvesters. There were an increase in absenteeism among labourers (greater than 20%) and a shortage of people moving for other employment opportunities such as Export Processing Zone. (SPES, 1991). Among small planters, many left their agricultural lands to work in the industrial sector for a greater income.

### **TREND OF SUGAR CULTIVATION BY SMALL PLANTERS**

The total area under cane occupied by small sugarcane cultivators has dropped, constantly from 42,000 hectares in 1962 to 35,000 hectares in 1982. The textile sector developed fast during the 1980s. There was also a drastic decrease in the amount of sugar produced from 685,900 tonnes in 1964 to 470,895 tonnes in 2009. This drop was caused by a reduction in the price of sugar, a shortage of labour, the high cost of production, the high cost of fertilizers and the development of economy of Mauritius.

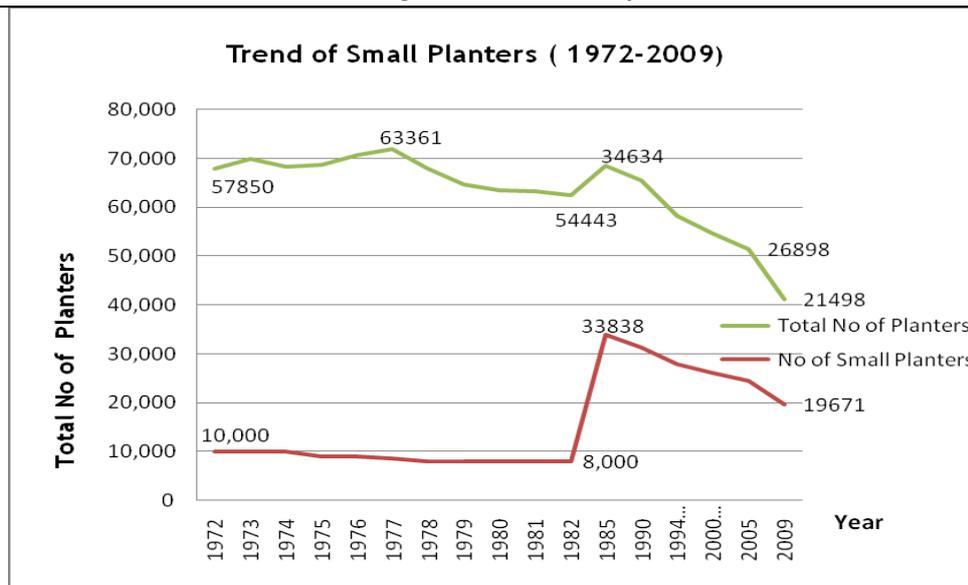
Figure 3 Total Area under cane from 1954-1989



Source: SPES 1991: *Summaries and Recommendations* (Final Report). Small Planters Efficiency Study.

Information about the number of small planters in Mauritius from the 1970s to 2009 is given in Figure 3. The number of small planters remained constant at 10,000 during the first three years after the 1970s.

Figure 4 No. of small planters 1972-2009



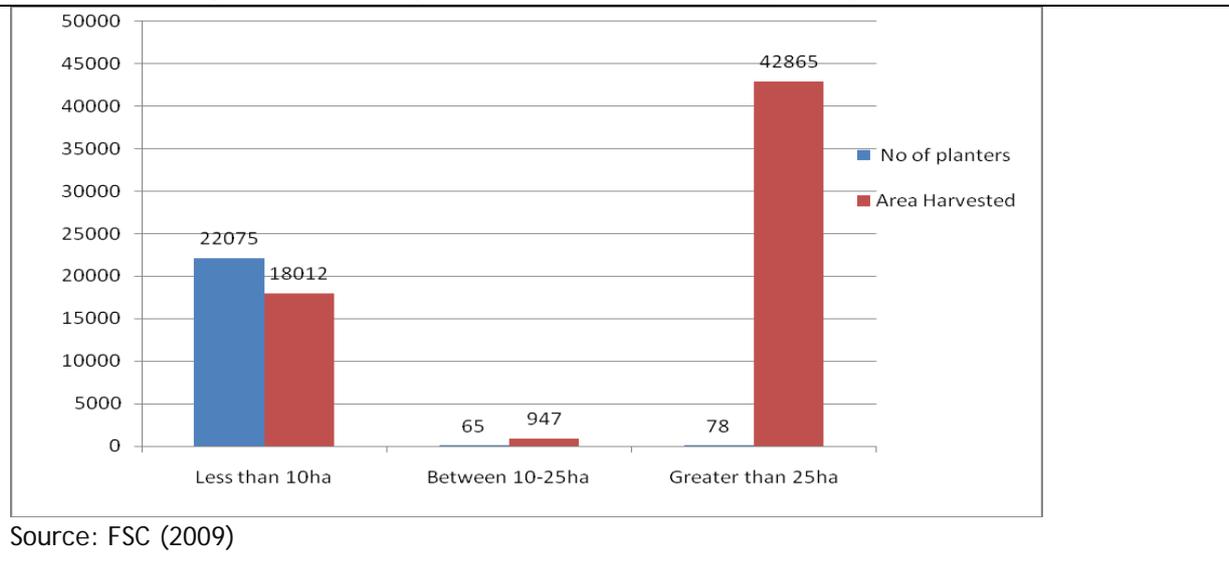
Source: Statistics from: Report of inquiry on Sugar Industry 1983 and Annual Reports of SIFB

After 1976, following the establishment of Sugar Mechanical Pool Corporation, many estates and large planters were massively bulldozing land and preparing their cane fields, just like small planters. In addition, some small planters did not benefit from these mechanical services, as they had less than 1 *arpent* of land. In 1985, more than 97% of all planters were small cane cultivators. Reform was being brought to the Sugar Industry after the Sugar Inquiry of 1983 and of the creation of the Mauritius Sugar Authority which provided financial support to a Sugar Industry worker (small planters) either for the acquisition of a house from the sugar estate, which is suitable for long-term occupation, or to buy a plot of land offered by the Sugar Estate or to build his own house thereon. Thus, there was a boom of small cane cultivators, reaching a peak of 33,838 planters. After 2000, a sharp decrease was noted in the number of small planters, due to the financial crisis and other problems.

With the growth in the economy of Mauritius, the Sugar Industry faced a continuous decline in the number of planters and in the sugar harvest. During 2008, a total of 23,366 of small-scale sugarcane

growers (small planters) contributed about 33% of the total annual sugar production that represented a direct source of income. (MSIRI, 2010) From 2000 to 2008, the number of small planters decreased from 28,461 to 23,366. There has been a gradual decrease in the size of the planters' community; the majority belonged to the small planters who benefited less from the economic activity, during the past decade. (SIFB, 2009). The planters' population has further decreased from 23,366 to 21,498, for the period 2008-2009.

**Figure 5 Number of planters and areas harvested by small planters in 2009.**



It can be noted that small planters possessing more than 25ha saw an increase in the number of their harvested areas, compared to other categories of small planters.

### EFFECT OF CENTRALISATION ON SMALL PLANTERS

The centralisation of sugar factories had begun in 1861, when 259 factories decreased gradually, over time, to 70 which were still operating around the country in 1921. The Chamber of Agriculture noticed that the main reasons for the closure of many factories were the damage caused by the spread of Malaria among Indian immigrants in 1866, as well as violent cyclones during the 1860s and 1870s. Consequently, the closure of factories led Indian immigrants to settle down in this colony and to purchase plots of lands from estate-owners during the *Morcellement* system. Small planters made use of ox-carts to transport their canes to the factory. With the closing down of factory units, they were compelled to send their canes even further than previously.

Centralisation was also intended to facilitate the accumulation of capital and profits by favouring operations in larger estate factories rather than dealing with smaller and fewer estate factories. Investments in small factory units were not feasible and practical; thus, the focus shifted to making the large factory units become more effective.

The Centralisation process in 1964 was defined by Roland Lamusse as:

*“An entirely new method of producing sugar which increased enormously the acreage over which sugar yielding material was grown, found cane growers in a state of unpreparedness with expensive methods of manipulation and cultivation with falling increasing returns from increased production, demanded time and sacrifice.”<sup>80</sup>*

With the progress of centralisation planters, the Commission of Inquiry of 1972-1973<sup>81</sup> raised the problem of reimbursement of transport costs of 25 cents for every ten miles of distance beyond four miles. This sum was deemed to be very low, with an increasing number of trips. In addition, in regions like Bamboo Virieux and Deux Frères, small planters' canes were left in the fields because of lack of transport and long queuing at the weighbridges.

The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture (MCA, 1997) highlighted issues relating to Blueprint on Centralisation. Therefore, the Blueprint Report dealt with the following issues:

- (1) Rising cost of inputs;
- (2) Means to attain the objectives of cost reduction, environment protection, optimisation of use of *bagasses* and diversification of activities;
- (3) Streamlining the procedures leading to closure of factories.

It also mentioned compensation for employees made redundant by centralisation. These people could get access to jobs in other factories or for an *ex gratia* payment in kind and in cash, depending on their length of service.

With the rising costs of inputs, the Blueprint on Centralisation of mills recommended that planters would be entitled to safeguards regarding the operation of weighbridges, quota allocations, and the collection of scum and sucrose tests by the Control Board. A package was also recommended for planters; they could collect scums and were offered a loader, if this was necessary to help them load their lorries with the scum. A sum of Rs. 15 million would be credited to the Planter's fund. Another facility proposed by the Blueprint was to maintain or increase the cane supply of quota for planters in the event of fires; the Control Board would come to the help of factory areas in the event of widespread fires.

The ex-Director of Mauritius Sugar Producers Association, Mr. M. Patrick, in a magazine entitled *Le Militant- Industrie Sucrière* in 1992, said that Centralisation was inevitable. Although, in the first instance, it could be avoided for years, it was not possible to do that in the long-term. However, lots of problems had occurred during the closure of factories. In 1985, planters of Solitude continued to send their canes to the weighbridges; for this, MSPA had to pay their transport. Thus, no planters paid for the transport.

The Centralisation of factories enabled workers to take voluntary retirement through the VRS system. VRS I and II have already been put into action in almost all sugar factories present in Mauritius. The future of Centralisation lies in good negotiations and policies planned for the Sugar Industry, with the help of group discussions involving Government, Sugar Associations, planters, other workers and other business partners.

## **MECHANISATION**

Mechanisation of cane fields in Mauritius enabled uncultivated lands to be more productive and high-yielding in the Sugar Industry. According to the Commission Report of 1947, mechanised cultivation was restricted to estates with factories and large holdings. In addition, there was no central tractor or agricultural machinery stations for associations of small planters. Mechanical services, in 1947, were mainly used for cultivation purposes, bulldozing, preparing the land, removal of stones and boulders, weeding interlines, furrowing and sub-soiling. From a total of 127 tractors operating on sugarcane lands, the estates-owners had the majority, i.e. around 99, while contractors, as well as large planters, owned 14 tractors respectively. Small planters faced lots of difficulties by managing their inferior low-yielding lands provided by sugar estates. The cost of hiring machines was high, and small planters were commercially exploited.

In order to protect small planters against commercial exploitation, an Ordinance was passed to provide mechanical cultivation for small planters. Thus *Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool* was founded in 1954, under the control of *Sugar Planters Rehabilitation Fund*. The main mechanical operations, provided by this new Federation, were the clearing of old canes stools, the preparing and furrowing for plantation of new canes. In October 1974, the *Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool* was created as a separate body under the SPMPC Act No. 46 in order to have better control of the mechanical pool and achieve greater efficiency. The main objectives of this Corporation under this Act were to maintain a pool of agricultural machinery for the purpose of the Sugar Industry and to hire out the machines of the Corporation to such people and on such terms and conditions, as the Board may determine.

### WHO IS A “TYPICAL SMALL PLANTER”?

The Chamber of Agriculture described the profile a “typical small planter” in the following terms in 1980:

*“A man of more than fifty years of age, who has not completed his primary education, who has a plot of land of less than five arpents not necessarily in the region where he lives and who cultivates his land as a part-time occupation, his main source of revenue being derived from the permanent employment.”*  
(Manrakhan, 1984)

Dharmadeho Chacoory was a carpenter by profession, and occupied a small plot of land, planting vegetables for his own family’s consumptions. The grandfather, Mr. Beeharry, was also commonly known as ‘*chacha Beeharry*’ by local people. He used to work as a labourer, as well as a “typical small planter” in his own land and most of the time in the past; he transported sugarcanes in his own cart to the sugar mill from his childhood until the 1980s.

There were very few people in the village in the past who owned carts, as people were poor. He had stopped loading and unloading canes in his carts a very long time before in 1984, when he had bought a lorry with his savings. The grandmother, Mrs. Mewantee Chacoory, always praised him as a hardworking, down-to-earth person, always struggling to meet the needs of his family. They had ten children (6 sons and 4 daughters). The grandmother was a housewife who also reared animals, such as goats and cows. She fetched grass for these animals and sold milk to the neighbours and merchants who came to her place.

Her children helped her a lot in meeting the needs of the extended family. Even at the age of six, her sons accompanied her very early in the morning to the fields to fetch grass for animals, such as cows and goats prior to going to primary school. Sometimes, they even did such work as *dépailage*<sup>82</sup>, cutting canes, loading and unloading of canes’ in another planter’s fields to get some additional money. No cent was kept by the children, after an early rise and long hours of work in the fields; instead, we received money from the planters, paid on a weekly basis, and this was given to the head of the family. The money was used for rations. Consequently, the children developed an intense passion for agricultural work.

### CONSTRAINTS OF SMALL PLANTERS

1. With the effect of centralisation, many small planters are having transport problems, as they need to send their canes far away to the factory area. They also pay high prices for transport.

**Food for thought:** “What in the case of a very small planter? Will he be able to afford high prices of transport compared to a small amount of cane transported on long distances?”

2. Long queuing problems at the sugar mills arose because of the closure of small ones. The mills took long hours to crush abundant amounts of canes from the entire region have discouraged many small planters from cultivating canes.
3. Nowadays, the new generation of small planters is not interested in enduring the same hardships as their ancestors. Instead, education is seen a key to a better living and white-collar jobs.
4. It must be also noted that due to a 36% decrease in sugar prices in 2010, the revenue of planters was also reduced; there was an increase in the price of fertilizers. Thus, many small planters preferred to abandon lands.
5. Many small planters now have no time, nor enough resources to manage the irrigation of their fields.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. Small cane planters should get financial help to buy other means of transport to motivate them to cultivate sugarcane.
- II. Plots of small planters, falling under block irrigation projects of Estate factories, should be legally swapped for land amounting to the same value in other areas, if the planters wish to.
- III. Vast training programs on research technologies in the Sugar Industry should be introduced for small planters so that they might broaden their minds and adopt new approaches, in order to increase sugarcane production.
- IV. Revised Agricultural Policies and Legislations should be introduced to enable small planters to group under irrigation projects.

### CONCLUSION

To promote growth of sugarcane plantations, some solutions are listed below:

- Intercropping of high-yielding crops in sugarcane fields;
- Small planters can themselves become contractors of labourer to outsource labourers for plantations in cane fields;
- Through proper training by MSIRI, small planters could developed their own canes to achieve high-cane yielding, resistant to natural calamities, such as droughts and floods;
- Expert small planters could open counselling centres to guide other new planters in the fields.

Small planters could have their own business in this modern world:

- The setting of new distilleries by small planters;
- With the reduction of sugar prices, the other by-products of cane are being emphasised for value addition in terms of making alcoholic drinks or using alcohol for the production of electricity. The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture of 1953 indicated a major export of alcohol of 49.625 hectolitre out of 66.492 hectolitres. The small planters have only relied on agricultural work, it's now time for them to take a step forward with the new technology, although it seems to be very difficult to start a new business with a large investment, but nothing is impossible;

- Small planters need to regroup themselves again into large groups to get capital investments and sponsorship through cooperatives, estate factories, companies and sugar institutions or simply by network marketing of small planters around the world. Network marketing is the “chain of contacts” which allows business to run through network of contacts and this could cost less capital investments with greater profits in return, and equipments could be purchased at a lower price through contacts.
- Small planters could promote alcohol manufacture or establish themselves as partners in distillery.
- Small cultivators could become good entrepreneurs in the Sugar Industry. With the help of NGOs, Government support and professional processing sugar factories, small planters could get adequate professional training and develop skills in the refinery of sugar to produce special sugar under good norms and conditions.
- However, if sugar prices and cost of the labour force are low, small planters could develop a new business with dried sugarcane leaves which could be used as decoration for roof ceilings purposes in hotels.
- Alternative cropping system could be implemented in the Sugar Industry. For e.g. *pejibaye* (*Bactris gasipaes*) palm cabbage production and *pitaya*. *Pejibaye* is well adapted to the superhumid zone. There is no risk of pest and diseases. Thus, there is no requirement of pesticides. In due course, if a suitable cover crop can be found to obviate the need for herbicides, organic production could be attempted. The palm cabbage quality is excellent. Since it does not oxidize, it lends itself to packaging for the convenience of supermarket customers. Small sugarcane growers could benefit from these alternative crops. According to R. Ramasawmy in his Report in 2006,

*“Pitaya is undoubtedly an excellent candidate alternative crop. The only major risk is that of saturating the domestic market. This implies checking the export market right away and looking for ways to extend the production season. Pitaya has a few very high peak labour demands for cross-pollination every year. In addition, few small-scale cane growers have experience with the management of alternative crops and, consequently, the management requirements should also be considered in the business plans.”*

## MÉTAYAGE IN MAURITIUS

Smita Gya and  
Satyendra Peerthum

### 1. DEFINITION OF MÉTAYAGE

*Métayage*, also known as sharecropping, is where the agricultural produce is shared or sold by a tenant farmer to the landowner.<sup>83</sup> The term *Métayage* originates from France and spread in Europe, as well as in British and French colonies of the Caribbean and Indian Ocean.<sup>84</sup> According to Professor Roland Lamusse, *métayage* or sharecropping can be considered as '*le faire valoir indirect*' (adding value in an indirect way).<sup>85</sup> Daniel North-Coombes has further refined this definition for Mauritius. For him, *métayers* were estate labourers who were provided with a plot of land on the sugar estate where they resided, with the clear agreement that they would grow sugar cane for delivery to the estate factory. They did not pay any type of rent money for the estate land where they grew the sugar cane, "but they received less than the ruling market rate for the cane supplied, which was equivalent to payment of a concealed ground rent in kind."<sup>86</sup>

### 2. HISTORY OF MÉTAYAGE

*Métayers* are leaseholders who obtained land in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the period of parcellisation and consolidation of the Sugar industry. As many could not afford to pay cash, they were allowed to lease the land on condition that they would supply the mill with canes. Most land was marginal land but today, with irrigation and expansion of Tourism, this marginal land is becoming highly profitable. Hence the desire of the sugar estates to reclaim this land and sell it to a foreign clientele or undertake tourist-related activities. Despite Independence, the Law and the authorities have been lukewarm in their attempts to protect the historic rights of the *métayers* when sugar estates wanted to reclaim the land leased.

According to research undertaken by Satyendra Peerthum for the Truth and Justice Commission, the first *métayers* could be considered to be the ex-slaves working for Free Coloured population after the abolition of slavery. A number of documents support this view. In April 1840, Captain John Lloyd, Surveyor-General of Mauritius, reported in a letter to John Irving that "*in preference to hiring themselves to a respectable planter, they will probably obtain a small piece of ground, from a coloured or black petty proprietor, on the conclusion of working for him [...]*". When abolition of apprenticeship occurred in 1839, Acting Governor J. Power declared:

*"I believe that I am within bounds in saying that not more than a third of the island is under cultivation whilst all of it may be made productive. There is also ample employment more than enough for the lately liberated population without returning to the sugar estates, in the cultivation of provisions, vegetables, and in rearing of minor stocks such as fowls, pigs, etc [...] which they fully understand [...] the prices of the majority of these articles are now nearly double what they were ten years ago."*<sup>87</sup>

In 1840, Governor Lionel Smith toured the island in order to gauge the social and economic impact of emancipation on the Colony. In August of the same year, he wrote to Lord John Russell, Secretary of State for Colonies:

*“I find very few of the emancipated population have returned to sugar cultivation, but it is not true, as was represented to me in England, that they were in a state of vagrancy and idleness, committing thefts throughout the island. They labour sufficiently either for themselves or others for subsistence and are a quiet, and content, people.”<sup>88</sup>*

Small-scale *métayage* seemed to exist therefore, while as the century progressed, the sugar estates used the *métayage* system in Mauritius, in order to deal with problems of labour shortage. The first record of it is on the St. Martin Sugar Estate, in the Savanne District, where it began in ‘the concluding months of 1846.’<sup>89</sup>

By 1847, a report of the Council of Government mentioned that “when the population of the island was increased by the introduction of 25,000 immigrants between 1834 and 1839 and subsequently of 39,000 in 1843-1844, the demand for skilled labour, for garden produce increased [...]”<sup>90</sup> There was thus also a good market for vegetable produce. The Colonial Government, however, viewed this system with some suspicion; Governor Gomm reported that “it was obviously at variance with established regulation.” Support for *métayage* came from a number of planters. In May 1847, Mr. Savy was ready to put 150 *arpents*, converted to hectares of arable land, at the disposition of ex-apprentices and indentured workers in South Pamplemousses. He wanted to establish a ‘system of partnership’ or system of *métayage* in order to grow sugar cane, corn and roots.<sup>91</sup> The Colonial Office even suggested to the British Governor to encourage the establishment of a system of *métayage* between the sugar planters and the ex-apprentices on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1847.

Unfortunately, it was never implemented by Governor Gomm, the Council of Government or the planters, with the exception of Napoléon Savy. The case of Savy helps us to understand why Lord Glenelg’s suggestion was never considered in Mauritius. Napoléon Savy was a Coloured sugar estate owner, a well-known barrister in the Colony and originally from the Seychelles. During the 1840s, he acquired Petite Rosalie Sugar Estate, as well as other properties in the Southern part of Pamplemousses District.<sup>92</sup>

*“I shall be happy to supply them with fertile land, advance them the necessary seed, and the wood and thatch to build their dwellings, on the terms which I have already alluded. I will, besides, make arrangements with the assistance and under the control of Government, to have their children educated. In making the preceding proposal to Your Excellency, I am actuated by my personal to Your Excellency, I am actuated by my personal interest, by the desire of being useful to a numerous class of men, and lastly by the wish of proving to Her Majesty’s Government that, far from rejecting its generous suggestions, the colonists are eager to offer Your Excellency the opportunity of fulfilling them.”<sup>93</sup>*

Within less than ten days of receiving this letter, Governor Gomm, through the Colonial Secretary, informed Savy in a very diplomatic manner that: “As the object which you have in view, can alone be brought about by the operation of a mutual confidence between the parties themselves, His Excellency does not consider that he can interfere in the manner you propose.”<sup>94</sup>

The Colonial Government was not happy either with the experiment in *métayage* being conducted on a sugar estate in the South. This estate was visited by two senior British Officials: Charles Anderson, Protector of Immigrants and George M. Elliot, Stipendiary Magistrate of Savanne.<sup>95</sup> Based on their reports, the British Governor stated: “While under the *métayage* agreement, they are likely to derive positive advantages”:

*“But, the object of Government must steadily be, to secure the Indian Labourers from ignorantly acquiescing in any speculative arrangements or binding themselves to any contracts, for the breach of which by the employers owing to whatever causes, they are not provided with a remedy at law”.*

He continued:

*“The system appears to the Committee to be too open to abuse to be safely encouraged and while most likely to succeed where employers are in prosperous circumstances, it will probably be most strenuously advocated (as here) by parties not so advantageously situated.”<sup>96</sup>*

Although this first experiment with *métayage* failed, as the labourers returned to India, other estates preferred to try it with Indian labourers rather than with ex-apprentices.

An intimate economic relationship developed between the estate owner/landlord and *métayer*.<sup>97</sup> It was also a relationship based on dependence as the workers were tied to the estate.<sup>98</sup> While *métayage* was considered as ‘mutually beneficial’, it was not necessarily an equal relationship. It was seen as a strategy used by the estate owners in order to secure “labour near the estate and to put marginal land to use”.<sup>99</sup> For estate owners, it also meant that marginal land was transformed into fertile land at little expense on their part. For the estate, “the lands were usually uneconomic for the estate to cultivate because of rockiness of the soil, difficulties of irrigation, inaccessibility, or unevenness of the terrain. An Indian working after hours with his wife and children could grow cane on such land.”<sup>100</sup>

Although unequal, this system allowed indentured labourers and Old Immigrants to “obtain” land for sugar cane cultivation.<sup>101</sup> Through this ‘land acquisition’, the estate worker was able to begin the long, complex and arduous task of securing “‘freeholds, some degree of material comfort and higher social status’” between the late 1800s and the first half of the 1900s.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, it also gave a chance to small planters to ‘acquire’ additional land “which enabled many of the latter to double or even treble the area cultivated, as against the area owned by them outside the perimeters of the sugar estate.”<sup>103</sup> ‘New chains of dependence’ emerged when credit advances, sometimes made by the estate owners and the total dependence of the *métayer* on the planter or estate for the purchase of his sugar cane.<sup>104</sup>

According to Alfred North-Coombes, “at the same time there was considerable competition for labourers between the various estates. In order to encourage a man and his family to work on an estate, they were often attracted by the loan of some land which, however, had to be cultivated in cane. Some financial help, by way of a loan on the future crop, was also given for the ‘mise en valeur’ of the land.”<sup>105</sup> Estate owners did not give land to anybody; it was usually a select group whom they knew very well and had worked for them for several years.<sup>106</sup> Benedict indicates: “Estate owners often loaned trusted employees small plots of cane land on the estate to cultivate. One of the motives was to keep the labourers, nearing the end of their contracts, attached to the estate”.<sup>107</sup>

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of the *métayers* were monthly workers who had worked for many years on the same sugar estate and had resided for years in the estate camps and in the nearby villages.<sup>108</sup> From the 1920s onwards, however, the importance of the *métayers* declined. Today, they form a very small class of small sugar cane growers with their numbers diminishing each year.<sup>109</sup>

**FROM PLOTS TO PLANTATIONS TO COMPANY:**

## CASE STUDY OF HAREL FRERES

**EARLY HISTORY**

Belle Vue Harel, created earlier, in 1775 by Jacques Antoine Dumolard, had some 110 slaves who lived there. Later on, the same estate was acquired by Babet and Jean Dioré. Jacques Saulnier created Beau Plan in 1821 and passed it on to J.T. Couve. In 1832, 202 slaves still lived on his estate. Recently, the sugar estate was turned into a sugar museum.

Apart from the exploitation of sugar to reap large sums of money, slave labour was also utilised in industrial development, as at the “*Forges de Mon Désir*”, created in 1745 under the Governorship of Mahé de Labourdonnais. Gilles Hermans associated himself with the Comte Philippe de Rostaing to create the “*Forges de Mon Désir*” which specialised in iron smelting:

*“C'est, en effet, en 1745, soit au début de la colonisation française de cette île, que deux officiers qui y avaient passé sous le gouvernement de Labourdonnais, Thomas Gilles Hermans et le comte Philippe de Rostaing, s'associèrent pour fonder aux Pamplemousses un établissement métallurgique qui comprenait aussi une raffinerie de salpêtre et une fabrique de poudre de guerre. Cet établissement métallurgique avait pris naissance à la suite de la découverte par Rostaing, aux Pamplemousses, d'une mine de fer ou, du moins, d'une certaine quantité de ce métal dans le sol. Des échantillons envoyés aux Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes à Paris furent jugés contenir une proportion de fer assez élevée pour justifier une exploitation et c'est la Compagnie elle-même qui incita Rostaing à se lancer dans cette entreprise. Constitué, à l'origine, par des [grants] accordées par le Conseil Supérieur, l'établissement de Mon Désir s'agrandit rapidement par diverses acquisitions au point d'atteindre en dix ans plus de 4,000 arpents - ce qui en faisait le domaine le plus considérable de toute l'île à cette époque.”*

In 1753, Rostaing received 50 slaves to work as masons, stonecutters and carpenters to create an oven to melt the iron. The *Forges* occupied around 4,056 acres of land, plus another 10,000 more acres of forests, kept to supply the estate with charcoal. From 1752 to 1759, *Mon Désir* employed around 790 slaves and supplied the French Engineer de Cossigny with iron for the construction of fortifications over the whole island. The *Forges* turned out to be so successful that production amounted to around £1 million of iron of different types per annum. These materials were exported to India.

The slaves, attached to the *Forges*, lived in the nearby “*camps*”, which were aligned in long rows of huts, each of them enclosed by a family garden. The area was divided in quarters, each having its own black commander to look after the well-being of the inhabitants. Hermans formed 200 of his slaves to be militarily disciplined and worked them as if they were true soldiers. He was very satisfied with the job they performed. However, this period of prosperity was not everlasting. In 1774, the owners of the *Forges* were forced to sell the estate as it went bankrupt. From then on, there came a change in the function and naming of the site.

Mahé de Labourdonnais owned the land situated in the valley formed by Mount Calebasses, Pieter Both and in the South, at Ferney. Some 236 slaves lived and worked in his indigo factory. Later on, sugar was cultivated to produce arrack, hence the need for a '*guildiverie*'. In 1820, a sugar factory was created on the estate and, in 1832, one Daruty owned the estate.

Cossigny, Manager of the *Moulin à Poudre*, was one of the few settlers who wanted to remunerate the slaves. However, this move was firmly opposed by his peers. The *Moulin à Poudre*, formerly located near Balaclava, was used as a site to manufacture powder needed in wars until the end of French occupation of the island in 1810. The manufacture exploded several times. It was later decided to transfer it to the former site occupied by the *Forges* in 1771. From 1823, the *Moulin* was used as a hospital.

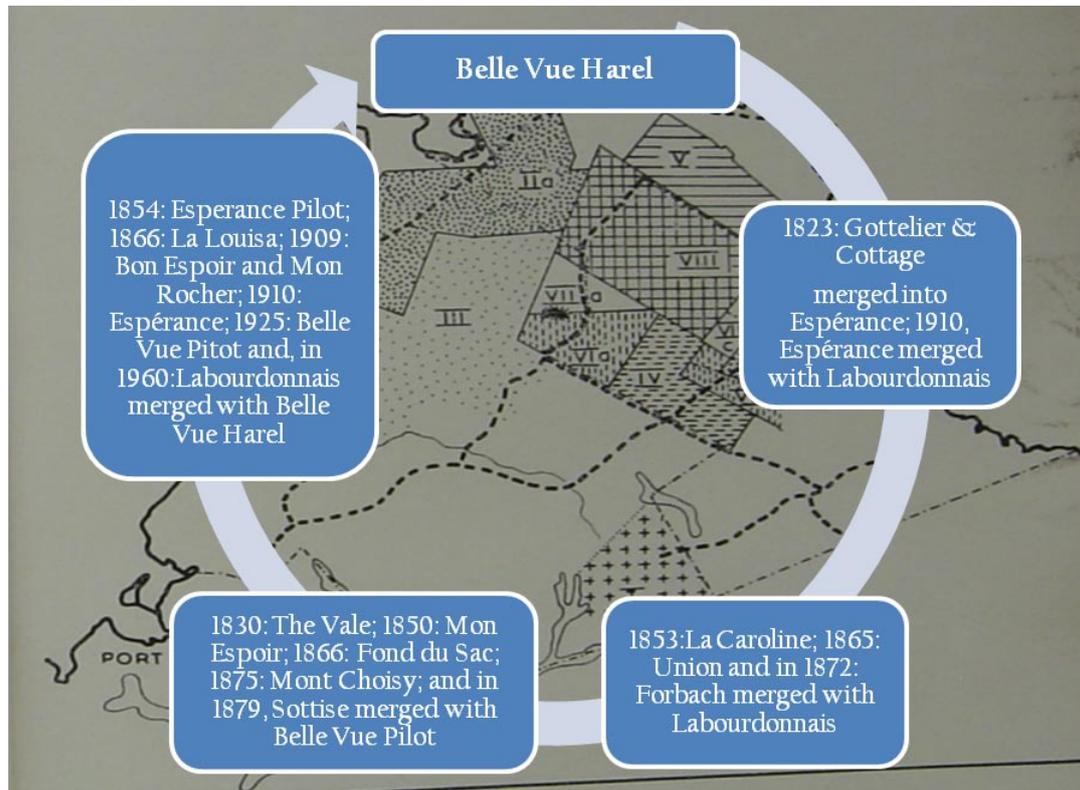


Figure 6. Some of the mergers in the North during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

## FROM SUGAR TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Throughout Mauritian History, the sugar magnates, having acquired large “*grants*”, set up large conglomerates, obtained a cheap labour force to create their wealth. Solitude Sugar Estate was one of the three sugar factories which belonged to the Society Harel Frères Limited. Auguste Dioré was the first owner between 1838 and 1839. He sold 406 acres of land to Jean Baptiste d’Agnel in 1857. Since that time, the land changed hands and increased in acreage several times. The annexation of adjoining lands, resulting from the closing down of factories, increased considerably the factory area of the sugar mill as was the case in other parts of the island.

Other important mergers in that Northern factory were: Bon Espoir (328 acres) in 1858; L’Agrément (456 acres) in 1867; L’Unité (746 acres) in 1867; and Bon Air (783 acres) in 1925.

The Belle Vue Estate, for example, was established in 1807 and the first sugar factory was founded in 1835 in this area under the ownership of the Anglade family. In 1838, Pierre, Victor, Eugène and Emile Harel set up the Society Harel Frères and bought Belle Vue.

In 1850, Victor bought his brothers’ share and became the sole proprietor. His son, Nemours, followed the example set by his father, in becoming, in 1898, the sole owner of the estate which he

sold to his children: Louis, Antoine, René and Louise. Louise Harel married Tristan Mallac. Each time the land changed hands, it increased in acreage, as is the case today.

- 1858: Pierre Victor Lanougarède and heirs (619 *acres*);
- 1866: Pierre Adolphus Wiehé (838 *acres*);
- 1869: The Ceylan & Co. Ltd;
- 1878: Jules Hyppolite Langlois & George Couve;
- 1881: The Northern Sugar Estate Company Limited (835 *acres*);
- 1898: The Crédit Foncier of Mauritius Limited (2 389 *acres*);
- 1899: Société Le Court de Billot Frères;
- 1919: The Solitude Sugar factory Company Limited (1 052 *acres*);
- 1925: Society Harel Frères (2 142 *acres*);
- 1940: Labourdonnais Sugar Estate;
- 1960: Harel Frères Limited (2 461 *acres*); and
- 2010: The latest acquisition being that of Mount Sugar Estate.

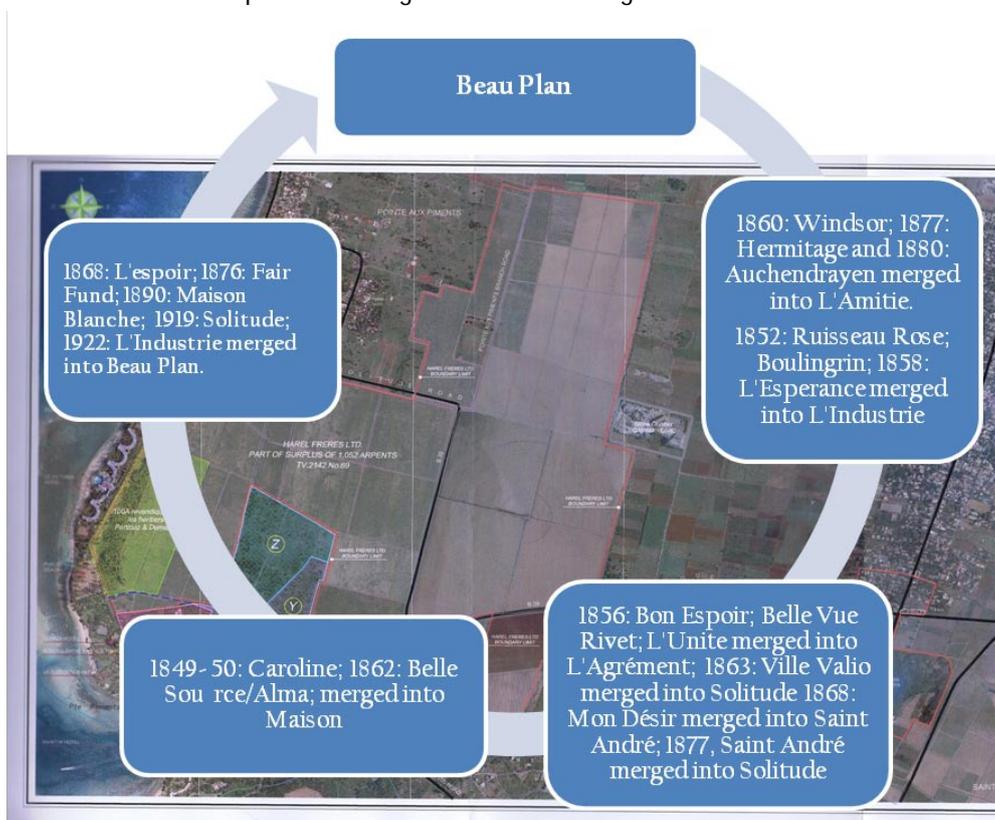


Figure 7 Example of a few mergers made over centuries

The Harel family has been so closely connected with the factory that it is still designated as Belle Vue Harel, even if the real name must be Belle Vue Mauricia, when the estates of Belle Vue Mauricia, Mon Rocher, Bon Espoir, Ferret and Forbach were annexed. They can trace their association with the business community as far back as 30<sup>th</sup> July 1799, when Charles Pierre Harel (1772-1842), from Saint Malo, France, obtained from the Governor of Isle de France the authorisation to command trading vessels.

The family business, which started in the 1830's, has turned into one of the most influential business sectors of the Mauritian economy The group consists of four main companies, namely Harel Frères Limited (cultivating more than 3, 900 hectares of sugar cane land in the North of the island); Harel Mallac & Co. Limited (today comprising of some 20 subsidiaries and 35 associated companies); The Mount Sugar Estate Company Limited - incorporated in 1913 and which controls 1, 800 *hectares*

of sugar land - closed its sugar factory in May 1995; and the Compagnie des Magasins Populaires Limitée, created in 1975 and operating in the distribution sector, affiliated to the French retailing Group "*Prisunic*", recently taken over by "*Monoprix*", another major French retailing group.

### SLAVE OWNERSHIP

As will be seen in the table showing registration returns in 1826, there was a close association of sugar estates with slavery and in this particular case, with the slave trade and commerce since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Most of the Mozambican slaves were in their 30s in 1826 returns which roughly correlates with the period when slave trading was going on with Kilwa and Zanzibar. Captain Harel in charge of the *Favorite* went to Kilwa on 2 October 1805; to Zanzibar on 17 January 1807 (Source: Auguste Toussaint *La Route des Iles* pp. 271-2). Other captains of the *Favorite*, apart from Harel, were Castaignet, Bazin, Préodet, Dumaine, Couacaud.

Harel was also Captain of the *Minerve* which made the following trips.

Mozambique:	5 September 1787
Pondichery:	29 June 1788
Pondichery:	3 August 1803
Batavia:	11 October 1803
Batavia:	7 August 1804
Zanzibar:	17 January 1807
Zanzibar:	26 January 1808

(Source: Auguste Toussaint, *La Route des Iles, Affiches et Annonces Diverses*)

The Sugar Estate Belle Vue Harel was in existence in 1835. On 16 Jan. 1837, according to compensation claim No. 6559, Charles Pierre Harel obtained for 131 slaves, the total sum of £4,397 - 5 shs-5d (p. 314, BPP).

Figure 8 Extract of Slave Registry of 1826

Slave's Family	Name	Surname	Sex	Occupation	Age	Country	Parents	
Famille d'Arsenne La Gaité								
	Arsenne	La Gaité	F	Servante	26	Malg	Mère de Célestin La Gaité	
	Célestin	La Gaité	M	Maçon	CM2	CM	Fils d'Arsenne La Gaité	
	François	Monqueray	M	Maçon	23	CM		
	La fortune	L'Endormi	M	Manoeuvre	67	Malg		
	Alexis	Rayon	M	Charron	40	Malg		
	Pierre	Jean	M	Manoeuvre	30	Malg		
	Pierre	Cataque	M	Domestique	CM0	CM		
	Virginie	Catherine	F	Domestique	CM8	CM		
Famille de Joséphine Marchal								
	Joséphine	Marchal	F	Servante	25	CM	Mère de Lisis et soeur de Baptiste et Marie Marchal	
	Lisis	Marchal	M		20 mois	CM	Fils de Joséphine Marchal	
	Baptiste	Marchal	M	Manoeuvre	20	CM	Frère de Joséphine et Marie Marchal	
	Marie	Marchal	F	Servante	23	CM	Mère de Léoncine et soeur de Joséphine et Baptiste Marchal	
	Léoncine	Marchal	F		9 mts	CM	Fille de Marie Marchal	
	Célestin	Célestina	M	Manoeuvre	20	CM		
	Zéphir	François	M	Manoeuvre	24	Malg		
	Nestor	Songoro	M	Maçon	22	Moz		
Famille de Victorine Panglose								
	Victorine	Panglose	F	Domestique	33	CM	Mère de Lisette, Volcy, Sidonie, Evariste, Améline, Valsin, et de Rosella Panglose	
	Volcy	Panglose	M	Domestique	CM7	CM	Fils de Victorine Panglose	
	Sidonie	Panglose	F	Domestique	CM6	CM	Fille de Victorine Panglose	
	Evariste	Panglose	M	Domestique	CM4	CM	Fils de Victorine Panglose	
	Améline	Panglose	F	Domestique	CM2	CM	Fille de Victorine Panglose	
	Valsin	Panglose	M	Domestique	CM0	CM	Fils de Victorine Panglose	
	Rosella	Panglose	F	Domestique	7	CM	Fille de Victorine Panglose	
	Lisette	Panglose	F	Domestique	CM9	CM	Fille de Victorine, et mère de Ferdinand Panglose	
	Ferdinand	Panglose	M		6 mois	CM	Fils de Lisette Panglose	
Famille de Céline Vaquelle								
	Céline	Vaquelle	F	Natteuse	36	Malg	Mère de Désiré, Alphonse, Paméla, Adélaïde, Sophie, Eulalie et de Hyacinthe Vaquelle	
	Désiré	Vaquelle	M	Pioche	CM8	CM	Fils de Céline Vaquelle	
	Alphonse	Vaquelle	M	Pioche	CM6	CM	Fils de Céline Vaquelle	
	Paméla	Vaquelle	F	Pioche	CM3	CM	Fille de Céline Vaquelle	
	Adélaïde	Vaquelle	F	Petite bande	9	CM	Fille de Céline Vaquelle	
	Sophie	Vaquelle	F	Petite bande	7	CM	Fille de Céline Vaquelle	
	Eulalie	Vaquelle	F		3	CM	Fille de Céline Vaquelle	
	Hyacinthe	Vaquelle	M		3 mois	CM	Fils de Céline Vaquelle	
Famille d'Olivette Chitte								
	Olivette	Chitte	F	Couturière	CM4	CM	Soeur de Thomy Chitte	
	Thomy	Chitte	M	Gratteur	CMCM	CM	Frère d'Olivette Chitte	
Famille de Perrine Clara								
	Clara	Perrine	Clara	F	Pioche	32	CM	Mère de Virginie, et Florisca Clara
	Virginie	Clara	F	Pioche	CM3	CM	Fille de Perrine Clara	
	Florisca	Clara	F	Pioche	8	CM	Fille de Perrine Clara	
	Clarisse	Thomasse	F	Pioche	30	Moz	Mère d'Adèle Thomasse	
Famille de Clarisse Thomasse								
	Adèle	Thomasse	F		8	CM	Fille de Clarisse Thomasse	
Famille d'Azémia Sara								
	Azémia	Sara	Sara	F	Natteuse	3CM	Malg	Mère de Jules Sara
	Jules	Sara	M		CM8	mois	CM	Fils d'Azémia Sara
Famille d'Estelle La honteuse								
	Estelle	La honteuse	F	Domestique	2CM	CM	Mère de Lisis La honteuse	
	Lisis	La honteuse	M		3	CM	Fils d'Estelle La honteuse	
Famille de Joséphine La malade								
	Joséphine	La malade	F	Natteuse	4CM	CM	Mère de Célestine La malade	
	Célestine	La malade	F	Pioche	CM6	CM	Fille de Joséphine La malade	
Famille de Toinette Jeannette								
	Toinette	Jeannette	F	Natteuse	22	CM	Soeur de Delphine, et Claude Jeannette	
	Delphine	Jeannette	F	Pioche	20	CM	Soeur de Toinette, et Claude Jeannette	
	Claude	Jeannette	M	Pioche	CM2	CM	Frère de Toinette et Delphine Jeannette	
Famille de Numa Siada								
	Numa	Siada	M	Gratteur	8	CM	Frère de Célestin Siada	
	Célestin	Siada	M	Gratteur	5	CM	Frère de Numa Siada	
Famille de Jean Louis								
	Jean	Louis	M	Charretier	CM8	CM	Frère de Gustave louis	
	Gustave	Louis	M	Charretier	CM6	CM	Frère de Jean Louis	
Famille de Calique La Bête								

Calique	La Bête	F	Pioche	40	Moz	Mère de Paul et Isidore La Bête
Paul	La Bête	M	Pioche	CM6	CM	Fils de Calique La Bête
Isidore	La Bête	M	Pioche	CM2	CM	Fils de Calique La Bête

**SINGLE MALES AND FEMALES**

La Fortune	Matouca	M	Commandeur	36	Moz	
Mameluck	Annibal	M	Maçon et pioche	27	Moz	
Zéphir	Voleur	M	Pioche et sucrier	34	Moz	
Narcisse	Matopé	M	Pioche et sucrier	35	Moz	
Mercuré	Cambarume	M	Pioche et sucrier	40	Moz	
Sans chagrin	Mitulia	M	Pioche et sucrier	29	Moz	
Hector	Mafouta	M	Pioche	29	Moz	
Sans-Souci	Beterave	M	Charretier	28	Moz	
Sancho	Tipo	M	Charretier	27	Moz	
Soliman	Mataque	M	Charretier	27	Moz	
Alexis	Coco	M	Charretier	27	Moz	
Caprice	Bonite	M	Charretier	27	Moz	
Eustache	Cheron	M	Charretier	22	Moz	
Grégoire	Il est mort	M	Pioche	24	Moz	
Jouan	Girault	M	Pioche et charretier	28	Moz	
Vulcain	Mamoisie	M	Cuisinier	30	Moz	
Muscadin	La Roche	M	Palfrenier	39	Moz	
Mardi	Manioquo	M	Pioche	42	Moz	
Lubin	Tazard	M	Pioche	27	Moz	
Caston	Osman	M	Gardien	3CM	Moz	
Charlot	Tipuya	M	Pioche	37	Moz	
Azor	Galiotte	M	Pioche	50	Moz	
Janvier	Sultan	M	Pioche	25	Moz	
Narcisse	Flacq	M	Pioche	45	Moz	
Cupidon	Tamarin	M	Pioche	37	Moz	
Frontin	Peroquet	M	Pioche	28	Moz	
Philippe	Macalibo	M	Pioche	35	Moz	
Myrtil	Moriman	M	Guldivier	33	Moz	
César	Camanga	M	Pioche	36	Moz	
Figaro	Moringué	M	Pioche	40	Moz	
Casimir	Diogène	M	Pioche	30	Moz	
La Rose	Potégua	M	Pioche	28	Moz	
Baptiste	Sudy	M	Pioche	32	Moz	
Jacob	Joseph	M	Cuisinier	29	Moz	
Azor	Bancale	M	Pioche	29	Moz	
Zéphir	Le Vent	M	Chauffeur	29	Moz	
Lindor	Mataye	M	Pioche	36	Moz	
Adonis	Laa	M	Pioche	25	Moz	
L'Eveillé	Ludoïke	M	Pioche	3CM	Moz	
Antoine	Jean Treize	M	Tonnelier	25	Malg	
Louis	Eveillé	M	Menuisier	20	Malg	
Romain	L'Evoula	M	Charpentier	34	Malg	
Lucien	Tamin	M	Maçon	26	Malg	
Théodore	André	M	Sucrier	30	Malg	
Scipion	Mare	M	Charretier	23	Malg	
Jupiter	Lindave	M	Pioche	4CM	Malg	
Pierre	Beterave	M	Gardien de troupeaux	34	Malg	
Augustin	Paya	M	Pioche	23	Malg	
La Fleur	Le Beau	M	Pioche	23	Malg	
Louis	Le petit	M	Pioche	CM8	CM	
Pierre	Dit triste	M	Pioche	CM8	CM	
	Créole					
Adolphe	Clara	M	Pioche	20	CM	
Elie	Laviolette	M	Sucrier	CM7	CM	
Paulin	Legrand	M	Pioche	CM9	CM	
Pierre	Le Coq	M	Gardien de troupeaux	53	CM	
Toussaint	Le saint	M	Sucrier	22	CM	
Henry	Gros	M	Pioche	CM4	CM	
	Lourdeau					
Rosy	Banian	M	Jardinier	47	Ind	
Brutus	Se Vola	M	Chef sucrier	36	Ind	
Gaspard	Antonio	M	Faiseur de Sacs	37	Ind	
Anna	Russy	F	Pioche	29	Moz	
Jeanne	Rosa	F	Pioche	50	Moz	
Rosalie	Zaoo	F	Pioche	30	Moz	
Félicité	Yamboman	F	Blanchisseuse	42	Moz	
Maguitte	La laide	F	Natteuse	25	Malg	
Eliza	Mare	F	Domestique	30	Malg	
Coralie	Fine	F	Couturière	25	Malg	
Louise	Commère	F	Pioche	30	CM	

**THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

The original Société Harel Frères of 1838 was incorporated in June 1960 into a Company and has turned itself into one of the most modern and advanced Sugar Groups on the island. Having acquired, through mergers, sufficient areas for cultivation of sugar, the Group introduced an extensive derocking scheme for its fields, thus preparing themselves for mechanisation and, coupled with a consistently, followed policy of rationalisation, they closed two factories in 1985 and a third one, in 1999 - that of Beau Plan Sugar Estate- to finally create a single modern factory with a production capacity of some 100, 000 tonnes of sugar annually. This factory, which has a 70 MW *bagasse*/coal fired power plant not only provides its own energy requirements, but exports some 105 GWh of *bagasse* based and 220 GWh of coal energy to the national grid every year. The Group pioneered the refining of raw sugar into white and special sugars to become, today, the largest producer of special sugars in Mauritius, with the setting up of one of the island's most technologically sophisticated factories on the island.

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**CREATION OF THE COMPANY UNDER  
THE DENOMINATION OF "HAREL FRERES LIMITED"**

The company "HAREL FRERES LIMITED" bearing File No. C 1179 was incorporated on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1960.

The formation of the "HAREL FRERES LIMITED" is as follows:

By virtue of a Notarial deed made by Notary Public, Me J. Robert Baissac,

1. the said Mr. Prosper Nemours Antoine Harel acting in his own name and as Manager of (i) Compagnie de Mon Songe Limitée; (ii) La Coutance Limitée and (iii) In his own name and as proxy of Mr. Joseph Alphonse Jacques Jean Harel;
2. Mr. Joseph Tristan Mallac, a proprietor residing at Curepipe acting under the name of the company, "Compagnie de Mauricia Limitée";
3. Mr. Nemours Henri Harel, residing at Curepipe, acting in his own name and Director of the company "Bon Espoir Limitée". Observation has been made that Mr. Henri Nemours Harel and Mr. Louis Georges Rouillard do also act as Administrator of the company under the denomination of "Henri Donald Harel & Cie." for a period of 30 years starting from 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1953 and as Administrator of the Société under the denomination of "Robert Sauzier & Cie. for a period of 20 years as from the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1953;
4. Mr. Félix Victor Michel Harel in his own name and as Administrator of the Civil Society under the denomination of "Michel Harel & Cie." for a period of 20 years as from 14<sup>th</sup> May 1951;
5. Mr. André Edouard Piat in his own name and as Administrator of "J. Edouard Piat & Cie." for a period of 10 years as from 01<sup>st</sup> May 1947 and as proxy of Mrs Marie Therese Piat, the lawful wife of Mr. Jean Gabriel Marie José D'Emmerez de Charmoy;
6. Mr. Marie Hyacinthe Raymond Harel in his own name and as Administrator of "Raymond Harel & Cie" for a period of 20 years as from 08<sup>th</sup> December 1950;
7. Mr. Raymond Joseph Alphonse Andre Raffray, in his own name and as Administrator of "Raymond Raffray & Cie. for a period of 10 years as from 20<sup>th</sup> April 1953;
8. Mr. Pierre Ritter Adam, in his own name and as Administrator of "Pierre Harel Adam & Cie. for a period of 20 years as from 15<sup>th</sup> June 1953;

9. Mr. Robert de Labauve d'Arifat and Mr. Louis Joseph France Vallet, at that time Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court, acting in his own name and as representative of Mrs Marie Magdeleine Harel, his lawful wife under the separation of legal community and goods and as Administrator of "Georges Harel & Cie. for a period of 20 years as from 11<sup>th</sup> March 1952;
  10. Mrs Louise Myriam Harel residing at Curepipe, the lawful wife, under the legal separation of goods, of Mr. Louis Gustave Philippe Guimbeau;
  11. Mr. Marie Joseph Antoine Edouard Piat, residing at Vacoas; and
  12. Mr. Marie François Jacques Harel;
- all of them were grouped to form the Company "Harel Frères Limited".

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Furthermore, the Group stands as shareholder of Sucrivoire S.A. for the leasehold and exploitation of some 10, 500 hectares operating on the two sugar factories in Ivory Coast through its offshore company, *Ivoirel Limitée*.

Harel Frères Limited owns a distillery/refinery which produces alcohol and a bottling plant, while representing, at the same time, a large number of imported brands of wines and spirits, positioning itself as a leader in the alcohol production and distribution trade. The Group carries out stone-crushing activities through its subsidiary "*Produits Basaltiques du Nord Limitée*" and other economic activities through its main subsidiaries, such as "*Compagnie Agricole de Belle Vue Limitée*", Beau Plan Sugar Estate Co. Ltd, Belle Vue Milling Co. Ltd, « *Compagnie Usinière de Belle Vue Limitée* », « *Compagnie Industrielle de Solitude Limitée* », Grays and Co. Ltd, and « *Compagnie Thermique de Belle Vue Limitée* ».

Following the marriage of Louise Harel to Tristan Mallac, the Harel and Mallac founded, and traded in, the name of Elias Mallac & Company. Ever since its inception in the 1830s, Harel Mallac has played a significant role both as a supplier of goods and services to the industrial sectors of the island. It has turned, today, into the Harel Mallac Group of Companies, comprising some 20 subsidiaries and 35 associated companies dealing in Import-Export, distribution, automotive products, shipping and aviation, tourism and travel, as well as petroleum, gas products, printing, management services, information technology, telecommunications and office equipment products and services, insurance, Freeport operations and Property Management

## THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Sugar is closely associated with Mauritius. It shaped the history and culture of the island. Covering more than 40% of the surface area of the island, this industry made the island State what it is today. But, the sweetener introduced by the Dutch almost 375 years ago which, once, was the island's only commodity and one of the main export earners, generating millions of rupees, being the basis of the creation and modernization of the island, has turned sour. After the first sugar mill had been set up at Villebague in 1745, Colonial Powers, France and then Great Britain, used the slave trade and the indentured labour system to expand and consolidate the industry. At its peak, there were 259 sugar mills in 1838 in Mauritius. Sugar was traded under different Protocols, the main ones being the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement of 1951 and the Sugar Protocol of 1975. Mauritius made constant efforts to improve and maintain the economic viability of this industry which was the very lifeblood of the economy. The Cotonou Agreement was signed in 2000 for 20 years. For many years, the island benefited from a high price for sugar under the preferential trade arrangements with Europe. At one time, the price for Mauritian sugar was three times higher than the price of sugar on the world market. The revenue was used to diversify the Mauritian economy.

There exist, nowadays, four categories of cane producers in Mauritius: the corporate sector and the very large planters account for some 70% of the production; the medium and large planters represent some 5% of the production; the small planters, whose plot size is less than 4 hectares, account for some 23% of the production, whereas the *métayers* account for some 2% of the production. The small planters and "*métayers*" generally cultivate cane in low-yielding "*difficult areas*," as compared to those of the corporate sector.

The challenge for the Corporate Sector was to sustain efforts to improve yields through mechanization/irrigation, to reduce both production and management costs and to invest in co-products. As regards the small planters and "*métayers*", there was a strong need to improve yield through intensive land preparation, derocking and irrigation.

Of the 72,000 hectares currently under sugar cane cultivation, 22,000 hectares are on free soils and do not require derocking. Some 14,000 hectares belong to the Corporate Sector and very large planters and have already undergone intensive derocking. It is expected that in the following years, the land under sugarcane cultivation will be reduced to 65,000 hectares. This includes 5,000 hectares of land classified as difficult and sensitive since they are found in highly rocky regions or on mountain slopes. Sugar cane in these areas was maintained for environmental and social considerations.

Mauritius has an annual target of 600,000 tonnes of sugar. Under the Sugar Protocol, the island has a quota of 491,030 metric tonnes (of white sugar equivalent) in any 12 month period. The revenue under the Sugar Protocol has provided stable and predictable levels of earnings till October 2009, when the Protocol ended. The multifunctional role of sugar underpinned the stability of the Mauritian society.

In modern times, in order to benefit from economies of scale, individual sugar mills existing throughout more than 200 years have regrouped and modernized. The earned revenue from sugar exports to the European market allowed the population to benefit from a sugar-based economy and which developed into other sectors such as tourism, financial services and textiles, making it one of the strongest economic performers in Africa.

Today, the Sugar Industry invests also massively in the new Energy Sector. The Sugar Industry has moved from a low-skilled commodity approach to a diversified one, with great emphasis on multifunctionality and value-added products that needed, over the years of upgraded and skilled employees, to engage in income-generating activities.

Ten of these factories use *bagasses* only or *bagasses* and coal to produce electricity sold under contractual arrangements to the Central Electricity Board (CEB). The *Compagnie Thermique de Savannah* and the Central Electricity Board have already signed a contract for a power purchase agreement of an 82Mw plant. In 2004, sales amounted to 318 GWh, which is equivalent to around 20% of total energy use. As part of a Government policy to broaden ownership in the Sugar industry, small planters and employees hold around 20% of the shares in milling companies, as well as a stake (10%-20%) in cogeneration plants through the Sugar Investment Trust.

In the coming years, the non-sugar sector will be confronted by several challenges: the production of a larger volume of quality food crops to satisfy the needs of a much higher inflow of tourists and meet the demand generated by a higher per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables of a population increasingly aspiring to a healthier life style; the production of a wider variety of food crops to cater for the growing demand for safer and higher quality food; and reducing the costs of production through increased productivity per unit area of land and per unit of investment.

These challenges will be met essentially through the implementation of an ambitious strategy for the non-sugar sector which would, *inter alia*, provide for the use of high technology production techniques. Biotechnology is believed to be a key element of the forward-looking agricultural diversification strategy of Mauritius.

By 2015, independent power plants located on sugar factory sites are expected to export some 1,700 GWh of electricity. The optimal burning of *bagasse* in power plants, with 83 bar boilers and condensing/pass out turbo alternators, would yield some 600 GWh. In normal circumstances, some 1100 GWh would come from coal.

However, high biomass supply, cane trash and, more particularly, energy cane and fuel cane would reduce the contribution of coal, with complementary benefits for the foreign exchange, the revenue of the Sugar Industry, the mitigation of the enhanced greenhouse effect and the reduction of the volume of coal ash. Furthermore, the use of biomass has to be viewed against the background of the projected high cost of oil.

From what were the old steam sugar mills of the earlier years, practically all sugar factories have, in 2008, been installed with firm power plant operating with state-of-the-art technology, geared towards maximizing energy savings, with new plants to come on stream. Such have been the case for Savannah (82Mw in 2007) and Médine (35 Mw in 2011/2012). Depending on the demand of the CEB, existing plants in FUEL and Deep River Beau Champ are expected to be replaced with more or less similar or slightly expanded dispatch capacity of some 65Mw production.

It is expected that more and more energy and fuel canes will provide cost-effective alternatives to the present use of cane and as a source of renewable biomass for the production of electricity.

Following the example of Brazil, it is now estimated that in Mauritius, some 30 million litres of ethanol could be obtained locally for use as blended gasoline/ethanol. The vision is to use Mauritian molasses to produce ethanol for blending and/or export, imported molasses to produce ethanol for blending and/or export, and the processing of imported hydrous ethanol into anhydrous ethanol for re-export.

A strategy for the blending of ethanol and gasoline, through a staged approach, to reach 25% in 2015, has been formulated. In fact, the first flexi-factory, integrating Mon Trésor and Mon Désert Sugar Factory and power plant, at La Baraque in l'Escalier, known as Omnicane, is producing refined sugar, electricity for the CEB and biofuel, namely ethanol.

This flexi-factory has been hailed as an important milestone in the history of the cane industry which has brought the Sugar Industry to live a new era. As a result of the reform of the European Union sugar regime, especially the 36% cut in the price of sugar and the end of the Sugar Protocol in early October 2009, a new Public Private Partnership has been forged to bring together all stakeholders in the cane industry. The transformation of the cane sector is seen more as the reincarnation of sugarcane, where sugar becomes a co-product of the industry, following the adoption of the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy Plan in 2006, with a view to transforming the sector into a diversified, more cost-efficient and competitive sugarcane cluster geared towards the production of raw, white, industrial and special sugars, electricity from *bagasse* and ethanol from molasses. Omnicane, the sole enterprise in Mauritius equipped with a state-of-the-art diffuser technology, bears a total investment of around Rs. 6.3 billion for the sugar mill, the refinery and the cogeneration power plant. An additional Rs. 3.5 - Rs 4 billion is scheduled to be invested in the coming years for forthcoming projects, namely the BioEthanol, carbon burnout and the wind energy. The new factory at La Baraque is called upon to process 1.2 million tonnes of cane as well as 60,000 tons of cane syrup from the mill at Union St Aubin. Besides, it has been planned to

produce 1,000 tonnes of Plantation White sugar a day for the refinery, of which only 600 tonnes a day will go to the refinery, while the remaining will be processed off season.

Furthermore, the power cogeneration activities are expected to increase their energy efficiency from 55% to 85%. The plant has the single biggest *bagasse*-coal installation in the world.

## Notes

## Abbreviations:

AIR Colony of Mauritius, variously titled annual reports of the Protector of Immigrants/ Immigration Department.  
 AR Annual Reports on the Colony of Mauritius.  
 CAOM Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France.  
 CO Colonial Office Records, The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom.  
 MNA Mauritius National Archives.  
 PP British Parliament Sessional Papers.  
 SPG Archives of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London.  
 RMD Colony of Mauritius, variously titled annual reports of the Registration and Mortgage Department.

<sup>1</sup> Grant 1801, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> On *marmites*, see also Rantoandro 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Jumeer 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Rosunee 2002, p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Allen 2011a.

<sup>6</sup> MNA: LC 4/133. For other documents on Bély, see Mantaux and Adolphe 1972.

<sup>7</sup> MNA: LC 5/47 and LC 5/52, respectively.

<sup>8</sup> MNA: NA 15/1B/70 - 28 décembre 1763.

<sup>9</sup> MNA: NA 15/2D/141 - 20 décembre 1764.

<sup>10</sup> MNA: NA 12/11A/25 - 1 avril 1763.

<sup>11</sup> MNA: NA 18/5A/3 - 2 avril 1770.

<sup>12</sup> MNA: NA 22/21/24 - 24 août 1790; NA 22/21/27 - 28 août 1790; NA 22/21/43 - 14 décembre 1790. For a fuller discussion of Marie's life, see Allen 2011b.

<sup>13</sup> MNA: NA 18/4E/134 - 8 janvier 1770.

<sup>14</sup> MNA: NA 33/2/10 - 28 janvier 1786.

<sup>15</sup> On gender considerations in free coloured social and economic life, see Allen 1989, 1991, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> MNA: KK 13 - Recensement des populations blanches et libres, Plaines Wilhems, 1825.

<sup>17</sup> Allen 1999, pp. 93-94.

<sup>18</sup> Allen 1999, pp. 96-97.

<sup>19</sup> Based on figures reported in D'Unienville 1885-86, vol. 1, pp. 52-228, as corrected.

<sup>20</sup> Allen 1999, p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> CO 167/226 - Capt. J.A. Lloyd to John Irving, 4 April 1840.

<sup>22</sup> *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Take a Census of the Island of Mauritius and Its Dependencies, November 1851*, para. 17.

<sup>23</sup> MNA: HA 108 - Th. Cordouan à Monsieur A. Hugnin, Commissaire Civil & de Police (Plaines Wilhems), 29 avril 1839.

<sup>24</sup> MNA: HA 108 - William S. Saunders à A. Hugnin, 15 Mai 1839.

<sup>25</sup> MNA: HA 108 - George Dick to A. Hugnin, 10 May 1839; A. Hugnin à George Dick, 15 Mai 1839.

<sup>26</sup> CO 167/226 - Capt. J.A. Lloyd to John Irving, 4 April 1840.

<sup>27</sup> CO 167/226 - Capt. J.A. Lloyd to John Irving, 4 April 1840.

<sup>28</sup> CO 167/267 - Report of J. Davidson, Stipendiary Magistrate (Grand Port), 20 December 1845, enclosed in Despatch No. 5, Sir William Gomm to Lord Stanley, 7 January 1846.

<sup>29</sup> CO 167/284 - Report of the Committee appointed by the Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> April on the subject of the Emancipated Population in the Colony (4 June 1847), para. 4, enclosed in Despatch No. 153, Sir William Gomm to Earl Grey, 12 July 1847.

<sup>30</sup> SPG/J.9/pp. 229-30 - Rev. A. Denny to the Secretary, Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Foreign Parts, 30 July 1845.

<sup>31</sup> MNA: NA 85/5 - 26 novembre 1839, and NA 85/9 - 11 novembre 1841, respectively.

<sup>32</sup> Rouillard 1979, pp. 230, 389.

<sup>33</sup> Allen 1999, pp. 114-19.

<sup>34</sup> CO 167/272 - Report of Peter Aug<sup>s</sup> Heyliger, Stipendiary Magistrate (South Pamplemousses), 24 December 1845, enclosed in Despatch No. 174, Sir William Gomm to W.E. Gladstone, 7 September 1846.

<sup>35</sup> MNA: HA 103 - Report on the State of the Population of African origin, emancipated from Slavery, in the District of Moka, by D<sup>is</sup> Beaugendre, Civil Commissary, 19 December 1845.

<sup>36</sup> MNA: HA 111 - Report on the State of the African Population, emancipated from Slavery, in the District of Savanne, by F. Giblot Ducray, Civil Commissioner, 26 November 1845.

<sup>37</sup> CO 167/267 - Report of J. Davidson, Stipendiary Magistrate (Grand Port), 20 December 1845, enclosed in Despatch No. 5, Sir William Gomm to Lord Stanley, 7 January 1846.

<sup>38</sup> MNA: NA 76/10/109 - 10 décembre 1836, and NA 76/10/114 - 14 décembre 1836, respectively.

<sup>39</sup> MNA: NA 84/3/PM311 - 16 octobre 1838.

<sup>40</sup> See Hall 1978; Trouillot 1988, pp. 84ff; Sheridan 1993. On slave provision grounds, see also Berlin and Morgan 1991; Mullin 1992, especially pp. 126-58, 300-07; Barickman 1994; Tomich 2004, especially pp. 152-91.

<sup>41</sup> Billiard 1822, p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> CO 167/272 - Report of James Hervey, Stipendiary Magistrate (Black River), 20 November 1845, enclosed in Despatch No. 174, Sir William Gomm to W.E. Gladstone, 7 September 1846.

<sup>43</sup> CO 167/226 - Capt. J.A. Lloyd to John Irving, 4 April 1840. For comparable developments in the Caribbean, see Trouillot 1988, p. 78.

<sup>44</sup> MNA: RA 440, no. 235 - R.H. Thomas to James Smith, 10 October 1831.

<sup>45</sup> Allen 1999, p. 116.

<sup>46</sup> Allen 1999, p. 119.

- <sup>47</sup> Turner 1988, p. 28.
- <sup>48</sup> Berlin and Morgan 1991, p. 14.
- <sup>49</sup> MNA: NA 83/2/120 – 25 mai 1841.
- <sup>50</sup> MNA NA 83/3/18 – 29 janvier 1842.
- <sup>51</sup> MNA: NA 83/3/44 – 6 avril 1842; NA 83/3/46 – 6 avril 1842.
- <sup>52</sup> *Report of the Committee appointed to conduct and complete the census of the colony [of Mauritius] (1846)*. PP 1849 XXXVII [280-II], pp. 197-98, 211.
- <sup>53</sup> MNA: B1A/C27 – *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Take a Census of the Island of Mauritius and Its Dependencies, November 1851*, p. 8.
- <sup>54</sup> Allen 1999, pp. 130-34. See also Allen 2008.
- <sup>55</sup> MNA: B1A/C28 – *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to take a Census of the Island of Mauritius and Its Dependencies, April 1861*, para. 2.
- <sup>56</sup> MNA: NA 84/8/PM1280 – 19 juin 1841.
- <sup>57</sup> MNA: NA 83/4/103 – 12 août 1843 (two acts).
- <sup>58</sup> MNA: NA 102/99 – 30 juin & 22 juillet 1875.
- <sup>59</sup> RMD 1881, para. 6; RMD 1883, para. 10, respectively.
- <sup>60</sup> AR 1895, p. 17. PP 1897 LIX [C. 8279-7].
- <sup>61</sup> AR 1897, para. 63. PP 1899 LXII [C. 9046-18]; AR 1895, Ann. 22 & 23; AIR 1896, Ann. 21.
- <sup>62</sup> *Census of Mauritius & Its Dependencies Taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1891*, para. 38.
- <sup>63</sup> MNA: NA 83/8/906 – 19 août 1850.
- <sup>64</sup> MNA: NA 83/19/2753 – 21 avril 1859.
- <sup>65</sup> *Report of the Royal Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Treatment of Immigrants in Mauritius*, para. 2947. PP 1875 XXXV.
- <sup>66</sup> On this and related developments, see Allen 2001.
- <sup>67</sup> Allen 1999, p. 149.
- <sup>68</sup> Allen 1999, p. 140.
- <sup>69</sup> MNA: NA 119/7 – 9 janvier 1877.
- <sup>70</sup> MNA: NA 102/174 – 22 septembre 1884.
- <sup>71</sup> MNA: NA 67/25 – 24 juillet 1835.
- <sup>72</sup> MNA: NA 83/83/21/2991 – 9 février 1860; NA 83/22/3235 – 24 décembre 1860.
- <sup>73</sup> MNA: NA 102/97 – 26 février 1875.
- <sup>74</sup> Allen 1999, p. 6.
- <sup>75</sup> Allen 1999, p. 150.
- <sup>76</sup> Allen 1999, p. 169.
- <sup>77</sup> Gleadow 1906, pp. 12-13, 18, 22, 25, 38.
- <sup>78</sup> Royal Commission of 1909, p. 11.
- <sup>79</sup> *Indians in a Plural Society – A Report on Mauritius. Colonial Research Studies. P. 145*
- <sup>80</sup> *Revue Agricole*. Vol 56, 1964, p. 25.
- <sup>81</sup> P. 2. Committee of Inquiry Sugar Industry, 1972-1973.
- <sup>82</sup> Trashing of old cane leaves.
- <sup>83</sup> Richard Allen, 'The Slender, Sweet Thread: Sugar, Capital and Dependency in Mauritius, 1860-1936' p.188; Burton Benedict, *Indians in a Plural Society: A Report on Mauritius* (London, 1961; W. K. Marshall, 'Métayage in the Sugar Industry of the British Windward Islands, 1838-1865' *Jamaican Historical Review*, 5 (May 1965), pp. 28-30/63-65.
- <sup>84</sup> Marshall, 'Métayage in the Sugar Industry of the British Windward Islands', 1838-1865' pp. 28-30/63-65/28-65.
- <sup>85</sup> Roland Lamusse, 'Labour Policy in the Plantation Island' *World Development*, Volume 8 (1980), p.1041
- <sup>86</sup> Daniel North-Coombes, 'Struggles in the Cane Fields: Small Cane Growers, Millers, and the Colonial State in Mauritius, 1921-1937' in M. Daniel North-Coombes, ed. W. M Freund, *Studies in the Colonial Economy of Mauritius* (Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, Moka, 2000), p.144.
- <sup>87</sup> MNA/SD 18, No.38, Miscellaneous, Despatch from Ag. Governor J. Power to Lord John Russell, Mauritius, 22nd June 1840.
- <sup>88</sup> MNA/SD 18, No.5, Miscellaneous, Governor Lionel Smith to Lord John Russell, Mauritius, 8th August 1840, para. 4.
- <sup>89</sup> Kissoonsing Hazareesingh, *History of Indians in Mauritius* (Revised Edition, 1977), p. 122; MNA/SD 29/No.82/Governor Gomm to Earl Grey, "Immigration", Mauritius, 13th April 1847, pp. 298-304.
- <sup>90</sup> MNA/SD 30, Report of the Committee appointed by the Council on the 20th April 1847 for the purpose of drawing up and submitting to the Secretary of State the opinion of the Council with reference to the several suggestions contained in his Lordships Despatch of the 31st December, 1846, No. 73, on the Subject of the Emancipated Population in the Colony, para 5, Enclosed in a dispatch from Governor Sir William Gomm to Earl Grey, Mauritius, 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1847.
- <sup>91</sup> Letter of Napoleon Savy to General Gomm, 4<sup>th</sup> May 1847, reproduced in *Le Cernéen*, Friday, 21 May 1847, p. 2.
- <sup>92</sup> Necrologie of Napoleon Savy, *Le Mauricien*, 21st July 1859; For additional information on Napoleon Savy See K. Hazareesingh, *History of Indians*, p. 38.
- <sup>93</sup> Analysis of Satyendra Peerthum.
- <sup>94</sup> MNA/SA 40/No. 73, Lord Earl Gleneg to Governor W. Gomm, Downing Street, London, 31st December 1846, p.809-811.; MNA/RB 190/169/Letter from George F. Dick to the Chief Acting Commissary of Police, 9<sup>th</sup> March 1847.
- <sup>95</sup> MNA/RA 927/No. 4899, Letter of George M.Elliott, Stipendiary Magistrate of Flacq, to the Colonial Secretary, Stipendiary Magistrate's Office, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1847.
- <sup>96</sup> MNA/SD 29/No. 82/Governor Gomm to Earl Grey, "Immigration", Mauritius, 13th April 1847, pp. 298-304.
- <sup>97</sup> Analysis of Satyendra Peerthum.
- <sup>98</sup> Hazareesingh, *History of Indians in Mauritius*, p. 122.
- <sup>99</sup> Teelock, *Mauritian History: From its Beginnings to Modern Times*, p. 305.
- <sup>100</sup> Benedict, *Indians in a Plural Society: A Report on Mauritius*, p. 25.
- <sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.
- <sup>102</sup> Allen, 'The Slender, Sweet Thread: Sugar, Capital and Dependency in Mauritius, 1860-1936' p. 199.

<sup>103</sup> Sooryakanti Nirsimloo-Gayan, "A Brief Analysis of the Strategy of Small Planters in Mauritius in Indians Overseas": The Mauritian. Experience Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, Moka, Mauritius, 1984), p. 361.

<sup>104</sup> D. North-Coombes, "Indentured Labour and Capitalist Transformation: The Genesis and Evolution of the Natal Sugar Industry with some References to the Case of Mauritius" p. 52.

<sup>105</sup> Alfred North Coombes, A History of Sugar Production, pp. 32-33.

<sup>106</sup> Author's Analysis

<sup>107</sup> Benedict, Indians in a Plural Society, pp. 24-25.

<sup>108</sup> See Colony of Mauritius: Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbance which occurred in the North of Mauritius in 1943 (London, 1944), pp. 26-27.

<sup>109</sup> Alfred North-Coombes, A History of Sugar Production, p. 33.

CHAPTER THREE  
**RODRIGUES ISLAND**

## INTRODUCTION

Rodrigues Island is situated 590 kilometres to the North-East of Mauritius between latitude 19°40' and 19°46' South and between longitude 63°20' and 63°30' East. It is of volcanic origin and has a central ridge which runs from East to West.

According to the 2011 Census, Rodrigues has a total population of 40,800. Apart from Port Mathurin, the other main settlements are Mont Lubin, in the centre, La Ferme in the West and Baie- aux- Huîtres in the North.

Rodrigues has an area of 108 km<sup>2</sup> exclusive of the islets. The length and breadth of the island is about 18.4 kilometres and 7.7 kilometres respectively. Mont Limon in the centre is the highest peak (393 metres above sea level). Ninety per cent of its area comprises State lands including, *Pas Géométriques*, the remaining ten per cent is land under private ownership.

Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act came into force on 11 October 2002 and the Assembly is now responsible for the State Lands and for the grant of leases thereon. The private lands are governed mainly by the Civil Code.

## EARLY GRANTS

Land grants were made across the island in various areas for agricultural purposes. Small portions of land were conceded in Port Mathurin, mostly for residential purposes.

According to a statement dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 1845 all grants of land made in Rodrigues since year 1812, preserved at the National Archives, a total of 1,978 *Arpents* were released to 8 beneficiaries.

These lands, originally granted in large areas, are now owned for the most part, in grouped ownership by the heirs and successors. In certain cases, sales have been effected but these transactions have been generally witnessed through deeds, under private signatures and mostly registered in Rodrigues.

The State lands comprise unconceded lands including, *Pas Géométriques* and re-acquired lands.

The State lands are administered by the Commission of Agriculture and Lands of the Regional Assembly. With the increasing population and the limited area of lands under private ownership, there is strong pressure for the release of State lands for various purposes, viz residential, commercial and tourism.

Although there is some concentration of the population in a few localities, namely Port Mathurin, Baie aux Huîtres, La Ferme, Mon Lubin, Port Sud-Est, Rodriguans have always favoured settling away from neighbours. Consequently, houses are scattered and are away from basic infrastructures. This is understandable as Rodrigues has had, from the beginning, an agricultural-based economy, and Rodriguans favour having their gardens and animals not far from their residential house.

As mentioned earlier, the "*Civil Code Mauricien*", which contains 2 283 articles regulates the people's rights to private life, Name, Domicile, Marriage, Divorce, Adoption, property, succession, division in kind, donation, will and testament, contracts, sale, lease, society, Mortgage and Inscriptions, Prescription, etc.

**AGREEMENT OF THE CAPITULATION OF 3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 1810**

Article 8 of the Deed of Capitulation, signed by the French and English Commanders on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1810, preserved the religion, laws, rites and customs of the people of Isle de France (Mauritius).

The change in the Government did not change anything in the civil rights of the people of Mauritius.

This Article was the basis for maintaining the *Code Napoléon* in Mauritius. This gave rise to several disputes which started from the very first year of British rule/administration. Governor Farquhar pretended that the "*Traite des noirs*" should be maintained, as a preserved custom protected by Article 8 of the Deed of Capitulation.

Dealings in land must follow the provisions laid down in the *Civil Code* and the specific legislation. The absence of resident Notaries, Attorneys and Land Surveyors to guide landowners in their dealings has affected the quality of land transactions, by introducing an element of uncertainty in many transactions. Furthermore, the registration and transcription of deeds of sale, lease agreements, deeds under private signatures were not done under the supervision of specialized qualified officers. The recent establishment of a Registration Office should facilitate the work of professionals in land matters and, thereby, improve the quality of any land transaction.

Land use in Rodrigues has always been a social and economic issue. The absence of a resident Land Surveyor on the island, coupled with a lack of control and proper supervision of forest lands and 'cattle walks' by Forest Rangers, has encouraged scattered settlement and unauthorized occupation of Government lands. It was only around 1940 that a Government Land Surveyor was posted to Rodrigues as an Officer of the Public Works Department.

The absence of up-to-date maps was an impediment to the preparation of projects and proper land administration. Government initiated a joint project with the '*Institut Géographique National*' for the editing of an up-to-date map based on an aerial photography. Under this project, 72 map sheets covering the whole island, on a scale of 1:2,500, were first published in 1986. Beforehand, a set of five sheets covering the whole island on a scale of 1:10,000 was published. This edition was further revised in 2004 by Ministry of Housing and Lands. A project to provide a landownership plan attached to a *cadastre* was a long-term objective which has not been implemented up to now.

Louis Ange Perrine, Commissioner responsible for lands in the Regional Assembly, deposed before the Commission on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2011. He highlighted the numerous problems affecting land, both State lands and privately-owned lands. He also mentioned the absence of a legal framework to control the type of development and define the various zones earmarked for development. Such a tool would enable the authorities in Rodrigues to ensure that development is carried out in an orderly way.

Regarding squatters, the Commission has embarked on an exercise to regularize 4,800 cases relating to persons who have already put up a house on State land. He proposes also to look into all the laws relating to land, and to submit a consolidated version.

The Truth and Justice Commission is conscious of the many problems which landowners face in Mauritius to ascertain their rights and felt that it should examine the situation in Rodrigues as well. In this context, the Commission held hearing sessions in Rodrigues in March and September 2010.

Claims received from all the interested parties were heard over a period of one week. Detailed reports, in respect of each case, are submitted separately.

It is worthy of note that in Rodrigues, there has been no complaint with regard to boundaries. The main problem relates to heirs and succession and the establishment of ownership rights based on privately-drawn deeds or prescriptions.

The Commission feels that the prevailing situation regarding privately-owned lands will deteriorate, unless something urgent is done. In view of the current situation in Rodrigues, it strongly recommends the implementation of a '*cadastral project*' involving privately-owned lands, especially adapted to Rodrigues. This will imply changing from a deed registration system to title registration, after the creation of an Adjudication Tribunal to determine the rights of anyone to each plot of land and issue a guaranteed title deed.

It is recommended that Ministry of Housing and Lands, which has the expertise, should send a team to assess the implementation of this recommendation and make such recommendation as to ensure that Rodrigues is not left out of any land reform administration.

The Commission is aware that the Mauritius Legislative Assembly has voted a new legislation, "The Cadastral Survey Act", which makes provision for the general administration, maintenance and updating of a digital cadastral data base (DCDB) for the island of Mauritius and other islands forming part of Mauritius. The Act is a follow up of the implementation of the LAVIMS project.

Under Section 21(2) (f), provision has been made for the publication of regulations with regard to Rodrigues.

The Commission has noted that, by Statute, Government Land Surveyors are the only persons authorized to survey lands intended to be prescribed. The Commission feels that a Government Land Surveyor may find himself mixed up in conflicts related to land disputes. Given that a prescription may be effected only on conceded land (that is, land under private use and occupation) and that State lands cannot be prescribed, it is felt that this policy should be reviewed in-as-much-as all Land surveyors will have to abide to standard of survey which will be published under the new legislation which will be applicable throughout the whole of the Republic. Furthermore, the appointment of a Land Surveyors Board to look over the professional conduct of Land Surveyors will ensure that the provisions of the Law are adhered to by all Surveyors in private practice.

## **RODRIGUES, THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**

The Island of Rodrigues faces serious environmental challenges that require urgent attention of all Rodriguans, and in particular the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Indeed, out of a total land area of some 10,800 hectares, only 1,000 hectares are in private hands, implying that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is completely responsible for the management of the lands, as land resources are the major assets of Rodrigues. This is a huge responsibility that the RRA cannot downplay, even though the State lands are leased to private individuals for a specific number of years, depending on the purpose of the development projects which are approved by the State Lands Committee. Thus, the strategy to be proposed rests heavily on environmental mainstreaming in policy and in key economic sectors. The adoption of a sustainable land resources, solid waste, and coastal zone-management system is viewed as critical in order to transform successfully, in the long-run, the current situation of land degradation, soil loss, and impoverished ecosystems into diverse cultural landscapes of outstanding aesthetic, economic, and ecological value.

In taking into account this general background, it must be underlined that land resources in Rodrigues are affected whenever one or more of the five components, that is Agricultural and grazing lands, Forestry & Forest Biodiversity, Management of Caves, Botanical Gardens and Built-up

area (settlements etc.) are under threat. Indeed, poor land management has resulted in low economic returns from agriculture. This is due to high soil erosion which is itself a result of bad agricultural and grazing practices; past deforestation; poor building practices (especially the dispersed nature of settlements); steep topography; and high-intensity rainfall (rainfall intensities of up to 150mm per hour is not uncommon). Besides reducing the agricultural potential of the land, soil erosion has affected rivers and dams as well as the lagoons and coral reefs. Soil erosion has also been due to poor building practices.

One of the main problems in infrastructure development and provision lies in the haphazard settlement pattern. Indeed, the very striking feature about the human settlement pattern in Rodrigues is its dispersed nature. Rodriguans have tended to build their houses in the agricultural land leased to them, so as to make it easier to look after their crops and cattle which roam freely. Consequently, houses are scattered and isolated, which typify the Rodriguan way of living. Another reason for same is the absence of an appropriate housing policy of declared zones, delays in approving housing leases and building permits and lack of enforcement. Due to the hilly terrain and scattered houses, the Authorities find it difficult to provide services like water supply, telephone, transport, and so forth, to all isolated settlements. Some people have to walk long distances to get to schools, hospitals and other facilities.

Talking about development and the land use in Rodrigues, the former Chief Commissioner, Johnson Roussety highlighted that:

*“Over the years the physical development of the island has evolved towards dispersal rather than a clustered form of development. The topography of the island coupled with the system of leased land have encouraged this scattered pattern, made even more pronounced by the apparent ease with which unauthorised occupation of land has occurred.”*

Land use is determined by individual needs. There is an absence of a centrally-coordinated programme of development for the greater good of the island.

The newly-appointed Land Commissioner for Rodrigues, Louis Pierre Perrine, went even further in a statement to the TJC: the situation in Rodrigues is “*chaotic*” with people occupying land anywhere, and land prescription is a new lucrative business for some people. “*There more than 200 land prescriptions only on the Bégué land in Grand Baie*”, said the Land Commissioner.

A three-day preparatory mission of the Truth and Justice Commission, led by the Chairman, Professor Alex Boraine and the Vice- Chairperson, Dr. Vijaya Teelock, was in Rodrigues between Friday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2010. The aim of this mission was to assess at first hand the existing situation on the island as to the possibility of holding hearings in Rodrigues. In this respect, it was decided to meet with officials, NGOs and individuals who may be able to assist the Commission in its work and to assess infrastructure and logistics available.

The Truth and Justice Commission held formal hearing sessions in Malabar, Rodrigues, in March and September 2010. Several follow-up sessions and meetings were held during the following months by Mr. Jacques David, the Truth and Justice Land Commissioner. He met all applicants, collected further information and undertook searches at the Archives and Registration Unit of Rodrigues, met the then Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues, Johnson Roussety, his Deputy Commissioner, Gaëtan Jabeemissar, as well as the other Commissioners of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and discussed in length several issues pertaining to land, health, education and other socio-economic affecting Rodrigues.



## LAND PRESCRIPTION IN RODRIGUES

Invited by the Truth and Justice Commission to explain and shed light on the whole issue of land prescription in Rodrigues, the Government Chief Land Surveyor talked at length on the subject which can be summarized thus:

To better understand the provisions of the Law governing land prescription in Rodrigues, the date the prescription was made has to be put into its proper historical context. There are no less than 4 pieces of legislation which deal with prescription on the island which have been passed at different period of time: the "Rodrigues Resident Commissioner's Power Act (1<sup>st</sup> September 1883)" (*with Government Surveyor acting*); the "Affidavit of Prescription Act (22<sup>nd</sup> December 1958)" (*Surveyor*); the "Rodrigues Administrative and Judicial Provision Act (11<sup>th</sup> July 1974)" (*Surveyor, as per Sections 6(i) & 6(ii) - when survey could be undertaken by Government and Private Land Surveyor*); and the "Registration and Transcription of Deeds and Inscription of Mortgages, Privileges and Charges (Rodrigues) (22<sup>nd</sup> December 1997 - when only Government Surveyors could perform as per paragraph 12(4). It is also to be noted that as per Section 18 of the Land Surveyors Ordinance No. 33 of 1867, Government Surveyors were prohibited from surveying private land, except with the permission of the Governor.

The procedure for land prescription in Rodrigues is similar to that adopted in Mauritius, with the exception that in Rodrigues, the person willing to prescribe has to make an application first to the Island Chief Executive (formerly Island Secretary) for the survey of the said land.

Upon receipt of the application, the Island Chief Executive transmits it to the Principal Land Surveyor of the Cadastral Office for appropriate action. The Principal Surveyor may delegate one of his Surveyors or decide to perform the survey himself. It is pertinent to highlight that only Government Land Surveyors are authorised to carry out surveys for prescription purposes in Rodrigues. This is in compliance with Section 12(4) of the Registration and Transcription of Deeds and inscription of Mortgages, Privileges and Charges (Rodrigues) (1977) which reads as follows:

*"For the purposes of Section 4(1)(b) of the Prescription Affidavits Act, the Memorandum of Survey shall, at the request of the authorised officer, be drawn up by a Government Surveyor subject to the payment, by the person applying for the transcription of the affidavit of prescription of such fees, as may be prescribed by the Minister to whom the responsibility for the subject of land is assigned."*

And, also in compliance with Section 14(3) of the Rodrigues Resident Commissioner's Power Act 1883 which reads as follows:

*"The Commissioner shall register all applications deposited with him and shall cause a survey of the portion of land claimed by prescription to be carried out free of charge by a Government Surveyor in post in Rodrigues."*

However, it must be noted also that both Section 6(1) and 6(2) of the Rodrigues (Administrative and Judicial Provisions) Act 1974 provide for the following:

Section 6(i)

*"Any person may apply in writing to the Island Secretary (formerly known as Resident Commissioner) for the survey of portion of land in Rodrigues of which he claims to be the owner, otherwise than by prescription, or of which he is the prospective purchaser". (This section may be interpreted as being a*

*restriction for the application for survey to the Island Secretary for purposes other than prescription).*

Subsection 6(ii) states:

*“The Island Secretary shall cause the survey applied for under this section to be carried out by a Government Surveyor on prepayment of a fee of 10 rupees by the applicant.”*

The above-mentioned legislations have given rise to some confusion as to whether:

***The Island Secretary (or the Island Chief Executive for that matter) can entertain requests for surveys of land in Rodrigues for prescription purposes;***

***Whether a Government Surveyor may survey land in Rodrigues for prescription purposes.***

In 2002, the then Island Secretary had sought legal advice on the matter from State Law Office through its parent Ministry, the Ministry of Local Government. The reply from State Law Office was that:

***The Island Chief Executive may authorise Government Surveyor to survey private land for prescription;***

***As Authorised Officer under the Registration and Transcription of Deeds and Inscription of Mortgages, Privileges and Charges (Rodrigues), the Island Chief Executive should accept application for transcription of affidavit or prescription in respect of Memorandum of survey prepared by Government Land Surveyor.***

The Surveyor designated to carry out the Survey prepares a Notice under Section 9(3) of the Land Surveyors Act for publication in the *Government Gazette* and two local newspapers in Rodrigues and proceeds in accordance with the provisions of the Land Surveyor's Act.

Once the survey of the land is completed, he draws up the Memorandum of survey in three originals giving the **precise description** of the land surveyed and the **exact extent** of the land mentioning the **nature of the occupation** and **value of the land**. The plan of the land surveyed is also incorporated in the Memorandum of survey. He then **records** therein **any observation**, if any, and then **signs it along with all the parties**. The Memorandum of survey is then registered at the Registration Unit in Rodrigues. The Registration Unit gives the Memo a registration number called LS No. and retains one copy. The Surveyor hands over one of the two copies to his client and keeps the third one for his personal records.

The job of the Surveyor ends here.

The interested party either continues with the procedure, as laid down in the Act, or retains the services of an Attorney or Notary to continue with the procedure.

## **APPLICATION**

The Notary/Attorney then deposits the Memorandum of survey, together with the Affidavit of prescription, at the Registration Unit in Rodrigues and applies for the transcription of the said affidavit.

Notice of the application is then made once in the *Government Gazette* and on three consecutive days in two local daily newspapers in Rodrigues. The format of the Notice is specified in the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act (Section 4).

The authorised officer enters the particulars of the affidavit in a special register known as the Register of Affidavits of Prescription (Section 5).

### **OBJECTION**

Any person claiming to be the owner or part-owner or having any interest in the whole, or part, of the immovable property may within three months of the last publication of the Notice object to the transcription of the Affidavit, setting out the grounds of his objection. The Conservator of Mortgages will then record the objection. The applicant or any interested party may within 3 months as from the date of the objection apply to a Judge in Chambers for an order setting aside the objection.

### **TRANSCRIPTION OF AFFIDAVIT**

Where no objection is received by the authorised officer within the three months prescribed period, or where the objection has been withdrawn or certified copy of a judgment setting aside the objection has been produced, the authorised officer causes the affidavit of prescription to be transcribed upon payment of the transcription fee.

Once transcribed, the applicant gets a presumption landownership title, but not conclusive rights.

## **DEPOSITION BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

All the applicants - Private and Government Land Surveyors, Attorneys and Notaries, Chief Planner - invited to give their views before the Truth and Justice Commission (*See attachments*) readily admitted that the Law has been respected in all circumstances. Yet, it must be observed that the information contained in the Notice for the Transcription of an Affidavit as per the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act are not precise enough to allow the real owner to know whether the subject-site under prescription is his property or forms part of his property, and would thus allow him to lodge the appropriate objection for transcription of the affidavit. For example, in certain Notices, the description given is so vague. In so many Notices, mention is often made "*On the first side by a public road*", "*on the second side by an unknown proprietor*", "*on the third side, proprietor is unknown*", etc. The law is clear as to the "*precise description*", "*the exact location*", "*the precise description of the land surveyed and the exact extent of the land mentioning the nature of the occupation and value of the land.*" *It is very difficult to believe that the person who has been occupying a plot of land since 30 years does not know the name of his neighbours.*

There have been cases where Notices have been published in a Chinese daily.

It has also been observed that the very person who prescribes a plot of land does not have to swear the affidavit. Only the two witnesses take the whole responsibility. He just gives instructions to swear the affidavit but does not participate in the procedure.

It may happen that a person accused of having prescribed a plot of land might later say that he was not aware that this land had been prescribed in his name.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is thus suggested that the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be amended to include information on the searches, made by the Surveyor, relating to the last known owner of the land being prescribed.

The legal status of land either in Mauritius or Rodrigues falls under three categories:

### **State Land;**

### **Domaine Public inclusive of Pas Géométriques; and**

### **Private Land**

All State Land is imprescriptible under the Law as per Section 35 of the State Land Act.

The *Domaine Public* is a category of land which belongs to the public at large by nature of its use: roads, beaches, sea, rivers and which are imprescriptible and inalienable.

The Private land is lands under private ownership which at a certain point in time either during the French occupation or the British occupation has been conceded/ granted to someone.

There is thus no such thing as ownerless land.

Any professional being a Land Surveyor, Attorney or Notary should be able to trace back the owner of any land in Mauritius or Rodrigues.

It must be made mandatory for any Notice of Affidavit of Prescription to be transcribed to contain the name of the last known owner.

At the same time, any Notice under the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be published with its appropriate location plan that will help in the identification of the land by the former owner.

No Notice of Affidavit of Prescription should be transcribed, if one of the adjoining owners is unknown. Thus, no prejudice could be caused if every endeavour is made to find its owner, or at least, its occupier.

Furthermore, any potential applicant for any prescription should make a formal declaration to the nearest police station to this effect and submit all particulars of his two witnesses, including names, residential addresses and identity card numbers. And an investigation should be made as to establish the credibility of any witness.

LAND CASES  
SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION

**CASE NAME: LALANDE**

Reference TJC/L/R/ 0004 - TJC/L/R/0050

The Lalande land issue has attracted a lot of publicity in Rodrigues due to the fact that the Land Fraud Squad has been, for quite a time, investigating the case.

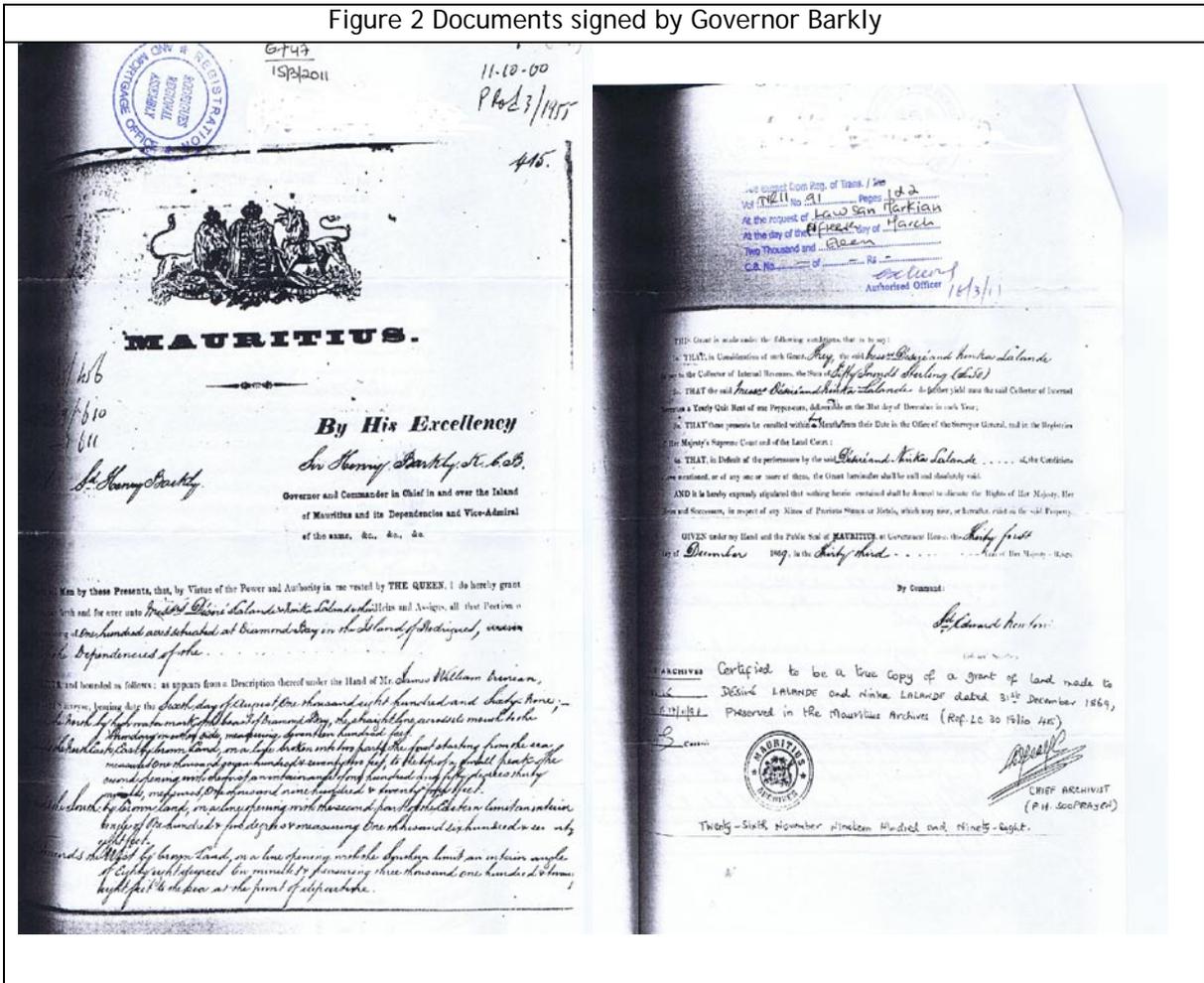
The gist of it is that the Lalande family claims to be the owners of a land to the extent of some 100 *Arpents* at Baie Diamant and that Government is releasing lease permits on their land and has even erected some buildings thereon.

The case has been brought to Court, but there has been no follow-up. The only document they have received from the Court of Mauritius, avers the Lalande family, tells the heirs to admeasure the site and mark waste land as theirs, and to build small houses on the said land.

After searches made by the Truth and Justice Commission, several questions raised doubts.

Sir Henry Barkly, Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the Island of Mauritius granted on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1869 a 100 *Arpents* plot of land at Baie Diamant to Jean Désiré Pierre and Ninka Lalande "and their heirs and Assigns".

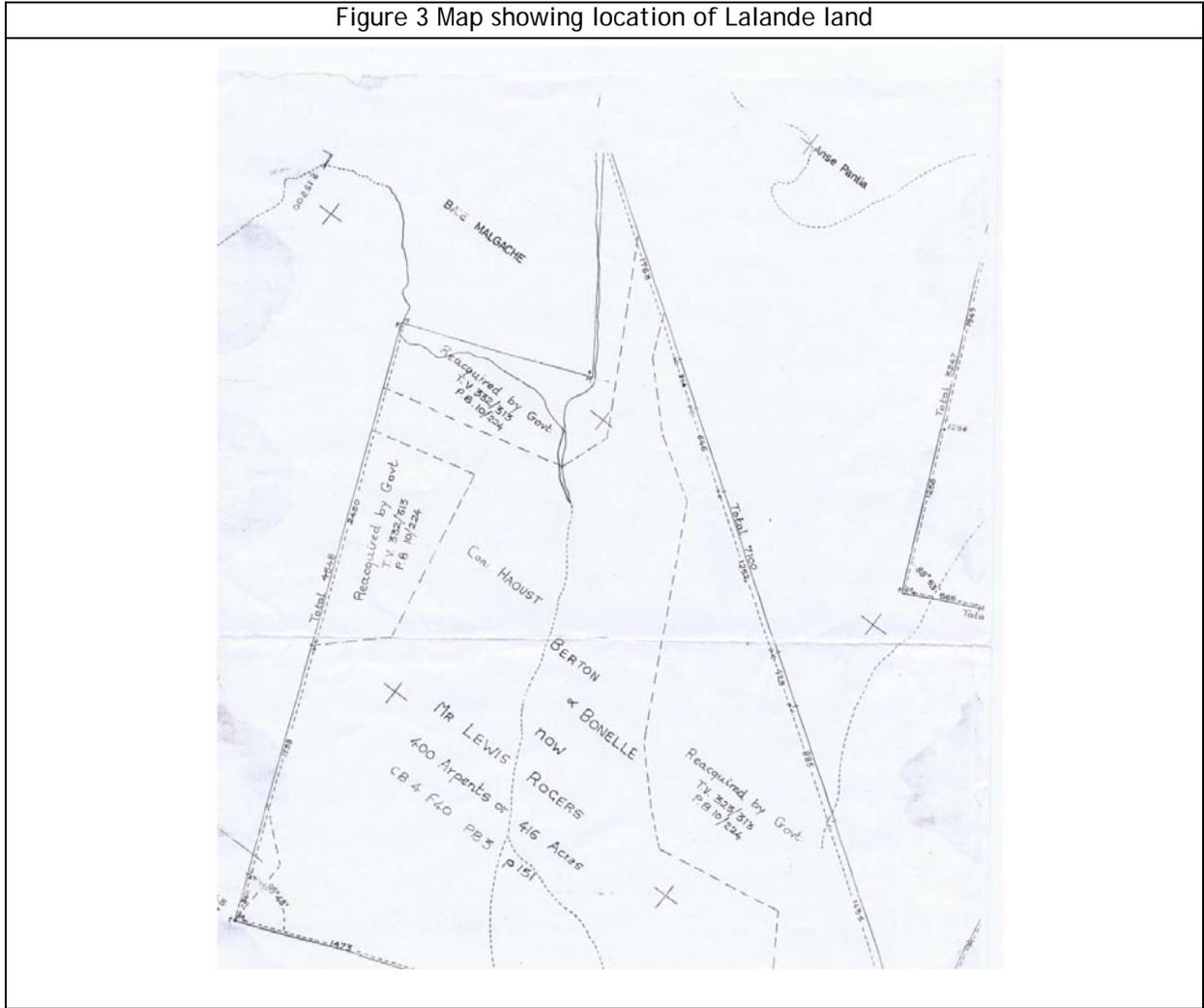
Figure 2 Documents signed by Governor Barkly



In the "Case hypothécaire" of Pierre Désiré Lalande (TV. 127 No. 31), it is revealed that the land was sold to Thomas H. Wilson for the sum of 204 pounds sterling on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1878. The plot of land was ultimately sold to different persons until it passed on to Government in 1920.

<p><b>On 31.12.1869:</b></p> <p><b>Concession to Jean Pierre Lalande, registered in Book No. 12 Folio 415 and 416, 100 A</b></p>
<p><b>On 28.01.1878</b></p> <p><b>Sold to Thomas H. Wilson, TV No.127 No. 31</b></p> <p><b>100 A</b></p>
<p><b>On 05.05.1882</b></p> <p><b>Sold to Louis Aristide Sauzier, TV No 146No. 171</b></p> <p><b>100 A at Baie Diamond</b></p>
<p><b>On 04.10.1883</b></p> <p><b>Sold to James Martin, TV 157 No. 202</b></p> <p><b>100 A</b></p>
<p><b>On 16.10.1902</b></p> <p><b>Sold Louis Rowell Rogers, TV 249 No. 78 100 A, which, on 13.01.1919 was given in exchange to the Government of Mauritius</b></p> <p><b>(TV 332 No. 313) 247. 5 A</b></p>

Figure 3 Map showing location of Lalande land



In 2006, after having obtained full power of attorney from members of the Lalande family, one Carl Larose, through Notary Arveen Ramphul, registered on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005 a “Procuration” (Register C/4 No. 513), giving to Larose full power to administer and sell the property. A portion of an extent of 33, 768 square metres was thus excised from the 422, 090 square metres that constituted the Domain of Baie Diamond.

*“Au moyen des présents et à compter de ce jour, l’acquéreur (Carl Larose) pourra jouir, faire et disposer dudit terrain comme bon lui semblera et comme de chose lui appartenant en toute propriété”, stipulates the deed drawn and registered by the Notary.*

On 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009, the said Carl Larose sold under private signature the same portion of land to Maurice You Seen, from Reunion Island, who also possesses a Mauritian National Identity Card.

Figure 4 Copy of Transcription by Carl Larose of land of Lalande

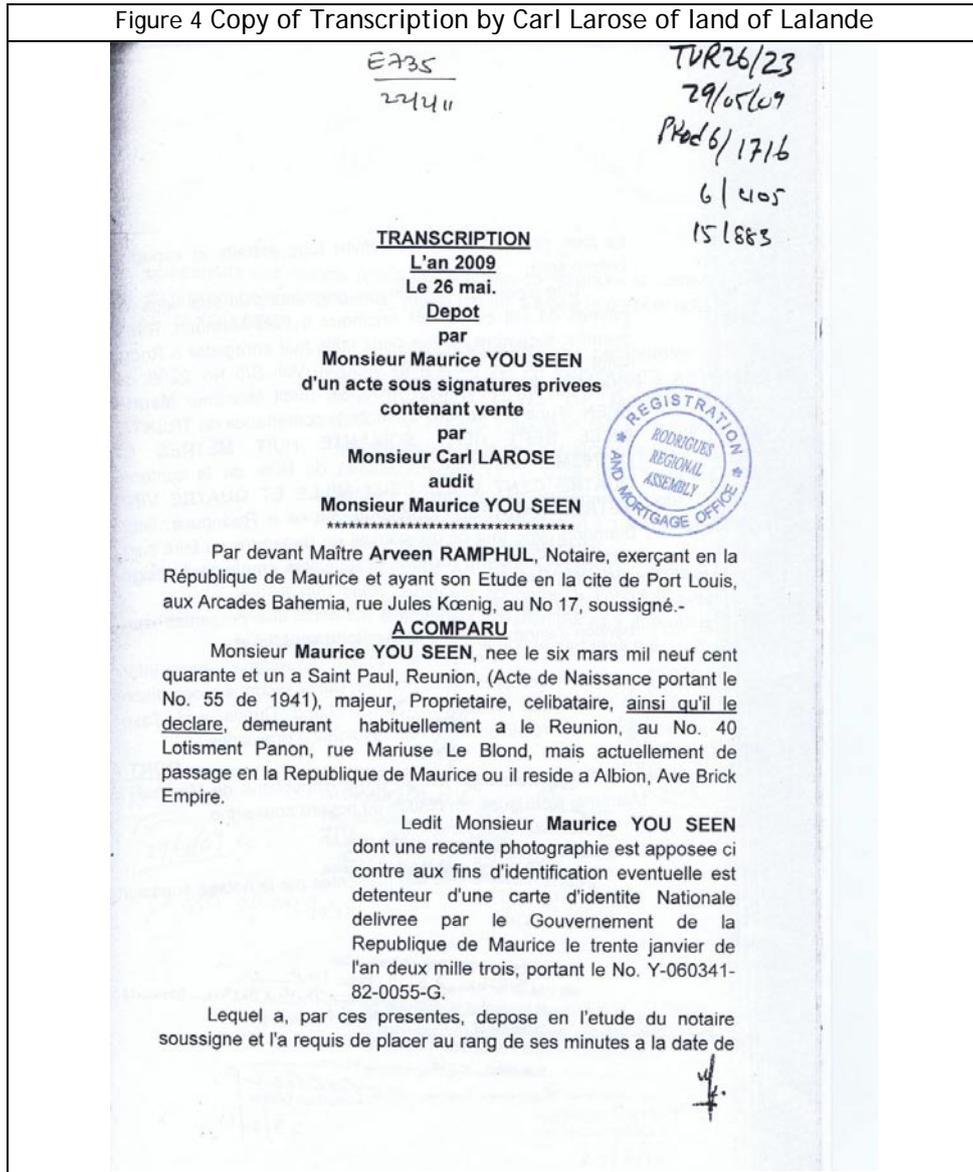
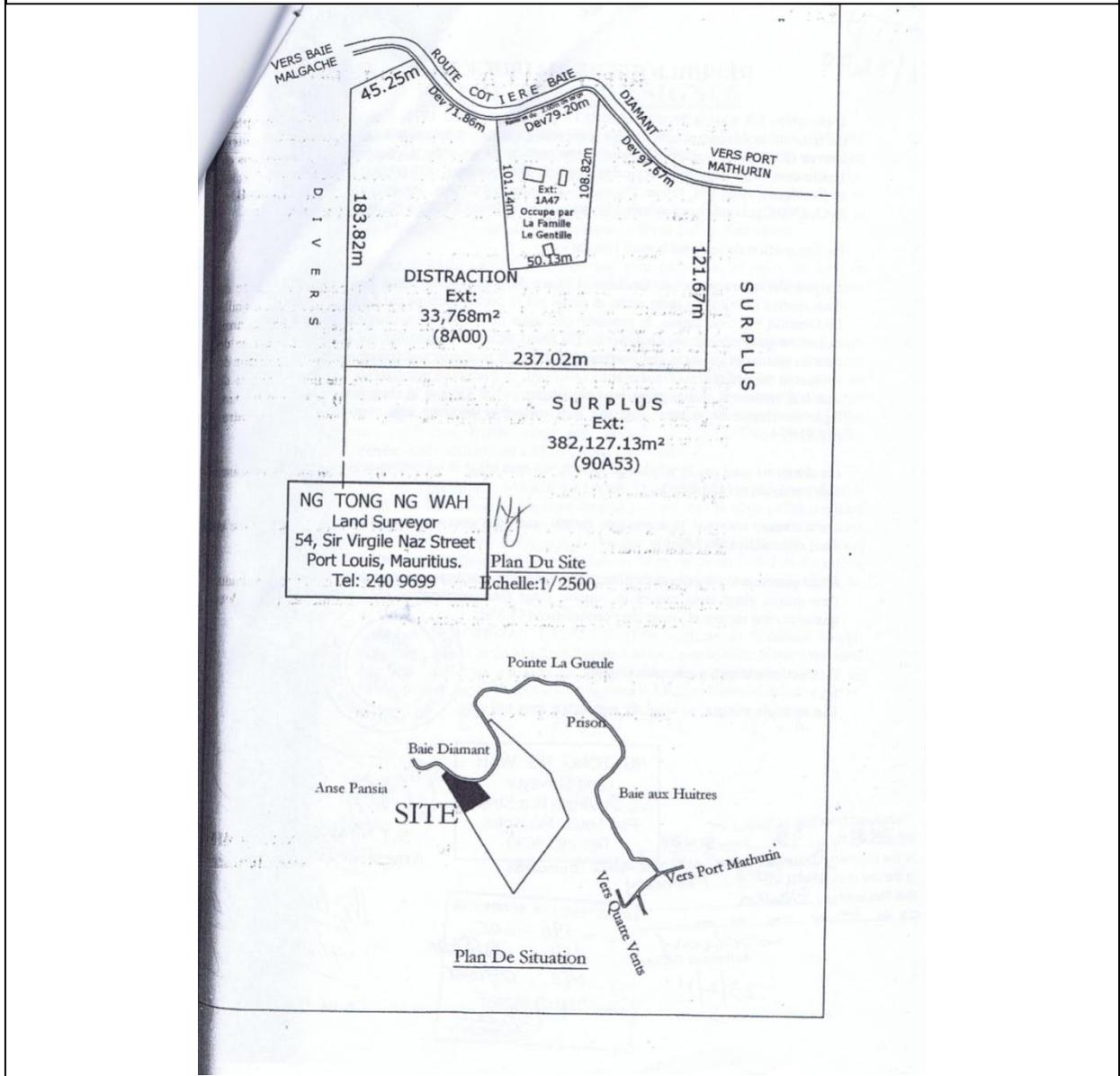


Figure 5 Plan showing distraction of Lalande land



**CASE NAME: JEAN LOUIS**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/230*

According to Mrs Marie Gladys Giguët, born Jean Louis, the house of her parents was destroyed by a cyclone in 1959. She avers that, on the advice of a Forest Ranger, her mother constructed another house on another plot of land situated at Nouvelle Découverte.

In December 1993, the new house was pulled down by labourers, leaving the personal belongings of the family in the open air. Her family took refuge in the nearby Social Centre.

An analysis of the case reveals that the litigation between the owners (Agnes Malherbes and others) had been referred to the Supreme Court (serial no 965/91) and the Judge in Chambers ordered Mrs Jean Louis to quit, leave and vacate the site by 31<sup>st</sup> March 1993 and in default, a writ *Habere Facias Possessionem* would be issued.

This is a sad case in which the Commission cannot intervene, the more so as Mrs Jean Louis did not put an appearance in Court, nor was she represented when the matter was brought before the Judge.

It should be observed that Mrs Jean Louis was residing in Rodrigues. It is presumed she could not put up a defence, unless she travelled to Mauritius and retained the services of lawyers at her own expense.

The Commission has not been appraised of the title deed of Agnès Malherbes and others.

**CASE NAME: JOSEPH EMMANUEL ALLAS**

*Reference: TJC/L/R (Allas)*

Louis Kurven Allas avers that he had purchased from his father, Joseph Emmanuel Allas, the bare ownership of a plot of land being lot 21 of extent of 264.11 m<sup>2</sup> situated along Ricard Street, Port Mathurin, as evidenced by title deed transcribed in TV 784 No. 42 dated 22 April 1959 for the price of Rs. 5,000. At the time of the sale, two buildings stood on the above-mentioned land.

However, on 13 July 1967, Emmanuel Allas sold the same property to Chung Voon, his tenant, for the price of Rs. 20,000, as evidenced by TVR 6 No. 122. The same land has been sold on two occasions.

In the light of the above, Emmanuel Allas has deprived his son, Louis Kurven Allas, of the property sold to the latter some 8 years before.

The heirs are advised to seek redress in Court.

**CASE NAME: JOYCE ROUSSETY**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0011 {Roussety}*

Joyce Roussety acquired a plot of land at Camp Du Roi in her own name. Her nephew Laval Purcy Roussety accused her of robbing the land from the heirs. He requested that she returns the property to the heirs by signing a document, so that the land could be shared equally. Joyce Roussety accepted.

She avers that after the document was signed, another document was drafted by the nephew's Attorney at Law, Iqbal Dauhoo, at the request of the heirs. Joyce Roussety refused to sign it because while reading the Document, she said, and especially at the paragraph entitled '*Jouissance*' of the Document she did not find it clear and she refused to sign. She added that Iqbal Dauhoo even came to see her at her home, but she still remained adamant on her position.

However what puzzles her more is that she did not hear about her nephew anymore. According to hearsay, Laval Purcy Roussety has gone to Mauritius with the document when she refused to sign. Joyce Roussety is wondering whether Laval Purcy Roussety has forged her signature since, before they tried to make her sign that Document she signed other Documents.

The Commission inquired into the case and wanted to know if there has been a change of proprietorship at the Registration either in Rodrigues or Mauritius.

Searches carried out in Rodrigues revealed that even if Joyce Roussety still holds a title of ownership, Laval Purcy Roussety and others hold 75% "*indivi part*" of the same plot of land of 892m<sup>2</sup> situate at Camp du Roi together with a house with veranda.

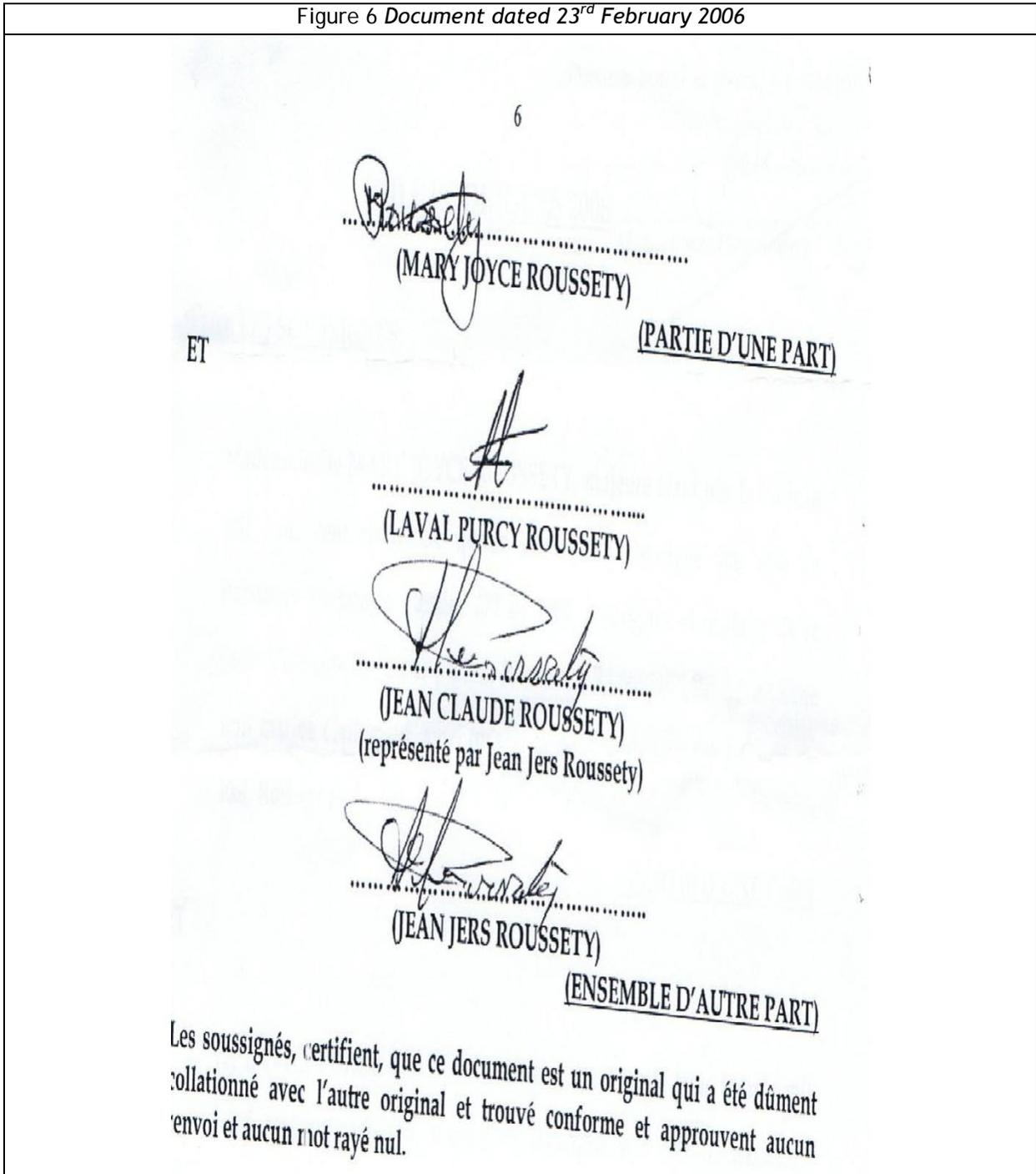
Searches in Rodrigues have revealed the existence of a "*sous seing prive*" drawn up on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006 and duly registered on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2006. The document purports to witness an agreement between Mrs J. Roussety and Mrs Laval Purcy Roussety and others whereby she relinquishes 75% of the undivided rights in a portion of land of an extent of 892m<sup>2</sup> together with the building standing thereon situated at Camp du Roi for the price of Rs 50,000. It is explained in the deed that she became the owner of the land for having purchased same from Jacques Desiré Grandcourt on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1982 (TVR8 No. 119 *bis*).

The Commission has also been made aware of a Survey report of Ng Tong Ng Wah, Land surveyor, dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 2006 (LS 1 No. 240) in respect of a portion of land at Camp du Roi which has been divided into four lots. Lot 1 of an extent of 471 m<sup>2</sup> "*devant être attribué à Mme Marie Joyce Roussety* ».

The Commission cannot reconcile the contents of the survey report drawn up two days after the agreement mentioned in the "*sous-seing privé*."

This is a typical case of illegal land transaction concerning deed under private signatures.

Figure 6 Document dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006



**CASE NAME: GABRIEL REGIS JEAN /MOISE ROSE**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0001 - TJC/L/R/0009*

Lucrèce Rose has been occupying the land at Montagne Bois Noir (app. 1 ½ A) left as legacy by practicing agriculture. However, as a result of financial problems, she moved to Mauritius with her three children. She thus handed over the land to her cousin, Jean Claude Edouard, residing at Graviers. As from 1987, the latter worked on the land for a year. Then, Marguerite Marie Rose, daughter of Brunel Rose took over the land. However, on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009, one Michael Casimir prescribed the land and said that he had occupied the land for 30 years. Michael Casimir then sold the land to one Regis Jean.

It has been brought to the attention of the Commission that, in 2010, after a survey undertaken by Land Surveyor Jean Aldo Ong Tone, the land was prescribed in the name of Blaize Edouard, Michael Casimir, Simeon Edouard, Madeleine Allas and Jean d'Arc Albert, all claiming to be the heirs of Marcelin Edouard. After the prescription, they all agreed to sell the same plot of land to Mr. and Mrs. Dominique Desire Jean, son of Gabriel Regis Desire Jean. The latter bought the land on behalf of his son, who resides in Mauritius.

Having acquired the land of 5883m<sup>2</sup>, Gabriel Regis Désiré Jean avers that he went regularly to check the acquisition of his son. However, on the 7th April 2010, while arriving on the plot of land, at the said location, he found a man and a woman cleaning the land; puzzled, he enquired about their presence on the land and who they were. The man did not identify himself, but only said that he was the owner of the land and forbade Regis Gabriel Desire JEAN from coming on the land.

The Commission has been made aware that the said person was one Jean Noel Rose and his wife. Moise Henri Rose deposed before the Commission on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010. He claims his Grandfather bought the land from Thomas Edouard since 1980.

The case was reported to either Rivière Coco Police Station or Songes, on whose advice, one applicant stated that this case must be dealt with over there since the accused lived at Songes.

The request made by both parties is for the Commission to clarify the situation as who is the rightful owner.

This is a case where two parties claim ownership of the same land. The Commission is unable to assess the genuineness of either deed.

The Commission is of opinion that this is a dispute over land ownership which can only be settled by the appropriate Court.

**CASE NAME: MARIE LOURDES BERNADETTE PERRINNE, *born Prosper***

*Reference : TJC/L/R/0006 (i)*

Bernadette Perrine, born Prosper, is the daughter of Julien Prosper (Fils). The land situated at Bassin Gallard/Saint Gabriel was the property of Bernadette Perrine's grand-father Julien Prosper (Père). She avers that applicant's father bought her mother's share and the share of his brother. They asked the Cadastral Office to parcel the land and establish boundaries so that each heir could get his part. The Land Surveyor Aldo Ong Tone was sent to do the land survey. After the Cadastral Office has done the work and a paper showing the boundaries was issued, they were requested to contact a notary for the drawing up of a deed.

Bernadette Perrine has a sister who is mentally handicapped and owing to this fact Attorney at Law Roopun, has been paid to draw the affidavit of Julien Prosper (Père) so that she could at last complete all the formalities. Attorney at Law P. Roopun has been requesting a medical certificate from the family, but the handicapped sister is not willing to go to hospital.

This case has been pending for more than 4 years.

The Commission has been asked to seek the best way the affidavit could be done in order to put an end to the quest of the family. The Commission has advised the family to initiate action for the husband to be the sub-guardian duly appointed by a Judge; a course of action which could help to serve the interest of one and all.

**CASE NAME: ASNEL JOLICOEUR**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0015*

Asnel Jolicoeur claims that he has been occupying a land of an extent of 4221m<sup>2</sup> situated at Trois Soleil since 1977. The land belonged to Charles Jolicoeur.

In 2008, Joseph Maxy Larose told Jolicoeur that the said land is his, and that he bought it from one Ariste Pierre Louis who is believed to have bought it from Charles Jolicoeur. According to Asnel Jolicoeur, the claimant, this operation could not have been possible, since Charles Jolicoeur died in 1907 and Ariste Pierre Louis was born in 1912.

However, despite this fact, Asnel Jolicoeur avers that Joseph Maxy Larose never stopped threatening him and even went to the extent by saying that he would get rid of Jolicoeur if he does not vacate the land. The case has been referred to the police more than once. Jolicoeur even made two '*mises en demeure*' for which Rs 2,500 was paid for each, to Attorney at Law Iqbal Dauhoo to be served upon Maxy Larose. To no avail.

The Commission has sent letters to all parties concerned in order to be appraised if the point raised by Jolicoeur concerning the 1907 date of death of Charles Jolicoeur and the date of birth of Ariste Pierre Louis are correct and of the outcome in the Police enquiry, if any, in this case.

In the absence of any reply, the Commission is of opinion that the issue is one which should be brought before the appropriate Court for a determination.

**CASE NAME: AGATHE MARIE MAYRICIE, born JOLICOEUR**

**Reference: TJC/L/R/0012**

Agathe Marie Mayricie is one of the 7 heirs of Sylvestre Jolicoeur who benefited of a land totalising 6 *Arpents* situated at Coromandel/Tambes. The land was subdivided between Sylvestre Jolicoeur and his brother-in-law, Silvain Jolicoeur. Sylvestre Jolicoeur got 2 *Arpents* and Silvain St Pierre got 4 *Arpents*.

In 2007, the 2 *Arpents* were shared amongst the 7 heirs of Sylvestre Jolicoeur. At the same time, the heirs of Silvain St Pierre proceeded to the land survey & land sharing for these two operations in the Jolicoeur and St Pierre family. The services of Notary Roopun were hired for the formalities. For the St. Pierre family everything went on smoothly, contrary to the case of the Jolicoeur family.

Up to now, the deed witnessing the ownership rights of the family (the Jolicoeur) has not yet been drawn up. The deponent avers that the family has not heard from Notary Roopun, since the year 2009.

Her request to the Commission is to assist her to obtain her deed.

The Commission has obtained a certified copy of the deed transcribed in TV Rod 4 No. 116 and same is being forwarded to the lady.

The family should now seek the services of a Notary to finalise this land transaction.

**CASE NAME: GELSIE AUGUSTIN, born FELIX**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0016*

**Case No.1**

Suzanne Augustin (born) Felix, mother of Gelsie Augustin avers she owns a piece of land of 5, 223m<sup>2</sup> situated at Montagne Bois Noir. Some years back, she was about to sell the land, but owing to a problem arising with his brother, Reddy Augustin concerning the price at which it should be sold, Suzanne Augustin could not sell the land. Since that day, the family has not been able to get back her Documents concerning her plot of land. Her title deed, which is of dire importance, cannot be traced out. When Reddy Augustin is asked if Documents are with him, he says that it is with the Attorney at Law, Pazhany Rangasamy, whom they had retained to do the needful. Pazhany Rangasamy, on the other hand, never answers when the family tries to get him on the phone.

**Case No.2**

While deponing before the TJC in Rodrigues, the same Suzanne Augustin avers that she also possesses a piece of land in Port-Mathurin. The land belonged to Suzanne Bernadette Felix, her grand-mother. The land is not occupied, by a businessman of Port Mathurin, commonly known as Ah- Koh Chong, seems to think that the land is his.

**CASE NAME: JOSEPH REDDY AUGUSTIN**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0018*

After effecting research work Joseph Reddy Augustin claims that the Felix family had obtained a concession in Rodrigues. In fact, he found that the two Felix brothers: Telescourt & Lauricourt Jean Felix has been granted land in Port-Mathurin. The applicant, wishing to gather more information on the matter, carried out researches in the archives at Port-Louis and in the Cadastral Office, Rodrigues but he could not retrace any document linked to the said grants.

In fact, after searches undertaken by the Truth and Justice Commission, it has been found that in case No. 1, Suzanne Augustin still holds a plot as per TV Rod 4No. 507, whereas in cases Nos. 2 & 3, the lands held by the Telescourt and the Lauricourt were sold as evidenced by TV Rod 5 No. 445 and TV Rod 5 No. 446 respectively.

**CASE NAME: WILSY BATISTE**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0019*

Wilsy Batiste avers that a plot of land situated at Montagne Bois Noir has been shared by brothers, namely Luc Batiste, Christian Batiste and Henri Batiste.

The land belonged to Late Henri Batiste, the grandfather who was granted 5 Acres of land and from which he sold 3 Acres. The heirs of Henri Batiste have also done a land survey of the land once.

According to him, there are people developing the land and undertaking beekeeping thereon.

The Commission is of opinion that the lawful owners of the land should seek redress from the appropriate court.

**CASE NAME: CARL LAROSE***Reference: TJC/L/R/0010***Case No.1**

Carl Larose stated to the Commission that he is one of the descendants of Lisa Larose who was of European origin.

In the 1960s, Lisa Larose, a "Documentor", came to Rodrigues. At this time there was a typhoid epidemic and Lisa was forced to stay in quarantine on Ile aux Crabes. During her stay on the island, she met with Maragon, the owner, who later sold the island to Séraphine Pison, who, in turn, sold the property to Lisa Larose. The heirs have a deed of sales which proves this operation.

In present days, the site is occupied by the Government. There is livestock grazing on the island. Since 14/15 years, the Larose family is trying to get back their property. They have written to the administration at Port Mathurin, who referred their case to the Ministry of Housing & Lands in Mauritius, but there has been no follow-up.

**Case No.2**

In his submission to the Commission, the same applicant puts forward that a portion of land of an extent of 225A at *Jardin Mamzelle* belonged to M. Issop Mackoojee who sold it to Ariste Pierre-Louis for the price of Rs 27,000. Ariste Pierre-Louis then sold it to late Vilmont Larose who was the father of Carl Larose. The Agricultural Division and later on in 1990 the Cadastral Unit has given residential sites thereon.

The land is actually occupied by people other than the heirs. There is a football ground on the land as well as a nursery at Oyster Bay. The land still belongs to the Larose family.

The Commission has written to obtain the actual views of both the Rodrigues Administration and the Ministry of Housing & Lands relating to both cases.

**CASE NAME: MARIE ANDEELA GASPARD***Reference: TJC/L/R/0021*

The gist of the matter is as follows: Marie Andeela Gaspard the deponent before the hearing session avers that her 8 brothers and sisters did purchase a plot of land to the extent of un quart *d'un demi quart* at a place called Orange from one Daniel Prudence as is evidenced from a private deed *sous seing privé* drawn on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1980. The deed was registered and transcribed in Rodrigues on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1998. Although, in the deed the purchaser (*acquéreur*) said that he well knew the land and its location, the later never knew anything yet about the land he was acquiring. While Louis Franklin Gaspard is getting old, the heirs are anxious to know the actual location before it is too late. Their apprehension can be rightly understood.

The Commission has undertaken searches in this case and as per TV Rod 7 No. 197, the land still exist and has only to be surveyed in presence of the parties.

**CASE NAME: NOEL ANGE ISMAEL, *born* GUILLAUME**

**MARIE BLAISE LEGENTIL, *born* ISMAEL**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0017*

Ange Ismael and Marie Blaise Legentil are sisters in law and they live in the same place: Cascade Jean Louis (near Health Center). They are both widows. Noel Ange Ismael lost her husband in June 2005 and Marie Blaise Legentil in 1989. The land on which they have been living since they married and living up to now is a land leased from government. Since their husband died, both widows say that they are not able to continue to pay the land (approximately Rs 34 as yearly payment) because they say it is established law that payment cannot be done in reference to the name of a late person. They have tried to change the land lease agreement to their names but there has been no outcome. Actually they are living on the said land.

This case does not reveal any dispossession. Nevertheless, the Commission has referred the request to the Land Commission of the Rodrigues Administration for whatever action is called for.

**CASE NAME: MARIE THERESE LISETTE *born* HYPOLITE**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0005*

Marie Thérèse Lisette is a widow. The small plot of land on which she actually lives at Petit Gabriel is a land leased from the Government.

Marie Thérèse Lisette feels that after the many years living on the land, and owing to the many years of civil service accomplished by her husband, the late Israel Lisette, who passed away on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1997, she could be granted a permanent residence permit and stop paying the land lease. She has been living in the same house and land for the last 57 years.

The Commission is of opinion that Marie Thérèse Lisette should, in this circumstance, regularize her occupation over the land by contacting the Cadastral Unit at Port Mathurin. Thereafter she may, if she is unable to pay the rental, make an application for aid to the Social Security.

Hereto, there is no dispossession of land. Nonetheless, her request has been transmitted to the Rodrigues Regional Authority for whatever action is called for.

**CASE NAME: MARIE LOURDES BERNADETTE PERRINE, *born* PROSPER & Ors.**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0006 (iii)*

The Prospers have land property scattered all over the island of Rodrigues and the Commission has been requested to look into one particular case, that of Solitude.

Following a request to make a survey of the land at the above-mentioned place, the heirs have paid the sum of Rs.14,500 to the Cadastral Office. In 2001, when the land survey process was about to be undertaken, the heirs were informed that there is a problem since one Mr. Roussety, currently known as *Mandoo*, brother of Alex Roussety, claims to be the owner of the same land.

The Archival records submitted to the Commission say that the land is the property of the Prospers. The Commission has not heard Mr. Roussety to know his version of the matter.

Up to now, the land has not yet been surveyed in spite of the payment effected years ago.

Only a Court of law can determine the share of each party and adjudicate upon who is the real owner. In the meantime, it is the opinion of the Commission that the Survey fees paid be refunded unless the dispute on ownership has been settled in favour of the Prospers.

The Commission has sent letter to the RRA to know if an enquiry has been made to clear this issue and what has been the outcome.

**CASE NAME: MARIE LOURDES BERNADETTE PERRINE, *born* PROSPER**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0006 (ii)*

A plot of land belonging to the Prospers situated at the Morcellement Petit Gabriel/Pompée is registered as being their property. The land is of an extent of 8 *Arpents*. It is said that only 4A remain since the other 4 *Arpents* have been sold. The heirs have never been notified about this fact: who bought it, who sold it and for what price?

The Commission is not aware whether facilities for searches exist in Rodrigues. It strongly recommends that the Cadastral Unit at Port Mathurin be authorized to help Bernadette Perrine in her request.

**CASE NAME: SIMON RABOUDE**

*Reference: TJC/L/R/0003*

Simon Raboude claims to be owner of a land at Fond la Digue but is unable to produce any documents. There seems to be a forlorn request for research. That Mr. Simon Raboude claims ancestry from a slave has been abundantly proved as well as to the genuineness of his roots in Rodrigues. The averment that his said ancestor had in Rodrigues as well as in other parts of the island of Mauritius is not however substantiated by any documentary evidence.

The Commission has gone through all documents at the Cadastral Office and has discovered that there is no land registered in the name of Simon Raboude. Instead there is a plot of land registered in the name of Simon Roddy Raboude as per TV Rod 15 No. 169. It has to be established that Simon Raboude and Simon Roddy Raboude is the one and same person.

**CASE NAME: MERCURE**

Yvonnila Emilien *born* Mercure bearer of IDN: 1/1/0/3/3/3/8/1/0/0/8/8/B residing at Avenue Soobiah, Réduit claims that she is one of the heirs of Georges Mercure. The latter was during his lifetime residing at St François where he owned 10 *Arpents* of land.

In support of her claim, she has produced a document registered in Rodrigues under ROD 4 No. 112 which witnesses an exchange of land between Government and Georges Mercure as follows:

To Government: about 5 acres situated at Grande Montagne (described by Duff on 20.10.1888) to Georges Mercure about 5 acres situated at Saint François, Baie de l'Est.

She has also submitted a copy of Rep 112/492 in which there is an entry which refers to another portion of land of an extent of 5 *Arpents* 00 acquired from Government on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1894 and which deed is transcribed in TV 212 No. 500.

She avers that "aliens" are occupying the land without any right or authority of the heirs. She paid an Attorney for the drawing up of an affidavit establishing the heirs but up to now she has not been able to lay hands on the document.

The Commission is referring the matter to the Commission of Agriculture, etc, in Rodrigues and is advising Mrs Emilien to complete her affidavit so that she may initiate legal action against the occupiers. She may beforehand apply for the land to be surveyed.

## THE BÉGUÉ CASE

*TJC/ L/0028/ BEGUE RONALD & OTHERS*  
*CROSS REFERENCE: TJC/L/R/0041/BEGUE PAUL GISELAIN*

The applicants, Ronald Bégué and others are heirs of late Gabriel Bégué, a French colon who settled in Rodrigues as far back as 1825. On 27<sup>th</sup> August 1829, he was awarded a “*grants*” of 324 *Arpents* of land at Grand Baie and another of 50 *Arpents* at Baie -aux -Huitres. Gabriel Bégué died in 1832 leaving 6 children. Around the year 1857 and after many years, some heirs left Rodrigues.

There has never been any partition of land among the heirs. In 1916, following the visit of a Sworn Land surveyor Parson, some of the heirs still in Rodrigues could be traced out but many others could not be identified as they had left the island. No partition of the deceased estate could take place.

While some of the heirs had migrated, others, who decided to remain in Rodrigues, chose to settle on part of the said “*concession*” with the tacit agreement of the other “*ayants droit*”. This practice has continued for over 5 generations of the Bégué family. No wonder after a time that other people alien to the Bégué family started to squat on plots of the land left unoccupied and claimed ownership in terms of the Prescription Act. Until today not less than 60 parcels of the said “*concession*” have been prescribed much to the dismay of the existing heirs. In many cases once the land is prescribed it is sold to another party.

Prescription of land has become a real scourge in Rodrigues by unscrupulous people who can hire the services of legal consultants namely surveyors, attorneys and public notaries. The practice seems to have intensified following the vesting of the powers of the Minister of Housing and Lands to the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues following the enactment of the Rodrigues General Assembly act 2006.

Conscious that they were being dispossessed of their ancestral lands, an association known as “*The descendants of Gabriel Bégué Welfare and Heritage Association*” was formed in January 2010. The aim of the association is to establish a genealogy of all heirs and successors of the deceased Gabriel Bégué and to promote the history of the family since the arrival of Gabriel Bégué in Rodrigues.

The family requests to the Commission to help them restore their “*patrimoine*” (heritage); to reset confidence in the heirs of their ancestors Gabriel Bégué and in the public in general; and to stop all the mal practices made by illegal occupiers especially with the help of the legal advisors

The petitioners have prayed the Truth and Justice Commission to intervene before the Chief Island Commissioners to stop the practice of allowing people who have no claim to the Bégué succession in making false declarations to the effect that they have elected domicile on part of the land and to carry an inquiry into the circumstances of a number of prescriptions that have been registered following false testimony of witnesses.

Ronald Bégué mentioned a case where a person alien to the Bégué family has successfully prescribed also need to be screened. Government has itself acquired a portion of land out the said “*concession*” under the Land Acquisition Act.

The practice of prescriptions in Rodrigues is a matter of grave concern as people who have no means to oppose such procedures taking place are helpless. A high level inquiry should be carried ultimately to throw light on all cases of abuse taking place.

A long list of prescriptions over the Bégué land has been established:

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 1995										
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation	3.8
1	Frederic Begue	Not done	5382.00	1416.32	S.Sakir 8.08.1995	District Magistrate Rodrigues 8.11.1995	Grand Baie	Registered in Mauritius 27.11.1995 -Vol.3253 Registered in Rodrigues 18.02.1998TVR 3 No.175	Sale 1 - Frederic Begue sold 5382m to his son Jean Clair Begue <b>11.03.1999</b> D. Roopun TVR10/55 Sale 2. Jean Clair Begue sold 1952m to Louis Felix Begue <b>29.6.2001</b> Private sign. TVR12/39 Sale 3. Jean Clair Begue sold 1952m to Louis Felix Begue <b>19.8.2001</b> D. Roopun TVR23/3 Sale 4. Louis Felix Begue sold 1952m to Mrs Mirella Jean Louis <b>20.04.2007</b> - D.Roopun TVR 23 No.4	

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 1999									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Dorestan Roussety	15.05.99 - P.959 Rec.3262083	3975.00	1046.05	M.Ramjug 2.08.1998	Notary public D.Roopun 11.02.1999	Grand baie	4 Dec.-E327 - 05/01/2009 - Prod.3/1942 Folio 195 TVR 11/89 1.Denise Roussety 2.Patrick Begue	Sale 1 - land 1891m sold to Jean Eudes Roussety <b>15.12.2001</b> (Private sign.) Sale 2 - Land 1049m sold to Louis Harold Roussety <b>14.04.2002</b> ( Private sign) Sale 3 - Land 1035m sold to Fong Tive Chong Fong Weng 18-19 S <b>29 Nov.2007</b> -TVR24/25 D Roopun. Sale 1 - Land 1065m sold to D.M.J.Orioux(Private sign.) <b>24.01.2004</b> - TVR17/27 Sale 2 -D.M.J.Orioux sold 1036m to M.& Mrs A.K.Khadun <b>19.05.2007</b> -TVR23/6 (Private sign.) Sale - Land 1950m to E.Patron 7 Mrs H.Bronguer <b>15.10.2003</b> TVR 16 No.92 (Private sign) -Partage en nature 975m each <b>24.11.2003</b> TVR 17No.13-
1	Mrs Marie Josianne Lenette (born bégué)	9/10/1999 - P. 2580 Rec No. 3264843	1065.00	280.26	M Ramjug / 09.11.1998	Attorney K. Hossen 28.09.1999	Grande Baie		Sale 1 - Land 1065m sold to D.M.J.Orioux(Private sign.) <b>24.01.2004</b> - TVR17/27 Sale 2 -D.M.J.Orioux sold 1036m to M.& Mrs A.K.Khadun <b>19.05.2007</b> -TVR23/6 (Private sign.) Sale - Land 1950m to E.Patron 7 Mrs H.Bronguer <b>15.10.2003</b> TVR 16 No.92 (Private sign) -Partage en nature 975m each <b>24.11.2003</b> TVR 17No.13-
2	Mrs Marie Germaine La Gaieté (born bégué)	9/10/1999 - P. 2580 Rec No. 3264823	1950.00	513.16	M Ramjug / 09.11.1998	Attorney K. Hossen 28.09.1999	Grande Baie		Sale 1 - Land 1065m sold to D.M.J.Orioux(Private sign.) <b>24.01.2004</b> - TVR17/27 Sale 2 -D.M.J.Orioux sold 1036m to M.& Mrs A.K.Khadun <b>19.05.2007</b> -TVR23/6 (Private sign.) Sale - Land 1950m to E.Patron 7 Mrs H.Bronguer <b>15.10.2003</b> TVR 16 No.92 (Private sign) -Partage en nature 975m each <b>24.11.2003</b> TVR 17No.13-
3	Mrs Marie Augele Nalletamby (born bégué)	29/10/1999 - P. 2580 Rec No. 326484	2280.00	600.00	M Ramjug / 09.11.1998	Attorney K. Hossen 28.09.1999	Grande Baie		Sale 1 - Land 1065m sold to D.M.J.Orioux(Private sign.) <b>24.01.2004</b> - TVR17/27 Sale 2 -D.M.J.Orioux sold 1036m to M.& Mrs A.K.Khadun <b>19.05.2007</b> -TVR23/6 (Private sign.) Sale - Land 1950m to E.Patron 7 Mrs H.Bronguer <b>15.10.2003</b> TVR 16 No.92 (Private sign) -Partage en nature 975m each <b>24.11.2003</b> TVR 17No.13-

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2000									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Mr. Itwell Bégué	18/03/2000 - P. 827 Rec No. 3730687	3500.00	921.05	Chaudan Lautan 25.06.1997	Notary Public D. Roopun 13.03.1999	Grande Baie	1.Dorestan Roussety 2.Patrick Begue TVR13/77 5.122001	

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2001									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Dorestan Roussety	30.06.2001 - P.2027 Rec No.530379	5913.00	1556.05	J.A.Ong Tone 15.05.2000	Notary Public D.Roopun 5.02.2001	Grande Baie	1.Patrick Begue 2.Ikweil Begue TVR13 No.37	Land 1603m sold to J.Richard Payendee on <b>22.07.04</b> TVR 18/34 - TVR 19/71- Notary: Roland Constantin
2	Dorestan Roussety	30.06.2001 - P.2029 Rec No.530379	803.00	211.32	J.A.Ong Tone 15.05.2000	Notary Public D.Roopun 5.02.2001	Grande Baie	1.Patrick Begue 2. Ikweil Begue TVR 13 No.38	Land 803m sold to Paul Yow Choy Fong Him on <b>07.01.2002</b> TVR14/9
3	Government of Mauritius	13.10.2001 - P.3017	2A53		General Notice No.1635 of 2001	Notice given under Section 6 Land Acquisition Act.1973	Grande Baie		
4	Government of Mauritius	27.10.2001 - P.3125	2A53		General Notice No.1707 of 2001	Notice given under Section 6 Land Acquisition Act.1973	Grande Baie		
5	Joseph Clairvot Castel	03.11.2001 - P.3221 Rec No.532529	756.00	198.95	Ng Tong N. Wah 16.05.2001	Notary Public D.Roopun 10.09.2001	Grande Baie		Land 756m sold to Marie Fabrina Roussety on <b>22.08.2008</b> TVR 25/35
6	Louis Gilot Bégué	03.11.2001 - P.3222 Rec No.532529	4628.00	1217.89	Ng Tong N. Wah 13.06.2001	Notary Public D.Roopun 10.09.2001	Grande Baie		
7	Jacques Desire Grandcourt	03.11.2001 - P.3222 Rec No.532529	1146.00	301.58	Ng Tong N. Wah 25.06.2001	Notary Public D.Roopun 10.09.2001	Grande Baie	1. Louis Gilot Begue 2. Benedict Begue TVR 20 No.9	Land 1146m sold to Mr. Marcelin Grandcourt on <b>23.09.2005</b> TVR20/28bis

VOLUME 2: LAND REFORM - LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2002									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Herfor Bégué	02.02.2002 - P.172 Rec No.533970	17389.00	4576.05	J.A.Ong Tone 15.10.2001	Notary Public 24.01.2002	D.Roopun Terre Rouge	1. Hardouin Boncoeur 2. Sylvio Baptiste TVR 18 No.7	
2	Mrs.Widow Dorisson Bégué	02.02.2002 - P.172 Rec No.533970	9500.00	2500.00	J.A.Ong Tone 04.09.2001	Notary Public 24.01.2002	D.Roopun Jean Tac		
3	Mrs.Widow Marquette Bégué	02.02.2002 - P.173 Rec No.533970	1523.00	400.79	Rajiv Futhee 02.04.2001	Notary Public 10.09.2001	D.Roopun Grande Baie	1. Joseph Clairvot Castel 2. Gerard sydney Damonsing TVR26 No.25	
4	Jean Lindsay Roussety	02.02.2002 - P.173 Rec No.533970	1028.00	270.53	J.A.Ong Tone 16.03.2001	Notary Public 18.07.2001	D.Roopun Grande Baie		
5	Joseph Hermance Bégué	02.02.2002 - P.174 Rec No.533970	4711.00	1239.74	J.B. L Aiguille 15.05.2001	Notary Public 18.07.2001	D.Roopun Grande Baie	1. Louis Jules Limock 2. Benjamin Castel TVR 14 No.50	Sale1.Hermance sold land of 1108m on 20.06.2002 to J.F.Thierry Begue TVR 14/72 (private sign.) Sale2.Hermance sold on 19 & 21 Oct. 2002 ( same as above ) + D.Roopun TVR20/32
6	Mrs.Ww.Marie Marjolaine Edouard ( Born Bégué )	02.03.2002 - P.442 Rec No.534476	3816.00	1004.21	Ng Tong N. Wah 07.01.2001	Attorney 21.02.2002	M.I.Dauhoo Terre Rouge		
7	Government of Mauritius	12.04.2002 - P.945 Second publication	4491.00		Public Beach	Section- 2 - of Local Government Act 1989	Grande Baie		

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2003									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Government of Mauritius	11.10.2003 - P.2860	1ha668		J.A.Ong Tone	Compulsory Acquisition under section 8 for Football ground	Grande Baie		
2	Mrs Nancy Naramootoo	18.10.2003 - P.3202 Rec No.1206730	978.00	257.37	J.B.L Aiguille 25.06.2001	Notary Public 13.10.2003	D.Roopun Grande Baie		
3	Mrs Aimee Plaiche	18.10.2003 - P.3203 Rec No.1206730	1928.00	507.37	Ng Tong N.wah 05.10.2001	Notary Public 13.10.2003	D.Roopun Grande Baie		M. & Mrs Richenel Plaiche sold land of 507.31m-20.04.2007 to Jean Harel Begue TVR221-TVRR22/91bis error on land survey/land found to be 1715.36m
4	Jean Ofred Roussety	18.10.2003 - P.3203 Rec No.1206730	3540.00	931.58	J.B.L Aiguille 22.01.2001	Notary Public 14.10.2003	D.Roopun Grande Baie	1. Remy Felicite 2. Cedar Novello Roussety TVR20/ 8bis	Donation : Land 3,540m2 - 08.06.2006 + Marie Therese Francesse Ah-Ming (née Roussety) TVR 21 No 7 (private Sign)
5	Jean Claude Roussety	18.10.2003 P.3205 Rec.1206730	2405.00		N.T.N.wah 26.01.2001	Notary Public 14.10.2008	D.Roopun Grande Baie	1. Jean Ofred Roussety 2. Cedar Novello Roussety TVR 20/73	
6	Government of Mauritius	24.10.2003 - P.3235 second publication	1ha668		J.A.Ong Tone	Compulsory Acquisition under section 8 for Football ground	Grande Baie		
7	Mrs Widow Johnson Bégué	24.10.2003 - P.3268 Rec No.1206839	881.00	231.84	J.A.Ong Tone 16.11.2001	Notary Public 09.10.2003	D.Roopun Grande Baie	1. Jules Meunier 2. Joseph Clairvot Castel TVR 20/73bis	

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2004									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Mrs.Widow Argile Gontran	13.11.2004 - P3312 Rec No.1982898	1428.00	375.79	Ng Tong N. Wah 23.07.2001	Notary Public 25.08.2004	D.Roopun Terre Rouge		
2	Mrs Marie Marjolaine Edouard ( Born Bégué )	31.12.2004 - P.3697 Rec No.1983565	3816.00	1004.21	NgTong N.Wah 07.05.2001	Attorney C.Mallam Hassam 29.12.2004	Terre Rouge		
LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2005									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Marseil Francois	05.11.2005 - P.4030 Rec.No.2298560	5310.00	1397.37	No surveyor mentioned	Attorney 26.10.2005	M.I.Dauhoo Terre Rouge		

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2004									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Mrs. Widow Argile Gontran	13.11.2004 - P.3312 Rec No.1982898	1428.00	375.79	Ng Tong N. Wah 23.07.2001	Notary Public D.Roopun 25.08.2004	Terre Rouge		
2	Mrs Marie Marjolaine Edouard (Born Bégué)	31.12.2004 - P.3697 Rec No.1983565	3816.00	1004.21	NgTong N.Wah 07.05.2001	Attorney C.Mallam Hassam 29.12.2004	Terre Rouge		

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2005									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Marseil Francois	05.11.2005 - P.4030 Rec No.2298560	5310.00	1397.37	No surveyor mentioned	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 26.10.2005	Terre Rouge		

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2006									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Mrs Ww.Marie Raymonde Roussety (Born Labour)	29.04.2006 - P.1280 Rec No.2315714	10660.00	2805.26	Ng Tong N.Wah 04.09.2001	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 10.04.2006	Terre Rouge	1. Louis Jules Limock 2. Louis Georgy Roussety (son of applicant) TVR24No.61	
2	Doreston Roussety	20.05.2006 - P.1492 Rec No.2315959	563.00	148.16	J.A.Ong Tone 28.01.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Louis Gilot Begue TVR24 No.31	Land 563 m2 sold on 17.12.2007 to Kwet Cheong Ah Fye TVR 24/35
3	Sylvio Bégué	20.05.2006 - P.1492 Rec No.2315959	946.00	248.95	J.A.Ong Tone 04.02.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Marina Castel TVR 24 No.14	Land 946m sold on 13 7 14 Aug 2009 to J.Edgar Patrice Duval TVR26/46
4	Doreston Roussety	20.05.2006 - P.1493 Rec No.2315959	1902.00	500.53	J.A.Ong Tone 04.02.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Louis Gilot Begue TVR23 No.41	Land 1902m sold on 9.05.2008 to Johnson Roussety TVR24/37
5	Doreston Roussety	20.05.2006 - P.1493 Rec No.2315959	1380.00	363.16	J.A.Ong Tone 28.01.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Louis Gilot Begue TVR23 No.69	
6	Doreston Roussety	20.05.2006 - P.1494 Rec No.2315959	1925.00	506.58	J.A.Ong Tone 04.02.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Louis Gilot Begue TVR23 No.42	Land 1925m sold on 17.12.2007 to Kwet Cheong Ah Fye TVR24/34
7	Doreston Roussety	20.05.2006 - P.1494 Rec No.2315959	481.00	126.58	J.A.Ong Tone 28.01.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Louis Gilot Begue TVR23No.68	Land of 481 m2 sold on 19.04 & 19.05.2008 to Mr & Ms Deepak Kumar Bundoo - TVR 24 No. 100
8	Mrs .Yolande Bégué	10.06.2006 - P.1771 Rec No.2316219	4051.94	1066.30	Rajiv Futhee 05.04.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 17.05.2006	Jean Tac		Sale 1. Land 1328m sold on 14.08.09 to Louis Marcellino Begue TVR26 No.47 (lot No. 1) Sale 2. land 1328m sold on 17.07.09 to Josian Begue TVR26/42 (lot No.2) Sale 3. Land 1328m sold on 17 July 2009 to Mrs. Marie Clara Helene TVR 26 No.419(Lot No.3)
9	Mr. Quet Song Ah Fye	02.09.2006 - P.2661 Rec No.2317236	890.00	234.21	Rajiv Futhee 08.05.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 04.08.2006	Terre Rouge		1.Land 890m sold on 11,12,13 Feb. 2009 to Marlene Begue TVR25/91
10	Mrs.Joliete Hung Chan Sang (Born Bégué)	02.09.2006 - P.2661 Rec No.2317236	2100.00	552.63	Rajiv Futhee 15.05.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 04.08.2006	Jean Tac	TVR24/3 5.o6.2006	
11	Mrs. Irene Bégué (Born Hortense)	02.09.2006 - P.2662 Rec No.2317236	5902.00	1553.16	Rajiv Futhee 02.05.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 04.08.2006	Grande Baie		
12	Mrs.Joseph Louis Roger Michaud (Born Philomene Meunier)	02.09.2006 - P.2662 Rec No.2317236	1813.09	477.13	Rajiv Futhee 07.04.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 04.08.2006	Jean Tac		Land 759.80m sold on 48.6 Feb. 2008 to Jean Alain Francois TVR24/53
13	Doreston Roussety	20.10.2006 - P.3384 Rec No.2838247	563.00	148.16	J.A.Ong Tone 28.01.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 05.04.2006	Grande Baie		Land 563m sold on 12.07.07 to Kwet Cheong Ah Fye TVR24/31
14	Doreston Roussety	20.10.2006 - P.3385 Rec No.2838241	481.00	126.58	J.A.Ong Tone 24.01.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 05.04.2006	Grande Baie		Land 481m sold on 27.08.07 to Deepak Kumar Bundoo TVR 24/100- TVR 23/08
15	Doreston Roussety	20.10.2006 - P.3385 Rec No.2838241	1925.00	506.58	J.A.Ong Tone 04.02.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie		
16	Sylvio Bégué	20.10.2006 - P.3386 Rec No.2838241	946.00	248.95	J.A.Ong Tone 04.02.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie		Land 946m sold on 13&14 Aug.2009 to J.E. Patrice Duval TVR26/46
17	Doreston Roussety	20.10.2006 - P.3386 Rec No.2838241	1380.00	363.16	J.A.Ong Tone 28.01.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Louis gilot Begue TVR23/69	Land 1380m sold on 27.08.07 to TVR23/69
18	Doreston Roussety	20.10.2006 - P.3387 Rec No.2838241	1902.00	500.53	J.A.Ong Tone 04.02.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 06.04.2006	Grande Baie		
19	Jean Jacquelin Gontran	09.12.2006 - P.4226 Rec No.2838944	1577.55	415.14	L.Lewis Casimir 27.03.2006	Notary Public D.Roopun 26.10.2006	Grande Baie	1. Stenio Roussety 2. Joseph Renaud Perrine TVR23/29	
20	Yvon Roussety	09.12.2006 - P.4227 Rec No.2838944	454.00	119.47	A.P.G.Zevanor 26.05.2006	Notary Public D.Roopun 18.09.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Plaiche 2. Claude Begue TVR23/19	

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2007									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Mrs Alix Bégué	03.02.2007 - P. 267 Rec No. 2839592	1267.78	333.63	J.L.Casimir 07.07.2006	Notary Public D.Roopun 15.01.2007	Terre Rouge		Land 1261.78 m2 sold on 06.03.2008 to Vythilingum Marday mootoo - TVR 24 No. 70
16	Yves Grandcourt	03.02.2007 - P. 268 Rec No. 2839592	701.00	184.47	A.P.G Zevanor 03.10.2006	Notary Public D.Roopun 15.01.2007	Grand baie	1. Rommel Felcité 2. Zetro Raffaut TVR 23 No. 22	Land 701 m2 sold on 09.06.2007 to Johnson Roussety TVR 24/21
2	Mrs Helena Edouard (Born Francois)	24.03.2007 - P.1024	16169.00	4255.00	J.A.Ong 04.02.2006	Notary Public A. Ramphul 08.03.2007	Terre Rouge	1. Marcel Edouard 2. Mme Julienne Zameer TVR24/28	
3	Louis Lambert Bégué	21.04.2007 - P.1381 Rec No.3161375	2044.00	537.89	Rajiv Futhee 28.12.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 30.03.2007	Terre Rouge		legal objection served
4	Antonio Bégué	21.04.2007 - P.1382 Rec No.3161375	3806.00	1001.58	Rajiv Futhee 30.03.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 30.03.2007	Terre Rouge		legal objection served
5	Mrs Ww. Anne Marie Josee Begue ( Born Ravina )	21.04.2007 - P.1382 Rec No.3161375	651.00	171.32	A.P.Zevanor 26.05.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 30.03.2007	Grande Baie		
6	Mrs. Bibi Mabooka Cooshna Roussety	21.04.2007 - P.1383 Rec No.3162558	5605.00	1475.00	Rajiv Futhee 20.12.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 30.03.2007	Terre Rouge		legal objection served
7	Corrigendum - Doreston Roussety	30.06.2007 - P. 2215 Rec 3162558				Attorney A. Ramphul			
8	Claudinaud Bégué	21.07.2007 - P.2520 Rec No.3162895	10498.00	2762.63	Rajiv Futhee 12.06.2006	Attorney J.Christophe Ohsan Bellepeau 12.07.2007	Grande Baie		
9	Marie Jacqueline Barret ( Born Gontran )	28.07.2007 - P.2583 Rec No.3162972	1233.00	324.47	No surveyor mentioned	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 02.07.2007	Grande Baie		
10	Jules Meunier	28.07.2007 - P. 2584 Rec No.3162972	4864.00	1280.00	A.H.Soobratesee 13.07.1998	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 13.07.2007	Grande Baie		
11	Mrs. Regis Bégué	18.08.2007 - P.2801 Rec No.3163234	14634.00	3851.05	A.P.Zevanor 03.10.2006 Amended 01.03.2007	Notary Public D.Roopun 20.07.2007	Terre Rouge	1. Joseph Marcel Rose 2. Marie Paul Rose TVR 24/30	
12	Richard Bégué	18.08.2007 - P.2802 Rec No.3163234	11334.00	2982.63	Rajiv Futhee 05.10.2006	Notary Public D.Roopun 20.07.2007	Terre Rouge	1. Marie Linda Ravina 2. Jean Luc Francois TVR 24/29	Land 11,334m sold on 20.03.09 to Mrs C.L.Jacqueline Stern TVR26/2
13	Miss Rosita Bégué	08.09.2007 - P.3056 Rec No.3163847	5684.00	1495.79	A.P.G.Zevanor 29.04.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 20.08.2007	Jean Tac		
14	Mrs.Leonia Castel	22.09.2007 - P.3355 Rec No.3163677	1117.57	294.10	Rajiv Futhee 10.03.2006	Notary Public A.Ramphul 20.11.2006	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Sylvio Begue TVR24/60	Land 1117.38 sold on 17&19 June 2009 to Society of Ophthalmological Services Ltd. TVR26/37
15	Mr. Edouard Grandcourt (also known as Edouard Grandcourt)	01.12.2007 - P.4653 Rec No.3412400	1110.57	292.26	J.Lewis Casimir 03.05.2007	Notary Public D.Roopun 17.11.2007	Grande Baie		Land 1110.57m sold on 18.04.08 to Jean Ally Meunier TVR24/84

LIST OF PRESCRIPTION NOTICES YEAR 2008									
No.	Name of Applicant	Government Gazette Notice	Area m2	Area Toises	Land Surveyor / Date of Survey	Lawyer / Date of Notice	Site	Witness	Observation
1	Marie Cerise Gontran	19.01.2008 - P.127 Rec No.3413052	1432.14	376.88	Rajiv Futhee 15.05.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 12.10.2007	Jean Tac		
2	Mrs. Yolande Begue (Born Edouard)	19.01.2008 - P.127 Rec No.3413052	4051.94	1066.30	Rajiv Futhee 05.04.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 05.11.2007	Jean Tac		
3	Mr.Quet Song Ah Fye	19.01.2008 - P.128 Rec No.3413052	890.00	234.21	Rajiv Futhee 08.05.2008	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 05.11.2007	Grande Baie		
4	Mr.Quet Song Ah Fye	19.01.2008 - P.129 Rec No.3413052	890.00	234.21	Rajiv Futhee 08.05.2008	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 05.11.2007	Grande Baie		
5	Mrs Veronique Bégué	01.03.2008 - P.707 Rec No.3413601	6244.00	1643.16	A.P.G.Zevanor 09.06.2006	Attorney M.I.Dauhoo 12.10.2007	Terre Rouge		CIRRIENDUM effected on 5.06.2010 & 26.06.2010
6	Mr.Nicolson Bégué	25.10.2008 - P.4486 Rec No.3721826	8697.85	2288.91	J.L.Casimir 21.07.2006	Notary Public D.Roopun 10.10.2008	Grande Baie	1. Louis Rudyard Felicite 2. Wilkinson Plaiche TVR26/21	
7	Jean Jacquelin Gontran	25.10.2008 - P.4486 Rec No.3721826	2128.00	560.00	V.V.S.Chuckun 24.10.2007	Notary Public D.Roopun 10.10.2008	Grande Baie Jean Tac		
8	Mrs Claudinette Grandcourt	25.10.2008 - P.4487 Rec No.3721826	803.00	211.32	Ng.Tong N. Wah 03.02.2003	Notary Public D.Roopun 10.10.2008	Grande Baie	1. Marina Begue (widow of Johnson Begue) 2.Louis Rudyard Felicite TVR26/67	

An enquiry has also been undertaken concerning the Compulsory acquisition made by Central Government.

On **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2001**, Government published in its issue of the Government Gazette (No. 105) under the General Notice No. 1635 of 2001 governed by the Land Acquisition Act of 1973 (Notice given under Section 6) the following:

‘Notice is hereby given that a plot of private land hereinafter described and which situate at Grand Baie, Rodrigues, **is likely to be acquired** compulsorily by the Government of Mauritius for the public purpose of the construction of a football ground, a Community centre and other public amenities - (File CO/00/767 refers).

On **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2001**, Government confirms its intention with the publication of the same notice in the Government Gazette (No. 109) under the General Notice No. 1707 of 2001, always governed by the Land Acquisition Act of 1973 (Notice given under Section 6).

Two years later, that is, on **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2003**, Government issued another notice in the Government Gazette (No. 102) under the General Notice No. 1751 of 2003 governed by the Land Acquisition Act of 1973 (Notice given under Section 6) the following:

‘Notice is hereby given that I **have decided to acquire** compulsorily on behalf of the Government of Mauritius a portion of land situated at Grand Baie, Rodrigues, hereinafter described, for the public purpose of the construction of a football ground, a community centre and other public amenities there on.’

The description of the said land is given under the hand of the then Minister of Housing and Lands bearing the signature date of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

As required by law, as per Section 9 of the Land Acquisition Act of 18<sup>th</sup> December 1973, the same Notice is once more published in the issue of Government Gazette (No. 107) under the General Notice No. 1853 of 2003.

All seemed to have gone well for the Government as all procedures have purportedly been followed. Government acquired the land and set up the football ground, the Community centre and all amenities.

Nevertheless, Government officials had overlooked another section of the same Land Acquisition Act of 18<sup>th</sup> December 1973 wherein the following is mentioned under Section 7 (2):

*“Where, within 8 months after the date of the second publication of a Notice in the Gazette under Section 6(1), the land has not been acquired compulsorily or has been abandoned, any interested person may serve a notice on the authorised officer requiring the acquisition of the land to be completed or abandoned.”*

In fact, Government had formulated its intention to acquire the land compulsorily in 2001 waited for two years, that is, in October 2003 - more than 8 months- the mandatory delay before it made public its real desire to go forth in this issue.

On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003, the Bégué family, by letter sent, contested the Government’s action. This was to no avail. Another letter was sent to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Lands on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008, drawing the attention of the Government on the same issue. The latter answered that the family had never challenged Government.

The Commission is in the presence of copies of letters exchanged between the Ministry and the Bégué family:

Figure 7

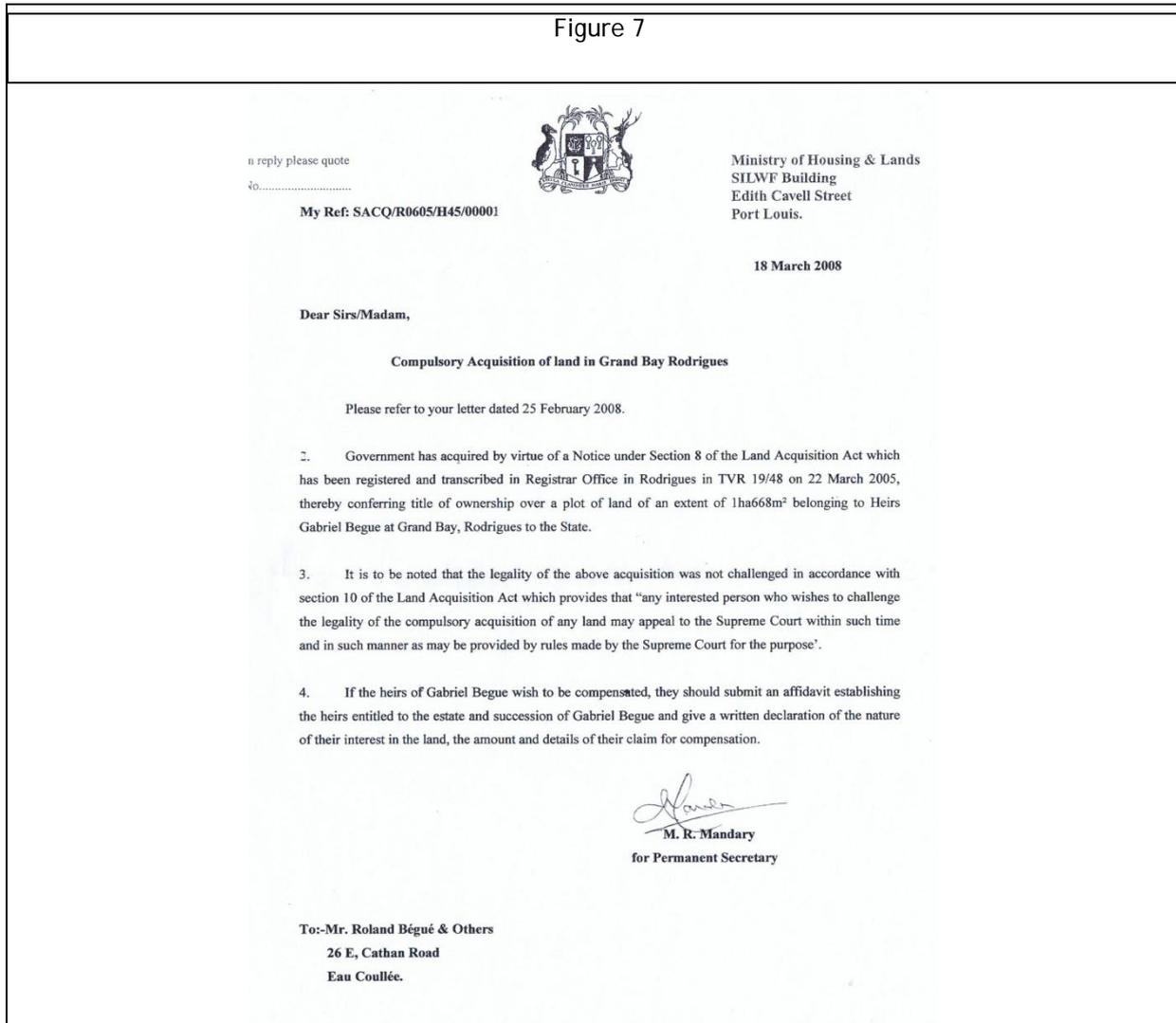


Figure 8 Correspondence exchanged between Government and Begue family

Your Ref: SACQ/R0605/M45/0001

18 December 2008

The Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Housing and Lands  
SILWF Building  
Edith Cavell Street  
Port Louis

Dear Sir

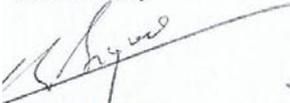
Thank you for your correspondence dated 18 March 2008.

I would like to bring to your attention that the mere question of compensating the Heirs of Gabriel Bégué is not even an option because we have already raised an important issue, beforehand, as to the legality of the proceedings leading to the 'compulsory acquisition' of that plot of land of 1 ha 668 m<sup>2</sup> located at Grand Baie, Rodrigues.

Your correspondence dated 18 March 2008 quotes that '[...] the legality of the above acquisition was not challenged [...]]', but, on the contrary, pursuant to Section 10 of the Land Acquisition act, we did challenge your notice dated 25 September 2003 in a hand-delivered letter dated 7 November 2003 and copied, amongst others, to the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court (please see attached copy including proof of registration of copy sent to the Curator of Vacant Estates and to the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court, on 7 November 2003). However, in addition to and regardless of the fact that we did challenge your notice, we have been advised that challenging such an 'acquisition' after its publication was not even an issue in that particular case because the process was flawed at its inception since your Ministry failed to follow the mandatory procedures, prescribed by law, leading to that acquisition.

In the light of the questionable legality of the above-mentioned 'acquisition', we have started the process of contacting all parties concerned, including the relevant legal counsel. This process is well under way; once it is completed, we shall contact your office accordingly. In the meantime, feel free to communicate with us should you need clarification in this matter.

Yours faithfully



L Ronald Bégué  
26 E Cathan Road  
Eau Coulée  
Curepipe



Enrico Bégué  
Appartement 37  
Arcades Vavid  
Avenue Indépendance  
Vacoas



Giselain Bégué  
Oyster Bay  
Rodrigues

FOR HEIRS OF GABRIEL BEGUE

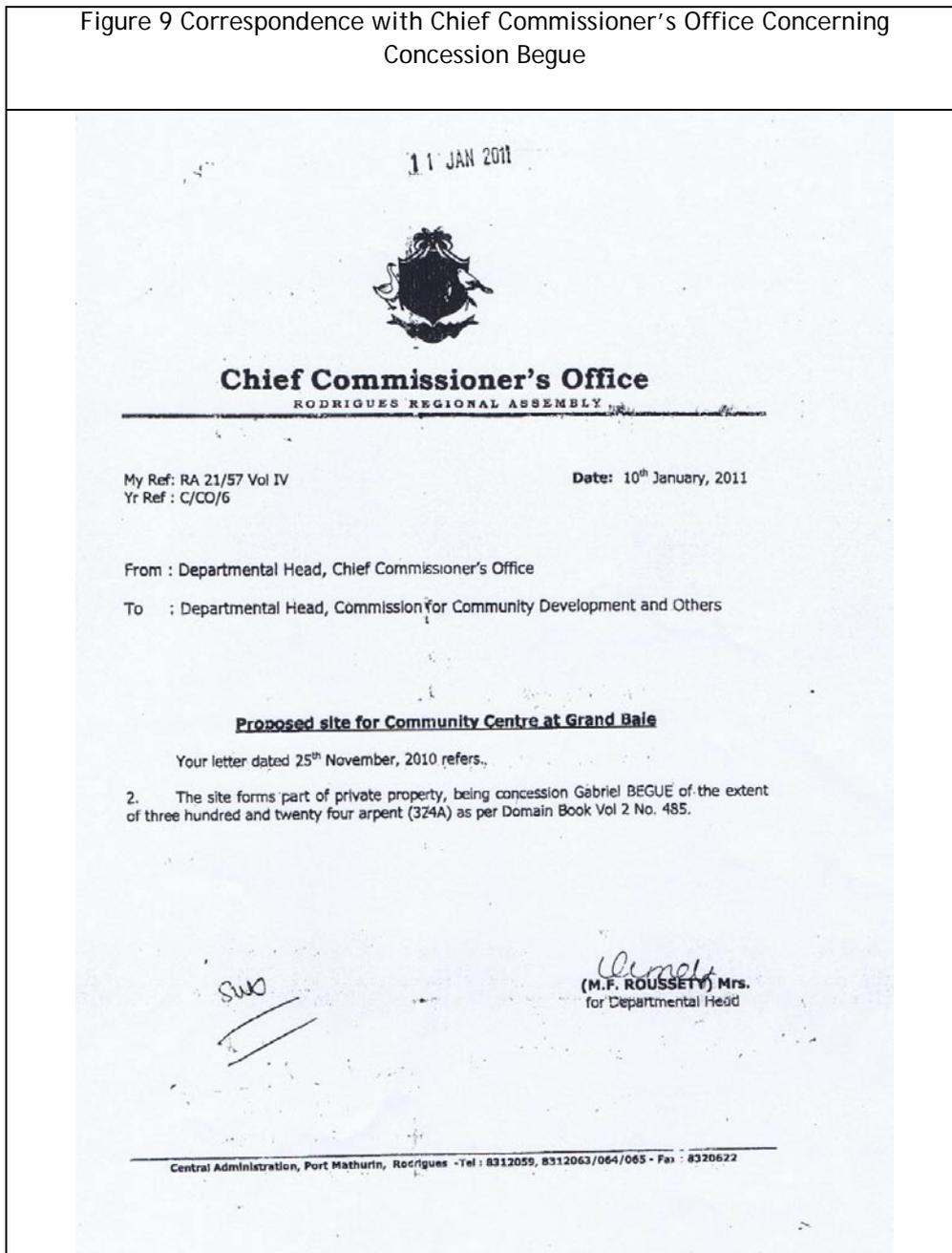
Encs

- c The Attorney General and Minister of Justice and Human Rights
- The Minister of Housing and Lands
- The Commissioner of Police (Land and Fraud Unit)
- The Master and Registrar, Supreme Court
- The Curator of Vacant Estates, Supreme Court
- The Ombudsman
- The Government Land Surveyor, Rodrigues
- The Island Chief Executive, Rodrigues
- The Chief Commissioner, Rodrigues

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has undertaken the same process of occupying the Bégué land in spite of a note of warning sent, not only by the Bégué heirs, but also by the Departmental Head of the Chief Commissioner's Office to the Departmental Head of the Commission for Community Development & Health.

In a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010, the President and Secretary of the '*Welfare and Heritage Association of the Descendants of Gabriel Bégué*' underlined that they were astounded to note that the department for Health and Development was in the process of building a community centre on a plot of land at Grand Baie, Rodrigues, belonging to the 'Heirs of Gabriel Bégué Domaine Book Vol.2 No. 485 Folio 208.' They added that 'proper procedure leading to such activities has not been followed.'

Figure 9 Correspondence with Chief Commissioner's Office Concerning Concession Begue



In spite of the note of warning of the Office of the Chief Commissioner in his letter of 10<sup>th</sup> January 2010 (*See Figure 9, above*) to his Commissioner for Development and Health, the Community centre was being constructed, as witnessed by the Truth and Justice Commissioner during a Mission on the island in March 2010, not far from the same Community centre built by the Government of Mauritius after the compulsory acquisition of 2003.

In both cases, Central Government and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly should be able to revisit Section 32 of the Crown Land Act of 21<sup>st</sup> March 1874 which reads:

Section 32      Crown Land in payment of compensation

Subject to this Act and the Pas Géométriques Act, the Minister may authorise Crown Land to be given by private contract upon such terms and conditions as he may approve in payment either in whole or in part of any compensation payable in respect of land compulsorily acquired by the Government'.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# LAND - A SOURCE OF CONFLICTS

<u>LAND CASES</u>	<u>CORNET CROUCHE</u>
	<b>D</b>
<b>A</b>	<u>DALMOND</u> <u>DASANI</u> <u>DEFOIX</u> <u>DEVANNY</u> <u>DHUNOO</u> <u>DIMBA/JEANNOT</u> <u>DODIN</u> <u>DOOKNAH</u> <u>DUMAZEL</u> <u>DUSAUTY</u>
<u>ADELE</u> <u>ADYCALUM</u> <u>AGATHE</u> <u>ALIPHON</u> <u>ANSELINE</u> <u>ANTHONIMOOTOO</u> <u>APPADOO</u> <u>ARISTIDE</u> <u>ARLAPIN</u> <u>ARMUGAM</u> <u>AUCHOMBIT</u> <u>AUFFRAY</u> <u>AUGUSTIN/EROOLEN</u> <u>AUNACHA</u> <u>AZIE</u>	<b>E</b>
	<u>ELISE</u> <u>ELIZABETH</u> <u>ESPIEGLE</u>
<b>B</b>	<b>F</b>
<u>BALISSON</u> <u>BARRY</u> <u>BEEFNAH/CHOOOLUN</u> <u>BEEHARRY</u> <u>BERNARD</u> <u>BERTHELOT</u> <u>BESAGUE</u> <u>BOIVIN</u> <u>BONNEFIN</u> <u>BOODENY</u> <u>BRASSE</u> <u>BUNDHOO</u> <u>BUSAWON</u>	<u>FANTAISIE</u> <u>FAOULEZ/ MACCA</u> <u>FELICIANE</u> <u>FIGARO</u> <u>FIGARO &amp; PERNE</u> <u>FORTUNO/PETIT</u> <u>FRANÇOIS</u> <u>FRICHOT</u> <u>FRIQUIN</u>
	<b>G</b>
<b>C</b>	<u>GATEAU</u> <u>GEFFREY or (GEOFFREY) WILFRID</u> <u>GERTRUDE</u> <u>GOODSIR</u> <u>GOODUR</u> <u>GOPAUL</u> <u>GOTEEA</u> <u>GOURANNA</u> <u>GRENADE</u> <u>GUBHOO</u> <u>GUKHOOL</u>
<u>CAPIRON</u> <u>CARVER</u> <u>CASTOR</u> <u>CELINE</u> <u>CHARLOT</u> <u>CHARMANTE</u> <u>CHIFFONE</u> <u>CHRISTOPHE</u> <u>CLEMENTINE</u> <u>COLFIR</u> <u>CORETTE/ SOBHA</u>	<b>H</b>
	<u>HANNELAS</u> <u>HERMINETTE</u> <u>HOYBUN</u>

	I	<u>MARTIAL/RATENA(RATNA)</u>	
<u>ISABELLE</u>		<u>MATOMBÉ</u>	
		<u>MAYEUR/ CAZALENS/KISNORBO</u>	
	J	<u>MEDAR</u>	
<u>JACQUES RENE</u>		<u>MIGUEL</u>	
<u>JADDOO</u>		<u>MOHUN</u>	
<u>JEROME</u>		<u>MOLLIERES</u>	
<u>JOB/DACRUZ</u>		<u>MOOLCHAND</u>	
<u>JOLICOEUR</u>		<u>MOSAUFEE</u>	
<u>JOORAMUN</u>		<u>MURTHEN</u>	
			N
	K	<u>NADAL</u>	
<u>KHISTO</u>		<u>NAURIS</u>	
		<u>NEERUNJUN</u>	
	L	<u>NETA</u>	
<u>L'AIGUILLE</u>		<u>NOHUR</u>	
<u>L'INDIFFERENTE/THOMAS</u>			P
<u>L'INTRÉPIDE</u>		<u>PADAYACHY</u>	
<u>LA FLECHE</u>		<u>PAULIN</u>	
<u>LABAVARDE</u>		<u>PERRIN</u>	
<u>LABONTE</u>		<u>PERRINE</u>	
<u>LABUTTE</u>		<u>PERTICOT</u>	
<u>LAMARQUE</u>		<u>PIERRE</u>	
<u>LANAPPE/DAVID</u>		<u>POORUN</u>	
<u>LAPEYRE</u>		<u>POPLINEAU</u>	
<u>LARHUBARBE</u>		<u>POTIE</u>	
<u>LARIDAIN</u>		<u>PRAYAG</u>	
<u>LAROSE</u>		<u>PREAUDET</u>	
<u>LASERINGUE</u>		<u>PREMDUTH</u>	
<u>LATIOU</u>		<u>PRUDENT</u>	
<u>LATIRE</u>			R
<u>LAURENT</u>		<u>RAGOONUNDUN</u>	
<u>LAVIOLETTE</u>		<u>RAMBARUTH</u>	
<u>LECERF</u>		<u>RAMESSUR</u>	
<u>LEMASSON/ORANGE/NETTA</u>		<u>RAMKALAWON</u>	
<u>LEMIÈRE</u>		<u>RAMNAUTH</u>	
<u>LISETTE</u>		<u>RAMPHUL</u>	
<u>LOUISE</u>		<u>RAMSAMY</u>	
	M	<u>RAMTOHUL</u>	
<u>MADELEINE</u>		<u>REBET</u>	
<u>MADHOO</u>		<u>RENEL</u>	
<u>MAISON ROUGE</u>		<u>REYNOLD</u>	
<u>MALGACHE</u>		<u>RIACCA</u>	
<u>MALOUPE</u>		<u>RIOUX</u>	
<u>MANGALKHAN</u>		<u>ROMEO</u>	
<u>MARGUERITE</u>		<u>ROOPSING</u>	
<u>MARION</u>		<u>ROUSSEL</u>	
<u>MARISSON</u>			

S

SALOMON  
SANSPEUR  
SEERUTTUN  
SEETUL  
SOBRATEE  
SOOKHARRY  
SOOPAUL  
SPEVILLE  
SREEPAUL  
SUHAWON ALAMAN  
SYLVIE/OLIVE

THELVA  
THERESE  
TOOLSY  
TOULET  
TOUSSAINT  
TRIME  
TUYAU  
TYPHIS

U

UJOODHA  
UNJORE

T

TAKEN  
TAKUN  
TANCREL  
TATTEEA

W

WEBB/CHANG KYE

Z

ZEPHIR

## LAND - A SOURCE OF CONFLICTS

*"Land tenure and interest in land are indeed extremely complex. It has been observed that the possessor or occupier of land may or may not be the owner and that the owner may or may not be the occupier. This is further complicated by the fact that the permanence and undestructibility of land makes it attractive to encumbrances or charges such as mortgages, annuities, legacies and debt charges and may even be a security for debt. Each of these situations gives persons other than the freeholders interest in the land. Because of all these complexities the art of conveyancing developed in order to properly transfer land from one person to another".*

*(Extract: From plots to plantations  
Land transactions in Jamaica,  
(1866 - 1900) - Veront M. Satchell,  
University of West Indies, 1990)*

There is a strong perception among Mauritians of "*inequality*" in the distribution of land resources and of dispossession of those who did own land at some point in time.

In Mauritius, land was and is still considered in law as a form of property and during the colonial days as an economic resource. There was no indigenous settlement and so no traditional forms of ownership. Instead there existed ownership by individuals, ownerships by private estates, corporate ownership, by Church and ownership by the State.

Unrecognised in law was the land used communally by persons working for the estates: slaves and contracted workers who lived and worked in the estate camps and also grew provisions. It could be described as communal use of land.

However, in Mauritius, the extent of ownership is highly skewed in favour of large plantation owners. There has never been large-scale redistribution of lands either after abolition of slavery or indenture or independence by governments, colonial or independent. Small farmers and proprietors have on their own saved enough money and bought many plots of land at various moments in history.

Indeed, control of land has always been a key issue and a latent source of conflict. After abolition of slavery, the rights to obtain land were severely curtailed even though many ex-slaves did obtain tracts of land during the "*petit morcellement*". There was no large scale emergence of a peasantry due to colonial government support for the plantation and no encouragement for ex-slaves to become peasant proprietors. However, economic crisis have played their part in ensuring some redistribution took place. By the 1880s, a "*grand morcellement*" took place which changed the socio-economic landscape when small owners emerged *en masse*.

Topography has also influenced to a great deal how land is used and valued in Mauritius. Suitability of land for sugar production has determined the price of land in the sugar producing regions for nearly two centuries although this is today changing as tourist and luxury housing estates become more and more the trend of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Throughout the years, land has been distributed either by a system of land grant known in the French period as "*concession*", by transfers and sales of land recorded in deeds, by wills recorded by Notaries Public or by the Curatelle Department. However, a great number of land transactions also occurred which were not recorded and considered as private sales ("*sous- seing privé*").

To safeguard against sale of land to other parties, the system of registration of deeds was introduced: "*Here it is that the registration system has been added to safeguard the purchaser from the risk of a fraudulent vendor having already legally conveyed or mortgaged the property to someone else*". Guibert describes the registration law as follows: - "*...the law of France of the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1885 and the Ordinance of Mauritius (No. 36 of 1863) have laid down with regard to third parties*".

Thus, what could be registered? It is well to notice that in Mauritius that there is a public office under the control of a functionary called the Conservator of Mortgages, in which special registers

are kept, and in which are duly transcribed under the aforesaid Ordinance: Every deed of transfer, inter vivos, of any immoveable property or of any such property or rights capable of being mortgaged, and every deed; declaratory of any such property or right; every deed importing renunciation of any such right; every judgement declaratory of the existence of the nature above-mentioned; every judgement of adjudication; every deed constituting any pledge of immoveable property, or any servitude or right of use (droit d'usage) on any immoveable property; every deed importing renunciation of the right in the above article enumerated; every judgement declaratory of the existence of such right in virtue of any verbal agreement; every lease of rural property (bail a ferme) of whatever duration; every deed of judgement establishing the discharge or transfer of rent (whether money or produce) not due at the date thereof under such lease; every lease of house property (bail de loyer) of more than three years' duration; every deed or judgement establishing discharge or transfer of rent due at the time under any lease whatsoever of house property when the amount thereof exceeds one year's rent.

However, as underlined in the *“Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation, Volume 2 (1879) at pp. 315- 317 under Registration of Deeds in Mauritius”*, the flaw was and continues to be *“that the Conservator of Mortgages is an administrator. He has not to decide on the validity or invalidity of the titles delivered to him to be transcribed”*.

The Truth and Justice Commission has highlighted some of these issues during the hearings pertaining to some cases, for example, Clémentine (File No TJC/L/0142), Faoulez/ Macca (File No TJC/L180), Capiron (File No TJC/L/O31) and the Spéville/ Choolun, dealt with extensively in the Report on **“Dispossession of properties as a result of false, inaccurate, doubtful, wrongly drafted, misinterpretation of affidavit of succession and wills and testaments”**, at **Chapter 5**.

Wills are another method of transfers of land but these are not entered into the deed register. These are recorded by Notaries and kept in the studies of the Notaries concerned and transferred to the National Archives after a number of years. It so happens that many individuals neglect to register their deeds, or these have not been recorded within the time required, thus showing the limitations of the deeds and Notarial records.

Furthermore, the Curatelle Department was established in 1768 to administer vacant estates. This was particularly useful as many young male bachelors had settled in Mauritius and did not leave any heirs when they died. The single Curator of the 1768 was replaced by a Curator for each district in 1795, appointed for life by the Communes. They were poorly paid and did not work efficiently. Some order was put by Decaen who restored the unique Curator system. He received a commission on land sold. However, his duties increased after 1809 when he was also given the duty to watch over wills where there was an executor, and it is felt especially when the executor may be a Black person.

An overview of the different changes which occurred over the years (since 1721 up to modern times) gives an idea of how land ownership evolves during the colonial times, up to Independence.

The Truth and Justice Commission has put the question to know **“who owned the land? How was the land distributed? Who obtained the land, and who was allowed to own land on the island?”** These questions have been discussed in Chapter 1 and are further highlighted in this present report.

A poor Frenchman could never aspire to obtaining a land grant of 156 *Arpents*, nor could an unskilled slave.

Some slaves did obtain, however, large tracts when they were manumitted (*See Appendix 1*).

- On 18<sup>th</sup> February 1791, Widow Maudave freed Marie, her slave. As a reward, Marie was given a piece of land, 3 000 *livres* and three slaves.
- Azor, a Mozambican slave obtained his freedom from Sr Jean Baptiste Pipon and 12 Acres of land in Camp de Masque, District of Flacq.
- Marguerite, a Creole slave was given her freedom as well as 78 Acres of land and eleven slaves by the late Sr Fleury in his will.

More plots of land, however smaller, and located in the Camp des Noirs Libres, Camp des Lascars and Camp des Malabars, in Port- Louis, were given to manumitted slaves. Pierre, for example, a former slave, manumitted his parents and sister, and gave them a house as well as 10 Acres in Mahebourg.

Succession to property was also possible for a non-white person through will. The Arrêté of 24 Pluviose An V (12<sup>th</sup> February 1797) had declared that free Blacks were capable of receiving all donations "*entre vifs*" due to death or other, except for concubines.

However, the law of 2 Pluviose An XII (24<sup>th</sup> January 1804) deprived natural children of colour from inheriting from white fathers. The French Government felt that by preventing Whites from giving to their slaves and freed slaves, this law would reduce and alter the ties of respect and attachment that Black felt towards their master.

Articles 767 and 768 deprived natural children of right to inherit from their father. According to Fromet de Rosnay, writing in 1860s, it was hatred for the non- White to the extreme that motivated the law. This law has permeated Mauritian consciousness and mentality up to today which had deprived hundreds of children of their natural right to property.

After abolition of slavery, the colonial land policies were geared to ensuring that a sufficient pool of labour was available for sugar production. In his circular of 31<sup>st</sup> January 1836, to the Governors of the British Colony, Lord Glenelg underlined that "*precautionary measures "were required " to prevent the occupation of any Crown lands by persons not possessing a proprietary title to them; and to fix such a price upon all Crown lands as may place them out of reach of persons without capital"*.

The need to produce exportable products also dictated land policies: it was preferable to produce sugar for export than to grow food. The economic emancipation of ex-slaves was not, at this stage, on the agenda of the British Government. Lord Glenelg's views were shared by the plantation owners but difficult to implement: land was important to ex-slaves and as many had saved sufficient capital and they had bought land in large numbers all over the island.

The supposed aversion to agriculture was a well cultivated myth.

Rapid expansion of the sugar industry and expansion of cultivation and setting up of mills occurred between 1853 and 1875.

Massive importation of indentured labourers and enormous pressure on land also during this period was put; and particularly of the forest areas which was reduced from 55 000 hectares to 33 000 hectares. Older coastal plantations on the west coast were abandoned in favour of interior plantations situated in upper parts of the island. The only who survived were those with irrigation facilities or close to water resources.

Mills in the 1820s and the 1830s had been built near rivers. But, by the 1850s, the need was less. Pollution of rivers, however, was a problem and it was forbidden to build any structure within 70 yards of a river until the surveyor had found no threat of pollution was possible.

A "*merciless water war*" ensured, according to Gleadow. Some mills crushed their rivals by means of lawsuits, just or unjust. Others had to amalgamate and centralize because there was water enough for one only. One of the biggest concerns in Black River District which "had not displayed excessive scruple in respecting the rights of others", can nevertheless only water one fifth of its land.

Expansion occurred in the Northern plains up to the sea, the rivers GRNO, in Plaines Wilhems: Vacoas, in the South between Mahebourg and Souillac, almost the whole of Flacq District and even up to Plaine des Roches.

Ordinance No. 35 of 1863 declared all rivers and streams as public property. Owners could own springs, except those which were sources of any river which were public property. Unfortunately, it did not protect marshes and as a result, a great number of marshes were planted. This continued

into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as had been the case of Valetta estate, draining Mare Tatamaka, Mare d’Australia, Gambier, Citron and Deux Poules d’Eau, all along Rivière Sèche.

The 1875 - 1920 periods witnessed the greatest battles concerning control over rights to property and a number of Ordinances, Court cases dealt with this issue. Forest regulations were hotly contested by plantation owners who then entered the political arena, asking for “Mauritians” to be represented in the Council of Government.

The main law in force was the Ordinance No. 13 of 1875. Pas Géométriques was defined as the area between high water mark and the 250 feet parallel to the coast line. A Mountain Reserve line was to be drawn. Several laws in force since 1769 to 1872 were repealed. A further report by Thompson recommended other measures leading to Ordinance No. 1 of 1881.

Apart from clear breaches of the law, there was also the fact that the laws were not applied nor enforced. Some laws were passed to legalise illegal actions such as the encroachment of Luchon forest. The Surveyor Langlois surveyed the forest and increased the Mountain Reserve line to 1 250 feet and 450 feet. As the owners Robert and d’Unienville did not object, the Surveyor’s plans became legal. A “*verification*” was held in 1884 and they obtained 82 Acres of forest land which they sold to Indian and Creole proprietors. The person rectifying the line, one Cassidy was later prosecuted for accepting a bribe from Robert for this “*rectification*”.

“Even Government forests were cut down; important planters (some of them members of the Council of Government) would cut down trees not only of their own estates, but also on Government lands somewhat near their estates and Government surveyors even drew false boundaries for Government lands, thus giving away Government land to estate owners, who, of course, rewarded the Government surveyors with large bribes”<sup>1</sup>

Bribery and blackmail were used to obtain land illegally, according to Gleadow.

In Black River, other owners had also encroached on forest land such as Virgile Naz and Labutte.

Other reasons were advanced to legalise illegal lines: lack of funds to undertake surveying.

Some 100 feet of forest reserves were thus “given” to private owners even though they had acquired it illegally.

Those who had encroached after promulgation of acts then demanded compensation. They also tried sometimes successfully to influence local government officials and even the Governor. There was a clear defiance by large plantation owners of the laws and encroachment on land which was never checked.

The most famous case at that time concerned Pilot and Labutte, large and influential landowners who continued to destroy forests in defiance of the Ordinance 13.

They also sent in claims for compensation. They submitted “*old sale deeds, some of them remarkable for being anything but what they purported to be; bogus sales in favour of certain relatives at the expense of others*”.

Antelme concluded that instead of claiming compensation they should be made to pay £ 30 000.

There were also a large number of squatters on *Pas Géométriques* which proved to be a thorny problem for the Government.

World War 1 also opened the doors to prosperity as cultivation extended further with an increasing number of small planters by 1913. Some 36 650 hectares by independent planters and 61 000 hectares on plantations were under exploitation. *Métayage* increased. However, many of those plots had not been paid for.

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<sup>1</sup> Gleadow, 1904, page 205

Gleadow's final statement reveals much about the state of affairs and explained why all the greatest laws would fail: - *"The corruption of subordinates needs not to be insisted upon. It is the natural corollary of the want of supervision. But, it involves a general want of moral tone in considerable sections of the society... The spirit of camaraderie is the outcome of the history of the island. The majority of Whites and White Creoles are the descendants of comparatively few families who have married and intermarried for generations so that it would be dangerous to say who is not related to whom"* .

Peter Burroughs joins in with what Gleadow says above. In *"The Mauritius Rebellion of 1832 and the Abolition of British Colonial Slavery"*, which was published in the *"Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, May 1976, Volume IV Number 3"* Burroughs made reference to an exchange of letter "Buchanan to Lefevre, dated 7th June 1833"<sup>2</sup> underlining: *"Shrewd scheming advocates with the eye to augmenting fees and influence found unlimited scope to ensnare opponents in the meshes of law, prolong cases brought before trial, and emasculate unpopular legislation. The local bar buttressed its enviable position by restricting the number of "Avoués" who could practice and making this privilege a monopoly of foremost French families. Because of its intimate association with planters and merchants through intermarriage, investment, and a common concern to defend the status quo, as well as its mastery of the obscurities of French commercial and land law, the legal fraternity dominated to an extraordinary degree the life of the whole community and exploited that predominance for selfish ends. Whenever the British Government devised incongenial policies or threatened to undermine the oligarchy's ascendancy, judges and lawyers could and did unashamedly empty the Courts to protect their sectoral interests. British merchants and creditors, for example, who, by 1832, apparently held mortgages on all but one of the island's sugar plantations, protested regularly about being defrauded by Mauritian debtors because of partisan "Avoués" and antiquated French laws so 'remarkably convenient for cheating the British out of their money'. They persistently urged the Colonial Office to introduce English laws and English Judges"* .

The 1920s witnessed the collapse of the sugar industry, the decline of cultivation of sugar as well as the reduction of sugar produced by small planters, followed by the emigration of others to South Africa. At the same time occurred the policy of centralization and concentration up to this day.

At the closing date of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010, the Truth and Justice Commission received some 230 files from claimants in Mauritius and 30 others from Rodrigues, to be analysed and assessed in order to find out how dispossession occurred. The background highlighted above gives an idea of how things happened at different periods of our history.

The views of the Commission are expressed in each case submitted, with recommendations and advice to the claimants and deponents, who called at the Office of the Truth and Justice Commission during these last few months, are also included.

Some 80 other files could not be attended to due to lateness of submission of claims and the time constraint. The categorisation and number of cases set before the Commission between July 2009 and June 2010 are established as follows.

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<sup>2</sup> Buchanan to Lefevre, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1833, enclosing extract of a letter of 21<sup>st</sup> February 1833, C.O. 167/173

Sugar (Estate) Company	18
Sale by Levy	7
Prescription	19
Metayer	6
Dispossession	16
CHA	8
Succession	29
Court cases	24
Frivolous	62
Wills & Testaments	6
State Land	2
Non-land cases	6
Miscellaneous	27
Total	<b>230</b>

**CONVERSION TABLES**

**LENGTH**

1 metre	=	3.2808 ft	1 foot	=	0.3048 metre
1 metre	=	3.0784 ft (French)	1 foot (French)	=	0.3248 metre
1 metre	=	0.30784 gaulette	1 gaulette	=	3.2484 metre
1 metre	=	0.513 toise	1 toise	=	1.949 metre
1 kilometre	=	0.6214 mile	1 mile	=	1.6093 km
1 French foot	=	1.065 English foot	1 perche	=	20 feet (French)

**AREA**

1 m <sup>2</sup>	=	10.764 sq ft	1 sq foot	=	0.0929 m <sup>2</sup>
1 m <sup>2</sup>	=	1.196 sq yard	1 sq yard	=	0.8361 m <sup>2</sup>
1 m <sup>2</sup>	=	0.2632 sq toise	1 sq toise	=	3.80 m <sup>2</sup>
1 hectare	=	10,000 m <sup>2</sup>	1 acre	=	4046.9 m <sup>2</sup>
	=	2.4711 acres	1 arpent	=	4220.9 m <sup>2</sup>
	=	2.3692 arpents		=	100 sq perches
1 km <sup>2</sup>	=	0.3931 sq mile	1 sq perche	=	11.11 sq toises
			1 sq mile	=	259 hectares

**CASE NAME: LA FLECHE**

TJC/L/0002/ANTOINE MARIE NOELLE AND OTHERS

The applicant, Marie Noëlle Antoine *born* Rome, heiress of Auguste La Flèche, together with other members of her family, state that Auguste La Flèche bought on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1845 a plot of land from one Jean Baptiste Permout and his wife Honorine Yandel. The plot of land of approximately 118 *Arpents* formed part of “*une habitation plus grande contenance*” situated at ‘*Quartier de la Rivière Noire*’, *lieu dit “Les Plaines Saint Pierre.”* It has been said that due to the inability of La Flèche to pay for the purchase of the land, it has been seized. But, the family avers that the official record underlines that “*le dit jugement n’a pas été transcrit car dans la Case hypothécaire de Auguste La Flèche, dit Siccard, la mention de saisie ne figure pas*”. In the «*Case hypothécaire*» of J. Baptiste Permout, there has been ‘*deux ventes du même terrain de 118 A 00 p à deux personnes différentes: l’un à M. Auguste La Flèche le 11.02.1845 et l’autre au prétendu Mon. et Madame Joseph Gélin le 30.11.1846. Mais étant donné que Monsieur Auguste La Flèche a eu main levée de Mon et Madame J.S Permout en date du 27 Février 1847 et qu’aucun jugement de saisie n’a été transcrit, j’en conclu alors que les droits de Auguste La Flèche, dit Siccard n’est pas éteint...*’ (p. 323 from *Rapport de Constat* of Jean Chaton Land surveyor on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2003).

The 118 *Arpents* belonging to Auguste La Flèche, states the applicant, was illegally sold being included in the sale of 312 *Arpents* to Brousse de la Borde and Marguerite Lucia Camoin.

The plot of 312 *Arpents* was sold several times.

In 1946, the land was sold to one Abdoolatif Hosseman.

On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2002, by order of Supreme Court, Raffic Osman and Karim Osman who were occupying the land illegally after formal claims, were summoned to quit and leave and vacate completely the said portion of land of 118 *Arpents* on request of the heirs of Auguste La Flèche (Summons from Supreme Court *refers*).

On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2002, there was a writ from the Supreme Court regarding withdrawal of the application.

The applicant declares that her uncle, Jules Edouard Rome (now deceased), represented the family in Court. The family ignores what has happened really on that day. Jules Edouard Rome was possibly forced into a decision due to the fact that there was no Land surveyor report to support the ownership of the La Flèche family.

The family restarted procedures to get back the land as the land is still there. She often goes there. There is still a chapel in ruins and tombs, which the elders say, are La Flèche family tombs.

In a second claim, the La Flèche family avers that Dame Babet, Widow La Flèche, mother of Auguste La Flèche obtained a “*Titre de concession*” at the Emplacement Ilôt (section 86 No 3) on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1836. The extents of the 2 portions of land are of 18 toises and 6 ft and 7 toises 2 ft. respectively. The land is found at Royal Road, Port-Louis.

She says that, at present, the land is a car parking owned by four persons. She says that the bakery owned by Auguste La Flèche was situated there.

In a third case laid before the Commission, Marie Noëlle Antoine says that Aristide La Flèche owned several plots of land in Rose Hill.

Concerning claims 1 & 2, the applicant submitted several documents to support their claims, but no document was submitted for Case 3.

The family requests the Commission to undertake searches and to assist them in getting their land back.

After having lengthily perused the file, the Commission has come to the following conclusion:-

In virtue of title deed transcribed in Volume 44 No. 380, Jean-Baptiste Permont sold to Auguste La Flèche a plot of land of an extent of 118 *Arpents* situated at Black-River on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1845.

In virtue of title deed transcribed in Volume 46 No. 233, Jean-Baptiste Permont exchanged the same plot of land of 118 *Arpents* situated at Black River against a plot of land of 220 toises situated at Mahébourg, belonging to Joseph Gelin and his wife on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1846.

On page 2 of the above-mentioned title deed (TV 46 No. 233) it is specified that due to the non-payment of the sale price of the land the '*resolution*' thereof has been pronounced by the consent of the said La Flèche '*par sentence du tribunal de première instances de cette île en date du six avril dernier (1846) dument enregistré le 27 du même mois RC 69 No. 3047 en droit de vingt livres sterling et signifie par exploit de Panguy, huissier en date du 25 novembre courant (1846). L'original duquel exploit, enregistré le dit jour vingt cinq novembre courant (1846) est demeuré annexé, après avoir été de lui certifié véritable et signé en présence des notaires soussigné - la dite résolution de vente a été prononcé par le tribunal pour les dits Sieur et Dame Permont être et redevenir propriétaires du dit bien franc et quitte de toutes charges et hypothèques du fait du dit Sieur La Flèche dit Sicard, et ce aux termes de la dite sentence sus-relatée.*'

It is to be noted that the above-mentioned fact has not been taken in consideration by late Jean Chaton in his report dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 2003.

Furthermore, as matters stand as at today, it is worth noting that the claim made by the heirs of La Flèche is not without any difficulty particularly on a legal standpoint, the occupation by the Document lacks all the requisites of occupation as it has not been continuous, peaceful, public, non-equivocal, uninterrupted, *animo domini*, '*à titre de propriétaire*' and apparent.

It is also the claim of the applicant that the land has been illegally sold in a sale of 312 *Arpents*, and same was sold several times and lately in 1946 to A. Hosseman. The fact remains a case before the Supreme Court was entered by the heirs claimant ordering Osman and parties to quit, leave and vacate but same was withdrawn by the claimant's Attorney on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2002, "*with costs*".

This withdrawal before the Court speaks volume in terms of the ownership of the claimant, with regard to the veracity and their interest in vindicating their rights over the property.

On the other hand, it is the contention of the Land Surveyor T. Chaton, to the effect that the "*rights of the claimant*" is still a live issue.

Based on his reports, Chaton, henceforth, acknowledged that the company, '*The New Belle Isle Estate Ltd*' is the owners of a land situate at Plaines Saint Pierre of 118 *Arpents* and same has been duly transcribed (TV No. 504 and 506).

There is also undisputed issue that by virtue of the title deed Volume 46 No. 233 that J.B Permont exchanged the plot of 118 *Arpents* against a plot of 225 toises situated at Mahébourg belonging to Joseph Gelin and his wife on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1846. This explains why the issue of transcription has not been effected since the land "*in lite*" was exchanged (TV 31 No. 20).

It is also of interest to note that upon the findings of Chaton, he concluded as follows: «*La compagnie New Belle Isle Estate Ltd est propriétaire d'un terrain de 118 A et ce terrain y trouve l'ancienne Usine et l'Etablissement principal d'une contenance de 118 A*» and Chaton went on '*le terrain des héritiers La Flèche est doté de seulement d'une mine et quelques tombes anciennes mais pas de bâtiments administratifs...*'

Even though the Auguste La Flèche has been initially the owner of the land in title as per the title deed Volume 44 No. 380 on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1845, the said Auguste La Flèche has relinquished such right as per the title deed TV 46 No. 233 due to the non-payment of the sale price of the land.

Due to the fact that the tribunal had resolved (annulled) the first title deed drawn up in the name of Auguste La Flèche, the heirs of late Auguste La Flèche do not have any right on the relevant plot of land.

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**CASE NAME: TANCREL**

TJC/L/0003/TANCREL DANIELLE &amp; OTHERS

The deponents (Joan Pierre Tancrel and Mrs Marie Danielle Fitzgerald, born Tancrel) claimed to be the direct and legitimate heirs of late Antoine Tancrel, who was among the first French *colons* settling in Mauritius and who had acquired several plots of land in the District of Flacq situated at Rivière Coignard, Camp de Masque.

In support of their claim, they have submitted some documents before the Commission, namely for a plot of land of the extent of 86 *Arpents* at Rivière Coignard and for another plot of land of the extent of 452A15 perches at Camp de Masque.

Most of the descendants of the Tancrel family now live abroad - South Africa, England, America, and France. The deponents find it hard to gather information on their family and on the land their ancestors possessed. They have, nevertheless, done quite a bit of research to that effect.

The deponents aver that, initially, the Tancrels had about 1,000 *Arpents* in the East of Mauritius, most of them occupied now by FUEL Sugar Estate.

It appears also that in the nineteenth century (around 1850), one Tancrel having had children with slaves would be classified as *Gens de couleur*. This state of affairs seems to be the root of the problems with regard to land dispossession.

Some 30 years ago, some relatives living in UK and France visited Mauritius and went to discuss with some Lawyers/Attorneys who, in turn are the descendants of Gujadhur family. They had a rough time and could not come up with any clarifications. It is noted that the Gujadhurs possessed the sugar estates L'Unité and L'Union which, after merging with other sugar estates, became FUEL. The Tancrels had land which formed part of L'Unité.

The Commission made several suggestions to the deponents to assist them in their research: Consulting the Registry of Cemeteries, les Registres Paroissiaux, *Government Gazette* and *Mauritius Almanac*, the Report on Sugar Unrest in 1937 in Flacq.

This is a complex case with many loose ends, but, nevertheless, it seems to be a typical case of dispossession by Sugar Estates, of land belonging to a French *colon*, who had children with a woman slave.

The family was advised to contact a Land Surveyor to make a "*Constat Report*" to enable them to pursue further their claim. They retain the services of Ravindrananth Bhurtun, Land Surveyor, for a "*Constat Report*".

In a Report drawn up on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011 Registered in Reg A 770 No. 4957, Land surveyor R. Bhurtun after having made searches about the location and ownership of the 86 *Arpents* located the land at Gibraltar, Camp de Masque, sandwiched between concessions Buttié, Routier and Marcotte as morefully indicated on his plan.

It is found in the middle and is mingled with the sugarcane plantations of Flacq United Estates Limited. R. Bhurtun confirms in his Report that the land of 86 *Arpents* is neither found in the "*Casier Hypothécaire*" of FUEL, nor in their title deeds. Moreover, that portion of land did not undergo any "*mutation de propriété*" todate.

The Surveyor Bhurtun concludes that the plan of concession Tancrel does fit on the now latest Map of LAVIMS from the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

The Chief Executive of FUEL, M.B.A. Joseph Vaudin was summoned before the Commission on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to give evidence and produce documents relating to the occupation of the 86

*Arpents* which is being claimed by heirs of late Antoine Tancred on the basis of a deed dated 19<sup>th</sup> July 1783.

The Commission is not satisfied with the explanation given by the Chief Executive of FUEL as regards their ownership over that plot of land as no mention is made in their *Domaine Book* for *Domaine Camp de Masque* save "*that the land in question has been in continuous and uninterrupted occupation by FUEL since 1938 and before by Constance Maness*". In other words, FUEL has integrated the portion of 86 *Arpents* without any supporting title.

One good note is that the land of the Tancred family appears on their plan submitted to the Commission and is astride on *Domaine Camp de Masque* and *Domaine Gibraltar*.

The documents submitted by ENL have been remitted to the Tancred family for further action at their end with a view to recover their land. It is up to them now to look for the old family cemetery, which they aver has been fenced by FUEL.

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#### **CASE NAME: MAYEUR/ CAZALENS/KISNORBO**

TJC/L/0004/ KISNORBO LOUIS.E.DIDIER & others

The applicant, Louis Eric Didier Kisnorbo, avers he is one of the heirs of Nicholas Mayeur on son's and daughter's side. The applicant's grandmother, late Anne Kisnorbo, born Cazalens, was the direct and legitimate heir of Nicholas Mayeur. Nicholas Mayeur acquired a property of 264 *Arpents* 90 of which 200 *Arpents* are left. Nicholas Mayeur died on March 1809 on his property at *Trois Ilots Olivia, Flacq*. In his will he gave his property of 210 *Arpents* to (1) Joseph Mayeur his son, "*noir libre*", (2) Marie Michèle Mayeur, his daughter "*Femme de Couleur*". He appointed as executor of his will, his neighbour, Pierre Marquet also called Cottry who was, at that time, the greatest land owner of *Trois Ilots*. Cottry withdrew as executor of his will and occupied the property (Document 2) as Joseph and Michèle Mayeur could not inherit from their father as le *Code Decaen* interdicted them as offspring of slaves, to inherit from their father who was a white man.

Pierre Marquet, also called Cottry, died on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1825 and on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1826, his widow, Hortense Marquet, also called Cottry, declared that the 200 *Arpents* belonged to Cottry and she bought back the shares of her children. This fraudulent acquisition is transcribed in the "*Bureau des Hypothèques*" twenty-six years after as evidenced by N53/193, allowing enough time to plead prescription. Widow Marquet, also called Cottry, has not been able to produce the title deed during this sale/acquisition by auction in one lot of the property from 1<sup>st</sup> February 1826 until today. It is written in Document 4: "*Les titres de propriété de l'immeuble formant le second lot se trouvant perdu ou à dire, l'adjudicataire du dit lot ne pourra exiger d'autre titres que le procès verbal d'adjudication...*"

From this day up to now, the title deed of the property of Nicolas Mayeur has never been produced during the successive changes of proprietors, neither by the vendors nor by the buyers not even by the different notaries.

According to Octave Béchet, in his book entitled *Les anciennes Sucrieries de l'île Maurice* (1960), the old property *L'Etoile* belonging to Dalais family, is delimited by the property belonging to Mayeur. According to Béchet, the Mayeur or heirs are still the owners.

In their request before the Commission, the heirs want:

- Restitution of the land to the heirs; and
- Compensation for illegal occupation of land and loss of use by legal heirs.

Even if the applicant has submitted his family tree, the Commission is still awaiting the "*Affidavit de Succession*" for ease of reference of "*Succession Mayeur*".

The Commission not only analysed the nature of the claim which is that of '*Dispossession of 200 Acres at Trois Ilots by W Marguet dit Cothrey, now land occupied by Deep River Beau Champ Sugar Estates to the detriment of Nicolas Mayeur*', but the case was first heard on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009, when Louis Eric Didier Kisorbo deposed as one of the heirs and succession of Nicolas Mayeur who died in 1809 but who purchased during his lifetime a property admeasuring 264 *Arpents* 90 perches situated at the left bank of '*La Grande Rivière du Canton des Trois Ilots*', in terms of a deed drawn up on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1797 by Notary Jean-François Arnaud and preserved at the National Archives ("*Répertoire*" NA538/7 No. 472).

According to the hearing summary, his request was as follows:

- That the Commission helps him to repossess a plot of land of 200 Acres, being what remains of the 264 *Arpents* 90 mentioned above and which is presently occupied by Deep River Beau Champ and to obtain as well reparation or damages.
- Invites the Commission to consider the whole issue of the law dealing with prescription as it prevents the descendants of slaves from being able to recuperate land lost as a result of the slave status of the ancestors.

Another hearing session was held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

At that hearing, Didier Kisorbo was assisted by Land Surveyor, R. Bhurtun. The latter filed a '*Rapport de constat*' in which he holds the view that Deep River Beau Champ not only has no title to the 200 *Arpents* being occupied but that the land is being occupied illegally and unlawfully by false title deed links, description, limit and extent, and has usurped the properties and rights of heirs.

In support of his views mentioned above R. Bhurtun avers the following:-

- Nicolas Mayeur died in 1809 and left as heirs Joseph Mayeur and Marie Michelle Mayeur. The extent of the land at his death was 200 *Arpents* 90, following the excision and sale of three portions of land (30 *Arpents*, 20 *Arpents* and 14 *Arpents*) from the original extent of 264 *Arpents* 90.
- There is no record that the land has ever been sold or ceded.
- The land is located near Kewal Nagar Village and adjoins concession Abraham.
- There is no connection between the 264 *Arpents* 90 and the 200 *Arpents* purchased by Deep River Beauchamp.
- Mr. Nicolas Mayeur bequeathed the property to the two heirs above-named.
- The majority of the land is now occupied by Deep River Beauchamp Company Ltd for cane plantation and partly by the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Memorial Garden and Monument.
- The land owned by Deep River Beauchamp, 200 *Arpents* in terms of the deed transcribed in Volume 523 No. 163 is triangular in shape and its description does not tally with the four sided land which Mr. S. Kisorbo claims to belong to the heirs Mayeur.

The representative of Deep River Beau Champ Sugar Estate attended the hearing session on the same day, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011, and submitted on that day a copy of its title deed together with a brief prepared by the Company's Notary in relation to the 200 *Arpents*.

The Company claims that its ownership of the 200 *Arpents* stems from the acquisition made from MAICO in September 1948 and that its origin goes up to 26<sup>th</sup> September 1882 when Société Beauchamp Sugar Estates Company Limited acquired the said portion of land from Alcide Sornay, Thomy Mamet and Evénor Dubois and his wife in terms of TV 150/228.

In addition, it is worthy to note that at the hearing session the CEO stated that in the past the Company had solved existing land issues by asking the two Land surveyors to study the case and come in with a full history of the land.

Subsequent to the hearing session, an official letter was sent to the Company on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2011 with a formal request to let the Commission to know whether the land claimed by Louis Didier Kisorbo within the limits shown on an enclosed plan was owned by the Company. The reply of the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2011 confirmed that the land is comprised in the Company's estate land and the same brief handed over on the day of hearing was enclosed.

The Commission observes that there is evidence that Nicolas Mayeur did purchase a portion of land at Trois Ilots and that at his death, he owned an area of 200 *Arpents* 90.

On the other hand, it is not clear what happened at his death to the land and what is the link, if any, between that plot of land and the 200 *Arpents* purchased by Beau Champ in terms of a notarial deed.

The Commission is faced with a claim whereby a party claims to have ownership rights over a portion of land of an extent of 200 *Arpents* 10 on the strength of the deed preserved at the National Archives as mentioned above; whereas the other interested party claims to have ownership rights in respect of a portion of land of an extent of 200 *Arpents* on the strength of the deed transcribed in Volume 523/163.

In view of the issue raised regarding the location of both portions of land which, for all the Commission knows, may also be one and the same land, it would be in the interests of Louis Didier Kisorbo to request his surveyor to liaise with the Company's surveyor and sort out the location issue in the first instance.

The other alternative is to seek redress in a Court of Law if he feels he has a strong case but at this stage, it will be difficult for him to support his claim without a proper plan which can only be produced if he has access to the land.

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**CASE NAME: FRICHOT**

*TJC/L/0005/FRICHOT SERGE CLAUDE A. & OTHERS  
Cross Reference: GENEVIEVE Paul Jose TJC/L/0128*

Serge Claude Frichot, the applicant, and other members of the family, claim that they are the heirs of Jean Martin Frichot who married Marguerite Frichot *born* Panon. In a letter addressed to the Commission, the applicants affirm that the family hired the services of several Notaries, Attorney-at-law and Land surveyors. According to the applicants, these people have gone through long lasting procedures which have produced none of the awaiting results.

**Case 1**

The applicants claim that they are the rightful heirs of a plot of land of 25 *Acre*s at Black River. They denounce that they have been victims of some ill-intentioned persons who have been illegally occupying their land. They also relate that the adverse party actually occupying the land (illegally) has erected a Real Estate project on 24 *Acre*s of land out of the 25 available. The applicants deplore the fact that no sanctions have been taken against this project even if several instructions have been received on their behalf at the Bar at law.

**Case 2**

The applicants affirm that they also own a portion of land at Bambous. The land has been and is still illegally occupied by a company named Belle Isle. The said company belonged to Victoire Ducasse who donated the property to her children including Laurestin Frichot, their forefather. The applicants relate that they were able to obtain an authorization from the Supreme Court of Mauritius in 2003 in order to survey the land. But according to them, the adverse party successfully intimidated the Land surveyors. They say that their forefathers' heritage has been standing for

years on the land namely a chapel, some tombstones and the ruins of an ancient factory. All of these have been destroyed by means of bulldozers by the adverse party.

**Case 3**

A plot of land, of 156 Acres at Albion, inherited by the heirs Frichot has been identified and surveyed. But the applicants affirm that they have met strong resistance from the adverse party: Médine Sugar Estate. This latter has even lodged an injunction before the Court of law. The case is actually before the Supreme Court; the Médine Sugar Estate has failed to appear and has deliberately postponed the case several times. Since then, Médine Sugar Estate, with the help of bulldozers, has been damaging all the boundary stones and landmarks despite the Court's order preventing both parties to have access to the said land.

**Case 4**

The Domaine Les Pailles, also known as "*Concession Mon Boudoir*" in the past, belonged to Marguerite Panon who is the ancestor of applicants. The land is of an extent of 308 acres. The applicants deplore the fact that they have not been able to survey the land till now.

The applicants submitted several documents to the Commission to support their claims and aver that they remain available to produce more relevant documents before the Commission as when required.

Furthermore, the applicants declare that their modest background has made that they have been vulnerable to ill - intentioned persons having easy access to finance and political backing. They claim that they cannot afford to lose the plots of land purchased by their forefathers without putting out the least fight. They request the necessary assistance of the Commission to carry out land surveying, claim or reclaim of their land.

The Commission analysed all the documents submitted, namely a summary of the request made by Serge Claude A. Frichot, following his letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009 to the Commission for remedial action in regard to four portions of land.

- A letter signed by Attorney-at-law Indu M. Padya was sent to the then Minister of Housing & Lands, Honourable Asraf Dullul, dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 2006 listing several portions of land in which the heirs of Frichot claim they have rights. It is not known what action, if any, has been taken by the Ministry.
- Reference is also made in the letter to two Court cases (SCR1/57B/04 S SCR No 5A/104/1) which had been brought before the Supreme Court some time back and which were even fixed for merits on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2004 and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

No decision can be taken by the Commission at this stage as the cases mentioned above are still pending before the Court.

The Commission was informed that the three Land Surveyors Ng Tong Ng Wah, Dwarka and D.D. Spéville would report back to the Supreme Court before Judge Devat after 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

When called at the Commission, Serge Frichot met Commissioner Jacques David on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011. The Court cases are now scheduled to be heard in March 2012.

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**CASE NAME: FRANÇOIS**

*TJC/ L/006/François Jacques Herold & Others*

Two plots of private land (130 - 134 toises) belong to Emile François and 46 toises to Auberge François respectively. The land is situated at La Gaulette approximately opposite to the

Débarcadère near the Community centre on which heirs of both Emile François and Auberger François are living.

In front of this plot of land, is found a plot of State land which Jean Emile François has been cultivating with mango trees, vegetables on which is found the septic tank and a right of way leading to the main road. The family has made several requests to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the lease of this plot of land. Requests have been acknowledged by Ministry of Housing and Lands to Joseph Lindsay François on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2005. Affidavits have been sworn in respectively by Joseph Lindsay François, son of Emile François on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2005, regarding a cafeteria to be built on the land instead of an orchard. At the same date, Marc Lindley Dario François (grandson of Auberger François) declares that he is still occupying the land and cultivating it. No reply has been received from the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Government Land surveyors, in the company of one B. Chunwan, admeasured the land with red paint. The Ministry of Housing and Lands has, apparently allocated the land to someone else as a CWA "*compteur*" has already been installed there.

The François family, who has been looking after this plot of land over years, considers that the lease should be given to them instead.

The Commission is of the opinion that the complaint concerns State land at La Gulette and a right of way, a direct access claimed by Jacques Herold François over an uncommitted State land. Being given that the lessor (Government) has now disposed the land in favour of another person for the construction of a building for commercial purposes, the applicant, as such, has no interest on that committed State land.

In view of the fact that the land which they are claiming is State land, the Commission cannot consider the application and has advised the François family to address their complaint to the Ombudsperson if they still feel aggrieved.

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#### **CASE NAME: PAULIN**

*TJC/ L/0007/PAULIN JEAN JOSÉ AND OTHERS*

Jean José Paulin, the applicant, laid two cases before the Commission to investigate.

#### **Case 1**

Dorval Mauvais Oeil and his wife Estelle Le Filou purchased a plot of land from Ernest Leclézio of 1 Acre (TV 47/229). The plot of land was divided in two parts whereby Dorval Mauvais Oeil and his wife Estelle Le Filou occupied the South Eastern part and Célestine Julie, the concubine of Dorval Mauvais Oeil occupied the North Western part.

Marie Gisèle Paulin, applicant's mother and Louis Raphaël Bisséral, applicant's uncle sold, on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1996 to applicant a plot of land admeasuring 207.66m<sup>2</sup> found at Ste. Croix, Port Louis, according to PV of surveyor Dumazel (LS 33/116 MF 68/19-20G). The aforesaid plot of 207.66m<sup>2</sup> formed part of a plot admeasuring 607.66 m<sup>2</sup>; this latter plot itself being the remaining part of a plot of land of 50 perches after the sales of two plots of 6 and 25 perches respectively by Louis Raphael Paulin (TV 679/95).

Gisèle Paulin and Raphael Bisséral, on the other hand, sold a plot of land of extent 173.40 m<sup>2</sup> to one Jose Aza, of Cité La Cure Port Louis, as evidenced by LS 34/2102.

Applicant's uncle told him that the plot of land of extent of 50 perches has never been sold by Célestine Julie. When she died, the Mauvais Oeil family stayed on the land. The heirs, Raphael Bisséral & Gisèle Paulin stayed there too. The land is still bare. The applicant still considers that the family is the heirs of this plot of land.

The request to the Commission was to investigate whether the plot of the land of 50 perches is still the family property.

## Case 2

Applicant's uncle Raphael was owner of a plot of land at Grand Gaube, which, avers the applicant, inherited from his father. He does not know the exact location of the land. Six years back, applicant says that he found Document in Registrar General's Office related to this land. He adds that he often travels abroad. So, when he came back in 2007 to obtain the Document, he found that the page was torn from the Register.

The Commission analysed the case after having undertaken searches in the present case.

Dorval Mauvais Oeil and Estelle Le Filou died respectively on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1858 and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1860. Jean Joselin Mauvais Oeil, who indeed, inherited a plot of land, died on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1877 leaving behind his heirs Marie Fichiana, Idea and Noël Mauvais Oeil, born from his union with Cécile L'Étendu.

Idéa Mauvais Oeil passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1937 left as heir Raphaël Bisséral, still alive and unmarried.

Noël Mauvais Oeil passed away on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1964 leaving as heir her sister Fichiana.

Marie Fichiana Mauvais Oeil, who passed away on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1995, had married one Louis Raphaël Paulin - the latter passed away on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1957 - and left behind as heir a daughter, Marie Gisèle Paulin.

- Applicants believed that they are the heirs of late Célestine Julie who owned the plot of land of extent of 50 perches at Champville, Vallée-des-Prêtres, in virtue of title deed TV 47 No. 229 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1847.
- As per TV 478 No. 229, Alexis Ernest Leclézio sold to Dorval Mauvais Oeil, Estelle Le Filou and Célestine Julie a plot of land of the extent of 1 *Arpent* at Vallée-des-Prêtres.
- According to Notarial Deed drawn up Freddy Audibert, as transcribed in Volume 769 No. 123, dated 10<sup>th</sup> December 1958, the heirs of Célestine Julie namely:
  - Noël Evariste Dorval,
  - Noëlie Evariste Dorval (wife of Bertin Quirin), and
  - Ida Vigoureux (widow of late Ange Evariste Dorval)

sold the 50 perches (being the share of late Célestine Julie in the above property) to Seewoocomar Indur.

In the light of the above, the applicants have no right on the property of 50 perches, nor do they own other plots of land apart from the remainder of the plot at Vallée-des-Prêtres.

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## CASE NAME: LEMIÈRE

*TJC /L/0008/ LEMIÈRE PAUL AND OTHERS*

Paul Lemière, in the name of his family, submitted several cases before the Commission, all related to land claims at Petite Rivière Noire, as well as a welter of Documents to sustain these claims.

**Case 1**

The applicant avers that In 1856, Joseph Hippolyte Lemière owned a '*titre de propriété*' as evidenced by TV 65/23, ¼ '*indivise*' of a plot of land of 1400 *Arpents*, that is, 350 *Arpents* situated at Bois Puant, Petite Rivière Noire, in front of Ilot Fortier. In the plan of "*Pas Géométriques*" given to Société Koenig, that "*concession*" does not form part of the property of Salines Koenig. On this plan are also indicated "*concession*" Genève, "*concession*" Messein & "*concession*" Duclos. Following research, the applicant says that he has found in the "*Précis Terrier de l'Île Maurice*" that "*concessions*" Duclos is said to be of an extent of 1400 *Arpents* and in Code Decaen.

In his Master plan, the *Société Koenig Frères* has cancelled the road which comes from the Mountain, along Bois Puant, the water reservoir towards the "*Barachois*" and has included it illegally in his portion of land. The applicant avers that the evidence of this road in the plan of the CWA, still exists both on Google Earth and in the plan of the "*Département des Bois et Forêts*". The portion of land of 1400 *Arpents* has been reduced to 1210 *Arpents* through irregular recuperation, avers the applicant, basing himself on the "*Rapport Langlois*", submitted to the Commission. In the report of surveyor Chaton, it is mentioned that "*Société Koenig Frères*" has included the land of the heirs Lemière in their portion by cancelling the landmark.

According to research in the Government Domain Book, says Paul Lemière, the "*Barachois*" does not form part of the State's property made up of 23 *Arpents*, 50 *Arpents* and 5 *Arpents* respectively. The applicant sustains that the "*Barachois*" should have belonged to the heirs Lemière as well as the '*Pas Géométriques*' which are found opposite the triangular lower part of "*concession*" Duclos.

The "*Société Koenig Frères*" is the owner of 686 *Arpents* at La Grande Rivière Noire, where the limits of their land end at Petite Rivière Noire, with the "*concession*" Duclos being the bordering line between the two "*concessions*". According to this deed, they have never been the owner of "*concession*" Duclos, avers the applicant. However at present, "*the Master plan of Société Koenig indicates that all the lower part is theirs*", says the applicant.

Paul Lemière contests the Master plan done by Surveyor J.C D'Hotman de Villiers. According to the lease, the "*concession*" Duclos has never been the property of "*Société Koenig Frères*".

**Case 2**

The lease of '*Pas Géométriques*' as a whole (113 *Arpents*) has been taken back by the Government on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1999.

The applicant has sent letters to the Ministry of Housing and Lands as well as to "*Société Koenig Frères*", asking them to leave the land. They have never done so. On the contrary they have "*regularize*" their case on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005; thus, bringing the extension of the land leased to 162 *Arpents* (Articles in *Le Cernéen* of 13<sup>th</sup> November 2007). The "*Société Koenig Frères*", at present known and registered as the "*Société Contour Bornes*", occupies a lease of 10.5 *Arpents* of '*Pas Géométriques*'. The public roads have been diverted. The applicant contests also the closing down of the public road between "*concession*" Duclos and "*concession*" Messein.

Furthermore, the applicant contests the Government action concerning the "*Barachois*", saying that this is contrary to the Ramsar International Convention as per the "*Rapport d'Arpentage de Delcourt 1912*". He also contests the "*Société Contour Bornes*" who has closed the road leading to the "*Batterie de l'Harmonie*".

**Case 3**

Eugène de Ravel and Maroussem own a plot of land of 1210 *Arpents*. They have sold the said plot of land to "*Société Palmyre*" owned by the Hardy family. The land surveyed originated from a plot of land of 1400 *Arpents* reduced to 1210 *Arpents* irregularly. The applicant contests the survey because he said that as a landowner, he was not convened when the survey was made.

He has entered a case in Court against:

1. Société de Ravel
2. Société Palmyre
3. New Mauritius Hotels
4. CWA regarding the occupation of this land.
5. Ministry of Housing and Lands

The case was heard for the first time on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009 and was postponed to 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2009.

The applicant requests the Commission to make an enquiry so that the heirs Lemière could get back their land which still exists in the "*Casier hypothécaire*" of the family.

The Commission analysed and discussed lengthily on the claims.

Paul Lemière stated that his ancestor, the late Hippolyte Lemière, was the owner of one quarter (¼) undivided rights in an original portion of land of an extent of 1400 *Arpents* (590.90 Hectares) situated at Petite Rivière Noire (Ex-*concession* Duclos) for having purchased same from the late Gaston Martin Moncamp on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1858, as transcribed in TV 65 No. 23 which authentic deed of sale was drawn up by Me. Jean Baptiste Guimbeau, Notary Public.

The description of the boundaries of the land "*in lite*" is found in the above-mentioned authentic deed which reads as follows:

- a. *"D'un côté par la propriété de Monsieur Genève;*
- b. *Vers le Nord par la Route publique conduisant au bord de la mer;*
- c. *Vers le Nord Ouest par la baie de la Petite Rivière Noire;*
- d. *Vers le Sud Ouest par la propriété Vergoz; et*
- e. *Du dernier côté vers la montagne par la propriété Belle vue".*

The late Hippolyte Lemière, in virtue of the authentic deed mentioned in paragraph 1, was therefore entitled to an extent of 350 *Arpents* (147.74 Hectares) taken from the original portion of land mentioned of 1400 *Arpents* (590.90 Hectares), this being the afore-mentioned one quarter (¼) undivided rights in the land "*in lite*". The plaintiff avers that the afore-mentioned one quarter (¼) undivided rights in the land "*in lite*" have never been subject to any sale, transfer, conveyance, nor by any of his heirs or successors, as evidenced by *Repertory 38 No. 102* which has remained unchanged to date with no marginal entries of any further sales or transactions whatsoever. He further avers that he and the other heirs of the said Late Hippolyte Lemière are, in truth and in fact, the co-owners of a portion of land of an extent of 350 *Arpents* (147.74 Hectares) contained within the original portion of land mentioned of 1400 *Arpents* (590.90 Hectares) this being the afore-mentioned one quarter (¼) undivided rights in that portion of which has devolved to them in their capacities as legal heirs and successors of the Late Hippolyte Lemière.

Searches have revealed the following:

- According to the title deed TV 65 No. 23 transcribed on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1858, Late Hippolyte Lemière purchased from Late Philippe Gaston Martin Moncamp ¼ undivided rights in the property of 1400 *Arpents* at Les Salines, Black River, in consideration of a sum of "*6500 piastres*". The last paragraph of the said deed TV 65/23 reads:- "*A la sûreté et garantie dudit prix de vente en capital et intérêts le quarts «indivis» dudit bien demeure par privilège spécial affecté et hypothéqué conformément à la loi*";
- As per records in the Repertory book at the Registrar-General's Office, the sale of the ¼ undivided rights to Hippolyte Lemière had remained affected and burdened by the mortgage which had never been erased;
- Initially, the said property of 1400 *Arpents* was adjudged on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1857 to the above-mentioned late Philippe Gaston Martin Moncamp at a sale by licitation before the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court as evidenced by title-deed TV 64 No. 81 in consideration of a sale of \$25,000;
- From a deed transcribed on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1866 in TV 90 No. 65, a sale by auction by "*Folle Enchère*" was prosecuted against both the above-named Philippe Gaston Martin Moncamp

and Hippolyte Lemière. They had not justified, having fulfilled the conditions under which Philippe Gaston Martin Moncamp became purchaser of the property of 1400 *Arpents*. The property was thus adjudged as evidenced by the said deed TV 90/65 to one Valey Dabbadie before the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court. Since then, the said property had changed ownership several times until it was finally acquired by "*La Société Palmyre*" by virtue of the title-deed transcribed on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1953 in TV 589 No. 97; and

- In 1882, when the subject site of 1400 *Arpents* had been in the name of Widow Pierre Dioré & Ors as per deed TV 147 No. 45, it was even surveyed at the request of the co-owners in the presence of a Government Surveyor and other parties. A memorandum of survey of the site was found to be of an extent of 1210 *Arpents*, was also drawn up on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1882 by the late Sworn Land surveyor, Arthur Langlois, signed by all the parties (late Hippolyte Lemière was not a party as he was not the owner of any rights in the property) and registered in Register LS 19 No.1898.

On the basis of the above, the claim of heirs Lemière of any rights in the property at Les Salines, as per title deed TV 65 No. 23, and the allegation of encroachment on the property have no foundation.

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**CASE NAME: MARTIAL/RATENA (RATNA)**

*TJC/L/0010 MARTIAL LOUIS BERTY*

This case was among the first cases to be deposited at the Commission. In working out the dossier it was found that there was no means to contact Louis Berty Martial in order to work out a case summary, the address and phone number being unavailable. Hence, the dossier is constituted only of documents submitted without any request or survey.

Most unfortunately, as the title deed dates back to 1810, being a sale for Joseph Jean Lejuge to M. H. Ratena of 2 plots of lands of an aggregate extent of 25 *Arpents* 82, it would have been an interesting case to study. No search can be carried out in the absence of precise data.

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**CASE NAME: DIMBA/JEANNOT**

*TJC/L/0011 JEANNOT*

According to the deponent (Mr Chellumbrun) Matthieu Jeannot owned a plot of land of an extent of 156 *Arpents* at La Cantine, Albion. He avers that Matthieu Jeannot was married and had a son. The son had three children: Aurélie, Guillaume and Alcide. He is a descendant of Aurélie, who married Louis Dimba. The Jeannot are also heirs.

The deponent avers that Medine Sugar Estate is occupying the land and that legal actions were initiated against the Estate on four occasions. Deponent says that former Chief Justice Victor Glover gave a judgment in favour of the family but the heirs have never obtained a copy of same.

In support of his claim, he submitted 13 documents including, an affidavit drawn up by Attorney-at-Law, H. Lam Shang Leen, giving the family tree of Matthieu Jeannot, who was born in 1770 in Louvres, France, and died in the District of Black River on 29 July 1819.

The Commission has held several sessions in respect of the case. Medine Sugar Estate was called to give evidence in respect of its occupation.

The Commission has been apprised of the following facts:

- Matthieu Jeannot purchased jointly with Joseph Favre 156¼ *Arpents* of land known as La Cantine in terms of a deed transcribed in TV 7 No. 94 bis.
- Matthieu Jeannot or Janno died on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1819 and in virtue of his last Will and Testament, he appointed Mr. Bretonache as “Légataire Universel” and Joseph Favre as his “Exécuteur Testamentaire”.
- Me Jeffroy then, a Notary, was appointed judicially “par sentence du tribunal de première instance” on 03 December 1847 to carry out the division in kind of the property held in joint ownership.
- the exercise was carried out on 26 January 1848 in presence of the interested parties and after drawing of lots: Lot 1 was attributed to one volamaire and Lot 2 to the “Légataire Bretonache”. Each lot admeasured 80 *Arpents*.

From the above, it follows that the will of Mathurin Jeannot in favour of Bretonache was given effect. A reading of the inventory which was carried out after the death of J. François Bretonache confirms that he was living on the land and occupied same for his business.

In the circumstances, the claim of the Jeannot/Dimba rests on the affidavit which states that Matthieu Jeannot had a natural son born in Mozambique and also on the fact that the “*Répertoire*”, kept at the Conservator of Mortgages, does not contain any entry in respect of the transfer of the rights held by Matthieu Jeannot to Bretonache or any other person.

The question of the property rights of the Médine Sugar Estate was raised again. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2008, Médine Sugar Estate lodged a plaint in court against P. Moogon and Boudeuse for illegal removal of stones from their premises. During the proceedings, sworn Land surveyor Koyratee declared that following searches made it appears that the 80 arpents of land on the original plot of 156 ½ arpents still belong to the heirs of Mathurin Jeannot. This statement was again made by Land surveyor Koyratee before a hearing session of the Commission on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

Land surveyor Koyratee avers that in Court, Bernard Desvaux de Marigny, sworn Land surveyor of the Medine Limited stated that the heirs of Mathurin Jeannot cannot pretend to have any claim on their ‘ancestral’ lands, because before the latter passed away he had bestowed all his lands to one Bretonache in a testament dated 21 June 1860.

On the other hand, Land surveyor Koyratee still avers that when crossed examined by Counsel in Court, “*sworn Land surveyor Desvaux admitted that the testament cannot be believed simply because documents during that period remained with the custody of the Court and was not even transcribed.*”

During the Court proceedings, avers Land surveyor Koyratee, “*Médine sugar estate was unable to produce any reliable evidence (“titre de propriété”) of their property rights on the land of 156 ½ arpents or 80 arpents originally held by Mathurin Jeannot*”.

The Commission is unable to submit any advice or recommendation on the claim as the assessment of the documents produced is a matter to be referred to an appropriate authority/Court.

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**CASE NAME: RAMSAMY**

TJC/ L/0012/AMOINDA MICHEL AND OTHERS

Michel Amoinda, the applicant says that his mother, Amaye Ramsamy, owns a plot of land of 100 toises at Sainte-Croix. The family has lived on this plot of land for more than 50 years. The family believes that this land has been prescribed by their neighbour and that the latter has sold the land to someone else. The new proprietor is now suing the applicant for illegal occupation of land. The applicant went to Court. On the second hearing before the Court, the case was dismissed. The new proprietor again brought the case to Court for the second time. It was scheduled to be heard in January 2010.

Searches have been initiated by the Commission to find out the truth. However, there is no land registered in the name of Amaye Ramsamy at the Registrar General's Office. The only document available is a '*Brevet*' that has not been transcribed.

The only copy of a deed made under private signature entitled "*Brevet de Vente*" purports to witness the sale of "*une maison de quatre pièces qui se trouve sur un terrain de 100 toises*" for a price of Rs. 300. The transaction was made on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1968.

It is to be noted that a sale is generally witnessed by an "*acte authentique*" - a Notarial Deed - and becomes effective only if registered and transcribed according to the provision of the law. In the present case, there is no legal document which the claimant may produce in support of his claim.

Moreover, since there is a Court action on the issue of ownership, it is difficult to entertain the request to "*assist her in getting back the land*" at this stage.

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**CASE NAME: GOODSIR**

TJC/ L/0013/ GOODSIR JAMES

The applicant, James Goodsir, through his proxy, Gerard Bernard, put two claims before the Commission: one related to a plot of land of 172 *Arpents* which constituted the "*concession*" of one Fouquet, obtained in 1757; and another claim on two plots of land of 12 and 30 *Arpents* respectively, pertaining to the 490 *Arpents* which formerly belonged to Pierre Spéville at Coteau Raffin, Black River.

**Case 1**

According to a "*concession*" deed dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 1757, one Fouquet received a plot of land of 172 *Arpents* at Plaines Wilhems, more precisely at Henrietta, Vacoas. Fouquet married Perrine Gauthier on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1753. The estate is sold "*à la barre*" (by levy) in 1900. In the "*acte de vente*" (deed of sale), it is said that Fouquet or assigned is one of the neighbours.

At present, Médine Sugar Estate has been occupying the land for quite a long time. Gérard Bernard, the applicant's proxy, has been negotiating several times with Médine Sugar Estate for the restitution of the land. But Médine says that they are the owner.

The applicant wants the Commission to request Médine Sugar Estate produce the title deed to prove that they are the official owners of the land. The applicant wishes to get back the land.

**Case 2**

Pierre Spéville, father of Amanda Spéville, owned two plots of land of 12 *Arpents* and 30 *Arpents* respectively at La Gaulette & Coteau Raffin. Some Mauritian families say that they are the legal owners of the land and they have constructed houses thereon. Applicant's proxy visited the land in 1966 and was shown the land marks. Since then, part of the land has been prescribed. The land was

then covered with forests and at present, several houses have been built on this land. Applicant's proxy wants to know how those who built the houses have obtained the required permits (building, water, electricity). The applicant wants the Commission to assist in the research about the real owners and about the title deeds.

The Commission made searches and analysed both requests. Gérard Bernard holds a power of attorney conferred upon him by Perrine James Goodsir and, on behalf of the latter, he is claiming the ownership of an extent of 172 *Arpents* situated at Henrietta which was once conceded to François Fouquet. According to him the rights of ownership over the land are now held by Pierre James Goodsir as descendant of François Fouquet.

In support of his claim he has tendered the following documents:

- A description of a plot of land of 500 "*Pas Géométriques*";
- An extract of a memorandum of survey of Land surveyor Merle dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 1763 (without any plan attached).
- A copy of TJ/98/2 relating to the judicial sale concerning Sugar Estates Reunion, Henrietta and Tamarind Falls.

The documents produced do not constitute sufficient proof of ownership in favour of Fouquet or his heirs. The fact that a description of a plot of land in a judicial sale paper mentions the name of Fouquet or Pauquet or assigns may be relevant for the location of a site but is immaterial as regards to the actual ownership rights of the portion of land.

It is observed that the land is said to be occupied by Médine Sugar Estates and that negotiations to recover the land - presumably "*à l'amiable*" - has failed as the Estate claims to be owner of the same.

The request of Bernard is to ask Médine Sugar Estate to give proofs that they are the real owners and to produce their relevant title deed. In other words, Bernard is asking to the other party to give particulars relating to a portion of land occupied by the estate peacefully "*à titre de propriétaires*" in order to build his own case.

The onus of providing the ownership rights rests entirely on him and in that respect, he has failed.

## Case 2

According to the applicant, Pierre Spéville was the owner of two plots of land of the respective extents of 12 *Arpents* and 30 *Arpents* at La Gaulette and Coteau Raffin which are presently occupied by persons unknown to him.

According to a plan of the plot of land of 12 *Arpents* submitted by the applicant, relevant site may be easily identified on site. The document which the applicant submitted is a "*sous seing privé*" in which one D'Emmerez acknowledges the sale of 12 *Arpents* to be excised from the Estate Coteau Raffin to Pierre Spéville.

However, searches at the Mortgages Office have revealed that Pierre Spéville was the owner of a plot of land of 490 *Arpents* at Black River and this plot of land has been sold in virtue of title deed transcribed in Volume 1353 No.11. No record of the transaction mentioned in the "*sous seing privé*", related to the present claim, has been found.

The Spéville case is lengthily discussed at Chapter 5 under the heading - "Dispossession".

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**CASE NAME: MARION**

TJC/ L/0014/ MARION LOUIS BENOIT &amp; others

René Marion, great-great grandfather of applicant Louis Benoit Marion, owned a plot of land of 64 *Arpents* at Grand Bois. The land is still there but applicant ignores the exact location. He wanted to get the land back as he claims to be a descendant of René Marion, a landowner during his life time.

The applicant further adds that Médine Sugar Estate has only 623 *Arpents* of land in Beau Songes and the Marion family owns 2 portions of land of extent 32 *Arpents* 38 perches and 130 *Arpents* respectively at the same location of Beau Songes. Concerning the 130 *Arpents*, he says, Médine Sugar Estate is at present selling part of that land. As for the 32 *Arpents* 38 perches, at present, United Basalt is proceeding in derocking the land.

The applicant avers that his family has always occupied both plots of land as pasture land, for charcoal making and for cultivation. In 1982, they built a small house on the 32 *Arpents* 38 perches and a store-house on the 130 *Arpents*. Médine Sugar Estate threatened him with weapons and accused him of illegal occupation of land. The Médine Sugar Estate even had recourse to the Special Mobile Force to force the Marion family to vacate the premises.

Finally, the whole issue was brought before the Court where the applicant lost the case. Médine Sugar Estate destroyed the house, bulldozed the land as well as the irrigational canal which provided water to the applicant and his family. He feels that he has been dispossessed by Médine Sugar Estate.

Furthermore, the applicant says that he has inherited another plot of land in Les Salines. But he has no information on this land. In support of his claim, he has produced two deeds in respect of a portion of land of an extent of 64 *Arpents* 75 at Beau Bois and another of 24 *Arpents* approximately at Beau Songes, other documents submitted relate to family tree and also one *proeipce*.

A perusal of the contents on file by the Commission and further searches show that the documents produced (*excerpt*) for the affidavit are not sufficient to enable a proper examination. A request was made to the Conservator of Mortgages for a proper copy of TV 144 No. 275 which relates to the land at Beau Songes.

The document obtained reveals that the 24 *Arpents* plot of land were surveyed in April 1916 by one Emile Belcourt and found to admeasure 32 *Arpents* 38 perches. This property has been the subject-matter to a *proeipce* in the District Court (cause No. 87/82). In the same paper, reference is made to an extent of 600 *Arpents*. "*Bien Beau Songes surveyed by Laurent on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1918*" in respect of which no information has been given by Louis Benoit Marion.

Further searches undertaken by the Commission revealed René Marion acquired a portion of land of 24 *Arpents* at Beau Songe in the District of Black River.

René Marion (son), together with his lawful wife, Orzelie Louis, sold the said portion of land to one Goody Ramdoss, as evidenced by TV 170 No. 54.

The said Goody Ramdoss then sold the plot of land of 24 *Arpents* to one K. Varathajaloo as evidenced by TV 216 No. 135. The said Varathajaloo resold the land to Goody Ramdoss by virtue of a transcription dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1896 as per TV 221 No. 240.

Furthermore, it has also been found that, through an outbidding made before the Master and Registrar at that time of the Supreme Court made by one Sudar Saib, who acquired the land on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1901. Prior to that, a sale by licitation was entered before the Supreme Court against the Widow of Goody Ramdoss, one Lutchmee David at the request of the Curator of Vacant Estates as evidenced by TJ 194 No. 40.

Later, the said Sudar Saib sold the land in two portions each of ½ undivided rights to one Frederic Langlois and A de Senneville.

Searches also revealed that the said portion of land of 24 *Arpents* actually belongs to one Leon Mamet who acquired the land on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1904 from Langlois and on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1903 from de Senneville as evidenced by TV 256 No. 69 and TV 250 No. 498.

As regards the case at the District Court against Médine Sugar Estate, the applicant apparently lost the case and the estate pulled down the house and appropriated the land. There is not enough data in file to apprise the issue in Court was and what the judgement was. A full copy of the *proecipe* and the record of the judgement could have been helpful but no copy of the judgement was available at the Bambous District Court.

The Commission has been made aware that the applicant and other heirs have entered another case before the Supreme Court against Médine Sugar Estate.

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**CASE NAME: BONNEFIN**

*TJC/L/0015/Clency Harmon & others*

Clency Harmon has submitted three land cases to the Commission. The Commission devoted the entire session of the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2009 to case No. 2, concerning land of Frederic Bonnefin at Cancaval, a region of Curepipe.

**NATURE OF CLAIM:**

- Misappropriation of a plot of land of 156 *Arpents*, according to title deeds (but of 277 *Arpents* according to deponent) belonging to the heirs and succession of Frederic Bonnefin, by Médine Sugar Estate, following acquisition of Réunion Sugar Estate by Médine Sugar Estate.
- Depletion of the Bonnefin heritage by the sale of part of their land, by Medine Sugar Estate, to the 'Compagnie River-Land', for the development of a morcellement

**SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS:**

During the Hearing session, Clency Harmon submitted 50 sets of supporting documents pertaining to the case.

**CONTENTION OF CLAIMANTS**

C. Harmon, assisted by Stéphane Gurbhoo, deponed as one of the heirs and succession of Frederic Bonnefin who died intestate on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1881. During his lifetime, the said Frederic Bonnefin acquired the undivided rights of various co-owners in a plot of land of 156 *Arpents* at Cancaval Curepipe, as per sales documents:

- Title deed dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1872 and bearing Registration TV 108/82.
- Title deed dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1872 bearing registration TV 108/345.

C. Harmon averred that after tedious and elaborated search, it has been proved that the land is of acreage of 277 *Arpents*.

The heirs of late Frederic Bonnefin became aware of the heritage when they learnt one day that one heir, namely Pierre Claude Bonnefin, intended to dispose of the land after having an affidavit sworn, declaring him as sole heir of Frederic Bonnefin. From then on, all the heirs have initiated legal actions against him and have succeeded to recover the land.

Unfortunately, they learnt that years ago, the Reunion Sugar Estate had annexed their land to its domain land and had afterwards sold the property to Médine Sugar Estate.

Around year 1996, all heirs joined forces and started legal action to recover their property. They compiled a list of all the heirs, swore an affidavit and drew a family tree. They could not go further as they were denied access to their land by Médine Sugar Estate

They also learned that Médine had excised a plot of land and was planning to sell part of their land to the Company River-Land for a *morcellement*. Despite their protest to the Morcellement Board, there had been no investigation or initiative to stop the Land developers from going ahead with their project. In 2007 the 'Compagnie River-Land' had already proceeded with the sales of many lots of land.

Harmon has submitted various documents and particularly plans to prove that the land at Cancaval belong to the Bonnefin. At the hearing, the Chairperson proposed that the Commission examined the case more in-depth and came with a synthesis and the way forward.

The Commission had carried in-depth investigation and research before convening the Chief Executive Officer of Médine for a Hearing on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

At the hearing of 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011, Dany Giraud the CEO, maintained that the land the Médine Sugar Estate had purchased belonged to the former Reunion Sugar Estate and was a regular acquisition. He was requested by the Commission to submit the title deeds and survey plans that could help to identify and locate the land disputed by the Bonnefin. Though hesitant at first, Mr. Giraud agreed to submit the relevant title deeds and survey plan drawn by Land Surveyor Raffray.

The Commission has examined and perused the various documents, particularly the survey plans drawn by Raffray and Florent for Médine Sugar Estate. The Commission is of opinion that the plot of land of 167 *Arpents* transcribed in Volume TV 1258 No. 12 that Médine identified as being their land and that of 156 *Arpents*, claimed by the Bonnefin are two different entities. There are clear indications in the documents submitted by Médine Sugar Estate, that the land of 167 *Arpents* is situated on the Western side of River Tatamaka and is not bounded by the Chemin Berthaud. On the other hand, the land identified by the Bonnefin is the only plot located on the Eastern side of River Tatamaka and is bounded by the Chemin Berthaud. Furthermore the two other sides are bounded by Tolbig on the North and M. Burguez on the South as described in their title deeds.

The Commission is in presence of two distinct portions of lands of different acreage, the first one belonging to Médine Sugar Estate and the second one to the heirs of Frederic Bonnefin:

- The Land of Médine is of 167 *Arpents* and is registered in TV 1258 No.12 as mentioned in an affidavit sworn by Land surveyor, K. Dwarka, before the Master of the Supreme Court.
- The land of heirs Bonnefin is of 156 *Arpents* and registered in TV 108/82 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1872 and TV 106/45 dated 08<sup>th</sup> October 1872.
- The land of Médine, according to description from title deed, is located on the western part of River Tatamaka.
- Land belonging to Médine Sugar Estate has no frontage on the Chemin Berthaud.
- The land of the Bonnefin has the main frontage on the Chemin Berthaud

The Commission, after having examined in-depth the claim of the heirs of Frederic Bonnefin, is of the opinion that the heirs Bonnefin may have a case in their favour and, should they feel dispossessed, they should seek redress in a Court of law.

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**CASE NAME: CELINE**

*TJC/L/0016/ CELINE STEVE*

The applicant, Steve Celine claims that his grandfather, late Jean Marie Martin, was the owner of:

1. 5 *Arpents* 25 of land at Grand Gaube

2. About 3 *Arpents* at Allée Brillant and
3. 15 *Arpents* 57 at Moka.

The applicant says that his father has always talked about a plot of land of approximately 5 *Arpents* 25P, owned by his grandmother in Grand Gaube. Grandmother passed away when the father was 5 years old. The family ignored then where the land was exactly located.

Steve Celine did some searches and through documents he could locate the land at Grand Gaube. At present, the land is occupied by squatters and about 30 houses have been constructed without any contract. The applicant ignores whether land has been prescribed by occupiers. There are 2 plots of land which are still bare. The family would like to get back the land.

He furthermore adds that the family also owned a plot of land of 15 *Arpents* at Allée Brillant, Vacoas. Part of the land has been sold by Daniel Martin, the son of Jean Marie Martin. The applicant thinks that only 12 *Arpents* have been sold. Another plot of land of an extent of 15 *Arpents* 57 at Moka constituted the heritage left by Jean Marie Martin.

Searches at the Registrar General's office have revealed that the name Jean Marie Martin does not exist in the index book kept by the Conservator of Mortgages. The plots of land claimed by the applicant are untraceable.

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**CASE NAME: MARISON**

*TJC/L/0017/HOSENY BERNARD & others*  
*Cross reference with TJC/L/VF 85 MARISON Anne Marie Louise*

The applicants, Bernard and Richard Hoseny, aver that they are heirs of Désiré Marison who married a Malagasy Princess. Désiré Marison and who they aver, purchased a plot of land of 151 *Arpents* in 1839 in Henrietta, Vacoas. He sold several plots of land during period 27<sup>th</sup> September 1847 to 1<sup>st</sup> October 1854. Following research, it appears that Widow Désiré Marison made a "*testament olographe*" (NA 87/10 No. 1243) whereby she gave all her property (land & chattel) situated in Vacoas to one Robert de Chazal. She gave to Magère Marison, brother of her late husband, a plot of land of extent of 4 *Arpents* extracted from the land which has been given to Robert de Chazal. As the Marison at that time were illiterate, the heirs thought that there might have been another will made by Robert de Chazal in favour of the heirs Marison being given that, at the death of Robert de Chazal, there has been a deposit of sale of land under private signature by one of the owners before actual owner, Médine Sugar Estate.

They request the Commission to investigate for a possible will by late Robert de Chazal to the heirs Marison; to investigate the authenticity of the sale by Robert de Chazal prior to the sale to Médine Sugar Estate.

The Commission started its investigation in this case after submission of the dossier on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2009.

The Attorney-at-Law of the Marison family made a request to the Commission on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010 to stop all searches and to close the case.

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**CASE NAME: JOLICOEUR**

TJC/L/0018/VF/JOLICOEUR PIERRE EDOUARD &amp; others

The applicant, Pierre Edouard Jolicoeur put two claims before the Commission.

**Case 1**

The applicant writes that he is the heir of one Delphine Jolicoeur, owner of two neighboring portions of land of respectively 5 and 4 *Arpents* in Piton and Rivière-du-Rempart. The two portions have been prescribed by Marie Jeanne Victoire and Sylvie Victoire. They are together of an extent of 1 *Arpent*. The 8 remaining *Arpents* have been occupied by the Government who has built a Citizens' Advice Bureau, a "*Maison des Jeunes*", a Swimming Pool, and a Dispensary.

**Case 2**

The applicant adds that the Jolicoeur family owns a plot of land of 2 *Arpents* at Terre Rouge, Pamplemousses.

On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Pierre Jolicoeur left at the Truth and Justice Commission, a letter he received from Attorney Hardy requesting him, following a judgement in "*Case Low Kom Marie Marceline V/S Jolicoeur Pierre Edouard*" in the Intermediate court of Mauritius delivered by Magistrate District Court of Mapou on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009, to pay a sum of Rs. 5,000 to Marie Jeanne Victoire as damages and to "*quit, leave and vacate premises by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009*".

The Court file CN 1524/2007 reveals that Marie Marcelin Low Kom obtained judgement against Pierre Edouard Jolicoeur on a plot of land of extent of 631.65m<sup>2</sup> at Royal Road, Rivière-du-Rempart. The Magistrate observed that the "*plaintiff has a clear and unchallenged title to her property and is accordingly entitled to the enjoyment of some without Defendant's interference*" (Pierre Edouard Jolicoeur).

There is another case in file CN 1151/08 whereby Marie Jeanne Victoire obtained judgement against Pierre Edouard Jolicoeur on a plot of an extent of 759 m<sup>2</sup> at Royal Road, Rivière-du-Rempart.

In both cases, Pierre Edouard Jolicoeur did appeal against the two judgements which debarred him from the said property. Therefore, as the matter stands, the applicant cannot have any claim to the said portion of land.

Further searches, undertaken by the Commission on the "*Case Hypothécaire*" of Jean Louis Jolicoeur and Jean Louis Casimir, reveal that plots of land belonging to the Jolicoeur have all been sold out during the period 1850-1889.

There is also a claim from Pierre Edouard Jolicoeur to the effect that his ancestor has 2 portions of land respectively 5 and 4 *Arpents* in Piton and Rivière-du-Rempart and that these plots of land are now occupied by Rivière-du-Rempart Citizen Advice Bureau, Maison des Jeunes, Swimming Pool, and Dispensary.

Searches have revealed that according to "*Répertoire*" 91 No. 367, Delphine Jolicoeur was the owner of a plot of land of the extent of 9 *Arpents* at Piton as evidenced by Title deed 21 No. 102, dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 1924. The plot of land is not found in Rivière-du-Rempart as the applicant claimed but in Pamplemousses. As to this property belonging to the said Delphine Jolicoeur, the applicant does have a claim as per the affidavit of succession.

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**CASE NAME: ROOPSING***TJC/L/0019/ROOPSING SARDANAND and others*

Sardanand Roopsing, the applicant, avers that his father, Mohun Roopsing, has inherited from his father, Nepaul Roopsing, 2 plots of land of 69 ½ perches and 1 *Arpent* 42 perches respectively at Roches Noires, Rivière-du-Rempart. When the property of his father was shared among the heirs, both he and his brother, sole heirs of applicant's grandfather, forgot to include this plot of land in their will. At Registrar General's Office, the land is still in grandfather's name.

The Roopsing family asks the Commission to locate and get their land back.

Searches carried out at the Registrar General's office revealed that the relevant plots of land have already been sold by the applicant's father, the late Mohun Roopsing, to Minors Ayoob Khedarun and Moosah Khedarun in virtue of Title deed transcribed in Volume 397 No. 283.

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**CASE NAME: DUMAZEL***TJC/L/0020/ DUMAZEL MIRELLA AND OTHERS*

Mirella Dumazel and other members of the family, having requested the help of the Commission to retrieve important documents from a "*Récupérateur des Terres*" (commonly known as agent) were called at the Commission on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Other representatives of the family were also heard by the Commission. The applicant avers that Jean François Dumazel, married to a slave, received a portion of land as "*concession*" of an extent of 27 *Arpents* situated at Balaclava, Pointe-aux-Piments. The plot of land is still there planted with trees. The family hired the services of a "*Récupérateur des Terres*" who has been keeping all Documents with him in spite of numerous requests to return back the Documents. The family was desperately looking for assistance to inquire into the land

They request that the Commission should undertake searches to get back this plot of land which they believe still belongs to them.

The family had difficulties in obtaining (i) the Birth Certificate of Jean Mélidor Dumazel, born on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1847 from the Central Statistics Office of Pamplemousses; and (ii) the Birth Certificate of Jean Marie Dumazel, which might be around the years 1820-1826 in order to establish link with Jean François Dumazel.

The Commission officially asked CSO to produce both birth certificates, indicating the date for ease of reference. But, the CSO of Port Louis has not been able to produce the required documents, neither even for Jean Marie Dumazel, if approximate possible years were given.

There are two problems regarding this application. Firstly, there is no birth certificate for Jean Mélidor Dumazel nor is there a birth certificate for Jean Francois Dumazel. Secondly, the family hired the services of a so-called "*land-searcher*", one Alfred Sing Fat, of 65 Vacoas Road, Vacoas and they claim that Sing Fat has many of their documents, and despite numerous requests they have not been able to get these documents back. The family signed an official agreement to pay Sing Fat 40% of the value of the land. No money changed hands.

The Commission called Sing Fat to depone. He appeared before the Commission on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010. He flatly denied the allegations made by the Dumazel family, but acknowledged that he would be paid 40% of the value of the land after retrieval and stated that he was conducting the search entirely from his own resources.

He agreed to return all documents to the family and agreed to meet with them at the Commission headquarters, with a Commissioner acting as facilitator.

The following week, Sing Fat and the Dumazel family met at the Commission in presence of Commissioner Jacques David. All documents in possession of Sing Fat were officially returned.

As for the claim of the Dumazel family over the land at Pointe-aux-Piments, the representative of Harel Frères, who might have taken possession of the plot of land was called before the Commission on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

The Commission has also found out that late Jean François Dumazel was indeed the owner of a plot of land at Pointe-aux-Piments, Balaclava, of an extent of 27 *Arpents* 25 perches as evidenced by the "Concession Book" LC/18/50 and LC/20/8 registered at the Mauritius Archives.

However, the "*Case hypothécaire*" 71 No. 153 reveals that Jean Mélidor Dumazel sold (a) undivided rights in 14 *Arpents* 50 perches at Pamplémousses and (b) 3 *Arpents* to Northern Sugar Estates and (c) another portion of land at Rivière Citron.

The plot of land of an extent of 27 *Arpents* 25 perches belongs to the "*Société Arjoon Sewraz*" in virtue of title deed TV 1196 No. 186 dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 1972.

Following searches and the hearing of Land surveyor Bernard Desvaux de Marigny, "*Terrain Dumazel*" and "*Terrain Cauvin*" as indicated on a Survey plan drawn up by André Aliphon on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1973, which is of an extent of 14 *Arpents* 50 and 11 *Arpents* 89 respectively, were parcelled out in 1976 by "*Noel Real Estate Company Limited*" in several lots as "*Morcellement Baie -Aux-Tortues*"

Adjacent to "*Terrain Dumazel*" and "*Terrain Cauvin*" is "*Terrain Rioux*" which is of an extent of 26 *Arpents* 50, which plot of land has been parceled out into 26 lots by Arjoon Sewraz.

Another plot, "*Terrain Rioux*", of an original extent of 35 *Arpents* 67 11/12 has been parceled out into 78 lots.

These 3 "*Terrains*" were found by Land surveyor M.B.Dwarka to be of an extent of 89 *Arpents* 43 in his Survey report dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 1969 and belong jointly to Arjoon and Dhaneswock Sewraz as per TV 1110 No. 21 (DK 48 No. 68)

"*Terrain Dumazel*" and "*Terrain Cauvin*" do not form part of the surplus of land of extent of 1052 *Arpents* belonging to Harel Frères Limited.

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**CASE NAME: JOB/DACRUZ**

*TJC/L/0021/NANETTE MARIE THERESE GISELE & others*

Marie Thérèse Gisèle Nanette avers that Pierre Job, her great grandfather, purchased a plot of land of 4 *Arpents* at Plaine Saint Pierre, Bambous. His sons Ernest & Charles Job, inherited from their father, the remaining plot of land, that is, 2¾ *Arpents*; (1 *Arpent* & ¼*Arpent* having been sold in 1859). After their death, Jacques Simon Dacruz, the applicant's brother, and grandson of Ernest Job, occupied the land and cultivated it.

The applicant declares that their uncle gave to Henri Cornelius Topize part of the land for cultivation. According to affidavit sworn in by Jacques Simon Dacruz on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1991, Henri Cornelius Topize is not an heir of the Job family. Marie Bernadette Aimée, the concubine of Henri Cornelius Topize, made an affidavit and prescribed the land on her name. The heirs became aware of the prescription much later. Jacques Simon Dacruz, brother of the applicant, in the name of the heirs, entered a case in Court to cancel the prescription. On the death of Jacques Simon Dacruz, the Court case was struck off.

The applicant requests the help of the Commission to cancel the prescription and get back the land of their grandfather.

Thérèse Gisèle Nanette, *born* Dacruz was requested on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to call at the Commission to give more details of the case. She failed to turn up.

According to the documents and information analysed by the Commission, it appears that:

- On 26<sup>th</sup> April 1991, Jacques Marie Simon Dacruz and 7 others, as heirs of the late Pierre Job, applied for and obtained an Interim Order in the nature of an Injunction restraining and prohibiting Marie Bernadette Aimée from charging, mortgaging or selling the portion of land of 9860 square metres situated at Plaine Saint Pierre, Bambous, which she had prescribed.
- Marie Bernadette Aimée and her paramour, Henri Cornelius Topize, resisted the application.
- After an exchange of Affidavits, the case was in shape and had been fixed for hearing before the Honorable judge in chambers to the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1992.
- There is no indication what happened on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1992.
- According to applicant, the case was struck out as Jacques Simon Dacruz had passed away.

The Commission fails to understand why the case was struck out as there were seven applicants.

In the affidavit in support of their application for Writ, the applicant stated that they will enter a main case before the Supreme Court praying for a judgement, declaring that the prescription made by Marie Bernadette Aimée of the portion of land of 2 *Arpents* 33 perches or 9860 square metres be declared null and void.

In spite of attempts made to contact the applicant to understand where matters stand, there is no answer.

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**CASE NAME: MOHUN**

*TJC/L/0022/MOHUN MARINA FLORISE & MILENA*

Jean Ricardo Power, the applicant, claims that his family has been living on a plot of land of 50 toises at Cremation Road, Tranquebar since 1930, that is, for 5 generations and that the family has been asked by Arya Sabha to leave the place. He states that the land does not belong to the family but to Arya Sabha. The family has been paying a rental fee to occupy the land. At present the family is quite at a loss.

They request the Commission to assist the family in obtaining 'reparation' from 'Arya Sabha'.

This case was heard before the Commission on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The transcript is on file.

The Power family has the impression that the land belongs to the Government and the Arya Sabha is a lessee of the Government and Gawtam, the owner of the mechanical workshop is a sub-lessee.

Following the hearing session, a letter was sent on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009 to the Ministry of Housing and Lands to enquire about the lease held by Arya Sabha from the Government and to know whether the Arya Sabha has the right to sublet part of the land to one Gawtam for the operation of a garage. A '*reminder*' was even sent to the Ministry on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

Furthermore, searches undertaken by the Commission revealed that the land mentioned is of an extent of 11 hectares belong to Arya Sabha (Mauritius) formerly known as Arya Pratinidhi as

evidenced by TV 446 No. 359 ("*Premier titre*") and part of it has been leased to Garage Gawtam. Gawtam, as tenant, is operating a mechanical workshop on part of the land.

There is no legal document concerning their occupation.

In view of the fact that the applicant and his ancestors have continuously occupied the land over a period of 80 years, the applicant has been advised to contact Arya Sabha Mauritius to see the possibility of getting a lease of the land on certain agreed terms and conditions.

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**CASE NAME: ISABELLE**

*TJC/ L/0023/ISABELLE MICHEL ROGER*

The mother of Michel Roger Isabelle has been looking for Documents regarding the plots of land belonging to his family (Isabelle & Labonté) in Vieux Grand Port, Flacq, Le Morne and Curepipe. He finds it difficult to obtain those documents as he is at loss where to go. Applicant says that it is easier to obtain birth, marriage, death certificates.

After searches carried out by the Commission through the "*Répertoire des formalités hypothécaires*", it has been found that Isabelle Fanchin ("*Répertoire*" 91 No. 412) had a plot of land of an extent of ¼ *Arpent* at Eau Coulée. The land has been sold to N. Chinathon for the price of Rs. 300 on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1904 as per TV 257 No. 318. The *Répertoire* 134 No. 44 of Elysée Labonté reveals that the plot of land of extent of 177p, 4p, and the 8p at Vallée-des-Prêtres have been sold to Assop Ahin for the price of Rs. 600 as per TV 174 No. 441.

The Commission concludes that after the sale of the abovementioned land, Isabelle Fanchin or Elysée Labonté has no land in their name.

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**CASE NAME: LABONTE**

*TJC/ L/0024/LAVIOLETTE Olga, Clency & others  
Cross reference with TJC/L 0160/LAVIOLETTE Batour Marie Renée*

Clency Laviolette and others claim ownership of 160 *Arpents* of land at Le Morne Brabant which they should have inherited from Joseph David Laviolette, their ancestor, but dispossessed through what the Laviolette family considers to have been illegally registered sale transactions as from 1899. He claims that his ancestor, Jean Baptiste Labonté, was the first owner of a plot of 210 *Arpents* in Le Morne Brabant. At his ancestor's death, his son David Labonté bought the land from all the heirs. The land has never been sold to either Joseph Keisler or Le Morne Brabant. The official Documents of sale of 210 *Arpents* refer to le Morne and not to Rivière Noire. All sale transactions right as from 1899 regarding this plot are illegal. This plot (160 *Arpents*) was surveyed by Land surveyor, Ramiah on behalf Le Morne Brabant Co Ltd recently is declared to be a surplus described in the title deed of David Labonté as per Volume 577 No. 48.

The Laviolette requests the Commission to help in restoring occupational rights of the 160 *Arpents* to the family.

Searches made by the Commission reveal that the official records confirm the sale of the 210 *Arpents* by Antony and Arthur Labonté for the sum of Rs. 4676 to Joseph Keisler on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1899. In the contract, it is mentioned “*au quartier de la Rivière Noire, lieu dit Le Morne*” which defines Le Morne as a locality in Rivière Noire. The contract also mentions a lease of “*Pas Géométriques*” in front of the plot of land but does not mention its area.

All official legal documents confirm sale of the 210 *Arpents* to Joseph Keisler on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1899. The contract was duly registered on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1899 in Volume 2203 No. 141 and relevant duty paid.

Further searches reveal also that this case is related to all the land claims in the region comprising of Le Morne, Coteau Raffin, pertaining to the Spéville/Choolun, Louis Chérubin (Karl) Lamarque and Labonté cases involving the Société Morne Brabant, Société Le Petit Morne and West Horizons Ltd, formerly Tatorio (Holdings) Mauritius Limited.

The Labonté, is a Malagasy free family that came to Mauritius and was established in Le Morne as fishermen. Their history is documented in works of missionaries. The current descendants are Laviolette family. The family lost their land, then David Labonté died leaving only minors as heirs and under a tutor who proceeded to sell most of the land.

Part of the land was sold to Keisler (ancestor of the Cambier family) who sold the said land to his heirs (Société Le Morne Brabant) who, in turn, sold it to Le Petit Morne - all members of the same family Keisler, Cambier, Desveaux de Marigny and Giraud.

However, there is still an unexplained 20 *arpents* of land or so which was left and somehow ended as part of Keisler/Société Le Morne Brabant/Petit Morne) and now being sold to Corniche Bay and now to West Horizons Limited. Part of the same land was sold to Government for the current public road.

This case needs to be taken up and further researched by the Land Research and Monitoring Unit, when set up. Presently, the Labonté/La violette family cannot afford a full independent survey nor pay legal and research fees.

The Commission is of opinion that it is possibly another case of dispossession.

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### **CASE NAME: MIGUEL**

*TJC/ L/0025/ MALGACHE MYLENE born MIGUEL*

Mylène Malgache, the applicant, says that she has been made aware of land belonging to the Miguel family through a list of registered number of documents. She does not have the Documents; she wants the assistance of the Commission in the search of the official documents in order to get hold of the land.

Though no documents or title deeds have been submitted except a few Civil Status Acts, the Commission went into files and documents at the Archives and at the Conservator of Mortgages to retrieve whatever available piece of information to prove the claim.

In fact, “*Répertoires*” 136 No. 435 and 261 No. 579 revealed that Lucia Miguel did exist and had several plots of land and properties which were sold namely:

- 1 ¼ *Arpents* at Flacq to WW Hardy as evidenced by TV 177 No. 104 dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1887 and
- Two plots of land at Poudre d’Or on the same day:

- 25 perches at Poudre D’Or to R. Ramlagun as evidenced by TV 364 No. 181 dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1923
- 25 perches at Poudre D’Or to H. Sohun as per TV 364 No. 187 dated the same 29<sup>th</sup> November 1923

There is no land in the name of late Lucia Miguel.

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**CASE NAME: MALGACHE**

*TJC/ L/0026/VF/ MALGACHE IVANHOË*

According to the documents submitted by applicant, the Malgache family possessed or leased out several plots of land at Le Morne Brabant. These plots of land are now in the possession of other people.

Moreover, the applicant who also claims to be one of the heirs declares that he has been made aware that other plots of land belong to his family in Port Louis, Chamarel and Rodrigues. He wants the Commission to assist in retracing these lands, the documents, the services of a Surveyor, as well as that of a Notary. Some documents have been submitted in support of the above claim, but only one copy of a title deed dated 1885 submitted has been valuable.

Searches carried out at the Registrar General revealed that the names of Gustave Malgache, Louis Malgache and Jean Malgache do not appear in the Name Index.

From an examination of cases submitted and after indepth searches, the following observation is made:

- The name of Gustave Malgache, Louis Malgache and Jean Malgache do not appear in the Index Register.
- Folio 1, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1877 and transcribed in TV 178 No. 354, is an “*écrit privé... déposé pour minute à Mons. Frédéric Langlois, notaire*”. It appears that Thomy Langlois sold to Bienvenu Malgach, also called Bienvenu Malcontent and to Marie Fanny Cateau, each for half undivided rights in a plot of land, the extent of which is not given, locality unknown, linear dimensions unknown.
- Folio 2, 3 and 5 refer to lease agreements made at Le Morne Brabant in respect of Lots 29, 39, 40 and 41 of Crown Lands granted to Jean, Joseph and Gustave Malgache for the period 1877 to 1887. The members of the family were lessees of the Government.
- Folio 4 is a Survey report drawn up by Sworn Land surveyor Joseph Pastourel de Pastouret indicating that Louis Malgache has acquired in 1863 from the wife of Jean Pierre Godin a plot of land at Rose Belle of an extent of 37 ½ perches. No survey plan of the site is annexed.
- Folio 6 is a survey Report drawn up by Sworn Land surveyor Edgar Merle dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1918 for a plot of land referred to as third portion situated at La Louise, Quatre-Bornes of an extent of 74 ¾ perches which Joseph René intends to acquire from heirs Victoire Malgache. No title deed is given.

In the absence of more precise information and land data, the case of the Malgache family is very doubtful.

In so far as the Crown land lease at Le Morne is concerned it was for a period of 10 years which expired on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1887.

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**CASE NAME: NAURIS**

TJC/L/0027/ RAM NAURIS OOMESH SURAJ

Ram Nauris arrived in Mauritius from India as passenger no 349/08 on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1908. When he died on 06<sup>th</sup> November 1968, he left to his heirs (wife of his son deceased and grandsons) a plot of land of 12 ½ perches. Following the death of Ram Nauris and after the affidavit has been sworn in, an enquiry was made into the plot of land left by Ram Nauris. The heirs found that a plot of land of 50 *Arpents* situated at Belle Rive, Kawal Nagar belonged to their grandfather. They started procedures to obtain documents: Land Contract, Title Deed, and "*Papier de Vente*". The land was bought from Jean Elysée Laverdure who obtained the land from legal prescription. They hired the services of a Land Surveyor to have a site plan. The Land Surveyor requested police assistance to enable him to carry on the survey. The exercise failed as there was '*intimidation*' from the present occupiers (Press Notice 28/10/1988). In fact, the family had obtained unofficial information that Deep River Beau Champ is now occupying the land illegally and it is being leased to small planters (*système métayage*).

At a meeting at the Commission on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009, O. Suraj Ram Nauris, the applicant, confirmed that there is no Court action on this land.

An analysis of the issue undertaken by the Commission put forward that according to a copy of a deed deposited at the National Archives, Document NA 154/117, being TV 356 No. 326 drawn up by Notary Gaston Sarre, Jean Elysée Laverdure residing at Grand Port, Mare D'Albert sold to l' "*Indien*" Ram Nauris "*une portion de terrain située au Grand port de la contenance d'environ 50 Arpents, borné d'après un procès verbal d'Arpentage dressé par Jean Louis Merle, Arpenteur juré le 18 avril 1772*", in consideration of a price of Rs. 2,000. At the time of signature of the deed, only a sum of Rs. 200 was paid. The remainder (*la solde*) was to be paid by the end of 1923; unfortunately the "*solde*" of Rs. 1,800 was never paid as evidenced by inscription 538/38 dated 21<sup>st</sup> September 1922 and inscription 557/67 dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 1932, and as recorded at "*Répertoire*" 227/392.

In the light of the above non-payment, the land is still mortgaged in favour of Jean Elysée Laverdure. The claim of the heirs of Ram Nauris having a plot land at Belle Rive, Kewal Nagar still belongs to them as the land has been left waste, as confirmed by the applicant himself.

At a meeting at the Commission on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the applicant has been informed that the land is at present waste; Deep River Beau Camp Sugar Estate who had sugar cane plantation thereon has not been up keeping the cane. The applicant has been advised to call at the SIFB office and to retain the services of a Land surveyor to identify the land and to start occupying the land if possible.

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**CASE NAME: BERTHELOT**

TJC/L/0030/PATIENT FRANÇOIS

The applicants, François Patient and José d'Albert (the latter being the legal representative ("*mandataire legal*") of George Berthelot (the latter being in France), aver that Jean Charles Berthelot and Eugène Berthelot sold a plot of land of 13 *Arpents* at Hermitage, Rivière-du-Rempart to "*2 Indiens*": Sujee No. 10759 and Awotarsing No. 4881 on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1875, as evidenced by a document submitted to the Commission. In 1876, there was a '*rétrocession*' of the land by the "*2 Indiens*" to Jean Charles Berthelot, Eugène Berthelot, Ernest Berthelot and Elysée Berthelot. On the site plan of 1823, the land is under the name of Azor Coacaud, "*homme de couleur*", the former owner.

As far as the applicants know from the elder members of the family, the Berthelot family lived on that land in 1876 but when they got married, they left. Some planters have been occupying the land, cultivating vegetables, sugarcane and tobacco. At present, 3 different families are occupying the land. Since 1961, the heirs have been trying to get back the land. In 2001, they paid for the services of an estate agency (Ariel Ltd.) but with no positive result. In 2005, they asked for the assistance of one Eric Pitchen and, again, there was no positive result. They asked a Land surveyor to survey the land but he refused.

The Patient family requests the Commission to assist the heirs to get back the land of 13 *Arpents*.

The Legal Adviser of the Commission had several meetings with the Patient family and they gave sufficient information concerning the successions of

1. Late Jean Charles Berthelot;
2. Eugene Louis Berthelot;
3. Ernest Berthelot;
4. Pierre Elysée Berthelot.

There was no affidavit except that of Elsie Daisy Legrand who was married to François Patient. In order to help the Land Fraud Squad to carry out an inquiry, it was urgent that Francois Xavier Patient submit an affidavit establishing the heirs and parties entitled to a share in the land of 13 *Arpents* situated at Rivière du Rempart.

F. Xavier Patient was married to late Elsie Daisy Legrand, who was herself the daughter of Angeline Berthelot, daughter of Ange Michel Berthelot, who was himself the son of the late Jean Charles Berthelot. Jean Charles Berthelot purchased the land together with his brothers:

- Louis Eugene Berthelot ;
- Ernest Berthelot ;
- Pierre Elysée Berthelot.

After submission of the affidavit drawn with the help of the Legal Adviser of the Commission, same was submitted by both François Patient and José d'Albert to the Land Fraud Squad and made a statement as to the nature of their claim.

Letters were addressed to the Land Fraud Squad on 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March, on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 to understand where matters stood in the present case.

Attention Inspector Nauthoo

*Officer in Charge  
Land Fraud Squad  
Line Barracks  
Port-Louis*

08/03/2011

*Dear Sir,*

*We refer to the letter dated 2nd June 2010 requesting you to enquire into the case reported by Mr. François Xavier Patient concerning a portion of land of 13 Arpents situated at Hermitage, Rivière du Rempart belonging to Jean Charles Berthelot as per deed transcribed in Vol 121 No 67.*

*The affidavit required to start the investigation has already been drawn up and submitted to you. We shall be grateful if you could kindly inform the Commission where matters stand.*

Thanking you,

Yours Faithfully

B.Moutou  
Commissioner  
The Truth and Justice Commission

On 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011, the Central CID answered to the query of the Commission.  
*Letter from the Mauritius Police Force*  
Central Criminal Investigation Department  
Line Barracks  
Port-Louis  
Mauritius

Date: 19th May 2011

Addressed to Mr. Jacques David  
Commissioner  
Truth and Justice Commission  
Belmont House, 1st Floor  
Intendance Street, Port-Louis

Subject: Case OB 315/ 10 CCID - Pre Measure

Your letter dated 29.03.2011 refers.  
I wish to inform you that the enquiry into the case reported by Mr. Francois Xavier Patient is in progress.  
Any new development will be communicated to your office.

f/ ACP (C)

So the case is still being looked into by the Land Fraud Squad.

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**CASE NAME: CAPIRON**

TJC/ L/0031/CAPIRON JEAN ELOI HERVEY

Jean Eloi Hervey Capiron submitted several claims before the Commission. He lengthily explained the cases supported by documents which he left for analysis.

**Case 1**

Ange Eloi Capiron has bought

- from Shell Eastern and South African Telegraph and Co a plot of land of 16 *Arpents* 5 perches at Roche Bois;
- from *mandataire* d'Abbadie de Barreau a plot of land of 7A 53 perches

In 1995, the claimant, Jean Eloi Capiron, found in the Registrar General Register a transcription without a legal deed dated 1943 concerning the 7 *Arpents* 53 perches. The legal deed was made by a Notary who was not registered as such on that date that is in 1943. In fact, he was Notary as from 1945. Letters were received on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2006, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and 30<sup>th</sup> August 2007 to the effect that there was no record of Henry Latham Koenig being a Notary in 1943. Henry Latham Koenig was sworn in as a Notary Public at the end of 1950.

A deed of sale with United Basalt was made wherein is inscribed these notes: "*risques et périls sans garantie*". About 2 ½ years ago, Capiron sued United Basalt who accepted that the land was not

*“en règle”*. Capiron’s Attorney informed him that United Basalt is asking for a negotiation. Since 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009, no answer has been received from them.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003, Capiron reported the case to ICAC. After one year, ICAC answered back that the complaint is *“beyond their purview”*. A case was referred to the Land Fraud Squad in 2004. No answer has been received from them yet.

Ange Eloi Capiron requests the Commission to look into the case so that the family may get back the land which they consider to be their property.

#### **Case 2**

Widow Clément Julie sold a plot of land of 400 toises to Emile Capiron at Royal Road, Beau-Bassin. One Marie Capiron, in turn, sold the land to one Hurhangee. According to affidavit established on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005, Marie Capiron is not considered as an heiress. However, a will was made *“à domicile”* by Widow Eloi Capiron (wife of Ange Capiron, nephew of Emile Capiron) on the eve of her death in favour of her niece Marie Capiron.

Jean Eloi Capiron is contesting this sale of land.

Marie Capiron has sold another plot of land to her cousin Fernand Capiron.  
Jean Eloi Capiron is contesting this sale.

#### **Case 3**

Another case has been entered in Court by Jean Eloi Capiron against the wife of one Antoine Capiron for illegal possession of land at Beau Bassin.

#### **Case 4**

Henri Vignes sold to Léonel Capiron and his wife two plots of land situated at Mozambique Street and Entre-casteaux Street Port Louis. Léonel in his will left all his assets to his wife Anna Beatrice Rebecca Vignes. Anna Rebecca Vignes made a will in favour of the wife of Ange Eloi Capiron (born Vignes). She made a will in September 1953 in favour of Louise Vignes. Louise Vignes sold the land in 1929 according to deed of sale dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1929. The applicant is questioning the date of sale of the land (1929), which according to the date of the will made in favour of Louise Vignes, that is 1953, should normally be her property in 1953.

The applicant requests the Commission to contest the date of the sale signed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1929.

The whole technical land team and, in the presence of a Commissioner Jacques David, had a working session with the applicant in the presence of his son-in-law, Stephan Clain on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010.

From further information from applicant it appears that:

- The land of 400 Toises situated at Beau-Bassin belonged to the late Anna Rebecca Vignes and bequeathed to Marie Lucie Lise Vignes, the wife of Ange Eloi Capiron.
- The land of 94 Toises situated at Beau-Bassin belonged to the late Marie Lucie Lise Vignes, the widow of Ange Eloi Capiron.
- Marie Lucie Lise Vignes had no children. She died on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1969.
- According to her last Will and Testament made before Notary public Roger Hermene Louis on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1969, in the presence of four witnesses, she bequeathed all her properties to Marie Capiron.
- The will was registered on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1969.
- Consequently, Marie Lucie Lise became the owner of the two plots of land of 400 toises and 94 Toises.
- One Marie Thérèse Isabelle Capiron claimed that she is the very Marie Capiron who received the property.

- One Marie Joséphine Capiron also claimed to be the very Marie Capiron who received the will drawn up by Notary Roger Hermane Louis on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1969.

The question remains a real mystery: Who is the real Marie Capiron? Marie Thérèse Isabelle or Marie Joséphine? There is no clear answer to this very important question.

The Commission verified the files which reveal that indeed:

- Marie Joséphine Capiron sold the land of 400 toises to one Dr. Hurhangee and Lajputh Beeharry, as evidenced by TV 180/4188. Marie Joséphine Capiron passed away in 2000.
- The land of 94 toises has also been sold by the heirs.
- Marie Thérèse Isabelle Capiron also passed away in 1995.
- There are two groups of persons who claim to be the heirs and successors of late Marie Capiron.

The Commission is of opinion that it is for the Supreme Court to decide and adjudicate as to who are the heirs and successors of Marie Capiron.

The applicant had been requested to bring details of the three cases entered before the Supreme Court and a precise and concise report of his complaints.

### Case 1

The applicant has retained the services of Attorney A.K. Jugnauth and Counsel Balluck to enter three cases before the Supreme Court concerning the plot of land of 16 *Arpents* and 5perches situated at Roche Bois.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2010, the Commission was informed by Attorney A.K. Jugnauth that two cases were withdrawn as the applicant could not give him the required precise information. As regards the case against United Basalt Limited, the case is in shape and is scheduled to be heard by the Court.

In view of the fact that the case is pending before the Supreme Court, the Truth and Justice Commission cannot entertain this particular claim.

### Case 2

According to a deed drawn up by and before the J.M Joson, Notary public dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 1988 and 24<sup>th</sup> June 1988 and transcribed in TV 1804/88 Joséphine Marie Capiron sold the plot of land of 400 toises situated at Royal Road Beau Bassin to J.Hurangee and Lajputh Beeharry. In the "*titre de propriété*", it is stated that the land was bequeathed to her by Marie Lucie Lise Vignes, the wife of Ange Eloi Capiron in virtue of a "Last Will" and testament dated 7<sup>th</sup> September 1964 registered in Register B113 No 745 and transcribed in Volume 960/13.

The land is actually occupied by Hurrangee and Samlo Industry.

Jean Eloi Hervey Capiron is of the view that the vendor had no right to sell the property. The late Marie Lucie Lise Vignes bequeathed the property to Marie Therese Isabelle in virtue of her last will and testaments dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 1969.

The said Marie Thérèse Isabelle Capiron passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2000, leaving as sole heirs and parties her nephew and nieces:-

- Anne Florise Susie Capiron ;
- Marie Hilda Paulette Capiron ;
- Jean Eloi Henry Capiron ; and,
- Marie Thérèse Yolande Capiron.

### Case 3

The land of 94 toises at No 4 Gustave Bestel Street, Beau - Bassin belonged to Marie Lucie Lise Vignes, wife of Ange Eloi Capiron as per deed transcribed in TV 362 No. 95. As per deed transcribed in TV 1198 No. 25, Marie Capiron bestowed the land to her cousin, François Fernand Capiron

following a will and testament dated 29<sup>th</sup> October 1769 and transcribed in Registered B115 No. 1926. Following the contention of the applicant, the said François Fernand Capiron pulled down the building. The land is waste and unoccupied.

The applicant has been advised to start occupying the land as he is one of the heirs of Marie Lucie Lise Vignes.

#### **Case 4**

According to applicant, the land situated at Mozambique and D'Entrecasteaux Streets, Port Louis has been sold by Ange Eloi Capiron and his wife and Louis Léonel Capiron and his wife to one Hossen on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1929 by a deed drawn up by Gaston Jarré, Notary public.

The applicant avers that this could not be so because between 1927 and 1931 Gaston Jarré was not registered as Notary public.

#### **Case 5**

Ange Eloi Capiron purchased several portions of land of an extent of approximately 74 *Arpents* 53 P from the Agent and Proxy of Gaston d'Abbadie de Barrau as evidenced by a deed drawn up by Henry Elysée Doger de Spéville, Notary public and transcribed in Register C151 No. 1961.

It appears that according to a deed drawn up by and before Henri Latham Koenig, Notary public dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1943 and transcribed in TV 480 No. 79, Ange Eloi Capiron sold the several portions of land to one Chan Pong and one Wing Fo Chan Kum.

According to the applicant, there was no Notary public by the name of Henri Latham Koenig practising in 1943.

Indeed, there are letters from the Supreme Court confirming that Henri Latham Koenig was not a Notary public practising on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1943.

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### **CASE NAME: ROMEO**

*TJC/ L/0032/ROMEO MARIE LOURDES*

The applicant, Marie Lourdes Roméo, great-granddaughter of Augustin Gateau has made 3 requests to the Commission:

#### **Case 1**

- To seek assistance to know why she does not have the right to a family land of an extent of 12perches at Mapou (TV 1206 No. 180 dated 13<sup>th</sup> March 1973).

#### **Case 2**

- To assist her to get back a plot of land of an extent of 2 *Acres* (being a prescription) situate at Point- aux- Piments (TV 322 No. 238 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1917), and

#### **Case 3**

- To assist her to get back a plot of land of an extent of 3 *Acres* at Pamplémousses (TV 46 No.183) 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1846.

#### **Case 1**

"*Compagnie du Mapou Ltd*" sold in 1920 a plot of land of 12 perches in "*lieu dit 'Mapou'*" Rivière du Rempart to Augustin Gâteau.

Marie Lourdes Roméo, having undertaken some searches, has found that this plot of land has not been transcribed nor sold. She has seen the land which is at present bare. She has contacted a legal person to sell the land and she has been told that she does not have the right to sell it but only to

occupy it. She wants the assistance of the Commission to better understand why she does not have the right on the land which she considers is for the family. She wants to get back the land.

**Case 2**

A plot of land of 2 acres situated at Pointe- aux- Piments, Pamplemousses has been given to Polidor Roméo, Jean Baptiste Roméo, Nemours Roméo, and Louis William Ayen. She is looking for the title deed of the land. Her family tree shows that she is linked to Nemours Romeo. She does not have any assistance to pursue research. She wants to get back the land.

**Case 3**

A plot of land of 3 A at Pamplemousses has been sold to Augustin Gâteau. No plan site is deposited. She is requesting the Commission to assist her to get back the land.

In support of her claim, Marie Lourdes Roméo produced copies of the 3 above mentioned deeds and various Documents pertaining to birth, marriage and death entries. The Commission has gone through the welter of Documents submitted and have observed gross inconsistencies.

Augustin Gateau, as referred to in Case 1 and in Case 3 is two distinct persons. The one referred to in the deed drawn up on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1973 referred to Augustin Gateau as "*labourer*" residing at Réservoir Road, Goodlands; whereas the Augustin Gateau referred to in the deed on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1846 is a "*cultivateur*" residing at Pamplemousses.

At marriage entry at Document 14B, dated 16<sup>th</sup> July 1842, Augustin Gateau, a Roman Catholic, "*location manager*" got married to Marie Brunette, a protestant. The profession of Augustin Gateau at document related to the death entry is given as "*Carpenter*". At another death entry, the name and surnames of father and mother of Augustin Gateau are not given.

No survey plans of the 3 above named cases are given and no "*Constat*" Report has ever been made by a Land surveyor. The sketch plan submitted has no bearing to the present case.

As regards **Case 2**, (being an affidavit of prescription dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1917), registered as TV 322 No. 238, the following persons have prescribed the land namely Polidor Roméo, Jean Baptiste Roméo, Nemours Roméo, Nelzire Roméo (wife: Alice Lebon) and Marie Léa Romeo (wife of Epidariste Balthazar). As such these people have undivided rights in that property. At no place is the name of Augustin Gateau mentioned.

In the light of the above observations, it appears that applicant Marie Lourdes Roméo has still a long way to go to undertake to convince the Commission of the genuineness of her case.

In view of the discrepancies and inconsistencies in the documents produced, it will be very difficult for the applicant to support what she is claiming. In the absence of any affidavit to prove the identity of the several persons having the same name (Augustin Gateau) with different profession, the applicant cannot proceed with her claim.

As regards claim no 2, her ancestors have no right whatsoever on the land of 2 Acres at Pointe-aux-Piments. The land had been devolved to the heirs of these 5 persons.

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**CASE NAME: MOSAUFEE**

TJC/L/0033/ MOSAUFEE ABDOOL KAYBAD

Abdool Kaybad Mosafee, the applicant, submitted two cases before the Commission. In the first case, he says that his grandfather Soleyman Mosafee, owned a plot of land at Pont Blanc, Flacq. The land belongs now to 4 heirs. The daughter of one heir is occupying the whole plot of land and

forbids the other heirs to occupy the land. Applicant does not know if the land has been prescribed. He wants the land back to the respective heirs. In the second case, he avers that his father Abbass Mosafee purchased "*les droits succesifs mobiliers et immobiliers*" in the succession of Jussodeea Bedasseah and he cannot obtain his share as there are too many heirs.

The Commission analysed the request made by of Abdool Kaybad Mosafee. It is very vague. The claimant has not submitted documents such as title deed, survey report, site location plan family tree to enable the Commission to undertake proper research and investigation.

He has been called by the Commission. He has been advised to contact an Attorney so as to enter a case of division in kind against the other heirs if the averment in the first case is correct,

In the second case, there is no substance to investigate in the matter.

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**CASE NAME: SOBRATEE**

*TJC/L/0034/ SOBRATEE ABDOOL FAROUK*

The applicant, Abdool Farouk Sobratee, explains that Jameerun Nunhuck married and died in 1956 without children. She had a plot of land of 1 *Arpent* 25 at the Vale, Rivière-du-Rempart. At her death, she gave 73 ½ perches to Ayoob Soobratee, father of applicant. The land is registered under the name of Ayoob Sobratee at the Sugar Insurance Board. At present, planters are illegally occupying the land. Research done has shown that there is no prescription, no acquisition of the land. '*Jouissance*' of the land has been given to one Jumrathan Choonka until her death. The planters occupying the land at present have forbidden members of the Sobratee family to get on their land for surveying purposes. They have consulted a lawyer and the planters have been summoned to release the land. There is no reaction on the part of the planters up to now. The family wants to get the land back.

Searches carried out by the Commission at the office of the Conservator of Mortgages reveals that as per "*Répertoire*" 371 No. 470, Ayoob Sobrattee is the owner of a plot of land of 11 perches. Searches have also revealed that there is no record of a plot of land of the extent of 1 *Arpent* 25 in the Vale region in the name of Ayoob Sobrattee or in that of Jameerun Nunhuck.

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**CASE NAME: DUSAUTY**

*TJC/ L/0036/ BERNARD GILBERTE*

Justine was an Indian slave. She was the slave of one Dusauty. She was "*affranchie*" by Dusauty and was given the surname Dusauty (with two 'ss' Dusauty in certain documents). Justine had a natural daughter named Lolotte to whom her mother gave the surname of Dusauty.

Lolotte Dusauty bought a plot of land of 343 sq yards bordered by Mountain Street & Field Street, Western Suburb, Port Louis, from the British Government in 1863 for the sum of £ 34.6 shilling. She had a natural son, Edward Albert, declared by his father Eugène Coquet.

Heiress Gilberte Bernard, *born* Coquet is asking the assistance of the Commission to get back the land that she considers belongs to her. It is difficult for her to define the land as the names of the roads have changed. She fears that the land may have been prescribed.

The applicant is looking for the "*Certificat d'affranchissement*" of Justine;

- Claiming a plot of land at Port-Louis field and Mountain streets; and also
- Claiming ¼ undivided rights in a portion of land at Moka, Rivière Saint Martin.

According to TV 90 No. 123, Victorien Justine Dusauty who, the applicant thinks, is the brother or nephew of Lolotte Dusauty, daughter of Justine Dusauty – the age of Victorien Justine Dusauty not being indicated-; yet, after searches undertaken by the Commission, they still own ¼ of 6 *Arpent* in Moka on Rivière Saint-Martin which at present is still in his "*Case hypothécaire*". A plan of the land is also available.

After searches undertaken, the applicant, nevertheless, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010 requested the Commission not to proceed with her application.

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**CASE NAME: BARRY**

*TJC/ L/0037/ BARRY JACQUES*

Jacques Barry, the applicant, submitted 16 documents for plots of land having belonged to his ancestors islandwide and requests the Commission to help the heirs to get back the land which they consider to be theirs as these plots of lands are not sold according to him.

The Commission analyses all his documents and made searches at the Conservator of Mortgages Office to retrieve necessary documents in order to better understand the claims.

Louis Marcellin Etienne Barry and his brother Joseph Barry bought on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1815 a plot of land of 500 *Arpents* at Baie du Cap and other plots of land at Flacq. Since 1958, the family made procedures to try to get these lands back but it is quite impossible. In the "*Case hypothécaire*", the land belonging to Marcellin and Joseph Barry have not been sold. Before 1939, Joseph Caboche was the owner of the Beaubois estate under sugarcane cultivation, neighbouring the land of Marcellin and Joseph Barry also under sugarcane cultivation. As from 1939, plots of the land '*numérotés*' (identified by numbers) are being sold. Since then, the neighbouring lands cannot be identified. At present, Constance and Fuel estates are the owners of Beaubois and others.

Analysis of the copy of two title deeds, being copy of a title deed transcribed in Volume 9 No. 51 dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 1815 gives evidence of an acquisition of 500 *Arpents* in the district of Black-River at "*Rivière du Cap*" by Etienne Barry and Edouard Barry in half undivided rights each.

For History, it can be recalled that, according to title deed dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 1815 and transcribed in Volume 9 No. 51, Etienne Barry and Edouard Barry acquired a plot of land of 500 *Arpents* at "*Rivière du Cap*" in the District of Black River from Françoise Louise Frichot in consideration of the price of "6 000 *piastres*" - "3 000 *piastres*" to be paid by 1<sup>st</sup> August 1816 and the remainder - one year later - by 1<sup>st</sup> August 1817.

Searches have also revealed that, according to title deed TV 18 No. 124 dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1822, Etienne Barry and Jean August Lemaire together with his wife Magdeleine Adelaide Perille Dusanzois sold 156 ½ *Arpents* to one Linormand, de Colomb D'Ecolay and Joséphine Antoinette Linormand. In the same deed, it is mentioned that Edouard Barry and his wife Adelaide Carosin sold their half undivided in that plot of land to Jean August Lemaire and his wife by a deed under private signatures.

Document 16, also being copy of a title deed transcribed in Volume 13 No. 159 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1818, gives the evidence that Louis Auguste Marcellin Barry and his wife Cécile Aline Focard sold to Hyacinthe Béguinot half undivided rights in Domaine Grand Retraite of a total extent of 756 *Arpents* 58 ½ perches.

According to documents submitted and searches carried out at the Registrar General's Office, it is observed that the land at Grande Retraite of an aggregate extent of about 756 *Arpents* 58 ½ have all been sold, although no proper entry has been made in the "*Répertoire*".

Other plots of land have been bought '*à la barre*' by Joseph Barry at Brisée Verdrière, as evidenced by Documents 3-8:

- 12 *Arpents* 75 perches, on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1826;
- 100 *Arpents*-at La Retraite on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1816;
- 80 *Arpents* 34 perches at Grand Bois/ Flacq on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1828;
- 103 *Arpents* at Grand Bois on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1828;
- 120 *Arpents* 78 perches at Flacq on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1826; and
- 193 *Arpents* at Grand Bois/ Flacq on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1826.

It has been impossible for the heirs to get access to the plots of land, to the administrators of Constance-Fuel. The employees are unaware of the history of the lands and it is impossible to survey the plots of land.

In conclusion, as per the advice of the Commission's Attorney, the remainder of the plot of 500 *Arpents* cannot be traced out at the Registrar General's Office, since most of the transaction at that time was carried out by deeds under private signatures and the records thereof being not registered are not available for public inspection. It is further observed that in view of the 70 inscriptions and charges burdening the land of the Barry family and in the absence of any survey/ constat/ investigation Report made by a Land surveyor, it may be assumed that the ancestors of Jacques Barry have no land still in their names.

However, according to searches, it appears that the land of 756 *Arpents* 58 ½ perches situated at Grand Retraite has already been sold although proper entry concerning the sale has not been made in "*Répertoire*". The absence of entry of the above sales in the "*Répertoire*" of Etienne Barry and Edouard Barry, gives the impression that they are still owners of the land at Grand Retraite.

Moreover, it is to be noted that there are about 70 charges and inscriptions burdening the properties of heirs. The number of the inscriptions is the same as the purchase price of the properties.

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### **CASE NAME: BERNARD**

*TJC/L/0038/BERNARD Michel Gérard*

The applicant, Michel Gérard Bernard, submitted five claims, with some documents, to the Commission to investigate.

#### **Case 1**

The applicant states that Jean Marie Chenel bought several plots of land at Rivière Française, Flacq (Document 1). In his will, he gave ½ of his assets to his sister, his nephews and niece Jean Pierre and Jeanne Française Diolle, children of Jeanne Villard married to one Diolle. Searches have been made to retrace assets of Jean Marie Chenel.

Jean Marie Chenel has given 78 *Arpents* to his sister Jeanne as "*dot de mariage*" to Villard. The land is shared among the 2 children Diolle. It is the neighboring land to Beaubois estate. According to the deed, Jean Pierre Diolle, owner of the land, died in 1915 leaving a daughter as heiress who married her cousin Jean Pierre d'Avrincourt. In the '*acte de vente*' of the plot of land belonging to d'Avrincourt, it is said that the neighbour is Jean Pierre Diolle. Beaubois sold his estate in 1900. In this title deed, it is said that one of his neighbours is an '*héritier d'Avrincourt*'.

Michel Gérard Bernard requests the Commission to assist him in getting back his land.

**Case 2**

The applicant avers that there exists another plot of land of an extent of  $\frac{1}{2}$  *Arpent* situated at Rivière Française which belonged to Pierre Aristide d'Avrincourt.

The Bernard family would like assistance from the Commission to get back the Beaubois estate as well as the land at Rivière Française, if there is no heir left.

**Case 3**

The applicant says that he was informed by an old lady of 109 years named Jean Louise that Notary Jeffroy gave to the grandfather, Louis Elisé Bernard, a plot of land near la Tour Koenig. On this plot of land there was a little tower which has been destroyed. He went to visit this plot of land when he was 19 years old and he was threatened by those who occupied the land. He adds that no Document is available in the family as his aunt threw away all the papers, thinking that the land had been sold. He wants the assistance of the Commission to find the Notary's deeds.

**Case 4**

Furthermore, Michel Gérard Bernard states that Marie Louise Bernard owned a plot of land of 350 *Arpents* at Flacq. He obtained that information while he was doing family research at the Registrar General's Office in 1959. He reported now that the "*Case hypothécaire*", that is, the "*Répertoire*" 22/88 of Marie Louise Bernard, has been destroyed since then.

The applicant has been informed that that the land is now occupied by a one Bhookun. He would like to identify this land so as to trace the first owner.

**Case 5**

Lastly, the applicant wants the Commission to investigate and research on what happened to a plot of land of 10 *Arpents* that Françoise Elizabeth, *born* Diolle, owned at Rivière Martin, Quartier Militaire. As per the "*Case hypothécaire*" he has seen that the land is not sold. He wishes, if there are no direct heirs and, if he has any right on it, to get back the land.

After analysis, the Commission has reached the following conclusion:

**Case 1**

In spite of some documents submitted, there is no indication to the relationship of the applicant with Jean Marie Chenel, the alleged owner of several plots of land. Neither can the applicant establish the relationship to Jean Pierre Diolle and Jean Pierre d'Avrincourt. There is no family tree and no affidavit of notoriety. The applicant has not indicated what portion of land, if any, has been left. He does not know who is occupying the land which he is claiming.

**Case 2**

The applicant says he wants to get back the land of  $\frac{1}{2}$  *Arpent* situated at Rivière Française, if there is no heir. The Commission cannot establish if the applicant normally is an heir and if there are no other existing heirs as no Documents, affidavit, site plan or deeds have been produced.

**Case 3**

The Commission cannot establish a case on hearsay evidence made by a lady of 109 years.

**Case 4**

There are no official records at the Registrar General's Office concerning the land of 350 *Arpents* at Flacq. According to searches carried out by the Commission, the page is missing. It is very difficult for the Commission to identify or trace out the land.

**Case 5**

The applicant wishes to get the 10 *Arpents* of Françoise Elizabeth if there are no direct heirs. He has not been able to establish his relationship with Françoise Elizabeth, *born* Diolle, the alleged owner of 10 *Arpents* of land at St-Martin, Quartier-Militaire. There is no family tree, no affidavit.

The site plan produced is a very old one; it is difficult to locate the land at present. Furthermore, the “*Case hypothécaire*” mentioned by the applicant has not been produced.

It is for applicant to prove and give evidence, documentary or otherwise to show that he is entitled to the land or has a share and/or interest in the land.

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**CASE NAME: RAMNAUTH**

*TJC/ L/0039/ RAMNAUTH MYPUTH*

S. Ramnauth has shared portions of land acquired by him at Rose-Belle between his heirs. His son Ramhurrack Ramnauth has received 2 portions of respectively 37 ½ perches and 50 perches at Rose-Belle. At the death of R. Ramnauth in 1939, his wife looked after the land for some time. She then “gave” the land to one Narain Booputh to look after. The latter occupied the land as from 1946. Myputh Ramnauth, the applicant, through an affidavit, contested this fact. On 13<sup>th</sup> November 1992, Narain Booputh was told, through a “*mise en demeure*” to vacate the land within one month or to give an indemnity in case of use and occupation. There was no response from Booputh. In 1993, he prescribed the land in his favour.

Myputh Ramnauth went to Court in order to contest the prescription.

The brother of Narain Booputh, in the meantime, shared the land among his heirs before the judgement has been pronounced.

The applicant entered a case before the Supreme Court praying *inter alia* for a judgement declaring null and void the prescription of the two portions of land. (*SCR 53222 refers*). Copy of the judgement as well as part of Court proceedings are also in file. The case was dismissed on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1999.

Myputh Ramnauth did not appeal against this decision.

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**CASE NAME: CORETTE/ SOBHA**

*TJC/L/0040/VF/ CORETTE/SOBHA*

The applicant, Roland Sobha, says that he is the son of Micheline Corette, and he has been made aware that his ancestors owned several plots of land across the island.

The applicant, who left two birth and one marriage certificates, has neither a title deed, nor a survey plan nor any official document. The name of his ancestors is unknown. He wants the Commission to undertake searches and to get back the plots of land.

A letter was sent to the applicant on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010, inviting him to meet members of the Commission in order to obtain more information about his request. He failed to do so.

He was again called on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010, but there was no answer at the other end of the phone.

Roland Sobha called at the Office of the Commission on 24<sup>th</sup> August and he promised that he will revert back as he needs time to get hold of some documents. He was called again on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010. He promised to revert back to the Commission on the following week with Documents that might help him and the Commission to undertake searches.

More efforts were undertaken by the Commission to reach Roland Sobha.

Unfortunately, phone calls made on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2010, remained unanswered.

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**CASE NAME: CORNET**

*TJC/L/0042/ CORNET NOEL SYLVIO*

The applicant, Noël Sylvio Cornet, relates that he has always heard his grand aunt say that the family owned a plot of land at Flacq, near Fuel. He has no document and has done no research as he does not know where to begin his search.

In fact, he does not know the name of the ancestor. He has neither a survey plan, nor a title deed

He wants the Commission to assist him in finding documents as he does not know how to proceed and has no financial support.

In the absence of documents, no search can be carried out.

The applicant was called at the Commission to find out what he possesses in terms of further information, but he never took the trouble to respond to the invitation.

It seems that the applicant is not interested with the case.

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**CASE NAME: PRAYAG**

*TJC/L/0043/PRAYAG ADEN KUMAR*

The applicant, Aden Kumar Prayag, put four claims before the Commission about a plot of land his great grandfather possessed throughout the island.

**Case 1**

- Aden K. Prayag’s grandfather called Seegobur Prayag possessed plots of land of 102 A at L’Ile d’Ambre. The land has been divided among the heirs, including Seetulpersad, son of Seegobur Prayag. No document has been obtained regarding this possession.

**Case 2**

- Seetulparsad Prayag was leasing out a plot of land of approximately 10 perches at L’Amitié, Mon Loisir for a period of 9 years as from 1<sup>st</sup> August 1951 to Adorisah Busriah. The family wants the land back.

**Case 3**

- Seewoonarain Prayag (brother of Seetulparsad Prayag) has been leasing out a plot of land of 1 *Arpent* 25 perches at Le Ravin, Morcellement Tayack, Rivière-du-Rempart to Sookaram Dookaram for a period of seven years until 1958. The family wants the land back.

**Case 4**

- Seetulparsad Prayag possessed:
  - A plot of land of 5 *Arpents* at Hauterive, Rivière-du-Rempart

- A plot of land of ½ *Arpent* at Royal Road, Le Ravin, Rivière-du-Rempart (behind Kalimaye)

The applicant avers that documents exist in the Registrar General's Office registers and he wants to have these Documents He personally did not hand over any document to support all his requests.

The Commission investigated at length to discover that the applicant's father, named Seetulparsadsow Prayag, passed away on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1967. A copy of the "*Case hypothécaire*" 293/617, 342/937 and 349/872 indicate that between the years 1945 to 1952, Seetulparsadsow Prayag disposed of all his properties. The applicant was only a 5 years minor then.

So, the properties which are being claimed have already been disposed of by applicant's grandfather, and nothing has been left to the applicant and his family, as he claims.

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**CASE NAME: GRENADE**

*TJC/L/0044/GRENADE CHRISTIAN*

Perrine La Grenade, also called Perrina Grenade, was owner of a portion of land of the extent of 15 *Arpents* situated at Le Bouchon, for having bought it from Gervais St Mart by virtue of a deed drawn up by Mr. Marie Rosemond Giblot Ducray, Notary Public of Grand Port and La Savanne on 31 July 1839 under reference NA/75/10 (B) No. 1375. He passed away on 04 September 1862 at 80 years old.

The Heirs aver that Gervais St Mart who got married to Perrine Grenade was the owner of a plot of land of the extent of 25 *Arpents* at Le Bouchon, by virtue of a deed drawn up by the above-named Notary on 08 December 1833, under reference NA75/4 No. 232 for having bought it from Marie Joseph Nanette and heirs Quantin Gébert.

According to "*Partage Testamentaire par Perrine La Grenade*" deed of Notary Adolphe Noël Macquet, ref. NA83/10 No. 477, dated 4<sup>th</sup> November 1852, she left 15 *Arpents* to her thirteen (13) natural children.

The remaining 10 *Arpents* was attributed to heirs Gervais St Mart according to a deed drawn up by Notary Adolphe Noël Macquet on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1862 - Ref NA 83/21 No. 3807.

The ownership of this plot devolved to the heirs, that is, his two brothers (i) Louis Charles St Mart (ii) Alexis Theodore St Mart (iii) his sister Françoise Emilie St Mart, widow of Hippolyte Baptiste. In October 1863, they proceeded with a division in kind of the property and agreed to a partition made "*à l'amiable*" whereby each party was attributed an extent of 3 1/3 *Arpents* each.

However, from a report of Surveyor Jean Chaton dated November 2007, it would appear that the major part of the 25 *Arpents* have been prescribed and that only "*une petite partie est restée sans occupation mais pas prescrit*". The Chaton Report gives a list of 63 occupiers/owners at Le Bouchon having obtained land through acquisitive prescription.

Considering Le Bouchon as being an Eldorado, people have squatted upon the land of the Grenades, resorted to acquisitive prescription, sold the land and, over the years, established a sort of militia to look after their property. There had been prescription over prescription, overlapping of prescription causing "*overlapping of title deeds*".

In his quest for identifying the land of his ancestors, the Police Officer Louis Edlé Grenade confided to three of his colleagues at the Police Division of his inability to retrieve the land and entrusted them in his absence with that work. While he went to establish in Australia, then Police Officers got the land prescribed by someone residing in the region and ultimately grabbed part of the land so prescribed.

In the light of documents provided, it is observed that the claimant's ascendant Achille Grenade owned one *Arpent* out of the whole 25 *Arpents*.

No documentary evidence has been submitted about the ownership of the land after the period 1862, that is whether it was still owned by the Grenade, save a copy of a lease agreement registered on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1949 in T.B No. 52, wherein it is noted that a plot of land to the extent of one *Arpent* out of 25 *Arpents* was given on lease for a five-year period to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1954, by Olezia Grenade to Dayanand Seewoosunkur.

To succeed in his claim, Edlé Grenade has to show that he has a genuine title ("*juste titre*") that is "*un titre exempté de vices*".

In any case, the Commission has, at Le Bouchon, an example of dispossession of land through the procedure of acquisitive prescription by individuals.

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**CASE NAME: BUSAWON**

TJC/ L/0045/ BUSAWON AMARNATH

Busawon came to Mauritius as an Indian Immigrant in 1860. He was employed as a cook by the Dalais family. In gratitude, he says, the Dalais family gave him in a will, 15 *Arpents* of land in Vacoas in 1910. At his death, there was a "*capitation d'héritage*" by the daughter of Dalais to whom Busawon "*handed the will which was never returned to him*".

The applicant, Amarnath Busawon, is requesting the Commission to investigate into the official records to find out about the land and wants reparation.

Searches undertaken by the Commission revealed the following:

- Busawon, married to Pynee Kadun, the Indian immigrant from Calcutta, bears the number 209881.
- They bought a plot of land at Highlands of the extent of 45 perches from Widow Louis Olivier Maingard and Ors.
- That plot of land was subsequently subdivided among his heirs into 4 lots and given to namely: Seelugun Busawon obtaining 10 ½ perches, Seeruttun Busawon obtaining 16 ½ p; succession Ramkissoon Busawon getting 9 perches and Ramlochun Busawon the remaining 9 perches;
- Ramlochun Busawon (being of the first generation) sold the plot of land of extent 9p to R. Busawon on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1965 according to TV 479 No. 137.

There is no record at the Registrar General's office of any "*will*" having been made by the Dalais family in favour of Busawon, the Indian immigrant bearing No. 209881 regarding a portion of land of 15 *Arpents* at Phoenix.

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**CASE NAME: PATRICK WEBB/CHANG KYE**

TJC/L/0046/PATRICK WEBB/CHANG KYE

Patrick Webb, the applicant avers that his ancestors, François Dioré and Auguste Dioré, were owners of several plots of land in the region of Flacq, Quartier Militaire, Pointe aux Piments. For the Médine Camp de Masque Pavé region, the applicant has submitted 4 documents in support of his claim.

The family requests the Commission to intervene so that they may know where the land of Mon Désert Alma ends as they aver that the Sugar Company is occupying their land illegally and wish to get their land back.

Their claim mainly concerns their ancestral and hereditary rights over a portion of land of an extent of 100 *Arpents* belonging to late Auguste Dioré and located at Quartier Militaire in the District of Moka.

In virtue of a Notarial Deed drawn up by late Notary Vigoureux de Kermorvat dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 1860, registered in Reg C93 No. 1196R and transcribed in TV 68 No. 352, Mr. Auguste Dioré acquired from Mr. Jules Gauthier in consideration of the price of 3,000 *piastres*:-

- a portion of land (*portion de terrain habitation*) of the extent of 58 *Arpents* situated at Moka and bounded as follows:  
*Par la propriété acquise de Rivière, la propriété Desfontaines et la Rivière Française.*
- une autre portion de terrain habitation of the extent of 100 *Arpents*, acquise de Bassaignet; and
- une troisième portion de terrain habitation of the extent of 58 *Arpents* acquise de Fanon et borné d'un côté par la propriété de Messieurs Rousselin d'un autre par celle de Jean Piston et du troisième côté par la Rivière Française et par la propriété de Quesnay.

There has been a correspondence between Webb/Chang Kye and Mon Désert Alma regarding the above land.

The Commission requested Webb/Chang Kye to submit a Survey Report drawn by a Land Surveyor in justification of their claims of hereditary rights.

Land surveyor, A. Kauppaymuthoo, submitted a Report dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 wherein he came to the conclusion that:

- James Patrick Webb is in fact one of the heirs of Auguste Dioré after taking cognizance of the family tree provided to him by his client; and
- the portion of land of an extent of 100 *Arpents* belonged originally to Auguste Dioré and is the one indicated on plans attached to his Report.

In the course of a hearing before the Commission on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011, the Chief Executive Officer of Espitalier Noël Limited, Gilbert Espitalier Noël, promised to help the Commission and the Webb family in supplying their plans and their title deeds.

A site meeting was arranged by the Commission on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011 at 1400 hours between ENL represented that day by Jean Marc Oudian, Officer-in-Charge of Espral Limited and Patrick Webb. Only four portions of land of an aggregate extent of 15 *Arpents* 00 belonged to ENL and the surplus is occupied by the heirs of Doorganah Tatayah.

Patrick Webb is satisfied with the stand taken by the Commission to help him to recover part of his land, and it is up to him now to continue his fight with ENL and heirs Doorganah Tatayah.

**CASE NAME: RAMPHUL**

TJC/L/0047/RAMPHUL DEODOTH

Sookbasso Sukurdeep (new deceased) was owner of several plots of land respectively of

- 7 ½ *Arpents* and 6 perches in Montagne Blanche, Flacq
- 6 *Arpents* and 2 perches at Bell Ville Pizan, Montagne Blanche
- 12 *Arpents* and 55 perches at Montagne Blanche
- 1 *Arpent* and 19 perches at Montagne Blanche
- 5 *Arpents* 17 perches at Montagne Blanche from which portion a part has been prescribed at Montagne Blanche.

Sukurdeep sold all these plots to one Retnon Velvindron (now deceased). Retnon Velvindron, in turn, sold the land to one Deoduth Ramphul. When Velvindron was the owner, the land was used as pasture land. After having bought the land from Velvindron, the new owner, Ramphul, wanted to 'bulldoze' it. FUEL Sugar Estate objected, saying that the land is theirs by occupation. Thus, as 'propriétaire par occupation', FUEL Sugar Estate leased the land as 'métayage' to several small planters. D. Ramphul, the applicant, finds himself is helpless as he cannot take possession of his land.

The applicant requests the Commission for assistance to get back all the plots of land belonging to him.

On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 Déoduth Ramphul informed that he would like to depone before the Commission on a case of "land dispossession by Flacq Union Estates Limited" (FUEL). This case was heard on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in presence of all Commissioners.

Deoduth Ramphul a well-known entrepreneur residing in Montagne Blanche in the Moka district made acquisition of 6 plots of land from one Retnon Velvindron on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1977. The deed of sale was made before a Notary public Joseph Marcel Joson. The sale refers to 6 plots of land totalling 33 *Arpents* as under -

- Plot 1 7.50 *Arpents*
- Plot 2 6 - *Arpents*
- Plot 3 12.55 *Arpents*
- Plot 4 1.19 *Arpents*
- Plot 5 5.17 *Arpents* &
- Plot 6 1.25 *Arpents*

According to the deed drawn by Notary Joson, the land was a free hold and not burdened by any charge or mortgage. However, a survey carried by Robert Foiret, Sworn Land Surveyor, revealed that while plots Nos. 1 and 2 were unoccupied, plot No. 3 was occupied by the FUEL Sugar Estates. As for plots Nos. 4, 5 and 6, Foiret admitted that further searches were made to identify their exact location.

The Commission puts the question: "Should the deed of sale be drawn in such circumstances?" Whether D. Ramphul was able to identify any of the plots of land before agreeing to sign the deed of sale appears dubious. In any case, he has never, he says, been able to take possession of any of plot of land he purchased as all were occupied by the FUEL.

Following representations made, the FUEL has always affirmed that the land was the property of the “*company by occupation*”. D. Ramphul reports that the FUEL Sugar Estate has let the land to a number of planters under the “*métayer system*”.

The Commission is well aware that this kind of arrangement is very common in Mauritius in that landless farmers are allowed to cultivate land belonging to sugar estates companies and on harvest part of the proceeds are retained by the sugar estate.

The Commission cannot give any conclusion into this case, as D. Ramphul has referred the case to the Supreme Court for redress.

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**CASE NAME: LAMARQUE**

*TJC/L/0048/ LAMARQUE LOUIS CHERUBIN*

Louis Cherubin Lamarque has addressed the Commission on the subject of “Land ownership and right of access” in regard to a portion of land of an extent of 16.88 hectares or 40 *Arpents* situated at Coteau Raffin, La Gaulette, Case Noyale in the District of Black River which, he claims, belongs to the descendants of Lauricourt La Poule.

Louis Cherubin Lamarque claims to be a heir to Lauricourt Lapoule and the descendant of a slave family. He claims that his ancestors resided on the land and cultivated it. The heirs have been living peacefully on the land until 2004, when their neighbour (Le Petit Morne Ltd.) started to interfere with their rights. He is requesting the Commission to look into the matter and reinstate access to the site from Black River Road.

**The Ownership of the Land by Lamarque**

According to a deed transcribed in Vol. 169/171, Lauricourt Lapoule acquired the rights of Jean Charles Lamoureux, Joseph Lamoureux and Dick Lamoureux in the succession of their grandfather in a portion of land in an extent of 40 *Arpents* situated at Coteau Raffin in the District of Black River. In fact, the vendors were heirs to their father Eugene Lelong who acquired same in September 1844 from Marguerite Fayot.

The land has not been sold according to the claimant, and its ownership still rests with the heirs. However, it is not clear from the contents of the deed referred to above whether the heirs are entitled to the whole of the 40 *Arpents* or only to undivided rights within the area.

Louis Cherubin Lamarque, who has as Consultant, A. Kauppymoothoo, has submitted six plans. These plans have been certified as correct by A. Kauppymoothoo, Land Surveyor, and show the limit of concession de Lamarque and the various changes which occurred subsequently as a result of the establishment of the *Pas Géométriques*, Mountain reserve and other sale transactions.

In fact, the plans tend to prove that the 40 *Arpents* of land are located within a larger portion of land which has been the subject of land transaction on several occasions without any mention in any of the deeds of the rights of the heirs Lapoule.

**The contention of the Lamarque family**

It is the contention of the heirs that the development originally proposed by “*Le Petit Morne Ltd.*” and later on by Tatorio Holdings (Mtius) Ltd. in connection with the Corniche Bay Golf Resort at La Gaulette has been planned on an area of 101.2755 hectares purchased by the latter company and which deed does not take into account the location of the 40 *Arpents* or any part thereof within that area. Furthermore, there have been incidents when access to the land by *Chemin Dansac* has been denied or obstructed by the Company.

### The ownership of the land by Tatorio Holdings (Mtius) Ltd

Tatorio Holdings (Mtius) Ltd. purchased the property from "*Le Petit Morne Ltd.*" in terms of a Notarial Deed transcribed in Vol. 6924 No. 2. In the deed, the description of the land is said to be according to a report drawn up by Jean Claude D'Hotman, Land surveyor on 28 January 2008 and which bears reference L.S63 No. 24/33. The same deed refers to a previous survey effected by Jean Jacques Desmarais, Land Surveyor on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2006 and bears reference L.S57 No. 50/37.

The Commission has come across another report drawn up by the same J.C. D'Hotman in respect of the same property, but drawn up in English ref. L.S54 No. 24/50 which indicates the same boundaries as defined in the deed mentioned above and, likewise, does not mention the presence of any settlement within the area nor of the access called *Chemin Dansac*.

Tatorio Holdings (Mtius) Ltd. purchased the property for the price of eighteen million one hundred and fifty six thousand eight hundred and thirty six Euros, i.e., 18,156,835 euros for the specific purpose of using the land for the development of a project under the Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS) as per the certificate issued by the Board of Investment on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

In the report submitted by L. C. Lamarque, may be seen a chronology of the events in connection with the proposed development, including a meeting held in December 2007 between the promoters of the IRS project and the heirs. It is mentioned therein that:

- (i) heirs Dansac refused money compensation;
- (ii) heirs Dansac just wanted free access through the existing slave route;
- (iii) there was no more dispute between the parties.

The IRS project has never been implemented up to now and the assets of the company are in the hands of a Receiver and Manager, pursuant to a floating and fixed charge. In his capacity as Receiver and Manager of the Company, Louis Clensy Appavou has invited tenders for the purchase of the assets of the Company comprising the threshold bare land of an extent of 101 ha. 2755 m<sup>2</sup> earmarked for the IRS. The closing date was Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

In consequence to the above, Louis Cherubin Lamarque addressed him a letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009 in which he drew attention to the appeal lodged before the Environment Appeal Tribunal and requested him to amend the invitation to tender published in July 2009 in order to reflect the true picture.

It should be observed that at some point in time there seems to have been recognition by the Company "*Le Petit Morne Ltd.*" of the rights of the heirs Lapoule is as much as an offer of Rs. 3 Million was made. But this offer was rejected.

Nowhere in the elements submitted by the Lamarque family on behalf of those in the rights of Lapoule is there any reply from the promoter company or a firm commitment to amend the project in order to take into account the rights of the heirs. And yet, on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009, that is, well before the closing date for the tenders launched, the assets of Tatorio Holdings (Mtius) Ltd have been sold for the sum of 9, 750, 000 Euros, to West Horizon Limited, a company incorporated on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009 as a Domestic Company bearing No. CO 88750 by Louis Clensy Appavou of Appavou Corporate Services Limited, setting himself as Director, with one shareholder, Tatorio Holdings (Mauritius) Limited (in Receivership) having one ordinary share of One Rupee. When Louis Clensy Appavou deposed before the Commission, he avers that he was not aware of any claim of the Lamarque family, nor was he aware of the letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

In the circumstances, the Commission feels that at this stage, the stand of the Receiver and Manager of the Company, now Director of West Horizon Limited, on the important issue of the ownership rights of Lapoule should be known. In the event of these rights being recognised, it would be important to know as well as how the former Receiver and Manager, now Director of West Horizon Limited, proposes to cure the defect in the title deed of Tatorio Holdings (Mtius) Ltd.

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**CASE NAME: MALOUE***TJC/L/0049/ HUET SYBILLE daughter of MRS. MALOUE*

Sybille Huët, the applicant, presented two cases before the Commission. In the first case, she wants the assistance of the Commission to find a conclusion so that they may obtain the necessary documents in order to retrieve their property and in the second case, she wants to get back a plot of land, she believes is hers.

**Case 1**

In 1947, the Magon family sold a plot of land of 25 perches at Vieux Grand Port to Xavier Maloupe, the Tonta family and the Bhugawon family. Each family bought respectively one part of the land, which was not divided legally. The contract of the three is "*indivisé*". The Tonta and Bhugawon family have respectively constructed on the plot of land. The Court appointed an Appraiser for the sharing in the person of Kadhati Khoyratty. However, no fees were paid by either the Tonta or the Bhugawon to obtain the contract. So, none of the three parties has been able to obtain a contract.

Another surveyor was then appointed by the Court in the person of B. Dumazel to survey the land. This time, the Bhugawon family contested the contract through an Attorney.

**Case 2**

The Maloupe family bought a plot of land in 1987 at Petit Bel Air. The son, Xavier Maloupe, was granted a loan and he put the said plot of land as guarantee. After having paid the loan, he sold the land to someone else. The family wants to get land back.

The Commission looked into both cases.

The case of Maloupe is being resolved in Court by way of a "*division in kind*". Harold Lam Shang Leen, Attorney for the Maloupe, informed the Commission that B. Dumazel, Sworn Land surveyor, appraiser, has filed his survey / valuation report on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010. However, there has been a counter report made by Tonta family and the case was scheduled to be heard on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

As for the second case, it is revealed that, according to deed transcribed in TV 1629 No. 174, Benjamin Cyril Maloupe purchased the "*solde*" of 25 perches from the Ganoo family on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1984.

According to deed TV 1758 No. 107 dated 16<sup>th</sup> March 1987, Benjamin Cyril Maloupe sold the land to his mother Marie Paulin Nadal, widow of Xavier Maloupe.

According to deed TV 2019 No. 10 dated 29<sup>th</sup> June 1990, Widow Xavier Maloupe sold the land to her son Louis Kingsley Maloupe.

According to deed TV 4693 No. 29, Louis Kingsley Maloupe sold the land to Sooraj Koomar Ramdhayan.

It is clear from the above deeds and land transaction that it was Benjamin Cyril Maloupe who was the original owner of the land of "*solde*" of 25 perches which he purchased from the Ganoo family.

Therefore, Sybille Huet, daughter of Marie Paulin Nadal, spouse of Xavier Maloupe cannot claim any right over the land which her mother sold on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1990 to Louis Kingsley Maloupe.

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**CASE NAME: FORTUNO/PETIT**

TJC/L/0051/ FORTUNO EDWIN GABRIEL

Edwin Gabriel Fortuno, the applicant's grandfather, Santalawa Bheekarry son of an Indian immigrant named Bheekarry No. 20999, owned a plot of land at Quatre-Cocos, Flacq. His grandfather was baptized and named Jean Baptiste Petit. He had two sons, Anatole, the applicant's father, and Jean Baptiste Gaston. Jean Baptiste's son has taken over all the land. The applicant wishes to get back his share of the land; he also wishes to claim that he was the descendant of an Indian immigrant.

Furthermore, the daughter of Louis Philippe Fortuno also claims a portion of land of an extent of 4 ½ perches situated in the District of Flacq, Centre de Flacq, more precisely at Sainte Ursule Street belonged to Louis Philippe Renaud Fortuno, her father.

The Commission heard the story of both applicants who had a sad telling. They, in fact, owned a land in Centre de Flacq, as evidenced by TV 1405/14.

In virtue of a deed drawn up by and before Notary public Joseph Henri Paul Leblanc, dated 19<sup>th</sup> April 1978, and transcribed in TV 1405 No. 14, Mustapha Ally Nanthoo sold to Marie Eveline Russie widow of Joseph Anatole Petit (Fortune). She died in 1995 and left the bare ownership to Pierre Roger Fortuno, Marie Solange Fortuno, Marie Edna Fortuno and to the wife of Philippe Lamarque as well as to Louis Philippe Renaud Fortuno of a portion of 4 ½ perches in the District of Flacq, place called Centre de Flacq, Sainte Ursule Street.

The family of Louis Philippe Fortuno constructed a one-storey building on that land. Whilst the family was occupying the first floor, they rented the ground floor to one Khadaroo who was operating a hardware shop.

Marie Solange Fortuno and Pierre Roger Fortuno appointed Philippe Fortuno as their agent and proxy. Marie Edna Fortuno never gained any power of attorney.

On 8<sup>th</sup> November 1979, the family borrowed the sum of Rs. 11,000 from one Seewoo, a money lender, and the Notary G.E. Sinatambou took charge of that land and inserted it in the TV 1360 No. 31 and indicated that the reimbursement was scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1980.

The property was seized on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1983 following a seizure as service of a "*Notice Commandant*" was personally served on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1983 on Louis Philippe Renaud Fortuno.

Nobody was aware of the "*Sale by levy*" except Philippe Fortuno. The wife of the latter was present in Court on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1984, she asked for a three months' delay for the repayment of the Rs. 11,000 and was refused.

The property was sold before the Master Bar on the very day, on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1984, and adjudicated to Mohamed Feisal Peeroo represented by his agent and Proxy Mamode Aniff Peeroo for the sum of Rs. 181,000.

In July 1984, Pierre Roger, his mother and Philippe were in the house when the purchaser and the police officers removed the personal effects of the Fortuno family. Peeroo took possession of the property.

Nobody was aware of the seizure and sale. It was only the police officers acted on that very moment their removable effects were thrown on the street that the family realized what was happening to their property.

Pierre Roger, his mother were later informed by the wife of Philippe Fortuno about the whole tragedy. They were not aware that Philippe Fortuno was a registered patient of Brown Sequad Hospital.

Even if Philippe Fortuno was not a certified mental patient who could not exercise his civil rights, yet, a letter from Brown Sequad Hospital, dated 28<sup>th</sup> December 1977, does prove that he was a registered patient there.

The Commission is left with some disturbing questions:

Were Marie Solange Fortuno and Pierre Roger Fortuno aware of the state of health of their brother?

How is it possible for a mental patient to exercise his civil rights to borrow money in the name of the others?

Can a mental patient act as agent and proxy of his brother and sister? This answer can only be obtained from the Brown Sequard Hospital or the treating doctor.

Why have Marie Edna Fortuno and Widow of Joseph Anatole Fortuno never been served with a "*Notice Commandant*," notice of seizure and sale, although they had a right and share in the property.

The sale dates back to 19<sup>th</sup> April 1984 before the Supreme Court at the Master's Bar.

It appears that, out of ignorance, the co-heirs/co-owners never took any legal steps to ask for the cancellation of the said sale, as they were never advised that they could do so.

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**CASE NAME: FRIQUIN**

*TJC/ L/0052/ VF/ FRIQUIN ANDRE  
Reference to Case Cornet (wife of A. Friquin) re file TJC/L/0163*

André Friquin writes that he has learnt that his father, Julius Emmanuel Friquin, married to Marie Ida White, has inherited from his grandfather, Emmanuel Friquin Cooper, a plot of land at Rivière Noire. This piece of information was given to him by one Rigobert who works at the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture. The applicant submitted documents in his possession: his birth certificate, marriage certificate, birth certificate of his father, his identity card and those of his wife and father without any title deed or survey plan, André Friquin apparently left some documents with Rigobert, but could not retrieve them.

After searches undertaken by the Commission, it has been found that his father's name, Julius Emmanuel Friquin, is indeed in the *Case Hypothécaire*, but the name of Emmanuel Friquin Cooper does not appear in the Name Index Register at the Mortgage office,

In fact, Julius Emmanuel Friquin owns a plot of land of the extent of 153 *toises* at Ste. Croix as per TV 1428 No. 45 dated 13/12/1978. There is nothing apparent at Rivière Noire.

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**CASE NAME: RIACCA**

*TJC/ L/0053/ VF/ RIACCA FLORENCE*

The applicant, Florence Riacca, writes that she owns a CHA house at Cité La Cure. It was bought when she was married to André Rubain Riacca, now deceased. The couple have been living separately for some thirty year but they never divorced. After the death of her husband, she wanted to take possession of her house but the concubine of her husband did not want to leave the house. She has gone to Court and is waiting for the judgment.

The Commission analysed the case and it is revealed that, in fact, the CHA house was purchased during the legal community of goods and property which existed between her and her husband, André Rubain Riacca, at the time when they were married. According to title deed transcribed in TV 4759 No. 43, the Central Housing Authority did sell the house to the late André Rubain Riacca.

As per notarial deed transcribed in TV 4759 No. 43, dated 12<sup>th</sup> November 1984, the CHA sold to André Rubain Riacca a concrete house under C.I.S. cover standing on a plot of land of the extent of above 2 ½ perches at 29, Sir Hilary Blood Avenue at Vallée-des-Prêtres (Cité La Cure).

In the same deed, it is observed that André Rubain Riacca is married under the system of legal community to Marie Rose Katiah which marriage was celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1963.

With the death of André Rubain Riacca, his estate and succession have devolved in his heirs. The case is before the Court awaiting Judgement.

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### **CASE NAME: ARISTIDE**

*TJC/ L/0054/VF/ARISTIDE DÉSIÉ*

The applicant Désiré Aristide writes that his father is dead and that his family is at present living at Grand Sable, Grand Port and Mahébourg. He would like to enquire whether the Aristide family is the owner of a plot of land, though the location is unknown to him.

From searches carried out by the Commission at the Registrar General's Office, it appears that Louis Roland Aristide, the father Louis Désiré Jean Francois Aristide, owned a plot of land at Sainte Croix of the extent of 258 m<sup>2</sup> as per TV 3355 No. 48 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1996. He sold an extent of 75m<sup>2</sup> along 52, New Sainte Marie, as evidenced by TV 3827 No. 72 dated 13<sup>th</sup> March 1998.

However, the "solde" of the 258m<sup>2</sup> is burdened with an inscription (fixed charge) to the tune of Rs. 75,000 in favour of MCB Limited. Following the death of Louis Roland Aristide his succession has devolved to his heirs who are responsible for the above loan. The family does not own other plot of lands.

The Commission has called the applicant to advise him to pay back the Rs. 75,000 to MCB in order to recover the land after necessary arrangement.

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### **CASE NAME: NADAL**

*TJC/ L/VF/0055/COURONNE MARTHESIE*

#### **Case 1**

The applicant Marthésie Couronne writes that her family owned a plot of land of one acre at Trou d'Eau Douce. The land belonged to Charlotte Marianne who sold it to Zélie Eulalie Marianne, Célestin Quirin, and Alexis Quirin. According to "l'acte" of Attorney C.J Montocchio dated 19<sup>th</sup> April 1853 as per TV 54/203, the land was "distrain" (extract) from [the land] of Pierre Akyer. One Bissoondoyal prescribed the land in 1990, the family went to Court and the judgement was in their favor. However, Bissoondoyal refused to leave the land.

She requests the legal assistance of the Commission to get back the land.

**Case 2**

According to applicant, Marthésie Couronne, her family owned a plot of land at Cap Malheureux obtained through a “*concession Le Moël*” of an extent of 312 ½ *Arpents*. “*Concessions*” were granted to Pierre Le Moël Monséjour, Louise Nadal, his wife and their children. She requests the Commission to assist in research and in getting back the land.

**Case 3**

The applicant writes further that after the sharing of the land of extent of 27 perches at Royal Road Trou d’Eau Douce, executed by the heirs of Mr. Louis Elisy Nadal in 4 portions:

- 243.23 sq m to Franck Nadal
- 243.23 sq m to Andrine Nadal
- 243.23 sq m to Helena Nadal
- 297.16 sq m to Juliette Nadal,

her cousin Louis Augustin Roy, heir of Andrine Nadal voluntarily exchanged his land, of the same extent as those of the heirs Franck Nadal, leaving the land that he inherited to the heirs of Franck Nadal. Before applicant father’s death, he built a four-room-house on the land, which has been renovated. He lived in the house. In 1975, Louis Augustin Roy made a false “*acte de vente*” stipulating that the father has sold the land and the house.

The applicant, Marthésie Couronne, confirms and certifies that he has falsified the document by imitating applicant’s father signature. On the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Marie Josée Achille (born Nadal) made a written statement confirming that she has never signed any document as stipulation by Louis Augustin Roy because she was in the UK at the period. She requests the Commission to investigate and to intervene legally in order to get back the land.

**Case 4**

Marthésie Couronne adds that family owned a plot of land of 21 *Arpents* at Camp de Masque Pavé. She ignores the exact location and whether it is occupied or not. She asks the Commission to assist in research.

**Case 5**

The applicant says that her grandmother was Marie Angèle Ang-Saye, she married Chin Paw in 1883. This latter bought a plot of land at Camp de Masque Pavé as evidenced by TV 214 No. 76. According to her, this latter was a real Estate broker. Chin Paw died, living Marie - Angele as his sole heir, as they had no child together. Marie-Angèle then remarried Kho-Sin, who died. No child was born either from this marriage. After his death, Marie-Angèle lived in cohabitation with Polixène Riche, they were not civilly married. From this relationship, five children were born:

- Arnold Riche, born on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1896;
- Angelders Riche. born on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1901;
- Louis Raymond Riche, born on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1904;
- Marie Simone Riche, born on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1906; and
- Marie Léa Riche, born on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1910.

According to the affidavit of affiliation, Marie Marthésie Nadal is the daughter of Marie Léa Riche. Marthésie Couronne, born Nadal, affirms that she had recourse to a Land surveyor, Ravindranath Bhurtun in order to know the exact extent of the land bequeathed to the heirs. With the agreement of the other heirs, they have decided to sell the land. Marthésie Couronne and her sisters report that a few days after having placed a sign to advertise the sale of the land, one Proag (*Applicant is not very sure of her name*) called her and said that she was the owner of that plot of land.

The applicant’s cousin, who lives not very far from the land, reported to them that the said Proag bulldozed the land and even destroyed an old shop found there. The applicants say that in the past the shop was hired by one Tion who went to Canada and finally died there.

Marthésie Couronne affirms that her cousin, Jacques Brunel Riche, recently died leaving six children who are his legal heirs. One of the heirs is a minor and they are waiting for an authorization from the Supreme Court of Mauritius in order to sell the land. Marthésie Couronne and her family even had recourse to the services of Solicitor Doorgacharun Luchmun to have the permission for "*Sale of Minor Rights*".

The applicant is one of the heirs of Félix Eulalie Marianne and Celestin Quirin who owned a portion of land of extent of 1 *Arpent* situate at Trou d'Eau Douce as per TV 54 No. 203 drawn in 1853.

The searches undertaken by the Commission in **Case 1** reveal that by affidavit of prescription dated the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1990, Jean Vivian Beau-Bois prescribed a portion of land of an extent of 770 m<sup>2</sup>.

It is the contention of the applicant that the land prescribed was owned by the succession of the afore-mentioned Félix Eulalie Marianne and Célestin Quirin and that the said Beau-Bois did not have all the requisites of prescription. On 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1991, the said Beau-Bois sold the land prescribed to his daughter and his son-in-law as evidenced by Volume 2158 No. 58.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004, the applicant, with other heirs, caused an action to be entered before the Supreme Court praying the Court to declare the prescription and the subsequent sale to be null and void.

The applicant came to the Commission for a meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011 to state that the case before the Supreme Court had been withdrawn by plaintiffs while redeeming their rights to start new proceedings. The Commission advised the parties concerned to contact their legal advisers in order to proceed with the new case. The affidavit should be drawn up anew, if needs be.

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#### **CASE NAME: LASERINGUE**

*TJC/ L/0056/VF/LASERINGUE MICHELE*

Michèle Laseringue, the applicant, states that she is the wife of Harris Laseringue. After 10 years of married life, she left her husband and her home situated at Avenue Laseringue Palma, Quatre Bornes to live with her mother. She never divorced. At her husband's death, the house was sold to the son of her husband's concubine, Rolande, who said that the house was hers. The applicant does not have the deed of sale. She is married in community of goods. She wants assistance to know how to recover her rights on the property and house.

In a second case, she adds that her husband had 2 sons from her concubine. Steve Laseringue (deceased) had 2 daughters and Marvin Laseringue, unmarried.

Harris Laseringue owned a plot of land of 27.50 perches in Bambous, Black River transcribed in Volume TV 1569 No. 149, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2004 and registered under TV 53 No. 1654, signed by Surveyor Ng Tong Ng Wah. This plot of land is leased out at present to several families from Rodrigues who have built a house. The applicant ignores to whom the rent is paid and wants the Commission to investigate.

From what the Commission has gathered, it has established that Harris Laseringue (born 20<sup>th</sup> October 1939) is married, "*sous le régime de la communauté légale des biens, to Jean Michèle Lalande on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1966*". Ten years later, in 1976, she left her husband and her house to live with her mother at Bambous near the District Court.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1982, Harris Laseringue prescribed a plot of land of extent of 27 ½ perches at Bambous as per TV 1569 No. 149. In terms of a Judgement delivered by the Master and Registrar of the Supreme court dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 1997, transcribed in TV 3598 No. 54, Harris Laseringue and ors became the "*sole and lawful*" owners of extent of 20 ¼ perches at Palma and in terms of a Division in kind, H. Laseringue was allocated 2 plots of land of 148.31m<sup>2</sup> and 55.73 m<sup>2</sup> respectively.

As per TV 7347 No. 51 dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Harris Laseringue sold to Louis Marvyne Laseringue (son of H. Laseringue and his concubine Marie Rolande Louise) the two above mentioned plots of land “ensemble une maison en blocs de ciment sous dalles y existant, ainsi que les installations pour une prise d’eau et de la lumière” for the sum of Rs. 400,000. “Que Monsieur H. Laseringue reconnaît avoir reçu et touché de l’acquéreur, dès avant ces présentes et hors de la vue du notaire ».

H. Laseringue passed away on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

Michele Laseringue has been advised to enter a Court case to contest the sale.

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### **CASE NAME: SALOMON**

#### **TJC/L0057/VF/ MUNOGEE MARIE-LINE ROSEMARY born LEGRAND**

This file deals with the properties of the heirs of late Bergicourt Salomon at Quatre-Cocos, wherein the applicant avers that she is co-owner and /or co-heirs of undivided rights in apportion of land of 2 *Arpents* situated in the District of Flacq, more precisely at a place called Quatre-Cocos. The land originally belonged to Bergicourt Salomon.

Marie-Line Rosemary Munogee, *born* Legrand, relates that his family possessed a plot of land of about 4/7 of 2 *Arpents*, that is, approximately 1 *Arpent* 15 perches situated at Quatre-Cocos, Flacq belonging to the heirs of late Bergicourt Salomon (husband of late Marie Juliana Catherine). During her life-time, Juliana Catherine has always said to her grandchildren that her late husband Bergicourt Salomon had left a property in Quatre-Cocos. Nobody trusted her as she was old. One of her grandchildren did some research at the Registrar General’s Office. She discovered that, indeed, her grandfather, Bergicourt Salomon had a property but that one Joseph Wilfrid Salomon and Eda Lionnet (wife of Robert Marie) had drawn a false affidavit of succession relating that they are the only heirs to apprehend the estate and succession of late Bergicourt Salomon.

All documents and evidences have been extracted during the years 1999 to 2000 to swear a counter-affidavit against the “*supercherie*”. Both “*usurpateurs*’ in their affidavit have left many contradictions such as the age of Bergicourt Salomon when he got married to one Lucie Goder. These events are contradictory when calculated with the date & birth certificate of Bergicourt Salomon.

The Commission has analysed the documents submitted.

As per an affidavit drawn after the death of Marie Juliana Catherine, it is said that she was married to Louis Bergicourt Salomon, also called Joseph Sergicourt Salomon. From that marriage, one child was born, namely Marie Micheline Pomponia Salomon on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1930.

However, after analysis of other documents, it appears that one Joseph Wilfrid Salomon and one Eda Lionnet (wife of Robert Marie), pretending to be the only heirs to apprehend the estate and succession of late Bergicourt Salomon, have sworn in a false affidavit in order to grab the properties of late Bergicourt Salomon. For instance, Bergicourt Salomon is supposed to have married Lucie Goder. They had 2 children namely Joseph Salomon and Marie Luciana Salomon (mother of Eda Lionnet, wife of Robert Marie.)

According to a deed drawn up by Notary public E. Chaillet, dated 12<sup>th</sup> November 1952, and transcribed in Volume 579 No. 168, one Eda Lionnet, wife of Robert Marie, sold to Joseph Salomon all her rights in the portion of land of ½ *Arpent*.

Yet, in the title of ownership, it is stated that Bergicourt Salomon died on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1932 leaving as sole heirs and parties

- His son Joseph Salomon born from his marriage with Lucie Goder and
- His grandchild Eda Lionnet, wife of Robert Marie, coming by representation of her mother Marie Luciana Salomon.

According to an affidavit of succession submitted by applicant and sworn by two witnesses before the Supreme Court on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2000 - affidavit drawn up by Attorney at Law, Me T. Ponambalum - it appears that Louis Bergicourt Salomon died on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1928, leaving Marie Micheline Pomponia Salomon, wife of Louis Bertiusse Legrand.

- Louis Bergicourt Salomon was married to Marie Juliana Catherine;
- Louis Bertiusse Legrand & Marie Micheline Pomponia Salomon had eight children (one of whom is the applicant).

There are two affidavits of Bergicourt Salomon, also called Louis Bergicourt Salomon, which are very different, firstly because of the date of death 6<sup>th</sup> May 1932 and 7<sup>th</sup> May 1928; secondly, concerning the heirs and parties entitled to the succession as per the affidavits mentioned in deeds of sale.

The case of Marie Line Munogee is one of the typical cases of usurpation which the Commission has come across.

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**CASE NAME: ZEPHIR**

*TJC/ L/0058/VF/DUPRE GERARD*

Gérard Dupré, the applicant, avers that a plot of land has been given to Zéphir Olivier, his ancestor, at St. Hubert. The land belonged to Zéphir Olivier, the great grandfather of Gérard Dupré, then to his son, who, in turn left it to the grandson. The land is situated near the Cemetery of Grand Port.

He further avers that the family had another plot of land at St. Hubert. The Ramphul family is now occupying the land illegally (without permission). The family does not possess any contract. The applicant thinks that all documents are found at the Archives.

Gérard Dupré wants the assistance of the Commission in finding documents and situating the land; and finally, in getting the land back.

Unfortunately, in spite of a letter sent to applicant on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2010, he has failed to submit the required documents. As a result, the Truth and Justice Commission could not proceed further as no one could get, despite several attempts, to contact the said Gérard Dupré.

It appears that applicant is not interested with the case. The file is kept in abeyance.

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**CASE NAME: RENEL**

TJC/L/0059/VF/ RENEL LEONCE SERGE

The applicant, Serge Léonce Renel, writes that following the "*testament olographe*" made by his father, he has inherited a plot of land at Petit Bel Air. The plot of land is known as "*Terrain Elizabeth Rambuche*", which was the name of his grandmother. According to a survey made by Land surveyor Dumazel in 1986, the latter found out that the plot of land is situated at the corner of Chemin Ruisseaux-des-Délices. He has asked for a building permit for the construction of a building on his property. The Grand Port/Savanne District Council refused the permit because the property was outside permitted developed area. Grand Port/Savanne District Council advised him to appeal to the Secretary of the Town and Country Planning Board against the decision of the Council. He requested Land surveyor Dumazel to survey the land and insert the landmarks. He made a request to CWA, CEB for permits and made a plan of the house. A Solicitor advised him to make an "*affidavit de prescription*" to enforce his occupation of land. His cousin, Pierre Renel, objected to this prescription. The case was referred to the Supreme Court and judgement was in favour of applicant. Even then he cannot build or share the land between his children.

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2008, a letter was sent to the Minister of Housing and Lands to plead his case. The Town and Country Planning Board maintained the decision of the Grand Port/Savanne District Council. Land surveyor, M. Beegun, also made a survey of his property to extract the portion belonging to his cousin.

He requests the assistance of the Commission to get a portion of land from the Government.

The Commission studied his case. There is a report by Land Surveyor Maurice Dumazel appointed by the parties in the case which was pending before Supreme Court. The parties have reached an agreement. The land of the extent of 1982.88 sq metres has been divided in two lots. The agreement which has been made by judgement of the Court has been transcribed in Volume 4204 No. 1. Since the site settlement is outside residential zones, it is understood that the Grand Port/Savanne District Council, the CEB and the CWA refused to grant the necessary permits to construct a house and supply water and electricity. The land is found to be outside the settlement boundary of the residential zone amidst sugar-cane plantations. This area cannot be developed for residential purposes.

As for the request to assist applicant to get another portion of land from the Government, this is outside the mandate of the Commission.

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**CASE NAME: CLEMENTINE**

TJC/L/ VF/0060/ CLEMENTINE MYRIAM

The applicant Myriam and her sister, Thérèse Clémentine, aver that their ancestors were the owners of several plots of land as follows:

1. 1 *Arpent* 50 perches opposite to the sugar factory of Réunion Sugar Estate at Vacoas;
2. 33 perches in the vicinity of Trou-aux-Cerfs;
3. 24 perches at Rivière-du-Rempart ;
4. Pamplemousses (applicants have no additional details); and
5. Glen Park (No additional detail is available).

No documentary evidence was submitted in support of these averments.

The plot of land opposite Réunion Sugar Estate at Vacoas is being used for the cultivation of sugar cane. Myriam Clémentine has paid one Rigobert of the Nelson Mandela Centre to do searches on

these lands, but, up to now he has not given any information back. The plots of land are under the name of Léontine Clémentine and they want to have their land back.

In spite of searches done by the Commission, there is no record of Léontine Clémentine in any "*Case hypothécaire*".

Further searches, made in the name of Jean Marcel Clémentine and his wife Marie Jeanne Appasamy revealed that they occupied a plot of land of extent of 31 perches at Vacoas on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1920 and another plot in Port-Louis on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1916 and sold them as per TV 1222 No. 233 and TV 435 No.127 respectively.

Therefore, the Commission is of the opinion that the land, as averred, has already been sold.

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**CASE NAME: LARHUBARBE**

*TJC/L/0061/VF/LAVICTOIRE SOLANGE*

The Lavictoire family avers that one Aristhène Larhubarbe owned a plot of land at Rivière-du-Rempart. The land is situated opposite Rivière-du-Rempart School and dispensary.

Furthermore, one Miss Larhubarbe who married one Lavictoire owned a plot of land at Tamarin. She has visited the land which was bare. After her marriage in 1971, people occupied illegally the land of an extent of 1 *Arpent* 5 perches.

The requests of the family are:

- The title deed;
- The site plan.

The report of Surveyor Buguth of the land under the name of Aristhène Larhubarbe. After review of the file and a perusal of the Report of Land Surveyor Buguth as recorded in MA 225, page 2, it has been observed that the file deals with only one case namely 1 *Arpent* 05 plot at Rivière-du-Rempart.

Following searches made at the Conservator of Mortgages Office, no "*Case hypothécaire*" in the name of Aristhène Larhubarbe was found.

As for the second request, there is no case in file for the Tamarin plot. The word "*terrain*" has been wrongly interpreted as being a plot of land at "*Tamarin*".

In the light of the above, there is no plot of land registered in the name of Aristhène Larhubarbe.

Solange Lavictoire has been informed accordingly.

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**CASE NAME: LAROSE**

TJC/ L/0062/VF/ LAROSE HYACINTHE

Hyacinthe Larose avers in a first claim that he is heir of Alfred Larose who owned a plot of land of Brigot Estate, Montagne des Trois Mamelles. The extent of the property is about 1 acre. The land is bare. Applicant would like to obtain a copy of the deed and other related documents.

In a second claim, the applicant says that the family owned a portion of land at La Louise, Quatre-Bornes from which 47 perches has been sold to one Ulysée Israel Rabot, husband of Augusta Larose, grandmother of applicant. The deed of the land has been drawn up by Raoul de Robillard on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1928, TV 392 No. 474. He wants to know if the land is still there.

In fact, the Commission obtained 3 copies of "*Case hypothécaire*" from the Conservator of Mortgages in the name of

- Raphael Larose (succession);
- Ulysée Israel Rabot (Augusta Larose);
- Rabot Ulysée ou Illis Rabaut.

The content was examined. The Commission sent a letter to Hyacinthe Larose at the given address, inviting him to come to the Commission; but the letter was unfortunately returned by the Post Office with the mention "*unknown*".

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**CASE NAME: SOOPAU**

TJC/ L/0063/VF/ SOOPAU MARIE ELISE

Marie Elise Soopaul, the applicant, lives on a plot of land of 29 ½ perches since 1963. In 1995, her neighbor, Louis Joseph Pyndiah, constructed a cattle-pen on her land. She contacted the Ministry of Environment but the officer threatened by Louis Pyndiah was forced to quit when he came for a "*constat*" of the situation'. She went to Court and following the judgement Louis Pyndiah had to destroy the shed. Afterwards he erected a fencing to replace the shed. The applicant contacted Magistrate Lalloo in Chambers'. The magistrate advised her to go to Court. She obtained legal aid, the services of Lawyer, Nazir Beekun and Attorney-at-Law, D. Ramgopalsing, were offered. This happened in 1996 and it was a civil case.

Judgement was proclaimed in 1998 by Magistrate of Bambous. The applicant won the case whereby she could occupy 25 perches. She had the land surveyed by Nazir Ahmed Khuram Beegun who advised her to ignore the 4 ½p which was closed by fencing.

The applicant came to the Commission after Christmas. She declared that on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2009, her neighbor, Louis Joseph Pyndiah, came in a lorry full of corrugated iron sheets and unloaded these on her plot of land. That same day Pyndiah started the construction of a house by erecting poles. On Christmas Day, the applicant's son removed all the poles. Joseph Pyndiah and his family were vexed and a quarrel broke out. The police had to intervene. On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>

December, Pyndiah put up the construction poles once again and assembled the iron sheets of 6 and 11 feet approximately. Marie Elise Soopaul accuses Pyndiahs of having “vandalized” her property: they have broken their window panes and kitchen utensils; removed all their taps and have stolen a gas bottle and a wooden plank.

She made a request to the Commission to apply the judgement that has been ignored by the nephew of applicant.

The applicant came to the Commission again on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010 to inform it that she has been summoned to Court on the next day, on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

The Commission has been made aware that the matter has already been dealt with by the Supreme Court.

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**CASE NAME: TUYAU**

*TJC/L/0064/VF/TUYAU FRANCIS*

Francis Tuyau, the applicant, writes that his grandfather and father had told him that the family owned several plots of land in Flacq and elsewhere, at Camp de Masque. He has no relevant document or title deeds. He wants to get the land back.

The Commission phoned the house of Francis Tuyau. A lady replied to say that she would come with the necessary document; but she never turned up.

The letter sent by the Commission has been returned by the Post Office.

In the absence of these papers, nothing could be done for the Tuyau family.

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**CASE NAME: MAISON ROUGE**

*TJC/ L/0065/VF/MAISON ROUGE RENEA*

Renéa Maison Rouge writes that, before dying, her husband told her that his father Léon Angilbert Maison Rouge owned a plot of land next to Ruisseau Créole in front of the Cemetery of La Preneuse, Black River. His mother, named Thérèse Edouard, being now deceased, cannot sustain any of the fact.

Renéa Maison Rouge relates that during a site visit on the said plot of land, she found a coconut plantation. She does not know who owns this plantation. She remembers one day that she accompanied her husband to Port-Louis where someone verified at the Registrar General’s Office and told them that the land was still registered in her husband’s family name. She has no documents with her. An “agent” has already proposed to her husband that, if he succeeded in the procedures to get back the family land, to promise, on paper, to give him a quarter of the portion,

According to searches undertaken by the Commission, the name of Leon Angilbert Maison Rouge does appear neither in the “Case Hypothécaire”, nor in the Registers of the Conservator of Mortgages.

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**CASE NAME: TYPHIS***TJC/L/OO66/VF/ TYPHIS GEORGIA & TYPHIS ELIAS*

Georgia and Elias Typhis put two claims before the Commission. In the first case, the applicants write that their great-grandfather, Ferdinand Antoine, was owner of a plot of land at Camp de Masque Pave. They have never visited the land and do not know where it is found. They want to get back the land.

In the second claim, they relate that their great-great-grandfather Jean Charles Typhis, owned a plot of land at Clarence, Black River. Jean Charles Typhis got married and had an only son named Avy Typhis. The latter died unmarried. The applicants' father, Louis René Typhis, inherited the share of Jean Charles Typhis. The family lived on the plot of land until the death of the father. They then moved to Bambous. The uncle of applicants' father, Charles Typhis, is still living at Clarence. The plot of land, which the Typhis are claiming, was adjoined that of Clarence Sugar Estate. According to applicants' mother, one Mac Grégor, Administrator of Clarence Sugar Estate, sent his messenger, Pan, to meet Charles Typhis in order to obtain Documents so as to verify if the Typhis were the real owners of the land. The documents were given to Pan, who disappeared with them.

Charles Typhis went to Court after the loss of the documents and was present each time the case was called. One day, on his way back from Court, Charles Typhis was hurt by a lorry of Clarence Sugar Estate. He died. After the death of Charles Typhis, Clarence Sugar Estate occupied the land. No access was given to applicants' mother and brother and himself to the land; the watchman of Clarence Sugar Estate threatened them.

At present, Médine Sugar Estate occupies the land, as this Company has bought all the land belonging to Clarence.

Even if no document was submitted by the applicants, the Commission undertook searches to reach a conclusion.

It appears that Jean Charles Typhis prescribed a plot of land of 3 *Arpents* 38 in terms of TV 476 No. 191 and on the same day disposed of 2 *Arpents* in two lots of 1 *Arpent* each to one Beesah, as per "*Répertoire*" 331 no 568. A perusal of the TV indicates that the said deed has been cancelled following a judgement of the District Court. The Commission has called at the District Council of Bambous to obtain a copy of the judgement. It has not been possible to get a copy of the said judgement even from the District Court of Black River. It appears that the prescription and the two sales have been declared null and void by the Court.

As regard to the claim of a plot of land at Camp de Masque, searches have revealed that Ferdinand Antoine had no plot of land at Camp de Masque but at La Louise in the District of Plaines-Wilhelm's, as evidenced by "*Répertoire*" 396/583.

The applicants have been made aware of this discovery.

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**CASE NAME: MADHOO**

*TJC/ L/0067/VF/ MADHOO MARIE THERESE*

Marie Thérèse Madhoo, the applicant writes that she lived at Cossigny Road, Quatre-Bornes. When her house was destroyed during a cyclone, she left the place and lived in a “*dépendance*” on the premises of one Gilbert Mazéry for whom she worked as maid. As Mazéry was the Chairman of the Municipal Council of Quatre-Bornes, the applicant’s mother made a request to obtain a Municipal house. The application was rejected.

Gilbert Mazéry acquired a house at 27, avenue Concorde, Cité Kennedy, on land leased out from Central Housing Authority. He allowed the Madhoo family to stay there and they did so for more than 32 years. When Mazery died, he gave in his will this house to the Madhoo family. A document “*A 465 No. 639, Year 1968*” was submitted in support of this claim. Several attempts were made to regularize the situation of the Madhoo family at CHA. But the officer of CHA, one Cassam stated that the Madhoo is not the owner of the house, in spite of the deed.

The Madhoo has been summoned to leave the said property following a letter sent to her by one Antoine Duquesne.

However, the situation changed completely when on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010, Marie Thérèse Madhoo informed the Commission that her problem has been settled in Court and that now she is occupying the CHA house at 27, Avenue Concorde, Residence Kennedy, Quatre-Bornes.

The case has been settled between the parties.

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**CASE NAME: REYNOLD**

*TJC/ L/0068/VF/VICTOR MARIETTE JOY born REYNOLD*

Mariette Joy Victor, the applicant, writes that her grandfather was the owner of a plot of ground at Chamarel, Black River. She does not have any document of the property. Her mother has always said that her grandfather, Jean Thomy Reynolds, possessed a plot of land at Chamarel. The applicant has sold the land without the consent of her mother.

The applicant does not have any title deed nor any other document of land which belonged to the ancestors.

Searches undertaken by the Commission revealed that neither Jean Thomy Reynolds nor Jean Thomy Reynolds’s name appeared in the Register/ “*Répertoire*” at the Registrar General’s Office or at the Office of the Conservator of Mortgages.

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**CASE NAME: L’INTRÉPIDE**

*TJC/ L/0069/ VF/ L’INTREPIDE PATRICK (Mr. & Mrs.)*

Both applicants Patrick L’Intrépide and his wife declare that the grandfather, Rasidore L’Intrépide was born on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1871 at Bel Air. According to applicant’s mother, Ernestine L’Intrépide, the grandfather Rasidore always spoke about a plot of land which he possessed at Mahébourg, next

to the Church. Rasidore L’Intrépide left Mauritius to settle in Madagascar. This was before the applicant’s mother’s marriage. No one took care of the land as applicant’s mother was illiterate. Applicant has no document concerning the land but wants to recover the land back.

The applicants have neither a title deed nor any other document concerning the land.

In any case, they would have been blocked by prescription. It would have been interesting to know the circumstances from oral history why no one can take care of the land. Illiteracy as such is not a reason.

The Commission undertook searches on the claim, but unfortunately, the name of Rasidore L’Intrépide does not appear in the Register of the Conservator of Mortgages.

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**CASE NAME: JEROME**

*TJC/ L/0070/ JEROME JEAN ALBERT*

The applicant, Jean Albert Jérôme, writes that he has a plot of land lying at Camp Roches, Henrietta - between the curves of Rivière Papayes and Rivière-du-Rempart of an extent of 325 *Arpents*. This land constitutes the concession of André Marie, which has passed on to Denis Levasseur who is his great grandfather. The applicant’s great grandmother was named Clivia Perrine, also called Cécile.

He requests the Commission to assist him in his searches and to get back the land of his ancestors.

He submitted copy of an “*Affidavit de Succession*” dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 2007 as well as copy of an “*Injunction*” for a Court case. Jean Albert Jérôme also writes that he has paid to one Rigobert of the Nelson Mandela Centre, the sum of Rs. 40, 000 and has received from him neither document nor additional information.

In his application, Jean Albert Jérôme speaks of 325 *Arpents* at Camp Roches. Yet, in another document dated 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010, left at the Commission, his claim refers to 112 *Arpents*. With reference to a Court case and addressed to the Supreme Court Judge the claim has come down to 40 *Arpents* at Camp Roches, Henrietta. This application, drawn up by the M. Conhyedoss, but signed by the S. Ramano, Attorney-at-Law, was solemnly affirmed before Supreme Court on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2007.

It is not clear what the extent of the land the applicant is claiming. In the application, 325 *Arpents* are mentioned. Mention of 112 *Arpents* is also made in a certificate and in the Court case the applicant is claiming 40 *Arpents* only.

The Supreme Court has not yet given any judgement in this case.

Furthermore, searches undertaken by the Commission also reveal that there is no land registered in the “*Case hypothécaire*” of Marie Jérôme.

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**CASE NAME: CHIFFONE**

*L/0071/VF/ POTIE MARIE HELDA (born Chiffonne)  
Case Potié husband of Mrs. Chiffone Marie Helda  
transferred to TJC/L/O165/VF.*

Marie Helda Potié, the applicant writes that she has a plot of land at Chemin Grenier, more precisely, on the left side of the Government school. It belongs to her father, Pierre Edouard Chiffone, who, in turn, inherited it from his father Pierre Dorsil Chiffone. The plot of land is now occupied by someone else (she does not know his name) but he seems arrogant. The case was referred to the Court and the Judge - from what the applicant says -inferred that her father could take possession of his land after his recovery when the judgement will be pronounced. Her father was not able to be in Court, being very ill.

The Commission carried out searches at the Mortgage Office, but, unfortunately, the names mentioned by the applicant do not appear in the records at the Registrar of Mortgages.

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**CASE NAME: POTIE**

*TJC/ L/0072/VF/LABONTE MARIE CATHERINE  
CROSS REFERENCE (case 1): POTIE JOSEPH OSCAR TJC/L/VF 165*

Marie Catherine Labonté, the applicant, writes that she has information about a plot of land belonging to her grandfather at Flic-en-Flac, but she does not know the location of the land.

She also adds that her family has another plot of land at Chamarel. She does neither know either the location of the land, or any document to support her claim.

In spite of searches at the Conservator of Mortgages, the names of applicant’s grandparents or ancestors do not appear in any official register.

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**CASE NAME: ANSELINE**

*TJC/ L/0074/VF/ANSELINE MARIE GRETA*

Marie Greta Anseline, the applicant, states that her grandmother Marie Makie Millien, who married Léonce D’Argenteuil Guimbeau had a plot of land of 9 *Arpents* 45 at Union Vale and wished to know what became of that plot of land, more so as the land is occupied by Mon Desert-Mon Trésor Ltd.

She further states that Léonce D’Argenteuil Guimbeau was also the owner of a plot of land at Rivière-des-Anguilles of an extent of 16 *Arpents* and 12 perches as per TV 318 No. 95, (“*Acte de Me Durand Deslongrais*”, dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 1899) & TV 86 No. 185 and that Joséphine Guimbeau was the owner of 3 plots of land of an extent of 1061 toises (1/4 *Arpent*) at Roche-Bois from whom the Anseline family has inherited.

Searches have shown that the plot of land of initially 9 *Arpents* 45 perches at Union Vale belonged to the applicant’s grandmother Marie Makie Millien - who married Léonce d’Argenteuil Guimbeau - as evidenced by TV 199 No. 446.

Marie Makie Millien passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1878, leaving as sole heirs to inherit her estate and succession her 3 children namely: Marie Joséphine Lucienne, Marie Marthe Gabrielle, Charles Auguste and her husband Léonce D’Argenteuil Guimbeau.

In virtue of a deed transcribed in Volume 351 No. 358, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1921, the heirs of Marie Makie Millien sold the plot of land of extent of 2 *Arpents* 47 to Anicet Ythier. This is confirmed by the report of Land surveyors Maurice Dumazel and Jean Jacques Desmarais.

According to “*Répertoire*” 215 No. 109 Marie Joséphine Lucienne Guimbeau, following a division in kind effected by late S.W.G.Gebert on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1898, transcribed in Volume 9199 No. 446, Marie Makie Millien was attributed a plot of land of extent of 2 *Arpents* 47 at Union Vale in the district of Grand Port.

As regards to the plot of land at Rivière-des-Anguilles and Roche Bois, these have been sold out.

In the light of the above, there is no case for the heirs of Marie Makie Millien.

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**CASE NAME: FANTAISIE**

*TJC/ L/0075/VF/FANTAISIE BRUNO*

The applicant, Bruno Fantaisie, says that his family had a plot of land at Camp Créole Albion which they lost. The land belonged to his grandfather Fantaisie. No other name was given as the applicant does not know his surname. Yet, he knows that His father, Noël Joseph Fantaisie has “*demi-frères*” (step brothers) and “*demi-soeurs*” (step sisters) named Siméon, are scattered all over the island. He recalls that when his father was young, he used to pick mangoes on his land.

Bruno Fantaisie requested the assistance of the Commission to undergo searches regarding the land and to get back the land.

Even if the claim is very vague - as he has produced no document, no survey plan, and no title deed to enable the Commission to make searches - we did find that the claimant grandfather’s name was Jean Eugène Fantaisie. Unfortunately, his grandfather’s name does not appear in the “*Répertoire*” or “*Case Hypothécaire*”; nor does the name exist at the Registrar General or on the Name Index.

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**CASE NAME: MATOMBÉ**

*TJC/ L/0076/VF/ MATOMBÉ JEAN RICHNEY*

Jean Richney Matombé writes that he very often accompanied his grandmother, Clarisse Matombé, his grandfather, Elvis Matombé, and his father, Louis Guy Matombé, to a plot of land belonging to them at Bois des Amourettes, mostly known as Montagne Lion to cut “*vacoas*” leaves. His aunt, Rose Matombé, daughter of the brother of his grandfather, Eloi Matombé, owned a part “*indivisé*” of this land. Without the family knowing it, Marie Rose Matombé leased out the land to her cousin, one Henri Bourbon, for the sum of Rs 10,000 per year; he is cultivating sugarcane. The family of applicant was not aware of this transaction because after her father’s death, they were not on speaking terms with the lady.

Philogène Matombé was the first owner was the land estimated to cover an extent of some 30-35 *Arpents*.

Neither title deed nor survey plan has been submitted.

The applicant wants the Commission to assist the family to retrace documents which could allow the heirs to sell land to Ferney Estate. Furthermore, the family asks for restitution and reparation.

Preliminary searches, carried out at the Registrar General's Office revealed that the names of Elie Matombé, Clarisse Matombé, Louis Guy Matombé, Gustave Bourbon and Henri Bourbon do not appear in the Name Index.

But further analysis of the "*Case Hypothécaire*" of Philogène Matombé and Jean Elie Matombé reveals that Jean Philogène Matombé is the owner of a plot of land of extent 1 *Arpent* 25 at Grand Port for having acquired it from R. Runjeet on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1900 in TV 240 No. 164 (*vide Répertoire 181 No. 816*) and Jean Elie Matombé sold his undivided rights in the succession of Pierre Paul Matombé on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1925 and undivided rights 1 *Arpent* at Grand Port, Saint Aubin (Bel Air) to the Beau Vallon Company on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1941.

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**CASE NAME: RIMA**

*TJC/ L/0077/VF/ RIMA JULIETTE*

The applicant, Juliette Rima, writes that her mother has always told her that her grandfather owned a plot of land at Mont Blanc, Chamouny. She has no additional information regarding the exact location and the extent of the land. She does not even know the name and surname of her grandfather nor that of her grandmother. She is not sure if it is Anseline or Louise. She wants to find the portion of land.

A most difficult case: No searches could be carried out as applicant does not know, and has not given then names of her grandfather and grandmother.

No land data is given to enable the Commission to do searches and put up a property report. What is given is only hearsay information.

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**CASE NAME: GUKHOOL**

*TJC/ L/0079/VF/GUKHOOL JACQUELINE*

The applicant, Jacqueline Gukhool, writes that her father Raghobeer Gukhool was the owner of property situated at Duo Cité Kennedy, Quatre-Bornes. It appears that he sold the land to his son and applicant's brother, Benjamin Gukhool. The latter is no more. She has been told that she has neither shared right nor any pretension to the said property. The sale had been done in favour of her brother at date 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1984, as evidenced by TV 1322 No. 110. As heir of her father, she says that she has not been aware of the sale.

With reference to Marc Benjamin and Raghobeer Gukhool in "*Répertoire*" 550/1 and "*Répertoire*" 578/693, respectively, Raghobeer Gukhool was the tenant of a CHA house at D40, avenue La Confiance, Cité Kennedy. He passed away on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 1991 at the age of 84 years. Years earlier, on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1974, he sold the house standing on the plot of land of extent of about 5P to his eldest son Benjamin Gukhool. Benjamin Gukhool has passed away.

Her sister, Jacqueline Gukhool, wants to contest the above sale, although she is presently residing at the same address.

The land in question is State land under the control of CHA.

For the Commission, it appears that it is difficult for Jacqueline Gukhool- who is now 71 years old- to ask for cancellation of the sale as Benjamin Gukhool has passed away, and as she is residing there.

The "*Répertoire*" makes it clear that Benjamin Gukhool purchased a house on a portion of land of 5 perches at Candos as per TV 1242 No. 214 dated 04<sup>th</sup> February 1974.

If ever Jacqueline Gukhool still wants to contest the sale, she has to enter a case before the competent Court, although it seems, as stated above, that it will be difficult to ask for cancellation of the sale which dates back to 1974.

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**CASE NAME: DEFOIX**

*TJC/ L/0081/VF/DEFOIX SIMON CLAUDE*  
*Cross Reference: DEFOIX PATRICK RICHARD TJC/L/0167*

The applicant, Simon Claude Defoix, declares he recalls that in the 1940s, when he was still young, his cousin, Mark Defoix, told him that there was a land for sale. The latter applied to Notary Dassyne to do the necessary for him to get the land. The applicant says that he has no document, except the extract of a birth certificate in the name of Simon Claude Defoix, son of Joseph Defoix, concerning the said property. He wants the Commission to investigate the land.

Searches carried out by the Commission at the Mortgage office revealed that the name of Mark Defoix or Mark Defoie, Mark Defoi or Simon Defoix, does not appear in the Name Index Book.

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**CASE NAME: CAETAN**

*TJC/ L/VF/0093/ CAETAN MARIE MADELEINE*

No case and no request were submitted.

Marie Madeleine Caëtan is a tenant of a NHDC house at Village Anouska, 16<sup>ème</sup> Mille. As she owed a big sum of money (Rs. 31,250) as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008, she received a letter as a last reminder to settle the arrears.

The Commission redirected her to a specific person at the NHDC responsible for hardship cases to try to help Madeleine Caëtan.

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**CASE NAME: MARGUERITE**

*TJC/L/VF/0082 MARGUERITE OLYMPE*

The applicant, Olympe Marguerite, writes that she has an access problem with her neighbours, Jean Claude Luchoomanen and Cyril A. Marianne, who have encroached on a road of 3.05m being used as

access for the back portion where she is one of the owners. The said road now cannot be used by vehicles. The applicant wants the authorities to reopen the road as appropriate.

Furthermore, she adds that according to her information, she has a right or a share in a portion of land of about 788 *Arpents* in the District of Savanne, more precisely at Ligne Bassin, Ruisseau Citron. However, there has been an exchange of land between the Colonial Government and one Adolphe Gébert, which brings the family inheritance to Mahébourg instead of Savanne. The minors Gébert and Masson Abraham were the heirs of that plot at Mahébourg. The deed witnessing the transaction was transcribed in Volume TV 55 No. 34 on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1853. The applicant's father, Jules Marguerite, has been raised by Jules Masson who had two sisters. Before his death, Jules Masson made a will (*testament olographe*) for his two sisters, thus leaving the "*jouissance*" and the "*nue propriété*" or "*usufruit*" for Jules Marguerite.

The history of the Masson family is as follows: Abraham Masson or Masson Abraham is one of the owners of the land of 788 *Arpents*. His son, Jules Masson, and his two daughters are the heirs entitled to apprehend the estate and succession of their father, Abraham Masson. Jules Masson was married but 35 years later, his wife died. No child was born from the said marriage.

One of the two sisters got married and had one daughter.

The married sister of Jules Masson was known under the name of "*Mazelle Fillette*". She was married to one Oscar L'Oiseau. The said marriage was done under the system of separation of goods and property.

Before her death, in 1941 at six o'clock in the afternoon, she wrote her will ("*succession*") before two witnesses. The said "*testament olographe*" was made in favour of applicant's father, Jules Marguerite.

The family requests the Commission to investigate in this case.

As for *Case 1*, the Commission cannot entertain this case as it concerns encroachment on a right of way by neighbours. She has to contact her Land surveyor in order to ascertain her right to use the right of access to her land. After that, she may take any appropriate action.

In *Case 2*, the applicant was requested to call at the Commission for a working session. She has not turned up. There are a lot of Court Status Acts and other documents incomplete formerly there and title deeds. Most of them relate to the Division in kind of a portion of land of 600 toises. This plot of land had been subject to a division in kind before the Master's Court, Supreme Court.

In so far as the land of 788 *Arpents* is concerned, it appears that it belonged to

- Adolphe Gébert;
- Minors Gébert; and
- Masson Abraham.

The proportion of the share is not known. The land is described as "*Crown forest*".

According to a will and testament, Jules Masson, son of Abraham Masson bequeathed the "*usufruit*" to Jules Marguerite. The "*usufruit*" became extinct following his death. His heirs cannot have any claim to the properties of Jules Masson or Abraham Masson.

According to her authentic will and testament dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 1941, Marie Eudoxie Masson, widow of Oscar L'Oiseau and daughter of Abraham Masson, bequeathed all her properties to Jules Marguerite. According to Notary Louis Marguerite Lazare, the share of Widow Oscar L'Oiseau in the property amounts to 1/9. The question remains obscure as to the share of Abraham Masson in the land of 788 acres.

There is no indication as to what has happened to the land of 788 acres. Whether it has been divided and who is occupying the land today.

After scrutinizing the deed of exchange dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1853, Mr. Adolphe Gébert and Abraham Masson have, in their own names, and on behalf of minors Gébert, exchanged a plot of land of about 16 perches at De Créoles Street, Mahébourg, for 788 acres of “*Crown forest*”.

The portion of land of 788 *Arpents* described as “*Crown forest*” could very well be State land on lease. The lease, having expired, the Government must have taken back the land. The applicant cannot have any claim on the “*Crown forest*” which is State Land.

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**CASE NAME: NETA**

*TJC/ L/0083/VF/ HEERAH YVONETTE (born NETA)*

Yvonne Heerah, the applicant writes that her father, Joseph Antoine Neta, bought a plot of land at Saint Louis Avenue, Plaisance in front of Rose- Hill garage for the sum of Rs. 300 per toise. The applicant was 14/15 years old at that time. At his father's death she was 23 years old. On her grandmother's advice, her mother took “*une hypothèque*” (mortgage) of Rs. 1,200 on the land and the small corrugated-iron house which her father had built on the land and in which the whole family was living. After some time, her mother managed to improve the little abode, turning it into a little concrete house. Meanwhile, applicant got married (16<sup>th</sup> September 1959) and was staying at Beau- Bassin. Unfortunately, Yvonne Heerah's mother was unable to pay back the sum borrowed. The concrete house and the land were sold by levy. The applicant's husband and sister tried to stop the “*Sale by levy*” but the property had already been bought by the Narain family.

Yvonne Heerah requests the Commission to verify if this sale has been done according to rules and regulations.

Searches undertaken by the Commission revealed that, according to the “*Case Hypothécaire*” 441 no 257, and transcribed into a notarial deed dated 13<sup>th</sup> January 1960, as per TV 804 No. 14, Joseph Antoine Neta did buy a plot of land at Plaisance, Rose-Hill, of the extent of 89 toises from R. De Chazal for the price of Rs. 267 at Rs. 3 per toise. Unfortunately, the land was burdened with many charges in favour of E. Audibert and Franchette.

As per Volume 5102 No. 78, the property was seized on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1970 and adjudged to E. Audibert.

Three months later, the house was sold to N. Seebaluck for the price of Rs. 5,000 as evidenced by TV 1136 No. 13 dated 29<sup>th</sup> August 1970.

The applicant has not stated who are the heirs and successors of the late Joseph Antoine Neta. She has not stated whether her father or mother or the heirs had taken the loan which was guaranteed by the mortgage.

It appears that applicant, her husband as well as her sister were fully aware of the seizure and the “*Sale by levy*” as they tried to stop the sale. As the amount due has not been paid, the property was sold before the Master's Bar of Supreme Court.

The applicant has been informed that the sale has been done according to regulations.

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**CASE NAME: MARISSON**

*TJC/ L/0085/VF/MARISSON ANNE MARIE LOUISE  
Cross reference with TJC/L/0017 HOSENY BERNARD & ORS.*

No summary. No application.

A few documents only have been submitted but no title deed or site and location plan.

There is however a request in the file from her Barrister-at-Law not to go ahead with this case.

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**CASE NAME: COLFIR**

*TJC/ L/0086/VF/PIERRE CLAUDIO*

Claudio Pierre submitted two cases to the Commission. In the first case, he writes that his grandfather on his mother's side is Léonce Colfir, the owner of a plot of land at Rivière Noire ex. Camp La Colle. After queries; he has noticed that Government has erected an NHDC housing estate over this plot of land. The company has acquired the said land from Didier Maingard de la Ville-ès-Offrans since three years.

One of his neighbours has told him that the NHDC Company wanted to give ½ of the land as negotiation. Unfortunately nothing has been done [as such]. NHDC have now been erected. Applicant has no deed nor any other Document concerning the said property.

As for the second claim, Claudio Pierre writes that his father, Louis Pierre, residing on, and proprietor of, the said premise at B5 Cité CHA, Tamarin is suffering from the encroachment of his neighbours namely one André Henry. The claim by applicant's father is situated at the rear of his residence at Pêcheur Avenue, Cité CHA Tamarin, No. B5. He writes that about ½ of their property has been encroached with the land of André Henry or others.

In both cases, the applicant requests the Commission to assist him: (i) in getting back a portion of land of an extent of 3 Arpents situate at Camp La Colle, Rivière Noire which he claims is occupied by NHDC and, (ii) he wants to know from Ministry of Housing and Lands who is the real owner; to stop the construction of André Henry.

From searches carried out by the Commission, it can confirm that:

- In virtue of a Notarial deed dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2004 transcribed in Volume 5586 No. 16, the Government of Mauritius acquired from Amédée René Philips Didier Maingard de la Ville-ès-offrans a plot of land of the extent of 8860.34m<sup>2</sup> (2A09.92p) excised from an original extent of 588A36.

The vendor is the owner of the 588A36 plot for having obtained it through a Division in kind depending on the succession of his father, Amédée Maingard de la Ville-es-offrans, as evidenced by title deed 1712 No. 138.

The NHDC Housing Estate has been constructed over the 8860.34 m<sup>2</sup> plot of land.

- The memorandum of survey drawn up by Land surveyor, M. F. Ricardo Ramiah, dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2003 registered in L.S 47 No. 3025 in relation to the above mentioned plot of land gives the names of all adjoining owners together with their respective title deeds.
- The name of Léonce Colfir does not appear in the Répertoire or "*Case Hypothécaire*" at the Registrar General's Office nor does it appear as an adjoining owner in the memorandum of survey of surveyor Ricardo Ramiah.

In the light of the above, the claim of Claudio Pierre could not be entertained by the Commission.

**CASE NAME: TOUSSAINT***TJC/ L/0087/VF/ HIPOLITE TOUSSAINT*

Hippolite Toussaint writes that he lives at Case Noyale, Cité CHA. Since 1919, his father Gabriel Hippolite has been employed by one Eugène De Ravel in Rivière Noire. He lived in a “*dépendance*” (annexed house). De Ravel transferred the family to another house near Les Salines. He promised to give them a housing contract (*kontralacaze*) but he has never done so. His three sons are aware of this promise. The applicant’s father is now deceased and he was living with him. He would like to have this housing contract

Moreover, applicant writes that he owned a plot of land in Médine Brigo, Beau Songes which belongs to his great grandmother Claudine Sirope, under whose name the contract has been made. Médine S.E. has asked him to survey the land of an extent of more than one acre. The applicant has no money to do the surveying. He would like to transfer the contract on his name.

After analysis of the whole case, the Commission noted that the only document submitted is the copy of a title deed TV 45 No. 406 dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 1846 drawn up by Notary J.M.R. Giblot Ducray witnessing the sale of a plot of land of 1 *Arpent* in Plaines Wilhems, in the region of *Réserves* Trois Mamelles, from one Autard de Bragard to Ambroisie Rustica and Louis Sirope. That plot of land is excised from “*propriété Bourgaudet*”, Riche-en-Roches. The original extent of 42 *Arpents* formerly belonged to L. M. Benoni Labutte.

According to deed transcribed in TV 45 No. 406, Louis Sirope was co-owner along with Ambroisie Rustica of a portion of land of 1 *Arpent*. It appears that Médine Ltd. has no objection to the survey be carried out by a Land surveyor.

Hippolite Toussaint has to establish that he is an heir of Louis Sirope and proceed with the survey of the land.

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**CASE NAME: LAMARQUE***TJC/ L/VF / 0088/ VELIN MARIE STELLA SABRINA  
CROSS REFERENCE: LAMARQUE Louis Cherubin TJC/L/0048*

The applicant, Marie Stella Sabrina, writes that she was born Lamarque and is married to Jean Yves Désiré Velin. They have a three year-old son. She lives on a sugar estate (“*camp sucrier*”) and she is not the owner of the house she is living in. She knows that the Lamarque family, her ancestors lived in Coteau Raffin; her grandparents, Rose and Luc, lived at La Gaulette. Her uncle Karl Lamarque is her father’s brother. She is aware that he had started procedures to get back the family land. The applicant would like to know if she will obtain a plot of land in order to build a house for her.

She has no document, title deed or plan to submit.

In view of the fact that Marie Stella Sabrina Velin’s uncle, Karl Lamarque has entered a case against the “*Société du Morne Brabant*” and Tatorio for the same reason, this file has been linked to **TJC/L/0048**.

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**CASE NAME: SYLVIE/OLIVE**

TJC/ L/0089/VF/ EDOUARD ROSELINE

Roseline Edouard, the applicant, writes that her parents, Louis Antoine (father) and H  l  ne Sylvie (mother) Jance, had a plot of land of 40 *Arpents* on Mon D  sert-Mon Tr  sor Sugar Estate "*dans les ann  es 1600.*" Her mother had told her that this land belonged to the family for quite a long time and that she had tried to get it back since 1970/1980. They paid the service of a Barrister Me Guy Ollivry to find out how they could retrieve their inheritance. The Barrister even accompanied the family once to visit the land but the access was forbidden by a chain and a plate marked "*Acc  s Interdit*". All those who have started the procedures and searches, her parents and the heirs to Olive and Sylvie families are now dead. Her Barrister did not go any further in her case.

The applicant has not produced any document, title deed, plea, affidavit in relation to the claim of 40 *Arpents* of land.

Searches carried out at the Conservator of Mortgages Office have revealed that the names Louis Antoine Jance and Marie H  l  ne Sylvie Jance do not appear in the Name Index Register at the Registrar General's office

Furthermore, the "*Case hypoth  caire*" of one Antoine Jance reveals that the said Antoine Jance, who was the son of Gilbert Jance and Georgina Labtuna had a plot of land at Belv  d  re, Beau-Bassin of the extent of 25 perches as per TV 622 No. 45 and who sold it to P. Ramen on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1985 as evidenced by TV 671 No. 25.

**CASE NAME: RIOUX**

TJC/L/0090/VF/ABRUE VIVIANNE

Viviane Abrue writes that the family owned a plot of land belonging to her grandfather Nicolas Rioux at John Kennedy Street Grand Gaube, mostly known as Camp La Serpe (B  ti). The applicant lived there when she was a child. The family then moved to live on sugar estates in the period 1949/1950. According to information obtained, the land has been sold by the nephew without the other heirs' consent. The nephew's family name is Louise.

Searches carried out by the Commission at the Conservator of Mortgages Office reveal that Nicolas Rioux has sold the land.

Nicolas Rioux (married to Olive Pierre) sold along with 12 other members of the family, a plot of land of the extent of 3 *Arpents* at Grand-Gaube on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1953 as transcribed in TV 610 No. 192 to Widow L  ovince Louison, Dame Jos  phine Brune in consideration of a price of Rs. 1,000.

Furthermore, a copy of the "*Case hypoth  caire*" "*R  pertoire*" 397 No. 638 indicates that Nicolas Rioux sold undivided rights in that property to Jos  phine Brune.

It is further noted that the said plot of land formed part of succession Jos  phine Brune and Ad  laide Brune "*qui   taient ells- m  mes propri  taires pour l'avoir acquis de Monsieur Nicolas Rioux*" as evidenced by TV 36 No. 195 transcribed on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1837.

A hand- written copy of the deed of sale is now in file.

The applicant has been informed accordingly.

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**CASE NAME: ELIZABETH**

TJC/L/0092/VF/ ELIZABETH LUC MARC

Luc Marc Elizabeth, the applicant, writes that he is one of the heirs of Elisa Elizabeth who owned a plot of land of an extent of 2 *Arpents* 84 perches at La Caverne, Vacoas. After several attempts to occupy the land they were forbidden to do so by neighbouring families. This happened in 2000. In August 2007, through a press notice in *Le Mauricien* newspaper, the family was informed that one, Seewoonarain Santchurn, and one, Arjoon Santchurn, had started procedures to prescribe the land. On the day when the surveying was scheduled the whole family went on the plot of land to prevent the surveying to be done by Land surveyor Ravin Tupsy, on behalf of the Santchurn family. The family Elizabeth waited until noon but the surveyor did not turn in. The family contacted two Land surveyors to do the surveying but they were forbidden to do so by the neighbours.

They request the help of the Commission in getting back the land.

The Commission undertook searches on the case. In fact, Elizabeth Elisa owned a plot of land of an extent of 2 *Arpents* 85 perches at La Caverne, Vacoas. According to "*Répertoire*" 22/351 T.V 41 No. 99 dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 1841, one Louis Martin sold to Elizabeth Elisa also called "*Governant*" a plot of land of 2 *Arpents* 85 at Plaines Wilhems for the price of \$ 47 as described in a Survey report drawn up by E. Ribet on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1840 in terms of a notarial deed transcribed in Volume 41 No. 99.

Luc Marie Elizabeth is one of the heirs of Elisa Elizabeth as revealed by the affidavit sworn in at the Supreme Court on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005 and duly registered in Register A 685 No. 4165.

An analysis of "*Répertoire*" 22/351 in the name of Elizabeth Elisa reveals that the land purchased has not been disposed of, as well as another property of an extent of 7 *Arpents*.

On the basis of the document produced, the Commission advised that the heirs and succession of the late Elisa Elizabeth have a sustainable claim.

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**CASE NAME: PERTICOT**

*Cross References:* TJC/L/0084/ VF/ MARTIN Jean Claude  
TJC/L/VF/0141 PERTICOT Marie Florida;  
TJC/L/VF/0107PERTICOT Stella Lydie;  
TJC/L/VF/0080 LEONIDAS Désiré Jean Pierre;  
TJC/L/VF/ 0073 MERVILLE Marie Maïta Pamela

**Case 1**

Jean Claude Martin, the applicant, writes that his great-grandmother was Denise Perticot; his grandfather Louis Athalise Martin; his grandmother was Clémence Perticot.

Louis Théodore de Peticoz, born on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1748, owned a plot of land of extent of 78 *Arpents*, situated at Baie-aux-Tortues, Balaclava, which he acquired from one Gerrest in 1779.

Louis. Théodore de Peticoz died on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1807 without any child, according to information which applicant obtained in France. Marie Denise Perticot died on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1878 at Pointe-aux-Piments.

Father of Denise Perticot was Louis Perticot, her mother Marie Virginie known as Françoise Virginie, born on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1843 in Pamplemousses, according to Folio No. 122.

As Louis Théodore Perticot died without any child, his property goes to his brother, Louis de Perticot, father of Denise Perticot.

At present, the land is planted with sugarcane by Solitude Sugar Estate, belonging to Harel family.

#### **Case 2**

Désiré Jean Pierre Kervin Léonidas, the applicant, writes that he has a right on a portion of land at Royal Road, Pointe-aux-Piments. He has no deed in his possession. His mother, Miss Chavry (married to L. Médard) was born on the said property. He knew where the land was situated. The heirs are not willing to share the land legally and to give applicant his share. The applicant writes that he does not know the exact extent of the land. He received information from his cousin, Luc Chavry that he has found a plot of land under the name of his grandmother in Pointe-aux-Piments "*in the corner coming from Triolet*" getting into Pointe-aux-Piments. On the land he found a land mark bearing the initial of the Chavry family. The applicant writes that he has no family tree

#### **Case 3**

Marie Maïta Pamela Merville, the applicant, writes that her mother, Marie Marlène Clovis (born Antoinette), is the owner of a plot of land situated at Route Royale Pointe-aux-Piments.

The applicant's father, Louis Noë Clovis, is dead.

While surveying the land on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005, the family's surveyor, Hasan Miyan was prevented from doing so on account of a dispute between the Martin family and the applicant's mother.

The land, of an extent of 22 *Arpents* has been subdivided among the heirs of Denise Perticot, widow (1<sup>st</sup> marriage) of Mr. Louis Perticot; she married a second time with Mr. Castor,

The case has been submitted to Supreme Court since 1999.

According to applicant, Judge Matadeen refuses to give a judgement.

#### **Case 4**

The applicant, Gladwyn Dany Laventure, says that his aunt, Marie Florida Perticot told her grandmother (Bérengine Pitchen) to come and live on her plot of land of 22 *Arpents*. The land belongs to Denise Perticot who had only one child, François Nélzir Perticot, who is an ancestor of Florida Perticot (Document 1). On a part of that portion of land, a Chinese built a shop and settled there. Without anyone knowing, one Hew Khee, made a prescription on part of the land.

Hew Khee and Ors. are now suing the two applicants together with Virgil Perticot (deceased). As Bérengine Pitchen only made a verbal agreement with the Perticot family, the Laventure family (descendant of Bérengine Pitchen) has no document relative to this agreement.

The applicant says that he has invested much of himself in this case, as his father is also among those being sued. They have spent more than Rs. 160,000 with surveyors, Lawyers and Attorneys and put a lot of time to build up a strong dossier which has been submitted and brought to Court.

Gladwyn Dany Laventure underlines that there have been many fraudulent issues on the land surveying and between the Lawyers of both parties so that the case is not brought to Court. However, the applicant persevered.

The case went to Court in November 2008 but no judgment has been pronounced up to now.

#### **Case 5**

The applicant, Stella Lydie Perticot, who says that she is the heiress of Virginie Perticot, writes that her family owned a portion of land of approximately 23 *Arpents* at Petite Pointe-aux-Piments which has been subdivided among the heirs of Marie Virginie Perticot or Perticoz or Virginie Perticault, wife of late Louis Perticot and wife in second marriage of Louis Castor. The land has been shared into eleven portions among the heirs of late Louis Perticot and minors of Louis Castor.

In 1973, when the applicant was still a child, she remembered that her parents were doing searches to retrace all documents and title deeds of the land of 22 *Arpents* on which the Perticot family was living.

Seven years back, people coming from elsewhere and unknown to the family started to construct on the land and squatted the land, thus causing prejudice to the Peticot family.

Another problem came when one Beedassy prescribed several portions of land neighbouring the portion of 2 *Arpents* which he has purchased from Françoise Peticot. The applicant declares that Beedassy has never occupied these plots of land.

The applicant considers that she is the sole owner and one of the heirs of the portion of 22 *Arpents*.

The Commission had several meetings and information sessions with members of the Peticot family and was able to put up three official hearings, either from Jean Claude Martin, their Land surveyor, A.S. Calloo and or Land surveyor, Bertrand Desvaux de Marigny of Harel Frères Limited to obtain more information on the matter.

Heirs Peticot claimed to be owners of a plot of land of approximate extent of 78 *Arpents* at Baie-Aux-Tortues, Balaclava, in the District of Pamplemousses, in virtue of title deeds volume 11 No. 177 and 16 No. 72.

Two attempts to survey the above mentioned plot of land were made by heirs Peticot, namely by Land surveyor Ng Tong Ng Wah on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and Surveyor M.A.S Calloo on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2010. Following objection lodged by Me André Robert, Attorney for Harel Frères Limited, the two surveyors did not pursue further the survey operations.

In a letter addressed to Harel Frères Limited on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the Registrar General confirmed that TV 11 No 177, purporting to be one of the title deeds of the Peticot did not exist as Volume No. 11 stops at page 167.

As regards the other title bearing TV 16 No. 72 drawn up by the then Notary, Me Guerin, on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1820 being a sale by Hyacinthe Jean Delourne to Arthur Comte de St Belin, there is no mention of heirs of Peticot in that title deed.

Moreover, Arthur Comte de St Belin sold the property of 78 *Arpents* to one Prospère Caiez D'Épinay as evidenced by Notarial deed drawn up by Me Yves Isidore Jollivet on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1823 transcribed in Volume TV 20 No. 97.

Furthermore, in virtue of title deed drawn up by Notary Me Marie Joseph Bernard D'Hotman de Villiers and following a division in kind dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 1991 transcribed in Volume 2142 No. 69 Harel Frères was attributed the surplus of "*Domaine Solitude*" of an extent of 1052 *Arpents*.

From plan submitted by heirs Peticot, it appears that the location plan is part of portion No. 241 of extent of 61 *Arpents* 25 P, commonly known as "*Filaos*".

- In virtue of TV 1746 No. 124 dated 27<sup>th</sup> June 1986, Harel Frères Limited had made "*apport*" of the portion of 1052 *Arpents* in "*Société Agricole de Solitude*" being the fusion of Harel Frères Limited and Beau Plateau Limited;
- Following title deed in TV 826 No. 47 dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1960, Harel Frères Limited acquired the surplus of the 1052 *Arpents* known under the name of "*Solitude*";
- Following deed in Volume 374 No. 252 (TJ 131 No. 52) Harel Frères acquired the Solitude Factory Co Ltd.;
- Following deed TV 337 No. 540 dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1919 Solitude Factory Co Ltd acquired from Société "*Le Court Desvaux & Cie*" a portion of 1052 *Arpents* excised from a portion of 2389 *Arpents* 0.9p;
- Following a notarial deed drawn up by Me Paul Baissac in TV 306 No. 31 "*Société Le Court de Billot Frères*" was renewed in the name of "*Le Court & Cie*";
- Finally by another Notarial deed drawn up by Me Joseph Ariste Piat dated 30<sup>th</sup> March 1899 transcribed in Volume 233 No. 49, "*Le Court de Billot Frères*" acquired from "*The Crédit Foncier of Martin Limited*" a portion of 2389 *Arpents* 0.9p known under the name of "*Solitude*";

- It is to be noted that Government also acquired 3 plots of land on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1988 under TV 1874 No. 54 from “Société Agricole de Solitude” (now Harel Frères Limited) for the construction of the access road to Balaclava.

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**CASE NAME: AZIE**

*TJC/ L/0094/VF/AZIE OLIVA*

No case and no request submitted.

The fact is that Olivia Azie came to the Commission, a file was opened with a list of names submitted, which, it was believed, could constitute part of a dossier. In fact, she wanted only to state that the family lives at Anouska Village, XVI Mile, Forest-Side since 1999. The family is awaiting compensation as they claim to descendant of slaves.

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**CASE NAME: SANSPEUR**

*TJC/ L/0097/VF/SANSPEUR ÉLISÉ*

Elisé Sanspeur submitted several documents which are not related to any land reclamation. There is no request, no application.

She wanted only to be placed on the list in case of any compensation be paid to descendants of slaves.

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**CASE NAME: THERESE**

*TJC/ L/L/0102/ VF/THERESE SERGE*

The applicant, Serge Thérèse, writes that his family owned a plot of land at Route Nicolay, Balisage, Rivière Latanier. The land, as he underlines, has been prescribed by one Lam Po Tang. He requests the Commission to investigate and assist in the research to get back the deed of one Lavaud, presumed to be the first proprietor and retrieve the land.

The full name of applicant’s ancestor Lavaud has not been given. No title deed submitted. The alleged prescription has not been produced. There is no proper affidavit in support of the claim.

Searches carried out by the Commission at the Registrar General revealed that the name of Lavaud (Jean Baptiste) does not appear in the Name Index at the Registrar General’s Office.

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**CASE NAME: BRASSE**

TJC/L/0099/VF/BRASSE JEAN CLENCY

The applicant, Jean Clency Brasse, writes that he is one of the heirs of Jacques Brasse who owned a plot of land at Rivière-du-Rempart. According to the contract, Jacques was “*un homme de couleur libre*” and the land he owned is well-known as Roc en Roc.

Jean Clency Brasse writes that before his father’s death he has often been on the land with his father. They found several houses built illegally without any permit. On the plot of land, they found tombs of their great-grandparents on which were inscribed the names of the Brasse family.

Sylvio Michel and P. Gurbhoo, Secretary of the “*Association Justice, Restitution et Réparation*” gave a brief of the case as such: Jean Clency Brasse is one of the heirs of late Jacques Brasse, owner of a plot of land of about 4 *Arpents* 35 perches at Grand Gaube, Roc en Roc, Rivière-du-Rempart.

According to research, Louis Couacaud has prescribed a plot of land at Grand-Gaube, Roc en Roc, Rivière-du-Rempart around the years 1938. The land had no fixed plan drawn up before the prescription. The only document is an affidavit of prescription giving a summary of the supposed boundaries of the land, saying that it is bounded by 4 common roads and a fictive Hindu name as occupier on one side.

Around 1942, Land surveyor Aliphon tried to fit the land prescribed - of an extent of 3 *Arpents* 00 perches according to the deed- on a plot of land of 4 *Arpents* 33 perches belonging to the heirs of late Jacques Brasse. The land of late Jacques Brasses family has only 5 sides. In any way, there are too many contradictions in this case. After searches made, it appears that the land prescribed by Couacaud has been subsequently sold to several persons who are now victimizing the heirs of late Jacques Brasse although they are occupying the land subjected to the present dispute.

Late Jacques Brasse has a title deed being a “*concession*”. After research, it appears that some other plots of land prescribed or belonging to André Couacaud have a status of State Land as per annexed plan submitted. In other words, the “*concession*” has not been granted by the government for non-fulfillments of the requirements or conditions. Due to the lack of control of the British Government at those times many frauds have taken place to arrive to the deed of André Couacaud or Société Melville.

The “*Association Justice, Restitution et Réparation*” and Jean Clency Brasse request the Commission to investigate and to take into account information regarding the land.

The case was heard by the Commission on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

At page 6 lines 184 of the transcript of the Hearing, it has been suggested that the Commission will summon Couacaud of Merville Ltd to give documents concerning the prescription of 3 *Arpents* of land. After admeasurements, the land has been found to be 4 *Arpents* 35. Out of the 4 *Arpents* 35, two plots have been sold and the remaining 2 *Arpents* 11 perches have been sold to Sew Subrun.

After searches and analysis of the matter referred, it is revealed that the land of 4 *Arpents* 35 perches is presently occupied by the three purchasers as per deeds drawn up by Notary Public namely:

- Chastry Chkogolall (2 *Arpents* 00);
- Jean Delastelle Brasse (0 *Arpent* 18); and
- Sew Subrun (2 *Arpents* 16)

No reference of any plot of land prescribed by Melville Ltée and Louis Couacaud in 1938 is made in the various “*Case hypothécaire*”. As per notarial deed TV 2538 No. 17 dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1993 witnessing the sale by Melville Limited to Sew Subrun, reference is made therein of a sale by

Melville to Jean Delastelle Brasse of a plot of land of an extent of 0 A18 perches as per TV 459 No. 145.

It is not known under what circumstances Jean Delastelle Brasse, presumably an heir to Jacques Brasse, acquired the plot of land of an extent of 0 *Arpent* 18 perches from Melville Ltd.

In the event that Louis Couacaud prescribed 3 *Arpents* out of the 4 *Arpents* 45 perches, it is up to the heirs of Jacques Brasse to come up with a Survey Report with a view to recuperate the 0A45.

The heirs of Jacques Brasse have been advised to retain the services of a Land surveyor with a view to making an investigation Report and to going for the restitution of the land.

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**CASE NAME: LAURENT**

*TJC/L/0100/VF/LAURENT JEAN ROGER MORRIS*

The applicant, Jean Roger Morris, submitted that his great-grandparents had told his parents that they owned plots of land at Mahébourg and Grand Port. They did some searches at the National Archives and found that one Jean Suffren Laurent possessed two plots of land in Mahébourg and Rivière des Galets. The Truth and Justice Commission has been asked to undertake searches and to assist in view of retrieving the plots of land.

In support of his claim, Jean Roger Morris Laurent has produced 3 documents:

- Copy of a transcription of a grant of land dated 13th Mars 1760 to Jean- Laurent, *tailleur de pierres au service de la Compagnie demeurant à Port-Louis à l'enforcement de pierres de la Montagne No. 212 of extent of "15 Toises sur 30 Toises"* (LC5 folio 17).
- Copy of testament dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 1856 whereby Jean Suffren Laurent (widow of Jean Marie Bocus and remarried to Marie Argentine Bourquin) left to the latter a plot of land of the extent of ½ *Arpent* at Rivière-des-Créoles. In the testament, Jean Suffren Laurent is given as a "*propriétaire pêcheur domicilié à Mahebourg, Ville Noire.* »
- Copy of a transcription of a grant of land dated 6<sup>th</sup> September 1755 (LC 3 page 102) of extent of 312 *Arpents* at Flacq granted to Jean Laurent, "*tailleur de pierres, demeurant à Port-Louis*".

After searches undertaken by the Commission, it is observed that Jean Laurent and Jean Suffren Laurent are not one and same person.

A century separates the two Laurents.

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**CASE NAME: LISETTE**

*TJC/L/0101/VF/ LLOYD MARIE GISELE (born) LISETTE*

The applicant, Gisèle Marie Lloyd, *born* Lisette writes that according to a list of registered slaves named Lisette, one Julie Mercier was owner of several slaves named Lisette:

- Louis Lisette, 24 years, Malgache (16<sup>th</sup> October 1826)
- Hughes Lisette, 4 ¼ years, Créole de Maurice, (16<sup>th</sup> October 1826)
- Esther Lisette, 1 ½ years, Créole de Maurice, (16<sup>th</sup> October 1826)
- Jeanne Lisette, born 5<sup>th</sup> September 1822, Créole de Maurice, (16<sup>th</sup> October 1826)

- Firmin Lisette, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1821, (16<sup>th</sup> October 1826)  
The census was done in Flacq.

She further adds that the maiden name of her mother was Agathe Eulalie, while her father was called Edmé Lisette. She knows that her grandfather was Alfred Lisette and her grandmother's maiden name was Félicia Milazar.

She did not know if the Lisette family owned a plot of land until one Rigobert of the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture informed her that the Lisette family owned plots of land in Flacq, Pamplemousses, and Plaines Wilhems. She has given a sum of Rs.1,500 to the said Rigobert to undertake searches for her, but she never received any Document.

Marie Gisele Lloyd wants to recover any land belonging to the family.

Searches undertaken by the Commission revealed in the "*Case Hypothécaire*" of Alfred Lisette, there existed a plot of land of extent 95 perches which has been sold to Beau Séjour Sugar Estate at Pamplemousses on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1894 as evidenced by TV 209 No. 87.

There is no plot of land in the name of the other Lisette.

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**CASE NAME: LABONTE**

*TJC/ L/0103/VF/ LABONTÉ ANTOINETTE*

The applicant, Antoinette Labonté, writes that her mother, Emma Albertine Labonté, who passed away some 10 years ago, bought, since she got married, a plot of land at Eau Coulée, formerly known as Quatre Caros at present called Route Duquel. Her parents built a wooden house there, which, unfortunately, was destroyed by cyclone "*Carol*". Her mother contacted CHA for the construction of a concrete house. She has been paying a sum of Rs. 17.50 per month and the remaining sum was Rs. 400.

On the death of her mother, the land and the house were sold by to one Georges Couronet of Laperousse Road, Eau Coulée. The latter has urged applicant and his family to leave the place. Antoinette Labonté maintains that she does not understand how her family has lost both their land and their house. The applicant submits both her father's name as Auguste Arnold Labonté, born in St. Pierre, and her mother, Emma Albertine, born in St. Hubert, Mahébourg. She requests to carry out searches for her.

Searches undertaken by the Commission have revealed the following:

Arnold Labonté acquired in 1942 a plot of land of the extent of 0A50p at Eau Coulée from one Mallet.

Subsequently, he sold:

- 24 p to H.Halooman on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1950 (TV 833 No. 118)
- 10 p to Abdoolah on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1962 (TV 866 No. 88); and
- the "*solde*" of the land (about 16p) was seized by the CHA on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1993

The plot of land was purchased by G.Beauharrais on the same day, the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1993 as evidenced by TV 1240 No. 30.

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**CASE NAME: ADELE**

*TJC/ L/VF/0105/ ANODIN MARIE NOELLE (born ADELE)  
& ADELE JEAN BAPTISTE*

The applicants, in the name of the Anodin and Adele family, put two claims before the Commission to have ownership rights over 2 portion of land: 68 *Arpents* (Bigara Cemetery) and 9 *Arpents* (Allée Brillant).

**Case 1**

According to applicants, Marie Noëlle Anodin and Jean Baptiste Adèle, their family owns a plot of land of 68 *Arpents* at Bigara Cemetery. The proprietor of this land was Adèle Delmazie. There were tombs of Adèle's family on the land. Now planters are cultivating onions on the land.

**Case 2**

The applicants further aver that their family owns a plot of land of 9 *Arpents* at Allée Brillant which formerly belonged to one Amédée Baudau.

They want to get back the above plots of land.

In support of the claims, the applicants produced a deed under private signature (*sous seing privé*) dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 1880, wherein Pierre Françoise, "*fils naturel de Marie Françoise*" recognizes to have sold to Amedée Baudoo and Jean Baptiste Adèle, half undivided for each for the price of Rs. 160, a portion of land of extent of 9 *Arpents* to be excised from an extent of 27 *Arpents* "*que j'ai succédé de ma mère Françoise, qui avait fait l'acquisition de Mademoiselle Geneviève Chenier*" as per TV 138 No. 89.

No survey plan has been produced nor is there an indication how the 9 *Arpents* have been excised.

There is no other document produced to indicate how these rights have passed on to Noëlle Anodin.

However, at TV 142 No. 80, there is a sale from Amédée Baudoo to one Poynan Annapa half undivided in 9 *Arpents* and TV 215 No. 214 reveal that Noël Adèle having sold 2 *Arpents* undivided rights to one Jourmondif on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1895.

Furthermore, the title deed in respect of the 68 *Arpents* (*Cimetière Bigara*) has not been produced.

On two occasions the applicants came to the Commission to inquire about their file. They promised to hand over whatever document they have to assist in proving their case. They never made it.

In the absence of the title deed or any other relevant document concerning the land of 68 *Arpents*, the case cannot be considered. The applicants rely on a deed under private signatures concerning the claim of the land of 9 *Arpents* in which his ancestor had left undivided rights. No other documents have been submitted and the plan of distraction.

There is, however, an entry in the "*Case hypothécaire*" of Jean Baptiste Adèle concerning the land of 9 *Arpents*, no affidavit has been produce to establish that the applicants are entitled to a share in the land, nor does the Commission made aware about the actual occupier of the land.

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**CASE NAME: THELVA**

TJC/ L/0106/VF/ THELVA JUDEX SYLVIO

The applicant, Judex Sylvio Thelva, writes that his grandfather was the sole owner of a portion of land on an extent of approximately 112 toises at Rue Villeneuve, now Rue Maurice, and Mahébourg. In 1991, he came to be informed that one Idriss Aumerally has prescribed the said property. At this stage, I. Aumerally and his children are all deceased. The said prescription has not been done in conformity with the law. Applicant has access easily to the premises. Nobody is occupying the land on the side of I. Goomany.

Patricia Thelva, for her part, writes that her great-grandfather François Dauphine and wife owned a plot of land situated in Grand Port. No document has been submitted nor is there any indication of the location of the land.

Right on the outset, searches carried out at the Registrar General's revealed that the name of François Dauphine does not appear in the "*Répertoire*" index at the Registrar General's Office.

As for the first case, the only document submitted relates to a sale of 100 toises at Mahébourg, undivided rights, from Marie Yvette Courteau to Désiré Laval Thelva, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1968, transcribed in TV 1074 No. 221.

From searches made by the Commission in "*Répertoire*" 504 case 203 reveals that Désiré Laval Thelva sold the undivided rights in the plot of land of extent 100 toises in portion of above to J.S. Thelva on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1978 as per TV 1426 No. 122.

However, there is no indication that the above plot of land having been prescribed by Idriss Aumerally. "*Répertoire*" 385 No. 501 does not reveal that information.

The Commission has been made aware by Judex Sylvio Thelva that he has retained the services of legal advisers to enter a case concerning the alleged prescription. The case, actually before the Supreme Court - a copy of which is in file - is scheduled to be heard in 2011.

The applicant has moreover been informed by the Commission that there is no document in support of the alleged prescription by Idriss Aumerally.

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**CASE NAME: CARVER**

TJC/ L//0108/CARVER RHODES

Rhodes Carver says that his grandfather, Elias Carver, owned a plot of land of 6 *Arpents* 50 perches at Roche Bois. The land has been sold by the same Elias Carver to Nichabay Ramchodji Nayak in 1939. But, the elder members of the family are also aware that Nayak has not honored the conditions of the sale. At present, the land is bare. A report of Land surveyor Dumazel states that this land consists of six portions belonging to various persons. These portions are related to the Carver land. Rhodes Carver adds that the family has been informed that now somebody wants to sell the land.

A site visit was arranged with Rhodes Carver on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and he was informed that Elias Carver has already sold the plot of land of extent of ½ *Arpent* on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1932 as evidenced by TV 446 No. 62.

Searches undertaken by the Commission reveal that, in fact, Elias Carver was the owner of a plot of land an extent of about 6 ½ *Arpent* in virtue of title deed transcribed in Volume 416 No. 482, which he sold on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1932 in virtue of titled deed transcribed in Volume 446 No. 62.

During the site visit carried out on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010, in the company of Rhodes Carver, the relevant site was identified and after consultation of the title deed and the plan of the subject property, the Commission reached the conclusion that the site previously belonging to Elias Carver was sold out and is presently built up. Therefore, the plot indicated by Rhodes Carver does not belong to heirs of the late Elias Carver.

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**CASE NAME: ALIPHON**

*TJC/L/L/0109/ MEDAN MARIE JOSEPHE, born ALIPHON*

Marie Josèphe Médan avers that her ancestors, the Aliphon family, purchased a plot of land in 1859 at Poste de Flacq. According to the contract, the land consisted of 3 portions. The Aliphon family occupied 2 portions belonging to Pierre Léoville Aliphon and Marie Adrienne Aliphon respectively. Marie Josèphe Médan and her husband have discovered that part of their heritage has been prescribed in 1997. The family wants to get back the prescribed part.

Searches undertaken by the Commission reveal that following TV 67 No. 275 dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 1859, Dogerville Aliphon acquired a plot of land of the extent of 1 *Arpent* (4220.87 m<sup>2</sup>) at “*Le Poste*” in the District of Flacq from Ernest Reynold. Part of that plot of land of the extent of 1603.93m<sup>2</sup> has been prescribed by one Cassam Ramjan as per survey report of Land surveyor L. Y. Sakir registered in L.S 28 No. 14466 and transcribed in TV 3104 No. 67 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1993. (*Register 511 No. 5052 refers*).

Subsequently Ramjan sold the above plot of land of the extent of 1603.93 m<sup>2</sup> to the following:

- His son Feroze Ramjan - a portion of land of the extent of 593.13m<sup>2</sup> as per TV 3435 No. 12;
- Premnath Goojah - a portion of land of extent 295.46m<sup>2</sup> as per TV 4573 No. 42;
- Another son, Naushadally Ramjan - the remainder of the plot of land found to be of extent 533.89 m<sup>2</sup> as per TV 4573 No. 43.

From the above, an extent of about 2616.93 sq metres, are still owned by the heirs of Pierre Dogerville Aliphon and should be divided amongst the heirs in the appropriate portion; and as regards to the 1603.93 m<sup>2</sup> prescribed, the applicant and the other heirs have been advised by the Commission to consult an Attorney or Notary so as to have a duly valid affidavit which would clearly establish the lineage and to initiate appropriate legal actions before the Supreme Court to pray that the affidavit of prescription be declared null and void and that the new owners be asked to quit, leave and vacate.

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**CASE NAME: SEETUL**

*TJC/ L/0110/ SEETUL ARAVINDRANATH*

Aravindranath Seetul, the applicant, writes in a letter that his grandfather Adjoodah Seetul married Phooljareeah Deewoo. He was born after the death of his father. His mother bought more than an acre of land. It was only when his mother died that he was informed that he was the owner of that plot of land found at Mon Désir, Paillote. He discovered then that the land was occupied by

two persons; one of them had prescribed the land. He requests the Commission to allow him to get back the land.

Searches carried out by the Commission at the Conservator of Mortgages' Office have revealed that the names given by Aravindranath Seetul Adjoodah or Ajoodah or Ajodah Seetul and Phooljaneeah Dewoo do not appear in the Name Index Register.

As regards Horil Gunness and Shan Yan Tow Cheong Wong who have allegedly prescribed their land, there is a Court case in file bearing case No. 164/90 wherein there is a judgment following a settlement of parties to the effect that a portion of OA 13 perches is to be allocated to Horil Gunness and a portion of OA 10 perches to Shan Yan Tow Cheong Wong.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011, the applicant's daughter, Darshinee, informed the Commission that the applicant passed away. There is no document in her possession. She was invited to contact her uncle and see if any document concerning the land could be traced out.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011, the applicant's brother Doomun Seetul called at the Commission to say that he could not produce any document, or any title deed concerning the land of 1 *Arpent* at Paillote. He confirms that there was a Chinese shop on the land -and several houses are occupied by several persons.

He further states that his grandmother had purchased the land from Trianon Estate, together with the shop. His grandparents lived on the land.

One Ahmed Sayed Hossen had prescribed the land of extent of 35 p and sold part of it to Tow Chong Wong as per TV 529/106; and Boodeea Beeharry has prescribed 57 ½ p as evidenced by TV 1349 No.135.

In view of the fact that the plot of land claimed is more than 1 *Acre*, Aravindranath Seetul has been advised to initiate action to have the surplus of land prescribed.

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**CASE NAME: RAMSAMY**

*TJC/ L/0111/ RAMSAMY IRÈNE*

The great grandmother of applicant, Irène Ramsamy, owned a plot of land of approximately 500 toises at Mangue Vert, Doux, at Bambous since 1850. In 1965, permission was granted by applicant to one Frank Marion to cultivate the land. In about 1992, the family received a letter to the effect that one Emile Autard has prescribed the land and sold it. The family and Frank Marion went to Court and the judgment was in favour of the new owner. They want to get back the land.

Even if this were a Court case, the Commission wanted to understand what has happened. Irène Ramsamy was called upon to submit some documents. According to notes dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009, the applicant had agreed to supply to the Commission copies of proceedings of Court case and judgment. She has not done so up to now. From information gathered, it appears that applicant has been ordered by the Court to quit, leave and vacate the property.

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**CASE NAME: ANTHONIMOOTOO**

*TJC/ L/0112/VF/ANTHONIMOOTOO GEORGES CHRISTIAN*

The applicant, George Christian Anthonimootoo, writes that one Ramparsad, a CHA tenant, has erected a wall, blocking the entrance to all inhabitants of C.H.A Housing estate, Hibiscus Road in Grand Bay on a State land. The inhabitants can no longer use this plot of land for their cars. They are aware that the plot of land belonging to Government cannot be prescribed nor occupied illegally.

The Truth and Justice Commission has sent a letter to the Ministry of Housing and Lands on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 to raise the issue.

As it is a problem which concerns a CHA Estate, Mr. George Christian Anthonimootoo has advised to contact the above Ministry.

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**CASE NAME: FIGARO & PERNE**

*TJC/ L/0113/VF/ ALLET JOSIANE CLOEE*

Josiane Chloé Allet *born* Figaro filed two cases at the Truth and Justice Commission. In the first case, she avers that her mother, Luciany, Perne, has always talked about land owned by her grandmother at Riambel and Chamarel. She would like to know if the land still exists. In the second case, Josiane Allet avers that her father Louis Marcel Figaro also possessed land at Mahébourg. In both cases, the applicant requested the Commission to retrieve the land at Riambel, Chamarel and Mahébourg, if ever they were available.

There is nothing in file which would enable the Commission to carry out searches to sustain her request concerning the land.

The only name given is that of Louis Marcel Figaro and whose name does not appear in *Case Hypothécaire*. The applicant is very vague in her claim.

In spite of letters sent to applicant she has failed to come at the Commission to give more precise details.

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**CASE NAME: LABAVARDE**

*TJC/L/0114/RIOUX MIREILLE (born LABAVARDE),  
LABAVARDE JEAN CLAUDE & others*

Mireille Rioux, Jean Claude Labavarde & Others write that their family owned a plot of land in Le Tombeau, Arsenal. The family said that they have been deprived of this land. They want to know what has happened and to get back the land.

The Commission inquired into the whole issue and it appears that the Supreme Court has given judgement in the case entered by M. R. Labavarde & Ors against A.D.D Nam Cam on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009. The plaintiffs have appealed against the said judgement to the Court of Civil Appeal.

The Commission cannot entertain the application as there is an appeal before the Court of Civil Appeal.

**CASE NAME: LECERF**

*TJC/L/L/0117/ LECERF SYLVIE*

Sylvie Lecerf put two cases before the Commission for assistance. In both cases, the applicant felt that she has been dispossessed of her inheritance by the Beau Champs Sugar Estates and by the Church.

**Case 1**

According to the applicant her great-grandmother married one Robert Lecerf. The latter owned a plot of land of 635A at l’Etoile, Beau Champs. Robert Lecerf, the grandfather died and the land was left unoccupied. Actually, avers the applicant, it is being occupied by Beau Champs Sugar Estates. Sugar cane is being cultivated there and a hotel also has been built on the land. The Lecerf family wants justice to be done and compensation for the illegal occupation of the land.

**Case 2**

Robert Lecerf owned a plot of land found at Quartier-Militaire. Since then, a Catholic Church has been built on this land. They want to get back the land.

In both cases, no document, no deed, no survey plan, and no family tree have been submitted.

After searches undertaken by the Commission, it has been found that the name of Robert Lecerf does not appear in the “*Répertoire*” or in the Name Index at the Register of the Conservator of Mortgages. So, it appears that Robert Lecerf has no land inscribed in his name.

As for the second claim for a plot of land on which there exists a church, the Saint Léon Church, the same land is also being claimed by Patrick Webb/ Changkye in another file (*Cross Reference: TJC/L/0046/ WEBB PATRICK /CHANG KYE*) - *CASE NAME: DIORE/CHAN KYE*.

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**CASE NAME: BEEHARRY**

*TJC/L/0115/ BEEHARRY ABDOOL SATAR*

The applicant, Abdool Satar Beeharry and who is a great-grandson of l’Indien Beeharry No. 234431, has submitted 3 cases before the Commission for investigation:-

- a plot of land of extent of 2/3 *Arpent* at Quartier de la Savanne.
- a plot of land of 4 *Arpents* at Curepipe purchased by his ancestors in 1854 which has been prescribed by Alphonse Lagesse which is presently part of the grazing land of Constantine Limited.
- a plot of land of 34A at Bois Cheri, Grand Bassin known according to oral tradition as “terrain Beeharry.”

**Case 1**

On 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 1879, l’Indien Beeharry bought a plot of land of an approximate extent of 2/3 *Arpents* at “*Quartier de la Savanne*”. This plot of land formed part of a larger portion of land. When applicant’s grandfather died, he left his property to 2 heirs: applicant’s father and applicant’s uncle. Applicant’s father moved so much on account of his work that he could not look after the land. At present, sugarcane and vegetables are planted on this land by people who are occupying the land illegally. Now, there are 15 heirs for this land.

**Case 2**

A plot of land of 4 *Arpents* was purchased by l'Indien Beeharry at "*Quartier des Plaines Wilhems*", Curepipe, in 1804. At present, the land is grazing land. Société Constantine is the owner of the whole plot of land situated at 16eme mille. This plot has been fenced including the portion belonging to the Beeharry family. Applicant says that the land has been prescribed by Constantine Ltd. According to Land surveyor Jean Jacques Desmarais, the land has been prescribed by Alphonse Lagesse and sold to Honorable Tristan Mallac and Constantine Ltd.

**Case 3**

The applicant adds that his great-grandparents were also owner of a plot of land of 34 *Arpents* at Bois Chéri, Grand Bassin. According to oral tradition, the land is known as "*Terrain Beeharry*".

Searches undertaken by the Commission have revealed the following:

**Case 1:** Beeharry No 234431 bought a plot of land at Savanne of extent of 2/3 *Arpents* on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1879 from F. Ganachaud as per TV 134 No. 429 and another plot of land at Savanne of the extent of ¼ *Arpent* on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1885 from one Ramkhalawon as per TV 168 No. 359. He sold the bare ownership of these 2 plots of land to F. O. Beeharry on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1890 as per TV 190 No. 4 in consideration of a price of Rs. 785 and the usufruct to Auskurrun and others. Mr. Abdool Satar Beeharry does not know the location of the plots of land nor has he produced a Constat Report.

The claim to the effect that the plot of land of 2/3 *Arpents* at Savanne allegedly prescribed by Britannia Sugar Estate does not hold.

**Case 2:** It is an interesting case. The former Land Surveyor Gustave de Coriolis sold to Beeharry 234431 a plot of land of the extent of 4 *Arpents* excised from Terrain D'Avray on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1881 under TV 143 No. 391 for the price of Rs 480, De Coriolis having himself bought it the year before from Jules Levieux under TV 142 No. 41.

It appears that on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1937, Alphonse Lagesse prescribed the said plot of land together with other plots making a total extent of 34 *Arpents* 01 perches. In the survey report drawn up by Land surveyor Jean Jacques Desmarais dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006 registered in Reg. A 690 No. 1570 at the request of J. M. Antoine Harel, representative of "*Constantine Limitée*", it is clearly indicated that the 4 *Arpents* plot of land having belonged to Beeharry 234431.

It is also stated in the report "*que le terrain de la famille Beeharry a été bel et bien prescrit par Mons. Alphonse Lagesse et que les droits des héritiers Beeharry sont périmés vu que le terrain a été prescrit par Mons. A. Lagesse*". It is very unfortunate that small owners with an aggregate extent of 34 *Arpents* 01p have lost their lands due to the fact that "*Constantine Limitée*" have fenced the whole perimeter, closed the 3.90m wide road and landlocked the properties of the small owners.

This is indeed a case of dispossession.

**Case3:** The plot of land of 34 *Arpents* at Bois Chéri, Grand Bassin is nowhere to be found in the "*Case Hypothécaire*" of the ancestor. It still remains in the "*oral conscience*" and memory as "*Terrain Beeharry*".

If the first and third cases cannot be considered, the second case concerns a land which had already been sold to Beeharry. Today the Beeharry cannot have access to their inheritance because the land has been enclosed and included in a prescription.

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**CASE NAME: PADAYACHY***TJC/ L/0116/CATHAN PADAYACHY MAREEAYE*

Mareeaye Cathan Padayachy, the applicant, relates one of the saddest aventure that had occurred in her life with the loss of her property and that of the whole family through lack of experience I n doing business, and who, most unfortunately fell into the hands of a money lender. She relates that the land belongs to the grandfather of the grandmother of her father. They bought the land for her grandfather (Goinsamy Cathan Padayachy) who had 3 children (two daughters and one son).When applicant's grandfather died, the two daughters gave the land to their brother (applicant's father, Cathan Mootoo Katha Padayachy). She was the only child of her parents. When her mother died, Yanum Valaydon, she was looked after, and she took care of her grandmother until her father remarried her mother's sister.

The applicant worked as a social worker benevolently.

In 1990, her father helped her by giving her the land which is situated in Vallée-des-Prêtres. The land was about 2 *Arpents* 16 perches on which a house of more than 2000sqft was built. This house was one of the first concrete houses in Vallée-des-Prêtres.

She stayed in that house along with her aunt and her daughter.

In 1991, she took loans from different institutions (a) Rs. 600,000 from the Sugar Industry Pension Fund; (b) Rs. 300,000 from the Development Bank of Mauritius; and (c) from the Mauritius Commercial Bank. She also took money from her father.

The loans were taken with the final aim to finance the construction of a 3,000 sq feet supermarket. The project necessitating more funding, she borrowed more money from her father's friend, one Guillemen Glency and gave as guarantee a plot of 35 perches. Applicant said that the supermarket was opened on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1992. It was inaugurated by Lady Sarojini Jugnauth, wife of the then Prime Minister.

Since applicant did not have any experience in marketing, she made a loss of Rs. 300,000.

She turned to a money lender one Seeram Huree who was keen to finance her project. She was given for the first time some Rs. 140,000 but she was asked to sign a paper in which Rs. 200,000 was written and she signed it. Each time, she got an amount of money; she signed another amount on paper.

***Example:***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount stipulated</b>	<b>Amount received</b>
28/12/92	Rs. 200,000	Rs. 140,000
03/02/93	Rs. 240,000	Rs. 160,000
15/03/93	Rs. 450,000	Rs. 270,000
09/07/93	Rs. 455,000	Rs. 270,000
09/03/94	Rs. 400,000	Rs. 30,000

In 1993 she had to pay back the sum of Rs. 1,345,000 to Hurree. She turned towards another money lender to reap the amount requested to pay to Hurree. She was asked to put another plot of 25 perches of land as guarantee to the second money lender, but the DBM had a bond on the land.

Since she had taken too much money from DBM, which amounted to some Rs. 240,000, there were 5 mortgages on the land.

After 6 months, Hurree pressed her to pay back the total sum of Rs. 1.3 million. She had to mortgage the land. The only recourse was to sell her land, but the total amount reaped was insufficient to repay her debt.

All her property was seized and sold by levy before the Master's Court. She lost everything.

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**CASE NAME: LABUTTE**

*TJC/ L/0118/ LABUTTE*

Louis Alex Labutte avers that he is one of the descendants of Louis Maurice Le Père de La Butte who was allegedly the owners of several portions of land namely, (1) 315 *Arpents* at Tamarin, (2) 180 *Arpents* at Petite Rivière Noire, (3) 490 *Arpents* at Coteau Raffin, (4) 29 *Arpents* at Baie du Tamarin and (5) 8¼ *Arpents* at a place between Cascavelle and Rivière Noire.

Louis Maurice had a son, Guillaume, born from a first marriage. Guillaume married a freed slave, Toinette and had a child, Jean François La Butte.

Guillaume gave a plot of land of 8¼ *Arpents* to Toinette (*citoyenne de couleurs affranchie*) and her six children on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1800.

According to the provisions of *Code Noir*, the above donation was not legal.

The coming into force of Ordinance 21 of 1853, which repealed Ordinance No. 57 of 1829, meant that ex-slaves could now acquire property, receive donation, have a right of inheritance in the succession of their natural parents.

The Commission heard the case and the applicant was assisted by one J. Seenyen. The Commission has taken into consideration all the facts stated by him but notes with regret the situation prevailing at that time.

Should the applicant still believe that he has a claim in the properties of his white ancestors, he may enter a case against the other heirs before the Supreme Court.

This would be a very interesting case as the Supreme Court will have to deal with right of inheritance involving children of white and coloured ancestors.

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**CASE NAME: PIERRE**

*TJC/ L/0119/ PIERRE SAWDIC*

This is a non land case. The applicant, Pierre Sawdic declares that from a document found at the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, his ancestors came from Mozambique. His family name is Pierre, whereas his sister's family name is Couronne. He ignores why and how he does not bear the family name of his father which is Couronne. He wants to regain the name Couronne instead of Pierre.

The Commission has advised the applicant to send a request to the Attorney General's Office to do the needful.

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**CASE NAME: UJOODHA**

*TJC/ L/0125/ SEEGOOLAM KAMLA DEVI  
(born UJOODHA) and LOCHUN DEWANTEE*

Kamla Devi Seegoolam's mother, Kevelee Ujoodha, owned a plot of land of an extent of 79 perches or 82 ½ perches at Athon Street, Pointe-aux-Piments, as per Volume 847 No. 35. On the death of applicant's mother, the land was shared among the heirs. A small part of the land (8½ perches) remained on the name of applicant's mother. This portion was prescribed by applicant's sister-in-law.

The Commission carried out extensive searches on this case because of its complexities.

Following a division in kind K. Ujoodha v/s J. Ujoodha registered and transcribed on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1961 in TV 847 No. 35, Kevelee Ujoodha was attributed the following portions of land namely:

- 19 perches out of 25 perches at Pamplémousses
- 79 perches at Solitude

According to TV 1320 No. 32 dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1976, Kevelee Ujoodha sold to each of her children Dewantee Baboo, Kamla Devi Baboo and Geeany Baboo 0A10 (1/3) perches.

As revealed by TV 1320 No. 31 of the same above date, Kevelee Ujoodha sold to each of her other children Danwantee Baboo, Atmanand Baboo and Jeewa Baboo 10 perches 1/3, retaining for her the surplus out of the 79 perches, that is, about 10 perches.

At folio (10) one Amritha Seebun caused to be prescribed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2002 a plot of land of 347 m<sup>2</sup> (about 8 ½ perches) as per TV 5063 No. 54 (the very surplus of land of Kevelee Ujoodha).

It is further noted in the Affidavit of prescription that the said "*Amritha Seebun has occupied for more than 30 years, since the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1968, the above plot of land and is still occupying in a peaceful, public and continuous, uninterrupted, unequivocal and "Animo Domini" à titre de propriétaire and in an apparent manner*".

The Commission is of opinion that the applicant be advised to retain the services of an Attorney and a Counsel to enter a case before the Supreme Court in order to declare the prescription null and void and to apply for a Writ of Injunction to prevent the sale of the land prescribed.

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**CASE NAME: JACQUES RENE**

*TJC/L/0120/VERNY CLENCY & CAMANGUE ROSEMONDE  
CROSS REFERENCE: LOUISE GEORGES FRANCE TJC/L/0147*

Rosemonde Camangue claims to be an heir of René Jacques and submitted several documents to sustain her averment. In 1827, René Jacques, "*homme de couleur*", she avers, was the owner of 120 *Arpents* in the "*quartier de la Savanne*". Out of this property, a plot of land of an extent of 20 *Arpents* was leased out to Gros Bois Sugar Estate for a period of 3 years as from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1867. The lease was made between Jacques, the children and the estate. In spite the fact that Gros Bois Estate did not pay completely the lease they continued to occupy the land after the agreed period of 3 years. The Estate and Notaries declared that the heirs have sold the land to one Chuttoo, to one Churendoss and other people. But no mention of these "other people" is mentioned in the "*Case Hypothécaire*".

Rosemonde Camangue is of the opinion that the sale made by René Jacques in 1854 as reported in the "*Case hypothécaire*", is not true, so the "*sales are fraudulent*".

There is a will made by René Jacques in 1848 wherein it is mentioned that he shared the property among his widow and children. The will is registered on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1854 but René Jacques had already died on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1854. In fact, René Jacques died in 1874. It is also mentioned that he could neither read nor write; but he signed on the "*contrat d'achat*". The applicant is of opinion that the will is a false one. A sharing of the property was done in 1875 among the children of René Jacques. In 1876, it is said that the widow abandons her rights, but this document is registered in 1875 indicating that it is also a fraudulent one.

The applicant's Grandfather, Michel Camangue, and Grandmother, Rosemonde Camangue, called on Britannia Sugar Estate for an interview. A petition was sent to the Attorney General but the family was advised to contact Chief Justice Office, avers Rosemonde Camangue.

The heirs made a "*manifestation*" (demonstration) on the occupied land at la Flora. A letter was sent by Attorney Fulena to the Attorney General, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, the Consortium BBHM Holdings Ltd asking for the restitution of the land to the heirs of René Jacques.

A declaration was made to the Police against Britannia Sugar Estate. The answer was that the case is a civil one and the Camangue family may have recourse to civil remedy.

A permit to develop for an excision of a plot of land of an extent of 8441.74 m<sup>2</sup> out of the 506842.06m<sup>2</sup> belonging to the heirs of late René Jacques, for agricultural purposes was granted to Rosemonde Camangue. She adds that one J. Sylvain Ricaud, one of the heirs, is at present receiving a certain sum of money from the Estate.

The family wants justice to be done in their case and that the land be restituted.

An analysis of the whole case undertaken by the Commission reveals in 1827, that René Jacques purchased two plots of land; the first one being of an extent of 60 *Arpents*, made up of 38 *Arpents* 24 and 21 *Arpents* 84 and another plot of 60 *Arpents*.

From the "*Case hypothécaire*" submitted it appears that on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1875, a Division in kind took place before a Notary with the authorization of the Court because there were minors.

The land of 120 *Arpents* was divided into 9 plots and distributed to each heir, two portions land of 6 *Arpents* 66 perches each.

However, only 20 *Arpents* out of the 120 *Arpents* were leased to Grand-Bois Estate for a period of three years prior to the division in kind. It appears that after the expiry of the lease, Grand-Bois Estate continued to occupy the land.

Searches at the Registrar General's Office carried out by the Commission in the names of

- Louis Evénor Jacques;
- Marie Louise Jacques; and
- Jean Jacques

reveal that they have already sold their lands by small lots.

Rosemonde Camangue has been advised to retain the services of a Land Surveyor to make further searches to know whether there is still property belonging to heirs René Jacques.

**CASE NAME: SUHAWON ALAMAN**

TJC/L/0121/SUHAWON SOWKATALLY

Sowkatally Suhawon, the applicant avers that his father told him that the Suhawon family owned numerous plots of land inherited from Ahlaman Suhawon, his grandfather: 25 *Arpents* at Grand Port, 5 *Arpents* 18 perches at Savanne, 100 *Arpents* 50 perches at Grand Port; 100 *Arpents* 8 p at Cent Gaulettes, Mahébourg; 1 *Arpent* 50perches at Grand Port.; 37 *Arpents* 1 perche, 26 *Arpents* 14 perches; 397 *Arpents* 67 perches at Cluny; 2 *Arpents* at Courteau de Gros Bois, Grand Port; Trois Boutiques; 1 *Arpent* 50 perches at Grand Port; and 50 perches from his father, Ahmod Suhawon. The heirs think that they have been dispossessed by Mon Desert Mon Trésor Ltd.

The applicant requests the help of the Commission to locate the plots of land.

After searches made by the Commission, it is revealed that late Ahlaman Suhawon was the owner of several plots of land in Grand Port/Savanne Districts.

Even if some documents have been submitted, as well as extracts of birth and death Certificates, it is a disappointing that not a Survey Report or plan has been submitted to enable the Commission to fully investigate their claim.

However, the copy of a deed drawn up by Public Notary Edouard Lesur on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1915, reveals the sale by Louis Noël, Paul Montocchio, Maurice Montocchio and George Montocchio of "*Paul Montocchio et Compagnie*" to Ahlaman Suhawon of a plot of land of an extent of 675 *Arpents* commonly known as "Sauveterre" situated at Les Mares and composed of 3 plots of land, in consideration of a price of Rs. 425,000.

At the moment of the signature of the deed only Rs. 100,000 have been paid. The remaining sum of Rs. 325,000 was to be paid as follows:-

- Rs. 100,000 on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1916
- Rs. 100,000 on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1917
- Rs. 62,500 on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1918
- Rs. 62,500 on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1919

The above mentioned plot of land is burdened with conventional charges, namely Rs. 300,000 dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 1915 in favour of L. M. Noël &Co and another conventional charge in the sum of Rs. 47,000 dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 1928 in favour of K. H. Cassim. These charges have not been erased

In view of the fact that late Ahlaman Suhawon owned several properties in Camp Diable and he had donated various properties to charitable institutions, it is difficult to know which properties might still belong to succession Ahlaman Suhawon.

In the light of the above, succession Ahlaman Suhawon has been advised to retain the services of a Land surveyor to make a "*Constat* report" on land having belonged to late Ahlaman Suhawon in order to know which property has not been sold.

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**CASE NAME: SOOKHARRY**

TJC/ L/0122/SOOKHARRY PADURAMVIR

The applicant, Paduramvir Sookharry, claims to be one of the heirs of his grandfather, Balgobin Sookahrry, who owned several plots of land throughout the island. He avers that Balgobin

Sookharry, his brother Lutchmun and Hareeparsad Narrain, a relative were the owners of a sugar estate. He further avers that a false affidavit has been sworn to the effect that the grandfather, Balgobin Sookharry died without any heir.

Lutchmun Sookharry was married to one Ragoobar Dookhee. He died without any children and left all his possessions to his brother Balgobin Sookharry.

Hareeparsad Narain was married to one Soomareea Sewraj and from this marriage a boy named Gangapersad Sewraj was born. Gangapersad Sewraj was dumb. At the death of Hareeparsad Narain, Soomareea Sewraj became the concubine of Balgobin Sookharry who adopted Gangapersad Sewraj. A natural child named Canchanlall Sookharry (the applicant's father) was born from this relationship. Gangapersad Sewraj never married. He made an affidavit and left all his belongings to his natural brother, Canchanlall Sookharry.

Canchanlall Sookharry was illiterate. He joined the army during the Second World War and when he returned home, his father Balgobin Sookharry was very ill. Unfortunately, he did not have the time to show the exact location of his lands to Canchanlall. He died shortly afterwards. But before he died, Balgobin Sookharry made an affidavit leaving all his belongings to Canchanlall.

During the last years of Balgobin Sookharry's life, a young boy named Jugganlal Dooblall used to bring fresh milk every morning to him. That is how he established close relationships with Balgobin Sookharry and his family. He learned a lot about the transactions of the family.

Paduramvir Sookharry requests the help of the Commission for all cases: he avers that his family has paid for the services of several lawyers, Notaries and Land surveyors but these people never did anything to enable the Sookharry family to recover their lands. They have spent a lot of money to undertake research and to try to get back the lands of their grandfather. They want the Commission to locate the lands owned by Balgobin Sookharry, to cancel the prescription and get back the land of their grandfathers.

#### **Case 1**

When Balgobin Sookharry died, Jugganlal Dooblall took advantage of the situation and made Canchanlall Sookharry believe that part of the land that his father owned at Montagne Blanche was for him. Jugganlal Dooblall convinced Canchanlall Sookharry to lease out one portion of land of 70 perches to him for a period of nine years as from 30<sup>th</sup> November 1970 until 30<sup>th</sup> November 1979. At the end of the lease, Dooblall continued to occupy the land. He is now occupying all the land belonging to Sookharry at Montagne Blanche. An affidavit which - according to applicant, is false - has been sworn in to the effect that the grandfather, Balgobin Sookharry, has died without any heir.

#### **Case 2**

On the grounds that the applicant and his sister are false heirs, Dooblall entered a case in Court against him and his family making a false accusation that they have bulldozed 'his' land in Nouvelle France. The applicant does not know where this land is found and thinks that it is possible that this land belongs to the heirs of Balgobin Sookharry.

#### **Case 3**

The applicant avers that during his searches, he discovered that Balgobin Sookharry owned several plots of land throughout the island, some being located in Camp Fouquereaux & Quatre Bornes. When he went to the Registrar General's Office and asked for the title deeds for Balgobin Sookharry, the officer there told him that there are many title deeds for Sookharry. He also found title deeds for Dooblall that were attached to those of Sookharry. He claims that Dooblall has made many frauds on the lands of his family.

The Commission made searches and analysed all the many documents submitted by Paduramvir Sookharry and the following observations are made:

- Lutchmun Sookharry is not the brother of Balgobin Sookharry. He is in fact the nephew who has renounced all his parts/ shares in the heritage as evidenced by TV 552 No. 875 dated 19<sup>th</sup> July 1974.
- A perusal of “*Case hypothécaire*” 337 No. 414 revealed that the only plots of land belonging to heirs Balgobin Sookharry are 56 perches at Montagne Blanche acquired from R. Lauraté and others on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1944 as per TV 484 No. 416, and 2 plots of land prescribed by him on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1948 of extents 59 perches and 70 Perches as per TV 516 No. 186.

All the other plots of land claimed by R. Paduramvir Sookahrry, purportedly having belonged to Balgobin Sookahrry, have been sold out.

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**CASE NAME: BESAGUE**

*TJC/ L/0123/EDOUARD LOUIS GERARD*

Louis Gérard Edouard, the applicant, says that his family has been staying on a plot of land at Labondance Petit Val (near Chamarel) since very long. According to him, the family got that plot of land from their great-grandfather on his mother’s side, one Adelaïde Bésague, in the late 19th century. They had their home there and even had their own pineapple plantation.

On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2007, they were asked by Government to move to Contour Prune, Choisy, by the National Park. According to that letter, it was made clear that the plot of land formed part of the National Park.

The applicant says that the family refused to move to Choisy because they have been living there since childhood and the plot of land was his great grandfather’s.

They request the Commission to get back their land and to tell them the exact extent of land they own.

Following searches undertaken by the Commission, there is no land inscribed in the name of Besague or Bezegui in the “*Répertoire*” of the Registrar General’s Office.

In fact, an attempt was made on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1990 by one Laurent Bézaguy to prescribe a plot of land of the extent 244810.40 m<sup>2</sup> (about 58 *Arpents*) at Chamarel following a survey report of Sworn Land surveyor Louis Maurice Dumazel. Laurent Bézaguy did not pursue further that attempt. None of the adjoining owners given in the survey report are owners of land at Chamarel. In view of the fact that some of them have already been served with “*Notice to Squatter*”, there is no indication that they are owners of land of Chamarel as they have squatted on forest lands.

The history of the case concerning this plot of land and the incident related in the said case before the Magistrate do not help the Commission more in the matter. The sentence of three months’ imprisonment imposed by the Magistrate says a lot.

The applicant has been advised to liaise with the Ministry of Housing and Lands in order to obtain a proper State land lease as the plot presently occupied is indeed included in the National Park.

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**CASE NAME: TOOLSY**

TJC/ L/126/ TOOLSY NOWRUTTUN

Nowruttun Toolsy, the applicant, says that his father died on 1986. According to him they had a plot of land at Pointe-aux-Piments of 1 *Acre* 37. The applicant explains that he has received a letter from the Registrar telling him that indeed he owns the plot of land, but his father's cousin has prescribed the land. His Attorney at Law told him that he could not have the land back again. Toolsy says that he has made an application for a title deed, but his uncle has lost it while doing research works on the said land. Nowruttun Toolsy wants restitution of the land.

Upon the request of the Commission, Nowruttun Toolsy was called to state where the plot of land is exactly situated. He answers that he does not know the exact location of the land. He stated that, according to information received from relatives, it appears that the land, which he believes, to belong to his father, uncles and grandfather is waste and unoccupied. He was advised that he ought to contact a Land surveyor or any other surveyor as soon as possible to make an assessment and give a site/ location.

He was also advised to afterwards report the matter to the Land Fraud Squad at Line Barracks. It will then be easier to explain to the Land Fraud Squad about his complaint.

The Commission is of the opinion that his share in the said portion of land of 1 *Arpent* 37 perches amounts to 1/28 only.

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**CASE NAME: HANNELAS**

TJC/L/0127/HANNELAS MICHEL GEORGES ANGE CYRIL

Georges Michel Ange Cyril Hannelas, the applicant, and other members of the family declare that they are heirs of Mathurin Jeannot through one Yolande Hannelas, *born* Farla, the mother of the heirs. Mathurin Jeannot bought a plot of land from one Lejuge in 1814. Many plots of land exist together and the total makes up about 156 *Arpents*. The land is found in the district of Black River, more precisely, at Albion but the applicant does not know the exact location.

To be able to sell the land, the heirs, the Hannelas family, together with the Dimba family, have started searches for the missing documents. They declare that the research has been made by Jean Claude Labavarde and one Rambert who are land promoters. All the searches have been done by these two persons only. The applicant has been swearing an affidavit upon the request of Labavarde as there are errors regarding the names of the heirs. They are still waiting for this affidavit since the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

In August 2009, Labavarde told Hannelas and Bolka, *born* Hannelas, over the phone that they are not the heirs of Mathurin Jeannot. The reason put forward by Labavarde is that Aurélie Jeannot died at the age of six and it is not likely that she has left any heir behind. But, according to the applicant's document, Aurélie Jeannot was born in 1812 and got married to Pierre Louis Dimba on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1834. As per the applicant's research at the Civil Status Office of Port Louis, they found that the death date has been registered in 1838 but no original document has been received because there is no index at Central Statistics Office. The applicant says that he does not understand why and how they are not heirs of Aurélie Jeannot.

The Hannelas family requests the Commission to undertake searches in order to know and clarify the link of the heirs with Aurélie Jeannot.

The application was submitted on 09<sup>th</sup> October 2009. However, by letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009, one Aubierge Caliste has requested the Commission to keep the matter in abeyance. The applicant has taken back all documents submitted as the family, not up to now, has been willing to maintain the case put before the Commission.

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**CASE NAME: FRICHOT**

TJC/ L/0128/ GENEVIEVE PAUL JOSE

*Cross Reference: FRICHOT Serge Claude A. & others TJC/L/0005*

The applicant, Paul José G enevi eve, says that her mother used to say that they had a lot of land in Riviere Noire. He does not know where they are found. He went to the Registration and Mortgages' Office and got a list of a few lands in Riviere Noire. The family requests assistance from the Commission to find out documents and lands.

Paul Jose G enevi eve claimed that his mother had told him that they had a lot of land at Riviere Noire. He did not know the location of those plots of land nor had he any plan in his possession. Only one title deed TV 39/212 has been produced.

He had copies of 3 "*R epertoires*" wherein mention is made of various sale at Riviere Noire made by Louis Laurestin Frichot.

In June 2010, he came to the Commission's Offices and promised to come back with the necessary documents to draw up the family tree and would revert back to the Commission once he had obtained other documents. He has not turned up.

Even if no family tree has been submitted, yet, after searches made by the Commission, it appears that Louis Laurestin Frichot appears in the family tree of Serge Claude Frichot. But, further searches at the Mortgages' Office reveal that the three "*R epertoires*" do not belong to Louis Laurestin Frichot who was married to Hortense Sans Fa on. One "*R epertoire*" relates to Louis Frichot, who was married to L ecadre Ashme.

The applicant has failed to supply the required precise information for the lands he is claiming and in the absence of more precise land data, it would be impossible to carry out searches.

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**CASE NAME: FIGARO**

TJC/L/0129/FIGARO GUICHARD

Guichard Figaro, the applicant, says that his great-grandfather owned a plot of land at Olivia. The latter was a Malagasy who came to Mauritius as a slave. His grandfather used to tell him that the Figaro family owns a plot of land there even if neither he nor any member of his family has seen the land in question. After having made some searches on his own, the applicant was able to have a copy of the contract of the land, TV 91 No. 5, at the Registrar General's Office.

He made a request to the Commission to enquire into the present situation of land and to reconstitute the land to the Figaro heirs and to investigate other plots of land which the Figaro might own in Moka.

Although searches carried out at the Registrar General's Office revealed that the names Jean Elidor Figaro and Israel Figaro do not appear in the Name Index, analysis of the "*Case hypoth ecaire*" of Jean L eonel Figaro and Bertraud Figaro revealed that there is one plot of land for the Figaro family in Moka. Furthermore, analysis of the deed of sale TV 91 No. 5 dated 11<sup>th</sup> July 1866, Louis Etienne Figaro did acquire a plot of land of  $\frac{1}{4}$  *Arpent* at Flacq, '*Les Trois Ilots*', from Louis Hilaire Tagman, in consideration of a price of "*50 piastres*" and a portion of land of extent 2 *Arpents* at Moka as per TV 53 No. 20, transcribed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1852.

When he passed away in 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1896, the plot of land has devolved on his heirs, namely his son Jean Elidor Figaro.

The Commission is of the opinion that the heirs may still initiate action, although they have not occupied the two portions of land purchased more than 150 years ago, through an Attorney/Surveyor, to try to retrace that plot of land which has a frontage of “32 *pièces sur le grand chemin de trois Ilots*” and the land of 2 *Arpents* at Moka.

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**CASE NAME: PRUDENT**

*TJC/ L/0130/PATRON MARIE JOSEPHINE born PRUDENT*

The applicant, Marie Joséphine Patron, *born* Prudent, lives at Elizabeth Ville, Baie Du Tombeau. She says that the NHDC has taken her out of her house and she is presently living at a relative's place. She is a widow. The house, she avers, belonged to her grandmother and, as such, is the heir and rightful proprietor of the house. At present, one Jack Désiré Laval Médon is living in the house. According to the applicant, the said person was a tenant but he has never paid her.

The Commission did searches in her case and came up with the follow analysis:

It appears that:

- NHDC had applied to the Judge in Chambers for a Writ Habere Facias Possessionem on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1998 against Joséphine Prudent.
- She resisted the application.
- In virtue of a judgment delivered on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1999, she was ordered to quit, leave and vacate the land of 3*Arpents* 66 by end of May 1999.
- She appealed against the said judgement.
- On 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001, in virtue of a judgement delivered by the Supreme Court, the appeal was dismissed.

The Supreme Court has already adjudicated upon the matter.

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**CASE NAME: REBET**

*TJC/ L/VF/0131/REBET (MRS)*

The applicant Rebet says that she is married since 1971; her husband has always worked at Les Salines, Black River, at a place commonly known as Domaine du Mont Calme. Her husband died in 2003.

She says that she actually lives on the property of the R.P.A de Ravel Company at Tamarin, Route Royale La Mivoie. The actual proprietors have tried to evict all the inhabitants living on the plot of land belonging to the de Ravel Company

The proprietors have asked them to leave the land giving as a pretext that the old huts erected there and occupied by applicant and other inhabitants, is an eyesore which devaluates the new “*Morcellement*”. It should be noted the proprietors have to go through this land occupied by the inhabitants to have access to the new “*Morcellement*”,

The applicant claims that the inhabitants are agreeable to the proposal of the promoters, but they are worried as the promoters want them to occupy a plot of land on lease based only on a verbal agreement. A deed will only be given to them after two years.

Now, applicant and the other inhabitants are at a loss.

The applicant Rebet says that she has in her possession all her electricity bills that she has paid since she has been living on the plot of land.

The Commission was keen to take up the case as applicant was requesting assistance.

On 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010, the Land surveyor and Senior Attorney of the Commission talked to the applicant on the phone. The Commission has thus been apprised that the matter has been settled and that the applicant does not wish to proceed any further with the application.

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**CASE NAME: AGATHE**

*TJC/ L/0133/VF/ AGATHE MARIE DENISE*

The applicant, Marie Denise Agathe, states that her mother’s name was Vélienne Agathe, her grandmother’s name Rosemay Agathe, and they are both deceased. She has four children. She submitted several birth and death certificates, with the wish that the Commission find out if she might have inherited any land somewhere in the country.

Searches were indeed carried out at the Conservator of Mortgages’ Office in the names of Roselmie Agathe and her late husband, César Agathe. Unfortunately, the two names do not appear in the Register of the Conservator of Mortgages.

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**CASE NAME: PAULIN**

*TJC/ L/0136/VF/ RAMSAY ELSIE MARGARETTE*

The applicant, Margarett Elsie Paulin, says that she is heir of Mylius Paulin and Georgina Paulin who each owned 2 *Arpents* out of a larger plot of 4 *Arpents* in the region of Rivière des Calebasses. She declares that it is possible that Georgina Paulin sold her part. The remaining 2 *Arpents* (Mylius Paulin’s part) is, according to applicant, still the family’s property. Applicant does not have any document but still remembers that her grandparents lived and stayed on the land before. At present, the land is unoccupied and some people are saying that they have prescribed the land and that it belongs to them. Applicant does not understand how these persons have been claiming the ownership of the land.

She wants assistance with research to understand what has really happened concerning the land and to get it back as well as to know its exact extent.

After analysis of the case from available Documents, it appears that applicant has not been able to read Document 10 submitted and does not know its content. Documents submitted at (10) and (11) do not reflect the portion of 4 *Arpents* as stated by applicant in her case summary. No Document testifies the relation of Adèle Paulin to Georgina Paulin.

Louis Mylius Paulin had acquired a plot of land at Rivière Calebasses, in the district of Pamplemousses, of the extent of 57 perches from one L.A. Sicard, as evidenced by title deed transcribed in Volume 324 No. 615 dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 1917.

According to TV 434 No.189 dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1937, he sold 50 "*perches*" to A.Y Sham Yen. The heirs of Louis Mylius Paulin claimed that there is still a portion of land belonging to them at Calebasses.

However, TV 435 No. 66 confirmed that Louis Mylius Paulin has, in fact sold 57 "*perches*" of land and not 50 "*perches*" as mentioned in TV 434 No. 189. It must be noted that TV 435 No. 66 is in fact a rectification of TV 434 No. 189.

This being so, the heirs of Louis Mylius Paulin do not hold any property at Calebasses.

Moreover, as regards the land of 4 *Arpents* mentioned in the summary, this plot of land does not appear in the "*Case hypothécaire*" of Louis Mylius Paulin.

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### **CASE NAME: MURTHEN**

*TJC/L/0138 CHEDUMBRUM MOONEEAMAH*

Mooneeamah Chedumbrum claims that his family is the owner of a plot of land of 35 perches at Henrietta, Vacoas. On humanitarian grounds, they allowed one Mariaye Matchiapien to live on a part of their land of 507 m<sup>2</sup> where there was a small house made of wood and corrugated iron sheets. Without the consent of the Chedumbrum, she pulled down the house and constructed two new houses on the 507 m<sup>2</sup> without a housing permit.

In 1991, the case was brought to the District Court of Curepipe and later to the Supreme Court. Mariaye Matchiapien hired the services of Attorney K. Gungabissoon and the land was surveyed by Land surveyor Sureshing Bheehuspoteea. They made use of CEB & CWA bills and used one Claude Sardanam as a witness to claim the property of the land.

The Chedumbrum maintained that in 2006, they hired the services of Attorney K. D. Varmah to whom they paid Rs. 20,000 and Land surveyor Irsaad Nuckchady to whom they paid Rs 13,000. They later realized that both did nothing for the fees they had claimed. A case was lodged against them at Casernes Central and both were arrested. The Attorney and the Land surveyor returned the sum of money they took from the Chedumbrum and Attorney Varma withdrew from the case.

The Chedumbrum are from a modest background and have already spent Rs. 150,000 to regain back their land. They have 7 children who do not have any land property. One of their children is mentally retarded and they have to look after him. Both husband and wife are retired and they fear that due to lack of funds they would not be able to pay the new Attorney A. P. Mungroo whom they have hired as the case has been postponed for next year.

They request the Commission to get back their land by providing legal and other aids for this case as they have spent all their meager savings in their long struggle for justice without any results up to now.

The fact of the case is as follows:

Following a Division in kind drawn up by Sworn Land surveyor Randabel dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1921, it was attributed, amongst others, to Carpaye Murthen a portion of land of the extent of 35 perches at Henrietta, Vacoas.

According to a recent memorandum of survey carried out by Land surveyor Jeewa dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009, the land belonging to heirs Katpermal Chedumbrum and Mooneeah Chedumbrum has been formed to admeasure 1730 m<sup>2</sup>.

It is observed that Société Tamige Baroba GaraSangham has prescribed an extent of 436 m<sup>2</sup>, being the whole frontage along Henrietta Branch Road on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1991 as per TV 2354 No. 62 by constructing buildings and a temple thereon.

MariayeMatchiapen and Moorooye Chedumbrum have made an attempt to prescribe an extent of 347.50m<sup>2</sup> on which stands the concrete building.

The prescription has been resisted by Mooneeamah Chedumbrum who has lodged an objection to the transcription of the affidavit.

It is not known how the Tamil Society has been able to prescribe 436 m<sup>2</sup> out of that plot of land. In fact the prescription is over an extent of 791.41 m<sup>2</sup>, as evidenced by TV 2354 No. 62.

The heirs of Carpaye Murthen have also lodged cases in the Supreme Court against Société Tamige Baroba Gara Sangham and against Moorooaye Murthen to quit, and vacate the premises and to pay damages for their illegal occupation. The case was scheduled to be heard sometime in 2011.

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**CASE NAME: GATEAU**

*TJC/L/0139/GATEAU MARIE MARLENE*

The applicant Marie Marlène Gâteau says that her son took a loan of Rs. 100,000 from Indian Ocean International, mortgaging her house. She is of opinion that she has already paid back the loan but according to the bank, she has not reimbursed that sum of money. Her house and her land have been seized.

The case was referred to Court by IOIB since the applicant has refused to accept the fact that she has not repaid back the loan. She says that she has paid a large sum of money to one Abbasakoor, Lawyer, to defend her case, but nothing has come of it. Every time her case is being postponed.

The Commission has looked into this matter. The case of “*Sale by levy*” is pending before the Master’s Court.

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**CASE NAME: CHARMANTE**

*TJC/ L/0140/LOUYAVA MARIE ADRIENNE*

Marie Adrienne Louyava, *born* Soopaul says, that there are four heirs on her mother’s side (Olivier Charmante, Manoir Charmante, Lixen Charmante and Noélida Charmante) Noélida Charmante. The four heirs possess a plot of land of 2 A 80 perches at Bambous. The applicant says that her step brothers named Cyril Sewpaul, built a pig pen on that plot of land which was unoccupied in 1992, while her other step-brothers Lewis, Jean-Claude Suzana, Mario Perrine and Marc Maccabla have built their houses on that plot of land belonging to the four above-mentioned Charmante heirs. It is to be noted that the heirs who have undertaken construction on that plot of land and herself have the same father but come from different mothers. Marie Adrienne Louyava’s cousin entered a case in Court in 1992. The Charmante family lost their case when the Court its verdict in 1998

The family appeals to the Commission to investigate the case presented in Court in 1998 and want the restitution of the plot of land.

The Commission has been made aware that there is a case pending before the Supreme Court. It appears that the case is scheduled to be heard in 2011, no precise date has been given to the Commission. In view of the fact that there is a case now pending before the Supreme Court, the Commission cannot entertain the application.

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**CASE NAME: TAKEN**

*TJC/ L/ / 0143/TAKEN MICHEL SALONI*

The applicant, Michel Saloni Taken, says that his father bought a plot of land of 9 perches at Route Palma, avenue Casquette, Quatres-Bornes from one Parsad. He built a house there. Next to this house was found another small plot of land which her father had also bought. The applicant declares that her father paid the full amount of money to Parsad and his son- in- law. However, no official document was signed regarding this transaction.

After the death of Parsad and applicant's father, Parsad's son-in-law decided to sell the small plot of land which applicant's father had already paid for, thinking that there was no heir to claim the land. Applicant declares that, now, the son-in-law does not want to sign the papers to finalize the sale of the land.

The Commission finds it very difficult to intervene in such a case and could not go any further as there was neither a deed of sale nor any "*promesse de vente*".

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**CASE NAME: AUNACHA**

*TJC/ L/0144/AUNACHA DENWANTEE & TEERWANTEE*

Denwantee and Reerwantee Aunacha, the applicants, declare that they are the heirs of Runglall Aunacha who bought a plot of land together with Jeebun Luckheea on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1916. The plot of land was of an extent of 1 *Arpent* 15 perches and is found in the district of Moka, Quartier Militaire, Providence. Each of these two persons owned half of the 1 *Arpent* 15 perches. The land has been shared among the heirs of the Aunacha family and the Luckheea family. The applicants' parents acquired the service of Land Surveyor Tupsy to survey the land in 1998. The family acquired the services of Attorney Charles Laval to make the sharing of the inherited land among the Aunacha family but he died without giving any documents to the family. According to the applicants, Charles Laval worked together with Attorney-at-law Gungabissoon but the latter has been suspended from his function and they have not been able to get any information from him. The family declares that actually three houses have been built illegally on their inherited land.

As per the file deposited at the Commission, it is revealed that document from the Supreme Courts reports to the sharing of 1 *Arpent* 15 perches among heirs of Aunacha family and of Luckheea family on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2002 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 03.

Following a division in kind before the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003 transcribed in Volume 5186 No. 20, heirs Basmatteea Aunacha and heirs Arjoon Aunacha were attributed in joint ownership 2 portions of land at Providence, Quartier-Militaire, viz:

- Lot 5A of an extent of 608m<sup>2</sup>
- Lot 5 of an extent of 1674.70m<sup>2</sup>.

Both plots of land have been at Rs. 540,000 which is equivalent to their share in the succession of Runglall Aunacha. In support of their complaint, the applicants have produced copies of building permits in the names of Dewantee Mungroo and Anouradha Jeehun and Soba Luckeea.

It appears from paragraph (4) of Folio (2) that the mother of Rajen Luckeea, Taramatee Dookun, has, in March 1998, prescribed the above plot of land of extent of 4642.96m<sup>2</sup> which was the subject of the above division in kind.

If the averment at paragraph (2) above is correct, the applicants have a strong case against the 3 squatters.

When they presented themselves at the Commission on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010, Denwantee and Teerwantee Aunacha were informed that Soba Luckeea had put up her house on the plot of land attributed strictly to heirs Basmatteea Aunacha and heirs Arjoon Aunacha.

It seems that Soba Luckeea has put up her house on the strength of the prescription made by her mother in 1998 and has completely disregarded the division in kind ratified by the Supreme Court on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

On the one hand, the Commission is of opinion that there is thus a need to declare null and void the prescription of the plot of land of extent of 4642.96m<sup>2</sup> as per TV 1873 No. 56 dated March 1988. There is also a need for the heirs Basmatteea Aunacha and Heirs Arjoon Aunacha to have the 2 plots of land lot 5 and 5 *Arpents* subdivided among their respective heirs with a view not to remain in "indivision".

The Commission is also of opinion that the only avenue opened to the applicants is to go before the Supreme Court to pray that the affidavit of prescription be declared null and void.

The applicants have been advised that as for financial assistance, they should apply for legal aid at the level of the Supreme Court.

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#### **CASE NAME: LEMASSON/ORANGE/NETTA**

*TJC/ L/0145/NETTA GEORGE JOSEPH*

The applicant's wife, *born* Marie Michelle Orange, now deceased, inherited from great-great-grandfather Gabriel André Lemasson, a plot of land of extent of 27 *Arpents* 52 perches at Bras de Mer, Le Bouchon bought from one Foisy on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1836. This land has been obtained by Foisy through a "concession".

The land, though unoccupied and covered with forests, remained the property of the Lemasson family. People have been occupying illegally the land for some seven years before the applicant decides to start procedures to recover the land. An affidavit was sworn in.

A request was made to the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries to demarcate the private land from "Pas Géométriques". A site visit was then made by Officers of the Forestry Department. A reply was sent on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006 whereby the Ministry of Agro-Industries stated that the applicant's family is the rightful owner of the plot of land. The applicant was asked to look for the services of a private surveyor to have his land surveyed. No surveyor has agreed to do the surveying.

After searches carried out by the Commission, The facts state the following:

- The 27 *Arpents* 52 was the property of Jacques Nicolas Foisy who obtained same through a concession.
- Foisy sold half undivided rights (1/2 indivis) in the portion of the land to André Gabriel Lemasson (*usufruit*), Jeanne Adèle Macquart (*usufruit*) and Joseph Dominique Lemasson

(*nue propriété*), Josephine Lemasson (*nue propriété*), as evidenced by the title deed transcribed in TV 35 No. 99.

- According to a title deed drawn up on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 1844, the remaining undivided rights (13A 76) were sold by the heirs Foisy to Isidore Charles Adolphe Collet. (“*Répertoire*” 12 No. 203)
- According to a survey carried out by E. Millien on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1917 and 9<sup>th</sup> September 1918, the land acquired under (ii) was found to be 12 *Arpents* 76 made up of 9 *Arpents* 76 perches and 3 *Arpents*.

A “*Mise en demeure*” was served to (i) Sunway Estates Limited and (ii) Vijawtee Lutchigadoo requesting both of them to: (a) refrain from parceling out the aforesaid portion of land; (b) to reinstate the land to its original state; (c) to remove all buildings materials, etc. and (d) to refrain from entering the land and interfering with the peaceful enjoyment of the heirs.

From the Documents mentioned above, there is no evidence that G. André Lemasson purchased 27 *Arpents* 52; actually, he purchased usufructuary rights in one half of the land which were transferred to the children, Joseph Dominique Lemasson and Josephine, on his death. The memorandum of survey drawn up by Edgard Millien indicates the breakdown of the 5 *Arpents* 38 attributed to Josephine in two lots 2 *Arpents* 84 and 2 *Arpents* 04.

The Commission has now been made aware that the applicants have retained the services of Land surveyor R. Bhurtun to carry out a survey of their land of 27 *Arpents* 52 perches at Bras De Mer, Le Bouchon. Some occupiers have objected. The Commission is in the presence of R. Bhurtun’s Report.

Furthermore, a case had been entered against the said Land surveyor.

It appears that the applicants have retained the services of Harold Lam Shang to enter a case before the Supreme Court. George Joseph Netta has apprised the Commission that his case was scheduled before the Supreme Court on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

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**CASE NAME: AUCHOMBIT**

*TJC/ L/0146/JOSEPH MARIE ROLANDE*

Marie Rolande Joseph writes that her great-great-grandfather came to Mauritius as an Indian Indentured labourer, and was registered as Auchombit No. 272742. Her grandfather was Sawdaghar Auchombit who, after his death, left two heirs, one son and one daughter. Louis Rolland Auchombit, the son, was the applicant’s great-great-grandfather, owned a plot of land of 1 *Arpents* 17 perches at Nouvelle Découverte. Her father told her that there was a well on that land from which the indentured labourers used to fetch water. She remembers that when she was still a child, her parents went to visit the plot of land. According to her, the land is at present unoccupied.

The applicant came to the Commission to ask for the restitution of the plot of land to her family and also needed assistance in the research procedures related to legal papers such as land contracts, etc.

Searches undertaken by the Commission reveal that “*Répertoire*” 117 No.129 indicates that Auchombit No 272742 was in fact the owner of a plot of land of extent 1 *Arpent* 17 perches at Nouvelle Découverte, Moka, as evidenced by TV 151 No. 251.

As there has not been any sale evidence in the “*Répertoire*”, it is assumed that heirs Auchombit 272742 are still the owners of the 1 *Arpent* 17 plot at Nouvelle Découverte.

The heirs have been advised to contact a private surveyor to carry out the works of identifying the land and drawing up a survey report and to start occupation as soon as possible, after the needful has been done.

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**CASE NAME: MEDAR**

*TJC/ L/0148/MEDAR JACQUES*

Jacques Médar, the applicant, says that his elders often related that they owned a plot of land of extent of 99 perches at Hermitage. The land had been completely neglected by his elders. He says that approximately 35 years ago someone took the land and started the cultivation of sugar -cane. His grandfather, Gaby Médar, told him also that the land belonged to him. His grandfather even put the case in Court. But according to applicant, on the very day set for the hearing of the case, the man occupying illegally the land paid Gaby Médar’s friends to make him take alcoholic drinks. The result was that he could not attend the Court’s hearing. Since that incident, the Médar family has not undertaken any action to get back the land due to financial difficulties. The applicant wants to have documents concerning the land and, the help of the Commission, to give legal assistance to get back the land.

In spite of several attempts made by the Commission to invite Jacques Médar to interviews and try to retrieve documents or to obtain more information from him, this was totally unsuccessful as both telephone numbers given by the applicant were wrong.

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**CASE NAME: BALISSON**

*TJC/L /0149/ FIERJAUN JIMMY DESIRE*

Jimmy Désiré Fierjaun, the applicant, says that his great-grandfather, Ernest Balisson bought a plot of land of 94 *Arpents* at Rivière-du-Poste. When he died, his family was neither aware of nor able to retrace, the exact extent of the land he owned. The applicant affirms that he had recourse to an Attorney and a Notary but he is now fed up with these long lasting procedures which according to him, even after 12 years, has given no results.

Jimmy Désiré Fierjaun went on site 2 to 3 times; he had recourse to the service of a Land surveyor who was able to situate the land only approximately. The applicant states that the State Investment Trust was launching a “*Morcellement*” process not far from the plot of land. Due to the unknown extent of the land, he does not know whether they are occupying his plot of land or not. But according to him, the limits of the land are in the surroundings of the Balissage Sugar Estate, Britannia Sugar Estate and Joli Bois Sugar Estate.

The applicant further submitted another claim purporting on a plot of land of approximately 126 *Arpents* at Rose-Belle, as he does not know the exact extent of land inherited by his grandfather.

He requests the Commission to investigate on the exact limit of the land bought by Ernest Balisson and to determine whether the land has been illegally occupied. He wants a restitution of the land and compensation.

Jimmy Désiré Fierjaun also avers that as heirs of the Clarisse family, he should have a share in a plot of land in Grand-Port.

#### **Case 1**

The Commission called in Jimmy Désiré Fierjaun to give further details and information on the case. After perusal of all the documents and according to a deed under private signatures dated 11<sup>th</sup> December 1848, the Belleville 'sold' to Ernest Charles Balisson a portion of land of 94 *Arpents* 20 at Grand-Port for the sum of Rs. 1,268 as evidenced by TV 49 No 24. However, after an analysis of the "*Case hypothécaire*", it appears that an inscription for the sum of Rs. 1,268 was taken on the very same day, that is, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1848 and inscribed in TV 64 No. 333 in favour of one Belleville. The deed under signatures, it is stated that the sale was made under conditions to the effect that approval should be obtained as the other co-owners were minor children of the Belleville. The amount due has not been paid as the inscription has not been erased.

The Commission is of the opinion that both vendor and purchaser have not fulfilled the conditions of the sale. One has not obtained the authorization as regards the minors; the other has not paid the purchase price. Consequently, the sale may have been annulled and her Belleville has taken back the land.

#### **Case 2**

According to "*Répertoire*" 21 No. 442, it appears that Ernest Balisson sold  $\frac{1}{4}$  undivided rights in the 106 *Arpents* situated at La Fôret, Grand-Port. There is no indication as regards the  $\frac{3}{4}$  undivided rights. In view of lack of precise information no further investigation could be made.

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#### **CASE NAME: CHARLOT**

*TJC/L/0150/CHARLOT JEAN MARC*

Jean Marc Charlot, who deponed before the Commission, relates that Camp Marcelin is a village locked in a sugarcane field under the authority of Constance La Gaité with access routes to Quatre-Cocos, Camp Ithier and Isidore Rose.

He says that all the inhabitants of Camp Marcelin are either linked by blood or by marriage. Some choose to leave the village but always have the possibility of returning home. No stranger can come to leave in the village unless s/he gets married to one of the village's inhabitants.

The inhabitants recognize that each one of them has the right to settle in the village with neither the obligation to purchase land nor any monetary transaction or exchange of any kind. One becomes land owner in Camp Marcelin by birth. All this result from a strong oral tradition that says:

- That all the inhabitants have Marcelin Charlot as ancestor.
- That the said Marcelin Charlot was a big landowner with one Desjardins and one Nozaic as immediate neighbours.
- That the said Marcelin Charlot presumably gave to his lineage as heritage his property, his lands, representing a portion of 800 *Arpents*.

- That the descendants of the said Marcelin Charlot have been dispossessed of the largest part of the land they had, leaving only the actual village of Camp Marcelin, thus explaining the unique and particular geographical position of the village.

The applicant explains that the consequences are:

- that the descendants of the said Marcelin Charlot have developed and still have ways of living resulting from this isolation and which further deepens this isolation (intermarriages within the family);
- that the descendants of the said Marcelin Charlot have suffered huge moral and legal prejudices and make a request to the Commission for reparation by:
- helping in the reconstruction of their family tree from Marcelin Charlot;
- assisting to trace back the complete surface area of the land and property of Marcelin Charlot and the related original Documents; and, by
- assisting them with the help of researchers, land surveyors, notaries or other legal professionals.

Searches undertaken at the Registrar General's Office have revealed that Marcelin Charlot was the owner of a plot of land of an extent of 12 *Arpents* at Quatre-Cocos. A plot of 2 *Arpents* has already been sold and the remaining land is still in the name of the Charlot.

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### **NAME CASE : L'AIGUILLE**

*TJC/ L/0151/L'AIGUILLE JEAN JOSÉ  
CROSS REFERENCE: ESPIEGLE LOUIS PHILIPPE TJC/L/0189  
GOURANNA JACQUES LAVAL TJC/L/VF/0155.*

Jean José L'Aiguille, the applicant declares that his grandmother, Marthe Anodin married to one L'Aiguille told him that the Espiègle family owned a plot of land at Saint - Paul, Plaines Wilhems. Françoise Provençale and Georgina Labonté chose Victorine Espiègle as their only heiress through a *testament olographe*. On 4<sup>th</sup> July 1856, on the death of her father, Françoise Provençale became the only heiress.

The applicant also adds that he is a descendant of the Espiègle family. He wants the Commission to investigate so as to know the exact extent of land that Françoise Provençale owned.

Neither the "*testament*", nor a survey plan has been submitted to the Commission. From perusal of the "*Répertoire*", no plots of land in the name of the family still exist. There is no plot of land in the deeds which speak of St Paul, Plaines Wilhems. There is no *testament olographe* from Françoise Provençale and Georgina Labonté to support Victorine as the only heiress.

But, according to searches carried out by the Commission at the Mortgage Office, it appears that the land of 2 *Arpents* at Plaines Wilhems have been sold as per deeds transcribed in Volume 92 No. 261, Volume 92 No. 239 and Volume 103 No. 248.

Mention of a *testament olographe* has been made by applicant but no copy has been produced. This testament is the basis of the claim and is very important to process the application concerning the other portions of land.

Jean José L’Aiguille presented himself at the Commission at the end of July 2011. A formal request was made to him by Commissioner Jacques David and Land surveyor M. Bahadoor of the Commission, to produce a copy of the testament as soon as possible. He promised to do the needful. But, he never returned. Therefore, the Commission did not proceed further.

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**CASE NAME: BOODENY**

*TJC/ L/0152/ BOODENY ROOKMEEN*

The applicant, Rookmen Boodeny, wrote a letter on behalf of late Heeralall Boodeny & Boodeny heirs, to the Chief Executive Officer of Grand Port Savanne District Council - a copy of which she has sent to the Commission, to complain about a Development signpost displayed by one Biness Bhadoo or Budhoo, on a land she claims to be hers, situated at Comblone Road, Nouvelle France.

She maintains that she has acquired the said land through legal & normal procedures issued by the Grand Port Savanne District Council, as per the Development Permit No. 14661 on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1991. The land in question had been occupied by Sohun Boodeny, the father-in-law of the applicant, since 1945.

In this letter, she appeals to the Grand Port Savanne District Council to take legal action against the same Biness who, being the Secretary of the Arya Samaj, and owner of Comblone Restaurant, is using her land illegally as parking for his restaurant and carry out social activities as an Aryasamajist without the Boodeny’s approval or consent. She further claims that her family is intimidated by people whenever they carry out any business on the land and that all “*Trepass boards*” which they placed on the electric poles have been removed and thrown away within hours of them leaving the site.

Even if this is not a case of dispossession, the Commission looked into the matter as this might result effectively into a way to dispossess the Boodeny of their land through an abuse of power.

It is confirmed that through a Title deed transcribed in TV 4167 No. 4, dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1999, a division in kind established and allocated to the Boodeny Family of Comblones Road, Nouvelle France, in the District of Grand Port. Rookmee Boodeny, wife of late Heeralall Boodeeny, is the owner of the land situated in this area

In spite of letter sent to different authorities of the country relating to this case, everyone has turned a deaf ear.

Rookmeen Boodeny has been advised to seek the help of a Land surveyor to carry out a proper survey and take relevant action in the light of the findings of the surveyor. The only remedy is to enter a Court case.

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**CASE NAME: GOURANNA**

TJC/L/VF/0155 GOURANNA JACQUES LAVAL  
 Cross reference : TJC/ L/0151/L'AIGUILLE JEAN JOSÉ  
 TJC/L/0189 ESPIEGLE LOUIS PHILIPPE

Jean José L'Aiguille, the applicant, declares that his grandmother, Marthe Anodin married to one L'Aiguille told him that the Espiègle family owned a plot of land at Saint-Paul, Plaines Wilhems. Françoise Provençale and Georgina Labonté chose Victorine Espiègle as their only heiress through a testament "*olographe*". On 4<sup>th</sup> July 1856, at the death of her father, Françoise Provençale became the only heiress. At the death of Françoise, Victorine Espiègle became the only heiress.

The applicant also adds that he is a descendant of the Espiègle family. He wants the Commission to investigate so as to know the exact extent of land that Françoise Provençale owned.

In spite the fact that no survey plan was submitted, from perusal of the "*Répertoire*", made by the Commission, no plot of land in the name of the family still exists. There is neither plot of land in the deeds which speak of St Paul, Plaines Wilhems, nor any "*testament olographe*" left by either Françoise Provençale or Georgina Labonté to support Victorine as the only heiress.

The land of 2 *Arpents* at Plaines Wilhems have been sold as per deeds transcribed in Volume 92 No. 261, Volume 92 No. 239 and Volume 103 No. 248.

The *testament olographe* mentioned by applicant -but no copy produced- is the basis of the claim and is very important for any process concerning portions of land.

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**CASE NAME : TOULET**

TJC/L/0153/CHARNIERE JEAN MICHEL

The applicant, Jean Michel Charnière, claims that he is one of the heirs of Paul Toulet who came to Mauritius in 1869. The later bought various plots of land in Mauritius and on his death; according to Charnière, he left 500 *Arpents* at Rouge Terre and 25 *Arpents* at Midlands.

The family requests the Commission to investigate on land sold and unsold and to assist them for eventual restitution, to carry out research for Documents on land at Civil Status Office and assist them in restitution and compensation to the heirs of Paul Toulet.

In support of the claim, Jean Michel Charnière submitted some extracts of Birth and Marriage certificates and copies of 5 "*Cases hypothécaires*".

Although he submitted a survey report drawn up by Sworn Land surveyor Charles E. Ribet, dated 28<sup>th</sup> December 1869, in respect of the site of an extent of 500 *Arpents*, he could unfortunately not identify the plot of land. After a whole day of '*reconnaissance*', the Commission finally spotted the land.

The applicant laid a second claim at the Commission as to the fact that his great-great-grandfather, Jean Joseph Charnière bought a plot of land of 25 *Arpents* from Runjoo and Sunjeelee in the surroundings of Midlands. The applicant had great difficulties in situating the exact location of the land and wants the Commission to investigate and assist in locating the land so that the land be restituted.

Charnière main claim rests on title deed TV 145 No. 10 “*Répertoire*” 42/33 and “*Répertoire*” 4/301 respectively where it is reported that Paul Toulet did acquire 500 *Arpents* from E. de Chazal and George Clifford Mayer in consideration of a price of \$ 25,000.

An in-depth investigation and search reveal the following;

- While TV 145 No. 10 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1882 indicates on one side occupied by Evénor de Chazal to Paul Toulet, Adrien Toulet and André Legreta, however, TV 11 No. 15, dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 1881, indicates a 2-year lease to expire on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1883 with option of renewal at a monthly rental of Rs. 350 for the 500 *Arpents* plot.
- As regards, TV 145 No. 10, there is a ‘*privilege inscription*’ as per CH 305/11 burdening the land to the tune of \$ 17,000 in favour of E. de Chazal and Mayers which inscription has not been erased.

As regards his claim of 25 *Arpents*, which supposedly had belonged to Jean Joseph Charnière at Midlands, searches undertaken by the Commission at the Registrar General’s Office have not revealed the existence of such plot of land.

In the light of the above, the heirs of Paul Toulet have no claim on the 500 *Arpents* of Rouge Terre.

In fact for the period 1883 to 1906 the Toulet family sold 23 plots of land around the island.

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**CASE NAME: MOOLCHAND**

*TJC/ L/0156/MOOLCHAND PURVURAM PRANNATH*

This file deals with eight cases submitted by the applicant, Purvuram Prannath Moolchand for plots of land in the region of Midlands having belonged to his grandfather, Lochund Moolchand; and his request is for the cancellation of the prescription of lands and their recovery to the family. A lot of documents were handed over to the Commission.

The summary of all claims and specific requests are thus listed:

**Case 1**

Lochund Moolchand, applicant’s grandfather, possessed some portions of land in Midlands. Most of the land was reserved for hunting; a small portion was cultivated.

One Issack Bulaty, a neighbor, was granted permission by applicant’s uncle, Ragoobeer Moolchand, to cultivate some creepers on a portion of land. The uncle often visited the land and was given a rent which has been agreed mutually. R. Moolchand could not visit the land for quite a long time due to illness. He then passed away.

When applicant afterwards visited the land, he was forbidden to do so. Bulaty informed applicant’s family that the land was his property. The land was prescribed in September 1990 and sold to the children (Documents submitted). A protest was lodged by late Mewachand Moolchand to the Land Fraud Squad in 2002.

Mr. Moolchand averred that Saveetree Jaggernath, who stood as witness for the prescription, declared to applicant that she was misled as she was told by Bulaty that he was going to purchase a piece of land and to stand as witness for that transaction. The lady had given that statement to the Land Fraud Squad.

On the death of Mewachand Moolchand, the Land Fraud Squad did not proceed further.

The applicant says that he made a fresh statement to the Land Fraud Squad. When Issack Bulaty passed away, the case was dropped by the Land Fraud Squad.

A case was entered in Court. It was struck out by the Court as Bulaty passed away. For lack of funds, the applicant says that he could not proceed further as he has already spent much money.

He requests the Commission to recover the land prescribed by Bulaty.

#### **Case 2**

Jadoonanun Bokhoree, a neighbor of Lochund Moolchand, has prescribed part of the plot of land belonging to the Moolchand (Documents submitted). A notice was served by applicant's Solicitor to stop the prescription. The case was heard in Court. As the applicant's Solicitor did not attend the Court, the case was stuck off in favour of Bokhoree.

The applicant requests the Commission to recover the land prescribed.

#### **Case 3**

One Bullywont Chatargoan caused the land belonging to Lochund Moolchand to be surveyed and leased it to Sanjiv Khedoo of Cluny. A new neighbour of Lochund Moolchand has witnessed by a deed that the land belonged to Lochund Moolchand. Furthermore, the applicant had the land surveyed to prove that it belonged to the Moolchand family and submitted a site plan locating the real plot of land of owned by Chatargoan.

#### **Case 4**

Jagroop family owns a plot of land of 1 *Arpent* at Midlands, cultivated with sugar-cane. At present, Ram Jagroop's grandson is using his land deed to occupy various plots of land not belonging to him. The Moolchand family had a survey of the land as a proof of the location. The Sugar Insurance Fund Board can locate the land of Jagroop family as it was planted with sugar cane.

#### **Case 5**

A member of Moolchand family authorized one Deokeenanand Pohiet (related to Moolchand) to occupy a piece of land as the latter was physically handicapped. In 1981, the lease was officialised for a period of 9 years. In 2001, the Moolchand family intended to proceed with a division in kind among heirs. Deerpuh Gokhool, lawful wife of eokeenanand Pohiet, refused to vacate the land. Afterwards, she prescribed the land.

The applicant made a request to the Commission to help him cancel the prescription and to recover the land.

#### **Case 6**

The late Deonarain Ramessur rented a plot of land of 1 *Arpent* 17 neighbouring the Moolchand's land. The land was cultivated with sugar cane and as it was surrounded by wasteland, monkeys attacked his plantation. Mewachand Moolchand was asked to clean a piece of land planted with some "*fatak*" to stop the monkeys' attacks. Ramessur agreed to pay a yearly rental of Rs 200. In 2003, the Moolchand family did not ask him for the rent as he was not in good health but he agreed to vacate the land when required. He was ready to leave the land but passed away. On the death of Deonarain Ramessur, his wife refused to vacate the land insisting that the land belonged to one Caleemoutou. But Caleemoutou had, years before, sold the land to Lochand Moolchand.

The Moolchand requests the Commission to intervene in order that the Ramessur to vacate the land.

#### **Case 7**

In the fifties, Sewnundun Ramundun was given a piece of land and materials by the Moolchand family to build a shelter as he was very poor. He paid a token rent of Rs. 8.00 yearly.

Now Ramundun has prescribed the land.

The case went to Court and Ramundun won his case. The Moolchand, having no funds to pay their Solicitor who stepped down as he was partly paid, could go no further in this case.

They want to recover the land.

**Case 8**

Pargasing and Takoorduth Balluck were neighbours of Taukoordoyal Moolchand. At the latter's death, the Balluck brothers prescribed Moolchand's land. The Land Fraud Squad made a visit on the land and found it in a wild and bare state.

In this case also, they want the Commission to stop all prescription procedures, to recover the land.

**Case 9**

One Hum Ting Sang has leased a plot of land from Mewachand Moolchand as from the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1974. He paid a yearly rent of Rs. 100.

In the fifties, the Moolchand family was running a shop on the same land; it was destroyed in 1960 by cyclone *Carol*. Since then, the land has been rented to various persons and to a religious association.

Now Hum Ting Sang is claiming that his family has been occupying the land since 1946 which, according to applicant, is a false statement. He has entered a case in Court. The trial was scheduled to be heard on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

The Moolchand family requests the Commission to stop all legal procedures and to recover the land. The applicant says that he has no funds to go to Court; even the lawyers have only been partly paid.

**Case 10**

Tankoordoyal Moolchand owned a plot of land of 50 perches at Bois Rouge, Pamplemousses. The land was leased to Foolmateea Seetohul, wife of Razdeo Rampergass Seetohul for sugar cane cultivation for a period of 7 years (1980-1987) and the lease was renewed. Seetohul witnessed the lease. At the end of the lease, Seetohul refused to vacate the land. He entered a case in Court. There was no follow-up. Rampergass Seetohul has now prescribed the land.

The Moolchand wants to stop the prescription procedure and to recover the land.

The Commission went into the details of each case and noted:

- The Notarial deed dated 21<sup>st</sup> February 1923 tendered by the applicant in support of his claim is in respect of twelve portions of land situated at Bananes whereas the lands mentioned in the cases are all referred to as being in Midlands.
- There is no family tree nor any affidavit to indicate the relation between the late Lochund Moolchand and the applicant, Purvuram Prannath Moolchand.
- The Land Fraud Panel Squad set up at the Police Department has been made aware of at least some of the cases, but it is not known what action has been taken.

After analysis, the Commission has reached the following conclusion:

**Case 1**

- It is observed that the land, subject matter of the prescription, is located at Midlands whereas the 12 portions mentioned in the title deed of Lochund Moolchand are all described as lands located in Bananes.
- Bananes Village is sandwiched between Midlands and Cluny. It lies partly in Grand- Port and partly in Plaines-Wilhems districts.
- The description of the land prescribed defines an area occupied and is not necessarily the same as the boundaries of the original plot of land nor is it necessarily of the same extent.
- The Commission is of the opinion that Purvuram Prannath Moolchand should relate the property of his forefather to the land prescribed and to seek to redress through a Court action if he can prove that the land prescribed and the land owned are one and the same land.

**Case2**

- It is observed that while Prannath Moolchand called at the Commission and spoke about land belonging to his forefather. Yet in the document submitted it would seem the land is said to belong to Hewachand Moolchand. The rights of Prannath Moolchand Moolchand in the land have been established.
- In any case, it would seem that there has been an objection to the transcription of land.

**Cases 3 to 8**

Prannath Moolchand called at the office of the Commission on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010. He has sought the services of a Surveyor, M Ramlakhan, to sort out the matter related to his portions of land at Bananes. The Commission drew his attention to the doubt on the actual location of these lands, i.e. Bananes/Midlands and explained to him that any defect in his title deed should be cured by a proper memorandum of survey.

**Case 9**

- There is no doubt that the 598m<sup>2</sup> forms part of the 35 perches, that is, 1477.30m<sup>2</sup>.
- While Prannath Moolchand who submitted the case to the Commission, has tendered a document as the Title deed for the family land, yet in a defence plea submitted to Court, another deed transcribed in Volume 790/71 is mentioned.
- Since a Court case has been initiated by the Heirs Hing Tim Sang, no further action is required on the part of the Commission.

**Case 10**

- In brief, the Moolchand are implying that by the action of Basdeo Seetohul, they are being dispossessed of their property.
- It should be observed that in terms of Prescription Act, the Moolchand had three months as from the date of publication in the *Gazette* to object to the transcription of the notice. Apparently this has not been done.
- In the circumstances, their only recourse is to lodge a case in Court for:
  - a) Decreeing that they are the lawful owners of the land "*in lite*" and
  - b) That the affidavit of prescription is declared null and void.

However, to succeed in Court, the Moolchand will have to prove their ownership rights but also the land which is the subject-matter of the prescription and the one claimed by them is the one and same land.

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**CASE NAME: UNJORE**

*TJC/L/0157/UNJORE KHEMRAJSINGH*

Khenrajsingh Unjore, the applicant, claims that he has been leasing a plot of land for sugar cane cultivation, situated at Beau Vallon/ Petite Cabane/Camp de Masque Pavé from one Sookasseeah Seesum since 1997. The first lease expired in 2006 and the second one runs from 2006 to 2015. He is registered at the Sugar Insurance Fund Board.

The applicant declares that one Beedeea Parcaass Ramdany, who owns a plot of land next to applicant's leased land, claimed that he has bought this land from Seesarrun and that the entire sugar cane plantation belongs to him. Ramdany, adds the applicant, has been harassing him and

even went as far as to intimidate and threaten him in 2008. He took the liberty of harvesting Unjore's sugar canes.

According to applicant, Ramdany lodged a false complaint against him and the matter was brought to Court at the Flacq District Court, to successively reach the Intermediate Court and finally the Supreme Court. According to applicant, when he went to Court, Ramdany refused to recognize that he assaulted the applicant. The matter was dismissed.

In the opinion of the Commission, the claim of land by applicant (who is only the lessee) and the land claimed by Ramdany are two different portions of land. It is for the heirs and successors of Sookasseeah Seesum, who are the landlords, to identify their property and initiate whatever action is called for to preserve their rights and those of the lessor.

Further searches have revealed that there are only two judgments of the District court of Flacq. There is no document concerning the cases before the Intermediate court or Supreme Court, as reported by the applicant.

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#### **CASE NAME: LARIDAIN**

*TJC/L/0158/BERTHELOT LOUIS ROLAND & others*

According to the applicants Gisèle Berthelot and Louis Roland Berthelot, their mother, Juliana Laridain was born in Chamarel. Their mother was not the sole owner of the plot of land of an extent of 37 *Arpents* in Chamarel as it belonged to all the heirs of Laridain consisting of descendants of Abel Laridain, father of Juliana, and Henri Laridain, brother of Abel. The plot of land was leased to the Bel Ombre Sugar Estate by the heirs Laridain. Each year, Bel Ombre Sugar Estate paid a rental to the heirs Laridain. Both applicants aver that their mother never saw the colour of the money, as Henri Laridain was the only person who received the money. Gisèle and his brother, Louis Rolland, Berthelot remember that Henri Laridain told their mother that the title deed was in his possession.

After the death of their mother in 1976, the widow of Henri Laridain with the help of Marcel Laridain, the eldest son of Henri Laridain prescribed the land. All the official land documents are actually in the possession of Marcel Laridain. In 2001, Gisèle Berthelot went to see Marcel Laridain. She told him that the heirs of Abel Laridain wanted their share of the plot of land, the latter told her that he had already prescribed the land. He gave her a site plan and told her that she will have to make a lot of legal procedures in order to recover her share.

Both Gisèle Berthelot and Louis Roland Berthelot request the Commission for Legal Assistance in order that the heirs of Abel Laridain could have an equitable share of the land among the heirs of Abel and Henri Laridain and also live on the land.

Marcel Laridain was called by the Commission to explain the whole affair and to say if, indeed, he received the rent from Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. While deponing, under oath, he maintained that that was never the case and was not aware of any land belonging to the Laridain family in the region of Chamarel.

In December 2010, Louis Roland Berthelot sent to the Commission a copy of the *Government Gazette* dated the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2010 concerning the prescriptions of two portions of land by Louis Marcel Laridain and Cyril Louis Laridain. The Commission tried to obtain a copy of the site and location from the Clerk of Senior Attorney, Cyril Huët de Froberville, under whose signature the prescription notice was published. His Clerk refused to give a copy to the Commission. Finally, Land Surveyor Seebaruth was contacted and he submitted the site and location plan as well as the Survey Report.

Louis Roland Berthelot was advised by the Commission to lodge an objection to the transcription of the notice. Subsequently, the Commission was advised that he had retained the services of Attorney, P. Boodhna, who served the appropriate notice on the Conservator of Mortgages.

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**CASE NAME: LAVIOLETTE**

*TJC/ L/0160/ BATOUR MARIE RENE born LAVIOLETTE*

Marie Renéa Batour, born Laviolette, the applicant, says that she came to know that her ancestor Jacques Laviolette owned three plots of land at Rivière Noire, Petite Bel Air (Ruisseau-des-Délices) and Mahébourg. According to her, those plots of lands have been taken over by different sugar estates of the said regions. The plots of land belonged to applicant's grandfather and she says that she is one of the heirs of the land. However, the applicant does not know the exact location of the land.

In her request to the Commission, she says that either the Sugar Estates should buy the land and give them money or they return back the land to the heirs.

In support of her claim, she submitted the following:

- A "*concession*" document delivered to Louis Laviolette ("*noir libre*"), of a plot of land of extent 222 *Arpents* dated 10<sup>th</sup> January 1764 registered by the "*Greffier aux Conseil supérieur et au Tribunal terrier*".
- A Survey report dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 1772 by Sworn Land surveyor Louis Merle at the request of Louis Laviolette for a plot of land of the extent of 312 *Arpents* as found in Folio 2, MA 62 Folio 396-401 in a file kept in Mauritius Archives.
- A Survey report dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 1771 drawn up by Sworn Land surveyor Louis Merle, at the request of searches, in respect of a plot of land of an extent of 5 *Arpents* 10 perches at Grand Port.

However, searches made by the Commission revealed that the said plots of land do not appear in the names of Louis Laviolette or Jean Laviolette in the "*Case Hypothécaire*".

The Commission analysed and undertook searches in the claim made by the applicant.

It is also revealed at "*Répertoire*" 180 No 302, that succession Louis Laviolette sold various plots of land from the year 1899 to the year 1925; and at "*Répertoire*" 190 No. 562, that Jean Laviolette sold undivided rights from the year 1904 to the year 1912.

In view of the fact that no affidavit had been submitted and no family tree produced, the claim of the applicants rests on very flimsy ground.

The claims of the three portions of land of 222 *Arpents*, 312 *Arpents* and 156¼ *Arpents* at Ruisseau-des-Délices and Plaines Saint-Pierre prompted much discussion at the Commission.

The first and third portions of land were received from concessions.

A thorough reading of the deed of concession reveals that the concession was given under certain terms and conditions. If the conditions were not fulfilled, the land would return back to the King. The document of "*concession*" was one like a "*Letter of intent*", not warranting any follow-up on the part of the Authorities at that time if those who received the concession disregard the rules and conditions. This may explain why in spite of the fact that the documents relating to the concession exist, searches carried out in the names of Jacques Laviolette, Louis Laviolette and Jean

Laviolette at the Office of the Conservator of Mortgages, the three portions of land cannot be traced out.

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**CASE NAME: PREAUDET**

*TJC/L/0161/PREAUDET SERGE EMMANUEL & others*

- Case heard on Wednesday 18 August 2010
- Serge Emmanuel Préaudet

**Claim of Deponent**

- His great-grandfather Ernest Préaudet owned several plots of land including 130 *Arpents* in Quatre Cocos which he purchased with five others (1857) in terms of deed transcribed in Volume 35 No. 294.
- The property has devolved now to the heirs and successors.
- Requests assistance of the Commission to get back the land.

**Hearing 18 August 2010**

Emmanuel Préaudet deponed before the Commission and explained that there are now 24 heirs, some of whom live abroad who may claim to have a share in the land. Since 1986, he started claiming the land and contacted Constance La Gaieté, the occupier of the said land. To assist him in his claim, he contacted one Eric Pitchen, a 'Researcher' to whom he paid approximately Rs. 350,000. The latter was to seek the services of a Land Surveyor (Mr Sakir) and arrange for the drawing up of the affidavit establishing all the heirs entitled to apprehend the estate and succession. As nothing had been done, he reported the case to the Police and Eric Pitchen was arrested.

The Commission is of the view that S.E. Préaudet should establish the family tree and finalise the drawing up of the affidavit.

Serge Préaudet has been advised accordingly and also to seek the services of a Land Surveyor to locate the land at issue should the heirs Ernest Préaudet decide to seek physical possession of the property through a Court action.

**Case 2 and 3**

The applicant adds that his grandfather told him that the family owned a plot of land in Plaines Wilhems. But he does not know the exact location. He also avers that the heirs have also 525 *Arpents* at Domaine Argy.

The Préaudet family requests the Commission to help them carry out land surveying and to reclaim their properties.

The Commission has examined the case and found that case No. 2 and case No. 3 are too vague to enable a proper examination. Hereto, the services of a Land Surveyor was advised in order to locate the properties and retrieve information as to their ownership (title deeds) that would enable the heirs to take a decision on any further move.

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**CASE NAME: ARMUGAM**

*TJC/ L/ /0162 ARMUGAM VISHWANADHAN PILLAY & OTHERS*

Vishwanadhan Pillay Armugam, the applicant claims that his father, Vinayron Pillay Armugam, was born at Vallée-des-Prêtres where he was brought up with his brother and two sisters. Before his father's death, the latter told him that his father (applicant's grandfather) had land(s) at Montagne Longue and Vallée-des-Prêtres. Throughout his life applicant's grandfather has been living at different places with his family that is why they have lost contact with their lands. The family wants assistance to identify these lands.

Searches have been carried out in the names of applicant's:

- 1) Father: Vinayron Pillay Armugam;
- 2) Grandfather: Soopaya Arunachalam;
- 3) Great grandfather: Armugum No. 417322.

The names of the applicant's grandfather and great-grandfather do not appear in the Registers of the Conservator of Mortgages as owners of any land.

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**CASE NAME: CORNET**

*TJC/ L/ VF/0163/ FRIQUIN ELSIE born CORNET*

Elsie Friquin, *born* Marie Elsie Cornet, writes that her father has told her that her great-grandparents owned several plots of land. She ignores where they are situated and requests the Commission to assist in research.

She claims that her great grandparents owned several plots of land about which she ignored their locations and the relevant title deeds. She has given the name of his grandfather, Emmanuel André Friquin.

Searches at the Conservator of Mortgages Office have revealed that Emmanuel André Friquin, son of Julius Emmanuel Friquin and Andréa Mars, married to Marie Elizabeth Cornet. They acquired on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002 from one L. Mars, a plot of land of an extent of 157.08 m2 situated in the District of Port-Louis place called Sainte Croix, 5, Leung Pew Antoine Street for the sum of Rs. 50,000 as evidenced by TV 4977 No. 29.

There is no property registered under the name of the grandfather.

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**CASE NAME: AUFRAY**

TJC/ L/0164/ PASCAL Elian Marie Wills

The applicant, Elian Marie Wills Pascal, says that after having undertaken some searches on his ancestors, the Auffray family, he has discovered that they owned a concession of 156¼ Acres that have been granted to Jean Pierre Auffray in 1770 in the region of Mare-Tabac. According to the applicant, this plot of land has since been passed over during several generations in the family. The applicant declares that the Auffray family was involved in fishing and plantation. He thinks that they might have used this plot of land for that purpose.

Elian Pascal adds that, according to him, the land had started to be neglected as from the 1860s, with Joseph Fernand Auffray, the applicant's great-grandfather, the one who had inherited the land during this period. He declares that someone has told him that the land is actually being occupied by the Savannah Sugar Estate; and he points out that after having made more in-depth searches at the Mauritius National Archives and other institutions, he has found no records mentioning the sale of the land. He concludes in underlying that he actually does not know the precise location of the land.

His request to the Commission is to locate the land, to investigate whether if the land has been illegally taken over by the Savannah Sugar Estate and if yes, when? He also wants to know whether the land has been prescribed by the Sugar Estate above-mentioned.

According to the records of the case, applicant has not submitted a written representation but has submitted several documents, the main ones of which are:

- A copy of a deed of concession bearing No. 758 copied in Volume 6 No. 105 and dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 1771
- A copy of a survey report of a plot of land of 156 ¼ *Arpents*

Searches carried out by the Commission at the Registrar General's Office revealed that the deed of concession is not mentioned in the "*Case hypothécaire*" of Jean Pierre Auffray (Jean Pierre Auffray according to deed of "*concession*"). Furthermore, the names of Joseph Fernand Auffray, Louis Lewis Andéol Auffray and Marie Leyla Routier have not been traced in the "*Case hypothécaire*"

However, according to a plan showing the plots of the "*concession*" in the area, the relevant site may be identified.

During a hearing, the applicant promised to look further into his claim and to obtain more precise and reliable information. No further information or documents had ever been produced to enable the Commission to investigate further.

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**CASE NAME: PERRIN**

TJC/ L/0166/GUIMBEAU JOSEPH ARNAULD GARY

Joseph Arnauld Gary Guimbeau, the applicant, claims that his great-grandfather, Edouard Perrin, was the owner of several plots of land at Constance which he bought or inherited from Jean Baptiste Martin, or his brother, Louis Perrin, who died childless. The applicant's family ignored the existence of this heritage until 1974 when one Gérard Bernard told the applicant's grandfather, René Perrin, that, while consulting a site plan of Constance, he discovered that Edouard Perrin owned several plots of land at Constance. René Perrin gave a '*procuration*' to Gérard Bernard to gather all necessary information about these lands. During his searches, according to Land surveyor Foiret, the lands had never been sold. Gérard Bernard has since retraced several plots of land.

On 4<sup>th</sup> February 1985, Bernard wrote a letter to Eddy Labat, the former Administrator of Constance & La Gaieté Sugar Estate. He was answered by Labat in a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 1985, that the sugar estate could not retrace this transaction. He suggested to Bernard to do all necessary searches and to come back to him once he had all relevant documents to study their authenticity.

On 7<sup>th</sup> February 2005, Serge Guimbeau, the applicant's father, gave another '*procuration*' to Gérard Bernard to retrace back all these lands. When Bernard met Labat with all the Documents, he was told that the lands would be returned back and the family refunded. Bernard was asked to meet Land surveyor D'Hotman. At the said meeting, Bernard was told by D'Hotman that these lands belong to one Valet and that, according to him, there was no way Valet would give back the land. Bernard tried his luck and, indeed, met Valet. The latter told him that he is no more the owner of Constance.

The preliminary searches undertaken by the Commission establishes the fact that there was no substantial property left to be claimed by the heirs of the said Louis Edouard Perrin (*fils*). Most of the properties purchased by Louis Edouard Perrin (*Père*), as well as by Louis Edouard Perrin (*Fils*), at some point had been sold. There may be small "*solde*" of land here and there but this can be confirmed only by further searches coupled with a land survey. However, the major plot of land that the Surveyor Foiret refers to in his letter does appear in the "*Case hypothécaire*" of Louis Edouard Perrin. The letter of Robert Foiret on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1985 mentions the ownership of the said portion of 78 *Arpents* purchased and transcribed in TV 12 Volume 183 as being owned by Louis Edouard Perrin.

In-depth searches also reveal that Elizabeth Perrin, the sister of Edouard Perrin, contracted a civil marriage with one Pringault. Since she was a minor, Edouard Perrin was his legal guardian. After the death of Pringault, Elizabeth Perrin married for the second time to one Odillard and a son named Emile Odillard was born from this marriage. In 1828, Emile Odillard bought a plot of land 312 *Arpents* and divided it into two equal two parts of 156 *Arpents* at Rivière-du-Rempart. In the "*Case hypothécaire*" of Emile Odillard, the land is registered in his name and no entry has been made therein to suggest that a transaction has been effected subsequently.

Joseph Arnaud Gary Guimbeau claims that Louis Edouard Perrin was his great-grandfather.

The Commission has observed that Joseph Arnaud Gary Guimbeau was born at Sainte-Clothilde, Ile de la Réunion, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1979. His father's name is Serge Guimbeau. It is not known how J.A. Gary Guimbeau is related to Louis Edouard Perrin, albeit the drawing up of a family tree by him in file.

Searches also reveal the following:

- 80 perches were sold to Caroopanen on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1904 as per TV 258 No. 189
- 2 *Arpents* 58 perches to J. Magha on the same date as per TV 25 No. 95, 64 *Arpents* 64 perches as per TV 28 No. 88 and 84 *Arpents* as per TV 46 No. 298.

In view of the family ramifications and its various documents submitted, the Commission is of the opinion that the claimant should carry out further investigation as same has not been done, by entrusting the work to a Land Surveyor for an appropriate Report.

However, it has also been found that actually Louis Edouard Perrin (*Le Père*) had a quite long list of charges that had been lodged against his various properties.

### **CASE NAME: GOPAUL**

TJC/ LI /0168/ GOPAUL POOSPAWTEE

Poospawtee Gopaul, the applicant claims that her husband, Mohunlal Gopaul, to whom she is married "*en communauté de biens*", has left her and their children in 1997 to live elsewhere. On 12<sup>th</sup> August 1970, he had bought a plot of land of 2 *Arpents* 50 perches at Tombeau in Pamplémousses District. In 1993 M. Gopaul made an application for a development permit for residential purposes at the Pamplémousses/ Rivière-du-Rempart District Council but he never went to fetch his permit. The applicant fears that his husband has already sold or is trying to sell this

land. On several occasions he has accompanied people unknown to applicant to visit the land. Once Mohunlal Gopaul, accompanied by a man, measured the land.

The applicant furthermore maintains that after the death of his parents, Mohunlal Gopaul inherited a plot of land of 4¾ perches where his son was living. He received a building permit for constructing a house there. But, without informing his family, he sold the land. Later, applicant's son received a notice of eviction from the Court. It was then and only that applicant learnt that the land had been sold.

She made a request to the Commission to find a way of preventing her husband from selling the land at Tombeau in Pamplemousses as her children and she have nowhere else to go.

The Commission showed much concern in this case as the interest of a family and, most importantly, the children might be at stake.

Mohunlal Gopaul married "*en communauté de biens*" Beefnah Poospawtee on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1968.

On 28<sup>th</sup> May 1973, he bought a plot of the extent of 2 *Arpents* 50p at Tombeau in Pamplemousses District as per TV 1215 No. 9 and he obtained in a "*Division in kind*" *ex parte* a portion of land of the extent of 4 ¾ perches (heirs Gopaul) as per TV 1690 No. 176, which he sold to Purmessur Prayagsingh on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2000 as per TV 4438 No. 4.

Searches have revealed that the 2 *Arpents* 50 plot of land purchased in 1973 (TV 1215/9) has not been sold. This property forms part of the "*communauté de biens*" and therefore cannot be disposed of by Mr. M. Gopaul without the consent of his legitimate wife.

As regards the land obtained through succession, the Commission has been advised that this is considered as a "*bien propre*" and as such, M. Gopaul was entitled to sell the land.

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**CASE NAME: RAGOONUNDUN**

*TJC/L/0169/RAGOONUNDUN SABITA*

Sabita Ragoonundun, the applicant is granddaughter of Mohabeer Ragoonundun, who owned approximately 3 *Arpents* in Calodyne and other plots in Grand Gaube and Melville. For 20 years, the family, i.e. the heirs of Ragoonundun, has been discussing for the sharing of the land but applicant affirms that she has no information as all initiatives have been made by her uncle Koomar Ragoonundun.

She requests the Commission to find a solution for the proper sharing of the land.

Searches carried out by the Commission at the Registrar General's Office reveals that the name of Ragoonundun Mohabeer does not appear in the index of owners. However searches have been carried out also in the name of Ragoonundun Mohabeersing, but to no avail.

Contacted several times to be apprised of the situation, Sabita Ragoonundun promised that she would come to the Commission "*soon*" but the lady never turned up.

In view of the fact that searches have revealed that the name Ragoonundun Mohabeer is not registered as a landowner at the Office of the Conservator of Mortgages, and the lady has not shown further interest to pursue her claim, the Commission is unable to investigate further as no dispossession has been disclosed.

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**CASE NAME: MADELEINE**

TJC/L/0170/MADELEINE LOUIS CLENCY

Louis Clency Madeleine, the applicant, presented two cases to the Commission, asking to retrieve his lands, which he did not know much about.

**Case 1**

The applicant claims that he is the only surviving heir of Louise Estasie Magdeleine *dite* Perrin who owned a plot of land of 30 *Arpents* at Trou d'Eau Douce, Flacq. He did not know about the existence of this land. The heirs of Edouard Magdeleine, thinking that they were the only heirs of Louise Estasie Magdeleine, have tried to sell the land to one Madhoo. They had to swear in an affidavit rectifying the terms of the contract.

One day, he recalls, Jude Seblin told him that his great-grandparents owned a plot of land which is now occupied by a certain one Oozeerally. The applicant trusted Seblin and gave him Rs. 10,000 to clear the land, believing that the said plot of land belonged to his great grandparents. Seblin, not only brought bulldozers to clear the land, but also removed the fences that had been erected by Oozeerally. Seblin paid for the work. However, it was later found that the land really belonged to Oozeerally. The latter sued the applicant for having destroyed the fences.

Later, the applicant paid Land surveyor Dwarka to locate the 30 *Arpents* of his great grandmother which he successfully did. Surveyor Dwarka found out that part of the land is now occupied by Marie Gracia Nadal, Joseph Christian Etiennette, Jean Joany Etiennette and Ootam Kumar Sauntoo.

Louis Clency Madeleine maintains that these people are illegally occupying his land as the land is still under the name of Louise Estasie Magdeleine. He decides to bring the case to the Supreme Court and hired services of Counsel G. Bhanji Soni to get his land back.

**Case 2**

The applicant declares that Armand Madeleine has sworn in an affidavit, which according to him is false. He is trying to sell the land. A press advertisement has been released concerning the sale and the contact person is one Ivan, son of Armand Madeleine. He wants to recover his land.

The Commission looked into the case presented by the applicant and heard the facts presented by the applicant which were far from convincing.

In fact, the heirs of L. Estasie Magdeleine tried to sell the land to Madhoo, and then the applicant admitted that the land belonged to Oozeerally. Therefore, the title deed of the applicant is "*précaire*" for all intents and purposes. The claimant cannot in law have the best of both worlds, that is, claim through the Court of its intention to get back the land and come to the Commission so that the latter may go on a fishing expedition for him!

The Magdeleine had another meeting at the Commission on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2010 and handed a copy of the plaint with summons issued by his Attorney at Court against five persons in which he is praying for a Court order, to the effect that the 5 persons had to quit and vacate the land "*in lite*".

This action confirms his intention expressed above and now does not need further examination by the Commission.

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**CASE NAME: GOTEEA***TJC/ L/0171/GOTEEA SOOREEADOO*

Sooreeadoo Goteea claims that when he was young, his grandfather always told him that his father owned land at Terre Rouge. The applicant made some searches and found out that his great grandfather, who came from India as an indentured immigrant and worked as a domestic servant for a British master had purchased a plot of land of 80 perches at Terre Rouge. He unfortunately died at an early age and left behind him an illiterate wife and seven children who were under-aged. The land was taken over by the "Curatelle" which published a notice in the newspaper. Being illiterate, the family could neither read nor get access to newspapers at that time. There was no protest on account of ignorance and illiteracy. The land was sold at a very low price. The applicant wants the Commission to shed light on this matter and see in what way Justice can be applied to either recuperate the land or compensate his family adequately.

Applicant has submitted no document. He had only consulted the registers at the National Archives and had not made any copy thinking that there was no way of getting back the land.

According to our searches in TV 151 No. 8, dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1882, Sworn Land surveyor Gustave de Coriolis sold a plot of land at Pamplemousses, Le Hochet, of the extent of 86 perches undividedly to Goteea 154635, son of Mohugoo (half undivided) and to Luckeea 236147, son of Hurdoyal and to Cheekhoory 20488, son of Jeehaloo (half undivided) for the price of Rs. 200. Goteea paid Rs. 100.

Goteea 154635 passed away on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1888, Luckeea 236147 passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1888 and Cheekhoory 204881 passed away on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1896.

It appears that the plot of land was declared a vacant estate and the then Curator of Vacant Estates, Huët de Froberville, obtained possession of this land together with other lands. He sold the said plot of land on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1918 to Eugène Solesse for the price of Rs. 80 as evidenced by TV 329 No. 604.

In a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2010, R. Lutchmun, the Curator of Vacant Estates, informed the Commission that he could not trace out any record of any payment effected to the descendants of Goteea 154635 and others.

In fact, there is no record at the Office of the Curator of Vacant Estates concerning how the Curator has been vested with the property, nor is there any document to shed light as to whether the sale price has been paid.

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**CASE NAME: TRIME***TJC/L/0172/EVREMONT ANNE MARIE PAULE, EVREMONT BERTY & ORS.*

Anne Marie Paule and Berty Evrémont, the applicants, claim to be one of the heirs of Marie Trime who owned a plot of land of 4 *Arpents* situated at Edgar Hughes Street, Curepipe, near Trou-àux-Cerfs. The land was purchased by Marie Trime and his two brothers Alfred and Augustin Trime but the two brothers died single leaving no descendant. Consequently, Marie Trime inherited of the 4 *Arpents*.

In about 1987, one Basdeo Ramudhin paid a Land surveyor to undertake searches on a plot of land of about 4 *Arpents* owned by his family in the Plaines Wilhems. The surveyor misled Ramudhin and made him believe that the land he was searching for was the 4 *Arpents* located at Edgar Hughes Street Curepipe, near Trou-aux-Cerfs. The surveyor even surveyed the land without the authorization of the applicants' family. It is much later that Ramudhin discovered that he had been misled. He died shortly afterwards.

The applicants have written a letter to the widow of Ramudhin but she never responded to it.

Now that the applicants intend to sell this portion of land, they fear that the daughter of Ramudhin - who has not accepted that the land is not the heritage of the family - may bring a case in Court against them claiming the property of the land.

The applicants want the Commission to make the Ramudhin family understand that they have been misled and that this portion of land is the property of the heirs of Marie Trime. They submitted the necessary documents to prove their ownership to the land and they want the Commission to help them to prove that the land belongs to them. They are ready to go to Court if circumstances make this necessary.

She, later, did produce copies related to the case which has been entered before the Supreme Court.

The Commission did searches in order to better understand where matters stand. "*Répertoires*" 68/322 and 68/323 reveal that on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1866 in TV 96 No. 109, Prosper Pellicot and his wife sold to Marie Trime, Alfred Trime and Augustin Trime 1/3 undivided rights in a plot of land of an extent of 4 *Arpents*, excised from a bigger plot of land acquired by Pellicot on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1818. There is not any charge burdening the plot of land nor is there any evidence that it has been sold. Sworn Land surveyor Ng Tong Ng Wah, on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and Ahmad A. Khadaroo, on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010 have their survey reports confirming the site and location place of the 4 *Arpents* plot at Trou-aux-Cerfs.

However "*Répertoire*" 451 No. 741 reveals that Ramudhin acquired a plot of land of an extent of 4 *Arpents* at Trou -aux- Cerfs from one Subsungkur for the price of Rs. 600,000 as evidenced by TV 1750 No. 111 dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 1989.

The case entered at the Supreme Court is still pending.

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**CASE NAME: DHUNOO**

*TJC/ L/0173/DHUNOO ROOPWANTEE*

The applicant, Roopwantee Dhunoo, claims that the great-grandfather of her husband, Dhunoo No. 222752, who came to Mauritius as an indentured immigrant in 1858, purchased a plot of land of 2 *Arpents* at 16<sup>ème</sup> Mille in the district of Plaines- Wilhems in 1883. Dhunoo 222752 had only one son, Ramchurn Dhunoo. The latter had two sons Gunganarain and Suddeo. Gunganarain had five children and Suddeo had two children. All these families are the heirs of the plot of land at 16<sup>ème</sup> Mille.

Roopwantee Dhunoo avers that one Pawan Kumar, an heir, has prescribed the land. Later, Devi Barosi, who is not an heir, prescribed the same land. A third person, who is not an heir, one Seeduth Sookharry, also prescribed the land. No copies relating to these prescriptions have been submitted.

In October 1993, one P.K. Tokising, one of the heirs Dhunoo, No. 222752 applied for a judgement against one Sibduth Sookharry advising the said S. Sookharry to quit leave and vacate the portion of land of 2 *Arpents* 00. On the day of the hearing on 29 March 1996, the respondent (Mr. S. Sookharry) left default and judgement was given in favour of the plaintiff.

There is no indication if the judgement has been executed or the defendant has complied with the judgement.

If the applicant wants to get the share of her husband in the land, she has to petition to the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court for the division in kind of the property among all heirs entitled to a share. The Commission is of opinion that she is still a co-heir and has not been dispossessed of the shares and rights of her husband.

She has been called by the Commission to be appraised of this conclusion.

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**CASE NAME: POPLINEAU**

*TJC/ L/0174/POPLINEAU JEAN EMMANUEL GEORGES*

As it has been the policy of the Commission to receive and listen to one and each applicant who presented a case to us, it has also been our advocacy to understand how applicants have lost their house and land throughout some bad experiences. The case of Jean Emmanuel Georges Poplineau was indeed a sad one.

The applicant claims that he had a CHA house at Block H6, Talipot lane at Batterie Cassée Abercombie, Sainte Croix. He is a hawker. On 14<sup>th</sup> December 1995, he avers he approached a 'casseur' (money lender) - one Deeawoodee - and asked for a loan of Rs. 50,000. The money lender imposed an agreement on applicant whereby he would give him a sum of Rs. 35,000 in cash and the reimbursement sum would be Rs. 55,000; the Rs. 20 000 being required for paper work. Applicant had 1 year to reimburse the money. Each month, he paid a sum of money to Deeawoodee but the latter did not give him any receipt arguing that he would give him a single receipt when the final payment would be made.

Meanwhile, applicant's house was in a very a bad condition. He went to the Indian Ocean International Bank and asked for a loan of Rs. 100,000 for the renovation of his house. The loan was granted to him against a mortgage on his house as guarantee and he had five years to repay back the sum borrowed. The applicant had to pay about Rs. 2,000 per month.

He avers that he paid the loan regularly for a period of ten months but, unfortunately, fell ill and was unable to pay the loan.

One the other hand, he was deeply pressurized by the money lender who refused to give him a receipt for the payments he made. The applicant is certain that he has to pay back much more than the sum he had borrowed.

Quite desperate, he went to the *Diocèse* of Port-Louis and asked for help. He met with Mgr. Maurice Piat. The latter agreed to give him half of the sum that he owned to the bank and the rest was paid by applicant. The money, thus obtained was paid directly to the Attorney of the bank, one Dwarka.

Some weeks later, the applicant says that he was surprised to receive a letter from the bank informing him that his house would be sold through a "*Sale by levy*".

Hopeless, he could do nothing to stop this.

When the house was sold "*at the bar*", he discovered, that the same Deeawoodee- the money lender- bought his house. The Court gave Poplineau six months to leave his house. He went to the

office set up by Government to review the “*Sale by levy cases*” to ask for help but his request was rejected without any reason given to him.

The applicant cannot explain why and how the bank seized and sold his property when he avers that the amount has been paid. He does not contest the sale today and he is asking the Commission to help him to get a plot of State land.

Unfortunately, the Commission cannot be of any help to him but notes that the applicant has been dispossessed of his property as a result of debts.

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**CASE NAME: MANGALKHAN**

*TJC/ L/0175/ MANGALKHAN ABDOOL LATIFF*

In a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009, Abdool Latiff Mangalkhan informed the Truth & Justice Commission that his forefathers possessed a plot of land of 78 acres at Chemin Savanne, Grand Port. He wants the Commission to assist in locating exactly the land.

One document has been submitted and relates to a plot of land of extent of 28 ½ acres being a sale by Aboo Tauleb to Mangalkhan as per TV 82 No. 26 dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1864.

Searches of the “*Case hypothécaire*” (52 No.196), confirmed that Mangalkhan acquired a plot of land of 28 ½ *Arpents* from A. Tauleb on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1864 as per the above TV for the price of 3000 *piastres* and another plot of land of extent of 78 *Arpents* on the same date as per TV 82 No. 27 from H.V.J Allarakia for the price of “8000 *piastres*” .

However, the two plots of land are burdened with two inscriptions namely:

- At Volume 134 No. 645 an inscription of Privilege of “8000 *piastres*” in favour of H.V.J Allakaria for 78 A.
- At Volume 137 No. 131 Conventional Inscription of “6400 *piastres*” for the above 2 plots.

These inscriptions have not been erased.

It appears that the land of 28 ½ *Arpents* has been sold on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1871 to Allakaria for “2000 *piastres*”. According to the “*Répertoire*”, the land of 78 *Arpents* has not been sold but is burdened with two inscriptions of Rs. 8,000 and Rs. 6,400.

In view of the above, there is no indication that those 2 plots of land still belong to heirs Mangalkhan.

The Commission has advised the applicant to retain the services of a Land surveyor in order to locate the land.

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**CASE NAME: FELICIANE**

*TJC/ L/0176/ FELICIANE PIERRE ALAIN*

The applicant, Pierre Louis Féliciane, in a letter addressed to Truth & Justice Commission on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2009, informs that his great great grandfather, Frédéric Féliciane, possessed a portion of land of extent of 77 Acres since 1904 in Pamplémousses, According to him, the land has not been prescribed; however, some portions have been sold. The remaining 30 Acres are now occupied by some people.

1. Two Documents have been submitted in support of his claim namely:
  - A Notarial deed dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1838 registered in Register C58 No. 3282 (NA 79/23) drawn up by Notary Trébuchet;
  - “*Répertoire*” 12 No. 327 in the name of Jeanne Antoinette Moutou, wife of Frédéric Féliciane.
  - No survey plan has been submitted in regard to the plot of land described in the notarial deed or a family tree which would show the link between Pierre Alain Féliciane and Frédéric Féliciane.
  - The Notarial deed relates to a sale made by Pierre Louis Perrot and his wife Céline Darmont to Frédéric Féliciane and his wife, Jeanne Antoinette Moutou, (½ undivided) and to ailaire Mootoo (½ undivided) of a plot of land at Pamplémousses of the extent of 77 *Arpents* 25 perches for the price of “4000 *piastres*”. That plot of land is burdened with an “*inscription de privilège*” in favour of Pierre Louis Perrot (Inscription 33/191) for the sum of “4000 *piastres*” which has not been erased.
  - Furthermore, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1857, Jeanne Antoinette Moutou sold ½ undivided rights in the 76 *Arpents* 25 perches to A. Florigny in consideration of a price of “5000 *piastres*”. (TV 61 No. 185).

In the light of the above, it appears that the shares held by Frédéric Féliciane and his wife have been disposed of and, consequently, the heirs held no rights.

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**CASE NAME: RAMESSUR**

TJC/ L/0177/ RAMESSUR SOOVENDRA

The applicant, Soovendra Ramessur, writes in a letter addressed to Truth & Justice Commission on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2009 that his great grandfather had several properties. The sister of his grandmother took possession of all the properties at the death of his great grandfather. The aunt of the applicant, in turn, took possession of all the family properties at the death of her mother. She sold the rest of the land of the applicant’s ancestors, thus depriving the applicant’s mother of her share of the property. Now, the applicant wants to have his share.

A family tree has been produced wherein the Commission learnt that the great grandfather bears the name of Sookdeo Boodoo, that of his grandmother, Dharmowtee Boodoo, as well as that of the sister of his grandmother Leelawtee Dabee. His father’s name is Goordeen Boodoo.

It must be noted that Dharmowtee Boodoo had not received any share in the property of his grandfather to whom she was not civilly married.

No affidavit has ever been made after the death of grandparents. No title deeds have been produced and no survey report or other relevant documents submitted.

Searches carried out at the Conservator of Mortgages office have revealed that the names Goordeen Boodoo, Dharmowtee Boodoo and Leelawtee Dabee do not appear in the *Répertoire*. However, it appears from the “*Case hypothécaire*” Sookdeo Boodoo, that the sister of his grandmother (Leelawtee Dabee) took all the properties.

In the absence of a proper affidavit of succession of the late Sookdeo Boodoo, it is difficult for the Commission to express any opinion in this case.

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**CASE NAME: RAMBARUTH**

TJC/L/00178/ LOTUN TARAMANDUTH

In a letter addressed to Truth & Justice Commission on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Taramanduth Lotun writes that the father of his mother, one Gangaparsad Ramburuth owned a plot of land of 2 acres, and that the latter had 5 children.

The applicant's uncle took a loan of Rs. 6,000 from Rathen Baichoo, giving as guarantee that plot of land. Each time he went to repay the loan, he was told that Baichoo was not at home. As time elapsed, Baichoo finally '*seized*' the land.

The Ramburuth family wants to get back their share in the land.

The inquiry led by the Commission reveals that according to "*Répertoire*" 247/88, Gangaparsad Ramburuth born on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1894, acquired various portions of land in the Districts of Rivière-du-Rempart and Flacq, one of them being a plot of land of extent of 1 *Arpent* 20 perches at Laventure, Flacq acquired under TV 509 No. 334 dated 25<sup>th</sup> April 1947. The undivided rights in these plots of land were devolved to succession of B. Ramburuth, as confirmed by the entry in "*Répertoire*" 437/69, dated 4<sup>th</sup> June 1959 and as evidenced by the deed transcribed in TV 785 No.120. The plot of land at Laventure was subject to a seizure on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1968 as per Seizure document 100 No. 29 in favour of R. Baichoo. Subsequently, the plot of land at Laventure becomes the property of R. Baichoo as per TV 1151 No. 138 dated 9<sup>th</sup> October 1968.

The Commission notes that the land had been seized and sold by levy and purchased by the creditor on account of a loan taken by the applicant's relative which had not been paid.

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**CASE NAME: CROUCHE**

TJC/ L/0180/ CROUCHE Andrée Laval

The applicant, André Laval Crouche, in a letter addressed to the Truth & Justice Commission on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2009, writes that his ancestors owned a plot of land at Route Vaudagnes, Bambous. The family is in the process of obtaining necessary documents to prove the claim.

The Crouches made a request to the Commission to assist them in recovering the land.

After searches made by the Commission, it is revealed that:

It is a case where two people are claiming the same plot of land.

At the request of Laval Crouche, Land surveyor Chamroo drew up a Memorandum of survey on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2000 registered in L.S 41 No. 6743 as a prerequisite for the said Laval Crouche to prescribe a plot of land of extent of 995.13m<sup>2</sup>.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2006, Louis Mario, of Vaudagnes Street, Bambous objected to the transcription of the affidavit, through his Attorney N. Rama in respect of the above-mentioned plot of land on the ground that Laval Crouche has never occupied that plot of land and that Louis Mario has always resided on the land.

On the other hand, the Commission has been made aware of the transcription of a declaration of prescription made by Louis Mario and prepared by Notary J.I.P. Avrillon dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2006 in TV 6493 No. 47 in respect of the same land.

The wife of Laval Crouche brought a copy of the affidavit of prescription made by Louis Mario, wherein it is stated that "*Louis Mario has presented a portion of land of 896.77 square mètres*

*situated in the district of Black River place called Bambous, Vaudagnes Road*". It was then that the Commission was made aware that the said Louis Mario is her step-brother. Her husband had authorized Louis Mario to occupy part of the land and the latter prescribed same.

Louis Mario and Marie Thérèsia Crouche were called to depone before the Commission on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010. Both gave different versions on how they prescribed the same plot of land at Bambous at different time. Whereas Marie Thérèsia Crouche said that the said land has belonged to her family for a very long time, it is only in 2002 that she and her husband decided to prescribe the land. Louis Mario, for his part, avers that he has been living on the same land for more than 35 years, built a small house thereon, and, in turn, decided to prescribe the land in 2006.

The Commission has been informed that Marie Thérèsia Crouche has referred the matter to the appropriate Court for a decision.

As the case is before a Court to decide who the real owner of the land is, the Commission cannot express an opinion in this case.

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**CASE NAME: NEERUNJUN**

*TJC/ L/0181/NEERUNJUN KRESHNA*

Khreshna Neerunjun, the applicant, writes in a letter addressed to the Truth & Justice Commission on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009 that his land and house have been sold illegally by levy in 2005. He has lodged several complaints to several Departments but in vain. Furthermore, he has not been paid any salary from December 2004-July 2005.

The Commission wanted to know how and why Khreshna Neerunjun had to experience such a misfortune.

He was invited for a working session.

The applicant explained that he was working for the "*Keep Clean Company*" when the company for various reasons which the Director of the said company will have to explain to the Labour Office, he had not received his wages / salaries from his employer.

Neerunjun could not pay the monthly installments of his loan obtained from the Mauritius Housing Corporation. His land was seized and sold by levy.

Fortunately, his son was able to purchase the property at the Master's court.

The Neerunjun family has already lodged a complaint with the labour office concerning the non-payment of his wages/salaries and the case had been lodged in Court. This illustrates the difficulties that most small workers encounter and how they may easily lose everything: land, houses, properties.

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**CASE NAME: AUGUSTIN/EROOLEN**

TJC/ L/182 EROOLEN CYRIL ANDRE

Three cases were referred for investigation for the Eroolen family on their ancestor, Arthur Augustin. Cyril André Eroolen, the applicant, has no document concerning those lands and he wants to recover all the lands mentioned.

**Case 1**

The applicant says that after having done research with his brother on land owned by his ancestors, they discovered, through Attorney Khadaroo, that they owned a plot of land of 103 Acres, in Congomah, Les Marrianes, which originally belonged to their great-grandmother Elvina Sophie. According to him, the land was abandoned by the owners due to the epidemic of “*la peste*” [the plague] to resettle in Port- Louis. The land was left unoccupied and neglected. The applicant declares that since then there has been much construction of buildings and plantations on the plot of land. He also mentioned that Attorney Khadaroo asked them to bring someone who had information and testify with regard to that particular plot of land and its owners. Applicant and his brother deplored the fact that when they brought an old resident of that locality, they alleged, that the Attorney tried to dissuade them from pursuing their research and to put an end to their effort in trying to retrieve the land on the basis that the case was too old and too many developments had already been undertaken on the land. Applicant also mentioned that throughout his research, he has been misled by several persons whom he paid.

**Case 2**

Applicant says that the family owns land belonging to Arthur Augustin, his grandfather. Land is of the extent of one and a half acre situated at Roches Bois.

**Case 3**

Applicant declared that his family owned several plots of land at Pamplémousses and several other locations. Late Hervé Janvier had shown him a list of land that his family possessed.

Searches were carried out by the Commission on the issues presented.

**Case 1**

Searches revealed nothing in respect of that plot of land of an extent of 103 Acres at Congomah which allegedly belongs to Elvina Sophie.

**Case 2**

The Roche-Bois issue is interesting as copy of the title deed TV 138 No. 322 is appropriate. In fact, the “*Répertoire*” 107 No.288, of Arthur Augustin confirms the acquisition from Charles Brun by Marie Erasile Bazeilhac (widow of Arthur Augustin) dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1880 of a plot of land at Roche Bois of an extent of ¼ individed in 1¼ *Arpent* (that is, 5/16 *Arpent*). There has not been any “*mutation*” and as such, the land is still the property of heirs Arthur Augustin. However, the plan submitted by the applicant is not relevant to that land.

**Case3**

There is no plot of land in the name of Arthur Augustin in the “*Répertoire*” for the Pamplémousses site.

The Commission is of opinion that if there is no substance regarding the first and third case as documents and information are missing or lacking, the 2<sup>nd</sup> case- concerning the land at Roches Bois, where widow of Arthur Augustin purchased undivided rights in the portion of land as per deed transcribed in TV 138 No. 322 appears genuine. According to searches carried out at the Mortgage office, undivided rights of widow Augustin in the land have not been sold.

A meeting was held with the applicants and other heirs during which they were advised on the course to follow to retrieve their inheritance.

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**CASE NAME: BOIVIN**

TJC/ L/0183 /BOIVIN ALEX

The applicant, Alex Boivin, mentions two plots of land, admeasuring respectively 72 Acres at Centre de Flacq and 17 Acres at Palmar, Quatres-Cocos as belonging to his great grandfather, Charles Alexy Boivin, to which he is a direct heir, through his mother, Marie Julie, granddaughter of the said Charles Alexy Boivin. The applicant says that he got to know about these two plots of land through one Gaëtan Duval, who works at the National Archives, a friend of applicant's son, Jean Patrick Boivin.

Alex Boivin relates that part of the land has been sold and he has neither been informed nor given a share of the sales, while another part of the land has been occupied by Société Constance for 200 years. According to the applicant, the "*Société Constance*" refuses to open any negotiations so that he could recover the land which, he believes, forms part of the "*héritage*".

The Commission analysed some of the Documents submitted. His averment is that his grandfather, Charles Alexy Boivin, had a plot of land of extent 17 Acres at Palmar was investigated.

"*Case hypothécaire*" 19 No.180 indicates an entry that Emilien Boivin had on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1884 acquired from Alvare Michel undivided rights to a plot of land of the extent of 7 Arpents at Quatre-Cocos, as evidenced by title deed transcribed in Volume 170 No.126.

However, there is also another entry to the effect that this plot of land has been sold on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1912 "*les Droits indivis nue propriété*" to one J. E. Michel, as evidenced by TV 291 No. 322.

As regards the claim for the plot of land of extent of 72 Arpents (but in reality 62 Arpents 64) at Centre de Flacq, it appears from copy of Survey plan of land, Land surveyor Edouard Hallot dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 1858, that the said plot of land of Alexis Boivin was sub-divided among his heirs and attributed as follows:

- Portion of extent 31 Arpents 32p to Anna Perrin
- Portion of extent 5 Arpents 22p to Marie Noami Boivin
- Portion of extent 5 Arpents 22p to Michelle Aglace Boivin
- **Portion of extent 5 Arpents 22p to Charles Alexis Boivin**
- Portion of extent 5 Arpents 22p to Indérille Elonida Boivin
- Portion of extent 5 Arpents 22p to Jean Nemours Boivin
- A first portion of extent 4 Arpents 65p to Augustine Anais Boivin
- A second portion of extent 57 p to Augustine Anais Boivin,

thus, making an aggregate extent of 62 Arpents 64 perches.

The applicant avers that he is related through his mother, Marie Julie Boivin, granddaughter of Charles Alexis Boivin. In fact, Charles Alexis Boivin has obtained 5 Arpents 22 out of the 62 Arpents 64 perches at Centre de Flacq. Subsequently, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1941, he sold his undivided rights to one J. Rosse as evidenced by title deed TV 465 No. 270 and TV 465 No. 273.

In the light of the above, it is felt that there is no plot of land still in the name of heirs Charles Alexis Boivin, at Quatre-Cocos.

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**CASE NAME: NOHUR**

TJC/0184/NOHUR MOHAMED YASHIN

Yashin Mohamed Nohur, the applicant says that his great-great-grandfather Nohur 85469 bis, married Sofina 324430. Nohur and Sofina had 3 sons and 7 daughters. One of them was Ismael Nohur who was applicant's great-grandfather. Ismael Nohur had a son named Mamode Aniff (applicant's grand-father). In 1923, Ismael Nohur bought a plot of land of 25 Acres at Goodlands, Rivière-du-Rempart and then he sold 10 perches to his son Mamode.

Mamode Aniff Nohur left the 10 perches to all his heirs through an “*affidavit de succession*”. Ayoob Nohur, the son of Mamode inherited 6 perches and his daughter, Rubeda Nohur, inherited 4 perches. The applicant is actually occupying the 6 perches of land without any problem.

Mohamed-Khaleed Nohur, is the grand-child of Mamode Aniff Nohur's brother. He is actually occupying the 4 perches of Rubeda Nohur which is mentioned in the will but not in the “*affidavit de succession*”.

His request to the Commission is to:

- (i) investigate about the real heir of the plot of land of 4 perches;
- (ii) how the land of his aunt Rubeda Nohur is actually occupied by his cousin Mohamed Khaleed Nohur even if his name is not mentioned in the will of Mamode Aniff Nohur; and
- (iii) why the name of Rubeda Nohur is not mentioned in the affidavit.

He also asks the Commission to retrace his exact family tree from the marriage of Nohur 85469 bis and Sofina 324430. The applicant declares that he had recourse to several Lawyers, Notaries, Attorneys, but, in vain. He relies on assistance from the Commission to establish the truth.

After searches, the Commission establishes the facts of the case are as follows:

In terms of a deed drawn up before Notary B. Seesurrun transcribed in Volume 367 No. 237 dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 1924, Mamode Aniff Nohur bought a plot of land of an extent of 10 perches at Goodlands from Ismael Nohur.

In terms of another deed drawn up before Notary Redmond Hart de Keating transcribed in Volume 1123 No. 35 dated 13<sup>th</sup> March 1970, Mamode Aniff Nohur sold to his son Ayoob Nohur the bare ownership of 6 perches (out of 10 perches), while he retained the usufructuary rights in the portion of land in his favour and that of his wife.

Mamode Aniff Nohur passed away on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1971.

Ayoob Nohur passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> April 92 and left as heirs, six children and his surviving spouse.

In 1997, Z.A.K. Beegun surveyed the 10 perches (now in two lots) and found the area sold to Ayoob Nohur to be 253.25m<sup>2</sup> and the remaining area 191.25m<sup>2</sup>.

The contention of Mohamed Yashin Nohur, grandchild of Mamode Aniff Nohur, is that one Mohamed khaleed Nohur is actually occupying the land of extent of 4 perches which he avers belongs to his aunt Bibi Rubeda Nohur. Mohamed Khaleed Nohur's name, the occupier, does not appear as a heir in the will of the late Mamode Aniff Nohur.

The applicant had a meeting at the Commission on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2010. He was informed that the above will was subsequently declared “*nulpare*”, simply by another will registered in Register B116 No. 1407 by Aniff Nohur whereby he left to Ayoob Nohur the bare ownership of the 6 perches and to Rubeda Nohur the bare ownership of the 4 perches.

The searches also revealed that according to a deed drawn up by and before Notary Joseph Marcel Joson, transcribed in Volume 7553 No. 8 dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Rubeda Nohur has sold the land of extent of 4 perches (now 191 m<sup>2</sup>) to Mohamed Khaleed Nohur for the sum of Rs. 300,000.

In the light of the above, there is no case of dispossession before the Commission and Mr. Mohamed Yashin Nohur was informed accordingly.

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**CASE NAME: APPADOO**

*TJC/ L/0185 VALLIAMAH VIRASAMY*

The applicant, Virasamy Valliamah, avers that a plot of land at Chamouny, belonging to his late father-in-law, Appadoo Virasamy, has not been equitably shared among the heirs and compensation has not been given to those who were allocated a lesser share of land. He filed a case in the Supreme Court ten years ago, but stopped the legal procedure because of increasing costs associated. He wants to have an equitable share.

The applicant has not submitted any document in support of his averment. No copy of Court case has also been submitted.

He has been called to submit necessary documents to show how he is related to Appadoo and to hand over the relevant document concerning the Court case.

In the absence of the documents asked for, the Commission is unable to advise the applicant.

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**CASE NAME: CASTOR**

*TJC/L/0186/SAVRY MARIE RHIMANTE born ANTOINETTE*

The applicant, Marie Rhimante Savry, avers that there are legal irregularities concerning a plot of land of an extent of 22 *Acre*s 85 perches located at Petite Pointe-aux-Piments, Pamplemousses District, which originally belonged to François Gustave Castor, her great-grandfather. In fact, the applicant declares that she is an heir, among many others, of the said plot of land through her grandmother Germaine Gustavie, the granddaughter of François Gustave Castor. Marie Rhimante Savry avers that there are people like late Soomundur & Heirs as well as one Bundhoo, who are using part of the land for plantation purposes and are now claiming ownership of the land.

In 2001, the applicant, with other heirs, entered legal action against the Mauritius Irrigation Authority to prevent them from using the land. The case was mentioned in a local newspaper. The applicant notes that the land is not abandoned, as some heirs of that plot of land have already built their houses on it and her cousins used it for cattle-rearing purposes.

She requests the Commission to intervene and regularize the legal situation of that plot of land so that all the heirs might obtain their fair share.

Marie Rhimante Savry deposed before the Commission and explained how over the years the land has passed on to a number of heirs and successors. In so far as the applicant is concerned, it appears that the share bequeathed to her was originally of 2 *Arpents* and not 22 *Arpents*.

A report by Land surveyor R.A. Jeewa, in the context of a case at the Supreme Court (SCR No. 59941) mentions that the limits of the property have been modified. For years, she has been trying to regain her lost property and has spent quite a considerable amount of funds towards that end, but in vain.

Solicitor Ramano, who has been looking after her case and who promised to attend the hearing session, failed to attend for unknown reason.

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**CASE NAME: L'INDIFFERENTE/THOMAS**

TJC/ L/O187/RUSSIE JOSEPH CARL

Jean Carl Russie claims that his great-grandmother, Gilda L'Indifférente, married one Thomas who was the owner of two plots of land of 1 *Arpent* 27p and 1 *Arpent* 20p approximately situated at Grand Gaube. The applicant occupies part of the second plot of land, that is, the 1 *Arpent* 20 p. The first plot of land, that is, the 1 *Arpent* 27 p is occupied by two families. He made a deposition to the Line Barracks Police Station but nothing has been done and these families are still illegally occupying the land. He has many problems with them.

Three heirs to these lands: Monique Lacharmante, Yolande Thomas and Stellina Laichoo have made a "*bordereau d'achat*" (purchase note) on the 1 *Arpent* 20 perches with one Ramano who has paid them a sum of about Rs. 1,100 – Rs .1,500. Meanwhile Russie's uncle has made a prescription on the 1 *Arpent* 20p occupied by him. In 1975, the applicant's father went to Court and was able to cancel the prescription. The Court sent Land surveyor Sunassee to survey the land. Since the applicant's father did not pay Surveyor Sunassee, the latter did not register his report at the Registrar Office.

As Ramano is now deceased, the applicant contacted his daughter who is an Attorney-at-Law. She told him that she has nothing to do with the agreement that her father made with the three heirs. She told Mr. Russie that her father was a "*prête-nom*" for Surveyor Sunassee who was the brother-in-law of her father. It is Sunassee who wanted to purchase the land. She also declared that the applicant could do whatever he wanted with this land and that she would not interfere. Jean Carl Russie wants the Commission to help him prove that he is a legal heir to both lands and to get his share of the land. He submitted no document, saying that that he would bring all his documents when he would depone.

After searches undertaken by the Commission, the facts of the case are as follows:

In terms a deed dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 1890 and transcribed in Volumes 193 No. 382 and 218 No. 3, late Marie Ezilda L'Indifférent (wife of Clément Thomas) purchased two plots of land at Grand Gaube each of extent of 1 *Arpent*. No affidavit establishing the names of the heirs to that succession was drawn up at the death of Marie Ezilda L'Indifférent and that of her husband.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1958, Late Joseph Russie, apparently one of the heirs of Ezilda L'Indifférent, caused an affidavit of prescription to be sworn alleging that he has been occupying with all the requirements of prescription, a portion of land of the extent of 1 *Arpent* (being one of the 2 plots here referred. The affidavit of prescription is transcribed in Volume 762 No. 82. One of the heirs of Ezilda L'Indifférent, namely Elibert Russie, entered a case against the heirs of late Joseph Russie, before the Intermediate Court (CN 149/73) and obtained judgment against them namely: the affidavit is declared null and void and the land belongs to the legal community of goods and property which has existed between late Marie Ezilda L'Indifférent and late Clément Thomas and consequently it now belongs to the succession. There is in file a *dépôt* being an "*acte sous signatures privées*" registered in TV 2652 No. 8, dated 21<sup>st</sup> November 1975 purporting to be a sale of undivided rights amounting to 3/5 of the above properties made by the 5 heirs of E. L'Indifférent to Lutchmaya Ramano. It seems that only a part payment of Rs. 3,300 out of Rs. 15,000 was effected by Lutchmaya Ramano and that the "*solde*" was to be paid to Samy Sunassee on the day of the signature of an authentic deed.

In the meantime, Samy Sunassee as well as Lutchmaya Ramano, his brother-in-law, passed away.

Now the heirs who entered the deal are at a loss.

The Commission still notes that, as at today, no affidavit of succession has been made at the death of Ezilda L'Indifférent and the rightful heirs still hold undivided rights in the succession

The Commission is of opinion that the heirs may now proceed with the division in kind of the land and have been so advised.

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**CASE NAME: GEFREY or (GEOFFREY) WILFRID**

TJC/ L/0188 FRANCHIN MARGARET (born PAUL)

The applicant, Margaret Franchin says that her grandfather, Wilfred Geffrey, owned a plot of land of 1 *Arpent* at Saint-Martin, Baie du Cap. Wilfrid Geffrey borrowed money from one Cader Hossenbaccus and therefore sold the said 1 *Arpent* in a '*vente à réméré*'. The applicant says that Cader Hossenbaccus had by then sold the land to one Makia Luchmun and Wilfrid Geffrey did not do anything to get his land back. The land has been sold to 5 different persons since then. The family wants to know whether they still have rights to the property and eventually get it back.

Searches carried out at the Mortgage office confirmed that indeed Wilfrid Geoffrey owned 1 *Arpent* at St. Martin Baie du Cap. Same was sold to one Cader Hossenbaccus a "*vente à réméré*" in terms of the deed transcribed in Vol 705 No. 168 dated 5<sup>th</sup> January 1957.

According to the deed, "*droit de réméré de vendeur le Réserve expressément jusqu'au 4 janvier 1958, la faculté de réméré se fera par le vendeur en remboursant à l'acquéreur le prix principal de la présente vente et les frais et autres coûts du présent contrat à défaut par le vendeur d'avoir affecté à rembourser dans le délai et de la manière ci-dessus stipulée, il sera déclaré de plein droit et la dite faculté de réméré et l'acquéreur restera propriétaire comme totale du dit lieu sans qu'il soit besoin a cet égard d'aucun acte de procédure quelconque.*"

According to TV 739 No. 60 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1958, Cader Hossenbaccus sold to Makeea Lucheemun, a plot of land at St. Martin. There is an observation in the deed to the effect that "*qu'aux termes du contrat d'acquisition sus relate Mons. Wilfrid Geoffray s'était jusqu'au 04/01/58 la faculté de réméré sur le dit terrain (bien) et que ce réméré n'ayant jamais été exercé par le dit Sieur Geoffray, Mons. Cader Hossenbaccus est resté propriétaire incommittable du dit bien*".

In the light of the above, the Commission is of opinion that Wilfrid Geoffrey having not exercised his right to re-acquire the land within the set period, Cader Hossenbacus was in his right to sell same. Consequently, the heirs have got no rights to the land now.

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**CASE NAME: ESPIEGLE**

TJC/ L/0189/ESPIEGLE Louis Philippe

Louis Philippe Espiègle, the applicant, says that his grandparents owned four acres of land at La Croisée, Glen Park, Vacoas, where he is presently living. There are many other people occupying the land. He says that one Antoine Teddy Ghoorana, a heir, prescribed part of the land and sold it to K. Gopaul. The applicant says that he is/was aware that Antoine Teddy Gourana prescribed the land but he was unaware when the land was sold. He further adds that the land is, however, still unoccupied and he wants to recover the land.

Searches undertaken by the Commission reveal the following:

- According to a deed of sale transcribed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1875 in TV 118 No. 7, Delphine Battoire sold to Victor Espiègle  $\frac{1}{4}$  undivided right of a portion of land of extent 4 *Arpents* at Croisée Glen Park.
- According to another deed of sale dated the same day transcribed in 117 No. 364, Delphine Battoire sold to Ernest Maccabée  $\frac{1}{2}$  undivided right in the above- mentioned portion of land.

- According to an Affidavit of Prescription dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1987 and transcribed in TV 1895 No. 86, Marthe Anodin (widow of Louis Gabrielle L’Aiguille) caused 2 portions of land at Camp Créole, Glen Park to be prescribed. The first of an extent of 1474.6m<sup>2</sup> and the second of extent of 1033.1 m<sup>2</sup>.

The above plot of 4 acres has been the subject-matter of many Court cases namely: M.D. Tickfine - versus W. Martha Christoharry and others.

The case of M.D Tickfine and others versus W.M. Christoharry has been resolved in the Supreme Court with S.L.S Max Derblay being appointed as Arbitrator.

As regards Antoine Teddy Goorana, the only plot of land having belonged to him is “*droits indivis*” in an extent of 18.5 perches which he sold to Carcasse and others at Vacoas, as evidenced by TV 1663 No. 55 dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 1989.

*The above report refers also to connected case no TJC/L/155 dated 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011. In reference to TJC/L/0155/Gouranna Jacques Laval/ Gouranna Rosemay*

The Commission notes that:

- The applicants declare that Delphine Battoire had given to Victor Espiègle the following:
  - Plots of land of a total extent of 210 *Arpents* at Glen Park, Camp Roches and Hollywood.
  - Plots of land on which stand Saint Paul church, C.W.A offered Glen Park Government School.
- It is not known how Jacques Laval Gourana is related to Victor Espiègle as no family tree has been produced nor any affidavit, drawn after the death of the ancestors, submitted.
- Searches carried out at the Register General’s Office revealed that Victor Espiègle had acquired on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1875 as indicated by TV 118 No. 7, one quarter of undivided rights in a plot of land of extent of 4 *Arpents* from Delphine Battoire.
- “*Répertoire*” 65 No. 325 indicates that this plot of land ¼ undivided rights in the 4A as purchased by Victor Espiègle has not been sold.

In conclusion, according to deed transcribed in TV 118 No. 7 and confirmed by searches carried out at the Mortgage Office, it appears that Victor Espiègle purchased ¼ undivided rights in ownership in a portion of land of 4 *Arpents* at Plaines Wilhems; the other co-owners are Jean Félix Sinapa and Jeanne Battoire. The land of 4 *Arpents* has not been sold and or disposed of.

The applicants have been advised to establish themselves by way of an affidavit of succession that they are the heirs and successors of Victor Espiègle. The heirs should then proceed with the division of land.

As regards the second case, the portion of land is not mentioned in the “*Case hypothécaire*” of Victor Espiègle.

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**CASE NAME: DALMOND**

*TJC/L/191/ DALMOND DEWANAND*

**Case 1**

The applicant, Dewanand Dalmond, says that in 2002, a loan of Rs. 2 million was approved for him by Delphis Bank. After two months, the bank shut down its business. On its last day of operation, a Friday, the bank issued a cheque and gave it to applicant’s Attorney, Me Avrillon. The applicant states that he did not receive this sum of money. When Dewanand Dalmond contacted the bank, the officers replied that nothing can be done. After two months, the bank re-opened as First City

Bank. The applicant saw in his statement of accounts that the Rs. 2 million was indeed credited in his account and a further Rs. 110,000, which represented the interest on loan, was debited.

Dewanand Dalmond, for his part, says that he never received this sum of Rs. 2 million. He went to the bank to protest and he was made to understand that the bank will return the amount of interest but this was never done.

He made a request to the Commission to help him recover his money.

**Case 2**

On the other item of land recovery, the applicant says that his grandfather, Jugdarry Dalmond, purchased 2 portions of land from Médine Sugar Estate. The two portions of land are respectively 2.2 Acres of land at Bassin Road, Quatre-Bornes and 2.2 Acres at Palma, Quatre-Bornes. The applicant does not remember the year of purchase. The father of Jugdarry Dalmond had nine heirs including the latter. However, the Civil Status Office does not recognize Jugdarry Dalmond. The latter died at the age of nineteen and the remaining eight heirs sold the land. Applicant says that the land belonged to the heirs of Jugdarry Dalmond and an injustice had been committed on them. They did not receive anything but they were aware when the land was being sold. The father of the applicant, Bennymadoo Dalmond, was sick and admitted to hospital for one month and he could not do anything. The applicant was asking himself how the authorities could have allowed this sale, without taking care of the heirs of Jugdarry Dalmond.

Dewanand Dalmond requests the Commission to prove that the land which the family is claiming belongs to Jugdarry Dalmond.

He further adds on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010, whilst discussing his case at the Commission that when his grandfather purchased the land from Médine Sugar Estate, he was given a receipt. He asks also that the Commission looks for that receipt at the Mauritius Archives.

After searches and analysis of this case, the Commission concludes that Dewanand Dalmond’s claim that his grandfather, Jugdarry Dalmond purchased 2 portions of land of 2.2 Acres each at Bassin Road, Palma, Quatre-Bornes does not stand as the very name of Jugdarry Dalmond does not appear in the Repertory at the Registrar General’s Office.

However, there are 2 plots of land at Palma, La Louise having belonged to Dalmond Passenger as per TV 783 No. 29 dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1958 and TV 353 No. 574 dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 1922. These have been sold out as evidenced by TV 795 No. 184 and TV 795 No. 144 dated same as at 25<sup>th</sup> September 1959.

In the light of the above, there is no plot of land still in the name of Dalmond (“Répertoire” 268 No. 807 and “Répertoire” 181 No. 147), as the two portions of land belonging to applicant’s grandfather - not his father - have already been sold.

Dewanand Dalmond has been informed accordingly.

As regards **Case 1** related to the Delphis Bank, it appears that a loan of Rs. 2 million had been approved and a cheque was sent to his Notary. Unfortunately, the bank was put in Receivership and later taken over by First City Bank.

So, Me. Avrillon, Notary public, returned the cheque and a new loan was granted to him by First City Bank.

The request of Dewanand Dalmond for the recovery of the interest from the Bank on the first loan does not fall within the ambit of the Commission.

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**CASE NAME: JOORAMUN**

TJC/L/0192 AJOODHEA DHARAMDEO

The applicant, Ajoodhea Dharamdeo, claims that his ancestor, Tooramun Luchmun, has a plot of land of an approximate extent of 4 - 5 *Arpents* in the region of Congomah. The land was used for agricultural purposes and his grandparents and other relatives were cremated thereon.

He claims that at the death of his maternal uncle in 1997, one Soobrun Tangaree occupied the land illegally. His request that the Commission recover back the plot of land and distribute it among the rightful owners.

Searches undertaken by the Commission reveals that Tooramun Luchmun married to Polestree Jankeepersad acquired in 1946, as per "*Répertoire*" 349 No. 267, 3 plots of land (i) at Calebasses of an extent of 1 *Arpent*, (ii) the family, then purchased ½ *Arpent* and 50 perches as evidenced by TV 499 No. 407 and, (iii) in 1975, acquired another 3 *Arpents* at Calebasses as evidence by TV 1275 No. 77.

However, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1992, Luchmun Tooramun sold the above-mentioned plots of land at Calebasses to C.Luchmun for the price of Rs. 100,000 as per TV 2356 No. 76.

The Commission is of the opinion that the claim of ownership of 4/5 *Arpents* does not arise as same has already been sold as per TV 2356 No. 60.

It is worth mentioning that a '*mise en demeure*' as evidenced by TV 466 No. 787 on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1998, was served by Attorney at Law O.N. Abbasakoor at the request of heirs Luchmun Tooramun on Soobrun Tangaree regarding the illegal occupation by the latter on a plot of land at Calebasses.

The heirs of Tooramun Luchmun has not gone to Court on that issue as the said Tooramun Luchmun has acquired undivided rights "*s'élevant à une mobilité en toute propriété et une huitième en usufruit dans un tiers indivis qu'il avait acquis....*" being all that remains (after several distractions) from a portion of land of 14 *Arpents* 14 perches at Plaines Calebasses.

So, concerning the land mentioned in the '*Notes mise en demeure*' same cannot be considered as the ancestors of applicant had '*only ½ TP, plus 1/8 "usufruit" in 1/3 undivided rights....*'

As regards the occupation by one S. Taugaree, the Commission is of opinion that it is worth mentioning.

It appears that the land is still in a state of undivision.

The applicant has been advised to proceed by way of division in kind ("*partage*") of the land among all the parties who have a share in the land.

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**CASE NAME: HOYBUN**

TJC/ L/193/HOYBUN BIBI FAWZIA (born BABOO)

The applicant, Bibi Fawsia Hoybun, says that her grandparents possessed a land of one acre at Grand River North-West. The land was equally divided between two heirs; the father and aunt of the applicant. She avers that she is now the only heir of the ½ acre of land.

She says that a family Goinden is living on part of the land since the 1980s. She made several complaints at the police station. She paid an Attorney the sum of Rs. 3,000 to put a case in Court, but he did nothing. According to her, the Attorney even insulted her and her husband.

The applicant even went to the Municipality of Port Louis, as the Municipal Council had a road built over their land without prior permission from the Hoybun family. This protest was not considered.

Several letters were written to ICAC, Municipality of Port Louis, *Cadastre* and other authorities concerned, but, to no avail. She adds that the Goinden family has obtained a Development Permit from the Municipality Council of Port- Louis to build their house.

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010, the applicant went to the police station for assistance. Two policemen Nuttoo and Nasurally, from the Central CID visited the land. She has not been made aware of the outcome of the police enquiry.

Finally, fed up with such uncommon attitude from all quarters, the Hoybun family decided to put up a case in the Supreme Court, asking to declare the prescription made by R. Goinden & Ors to be null and void. No document in support of this submission has been produced. It is understood that the applicant has retained the services of an Attorney for that purpose.

In view of the Court case, the Commission has not examined this case further.

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**CASE NAME : ADYCALUM**

*TJC/ LI/ 194/314/ MAGON MARIE ANNE*

Marie Anne Magon claims that her grandmother, Adycalum No. 337790 had a plot of land of an extent of 42 perches at Quatre-Bornes and that the grandmother’s grandchild, one, George Thomassoo, lived on that land. It appears that George sold that land to people living in the surroundings. Another case has been referred to the Commission. It relates to applicant’s grandfather, Anthony Thomassoo, who owned a plot of land “*somewhere*” of the extent of 19 perches. This case is being supervised by Solicitor, Jean-Christophe Bellepeau. They would like the Commission to investigate about the plot of land.

Searches undertaken by the Commission at the Registrar General’s Office have revealed the following:

In virtue of a Notarial deed drawn up by Notary, Paul Baissac dated 15<sup>th</sup> October 1913 and registered in CL 57 No. 1587, the Mauritius Estates and Assets Company Limited sold to l’Indienne Adycalum No. 337790, wife of Thomadoo No. 337789 a plot of land at La Louise of the extent of 92 perches and bounded by the survey report of S.L.S Parsons dated 7<sup>th</sup> October 1913 registered in Register in L.S11 No. 860.

It appears that as per TV 3229 No. 7, one Goindasamy Runghen did cause an affidavit to be solemnly affirmed to the effect that he had allegedly been in possession of and occupying with all the requisites of prescription an extent of 1769.85 m<sup>2</sup> at La Louise according to a Memorandum survey drawn up by Land surveyor, S. Beehuspoteea, on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1997 and Registered in cs 33 No. 4597 on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1998 transcribed afterwards in Volume 3967 No. 2. R Goindasamy Runghen sold an extent of 1218.55 m<sup>2</sup> excised from the prescribed portion of land of extent of 1769.85 m<sup>2</sup> to Oomarduth Luchhun for and in consideration of a price of Rs. 578,000.

Thereafter Goindasmy Runghun sold the ‘*solde*’, that is, 464.30 m<sup>2</sup> to Marday Runghen on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1998 in terms of a deed transcribed in Vol 3967/103.

The applicant deponed before the Commission and was advised to initiate Court proceedings to recover the land prescribed. One Rajendri Veerapen later called at the office and informed the Commission that the Thomassoo family had retained the services of Land surveyor, K. Koheratee, to survey the land with a view to initiating a Court action. It is not known whether any progress has been made so far and whether legal views have been sought by the applicant.

**CASE NAME: ELISE***TJC/ L/196 ELISE MARIE MARCELINE (BORN BERNARDIN)*

The applicant, Marie Marceline Elise, says that she leased a plot of State land, obtained through the Central Housing Authority (CHA) located at No. 10 Chebel Housing Estate. She mentions that with much effort and sacrifice she got the permission to build a tobacco shop ("*tabagie*") annexed to her house on that plot of land. However, the poor condition of the building prompted her to take a loan of Rs. 225, 000 from The Mauritius Housing Corporation (MHC) for renovation purposes. As the previous loan was not enough to complete the works, she applied for an additional loan of Rs. 50, 000 at the MHC. The loan was refused and MHC gave as reason that applicant did not have the relevant document from CHA.

Marie Marceline Elise was requested by CHA to modify the lease and apply for the purchase of the land on which her house is found. She engaged in the required procedures but a police officer, one Thomas, residing in the locality interfered in the process. According to applicant, Thomas, she alleges, in connivance with an officer of the CHA, one Runghen, prevented her from obtaining the relevant Documents to get her loan approved. As a result of this, applicant had to face several difficulties ranging from inability to pay debts, additional rental claimed by CHA and the eventuality of her house being seized by MHC for non-repayment of loan.

Pertaining to the above mentioned difficulties, applicant has lodged a complaint to the Public Complaints Bureau in 1999 and to the Ombudsman's Office in 2008. Ombudsman's Office has perused her case with the relevant Ministry and cleared misunderstandings concerning arrears.

The applicant's request has been look into by the Commission. Her initial loan with the MHC has been written off. The applicant furthermore wants the Commission to investigate whether the said Runghen had the right to interfere and prevent applicant from having loan adjustment.

After investigation of this case at the Ministry of Housing and lands, the following came to light:

The complainant is owner of the CHA House standing on a portion of land at Cité Chebel leased as a residential site.

Apart from the house, she applied and obtained permission to have a General Retailer's shop on the land. Hence the rent was increased by Rs. 300.

While the question of arrears has been settled, the issue of ownership of the land is still arising. She may purchase the land as offered by Government, but in the first instance she has to settle the current rent.

Although the request of the applicant does not fall within the mandate of the Commission, it should be noted that after intervention, the issue of the payment of rent has been settled at a meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The purchase by her of the land on which stands her house and shop from Government will solve all her problems.

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**CASE NAME: JADDOO**

*TJC/ L/0197/JADDOO MAHMAD FAWSI*

Mahmad Fawsi Jaddoo, the applicant, says that his grandfather owned a plot of land of 16 Acres at Petit Verger. When he died, the Spéville family prescribed the land and sold it. The applicant came to know this when the inhabitants of Moka told him that his grandfather had given 12½ perches to build a mosque. The Jaddoo family wants to get land back.

In a second claim, the applicant adds that his grandfather also owned an estate at Belle Rive. He does not know the exact location. When his grandfather died, the Island Estate took over the land. Moreover, he says that there are many prescriptions on the land and that he does not possess any document concerning this land.

Searches carried at the Mortgage Office revealed that the name Jaffar or Juffor or Jafar or Juffar No. 124029, does not appear in the Name Index of the "*Répertoire*" at the Registrar General's Office.

However, there is still a Court case between St. Pierre Mosque and Hifzul Iman Society and the claimant regarding a plot of land of extent of 12 ½ perches (1/8 *Arpent*) at Petit Verger, Moka, which plot of land is Waqf property.

In view of the above the claimant has been informed that after searches effected, his grandfather did not own land of the extent of 16 Acres at Petit Verger.

As regards, the land of extent of 12 ½ p, it is "*Sub Judice*".

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**CASE NAME CHRISTOPHE**

*TJC/ L/198 CHRISTOPHE GEORGES KARL: MOV BIEN ETRE BATTERIE CASSE*

This is a non-land issue, as the file deals with a project at Batterie Cassée for the construction of a development building and which requires State Land for that purpose.

In fact from the documents submitted, the project calls for the setting up of a "*centre polyvalent d'activités pour un public inter-génération*", while Government undertook to release 4 *Arpents* for a sport complex, as per document submitted by applicant Georges Karl Christophe.

On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1997, the Cabinet decided to release 4 *Arpents* of land at Carreau Ecalyptus, Batterie Cassée, for the purpose of constructing a polyvalent Sport Complex. The "*Movement Bien-être Batterie Cassée*" is complaining that nothing has been done up to now. The documents produced do not reveal a dispossession. As Batterie Cassée is a sensitive area where the residents feel excluded, the case has been referred to the Social Justice Section.

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**CASE NAME: MOLLIERES**

TJC/L/199 MOLLIERES EDLEY JOHN

Edley John Mollières, the applicant, and his brother say that their grandparents owned a plot of land of 15 Acres at Mare D’Albert. The cousins of the applicant inherited and bought several plots of land. They were proprietors of several sugar plantations. The applicant says that he is unaware of the history of land. But he knows that his cousins and the Chapman were partners. And the Chapman even guaranteed the Mollières for the purchase of land. The Chapman also filed a case against the Mollières for unknown reasons. The Mollières lost the case because they were not present during the hearing. The applicant says that he is unaware who the actual owners of the land are at present.

They request the Commission to rediscover the history of the land, recover the land and make justice prevail. They submitted a number of documents which have no bearing to the claim.

Searches undertaken by the Commission reveal that there is no plot of land of the extent of 15 Acres at Mare D’Albert in the name of the Mollières. In fact, the Mollières were in partnership with the Chapmans and, at one time, the Chapman became the owners of the land of the Mollières. No details were submitted regarding the Court case. In the circumstances the claimant has still to show how he has been dispossessed.

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**CASE NAME: SANS SOUCI**

TJC/ L/200 Louis Georges Jean Claude Sans Souci,  
Jean Ronial Cassadin & A.Ah-Siong

According to the applicant, M. R. Sans Souci, his great-grandfather on the maternal side, Noë Sans Souci, was an heir of a plot of land of 6 Arpents 14 perches, situated at Pointe-aux-Piments. However, applicants were unable to find any document concerning the existence of Noë Sans Souci, except for his name on the birth certificate of Félix Sans Souci who is the maternal grandfather of applicant Louis Georges Jean Claude Sans Souci.

The plot of land is currently partly unoccupied and according to applicants, planters have entered and cultivated the other part of the land. Applicants Sans Souci and Ah-Siong are descendants of Félix Sans Souci through their mothers, while Ronial Cassadin is married to another descendant of Sans Souci. The applicants want to prove that they have legal rights to the plot of land through their ancestor, Noë Sans Souci, and eventually recuperate the plot of land.

The Commission carried searches which revealed that the names of Noë and Félix Sans Souci do not appear in the “Répertoire” of the Registrar General’s Office.

However, further analysis of copy of “Répertoires” 30 No. 627 and 30 No. 632, obtained at the Conservator of Mortgages Office, the plot of land at Pointe- aux- Piments of an extent of 6 Arpents 14, belonged to the Sans Souci family namely Clara, Cécile, Victor, Loïd, Aline, René and Alphonse, jointly and individually 1/7 to each “dans la propriété de la moitié indivisé d’un portion de terrain de la contenance de 6 Arpents 14” as per TV 49 No. 213, dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 1848.

As there has not been entry to any sale, the Commission is of the opinion that the plot of land still belongs to the Sans Souci family by title. They have been advised to consult a Land surveyor to identify the land and subsequently to initiate action for the division in kind of the land once the family tree has been established.

**CASE NAME: POORUN**

TJC/ L/0201/RANBALLY BAGO (born POORUN)

Bago Ranbally, *born* Poorun, the applicant claims that her grandfather Sookur Poorun was the owner of a plot of land of 1 *Arpent* 13 perches situated at Anse Courtois, Les Guibies, Pailles which he acquired by prescription. Her family has been occupying this land and she herself was born on this land. In the beginning of 1980, one Baulaucky contested their title. One day, she avers the said Baulaucky came and forced them to vacate the land by using force. He took all the family personal belongings and put these on the street. The applicant and heirs have brought a case to Court but they have lost their case because, they claimed that their lawyer did not present all the title deeds to the Court. The family requests the Commission to help them to get back the land of their grandfather

The Commission inquired into this case.

In short, the claim of Ranbally Bago, *born* Poorun is to the effect that the plot of land of about 1 *Arpent* at Les Guibies, Pailles, belonging to heirs Sookun Poorun, has now been taken over and prescribed by one Mamade Baulaucky who apparently sold it to one Atchia (Atchia Ceramica). The Commission has looked into the judgement - B. Poorun & Ors (Plaintiffs) v/s M. Baulaucky (Defendants) - wherein the Judge "*agrees with the explanation given by the defendant's surveyor that the land mentioned in the said affidavit is probably lot 16, as earmarked by G. de Coriolis in his memorandum of survey and that the land claimed by the Plaintiffs comes from lot 7 of the same Document*".

Called by the Commission on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011, Ranbally Bago, who was accompanied by his sister, was explained of the above. The attention of his sister has been drawn to the fact that she has been occupying the wrong portion of land and that in their interest, they should locate the plot 7 which, it would appear, belongs to them.

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**CASE NAME: RAMKALAWON**

TJC/ L/ 0202 RAMKALAWON VINITA

The applicant, Vinita Ramkalawon, says that in an exercise in connection with the division in kind of a piece of land situated at L'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, the applicant and her family discovered the existence of a piece of land of 65 perches situated at Dagotière, Valetta.

The applicant's grandfather, Ramdayah Ramkalawon, and grandmother, Durmateea Ramkalawon, maintained during their lifetime they once occupied and worked on a plot of land of approximately of 1 *Acre* in Dagotière. After the death of Ramdayah Ramkalawon, Durmateea asserted that they were dispossessed of that plot of land by their close relatives. The applicant did not clarify how this dispossession had taken place. However, it appears that the dispossession occurred in, what she qualifies, "*an unjust manner*." The applicant and her family was all living in UK and was unable to investigate into the matter.

In fact, the land was prescribed by applicant's family. The applicant's father and grandmother were unaware of this prescription.

Vinita Ramkalawon relates that her father was a minor at that time the whole issue of prescription occurred. His elder cousin, Haireelall Ramkalawon, having made successful application to become the guardian of minor Ramdayah Ramkalawon prescribed the land on behalf of the minor. Half of the land is sold and the other half is retained by one Charitar Ramkalawon, though the applicant is not sure about this.

The applicant's grandmother, having married her grandfather under legal community of goods and property in 1935, still had a right of usufruct as the surviving spouse. However, by virtue of a

*“délibération de conseil de famille”*, she was deemed to have sold all of her rights to the buyer, Charitar Ramkalawon. She insisted that during her lifetime that she had not sold her rights.

Charitar Ramkalawon’s father alleged that he was the actual person working on the land at Dagotière, not the grandfather and grandmother of applicant. And to back up this allegation, an affidavit was drawn up. This affidavit has been retrieved from the Registrar including prescriptions and subsequent sale documents of the land. The applicants have carefully read these Documents and discovered many inconsistencies in drawing up and execution of the Documents.

Some inconsistencies:

The applicant’s grandparents alone occupied the land, not the father of Charitar Ramkalawon who died almost 20 years before the prescription of the land.

Because the applicant’s grandparents alone occupied the land after their grandfather’s death, only the legitimate spouse and children would have the rights to prescribe the land. However, the 1956 prescription Document, as well as giving applicant’s grandmother and grandfather that rights, gave all the brothers, sisters and their children the same right to prescribe the land as it was maintained that the land was left to them on the death of Charitar Ramkalawon’s father who did not perform a civil marriage.

The Commission has, indeed, been put in front of a complicated case with many inconsistencies and difficult explanations.

The applicant has been requested to submit a proper affidavit of succession, but she has no locus standi as her father is still alive.

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**CASE NAME: TAKUN**

*TJC/ L/203 MANDEEA VISNOOH*

The applicant, Visnooh Mandeea, avers that he and his wife were owners of a plot of land of 20 perches at Floréal. The plot of land originally belonged to the grandfather of applicant’s wife. The latter lived on the land during 69 years while applicant lived there for forty years after getting married. The couple built their house on the plot of land. Visnooh Mandeea declares that no one in his family was aware that one Harry Mungur prescribed the plot of land.

The applicant says that Mungur has been claiming possession of the land for around 25 years. This culminated into a Court case in 2004 which the applicant lost. According to Visnooh Mandeea, his lawyer did not plead his case properly nor submitted all documents in Court.

He submitted a press article from which additional information was extracted.

Visnooh Mandeea requests the Commission to help him and his family in getting back the land.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010, the Commission phoned applicant and requested him to contact the Police to know about the outcome of case, as advised by Director of Public Prosecutions. He promised to do needful and to inform the Commission as soon as possible.

An analysis by the Commission reveals that the case is thoroughly elaborated by a judgement delivered on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2002 by the Supreme Court against Nundloll Taken & Ors to quit leave and vacate a plot of land at Rivière Sèche, Floréal and to move out of the buildings by 31<sup>st</sup> August. Moreover, he was summoned to pay Rs. 25,000 as damages with costs, while the judgement holds that Harry Mungur is the rightful owner of the land by acquisitive prescription.

Nundloll Taken, not satisfied with the judgement, went on appeal against a decision of the Trial Court. The appeal was dismissed with costs by two Judges in March 2004.

There is also on file the *verbatim* record of an oral question bearing no B/97 relating to the Takun family and the prescription of their land put up by Honorable Megduth Chumroo to the Honorable Prime Minister at a sitting of the National Assembly held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2005.

Commissioner Jacques David wrote to the Commissioner of Police on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011 to inquire into the case and to better understand the manner in which the prescription of the 25 perches was made as well as the role played by the witness, one Gangaparsad Binda, in the prescription plea and affidavit.

In a letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011, the Commissioner of Police, through the Assistant Superintendent of Police, A. Kissoondoyal, replied that:

- On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005, the Director of the Public Prosecutions advised prosecutions as follows:-
  - **Against Mr. Harry Mungur for :-**
    - Giving instruction to solemnly affirm a false affidavit;
    - Giving false evidence in civil matter.
  - **Against Mr. Gangaparsad Binda for:-**
    - Solemnly affirming false affidavit;
    - Giving false evidence in civil matter.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005, the matter was referred to Intermediate Court for proceedings. On 30<sup>th</sup> August 2006, Defence Counsel communicated to the Court that his client Mr. Gangaparsad Binda has a fading state of health.
- On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Mr. G. Binda was examined by Dr. S. Parsad Jankee, Police Medical Officer. In his report, Dr. S. Parsad Jankee stated that Mr. G. Binda is unfit to stand trial.
- Thereafter, the file together with the medical report was sent to the DPP's Office for further advice.
- On the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2008, the DPP's Office advised no further action into the matter against both accused, Mr. Harry Mungur cannot be prosecuted as the testimony of Mr. Gangaparsad Binda is imperative to prosecute him.

It is worth noting that the Honourable Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, in his reply to PQ bearing No. B/97, underlined that "*it is the intention of Government to help the poor couple who is facing a very difficult situation*". The whole matter has been referred to the Trust Fund for the Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Groups and to report back to the Prime Minister.

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**CASE NAME: ROUSSEL**

**TJC/L/204 ROUSSEL DESIRE EMMANUEL**

Désiré Emmanuel Roussel, the applicant, says that his great-grandparents possessed a plot of land of 325 Acres at Plaine Magnien. He avers that the Mon Désert-Mon Trésor Sugar Estate cultivates sugarcane on the land. The applicant says that he is unaware of the history of land. He came to know about it by doing searches at the Archives.

He claims that his ancestors had a plot of land in the region of Grand-Port District. He avers that his family has been dispossessed of the land which is at present occupied by S.I.T.

He wants to recover the land and, in addition, to obtain compensation, he submitted some photos of a "pirate cemetery" being supposedly 'Cimetière Roussel' where members of the family are buried.

In support of his claim, Désiré Emmanuel Roussel submitted a deed of concession dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 1971 in Volume 6 No. 141 being a "concession" of 312½ *Arpents* situated at Rivière-La-Chaux in the District of Grand-Port, granted to Henri Roussel.

This case has been heard by the Commission. The applicant has not produced any affidavit of notoriety or Family Tree. He does not know the exact location of the land and it has not been surveyed. There is no site location plan or Survey report.

It is not known whether Désiré Emmanuel Roussel is the great-grandson of Henri Roussel as no family tree has been produced.

There is no indication that, apart from the tombs, the Roussel Family has ever occupied the land.

The "concession" document submitted is not an "Acte Authentique" and the dimensions of the "concession" are not given. The plan of the Land Surveyor Henri Mart drawn up on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1770 is missing.

Searches undertaken by the Commission revealed the following:-

- The above plot of land does not appear in the "Case hypothécaire" of Henri Roussel or that of Jean Baptiste Alexis Roussel.
- The "pirate cemetery" is in fact the 'Cemetery Magnien' having belonged to François Magnien.
- Presently, the above-mentioned plot of land which bears field "Number 4314" of an extent of 328 hectares belongs to Sugar Investment Trust having been acquired from Mon Désert Mon Trésor in 2005 in virtue of title deed transcribed in TV 4839 No. 60.

The claimant has not been able to prove occupation and possession of the land by his parents, grandparents or great-grandparents. All he knows is that his father went on the land regularly "to clean the tombs". There is no evidence regarding plantation and/or occupation of such a big plot of land.

The applicant has been advised that he has no claim on the strength of the documents provided. He has been advised to seek legal action before pursuing the matter.

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### **CASE NAME: GUBHOO**

*TJC/ L/205 GUBHOO PRAKASH & Others*

The applicant, Prakash Gubhoo, avers that his grandfather, father and other immediate family members lived on a plot of land at Grand-Gaube, Bati. He himself lives on the said plot of land. He declares that, in 1995, the Bigaunah family claimed the plot of land which he and his relatives occupy. Later, the Bigaunah family sued the applicant and his relatives in Court. The Gubhoo lost the case. The applicant recalls that after losing the Court case against the Bigaunah family, he agreed to buy the plot of land for Rs. 3 million without consulting and seeking the approval of his relatives (also living on the plot of land). When made aware of the commitment by applicant, his relatives refused to proceed further in the purchase.

Gubhoo also avers that the Bigaunah family did not enter any procedure to sell the land to him; his move was intended to stop Bigaunah family from expelling him and his relatives from their houses. He appeals to the Commission to investigate how Bigaunah family won the case at the Supreme Court when the plot of land is still in the name of Gubhoo family.

The Commission analysed the whole issue and concluded it should not intervene in view of the settlement reached in court which was made the judgement of the court on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009. It is also understood that the applicant/s have caused an application for a new trial to be entered before the Supreme Court on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

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**CASE NAME: DOOKNAH**

*TJC/ L/206 DOOKNAH FRANCE*

The applicant, France Dooknah, avers that his great-grandfather possessed a plot of land of 68.4 toises at Chemin Camp Poule, more precisely, at Distillerie Sainte-Hélène, Poste de Flacq. He explains that, in 1976, he paid off the other nine heirs to become the sole owner. One old lady used to live on the said land. As France Dooknah never lived on his plot of land, the neighbors always thought that the land belonged to the old lady. After the death of the latter, the neighbors squatted on the land.

In 1986, those who were still squatting the plot of land prescribed it. The applicant was not aware of this prescription. The applicant filed a case in Court, but, on the hearing day, that is on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010, the Land surveyor was not present and he lost the case.

The Commission analysed the issue to understand what has happened.

In 1976, France Dooknah purchased from D. Dabeedoyal & others all the rights in apportion of land of an extent of 60 toises at Poste de Flacq in the District of Flacq. The said deed is transcribed in Volume 1337 No. 233.

In 2000, the applicant caused the land to be surveyed by Land surveyor, Bernard Desvaux de Marigny, who, in a comprehensive report, gave a fresh description of the portion of land and reported that it is occupied by a one-storey house.

Following searches, he found out that the property had been the subject-matter of a prescription in July 1991 and described according to a Survey report drawn up Robert Foiret, Land Surveyor, on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1990.

In 2002, the applicant filed his case at the Supreme Court asking for a judgement "*declaring and decreeing that the affidavit of prescription is null and void to all intents and purposes.*"

The matter was called on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010 for continuation and from the records it is noted that Bernard Desvaux de Marigny, the Land surveyor, was absent on that day. A request for postponement by the plaintiff's Barrister was resisted by the respondent.

It seems that the Counsel appearing for France Dooknah had moved to withdraw the case on date of merits as his Land surveyor (a witness) did not attend Court and Counsel could not conduct the case. The case was struck out purely and simply.

The applicant Dooknah has been advised to contact his legal advisers to enter a new case. He met his Counsel who told him that he can re-appear for him for free of charge.

**CASE NAME: BUNDHOO**

TJC/L/207 BALGOBIN DANWANTEE (born BUNDHOO)

Danwantee Balgobin, the applicant, says that her father and mother possessed land at the following places:

1. Near school, Bois Chéri
2. Impasse, Bois Chéri
3. Route Royale, Bois Chéri
4. Near River, Bois Chéri.

There are eight heirs, and two are already deceased. Harry Bundhoo, applicant's little brother, has all the papers concerning the land. He has planted flowers and built a house on the land. He does not want to share the land and give the applicant her share of land. Applicant's father told her, before dying, that her sister and she will have their share of land near the school. The applicant says that she wants her share and she does not mind if she is given at any place. When applicant asked her brother for her share, he insulted her and even tried to beat her. Her brother even told her not to come at his house. She adds that her son and husband are seriously sick. She has a daughter who is still studying and one for whom she has to perform the marriage ceremony. Applicant does not have enough money to pay Land surveyors and Lawyers. She wants to have her share.

After analysis of this case, the Commission finds that her father passed away, leaving 8 children. Her father had sold 886.40 m<sup>2</sup> to her brother Premnauth. The lands are still occupied by one of her brothers.

The Commission has advised her to petition the Masters' Court, Supreme Court, for the division in kind of the properties among the heirs.

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**CASE NAME: DEVANNY**

TJC/L/M/208 DEVANNY OOMADUTSING

Oomadutsing Devanny, who deponed before the Commission, claims that he is one of the heirs of late Goordial Devanny and Shibdial Devanny who were co-owners of a portion of land of 5 *Arpents* situated at Bel Ombre, in the District of Savanne for having acquired same from Arthur Marrier d'Unienville on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1987 as per TV 175 No. 283 in consideration of a price of Rs. 250. However, that land is burdened with an "*inscription of privilege*" for the sum of Rs. 125 in favour of A. M. d'Unienville as per INS 338/155, which inscription has not been erased.

The said portion of land was, in fact, purchased from Arthur Marrier d'Unienville in 1887; the applicant claims that in 1988, Bel Ombre S. E. blocked the access to the said portion of land.

In 2002, Oomadutsing Devanny caused the said portion of land to be surveyed by S. Beehuspoteea, Sworn Land surveyor; and he further avers that as a result of the survey he found out that part of the said portion of land was sold by Bel Ombre SE to the "*Société de l'Abondance*".

The case of the applicant rests on the report, mentioned above, made by S. Beehuspoteea. The ownership of the portion of land is established in TV 175 No. 283 and the affidavit of succession establishes the rights of the applicant.

From further searches made in the "*Case hypothécaire*", the portion of land remains as property for the "*ayant droits*" of succession Devanny. From the said report, the Land surveyor concludes

that the 5 *Arpents* of land belonging to the heirs Devanny has been wrapped up and sold by Bel Ombre Sugar Estate to the “*Société de l’Abondance*” in 1999 by virtue of TV 456 No. 382 and TV 456 No. 383.

The evidence gathered during this hearing shall enable the Commission to call Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. The Commission should also consider the possibility of calling the surveyor for the applicant and the surveyor for Bel Ombre. It is the opinion of the Commission that blocking access may be one of the means that sugar estates use to wrap up surroundings lands not belonging to them.

The case is still before the Supreme Court.

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**CASE NAME: LATIOU**

*TJC/ L/0209/LATIOU*

Someone has deposited some documents at the Commission, without any request being made, nor any Civil Status Acts submitted or any location of property stated.

In the absence of Documents, no proper study and investigation could be carried out.

However, some searches have been effected in the name of Arthur Louis Latiou, the ancestor of Marie Rosemay Latiou. Unfortunately, his name does not appear in the “*Répertoire*” or “*Case Hypothécaire*” at the Registrar General’s Office.

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**CASE NAME: GOODUR**

*TJC/L/M/210 GOODUR ABDOOL RESHAD*

The applicant, Abdool Reshad Goodur, says that his great-grandfather possessed four *Acres* of land at Bois Pignolet. His father used to tell him that they possessed a plot of land there. He did some searches at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. He once visited the land and found that there were sugarcane plantations thereon. Now, vegetables are being cultivated. Four persons were formerly occupying the land: one Sahabouah, one Bauboo, Tapsi and his daughter. They had leased the land from a deceased Goodur. At present, only one of them is occupying the land.

Abdool Reshad Goodur says that he has spent much money on research. He even had to bribe some officers working at the Civil Status Office at Moka and Port Louis to obtain Documents.

He requests the Commission to help him to recover the land and to know the family history.

The Commission did an investigation which reveals that the applicant’s great-grand-father and grand-father, Goodhur No. 191025, owned a plot of land of an extent of four *Arpents* at Plaines-des-Calebasses as per deed of sale dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 1882 and transcribed in TV 151 No. 327.

In the same deed of sale dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 1882, Louis Bouton (Miss) sold to:

- Goodhur No 191025, 3/8 undivided rights and
- Roopkholeea, daughter of Beeharry No 194345, 3/8 undivided rights and
- Didarally No 199454, son of Goodhur 2/8, undivided rights.

The above deed of sale is accompanied by a Survey Report, drawn up by Land Surveyor Langlois, dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1882 register L.S 4 No. 734.

Land surveyor Maurice Dumazel drew up a new survey Report dated in March 1987 registered in L.S 23 No. 8362.

These are also copies of a lease agreement, where the land was given on lease for cultivation purposes for period of 5-7 years. The land was leased to one Osman Bauboo for period 1957 to 1964.

6. Further searches have revealed the following;

- In virtue of TV 626 No. 113 dated 25<sup>th</sup> May 1954 Allyjaun Didarally caused to be prescribed the above plot of land of an extent of 4 *Arpents*.
- According to a notarial deed drawn up by Notary Freddy Audibert dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1964 in TV 961 No. 94, the heirs of Allyjaun Didarally have renounced '*purement et simplement à la prescription du dit terrain de 4 Arpents à Calebasses.*'
- In terms of a deed (TV 1899 No. 6) dated 21<sup>st</sup> December 1988 Adoo Bauboo is the owner of the plot of land at Calebasses.

In the light of the above findings and the fact that late Goodhur No. 191025 has undivided rights in the four-*Arpent* plot of land, it is difficult for them now to claim any share in the above plot of land.

The Commission showed it is of more serious concern when the applicant, Abdool Reshad Goodur, was assaulted by one Bauboo after deponing before the Commission, when he went to visit the land.

A police enquiry has started in this case.

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**CASE NAME: HERMINETTE**

*TJC/L/212/ RAGOO CHILA MERIENNE FRANCOISE*

The applicant, Chila Mérienne Françoise Rago, inherited a plot of land of 383.50 m sq. situated at Petit Verger, Pointe-aux-Sables from late Marie Lucienne Herminette. The latter passed away in 2008. The applicant became aware of her inheritance after knowing the contents of the will. She contacted Land surveyor Zahur Ahmad Khuram Beegun to survey the plot of land. One Toman Seewoo objected to the survey claiming ownership of the plot of land. The applicant declares that the latter had prescribed the plot and also claimed that Seewoo got the land surveyed by faking the signature of one Bise.

A Court decision enabled the land survey to take place and it was thus determined that Seewoo is not the rightful owner of the plot. The applicant has currently claimed ownership of the land. However, according to him, two deeds of ownership exist for that same plot of land, one being in the hands of Seewoo.

The Rago family requests the Commission to determine in which circumstances Seewoo prescribed a plot of land not belonging to him and thus clarify the legal status of land so as to prevent any future problem that could arise, due to irregularity in the documents

From documents submitted, it appears that the prescription made by Toman Sewoo is questionable for the following reasons:

- There is no ‘*occupation trentenaire*’ between the dates of the prescription of the T. Sewoo, that is, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002 and the date of the title deed of Marie Lucienne Herminette on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007, there is a lapse of less than 25 years.
- The names of adjoining owners put in by Land surveyor S. Beehuspoteea for Toman Sewoo seems to be fictitious as the title deeds of ownership are not given.
- However, the Memorandum of survey put up the Land surveyor A. K. Beegun for Chilla Marianne Ragoo (daughter of M.L. Herminette) is in line with the Land surveyors’ Act adjoining owners’ names and title deeds put up in Report.
- In the circumstances, there is a strong case for Marianne Françoise Ragoo to challenge the legality of the prescription before Court.
- This is a clear case of dispossession and Chilla Marianne Françoise Ragoo has been advised by the Commission to seek redress by initiating legal action before the appropriate Court.

This is a sad case of a person who has received a plot of land by Will and Testament but which has been prescribed by a third party, in an attempt to dispossess the real owner.

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**CASE NAME: RAMTOHUL**

*TJC/ L/0213/RAMTOHUL TRITIKUMAR*

Tritikumar Ramtohul, the applicant, avers that Bel Ombre Sugar Estate leased and sold marginal land, due to a lack of finance and manpower, to planters. The applicant underlined that he purchased this land from two planters ten years ago. He now owns seven acres of land at Sainte-Marie. He cultivates the land. There was a decrease in the price of sugar cane and an increase in the price of fuel. This increased the cost of production. Bel Ombre Sugar Estate proposed to 109 planters to vacate the land and compensate them. 104 planters signed and accepted the deal. Five did not, including the applicant. The Sugar Authority acted as a regulator between the applicant and Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. But the applicant avers that the Sugar Authority acted in favour of the Bel Ombre Sugar Estate.

Tritikumar Ramtohul had a meeting with Minister Satish Faugoo at the Ministry of Agro-Industry. The latter proposed a new formula to applicant which he did not accept. On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2009, the applicant met the Minister at a second meeting. He promised him that justice will be made for his case. A Technical Committee was to be set up to evaluate the land and a report will be made. This, according to the applicant, was never done.

The applicant wants the land to be surveyed and an equitable compensation be made. He awaits that the report of the Technical Committee and wishes that Committee to treat his case separately from the planters of Flacq.

This case of “*métayage*” and not dispossession is being dealt with in this Report of the Commission at CHAPTER 2

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**CASE NAME: SREPAUL**

TJC/ L/M/218/ SREPAUL KULWANTSING

Kulwantsing Sreepaul, the applicant is the son of late Jaynutsing Sreepaul, a “*métayer*”, who had 40 *Arpents* of land under “*métayage*” at Chazal Chamouny, Chemin Grenier with St. Félix Sugar Estate, for the period 1950-1967. The applicant declares that in 1967, his father was deprived of “*métaying*” rights from St. Félix Sugar Estate.

Kulwantsing Sreepaul states that the loss of “*métaying*” rights in 1967 caused his father to suffer from a cerebral haemorrhage and this had several negative consequences on the lives his family. The applicant relates that he was about 11 years old, when the mishap happened and thus could not pursue secondary education, since he had to cater for his family and also the pitiful state of his father. The applicant also notes that his father had nine children and none of them could get proper education.

He wishes the Commission to investigate why St Félix Sugar Estate took back the land as well as the “*métaying*” rights from his father.

- He wants himself and his siblings to receive financial compensation or plot of land equivalent to that which his father had under “*métayage*” with St. Félix Sugar Estate.
- As he has a daughter aged 27 who is disabled and a son aged 14, he would like the Commission to cater for his children so that they do not undergo the same suffering as he endured during his childhood.

This case concerns a “*métayer*” land of 40 *Arpents* which was being occupied by the late father of applicant; the case is being dealt with along with the “*métayer*” cases in this report at CHAPTER 2.

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**CASE NAME: KHISTO**

TJC/ L/0214 KHISTO JAYSING

Jaysing Khisto brought two cases before the Truth and Justice Commission. In his first application, he sustained that his grandfather (Samchan/Sam Khisto) was occupying the Barachois Estate, Tamarin (801 Acres) as administrator. One L’Oiseau was working with him and knew all his secrets. When Sam Khisto passed away, L’Oiseau, from what the claimant says, fooled the uncles of the applicant to take loans and he took the money. The uncles could not repay the loans and they lost the land. Actually, one Dr. Jubhoo is occupying the land. The applicant explains that he tried to contact the actual occupier, but in vain. He adds that the tomb of his grandfather was located on the land but had recently been demolished. He also adds that his sister, Pushwantee, lived on the land for a period of 8-10 years.

Jaysing Khisto wishes to get back the land and is prepared to go as far as to buy the land as it represents a souvenir of his grandfather. He also expresses the wish to be compensated by Government as a measure of fairness.

In his second claim, he explains that on his father’s death, his family was living at Riche Mare, Central Flacq over a plot of land of 1 ½ acres. Some years later, the remaining family left the land and went to live at his grandmother’s place at Terre Rouge. He wants to get back the land at Riche Mare.

From searches carried out at Conservator of Mortgage Office, the Commission found that the said Khisto or Khistoo Samchan or Sumchund, son of Khisto (156679), husband of Doorpuuth Ram had sold all his properties at Rivière Noire, namely, a “*solde de 126 Arpents*”. Furthermore, he sold, on 29<sup>th</sup>

May 1927, 29 *Arpents* to one Constant Loyseau for the sum of Rs. 8,000, as evidenced by title deed transcribed in Volume 384 No. 495.

Jaysing Khisto was called to the Commission on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 to submit more documents for the second claim, but in spite of promises that he would bring all related documents the following week, he never turned up.

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**CASE NAME: TATTEEA**

*TJC/ L/M/217 TATTEEA BAJEERAO*

The applicant, Bajeerao Tatteea, is a “*métayer*” and was cultivating a land of 4 *Arpents* at Bel Ombre, more precisely at Section D’Ambris. He states that Bel Ombre Sugar Estate will take back land and supposedly, on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010, compensate all “*métayers*” financially or offer them a plot of land.

The applicant wants to be fixed as soon as possible whether Bel Ombre Sugar Estate will compensate him or offer him a plot of land.

This is a case of “*métayage*” which is being dealt with in the Report of the Commission at CHAPTER 2.

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**CASE NAME: SEERUTTUN**

*TJC/ L/0215 SEERUTTUN DAYADHARRY*

Dayadharry Seeruttun writes that his late father possessed a plot of land of half an acre at Triolet. A few years ago, someone built a house on the land. The applicant went to the District Council and paid for the services of a Land surveyor to help the family retrieve the land. But the Seeruttun heirs have been denied access by the people illegally occupying the land.

The Commission, keen to have an exact picture of the whole situation undertook some searches and found out that in terms of a Notarial deed drawn by E. Hart de Keating on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1945, duly registered and transcribed in Volume 672 No. 192, Ramduth Seeruttun purchased ½ A of land excised from a plot of 2 *Arpents* 08 in extent situated at Triolet.

Nevertheless, it is not clear from the deed, whether the description given relates to the ½ *Arpent* plot or the 2 *Arpents* 08 plot. At this stage, this has no bearing on the issue.

From a deed referred to as “*acte de notoriété après décès*” Ramduth Seeruttun passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1995 and left as sole heirs to apprehend his estate and succession his 8 children. It follows, therefore, that the property purchased is now held by the heirs R. Seeruthun represented by the eight children.

It would appear that the land has been squatted upon or prescribed by someone who is denying them access to the property and who has objected to the survey of the land.

The applicant has been advised by the Commission that this is a legal issue which should be addressed to the appropriate Court of Law or Judge in Chambers.

The applicant must enter a case against the squatter before the competent Court. He has been advised to:

- Enter an “*action en bornage*” before the Supreme Court;
- Apply for a writ *Habere Facias* possession before the Honorable Judge in Chambers.

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**CASE NAME: BEEFNAH/CHOOOLUN**

*TJC/L/0219/BEEFNAH DHARAMDEO*

Dharamdeo Beefnah, the applicant states that he is the owner of a plot of around 50 perches at Mahatma Gandhi Lane, Arsenal, which he bought in 1992 from his maternal aunt, Lilawtee Choolun. He also avers that the land was originally acquired in 1929 by his maternal grandfather, Ramparsad Choolun.

Beefnah declares that Massillia Limited erected a canal on the plot of land in the period 1950-1955 without any written contract or agreement. He relates that the canal through the years has become larger and deeper, hence obstructing access to part of the plot of land. He further states that Massillia Limited is unwilling to look into the matter, for there is no written agreement with clearly stated terms and conditions concerning the canal.

Dharamdeo Beefnah requests the Commission to look into the matter so that a written agreement is established with Massillia Limited in order that (i) Massillia Limited takes the responsibility of maintenance of the bank and bed of the canal, (ii) to regularize access for applicant to the other part of the plot of land through a bridge or any other system.

The Commission analysed the whole situation: the land formed part of a plot of 50 perches which were divided into 4 lots in 1991, as per the plan of Sworn Land surveyor Tupsy. The Commission notes that no mention is made of any canal crossing the property in previous deeds, or any reference of that canal constituting a service burdening that property.

At the time of purchase, applicant was fully aware of the existence of the canal. He was satisfied with his purchase, as he has stated that he had seen and visited the land.

In the deed of Dharamdeo Beefnah dated 8<sup>th</sup> September 1992, it is stated that Beefnah accepts the plot of land as it is, having seen, visited and is satisfied ‘*ensemble tout ce qui peut en dépendre ou en faite partie sans aucune exception, ni réserve et sans plus ample désignation.*’

Massillia Limited has gone bankrupt and is now in liquidation.

The Commission talked to the Irrigation Authority, the Central Water Authority and Water Rights Administration, but to no avail, as the status of the canal crossing the property is not clearly defined.

The Commission is of opinion that in view of its location, the canal can still be diverted to follow the property of Massillia Property, or the applicant can construct a slab over the canal to get access to the small bit of triangular plot of land. And, as a last resort, Dharamdeo Beefnah has been advised to seek redress from competent authorities in the event that the case were to be administered by Rivérains and Syndics.

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**CASE NAME: PREMDUTH**

TJC/ L/ M/0220/ RAMCURUN PREMDUTH

Premduth Ramcurrun, the applicant is a “*métayer*” and has 6 Acres 4 perches of land under “*métayage*” at Sainte-Marie, Montagne Chapeau with Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, for the period 1959-2010. Initially the father of the applicant worked on that land and, in 1992 transferred to on the applicant’s name. Premduth Ramcurrun says that he is not satisfied by the way Bel Ombre Sugar estate is reacting towards him. He claims that Bel Ombre wants the said plot of land back.

The applicant enumerated several hardships “*métayer*” planters had to face and would elaborate further on the hearing day at the Commission.

He requests the Commission to establish the real ownership of the land and he wants to become owner of the plot of land or receive reasonable financial compensation or a plot of land of similar surface area.

The case of Premduth Ramcurrun is being dealt with along with other “*métayer*” cases at CHAPTER 2.

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**CASE NAME: GOBERDHUN**

TJC/ L/ M/0221 GOBERDHUN SATOORAM

The applicant, Satooram Goberdhun, is a “*métayer*” and has 4 Acres 5 perches of land under *métayage* at Bel Ombre with Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, for the period 1968-2010. The father of the applicant initially worked on that land and, in 1995, transferred it to the applicant’s name. Goberdhun is not satisfied the way Bel Ombre Sugar Estate is reacting toward him. Also he claims that Bel Ombre want back the said plot of land. He agrees to return back the land but does not agree with the compensation Bel Ombre is giving.

The case of the “*métayer*” is being dealt with at CHAPTER 2.

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**CASE NAME: LOUISE**

TJC/ L/0222 LOUISE ATISH KUMAR

The applicant, Atish Kumar Louise, avers that his legitimate father had constructed a house at Route Vingta No. 1, Vacoas on a portion of land of 167.2 m<sup>2</sup>.

According to an Affidavit of Succession, drawn up by V. Ramloll, Attorney-at-Law and sworn on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2011 before the Chief Registrar, it appears that:

- (1) Michel Hervé Louise passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1996, leaving as sole heirs and parties, his two legitimated children: (a) Atish Kumar Louise and (b) Amrish Kumar Louise and his surviving spouse, Premila Soomary
- (2) Premila Soomary passed away on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1997 leaving as sole heirs: (a) her acknowledged natural children: (i) Roshni Pandarun, (ii) Ashok Kumar Pandarun and (iii) Arouna Pandarun from her intimate connection with Vishnu Mardaymootoo

Pandarun and (b) her two legitimated children: (i) Atish Kumar Louise and (2) Amrish Kumar Louise

The applicant says that his father had started the procedure of a prescription and was bedridden after some time. The applicant went to the Registrar to make searches to know if the land had indeed been prescribed, but did not find anything.

The applicant requests the Commission to help him proceed with the prescription which is incomplete since his father became bedridden.

The Commission is of the opinion that the five children should contact their legal adviser to help them get a title deed of the property.

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**CASE NAME: LANAPPE/DAVID**

*TJC/L/0223 PERMAL MAURICE ROLAND*

The applicant, Roland Maurice Permal, mentions he is heir to a plot of land of 312 *Arpents* located at Providence, Quartier Militaire, to which his mother-in-law, Marie-Thérèse David, is the sole heiress. The applicant declares that the land was bought initially in 1862 by Emmanuel Lanappe, the grandfather of Marie-Thérèse David. However, according to the applicant, in 1864, Emmanuel Lanappe was prohibited from accessing the land through a legal '*gain de cause*' won by Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate.

The applicant cited the existence of a document stating that half of the 312 *Arpents* were sold, but since the buyer settled the total payment, Marie-Thérèse David is entitled, as the sole heiress, to the 312 *Arpents*.

The applicant also pointed out that there is a river on that plot of land, '*La Rivière Française*' and also that one, '*Jean-Claude*', has once brought Marie-Thérèse David and her son to the plot of land, and mentioned the names of persons occupying several parts of the plot of land.

Since 2005, the applicant and a few relatives started procedures through an Attorney and a Land surveyor in view of recovering the land. However, due to uncertainty and high costs, the applicant and relatives did not take the procedures further.

The applicant declares that at present, there are sugar cane plantations, a poultry farm operated by "*Innodis Ltd.*" and houses built on the plot of land.

His requests to the Commission are:

- to do a land surveying; and
- to recover back the land. His request is supported by the following Documents:
- The TV 74 No.241 dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 1862 being the purchase of the plot of land of extent of 312 *Arpents* at Quartier Militaire (Moka) by Mootien Arnassalon and Edouard Louis Maximilien Hallot in individual rights.
- A document confirming that the said land had been divided and given to the three children, namely Ferdinand David, Angela David and Louise David
- Another document has been submitted which needs to be authenticated whether the applicant is an heir through her mother, Thérèse David.

However, the document produced contradicts the applicant in his claim.

A Court case was entered against Mon Désert Alma by the heirs of Emmanuel Lanappe. Judgement was given on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1994, and it was established that Mon Désert Alma was the proprietor of the said 312 *Arpents* as per TV 74 No. 241.

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**CASE NAME: LAPEYRE**

*TJC/L/224/LAPEYRE JEAN PERCY HANSLEY*

Jean Percy Lapeyre, the applicant, avers that his forefather had:

- a) A plot of land at Pamplemousses
- b) A plot of land at Curepipe.

Both plots, according to him, are still in the name of the Lapeyre family but he could not sustain his claims by producing either a document or a family tree. He requests the Commission to get back the land of his forefathers.

To summarise, the claims are as follows:

**Case 1**

His forefathers had a plot of land at Pamplemousses which, he avers, is still in the name of the Lapeyre family and is now under sugar plantation. He does not know who is the owner of the sugar plantation.

**Case 2**

His forefathers also had a land at Curepipe which is still in the name of the family, and is actually occupied by some individuals. These individuals have constructed two houses on that plot of land. He claims that the land is occupied by a CID officer and a Barrister.

The Commission looked at his requests and searches have revealed the following:

According to TV 116 No. 248, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1875, Louis Lapeyre had acquired from one F.A Delorme Ignard two plots of land in Pamplemousses District: the first one of the extent of 2 *Arpents* 68 at Roche Bois and the other one of extent 26 *Arpents* 8 p at Terre Rouge for the price of "2300 *piastres*".

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1911, Louis Lapeyre sold these plots to Tholman for the price of "4000 *piastres*" as evidenced by TV 389 No. 441.

On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1883, Louis Lapeyre acquired from Louis Victor de la Faye and, agreed by Alexandre André, a plot of land of extent of 7 *Arpents* at Pamplemousses for the price of "1375 *piastres*".

However, in the "Case Hypothécaire" 89 No. 110, it is revealed that there is a 'Privilège Inscription' 315 No. 230 dated 17<sup>th</sup> September 1983 in favour of Alexandre André for the price of "1600 *piastres*" "acquere subrogation jusqu'à concurrence de 1200 *piastres*". So, the "solde de" and not been paid, and there is no indication about its sale.

It appears that this plot of land is still burdened with that inscription as there is no indication of its erasure.

Furthermore, there is no plot of land still in the name of the forefather of Jean Percy Lapeyre. Two portions of land of 2 *Arpents* 68 p at Roche Bois and 26 *Arpents* 86 at Terre Rouge have already been sold on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1911, as per TV 389 No. 411.

There is no entry made in the Register of the Conservator of Mortgages concerning the land at Curepipe, allegedly occupied by a CID Officer and a Barrister, whose names have not been given by applicant.

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**CASE NAME: LATIRE**

*TJC/ L/VF/0225LATIRE JOSE GABRIEL*

Jean Gabriel Latire, the applicant avers that his grand-parents possessed a house at Cité La Caverne, L6. At present, his cousin Eddy Latire is living in the house and is unwilling to leave. He has filed a case in Court.

He paid Rs. 18,000 to Attorney Appa Jala and Rs. 4,000 to Lawyer Nasime B. Sondagur. The latter did not attend the previous hearing and is now claiming Rs. 6,000 for the next hearing.

The applicant adds that he has no place to live and often has to shift.

After analysis of this request at the Commission, it was found that late Joseph Zephyr was a tenant of a CHA house at Cité La Caverne. He passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1997, and according to an affidavit drawn up after his death, he left Gabriel Latire as sole heir to apprehend his estate and succession.

It is understood that J. G. Latire has entered a case in Court claiming the above leasehold.

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**CASE NAME: DODIN**

*TJC/ L/0226 DODIN MICHELLE DANIELLE*

Michelle Danielle Dodin, the applicant, remembers her mother telling that her grandparents the Don Bastien family and the Noble, had plenty of land in the vicinity of Pamplemousses, but as children, they just listened and did not pay much attention as it was like a fairy tale. She requested the Commission to look for the lands in Pamplemousses which one Rughoonath told her that the Don Bastien family owned; and to contact the latter to get further information. She did not submit any document, title deed or any plan.

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the Commission phoned Rughoonath to explain the whole issue. But, the latter was unwilling to provide information on lands which Dodin is claiming as she did not pay him for the research he carried out.

However, searches carried out by the Commission at the Mortgage Office reveal that the names of Marie Yvonne Don Bastien and François André Thompson do not appear in the Name index. Further searches also revealed that the name of Jean Edmond Noble does not appear in the "*Répertoire*."

However, the name of Pierre Feline appears at "*Répertoire* 30 No. 754, where Pierre Feline acquired on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1849, a plot of land of extent of 410 *Arpents* being Domaine Fair Fund from S. Baker for the sum of Rs. 7,000. That land is burdened with many charges; the inscriptions of which have not been erased, namely Rs. 58,750 from S. Baker and Rs. 20,000 from Banque d'Epargne.

In view of the above, Michelle D. Dodin has been informed accordingly.

**CASE NAME: ROMEO**

TJC/ L/0227/ROMEO MARIE ARLETTE

The applicant, Marie Arlette Roméo, avers that her great-grandfather, Yyempermal, from Tanjavour, worked for the Ceylan Tea Limited Company during colonial times. While working for the company, he bought a plot of land of 10 *Arpents* at Beau-Songes for Rs. 7,000. In Document No.1 submitted, it is mentioned that the same plot of land was sold for Rs. 1,200. When applicant's great grandparent passed away, the land was left unoccupied and Médine Sugar Estate Company occupied less than 5 *Arpents* approximately. The company erected a building on that land. The rest of the land belonging to the applicant is still unoccupied, and she wants to get the plot of land back.

She called at the Office of the Commission on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and enquired about the land of Yyempermal. The Commission Land surveyor, having taken cognizance of her case, talked to Vince Ramsamy, the Surveyor of Médine Sugar Estate. The latter said that he is prepared to help the lady. A site meeting was organized between Marie Arlette Roméo and Vince Ramsamy and it was agreed that both parties would inform the Commission of the outcome of that meeting. In the meantime, the applicant has asked another Land surveyor, R. Bhurtun, to accompany her on site the very day of the meeting.

Nothing was heard about the meeting between the applicant and Vince Ramsamy.

On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011, she called at the office and submitted copy of "*Répertoire*" 253/924, which the Commission had already retrieved from the Conservator of Mortgages' Office. She had a long story to tell before informing the Commission that she has entrusted her work to another Land surveyor, Mr. Kritanand, Seebaruth, and would revert back to us once the survey has been completed.

The Commission, having undertaken searches in that case, found that the grandfather of Marie Arlette Roméo l'Indien Yyempermal purchased 2 plots of land of 5 *Acre*s each at Roche-Ville, in the district of Black River having bought them from one Edgar Vaudagne as per TV 159 No. 248, dated 25<sup>th</sup> January 1884.

There is also on record a Survey Report drawn up by Land surveyor J. J. Moura dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1883 for the 2 plots.

It appears that there is, on one of the sites, a concrete building erected by Médine Sugar Estates.

Mrs Marie Arlette Romeo should request her Land Surveyor to carry out a survey of both sites under Section 11 of the Land Surveyor Act, and thereafter claim any part which allegedly has been encroached upon.

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**CASE NAME: ARLAPIN**

TJC/ L/228/ARLAPIN BERTY

Berty Arlapin, the applicant, claims that the property of his ancestors at Black River (Tamarin Region) has been taken by one Dr. Jhuboo without permission of any owner of this land. In support of his claim, he has submitted the following:

- Affidavit of succession made after the death of Marcellus Toomany;
- A private writing being a lease agreement between the Toomany and Arjoon Bijloo over an extent of 20 *Arpents* at Mon Désert for a period of nine years which expired on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1946.
- A site plan indicating a "*Barachois*", as being the very site owned by the Toomany.

Searches undertaken by the Commission have revealed that the names of the Toomany appearing as lessor in the “*lease agreement*” are not registered as owners of any land at Tamarin. In fact, the names do not appear in the Index Repertory at the Conservator of the Mortgages’ Office.

Furthermore, the lease document submitted at (ii) above is not a Notarial deed, and the Memorandum of survey produced by Berty Arlapin is not related to this case as it is a survey carried out by Sworn Land surveyor E. Belcourt at the request of Dr. Jhuboo.

In the light of the above, the claim of the Toomany does not stand.

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**CASE NAME: PERRINE**

*TJC/ L/0229 PERRINE CLAUDIA*

The applicant, Claudia Perrine 44 years of age, has written that since the age of nine, she lived on CHA land in Rivière Noire. She married and lived on the same land with her children. In 1991, her step-father (who lived with her mother) and she have taken the necessary steps to acquire a plot of land on the same ground. Finally, in 1996, the applicant said she got hold of the lease contract and from then on, she started paying Rs. 150 per year for the lease.

Afterwards she has undertaken necessary measures for a one storey house and in fact she built one on the ground floor. As soon as the construction plan was approved the lease was raised to a sum of Rs. 1,150 in 1999. She continued paying the lease till the day the Government gave permission to buy the CHA land.

She applied at the office where she was asked to bring along a paper to pay the arrears. She paid them and was asked to wait for a letter. She received a letter bearing her step father’s name where they were asked to bring the heirs to be able to buy the land. Once at the office, she was told that it did not concern her plot of land but the land next to hers. In fact, the applicant wrote that it was the same plot of land which was divided into two parts.

She was told to keep on paying till the day the State grants her permission to buy her plot of land. She writes that she wants to know if she will own the plot of land one day, just like those who have already earned a plot of land in the housing estate.

She requests the Commission to shed light on the reason why she cannot buy the land which she is occupying now and why she was being asked to buy the other plot of land

Furthermore, her request has been referred to the Ministry of Housing and Lands (CHA unit).

This is a State land, within a CHA estate, which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. The applicant has been requested to contact that Ministry for a proper land survey and in order to sort out the confusion on the site occupied by her.

**CASE NAME: BABYLONE/VALLY**

*TJC/L/ 0231Emmanuel Babylone*

Emmanuel Babylone claims the ownership of two plots of land which he avers belongs to the “*ancestors Vally*”, as mentioned in a Memorandum of survey dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 1919. He avers that Medine Sugar Estate is occupying the two plots.

In support of his claim, he has submitted 27 documents including a copy of the plan drawn up by Hall SLS, which plan accompanies the report dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 1919 above-mentioned.

After perusal of the documents produced, the Commission has confirmed that on the plan accompanying the memorandum of survey dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 1919, two portions of land are indicated as “Terrain Vally ou ayant droits”, but no extent is given. The Memorandum of Survey further indicates that the two portions of land are situated in an area of 1,389 *Arpents*, described as the fourth lot, but “*cette étendue ne comprend pas les terres concédées au Gouvernement pour le chemin de fer et les deux terrains Vally ou ayant droits et les terrains de Hattersing a Villaooty ou ayant droits.*” The plan further indicates that a triangular portion of land referred to as ‘*terrain Vally*’ or ‘*ayant droits*’ forms part of the land allocated to “*les légataires Bretonache*”, whereas the other portion is located outside the original limits of the land known as “*La Cantine.*” La Cantine was at one time owned jointly by Mathurin Jeannot and Joseph Fabre and was divided in two lots of 80 *Arpents* each in 1898.

In terms of a deed drawn up by Notary Claude Ernest Alexis Josselin Maingard on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1860, as evidenced by TV 70 No. 170, Justine Bretonache and Ors sold to Célestine Bretonache, wife of François Vally “*all their rights in a portion of land of 5 Arpents, having a triangular shape*”, situated at “*La Petite Rivière Noire*”. The deed fully explains that the portion of land is excised from the 80 *Arpents* allocated to Miss Valazanac, C. Bretonache and others following the division in kind effected by Numa Geoffroy, judicially appointed for that purpose on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1848. As a result of this acquisition, the wife of François Vally (born Bretonache) became the sole owner of the plot of land.

Among the documents submitted, there is a Survey Report, drawn up by late Maurice Dumazel, dated 30<sup>th</sup> March 1948, giving the description of a portion of land of an extent of 5 *Arpents* 36, triangular in shape, which it is said belongs to “*Monsieur Ange Balou par occupation*”. The report bears the Reg. No. LS 23, No.1735.

It also indicates an adjoining plot of an extent of 9 *Arpent* 49 marked at one corner “*ancien cimetière Vally*”.

The Commission has also taken note of a notarial deed drawn up by Jean Jacques Montocchio, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1989 which witnesses an agreement between Médine Sugar Estate and Ange William Balou, also known as Ange Balou, whereby, against payment of Rs. 300,000, Ange Balou would renounce in favour of the Company whatever rights he may have on the portion of land of an extent of 5 *Arpents* 36 and also would withdraw the claim for damages he lodged against the Company (statement of claim dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 1948). Furthermore, he agreed that he would recognise the Company “*comme seule et incommutable propriétaire de la dite portion de terre*”.

Based on the documents produced, the Truth and Justice Commission is of the opinion that the owners, by title of the 5 *Arpents* 00, are the heirs of Celestine Bretonache, wife of Francois Vally. Neither Ange Balou, nor Médine Sugar Estate has a clear title to the said portion of land.

The deponent has also left newspaper cuttings relating to an old cemetery having the tombs of Jean François Vally, Joseph Favre and others. It is interesting to note that Joseph Favre expressed the wish, in his will, “*à être inhumé sur mon habitation auprès de la tombe de mon ami Bretonache*”. Bretonache, in his will, also expressed the wish to be buried next to Mathurin - presumably Mathurin Jeannot.

Another reference to the cemetery is made in the deed, registered in Reg. C 92 No. 1414, on May 1858, and duly transcribed in Volume 64 No. 105, concerning the chargers, clauses and conditions of the judicial sale of the remaining property, formerly owned by Charles Favre. Article 1 of the conditions of sale is reproduced below:

**“Article First:** *The purchaser or purchasers of the said plots of ground shall be bound to take the said plots of ground now to be sold, such as they shall stand at the time of the sale thereof, without being entitled to claim any indemnification or guarantee for default of measurement, extent and description or otherwise. And, in the sale of the lot above described, shall not be comprised a burial ground existing thereof being forty one feet three inches in length and thirty sixth feet five inches in breadth, the said burial ground, actually surrounded by walls and reserved for the use of the families of those who have already been buried*

*therein and among others of the late Charles Fanny Volamaire, commonly called Charles Favre."*

And the purchaser

*"shall not have and possess the said burial ground which shall remain a perpetual servitude on the second lot and he or they shall moreover be bound to suffer also as a perpetual servitude the existence of a passage fifteen feet wide leading thereto from the main road, which is about forty feet from the entrance of the said cemetery".*

It follows, from the above, that the purchasers and now the present owners of the second lot of an extent of about 13 Acres, are bound by the conditions attached to the sale above.

Searches have revealed that in 1932, an area of 10 Arpents 19 was excised therefrom (*vide* P.V. Khermann, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1932).

This portion of land has been acquired by Médine Sugar Estates in terms of TV 433 No. 416.

It is not known on which part of the land the burial ground is located.

The Truth and Justice Commission recommends that those in the rights of the late Clémentine Bretonache, wife of François Vally, should take up the issue of ownership of the two plots of land with Médine Sugar Estate. They should seek legal advice regarding their claim. As regards the burial ground, the Commission is of the opinion that those in the rights of the persons buried on site should pursue the matter with Médine Sugar Estate regarding access to the land.

The plot of 13 Acres, described as being a plot of land, is not the same as the one indicated on the plan drawn up by Hall. The present 13 Acres plot form part of the land allotted to Favre, while the 5 Arpents 00 on Hall's plan forms part of the land allotted to "*les légataires Bretonache*".

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CHAPTER FIVE

**DISPOSSESSION OF PROPERTY**

# DISPOSSESSION OF PROPERTY

## INTRODUCTION

From the applications made, documents submitted, and during the hearing of several land cases, it has become apparent that several persons have lost their properties and/or have been dispossessed of their properties due to the false, inaccurate, doubtful, wrongly-drafted misinterpretation of affidavits of succession and Wills and Testaments.

Some affidavits and Wills and Testaments produced before the Commission have been drawn up with the connivance of certain heirs. It has been observed that some affidavits have been wrongly drawn up by Attorneys at Law and sworn or solemnly affirmed by the doubtful witnesses before the Supreme Court.

More than one case has attracted the attention of the Commission after searches were undertaken and analysis made of claims put before the Commission during these last few months. Three of such cases - CLÉMENTINE (File No TJC/L/0142), FAOULEZ/MACCA (File No TJC/L180) and CAPIRON (File No TJC/L/031) - are here highlighted to sustain the above. The SPÉVILLE/CHOOOLUN case, as well as the GUIBIES/PAILLES case and the GERTRUDE/DASANI case (Gertrude Marie Fleurance, born Bontende - File No. TJC/L/312 - ; Dasani Lutchmeen, born Gowreeah/Sobrun Renouka, born Dasani - File No. TJC/L/0137) are other examples of how people have been victims of such dismeanours.

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## CLÉMENTINE (FILE NO TJC/L/0142)

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José Désiré Roland Clémentine claims to be one of the sixteen heirs of Marie Rosanne de Coriolis who owned many plots of land totalling 7 *Arpents* at Plaines Wilhems and Coromandel. Myriam Rabouine and, the agent of the Clémentine family, one S. Rago, deponed before the Commission. José Désiré Roland Clémentine avers that the heirs were induced to form a *Société* known as "*Société Beau Séjour*". They were later asked to bring their land of 7 *Arpents* as their share in the *société*. They were told that they will get 50% of its selling price. It was also averred that the land has already been sold for Rs. 65 million, from information received but only four heirs have received money and the other heirs do not know the exact amount which have been paid.

The representatives of the Clémentine submitted copy of an agreement dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 from the *Gérant* of "*Société Beau Séjour*" to pay Rs. 200,000 to each heir when the land will be sold.

The factual background is as follows:

- The heirs Clémentine claim that they are the heirs of late Fernand Clémentine, who was the heir of Gustave de Coriolis, the owner of a portion of land of 24, 058. 96 sqm. situated at Coromandel.
- Whilst deponing before the Commission, Myriam Clémentine explained that sometime in, around 2007, members of the family met with one Willy Rigobert who informed them that he would do searches with respect to land owned by their ancestors. It is averred by the heirs Clémentine that they paid a large sum of money to the said Rigobert in consideration of his searches. It is further averred that it was the said Rigobert who introduced the heirs Clémentine to Notary Arveen Ramphul and to one Parvez Maharaullee.
- They were then requested to meet with Notary Ramphul. The first meeting occurred in the presence of the said Rigobert. At the office of the Notary, in September 2008, the 16 heirs

were requested to sign a document, and they alleged that no one explained the contents of the documents to them. The heirs further averred that, in return for signing the document, they would receive the sum of Rs. 200 000, sum which they never received.

In fact, the document referred to the creation of a civil partnership known as the "*Société Beau Séjour*".

The deed was transcribed and registered in Volume 7144 No. 5 and the important features are as follows:

- The 16 heirs had "*parts sociales*" in the said "*Société Beau Séjour*", together with the said Parvez Maharaullee and one Bibi Nazreen Ismael;
- In consideration of their "*parts sociales*", the 16 heirs brought as "*apport*" the aforesaid plot of land situated at Coromandel, which was estimated at Rs. 5 millions; and
- The said Maharaullee, in consideration of his "*parts sociales*", brought as "*apport*" the sum of Rs. 5 millions; and
- The said Bibi Nazreen Ismael was appointed as "*gérant*" of the said "*Société*".
- On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009, the said Bibi Nazreen Ismael transferred all her management powers in the "*Société Beau Séjour*" to one Mithyl Padaruth. The heirs alleged that they were not aware of this meeting.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, in the presence of all 16 heirs and Mithyl Padaruth, it was proposed and approved that:

- The civil partnership "*Société Beau Séjour*" was agreeable to pledge the aforesaid plot of land situated at Coromandel in favour of any financial institutions so as to enable the company "Solar Watt Co. Limited" to raise funds; and
- Mithyl Padaruth was authorised to sign all relevant documents.

In their deposition, the heirs alleged that their signatures were forged in the said document dated the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

- On the 29<sup>th</sup> July, in presence of all heirs and Mithyl Padaruth, it was decided that the resolution, approved on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, be declared null and void.

While deponing before the Commission, Notary Ramphul denied all the allegations made against him and maintained that he has abided as per the law and that he has fully explained to the heirs Clémentine the clauses of the above-mentioned deed.

Lilette Fortune, Francis Clémentine, Bibi Nazreen as well as Willy Rigobert were called before the Commission to explain their involvement. Lilette Fortune confirmed that Willy Rigobert was the initiator of the searches and was one of the go-betweens the heirs and Notary Ramphul, whereas Francis Clémentine avers that right from the beginning he was not in favour of any involvement in securing the "*héritage*" to a "*Société*". Willy Rogobert put forward that he is someone "*who wants to help people*". He sustained that he needed the payment for searches, land surveying and the help of other researchers in his quest and that his clients needed to be patient even if in certain cases it would take time to retrieve information from the Archives. The Commission has been made aware that Willy Rigobert has a lot of "clients" from whom he has obtained large sums of money.

Bibi Nazreen Ismael put an appearance that she is a victim in this matter. She avers that she did not even know why she had to appear before Notary Ramphul in this case, together with the Clémentine family. She does not know if she was a "*gérant*" of the "*Société Beau Séjour*" and does not know about anything about land matters. She earns her living as a "marchand ambulant".

The Commission was surprised to learn that it was her husband, and not Parvez Maharaullee, who was present the very day she was appointed as "*gérant*" before Notary Ramphul.

After enquiry about the said Parvez Maharaullee, the Commissioner of Police informed the Commission that Parvez Maharaullee was in prison at that time and thus, could not be physically present at the office of the Notary Ramphul. He is still serving a prison sentence at the Beau-Bassin prison.

The whole matter was reported to the Land Fraud Squad.

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### **FAOULEZ/ MACCA (FILE NO TJC/L180)**

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In the case of Faoulez/ Macca, the Commission called Hugues Faoulez to depone on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010, after having heard in a previous session the version of the Macca family. In his testimony before the Commission, Hugues Faoulez avers that he requested one Maharaullee and the "Société Domaine Le Mapou" to make searches for him as regards a plot of land owned by his ancestors. He denied having ever created any company or "Société" and was not aware of same. He even denied giving instructions to swear any affidavits of succession on his behalf.

The factual background is as follows:

On the basis of a false affidavit of succession dated the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and transcribed in Volume 6658 No. 64, Hugues Faoulez, together with May Victorria Faoulez, have allegedly presented themselves to be the sole heirs of Jean Falouez and therefore, the sole heirs to his plots of land.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007, by Notarial deed drawn by Notary Arveen Ramphul and duly transcribed in Volume 6684 No. 47, the said Hugues and May Faoulez, together with one Raj Rekha, created a civil partnership known as "*Société Civile Domaine Le Mapou*".

In consideration of their "*parts sociales*", the Faoulez brought as "*apport*" three portions of land namely 120 *Arpents* in Mapou, 9 *Arpents* 14 p in Poudre d'Or and 157 *Arpents* in Mapou.

The three portions of land were evaluated at Rs. 15 millions.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007, by deed drawn by Notary Ramphul, the said Faoulez, together with Parvez Maharaullee, formed the civil partnership "*Blue Coast*". As "*apport*", the Faoulez brought a portion of land of 75 *Arpents* situated at Mapou evaluated at Rs. 6 millions.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007, the said Raj Rekha delegated all his management powers of "*Société Civile Domaine Le Mapou*" to Parvez Maharaullee.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008, by Notarial deed drawn up by Notary Ramphul and duly transcribed and registered in Volume 7237 No. 16, the "*Société Civile Domaine Le Mapou*" sold 14 *Arpents* 5 p to "*Sandy Row*" for the sum of Rs. 20 millions.

As regards legal documents in the case of Faoulez/Macca where several portions of land of the total extent of 370 *Arpents* and 46 perches are involved, three affidavits have been produced.

The first one has been drawn up by Attorney Conhyedoss and sworn by two witnesses on 03/02/2005 before the Supreme Court whereby the witnesses have stated that Jean Faoulez has passed away in 1860 and as at 2005 he had left many heirs and successors.

The second affidavit has been drawn up in the Office of Attorney M. Conhyedoss but signed by Attorney S. Ramano and sworn by two witnesses on 02/04/2007 before the Supreme Court wherein it is stated that Jean Faoulez has passed away on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1869 and as at 2007 he had left two heirs and successors. One of the two heirs has even deponed before the Commission and written a letter to the effect that he had never retained the services of Attorney M. Conhyedoss to draw up the affidavit.

The third affidavit has been drawn up by Attorney Anil Kumar Jugnauth and sworn by two witnesses on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007 before the Supreme Court wherein it is stated that Jean Faoulez has passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1824 and as at 2007 he had left two heirs and successors. It is to be noted that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> affidavits one witness is a common one.

Three Attorneys and the witnesses who had sworn the first two affidavits were summoned before the Commission. The Commission was not satisfied by the explanations given by them. The Commission had no alternative than to refer the matter to the Central C I D for investigation.

What is more disturbing in the case is that Attorney S. Ramano who had signed the second affidavit, has at the request of M. E. Faoulez and others lodged a case before the Supreme Court. In the Complaint with Summons it is stated *inter alia* that (a) Jean Faoulez has passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1825, (b) Jean Faoulez had made a holographic Will dated 12<sup>th</sup> October 1821 in which it is stated that he had no heir and had appointed Jean Caillaud as his Universal legatee (c) Hughes Faoulez and May Victoria Faoulez have along with other persons formed a "*Société*" known as "*Domaine Le Mapou*" and have brought into the "*Société*" the "*apports*" about 14 *Arpents* of land situate at Melville, Grand-Gaube.

At a certain point in time, the Commission had no alternative than to refer the matter to the Police for enquiry.

The Land Team, under the supervision of the Commissioner, Mr. Jacques David and members of the Land Fraud Squad, which secured the help of Interpol (France) and the French Embassy in Mozambique, looked into the matter closely.

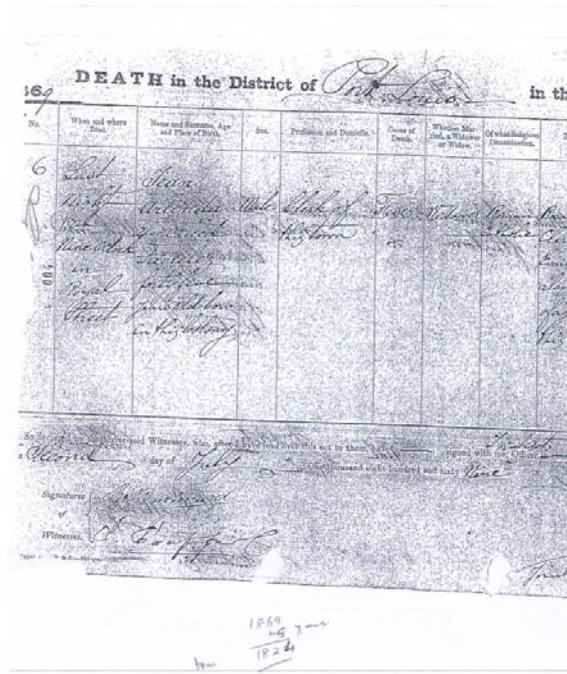
A thorough investigation has revealed that Jean Faoulez was born on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1777 in *Côte d'Armor*, France from the marriage of Jean François to Françoise Lequellec, as evidenced by documents from the Archives Department of the "*Conseil Général de Côte d'Armor*". Jean Faoulez arrived in Isle de France in 1790, at the age of 13, on board of "*La Belle Reine*" as can be evidenced by the Port-Louis Census on White population of 1803 (*Document KK2 Folio 76 + 77 Recto*).

In 1803, Jean Faoulez was a well-known "*Négociant*", having 4 male slaves and 3 female slaves to his service.

Between 30<sup>th</sup> May 1814 and 18<sup>th</sup> May 1824, he secured a lot of properties, obtained a "*concession*", and did a lot of business.

He got married on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1810 to one Adelaide Desperles. They had one son, also named Jean, who was still a minor on the death of his father.

Jean Faoulez passed away at Royal Road, Port-Louis on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1869, as same is evidenced by the death certificate bearing No. 6 of 1869 of Port-Louis. A copy of the death certificate is thereto annexed.



Jean Arlanda, also called Faoulez, contracted a civil marriage with Eudoxie Arsene Domolard.

Five children were born from the said marriage, namely: Marie Faoulez, Eudoxie Faoulez, Albertine Faoulez, Wilfrid Faoulez and Edwin Faoulez.

The above information is to be found in the Memoranda of Charges filed in two cases of the Judicial Sales before the Master's Bar of the Supreme Court and transcribed in TJ 40 No. 8 on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1878 and TJ 78 No. 54 of the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1893, respectively.

As can be proved, Jean Faoulez did leave five children.

The averment to the effect that Jean Faoulez did not leave any heir and that a niece, one Louise Belle, from Mozambique inherited all of his properties, does not stand.

In fact, Louise Belle, together with other members of her family, namely Victorien and Victorine, were the "*domestiques*" of Mathurine Michelle who lived on the "*La Ressource*" Estate at Rivière-du-Rempart. She was "*rougeâtre*", measured "*1-56 m avec une cicatrice au front et au lèvres supérieure*", as described at Reference No. T71 596-597 of the Slave Data 1826.

Being given that Jean Faoulez left 5 children as heirs, the Macca family has absolutely no share or right of succession of Jean Faoulez. The different sales of the said portion of land have given rise to several cases which have been lodged before the Supreme Court of Mauritius. The particulars of the cases are as follows:

- SCR 103347 (1/643/09) I. Koolmoteea & Ors v/s Lloyd Bowmaker (Mauritius) Ltd.
- SCR 104295 (1/389/10) M.E. Faoulez & Ors v/s MCCR Collet & Ors.
- SCR 105050 (1/84/11) Sandy Row (Mauritius) Ltd v/s Domaine Le Mapou.

All these cases were mentioned before the Supreme Court on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and have been postponed to 03<sup>rd</sup> October 2011.

The Commission wishes to place on record the help and collaboration of the Land Fraud Squad in the present case and show its appreciation of the work undertaken, particularly by K. Yogita Poorunsing (WPC 153) and Jean Joyce Roussety (PS 4299).

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### **CAPIRON (File No TJC/L/O31)**

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Henri Vignes sold to Léonel Capiron and his wife two plots of land situated at Mozambique Street and Entre-casteaux Street Port Louis. Léonel in his will left all his assets to his wife Anna Beatrice Rebecca Vignes. Anna Rebecca Vignes made a will in favour of the wife of Ange Eloi Capiron (born Vignes). She made a will in September 1953 in favour of Louise Vignes. Louise Vignes sold the land in 1929 according to deed of sale dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1929. The applicant is questioning the date of sale of the land (1929), which according to the date of the will made in favour of Louise Vignes, that is 1953, should normally be her property in 1953.

The applicant requests the Commission to contest the date of the sale signed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1929.

The whole technical land team and, in the presence of a Commissioner Jacques David, had a working session with the applicant in the presence of his son-in-law, Stephan Clain on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010.

From further information from applicant it appears that:

- The land of 400 Toises situated at Beau-Bassin belonged to the late Anna Rebecca Vignes and bequeathed to Marie Lucie Lise Vignes, the wife of Ange Eloi Capiron.
- The land of 94 Toises situated at Beau-Bassin belonged to the late Marie Lucie Lise Vignes, the widow of Ange Eloi Capiron.
- Marie Lucie Lise Vignes had no children. She died on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1969.
- According to her last Will and Testament made before Notary public Roger Hermane Louis on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1969, in the presence of four witnesses, she bequeathed all her properties to Marie Capiron.
- The will was registered on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1969.
- Consequently, Marie Lucie Lise became the owner of the two plots of land of 400 toises and 94 Toises.
- One Marie Thérèse Isabelle Capiron claimed that she is the very Marie Capiron who received the property.
- One Marie Joséphine Capiron also claimed to be the very Marie Capiron who received the will drawn up by Notary Roger Hermane Louis on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1969.

The question remains a real mystery: Who is the real Marie Capiron? Marie Thérèse Isabelle or Marie Joséphine? There is no clear answer to this very important question.

The Commission verified the files which reveal that indeed:

- Marie Joséphine Capiron sold the land of 400 toises to one Dr. Hurhangee and Lajputh Beeharry, as evidenced by TV 180/4188. Marie Joséphine Capiron passed away in 2000.
- The land of 94 toises has also been sold by the heirs.
- Marie Thérèse Isabelle Capiron also passed away in 1995.
- There are two groups of persons who claim to be the heirs and successors of late Marie Capiron.

The Commission is of opinion that it is for the Supreme Court to decide and adjudicate as to who are the heirs and successors of Marie Capiron.

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## THE SPEVILLE/CHOOOLUN CASE

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The Spéville case, although a time-consuming dossier, has been one of the most challenging. Searches all along these last few months revealed how the mechanism of fraud can work at all levels of the Mauritian society; it is neither a question of race or colour. It is only a question of the colour of the currency and the amount it involves.

The applicant, Raymond Doger de Spéville, writes that his grandparent, late Pierre Spéville was owner of a plot of land of extent of 490 *Arpents* situated in the District of Black River, place called "*Côteau Raffin*" as well as l'Ilôt du Morne. The applicant states that his family has been dispossessed of their rights on the said portion of land as nowadays the "*Société du Petit Morne*" is occupying the land.

The applicant avers that Sieur Doger de Spéville, the great grand parent of the applicant lived in Black River in a house ("*Campement d'habitation*") that he constructed on Ile-aux-Bénitiers and died on that property and his tomb is the proof that he owned the land. The said Sieur Doger de Spéville had also a "*habitation à Pamplémousses*" where his son, Pierre Spéville, lived. Pierre Spéville's mother was a slave at the service and belonging to the family. They all lived on the Spéville family "*habitation*", in Pamplémousses.

Pierre Spéville, "*un homme de couleur*" married Marie Elisa Anto. He died in 1859 and had an only son called Mylis. The latter was a "*forgeron*" living on the same "*habitation*" belonging to his grandfather at Plaine des Calebasses, Pamplémousses.

Mylis married Rosette Rogelaure and they had three children namely Hermina, Charles and Julius. Mylis died on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1909 at the age of 71.

Raymond Spéville, the applicant, who deponed before the Commission on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010 claims that Pierre Spéville was also the owner of several plots of land in Savanne and Rivière Noire, as evidenced by the "*Case hypothécaire*" and that the said land has never been sold as some of the property was leased for the cultivation of coconuts and vegetables.

The great aunt Hermina, who died at the age of 100 years and 8 months on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1967, who made several trips on that land in the Black River District, told the family how the great-grandfather used to bring all the children in "*locally-made carts*" to the island which, at that time, was accessible at low tide.

At the death of the said Mylis, who was illiterate, the family seemed to have been dispossessed by the family to whom the land was leased as it was difficult for the Spéville family to visit frequently the property as they were still living in Pamplémousses.

The Commission looked closely into this case.

After searches, TV 29 No. 46 reveals that there has been a sale before Notary Yves Isidore Jollivet made by Mathieu Wohnritz to Frederic Chardoillet of:

490 *Arpents* situated at Côteau Raffin bounded as follows:

North by habitation Case Noyale belonging to Mlle Frichot (later on, Benoni Labutte) East and South by habitation Case Noyale belonging to Frédéric d'Emmerez and

West by "*Pas Géométriques*" and the sea; and

Ilôt du Morne situated at 1000 ft. from the shore to an extent of about 130 *Arpents* plus 3 slaves, namely l'Eveillé Narcisse, Charles Boncoeur and César Fidèle.

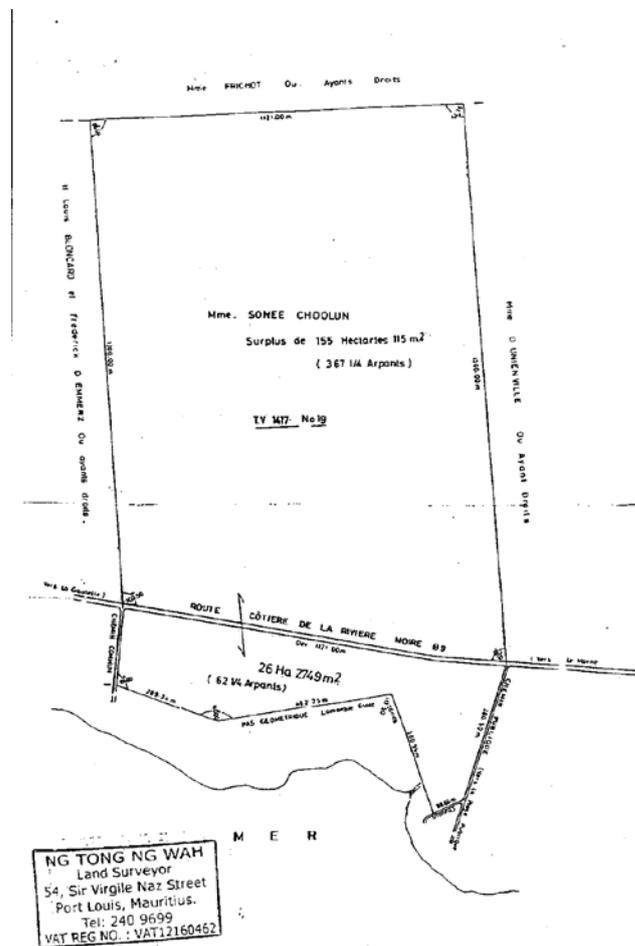
*Devant Me. Yves Jollivet et son collègue Notaire publics soussignés :*

*Fut présent :- Mons. Mathieu Wohrmitz, négociant demeurant au Port- Louis.*

*Lequel a par ces présents vendu a promis et s'est obligé garantir de tous dont :- domaines, dettes, hypothèques, privilège, éviction, revendications et de tous autres meubles et empêchements généralement quelconques à Mons. Frédéric Chardoillet, négociant demeurant au Port-Louis à ce présent et acceptant acquéreur pour lui les héritiers et ayant cause -*

*La propriété possession et jouissance :*

*De 490 A de terre situées au lieu dit le « Côteau Raffin » quartier de la Rivière Noire bornés au nord par les habitations communes sous le nom de Case Noyale appartenant ci-devant Mlle. Frichot, aujourd'hui à Mons. Benoni Labutte, à l'est et au sud par les habitations connues sous le nom de case Noy de Mons. Frédéric D'Emmerez et enfin à l'ouest par les pas géométriques et la mer.*



The 490 Arpents which belonged to Pierre Spéville

*De l'islot dit « l'islot du Morne » situés en face des biens ci-dessus mentionés éloigné de terre d'environ 1 000 et de la contenance de 130 A environ sous garantie ni recours de part et d'autre pour le plus ou moins d'étendue de terrain - sont compris dans les présentes ventes les maisons, bâtiments et dépendances et les plantations existant sur les dits terrains sans en rien excepter réserver ou retenir plus 3 esclaves nommés (i) L'éveille Narcisse cuisinier âgé de 38 ans indien (ii) Charles Boncoeur pioche âgé de 34 ans malgache et (iii) Cesar Fidele palfrenier âgé de 39 ans Mozambique et que le dit acquéreur dit bien connaître et dont il déclare être content et eu possessions par lui*

*ses héritiers et ayant cause en jouir faire et disposer de ce jour et à l'avenir comme de chose entièrement à lui appartenant au moyen des présents.*

*Les dits biens appartiennent au vendeur pour les avoir acquis savoir les esclaves de divers auxquels il en a payé le prix de ses derniers et les terrains suivant contrat passé devant Me. Jollivet l'un des notaires soussignés qu'en a garde la minute et son collègue le 10/09/1828 enregistré le 20 du sieur Lagoardette agissant au nom et comme fondé du pouvoir spécial du sieur Joseph Lousteau à qui lui appartenaient pour s'en être rendu adjudicataire à la barre du tribunal de première instance de cette île le 09/05/1825 par l'entremise du dit sieur Lagoardette fondé de son pouvoir spécial sur la vente par expropriation forcée poursuivie à sa requête sur les sieurs Julien et Charles Spéville suivant procès verbaux de mises d'enchères et adjudication en date à la fin du dit jour 09/05/1825 étant en un cahier extrait des minutes du greffe du dit tribunal.*

*Le dit Pierre Spéville avait acquis les 490A du sieur Joseph Lousteau suivant contrat passé devant Me. Guerin vivant notaire en cette île et son collègue le 16/09/1820 enregistré le 23.*

*Le dit Lousteau en était propriétaire au moyen de la déclaration faite à son profit par Me. Sabrat avocat et avoue près les Tribunaux de cette Isle le 02/09/1819 qui s'en était rendu adjudicataire pour le dit sieur Lousteau suivant procès verbaux d'enchères et adjudication définitive tranchée au profit du dit Me. Sabrat à la barre du tribunal de première instance de cette colonie le premier du dit mois de septembre 1819 par suite déspropriation force poursuivie sur le sieur Jean Nicolas D'emmerez père habitant de cette colonie à la requête du sieur Philbert Perret ansent représentée en cette île par Mons. Jacques Francois Lefèvre président du Tribunal de première instance.*

*Et le dit Pierre Spéville aurait acquis l'îlot dit L'islot du Morne suivant écrit sous signatures privée en date du 11/10/1807 déposé à l'étude du dit Guerin notaire suivant acte du 14/06/1819 du sieur Nicolas D'emmerez.*

*Le dit sieur D'emmerez aurait acquis la totalité des dits biens avec plus grande contenance suivant contrat au rapport de Me. Auffray et son collègue notaires en date du 5 pluviôse an 6. Les Sieurs Charles Francois Michelet et André Waullohen qui en étaient propriétaires, comme faisant partie des biens par eux acquis des citoyens Jean Marie Lelleivier et Pierre Michel Desseliers suivant contrat passé devant Me. Roux et son collègue le 22 Germinal an 5.*

*Desseliers et Lelleivier étaient propriétaires du dit terrains au moyen de l'adjudication qui leur en a été faite en 4 lots suivant procès verbal d'enchères et adjudications reçu par Guerin et son confrère notaires le 9 nivrose an 4. La dit adjudication poursuivie est faite sur une seule enchère à la requête de Thomas Etienne Bolgerd propriétaire en société avec Edouard Périchon.*

*Etienne Bolgerd aurait acquis les dit terrains par contrat au rapport de Me. Pelte et son confrère notaires le 23/02/1786 de Jean Lousteau fondé par procuration de Marie Anne Françoise de Joailles veuve de Louis Engelbert de Samareh à laquelle la totalité des dits terrains aurait été concédée le 25/01/1786 par les Gouverneurs et Intendant Souillac et Motais à Marbonne par acte enregistré au Bureau de l'Intendance le dit jour 25/02/1786 et au tribunal terrier le 06/02/1787.*

The title deed, dated 7<sup>th</sup> July 1820, transcribed in TV 16 No. 58, confirms the sale by Joseph Lousteau of the 490 Arpents at Côteau Raffin to Pierre Spéville of which the deponent claims to be one of the heirs.

REGISTRE des Formalités, des Actes et des Transcriptions.	DATE des Transcriptions.	INDIQUER s'il s'agit d'une acquisition ou d'une vente.	DÉSIGNATION des IMMEUBLES.	VALEUR des Transcriptions.	NOMS des vendeurs ou acquéreurs.	DATE de la transcription de la saisie immobilière.	OBS
	29 juin 1819	acquisition	terrain à la Rivière-rouge	2512	Rimmeuz		
	7 <sup>th</sup> 1820		terrain à la Rivière-rouge	1100	J. Lantier		
	27-1-77	vente	490 A env. R.N. Côteau Raffin	100,000	Z. Choolun		
	2/4/82	saïe	490 A Côteau Raffin		M. Spéville et J. Lantier		

Copy of the tampered document at the Conservator of Mortgages' Office

### TAMPERED DOCUMENT

The Spéville case could have been one of the easiest to resolve, if the Commission had not come across some disturbing elements during the searches undertaken. Indeed, after having heard Raymond Spéville on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the Commission wrote to the Conservator of Mortgages to obtain the "Case hypothécaire" of Pierre Spéville. Surprisingly, the document showed clearly that it had been tampered with.

The Commission was called upon to probe more deeply into this case in order to find out if there has been dispossession, examined all various transactions and wishes to establish whether these irregularities had not open the doors to fraud.

One Marie Yolande Andrea César, whose name was mentioned during the searches as being another claimant of the plot of land at Côteau Raffin, was called before the Commission on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011 to explain in what circumstances, she had on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1972 conferred the Power of Attorney to one Emunchul Misseer Madhoo, drawn up by late Notary Public Serge Gopee, duly registered in Reg. A383 No. 1229, to take hold of the 490 A. The deponent averred that she is one of the heirs of Pierre Spéville and had in good faith appointed the said Madhoo as her agent and proxy. While deponing before the Commission, Marie Andrea César underlined the fact that she was aware that her family possessed a plot of land but did not know the exact situation of the said land. In these circumstances, she retained the services of Counsel Madhoo as regards the land. She further averred that she never had any response from Madhoo and affirmed never having sold the land nor having agreed to any sale.

But, by virtue of a deed drawn by Notary Cooty, dated the 15<sup>th</sup> December 1976 and duly registered in Reg. A 401 No. 1956, the said Madhoo was replaced by one Harryparsad Choolun in lieu and stead in the exercise of the powers conferred in the afore-mentioned Power of Attorney.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1977, a "bordereau" was registered in Volume 1353 No. 14. If a "bordereau" is a "promesse de vente", it seemed that, in the present case, the said "bordereau" has been used a document witnessing a sale. The sale was in respect of part of the plot of land of 490 Arpents, signed by Harryparsad Choolun, acting in the name of Marie Yolande Andrea César, in dealing with one Zwalaparsad Choolun.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1977, the said Zwalaparsad Choolun sold the said plot of land to her sister, Sonee Choolun, as duly transcribed in Volume 1378 No. 5.

In 1977, Sonee Choolun applied for a development permit to the District Council of Black River as regards the plot of land. In spite of the decision of the Works and Planning Committee of the

District Council, Sonee Choolun received under the signature of one Ms. V. Sunassee, then Planning Officer of the Black River District Council, her development permit.

In 2009, Sonee Choolun stood as surety for a loan of Rs. 50 million at the Development Bank of Mauritius for the development of Qay Call Centre and Outsources Services Limited, set up by one N. M. Fokeerbux, Director, thus pledging the said portion of land.

The factual background is as follows:

- By a hand-written deed under private signatures drawn up at Quatre-Bornes and dated 29<sup>th</sup> December 1976, late Harryparsad Choolun, allegedly acting as agent and proxy of Marie Yolande Andrea César in virtue of a power of Attorney, allegedly granted by the same Marie Yolande Andrea César to one Emmanuel Misseer Madhoo and in whose powers the said Harryparsad Choolun was allegedly substituted “*s’engage et oblige la dite mandante, that is Marie yolande Andrea César, à vendre sous les garanties ordinaires et de droits*” to Zwalaparsad Choolun and which was accepted by the latter a portion of land of an extent of ‘cent quatre-vingt dix Arpents environ’ situated in the District of Black River, called Côteau Raffin”.
- It was one of the conditions of the deed referred to above and that “qu’en cas le soussigné d’une part (meaning Harryparsad Choolun) pour n’importe quelle raison quelqueconque refuserait de vendre le dit terrain à l’acquéreur aux présentes (meaning Zwalaparsad Choolun), il devra verser à ce dernier une somme de quatre vingt milles roupies à titre d’indemnité....)”.
- The said deed was registered on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1977, in Reg. C 279 No. 5040 and transcribed in TV 1353 No. 14.
- On 5<sup>th</sup> April 1977, Harryparsad Choolun (still acting as agent and proxy of Marie Yolande Andrea César) and Zwalaparsad Choolun appeared before Marcel Cooty, Notary Public and deposited the deed under private signature referred to above.
- Marcel Cooty, Notary Public, stated in the deed drawn up by him on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1977 that “une pièce qui est l’un des originaux d’un écrit sous signatures privés dit fait triple à Quatre-Bornes le 29 Décembre 1976 [...] *contenant vente par le mandataire de Madame Marie Yolande Andrea César à Mons. Zwalaparsad Choolun, d’une portion de terrain de la contenance de quatre cents quatre vingt dix Arpents environ...*”. The said «dépôt» was registered on the 14<sup>th</sup> April in Reg. A 403 No. 232 and transcribed in Volume 1362 No. 11.
- By a third deed under private signature dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1977, made in triplicate at Quatre-Bornes and transcribed in Volume 1378 No. 5, Zwalaparsad Choolun allegedly sold to Sonee Choolun a portion of land of about 490 Arpents situated in the District of Black River, a place called La Gaulette, Côteau Raffin. It has been stated in the said deed that Zwalaparsad Choolun is the owner of the said portion of land by virtue of deeds transcribed in Volume 1353 No. 14 and Volume 1362 No. 11.

The alleged sale mentioned above the conditions that:

*“la transmission du dit titre de propriété ne se fera que le jour du paiement intégral du dit solde de prix de vente de la signature du contrat authentique régularisant ces présentes...»*

*Qu’en cas le soussigné d’une part (Zwalaparsad Choolun) pour n’importe quelle raison quelqueconque refuserait de vendre le dit terrain à l’acquéreur (meaning Sonee Choolun) il devra verser à ce dernier une indemnité de la somme d’un million quatre cent mille roupies et lui rembourser la somme de Rs. 123. 000, à lui payer à titre d’indemnité».*

*Qu’au cas ou l’acquéreur (meaning Sonee Choolun) refuserait de faire la présente acquisition, toute somme versée par elle à Mons. Zwalaparsad Choolun restera acquise à ce dernier a titre d’indemnité».*

On the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1978, Sonee Choolun and the heirs of Zwalaparsad Choolun appeared before Notary Public Marcel Cooty and deposited the deed under private signatures referred to above. The said “dépôt” was registered in Reg. C 285 No. 4845 and transcribed in Volume 1417 No. 17.

Furthermore, Sonee Choolun has by a deed registered in Reg. A 507 No. 6177, given a power of Attorney to one Swee Pin Sing Fat, of Vacoas Road, Vacoas, empowering him to sell and/ or dispose of the said portion of land of 490 *Arpents*.

By another deed under private signatures, dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1980, a sale is made on a portion of land of 300 *Arpents* from the said portion of land of 490 *Arpents* to one Mohamed Khateeb Hosany. Following a “dépôt”, the said deed has been transcribed in Volume 4684 No. 44.

Finally, *Le Petit Morne Limitée* claims to have purchased the land in lite from the *Société du Morne Brabant* on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1986 as per deed drawn by Notary Marie Joseph Pierre Doger de Spéville in virtue of the deed transcribed in Volume 1702 No. 82.

While deponing before the Commission, Marie Andrea Yolande César, (*See Appendix ii*) as far as she recollects, said that she has never given a Power of Attorney to Harryparsad Choolun to sell or dispose of the land referred to above, nor has she, in any way whatsoever, authorised him to dispose of the said property, or of any part of it.

**THE BLACK RIVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Avenue des Manguiers  
Bambous  
T 452-9304 - 452-0621

**DEVELOPMENT PERMIT**

Reference: BLR/5945/97

Under the Town & Country Planning Act No. 6 of 1954 as Subsequently amended.  
Mess / Mrs / Mr / Messrs / Heir: SONEE CHOLUN

is / are hereby authorised to develop her / his / their land  
TV No. 1378/5 & 1417/19 situated at COPEAU RAFFIN

in the District Council's Area on the conditions mentioned below:  
Description of Development: ERUCTION OF A PLOT OF LAND OF AN EXTENT OF 26 Ha 2749 sq FROM A PLOT OF LAND OF THE EXTENT OF ABOUT 490 ARPENTS.

Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

N.B. 1. Before starting any construction, the above developer must apply for and obtain a building permit from the ministry of works. The building to be erected should be according to the site plan approved by the Council.  
2. This permit along with the necessary plans should be kept on site of work and produced on demand of any authorised officer of this Council.  
3. For cases of Commercial or Industrial Development applicant should apply to obtain relevant operation licences from this Council. Attention of applicant is drawn to the fact that no payment whatsoever should be made for the obtaining of this permit.

Date: 31/1/97

Black River District Council

*The Development Permit obtained from the Black River District Council in spite of non- approval from the Council*

In the course of searches undertaken by the Commission and on the basis of documents gathered, certain irregularities have been found:

- In the “*casier hypothécaire*” of Pierre Spéville, Repertoire No. 7, it was found that:

- The entry of 1977 is made before another entry witnessing seizure in 1821; and
- The entries have been modified and amended, as evidenced by deletion.

In the said “bordereau” registered in Volume 1353 No. 14, it was found that:

- There are numerous erasures without any appropriate initials;
- Where the name Zwalaparsad Choolun appears, it is neither the same handwriting, nor colour as the rest of the document;
- The mention of “Le Morne”, as the location of the said property, was erased and only further was the name “Côteau Raffin” inserted;
- The document bears two signatures of Z. Choolun which differ from one another.
- Furthermore, while the said “bordereau” mentions only 190 A., in the “*case hypothécaire*” of Zwalaparsad Choolun, the corresponding entry mentions 490 A.

Furthermore, the Commission is of the opinion that the land sold should first have been registered under the name of the forefathers of Marie Andrea Yolande César, but on the documents, it can be seen that the sale was made directly from Pierre Spéville who died in 1859 to Z. Choolun.

The two representatives of the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM), Messrs Geerjanand Prithvinath, Manager and his Assistant, P. Teeromalay, (*See Appendix ii*) who deponed before the Commission on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011, gave evidence that there was an application with respect to the loan of Rs. 50 million where the portion of land was given as surety. The representatives explained that the DBM found that there were irregular circumstances surrounding the said plot of land and therefore did not proceed with the loan. When questioned about the irregular circumstances, both Directors of the DBM stated that after queries about the site plan and title deed, the Board were not quite satisfied that the real owner of the land, as the “*Société Le Petit Morne*” had also a claim on the said portion of land.

Land Surveyor Georges Ng Tong Ng Wah, (*See Appendix ii*) who supposedly surveyed the land at the request of the Choolun family categorically denied on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011, having performed the work. When asked to explain how his name and stamp were found on the site plan submitted to the DBM, Ng Tong Ng Wah replied that he does not even know the site and had never been to Côteau Raffin. He was unable to ascertain how the stamp had been used. He avers that the site plan does not bear his signature.

While deponing before the Commission on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Mrs Koo Yuk Cheong, (*See Appendix ii*) Deputy Registrar General of the Conservator of Mortgages Office, confirmed that indeed the “*Case hypothécaire*” related to the plot of land of 490 *Arpents* belonging to Pierre Spéville, has been tampered with and that the land has, allegedly been sold to the Choolun for the sum of Rs. 100,000. And that the said entry in the “*Case hypothécaire*” related to this sale is false.

On the other hand, called to explain how a Development Permit could have been given for development on the said plot of land of Pierre Spéville, Mrs. Marie Aimée Bhujohory, Acting Chief Executive and Y. Hosenally, Chief Planner of the Black River District Council, (*See Appendix ii*) explained in details how and in what circumstances a Development Permit is given to somebody. When confronted with a copy of the Development Permit to the Choolun, both showed their astonishment and shock that such a thing could have happened being given in the present case, the whole Council, after perusal of the Choolun dossier and after having obtained the legal advice, twice rejected the request for the permit.

Vijayal Sunassee, the then Head Planner, attached to the District Council, (*See Appendix ii*) as Representative of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, who issued the Development Permit without the approval of the Black District Council, avers that she could not explain how her signature could have been on the approval letter, even if she accepted that it was indeed her real signature at the bottom of the letter.

On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011, Sanjay Choolun, who holds a Power of Attorney on behalf of Sonee Choolun, purported that he was handling the present case. In fact, Sonee Choolun who deponed



In the last paragraph of the Affidavit of Prescription, which was drawn up by Me Richard de Chazal, Notary Public, it is stated

*“that it is to our perfect knowledge that the said company “L’Anse Limited” has since the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1944 up to now occupied peacefully, publicly, continuously, uninterruptedly, unequivocally, animo domini “à titre de propriétaire” the four above portions of land.*

The Affidavit was registered on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1957 in Reg. A 332 No. 9720 and transcribed in TV 710 No. 175.

An in-depth study of the above land prescription has revealed that, in fact and truth:

- No survey plan signed by a Land Surveyor was submitted with the said land prescription.

It appears that Mr. Montocchio could also have ‘prescribed’:

- State-owned land ‘Mon Boudoir’ amounting to some 280A59P (Please refer to TV 257 No. 77 at the Registrar & Mortgage Office
- State-owned land ‘Legrand’ amounting to some 15A46P (TV 261 No. 76).
- Numerous Private-owned portions of land belonging to various small and medium landowners amounting to some 340A39P or much more.
- Company ‘L’Anse Limited’, incorporated following a deed drawn up by Me. Edouard de Keating, Public Notary, on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1944 and represented by René Mérandon du Plessis, purchased from the said Montocchio the four portions of land amounting to some 636A44P for the sum of Rs. 60,000 on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1957. It is explicitly mentioned in the title deed transcribed in TV 717 No. 1, and drawn up by Notary Public Richard de Chazal that *«Montocchio a déclaré qu’étaient aussi compris en la dite vente :*

*tous les terrains généralement quelconque sis à L’Anse Courtois dont il pourrait être propriétaire et qui n’auraient pas été inclus en la dite vente;*

*tous terrains qui peuvent être enclavés dans les terrains vendus ou qui peuvent les avoisiner et qu’il aurait pu acquérir par prescription ;*

*qu’en sus des 636A44P don’t il est question dans l’Affidavit de prescription, il existe d’autres terrains sis au même endroit dont la Compagnie L’Anse Limited est propriétaire à divers titres.»*

There have been several sales and exchanges of the said four portions of land from 1958 up to 2003.

In the light of the above-mentioned events, the Commission believes that Montocchio may have prescribed State lands “Mon Boudoir” and “Le Grand”, as well as those belonging to several small and medium land owners.

The different companies are still enjoying today the financial windfalls derived from the prescription of 636A44 perches made by Montocchio in February 1957.

The Commission without hesitation referred the matter for further investigation to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, as it believes State land may have been included in the prescription.

## VICTIMS OF THEIR GOOD FAITH

The Commission wishes to highlight two cases where people, through both good faith and illiteracy, lost their land, wealth, security and hope in everything they have been brought to believe in.

Other cases have been analysed by the Commission where “crooks”, be it “supposedly land searchers”, Notaries, Barrister-at-law, Bank and Insurance officials, “facilitators” roaming in the vicinity of the Registrar of Companies’ Building or at the Conservator of Mortgages Office, easy and complacent “witnesses” being paid some Rs. 50/100, acting as predators over their victims, leave no stone unturned to lay their hooks into poor and illiterate people.

The system, being too lenient, opens the door for well-dressed corrupt individuals to prey on innocent victims by making false promises to them.

CASE NAME: GERTRUDE (TJC/L/312 GERTRUDE Marie Fleurance born Bontende)

CASE NAME: DASANI (TJC/L/0137/DASANI Lutchmeen, born Gowreeah/SOBRUN Renouka, born Dasani)

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### THE GERTRUDE CASE

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Marie Fleurance Gertrude, the deponent, says on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2010 before the Commission that she is the owner of a plot of land of extent of 13 perches 20/100 situate at Bel Air Rivière Sèche by virtue of title deed Volume 1420, No. 26.

In 2002, both Marie Fleurance Gertrude and one Naidoo, a member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church, reached an agreement to the effect that she donated half of her land to the Church and in consideration thereof, the Church would build a concrete house for her.

The deponent was brought to the District Council for the relevant permits and, subsequently, the land was surveyed and, in the division, the Church got 7 perches and the remaining portion to the deponent.

As a result of the survey, Gertrude was brought by the said Naidoo to Notary Gilles Catherine to sign the relevant documents.

While deposing before the Commission, Gertrude, the over-80 year-old could not stop crying because she was never aware of the ordeal she had to go through because of her good faith towards her God and her Church.

She claimed that nothing happened since both parties signed the agreement and; in 2005, she queried one Lutchman, a *Pasteur* from the Church. The latter again took the deponent to Notary Catherine who informed them that he had failed to register the previous deed but would now do the needful.

The deponent has not been provided with any papers as regards the division, and the concrete house, as agreed upon, was still not built at the time she came to the Commission.

Further, Gertrude had, at her own costs, to clean the land upon the request of the District Council. She avers that the cleaning amounted to a cost of Rs. 25,000/-. She did send a letter to the Church but never received any answer.

It was the request of the deponent that either she be given her papers and the proposed house or that she be handed back her plot of land.

The Commission decided that, should the relevant evidence be adduced, the next step would be to summon representatives of the Church. The District Council should also be summoned so as to produce the relevant permits.

"*Pasteur*" Lutchman was formally asked to depone before the Commission. He presented himself to the Commission and, surprisingly, he was in possession of the land contract as well as the development permits. He promised before the Commission to do everything to honour the contract entered into between the Church and Gertrude. "*Pasteur*" Lutchman even presented a site and building plan of the building to be erected for Marie Fleurance Gertrude, promising the members of the Commission to be invited to the inauguration of the house well before Christmas day 2010.

Neither Marie Fleurance Gertrude, nor members of the Commission were invited to the promised Christmas-day inauguration of the new building to house, since nothing happened.

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## THE DASANI CASE

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Deponent Lutchmeen Dasani, born Gowreeah, declares that in the year 1989, one Deoduth Mooklall Beegun asked her to act as surety together with his son, one Veerchand Mooklall Beegun, with the SICOM. She accepted to be the guarantor of Deoduth Beegun to enable the latter to purchase a bus to work and earn a living for his family.

She was of opinion that everything was working out smoothly.

Six years, that is, on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1995, the Insurance Company, SICOM LTD., where the loan has been contracted by Deoduth Beegun, sent a letter to Mrs. Gowreeah to inform her that her property will be seized.

The deponent avers that she was not aware that the loan had been contracted by Veerchand Mooklall Beegun, son of Deoduth Mooklall Beegun, and she was also under the impression that it was a simple transaction for Deoduth Beegun to be able to get a bus to work. She avers that she was totally unaware of the amount of the loan. She avers that she has been fooled as she does not know how to read nor write.

The land was seized and sold by levy. SICOM Ltd. bought the land and the house at the bar. While deponing before the Commission in September 2010, the representative of SICOM Ltd. explained that Mrs. Dasani was quite aware of what she was doing as she was put in presence of the pledge and was given all the explanation necessary by the Attorney of the Insurance Company.

The factual background is as follows:

- In 1989, the deponent was asked to act as surety for one Mr. Deoduth Mooklall Beegun for a loan contracted with SICOM.
- The deponent claims that the sum intended was for the purchase of a bus.
- The deed of loan was signed before Notary Lallah on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1989 and inscribed in TV 1623 No. 103.
- As surety, the deponent pledged a portion of land of 50 perches situated at "Providence" which belonged to her.
- The deponent claims that she was unaware of the amount of the loan or the conditions attached to it.

The Commission raised some questions in this present case:

*Did the Deponent read the deed before signing?*

*Was the deed read over to her by the Notary?*

*Was she made aware of the terms and conditions of the deed?*

*Did she know for what amount she stood as surety and for what purpose the loan was taken?*

In the loan document, it can be found the mention “*read and approved*” written by the deponent in her own handwriting.

The deponent claims she was told that the loan was for the purchase of a bus.

*Did the deponent check whether the bus was bought and what actions did the deponent take?*

In 1995, the deponent was informed that her land would be seized in case of non-payment

*What actions did she take following this letter?  
Did the deponent contact the Beegun or SICOM?  
What actions were taken to stop the seizure?*

In 1997, the portion of land was sold by adjudication.

*What actions were taken between 1995 and 1997? What happened afterwards?  
Was the deponent represented during the proceedings? What was her stand?  
Did the deponent initiate any legal actions against SICOM or the Beegun?*

From searches undertaken by the Commission, the loan was taken to enable Deoduth Mooklall Beegun to build a concrete building on a portion of land.

In September 1995, the deponent was informed by SICOM that due to non-repayment of the loan, the property pledged would be seized;

On the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1997, the land was sold before the Supreme Court by adjudication and it was SICOM which purchased the land for Rs. 200,000/-;

The loan was given for the construction of a concrete building as shown in the agreement dated the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1989;

It was one of the terms of the agreement that the construction should be completed by nine months;

SICOM never ascertained whether the money was actually used for construction purposes.

Furthermore, while perusing the documents that Mrs. Dasani had signed and which were produced by SICOM Ltd., the Commission discovered that, indeed, Mrs. Dasani could not sign her name on the said document, but, instead, she had her thumbprint.

The Commission wonders how Mrs. Dasani could have written the words “*Read and approved*”...

The representative of the Insurance Company accepted, during his deposition, that the lady was illiterate.

Neither Deoduth Mooklall Beegun nor his son, Veerchan had ever been called to reimburse the sum received from SICOM Ltd.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE COMMISSION FINDS

- The Commission has observed that affidavits have been sworn by witnesses who do not know the deceased person and the persons who are entitled to apprehend the estate and succession of the deceased person. These persons are called "*professional witnesses*" and swear affidavits upon payment of a sum of money. These persons are found lurking near the offices of Attorneys and Notaries and offer their services whenever needed.
- The Commission has also observed that some affidavits have been drawn up without verifying the Civil Status Acts. The dates of deaths are inaccurate and the numbers of the Civil Status Acts are fictitious. However, due to the new Rules and Regulations made by the Conservator of Mortgages, the affidavits drawn up, sworn and transcribed nowadays are accurate, well-drafted and contain precise information.
- It is a matter of concern that there is no Registry or Record kept for Wills and Testaments. Law Practitioners, heirs and successors and members of the public cannot know the existence of any Will and Testament left by a deceased person.
- This state of affairs gives rise to doubtful and inaccurate affidavits being drawn up. At times the legal heirs and successors are left out. At other times, the persons who have been bequeathed with properties are discarded in the affidavit.
- In such cases the parties are engaged in long and costly legal battles which take several years before the Court pronounces on the subject.
- The Commission has come across Wills and Testaments in which the Notary or the party making the Will has failed to mention the reserved portion of his properties, '*Quotité disponible*'. The testator has also failed to mention that he has other children. All the properties have been bequeathed to one person, instead of bequeathing the share which he can dispose of according to law.
- Representation has also been made to the Commission concerning the sale/donation/transfer of all properties by the father/mother to one/two children only, thus depriving the other children of a share in their parents' property.
- In such cases the heirs / successors who have not received any property or who have been discarded deprived of their rights, have to enter cases before the Supreme Court against their own brothers/sisters in order to get their shares either in cash or in kind.
- It has been observed that some Notaries would not draw up such deeds. However, it is a matter of regret that others Notaries still draw up such deeds which eventually leads to animosities between among heirs.
- The coming into force of the *Code Napoléon* (Amendment) Act No 8 of 1980 on the 8<sup>TH</sup> June 1980 has simplified the succession laws and has brought new hopes. Acknowledged natural children and legitimate children have the same shares and rights. It has also given to surviving spouse a share in the deceased property. The surviving spouse has also been attributed a right of *usufruct* on all the movables effects and the house which was used as the main residence of the family.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

- It is high time that the Authorities find ways and means of keeping a record of all Wills and Testaments. One such way could be to make an entry in the "*Répertoire*" kept by the Conservator of Mortgages of the existence of a Will and Testament. This is possible for the authentic Wills and Testaments which are drawn up by two Notaries in the presence of the two witnesses or by one Notary in the presence of four witnesses.

- The registration concerning “*Testament olographe*” and ‘*Testament mystique*’, as provided for in Articles 969 and following of the *Code Civil*, cannot be done and this will give rise to problems in future, unless an amendment is made to the existing laws.
- The Notaries should ensure that the conditions laid down in Articles 913 and following of the *Code Civil* are observed fully.
- The Commission hopes that new laws should be implemented in order to protect, the spouses, the children, the family, the society and the country.



CHAPTER SIX

**PRESCRIPTION**

**ACQUISITIVE PRESCRIPTION:**

**A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE**

## INTRODUCTION

The Commission has laid down below the current legislation and practices regarding prescription. The purport of this chapter is to enable people to grasp the rationale behind the concept of prescription.

However, the Commission wishes to point out that the foregoing should not be considered as a reference for prescription of land.

1. Prescription is one of the means of acquisition of property which arises at the end of a fixed delay. It has been defined as : *“L’écoulement d’un certain délai au terme duquel elle transforme en une situation juridique définitive et inattaquable une situation de fait qui s’est prolongée.”* In the same way, prescription provides as a means to give legal validity to a set of events which have taken place over a definite period of time.
2. Although, as found in numerous cases before the Commission, prescription may lead to unfairness, when an owner is being deprived of his property, the rationale behind the law of prescription is to punish the owner who has failed to exercise any control or *entretien* over his property for such a long period. This lack of control or supervision does not entail occupying the land, but also to monitor that no third party is in occupation of the land. It is this lack of diligence or *“négligence grave”* that is sanctioned by our Law.
3. It must be borne in mind that prescription entails some advantages which cater for the true cases of unfairness. In fact, in most cases, prescription serves to strengthen a claim to ownership without depriving anyone. For example, in Mauritius and Rodrigues, many people are owners of plots of land but for one reason or another, these people do not have any documents, such as title deeds, witnessing same. By way of prescription, these people, although rightful owners from the very start, shall be in a position to prove their claim of ownership. *“La prescription alors ne change rien à la réalité juridique; elle ne fait que protéger l’ayant droit régulier en remédiant au défaut de preuve.”*

## RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS

### 4. *Civil Code (Code Civil Mauricien)*

**Art 2219-1 al 2 CCM :** « La prescription acquisitive est un moyen d'acquérir la propriété ou ses démembrements par l'effet de la possession. »

**Art 2229 CCM :** « Pour pouvoir prescrire il faut une possession continue et non interrompue, paisible, publique, non équivoque, et à titre de propriétaire.

Pour prescrire en matière immobilière, la possession doit, en outre, présenter un caractère apparent, manifeste par des signes matériels extérieurs, tels qu'une construction, un mur bâti servant de clôture, des plantations.»

**Art 2232 CCM :** «Les actes de pure faculté et ceux de simple tolérance ne peuvent fonder ni possession ni prescription.»

**Art 2233 CCM :** « Les actes de violence ne peuvent fonder non plus une possession capable d'opérer la prescription.

La possession utile ne commence que lorsque la violence a cessé.»

**Art 2235 CCM :** « Pour compléter la prescription, on peut joindre à sa possession celle de son auteur, de quelque manière qu'on lui ait succédé, soit à titre universel ou particulier, soit à titre lucratif ou onéreux.»

## EVOLUTION IN THE LAW

5. The Law regarding prescription has always found its source in the *Civil Code*. The Law has been amended twice, once in 1979<sup>1</sup> and the second time in 1983<sup>2</sup>. The time required for prescription has evolved from 20 years to 30 years and exterior signs of occupation added in Art. 2229 CCM.

## GENERAL CONDITIONS

6. Article 2229 CCM clearly lays down the conditions required to invoke prescription. It is to be noted that the conditions set down in Article 2229 CCM are cumulative.
7. *Possession continue et non interrompue*: the person should be in possession of the land in a continuous manner for the full period required for prescription. It is to be noted that by virtue of 2235 CCM, for the purpose of computation the time delay, subsequent owners may add to the time prescribed by the precedent owner. For example, an heir who has continued to occupy of a portion of land was entitled to rely on his father's acquisitive prescription and his own subsequent occupation.<sup>3</sup> The same principle applies for sales. It has been held that "*where a portion of land has been sold to different parties who occupied it, in turns, as owners, the periods of occupation can be added to make up the time required for acquisitive prescription to have effect.*"<sup>4</sup>
8. *Paisible*: "this condition entails that there are no interferences from people who claim that they are the rightful owner by any judicial means. For example, if an action is entered by someone against the possessor, this will suspend the time of prescription. In the same way, if someone else uses the plot of land as the rightful owner and interferes with the possession, the occupation cannot be termed as "paisible".
9. *Publique*: "this entails that the possession of the occupier should bear exterior signs of ownership. The occupier should act in an ostensible manner in so doing as owner of the land. For example, the occupier should erect buildings or cultivating crops or setting up of walls."
10. *Non équivoque et à titre de propriétaire*: This condition provides that the occupier should act as the rightful owner and in an unequivocal manner. The occupier should possess the *animus domini* which has been defined as "*L'animus est la volonté chez le possesseur d'agir comme il le fait parce qu'il se veut titulaire du droit auquel correspondent normalement ses actes matériels de maîtrise, de maniement, d'usage, de jouissance, ou de transformation. La légitimité de cette intention n'est pas à prendre en considération, faute de quoi la possession n'aurait aucune valeur par elle-même [...]*"<sup>5</sup>
11. It is worth noting that good faith is not required to prescribe under Article 2229 CCM and: further, is not an element of possession itself. As such, a person can prescribe a land, although he knows he is not the owner of the land and even if he knows the identity of the real owner, save that he abide by the conditions laid down above.

## PROHIBITION OF PRESCRIPTION

12. It is provided by Law that certain land or immoveable property cannot be subject to prescription. The first exception is State Land<sup>6</sup>, formerly known as Crown Land. This principle has been reaffirmed in various cases before the Supreme Court.<sup>7</sup> Please note that originally the Law applicable before 1991 was the Crown Lands (Exclusion from

<sup>1</sup> The *Code Napoléon* (Amendment) Act 37 of 1978.

<sup>2</sup> The *Code Napoléon* (Amendment No. 3) Act 9 of 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Vide *Dadool v. Jeetdeal 2006 SCJ 3*.

<sup>4</sup> *Solange v Aubeeluck 1955 MR 43*.

<sup>5</sup> Encyclopédie Dalloz, Droit Civil Vo. Possession at note 17.

<sup>6</sup> Section 35 of the State Land Act (1991): "Notwithstanding article 2227 of the Code Napoleon or any other enactment, State Land is imprescriptible".

<sup>7</sup> *La Société des Cascadeurs v. The Ministry of Works 1995 SCJ 15*: "One cannot acquire by prescription any right over State property."

Prescription) Ordinance 1945. Therefore, prior to 1945, crown lands were subject to prescription.

13. By virtue of Art. 2226 CCM, "*On ne peut prescrire le domaine des choses qui ne sont point dans le commerce.* » Being considered as such are, amongst others, sea, air, etc
14. Another prohibition to prescription is laid down in art 2236 CCM<sup>8</sup>. The operative word in this Section is "*précarité*". This word means that the occupier has been put in possession by virtue of the consent of the real owner. As such, the notion of possession required for prescription is vitiated and cannot be the basis of a prescription. The occupier is only holding the property on behalf of the actual owner. The most current examples are land leased or given by agreement. It has been held by the Court that "*la précarité n'est pas un simple vice de possession, c'est quelque chose de bien plus grave, c'est l'absence de possession: la possession précaire n'est qu'une simple détention de la chose, c'est-à-dire une situation juridique parfaitement distincte de la possession.*"<sup>9</sup> Further, by virtue of art 2237 CCM<sup>10</sup>, the subsequent heirs of a «détenteur précaire» cannot prescribe as their occupation is considered defective from the very start. The same principle applies even after the end of the lease period. It was considered that "*Les fermiers et locataires ne peuvent prescrire la chose donnée à bail ou à loyer, soit pendant la durée du bail, soit après son expiration. Il en est ainsi même si le bailleur n'est pas propriétaire de la chose : en ce cas, la possession du fermier ou du locataire profite au bailleur. Si le défunt n'était que détenteur, son héritier aura la même qualité. Ainsi les héritiers de celui qui a possédé pour autrui ne peuvent prescrire, si la possession primitive était viciée, l'héritier succède aux vices de la possession de leur auteur.* »<sup>11</sup>
15. It must be noted that even though the heirs cannot prescribe, if the land in issue is sold to a third party, the buyer can start to prescribe as from the date of sale.<sup>12</sup>
16. However, the *Civil Code* itself has brought an exception to the rule laid down in paragraph 14 above. By virtue of Art. 2238 CCM<sup>13</sup>, should there be *interversion* or *opposition au propriétaire*, the detention is no more considered as *précaire*. What is contemplated by Art. 2238 CCM is the situation where the occupier *précaire* acts as the rightful owner and challenges the owner on the issue of ownership. It has been held by the Court that "*La contradiction opposée aux droits du propriétaire, qui est la seconde cause d'intervention prévue par l'article 2238, peut résulter de tout fait ou de tout acte impliquant, de la part du détenteur à titre précaire, la volonté de posséder en maître et de contester à l'avenir le droit de celui pour le compte duquel il possédait. Il ne s'agit pas d'une simple négation du droit de propriétaire ; il ne suffit pas que le détenteur agisse, en fait, comme s'il était propriétaire, par exemple, en faisant des démolitions ou des constructions ; il faut qu'il y ait contradiction opposée au propriétaire, c'est à dire qu'un conflit s'élève directement entre eux sur la question de propriété.* »<sup>14</sup>
17. The next exception is the issue of *communiste* that is where a plot of land is owned jointly by several persons. This may be the case where several heirs inherit a plot of land or when there is *indivision* in ownership. The rule is that a co-owner cannot prescribe against the other co-owners.<sup>15</sup> The same exception, as provided in paragraph 16 above, applies. It has been held that "*il faut, de la part de celui qui prétend acquérir à titre privatif, des actes*

<sup>8</sup> Art 2236 CCM: "*Ceux qui possèdent pour autrui, ne prescrivent jamais, par quelque laps de temps que ce soit. Ainsi, le fermier, le dépositaire, l'usufruitier, et tous autres qui détiennent précairement la chose du propriétaire ne peuvent la prescrire.* »

<sup>9</sup> Nemdharry v. Rasmally 1955 MR 353.

<sup>10</sup> Art 2237 CCM: "*Les héritiers de ceux qui tenaient la chose à quelqu'un des titres désignés par l'article précédent, ne peuvent non plus prescrire.* »

<sup>11</sup> Parmessur v. Seeyave 2000 SCJ 348.

<sup>12</sup> Art. 2239 CCM : « *Ceux à qui les fermiers, dépositaires et autres détenteurs précaires ont transmis la chose par un titre translatif de propriété, peuvent la prescrire.* »

<sup>13</sup> Art 2238 CCM : « *Néanmoins, les personnes dans les articles 2236 et 2237 peuvent prescrire, si le titre de leur possession se trouve interverti, soit par une cause venant d'un tiers, soit par la contradiction qu'elles ont opposés au droit du propriétaire.* »

<sup>14</sup> Parmessur v. Seeyave 2000 SCJ 348.

<sup>15</sup> Bakooa v. Proag 1956MR 453.

*extérieurs et contradictoires, agressifs et persévérants qui, par une manifestation non équivoque, mettent l'associé en demeure de défendre son droit ; autrement il est censé représenter la communauté et jouir, en vertu de son titre, aussi bien pour elle que pour lui-même »<sup>16</sup>*

## DELAY FOR PRESCRIPTION

18. As provided for in Art. 2261 CCM, the length of time required for prescription is 30 years. There is the shorter delay of 10 years which shall not be dealt with in this Report. The delay is computed in days and the prescription shall be effective on the end of the last day.
19. Any person applying for prescription shall state, and give evidence of the duration and the starting date of the prescription, failing which the claim for acquisitive prescription will be rejected.<sup>17</sup>

## INTERRUPTION OF THE DELAY

20. The *Civil Code* has provided for circumstances that shall put an end to the period of occupation prerequisite for prescription. These are as follows:

**Art. 2242 CCM :** «*La prescription peut être interrompue ou naturellement ou civilement.*

**Art. 2243 CCM :** *Il y a interruption naturelle, lorsque le possesseur est privé, pendant plus d'un an, de la jouissance de la chose, soit par l'ancien propriétaire, soit même par un tiers.*

**Art. 2244 CCM :** *Une citation en justice, un commandement ou une saisie, signifiés à celui qu'on veut empêcher de prescrire, forment l'interruption civile.»*

21. For the purpose of Art. 2243 CCM, what is required is that the occupier is deprived from the possession of the land for a minimum period of 1 year be it by the rightful owner or a third party.<sup>18</sup> This principle is also explained as : *“la prescription acquisitive, reposant à la fois sur la possession prolongée d'une chose par celui qui prescrit et sur l'inaction de celui contre qui la prescription court, cette prescription cesse de courir, soit que le possesseur cesse de posséder, soit que le propriétaire de la chose sorte de son inaction et réclame la restitution de sa chose ou obtienne une reconnaissance volontaire de ses droits »<sup>19</sup>*
22. Another limb to Article 2243 CCM is when the occupier abandons by his own will the possession of the land. There is no requirement of 1 year, as provided above, but the material part is that the occupier chooses not to act as owner; therefore there is no *animus domini*.<sup>20</sup> However, mere non-usage does not constitute abandonment.
23. Another means to stop the delay is to initiate legal proceedings against the occupier. By legal proceedings, we mean any action brought before a Court of Law challenging the ownership and also services of a *mise en demeure*. The day the action is entered or the notice *mise en demeure* is served, shall constitute the effective date of interruption.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Bakooa v. Proag 1956MR 453.

<sup>17</sup> Amjad v. Ramloll & Anor 2002 SCJ 219.

<sup>18</sup> Vide Rioux v. Esplacathose 2003 SCJ 248.

<sup>19</sup> Dalloz, Vo Prescription note 129.

<sup>20</sup> Vide supra paragraph 10.

<sup>21</sup> Vide Foolman v. Chaytoo 1972 MR 232.

24. It is noted, however, that the principle laid down in paragraph 22 above shall have no effect if the plaintiff withdraws his case or his claim is rejected by the Court.<sup>22</sup>
25. Any interruption for the reasons given above result in nullifying the delay which has already lapsed. It has a retrospective effect and creates the legal situation that the occupier has not occupied the land for the purpose of prescription. However, nothing prevents the occupier from starting anew the prescription, provided the conditions laid down in Article 2229 CCM are met.

## SUSPENSION OF THE DELAY OF PRESCRIPTION

26. The suspension of the delay of prescription shall not be confused with interruption of the delay. The difference between the two notions is that suspension is a mere temporary interruption of the prescription where the time elapsed of prescription is still valid and shall continue upon resumption of the prescription.
27. Prescription cannot run against minors, incapacitated majors and spouses.<sup>23</sup> Hence, prescription started against a “majeur” shall be suspended upon his death and where the heir is still a minor. The prescription will resume at the majority of the heir.<sup>24</sup> However, viewing it from the other side, minors can prescribe through their legal administrator.<sup>25</sup> Therefore the rule as regards minors is that prescription can be made by a minor but not against a minor.
28. French jurisprudence also provides as a cause of suspension the “*impossibilité d’agir*”, although it has restricted its application. Dalloz explains: “*Lorsque l’impossibilité d’agir où il s’est trouvé provident, non pas de sa personne mais des circonstances, rien ne suppose a ce que les tribunaux tiennent compte de l’obstacle et puissant décider que la prescription a été suspendue.* »<sup>26</sup>
29. There remains the situation where someone is not aware of his rights over a plot of land. There has been a lot of debate on this issue in the French jurisprudence but it seems that the latest decisions go to the severe approach inasmuch as it has been decided that “*mais certains plus récemment ont exigé l’erreur invincible ou même posée en principe que l’ignorance de l’existence d’un droit ne constitue pas une impossibilité absolue d’agir équivalent à la force majeure.*”<sup>27</sup> This argument has never been tested before the Mauritian courts and it would be interesting to have a judgment on this issue.

## CONSEQUENCES OF PRESCRIPTION

30. If the occupier was the rightful owner as from the start, prescription would merely serve as evidence of his title. The person does not need to produce any title deeds but only show that the prescription has given him the status of owner.
31. If the occupier was not the rightful owner, he acquires the ownership by way of prescription. This does not only serve as a defence against claims of ownership by other parties, the prescription gives him all the rights accrued to a owner including the right to sell the land.

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<sup>22</sup> Vide Art. 2247 CCM.

<sup>23</sup> Vide arts. 2251, 2252, 2253 CCM.

<sup>24</sup> Ramjeeawon & Ors v. Matapallut 2003 SCJ 138.

<sup>25</sup> Jankoo v. Gopaul 1992 MR 90.

<sup>26</sup> Dalloz Vo Prescription note 220.

<sup>27</sup> Dalloz Vo Prescription note 225.

32. To be able to exercise all the rights of an owner, the owner by prescription should abide by the Affidavits of Prescription Act 1958. Following such transcription, the prescription will act retrospectively as to the first date of occupation.
33. However, even when all the conditions of the Affidavits of Prescription Act 1958 are met, the title deed of the owner by prescription can always be challenged by any party. The delay for such an action is 30 years.
34. In a case before the court, the owner by prescription will have to adduce evidence to prove that he has occupied the land with all the requisites of prescription for 30 years. The opposing party will have to adduce evidence to the contrary and the Judge shall decide upon the merits of the case on a balance of probabilities.
35. Since the "title" can be challenged within 30 years, any sale of the land should bear the mention that the buyer has been informed that the land bought has been obtained by prescription and hence can be challenged.
36. Since prescription is concerned with "*possession utile*" and not ownership, even if the rightful owner produce a title deed, this shall not suffice to nullify the prescription provided the owner proves his occupation with all the requisites of acquisitive prescription.<sup>28</sup>

## AFFIDAVITS OF PRESCRIPTION LEGISLATION

As stated above in paragraph 32, each prescription needs to be transcribed.

The whole procedure of prescription rests upon the swearing of an affidavit of prescription. Basically, an affidavit of prescription is a legal document sworn by two witnesses who affirm that the applicant has occupied a portion of land with all the requisites of acquisitive prescription. In the spirit of the law, the swearing of a false affidavit is a criminal offence and as such, an affidavit is a document that can be relied upon. However, cases before the Commission have revealed that this has not prevented the emergence of so-called "*témoign de complaisance*", who, after payment of money merely affix their signatures on the said affidavits and, more often than not, without even understanding the contents thereof. This system has been encouraged by the complicity of other members of the judicial systems such as attorneys or clerks. It is not uncommon to find the same persons as witnesses on a large number of affidavits.

For the system to function in a just and fair manner, there need be two witnesses who have personal knowledge of an occupation of 30 years and the manner in which the occupation has been exercised. The Commission fails to see, save providing harsher penalties and an explanatory campaign, how to prevent these abuses and in any case, the power of control would be limited.

The second flaw of the system is the plan accompanying the memorandum of survey and affidavit of prescription. Each affidavit of prescription must be accompanied with a memorandum of survey with a plan in conformity with the Land Surveyors Act, showing the location and extent of the land subject matter of the prescription. Experience has shown that in certain cases, there is neither mention of adjoining neighbors or occupiers, nor the state of the land when it was surveyed.

The combination of these two flaws results in the fact that it is an easy task to obtain a false affidavit of prescription and a sufficiently vague plan which, as already stated, and as a result, a legal title.

The governing law is the Affidavit of Prescription Act 1958 which provides for the mechanism to swear affidavits of prescription.

Affidavit of prescription, which is defined as an affidavit witnessing the acquisition by prescription of immovable property, has for effect to give legal validity to occupation with all the prerequisites

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<sup>28</sup> Khadaroo v. Dorson 1980 MR 45.

of acquisitive prescription, i.e., when someone has occupied a portion of land with all the requisites of acquisitive prescription, the only way to have a legal valid title is by means of an affidavit of prescription.

It is to be noted that an affidavit of prescription is not a clear and unequivocal title since it can always be challenged in Court. For example, in case of sale, the Notary is bound to inform the buyer that the seller's title is one of affidavit of prescription. Further, anyone feeling deprived by a prescription have 10 years to challenge the prescription before the Supreme Court.

## PRECONDITIONS

The Law provides for three basic conditions in order to swear an affidavit:

- the affidavit shall contain a mention of the situation, description and exact boundaries of the immovable property forming the subject-matter of the affidavit, and the open market value of the property at the time of completion of the statutory period for prescription;
- the affidavit shall contain the date on which the occupation started and shall be accompanied by a site plan showing the precise location of the property; and
- the affidavit shall contain, in respect of the party alleged to have acquired the immovable property by prescription -
  - his names in small letters and his surname in capital letters;
  - his date of birth, the birth certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the birth was registered; and
  - where applicable, his date of marriage, the matrimonial regime governing the marriage, the marriage certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the marriage was registered.

## PROCEDURE

- An affidavit containing the particulars mentioned above shall be sworn by two witnesses who shall, under oath, affirm that the person has occupied a portion of land with the prerequisites of acquisitive prescription;
- When the affidavit is sworn, in order to give it legal validity, the affidavit of prescription needs to be transcribed at the Office of the Conservator of Mortgages. The applicant shall cause an application to be made;
- The application shall be made at the Office of the Conservator of Mortgages and every application for the transcription of an affidavit of prescription shall be accompanied by:
  - (a) the duly registered affidavit of prescription; and
  - (b) a memorandum of survey by a Surveyor setting out the situation, description and exact boundaries of the immovable property forming the subject matter of the affidavit;
- The applicant shall cause a Notice of the application to be published once in the *Gazette* and on consecutive days in 2 daily newspapers in Mauritius, of which one at least shall be approved by the Conservator; and
- The Conservator shall enter in a special register kept for the purpose and known as the Register of Affidavits of Prescription the particulars of every affidavit of prescription

received by him for transcription and the said register shall be available for inspection by members of the public.

### **OBJECTION**

- Any person claiming to be the owner or part-owner of, or to have an interest in, the whole or part of the immovable property in respect of which an affidavit of prescription has been sworn, may, within 3 months of the last publication of the notice, object to the transcription of the affidavit of prescription by serving upon the Conservator and upon the applicant a notice setting out the grounds of his objection;
- The Conservator shall forthwith enter in the Register of affidavits of prescription particulars of any objection received by him as well as a mention of the date of service of the notice of objection;
- Any interested party may, within 3 months of the date of service on the Conservator of a notice of objection, apply to a judge in Chambers for an order setting aside the objection; and
- Where, after hearing the parties and later considering the grounds on which the objection is based, the judge is of opinion that the objection is frivolous and unjustified, he shall make an order setting aside the objection; he shall otherwise refer the parties to the competent court.

### **TRANSCRIPTION OF THE AFFIDAVIT OF PRESCRIPTION**

- The affidavit shall be transcribed only when the objection is withdrawn by notice served on the Conservator or there is presented to the Conservator either an order of a judge in Chambers setting aside the objection or a certified copy of the judgment of a competent court deciding the issue against the objector; or
- In the alternative where no objection is received by the Conservator or where any objection received has been withdrawn or disposed of against the objector, the affidavit of prescription' shall be transcribed on production by the applicant to the Conservator of the copies of issues of the *Gazette* and of the newspapers containing the publications prescribed and on payment of the transcription fees.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- No deed, whether authentic or under private signatures, witnessing the sale or transfer of, or the constitution of any privilege, mortgage or servitude or right of use over, an immovable property the title to which is derived from acquisition by prescription witnessed by affidavit of prescription, shall be valid unless the affidavit has been transcribed, and a reference to the particulars of such transcription is endorsed on the deed.
- The above refer only to the transcription of an affidavit of prescription, be it the requirements or the objection, the substantive law of prescription is to be found in the civil code.
- The delay for the objection does not at no time preclude any interested party to contest the validity of the prescription itself before the Supreme Court.

## THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

1. After having reviewed the numerous laws regarding prescriptions, the Commission recommends to do away with the whole procedure of affidavit and to provide for an alternative way to effect the transcription of prescribed plots of land.
2. It is the opinion of the Commission that the appropriate Protocol would be to exercise more control upon the averments of a person alleging to have prescribed a plot of land. There should be an institution which will ensure the truth of the said averments and which shall have the powers to investigate upon the veracity of these averments. Further, before the same institution, an appropriate memorandum of survey would be required with the possibility of putting questions to the Surveyor.

To summarise, any person who claims to have occupied a plot of land, with all the requisites of acquisitive prescription, shall have the burden of proving same, with at least two witnesses to corroborate the claim. Be it the applicant or the witnesses, they would face a panel who would query them on their averments.

Although this system would not be foolproof, it will minimize the risks of frauds.

Also, it must be borne in mind that the creation of a single institution may result in it being overburdened, which might hamper a quick and efficient process. This is the reason why it has been deemed appropriate to share this role amongst our Local Authorities, although the possibility of one central institution remains.

Below is a proposal for a new system where the affidavit of prescription has been replaced by a prescription permit. To cater for these, the Affidavit of Prescription Act can be amended or simply repealed and the following added to the Local Government Act.

To conclude, the legislator needs add the appropriate penalties for non compliance or frauds.

1. There shall be established in every Local Authority, a committee to be known as the Prescription Committee (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee"), which shall consist of *the Chief Executive or his representative* as Chairperson, the head of the planning department, the legal adviser of the Local Authority, a government Land Surveyor and a representative of the Ministry of Housing and Lands
2. The Chief Executive shall also designate an officer of the Local Authority to act as Secretary to the Committee.
3. The authority for execution of the Committee shall be the local authority of the respective town or district where the land to be prescribed is situated.
4. The Committee shall disseminate clear and transparent guidelines for the application, processing and issue of prescription permits.
5. The Committee shall examine, process and approve applications for prescription permits without having to refer the matter to the Council and such approval shall be deemed to have been made *under the authority of the Chief Executive*.
6. The Minister may make regulations to prescribe such other conditions as he deems necessary for the purposes of this Act. Any regulations made under Section (6) may provide that any person who contravenes them shall commit an offence, and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding [...] rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [...] years.
7. Where any member of the Committee or his spouse or next of kin has any direct or indirect interest in relation to any matter before the Committee, he shall -

- a. disclose, at or before the meeting convened to discuss that matter, the nature of his interest;
  - b. not take part in any deliberation or any decision-making process in relation to that matter;
  - c. A disclosure of interest made under this Section shall be recorded in the minutes of the committee; and
  - d. Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of this Section shall commit an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees and to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years.
8. All applications for prescription permits shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive who shall refer same to the Committee within a period of fifteen days. The Committee shall hold a hearing within 3 weeks of the end of the period of 6 months as provided by Section 12.
9. The application for a prescription permit shall:
- a) state the date on which the occupation started and the open market value of the property at the time of completion of the statutory period for prescription;
  - b) be accompanied by a memorandum of survey by a surveyor setting out the situation, description and exact boundaries of the immovable property forming the subject matter of the application and the adjoining properties; and
  - c) in respect of the party alleged to have acquired the immovable property by prescription
    - i. his names in small letters and his surname in capital letters;
    - ii. his date of birth, the Birth Certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the birth was registered, his National Identity Card; and
    - iii. where applicable, his date of marriage, the matrimonial regime governing the marriage, the Marriage Certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the marriage was registered;
10. Notice of the application shall be published once in the Gazette and on 3 consecutive days in 3 daily newspapers in Mauritius, of which two at least shall be approved by the Chief Executive. Further, the notice shall be affixed on the notice board of the relevant Local Authority.
11. The notice shall be in the form specified in the Schedule.
12. Any person claiming to be the owner or part owner of, or to have an interest in, the whole or part of the immovable property in respect of which an application for a prescription permit has been made, may, within 6 months of the last publication of the notice required under Section 10 object to the granting of the application by the Committee by serving upon the Chief Executive and upon the applicant a notice setting out the grounds of his objection.
13. In the event of an objection under Section 12, the Committee shall not proceed with the application unless it is ordered to do so under Section 15.

14. Any interested party may, within 3 months of the date of service on the Chief Executive of a notice of objection under Section 12, apply to a judge in Chambers for an order setting aside the objection.
15. Where, after hearing the parties and later considering the grounds on which the objection is based, the Judge is of opinion that the objection is frivolous and unjustified, he shall make an order setting aside the objection and refer the application back to the Committee or he shall otherwise refer the parties to the competent Court.
16. At the hearing of the Committee -
  - a) The applicant shall be accompanied by -
    - i. at least two witnesses; and
    - ii. the land surveyor who has signed the memorandum of survey referred to in Section 9 (b).
  - b) The Committee shall examine the applicant and the witnesses present as to
 

The date and length of occupation;

    - i. The nature of the occupation; and
    - ii. The knowledge of the witnesses as regards the applicant's contention.
  - c) The Committee may examine the Land Surveyor on his memorandum of survey.
  - d) The Committee shall, if it deems necessary, summon any other witnesses more specifically, the owners of adjoining plots of land.
17. The Committee shall within 4 weeks of the hearing referred to in Section 16, grant or refuse to grant a prescription permit. In case of refusal, the Committee shall give notice in writing to the applicant setting out the reasons thereof.
18. Any applicant for a prescription permit under this Act may, within 30 days of the date on which the notice of refusal under Section 17 is given, apply to the Judge in Chambers for a summons calling upon the local authority to show cause why his application should not be granted.
19. An application to the Judge in Chambers under Section 18 shall be made in the presence of the local authority and the Judge may grant any application on such terms and conditions as he may deem fit or reject it.
20. The prescription permit shall henceforth be drawn up, on a prescription deed, by an Attorney or a Notary.
21. No person shall cause a prescription deed to be transcribed nor shall the Conservator of Mortgages transcribe a prescription deed unless -
  - a) he is the holder of a prescription deed issued under this Act authorising him to do so;
  - b) he has an order of the Judge granting the application and has subsequently drawn up the prescription deed; or
  - c) he has a certified copy of the judgment of a competent Court deciding the issue against the objector which has subsequently been drawn up in the prescription deed.

22. A prescription deed shall be transcribed on production by the applicant to the Conservator of the copies of documents mentioned in Section 21 and on payment of the transcription fees.

23. No deed, whether authentic or under private signatures, witnessing the sale or transfer of, or the constitution of any privilege, mortgage or servitude or right of use over, an immovable property the title to which is derived from acquisition by prescription witnessed by a prescription permit, shall be valid unless the prescription permit has been transcribed, and a reference to the particulars of such transcription is endorsed on the deed.

24. Any person who draws up a deed in contravention of Section 22 shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding [...] rupees.

25. The transcription of a prescription permit shall not confer on any party any rights on any immovable property which but for this Act such party would not have possessed.

### **THE COMMISSION FINDS**

The Commission is of opinion that Notarial deeds witnessing the acquisition by prescription of landed property should bear the same conditions as laid down in the proposed Affidavit of Prescription Act, more fully described above..

As per the Prescription of Landed Property Act 41 of 1969 - November 1969 and amended by RL 4/253 - 24 April 1982, someone who is acquiring land by prescription needs not to swear an affidavit of prescription, but has to comply with the other conditions. The procedure remains the same.

The amendments in the Affidavit of Prescription Act, as proposed by the Truth and Justice Commission, would thus apply *de facto* to the Prescription of Landed Property Act.

### **THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS**

The Commission recommends that the Prescription of the Landed Property Act be repealed which will thus prevent any confusion as to the procedure of prescription.



CHAPTER SEVEN

**LAND REFORM  
LEGAL PERSPECTIVES**

## LAND REFORM - LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

Land is the habitat of Man and its myriad and complex use of it is crucial for human survival. It is the source of all material wealth, be it food, clothing, fuel, shelter or precious stones. We live on the land and from the land, and to the land our bodies or our ashes are committed when we die.

Many members of the animal kingdom have a fundamental drive to stake out and possess territory. Evidence for this is seen in all societies where groups of individuals establish their own areas of defensible space.

Where land is plentiful and can be obtained by clearing jungle or woodland, with no concern for the future, the administrative machinery needs only be rudimentary, but whenever the society reaches a level at which competition for the land begins to arise, land control must be introduced.

In the earliest beginnings, all societies regarded land as belonging corporately to the social group, whether this was a tribe, village, lineage or family. This concept is eloquently expressed in the much quoted saying of a West African Chief:

*"Land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless numbers are still unborn."*

Land is finite in extent and permanent by nature, but the ownership and extent of the rights associated with it change.

*"Land is the most fundamental resource upon which society relies for its very existence. This is the one resource which cannot grow in size unlike any human and other physical resources. Thus, it is of utmost importance that this resource be optimized to support economic growth, provide social stability and underpin sustainable resource development in Mauritius".* (Hon. Abu Kasenally, Minister of Housing and Lands, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011).

All along, while studying the documents and deeds submitted to the Commission, it has been noted that the Deeds Registration which prevails in Mauritius is a system for registering documents, but not necessarily registering title to land.

A deed does not prove who owns the land; it only records an isolated transaction. The information in the deed may be inconsistent with previous transactions. Apparent consistency may be the result of copying from a previous deed that itself was erroneous.

In many countries, the deed registering system has been abandoned in favour of a new system of registration of title supported by a Cadastral Map. The advantages may be listed as follows:-

1. Better basic records management, including better administration and accounting arrangement.
2. Standardization of forms and procedures to expedite the routine processing of documents.
3. Physical improvements to record keeping and documents storage so that there is easier access.
4. The use of microfilm for both archiving and retrieving of data.
5. Computerisation of the abstracts of Titles to provide quicker access to information.

The Government is aware that the present system is no longer able to respond to the needs of a modern State. For two years, it has initiated a Land Administration and Valuation Information Systems (LAVIMS) project as a first major part of an ongoing land reform programme.

A landowner should never be encouraged to think that a map can be a substitute for boundary marking anymore, and that the negotiation of his title can rid him of the responsibility of looking

after his land. When rights to land were transferred by a public ceremony performed on the land itself, there was little scope for uncertainty or mistakes. Boundaries were self-evident to the witnesses, and any doubtful points were cleared "*in situ*". When, however, land came to be transferred merely by a document in writing, it was no longer certain that the land component in the transaction would be physically pointed out in the presence of witnesses and in any case, some form of written description was needed for inclusion in the document.

The best boundary wrote S. Rowton Simpson "*is still the boundary which speaks for itself and requires neither map nor survey to prove it.*"

Instead, Surveyors in private practice abuse survey reports and claim fees for memoranda of survey. These result in 'surveys' which are not binding on the parties and should not be admitted in Court. Survey Reports are undertaken by Land Surveyors for the purpose of determining the extent and acreage of land.

With the implementation of the LAVIMS Project, certain fundamental reforms should be envisaged. Professor P. F. Dale rightly pointed out that:

*"the Cadastral Surveyor and the Survey organization which he serves both lie in the field of land information. The rationalisation of this role requires a re-appraisal of the content of land survey education and a change of attitude towards the responsibilities of the Government Land Survey department. An understanding of land must be put into the education of the Land Surveyor; the mandate of the Survey Department must be extended to permit to coordinate the acquisition, processing and presentation of all land information as required for planning and development. Only then will boundary surveys be seen in their proper perspective."*

In the new Cadastral Act, a Disciplinary Board to sanction wrong doings and malpractices of Land Surveyors will go a long way towards restoring public confidence.

Ideally, there should be one single agency to perform the various land management functions, such as survey, registration, valuation, planning, engineering surveys etc. In practice, however, it is difficult to alter existing arrangements, sanctions established by law, for which there are historical and political reasons.

The survey profession, itself, is perhaps coming to the close of a period of profound change and these changes are quite fundamental. Previously, there were few changes in technique that could be easily absorbed into the traditional philosophy of land surveying. Surveying is of such a nature that it now requires a radical change in ideas as to what land surveying is all about, the basis of its underlying philosophy and the educational background needed to support it.

There are three distinct areas where recent developments in surveying technology have created a need for radical change in outlook:

- (1) Electronic Magnetic Distance measurements techniques ranging from the short distance infrared devices to the very long base Interferometer (VLBI).
- (2) Satellite technology both for position fixing and thematic purposes.
- (3) Digital techniques for both the acquisition of data and its storage and subsequent processing.

The basic principle of registration of title is that the document, when properly worked out and maintained, will unambiguously define the parcel, reveal its owner (person, body corporate, persons in co-proprietorship or proprietorship in common) as well as the conditions and limitations (interests, rights, mortgages, lands, charges, easements and other encumbrances) vested for the time being in the person and attached to his ownership. In such a system, the land parcel affects "*the transference of primary attention for the mobile, mortal, mistakable persons temporarily possessing or claiming rights over patches of the earth's surface to the movable, durable, precisely definable units of land affected and the adoption of these as the basis of record instead.*"

The main objective of the registration of title is to spare persons, dealing with registered land, from the trouble and expense of going behind the Register, in order to investigate the history of their author's title and satisfy themselves of the validity. That end is accomplished by ensuring that anyone who purchased '*bona fide*' and for value, from a registered proprietor and then enters his deed of transfer or mortgage on the register, shall thereby acquire an indefensible right notwithstanding the infirmity of the author's title. Registration of title gives finality and does away with the repeated, imperfect and costly examination of past title. It removes the possibility of '*bona fide*' mistakes as to the past titles or the existing burdens affecting the land. It removes the ever-present possibility of fraud by duplication or suppression of deeds. It gives State guaranteed safety and that positive security against adverse claims which the system of conveyancing by deeds cannot give.

The existing legislation does not indicate whether an interest, for which an instrument has not been transcribed, does or does not exist. Interest in a property can actually be created which runs contrary to each other. Transcription does not affect the creation of such interests; it merely makes them "*maintainable*" against each other in Law and to ascertain whose interests prevail; the parties would have to "*go to law*". In the case of a registration of title, an interest is registered only if it is in order, and until it is registered, it does not exist. There can thus be no conflicting interests registered and, consequently, there is no occasion for parties to "*go to law*".

Presently, a document is registered in the absence of the interested parties. In the new registration of title, no instrument will be registered unless the owner is present and proves his Certificate of Title. Similarly, no instrument involving a change in the identity of a parcel, such as sub-division and sale of parts, will be registered, until the plan affecting the change has been deposited with the relevant Authority responsible for lands and new documents of title for the resulting new lots have been prepared, registered and interference with the former document of title.

No amendments to boundaries are to be accepted unless it is based on a proper survey supported by plans of acceptable standards and satisfaction to the Commissioner of Lands.

## **FOR A BETTER METHOD OF REGISTRATION OF TITLE OF LAND**

### **THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS:**

1. Grouping together of all activities now concerned with land title matters into one Central Authority.
2. The introduction of the principles of title to land and the creation and maintenance of a Cadastral Map.
3. To avoid duplication of staff and work, the Central Authority should be housed in one building.
4. The Cadastral Map will be a map compiled at a sufficient large scale to show clearly each parcel in the territory. This also applies for Rodrigues Island.
5. Surveyors' field-notes will be retained. All plans, field-notes and computations should be properly filed and numbered.
6. The use of microfiches and microfilms should be introduced to archival existing land registration volumes and other archival documents such as concession plans.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**LAND UTILISATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

In the early French period, the land policy was geared towards agriculture, the policy of gentleman farmer, a series of estates dotted all over the island. Only a small percentage, however, was put to use.

The term "Crown Land" probably originated with the purchase of the island by the French Crown from the Compagnie des Indes in 1765 for a price of around 12,8 million *francs*. By that year, about 85,000 hectares of land had already been conceded, although they had to be reunited to the Crown with the Royal take-over.

However, if by 1770 the conceded (private) land stood at some 25,325 hectares (60,000 *arpents*) against 85,000 hectares in 1765, in 1790, there were already some 156,136 hectares (369,918 *arpents*) of private holding against 26,490 hectares (62,761 *arpents*) of mostly bare lands as Crown property.

The situation regarding land tenure became even more erratic by 1804, which showed that out of some 70% of concession land, representing 132,000 hectares (312,734 *arpents*) of the island, some 26% had already been cleared and were being put under agriculture.

After 1810, the British Colonial Government had to take stock of Crown and privately-held lands. Three successive surveys were undertaken in 1814, 1816 and 1830.

	1814	1816	1830
Conceded land (with title deeds)	340,812 <i>arpents</i>	311,812 <i>arpents</i>	315,903 <i>arpents</i>
Private lands where title deeds had to be reviewed		27,649 <i>arpents</i>	
Unconceded or unconcedable lands, including Crown Land	Port- Louis Area + Surrounding Mountains	87,254 <i>arpents</i>	116,765 <i>arpents</i>

Source: Summary Data from Land Surveys, 1814-1830.

The Colonial Government initiated a series of small land acquisition in the capital mainly for the road network and construction. Apart from the Government's own uses, Crown land had been disposed of through private and auction sales, leases and free "*concessions*" (Grants) of small extents. Furthermore, in order to tighten control, the Colonial Government started to implement some of the provisions of the two "*Arrêtés*" of General Decaen - (*Arrêté* No. 83 of 1805 which was designed to act principally as a check on unrestrained land clearances) and (*Arrêté* of 5<sup>th</sup> May 1807, wherein are defined, amongst others, the inalienability of the *Pas Géométriques* and the prices to be put on land "*concessions*"). So the British decided, as from 1815, that land had to be granted by public auction only.

Nevertheless, this decision was not strictly followed as private sales continued, whilst some "*concessions*" still remained free in consideration of the social status of, and services rendered by, the potential beneficiaries.

The take-over by the British Colonial Government was mostly characterized by the pattern of use of

establishment of a monocrop economy between 1815 and 1861 which brought about dramatic changes in the agricultural land on the island. This policy disrupted the ratio between cashcrop and foodcrop production which had existed under French Administration.

The first 50 years of British rule brought about an irreversible situation - with the setting up of more than 300 sugar factories - whereby large extents of native forests had to be cleared, which resulted in important socio-economic changes: the development of the harbour and opening of trade facilities, the start of indentured immigration, the increase labour requirements, the creation of the Chamber of Agriculture in 1853, followed by the establishment and spread of railway communications in the 1860s for sugar transport, the acquisition of more lands for the railway network which lasted till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The expansion of Sugar Industry was, however, checked by the outbreak of malaria in 1868, followed by the upsurge of serious sugarcane's pest and other diseases. As from 1870s, there ensued a slump in sugar prices as a result of the strong competition from sugar cane development in Cuba and Java and the beet sugar in Europe. The Sugar Industry tried to react with a restructuration programme in order to improve its technical efficiency; this led to centralization, with the creation of sugar companies and factory modernisation. Many factories had to close down; some localities had to be abandoned, thus leading to mass exodus of the population toward the Central Plateau.

The Colonial Government had to exercise stricter control over the utilization of Crown and forest lands. Ordinance No.18 of 1874 was amended by Ordinance No.15 of 1875 to make better provisions for the protection and disposal of Crown Lands and *Pas Géométriques*; free grants and private sales of Crown lands were therefrom prohibited and all sales had to be by public auction. The same Ordinance decreed that Crown lands became imprescriptible.

The 1880s saw the emergence of the small planters community with the first "*Morcellement*" of private lands mostly sugar estates . This policy gathered momentum, increasing steadily till the 1920s, with the result that small planters owned some 33,770 hectares, that is, 45% of the land under sugar. The Wilberforce Report of 1911 brought in the creation of the Cooperative Credit Societies in 1913, with the object of providing crop loans to the small sugarcane planters at reasonable rates of interest.

#### **STATE LANDS TO INDIVIDUALS GROUPED IN SMALL HOLDINGS**

While lands continued to be granted on lease to large and small planters for cane cultivation, aloe fibre and for hunting grounds, it was not before the early 1960s that Crown land - later on State lands - were allocated to individuals grouped in small holding Cooperative Societies. This was a major departure in the Government policy which started, in fact, before the Independence era. The objectives were three-fold:

- To boost the production of sugar and vegetables;
- To create job opportunities in the agricultural sector for small entrepreneurs cultivating tea and other crops;
- To give access to land to a wider range of people engaged in agriculture, thereby democratising land tenure.

In line with this policy, plots of land were allocated, in different parts of the island, to Cooperative Societies for sub-letting to their members. The area allocated to members as sub-leases ranged between 1 to 3 *arpents*. At the start, these plots were allocated for cane cultivation. Later on, other plots of land were given on lease for vegetable cultivation as well. Around the year 1959/60, following the possibility of tapping underground water, State lands located in the coastal regions, hitherto left idle for lack of precipitation, were rendered cultivable, thanks to the tapping of underground water, especially in the North and East of the island by the Irrigation Authority.

#### **TEA SMALL HOLDING SCHEME**

The Small Holding Project, a most significant development, was implemented in the context of the tea-growing small holdings scheme to diversify agricultural activity away from sugar. The project, in fact, started in 1959, when large areas of forest land were cleared and planted with tea in the Midlands valley. On reaching maturity stage, the tea gardens were then parceled out into plots ranging between 1 to 3 *arpents* and allocated to individual members of the society. The first Tea Marketing Cooperative was registered with 150 lease-holders at Midlands.

Other areas in the Midlands valley were devoted to tea cultivation, namely at Rivière-du-Bois, La Pipe, Canelière and Vuillemin, totaling around 2,700 *arpents*. Former labourers, engaged in the cultivation of tea plots, working in the Tea Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, were allocated on a priority basis to such tea plots and operated under the ambit of the Tea Credit and Marketing Co-operative Societies.

The project which, by the year 1980, comprised around 5,500 *arpents* of land being exploited by 3,100 beneficiaries, proved to be successful. Unfortunately, the fall in the price of tea on the world market (operating through London) rendered tea cultivation uneconomical and plots of land under tea were reconverted into plantations sugar cane and other crops, with or without the same beneficiaries of the original plots.

#### **ALLOCATION OF STATE LANDS FOR OTHER TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY**

Other plots of land were allocated on the same basis to planters grouped in Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Credit Societies at Belle Mare, Palmar, Bel-Ombre, Plaisance North, and La Ferme St. Martin for onion, potato and other vegetable crops. Such projects have proved beneficial in that the bulk of the onion crop is produced on such lands, while production of vegetables remained important to meet the country's requirements. In 1984, 25 *arpents* of land were, for the first time allocated to pig-breeders grouped in the Plaisance Pig Credit and Marketing Co-operative Society. Each sub-lease, being '*bona fide*', pig-breeders who resided in the outskirts of the township of Beau-Bassin/Rose-Hill received notice to stop pig-breeding in the sub-urban areas. This project, consisting of 25 pig-breeders, is responsible for around 40% of national production of porkers, a remarkable feat in itself.

Between 1881 and 1904, the Colonial Government was involved in a vast acquisition programme and purchased some 27,534 *arpents* of land, mainly in the watershed regions of Plaines Wilhems, Moka and Savanne. Following the recommendations of Gleadow in 1904, further acquisitions were made in other districts up to 1930, thus bringing some 12,597 *arpents* more under Government control. Gleadow reported that these acquisitions ended up at times in the Court, owing to either non-compliance of the former owner or dispute over valuation and compensation.

Other areas were acquired under the La Nicolière and La Ferme Schemes (1944), the Pilot Land Settlement Schemes (in the early 50s), Richelieu (1934), Mare Anguilles (at Choisy, in 1963 for tea) and at Mon Bois (1967, for tea and fodder plantations). Moreover, lands were reacquired for non-agricultural purposes, mainly for the extension of educational infrastructures, the development of internal and external communications for the improvement of the road network and the establishment of Plaisance Airport, the Cyclone Rehousing Programme, after the passage of cyclone Carol for low-income groups.

Following the Independence of Mauritius, all land acquisitions were determined by existing economic constraints and social development: education, housing, rehabilitation, after cyclone Gervaise.

The new Government focused its attention on: rehousing schemes, the extension of Primary and State Secondary Schools in 1968, communications improvement with the creation of the First Highway Project, the Northern Entrance Road, Relief Roads to the North, the Phoenix-La Vigie-Mahébourg Road, better control on the main agricultural sectors, mainly sugar cane and tea, through the acquisition of the Rose-Belle Sugar Estate and the Nouvelle France Tea Estate in 1973, and the acquisition of land for the Plaine-des-Roches Airport Project (which has been shelved), while reclaiming, at the same time, land from the sea in the Mer Rouge area for harbour development.

It is worth-mentioning the remarks made by the Chairman of the Fact-Finding Committee, Jairaj Ramkissoon, on Crown Lands and *Pas Géométriques*, in his findings in June 1985:

*"Although this book (The Domaine Book) has served as a comprehensive catalogue of Crown Lands for the past half-century, it has some limitations". He adds: "No system has been developed so far to rationally complement and convey the dynamics of all land transactions of Government. The approach since 1934, which might have been worthwhile in the shortterm was simply to make hand-written entries and adjustments (for example, following an exchange and sale of land) on a few copies of the Domaine Book."*

The FFC highlights "*shortcomings*" of the Information System which suffers from some deficiencies:

- Manual, sometimes incomplete and inconsistent;
- An absence of a regular, periodical up-dating and evaluation;
- A lack of data on lands considered as "domaine public";
- No link with a Master Plan;
- A high reliance on the personal knowledge, experience and memory of Surveyors;
- Hence an archaic, and in practical terms, extremely time-consuming system to retrieve, process and analyse.

## CHAPTER NINE

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### LAND DISPOSSESSION

The setting up of the Truth and Justice Commission has created high expectations within the Mauritian population at large. Different people had different interpretations of the true mandate of the Commission, particularly as far as land is concerned. Most of those who presented themselves before the Commission were of the opinion that the TJC would do the utmost to retrieve the land that their ancestors might have possessed at different periods of our history. While others thought that they would be compensated for the land they probably owned and which they have lost. This perception has, moreover, been emphasized from certain quarters who have led people to believe that the Commission has been created, first and foremost, to take back large portions of lands, especially from sugar estates, and to undertake an equitable redistribution among the less privileged and those lower on the economic and social ladder.

Very few people were aware of the fact that the mandate of the Commission was to inquire into how people had been dispossessed of their properties and by what means.

Following findings of the Commission, which has probed deeply into the history of slaves and indentured descendants, it has been found that people have lost their land due to their inability to establish their claim or prevent people from acquiring their land through prescription and illegal means.

During the whole French occupation, the slaves had no right to hold land. Those who were emancipated and who managed, through enormous sacrifice to obtain plots of land, lost these due to legislation in force which prevented them from enjoying their rights.

The hearing sessions, meetings, interviews and research of the cases submitted from 2010 to 2011 have helped the Commission to better understand the system and to draw the relevant conclusions, thus paving the way for recommendations.

The Oral History Project research (See *ORAL HISTORY OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES Part 1, Volume 3*), commissioned by the Truth and Justice Commission to document and preserve the memories and views of people who consider themselves as slave descendants, surveyed the collective memory of the people who have a particular knowledge of the history, culture, lifestyle, heritage and traditions of slaves, ex-slaves and their descendants. The survey, which covered the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues, Agaléga, Chagos aimed, amongst others, at uncovering the **“Causes of landownership and causes for loss of land”** by the descendants of ex-slaves.

People from different parts of Mauritius were interviewed and a sample of answers is given here. When interviewed, the respondents from lower Plaines Wilhems answered convincingly:

- *“Many families have lost their lands”- (R5);*
- *“Lost land my grandma Bhugaloo, a Creole. Her father came from India, had land from la Louise to Bassin. It was lost” - (R8);*
- *“My wife’s parents had land but they lost it. They did not care about land or had too many debts. Out of debts I could have lost my land. My children have built on that land - (R12);*
- *“We have lost land from dad’s in Pointe-aux-Piments” - (R13);*
- *“There was Teco family who lost hundreds of Arpents of land that Medine has*

taken from them”- (R14);

- “I know someone who has mortgaged his land for friends and it was sold to the bar and it was lost. If you have a land, you should not sell it. It’s not good to rent houses all your life. It’s important to have you own house”. (R10);
- “In Belvédère where I was born, my ancestors had allowed Hindus who had come from India to settle on a piece of their land. After that, these people stole their land- (R11);
- “My mum and dad had land, but my cousins stole those lands. We also lost lands in Curepipe. Before his death my grandfather gave a land contract to one of my aunts and told her to give it to me. One of my cousins stole the contract and now her sons are building houses on that land. Once my mother was called because there would be sharing of Simpson lands, she did not go”.- (R19);
- “We have lost a lot of land. Creoles have lost a lot of land. My grandmother had land in Ste Croix but lost it during the racial riots in 1968”.- (R20 );
- “My grandma father came from India, had land from la Louise to Bassin. It was lost”.- (R23).

The families of 10 out of 25 respondents have lost their lands.

Those from East and South-East (Flacq and Grand-Port Districts) related the same:

- “She claims that her great grandfather was given land (around 10 acres) by the owner of Sans Souci Sugar Estate as he was the guardian of the weighing Bridge. But she doesn’t have any document as no one in her family ever had any document. In the past, people even used to take permission from her grandfather to grow ‘filao’ on the land. Her brother still lives on the plot where the bridge was found. However, some years back, the land was being sold by a “courtier” upon the request of FUEL Sugar Estate. Even the small plot of around “140 toises” where she lives with her sisters and brothers has been sold to someone living in Rivière du Rempart. She is facing a legal battle. She claims that all her generations have lived on this land. She blames FUEL Sugar Estate to sell a land that didn’t belong to them. My mother has also lost her land in St Julien d’Hotman. I also know the Lamarque family who now lives in Port-Louis, who have lost 75 arpents of land, which is currently being occupied by the sugar estate”. - (R1);
- “Respondent says that her grandparents had land in the eastern part of the island. But he never managed to get precise information about its location to claim it”. - (R2);
- He explains that his mother had land around St Julien d’Hotman but the land was lost with time. Respondent also explains how in the past, people use to stay on land without having any document to prove their ownership. Some did manage to get their “bordereau” to claim their land. In other cases, the sugar estate owners simply cleared bare or unoccupied lands and planted sugarcane on it. Sur to lack of financial resources, the owners never managed to claim back their lands. - (R3);
- “I know the Tai family of Flacq who had vast portion or around 100 arpents of land in Bel Etang. The elders didn’t inform the upcoming generation about this land and it became unoccupied. The sugar estate had land on each side of the Tai property. First, they built a road across the unoccupied land. Little by little they cleared further land until they became the owner as no one is claiming the land. The Aza family also faced the same. When they claimed their land, the sugar estate in return claimed for much compensation for the money they invested in the land”. - (R3)

- *“My father-in-law has lost a land in Olivia. He had bought the land. He even has the title deed, but the sugar estate didn’t allow him to claim the land. I have handed the contract to the notary. My lawyer told me to give up even though I paid him Rs. 3000”. (R5);*
- *“I have a land which stretches from Trou D’eau Douce till Palmar, but “tablisma” had planted sugarcane on it. I even had my all my documents”.- (R6);*
- *“My family, the Charlot had lots of land, but the sugar estate has grown sugarcane on it. They were too careless. The Whites took away the land”. - (R7);*
- *“My mother has lost her land in Komason. My father- in- law lost his land in Carreau Banane. They were too focussed in enjoyment. For Rs. 45 and a “farata, curry banana ek curry coq”, they lost two ‘arpents’ of land”. - (R 10);*
- *“In Camp Marcelin, there was much land that belonged to Creoles. But the sugar estates have taken the land from them”. (R11).*

Nine respondents claim to have lost land.

In most cases, the sugar estate owners have cultivated sugarcane on these lands. Due to lack of education and financial resources, they have not managed to get back their land. According to them, the whites were financially too strong to fight against and justice is too expensive to afford and with growing age the respondents have even grown weaker.

The surface of the land that was lost is very important ones.

Research also revealed that the slave descendants were given land without any document to prove ownership. With time, they simply had no document to prove that they own the land which was being sold.

Some respondents are of opinion that the lack of education of their grandparents is also attributed for the lost of land.

The issue of land dispossession was also raised in the interviews West and South-West (Black River and Savanne Districts) with almost all the informants pointing out that the slave descendants lost their land.

Almost all the informants pointing out that their family have lost their land, either to the sugar estates or to members of other ethnic group or more rarely to their own kins. They were dispossessed of their land because they were illiterate or negligent. The surface of the land that was lost is very important ones. Had the respondents still owned them today, this would certainly have been an excellent way to better their future and overcome their poverty.

Some claim to have title deeds.

But, *“Creoles have lost their family tree. They have lost their names and have been given other ridiculous names. They have no Chamber of commerce, no economic centre”. - (R5)*

How do they react towards such loss of identity and properties?

- *“There are still many families from slave ancestry who don’t even have a house today. Indians came for sugar cane field work and they had priority to have lands. Creoles were left behind. They struggled but had nothing and still have nothing. Creoles are those who don’t have houses. The land they lived on was not theirs. They lost it. Many families have lost their lands. We must do research. I have moved 14 times in my life because of cyclones. Today I have a small cité house. Mother bought it*

*after cyclone Gervaise. I have lived in that house for 33 years, but we don't possess it fully because we are still paying for the land. There were 80 houses; these were the first houses to be built after Gervaise (Lakaz letaz - Storeyed House). It was a "sample". People have become owners of their houses 50 years after Carol. Housing is a serious problem. Some children cannot buy land, it is too expensive. And there are too many people on the list". - (R6);*

- *"Slavery had an impact on us. This is the history of my ancestors, they were living in their country, they worked, risked their lives, fought, lost their loved ones. To be healed from that, it needs time. They liberated themselves, created their language, and invented their music to fight the harshness of life. Sega is the intelligence and sweat of our ancestors to regroup and express the hardships of life. Their descendants still suffer from these wounds. They had no one to advise them as indentured labourers had. The French colonists educated the children they had with slaves but there were barriers between those categories of descendants. They are not liberated at 100% today. There are not enough advisors today. I have three children. I want to advise them for a job. Who will I turn to know about that? How to help orientate them professionally? Creoles that have succeeded do not help others. Other communities do that". - (R9);*
- *"Poverty is a consequence of slavery".- (R12 and R13);*
- *"As slave descendants, we have inherited nothing, no land, no economic power. 80% of land belongs to white people. Indians are organized since 1913; they had experience in economic development. Creoles did not have that experience. They were destitute". - (R16);*
- *"Consequences are hard - My biggest suffering is in the lack of self esteem. Because my father was mazambik, my mother's family rejected him. Creoles still have disdain for themselves. He cannot accept himself. It's a bad start in life. It has been hard for slave descendants, because the slave system is an economic system. The Catholic religion is the official religion of this system. 15 articles on Code Noir talk about the Catholic Church as a partner of this system. It is still damaging the descendants, by stigmatization. You remain tikreol for life whatever successes you have". - (R14)*
- *"Slavery is not the same as indentured labour - slaves did not have a salary - he has been snatched from his country and brought here". - (R16)*
- *"Long ago, we accepted totally and passively our marginalized situation. People had categorized us. There was reproduction of class and work, especially for boys who had to do their fathers' job. We were limited. Now there is emancipation.- (R8)*

Dispossession has indeed occurred throughout different periods and through different means and highlighted either under the headings of "**DISPOSSESSIONS**" at Chapter 5 or more profoundly under "**PRESCRIPTIONS**" at Chapter 6.

The sample of cases under review under the heading of "**Land - A Source of Conflicts**" and a few cases which have been more closely studied, namely the **Clémentine** (File No TJC/L/0142), **Faoulez/ Macca** (File No TJC/L180) and **Capiron** (File No TJC/L/O31), the **Spéville/ Choolun** case, as well as the **Guibies/ Pailles** case and the **Gertrude/ Dasani** case (*Gertrude Marie Fleurance, born Bontende - File No. TJC/L/312 - ; Dasani Lutchmeen, born Gowreeah - File No. TJC/L/0137*) in Mauritius and the **Bégué** case, in Rodrigues have been combined to show how people can be so easily victimized, even if laws exist to protect one and all.

In fact, people can easily be dispossessed of their properties, more so by a system which opens the

door to all sorts of malpractices on the part of certain professionals called upon to protect the interests of one and all. It is even easier to prescribe a plot of land whereby a Notary has simply to fetch two witnesses for a mean Rs 100 to swear an affidavit of prescription. But, it is extremely difficult for someone, without sufficient financial means who wants to safeguard his rights. The hurdles are set so high. All those who have been dispossessed of their land should, in the actual system, have recourse to a land surveying, establish his family tree, secure the services of a Notary and an Attorney to prepare and plead his case in Court. The larger the extent of land, more costly becomes the bill for surveying; the longer the case remains on the Register of the Court roll, the more they have to pay. The case of **Louis Chérubin (Karl) Lamarque** - (File TJC/L/0048) is an example.

All those who came to the Commission were people who did not have sufficient financial means to put up a fight, whereas those who already had a case in Court have been, during years, making enough sacrifice to find the necessary support to continue the legal battle. The Court cases are also analysed in Chapter 4.

Research is time consuming and strenuous.

This has given rise to a particular trade: that of "*Récupérateur de terres*", who, in fact, are mere swindlers. Many deponents made reference to more than one of these "*Récupérateur de terres*" who have not only received huge sums of money to undertake searches, but have simply taken possession of all documents, after retrieving them from the Archives, found the land and sold it to third parties. Moreover, these people have easy access to official documents, tamper these documents and use them to fraudulently deprive the real owners of their properties. The **Jean Albert Jerome** - (File TJC/ L/0070) as well as the **Spéville/ Choolun** issue is a showcase amongst all analysed by the Commission.

Research work is even more strenuous concerning claims related to the sugar estates/companies.

Several families continue the fight against the sugar estates/ companies in or out of the Court or against the system of prescription: The **Tancrel** (File TJC/L/ 0003), **Kisnorbo** (File TJC/L/ 0004), **Lebrasse** (File TJC/0009), **Ramphul** (File TJC 0047), **Harmon** (File TJC/L/0015), **Webb** (File TJC 0046), **Ram Nauris** (File TJC/L/0027), **Toulet** (File TJC/L/0153), **Preaudet** (File TJC/L/0161), **Laridain** (File TJC/L/0158), **Babylone** (File TJC/L/1231), **Roméo** (File TJC/L/0227), **Bégué** (Rodrigues case), **Seetul** (File TJC /L/0110), **Beeharry** (File TJC 0115), **Ujodha** (File TJC/L/0125), **Chedumbrum** (File TJC 0138), **Aunacha** (File TJC 0144), **Moolchand** (File TJC/L/0156), **Dhunnoo** (File TJC/L/0173), **Crouche** (File TJC 0180), **Magon** (File TJC/L/ 0194 - 0314), **Jaddoo** (File TJC/L/0197), **Bago** (File TJC/L0102), **Ramkhalawon** (File TJC/L0202), **Goodur** (File TJC /L/0210), **Naraisse** (File TJC/L/0201) or **Ragoo** (File TJC/L/0212), among others.

Some of them have, during years, been confronted with the problem of non- access to their ancestors properties due to the fact that these plots of land are found in the areas occupied by sugar estates/ companies. In order to reach out these plots of land, the deponents had to undergo searches, support their claims by a Land surveyor's Report/ Constat Report on the very plots of land which are not accessible. If the Commission has been able to help some applicants, **Tancrel Danielle & Others - FUEL** ( File TJC/L/0003); **Devanny Oomadutsing - Bel Ombre** (File TJC/L/M/208); **Patrick Webb/Chang Kye - Espitalier- Noel Group** (File TJC/L/0046); **Bonnefin/Clency Harmon & Others - Medine** (TJC/L/0015); **Mayeur/ Cazalens/Kisnorbo - Deep River Beau Champs** (File TJC/L/0004); to open the long awaited dialogue with the sugar companies; others had to have recourse to the Court (**Louis Chérubin (Karl) Lamarque - LE Petit Morne Limited** (File TJC/L/0048) - as have done the other 24 claimants who came before the Commission - to be able to make themselves heard and try to set their foot on their claimed property. Fortunately, in the cases mentioned, most of the claimants had already undertaken some searches and had a good set of documents which helped enormously the Commission.

When called to give their version, in most cases, the CEOs laid down heaps of documents which forced the Commission to spend a lot of time to find out to situate exactly these claimed plots of land.

However, the Commission has been satisfied to have been able to construct a bridge that will help

maintain the discussions/ negotiations between all parties concerned.

Furthermore, the Commission has also observed some disturbing factors which should be highlighted:

- The demand for more land and the rapid development of real estate has opened the door to a new breed of "*Récupérateurs de terres*". These individuals open and run modern offices, invest huge sums of money to better attract their clients, establish deals of 49%/51% or vice-versa, to retrieve lands with the promise of a better future for those who are in search of their heritage.
- Furthermore, some Land surveyors, seconded by certain Attorneys and Notaries are rapidly prescribing plots of land which are quickly sold, overnight, to new companies set up with the help of foreigners/ investors looking for greener pastures in Mauritius.
- Moreover, persons who have prescribed plots of land and who know that they could be challenged in Court have secured the help of some militia in order to prevent real owners to have access to their properties, (**Christian Grenade** - File TJC/L/0044) and **Goodur Abdool Reshad** - File TJC/L/M/0210). In the case of Grenade, the Commission views with concern that even a request made to the Commissioner of Police to give police protection to the heirs to clean up their land at Le Bouchon has remained unattended.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE COMMISSION FINDS

The Commission has observed that affidavits have been sworn by witnesses who do not know the deceased person and the persons who are entitled to apprehend the estate and succession of the deceased person. These persons are called "*professional witnesses*" and swear affidavits upon payment of a sum of money. These persons are found lurking near the officers of Attorneys and Notaries and offer their services whenever needed.

The Commission has also observed that some affidavits have been drawn up without verifying the Civil Status Acts. The dates of deaths are inaccurate and the numbers of the Civil Status Acts are fictitious. However, due to the new Rules and Regulations made by the Conservator of Mortgages, the affidavits drawn up, sworn and transcribed nowadays are accurate, well-drafted and contain precise information.

It is a matter of concern that there is no Registry or Record kept for Wills and Testaments. Law Practitioners, heirs and successors and members of the public cannot know the existence of any Will and Testament left by a deceased person.

This state of affairs gives rise to doubtful and inaccurate affidavits being drawn up. At times the legal heirs and successors are left out. At other times, the persons who have been bequeathed with properties are discarded in the affidavit.

In such cases the parties are engaged in long and costly legal battles which take several years before the Court pronounces on the subject.

The Commission has come across Wills and Testaments in which the Notary or the party making the Will has failed to mention the reserved portion of his properties, '*Quotité disponible*'. The testator has also failed to mention that he has other children. All the properties have been bequeathed to one person, instead of bequeathing the share which he can dispose of according to law.

Representation has also been made to the Commission concerning the sale/donation/transfer of all properties by the father/mother to one/two children only, thus depriving the other children of a share in their parents' property.

In such cases the heirs / successors who have not received any property or who have been discarded deprived of their rights, have to enter cases before the Supreme Court against their own brothers/sisters in order to get their shares either in cash or in kind.

It has been observed that some Notaries would not draw up such deeds. However, it is a matter of regret that others Notaries still draw up such deeds which eventually leads to animosities between among heirs.

The coming into force of the *Code Napoléon* (Amendment) Act No. 8 of 1980 on the 8th June 1980 has simplified the succession laws and has brought new hopes. Acknowledged natural children and legitimate children have the same shares and rights. It has also given to surviving spouse a share in the deceased property. The surviving spouse has also been attributed a right of *usufruct* on all the movables effects and the house which was used as the main residence of the family.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

It is high time that the Authorities find ways and means of keeping a record of all Wills and Testaments. One such way could be to make an entry in the "*Répertoire*" kept by the Conservator of Mortgages of the existence of a Will and Testament. This is possible for the authentic Wills and Testaments which are drawn up by two Notaries in the presence of the two witnesses or by one Notary in the presence of four witnesses.

The registration concerning "*Testament olographe*" and '*Testament mystique*', as provided for in Articles 969 and following of the *Code Civil*, cannot be done and this will give rise to problems in future, unless an amendment is made to the existing laws.

The Notaries should ensure that the conditions laid down in Articles 913 and following of the *Code Civil* are observed fully.

The Commission hopes that such new laws should be implemented in order to protect, the spouses, the children, the family, the society and the country.

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## THE SMALL PLANTERS

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### THE COMMISSION FINDS

With the effect of centralisation, many small planters are having transport problems, as they need to send their canes far away to the factory area. They also pay high prices for transport.

"What in the case of a very small planter? Will he be able to afford high prices of transport compared to a small amount of cane transported on long distances?"

Long queuing problems at the sugar mills arose because of the closure of small mills. Mills took long hours to crush abundant amounts of canes from the entire region had discouraged many small planters from cultivating canes.

Nowadays, the new generation of small planters is not interested in suffering from the same hardships as their elders and, instead, make education a key to a better living through white collar jobs.

It must also be noted that due to a 36% decrease in sugar prices in 2010, the revenue of planters was also reduced; there was an increase in the price of fertilizers. Thus many small planters preferred to abandon lands.

Many small planters have no time to manage the irrigation of their fields.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Small cane planters should get financial help to buy other means of transport to motivate them to cultivate sugarcane.

Plots of small planters, falling under block irrigation projects of Estate factories, should be legally swapped for land amounting to the same value in other areas, if the planters so wish.

Training programs on research technologies in the Sugar Industry should be introduced for small planters, in order to increase sugarcane production.

Agricultural Policies and Legislations should be revised to enable small planters to be regrouped under irrigation projects.

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## FURTHER RELEASE OF LAND TO VULNERABLE GROUPS

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### THE COMMISSION FINDS

The policy of allocation of State lands in lots to cooperative societies for on letting to '*bona fide*' cane growers, vegetable growers and breeders has proved successful. In the context of greater democratisation of land, small holding projects have proved to be tools towards that end. While Creoles, descendants of ex- slaves after the abolition of slavery have been cut-off from agricultural activity in Mauritius, a situation which has not occurred in Rodrigues there is presently a desire for land acquisition and a return to agriculture.

The consequences of the divorce of Creoles in agriculture have proved damaging in that it has destroyed in them the urge for land ownership and a sense of entrepreneurship in agricultural Society. However, there is now a hue and cry from people of this category to return to agriculture and other farm activity.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

The Commission therefore recommends that well-knit projects on whatever land granted by the private sector to the Government be allocated to *bona fide* planters and breeders grouped on Small Holding Cooperatives.

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## PRESCRIPTION IN RODRIGUES

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### THE COMMISSION FINDS

All the applicants - Private and Government Land Surveyors, Attorneys and Notaries, Chief Planner - invited to give their views before the Truth and Justice Commission readily admitted that the Law has been respected in all circumstances. Yet, it must be observed that the information contained in the Notice for the Transcription of an Affidavit as per the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act are not precise enough to allow the real owner to know whether the subject-site under prescription is his property or forms part of his property, and would thus allow him to lodge the appropriate objection for transcription of the affidavit. For example, in certain Notices, the description given is so vague. In so many Notices, mention is often made "*On the first side by a public road*", "*on the second side by an unknown proprietor*", "*on the third side, proprietor is unknown*", etc. The law is clear as to the "*precise description*", "*the exact location*", "*the precise description of the land surveyed and the exact extent of the land mentioning the nature of the occupation and value of the land.*" *It is very difficult to believe the person who has been occupying a plot of land since 30 years does not know the name of his neighbours.*

There have been cases where Notices have been published in a Chinese daily.

It has also been observed that the very person who prescribes a plot of land does not have to sign the affidavit. Only the two witnesses sign it. He just gives instructions to swear the affidavit but does not participate in the procedure.

It may happen that a person accused of having prescribed a plot of land might later say that he was not aware that this land had been prescribed in his name.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

It is thus suggested that the Second Schedule of the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be amended

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to include information on the searches, made by the Surveyor, relating to the last known owner of the land being prescribed.

The legal status of land either in Mauritius or Rodrigues falls under three categories:

State Land

Domaine Public inclusive of Pas Géométriques; and

Private Land

All State Land is imprescriptible under the Law as per Section 35 of the State Land Act.

The *Domaine Public* is a category of land which belongs to the public at large by nature of its use: roads, beaches, sea, rivers, etc.

The Private land is lands under private ownership which at a certain point in time either during the French occupation or the British occupation has been conceded/ granted to someone. As such, all the plots of private land must have originated from one of these grants.

There is thus no such thing as ownerless land.

Any professional being a Land Surveyor, Attorney or Notary, should be able to trace back the owner of any land in Mauritius or Rodrigues.

It must be made mandatory for any Notice of Affidavit of Prescription to be transcribed to contain the name of the last known owner.

At the same time, any Notice under the Affidavit of Prescription Act should be published with its appropriate location plan that will help in the identification of the land by the true owner.

No Notice of Affidavit of Prescription should be transcribed, if one of the adjoining owners is unknown. Thus, no prejudice could be caused if every endeavour is made to find the owner, or at least, its occupier.

Furthermore, any potential applicant for any prescription should make a formal declaration to the nearest police station to this effect and submit all particulars of his two witnesses, including names, residential addresses and identity card numbers. And an investigation should be made as to the credibility of any witness who are to be established by the police.

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## **OTHER LAND ISSUES IN RODRIGUES**

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### **THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS**

- Adoption of a Physical Development Plan and of a Land use Plan.
- Finalise the Land Information System
- Ensure that projects are in line with defined strategies for land use development.
- Provide accurate information on state land ownership status and development at any point in time.
- Align and revise rental of land in accordance with market rates.
- Improve legal framework for town & country planning and land use.
- Regularise all eligible occupiers of State lands.

- Respond to the land requirements of all Commissions for timely implementation of public projects.
- Planning clearances for residential and commercial/industrial projects on state land prior and after lease of land.
- A digitalised Cadastre of all State lands in the island of Rodrigues effectively established and updated.
- Review of State land leases effectively for optimising Government revenue.
- Grant of lease to applicants occupying state land.
- Effective vesting of State lands and acquisition of private land for public projects.
- Land Use Planning and management processes in place and promoting improved and sustainable land use
- Effective land administration services in place, accessible to all and protecting the land rights of all citizens.

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## CREATION OF A LAND BANK

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### THE COMMISSION FINDS

The control of the use of land is a major problem to Governments. In both developed and developing nations, local and central authorities have tried in a variety of ways to shape the physical layout and contour of their cities and other areas in the realization that how land is used has profound consequences for the well being of their citizens.

As it is, land management is intertwined in a patchwork of overlapping authorities with diverse sources of authority.

The Ministry of Housing and Land Development plays a key role in land development and land use. Any development on State Land requires the approval of the Planning Division which acts on behalf of Government as lessor. Their activity is not restricted to Government owned land since their advice is sought by local and parastatal bodies for development on private owned land as well as "aménagement des territoires".

Under the Town and Country Planning Act, any development requires a permit. The Local Authority must ensure, before issuing a development permit that the proposed development is conformed to an approved Outline Scheme. In complex cases, the local authority refers the file to the Town and Country Board which in turn refers it to the Planning Division for technical advice before giving its own recommendations. In addition to a proposed development, developers need also a building permit under the Building Act or a morcellement permit under the Roads Act. In municipal areas, the local authorities are responsible for the issuing of Building Permits on behalf of District Councils. On morcellement matters, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure advises the developers to obtain clearance from the Central Electricity Board and the Central Water Authority that power and water are available and then consults the Planning Division before issuing the relevant permit.

D. Griggs in "The Harsh Lands-A Study in Agricultural Development" writes:-

*"Any plan for agricultural development should be essentially an essay in economic ecology. Agriculture is influenced by interdependent variables of the economic and the ecological environment and no policy that ignores either agronomic or economic problems can possibly succeed".*

Available areas by itself will not be sufficient to solve the problems of raising agricultural productivity. The cost of setting new land, of reclaiming land from the onslaught of the sea or of

bringing derelict land into productive use is rarely justifiable, however socially desirable it may be. New plans for development should concentrate upon intensifying output criteria for agricultural areas. Due to shortage of funds and the non-availability of recoverable lands, it is wisest to concentrate capital over trained personnel in areas which are likely to give reasonable returns on investment.

It is in the light of these reflections that the creation of a Land Bank is envisaged as a panacea to land management.

The Land Bank is a Central Land Authority which coordinates within a single institution all the functions and powers presently vested in a number of different corporations' authorities, department and ministries relating to the organization and management, especially in the context of land reform and environmental development.

Land being a scarce commodity, every attempt should be made not to endanger the aspirations of future generations by plundering this meager resource.

When contemplated in a context of land scarcity with possible conflicting land use, the Land Bank, if properly formulated by a comprehensive land use policy will ultimately control all forms of land development and will ensure a judicious allocation of lands needed for the island's development.

#### **THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS**

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The functions of that agency can be *inter-alia* summarised thus:-

- (1) Buying and selling of agricultural land so as to foster its distribution among small holders and the landless;
- (2) Purchasing of land for development for immediate projects;
- (3) Expediting the purchase and transfer of land so as to avoid administrative delays and allow the steady release of developable land;
- (4) Managing of stock Government-owned land;
- (5) Reducing land speculation and curtailing the increase in land value; and
- (6) Organising and regulating of a real estate market.

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## PRESCRIPTION IN MAURITIUS

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### OBSERVATIONS

- No deed, whether authentic or under private signatures, witnessing the sale or transfer of, or the constitution of any privilege, mortgage or servitude or right of use over, an immovable property the title to which is derived from acquisition by prescription witnessed by affidavit of prescription, shall be valid unless the affidavit has been transcribed, and a reference to the particulars of such transcription is endorsed on the deed.
- The above refer only to the transcription of an affidavit of prescription, be it the requirements or the objection, the substantive law of prescription is to be found in the civil code.
- The delay for the objection does not at no time preclude any interested party to contest the validity of the prescription itself before the Supreme Court.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

1. After having reviewed the numerous laws regarding prescriptions, the Commission recommends to do away with the whole procedure of affidavit and to provide for an alternative way to effect the transcription of prescribed plots of land.
2. It is the opinion of the Commission that the appropriate Protocol would be to exercise more control upon the averments of a person alleging to have prescribed a plot of land. There should be an institution which will ensure the truth of the said averments and which shall have the powers to investigate upon the veracity of these averments. Further, before the same institution, an appropriate memorandum of survey would be required with the possibility of putting questions to the Surveyor.

To summarise, any person who claims to have occupied a plot of land, with all the requisites of acquisitive prescription, shall have the burden of proving same, with at least two witnesses to corroborate the claim. Be it the applicant or the witnesses, they would face a panel who would query them on their averments.

Although this system would not be foolproof, it will minimize the risks of frauds.

Also, it must be borne in mind that the creation of a single institution may result in it being overburdened, which might hamper a quick and efficient process. This is the reason why it has been deemed appropriate to share this role amongst our Local Authorities, although the possibility of one central institution remains.

Below is a proposal for a new system where the affidavit of prescription has been replaced by a prescription permit. To cater for these, the Affidavit of Prescription Act can be amended or simply repealed and the following added to the Local Government Act.

To conclude, the legislator needs add the appropriate penalties for non compliance or frauds.

1. There shall be established in every Local Authority, a committee to be known as the Prescription Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”), which shall consist of the Chief Executive or his representative as Chairperson, the head of the planning department, the legal adviser of the Local Authority, a government Land Surveyor and a representative of the Ministry of Housing and Lands
2. The Chief Executive shall also designate an officer of the Local Authority to act as Secretary to the Committee.

3. The authority for execution of the Committee shall be the local authority of the respective town or district where the land to be prescribed is situated.
4. The Committee shall disseminate clear and transparent guidelines for the application, processing and issue of prescription permits.
5. The Committee shall examine, process and approve applications for prescription permits without having to refer the matter to the Council and such approval shall be deemed to have been made *under the authority of the Chief Executive*.
6. The Minister may make regulations to prescribe such other conditions as he deems necessary for the purposes of this Act. Any regulations made under Section (6) may provide that any person who contravenes them shall commit an offence, and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding [...] rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [...] years.
7. Where any member of the Committee or his spouse or next of kin has any direct or indirect interest in relation to any matter before the Committee, he shall –
  - a. disclose, at or before the meeting convened to discuss that matter, the nature of his interest;
  - b. not take part in any deliberation or any decision-making process in relation to that matter;
  - c. A disclosure of interest made under this Section shall be recorded in the minutes of the committee; and
  - d. Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of this Section shall commit an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees and to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years.
8. All applications for prescription permits shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive who shall refer same to the Committee within a period of fifteen days. The Committee shall hold a hearing within 3 weeks of the end of the period of 6 months as provided by Section 12.
9. The application for a prescription permit shall:
  - a) state the date on which the occupation started and the open market value of the property at the time of completion of the statutory period for prescription;
  - b) be accompanied by a memorandum of survey by a surveyor setting out the situation, description and exact boundaries of the immovable property forming the subject matter of the application and the adjoining properties; and
  - c) in respect of the party alleged to have acquired the immovable property by prescription
    - i. his names in small letters and his surname in capital letters;

- ii. his date of birth, the Birth Certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the birth was registered, his National Identity Card; and
  - iii. where applicable, his date of marriage, the matrimonial regime governing the marriage, the Marriage Certificate number and the Civil Status Office where the marriage was registered;
- 10. Notice of the application shall be published once in the Gazette and on 3 consecutive days in 3 daily newspapers in Mauritius, of which two at least shall be approved by the Chief Executive. Further, the notice shall be affixed on the notice board of the relevant Local Authority.
- 11. The notice shall be in the form specified in the Schedule.
- 12. Any person claiming to be the owner or part owner of, or to have an interest in, the whole or part of the immovable property in respect of which an application for a prescription permit has been made, may, within 6 months of the last publication of the notice required under Section 10 object to the granting of the application by the Committee by serving upon the Chief Executive and upon the applicant a notice setting out the grounds of his objection.
- 13. In the event of an objection under Section 12, the Committee shall not proceed with the application unless it is ordered to do so under Section 15.
- 14. Any interested party may, within 3 months of the date of service on the Chief Executive of a notice of objection under Section 12, apply to a judge in Chambers for an order setting aside the objection.
- 15. Where, after hearing the parties and later considering the grounds on which the objection is based, the Judge is of opinion that the objection is frivolous and unjustified, he shall make an order setting aside the objection and refer the application back to the Committee or he shall otherwise refer the parties to the competent Court.
- 16. At the hearing of the Committee –
  - a) The applicant shall be accompanied by –
    - i. at least two witnesses; and
    - ii. the land surveyor who has signed the memorandum of survey referred to in Section 9 (b).
  - b) The Committee shall examine the applicant and the witnesses present as to
    - The date and length of occupation;
    - i. The nature of the occupation; and
    - ii. The knowledge of the witnesses as regards the applicant’s contention.
  - c) The Committee may examine the Land Surveyor on his memorandum of survey.

- d) The Committee shall, if it deems necessary, summon any other witnesses more specifically, the owners of adjoining plots of land.
17. The Committee shall within 4 weeks of the hearing referred to in Section 16, grant or refuse to grant a prescription permit. In case of refusal, the Committee shall give notice in writing to the applicant setting out the reasons thereof.
18. Any applicant for a prescription permit under this Act may, within 30 days of the date on which the notice of refusal under Section 17 is given, apply to the Judge in Chambers for a summons calling upon the local authority to show cause why his application should not be granted.
19. An application to the Judge in Chambers under Section 18 shall be made in the presence of the local authority and the Judge may grant any application on such terms and conditions as he may deem fit or reject it.
20. The prescription permit shall henceforth be drawn up, on a prescription deed, by an Attorney or a Notary.
21. No person shall cause a prescription deed to be transcribed nor shall the Conservator of Mortgages transcribe a prescription deed unless –
  - a) he is the holder of a prescription deed issued under this Act authorising him to do so;
  - b) he has an order of the Judge granting the application and has subsequently drawn up the prescription deed; or
  - c) he has a certified copy of the judgment of a competent Court deciding the issue against the objector which has subsequently been drawn up in the prescription deed.
22. A prescription deed shall be transcribed on production by the applicant to the Conservator of the copies of documents mentioned in Section 21 and on payment of the transcription fees.
23. No deed, whether authentic or under private signatures, witnessing the sale or transfer of, or the constitution of any privilege, mortgage or servitude or right of use over, an immovable property the title to which is derived from acquisition by prescription witnessed by a prescription permit, shall be valid unless the prescription permit has been transcribed, and a reference to the particulars of such transcription is endorsed on the deed.
24. Any person who draws up a deed in contravention of Section 22 shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding [...] rupees.
25. The transcription of a prescription permit shall not confer on any party any rights on any immovable property which but for this Act such party would not have possessed.

### THE COMMISSION FINDS

The Commission is of opinion that Notarial deeds witnessing the acquisition by prescription of landed property should bear the same conditions as laid down in the proposed Affidavit of Prescription Act, more fully described above..

As per the Prescription of Landed Property Act 41 of 1969 - November 1969 and amended by RL 4/253 - 24 April 1982, someone who is acquiring land by prescription needs not to swear an affidavit of prescription, but has to comply with the other conditions. The procedure remains the same.

The amendments in the Affidavit of Prescription Act, as proposed by the Truth and Justice Commission, would thus apply *de facto* to the Prescription of Landed Property Act.

### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

The Commission recommends that the Prescription of the Landed Property Act be repealed which will thus prevent any confusion as to the procedure of prescription.

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### CASES OF LAND DISPOSSESSION

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#### THE COMMISSION FINDS:

From the numerous cases heard before the Commission and significant research carried out, the Commission has come to the conclusion that on a general basis, cases of dispossession often arise because claimants are illiterate, without sufficient financial resources and face the uphill task of collecting the required documents.

In order to tackle any case of dispossession, a claimant needs first of all to collect the relevant documents, be it title deeds or establishment of succession rights through affidavits and secondly to bring the matter before the competent Court in order to have a judicial decision that shall validate his claim.

As stated earlier, the whole process requires assistance, be it on a financial basis or competence to find and collect the appropriate and relevant documents.

#### THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

The creation of a **Land Research and Monitoring Unit** which shall cater for the technical side of the search and an appropriate Tribunal to give legal sanction to a valid claim.

The functions, powers and of this Unit are outlined below:

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#### FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE LAND RESEARCH AND MONITORING UNIT

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##### **The functions of the Land Research and Monitoring Unit would be:**

1. To receive legitimate complaints from persons who allege that they, or their family, have lost or have been dispossessed of their property;

2. To carry out an in-depth investigation concerning an alleged complaint or hold an enquiry into land issues, out of its own initiative or at the instance of interested parties;
3. To advise the applicant, after thorough investigation and enquiry, on his claim and any other relevant issues;
4. To assist the applicant to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and Civil Status documents and in collaboration with other appropriate institutions, to draw up genealogical trees;
5. To study plans of *grants*, relevant Notarial Deeds and any other relevant documents related to land movement;
6. To provide, within statutory limits, assistance, financial or otherwise, to claimants as regards land surveys or other necessary actions;
7. To submit or refer the matter to Mediation and to promote amicable settlements which shall be binding upon all the parties; and
8. Where appropriate, to refer the case to a specialized Tribunal.

The Commission wishes to stress that, in its considered opinion, a two-fold approach is recommended, since neither the proposed Unit nor the suggested Tribunal would be effective on its own.

The Commission has purposely refrained from making specific suggestions as to where the Unit should be set up, or its composition, or as to whether the Tribunal should, for example, be a Division of the Supreme Court or an *ad hoc* Tribunal. That is because, on the one hand, the Government may wish to consider including the Unit in an existing framework such as those catered for in the LAVIMS (Project Implementation) Act or the Cadastral Survey Act 2011 and, on the other hand, the Government may prefer to consult the Chief Justice as to how he feels that the Judiciary could best lend its support to the scheme.

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## RECOMMENDATION FOR A NOTARIAL ACTS DATABASE

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The Commission recommends:

1. That the work initiated by the Notarial Acts Database (outline of which follows) be continued by the proposed Land Research and Monitoring Unit **as a matter of urgency**.
2. That the server to host the database be the Linux Operating system (Open source) which is reliable, highly performing and resilient. The server has been configured to allow only authenticated users to connect to and use the system.
3. Training: Users (research assistants) to be trained at each stage of prototype deployment. However those having been trained by the Commission can be used to train others and to continue this database. The Notarial Acts Database

## BACKGROUND

The design of a Notarial Acts Database was commissioned of a team composed of the members of the Computer Science and Engineering department of the University of Mauritius:

- Miss Begum Durgahee, Lecturer, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, University of Mauritius
- Mr. Paramasiven Appavoo, Lecturer, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, University of Mauritius
- Mrs. Anuja Meetoo-Appavoo, Lecturer, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, University of Mauritius
- Mr. Raj Kishen Moloo, Lecturer, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, University of Mauritius
- Mr. Anwar Chutoo, Lecturer, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, University of Mauritius

**The work undertaken included:**

- Analysis of proposed system
- Delivery of Prototype 1 of the Truth and Justice Database on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- Hardware and infrastructure specification document to be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- Completion and Delivery of Prototype 2 of the Truth and Justice Database on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2009
- Overseeing infrastructure set up and Installation of software on server 30<sup>th</sup> August 2009
- Completion and Delivery of Prototype 3 of the Truth and Justice Database on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009
- Delivery of final project on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010
- Evaluation by Truth and Justice Commission and refinement of system till July 2010

**The details of the assignment was as follows:**

- To design a software and database to allow for the collection of notarial acts in Mauritius
- To make provision for the addition, update, deletion and view of different data  
(Notaries, Surveyors, Lawyers, Purchaser, Seller, Property, Transactions ...)
- To allow for key word search by different categories (notary, buyer name, seller name, surveyor name, location, immigrant number, district, locality and other relevant information)
- To allow for qualitative and quantitative analysis of information for land ownership
- To allow for tracing records relating to land claims
- Allow conversion between different currencies of the time (livres, piastres ...)
- To allow for a detailed study of the land ownership patterns per month, year and decade as well as within a particular district and in other districts throughout the island
- To allow the study of the land transactions by price range, year, district, locality ...
- To make provision in the database for upgrades and for the inclusion of new information that can be added from other primary sources
- To allow statistical analysis of notarial acts details and automatically generate charts and graphs in order to identify trends
- To allow for the localization of a plot of land on a map using GPS coordinates
- To allow for view of the different property of a particular person on a map
- To allow for provision for the addition of maps and plans and other documents

- To provide for export of data into Excel and Word

### **Non-Functional requirements**

The major system quality attributes to be achieved for the software are:

- Usability
- Security
- Performance
- Modifiability
- Portability

### **Architecture**

The system was deployed over an Intranet infrastructure and was accessible within the Truth and Justice commission. The software to be designed was a standards-compliant web-based application which would allow multiple authorised users (using popular browsers like Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Internet Explorer) to access the system

- The front-end will thus be decoupled from the back-end (database and domain logic)
- The server will host the Apache Web server and will also use the MySQL database.
- This infrastructure is very flexible and extensible- for example, authorized users can easily be added to the system and requires minimal installation at the clients workstation.

The project also involved the following activities:

- Analysis of system
- Database and UML class design
- Set up of test environment
- Table design
- Form designs and implementation
- Report designs and implementation
- Hardware specification document
- Software installation and configuration on server (Linux Operating System, Database, Web Server, security configurations)
- Backup strategy design
- Graphic Design and overall wrapper
- Map Design and Implementation
- User Training (ongoing process)
- User guide preparation

A user guide for the system follows.

## LAND ISSUES DATABASE

The Land Database contains details about transaction dealing with Land Sales and Loans. The Land Database has been built around Open Source Technologies, namely Apache [2], MySQL [3] and PHP [4].

To deploy the application, MoWeS Portable II [1], has been used and provides for setup of WAMP on any Windows system. To launch the database, Open the contents on the pen-drive provided and double-click on "TJC-DoubleClickMe". This will launch the different services (Apache and MySQL) and the application will start as shown in Figure 1 below.

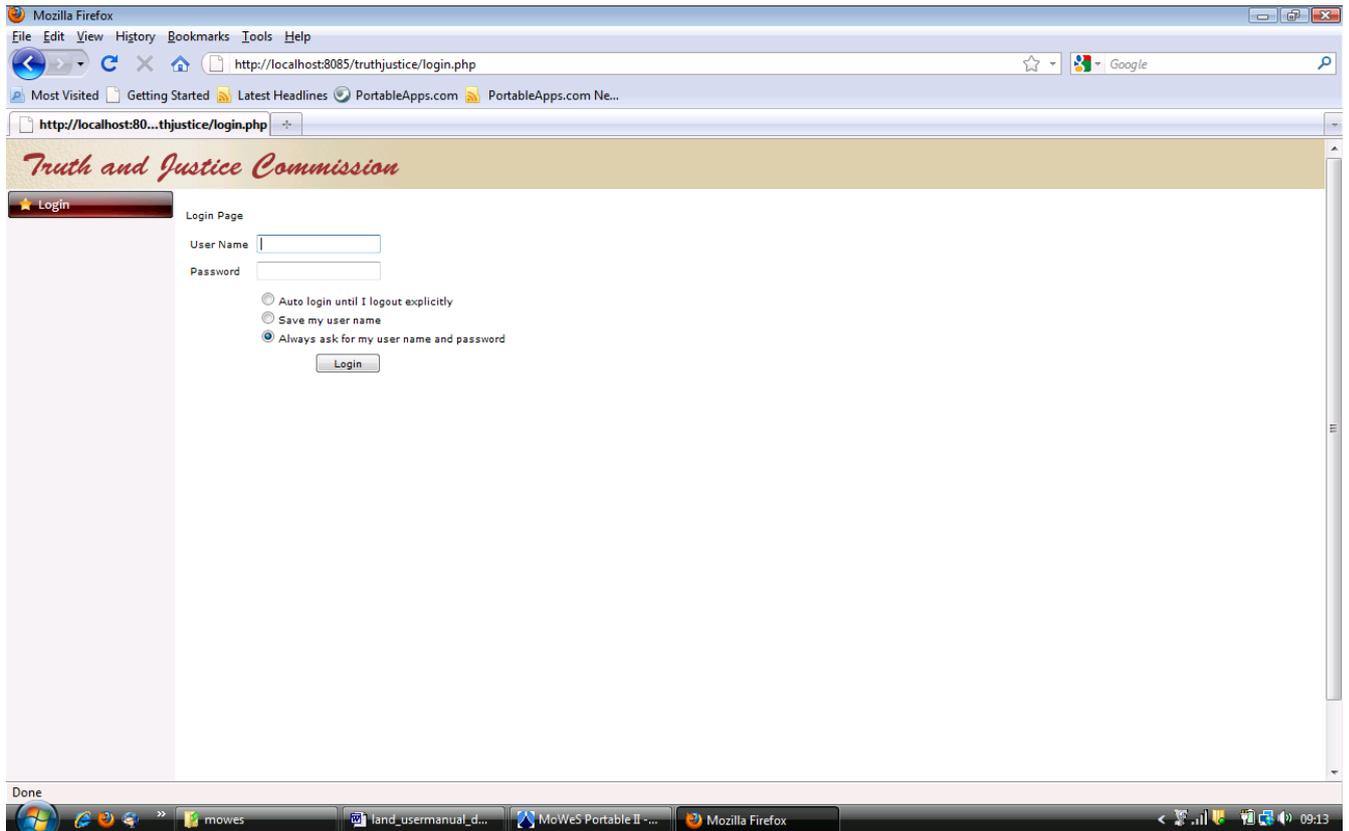


Figure 1: Land Issues Database Launched

The User Name "tjc" and Password "tjc" gives full access to the system as shown in Figure 2.

TABLE: Transactions

Search  Search (\*) Show all

Exact phrase  All words  Any word

Page  of 302 Records 1 to 20 of 6029

Archival Ref (*)	Transactions Gregorian Day (*)	Transactions Gregorian Month (*)	Transactions Gregorian Year (*)	French Day (*)	French Month (*)	French Year (*)	Transactions Type (*)	Logged By
Na 144/54	27	09	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/54	29	09	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/54	29	09	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	01	08	1911				Loan...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	03	08	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	07	08	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	10	08	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	10	08	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	11	08	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	12	08	1911				Sales...	nadeem View Edit
Na 144/53	14	08	1911				Loan...	christelle View Edit
Na 144/53	16	08	1911				Loan...	christelle View Edit
Na 144/53	17	08	1911				Sales...	christelle View Edit
NA 144/10b	31	10	1908				Sales...	pooja View Edit
Na 144/53	17	08	1911				Sales...	christelle View Edit
NA 144/10b	30	10	1902				Sales...	pooja View Edit
Na 144/53	21	08	1911				Sales...	christelle View Edit
Na 144/53	22	08	1911				Loan...	christelle View Edit
NA 144/10b	10	10	1902				Sales...	pooja View Edit
Na 144/53	23	08	1911				Sales...	christelle View Edit

Figure 2: Land Issues Database Main Page

The menu on the left allows the users to navigate to different pages of the system. All the pages except for *Sale Reports* and *Loan Reports* are modeled in a consistent way: the user is presented with a list of existing entries and she can view, edit or delete the entry, while she can also add a new entry.

The main/master component of the system is the Transaction page. A transaction can be of different types: Loan, Sales, Auction Sales as shown in Figure 3 below:

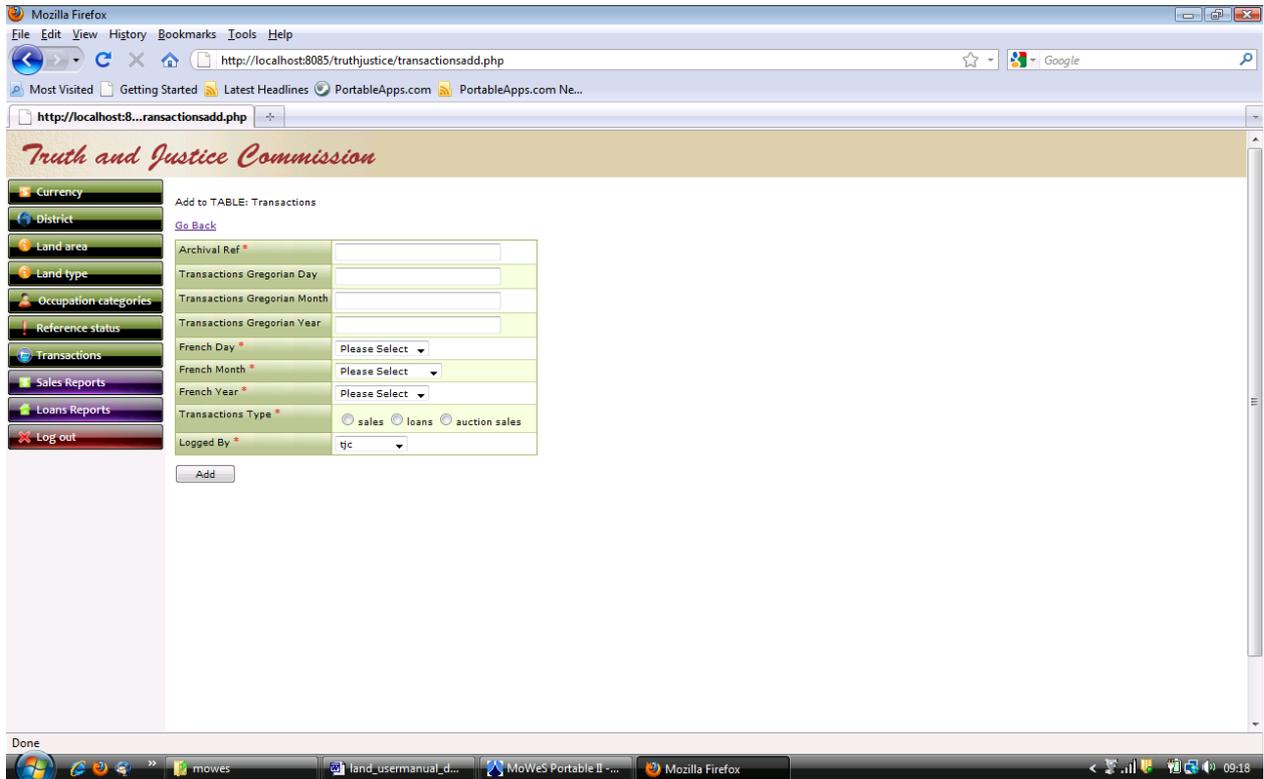


Figure 3: Adding a new transaction

Once a transaction has been added, depending on its type, the “Sales...” or “Loan...” links will appear on the list and the user can make entries for the loan or sale as shown in Figure 4. The user clicks on the “Add” link and can add as many entries as there are in the archival reference.

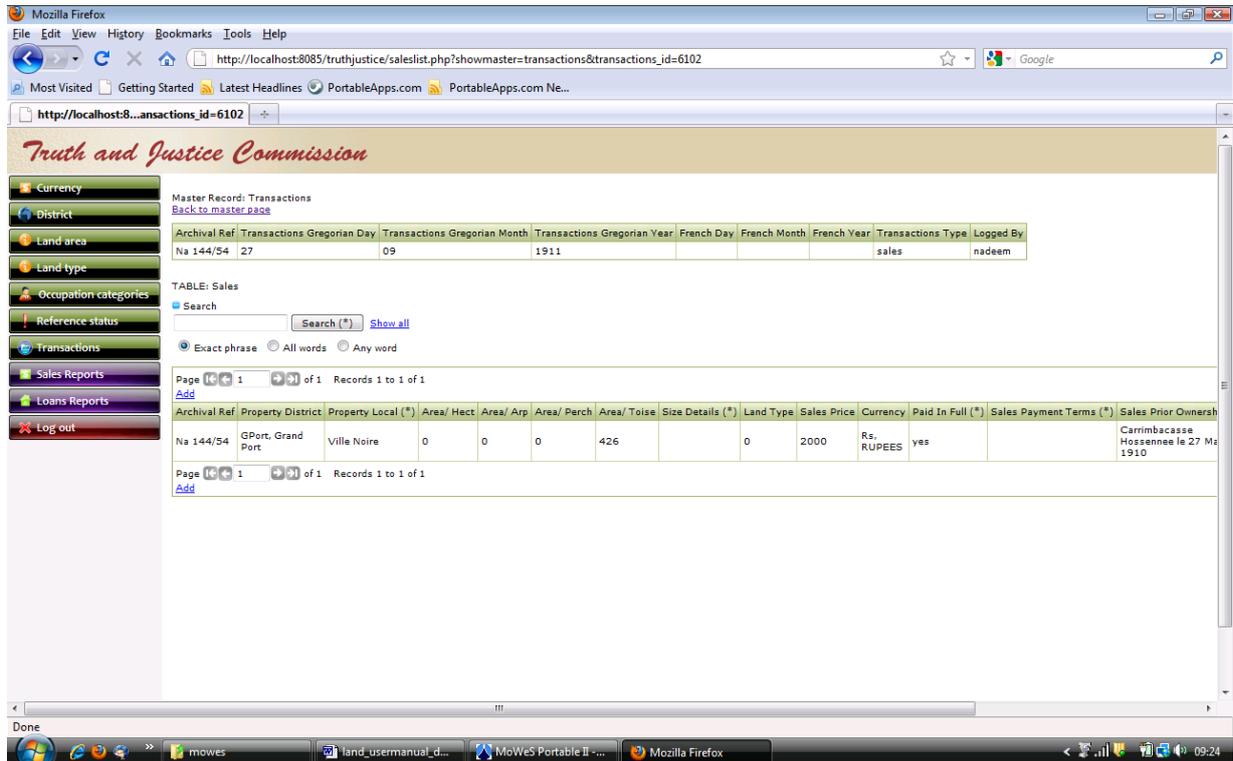


Figure 4: Adding Sales details for a transaction

The user can also make entries for all people involved in the transaction, by clicking on “*Transaction Person Details*” and is presented with a screen similar to Figure 5. The user can add persons involved in the transaction by choosing the “*Add*” link and making relevant entries.

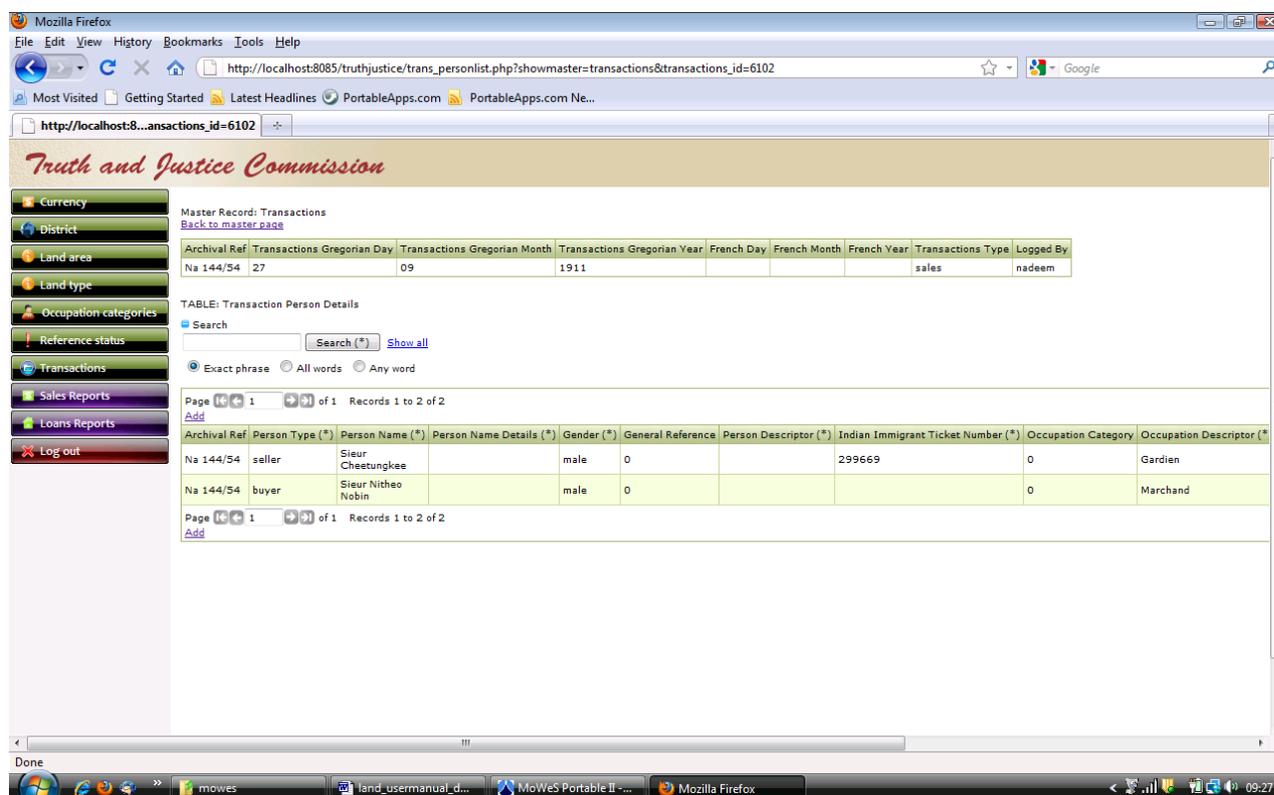


Figure 5: Screen to allow the user to add persons involved in the transaction

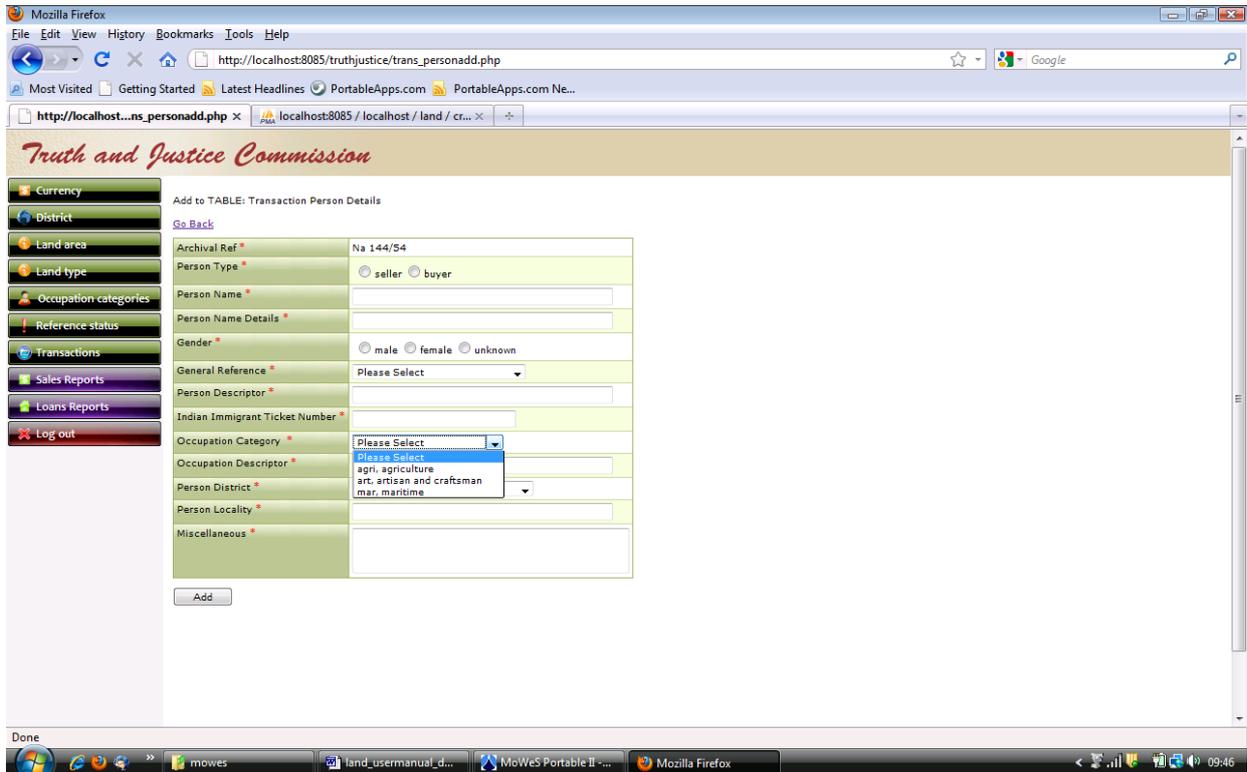
The “*Sales*”, “*Loans*” and “*Transaction Person Details*” options are kept separate from the main “*Transaction*” page, since there can exist more than one of each of them in an archival reference. The model adopted is that of the master-detail pages, where the master can have many related detail records.

The Other links on the menu, namely, “*Currency*”, “*District*”, “*Land Area*”, “*Land Type*”, “*Occupation Categories*”, “*Reference Status*”, are used to populate items used as drop down lists in the transactions, “*Sales*”, “*Loans*”, and “*Transaction Person Details*” pages. These ensure that similar records are entered consistently into the system such that relevant reports can be inferred. Also, they ensure that the system is dynamic and can be enhanced in the future.

The purpose of each of them are summarized as follows:

- **Currency:** Defines the different currencies as used in the archives
- **District:** Defines the districts that occur in the archive registries
- **Land Area:** Defines the abbreviations used to specify the areas of land (*arpent*, *toise*)
- **Land Type:** Defines the types of land involved in the archival registries (Terrain emplacement, Terrain Habitation)
- **Occupation Categories:** Defines the occupation of the people involved in the transactions (Agriculture, artisan)
- **Reference Status:** Defines the reference of the people involved in the transaction (femme de couleur libre, Ancien Immigrant)

The above will dynamically change the drop down lists presented to the user. For example, if a new "Occupation Category" is added, this will be available in the drop-down list for adding person details as shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6:** Screen shot illustrating drop down list populated from Occupation Category form

The above mechanism allows the system to be extensible in the future, by allowing new parameters to be entered into the system. The different reports created for the system will be automatically modified accordingly.

Different reports have been created to represent the patterns in the land transactions. These can be accessed by clicking on the "Sales Reports" and the "Loans Reports" links in the menu., and clicking on the drop down list "Reports", where the different reports available in the database will be shown. This is illustrated in Figure 7 below.

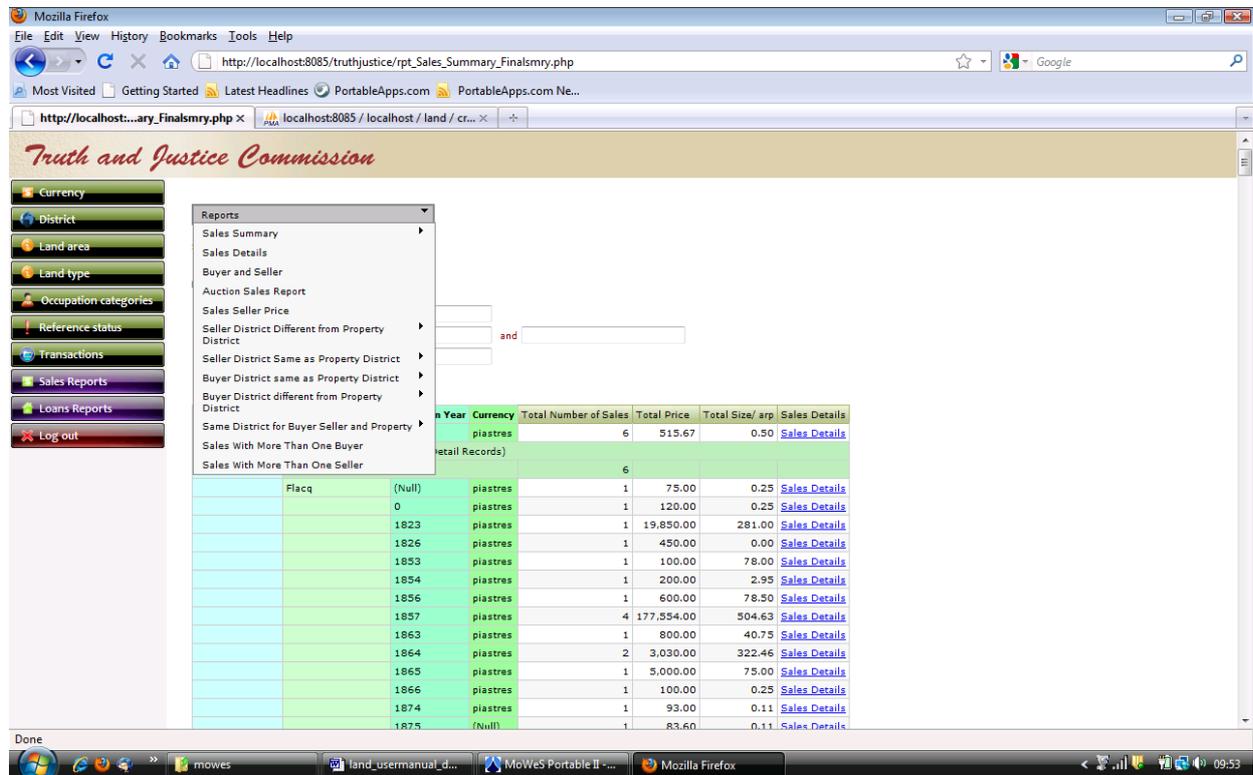


Figure 7: Accessing reports in database

The data accessed via the different reports can be exported to Excel, by clicking on the “*Export to Excel*” link. This allows the data to be easily extracted from the system. The reports also contain diagrammatic representations of the data (line charts and pie charts), as shown in Figure 8:

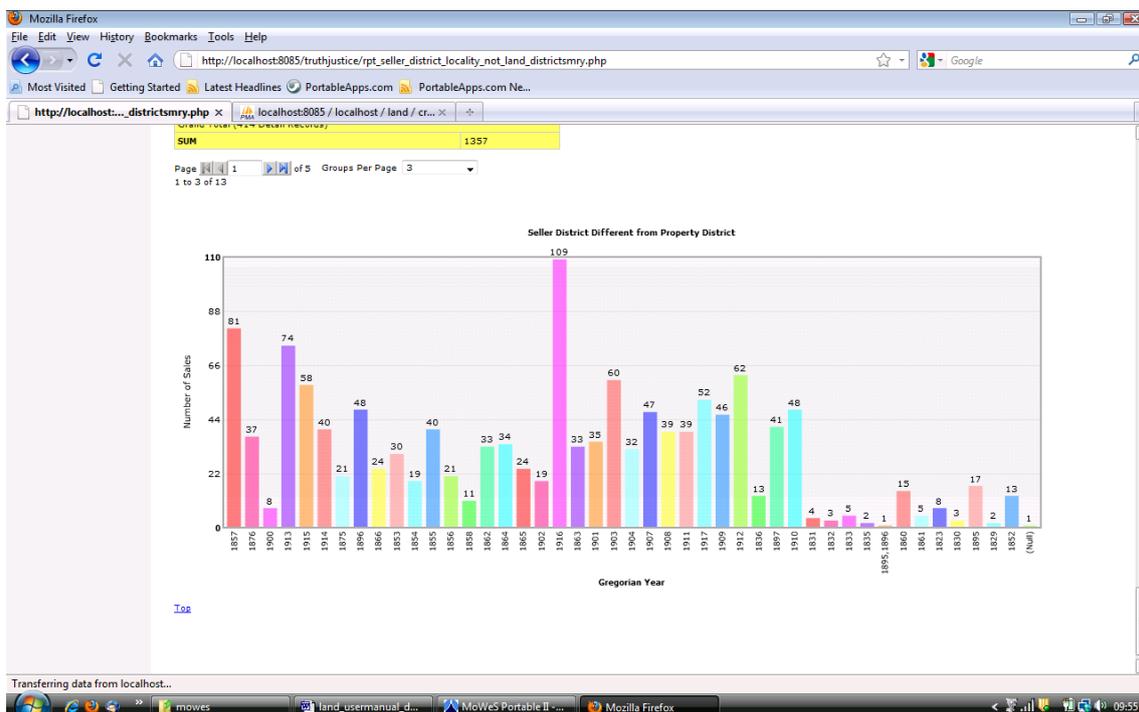


Figure 8: Showing sample Bar Chart

All the reports created in the system are dynamic. That is, they reflect the actual content of the database. If new data are added, the reports will change accordingly.

#### Technical notes:

- Since the data entry will be carried out by different Research Assistants, in order to sanitize the data entered, different scripts were written to extract inconsistent data in the form of Excel sheets, so Research Assistants can easily verify their entries. Examples of such reports were where the persons name contained “veuve”, “sales Size Other” field contains the “portion” keyword.
- The overall system can be modelled using the following class diagrams:

A transaction is composed of the following entities: Transaction Person, Loan, Sale. The transaction can consist of more than one of the above entities.

- Although the database has been distributed via MoWeS, the different services (Apache, MySQL, PHP) can be installed on a computer and the relevant files restored as appropriate. This can give better performance.
- The port on which the Apache within MoWeS is listening is port 8085. If this port is already in use in your system, modify the configuration for Apache to listen to a different port.

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- [1]: <http://www.chsoftware.net/en/mowes/mowesportable/mowes.htm> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)
- [2]: <http://www.apache.org> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)
- [3]: <http://www.mysql.com/> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)
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## CHAPTER 6 PRESCRIPTIONS

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2. The *Code Napoléon* (Amendment No. 3) Act 9 of 1983.
3. Vide *Dadool v. Jeetdeal* 2006 SCJ 3.
4. *Solange v Aubeeluck* 1955 MR 43.
5. Encyclopédie Dalloz, Droit Civil
6. State Land Act (1991)
7. *La Société des Cascadeurs v. The Ministry of Works* 1995 SCJ 15
8. *Nemdharry v. Rasmally* 1955 MR 353.
9. *Parmessur v. Seeyave* 2000 SCJ 348.
10. *Bakooa v. Proag* 1956 MR 453.
11. *Amjad v. Ramloll & Anor* 2002 SCJ 219.
12. Vide *Rioux v. Esplacathose* 2003 SCJ 248.
13. Vide *Foolman v. Chaytoo* 1972 MR 232.
14. *Ramjeeawon & Ors v. Matapallut* 2003 SCJ 138.
15. *Jankoo v. Gopaul* 1992 MR 90.
16. *Khadaroo v. Dorson* 1980 MR 45.



## APPENDIX I



EXTRACTS FROM MANUMISSIONS OF SLAVES WHOSE MANUMISSION ACTS WERE CONFIRMED 1790S

DATES	NAMES	AGE	SEX	CASTE	REASONS FOR MANUMISSION / METHODS	NAMES OF OWNERS (private / state)	DONATIONS	CONDITIONS FOR MANUMISSION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING SLAVE (S)
1790	Françoise	-	F	créole	exchanged for another slave	Annette-free negress	a house made of timber & covered with shingles (*)	replaced by Pierre, a mozambique slave.	" a été rayée de la matricule, ayant été échangée. .... " (has been struck off the register ). Slave bears the No. 43.
June 8 <sup>th</sup>									
Dec 24 <sup>th</sup>	Charles Dimbare	72	M	-	reward for good conduct and good work done	The King	-	He will continue to work for the King, like in the past.	C. Dimbare has been in the colony since 1745, and he was an ordinary commander until 1750, following which he got the "grande médaille d'argent"
1791									
Jan 13 <sup>th</sup>									
Feb 18 <sup>th</sup>	6. Thérèse	-	F	créole	exchange	Thérèse Flaury, free negress Godmother of slave.	1. A house 2. A male servant "noir malabar"	replaced by a malagasy slave, has means not to depend on colony.	"... Vendu, cédé et transporté le nommé Paul."
Feb 18 <sup>th</sup>	8-9. J. François Mathieu & Paul	7½ 5½	M M	créole mulâtre	maternal love	Annette Nama mother of the 2 children)		A certain Sr. Carrière sold to the appearing: 3 male blacks and 1 negress ; land situated at "Camp des Noirs Libres."	Manumission confirmed following consideration of the donations offered by the master / relative. (Reference to decree issued by General Assembly - powers delegated 'ad-hoc' to "Comité Permanent d'Administration". Slave bears the No. 1021.
18 <sup>th</sup>	11. Ravanne	50	F	Malagasy	exchange	Raphar Salam - free negro	a house made of timber	replaced by a young mozambique negress Manou, aged 12.	
18 <sup>th</sup>	12. Marie	-	F	-	reward	Widow de Maudave	a piece of land, 3000 L and 3 slaves		Donations offered by Sr. Antoine Collard, merchant in the island and residing at Port-Louis.
18 <sup>th</sup>	13. Joseph	-	M	-	-	François Larue, free black ( godfather of	a house at 'Camp des Malabars'. a negress named		No mention of age, caste and the reason for manumission. ( Ad-hoc

8.

18 <sup>th</sup>	15. Babet La-serve	-	F	Indian	-	Louise, free negress	Flore	No mention of age and the reason for manumission. However, the slave has two children - Joseph & Jarotte. Slave owns: a house, a location ('emplacement') and several slaves.
18 <sup>th</sup>	16. Azor	-	M	moz.	-	Sr. Jean Baptiste Pipon	12 acres of land located at Flacq, in the region of Camp de Masque.	No mention of age and reason for being manumitted. (Ad-hoc).
26 <sup>th</sup>	17. Marguerite	-	F	créole	clause of will	late Sr. Fleury	1. a creole negress named Julienné (11Y) 2. eleven slaves 3. 78 acres of land.	The will also makes mention that the master is rewarding the slave for having looked after him. The 78 acres are from Sr. Fleury's estate.
Feb 28 <sup>th</sup>	18. Renaude Victoire Louise Magdelaine	-	F	-	-	Thérèse, free negress	Several slaves and a house	No mention of age, caste and reason for being manumitted.
28 <sup>th</sup>	19. Niovar	-	F	Guinea	-	Joseph Sambas, free black	A house and a slave	Slave has a means to subsist following Sambas' donations.
28 <sup>th</sup>	20. Panchique	-	F	Parchy	reward	Mrs Nicole Catherine Cordieu, living in Pondicherry.	-	Slave owns a house and a piece of land. Has bought a bengali negress for 1000 L.
14 <sup>th</sup>	24. Christine	-	F	Indian	reward (for having looked after her master).	Sr. Emmanuel Desjardins.	3000 L	The master wishes to give back the slave her former status, that is, a free negress.
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	27. Rose	-	F	Bengali	reward	Sr. Robert Levallois	2 mozambique slaves, Baptiste & Jean, in her favour so that she may consider them as her personal "things"	No opposition towards manumission, however the slave has married Baptiste, a 55 year old black, not freed yet.
April 1 <sup>st</sup>	33. Augustin	-	M	Malagasy	fraternal love	Louis Martin & Marie Jeanne, free negroes.	2000 L	No opposition since slave has a means of subsistence. The two 'owners' are his brother and sister in law.
25 <sup>th</sup>	43. Rosalie	-	F	Bengali	love / affection	Marie-Rose, free ne-	a house worth 1800L lo-	

2.

25 <sup>th</sup>	44. Flore	-	F	Indian	reward	1. Sr. Basardy 2. Sr. Jolicoeur	cated at Trou Fantaron & a bengali negress.	Posesses several slaves.	The request for manumission is being presented by Sr. Jacques Lagesse. On 3rd Dec. 1784, Sr Basardy freed the slave and leaves the act to be confirmed by Sr. Jolicoeur. Slave has two children. ( Ad-hoc )
25 <sup>th</sup>	François and his four children : Perrine, Jeanne, Angélique, François Victor	- - - -	F F F M		paternal love / affection	Francisque, free negro, father to François and grand-father to the 4 children.			( Ad-hoc ) On 20th October 1790, he sold a slave named Zephir for the sum of 1000 L to his son, François. On 20 June 1789, Francisque bought a piece of land situated at Le Piton for the 1100 L, from Sr. Victor, surgeon in the district of PA. A sale of several slaves to Francisque is also recorded on that date.
7 <sup>th</sup>	67 - 69 : Laurence and her 2 children - Jean Olive	- -	F M			Sr. Pareoult	A house made of timber located at the Camp des Noirs Libres : A female moz.slave named Marie. A sum of 1000 L.	A certain Sr. Malsain gave money as a means of subsistence for the two children.	( Ad-hoc ) The sex of the child Philogène is not stated T he two children received a sum of 4000 L from Sr. Malsain. ( In the manuscript, it is mentioned " Sr. Malsain père", hence supposing that he might be the father of the two children ).
18 <sup>th</sup>	80. Marie Jeanne	-	F	créole	love / affection	Marie Sarce, free negress, malagasy	A house ( 20 by 12 feet ), covered with shingles consisting of a kitchen also. The land together with the house are estimated around 2400 L.	The slave has enough in her possession to be able to subsist when she is freed. She will not depend on the colony.	
June 27 <sup>th</sup>	82. Ursure	-	F			Sr. Raymond	A house made of timber situated at Camps des Noirs Libres and 3000 L.		
Oct 19 <sup>th</sup>	94. Nanon	-	F	créole	satisfying the request made by Nanon's daughters.	Sr. Jean François Boudret.	1. A house at the Camp Malabar 2. Four slaves	Nanon must consider the donation made by Carmel to her two daughters, so as not to depend on the colony.	Nanon is the mother of the two girls - Adélaïde and Henriette ( refer to nos. 72-73, 10th May 1791 )

25 <sup>th</sup> OCT	97. Manon	-	F	-	-	Sr. Nizam, free negro.	a house and a male slave named Lindor 1. an enclosed straw roof house together with a small enclosed kitchen made with planks, situated on a non-granted land at Camp des Malabars. 2. a Mozambique male fisherman, Cazimir, aged 26. Marie-Anne acquired the house and the slave from a certain Joseph Chavry for the sum of 2500 L. Babet bears the responsibility to look after her children until they come of age. All that she has in her possession would certainly be transferred to her children after her death. 1. A Mozambique negro aged 8 years. 2. an enclosed straw roof house on a non-granted land situated on the way to Grande Riviere. 3. M. Magdelaine accepts for her daughter a donation from Sr. Michel : an indian cook aged 38.	( Ad-hoc )
31st	101. Mathurin	9	M	créole	-	Marie-Anne, widow of Denis Pitchen, residing in Port-Louis, at Camp des Malabars.	Sr. Michel wanted to reward Marie for all she did for him when she was at his service	Marie-Louise was acquired from Sr. Labutte for 3000 L on 7th August 1790. Same rules as case no. 99.
	Marie-Louise, Benjamin Joseph &	20	F	M	créole	Babet, créole negress living at La Savanne formerly slave of Mrs. Desvaux.	The slave Marie had been acquired from Sr. Michel, gatekeeper at the State Hospital ( l'hôpital du Roi ). Marie Magdelaine accepted the donations from Sr. Michel on behalf of her daughter, Marie: "...ce accepté pour la dite Marie, par la dite Marie Magdelaine, sa mère..."	
2 Nov	Marie and her sons - Michel	1	F	M	M	Marie Magdelaine free negress, former slave of late Sr. Warqueville. Marie Magdelaine resides in Port- Louis at the Camp des Noirs Libres.		
DEC 10 <sup>th</sup>	Antoine, his wife M. Jeanne and their daughter, Euphrasie.	-	M	F	malagasy indian	Pierre, also called Pierrot, the couples son and free negro, formerly slave		
1790 AUG	125: Jeanne, also known as Courroufaye	-	F	-	-	Louise Vincente, free negress.	1. a wooden house 2. two enclosed houses at Camp Yoloff. 3. two moz. Slaves. 4. she-goats & poultry	The donation was dated 10th July 1789.
FEB : 27 <sup>th</sup>	Marie, Marceline ,	- 25	F F	F F	créole	Pierrot, free negro, (Guinea), residing at	Pierrot has to take care of his wife and children during	Marie is Pierrot's wife and the two girls are his daughters. Rules

4.

	Félicité & Louis (Marceline's son)	13 2	F M			St. Julien de Flaccq.	his lifetime.	- same as case no. 99.
April 12 <sup>th</sup>	13. Zanuba	-	M			Charles, also known as Dagueville, free créole.		The donation comprising of the house and the slave is worth the amount of 5000 L.
13 <sup>th</sup>	14. Marie - Joseph	17	F	créole	reward and exchange	Julienne, free negress, residing at Camp des Noirs Libres.	The slave, M. Joseph is Julienne's niece and she had been exchanged against a male malagasy slave, André, on 6th February 1792.	The slave bears the No. 2292.
25 <sup>th</sup>	16. Marie Bety	-	F	bengali		Sr. Castagnié		The said site and the house amounted to 1500 L. (*) - more details are missing.
1793 27 <sup>th</sup>	Marie - Louise & Gertrude	4 2	F F	-	maternal love	Marie, free negress.	Donation received from a certain Sr. Boudret. precise details are missing	The two girls are being manumitted following an exchange of slaves carried out by the Sr. Boudret. They were replaced by Flore (indian) and ToINETTE (créole).
APRIL	15. Choub	30	M	Malagasy		Rosette, free	1. A Mozambique negro,	

5.



## APPENDIX II



TRUTH

AND

JUSTICE COMMISSION

Friday 20 May 2011

Morning Session

**Members Present**

Dr Vijaya Teelock - Vice Chairperson  
Dr Parmaseeven Veerapen - Commissioner  
Mr Jacques David - Commissioner

**Chairperson of Session:** Dr Parmaseeven Veerapen

**Apology:-** Dr Alex Boraine  
Mr Benjamin Moutou

**In attendance**

Mrs Choolun Sonee (Deponent)

**TJC/H/Choolun S./20.05.11/Mc**

**Original Version**

1. **DR V. TEELOCK**:- Bonjour, Mme Choolun, donc c'est ou ki pou causé aujourd'hui.
2. Monsieur, vous êtes l'avocat, mais d'après les règlements du hearing, vous n'avez pas le droit de
3. parler. C'est Mme Choolun qui va parler. Vous allez à conseiller seulement. Ou neveu pou vini
4. après, oui. La secrétaire pou fer ou prêt serman.
5. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
6. **DR V. TEELOCK** :- Ou pou bizin identifie ou, ou dir ki ou nom et kot ou reste.
7. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Monn blie mo carte identite lakaz.
8. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Pa fer narien. Eski ou ti capav deboute pou prêt serman ?
9. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
10. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Ou bizin lev ou lame drwat et dir ki ou pou koz la verite rien que la
11. verite pendan la depozision.
12. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo pou koz la verite pendan mo depozision et mo abit Avenue Wilson,
13. Belle Rose.
14. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Kouma ou apele, ou bizin dir ou nom ?
15. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Sonee Choolun.
16. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Merci.
17. **DR V. TEELOCK** :- Merci, Madame, ou conné ki fer ounn vinn isi zordi ?
18. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
19. **DR V. TEELOCK** :- Donc, Dr Veerapen a kote moi, li pou poz ou enn de kestion.
20. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui, atan mo neveu pou vini la.
21. **DR V. TEELOCK** :- Nou pou poz ou kestion avan, apre nou pou appel ou neveu.
22. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
23. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Bonjour, Mme Choolun. Sa fer moi enn gran plezir akeyir ou azordi. Li
24. pas ti fasil pou ou kapav vini. Nou bizin enn ti pe klarifikasion. Ena enn problem, nou bizin
25. kompran problem la ki finn arive. Ou pe kompran moi la, ou pe swiv seki mo pe dir ?
26. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui. Mo finn amen mo neveu ensam ek moi, kouma dir moi monn vie,
27. mo pa kapav fer narien, get koze mem parfwa mo pa kapav koz bien. Be mo neveu mem pou
28. okup tou sa la. Tou seki ena la, mo donn li drwa. Ou kompran moi la, misie ?
29. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Oui, mo kompran ou. Me ou kone simpleman ou ou enn gran dimoun,
30. sa lepok la ou mem ki ti aste, Nou bizin serten renseyman avek ou avan apre nou pou appel ou
31. neveu, ok, pa bizin pren traka, nou pou appel ou neveu.
32. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
33. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Pour le moman, parski ou enn gran dimoun, ou neveu pa ti la letan sa

34. bann transaksion la ti fer ou bien mem li ti la, nou ti a kontan dabor gagn serten klarifikasion avek
35. ou apre sa nou pou appel ou neveu. Pa pren traka, nou pou appel ou neveu, ok ?
36. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
37. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Les mo demann ou enn de ti kestion. Ou rappel ki ou ti aste enn terin
38. avek Mons. Jwalaparsad Choolun ?
39. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
40. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou rappel sa ?
41. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
42. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou rappel bien sa ?
43. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
44. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou ti kapav donn moi impe detay lor sa terin la dabor ?
45. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo pa kapav, misie, parski impe lontan sa. La monn vie, lerla kouma
46. dir mo ti zen kouma enn zenfan, me la monn vie, mo pa kapav dir ou, akoz sa mem monn amen
47. mo neveu. Mo neveu ki pou explik ou, ki pou koz ek ou.
48. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Merci, Madame, me mo ti envi dir ou Mons. Jwalaparsad Choolun, ou
49. konn li sa misie la ?
50. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo frer sa, mo gran frer.
51. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou gran frer sa, dakor. Ou gran fer, li kinn vann terin la avek ou ?
52. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
53. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou kapav dir moi ou gran frer li, li ti dan sa terin la bokou avan ?
54. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Avan ?
55. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Avan li ti vann sa ar ou, li ti vann sa ar ou le 23 mai 1977.
56. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
57. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Li ti ena sa terin la depi lontan ?
58. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Sa mo pa kapav dir ou.
59. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Seki mo pou dir ou seki efektivman apepre enn mois de sa setadir avan
60. ou aste li, en mai 1977, ti ena enn misie Harryparsad Choolun.
61. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo ti frer.
62. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou ti frer et Mons. Jwalaparsad Choolun ou gran frer ?
63. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo gran frer.
64. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Mons. Harryparsad Choolun li paret ti ena enn dokuman ki li ti fer enn
65. promesse de vente a ou gran frer. Se enn mois avan sa.
66. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Sa mo pa kone.

67. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Kan nou dire enn promesse de vente, sa mem nou appel bordereau.
68. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Oui.
69. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Li pann enn la vente sa, li enn bordereau.
70. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Mo pa kapav dir ou.
71. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Ou pa konn sa ditou ?
72. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Non.
73. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Me gete tou lede frer mem?
74. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Oui.
75. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Enn gran frer, enn ti frer.
76. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Oui.
77. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Ou bizin au courant ki avan avril 1977 ni ti frer ni gran frer pa ti ena  
78. terin la ?
79. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Mo pa kapav dir ou, misie, parski zot pann dir moi. Moi mo pa kone.
80. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Ou rod dir moi ounn aste enn terin avek ou gran frer et ou pa kone depi  
81. kan ou gran frer ti ena terin la ?
82. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Non, sa terin la, sa mo kone. Zot ti pe dir ki zot inn aste sa terin la.
83. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Zot ti pe dir depi kan zot ena terin la, ase lontan avan zot vann sa ar  
84. ou ?
85. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Impe lontan.
86. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Depi ase lontan ki zonn dir ou zot ena terin la ?
87. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Oui.
88. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Savedir en 1977 ou aste terin la, savedir li kapav enn 10 ans avan, enn  
89. 20 ans avan ?
90. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Pa kapav dir ou. Kot monn arrive la, mo pa kapav donn tou sa  
91. explikasion la.
92. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Oui, be dizon enn 5 ans avan ?
93. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Pa kapav dir ou.
94. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Pa kone. Me selman ou okuran ki depi lontan zot ena terin la ?
95. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Parski mo impe malad, malad, mo pa kapav donn ou tou explikasion, si  
96. ti appel mo neveu li ti kapav dir ou.
97. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Ale right, ok.
98. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Mo la tet fatigue, mo pa kapav koz bokou.
99. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Ou frer Harryparsad Choolun, li enkor vivan, non?

100. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Non, linn mor.
101. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ki li ti pe travay sa lepok la ?
102. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Sa lepok la zot ti ena komers.
103. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ti pe fer komers?
104. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui.
105. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Dakor, et ki so komers ti ete?
106. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Komers dile.
107. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Aster la letan ounn aste terin la, ki ou finn fer avek terin la ?
108. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Terin la koumsa mem. Sa mem mo pe dir ou appel mo neveu.
109. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Oui, mo pou appel li enn ti moman la.
110. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Fer apel li, mo fatigue, mo pa kapav koz bokou.
111. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Pa trakase, Madam, nou kompran ou. Nou pa pou tro tarde. Me
112. mo ti envi gagn enn serten klarifikasion avek ou. A lepok kouma ou dir impe lontan kit fwa
113. ou neveu pa tro kone ki ti arive lontan la, be ounn temwagn se kinn arrive lontan la. Akoz sa
114. nou pe demann ou enn de ti zafer.
115. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Be misie mo blie, lakoz sa mo pe dir ou appel mo neveu.
116. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Oui, nou pou appel li taler enn ti moman la, nou pou appel li.
117. Be selman mo ti envi dir ou savedir terin la ou pann fer narien are sa. Ounn les terin la
118. koumsa ?
119. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Pe gagn impe problem, akoz sa pa pe kapav fer narien. A koz sa
120. mo neveu pou vinn koze, ou va kapav pli kompran.
121. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou ti kapav dir moi ki kalite problem ounn tende ki ena lor terin
122. la ?
123. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Ti ena enn blan ti pe fatig fatig nou, pa ti pe kapav fer narien lor
124. la.
125. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ki sann la ti pe fatig fatig ou koumsa ?
126. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Enn blan.
127. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ki sa blan la sa, kouma li apele ?
128. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo pa konn so nom, be koz sa mem nou pa pe kapav fer narien
129. lor la. Ala mo pe dir ou fran.
130. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ok, ou rappel apepre terin la komie ti koute ?
131. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Non, sa mem mo pe dir ou mo pa pe kone parski monn blie,
132. impe lontan sa. Mo mem mo krwar mo ti impe kouma zenfan zenfan, impe zen. Aster get sa

133. monn vinn vie, mo pa kapav rappel tou sa la, mo la tet fatigue, kompran.
134. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Oui, me ou ti ena kas pou aste normal, ou ti pey li kontan ?
135. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui, nou ti pe travay. Nou travay sa mem fer komers dile ek mo
136. mama tou sa inn donn koudme. Be lerla mo mama donn moi kas ar sa arsam. Be lerla nou
137. ramas sa larzan la, be lerla noun resi al aste, kompran.
138. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Dakor, ale right, ok. Merci, mo bann koleg kapav poz keston.
139. **DR V. TEELock**:- Donc, nou pa pou tard ou tro bokou. Me enn de ti keston enkor mo ti a
140. kontan demande. Et ou rappel komie arpan terin ou ti aste ?
141. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Sa mem mo pe dir ou apel mo neveu la, li kapav dir ou. Mo pa
142. kapav koz sa kouma dir mo la tet fatigue mo pa kapav.
143. **DR V. TEELock** :- Ou pa rappel komie arpan ounn aste ?
144. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo pa kapav, mo pa rapel parski monn blie la.
145. **DR V. TEELock**:- Ok, et larzan ki ounn peye ounn gagn sa ek komers dile?
146. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui, inn travay, inn fatigue bokou pou gagn sa kas la. Ou kone sa
147. lepok la kouma dimoun ti ete, sa ou kone la. Be noun travay bokou.
148. **DR V. TEELock** :- Ou tou sel ti pe travay ek ou mama ?
149. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo papa, mo mama, mo bann frer, ser tou koumsa kouma dir
150. nou finn travay, kompran, ena Harryparsad Choolun, li osi linn travay, mo ti frer sa. Li si linn
151. travay kan papa inn malad, papa inn mor. Be lerla linn pran travay la, li ti enkor impe zenfan,
152. bel er linn mor, travay la apre dile nepli, pena dile, pena mem vas.
153. **DR V. TEELock** :- Komie vas ou ti ena ?
154. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Vas nou ti pe aste. Nou aste nou reavann, nou fer travay
155. koumsa. Nou pa nourri vas. Zame noun nourri vas nou.
156. **DR V. TEELock** :- Et dan ki rezion ou ti pe vann dile ?
157. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Rose Hill impe pa kone, preske moi mo res impe parfwa, moi
158. mo donn enn koudme par si par la, parfwa kan mo dan lakaz, kompran.
159. **DR V. TEELock** :- Donc a komie frer ser zot ti ete dan la fami ?
160. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Nou ti enfin seki inn mor, impe lontan sa mo pa rappel, enn frer,
161. enn ser, kitfwa frer la konn moi, be moi mo pa konn frer la, entou nou ti kouma dir 5 frer, 5
162. ser. Be la nou zis 3 ena, enn moi, ena enn santener, apre ena enn enn ti pli gran ki moi, sa
163. mem.
164. **DR V. TEELock** :- Et kot li ti pe reste a lepok ?
165. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- La mem, Avenue Wilson, Belle Rose.

166. **DR V. TEELOCK**:- Tou letan ounn res laba ?
167. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Tou letan noun rest la, tou letan. Noun ne, noun grandi, ala nou
168. pe vinn vie.
169. **DR V. TEELOCK**:- Be kouma ounn al pens aste enn terin a Riviere Noire?
170. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Be mo pe fek pe dir ou la apel mo neveu la li kapav dir ou.
171. **DR V. TEELOCK**:- Be ou neveu pa ti la sa lepok la, li pa ti enkor ne ?
172. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Be ena papier, li kapav dir ou.
173. **DR V. TEELOCK**:- Dakor, ok. Et Mons. David ena enkor enn de ti kestion.
174. **MR J. DAVID**:- Merci. Enn sel kestion en tou ka. Bon, bokou kitsoz ou pa pe rappel.
175. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Oui, be aster monn vinn impe vie, mo ti impe zen. Apre sa
176. memwar la tout letan li pa parey.
177. **MR J. DAVID**:- Ou memwar tre bon quand il s'agit pou koz lot kitsoz me kouma koz
178. lor terin ou perdi memwar rapidman ?
179. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Non, non, li arive koumsa, misie, sorry. Li ariv koumsa,
180. nimport ki koze mo ou le koze la mo kapav koz li koumsa apre mo blie, mo perdi.
181. **MR J. DAVID**:- Dir moi sa terin la linn res vag koumsa mem, pa finn met fencing tou sa
182. non ?
183. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Pann kapav fer narien, monn dir ou pe gagn problem.
184. **MR J. DAVID**:- Pann met narien otour terin la ?
185. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Zot ti pe oule. Me mo bann frer la zot pa la. Si zot ti la, zot ti
186. kapav dir ou, be zot gagn problem, pa pe kapav fer narien.
187. **MR J. DAVID**:- Zordi zour zot ti kanmem 10 zenfan, ti a 10, sesa ki ou fek dir, komie
188. zenfan ti ete dan la fami, 5 garson, 5 tifi -
189. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Be mo pa pe dir ou enn la ti gran, kitfwa li ti enn garson, apre
190. enn tipti la -
191. **MR J. DAVID**:- Komie lezot memb la fami ki reste, bann frer ser enkor la ?
192. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- La ena 3.
193. **MR J. DAVID**:- Zis 3 ?
194. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Enn ser santener.
195. **MR J. DAVID**:- La li pou al gagn telefonn gratis ek gouvernman.
196. **MRS S. CHOOLUN**:- Apre ena moi, mo pli tipti. Apre ena mo ser impe pli gran, moi
197. mo pli tipti, sa mem, sa ti frer la inn disparet.
198. **MR J. DAVID**:- Ecoute, merci. Nek zis sa mem mo ti pe envi kone, pena fencing, zame

199. ounn al res lor terin la, zame ounn okip terin la.
200. **MRS S. CHOOLUN** :- Pa kapav, mo pe dir ou pe gagn problem. Mo bann frer oule
201. mem fer kitsoz lor la, pa kapav.
202. **MR J. DAVID** :- Merci, mo retourn la parol.
203. **DR V. TEELOCK** :- Ok, Madame, merci.

*This is a true and accurate version of this audio recording*



(H. Neermul)



**TRUTH**

**AND**

**JUSTICE COMMISSION**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Morning Session**

↪



## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

**Dr Parmaseeven Pillay VEERAPEN, Commissioner**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

**Apology:**

**Dr. Alex BORAINÉ, Chairperson**

**Mr Benjamin MOUTOU, Commissioner**

**Chairperson of Session:**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

### **MORNING SESSION**

**Mr NG TONG NG WAH G**

**Mr FRANÇOIS B (Legal Adviser)**

This is to certify that the following **08** pages are a true and accurate version of the audio recordings of Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 (Morning Session)



(L R Luckhoo)

Contractor

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2011

TJC/H/Ng Tong Ng Wah G/200411/Me  
Original Version



1 DR TEELOCK: Ou Mr George Ng Tong Ng Wah, Land Surveyor? Vous êtes arpenteur?

2 MR G N T NG WAH: Oui

3 DR TEELOCK: O.k. Vous savez pourquoi vous êtes là aujourd'hui ? Ou koné ki fer ou la  
4 aujourd'hui ?

5 MR G N T NG WAH: Je suis un peu dur d'oreille, I am a bit hard of hearing

6 DR TEELOCK: Do you know why you are here today?

7 MR G N T NG WAH: I am a bit hard of hearing doctor

8 DR TEELOCK: Do you know why you are here today? Ou koné ki fer ou la aujourd'hui ?

9 MR G N T NG WAH: I am a Land Surveyor, I am Ng Tong Ng Wah, Land Surveyor of 52  
10 Volcy Pougnet street, Port Louis

11 DR TEELOCK: Thank you. Mrs Damory, our secretary, will make you swear; Mrs Damory?

12 THE SECRETARY : Bonjour, veuillez vous mettre debout s'il vous plait, levez la main droite et  
13 affirmez que vous allez dire la vérité

14 MR G N T NG WAH: (*raising his right hand*): I, Ng Tong Ng Wah, Land Surveyor of 52 Volcy  
15 Pougnet street, Port Louis

16 THE SECRETARY : You must affirm whatever you will say will be the truth

17 MR G N T NG WAH: I wish to inform the commission that I had never carried out any survey  
18 and that Mrs Choolun had never requested me to carry out any survey...

19 THE SECRETARY : You must affirm...

20 MR G N T NG WAH: ...any survey being the subject site of 490 arpents situate in the district of  
21 Black River...

22 DR TEELOCK: You have to swear first

23 MR G N T NG WAH: I affirm to the commission that whatever I shall say will be the truth

2



24 THE SECRETARY : O.k. thank you, you may sit down

25 DR TEELock: In what language do you want to speak? Anglais, français or créole? In what  
26 language do you want to speak?

27 MR G N T NG WAH: Je sui un peu dur...j'ai un peu problème avec mon oreille là

28 DR TEELock: In what language...

29 THE SECRETARY : Vous allez parler en anglais ou en français ?

30 MR G N T NG WAH: I prefer English, I prefer to speak in English

31 DR TEELock: Do you know why you are here?

32 MR G N T NG WAH: Yeah

33 THE SECRETARY : Pourquoi vous êtes là ?

34 MR G N T NG WAH: Pourquoi je suis là ?

35 THE SECRETARY : Oui

36 MR G N T NG WAH: I am here because I was requested by the The Truth & Justice  
37 Commission to speak on the subject matter of a plot of land of 490 arpents situated in the district  
38 of Black River and which was produced in an application of development permit in 1997 but I  
39 wish to inform the commission that I had never carried any survey in favour of Mrs Soonee  
40 Choolun being the subject site of the plot of land of 490 arpents situate in the district of Black  
41 River and which was produced in an application for a development permit in 1997.

42 I wish to inform the commission that in 1997, I worked at the Ministry of Housing & land as  
43 Principal Surveyor. So I am not entitled to carry out private work.

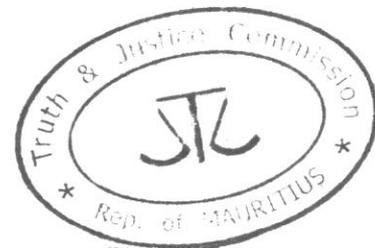
44 DR TEELock: Dr Veerapen is going to ask you a few questions

45 THE SECRETARY : Dr Veerapen va vous parler

46 MR G N T NG WAH: Yeah



- 47 DR VEERAPEN: Mr Ng Tong Ng Wah, it is a pleasure to have you today present at the The  
48 Truth & Justice Commission. You have just said you were working for sometime at the Ministry  
49 of Land & Housing, am I right, you get me? When did you work at the Ministry of Land &  
50 Housing, when was it?
- 51 MR G N T NG WAH: I joined the Ministry of Housing in June 1966 and I worked there for the  
52 past 37 years, I retired in April 2003 and I carried private practice at the Arcades Bahemia office  
53 in Port Louis up to now.
- 54 DR VEERAPEN: You retired in April 2008?
- 55 MR G N T NG WAH: Yeah about 37 years I was there, 37 years
- 56 DR VEERAPEN: O.k. more than 37, that's make 42 years; Oh 2003, o.k. thank you
- 57 MR G N T NG WAH: You know sometimes we may work in the civil service and occasionally  
58 you can do some private work, is that not? This happens, am I right?
- 59 MR G N T NG WAH: I can't hear
- 60 THE SECRETARY : Although you were working for the Ministry, you were doing private work  
61 sometimes, occasionally
- 62 MR G N T NG WAH: Quand j'étais au Ministère des Terres ?
- 63 THE SECRETARY : Oui
- 64 MR G N T NG WAH: No when I was at the Ministry of Housing, I did not carry any private  
65 work because I am not allowed; surveyors are not allowed to carry private work
- 66 DR VEERAPEN: Thank you but can I now just show you a document?
- 67 MR G N T NG WAH: Yes may I see?
- 68 DR VEERAPEN: Yes I am going to show that to you in a minute. A document which indicates a  
69 plot of land of Mrs Soonee Choolun and where we have the seal of your office
- 70 MR G N T NG WAH: Can I see it?



71 DR VEERAPEN: Yes to have a closer look at it

72 *At this stage, a document is shown to deponent*

73 MR G N T NG WAH: No, I have never drawn up the plan, it appears to be my stamp but I have  
74 never drawn up the survey nor carried out with the report, no there is no survey report only the  
75 plan, only the plan with my stamp. Normally I initial the plan and I sign the survey report. No  
76 it's not mine.

77 DR VEERAPEN: Now I am going just to say something of a general nature not for you (Mrs  
78 Damory just take care of word), sometimes it happens I don't say it's you, sometimes it happens  
79 for some officers?

80 MR G N T NG WAH: Yeah

81 DR VEERAPEN: O.k. though they are working for the government, they may occasionally do  
82 some private work?

83 MR G N T NG WAH: No

84 DR VEERAPEN: You agree with me on that?

85 MR G N T NG WAH: Qu'est-ce qu'il dit ?

86 DR VEERAPEN: Question générale

87 THE SECRETARY : It appears that some government officers though they are employed by the  
88 government, they may do occasionally some private work?

89 MR G N T NG WAH: Quand j'étais au gouvernement ...

90 THE SECRETARY : Generally speaking ?

91 MR G N T NG WAH: Quand j'étais au gouvernement ... When I was at the Ministry of Housing  
92 in 1997, I was in charge of the Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart districts as Principal  
93 Surveyor and there were two surveyors working under my supervision. So I do not know where  
94 the plan comes from, I do not know and it is not me who has drawn up the plan here.



95 DR VEERAPEN: Who were the surveyors working under your supervision? Give me the names  
96 of those two surveyors who were working under your supervision?

97 MR G N T NG WAH: In 2003 I practiced private work at the Arcades Bahemia but in 2003, I  
98 worked at home at my place, I lived at that time at 59, La Paix street, Port Louis, 54 Sir Virgile  
99 Naz street, Port Louis and my stamp, my telephone number is 2409699, I put it there but now I  
100 change my stamp, I join I work at Arcades Bahemia but at that time my stamp is that, my stamp  
101 is kept in my drawer, I had no office I worked at home at that time but I do not know who has  
102 falsified my stamp. There is neither my signature nor my initials. It is not mine.

103 DR VEERAPEN: No, I am just asking a very specific question, you just ask him again that  
104 question Mrs Damory: Could Mr Ng Tong Ng Wah tell us who were the surveyors who were  
105 working under your supervision when you were at the Ministry? The names of the surveyors?

106 MR G N T NG WAH: I have never surveyed the land, I have never been on site

107 DR VEERAPEN: No, no, my question is different...

108 MR G N T NG WAH: I do not know Mrs Choolun and she has never requested me to survey her  
109 land

110 THE SECRETARY : The names of the surveyors working with you at the Ministry of Housing?

111 MR G N T NG WAH: At the Ministry of Housing in 1997, I was Principal Surveyor in charge of  
112 two districts, Pamplemousses and Riviere du Rempart districts, two districts. Black River is not  
113 mine, I do not know Black River at that time and I don't know where the plan comes from. Mr  
114 Choony has never contacted me neither at the Ministry not at my office my private at Arcades  
115 Bahemia, I do not know her. The name of the two surveyors working with me at that time?

116 THE SECRETARY : Yes

117 MR G N T NG WAH: At that time 97, there were two surveyors working with me but I don't  
118 remember their names because I changed the district, every two years I changed district and they  
119 changed the surveyors and I do not know, I can't remember the names of the two surveyors  
120 working with me may be the Registry of the Ministry of Housing would confirm. The Ministry  
121 of Housing could confirm.



122 DR VEERAPEN: O.k. thank you but first I would like to ask you to help us. When you looked at  
123 this plan which I showed you to tell us whether you can confirm as a Sworn Land Surveyor  
124 whether this plan is a fake plan?

125 *At this stage, deponent is shown a document*

126 MR G N T NG WAH: No I do not know... whether the plan is a fake one? I wish to confirm to  
127 the commission that the plan is not mine, I do not know who has drawn up the plan, right who  
128 has drawn up the plan and who has put the stamp, put my stamp on the plan without my initials  
129 or signature. So I could confirm that it is not mine and I don't say it is a fake one but it is not  
130 mine and I do not know who has drawn up the plan, right and I have no computer, it appears to  
131 be from a computer but I have no computer at my place.

132 DR VEERAPEN: Listen it is very important to tell us who are those people who work with you  
133 as clerks, as assistants, as whatever when you work in private practice and when you were at the  
134 Ministry? You've got to think about it though you can't give us the answer today, you think  
135 about it in 1997, who were those who were working with you? You will give us the information  
136 in writing, you write to the secretary of the commission

137 MR G N T NG WAH: I can give the commission the names of the people working with me at  
138 Arcades Bahemia but at the Ministry of Housing, I can't remember

139 DR TEELock: Please check the Vat Registration Number

140 MR J DAVID : Check it first

141 MR G N T NG WAH: Alright

142 MR J DAVID : Say yes or no?

143 THE SECRETARY : S'il vous plait parlez

144 MR G N T NG WAH: Yeah, in 1997 the VAT Registered Number mentioned on the plan is  
145 mine, its correct VAT: 12160452, that's correct my VAT number

146 DR TEELock: But you were working at the ministry at that time



147 MR G N T NG WAH: My VAT number, my stamp appear to be mine my stamp

148 DR TEELock: But you were working at the ministry at the same time

149 MR G N T NG WAH: That's correct my VAT number, my telephone number is right

150 THE SECRETARY : The VAT number?

151 MR G N T NG WAH: The VAT number is right, that's correct because I left the government  
152 service, I left the ministry in April 2003 but in 2003 my stamp is the same that's right and my  
153 telephone number is at my place at 59 La Paix street, right 2409699 I worked at my place, I did  
154 not work, I worked for myself at my place. At that time there was no assistant working with me.  
155 In 2003, no assistant.

156 DR TEELock: Do you have any idea who could have taken your stamp?

157 MR G N T NG WAH: No I wish to confirm to the commission that I have no idea who could  
158 have taken my stamp but I kept my stamp in my drawer at home, I do not know, I don't know,  
159 my brother was living with me at that time, I don't know whether...I can't confirm whether my  
160 brother has given my stamp to somebody

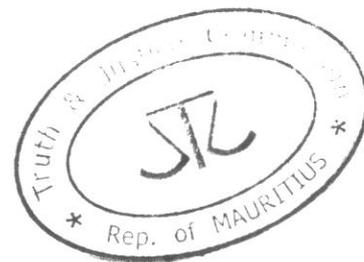
161 DR VEERAPEN: Now have you ever done any work of surveying in Rodrigues? Mrs Damory is  
162 writing it

163 MR G N T NG WAH: I wish to inform to confirm to the commission that I worked at Rodrigues  
164 for 18 months, 1985 and 1986. I was at that time a Senior Surveyor. Senior Surveyor and I  
165 worked at Solitude, at Citronelle, the survey office was at Citronelle in Rodrigues and I went to  
166 Rodrigues for a tour of service, a next tour of service of 1 year of 12 months in 2001 and 2002,  
167 right; August 2001 and I returned back to the Ministry in August 2002, 1 year I spent there.

168 DR TEELock: Thank you very much, you are free to go, there is need for you to come on  
169 Friday

170 MR G N T NG WAH: There was a letter, I got your letter right concerning the prescription at  
171 Rodrigues, Heirs Begué, right

172 THE SECRETARY : Any comments on this?



173 MR G N T NG WAH: In the year 2006 and 2008, a name is mentioned in the letter, the survey  
174 may have been done by Aldo Ong Tone because he was my colleague, he worked under my  
175 supervision in 2001 and in 2002, Aldo Ong Tone but at that time he was not allowed to sign any  
176 plan, any survey plan...So I carried out...he came to see me at my place and requested me to  
177 sign the plan, the survey report but I have never drawn any affidavit of prescription. It is the  
178 notary or the avoué who has done the affidavit of prescription but this is not mine, not Aldo  
179 because he is not allowed to prescription

180 MR J DAVID : Repeat what you just said, Aldo Ong Tone has no right...

181 MR G N T NG WAH: I can't submit to the commission any report, any survey report. All the  
182 reports have been kept by my colleague Aldo Ong Tone, Land Surveyor, he is now Senior  
183 Surveyor at the Cadastral Office

184 MR J DAVID : Concerning Aldo Ong Tone he was not allowed to do any prescription?

185 MR G N T NG WAH: Yeah, Ong Tone was not allowed, he is a Land Surveyor, he is not  
186 entitled to draw up affidavit of prescription but he is allowed to carry out survey work, right,  
187 survey in view of prescription, right, survey, he carried out the survey, o.k.

188 DR TEELock: Thank you very much.

189 **Certified A true and accurate version of the audio recordings**

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193



**(L R Luckhoo)**

**Contractor**

**09/05/2011**



**TRUTH**

**AND**

**JUSTICE COMMISSION**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Morning Session**



## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

**Dr Parmaseeven Pillay VEERAPEN, Commissioner**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

**Apology:**

**Dr. Alex BORAINÉ, Chairperson**

**Mr Benjamin MOUTOU, Commissioner**

**Chairperson of Session:**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

### **MORNING SESSION**

**Mrs BHUJOHORY M A**

**Mr FRANÇOIS (legal adviser)**

This is to certify that the following **24** pages are a true and accurate version of the audio recordings of Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 (Morning Session)

  
(L R Luckhoo)

Contractor

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> +May, 2011

TJC/H/Bhujohory M/200411/Mf  
Original Version



- 1 DR TEELOCK: Le CEO
- 2 MRS BHUJOHORY: Le CEO est en congé préretraite, il est parti depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> Janvier cette  
3 année
- 4 DR TEELOCK: La secrétaire va vous demander de prêter serment et de vous identifier
- 5 MRS BHUJOHORY: O.k.
- 6 DR TEELOCK: Et vous êtes au courant du cas ?
- 7 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui, d'ailleurs je vais table les détails sur ça
- 8 THE SECRETARY : Bonjour, madame si vous pouvez vous mettre debout, si vous pouvez lever  
9 la main droite et affirmez que vous allez dire la vérité et rien que la vérité pendant la déposition
- 10 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui je vais dire la vérité, rien que la vérité pendant toute la déposition
- 11 THE SECRETARY : Merci, identifiez-vous devant la commission
- 12 MRS BHUJOHORY: Je suis Marie Aimée Bhujohory
- 13 THE SECRETARY : En tant que ?
- 14 MRS BHUJOHORY: Acting Chief Executive
- 15 THE SECRETARY : D'accord, merci
- 16 DR TEELOCK: Alors vous allez parler anglais, français, créole ?
- 17 MRS BHUJOHORY: Peu importe, français disons
- 18 DR TEELOCK: Français ou créole
- 19 MRS BHUJOHORY: Créole, nou la langue chose sa
- 20 DR TEELOCK: Donc vous êtes au courant du cas ?
- 21 MRS BHUJOHORY: Si, je vais faire un petit historique, d'ailleurs le table...
- 22 DR TEELOCK: Une minute, le commissaire David qui va vous poser des questions suivi par les  
23 autres commissaires



24 MRS BHUJOHORY: O.k.

25 MR J DAVID : Merci, madame je n'ai pas retenu votre nom

26 MRS BHUJOHORY: Marie Aimée, mon prénom, Marie Aimée Bhujohory

27 MR J DAVID : Merci. Oui madame donc merci d'être venu à défaut de votre Chief Executive  
28 mais surement vous allez nous donner les réponses qu'on cherche

29 MRS BHUJOHORY: Certainement

30 MR J DAVID : Donc allons procéder par étape

31 MRS BHUJOHORY: O.k.

32 MR J DAVID : Quelqu'un vient chez vous et demande un permis de développement ; quelle est  
33 la procédure enclenchée ?

34 MRS BHUJOHORY: Quelqu'un normalement ce qu'on lui demande ce sont il y a les application  
35 forms à remplir, il y a trois sets de plan à soumettre, un location plan. Il fait sa demande, sa  
36 demande est examinée par les inspecteurs ou le Planning Department...

37 MR J DAVID : Planning Department

38 MRS BHUJOHORY: Et s'il n'y a rien et que tout est en règle il respecte tout ce qu'on lui  
39 demande, il a le set back, disons il veut construire une maison il a le set back requit donc il donne  
40 son permis.

41 MR J DAVID : O.k. est-ce que vous avez combien de type de permis de développement que  
42 vous offrez, développement résidentiel ?

43 MRS BHUJOHORY: o.k. commercial

44 MR J DAVID : Résidentiel, commerciale

45 MRS BHUJOHORY: Commercial et puis sergenerist...*(difficult to understand the word)* ça veut  
46 dire industriel et autre chose hein

47 MR J DAVID : Industriel, morcellement et tout ?



- 48 MRS BHUJOHORY: Excision
- 49 MR J DAVID : Excision, donc plusieurs types de permis ?
- 50 MRS BHUJOHORY: De développement
- 51 MR J DAVID : De développement ?
- 52 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 53 MR J DAVID : O.k. bon quand cela arrive chez vous, quelles sont les étapes que vous  
54 engagées ? Vous avez différents départements ?
- 55 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 56 MR J DAVID : D'abord ça part... allez je viens moi comme n'importe quel mauricien je dis j'ai  
57 un terrain à faire développer à Rivière Noire, je vais remplir...
- 58 MRS BHUJOHORY:...les formulaires qu'il faut, oui
- 59 MR J DAVID : Les formulaires ?
- 60 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 61 MR J DAVID : Je donne mon title deed
- 62 MRS BHUJOHORY: Tout ça, oui
- 63 MR J DAVID : Je donne les plans
- 64 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 65 MR J DAVID : Je donne le location plan, site plan
- 66 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 67 MR J DAVID : Je donne aussi le Surveyor's Report ?
- 68 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 69 MR J DAVID : Ça aussi il faut ?



- 70 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 71 MR J DAVID : Tout là, donc ça part où ? Je dépose ça avec le secrétaire, ça part où après ?
- 72 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non, vous déposez ça dans le Planning Department
- 73 MR J DAVID : Planning Department d'abord ?
- 74 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui comptoir d'accueil, ce sont les clerical officers qui accusent réception
- 75 du dossier
- 76 MR J DAVID : O.k.
- 77 MRS BHUJOHORY: On vous donne une référence pour le dossier
- 78 MR J DAVID : Pour le dossier
- 79 MRS BHUJOHORY: Voila
- 80 MR J DAVID : Oui et puis ça part où ?
- 81 MRS BHUJOHORY: Comme je vous dis l'application est processed par les inspecteurs pour
- 82 voir si tout est correct, s'il respecte les planning policy guidance disons...
- 83 MR J DAVID : Inspecteurs ?
- 84 MRS BHUJOHORY: Le Planning Department
- 85 MR J DAVID : Planning Department, o.k. et par la suite?
- 86 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ils vont voir si c'est conforme au PPG hein, planning policy guidance. Ils
- 87 regardent disons pour la hauteur du bâtiment, les trucs comme ça
- 88 MR J DAVID : Bâtiment, environnement qu'il faut protéger
- 89 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est ça
- 90 MR J DAVID : Les arbres qu'il ne faut pas détruire ?
- 91 MRS BHUJOHORY: O.k. c'est ça



- 92 MR J DAVID : C'est tout pour que ça s'intègre totalement dans l'environnement ?
- 93 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est ça, voilà
- 94 MR J DAVID : Ça c'est le environment impact assessment que l'on fait ?
- 95 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 96 MR J DAVID : Nous sommes tout à fait d'accord là-dessus là ?
- 97 MRS BHUJOHORY: O.k. ça veut dire le Planning Department processed, il fait ces  
98 recommandations, si c'est o.k. on a un formulaire il met ces recommandations, s'il y a à  
99 soumettre les trucs, les trucs, enfin je ne sais pas moi, additionnels...
- 100 MR J DAVID : Pour ou contre ou en faveur
- 101 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est ça
- 102 MR J DAVID : Où il manque des choses ?
- 103 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est ça
- 104 MR J DAVID : Oui...
- 105 MRS BHUJOHORY: Et puis l'ingénieur qui entre en jeu pour la structure hein
- 106 MR J DAVID : Voilà alors premièrement planning ?
- 107 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 108 MR J DAVID : Deuxième ingénieur ?
- 109 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 110 MR J DAVID : Oui tout à fait d'accord
- 111 MRS BHUJOHORY: Il donne ces recommandations
- 112 MR J DAVID : Il donne sa recommandation



113 MRS BHUJOHORY: Street o.k. on a un comité qui s'appelle le Permits and Business  
114 Monitoring Committee (PBMC), on se rencontre une fois la semaine minimum les mardis. Donc  
115 ça passe dans le comité et puis on issue le permit à la personne.

116 MR J DAVID : Voila. Est-ce que vous avez des chercheurs chez vous par exemple pour vérifier  
117 si un titre de propriété est véritablement ça appartient à monsieur or madame X ou Y ?

118 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non

119 MR J DAVID : Vous ne le faites pas ?

120 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non

121 MR J DAVID : Ce n'est pas votre...

122 MRS BHUJOHORY: On n'a pas la compétence pour le faire, les inspecteurs n'ont... enfin ils  
123 peuvent lire comme ça mais si il y a quelque chose entre, je comprends ce que vous voulez  
124 dire...

125 MR J DAVID : Face value, quelqu'un vous dit je suis propriétaire de la montagne du Morne,  
126 vous m'écoutez vous dites oui vous êtes propriétaire, non ?

127 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui mais normalement...

128 MR J DAVID :...c'est peu ça ?

129 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ils étudient les title deeds et comme je vous dis ce n'est pas comme un  
130 juriste comme un notaire peut le faire

131 MR J DAVID : Vous ne croyez pas que c'est une...c'est très grave ?

132 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est une lacune, oui

133 MR J DAVID : C'est une lacune très très grave ?

134 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

135 MR J DAVID : Parce que moi comme je vous dis si j'ai envie de construire un château sur le  
136 sommet de la montagne du Morne je peux le faire ?

- 137 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui...*laughing*
- 138 MR J DAVID : Personne ne pourra m'en empêcher
- 139 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est vrai
- 140 MR J DAVID : Donc ...
- 141 MRS BHUJOHORY: Si c'est falsifié comme je vous dis c'est difficile pour nous de le savoir
- 142 MR J DAVID : Difficile de savoir ?
- 143 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 144 MR J DAVID : Allons dire pour ce qui est du morcellement, vous-même vous donnez le  
145 permis ?
- 146 MRS BHUJOHORY: Enfin ça dépend si c'est un Division in kind disons entre héritiers...
- 147 MR J DAVID : Entre héritiers ?
- 148 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est nous qui donnons, si c'est un gros projet plusieurs lots ça va avec le  
149 morcellement board
- 150 MR J DAVID : Ah bon très bien. Morcellement Board d'abord et puis ça revient vers vous ?
- 151 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 152 MR J DAVID : Dans le cas qui nous intéresse est-ce que vous êtes au courant vous pouvez  
153 confirmer ou non si c'est une demande pour un morcellement dans le cas Choolun ?
- 154 MRS BHUJOHORY: Dans le cas de Choolun on a reçu deux applications en 1997
- 155 MR J DAVID : Voilà c'est ça que je voulais savoir
- 156 MRS BHUJOHORY: Le premier était pour une excision
- 157 MR J DAVID : Oui, mil neuf cent quatre vingt... ?



158 MRS BHUJOHORY: ...dix-sept, en 1997 oui, le premier c'était pour une excision, l'application  
159 était datée le 12 Novembre 1997

160 MR J DAVID : De 26 arpents?

161 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non

162 MR J DAVID : C'est ça?

163 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non il y a deux là

164 MR J DAVID : Il y a deux, allez le premier ?

165 MRS BHUJOHORY: Le premier une excision de 297.24 mètres carrées d'un total de 2,  
166 068,226.30 mètres carrées...

167 MR J DAVID : Vous partez trop vite pour moi là. En terme d'arpent ?

168 MRS BHUJOHORY: 400 plus

169 MR J DAVID : 400 arpents, disons hein, allez...

170 MRS BHUJOHORY: Le head planner peut vous donner...

171 MR J DAVID : 2 million allez je m'arrête je ne vais pas plus loin, 2 million

172 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

173 MR J DAVID : Donc quelques 400 arpents ?

174 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

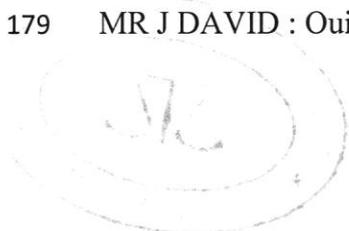
175 MR J DAVID : Nous sommes d'accord bon voila. Donc c'était premièrement une excision hein ?

176 MRS BHUJOHORY: Une excision

177 MR J DAVID : Très bien, en faveur de qui ?

178 MRS BHUJOHORY: De Mme Sonee Choolun

179 MR J DAVID : Oui en faveur de Mme Choolun



- 180 MRS BHUJOHORY: A Coteau Raffin, La Gaulette
- 181 MR J DAVID : O.k. et le deuxième ?
- 182 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça a été rejeté hein par le conseil
- 183 MR J DAVID : Ça a été rejeté ?
- 184 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 185 MR J DAVID : O.k. oui
- 186 MRS BHUJOHORY: Le deuxième c'est une application faite le 30 Décembre 1997
- 187 MR J DAVID : 30 Décembre, quelques semaines après ?
- 188 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui pour une excision de 70 arpents, là c'est en arpent hein, 70 arpents 25
- 189 d'un gros lot de 490 arpents for agricultural purposes ; la première c'était pour residential
- 190 MR J DAVID : Le deuxième c'est pour ?
- 191 MRS BHUJOHORY: Agricultural purposes, c'est toujours à Royal Road, Coteau Raffin, La
- 192 Gaulette
- 193 MR J DAVID : O.k. pour le même lot ça hein ?
- 194 MRS BHUJOHORY: Pour le même lot
- 195 MR J DAVID : O.k. très bien
- 196 MRS BHUJOHORY: On avait des doutes sur le title deed, on avait écrit d'ailleurs à notre then
- 197 legal adviser, Mr Balmanno qui nous a répondu qu'on ne peut pas...
- 198 MR J DAVID : ...donner le permis ?
- 199 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est ça on n'a pas donné
- 200 MR J DAVID : On n'a pas agréé?
- 201 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non



202 MR J DAVID : Oui donc il n'y a pas eu une troisième demande ?

203 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non...je ne peux pas vous dire je n'ai pas...

204 MR J DAVID : Si je peux me permettre

205 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

206 MR J DAVID : Il y a eu un development permit référence 0946/97 : « He is hereby authorised to  
207 develop his or her land situated at Coteau Raffin. Description: Excision of a plot of land of an  
208 extent of 26 arpents, 2,747 metres carrés de 490 arpents” et cela a été octroyé le 3.11.1997

209 MRS BHUJOHORY: Un development permit? C'est grave ça

210 MR J DAVID : Ben madame ce n'est pas moi qui faite, je n'ai pas fais de commentaire c'est  
211 vous qui dit que c'est grave

212 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui très grave

213 MR J DAVID : Et jetez un coup d'œil

214 *At this stage deponent is shown a document*

215 MR J DAVID : Vous n'êtes pas au courant de ça ?

216 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non

217 MR J DAVID : Ah c'est doublement plus grave si vous n'êtes pas au courant

218 MRS BHUJOHORY: Du tout

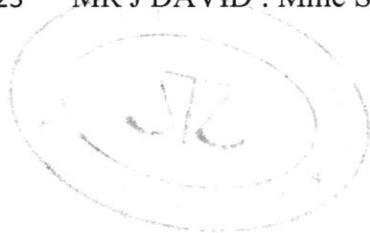
219 MR J DAVID : Donc vous voyez que ça sort de chez vous ?

220 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

221 MR J DAVID : Vous pouvez... il y a une signature qui n'est pas trop lisible ?

222 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça c'est Mme Sanassy

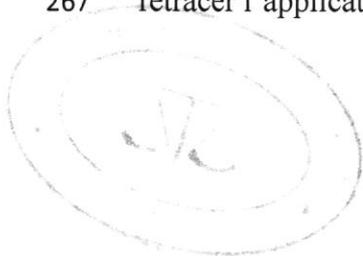
223 MR J-DAVID : Mme Sunassee?



- 224 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui je dois confirmer
- 225 MR J DAVID : Elle était quoi là-bas ?
- 226 MRS BHUJOHORY: Elle était Planning Officer
- 227 MR J DAVID : Planning Officer, donc Mme Sunassee donne un papier de permis de  
228 développement et vous en tant que Acting Chief Executive, vous n'êtes pas au courant ?
- 229 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non
- 230 MR J DAVID : Maintenant vous allez voir ; est-ce que elle avait le pouvoir de signer un tel  
231 papier ?
- 232 MRS BHUJOHORY: Dans le temps c'était elle qui signait en 1997 et puis...
- 233 MR J DAVID : Dites moi qu'est-ce qui a changé ?
- 234 MRS BHUJOHORY: Avec le Business Facilitation Act de 2006, donc là maintenant c'est le  
235 Chief Executive qui signe
- 236 MR J DAVID : Oui donc Mme Sunassee, elle était donc Chief Planner à l'époque ?
- 237 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui elle était responsable, oui du département planning
- 238 MR J DAVID : Du département parce que elle, elle signe for the secretary of...
- 239 MRS BHUJOHORY: of the council
- 240 MR J DAVID : Of the council et elle est toujours attaché à ce département chez vous ?
- 241 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non elle n'est plus chez nous
- 242 MR J DAVID : Elle a eue une promotion ?
- 243 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non, elle est consultante en feng shui
- 244 MR J DAVID : Pardon ?
- 245 MRS BHUJOHORY: Consultante en feng shui



- 246 MR J DAVID : Feng shui, donc elle a pu retrouver son bien-être dans le feng shui ?
- 247 MRS BHUJOHORY: No comments
- 248 MR J DAVID : Pour avoir eu avec une telle facilité la possibilité de signer un tel papier et que  
249 vous vous me donnez deux...
- 250 MRS BHUJOHORY: Je veux vous donner ça
- 251 MR J DAVID : J'aurais souhaité si vous pourriez laisser une copie de cela ?
- 252 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non je vous donne, je laisse l'originale
- 253 MR J DAVID : L'originale, merci, merci
- 254 MR J DAVID : Donc deux demandes ; la deuxième demande vous aviez acceptée ou rejetée ?
- 255 MRS BHUJOHORY: Rejetée
- 256 MR J DAVID : Rejetée, deux demandes rejetées et pourtant il y a un qui passe comme une lettre  
257 à la poste et sans que nous ayons un commentaire à faire, vous étiez au courant de ce plan qui  
258 était déjà accompagné des détails ?
- 259 MRS BHUJOHORY: Le problème Mr David que lors des émeutes de 1999, la plupart des  
260 archives du Planning Department ont été détruites par le feu
- 261 MR J DAVID : Ah ! Heureusement nous avons pu conserver ça
- 262 MRS BHUJOHORY: La plupart ils ont eu le feu là-bas carrément hein
- 263 MR J DAVID : Détruites ?
- 264 MRS BHUJOHORY: Détruites
- 265 MR J DAVID : Mais...
- 266 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça on a pu retracer d'ailleurs c'est attaché là, que les registres que j'ai pu  
267 retracer l'application, il y avait un livre qu'on gardait mais les dossiers...



268 MR J DAVID :...ont disparus et c'est encore plus grave, grave, grave. Est-ce que dans vos  
269 relevés aujourd'hui, vous avez cela (*At this stage a document is shown to deponent*) ?

270 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non

271 MR J DAVID : Non, vous n'avez pas de trace du tout ?

272 MRS BHUJOHORY: Du tout

273 MR J DAVID : Donc c'est le feng... Vous n'étiez pas au courant de ça vous ?

274 MRS BHUJOHORY: Du tout

275 MR J DAVID : Bon ça c'est très important comme je vous dis. Donc maintenant vous me dites  
276 qu'on a signé comme cela, là ça devient plus grave qu'on y pensait. C'est authentique ça ?

277 DR TEELock: D'après vous c'est authentique ce document ou ça a pu être...

278 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui d'ailleurs il y a un numéro

279 MR J DAVID : Un numéro dessus, tout est là-dedans

280 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça veut dire avant c'était dans un carnet, donc on retirait on gardait une  
281 copie dans le dossier et on donnait l'originale à la personne

282 MR J DAVID : Voila, o.k. Combien de temps est-ce que Mme Sunassee a travaillée à votre...

283 MRS BHUJOHORY: Chez nous ?

284 MR J DAVID : Chez vous ?

285 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça veut dire en 1994 elle était au Ministère Housing & Lands

286 MR J DAVID : Housing & Lands en 1994, oui ?

287 MRS BHUJOHORY: En 94, elle est arrivée chez nous

288 MR J DAVID : Ah ! Elle était au Ministry of Housing avant ?

289 MRS BHUJOHORY: Avant, oui



- 290 MR J DAVID : Et combien temps elle a fait chez vous ?
- 291 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça veut dire elle a quittée il y a à peu près deux ans
- 292 MR J DAVID : Elle vient de quitter ?
- 293 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 294 MR J DAVID : Les documents qui ont disparus ; à quelle période à peu près ?
- 295 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non les documents comme je vous ai dis les émeutes de 99
- 296 MR J DAVID : Voila
- 297 MRS BHUJOHORY: Février 1999
- 298 MR J DAVID : Elle était là en 1997 et nous avons la preuve qu'elle y était. Très bien et puis en  
299 98, 99 pardon, en 99 tous les plans...
- 300 MRS BHUJOHORY: ...partent en fumée
- 301 MR J DAVID : partent en fumée, voila donc on retrouve... donc est-ce qu'elle a le droit de  
302 donner un permis par elle-même...
- 303 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non
- 304 MR J DAVID : ...elle peut s'octroyer ce droit ?
- 305 MRS BHUJOHORY: Bien sûr que non. Avant c'était le Works and Planning Committee qui  
306 déterminaient les applications
- 307 MR J DAVID : Voila tout ça est fait en règle générale selon la procédure ?
- 308 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 309 MR J DAVID : Donc ce qui fait qu'elle doit suivre les étapes ?
- 310 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui certainement



311 MR J DAVID : Si jamais donc, si jamais elle a donnée un tel permis ce serait derrière le dos de  
312 tout le monde alors ?

313 MRS BHUJOHORY: Bein oui, définitivement

314 MR J DAVID : Vous avez dit grave une fois, j'ai dit deux fois, trois fois

315 MRS BHUJOHORY: Je suis choquée, outrée

316 MR J DAVID : Vous vous êtes choquée ?

317 MRS BHUJOHORY: Choquée, outrée

318 MR J DAVID : Voila

319 DR TEELock: Si elle a donnée ce permis de développement, elle était aussi dans la même  
320 équipe avec les deux autres qui ont dit qu'il y avait des problèmes avec les title deeds ? Elle était  
321 au courant ?

322 MRS BHUJOHORY : Oui bien sûr

323 DR TEELock: Donc elle était en full knowledge que c'était faux ?

324 MR J DAVID : Full knowledge?

325 MRS BHUJOHORY: Certainement

326 DR TEELock: Que c'était faux ?

327 MRS BHUJOHORY: Certainement, ça veut dire on a écrit à Me Balmanno et c'est elle-même  
328 qui a signée la lettre d'ailleurs

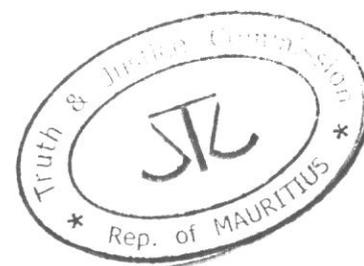
329 MR J DAVID : La lettre ?

330 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui c'est attaché là hein

331 MR J DAVID : Donc je vois donc une lettre en date du 5.2.98

332 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

→



333 MR J DAVID : Où elle écrit à Me Balmanno

334 MRS BHUJOHORY: Me Balmanno

335 MR J DAVID : Donc elle signe, donc elle est très au courant qu'il y avait quelques doutes sur ce  
336 terrain là ?

337 MRS BHUJOHORY: Me Balmanno a carrément... d'ailleurs si on voit son advice qui est clair et  
338 net

339 MR J DAVID : Oui

340 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est attaché là-dedans

341 MR J DAVID : Voila et Me Balmanno qui répond en lettre du 18.2.98 à l'effet qu'il a regardé le  
342 document et que...*(reads the document)* il demande de vérifier si Mme Choolun a un good title  
343 deed

344 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

345 MR J DAVID : « The document submitted by her is a document under private signature. It  
346 provides 13<sup>th</sup> line from bottom "la transmission du titre ainsi de suite.... » She is therefore not  
347 yet the owner of the plot of land" Ça c'était en 98?

348 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

349 MR J DAVID : Mais pourtant en 97, elle a signée pour donner le permis à Mme Choolun. Avec  
350 ce permis de Mme Choolun, Mme Choolun fait une demande auprès de la DBM en mettant ce  
351 terrain en garantie pour 50 million

352 MRS BHUJOHORY: Je tombe des nus

353 MR J DAVID : Donc voila nous nous voulions savoir quelle était votre responsabilité en tant  
354 qu'institution. Donc vous tombez directement sous the Ministry of Local Government?

355 MRS BHUJOHORY: Of Local Government



356 MR J DAVID : Et que tout ce qui touche à cette institution touche le ministère, touche aussi le  
357 gouvernement dans son ensemble ?

358 MRS BHUJOHORY: Certainement, certainement

359 MR J DAVID : Donc si une personne arrive à octroyer des permis derrière le dos de tout un  
360 chacun, je crois qu'il y a enquête à initier ?

361 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

362 MR J DAVID : Dans ce cas

363 DR TEELock: Moi j'ai une petite question. Est-ce que c'est possible qu'une personne seule  
364 soit responsable, une personne peut faire autant et que personne autour de lui, les officiers, les  
365 collègues ne soient pas au courant ?

366 Je trouve ça un peu surprenant que personne ne soit au courant

367 MRS BHUJOHORY: Il y a une personne qui était responsable de la section planning et donc elle  
368 avait toute la latitude de faire ce qu'elle veut

369 DR TEELock: Pour donner un permis comme ça, il faut qu'elle est le the support du CEO,  
370 l'aval du CEO ou pas nécessairement ?

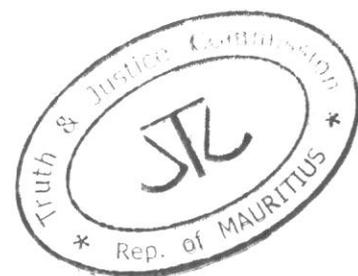
371 MRS BHUJOHORY: Je ne peux pas répondre, je ne crois pas non

372 DR TEELock: Mais quelle est la procédure normalement pour donner un development permit,  
373 the CEO should be aware ?

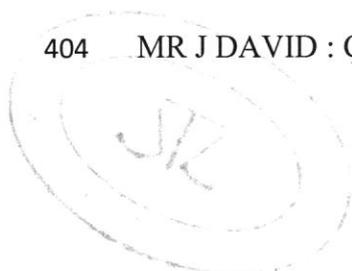
374 MRS BHUJOHORY: Normalement pour donner un development permit comme je vous dis, ça a  
375 été au Works and Planning committee, c'est minuted c'est recorded telle personne le permis a été  
376 approuvé, telle personne le permis a été rejeté.

377 Ça peut-être je peux essayer de retracer les minutes of proceedings de ça, ça je vous ai pas  
378 donnés je peux vous les donner ça hein. Donc on octroie des permis à la base de ce que le Works  
379 and Planning...

380 MR J DAVID : ...soumet comme...



- 381 MRS BHUJOHORY: ...approuvé mais sinon...
- 382 MR J DAVID : Approuvé ou pas approuvé
- 383 MRS BHUJOHORY: Si ce n'est pas approuvé, on dit ce n'est pas approuvé
- 384 MR J DAVID : Voila
- 385 DR TEELock: Est-ce que le CEO peut disapprove ce que le planning committee dit? Est-ce  
386 qu'il doit donner son aval ?
- 387 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non, non, auparavant c'étaient les conseillers qui... c'étaient les  
388 conseillers
- 389 MR J DAVID : Oui
- 390 MRS BHUJOHORY: Maintenant c'est le staff qui s'occupe
- 391 MR J DAVID : Donc j'ai bien compris vos points madame et je crois que nous avons suivis les  
392 procédures qui doit donner et qui ne doit pas donner ainsi de suite.
- 393 Est-ce que vous seriez au courant ou pas, est-ce qu'il y aurait d'autre demande de développement  
394 sur ce terrain en question ?
- 395 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ce que je veux faire aussitôt que je rentre au bureau je vais essayer de voir  
396 si on a reçu d'autre application de Mme Choolun après, ça je n'ai pas vraiment vérifié et je me  
397 suis concentrée que sur ça hein
- 398 MR J DAVID : Bon je retourne la question ; est-ce qu'il y aurait eu des demandes de  
399 développement par une autre société sur ce terrain là ?
- 400 MRS BHUJOHORY: Difficile de vous dire, je dois vérifier
- 401 MR J DAVID : S'il vous plait parce que vous voyez ce n'est pas difficile de retrouver, vous avez  
402 chez vous votre Bible
- 403 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 404 MR J DAVID : Ça c'est votre Bible ça ?



405 *At this stage a document is shown to deponent*

406 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

407 MR J DAVID : Et à partir de là vous découvrez dans quelle partie de la région il y a  
408 développement, il y a demande de développement donc et tout ; en tant qu'institution de cette  
409 région, c'est totalement...

410 MRS BHUJOHORY:...sous notre responsabilité

411 MR J DAVID : Sous votre responsabilité, la moindre petite roche que l'on bouge vous devez être  
412 au courant ?

413 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

414 MR J DAVID : Donc nous c'est ça donc que nous voulions savoir et donc vous avez donné les  
415 réponses à certaines questions. Donc maintenant je retourne la parole donc à Mme Teelock

416 MRS BHUJOHORY: Mais dites moi, excusez moi hein, ce que vous m'avez montré attaché avec  
417 le development permit ce n'est pas un proper survey plan ça hein

418 MR J DAVID : Pardon ?

419 DR TEELock: C'est faux

420 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ce n'est pas bon

421 MR J DAVID : Ah oui vous êtes en train de confirmer pour ça là ?

422 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui, ça veut dire ça se situe tout près de la route Royale parce qu'il faut  
423 que je situe pour que je puisse voir

424 MR J DAVID : Oui vous allez pouvoir retracer facilement

425 MRS BHUJOHORY: D'après ça hein...laissez moi voir ?

426 MR J DAVID : D'après ici

427 MRS BHUJOHORY: Laissez-moi voir ça ?

2



428 MR J DAVID : Voila

429 *At this stage a document is shown to deponent*

430 MRS BHUJOHORY: Laissez moi voir ça, ça veut dire Route côtière de la Rivière Noire vers La  
431 Gaulette, ça veut dire c'est à gauche

432 MR J DAVID : Oui

433 MRS BHUJOHORY:... Ah c'est vers Le Morne, ça veut dire c'est à droite de la route côtière, là  
434 c'est le chemin vers la plage publique mais je connais cette région c'est développée maintenant

435 MR J DAVID : Pardon ?

436 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est complètement développée c'est presque

437 MR J DAVID : Voila exactement, exactement, si vous dites maintenant que c'est développée,  
438 nous la commission on aurait voulu savoir qui, quand, comment tout ça a été développée avec ou  
439 sans l'aval de votre institution ?

440 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça veut dire à la suite de ça il devrait y avoir eu un morcellement

441 MR J DAVID : Ah ! C'est pourquoi je vous ai posé la question sur le morcellement

442 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui, oui

443 MR J DAVID : C'est pourquoi je vous demande qui donne le feu vert pour un tel développement  
444 parce que si je me trompe, il y a des développements à hauteur de million où si je veux être  
445 modeste en parlant de million, je ne parle pas de milliard

446 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui, oui

447 MR J DAVID : C'est pourquoi je vous pose la question en ce qu'il s'agit de développement de  
448 morcellement, je me situe très bien à cette partie là moi aussi là

449 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non maintenant je me retrouve, je sais où c'est

450 MR J DAVID : Voila



- 451 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est-à-dire c'est tout juste après La Gaulette, le village de La Gaulette
- 452 MR J DAVID : Voila, juste avant d'arriver, il y a cannes à sucre le restaurant à côté et puis vous  
453 tombez tout de suite dans Le Morne
- 454 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui, oui, Coteau Raffin, oui
- 455 MR J DAVID : Coteau Raffin
- 456 MRS BHOJOHORY : Il y avait des squatters là-bas
- 457 MR J DAVID : Est-ce que moi une question que je vous pose aujourd'hui ; vous étiez au courant  
458 de ces développements ?
- 459 MRS BHUJOHORY: Comme je vous dis, il devrait y avoir eu un morcellement qui a  
460 techniquement ça a dû être au morcellement board
- 461 MR J DAVID : Voila
- 462 MRS BHUJOHORY: Et on peut retracer chez nous
- 463 MR J DAVID : Voila. Vous nous rendriez énormément service à la commission surtout si on  
464 pourrait avoir les minutes de tout ça parce que comme je vous dis ce terrain qui a été vendu à  
465 plusieurs personnes et que si le District Council n'est pas au courant, il y a quelque chose  
466 d'extrêmement grave
- 467 MRS BHUJOHORY: Laissez moi vous interrompre Mr David, le problème ce qu'on a comme je  
468 vous dis quand on a plusieurs lots, ça va au morcellement board.
- 469 Lorsque la personne a son morcellement permit, il commence à vendre
- 470 MR J DAVID : Voila
- 471 MRS BHUJOHORY: Il n'y a rien à faire avec nous là
- 472 MR J DAVID : Oui
- 473 MRS BHUJOHORY: Enfin je vous suggère de convoquer le morcellement board



474 MR J DAVID : Très bien merci, on suivra bien votre conseil, c'est très judicieux, d'ailleurs nous  
475 nous voulons passer par l'étape et de savoir qui donne le feu vert

476 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

477 MR J DAVID : Du moment que vous mettez le contact et que la voiture commence à rouler,  
478 nous voulons savoir qui est le chauffeur qui guide par la suite d'où votre présence madame.  
479 Donc vous nous avez beaucoup éclairés et je retourne la parole au chairperson.

480 DR TEELock: Je rejoins Mr David pour les renseignements très précieux. Donc vous nous  
481 confirmez qu'une fois que ça va au morcellement board, ce n'est plus dans les mains du District  
482 Council ?

483 MRS BHUJOHORY: Non, non, ce n'est plus

484 DR TEELock: Donc malgré le fait que vous géré toute cette région, vous n'avez aucun contrôle  
485 sur ce qui se passe après...

486 MRS BHUJOHORY: C'est le morcellement board qui décide

487 DR TEELock: O.k. Dr Veerapen va vous demander quelques questions

488 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui

489 DR VEERAPEN: Je reprends la ligne de questions que la chairperson Dr Teelock a initié. Vous  
490 savez vous avez un Permit and Development Committee. C'est un comité ; est-ce que le comité  
491 peut se substituer au District Council ? Est-ce que le comité par définition, n'importe quel comité  
492 n'importe quelle instance ne doit pas faire soumettre un rapport avec ces recommandations  
493 à l'instance suprême entre guillemet qui doit ensuite donner son aval ou bien refuser ou quoi que  
494 ce soit ?

495 MRS BHUJOHORY: Comme je vous dis avant c'était le Works and Planning Committee, c'était  
496 les conseillers qui décidaient hein et depuis 2006 on a le Permit and Business Monitoring  
497 Committee qui est normalement chaired by the Chief Executive.



- 498 Et il peut nommer quelqu'un pour le représenter et puis on a ce sont les officiers, ce sont les  
499 officiers qui travaillent chez nous ça veut dire ce ne sont pas des politiciens ou autre qui prennent  
500 des décisions, ce sont les officiers de chez nous.
- 501 DR VEERAPEN: Si je comprends bien donc à l'époque ce sont les conseillers donc qui ont  
502 avalisés le rapport ?
- 503 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 504 DR VEERAPEN: C'était en 19... mais quand le District Council se réuni et à quelle intervalle ?
- 505 MRS BHUJOHORY: Chaque mois
- 506 DR VEERAPEN: Chaque mois ?
- 507 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 508 DR VEERAPEN: Parce que si c'est le 3 Novembre donc ça devrait être avalisé en Novembre ou  
509 Décembre ?
- 510 MRS BHUJOHORY: Oui
- 511 DR VEERAPEN: O.k. Merci
- 512 DR TEELock: O.k. Merci. Une petite chose, je reviens sur ce truc de relationship entre vous et  
513 morcellement, quand ils font des morcellements il y a tous les permis de l'électricité, drainage  
514 tout ça ; tout ça ne passe pas par vous pour donner les permis, pour installer les pylônes  
515 électriques et tout ?
- 516 MRS BHUJOHORY: Normalement ils vont au morcellement, ils soumettent une application au  
517 morcellement board et normalement ils nous demandent our views. Nous c'est normal ils doivent  
518 provide electricity, électricité, l'eau, l'infrastructure, chemin, des drains, ça c'est générale, c'est  
519 tout.
- 520 DR TEELock: Mais quand ils vous ont demandés vos views sur ce développement ?
- 521 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ça je veux aller voir là



522 DR TEELock: Vous aviez dû voir que vous aviez refusé le permis avant, non ?

523 MRS BHUJOHORY: Certainement

524 DR TEELock: O.k. Vous allez nous faire savoir?

525 MRS BHUJOHORY: Je le ferais

526 DR TEELock: Merci beaucoup madame

527 MRS BHUJOHORY: Ok

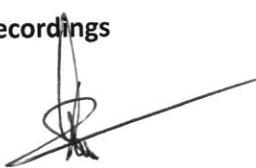
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**09/05/2011**

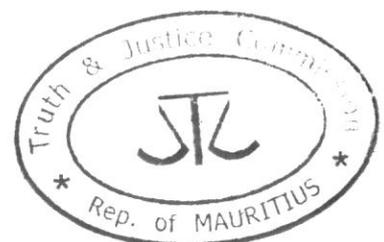
**TRUTH**

**AND**

**JUSTICE COMMISSION**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Morning Session**



## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

**Dr Parmaseeven Pillay VEERAPEN, Commissioner**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

### **Apology:**

**Dr. Alex BORAINÉ, Chairperson**

**Mr Benjamin MOUTOU, Commissioner**

### **Chairperson of Session:**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

### **MORNING SESSION**

**Mrs KOO YUK CHEONG H**

**Mr FRANÇOIS B (Legal Adviser)**

This is to certify that the following **09** pages are a true and accurate version of the audio recordings of Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 (Morning Session)



(L R Luckhoo)

Contractor

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2011



TJC/H/Koo Yuk Cheong H/200411/Mf  
Original Version



- 1 DR TEELock: On va vous faire prêter serment
- 2 THE SECRETARY : Vous pouvez vous mettre debout, vous pouvez lever la main droite et  
3 affirmez que vous allez dire la vérité et rien que la vérité pendant la déposition
- 4 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Je vais dire la vérité et rien que la vérité pendant la déposition
- 5 THE SECRETARY : Merci, identifiez-vous devant la commission
- 6 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Je suis Har Man Yung Koo Yuk Cheong, Deputy Registrar  
7 General au Conservateur des Hypothèques
- 8 THE SECRETARY : Merci bien
- 9 DR TEELock: Merci madame. Vous voulez parler anglais, français, créole ; quelle langue ?
- 10 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : N'importe
- 11 DR TEELock: On va faire l'anglais potiche en ce cas là et donc ça ne va pas prendre  
12 longtemps. On voulait simplement certifier certains documents que vous nous avez remis mais  
13 aussi avant ça on voulait simplement si vous pouvez nous donner une idée de comment  
14 fonctionne votre bureau ?
- 15 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : D'accord. Bon le document est présenté à la caisse premièrement à  
16 la taxe... premièrement le Notaire dépose les actes à la taxe pour être taxé. Si tout est o.k. on fait  
17 la taxe et puis les clercs de notaire en principe qui viennent prendre les documents pour passer à  
18 la caisse et puis après la caisse ça va à la présentation. Je parle des documents qui sont transcrits.  
19 Les documents vont à la section présentation là où on donne les numéros, on passe les  
20 documents d'après l'ordre du dépôt et puis on donne les numéros et puis l'original...
- 21 DR TEELock: Just relax we are not a court of law here so just relax
- 22 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Non, non, après les numéros qu'on a attribué l'officier prend  
23 l'original, l'acte où le notaire a signé on met d'un côté et puis les feuilles de transcription on met  
24 d'un autre côté qu'on remet au Binding Section pour être relié. Et puis le Registration Officer  
25 prend les actes notariés pour passer dans le Répertoire. Auparavant c'était fait dans le livre  
26 manuellement mais maintenant on fait...on entre les données dans les ordinateurs.



27 DR TEELOCK: O.k. il y a certain enfin comme vous savez il y a eu beaucoup de plaintes à  
28 la commission concernant ce fameux registre où on fait les entrées manuellement

29 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : On est au courant

30 DR TEELOCK: Et on voulait que vous nous donnez une idée comment ça se fait qu'il y a autant  
31 de...on voit qu'il y a des gens qui ont mit des ratures qui ont scrubbe là-dessus et on voulait  
32 savoir comment ça peut se faire qu'une personne peut entrer ou même je ne sais pas si ce sont  
33 des officiers qui le font qui déchirent des pages, on a eu beaucoup de plaintes là-dessus.  
34 Donc vous pouvez me dire un peu comment ça se fait qu'il y a pu avoir tant de manipulations de  
35 ce document aussi important ?

36 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Parce que le Search Room est opened to the public, ça veut dire on  
37 paye un droit de recherche et les gens viennent faire des recherches.

38 DR TEELOCK: Il n'y a pas de vérification du comportement des gens qui viennent dans votre  
39 bureau pour voir ces documents ?

40 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Mais non les officiers sont en train de travailler, ils sont libres de  
41 vérifier les registres

42 DR TEELOCK: Donc nous avons un document en particulier que Mr David va vous montrer et  
43 je crois que vous avez une copie ?

44 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui

45 DR TEELOCK: Vous allez voir qu'il a des traits qui ont été fait dans le document et si vous  
46 pouvez nous donner une explication ? Vous avez l'original avec vous ?

47 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Une copie certifiée, l'original est au bureau

48 DR TEELOCK: Vous pouvez expliquer comment ça se fait, il y a un nom par exemple Lousteau  
49 qui est quelqu'un qui date du 18<sup>ème</sup> et comment ça se fait que son nom apparaît ?

50 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Parce que là les entrées je ne sais pas à quelque moment, ça a été  
51 fait après l'année 78, la date de la saisie est datée du 1825, 20 ou 25 mais l'acte de dépôt est daté



52 de l'année 1978, ça veut dire il y a quelqu'un je ne sais pas je ne peux pas confirmer ni infirmer  
53 qui a mit ça dedans mais ce n'est pas...

54 DR TEELock: Ce n'est pas votre bureau ?

55 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Non

56 DR TEELock: Donc c'est faux en principe ?

57 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : En principe c'est faux

58 DR TEELock: Et aussi vous allez voir dans le même document un terrain de 490 arpents ?

59 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui

60 DR TEELock: Vendu pour Rs 100,000, c'est celui là Pierre Speville

61 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : On était en train de voir pour Soonee là, Soonee Choolun

62 DR TEELock: Oui, c'est vendu à Choolun pour Rs 100,000 – 490 arpents

63 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : C'est le volume 1353 que vous êtes en train d'en parler là ?

64 DR TEELock: Oui, est-ce que vous croyez que c'est quelque chose qui est faux ? C'est un de  
65 vos officiers qui a fait cette inscription ?

66 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Parce que l'entrée comme je viens de vous dire, on travaille avec  
67 l'original, la transcription on envoie directement à la section du relieur pour être relié en volume.

68 DR TEELock: Mais ce que je vous demande c'est est-ce que vous êtes sûr ce qui a été inscrit là  
69 ça vient de votre bureau ce n'est pas n'importe qui peut venir écrire...

70 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : 1353, je peux confirmer que c'est un officier de notre bureau

71 DR TEELock: 1353, vous êtes sûr que c'est un officier de votre bureau qui a fait ça ?

72 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui mais par contre pour saisie 2946, non

73 DR TEELock: 2946 vous pensez que ça c'est faux ?



→

- 74 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : 2946 c'est faux parce que la saisie est datée du 1821 par contre...
- 75 DR TEELock: 1977 qui est impossible ?
- 76 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : C'est impossible
- 77 DR TEELock: Je vais passer la parole à Mr David
- 78 MR J DAVID : Madame, le fait que nous ayons un tel papier ça rend légal ?
- 79 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui
- 80 MR J DAVID : Quelle est la valeur d'un tel papier pour vous ? Disons je viens demander ma  
81 case hypothécaire, ça devient un papier extrêmement important ça ?
- 82 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui
- 83 MR J DAVID : Bon à partir de là si jamais il y a une manipulation, toute cette manipulation peut  
84 être utilisée par la suite pour la vente d'un terrain, n'est-ce pas ?
- 85 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Je pense que si
- 86 MR J DAVID : Donc de ce fait quelque chose d'illégal peut devenir très légale à partir d'un  
87 casier hypothécaire
- 88 DR TEELock: Ce qu'on a constaté dans les deux Speville et Choolun, c'est la même écriture  
89 qui a été...
- 90 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Pour la saisie ?
- 91 MR J DAVID : Pour la saisie oui effectivement
- 92 DR TEELock: C'est même écriture
- 93 MR J DAVID : même écriture
- 94 DR TEELock: Donc c'est une personne en particulier qui a manipulé le document ?
- 95 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui ce n'est pas un officier de...



- 96 MR J DAVID : Est-ce que chaque officier n'appose pas sa signature lorsqu'ils font des entrées  
97 dans les livres ?
- 98 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Dans répertoire, non par contre dans l'acte notarié on met leurs  
99 initiales
- 100 MR J DAVID : On met les initiales où on peut savoir qui l'a fait ?
- 101 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Qui l'a fait, oui
- 102 MR J DAVID : Donc la...
- 103 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Et puis d'après le nouveau système comme c'est informatisé on  
104 query on va savoir
- 105 MR J DAVID : On peut savoir...
- 106 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : ...qui a fait l'entrée et qui a collationné parce que j'ai oublié de  
107 vous dire pour la procédure lorsqu'on a, un officier fait l'entrée et un senior officer qui  
108 collationne pour voir si l'entrée a été bien faite
- 109 MR J DAVID : De ce fait on a enlevé tout ce qui se rapporte à la saisie ?
- 110 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui
- 111 MR J DAVID : Sur le répertoire 587, donc les trois ont été rayés de même comme dans le  
112 répertoire 7 numéro 208, la saisie aussi de 1821 a été rayée ?
- 113 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Non là on n'a pas rayée, là...
- 114 MR J DAVID : Là on n'a pas rayée là ?
- 115 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : En principe il faut enlever
- 116 MR J DAVID : Il faut aussi enlever ?
- 117 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui
- 118 MR J DAVID : Parce que si vous maintenez...



- 119 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG :... la logique de la date
- 120 MR J DAVID : Exactement, parce qu'à ce moment là donc...
- 121 DR TEELOCK: ...la même personne en 1821 et 1977 c'est la même écriture ?
- 122 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Non 1825
- 123 DR TEELOCK: Il y a la même écriture 1821 et 1977, la même personne qui a fait ces entrées ?
- 124 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : 1977 non, 1977 c'est un officier de notre bureau, ça c'est la vente  
125 c'est l'entrée pour 1353 No 14
- 126 MR J DAVID : Ah oui 1353 No 14
- 127 DR TEELOCK: Regardez l'écriture madame
- 128 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : C'est ça 2946 c'est le même numéro qui figure partout
- 129 MR J DAVID : Il faut faire une expertise pour comprendre. Une question que je souhaite vous  
130 poser encore, pourquoi est-ce que vous ne mettez pas des photocopies à la disposition du public  
131 plutôt et gardez les originaux et de ce fait il ne pourrait pas modifier ou manipuler les originaux ?
- 132 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Ça c'est le Code Civil mais là on est en train d'informatiser, enfin  
133 ça va venir très prochainement, on est en train de scanner tous les... all the documents are being  
134 scanned and put in our system
- 135 MR J DAVID : Oui mais vous savez que pendant des années donc il y aurait pu avoir de telles  
136 manipulation ?
- 137 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Ça c'est government policy on ne peut pas le faire par nos  
138 propres... par nous-mêmes
- 139 DR TEELOCK: Vous n'avez jamais reçu des plaintes venant de la part du public à l'effet  
140 que les pages ont été déchirées ou coupées ?
- 141 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui on a rapporté des cas à la police
- 142 DR TEELOCK: Et quelle a été la suivie ?



143 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Mais pour les anciens cas je crois qu'on a rien reçu de la police et  
144 ça il faudra confirmer je vais...

145 DR TEELock: Si c'est possible pour vous de confirmer ?

146 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : De confirmer et de vous dire...

147 DR TEELock:... quelle a été le suivi par la police

148 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : D'accord

149 DR TEELock: Dr Veerapen?

150 DR VEERAPEN: Moi je voudrais revenir sur votre système comment ça fonctionne, il est vrai  
151 maintenant avec le système informatique les choses évolues différemment mais le faite reste que  
152 jusqu'à maintenant on a pas mal de cas des gens qui ont fait des photocopies au Conservator of  
153 Mortgages et on a des problèmes. Je reprends ce que vous avez dit dans votre introduction parce  
154 que lorsqu'il y a un document pour être enregistré, vous vérifiez si c'est o.k., votre bureau vérifie  
155 si c'est o.k. ?

156 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui

157 DR VEERAPEN: Comment cela se fait cette vérification ? Pouvez-vous nous donner des détails  
158 additionnels ? Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire, la vérification qu'est-ce que cela veut dire c'est o.k. ?

159 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Disons pour une vente on regarde si tous les renseignements  
160 concernant les personnes qui comparaient dans l'acte on a donné, c'est d'après la section 36 du  
161 Registration Duty Act. Si c'est o.k. on accepte la vente, l'officier qui fait la taxe impose le  
162 montant qu'il y a à payer

163 DR VEERAPEN: D'accord et comment ça est réglé à ce moment là ?

164 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : A ce moment là la procédure se déclenche

165 DR VEERAPEN: Maintenant vous dites que le Search Room is opened to the public, c'est  
166 toujours comme ça sa, ça a existé toujours ?

167 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui, oui



168 DR VEERAPEN: Ça a été toujours comme ça mais cela n'est jamais venu en tête au niveau de  
169 votre bureau qu'une fois c'est ouvert au public, il y a des risques de manipulation, il y a un  
170 risque de falsification, non cela ne s'est jamais venu ?

171 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Parce que ça a été toujours comme ça

172 DR VEERAPEN: Est-ce que vous n'aviez pas besoin d'un genre de risk management c'est-à-dire  
173 le risque existe et le fait qu'il y a un risque pareil, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas une politique de risk  
174 management au niveau de votre bureau pour vérifier les documents qui ont été pris par les  
175 membres du public ? Je ne dis pas que peut-être ça doit être fait pour chaque document mais en  
176 terme d'avoir un terme d'échantillon au moins de pouvoir voir ?

177 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Je vais proposer ça à mon supérieur

178 DR VEERAPEN: Oui

179 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Pour ce...

180 DR VEERAPEN: Parce que combien de temps ça va prendre pour vous d'informatiser tous vos  
181 systèmes là ?

182 *Officer accompanying Mrs Koo Yuk Cheong* : D'ici Juillet de cette année ci

183 DR VEERAPEN: Juillet ça fait quand même a peu près, Juin-Juillet, a peu près trois mois, le  
184 temps suffira pour encore falsifier des documents. Ce qu'on vous demandera si c'est possible  
185 d'avoir un système de risk management

186 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui c'est ça

187 DR VEERAPEN: Parce que en attendant juillet, ça risque d'être trop tard ; d'accord ?

188 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui

189 DR VEERAPEN: Et bon ceci dit c'est l'essentiel...

190 DR TEELock: Mr Jacques n'a pas d'autre question ?

191 MR J DAVID : Non, non



192 DR TEELOCK: Merci beaucoup madame

193 MRS KOO YUK CHEONG : Oui

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**09/05/2011**



**TRUTH**

**AND**

**JUSTICE COMMISSION**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Morning Session**



## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

**Dr Parmaseeven Pillay VEERAPEN, Commissioner**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

**Apology:**

**Dr. Alex BORAINÉ, Chairperson**

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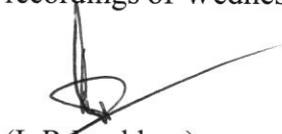
## **IN ATTENDANCE**

### **MORNING SESSION**

**Mr TEEROMALLAY P**

**Mr FRANÇOIS B (Legal Adviser)**

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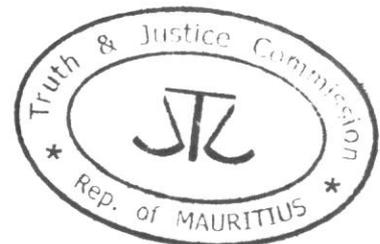


(L R Luckhoo)

Contractor

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2011

TJC/H/Teeromallay P/200411/Mf  
Original Version



1 DR TEELock: O.K. We will start, this is the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the The Truth & Justice Commission  
2 for 2011. C'est la quatrième session des auditions du Truth & Justice Commission de 2011. I  
3 welcome you ladies and gentlemen. Mo accueil ou mesdames et messieurs et nous avons le cas  
4 de César-Choolun aujourd'hui et le premier témoin c'est le directeur de la banque de  
5 développement de Maurice. Welcome gentlemen. The secretary will ask you to identify yourself  
6 and to swear to tell the truth.

7 THE SECRETARY : S'il vous plaît vous pouvez vous mettre debout pour jurer

8 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui

9 THE SECRETARY : Si vous pouvez lever la main droite et affirmez que vous allez parler la  
10 vérité et rien que la vérité pendant la déposition

11 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui, Parmeseeven Teeromallay de la banque de développement, je  
12 jure que je vais dire la vérité et rien que la vérité

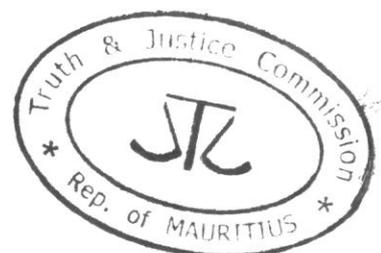
13 THE SECRETARY : Merci bien, vous pouvez vous asseoir

14 DR TEELock: O.k. thank you, I think you are aware why you have been asked to come and  
15 depone today at the commission. I will pass on to Mr David who has been following this case  
16 and to submit the documents and to seek clarifications from you. Mr David?

17 MR J DAVID : Thank you. Bonjour messieurs, on peut parler français, anglais ou soit créole

18 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Pas de problème

19 MR J DAVID : Dans une langue ou tout le monde arrive à se comprendre. Donc écoutez je vais  
20 venir rapidement sur le cas qui nous intéresse du fait qu'il a été porté à votre connaissance que ce  
21 dossier concernant un prêt donc à la compagnie Qay Call Center and Outsourcing et ainsi de  
22 suite et que Mme Choolun a été si je comprends bien une garante. Donc nous la commission  
23 souhaite surtout savoir les procédures de la banque quand à ce prêt, qu'est-ce que la banque a fait  
24 et comme vérification si la banque est satisfaite donc avant d'octroyer ce prêt et surtout  
25 concernant la garante. Est-ce qu'elle est viable ? Est-ce qu'elle est fiable ? Donc c'est ça que  
26 nous aurions souhaités vous entendre.



27 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Donc ce que je vais faire c'est que je vais faire un résumé de all the  
28 steps that have been followed

29 MR J DAVID : Yes

30 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Donc en aout 2008, la compagnie a fait une demande d'emprunt de  
31 Rs 50 million pour set up a call center, an outsourcing unit at Candos. Les promoteurs étaient  
32 Mme Bibi Nushreen Fokeerbaccus et Mme Sonee Choolun. L'emprunt a été approuvé par notre  
33 board le 31 Octobre 2008 et le loan agreement a été signé le 12 Décembre 2008 et dûment  
34 enregistré à l'office du Registrar.

35 La sécurité qu'on avait prit c'était en premier un first rent fixed charge sur une portion de terrain  
36 de 62 ¼ arpents appartenant à Mme Choolun et se trouvant à Cotteau Raffin à Rivière Noire.  
37 Ensuite il y avait une sûreté flottante sur les biens de la compagnie et troisièmement une sûreté  
38 flottante sur les biens des promoteurs c'est-à-dire Mme Fokeerbaccus et Mme Choolun.

39 MR J DAVID : O.k. sur les deux

40 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Avant le décaissement le board avait reçu ce qu'on appelle des  
41 disturbing information qui a été passé au directeur, à ce moment-là Mr Chooramun, à l'effet qu'il  
42 y a des craintes sur le terrain qu'on a donné à la banque comme garantie. On avait fait savoir  
43 qu'il se peut que ce terrain n'existe pas en tant que telle et que aussi le contrat qu'on a eu comme  
44 titre de propriété pourrait être fake.

45 Alors suite à ça, le directeur a ordonné à ce que les promoteurs soumettent d'autres documents,  
46 fresh documents originaux, surtout un fresh Land Surveyor's report, un fresh valuation report et  
47 aussi que la banque fasse des nouveaux searches au bureau de l'enregistrement.

48 MR J DAVID : O.k.

49 MR P TEEROMALLAY : En plus de ça on a fait des enquiries auprès des Land Surveyors qui  
50 d'après nous étaient au courant des problèmes qui pourraient exister concernant ce terrain là et le  
51 titre de propriété.

52 MR J DAVID : Est-ce qu'il y a eu un nom d'un Land Surveyor qui était mentionné ? Vous  
53 connaissez qui avait soumit les documents en premier ?



54 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Non, c'est-à-dire là je connais, je connais les documents qui ont été  
55 soumis par les promoteurs et je peux vous dire

56 MR J DAVID : Quel est le nom du Land Surveyor ?

57 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Bon lorsqu'on a redemandé le original surveyor's report, c'était  
58 Ravindranath Bhurtun

59 MR J DAVID : Bhurtun ?

60 MR P TEEROMALLAY : qui a soumis ça pour le client hein, au nom du client

61 MR J DAVID : Non le premier, le premier ? dans le premier land surveying effectué ?

62 DR TEELock: The original survey ?

63 MR J DAVID : The original one before you discovered that it was fake? I should like to know  
64 the name of the Land Surveyor, please. There should be a plan attached to the first request, a site  
65 plan. We just wanted to verify the name of the Land Surveyor

66 DR TEELock: At the time of submission

67 MR J DAVID : Yes you could continue, have you seen it? There must be a signature of the Land  
68 Surveyor with the site plan

69 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Là je vois qu'il y a un document, le valuation report qui a été fait en  
70 2008 par Allan Tinkler et Ramlackan company Ltd

71 MR J DAVID : Oui

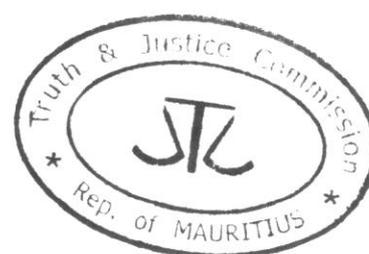
72 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Bon ça c'est le valuation report, il y a aussi le surveyor's report

73 MR J DAVID : But I wish to know the name of the Land Surveyor who submit the site plan, o.k.  
74 In the meantime...

75 DR TEELock: ...we continue

76 MR J DAVID : We continue. Now what I should like to know, what were the disturbing factors  
77 that kept you from...

g



- 78 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Certains membres du board, certains membres de notre board étaient  
79 je ne sais pas au courant ou bien avaient eus des renseignements de faire attention qu'il se peut  
80 que le terrain n'existe pas ou bien que le contrat, il y avait quelque chose de...
- 81 MR J DAVID :...de pas clair ?
- 82 MR P TEEROMALLAY : De pas clair dans le contrat, o.k. et c'est suite à ça qu'on a fait et  
83 qu'on avait demandé des nouveaux documents que le promoteur a soumis, c'est ça que je vous  
84 dis là
- 85 MR J DAVID : Oui
- 86 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Les nouveaux documents c'était un nouveau Sworn Land Surveyor's  
87 report effectué par Ravindranath Bhurtun, un nouveau valuation report fait par Mr Saddul
- 88 MR J DAVID : Saddul ?
- 89 MR P TEEROMALLAY : De la compagnie Property & Assets Valuation Limited. Voilà je vous  
90 dis il y avait un plan qui a été effectué par Ng Tong Ng Wah
- 91 MR J DAVID : So with this plan, vous n'étiez pas satisfait du tout parce que le Land Surveyor  
92 doit donner un rapport ?
- 93 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui
- 94 MR J DAVID : Accompagnant le terrain ?
- 95 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui
- 96 MR J DAVID : Donc vous ça a été...
- 97 MR P TEEROMALLAY : On a fait des recherches au niveau de l'enregistrement et à ce  
98 moment-là tout paraît correct, les documents étaient dûment enregistrés, c'était dans le livre du  
99 Conservateur et à ce moment-là ça paraît correct
- 100 MR J DAVID : Oui ?
- 101 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui



102 MR J DAVID : Et après par la suite ça n'a pas paru correct ?

103 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui lorsqu'on a eu ces informations là, bon aussi Mme Choolun m'a  
104 soumit un affidavit pour jurer qu'elle est le propriétaire du terrain et qu'elle donnait son  
105 consentement pour donner ce terrain là en garantie

106 MR J DAVID : Oui

107 MR P TEEROMALLAY : O.k. il y avait aussi Me Bertrand Maigrot, ça c'était un undated  
108 search report qui avait soumit un document pour certifier ownership du propriété. Maintenant de  
109 l'autre côté nous, nous avons des verification officers qui travaillent pour la banque, pour le  
110 compte de la banque. Un de nos senior verification officer a été à la recherche des informations.  
111 O.k. je peux vous dire from a discreet investigation amongst fellow search officers, il est tombé  
112 sur un document à ce moment là un site plan qui disait que soit le terrain ou bien une partie du  
113 terrain appartient à d'autre personne.

114 MR J DAVID : Voila

115 MR P TEEROMALLAY : O.k. c'est ça le disturbing information peut-être que certains membres  
116 du board avaient mais que nous mais nous nous avons pu avoir, je ne peux pas vous dire certifier  
117 mais on a pu avoir

118 MR J DAVID : Quelle est la personne qui à part, allons dire votre researcher de la banque, vous  
119 avez d'autre source d'information à l'effet qu'il pourrait y avoir des défauts sur ce terrain ?

120 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Non là je ne pourrais vous dire, seulement je sais qu'on a eu une  
121 copie du document et que à partir de là on a fait d'autres recherches, on a fait tirer des  
122 documents, les title deeds originaux

123 MR J DAVID : Originaux

124 MR P TEEROMALLAY : certifiés par le Conservateur

125 MR J DAVID : conservateur, o.k.



126 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Et à partir de là, nous avons ces documents là maintenant qui sont en  
127 notre possession en possession de la banque qui dit que ce terrain là il y a un problème et que en  
128 partie du terrain ou bien tout le terrain ownership is being claimed by other companies

129 MR J DAVID : Oui, vous rendriez service à la commission en soumettant copies de ces  
130 documents ?

131 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui bien sûr si c'est demandé on va avoir l'aval du management et on  
132 va certifier

133 MR J DAVID : On est en train de chercher la vérité sur toutes ces histoires, si vous avez une  
134 partie de ces documents qui pourrait aider la commission, nous vous serions très redevables

135 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui

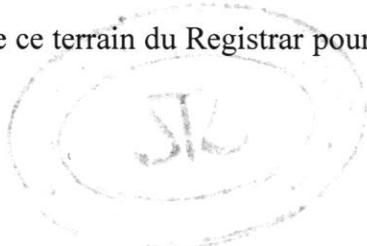
136 ? (*a person from DBM sitting near deponent*) : Nous sommes prêts à soumettre tous les  
137 documents parce que vous aviez pu voir il y a deux dossiers remplis avec les documents et nous  
138 sommes au courant de quels sont les documents spécifiques que vous auriez besoin mais nous  
139 sommes prêts à donner une fois que nous avons la requête officielle nous avons l'approval de  
140 notre board et nous allons certifier chaque copie qu'on va faire et soumettre à la commission.

141 MR J DAVID : Oui, vous comprenez que tous qui auraient pu être disturbing pour vous l'est  
142 aussi pour la commission, d'où donc notre appel d'une part pour que vous veniez nous dire ce  
143 qui s'est passé et comme ça on va tirer toute cette histoire au clair. Ben nous vous remercions  
144 d'avance et donc nous allons faire la demande par la suite. Oui, continuez s'il vous plait.

145 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Donc suite à ça, Mr Bahorun notre senior verification officer a été à la  
146 recherche d'autre information et nous sommes tombés sur deux titres de propriété, l'un  
147 appartenant au Petit Morne Brabant, compagnie de Petit Morne Brabant, là je peux vous donner  
148 le volume number, c'est le TV 1702 No 82 et une autre société du Morne Brabant, le T.V. No  
149 c'est 577 No. 48.

150 MR J DAVID : O.k.

151 MR P TEEROMALLAY : On a fait une demande à ce moment-là pour avoir des certified copies  
152 de ce terrain du Registrar pour voir les titres de propriété et à partir de là on était convaincu qu'il



153 y a un problème et qu'il ne fallait pas aller vu la somme conséquente de Rs 50 million pour  
154 l'emprunt, il ne fallait pas aller de l'avant avec ce terrain là. On a communiqué ces détails là aux  
155 promoteurs pour leur dire o.k. to find out alternative security.

156 MR J DAVID : Très bien, donc écoutez messieurs merci pour votre explication sauf je  
157 reviendrais sur un petit détail. Bon vous n'avez pas été de l'avant avec l'emprunt ?

158 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui

159 MR J DAVID : Mais il y a toujours sur la case hypothécaire donc de Mme Choolun, il y a une  
160 petite remarque qu'on voit encore là, il y a une inscription déjà which has not been erased,  
161 l'inscription de Rs 50 million, donc si on peut savoir comment est-ce que ça a pu atterir, cette  
162 inscription ?

163 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Comme je vous ai dis au commencement avant de découvrir les  
164 disturbing information, le document a été dument signé et enregistré. Après avoir communiqué  
165 avec le promoteur, je peux vous dire que le main promoteur ce n'est pas Mme Choolun, on a  
166 communiqué à Mme Fokeerbaccus en écrit, par écrit et on lui a dit o.k. la banque est d'accord  
167 pour enlever ces charges à condition que vous payez les frais de l'enregistrement qui montent à  
168 Rs 304,500

169 MR J DAVID : Bon il faut qu'elle paye ?

170 MR P TEEROMALLAY : ça c'est au frais du client

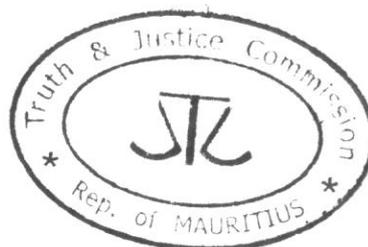
171 MR J DAVID : O.k.

172 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Et jusqu'à maintenant le paiement n'a pas été fait et c'est pourquoi la  
173 banque n'a pas encore enlevé ces charges là. On est prêt à enlever du moment qu'on a le  
174 paiement.

175 MR J DAVID : Qu'on n'a pas payé ?

176 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Non

177 MR J DAVID : O.k. oui bon écoutez voila les explications sont là donc nous voulions surtout  
178 savoir pourquoi this has not been erased. Donc moi je vous remercie, oui



179 ? (a person from DBM sitting near deponent) : Je pourrais confirmer dès que nous avons les Rs  
180 300,000 et quelques et si nous avons ça aujourd'hui, ça va être erased dans les jours...dans  
181 quelques jours

182 MR J DAVID : Et si la banque ne reçoit pas cet argent là, ça va rester...

183 ? (a person from DBM sitting near deponent) : ça va rester jusqu'à ce que on va voir quel sera à  
184 travers les avis légaux que nous avons quelle sera la marche à suivre, c'est toujours là une dette  
185 pour le moment

186 MR J DAVID : C'est au détriment de qui ? Allons dire c'est Rs 50 million qui figure toujours à  
187 l'inscription, aussi longtemps que la dame ne paye pas c'est elle qui est toujours endetté ?

188 ? (a person from DBM sitting near deponent) : C'est le client qui est supposé...

189 MR J DAVID : La compagnie ?

190 ? (a person from DBM sitting near deponent) : La compagnie, le client de la banque, ce n'est pas  
191 encore client, il était le client potentiel pour le moment qui est supposé encourir les frais légaux.  
192 Alors aussi longtemps que ce n'est pas payé, la radiation n'est pas faite

193 MR J DAVID : Il ne passe pas, d'accord. Dites moi, une dernière question, il y a eu un  
194 engagement, vous dites que par la suite il y a eu Mr Bhurtun qui a fait un autre travail, il y a  
195 d'autre valuation qui ont été effectués ; est-ce que ça a été de l'avant ce prêt là ?

196 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Non, non, c'est-à-dire qu'on a reçu des documents, on a demandé aux  
197 promoteurs de nous soumettre des documents et c'est qui a été fait mais par la suite aux  
198 recherches qu'on a fait, on a vu malgré tous ces documents là on n'était pas satisfait de par le fait  
199 qu'il y a d'autres documents qui tente à certifier que il y a d'autres personnes qui claim owners of  
200 the property.

201 MR J DAVID : Oui est-ce que vous êtes satisfait avec le rapport de Bhurtun, 2<sup>ème</sup> Land  
202 Surveyor ?

203 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Je ne pourrais vous dire parce que lui il n'a fait que baser sur le titre  
204 de propriété de Mme Choolun, le titre de propriété est...



205 MR J DAVID : ...déjà il y a des doutes ?

206 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui

207 MR J DAVID : Donc dans les deux cas la banque n'est pas satisfaite ?

208 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Non

209 MR J DAVID : O.k.

210 ? (*a person from DBM sitting near deponent*) : Je pourrais ajouter que c'est un peu une partie du  
211 risk management que la banque exerce régulièrement. Alors là nous avons vu il y a un cas où il y  
212 a certain risque. Alors exposant Rs 50 million pour...et en présence de ces risques là, on a  
213 préféré et c'était officiellement communiqué au demandeur d'emprunt que nous n'allons pas allé  
214 de l'avant avec ce garantie, il faut qu'il vienne avec des garanties alternatives bien sûr avec la  
215 satisfaction de la banque et entretemps nous allons retenir. Alors ils sont d'accord, ils étaient  
216 d'accord à venir avec d'autres...

217 MR J DAVID : garanties

218 ? (*a person from DBM sitting near deponent*) :...acceptable à la banque mais jusqu'à l'heure ça  
219 n'a pas été fait et le décaissement n'a jamais été fait par la banque et ce que nous pouvons dire.

220 MR J DAVID : Très bien merci. Je retourne la parole à la chairperson, merci beaucoup.

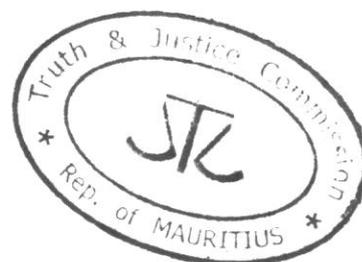
221 DR TEELock: Deux petites questions ; I wanted just to confirm what you said it was Mr  
222 Bertrand Maigrot who certified the ownership of Mrs Choolun's property?

223 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui parmi les documents soumis par Mme Fokeerbaccus, il y avait un  
224 document qui a été rédigé par l'étude de Bertrand Maigrot qui dit que...le notaire certifie que le  
225 terrain appartient à Mme Choolun

226 DR TEELock: C'est possible d'avoir une copie de cela ?

227 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui, on va prendre note de ça

228 DR TEELock: Et deuxième chose, le main applicant for this loan was madame, ce n'était pas  
229 Mme Choolun c'était Fokeerbaccus ?



- 230 MR P TEEROMALLAY : En fait c'est une compagnie qui a fait la demande et d'après nos  
231 données, Mme Fokeerbaccus is the main promotor
- 232 DR TEELock: Main ?
- 233 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Avec 51% des actions
- 234 DR TEELock: des actions and so there are only two persons involved in this company?
- 235 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Yes
- 236 DR TEELock: D'accord, thank you
- 237 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Je peux ajouter que Mme Choolun était représenté par son neveu  
238 Sanjay Choolun, ce n'était pas Mme Choolun qui faisait le va et vient à la banque. On a demandé  
239 à Mme Choolun de venir à la banque qu'une seule fois c'est là à la requête de notre legal adviser  
240 qui avait dit o.k. vu l'âge de Mme Choolun, c'était bon pour la banque de faire Mme Choolun  
241 venir à la banque pour lui parler directement et d'avoir son consentement directement avant  
242 d'aller de l'avant. C'était Mr Sanjay Choolun qui représentait Mme Choolun.
- 243 DR TEELock: Et vous avez rencontré Mme Choolun vous-même ?
- 244 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui il y a moi, il y a le directeur à l'époque Mr Chooramun, oui
- 245 DR TEELock: O.k. merci, Dr Veerapen?
- 246 DR VEERAPEN: Just some clarifications; could you give us the name of the company, Mme  
247 Fokeerbaccus et Sonee Choolun?
- 248 MR P TEEROMALLAY : La compagnie c'est Qay Call Center & Outsourcing Services Ltd
- 249 DR VEERAPEN: Qay Call Centre and?
- 250 MR P TEEROMALLAY : And Outsourcing Services Ltd
- 251 DR VEERAPEN: O.k. Ensuite vous avez fait mention d'un new Land Surveyor's report de Mr  
252 Bhurtun ?
- 253 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Oui



254 DR VEERAPEN: C'est quel Bhurtun ça ?

255 MR P TEEROMALLAY : C'est Ravindranath Bhurtun

256 DR VEERAPEN: Et les valuator, les nouveaux valuator report ?

257 MR P TEEROMALLAY : C'est Mr G Saddul c'était de la compagnie Property & Assets  
258 Valuation Ltd

259 DR VEERAPEN: O.k. Et Mr Ng Tong Ng Wah, qu'est-ce qu'il fait dedans lui ?

260 MR P TEEROMALLAY : C'est lui qui avait soumis le premier surveyor's report

261 DR VEERAPEN: O.k.

262 MR P TEEROMALLAY : Non, non, il y avait Mr Beehuspoteea et puis il y a un site plan je  
263 crois qui est certifié par Ng Tong Ng Wah, c'est Beehuspoteea le surveyor et le site plan certifié  
264 par Ng Tong Ng Wah

265 DR VEERAPEN: O.k. très bien, merci

266 DR TEELock: Thank you very much

267 ? (a person from DBM sitting near deponent) : Pour les documents on va travailler ensemble  
268 avec madame, oui, merci

269 DR VEERAPEN: Donc on va simplement envoyer une lettre officielle, n'est-ce pas c'est ça que  
270 vous demandez et on le fera d'accord.

271

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**Certified A true and accurate version of the audio recordings**

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**18/05/2011**



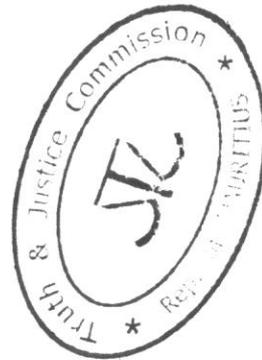
**TRUTH**

**AND**

**JUSTICE COMMISSION**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Morning Session**



4

## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

**Dr Parmaseeven Pillay VEERAPEN, Commissioner**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

**Apology:**

**Dr. Alex BORAINÉ, Chairperson**

**Mr Benjamin MOUTOU, Commissioner**

**Chairperson of Session:**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

### **MORNING SESSION**

**Mrs CESAR M Y A**

**Mr FRANÇOIS B (Legal Adviser)**

This is to certify that the following **23** pages are a true and accurate version of the audio recordings of Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 (Morning Session)



(L R Luckhoo)

Contractor

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2011

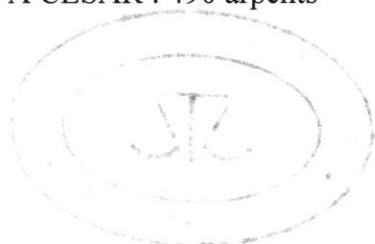
TJC/H/Cesar M Y A/200411/Mc  
Original Version



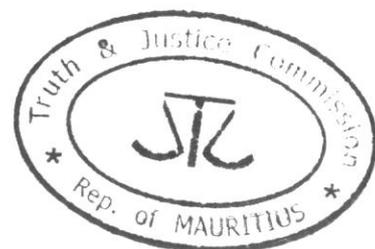
- 1 DR TEELOCK: Ou koné ki fer oune vine ici aujourd'hui ?
- 2 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 3 DR TEELOCK: Donk nou pé guette ou cas et Mme Damory qui est la secrétaire pou fer ou prete  
4 serment et identifier ou même
- 5 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 6 THE SECRETARY : Bonjour
- 7 MRS Y A CESAR : Bonjour
- 8 THE SECRETARY : Si ou ti capave mettre ou debout s'il vous plait ?
- 9 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 10 THE SECRETARY : Si ou ti capave leve ou la main droite et affirmez ki ou pou koze la vérité et  
11 rien que la vérité
- 12 MRS Y A CESAR : La main la enflé la
- 13 THE SECRETARY : Ou bisin repeté ou bisin dire ki ou pou koze la vérité et rien que la vérité  
14 pendant la deposition
- 15 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pou dire la vérité, rien que la vérité
- 16 THE SECRETARY : Merci kuma ou appeler?
- 17 MRS Y A CESAR : Marie Yolande Andrea Cesar
- 18 THE SECRETARY : Kot ou habiter ?
- 19 MRS Y A CESAR : Cité Sugar Planters, Pointe aux Sables
- 20 THE SECRETARY : Merci ou capave assize ou
- 21 DR TEELOCK: Donk ou koné ki fer noune fer ou vini aujourd'hui, nou pou pose ou aine deux  
22 kestions
- 23 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui



- 24 DR TEELOCK: Concernant terrain a Cotteau Raffin
- 25 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 26 DR TEELOCK: Donk Mr David ki pou pose ou banne kestions
- 27 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon ?
- 28 DR TEELOCK: Mr Jacques David ki commissaire Truth & Justice Commission li pou demande  
29 ou quelques kestions
- 30 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui koze un peu fort, aine tipé zoreille... pli fort
- 31 DR TEELOCK: Mr David ki commissaire Truth & Justice Commission li pou demande ou aine  
32 deux kestions
- 33 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui, oui
- 34 DR TEELOCK: O.k.
- 35 MR J DAVID : Merci, madame bonjour
- 36 MRS Y A CESAR : Bonjour
- 37 MR J DAVID : Ou tanne moi bien la ?
- 38 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 39 MR J DAVID : Oui merci oune vini
- 40 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon ?
- 41 MR J DAVID : Merci oune vine devant la commission et nou ti envie koné aina buku problème  
42 lors sa zafer terrain Cotteau Raffin la
- 43 MRS Y A CESAR : Ayo
- 44 MR J DAVID : Allez raconter dire moi aine ti coup d'abord ki grandere terrain sa ?
- 45 MRS Y A CESAR : 490 arpents



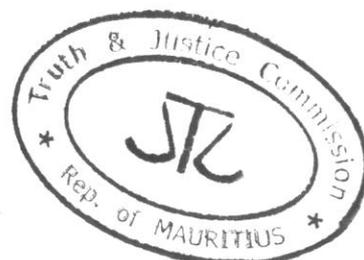
- 46 MR J DAVID : 490 o.k.
- 47 MRS Y A CESAR : Li kumens acote Cotteau Raffin
- 48 MR J DAVID : Oui
- 49 MRS Y A CESAR : Et sa termine balisage Morne plage
- 50 MR J DAVID : O.k. 490 arpents?
- 51 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 52 MR J DAVID : Entierement d'accord, ou ou dire ki terrain la li ti pou ou banne grand dimun ?
- 53 MRS Y A CESAR : Pou Pierre Speville
- 54 MR J DAVID : Pierre Speville ?
- 55 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo arriere grand père
- 56 MR J DAVID : Kuma ou vine, raconte moi astere, kuma ou vine descendant Pierre Speville ou ?
- 57 MRS Y A CESAR : Et bien mo papa kine raconte moi Pierre Speville marier avec aine fille
- 58 Angelique, on ne sait pas si c'est Angelique Speville même
- 59 MR J DAVID : Oui
- 60 MRS Y A CESAR : Pas de surnom, il a une fille Armanda Speville. Armanda Speville fine
- 61 gagne aine jumelle, deux filles
- 62 MR J DAVID : O.k.
- 63 MRS Y A CESAR : Eugenie, ma grand-mère et Hermenie aine lot sœur
- 64 MR J DAVID : Houn, houn
- 65 MRS Y A CESAR : Eugenie Sevenne marier avec Phenelon Cesar, c'est mo grand père
- 66 MR J DAVID : Ou grand pere bon, dire moi aine coup astere kan oupé dire moi Armanda
- 67 Speville, Armanda Speville marier avec ki sane na ?



- 68 MRS Y A CESAR : Jean Numas Sevenne
- 69 MR J DAVID : O.k. parski sa nom Sevenne la important sa ?
- 70 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 71 MR J DAVID : Ou koné ki fer li important ?
- 72 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 73 MR J DAVID : Ki fer sa nom la li important?
- 74 MRS Y A CESAR : Parski la fille appelle marier Sevenne non
- 75 MR J DAVID : Non aine zafer important la. Dire moi aina oune mettre aine cas la cour ?
- 76 MRS Y A CESAR : Bien longtemps avec avocat Jaddoo
- 77 MR J DAVID : Oui ki fer sa?
- 78 MRS Y A CESAR : 11 ans li panne fer narien
- 79 MR J DAVID : Ki fer ou ti mettre aine case la cour ?
- 80 MRS Y A CESAR : Case la cour moi ?
- 81 MR J DAVID : Ki fer oui?
- 82 MRS Y A CESAR : Non sa aina aine Jaddoo avec so courtier kine fer sa pas moi
- 83 MR J DAVID : Jaddoo la c'est ki sa?
- 84 MRS Y A CESAR : Aine avocat
- 85 MR J DAVID : Aine avocat?
- 86 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 87 MR J DAVID : Pas aine avoué ?
- 88 MRS Y A CESAR : Non



- 89 MR J DAVID : Aine avocat?
- 90 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 91 MR J DAVID : Bé ki fer ti mettre case la cour dire moi aine coup ?
- 92 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pas capave dire ou si pas ine poursuivre kikaine mo pas koné
- 93 MR J DAVID : Eski ou personnellement ou ti donne aine pouvoir a aine missier pou okupe sa
- 94 terrain la ?
- 95 MRS Y A CESAR : C'est sa dans la main Hosseney et avocat Jaddoo, ces deux là
- 96 MR J DAVID : Ou ou ti donne zot sa terrain 490 arpents la ?
- 97 MRS Y A CESAR : Pou occuper
- 98 MR J DAVID : Pou occuper?
- 99 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 100 MR J DAVID : Eski ou pas ti donne sa aine missier ki appelle Mr Madhoo ?
- 101 MRS Y A CESAR : Avocat Madhoo
- 102 MR J DAVID : Avocat Madhoo?
- 103 MRS Y A CESAR : Sa premiere fois sa
- 104 MR J DAVID : Parski ou ti signe aine papier avec li sa ?
- 105 MRS Y A CESAR : Ti fer aine bordereau, ti dire moi fer aine bordereau...
- 106 MR J DAVID : Non, non, avant ti fer bordereau ou tine signe aine procuration ? Ou rappelle sa
- 107 papier la ? *(At this stage a document is shown to deponent)*
- 108 MRS Y A CESAR : C'est ça mo pas koné li dire moi bordereau
- 109 MR J DAVID : Allez, allez, d'accord
- 110 MRS Y A CESAR : Li pas dire moi procuration li



- 111 MR J DAVID : Allez oune signe aine papier avec Mr Madhoo ?
- 112 MRS Y A CESAR : Donne li droit pou envoye aine nommé Ramparsad Choolun lors sa terrain  
113 la alle guetter
- 114 MR J DAVID : Ah bon revinne doucement astere la; ou oune donne Mr Madhoo pouvoir ?
- 115 MRS Y A CESAR : Droit
- 116 MR J DAVID : Droit pou fer quoi ? Ki pouvoir li ti aina dans so la main ki oune donne li lors sa  
117 terrain la ? Ki oune dire li fer ou ? Ki ou ti dire li fer ?
- 118 MRS Y A CESAR : Bé sa kuma dir monne donne li sa travail la pou li fer
- 119 MR J DAVID : Han
- 120 MRS Y A CESAR : Parski mo pena l'argent mo pena narien
- 121 MR J DAVID : Ou dire li vende terrain la ?
- 122 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?
- 123 MR J DAVID : Ou ti dire li vende terrain la ?
- 124 MRS Y A CESAR : Non monne dire li fer demarse et puis pou vender
- 125 MR J DAVID : Voila
- 126 MRS Y A CESAR : Jamais li ti dire moi pé vender ziska li mort
- 127 MR J DAVID : Han
- 128 MRS Y A CESAR : Lere la line donne moi aine lot copie li dire moi prend sa ou va alle au  
129 devant avec sa, aine copie de 12 arpents, sa avec moi 12 arpents la
- 130 MR J DAVID : Ou aina sa papier la avec ou ?
- 131 MRS Y A CESAR : Non li pas avec moi la, li a la maison



- 132 MR J DAVID : A bein nou ti dire emmene papier madame. Bon eski sa papier la sa même 12  
133 arpents ?
- 134 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 135 MR J DAVID : Cotteau Raffin?
- 136 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 137 MR J DAVID : Ou rappelle kit fois li aine tiguine kume sa, papier la ?
- 138 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?
- 139 MR J DAVID : Li aine tiguine kume sa papier la ou koné ?
- 140 MRS Y A CESAR : Li même longueur chose aine copie
- 141 MR J DAVID : Aine copie?
- 142 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 143 MR J DAVID : Ti aina aine dessin tout sa la lors la ?
- 144 MRS Y A CESAR : Aina so map
- 145 MR J DAVID : Aina so map?
- 146 MRS Y A CESAR : Map la mer sa même ki l'Ilot Bénitier, pas l'Ilot Bénitier sa nou ti appelle sa  
147 l'Ile aux Cocos
- 148 MR J DAVID : L'Ile aux Cocos ?
- 149 MRS Y A CESAR : Parski mo grand pere Pierre Speville fine plante 600 cocotiers lors la, alors  
150 ti aina tombe ti aina tout zot enterrer, Pierre Speville ine mort noyer avec aine gouverneur ler alle  
151 baigner. Alors ti enterre li la, alors aine musulman Habid si pas Hossenbaccus, Ramgoolam père  
152 dire li reste gardien là. Lere line reste gardien la, zot fine enleve tout, zot ine zete dans la mer li  
153 dire moi gardien la
- 154 MR J DAVID : Nepli aina cocos?



155 MRS Y A CESAR : Nepli aina narien lere la sa c'est pas une ile sa, li forme partie nou terrain  
156 490, alors letemps ti aina volcan, mo croire oune apprane a l'époque moi mo pas koné

157 MR J DAVID : Mo pas ti enkor la moi aussi

158 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo croire moi aussi et lere la li vine kuma dir, sa volcan la ine fer aine  
159 chemin dans la mer kuma aine lac, alors la mer sa allez allez li prend place et lere la ti aina aine  
160 coquille en dehors, ti ena aine pretre mo papa zot banne fami ti fer beni sa, lere la appelle sa Ilot  
161 Bénitier

162 MR J DAVID : Voila, a nous vine aine tiguine a l'essentiel...

163 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui mais li aine sel sa, la mo tanne dire Nando Bodha pé alle fer dimande  
164 location lors la si pas ki commerage mais pas pou ni gouvernement ni pou li sa

165 MR J DAVID : Ouai nou revinne aine ti coup a l'essentiel ; au depart ti ena 490 arpents ?

166 MRS Y A CESAR : arpents

167 MR J DAVID : Kumaniere Mr Madhoo dire ou ki ou aina zis 12 arpents rester ?

168 MRS Y A CESAR : 12 arpents la lere li arete fer sa travail la sa

169 MR J DAVID : Ouai, li li dire ou reste 12 arpents la ?

170 MRS Y A CESAR : Lere la li donne moi sa copie 12 arpents la alle lors la mo a gagne de tout

171 MR J DAVID : Très bien letemps reste 12 arpents oune fer aine lot papier avec banne Sevenne,  
172 banne Sevenne oune mentionne moi talere la banne Sevenne ou fami tout sa la sa ?

173 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui

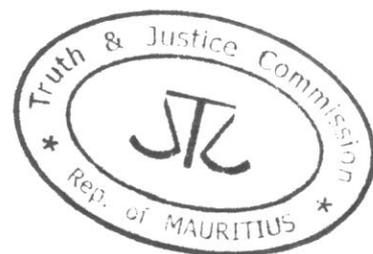
174 MR J DAVID : Sevenne, oune fer aine lot...

175 MRS Y A CESAR : Madame la fek apprane line mort le 4 Mars La France, line alle La France  
176 et so mari zot tout fine mort alors ti fille la fine vini ine prend li ine aller line mort le 4 Mars

177 MR J DAVID : O.k. mais so banne zenfant encore la même zot reste Ste Croix ?



- 178 MRS Y A CESAR : La ici Maurice li aina aine sel garçon
- 179 MR J DAVID : Li aina aine sel garçon reste Ste Croix ?
- 180 MRS Y A CESAR : Li habite Tranquebar
- 181 MR J DAVID : Tranquebar voila. Non nou revine mo envie tire sa au clair sa zafer 490 arpents
- 182 Mr Madhoo dire ou coume sa reste 12 arpents, o.k. ?
- 183 MRS Y A CESAR : Houn
- 184 MR J DAVID : Bon eski ou oune fer aine lot papier cot oune vende terrain avec banne Sevenne,
- 185 300 arpents la ?
- 186 MRS Y A CESAR : Ek banne Sevenne?
- 187 MR J DAVID : Hein?
- 188 MRS Y A CESAR : Mais zamais
- 189 MR J DAVID : Zamais ?
- 190 MRS Y A CESAR : Non
- 191 MR J DAVID : Ou panne zoindre zot banne Sevenne ?
- 192 MRS Y A CESAR : Au contraire la Cour, banne Jaddoo mo croire pas ti avoye zot la Cour
- 193 MR J DAVID : Houn, houn
- 194 MRS Y A CESAR : La Cour dire zot ki zot pas heritier
- 195 MR J DAVID : Oui
- 196 MRS Y A CESAR : Et puis sa la fami pas trop bien are moi mais moi mo ti dire zot si zamais mo
- 197 gagner mo pou partage ek zot parski mo koné deux sœurs même mama zot besoin gagner,
- 198 Eugenie ek Hermenie mais zot pas ti d'accord are moi et ala lere li aller li oussi li pas dire moi li
- 199 aller. Astere so garcon dire moi line mort la le 4 Mars.
- 200 MR J DAVID : Bon oune joindre garçon la ou ?



- 201 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui mo joindre li
- 202 MR J DAVID : Ou joindre li ?
- 203 MRS Y A CESAR : Mais mo...
- 204 MR J DAVID : Parski aina aine problème lors sa zafer c'est pas 12 arpents sa, c'est 300 arpents  
205 ki banne Seienne ine prend ?
- 206 MRS Y A CESAR : Non sa 390 arpents la, le gouvernement zamais line prend lotorisation nou  
207 pas koné ek ki, li fine fer chemin et c'est pour cela ki sa ine diminuer la
- 208 MR J DAVID : Houn
- 209 MRS Y A CESAR : Pas ti aina chemin là-bas, ti aina pieton au Morne mais le gouvernement ine  
210 fer chemin mais zamais ti donne nou aine recompense aine narien
- 211 DR TEELock: Mais aine chemin pas capave fer aine terrain 490 fine 12 ?
- 212 MRS Y A CESAR : Abé Ramgoolam la mo lé zoindre li, li ti emmene moi lot fois dans so l'auto  
213 tout sa la noune alle manger, boire mais banne la police pas laisse moi rentrer, mo zoindre li  
214 dehors li en pressant et li dire moi vine bureau, pas laisse moi rentrer pou alle koze avec li
- 215 MR J DAVID : Mais si nou guette bien la...
- 216 MRS Y A CESAR : Lere la monne met 12 arpents la dans la main Ramgoolam c'est sa ki mo  
217 croire ine met sa dans la main vasa... mo même mo pas koné. Ou koné moi aussi mo pé vine  
218 vieux, avant-hier monne gagne 85 ans et sa même mo pas zen pou pense tout sa la
- 219 MR J DAVID : Mais astere avec banne Mme Choolun, oupé dire nou ou pas fine met li la Cour ?
- 220 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?
- 221 MR J DAVID : Oupé dire ou pas fine met li la Cour ? Situation tel ki li été ou ou croire ki ou  
222 propriétaire zis 12 arpents, zis 12 arpents oune dire nou la et tout le reste terrain oune perdi  
223 alors ?
- 224 MRS Y A CESAR : Perdi?



- 225 MR J DAVID : Hein oupé tendé ki mo pé dire la ? Dans sa 490 la, oune perdi tout ?
- 226 MRS Y A CESAR : Pourquoi ?
- 227 MR J DAVID : Bé sa même oupé dire Mr Madhoo ine dire ou reste zis 12 arpents, nou nou envie  
228 koné kot sa 400 arpents la fine aller ?
- 229 MRS Y A CESAR : Pas koné, en ce temps la ti aina aine nommé Choolun, Ramparsad Choolun
- 230 MR J DAVID : Voila
- 231 MRS Y A CESAR : Lere la li aller sencé li trop grand missier, Madhoo dire li li pou donne li  
232 aine part, li fine alle au Morne line tire barblé, dans li alle tire barblé banne Desvaux si pas  
233 Grand Baie fine donne li coup de fusil, ti aina aine gardien ti aina so fusil. Dans television tout sa  
234 la demander, demander et après ine alle gagne so lé corps dans bois et la li aina aine so neveu ki  
235 la.
- 236 MR J DAVID : Madame mo croire bon faudrer pas nou ajoute film la hein parski l'époque pas ti  
237 aina television ou ti pé dire sa l'époque la la, pas ti aina television narien pou alle dire...oupé  
238 dire banne zafer ki ou a dirait bon oune tanne dire, ou panne chose, faudrer pas nou vine trop lors  
239 sa banne kozé la, nomme banne noms banne dimun. Moi mo pé dire ou de ou vivant ou, ou ti  
240 kone zis missier Madhoo ?
- 241 MRS Y A CESAR : Madhoo premier personne kine occupe sa
- 242 MR J DAVID : Premier personne; deuxieme dimun lors ki oune gagne zafer lors sa 490 arpents  
243 la ?
- 244 MRS Y A CESAR : Avocat Jaddoo
- 245 MR J DAVID : Jaddoo, alors Madhoo d'abord et puis Jaddoo, ki fer oune alle guette avocat  
246 Jaddoo ou ?
- 247 MRS Y A CESAR : Aine courtier ki ti vine rode moi kot mo rester
- 248 MR J DAVID : Oui



249 MRS Y A CESAR : Non au commencement ti aina aine nommé aine fille chretienne rentre chose  
250 marier ek Ibrahim Dawood, aine jour mo truve li vine ek l'auto vine cherche moi, li alle fer  
251 demarse fer demarse, li emmene moi kot aine monsieur ki appelle Akini la rue La Poudriere li  
252 dire moi signer pou li capave gagne l'argent pou kuma dir paye dimun pou travay. Li aller li  
253 prend Rs 600,000 li pas donne moi 5 sous, aine sel aller ziska zordi mo perdi li, sa fam la marier  
254 avec Ibrahim Dawood reste Curepipe. Aller aller lere la aine jour chose ki vini sa Hosenny la

255 MR J DAVID : Hosenny, oui allez?

256 MRS Y A CESAR : Lere la ki line emmene moi avec avocat Jaddoo

257 MR J DAVID : Oui, Hosenny astere line fer ou signe aine papier li ?

258 MRS Y A CESAR : Line fer moi signe aine papier bureau, li dire moi ou koné mo pas pou  
259 capave travay sans ou lotorisation, signe aine papier aine bordereau...

260 MR J DAVID : Voila

261 MRS Y A CESAR : ...donne avocat lotorisation pou li occupe sa

262 MR J DAVID : O.k.

263 MRS Y A CESAR : Depuis 11 ans

264 MR J DAVID : 11 ans. Donk line prend papier li aller ?

265 MRS Y A CESAR : Aine sel aller, zamais, tous les zours demain, tantot, rien et mo tanne dire ki  
266 zot ine prend l'argent lors la preter la banque sensé pou zot fer travay mais zamais ti fer narien.  
267 La deuxiemement sa coup la fine gagne aine lot Choolun kine mort la so neveu fine vine regarde  
268 moi ine emmene moi ek avoué Dauhoo

269 MR J DAVID : Oui, o.k.

270 MRS Y A CESAR : Dauhoo

271 MR J DAVID : Oui



272 MRS Y A CESAR : La lipé occuper line emmene moi au Morne, line emmene arpenteur ek  
 273 camion zom alle arpente terrain, fine emmener tout correct la, ine alle presente moi la Cour tout.  
 274 Alors lere la...

275 MR J DAVID : Ine emmene ou pou alle fer l'affidavit sa ?

276 MRS Y A CESAR : Lere la monne alle fer serment devant magistrat ki mo retire mo plainte, mo  
 277 travay ki monne donne Jaddoo

278 MR J DAVID : Donne zot sa ?

279 MRS Y A CESAR : Donne sa Dauhoo

280 MR J DAVID : O.k.

281 MRS Y A CESAR : Alors la Cour fine accorde moi, alors la Dauhoo pé occuper la, mo pas  
 282 capave dire ou encore

283 MR J DAVID : Ki sane la kine explik ou ki la Cour fine donne ou sa possibilité fer sa la ?

284 MRS Y A CESAR : Ki possibilité ?

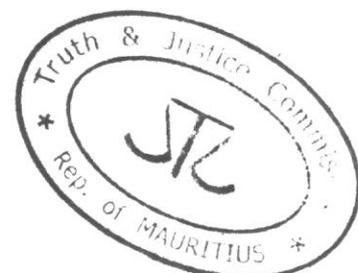
285 MR J DAVID : Ki tire sa dans la main untel et donne sa dans la main lot dimun ?

286 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui parski avocat Jaddoo so madame aine avoué li ti vine presente la Cour

287 MR J DAVID : Ah bon

288 MRS Y A CESAR : Li pas ti accepter bé lere la mo ti dire avec magistrat mo pou gagne 85 ans  
 289 mo pas zen, mo aina zenfant nou malheureux nou misere, a bein mo ti a content mo zenfant  
 290 gagner. Abé lere la mo explik la Cour devant magistrat mo dire li, excuse moi mo capave  
 291 raconter ?

292 Mo aina aine chaise ine casser et monne done ou, oune arranger, oune prend dix ans pou arranger  
 293 et la mo pé bisin mo chaise pou mo assizé, il ne reste zis pou mo capave prend mo l'objet tire li  
 294 ek ou pou mo donne aine lot arranger hein. Lere la magistrat rier guette moi et lere la li dire moi  
 295 oui et lere la Mme Jaddoo en colere, lere la li dire moi oui madame.

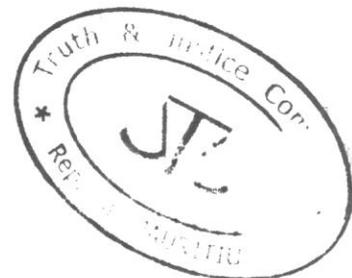


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- 296 MR J DAVID : Sa veut dire oune gagne aine papier officiel de la Cour pou dire ou fer sa ?
- 297 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pas koné si pas li ek Dauhoo mais mo pena aucaine papier are moi...
- 298 MR J DAVID : Donk si Mr Jaddoo astere ki pé occupe sa?
- 299 MRS Y A CESAR : Non, Dauhoo
- 300 MR J DAVID : Dauhoo, Dauhoo...
- 301 MRS Y A CESAR : Avoué Dauhoo
- 302 MR J DAVID : D'accord, o.k. Eski line dire ou kan pou retourne la Cour enkor la lors sa zafer
- 303 la ?
- 304 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?
- 305 MR J DAVID : Eski ine dire ou kan pou retourne la Cour pou ou enkor la lors sa zafer la ?
- 306 MRS Y A CESAR : Non line dire moi la li pé guette l'acquireur pou vendé
- 307 MR J DAVID : Oui
- 308 MRS Y A CESAR : Ti aina aine messieur tine sorti dehors ine vini ine dire oui, après li panne
- 309 retourner, c'est sa ki li pé attendre l'acquireur arriver, kuma dir bisin gagne dimun pou acheter
- 310 lere la li donne moi mo part
- 311 MR J DAVID : Non la Cour fine dire ou retourne enkor la la pou vine...
- 312 MRS Y A CESAR : La Cour, non
- 313 MR J DAVID : Non ?
- 314 MRS Y A CESAR : Non
- 315 MR J DAVID : Ou pas koné ki au mois de Mai la Cour ine dire ou revine guetter, la Cour
- 316 Suprême ine dire ou revini, ou pas au courant ?
- 317 MRS Y A CESAR : Non



- 318 MR J DAVID : Ou avoué panne dire ou sa ?
- 319 MRS Y A CESAR : Non
- 320 DR TEELock: Mo croire ou bisin contacter...
- 321 MRS Y A CESAR : Nek line dire moi et hier même monne alle là-bas li pé attane dimun même  
322 pou acheter
- 323 DR TEELock: Ine fini fixer la Cour
- 324 MR J DAVID : La Cour ine fixer pou en Mai, ou bisin fer aine demars ou alle la Cour au mois  
325 de Mai sa zafer la pou passer
- 326 MRS Y A CESAR : Avec avoué la ? Parski monne déjà...Gambier ine aller li, li ti koze bonne a  
327 vini, line guetter chose line aller labas li lors montagne la, c'est Desvaux ki ti la mo ti alle chez  
328 Desvaux...
- 329 MR J DAVID : Mo croire ou pé melange aine ti peu banne chose la...
- 330 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo ti alle chez Desvaux...
- 331 MR J DAVID : Madame...
- 332 MRS Y A CESAR : ...lere la li ti dire moi oui li reconnaître ki Gambier ine vende terrain are li,  
333 pas pou li sa. Lere Mme Desvaux koze ek Gambier li dire les héritiers voudraient vous parler, li  
334 dire moi je m'en fous avec les héritiers li avoye promener
- 335 MR J DAVID : Bon mo croire nou pé melange aine ti peu plan, nou retourne a l'essentiel,  
336 l'essentiel pou nou c'est sa terrain 490 arpents la donk zamais oune okuper ou, oune passe sa les  
337 autres dimun, c'est sa kine arriver, dans ou cas c'est sa kine arriver ? Oune prend, oune donne  
338 Mr Madhoo, Mr Madhoo ine donne Mr Jaddoo, Mr Jaddoo ine passe Mr Dauhoo, donk c'est aine  
339 la file dimun kine vini ?
- 340 MRS Y A CESAR : Non moi kine mettre sa dans la main Dauhoo
- 341 MR J DAVID : Oui seki mo pé envie dire ou fine aine aine tralé dimun ine vine divant ou...

- 342 MRS Y A CESAR : Ine embete moi et pas fer narien
- 343 MR J DAVID : ...pou fer business 490 arpents, valeur du jour ou pena narien ?
- 344 MRS Y A CESAR : Pena
- 345 MR J DAVID : Ou pena narien?
- 346 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pé reste dans aine ti lacaze cité misere...
- 347 MR J DAVID : Ki sane na pé okupe sa terrain 490 arpents zordi ? Ki sane la ki pé occupe sa ?
- 348 MRS Y A CESAR : Hein?
- 349 MR J DAVID : Ki sane la ki pé occupe sa d'apres ou, sa 490 arpents la ?
- 350 MRS Y A CESAR : Bé lors la ti aina Gambier, Desvaux
- 351 MR J DAVID : Non, Mr Choolun li enkor lors la ou li pas enkor lors la ? Banne fami Choolun
- 352 enkor lors sa terrain la ou pas ?
- 353 MRS Y A CESAR : Mais Choolun mo panne dire ou line mort et zot ine tuer li
- 354 MR J DAVID : Ah bon, so banne zenfant ou pas koné ?
- 355 MRS Y A CESAR : So neveu ki la pé... so neveu ki pé occupe sa ensemble avec Dauhoo, avoué
- 356 MR J DAVID : Avoué Dauhoo?
- 357 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 358 MR J DAVID : Ah bon, astere nou pé kumens gagne explication la trankil la, doucement
- 359 doucement ; donk Dauhoo et neveu Mme Choolun ?
- 360 MRS Y A CESAR : Neveu Choolun kine mort la ki pé occupe sa
- 361 MR J DAVID : O.k.
- 362 DR TEELock: Est-ce que vous êtes allé voir Mr Hossen ?
- 363 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?



- 364 DR TEELOCK: Oune alle guette aine Mr Hossen?
- 365 MRS Y A CESAR : Hein?
- 366 DR TEELOCK: Oune alle guette aine Mr Hossen?
- 367 MRS Y A CESAR : Ki Hossen?
- 368 MR J DAVID : Avocat?
- 369 DR TEELOCK: Ou panne tanne parler de Mr Hossen ?
- 370 MRS Y A CESAR : Hossen?
- 371 DR TEELOCK: Hein?
- 372 MRS Y A CESAR : Non mo kone zis avoué Dauhoo la
- 373 DR TEELOCK: Parski aina aine plainte ki ou oune metter ek Hossen ?
- 374 MRS Y A CESAR : Ki sa Hossen la ?
- 375 DR TEELOCK: Pourtant aina aine plainte kine metter par ou contre Choolun par Hossen, zamais
- 376 oune alle guette aine Mr Hossen ?
- 377 MRS Y A CESAR : Non
- 378 MR J DAVID : Plainte la ine fer par Mme Jadoo avec avocat Hossen lors ou nom ?
- 379 MRS Y A CESAR : Non, pas kone narien
- 380 DR TEELOCK: Ou pas au courant ?
- 381 MR J DAVID : Ou pas au courant di tout sa ?
- 382 MRS Y A CESAR : Non, non mo pas au courant narien, tout mo zafer dans la main Dauhoo la
- 383 ek Choolun, avec Sanjay Choolun, mo pas kone narien
- 384 DR TEELOCK: Mo croire nou banne avocat pou explik ou aine ti peu ki pé arriver, houn



385 MR J DAVID : Oui, mo croire aina buku kikchose nou pou bisin explik ou madame parski nou  
386 croire ou pas au courant buku kikchose. Entretemps mo ti envie kone aine zafer, oune tanne aine  
387 Mr Sim Fat, Sim Fat, aine Mr Sim Fat ti vine guette ou pou fer transaction terrain ?

388 MRS Y A CESAR : Pou alle lors terrain ?

389 MR J DAVID : Hein

390 MRS Y A CESAR : Chinois ?

391 MR J DAVID : Hein ?

392 MRS Y A CESAR : Zamais

393 MR J DAVID : Zamais ?

394 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo panne truve personne

395 MR J DAVID : Han, panne truver

396 MRS Y A CESAR : Non, attention aina aine heritier de côté Sevenne appelle Jacqueline, li La  
397 France la, chaque fois li vini li alle guette bureau, li alle ici li alle là-bas a koze la Cour ti dire  
398 kume sa zot mama pas marier, zot declare lors nom zot mama zot pena droit lors sa terrain la.  
399 Alors li ki pé fer tout banne desordre la, kit fois li mais mo pas au courant.

400 MR J DAVID : Mais madame mo capave dire ou aine zafer ; aina buku kikchose ki ou pas koné,  
401 li malheureux pou dire ki déjà a l'époque en 1972 ou signe aine procuration pou donne aine  
402 missier, aine avocat Madhoo ; eski ou koné ki avocat Madhoo ine donne sa terrain la, ine vender,  
403 ine fer aine transaction a Mr Choolun ? Ou koné sa, non ? Oune apprane sa, non ?

404 MRS Y A CESAR : C'est sa ki mo dire ou, li line fer sa lors Choolun, Choolun sa même ki mo  
405 dire ou ine alle fer so grand noir, ine tire barblé, ine dire pou li, sa même ki zot ine tuer li.

406 MR J DAVID : Voila, o.k.

407 MRS Y A CESAR : Ramparsad la, sa même so neveu aster la ki pé fer sa travail la avec Dauhoo  
408 la



409 MR J DAVID : Li pé continue travay la ?

410 MRS Y A CESAR : Choolun la so neveu

411 MR J DAVID : Seki noune decouvert madame, mo pu dire ou li malheureux c'est ki oune donne  
412 pouvoir a toute un chacun, ou donne pouvoir Mr Madhoo, Madhoo ou tirer ou donne pouvoir Mr  
413 Jaddoo, ou tire pouvoir dans la main Mr Jaddoo ou donne Mr Dauhoo et donk seki après par la  
414 suite ou pas pé kone narien seki pé passer ?

415 MRS Y A CESAR : Non

416 MR J DAVID : C'est sa le problème. Astere monne comprend en conclusion astere c'est ou  
417 banne neveu, niece ki en France ki pé fer demars pou gagne terrain la

418 MRS Y A CESAR : Aine sel niece La France

419 MR J DAVID : Aine sel niece, aina aine lot reste, aine neveu reste Tranquebar li appelle  
420 Sevenne

421 MRS Y A CESAR : So mama fek mort la

422 MR J DAVID : Li appelle Sevenne?

423 MRS Y A CESAR : Sevenne, Odile Sevenne

424 MR J DAVID : Voila, li donk de ce fait...

425 MRS Y A CESAR : Apres zot aina aine tonton exister la...

426 MR J DAVID : Mo pou dire ou aine sel kestion, aine sel kestion mo pose ou ; kan ou ti dire Mr  
427 Madhoo ki ou aina sa terrain 490 arpents la, eski ou ti aina aine titre de propriété pou dire ki ou  
428 propriétaire sa terrain la ?

429 MRS Y A CESAR : Bé oui li li ti dire moi mo tout sel héritier...

430 MR J DAVID : Non madame mo pé dire ou, eski ti aina aine papier officiel kot dire ou c'est ou  
431 ki propriétaire sa terrain la

432 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pas koné, Madhoo dire moi mo propriétaire terrain mo pas koné



- 433 MR J DAVID : Bon
- 434 DR TEELock: Madame...
- 435 MRS Y A CESAR : Alla kot Jaddoo aussi, sa Hosseney la ti dire moi ou tout sel héritier
- 436 DR TEELock: Ou ou dire nou, oune dire nou talere la ki ou grand pere ou fami ti dire ou ki ou  
437 aina terrain ou alle visite terrain tout sa la
- 438 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?
- 439 DR TEELock: Depi ou tipti ou koné ki ou aina sa terrain la
- 440 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo papa ti dire moi avant li mort, oui
- 441 MRS Y A CESAR : Ou ti alle visite sa terrain la kan ou ti tipti ?
- 442 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pas kone narien moi, li même line explik moi
- 443 DR TEELock: O.k.
- 444 MRS Y A CESAR : Lere la mo alle fer fer demarse, mo pas kone narien
- 445 DR TEELock: Lere la Mr Madhoo vine dire ou ki effectivement ou aina sa terrain la ?
- 446 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 447 DR TEELock: Oui, astere kuma Mr David ine fek dire ou oune alle donne pouvoir aine kantité  
448 dimun pou fer banne transaction mais seki nou pé truver seki zot ine fer banne zafer ki peut-être  
449 ou pas au courant
- 450 MRS Y A CESAR : Mais moi mo truver d'apres l'ordre kuma dir mo pas kone narien, c'est aine  
451 banne escroquerie qui zot ine fer ek moi
- 452 DR TEELock: Seki mo pou demande ou...
- 453 MRS Y A CESAR : Parski zot truver mo pena aine homme, mo pena personne pou debouter mo  
454 vieux zot embete moi



455 DR TEELock: Seki mo pou demande ou fer c'est assizé ek nou conseiller legale après sa  
 456 hearing la, li pou explik ou ki pé arriver parski cas la pé apparaître en Cour en Mai et ou pas  
 457 même au courant

458 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pas koné, mo pena aine lettre mo pena aine narien

459 DR TEELock: Li pou explik ou ki bisin fer, o.k. si ou assize ek li aine ti moment, ou pou  
 460 capave assize ek li aine ti moment ?

461 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon ?

462 DR TEELock: Ou pou capave assize ek nou conseiller legale ki pé assizer la, Mr François ?

463 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui mo capave assize ek li

464 DR TEELock: Ou assize ek li et li pou explik ou ki pé arriver

465 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui

466 DR TEELock: O.k. ?

467 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui

468 DR TEELock: O.k.

469 DR VEERAPEN: Madame, nou bien sympathise avec ou seki pé arriver. Seki mo ti envie  
 470 demande ou letemps ou papa dire ou, ou aina aine terrain, o.k.

471 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?

472 DR VEERAPEN: Ou papa ti dire ou, ou aina aine terrain ?

473 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui

474 DR VEERAPEN: Zamais line dire ou alla li la mo aina aine papier, ala aine papier dans tiroir ou  
 475 bien dans l'armoire aina aine papier ki certifier sa terrain la pou banne grand dimun ?

476 MRS Y A CESAR : Non mais mo papa letemps zot ti Rivière Noire zot mais letemps zot vine  
 477 Port Louis ici ek so mama tout sa la, zot ti aina zot banne zafer. Abé lere l'epidemie arriver, so

5



478 mama mort l'artillerie la li dire moi mais li pas koné, li même li lors lilit bien faille, so mama pé  
479 mort la l'epidemie, li pas koné kot tout sa la.

480 Aine cousin ki ti sorti dehors vine guette li et dire li occupe to terrain to aina, lere la papa, mo  
481 papa ine paralyser lors lilit, ere la li dire moi aine deux aine deux parole, truver ? Bé seki line  
482 dire aine deux parole avant li mort en 61 et lere la monne marse lors la même, mo pas kone  
483 narien.

484 DR VEERAPEN: Mais sa cousin ki fine vine dire, dire li occupe terrain la, cousin la enkor la  
485 même li ?

486 MRS Y A CESAR : Line mort longtemps

487 DR VEERAPEN: Line mort, sa veut dire ou pena personne dans fami...

488 MRS Y A CESAR : Pena personne, mo tout sel, de côté mo papa mo tout sel

489 DR VEERAPEN: Oui mais ki aina aine papier lors terrain la, ou pas kone ditout sa ?

490 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?

491 DR VEERAPEN: Ou pas kone ditout ki aina aine papier, aine papier ki dire sa terrain la pou  
492 banne grand dimun, ou pena li ?

493 MRS Y A CESAR : Aine sel chose aine fois mo ti alle archives, aine dimun ti emmene moi mo ti  
494 alle guetter, alors nou ti alle guetter Pierre Speville so terrain non-vendu. Alors lere la même,  
495 lere fine mettre sa non-vendu la même ki Madhoo vine occuper, oune comprend ?

496 DR VEERAPEN: Ki sa dimun ti emmene ou la, archives ?

497 MRS Y A CESAR : Banne courtier tire papier là-bas la

498 DR VEERAPEN: Ki sa courtier la ? Ou pas rappelle so nom ?

499 MRS Y A CESAR : Li prend moi Rs 300.- ce jour la pou alle guette dans livre

500 DR VEERAPEN: Ki so nom sa courtier la?

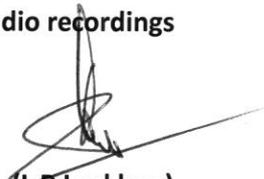
501 MRS Y A CESAR : Pierre Speville, terrain non-vendu



- 502 DR VEERAPEN: Oui, oui, non mo pé dimande ou ki sa courtier la, ou rappelle so nom ?
- 503 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?
- 504 DR VEERAPEN: Sa courtier kine emmene ou archives la...
- 505 MRS Y A CESAR : Kot li pou vivre, aine vieux dimun sa ziska sa lere la, aine musulman sa et
- 506 line mort
- 507 DR VEERAPEN: Oui, ou pas rappelle so nom ?
- 508 MRS Y A CESAR : Mo pas rappelle so nom
- 509 DR VEERAPEN: Ou pas rappelle so nom, allez right, o.k., merci madame
- 510 DR TEELock: O.k. merci madame, ou pou assizé ek Mr François aine ti moment ?
- 511 MRS Y A CESAR : Oui
- 512 DR TEELock: Oui, merci ou capave aller astere
- 513 MRS Y A CESAR : Pardon?
- 514 DR TEELock: Ou capave aller ou assizé ek Mr François
- 515 MRS Y A CESAR : Ou sa ?
- 516 DR TEELock: Dans so bureau

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518

519   
(L.R. Luckhoo)

520 **Contractor**

521 **19/05/2011**



TRUTH

AND

JUSTICE COMMISSION

Friday 1 April 2011

Afternoon Session

## **Members Present**

Dr Parmaseeven Veerapen - Commissioner

Mr Jacques David - Commissioner

**Apology:-** Dr Alex Boraine  
Dr Vijaya Teelock  
Mr Benjamin Moutou

**Chairperson of Session:** Mr Jacques David

## **In attendance**

Mrs How Man Yoon Koo Yue Cheong (Deponent)

Mr Seewoo Tookraj

**TJC/H/How Man Yoon K.Y.C/01.04.11/Af**

**Original Version**

1. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- We start the session of afternoon session, this Friday 1 April 2011, and we are
2. dealing with the case of Speville and we have invited several individuals to depone today. The first
3. one would be the Conservator of Mortgages. Who is who? Who is the Conservator?
4. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- The Conservator has delegated me to come and depone.
5. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- In a minute, you introduce yourself. So, the first thing I am going to ask you
6. please is to swear your oath, okay, that you are going to say the truth nothing but the truth with the
7. help of the acting secretary, Mr Gobin, okay. So each of you and then you present yourself to the
8. Commission.
9. **MR GOBIN**:- Dir ki tou seki ou pou dir se la verite rien que la verite.
10. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Je le jure.
11. **MR GOBIN**:- Quel est votre nom ?
12. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- C'est How Man Yoon Koo Yue Cheong, I am Deputy Registrar
13. General.
14. **MR GOBIN**:- Say all that you say the truth nothing but the truth, you have to repeat it.
15. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- All that I have to say the truth nothing but the truth.
16. **MR GOBIN**:- You raise your right hand and say whatever you will say will be the truth nothing but
17. the truth.
18. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Whatever I will say it is the truth but nothing than the truth.
19. **MR GOBIN**:- Can you present yourself?
20. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- I am Mr Tookraj Seewoo. I work at the Registrar General Department. I am a
21. Principal Registrar Officer there.
22. **MR GOBIN**:- Okay.
23. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Okay. Would you like to depone in what language, any choice, Anglais,
24. Français, Creole ou quoi? Choisissez, le choix c'est vous, c'est à vous de choisir.
25. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- English or French.
26. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Okay. So, now I would ask Mr David to lead the discussion, okay and he has
27. been working in the case of Speville and he will ask any question and clarifications that we require. I
28. pass over on Mr David.
29. **MR J. DAVID**:- Okay, thank you. Bonjour et bienvenue à la Commission. Merci, donc, d'avoir fait
30. le déplacement pour nous donner un peu plus de – on voudrait éclairer sur certain point que nous
31. profane, nous n'arrivons pas toujours à trouver cette lumière là. Vous vous êtes spécialistes des
32. documents et c'est la raison pour laquelle on vous a appelé aujourd'hui. Je ne sais pas si vous êtes au
33. courant du cas qui est en litige aujourd'hui, le cas Speville. Il s'est passé que Mons. Speville donc,

34. Mons. Raymond Speville déclare être propriétaire du fait d'être les descendants de Pierre Speville. Il  
 35. est donc un des héritiers possédant quelques 490 arpents à Côte aux Raffins. Nous allons voir les  
 36. documents. C'est surtout pour les documents disposés que nous voulons avoir plus d'éclaircissement.  
 37. Ce terrain par la suite est passé sous la responsabilité d'un certain Hurryparsad Choolun et qui lui de  
 38. son côté déclare avoir obtenu ce terrain donc par procuration d'un certain Marie Hollande Darien  
 39. Cesar. Voyez un petit peu donc beaucoup d'acteurs et d'actrices entre en scène dans ce genre de  
 40. dossier. Donc, nous voulons avoir comme je l'ai dit plus de lumière sur ce cas d'où le fait que nous  
 41. avons demandé à ce que vous apportez les documents pour voir s'il y a eu manipulation dans les  
 42. photocopies ou qu'est-ce qui s'est passé dans les originaux. Comme vous êtes de spécialistes, donc,  
 43. nous vous allons vous soumettre, vous n'avez pas apporté de document.
44. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Malheureusement les livres ne peut pas quitter le bureau parce que c'est  
 45. ouvert pour le public. Vous pourrez aller voir mais on ne peut pas retirer les livres du bureau.
46. **MR J. DAVID**:- Vous ne pourrez pas avoir un certified copy ?
47. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Certified copy vous pourrez avoir mais pour original on ne peut pas  
 48. comme ci dirait l'original ne peut pas quitter le bureau.
49. **MR J. DAVID**:- Ok, très bien.
50. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Vous pouvez faire quelqu'un venir au bureau pour voir.
51. **MR J. DAVID**:- Peut-être si nous vous envoyons une lettre par la suite nous avons souhaité d'avoir  
 52. des copies certifiées.
53. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Ça vous pouvez avoir.
54. **MR J. DAVID**:- Parce que nous nous avons des copies.
55. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Mais c'est pas une copie certifiée, excusez-moi.
56. **MR J. DAVID**:- Allons dire par exemple j'aurais souhaité, la Commission aurait souhaité mieux  
 57. comprendre un casier hypothécaire, un casier hypothécaire relative à des mouvements de terre de  
 58. Speville. Si par exemple je vous soumettais ce document là, est-ce que vous pourriez jeter un coup  
 59. d'œil et nous dire ? Je vous donne le papier là. Ça fait beaucoup de paperasse et comprend que vous  
 60. vous avez encore plus que ça. Jetez un coup d'œil sur le document de casier hypothécaire ce qui nous  
 61. a été soumis et nous dire si ça conforme à des genres très effectués ou si cela si rien ne vous gêne  
 62. dedans, seulement le premier là, vous allez voir des entrées, si vous pouvez lire s'il vous plaît ?
63. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- D'après la Remarque qu'on a mis il y a un officier qui a fait l'entrée  
 64. avant et puis un senior officer qui collationne. Si jamais il y a des corrections à faire, le Senior  
 65. Registration Officer fait la correction.
66. **MR J. DAVID**:- Oui, fait la correction.

67. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Oui.
68. **MR J. DAVID**:- Mais ça c'est une photocopie dès ce qui a été obtenue ?
69. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Oui.
70. **MR J. DAVID**:- Chez vous. C'est pourquoi je vais vous dire par la suite –
71. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Mais c'est pas une copie certifiée.
72. **MR J. DAVID**:- C'est ça. Nous, on croyait que –
73. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- On donne certified copy parce que là je ne vois pas le tampon qu'on a
74. demandé at the request of -
75. **MR J. DAVID**:- Voilà, pourquoi on vous avait demandé d'apporter l'original.
76. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Malheureusement on peut pas apporter l'original.
77. **MR J. DAVID**:- Ça ne fait rien puisque ... n'est pas perdu parce que nous allons vous demander
78. cette copie par la suite.
79. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- D'accord.
80. **MR J. DAVID**:- Mais vous selon votre point de vue, quelle est votre commentaire dessus ? Il y a un
81. premier achat, il y a une première acquisition et puis il y a une première vente.
82. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- L'encre qui est tombé sur le premier document, on n'a pas trouvé le
83. nom qui est là-dessus là. Dans l'original ici il y a a –
84. **MR J. DAVID**:- Oui.
85. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Oui, je l'ai vu, il y a dans l'original.
86. **MR J. DAVID**:- La tache d'encre ?
87. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- La tache d'encre.
88. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Il y a dans l'original.
89. **MR J. DAVID**:- Il y a aussi dans l'original ?
90. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Oui.
91. **MR J. DAVID**:- Quel est votre interprétation sur la séquence d'échange, vente, ainsi de suite. Il y a
92. un premier signature de Lousto au départ ?
93. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Ça était acquit, la première entrée, ça était acquit de - ?
94. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- De Mons. Demerez.
95. **MR J. DAVID**:- Demerez, oui, c'est ça.
96. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Et puis je vois acheter un autre terrain de 490 arpents de Mons. Lousto.
97. **MR J. DAVID**:- De Mons. Lousto, ok.
98. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Le numéro de transcription -
99. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- C'est que l'encre est tombé là-dessus là, c'est le titre.

100. **MR J. DAVID** :- Voilà.
101. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Le titre.
102. **MR J. DAVID** :- Donc, personne ne comprendrait. Même vous demain ça va être
103. extrêmement difficile pour vous d'interpréter –
104. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Dans le précédant volume il y a la vérité mais d'après la vente
105. on pourra remonter au titre.
106. **MR J. DAVID** :- Voilà, donc, maintenant voyez la date, voyez un petit peu la séquence, ça ce
107. que je vous voulais avoir vos commentaires sur la séquence là, ça remonte à 1820.
108. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Oui.
109. **MR J. DAVID** :- Et puis c'est vendu en 1977 ?
110. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Oui.
111. **MR J. DAVID** :- Et puis la saisie, date de 1821 ?
112. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- L'entrée n'est pas fait de chez nous ça. C'est pas possible.
113. **MR J. DAVID** :- Donc, vous comprenez pourquoi je vous ai demandé les originaux.
114. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Oui.
115. **MR J. DAVID** :- Tout est là. Toutes les questions que la Commission se pose tourne autour
116. de ça.
117. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Une petite Remarque que je puisse faire, hier lorsque j'ai été
118. voir le livre, il y avait trois entrées concernant le même terrain.
119. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Quand nous faisons des entrées, on n'écrit pas comme ci la date.
120. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- 2/4/1821.
121. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Oui, comme ça on n'écrit pas.
122. **MR J. DAVID** :- Vous n'écrivez pas ?
123. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Non, comme ça non. Nous avons un principe d'écrire d'abord.
124. **MR J. DAVID** :- Oui.
125. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Je crois pas que ça a été fait par nos officiers.
126. **MR J. DAVID** :- Ok.
127. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- A l'époque.
128. **MR J. DAVID** :- Oui, parce que comment se fait-il qu'un terrain d'une part acheter ou la
129. transaction se fait en 1820 et puis par la suite nous arrivons quelques années, plusieurs années
130. plus tard en 1977 et que nous faisons un retour en arrière dans l'histoire à 1821, d'où la
131. question c'est quels sont vos commentaires en tant qu'experts à la matière ?
132. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Il y a quelqu'un qui a écrit ça dans le livre.

133. **MR J. DAVID** :- Voilà, ok. Et voilà pourquoi la Commission souhaite obtenir une copie  
134. certified pour voir si selon vos recherches, est-ce que vous avez vu vous hier en regardant ces  
135. documents qu'il y a quelque chose qui a été ajoutée ou pas ?
136. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Il y a un casier hypothécaire 587/85, vous n'avez pas dedans.
137. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- /45.
138. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- C'est ça. On n'a pas une copie mais on a copié.
139. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- C'est ça, qu'il y avait trois entrées.
140. **MR J. DAVID** :- Voilà les trois entrées, ça vous avez vu ?
141. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Ça, j'avais vu.
142. **MR J. DAVID** :- Bon, ma question maintenant en regardant le premier papier que je vous ai  
143. soumis, est-ce qu'à chaque fois qu'il y a acquisition, vente, mouvement, est-ce que ça entre  
144. automatiquement dans le casier hypothécaire dans vos livres à chaque fois qu'il y a –
145. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Oui, lorsqu'on a déposé le document disons il y a une vente qui a  
146. été déposé, si on a payé à la caisse, les officiers qui ont les procédures à suivre qu'on fasse  
147. l'entrée dans nos répertoires.
148. **MR J. DAVID**:- Bon, dites moi maintenant est-ce que les bordereaux sont enregistrés chez  
149. vous, un avoué ou un notaire a fait un bordereau sur une promesse de vente ?
150. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- C'est enregistré seulement.
151. **MR J. DAVID**:- C'est enregistré seulement mais est-ce que –
152. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Mais ça ne figure pas dedans.
153. **MR J. DAVID** :- Le mouvement ne figure pas ?
154. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Non, on met seulement les documents transcrits à part si c'est  
155. transcrit on le met dedans.
156. **MR J. DAVID** :- Si le bordereau est transcrit –
157. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Si c'est transcrit en même temps.
158. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Nous faisons les entrées pour tous les documents qui sont transcrits.
159. **MR J. DAVID** :- Nous sommes en train de parler bien de 490 arpents à Côte aux Raffins ?
160. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Oui.
161. **MR J. DAVID**:- Ok, en tant que expert à la matière, je vais vous soumettre un deuxième  
162. exercice. Donc, allez, on passe à quelque chose d'autre. Voilà, un bordereau fait touchant le  
163. même terrain. Vous allez voir que nous avons highlight un peu les choses qui vous intéressent.
164. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Il y a quelque chose qui ça paraît -
165. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Dans le contenu de répertoire.

166. **MR J. DAVID** :- Voilà.
167. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- On a, c'est vérifié c'était 490 arpents.
168. **MR J. DAVID** :- Qu'est-ce que vous lisez dessus ?
169. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- 190.
170. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Ici, je vois 190 arpents. Il y a quelque chose qui cloche ici parce que les
171. 190 arpents ça ne correspond pas à l'écriture qui a été écrit, ce n'est pas la même écriture.
172. **MR J. DAVID** :- Voilà, c'est ça au fait que nous sommes en train de – C'est pourquoi j'ai
173. demandé encore une fois les originaux parce que là –
174. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Malheureusement on ne peut pas apporter les originaux.
175. **MR J. DAVID** :- Voilà, alors 490 arpents est réduit à 190. Maintenant ça veut dire il y a 300
176. arpents qui se baladent dans la nature.
177. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Non, ça je ne peut pas le confirmer parce que je dois avoir les originaux.
178. **MR J. DAVID** :- Ok.
179. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Il faut confirmer avec les originaux.
180. **MR J. DAVID** :- Est-ce que d'habitude vous voyez les documents, il y a beaucoup de rature,
181. ça veut dire il y a, on met slash quand on met slash, ça doit se rapporter à la fin à une note ?
182. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Oui.
183. **MR J. DAVID** :- Est-ce que vous pourriez voir s'il y a une note quelconque sur les slashes
184. qu'on a mis un petit peu à gauche et à droite.
185. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Sans les originaux, on ne peut pas savoir si c'est bon.
186. **MR J. DAVID** :- Bon, premier analyse de ce que vous voyez aujourd'hui.
187. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Oui.
188. **MR J. DAVID** :- Quelles seront vos commentaires ?
189. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- On peut pas se prononcer vu que nous n'avons pas des
190. documents avec nous pour dire si c'est vraiment ce qu'il y a dedans.
191. **MR J. DAVID** :- Oui, prenons par exemple si les originaux sont conforme exactement,
192. l'hypothèse que c'est ça. Quel serait vos commentaires, vous allez voir qu'il y a stamp que ça
193. sort de chez vous-même.
194. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Oui.
195. **MR J. DAVID** :- Vous avez vu dans la marge, donc quand nous parlons de ce terrain de 490
196. arpents et que ici on a oublié 300 arpents, c'est un papier où on a mentionné, oui, est-ce que le
197. contraire pourrait, allons dire est-ce que 490 pourrait devenir 190 par la suite ?
198. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Peut-être il y a erreur si en copiant, je ne sais pas à l'époque.

199. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Si la transcription est mentionnée 490 et l'entrée dans le répertoire c'est  
200. 490 –
201. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Parce qu'on travaille avec l'original et l'acte.
202. **MR J. DAVID** :- L'acte, d'où le fait encore une fois la Commission va vous faire la demande  
203. pour obtenir les originaux de ces documents. Ça devient extrêmement important concernant la  
204. rature que vous voyez là, les ratures, ils doivent lire au bas la note qui correspond à ces ratures  
205. là.
206. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Non, il y a une chose que je peux vous dire.
207. **MR J. DAVID** :- Oui.
208. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Parce que quand il y a des photocopies des documents, on peut pas  
209. différencier qu'est-ce qui est l'original et qu'est-ce qui a été falsifié.
210. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Qui a été falsifié comme ci.
211. **MR J. DAVID** :- S'il y a –
212. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Falsification.
213. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Parce que la photocopie est en noir et blanc.
214. **MR J. DAVID** :- Est-ce qu'il vous faut des appareils plus sophistiqués ?
215. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Non, il faut voir les originaux.
216. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Il faut l'original.
217. **MR J. DAVID**:- Ok, la commission donc va faire appel à vous. Donc, puisque les documents  
218. ne peuvent pas venir jusqu'ici donc encore une fois il va falloir que la Commission vous  
219. réclame ces documents certifiés et à ce moment là donc –
220. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- On peut comparer à ce moment là.
221. **MR J. DAVID** :- Oui.
222. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- D'accord.
223. **MR J. DAVID**:- Je serais donc – C'était surtout ça, que vous puissiez nous donner vos  
224. commentaires. Mais les commentaires viendront par la suite encore une fois, mais comme je  
225. vous dis si c'est le premier document, le répertoire donc 7/208 donc il y a quelque chose qui  
226. ne tourne pas rond.
227. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Surtout je peux ajouter sur le répertoire 587, il y a trois entrées, trois  
228. même entrées saisies, regardez le répertoire.
229. **MR J. DAVID** :- Oui, trois entrées saisies.
230. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- 584 –
231. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Oui, ça, nos officiers ont remarqué. Je ne sais pas qu'est-ce qui s'est

232. passé.

233. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- On avait déjà coupé l'entrée.

234. **MR J. DAVID**:- Vous avez rectifié ?

235. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Non, on a coupé l'entrée.

236. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- On a coupé l'entrée parce que ça n'était pas fait par nos officiers. Les  
237. trois entrées ce n'est pas –

238. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Si je peux ajouter.

239. **MR J. DAVID**:- Oui.

240. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- On ne peut pas saisir un terrain en trois fois.

241. **MR J. DAVID**:- Bien sûr. A ce moment là vous avez vu la copie que nous avons obtenue,  
242. s'ils ne sont pas les officiers qui ont accès à ces documents ?

243. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Tous les membres du public. On ... un droit de recherche, on fait  
244. les recherches.

245. **MR J. DAVID**:- Oui, est-ce que vous voulez dire un membre du public peut ajouter quelque  
246. chose ?

247. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Peut-être.

248. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Oui, ce n'est pas la première fois.

249. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Il n'est pas autorisé mais on le fait.

250. **MR J. DAVID**:- C'est bien grave.

251. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- On a déjà des cas où quelqu'un a pris juste pour vous faire  
252. savoir comment on a ajouté une entrée dans le disons dans le hypothèque qu'on a pris.

253. **MR J. DAVID**:- Oui.

254. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- On a dit qu'on rayé la date, on a mis une initial, au fait quand on  
255. a ouvert le livre c'est pas rayé, c'est la ... et le cas est en Cour.

256. **MR J. DAVID**:- Heureusement pour deux cas, vous avez pu mettre la main dessus. Mais  
257. dans d'autre cas comme ce cas ici là où je vois 1819, 1920 et nous passons immédiatement à  
258. 1977, c'est incroyable pour revenir à 1821. A moins qu'on a retiré Mons. Louisto de sa tombe  
259. pour lui dire de venir signer. Et c'est très grave. Donc on parle de saisi, on parle de vente ainsi  
260. de suite. Ecoutez moi, je vous remercie et c'est tout le point que je voudrais vérifier avec  
261. vous. La Commission va vous écrire officiellement.

262. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- D'accord.

263. **MR J. DAVID**:- Pour demander donc on a fait mention aujourd'hui et surtout ces bordereaux  
264. qui encore une fois portent beaucoup d'écritures différentes. C'est ça qui est intrigant. Il y a

265. une écriture quelconque et puis au milieu donc c'est une écriture différente qui apparaît. Par la  
 266. suite il y a des ratures et avec les ratures il y a aucun commentaire.
267. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Oui.
268. **MR J. DAVID** :- Et de ce fait celui qui prend tout ça et je ne sais pas qu'est-ce qui s'est passé  
 269. par la suite. Certains sont dépossédés, donc comme je vous dis sortir de 490 arpents pour  
 270. arriver à 190 arpents, ça soulève beaucoup de question. Ecoutez, je vous remercie si vous êtes  
 271. dérangés.
272. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Non.
273. **MR J. DAVID** :- La Commission a besoin beaucoup de vos lumières.
274. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- D'accord, on est à votre disposition.
275. **MR J. DAVID** :- D'ailleurs je profite de l'occasion pour transmettre la remerciement de la  
 276. Commission. Jusqu'ici vous avez énormément aidé. Je sais que les chercheurs viennent chez  
 277. vous très souvent pour retirer certain document, des papiers et vous avez été d'une aide  
 278. précieuse. Et c'est une très bonne collaboration et la Commission vous remercie et encore une  
 279. fois nous allons avoir besoin de votre collaboration.
280. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- D'accord.
281. **MR J. DAVID** :- Merci.
282. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Merci.
283. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Tout simplement donc vous n'avez pas les moyens de vérifier des  
 284. documents qui étaient consultés par les membres du public. Vous n'avez pas un moyen  
 285. quelconque pour les faire.
286. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Non, malheureusement il n'y a pas des vidéos caméras, rien.
287. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- Il y a des officiers qui travaillent.
288. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ils savent nécessaire de la faire, il me semblerait-il, d'une part ?
289. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Mais là, très prochainement on est en train d'informatiser nos  
 290. système, je crois juin.
291. **MR T. SEEWOO** :- D'ici juin ou juillet.
292. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Juin, juillet, on va mettre tout sur ordinateur.
293. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Mais en attendant on risque d'avoir des problèmes majeurs.
294. **MRS HOW MAN YOON** :- Malheureusement on a demandé à mettre caméra.
295. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Mais entre temps ce sera possible pour vous là bas de faire une  
 296. vérification sur une base d'échantillons quelconque. Disons il y a combien de personnes qui  
 297. viennent par jour, disons en moyenne à peu près 100.

298. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Plus.

299. **DR. P. VEERAPEN**:- Disons je prends 200, vous n'allez pas pouvoir vérifier 200  
 300. documents, je comprends. Est-ce que c'est possible de prendre disons 5%. Ça fait 10  
 301. documents, au hasard d'après le système systématique de vérifier ce 10 là va donner quelque  
 302. chose. Bon bien sûr on a un échantillon on le sait, mais en attendant parce qu'on peut dire on  
 303. se rend compte qu'il y a pas mal de cas, pas simplement chez vous. Il y a d'autres institutions,  
 304. des documents qui disparaissent et des documents qui sont faussés. D'accord donc on  
 305. demande aux institutions s'il vous plait, ... l'avis de cette Commission Il y a quelque chose  
 306. qui se passe plus vite encore. Ces activités là sont indépendantes de la Commission. Le fait  
 307. qu'il y a pas mal de cas qui se présente devant la Commission, donc les choses accélèrent et  
 308. on est au courant de cela. Donc, on vous demande si vous pouvez faire quelque chose au lieu  
 309. d'attendre juillet, établir un système de vérification. Je suggère échantillons mais moi je suis  
 310. un profane, vous êtes des experts. Vous êtes des connaisseurs dans le domaine. Réfléchissez  
 311. là dessus, essayez d'avoir des mesures par intérim en attendant que vous arrivez à  
 312. l'information s'il vous plait parce que –

313. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- On va informer notre supérieur.

314. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- On a enregistré pas mal de cas. C'est assez sérieux. Ce matin  
 315. quelqu'un qui nous a dit, j'ai vu un contrat au Archive National de Coromandel, maintenant le  
 316. contrat a disparu. Vous comprenez il n'y a plus maintenant, on n'a plus d'institution, on n'a  
 317. plus, vous comprenez et nous sommes au courant de tout cela. Il y avait un jugement  
 318. important sur la propriété d'un terrain en 1821. Voilà ce jugement a disparu, 200 arpents donc  
 319. encore une fois donc s'est passé chez vous. Donc, je demande s'il vous plait faites quelque  
 320. chose maintenant, n'attendez pas en attendant, regardez, vous êtes des experts.

321. **MRS HOW MAN YOON**:- Oui.

322. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Merci, Monsieur et Madame.

323. **MR T. SEEWOO**:- Merci.

*This is a true and accurate version of this audio recording*



(H. Neermul)

TRUTH  
AND  
JUSTICE COMMISSION

Friday 1 April 2011

Afternoon Session



## **Members Present**

Dr Parmaseeven Veerapen - Commissioner

Mr Jacques David - Commissioner

**Apology:-** Dr Alex Boraine  
Dr Vijaya Teelock  
Mr Benjamin Moutou

**Chairperson of Session:** Dr Parmaseeven Veerapen

## **In attendance**

Mr Choolun Sanjay (Deponent)

**TJC/H/Choolun S./01.04.11/Ac**

**Original Version**



1. **DR V. TEELock** :- Donc, on recommence. On a attendu Mme Sony Choolun, mais Mme Choolun
2. ne vient pas. Pouvez-vous présenter disons, prêtez serment, ok. Vous présentez avec l'aide de Mme
3. Damoree, la secrétaire de la Commission.
4. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Bonjour Mons. Choolun. Si vous pouvez vous mettre debout. Si ou kapav lev ou
5. lame drwat affirme ki ou pou koz la verite rien que la verite pendant la depozision.
6. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo affirme ki mo pou koz la verite rien que la verite pendant la depozision.
7. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Identifiez vous devant la Commission, kouma ou apele ?
8. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- Mo nom se Sanjay Choolun.
9. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Ou ou habit ?
10. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- Avenue 25 ....
11. **MRS DAMOREE** :- Merci.
12. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ou pfer koz en ki lang ?
13. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- En kreol.
14. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Bon en ki tit ou prezan la, Mons. Choolun parski nou finn invit Mme Sony
15. Choolun.
16. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui, le fe ki depan so laz li pa en bonn sante en se moman. Mo ena la
17. prokuration ki linn donn moi pou –
18. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Se enn prokuration ki date de 2008 sa.
19. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- 2008, oui.
20. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ki laz Mme Choolun ena la ?
21. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- 83 ans.
22. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Oui, li ena problem de sante, me selman li ti importan ki ou kone ki nou ti
23. prefer kapav tann Mme Choolun en person.
24. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- Oui, be ou kone seki mo ti pou dir, seki monn gagn enn short notice. Monn
25. gagn la let mercredi et jeudi, hier monn rappel isi pou demande eski o fe mo ti pe demande si nou
26. kapav gagn en renvwa mo kapav amen madam la ensam.
27. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ale right.
28. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- Koumsa lerla mo kapav prepar tou le done et dokuman.
29. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ok, dakor. Bon dan lekel ka mo pense se posibil sa, sinon ou kapav fer nou
30. gagn sa prokuration dabor, nou pou fer enn kopi de sa prokuration la. Si ou pou dakor nou pou fer en
31. kopi de sa prokuration la, me etan done nou nou ti pe interese kapav ekout Mme Choolun. Ou reket
32. nou pou agre a ou reket, ki nou kapav fer enn renvwa. Nou ava donn zot plis letan, ok, notre konseye
33. legal Mons. François, oke. A ce moman la lerla nou kapav gagn version Mme Choolun. Etan done se



- 34. enn Choolun sa generasion la li paret li ti implik dan sa bann tranzaksion la. Li ti tre importan.
- 35. Absoluman importan ki li vini, dakor, ok. Alor ceci dit, mo pou simpleman pas enn parol a komiser
- 36. Mons. Jacques David ki get dosie la pou li kapav fer enn de komanter parski sinon nou pou renvway
- 37. la seans nou pou invit ou pou enn prosin seans, merci.
- 38. **MR J. DAVID** :- Oui, merci. Donc si nou gete ounn gagn enn prokurasion et mo dout for ki sa
- 39. prokurasion la donn ou enn pouvwar pou vinn explik sa ka la devan la Commission parski
- 40. imediatman mo kapav dir ou ki nou pou donn ziska vendredi prosin. Si Mme Choolun kapav vini, ou
- 41. akompagn li parski ou dir moi li ase aze et ki li pa tro tro bien nou ou donn li donc vendredi prosin a
- 42. 1.30 hrs. Si li kapav vini donc se sa ki li ena, donc enn semenn li kapav prepar li, li rod so bann
- 43. dokuman et tou. Donc a se moman la nou va atann li, ok, merci oun deranze. Me nou bien sagrin, se
- 44. surtou elle ki nou ti pe envi tande. Ok, merci bokou. Je repasse la parole a mes collègues.
- 45. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- Ok, bon donc merci.
- 46. **MR S. CHOOLUN** :- Merci.
- 47. **DR P. VEERAPEN** :- I declare therefore the session for today closed.

*This is a true and accurate version of this audio recording*

  
 (H. Neermul)



**TRUTH**

**AND**

**JUSTICE COMMISSION**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

**Afternoon Session (Original Version)**



~

## MEMBERS PRESENT

**Dr Parmaseeven Pillay VEERAPEN, Commissioner**

**Mr Jacques DAVID, Commissioner**

**Apologies:**

**Dr. Alex BORAINÉ, Chairperson**

**Dr (Mrs) Vijayalakshmi TEELock, Vice Chairperson**

**Mr Benjamin MOUTOU, Commissioner**

**Chairperson of Session:**

**Commissioner: Mr Jacques DAVID**

## IN ATTENDANCE

### MORNING SESSION

**Mr SAUZIER T**

This is to certify that the following **09** pages are a true and accurate version of the audio recordings of Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011 (Afternoon Session-Original Version)

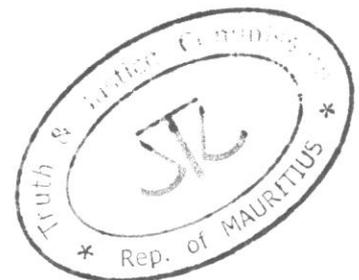


(L R Luckhoo)

Contractor

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011

TJC/H/Sauzier T/130511Af  
Original Version



1 DR VEERAPEN : We are starting the afternoon session of the Truth & Justice Commission and  
2 today we have got the Chief Executive Officer of Medine Ltd

3 MR T SAUZIER: Deputy Chief Executive

4 DR VEERAPEN : Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Medine Ltd whereby we shall deal with  
5 the case dealing with the whole issue of the purchase by Medine of Reufac, o.k. and there is a  
6 piece of land which is in litigation following the submission of the case by a deponent here. So  
7 we will call the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Medine here to be able to help us in our  
8 research and to be able to establish what are the real issues, o.k.

9 With this in mind therefore, Mr Thierry Sauzier, I understand that's your name o.k. So we are  
10 pleased to meet you today, we will like you please if you can with the help of the secretary, Mrs  
11 Damory, to take oath, right and then we will start the interaction with you.

12 THE SECRETARY: Vous voulez parler en anglais, français ?

13 MR T SAUZIER: Français

14 THE SECRETARY: Vous pouvez vous mettre debout s'il vous plait, vous pouvez la main droite  
15 et affirmer que vous allez dire la vérité et rien que la vérité pendant la déposition

16 MR T SAUZIER : Je vais le faire

17 THE SECRETARY : Vous pouvez répéter s'il vous plait

18 MR T SAUZIER: Je vais dire la vérité, rien que la vérité

19 THE SECRETARY : Merci identifiez-vous devant la commission, identifiez-vous comment  
20 vous vous appelez ?

21 MR T SAUZIER: Jean Thierry Sauzier et je suis deputy Chief executive officer de Medine Ltd

22 THE SECRETARY : Merci, vous pouvez vous asseoir

23 DR VEERAPEN : O.k. I will now, you are free to express yourself in English, French or creole,  
24 you choose the language which you would like to choose



25 MR T SAUZIER: Français

26 DR VEERAPEN : O.k. and then I will pass over to Mr Jacques David who has been dealing with  
27 this case, o.k.

28 MR J DAVID: Merci, bonjour et merci d'être venu et d'avoir accepté notre invitation donc pour  
29 traiter de ce cas. Il y a plusieurs cas qui nous intéressent et touchant aux terres vendues, achetées  
30 par Médine donc, les terres touchant surtout l'ancienne propriété de Réunion et le cas qui nous  
31 intéresse aujourd'hui donc c'est le cas Bonnefin.

32 Je ne sais pas donc si vous êtes si vous comprenez bien cet état de situation concernant ce terrain  
33 ou si vous avez été emmené à vous pencher sur ce problème. Donc c'est de ça qu'on aurait voulu  
34 parler aujourd'hui

35 MR T SAUZIER: Oui bein merci. Personnellement nous ne pouvons savoir le terrain, nous  
36 n'avons pas eu beaucoup de détail de la part de la commission par rapport au terrain qui était en  
37 litige. Donc nous aurions souhaité avoir peut-être un peu plus de détail pour pouvoir investigate  
38 et revenir vers la commission avec plus de réponses aujourd'hui donc.

39 Personnellement moi je suis rentré dans la compagnie très récemment et donc je n'étais pas là au  
40 moment du transfert du terrain à l'époque mais par contre nous allons collaborer pleinement pour  
41 fournir les documents nécessaires à la commission afin de vous éclairer dans votre travail.

42 MR J DAVID: Oui

43 MR T SAUZIER: Donc personnellement je ne suis pas très au courant du cas parce que je ne sais  
44 pas

45 MR J DAVID: Vous arrivez tout juste donc

46 MR T SAUZIER: Au faite Médine n'est pas trop au courant de what is the claim ?

47 MR J DAVID: O.k.

48 MR T SAUZIER: De la part des Bonnefin.

49 MR J DAVID: Oui



50 MR T SAUZIER: Donc c'est pour ça qu'on n'a pas penché sur le dossier. Moi j'ai porté avec  
51 moi deux titres de propriété que nous pensons être les titres de propriété dont on est en train de  
52 parler mais nous sommes pas 100% sûr de cet état de chose.

53 MR J DAVID: Oui, bon si vous avez les documents on peut jeter un coup d'œil rapidement et de  
54 ce fait nous allons voir s'il s'agit bien de ce terrain. Merci. Au fait il s'agit bien des titres de  
55 propriété touchant à Reufac anciennement Réunion Ltée ?

56 MR T SAUZIER: Oui

57 MR J DAVID: Donc si je revois donc c'est un document donc qui a été signé en 1994 si je me  
58 trompe ?

59 MR T SAUZIER: C'est un document qui a été signé en 1974

60 MR J DAVID: 74, pardon, 74

61 MR T SAUZIER: et 77

62 MR J DAVID: Voila hein, donc ce document a été dressé par Pierre Doger de Speville donc  
63 entre les représentants de Réunion et le représentant de Médine et je vois le nom d'un quelqu'un  
64 qui vient de partir, donc Mr Christian Rivalland qui à l'époque était donc le représentant de la  
65 compagnie Noel

66 MR T SAUZIER: Exactement

67 MR J DAVID: Noel hein, écoutez effectivement il s'agit bien de ce document mais vous n'avez  
68 pas allons dire entièrement en tête ce que contient ce document, ce n'est pas évident je sais?

69 MR T SAUZIER: C'est un document qui est très long et fastidieux

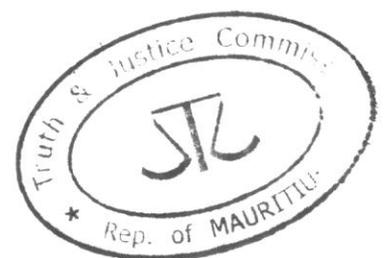
70 MR J DAVID: Fastidieux

71 MR T SAUZIER: Et dont je ne suis pas forcément un technicien notarial...

72 MR J DAVID: Oui

73 MR T SAUZIER: ...ni un technicien du land surveying ou des titres de propriété non plus

x



74 MR J DAVID: Bien sûr, écoutez ce serait difficile pour moi à ce moment là donc de vous poser  
75 des bonnes questions parce que vous n'allez pas pouvoir avoir les réponses forcément

76 MR T SAUZIER: Absolument je pourrais essayer...

77 MR J DAVID: Ce que je peux convenir si après avoir prit lecture de vos documents et de ce que  
78 nous avons parce que nous avons des plans de situation et autres ; est-ce que nous pourrions  
79 ensemble avec ceux qui disent avoir donc un claim sur ce terrain avec nos arpenteurs et vos  
80 représentants aller voir le terrain aller faire un constat, est-ce que ça...

81 MR T SAUZIER: Nous nous sommes dans une logique de collaboration totale à l'intérieur des  
82 droits et de la législation existante de la commission

83 MR J DAVID: de la commission bien-sûr

84 MR T SAUZIER: Si ça fait partie de vos prérogatives il n'y a pas de raison pourquoi on ne  
85 pourra pas le faire mais je ne suis pas ni un lawyer ni un notaire donc nous on est là pour  
86 collaborer en tout cas entièrement avec la commission pleinement

87 MR J DAVID: Oui si donc dans le courant de la semaine nous arrivons nous à faire une  
88 délimitation selon un plan de réunion que nous avons déjà et nous arrivons à situer  
89 l'emplacement de ce terrain bien-sûr accompagné de vos land surveyors

90 MR T SAUZIER: Les techniciens, oui

91 MR J DAVID: de vos techniciens, on va sur place et à ce moment là on verra quels sont vos  
92 titres. Il est très facile si nous allons sur un point x, y, z, nous allons pouvoir délimiter. A partir  
93 de là vous pourriez dire si vous êtes d'accord ou que ce terrain vous appartient ou ce terrain est  
94 en litige, à ce moment là donc nous allons voir dans vos documents où se situe ce terrain là

95 MR T SAUZIER: D'accord

96 MR J DAVID: Donc je...

97 MR T SAUZIER: Je crois, si je peux me permettre ?

98 MR J DAVID: Bien sûr je vous en prie



- 99 MR T SAUZIER: Je demande humblement à la commission de nous donner tout d'abord un peu  
100 de temps pour réagir
- 101 MR J DAVID: Bien sûr
- 102 MR T SAUZIER: Nous avons des équipes et beaucoup de projets sur qui ils travaillent
- 103 MR J DAVID: Oui
- 104 MR T SAUZIER: Donc de nous donner un délai raisonnable
- 105 MR J DAVID: Raisonnable
- 106 MR T SAUZIER: Afin qu'on puisse agréer à votre requête d'une part et si aussi si on pouvait  
107 avoir vraiment de détail du claim je veux dire qui est fait aujourd'hui vis-à-vis de Médine
- 108 MR J DAVID: De Médine, oui
- 109 MR T SAUZIER: Quoi que nous nous n'avons pas de raison de croire que ces titres de propriété  
110 là ne sont pas valides
- 111 MR J DAVID: Oui
- 112 MR T SAUZIER: Il y a eu un transfert qui a été fait à l'époque mais c'est très important que  
113 nous obtenions les détails du claim pour que nous puissions faire notre travail aussi de notre côté  
114 au préalable
- 115 MR J DAVID: Bien sûr
- 116 MR T SAUZIER: De nous donner un délai raisonnable pour fixer la visite
- 117 MR J DAVID: la visite
- 118 MR T SAUZIER: Si c'est possible d'avoir les détails en écrit aussi ce serait bien...
- 119 MR J DAVID: Bien sûr, par ailleurs puisque vous êtes là donc j'aurais souhaité savoir, est-ce  
120 que vous auriez un master plan vous de...
- 121 MR T SAUZIER: Au faite à ces titres de propriété là n'étaient pas attachés le plan de situation



122 MR J DAVID: Le plan de situation

123 MR T SAUZIER: Et comme nous n'avions pas de détail exact de what is the claim

124 MR J DAVID: Oui

125 MR T SAUZIER: C'est un peu difficile pour nous de venir donner un master plan vous voyez

126 MR J DAVID: Oui dites moi mais à partir donc vous avez votre titre de propriété et tous les  
127 détails...

128 MR T SAUZIER: Absolument...

129 MR J DAVID: ...couvrant cette superficie de Réunion, vous n'avez pas fait votre master plan en  
130 conformité...

131 MR T SAUZIER: On a fait des recherches par rapport à ce titre que nous pensions être le bon  
132 titre pour ce hearing là aujourd'hui, il n'y avait pas de plan de situation attaché à ces titres de  
133 propriété là

134 MR J DAVID: Oui

135 MR T SAUZIER: Donc c'est pour ça qu'on ne pouvait pas fournir ce titre de propriété....

136 MR J DAVID: Allons dire pour Réunion Ltée est-ce que vous auriez un plan de situation ?

137 MR T SAUZIER: Nous allons devoir aller chercher dans nos archives ce plan de situation

138 MR J DAVID: S'il vous plait, ça nous aiderait énormément d'une part, nous nous allons lire  
139 donc au faite je l'ai déjà lu parce que la commission aussi a fait son travail autant que pour vous  
140 c'est petit et pour nous nous avons donc tout le plan de situation que j'ai lu et merci de nous  
141 avoir fait parvenir ces copies.

142 Le travail est là mais avec ce qu'on appelle le site plan, le plan de situation ça nous aurait donné  
143 donc une plus grande visibilité sur tel terrain se trouve où et qu'est qu'il y a parce que là dans  
144 nous avons quand même huit chapitres

145 MR T SAUZIER: Absolument



146 MR J DAVID: Huit chapitres où vous détaillez tous les terrains qui ont été achetés de Réunion  
147 donc par Médine. Je crois que ces huit chapitres sont assez clairs d'où le fait comme je vous dis  
148 si nous allons sur le terrain après que nous ayons donc fait un plan de situation à ce moment avec  
149 les parties concernées, nous allons pouvoir et je crois que dans deux ou trois jours près, vous  
150 pouvez nous dire donc si il y a un TV number si c'est enregistré, donc

151 MR T SAUZIER: Absolument donc nous allons faire notre home work nous aussi

152 MR J DAVID: Voila

153 MR T SAUZIER: Simplement on a besoin d'avoir les détails précis et écrits...

154 MR J DAVID: Tout à fait

155 MR T SAUZIER: Et avec les différentes requêtes pour pouvoir soumettre toute la documentation  
156 nécessaire

157 MR J DAVID: Certainement

158 MR T SAUZIER: Et ensuite on va faire le travail within les paramètres

159 MR J DAVID: Oui les paramètres qu'il faut

160 MR T SAUZIER: Et de l'organisation totale globale de notre travail aussi afin de coopérer avec  
161 vous

162 MR J DAVID: Très bien je crois que l'on s'entend donc...

163 DR VEERAPEN : Envoyer le claim

164 MR J DAVID: Donc ce que nous faisons, allons dire la semaine prochaine hein nous vous  
165 enverrons donc un papier

166 MR T SAUZIER: Très bien

167 MR J DAVID: Disons bien et voila le claim et de quoi il s'agit

168 MR T SAUZIER: O.k.

g



169 MR J DAVID: Et à ce moment là...

170 MR T SAUZIER: Au faite on vous a écrit aussi je crois hier on a déposé un lettre

171 MR J DAVID: Oui j'ai eu la lettre

172 MR T SAUZIER: Et j'ai signé personnellement pour vous dire si vous pouvez enfin ce que je  
173 viens de vous dire

174 MR J DAVID: Voila moi je suis entièrement d'accord, donc il y a un esprit de collaboration bien  
175 sûr

176 MR T SAUZIER: Absolument

177 MR J DAVID: Parce que pour nous nous devons trouver la réponse à chaque cas qui nous est  
178 soumis. Donc nous allons de l'avant, voir tout ça et vous allez avoir votre réponse et on aura  
179 notre réponse

180 MR T SAUZIER: Très bien

181 MR J DAVID: Merci

182 DR VEERAPEN : O.k. merci Jacques. Tout simplement donc une fois qu'on vous fera avoir les  
183 détails de notre claim d'accord, combien de temps vous croyez vous aurez besoin enfin ?

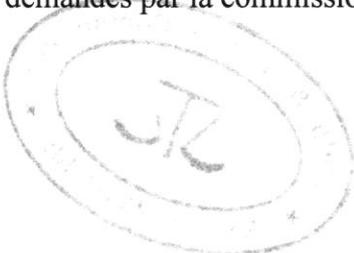
184 MR T SAUZIER: Ecoutez c'est un peu c'est difficile pour moi de répondre là tout de suite...

185 DR VEERAPEN : Oui, oui

186 MR T SAUZIER: Parce que ça va dépendre de la quantité de travail

187 DR VEERAPEN : Certainement, oui

188 MR T SAUZIER:....associé aussi à vos requêtes et comme on n'a pas vraiment de détail des  
189 requêtes c'est difficile à dire, ça va dépendre de la disponibilité de nos arpenteurs et de nos  
190 consultants interne et externe mais je redis qu'on va faire le nécessaire pour que ce soit fait dans  
191 les délais les plus brefs par rapport au load de travail qu'il y a et par rapport aux détails  
192 demandés par la commission



193 DR VEERAPEN : Oui bon certainement et naturellement je comprends, je comprends moi les  
194 contraintes de par et d'autre mais simplement je vous demande cela peut-être on va faire des  
195 liaisons, on va pouvoir planifier pour que ça puisse vous aider de votre part et de notre part, du  
196 côté de time management aussi, o.k.

197 MR T SAUZIER: Absolument

198 DR VEERAPEN : Et pour pourvoir donc ensuite faire le suivi. O.k. alors vous aurez donc le  
199 claim la semaine prochaine et ensuite à partir de là, on va faire le suivi et planifier les rencontres  
200 et en fin de compte

201 MR T SAUZIER: Très volontiers, merci

202 DR VEERAPEN : O.k., alors merci. Donc la séance est terminée et c'est clos pour aujourd'hui,  
203 merci.

204 **Certified A true and accurate version of the audio recordings**

205



206

**(L R Luckhoo)**

207

**Contractor**

208

**29/06/2011**



TRUTH  
AND  
JUSTICE COMMISSION

Friday 20 May 2011

Morning Session



## **Members Present**

Dr Vijaya Teelock - Vice Chairperson  
Dr Parmaseeven Veerapen - Commissioner  
Mr Jacques David - Commissioner

**Chairperson of Session:** Dr Vijaya Teelock

**Apology:-** Dr Alex Boraine  
Mr Benjamin Moutou

## **In attendance**

Mr Geerjanand Prithvinath, Manager of DBM (Deponent)

Mr Teeromalay, Assistant Manager of DBM (Deponent)

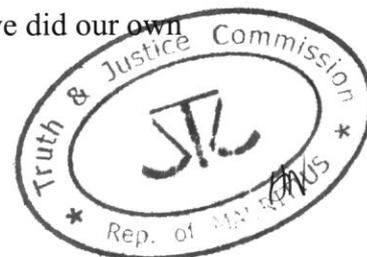
**TJC/H/Geerjanand P./20.05.11/Me**

**Original Version**



HN

1. **DR V. TEELOCK**:- Short hearing for you. Mrs Damoree, our secretary, is going
2. to make you swear.
3. **MRS DAMOREE**:- Could you please raise your right hand and affirm that
4. whatever you will say will be the truth nothing but the truth.
5. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- I affirm.
6. **MRS DAMOREE**:- You must repeat, please.
7. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Whatever I am going to say, I am going to say the
8. truth and nothing but the truth.
9. **MRS DAMOREE**:- Can you identify yourself before the Commission?
10. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- My name is Prithvinath Geerjanand and I am
11. working as Manager at the DBM, Development Bank of Mauritius.
12. **MRS DAMOREE**:- Thank you. Mr Teeromalay, could you please?
13. **MR TEEROOMALAY**:- ... Teeromalay, Assistant Manager of
14. Development Bank of Mauritius. I swear to tell the truth, only the truth.
15. **MRS V. TEELOCK**:- Thank you, I think you know why you are here today.
16. When you came last time, you had mentioned that there are certain irregularities in
17. the document and you are going to provide some details about them.
18. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Yes.
19. **MRS V. TEELOCK**:- So, I will ask you to go ahead and provide these details.
20. **MRS P. GEERJANAND**:- In fact, we didn't use the word irregularities, we had
21. mentioned that after sanctioning the loan, some disturbing information were received
22. concerning the risks that may be involved in the sanctioning of such a huge amount
23. backed by a collateral security in terms of the property which was being given at that
24. time. In view of the risks which were involved, we were requested by our board to
25. find out more information. When we did our search, we found that there may be some
26. – the risk involved was more apparent. So, the bank decided that instead of taking
27. such a big risk for this amount, we requested the applicants to provide an alternative
28. security. So, when the processing of the loan was going on, we are today giving
29. copies of the documents which were initially submitted for the bank to consider the
30. loan. This is a first batch which was submitted by the applicants.
31. **MRS V. TEELOCK**:- This is the alternative security?
32. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- No, the alternative security has not yet been given,
33. has never been given. Now, after we got disturbing news and we did our own



34. searches and research, then we came out, we got copies, additional copies of other  
35. title deeds which confirm the probability of risks concerning this property. I am  
36. submitting now the documents which we now have obtained ourselves.

37. **MRS V. TEELock**:- Could you summarise the documents just briefly?

38. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- The documents which we have submitted second  
39. batch shows a lot of similarities, a lot of overlapping between the property which was  
40. given as security originally and the other title deeds which we have obtained from the  
41. efforts we have made. There are drawings where it is clear that there is a little bit of  
42. overlapping of the property of different owners. So, again we cannot say that we have  
43. been able to confirm all these things, but as a bank, our main concern was to give a  
44. loan of Rs50M and to obtain a clear property of the value to cover that loan and since  
45. this one had a lot of difficult questions to be answered, we preferred to ask the  
46. applicants to provide alternative security. So, we sent letter to the applicants and we  
47. also got a reply from the applicants confirming that they will provide an alternative  
48. security and will pay whatever legal cost that have been involved so far and I am  
49. handing copies of these two documents, the one which the bank had sent a letter and  
50. the reply where the clients confirmed that they will provide an alternative security  
51. and they will also pay the legal fees.

52. **DR V. TEELock**:- Just to clarify, you did not ask them to confirm or provide  
53. additional documents confirming the ownership of the land?

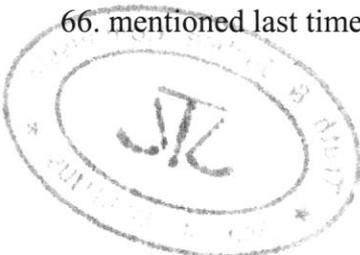
54. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- In the first batch of documents which I have  
55. submitted, initially the applicants had submitted only one document which was not a  
56. clear titled deed. So, we requested first to get a clear title deed with a survey report  
57. and you will see in the first batch, in the first document, there are some mentions  
58. below by our officers that they will require additional information and this is  
59. followed by the additional information which was submitted.

60. **DR V. TEELock**:- So, you were satisfied that the title deeds and additional  
61. information supplied were satisfactory for the bank?

62. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Standard documents that we usually require to  
63. complete our legal formalities, loan deeds.

64. **DR V. TEELock**:- And what has been the outcome?

65. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- The outcome was that until today, as we have  
66. mentioned last time, we have not disbursed, we are still waiting as undertaken by the



67. applicants that they will provide alternative security. But we have also mentioned in  
68. our documents, due to time lapse, more time it takes, we will require to re-examine  
69. the project.

70. **DR V. TEELock**:- Just for the record, what time lapse there have been now  
71. between the original submission and -?

72. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- So, the whole story started, they applied in August  
73. 2008 and the loan was approved by the board in October 2008 and after carrying out  
74. our own investigation, we reached March 2009 when we informed the clients, the  
75. applicants that we will require alternative security.

76. **DR V. TEELock**:- And how much more time do these applicants have now?

77. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Basically when we send a letter of loan offer, it is  
78. already got, if I am not mistaken, three months time, but if in case there are  
79. continuous correspondences between the client and the bank, this shows that there is  
80. still the interest of getting the loan. Now, as I have mentioned, since we have not got  
81. any further reply to the letter that was addressed to us, even if the clients come back  
82. to the bank with alternative security, we will have to re-examine the whole proposal  
83. in view of present circumstances.

84. **DR V. TEELock**:- I will pass on to Mr David and Dr Veerapen.

85. **MR J. DAVID**:- Good morning, first of all you talked about the disturbing factors  
86. that you find before, you issued a new letter saying you need a new security. Before  
87. you went on research, what are the disturbing factors?

88. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Unfortunately, the bank has got a board of directors  
89. and these loans are submitted for approval at the level of board of directors. Once it  
90. was approved, it is ratified in the next board and we got information from our  
91. managing director that some members of the board that they have requested the bank  
92. to review this case because they feel that there is some problem relating to the  
93. security. This is what prompted us to go ahead for more information.

94. **MR J. DAVID**:- But they did not give any specific information as to -?

95. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- No, we didn't get any specific information and even  
96. up to today the bank cannot confirm whether there is a problem on this, but as I  
97. mentioned, we found that there are risks involved. So, we preferred to mitigate the  
98. risks.

99. **MR J. DAVID**:- Tell me, the loan was asked ... guarantee of 490 arpentis or only on 190, can



EW

100. you recall what was the security handed over?

101. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Our Security was –

102. **MR J. DAVID**:- Was it on 490 or 190 arpents?

103. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- As security, we had a fixed charge on 62¼ arpents or 26

104. Hectares 2749 m2 found at Coteau Raffin belonging to Mrs Sunee Choolun.

105. **MR J. DAVID**:- The last time you were here, you talked about the loan of Rs50M, the  
106. erasure has not been done yet at the Conservator of Mortgages. Has it been done now?

107. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Not yet.

108. **MR J. DAVID**:- So, still pending, they are owing you Rs50M?

109. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- No. If you go through the letters which we have sent, last two  
110. letters, they are replied by K Call Centre. They have acknowledged that they will come  
111. forward with an alternative security pending which and they have agreed they will erase the  
112. charge on this particular property once the legal cost has been settled.

113. **MR J. DAVID**:- So, following what you just said, so they are still on with the project,  
114. they are still on to get the loan from the bank?

115. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- We have not got any further correspondence till then. So, we  
116. will not be able to say whether the parties are still interested with the project or not.

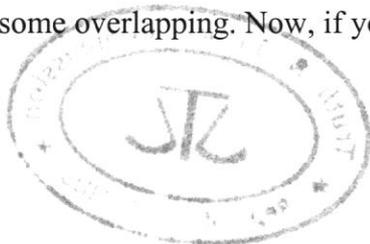
117. **MR J. DAVID**:- Okay, thank you.

118. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Now, you've talked of first set of documents, this is clear,  
119. second set of documents, okay. The second set of documents, the title deed for the same  
120. property or for a different property? Could you a bit more elaborate on that?

121. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- I will request my colleague to –

122. **DR P. VEERAPEN**:- Okay.

123. **MR TEEROMALAY**:- I would like first to say that the first document that we received  
124. was from an unknown source. We have our research officers, we call them verification  
125. officers, they go everyday to the Registrar Office to make searches. Now, they gather from  
126. one of the colleagues over there that really there might be some problems of ownership on  
127. that particular property and it happens that he did have a copy of the location plan from one of  
128. them. Unfortunately we can't say from whom because they did not want to say from where  
129. they got it. We did get that copy and on that copy we requested for transcriptions copies and  
130. certified copies from the Conservator and from there we happened to know, they might not be  
131. the same property, but it tends to be the same property. As my colleague say there must be  
132. some overlapping. Now, if you look at the location plan, it appears to be the same property



133. and from there, you will find on the title deeds given, they are different owners, Société du  
134. Morne Brabant, Le Petit Morne, they are different owners. This is why we say okay, we can't  
135. accept that property because we are not clear about the ownership of that property.  
136. **DR V. TEELock**:- That's all the questions we have for today. Thank you for all the  
137. documents you have supplied.  
138. **MR P. GEERJANAND**:- Thank you.

*This is a true and accurate version of this audio recording*



(H. Neermul)



AN



**VOLUME 3**

**CONTEMPORARY HISTORY,  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

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Publisher: Truth and Justice Commission

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**Mr. JACQUES DAVID**



## Preface

Volumes three and four contain all the research reports, technical studies and surveys carried out by the team of consultants, researchers and volunteers appointed by the Truth and Justice Commission. Where the Commission could not find appropriate or qualified persons, Commissioners have headed teams of younger researchers to study a particular topic. The mandate of the Commission is to investigate the history of slavery and indenture, its consequences and suggest reparations. It was clear that two years would not allow for the task of reviewing 350 years of history and consequently, the Commission focused on a number of topics for in-depth study. Assessing the consequences or even identifying descendants was less easy as the reports show, since so few Mauritians are aware of their history and still less of their family history. Consultants, scholars and researchers have expressed their personal views on issues, and it is clear that not all views converge. The Commission has studied and considered all views expressed and given its own views in its report in Volume 1. It is understood that the views expressed here are those of the writers themselves, and not those of the Commission.

There are many myths and perceptions about Mauritian history that Mauritians have. This has become evident from the nationwide surveys undertaken by the Commission to seek the views of, not only those who are vocal and visible, but also of Mauritians who do not normally have the chance to express their views publicly. The analysis of these surveys by various consultants and researchers are reproduced here, while the original interviews and transcripts are to be found in Volumes 5 and 6. Some interviews have been 'anonymised' to protect the interviewees.

The studies were regrouped under twelve projects monitored by the Commission. In each project, a Team Leader was appointed responsible for guiding and supervising the studies and preparing the final report for the Commission. In some projects, however, Team Leaders could not be found and so Commissioners acted as Team Leaders.

The most important set of studies for the Commission has been those which directly examined the situation of 'descendants' of slaves and indentured labourers and which sought their views. However, it was important also to study descendants of slave owners as well, since slavery is both about slaves and slave owners. Among descendants of slave and indentured labourers, *métissage* has led to difficulties in identifying who were descendants, and it is clear in Mauritius, that phenotype is the popular delimiting factor in deciding who may be a descendant of a slave or indentured labourer. Yet these stereotypes are not only misleading but dangerous and need to be vigorously corrected. Not all 'blan' (white) are descendants of slave owners, as not all those with an African phenotype are descendants of slaves, and not all Indians were indentured labourers. For the population of mixed origins, we have used the term 'gens de couleur' to refer to descendants of the following relationships: a) whites and Afro-Malagasy and b) whites and any other group. These represent also persons of a higher social class.

It is, above all, the variety of life experiences of Mauritians that is highlighted in these studies, and it is hoped that they will provide material for institutions and individuals in the future to better plan people-centred policies, more in line with Mauritians' wishes, interests and expectations.

Vijayalakshmi Teelock GOSK  
Vice Chairperson  
Truth and Justice Commission

## VOLUME 3 CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

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VOLUME 3

**CONTEMPORARY HISTORY,  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

**PART I**

**WHAT THE DESCENDANTS THINK**



# ORAL HISTORY OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

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*Applied Anthropologist*

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## INTRODUCTION

This oral history project research has been commissioned by the Truth and Justice Commission to document and preserve the memories and views of people who consider themselves as slave descendants. It surveys the collective memory of the people who have a particular knowledge of the history, culture, lifestyle, heritage and traditions of slaves, ex-slaves and their descendants. The survey covers the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues, Agaléga, Chagos and aims at uncovering the following topics identified by the Truth and Justice Commission:

- A. Experience of inverse and adverse racism
- B. Contributions of slaves and their descendants to the economic, political, social and cultural life of Mauritius
- C. Perceptions of slavery and its consequences
- D. Perceptions of descendants of slaves and indentured labourers
- E. Life histories of the individuals, their parents and grandparents
- F. Particular constraining experiences of living in *cités* (coastal and non-coastal) and occupation etc.
- G. Causes of illiteracy
- H. Causes of landownership and causes for loss of land
- I. Perceptions of other ethnic and cultural groups and their history
- J. Experience at work-place taking into account social, ideological, psychological and historical factors
- K. Expectations and hopes for the future

## METHODOLOGY

The University of Mauritius was asked to take over the assignment. An academic team composed of seven Researchers under the direction of Associate Professor Jocelyn Chan Low (Historian) was set up. The island was divided into seven regions under the responsibility of a regional coordinator as follows:

- Assoc. Prof. Arnaud Carpooran (Socio-linguist): Port Louis North and South
- Dr. Danielle Palmyre (Anthropologist): Lower Plaines Wilhems
- Daniella Bastien (Anthropologist): Upper Plaines Wilhems
- Raviraj Beechook (Historian): East and South East (Flacq and Grand-Port Districts)
- Ms. Sophie Le Chartier (Anthropologist): West and South West (Black River and Savanne District); North (Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart Districts) and Rodrigues

Each Researcher was assisted by Research Assistants who acted also facilitators and interviewers. For each region, around 30 interviews were conducted.

The terms 'slavery, slaves and slave descendants' convey diverse meanings for different people. Hence, first, for the project to reflect people's idiosyncratic perceptions, conceptions and beliefs, and second, to avoid any bias and preconceptions which could jeopardise the validity of this study, the informants were asked to define and identify themselves, how they conceptualise the above-mentioned terms and how they define their origins without any subjective intervention of the

interviews. However, in the Port Louis region, the team interviewed only those whom they identified as potential slave descendants and the facilitators were chosen likewise.

Given the short time-span for carrying out 200 in-depth interviews, key informants had to be identified. To ease the identification process, a questionnaire about the nature of the study was designed with focused and basic questions on the topics that have to be investigated and as per the profile of the interviewees.

For Rodrigues, a local facilitator/research assistant, familiar of local realities was responsible for identifying key informants and only one regional coordinator was responsible for compiling and collecting testimonies. The informants were mainly men and women aged 50 years old and above, Mauritians, Rodriguans, Agaleans and Chagossians who identify themselves as descendants of slaves. The sample was representative of the various occupational activities, both white collar and blue collar workers.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Face-to-face semi-structured interview methods have been chosen because they are considered effective in yielding insights into people's personal opinions, attitudes and values and expressed in their own words. It is also efficient in providing in-depth information. In addition, since informants might have a low literacy level, they would feel more confident when using their verbal aptitudes than writing skills. A better response rate was thus obtained.

For methodological purposes and to make interviewees feel comfortable, the interviews were conducted in Creole. However, some interviews were in French for those who felt more at ease in this medium. The informants chose the time, date and venue of the interview, the duration of which was not more than two hours.

Since Rodriguan informants might have felt uncomfortable in front of a stranger who is not a native of Rodrigues, the local facilitator assisted the researcher during the interview. Two interview guides were designed, translating the aims of the study. Given that the slave history of Rodrigues Island differs from that of Mauritius Island and, consequently, that the experiences of Rodriguans and Mauritians, might diverge, a different interview guide was designed for Rodrigues to reflect Rodriguans' reality. Open-ended questions were used to encourage the informants to talk freely and the guides were translated into Creole.

In line with the aims of the project, the questions were regrouped under fourteen main topics:

1. Life History
2. Literacy
3. Family History
4. Property
5. Identity/Perception of descendants of slaves
6. Slavery and its consequences
7. Contribution of slaves and their descendants to the economic life of Mauritius
8. Contributions of slaves and their descendants to the political life of Mauritius
9. Contribution of slaves and their descendants to the social life of Mauritius
10. Contribution of slaves and their descendants to cultural life of Mauritius
11. Slavery and its consequences and perceptions of descendants of slaves
12. Life in *cités*
13. Perceptions of other ethnic and cultural groups
14. Racism
15. Expectations and hopes for the future

The interviews were conducted in an ethical way as per the code of ethics of the American Anthropological Association. This included explaining the aims of the project, the procedure related to copyright, right to anonymity, etc. A written consent form was designed to ensure that the anonymity of the informants and their copyright privileges would be respected (Please refer to Appendix D for copy of consent form). The consent form was translated into Creole. In instances when the informant was illiterate, the facilitator or a family member signed the consent form as a witness.

A written consent form was obtained to ensure that the anonymity of the informants and their copyright privileges would be respected.

The interviews were audio taped. Data collection took more than four months.

## ORGANIZATION

The start of the project was delayed due to several unforeseen circumstances; initially, the project was designed and organized so as to start in November 2009. However, it was delayed because of legal issues to be cleared and as result of changes at the TJC. The interviewing process was further delayed by the unexpected announcement of General Elections which the academic team felt would greatly influence the research which covered also politics and slave descendants' perceptions of other ethnic groups. It was further delayed by the resignation of one member of the Academic Team from UOM to proceed abroad and finally by the acute shortage of voice recorders on the local market after the General Elections.

The initial 400 interviews were halved later on conditions that transcriptions of the tapes be effected. However, the team decided on a more exhaustive report which meant working on all the interviews for the report instead of a sample. This greatly delayed the transcription process.

Moreover, the submission of the report for the Port Louis region was considerably delayed by the hospitalization of a key investigator at the Burns Unit at Candos Hospital. The interviews of the Chagossians could only be carried after the New Year festivities.

### Interviews

- (a) The questionnaire was tested among individuals from various socio-professional categories perceiving themselves as slave descendants. After testing, it was obvious that the questionnaire could not be put to respondents as it was. It was too academic and hard and they quickly lost interest in answering. The team members opted for an open question as a starter with other questions on particular subjects where it seemed necessary. It was more fruitful to let respondents narrate their own story around the topics which seemed important to them, while providing a leading thread.

But for the East and South-East (Flacq and Grand-Port Districts), it turned out to be a more "récit de vie" type of research. The questionnaire, in fact, dictated much more the interview, with the informant answering mostly to the questions asked to him or her rather than narrating his or her life or past experiences.

A major difficulty was the lack of understanding of the word 'descendants' by most respondents. This being the crucial entry point, it took time to make them talk about this topic, but the life narratives were easier. Respondents could reflect on their own lives and the lives of their families and organize their thought in a rational way

- (b) One major obstacle was the fact that the informants were most of the time not aware of the existence of the Truth and Justice Commission. To make them sign the consent form was even more difficult. It took much time and, at times, several meetings to educate them about the project, win over their trust and make them participate in the project.

- (c) Some people who, according to people surrounding them, have heard a lot about stories related to slavery simply refused to participate in this project, as they felt it was useless and that it was not going to be of any benefit to them.
- (d) The whole section of the questionnaire relative to slavery and its consequences and on the contribution of slaves to economic, political, social and cultural life in Mauritius was very difficult for the respondents. Most of them did not understand what was expected of them, and it was impossible to put the questions in such a detailed manner.
- (e) There were the time constraints and fatigue of respondents. For the Sections H, I, J, K on the economic, political, social and cultural contribution of the slaves and descendants being too lengthy, many respondents gave no answers. Some interviews were interrupted because the informants were quite old and could not talk for long.
- (f) At times, it was somewhat delicate for the informants to discuss the issue of 'racism' with the researcher or research assistant as some were not comfortable to express their views on the community the researcher and the research assistant belonged to, when the latter was not of the same religious or ethnic group as the respondent.
- (g) The conditions of recording were not always ideal; e.g. at times, the noise of traffic interfered with the work. To these technical obstacles, there were those of an emotional nature. Some respondents wept while answering, some fell silent for a while (and it was not always easy to interpret the meaning of this), some answered by non-verbal signs to emotionally sensible questions (for the majority) refused to answer.
- (h) Very often, the informants were not able to specify the exact time of events they were narrating, which makes it difficult to date the facts. In addition, some of them have 'interiorised' the popular myths related to slavery.
- (i) For the West and South-West (Black River and Savanne Districts) the investigator reported that the quality of the interviews was hampered because of constraints with respect to the quota of informants to be interviewed and the date of submission of the report. It was impossible for the researcher to conduct proper ethnographic fieldwork and oral history interviews because of time constraints.
- (j) The section of the questionnaire that dealt with the contribution of the slave descendants in the social, economic, political and cultural life of Mauritius was difficult to tackle as the informants very often did not understand the questions and their approximate answers were not the ones expected from them.

## 1. LIFE HISTORIES

### PORT LOUIS NORTH AND SOUTH

- R1-R4 - Most of the respondents worked at two or three jobs at the same time. The women could be housemaids, social workers, women labourers etc. For the men-folk, too, working at two jobs simultaneously is not rare. The most common jobs are manual work; tailor, blacksmith, carpenter, charcoal maker, docker, sugar cane labourer. The grandparents had been labourers, stockbreeders, etc.
- R5 Retired; had worked at several jobs: housemaid and in a factory.
- R6 Docker but had been a bricklayer in the past.
- R7 Exiled from Chagos; had done several jobs since 12 years old; in coprah factory, in the house of the staff; fisherman then on several ships. In Mauritius, worked on lorries, in the harbour, and as fisherman. Came to Mauritius to buy fishing equipment but learnt here, after some time that the islands were closed. The deportation of the inhabitants of his island to Mauritius then started.
- R8 Widow, Seamstress (50)
- R9 Docker (retired) - Catholic
- R10 Assistant-mason, musician, 'bricoleur, soudeur'
- R11 Retired
- R12 Retired. Had been a mason at the municipality
- R13 Housemaid in a hotel; had done several jobs here and there
- R14 Foreman at a construction site
- R15 Housemaid and several other jobs
- R16 Seamstress and other small jobs
- R17 Carpenter/wheelwright/ blacksmith apprentice/mason/ gathering sugar cane
- R18 Many small jobs
- R19 Not decipherable

### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

All respondents come from working-class families.

Most of them are still masons, labourers, cane cutters, worked in CHA, *4 jours à Paris*, *femme de ménage* (maids), security-officers, plumbers, electricians, sewerage-worker, cleaners, toilet cleaners, and a few now have other jobs (teachers, foremen, financial officers, civil servants, nursing officers, musicians). Men have done many jobs: worked in *Moulin goni* (sack factory), were coffin-makers, iron-maker apprentices, painters, mechanics, cooks, laboratory attendants. Some of them have done dangerous jobs (for example with chemicals in paint industry etc. without protection). One of the respondents said he illegally made *tilambic* to sell to have a few rupees to feed his children.

All of them - men as well as women - have done different jobs, mostly because they were not employed on a regularly basis, but on a seasonal basis especially those who worked as labourers or *kouper kann* in the sugar-cane estates. They have not known security of employment.

All of them bear witness to the hardness of their living conditions and how they have managed to survive and to better their existence as much as they have been able to. They have all experienced poverty, the majority of them in an acute form.

They mention how they ate a piece of bread with only sugar. They ate 'mines' (*noodles*) their mother prepared herself with a little flour with *bouillon brède martin* from *karo kann*. At night they had a *goble delo disik* (*cup of sugared water*) to dine. Drank rice water. They did not eat rice but manioc etc.

They cooked on wood which they went to fetch with their mothers in the woods, after very long walks under the sun and without any food.

These people can measure the difference between their present life and the life they had as children with their parents. The majority are happier with their present life, though many of them still face economic difficulties.

The children of those who have not been able to accumulate even a very small capital are doing the same jobs as their parents, but most of the children have jobs like teachers, contractors, working in the printing industry and port, but they say they have to face difficulties in the employment sector. They feel that although they have made lots of self sacrifices to give their children better opportunities, the social, political and economic system is not helping their children in their social mobility. Many have had to struggle hard, to face injustices before being able to find a job.

Some have been married once, others have had children without being married, others have been married more than once. Women have their own stories to recall. Some of them have educated their children without the support of a husband (widows or single mothers). They have worked very hard for very low wages and show a great sense of sacrifice. They have been forced to leave their children with family members to find better paid jobs, either in places other than their living places or abroad. Some of them have worked as maids, embroiderers, in textile factories.

Many of them have had their houses destroyed during cyclone 'Carol'. They then moved to other places, from rural areas to *cités* in Plaines-Wilhems towns.

#### UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

All of the respondents, coming from working-class background had worked at several jobs like masons, painters, mechanics, carpenters, labourers, tailors, attendants, blacksmiths, woodcutters, drivers, cabinet-makers for the men. It is interesting to note that even those who were civil servants had another parallel job (R21, R28). The women, for the most, were and some are still are housemaids, nurses, cooks, women labourers.

All had known poverty and had done several jobs to survive. «Finn toultan travay pou reysi manze ek bwat» (Eng: Had to work all the time to get enough to eat) (R 21). They had thus never known job security, for the work was seasonal. Their outlook on the past is full of bitterness but also of a certain pride to have survived and made it possible for their children to grow up. That is why many find that their life today is not to be pitied although they face financial hardship.

#### EAST AND SOUTH-EAST (FLACQ AND GRAND-PORT DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

All the respondents come from a working-class background and have done more than many jobs in their lives. The occupations vary from drivers, fishermen, masons, brick-layers, *tailleurs-roche*, labourers, tailors, maids, wood-cutters, carpenters, gardeners, civil servants, plumbers, electricians, etc. Most of the jobs were manual and physically very exhausting ones.

For those who have not been in the civil service or on sugar estates, we find that they (both men and women) have changed jobs throughout their lives. Most of the time, this was dictated by the need to feed the family and primarily the children. We have accounts of men having to cycle for long distances to go for work when they could find work in neighbouring area. It was driven by the

philosophie “ki pu fer, bisin trace pu gagne ou boussé mange.” (What else could we do? Had to struggle to get a living). Seasonal jobs like cane-cutters did not ensure regular incomes for the workers and weeks or even months of unemployment very often followed the end of seasonal jobs.

Most respondents recall the following from their life: “avant ti ena buku misère, aster ki la vie facile”. (Before it was hard; now life is easy). No matter how hard their present life is, they still believe that their past was much more difficult. This poverty, or at times acute poverty, is often characterised by unavailability of food whereby the respondents had to skip dinner and lunch regularly. Families had to depend on oil lamps “*la lampe pétrol*” to light the house. In case they did not have money, they would face days or even weeks of darkness. Even though slavery was abolished, some of them, like Mrs Jacksony, recalls that her mother had to look for manioc and “patate” (sweet potato) to feed the family, a situation which is similar to slavery. That poverty has left a strong imprint in the memory of the respondents. Life was not, or could simply not be, planned as families had to struggle for food.

Women have played a crucial role within the family. They were the ones who faced the pressure of feeding the family. They would go far in the woods to cut wood to cook food. They would collect vegetables (brède), fruits (Jack fruit, fruits à pain) and roots (maize, manioc, sweet potato, “arouille”) that were available to feed the family. For New Year, they could hardly afford meat and “saumon”, i.e. canned pilchards were the best they could have once or twice a year. It is women who mostly cared about the future of the children. They were the ones who would really bother sending the children to school to acquire education, at times without the support of the husbands. Women used to cumulate jobs (maids, field-workers, cleaners, cane-cutters, etc.) and very often had to face domestic violence.

For those who have succeeded in sending their children to school, they actually either work in the civil service or in private companies as electricians and IT Officer. Some agree that being a “Creole” is a stigma, and this is an obstacle to their social mobility. But in cases where the children have not been able to acquire education, they are still doing the jobs their parents were doing like masons, “casser roche” (stone breakers), or, in the hardest cases, “p bat baté par ici par la” (work here and there).

Most of the respondents coming from working-class background had worked at several jobs. The occupations vary from drivers, fishermen, masons, brick-layers, *tailleurs roche*, labourers, tailors, wood-cutters, carpenters, gardeners, civil servants, plumbers, electricians, etc. for the men. Women used to cumulate jobs (maids, field-workers, cleaners, cane-cutters, etc.) housemaids, nurses, cooks, women labourers. All had known poverty and had often taken parallel jobs to survive. They had thus never known job security for the work was seasonal. Life was not, or could simply not be, planned as families had to struggle for food.

Their outlook on the past is full of bitterness but they also show a certain pride to have survived and made their children grow up. That is why many find that their lives today are not to be pitied though they face financial hardship. That poverty has left a strong imprint in the memory of the respondents.

Some have been married once, others have had children without being married, others have been married more than once.

Women have their own stories to tell. Some of them have educated their children without the support of a husband (widow or single mother). Women have played a crucial role within the family. They were the ones who faced the pressure of feeding the family. They would go far in the woods to cut wood and to cook food. They would collect vegetables (*brède*), fruits (Jack fruit, fruits à pain) and roots (maize, manioc, sweet potato, “arouille”) that were available to feed the family. They were the ones who would really bother sending the children to school to acquire education, at times without the support of the husband. Women used to cumulate jobs (maids, field-workers, cleaners, cane-cutters, etc.) and very often had to face domestic violence.

## 2. LITERACY/EDUCATION

### PORT LOUIS NORTH AND SOUTH FINDINGS

- R1 Had done up to Std VI .Knows how to read and write
- R2 Not schooled as a child but has followed literacy classes at 60. Knows a little how to read and write.
- R3 Had done Std 1; does not know how to read and write.
- R4 Had done up to Std V. Knows how to read and write a little.
- R5 Up to Std IV. Left because of financial difficulties.
- R6 Up to Std VI but did not get through that level.
- R7 Not schooled in Chagos but follows evening classes in Mauritius.
- R8, R9 Std IV. Lack of means to continue.
- R10 Had completed CPE, had reached Form 1, then stopped to follow courses in a technical school.
- R11 Until Std VI, then at the Loreto College until SC.
- R12 Until Std VI.
- R13 Until Std IV. (It is the mother who had 10 children who decided thus).
- R14 Until Form II; had stopped through disinterest for school.
- R15 Until Std III: left at father's death.
- R16 Until Std VI; no shoes to go to school.
- R17 Std II; *déménagement* Std II. Moving out.
- R18 Form III
- R19 Not decipherable

	Std 1 (1)	Std 2 (1)	Std 3 (1)	Std 4 (3)	Std 5 (1)	Std 6 (6)	Secondary (4)	Night School (2)
Respondent	R3	R17	R15	R5, R9, R13,	R4,	R1, R6, R11, R12, R16,	FI: R10 FII: R14 FIII: R18 FIV: R8	R2 R7

### UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

3 respondents only took Secondary Level R1 (Form V), R2 (Form V), R16 (Form III)).

9 completed Primary Level (R6, R8, R9, R12, R15, R17, R21, R25, R28)

And those who did not say that it was because of a lack of means, because they were too numerous and that the parents gave priority to boys' education. The girls stayed at home to look after the children and help their mothers at house chores or at work (housemaid, etc...) An interesting fact: The boys followed their father throughout the island to look for work and the whole family moved depending on where the father was working, hence making continuous schooling difficult. The expression *al kampe* (to go camping) illustrates very well this nomadic aspect

Today, all see that education is important. Even though some are ashamed of being unable to read and write, they are proud to have worked hard to allow their children to continue their studies. R1 and R3 are proud to have been able to get their children schooled in the French system. And they think that if there are still children who are illiterate, the fault lies with the parents for education is free. They are all conscious that education is the key to getting out of poverty.

	Std 1 (1)	Std 2 (1)	Std 3 (4)	Std 4 (4)	Std 5 (5)	Std 6 (9)	Went on and off to school(1)	Form 3 (1)	SC (2)	No schooling (1)
Respondent	R10	R18	R4, R22, R27, R29	R3, R7, R13, R14,	R19, R20, R23, R24, R26,	R6, R8, R9, R12, R15, R17, R21, R25, R28	R11	R16	R1, R2	R5

	Knows how to read and write	read and write ( a bit)	read but not write	Can write own name	Can write but does not read well	Cannot read nor write	No answer
Respondents	R1, R2, R6, R8, R9, R12, R14, R15, R16, R17, R19, R20, R21, R24, R25, R26, R28, R29	R3, R13	R4, R27	R7, R22	R23	R5, R10, R18	R 11
Total	18	2	2	2	1	3	1

62% of respondents know how to read and write.

#### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

All children went to primary school but only the last brother went on till Form 3. Std 1 (2). Std 2. Std 3. Std 4 (2). Std 5 (2). Std 6(5) Did not go to school.

Read and write: 1 Eng. and French: 1 Read and write a little: 2

I can read but not write very well: 4 cannot read and write: 4

It is hard to be unable to fill in a form. I cannot write. I have to put a cross as signature.

Poor people cannot read. They feel bad and inferior. Feel ashamed (3). Cannot travel because they do not read.

Those who were into primary school with me and in college, these people have become illiterates. They do not read and write. If after school we do not continue to read and write, it is lost. In Mauritius, we are culturally weak, we do not like to read and write; we are lazy.

Secondary: F4 (2) SC: 2

## Tertiary: 1

Some have learned by themselves (autodidact), on coal tar, especially one who had a passion for books and reading.

One asked why Creoles are doing such high studies that will not give them a job in Mauritius.

The education system is terrible in Mauritius. Teachers leave mistakes in children's copybooks.

In Government schools, non Creole teachers do not take Creole children into consideration (2). They are stigmatized. This is why many Creoles do not want to say they are Creoles. They are afraid.

	Std 1	Std 2	Std 3	Std 4	Std 5	Std 6	Primary	F 4	SC	Tertiary
No of respondents	1	1	1	2	1	7	4	2	2	3

	Read and write	Read and write a little	Read building plans	Write my name	Read and don't write	Don't read nor write	
Respondents	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R14, R16, R26	R18, R22	R19	R19, R24	R10, R17, R20	R24, R25	
Total	12	2	1	2	3	2	22

Half of the respondents can read and write (2 of them a little). Half do not read or write.

## EAST AND SOUTH-EAST (FLACQ AND GRAND-PORT DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

Level	Never attended school	Std 1	Std 2	Std 3	Std 4	Std 5	Std 6	F 4	F 5	University
No. of Respondents	5	1		3			6	1	1	

Literacy				
Respondent	Read	Write	None	Comment
R1			•	
R2			•	
R3	•	•		
R4	•	•		
R5	•	•		
R6	•	•		A little of both
R7			•	
R8	•	•		A little of both
R9	•	•		
R10	•			Can not only read a little
R11	•	•		
R12	•	•		
R13	•	•		
R14	•	•		
R15	•			Can not only read a little
R16	•	•		
R17			•	

All respondents believe it is important to acquire education. Many blame either poverty and/or ignorance of parent's for illiteracy.

- R1 We did not have anything to eat, how do you think we would go to school
- R2 At times, parents were themselves not educated and this is why we find children roaming around and not going to school.
- R7 Be mo banne grand dimounn ti miser zotte pa in envoye moi l'école.  
My parents were poor and did not send me to school.
- R15 Mo panne pratik li dans l'armée la bas nu in alle école, mo ti coze anglais bien mais monne blie. Créole panne aprane, les autre ti aprane.  
I did not learn in the army; there we went to school; I used to speak English well but I've forgotten. The Creoles did not learn; the others did.  
Did not have this in mind, rather enjoy life. And now  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the children roam here and there.  
Pas ti ena sa dans la tête, plito amuser. Be aster la meme  $\frac{3}{4}$  zanfan traine par ici par la.
- R17 Mo pas conne lire mo chagrin, ler moi monne marie, mo envoyé mo zanfan l'école, mo pas même capave prend ene livre de messe mo lire.  
I don't know how to read; I'm sad about it. When I got married, I sent my kid to school, I cannot even read a prayer book.

#### NORTH (PAMPLEMOUSSES AND RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICTS)

There is a generational transmission of menial jobs, because as it is reflected by the life histories of the informants, they stopped schooling at a young age to start working. For example, R6 and R13 stopped schooling after Standard 6 and Form 2 respectively because of financial problems. They were poor and education was not free at that time.

For the informants, although illiteracy is present in all ethnic groups, yet Creoles are mostly illiterate because in the past, they did not have the opportunity either to go to school or to continue schooling.

While for some they do not feel ashamed of being illiterate, for others, they see it as a shame such as R12 and R8:

'...non li pa normal li pa normal parski mo mem mo pa kon lir ester mo  
sagrin parski parfoi mo dir mo tifi get sa pou moi get sa si 1 zournal mo pou  
dir li lir sapou moi mo truver lir li bien inportan aster...'<sup>4</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...No it is not normal, it is not normal because me too I do not  
know how to read; now I am sad because sometimes I ask my daughter to look  
at that for me if it is a newspaper I will ask her to read it for me I find that  
reading is very important.

About half of the respondents can read and write, having done part or the whole of primary schooling. Some have learned by themselves. Those who did not complete their primary schooling blame lack of means. And parents gave priority to boys' education. The girls stayed at home to look after the children and help their mothers at house chores or at work (housemaid, etc). Moreover the boys followed their fathers throughout the island to look for work and the whole family moved, depending on where the father was working, hence making continuous schooling difficult.

All respondents believe it is important to acquire education. They are all conscious that education is the key to getting out of poverty. Many blame either poverty and/or ignorance of parents for illiteracy. However, some state that in Government schools, non Creole teachers do not take Creole children into consideration. They are stigmatized.

### 3. FAMILY HISTORY

#### PORT LOUIS NORTH AND SOUTH FINDINGS

- R1 Rodrigues
- R2 Father born in Madagascar but grew up in Rodrigues
- R3 Rodrigues
- R4 Agaléga
- R5 Mother Mauritian; Father Rodriguan
- R6 Mother and Father Mauritians; ancestors from mother's side India, according to what he has been told; father's from Africa according to him
- R7 Father born in Solomon Islands; mother from Mauritius. Had lived in Peros Banos until deportation; in Mauritius lived in Cassis
- R8 Had known only his maternal grandmother. Origins of parents: 'Father from Madagascar'; 'mother from Scotland'.
- R9 Does not know origins of family; believes it originates from India
- R10 Father's origins from India; mother's African
- R11 Had kept documents on parents; had known maternal grandmother and says that knows this branch is from India.
- R12 Had not known the grandparents and does not really know history of family.
- R13 Considers himself without any shame as descendant of slave; knew his grandfather and makes no mystery as to the origins of his ancestors. Thinks the parents of his grandfather came from Madagascar and that those of his grandmother came from India.
- R14 Has no information on the origins of his parents but would have liked to know
- R15, R17 All Mauritians
- R18 Has no information. Believes they are all Mauritians
- R19 Information not decipherable

#### Jobs of parents and grandparents

- R5 Mother did not work; father Docker
- R6 Mother Housemaid; father mason
- R7 Father blacksmith; grandfather (paternal) born in the islands; mother's parents from Mauritius; Grandmother married to a Mauritian who had been in the army, which explains his return to Diego Garcia. Origins-Africa, Madagascar; maternal great grand-mother from Reunion Island
- R13 Father worked on board ships (to carry merchandise); mother did not work
- R14 Father docker; mother did not work
- R15 Father Driver; paternal grandfather; worked at a furnace
- R16 Father carpenter, mother; Paternal grandfather no information; maternal grandmother; Sick Attendant
- R17 Father, carpenter; mother handicraft (making of bags, hats and carriers bags)

#### UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

Most did not know the origins of their family. If some had a vague idea it is because they heard their parents discuss among themselves. Before, children did not listen to adult conversations

##### Origins

- R1 Madagascar, Mozambique and India
- R5 Grandmother's originated from India
- R12 His father was Tamil
- R13 India. He has been told that his grandparents were slaves
- R14 His maternal grandmother came from India
- R19 Great great-grandfather originated from Madagascar
- R22 Grandfather told him that his family came from Mozambique
- R23 Father was Seychellois
- R26 Great-grandmother was Seychellois
- R28 Thinks family came from Madagascar
- R29 India and Madagascar

##### Jobs of parents and grand parents

Many had worked «*dan lakour blan*» (as domestic servants of the whites) and lived in *dépendances*. Women were housemaids, «*nenenn*».

- R20 Mother earned Rs 25 per month and she had to be available all the time «Pa ti ena lesklavaz, me mo mama ti kouma enn esklav».

##### Other occupations

Seamstress, cabinetmaker, joiner, labourer, mason, woodcutter, bus-driver, sacristan, railwayman, cook, at making *vacoas* bags and mats.

If many had lived in Curepipe region since their birth, their parents and grandparents came from villages throughout the island:

Plaine Magnien, Bambous, Montagne-Longue, Grand-Baie, L'Escalier, Chamarel, Rivière des Anguilles, Mahébourg, Bel Air, St-Pierre, Camp de Masque.

#### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

##### Origins

- R5 Portuguese
- R8 Indian+ mixed black and white
- R11 grandfather was a French merchant navy captain who had children with a slave descendant
- R13 Father was a French descendant and his mother had ancestors from Madagascar
- R16 His mother's family from India
- R17 Ancestors from France who married a Bengali

- R18 Her grandfather (mother's side) came from India and was a slave in Réunion, then fled to Mauritius + father's side came from Madagascar.
- R19 My mother's father was a tamoul from India who had a British name because he had a British father and a tamoul mother - my grandfather came when the British came to Mauritius. My father's dad was a Bombay and his mother baptized Creole madras. My family name is from India.
- R20 Grandfather was a Malagasy. We have African ancestors. My mother is a descendant of *madras batize* (Tamil Christian) Grandmother talked about our African slave ancestors and what they endured.
- R22 I don't know about the origins of my family, but my mother is a mazanbik, black with *tiseve* as an African descendant. My father was from a high-class family.
- R23 Dad's mother came from Pondicherry - I have a grandma with a Creole name - I don't know where my ancestors came from.
- R26 My grand grandmother is a catholic from Pondicherry. Their fathers were hairdresser, carpenter, shoemaker, mechanic, reared animals, had seasonal work such as sofer kamion pandan lakoup on sugar estates, coalmen. Six fathers went to the army. Mothers worked as maids, sewers, worked in aloe factories, planted peanuts.
- R8 "My grandma was born of an Irish dad and a Malagasy mother. She has a European phenotype. Her father left heritage but a sister married in a white family wanted to take my grandmother. She said no and she signed a paper. In fact she lost her heritage. My grandpa was a shoemaker. His mother was Malagasy and father white. They had values though no education."
- R6 "My grandfather practiced animal rearing and planted maize, sweet potatoes and manioc. He had a small plot of land and did barter with fishmongers etc."
- Their parents or grandparents have worked for white people. They feel they have been oppressed. They describe their conditions of life as that of slaves and modern slaves. Women were servants and worked 24/7 for their masters, going to "campements" with them, taking care of their children, but were ill treated for some of them. They slept under the table and when their family lived in dependence, their children had to be shut in the house so as not to disturb the masters.
- R10 "My grand grandmother was a Madras from India, with long dresses and big holes in her ears. My mother's name is Lecoq. My dad was a Sookoonah, a Bombay. His family had become catholic. My father in law says his family came from Madagascar."
- R26 "My grand grandmother (father's side) is a catholic from Pondicherry. My father was born from a métissage of Indo-Catholic and a White. My mother is a Creole but her grand grandmother had money. She has a French name. After that they became poor."

#### Change or sale of names

2 respondents stated that white people bought the family names of their ancestors.

- R3 "My father's family was Theodore. My grandfather was in fact called Giraudoux. White people came and asked to sell his name with them. My grandfather was stupid. He took the name of Theodore and sold the name of Giraudoux. But my father's cousin did not want. His children are called Giraudoux. Giraudoux was the name of a white, a French."
- R5 "It's astonishing that I am called Antoine, because my ancestors were not Europeans. We have been called Soulange. We have looked in the archives. It seems my ancestors were Portuguese. My great grandfather was a guitarist (1850). My

father was born in Vieux Grand Port. His father was Antoine Soulange. Then Soulange was dropped and we were called Antoine."

#### Relationship between classes in families

Problem can arise when a member of the working class family has a white collar job.

- R2 "What is sad in Creole families is that there is a gap between the working class world and the intellectual world. It is not that they met dan zar. There is a bad reaction from members in working class. There is a social crisis in families. For me it was very difficult to make these two worlds meet. Lots of efforts. They shed away from intellectuals; feel ill at ease. I say that it is important to keep close. We can help each other. They come to me for services only. Workers are now educated and have progressed."

#### EAST AND SOUTH-EAST (FLACQ AND GRAND-PORT DISTRICTS)

The knowledge of family and its origins very often don't go beyond great grandfather (two generations). This is perhaps because, families have moved from one area to another resulting in a cut off from family ties and most probably because of absence or lack of oral transmission of family origins.

The parents were metal workers, labourers, wood cutters, fishermen, 'toiler', 'chaudronnier', drivers, masons, stone cutters, seasonal workers on sugar estates. Women were maids, housewives (but often seasonal workers). Many worked for the whites and the respondents remember their dominant attitude.

For the respondents, the lives of their parent's grandparents and ancestors were characterised by poverty and hardships. However, they tend to associate what they have heard or seen about slavery on TV (fiction) about slavery to the sort of their grandparents. At times, their narration is driven by emotions related to their grandparent's hardships.

- R1 "My father's name was Laval Jacksony. My mother's name was Simone Tuyau and is 81 years old. My great grandfather came to live in Lallmatie. Before that he was in th'to work of the Sans Souci Sugar estate. He was a slave of the British. He got married in Mauritius. My grandfather became an "engagé" (indentured labourer). He was doing the "Kalipa" ( a fight like judo) without any money in return. My father was a planter. He was growing manioc, peanuts and manioc to sell. This is how he fed his eleven children."
- R3 "My grandmother came from India as a coolie. She was wearing big earrings. My father used to tell us that our ancestors were slaves. They didn't tell much though."
- R6 "I have family who came from Madagascar. Some came from India. My grandfather used to tell us how poor they were and how much hardship they had to face. They were working with the whites who were dominating them."
- R9 "I was born on the Beau Champ Sugar Estate. I was working there with my father who was a head mechanic. My mother was a Boucherville and was a housewife. I don't know much about my grandparents. I'm a descendant of the Bazerks who had cousins (Germain) in Rose Hill."
- R11 "My grandparents had their own land. You know, formerly people did not live a luxurious life. They were growing sugarcane and vegetables. When, these were not available, they use to work for others as labourers".

- R12 "My father was a "toiler" and 'chaudronnier' on the St Antoine Sugar estate. My mother died when I was four years old only. My grandfather (paternal) was a 'sirdar' and "colomb". My grandfather (maternal) was a veterinary on the FUEL Sugar Estate. My ancestors came from Madagascar. I don't know if they were slaves and what they were doing. I've heard about Le Morne where they were committing suicide."
- R13 My father used to tell me that our ancestors came from Madagascar. So, I'm a slave descendent.
- R14 My father was a fisherman. He taught me this job too. My grandfather who was also a fisherman came from Albion. I've heard him saying that our ancestors came from Africa.

#### Slave descendant

13 respondents consider themselves as descendants of slave. They believe that their ancestors have come from Africa (the continent), Madagascar, India, South Africa and Mozambique.

Two respondents claim to have written proof of being descendant of slave.

- R1 She has a written document from the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture which states that her forefather came to Mauritius as a slave who came from South Africa. He first was working in the region of Plaine Wilhems then moved to Lallmatie to work for the Sans Souci Sugar Estate. He was the "gardien" of the weighing bridge. Her brother still lives on the plot where the ruins of the weighing bridge are found. Respondent claims loss land.
- R4 He has a copy a legal document of the year 1819 whereby his great grandfather, Mathurin Jeannot, born in Mozambique, left behind a large plot of 156 arpents in the District of Black river to his children Alcide, Abédé, Guillaume, Frédéric and Delphine Jeannot. R4 claims to be the descendant of Alcide. Respondant claims loss land.

1 respondent (R9) doesn't know the origins of his ancestors.

None of the respondents are aware that slaves have ever come from India. Very often they tend to mix up slavery and "coolie", i.e, indentured labourers.

For some respondents, being Creole is an element that makes the respondents feel that they might be descendent of slaves. Other characteristics are the "frizzy" hair and dark colour of the skin. So here, we understand that there is a biological conceptualisation of slave.

Poverty is another crucial factor that makes the respondent feel that they are descendants of slaves. R11 states that she is a slave descendent as she does not have anything. So here, we have an account of an economic conceptualisation of slavery. The testimonies reveal that not all respondents believe that all Creoles are descendants of slaves.

Family origins and identity construction.

#### WEST AND SOUTH-WEST (BLACK RIVER AND SAVANNE DISTRICTS)

Interviews revealed that there has been either no or limited transmission of family origins. For many people recollections of family history were limited to their grandparents and sometimes to their great grandparents. The knowledge of family and its origins very often don't go beyond great grandfather (two generations). This is perhaps because, families have moved from one area to another resulting in a cut off from family ties and most probably because of absence or lack of oral transmission of family origins.

They do not know why their ancestors came to Mauritius but they think it was to develop the country.

For example, Harvey's grandparents used to say that they are of *Mazambik* descent meaning that they are of Mozambican descent and Daniel's father used to say that they are of Malagasy descent. For those who do not know their origins, most of them guessed about their family ancestry based on their physical appearance and what their parents told them

#### NORTH (PAMPLEMOUSSES AND RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

Either no or limited transmission of knowledge of family origins. Generational transmission of family history was limited to one to two generations and hence for many people recollections of family history were limited to their grandparents and sometimes to their great grandparents. Although they did not know their origins they identified themselves as of slave descent because of their African phenotype. For example, Rosemay considers herself as being Mauritian of African descent because of her skin colour, she is Black and hair type is 'frizzy'. She does not know when her ancestors came to Mauritius but she thinks they came enchained as shown in films. Although the informants who did not know their origins mentioned that they would like to know about their family origins, some of them such as Joseph questioned what this knowledge will bring him?

The knowledge of family and its origins very often don't go beyond great grandfather (two generations). This is perhaps because, families have moved from one area to another resulting in a cut off from family ties and most probably because of absence or lack of oral transmission of family origins. Interviews revealed that there has been either no or limited transmission of knowledge of family origins. Generational transmission of family history was limited to one to two generations and hence for many people recollections of family history were limited to their grandparents and sometimes to their great grandparents. Although they did not know their origins they identified themselves as of slave descent because of their African phenotype. For example, Rosemay considers herself as being Mauritian of African descent because of her skin colour, she is Black and hair type is 'frizzy'. For those who do not know their origins, most of them guessed about their family ancestry based on their physical appearance and what their parents told them. Their identification is not derived from knowledge of ancestral origins but rather on shared legacies of slavery such as social experiences and lack of education and opportunities. On the other hand, some informants' identification with the slaves descendant seems also to be founded on racial grounds. This biological identification associates the African phenotype, skin colour (being black) and hair style (frizzy hair) with slave ancestry.

Most did not know the origins of their family. If some had a vague idea it is because they heard their parents discuss among themselves. Before, children did not listen to adult conversations. For some respondents, being Creole is an element that makes the respondents feel that they might be descendent of slaves. Other characteristics are the "frizzy" hair and dark colour of the skin. So here, we understand that there is a biological conceptualisation of slave. However some have written documents from the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture which states that her forefather came to Mauritius as a slave.

None of the respondents are aware that slaves have ever come from India. Some tend to mix up slavery and "coolie", i.e., indentured labourers. Some indicate that one of their ancestors came from India. The correlation between Creoles and slave descent clearly transpires in the interviews. But the definition of Creole diverged. For some Creoles are descendant of slaves and are of African descent; the Blacks with frizzy hair are the real descendant of slaves.

Poverty is another crucial factor that makes the respondent feel that they are descendants of slaves.

For the respondents, the lives of their parent's grandparents and ancestors are characterised by poverty and hardships. At times, their narration is driven by emotions related to their grandparent's hardships. Their fathers were hairdresser, carpenter, shoemaker, mechanic, reared barber animals, had seasonal work such as 'sofer kamion pandan lakoup' on sugar estates, coalmen. Six fathers went to the army. Mothers worked as maids, sewers, worked in aloe factories, planted

peanuts. Mothers worked as maids, sewers, worked in aloe factories, planted peanuts. Many had worked «dan lakour blan» and lived in dépendances. Women were housemaids, «nenenn».

The other jobs: Seamstress, cabinetmaker, joiner, labourer, mason, woodcutter, bus driver, sacristain, railwayman, cook, *vacoas* bag and mat maker. The parents were metal workers, labourers, wood cutters, fishermen, 'toiler' , 'chaudronnier', drivers, masons, stone cutters, seasonal workers on sugar estates. Women were maids, housewives (but often seasonal workers). Many worked for the whites and the respondents remember their dominant attitude.

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## 4. PROPERTY

### PORT LOUIS NORTH AND SOUTH FINDINGS

- R1 Householders
- R2 Householders
- R3 Householder in Rodrigues. Owner of an NHDC house that she is still paying
- R4 Inherited from her husband
- R5 Owned a house in Vallée Pitot but sold after the ethnic riot of 1968 to live in a longère (shed) and then in a *cité ouvrière* (working class estate) at Cité Briquetterie. Owns today a house but not the land
- R6 Owns his house (in a *cité ouvrière*) but not the land
- R7 In Chagos the land belonged to the Etablissement; a sum was deducted from their wages as rent but there was no question of ownership. In Mauritius, the respondent's grandfather had bought a piece of land near La Butte (Rue Moka) and hoped to bequeath it to his daughter but the sister of the grandfather had taken over the land despite his daughter. Presently the responder owns a house at Cassis while living in another at la Tour Koenig.
- R8 The grandfather had land at Roche Noire but was cheated by his own brothers when respondent was still very young
- R9 Knows that the family from the paternal side had plots of land
- R10 On the maternal side they were proprietors but had lost their land.
- R11 Had inherited the house from his parents. The parents from maternal side had lost plots of land through neglect
- R12 Father owned a large plot of land that he lost
- R13 Is presently a tenant but the maternal grandparents owned land at Plaine des Papayes. They lost the land through neglect.
- R14 Owns a house inherited from the mother who had bought it
- R15 Owns a house at *Cité la Cure* and a plot of land at Mme Azor
- R16 She lives with his son who owns house at *Cité la Cure*. The forefathers had a plot of land at Pamplemousses that they lost through neglect and declaration of property rights
- R17 Owns the house in *Cité la Cure* and lived on «Crownland at Vieux Grand-Port. The forefathers had a plot of land of 2 acres which cannot be sold as they were dead
- R18 Is not a householder but had understood through several oral sources that there had been loss of land in the family. This was due to the fact that elders had left no will at their death
- R19 Information not available

	Owner	Other land/housing	Owens the house but not the land	Lives with a relative	Tenant
	R1,R2,R3,R4, R7, R11, R14	R15	R5,R6,R15	R16,R17	R9,R10,R13, R18
Total	7	1	3	2	4

## UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

Most of the respondents own their house

- R1 The parents bought the land
- R2 Had bought where he lives
- R3 Got his house after Cyclone *Carol*. Then bought the house
- R4 Got his house after Cyclone *Carol*. Then bought the house
- R5 Bought his house
- R6 Father bought the house where she lives
- R7 Had bought the house where she lives
- R8 (./.)
- R9 (./.)
- R10 The land belongs to the family since a long time.
- R11 (./.)
- R12 Lives with the son
- R13 Had bought the house where he lives. Had a house built at Camp Caval on a plot of land he bought
- R14 Had bought his house
- R15 Owns the house he lives in. Built the house himself
- R16 (./.)
- R17 (./.)
- R18 Owns the house he lives in
- R19 Inherited his house
- R20 Householder
- R21 Householder
- R22 Does not own his house
- R23 Householder
- R24 Householder
- R25 Householder
- R26 Householder
- R27 Householder
- R28 Owns the house he lives in. Built the house himself
- R29 Householder

	Owner	Other Land/Housing	Owns the house but not the land	Lives with a relative	
	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R10, R13, R14, R15, R18, R19, R20, R21, R23, R24, R25, R26, R27, R28, R29	R13	R22	R12	
Total	22	1	1	1	25

## LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

- R1 when her father came back from the army, her mother took the money he had earned and bought the land and house in which they are still living today.
- R2 his parents rented houses and he has his own house.
- R3 she has bought the house in the *cit *, but is still paying for the land.
- R4 lives in a house which belonged to his grandfather and there too many heirs to find a solution. He lives in the house, takes care of it but it is not his. He has no means to buy a house on his own.
- R5 is the owner of his house.
- R6 her ancestors did not have any house. Her grandfather built a wooden house in the woods which was destroyed by *Carol*. She is still paying the land on which her *cit * house is built.
- R7 owns his house
- R8 Is owner of her house.
- R9 His mother's family had a small house and advised her children to have their own house. He has succeeded in having his own house but it was with the help of a French couple. His children are having their own house.
- R10 has not inherited of land or house. She has rented a *cit * house for 22 years, then bought it and later sold it to buy another house.
- R11 recalls that her ancestors had land in the east. They allowed Indians to settle on to help them but they finally lost their land. She has bought a small plot of land from a family member.
- R12 parents could not save to have a plot of land. His wife's parents had land but lost it. The ancestors were not aware of the value of land. When they had too many debts, they lost their land.
- R13 parents have lost land. Now she lives in her mother's house which is hers.
- R14 is well off. He has a house which he rents and one in which he lives. He recalls that his family lost large plots of land because *M dine Sugar Estate* took them.
- R15 rents a house in the *cit *.
- R16 His parents have a plot of land but no property act. He lives in his mother's house.

- R17 Lives in her son's house.
- R18 Has saved little by little and has bought her house with the help of her children.
- R19 Does not own a house.
- R20 Wanted to have his own house but he lives in his mother's house because he cannot obtain a loan from the bank. Too many debts for too long
- R22 Lives in her mother's house. There are 4 heirs.
- R24 His family lost land. He has his own house.
- R25 Won the lottery and bought land. He obtained a loan from the bank. He has built himself his house. His grandparents had land.
- R26 Her father bought the land and she built her own house.

	Own their house	Still paying for house	Rent their house	Lives in a relative's house/ no house of own	
	R1, R2, R5, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R13, R14, R18, R24, R25, R26	R3 (site), R6(site)	R15 (site), R19	R4, R16, R17, R20, R22	
Total	14	2	2	5	23

14 respondents own their house. 2 own the "site" house but are still "paying for the land. 2 rent houses and 5 live with a relative. Those who have managed to have a house are mainly situated in "site" and have struggled very hard to be owners. They all are aware of the importance of being a house owner.

#### EAST AND SOUTH-EAST (FLACQ AND GRAND-PORT DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

- R1 She has a single room made up of wood and iron sheets. She claims that the land belongs to her family, but she doesn't have any document to prove it. In fact, the land has been sold to someone else living in the region of Rivière du Rempart. So officially, she doesn't own the land.
- R2 He has bought a plot of land. But actually he lives in a house made up of wood and iron sheets which belongs to his concubine. She expects her daughter who has studied up to form five to get a job in the civil service so that she can have a loan to build her house. She has spent her entire life in a "lakaz tolle" and hopes to stay in a concrete one before dying.
- R3 He is the owner of a concrete house, but has given it to his sons. He actually lives in the house of his concubine who is renting it from a Hindu. The respondent is a part-time driver for the owner of the land.
- R4 He lives in a one storey concrete house which belongs to him along with his mother and two sisters.
- R5 He lives in the house which his late wife inherited from her parents. Legally, he is the owner of both land and house.

- R6 She lives in a *Cité* Argy and has bought the house. She has even opened a shop in front of her house.
- R7 She lives in a concrete house on a land that belong to her ancestors (Charlot Family). She has worked hard and “met sit” to save money for her house. She wanted a secured housing for her children.
- R8 He lives in a concrete house on a plot of land that belonged to his family.
- R9 He lives on a plot that he inherited from parents.
- R10 She lives in *Cité* Argy where she has bought the land and house from the state.
- R11 He actually lives in the plot of land that belongs to his wife. He himself owns land in Quatre-Cocos.
- R12 Lives on the FUEL Sugar Estate blocs.
- R13 Lives in a concrete house on a land inherited by his wife.
- R14 Lives in a concrete house on a land inherited by his wife.

All respondents own their land, except R1.

Those living in *cité* (R6 and R10) have bought the house and even extended the premises. The women have played an important role in saving money to buy the house and land.

Most of the respondents owned their house, having through either purchase or inheritance. Those living in *cité* have bought the house and even extended the premises. But some own the “*cité*” house but are still “paying for the land. They all are aware of the importance of being a house owner. The women have played an important role in saving money to buy the house and land.

#### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

- R5 The land they lived on was not theirs. They lost it. Many families have lost their lands.
- R8 Lost land my grandma Bhugaloo a Creole her father came from India, had land from la Louise to Bassin. It was lost.
- R12 My wife parents had land but they lost. They did not care about land or had too many debts. Out of debts I could have lost my land. My children have built on that land.
- R13 We have lost land from dad’s in Pointe aux Piments
- R14 There was Teco family who lost hundreds of *arpents* of land that Medine has taken from them.
- R10 I know someone who has mortgaged his land for friends and it was sold to the bar and it was lost. If you have a land, you should not sell it. It’s not good to rent houses all your life. It’s important to have you own house.
- R11 In Belvédère where I was born, my ancestors had allowed Hindus who had come from India to settle on a piece of their land. After that, these people stole their land.
- R19 my mum and dad had land, but my cousins stole those lands. We also lost lands in Curepipe. Before his death my grandfather gave a land contract to one of my aunts and told her to give it to me. One of my

cousins stole the contract and now her sons are building houses on that land. Once my mother was called because there would be sharing of Simpson lands, she did not go.

R20 We have lost a lot of land. Creoles have lost a lot of land. My grandmother had land in Ste Croix but lost it during the racial riots in 1968.

R23 My grandma father came from India, had land from la Louise to Bassin. It was lost.

Families of 10 /25 respondents have lost lands.

#### EAST AND SOUTH-EAST (FLACQ AND GRAND-PORT DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

R1 She claims that her great grandfather was given land (around 10 acres) by the owner of Sans Souci Sugar Estate as he was the guardian of the weighing Bridge. But she doesn't have any document as no one in her family ever had any document. In the past, people even used to take permission from her grandfather to grow 'filao' on the land. Her brother still lives on the plot where the bridge was found. However, some years back, the land was being sold by a "courtier" upon the request of FUEL Sugar Estate. Even the small plot of around "140 toises" where she lives with her sisters and brothers has been sold to someone living in Rivière du Rempart. She is facing a legal battle. She claims that all her generations have lived on this land. She blames FUEL Sugar Estate to sell a land that didn't belong to them. My mother has also lost her land in St Julien d'Hotman. I also know the Lamarque family who now lives in Port-Louis, who have lost 75 *arpents* of land, which is currently being occupied by the sugar estate.

R2 Respondent says that her grandparents had land in the eastern part of the island. But he never managed to get precise information about its location to claim it.

R3 He explains that his mother had land around St Julien d'Hotman but the land was lost with time. Respondent also explains how in the past, people use to stay on land without having any document to prove their ownership. Some did manage to get their "bordereau" to claim their land. In other cases, the sugar estate owners simply cleared bare or unoccupied lands and planted sugarcane on it. Sur to lack of financial resources, the owners never managed to claim back their lands.

I know the Taï family of Flacq who had vast portion or around 100 *arpents* of land in Bel Etang. The elders didn't inform the upcoming generation about this land and it became unoccupied. The sugar estate had land on each side of the Taï property. First, they built a road across the unoccupied land. Little by little they cleared further land until they became the owner as no one is claiming the land. The Aza family also faced the same. When they claimed their land, the sugar estate in return claimed for much compensation for the money they invested in the land.

R4 Respondent has shown an "affidavit" whereby his ancestor, who came from France, has left 156 *arpents* of land for his children. The land is found in Black River and is currently being occupied by Médine Sugar Estate. The matter has been brought in front of the TJC. There's even a family cemetery on the plot whereby tombs bear the names of Jeannot.

R5 My father-in-law has lost a land in Olivia. He had bought the land. He even has the title deed, but the sugar estate didn't allow him to claim

the land. I have handed the contract to the notary. My lawyer told me to give up even though I paid him Rs. 3000.

- R6 I have a land which stretches from Trou D'eau Douce till Palmar, but "tablisma" had planted sugarcane on it. I even had my all my documents.
- R7 My family, the Charlots had lots of land, but the sugar estate has grown sugarcane on it. They were too careless "contant manzé boire" ('love to eat and drink, i.e. enjoying themselves)' The Whites took away the land.
- R10 My mother has lost her land in Komason. My father in law lost his land in Carreau Banane. They were too focussed in enjoyment. For Rs. 45 and a "farata, currybanana ek curry coq", they lost two 'arpents' of land.
- R11 In Camp Marcelin, there was much land that belonged to Creoles. But the sugar estates have taken the land from them.

9 respondents claim to have lost land. In most cases, the sugar estate owners have cultivated sugarcane on these lands. Due to lack of education and financial resources, they haven't managed to get back their land. According to them, the whites are financially too strong to fight against. It a "David vs Goliath" situation. Justice is too expensive to afford and with growing age the respondents have even grown weaker.

The surface of the land that was lost is very important ones. Had the respondents still owned them today, this would certainly have been an excellent way to better their future and overcome their poverty. Hence, these losses of land have deprived slave descendants from the opportunity of social mobility.

Research also reveals that slave descendants were given land without any document to prove ownership. With time, they simply had no document to prove that they own the land which was being sold. Some respondents also blame the 'manzé-boire' attitude as well as lack of education of their grandparents for the lost of land.

#### WEST AND SOUTH-WEST (BLACK RIVER AND SAVANNE DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

The issue of land dispossession was also raised in the interviews with almost all the informants pointing out that the slave descendants lost their land. They were dispossessed of their land because they were illiterate and these injustices have to be repaired. The relationship of the latter with land is not solely practical (such as for economic reasons) and physical but also symbolical as indicated by Elizabeth for whom land is not physically important but the symbolism of the land is important because she remembers the sufferings of her ancestors on that land. She does not have any physical attachment to the land and does not want to go back on the land where she was born and where her ancestors lived. But many young people are claiming back the land which was not theirs and which neither belonged to their ancestors. They do not understand the importance of the symbolism of that land.

#### GENERAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Almost all the informants pointing out that their family have lost their land, either to the sugar estates or to members of other ethnic group or more rarely to their own kins. They were disposed of their land because they were illiterate and these injustices have to be repaired. If land had been lost, it's because «dimounn finn anbet zot» and also because they were illiterate, or negligence. The surface of the land that was lost is very important ones. The surface of the land that was lost is very important. Had the respondents still owned them today, this would certainly have been an excellent way to better their future and overcome their poverty. Hence, these losses of land have deprived them from the opportunity of social mobility.

Some claim to have title deeds.

## 5. IDENTITY/PERCEPTION OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES

### PORT LOUIS NORTH AND SOUTH FINDINGS

- R1 Creole
- R2 Mauritian
- R3 Mauritian and Catholic
- R4 Mauritian
- R5 Defined herself as Mauritian and Catholic and as slave descendant. For her, the slaves were those who were ill-treated before.
- R6 Defined herself as Creole and slave descendant. What is a Creole? Answer: «Enn Nasion». Is conscious being a slave descendant because of the history of the family that he had learnt.
- R8 The Creole and Indian communities are those who had produced slave descendants. But respondent sees herself as Mauritian.
- R9 Everyone is a descendant of slave. General population + Creole and are all descendants of slaves
- R10 Everyone is Mauritian and he calls everyone nations whatever their origins
- R11 Sees self above all as Mauritian
- R12 Does not want to talk about community and defined herself as Mauritian
- R13 Hesitated a long time before answering the question but thinks all Creoles are slave descendants
- R14 Defines himself as Mauritian; does not know if he is a slave descendant but thinks it's possible.
- R15-R17 The three respondents showed great incomprehension as to the word descendant, not understanding the meaning of the word. This has necessitated stopping the recording several times to explain the term. Besides, though they had acknowledged themselves as descendant of slaves at the time of selection, it turned out that when questioned, the majority could not elaborate on the subject, as they lacked detailed knowledge. Besides, when they were young, it was prohibited to ask too many questions from elders. It was taboo, or impolite to talk with elders. However, they all considered a having a link with slavery because of their present ethnic belonging. More concretely, they did not identify themselves as slave descendants but thinks their parents or forefathers were.
- R18 Define himself as Mauritian and Catholic, but consider himself as descendant of slave, after having heard speaking about this on television and elsewhere. Has no shame to recognize himself as such.
- R19 Does not know what is a descendant of slave or how to define a Creole. But considers that in general the Creoles as slave descendants.

Hence defines himself as descendant of slaves and has no shame in stating this.

## UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

The question «*Kouma ou defini ou lidantite?*» (How do you define your identity) had to be reformulated for the respondent to understand the term *identity*. They answered 'Mauritian'.

- R1 Mauritian, not from just one origins. Physically I belong to one community. I am of mixed blood
- R2 Creole. All Creoles are descendants of slaves. A culture, religion had been imposed upon us. Does not feel he had an identity proper. His physiomy shows his belonging. Today we talk more of Creole than slave descendants
- R3 Is considered as Creole in Mauritius but he feels his Mauritian. The Creoles are the sole descendants of slaves
- R4 Considers herself as Mauritian but Creole pure race, that is not mixed
- R5 Creole
- R6 Creole
- R7 Mauritian
- R8 Thinks there is only one community which is poor. Believes himself inferior
- R9 Creole and Mauritian. But has relatives coming from India
- R10 Creole. Believes that there is a need to forget the past as this prevents us from living
- R11 Mauricienne. Mauritian. Ethnic belonging is linked with religion
- R12 Catholic
- R13 Marathi. For him the coolies were slaves
- R14 Creole
- R15 Mauritian but is still downtrodden
- R16 Feels still a slave
- R17 Slave descendant. They are still badly perceived by society and government
- R18 Creole. All Creoles are descendants of slaves
- R19 Mauritian and also Creole because it's my language. Slave identity is not perceived as a shame
- R20 Mauritian
- R21 Mauritian but also slave descendant « *santiman desandan esklav bizin viv li ek li inportan rapel sa bann zanfan* ».
- R22 Creole. All Creoles are descendants of slaves
- R23 Mauritian but says he has suffered another form of slavery. There are different types of Creole the poor and the «*de kouler*». (lightskinned Creoles)
- R24 Mauritian
- R25 Mauritian. Says he is a descendant of slave as his father had talked about it. He knew Liberated Africans who came to Mauritius. «*zot ti mars dan kote patron*». (They sided with the boss)
- R26 Mauritian but also descendant of slave because of her skin colour
- R27 Mauritian
- R28 Not all Creoles are descendants of slaves for there are of mixed origins
- R29 Creole

Though a majority consider themselves as Mauritian, Creole identity is very present (in its ethnic sense). R19 believes that speaking Creole makes one Creole. R26 thinks her skin colour is proof she is of slave descent. Slave ancestry is not perceived as shameful but on the contrary as a source of pride. But many stated that this identity is perceived negatively at work. (R8, R15, R17, R20, R21, R23).

#### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

##### Slave ancestry

12/26 finds a link between them and slaves. For 1 respondent, no one in the family ever talked about it. Three more find a link between them and Africa or Madagascar.

R5, R7, R10, R12, R13 Obvious link: not proud to be but accepts it.

R14 Rodriguan father proud of Africa and Mauritian mother; he knows also his ancestor Jolicoeur who was affranchised in 1740

R15 - R16 declares "there is the memory of our body", there are invisible but real traces of that period with its suffering in us, and it will take time to change the traces of that collective experience - R20 -R22 - R25

R6 Obvious link to Africa or Madagascar: his grandfather told her that Fanfan (her family name) has been given to his grandpa's grandpa who came from Mozambique to Mauritius.

R15 - R25 looks like Nelson Mandela and considers him as a "brother".

R1 No one in the family ever talked about slavery

##### Creole

All respondents see themselves as Creoles. 9 made different kinds of comments on the subject. This has to do with Creole language being one of the elements defining their identity, with a wide variety of mixed origins, namely Madras and Malagasy (see ORIGINS). Creole identity is seen as an open one.

R3, R4, R11, R12, R13, R24 I am a Creole (and proud to be a Creole).

R26 This respondent is aware of the existence of Creoles all over the world.

These identity definitions specially "being a Creole" cover a wide variety of explanations and perceptions, with a strong feeling of being born in Mauritius, of speaking Creole and also for some of being of mixed origins.

Creole identity - linked to Creole language: "I am a pure Creole: From birth, I speak Creole. I cannot read or write Creole. I read and write French. French is easy. Creole is difficult.

R3 A typical declaration where the culture-language-social question is obvious. This respondent states she is a Creole because from birth she speaks Creole, but as she was never taught to read and write in Creole, she finds it difficult. It is easier to read and write in French.

R11 Creole identity: I am a full Creole. From birth, I speak Creole. (R 4 is married from a Christian woman of Indian origin. "My children will be Creole by their name. But I have an open mind, I feel as a human being.

R12 "I think of my ancestors as slaves from Africa. I have visited Morne and heard my grandparents talk about slavery. I have suffered a lot, so I think I have followed the steps of my ancestors. I consider myself to be a descendant of slaves. I define myself as a Creole and I am proud being a Creole. People used my ancestors as slaves. We have our value."

R19 I am a Creole madras (his mother was descendant of a Malagasy slave) and he speaks a little madras.

Creole is a *métis*, mixed blood:

R5 R11 Creole culture is a mixed culture

R24 gave the example of jazz music in Louisiane; this music is not an African music but a Creole music, a mixed music.

R14 has a broad definition of Creole: "If someone declares he is Creole, we should accept the fact, and if a black person does not say he is a Creole, we should accept it also. A Creole is one who chooses to be Creole. The pride of a Creole is not only slavery history because it transcends history and in the modern world - this is a "parti-pris d'espérance" because the world is becoming intercultural and Creole. Then racism and xenophobia and protectionism will disappear."

R25 Creole mixed with madras

All respondents consider themselves as Mauritians. Their motherland is Mauritius.

R10, R13, R25 I am a Mauritian:

R10 I see myself as a Mauritian and part of my family came from India, Madagascar. Long ago, slaves have been sold and came to work for white people and suffered a lot. We come from these people.

R14 I have friends from all communities and I like it. I was raised in a Hindu environment and I am impregnated with Indian culture and religion. We reared animals and grew with Hindu friends.

R25 attracts our attention on the values and traditions in Creole families. Adults did not speak familiarly to their children to recount the past or give them information on their ancestors. But what we see is that mothers and grandmothers are the ones who shared the most, perhaps because of the natural closeness between mother and child. Nevertheless some fathers also did transmit memories

#### NORTH (PAMPLEMOUSSES AND RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICTS)

In line with the testimonies, the slaves were people that were not paid for their labour, they had no rights and did not consent to come to Mauritius. They slept in common sheds on straw mattresses. They were ill-treated as stated by Joseph, they were treated like animals, enchained and whipped.

It transpired from the testimonies that there is a biological conceptualisation of slavery and slave descent as being genetic and 'passed on' in people's blood. The legacy of slavery, hence, seems to be not only cultural but also genetic. For example, according to Pierre, everyone has slave blood because at a point in time people mixed and there has been interbreeding.

For Joseph, when a man of slave descent marries a Madras woman, the children will be descendant of slaves but if a Madras man marries a woman descendant of slaves, the children will not be of slave descent. His conception of ancestry is rooted in patri-lineal. For Donald, he heard that people who fall under the category General Population are the descendant of slaves but the term General Population is vague hence how to prove that they are descendant of slaves? Furthermore, following interbreeding it may not be possible now to recognise a slave descendant

Also, whilst there are people who are proud of their slave ancestry and claim it, others deny their origins because they do not want to be considered as slave descendants.

For some interviewees, even though they consider themselves as descendants of slaves, they primarily identify themselves as Mauritian such as R2 and R4 although they might be of slave descent they consider themselves as Mauritian. Among the informants who identified themselves as

Mauritian, for some knowing their origins is not important because they identify themselves to the capitalist system and to contemporary times and they obliterate past history that is not significant to them. For example, R5 stated that she cannot say that she is either a slave or of slave descent. Her statement is rooted in a conceptualisation of slavery that if we do not experience modern forms of slavery we are not slaves or of slave descent.

Although they do not recognise their descent, they all mentioned that people need to be of their slave origins. Indeed, even if they do not assert a slave stock, yet they assert a slave history and identify themselves to this history. One explanation for this identification might be that it is rooted in a collective history of slavery, in other words, a sharing of this history.

When questioned on identity construction, many informants answered that they consider themselves as Mauritian Creoles because of their African and Malagasy phenotype, their skin colour (they are dark skinned; in other words Black), hair type (they have frizzy hair), culture and food habits. For example, R9 thinks that his ancestors came from Pondicherry and from Africa as well because of this skin colour, hair type and physical appearance. Also, he identifies himself with the suffering of the slaves and is proud of his origins.

On one hand, based on interviewees' testimonies, it appears that their identification as descendant of slaves is based on their shared feelings and experiences of sufferings and oppression rooted in the belief that 'the others' and society keep them in oppression by refusing or repressing their social mobility and undermining their history and consequently the memory of the slaves. A collective memory of suffering and oppression is perpetuated with the generational transmission of suffering, misery and poverty that keep the descendants of slaves in the continuous cycle of deprivation. Their identification is not derived from knowledge of ancestral origins but rather on shared legacies of slavery such as social experiences and lack of education and opportunities.

On the other hand, some informants' identification with the slaves descendent seems also to be founded on racial grounds. This biological identification associates the African phenotype, skin colour (being black) and hair style (frizzy hair) with slave ancestry.

Along the same lines, Black Creoles who are not necessarily of slave ancestry also identified themselves as being of slave descent as they share the same experiences as the descendant of slaves because of their African phenotype. Society's behaviour towards the Afro-Creoles is based on racial grounds with all people of African appearance being considered of slave origins. This is illustrated by R15 declaration. His paternal great grand father was Belgian and on his mother's side they are of Indian origin and maybe of Malagasy origin also. For him there is a difference between being of African and of Malagasy origin since slaves came mostly from Africa than from Madagascar. He considers himself as a descendant of slaves because he is Black and for him all Blacks are of slave descent.

## WEST AND SOUTH-WEST (BLACK RIVER AND SAVANNE DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

### Conceptualisation of slavery and slave descent

For the informants living in Tamarin, the real descendants of slaves live in Chamarel because their language - the way they speak Kreol - and their lifestyle are different compared to those living in Tamarin. For example, France found that they look like Rasintatane. Since the inhabitants of Chamarel live a rather simple life reclusive from others, they are perceived by the other Creoles as being different because of their way of living that is considered as being similar to that of the slaves.

For Harvey and Daniel, the slaves came from Africa by ship and they did not have names but numbers. They were sold, whipped, chained and were starved (causing high infant mortality and morbidity). When sold they were separated from their families. According to Chris when they came they did not negotiate their working conditions and were dominated by others.

The descendants of slaves are people whose ancestors came as slaves. Some of them have succeeded in life but according to Shirley, those who have achieved success are of mixed European

and African descent and their 'White' fathers helped them in their schooling. For her, the educational achievers are the Coloured Creoles and many of them got abroad to study and do not come back to Mauritius. Yet she pointed out that there are also Creoles whose parents are both 'Black' Creoles and who have been quite successful.

For everyone, with the exception of festivities, the government has done nothing for the descendant of slaves and they are still waiting for recognition. Children do not know the history of slavery as it is not taught in schools. Hence, there is a need to correct this error and to include the history of slavery in the school curriculum.

We should distinguish between slavery and slave ancestry for according to Shirley following mixed relationships the notion of pure descendants of slaves is erroneous and with evolution there is a need to remember and preserve the memory of slavery and slave origins. Moreover, for almost all informants, the question of being or not of slave descent is a political discourse and is no more the key issue. Chris stated that it is time to stop talking of slave ancestry and to start considering reparation for the damage and wrong caused to descendants of slaves who were dispossessed of their land and have since been oppressed. Instead of giving money to the descendant of slaves, there are other means to improve their life such as improving.

## 6. SLAVERY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

### PORT LOUIS FINDINGS

- R5 Does not have much to say about the sequels of slavery but is conscious that the poverty of the descendants of slaves is linked with this history; thinks the Creoles still suffer from these sequels in the form of discrimination when it comes to recruitment.
- R6 Has no opinion on the sequels of slavery. But is conscious that the discriminations the Creole sufferings are linked. Besides does not believe in the ability of Creole politicians to advance the cause of the slave descendants
- R7 Have lost their traditions and customs; racism and education; discriminated against; did not come to Mauritius to stay; had job security in Chagos
- R8 Those that had few means (descendants of slaves) remained in poverty, either because they could not or did not make efforts to get out.
- R10 The slave descendants are uprooted. A different lifestyle from others
- R11 The descendants of slaves are poor and rejected. The sequels of this suffering is still present and there is still among them a feeling of marginalisation
- R12 The descendants of slaves are penalised in several fields, namely in education and in the field of employment. The feeling here is that access depended less on competence than on skin colour
- R13 Had no idea of the sequels of slavery and does not seem to understand the question. Makes no direct link between filial ancestry with slavery and present poverty of Creole.
- R14 Slavery has as sequel that many among the population remained backward, illiterate.
- R18 Does not well understand the link to establish between slavery and its present consequences
- R19 As the slaves had nothing to preserve («Bann esklav pa ti ramas nanye»), it follows that their descendants found themselves with nothing

### UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

This section was difficult for the investigators as the respondents had difficulties understanding the meaning of the questions. The consequences of slavery are visible today specially in the economic and social field

- R10 Poverty is a direct consequence of slavery
- R15 The descendants of slaves do not have sufficient means to get out
- R16 Injustice envers n'ont pas assez de moyens pour s'en sortir.

### Injustice

- R17 Injustice, unemployment, lack of education
- R19 A bad image. It's visible in social life and mentalities

- R20 There are still those who oppress the others. Today, there is another form of slavery
- R21 «*Santi nou kraze, lezot imilie nou*». We feel oppressed. The others humiliate us
- R25 There are other forms of slavery today
- R28 «*Sibir imiliasion, diskriminasion dan travay ek lasosiete*». Have to face humiliation and discrimination at work
- R29 Miscegenation

#### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

Creole mindset and attitude to life: a consequence of slavery (mistrust, credulous)

This respondent has a very deep analysis on his situation. He is conscious of his own fears and auto-limitations but he is very creative, has written poems and theatre plays. He explains that those fears are experienced by many Creoles and he sees that as a consequence of slavery. This auto-censure is reinforced by the development of power distribution in post- Independent Mauritius.

R5 - R16 fear to undertake new projects: “Mo panse mo enn desadan esklav - ena kiksoz mo anvî fer mo pa kapav - mo finn aste enn arpan kann, me ena kiksoz ki bloke - zot anvî sorti, me zot per pou al de lavan - pena bokou devlopman - avek diplom ou pa telman kapav devlope”.

R2 The destiny of Creoles is dramatic because they were made to believe they are different and do not have the same qualities, human values, intelligence, right to the same education, even religion. This did not help him to think he is a full-fledged Mauritian. So he is afraid to ask for his rights, he has an inferiority complex. These are the sequels of that period. There will be progress through education.

The way history has been presented does not help him. He is revolted and that does not help psychologically.

Creoles are born with many handicaps: they have no bank account, they are born in a small house, poor environment. They are ill at ease. Difficult to manage his life conditions as a Creole. Teaching of history must help him think of the future.

We should be careful about REPARATION. Some see only MONEY. I think money won't repair sufferings. What is needed is education, lift his conditions of life, make him be accepted as a fully-fledged Mauritian.

Psychological reparation is more important than material. This will not repair the damages caused by slavery; He has been hurt in his mind, flesh, guts, body. Show him he is part of that society everywhere in society and Church.

R4 Slavery has consequences today. There are sequels. Creoles are marginalized. They lack everything, they cannot progress, have no opportunities. To have money, you need to have a little, but if you have nothing, you will still have nothing. I myself am still fighting, have not enough money. I could not go to college because of lack of money. I wanted to further my education. More Creoles are studying. There must be people to advise them. You lack knowledge. You don't know how to do. We did not have ideas, we could not think of business. My family lived from day to day. I could not have any dream. Our focus was on our everyday meal.

- R5 Creoles have lost their family tree. They have lost their names and have been given other ridiculous names. They have no Chamber of commerce, no economic centre.
- R6 There are still many families from slave ancestry who don't even have a house today. Indians came for sugar cane field work and they had priority to have lands. Creoles were left behind. They struggled but had nothing and still have nothing. Creoles are those who don't have houses. The land they lived on was not theirs. They lost it. Many families have lost their lands. We must do research. I have moved 14 times in my life because of cyclones. Today I have a small *cité* house. Mother bought it after cyclone *Gervaise*. I have lived in that house for 33 years, but we don't possess it fully because we are still paying for the land. There were 80 houses; these were the first houses to be built after *Gervaise* (*Lakaz letaz* - Storeyed House). It was a "sample". People have become owners of their houses 50 years after Carol. Housing is a serious problem. Some children cannot buy land, it is too expensive. And there are too many people on the list.
- R9 Slavery had an impact on us. This is the history of my ancestors, they were living in their country, they worked, risked their lives, fought, lost their loved ones. To be healed from that, it needs time. They liberated themselves, created their language, and invented their music to fight the harshness of life. Segá is the intelligence and sweat of our ancestors to regroup and express the hardships of life. Their descendants still suffer from these wounds. They had no one to advise them as indentured labourers had. The French colonists educated the children they had with slaves but there were barriers between those categories of descendants. They are not liberated at 100% today. There are not enough advisors today. I have three children. I want to advise them for a job. Who will I turn to to know about that? How to help orientate them professionally? Creoles that have succeeded don't help others. Other communities do that.
- R12 and R13: Poverty is a consequence of slavery.
- R16 As slave descendants, we have inherited nothing, no land, no economic power. 80% of land belongs to white people. Indians are organized since 1913; they had experience in economic development. Creoles did not have that experience. They were destitute.
- R14 Consequences are hard - My biggest suffering is in the lack of self esteem. Because my father was mazambik, my mother's family rejected him. Creoles still have disdain for themselves. He cannot accept himself. It's a bad start in life. It has been hard for slave descendants, because the slave system is an economic system. The Catholic religion is the official religion of this system. 15 articles on Code Noir talk about the Catholic Church as a partner of this system. It is still damaging the descendants, by stigmatization. You remain *tikreol* for life whatever successes you have.
- R5 The negative role of the Catholic Church that has associated all that is evil with blackness.
- R16 Slavery is not the same as indentured labour - slaves did not have a salary - he has been snatched from his country and brought here.
- R8 "Long ago, we accepted totally and passively our marginalized situation. People had categorized us. There was reproduction of class and work, especially for boys who had to do their fathers' job. We were limited. Now there is emancipation.
- As a civil servant for 30 years, I lived that. I had to accept that other less qualified people than me were promoted before me. Now we fight

for our rights, because we have the same qualifications as others. We react. Creoles were accepting totally their situation. I think this is a sequel of slavery. It made us become obedient (servile). There was so much pressure on us to make us accept everything. After slavery this attitude became that of Creoles.

MANY OF THE RESPONDENTS ARE AWARE THAT SLAVERY HAS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE CREOLE MINDSET AND ATTITUDE TO LIFE AND HAS MADE HIM PASSIVE AND OBEDIENT FOR A LONG TIME. HE HAS LOST HIS SELF-ESTEEM, IS FEARFUL TO ENGAGE IN NEW PROJECTS, PRACTICE A DEEP AUTO-CENSURE ON HIMSELF, PARALYZING ALL HIS GOOD WILL AND POTENTIALITIES. THE PROFOUNDEST WOUNDS ARE INVISIBLE AND ARE ENGRAVED IN HIS PSYCHOLOGY. THE REPARATION WILL TAKE A LONG TIME.

The second main consequence is the lack of economic power and social mobility. It is very difficult if not impossible to come out of poverty and climb the social ladder if you have nothing at the start, not the slightest capital. Moreover, slavery and its effects have confined a large proportion of Creoles/slave descendants in the working class.

Property and housing: 300 years after French colonization and 162 years after the abolition of slavery, many very poor descendants of slaves and Creoles in general are still struggling to get a decent house.

Creoles did not have the economic expertise like Indians had. They had no leaders or counselors to guide them as in other communities.

R4 declared he could not have any dream. Creoles are criticized for their lack of aspiration, but the psychological impact of slavery and extreme poverty leave no room for that.

The Catholic Church was a partner of the slave and colonial system.

Slavery as a holistic system with a strong economic dimension must be treated in a different way than indentured labour to do justice to those who suffered from both systems.

#### WEST AND SOUTH WEST (BLACK RIVER AND SAVANNE DISTRICT) FINDINGS

When questioned on the legacy of slaves, the informants mentioned a form of 'couillonisme' (English. Translation Idiocy) and arrogance that the descendant of slaves have inherited from their ancestors and that they perpetuate. For them the Creoles are individualist and "pernickety" such as R6 talked of how there was and there is still cohesion among the Indo-Mauritians who value the importance of education and saving for tomorrow whereas the Creoles are not land owners because they sold their land. The latter are not far sighted and do not have the 'brains' to plan for future generations. Presentism is a philosophy of life that the Creoles (referring to the Creoles as descendant of slaves) have adopted. This philosophical approach to life is a generational transmission that dates back to slavery, when at the abolition of slavery the emancipated slaves adopted a hedonist lifestyle and did not regroup but were divided.

Moreover, based on R15 testimony, there is a generational transmission of jobs which is as well a legacy of slavery. The Indian indentured labourers did not come as slaves but to cultivate land and subsequently their descendants remained in agriculture while the Blacks work mainly in the construction industry as labourers and stone masons.

'...Et plus de Créoles, de noires, enfin je ne sais pas comment dire ça qui sont dans la construction.... Peut-être au fil de la génération si vous voulez, ils ont appris a... ceux qui savent cultiver la terre, ils ont appris de leur père, des trucs comme-ça à cultiver la terre, et ceux qui sont habitués a la lignée de la famille construction, ou peut-être aussi les échecs scolaire qui vous amène a ça...'11

(Eng. Trans.:...And more Creoles, Blacks, i do not know how to say that who are in construction...Maybe through generations if you want they learnt...those who cultivate

land, they learnt with their father, things like cultivating land and those who are through generations in construction, or maybe schooling failures that bring you there...)

All the people interviewed stressed that it is time for the future generations to get rid of this idiocy and arrogance that still hold them back. According to R6, the last five years has witnessed a change among the Creoles who have gained consciousness of the importance of education and of rectifying past mistakes. They also stressed the need to recognise the history of the slaves

#### NORTH (PAMPLEMOUSSES AND RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

There is a generational transmission of menial jobs because as reflected by the life histories of the informants, they stopped schooling at a young age to start working. For example, R6 and R13 stopped schooling after Standard 6 and Form 2 respectively because of financial problems. They were poor and education was not free at that time.

For the informants, although illiteracy is present in all ethnic groups who are illiterate yet Creoles are mostly illiterate because in the past they did not have the opportunity either to go to school or to continue schooling. While for some they do not feel ashamed of being illiterate for others they see it as a shame such as R12 and R8:

'...non li pa normal li pa normal parski mo mem mo pa kon lir ester mo sagrin parski parfoi mo dir mo tifi get sa pou moi get sa si 1 zournal mo pou dir li lir sapou moi mo truver lir li bien inportan aster...'<sup>4</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...No it is not normal, it is not normal because me too I do not know how to read now I am sad because sometimes I ask my daughter to look at that for me if it is a newspaper I will ask her to read it for me I find that read is very important now...)

#### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

As per the answers of the respondents, one can say that they had never looked at this dimension of slavery in terms of contribution. If they find a contribution, it is at the personal level, that is in the transmission of a craft and also a cultural heritage (music)

Politically, they feel the Creoles are not represented. There is a lack of persons who put pressure on the political authorities. Politicians only come to them at elections time. For Pour R18, Sylvio Michel represents the Creole community. The descendants of slaves who enter politics end up like all politicians, looking after their own personal interests R17 is a member of FCM for she wants to militate for the uplifting of the Creole community, R25 is a member of l'Organisation Fraternelle. Except for R21 who does not vote, the respondents do not cast their vote according to the ethnicity of the candidate

Economically, even if many agree that the Creoles are poor, they don't deny the fact that poverty hits all communities. Poverty is material (lack of food, of decent lodging) and the reason why they are trapped in that spiral is through lack of education. R1 believes that the descendants of slaves had been kept away from progress through lack of education but also because many had come to accept their situation.

For R2 the Government had not played its role of supporting the Creoles, the Catholic Church too.

Hence though many have studied, it's difficult to get a job in the civil service.

R21 «Kreol pa gagn travay dan gouvènmàn» (Creoles do not get jobs in government service) or R26: «Fode ena inpe kouler pou gagn enn travay» (You need to be light skinned to get a job). They are conscious that even though everyone has access to education, access to work is not equal.

However, R25 and R12 believe «travay ena, dimounn ki pa le travay» (there are jobs but people do not want to work).

The retired persons are grateful to the government for the old age pension.

R26 “aster mo erez dan mo vie zour”. (Now I’m happy in my old days)

Few consider themselves as poor for compared to their past life, today they have a house and enough to eat even though some have difficulties making ends meet.

The living conditions of the past have left a deep imprint on them. Many speak of the Second World War era where food was rationed. Besides this period, their food consisted of manioc, sweet potato (which grew up in the courtyard), mashed up maize, «kanbar sousou», fish for those who lived on the coastal area, and green leaves

Some added that at the time everything they consumed was fresh and perhaps that’s why there were less diseases. The dishes were cleaned with ashes which were left in the hearth. The houses were made of cowdung. Many respondents were nostalgic of the times when they themselves fetched the cowdung. That was part of their weekend walks during their childhood. Another fact that certainly left an imprint was the *baydoun*. If in villages the latrines were the water closet, in the towns there were the *baydoun*, those prisoners who came each morning to fetch the excreta. R19 has even kept a recipient. Medicinal plants made up their pharmacy: Ayapana, citronnelle, boileau, «fandamann», «fey tourtrell», «liladpers».

Culturally, they all agree that music, the sega is a heritage from their slave ancestors. R21 thinks we are losing this heritage, this *sega ravanne* culture as today other instruments are used.

#### UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

This whole section of the questionnaire on contribution of slaves to economic, political, social and cultural life in Mauritius was very difficult for the respondents. Most of them did not understand what was being expected of them and it was impossible to put the questions in such a detailed manner.

## 7. CULTURAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The way the question was put was not easily understood by the respondents. The notion of “contribution” was understood as a “payment” slaves paid and it was clear that this was impossible. Many understood that the question was about their actual economic situation and it was quite impossible to make them say anything on the topics concerning contribution of slaves.

Generally few respondents have a reflection on politics and when they have one, it is about the post-Independence politics and not about the contribution of slave. It seems that they cannot imagine that they can be part of decision-making

It was evident that respondents had never thought about that dimension, though all a large proportion of them know that their fore parents have worked very hard. This is perceived rather in terms of class relationship with White people. They were the have-nots who had to work in harsh conditions, but they have not reflected on their slave ancestors as having contributed to the development of Mauritius.

One respondent, R14, stated that “by their forced work, slaves developed the country. They have largely contributed to nation-building: there was a time not too far away when most teachers were slave descendants and have educated children from all walks of life. There is a need to acknowledge that contribution.”

R10 Slaves have worked hard.

R26 “When slaves came, there was nothing. They did the hardest work in the beginning. Under the lashes, they did everything that had to be done. Then others came to work. We cannot forget that they were the first to toil the soil of this country. Their work is not acknowledged. Creoles themselves have no recognition, whereas they have been the first to come here. Today Creoles have no place.”

See the FINDINGS on the life history and the consequences of slavery as regards to economy.

### CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION

Kreol language must have its place in social life.

R5 The heritage is Sega, ravann, triangle makalapo, zez, banbou, bobre. Many instruments have been lost. People expressed their lives through onomatopoeia; He was crying on his misery. I have found these instruments back and put them back in our culture. Culinary heritage: galet manioc, etc. Young people don’t know. Creole used to do “mafât” (kind of galette in earthen oven); Zendwi: galantine ou tête de porc, andouille boucanée. Keep fish fresh in charcoal dust in a box. Old technique.

R7 I was a teacher and considered as an intellectual and I sang sega considered a low class cultural trait. Sega is our Mauritian folklore. People liked my songs. I composed Lil Moris mo zoli pays, Zarina and Mme Eugène. They became a disk. Mme Eugène became a big success. I had an ulcer. When I was well, I went to P. Laval. Cocono pa le mor. I was greeted everywhere. (...) I always wanted to know what had happened in the past and what will happen in the future. When I went to Paris, I went to cultural places: libraries, museums. Same in England and Italy. When I began with sega, I was encouraged by my parents and the public. I travelled a lot. I progressed. I researched on sega, the most Mauritian thing that exists. I think I have slave ancestors from what I have read. Sega helped me to know the history

of my country. I went to archives to know where I came from. Lebrasse in Bordeaux University. The first French Lebrasse who came to Mauritius came from Bretagne and he met a slave. There is a lot of phenotypes in my family. We adapt with different languages and milieus. Creole culture is open.

R14 Creoles have contributed to the language and lifestyle adopted by all Mauritians.

R26 Creole culture is the biggest contribution of Creoles to Mauritius, because it was created here.

#### SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

R8 I have done social work with poor people for 15 years.

R12 Creoles do a lot of social work, visit poor and sick people etc.

R15 I do a lot of social work.

R16 I do a lot of social work and I think a lot.

#### POLITICAL CONTRIBUTION

R14 Creoles are despised because they voted against Independence but this must be analysed in context. The Labour Party was founded by slave descendants. My father was member of the Labour Party. Because of the struggle of port workers, social and work laws have progressed. In Free Zone and tourism, black women were called "p" because they dared to work in these sectors.

Generally few respondents have a reflection on politics and when they have one, it is about the post-Independence politics and not about the contribution of slave. It seems that they cannot imagine that they can be part of decision-making. They are preoccupied with basic necessities and the economic dimension of their lives.

The role of politicians is severely criticized. Government is seen as being partial. There is wide corruption.

#### WEST AND SOUTH-WEST (BLACK RIVER AND SAVANNE DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

The testimonies diverged on the recognition of the contribution of slaves with some recognising the participation of the slaves to the development of the country

All informants mentioned that the slaves contributed to Mauritian cultural life with the creation of the Segga music and dance, art and creativity, Mauritian cuisine and food habits even if they have evolved and also with the ascription of Le Morne Mountain as a world heritage site. In line with R6 testimony, Creole use skills to express themselves through music and partying and these things are 'in their blood' but blood washes away quickly because people are mixing more. These skills are integral to Creole customs. Along this line the informants give to the Creole customs and musical skills biological underpinnings as if they are within people's blood and genes and with mixed relationships increasing, people are mixing their blood and hence skills are not transmitted to future generations.

But few people made the correlation between the island's cultural patrimony and local economy. Also, when referring to the cultural legacy of slaves, many mentioned the architectural heritage with the Cathedral, Martello Tower, churches such as the Church of Cassis, the Citadel and other stone buildings as being the tangible inheritance from the slaves and old jobs that have disappeared

such as stone cutters, charcoal makers, sugar cane labourers and wood cutters. In people's collective memory, the architectural patrimony dating backing to the French and English colonial periods are legacies of the slaves as for them the legacy of slaves and of slavery are same.

'....Zot '....Zot inn travay bokou, zot mem bann premie planter kann; o fe zot inn fer tou devlopman me ki san ki zot kone ki zot pe fer parksi zot ti bizin zis pou planter, zis pou fer sa...kinn devlop pei, kinn fer tousala. Parski kan zot komans plant kann-la, inn komans vann kann-la inn gagn kas, inn trouve enn bon zafer. Ler-la komans fer bann indistri fer li pli gran tousala. Me inn komans par zot, bann esklav.... Nou pli gran kiltir se la dans, la sanson. Parski Kreol lontan, esklav li ti kominik par sante, par ravann. Se par sa fason-la ki nounn kominike, anfin dapre seki mo'nn aprann. Se sa ki nou veritab kiltir se la dans, nou exprim nou par ladans, par la sanson...10

(Eng. Trans.:...They worked lots, they are the first planters; they unconsciously did all the developments because they had to be planters only, only to do that, they are the one who developed the country who did all that. Because when they started growing and selling sugar cane, they earned money and found it a good thing. Then they started developing bigger industries. But it started with them, the slaves...Our greater culture is dance and songs. Because Creoles before, the slaves communicated by singing, by *ravanne*. Based on what I learnt it is by this means we communicated. This is our real culture it is dancing we express ourselves through dancing and singing...)

Based on R4 and R5 testimonies, our cultural morals and values are a legacy of the slaves. For them we have preserved the ways of living like the slaves without being savages but civilised people. Such a statement is anchored in and brings back the perception that traditions and practices that slaves brought with them and perpetuated were barbarian as they did not conform to western ones. Only western and traditional practices, norms and values were considered as civilised because civilisation was and is still associated to westernisation.

There is a commonly held belief that the ancestral culture of the slaves was eradicated by Christianisation but from the testimonies it transpires that traditional practices and values survived but under modified forms which constitute Creole culture. They all mentioned the need to recognise the history and cultural heritage of the slaves.

Although for some the slaves and descendants of slaves have their input in the economic and political life of the country, they were unable to explain and identify their contributions. Few mentioned that the descendants of slaves participate in political life of the country either by making requests to the government or by voting. For example, for R9, the political contribution of the slaves was through the political involvement of the Creoles like Guy Rozemont, Balancy and Sylvio Michel. For others, the slaves and descendant of slaves contributed the cultural life of the island only.

The responses to the questions on the participation of slaves and slave descendants to the economic, social, cultural and political development of Mauritius indicated that for people these spheres are not interconnected but rather distinct and isolated. Only some informants mentioned that the slave descendants contribute to the economic development of the country by working in the sugar industry as skilled workers and labourers and that the Mauritian culture underpins the development of the tourism industry.

Another contribution of the slaves that the interviewees mentioned and that we did not think of initially was their struggle for our freedom and that this fight is wherefore we gained independence and our rights. As mentioned by R12 and R13, if they had not fought for their freedom and against the slave system we would still be a colony. By struggling for their emancipation they fought for our independence. The Whites' domination resulted in the descendants of slaves gaining consciousness that they had no rights and subsequently they lobbied for their rights and their identity as Creoles. In a certain way, the slaves are perceived as the precursor of independence. 11 TJC

Only a few interviewees considered the Minister Xavier Luc Duval as an eventual representative of the Creoles descendant of slaves; but before doing so they need to see his track record. He has to show his ability as Minister of Social Integration and Empowerment. However, almost all the people mentioned the need to have a Creole at policy making level, in other works to have a representative at national decision making levels for the advancement of the Creoles. For them, as

long as they are under-represented in key and influential political positions, the Creoles will stay backward and underprivileged. This conveys the commonly held idea that above all politicians stand for their ethnic group and hence that they promote their community interest before that of their political party.

#### NORTH (PAMPLEMOUSSES AND RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

The informants recognised the contribution of the slaves and their descendants to the development and to the future of the island. For example R1 mentioned that the slaves did not only contribute to the construction of churches but she also believes that they gave the land in Saint Croix for the grave of Father Laval. They were hard workers, carrying heavy loads in the sugar cane plantations. The informants pointed out that they were the ones who developed the sugar cane plantations in the country such as R3 stressed that the history of the sugar industry is closely related to the history of slavery:

*'...Anfin mwa seki mo'nn tande seki bann legliz, bann legliz ki ena bann gran gran batiman kouman Notre Dame; Poudre d'Or tousala. Kan mo get sa bann legliz la mo panse bann esklav kinn fer sa...Be sem zot ed ki zot inn fer be zot mem kinn fer devlopman pei-la letan bann franse bann kolon ti amenn zot. Sem zot devlopman ki zot inn fer dan sa pei-la mo pa trouve apre. Nek apre kan linn aboli kinn ena enn levolisyon. Si mo pe lir, tosi to pe lir, nounn vinn egal...'*<sup>3</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:What I have heard is that the churches that have huge buildings like Notre Dame, Poudre D'Or etc. When I look at these churches I think the slaves built them. They are the one who developed the country when the French and the Colon brought them. These are the developments they brought to the country I do not find anything else. When it was abolished, there was an evolution. If I can read, you also you are reading, we are equal...)

Regarding the political contribution of the slave descendants, only R2 and R3 mentioned that they contribute politically by voting in the elections. By electing people of other communities as Ministers, that demonstrates that Creoles are not racists. For others, even though the slave descendants are represented at political level and have contributed to the local cultural patrimony, yet they are not sufficiently represented at social levels as they do not enjoy freedom of expression against the government.

There is a common perception that when the slaves came to Mauritius they had no culture as if they left their cultural traditions and practices in their mother land and cultural milieus, that they forgot all of their cultural customs and values when they landed in Mauritius and hence that they lived in a vacuum without any cultural marks. For example, Pierre stated that many slave descendants do not have a culture and do not know their culture. It seems that people have difficulties to conceive that slaves were cultural bearers and when they came to Mauritius they formed cultural units. They had to culturally adapt to communicate and survive. There were cultural exchanges and a syncretism of cultural elements to form common cultural practices shared by all such as the Creole language to communicate, the Segga dance as a communication medium and also traditional medicine as healing practices. From this blending of traditions and practices, new cultural forms emerged that over time evolved and changed for survival under modified forms. The slaves came from various regions of Africa and that is why according to R3 Creoles now are underprivileged and face so many problems because they do not have a homogeneous culture.

#### GENERAL FINDINGS FOR H, I, J, K

This whole section of the questionnaire on contribution of slaves to economic, political, social and cultural life in Mauritius was very difficult for the respondents. Most of them did not understand what was being expected of them and it was impossible to put the questions in such a detailed manner.

## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The way the question was put was not easily understood by the respondents. The notion of “contribution” was understood as a “payment” slaves paid and it was clear that this was impossible. Many understood that the question was about their actual economic situation and it was quite impossible to make them say anything on the topics concerning contribution of slaves.

Slavery is seen more in terms of suffering and forced labour than in terms of positive contribution to the nation.

There is deep ignorance of historical facts and so, very little to refer to

It would be tedious to make a list of the enormous contribution in terms of labour force of slaves and slaves’ descendants/Creoles. In the plantation sector, in sugar cane estates and textile and other factories (sack). In Free Zone and tourism. Listening to their life history would be enough.

The economic contribution is tremendous in the plantation sector, in sugar cane estates and textile and other factories (sack). In Free Zone and tourism, black women were called “putes” because they dared to work in these sectors.

Of course, this contribution is also invaluable and invisible because it is at the same time an artisan work and an artistic work, in different types of crafts, in the art of cooking, stone carving and building, woodwork and carpentry.

From everything that was said during the interviews, the contribution of Creole women has been underlined and it is tremendous. Women are in the forefront when it comes to acquiring land and houses, to provide for the basic needs of children, to make sure (as best they can) that their children get education.

Their contribution is also very important on the cultural level. The greatest contribution is the creation of the Creole culture itself. Culturally, they all agree that music, the sega is an heritage from their slave ancestors. R21 thinks we are losing this heritage, this sega ravanne culture as today other instruments are used.

Creoles have contributed to the language (Mauritian Creole) and lifestyle adopted by all Mauritians. Creole oral tradition, narratives, music, instruments, sega, danse, theatre, poems are a rich part of Mauritian culture. In sports and physical activities, Creoles are bright.

In the field of education and social work, Creoles have contributed and still contribute a lot.

In the political sector, Creoles are despised because they voted against Independence but this must be analysed in context. The Labour Party was founded by slave descendants. Because of the struggle of port workers, social and work laws have progressed. Almost all the people mentioned the need to have a Creole at policy making level, in other works to have a representative at national decision making levels for the advancement of the Creoles. For them, as long as they are under-represented in key and influential political positions, the Creoles will stay backward and underprivileged. This conveys the commonly held idea that above all politicians stand for their ethnic group and hence that they promote their community interest before that of their political party. Politically, they feel the Creoles are not represented.

## 8. LIFE IN *CITÉS*

### PORT LOUIS FINDINGS

- R1-R5 Considers life in the *cités* as normal where there live a majority of Creoles and poor persons who are often descendants of slaves.
- R6 The *cités* are linked in popular imagination to Cyclone *Carol* and the Creoles. Does not make a difference between the descendants of slaves who live in the *cités* and those who live elsewhere.
- R8 The *cités* are linked in popular imagination to cyclones and the Creoles.
- R9 Everyone lives there
- R12 Area where all communities can live.
- R13 Area where everyone gets mixed up.
- R14 Symbolizes life in suburbs of towns. Not necessarily linked to slave descendants but to those who are not rich.
- R15-R17 They are housing which the government offers for shelter. From a general point of view, according to the respondents, it's the poor people who live in the areas called *cités*. In these areas, each one looks at his occupation, some work, some do not. It's also seen as an area where lives namely the créole community.
- R18 The *cités* denote people who have been allocated by the state a place to live; they are more associated with poor people than to the vdescendants of slaves.
- R19 Thinks that the *cités* are inhabited by a majority of Creoles. Sees no difference between the descendants of slaves living in the *cités* and the descendants of slaves living elsewhere.

### UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

- R1 Place where persons in town that had difficulties were put. There are today organizations in the *cités* to improve things, especially with regards to poverty.
- R2 There is a majority of descendants of slaves in the *cités*
- R3 There are more Creoles in the *cités* though we find other communities
- R4 The majority of the inhabitants are descendants of slaves. People live like a big family.
- R5 The inhabitants of the *cités* live close to each other, like a family
- R6 Most of the inhabitants of the *cités* are Creoles, descendants of slaves.
- R8 The government has contempt for the inhabitants of the *cités*. They place there the delinquents.
- R9 Everyone lives in harmony. The poorest live there. There is contempt for the inhabitants of the *cités*
- R10 The *cités* are for persons that have no accommodation. The majority are Creoles but one finds all communities, except the Chinese.
- R11 Many descendants of slaves in the *cités*
- R12 For her, the *cité* is simply a home.
- R13 There are unfortunate people who live in the *cités*.

- R14 There are many descendants of slaves in the *cités*
- R15 The inhabitants of the *cités* are poor
- R16 In the *cités* everyone rubs shoulders with each other. The different communities get on very well
- R17 Life in the *cités* is difficult as there are problems like drugs but she likes the atmosphere of the *cité*
- R18 It's quiet place. It's 45 years since he lives there. There are many descendants of slaves in the *cités*. There is a difference between them and those from the coasts. The latter are badly dressed and have a different way of life. Does not think he could one day live in a coastal village.
- R19 Those who live in the *cités* have lost their home as a result of Cyclone Carol. There are many descendants of slaves in the *cités*. The people from the coasts are different from those of the *cités*. They are more hospitable. All her relatives live on the coast. She would have liked to live there.
- R20 The inhabitants of the *cités* are unlike those of the coastal areas. Their speech («Maybwa» for Mahébourg) and their mentalities are different.
- R21 A majority of Creoles live in the *cités*. The people of the coasts are different. Their way of life is different. They buy less than in the towns. One must be accustomed to that way of living to live there.
- R22 Many Creoles live in the *cités*. Had lived on the coast and can go back to live there again
- R23 There is a family life in the *cités*. There is mutual help. Many descendants of slaves live in the *cités*. Could live in a coastal village. «dimounn lakot konn fer lekonomi». (People there know how to save money)
- R24 It's after Cyclone Carol that the *cités* were built
- R25 Idem
- R26 There are many Creoles in the *cités*. It's after Carol that the *cités* were built. «Duval (Gaëtan) finn bien okip nou» Duval (Gaëtan) did look after us very well. (Could not live in a coastal village. *Dimounn lavil pli sivilize ki dimounn lakot.* (Townfolk are more civilized»)
- R27 In the *cités* there all communities, except the Chinese
- R28 There are many descendants of slaves in the *cités* but we also find other communities. The descendants of slaves of the *cités* are different from those of the coast.
- R29 There are many Creoles in the *cités*.  
Above all it's a place where it's nice to live. Many talk about as a family.  
The majority of the inhabitants of the *cités* are slave descendants  
A concentration of people who had lost all after Cyclone Carol  
Today we find other communities except the Chinese  
Those who live there do not think they could live in a coastal villages  
Stereotypes of people from the coast: Uncivilized, badly dressed, frugality, does not speak well  
Those who could live on the coast either have grown up there or had relatives living there.

## LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

- R3 People are ok in *cités*, they manage to live.
- R5 There are too many ghettos in Rose-Hill in contrast with these exclusive residential places as Balfour. These ghettos are the consequences of Carol.
- R10 I have lived in a *cité* for 22 years, there were lots of Creoles. I was ok. I have a good experience of life in a *cité*. I am still the same. People have prejudices on people in *cité*, but it does not correspond to the reality.
- R12 The majority of people in *cités* are Creoles. We have bad reputation but this is unjust and sad. I take care of young people suffering from alcohol or drug abuse and I help them. With the police, to get a job or to get married with someone outside, it's not easy. R24. If you called SAMU or a taxi, they do not want to come. In St. Pierre, there is a *cité* in which there is a price for Indians and a price for Creoles.
- R13 It's poor people who live in *cités*. If you know how to live, there is no problem.
- R14 I am close to poor people and people in *cités*. It's society that puts these people in ghettos. Then they get accustomed to it and cannot get out of it. They now auto-ghettoise themselves. Societal forces press them.
- R15 It's Creoles who live in *cités*. There are good and bad people and things. I live in a *cité*.
- R16 70% of Creoles live in *cités* because they don't own land. It's the way these *cités* have been built which is not good. *Cité Trèfles* was built in 1985; for 5 years you did not have water. It's in 1990 that they built a football playground. *Cité Mallory* is known as "*Cité Mal nourris*". I personally would not want to live in a *cité* because of the lack of space.
- R19 Poor people who have to live in *cités*. It's a post-Carol phenomenon.
- R26 *Cité* is a place where people live. If he has not been able to have another house, he has a cite house. But this must be a springboard for him. He must not be discouraged and stop striving for a better situation. He must not say I live in a *cité* so I live day by day. No he must use that as a springboard perhaps not for himself but for his children. He gives them education and tomorrow they can progress. They will not live eternally in *cités*.

Very few respondents know anything about Chagos or Ilois. In most cases, we could not interview the respondents on that item.

- R26 First and foremost, we are talking about people. *Cités* are just places where people live and these people happen to be among the poorest.

R3, R10, R12, R13, R15 stated that it is ok to live in cites. People manage to live.

Social responsibility in the problems of *cités*

People who live in *cités* are economically at the bottom of the social ladder. They are poor, have little or no education, are not qualified for the employment market though they have huge abilities and competencies which, in the actual social organization, are not acknowledged, cannot be assessed and receive no accreditation.

People have come to cites due to life problems. Cyclones (Carol, Gervaise) have destroyed their fragile houses and they have been forced to find new housing. Government has provided very small ready-made houses built in small areas, with few amenities, structural facilities and leisure opportunities.

As in any other poor group of people with no regular employment or economic viability, the people in *cites* have many social problems and have been tagged by the rest of society, with a snowball effect. This has largely contributed to the marginalization of these people. This in turn has reinforced the “tendency” of Creoles not to venture outside their known world, creating a “ghetto” effect.

#### GENERAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

First and foremost, we are talking about people. *Cités* are just places where people live and these people happen to be among the poorest

The *cités* are linked in popular imagination to Cyclone Carol and the Creoles People have come to *cites* due to life problems. Cyclones (Carol, Gervaise) have destroyed their fragile houses and they have been forced to find new housing. Government has provided very small ready-made houses built in small areas, with few amenities, structural facilities and leisure opportunities.

The majority of the inhabitants of the *cites* are slave descendants But Today we find other communities except the Chinese

The answers of the respondents of *Cité La Cure* show they do not have real problems as to social relations with persons from other ethnic groups but are globally conscious that the political issues related to the cultural diversity of the inhabitants are prone to create relational problems and tensions. For there is a family-life in the *cités*. There is mutual help.

People who live in *cités* are economically at the bottom of the social ladder. They are poor, have little or no education, are not qualified for the employment market though they have huge abilities and competencies which, in the actual social organization, are not acknowledged, cannot be assessed and receive no accreditation As in any other poor group of people with no regular employment or economic viability, the people in *cites* have many social problems and have been tagged by the rest of society, with a snowball effect. This has largely contributed to the marginalization of these people. This in turn has reinforced the “tendency” of Creoles not to venture outside their known world, creating a “ghetto” effect.

There are today organizations in the *cités* to improve things, especially with regards to poverty.

## 9. PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER ETHNIC AND CULTURAL GROUPS

### PORT LOUIS FINDINGS

- R1-R4 Thinks there is a good understanding among the groups. But the Creoles are at a disadvantage as regards the system.
- R6 Feels discrimination from Mauritians of other communities towards slave descendants.
- R7 Difference between Chagossians and Mauritians for the Chagossians are always struggling for their rights
- R8 Through work contacts are established
- R9 Had kept painful memories of interethnic riots of 1968 and distrust contacts with the others since.
- R10 It's politicians who always make distinctions while we are all Mauritians
- R11 Workplaces help to establish contact with others but there is a feeling that those who make up the majority community believe themselves superior.
- R12 Even if the cultures are different, contacts are fine in the workplaces
- R14 Considers everyone in the same way and keeps good relations with the others. Believes the workplaces favour interethnic relations
- R15-R17 The answers of the respondents of *Cité La Cure* show they do not have real problems as to social relations with persons from other ethnic groups but are globally conscious that the political issues related to the cultural diversity of the inhabitants are prone to create relational problems and tensions.

According to the informants, the inequalities that we see in the country are the consequences of the weight that dominant ethnic groups exert toward the more vulnerable groups

- R18 Considers there is no equality in Mauritius but is not conscious of having experienced personally discrimination because of his ethnic belonging.
- R19 Does not believe equality exists in Mauritius. «Seki ena pa konn bann seki pena». The haves do not know the have-nots.

### UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

Respondents have an understanding of the pluri-ethnic nature of Mauritius

1. Have no problem to mix other communities in their neighbourhood, in old aged clubs, in festivities, like marriage ceremonies. Though there are clashes at times, each one respects each other. But R21 adds «me si zot kav kwins ou, zot fer li».
2. In the interethnic classification they find that the Creoles are at a disadvantage and the Indo-Mauritians are privileged.
3. R16, R20, R26, R27, R28 know the Ilois but have never mixed with them. R21 knows the Ilois as he is a driver.
4. Very few know the word 'indentured labourer'. However they know the «coolie». For R23, «travayer angaze pa ti esklav». Indentured labourers were not slaves For R27, «azordi zot desandan minis, avoka. Zot, zot finn bien larg lasenn». Today their descendants are ministers. They've broken their chains all too well.

#### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

1. Whites are seen as being those who were responsible for the fate of slaves. They were cruel and arrogant. They are those who possess 70% of all lands in Mauritius; they have taken lands from Creoles. Médine Sugar Estate is cited as an example. Today Whites are still those who are the masters in hotels. Workers still suffer from them. Many respondents, specially the women, have worked “dan lakour blan”. Those who have French or white ancestors acknowledge it.
2. Indian, African and Malagasy origins are acknowledged.
3. Respondents stated that in their childhood life between people of different cultures was easy. Neighbours helped each other and shared. Now people are individualistic and tend to live inside their cultural group.
4. There is acceptance of Indian culture, as being part of Creole origins and part of multicultural Mauritius.
5. The unfair treatment of Creoles by Indian politicians and civil servants is severely denounced by respondents. Indians are seen as those who deny Creoles the right to exist and have access to social mobility. Indians are perceived as those who have taken a total control of political power in order to be the only group which benefits from the (economic) fruits of the development of the country.

Respondents have an understanding of the pluri-ethnic nature of Mauritius and have no problem to mix other communities in their neighbourhood, in old aged clubs, in festivities, like marriage ceremonies. Though there are clashes at times, each one respects each other. But R21 adds «me si zot kav kwins ou, zot fer li». If they can corner you they will.

Workplaces help to establish contact with others but there is a feeling that those who make up the majority community believe themselves superior.

6. In the interethnic classification they find that the Creoles are at a disadvantage and the Indo-Mauritians are privileged. The unfair treatment of Creoles by Indian politicians and civil servants is severely denounced by respondents. Indians are seen as those who deny Creoles the right to exist and have access to social mobility. Indians are perceived as those who have taken a total control of political power in order to be the only group which benefits from the (economic) fruits of the development of the country.
7. Whites are seen as being those who were responsible for the fate of slaves. They were cruel and arrogant. They are those who possess 70% of all lands in Mauritius.
8. It's politicians who always make distinctions while we are all Mauritian.

## 10. RACISM

### PORT LOUIS FINDINGS

- R5 Yes, feels there is still racism against dark skinned Creoles
- R6 There is still much racism in Mauritius against the «nasion» (Descendants of slaves.)
- R7 Marriage, way of life
- R8 Discrimination in the field of education and work
- R9 Has a feeling that there is much racism at the level of the civil service which does not recruit enough Creoles
- R10 One becomes racist when one sees discrimination against someone from his own community. Capitalism leads to racism
- R11 There is racism and discrimination in the field of work and employment
- R12 All the communities are faced with racism
- R13 Thinks there is much racism against the descendants of slaves. Defines racism as a form of discrimination and exploitation that those who possess (*bann ki ena*) towards those who do not possess (*bann ki pena*).
- R14 Yes there is racism but it does not affect only the Creole community.
- R15-R17 The three respondents from Cite La Cure do not deny the existence of racism emanating namely from cultural diversity. They mention at one time discrimination against dominated ethnic groups by dominating ethnic groups, at other time physical attributes. Indeed one respondent mentioned his preference for white skin and beautiful hair.
- R18 Thinks there is much racism in Mauritius, which is defined as contempt and exploitation by the powerful
- R19 Racism continues to exist in Mauritius because some think they are superior to others and ignore or despise them. But has no memory of having been personally victim of racism

Very few respondents know anything about Chagos or Ilois. In most cases, we could not interview the respondents on that item.

### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

- R1 Racism is visible in the field of work. There is discrimination against the Creole
- R2 There is discrimination against the slave descendant in the field of work
- R3 The rich are superior
- R4 Before there was racism but now it's better.
- R5 Racists Those who commit crimes, take drugs
- R6 Racism exists in Mauritius
- R7 The country is becoming racist
- R8 Racism is when one looks at someone through his appearance, according to his community
- R9 Racism exists. There is discrimination in jobs. Has still the feeling of bowing down to others

- R10 Does not think there is so much racism as there are less whites in Mauritius
- R11 More one is rich and more one is racist
- R12 Much racism in Mauritius. There is discrimination in all fields as people judge through appearance
- R13 The rich are more racist
- R14 There is racism because of wealth
- R15 Thinks in Mauritius one looks at skin colour before joining the others
- R16 Does not feel racism
- R17 Has suffered from racism. She went to an office where she was treated as «ti seve».
- R18 Even if in principle everyone is equal, there is racism. «Blan finn touzour dominn nou». There is racism when a distinction is made according to skin colour.
- R19 Everyone is equal but racism exists. He is called «Kreol mazanbik». Racism is identical to communalism. There are people who don't like «bann nwar, bann ti seve. Dan enn mem kominote kapav ena rasism. When the time for marriage comes then we see racism
- R20 There is racism even though everyone is equal. «Bann blan santi zot siperyer». Has a feeling that we cannot still live together
- R21 «Zis par parol ki tann dir ki dimounn ena mem drwa, dan lavi toulezour pa trouv li.» «Rasism ek kominalism se 2 brans mem pie».
- (Eng. trans. Only in words that we hear of equal rights for everyone, in daily life it does not exist. Racism and communalism it's 2 branches of the same tree).
- We see this at elections time. There is racism against the Creoles. His personal experience. Not situations which would have ended in physical fighting but humiliating situations where he was denigrated.
- R22 There no racism in Mauritius. Racists look at skin colour. It's money that is the source of all this. «saki ena lamone rest enn kote».
- Eng. trans. Those who have money live apart.
- R23 "Pena mem draw" (Do not have the same rights) Racism is different from communalism. Someone had once called him «Mazanbik». Skin colour is important in Mauritius and there are places where the descendants of slaves cannot reside.
- R24 Even if in principle everybody is equal, there is still racism. Had once heard the term communalism but does not know it's meaning.
- R25 Racism exists and it's linked with money.
- R26 Had suffered racism at school.
- R27 There is also racism among the blacks
- R28 Racism is a poison and it's an obstacle to entry to a job. Hs once suffered from racism at work. A Whiteman took off his hat aggressively and with force.
- R29 Racism exists «Dan Kreol ousi ena rasism» «Bann milat santi zot siperyer» (Among the Creoles too there is racism. The mulattoes feel superior.

«Racism, communalism are but words for the respondents. They have suffered from bad treatment because of their skin colour or their social conditions. That is why many associate racism with money. The term 'Mazanbik' or 'ti seve' are currently used to denigrate them. Their ethnic belonging is an obstacle to job access. Some point to racism in the Creole community

## UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

- R1 No racism - R5 no discrimination
- R16 How can Morne and other places belong to Blancs and we don't have access to those places? - R20 - R19 *Blancs* are racist.
- R8 A big suffering is that others talk about Creoles in a bad way. If someone is drinking, someone will say *Sa enn Kreol sa!* as if it is normal for a Creole to drink. Here is my own personal experience. I have a Hindu neighbor. One day she said *My husband and I we talk about you. Oh I said what were you saying?* She said *Yes we were thinking that you and your husband are like Hindus. Your husband does not drink, you are calm (reserved) people. I said But you know not all Creoles drink. She was prejudiced against us. When she learned that Creoles were going to be her neighbours, she thought immediately oh! They will drink and organize parties all the time. Often we hear this. On Easter Monday, my colleagues are surprised to see me work. They say Ta to pa enn vre kreol twa! They qualify us by bad things. It's normal for Creoles to be like that.*

Civil servant in 1970 when I became a civil servant, there were Creoles. By the end of the eighties, Creoles began to diminish as civil servants. There were lots of Creole working as nurses and doing night shift. Now Creoles are very few in the civil service. At the start of my career, it was ok, but when I began to progress, there were schemes from a Hindu superior. They are communalistic. To have promotion, you must fight a lot. But if you are passive, you will never be promoted. I retired prematurely because every time for a promotion, I had to fight. This is not normal. It was hard. No meritocracy. There are many injustices but as we are a minority, we are harassed verbally and in many other ways. My secretary was a Hindu. She put a *permanente* in her hair, she spoke French, all said she had become a *Créole*. We are excluded. They make us feel it is not natural for Creoles to succeed. It is frustrating."

- R9 "When I wanted to have a permit, others had and I did not, though I met all the requirements. As a Mauritian Creole, I see that Creoles are underrepresented in decision making bodies. There is a protection system. You have to know somebody to have what you deserve. When will we have leaders who will treat all Mauritians as Mauritians? My own experience is that there were many Creoles who were postmasters, in hospitals, had scholarships, and when Creoles go abroad they succeed everywhere in the world. Do people there implant a new brain in them? Here they don't have a chance. Creoles are blocked and are not given a chance to develop his potentialities. There is discrimination in Mauritius. When politicians speak publicly they say one thing, but when they have power they act differently. When I hear that politicians and deputies are coming in their region to meet their constituents, is that not corruption since I have to go to him to have a job for my son or parent? This is not right. This is *passé-droit*, corruption. For political reasons, or because you are so and so, or because you live in such a place, you are not treated in an equal manner. So many children from *cités* have done so many efforts, are blocked and discouraged and then find no opportunity. Sometimes those who help are evil people and they get lost. Mauritius could be a paradise. It would not be a "paradi an dey".
- R2 Discrimination is a strong word. I feel there is rather a lot of egoism, especially in political parties to preserve the cake for their members and not share with others. Lets us share amongst ourselves. Others will have bits and pieces. And this leads to exclusion. Creoles are those who lose and are prevented from having access to institutions, jobs, etc. Education opens

the door, but after that the door is closed and that brings revolt. So that's why there should be institutions to support young Creoles and help them. It's not easy for Creole families to finance their children's studies. They make a lot of sacrifices so there must be justice in the work field. That will motivate the younger Creoles. - R10 -

- R26 Creoles have no place, because they do not have employment in the public sector. I have applied for 12 years for a post in hospitals. I never obtained it. Other people were employed but I was not. At the end, I quit. Other Creoles like me have applied and we have not been employed. And when I look at these governmental bodies, there are no Creoles. Because they don't take Creoles. At times, they were saying that Creoles did not have education. But Creoles had Primary certificate. They could work as cleaners in hospitals but even these jobs, they did not get. There are 70% of other communities, Creoles are few. We are not asking for 70% of places but we could have 10%, 20%. This is INJUSTICE. It's normal for them to have more but we should be proportionately or justly represented.
- R14 In the Constitution, all citizens are equal. The problem is in the application of the law. In the course of our recent history, a communal-economic intelligentsia has implemented a system of recruitment, promotion and social mobility in society that has marginalized slave descendants. Some have been able to go through but the majority has been ostracized. This anti-African OSTRACISM (young mulattoe girls are secretaries in good jobs without qualification ) has been initiated by the emerging catholic non African bourgeoisie - it's only recently that African phenotypes young people have become visible in the private sector. This is reinforced by prejudices that are kept alive by those who see Creoles as an economic threat.
- R16 There was a turning point when MMM left power in 1982. There has been a new political ideology to favour Hindus and Muslims who are MSM. The civil servants are MSM people. They have set up a strategy to protect Hindus to isolate Creoles. This is discrimination. How about the Equal Opportunity Act? In our family, all of us have studied but none of us has had a job in government bodies. Why? Many have been forced to emigrate to get out of poverty.

#### Racism and communalism

- R3 - R4 worked as lab attendant and was paid as a labourer, was nominated at the eve of his retirement. His brother in the police force was never nominated and went to Australia.)
- R10 Racism among Creoles (class struggle)
- R7 his father was a shoemaker, his mother from a high class family)
- R18 -
- R13 No equal opportunities, no equal treatment.
- R24 get figur
- R6 We lived together long ago, but now everyone lives in his own group.

Racism is not really considered an issue by respondents. But INJUSTICE and GET FIGIR are denounced as being social and political evil which gangrene Mauritian life and affect Creoles.

These bad practices are supported by a wide range of PREJUDICES against Creoles that are publicly expressed by Hindus.

In the public service, the few Creoles who are employed are harassed verbally, are never promoted on the basis of meritocracy and are subject to punitive treatment. Frustration, discouragement, anger and finally resignation are the common fate of Creole civil servants.

There is a political reason and power struggle issue in that. For two of our respondents, a Hindu communal-economic intelligentsia has implemented an unjust system of recruitment, promotion and social mobility in society that has marginalized slave descendants.

#### EAST AND SOUTH-EAST (FLACQ AND GRAND-PORT DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

- R1 Hindus are too racist. They behave as if Mauritius belongs to them. Muslims are very generous persons. You go to them and they fill your baskets. Whites are very racist.
- R2 I haven't suffered from any form of racism and discrimination. Muslims are racists. They tend to protect Muslims only. Whites tend to always adopt a dominating attitude.
- R3 No discrimination.
- R4 No discrimination. However, he believes that racism exists and that Muslims are racist.
- R5 Some whites are nice, some aren't. They only protect whites. Some do cater for the poor. Even in Creoles, we find "white Creoles" who are fairer and are rich who are racists towards those who don't have.
- R11 No discrimination. dan tou, hindu ENA grand nation, ti nation, vaish ...Quatres coco pa invite banne ti nation, zotte préfère banne créole .  
Zot dire charmarre mangeur cochon. Among all, Hindus there are high caste, low caste, vaish. Quatres coco does not invite low castes, they prefer Creoles. They say charmarre eat pork.
- R12 No discrimination
- R14 No discrimination. «si ou in al cote sa indien la li dire moi manger et li aussi li vine manger cote moi, musulman la si linne fer brie mo pu aller mo pu manger, ou allé fer se ki nu content»  
If you visit this Indian he tells me to eat and he too comes to eat at my place; the Muslim too if he makes bryani, i'll go and eat; you go and do what you want.
- R15 racism Cuma dire moi mo ene créole mo pas ouler frekent ou... ti pe prend li mal, banne dirigeant l'église ki ti mette sa barrière la. Zotte panne explik dimune la kan ene dimune marie, ve dire ou reconnaitre un tel pour le pire et meilleur  
Racism is like I am a Creole I don't want to mix with you. It was taken badly; the Church dignitaries put up those barriers. They did not explain that when someone got married, you come to know such and such for the best and for the worst.
- R16 Racism exists. If i have my certificates, I won't get the job. There must be meritocracy. Creoles suffer from discrimination more than others.
- R17 blan Letan in née li ena so travail, avant ou gagne ene travail li bien difficile sa  
The white man when he's born has got this job; before you get a job it's very difficult

## WEST AND SOUTH-WEST (BLACK RIVER AND SAVANNE DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

The interviews made apparent that in Mauritius to succeed people need to be wealthy and that there are still people who work for 250 rupees for a day's work starting at 6 hrs 30 to 16 hrs. Discrimination, inferiority and superiority views and values are based on occupation, skin colour and name. The Indians and Chinese were abusive and manipulative with them. One of the reasons put forward for the over-representation of Creoles descendant of slaves in absolute and relative poverty is because when freed the slaves received no training and no education and were dispossessed of their land because they were illiterate and not long sighted and were deceived financially.

For example, Shirley's family had a plot of land in Piton which they lost and for Gabriel, the descendants of slaves are still trapped in the vicious circle of poverty as they are still being discriminated against, negatively stereotyped, victimised and considered as being inferior.

All the informants mentioned All the informants mentioned that they do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as others such as when job seeking, as potential employers will take into consideration names (which are religio-ethnic markers), promotional prospects in the public sector are difficult for the descendant of slaves (Creoles) and in hospital the health officers often speak ethnic languages instead of speaking Creole. All Mauritians should enjoy equal rights but there is favouritism. Also, there is a commonly held perception that Creoles are lazy but in fact they are intelligent but there is a form of intimidation exercised on them to make them feel that they cannot achieve success in life. For example, Harvey and Daniel pointed out that there are still submissive house workers who do not have the choice but to comply because they need to work to survive. People were not prepared for this sudden development boom that was too fast whilst people were still subservient in their mind. They are still submissive to the 'Whites', 'Blacks', Chinese (referring to Sino-Mauritians) and Indians (referring to Indo-Mauritians) because they lack education and training.

In the same line of thought, Paul mentioned that he feels that 'the others' do not want the descendant of slaves to succeed and that is why they ('the others') are not willing to recognise the history of slaves. When talking of the history of slaves, we should distinguish between the history of slavery which is rather the history of the slave system whereas the history of the slaves refer to the history of the people who were slaves such as their life histories. Based on the information gathered, what people are claiming is the recognition of the history of the slaves which implies looking at their experiences of slavery and subsequently of the slave system from the perspective of the slaves.

Daniel and Harvey two entrepreneurs in the construction industry highlighted that Mauritius has a high level of unemployment but we import labour not because Mauritians refuse to work or are lazy but because they refuse to return to slavery.

The government refuses to increase salaries as they do not know their value. For example, a gardener works for 3,500 rupees per month which currently is worthless and is merely slavery but without chains. For five years Harvey has been working for an estate in conditions of quasi-slavery, working for a meagre living only.

Furthermore, even though the government has launched various institutions and programmes for the social and economic integration of destitute people such as the Small Enterprises and Handicraft Development Authority, the National Empowerment programme, yet, as said by Harvey, the government discourages the small entrepreneurs to succeed in business. There is a boycott of small construction businesses/small contractors because they might develop into big construction companies. Also, they work for a profit margin of 2% and they have to pay 6% business taxes and 3% individual taxes. Hence at the end they work for almost nothing.

In light of both Harvey's and Daniel's testimonies, it seems that there is an 'entrepreneurial mafia' on the island that keeps businesses within the hands of a minority and with potential small companies seen as threatening competitors to big and medium enterprises. For this reason small business expansion should be retrenched so that the economy of the country stays within the hands of a selected and limited network.

From the interviews we can say that the Capitalist system in Mauritius is a legacy of slavery with the colonial mentality that manual workers should be kept in underpaid jobs and the descendant of slaves constitute the main pool of menial low paid workers. The poor become poorer and the rich richer leading to a polarisation of society.

#### NORTH (PAMPLEMOUSSES AND RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICTS) FINDINGS

1. For generations R1 family has been working for a sugar estate located in the north of the island. Her maternal grandmother and her great grandfather on her father's side and her mother were *sirdars* (English. Translation: overseer). She explained that the sardars were Creoles and Indians (referring to Indo-Mauritians) while the *colomb* (Eng. Trans.: overseer) were the Whites or Mulattos that were the proprietors of the estate. She testified that during her grandmother's period, the supervisors used to give instructions to the sardar to beat the labourers but when her mother was a *sirdarine* (Eng. Trans. Female overseer) they did not ill-treat the labourers. Her parents also told her that her great grandfather's supervisor beat him to death and to buy his silence the *colomb* gave him a plot of land on which her cousins are living now.
2. When questioned on the term 'Malaise Creole', R3 stated that initially it referred to the demands for the elimination of discriminations against the descendants of slaves. Education is one of the means for the social mobility of Creoles, for them to progress in life. His statement reflects the perception that Creoles are the only descendants of slaves that hence discarded those that are of non slave descent.
3. The informants working in the public sector testified experiencing racism with their colleagues being essentially Indo-Mauritians and those working in the private sector also mentioned being discriminated against such as R10.
4. '...nou pren 1 lexemple mo p dir ein si kumadir moi mo 1 kreol deza mai dison moi mo enan 1 plas 1tiper pli haut si pou enan si kumadir pou enan 1 hindou sa ban lexperiens ki moi mon viv ein si enan 1 hindou p vini kumadir sa si ena 1 lot hindou la li pou pren plis intere sa hindou la si enan 2 kreol la li pa pou get li li pa pou get sa kreol al sa moi mon truver sa...'5

(Eng. Trans. ...We take an example, I am saying if me I am a Creole but let say ilhave a higher job but let say there was a Hindu these are experiences I have lives if there is a Hindu let say another Hindu there he will take into consideration the interests of this Hindu if there are two Creoles there he will not take him into consideration he will not look at this Creoles this I have observed...)

5. During daily negotiations and inter-ethnic interactions, Jules feels that some groups think they are superior to others especially when they are 'en bande'. Inter-ethnic relationships are rooted in racism with the Creoles being victims of stereotypes. Racial segregation can be observed with people of same ethnic group regrouping in same region of the island.
6. For R13 racism permeates Mauritian society but Creole informants feel that mostly Creoles are discriminated against and especially those who are dark skinned with frizzy hair
7. '....enfin 1 dimun li poseder li enan 1 gran lakaz li tu mai kan ou dir li bonzour li get ou fran dan ou figir kumsa pena 1 repons penan nanien ou konpren mai pou moi li pa zoli... se sa 1 bonzour li pa kout nanien sa mo pan deman li 1 rupi pou moi li 1 bonzur 1 sourir...'6

(Eng. Trans. One wealthy person who has a big house but when you say good morning he looks at you bluntly in the face without any reply nothing, you

understand but for me it is not nice...a good morning costs nothing I did not ask him one rupee for me it is a good morning a smile...)

8. '...mon deza al rod 1 travai dan 1 magazin mo kamarad pli klair ki moi alors lin pren li mon pas avan lin dir moi pa p pren dimun mo dir mo kamarad pa p pren li dir moi lais mo al geter moi ler li al tan so san ban la pren li e ler mo geter tu ban blan ban klair klair lapo blan mem ki travai laba dan 1 magazin...'<sup>7</sup>

(Eng. Trans. I once went to look for a job in a shop my friend is fair skinned my turn was before her and they told me they do not employ people and i told my friend that they are not recruiting but she told me she will try and she was recruited when I observed all the whites and fair skinned work in shop...)

#### GENERAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Racism is not really considered an issue by some respondents. But INJUSTICE and GET FIGIR are denounced as being social and political evil which gangrene Mauritian life and affect Creoles. For others Racism, communalism are but words for the respondents. They have suffered from bad treatment because of their skin colour or their social conditions. That is why many associate racism with money. The term 'Mazanbik' or 'ti seve' are currently used to denigrate them. Their ethnic belonging is an obstacle to job access. Some point to racism in the Creole community Racism is visible in the field of work. There is discrimination against the Creole Creoles have no place, because they do not have employment in the public sector

These bad practices are supported by a wide range of PREJUDICES against Creoles that are publicly expressed by Hindus.

In the public service, the few Creoles who are employed are harassed verbally, are never promoted on the basis of meritocracy and are subject to punitive treatment. Frustration, discouragement, anger and finally resignation are the common fate of Creole civil servants.

There is a political reason and power struggle issue in that. For two of our respondents, a Hindu communal-economic intelligentsia has implemented an unjust system of recruitment, promotion and social mobility in society that has marginalized slave descendants.

## 11. EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

### LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS & PORT LOUIS FINDINGS

- R1-R4 Rather optimistic for self in the immediate future but expect a dark future for grand children.
- R5 Great improvement on the personal level and in a general way in relation to the past but thinks life will become more and more difficult in the future. Hopes the state looks a bit more at the slave descendants and their sufferings.
- R6 Life was much better before, even though we had few means and the future looks even more difficult.
- R7 Improvement in the life of the Mauritian in general but the youth will want more modernity.
- R8 The situation in Mauritius will deteriorate.
- R9 Pessimist vision of the future as there are no perspectives for the youth. Hopes that everyone treated equally.
- R10 The politicians have to contribute to ameliorate society. Hopes that everyone feels Mauritian above all.
- R11 People are becoming more and more intelligent but also more selfish. There is a need of more training and support to people who need it.
- R12 A change in mentality is needed. People are too selfish. There is a need to help the descendants of slaves to find their place in society. There are too many places where some communities are concentrated.
- R13 The future will be only for those who work. Hopes that all Mauritians, in particular the descendants of slaves find a roof and what to eat and drink.
- R14 On a personal level, for the time being everything is fine but the future generations will have to keep up through education and work to get out.
- R15-R17 The three respondents of *Cité La Cure* hope a better future for themselves namely on the economic and political levels for they have often a tendency to bring back the subject to their own person remembering the vicissitudes and difficulties they face daily. However their answers reveal also a form of lack of concentration due to fatigue, given the number of questions asked.
- R18 Is rather satisfied of his own situation but ask himself questions as to the future that awaits the youth. «Mwa mo pe ale, pa kone ki pe atann deryer».As to me, I am leaving; don't know what's waiting behind) Hopes there will be more understanding among each other.
- R19 The future is bleak for future generations. They will have to give much of themselves if they want to succeed («Zot pou bizin konn trase»). They'll have to find their way ...). Hopes there will be more equality in society.

## UPPER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

Table 11		
Hopes and expectations of descendants		
<u>Optimist</u>	<u>Dark future</u>	<u>Suggestions</u>
<p>R1 Is optimistic</p> <p>R6 Is optimist</p> <p>R11 There has been much progress (Il y a eu beaucoup de progress).</p> <p>R16 Hopes amelioration in his life and that he could enjoy more personal comfort</p> <p>R17 Optimist. A better life, comfortable with grandchildren</p> <p>R18 «Bann ti zanfan zot lavenir bon» Grand children's future good</p> <p>R19 The future is full of hopes</p> <p>R22 «lavi kouma li pe ale, li korek» Life as it goes is fine</p> <p>R26 «Moris plito bon azordi» Mauritius is rather fine today</p>	<p>R2 Encourages emigration to places where there are more opportunities. The future here is not bright à immigrer</p> <p>R3 Everyone looks after his own interest. Not much improvement in sight</p> <p>R8 Dark future for Mauritius</p> <p>R12 Thinks the situation will deteriorate</p> <p>R15 Situation is worsening because of modernity which increases the cost of living</p> <p>R20 La vie redevient difficile. Life is becoming difficult again</p> <p>R21 L'avenir est sombre. «Pli ale lavi pe vinn difisil» «Manze vann ser».</p> <p>The future is bleak. A time goes by life becomes harder. Food is becoming expensive.</p> <p>R28 A peur de l'avenir. Fears the future</p>	<p>R1 Have to change the perception of others. Need more education and training</p> <p>R6 Mentalities must change. Means should increase</p> <p>R11 Il faut porter plus d'intérêt aux descendants d'esclaves. There is a need for greater interests for the slave descendants</p> <p>R19 Il faut moins d'injustice, de corruption, de crimes. There must be less injustice, corruption and crimes</p> <p>R3 There must be a change among the leaders</p> <p>R8 All should get a job</p> <p>R12 Everyone should get a home</p> <p>R15 There must be less spending</p> <p>R20 There must a society where one feels secure</p> <p>R21 Would like to see the Creoles joining together</p> <p>R23 That everyone lives in a land of peace</p> <p>R24 « Tir sa mo esklav-la » Take out this word slave</p> <p>R25 There is a need for more equality</p> <p>R27 Look after the poor and destitute</p> <p>R28 A change in mentalities</p> <p>R29 «Kreol bizin sanz zot Creoles must change themselves mantalite»</p>

## LOWER PLAINES WILHEMS FINDINGS

- R2 Optimistic. But perhaps there is a problem with the Creole community. They need to be gathered not periodically but on the long run. Many Creoles are fed up with these so-called leaders. This must succeed someday otherwise this will seem a fatality. But I am optimistic because Creoles are still fighting and moving forward. *L'Union fait la force.*

I would like Creole intellectuals to show themselves and be examples to others. There is opacity on Creoles performance. We must show the beautiful and good things, successes of young Creoles. That will stimulate. If there is a Creole laureate, show it. Open new avenues,

inform about courses and training that can be followed, even in the Church. Give visibility to those good events. Don't stay in the dark.

There must be a change in mentality. Don't stay enclosed in ghettos. Open up. Creoles are open to others. They accept anybody. The doors of others are closed. They have to change. Creoles should not concentrate on the past. Look at the future. Not look always back in slavery but forward to the future.

R3 I don't know. Life is good, better than before but everything is expensive and it is hard to have money. Some Creoles are better off, others are poor.

R4 I want to see my children grow and do my job as a father. Creoles must do many efforts. Education is important. We must begin by education. Learn to save money. If you work and have money, you have to think of the future. You must have economic means.

R5 I wish that Creoles become more responsible of their future and that of their children. Unfortunately I see that these children around me will die in the ghetto. Their parents drink, smoke gandia, drug. Children drink alcohol. I don't see who will come and take them away from there. The Catholic Church must come to them in the *cité*. Who will save them? People must come to them. I am pessimistic.

I also see other Creoles. Mothers work in offices and *cybercité*. They have money and leisure, are a bit *francisé*. Those who go to l'Ecole du Centre and Lycée Labourdonnais will become elite. These children want to know their culture. So in the future, Creoles will be mi-elite and *mi-proletariat*.

R6 Mauritius should evolve. University and the employment market are not easily accessible to Creoles. Their efforts are not rewarded. They are discouraged. Many have to emigrate. Things must change in education and in the work market. Manual work should have a better social status. People work hard but cannot cope because everything is expensive. My children must work during the week-end also; otherwise they cannot cope with their salary to repay the loan for their house. To have a table or chairs, we have to get indebted and then work to repay. If we spare some money, it is for our health problems. Those in the low class cannot progress. It is very slow. Everyone is doing effort but little progress. I think training, formation is very important for manual work also. We need to have a part of the cake. Women want to better the life of their family. When young people don't have opportunities, they fall in drug, prostitution etc. We need to help them. Government should help. Families with young people in drugs cannot progress. It is not easy for those young to find help. Government should work for all the people, not for some people only. All should work together for our country. All children should have equal rights, food etc.

R7 One day Creoles will have a status. There is too much preference for Indians. But government will have to accept that Mauritius is for all.

R8 Creoles are progressing. There are a few Creoles in the University of Mauritius. Many are qualified but don't find jobs in the public sector. Creoles should be interdependent. Those who have succeeded should help those who need help. We cannot wait for government or others to help. We should organize to help others. The State has a big responsibility. As citizens we have rights. The State says but never does. ZEP schools have not progressed in any way. Those who are at the back stay at the back. My social experience proves that to me. We don't have the means to implement projects and initiatives. Creoles are conscious but more must think. In far away regions, Creole children are interested

to go to school. The education system must be revised. We Creoles have to go in poor regions to do something in the educational field. These children know only that environment. We should open their minds to other things. I don't expect much from government. The Ministry of integration has not done much. They have projects. These are implemented by people who have academic qualifications but no field experience at all. This does not work. They make bad decisions and people stay in their problems. Bureaucrats cannot change anything. They must go at grassroots level to know the real situation. Solutions are often inappropriate to people's needs.

- R9 Things can change but it will take time. The young generations will do it. We need people with a vision of Mauricianism, who will work for all people equally and do politics in another way. It will take time. Social justice, meritocracy, equality of chances, these are very important. We must be treated as human beings. Mauritius will be better.
- R10 For the future, Creoles can have jobs but it depends on others if they will give them. We must eliminate backing. Someone must stand for Creoles (leaders).
- R12 When I look back and today, Creoles work and think about their children's future. Solidarity is important. We must have our place in society and our part of the cake.
- R14 I cannot name people slave descendants. Because a slave descendant can be a businessman, a middle-class and have a piscine in his yard. But there are those who are poor economically. The process of "ghettoisation" will go on and on if we don't identify the true causes to be able to bring these people out of poverty, and if we don't have an efficient housing policy. Promiscuity is a big problem 3 and 4 generations are living in the same small house. Government does not look into the problem. If this is not coupled with a decent work, all his life will be precarious.
- R16 Creoles must be sensitized. The future depends on each Mauritian and on intelligent politicians. We are living in a paradise. In Europe, in Africa, life is not easy. Creoles must provide education for their children and government must give them work.
- R19 The future of Mauritius is good. I trust my government.
- R20 In ten years time, Mauritius will drown. Creoles must start saving, make plans with their money and provide books for their children.
- R23 If it goes on, Creoles will wait for a Moses - I prefer to work rather at grassroots level with people rather than look up to a leader.
- R26 Even with the new generation of politicians, it's the same thing. I had hoped it would be different (the unfair system), but they act in the same way. They have education but the same mindset as the previous generation.

Creoles are more conscious. They know who they are and can be more affirmative. They give education to their children. They have courage to go forward. If Creoles continue their efforts, by his own means, he will progress. He must take his destiny in his own hands. It will not be easy for him, to have a job in public sector etc, but he must not expect that. He can be disappointed. But if by his own means he gives education to his children and do other things, he must count on himself and not on others. We can progress. Education will help a lot. We don't have to become laureates, but do our very best.

Creoles must not get discouraged; they must take their destiny in their hands and progress. Perhaps he will not go to the University of Mauritius, but there are other possibilities today. If he saves, he can find alternative means here, there are educational schemes that help. They must seize all opportunities. They must not focus on what they do not have, but on what they can have.

The vision of respondents concerning the future is realistic. There is a fair bit of optimism because of the efforts already being made by a large number of Creoles. Creoles are more conscious. They know who they are and can be more affirmative. The Creoles are open people; this is a precious value. Creoles are more sensitized they know the value of education, think about their children's future, spare money and work hard.

But Creoles do not possess sufficient economic power.

Those in the low class cannot progress. It is very slow. Everyone is doing effort but little progress. Things can change but it will take time.

Children and young people in *cités* are having lots of problems. They need help and don't get it.

Families with young people in drugs cannot progress.

The process of "ghettoisation" will go on and on if we don't identify the true causes to be able to bring these people out of poverty, and if we don't have an efficient housing policy. Promiscuity is a big problem 3 and 4 generations are living in the same small house. Government does not look into the problem. If this is not coupled with a decent work, all his life will be precarious.

Things can change but it will take time. There must also be changes in the socio-economic and political organization of the country.

The future depends on each Mauritian and on intelligent politicians.

Social justice, meritocracy, equality of chances are very important. All people should enjoy equal treatment. Creoles need to have a part of the cake.

We need people with a vision of Mauricianism, who will work for all people equally and do politics in another way.

Backing must be eliminated. Government should work for all the people, not for some people only.

Things must change in education and in the work market.

Manual work should have a better social status. Training, formation is very important for manual work also.

1. Economic- Descendants need education to get out of poverty
2. Social - A change of mentality is necessary and they must be better perceived.
3. Political - They need deserve more from the political class.

There must still be a change in mentality and attitudes:

- There must be more sensitization among Creoles.
- Creoles need to be organized. Solidarity is important. They need to be gathered not periodically but in the long run.
- Creole intellectuals must be role-models.
- Creoles should be proud of their achievements and make them visible. That would be stimulating for others.
- Creoles should open themselves up more.
- They should give less importance to the past and look forward on the future.

- Creoles will wait for a Moses - I prefer to work rather at grassroots level with people rather than look up to a leader.
- There must also be changes in the socio-economic and political organization of the country.
- The future depends on each Mauritian and on intelligent politicians.
- Social justice, meritocracy, equality of chances are very important. All people should enjoy equal treatment. Creole need to have a part of the cake.
- We need people with a vision of mauricianism, who will work for all people equally and do politics in another way.
- Backing must be eliminated. Government should work for all the people, not for some people only.
- Things must change in education and in the work market.
- Manual work should have a better social status. Training, formation is very important for manual work also.
- Behind all these aspirations, there is a fundamental one: Creoles must be treated as human beings and fully-fledged Mauritians.

## 12. GENERAL CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Oral Research History project has unraveled the perceptions of respondents who consider themselves as slave descendants from various regions of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Chagos as to a series of fundamental issues identified by the Truth and Justice Commission.

Above all it has revealed the existence of a community that is proud of its identity and its achievements despite the acute poverty and deprivation that have characterized its forebears. Though it has revealed no clear definition of what is a descendant of slave, yet there is a strong feeling that Creoles are the descendants of slaves, despite the mixed origins of many from the community.

This research has also shown that within the community, knowledge of family history and of ancestors is rather blurred. However, there is a strong belief that many members of this group have been spoliated of the lands they once possessed and that reparation is necessary.

In terms of identity, though they consider themselves Mauritians, they are proud of their slave ancestry and achievements, economic, social and cultural. Moreover, they have no deep resentment against any ethnic group in particular and understand the plural nature of Mauritian society.

However, there is very strong resentment against discrimination and racism which debar them from access to jobs, especially in the civil service. There is also a feeling of under representation at political/decision making level. This is accompanied by a general mistrust towards the political class.

In general, their expectations for the future are realistic. Education is perceived as the key to the way out of poverty but there is the need for government affirmative action's and greater internal solidarity and organization for empowerment of the group.

This research has targeted mainly the older generation. The same research could be carried among the younger generation for a comparative study. Moreover, cultural, linguistic and intangible heritage have not been explored in depth but could be the object of a further study. Likewise, the mixed origins and cross-cultural exchanges affecting the group could be investigated in detail.

# FROM SLAVE CAMP TO CITÉ: LA MIVOIE

SOPHIE LE CHARTIER  
*Researcher, TJC*

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Photo 1 Cité La Mivoie - typical 1960s house made with asbestos panels



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/PH 39/P/LaMivoie/10May2010

Photo 2 Inside View of Cité La Mivoie



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/PH 39/P/LaMivoie/19May2010

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## GLOSSARY

Bonhom and Bolom: Old man

Boutik: Shop

Brize: Clearing in the wood

Chassée: Hunting grounds

CHA: Central Housing Authority

Cité: Low Cost Housing Estate

Concubinage: Cohabitation

Kan: Camps

Kanal: Canal

Karo: Plantation

Ladig: Dam

Lakaz Lamiant: Asbestos houses

Longère: Longhouse

Pon: Bridge

Morcellement: Residential development

Sime: Road or path

Tabagie: Small Retail Shop

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report falls under Project 4 of the Truth and Justice Commission (TJC) entitled: Culture, Ethnicity and Identity. It is a multi-disciplinary study of Cité La Mivoie and aims at assessing the social and economic conditions of the residents of the Cité La Mivoie also known as *Cité* EDC Grande Rivière Noire.

It is a low cost housing estate situated on the western coast of Mauritius in the Black River District. It is located at the southern end of the village of Grand Rivière Noire, before the village of Petite Rivière Noire.

To meet its objectives, this research intends to answer the following guiding questions: (1) Are the social and economic conditions of the residents of Cité La Mivoie better than in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? (2) How has the *Cité* evolved since the time of slavery to the present day? (3) Have the job patterns evolved since the time of slavery and indentured-ship or are the inhabitants still performing menial jobs and adopting a subservient attitude towards the wealthier residents and new owners of the luxury residences? (4) What can be done to improve this situation?

In line with the objectives of the research, this report is divided into two parts. The first part is a historical survey of Cité La Mivoie and the second part is a social and economic survey of the *Cité*. The report concludes with recommendations to improve the social and economic situation of the local inhabitants.

The social survey focuses on the social life in Cité La Mivoie in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of, firstly, the social organisation in the *Cité*, secondly, the ethnic relationships within the housing estate, thirdly, the gender relationships and family patterns in the *Cité*, fourthly, the settlement in Cité La Mivoie, fifthly, its housing conditions and sanitation and finally the social conditions of the residents.

This social survey reconstructs the social evolution of Cité La Mivoie from the perspective of the local population aiming at assessing the local social conditions and identifying the social problems the residents are presently facing in order to make recommendations to address the problems identified and ultimately improve their social conditions.

The economic survey focuses on the economic life in the *Cité* in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of, firstly, the infrastructural development of the village of Petite Rivière Noire and the *Cité*, secondly, the occupation patterns in the housing estate during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thirdly, the educational patterns within the *Cité* and finally other economic problems that the local residents are facing.

This economic survey reconstructs the economic evolution of Cité La Mivoie from the perspective of the local population and aims at assessing the local economic conditions and identifying the economic problems the residents are presently facing in order to make recommendations to address the problems identified and ultimately improve their economic conditions.

Field research concluded that Black River village is at a transitional stage facing a population expansion with the mass influx of human resources as well as economic resources. High population density will in the end cause more economic problems related to security, space and natural and environmental resources.

Albeit, some local inhabitants have seen an improvement in their standard of living and there is a situation of quasi-full employment in Cité La Mivoie, yet, this pseudo development does not benefit everyone. The residents of Cité La Mivoie are facing the negative effects of these developmental projects.

This report concludes with recommendations for improving the social and economic life of the *Cité* residents and for the preservation of the local tangible and intangible heritage to ensure that the history of the residents' ancestors do not go in oblivion and ensure that the memories of their ancestors remain alive.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Cité La Mivoie also known as *Cité* EDC Grande Rivière Noire is a low cost housing estate located at the southern end of the village of Grand Rivière Noire, in Black River District. (See Appendix 2)

Black River District is the third largest and longest district of the Republic of Mauritius, encompassing an area of 346 Km<sup>2</sup> over a distance of more than 60 km with a population of approximately 74,572<sup>1</sup> that represents approximately 6% of total population living in Mauritius.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to state the exact number of people residing in Cité La Mivoie as all figures available give aggregate statistics for Grande Rivière-Noire VCA whose population in 2000 amounted to 2,042<sup>2</sup> (1,010 males and 1,032 females) and the population density per km<sup>2</sup> was 47.4<sup>3</sup>. As at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009, the local population was estimated at 2,571<sup>4</sup>.

However, based on the electoral list of 2010, the resident population in the *Cité* was estimated at 5,000. Statistics on Grande Rivière-Noire VCA are included in this report for referencing purposes only and it should be emphasised that they do not reflect the social and economic reality of the *Cité*. Established in October 1989, the Black River District Council Area is the youngest local authority composed of 13 Village Councils Area (VCA). Prior to its setting up, under the French period, Black River was a division of the Plaines Wilhems district and, later, the district was under the jurisdiction and administration of the Moka/Flacq and Grand Port/Savanne District Councils respectively. The *Cité* (Eng. Trans. Low Cost Housing Estate) falls under the administration of the Grande Rivière Noire VCA.

As per the Local Government Act of 1989, every five years the villagers in accordance with the Representation People Act elect the village councillors. The chairperson and vice chairperson of the council are elected, by secret ballot, by the members of the village council during a special meeting convened by the chief executive of the district council.

The southern part of the district is known to be among the poorest localities of the island in terms of social and health conditions such as sanitary, infrastructure, academic achievements and economic and employment opportunities as illustrated in Map 1 below.

According to inhabitants' testimonies, the region and the local population have, for years, been stigmatised by people living in other parts of the island, as the 'back country' populated essentially by Mauritians presumed to be the descendants of slaves and of the maroon slaves. There is a shared feeling that this stigmatisation has, for many years, negatively impacted on the local social and economic evolution as illustrated in Marie Michele's testimony below:

...parce que tout le monde sait qu'à Rivière Noire c'était majoritairement des Créoles tu vois et tout le monde savait à cette époque là et que c'était considéré comme un endroit défavorisé et que, comme si que c'était pas que ma personne, c'était, parce que ce que j'étais...<sup>5</sup>

(Eng. trans:...because everyone knows that in Black River it was in majority Creoles you understand and at that time everyone knew that it was considered an underprivileged area and that it was not just me, it was because of who I was...)

### 3. BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Black River was commonly perceived as being a land of predilection for the maroon slaves and as being inhabited by Mauritians of Afro-Malagasy origins that, subsequently, led to its exclusion and marginalisation by the colonial and postcolonial society. The socioeconomic conditions of northern and southern Black River differed and after emancipation the district experienced demographic changes:

The Northern part benefitting from better water supply, more roads, and large plantations developing into sugar plantations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Southern Black River which starts from the village of Black River going southwards, the story is very different. There were few roads; it was dry with little major economic activity except for the large estates which did not necessarily produce crops because of lack of rainfall and small scattered populations. The state of health was a preoccupation throughout its history as was the problem of communication... (Teelock (2010, p. 51),

According to Teelock (1998), in 1806, 1826 and 1832, the slave population in the Black River district amounted to 4,687; 5,397 and 4,429 respectively.<sup>6</sup> In 1831, the number of slaves in Black River amounted to 4,642 slaves of which 2,926 were men and 1,716 were women. There were 264 French settlers and 588 'Free Blacks'. At the abolition of slavery, in 1835, most inhabitants (French and Coloured) were still living in the region and between 1835 and 1935; about four percent of the ex-apprentice population of Mauritius lived in Black River.<sup>7</sup>

Emancipation led to the emigration of two-thirds of the slave population out of the district. 'As the Stipendiary Magistrate stated, only one third of ex-slaves were left and were replaced by other ex-slaves from other districts as well as by indentured immigrants. However, their exact location is not known. We know they left the large estates because returns from these large estates show only a handful of ex-apprentices listed as working there. Stipendiary Magistrates also reported that few wanted to stay on large plantations, but they probably stayed close to smaller estates or moved to where they could settle or purchase land'.<sup>8</sup>

With the arrival of the Indian indentured labourers, the local demography changed (Table 1).

Year/Population	Indian Population		General Population		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1846	2,014	261	2,532	2,024	6,831
1851	4,106	888	2,791	2,306	10,091
1861	7,822	2,945	3,592	2,812	17,171
1871	5,437	2,695	2,052	1,813	11,997
Total	19,379	6,789	10,967	8,955	46,090

Source: Appendix No. 10, Appendices to the Report of the Census of Mauritius

The population of Indian origins in the Black River region came essentially from Madras and Calcutta and the men outnumbered the women. Some of them were living on estate land while others were not living on Sugar Estates (Tables 2 and Table 3).

Sex/Immigrant	Calcutta	Madras	Bombay	Not Stated	Indo-Mauritians	Free Passengers
Males	1138	646	347	9	1351	146
Female <sup>3</sup>	467	312	128	3	1376	103

Source: Appendix No. 13, Appendices to the Report of the Census of Mauritius

Sex/Immigrant	Calcutta	Madras	Bombay	Not Stated	Indo-Mauritians	Free Passengers
Males	1084	386	356	13	1041	66
Females	408	181	150	20	977	28

Source: Appendix No. 13, Appendices to the Report of the Census of Mauritius

Oral history revealed that until 1960 the local people were still living in the camps on the surrounding estates and after the construction of the Cité La Mivoie under the Cyclone Housing Schemes of the Central Housing Act of 1960, people moved from the neighbouring localities to settle in the housing estate.

The settlement of the *Cité* dates to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the present resident population is composed of majority Creoles presumed to be descendants of slaves and a minority of Hindi-speaking and Marathi-speaking Indo-Mauritians.

In accordance with Marie Michele's testimony quoted above and with Daniel's testimonies, the local inhabitants believe that they are being marginalised and ostracised because of, firstly, their political preferences and, secondly, their presumed ancestral origins. They feel that they are further discriminated against when the local councillors are not of the same political background as the government in power.

...Site la...ou kone ki arrive...ki fer site...demoli parseki bann dimunn aster zot tro met zot lespri dan sa MMM MMM la Zot ena lespoir ladan. Zot servi politik buku...Me selman lenvironmen ti pli bon....pena droger, pena piker...selmen pu li pa develop, c gras a politician. Kombien tan Ganoo ici la 25 an Ganoo dan sa soz la.....mo pa truv nenryen...<sup>9</sup>

(Eng. trans:...The housing estate...you know what is happening...why the housing estate is shattered because people now are too focused on MMM they have placed their hope in the MMM. They use politics lots...but the environment has improves...there are no drug abuser, there are no heroin addict...but it is because of politicians it is not developing...how long has Ganoo been here? 25 years in this (electoral ward)...I see nothing...)

Over the past ten years, following mass development, inward migration of people from urban areas to Black River and of foreigners especially French, South Africans and English<sup>10</sup>, the region has undergone much transformation in terms of infrastructural developments. For example, the opening of new restaurants, commercial centres and the construction of new residential areas that led to a reversal in the local employment structure. New Integrated Resort Schemes developments are planned in the region such as La Balise Marina and Matala Lifestyle and Spa.

The changes in the demographic profile and in the social, economic and cultural landscape of the area have other correlated impacts such as affecting the social fabric of the community. For example, the criteria under-pinning social stratification and social mobility are evolving and consequently social relationships as well with the historical econo-ethno pattern is resurfacing or even intensifying.

Although Black River has experienced burgeoning developments, field research uncovered that only part of the village and its population are benefiting from the opportunities of these developments with others being further victimised.

## 4. CONTEMPORARY CITÉ LA MIVOIE - SOCIAL SURVEY

This chapter focuses on the social life in Cité La Mivoie, in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of social organisation, ethnic and gender relations, family patterns, settlement and social, sanitary and housing conditions of the residents.

Based essentially on oral interviews of residents, this social survey reconstructs the social evolution of Cité La Mivoie from the perspective of the local population. It aims at, assessing the local social conditions and identifying the social problems the residents are presently facing in order to make recommendations to address the problems identified and ultimately improve their social conditions.

### 4.1 SOCIAL ORGANISATION SPATIAL ORGANISATION

For non-residents of Cité La Mivoie, it is a common perception that the *Cité* dwellers are not organised, unable to take care for themselves and are dependent on the welfare state for social assistance as illustrated in the testimony of Devi below:

...Wi. Me koma mo pe dir ou ? ena boukou kapav pa interese pou zot fer lavansman. Zot atann kouma dir tou letan ler....ou tann dan zot la bous, gouvernman pa pe fer nanien. Be gouvernman la, pou vinn met manze ar ti kouyer dan ou la bous, ou bizin fer zefor...<sup>11</sup>

(Eng. trans: Yes. But how shall I tell you that? Maybe there are many who do not want to progress in life. How to say that? They always wait...you hear them say government does nothing. But the government will feed you, you need make efforts)

The *Cité* has its own internal organisation similar to a 'kinship' system. It is a discrete unit with distinctive identifiable values such as a strong sense of collectivism and comradeship and social systems different from that of other housing estates.

As stated by Emilienne Faron, Nicole Papeche and Marie France Hippolyte respectively '*...sak Site ena so diferans. Tou pa parey. Sak Site ena so diferans...*'<sup>12</sup> (Eng. trans. Each housing estate is difference. They are not similar. Each housing estate is different) and Cité La Mivoie is '*...fason viv monn gagn enn site spesial...Mwa mo trouve nou enn ti pe pli vivan parski la to trouv dimounn dan simin me ena site to ale pa trouv personn... saken konn so kamouad isi...*'<sup>13</sup> (Eng. trans. [Our] way of living, I have a special housing estate...I find that we're a little more lively because now you see people on the road by there are housing estates when you [go there] there is no-one on the road...We know each other).

Indeed, the *Cité* can be conceptualised as being an organic space in that it is an extension of the residents, it evolves with its residents and functions like a body.

It is a space constructed by its residents that shapes their lives. It is a shared and common space where the notion of private property and individualism are absent.

The centre of the housing estate is its most densely populated and lively part - along *Sime Boulodrome* (Eng. trans. Boulodrome Road) - that represents its heart. The arms and legs form the periphery of the *Cité* that corresponds to *Sime Quatre Saisons* (Eng. trans. Four Season Road) and *Sime Eucalyptus* (Eng. trans. Eucalyptus Road) (Map 1).



*...Eski ou pou dir site ena enn kiltir prop a zot isi ? enn konportman ?...Kouma mo pou dir ou ? Touzour de konportman mal vu o zie de zot. Ou pou trouv zot pe mars pjeni. Pe mars pjeni ek zot kapav asiz lor shemin. Zot dezene lamem, zot gard kous zot baba lamem, zot donn zot baba bwar lamem, zot trye zot bred lamem, zot koup zot legim lamem. Olie ki zot asiz dan zot lakour anfin petet mo konpran osi ki lespas e tro sere. Me kanmem, mo redir ankor ena bann fami ki byen rezerve, zot kot zot mem zot zanfan ou pa pou touv...<sup>17</sup>*

(Eng. trans: Would you say that the housing estate has its own culture? Behaviour?...How shall I tell you that? As usual behaviour that others criticise. You will see them walk bare footed. Walking bare footed and you can see them sit on the road. They have lunch there, they keep their nappies there, they feed their babies there, they clean their greens there. Instead of sitting in their yard, but maybe I understand that space is limited. Whatever, I repeat myself, there are families that are aloof, they remain at home and you will not see their children).

The *Cité* functions like a family clan; an extended family and in accordance with Nicole and Marie France, collectivism dominates over individualism as the collectivity is responsible for each resident. The residents have constructed a collective identity and each member of the extended family cares for the other.

Indeed, individualism does not seem to be the residents' precept compared to the surrounding residential areas and particularly the restricted type of secure and gated *Morcellement* such as Plantation La Marguery.

Like a clan protective towards its members, the residents of Cité La Mivoie protect each other and consider outsiders whom they do not know with suspicion and hence do not disclose information easily. They can also be sensitive but once the outsider is accepted by the clan and is considered as a fellow member, a rapport of trust is established and people share information.

Spatial and land problems and high population density in the *Cité* are currently negatively affecting social cohesion. These problems have become 'grafted onto' long-standing social and economic problems and consequently social unity is threatened.

These family tensions, as well as frustration, might, in the end, lead to internal conflicts. Hence, the urgent need to address the problems of space and housing in the *Cité* as well as other social problems identified for this report.

It might be a cultural shock for people, who do not know the living conditions on estates and in underprivileged localities, when entering the housing estate and observing the lack of hygiene, the poor living conditions and housing conditions that do not conform to the modern standards and norms.

However, even if from an external western vantage point, it appears that the *Cité* has remained on the brink of societal development; in fact, 'tradition' and modernity co-exist in this microcosm.

Certain core traditional values and knowledge endure and are passed on across generations while others have faded away. Collectivism is still predominant in the *Cité*. It can be seen as an adaptation strategy used by the residents as a survival mechanism that has allowed them, on one hand, to preserve their traditions and on the other hand to face harsh social and economic conditions by ensuring the welfare of the group.

But, in the process of social modernisation, some traits of modernity that are indicators of social evolution and of improvement of standard of living can be observed and some have merged with traditional values to form a new value system. This is reflected in generational differences such as in the family dyad, residential and occupation patterns that will be further developed in the report.

Field research exposed that post-1960 was a significant turning point for the local residents as it brought drastic reconfigurations in spatial and social arrangements and organisations such as the disappearance of gardens and camps and a shift from a semi-subsistent lifestyle to one based on obtaining mass produced goods.

Given the strong correlation between social organisation, space, place and behavioural patterns, these reconfigurations have had negative aftermath on the social, cultural and economic life of the latter and especially on their relation to space. The villagers are still bearing the weight of these changes.

For example, one main negative outcome is that they are denied access to the mountain and land for small-scale farming because it is private property as testified by Varnanaden Veerapen ...*Ti enn terin lagrikultur sa zordi terin la inn konverti...pe morsel pe cande...*<sup>18</sup> (Eng. trans. It was an agricultural land. Now they converted the land...it is being divided and sold).

The recent residential developments and the depletion of the lagoon have 'taken their toll on' the plight of the villagers as stated by one of the school directors.

...Donc, la l'hiver, ils n'ont rien...Moi j'ai rencontré des parents, des papas, qu'ils me disent que la, la actuellement, il y a pas de poisson, il n'y a presque quasiment plus de poisson...l'homme qui va a la pêche il va peut être avoir 2, 3 poissons...<sup>19</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Thus, now its winter they have nothing...I have met parents, fathers, that told that presently there is no fish, there is almost no fish...the fisherman might catch 2-3 fish...)

People have strong animist belief and the sea, the mountain, and its wood are not seen as mere environmental features. The villagers had a close and symbiotic relationship with the environment based on respect of nature. The sea and the mountain were, and are still, conceived by the local inhabitants as their 'nurturing mother' in the sense that they provided the residents with abundant food and medicinal herbs that they needed.

These open spaces were the children's playgrounds as well. Nevertheless, now, their 'nurturing relationship' has forever been altered.

Poaching, gathering and hunting were common traditions and a means of subsistence since the mountain and forest provided the villagers ample space to hunt and collect edible fruit and plants. For example, they hunted hedgehog, hare, deer, monkey and wild boar for meat.

Before, 1960, the local inhabitants cultivated gardens and reared cattle on the surrounding plots of land and especially on the mountain. Their daily meals were composed of fish and vegetables, supplemented with meat. Venison, hedgehog and wild boar are still very much appreciated whereas monkey is rare. This abundant wildlife ensured inhabitants did not suffer from starvation.

In line with Teelock (1998, p. 171), these forms of subsistence patterns date back to slavery when, 'slaves traditionally supplemented their rations given by their owner by procuring their own food through a variety of means. There were also periods when the supply of food to slaves was interrupted and slaves left to fend for themselves. Other slaves fished, hunted or simply gathered wild fruit and vegetables'.

After working hours and during their free time, the farmers who were essentially the *Bombaye*<sup>20</sup> worked in the fields whereas the Creoles went fishing. The women were responsible for the household chores. The forest provided them with cooking wood and they did their laundry in the river.

The appropriation of the surrounding natural waterways and of the mountain transformed these natural features into domestic spaces for the local residents. The use of natural landscape by the inhabitants includes farming land, residential places (where the camps were located) and laundry places.

## 4.2 LOCAL HERITAGE SITES

Seven-laundry/washing places were identified that form part of the local heritage. They are mostly located along the road leading to the Black River Gorges. (See Appendix 3)

...kanal Raffia, lav linz. Ladig Bambous...ti ladig osi avan lav linz, apre lor pon ti lav linz. Kouma lontan, pa ankor ena bann developman, ici pon Misel osi ti lav linz...<sup>21</sup>

(Eng. Trans: Canal Raffia, (used to) wash clothes. Bambous dam...Small dam as well long ago (used to) wash clothes, then on the bridge used to do washing. Long ago these developments did not exist, there Michel bridge also used to do washing...)

When one travels from the Black River Gorges towards the main road, the following washing places were identified:

### 1. *Ladig Bamboo* (Eng. trans. Bamboo Dam):

It is located on the left side of *Sime Gorgz* (Eng. trans. Black River Gorges Road) before *Pon Blan* (Eng. trans. White Bridge) and after *lacrwaze 5 Sime* (Eng. trans. Crossroad 5 Road)

...sur le kote ti ena kann ek bwa. Pli lwin dela, kote drwat, apel sa la dig Bambous. Lot kote ladig Bambous. Kot sa?...andan va dir la ena enn sa, la rivier ki sorti depi Gorge, delo la pas la mem la, li al ziska lor pon. Lor gran pon Rivière Noire...<sup>22</sup>

(Eng. trans:...On the side there were sugar canes and wood. Further, on the right side it is named Bamboo Dam. Where? Inside there is a river that springs from the Gorges, it flows from there to the bridge, the bridge of Grande Rivière Noire...)

### 2. *Ti Lagig* (Eng. trans. Small Dam):

It is located on the left side of *Sime Gorz* after *Pon Blan*, before *Pon Misel* (Eng. trans. Michel Bridge) and next to *Pon Raffia* (Eng. trans. Raffia<sup>23</sup> Bridge)

### 3. *Pon Misel*:

It is located on the right side of *Sime Gorz* opposite *Kanal Raffia* (Eng. Trans. Raffia Canal) and is located on *Sime Bef* (Eng. trans. Cattle Road). This place is a *lieu de mémoire* in that a young man died there and his death forms part of the collective memory of the residents.

The bridge was named after a young man named Michel, the brother of a man named *Ton Néné* (Eng. trans. Old man Néné), who died in the river. He went to a Sega night in *Kan Laserp* (Eng. trans. Camp Billhook) and on his way back, he drowned in the river. His mother found his dead body the next morning.

...ti ena park bef, wi, lao, apre ti ena enn bann kan par laba. Ti ena enn bann kan, ena enn la rivier la, ena enn ti la rivier ki pas la, bann dimounn inn donn sa non la, Pon Misel...pon Misel akoz, ti ena enn garson ki ti apel Misel...li sorti anba, dan Vilaz, ti ena sega. Lontanbann dimounn ti fer sega la nwi, bann gran ti pe fer tipik, kan linn vini, mo krwar linn gagn soif, linn vers dan sa pon la pou bwar inpe delo. Kan linn verse pou bwar inpe delo, linn tom la mem. Kan so mama, ki ti res inpe lao laba, linn vini, pou vinn, pou plin so delo dan gramatin, linn trouv enn dimounn. Apre ler li get byen, li dir, be sa linz mo garson, linn al dekouver ki so garson inn al mor la...<sup>24</sup>

(Eng. trans:...there was a cattle-breeding land, yes, uphill, then there were camps over there. There were camps, there is a river there, there is a stream flowing there, people named it Michel bridge...Michel bridge, because there was a boy named Michel...he came from downhill, from the village, there was Sega. Long ago people used to organise Sega nights, the elders used to do Typical Sega, when he came back, I think he was thirsty, [when he reached the bridge] we bent down to drink water. When he bent down to drink water, he fell in the river. When his mother, who lived uphill there, came in the morning to fetch water, she saw someone. When she looked attentively, she said, it is my son's clothing, she found out that her son was dead...)

Photo 3 *Pon Misel*



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 1/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

4. *Kanal Raffia*:

It is located at the entrance of *Sime Gorz* on the left side of the road and opposite *Sime Bef*.

...mo konn li Kanal Raffia, parski etan done kan gagn bann sesres, koma dir bann delo la rivier anba pa, bon pou lave, nou vinn lave isi...<sup>25</sup>

(Eng. trans:...I know it as Raffia Canal since when there is draught, the water in the river down over there is not adequate for washing, we come to do our washing there...)

5. *Kanal Maraz* (Eng. trans. Maraz Canal):

It is located opposite the shop named *Boutik Trwa Bra* (Eng. trans. Three Branches shop).

It was named after a man named *Bonhom Maraz* (Eng. trans. Old man Maraz) whose garden was located there, near the canal.

...isi ti ena karo kann...Kot ou, ena bann karo banann la, lot kote la, ti ena enn bolom ti res la ti apel bolom Maraz....li ti ena so zardin, ena enn la rivier ki pas la, nou touzur apel sa la rivier la canal maraz...<sup>26</sup>

(Eng. trans:...here there was a sugar cane field...where there is a banana plantation there, on the other side there, there was a man named Old man Maraz living there...he had his garden, there is a river flowing there, we always named this river Canal Maraz...)

Photo 4 *Kanal Maraz*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 2/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

When leaving the Black River Gorges, along the main road when going towards Cité La Mivoie, the following washing places were identified:

6. *Kanal Dharma* (Eng. trans. Canal Dharma):

It was located on Mr. De Senneville land inside Black River Gorges and there were *Bombaye* (from Maharashtra) living there. It was named after a *Bombaye* named Dharma. (See Chapter Social Survey)

7. Another washing place was identified but has no name. It is located near the bridge named *Pon La Grande Rivière Noire* in front of Village Bougainvilliers.

Out of the seven sites listed above, three were identified as still being used by the *Cité* dwellers as washing places: *Kanal Raffia*, *Pon La Grande Rivière Noire* and *Kanal Maraz*.

Indeed, during fieldwork, women with their buckets on their head walking to the river were observed.

It is to be noted that the scene of women, commonly referred to as *dhobi*, carrying their basket full of clothes on their head and doing their washing at river, is perceived as a folkloric scene. 'Dhobi' are considered as being inherent to Mauritian folklore and the Indo Mauritians might probably name these places 'dhobi ghat'.

#### 4.3 OTHER NATURAL SITES USED BY INHABITANTS THAT ARE POTENTIAL HERITAGE SITES:

More sites were identified in the Black River Gorges and on the surrounding estates. Some could not be located exactly as they are found inside the gorges and inside the estates. (Appendix 3)

- *Basin Zigret* (Eng. trans. Egret Pond):

When going towards the gorges, it is located along *Sime Gorz* after the *Kalimaya*. According to Nicole, there are four legends associated to this pond. Two legends are about mythological aquatic animal creatures living in the pond and two others are about legendary human beings.

One legend says that in the pond, there is a cave underneath the mountain and that a mermaid or a baby mermaid lives in this cave. Another is about a giant eel that lives in this cave.

Another legend says that Paul and Virginie swam in the pond and the last one is about the slaves or maroons who came to this pond. These two legends take place with the history of slavery.

...ki fer apel sa basin zigret? me mwa monn konn sa non la tou letan basin zigret, me dapre listwar, zot dir ena enn lezann. ki lezann ena? ena dimounn pretann ki zonn deza trouv bann...Otre fwa en, zot trouv la sirenn...Parseki li fer bann ros, bann gro ros...kuma dir kot ou truv sa basin ponfon la, enn cav endsou sa...Dan sa cav la ena enn gros enguil, ena enguil ladan. Me, la selma avek, la sesres, parseki si normalman, ti gagn bann...gagn bon delo la. Me tou letan dimounn mem bizin pran delo avan pa kapav pran li kot sa basin la parseki, kot bassin la zot dir li byen profon laba...Me donk, me ki zistwar la sirenn sa en? Sa anfin monn tann bann gran-gran dimounn kinn dir sa, zot fami inn dir zot, zonn deza trouv enn, bebe sirenn. Me koma li ti ete sa la sirenn la en?...mwatie imin, mwatie poison... apre sa si mo pa kone. Mo pa kone si li vre ou si li manti. Parski zot dir, ki, tou letan Paul e Virginie, ti abitie vinn baigne la...pa kapav dir ou kisanla kinn tann sa zistwar la, me mo pa krwar si pa Paul ek Virginie ti vinn dan isi. Mwa...monn panse ki tou letan ki bann esklav ki ti vinn par isi. Ek ki fer ou panse ki ti ena esklav?...Kouma dir, zot ti rod bann plas pou kasiet...<sup>27</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Why name it Aigrette Pond? But me I always knew it as Aigrette Pond, but as said by history, there is legend [associated to it]. Which legend? There are people who say that they saw...long ago a mermaid...because it forms stones, big stone...how to say that? You see this pond [is] deep, there is a cave underneath...in this cave there is a giant eel, there is an eel inside it. But, now, because of draught, because normally, there was...lots water in the pond they say it is deep...thus what is the mermaid story? It is, finally, I have heard, the elders said that, their family told them, they saw a baby mermaid. But how the mermaid looked?...half human, half fish...after that I do not know. I do not know whether it is true or if it is fake. Because they say that each time Paul and Virginie, used to swim there...I cannot tell you who heard that story, but I do not believe that Paul and Virginie came here. Me...each time I thought it were the slaves who came here. And why you thought there were slaves?...How to say that, they searched for hiding places...)

Photo 5 *Basin Zigret*



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 3/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

- *Pon Papay* (Eng. trans. Papaya Bridge):

It is located after Lacrwaze 5 Sime on Old Black River Gorges road on the way to a place named *Matala* in the Black River Gorges. According to Antonio, '...Nou sort pon Papay pou nou kapav al Tamarin Falls sa...'<sup>28</sup> (Eng. trans: You leave Papaya Bridge to go to Tamarin Falls...)

- *Brize*<sup>29</sup> *Dharma*:

It was named after a *Bombaye* or Marathi person named Dharma and was located on Mr. De Senneville estate. Further information will be provided later in the chapter entitled settlement.

- *Laveret*:

It was on Mr. De Senneville land near the tobacco plantation. According to Antonio, a man named Robert Deline, who worked as watchman, used to live there.

...Saem dan kote sase li trouv kot misie Desenville mem Laveret Laveret Taba tousala pou misie De Senneville mem sa. Taba ? Wi Taba. Enn landrwa sa ? Wi Sa karo la apel karo Taba. karo Taba ? Wi Li akoste ar Laveret Laveret anba Taba kote lao dan kote misie De Senneville mem...<sup>30</sup>

(Eng. trans:...It is on the hunting ground of Mr. De Senneville Laveret Laveret tobacco all this for Mr. De Senneville. Tobacco? Yes tobacco. A place this? Yes this plantation is named tobacco plantation. Tobacco planraron? Yes it is near Laveret downhill tobacco is uphill on Mr. De Senneville...)

- *Tamarin Lapel* (Eng. trans. Tamarind Call):

It refers to a Tamarind tree that was in front of the property of Mr. De Senneville, on the roadside apposite the place named *forum*. The Tamarind tree still standing and is located in front of the place named the Ranch.

The workers of Mr. De Senneville named it Tamarin Lapel because every morning at this place their supervisor used to assign their daily work duties.

...sa De Senneville sa. Ti, avan ti enn bwa, ti enn bwa, epwi devan la ti ena de trwa ti lakaz an paye, kot bann dimounn ti abite, apre koma dir, dan gramatin kan tou bann dimounn pou vinn travay, dimounn sorti ti Rivière Noire avek Grande Rivière Noire, zot vinn atann devan la, ena enn gro pie tamarin, zot ti apel sa tamarin lapel. Parski kouma dir la ki, sa dimounn responsab la, li klas ou travay kot ou bizin al travay...<sup>31</sup>

(Eng. trans:...It is De Senneville. Before it was wooded, it was wooded, and in-front here there were 2-3 straw houses where people lived, and then how to say that, in the morning when people came to work, people came from Petite Rivière Noire and Grande Rivière Noire, they waited in front here, there is a big Tamarind tree, they used to name it Tamarind muster. Because how to say that, the responsible person, gives you your task and where you had to work...)

Photo 6 *Tamarin Lapel*



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 4/P/LaMivoie/15June2010

Other places identified in the Black River Gorges as potential slave heritage sites: *Matala*, *Walala*, *Magenta*, *Macondé*, *Marmit Kase* (Eng. trans. Broken Pot), *Later Koupe* or *La coupée* (Eng. trans.

Cut Soil or Land), *Plato Remous* (Eng. trans. Plateau Remous) and *Brize Nik Mous* (Eng. trans. *Brisé Fly Nest*) which according to Olivier are located on Tamarin Estate.

...Plato Remous se kan ou monte ou pran simin Gorz ou monte ou kontinie monte pran simin pou mont La Marie ou trouve ena enn mirador laba an metal en rel bann la ti ranze sa mo kone mwa monn ranze mo ti, ranze parseki mwa ek Benoit ki ti al mont sa...Allan Cambier...ti amenn nou...nou ti travay ansam ti ena enn lot ti al mont sa laba ena 2 sa...<sup>32</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Plateau Remous is when you go up Black River Gorges you continue take the road that goes to La Marie you shall see a metal mirador over there they constructed it I know I constructed it because Benoit and me that built it...Allan Cambier took us there...we worked together there was another that was built over there there were 2...)

According to Nicole, the name *Walala* dates back to slave time when ‘...sega sa mo sipoze non?..Sega? Bann esklav ti fer sega laba?..’<sup>33</sup> (Eng. trans: I think its Sega no?...Sega? the slaves did Segas over there?) and also that there are more place names in the gorges such as, *Basin Sevret* (Eng. trans. Pond of fresh water shrimps) and *basin Mamzel* (Eng. trans. Young Lady Pond), with stories attached to these places.

However, the real name is ‘Walhala’ after a sugar estate that used to exist in this area.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, based on her testimony, *Macabé* Forest as well is a potential slave heritage site as there are artefacts in the caves inside the forests.

...Parski, ena enn dimounn ki deza dir mwa, me li inpe lwin dan la fore de Maccabe. Dan la fore de Maccabe...ena enn la kav, kot bann esklav ti abite. Enn dimounn ki travay dan Mauritius Wild Life ki ti dir mwa sa. ki fer li panse ti ena, bann esklav ki ti abite dan sa la kav la en? Ek kuma linn dir mwa, linn trouv bann le zo, apre kouma dir enn plas kot zot ti aranze, ar di bwa pou fer zot lili. Plis linn trouv enn bann ros kot bann la ti pe kwi zot manze. Maccabe fore la kot trouve sa? li andan la mem la, dan sa sime Gorge la-la. Mo pa kapav dir ou ekzakteman kot li ete. Li li andan net, li travay pou Wild Life, linn gagn lokazion pou al laba. Li ti deza dir mwa, enn zour li pou amenn mwa, be kan li dir mwa bizin mars bouku, mo pann ou le ale...<sup>35</sup>

(Eng. trans:..Because someone told me but it is far inside the Macabé Forest. In the Macabé Forest...there is a cave, where the slaves lived. Someone that works for the Mauritius Wild Life who told me that. Why he thinks lived in that cave? As he told me he saw bones, then how to say that, a space that they prepared with wood to build a bed. Besides, he saw a stone [fireplace] where they cooked food. Where is Macabé Forest found? It is further inside, in Black River Gorges there. I cannot tell accurately where it is located. It is further inside, it is for the Wild Life, he had the opportunity to go there. He told me that one day he would take me there, but when he told me that there is much to walk, I did not go...)

The Maroon Slave Archaeological Investigation Project Report confirms this statement of Nicole Papeche as artefacts possibly relating to maroonage have been found in these caves.<sup>36</sup>

...Me enn zafer ki drol parfwa kan mo marse mo al lasas ena plas kot nou trouve tomo ena plas kot nou trouve ena bann vesel ki inn kase bann lasiet...Bann porseleenn. Bann porseleenn lontan ou trouve ou trouv bann bann kokiy de mer...<sup>37</sup>

(Eng. trans:...but something that is sometimes weird, when I hunt there are burial places that we see, there are places where we can see broken utensils, plates...porcelain. You see old porcelain you see seashells...)

There are both male and female heritage spaces, so far unrecognised on heritage lists: washing places became ‘socialising’ spaces, spaces where women could express themselves freely without being constrained by their husband’s presence and where they could ‘gossip’. Developments have negatively impacted on the continued availability of these spaces for inhabitants of Cite La Mivoie.

Many elders regret their past life, which they feel was of better quality as they were to some degree self-sufficient as the district was far less populated than it is now. Whereas nowadays they are more vulnerable since they are part of a consumer, society and they feel the burden of financial poverty.

Their standard of living has depreciated and their conditions are likely to worsen resulting from the scarcity of resources and the high population density. Most inhabitants wish to get out of the current economic system and live a self-sufficient lifestyle as they used to.

CENSUS DATE	Male	Female	Both Sexes
1st August 1846	4,546	2,285	6,831
20th November 1851	6,897	3,194	10,091
8th April 1861	11,414	5,757	17,171
11th April 1871	7,489	4,508	11,997
4th April 1881	9,050	6,242	15,292
6th March 1891	8,772	6,926	15,698
1st April 1901	7,685	6,378	14,063
31st March 1911	8,027	6,918	14,945
21st May 1921	7,807	6,910	14,717
26th April 1931	7,384	6,879	14,263
11th June 1944	6,490	6,012	12,502
30th June 1952	6,699	6,731	13,430
30th June 1962	9,385	9,183	18,568
30th June 1972	13,220	12,951	26,171
2nd July 1983	18,453	18,408	36,861
1st July 1990 4	21,972	21,796	43,768
2nd July 2000 4	30,475	30,112	60,587

Source: <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/cso/>

#### 4.4 ETHNIC RELATIONSHIPS

Although Cité La Mivoie is perceived as a homogenous egalitarian Creole *Cité* or as a Creole traditional fishing village, yet it is a heterogenous housing estate with residents of other religio-ethnic groups living there. Among the residents there are many descendants of indentured labourers of Indian origin, particularly of Marathi origin, commonly referred to as *Bombaye* as illustrated in Tables 2 and 3 respectively.

In contemporary Black River, this diversity has continued : in Grand Rivière Noire VCA there were in the year 2000: 3 Buddhist Chinese; 1,434 Christians; 415 Marathi Hindu; 5 Tamil Hindu; 2 Telegu Hindu; 129 other Hindus (but excluding Hindi Hindus); 2 Muslims and 52 who did not state their religious affiliation.<sup>38</sup>

Oral history confirms there are three Hindi-Speaking families living in the housing estate, namely, the Sukhoo or Sokoo Family, the Saradee Family and the Gobinsingh Family. In addition, there are

approximately seven Marathi-speaking families in the *Cité*. Most Indo-Mauritians live outside the housing estate. This implies that Creoles and Marathis are in majority in the region.

The housing estate has evolved from a traditional fishing village to a complex *Cité* with internal cleavages caused by, differential positions in the labour market. It is stratified along econo-ethno lines and internal econo-ethno stratification often leads to ethnic tensions.

#### Inter-ethnic relationships

Despite overt social cohesion with no visible signs of inter-ethnic conflicts, politics and social mobility gap do lead to ethno-religious antagonisms. Sylviana stated: '*...Ena ene parti, ena ene parti non. Ene parti ki enten, comme si trwa kar pas enten zot...*'<sup>39</sup> (Eng. trans. There are some (who get along), there are some no. Some who get along, as to say three quarter do not get along)

Some of the tensions seem to have racist underpinnings with a perception that the Creole residents are less 'civilised' than the other local residents like Devi who stated that people living in *Sime Quatre Saison* and in *Sime Boulodrome* are '*pa civilize*' (Eng. Trans. not civilised) compared to those living in *Sime La Jetée* and *Sime Eucalyptus* who are '*serye, bon, prop ek korek*' (Eng. Trans. serious, good, clean and nice).

...kouma mo pe dir ou ena enn tiginn desord isi osi. Dan lapre midi tou sala, koma monn dir. Sak pa chez swa, zot pa kouma bann dimounn sivilize osi, ou pa trouve zot bwar, zot zoure tou sala, ou konpran...<sup>40</sup>

(Eng. trans:...how shall i tell you there is some mess here too. In the afternoon as I told you. There is not each in their home, there are not like civilised people as well, you do not see they drink, they swear, you understand...)

Ethnic differences in living conditions have been observed between Marathi-speaking and Hindi-speaking Indo-Mauritian residents being seemingly better off than Creole residents and the former enjoying more opportunities compared to the Creoles such as they are academic achievers and have better jobs.

'...Donk la mazorite klas sosial bisin dir nou ena blan avek indyen. Zot klas sosial ot konpare ek mem, la plipar anfin isi mem bann sinwa ki reste isi se bann klas byen ot mem me kom mazorite nou ena abitan Kreol kom bann indyen ek bann blan me mazorite se trwa kar banla ki okip ot mazorite sosial... Bann kreol tou le tan zot retrouv zot dan bann ba, bann plas tou le tan ba. Kom si bizin dir tou move kitsoz se Kreol mem ki ladan...Ban blan boukou biro ek bann indou, bann indien plito dan bann plas gouvernman, komersan ek kreol se tou le tan bonn a tou fer ou byen maxi clean ou byen peser. Avan kan ti ena kann, ti ena enn ti pe labourer...byen souvan de fwa bann blan ena plis soz ki, ki nou. Ena fwa avan zot pran nou kas an konsiderasyon, si enn blan li, li pou pas kouma mo pou dir ou li pu pran enn tret enn problem mazer me si li enn kote blan so problem pou fini resoud tou de swit ki enn kreol li pou kapav pran de lane ou kan le problem inn fini, kouma dir li aprofondi, li fini net lerla zot pou pran sa an konsiderasyon...'<sup>41</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Thus the main social classes there are whites and Indians. Their social class is high compared and most Chinese that live here their social class is high but since the inhabitants are mostly Creoles Indians and whites these three mostly the latter have mostly high social class...the Creoles are always low, they always find themselves in low positions. As if we have to say Creoles find themselves in bad things...Many whites (work) in offices and the Hindus, the Indians in government, shopkeepers and the Creoles it's always been housemaids or maxi clean<sup>42</sup> or fishermen. Before when there were sugar canes there were some labourers...often whites have more (privileges) than us. Sometimes before taking our cases into consideration, if a white he will, how to say that he will, his (case) will be a prime problem, the white his problem will be solved immediately than the Creole, (the Creole) he can wait years or when the problem has already been solved, let say sorted out and solved then they will take it into consideration...)

These segregationist perceptions show the tendency to attribute others success and personal failures to extrinsic factors and to attribute others failures and personal success to intrinsic factors. In other works, the Creoles attribute the Indo-Mauritian mobility opportunities to political

patronage and not to the individuals' efforts to achieve in life. The attribute the Creoles lack of upward mobility to absence of political support and not to personal factors.

Besides, the value systems, history, psychosocial health and other social and cultural traits should be taken into account when considering differential mobility like education, family background and socio-economic positioning.

We also observed that the Indo-Mauritian residents are the owners of the retail shops, snacks, *tabagie* (Eng. trans. Small Retail Shop) and the hardware shops in the village with the exception of the hypermarkets and luxury shops.

The Creoles are at the 'other end' of the economy; they are consumers that guarantee the survival of these businesses and subsequently contribute to the upward vertical mobility and horizontal mobility of the Marathis. Hence, it can be said that the social and economic system maintain the Creoles in this dependency relationship with the latter being dependent on the wealthy families who are their employers and on the Indo-Mauritian business owners.

Furthermore, spatial arrangements of the property as well act as ethnic markers such as in most of the Indo-Mauritian gardens there is a *Mabhiswamiavk Hanuman*<sup>43</sup> to protect their house and the house dwellers and differences in housing conditions and constructions are a visible symbol of social inequalities.

Considering that houses and asset accumulation are powerful symbols of wealth, it was observed that the design of the houses of the Marathi-speaking and the Hindi-speaking residents were more elaborate which are visible signs of upward social mobility compared to the majority of Creoles in the housing estate.

It should be noted that, the material modern signs of wealth such as visible satellite dishes or an LCD television set in a shattered iron-sheet house or a 'tuned' car in the housing estate can be misleading on the actual financial situation of some of the local residents. There are indicators not only of consumption choices but of life priorities as well. For example, one of the informants (who is not among the wealthy residents) mentioned that she would buy an LCD television set to watch international football. Later on, during fieldwork, she mentioned that she was not yet a property owner because of lack of financial means to pay the legal proceedings.

In addition, during the interviews, verbal cues indicated tensions between Creoles and the Indo-Mauritians. It seems that the Hindi-speaking villagers and the Creoles get along better and that the Marathi-speaking inhabitants are perceived by others as being more ethno-centric than the Hindi-speaking villagers.

...mo pa kasiet pou dir ou, pli boukou bann Marathi. Par bann lasosiasion sosio kiltirel, zot le selman zot mem ladan, zot pa le ni enn indou ni enn Katolik ek zot. Mo mem monn pas dan sa ka la, mo enn presidan lasosiasion feminin, mo ti pe fer mo renion dan enn klub laba, laba ti ena lasosiasion feminin, ouver pou tou le mond, pou tou madam san distinksiyon de ras de kast. Ounn konpran la...mazorite ladan ti bann Marathi, minorite ti ena inpe bann kreol zot dir mwa tir bann madam kreol la depi dan lasodiadion la. Seki mo pa finn aksepte, mo dir non...Be lerla letan mo pann finn dakor zot inn tir mwa depi ladan. Be lerla monn fer tou se mwa. Parski akoz mo fer li midi li tir mwa depi laba, li dir mwa, si mo anvi res laba tir tou bann kreol depi ladan. Be ou konpran mo pa finn le sa...<sup>44</sup>

(Eng. trans:...I will not hide, mostly Marathis. In the socio-cultural organisations they want Marathis only, they do not want neither Hindis nor Catholics. I also happened to me, I am the president of the Women Association that is opened to all women irrespective of their race [and] caste. You understand...majority were the Marathis, minority there were some Creoles, they told me to take the Creole women out of the association. I did not agree, I said no...hence, since I disagreed they took me out of the association. Hence, I organised [meetings] at my place. Because I organise them midday they expelled me from over there, they told me, if I want to stay I need to take out all the Creoles. But you understand I did not want to do that...)

However, these tensions are, until now, not a direct threat to social cohesion as in their daily life, mutual aid and good 'entente' between the residents prevail over ethnic tensions. Collectivism ensures a state of internal equilibrium in the *Cité*.

### Intra-ethnic relationships

Even though no visible signs of conflict were observed among the Marathi-speaking and Hindi-speaking residents and among the Creoles, intra-ethnic tensions were still identified.

The tensions amongst the Creoles seem to be caused by socio-economic differences and differences in upbringing and not just in issues of origins. Because of their behaviour and way of living, others look down on them. For example, a Creole respondent mentioned that some Creoles tend to misbehave; they fight and are vulgar which she considers as unacceptable social behaviour.

Problems of land and space in the *Cité* are exacerbating these tensions as residents who were living on Li Mo Yo's land will soon be evicted and they need to find a new place.

...me parfwa kreol la si nou pa dir ki tou ki pe ena mal konportman. Ena bokou ki ena zot bon konportman. Me kan ou viv la dan enn landrwa enn site kan de-trwa dimounn pe fer tapaz, dimounn la pa pou dir de-trwa dimounn. Li pou dir bann site. Vwala se sa, bann site...<sup>45</sup>

(Eng. trans:...But sometimes the Creole do not all misbehave. There are many who behave properly. But when you live in a region in a housing estate when 2-3 are being noisy, the person will not say 2-3 people. They will say the housing estate...)

Intra-ethnic conflicts among the Indo-Mauritians seem to be grounded in minority-majority tensions. This can be explained by the fact that the Marathis are in minority in Mauritius and hence the dilemma of preserving their religio-ethnic distinctiveness and perpetuate their traditional religious and cultural beliefs and practices.

Internal hierarchies and diversities cause intra-ethnic tensions in the *Cité*. There is a popular perception that ethnic groups are homogenous when actually they are heterogeneous and their inner-structure and internal power dynamics are rooted in socio-economic inequalities.

These ethnic tensions are not only inherent to Cité La Mivoie. They are present in other regions of Mauritius. However, in a closed system these tensions are intensified by competition for resources. Scarcity of resources; natural, economic and cultural resources exacerbate minority-majority tensions.

Furthermore, they share the same space and social reality and common cultural traits that cut across ethnic borders. Yet, the social fabric is fragile in a small and closed space like Cité La Mivoie.

## 4.5 GENDER RELATIONS AND FAMILY PATTERNS

### Family Patterns

In Cité La Mivoie, ambilocal<sup>46</sup> residence patterns have been identified whereby couples tend to establish their home either at the bride's or the groom's relatives' residence. They either build an individual housing unit on the same plot of land or live within the same housing unit depending on disposable space. For example, Jasmine Lalouette and her husband live with her mother and Nicole Papeche used to live with her uncle.

In fact, in the aftermath of the current economic turmoil and social crisis that led to an upsurge in land and housing prices, young couples cannot afford to buy or even rent a house or apartment and thus are compelled to live at their parent's or in-laws homes.

One of the social outcomes of this crisis is a return to extended family patterns especially among the working and middle classes who might not voluntarily choose extended residential patterns.

As Teelock (1998) wrote, during slavery multitude family patterns were formed that were not consistent with the western notion of the family. Various forms of social interactions, network relationships, 'family consciousness' and social situations developed to form the 'slave families' and kinship relations.

For example, 'when slaves called each other 'brother', 'sister', 'cousin' it did not necessarily mean a biological relationship but 'implies a greater degree of intimacy and friendship with certain persons than with the rest of the comrades.'<sup>47</sup>

There is a strong correlation between residential and family patterns with one influencing the other. The *Cité* can be seen as an extended family whereby the residents have kinship links to various degrees; biological and non-biological links.

Presently, two forms of extended families were identified in the *Cité*, firstly joint families and, secondly, combined families. Single mothers on the other hand tend to prefer matri-focal residential patterns given that women tend to assume prominence.

Even though patriarchy underpins the structure of the social system within the *Cité*, the family space remains the woman's space as the woman remains the pillar of the family. The feminisation of the domestic space is not a contemporary social feature but according to Burrell (2010) it can be retraced back to slave times when the woman was the dominant figure of the family while the man was relegated to the second place and when he lost his prerogative on his wife, he was denied his dominant role as the family protector.

For the Hindi-speaking and the Marathi-speaking residents, the cultural pattern is different as traditionally, once the daughter is married, she leaves her parents' house to live with her in-laws.

For example, when Devi got married in 1975 she settled in her parent-in-law's house in the *Cité*. They had to reconfigure their internal arrangement with the expansion of the family. Her daughter went to live at her in-law's house in Baie-du-Cap when she got married.

...Ietem monn marye monn vini...pa ti ena mem la mezon, ti ena bann site, bann mezon an lamiant la, bann site, anfin ti ouver, kouma dir se ta ki ti pe al kot so kamarad, tou sa la, ou konpran! Ek pa ti ena oken konstriksion, an beton...bann semin la mem pa ti byen fer...Mo ti ena mo belmer mem, mo boper, ek an plus de sa li ti ena so bann zanfan, ek mwa letan monn marye monn vinn, mintenan mo si monn bizin enn lasam ladan, dan sa kat pies la. Lerla kouma dir mo belmer inn ranz enn lot, pou mo bann bofrer dormi ladan, enn kote...<sup>48</sup>

(Eng. trans:...when I got married I came...there was no house, there were *Cité* [houses], asbestos houses, the *Cité*, it was open, how to say that people went to their friends' [place], all this you understand! There were no concrete buildings...even the roads were not done properly...I had a mother-in-law, my father-in-law, besides he had his children, and when I got my I came, then me too I needed a room among these four rooms. Then how to say that, my mother-in-law built another [room] for my brother-in-law to sleep aside...)

Women in the *Cité* have children at a young age, as young as 13 years of age, and it is common for women in their thirties to have five children from different fathers as illustrated in Devi's testimony below.

It seems that female-headed households constitute the majority in the housing estate resulting from serial monogamy and multiple sexual partners.

...Donk me...ena boukou mer selibaterdonk dan la site? Enn dizain.... Ant 17 a 27. Ant 17 a 20, 27. Ek komien zanfan zot ena? la ena 11, seki dernie mo kone, mo kone ena 3, anfin maximum 3...Ena diferan papa...Donk si mo konpran se enn jeun madam ki zot inn rankontre enn zom, zot inn gagn zanfan la, papa la pa in deklar zanfan la? Ena pa in deklare...<sup>49</sup>

(Eng. Trans:...So...are there many single mothers in the housing estate? there are ten...between 17 and 27 [years old]. Between 17 to 20, 27 [years old]. And how many children they have? What I last learnt there are now 11, I there are 3, maximum 3 [children]...there are from different father...So, if I understand it is a young woman who met a man, they got a child, the father did not declare the child? There are who did not declare...)

These family patterns are commonly perceived as being dysfunctional and that combined with spatial arrangements problems, foster 'promiscuity' and unhealthy living environments.

The testimonies revealed that some women do not even know the name of the father of their child and thus do not receive any alimony for their children. These women sometimes are unemployed and live in abusive relationships with domestic violence being widespread in the *Cité*.

Denial and minimisation were identified as a survival mechanism that helps them cope with the abuse and stay with their abuser. The various barriers restraining them to leave abusive relationships entrap these women in the vicious cycle of domestic violence.

The main barriers are: (i) lack of financial means and affordable housing facilities, (ii) fear of loneliness and violent reprisal, (iii) limited access to resources, training and education for women; (iv) children and (v) fear of social stigma.

*...La zot pou, petet seki zot, si bann jeune tifi ki finn viktim de zot konkibin...petet ki zot pou al retourn kot zot fami ou bien si le konkibin ki finn viv isi avek so konkibin, se li ki pou ale. Konkibin la ki pou ale me zame zot pa pou al de lavan kom si pou, petet zot pa pou mem defann zot drwa ou bien accepte lakoz zot zenfan...<sup>50</sup>*

(Eng. trans:...they will maybe, if it is the young girl who is the victim of her partner...maybe they will return at their family [place] or if it is the partner who settled at the girl's place, he will leave. They male partner will not leave, they will never go forward let say maybe they will not even defend their rights or even accept because of their children...)

Genealogical research revealed that residents favour endogamy to exogamy in that they prefer to marry people within their personal network either natives of the *Cité* or people living in the neighbourhood such as in Morcellement Les Tamariniers or people from surrounding villages such as from Chamarel, Tamarin Village, Petite Rivière Noire or Le Morne Village.

For example, Pierre Auguste married Toinette Verlope both were living at Le Morne Brabant and their son Albert Pierre Auguste married Olivia Victorinne who lived in the same locality. Jean Louis Malgache living in Chamarel married Marie Elizabeth Townsend living in Petite Rivière-Noire.

Morcellement Les Tamariniers commonly referred to as *Kan Tamarinier* (Eng. trans. Tamarin Camp) or *Cité Tamariniers* was constructed three years ago and is located opposite *Cité La Mivoie* between *Kan Lakol* and *Kan Diosez*. It can be considered as an extension of *Cité La Mivoie* given the close relationship between the two. They are related by kinship and some people moved from *Cité La Mivoie* to settle in these localities. For example, the Faron Family live in Morcellement Les Tamariniers as illustrated in Chart 1 below.

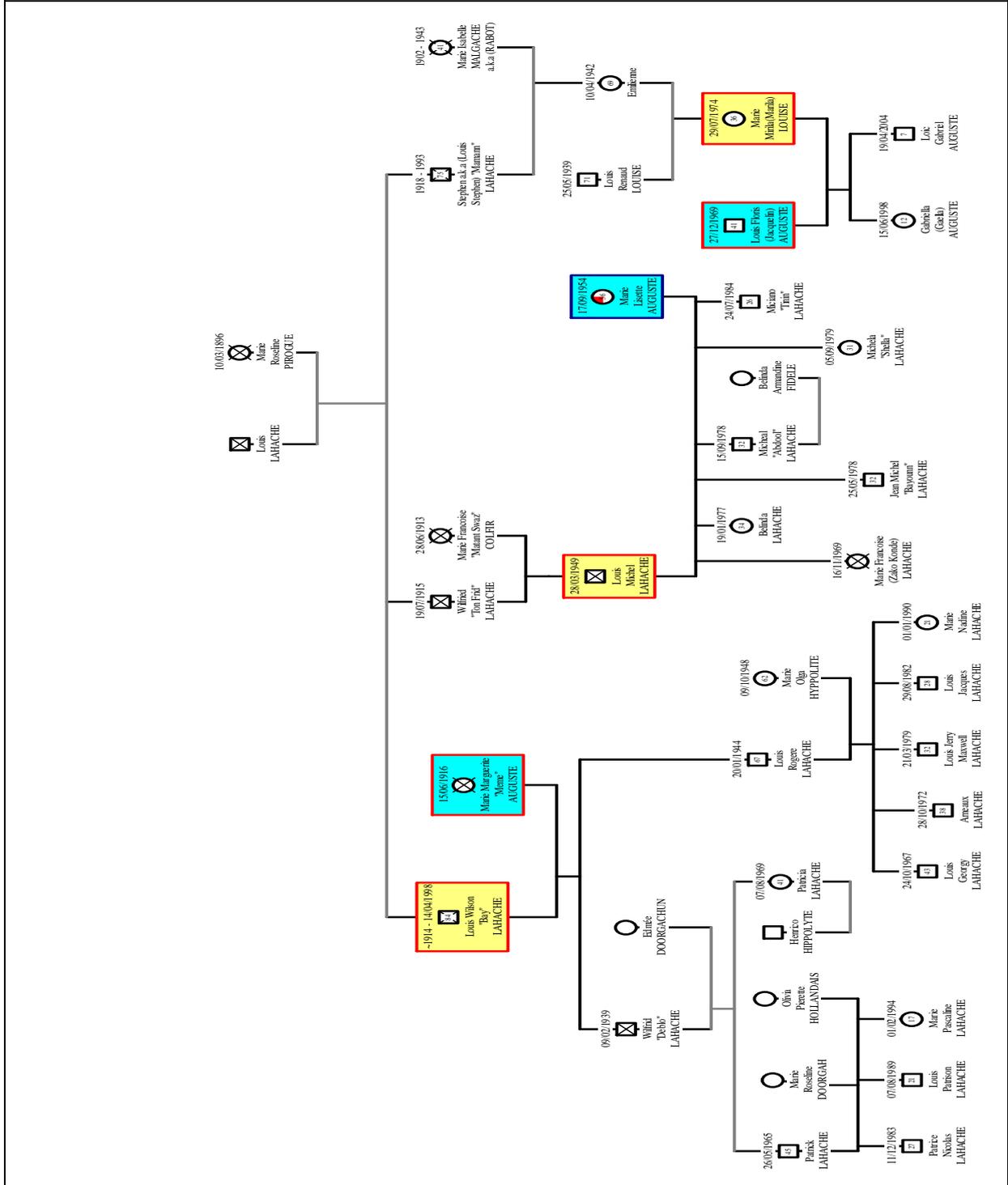
It can also be observed that some family members tend to marry within the same family through generations such as Lahache family (uncle and nephew) marrying in August Family as illustrated in Chart 2.

Emilienne's father had a wife whose maiden name was Louise and Emilienne is presently living in *concubinage* (Eng. trans. Cohabitation) with Louis Renaud Louise as indicated in Chart 3.

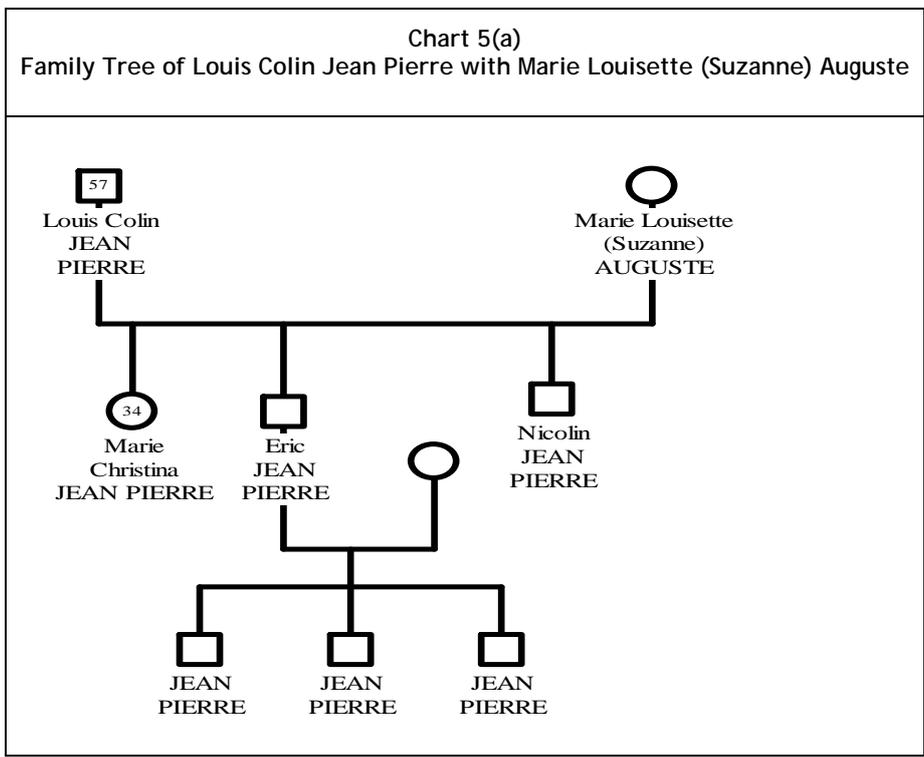
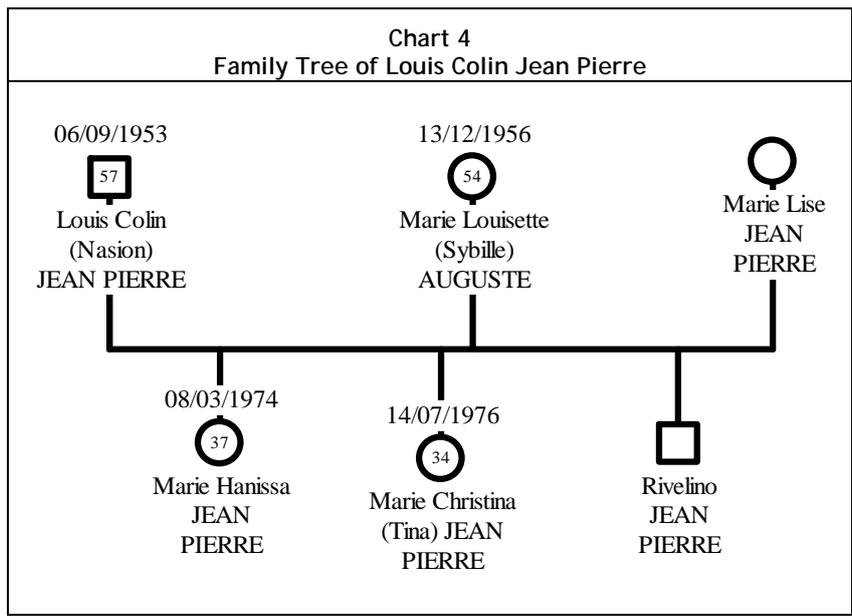


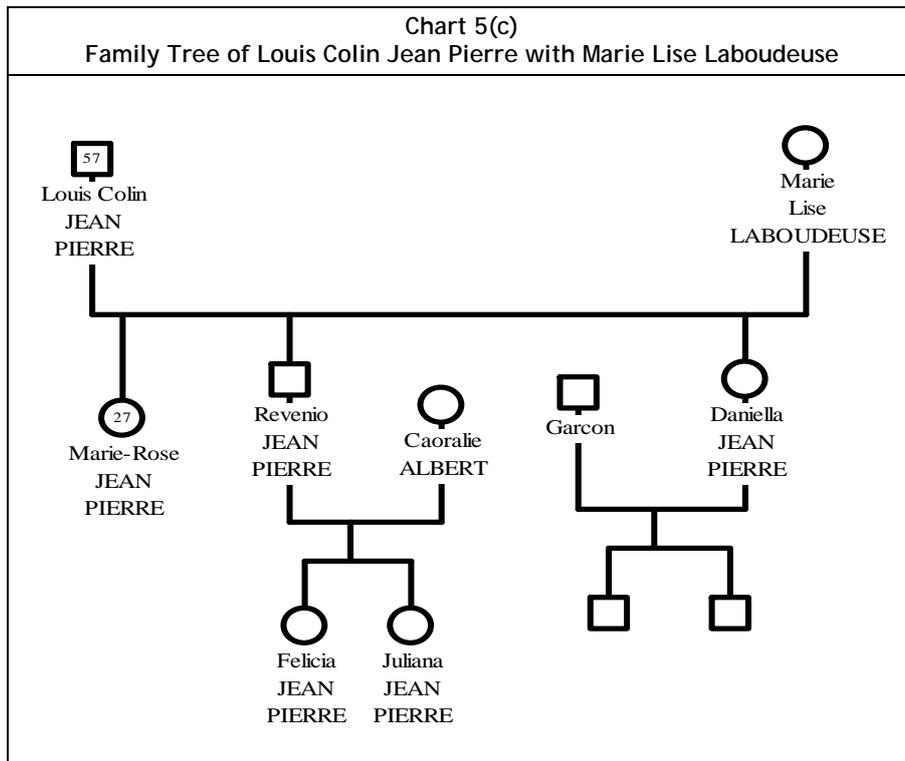
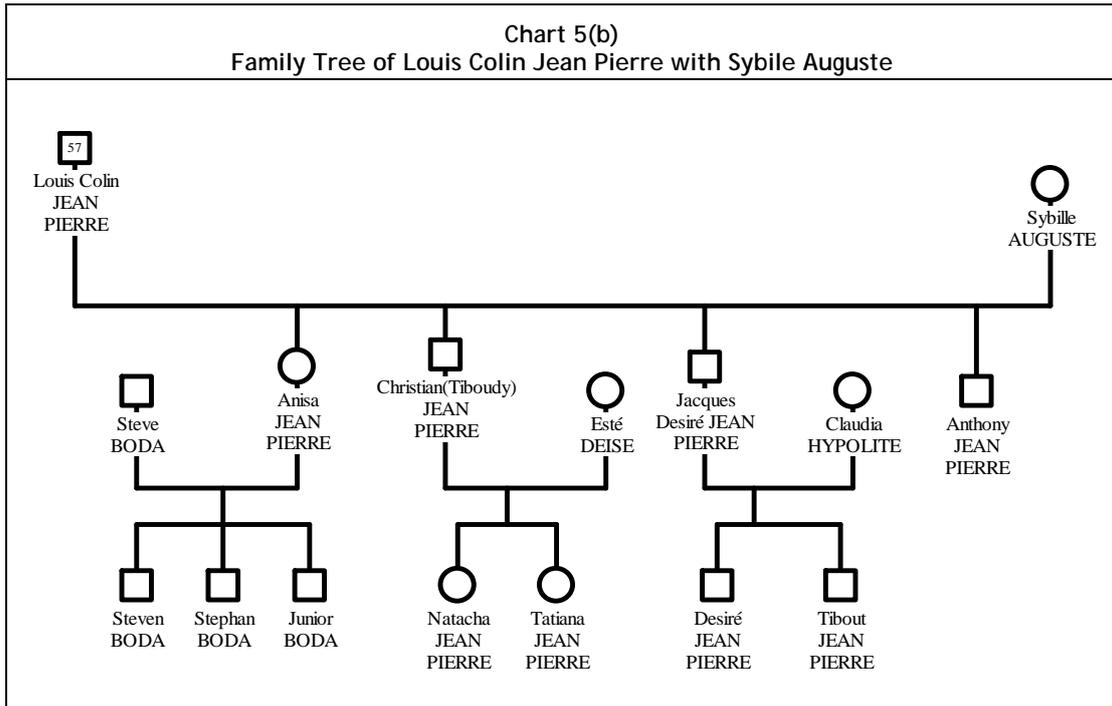


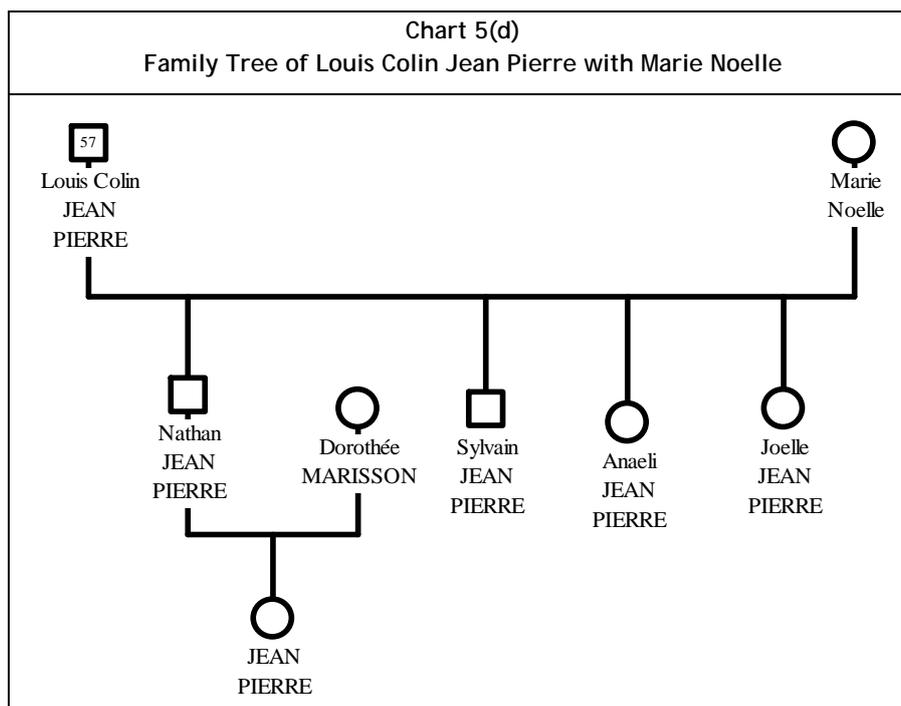
Chart 3  
Branch of the descendant Tree of Louis Lahache illustrating kinship links with the August Family



The tree entitled Chart 4 is based on official documents and indicates that Louis Colin Jean Pierre had children with two partners namely Marie Louise Auguste and Marie Lise Jean Pierre. Whilst, the family trees entitled Chart 5 (a) to Chart 5 (d) were built based on the oral testimonies and indicate that he had four partners.







It should be noted that the genealogy trees do not reflect the exact extent of multiple partnerships in the *Cité*. Moreover, respondents do not make the distinction between *concubinage* and marriage.

They conceptualise both relationships as being similar because they conceive both as being husband and wife relationships. For example, they used the morpheme *fam* (Eng. Trans. Wife) to designate the various female partners of a man.

This can be explained by the fact that in the Mauritian Kreol lexis, the equivalent for an intimate female partner is *fam* since in intimate cohabitation; the man and the woman are related by an intimate conjugal relationship.

Therefore, it was difficult through oral history to retrace the nature of these various intimate cohabitations and multi-partner relationships especially when children born from these relationships were declared under their mother's patronymic name.

It is worth noting that *concubinage* and serial monogamy are not modern forms of family patterns and they can be traced back to colonial times. For example the 1871 census reported that 'amongst Indians there was a large number of females who were living in *concubinage* and one of the causes of their doing so was that they were not allowed by the laws of the colony to marry before the age of 15 unless they obtained a special dispensation from the governor.'<sup>51</sup>

Although Cité La Mivoie is predominantly a cognatic society, in some instances, when children were born out of illegitimate relationships or of serial monogamy, they were declared under their mother's name (either because the father did not recognise his paternity or was unknown) which hence made it difficult or sometimes impossible to retrace their patrilineage.

In the past, it was common practice that children were not declared by their biological parents but by friends or by relatives. Sometimes, these children were not declared under the same patronymic name as their parents or they carry the patronymic name of the person who declared them. Hence, this practice disrupt contemporary family lineage.

This naming practice dates back to colonial times such as Arthur Townsend born in 1898, the son of Louis Malache, was declared under his mother's name Marie Elizabeth Townsend. This practice might stem from the fact that during slavery, maternity and the nurturing role of women were recognised whereas slave owners undermined paternity and hence only the mother's name was registered in the plantation records.<sup>52</sup>

Another reason might be children born outside marriage and from ‘illegitimate’ relationships were considered, as ‘illegitimate’ children and the father did not recognise their paternity. For example, Emilienne is an illegitimate child of Louis Stephen Lahache and it might be one of the reasons why she does not have a patronymic name.

...Mo mama ti apel Marie Isabelle Rabot...Ek ou papa? Mo papa ti apel Louis Stephen Lahache...Non. Zot pa marye. Mo maman ti marye avek Cyril LaBoudeuse...Mo papa ti marye avek...Wi Ti marye Roselda Chambac...Mo gramer appel Marie Amandine Malgache. Mo granper mo pa kone...<sup>53</sup>

(Eng. trans:...My mum was named Marie Isabelle Rabot...And your father? My father was named Louis Stephen Lahache...No they were not married. My mother was married with Cyril LaBoudeuse...My father was married to...Yes it was Marie Roselda Chambac...My grandmother is named Marie Amandine Malgache. My grandfather I do not know...)

Her mother’s patronymic name is Rabot whereas her mother’s sister or half-sister was named Simone L’Hermitte. She thinks that a man named Rabot might have declared her mother.

...Be lontan zot ti pares. Li pati difisil. Li kapav pe asize dan lakaz: To pe al deklar to zanfán? Dir wi. Ayo deklar pou mosi enn kou...<sup>54</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Long ago they were lazy. It was not difficult. They might be sitting in the house: you going to declare your child? Say yes. Ayo declare for me too...)

According to Burrell (2010), disproportionate ‘black family’ dysfunction is directly linked to American chattel slavery with slave owners having no regard for family attachment. They made a conscious and willing decision to control slaves’ minds through decimating the ‘black family’. Deconstructing the very concept of the ‘black family’ was central to massive enterprise to build a new economy and to lay the cornerstones of personal fortunes.

The female-headed families can be conceived as a by-product or a consequence of slavery that destroyed all ancestral family bonds within the ‘slave families’ (separating families upon their arrival on the island or before their deportation) with the exception of the mothers-children dyad with mothers and children that remained together.

To make the slaves more compliant and submissive, the slave owners destroyed their identity markers. The deconstruction of ‘slave families’ can be considered as a strategy used by the colonisers to destroy the slaves ancestral identity and cultural markers so as to submit the latter to their control and power.

This was achieved through de-culturation and acculturation that systematically implied the branding and breaking of ancestral traditions and value systems. Hence, slavery led to changes in family patterns from ancestral male-headed families to families headed by mothers.

The breaking of family and marriage ties among slaves and constant separation of families led to a shift in family patterns and structures that still impact on the contemporary family.

However, how far the present local community structures and family patterns are legacies of slavery have yet to be determined given that they might result from other social, economic, historical and cultural influences dating back to post-slavery period.

### Gender relations

Women are the pillar of the *Cité* in that based on the respondent’s testimonies, the women residents are more active than men are and they are the pillar of the family as they play a crucial role in the formation of community life. But, the *Cité* inner-structure remains patriarchal.

...Ou fek dir enn zafer la se bann fam ki plis mobilize dan la rezion... Kouma ou explik sa ein?... Ena boukou bann papa ayo pa mo zafer sa mo pa rant ladan mo pa dir tou ena papa santi li bien kapav fer kitsoz par kont dan le PTA ti dir douz mam ena 1 sel zom parmi 11 fam... Me eski ou pou dir dan la site se bam fam ki tenir latet lakaz?...Ah oui oui fasil kler ek net!...<sup>55</sup>

(Eng. trans:...you just said that women are more active in the region...how you explain that?...you hear fathers say ayo this is not of my concern I will not get involved in that I do not say all, they are fathers you feel they can do things but in the PTA there are 12 members there is one man amongst 11 women...would you say that in the housing estate it is the woman who is the head of the household?...yes yes easily clear and straight...)

Even though, at the surface, women seem to be empowered, yet, field research uncovered that female residents have internalised low self-esteem and low self-confidence that result from negative self-images and self-representations. They believe that they are socially and economically dependent on men and that their social and individual identity can only be constructed through a man.

The generational transmission of these beliefs perpetuate serial monogamy and multiple sexual partners among both men and women. For example, Stephane Lahache, the father of Emilienne Faron, had three three wives.

Emilienne has two partners (she was previous married to Mr. Faron and is presently living in *concubinage* with Louis Renaud Louis) and her son Antonio Faron was married one and is actually living in *concubinage* with his second partner.

In keeping with Teelock (1998), these types of relationships seem to date back to slavery when women were convinced that the route to 'material improvement', social mobility, social recognition and a better standard of living was through a man and especially 'free men that could provide for their subsistence' which implies a man with a higher social status. These relationships were also a means for women to build sense of social image and social respect.

The economic dependence of women also was retraced to slave times when few opportunities of socio-economic mobility were available and women 'were for the most part dependent on the men when they wanted to provide additional comforts and necessities to their children and a path to social advancement.'<sup>56</sup>

There is also a transmission of gender-based violence across generations, as it seems that through generations people have internalised the behavioural patterns that they reproduce.

For example, during the interview of a woman, behavioural cues were identified indicating that she might be abused by her husband and we found out that her mother also was physically abused by her father and was beaten to death.

We tend to forget that 'black female' identity was shattered under slavery. Slave women were treated as sexual objects that imply that they were denied sexual integrity and they were the property of their slave master. They had no control over their sexuality and bodies.

Subject to rape and other sexual abuses, they were stripped of their self-esteem and were emotionally fragmented. They were negatively stereotyped as being of 'loose' character and of having an uncontrollable sexuality.

This sexual stereotyping that was perpetuated in post-colonial times such as in the post-colonial literature, has impacted on the 'black female' psyche with women across generations internalising that their body and sexuality were just a 'bartering tool for love and affection' and social status.

In line with Burrell (2010), the slave system also negatively affects the 'Black male' identity in that 'slavery and its aftermath constituted an unrelenting assault on black male identity. The trauma was a serious blow to the sense of manhood prevalent in male dominated societies and which many Black men still 'wrestle' with today.

It is impossible to understand our current family crisis without examining the historical ways in which black fathers, mates, brothers and sons were emasculated.' Actually, slavery disrupted gender relations and roles that left the slave men and their descendants with a sense of emasculation that has been internalised and transmitted across generations.

For example, the rape and sexual objectification of slave women and the helplessness of the slave men who watched their wife, sister or daughter being abused are present in the collective memory.

The distribution of work duties on the sugar plantations during slavery as well further disrupted gender roles since, slave women were 'forced into male roles', they 'performed almost all the tasks performed by male slaves'<sup>57</sup> and were, in reality, subject to harsh corporal punishment.

Indeed, the impact of the long-term trauma and psychological disempowerment of the slave system on contemporary gender relations should not be undermined. Slavery and even post-slavery was a dehumanising and denigrating system whereby slave men were forced to stifle their male identity and it bore prejudice to their sense of manhood.

In other words, slave men were denied their manhood since they were dehumanised and objectified. They had to submit to the oppression of another man, the slave owner, and be docile and subservient.

This sense of emasculation might be one of the reasons why the male *Cité* dwellers still feel the need to prove their manhood and male prerogatives in a patriarchal society that reminds them how their male ancestors did not defend nor protect their female ancestors.

Indeed, during fieldwork, it was observed that the male residents at a very young age adopted a macho and misogynistic behavioural pattern as a means of affirming their male identity and their domination such as in their language codes that are heavily loaded with violent slang and in their attitudes towards the female residents.

Since a young age, they are socialised to adopt and nurture the 'appropriate male dominant behaviour and traits' with male-hood being associated with aggressiveness, domination, power and control.

'...Zot ena respe pou fam indien...Wi, de fwa enn fam indien pou pase la, zot pou dir he aret zoure ena madam pe pase la me de fwa ou pe pase zot pou kontinye betiz. Si zot bisin pou fer tiss en plin air pou ou trouve, zot fer tiss. Li bann ak koumsa kot nou pase...Be bann fam sinwa, bann fam blan ek bann fam milat? Non zot pou kone sa bann lot kalite par dimounn sa ou zot be zot pou les li, zot pou atan, zot pou les li pase lerla zot pou fer seki zot bizin fer ou lot la pou dir res trankil...kom si pou zot kreol bizin res tou le tan koma koze la derier midi... De fwa fason depann, koze ein... Be ki zot dir, ki koze ou antan lor ban kreol? Kreol voler, Kreol souler, Kreol pitin...'<sup>58</sup>

(Eng. trans:...they respect Indian women...yes sometimes an Indian woman will pass by, they will say stop swearing there is a woman passing by but sometimes they you pass by they continue swearing. If they need urinate in the open air for you to see, they urinate. They behave like that when we pass by...but Chinese women, white women and mulatto women? No they will know these people they will leave her, they will wait, they will let her pass by then they will do what they have to do or the other will say stay quiet...as if for them Creoles have to always remain (backwards)...sometimes way of talking...But what they say, what you have heard on Creoles? Creoles thieves, Creoles drunkards, Creoles whore...)

Gender differences in academic achievement and occupational distributions as well was observed with men being mostly fishermen and gardeners whereas women are housemaids and blue collar workers which means that the skilled and qualified workers are mainly women.

Nonetheless, it seems that once reaching adolescence, girls experience more societal pressure to find a potential life partner leading to changes in the hierarchical organisation of motivation with their focus targeted towards finding their life partner. Subsequently, they tend to leave school either because they are pregnant or to get married. The issue of the school 'drop-out' will be further developed later in the report.

...ki fer zot aret lekol, ki zot al fer? Abe zot marye, zot fini al form enn foye, enn menaz. Donk ou dir mwa ena bouku kinn aret lekol ? Wi. Dan 14-15 an, apre marye? Wi...'<sup>59</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Why they stop schooling, what they do? They get married and they form a family, a married couple. So you told me there are many who stop schooling? Yes. So [they are] 14-15 years of age? Yes...)

Hence, in keeping with Bryne (1978), gender stereotypes that underpin gender discriminations and subsequently the cycle of gender discrimination against women are maintained and reinforced by parents in Cité La Mivoie that perpetuate identity of girls in domestic traditional terms and roles and in relation to men.

However, considering that slave women constituted the main source of unskilled and menial labour whereas slave men performed skilled work<sup>60</sup>, the shift in job patterns with women nowadays being rather blue-collar workers and skilled workers indicate that women have been able to make use of the opportunities of post-slavery for economic advancement. (See Economic Survey Chapter)

#### 4.6 SETTLEMENT

The villages in Black River region should not be considered as isolated entities but as being inter-related. They are linked by history and kinship as mentioned earlier and as revealed by the family histories. The family histories uncovered that people living in the camps came from the villages such as Le Morne Village, Chamarel and Petite Rivière Noire<sup>61</sup>.

For example, in 1963 Antonio Faron, the son of Emilienne, was born in *La Salin* Pilot/Koenig and grew up there. Now he lives in Morcellement Les Tamariniers. Jean Louis Malgache, the great grandfather of Humbert Thousand was born in Chamarel. One of our respondents, Evariste La Boudeuse, was born in 1939 in Macaque and grew up in Trou-Chenille.

...Mo mama ti dir mwa mo ti ne laba enn lendrwa apel makak. Makak li akote le morne? Makak li akote le morne. A ou ti ne makak apre kot oun grandi? Lerla monn grandi mo vinn grandi trousini ena enn landrwa dan le morne mem sa...Ki laz ou tiena kan oun vinn rest trousini? Ler monn ne sa ve dir mo tiena 6 an laz 45 laguer 45 mo ena 6 an. Donk kan ou tiena 6 an oun al trousini?...Ti ena enn legliz la sa legliz la inn fini sa lerla mo ti ne laem kot la fours mo ti ne makak lerla monn..Oun grandi trousini ou byen ounn grandi labrazier? Saem li kom dan sa simin laem koumadir trousini kote anba la enn kontour la enn la boutik la madam Ah Hee pou al andan pou trouv trousini...<sup>62</sup>

(Eng. trans:...My mum told me that I was born in a place named Macaque. Macaque is near Le Morne? Macaque is near Le Morne. Oh you were born near Macaque and then where you grew up? Then I grew up in Trou Chenille it is a region in Le Morne. What was your age when you settled in Trou Chenille? Then I was 6 years of age in 45 was the war in 45 was 6 years of age. So when you were 6 years of age you went to settle in Trou Chenille? There was a church there the church was destroyed I was born there near the Pied La Fourche I was born in Macaque then I...You grew up in Trou Chenille or in L'Embrassure? It is part of this road how to say Trou Chenille is down there [there is] a turning the shop [of] Mrs Ah Hee to go within you have Trou Chenille...)

These links result from voluntary or forced migration. As illustrated in the migratory map attached, it seems that local inhabitants migrated from the villages in the southern part of the district to the northern part. In other words, they climbed up the district. (See Appendix 2)

For example, in the past, employment opportunities and marriage motivated migratory movement of people as people settled in regions where there were job offers and as mentioned earlier people tend to marry within the region.

Oral history revealed that before the 1960s, the bulk of the population was living in the various *kan* (Eng. trans. Camps) on the surrounding estate land namely the estates of the Maurel Family that was divided and sold in the 1960s to the Lagesse Family, De Senneville Family, De Maroussem Family and Ramdenee Family.

However, it was not possible to consult the deeds of sales to have details of the land transactions such as chronology of the sales and acres of the concession sold because of lack of time. Hence, I relied on the oral testimonies to retrace the spatial configurations. Therefore, discrepancies might have arisen because of memory distortion.

Based on Olivier's testimony, one of the elders in the region, it seems that the region belonged to the Maurel Family who was the main estate owner in the region with their concession extending from *Bois Piant*<sup>63</sup> (Eng. trans. Stinking Wood) in Petite Rivière Noire to Tamarin.

The Maurel Family divided their concession that they sold to Philip Lagesse with his estate extending from *Bwa Pian* to La Mivoie; De Ravel Family that owns land from Petite Rivière Noire to Bois Piant and the *Salin* Carlos; and Maingard Family that possess the Mountain La Tourelle du Tamarin to Tamarin Village.

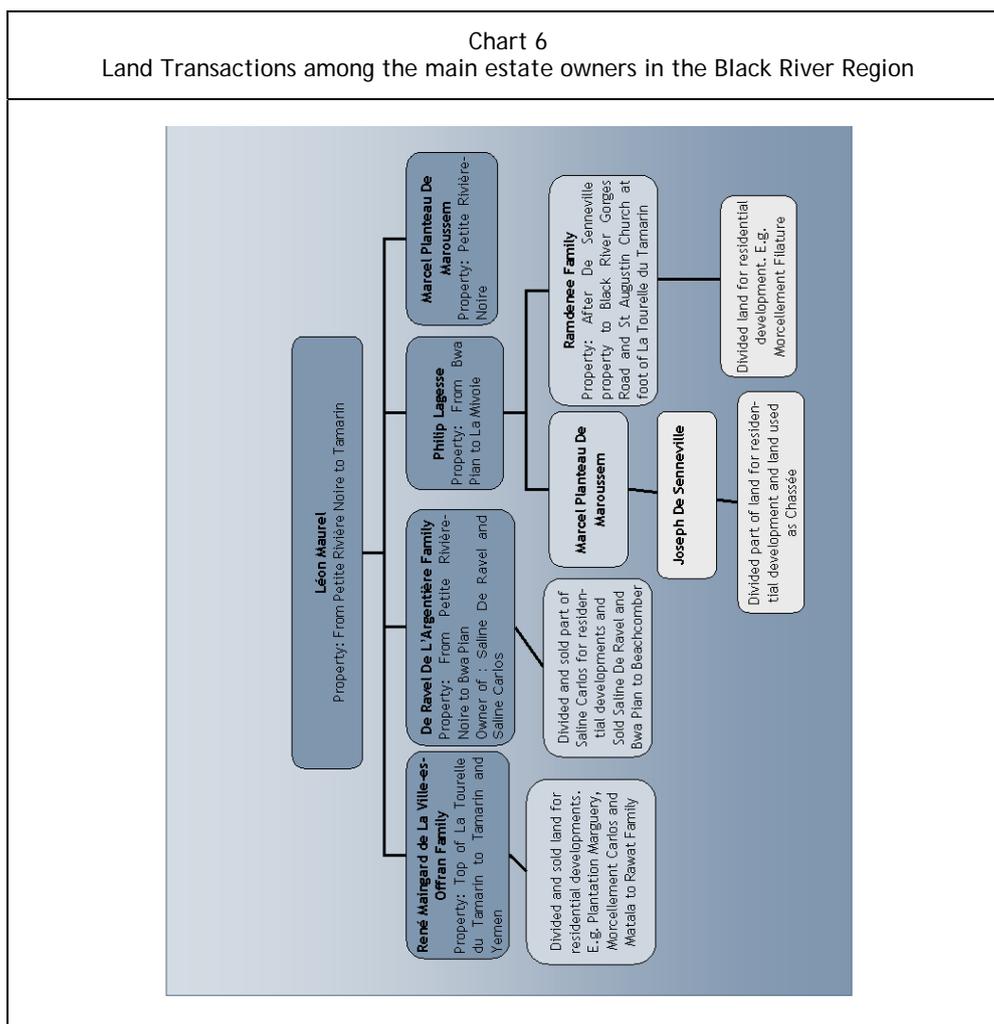
Later, Philippe Lagesse sold his concession to Marcel De Marousse and the Mr. Ramdenee whose property was located after that of Joseph De Senneville and along the Black River Gorges Road until *Pon Misel* and at the foot of the mountain until St Augustin Church.

Marcel De Marousse sold his property to Joseph De Senneville who converted his land into hunting grounds. Oliver was working for him as watchman from the age of 45 and now he is retired.

According to Moutou (2001, p. 35), Adolphe Maquet in the *Précis Terrier de l'isle de France* estimated that in the years 1744, in the Black River district, not less than 100 concessions were allotted for a territory of 35,937 arpents. These concessions were later on transmitted across generations. For example, Comtesse De La Marque possessed a concession of 1,045 arpents, François Fortier owned 156 ¼ arpents, Jean Lousteau Père had 156 ½ arpents and Chazal Chamarel was allotted 1721 ½ arpents.

Furthermore, in accordance with Teelock (1998), of all the concessions in Black River, 89 percent of them were large concessions of over 100 arpents and in 1830; there were 107 estates in the region. Hence, it might not be surprising that the De Ravel Family was one of the main landowners in the Black River region.

Chart 6  
Land Transactions among the main estate owners in the Black River Region



## 1. Maurel's Property

Oral history discloses that, apparently, Petite Rivière Noire to Tamarin somewhat belong to the Maurel Family before 1960 since they were the main landowners in the region with the exception of the Koenig brothers salt-pan owners.

According to Nicole, '*propriete Maurel komense apre mo le dir Bel Ombre!*'<sup>64</sup> (Eng. trans. Maurel property starts after Bel Ombre). Hence, the property extended after Bel Ombre property in Petite Rivière Noire to Tamarin.

## 2. De Ravel Property

When going towards the North, De Ravel's property is one the left side of the main road and starts with the Fatima Chapel<sup>65</sup> in Petite Rivière Noire where the *Salin* De Ravel is located.

...zis kouma nou gagn komansman legliz la, kote gos, ek terin De Ravel komanse...wi, chapel Fatima trouv lor terin De Ravel. Sa ve dir De Ravel, kot so terin koumanse? la. kot ena la chapel?...Wi...Parski kan nou get byen la, zis enn semin ki De Ravel...en bann, bann abitan ilofortie inn pran, parski sa kote la ou gagn difil pou De Ravel...Me selman, dan terin De Ravel...De Ravel so terin trouv bor semin, inpe bor chemin, pli andan, ena terin ki ti appartenir a la salinn Pilot...<sup>66</sup>

(Eng. trans:...It is just before the church on the left there De Ravel land start...yes, Chapel Fatima is located on De Ravel land. So De Ravel where his land starts? There where the is the Chapel?...Yes...because when we see carefully there is a road just [for] De Ravel...they inhabitants of ilot Fortiers use this road, because on this side you have a fence for De

Ravel...But De Ravel's land is on the roadside, a little on roadside, further inside there is land that belongs to the Pilot salt-pan...)

Recently the De Ravel Family<sup>67</sup> sold their property in Petite Rivière Noire to Beachcomber group but the salt-pan is still operational.

On his property, inside *Salin* De Ravel, there was a camp at the entrance of the salt-pan where the workers used to live. The camp was destroyed 20 years ago and presently Nicole's daughter and her family are the only one to live there.

As from the place named *Bois Piant*, when going towards the North, the property on the left side of the main road is divided into two parts. The land that is on the sea border is for the Pilot/Koenig family and the land on the road border is for the De Ravel Family.

### 3. Hardy's Property

It is located on the right side of the main road in Petite Rivière Noire. The Church of Petite Rivière Noir is located on Hardy's land. Part of the hunting land was converted into residential land such as *Morcellement* Multipliant that was built eight years ago.

### 4. Pilot/Koenig Salt-pan and Îlot Fortier

The Pilot and Koenig families were also identified as main landowners in the region. For generations they owned the salt-pan Pilot/Koenig that they recently sold to Beachcomber group for hostelry development.

According to Moutou (2001, p.222), in 1939, there were seven salt-pans of which six were located in the Black River district amongst which there were Les Salines for the Koenig brothers, La Mivoie for Léon Maurel and Petite Rivière Noire for Société E. Antelme.

Nicole testified that the great grandmother Mrs. Koenig had many children approximately twelve to nineteen descendants. When the great grandparents died, Îlot Fortier was divided between each child but later on, some of them sold the land they inherited. Presently there are three Koenig daughters still living on the island namely Mrs Colin, Mrs Leclezio and Mrs Adam.

### 5. De Senneville Property

When going towards North, the De Senneville property is on the right side of the main road and starts after the place named *Bois Piant*, after the reservoir.

...apre bwa pian la li pou komans pou De Senneville...Oparavan sete Maurel, epwi vande, vande, vande, De Senneville...<sup>68</sup>

(Eng. trans:...After Bwa Pian starts De Senneville [property]...Before it was for Maurel, then [he] sold, sold, sold [to] De Senneville...)

According to Nicole, the Maurel Family sold the land to the De Senneville who used his property as hunting ground. Part of the hunting ground was converted into residential land. A *Morcellement* was constructed in-front of Paolen Industry on the location of the Aloes Mill.

### 6. Ramdenée Property

Ramedenée Family estate started after the De Senneville property, after the Tamarind tree named *Tamarin Lapel*. According to Nicole, Mr. Ramedenée bought land from Mr. De Maroussem around 1970 and in around 2005, he divided and sold his land for residential development and built *Morcellement* Les Filature.

...donk en 1960, Ramdenée pa ti ankor proprieter alor? non, non. E Ramdenée inn vinn proprieter byen byen apre 60, byen apre. Byen apre ? Wi. Ou kone ver ki lane linn vinn proprieter? parski kan mo pe dir ou, en 1960 la, Maurel pe koumans deza vande la kot misie Maroussem inn pran, misie Maroussem inn pran tou sa, sa mem kot apre inn vinn Ramdenée. E, Ramdenée inn pren ver lane 70...<sup>69</sup>

(Eng. trans:...so in 1960, Ramdenée was not yet owner then? No no. Ramdenée became owner well after 1960, well after. Well after? Yes. You know when he became owner?)

Because when I tell you in 1960, then Maurel already started to sell, where Mr. De Maroussem took, Mr. De Maroussem took all that, then afterwards was sold to Ramdenee. And Ramdenee told in around 1970...)

## 7. Cité La Mivoie

The *Cité* was built in 1960 after the devastating impact of *Cyclone Carol*. It was built under the Cyclone Housing Schemes of the Central Housing Act of 1960. This scheme provided for the construction of houses to be let or sold to occupiers of residential buildings blown down or damaged by a cyclone. Consequently, the government constructed Cité La Mivoie for the local victims of *Cyclone Carol*.

Oral history uncovered that the settlement of the *Cité* can be divided into two waves. The first settlement dates back to around 1962-1963 when the victims of *Cyclone Carol* took possession of their houses.

Among the first settlers, many lost their houses because of non-payment of their rent and bail. As soon as a house was vacant, squatters, who often were relatives of the former house occupant and living in the surrounding localities, settled in and later on were registered.

This second wave of settlement was in around the 1980s, from 1975 until 1982. For example, the uncle of Nicole was evicted from his house for non-payment of lease and Nicole settled in.

...Mo tonton ti abit la. Roger L'hermitte...Lakaz tipe pay venntwa sinkant. Be lerla mwa mo tipe res kot enn lot madam. Lokater kom li ansam ar li. Lerla mo tonton li li pann pay lakaz. Madam-la so ser pann pay lakaz. Mo vinn res linn rama so ser...Tir ou bann kiksoz zet deor. Met kadna dan laport. Be lerla-be...monn vinn res ek li la monn dir li pay ou lakaz ou pou perdi lakaz. Abe zot pann paye zot inn perdi lakaz. Inn met kadna inn tir tou nou kiksoz met deor. Perdi lakaz. Kan rayot inn ale monn kas kadna-la monn rantre...<sup>70</sup>

(Eng. trans:...My uncle lived there. Roger L'Hermitte...the rent was twenty tree rupees fifty cents. I was living at another woman's place. I was tenant like her. Then my uncle did not pay his lease. The woman her sister did not pay her lease. I settled [with my uncle] and her sister settled with her...remove your things. Lock the door. Then...I stayed with him, I told him to pay his rent or he will lose the house. They did not pay they lost the house. They put a lock removed all our things. Lost the house. When the police force left I broke the lock and settled in...)

Cité La Mivoie developed and expanded with the descendants of these settlers who across generations married among themselves and constructed their houses in the *Cité* thus forming an extended clan with residents being linked by kinship and descent as illustrated by the family tree of the Louis Horace Albert (chart 7).



island. By definition, a camp is a temporary settlement but in Mauritius, they became almost permanent in sense that when some moved out of the huts others moved in their place.

The camps and villages were not static social units but on the contrary, they evolved with the economic and social life of the region. They were an open system in that there were social exchanges between them such as people moved from one camp to live in another because of job opportunities or after marriage. They formed an extended family in that they were kindred but developed fictive kinship as well in the sense that they considered themselves as forming 'a family' crossing religio-ethnic barriers.

The Labour Ordinance of 1922 provided that estate owners had to provide housing facilities to the labourers employed on estates. In keeping with the testimonies, this practice continued beyond the abolition of the indenture system in and were incentives for people from neighbouring regions such as a Cascavelle and Henrietta and sometimes as far as urban regions to come and work for the estates. The main incentives mentioned in the interviews were wood to construct houses, plot of land to farm and the possibility to have their own gardens for subsistence.

From the oral testimonies gathered and during the site visits the camps listed below were identified. The memories of these camps are still alive in individual and collective memories, as there has been transmission across generations. For example, the son of Olivier, one of the elders in the locality, stated that he learnt the name of these places and of places in the Black River Gorges from his father.

The respondents identified the following sites of settlement as constituting their local heritage. The heritage significance are specified in the testimonies:

1. *Kan Kadoc*<sup>71</sup>

It was located on private land at the south end of the *Salin Pilot/Koenig* near a pond. There were Creoles, Hindi speaking and Marathi-speaking people who used to live there.

Emilienne mentioned that a man named Papa Zen used to live in this camp near a kalimaya.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, we were unable to crosscheck her statement or to identify the location of the camp.

2. *Kan Dharma or Brize Dharma:*

It was located on the estate land of Mr. De Senneville. It was named after a man named Mr. Dharma who used to live there.

...Donk ti ena apre ti koz enn kan kan Dharma ? Saem Dharma sa dan kote sase mem sa Kot drwat letan ou ale kot larivier dan de kote sa wadir dan kote misie Senneville la. Kifer Dharma ein? Saem saem bann Bombaye ti reste saem zot ti fer zardin Saem apel sa Brize Dharma Dimounn la ti apel Dharma. Brize Darma? Wi Kote misie Senneville...<sup>73</sup>

(Eng. trans:...So after there was you talked of a camp Dharma camp? Dharma it is on hunting ground on the right side when you go to the river it is on Mr. De Senneville side. Why Dharma? It was the Marathis who lived there they were gardening it is named Brize Dharma the man was named Dharma. Brize Dharma? Yes on De Senneville side...)

3. *Kan Listo:*

It was also located on the estate land of Mr. Ramdenee near College Saint Esprit and the Village Bougainvilliers. According to Antonio, there was a public tap in front of the camp.

Unfortunately, because of lack of time we were unable to investigate whether there are any links between the name of this camp (Camp Lousteau) and Mr. Lousteau.

...kan Listo...Wi...sa ve dir li ti ekzakteman dan la...vilaz Bougenville...Wi me selman ti ena bann tipti lakaz, ti lakaz kaka vas...me kan sa kan la...ki period sa en? sa, en...avan 1960 sa...mai sakan la, li ti donk lor terin Ramdenee?..apre 60, boukou kan inn disparet, apre 63...tou bann kan inn ale?..Wi...me bann dimounn ki ti abit dan kan Listo, kot zonn ale?

ena dimunn inn bouze inn al anba, dan EDC...Rivière Noire. Apre ena dimounn inn al dan salinn lot kote la...<sup>74</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Listo camp...yes...that it is was located exactly in...Village Bougainvilliers...yes but there were small houses, houses made of cow dung...but when was this camp...which period? It was in...before 1960...but this camp it was on Ramdenée property?...after 1960, many camps disappeared, after 1963...all the camps disappeared? Yes...but the people living in Listo Camp where they moved? There are people who moved to Rivière Noire EDC. Then there are people who moved in the salt-pan on the other side there...)

...Apel sa kan Listo. Kan Listo ti ena 1 robine piblik. Wei ti ena 1 robine la. Kifer apel sa Kan Listo ein? Sa boug ki apel Listo la ki mo pa kone ki sanela sa. Sa ve dir kan Listo li kot kolez St Esprit? Wi...<sup>75</sup>

(Eng. trans:...It is named Listo Camps. Listo camp there was a public tap. Yes there was a public tap. Why it was named Listo Camp? The man named Listo I do not know who he was. So it means camp Listo was near St Esprit College? Yes...)

#### 4. *Kan Laserp* (Eng. trans. Billhook Camp):

According to Olivier, it was located near the office of Mr. Ramdenée and the salt-fish factory and there were many people living. For example, Emilienne mentioned that she was living in this camp.

However, Nicole mentioned that the forum, now Paolen industry (and previously the College Saint Esprit) was constructed on the site of *Kan Laserp*

...bann kan li pou koumens zis apre sa gro pie tamarin la...Donk kot ti ena pie tamarin, si mo kompren byen, ti ena enn kan?...Wi. E lot kote ti ena bann travayer pou misier De Senneville, apre ici la...kot en fas la, sa mem ti apel kan laserp...mai ena enn lakaz blan la, pou li sa?...b, bann la tinn mont sa ti ena de trwa...plisir zafer inn fer endan laba. Zonn fer mem la foil, zot fer...zot inn fer forum, wi zot inn fer forum...enn momen done lekol saint Espri ti bouz la, parceke lekol pa ti enkor pare. Apre maintainan zot fer potri...kan monn kumens travay dan bwa lera monn al kone sa terin la ti pou De Senneville, mai mo pa ti kone avan terin la, pou ki sanla ti ete. Ti ena enn bann pie, gro gro pie casi ladan, parceki mo kone kan monn fer sarbon la, la kan monn kumens fouy later, pou bann morso porcelain inn kase...<sup>76</sup>

(Eng. trans:...the camp started just after the big Tamarin Tree there...So if I understood where is the Tamarind Tree there was a camp?...yes. and on the other side there were Mr De Senneville workers, there here...in front there, it was named *Kan Laserp*...but there is a white house it's for him?...people built it there were two three...many things they did in that. They did a market, they did a forum, yes they did a forum...at a certain period the St Esprit College moved there, because the school was not ready. Now they do potteries...When I started to work in the wood then I learnt that this land is for De Senneville, but I did not before for who the land was. There were big Cassis trees inland, because I learnt that when I made charcoal there, when I started to dig the soil, [saw] broken pieces of porcelain...)

Photo 7 Location of *Kan Laserp*



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 5/P/LaMivoie/15June2010

5. *Kan La Salin or La Salin* (Eng. trans. Salt-pan Camp):

It was located at the entrance of Pilot/Koenig salt-pan. Since the salt-pan was sold to Beachcomber, the families living in this camp will be delocalised next to Village Bougainvilliers where *Kan Listo* was located

...Nou ti ena o mwin enn 8-10 lakaz par la non? Anviron kot Parsad lot kote kot Parsad ti ena André kot Parsad anba isi apre ler la vini tiena bann Pierre ti ena Dev seki bann lakaz seki ti ena Pierre, Dev, Pablo ti ena nou mem ti ena Selvi Coco...ti ena bann lakaz bann Cocoy...Apre par isi to ti gagn lakaz Cynthiers be avan lakaz Cynthiers to ti gagn bann Rosida bann bonfam Rosida ti reste...Kot soz si ti reste par la ta? kouma apel la? Bonom Grappener...Ti ena plizir ti ena 1 kan ti la...<sup>77</sup>

(Eng. trans:...There were approximately 8-10 houses there no? approximately where Parsad [was] on the other side where Parsad [was] there was André where Parsad [was] down over there later there were the Pierre there was Dev the houses that existed there were the Pierre, Dev, Pablo ourselves there was Selvi Coco...there was the house of the Cocoy...Then on the other side here there was the house of Cythiers but before the house of Cynthiers there the house of Rosida old woman Rosida was staying...Where [what's his name] was staying there? What is his name? Old man Grappener...there were many there was a house there...)

6. *Kan Bombaye*:

It was on Ramdenee estate and named such because Marathi-speaking Indo-Mauritians were living in this camp and they used to organise *danse bombaye* also known as *gran danse* (a traditional Marathi dance). A man named *Bonhom* Ganse was living there with his family who used to organise this traditional Marathi dance.

...Saem sime gorz, apel Kan Bombaye, ti ena danse Bombaye laba...Dan sime gorz?...Danse Bombaye? Wi. Ki ve dir sa? Ban grann danse Ti ena enn bolom ti apel bolom Ganse saem ti organiz sa bann danse la Dimounn ti res pre dan sa sime gorz la. Kisanla ki ti pe res la ein? Saem mo pe dir ou ti ena enn bolom ti appel bolom Ganse ti fer sa danse la. So bann fami tou ti res laba...<sup>78</sup>

(Eng. trans:...It is Black River Gorges Road, named *Bombaye* Camp, there was *danse Bombaye* over there...In Black River Gorges Road?...*Danse Bombaye?* Yes. What it means? *Gran danse* there was an old man named Old man Ganse who organise these dances people stayed near in the Black River Gorges Road there. Who stayed there? That is what I am telling you there was an old man named Old man Ganse organised these dances there. His family stayed over-there...)

7. *Kan Maraz* (Eng.trans. Maraz Camp):

It was located in front of the shop named *Trwa Bra* in *Karo Maraz*. It was named after a man named *Bonhom Maraz*. (See Economic chapter)

8. *Kan legliz* (Eng.trans. Church Camp):

It was near *Sime bef* (Eng.trans. Cattle Road)

...Saem ti ena kan la...ti apel soz kan Legliz. kan legliz ? Wi. Zis apre legliz sa ? Wi sime la monte vinn ver kot Pon Michel la dan verze mang la Ti ena enn kan la ti ena dimounn ti reste Lerla zot apel sa sime bef vinn ver la...<sup>79</sup>

(Eng. trans:...there was a camp there...ti was named Church camp. Church camp? Yes. After the church? Yes the road goes up to Michel Bridge there in the mango orchard there was a camp there were people living there then they named it Cattle road comes here...)

Photo 8 Location of *Kan Legliz*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 6/P/LaMivoie/15June2010

9. *Kan Disabl* (Eng.trans. Sand Camp):

It was located behind the shop named Li Mo Yo and was on the estate land of the Maurel Family. Cité La Mivoie was constructed on the site of *Kan Disabl*. It was composed of approximately three to five families namely the Faron Family, Auguste Family, Louise Family and Joseph Family that were living there and were working for the estate.

...Me pa ti ena bann kan kouma kan kan lakol kan disab? kan disab kot simitier pa derier la boutik limoyo La ou gagn kan disab li par lor bor lamer laba...Donk li derier la boutik limoyo. Wi Li apel kan disab...<sup>80</sup>

(Eng. trans:...There were not camps like Glue Camp Sand Camp? Sand camp near the cemetery at the back of Li Mo Yo's shop there you have Sand Camp it is on the seaside over there. So it is at the back of Li Mo Yo's shop. Yes it is named Sand Camp)

Photo 9 Location of *Kan Disabl*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH7/P/LaMivoie/11May2010

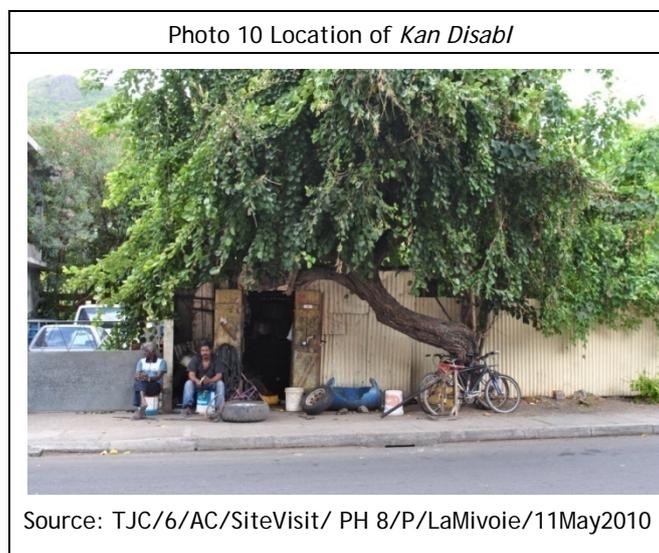
10. *Kan Robine* (Eng.trans. Tap Camp) or *Kan Lakol* (Eng.trans. Glue Camp):

It was first named *Kan Robine* because there was a public tap in front of the camp. Later on, when the tap was removed, it is now named *Kan Lakol* because there was a *pie lakol* (Eng.trans. Glue Tree) in front of the camp.

It is located opposite of Li Mo Yo's shop and adjacent to St Augustin Church. The Levailant family has been living there for generations.

....me an fas la boutik Li Mo Yo la, lor kote drwat sime, kan ou trouve ena bann, zafer inpe krem krem la, komen li apele la? be sa, sa mem ki ti apel. Ti apel sa kan Robine, nou. Parski zis, kot sa ti ena tol la-la, ti ena enn robine piblik. A kote Jean Luc Bar la? Wi. Ti ena enn robine piblik la. Preske tou dimounn ti vinn plin zot delo la. Be sa bann dimounn la, la mo krwar sa bann ki pe reste la se bann katriem zenerasion ki la...<sup>81</sup>

(Eng. trans:...in front of Li Mo Yo's shop there, on the right side of the road, when you see the cream-coloured things there, how is it named? This, this is what was named Kan Robine. Because just where there are the iron sheets there was a public tap. Near Jean Luc Bar there? Yes. There was a public tap. Almost everyone came to fetch water there. These people I think are the fourth generation living there...)



#### 11. *Kan Diosez*:

It was located at the north entrance of the village. Nicole knew people who have lived there for approximately 40 years and in the eighties then were displaced in longhouses near the cemetery and other in the *Cité* when the church, apparently, sold the land.

...kan Diosez, li ti koumans kot Manorama la, li monte tou sa la. Wi. Ver la montagn ? Wi. Ver la montagn. Enn parti ti ena bwa, enn parti ti ena bann dimounn ki ti rant la kouma bann squatter. Zonn fer bann lakaz, zonn reste, ena dimounn finn res la byen lontan mem. Ek apre finlaman sa inn bizin vande, kan linn vande, bann dimounn ki ti res la, zot ti nepli trouv zot ena plas. Finalman ti aranz enn lonzer...ti aranz sa laba, opre simitier, pou ki sa bann dimounn la kapav reste avan ki zot inn gagn lakaz dan Tamarinier. Mei kan Diosez ti lor terin kisanla? Kan Diosez! Be mwa monn konn sa terin la ti appartenir a la Diosez mem...Apre sa mo pa kone. Mo pa tro rapel ki bann dimounn kinn fer demars pou vann sa. Mei ki lane ti ena sa kan Diosez la en? Aahhh...Byen lontan sa parski mo konn ena dimounn inn res lor la o muin enn karant an. Mei kan ki lane nepli finn ena kan Diosez? Ver ki lane sa?...li kapav en 80-82...<sup>82</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Diocese started from Manorama<sup>83</sup> there and spreads up there. Yes. Towards the mountain? Yes. Towards the mountain. Part was woody, another part people were squatting. They built houses and stayed, there a people who stayed there for a long period. And later finally it was sold, when it was sold people who stayed there, they had no place. Finally a longhouse was built...was built over-there near the cemetery, for the people to stay before building the houses in Tamariniers. But Diocese Camp was on whose land? Diocese Camp! Me I know that the land was for the Diocese...Afterwards I do not know. I do know who sold it. But which year the Diocese Camp [existed]? Aah...long time that people I know people who stayed there for 40 years. But which year Diocese no-more existed?.It might be in 80-82)



Other camps identified in the region that have historical links with Cité La Mivoie:

12. *Kan Salin De Ravel* (Eng.trans. Camp De Ravel Salt-pan):

It was located inside the De Ravel salt-pan in Petite Rivière-Noire. When the camp was destroyed, families living there were delocalised to Petite Rivière-Noire Village and to Cité La Mivoie. The daughter of Nicole Papeche and her husband are the sole family presently living at the entrance of the salt-pan.



13. *Caredas*:

It is located on De Ravel estate at the north entrance of the village and at the road junction leading to Morcellement Carlos. It is before London Way Supermarket when going towards Tamarin Village.

There are approximately ten families living in *Caredas* that will be delocalised to a new residential area next to Village Bougainvilliers. They will be displaced because Mr. De Ravel has planned a new residential development at the actual location of *Caredas*.

The spaces identified are symbolic in that, for the respondents, they are symbolical representations of past life when land was conceived as an open public space. Before land was divided into *morcellement* (residential developments) the latter had not, yet, gained consciousness of the notions of private landownership and private propertyship.

It transpires from the interviews that, until the landowners erected walls and bared wires (visible signs of property delimitations), the villagers were not conscious of the fact that land (including land lying fallow) was already conceded (it was already divided in 18th century) and that they were

allowed to live there because either they were working for the estate or were squatters or had beneficial occupancy. It is only now that the owners are developing their land.

Today barbed wires and concrete walls have replaced open spaces and passageways are closed. The feeling of wide-open space that existed is missing and this affects the spirit and minds of those who knew what this meant: sense of freedom of movement and a sense of belonging and of collectivism.

...Avan, pa ti ena bann di fil, ki ti separ....koma dir bann plas avek bann montagn, bann dimunn ti kapav al en bwa. Apre ou kone o fur e a mezur, bann dimunn inn kumens vinn inteligen, b bizin met difil...<sup>84</sup>

(Eng. trans:...before there were no barbed wires, that divided...how to say places and the mountain, people could go in the woods. Afterwards, you know, gradually people were more intelligent, there was need to put barbed wires...)

The sites identified can also be reckoned as intermediary spaces between the local intangible and tangible heritage. They constitute the local tangible heritage as, firstly, they are tangible links with the past and their names, the story of these places and the myths and legends attached to them constitute their intangible heritage. Secondly, in contemporary Mauritius, they are perceived as vibrant bearers of past traditional spatial arrangements and organisations that date back to slavery and post-slavery.

For example, Antonio and Nicole narrated some myths and legends linked to *Basin Zigret* and *Rwiso Harrison* (Eng.trans. Harrison River) with some of them related to slavery. These myths and social realities, in keeping with Malinowski (Cited in Barnard and Spencer 2010), are functionally related and the former 'confirm, support and maintain the social state of affairs and provide an account of origins of people and their convictions.' They can be seen as a 'partial window' on the past.

### Some local legends: the legend of the Lougarou

According to Antonio, Nicole and Olivier, *Rwiso Harrison* was named after a man named Harrison who used to live near the river and drowned in the stream. They stated that there was a *Ti-Alber*<sup>85</sup> or a *lougarou* (Eng.trans. Werewolf) living near the stream given that the man named Harrison was a lycanthrope who had the ability to transform himself voluntarily in a wolf or a wolf-like creature.

Long ago when people used to organise sega nights near the river, he used to transform himself into a werewolf to threaten people.

...me appel sa rwiso Harrisson parski lontan bann la dir seki listwar mo inn tande sa boug ki apel Harrisson la li komdi koze bann la dir ti ena lougarou...li li fer so mesanste a sa lepok pou mwa ti arive enn zour li ti pran enn motosiklet linn roule linn bien roule me li pa inn konn arete pa kone kouma pou arete lerla letan linn tonbe li ti tom dan rwiso depi sa bann la inn konn sa pou mwa listwar kouma ti konn rwiso Harrisson me touletan.....bann la inn rakont nou sa...<sup>86</sup>

(Eng. trans:...I call it stream Harrison because long ago people said it is the story I have heard the man named Harrison as it is commonly said he was a werewolf...in the past he did this trick for me it happened that one day he took a motorcycle to ride he rode well but he did not know how to stop not knowing how to stop he fell he fell in the stream and since people knew that for me it is story how stream Harrison was known but every time...people told us that...)

Dédéré, a man who lived in the *Cité* was said to be a *lougarou* with the power to shape shift<sup>87</sup> into an object that could fly.

...Sa bann zistwar la kan mo gran mer rakonte ti extra li dir nou koumsa ti ena enn ti boug ti rest la dan site la mem non Dedere...li dir bann la ti kit Gabriel bann la ti al get sega Yemen Gabriel pe plere letan li vini Gabriel ti ena 2-3 so bann kamarad ler la li dir Gabriel koumsa ki to gagne to pe plere? Li dir bann la inn ale zot pa inn oule amenn mwa be rod enn bwat sardinn enn bwat sardinn alor zot tou pou rant dan bwat sardinn la me vre zot inn ale...Selman kan to rant la dan pa koze...Pa koze pa riye me zot aterir mo dir ou lontan vreman ti ena li enn zafer ki drol ki nou pa krwar pourtan bann dir ou ki ti ekziste...Zot sekre ki zot ena zot pou anvole zot pou ale enn avion si pa enn elikopter zot

anvole zot pou ale dan sa bwat sardinn la me si ou koze li eklate kot ou ete ou tonbe kot inn arive ou ou tom laba mem...<sup>88</sup>

(Eng. trans:...when my grandmother narrate those stories its extraordinary she told us there was a short man named Dedere living in the housing estate...she told they left Gabriel they went to see Segá [in] Yemen Gabriel was crying when coming Gabriel was with 2-3 of his friends he asked Gabriel why are you crying? He answered that they left and refused to take him that looking for a sardine box a sardine box for all to get in the sardine box and truly they went...but when you get in do not speak...do not speak do not laugh they landed I tell you long ago really it existed something weird that we do not believe but people say it existed...the secret they have they will fly they will go [in] a plane or an helicopter they will fly they will go in the sardine box if you speak it will explode where you are you fall where you reached you will fall there...)

Three other men were identified as being werewolves, *Bonhom* Gilbert and *Bonhom* Hanson and *Bonhom* Tataz Levaillant. The latter used to live in *Le Salin* and Antonio witnessed one of his transformations.

...Wei kan Senneville lot kote kot Ramdane labá pou nou al get televizyon...Sa lepok la enn zour nou pe ale nou trouv bonom la pe asize anba pie tamarinie be sa bonom la mo dir ou fransman si pie tamarinie la ti kot lantre La Salin ek pou al kot li to gagn letan fer 10 kou ale vini vinn Rivière Noire isi me li pa pou ankor rant kot li...Manier ki li ti marse mo gagn letan fer 10 fwa ale vini ek li pa kapav marse mem li ek sa zour la nou trouv li pe asize la sa temoin pa lezot dimounn ki inn rakonte se ki mwa mo inn trouve kan nou pe monte nou kit...Nou tand lisien pe zape nou trouv 2 far vini nou dir kapav loto nou tou avanse koste dan bor me letan 2 far la pase zis 2 far ki ena... Ki ler sa? Be ver 7h00 7h15 zis 2 far me li pena loto li pena okain transpor zis 2 far ki inn traverse ek lisien pe zape pe ale mem be sa temwayaz sa nou inn trouve...Non nou retourne derier letan nou retourne Tataz pa la dordinerman si Tataz ti marse letan nou retourne nou inn galoupe...<sup>89</sup>

(Eng. trans:...yes camp De Senneville on other side on Ramedenee over-there to watch TV...At that time one day we were going we saw the old man sitting under the Tamarind tree this old man I would tell you honestly if the Tamarind tree is there was at the entrance of the salt-pan and to go to his place you have time to come and go to Black River there ten times that we would not have reached his place...The way he walked I would have had time to come and go 10 times he could not walk and that day we saw him sitting there I witnessed not other people to narrated this is what I saw when we were walking we left...we heard dogs barking we saw two headlights passing there were only two headlights...what time was that? At around 7hrs - 7hrs15 only two headlights there was no car there were only two headlights that were passing and dogs were barking constantly this we witnessed...we came back on our steps and when we came back Tataz was not there usually if Tataz was walking when we came back we were running...)

In the local folklore, a *Ti Alber* is another term for a *lougarou*. The respondents used these two terms interchangeably but it seems that use the term *Ti Alber* to refer to people who had the power to shape shift into inanimate object such as a car where was the term *lougarou* is used to designate someone who had the power to transform himself into an animal.

As per the respondents' conception, a werewolf is an elderly man with an evil spirit who had the power of shape shifting. It seems that, these phenomena dates back to the period of pre-industrialisation and disappeared with regional development that brought changes in spatial organisation. These creatures nomore exist in contemporary Cité La Mivoie as they have disapperread with the previous generations and the conversion of the surrounding woods into concrete spaces.

### 3.Traditional Spiritual Practices

It is a commonly held belief that the slaves' cultures were eradicated by the slave system and by westernisation and Christianisation. However, it transpires from the testimonies that some practices and values survived under modified and syncretised forms.

Cultural exchanges and diffusion have led to a syncretism of African, Asian and European traditional beliefs and rituals. Different ethno-religious groups adhere to these beliefs and practices that cross cultural groups. They cut across religious background, ethnic groups and social classes. For example, some Catholics believe in the *gardyin lakour* (the protector of a place) and make offerings and prayers to the protector. Others wear *tabiz* (it is a talisman) to protect themselves from evil spirits.

Traditional spiritual practices and sorcery are still performed in the village but are threatened by official religious institutions, especially the Catholic Church and by modernity. Testimonies revealed that generational oral transmission has ensured the survival of some traditional practices

..kas koko devan lakaz sa inn trouve enn ta fwa sa...kouma la bouzi rouz boutey rum...Mwa mo inn ale la pa lwin servis de mor ver la bier byen glase lor tom sigaret matine pake biskwi di pain koko biskwi eski enn pake zafer enn pake zafer ena di vin rum ena dimounn aste zis enn boutey whisky pou al donn enn mor dan simitier ein...<sup>90</sup>

(Eng. trans:...I often saw broken coconuts in front of houses...like red candles and rum bottles...me I went recently the worship of the dead cold glass of beer on the grave cigarettes packets of biscuits bread coconuts biscuits soft drink many things there are many things wine rum there are people who buy a bottle of whisky only to offer to a dead in the cemetery...)

This heritage has been reduced to the status of an 'underground spiritual practice' with these rituals and practices not being prescribed by the official religious institutions because perceived as irrational and in the realm of superstition and considered as illegal according to the 1846 Law.

...Tataz Levaillant res La Salin be ti ena bokou bann gran dimoun ki zot ti konn bann zafer parey kouma la fwa dernie mo inn gagn enn zistwar li dir mwa ti ena enn boug ki ti la bann la ti apel mo inn bliye kouma li apel bann la ti li ti touletan guet dimounn pou travay kot li li be li ti inpe vang vang be enn zour mo krwar enn madam ti vinn travay li dir madam la mo krwar inn tous kit soz li dir li ou inn pran? Non li dir ou pa inn pran? Non landemin re vini kan madam la re rant travay ou sir ou pa inn pran? Pran sa di pin la manze don...boug la al travay li retourne madam la ankor manz so di pin mem... Kifer? Di pin la pa fini? Pa fini zamei setadir si madam la pa ti pran di pain la ti pou fini...resaman sa? Non a lepok...<sup>91</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Tataz Levaillant stayed *La Salin* there were many elderly people who knew things like that like last time I heard a story about a man that was there people called him I forgot his name he was looking for people to work for him he was wandering and one day I think a woman went to work and he said he thought the woman took something he asked her you took something? No he said you did not take? No the next day [she] came back when the woman arrived at work [he asked] you sure you did not take something? Take this bread and eat...the man went to work and came back the woman was still eating her bread...Why? The bread was not finished? Never finished because if the woman did not steal the bread would have finished...was recent? Not long ago...)

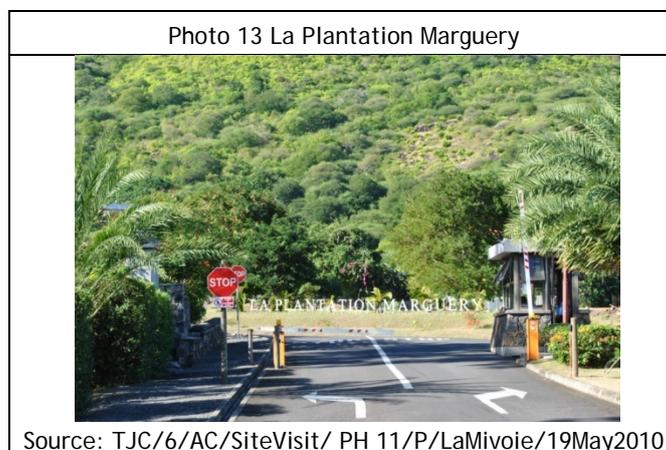
These spiritual beliefs affect the residents' conceptualisation and relation to the world and to space. Space is conceived as expanding beyond the visible and perceptible space to an 'invisible' space or supra-natural world inhabited by wandering spirits, ancestors' spirits and protectors that can be invoked when their assistance and protection are needed.

...Wi me plizir fwa mo inn trouv monn swiv Jesus...li desan ek so bisiklet li ale li mo inn trap so la main mo inn desann li so mama dir pa bizin trap li Pa bizin trap li zot kapav ale lesli parski so papa pe amenn li ek so papa ti fini mor...Non mor vivan ki pe rod dir...<sup>92</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Many time I saw and I followed Jesus...he got down of his bicycle he went I held his hand to help him get down his mother told me no need to hold him no need to hold him his father will help him you can go away leave him because his father is helping him and his father was dead...No wandering spirit meant...)

Modernisation and globalisation brought their loads of changes in spatial conceptualisation in line with modern value systems and mindsets. One of these spatial reconfigurations is the dividing and delimitation of space that led to changes in spatial arrangements and organisation and subsequently on the societal system and system of beliefs.

For example, all the respondents are against the gated residential areas that forbid them access to the mountain and the beach that they conceptualise as public spaces. For them, the mountain is a natural feature that cannot be conceived as a private property.



They feel that their freedom of movement is being violated. They do not understand how it is that *nou montagn* (Eng.trans. Our mountain) *nou la plaz* (Eng.trans. Our sea) have been privatised when this land belongs to all Mauritians.

In fact, in the past, they were open spaces and the mountain and the sea were their 'nurturing mother' that fed them. These concrete spaces are full of memories, as they were living spaces around which webs of association, significance and cultural practice were spun<sup>93</sup>.

...mo krwar ena bann landrwa ki bann dimounn mem inn donn bann non, par zot mem. Parski, ti ena bann dimounn vinn la...ena tel zafer la, zot dir sa, apel sa non la, sa apel sa non la, sa apel sa non la mei mo pa krwar si pa li enn non ki ena lor enn kan...<sup>94</sup>

(Eng. trans:...I think there are places that people named, they took incentives to give names. Because there were people coming there...there is something there, they say, this is named so, that named so, this is named so but I do not think the name is on a map...)

They were social and cultural spaces and are culturally and historically marked, as they are inherent to the local history. In addition, they were named after either an individual's name or a natural feature or a physical object.

Camp life is a symbolical entity as well as a physical entity. During slavery, it was the only space that was not invaded by the slave owning class and few ventured in it. Indeed, we have few descriptions of slave camps by any traveller in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The same can be observed for the *Cité* as few outsiders enter it and even officials and private persons (often of a different cultural background with their own prejudices) go in there only to do their business and leave. The *Cité* is a regeneration of the slave camp, after decades of being moved from camp to camp in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is an autonomous space and a cultural space fashioned by the people themselves. This spatial organisation must be understood and integrated in future policies.

The ritual presence of the slaves in the camps confers to the spaces their symbolism and heritage significance. It was a space shared by the slaves and they forged camp life with its idiosyncratic arrangements and organisation and inner-structures. This way of life was surely transmitted to the successive generations. Through these spaces the memories of the people who have disappeared remains alive in the collective memory through place-names or anecdotes linked to these spaces.

## 4.8 HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT OF CITÉ LA MIVOIE

Before 1960 there was a camp known as *Kan Disabl* at the actual location of Cité La Mivoie. About three to five families namely the Faron Family, Auguste Family, Louise Family and Joseph Family made up this camp and can be considered as the founding families.

The *Cité* was built on the site of *Kan Disabl* in 1960 after Mr. Maurel either sold the land or gave the land to the government.<sup>95</sup> The descendants of Mr. Maurel have refused to be interviewed.

...Donk seki ou apel aster la Cité La Mivoie, Cité Rivière Noire, li ti lor terin Maurel alor? Gouvernma inn aste sa bout ek Maurel in aste sipa in done pa kone. Avek tou dimounn monn tann sa. Wa in aste sipa in done pa kone. Donk ki lane linn van sa ein? Apre siklon Carol 1960 dapre mwa...<sup>96</sup>

(Eng. trans:...So what you name now Cité La Mivoie, Cité Rivière Noire, it was on Maurel land then? The government bought this plot of land from Maurel or he gave I do not know. I heard that from everyone. Whether was bought or given I do not know. So which year he sold it? After *Cyclone Carol* in 1960 I think...)

It is not clear whether during the first settlement movement; Indo-Mauritians also lived there or not. The exact number of inhabitants is also not known.

### First settlement movement:

According to Marie Suzanne Auguste and Emilienne, one of the two doyennes of the *Cité* and Nicole, there were 10 families that first settled. They came from the surrounding regions, namely, the Décidée Family and Hyppolite (or Hippolyte) Family coming from Yemen; the Louise, Jean Pierre and Toulouse families coming from *Salin Pilot/Koenig* and the Indo-Mauritian families such as Babajee, Rowjee and Jany who came from the Black River Georges.

...Zot non fami? Décidée, Hyppolite...Fami Louise, fami Toulouse, Fami Jean-Pierre. Sa ti par isi mem sa salinn koenig...Fami Albert...Fami Colfir? Sa si bann sorti inpe parlaba sa...Dir mwa avan 1960 ti ena bann indien ti abit isi ? Wi. Mo konn Bolom Pandid linn fini mor Nani mem inn fini mor, granmer Baba inn fini mor...<sup>97</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Their family name? Décidée, Hyppolite...Louise Family, Toulouse Family, Jean-Pierre Family. This was there Koenig salt-pan...Albert Family...Colfir Family? They too come from over there...Tell me before 1960 there were Indo-Mauritians living here? I know old man Pandid he is dead Nani also is dead, grandmother of Baba is dead...)

Some inhabitants left the locality because they moved elsewhere or they were evicted for non-payment of rent and settled nearby. They could not afford to pay their lease because of financial problems such as they were unemployed, underpaid and spent their meagre income on buying alcoholic beverages.

For example, the Aimée and Maison Rouge families who, as per La Mivoie Housing Estate site map 1998, were among the first settlers were no longer living in the *Cité*. However, there is a Maison Rouge family living in Tamarin Village.

...Boukou pann peye. Donk bokou dimounn inn per inn...Boukou inn perdi...Inn perdi? Wi. Me kot sa bann dimounn la inn al abite? Be ena kinn kite. Zonn ale? Ena finn kite inn al lwin lwin...<sup>98</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Many did not pay. So many people were afraid...Many lost [their house]...Lost? Yes. But where these people moved to? Some left the housing estate. They left? Some left and went far far...)

### Second settlement movement:

As stipulated in Section 26 of the CHA Ordinance No. 32 of 1960, a person who is granted a lease of a portion of Crown Land for occupying a building erected thereon in pursuance of a Cyclone Housing Scheme, the lease shall be registered.

Furthermore, as per Sections 36C and 36D of the Act, if a tenant or purchaser of a house erected under the Cyclone Housing Scheme owes to the Authority any rent or instalment and if the latter receives any relief or allowance under the provisions of the Public Assistance or the Family Allowance Ordinances, the Public Assistance Commissioner may deduct there from an amount not exceeding 50% of the allowances. Where the rent or instalment is in arrears, a warrant may be issued. This does not follow from before: as pointed out by Nicole, once someone was ejected from the premises, a member of his family settled in and transferred the rent in his name.

Indeed, Section 39A of the Act lays down that any person who unlawfully occupies or takes possession of the premises is deemed to be a squatter and a Court Order shall be issued for the latter to vacate the premises. If the person fails to comply with the order, he shall be liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding 2,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.

For example, Mr. Varnanaden Veerapen mentioned that long ago *Sime La Jetée* (Eng.trans. Jetty Road) was an orchard that belonged to Mr. Lenfena or Mr. Rey Lenfena. People who worked for the family lived on this plot of land like his father who worked as Family cook.

When Mr. Lenfena divided his land, to build villas for sales on the left side of the road (known as La Balise), the former residents who could not afford to buy land were delocalised in the *Cité*. Those who had financial means especially the Marathi-speaking residents bought land such as Varnanaden's father.

The descendants of some of these families are still living in the housing estate and have peopled the *Cité La Mivoie*, namely, the descendants of the Auguste, Jean Pierre, Lahache, Hippolyte, Albert and Thousand families that have intermarried and have settled there for generations. Four generations of these families have been retraced in the *Cité* as explained in the genealogical report. (See Appendix 1)

Two types of migratory movement were identified, an inward and outward movement. Inward migration occurred when people moved from the surrounding villages such as Le Morne Village and from town and urban regions. The first is due to marriage as in the case of Jasmine's husband and Devi.

Outward migration occurred when people either left the *Cité* to settle either in the neighbouring villages or as far as in town or even abroad or through marriage such as Marie Michele Jean Pierre who moved to Tamarin Village. One of the daughters of Nicole Papeche lives in Reunion Island and the daughter of Mrs Jany lives in Baie-du-Cap.

Thus *Cité La Mivoie* used to be composed of fifty families with each family having an individual housing unit and plot of land. The number of residents amounted to approximately 500 people. Today there are five families related to each other living on the same plot of land either in the same housing unit or in individual housing units. (See Appendix 4)

The actual *Cité* population has been estimated to 5,000 people for an area of approximately 15,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Each housing unit is composed of a mean of four members. Based on the present birth rate (mean number of children per family unit is estimated to two) in approximately twenty-five years the *Cité* population has been estimated to 10,000. (See Map 2)

## 4.9 HOUSING CONDITIONS AND SANITATION

### Housing conditions

Since, in common perception, asset accumulation are reliable indicators of a person's wealth, the house in which a man lives indicates how wealthy he is and is a visual symbol of social mobility and especially up-ward mobility. Housing conditions are indicators of social status with house structures and construction materials functioning as wealth markers.

Long ago, social and economic stratification were less complex and there were mainly three types of houses, straw or aloe houses for the working classes, wooden houses for the wealthier classes and corrugated iron-sheet houses for medium income families.

However, post-modernisation societies, on one hand, are more stratified with social inequalities being more accentuate. On the other hand, new modern construction material and technologies were developed and houses, although formerly less important, as well as property ownership, became indicators of socio-economic mobility and of social and economic status. In contemporary Mauritius, people tend to be categorised based on their house's state of repair, design and superstructure.

In line with the respondent's testimonies, the wealthier residents are property owners who live in one or two storey concrete houses and who spend money in maintenance of their property. The 'poor' are those who live in shattered corrugated iron sheets houses.

...Be apre si enn dimounn inn gagn enn terin, li fasil, li travay li mont enn la mezon lor la. Be si linn finn gagn terin, be sa mem enn gran zafer. Konpran be la aster li bizin amelior so la vi, li travay li ranz enn la mezon, li gagn enn la mezon an beton pou li...Me koma mo pe dir ou, ena bouku kapav pa interese pou zot fer lavansman. Zot atann koma dir tou letan ler...<sup>99</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...But afterwards if someone got land, it is easy, he works he builds a house on it. But if he has land this is a great thing. [You] understand but now he needs to improve his life, he works and build a house, he has a concrete house for him...How would I tell you, maybe there are many who are not interested in progressing in life. All the time they wait...)

Photo 14 House of Jasmine Lalouette



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 12/P/LaMivoie/12May2010

Housing conditions and life styles are visible symbols of this internal stratification and internal socio-economic inequalities in Cité La Mivoie. Those who are 'better off' and who are landowners have either pulled down the asbestos houses and constructed concrete houses or have kept the asbestos foundations and have extended or renovated their house.

...Ena enn bann dimounn sak sak lakaz ki zot inn, refer zot inn kase zot inn monte. Ziska zot inn monte me zot zot lakaz lamiyant li laem li li o milie...<sup>100</sup>

(Eng. trans:...there are people each house they renovated they destroyed and re-built. Then built but there asbestos houses are in the middle...)

Those who are financially disadvantaged still live in the CHA houses. According to Marie France, there are approximately 41 *lakaz lamiant* (Eng. trans asbestos houses) in the *Cité* that are a major concern for the residents.

Photo 15 House with asbestos panels



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 13/P/LaMivoie/20May2010

From the time local inhabitants learnt that asbestos was a toxic material, the latter are more health conscious of the dangers of living in these houses. However, because of lack of financial means, they have no other choice than to continue to live in these residences and some of these constructions are falling in ruin.

Given that exposure to this fibre is risky for their health, they cannot renovate nor extend nor do any other construction works that are potentially hazardous. There is a shared perception that there is causality between asbestos and the following illnesses, asthma and cancer and high infant mortality in the locality.

Marie France testified that she learnt of the dangers of asbestos after the death of her ten-year-old son and she believes that this material caused his illness and death. But she finds these houses resistant to bad weather.

...Wi ek ena ankor dimounn pankor tire 41 lakaz ena pankor tire...Bien lontan ti bien lontan me pa ti le koz sa mei apre mo rapel lane misie Michel inn mor dokter inn dir koumsa linn gagn kanser poumon...nou tou dir be li ti bien sportif tou kouma linn kapav gagn kanser poumon me enn se sel rezon...<sup>101</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Yes there are still people who did not remove there are 41 people that have not yet been removed...it was long ago it was long ago but did not want to talk about it put afterwards I remember the year Mr. Michel died the doctor said he died of lung cancer...we all said he is sportive how come he had lung cancer but [there is] one reason...)

Furthermore, on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2011, two days after the hearing organised by the TJC at Cité La Mivoie, two houses in the *Cité* took fire and presently four families are homeless. This tragedy was reported in the local newspaper and according to one of the residents; local authorities were to assist these families but in vain.

It seems that the fire started in the asbestos and corrugated iron sheets house of Amandine Jean Pierre, then spread in the condominium<sup>102</sup> of Steven Jean Pierre and in the adjacent house of Dorine and Michael Jean Pierre and the brother of Michael who was living with them.

Two weeks after the incidence, the authorities collected the asbestos wastes and the residents are worried of the risks of the long exposure to these wastes. The victims were supposed to be delocalised in a surrounding EDC residence but they are still homeless. Dorine and her husband are temporarily living in Island Sport and Amandine is living with her sister's place in the *Cité*.

According to the residents, so far, studies have not been carried out in the *Cité* to survey the impact of asbestos houses on the health of the *Cité* dwellers. The various pleas to the government, with the help of local media, have until now remained unanswered and they feel that local authorities are not concerned by the problem of asbestos in the housing estates all over the island.

...ou konpran, get parey kouma mo mem, mo ti kone delo pe ramase, apre lamiant enn move zafer pou la sante. Be lerla monn panse mo mem monn perdi de zanfan isi, dan sa lakaz lamiant la. Be lerla mo finn fer mo zefor, mo finn resi mont mo lakaz, monn kas lamiant la, mo pann get...gouvernman, ni CHA nanie, zis mo prop la sante, ek la sante mo bann zanfan, mo finn detwir li. Mo finn mont enn lakaz an beton...kan zonn desede? ...Enn la en 79, ek...enn en 81, 82. Donk ou ena de zanfan kinn desede, enn en 79, enn en 1981, ki laz zot ti ena? Wi. Ne, inn mor ne...<sup>103</sup>

(Eng. trans:...You understand, look at men, look at me i knew that water was stagnating, then asbestos is risky for the health. Then I thought that I lost two children here in this asbestos house. Then I made efforts I succeeded in building my house, I pulled down the asbestos [house], I did not see...government nor CHA no one, only my own health, and that of my children, I destroyed it. I built a concrete house...when they died?...one in 7...and...in 81, 82. So you have two children who died, one in 79, one in 1981, what was their age? Yes. Was stillborn...)

In fact, based on the CSO Vital Statistics for 2001, the Black River District had the highest infant mortality rate amounting to 17.3 but had the lowest crude death rate of 5.6. Mortality has always been high historically in this district.

### Housing constructions

The traditional CHA houses commonly known as *lakaz lamiant* were made of corrugated asbestos-cement sheets and the number of rooms varied from two for 'poor' families to four rooms for those who earned more money.

Today, next to these traditional houses we can see both concrete and corrugated iron sheets houses in the *Cité* as shown in Table 5.

Year of Completion	Concrete Wall and Roof	Concrete Wall and Iron or Tin Roof	Iron or Tin Wall and Roof	Wood Wall and Iron or Tin Roof	Wood Wall and Shingle Roof	Other	Total
Before 1970	51	57	11	0	1	10	130
1970-1984	103	23	10	2	0	1	139
1985-1989	82	20	21	1	0	5	129
1990-1994	63	3	24	1	0	1	92
1995-1999	90	13	29	0	0	2	134
2000	7	0	0	1	0	0	8
Not Known	10	4	0		0	0	14
Not completed but inhabited	2		0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	408	120	95	5	1	19	648

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. 1, Port Louis. Mauritius

According to Emilienne, the concrete houses were built around 1995 with present generations establishing their residence in the *Cité* and the past generations gradually improving their houses with their own savings and materials. Some are still gradually investing in improving their houses such as the son of S. Jottee Sookoo and Julien Albert.

Interviews revealed that respondents who mentioned that the CHA houses are vulnerable to cyclones and bad weather were not referring to the asbestos houses but to the ones made of corrugated iron sheets. The traditional CHA houses were said to be strong and resistant to cyclone.

Most of the families living in the *Cité* do not have sufficient income to build concrete structures. The gap between the *Cité* dwellers who are better off and those who still live in precarious conditions is obvious and this gap is widening with the construction of wealthier houses adjacent to the *Cité* - along the north border, *Sime Eucalyptus*, and south border - *Sime La Jetée* - and the development of new residential areas in the proximity such as La Balise Morcellement.

Given that housing conditions of the *Cité* dwellers is worsening, *Cité La Mivoie* can be compared to a slum and a 'ghettoisation' effect can be observed with accentuation of social and economic disparities.

### Spatial Organisation

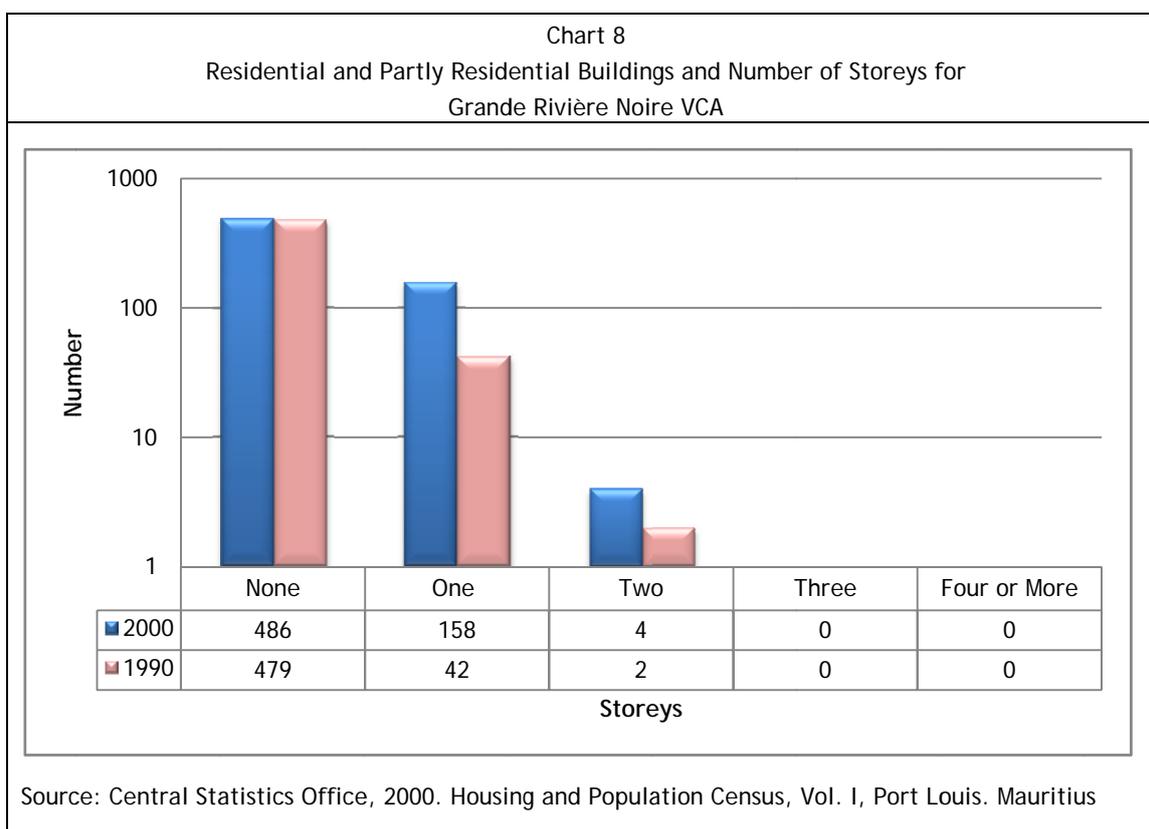
Even though there are fixed visible boundaries (the roads act as spatial delimitations) that delimit the housing estate, peoples' conceptualisation of the *Cité* extend beyond these delimitations. Taking the cardinal points as reference, the *Cité* extends from South to North with house number one located in *Sime 4 saison* (on the south periphery) and ends *Sime Eucalyptus* (on the North periphery) it stretches from east (from the main road) to west (ending *Sime Colonel Dean*). (See Appendix 6)

In the collective mind the spatial delimitation of the *Cité* extends to *Sime La Jetée* (which is after *Sime 4 saison*) because of its proximity with the housing estate. However, as we shall see later in the report, land along *Sime La Jetée* is private land and the living conditions of these landowners are different from that of the *Cité* dwellers.

The CHA houses varied from two to four rooms with separate kitchen but no bathroom. There is disagreement on whether the houses were delivered with toilets or not.<sup>104</sup> The spatial arrangement inside the houses differs and fieldwork uncovered the correlation between household spatial arrangement and types of construction. The housing patterns as illustrated in Chart 8 beneath vary

from detached single-unit dwellings to multi-dwellings ranging from one storey to two storey houses. But in the *Cité*, asbestos and concrete single-detached homes prevail with few two-storey dwellings.

In the renovated houses and recent constructions, the toilet and bathroom are integrated within the main house whereas in the typical CHA houses, they are independent units outside the main house and made up of corrugated iron sheets. For example, in Nicole Papeche house, the toilet is an independent unit in the courtyard. However, in her son's house that is a recent concrete construction, the toilet is found in the house. These are traditional arrangements compared to modern arrangements.



Spatial organisation of Cité La Mivoie and spatial arrangement inside houses changed overtime with the family generations settling in the *Cité* and family organisation following ambilocal residential pattern.

People who cannot afford concrete houses or to build multiple storey houses tend to either build condominiums or single units on the same plot of land which results in courtyards being almost non-existent or relatively small. For example, the children of Emilienne have built individual housing units on her plot of land.

But, wealthier people can afford to build one and two storey concrete houses with children usually building on the top floor such as the son of Mrs Sookoo who is building one storey on his parent's house where he lives with his wife and children.

In the past the spatial distribution and domestic organisation were different; people had individual houses and did not live so close to each other and had large courtyards. In addition, there were no visible separations. Domestic organisation as well changed with spatial arrangement inside the house changing with family expansion as indicated in the testimony of Mrs. Devi quoted earlier.

For example, the concrete houses are composed of multiple rooms ranging from two to four (excluding kitchen and bathroom). But in the asbestos and corrugated iron sheet houses, there is problem of space as the size of the houses is too small for the family. There are not enough rooms

for the families of minimum four members. Children and parents sometimes share the same bedroom thus encouraging 'promiscuity'.

In the *Cité*, spatial arrangement problems negatively affect children cognitive development and socialisation process in that they are detrimental to their physical, mental and social development and well-being.

The home remains children's first learning environment and the family one of the main socialising agents. However, it was observed that children do not have their own space and privacy; a space for them within their home where they can play, do their homework, organise activities and where they feel free and independent without the fear of disturbing other family members and adults.

## Sanitation

### Water and Electricity Supply

The houses were delivered without water, electricity and wastewater including sewerage systems. For example, when in 1967 Mrs Sookoo settled in their house they had to set up their water and electricity connections at their own cost.

The residents did not receive any financial aid from the government to install their own water and electricity system and sewerage system including toilet and bathing facilities. Not everyone could afford to pay the installation and connection fees for facilities.

In 2011, there are still houses with no water and electricity supply and no toilet and bathroom as indicated in the Tables 6 and 7 below. Most families do not have the financial means to install a water tank and thus rely on running water. In times of drought and water cuts, they face problems, as the water supply is irregular and rely on the government water facilities.

These people use various lighting methods such as oil lamps, gaslights, candlelight, petrol-lit and torches. For cooking, they use either gas cooking or wood cooking or charcoal. Gas, as per Chart 9, is the preferred cooking fuel. The kitchen as shown in Table 8 is sometimes separated from the main unit as a preventive measure in the event of a fire outbreak.

Table 6  
Total Housing Units Occupied by Private Households and Population and Availability of Electricity for Grande Rivière Noire VCA

Housing Units	Available	Not Available	Not Stated	TOTAL
Total Housing Units	708	7	0	715
Occupied Housing Units	534	6	0	540
Households	571	7	0	578
Population	2015	21	0	2036

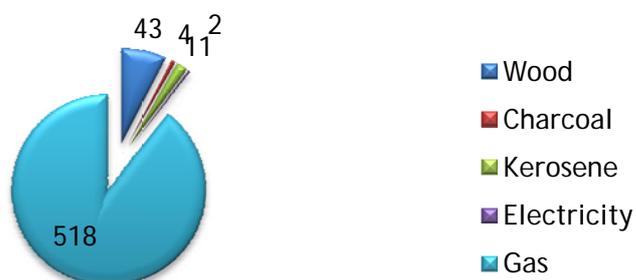
Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. I, Port Louis. Mauritius

Table 7  
Total Housing Units Occupied by Private Households and Population and Type of Water Supply for Grande Rivière Noire VCA

Housing Units	Inside Housing Unit	Outside on Premises	Outside Public Fountain	Tank Wagon	Well/River	Other	Not Stated	TOTAL
	Piped Water							
Total Housing Units	533	138	8	0	0	36	0	715
Occupied Housing Units	361	137	8	0	0	34	0	540
Households	379	155	8	0	0	36	0	578
Population	1289	592	26	0	0	129	0	2036

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. I, Port Louis. Mauritius

Chart 9  
Private Households and Principal Fuel Used for Cooking in Grande Rivière Noire VCA



Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. I, Port Louis. Mauritius

Housing Units	With Kitchen				None	Not Stated
	Inside Housing Unit		Outside Housing Unit			
	Not Shared	Shared	Not Shared	Shared		
Total Housing Units	582	6	111	5	11	0
Occupied Housing Units	410	6	111	4	9	0
Households	434	8	123	4	9	0
Population	1510	30	457	13	26	0

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. I, Port Louis. Mauritius

### Water and waste disposal

Housing Units	Authorised Collector		Ash Pit	Dumped on premises	Dumped on Roadside	Other	Not Stated
	Regular	Irregular					
Total Housing Units	676	1	35	1	0	0	2
Occupied Housing Units	504	1	34	0	0	0	1
Households	540	1	36	0	0	0	1
Population	1906	3	123	0	0	0	4

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. I, Port Louis. Mauritius

There is a problem of water and waste disposal in the *Cité* that cause environmental population with the residents living in unhygienic conditions. It was observed that residents used their back yard as a dumping ground: domestic waste littering the yards.

Photo 16 Backyard Used as Dumping ground



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH  
14/P/LaMivoie/20May2010

Photo 17 Nappies on the roof



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH  
15/P/LaMivoie/20May2010

There is a problem of water disposal because the 'drains' do not drain as in *Sime Eucalyptus* there is a problem of stagnating water because the grading portion of the drain was not correctly measured. In addition, people urinate in the drains and use the canals as dumping that cause problems of air pollution and mosquitoes that are health hazards.

Mrs Devi quoted before testified that the CHA houses were low houses and in times of heavy rain the houses were flooded. She pulled down her asbestos house, elevated her foundation and renovated her house to remedy the threat of stagnating water.

Photo 18 Drains *Sime Eucalyptus*



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 16/P/LaMivoie/11May2010

#### Toilet and Bathroom Facilities

According to Marlana and Father Jean David, there are still people who go to the river to bathe and wash their clothes. Others collect water from their neighbour's house or from the river. In the past, they fetched water from public taps.

...Vous savez il y a toujours des gens à Rivière Noire qui n'ont pas de 'toilet', qui font leur besoin dans des sacs en plastique...ça existe à Rivière Noire dans la cité. Vous savez qu'il y a aussi des gens qui aillent faire leur besoin dans la cour, là bas...<sup>105</sup>

(Eng. trans:...You know there are still people in the housing estate that do not have toilets, that defecate in a plastic bag...it exists in Black River in the housing estate. You know that there are also people who defecate in the garden, over there...)

In the 1960s, toilet system consisted of pit latrines. It consisted of a hole in the ground and inside which, sometimes, there was a drum and above a square wooden sheet as toilet cover. When the drum was full, they covered it with soil and then dug another hole.

...Non pa tiena tiena enn pik...ou pa kapav asoir si ou sorti la tou sa loder la...Wi wi latrinn apre...met drom pa met drom krab la nek grain ladan...fini rampli...Abe bizin met...si ou fouy li lorla ou mete koumsa ou touse li lorla li fini bouse net ...<sup>106</sup>

(Eng. trans:...No there were no [toilets] there were pits [pit latrines]...you cannot go out at night it was smelling [bad]...yes yes latrines then...put a drum [if] do not put a drum crabs fell in it...would be full...you had to put [a drum]...if you dig it [the soil] you put it like that you touch it it would be full...)

Although, flushing systems are most common nowadays, there are still people using pit toilets as indicated in Table 11 below. Those who have no toilet either go to the public toilet in the churchyard or in the woods.

Housing Units	Bathroom Inside Housing Unit				Bathroom Outside Housing Unit				None	Not Stated
	With Water	Running	Without Water	Running	With Water	Running	Without Water	Running		
	Not Shared	Shared	Not Shared	Shared	Not Shared	Shared	Not Shared	Shared		
Total Housing Units	486	26	20	3	38	36	56	28	22	0
Occupied Housing Units	320	26	16	3	37	34	54	28	22	0
Households	334	29	19	5	39	37	56	31	28	0
Population	1118	107	73	16	173	131	208	110	100	0

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. I, Port Louis. Mauritius

Housing Units	Flush Toilet Connected to						Pit Latrine				Other including None	Not Stat ed	TOTAL
	Sewage System		Absorption pit		Septic Tank		Water Seal		Other				
	Not Shared	Shar ed	Not Shared	Shar ed	Not Shared	Shared	Not Shared	Sha red	Not Shared	Shar ed			
Total Housing Units	2	0	428	42	99	3	10	9	51	71	0	0	715
Occupi ed Housing Units	1	0	304	41	52	3	9	9	50	71	0	0	540
Househ olds	1	0	318	47	52	4	10	11	52	83	0	0	578
Populat ion	4	0	1115	166	167	10	38	42	196	298	0	0	2036

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. I, Port Louis. Mauritius

Poor sanitation is a health hazard. Open defecation and poor access to clean water are an affront to human dignity in modern Mauritius and should be eliminated. Changes in people's behaviour and elimination of bad sanitary practices can be achieved with the required education combined with political will and mobilisation of civil society and of resources.

#### 4.10 LAND

##### Property ownership

Under Section 28 of the CHA Ordinance, 1960, people whose houses were damaged or destroyed by a cyclone could either buy or rent a CHA house or benefit from financial facilities provided by the Authority as long as the applicant satisfied all the eligibility conditions for assistance such as that the person annual income did not exceed 10,000 rupees and did not have sufficient financial resources to build a house of the CHA type. He had however to provide evidence of ability to pay the monthly charges.

Even though the CHA provided the opportunity to low income earners to be house owners, in Cité La Mivoie many people could not seize this opportunity for various reasons and most of them were and are still tenants. The main reason put forward by the residents are lack of financial means.

Testimonies diverge as to the cost of the lease. Some residents like Marie Arline, Emilienne and Mrs Sookoo stated that they had to pay a rent and a lease that amounted to approximately 23 rupees in 1962.

Others like Mrs Sookoo mentioned that when they settled in the *Cité* in 1967, there were no Hindi-Speaking Indo Mauritians. They registered for a CHA house and paid a monthly lease of 24 rupees for the land and house, then 12 rupees per month and in 1982 under the governance of Paul Bérenger the rent was increased to 48 rupees per month.

Julien Albert stated that in 1963, the Government built the CHA houses and his father had to register to the CHA to get a house. There were approximately 23 houses and people signed a contract that initially stipulated that the rent was 12 rupees per month but afterwards the terms and conditions of the contract were often modified and the lease was reviewed upwards to 23

rupees per month. As long as they were tenants, they were not allowed to renovate nor extend their house.

While some of them are still tenants, others like Mrs Sookoo became house-owners in around 1989. She bought her house for approximately 5,000 rupees and, in 2008; she became landowner and purchased the land for approximately 4,000 rupees.

Renaud Louis also is a property owner. According to Emilienne, her *concubin* registered the house and land on his name only which implies that he is the sole owner of the property. In 1989, she bought the house for 500 rupees and they paid 4,000 rupees to become landowner in 2008. The land surveying cost 1,750 rupees and they paid 200 hundred rupees for two witnesses.

According to Devi in 2009, the Government gave facilities to people to purchase CHA houses and in the same year she purchased her house for 4,000 rupees, Julien Albert, and his mother as well are property owners since 2009.

...mwa Lane dernier. Gouvernman pann fek aplik enn lalwa la, ki tou bann site CHA, kouma dir nou kapav vinn proprieter ek 4000. be ena boukou kinn finn profit sa, inn gagn dezan de sela. Sa ve dir ounn pey 4000. pou vinn proprieter? Proprieter, wi, wi. E dapre ou tou bann dimunn dan cite inn vinn proprieter? non. Ena boukou pa ankor vini, me seki finn interese, finn fer zefor finn reusi. Me pa tou...<sup>107</sup>

(Eng. trans:...me last year. The government just passed a law that all the CHA housing estate, how to say that we can become owners with 4,000 rupees. May benefited from that, it was two years ago. It means you paid 4,000 to become owner? Owner, yes. According to you all residents in the housing estate are owners? No. there are many are not yet, but those who were interested, made efforts and succeed. But not all...)

Notwithstanding some residents are conscious of the importance of being a property owner, there are some people who have not yet gained this consciousness and others for whom access to land is utopia.

Albeit the purchasing value of the house and land were low cost and seemed rather symbolic, yet, there are still people who are property-less because either they do not have the financial means to buy a property or there are inheritance problems resulting from ambilocal residence patterns. For example, Nicole is not property owner.

...Me terin? Ou proprieter terin? Terin asterla mwa mo ena bann prosedir me Selman pe tarde akoz ban papie aster ki mo pe al aste terin. Donk tou sa letan la ou tipe pey terin crownland sa non? Wi. Ek komie ou pey gouvernman tou le mwa ? Mo tipe pey par lane sa...250. Komie gouvernman pe vann sa terin la? 10 mil roudi. 10 mil roudi? Non 2 mil...Ein ok 2 mil roudi. 2 mil selman ladan mo ena bann fre noter kouma mwa etan done si mo ena bann ser frer lafidavid tou sa. Ek ki superfisi sa ein rs 2000 la? Ki dimansion? 5 pers non 5 pers 4 pers sa...<sup>108</sup>

(Eng. trans:...But land? You owner? Land now I have to start proceedings but they are long because of paper now I'm going to buy land. So all that time you were paying bail it is Crown Land? Yes. How much you pay government monthly? Each year I pay...250 rupees. How much the government is selling land? 10,000 rupees. 10,000 rupees? No 2,000 rupees...Ah ok 2,000 rupee. 2,000 rupees but like me I have notary fees since I have brothers sisters [have] affidavit. What is the area for 2,000 rupees? Which dimension? 5 perches no not 5 perches it is 4 perches ...)

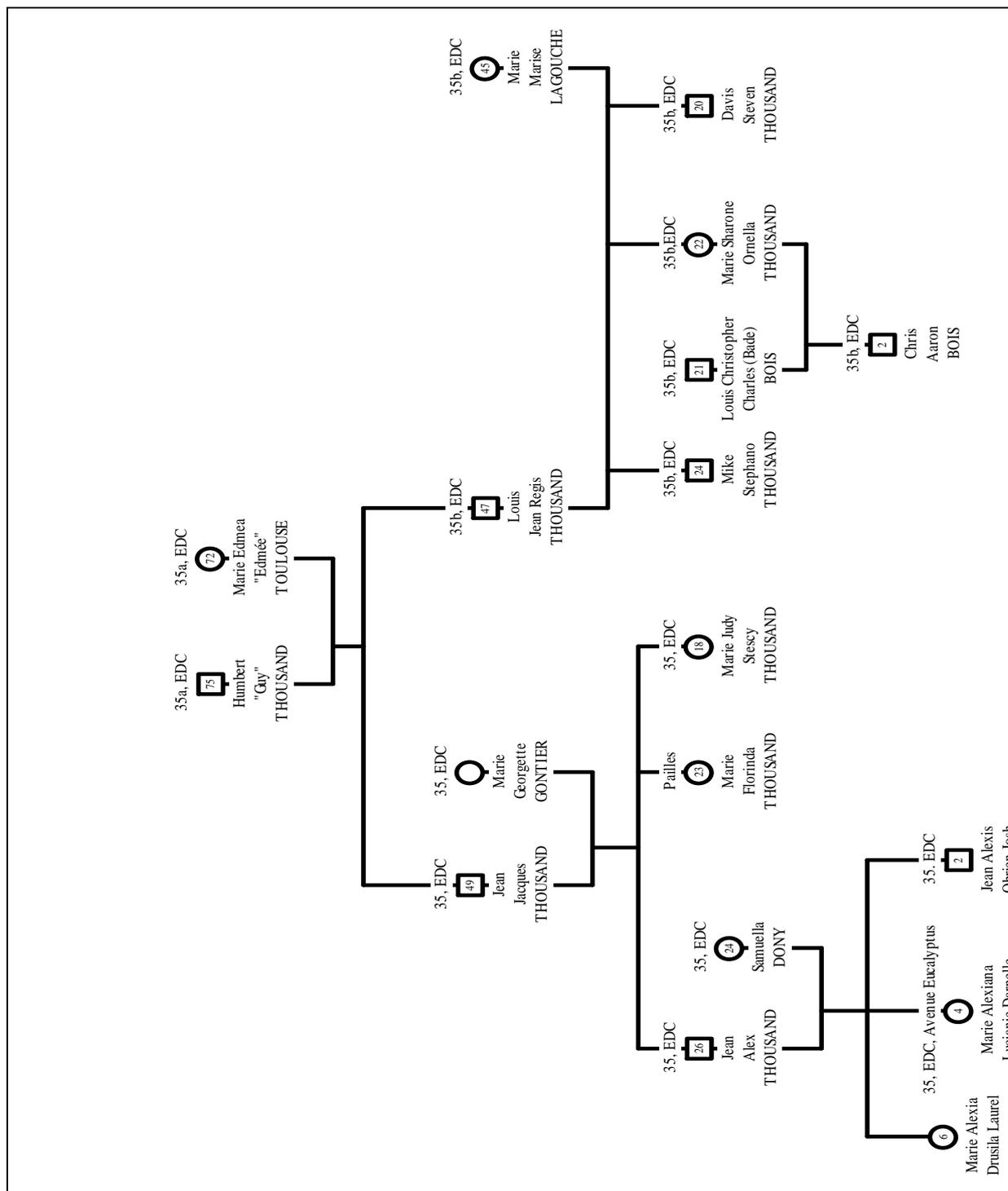
It is too easy to say that the *Cité* dwellers are lazy<sup>109</sup> and do not make efforts to improve their housing and living conditions. But, we should rather try to go beyond such stereotypical and prejudicial perceptions as maybe one of the reasons why some of them are still living in an insalubrious environment and in inhumane conditions might be that the tenants were not allowed to renovate their houses. Another reason might be that some people were not empowered to seize the socioeconomic opportunities compared to other residents because of, for example, lack of literacy and numeracy skills.

Besides, even though the families residing the in the *Cité* like the Jean Pierre, Thousand and Toulouse families stated being property owners, yet, given that they adopt ambilocal residence

patterns, they are house owners but not land owners as illustrated by the family trees of Jean Jacques and Louis Regis Thousand and of the family tree of Louis Horace Albert. (See Appendix 4)

In their conceptualisation of space, since for generations their family has lived on this plot of land and since they are not homeless, they consider themselves as being owners of the land on which they have constructed their house or on which they are living. In fact, this conceptualisation is derived from a collectivist approach, in other words, from their relation to the group and from the self-configuration and self-representation of their relation the space.

In fact, interdependency characterises Cité La Mivoie whereby the local residents are connected and interdependent. In this web of connections and interrelations, land is a shared and a common space that belongs to the *Cité*. However, given that the *Cité* does not exist in a vacuum and functions within a macro-system, the legal characterisation of land rooted in western individualistic terms is influencing the local conceptualisation and relation to land. In Contemporary Mauritius, the local residents are facing property ownership problems that are exacerbated by the present social and economic crisis.



Cité La Mivoie is a 'working class' low-cost housing estate with its residents living in relative poverty. They are low-income earners (they are either seasonal workers or unskilled workers or paid domestic workers such as fishermen, gardeners and masons), have poor living standards and face difficulties meeting basic social, health and nutritional needs.

For them, purchasing land is beyond their financial means. The low-income earners bear the burden of land speculation and increasing land value that deprive them of their entitlement to be property owners. They cannot afford to purchase either land or an apartment that they conceive as luxury assets. For them to be a property owner is a utopia.

Indeed, it seems that they conceive property ownership as an entitlement for 'others', the wealthy people and elite and not for 'us' the underprivileged. Consequently, they have no other choices than to adopt ambilocal residence patterns.

Equitable land distribution and access and enjoyment of full rights of property ownership are not being practised nor promoted with land being concentrated in the hands of wealthy people and the land market practices restricting access to property ownership to the low and middle income earners which implies that the latter's rights and opportunities to occupy and utilise land are being denied and infringed. They are considered as an insignificant market as they have limited or no spending power.

Such discriminatory practices are not contemporary practices and date back to colonial times when the *colons* were allocated large concessions that, were passed on to their descendants. It can be said that in post-colonial Mauritius and until now, discriminatory land practices are maintained and given the present local social, topographic and economic profile, such practices are deemed to be perpetuated.

Consequently, the latter are being further impoverished and maintained in the poverty trap. As Quan (2006, p.3) stated:

...Land is a capital asset offering opportunities for social and economic empowerment and thereby a springboard from which to escape from poverty. Secure rights to land are a basis for shelter, for access to services and for civic and political participation; they can also provide a source of financial security furnishing collateral to raise credit, as a transferable asset which can be sold, rented out... mortgaged, loaned or bequeathed. Moreover secure access to land creates incentives for the user to invest labour and other resources in it so as to maintain its value and sustain its productivity, and allow the user access to social and economic development opportunities.

In line with Carter (cited in Quan 2006, p.2003) 'equitable land access forms a sine qua non with up-ward social mobility, wealth creation, equitable wealth distribution and improvement of standard of living. There is a positive correlation between poverty reduction and land access as well as enjoyment of full rights of property ownership. They benefit household income gains, food security and serve as a safety net with investment effects whereby land assets provide a buffer against external shocks and frees up resources for investment e.g. in children's education; and the dynamic income distribution effects of more equitable land distribution across society.'

The low-income earners and middle-income earners living in Cité La Mivoie are enduring discriminatory land practices with land promoters targeting solely the wealthy classes - foreigners and high-income earners - materialised in the recent and upcoming luxurious residential developments such as Plantation Marguery, Les Salines Mont Calm in La Preneuse, Morcellement La Filature on Ramdane Estate.

With the exception of, Village Bougainvilliers and Morcellement Les Tamariniers that were built for the villagers that were displaced from De Ravel property and *Kan Diosez* respectively and a forthcoming *morcellement* for the inhabitants of *Caredas* who will be displaced, no other residential developments have been planned to solve the problem of lack of space in the *Cité* and for the 'poor' villagers that are facing housing problems in the surrounding localities.

Facing lack of access to tenured land of individual plots of land and prejudicial land practices to the detriment of the already vulnerable groups, the local inhabitants have no other choices than to squat others land.

### Illegal land occupation

As illustrated on the site map of La Mivoie Housing Estate, there is a private land belonging to the Li Mo Yo Family crossing the *Cité*. The respondents testified that for approximately 10 years about nine families namely the Jean Pierre, Joseph, Gentille and Mootoo (or Moutou) families have been squatting this land. (See Appendix 6)

...mo pa kone kouma linn aste terin la li sa bout...pe gagn kwinse la mo pa kone kouma linn aste terin la kouma linn fer sipa linn separe kouma pa kone kouma zot in fer sa lerla proprieter pe dir sa bout la tom so terin...pe gagn gro problem ar bann la fami la...enn bel

lepok zot reste. Banal...inn gagn a pe pre enn 20 inn gagn a pe pre enn 10 an pase li posibil. Enn 10 an parla...sinwa pe dir ki so terin li ariv par la. Mo pe anons twa enn 15 an a pe pre la...<sup>110</sup>

(Eng. trans:...I do not know how he bought this land this part...is stuck I do not know how he bought this land how he did whether he separated [it] how do not know how they did that then the landowner is saying that this part is on his land...having big problem with the families...since long then have been staying. They...its about 20 years it's about more than 10 years...about 10 years...the Chinese is saying that his land reaches there...I am saying about 15 years...)

The site number 3 of 286 m<sup>2</sup> and number 4 of 303 m<sup>2</sup> were allotted to the Joseph family and Jean Pierre family respectively and through generations they have been living on the same land. However, family expansion coupled with lack of space, they constructed on the Li Mo Yo land and have been illegally occupying this land for generations.

For the squatters since, on one hand, the land was left uninhabited and was used as dumping ground and, on the other hand, there was a problem of space in the *Cité*, it was 'normal' for them to occupy this land. They were facing space problems and for them squatting this readily available and unoccupied space was the practical solution to their problem.

Furthermore, it seems that there were no visible delimitations indicating it was private property such as the land was not fenced and there was no sign that trespassing was forbidden. In their spatial conceptualisation, this land was part of the *Cité* and belonged to the collectivity. They appropriated this land.

Even if they were conscious of the illegal nature of their actions (taking possession of a property), their right to housing and having a shelter overrode other legal concerns. But, the Li Mo Yo family has currently lodged a case in court to get back their land and the squatters will be expelled. Given their limited financial means to buy and even rent a housing unit, some of them have no other choices than to build a unit adjacent to their relatives' residence in the *Cité*.

These housing and land problems are one of the causal factors of tensions between families with some claiming the ownership of other's land. In addition, some residents have difficulties accessing their residence because others have built their house beside theirs and the latter do not grant passage to the former.

The high population density in the *Cité* exacerbates these tensions and hostilities are worsening since lack of space is becoming a major problem with future generations settling in the *Cité*.

### Land Dispossession

Field research uncovered cases of land dispossession by some of the local estate owners and some residents even mentioned that these dispossessions were made possible with the support of local authorities and politicians.

However, these testimonies should be considered with caution because the information were not cross-checked given that estate owners refused to be interviewed and thus it was not possible to verify and affirm these allegations.

The *Cité* dwellers identified two local families namely, the Colfir Family and Maison Rouge Family that were dispossessed of their land by the Maingard Family.

... ti ena enn fami Jany ki ti abit la...sa mem seki ou ti pe dir mwa la. Me sa terin la ti pou kisanla, kote drwat sime, kot ena Rwisso Creole tou sa la? zot dir pou Maingard. Pou Maingar ? pou Maingard, e mwa mo kone ti ena enn enn boug ladan ti enn bon partisan ki bann la ti pe dir, ki bann Maison Rouge. Me la fami Maison Rouge, mo krwar zot inn koumans fer bann demars, apre inn arete...<sup>111</sup>

(Eng. trans:...there was the Jany Family living there...that is what you were telling me. But this land was for whom, on the right side of the road, near Ruiseau Creole, it was for whom? They say for Maingard. For Maingard? For Maingard, but me I know that there was a man who

was a good agent and they said that it was for the Maison Rouge. But I think the Maison Rouge Family start their proceedings afterwards they stopped...)

According to Julien Albert, his grandfather on his mother's side, Joseph Plumedor Colfir, used to work for the Maurel family and as payment for service rendered, Mr. Maurel gave him a plot of land at the foot of La Tourelle du Tamarin Mountain. His great grandfather passed on the land to his mother Suzanne Colfir.

However, afterwards, Mr. Didier Maingard removed the four land markers and took possession of their land and Morcellement Les Tamariniers was built on the plot of land. Since they lost their papers during Cyclone Carol, they cannot claim back their land but Julien mentioned possessing a map showing the location of their plot of land.

...be terin la, kouma mo pou eksplik ou, pou inpe lor zistwar. Ounn tann dir terin pou Maingard, ounn tann dir terin, pou Colfir, ounn tann dir terin pou gouvernman. Me pa kone ekzakteman pou ki terin ete. Ok. Donk personn pa kone Cite Tamarinier pou kisanla? Non. Pou ki ti ete avan? Non. Seki mwa mo kone, tou recemen avan la konstruktion enn...la Cite Tamarinier ti ena bann la fami Colfir, ki ti pe marse osi, pou fer demars sa later la, lakaz la. Me petet la prosedir, ti ase lon, ki zonn Ki pann kapav kontign la prosedir inn les tonbe, zot ti mank inpe bann papye pou kontign la rout...<sup>112</sup>

(Eng. trans:...but the land how will I explain to you it is a little about history. You hear land is for Maingard, you hear that land is for Colfir, you hear that land is for government. But to know who exactly is landowner. Ok. So no-one knows to whom exactly Cité Tamarinier is? No. To whom it was before? No. What I know, recently before the construction...Cité Tamarinier there was the Colfir Family, that undertook proceedings to get this land. But maybe the proceedings were too long, that they could not continue and abandoned, there were papers missing to continue...)

The history of these 'dispossessed families', and especially of the Albert/Colfir Family who reside in the *Cité*, forms part of the collective memory of Cité La Mivoie. These family histories are still alive in the memories of the residents - all respondents mentioned having heard that these families were landowners and that they were dispossessed of their property even though some were more knowledgeable than others who did not know the detailed story.

Even if the Colfir Family did not undertake legal actions to claim their land, for these people, the individual memories of their lost land somewhat contribute to distinguish them from the others who are not landowners. This land is symbolic for the family members as it represents the life they could have lived such as better housing and living conditions and the status and facilities that people enjoy when being property owner.

In view of the fact that distribution of individual plots of land to slaves for farming activities was common practice in the later years of slavery<sup>113</sup> a question can be raised, were these families really landowners or was the land under usufruct and with time and attachment to the land, the descendants of these families appropriated it or conceived the land as being theirs?

Indeed, in line with Teelock (1998, p.171), such scenario was feared by the slave-owners who 'were apprehensive about giving slaves land to farm individually in the eventuality that they begin not only to develop a certain amount of economic independence but worse, in the planter's mind, begin to look upon the land as their own.'

Therefore, these alleged cases of land dispossession remain to be investigated to determine whether or not these families were actually disposed of their land and in instances that they were not the real owners, it is of utmost importance to understand the wherefore of their belief of having been disposed.

However, whether or not they were really dispossessed of their land, these stories of dispossession have a symbolical function for the local residents such as they represent the power struggle between the elite who have power, in this context, the Franco-Mauritians and the Creoles who have limited or no power. It reminds them of how the Creoles were and are still victims of prejudices and discriminated against. It can be said that the stories on land dispossession form part of the local legend.

These families were and are still victims of exclusion caused by structural social inequalities, inheritance constraints, historical nepotism and ineffective and expensive land administrations systems. It is the duty of the government to secure tenure of the vulnerable groups and provide reparation to the victims of discriminatory land practices.

#### 4.7 Social conditions

The local inhabitants are not protected from the influences of the capitalist and free market forces. Driven by the need to compensate for feelings of low self-esteem, they tend to overcompensate through material brazenness to prove their social worthiness by purchasing the best and most expensive brands.

Across generations, the Creoles have interiorised that they are second-class citizens, that their life is precarious and their future uncertain and that they should live their present life to the utmost. In contemporary Mauritius driven by capitalism, money is used as a defence mechanism to show off with the perception that material possessions are a means to claim, gain and define social status and social worthiness.

We should not forget that although the Creoles and the Indo-Mauritians have a shared history, yet, there are cultural and historical differences that impact on their present life such as differential opportunities and the Indo-Mauritians were allowed to maintain and perpetuate their traditional beliefs, values and practices.

Even though the Slaves Savings Bank existed and the apprentices bought land, the reasons put forward by Shirley why their ancestors lost their land are: lack of knowledge, training, and financial literacy, ignorance, illiteracy, they were not long sighted (they did not think of their future generations) and immediate gratification. For example, her ancestors were landowners in Piton and in Quatre-Bornes. The lands were transmitted across generations until they lost their land in Piton and her father sold their house in Quatre-Bornes.

...kan blan inn ale, inn, ena bokou blan landan kinn donn bann kreol, kinn donn bann esklav later. Inn dir zot, to pran li to travay li, to reste. Savedir li vinn pou twa. Se ki fe ki li pa konn lir, li pa konn narnye inn fou li ar enn kare later, ki li pou fer ar sa. Li pa kone ki pou met lor la, li pa kone kot pou al gagn lagrain pou met lor la, koma pou plante koma pou fer, lot kinn vini, bann lezot kominote kinn vini, li li kone li...li pa finn vinn enn bann esklav la, li finn vinn kokin li plito, parski li finn vinn kokin bann esklav. Esklav kan li ti nepli esklav, li ti posed kiksoz, me li pa ti kone ki pou fer ar sa, li pa ti kone kouma servi li, parski pandan tousa tan la, li pa ti al lekol. Li pann gagn formasion, kan linn sorti esklav, linn vinn lib, ant sa tranzision eklav lib la li pann gagn okenn aprantisaz, savedir letan linn lib, inn donn li enn kare later, ki pou fer ar sa? li pa pou kapav manz later, li pa pou kone kouma pou plante kouma pou met enn lakaz lorla. Se pou sa lezot kominote kinn vini, ki kone inn dir, to kone mo donn twa enn ti kas, to donn mwa ha. Be kas li kapav al aste manze la, li pou al aste bwar la, me li pa kone kan kas la inn fini, li fini sa ki pann explik li. Ki so ti travay to later to mem, to ti vande, to ti pou resi, li pann konpran sa. A la riger li ti ena sipa 10 arpan later, li vann 5 ladan, li pran kas la li ti plante zordi li ti pou ena so 5 arpan later. Abe sekinn vini inn anbet li la, li pann dir li sa li, li nek inn vini li nek inn dir li mo donn twa enn ti kas to donn mwa later la..Mo gramer ena 121 arpan kann dan Piton, ziska dernie resansman nout i fer ti ankor apel sa karo Isor. Me kan mo granper inn mor, kan nou ti dir li al fer demars, li pa ti le tann parle. Parski kifer, li pa konn lir, li dir ou ki li pou fer ar sa ? Li pou manz kann tou la zourne, koman li pou plante lor la, ki li pou plante ? Kan kann la inn fini arase ki li pou fer ar sa ? Li pa kone. Savedir li ti ena, li ti posed esklav la. Me li pann kone ki pou fer ar li, e li li pann vande li pann fer narnie, linn abandonn li...Get kouman mo papa, ou pa vann tou ou terin, tou ou lakaz! Nou ti ena enn terin dizon, li ti ena enn bel lakaz lor la, 6 lasam ena 3 pie leti ladan...li vann lakaz-la... E li vann li enn bel lakaz koumsa dan vie Quatre-Bornes 185 000 roupi, sa ziska mo mor mo pa pou pardonn li sa - 185 000 roupi. Enn mwa apre enn sinwa vini, ofer li 1 million, li fini vande, seki fe, mo panse, sori pou lexpresion me zot inn gard sa kouyonis-la. li koumsa zot inn gard sa. Ou kone, esklav viv li...sa pou mwa mo fer seki mo anvi- mo pa get mo zanfan ki pou arive ki pa pou arive demin...<sup>114</sup>

(Eng. trans:...when the whites left, there are many who gave [land] to the Creoles, who gave land to the Slaves. They told the latter to work the land and to live there. In other words, it is yours. But he [the slave] was illiterate, he did not know anything [and] gave him a plot of

land, what he would do with that. He did not know what to put on it, he did not know where to get seeds to grow, how to plant how to do, the others that came, the other communities that came, they knew...he [the other communities] did not come as slaves, he came to steal instead, because he came to steal the slaves. When the slaves were no more enslaved, he possessed things, but he did not know what to do with it, he did not know how to use it, because all that time [when slave] he did not go to school. He did not get training, when he was no more a slave, when he was freed, during this transition from slave to Freed he did not get any training, in other words when he was freed he was given a plot of land what he would do with that? He could not eat land; he did not know how to plant, how to build a house. That is why the other communities that came, that knew, said: I give you money you give me this [your land]. [With] money, he could buy food, drinks, but he did not know that when money is finished, it is finished, they [the whites] never explained that to him: that if he worked the land, he would sell [his harvest] that he would succeed, he did not understand that. At most he had 10 arpents of land, he sells 5 arpents, he uses the money he grew [cultivated the land] today he would have 5 arpents of land. But those who came abused him, did not tell him that, they just came just told him I give you some money you give me the land...my grandmother has 121 arpent of sugar cane [field] in Piton, at the last census it was still named Isor field. But, when my grandfather died, when we told her to start the proceedings, she did not want to hear about it. Because she does not know how to read, she said what she would do with that [the sugar cane field]? She will eat sugar cane all day, how she will plant and what she will grow? When the sugar cane has been harvested what will be done with it? She did not know. It means he [the slave] possessed, the slave owned. But she did not know what to do with it, she did not sell it, she did not do anything with it, she abandoned it...Like my father, you do not sell all your land, your whole house! We had a plot of land let say there was a big house on it, 6 rooms and 3 litchi trees...he sold the house...and he sold a big house like that in Quatre-Bornes town 185,000 rupees, until my death I will not forgive him 185,000 rupees. One month later a Chinese came and offered him 1 million, he had already sold [the house], which means, I think, I apologise for the saying but they [the descendants of slaves] kept this stupidity. It is like that they kept it. You know the slave likes it [this stupidity]...this is for me I do what I want I do not consider what will happen to my children what will happen tomorrow...)

There is an intergenerational transmission of need for immediate gratification that is a component of peoples' spending and saving habits. They are susceptible to marketing pleas to instant purchase as opposed to saving and investing for the future. Their preference for high status brands is a means for them to deconstruct the social perception that they are inferior. As mentioned in the previous chapter, even though they are low-income earners and are financially poor, in almost all houses including the iron-sheet houses that are falling in ruin, there are a high-tech stereo player and television set. For example, in the evening when walking in the *Cité* you can hear stereos playing loudly and almost all the residents including adolescents possess a mobile phone that they consider as being a necessity.

Besides, the elderly residents testified that when Cité La Mivoie was built, the environment was quiet and safe. Even though life was difficult and living conditions harsh, people were happy. Poverty is not a recent social problem, the region being renowned for being one of the poorest areas in Mauritius, it was part of their everyday life and was somewhat 'normalised' as they did not feel the weight of financial poverty as present days.

...Lontan site la li ti inpe, pli koul. Pli kalm. Pli respe. Be ester pena respe. Kouma dir... tou kalite figir dimounn ou trouve la, kalite loto aswar ou trouve. Ou...gagn per mem pou ou kapav sorti. Get mo bann zanfan mem kan zot tipe anba lontan nirport ki ler mo ti al get zot. Asterla kouma dir ou inpe tike ou trouv bann loto bann zom ladan. Pa kone ki zot ete. Ou pa kapav. E lester bann garson mem bannbbann zen zen fam ayo. Kouma mo pou dir sa. Zot pa respe zot mem. Zot pa pou respe ou...Zot bwar zot soule zot mars lor sime. Wi. Zot zoure. Zot pena rol...<sup>115</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Long ago the housing was a little more 'cool'. More respect. But now there is no respect. How to say...you see all sort of people, you see all sort of cars. You...are afraid to go out. Look when long ago my children were down over there at whatever the time I went to see them. But now you hesitate you see cars with men inside. You do not know how there are. You cannot. And now [not only] the young boys young women [too]. How I would say. They do not have self-respect. They will not respect you...they drink they are drunk they walk on the road. Yes they are vulgar. They have nothing to do...)

Although Black River is burgeoning, it appears that only part of the village and its population has benefited from the opportunities presented. Cité La Mivoie still facing many social, health and economic problems. (See Chapter on economic survey)

Other social and health problems identified during field research are:

#### **Alcoholism:**

Alcoholism is one of the main social problems in the *Cité* and is one of the causes of collateral socio-economic problems and disturbances such as noise pollution, insecurity, poverty and unemployment. Feminisation of alcoholism was also noted. For some people, daily excessive alcohol consumption is 'normal' and not a social problem. For them, alcoholism is a trivial issue. In the past shops were meeting places where men gathered in the evening after working hours. Shops are still socialising places but now both men and women as from a young age meet at the shop and drink with friends the whole daylong.

Photo 19 Children Drinking at Midday



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 16/P/LaMivoie/12May2010

It seems that alcohol abuse is a problem across generations that can be explained by the fact that parents and the living environment are the primary socialising agents and children tend to reproduce the same attitudes and behaviour of their parents, neighbours, friends and other role models.

These children are socialised in dysfunctional families and social environments and learn that the behaviour and attitudes they observe such as consumption of drugs and alcohol and other violent behavioural patterns are normal. They grow up within a value system that somewhat normalises anti-social behaviour and mores. Normative social influences push them to adopt these behavioural patterns to be liked and accepted by their peers and immediate network. Non-conformity would imply exclusion and stigmatisation.

Normative social influences contribute to group cohesiveness and to a sense of group belonging and given that group identity primes over individual identity and pressure to conform is high in a closed system like Cité La Mivoie.

It appears that alcohol consumption plays an important role in the social life of the residents and is strongly associated with leisure time. All opportunities seem to be favourable for drinking and 'partying'. The problem of alcoholism is rampant.

Every day during fieldwork, we saw people on the roadside drinking and playing cards and dominos and in the evening's music playing loudly. One day during daytime, we even saw two women that were drunk and screaming on the road. The situation has worsened with children starting to drink from age of 13 and people being drunk early in the morning. With the exception of the nearby sea and the churchyard used as leisure grounds, lack of leisure and recreational activities and

infrastructures and of sport infrastructures are some of the reasons put forward for why children fall into alcohol abuse and drug abuse.

In line with Emilienne’s testimony, excessive alcohol consumption is encouraged by the local market as shops remain open and sell alcohol until late at night. *‘laboutik pena ler ferme. Pena ler ki zot pou vann zot labwason ki li 11 zer ki li minwi ki li kwa. Zot pe vann zot labwason. Be banla tante lorla. Pena disiplinn.*<sup>116</sup> (Eng. trans: the shops do not have closing hours. They do not have hours to sell alcohol beverages whether it is 11 hrs or midnight. They are selling alcohol. They are enticed. There is no discipline)

The Household Budget Survey (HBS) 2006/07 estimated alcoholic beverages and tobacco to 9.5% of total expenditure and estimated private household consumption of alcoholic beverages per annum 980 million rupees. But, from the observed drinking habits in the *Cité*, the percentage of household expenditure on consumption of alcoholic beverages in the housing estate is much more.

AS pointed out by the HBS 2006/07, only 35% of national consumption is captured at the HBS and therefore statistics do not reflect reality. It has been estimated from other sources that household consumption of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes represents about 80% of total sales in the country and thus an adjustment of 938 rupees has been worked out for the average monthly household consumption expenditure.

#### **Drug Consumption:**

When questioned on the problem of drug consumption and trafficking in the *Cité*, the respondents remained evasive. They neither denied nor admitted the magnitude of the problem. They acknowledged that there are young boys and girls that consume soft drugs especially marijuana but stated that there is no problem of hard drug consumption such as cocaine and ecstasy.

When asked where the youngsters buy drugs, they were equivocal stating, on one hand, that they find drugs in the *Cité* and on the other hand, that they buy them outside the housing estate. Only one respondent mentioned that she witnessed the traffic of Subutex<sup>117</sup>. A pill is sold for 800 rupees and half a pill is sold for 200 rupees.

...konsomasyon ek trafik tou le de...mo trouve ek mo lizie. Zot vinn lor la kroise la, zot fer kot sa monn trouve, dan mo la boutik mem, ti ena enn garson res anfin li res lao li montre nou, li dir gete madam get ki ena ladan...Be mo dir komien li koute pou sa? Li dir mwa, enn koumsa, ou kone komien koute sa enn konprime la, 800 li dir si mo vann kar ladan o fet vann par kar tou sa si ou vann enn kar ladan, ou gagn 800. Ena soz ou si enn sering. Wi ena sering osi, ena sa ganndia...<sup>118</sup>

(Eng. trans:...consumption and traffic both...I saw with my eyes. They stand at the crossroad there, they do [consume and traffic] where I saw, in my shop, there was a boy he resides uphere he showed use, he said madam look what is inside...And i asked how much it costs? He told me, one like that, you know how much it costs one pill, 800 rupees...he said if I sell one quarter of that in fact sell one quarter also if you sell one quarter you earn 800 rupees. There is a syringe also. Yes a syringe also, Gandia...)

During fieldwork, it was observed that it is the practice for youngsters to gather at road junctions in the evening, as from approximately seven o’clock, to buy and smoke their ‘joint’. During the day, adults were also observed to be heavily under drug influence. When questioned about their activities, they replied that they had been fishing early in the morning and that their working day was now over.

On several occasions, an outsider was observed coming into the neighbouring residential area to sell drugs. One of our respondents even hinted at this. A car was also observed regularly coming into the *Cité*, almost every day and sometimes more than once a day. Their car did not belong to a resident.

Two incidents were mentioned concerning scuffles in the *Cité* around 2000 between youngsters from another urban *Cité* of the suburbs of Rose Hill and those of Cité La Mivoie. It may have been related to drugs.

During our enquiry, various cases of burglary were reported in the *Cité* and surrounding residential areas. These cases could be drug related offences.

Albeit the residents are against drug trafficking in their locality, yet it seems that they minimise the problem of illicit substance abuse and even there is a 'normalisation' of drug consumption. This normalisation of smoking marijuana, as mentioned by Father Jean David, can be explained by the fact that marijuana is inherent to Rastafarianism and the youngsters in the *Cité* identify themselves with Rastafarian music.

However, they are not 'real' Rastafari in the *Cité* as they do not follow the Rastafarian spirituality or lifestyle apart from the more visible parts of it such as the dressing style and music; they listen to reggae, seggae and saggai music. A modified form of 'Rasta culture' with Bob Marley and Kaya still present in the collective memory of the population and especially the Creole community is inherent to *Cité* subculture.

### **Child abuse**

By the end of fieldwork, only two cases of child abuse were reported. They were mostly cases of fondling young girls by minors that occurred when children were playing. Sylviana mentioned that these cases were reported to the Child Protection Unit but the children did not receive any psychological assistance and there was no legal follow up. She also pointed out that maybe there maybe more cases of child abuse by adults and adolescents but these incidences remain hidden, as it was a sensitive issue and even a taboo subject.

However, given the extent of domestic violence in the locality, actually, more cases of child abuse remain underreported. In fact, the following cases were identified:

- Child neglect: Children are poorly cared for, they are undernourished, improperly clothed and are denied necessities and rights, proper medical care and access to education. They are emotionally neglected and are treated with indifference. Neglect is one of the reasons why children fall in alcoholism and drug abuse at such a young age
- Psychological abuse: Children living in abusive relationships are exposed to various forms of violence that are likely to negatively impact on their cognitive development and subsequently on the type of adult they will be in the future such as they might reproduce these violent behaviours. In addition, they do not receive the adequate attention from their parents.

### **Child Labour**

Despite the Labour Act of 1975 which prohibits child labour, it continues to be a problem with the *Cité* children starting to work at a young age. However, this problem is not peculiar to Black River as it is widespread in the island.<sup>119</sup>

Child Labour is also prohibited under the Child Protection Act of 1998 but since the children in the *Cité* often drop-out of school before the age of 16, they enter the labour market while at the same time acquiring their skills from their parents through informal education.

Based on the writings of Teelock (1998, p.182), Mauritian society and economy were developed on partly on the exploitation of children that was inherent to the slave system. The slave children were denied 'childhood' and 'although parents tried to limit their children's participation in hard physical labour, child labour was widely practised.'

Child labour was perpetuated under the indenture system and in post-slavery and post-indenture Mauritius. Children continued to constitute a ready pool of labourers working as poultry keeper, cattle herder, bird chaser, weeds picker and performing other menial jobs. A gender dimension was identified in the distribution of work; boys were working in the fields while girls were performing domestic works. Until now children remain vulnerable to child labour and exploitation.

### Child Prostitution

Some respondents had heard about problems of child prostitution in Cité La Mivoie but they had no proof. Poverty and lack of educational and employment opportunities seem to be the reason why women engage in prostitution.

...bon, mo trouve ena enn group tifi...de mo tabagi mem en, enn defoi zot fami vini, pe maltret zot pe koze; "Hier monn trouv twa ek intel, pe koz ar intel, tonn rant dan loto tonn ale....tonn al si pa kot sa, tonn retourne tel ler....to enn move zenfan, to fer betiz tou lor la...." ou konpran la, be la kinn donn mwa lide kouma dir ena sa. Me...lerla mo demann tifi la, mo dir li; "be ki fer to fer sa, kot to ti ale?" li dir mwa; "madam Ramesh, be ki mo pou fer, si mo bezoin larzan, ki mo pou fer." Ounn konpran mwa. Be lerla ki monn finn panse, mo dir petet, sa mem ki zot bezoin larzan...<sup>120</sup>

(Eng. trans:...i saw a group of girls...from my shop, once twice they family came, screaming at them telling; 'yesterday I saw you with someone, talking to someone, you got in the car and went...you went donot know where, you came back that time...you a bad child, you do bad things...' you understand, then I knew there was that. But...then I asked the girl, I asked her: 'why you do that, where you go?' she replied; 'Madam Ramesh, what I will do, I need money, what I will?' you understand. Then I thought maybe that is why, they need money...)

On several occasions, they saw a car collect a group of five young girls of 15 years old on the main road at eight o'clock in the evening and they came back in the early morning the next day or few days later. The 'pick up point' was never the same; sometimes it was in the churchyard and other times in front of the playground.

The problem of sexual exploitation of girls is not inherent to the *Cité* and is a social plague that touches other regions of the island

### Teenage pregnancy

Youngsters in the *Cité* have their first sexual intercourse at around 14 years old. According to Moore (1990), the younger the age of the first sexual intercourse, the more likely that the experience was coercive which might have long lasting negative effects and the greater the risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections because they are less likely to use contraception.

They also tend to engage in high risk sexual behaviour. It was also noted that for the majority of females who had their initial sexual experiences at 14 years old or younger it was non-voluntary.

Teens' sexual behaviour is influenced by various social, psychological and cultural factors. In the *Cité*, it is a social problem that crosses generations in that women residents have their first child at a young age.

As pointed out by the director of one of the kindergarten, it seems that women do not make the distinction between love and sexual desire; for them if man wants to have sex with them it means that the man is in love with them.

Furthermore, they do not measure all the outcomes of teenage motherhood and early sexual intercourse such as on the psychosocial development of children, future sexual life and on their social and economic opportunities. (See Chapter on Economic Survey)

For example, Marie France's daughter had to stop schooling because she became pregnant. She had the opportunity to return to school but she chose to start working as a cook. During fieldwork, we were informed that three other adolescents were also pregnant.

One of the reasons' might be that open discussion of sexuality is still taboo in Mauritian society, parents rarely talk of sexuality with their children and sex education is not mandatory. In schools where there are sex education classes, they are limited to the biological and reproductive aspect of the subject.

**Lack of Leisure facilities and sports infrastructure**

Children and youths have limited choices in terms of leisure and sport activities such as they go either to the beach or play football or volleyball or play dominoes or cards. They get bored and to kill time they drink or smoke with cigarettes, cigarettes and drugs being easily accessible.

**Scabies infestation**

There is a problem of scabies infestation among the children in the *Cité*. Even though public doctors gave treatment, the illness is still persistent because the residents do not take the necessary precautions concerning hygiene and so risks of propagation are increased.

**4.10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Social organisation**

The sites identified in the culture map should be listed as constituting the natural, tangible and intangible local heritage.

The stories of these sites, the origins of these place names and of the local traditional knowledge should be inventoried to be passed on to the future generations.

- **Family patterns and gender relations**

There is need to carry an in-depth study on the impact of slavery on the contemporary family and social problems especially, gender relations and family dysfunction.

Sexual education should be mandatory but should also promote the norm that sex should take place in intimate relationships of mutual respect and equal gender relations.

- **Settlement**

These sites listed below should be listed as local heritage sites as they are an integral part of the heritage of the local residents who live in this region for generations.

Democratising access to property ownership through the construction of low cost residential developments/Morcellement for the low and middle classes. It also implies implementing measures to protect and defend the land rights of the vulnerable groups such as women and working class families.

- **Social Organisation**

In line with Article 27 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) the State should ensure that every child in the housing estate enjoys the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. It is the State's obligation to take appropriate measures to assist parents in the *Cité* and others responsible parties to implement this right and in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing in accordance with national conditions and within their means.

- **Housing conditions**

There is need to carry out a Health survey in the *Cité* La Mivoie and other housing estates to find out if the illnesses and deaths in the *Cités* are in fact asbestos related diseases and deaths.

As a solution to the problem of space in the *Cité*, the government should come up with a long-term affordable housing programme for middle and working classes. These houses should be within the financial means based on the household disposable income of individuals.

To facilitate access to long term affordable housing, grants and subsidised loans with monthly mortgage payments and low fixed interest rates can be proposed to middle and working class based on the household disposable income so as to avoid foreclosure.

The Ministry of Land and Infrastructure should modify the drainage system in line with the norms and regulations

There is need to develop financial and money management programmes, life skills and leadership programmes to change the residents' mindset and develop a culture of money management and saving and new set of attitudes.

Based on the approach 'Culture as Treatment', instead of designing self-empowerment programmes based on western methods, traditional self-empowerment programmes should be designed for the residents that are cultural sensitive and that take into consideration their social and historical background.

- **Toilet and Bathroom Facilities**

Provision and access to adequate clean water, basic sanitation and electricity are essential to meeting the Millennium Development Goals and ultimately the eradication of extreme poverty. They are vital to trigger sustainable social and economic developments and inclusion that will get people out of the poverty trap. For example, by improving the living conditions of people, ensuring health and educational opportunities and gender equality

Indeed, in line with Water Aid (2001), poverty reduction strategies must include effective water and sanitation interventions to achieve sustainable development. Water, electricity and sanitation access promote good hygiene and health and have other indirect positive effects on educational opportunities, gender equality and social, economic and cultural empowerment. Safe water and sanitation underpin economic growth and environmental sustainability.

- **Land Dispossession**

In line with the various United Nations treaties, government should promote 'effective and democratic land, property and natural resources governance, management and practices' including decisions on access to land, natural resources and property; land and property rights, land use, and land and property development. It is the duty of the government to support the increasing number of citizens who do not have access to land and adequate shelter and since market forces will not naturally alleviate the situation land reforms should be proposed to reduce the structural inequalities and longer term measures for housing and land and property rights need to be put in place to support social stability.<sup>121</sup>

For example, FIG-World Bank Declaration on Land Governance in Support of the Millennium Development Goals clearly spells out that sustainable land governance should provide transparent and easy access to land for all and thereby reduce poverty, avoid land grabbing and the attached social and economic consequences, safeguard the environment, cultural heritage and the use of natural resources; guarantee good, transparent, affordable and gender responsive governance of land for the benefit of all including the most vulnerable groups; apply a land policy that is integrated into social and economic development policy frameworks; address the challenges of climate change and related consequences of natural disasters, food shortage, etc.; and recognise the trend of rapid urbanisation as a major challenge to sustain future living and livelihoods.<sup>122</sup>

Furthermore, the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements (1996) lays out the engagement of governments to 'endorse the universal goals of ensuring adequate shelter for all and making human settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, equitable, sustainable and productive'. States recognised the urgency of addressing the problem of continuing deterioration of conditions of shelter and human settlements and reaffirmed their commitment to better standards of living in larger freedom for all humankind and to promote the conservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of buildings, monuments, open spaces, landscapes and settlement patterns of historical, cultural, architectural, natural, religious and spiritual value.

- **Child Prostitution**

During her visit to Mauritius in May 2011, Ms. Maalla M'jid, the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography said that the number of reported cases of sexual abuse, maltreatment and neglect in Mauritius is increasing and that the Mauritian children are increasingly vulnerable to sexual exploitation because of a combination of poverty, family dysfunction, social taboos, alcohol and drugs.

She also identified increasing consumerism, the persistent demands of the market for commercial sex, access to new technologies, parental migration for economic reasons and lack of sex education programmes that inform children about the risks inherent in early sexual activity as other causal.

In line with UNHCR Trafficking in Persons Report (2010) and as per the Child Protection (Amendment) Act of 2008, the State should investigate into these cases of child trafficking and should implement mechanism to facilitate improved anti-trafficking communication and coordination among the relevant parties including law enforcement entities, working groups, NGOs and protective services available to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Also adequate support for the rehabilitation of these children.

In addition, the government has a formal protocol on the provision of assistance to all victims of sexual abuse including children victims/survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. In this respect, the government should investigate why the victims-survivors did not receive the adequate assistance and support such as why they did not receive the adequate medical treatment and psychological support.

#### Local Heritage

Preservation of the intangible and tangible heritage identified. The memories of the places that have been destroyed should be preserved such as their stories should be transmitted to future generations.

For example, a local history museum with pedagogical activities should be constructed and the publication of the local history.

The history of the main estates should be retraced given that they determined local social and economic evolution.

Anthropological and archaeological study of Black River Gorges to locate the place names and potential heritage sites mentioned in the interviews to list the gorges as natural heritage.

The research should be extended to Tamarin Village and Petite Rivière Noire and other regional villages.

## 5. CONTEMPORARY CITÉ LA MIVOIE - ECONOMIC SURVEY

This chapter focuses on the economic life in Cité La Mivoie in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of, firstly, the infrastructural development of the village of Petite Rivière Noire and the *Cité*, secondly, the occupation patterns in the housing estate during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thirdly, the educational patterns within the *Cité* and finally other economic problems that the local residents are facing.

It aims at assessing the local economic conditions and identifying the economic problems the residents are presently facing in order to make recommendations to address the problems identified and ultimately improve their economic conditions.

### 5.1 Infrastructure and Spatial Organisation

Based on the premise that, firstly, infrastructural landscape is not fixed but dynamic in that it evolves through time in line with changes in land use, secondly, socio-economic transitions are determined on land use that subsequently affect environment (social and ecological environments), the shift in the regional economic development strategy - with the main estate owners dividing out land for commercial and residential developments - transformed the local infrastructural pattern. (See Appendix 3)

The infrastructural landscape can be divided as such: (i) an upper part that corresponds to the apex of La Tourelle du Tamarin Mountain where luxurious residences were built (ii) an intermediary part which is at the foot of the mountain where the commercial infrastructures are located and (iii) a lower part where the low cost housing estates are situated (Cité La Mivoie and Morcellement Les Tamariniers).

Cité La Mivoie is an enclave between the commercial area of the village located upstream and the wealthy residences owned essentially by foreigners and fair-skinned Mauritians (either Mauritians categorised as Franco-Mauritians or Mauritians categorised as Mulattos) found downstream on the beach side.

Photo 20 *Sime Colonel Dean - Beach Side*



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 18/P/LaMivoie/11May2010

On the right and left peripheries (*Sime LaJetée* and Market Lane) of the *Cité* there is private land owned by Hindi and Marathi speaking Indo-Mauritians who are said to be better off than the *Cité* residents. (See Chapter Social Survey)

Photo 21 La Balise: *Sime LaJetée*



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 18/P/LaMivoie/11May2010

Photo 22 Market Lane



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 20/P/LaMivoie/11May2010

The following public amenities were identified: Post Office, British American Insurance Office, Village Hall, Alliance Française office, Police Station, Citizen Advice Bureau, hardware store, restaurants, Ruiseau Créole a luxurious shopping complex, Nautica another recently-built shopping complex, a hairdresser and various retail shops.

Dr. Y. Cantin Hospital is the only health institution found at the north entrance of the village but there are several private physicians in the region in La Mivoie and Tamarin Village. The health services provided by the hospital are far from meeting international public health standards for a developing country although improvements were brought since the opening of the hospital in 1997. Various newspaper articles, for example published in *L'Express* dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010 reported, the poor working conditions of the hospital personnel and the poor health services dispensed including basic primary health care such as lack of health equipments and medicine.

Photo 23 Dr. Yves Cantin Hospital



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH  
21/P/LaMivoie/11May2010

There is a football ground and a basketball court at the north entrance of the village as sporting infrastructure. It seems that these amenities are under-utilised, as during fieldwork, once we saw people (men) playing football and on another day students of the primary school were competing in sporting activities. It seems that the children do not use these sporting facilities, as they prefer to play football in the churchyard because of its proximity with the housing estate.

As a religious infrastructure, St. Augustin Church was established in 1857 following the donation of Comte Augustin Genève de St. Jean a large estate owner in Black River<sup>123</sup>. A *Mandir*<sup>124</sup> named Black River Ganesh Mandir is presently under construction at the north entrance of the village and a Christian cemetery, Black River cemetery, is located at the north entrance of the village adjacent to the post office.

As educational Infrastructures: (i) two kindergartens exist, Garderie Etoile located in the churchyard for low-income earners and working class families. La Case des Bambins Halte Crèche and Pre-primary School is a private kindergarten located in front of the church on the left side of *Sime La Jetée*, (ii) a specialised school for mentally handicapped children located in the church yard, (iii) a technical school: *Ecole des Techniciennes de Maison* (Eng.trans. School of House Technicians) located in the church yard, (iv) a pre-primary and primary school: Black River pre-primary and primary government school at the north entrance of the village adjacent to the Village Council Hall and (v) a secondary school: Collège du St Esprit Rivière Noire at the South end of the village.

There is no taxi service based in the village and few people own a private car or motorcycle. , the local residents rely on public transport whose efficiency has improved since the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries when the Black River region faced transport and communication problems that contributed to its marginalisation.

Nowadays, the public bus service is regular and there is a bus every hour going from Baie-du-Cap to Quatre-Bornes and every morning and afternoon there is a bus going to Port Louis. There are two bus stops, one located in front of Li Mo Yo's shop (when going to Port Louis) and the other in front of Saint Augustin Store (when going to Baie-du-Cap).

Regarding road infrastructure, as Devi testified, before there were railways and in the 1960s there were muddy roads but in the eighties, the roads were tarred. The transport service is still served by a private company with the exception of the National Transport Corporation that serves the trip Baie-du-Cap to Port Louis.

Even though pedestrian crossings, signs and safe pavements are available, when driving through the village, drivers including bus drivers rarely respect speed limits and the Highway Code. I observed

that road safety is a major concern because of speeding especially in regards to the children who tend to play on the pavements and roadside.

There are other amenities available in La Mivoie that is approximately 10 minutes' walking distance North of Cité La Mivoie. The Central Electricity Authority Office, the filling station, London Hypermarket, a chemist, the Mascareignes Bank and other commercial shops such as restaurants and decorations are located at La Mivoie.

In Tamarin village, we find FranPrix Hypermarket, a chemist and Barclays Bank as well as a commercial mall and River Land, a sports club for the wealthy people. Tamarin Village that is approximately 15 minutes driving distance north of the *Cité*.

According to the respondents, these infrastructural developments started around the mid 1980s and increased in the past 10 years with the mass influx of expatriates settling in the region. Market forces shape these developments, especially, the commercial amenities that target particularly the wealthy strata of the local population.

For example, the luxurious commercial complexes, house decoration shops, and the regional residential developments are intended for the wealthy foreigners and the higher classes. Even the goods in the local hypermarkets are higher-priced compared to urban regions.

Photo 24 Ruiseau Créole



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 22/P/LaMivoie/12May2010

However, there are still basic amenities missing and there are high expectations among the residents in terms of infrastructure and services: (i) an agricultural market. The nearest market is in Bambous but they go to Quatre-Bornes. (ii) An equipped and modern hospital. For serious illnesses, they have to travel to Candos Hospital the nearest public health service located in Quatre-Bornes that is approximately 40 minutes' driving distance by car. (iii) Recreational infrastructures and a proper and safe playground for children. At the entrance of the *Cité* there is a playground but it is not safe and hygienic as it used as dumping and defecating ground. (iv) There are no streetlights in the *Cité* and proper and standardised drainage system. (v) A meeting place where the residents can gather and organise meetings and (vi) a public library.

## 5.2 Potential Heritage Sites

The *sime* (Eng.trans. Road or Path) identified in this report were multi-functional paths that passed through private and government land. They were muddy paths like horse tracks that 'cut across' sugar-cane plantations and used by lorries to load sugar-cane.

However, in view of the fact that, long ago, people used to walk and, often, long distances, some of these paths were used by the local residents as short cuts.

...be tou sa bann chemin la, bann, ti ena bann ti santie sa, zonn fer sa kouma dir bann....kamion kapav tir kann, kapav tir di bwa tou sa. Se pou sa ki zonn...bann ti santie...<sup>125</sup>

(Eng. trans:...but all these roads, there were small paths, they did that how to say that...lorries can load sugar-cane, can load wood all that. That is why they...small paths...)

These *sime* are of historical and symbolic importance for the local inhabitants as in the past they regularly used these paths and they still use some of them. They were secondary roads that can be conceptualised as intermediary or ritualised spaces that linked places such as the camps, the villages, the working places and gardens.

The following *sime* were identified as constituting the local intangible and tangible heritage. The names and stories of these paths are still present in the collective memory of the residents. (See Appendix 3)

1. *5 Sime* (Eng.trans. Five Road):

It is presently known as Old Black River Road and starts from *lacrwaze 5 Sime* and passes through the Black River Gorges.

It was named such, because the road splits into several branches (approximately 5 branches) that lead to various places in the Gorges such as Matala, Walhala and Yemen

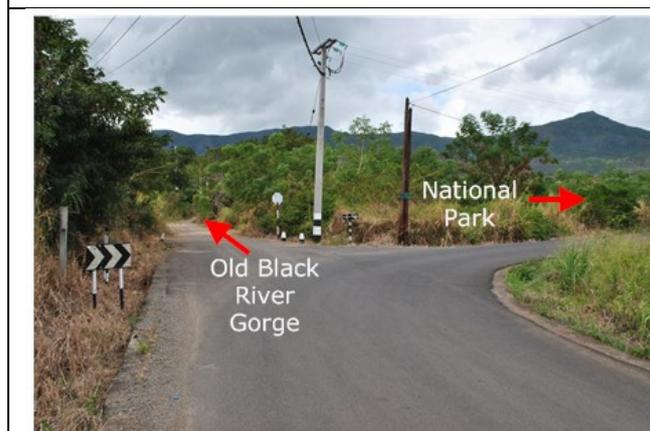
...me cink sime kot li ete sa? cink sime, li trouv dan sa sime la mem me, inpe pli devan...<sup>126</sup>

(Eng. trans:...but where is Five Road? Five Road is found in this road but a little further inside...)

...apel sa lakrawze cink chemin, parski kan nou pran sa chemin ki pa asfalte la, chemin blan la la, dan sime later la, la nou gagn sime pou nou al Walala, sime pou al Matala, dan sime Yemen. Apre sa kontour la la, se sa kot nou pou al dan Gorge...donk si mo konpran byen, apre dan...sa tournan la mo trouv ena enn chemin ki al tou drwat! Wi. Donk se sa sime la, li al ziska Matala ek Walala. Wi Matala, Walala...ek ziska Yemen...be ki fer apel sa lakrawze cink sime? mai zonn donn sa non la, lakrawze cink sime...kan ou rantt dan sa chemin blan la la, ena bann chemin ki kouma dir....de partaze...Donk se Old Black River Road ki al ziska Yemen alor...<sup>127</sup>

(Eng. trans:...It is known as five Road junction because when we use take that road that is not tarred, the white road there, the dirt road there, there we have the road to go to Walala, the road to go to Matala, in the Yemen Road. After this road curve there, it is where we go in the gorges...so if I understand after...this road curve I see a road going straight! Yes. So it is this road that goes to Matala and Walala...and to Yemen...Why is it called five Road junction? They gave this mane, five Road junction...when you go on that white road there, there are roads how to say that...split...So it is Old Black River Road that goes to Yemen...)

Photo 25 5 Sime and Lacrwaze 5 Sime



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 23/P/LaMivoie/12May2010

2. *Sime Gorz*:

This is the Black River Road. It starts from the main road (from the junction in front of *Boutik Trwa Bra*) to places named Ti-Gorz and Gran Gorz in the Black River Gorges

..mesa chemin National Park la, komen...Li touzur ti apel koumsa sa? non. Ti apel li Gorge de la Rivière Noire. Sime Gorz...Ah sa ve dir...chemin National Park, li apel osi sime Gorge...<sup>128</sup>

(Eng. trans:...But this road [named] National Park...it was always named such? No. It was named Black River Gorges. Black River Gorges Road...Ok it means National Park Road, is also named Black River Gorges Road...)

Photo 26 *Sime Gorz*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 24/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

3. *Sime Ti Ladig* (Eng. Trans. Small Dam Road):

It is located before *Pon Blan* and was named such because there was a stream flowing in front.

...Donk dan kote drwat dan chemin National Park, ena enn segon chemin la dan kote drwat, komen li apele en? chemin ti la dig...ki fer ti la dig en? Ki ti ena la? ena enn la rivier ki pase devan...en ena enn la rivier ? Wi...Donk inn apel sa chemin ti la dig? Wi...<sup>129</sup>

(Eng. trans:...So on the right side of National Park Road, there is a second road on the right how is it named? Small Dam Road...Why Small Dam Road? What was there here? There was a river flowing in front...there is a river? Yes...So it was named Small Dam Road? Yes...)

4. *Sime Bolom Baboo* (Eng. trans. Old man Baboo Road):

It was located on Ramdenee estate and was named after a man named Baboo as the road led to his garden. Presently at the entrance of the road, there is a gate.

...wa. Tou sa ti ena kann pou Ramdenee sa. Sa chemin la la, kot nou ete la, ti apel sa chemin bolom Babou...Sa ve dir kot ena gat la, dan gos-la. Ti apel sa bolom Babou... ki fer? Err mwa mo sipose bolom Babou ti ena enn zardin, inpe pli devan laba...<sup>130</sup>

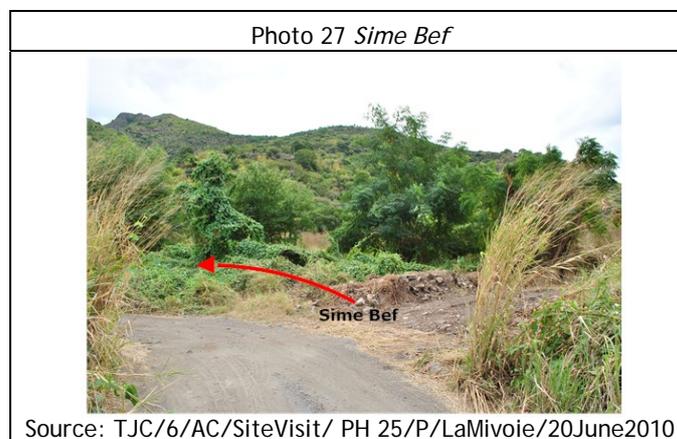
(Eng. trans:..Yes. All this was for Ramdenee. This road where we are there was named Old man Baboo Road...It means where there is the gate there on the left there. It was named Old man Baboo...why? Me I think the Old man Baboo had his garden there, a little in front over-there...)

#### 5. *Sime bef*:

It was located south of St. Augustin Church. It led to *Pon Misel* and ended *Kanal Raffia*. It passed near *Rwiso Harrison* and behind *Kan Bef*.

monte li vinn tom kot sa verze la la kot pon michel...Sime bef ? Wi. Avan al legliz ? Wi Pran kot legliz la ou monte mem ou vinn kot Pon Michel ti ena enn gran verze mang la ti ena dimounn ti reste tou laba. Ki ti pe res laba ein ? Ti ena enn bonom apel bonom Gesen ti pe gardien bef dan sa soz la dan sa verze mang la li res laem. Donk ti ena sime bef la ? Wi pran kot legliz li vini pers Pon Michel lerla ou gagn verze mang sa bonom la ti gardien ti res dan sa verze la...<sup>131</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Here there was an orchard...there was a road named Cattle Road it started near the church it went uphill to the orchard there near Michel Bridge...Cattle Road? Yes. Before the church? Yes start from the church go uphill you reach Michel Bridge there was a huge mango orchard there were people staying over-there. Who stayed over-there? There was a man named Old man Gesen who was cattleherder in this orchard he was living there. So there was Cattle Road there? Yes it started near the church passed by Michel Bridge then you have the mango orchard the man was watchman and was living in the orchard...)



The following infrastructures were also identified as forming part of the local tangible and intangible heritage. (See Appendix 3)

#### 1. *Bois Piant*:

It is a place located before the reservoir on the way to Petite Rivière Noire. *La Montan Bois Piant* (Eng.trans. Stinking Wood Slope) refers to a steep slope and curve on the road.

This place name serves as delimitation for De Senneville estate on the left side of the road and De Ravel estate located on the right side of the road when going towards Petite Rivière Noire

...la nou koumans par later bwa pian, nou monte parski ki fer, ou trouv sa gran la montan la, apel sa la montan bwa pian...ki fer bwa pian...ki san la kinn met sa non la? me

sa depi a ma konesans monn tann sa bwa pian, mo pa tro kone ki so sinifikasion...parski li enn la montan ki byen dur. Si ou fer sa a pie li byen dur...<sup>132</sup>

(Eng. trans:..There we start from Stinking Wood land, we go up why because, you see this steep slope there, it is named Stinking Wood Slope...Why Stinking Wood...why gave this name? Because I always heard this Stinking Wood, I do not really know its signification...because it is a steep slope. If you climb it on foot it is difficult...)



2. *Pon Misel*: (See Chapter Social Survey)



3. *Pon Raffia*:

It is located between *Pon Misel* and *Pon Blan* and near *Sime Ti Ladig*. It was named such because there were Raffia trees near the bridge.

...pon Raffia pli devan. Pli devan? Wi. Sa ve dir li...li dan chemin Gorge. Li dan chemin Gorge...Sa ve dir kan nou rant dan Gorge, li avan Kalimay. Wi. Ok dakor. Be ki fer apel sa pon Raffia en? ena bann pie Raffia...<sup>133</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Raffia Bridge is far ahead. Far ahead? Yes. It means it...it is in Black River Gorges Road...It is in Black River Gorges Road...It means when we are on Black River Gorges Road it is before the Kalimaya. Yes. Ok right. Why is it named Raffia Bridge? There are Raffia Trees...)

4. *Pon Blan*:

It is located at the entrance of *Sime Gorz* before *Lacrwaze 5 Sime*. It is '*dan chemin National Park, ena enn second pon*'<sup>134</sup> (Eng.trans. In National Park road, the second bridge)

Photo 30 *Pon Blan*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 28/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

5. *Boutik Trwa Bra*:

It is a *Boutik Sinwa* (Eng.trans. Chinese Retail Shop) located at the south end of the village and opposite the roundabout at the entrance *Sime Gorz*. It is still open and there is a Chinese restaurant named Pavillon de Jade above the shop.

Photo 31 *Boutik Trwa Bra*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 29/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

6. *Boutik Li Mo Yo*:

It is a *Boutik Sinwa* located in front of Cité La Mivoie and opposite *Kan Lakol*. Nowadays the shop is closed. When it closed, the shop was transformed into a market named Black Market.

Photo 32 *Boutik Li Mo Yo*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 30/P/LaMivoie/11May2010

7. *Boutik Saint Augustin*:

Is a *Boutik Sinwa* located at the North entrance of the village is still open.

Photo 33 *Boutik Saint Augustin*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 31/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

There are infrastructures that existed in the past but that have disappeared now because of spatial reconfigurations resulting from residential and other infrastructural developments. Some of these infrastructures are inherent to the local economic history and are still present in the collective and individual memories of the respondents as they have an historical significance for the latter. Therefore, the vestige of these infrastructures should be listed as local heritage sites:

1. *Fouraso* (Eng.trans. Limekiln):

Two Limekilns were identified. One at the northern entrance of the village after Ruiseau Creole and another at the south end of the *Cité* near the Centre de Peche (a jetty and a fishing club. It was formerly a hotel.)

2. *Chambre des morts* (Eng.trans. The House of the Dead):

It was adjacent to the post office. It was a mortuary where in the past people used to leave the dead corpse until they get all their papers for the funeral.

...avan kouma dir kan enn dimounn, pa pe gagn bann papie pou anter li, ti pe gard so lekor ladan, ziska bann fami al fer bann demars landemin lerla, zot pran lekor la zot al antere. Se sa ki zot apel lasam de mor la? Wi. Me ziska ki lane inn fer sa an?..Ase lontan parski, mo mem mo ti ena enn fami, pa ti gagn papie, zanfan la ti res dan kapav li kapav 75-76...<sup>135</sup>

(Eng. trans:...long ago when people did not have their papers to be buried, the corpse was kept there, until the next day his family undertook the proceedings, they took the corpse to be buried. This is what they call the house of the dead? Yes. Until which year this practice

existed?...for a long time as myself I had a family [member] who did not have his papers, the child stayed in [the House of the Dead] maybe in 75-76...)

Photo 34 Location of Chambre des Morts



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 32/P/LaMivoie/12May2010

3. *Moulin Lalwes* (Eng. trans. Aloes Mill):

It was located on De Senneville estate near the office of Mr. Ramdenee. Léon Maurel was the former owner of the factory who later transferred the ownership to Joseph De Senneville.

The *Cité* residents have worked in the mill and in the Aloes field until it closed in around 1970.

Today, there is a *Morcellement* on the site of the factory and it was not possible to accurately locate the mill. As stated by Antonio, Mr. Jean Claude D'Hotman built his house in the mill.

According to Moutou (2000,p. 217), in 1929, there were 25 Aloes Mills in the Black River district including that of Léon Maurel in Black River and the factory of A. Keisler in Petite Rivière Noire.

...Moulin lalwes...ou kone bann terin andan, li ti inpe divize parski Moulin lalwes se...misie Maurel ki ti okup sa...o komansman. Wi. Apre, kouma dir lerla misie De Senneville inn pran. MisierDe Senneville ziska asterla ou pase la, ou pou trouv kot so bann poto difil ena la. Ou pou trouv kot so bann poto difil ete la *lizin*...<sup>136</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Aloes Mill...You know the properties inland, it is divided because the Aloes Mill it...was Mr. Maurel who managed it...at the beginning. Yes. Afterwards Mr. De Senneville took over. Mr. De Senneville until now when you pass by you will see the electric posts there. You will see where the electric posts are [it was there] the factory...)

Antonio testified that there was a *Balans* (Eng.trans. Scale) to weight the Aloes fibres before sending them to Grande Rivière. The scale was near the shop named *Boutik Trwa Bra* where the Levasseur Family built their house.

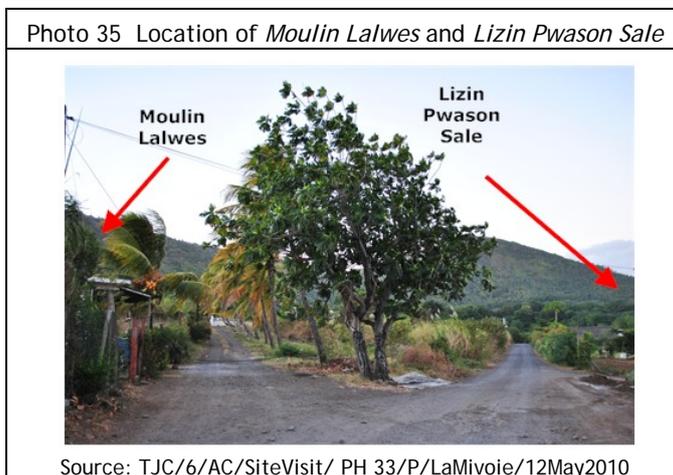
4. *Lizin Pwason Sale* (Eng.trans. Salt-Fish Factory):

It belonged to Mr. Ramdenee and was located near the Aloes Mill. *Morcellement* Filature was constructed on the site of the factory and it was not possible to accurately locate the salt-fish factory. However, none of the residents mentioned that they worked for this factory.

...wa. Parski dizon kan ou pran sa chemin la ou ale, par derier laba, ou gagn so lisinn pwason sale...donk Ramdenee, ti ena enn lisinn pwason sale ? Wi. Me depi kan so lisinn pwason sale en? Ase lontan sa lisinn pwason sale la. Parski sa lisinn pwason sale la, mo kone li ti pe devers so delo dan la rivier, kot gagn ase bann problem kom sa avek bann

abitan...Me sa lisinn pwason sale la, en 1960 li ti deza la? Non...Byen apre sa. Byen, byen apre. Err ou pa kone ver ki period? Kapav dan les ane 78-80 parla...<sup>137</sup>

(Eng. trans:...yes. Because when you take this road, at the back over-there, there is the salt-fish factory...So Ramdenee owned a salt-fish factory? Yes. But when dates this salt-fish factory? A long time [ago] this salt-fish factory. Because this salt-fish factory I know its water was pouring into the river that caused many problems with the inhabitants...but this salt-fish factory it existed in 1960? No...no it was well after. Well, well after. You do not know which period? Maybe approximately in the years 78-80...)

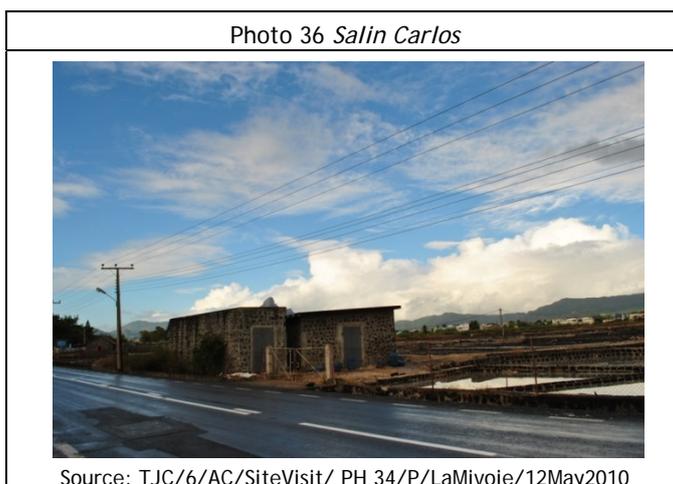


5. *Salin Carlos* (Eng. trans. Salt-pan Carlos):

It is located at the south end of Tamarin Village, in between Tamarin Village and Grande Rivière Noire Village. It belongs to the De Ravel Family. Recently the salt-pan was divided up and part of it was converted into a residential area.

Some of local residents such as Nicole and Marjorie<sup>138</sup> used to work as labourers in this salt-pan. Long ago, working conditions were harsh and even inhumane.

The *kolom* (Eng. trans. The supervisor) that often was a Creole dominated them and abused the labourers. This unequal power relationship and the constant abuse of power, led to a lack of solidarity amongst the salt-pan workers.



For example, Nicole testified that when she fought for their labour rights to be respected and for the improvement of their working conditions, as a reprisal, she was forced to work from nine in the morning until four in the evening. Nevertheless, following her claims, the trade union lobbied for more humane working conditions for the salt-pan labourers and now, they have to wear boots and gloves and the weight of the baskets are regulated.

According to Nicole, the salt-pan was named after a man called Carols who died while using dynamite for stone demolition.

...ti ena enn misie, ki ti pe travay, li ti apel Carlos. Kan a lepok pa ti ena bann masinn pou kass bann ros, ti bizin met dinamit dan ros koumadir, pou ros eklate, kasse. Ti ena bann gro gro ros la. Kan linn met sa dinamit la, kouma linn alime, dinamit la inn eklate, linn mor la, se pou sa kin ou apel sa salinn Carlos...<sup>139</sup>

(Eng. trans:...there was a man who was working [in the salt-pan], he was named Carlos. At that, time there was no crushing machine to break rock, dynamites were used, to crush rocks. There were huge rocks there. When he placed the dynamite and light up the [fuse] the dynamite exploded, he died there, that is why it is named salt-pan Carlos...)

6. *Salin Pilot/Koenig* (Eng. trans. The Pilot/Koenig Salt-pan):

It is located at the South end of Grand Rivière Noire Village and after *Boutik Trwa Bra* and is known as *Le Salin*. Some of the *Cité* residents moved from *Le Salin* to settle in the housing estate. (See Social Survey Chapter)

*Batterie de L'Harmonie* also known as L'Harmonie historical site is located at the south end of the salt-pan. It is the 'sister battery with an identical history to the Battery of La Preneuse.'<sup>140</sup>

The public does not have access to the Les Salines public beach nor to the heritage site as apparently it is on private land.<sup>141</sup>

The salt-pan was sold to Beachcomber group for a hotel development project and the battery is located on the development site. One question arises regarding the preservation and access to this historical site.

These places were carved by the ancestors of the *Cité* residents who configured these spaces and gave them new characteristics such as their functional and cultural dimensions. Their actions and utilisation of these spaces gave to these sites their symbolical significance.

According to Levy and Segaud (1983, p.30):

'...toutes les sociétés par définition même sont...en relation avec l'espace ; toutes, elles se signifient par leur organisation spatiale, mais cette relation, cette organisation, ne sont saisissables que dans leurs particularités. La relation à l'espace est ainsi pourrait-on dire, universellement garante de la particularité des identités...'

(Eng.trans:...All societies by definition are...related to space; they are all symbolised by their spatial organisation, but this relation and this organisation are distinguishable in their specificities. Thus, we can say that the relation to space universally guarantees identities specificities...)

In keeping with them, symbols embrace sense and consequently our understanding of the world. Symbols underpin collective and individual identities.

Besides, these sites were named and subsequently are related to either a person such as *Pon Misel* or an ethnic group such as *kan Bombaye* or a socio-economic activity such as *karo letchi* (Eng.trans. Lychee Garden).

The naming system of these places constitutes symbolical association and assimilation of these spaces to the person or to the group. Through these spatial configurations, we can learn much on the local history and on past life such as on past social systems.

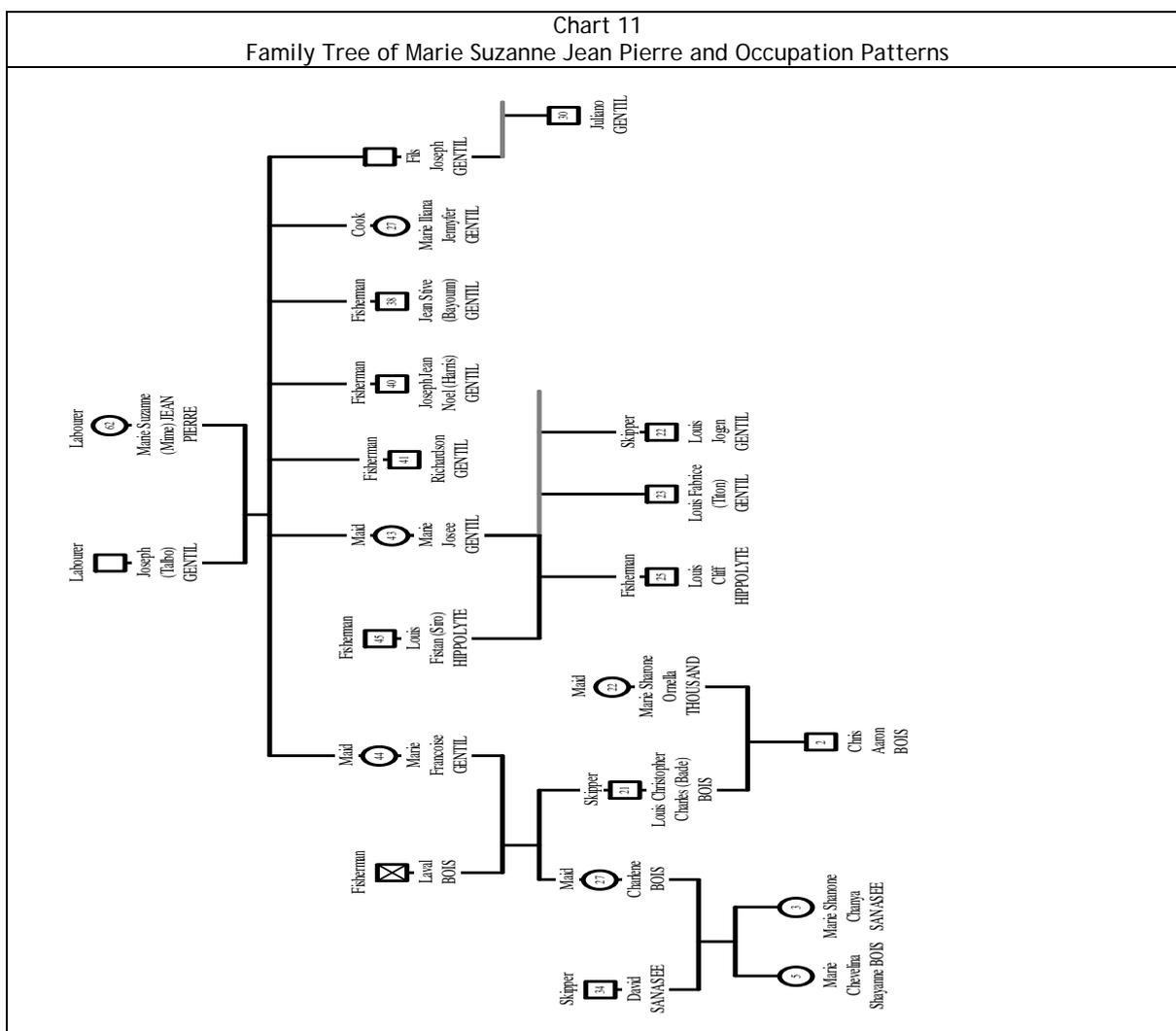
These sites and the stories of these places should be preserved and transmitted to the future generations for them to learn their history and that of their ancestors.

### 5.3 Occupation patterns in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Family histories revealed that there is a transmission of menial jobs and blue-collar jobs to succeeding generations. They adopt a subservient and servile attitude towards the wealthier residents and new owners of the luxury residences.

Most residents work as paid domestic workers, boat skippers, builders, gardeners, labourers and fishermen. Few people work in the white-collar sector as salespersons, cashiers and office workers. Only three people were identified as being office workers, Jasmine used to work as secretary and now she works as manager of the *Ecole des Techniciennes de Maison*. The son of Devi works as accountant for a private company and another Indo-Mauritian respondent works as clerk.

Based on the genealogy trees, six qualified workers were recorded; two teachers, three cooks and one social worker as illustrated in Charts 11 and 12 .





Besides, the residents are either casual workers in that they only work during specific periods of the year such as the fishermen during the fishing season and builders who are likely to work on fixed term contract when there is a construction site.

There are also part-time workers doing multiple jobs such as the domestic workers and gardeners who work for various wealthy families living in the neighbourhood like for families residing in Morcellement Carlos and Plantation Marguery.

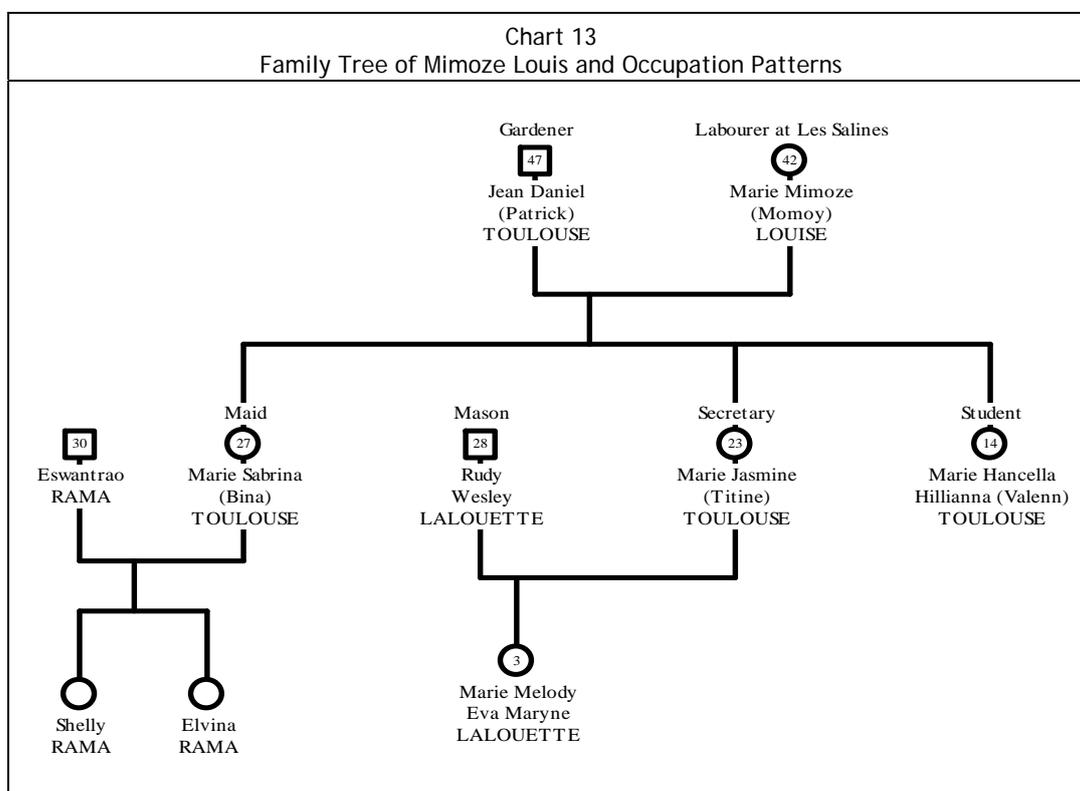
They are compelled to take multiple jobs to survive. Nevertheless, there are also some full-time workers, particularly, the office workers who enjoy job security compared to the casual and part-time workers.

Gender differences in occupational distributions can be observed with men being mostly fishermen and gardeners whereas women are paid domestic and blue-collar workers. The skilled and qualified workers are mainly women as well.

On one hand, the residents tend to choose occupations similar to their parents. Men tend to be fishermen across generations such as the descendants of Michel D Jean Pierre. His son, D. Jean Pierre and his grandsons such as Louis Colin Jean Pierre, Louis Daniel Jean Pierre and Emmanuel Jean Pierre are all fishermen.

Similarly, a matrilineal occupational transmission was observed with women working as domestic workers across generations. For example, Sylvia Malegasse was domestic worker and her two daughters, Marie Jenika Albert and Jenilo Albert also.

On the other hand, even though differences in occupational choices across generations can be observed, yet, they still perform blue-collar and menial jobs. For example, Mimoze Louise (daughter of Emilienne who worked as domestic worker) works as a salt-pan labourer and her husband, Jean Daniel Toulouse is gardener but none of their children performs similar jobs. Sabrina Toulouse is a domestic worker, Jasmine Lalouette works as manager of *L'Ecole des Techniciennes de Maison* and Hancella Toulouse studies.



Family histories revealed changes in occupational choices after slavery. For example, Albain Michel Jean Pierre, grandfather of Dorisse Jean Pierre was a carpenter. Joseph Albert, the great grandfather of Louis Horace Albert was a blacksmith and Téfine Hanine, his great grandmother was a seamstress. (See Appendices 8 and 9)

A downward shift can be observed in the occupational choice with the first generations (as retraced in the genealogy) being skilled artisans whereas the successive generations, as from the fourth generation, performing mostly menial jobs. Some causal factors for this downward shift in occupational choice might be the changes in the development strategies of the surrounding estates, the failure for the villagers to keep with the labour market demands since schools were located far away. Distance and isolation have played a huge role in absence of education among population here.

As from the 1960s, the labour demand of the estates changed in line with their development strategies and especially following the division of the estate land. They needed mostly labourers and domestic workers as illustrated by the genealogical trees.

For example, Maurel, De Ravel and Pilot/Koenig families were the main employers in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These 'Franco-Mauritian' estate owners had the monopoly of the economic life in the region as they controlled farming activities, aloes production, sugar cane plantations and salt-pans.

Until early the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these families and the Maurel Family especially, controlled most of the economic activities. The Ramdenee Family and the Rama Family in Chamarel were the only non 'Franco-Mauritian' estate owner identified in the region in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As from the 1960s, Mauritius faced economic strains of a mono-crop economy that relied essentially on importation. After independence in 1968, it had to diversify its economy. Subsequently, the main local estates reoriented their economic activities in line with the national economic strategies.

According to Nicole, Mr. Maurel started to divide and sell his land and semi-industrial activities developed. Sugar cane production, Aloe production, salt-pans and the development of the *chassée* were the main economic activities and the villagers worked essentially as paid domestic workers, labourers, fishermen and salt-pan workers.

...Lontan tiena ban dimounn ti pe travay tiena Moulin lalwes ban madam ti pe travay Moulin lalwes...Li ti peser wa li travay peser... Ena peser ena labourer koup kann mwa mo papa ti koup kann sa lepok la mo bolom peser...<sup>142</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Long ago people worked [in the] Aloes Mill women worked in the Aloes Mill...He was fisherman yes he worked [as] fisherman...there are fishermen, labourer cut sugarcane at that time my father cut cane my husband [was] fisherman...)

Consequently, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the estates were still the main employers. However, these social and economic changes not only had an effect on the residents' occupational choices but led also to a shift from a sustainable lifestyle to a consumption lifestyle following changes in land reconfiguration as explained in the previous chapter.

Even after moving from estate land to settle in Cité La Mivoie, the residents were still working for these estates. Yet, some respondents testified that, apart from the demolition of their houses after Cyclone Carol, the opportunity to engage in independent non-estate economic activities mainly fishing was one of the reasons why people moved from estate land to settle in the *Cité*.

This is substantiated by genealogical research that, revealed a downward shift from skilled artisan occupation to unskilled jobs as from the fourth generation, onwards, who were identified as Cité La Mivoie first settlers.

In fact, based on the oral testimonies, the development of the tourist industry did not bring a drastic change in the local economic landscape, as it seems that few *Cité* dwellers took employment in the surrounding hotels. Few interviewees mentioned having worked or are actually working for neighbouring hotels with the exception of Devi who mentioned that in around 1975 she

was working as salesgirl in an hotel located in La Mivoie and Sylviana Papeche who used to work for Le Pavillon Hotel in Le Morne as hostess in the club for children.

Furthermore, albeit, as per Chart 12 above, the local population of Black River district work mostly in the manufacturing sector, these figures do not reflect the reality of Cité La Mivoie. Actually, none of the residents testified working or having worked in Export Processing Zone (EPZ) such as in the export-manufacturing firm in Bamboo and Grand Rivière.

It can be said that, the population of the Northern part of the district benefited from the development of the EPZ sector in the 1970s and 1980s given their geographical proximity with the industrial zone to the detriment of south Black River that was marginalised because of its remoteness.

Consequently, the *Cité* residents relied on the plantation and fishing economies and on invisible labour that are legacies of slavery in that the local residents continued to work for the surrounding estates and as paid domestic workers and fishermen.

### Small Scale Farming:

Field research uncovered that the villagers and especially the Marathi-speaking inhabitants also practised small-scale agriculture and animal farming on estate land at the foot of La Tourelle du Tamarin Mountain and in *Sime Gorz*. They reared animals and cultivated land for subsistence and surplus was sold or bartered.

Although small agriculturists continued to cultivate land, by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, farming was no more being practised. The last garden was identified in around the 1980s. As Nicole testified, agriculture and farming gradually stopped with the expansion of hunting grounds and sugarcane fields.

There were plantations along *Sime Gorz* such as maize gardens, tobacco plantations, rice fields, and Eucalyptus plantations at the north entrance of the *Cité*.

...avan ti ena di ri, plantasion di ri! Ti ena plantasion di ri, apre zonn tir plantasion di ri, zonn met kann, me de kote, ti ena kann, chemin pa ti koumsa...<sup>143</sup>

(Eng. trans:...long ago there were rice, rice plantations! There were rice plantation, afterwards they removed the rice plantation, they cultivate sugar cane, but on both sides, there were sugarcane, the road was not like that...)

Two orchards were also identified, one on the mountain at a place named *Rwiso Harrison* on Maingard land and another one owned by a family named either Rey Lenferna or Lenferna which was also an aviary at the actual location of La Balise. The orchards disappeared when the landowners divided and sold their land for residential development.

The following sites were identified where people in the past used to practise small-scale farming. These places are still alive in the collective memory and they constitute the tangible and intangible heritage of the local inhabitants:

#### 1. *Karo Kasi* (Eng. trans. Cassis Plantation):

It was at the north entrance of the village on the land of the Baboo Family located at the foot of the mountain. The plantation existed in around 1972-1973

...avan zot vinn konstruir pou aranz tou sa la, li ti enn karo casi la. Ti ena pie casi ki ti al. mai apre monn kone ki li appartenir a la fami Baboo. Lot kote chemin; depi mw mo kone sa later la, appartenir a la fami Sokoo...Ziska ki lane sa? Kapav ziska 72-73...<sup>144</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Before all these buildings there was a cassis plantation there. There were Cassis trees there. Then I knew it belonged to the Baboo Family. On the other side of the road; I know this plot of land belongs to the Sokoo Family. Until which year? Maybe until around 72-73...)



2. *Rwiso Harrison:*

According to Olivier *Sime bef* lead to the orchard where there were mango trees and a man named Bonhom Genes or Zenn who used be cattle herder was living near this stream.

Based on other respondents' testimonies there is a myth linked to this place. Some mentioned that there used to be a Ti-Albert in *Rwiso Harrison*. (See Chapter Social Survey)

...rwiso Harrison la drwat...la lapli tonbe delo desann Saem delo desann al paraz kot legliz la li dan terin misie Maingard...Kifer sa bann non la ein ? Rwiso Harrison saem mo dir ou ti ena dimounn ti res la ti ena enn misie apel Harrison ler zot inn donn li sa non Harrisonn kan lapli tonbe bel bel delo desann ladan...<sup>145</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Harrison River there on the right...when its raining water flows downstream near the church it is on the land of Mr. Maingard...Why this name? Harrison River because as I told you there were people living over there there was a man named Harrison then people named [this place] Harrison when rains water flows in that...)

3. *Karo Taba:*

It was a tobacco plantation located on the estate of Mr. De Senneville near a place named *Laveret*. (See Chapter Social Survey)

4. *Karo Maraz:*

It was located opposite *Boutik Trwa Bra* near Kanal Maraz. According to Nicole, this plantation dates back to when the Maurel Family owned the land

...pou mwa mo sipose li ti touzur lor la propriete Maurel. Etan done ki bolom la ti fer zardin la, ti travay zis dan kann, li ti travay dan kann apre so letan lib dan lapre midi, li ti fer so zardin, se pour sa ki nou ti apel sa la, karo maraz...<sup>146</sup>

(Eng. trans:...for me I think it was on Maurel's property. Since the old man had his garden there, he worked in sugarcane [field], he worked in sugarcane [field] and during free time in the afternoon he was gardening, that is why we named it Maraz plantation...)

5. *Park bef* (Eng. trans. Cattle grazing land):

It was located on top of *Pon Misel* and on *Sime bef*. It was also known as *Kan Bef* (Eng.trans. Cattle Camp) or *Vie Kan* (Eng.trans. Old Camp).

It was a space used for cattle breeding and there were few people living there as well who were cattle herders.

...ti ena enn bolom lot kote, ti apel bolom maraz, li ti ena so zardin, me apre sa pli lwin ti ena park bef...kouma dir, ti ena park bef, ti ena enn chemin, pou bann bef pase, se pour cela ki nou ti apel sa simin bef...Donk, ti ena dimounn ti abit laho, ti ena enn...kan? Wi. Ti ena enn ti kan laba. Inpe par laba, ti ena kelke fami ki ti abit laba...<sup>147</sup>

(Eng. trans:...there was an old man on the other side, he was named Old man Maraz, he had a garden, but further there was a cattle grazing land...how to say there was a cattle grazing land, there was a road, for the cattle, that is why we called it Cattle Road...So there were people living up-there, there was a...camp? Yes. There was a camp over-there. A little over-there, there were some families living over-there...)

Photo 38 *Park Bef*

Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 36/P/LaMivoie/20June2010

Other gardens and plantations were located on estate land at the entrance of *Sime Gorz* such as *Karo letchi* (Eng.trans. Lychee Plantation) and *Karo zarico* (Eng.trans. Beans Plantation).

...Kot pon la se ki mwa mo kone bann la ti ena 2- 3 zardin tiena. Ti ena zardin kot bor la rivier la ti ena bonom kokom ti la bann la ti fer bann zardin...<sup>148</sup>

(Eng. trans:...I know that near the bridge there were 2-3 gardens. There were gardens on the riverbank the was Old man Kokom there they did gardens there...)

There were gardens named *Zardin Bombaye* (Eng.trans. Marathi garden) on marshy land, before the Grande Rivière Noire Bridge near *Boutik Trwa Bra*. The gardens were named such because Marathi-speaking people used to work in them, as the Marathis were the horticulturalist in the region.

As indicated by the 1851 and 1871 censuses, it seems that after abolition of slavery and the introduction of the indentured labourers, the agricultural workers were mostly the Indo-Mauritians who outnumbered the 'General population' in agricultural class.

Table 12 (a)

Statement showing the employment of the General Population and Indian Population on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1861 and 20<sup>th</sup> November 1851 in Agricultural Sector by Class and Sex

Agricultural Class	Indian Population		General Population		Indian Population		General Population	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1861				1851			
Field on Sugar Estates	81621	116	3106	187	40783	18	2020	114
Gardeners	1386	4160	1158	228	2714	57	3548	693
Watchmen and house guardian	363	4	206	12	176	-	214	20
Cowherder	4160	191	1158	228	2714	57	3548	693

Source: Report of the Commissioners appointed to take a Census of the Island of Mauritius and its dependencies, April 1861.

Table 12 (b)  
Population Working in Agricultural Sector by Class and Sex as at April 1871

Agricultural Class	Indian Population		General Population		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Field labourers	61,867	225	126	0	62,218
Gardeners	6,964	549	630	53	8,196
Watchmen on Sugar Estates	321	0	29	0	350
Graziers and Herdsmen	352	17	12	0	381
Total	69,504	791	797	53	71,145

Source: Census of Mauritius and its dependencies taken on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1871, part first, E. Dupy and P. Dubois. Mauritius.

There were plantations at the north entrance of the Cité La Mivoie, as well, on the land of Baboo and Sokoo families such as a Eucalyptus plantation and a Cassis plantation. All these gardens disappeared with the expansion of the sugarcane fields and with the residential developments.

The introduction of sugarcane plantations led not only to a reconfiguration of spatial arrangements but also to a shift from a semi-subsistence living to one dependent solely on mass markets and consumption.

### Contemporary occupation patterns

Cité La Mivoie was a fishing village since traditional fishing activities historically such as since slavery constituted a means of subsistence as well as the livelihood for the local population. There is still a generational transmission of traditional fishing techniques and knowledge such as vernacular fishing terms and the names of the various *pas* (Eng.trans. Natural passages in the lagoon).

..Be Wi se enn zafer ki... zenerasyon a zenerasyon...mo gran per li ein dizon la mo so ti zanfan mo al la pes avek li selma mwa kan mo trouv li koste la letan li pe koze Trou zeguïy la ein si pa...<sup>149</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Yes it is from...generation to generation...my grandfather it is let say I am his grandchild I go fishing with him but when I see him approaching the coast when he is speaking needle hole or...)

However, bad fishing practices have led to the depletion of the fishing stock and the recent development projects have taken a heavy toll on the fishermen' plight. Traditional fishing is a dying activity and as is traditional fishing knowledge.

Presently, the traditional fishermen face difficulties to earn a living from the sea. They live a harsh life with no fixed revenue as their income depends on the whims of nature and on their catch. In times of bad weather and 'dead' seasons, the registered fishermen (there are approximately 40 professional fishermen registered) rely on the government allocations and they live on their savings made during the fishing seasons from their earnings from the sales of their catch.

Some of them do multiple jobs, when they are not at sea they work as labourers in the surrounding *chassée*, builders and gardeners. The majority of them either never went to school or left school before the end of the primary education cycle; it is difficult for them to find a job. They are either illiterate or have only some basic literacy knowledge.

Furthermore, they have acquired their fishing skills from their elders thus perpetuating the fishing tradition within the family. Because of lack of employable skills, these residents face difficulties to find a new stable and secure job and have no other choice than to try earning a living from the sea. But, the depletion of the fishing stock is threatening the transmission of this traditional knowledge with parents being conscious that traditional fishing is a dying activity and that the future generation will not earn a living from this activity.

Most fishermen in the *Cité* work for a *banyan* (Eng.trans. Wholesaler Middle man or Fish trader) which means that this system still prevails. In this first case, the fishermen are not self-employed as they work for the *banyan* that provides them with boats, fishing materials and a salary and in return, the catch is the property of the *banyan*.

In the second instance, there are fishermen who are self-employed, as they own their own boats and fishing materials. Although they do not work directly for the *banyan*, instead of selling their catch directly to the consumer, they sell it to the *banyan* because they find it easier to sell to the fish trader as it is hard for them to go fishing and at the same time sell their catch.

While, on one hand, it is easily earned money, on the other end, the *banyan* exploits them as they sell their catch for a meagre sum of money to the trader who in return sells the fish for twice or three times the price in town. There were attempts in the past to reunite the fishermen and the *banyan* in a cooperative system to regulate this practice but the initiative failed.

In line with Louis Daniel, the Co-operative Societies in the locality including the fishermen Co-operative did not work because the residents did not trust the administration that were perceived as thieves. This mistrust might result from a lack of communication from the administration and consequently lack of knowledge at grassroots level on the functioning of the co-operative formula and of the responsibilities (especially financial responsibilities) incurred when entering this society.

...me ki ete sa kooperatif la pes...kisanla ki dan kooperatif la pess? isi pena avan ti ena ...[name deleted] inn tro kokin dan kooperatif...[name deleted] mari kokin inn kokin dan kooperatif...ti ena de bato par isi enn le roi...ti apel Charles Fournier...apre lerla ti apel James Ornel enn bato fib sa fib de fer moter diesel se gras a [name deleted] ki bann la zot inn perdi zot bato. ki fer? li voler, li kokin dan kooperatif enn tigit linn kokin sa boug la...me ki fer ou dir linn kokin kouma linn kokin? kouma linn kokin? li mem kone kouma... Me selman li mem linn kokin. Get enn lot kooperatif laba, kooperatif la sanla la pa pu la pess sa, sa ve dir la boutik. Sa ou si bann la inn kokin ladan inn ferm kooperatif...me komen zot inn perdi zot bato ? Pa kone...si sa [name deleted] la mem, li mem sa li enn presiden kooperatif la, li mem kone ki linn trafike laba, ler bann la perdi zot bato. Me kisan la inn pran bato la lerla? la bank parski zot ti pran kas la bank sa. Donk sa ve dir ena peser ki travay me ki pa mam sa kooperatif la? Isi nou tou peser nou pa mam kooperatif nou...<sup>150</sup>

(Eng. trans:...what is the fishing co-operative...who are the memebers in this fishing co-operative? Here there is no [fishing co-operative] before there was...because [he] stole too

much in the cooperative...[he] stole lots in the cooperative...there were two boats here one the king...he was named Charles Fournier...then the other was named James Onel...it was a fibreglass boat with a Diesel engine it is because of of [him] that they lost their boats. Why? He is a thief he stole in the cooperative he stole lots this man...but why you say he stole how he stole? How he stole? He is the one who knows how he stole...But he is the one who stole. See the other cooperative over there, this cooperative is not for fishing, it is a shop, in it also they stole they closed the cooperative...But how they lost their boat? Do not know if because of this [man] this man he is the cooperative president he is the one who knows what he did then they lost their boat. But who took the boat then? The bank because they borrowed money from the bank. Hence, it means there are fishermen who work here but they are not member of the fishing cooperative? Here we are all fishermen but we are not members of the cooperative...)

Intensive development of tourism in the region and intensive fishing, have negatively affected the marine environment that fishermen consider their natural heritage. Consequently, the new generations of fishermen need now to find new means to earn a living from the sea.

Indeed, following the depletion of the fishing reserves in the lagoon, the closing down of the salt-pans and the disappearance of the sugarcane fields, many young residents, have seized opportunities offered by the tourism sector and took employment in new sectors closely linked to the tourist industry.

Nonetheless, based on Michael Jean Pierre testimony, the boat skippers still earn a meagre salary of 500 rupees to 1,000 rupees per day's work. In view of the fact that traditional fishing is a dying industry and that aquatic life is threatened by bad human practice such as the depletion of the fishing stock in the lagoon, it leads us to wonder how long the residents will still be able to earn a living from the sea?

Fieldwork uncovered that most villagers are waged employees but also that there are few self-employed residents who have set up their own small and medium-sized enterprises. For example, Michael Jean Pierre is a skipper who has set up a boat company and Devi owns a *tabagie* (Small retail shop) and other residents have seized the opportunities offered by the expansion of the tourism industry in the region to develop their business.

These cases can be considered as success stories yet, given the negative 'backlash' on the local tourist industry resulting from the actual global economic and social crisis; we need to question the long-term sustainability of these businesses highly dependent on tourism.

People value the future Integrated Resort Scheme developments in the region from the vantage point that these developments will create wealth and uphold regional and overall economic growth with the creation of new and better-paid jobs and foreigners injecting money in the local economy.

***Lack of employment opportunities and vulnerable employment:***

Testimonies diverge regarding the employment status of the *Cité* residents. For Father Jean David, there is no problem of unemployment in Cité La Mivoie but, on the contrary, a situation of almost full employment since almost all the villagers works.

However, according to Marie France, Varnanaden and Nicole there is a problem of unemployment among the young generation that is sustained by the statistics illustrated in Chart 14 below.

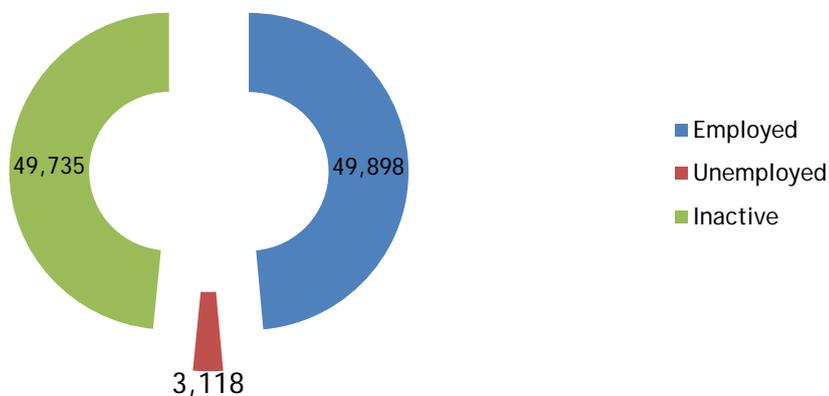
Photo 39 Fishermen Drinking at 11 o'clock



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 37/P/LaMivoie/12May2010

There is a close correlation between unemployment and educational underachievement among the young people. They are not employable because of the lack qualifications and skills. The problem of academic underachievement will be addressed later.

Chart 14  
Resident Population 12 Years of Age and Over by Sex and Current Activity Status for Black River District



Source: Central Statistics Office, 1990. Housing and Population Census, Vol. VIII, Port Louis. Mauritius

While the majority of the residents are blue-collar workers as indicated in Chart 14, there are a minority of low tier white-collar employees. Although they perform white-collar jobs, yet, they have limited promotional prospects to high tier jobs because of lack of academic qualifications and appropriate skills. The risk of disbanding is a constant threat as the under-qualified employees are the prime targeted category.

Furthermore, even though almost all the residents work, most of them are forced into vulnerable employment. The *Cité* dwellers, are either casual workers or part time workers doing multiple jobs.

Because of lack of employment, opportunities they are forced to take-low paid vulnerable jobs and to accept sub-standard working conditions that lack social protection and safety nets and that undermine their fundamental labour rights. Consequently, they are unable to generate sufficient

savings to offset hard times of low economic demand. There are few residents in full, secure and productive employment.

The Millennium Development Goal Report (2010) reported that the labour market conditions will continue to deteriorate and will likely threaten much of the progress made over the last decade towards decent work. The economic deterioration resulted in a sharp drop in employment-to-population ratios and labour productivity.

Although the *Cité* does not face a problem of mass unemployment, the *Cité* dwellers have limited employment opportunities and have no other choice than to resort to underpaid and vulnerable employment that subsequently keep them in relative poverty. Given that, most of them live in households where individual members subsist on less than 10,000 rupees per month, they are the 'working poor'.

Since the majority of the residents do not possess a private motorvehicle and thus rely on the public transport, travelling long distances to town deter the latter to find a work outside Black River Village and the neighbouring localities. To work in the vicinity is more advantageous to them. For example, most interviews were conducted as from two in the evening when the residents were back from work. Most of them and especially the women respondents mentioned that they appreciate to get back home at 'decent' hours as they can do their household duties, take care of their children and do other social voluntary work. Few residents were identified working for companies located in town.

#### Working conditions

Like all capitalist systems, Mauritius is a stratified society that nurtures social class divisions based on gender, race, ethnicity, education and occupation. As in any class-divided society, Mauritius perpetuates economic and social inequalities for the majority of its citizens and Cité La Mivoie exemplifies the plight of capitalism.

As stated by Father Jean David, Mauritian society is based on unequal wealth distribution to the detriment of the working classes and on the exploitation of blue-collar and menial workers. Mauritius development was and is still founded on labour exploitation.

In line with the testimonies, those who are at the bottom of the pyramid perceive their situation as a perpetuation of slavery as they still constitute a pool of servile labour force and their working conditions are harsh.

'...dan la realite ena pe krwar ki li siperier...blan! Hindou...mo panse akoz zot ena later, zot ena kas, zot ena la rises. Mo panse sa ki fer zot krwar ki zot siperier...sinwa li viv enn viv kool li se ki mo aprann, zame mo trouv enn sinwa gagn problem pe diskite li mix...kreol pe vinn esklavaz, pe kraze anba lipie bann la mo trouve...'<sup>151</sup>

(Eng. trans: ...In reality there are people who think they are superior...white! Hindu...I think because they have land, they have money, they have wealth. I think it is why they think they are superior...the Chinese they live a quiet life that is what I have learnt, I never saw a Chinese having problems quarrelling. He mingles...Creoles are becoming slaves, are oppressed by the others...)

Indeed, all the respondents stated that their employers do not recognise their human and legal rights as laid down in the various Human Rights Conventions and in the labour law exploit them.

The Employment Rights Act of 2008 prohibits employers and prospective employers from treating workers and prospective workers in a discriminatory manner in his/her employment or occupation and in access to employment or occupation.

This is sustained by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) labour standards and Decent Work Agenda that aims to achieve decent work for all by promoting social dialogue, social protection and employment creation, as well as respect for international labour standards<sup>152</sup>.

For example, Claudia, Kathy and Nicole testified that, often, employers request their domestic workers to work every day even during weekends and public holidays without being paid overtime.

'...dizon, kom travayer ein, kom travayer nou tou nou ena nou drwa, eski zot respekte nou avek nou drwa ? ankor ena pe bizin travay dan dimans ein, mo kone lotel li enn lot zafer, me koumadir nou travay anplwaye de mezon la, eski dimans nou ankor pe bizin vinn esklav ar zot, fer zot lili, fer zot dite ek nou pa gagn drwa, si nunn pran sa kondisyon la, na pa gagn drwa dir nou pa pou vini parski nou oblize. Eski zot pe pey nou dimans kouma bann lotel ? dimans zot ena enn lapey ki plis lor la. Pou nou li mem afer. Nou pe bizin esklav avek zot... mwa mo pe panse si zot ti pey nou, nou pa ti pou santi nou esklav. Lor sa larzan ki zot pe donn nou la, nou oblize fer sa avek zot parski kondisyon la li koumsa...lapey la ena gagn 2500, 2000, bann seki gagn plis ki 3000 rounpi me travay la li ogmante li, li ogmante li ale vini travay la li ogmante me zame pou dir ou koumsa travay sirplis pu pey ou pu seki ounn fer apar. Me kouma ou pran ou, ou pa trouve ki li ankor ena sa mantalite esklavaz la ladan parski mwa mo panse si enn dimounn pe travay plis, li merit gagn so saler seki linn fer...dimans, konze piblik, si ena 2 dimounn, enn konze piblik travay, enn dimans travay, ena le premie zanvie si zot ena 2-3 dimounn la, ena la pou dir ou la sanala le premie zanvie vini, lot la le de pa vini, toultan enn roulman. Lesklavaz la pa pe fini, ankor pe, li lor touzur mem lapey, zame pou dir ou po u pey sirplis...'<sup>153</sup>

(Eng. trans:...let say, like work, we all have our rights, do they respect us and our rights? There are still who have to work on Sundays, I know in hotels it is something else, but we work (as) domestic workers, on Sundays, do we still have to be their slaves, do their bed, their tea and if we have agreed to these conditions we do not have the right to say no we won't come because we are forced to. Are they paying us our Sundays like in the hotels? Sundays they have a greater salary. For us it is same (salary) we have to be their slave...I think if they paid us we would not be feeling like slaves. Besides the salary we earn we need to manage with that and with them because it's the condition...The salary, there are people who earn 2500, 2000, there are who earn more than Rs 3000 but the work increases...but you never paid for the additional work or for the extra work. But how you take it you, you do not find that they still have this slave mentality because I think that a person who works more he deserves his salary for his work...Sundays, public holidays, if there are two people, one works on public holidays, one on Sundays, some on the 1<sup>st</sup> January if they have 2-3 people, they will tell this one to come on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, the other does not come on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, each time there is a shift. Slavery does not end, still (exists), still have same salary, never tell you that you will be paid more...)

This practice is a breach of Article 14 of The Employment Rights Act that states that a normal day's work for an employee, with the exception of part-time workers or a watch-person, is 8 hours and that the latter can work in excess of the stipulated hours without additional remuneration if the number of hours in a fortnight does not exceed 90 hours. If the daily paid worker has completed 90 hours in less than 12 days in a fortnight, the latter has to be paid 12 normal day's basic wage.

For the respondents, despite slavery was abolished in 1835, in fact, it is still perpetuated in Contemporary Mauritius but under modified forms. For them they are still slaves as their employers perpetuate illegal racist, discriminatory practices and subjugate them. They are denied their basic human rights.

For generations they did not and, until now, do not benefit equal opportunities and have limited prospects to build social and economic capital. They are kept in servitude. For them they have no other choices than to be submissive to their employers for their livelihood as illustrated in the testimony below.

'...Ena dimounn rakont ou zot rant travay tel ler a tel ler pa gagn narien pa gagn drwa tou sa pa gagn drwa tou sa ek sirtou sa bann etranze la zot fer koumadir letan deskav ankor la...me selman dimounn la li bizin travay li bizin travay non parski zordi tou dimounn bizin travay. Ek bann anploye morisien ? Wi me li preske parey ein preske parey. Me kifer zot ena sa mantalite la? Ou kone par kont mwa mo kapav dir petet la bann zenerasion kip e monte aster dizon dan le 30 an 40 an zot korek me ena mem ki ena 70-80 ena certain ki korek me ena depi depi zenes li enn pikan li marye si li pou pikan koumadir li pou panse sa nwar bizin bizin dominn li bizin dominn li koumadir bizin so esklav...'<sup>154</sup>

(Eng. trans:...There are people who tell you they start work from that time to that time, they get nothing they are not allowed to touch thing and especially the foreigners they behave as if it is still slavery...but the person needs to work, he needs to work no because now everyone needs to work. And the Mauritian employers? Yes it is almost the same almost

the same. But why do they have this mindset? You know however, I can say that the coming generation let say those between 30 years of age and 40 years of age they are nice but there are who are 70-80 who are nice but there are who since their young age who are nasty when he marries he is still nasty how to say he thinks that this person needs to be dominated he needs to dominate the latter how to say the latter needs to be his slave...)

Domestic workers are often 'de jure' or 'de facto' denied labour and social protection because of common held perception that, firstly, domestic work takes place in the home and thus is invisible and under-rated and, secondly, a feminisation of household works that traditionally were carried out without pay. For example, they are not registered at the National Pension Fund.

The Employment Rights Act 2008 stipulates that an employer every month should deduct one percent of the basic wage of this employee as contribution to the National Pension Fund. The National Saving Fund Act 1995 states that every employee is eligible to hold a National Savings Funds into which are credited 2.5 percent contributions payable by the employer, one percent payable by the employee and other contributions. The objects of this Fund are to provide for the payment of a lump sum to the employee on his/her retirement or at the time of his/her death and to set up and operate for the benefit the employee such schemes, including loan schemes, as may be prescribed. However, it seems that in reality, this Act is not systematically enforced.

Domestic labour is still under-reported and under-declared and hence remains in the invisible economy. For example, as per the Digest of Labour Statistics 2009, in March of the same year, 241 (175 males and 66 females) employments were recorded in community, social and personal services in the Black River district. These figures do not reflect the extent of domestic work and the gender dimension of this occupation.

In line with the ILO, one of reasons for the under-reporting of work performed by the domestic workers is that it is not considered a 'real work' and is 'generally thought of as the labour market' because it does not 'take place in a factory or an office, but in the home'. Hence, domestic workers suffer from lack of decent wages, bad working conditions, undefined working time, no weekly offs, loneliness, no career growth, no skill development, victimisation at the hands of traffickers/placement agencies and even violence, abuse and sexual harassment at workplace.<sup>155</sup>

Indeed, the public perception of domestic work is often that it is undignified work, and the workers in this sector should be pitied because they are unqualified and unskilled<sup>156</sup>. This social representation of domestic labour is rooted on the colonial mentality whence domestic slaves and particularly slave women fulfilled such occupations. After the abolition of slavery, based on the 1871 Census, the 'Indian Population' outnumbered the 'General Population' in the domestic class and men preponderated over women as indicated in Chart 10 below

Category	Male	Female	Total
Indian Population	11,374	1,209	12,583
General Population	3,042	3,005	6,047
Total	14,416	4,214	18,630

Source: Census of Mauritius and its dependencies taken on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1871, Part I, E. Dupy and P. Dubois. Mauritius.

The *Ecole de Techniciennes de Maison* was set up in 2006 to offer free training to girls that have abandoned school to be qualified house workers to be not only employable, but also to teach them their rights to protect them from exploitation. For Jasmine, the manager, by providing training to the girls, they will be better equipped to negotiate their working conditions, as they will now be skilled workers.

In fact, this school falls under a programme of the National Empowerment Foundation to train the unemployed people, those above 16 years of age who have left school and unqualified people to develop employable skills to become blue-collar workers. This programme intends to uplift paid

domestic work to the category of skilled labour to upgrade and obliterate the stigma attached to domestic labour and ultimately for the workers to gain social status and feel more valuable.

Modernisation is a double-edged-sword in that the *Cité* residents are now dependent on their employers, the state and civil society for support and their livelihood. From generation to generation since slave times they have been conditioned to accept their vulnerable and underprivileged situation with hope of heavenly rewards in their afterlife and of a better hereafter.

They have learnt to somewhat surrender to the powerful ‘others’ such as religious institutions, government and non-governmental organisations to ‘save’ them. Therefore, there is no unworthy work and particularly in the present economic and social crisis whereby people have to work to earn a decent a living to sustain their family.

## 5.4 Education

### Mainstream Education

Family histories have uncovered an intergenerational transmission of academic underachievement in Cité La Mivoie in that few people have continued schooling until tertiary education and the children living in the *Cité* were identified as pupils at risk within the education system.

The family trees show an improvement in schooling across generations with more children now going to school until the secondary educational level and pre-vocational school that implies that the new generations are supposedly numerate and literate compared to their elders.

The first generation of settlers in the *Cité* either did not go to school or stopped schooling before the end of the primary educational cycle. The second generation went to school until CPE or Standard 4. Only one person was identified who reached the secondary education cycle, namely, Marie France who went to school until Form 2.

When reaching the third and fourth generations, it can be observed that they continuing schooling until secondary level and even until HSC. Others they go to pre-vocational schools.

These generational differences can be explained by the fact that the basic compulsory education law was proclaimed in 1993 and education up to 16 years old was made compulsory in 2005. Before, education was not seen as mandatory.

Furthermore, although since 1944 and 1976 primary and secondary education respectively is free; yet, academic education was not accessible to all as not all the segments of the population were empowered to send their children to school.

In fact, based on the Millennium Development Goal Report (2010), rural children are twice as likely to be out of school as urban children are. The biggest obstacle to education is poverty and the rural-urban gap is slightly wider for girls than for boys since girls and women are, often, the first victims of poverty.

However, access to academic education does not necessarily mean being numerate and literate. Access to academic educational opportunities is one thing and quality of the educational system and academic achievement are something else.

Actually, field research revealed, that across generations there is a problem of academic underachievement in that few children residing in the housing estate went until tertiary education and that a significant portion of the population drop-out of school before the end of the educational cycle.

...se matin mem, mo trouv de zanfán pe roul la rou pe ale. Lerla mo finn dir to pa finn al lekól, non. Mo dir koumsa be ki fer to pa finn al lekól, la polis pou vinn rod twa? Lerla zot dir koumsa, non, non, non, nou pe ale, la nou pe al kot nou la. Be zot al kashiet. Alors zot pa pou sorti lor chemin la, la polis pou may zot. Be tou sa la enn paran li bizin konsian li bizin get so zanfán. Parski ledikasion li tou...<sup>157</sup>

(Eng. trans:...This morning, I saw two children playing with a wheel. Then I told them you have not gone to school. I asked them why have you not gone to school, the police officers will come look for you? Then they replied no were are going, we are going home. In fact, they were going to hide. Then they will not be on the road, they police officers will not catch them. But all this, parents have to be conscious they have to look after their children. Because education is everything...)

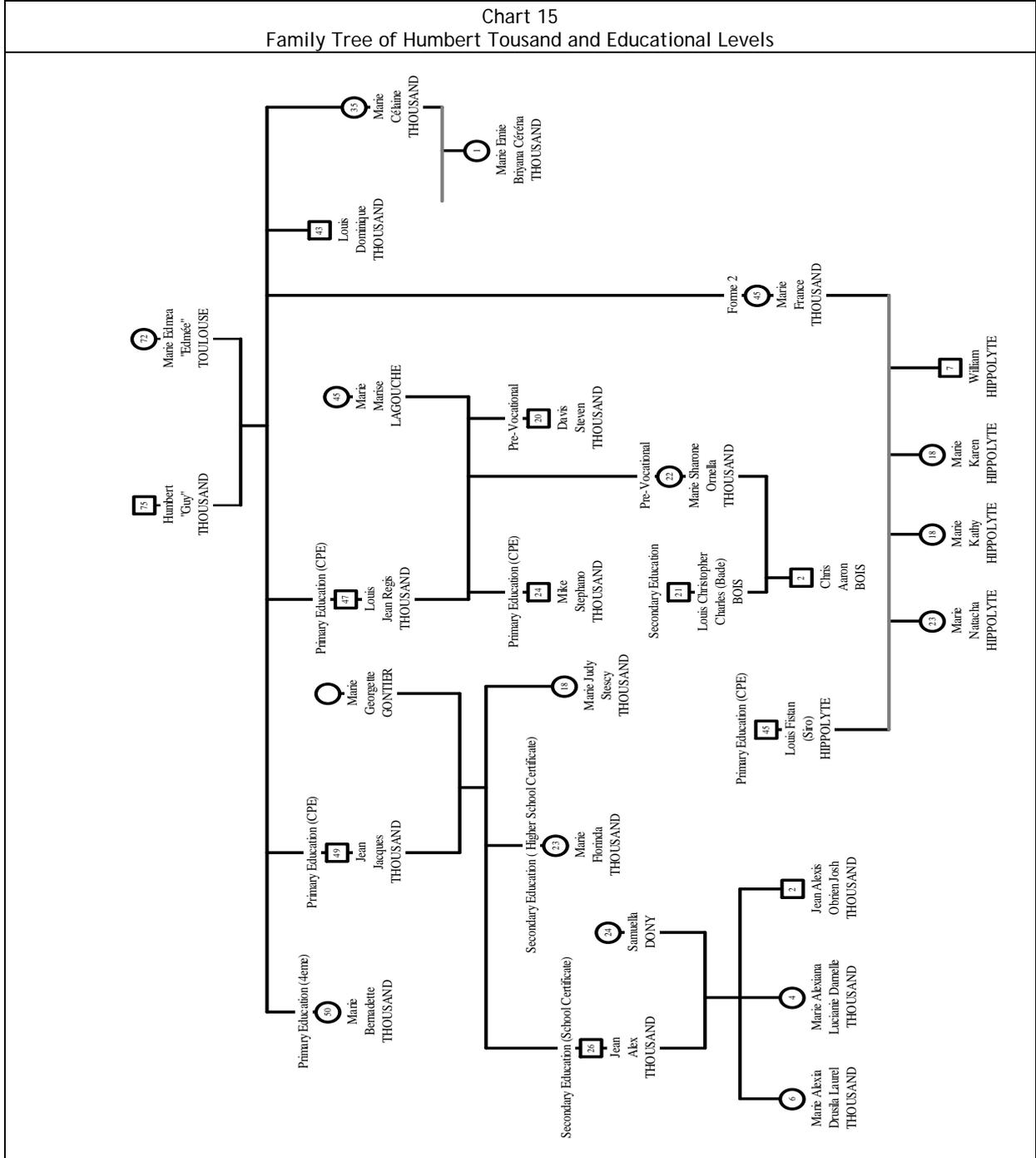
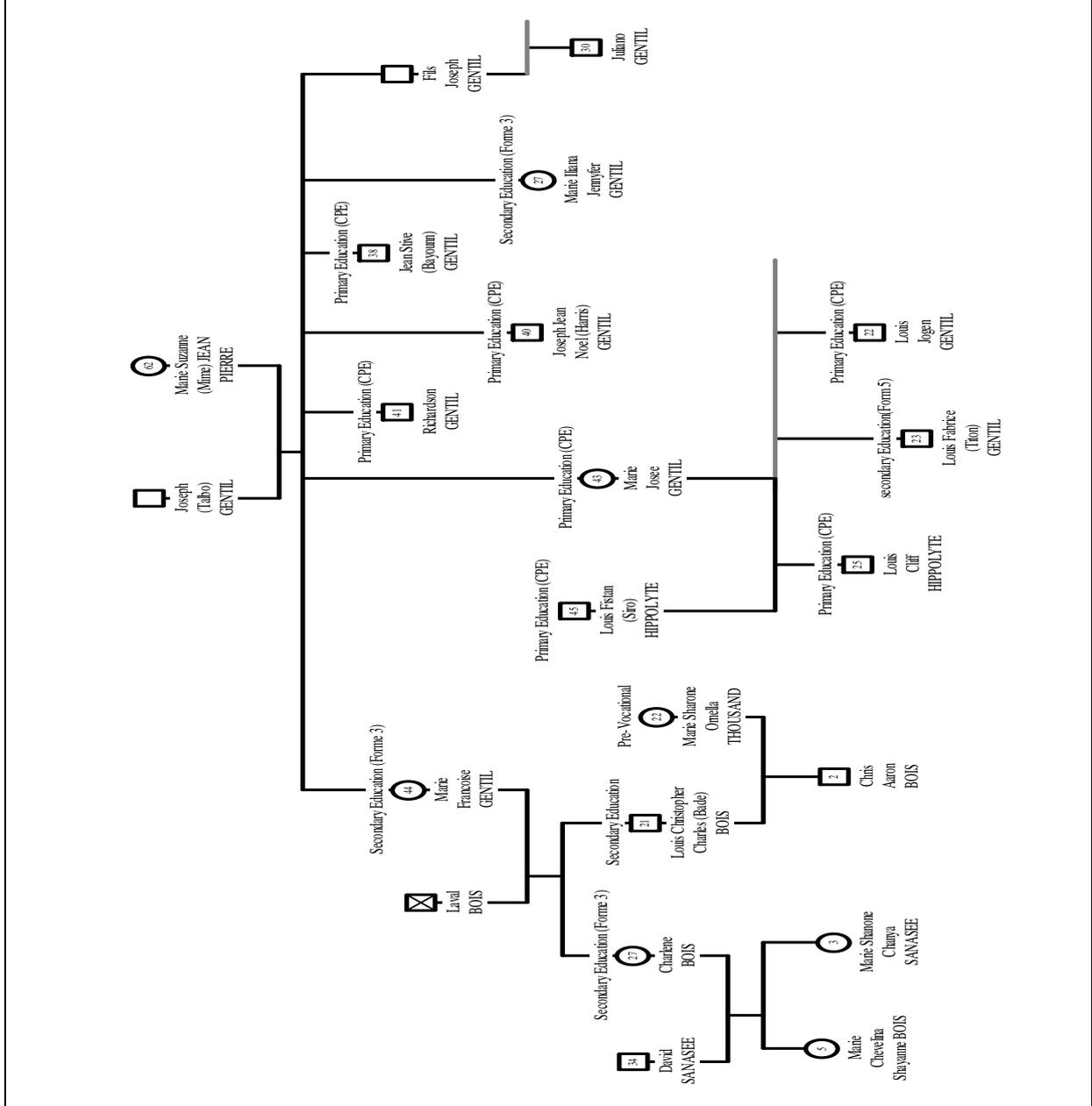


Chart 16  
Family Tree of Marie Suzanne Jean Pierre and Educational Levels



Only two respondents were identified that continued schooling until tertiary level namely Marie Michèle Hippolyte who is actually doing a Post Graduate Certificate in Education and the son of Devi who went to England to do his ACCA.

Even if nowadays access to academic education is democratised and education is supposedly free, why does academic underachievement still affect the residents of Cité La Mivoie and particularly the Creole segment of the local population?

Achievement gaps were identified between the Marathi-speaking residents and the Creole residents as based on the testimonies, the Marathi were said to be academic achievers compared to the Creoles since the former tend to continue schooling until Form 5 or even HSC.

..Bizin dir dan le pase boukou ti aret siziem me finn ena enn ti ameliorasion de kote sirtou bann indien ki kontign zot letid plis ki katolik...ena ki aret li siziem mem me ena ki kontign ziska form 5...De fwa zot dir ou problem finansie, avan zot ti pe dir ou sa me aster koma parski gagn ase ed ar gouvernman pou enn zanfan al lekòl...Ou bien si zot inn coumens al collez, tan dir en an de an apre ou trouv zot avek zot ti vent, zot in fini anseint. Enn ti pe zot aret lekòl de fwa lakoz sa...Tandi ki ou dir mwa ena enn diferans entr bann kreol ek bann indien? Bann indien zot kontinie ziska ki laz zot? Form 5, HSC, SC, Lower 6. Be kifer bann indien kontinie lekòl zot? Petet se lapui ban paran ek kot lanvironman osi zot viv...<sup>158</sup>

(Eng. trans:...We have to say that long ago many stopped schooling after Standard 6 but there has been an improvement especially among the Indians who continue school further [compared to the] Catholics...There are [some] who stop after Standard 6 but there are who continue until Form 5...Sometimes they tell you [because of] financial problems, before they said that but now how come because they receive governmental aid to send their children to school...Or if they started to go to college, you hear that after one year or two years they are pregnant. Sometimes they drop-out of school because of that...you told me there is a difference between the Indo-Mauritians and the Creoles? The Indo-Mauritians they continue until what age? Form 5, HSC, SC, Lower 6. Why the Indo-Mauritians continue schooling? Maybe because they have parental support and their living environment...)

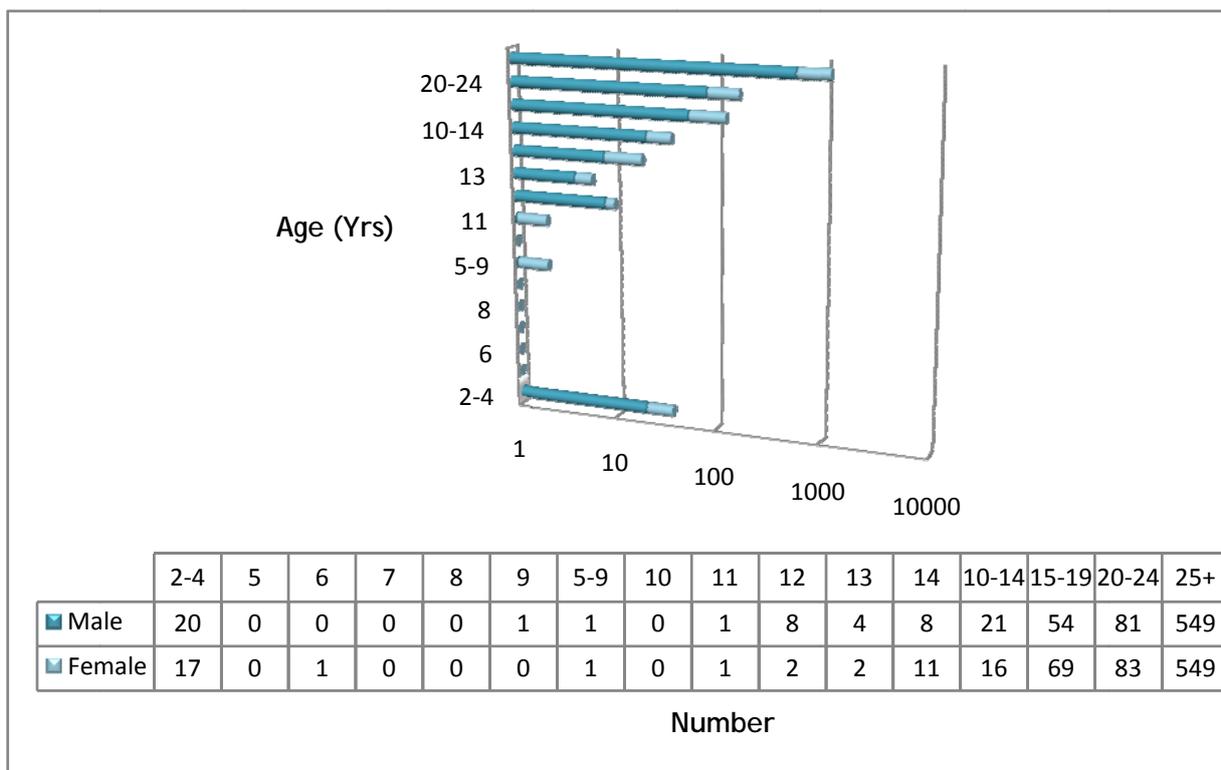
Given that the *Cité* dwellers share, to some degree, the same social and economic realities, poverty as justification for differential achievement and Creoles underachievement is of little solace.

In fact, fieldwork revealed that school ‘drop-out’ is still a major problem in the region (Chart 17).

In addition, the testimonies uncovered that society maintains and perpetuates negative stereotypical representations of Creoles rooted in racism and that even the Creoles hold racist beliefs on their fellows. Subsequently the reasons put forward by the respondents for academic underachievement of the Creole *Cité* dwellers were very much founded on racist underpinnings.

Most of the interviewees such as Devi and Claudia mentioned that because the Creoles have a fatalistic approach to life they are not motivated to go to school, to study and to achieve in life. In addition, they stated that there are Creole parents who do send their children to school because they have not gained consciousness of the importance of schooling as they lack ambition and are not far sighted.

Chart 17  
Resident Population aged 12 Yrs and Over Not Attending School by Age and Sex for Grande Rivière Noire VCA



Source: Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. V, Port Louis. Mauritius

'...mond ouvrye sa ve dir bann dimounn ki travay manuelman. Li kapav kouma dir bann mason, li kapav kouma dir bann menuizie...zafer ki monn konstate seki ena ena de mantalite du mond ouvrye. Ena enn mantalite ouvrye seki ena zenes ki malerezman kouma dir...papa peser, mason ainsi de swit ek finaleman kouma dir zot zot dan enn espes moul kot zot res ladan mem ek ki kouma dir zot dir be se enn santiman fatalist ki ki pran zot, zot dir koumsa ki wai be ki zistwar la li koumsa ek nou pa pou kapav sanz narien... Me deziem mantalite ki monn touve ek ki sa mantalite la osi ki li diviz an de, se enn premie mantalite dir koumsa be vwala mo dan sa mond ouvrye la...me selma kouma dir souvan ena bann paran du mond ouvrye ki konsian ki sel fason pou sorti, se ledikasion. Alor zot inkilke sa dan zot bann dan zot bann zenfan. Ek zenfan la kouma dir li resi monte sosialman, o nivo bann letid. Fale resi monte ek kan li resi ariv la ba...fer tou mo posib pou ki kouma dir mo valoriz sa mond ouvrye la ek konsiantiz kouma dir bann zanfan ki dan enn le mond ouvrye konsiantiz zot ki kouma dir mem si nou sorti dan enn mond ouvrye, nou kapav arive dan la vi...E deziem, malerezman deziem fason...seki souvan bann paran du mond ouvrye ankor enn fwa zot motiv zot bann zanfan pou al de lavan dan letid. Don zot tou seki zot bizin, ek ki zanfan la resi ariv enn moman, li resi ariv enn bon bon nivo, ek malerezman seki monn konstate, seki li blie sa plas kot linn sorti la, li anvi blie sa sa mond ouvrye kot linn sorti...'<sup>159</sup>

(Eng. trans:...The working class means manual workers. It can be how to say that a mason, it can be how you say that a craftsman...something I have observed that the working class has two mindsets. There is one mindset of the working class that unfortunately the young people how say that...father is a fisherman, mason etc and finally let say that they are in a matrix in which they remain and they say that they are impregnated of a fatalist feeling, they say that their story is as such and that they won't be able to change it...but the second mindset that I observed and it is also subdivided in two parts, it is a first mind frame that states that here is I am in this working class...but how say that often there are working class parents that are conscious that education is the only means of get out. They inculcate it in their children. And the child succeeds in moving up socially, at educational levels. And when he succeeds...he does everything to valorise the working class and sensitise the working class

children that even though we come from the working class they can succeed in life...and second (mind frame) unfortunately...is that often working class parents again motivate their children to succeed in education. (They) give them all that they need and the children succeeds, he succeeds in reaching a good level but unfortunately what I observed is that he forgets where he comes from, he wants to forget the working class from which he comes...)

Others such as Emilienne, Sylviana and one of the headmasters testified that parents do not send their children to school pretending that they cannot afford to do so because of financial problems. Actually, they receive much aid from non-governmental organisations such as free schoolbooks, educational materials and food assistance.

These testimonies stem from the deficiency discourses which, according to Stinson (2006, p. 483), focuses on the perceived deficient cultural, schooling and life experiences in general of Black children.

School administrators and teachers who participate in these discourses often claim that the lower academic achievement of 'Black students' exists because 'Black children' experience higher rates of poverty living in high crimes communities, unstable single parenting and minimal parental involvement as well as suffering from the negative effects of slavery, segregation, racism and discrimination.

Stinson coined that the dynamics of socio-cultural contexts inside and outside schools affect the students' knowledge acquisition and understanding. Historical and socio-cultural structures in which teaching and learning are embedded significantly impact on students learning and performance and especially on those who have been marginalised historically. The student's ability to accommodate, reconfigure or resists the available social, cultural discourses including institutions and language, signs and practices that order and sustain socio-culturally constructed forms of social existence influence their performance.<sup>160</sup>

His argument is taken by The United Nations that sustain that the children remain out of school for a variety of reasons among which social and cultural barriers to education are common causal factors.<sup>161</sup>

Accordingly, we should not undermine differential history and cultural background of these children and the fact that the children residing in the *Cité*, since their birth, are disadvantaged in that they are born in an econo-ethno-stratified and unequal society.

#### ***Academic under-achievement and School 'Drop-outs'***

Academic underachievement and lack of employable skills result from three causal factors identified. Firstly, the young people have either failed the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), the primary educational cycle.

Secondly, they have left out of school after failing the primary educational cycle or at the early stage of secondary educational cycle after Form 4 or Form 5 (because they have failed the School Certificate exams).

Thirdly, those who have continued schooling until the end of the secondary cycle have failed at the Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams.

When the ranking system was abolished in 2001, the grading system was introduced that perpetuates the elitist nature of mainstream education that focuses on academic achievement and does not cater for the holistic development of children. The children who do not adapt are, systematically excluded and withdrawn from the system.

In line with the testimony of one of the headmasters, the children living in the *Cité* who fail the CPE are not systematically canalised towards the pre-vocational schools, as there is no 'follow up' system in place.

Furthermore, the students who went to the pre-vocational school of Black River, once they leave school to attend polytechnic school such as the IVTB School in Ebène face adaptation problems because of the cultural shock.

Many local students do not adapt as, either they are stigmatised because they come from an underprivileged region, or following cultural clashes. Facing adaptation and integration problems, they are de-motivated and choose to abandon further schooling.

...Après trois mois, quatre mois, nos mêmes élèves qui étaient motivés, qui te disent que...ils ont laissé tomber. Ils ont laissé tomber, et ils te disent, "tro diferen laba, nou pa adapte, nou pas kapav, tro lwin". Voila. Par exemple, les élèves d'ici vont soit à Mont Roches. Mes élèves vont à Mont Roches, sont envoyés à Mont Roches, ou alors sont envoyés à Surinam, après quelque mois, qu'est ce qui se passe ? Tu vas me dire oui, le transport est payant. Oui je suis d'accord. C'est vrai, le transport est payant. Mais pour eux, c'est un peu les déracinés...Avec des sous cultures qu'ils ne connaissent pas du tout...<sup>162</sup>

(Eng. trans...After three months, four months, our students that were motivated, they tell you...that they abandoned. They have abandoned and they tell you, 'too different over-there, we do not adapt, we cannot, too far'. Here it is. For example, the local children go either to Mont Roches. My students go to Mont Roches, they are sent to Mont Roches, or are sent to Surinam, after a few months what happens? You will tell yes, transport is not free. Yes I agree. It is true, transport is not free. But for them they are uprooted...with the subcultures are not familiar with...)

The local children experience multiple victimisations as the educational system that seems to promote middle-class values to which they do not identify.

For example, when they attend a school that is not in their vicinity or where the majority of the students are from a different social milieu and religio-ethnic background they feel stigmatised because of their differences.

This is sustained by Marie Michèle who used to live in the *Cité* and who testifies how at school and even later in life she experienced racist prejudices because of her ancestral origins, phenotype and geographical origins; because she is of African phenotype and presumed to be of slave descent and native of Black River.

...Secondaire Swami Sivananda SSS, Bambous. Ça était très dur...sur 41 élèves il y avait 2 ou 3 créoles, j'étais la seule, non, on était deux comme si, d'être crépus...Rivière Noire était...considéré comme endroit défavorisé...et moi on m'a tout de suite, on m'a donné un joli nom africain, que j'ai détesté pendant 6 ans mais c'est après que j'ai réalisé et j'étais très fière de ça. Mais ça m'a miné...C'était Macumba. Macumba et puis Bongo, il y avait deux...j'étais en Forme 4 ou en Forme 5, on avait écrit sur le nom Macumba entre brackets Jean-Pierre is from Africa, entre brackets - Rivière Noire. Donc pour me dire de toute façon, ben tu sors de l'Afrique toi, Rivière Noire était considérée comme l'Afrique...<sup>163</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Secondary Swami Sivananda SSS, Bambous. It was very hard...Out of 41 students there were 2-3 Creoles, I was the only one, non, we were two like that, to have frizzy hair...Black River was seen as an underprivileged region...and me they straight away they gave me a nice African name, that I hated for six years but later on I realised and I was proud of that. But it upset [me]...it was Macumba, Macumba<sup>164</sup> and then Bongo. There were two [labels]...I was in Form 4 or in Form 5, it was written on [the blackboard] the name Macumba in brackets Jean Pierre is from Africa, in brackets - Black River. So to tell me that I come from Africa, Black River was seen as Africa...)

According to the head master of Black River pre-primary and primary school, in his school, the literacy rate is approximately 30%, the pass rate approximately 40% and absenteeism approximately 10% that he finds reasonable for a ZEP school. Nevertheless, the figures do not reflect the reality of the education system.

Even though the pass rate and the literacy rate are said to be satisfactory, the mainstream education system is deficient as it fails to fulfil its role, to educate all children and develop their skills and capital to integrate society. Our system is dysfunctional as it caters for a small category of children and marginalises others who are at a disadvantage.

The problem of school 'drop-outs' affects both boys and girls but according to one of the headmasters there are gender differences in academic achievement with girls being more motivated than boys to succeed academically. Then, how is it that in 2009 out of 14 girls 10 girls failed their S.C exams whereas out of 13 boys only three boys failed?

One of the reasons according to the latter is that when reaching Form 5 girls tend to develop new intimacy links with boys and consequently they tend to focus more on their romantic relationship that negatively affects their academic performance.

...ou kone ena de fwa. Get la mem la, ena enn tifi ti pe bien al lekol, apre linn kontan enn garson, li finn al rod enn anplwa, be li ti fer enn bon li ti pe al enn bon lekol. Be kouma li ena plisir...zanfan koumsa ki aret lekol? Wi. Ki laz parla, zot aret al lekol? katorzan kinzan...Ki fer zot aret lekol, ki zot al fer? Abe zot marye, zot fini al form enn foye, enn menaz...<sup>165</sup>

(Eng. trans:...you know sometimes. Look actually there was a girl that was going to school, then she fell in love with a boy, she went to work, she used to go to a good school. Why are there many...children that 'drop-out' of school? Yes. At what age they stop schooling? 14-15 [years of age]...why they 'drop-out' of school, what they do? They get married, they form a couple...)

This shift in their priorities is an outcome of patriarchy; of gender socialisation, that perpetuate gender differential roles among both the Creoles and the Marathi-speaking residents.

For example, Devi mentioned that while her son continued schooling until tertiary level, her daughter went to school until Form 5. She left school because she got married (at 17 years old) and her parent-in-laws did not want her to continue schooling.

...ek dir mwa, ounn ou garson inn fer ziska tertier alor ziska so ACCA, ek ou tifi inn fer ziska form sink. Err ki fer ou tifi inn aret lekol form sink? non, br ou kone dan la relizion Indou, kan enn tifi inn gagn demann kouma dir, be kote so bo paran zot pa finn lesli re kontinie, ou konpran la be lerla li finn gagn mariaz linn marye. A ki laz linn marye alor? E 17 an...<sup>166</sup>

(Eng. trans:...tell me your son went until tertiary level and did an ACCA and your daughter did until Form 5. Why your daughter stopped schooling after Form 5? None, you known in Hinduism religion, how to say that when a girl is asked for marriage, her parents-in-law did not let her continue [school], you understand then she married. At what age she got married? At 17 years of age...)

According to feminists such as Sharpe (1976) gender socialisation of children, underpin the construction of masculine and feminine cultural identities. Secondary agencies of socialisation such as media and peer groups reinforce these gender identities established during primary socialisation.

The former perpetuate traditional patriarchal values, norms and ideologies of marriage, domesticity and subordination. Subsequently, girls in the *Cité* are socialised in the traditional patriarchal dogma that they should get married at a young age because they need a man to take care of them and of their needs and wants.

For them to 'be with a man' or to 'be married' is the 'proper role of women' and if an adolescent girl does not have a boyfriend and if a woman is not yet married when she reaches her thirties, it is seen as a 'social problem' as it is considered 'socially and culturally unacceptable'. (See Chapter on Social Survey)

In line with Hammer (2003), both the home environment and the school environment affect children's achievement. For example, parental involvement in their children's education, peer group pressure, parental education and influences and the social and economic environment of the *Cité* have been identified as influential factors in children achievement gap.

According to him, both parents and teachers play a crucial role to make sure that every child becomes a high achiever and thus not only classroom environment should be considered in explaining achievement gap but also what happens to children before and after school.

We observed that the *Cité* is not a conducive learning environment. There is noise pollution with people speaking loudly, children screaming and music and television playing at full volume. The spatial organisation and arrangement of rooms do not provide for children to have a quiet place to learn and do their homework.

The *Collège du St. Esprit Rivière-Noire* has developed an afterschool assistance programme for students to stay after school hours to do their homework under the supervision of a teacher. Since they have developed this programme, the teachers observed that children prefer to stay after school than to go home as for them the school environment is like a cocoon where they feel protected from the influences of the external environment and safe.

...Parce que l'école reste un cocon hein. Beaucoup d'entre eux s'évadent de la maison, s'évadent de la réalité et préfèrent être à l'école...Pour eux de huit heures trente à deux heures trente ils sont au chaud bien encadrés. Ils sont bien traités par les enseignants. Donc c'est un peu un genre d'échappatoire. L'école est un peu un genre d'échappatoire...<sup>167</sup>

(Eng. trans:...Because school remains a cocoon. Many run away from home, escape [home] reality and prefer to be at school...for them from 8 hrs 30 to 14 hrs they are surround and warm. Their teachers treat them well. So it is like a means of evasion. School is like a means of evasion...)

The parish as well, with the help of volunteers, has developed an educational assistance programme for children who have dropped out of school after failing CPE. They deliver literacy and numeracy courses to these children so that they do not become vagrants and become employable.

In addition, la *Garderie Etoile*, subsidised by private funders was set up for the working class families. They have to pay a symbolic fee of 500 rupees per month. One of the respondents mentioned that even though some families cannot afford to pay the monthly charges they could send their children to the kindergarten. Various factors were identified that place children at risk and their compounding effect significantly increase the likelihood for academic failure and poor life achievement.

For example, the son of Emilienne had excellent results at CPE exams. His mother and teachers encouraged him to continue his studies but he was not motivated to do so. He preferred to start working as labourer and to stop schooling. He was offered a job as clerk but he refused on the grounds that he did not know how to speak neither French nor English and choose to work as gardener. Her daughters too stopped schooling after primary cycle and her granddaughters after SC.

One factor identified is earning fast and easy money. The children of the *Cité* are vulnerable not only because they are at risk to fail their academic cycle but because they are very much inclined to 'drop-out' of school to start working at an early age than to continue schooling.

According to one of the personnel of the college, there are intelligent students who have the potential to be academic and life achievers but they prefer to leave school to start work. Indeed, it is common practice for working class and low middle class children to work during holidays either to supplement their family budget or to earn pocket money.

Often, they find easy money tempting and prefer to leave school and start working. They have been socialised in a false consciousness that instant financial gratification will give them a sense of worthiness, higher status and respect. They are not conscious of the importance of continuing schooling until Form 6 or even going to university.

Although parental low education is not a causal factor for children academic failure, yet, parent education and encouragement are strongly related to improving student achievement. The lack of some parents' and educators' encouragement and involvement in the children's education is caused by an internalised feeling of inferiority and a somewhat 'normalisation' of academic underachievement.

Indeed, during an informal conversation with one of the schoolmasters, it was obvious that for him the children living in the *Cité* are hopeless as they are not skilled for academic studies. For him it is

the normal course of life that they 'drop-out' of school. It also implied that educators tend to expect less from these students.

His testimony demonstrates that the tenet of equal educational opportunity is far from becoming a reality for the underprivileged children who perform less well academically because their opportunities and experiences are not equal.

...Nu dir equal opportunity act, donk, li bizin egal partou o nivo ledikasion. La valer di zour kot nou ete la, kouma mo ti dir ou taler la, tou inn vini avek zot langaz, zot tou ena zot langaz dan lekol, indou ena pou li, hindi, marati, mandarin, franse, angle, be kreol, pena. Li pa egal ditou la. Be ki nou appel equal opportunity act? Nu pe lager pou ki sa lang kreol la li rant dan lekol li ousi. Se la li pou vinn equal opportunity act...<sup>168</sup>

(Eng. trans:...we say equal opportunity act at educational level. So where are we, as I said before, all came with their language, they all have their language at school, Hindus have theirs, Hindi, Marathi, Mandarin, French, English, but Kreol there is none. It's not at all equal. What do we call equal opportunity act? We are fighting for the Kreol language to also be introduced at school. It's then that there will be equal opportunity act...)

Field research revealed that, the children in the *Cité* lack support to move ahead and succeed in life as some parents and even some social partners are not conscious of the importance of providing to children all the necessary tools and skills to be achievers.

These children do not grow up with the belief that they can be anything they aspire to be in life but on the contrary, they internalise a sense of limitation and mediocrity in their psyche. Consequently, they are susceptible to set low goals and expectations.

Moreover, in keeping with Marie France and Emilienne, there are parents that instead of saving and investing money in their children's education or in their house spend their wages in an irresponsible way and especially in alcohol as they are trapped in the vicious cycle of alcoholism. Besides those who are, potential achievers are often ostracised in that they are labelled as *fer blan* (acting white).

For example, one of the schoolmasters mentioned that the brightest students were amongst the girls who fell pregnant in 2009 because the boys tend to target these girls as girl friends. It is a way for boys to affirm their domination over these girls by suppressing their aspirations and motivation for parity.

Teenage pregnancy is the main reason identified why many girls abandon schooling. One of the headmasters estimated half a dozen cases of teenage pregnancy between 2005 and 2010 and they were the most intelligent girls.

Even though the Catholic Church, the Ministry of Gender Equality Child Development and Family Welfare and the NGO MAM (Mouvement D'Aide à La Maternité) are present on the field with family planning programmes and organise sensitisation and information campaigns, yet, it seems there is a generational transmission of teenage pregnancy among the women in the *Cité* with mothers and daughters giving birth to their first child at a young age. Once pregnant the girls often do not resume schooling. (See Chapter on Social Survey)

Educational achievement significantly and differentially affects occupational choice with people with more education and qualified residents choosing higher-ranking jobs that require more skills and qualifications. It has long been recognised as the key to social and financial progress and stability.

Consequently, because of lack of qualifications and employable skills, the residents have limited job and socio-economic mobility opportunities. They are trapped in low-paid unsecure jobs and subsequently in the cycle of poverty. Poverty in turn affects life social circumstances and has been identified as a risk factor. The above-mentioned aspects are consequential factors of poverty that place children at risk.

...zot kapav dir zot fami en a le moyen, pou zot al lekol, ou kompren. Ena parfwa bann fami pov osi, zot arete, si zot inn fer depi form cink, zot arete, zot rod enn ti travay, zot p travay, pou aid zot fami...<sup>169</sup>

(Eng. trans:...They can say that their family has the means, they will go to school, you understand. Some there are some their family is poor, they stop, if they continue until Form 5, they stop, they search for a job, they work to help their family...)

Mauritius ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children in 1990 recognising the universal, indivisible and inalienable rights of children.

Consequently, the State engaged itself to respect and promote the rights set forth in the Convention without any discrimination so that each child can fully enjoy his/her human rights irrespective of his/her race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. In this respect, the Mauritian State committed to take all appropriate measures to ensure that children are protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment.

Article 28 of the above-mentioned Convention recognised the right of all children to education and, in view to achieve this right, education was made free and Mauritius amended the Educational Act in 2004.

The Act stipulates that education is compulsory until the age of 16 and every child who has reached the age of admission to a primary school shall attend an educational institution.

Any responsible party of a child under the age of 16 whom, without reasonable cause, refuses or neglects to ensure that the child attends school regularly shall commit an offence and shall, upon conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees and to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years.

Other policy measures have been adopted to comply with Article 28 such as pre vocational education has been introduced for children who have failed the CPE to reduce the 'drop-out' rates. The Zone Priority Education strategy was developed as an attempt to address the problems of learning difficulties of children from underprivileged areas and of low achieving schools.

In addition, under the National Budget, provision is made for financial assistance like free transport for students and fiscal assistance for exams fees for low income earning families. These measures aim at making education available and accessible to every child.

However, fieldwork in Cité La Mivoie raised many questions as, albeit all these policy measures and even if primary education is compulsory and education is supposedly free, actually, this research revealed that the mainstream educational system in Mauritius is dysfunctional and is failing in integrating children of all socio-economic streams and in offering equal opportunities to all.

In fact, there is breach of Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention as; firstly, the children of the *Cité* are excluded from the education system that fails to cater for the development of their personality, skills and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential and to cater for their special needs.

Secondly, undeniably, educational achievement in Mauritian society is measured in terms of academic achievement, as mainstream education focuses on academic subjects and not on the holistic development of children, such as, the development of their social, cultural, emotional and psychosocial capital.

Thirdly, since the system is academic oriented, it does not promote the children's cultural identity, language and values and they face negative educational experiences that lead to academic and behavioural problems such as social withdrawal, violence, irregular school attendance and substance abuse that are considered as indicators of failure.

Fourthly, the problems of illiteracy, numeracy and delay in language and reading development and lack of general knowledge still affect the younger generation (as well as the adults) in the *Cité* (and Creole children throughout the island) who continue to 'drop-out' of school early.

Fortunately, according to one of the headmasters, many parents are now conscious of the importance of formal education. She estimated that approximately 82.4% of parents (the student population in her school amounts to approximately 42 children) are committed and involved in their children's education compared to other regions such as Le Morne Village where the situation is worst. Nonetheless, absenteeism is high and children are at risk of dropping out of school at any time.

Indeed, some respondents believe that without a good educational background their children will not be life achievers and gain up-ward social mobility. They try their best to transmit to their children the values of success and of educational and life achievements.

These parents encourage their children to go to college and to university. They make many sacrifices to give the best education to their children. For them to be literate is a pride and inherent to building self-esteem, self-confidence and positive self-perception.

## Other economic problems

### Integrated Resort Scheme Development Projects

Residents' perceptions of the Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS) development projects diverge. These projects are like living 'with a sword of Damocles on the head'. Notwithstanding that they are expected to create job opportunities, they are seen as pseudo developments and the local population is not prepared for such type of development.

They might in the long run lead to the 'ghettoisation' and impoverishment of the villagers with on the other side wealthy people living in gated luxury residences which subsequently might cause many social problems such as prostitution and property crimes.

...Me developman osi bizin...enn sertin kontrol kouma mo pou eksplik ou....si demin ou ouver enn kasino....ki pou arive, ou pou gagn...tou kalite dimounn pou koumans vinn la. E demin ou fer enn bwatt de nuit, ou gagn tou sa kalite dimounn ki pou koumans vinn la...kouma mo pe eksplik ou lerla ki problem la pou koumans vini. Lerla pou koumans gagn prostitution...koumans gagn la drog...parski kot ena touristik bann developman touristik...parski nou pa le Rivière Noire vinn kouma Grand Baie...<sup>170</sup>

(Eng. trans:...But development too there is need...of a degree of control how I will explain you...if tomorrow you open a Casino...what will happen, there shall be...all sort of people will come here. And tomorrow you open an night club there will be all sort of people who will come here...like what I am explaining to you then problems will emerge. Then prostitution will start...drug will start...because where there are tourists where there are tourism development...Because we do not want Black River to turn like Grand Baie...)

Furthermore, in spite the development promoters are bound to employ local residents in priority, often, they do not respect their commitment because the local population is not qualified and do not possess the employable skills required.

Photo 40 La Balise Marina Development Project



Source: TJC/6/AC/SiteVisit/ PH 38/P/LaMivoie/12May2010

As stressed by Varnanaden, people follow the training courses such as training offered by the National Empowerment Foundation and *Fondation Espoir et Développement* thinking that because they have acquired the required technical skills and capacities they will, de facto, find a secure and well remunerated job. In reality, it is not the case because, either they find insecure jobs, or they are unemployed and are forced to do low paid menial jobs.

There is a shared feeling that Mauritius is being marketed to foreigners especially to South Africans and French who will soon own their region and Mauritius and for this reason, Mauritians will soon be ostracised. In addition, they feel that the Mauritian government is not environmentally friendly as they promote intensive development to the detriment of our environment.

The development strategy adopted by the local government demonstrates that capitalism is incompatible with sustainable development and ecological development. The development project of La Balise Marina is much contested because it is located on the estuary that, in line with Ramsar Convention for the protection of wetland resources that Mauritius also ratified in 2001, should be preserved. The Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 1998 as well declared wetland as protected marine zone.

A petition was signed by approximately 35 women to protest against this project that violates government commitment to protect and preserve local biodiversity such as the Convention on Biological Diversity for the Conservation of biological diversity ratified in 1992 and The Stockholm Declaration at the UN Conference on the Human Environment that stipulates that natural resources of the earth, including the air, water, land, flora, fauna and especially representative ecosystems should be preserved.

## Recommendations:

### Infrastructure

Dr. Y. Cantin Hospital should become a regional and better-equipped hospital where people from the surrounding villages can receive first-aid assistance and all the medical assistance they need. Doctors and nurses should be attached to the hospital on a 24 hours basis.

Streetlights in the *Cité* and speed restrictors on the main road should be installed for the safety of the *Cité* children.

A vegetable and fish market should be constructed where the local fishermen can sell their catch directly to the consumers without passing through a *banyan* and where the villagers can buy vegetables and fruit instead of going to Quatre-Bornes.

The construction of a multi-purpose centre where social and cultural activities will be organised and it will be also a refuge centre for people during cyclonic weather conditions. This place should be 'ethnically neutral' where people irrespective of their religio-ethnic background can meet.

It should be managed by salaried and trained local residents with the help of the local authorities and locally based institutions such as the hotels and IRS development projects who should be the main sponsors. The salaried managing personnel of the centre should include salaried social workers and counsellors. This centre should be a social centre, an educational centre and a leisure centre.

A social centre where people can socialise and gather to organise activities and meetings. Social workers as well should be employed to assist the villagers in their administrative and bureaucratic dealings and re-orient them when necessary to adequate social services.

This individual assistance should include counselling, psychological and social assistance to families and individuals having problems. Thus, the social workers should be able to identify people who need specialised assistance. Counselling should also be regularly organised on social and health issues such as aids, alcoholism, drugs, sexually transmitted diseases and gender based violence.

A sport and leisure centre where boys, girls and adults can meet instead of gathering on the road to drink and smoke drugs. Indoor and outdoor activities should be organised such as: keep fit activities, yoga courses, table tennis, badminton, billiards, basketball (there is a need for a proper basketball pitch with lights, athletics (there is need for an athletic track), swimming pool and aqua gym courses (either a swimming pool has to be built or the lagoon has to be rehabilitated).

Coaches should be employed for each activity. Activities that target both boys and girls should be proposed to avoid any gender discriminatory practices.

An educational centre including a public library, study room and computer room with internet access where children can read and study in peace. This centre should address and remedy to the problem of academic underachievement in the locality.

Specialised pedagogical assistance should be provided freely to children especially those having learning difficulties and disabilities such as dyslexia, attention deficiency disorder and hyperactivity. The problem of adult illiteracy should be addressed also and therefore literacy and numeracy courses should be provided to adults and to young people who have dropped out of school.

Assistance should be provided to unemployed and unqualified, professionals as well such as training should be given to develop professional skills, special courses should be organised that lead to a technical certificate which will ensure that they are employable. The courses should be in accordance with the employment skills that the employers seek, and the demands of the labour market.

### Occupation patterns

The Cim Stockbrokers Research 2009 Review (2010) reported that 'in 2009, international tourist arrivals fell by 4.3% to 880 thousand which is the largest decrease registered for more than 30 years. In Mauritius, tourist arrivals fell by 9.7% over the first nine months before registering a recovery in the final quarter (+2.4%) bringing the reduction in arrivals for 2009 down to 6.4%.

Tourism earnings on the other hand fell by 13.4% as the industry suffered from the reduction in spending power of tourists, heavy discounting by operators, a shift in demand towards cheaper accommodation, and the depreciation of the Euro and Pound against the Rupee. More than 65% of tourists arriving in Mauritius originate from Europe. Mauritius is not under sheltered from the global world recession that has already had economic downturn on the textile and tourism sectors and the risks of negative trade balance<sup>171</sup> and current account balance are impending.

Hence, the small and medium enterprrial projects developed that rely on tourism can be queried as poverty alleviation strategies and sustainable development projects given the slowdown in the local property market and the decline in spending power.

Based on the premise that the livelihoods of people without access, or with very limited access to natural resources are vulnerable because they face difficulties in obtaining food, accumulating other assets, and recuperating after natural or market shocks or misfortunes<sup>172</sup>, sustainable livelihood approaches should be considered that would give vulnerable group access to different natural resources.

It implies developing Livelihood Support Programmes (LSP) to promote integrated sustainable livelihood as sustainable poverty alleviation strategy. It involves allowing access by the poor to natural resources including land for pasture, farming and agriculture and water. In times of crisis, the dictum that 'work is a necessity linked to the survival of the human species' makes sense.

Even though, in such instances, people have limited choices, it does not imply that they should be denied their rights and comply with unhealthy and degrading working conditions. There is need to conduct an in-depth investigation in the working conditions of the paid domestic workers and lobby for an amendment of the Labour Act to clarify the loopholes in the law regarding this category of employees and for the employers to comply with the law.

An in-depth study should also be carried out to assess how far Mauritius abides by the various United Nations Conventions that the country ratified such as the International Labour Organisation Conventions and Human Rights Conventions and especially whether the International labour standard for paid domestic workers set by the ILO entitled 'Decent Work for Domestic Workers'<sup>173</sup> are respected.

Regional reporting and complaint units should be set up for people to report cases of breaches of their rights as employees and to lodge complaints in cases of employers' non-compliance to the labour laws in force. These units should also sensitise and inform the population of their legal rights and existing laws that protect them from potential abuse and exploitation.

*L'Ecole des Techniciennes de Maison* should broaden its scope of work to mobilise paid domestic workers to understand the concept of decent work, strengthen their capacity to represent and defend their rights as paid domestic workers whilst simultaneously train them to acquire expertise, skills and praxis

The socio-economic status of paid domestic and manual labour should be upgraded that would bring horizontal mobility of these workers. This mobility can be achieved by increasing the minimum salary threshold and improving the social and legal protections in this labour sector in line with the inflation rate.

The social and economic value of these occupations should not be under-estimated and mechanisms should be set up for employers to systematically register their employees. Only by bringing domestic and manual work out of the 'shadow' economy will it minimise the risks of domestic servitude, abuse, exploitation and other forms of discriminatory practices.

### **Working Conditions**

The residents' present conditions result from a continuation of historical trends that are likely to worsen with the latter being at risk of falling into absolute poverty. For this reason, there is urgent need to discover alternative sustainable development programmes to minimise the negative outcomes of this economic turmoil on the standard of living of the already vulnerable groups.

One alternative is the revalorisation of low tier jobs, particularly, paid domestic and manual labour that still bear negative stereotypes rooted in patriarchy and colonial times when slaves performed these types of jobs such as labourers, cattle-herder, fishermen, poultry-herders and many other skilled and unskilled work. The slaves were fieldworkers, domestic workers, and skilled traders and worked in the mills and at sea<sup>174</sup>.

Actually, the stigma does not lie in the people performing these jobs or in the nature of the job itself but in the social system that denigrates paid household work and ascribes low status to menial and blue-collar work and subsequently this labour category.

In fact, paid domestic labour is still commonly perceived as unskilled work and this perception is based on a dominant construction of paid domestic work as replacing unpaid family duties that were initially fulfilled by slave women and after by female family members. When paid domestic workers substituted these unpaid domestic jobs, the social and economic value of domestic employment was and is still undermined and under-estimated.

Domestic and manual labour remains somewhat an invisible economy and informal sector. In other words, society and people devalue domestic and manual work and workers resulting from an imperialist and colonial mentality that is maintained.

Given that paid domestic labour is the main source of income for the families living in Cité La Mivoie and is growing in Mauritius, and also that there are more people who are dependent on blue-collar jobs and manual jobs, there is need to de-stigmatise these jobs as these people deserve consideration.

The Millennium Development Goal Report (2010) targets to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people by 2015. The poverty gap is widening as a backlash of the economic downturn. The already historically vulnerable groups as if the residents of Cité La Mivoie live below the poverty line are facing social and economic impoverishment resulting from the inflation and diminishing incomes of poor households because of higher unemployment.

According to above-mentioned report, after the initial food crisis of 2008, prices of staple foods remained high in 2009. Both crises led to the reduction in effective purchasing power of poor consumers who spend substantial income on the purchase of basic food.

The protection of the vulnerable workers is an imperative. In this endeavour, it is the duty of the State and of Civil Society to ensure that they at risks of further prejudices. There is need to develop legal and policy measures on domestic work and to improve the living and working conditions of this category of workers to ensure that they are not discriminated against.

### **Education**

Need to review the national educational policy to adopt a holistic educational approach to bridge the academic achievement gap, reduce academic underachievement and to cater for the special needs of children who have difficulties integrating and staying in the educational system.

Reform of the national educational system with the implementation of cultural education centre that is adapted to the cultural capital of the vulnerable groups.

An IVTB school should be built in the locality and the pre-vocational system should be promoted.

To combat child labour and reduce school drop-outs, the Educational and Labour Acts should be amended to make education compulsory until the age of 18 and raise the legal working age to 18 years old.

More funds and resources should be allocated to ZEP schools and to remedy the victimisation and vulnerability of the children living in the *Cité*,

The state has a legal obligation to develop all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of these children in an environment that fosters their health, self-respect and dignity.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Black River village is at a transitional stage facing a population expansion with the mass influx of human resources as well as economic resources. High population density will in the end cause, as mentioned in the report, more problems related to security, space and natural and environmental resources. Some local inhabitants have seen an improvement in their standard of living and there is a situation of quasi-full employment in Cité La Mivoie, yet, this pseudo development does not benefit everyone. The residents of Cité La Mivoie are facing the negative effects of these developmental projects.

Based on the United Development Programme (2010) analysis, the underprivileged people will continue to live in precarious conditions and the number of slum dwellers will grow with the worsening home crisis resulting from the worldwide financial and economic downturn that has been exacerbated by 'lack of land titles and other forms of secure tenure; cutbacks in funds for subsidised housing for the poor; lack of land reserves earmarked for low-income housing; and an inability to intervene in the market to control land and property speculation'.

As stated in the report, they are facing forced de-localisation; they are denied access to land, safe shelter and natural resources. In addition, they have to bear the plight of price inflation and socio-cultural changes. The rise in land prices rule out the possibility for the working poor and the low-income earners to own land and a house and it consequently exacerbates the precarious housing conditions in the *Cité*.

The cultural clashes are negatively affecting the *Cité* whose organisation was, until now, based on ancient structures with their own relation to time, assets, goods and wealth. Cité La Mivoie is at a transition between a traditional fishing village, with its specific social and spatial organisation and value systems, to a working housing estate. Their value system and social and cultural systems continue to be threatened by Eurocentric systems. These contemporary problems do not stand in isolation, history impacts on their present reality.

Oral history uncovered a continuity between the local economic and occupational evolution and the colonial history (slave and indenture system) in that the availability of cheap and docile skilled and unskilled labour underpins contemporary regional economic and social development and economic prosperity. There is precariousness in the *Cité* which stems from historic inter-dependence of the residents and their wealthy neighbours and especially economic dependence with the former being employees and needing to 'earn a living' and the latter, the employers, in need of cheap and docile labour. This inter-dependence is rooted in servitude and capitalist exploitation.

This labour profile inherent to the capitalist system is rooted in the slave system and is an extension of slavery but under a modified and 'institutionalised' form. The residents of Cité La Mivoie still bear the burden of slavery. It will be a long and hard endeavour to repair the destructive aftermath of slavery and of discriminatory practices.

Reparation starts with work on the memory of slavery and of the slaves' history of abuse for psychological healing purposes. This healing process starts with a de-construction of the deep internalised sense of limitations and powerlessness. Furthermore, other social, cultural and psychological dynamics should take into consideration such as differential socialisation and enculturation processes to understand the *Cité* inner-structure, subculture and value system.

It is only with time and sincere and genuine political will that we shall be able to break this deeply seated perception that their marginalisation and underprivileged situation are inherent to their being. The recommendations are all made to help address the plight of the residents of Cité La Mivoie and improve their social and economic situation. We should learn from past errors made during post-slavery whereby now there is no living memory of the slaves among the residents. Recommendations are also proposed for the preservation of the local tangible and intangible heritage to ensure that the history of the residents' ancestors do not go in oblivion and ensure that the memories of their ancestors remain alive.

	Economic Heritage	Social Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Historic Heritage	Other Recommendations
Social organisation					
<i>Ladig Bamboo</i>					
<i>Ti Lagig</i>					
<i>Pon Misel</i>					
<i>Kanal Raffia</i>					
<i>Kanal Maraz</i>					
<i>Kanal Dharma</i>					
<i>Basin Zigret</i>					
<i>Pon Papay</i>					
<i>Brize Dharma</i>					
<i>Laveret</i>					
<i>Tamarin Lapel</i>					
<i>Other sites</i>					
Family patterns and gender relations					
					In-depth study
					Sexual education
Settlement					
<i>Kan Kadoc</i>					
<i>Kan Dharma or Bize Dharma</i>					
<i>Kan Listo</i>					
<i>Kan Laserp</i>					
<i>Kan La Salin or La Salin</i>					
<i>Kan Bombaye</i>					
<i>Kan Maraz</i>					
<i>Kan Iegliz</i>					
<i>Kan Disabl</i>					
<i>Kan Robine</i>					
<i>Kan Diosez</i>					
<i>Kan Salin De Ravel</i>					
<i>Caredas</i>					
					Democratising access to property ownership
Social Organisation					
					Ensure that every child in the housing estate enjoys the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and

					social development.
					Take appropriate measures to assist parents in the <i>Cité</i> and others responsible parties to implement this right and in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes
Housing conditions					
					Health survey in the Cité La Mivoie
					Long-term affordable housing programme for middle and working classes.
					Affordable housing grants and subsidised loans
					Modify the drainage system in line with the norms and regulations
					Financial and money management programmes, life skills and leadership programmes
					Traditional self-empowerment programmes
Toilet and Bathroom Facilities					
					Provision and access to adequate clean water, basic sanitation and electricity are essential to meeting the Millennium Development Goals
Land Dispossession					
					Promote 'effective and democratic land, property and natural resources governance, management and practices'
					Support the increasing number of citizens who do not have access to land and adequate shelter and including land reforms to reduce the structural inequalities and longer term measures for housing and land and property
					Address the problem of continuing deterioration of conditions of shelter and human settlements
Child Prostitution					
					Investigate into these cases of child trafficking
					Implement mechanism to facilitate improved anti-trafficking communication and coordination among the relevant parties including law enforcement entities, working

					groups, NGOs and protective services available to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation
					Provide adequate support for the rehabilitation of these children
					Investigate why the victims-survivors did not receive the adequate assistance and support
Infrastructure					
<i>5 Sime</i>					
<i>Sime Gorz</i>					
<i>Sime Ti Ladig</i>					
<i>Sime Bolom Baboo</i>					
<i>Sime bef</i>					
<i>Bwa Pian</i>					
<i>Pon Raffia</i>					
<i>Pon Blan</i>					
<i>Boutik Trwa Bra</i>					
<i>Boutik Li Mo Yo</i>					
<i>Fouraso</i>					
<i>Chambre des morts</i>					
<i>Moulin Lalwes</i>					
<i>Lizin Pwason Sale</i>					
<i>Salin Carlos</i>					
<i>Salin Pilot/Koenig</i>					
					Dr. Y. Cantin Hospital should become a regional and better-equipped hospital
					Street light in the <i>Cité</i> and speed restrictors on the main road
					A vegetable and fish market
					The construction of a multi-purpose centre
Occupation patterns					
					Sustainable livelihood programme
					In-depth investigation in the working conditions of the paid domestic workers and lobby for an amendment of the Labour Act to clarify the loopholes in the law
					An in-depth study to assess how far Mauritius abides by the International Labour Organisation Conventions and Human Rights Conventions
					Set up of regional reporting and complaint units

					<i>L'Ecole des Techniciennes de Maison</i> should broaden its scope of work
					The socio-economic status of paid domestic and manual labour should be upgraded
					Mechanisms should be set up for employers to systematically register their domestic workers
Working Conditions					
					Revalorisation of low tier jobs, particularly, paid domestic and manual labour
					Development of legal and policy measures on domestic work and to improve the living and working conditions of this category of workers to ensure that they are not discriminated against
Education					
					Review the national educational policy to adopt a holistic educational approach
					Reform of the national educational system with the implementation of a cultural education centre that is adapted to the cultural capital of the vulnerable groups.
					Building of an IVTB school in the locality and the pre-vocational system should be promoted.
					The Educational and Labour Acts should be amended to make education compulsory until the age of 18 and raise the legal working age to 18 years old.

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

### 1. Biographical information:

- Name?
- First name?
- Age and Date of Birth?
- POB? Where did you grow up?
- Where do you live? Where else did you live in the past? How long? Why they moved?
- Present and past occupations?
- Schooling? Which class? Why did you stop? Was it important for you and your family to go to school, to have a certificate? Why? Literacy?
- Married or not? Since when? How did you meet your wife/husband?
- Their look and feeling about their personal history - personal achievements and quality of life

### 2. Family history:

- Parents and grandparents?
- Occupation
- Date and Place of Birth and Place of living
- Any stories about them
- Family origins
- Was there an intergenerational transmission of wealth, family history, traditions and values, knowledge and skills, land? etc
- How parents and grandparents met? At what age they got married? Why?

### 3. 'Cité' History and Life:

- Identification of important places, *Lieu dit*, monuments, ceremonies etc
- Identification of heritage components,
- Lifestyle in the past and now: water, electricity, roads
- Houses
- Settlement
- Childhood memories

### 4. Experience living in the 'cité':

- Any constraining experiences?
- What is a 'cité' for you?
- Perception of slave descents living in cite/coastal? Image projected? Stereotypes?

### 5. Economic, social and cultural life of the 'cité':

#### Economic/Occupations:

- Occupations
- Employment structure:
- Fishing

- Plantations
- Salt pans
- Tourism
- Other economic activities such as house workers, gardeners etc?

Cultural and Social life:

- Traditions and customs including traditional religious and spiritual practices
  - Popular religion (prayers, rituals, ceremonies etc)
  - Traditional food practices and habits
  - Infrastructure developments
  - Road development
  - Education
  - Religious places and cemeteries
6. **Land-ownership issues**
- Are you land owner?
  - Where is your land? How did you get this plot of land?
  - Were your parents or grandparents landowners? Where? How did they get this plot?
  - Cases of landownership and causes for loss of land?
7. **Evolution of the 'cité' including impact of development and future developments**
- How the village/region changed over time and what brought about those changes?
  - How the economic, social and cultural life of the 'cité' evolved?
  - What Mauritian society can do to help slave descents to feel /be better economically, politically, socially, culturally, etc?

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- <sup>4</sup> Central Statistics Office, 2000. Housing and Population Census, Vol. VI, Port Louis. Mauritius
- <sup>5</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/MH 11 12/T/MontCalm/21May2010, line 1130-1132
- <sup>6</sup> Teelock (1998, p.100)
- <sup>7</sup> Teelock, Le Chartier & De Salle Essoo (2008, pp. 54-56)
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid
- <sup>9</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DJ 16/T/CiteLaMivoie/25May2010, lines 823-828
- <sup>10</sup> Based on the 2000 Housing and Population Census, about 329 people aged five years old and above lived in other parts and outside of the island five years ago.
- <sup>11</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, line 248
- <sup>12</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/EF 2/T/CiteLaMivoie/3May2010, line 107
- <sup>13</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/FH NP 10/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 648-653
- <sup>14</sup> From an outsiders perspective
- <sup>15</sup> Observation from an English that has been living in Mauritius for approximately four years
- <sup>16</sup> Observation from a Mauritian that has been working with the fishermen in the region
- <sup>17</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/NP 8/T/CiteLaMivoie/15May2010, lines 618-624
- <sup>18</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/VV 24/T/CiteLaMivoie/2June2010, lines 615-616
- <sup>19</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/MM 26/T/CiteLaMivoie/3June2010, lines 31-336
- <sup>20</sup> *Bombaye* is a local term referring to the Marathi-Speaking Indo-Mauritian. They are commonly named *Bombaye* because their ancestors embarked to Mauritius from the port of Bombay in India
- <sup>21</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 248
- <sup>22</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 122-124
- <sup>23</sup> Its scientific name is *Raphia Fuffia* which is an African palm tree with large leaves whose fibres are used for various purposes such as to make baskets and mats
- <sup>24</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 80-84
- <sup>25</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 246
- <sup>26</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, line 566
- <sup>27</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 183-210
- <sup>28</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, line 256
- <sup>29</sup> A vernacular derived from the French referring to a clearing in the wood
- <sup>30</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/VL 28 29/T/CiteLaMivoie/4June2010, lines 292-300
- <sup>31</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, line 304
- <sup>32</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 349-358
- <sup>33</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 239-241
- <sup>34</sup> Guy Rouillard, Domaines Sucriers, 1978.
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- <sup>36</sup> Maroon Slave Investigation Project commissioned by the National Heritage Fund, 2003. The Black River Gorges is to be proposed for nomination on the World Heritage List.
- <sup>37</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 388-391
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- <sup>40</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, line 408
- <sup>41</sup> TJC/2/SLC AC/IN/SP 4/T/CiteLaMivoie/11May2010, lines 22-78
- <sup>42</sup> Refers to a cleaning organisation
- <sup>43</sup> It is a shrine with a red flag on the top and inside the shrine there is a *murti* of Lord Hanuman who in the Hindu pantheon is considered to be the *gardyen lakour* (Eng. trans. The protector of a place)
- <sup>44</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, line 442
- <sup>45</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/NP 8/CiteLaMivoie/15May2010, lines 596-599
- <sup>46</sup> When a newly married couple has the choice of living with or near the groom's or the bride's family.
- <sup>47</sup> Teelock (1998, p.200)
- <sup>48</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, line 24
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- <sup>51</sup> Census of Mauritius and its dependencies taken on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1871, part first, p. 13
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- <sup>57</sup> Teelock (1998, p.188)
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- <sup>59</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 287-292
- <sup>60</sup> Teelock (1998, p.189)
- <sup>61</sup> It should be noted that the Village of Petite Rivière Noire existed before Cité La Mivoie and was formed by The Patate and Dumatin families. Later the Poniav and Ramdev families settled in the village and when then De Ravel salt-pan closed the families living in the kan Salin De Ravel were delocalised in the village.
- <sup>62</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/EL 6/T/CiteLaMivoie/10May2010, lines 8-22
- <sup>63</sup> Foetidia Mauritania. It was commonly named Bwa Pian (and in French Bois Puant) because a stinking oil or sap leaked through its wood
- <sup>64</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, line 24
- <sup>65</sup> The Chapel was built when the priest received as gift a statue of Notre Dame de Fatima from a Belgian
- <sup>66</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, lines 69-234
- <sup>67</sup> According to Moutou (2001, p.65), the De Ravel Family is of Italian origine
- <sup>68</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, lines 71-256
- <sup>69</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 17-22

- <sup>70</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/ SP 1/CiteLaMivoie/3May2010, lines 1302-1317
- <sup>71</sup> Kadoc is a vernacular term designating a black bean
- <sup>72</sup> It is a shrine dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali
- <sup>73</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/VL 28 29/T/CiteLaMivoie/4June2010, lines 284-291
- <sup>74</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, lines 456-482
- <sup>75</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 159-164
- <sup>76</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, lines 330-504
- <sup>77</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 91-97
- <sup>78</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/VL 28 29/T/CiteLaMivoie/4June2010, lines 227-237
- <sup>79</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/VL 28 29/T/CiteLaMivoie/4June2010, lines 337-342
- <sup>80</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/VL 28 29/T/CiteLaMivoie/4June2010, lines 355-359
- <sup>81</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 295-298
- <sup>82</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 378-388
- <sup>83</sup> It is the name of a snack
- <sup>84</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 100
- <sup>85</sup> This term might be a derivative of Petit Albert which is the name of a French grimoire (Eng. trans. Conjuring book)
- <sup>86</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 459-464
- <sup>87</sup> Refers to the ability of a human being to transform himself/herself into a creature or another person or another entity
- <sup>88</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 480-494
- <sup>89</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 549-574
- <sup>90</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 668-673
- <sup>91</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 510-520
- <sup>92</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 631-634
- <sup>93</sup> Scott, J (n.d)
- <sup>94</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 238
- <sup>95</sup> Unfortunately it was not possible to cross-check the validity of this testimony with information from the Ministry of Housing and Lands and Registrar.
- <sup>96</sup> TJC/6/AC/IN/MA 17/T/CiteLaMivoie/26May2010, lines 90-95
- <sup>97</sup> TJC/6/AC/IN/MA 17/T/CiteLaMivoie/26May2010, lines 205-215
- <sup>98</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/EF 1/T/CiteLaMivoie/3May201, lines 1553-1573
- <sup>99</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 244-248
- <sup>100</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN EF 1/T/CiteLaMivoie/3May2010, lines 1725-1726
- <sup>101</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/FH NP 10/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 758-771
- <sup>102</sup> Refers to a unit in a building in which units of property are owned by individuals and common parts of the property are owned jointly by the unit owners.
- <sup>103</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 52-58
- <sup>104</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/ and TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/EF 1/T/CiteLaMivoie/3May2010
- <sup>105</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/MM 26/T/CiteLaMivoie/3June2010, lines 735-738
- <sup>106</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/SJ 14/T/CiteLaMivoie/21May2010, lines 460-468
- <sup>107</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 130-132
- <sup>108</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/NP 8/T/CiteLaMivoie/15May2010, lines 225-242. Old French measurement still used in Mauritius.
- <sup>109</sup> As quoted in the Chapter on Social Organisation and Spatial Organisation
- <sup>110</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/JA 13/T/CiteLaMivoie/20May2010, lines 175-191
- <sup>111</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 434-438
- <sup>112</sup> TJC/O6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 352-356
- <sup>113</sup> Teelock (1998, p.170)
- <sup>114</sup> TJC/9/SLC AC/IN/SW 116/T/Bambous/27May2010, lines 338-382
- <sup>115</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/EF 1/T/CiteLaMivoie/3May2010, lines 1136-1143
- <sup>116</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/EF 1/T/CiteLaMivoie/3May2010, lines 1158-1162
- <sup>117</sup> Initially it is used to treat narcotic dependence, to prevent withdrawal symptoms.
- <sup>118</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 184-192
- <sup>119</sup> The Act prohibits the employment of children under age 15 and limits the employment of youth between ages 15 and 18 to work which are not harmful to their health, not dangerous and which are suitable for them. Employers that do not comply with the law are liable to penalties equivalent to a fine of no more than approximately 2,200 rupees and a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year.
- <sup>120</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, line 154
- <sup>121</sup> Enemark, S., McLaren, R., Van der Molen, P. (2009)
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid
- <sup>123</sup> Moutou (2001, p.169)
- <sup>124</sup> Hindu Temple
- <sup>125</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 120
- <sup>126</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 41-42
- <sup>127</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 138-153
- <sup>128</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 37-38
- <sup>129</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 107-114
- <sup>130</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 258-262
- <sup>131</sup> TJC/6/SLC/IN/VL 28 29/T/CiteLaMivoie/4June2010, lines 319-331
- <sup>132</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, lines 220-232
- <sup>133</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 224-234
- <sup>134</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 115
- <sup>135</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 412-416
- <sup>136</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, line 296
- <sup>137</sup> TJC/6/SLC AC/ Sitevisit/SV 32/T/LaMivoie/15June2010, lines 412-416
- <sup>138</sup> She was an informal informant that was born on Yemen estate and later on settled in the region

- <sup>139</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 450
- <sup>140</sup><http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/nheritage/>
- <sup>141</sup>L'Express dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011
- <sup>142</sup>TJC/6/SLC/IN/SA NP 11/T/CiteLaMivoie/20May2010, lines 321-332
- <sup>143</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 64
- <sup>144</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 334-342
- <sup>145</sup>TJC/6/SLC/IN/VL 28 29/T/CiteLaMivoie/4June2010, lines 374-349
- <sup>146</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, line 16
- <sup>147</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/Sitevisit/SV 33/T/LaMivoie/20June2010, lines 2-90
- <sup>148</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 72-73
- <sup>149</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/AF 27/T/CiteTamarinier/3June2010, lines 874-875
- <sup>150</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DJ 16/T/CiteLaMivoie/25May2010 lines 725-751
- <sup>151</sup>TJC/2/SLC AL/IN/HL008/T/Caredas/17May2010, lines 337-345
- <sup>152</sup><http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards>
- <sup>153</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/JP CP007/T/VillageBougainvilliers/13May2010, lines 413-435
- <sup>154</sup>TJC/6/SLC/IN/NP 8/T/CiteLaMivoie/15May2010, lines 698-717
- <sup>155</sup><http://www.ilo.org/>
- <sup>156</sup>Ibid
- <sup>157</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, line 144
- <sup>158</sup>TJC/2/SLC AC/IN/SP 3/T/CiteLaMivoie/11May2010, lines 215-254
- <sup>159</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/AB015/T/RiviereNoire/26May2010, lines 236-275
- <sup>160</sup>Stinson (2006, p. 478)
- <sup>161</sup>Millennium Development Goal Report (2010)
- <sup>162</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DS 25/T/RiviereNoire/3June2010, lines 217-224
- <sup>163</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/MH 11 12/MontCalm/21May2010, lines 908-944
- <sup>164</sup>In Mauritius Macumba and Bongo were pejorative and degrading labels used to designate people of Afro-Malagasy phenotype. The meanings of these words were distorted from their original African significance
- <sup>165</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 282-288
- <sup>166</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, lines 93-96
- <sup>167</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DS 20/T/RiviereNoire/27May2010, lines 237-243
- <sup>168</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/JP CP 7/T/VillageBougainvilliers/13May2010, lines 834-838
- <sup>169</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/IN/DE 9/T/CiteLaMivoie/19May2010, line 314
- <sup>170</sup>TJC/6/SLC AC/ IN/VV 24/T/CiteLaMivoie/2June2010, lines 429-435
- <sup>171</sup>According to the CSO, in February 2011 the trade balance showed a deficit of Rs. 5,694 million that is higher by 16.0% compared to the previous month and by 18.4% compared to the corresponding month of the previous year
- <sup>172</sup>Quan, J 2006
- <sup>173</sup>International Labour Conference, 100th Session 2011, *Decent work for domestic workers*
- <sup>174</sup>Teelock (1998, pp.136-137)

# THE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF LE MORNE BRABANT

## INTRODUCTION

*By Vijayalakshmi Teelock, Vice-Chairperson*

Public attention on Le Morne Brabant began in 1999 when public protest arose over the proposed construction of a cable car project on Le Morne. A number of studies were undertaken on archaeology, ethnography and history by various scholars. An institution was created to manage the site over which there has been much contestation of an ethnic nature from socio-cultural groups and on the part of developers. Since then, the site has become a World Heritage site, yet remains inaccessible to the public.

The combined effects of pressure of developers on public institutions managing land and cultural issues have ensured that the management of the site leaves much to be desired as well as the interests of the inhabitants being neglected. One is at pains to understand why the village of Le Morne was not included in the Buffer Zone of the World Cultural Landscape as the inhabitants uphold the traditions bequeathed to them by their slave ancestors who lived in the area. The interests of the inhabitants of the original Le Morne village found on the land what is known as 'Trou Chenille' have not been taken into account at all and to date no full archaeological or historical survey carried out on this village which was composed of descendants of slaves having lived in the area for generations.

The conditions in which they were removed are considered unacceptable: from Trou Chenille to L'Embrasure in 1945 and again in 1960 to the present location of Le Morne, where they are unable to provide for themselves an independent livelihood due to constriction of space: whereas in the original village they could engage in fishing and agriculture the absence of agricultural land means the inhabitants are dependent on others and cannot practice subsistence agriculture as they used to.

Numerous studies have been undertaken on slavery and on Le Morne but no one had yet been able to state categorically who were the original inhabitants of Le Morne or who was buried in the abandoned cemetery found near the estuary at Le Morne. The answer is to be found in in-depth studies using a multi-disciplinary approach and combining contemporary sources of knowledge and data as well as historical and archaeological sources.

TJC commissioned a professional archaeological survey of the abandoned cemetery, DNA testing of local inhabitants and a family history from one descendant of a slave family having lived in Le Morne since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Circumstantial evidence points to a link between the cemetery and the former slave inhabitants of Le Morne although further studies are recommended to confirm this. Preliminary DNA testing did not prove conclusive as the bones were 'water logged' but further tests are required as well as C4 dating. DNA tests of inhabitants will also indicate their ethnic origin and whether they conform to the ethnic origin mentioned in slave registration returns. What we do know from the osteological analysis is that although they were not malnourished, the adults buried there lived 'short, hard and brutish' lives. Many children among the few adults indicate high infant mortality rate which is consistent with the historical demographic data on slaves in Mauritius.

The two studies one by Yola Argot Nayekoo, herself a descendant of a family of slaves having lived in Le Morne since early 19<sup>th</sup> century, if not before, and the archaeological study of Krish Seetah and his team in the abandoned cemetery point to a new facet of the history of Le Morne: aside from being associated with maroonage, Le Morne is also associated with a permanent slave community living and working in the area which need to be further researched. More studies such as that of Yola Nayekoo and Krish Seetah need to be undertaken, in collaboration with institutions and individuals interested in this region.

The massive commercial development that has occurred in this region has not yet reached the ordinary citizens of Le Morne or neighbouring villages: the jobs being offered to them consist largely of the same menial occupations that were undertaken by their forbears and few are in professional, technical or managerial positions. This is unacceptable in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Mauritius. The number of Mauritian Creole scholars and professionals overseas is testimony to the fact that expertise can be obtained and that if those living in Mauritius are given the opportunity, they will seize it. These opportunities seem sorely lacking for the Creole community living in the region.

To quote from Joyce Fortune-Pope:

*Restorative justice should include restoring people to their former situation before the violation occurred and compensation as a form of reparation for the loss of earnings and business should be given. They also need a formal and written apology from the government for the prejudice they suffered.*

We recommend reparations to be given in the form of:

1. As a form of *restorative justice*, the **inhabitants** of Le Morne and neighbouring areas to be given agricultural land jointly held by them to engage in agricultural practices to enable them to increase their daily revenue and be autonomous as they used to be.
2. Implementation of recommendations contained in numerous studies undertaken by the University of Mauritius and various consultants of Le Morne Heritage Fund by a pool of trained professionals, irrespective of gender, race, religion or political creed.
3. The intense communalization, politicization and undue influence of developers and local elite on public institutions to cease and not be tolerated at any cost in this region.
4. A full historical archaeological survey of Le Morne summit and slopes as well as neighbouring areas and its links with neighbouring villages to be undertaken by the LMHTF in collaboration with professionals and to make the results of this researches available to the Mauritian public through books, films, drama, songs dance and curriculum materials for schools. The principle must be adopted that any research and activity funded by public money should go back to the public and not remain in the drawers of officials of those institutions.
5. The inhabitants of Le Morne and neighbouring villages to be brought in to the activities of Le Morne Heritage Fund in managerial, technical and professional posts and appropriate training given to them to fulfill their duties professionally.
6. That the area known as Trou **Chenille** be officially recognised as site of former settlement by inhabitants many of whom are descendants of slaves having lived there for generations (and not as squatters) and that their removal be recognised as 'forced removal'. Commission recommends they be compensated accordingly for loss of home, revenue and inability to continue their occupations and traditions. The Commission further recommends that their history be written before it is forgotten and the oral testimonies of those who lived there be recorded and made available in a public oral archive.
7. The inhabitants be given full access to their former village and a space where they can remember their former lives be created there. The model of District Six museum to be used.
8. **LMHTF Board**: The composition of the LMHTF Board must be amended to reflect both professional and community representatives. They need to be chosen among persons of moral and professional integrity and not associated with communal or commercial operators operating in the area. There should be a reduction in the number of administrators in this Board.

Given the fact that in Mauritius the pool of professional experts is small, there needs to be better interaction between different institutions where these competencies exist to ensure public funds are not being used unnecessarily in activities that duplicate those of other institutions.

9. **Ministry of Arts and Culture:** Similarly at the Ministry of Arts and Culture under whom, specialists in slavery, indenture and in heritage management archaeology history and anthropology must be appointed to better monitor these institutions. Currently to our knowledge, there are none.

Connivance of civil servants, board members and staff with private developers must be expected and therefore controlled and closely monitored by the Ministry and transparent procedures adopted when decision making concerning development permits in the Buffer Zone.

10. The Ministry and Le Morne Heritage Fund to ensure that other heritage found in Le Morne is not neglected i.e. Marathi culture in Le Morne and there is a harmonious and sharing relationship between the two cultures found in Le Morne Village.
11. The links between the Le Morne Brabant, the forests of the Black River Gorges and Baie du Cap are fully surveyed (continued from the Maroon Archaeological Project initiated in 2002) and the maroon trails and sites fully protected from developers coming up with commercial projects and that access is provided to the public to access those sites. The Black River Gorges constitute not only a natural site but a cultural site as maroon activity was intense in this area.

TROU CHENILLE:  
L'HISTOIRE D'UNE FAMILLE DESCENDANT  
D'ESCLAVES -  
La famille Verloppe-Donice

YOLA ARGOT NAYEKOO

**MME TEELOCK:** Ki ou ti a kontan la Komision fer, Madame ?

**MME LARUSEE:** Mo ti a kontan gagne enn bout la ter nou reste. Le zour ou lor la ter, taler ou kapav mor osi. Mo ti a gagn enn la ter, mo ti a reste. Mai la tous les zour ou bizin vey la ter. Ou gagn enn ti pansion, ou bizin tir kas ladan ou bizin paye la ter, bizin trouve mo rasion pour mo manze, bizin paye la limier, paye delo.

**MR MOUTOU:** Ou pas a kot ou bann fami ? Ou reste tou sel ?

**MME LARUSEE:** Mo garson rest ar mwa, li ena so madam.

**MR MOUTOU:** Ou sel revenu se ou pansion vieyess ?

**MME LARUSEE:** Oui, zist mo servi mo pansion la mem. Garson la kan li finn gagne, li bizin donn so bann madame aster la.

**MR MOUTOU:** Sa lokasion la, li represant komie dan ou pansion vieyess ki ou gagne?

**MME LARUSEE:** Parfwa ena ler mo bizin paye Rs400 de lo. La limier kapav Rs200.

**MR MOUTOU:** Lokasion la ter mo dir ?

**MME LARUSEE:** Rs2000 mo paye par an.

**MR MOUTOU:** Li represant enn bon som dan ou ti pansion ?

**MME LARUSEE:** Ou bizin ramase, ki ou pou fere ? Ou kone ou pou paye, ou pa kapav manze? Apre pena plas pou ou reste.

**MME TEELOCK:** Et madam, ou ena kitsoz pou demann la Komision.

**MRS MARGUERITE:** Mo osi parey, mo ti pansion ki mo gagne pa ase, mo bizin paye la ter. Rs350 mo bizin paye la ter. Mo gagn Rs3900 et ladan mo bizin paye mo la ter, mo bizin aste manze. Si ou dwa, enn ti det par isi, la limier, de lo et le tan ou tir tou sala, narien pa reste. Ler ariv la mwatie le mwa, finn fini, enn sou pena. Enn sink sou pena. Li pas sifi.

(Extract from Hearings held at Le Morne Village, January 2010)

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*Le Morne, Destination de l'Amitié  
à ceux qui me condamneraient  
pour ce devoir de mémoire  
je leur rappellerai  
tous ceux qui ont dé pleurer  
juste parce qu'ils étaient Noirs !  
est-ce ma faute à moi  
si je suis né comme ça  
comme toi  
même si tu ne le vois pas?  
à ceux qui voudraient en rire  
qui ne voudront pas sécher les larmes  
de ces millions de martyrs  
je leur dirai de prendre  
le chemin du Morne  
la voie du pèlerinage  
le symbole suprême  
qui fait que l'on s'aime  
à ceux qui seraient tentés  
de déchirer les pages  
pour faire oublier  
pour effacer toute trace  
je te brandis le Morne !  
la preuve de pierre  
l'histoire buissonnière  
de ces humains marrons  
ces amoureux de la liberté  
à ceux qui ne me croient pas  
regardez, il est là  
sculpté par le temps  
ce n'est pas le tombeau des morts  
le Morne  
c'est la place des vivants !*

ASSONE S. R., 2002. *Le Morne, territoire marron !* Port-Louis, Éditions de la Tour.

C'est certainement le destin qui m'a ramené au village du Morne.

J'ai grandi en France et je suis peut être plus française que mauricienne mais un jour, mes pas m'ont porté vers ce petit village, très loin, à la pointe sud ouest de l'île Maurice.

Ma mère, originaire du Morne, me racontait des histoires sur son village, sur sa famille, sur cette montagne. Et puis, j'y ai rencontré mon mari, lui aussi y est né et y a grandi. Lui aussi, un *zanfabor la mer*.

J'ai personnellement toujours été intéressée par l'histoire, l'ethnologie et la généalogie. J'ai donc tout naturellement été attirée par l'histoire de mes ancêtres, de ma famille : qui étaient-ils? Où vivaient-ils, dans quelles conditions? Quelles étaient leurs activités, quels étaient leurs moyens de subsistance dans une région aussi reculée que le Morne ?

Tout généalogiste amateur admettra que retracer son arbre généalogique n'est pas une chose aisée. J'ai commencé mes recherches timidement en 2008. A ce jour, je n'ai toujours pas réussi à réunir tous les morceaux du puzzle mais les informations que j'ai recueillies m'ont permis de dresser au moins une vue générale et de découvrir au fur et à mesure de mes recherches des choses fascinantes sur ma famille.

## LE MORNE BRABANT, LÀ OÙ TOUT A COMMENCÉ

Fig. 1 Le Morne Brabant, vue sur Trou-Chenille



Je savais pertinemment que j'avais des ancêtres esclaves: mes parents, l'aspect physique des membres de ma famille, mon nom, ma religion, toutes ces informations laissaient à penser que mes ancêtres venaient d'Afrique ou bien de Madagascar.

Je sais que nous sommes «créoles» car c'est ce que mes parents m'ont toujours dit. Mais en me regardant dans un miroir, j'avais un peu de mal à croire que mes ancêtres venaient d'Afrique... ou plutôt ne voulais-je pas y croire: je n'arrivais pas à m'imaginer qu'on les avait un jour amené à Maurice par la force et qu'à cette époque, ils n'avaient pas été considérés comme des êtres humains.

J'ai commencé à remonter mon arbre généalogique comme tous ceux qui commencent. J'ai interrogé mes parents sur leurs propres parents ainsi que des oncles et des tantes. La seule chose dont j'étais certaine, c'était que la famille DONICE a toujours vécu au Morne Brabant.

Cela a été assez difficile au début. Je n'avais ni acte, ni dates qui m'auraient permis de demander des actes au service d'état civil à Maurice. Un peu découragée, et la distance n'aidant pas, j'ai donc entrepris des recherches sur l'esclavage en général à Maurice et par simple curiosité, je me suis mise à consulter les registres d'esclaves.

## LES REGISTRES D'ESCLAVES

### LA FAMILLE VARLOPE

L'habitation du Morne Brabant appartenait à M<sup>elle</sup> Lenormand et comptait 71 esclaves en 1826 selon les recensements.<sup>1</sup>

Bernardin de St. Pierre dans son récit «Voyage en Isle de France» qualifiait la région du Morne comme très reculée, dangereuse et le repère des esclaves marron, prêts à attaquer et dépouiller quiconque s'aventuraient sur leur territoire. Il faisait déjà mention de l'habitation de M. Lenormand en 1769 qui ne comptait alors que 8 noirs.

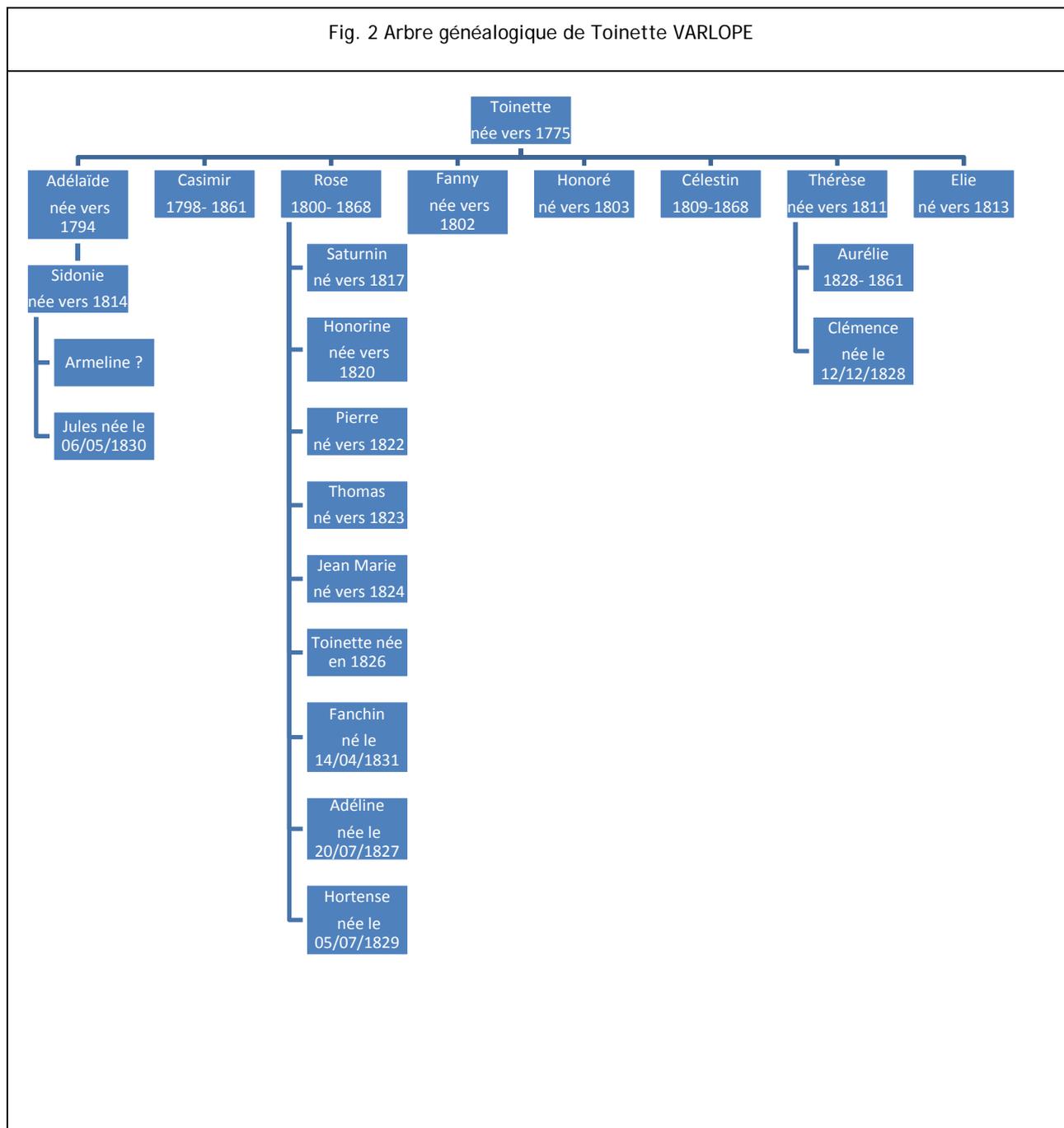
Parmi tous les noms d'esclaves présents sur les registres comme Rabot, La scie, La Galère, Gouge ou encore Savon, un seul a attiré mon attention: VARLOPE.

Je connaissais ce patronyme car il est encore très présent parmi les familles du Morne sous la forme de «Verloppe». Je savais que les noms avaient pu être modifiés avec le temps. Et il ne m'a pas fallu longtemps pour comprendre que les patronymes Varlope et Verloppe désignaient certainement la même famille. Les Varlope/Verloppe auraient donc été esclaves sur l'établissement du Morne Brabant et y seraient restés depuis lors. J'imagine qu'à la fin de l'esclavage, une fois libres, ils se sont installés avec d'autres familles à Trou- Chenille, sur le flanc sud de la montagne, face à l'ilot Fourneau.

La première ancêtre Varlope se prénomait Toinette. Elle était de caste Mozambique et était âgée de 51 ans lors du recensement de 1832.

Elle travaillait sur l'habitation du Morne Brabant en tant que blanchisseuse. Probablement à cause de son âge - avancé pour l'époque- on ne lui confiait plus les travaux des champs. De quelle tribu était-elle originaire? Était-elle Macoas, Mondjavoas, Senas, Moussénas, Yambanes, Mouquindos, Maravis, Macondès, Niamoëses<sup>2</sup>? Nous ne le saurons jamais. Les seules informations disponibles sur les registres étaient qu'elle n'était pas née à l'Isle de France, était de caste Mozambique et mesurait 5 pieds ¼. Elle avait une cicatrice sur le côté gauche du cou. Elle eût au moins 8 enfants, tous portaient le même patronyme Varlope. Toinette a certainement eu tous ses enfants avec un autre esclave du Morne. C'est avec certitude que l'on peut affirmer qu'elle est arrivée à l'Isle de France avant 1794; année de naissance estimée d'Adélaïde, sa première fille dite « créole ». Les enfants de Toinette eurent à leur tour des enfants, tous mentionnés dans les registres d'esclaves. C'est ainsi que j'ai pu retracer une partie de sa généalogie.

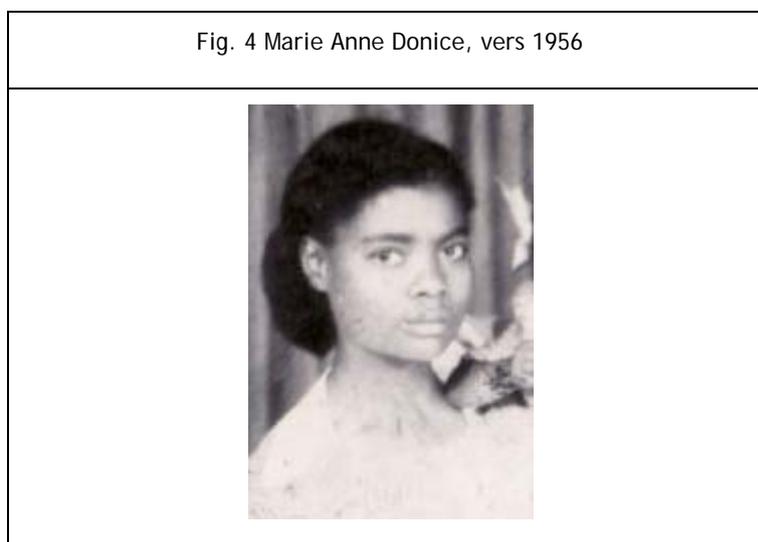
Fig. 2 Arbre généalogique de Toinette VARLOPE





## LA FAMILLE VERLOPPE-DONICE

Un de mes oncles avait heureusement gardé au fond d'un tiroir les actes de naissance de ses grands parents. Mon arrière grand père s'appelait Elis DONICE. Il était habitant de Trou-Chenille. Il a épousé Lucia LEGOY, elle aussi originaire de Trou Chenille. Ils ont eu ensemble 4 enfants dont ma grand-mère Marie Anne DONICE.



Il était pêcheur. Il avait appris la pêche de son père, et l'a appris par la suite à mes oncles qui eux-mêmes l'on enseigné à leurs fils.

Elis Donice était le fils d'Elisa VERLOPPE et de Jean DONICE. Il est né en 1902.

Fig. 5 Acte de naissance d'Elis DONICE

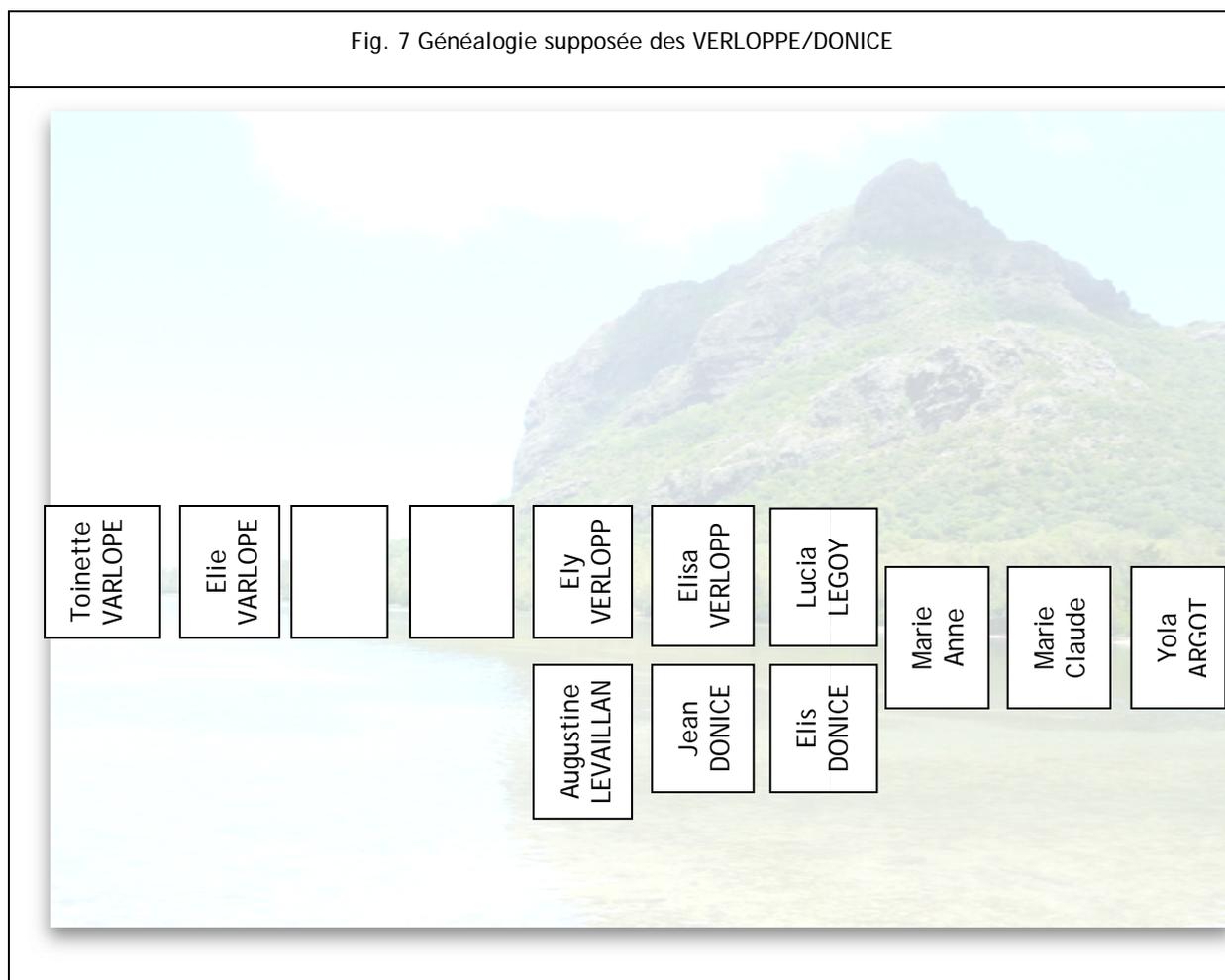
1902 BIRTH in the District of		Black River		in the Island of Mauritius		
No.	Name and Surname	Sex	Name and Surname of Father and Mother, Profession and Religion	Name and Surname of Informant, Profession and Religion	Married Name	
68	On this 1st day of June 1902 at about 10 o'clock in the afternoon at Home No. 14 in the District of Black River	Male	JEAN DONICE Agriculturist and Elisa Verloppe No calling wife of the said	The Father and the mother as present	DOMINICA DANDJEE and MILL CRAMER Both husband of age and of this District.	
I hereby certify that the above said information is the true and correct information given to me by the informant in the presence of the above named witnesses who, after I have read over this Act to them have signed or verified the same in my presence this 1st day of June 1902 at about 10 o'clock in the afternoon at Home No. 14 in the District of Black River.		Signature of informant Elis Donice		Signature of witnesses M. Legoy P. Donice		Signed D. Legoy Officer of the Civil Status of the District of Black River A True Record: M. Legoy Officer of the Civil Status of the District of Black River (Notary Civil Status Officer) 14-6-02

Source : Civil Status Office, Mauritius

J'ai découvert un peu plus tard que sa mère, Elisa VERLOPPE était née au Morne Brabant en 1880. J'ai la certitude qu'elle a grandi à Trou Chenille. Même si je n'ai pas de traces écrites pour le prouver, j'ai néanmoins recueillis les divers témoignages des anciens de ma famille qui m'ont assuré qu'ils avaient toujours vécu à cet endroit.



Fig. 7 Généalogie supposée des VERLOPPE/DONICE



Entre temps, j'ai également entrepris de faire l'arbre généalogique de la famille de mon mari, originaire pour son côté paternel de Bombay.

J'ai rapidement pu retrouver le premier ancêtre NAYEKOO venu d'Inde en tant que travailleur engagé grâce au Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

Pour le côté maternel de mon mari, il se trouve que nous avons des ancêtres en commun. On m'avait dit que toutes les familles du Morne étaient plus ou moins liées et cela s'est confirmé lorsque j'ai découvert le même patronyme dans l'arbre généalogique de mon mari : VERLOPPE.

Sa grand-mère s'appelait Léonide Célestin Verloppe. Elle était par ailleurs cousine avec la tante maternelle de ma mère, Alicia Verloppe. Cette dernière n'avait pas hérité du patronyme Donice car elle était le fruit d'une relation non légitimée par le mariage entre Elis Donice et Charlette Verloppe. Elle portait donc le nom de sa mère VERLOPPE.

Je ne sais pas dans quelle autre mesure cette branche Verloppe est liée à la mienne. Compte tenu de la grande descendance de Toinette, il existe d'innombrables possibilités. Il me reste encore à remonter cette branche et la chose n'est pas aisée.

D'après mes recherches généalogiques, il s'est avéré que les différentes familles du Morne pratiquaient l'endogamie ou l'inter mariage, c'est-à-dire qu'ils ne se mariaient que très peu avec des gens d'autres villages. Selon les actes d'état civil, ce sont toujours les mêmes noms qui

reviennent. C'est ainsi que l'on peut affirmer que finalement, toutes les familles du Morne n'en forment en réalité qu'une seule, qu'une seule grande communauté.

Pour en revenir à la branche DONICE Je n'ai malheureusement pas pu remonter très loin pour le moment. Le nom a certainement dû changer avec le temps. Peut être est-ce ADONIS, DONIS ? Pour le moment, ce nom s'arrête avec mon arrière grand père Jean Donice, probablement né vers 1880. Mais je ne désespère pas.

En ce qui concerne son fils Elis Donice et sa belle-fille Lucia Legoy, nous savons qu'ils sont nés à Trou-Chenille grâce aux actes de naissance.

Trou Chenille est un des premiers villages d'esclaves et d'anciens esclaves. Selon une légende à présent célèbre, des esclaves en fuite s'étaient réfugiés au sommet du Morne. A l'abolition de l'esclavage en 1834, certains sont venus leur apporter la bonne nouvelle: qu'ils étaient à présent libres ; mais en voyant ces gens depuis leur cachette, les esclaves prirent peur et pensèrent qu'on venait les chercher. Certains préférèrent donc se jeter du haut de la montagne et mourir libres plutôt que de retourner en esclavage. Pour certaines personnes il ne s'agit que d'une légende mais on ne peut nier que le Morne a été le refuge d'esclaves marrons.

Des fouilles récentes l'on prouvé et les témoignages des habitants de Trou Chenille le confirment; ils ont vu de leurs propres yeux des ossements, des traces d'habitation et des ustensiles dans des cavernes au pied de la montagne.

## LA VIE AU VILLAGE DE TROU CHENILLE DANS LES ANNÉES 1940

On m'a souvent raconté comment ils vivaient dans ce petit village au pied du Morne Brabant. On m'a raconté comment, un jour, ils ont tous été chassés de leur village par la force et contraints de s'installer plus loin. Cela a été très dur, ils auraient tant aimé rester dans leur petit village, entre eux. On peut dire que là bas, la vie était douce, bien que sans électricité ni eau courante, les gens menaient une vie simple mais heureuse.

Cet ancien village d'esclaves libres se situait entre mer et montagne. Pour la plupart pêcheurs, les habitants vivaient d'auto subsistance. Ils chassaient les singes, lièvres, sangliers, et tangués. Il y avait aussi des charbonniers, des laboureurs. Certains coupaient ou ramassaient l'arbre filao pour en faire de petits paquets qui étaient ensuite amenés sur des bateaux à voile pour être revendus en ville.

### Habitations et activités

Les pêcheurs à la sène ramenaient des poissons cornes à l'abondance. Les pêcheurs à casiers construisaient eux-mêmes leurs outils de travail tandis que les enfants cherchaient les crabes appelés loulou. Les pirogues à voile permettaient aux pêcheurs d'aller en dehors du lagon pour attraper de grosses prises. Les habitants nourrissaient leurs animaux de basse-cour : oies, poules, canards, cabri. Et cultivaient la terre pour leurs propres besoins: maïs, taro (songes), manioc, patates douces, pommes d'amour, piment et autres. Une partie des habitants travaillait néanmoins pour l'établissement du propriétaire terrien local, la famille Cambier.

Les habitations consistaient en de simples cases. Les murs étaient faits de feuilles d'aloi et tapissés d'un mélange de terre et bouse de vache. Les toits étaient faits de paille. Ces cases ne résistaient que très difficilement aux cyclones.

Hormis leurs pirogues, aucun autre moyen de transport n'était à leur disposition, tout se faisait à pieds. Ainsi les habitants marchaient jusqu'à Rivière Noire où ils pouvaient ensuite prendre le train qui les amènerait directement à Port-Louis. Mais les sorties en ville restaient extrêmement rares.

Les habitants disposaient également d'une boutique, située à Trou Chenille même qui leur fournissait tous les produits d'utilisation courante à portée de main.

## L'école et le catéchisme

Les familles du Morne étaient pour la plupart de religion romaine catholique. Les villageois marchaient jusqu'à la chapelle située à l'Embrasure pour assister à la messe. Des mariages y furent célébrés.

Une école, près de la chapelle dispensait des cours et le catéchisme aux plus jeunes jusqu'à leur première communion. On fait déjà état de ce petit village de pêcheurs dans le Mauritius Register datant de 1859: je cite «le long de la baie formée par la Péninsule sur laquelle le Morne se dresse, il y a un village de pêcheurs, dans lequel on trouve une école et une chapelle soutenues par le Mauritius Church Association<sup>3</sup>. En 1858, cette école publique et gratuite accueillait 55 enfants: 34 garçons et 21 filles<sup>4</sup>.

Les ruines de la chapelle sont encore visibles aujourd'hui à l'Embrasure. Mais malheureusement désormais interdites d'accès.

## Le cimetière de Trou Chenille

Lors des décès, on transportait le défunt sur le dos, à pieds ou en pirogue jusqu'au cimetière de la Rivière Noire. Selon les dires de tous les anciens, aucun enterrement n'a eu lieu dans le vieux cimetière situé près de l'actuel terrain de football. Selon eux, les tombes qui y reposent remontent au temps de l'esclavage.

Effectivement, les récentes fouilles et analyse de ce cimetière ont démontré qu'il s'agissait certainement de corps d'esclaves libérés. Les corps d'environ 70 personnes ont été enterrés ici entre 1810 et 1850. La datation la plus ancienne des artefacts retrouvés remonterait à 1815. Ce cimetière aurait donc été créé dans une période de transition, où des esclaves étaient parfois libérés, avant l'abolition de l'esclavage, avant aussi que les catholiques n'entreprennent leurs campagnes de conversion. Aucune trace de rites chrétiens n'existe sur le site, si ce n'est la grande croix qui a été érigée bien plus tard.

Ce petit cimetière "animiste" nous donne un témoignage archéologique très intéressant sur le mode de vie des esclaves libérés<sup>5</sup>.

Fig. 8 Cimetière de Trou Chenille



Peut-être reposent dans ce cimetière le corps de Toinette et d'une partie de sa famille. Nous ne le saurons probablement jamais.

### **Le respect dû au propriétaire terrien**

Bien que libres, les descendants d'esclaves de Trou Chenille devaient respect au «Missié», au propriétaire terrien local.

Ainsi, ils n'avaient pas le droit de lui répondre, et devaient dire oui à tout ce qu'il disait sous peine d'être battus ou licenciés sans aucune raison.

Les villageois n'avaient pas le droit d'allumer un feu de bois à la nuit tombée à cause des risques d'incendie. Ils utilisaient alors des petites lampes faites de boîtes en fer avec une mèche au milieu trempée de pétrole pour s'éclairer.

Une pierre présente dans les environs que l'on appelait «tone» était utilisée pour allumer la flamme : deux pierres frottées l'une contre l'autre provoquaient des étincelles qui permettaient ensuite d'allumer une petite flamme grâce aux brindilles sèches au cœur de l'arbre appelé l'aloï.

### **Les plantes curatives**

Pour les soins, les anciens avaient une grande connaissance des plantes médicinales et de leurs effets. Les habitants ne se déplaçaient que très rarement pour aller à l'hôpital ou consulter un médecin.

Ils allaient cueillir eux-mêmes au pied de la montagne et dans les environs les herbes dont ils avaient besoin et les préparaient de façon adéquate. Les techniques étaient transmises de parents à enfants. Aujourd'hui encore, si vous interrogez les villageois du Morne, ils vous diront comment soigner la fièvre, la gangrène, l'hypertension ou diverses douleurs sans avoir recours à aucun médicament mais seulement grâce aux herbes et tisanes. Cela, ils l'ont appris de leurs parents. Par ailleurs ils sont aussi persuadés que l'air de la mer possède un effet curatif.

Ces plantes, ils les trouvaient donc dans les environs, au pied de la montagne du Morne, dans les forêts avoisinantes. Les femmes préparaient les décoctions tandis que les hommes étaient chargés de ramasser les herbes nécessaires. La transmission des connaissances et techniques se faisait uniquement par voie orale, de parents à enfants. Les enfants reproduisaient ainsi le même schéma jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

Toinette Varlope utilisait certainement elle-même ces techniques pour soigner ses maux et ceux de ses enfants.

### **Les nuits de Séga**

Le principal loisir des villageois de Trou Chenille était l'organisation de nuits de séga: généralement le samedi soir. Il s'agit de ce qu'on appellerait aujourd'hui le séga typique : ils chantaient et dansaient toute la nuit au son du tambour et d'un autre instrument appelé bom («bobre»). Il s'agit d'un instrument à corde rudimentaire d'origine africaine, constitué d'un morceau de bambou tendu en arc par une corde et relié à une noix de coco séchée et vidée servant de caisse de résonance. Cet instrument est connu depuis 1769. Les gens composaient leurs propres textes. Il s'agissait le plus souvent d'improvisation sur ce qui se passait dans le village : ils racontaient en musique les histoires ou chamailleries ou déclaraient même leur amour en publique. Ces nuits de séga étaient renommées et les villageois des autres environs comme Petite Rivière Noire, de Case Noyale ou encore de Chamarel n'hésitaient pas à faire le déplacement à pieds pour y participer. Pendant ces nuits, on mangeait et buvait le tilambik, baka et le kalou qui sont des alcools que les villageois fabriquaient artisanalement. La technique de fabrication se transmettait également de parents à enfants. La vie à Trou Chenille était donc très simple mais assez douce.

### **Déplacements forcés**

En 1945, les familles de Trou Chenille qui avaient occupé ces terres depuis des générations et des générations ont été contraints de partir sous la pression et les menaces du propriétaire terrien local.

La question qui se pose ici est: à qui appartient Trou Chenille?

Alexandre Descubes, Land Surveyor, a compilé un cadastre en 1880 à partir de plans, d'actes de propriété et d'autres sources antérieures, sur lequel apparait le village de Trou Chenille et le vieux cimetière. Mais le nom du propriétaire de ce territoire n'est pas mentionné contrairement aux autres parcelles de terrain du Morne pour lesquelles les noms des propriétaires sont bien mentionnés. J'en ai déduis personnellement qu'à l'époque, Trou Chenille appartenait à ses habitants.

Ces habitants ont donc été contraints de quitter leurs habitations et de déménager vers l'Embrasure, plus à l'intérieur des terres pour la plupart. Un délai leur avait été donné, le temps de reconstruire une nouvelle petite maison avec les moyens qu'ils pouvaient trouver à ce moment là. Aucun dédommagement ne leur a été versé pour quitter la terre de leurs ancêtres. Si à l'époque aucune famille ne s'est rebellée contre ce déplacement forcé, c'est avant tout car ils craignaient la famille Cambier. Il faut rappeler que certains villageois travaillaient pour cette famille et en étaient par conséquent dépendants. Par ailleurs, depuis l'époque de l'esclavage, on leur a toujours dit qu'il fallait respecter et se courber devant les descendants de colons. C'est donc sans se battre et impuissants qu'ils ont abandonné leur village. Ce fut donc le premier déplacement forcé des villageois de Trou Chenille.

Le deuxième déplacement forcé à eu lieu 20 ans plus tard, après le cyclone Carol en 1960.

Les habitants de Trou chenille s'étaient donc installés à l'Embrasure, des deux côtés de la route royale. L'installation à l'Embrasure a posé problème notamment aux pêcheurs qui se retrouvaient à présent beaucoup plus loin de la mer.

Les maisons étaient construites dans les mêmes matériaux qu'auparavant et donc vulnérables face aux cyclones. C'est d'ailleurs après le passage du cyclone Carol dans les années 1960, qu'il a été demandé aux villageois de quitter une nouvelle fois leurs maisons dévastées pour aller s'installer plus loin, sur des terres libres du gouvernement ici même au Morne Village actuel. Dès le déplacement des villageois effectué, des barrières et des fils de fer ont été mis en place pour délimiter le terrain. Et l'accès fut complètement interdit à quiconque.

Comme pour le déménagement de Trou Chenille vers l'Embrasure, c'est tout d'abord la boutique qui a été déplacée: privés des commodités et des éléments de première nécessité que fournissaient la boutique, les familles ont été une nouvelle fois contraintes de se déplacer et de suivre la boutique.

A l'emplacement actuel du village, les habitants ont choisi un bout de terrain pour s'installer. Mais ils ont tout d'abord été parqués dans des baraquements.

Un contrat a ensuite été établi. Le contrat de mon arrière grand père Elis Donice a été établi en 1964, il s'agissait d'un contrat de 20 ans renouvelable. Il pouvait disposer de ce terrain sous certaines conditions et contre le paiement de 31 roupies chaque année.

Trou Chenille est un village historique. Aujourd'hui encore, nous pouvons y trouver les vestiges des maisons. Malheureusement, l'accès au village est interdit à ses anciens occupants. Les habitants de Trou Chenille ont perdu tout droit d'occupation sur ce qui avait été autrefois leur territoire. On leur refuse tout accès.

Pour ses habitants, descendant d'esclaves, il s'agit d'un site sacré, il ne s'agit pas ici seulement de folklore comme on peut l'entendre quelque fois, mais Trou Chenille est profondément lié à leurs origines et leur identité propre.

Les villageois ont un rapport très intime avec la montagne du Morne. C'est le lieu de leur enfance, là où leurs parents et grand parents ont pu leur conter des histoires sur leurs ancêtres. Ce village symbolise une façon de vivre de l'époque. La tradition orale, les coutumes de ses habitants que l'on ne trouve pas ailleurs à Maurice sont l'héritage que leur ont laissé leurs ancêtres esclaves.

Toinette Varlope a laissé à ses enfants un patrimoine culturel incroyable. Aujourd'hui encore, ses descendants lui rendent hommage en perpétuant ce qu'elle leur a appris.

Comme leurs ancêtres esclaves autrefois, les familles du Morne sont en quête aujourd'hui d'une certaine liberté et veulent lutter contre l'oppression. Ils veulent tout simplement la justice. C'est la raison pour laquelle un dossier a été déposé devant la Commission Justice et Vérité en 2010.

## LE MORNE BRABANT AUJOURD'HUI

Les habitants pensent sincèrement que Trou Chenille a appartenu à leurs ancêtres esclaves du Morne et estiment qu'ils ont par conséquent un droit sur ce terrain. Il faut par conséquent que la lumière y soit faite sur le droit de propriété depuis l'époque de l'esclavage jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

Si aujourd'hui les langues se délient c'est aussi grâce au développement actuel du Morne. Les Donice, les Verloppe et les autres familles ont souvent eu l'impression d'être des laissés pour compte. Ils ont vécu dans une certaine pauvreté et des conditions difficiles après leur éviction de Trou Chenille. Comme beaucoup de la population créole, ils se sentent en marge du développement de Maurice.

Mais aujourd'hui, alors que le site du Morne a été reconnu site patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco, ces familles se réjouissent que l'on s'intéresse enfin à elles et à leur histoire. Elles souhaitent avant tout que le développement du village continue à long terme, et que tout le monde puisse en profiter : pas seulement les gens aisés mais également les villageois de toutes conditions. N'oublions pas que ce qui fait un village, ce sont ses habitants, ces descendants d'anciens esclaves.

## CONCLUSION

A présent maman à mon tour, je serai fière un jour d'expliquer à mon fils que ses ancêtres étaient esclaves et comment ils ont vécu.

Je lui raconterai comment un jour, une certaine Toinette Varlope a été amenée à l'Isle de France pour y travailler la terre de force et comment, elle fût libérée et sa famille s'est agrandie.

Dix générations plus tard, je pense encore à son courage et à sa force, à sa probable envie de voir ses enfants libres un jour. Elle serait peut être fière aujourd'hui de voir que ses descendants résident toujours au Morne et que certains se sont même installés très loin, en Europe.

*"I am not ashamed of my grandparents for having been slaves. I am only ashamed of myself for having at one time being ashamed." (Ralph Ellison)*

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<sup>1</sup> Recensement biennal -Plantation Slaves 1-347, état du 16 octobre 1826.

<sup>2</sup> Baron d'Unienville, *Statistiques de l'île Maurice et de ses Dépendances. Suivie d'une Notice Historique sur cette Colonie et d'un Essai sur l'île de Madagascar* (Paris, 1838),

<sup>3</sup> G.T Bradshaw, T.E Palmer, G. Clark, *The Mauritius Register: historical, official and commercial*, 293 pages, 1859 : "along the sides of the bay formed by the peninsula in which Le Morne stands, is a fishing village in which are a school and chapel supported by The Mauritius Church Association" chapitre XXVIII.

<sup>4</sup> *Bolton's Mauritius Almanach*, 1852

<sup>5</sup> Article paru dans *Le Mauricien*, 22 juillet, 2011.

# Le Morne Cemetery: Archaeological Investigations - the 2010 Season: Excavation, Results and Interpretation

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## REPORT SUMMARY

The report centres on the field survey undertaken between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2010 at the Le Morne Cemetery Site, Le Morne, Mauritius. The excavations were undertaken under the aegis and commission of the Truth and Justice Commission, Port Louis, with the express desire to gain a clear understanding of who was actually interred in the cemetery. Previous oral knowledge and conjecture about the site had suggested that the buried were of Malagasy origins; our principal objective was to clarify this issue given the significance of the site in relation to Le Morne Cultural Landscape WHS. In addition to this main objective, it was hoped that any remains recovered might be used within the framework of the 'Health Legacies of Slavery and Indenture' project directed by Mr Benjamin Moutou, with myself as team leader. The remit of this latter project was to better understand, through comparative study, the impacts (if any) of slavery and indenture on the health of the modern Mauritian population.

This site is remarkable. We have clear evidence relative to aspects of diet, health and working life. As significant, we have a unique and unparalleled insight into the life ways of an ancestral Mauritian community as it relates to death, burial and spiritualism. While it is unfortunate that in the absence of DNA evidence, we do not at this stage have conclusive evidence of the origins of those interred, we must not lose sight of the fact that this is a *first* for the Republic, and represents an invaluable step in linking the modern Mauritian population with its past.

Our main recommendations place emphasis on the need to carry out further excavation and analysis as this study has been most heavily hampered by a lack of samples. Given what this site and the interred remains represent, it is our sincere hope that further studies can be undertaken as these are essential for better understanding the site and the peoples buried.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

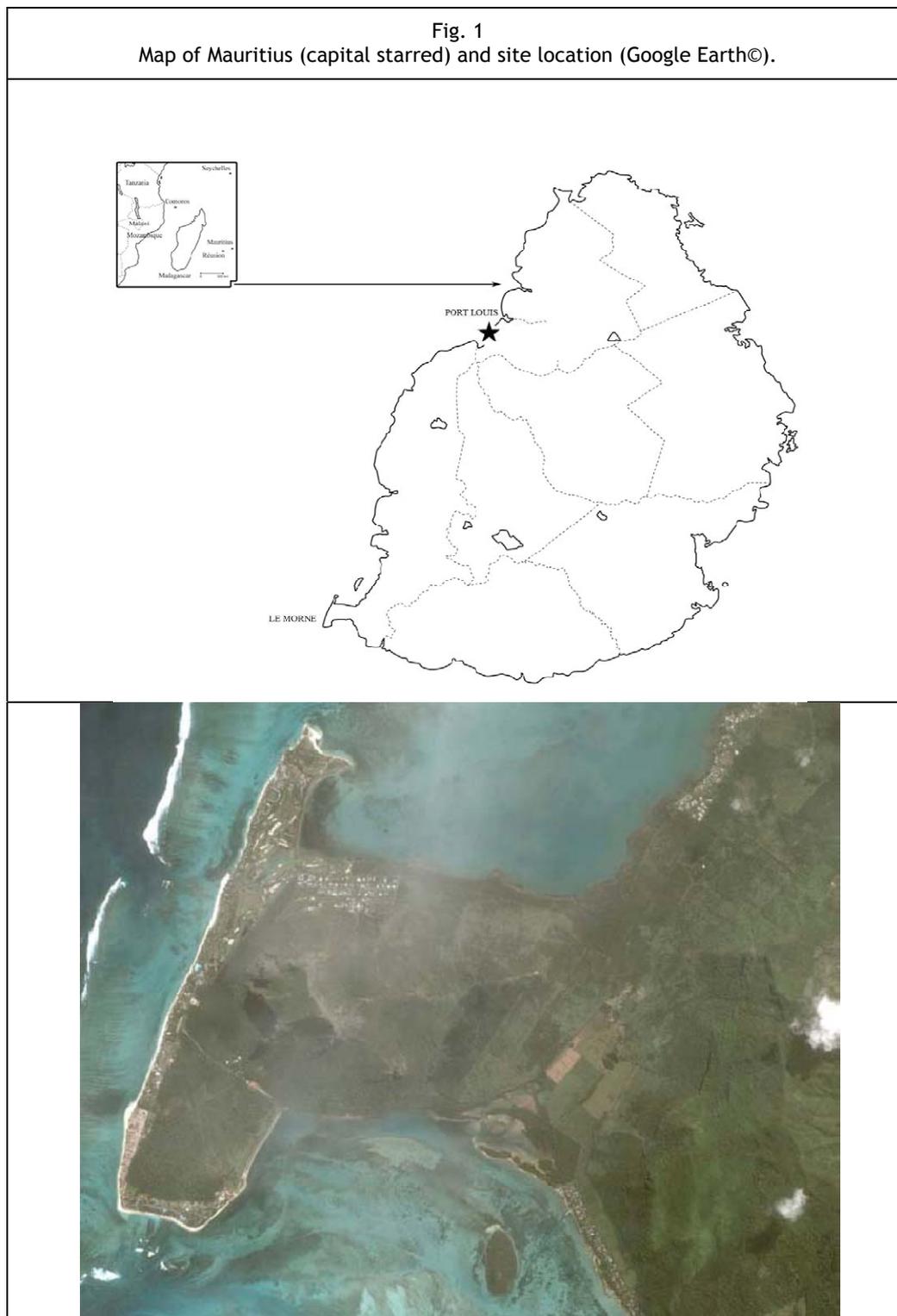
We must firstly acknowledge the support of the Truth and Justice Commission, particularly Prof. Alex Boraine, Dr. Vijaya Teelock, Mr. Benjamin Moutou, Mrs. Colette Le Chartier, Mr. Allan Charlot and Mr. Satyendra Peerthum, all of whom provided much needed support and assistance. From the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund (LMHTF), our sincere thanks to the Acting Chairperson, Mr. Mathieu Laclé, whose support is gratefully acknowledged. Our work at Le Morne was facilitated by Mr. Jean-Francoise Lafleur and Mr. Stephan Dux of LMHTF, and many local participants, all of whose assistance we greatly appreciate. We are all thankful to Dr Anwar Janoo and the students of UoM, for assisting us so ably on many occasions, and Mrs. Nelly Ardill and Mr. Thierry Le Breton from SOS Patrimoine for both financial and logistical support. Our thanks to Mr. Beebeejaun of the Mauritius Museum Council for kindly providing space for interim storage of the skeletal materials prior to analysis. We also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Ms. Sheila Thanoo of NHF for providing permissions and support throughout our venture, and Mr. Choonee, Minister for Arts and Culture for quickly recognising the value of this site and immediately providing 24hr security. Our grateful thanks to Prof. Konrad Morgan, VC of UoM, for providing logistical support in storing and transporting the skeletal remains as well as providing facilities to study the remains.

## FUNDING BODIES

Funding for this seasons' work has been generously provided by, and gratefully received from, the TJC, LMHTF, SOS Patrimoine, The University of Mauritius, The British Academy, the University of Central Lancashire and the US State Office, Mauritius.

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

The following report details the 2010 campaign of archaeological investigations undertaken at Le Morne Cemetery, Le Morne, Mauritius (fig. 1), under the aegis of the Truth and Justice Commission, Port Louis, Mauritius.



The site of Le Morne Brabant represents perhaps one of the most significant global commemorations to the memory of slave resistance. Not only does this site evidence a rich associated cultural and oral history within a local context, but it has recently been inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008 precisely for its remarkable role within the maroon movement.

Fieldwork was carried out between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2010 by a collaborating group of professional archaeologists from the University of Central Lancashire, University of Reading and University of Cambridge, UK; Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia, Italy and Inštitut za antropološke in prostorske študije, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The excavation focused on the area that had previously been studied during the 2009 survey season, identified as the main cemetery site. Two further 'satellite' regions were also included, which ultimately proved to be highly beneficial thanks to the identification of further interred remains.

### 1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CEMETERY AND GRAVES

The site could best be described as an abandoned, but not unused, cemetery. Although there are no apparent connections between the present population and the interred, the cemetery shows clear and unequivocal evidence of *longanis* practices.

Fig. 2  
Site prior to clearance showing evidence of *longanis* (voodoo) practice.



The cemetery itself is located enigmatically in the shadow of Le Morne Brabant Mountain, on a small sandy islet, which is regularly cut-off from the mainland as a consequence of tidal oscillations. Based on current evidence, the site appears to be divided into three sections, a main central burial area that is approx. 20m x 25m aligned north-south along the longest axis (with the supposed entrance due north). This is orbited by two apparent satellite areas, each considerably smaller, and measuring approx. 5m x 6m to the east and 5m x 5m to the west of the main area.

Prior to excavation, and as one might expect in a tropical environment, the area was heavily overgrown with small trees, mostly acacia, shrubs and other low lying vegetation. Two larger, and

considerably older, trees seemed to form a natural focal point for the central grave region. Evidence of current ritual practices was observed from remains of sacrificed chickens (fig. 2), portions of young pig, an abundance of coconuts, and copious small earthenware oil lamps. Other examples, more enduring and arguably less contemporaneous, were small dolls and bottle tops nailed into one of the larger 'focal' trees. Under the bottle tops were small pieces of cloth with the names of individuals written in ink; the ritual significance of these finds are complex, but are unlikely to have any particular connection with the interred individuals. Despite our greatest fear, only one of the graves was particularly disturbed, and none were robbed.

The graves themselves were delineated by basalt rock. These delineations, of varying sizes, were proportional to the interred, i.e. smaller graves denoting infants, larger graves for adults. This was not immediately obvious as the arrangement of stones was often disassociated and apparently ad hoc. While the majority of the graves were marked by relatively small-to-medium sized stones that showed little evidence of being tailored or fashioned (cut) in any way, the more prominent adult graves were delineated with cut basalt blocks. These were most likely brought to the site as waste building material and re-used for constructing the grave markers.

## **2. Fieldwork Procedure**

The excavation procedure followed a basic hierarchical system. Individual stratigraphic units were defined as 'contexts'; a collection of associated contexts or artifacts were defined as 'features', and groups of features were defined as 'structures'. For the purposes of clarity and to facilitate recording and accession, each context was provided with a unique identifying index number (i.e. context number).

All grave fill contexts (sandy layers) were subject to 100% coarse dry-sieving, firstly through a 5mm mesh and then subsequently through a 3mm mesh. Due to logistical and time constraints it was not possible to carry out flotation for general biological analysis, although given the nature of the site this was not deemed particularly detrimental under the circumstances. All finds, including all osteological remains, were hand-collected.

### **2.1 EXCAVATION PROCEDURE**

The 2009 field season deemed the cemetery site particularly suitable for geophysical survey as the graves were constructed using basalt, a highly magnetic material, set in natural sand geology that is magnetically quiet. Grids of 10 x 10 metres were laid out using a Leica 700 series Total Station. The station and grid points were later recorded with GPS for subsequent geo-referencing. Since the common line of archaeological features (the graves themselves) were aligned roughly north west - south east, the base line was oriented east-west and the direction of traverse was north. The magnetometer survey of this site was successful in identifying surface and sub-surface archaeological features. The quiet magnetic signal of the sand in this area contrasts sharply with the dipolar anomalies created by the highly magnetic basalt stones used to construct the graves. In total, some 21 clearly defined sub-soil structures were identified following the 2009 geophysical survey.

Building on this in 2010, our first remit was to establish extent of the cemetery based on the preliminary results from the 2009 survey. This involved a concerted programme of site clearance, guided by the field archaeologists at all times, but heavily reliant on the efforts of local Le Morne and additional UoM volunteers. Due to the location, but more importantly the sensitive nature of the site, no mechanical equipment was used for site clearance; a more sympathetic approach based on hand clearance was preferred. Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate the extent and outcome of the work undertaken.

Fig. 3  
Site - prior to clearance



Fig. 4  
Site - post clearance



Following on from the site clearance a full archaeological reconnaissance of the site was undertaken, with very positive results. A further 24 'structures' were discovered, bringing the total count of burial type features to 45.

The area of the excavation was set out using a Total Station Theodolite, with reference to the previous seasons survey strategy. Once geo-referencing was complete, actual excavation was undertaken. The nature of the topsoil was comprised of a relatively loose amorphous substrate composed of loose-leaf litter and other vegetal matter. However, this rapidly gave way to a series of sandy layers that continued without a break through to the level in which we were able to recover osteological remains, some 90cm below topsoil level. A full soil, including microstructure geo-archaeological, assessment is provided in Appendix IV. Due to the nature of the sandy soil, all the graves were excavated in plan, where possible by context, but by spit were no clear contextual divisions were evident. Excavating by spit effectively means that soil is carefully removed by standard units (e.g. 20cm) down to the level of finds. Throughout the process a photographic log was maintained, with images taken of each skeleton whilst *in situ* before lifting.

### 3. FIELDWORK RESULTS

All 45 structures were cleared of vegetation, recorded and geo-referenced; a total of eight were actively excavated resulting in the recovery of 11 entire skeletons, the analysis of which form the bulk of the remainder of this report.

Very few additional finds were made with the skeletal remains, although notable exceptions include a series of buttons, a small collection of French coins and a glass bottle. A spade and hoe were also recovered just below the topsoil layer of grave 8. There was limited remaining evidence of the actual mode of interment, although ephemeral residues of ostensibly well-constructed coffins were revealed by careful excavation (see fig. 5 below).

Fig. 5  
Coffin outline evident in grave no: 29, as revealed through careful excavation



### 3.1 SUMMARY OF EXCAVATED GRAVES

Grave no. 01:

A rectangular 'frame' constructed of basalt and coral, and held together with a lime mortar, delineated this grave (fig. 6). A number of the basalt block, mainly those at the corners of the frame, were cut. Beneath these blocks was a dark brown layer of topsoil, which was heavily overgrown with a network of roots. The fill of the grave comprised three sandy layers, alternating from light grey to light beige in colour and with decreasing vegetal matter at lower depths. At the lowest context a coffin with the skeleton of an adult and a juvenile (neonate) were recovered (fig. 7). The remnants of a wooden coffin were visible as a darker outline, detectable in the lighter sand deposit; the remains of the metal elements of the coffin, ostensibly iron nails, were also recovered. The adult skeleton's head was positioned to the left. Some bones of the right foot were displaced from the original position otherwise the skeleton was complete. The placement of the arms of adult skeleton suggests that they were crossed at the abdomen at the time of burial. The remains of the juvenile were positioned between the legs (knees) of the adult, with the head towards the feet of the adult. The level of ossification of the juvenile bones was at an underdeveloped stage and the remains were thus very fragile and not preserved as a full complement.

The grave contained no finds other than human bones, metal remnants of the coffin and a set of round buttons made from mother of pearl, indicating that one or both of the interred individuals was clothed when buried.

Fig. 6  
Layout of grave no. 1, with scaling and positioning

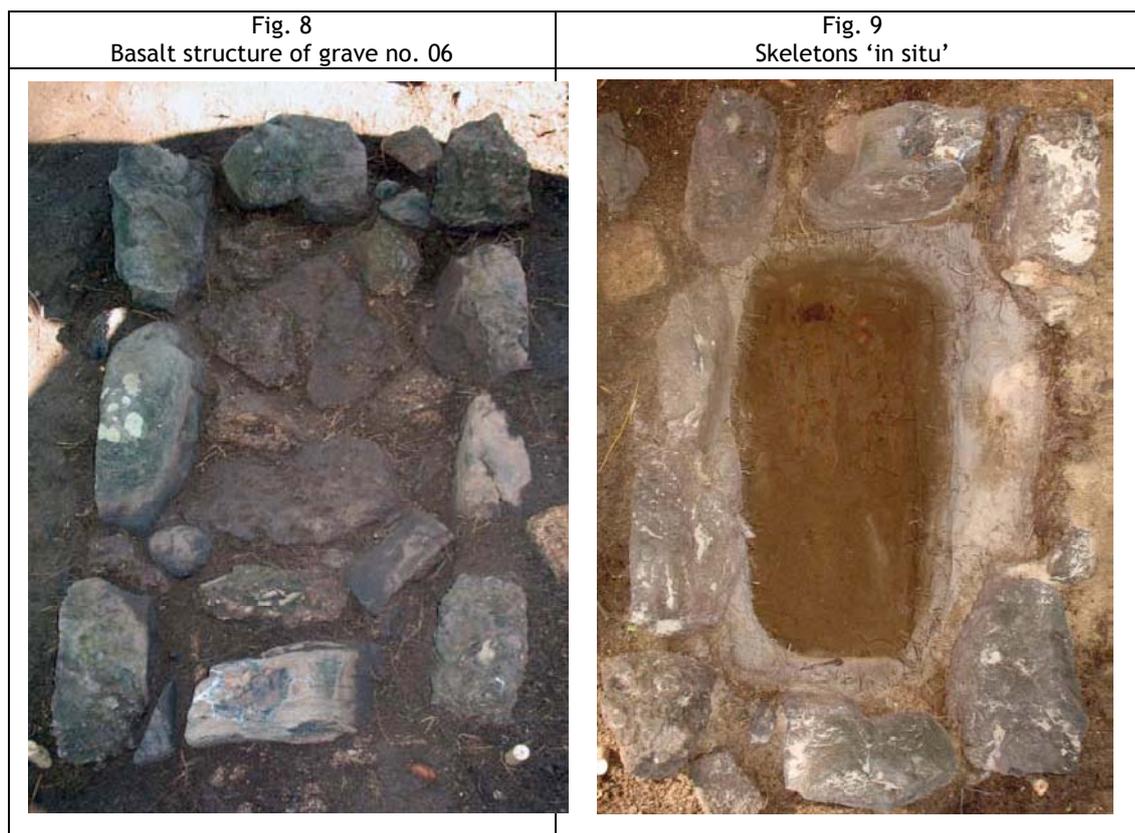


Fig. 7  
Position of both skeletons 'in situ'



Grave no. 06:

The size of the rectangular basalt stone covering the grave suggested this was a small inhumation (fig.8). Under the basalt, a dark brown layer of soil was present, overlaying three layers of sand, altering in colour (light beige to dark grey) and moisture content (dry to wet) with increasing depth. The lowest sandy layer contained two skeletons of newborn juveniles, with their head orientated to the east (fig.9). During excavation, traces of a rectangular coffin were detected as a residual variation in substrate colouration; metal finds (nails) were also recovered towards the distal (feet) end of the coffin. A stone plate was also recovered, covering the head of one of the skeletons, and possibly part of burial practice.



Grave no. 07:

This grave was delineated by a series of four rectangular structures, all comprised of basalt, and laying at different stratigraphic levels (fig.10). Those basalt stones on the surface (contemporary structure) were lime mortared; the blocks themselves had been cut, most likely indicating that the structure was comprised from reused building material. The position of the top row of stones did not align to the position of lowest row. After the top organic dark brown soil was removed, within the stone frame of the grave, some ritual objects were found, pertaining to the modern times. Five sandy layers filled the grave, with the lowest containing the remnants of a wooden coffin, visible as a series of darker outlines within the sand deposit delineating the wooden frame of the coffin. Portions of wood from the coffin were recovered, along with eight metal elements (iron nails). The adult skeleton faced Le Morne Mountain (fig.11). The skull was turned to the right and most of the long bones were displaced from their original place, but in correct anatomical position. Under the skull a fabric bag was recovered containing four silver coins.

Fig. 10  
Basalt structure of grave no. 07



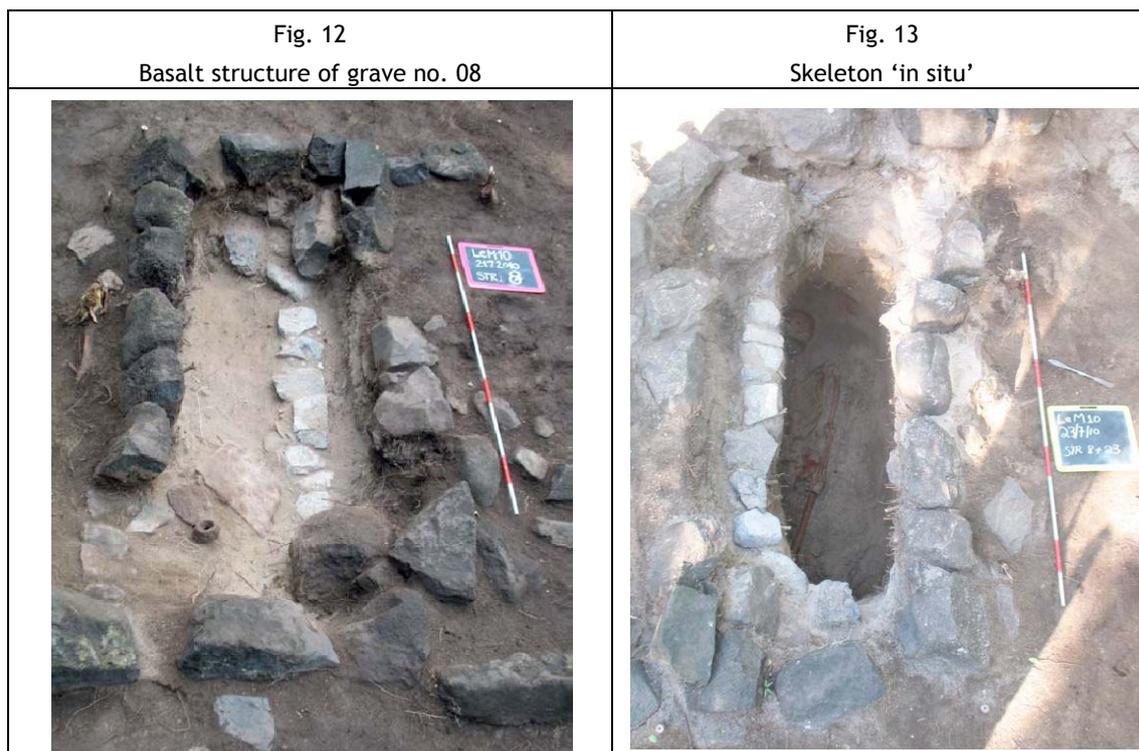
Fig. 11  
Skeleton 'in situ'



Grave no. 08:

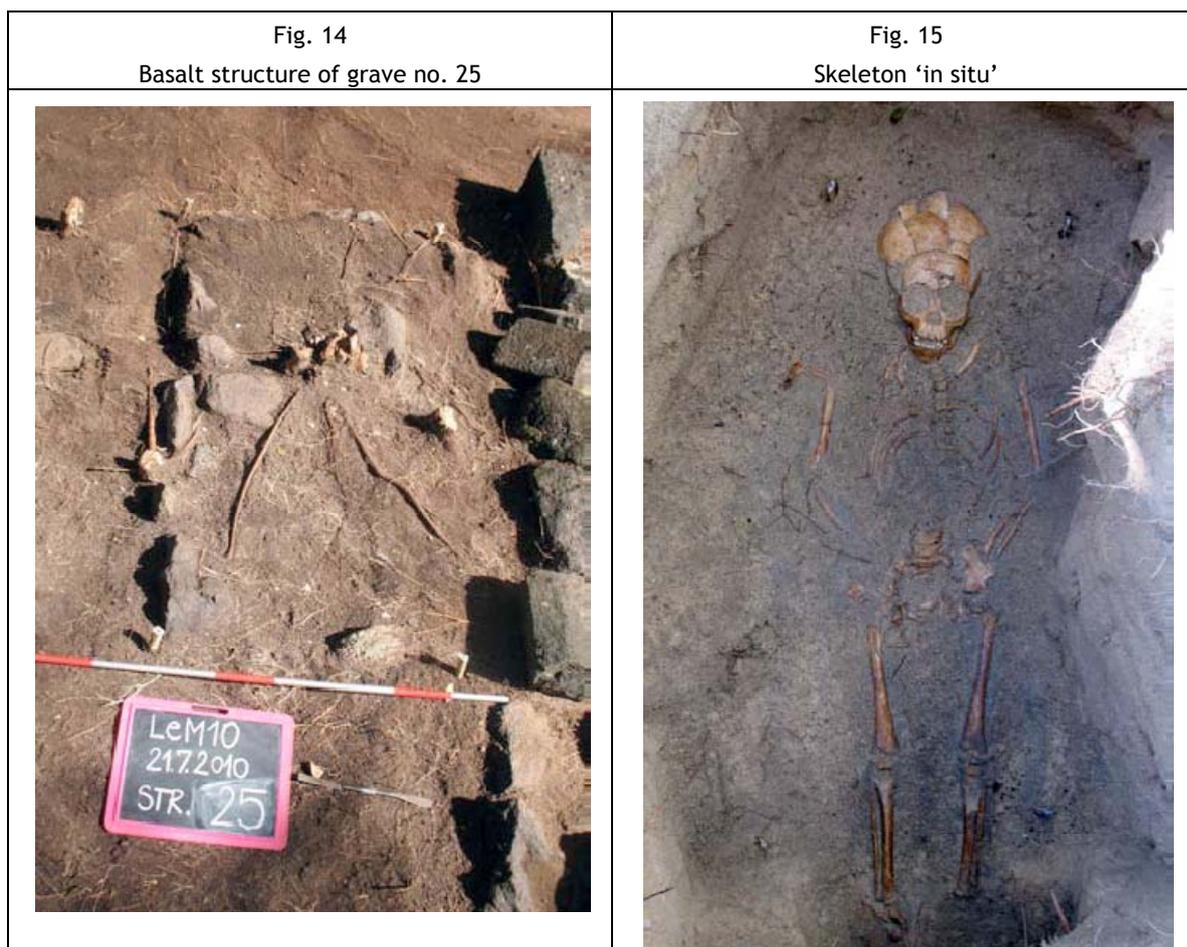
Based on the size of the basalt structure outlining this grave, it was assumed to be the grave of an adult. Basalt stones were positioned on the topsoil to form a rectangular outline (fig.12). The stones had no mortar linking them together, resulting in two gaps of missing stones. Under the topsoil, a sandy layer covered a second basalt grave outline. The position of this second tier of

basalt was not aligned with the upper layer or directly with the inhumation. The second layer of stones was smaller, more tightly positioned, and was most likely the original surface marker of the grave. The first sandy layer under the second stone structure contained two artefacts, a shovel and a hoe, which were not part of the original grave deposits, but were placed subsequently. A second sandy layer under the second stone structure contained remnants of a coffin (evident as a darker substrate layer), six iron nails, two of which retained remnants of the wood coffin. The bones of a well-preserved adult were recovered, with the head facing Le Morne Mountain (fig.13). In addition, a set of round buttons, made from mother of pearl, was recovered which indicate that the interred was clothed when buried. A sample of the soil deposit underneath the skeleton was taken for a geo-archaeological analysis (App. IV).



#### Grave no. 25:

A smaller rectangular basalt stone structure, next to grave no. 07, indicated that there was a child buried next to an adult (fig.14). The top organic soil covered the sandy fill of the grave, which was comprised of three sandy layers. The last sandy layer contained the remnants of a wooden coffin and a juvenile skeleton (fig.15). The bones were well preserved, although the skull was highly fragmented. Interestingly, and mimicking a number of the other graves the top stone structure lay in a completely different orientation to the interred individual. The surface structure was facing Le Morne Mountain, while the remains were orientated towards the south.



## Grave no. 29:

A crudely oval basalt structure with two stones placed in the middle, presumably cutting it into two halves, delineated this grave (fig.16). As with many of the graves, modern coins, earthenware oil lamps, thin red and white candles, parts of sacrificed animals, and plastic bags, were spread on and around the structure, leftovers of ritual practices performed on the cemetery. Under the first stone structure was an organic, dark brown soil, which contained a network of tree roots. A second stone structure, more rectangular in shape, was noted beneath the topsoil layer. The rectangular basalt structure seemed to be composed of 2 similar parts, with a gap of 20 cm separating them. At the time of excavation this suggested that two juvenile burials were in this grave. Both parts were mortared on the tops and between the stones. Under the second stone structure was a visible cut for the grave, filled with four sandy layers. The last contained traces of a coffin (noted as a darker outline in the deposit), two iron nails and a well-preserved juvenile skeleton (fig.17). Two round, mother of pearl, buttons were also recovered.

Fig. 16

Basalt structure of grave no. 29



Fig. 17 Skeleton 'in situ'



Grave no. 30:

A small rectangular basalt structure on the surface suggested that this was a child's grave (fig.18). Under the basalt structure, which was disturbed by a tree trunk, a dark brown layer of soil was present. This organic layer, full of roots, covered the grave cut, which was filled with two sandy layers. The second contained a juvenile skeleton, with the head turned to the right and the arms crossed at the abdomen (fig.19). This grave was originally dug deeper than others, reaching a depth of 1.20m. Due to this greater depth, the interred was submerged at high tide, which made of this grave very difficult.

The orientation of the surface stone structure and the alignment of the skeleton differed for approximately 45 degrees. The stone structure was oriented toward west while the skeletons alignment was more toward Le Morne Mountain. Two small round buttons made from the mother of pearl were recovered from this grave.

Fig. 18

Basalt structure of grave no. 30



Fig. 19  
Skeleton 'in situ'



Grave no. 33:

The basalt structure on the surface of this grave was damaged; although it was clear that it had a rectangular shape at its origin and that it was oriented toward Le Morne Mountain (fig.20). The grave occupied what was apparently the centre of the cemetery thus making it a focus for modern ritual practices. This resulted in copious quantities of modern objects being discarded on and around the grave. As the stone structure was damaged, with numerous stones missing, it was initially suspected the grave had been looted and any remains robbed.

The first substrate layer, which in the other graves had been composed of dark brown topsoil, here contained a mixed dark brown soil and light beige sand with a considerable quantity of admixed modern material from recent ritual practices. This disturbed deposit was thick, reaching a depth of 50cm. Establishing who / what was responsible for the disturbed state of this grave was difficult as there was evidence of both animal (crabs) and human intervention. Under this mixed layer the cut for the grave was visible, again differing considerably from the orientation of the surface structure. The cut for the grave was filled with a sandy layer; at a depth of 90 cm from the surface an adult human skeleton was recovered, facing Le Morne Mountain. All the bones were well preserved. Under the skull was a dark green, glass bottle of unknown origin. Upon lifting of this skeleton (grave 33 UPPER), another became visible directly beneath the first (grave 33 LOWER) (fig.21). The second adult skeleton was aligned and positioned in a near identical position to the first adult, with the exception that the arms crossed on the abdomen, while the arms of the upper skeleton were

positioned parallel to the body. Almost all the bones of the lower skeleton were preserved, except the long bones of the left arm, which were missing apparently as a consequence of crab activity.

Fig. 20

Basalt structure of grave no. 33



## 4. Post-excavational Analysis

Fig. 21  
Skeletons 'in situ'



The following details the post excavation analysis of the skeletal finds. One facet of these post excavation research, commissioned by the Truth and Justice Commission and undertaken by Dr Will Goodwin of the University of Central Lancashire, is not presented herein. The analysis of aDNA, regrettably, was unsuccessful. Tropical locations are notoriously poor at preserving ancient DNA; furthermore, the fact that the skeletons themselves would have been cyclically submerged in seawater is likely to have had a deleterious effect on any DNA.

The 11 skeletons recovered consisted of six juvenile and five adult individuals. Aside from the actual details of recovery, the most significant information regarding the skeletal finds has been derived from osteological analysis, detailing demography, indicators of health and evidence of lifestyle. Corroboratory evidence regarding diet and migration has been provided by bone collagen and enamel carbonate isotopic analysis.

## 4.1 POST-EXCAVATIONAL TECHNIQUES

### 4.1.1 ISOTOPIC METHODS

Carbon and nitrogen stable isotope analysis was carried out on the rib bones of ten individuals from La Morne cemetery and one deer mandible (a faunal component is key for providing corroboratory data). Five of the individuals were adults (2 females, 2 probable females and 1 probable male), 3 were children and 2 were peri-natal infants at the time of death. The collagen results from the peri-natal samples will reflect the diets of their mothers and are thus included in the analyses below. Collagen was extracted using the standard methodology of the Dorothy Garrod Laboratory, University of Cambridge, based on the method described in Privat *et al* (2002). All of the collagen was deemed to be of good quality as it fulfilled the following criteria: an atomic C:N ratio of 2.9 to 3.6 (De Niro 1985); a 'collagen' yield of >1% by mass; final carbon yields of >13%; and final nitrogen yields of >4.8% (Ambrose 1990). Each sample was analysed in triplicate and the mean results are presented below (4.2.1).

Seven of these individuals were also sampled for tooth enamel carbonate. The five adults and two of the children were sampled for tooth enamel carbonate. A variety of teeth were sampled and it should be noted that some of the samples are likely to show the fractionation effects of breastfeeding.

The sample size was too small for reliable statistical analyses.

### 4.1.2 OSTEOLOGY METHODS

Of the 11 recovered skeletons, two skeletons were initially carefully washed; however, as the matrix was largely sand, it was found that cleaning could be as effectively achieved by dry brushing, so the remainder of skeletons were cleaned using this technique by Dr Anwar Janoo, the author, and a team of students from the University of Mauritius. This had the advantage of reducing the potential for fungal growth on damp skeletal remains.

The skeletons were examined following the standard procedures recommended by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994), although with some amendments. The presence and degree of completeness of all skeletal elements was systematically recorded. Age of sub-adult individuals was determined by development and fusion of the long bones and cranium, long bone length, and dental development after Ubelaker (1989). Infant age was calculated from long bone length using the linear regression equations of Scheuer *et al.* (1980) Adult age was determined following the recommendations of O'Connell (2004), with the auricular surface of the ilium recorded following the modified method of Buckberry and Chamberlain (2002). Dental wear was recorded using the Smith (1984) and Scott (1979) guidelines, but was not used to determine adult age as so little is known about wear rates in this skeletal population. Pubic symphyseal ageing followed the criteria of Brooks and Suchey (1990), although the pubic symphysis was preserved in only one individual from this assemblage. Although cranial suture closure was recorded by the method advocated by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994), it was regarded only as a very general indicator of age. Measurement of adult remains follows the criteria of Martin (1957), whilst non-metric traits were recorded according to Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). Juvenile measurements follow the criteria of Fazekas and Kosa (1978). Adult sex was determined by sexually dimorphic features of the pelvis and skull, measurement of the humeral and femoral heads and general assessment of robusticity, in declining order of reliability. The sex of sub-adults cannot be reliably determined from the skeleton.

All pathological conditions were noted, photographed and recorded in detail. All pathological bones were examined under x10 magnification and x-rays taken wherever this would aid in interpretation. Traumatic lesions were recorded according to the criteria of Lovell (1997), whilst diagnosis of possible infectious conditions followed Rogers and Waldron (1989). Recording of arthropathies followed the recommendations of Rogers and Waldron (1987; Waldron 1995). All long-bones of individuals older than neonatal were x-rayed and examined for traces of growth interruption (Harris) lines.

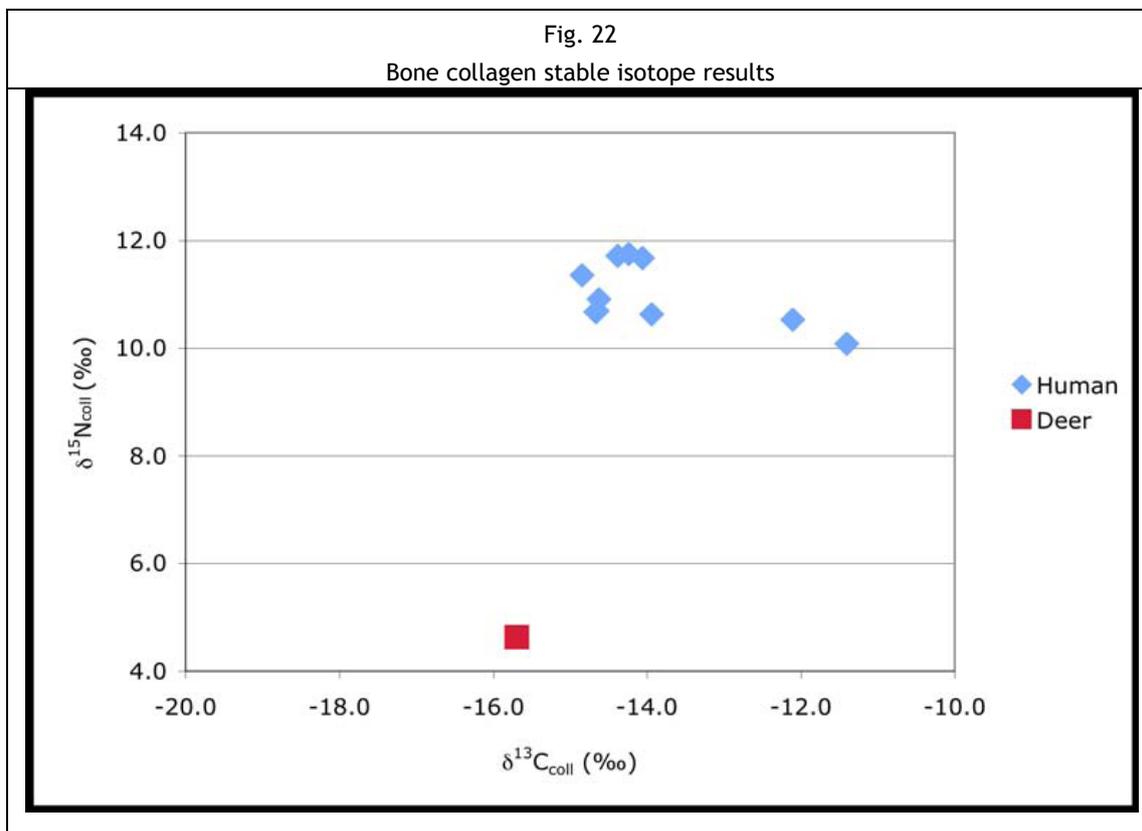
Stature estimation in adult females followed the recommendations of Trotter and Gleser (1977) for Black Males and Females. Where possible, the equations for the femur were used. Where the femur was not present, equations for other long bones were used. Stature estimation of infant and children is unreliable from skeletal remains (Lewis 2007: 77) and so was not attempted for this population.

## 4.2 POST-EXCAVATIONAL RESULTS

### 4.2.1 RESULTS OF ISOTOPIC ANALYSIS

The deer sample has collagen isotope values of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{coll}} = -15.7\text{‰}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}_{\text{coll}} = 4.6\text{‰}$ . This suggests that the deer consumed a mixed diet including both  $\text{C}_3$  and  $\text{C}_4$  plants.

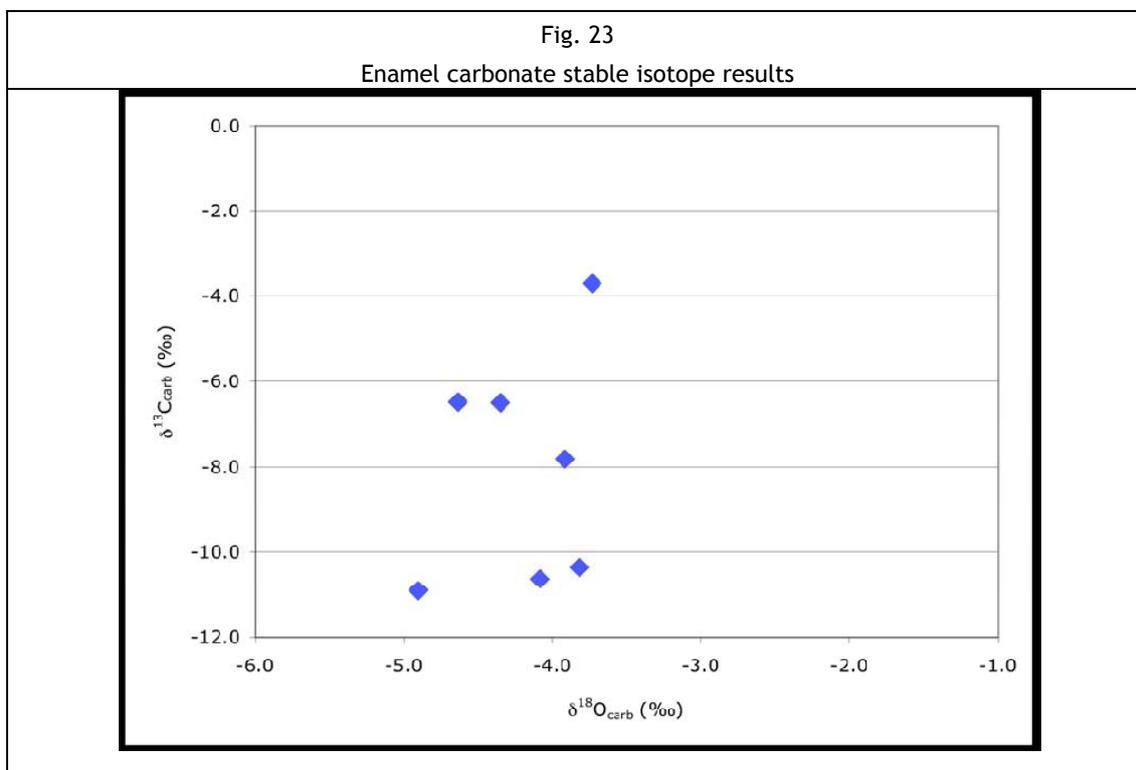
The human collagen carbon isotope results range from  $-14.9\text{‰}$  to  $-11.4\text{‰}$  (range =  $3.5\text{‰}$ ) and have a mean  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{coll}}$  value of  $-13.9\text{‰}$  (sd =  $1.2\text{‰}$ ) (fig. 22). Both the standard deviation and the range of the human  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{coll}}$  results are large. Two outliers can be identified: grave 25 which lies more than 1.5 times the inter-quartile range above quartile 3; and grave 33/U which lies more than 3 times the inter-quartile range above quartile 3. When these outliers are excluded the range ( $0.9\text{‰}$ ) and standard deviation ( $0.3\text{‰}$ ) of the carbon isotope results are relatively small.



The human collagen nitrogen results range from  $10.1\text{‰}$  to  $11.8\text{‰}$  (range =  $1.7\text{‰}$ ) and have a mean  $\delta^{15}\text{N}_{\text{coll}}$  value of  $11.0\text{‰}$  (sd =  $0.6\text{‰}$ ). The standard deviation and range of the  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  results are not as large as those of the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{coll}}$  values, and decrease less when the two outliers are excluded (sd =  $0.5\text{‰}$ ; range =  $1.1\text{‰}$ ).

The tooth enamel carbon isotope results range from  $-10.9\text{‰}$  to  $-3.7\text{‰}$  (range =  $7.2\text{‰}$ ) and have a mean value of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}} = -8.1\text{‰}$  (sd =  $2.7\text{‰}$ ) (fig. 23). This is a notably large range of variation for a sample of this size.

The tooth enamel oxygen results range from -4.9‰ to -3.7‰ (range = 1.2‰) and have a mean value of  $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}} = -4.2\text{‰}$  (sd = 0.4‰).



#### 4.2.2 OSTEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

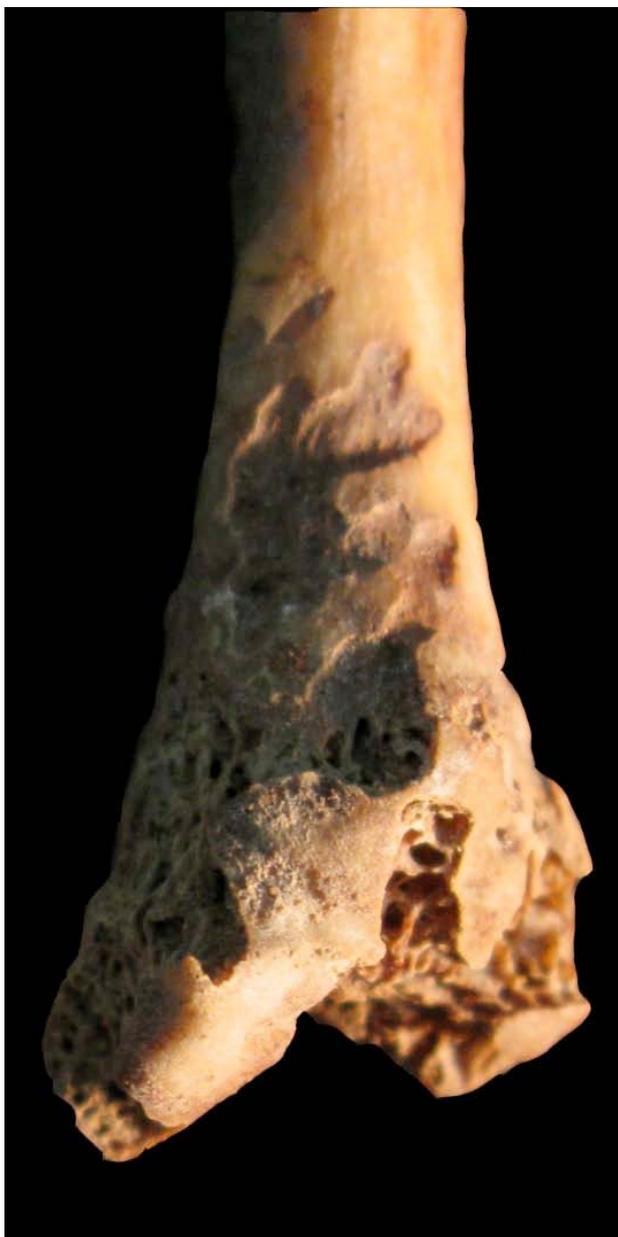
The skeletons were in a variable state of preservation. Most were moderately well preserved, but there was some loss of the bone surfaces in all individuals and most had some erosion of articular ends. Probably as a result of the thorough excavation technique and sieving, the percentage of the skeleton recovered was generally high. Where elements are missing it is probably as a result of preservational factors rather than bones being overlooked.

The burials are primary inhumations of intact individuals and there is no indication of any secondary practices such as disarticulation or deliberate movement of individuals after decay. Damage to bones can generally be attributed to in-ground soil conditions rather than human action. There are no peri-mortem or immediately post-mortem fractures.

One interesting taphonomic feature is the presence of globular-shaped destruction of the outer bone table on the surface of some bones from Structure 1/A (fig. 24). This feature initially looked like a pathological condition affecting the distal ulna and the proximal second metacarpal, but analysis under x10 magnification showed no sign of bony reaction. Similar features were observed on the shaft of the left femur from Structure 33/Lower. Structure 33 was very disturbed by the actions of burrowing land crabs (*Cardisoma carnifex*), and it is possible that the surface damage represents scavenging by these animals.

Fig. 24

Metacarpal from Structure 1 with pseudopathology.



#### 4.2.1.1 Demography

Ages and sexes of the skeletons from Le Morne are set out in table 1 (below). Although the sample size is small and it is therefore difficult to draw conclusions about population structure, there are nevertheless several features worth noting. Of the 11 individuals analysed, three were either late-term foetuses or still births<sup>1</sup>, whilst a further three were under five. No older children were identified. Of the adults, three were females in their child-bearing years. This gives an overall rate of childhood mortality of over 50%. The individual from structure 1 was buried with a foetus between her legs and may have died in childbirth (see discussion section for further comment on this individual).

Table 1 Age and sex determinations of the individuals from the cemetery at Le Morne		
Structure No.	Approx. Age	Sex
1A	17-19 years	F
1C	33-35 weeks gestation	-
6/7	36-40 weeks gestation	-
6/8	37-41 weeks gestation	-
7	25-30 years	F
8	40+	?M
25	3-5 years	-
29	2-4 years	-
30	3-4 years	-
33/Upper	25-30 years	?F
33/Lower	Middle-older adult	?F

Stature could be calculated for four of the five adult individuals. Female and possible female stature ranged from 155 to 161 cm, whilst the possible male had a reconstructed stature of 163cm.

#### 4.2.1.2 Nutritional deficiency and non-specific stress

Conditions that might indicate dietary insufficiency or non-specific stress include scurvy, rickets, *cribra orbitalia*, enamel hypoplasias and Harris lines on long bones. Scurvy and rickets both result from specific vitamin deficiencies, of vitamin C and D respectively. Neither of these conditions was observed in the skeletal remains from Le Morne. *Cribra orbitalia* was also absent. This condition is typically associated with iron deficiency anaemia, either due to dietary insufficiency, illness or parasitic infection. Although numbers are small, the lack of these conditions may indicate a relatively good diet for this population. Despite taking x-rays of all available long bones, Harris lines, which indicate periods of growth interruption, were also absent from the Le Morne skeletons. In the older adults it is possible that Harris lines would have been obscured by skeletal remodelling, but it is to be expected that they would be visible in the younger adult and juvenile remains. Enamel hypoplasias, which like Harris lines show periods of growth interruption, but which are not subject to remodelling, were observed on the teeth of two of the younger individuals: the females from Structure 1 and Structure 7. Although none were observed in the teeth of the older individuals, this does not prove that they were originally absent in all cases as many teeth had been lost and the majority of remaining teeth had at least some degree of calculus formation which could have obscured lesions.

#### 4.2.1.3 Dental disease and caries

Dental caries results from the action of bacteria on the tooth surface which ferment simple carbohydrates from food (Roberts and Manchester 2010: 65). This process produces acids which

eventually cause cavities. Caries rates are thus often used as a proxy for the levels of simple carbohydrates in the diet. At Le Morne, 7.14% of preserved adult teeth had carious lesions, distributed between three individuals (Table 2). The actual number of teeth affected by caries was probably in reality slightly higher as the two older adult individuals had both lost a considerable proportion of their teeth before death (8 in the case of Structure 33/Lower and 21 in the case of Structure 8). It is probable that a good proportion of the tooth crowns had been destroyed by caries. This process can be observed on the molars of the 25-30 year old woman from structure 7, who had three teeth where the crown had been almost entirely destroyed by caries (fig. 25). Interestingly, caries were not limited to the adult section of the population. The child from structure 29 had a carious lesion on the inter-proximal surfaces of both upper central incisors. These teeth had been in wear for a maximum of three years at the time of death, which suggests that the child must have had a significantly cariogenic diet.

In addition to caries, abscess cavities were observed on both of the older individuals. That on the lower individual from structure 33 showed evidence of active infection at the time of death. Calculus was also present on the teeth of all adults and on those of the 3-4 year old child from Structure 30, suggesting that dental hygiene was poor. The lower individual from structure 33, an older adult possible male, also showed evidence of periodontal disease that had caused up to 3.7mm of alveolar resorption (fig. 26).

Structure No.	Age	Teeth present	Teeth lost <i>ante mortem</i>	No. of teeth with caries	No. of abscesses	Calculus	Enamel hypoplasia
1	17-19	32	0	0	0	Y	Y
7	25-30	27	2	6	0	Y	Y
8	40+	10	21	0	1	Y	N
25	3-5	18	-	0	0	0	N
29	2-4	17	-	2	0	0	N
30	3-4	17	-	0	0	Y	N
33/Upper	25-30	27	0	0	0	Y	N
33/Lower	Middle-older adult	16	8	2	2	Y	N

Fig. 25

Mandible from Structure 7 showing teeth mostly destroyed by caries



Fig. 26

Periodontal disease in the maxilla from Structure 33/Lower

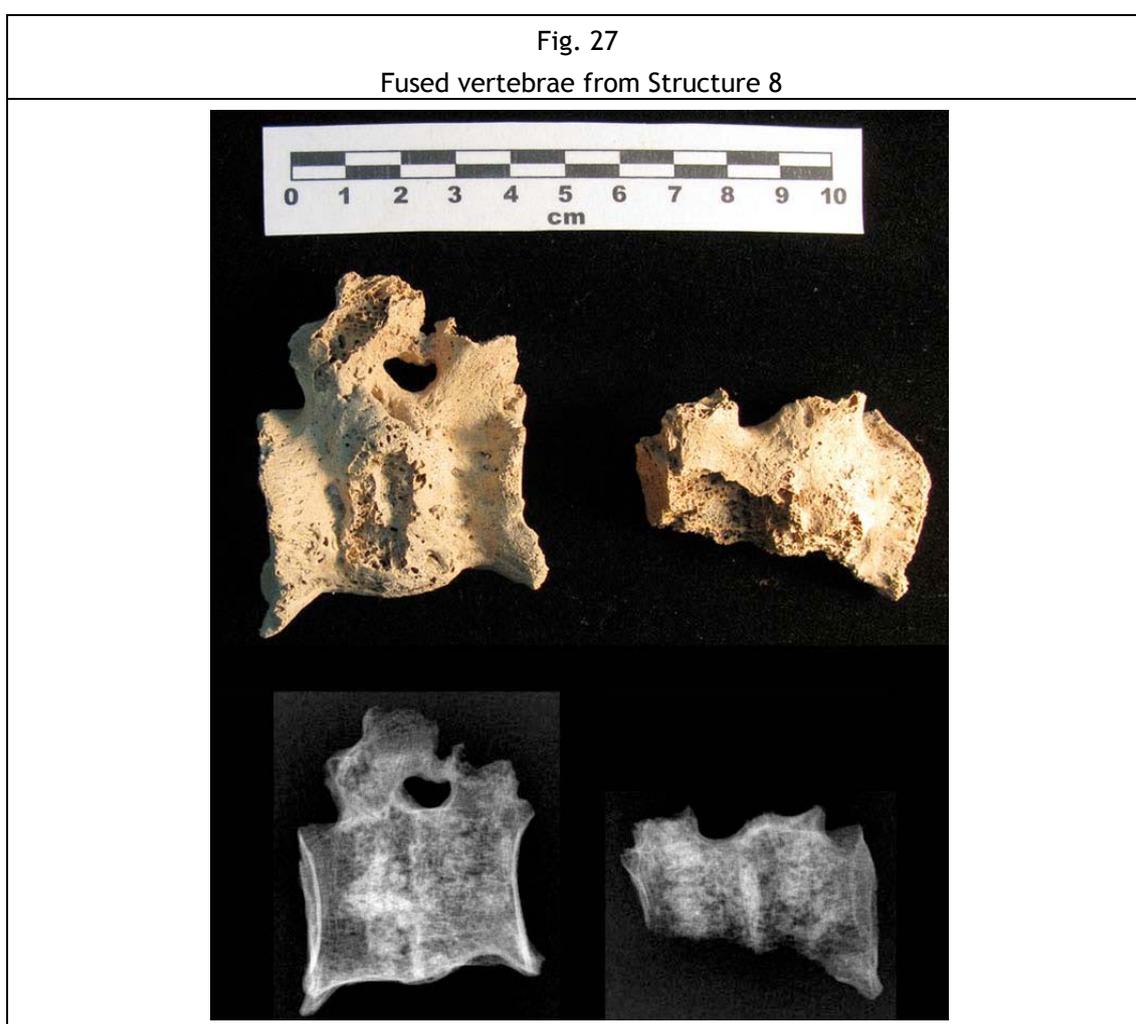


#### 4.2.1.4 Infection and trauma

Only one skeleton from the Le Morne cemetery showed traces of a bone infection: chronic osteomyelitis was identified in the lumbar spine (T12 and L1) of the individual from Structure 8. This had led to complete destruction of the disc-space and fusion of the two vertebrae. Large osteophytes had formed around the area of vertebral fusion. There was a possible cloaca in one pedicle of the first lumbar vertebrae. X-rays show slight sclerosis where the two vertebral end-plates have fused. The disc-space has been entirely destroyed.

Because the vertebrae have fractured longitudinally in the ground, it is possible to directly observe the trabecular structure of the vertebral bodies. This shows a dense trabecular pattern and demonstrates convincingly that there is no remnant of the inter-vertebral disc. The age of this individual, a middle to older adult, fits well with a diagnosis of vertebral osteomyelitis, which predominantly affects people over the age of 50.

Conditions that may be confused with osteomyelitis are tuberculosis, fungal infections, brucellosis and tumours. In this case, the lack of anterior bone destruction, the involvement of the pedicles and the presence of new bone formation suggests that this individual did not suffer from tuberculosis. The lack of dense sclerotic bone around the lesions makes brucellosis unlikely, whilst the specimen lacks the defined lytic lesions characteristic of metastatic cancer. Fungal infections would typically involve a 'space occupying lesion' character, which is lacking in this case. Another possible cause of conjoined vertebrae with no disk space is failure of segmentation during growth; however, in that case the vertebral end-plates fail to develop, whereas in the Structure 8 individual, residual traces of the end-plates can be observed in x-rays (fig. 27). Osteomyelitis thus seems the most plausible diagnosis.#



The right femur from the Structure 33 lower individual was bowed in an antero-posterior direction and thickened at midshaft. The bone surface appeared normal with no evidence of periostitis, sequestrum or involucrum. The shaft was broken post-mortem both proximally and distally, making it impossible to identify whether there was any shortening of the bone. The femoral head and neck were the only other portions to survive. These were of normal morphology. An x-ray showed thickening of the cortical bone and slight narrowing of the medullary cavity in comparison to the left femur. There is no indication of a fracture either of recent or longer standing. The left femur and lower leg bones appear normal.

Although the obvious explanation for femoral bowing is rickets or osteomalacia, several features suggest that this is not a likely explanation in this case. The condition is not bilateral and does not appear to have affected the tibiae. At the same time, the cortical bone is more dense and thicker on x-ray than that of other long bones. The lack of vitamin D in rickets/osteomalacia causes a loss of bone mineral and therefore the cortical bone should be relatively thin and radiolucent if this was the cause of the bowing. In fact, the right femur was noticeably heavier than the left when lifted, despite the fact that the left was more complete. Finally, the most frequent location of a bowing deformity in femora with rickets is in the proximal shaft (Brickley and Mays 2010: 400), whereas in this case the bowing was at midshaft. X-rays showed no evidence of infection.

Given the age of this individual, the most likely cause of the femoral bowing seems to be a greenstick fracture of the shaft suffered in childhood and since completely healed. This is, however, of necessity only a tentative diagnosis since it is one of elimination rather than of positive identification. No traces of any fracture callus remain visible on the outline of the shaft.

#### 4.2.1.5 Activity

When individuals are habitually involved in manual work, it can leave traces on the skeleton in the form of ossified muscle attachment points. The distribution of these can give some idea of which muscle groups were used most heavily. The skeletal material from Le Morne showed little indication of such activity. Only two enthesophytes were observed. One was present at the insertion of the triceps muscle at the olecranon process of the right ulna of the individual from Structure 8 (fig. 28). The second was on the radius of the lower individual from Structure 33, at the origin of the *Flexor digitorum superficialis*. The general lack of muscle development is interesting in light of the fact that the population may represent the remains of freed slaves. One possible reason for this lack of evidence for heavy muscle usage is that there was a gendered division of labour, with females engaged in less manual labour; however, this is not borne out by the existence of two other examples of pathological lesions. The young woman from Structure 7 had spondylolysis of the fifth lumbar vertebra (fig. 29). Spondylolysis is a form of stress fracture in which the neural arch of the vertebra separates from the body through the *pars inter-articularis*. The lesion was well remodelled and healed at the time of death.



Fig. 29

## Spondylolysis in the lumbar spine from Structure 7



Rather than a specific trauma, spondylolysis usually develops in response to repeated strain over long time periods (Merbs 1996). In modern contexts it is frequent in individuals who are involved in manual labour, and seems to be particularly associated with vigorous and repetitive movements involving the lower back (Roberts and Manchester 2010: 106). It is only observed in humans and is thought to relate to the adoption of an upright posture. Although involving a fracture and separation of the body and neural arch of the vertebra, spondylolysis is not usually associated with long-term pain, and Merbs (1996) has even suggested that it might be an adaptive response, giving a greater degree of flexibility.

Os acromiale was identified on the right scapula of the older possible female from Structure 33 (fig. 30). This occurs when there is a failure of fusion of the acromion process of the scapula due to stresses placed on the scapula during development. Very high frequencies of this condition were observed in the skeletal remains from the Mary Rose (Stirland 2005), and it has been suggested that this resulted from training with the medieval long-bow during adolescence. The Le Morne example was restricted to the right shoulder, with the left appearing normal.



Both of these conditions have been associated both with heavy labour and with congenital defects that make the bone more liable to fracture (Larsen 1997: 190-191; Roberts and Manchester 2007: 151-152). The small numbers in the present sample means that any assessment of prevalence would be insecure, but the very fact that both of these conditions occur in such a small sample is of interest.

One skeleton from Le Morne (Structure 1A) also had squatting facets on the distal tibia. These extensions of the joint surface typically develop when the ankle joint is habitually in a flexed position as is the case in squatting. This may indicate that this person commonly adopted a squatting posture when at rest, or alternatively that she regularly carried out activities that required a squatting position.

#### 4.2.1.6 Other conditions

A button osteoma was observed on the skull of the young woman from Structure 7. This benign lesion is observed in about 1% of autopsies (Ortner and Putschar 1981: 368). It has no clinical impact and the individual would probably have been unaware of its existence.

## 5. Discussion and Interpretation of Results

### 5.1 DISCUSSION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

A number of points are worthy of further discussion from the archaeological evidence itself, relative to understanding issues of lifestyle and who may or may have been interred.

Principal amongst these issues is an attempt at defining the religious affiliation of those buried, and by analogy, those individuals who buried their dead. This ties in directly with our desire to understand the origins of those interred. In this instance, one might assume that the interred, of slaves or freed slaves, would have followed a Christian religious life. However, in the case of this cemetery, there is no evidence linking the burial traditions of the buried with Christianity. In fact, the opposite would appear to be the case. The bodies are, in the main, orientated to face (predominantly) West, which - whether by design or serendipity - also faces Le Morne Brabant, and Madagascar. This is the reverse of Christian doctrine. In addition to this, the presence of both the glass bottle (grave 33/U) and coins (grave 7) would be more in keeping with traditional African burial practices as opposed to Christian. Finally, there is no evidence of consecration of this area. Although difficult to determine, the fact that at least three very young juveniles, effectively neonatal or newborn, are buried within the cemetery - individuals that could not possibly have been baptised - indicates that the religious practice adhered to was not a Christian one.

Looking at the graves, their construction, the evidence for the types of coffin used and the mode of delineation of the grave, again, a number of points are worth further exploration.

It would appear that whether on an individual, or community level, those burying the dead were not without means. The coffins themselves, although certainly not exemplary are far from being rudimentary examples. While it must be remembered that a death and subsequent burial are social occasions that draw on community strength and resources, and that craftsmanship (for constructing coffins for example) could well be provided for a minimal cost basis, nonetheless, we should not ignore the fact the evidence points to products of reasonably good quality. Furthermore, the almost ubiquitous recovery of mother-of-pearl buttons, from infant and adult burials alike, suggests that bodies were not simply interred in a shroud, but in cloths of some finery.

At least for some of these graves there is clear indication that the specific (if not always the precise) location of the individual grave was noteworthy and part of social memory. This is indicated by the fact that the grave outlines were reconstructed, in one case on four separate occasions; invariably the reconstruction phase resulted in the use of larger, often cut, basalt blocks. The earlier levels more often than not use small, uncut basalt stones, serving as a relatively simple grave outline. These reconstructions are very important as they speak of a period, perhaps decades long, where the cemetery's purpose is sovereign, undergoing little change, and known as the final resting place of ancestral populations by those using it. This clearly points to an enduring memory within the context of landscape and land use.

While time and funding prohibited, at this stage, radiocarbon dating to determine the period of use and the temporal relationship between the interred, the coins found with grave 7 dated the grave to the first third of the 19th century. The fact that some of the graves show evidence of being buried at a time when the local substrate was considerably lower (as evidenced by re-construction of the surface outline) would seem to indicate that the site was in use for some considerable period of time.

### 5.2 DISCUSSION OF ISOTOPIC ANALYSIS

The human bone collagen isotope results suggest that the protein component of the analysed individuals' diets during the last years of life were based upon a mixture of C<sub>3</sub> (i.e. wheat) and C<sub>4</sub> (i.e. maize) resources. The two outlying individuals (grave 25, a 3 to 4 year old child; and grave 33/U, a 25 to 30 years old probable female) consumed a diet with a higher proportion of C<sub>4</sub>-derived

protein than the other nine analysed individuals. With the exception of these outliers, the individuals within the population consumed similar diets in terms of the amount, trophic level (i.e. plant, herbivorous animal or omnivorous animal) and the C<sub>3</sub>/C<sub>4</sub> status of their protein intake. As the deer isotope results indicate that it consumed a diet containing both C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>4</sub> plants, it is not possible to determine whether the human collagen isotopes reflect the consumption of C<sub>4</sub> plants or the consumption of animals that consumed C<sub>4</sub> plants. However, the large difference in  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values between the deer and the mean human value indicates that this deer is not representative of the protein consumed by the analysed humans. A larger faunal sample is necessary for a more accurate baseline for comparison, particularly as the deer deposition may not be contemporary with the human burials.

The tooth enamel carbonate carbon isotope results show a wide range of variation, indicating that during childhood these individuals ate significantly different diets. Tooth enamel carbonate primarily reflects the carbohydrate component of the diet, indicating that, regardless of the C<sub>3</sub> or C<sub>4</sub> status of any animal protein consumed, during childhood some of the individuals did consume C<sub>4</sub> plants. The amount of C<sub>4</sub> plants consumed during childhood varies from little or none (grave 8, grave 30 and grave 33/U) to a large proportion of the carbohydrate portion of the diet (grave 33/L).

Two edible C<sub>4</sub> plants are known, historically, to have been available to the people of Mauritius - sugar cane and maize (Allen 1999). There is no historical evidence for the importation of the other African C<sub>4</sub> staple plants, sorghum, finger millet and pearl millet, to Mauritius. Given the low protein content of sugar cane, and that it was produced for export, it is likely that the C<sub>4</sub> signal seen in the bone collagen isotope values reflects either the consumption of maize or the indirect consumption of C<sub>4</sub> resources via animal protein. The tooth enamel carbon isotope results show a human diet that included varying amounts of maize and/or sugar cane at least during childhood. Given the abundant coastal / sea resources, as well as produce such as sweet potato, it is likely that these formed part of the diet also.

The difference in range of variation of bone collagen results (excluding the two outliers) and tooth enamel carbon isotope results is striking. While the carbohydrate component of childhood diet varied substantially, during adulthood (Hedges et al. 2007) the protein components of their diets were similar. It is possible that this pattern reflects the diets of a group of people who during childhood lived in multiple locations but later in life came to live, and eat, together. Further evidence is needed to support this hypothesis, particularly more information regarding the temporal spread of the burials.

The bone collagen results show that two outliers, grave 25 and grave 33/U, were consuming a diet that during life would have been noticeably different from that of the other analysed individuals. There are several potential explanations for this. Firstly, these individuals may have lived with the other buried individuals but eaten a distinct diet, perhaps in order to maintain a separate social status or identity. Secondly, the outlying individuals may have been newcomers to the community, such that their isotope results reflect a mixed signal of two distinct diets. Thirdly, the outlying burials may not be contemporary with the other analysed burials and reflect a temporal change in subsistence practice. Radiocarbon dating results would clarify this issue.

The oxygen isotope results show a range of variation consistent with a population that drank water from the same source during childhood. However, it is possible that some or all of these individuals migrated to Mauritius from a place where the drinking water was not isotopically distinguishable from that of Mauritius. i.e. Madagascar, which has a similar isotopic composition to that of Mauritius ( $\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{ppt}}$  estimations obtained from [www.waterisotopes.org](http://www.waterisotopes.org), March 2011). These individuals may well have derived from Madagascar as the isotopic signal for Mauritius falls within the range that one finds from Madagascar. However, precisely because of this, there is no isotopic reason to assume that any of these individuals were long-distance migrants.

### 5.3 DISCUSSION OF OSTEOLOGICAL FINDS

The excavation and analysis of the human remains has prompted three key questions that will be discussed in more detail here. Firstly, and perhaps most significantly in light of the World Heritage status of Le Morne Brabant is the question of whether the skeletons are of slaves or ex-slaves, or whether they represent other portions of the Mauritian population. Secondly, there is the question of the neonatal twins from Structure 6: is infanticide an option or were they natural deaths. Thirdly, what is the significance of the double burial in Structure 1? Is it simply a double burial or does it represent either death in childbirth or a 'coffin birth' where the baby is delivered after death due to the decomposition process?

#### *1. Could the skeletons represent the remains of slaves or ex-slaves?*

Dating evidence from coins and other material culture suggests that the cemetery at Le Morne was in use up to the mid 1830s, the period when slavery came to an end in the country. The area has since become famous for its association with Maroons - groups of escaped slaves who took advantage of Le Morne Mountain's inaccessibility. The question of whether the skeletons are of slaves is therefore of extreme cultural significance. To address this, it is necessary to examine evidence of lifestyle and to ask whether this evidence is compatible with a slave origin.

Osteological studies of slavery have so far been largely confined to slaves of considerably earlier periods such as the Roman Empire and to the Caribbean and North America. Of these, it is likely that the plantation-based slavery of the Caribbean and North America will have more relevance to the present case than examples from the ancient world. Studies of New World slavery have identified a number of characteristics that are commonly associated with slave populations, but it must be acknowledged that there is considerable variability, meaning that a 'shopping list' approach to the osteology of slavery is to be avoided. Given this caveat, some features that might be relevant in the present case are evidence of nutritional deficiency, the development of skeletal features related to heavy manual labour and evidence of high levels of non-specific infections and skeletal trauma. The last three of these are, of course, dependent on the form which slavery takes. Household slaves would have been involved in different kinds of activities to agricultural slaves and this would have been reflected in the kinds of risks to which they were exposed and hence the kinds of conditions that are visible in the skeleton. A further characteristic of slavery in Mauritius was the over-representation of males. Kuczynsky (1949, cited in Benedict 1976) has calculated that male slaves outnumbered women by two to one until 1826, when the proportion of females began to increase (Benedict 1976: 140). The 1826 registration data records five female slaves and 27 males belonging to the Le Morne Brabant estate (Teelock *et al* n.d.). Interestingly, these were all adults. The demographic characteristics of the Le Morne sample may therefore also cast some light on this question.

Nutritional deficiency is commonly associated with slave populations because slaves eat a relatively monotonous diet of low-value foods. Whilst it is necessary for slaves to have sufficient food to be able to work, owners are frequently reluctant to invest more than necessary in the provision of a varied diet. This is reflected in both evidence of specific dietary deficiencies and in evidence of childhood stress such as enamel hypoplasias.

Rates of enamel hypoplasia vary considerably between published skeletal slave samples from the US and Caribbean. At a slave cemetery in South Carolina 92% of males and 70% of females had enamel hypoplasias (Rathbun 1987) and in the Newton cemetery in Barbados the figure was 98% (Handler and Corruccini 1983), testifying to very severe stresses placed on the slaves through factors such as calorie or nutrient deficiency or disease. These figures are clearly very high compared with the Le Morne figure of 40% of adults. In contrast, levels were much lower in a series of pooled skeletal samples from Virginia and the Carolinas, at 56% in the eighteenth century and only 29% in the nineteenth century component (Kelley and Angel 1987).

The two most commonly observed specific nutritional deficiencies in human skeletal remains are rickets and scurvy. Both are absent from the Le Morne skeletons. Although one femur (from Structure 8) was bowed, the lack of bilateral involvement and the form of the bowing are not consistent with rickets and must represent some other process. The former is not altogether

surprising. Although rickets is typically associated with low-status populations, it is generally found amongst industrial populations where people did not have adequate exposure to sunlight. Given that Mauritian slaves are likely to have spent considerable periods of time working outdoors, evidence for rickets would have been surprising. The similar lack of scurvy suggests that the diet must have included sufficient vitamin C. There is some suggestion that slave diet in Mauritius was based around maize consumption (Grant 1801, cited in Benedict 1976: 139) and this is supported by the results of isotopic study of the Le Morne skeletons. Maize contains a relatively high proportion of vitamin C when harvested as a mature plant (around 1/3 the amount in orange juice, measured gram for gram (Esselen *et al* 1937: 507)) and this may explain the lack of evidence for scurvy in this population.

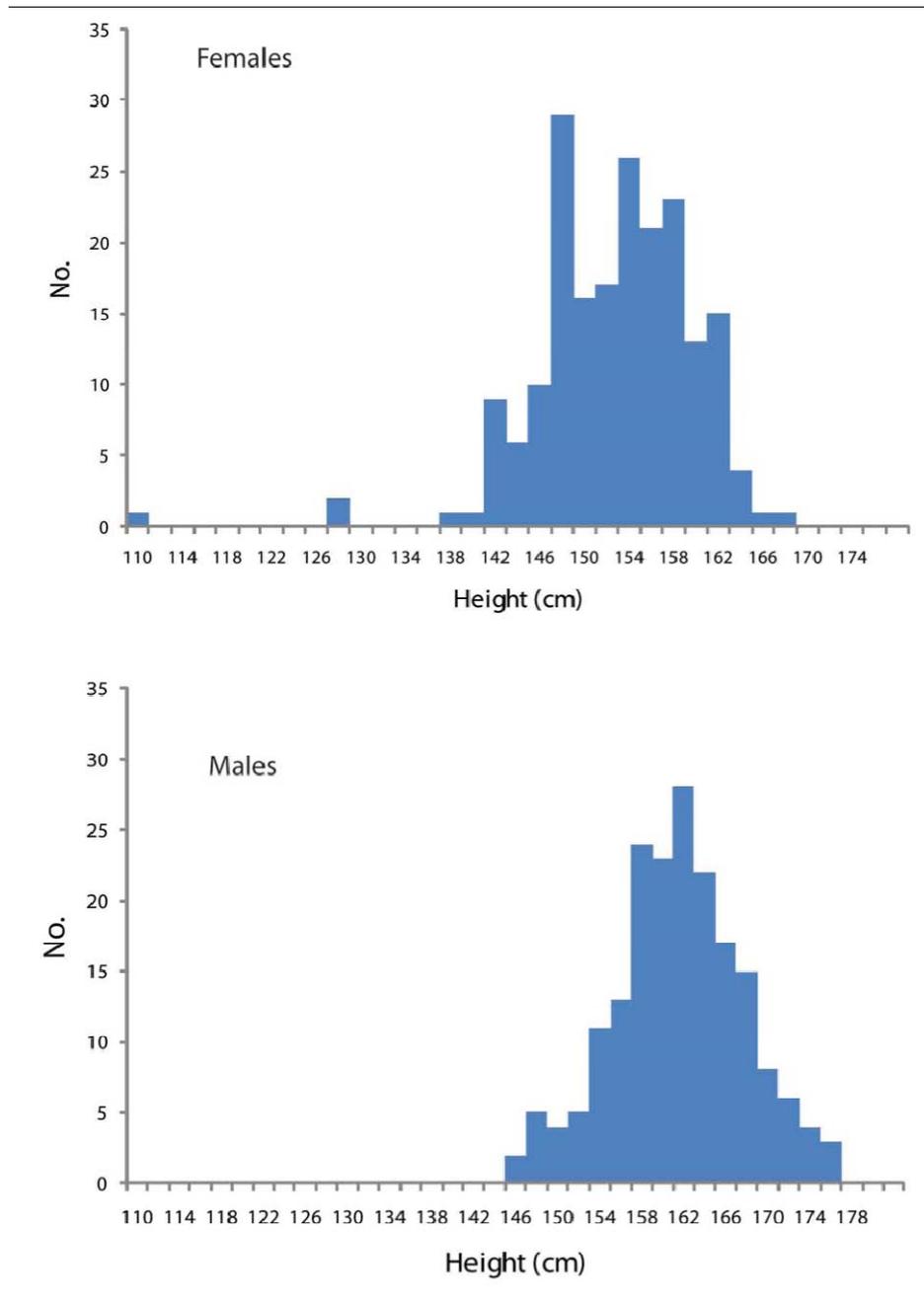
A further indication of poor health and nutrition is stature and it is noticeable that the reconstructed statures of the Le Morne individuals were low. Female heights were around 155-160 cm, whilst the reconstructed height of the possible male was 163cm. Although these figures would be seen as markedly low were they to appear in a modern population of European ancestry, they cannot necessarily be seen as abnormally low for those populations that have contributed to the Mauritian population. Modern figures from Malawi, which contributed to the slave population of Mauritius, give mean heights of 155 for females and 166 for males (Msamati and Igbibi 2000). These populations are themselves subject to problems of inadequate diet and poor healthcare and we must therefore acknowledge that such conditions are not limited to slave populations.

It has been possible to compare the reconstructed heights of the Le Morne skeletons to heights of slaves in the southern portion of the island recorded in the registration of 1826 (fig. 31; data kindly provided by Vijaya Teelock of the Truth and Justice Commission (Teelock *et al* n.d.)). From this it can be seen that the Le Morne skeletons fall right into the middle of the height distribution of the slave population.

Fig. 31

Height distribution of slaves from the area around Le Morne in 1826

(data from Teelock *et al*, n.d.).



In summary, the Le Morne skeletal population appears to have been reasonably well nourished and to fit with the expected statures of the populations that have contributed to the Mauritian population, but shows evidence of over-use of certain parts of the skeleton. Whilst the lack of evidence of stress and nutritional inadequacy differentiates the Le Morne skeletons from slave samples from the New World, this does not mean that the Le Morne cemetery does not contain slaves. Rather it seems to suggest that the conditions of slavery in the south of Mauritius would have been different to those on the large plantations of the New World. Plantation slavery was certainly common on Mauritius, but the area of Le Morne Brabant is not suitable for such cultivation methods due to its aridity. Instead, subsistence farming with some livestock appears to have been the main activity in this area, and the diet was probably supplemented by hunting and fishing (Teelock, pers. comm.). Such an interpretation is supported by the slave registration of 1826 (Teelock *et al* n.d.), in which occupations include fisherman, hunter and guardian of cattle as well as the more familiar categories of labourers and servants (although these latter categories dominate the sample).

### *2. What is the significance of the twin burial?*

The two babies buried in Structure 6 are of great interest. The arrangement of the bodies so close to one another and the lack of evidence of disturbance of the remains strongly implies that the two burials were contemporaneous. Calculating age from the length of preserved long bones gives figures of 36-40 weeks and 37-41 weeks gestation respectively, indicating that these infants died at around the point of birth. As they are almost exactly the same size and were buried at the same time in the same grave, it seems likely that these two babies were in fact twins.

In many African societies, including Madagascar, twins were frequently subject to infanticide and therefore this must be regarded as a possibility for these two individuals. Unfortunately, this is very difficult to prove from dry bones. Neonatal bones are relatively undeveloped so that methods that can be used to identify cause-of-death in adults may not be applicable. For example, strangulation may be identified in adults by fracture of the hyoid bone, but in neonates the hyoid has barely commenced ossification (Lewis 2007: 95). Even in modern forensic cases, it is usually possible to prove only the lesser offence of 'concealment of birth' when neonatal remains are skeletonised (*ibid.*).

Death around the point of birth can, of course, take place for a variety of reasons. Babies may be still-born or get into difficulties during the birth process. This is especially true where no doctors are present to assist the mother, as is likely to have been the case at Le Morne. It is likely that the surroundings in which women gave birth in the rural and relatively remote area of Le Morne were not particularly clean and so babies may also have died from infections within days of birth. Infanticide is thus only one possible explanation.

In the case of the 'twins' from Le Morne, the bones themselves show no traces of violent treatment. All fractures are consistent with in-ground, dry-bone breakage. As death seems to have occurred around the point of birth, there is also no evidence for healing injuries, as might be expected if they had been ill treated but survived for several weeks after birth. The question of infanticide must therefore remain unanswered, suggested only by the co-incidence of two identically aged neonates buried alongside one another.

### *3. How can the double burial in Structure 1 be understood?*

Structure 1 contains the bodies of a young woman and a late term foetus/neonate. Whilst the woman is placed in the normal supine position with her head to the east, the foetus is placed between her legs, with the head facing up and away from the woman (fig. 32).

It is the only body in the cemetery not to have its head to the east. Although the baby was found outside the body, calculations of its age from long bone lengths suggest that it was approximately one month premature, giving rise to a number of possibilities. The possible explanations for this unusual burial positioning are as follows:



Fig. 32 Structure 1 - Burial

- i. The two individuals were unrelated but died at the same time and were buried together
- ii. Both mother and baby died during childbirth and were buried together
- iii. The mother died in the latter stages of pregnancy and the foetus was found between the legs due to a 'coffin birth'

Sadly, due to the preservational characteristics of foetal bone, it has not been possible to establish whether the mother and foetus were directly related to one another through the use of DNA evidence. Distinction between the first two possible scenarios is therefore only circumstantial.

Double burials occur in three of the eight excavated structures at Le Morne. Structure 33 contained the remains of two adult females, whilst Structure 6 contained two neonatal babies. Structure 1 is the only grave to contain an adult and a child buried together, but given the small sample size, this does not prove that this was a unique treatment in the cemetery. The young female buried in Structure 1, at between 17 and 19 years old, is certainly in an age group that we might expect to be having children and it is therefore plausible that she was the mother of the baby.

The small size of the foetal remains found in the coffin and their positioning between the legs of the young woman means that it is necessary to examine the possibility that the mother died before giving birth and that the baby was only found outside the body due to the processes of decomposition. So-called 'coffin births' have occasionally been reported in the forensic literature since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and written references to such occurrences go back at least as far as

the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Jungmichel and Musick 1940). They occur when the gases produced during decomposition force the body of the baby through the birth canal, simulating a process of birth that occurs after death. Documented cases of coffin birth from the German language literature show that the position of the baby is very variable in such cases. Some report only a partial 'birth' in which the head of the baby appears between the legs (Schultz *et al* 2005), whereas in others the baby appears to have been fully delivered (Panning 1941). Whilst the foetus from Structure 1 has the head quite far down the legs of the potential mother (between the proximal tibiae), it is not so different to a case from 1940s Poland where the head of the baby was at the level of the mother's knees (Panning 1941: 259). It is also possible that the foetus may have moved within the coffin if the coffin was partially waterlogged or contained decomposition fluids. Evidence of a waterline on the skull of the woman suggests that this may have been the case, but it is impossible to ascertain how soon after burial such water-logging may have begun. The woman's body shows evidence of having decayed within a void - the femurs have fallen outwards and the pelvis has flattened - but there is no evidence that her bones have been moved by water, so water-logging may have occurred after the coffin had decayed and the space been filled in with sand. This would prevent movement of the bones.

One reason for suggesting coffin birth as a possibility is the small size of the foetus/neonate, which suggests that it was pre-term at death and may not have been delivered; however, it is also worth considering what the implications of size are in this population. The adult skeletons excavated from Le Morne are all small, and this fits with the height distribution of slaves from the 1826 registration (Teelock *et al* n.d.; fig. 31). In a population with small adult height, low birth-weight babies may also have been common and this means that ages calculated from equations developed for babies from European contexts may be too low. If this is the case, the double burial in Structure 1 may merely represent the remains of a mother who died in childbirth and her baby.

Analysis of the bones themselves and their distribution within the grave cannot provide conclusive proof one way or another about the burials in Structure 1, but it is interesting to note that if it was a genuine double burial then it shows some interesting foetus. If the baby was placed between the legs of the mother then it would in some way appear to mimic the process of birth.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This excavation and subsequent analyses have proven to be highly informative in terms of unravelling some of the details of the Le Morne Cemetery during its period of use. From the archaeology itself, particularly in terms of grave 'construction' the most interesting facet is the re-laying of grave outlines - which clearly took place on a number of occasions over a period of many years, perhaps even decades. This is truly remarkable and speaks of the nature of the site, its prominence within the minds and cognition of those who used the site, and their reverence for both their dead and their burial site. From the extensive and detailed osteological evidence it is apparent that hard work and heavy toil were the norm; however, we must use this evidence cautiously given the nature of 'work' at the time in question. From both the isotopic and osteological evidence it is also apparent that the dietary needs of the buried individuals were met, with no clear indications of dietary deficiency.

In addition, and again turning to the recovered finds, it would appear that the dead were buried in relatively well constructed coffins, clothed, and with clearly delineated grave outlined constructed in their memory. These lines of evidence would seem to indicate that the interred were freed 'peoples', but whether initially slaves or not is hard to decipher. Thanks to the isotopic analysis we can be clear that they were all from the *same* region geographically; however, at this stage it is unclear whether the interred arrived, within their lifetime, from further afield or were born and raised in Mauritius.

What is clear, and what we cannot ignore, is the seemingly unequivocal importance of Le Morne Brabant itself. While we are still left with pressing questions of *who* and *when*, we can learn a great deal about they *why*. It would appear that, as in the modern day, the site and sheer

impressive magnitude of Le Morne Brabant has been a focal point for specific practices and indeed, the creation of a remarkable burial site.

In the absence of aDNA results, it is unfortunately the case that a definite answer to the question of racial affinity and origins is not possible at this time. This points to potential avenues for further study. At present, where osteological and scientific analysis are concerned we are most hampered by a lack of samples. In the absence of DNA for example, excavations on another portion of the site may uncover remains that have not been subjected to water-logging, and thus more likely to yield DNA. Also, with a larger sample it may be possible to assign racial affinity based on metrical and morphological criteria. This kind of evidence is at its most persuasive when large numbers of individuals are present and results can be subject to rigorous statistical analysis. The current sample size of five adults and six children can only hint at the community life of these people and it is greatly to be hoped that this sample can be increased in the future.

Report has been kept relatively brief, presenting limited archaeological details. This has been done with the express desire to emphasise the *results*. This is a remarkable site, primarily for the local and wider Mauritian population. The site and the recovered remains are the first such finds for the Republic of Mauritius and would seemingly provide some of the most tangible links to a collective ancestral population. The purpose of archaeology is to connect modern with ancient: the site of the Le Morne Cemetery allows us, for the first time ever, to *visualise* the use, reuse, and reverence that this cemetery held for an enigmatic ancestral Mauritian community. While so much of Mauritius' past is intertwined within paradigms of slavery and indenture, hardship and toil, at least this aspect appears free of that; we should do all we can to learn more about this facet of past lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Ages of fetuses and neonates were calculated from the length of long bones according to techniques developed on modern Western populations. Given the small sizes of Le Morne adults, it is possible that babies in this population would have been smaller than their Western counterparts, with the corollary that the calculations are systematically under-estimating age.

# REPARATIONS -A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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*I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me  
Because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact.  
A matter of the construction of their inner eyes.  
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible man**

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## Glossary

**Affirmative Action:** Policies of governments and other institutions, private and public, intended to promote employment, contracting, educational, and other opportunities for members of historically disadvantaged groups. Because they may favour some groups over others, affirmative action policies must be narrowly tailored to meet the institution's legitimate goals, such as remedying the effects of past discrimination or promoting full diversity in a school setting.

**Caveat emptor:** Latin for "Let the buyer beware". The basic premise is that you are buying a product or property at your own risk and should personally examine and test for obvious defects and imperfections. Caveat emptor still applies even if the purchase is "as is" or when a defect is obvious upon reasonable inspection before purchase. Since implied warranties and consumer protections regarding product liability have come upon the legal landscape, the seller is held to a higher standard of disclosure than "buyer beware" and has responsibility for defects which a buyer cannot note by casual inspection.

**Certiorari:** Latin for "fully informed". In Cases in which there is no appeal as a matter of right, certiorari is a writ (order by the appeals court so send all the documents in a case so that the appeals court can review the decision. Certiorari is most commonly used by the United States Supreme Court, which grants certiorari when at least four justices believe that the case involves a sufficiently significant federal issue.

**Circuit Court:** (1) The name used for the principal trial court in many states.

(2) In the federal system, the term may refer to courts within the 13 circuits. Eleven of these circuits cover different geographic areas of the country- for example; the United States Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit covers Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. The remaining circuits are the districts of Columbia, and the Federal Circuit, (which hears patent customs, and other specialized cases based on subject matter).

The term derives from an age before mechanized transit, when judges and lawyers rode the circuit of their territory to hold court in various places.

**Collateral Descendants:** A relative descended from a brother or sister of an ancestor- for example, a cousin, niece, nephew, aunt, or uncle.

**Consortium:** A group of separate individuals or companies that come together to undertake an enterprise or transaction that is beyond the means of any one member. For example, a group of local businesses might form a consortium to fund and construct a new office complex.

**Constitution:** The fundamental, underlying document which established the government of a nation or state. The United States Constitution, originally adopted in convention on September 17, 1787, ratified by the states in 1788, and thereafter amended 27 times, is the prime example of such a document; however, states also have constitutions.

**Constitutional Rights:** Rights given or reserved to the people of the U.S Constitution, and in particular, the Bill Of Rights.

**Standing:** The right to file a lawsuit or make a particular legal claim. Only a person or entity that has suffered actual injury has standing to seek redress in court. For example, an advocacy group may not file a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a statute on its own; there must be a plaintiff who has actually been harmed by the statute.

***In Forma Pauperis:*** Latin for "in the form of a pauper." A party to a lawsuit who cannot afford the court costs and fees can ask that they can be waived (forgiven) in order to proceed "*In Forma Pauperis.*"

**Statutory Damages:** Predetermined payments established by law to compensate for certain injuries. Statutory damages are sometimes made available because it is too difficult to calculate actual damages.

**Statute of Limitations:** The legally prescribed time limit in which a lawsuit must be filed. Statutes of limitation differ depending on the type of legal claim and on state law. For example, many states require that a personal injury lawsuit be filed within one year from the date of injury- or in some instances, from the date when it should reasonable have been discovered- but some allow two years. Similarly, claims based on a written contract must be filed in court within four years from the date the contract was broken in some states and five years in others. Statute of limitations rules apply to cases filed in all courts, including federal court.

**Sovereign Immunity:** A legal principal making governmental bodies and employees immune from being sued in their own courts without governmental consent. The legislature can, and often does, carve out areas where this immunity will be waived/cancelled (waiver of sovereign immunity).

## PREFACE

The topic of reparations for slavery can quickly draw a negative response especially when financial compensation gets into the mix. A few years ago while listening to Mauritian radio, I heard a reparations activist declare that those who are "*Fortunate should not get any compensation*"; this type of statement although entertaining to those who, at the time, were aware of the insider joke, reduces the question of reparations to a class issue that exists in the Creole community and that in the end, it was just about money. I have to say that I have not always been in favor of financial compensation for the simple reason that I think that the funds to be disbursed would simply be measly. At the time, I drew from the case of the displaced Chagossians who after decades of legal battles were awarded a small financial compensation and a small plot of land in underdeveloped and economically impoverished localities with little infrastructure such as Tombeau Bay.

The Chagossians went back to the drawing board and sued again. They received their checks and the choice to opt for British citizenship however they did not receive a single word of apology for their ordeal. An apology is important after all, it heals the ego and helps the victims move forward. It was in my opinion an incomplete and half-hearted apology.

One of the best examples of Reparations to date is the case of Japanese-American victims of United States internment camps of World War II, which recognized the internees' personhood, their social and racial visibility, civil rights and citizenship through a formal written apology from Congress, financial compensation and various reparations measures such as scholarships, educational funds.

My contribution and analysis of the legal literature on the litigations for reparations and slavery comes from the perspective of a historian. I approach the subject of reparations from a multidisciplinary perspective but do not regard myself as an expert in any discipline other than history. This is my contribution to the discourse.

"...America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

Martin Luther King Jr., "I have a Dream"

## INTRODUCTION

### SLAVERY AND THE LAW

The study of Reparations for Slavery has much to benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach, which ought to (but not limited to) include philosophy, psychology, history, sociology and law. It makes sense to compare the study of reparations in Mauritius to reparations movement in the United States for the Mauritian case has no legal precedent moreover; the multi-cultural nature of the population in the U.S is also very similar to Mauritius. However the reparations movement in the United States is privately initiated and brought about by individuals or groups of people who filed legal suits for compensatory reparations for the harms of slavery. Conversely the Mauritian study for the reparation of the harms caused by slavery is a governmental endeavour enacted by the parliament. It is part of a Truth and Justice Commission and among its many objectives is the study of the effects of slavery on the descendants of slaves in a historical, sociological and economic context. The Mauritian reparations study is in fact very similar to the United States Congressman Conyers H.R. 40 bill, which is still infamously lingering in congressional sub-committee since its introduction in 1989. Congressman Conyers perennially re-introduces the bill and each time it garners yawns of boredom from the floor followed by a predictable defeat.

The H.R.40 is in fact far from being a radical bill; it does not ask for an apology from the institutions that profited from slavery or an immediate, outright financial compensation for descendants of slaves but for the establishment of a commission to study slavery and its subsequent racial and economic discrimination against freed slaves, and the impact of these forces on today's African Americans. Among the aims of H.R 40 bill is to make recommendations to Congress for appropriate remedies to redress the harm inflicted on living African Americans. The Mauritian reparations study is a far cry from the H.R 40 bill and would probably represent a dream come true for the reparations activists in the United States.

Slavery pervaded all aspects of the slaves' lives and the slave-owners', it involved kidnapping, forced migration, assault and battery, rape, denial of religious freedom, prohibition to converse in one's native tongue, destruction of the family unit, deprivation of 4 status and the list goes on. These forms of abuse did not only affect the body but also the psyche; in jurisprudence these are described collectively as "*Torts*". Any person nowadays who undergoes any of these forms of torture and who files suit would surely collect compensatory damages and the offender (if convicted) would most certainly be imprisoned. However these abuses happened more than a century ago, in Mauritius, slavery was abolished in 1835 and any claim for reparations whether in terms of compensatory damages or punitive damages would entail filing derivative claims by someone other than the victim. In this case, descendants of slaves would file the law suit on behalf of their ancestors (who are long deceased) against victimizers who are deceased. The problem is that in American jurisprudence, Tort doctrine is not receptive to derivative claims because only the victim can file a suit for damages and the damages should be noticeable in some ways or easily assessed, verified by psychiatric and or medical professionals. Moreover the claimant has a set period to file the lawsuit for damages called a statute of limitation.

So far the African American reparations suits were defeated on the procedural major roadblocks such as statute of limitation and legal standing. Prof Keith Hylton proposes that demanding an accounting of the ways the beneficiaries profited from slavery and the extent/amount of their profits be made public and this according to Hylton has the potential to clarify the social costs of slavery and the oppressive regime that appeared in it awake which is Jim Crow segregation laws in the United States. The institution of slavery existed in a moral vacuum by today's standards and legally speaking, the institution although sanctioned by law functioned on the margins of legality.

According to Keith Hylton Social Torts are "*most damaging to slave descendants because, like a constantly mutating virus, they have the capacity to injure successive generations*"<sup>1</sup>. Ute Schönplflug makes the same point that individuals transmit information to one another in the form of cultural transmission from one generation to the next. Schönplflug draws upon the writings of the biologist Cavalli-Sforza to illustrate that cultural transmission functions are very similar to genetic transmission from parents to offspring. Schönplflug points out that the parents, social (and racial)

groups transmit their sets of cultural values such as skills, accumulated knowledge, social values, behaviours, dialect, clothing fashion, consumer behaviour, stories, rhymes, use of legal or illegal drugs, self-esteem, religious beliefs, sex-role conceptions, patterns of socialization, morals, political beliefs and the list is not exhaustive.

Hylton goes further in his development of social torts, he contends that the cultural values transmitted from slave to slave from one generation to another, have the power to change and adapt to the social, political and cultural climate specific to each generation. James R. Hackney argues that “slavery has severely decimated African Americans race capital”; the concept that race is cultural capital is borrowed from Bourdieu’s theory which proposes that a group is an amalgam of cultural, social and economic capital, and wherever slavery existed, it had a heavy impact on the people, laws, norms and values in that particular society.

## SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY ON THE BLACK SELF

The psychologist Adelbert Jenkins calls for a shift in our perspective from an external to an introspective look into how descendants of slaves conceptualize and shape their reality in a world where economic opportunities and social status are still ascribed on race. Jenkins does not reject that slavery brought unspeakable harm upon slaves and their African American descendants however contends that they are mere puppets or victims of their environments. He posits that Blacks have a say in their destinies as opposed to the Mechanist perspective which is a philosophical approach that considers people to be products of their environments. Jenkins explains that people are complex and sometimes the concepts used to account for their behaviours may often oversimplify rather than take into account the complexities that make the human person.

The definition of the term *self* refers to the aspects of experience that the individual considers to be “I” or “Me” and through experience with the world, what is self comes to be distinguished by the person from everything that is experienced as “not me”<sup>2</sup>. According to Jenkins, the idea of self is a unity that is patterned of many personal tendencies and one very important aspect of self is the concept of self-esteem. It refers to the judgments or evaluations that we make of our worth and consists of affective evaluations of the self either in terms of positive, negative or ambivalent tone. According to Jenkins the self is many sided and there are multiple bases for establishing self-esteem which depend on people’s personal history, the opportunity structure such as access to education, ethnic and social membership. According to Jenkins, the self-concept or view that we developed of ourselves as we turn our gaze towards ourselves- as an object, so to speak- we become aware of ourselves as agents, who take actions, initiative, and make decisions, choices from among possibilities.<sup>3</sup>

In his discussion of race in *Blackness Visible* Charles W. Mills proposes that European expansionism in its various forms such as expropriation, slavery, colonialism, settlement brought the concept of race into existence globally. According to Mills, those termed *Whites* are the bringers of civilization per se; they are the ones who built the legal system and the society from scratch in a land where according to their outlook was bare; which is a concept marvellously encapsulated in a book published in Mauritius entitled, “*Les Défricheurs de L’île Maurice*”, meaning those who weeded Mauritius although there are some serious speculations as to whether the colonists actually did the weeding themselves.

Mills makes his point by comparing the prolific misogynistic writing on women to the conspicuous absence of Blacks in classical philosophy. He points out that a collection of explicitly racist statements about Blacks quoted from major works in the Anglo-American canon would not be a particularly thick document.<sup>4</sup> The relationship of Blacks and Whites in American society is always set in terms of polarity, those termed *Whites* have the moral, religious and judicial standing that has lifted them above the other “races” and they have been the expropriators while others have been the expropriated. They have been the Slave-owners while others have been Slaves.<sup>5</sup> However, the problem of Mauritius is much more complex than that; the polarity between Whites and Blacks exists although not as prevalent as in the United States because Whites represent a very small minority in the population (albeit a very affluent one) and by virtue of their higher economic status, they can afford to forfeit the use of some services such as public bus system and

governmental public hospital. The Mauritian complication resides not only in the polarity between Whites and Blacks but between Blacks and other “communal groups” as well. The communal group termed “General Population” includes descendants of White slave-owners as well as descendants of slaves, who by the way refer to themselves as Creoles. It seems that the only commonality between Whites and Blacks in Mauritius is Christianity or at least the local perception is that both groups are said to be Catholics.<sup>6</sup> Economically speaking, these two groups are at opposite ends of the economic spectrum; descendants of slaves belong to the lowest social classes whereas the descendants of slave owners enjoy the highest social status in Mauritius.

A study sponsored by Cassam Uteem, former President of Mauritius shows that the “Black members” of the General Population suffer from “exclusion”, that they do not enjoy the same educational, economic opportunities as the other communities. So here is the hitch: by being included under the same denomination as the most affluent component of the General Population, the problems of the economically impoverished descendants of slaves are masked.

We can all agree that lumping groups of peoples together based on race, religion etc; label and pigeon-hole them, is in itself offensive. However assembling disparate groups of people who have little in common under a common appellation is even worse. The matter gets worse considering that the national census is no longer recorded along communal lines but the terminologies used in these census records to label people are still in use today (e.g. in the broadcast news, newspapers and even in law bills) and from a legal standpoint these terms are obsolete.

The government sponsored sociological study on “Exclusion” in the mid 1990s, hinted to some deeper issues within Mauritian society as a whole. Creoles however do not need a government sponsored study to tell them that they suffer from racial discrimination and before that study was ever undertaken; the first person to publicly declare that there is a problem with Mauritian society concerning the treatment of descendants of slaves is Father Roger Cerveaux, a Catholic priest who coined the term “*Malaise Creole*”. The ensuing public outcry felt more like a denial than applause or outrage at the situation. Cerveaux expounded his theory on *Malaise Creole* in the course of a Mass sermon; he declared that Creoles did not enjoy equal economic opportunities as the rest of the population based on their ancestry. In the sermon Cerveaux did not blame Creoles for their own problems per se; he saw them as victims of history who have trouble adjusting to the twenty first century due to ongoing racial discrimination. Ideas such as Cerveaux’s “*Malaise Creole*” belongs to the school of thought called Mechanism as opposed to Humanism proposed by Prof. Adelbert Jenkins.<sup>7</sup> Jenkins following the humanistic perspective focuses on people as being agents of their own destiny, capable to shape their lives through choices of their own. In so doing, Jenkins makes a clear distinction between the terms *humanistic* and *humanitarian*; the former refers to a philosophical stance that puts individuals and their choices as central, determining factors in their fate. While the latter refers to an attitude of compassion or benevolence towards humankind or a philosophical position which strives to attain the highest level of personal (sometimes spiritual) development for all humans. These factors are determinants in the individual’s freedom and responsibility; humanists may or may not be concerned with the welfare of the humankind in general as opposed to humanitarians. Jenkins’ humanistic position is drawn into sharp contrast to the Mechanists’ philosophical approach which sees human beings as constantly shaped by external circumstances with little input of their own.<sup>8</sup>

In Mauritius, the study on exclusion in the 1990s has shown that there is a higher rate of failure in inner-city public primary schools and one of its findings was that at the end of six years of primary school Creole children were still illiterate. Comparatively African American children from inner-city public schools in great urban areas such as Watts in Los Angeles or East Harlem in New York City, encounter the same problems. Jenkins’ theory of humanistic approach calls for a study of inclusion rather than exclusion, which focuses on how people view their cultural world, how they transmit knowledge and interpret them. A major problem, I have with Jenkins’ perspective is its diachronic in nature (although it is understandable that one cannot analyze a dead person’s psyche) Jenkins does not discuss the historical impact of slavery on African Americans’ as a major factor which can influence their choice making and subsequent interpretation of the world around them. Cross-cultural psychology on the other hand provides more straightforward answers; it suggests that cultural transmission is vital in people’s choice making. If cultural transmission of the torts of

slavery is a way to account for the present generation suffering the social torts of slavery then we can actually study these problems in a historical context and how articulate their choice making.

Seeing that our past is still with us, which is true in the United States and Mauritius; a Commission for Truth is an opportunity to heal the damages done to Mauritians through slavery and the indenture system as Randall Robinson says in his book, *The debt that America owes to Blacks that "no nation can enslave a race of people for hundreds of years, set them free bedraggled and penniless, pit them, without assistance in a hostile environment, against privileged victimizers, and then reasonably expect the gap between the heirs of the two groups to narrow. Lines, begun parallel and left alone, can never touch."*<sup>12</sup> Reparations through the Truth and Justice Commission are a means of democratizing history, it gives a voice to those who are seldom heard; silenced by a society founded on slavery.

The section entitled Reparations in the United States looks at class-action lawsuits filed on behalf of African Americans against the government, American and international corporations. This section gives the political and legal background to the different reparations suits and the social context in which they took place. Callie House and the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association reparations suit discusses the role of the church in grassroots movements and the ex-slaves' movement attempts to sue government agencies for monetary compensation for unpaid slave labour. The Dred Scott case analyzes the institution of slavery and the legal status of the slave in the ante-bellum jurisprudence. This section also investigates the question of citizenship of the African American slave in a pre-civil war context. It also explores the influence of Justice Tanney's opinion in the subsequent racial policies enacted such as Jim Crow in southern states post civil war. This section also uncovers similarities and differences between the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the 21st century lawsuits and how the demands of the reparations activists changed over time.

Section two explores the Japanese Internment Victims Reparations suit and the introduction of the H.R 40 bill which it inspired and their influence on modern reparations suits. This section gives details of each reparations suit and discusses the judges' opinions in relation to Keith Hylton's argument on the Social Torts of slavery and how they apply to the American context. This section also discusses the reparations of slavery within the Rule of Law. According to Dr. Kaimipono D. Wenger, the Rule of Law is an important and widely accepted idea, integral to most understandings of how society interacts with the law. The Rule of law is the idea that laws are equally applied, knowable, and distinct from arbitrary power and it is an imprecisely defined concept. Dr. Wenger discusses in his essay how slavery was a breach of the Rule of Law therefore reparations are an important way to address that breach. This essay analyzes Hylton theory concerning the social torts of slavery as causation for the problems encountered by descendants of slaves in relationship with Wenger's theory of reparations within the Rule of Law.

Section three gives the political background and legal histories of compensatory reparations in Mauritius Island after the abolition of slavery. It examines the case of a Mauritian consortium, which was created after the abolition of slavery with compensatory monies from the British government compared to a lawsuit for compensatory damages for the loss of slaves' labour and property as a result of abolition in the State of Louisiana. This section also investigates the reparations suit for the refugees of the Chagos Islands in Mauritius and why the compensatory actions did not heal these people's wounds. It also explores the theory of race through history comparatively in the U.S and Mauritius using Adelbert Jenkins humanistic approach to psychology and cross-cultural psychology proposed by Ute Schönplflug.

Section four is devoted to the comparison of the latest reparations class action suit in the United States to the state sponsored study on reparations which is part of the Truth and Justice Commission. It looks at similarities between the Farmer-Paellmann class-action suits and the present state-sponsored study on reparations in Mauritius and makes recommendations based on Prof Hylton's theory on Social Torts and Dr. Wenger's discussion of reparations as a way to redress the breach in the Rule of Law caused by slavery. This section discusses the pertinence of using a multidisciplinary approach to the study of slavery and reparations for the Truth and Justice Commission.

**REPARATIONS MOVEMENT IN THE U.S- THE JAPANESE AMERICANS WORLD WAR II INTERNEES**

The internment of Japanese Americans in concentration camps during World War II, in East Central Southern California is was a well-documented case of racism and civil rights violation. As early as 1941, the Department of State investigated the Japanese American population living in Southern Californian coastal cities, the reports documented the loyalty of Japanese Americans and subsequently advised that they did not pose any threat against national security. The FBI and the U.S Navy conducted separate independent investigations and their findings were similar to the Department of State however their reports were not made public until after the war ended. Japanese Americans were rounded up, forced out of their homes and left their belongings behind and interned in concentration camps for the duration of the war. One of them was Manzanar located in East Central California made famous by the 1973 autobiography of Jeanne Toyo Wakatsuki Houston who gives a firsthand gripping account of life in the internment camp and the struggles Japanese Americans faced in mainstream society after their release.<sup>10</sup>

The case of the Japanese Americans was first addressed in the 1970s; there was a lot of grassroots activity through the Japanese American Citizen League (JACL) and other local groups and chapters. *Farewell to Manzanar* the autobiography of Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston also helped to stir the sentiments of the survivors and their dependents. The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) pursued its efforts throughout the early 1980s which culminated in a Congressional fact-finding commission to study the possibility of reparations and make recommendations for compensatory damages. The commission welcomed survivors to depone in front of the congressional committee and a large number of older internees came forward to testify. In their testimonies, the survivors mentioned the despair and depraved living conditions they had to endure in the camps. Upon their release, they came back to their former homes to find them occupied by White Americans, some of the former internees managed to get their homes back but their furniture and precious belongings were stolen. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston mentioned in her book that after her family's return from Manzanar, her father who was a deep-sea fisherman could not get his boat back and deprived of his means of livelihood and already very depressed from the harsh life in Manzanar became an alcoholic.

The testimonies in front of the Congressional committee were so appalling to public opinion that both parties endorsed measures of redress for the Japanese Americans in their 1984 presidential bid. The case of Japanese Americans was further aided by many internal changes within the congressional subcommittee dealing with the legislation concerning their claim; the Democrat Frank Barney from Massachusetts replaced Dan Glickman, the Republican Representative from Kansas as the chairman. Four senior Japanese American Democrat legislators from Hawaii, California, and Arkansas used all of their influence to push the bill forward. Moreover, the congressional legislators cleverly presented the claim as a violation of constitutional rights, denial of equal opportunity to private citizens thus avoiding any reference to race. The class action suit filed on behalf of Japanese Americans Korematsu, Hirabayashi and Yasui was favorably presented in the media. The Civil liberties Act of 1988 was enacted to authorize a national public apology, each surviving internee and dependents received \$20,000 in compensatory damages, an educational scholarship fund was put in place to benefit the survivors and their descendants in their educational needs.<sup>11</sup>

The compensation was not effective immediately; checks were disbursed over a period of time; for instance Japanese Americans internees living in Hawaii received their checks in 1992.<sup>12</sup> The most important part of the reparations for Japanese Americans was the formal written apology which the federal government sent to each family. It is reported that the note was not long, the government took full responsibility for what it did and apologized; it gave these people closure to a painful chapter in their lives.

Japanese Americans internment was in some respect similar to the Dred Scott case of 1854, the central issues in both suits were ultimately citizenship and race. In the case of the Japanese internees, the generation called Sensei born in Japan, resided a long time in the United States and subsequently took American citizenship, their children called the Nikkei generation were born in the country and were by birth Americans. The Sensei and their children the Nikkei, who were mostly underage at the time, were also interned in the camps because their citizenship and allegiance were in question because of their race. Similarly, the Dred Scott case, the question of

citizenship was addressed in the famous opinion of Justice Roger B. Tanney that slaves being of a race different from the Caucasian Americans and Native Americans could not be citizens of the United States. The Dred Scott case will be discussed in further details in the subsequent chapter.

### THE DRED SCOTT CASE 1854 TO 1857 - SLAVERY AND CITIZENSHIP

Dred Scott was born in Southampton County, Virginia, his exact birth date is not known and existing records indicate the year to be between 1795 and 1800 on the Blow family's plantation. The Blow family was part of a long established, preeminent group of Virginia Planters whose roots reached the first days of the colony in the 1600s. Dred Scott's owner Peter Blow was an unsuccessful planter; he moved his family several times from Virginia to Alabama in 1818 and again in 1822 to Florence, Alabama where he established himself as an innkeeper. Business was good in bustling town of Florence, records show that Dred was employed as a hustler; he took care of the clients' horses.<sup>13</sup>

His physical appearance was listed as being dark of skin, short and slightly built; unlike the many other male slaves belonging to the Blow family group, he was not a mulatto. His short stature was associated to a bout of disease he suffered in childhood, which decided his owner to set to work in the house rather than on the plantation with the other slave children. Short of cash and his wife sick of a lingering disease that would ultimately claim her life, Peter Blow sold many young male slaves among them was Dred Scott who legally became property of Dr Emerson in 1833.

In 1833, Dr John Emerson was assigned by the U.S. Army to Fort Armstrong, located in Rock Island, Illinois. The territory of Illinois was known as a free territory with the passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 however it is not clear whether Dred Scott knew the implications that living in a free state where slavery was not upheld would have on his life.<sup>14</sup> Emerson on the other hand fully understood the situation but chose to bring his slave with him anyway. At the time, it was common for Southern Army officers to bring along their slaves to their Army postings whether it was; in a Free State or Slave state. In 1836, Dr. Emerson was reassigned to Fort Snelling on the Mississippi River, which was located in Michigan Territory now Saint Paul, Minnesota, then a vast area later subdivided into five states; Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota. Slavery was not recognized in the Michigan territory either furthermore, the Missouri Compromise strictly prohibited slavery in that region.<sup>15</sup> At Fort Snelling, Dred Scott met and married a black woman known as Harriet Robinson who was attached as servant to Major Taliaferro, a local Indian agent who also presided over their civil union as Justice of the Peace. Scott travelled to Louisiana and Texas with his family and often without his master and they did not escape. After the death of his master, Dred Scott, his wife and two daughters travelled to Missouri with the widow Emerson. There Scott brought suit against his owner to gain freedom for himself, his wife and their two children. The reasons may have been that the widow Emerson needed money and wanted to separate the Scott family by selling either the parents or the children to different owners. In his lawsuit, Scott claimed that the state of Missouri had the longstanding principle of "once free, always free" and that applied to him and his family because they had resided in the free territory for years, his daughter Eliza was born in the free territory and that once a slave took residence in the Free State he was immediately set free.

This case had a legal precedent in the England; the counsel to James Somerset made the same argument that a slave became free once he resided in a free state. The case of Rachel v. Walker in 1836 brought to the Circuit Court of St Louis, Missouri also used the James Somerset argument and the court ruled in favour of the slave woman named Rachel. Rachel's claim was that having lived in free territory where slavery did not exist, she was automatically freed. The verdict came a month after Dred Scott's move to Fort Snelling in May 1836. We do not know the reasons why Dred Scott did not bring that suit sooner but the fact that his family would be torn apart was a very strong incentive. The widow Emerson surrendered all of her property rights to Dred Scott to her brother John F. Sandford and this is how the case came to be known as Scott v. Sandford rather than Emerson.

It was recorded that the Emerson/Sandford family cut all means of livelihood to Dred Scott and his family, his former owner the Blow family took them in. Dred Scott hired himself out to nearby businesses and plantation owners to sustain himself and his family. He was sent free in 1854

by the Missouri Supreme Court but Sandford appealed and the case went to the United States Supreme Court, the case was decided in 1856 with Justice Roger B. Tanney reading his famous opinion on the case. The verdict took everyone aback; the abolitionists north and the pro-slavery south alike furthermore the verdict had many legal implications for the status of the person of African descent and for northern politics.

First, Justice Tanney redefined the status of people of African descent whether free or enslaved as inferior and by virtue of their African ancestry, they could never attain full citizenship in the Union. Justice Tanney's legal definition of the slave was very much in conformation with the French Code Noir which defined the slave as a "*bien meuble*", which would mean that the slave was just private property and the owner could do whatever he wished with him, the court could not intervene because the owner was in his rights. Second, Justice Tanney stated that the Framers of the Constitution did not intend to include the Black man in the article of the constitution and that the phrase "*All men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights...*" did not refer to the Black man and invoking the racist mindset of the framers, Justice Tanney asserted that if they did not intend to include the Black man as being part of the human family they were intending to define and in the case they did intend to include those of African descent they would have suffered "*universal rebuke and reprobation.*"<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore Justice Tanney proclaimed that Scott had no right to bring suit in federal court or any court of law because he was black and all blacks (not just slaves) could not be citizens of the country because their ancestry could be traced back to Africa. He pronounced the most memorable lines in the history of the Court that is the Black man: "*had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.*"<sup>17</sup>

Justice Tanney's opinion also nullified the 1820 Missouri Compromise thus angering Northern abolitionist sentiments. New states like Kansas were settled by both slave owning whites and abolitionists from the North, which led to violent riots and Justice Tanney's opinion, exacerbated the problem. On July 9, 1868, Congress ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution declaring among other things, that all persons born or naturalized in the United States were United States citizens and citizens of the state in which they resided. Section 1 of this Amendment effectively overruled the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision, ultimately making freed slaves citizens of the United States. Finally, on February 3, 1870, Congress ratified the Fifteenth Amendment with the intention of granting African-Americans the right of suffrage. The Fifteenth Amendment provides, in part: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude." U.S. Const. amend XV, § 1. Concerned with the possibility that individual states may attempt to circumvent the purpose behind the Civil War Amendments, Congress included an enabling clause in all three of the Civil War Amendments, giving it the exclusive power to enforce the Amendments with appropriate legislation. See U.S. Const. amend XIII, § 2; see also U.S. Const. amend XIV, § 5; U.S. Const. amend XV, § 2.

## EARLY REPARATIONS MOVEMENT

There were also early efforts attempts for a modicum of relief for ex-slaves. In 1865, Union Major General William T. Sherman declared that abandoned or confiscated land along the southeast coast, be set aside for freed slaves with families at a rental for three years. They were entitled up to 40 acres, hence the expression, "forty acres and a mule". However, this policy did not expand to the Deep South; after Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Jackson halted this movement in an effort to pacify the defeated confederate states. In June 1865, President Andrew Jackson ordered 40,000 Freedmen from their homesteads allowing the rebel white southerners to reclaim the land. The federal Government established the Freedmen's Bureau to provide assistance to former slaves.

Major General Oliver Otis Howard was nominated Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, which was headquartered in Washington D.C.<sup>18</sup> The bureau's assistants and agents carried out the daily operations in the former confederate and the Union states, of registering freed slaves for relief. The Bureau helped the ex-slaves with clothing, issued rations, operated hospitals and refugee camps. The Bureau also managed apprenticeship disputes (precisely the type that occurred during Callie House's childhood), assisted benevolent societies in establishing schools, helped freedmen legalized marriages contracted during slavery and provided transportation to reunite with their family or relocate to other parts of the country. Congress extended the life of the Bureau and added other duties, such as assisting Black soldiers and sailors in obtaining back pay, bounty payments, and pensions. When the Bureau was discontinued in 1872, its remaining functions were transferred to the Freedmen's Branch of the Adjutant General's Office.<sup>19</sup>

The Reparation movement is not new to the United States. As early as 1870, a white southerner, democrat and businessman named Walter R. Vaughan wrote to congress to appeal for a pension fund to help aging ex-slaves. Vaughan based his model on the pension fund already in use for Union veterans' soldiers, he was the first to suggest that being enslaved is tantamount to sustaining personal injury and that the government should compensate the ex-slaves for the repeated injuries they suffered during slavery. Vaughan worked closely with Congressman William J. Connell on the 1890 bill also known as the Mason bill which would provide ex-slaves a pension based on a scale.<sup>23</sup> Seeing that his efforts were fruitless with the Congress, Vaughan decided to appeal to public opinion Blacks and whites on the need to have an ex-slaves pension fund to support aging slaves who cannot support themselves through work. In 1891, he published his views in small book entitled, *Vaughan's Freedmen's Pension Bill: A plea for American Freedmen and a Rational Proposition to Grant Pensions to Persons of Colour Emancipated from Slavery*. Vaughan's book was an instant bestseller in the South, ex-slaves collected money to buy it, those who could read, read aloud to entire gatherings. According to Charles P. Henry, Vaughan's book was remarkable in its historical scope, it described great accomplishments of Blacks in Africa for instance in Ancient Egypt and included contemporary biographies of successful Black men who had been slaves. However Professor Frances Berry contends this portrayal of Vaughan, she postulates that he wanted to revitalize the southern economy which was severely weakened by the civil war.<sup>20</sup> Demanding a pension fund for ex-slaves would help the south recover from the ravages of the civil war, in Vaughan's opinion helping the freedmen recover would benefit the whole white society in the long run because enabling them with the means of consumption would boost the economy, creating more demand for consumer goods.

Regardless of Vaughan's true motives to proposing the Freedmen's pension; one has to admire his thoughtfulness, incisive intellect to see beyond the very immediate confines of race to imagine how the south would benefit from the implementation of such a radical bill. Vaughan and the leaders of the National Ex-Slaves Mutual Relief, Bounty Association worked together closely at first to push for congress to adopt the Mason bill. However internal problems arose, Vaughan decided to announce that only he and Congressman Connell were responsible for drafting the Freedmen's pension bill and that anyone not approved by him was deemed a fraud. He denounced the elected secretary Callie House and the general manager of the National Ex-Slaves, Isaiah H. Dickerson as frauds in southern papers and warning the public not to give them money for the passing of the bill as it would be fraudulent.

**CALLIE HOUSE AND THE NATIONAL EX-SLAVES MUTUAL RELIEF, BOUNTY ASSOCIATION**

Vaughan's ideas on the Freedmen's pension fund heavily influenced the first Black organization *The National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty Association* that sought reparations for unpaid wages during slavery. The organization sought pensions for African-American ex-slaves based on the type of pensions offered to Union soldiers; the organization targeted \$68 million in taxes levied on seized cotton from the defeated southern states, a sum which would amount to \$1.2 billion in 2005 according to Prof. Frances Berry's estimates.<sup>21</sup> One of the pioneers for the Reparation Movement was Mrs. Callie House born Callie Guy into slavery in 1861 and was still a small child at the time of emancipation.<sup>22</sup>

After the abolition of slavery, many owners in Tennessee would refuse to let the ex-slaves' children go with their parents; keeping them as apprentices without parental authorization.<sup>23</sup> Callie House became a widow very young; it must have been difficult to care for her five children on a washerwoman's salary. Callie knew the daily struggles of the ex-slaves; it was definitely worse for those who were too old to work. There was a collective need for self help within the former slave community. The National Ex-Slaves Mutual Relief Bounty Association functioned as a mutual help society; there were monthly dues for those who could contribute, which went towards helping the destitute old or disabled ex-slaves for their medical and living expenses as well as burial aid. The rest of the contributions went towards stationery, stamps and the general administrative work surrounded writing and collecting petitions for congress to help Freedmen and to help pass the Mason Bill. Much of the information concerning the slaves were obtained through door to door interviews with former slaves which Callie conducted herself; she listened to their woes about the present, and their fears concerning the future. She exhorted anyone especially the older slaves to write to congress to petition for a pension and it clear to them that it was their right and privilege as American citizen to do. Callie and the other officials from the association collected and submitted these petitions to Congress.<sup>24</sup>

The activities of the Association were not solely confined to Nashville Tennessee but soon spread in the south and in North America where the ex-slaves settled after 1865. There were chapters in Atlanta, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, and Washington D.C. Callie House and the leader Isaiah Dickerson travelled a lot while organizing for the association when House and Dickerson were arrested for fraud, they were questioned at length on the origin of their travel funds. A lot of the Association's members had never met Callie House or Dickerson in person and there were rumours of people going around collecting money impersonating them. Prof Berry suggests that these people were either rumours spread around from the Post Office Administration in D.C or by people who did not like the idea of African Americans organizing themselves at a community level for self-help and personal betterment. Callie House's impersonator was described as a thin-faced, well-spoken, slender mulatto woman who had an elegant handwriting, which was very far from the truth. Callie was a full figured, dark skin woman with a primary school education but she was very intelligent and often gave public lectures on reparations.

Callie House worked closely with Cornelius Jones, a black attorney to bring suit against the Treasury Department on taxes levied on cotton seized as war bounty by the Union army when they invaded the south. The class action suit was filed in 1915 under the name *Johnson v. McAdoo*; the plaintiffs all freedmen from the Association claimed that the government owed them money in the form of unpaid wages over cotton seized during the war, which they claimed was picked and processed by slaves' hands. The plaintiffs stipulated that the government had already earned huge amounts of profit on the bounty cotton; price for crops like cotton was kept artificially high during the war moreover according to the three-fifth representation rule, cotton was already heavily taxed. This means that the government made an enormous amount of money on that crop, first on the inflated price and second on the heavy taxation that was levied upon it. The cotton had been already identified when it was taxed and was well publicized as war bounty in the newspapers of the time, the money was even be traced to the Treasury department thus the suit could avoid the issue of whether Congress would appropriate funds to pay for pensions as compensation for the ex-slaves.<sup>25</sup> The plaintiffs in this case claimed as unpaid revenue which amounted to \$68,078,388.99 collected in taxes from 1862 to 1868. Cornelius Jones was a very skilful attorney; he avoided any hints to the failures of Reconstruction policies in the south, that these policies did not include Blacks at all. And the fact that the Jacksonian proclamation of 1865 forced the freedmen off their homestead and returned the land to the ex-slaveholders. Instead Jones crafted his argument on

comparisons with Indian monies that were held in the Treasury and were payable under specific Indian Treaties. The freedmen lost the case based on a procedural objection that the government of United States could not be sued without its consent and Jones filed an appeal in Supreme Court and lost. Waivers of sovereign immunity allow such claims to avoid immediate rejection in the courts and today the government allows such waivers but during Callie House's, it was the government was causing the harassment and the discrimination and it would not allow it.

Jones made himself a target of persecution when he filed this class action suit against the treasury department. Moreover, Jones and Callie House greatly publicized the suit among ex-slaves and their families in the various chapters around the country and to do that they had to use the mail. This gave more fuel for the Post office department to persecute Callie House, the Association and Cornelius Jones. The Post Office department presented the invitation to contribute in the lawsuit as an evidence of the Association's criminality. Jones was indicted for money and mail fraud as he was filing the appeal in the Supreme Court.

The harassment from the postmaster general and by extension the federal government continued until Mrs. House was finally arrested on charges of mail fraud, prosecuted and sentenced to one year in a federal penitentiary. Mrs. House pleaded not guilty and asserted in court that her work with the Association was necessary. Mrs. House maintained her innocence until her death from uterine cancer in 1928.

Callie House must have come across as arrogant and impetuous when she wrote to Acting Assistant District Attorney Barrett, telling him that she was an American citizen and it was in her rights to petition Congress to redress the dreadful situation African Americans found themselves in after the Civil War. People like Barrett and those who actively sought to silence Callie and the Association could not fathom that Blacks were entitled to rights and citizenship; they were still in the same "world" as described in Justice Roger B. Tanney's opinion in the Dred Scott case in 1856. Justice Tanney made it plain when talking about Dred Scott that being a black man, he could not be a citizen of any state because he was a negro whose ancestors were of pure African blood and who were imported into the Union and sold as slaves. Furthermore a black man had no rights to sue a white man in a court of law because these were the rights and privileges of a citizen to which he could not aspire. Justice Tanney went on to describe African Americans as *"beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was brought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it. This opinion was at that time fixed and universal in the civilized portion of the white race."*<sup>26</sup>

Callie House's demise, the ultimately death of the mutual help association and the failure of the Mason bill in subcommittee shows that slavery ended only to replaced with Jim Crow which brought disenfranchisement and segregation. In the case of Dred Scott, few years before Callie House was born; Justice B. Tanney wrote his opinion on the case based on his own views but also it reflected the sentiments of the white society of the time. Similarly the true motive behind federal government's arrest and prosecution of Callie house was to silence her and any demands from the Black population to a better life. The treatment that she had to undergo because of her activities to obtain a better life for African Americans materialized the words of Judge Tanney that the *"negro was so far inferior that they had no rights which a white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit."* These words reflected the negative sentiments, attitudes and perceptions the white society harboured for African Americans who were considered in the words of the philosopher Charles W. Mills as subpersons. Although a generation separated slavery from Callie House's prosecution, the attitude of white society towards African Americans had not changed.

#### H.R. 40 BILL AND MODERN REPARATIONS CLASS ACTION LAWSUITS

The United States congressman John Conyers representing Michigan 14<sup>th</sup> district, introduced the bill H.R.40 in January of 1989 entitled "The Commission to study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act"<sup>27</sup> and for the past twenty-one years Congressman Conyers has reintroduced the bill and each time H.R. 40 stayed in the subcommittee level. Congressman Conyers and his

constituents were inspired by the Reparations for the Japanese internment victims of World War II which was awarded in 1988. The H.R 40 bill is very different from the one authorized by the fact-finding congressional sub-committee on Japanese Americans Internment victims; it is rather timidly phrased as only a study to the possibility of Reparations for descendants of slaves. H.R 40 so eloquently titled after "the forty acres and a mule" phrase does not even ask for reparations, an apology or compensation in the form of scholarship fund or individualized monetary award like it was in the case of Japanese Americans. What is baffling with American society is that even such a modest attempt to study race relations is very rudely ignored and some predict that it might stay in the sub-committee level indefinitely unless a miraculous change of mind occurs both on the Republican and Democrat side.

The case was argued in October of 1995 in the city of San Francisco, CA and was dismissed by Judge Sandra B. Armstrong; district Judge in District Court for the Northern District of California. The plaintiffs appealed their complaints against the United States that as descendants of slaves they have suffered damages from the enslavement of Africans and have suffered racial discrimination based on their African ancestry, which was a cause in their inability to muster the same economic, educational opportunities as their white counterparts. The plaintiffs appealed in the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in December of 1995 In *Forma Pauperis* and demanded reparations for the damages they claimed they have suffered and a formal apology for slavery from the United States government.

The case was dismissed based on the inability of the plaintiffs to neither establish that there was concrete, personal injury nor assert the alleged guilt of the United States of America government to have committed these injuries under Tort Law. Moreover, if there was concrete evidence of personal injury from enslavement of African Americans, the statute of limitations to sue for punitive and compensatory damages have been exceeded by more than a conventional human lifetime. The waiver of sovereign immunity in Tort claims against the government of the United States is limited to claims accruing on and after January 1, 1945.<sup>28</sup> In the 1915 case of *Johnson v. McAdoo*, the government refused to allow a waiver of sovereign immunity which led to the plaintiffs losing the case. Had the government granted a waiver of sovereign immunity, the plaintiffs would have (most probably) won the case; as they could easily testify in court and the subject of their claims could be traced to the Treasury Department without any problem.

*Re- African American Slave Descendants Litigation* is a class action suit initially filed in federal court in March 26, 2002 New York by a group of lawyers such as Prof. Charles Ogletree Jr. a professor at Harvard Law School and co-chairman of the Reparations Coordinating Committee and the late Johnnie Cochran, a Los Angeles-based lawyer. The lawsuit entitled *Farmer-Paellmann v. FleetBoston* named Deadria Farmer-Paellmann, Executive Director of the Restitution Study Group, the Chicago chapter of the Reparation movement, was filed on behalf of all African-Americans seeks compensation from a number of defendants for profits earned through slave labor and slave trade. The suit named a few corporations such as FleetBoston Financial Corporation, Aetna Insurance Company and CSX (a railroad company) and was joined later by Meryll Lynch now owned by Bank of America and New York Life Insurance as the reparations committee progressed in their historical investigation. The Committee worked towards including quite a few educational institutions such as Brown, Yale and Harvard Universities which according to Prof Charles Ogletree have made headlines as beneficiaries of grants and endowments which could be traced back to slavery.<sup>29</sup> Like in the *Cato v. United States* and *Johnson v. McAdoo*, Professor Ogletree also named the United States government as a defendant, he claimed that the government through public officials guaranteed that slavery and Jim Crow segregation laws were feasible. The movement cited the example of South Africa where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has made monetary compensation a central part of their mission, which seeks to compensate people with clear material needs who suffered under apartheid because of race. It was also in South Africa, in the 2001 conference on racism that the United Nations named slavery a crime against humanity which Prof Ogletree asserts is a legal definition that may enable the reparations movement to extend its reach to international forums but so far the movement is U.S based only.

*Farmer-Paellmann v. FleetBoston Financial Corporation, and Barber v. New York Life Insurance Co* both filed in 2002 claimed that above-named corporations and eighteen other companies profited from their historical roles in the enslavement of Africans. FleetBoston, JP. Morgan Chase through two of its merger companies Merchant's Bank of New York and the Leather

Manufacturers Bank of New York, and New York Life Insurance Co. Made huge profits from holding insurance contracts on slaves and used slaves as collateral prior to 1865.<sup>30</sup> The state of California as a plaintiff sued FleetBoston Financial Corp. in 2003 because it claimed that FleetBoston Financial Corp profited in slave trading even after the abolition of slave trade and that the corporation held insurance policies on slaves. The effect of writing slave life insurance policy was to provide the financial means to, and incentive to, purchase more slaves, the slave owners worked the slaves extra hard so as to extract the most profit from his labour. The insurance company on the other hand so as to maximize profit would ask a mandatory medical exam of the slave then write the insurance policy on only three quarter of the market value of the slave. Hence the scheme was profitable to both parties.

JP Morgan Chase Manhattan Bank recognize its role in the slavery era but did not specify its involvement, the bank issued an apology and established a \$5 million scholarship fund for students living in the state of Louisiana. The gesture was characterized as an insult and a lukewarm apology as the company's assets are valued in the hundredths of billions of American dollars and as such there were calls to boycott the college funds. The question is how modern companies can today be accountable for the unethical and immoral measures (such as ensuring slaves or using them as collateral for loans) that their predecessors have committed during the era of slavery? The answer lies in the Slave Era Disclosure Laws enacted in several states such as California, Iowa, and Massachusetts to name a few, have established that the "Predecessor Company" shall own all the rights, duties, benefits, liabilities in an uninterrupted chain of succession which are transferred in the merger for instance, JP Morgan Chase acquired all of the benefits and liabilities of Canal Bank and Citizens Bank, which are known to have accepted slaves as collateral for loans disbursed to slave owners. Let's examine a short bio of the said mergers:

In 1831 Canal Bank was formed in Louisiana followed by the birth of Citizens Bank in the same state. In 1924 the Canal Bank and Citizens Bank merged to form the Canal Commercial Trust and Savings Bank better known under the acronym CCTSB. In 1931 Chase Bank took over the CCTSB and in 1933 at the height of the Great Depression CCTSB went into liquidation. In 1933, CCTSB passed on some of its deposits and loans to the newly formed National Bank of Commerce and in 1971 the subsequent bank was renamed First National Bank of Commerce and in 1998 the latter merged with Bank One Louisiana. In 2004 Bank One merged with JP Morgan Chase & Co and is known as such today. Under the Slave Era Disclosure Law, JP Morgan Chase & Co is liable for issuing loans to slaveholders using slaves as collateral as well as responsible for every other action performed by the defunct companies it absorbed.

The Farmer-Paellmann v. United States class action suits have been appealed many times and in many courts of law, the last being October 1, 2007 when the case was finally dismissed in United States Supreme Court. The opinion interestingly enough consists of one single line denying an appeal to the Circuit court:

*Opinion- "Petition for writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit denied. Justice Breyer took no part in the consideration or decision of these petitions".*

The Farmer-Paellmann class action suits have hit the same roadblock over and over again that is the Statutes of limitations have long expired and that the plaintiffs cannot establish the alleged misconducts to the defendants. In plain English, there are no indications in this day and age that the plaintiffs can point to the person or persons employed at FleetBoston, Merryll Lynch or JP Morgan Chase who actually wrote the slaves insurance policies or disbursed loans to slave holders using slaves as collateral. And for that matter, the said slaves who were obviously the recipients of the tort are all long deceased and so are the people who processed the so-called loans and other financial transactions. To put it succinctly, one has to say that in the event of an "absence of plaintiffs as well as an absence of perpetrators" there can be no crime.

In the appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit argued on September 27, 2006 and Decided on December 13, 2006, Judge Posner writes in his opinion that, *"we think that the district court was correct, with some exceptions to be noted, in ruling that the plaintiffs lack standing to sue It would be impossible by the methods of litigation to connect the defendants' alleged misconduct with the financial and emotional harm that the plaintiffs claim to have suffered as a result of that conduct."* The Judge goes on to say that there is a *"fatal*

*disconnect between the victims and the plaintiffs. When a person is wronged he can seek redress, and if he wins, his descendants may benefit, but the wrong to the ancestor is not a wrong to the descendants. For if it were, then (problems of proof to one side) statutes of limitations would be toothless. A person whose ancestors had been wronged a thousand years ago could sue on the ground that it was a continuing wrong and he is one of the victims”.*

First of all, the litigants' claims have to be derivative because they were clearly not born in 1865 when slavery was abolished following this line of thought; the claims could not be brought up by those who incurred those injuries. Secondly their alleged injuries have to be derivative also; they claim that they suffer from racial discrimination in its entire spectrum, which permeated (to the present) in every single aspects of their lives that they have comparatively (to the white population) lower economic, educational, social status and all because of their ancestry to African slaves.

In the case of the litigations, Re-descendants of African slaves/Farmer-Paellmann suits, the defendants are not clearly identifiable, they are said to be present day corporations which merged with defunct corporations, which conducted slave based business deals prior to or in 1865. The injuries themselves are rather nebulous according to the plaintiffs the defendants cause them harm by profiting from business deals with slaveholders and using slaves as collateral. However the plaintiffs fail to clearly identify how and when the injuries came about. Nor were they able to identify how many times they were hurt and how serious their injuries were.

To better understand this argument let's take a mundane example. If Jill hits Jack on the head with a club then the action of hitting and the instrument used in the deed are all causal for Jack's injury. In the class action suits, the litigants fail to establish the causality under Tort Law hence their dismissal. In simple English, the litigants have difficulty identifying their injuries in a precise manner and cannot show for that matter how, when and who hurt them with the accuracy dictated by Tort Law. These injuries are not covered by "traditional" Tort doctrine as Prof Keith Hylton puts it; tort law redresses injuries which are current the law establishes a timeline in which an identifiable victim can sue the alleged perpetrator (who should also be identifiable) usually within a year or two of the said injury (depending of the state in which the litigation takes place) beyond that prescribed timeline, the statute of limitations expires. In that respect, Tort Law is very specific.

Suzette Malveaux argues otherwise in her article entitled *Statutes of Limitations: a Policy Analysis in the Context of Reparations Litigation*. She contends that time-barring procedures in reparations claims are against public policy and that *"under existing rationales for statutes of limitations and their exemptions, such claims could survive."*<sup>31</sup> Malveaux also argues that the courts should exercise their equitable, impartial power and permit these reparations claims to be heard on the merits and they did not. Malveaux claims that the statutes of limitations upon, which the courts are relying, are outdated and cannot be justly applied in the context of reparations litigations. Malveaux uses the 1921 race riots in the Greenwood neighbourhood of Tulsa, as an illustration of the inapplicable nature of the statues of limitations; the district court in this case interpreted the plaintiffs' injuries and the causation of such injuries in an unhistorical manner and held the plaintiffs to a far greater standard than the defendants who used deception to avoid liability. There were more than 100 legal suits filed in 1923 for the case of Tulsa riots but only two of them went to trial.<sup>32</sup>

Keith Hylton proposes another course of action; that the litigants in the reparations suits should instead concentrate on the Social Torts, that slavery involves a category of Social Torts which are according to him more harmful and to which the tort law appears to be an inadequate means of seeking damages. Among these social torts is the denial to the slaves the right to marry, deprivation of status, denial of religious freedom, etc. Hylton suggests that Social Torts are most damaging to descendants of slaves because they are "like a constantly mutating virus, they have the capacity to injure successive generations". The comparatively lower economic, educational, social and legal standing in society based on African American ascendancy to African Slaves are actually derivative of the social torts of slavery. By consequence of the above-mentioned social torts, descendants of slaves have a difficult time overcoming the branding of inferiority that the institution of slavery has bestowed upon them by virtue of their phenotypic appearance which

recall their ascendancy to African slaves; they are *de facto* relegated to an inferior status in all of the institutions of society.

Hylton also proposes another resolution that in order to have some potential in social gain, reparations claims have to demand an accounting on slavery's beneficiaries and precisely how they profited from this institution and the findings should be made public. In his article, Hackney deplores that it might be a simple task to identify individual slave owners but "*there is no continually existing entity (such as a corporation) to answer for these claims*". It might be hard to find a corporation that could answer these claims in the United States but in Mauritius, the case is very different. The Mauritius Commercial Bank, a consortium was founded in 1838 from compensatory funds obtained from the British Government as reparations for the loss of slaves after the abolition of slavery.<sup>37</sup> The compensation money was invested in the new Mauritius Commercial Bank but also in the plantations in Mauritius.

### COMPENSATION IN COLONIAL MAURITIUS - THE MAURITIUS COMMERCIAL BANK

Hylton recommends in order to potentially garner social gain for descendants of slaves, reparationists in the United States ought to demand an accounting of the businesses that benefited from slavery and that the findings should be public knowledge. The political entity of Mauritius like the United States of America was founded on slave labour; the book "*Les Défricheurs de L'île Maurice*" gives a list of the French families and individuals who came to Mauritius then Isle De France as colonists. The above-mentioned book however, concentrates only on the French period and does not give us much information on the Dutch or British periods of colonization.

Slavery in Mauritius was abolished on February, 1, 1835 which was thirty years before the abolition of slavery in the United States; furthermore there was no formal reconstruction period as in the United States where special funds were disbursed by the legislative to relieve and help White Americans from the disastrous effects of the Civil War had on the economy. Mauritian historiography points out that the first British governor Robert Farquhar was particularly friendly to the French slave-owners and that he used all his influence to accommodate their needs such as French legal code was retained as well as the colonists' right to keep slaves; they were not forced to convert from Catholicism to the Church of England.<sup>38</sup> There was the Treaty of friendship of 1817 signed with King Radama the 1st from the Imerina kingdom from central highlands of Madagascar to whom tactical and military means were given to in him in the hope of establishing himself as sole King of the Island of Madagascar.<sup>39</sup>

Farquhar did not enforce the Slave Trade Abolition Act, which took effect in all British colonies in 1810 and nor was the Slave Trade Felony Act of 1813 ever enforced in Mauritius. It was rather hard to enforce the slave trade felony act since the high officials in the colony were all slave-owners themselves or sons of slave-owners. In a way, Farquhar conciliatory attitude towards the French colonists precluded him from enforcing British policies in the island. Farquhar's strategy in stopping slave trade was to be non-confrontational and instead of focusing on the slave-owners in the island, he shifted his attention to the sources of the slave supply, which was Madagascar and East Africa.

The slaveholders in Mauritius protested against most British generated policies especially those which dealt with slavery such as registration of slaves ordered on September 24, 1814 and enacted in Mauritius in 1815. Teelock writes that slave-owners in Mauritius *vociferously protested and boycotted registration*, the French population feared slave rebellions more than anything and any amelioration laws were met with resistance.

The hostility and resistance to British rule displayed by French colonists was translated through the steadfast hold of French cultural values which had slavery being at its very core. The attitude that slaves were inferior therefore were to be "*bien meuble*" that is, mere pieces of property, as it is worded in the Code Noir; was the nucleus of the so-called French cultural values. British Colonizers were not opposed to slavery either for instance; Charles Telfair was one of the largest and wealthiest slave-owner in the island. Private property was at the very centre of the slave-owning mentality and when slavery was abolished in 1835, slave-owners most certainly saw themselves as being robbed of their property. The threat of losing their personal property

prompted the planters to send Adrien d'Epinau, an attorney and a very wealthy slaveholder and plantation proprietor to England to "defend the property" of the colonists.

When one analyses from the perspective of causation that is how the torts which the slaves suffered from were easily transferred to their children and each generation passed these onto the present day generation. In other words there is a direct correlation between the poor economic status of African Americans nowadays and the economic and social depravity of the slaves. James R. Hackney Jr. seems to cite conservative writer John McWhorter who attributes the inequalities suffered by African Americans to their differing cultural values and on the negative incentive effects of the welfare system.<sup>36</sup> McWhorter means differing in the sense that African Americans hold values which differ from the normative White Americans cultural values. McWhorter's assertion imputes the responsibility of causation on African Americans; he sees them both as victims and as perpetrators of their own demise through over-reliance on welfare and their inability to adjust or change their cultural values to par with mainstream White America.

Despite Hylton's argumentative brilliance on the toxicity of social torts on future generations, he does not however, explain how these (social torts) "mutate" and negatively affect African Americans. James R. Hackney Jr. in his essay *Ideological Conflict* cited above gives a glimpse of an elucidation, which I will subsequently further expound.

Hackney cites Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital, and how race capital of any ethnic group represents an amalgam of all forms of capital proposed by Bourdieu. Hackney argues that "slavery has severely decimated African Americans' race capital". Setting aside the use of the verb "decimated" (from the verb to decimate, which actually means to kill a tenth of) Hackney is close to making a point here, that slavery has a lot to do with African American status in this day and age (and based on the same model, descendants of African slaves in Mauritius too).

In Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural reproduction, the stress is placed more on the capacity of social actors to actively impose and engage their own cultural productions and symbolic systems in the reproduction of social structures of domination rather than putting emphasis on economic factors as in Marxist analysis.<sup>4137</sup> Bearing in mind that Bourdieu was actually talking of upper class French society, one can extrapolate from Bourdieu's theory to understand that economic, social cultural and symbolic capital of an individual or a group can actually transmit to the next generation. We can consider how the social and psychological aspects of how people feel, think and act and how these translate into specific choices within a sociological context and how these choices and/or behaviours are passed on to the next generation.

Ute Schönplflug explores this theory further in her article entitled "*Cultural Transmission- A Multidisciplinary Research Field*".<sup>38</sup> First, Schönplflug defines the cultural reproduction in terms of cultural persistence as being essentially transmission or the passing on of information from individual to individual or from groups to other groups. Schönplflug draws on the writings of the biologist Cavalli-Sforza that "*genetic transmission may not be the only source for parent-offspring biological similarity and that social orientations, skills, and accumulated knowledge are also similar in parent-offspring dyad*". Schönplflug distinguishes three channels of cultural transmission such as vertical, horizontal and on the dual model which means, transmission can go both vertical and horizontal. Here is a selection of the often most discussed issues in studies involving people of African descent and which are transmitted using Vertical modes of transport; cognitive development, attitudes, educational and occupational status, upward and downward mobility, patterns of socialization, sex-role conceptions, political beliefs, religious beliefs, self-esteem, use of legal or illegal drugs, language and linguistic usage etc. Horizontally transmitted traits include aggressive behaviour, altruistic behaviour, morals, social values, conformity, dialect, technological innovations (or lack thereof), clothing fashions, consumer behaviour, stories and rhymes, songs, children's games. The dual mode of transmission is known as dual inheritance model; that is, genetic and cultural transmission; right or left handedness, intelligence, and cerebral dominance. Schönplflug proposes that the transmission mechanisms might occur in two stages; the first stage is awareness of the information to be transmitted and second is acceptance of the information. The two stages can only be separate if the individuals make the discriminate choice to accept or not to accept the information. The complication in this model according to Schönplflug is that there might be a strong spontaneous motivation to "teach" on the part of the transmitter as well as a strong

motivation on the part of the receiver to “learn” the information. Modes of transmission can be age-specific that is these have to do with biology and cognitive development, which are areas of study that this essay will not tackle.

Schönpflug’s take on Cultural Transmissions can explain how the noxious nature of the Social Torts change and adapt to affect successive generations of African Americans. However, Schönpflug talks about a strong willingness to learn as well as a strong willingness to teach those cultural components. So the problem is this why is the onus solely on the descendants of slaves in this rhetoric? One can understand that children, young as well as older people in all ethnic groups will transmit and accept values within their community and even outside the community. But what about the people who are not descendants of slaves, in the United States the majority being whites or Caucasian Americans, are they an amorphous mass that do not transmit their ancestors’ values i.e. “slaveholders’ values”. Slaveholders are human beings too, no punch lines intended here; they will transmit values to the subsequent generations of their own offspring and anyone coming into contact with them and accepting what they transmit. In a strange way, slaves did a strange and twisted way accepted their subordinate inferior status that is one of the reasons why the system flourished for so long. The abusers impose their values on the abused and by not denouncing or outwardly rebelling against the abusers they become tacit accomplices to their own ill treatment. There were rebellions in all slave-based societies (even in Mauritius, the historiography is very quiet on it though) with the exception of Haiti, none of them managed to overthrow the slaveholding regime. The abuser v. abused model is very similar to the abusive parent and abused child relationship, which is a toxic but mutually dependent bond. Abusive behaviour like any type of behaviour according to Schönpflug follows a horizontal transmission mode, based on this model slaveholders’ transmit their abusiveness through their children and their victims who subsequently can become abusers themselves and transmit this type of behaviour to their children and so forth. In the light of Hylton’s argument on Social Torts; transmission of abusive behaviour would indeed be a very toxic, contagious and rapidly mutating virus that can affect whole generations of people.

## RACE IN PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Philosophy of Race developed by Prof Charles W. Mills who in his collection of essays entitled “Blackness Visible” discusses the invisibility of blacks in American society. The issue of reparations is ultimately a question of how to guarantee that the civil rights of a few despite the opposition of a majority. The irony in American ‘exceptionalism’ is that it supports reparation bills for crimes perpetrated outside the United States and on foreign victims such as the Holocaust while it rejects a reparation bill for slavery, which was a crime perpetuated over centuries on American soil.<sup>39</sup>

Slavery has an ambiguous status in the constitution of the United States to say the least; slavery as a term is not even mentioned in the constitution<sup>40</sup> regardless of the fact that slaves was used as the yardstick for wealth and power.<sup>41</sup> The word Slave itself was completely omitted from the Constitution, the only time that the word appears is in the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution which actually abolishes the institution of Slavery. Liberal Individualism prohibits for instance the reference to group characteristics like race and that is why any positive discrimination such as Affirmative Action based on race, gender, caste of a said group to have access to the similar standards as the majority is in theory unconstitutional and has been repealed in some states such as California. The Slave is carefully avoided in the articles of the Constitution and instead slaves are referred to as “other persons”, “such persons” and “persons held to service or labor”.<sup>42</sup> With Justice Tanney’s opinion in mind; make no mistake, white society knew who “such persons” referred to.

The notion of private property as well as the liberal individualism enunciated by John Locke has deeply influenced the Founding Fathers and the drafting of the constitution. John Locke like his predecessor Thomas Hobbes agree that the state has to defend the rights of property of its citizen; Locke says for instance, that when a person uses his own labour to make something out of what was originally communal property, he lays claim to it.<sup>43</sup> Lockean thought like the other ‘contractarian’ philosophers does not include the black man as a citizen actually in John Locke’s reasoning the black slaves were not people at all, they were commodities similar to the Code Noir from Colbert in which the slaves were referred to as “*bien meuble*”.<sup>44</sup>

Taxation and representation in the legislature was tied to the presence of slaves which states that three fifth of the number of slaves in any state would count towards the number of congressmen, and three-fifth of them would count toward how much in taxes the state would have to pay when the congress passed a direct tax. Raising revenue or taxes in the wording of the constitution was restricted to the House of Representatives rather than the Senate, it is in effect a democratic measure because the power to levy taxes rests on the elected members of the lower house of the legislative rather than on the Senate. However the three-fifth law also meant that the slave owners could decide when to levy taxes, by how much and on whom and also the power to eliminate any more taxes on themselves. The power of taxation and slavery was in effect intertwined. The Congress had also the power to levy taxes on import, export and to regulate trade between the states and with other nations. The southern states grew mostly, tobacco, indigo, cotton, sugarcane and rice which were cash crops marketed abroad; this meant that the slave owners would have the power to make sure that their particular products would not be overridden by senators with abolitionists tendencies and/or from states where the economy did not depend exclusively on slave labour. Furthermore slave owning congressional representatives could prevent a rise in taxation on slave traffic by taxing the staple goods produced with slave labour such as tobacco, indigo and later cotton. The three-fifth rule ensured the hegemony of southern slave owners in the Congress and their influence on the election of the president.

Reparations for the damages incurred by slaves and their descendants comes after a formal apology but words are cheap and will not cure the evil caused by hundreds of years of institutionalized racism, lack of education which result in difficulty to compete with the rest of the nation in an increasingly technologically focused society.

Jenkins discusses the model proposed in 1972 by the Black psychologist Roderick Pugh in his book *Psychology and the Black experience* as a bit lacking in describing the complexity of the Black experience as Pugh mirrors the existing mechanistic oriented literature of the time. Pugh proposed that the attitude of Blacks before the revolution of the 1960s was an “adaptative inferiority” towards Whites. That African Americans have adopted this stance to minimize the anxiety provoked by the punishing and controlling behaviour of whites towards them. And to reduce punishment and abuse associated by being treated badly because of the colour of their skin, Blacks (according to Pugh) assumed a deferential demeanour in interracial situations. Sometimes they are overly deferential in a passive aggressive way that is best exemplified by a passage in the *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison (1952) in which an old black man on his deathbed says to his son. “I want you to overcome ‘em with yeses, undermine ‘em with grins, agree ‘em to death and destruction.”<sup>45</sup>

## ORAL HISTORY AND PSYCHOLOGY <sup>1</sup>

Ex-slaves had their own system of beliefs which is most of the time was shoved under the rugs because of an outdated law enacted in 1843, put in place to thwart popular religion which was labelled ‘witchcraft’. It is currently still active in Mauritius as evidenced by the people who were arrested and jailed on simple accusations of witchcraft.<sup>46</sup> Paraphernalia such as regular gaming cards (worse if it is Tarot cards), incense even those commonly used in Hindu temples (and sold everywhere), limes, coconut fruits, which are said to be used as offering in worship are deemed evidence for the prosecution and can lead to conviction.

The practice of traditional religions in Mauritius is a legacy of slavery; it is a prime example of human resilience, and pervasiveness of self-expression despite the prohibition of 1843.<sup>47</sup> The antiquated piece of legislation dating from Queen Victoria expressly prohibits any form of popular religion not recognized by an organized religion and such practice is deemed to be witchcraft and therefore considered evil.<sup>48</sup> The banning of Afro-Malagasy influenced cults has produced this atmosphere of secrecy surrounding the people who actively practice healing and spirits’ worship. A healer can be arrested and jailed because of her or his profession. The Afro-Malagasy cults practiced in Mauritius have been strongly influenced by South Indian deities; it can be argued that syncretism is, in fact, a response to the prohibition upon Afro-Malagasy forms of worship. The people disguise the prohibited object of worship for a more socially acceptable one; an example of

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<sup>1</sup> Due to Mrs. Joyce Fortuné-Pope’s illness, she was not able to finalise this section. The Commission has incorporated Mrs. Fortuné’s paper from the Slave Trade Conference, as it contains important elements to be considered.

syncretism is the adoption of Saint Peter and other catholic saints in the Voodoo religion in Louisiana, United States. In Candomble practiced in Brazil, Yemanjá the goddess mother of the sea is identified to the Virgin Mother because she is also considered as a mother and is said to embody balance and temperance. Syncretism in Candomble, voodoo and also Santería in Cuba is a result of the prohibition put in place by Christian churches as is the case in Mauritius; Afro-Malagasy cults are still referred to as "*Fer Diab*", which means "Do Evil". However, the situation is very different in the neighboring island of Réunion, Afro-Malagasy cults are perfectly legal activities. There is also a rich literature and growing scholarship.

In modern democracies, freedom of worship or freedom of conscience is guaranteed under the constitution. It is regarded as a form of persecution to prohibit someone to practice the religion of her or his choice. Under the constitution of Mauritius freedom of conscience is clearly protected or at least it the religions endorsed by the state which are mostly the religion of the book. The discrepancy is, if the government protects freedom of conscience as an inalienable right of the individual, how can it be possible that the police, an agent of the same government, arrests citizens for exercising their constitutional right? Does the government have the right to impose on or choose the "type" of confession for the individual? In the wording of the 1843 law, divination, or any use of subtle craft is a form of superstition and not an expression of freedom of conscience. In the same light of that I would say that a practice such as Reiki or the horoscope are subtle crafts that can be used to ensnare people, how is it that there is a daily page on horoscopes in the newspapers and that Reiki is openly documented on National television. How are these practices from a sociological (and perhaps legal) point of view differ from traditional healing? Can a modern democracy choose to outlaw one subtle art and favor another based on its origin? On what basis can we define an "acceptable form of worship? And, most importantly, "acceptable" to whom? Some of the issues concerning religious beliefs, traditional healing, spirit cults and identity need to be discussed as part of cultural and race capital in the context of the reparations movement in Mauritius.

The possibility of reparative and restorative justice for people who have been arrested, prosecuted and their reputation sullied for practicing Afro-Malagasy cults must be considered. Restricting freedom of conscience for a group of people is not only a violation of their constitutional rights but also a form of institutionalized racial prejudice. The paradigm for restorative and reparative justice which may come after a truth and justice commission restores the victims to their initial situation before their suffering or loss. In the case of arrest for practicing Afro-Malagasy cults, the reparative and restorative efforts establish victims' identification and accounting of the loss and pain. In the case of Mauritius most of the data would either come from the police archives, the legal system as the victims were legally prosecuted and therefore produced legal records.

There is a trove of literature on the Candomblé, Voodoo, Santería and other expressions of African religion whether on the African continent or in African Diasporas around the world. Perfectly serious American and European professors would stare you in the eyes and discuss with you spirit possessions, ancestors' cults and spiritual healing. There is not a single case (that does not mean it does not exist) that I have come across which the accused were arrested as part of an assembly as worshipers or officiate; comparatively in Réunion Island, people worship together in "*Kabare*", there is always someone who preside over the meeting and there are followers in attendance. The Mauritian case is very different in the sense that recourse to the "witch doctor" would happen in times of desperate need when conventional western medicine or alternative mainstream medicine such as *Aryu Vedic* and Chinese medicine have failed to produce the desired result. As such the Mauritian traditional healer using African religion does not follow a set of tenets; there is no codified dogma either written or oral that she or he abides to. Mauritian popular religion is more diverse than the people who practice it; there are influences from Hinduism, Catholicism, Islam and even Buddhism from the Chinese lineage.

Although it is true that some people are duped by healers who reveal themselves to be crooks, I believe that a system of registration as a small business and taxation as it is the case in Réunion Island and the United States should be put in place to regulate the trade. I think that if this practice still exists even after slavery was abolished and the formal prohibition of 1843 could not get rid of it, it means that some people believe in it and that for them it really works.

## CONCLUSION

There is so much more to the Reparations discourse than “the money issue”, in Mauritius, the words “compensation” and “reparation” is interchangeable and it always refers to monetary compensation alone. The case of the Chagossians is one glaring example of a failed reparation effort; people received money as a palliative means, they did not receive any psychological, social or special attention to alleviate the problems they might suffer from being forcefully uprooted from their native island(s). As a consequence the Chagossians have not been integrated in Mauritian society and many chose emigration to England as opposed to accepting Mauritius as their motherland. Restorative justice should include restoring people to their former situation before the violation occurred and compensation as a form of reparation for the loss of earnings and business should be given. They also need a formal and written apology from the government for the prejudice they suffered.

The point is to help heal the descendants of victimizers as well as the victims; it should not be a state-sponsored vendetta or a lottery type system where people expect to reap “big bucks”. The approach should be humanitarian towards those who have suffered the most because of our historical legacy. The government should ensure that most basic of needs for instance clean water is available to all areas to every household especially those deemed underprivileged. There should be a type of Affirmative action sponsorship that provided mandatory and state sponsored education through Form Five as well as equal opportunity to compete for governmental and private employment. The Affirmative Action should ensure the employment of an equal amount of people of different backgrounds.

## NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

- <sup>1</sup> Hylton Keith N.; *The Jurisprudence of Slavery Reparations: Slavery and Tort law. Boston University Law Review*, Boston University, December 2004. Note that using Tort Law alone as a means of redressing the injuries incurred during slavery in the reparations suits is insufficient for converting the abuses suffered into claims for damages. Tort doctrine involves “concrete” injuries verifiable by means of forensics, psychiatric and or medical examination, which are to be carried out during the time before the expiration of the statute of limitation to file a claim for compensatory damages. The crimes of false imprisonment, kidnapping, battery, rape etc carry penalty under the law and using Tort doctrine; today any victim of these crimes might surely obtain compensatory damages for her/his injuries. However, in the case of slavery the perpetrators as well as the victims are long deceased and with them are buried all traces of malfeasance and under Federal Tort Law, there can be no crime because the defendants and the plaintiffs are no longer with us.
- <sup>2</sup> Jenkins, Adelbert H. *Psychology and African Americans, A Humanistic Approach*. New York University, 2nd edition, Allyn & Bacon, MA c 1995 Professor Jenkins points to the concerns and criticisms on the available research as being centred on two main points. First the accumulating literature on the individual Black person, the family and the community reflects the common practice of looking within the Black community and in Black people themselves for the sources of social advantages affecting their personal and collective destinies. As a result, the victims of individual and institutional racism in the white society are made responsible for their own plight. Where the role of the white society in creating problems for the Black minority is analyzed, the onus is eventually placed on Blacks for responding inadequately to the situations they face. The second distortion that Jenkins cites and attempts to correct in his book -is the tendency to describe the psychological functioning of the Black American in negative terms. This stems in part from the almost complete lack of interest in studying the effective and constructive aspects of the psychological functioning of Black Americans. The psychological literature has neglected almost totally a serious consideration of the competent and positive aspects of their personalities, almost as if these components of their make-ups did not exist. Instead, the emphasis is almost always on their personal deficiencies- their seemingly endless failings and inability to cope with life. Even where the data suggests strengths and capabilities, these traits are often interpreted as defences to cover up the deficits and insecurities that are “really there underneath.” Blacks seem to be in a no-win position. Whatever their assessment of it is in the literature usually turn out to be negative. Page xvii Jenkins talks about some Black psychologists who advocate “scrapping away the entire body of theory and research on Blacks and developing entirely new approaches and new sources on Blacks to replace it.” He talks of more promising approaches which might lead to broadening our understanding of the psychological functioning of Black Americans. These more promising approaches look at the human individual from a “humanistic” perspective. They posit a distinctly different image of the human being from that being defined by “mechanistic” conceptions. In the mechanistic image-still the reigning one in American psychology- the human individual is portrayed as a passive being whose responses are primarily determined either by environmental factors or by internal psychological and constitutional states. Historically the behaviourist position can be most clearly identified with the mechanistic tradition. In this approach, behaviour is seen as a function of innate or learned drives or as a function of controlling environmental “contingencies” which are circumstances in the environment that reward or punish an event thereby determines its likelihood of occurrence.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, page 35
- <sup>4</sup> Mills, Charles W. *Blackness Visible-Essays on Philosophy*. Cornell University Press. 1998.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, preface XIV.
- <sup>7</sup> Fortune, Marie Joyce S. *The social and Cultural life of Afro-Mauritians from oral history, 1880-1910*. Unpublished B.A Thesis, University of Mauritius, Réduit, 1998.
- <sup>8</sup> Jenkins, Adelbert H. *Psychology and African Americans, A Humanistic Approach*. New York University, 2nd edition, Allyn & Bacon, MA c1995.. Page xvii 7 *Ibid*, page xxi 8 Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible man*. New York: Signet Books. c1952.
- <sup>9</sup> Robinson, Randall. *The debt- What America owes to Blacks*, Penguin Books, New York, c 2001 page 74.

## REPARATIONS MOVEMENT IN THE U.S- THE JAPANESE AMERICANS WORLD WAR II INTERNEES

- <sup>10</sup> Wakatsuki Houston, Jeanne and Houston, James D. *Farewell to Manzanar*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1973. The Autobiography of Jeanne Toyo Wakatsuki Houston recounts her life in the internment camp

Manzanar situated in the Owens Valley in eastern California. Jeanne T. Wakatsuki Houston is a second generation also known as the Nikkei, she was born in 1934 in Inglewood, Los Angeles. Jeanne recounts the story of her parents who tried as hard as they could to keep their dignity and the family intact in the internment camp. During their long incarceration, Jeanne's mother showed remarkable strength and hope while her father was more vulnerable; he became listless, irritable and abusive. And after their release the family resettled in Long Beach, California because Jeanne's father, an off-shore fisherman, could not recover his fishing boat and their house in Santa Monica. He sank into a deep depression fuelled by alcoholism and he became physically and mentally abusive. Jeanne gives us a candid but touching account of her family and her personal suffering in a post-war society.

- 11 Henry, Charles P. *Long Overdue- The politics of Racial Reparations*, New York University Press, NY c 2007, page 98.
- 12 Yamamoto, Erik, "Japanese Americans."
- 13 Mc Neese, Tim. *Dred Scott v. Sandford: The Pursuit of Freedom*. New York; Chelsea House, c2007.
- 14 Officially titled "An Ordinance for the Government of the territory of the United States North West of the River Ohio", the Northwest Ordinance passed on July 13, 1787. It established a government for the territory east of the Mississippi river and west of the Ohio River; the ordinance outlined the process for admitting newly created states to the Union and ensured that the new states would be equal in every way to the original thirteen states. The Northwest Ordinance also protected civil liberties and outlawed slavery in the new territories. For more information see The Library of Congress webpage: [www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/northwest.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/northwest.html)
- 15 The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted the State of Missouri into the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state. This law also prohibited slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of latitude 36° 30". The Missouri Compromise was repealed by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 which opened new territories west of the Mississippi River. The Kansas Nebraska Act infuriated Northern anti-slavery supporter who considered the Missouri Compromise as binding. Kansas finally entered the Union as a Free State in 1861 few years before the Civil War. For more information see [www.historyplace.com/lincoln/kansas.htm](http://www.historyplace.com/lincoln/kansas.htm)
- 16 *Dred Scott, Plaintiff in Error, v. John F. A. Sanford*. Supreme Court of the United States 60 U.S 393; 15 L. Ed. 691; 1856 U.S.Lexis 472; 19 How 393, March 5 1857, Decided December 1856 Term.
- 17 The Freedmen's Bureau Records created by Commissioner Otis and his staff contain data on the names of the slaves, birth, deaths, civil status, occupations, and places of residence. These records sometimes contain also the names of the slaves' former owners, information concerning black military service such as their company and regiment, plantation conditions, manumissions, property ownership, migration, and family related matters such as children or relatives (their names, age, sex and skills/occupations) sold in other states. These records are a major source of African-American genealogical research at the National Archives (see: Guide to Genealogical research in the National Archives, c2000 & A select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications, c1996- both published by the National Archives Trust Fund Board).
- 18 National Archives and Records Administration. Preliminary Inventory, 174.
- 19 Henry, Charles P. *Long Overdue- The Politics of Racial Reparations*. New York. University Press, NY, 2007 page 47. "Those slaves of seventy years and older were to receive an initial payment of \$500 and \$15 a month, and ex-slaves between sixty and seventy years of age would get \$300 and \$12 a month. Ex-slaves fifty to sixty years of age would get \$100 and \$8 a month, and those under fifty years old would receive \$4 a month pension but no initial payment. Between 1890 and 1903, Vaughan secured the introduction of nine bills but none of which became law".
- 20 Berry, Mary Frances, *My Face is Black is True, Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations*. First Vintage Books Editions, New York, c October 2006.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid, Callie House born Callie Guy was born in 1861 in Rutherford county near Nashville, Tennessee, Callie was only a child when slavery was abolished in 1865 and many owners in Tennessee refused to let slave children go with their parents; keeping them as apprentices without parental authorization. 8 Berlin, Ira, Rowland, Leslie (eds). *Families and Freedom. A Documentary History of African American Kinship in the Civil War Era*. New York; New Press, 1997.
- 23 Berry, Mary Frances. *My face is Black Is True. Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations*. Vintage Books, 2006. Harrison J. Barrett, the assistant to the Assistant District Attorney General James Tyner for the Post Office Department, Washington D.C but called himself Acting Assistant District Attorney General because Tyner was only two years to retirement and the latter was also his uncle by marriage. Barrett sent a notice of fraud order in September 1899 to Callie House on the basis that she and Isaiah Dickerson have used the Association's money for themselves and to hire their own family members. This would have been so far from the truth for Callie House as her children were very young and still in school. The oldest son worked was fifteen at the time worked in a store and that was a well-documented fact by the District Attorney's office which had all of the prominent members followed and their families

investigated. Callie House was particularly stung by the allegation of fraud and misappropriation of funds; she wrote a very stern letter to Barrett explaining her rights as an American and she made apologies for her work. She provided a detailed explanation of the movement's mission and actions. *"We tell them we don't know whether they will ever get anything or not but there is something due them and if they are willing to risk their money in defraying the expenses of getting up the petition to Congress they are at liberty to do so."* She explained to Barrett: *"First, we are organizing ourselves together as a race of people who feels that they have been wronged. They had a perfect right as ex-slaves to gather and organize our race together to petition the government for a compensation to alleviate our old decrepit men and women who are bent up with rheumatism from the exposure they undergone (underwent) in the dark days of slavery. I am an American born woman and was born in the proud old state of Tennessee and I am considered a law abiding citizen of that state anyone that work honestly and earnestly for the up building of their own race would like for it to be recognize that way let it be a white man or whit woman are a black man or a black woman."* She went on to denounce the accusation of money fraud : *"My face is black is true but it's not my fault but I love my name and my honesty in dealing with my fellow man....My whole soul and body are for this slave movement and are (am) willing to sacrifices (sacrifice) for it."* Page 128.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Dred Scott, Plaintiff in Error, v. John F. A. Sanford. Supreme Court of the United States 60 U.S 393; 15 L. Ed. 691; 1856 U.S.Lexis 472; 19 How 393, March 5 1857, Decided December 1856 Term page 13 of printed document. This case started in 1854 after Dred Scott a slave belonging to Mr. John Sandford sued the latter for striking his wife Harriet, daughter Eliza and Lizzie. His defence was that he Dred Scott was a free man since he was brought to live in the free state of Illinois for many years with his former owner Dr. John Emerson (who was Sandford's brother-in-Law) where he met and married his wife Harriet and their eldest daughter Lizzie was born on the river Mississippi between state line in the free territory. He claimed that since he lived in the free territory then brought back to Missouri where slavery was legal; he was no longer a slave because of his extended stay as a free person.

<sup>27</sup> Congressman John Conyers from Michigan introduced the H.R 40 Bill in January of 1989 and has reintroduced it every year without fail. The number 40 from the bill is a symbol of „the forty acres and a mule’ that the United States government promised to the freed slaves, [http://conyers.house.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=issues.home&issues\\_id=06007167-19b9-b4b1-125c-df3de5ec97f8](http://conyers.house.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=issues.home&issues_id=06007167-19b9-b4b1-125c-df3de5ec97f8) The H.R 40 bill was very much influenced by the Reparation movement for Japanese internment victims of World War II, in fact many of the supporters and participants in the Reparations movement for slavery came from the Japanese reparations team.

<sup>28</sup> Cato v. United States of America. United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Court. No.94-17102, No.94-17104 70 F. 3d 1103; 1995 U.S App Lexis 33665; 95 Cal. October 16, 1995, Argued and Submitted, San Francisco, California. December 4, 1995 Filed.

<sup>29</sup> Ogletree, Charles J. Jr. Litigating the Legacy of Slavery. *The New York Times*. March 31, 2002 Sunday, Late Edition.

<sup>30</sup> Excerpt from the Slave Era Disclosure Ordinance- San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 12Y. Sec. 12y.2 Definitions As used in this chapter, the following capitalized terms shall have the following meanings:

(e) "Participated in the Slave Trade" shall mean: (1) issued Slavery insurance policies, including but not limited to policies issued to slaveholders for damage to or death of persons subjected to slavery, and policies issued to insure business transactions and operations related to the traffic in persons subjected to slavery; (2) purchased, sold or held Persons subjected to slavery; (3) provided loans to facilitate the purchase, sale, transport, or enslavement of persons subjected to slavery; (4) used Persons subjected to slavery as collateral for insurance policies, loans or other transactions; (5) facilitates the traffic in Persons Subjected to Slavery by transporting such persons by boat or rail; or (vi) provided any other services to aid and abet the traffic in persons subjected to slavery.

Subsection entitled:

(f) Goes on to describe the meaning of "Person Subjected to Slavery" under the Slavery Disclosure Law.

(g) "Predecessor Company" shall mean an entity whose ownership, title and interest, including all rights, benefits, duties and liabilities, were acquired in an uninterrupted chain of succession by the Contractor.

(h) "Profits from the Slave Trade" shall mean any company advantage or financial benefit derived from the labour of Persons Subjected to Slavery or from Participation in the Slave Trade.

<sup>31</sup> Malveaux, Suzette. Statutes of Limitations: a Policy Analysis in the Context of Reparations Litigation, *George Washington Law Review* 74, Pages 68-122 November, 2005,

<sup>32</sup> Henry, Charles P. *Long Overdue- the Politics of Racial Reparations*. New York University Press, New York, 2007. Page 83. By June 1923, more than one hundred legal suits had been filed, but only two went to trial. One case did not reach the jury. But the case of William Redfearn, A Native American who lost a theatre and a hotel in Greenwood, did go all the way to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Redfearn had sued both the

city and his insurance company, which had refused to pay his claim based on a riot exclusion clause in his policy. The suit against the city was dropped largely on ground of the city's immunity from liability, but the insurance case hinged on whether the loss was caused by police or the special deputies. Although the court's decision acknowledged the role of the deputies in the destruction, it questioned whether the men wearing "police badges or sheriff's badges were in fact such officers or acting in an official capacity". Thus, Redfearn's claim was denied.

- <sup>33</sup> Teelock, Vijaya. *Mauritian History-From Its Beginning To Modern Times*. Mahatma Gandhi Institute, 2001. Adrien D'Epinay was successful in "obtaining £2,112,632 in compensation for planters in the loss of slaves, several thousand of whom had been illegally introduced. Compensation payments went largely to the big planters among the slave-owners. Though forming less than 5% to the slave-owning population, they received over 20% of the payments. Much of this was re-invested in the sugar estates and the number of sugar mills rose from 167 to 203 between 1833 and 1838. The Mauritius Commercial Bank was also founded partly with the sums received from compensation."
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* Page 170. Farquhar was concerned about upsetting the French inhabitants: *My opinion is, that maintenance of the British authority in the colony will materially depend on the conciliation of the established inhabitants of the island, on the degree in which the terms of the capitulation may consult their personal interests, as connected with the security of their property, with the advantageous dispersal of the produce of the island and with their safety against the insurrection of their slaves.*
- According to Teelock, Farquhar forged a policy of conciliation with the French colonists; he employed the "sons of principal landholders" to hold public office, maintained the traditional French administrative institutions such as the division of districts into the French division known as "quartiers". Farquhar reintroduced the posts of *Commandant de la Milice*, *Commissaire Civil* as well as the institution known as the *Commune*.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid* page 173.
- <sup>36</sup> Hackney, James R. Jr. Ideological Conflict, African America Reparations, Tort Causation and The Case for Social Welfare Transformation. *Boston University Law Review* 84. Pages 1193-1207 December, 2004.
- <sup>37</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of The Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 1984.
- <sup>38</sup> Schönplflug, Ute. Introduction to Cultural Transmission-A Multidisciplinary research Field. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 32 No. 2, March 2001. Western Washington University. pages 131-134
- <sup>39</sup> Henry, Charles P. *Long Overdue-The Politics of Racial Reparations*. New York University Press, New York, 2007. Page 16 "The Liberal individualism that America's founding fathers inherited from John Locke prohibits direct legislative references to group characteristics like race. The U.S. Constitution does not contain the words Black and White, and the infamous three-fifths compromise, created during the Constitutional Convention to count five slaves as three whites has more to do with Whites and White regional representation than it does with the character of slaves. Between 1836 and 1844, Congress formally adopted gag rules restricting the receipt of petitions opposing slavery and institutes a ban against mailing abolitionist literature to the South and about 90 percent of legislative acts dealing with race fail to include the term race". Charles P. Henry postulates that the three-fifth compromise meant that five Black slaves were considered to be the equivalent to three white adult males but that is not what the Third clause of Article 1, section 2 enunciates; according to David Waldstreicher's analysis of this particular clause, the three-fifth rule was actually measure by which White society used to quantitatively gauge the wealth and legislative representation in the state. It does not mean that a Black slave was equated to three-fifth of a white person. At the time the philosophical discussion on the humanity, personhood and the idea of slaves possessing a soul was in its infancy and to think that a slave could be equated to three-fifth of a white adult male would be close to attributing a soul, personhood and humanity (even if it is three-fifth of it) to a creature that convention does not even acknowledge its very existence.
- <sup>40</sup> Waldstreicher, David. *Slavery's Constitution - From Revolution to Ratification*. Hill and Wang, New York, 2009, page 3. *The Constitution never mentions slavery. The word does not appear. And yet slavery is all over the document. Of its eighty four clauses, six are directly concerned with slaves and their owners. Five others had implication for slavery that were considered and debated by the delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention and the citizens of the states during ratification. This is many more words, with greater implications for slavery, than contained in the Articles of confederation, the previous, notoriously weak national charter drafted in 1776 and passed eventually by the Continental Congress. All but one of these clauses protects slavery; only one points towards a possible future power by which the institution might be ended. In growing their government, the farmers and their constituents creates fundamental laws that sustained human bondage.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, page 4 "Representatives elected by the people every two years and a senate elected by the legislatures of the states. Before congressional powers are enumerated, or the composition of the Senate even described, however, readers of the new Constitution learned that the number of representatives in

*the House would be tied exactly to the amount of direct taxes that the national government could requisition from the states- an especially controversial issue of the Confederation era, which stretched from 1776 to 1787. Both taxation and representation would be tied to population, but in a very particular way. "Representatives and direct taxes", begins the third clause of Article 1, section 2, "Shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons."*

- <sup>42</sup> Finkelman, Paul (ed.). *Slavery and the Law*. Madison House, Madison WI c1997, page 17 *The awful word does not appear in the constitution until the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished the institution. Nevertheless the main body of the document is littered with references to slaves as "other persons", "such persons, and "persons held to service or labour". See in the appended section at the end of the document; the Third Clause, Article 1, section 2 of the United States Constitution.*
- <sup>43</sup> Kelly, Eugene. "The basics of Western Philosophy". Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, c 2004, page 194. *Property Rights: Both Hobbes and Locke agree that one of the functions of government is to defend the rights of property of its citizens. The notion of property rights naturally requires some analysis and defense. What if a person did not acquire his property legitimately? What if a person uses his property to harm other persons, for example, by using his ownership of a factory to employ workers at a very low salary? What theoretically entitles a person the use of his property?*
- <sup>44</sup> *Bien meuble* literally means immovable property, a piece of property that one can in theory dispose of however he pleases. The property is ambulatory very much like a beast of burden, it can be used to till the earth, or produce goods. It can also breed thus increasing the owner's initial investment.
- <sup>45</sup> Ellison, Ralph, *Invisible man*, New York, Signet books, c1952 page 19-20.

#### ORAL HISTORY AND PSYCHOLOGY

- <sup>46</sup> Laws, Ordinance, Proclamations, Notices published in Mauritius in 1844 by the Registrations and Mortgage Office, Ordinance June 10 1843, Volume B3B. Mauritius National Archives, Coromandel.
- Article 3: Every person pretending to deal in witchcraft, every person pretending to tell fortunes or using or pretending to use any subtle craft or device by palmistry or any such like superstitious means to deceive or impose on any of Her Majesty's subjects.....shall be deemed a rogue and a vagabond within the true intent and meaning of the Ordinance; and it shall be lawful for any stipendiary Magistrate to commit such offender or by the evidence on oath of one or more credible witness or witnesses .....to be kept to hard labour for any time not exceeding 60 days (reduced to 28 days by Proclamation of the 5/march/1845).
- <sup>47</sup> Constitution of Mauritius: 11. Protection of freedom of conscience
- (1) Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this section, that freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
- <sup>48</sup> Carranza, Ruben; *The Right to Reparations in Situations of Poverty*, International Center for Transitional Justice, September 2009.

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**Audiovisual material**

**Title:** Slave Ship: Discovery Education, United States, c2007.

**Description:** Full screen edition, 52 min DVD, close-captioned.

**Summary:** Sail back into the history of the Trans-Atlantic slave-trade to uncover surprising and shocking facts about this tumultuous era.

**Browne, Katrina C.:** Traces of the Trade: A story from the Deep North. Katrina C. Browne: Writer/Director/Producer. MS, PBS films, 2008.

**Summary:** Katrina Browne whose family the De Wolf family held the biggest slave trading business in United States' history. Ms. Browne takes us on an astounding, roller coaster ride through time yet one feels that there is a great desire for healing and mending of the broken lives that her ancestors' business created.

**William St Clair's** book: "The door of No return" is really helpful in understanding the intricacies of the trade, the various slave trading ports and the economics of the trade itself. Browne's relative Tom De Wolf's book: Inheriting the Trade, also brings an interesting (albeit scholarly and a little sterile) aspect to the experience of confronting such a heavy and very embarrassing legacy.

**Gates, Henry Louis J.R, Grant, William R., Kunhardt Peter W.** (Executive Producers): African American Lives (4 in the series). A Film by Kunhardt Productions and The Thirteen and PBS Television. New York, c2006.

1 Sweet, Jesse (Director and Producer): Listening to our Past.

2 Farrell, Leslie D (Director and Producer): Searching Our Names

3 Asako Gladsjo, Leslie (Director and Producer): The Promise of Freedom.

4 Judd, Graham (Director and Producer): Beyond The Middle Passage

**Summary:** Eminent Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates J.R uses revolutionary breakthroughs in genealogical research and DNA analysis to take eight prominent African Americans on once-unimaginable journeys into their past tracing their family sagas down through U.S history and even back to Africa. On this epic adventure, Gates is joined by pioneering neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson, Actress Whoopi Goldberg, Bishop T.D Jakes. Astronaut Mae Jemison, Musician/producer Quincy Jones, Sociologist Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, Comedian/actor Chris Tucker and TV pioneer/philanthropist Oprah Winfrey.

# PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERCONTINENTAL MUSEUM OF SLAVERY

BENIGNA ZIMBA

VIJAYA TEELock

## I. HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, CONTEXTUALIZATION AND JUSTIFICATION

The idea for a Slavery Museum originated as early as 2000 during discussions for the Origins Project in Mauritius and during the Conference of Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa in 2004.

In both Mozambique and Mauritius, despite all efforts, for various reasons, no museum ever saw the light of day.

In 2009 the Truth and Justice Commission began its activities. One of the key components was research towards the memorialisation of the slave trade, slavery and indentured immigration. The idea was thus re-launched and discussions to finalise this project resumed in 2010.

In April 2011, the Truth and Justice Commission organized an International Conference on the Slave Trade. This presented the ideal opportunity and appropriate forum to collect the views of many persons from all walks of life on the subject of slavery, the slave trade and representations and allowed those who conceived this project to update the project and infuse it with a new dynamism.

A few countries in South Eastern Africa already house slavery museums: the Rabai Museum in Mombasa, Kenya and the Museu da Escravatura in Luanda, Angola are some examples.

Our research through the various projects undertaken since 2000 (Origins Project, Slave Routes Project, Truth and Justice Commission, etc) has concluded that there is a need for an intercontinental museum linking the countries such as Mozambique, Mauritius and Madagascar, as they all formed part of the slave trade network in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

They are also the countries that have played a key role in the Indian Ocean Slave trade. Conservative estimates are that Madagascar exported over 125,325 slaves and Eastern Africa, over 180,000 slaves. France traded the bulk of these slaves (over 335,000) followed by the other European countries, Portugal, Holland and England approximately between 10,000 and 60,000 each.

Mozambique and Mauritius are, therefore, the two most appropriate places to host the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, and ideal places to give more visibility to the phenomenon of slavery and slave traffic in the Indian Ocean under colonial rule (Portuguese, French, British, Dutch).

Furthermore, Mauritius is the first country in Africa and the world to have a Truth and Justice Commission investigating the history of slavery and its consequences and to accept the principle that reparations are required.

Mauritius has currently also all the required conditions (moral, rationale, logistics, infrastructural and official government support) to be the first to house the first intercontinental museum in Africa.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum endeavors to be primarily, an institution directed towards cultural preservation and studying the phenomenon of slavery and slave trade in the Indian Ocean.

In addition, various factors explain the main function, usefulness and historical value of this institution:

- (i) the *Slavery Museum* aims to be an institution to promote cultural exchange, the culture of peace and union among peoples of several continents involved in this process;
- (ii) this institution will strive to develop its enormous educational potential to promote curricular development, scientific research, as well as the production of educational and pedagogical materials;
- (iii) the *Slavery Museum* will constitute a driving factor for developing cultural tourism and the construction of economic and social infrastructures;
- (iv) from the scientific point of view, the Project seeks to stimulate curricula development and the production of pedagogical material related to this topic, a process which is currently in course in most of the African continent.

## II. RELEVANCE AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL SLAVERY MUSEUM

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum will highlight the deep transformations that this tragedy caused at economic, social, political, cultural, and ideological levels in all continents, with particular emphasis to Africa and Africans. It will also create opportunities to conduct in-depth and extensive studies of the phenomenon of “slavery and slave trade” on a regional scale and global level. It will also promote investigations and studies en route for the thematic “slavery and slave trade” in Mauritius, Mozambique and Madagascar, in the region, and in the context of the former colonial empires.

Beneficiaries of the Slavery Museum will be:

- (i) students of all educational levels;
- (ii) educational institutions;
- (iii) communities that are part of the slave routes itinerary;
- (iv) researchers, teachers and academicians;
- (v) governmental institutions such as the ministry of tourism;
- (vi) civil society
- (vii) Countries in the region directly and indirectly affected by the Slave trade and slavery will be able to gain from increased understanding and knowledge of this process and how it continues to affect our societies today.
- (viii) International visitors and tourists

## III. COMPONENTS, STRATEGY, AND METHODS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

The Project will cover six components including the Scientific, Educational, and Cultural constituents, and endeavors among other aspects:

- (i) to give logical continuity to the first phase of the Slave Routes Project in Mozambique and Origins Project in Mauritius. Both projects included book publications (*'History, Memory, Identity'* and *'Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa'*, audiovisuals and other materials; and
- (ii) to be an inclusive institution in time and space, hence the reason and justification for the use of the term “intercontinental museum.”

## IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE SLAVERY MUSEUM

Considering the role of future generations in social and cultural development of the continent, the main goal of this Project, is to rescue the history of slavery and the slave traffic in southeastern Africa. In this context, the gathering, collection and preservation of oral traditions; as well as the promotion of cultural diversity and cultural tourism, and of a whole range of activities interconnected to this phenomenon, are crucial to this Project.

## V. IMPLEMENTATION

Concerning implementation, we recommend that the Project be initiated and supervised by the Prime Minister’s Office in collaboration with related institutions.

## VI. SITE OF MUSEUM

The proposers of this Project recommend that the Museum be located in the capital city Port Louis. Apart from giving the history of slavery its due importance it is also appropriate that it should be placed in a location that is reminiscent of slavery and related to slavery. Furthermore as the historic parts of the city are frequently visited by tourists and Mauritians alike, this will ensure financial sustainability for the Museum once it is opened.

The site par excellence is the complex on the eastern side of Port Louis comprised of historical buildings all found on State land and currently neglected and found in the Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site. The Military Hospital complex will provide sufficient space for this and especially as one wing will house the National Art Gallery, a project also to be initiated by the Prime Minister's Office. This Hospital was built by slaves and indeed housed sick slaves on one floor. It is surrounded by other buildings of direct relation to slavery: the Post Office on which site existed the *Bagne* for Maroon slaves, the Granary where port workers (descendants of slaves) loaded and unloaded rice, the Customs House where slaves and Liberated Africans passed through when they first arrived in Mauritius in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, amongst others. Ratsitanina, the Malagasy Prince, exiled to and executed in Mauritius was imprisoned in the *Bagne*.

## INTERCONTINENTAL SLAVERY MUSEUM

## 7. BUDGET (US \$) ESTIMATE BY OBJECTIVE

(Time-frame: 18 months from start date)

Dated 26 May 2011

CATEGORY	US\$
<i>Objective 1: To carry out preparatory activities for the establishment of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum</i>	
Consultancy fees: (60,000=2,500x12mtsx2)	101,700
Airfare: every quarter=1000x4x1 for Mozambican consultant;1000x2x1 for Mauritian) trips and accomodation/per diem: Mozambican consultant each visit: 15 days 350x15x4=21,000; for Mauritian consultant 350x2x21=14,700; for Preparatory Phase	
Field research in Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius and language courses	25,000
Visits to the following countries: Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius	15,000
Training workshop in Museology, conservation and others	10,000
Equipment to supply the Slavery Museum's preliminary offices in Maputo and Mauritius	20,000
<b><i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 1</i></b>	<b>161,700</b>
<i>Objective 2: To establish and institutionalize the Intercontinental Slavery Museum</i>	
Survey studies that include topographic analyses	2,000
Architectural and engineering design, including air conditioning and water system	70,000
Preparing tender process	8,000
Restoration works	600,000
Supervision of works	30,000
Training of museum staff	50,000
Equipment of the museum with office and museum supplies	250,000
<b><i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 2</i></b>	<b>1,010,000</b>
<i>Objective 3: To stimulate research on the slave routes in South-West Indian Ocean and to contribute to the gradual revision of school manuals and curricula at all educational levels of schools in regions concerned</i>	
Revision of manuals and programs, at primary, secondary and university levels;	75,000
Scientific trips	60,000

Production of maps	50,000
Development of partnerships with countries and institutions related to slavery	30,000
<i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 3</i>	215,000
<i>Objective 4: To preserve written documentation on the slave routes in South-West Indian Ocean, and to catalogue tangible heritage</i>	
Creation of a Website, and compilation of physical and digital archive-files	60,000
Inventory of Tangible Heritage	20,000
Lectures and international conferences	40,000
Production of informative material	110,000
<i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 4</i>	230,000
<i>Objective 5: To organize joint activities with institutions to promote cultural programs related to slavery and slave trade</i>	
Cultural festival	100,000
Permanent Exhibition	100,000
Itinerant Exhibition	200,000
<i>SUB-TOTAL OBJECTIVE 5</i>	400,000
GRAND TOTAL	2,016,700.00
	Two million sixteen thousand seven hundred US\$

# SEARCHING FOR OUR ORIGINS

## INTRODUCTION

*Vijayalakshmi Teelock, Vice Chairperson*

The aim of this section devoted to descendants of Indian immigrants aims to highlight, as for slave populations the necessity of every family knowing and understanding his or her family origins. In the very delicate fabric that Mauritian society is made up of and being a newly emerging society, it has become abundantly clear that this type of knowledge makes Mauritians feel more 'Mauritian' and at the same time distinguished Mauritians from other nationalities. There are inherent difficulties however in tracing one's history: documents since the French and British period have not been well kept and even today numerous problems face the family historian.

These family histories and life histories are compiled by a group of young Mauritians trained in history who were the given the task of finding and confronting their own family's past. It has not only proved to be a rich personal experience for them but has also provided the Commission with the justification for proposing a more vigorous campaign to collect all available documentary sources about Mauritians and make it accessible to the public. In the course of the research, the conservative approach adopted by some institutions towards releasing immigrant data must be unequivocally condemned. Judging by the numerous correspondence and discussions after the controversy concerning access of public Immigration archives currently housed at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, it is clear that not all Mauritians feel the need to hide their truth about their family or caste origins and indeed they welcome openness and progressive attitudes. It is recommended that the MGI and all those other institutions and individuals rethink this policy of blocking public access to this section of the National Archives. A public campaign to explain the nature of the sources and why discrepancies and errors exist in the sources needs to accompany this open policy, as is the practice in other National Archives found overseas.

The *metisage* in terms of not only ethnic groups and but among Indian immigrants of various linguistic, regional and caste backgrounds leads one also to recommend that all copies of genealogical and family data be regrouped in one institution to make the task of reconstructing genealogies and family histories easier for the Mauritian population. Many Mauritians are descended from Indian, African and European origins and this currently means that a 'multi-racial' Mauritian has to visit no less than 5 different institutions over many years to compile his/her family history. In the digital age this is an unnecessary burden to place on Mauritians.

# THE STORY OF THE MUNISAMI FAMILY

PAMELA SOOBEN  
*Research Assistant, TJC*

**“THEY ARE NEVER REALLY GONE IF THEY ARE REMEMBERED.” Russian Proverb**

The very purpose of this research was to allow this researcher to take a personal look into her family history. She traced her family history because for her, this process brings her ancestors back to life. They were once real people, alive with all the joys and pains of daily life. What she gained from researching her family history is a greater knowledge of the lives of the ones who came before her. Indeed, this research process was a challenge that made her dig through birth, death and marriage certificates, photographs and oral histories. She found that a whole nuclear family had come to Mauritius: The PANDIAN Family.

Like most Indian Immigrants who left India in the nineteenth century in search for a better life, PANDIAN was no exception. PANDIAN, son of SHANMUKHUM and KALLIAMMA, was born in Trichinopoly<sup>1</sup>, India in 1848. His family ran a restaurant. According to oral sources, they were well off and they were descendants of King Pandian.<sup>2</sup> As one can imagine, this to date is quite difficult for me to verify.

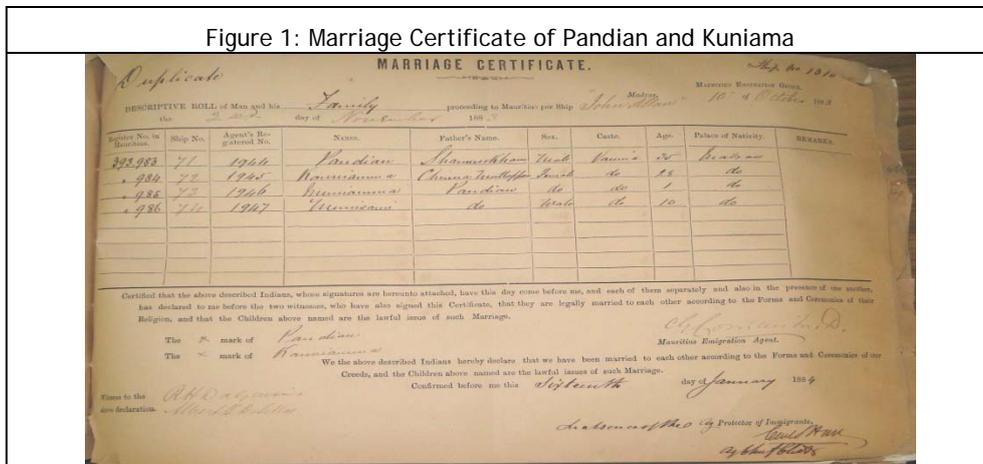
PANDIAN did not want to work in the restaurant. Being adventurous by nature, he always wanted to know how life was outside India. PANDIAN was married to KUNNIAMMA and they had two children MUNISAMI and MUNIAMMA.

PANDIAN’s wife, KUNNIAMMA was born in 1855. She was the daughter of CHINNAMUTTAPPAN and PALIATHA of Tamil Nadu. She gave birth to MUNISAMI in 1873 and to MUNIAMMA in 1882. Along with her husband, 10 year-old Munisami and 1-year-old Muniamma, she left their village and came to Madras Depot. They were given each an immigrant number (Table 1).

Table 1 : Pandian family’s names and immigrant numbers	
Name of Immigrant	Immigrant Number
PANDIAN	393983
KANNIAMMA	393984
MUNIAMMA	393985
MUNISAMI	393986

PANDIAN and KUNNIAMMA were legally married at the depot on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1883, as seen in the marriage certificate (fig. 1).

Figure 1: Marriage Certificate of Pandian and Kuniamma



After a voyage of approximately two months, the PANDIAN in Port Louis Family arrived in Mauritius on board *John Allan* on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1883. They landed at the depot on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1883. On 16<sup>th</sup> January 1884, the whole family was presented before the Protector of Immigrants to confirm the marital status of PANDIAN and KUNNIAMMA. After three days, they were distributed on Gros Bois Sugar Estate where the employer was Mr. J Currie. It seems from the records of the Protector of Immigrants that both PANDIAN and KANNIAMMA were from the Vannia Caste. This caste was mostly *ouvriers et petits propriétaires agricoles*<sup>3</sup> PANDIAN was 1m52cm and had a scar on his right elbow. KANNIAMMA was 1m54cm tall and had a scar on her forehead. Funnily, KANNIAMMA was taller than her husband; so physical appearance was not important for her.

#### PANDIAN (Tree 1) (See Appendix on CD)

Pandian worked as an indentured labourer for five years. He passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1889 at seven o'clock in the morning on Gros Bois Sugar Estate. His death certificate was issued in Mare D'Albert Civil Office. (See Death Certificate in Appendix 1). However there are errors on this certificate as he did not have his ticket. It may have been lost or was in the possession of the employer. According to the information available on the death certificate, Pandian was a 45 year-old single Hindu immigrant. However, if we take a closer look at the information available in the Registers at the Archives, one would see that at the time of his death, PANDIAN was a 40-year old married Tamil immigrant.

#### KANNIAMMA

KANNIAMMA stayed twenty years in Mauritius. Fifteen years after the death of PANDIAN, KANNIAMMA left Gros Bois Sugar Estate and went back to India on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1904 on board the *Itria* (Appendix 2). Both MUNISAMI and MUNIAMMA were left behind in Mauritius.

#### MUNIAMMA

MUNIAMMA has not left us today with much information about herself. She was only one-year old when she landed in Mauritius. But at the age of 8, she was already registered as an Old Immigrant (Appendix 3) perhaps, because her mother had re-indentured. She died at the age of 38 on Gros Bois Sugar Estate. From her death certificate issued in the District of Grand Port (Death Certificate in Appendix 4), it seems she was still single, without any profession and living on Gros Bois Estate. Family oral sources are also silent about her and no one in the family today knew that PANDIAN had a daughter. Further research is therefore required to trace the family of MUNIAMMA in the region of Gros Bois.

#### MUNISAMI (Tree 2) (See Appendix on CD)

MUNISAMI is the protagonist in this family History. According to oral sources, MUNISAMI lived with his parents on Gros Bois Sugar Estate. But some members of the family stated that he had beaten a man called Gunga, while others stated that he murdered the man and therefore ran away from the District of Grand Port to hide and start a new life in the District of Savanne. How far is this information reliable? Further searches, here too, are required in perhaps in Police Records. We know for a fact, however, that MUNISAMI came to settle in Bel Air St. Felix Sugar Estate. He married religiously, RUNGAMAH KARUPPAUNEN. They had 3 children: a son, SINSAMY MUNISAMI (the researcher's grand-father), born in 1913 (Appendix 5) and 2 daughters: MOONEEAMAH MUNISAMI, born in 1917 (Appendix 6) and GOINDAMAH PANDIAN born around the 1920.

RUNGAMAH was the daughter of Karuppaunen No.396893 of St. Felix Sugar Estate and Goindamah of Moka village. She was born on 22 December 1895 (Appendix 7) in the District of Moka because her mother's delivery took place there. No one, however, knew how the parents of RUNGAMAH met and got married as the two estates are quite far away: Karuppaunen was a labourer on Bel Air Saint-Felix Sugar Estate in the South of Mauritius while Goindamah resided in Moka in the centre of Mauritius. MUNISAMI died in 1932 (Appendix 8) and RUNGAMAH in 1942 (Appendix 9).

A question was left pending is why did one of MUNISAMI'S daughter named after her grandfather, PANDIAN? GOINDAMAH PANDIAN and MOONEEAMAH MUNISAMI

GOINDAMAH PANDIAN was married to VEERAYEN SOOBHOO NAIDOO. She had 3 children SIVEN, DESSA and NILA. She unfortunately passed away, and her husband married her elder sister, MOONEEAMAH. Nila passed away in 2010 and Siven and Desa are still alive and live in the small village of Batimarais in the Southern part of Mauritius.

#### SINSAMY MUNISAMI (Tree 3) (See Appendix on CD)

The researcher's grandfather was born on 24 August 1913 on St. Felix Sugar Estate (Appendix 10). He never went to school. He worked as labourer and *sirdar* in Bel Air Saint-Felix Sugar Estate. He was only 19 years old when he lost his father. He lived in Saint-Felix Camp with his mother and two unmarried sisters. He had to work very hard to get his sisters married. He was also a priest in the *kovil* found in the camp. His son (this researcher's father) would often help him every Friday and during special prayers like the Cavadee<sup>4</sup>, Govinden<sup>5</sup> or Thimeedee.<sup>6</sup>

In 1938, he married PETCHAYE MANIKUM, the daughter of MARDAYMOOTOO MANIKUM and THUNGE born on 28 July 1920 (Appendix 11). It was an arranged marriage. It was only in the 1973 that they legally got married and their children were legitimized (Certificate 2). She gave birth to their first child, a daughter, and after a few years, they had 3 more daughters. According to the researcher's aunts, their parents were very religious. On one occasion, they were advised by elder relatives to fast for 24 hours on *Ekadasi* if they wanted a son in the family. Coincidentally, Petchaye did bear a son, MARDAY and another, ARNASALON (the researcher's father) in 1950. This was followed by a daughter in 1957.

When the first son, Marday, was married to DEVAGEE, they had four daughters. They followed the advice of grandfather and Devagee gave birth to a son the following year. The researcher's grandfather was a priest and was very superstitious. He tried to inculcate his beliefs in his children. SINSAMY died at the age of 78 in Surinam (Appendix 12).

Figure 2: Certificate

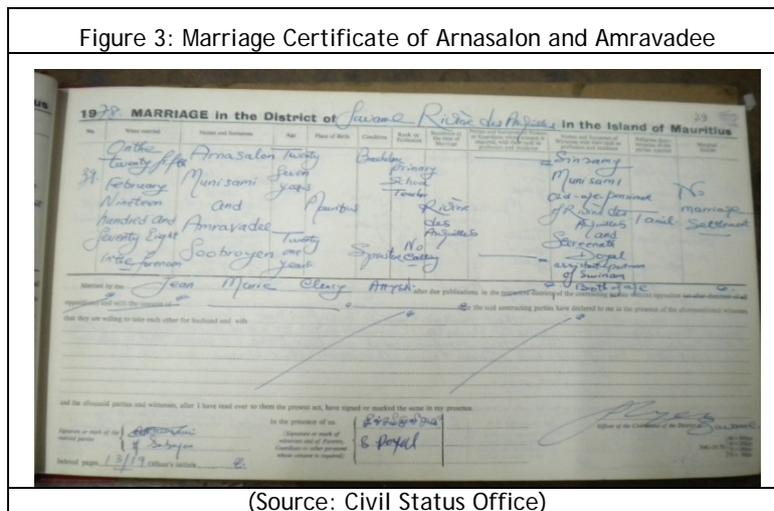
(Source: Civil Status Office)

As most indentured descendants, they faced many miseries. PETCHAYE, her son Marday and her daughters had to work as labourers in the sugarcane fields. ARNASALON, on the other hand, went to school and was the first student to pass his School Certificate Examinations in the whole St. Felix Camp. According to oral sources, the rations were insufficient and due to financial constraints, they had to cook *Ponga Banane*<sup>7</sup> with salted fish and sometimes, they would even make *chayote* skin or goat skin curry. PETCHAYE struggled a lot as a wife, mother and a labourer. She died at the age of 68 in Rivière des Anguilles (Appendix 13).

#### ARNASALON MUNISAMI (Tree 4) (See Appendix on CD)

The researcher's father was born on 4 September 1950 in Bénarès (Appendix 14). He completed his primary education at Rivière des Anguilles Government School. He studied till School Certificate and became a primary school teacher and is a headmaster today.

ARNASALON was married to AMRAVADEE, daughter of RAMSAMY SOOBROYEN and ANJEELAY RAGAVEN and TWIN of PARVADEE SOOBROYEN of Chamouny (Appendix 15). They married legally on 25 February 1978 (fig. 3). They had a son JAGADISSEN and a daughter PAMELA.



### JAGADISSEN MUNISAMI (Tree 5) (See Appendix on CD)

Since PANDIAN took the decision to come to Mauritius, we believe that JAGADISSEN is the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of this researcher's family. JAGADISSEN was born on 13 September 1978. He left Mauritius 11 years ago to study in the UK. He is a Lecturer in a University in UK and he is not yet married. Hopefully, JAGADISSEN will contribute to the compilation of this family history in the years to come.

## CONCLUSION

This family history was only a small trip back into time. PANDIAN came as an indentured labourer with his family and what he has left as legacy is: 2 children, 3 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren, 24 great great-grandchildren, 34 great great-great-grandchildren and 1 great great-great-great grandchild. There is still more research waiting to be carried out in Mauritius and in India. Until that time comes, the Researcher feels enriched with the stories of the past and having started on this journey and met some wonderful people that she would have never known other than through this research, precious stories and shared memories, passed from generation to generation.

<sup>1</sup> A village in India and nowadays it is has been changed to Tiruchappalli.

<sup>2</sup> A King who ruled in South India.

<sup>3</sup> Manual workers and small plantation owners. According to *Le Grand Livre de l'Histoire de la Réunion, Volume 2 'De 1848 à nos jours (2003)'*, Daniel Vaxelaire. Collection Le Grand Livre, Orphie.

<sup>4</sup> Tamil Religious Ceremonies for Lord Muruga.

<sup>5</sup> Tamil Religious Ceremonies For Lord Krishna.

<sup>6</sup> Tamil Religious Ceremonies For Lord Ammen.

<sup>7</sup> Banana Flower.

**“IN SEARCH OF MY ANCESTORS” :  
A HISTORY OF THE PEERTHUM FAMILY**

**SATYENDRA PEERTHUM**  
*Researcher, TJC*

*[...] all human ancestry goes back to some place, and some time, where there was no writing. Then, the memories and the mouths of ancient elders was the only way that early histories of mankind got passed along [...] for all of us today know who we are."*  
*Extract from the Acknowledgement Section of Alex Haley's 'Roots' (1976)*

Research into one's family history is a difficult and complicated task, but a rewarding experience, since it allows a person to discover his/her roots or where we come from and who we are. The story of my family starts during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of Peerthum, my great great-grandfather, an Indian non-indentured immigrant and day labourer, bearing the passenger list number 5750 (*bis*). He arrived in Mauritius from Calcutta, India, some time between the late 1860s and early 1870s.

The Elusive Search of the Date of Arrival of Peerthum in Port Louis, a Free Indian Passenger to Mauritius

Figure 1: Birth Certificate of Seesurrun Peerthum<sup>1</sup>

Register No. in Mauritius	Ship No.	Agent's Registered No.	NAME	Father's Name	Sex	Caste	Age	Place of Nativity	REMARKS
283,283	71	1866	Sundar	Sundar	Male	Hindu	25	India	
284	72	1866	Sundar	Sundar	Male	Hindu	25	India	
285	73	1866	Sundar	Sundar	Male	Hindu	25	India	
286	74	1867	Sundar	Sundar	Male	Hindu	25	India	

Oral history provided me with the first inroad into my family history. It was my grandfather; Chandraduth Peerthum, who told my father, Sateeanund Peerthum, many years ago, that his mother, Sookbassea Peerthum, recounted to him the story of Peerthum, her father-in-law, who had come to Mauritius at the age of 14. This claim has not been supported so far by any type of archival document.

Between 2004 and 2009, my parents and I checked dozens of volumes in the Z2D series which contain passenger list arrivals for the period between 1858 and 1870. We never found any trace of Peerthum's arrival in Mauritius. In September 2010 and February 2011, I consulted the same volumes at the Mauritius National Archives or MNA/Z2D Volume 38 for 1858 to Volume 81 for 1870. However, by then, the volumes for the years between 1866 and 1870 were badly damaged and difficult to read. Until 2004, the Peerthum family had always lived with the thought that their ancestor came as an indentured immigrant. But a check at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute's Indian Immigration Archives confirmed that he was not listed there and that he had arrived as a free immigrant or a "deck passenger". Today, this is clearly seen through his four digit passenger list number.

Who exactly were these non-indentured Indians in Mauritius? The most detailed description of the non-indentured Indian workers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is provided by Saloni Deerpalsing, former Curator of the MGI Indian Folk Museum:

*"In fact, they were not indentured as they did not form part of the influx of controlled immigration and unlike the indentured labourers, they did not benefit from a free passage from Mauritius to India and back. Moreover, the non-indentured Indians came to Mauritius without*

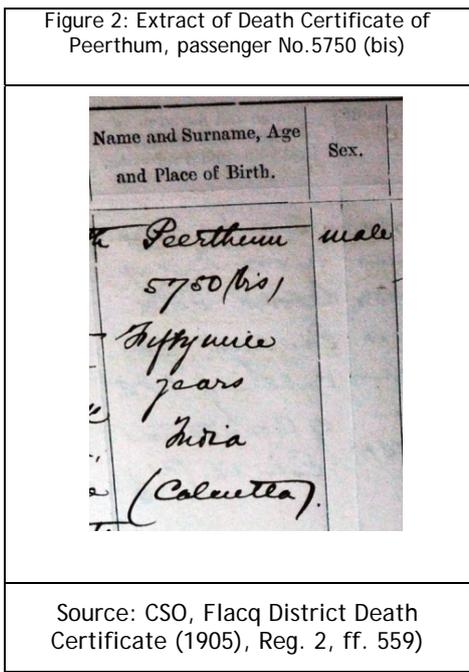
signing any contract. They paid their passage themselves and were known as passengers to differentiate them from the indentured Indians. These passengers were rarely employed as labourers for most of them mainly engaged in free trade." "After their arrival in Mauritius, a passenger number was attached to their name for identification purpose. Divided in two parts by a slash, the first part of the number appears to be a serial number while the second one corresponds to the year in which they were remitted an identification certificate."<sup>2</sup>

Unlike indentured labourers, Peerthum paid his own passage from Calcutta to Port Louis which amounted to around five pounds sterling in the 1860s. In addition, there is no indication in his passenger number of which year he arrived in Port Louis, which makes the search for the exact date of his arrival elusive.

Therefore, it is presumed that he arrived as an adult at some stage between the late 1860s and early 1870s. Peerthum was born in 1846 and is believed to be from the South Western District of the Bengal Presidency to the East of Calcutta and to the South of city of Raniguni. (This region was not a traditional region for the recruitment of indentured labourers for British and European overseas plantation colonies like Mauritius). Furthermore, according to his passenger ticket, his father was Cartick and his mother was Danno.

When he reached his late teens, he migrated to Calcutta, India, before embarking for Mauritius. It is believed that during the one-month voyage between India and Mauritius, he became a close friend with another free immigrant labourer called Digum or Diggun. They formed a type of "jahaji bhai" relationship and that they kept in touch with one another for many years after their arrival in Mauritius.

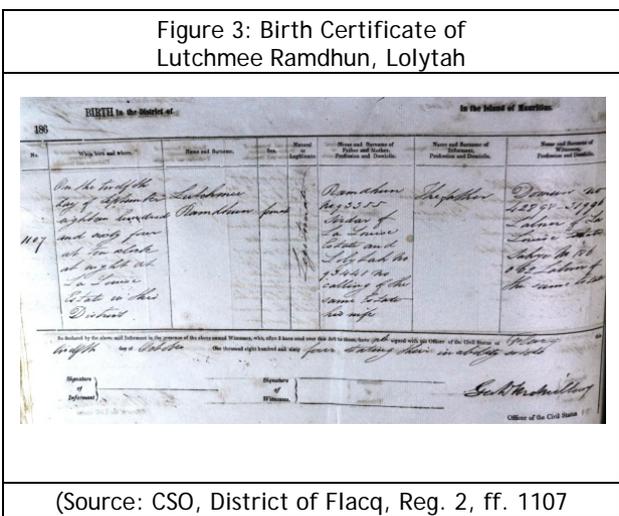
Furthermore, it is believed that Digaum never held a steady job on a sugar estate as a day labourer. He was arrested on several occasions for petty theft and even spent some time in prison. However, eventually Digaum stabilized his life, got married and had children. He passed away on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1909 in the District of Pamplemousses and his passenger list number was not mentioned in the records. Today, some of his descendants are living in Bon Accueil near Mission Cross Road.



### 1. The Life of Peerthum and Lutchmee Ramdhun and her parents during the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Between the late 1860s/early 1870s and 1890, Peerthum worked as a "day labourer" on Grand Bois Sugar Estate and lived in its estate camp. Grand Bois Sugar Estate was a small sugar plantation which was located between Bois Chéri and Rivière du Poste in the District of Savanne.

Sometime in 1879 or 1880, Peerthum was married to Lutchmee Ramdhun. He was 33 or 34 years old and she was 15 or 16 years old. Lutchmee Ramdhun was born on La Louise Sugar Estate in September 1864 in the District of Flacq near Sebastopol village. She was the daughter of Ramdhun, the *sirdar* of La Louise Sugar Estate, and of Lolytah, his wife and a resident in the camp of the same sugar estate.



Ramdhun, Immigrant No.93355 was 21 years old (born in 1830) and Lolytah Immigrant No.93441 was 18 years old (born in 1833) when they arrived, on the *Aeneas*, to Mauritius on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1851. They landed at the Immigration Depot where they spent three days, before being sent to work on an unspecified sugar estate in the District of Flacq. It may have been La Louise Sugar Estate, but there is no record to confirm this until the mid-1860s.

According to records of the Immigration Department, Ramdhun's father was Sookloll and Lolytah's father was Goonooa and they both belonged to the Ghausee caste which is actually a sub-caste within the Vaish caste which specialized in the rearing of farm animals.

They were both from the village of Golah, the pergunnah or "sub-division" of Echaug, the Zillah or Province of Hazareebaug in South Bihar (now in Jharkhand). They were both married before leaving Calcutta, India, and it is believed that they were married in Golah itself before migrating. Furthermore, it is even probable that they performed a child marriage several years earlier in their native village during the late 1830s or early 1840s. During the 1860s, as it was mentioned earlier in this report, Ramdhun served as a *sirdar* on La Louise Sugar Estate when he was in his early thirties and Lolytah was a housewife and they resided in a house in the estate camp. The best description of a *sirdar* on a rural sugar estate during the 1860s is provided by Huguette Ly-Tio Fane Pineo:

*"He exerted his authority both in the establishment quarters and in the labourers' camp. His dual status gave him a position of great power among the labourers from whom he usually commanded both obedience and respect. The caste to which he belonged had certainly been a factor in his promotion, but the permanency of his position depended on the quality of his leadership. Good leadership required on his part exceptional "savoir faire" and good judgement, qualities which he acquired from long practice in fieldwork and familiarity in all the different social quarters of the estate."*<sup>3</sup>

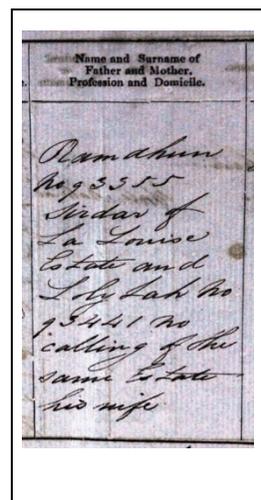
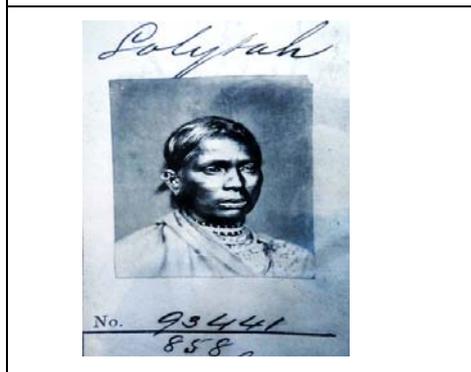


Figure 4: Birth Certificate of Lutchmee Ramdhun

Figure 5 : The picture of Lolytah, immigrant no.93441, the mother-in-law of Peerthum which was taken in 1883 at the Immigration Depot or the Aapravasi Ghat



Source: MGIIA/PG Vol. 28, ff. 102

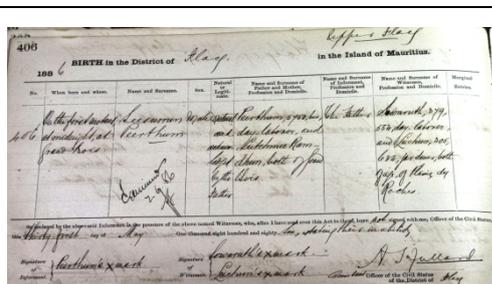
In addition, during the 1860s, before a labourer became a *sirdar*, he had to be able to muster before the sugar harvest more than 24 labourers and keep them under his control. On the large sugar estates, the *sirdar* was answerable to the chief *sirdar* who had to answer to the estate manager.<sup>4</sup>

My father explains that ever since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, usually one week before the harvest season, the *sirdar* would take his workers to the local grog shop or tavern usually located on the perimeters of the estate or a nearby settlement. There, he would offer them drinks such as rum, food and some tobacco and promises that they would be paid on time for their work throughout the sugar cane harvest season. This ensured the loyalty of the workers and the *sirdar's* authority on the highly-stratified hierarchy which existed on the sugar estates.

In October 1866, Ramdhun, the father-in-law of Peerthum, passed away at the age of 36, when Lutchmee Ramdhun was only two years old. Some time, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lolytah went to live at Rivière Sèche in the District of Flacq. In 1883, the picture of Lolytah was taken at the Immigration Depot in Port Louis when she was 51 years old. Many years later in March 1908, she passed away at Rivière Sèche at the age of 76 and lived for 42 years as a widow. It is interesting to note that she outlived Lutchmee Ramdhun, her daughter, and Peerthum, her son-in-law.

## 2. The Life of Peerthum between the 1880s and the early 1900s

Figure 6: Birth Certificate of Seesurrun Peerthum, son of Peerthum born at Grand Bois



Source: CSO District of Flacq Birth Certificates (1886), Reg.1, ff 406)

After her marriage, Lutchmee Ramdhun lived at Grand Bois with Peerthum. Between 1881 and 1886, they had three children, Ramsurrun, Poonbasseea and Seesurrun. All three of them were born at Grand Bois and registered at the Civil Status Office of Flacq. This fact is not surprising because it is an old tradition for Mauritian women to go and stay for several days and weeks at their parents' place after having given birth to their child. Ramsurrun Peerthum was born in May 1881, Poonbasseea Peerthum in March 1883 and the youngest one and my great grandfather, Seesurrun Peerthum, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1886. Lutchmee Ramdhun passed away in 1890 at the age of 26 and it is believed that she died while trying to give birth to her fourth child, which was common in those days.

In the aftermath of this tragic event, Peerthum, who was 44 years old, found himself a widow, struggling to bring up three young children. A short time later, perhaps a year after the death of his wife, he decided to leave Grand Bois and settle in the estate camp of Grande Retraite in Northern part of the District of Flacq. He became an "engaged labourer" and was no longer a "day labourer" in order to provide for this children. Peerthum left his youngest child, Seesurrun Peerthum, in the care of the Mahesh family who resided in a small settlement just on the perimeter of Grande Retraite, Sugar Estate.

This settlement, which was established during the 1880s and 1890s, would eventually become the village of Grande Retraite. Between 1891 and 1905, Peerthum worked and lived as an engaged labourer on Grande Retraite Sugar Estate where, apart from his wage, he was provided with accommodation, rations and medical care.

He became good friends with Sabally Kaudeer and Ramnath Seebaran, who were both Indo-Mauritians and engaged labourers on the same estate. Peerthum passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1905 at Grande Retraite Sugar Estate and it was Kaudeer and Seebaran who reported his death and signed his death certificate as witnesses. Peerthum No. 5751 (bis) never purchased any property and went from being a day labourer to an engaged labourer during the last years of his life.

Figure 7: Accommodation for Monthly or Contract Labourers on a Sugar Estate in Flacq during the 1940s



## 3. The Story of Seesurrun and Sookbasseea Peerthum: The Early Years

Seesurrun Peerthum thus spent the first four years of his life in Grand Bois and barely knew his mother, Lutchmee Ramdhun, since he was only four years old when she died. Between 1891 and 1911, he grew up and lived in a small settlement on the outskirts of Grande Retraite Sugar Estate. He was brought up by the "Mahesh" family and received regular visits and financial support from his father until the latter's death in 1905. The house and property of the "Mahesh" family was located where the Grande Retraite Village Hall is located today. During the early 1900s, shortly before the death of Peerthum, a child marriage was performed between Seesurrun Peerthum and Sookbasseea Nundlall, the daughter of Ramdhuny Nundlall, who was a *sirdar* on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate in Rivière du Rempart district.

Sookbasseea Nundlall, my great grandmother, was born on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate in March 1896. She played a crucial role in social and economic progress of the Peerthum family and had a major impact on the life of Dr. Satteeanund Peerthum, my father. Sookbasseea's grandfather and the father of Nundlall the *sirdar* came to Mauritius from Bihar, India, during the 1850s. He passed through the Immigration Depot where he was registered as an indentured labourer and went to

work on a Sugar Estate in Rivière du Rempart. His son, Ramdhuny Nundlall, was born in December 1867 and by the early 1890s, when only in his early 20s, he became a *sirdar* on Labourdonnais Estate.

#### 4. The Story of Seesurrun and Sookbasseea Peerthum: Life on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate

During the 1890s and until his death in the early 1930s, "Nundlall the *sirdar*", as he was often called, lived in a well built and well furnished house close to the estate camp of Labourdonnais. A few years after their child marriage, a religious marriage between Seesurrun and Sookbasseea was performed in 1910/1911 when the former was 24/25 years old and the latter was 14/15 years old. Between 1912 and 1919, they had seven children, Doorpatee, Seelochnee, Soobagwatee, Luckpatheea, Deosia, Chandraduth and Sookdeo.

Their sixth child was "Chandraduth" Peerthum, my grandfather who was born on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate in April 1917. He was registered at the Civil Status Office of Poudre d'Or village early the following month, and his name was written "Chanarduth", instead of Chandraduth by the Civil Status Officer. His real name will be used here.

In 1910/1911 and 1926, Seesurrun Peerthum lived and worked on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate as a cart driver and owned his own ox and cart. Seesurrun and Sookbasseea lived in a house close to that of Ramdhuny Nundlall and near to the estate camp of Labourdonnais. Between 1914 and 1915, Swami Swatantranand, an important pandit of the Arya Samaj movement in India, came to Mauritius to spend one year at the behest of Manilall Doctor. Swami Swatantranand was invited by Ramdhuny Nundlall to reside in his house during his Mauritian sojourn and he spent several months there.

Sookbasseea and her siblings served the swami whom they considered as their guru. They were able to learn, to a certain extent, to read and write in Hindi and had some very basic knowledge about Hinduism and Hindu scripture.

Figure 10: Satyadeo Peerthum



Source: Courtesy of Satyadeo Peerthum and Arya Sabha Mauritius

The Nundlall family were already followers of the early Arya Samaj movement or the Arya Sabha in Mauritius and Swami Swatantranand played an important role in its establishment prior to the return of Pandit Cashinath Kistoe in 1916. This event cannot be underestimated in the history of my family because Seesurrun and Sookbasseea Peerthum became staunch Arya Samajis all their lives. Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren also became followers of the Arya Samaj movement. They helped in the establishment and consolidation of the Arya Sabha in the island.

Satyadeo Peerthum, the grandson of Seesurrun and Sookbassea Peerthum and my father's elder brother, became the President of the Arya Sabha of Mauritius during the late 1990s and first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which manages more than 300 branches throughout the island. He has been an active member of this Hindu reformist organization since 1984, an office bearer in the Managing Committee of the Arya Sabha and Chairman of the DAV College Committee. For more than a decade, he has been the Editor-in-Chief of *Aryodaye*; the press organ of the Arya Sabha. For the

Figure 8: The house of a *sirdar* on a Mauritian Sugar Estate during the 1940s



Source: Photo Collection of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture

Figure 9: Indo-Mauritian residents on Estate Camp of Antoinette Sugar Estate



past 27 years, he has been an active social worker in organizations which are affiliated with the Arya Sabha. Thus, four generations of the Peerthum family, over a period of almost a century, have been active supporters of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius.

Apart from Sookbasseea, Ramdhuny Nundlall or "Nundlall the *sirdar*" had several children and one among them became known later on as Pandit Nundlall. Between the 1930s and 1950s, he became an active and important pandit of the Arya Samaj movement in Mauritius.

Equally interesting is the fact that during the 1950s, he visited his distant relatives in Bihar who were related to his grandfather, Nundlall the Immigrant. During that period, Pandit Nundlall is one of few Mauritian descendants of an indentured labourer to have done this during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It is interesting to note that he was visiting his son, Iswarduth Nundlall, in Lucknow in Northern India, who during the 1950s, had earned his B.A Honours and Master's degree in music. During the 1960s, he obtained his doctoral degree in Music and many years later, he wrote a book on music in Mauritius.<sup>5</sup>

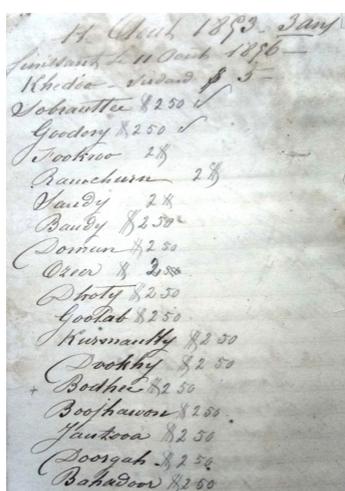
On 11<sup>th</sup> June 1916, Seesurrin and Sookbasseea Peerthum were legally married and their Act of Marriage was registered at the Civil Status Office of Poudre d'Or village. In addition, Chandraduth Peerthum, my grandfather, was their first child to be born after Seesurrin and Sookbasseea Peerthum were legally married. The objective of their legal marriage was to purchase jointly an *arpent* plot of fertile land at Bois Mangué which is located in Rivière du Rempart district and a few kilometers from Labourdonnais Estate.

Figure 11: Sookbasseea Peerthum in her 50s standing next to her brother, Pandit Nundlall



Source: Courtesy of Sheilandra Peerthum

Figure 12: Payroll of labourers on contract on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate 1893-1896



Source: Château Labourdonnais

It was purchased through several instalments over a period of several years so that by the early 1920s, they were able to secure this plot of land through their savings. Furthermore, Ramdhuny Nundlall acted as the financial guarantor of their land acquisition which was registered at the office of a notary in Rivière du Rempart district. The essential question which arises is how did they pay for this land? As mentioned earlier, Seesurrin had been working for several years on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate as a cart driver, and even Sookbasseea was on the payroll of the above-mentioned estate. However, it is unclear what specific work she performed there. During the late 1910s, Seesurrin and Sookbasseea grew sugarcane on their newly-acquired land and, in between the rows, tomatoes were grown which they sold at a rate of 1 lb. for 1 cent.

Their wages and the money they obtained from their small sugarcane harvest and tomato cultivation, helped to make installment payments. It goes without saying that Seesurrin and Sookbasseea, as small planters, took advantage of the sugar boom which lasted until 1921. At the same time, they were among the last Indo-Mauritians who, by purchasing a plot of land, actively took part in the *Grand Morcellement* Movement which came to a close by 1921 or the early 1920s.

## 5. The Beginning of Life for the Peerthum Family in Cottage during the 1920s and 1930s

In 1925, Ramdhuny Nundlall the *sirdar* gave his daughter a plot of land of around half an *arpent* in size in the small village of Cottage and located next to Forbach Sugar Estate. He had purchased this land from a Franco-Mauritian planter and owner of Mon Tracas, a small Sugar Estate, from which part of the village of Cottage gradually emerged during the 1910s and 1920s. Between 1925 and 1926, Seesurrun and Sookbasseea, with the help of their relatives, started building their house in Cottage, barely two kilometres from where they were living on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate. In 1926, they left Labourdonnais Estate and settled permanently in Cottage. During the following year, in February 1927, Gianduth Peerthum, the eighth child of Seesurrun and Sookbasseea, was born and he was the first of many Peerthum children to be born in Cottage.

During the late 1920s and after, Seesurrun and Sookbasseea planted sugarcane and vegetables and were also involved in cattle-rearing on their land in Cottage. Furthermore, Seesurrun continued to work as a cart driver on Labourdonnais Estate until his death in 1933 and Sookbasseea was still on the payroll of the above-mentioned estate as long as her father remained a *sirdar*. In November 1931, Soorajdut Peerthum, the ninth and last child of Seesurrun and Sookbasseea, was born. He was barely two years old when his father passed away and never got to know him, unlike the other Peerthum children.

What type of person was Seesurrun Peerthum? This question was answered by a well-known and long-time resident of Cottage, Mr. Balam Nursimooloo, who is now 90 years. He is the grandson of an indentured labourer who arrived in Mauritius during the late 1800s from one of the Telugu-speaking districts. Balam was born around 1921 and was a *sirdar* on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate between the late 1940s and the 1960s. As a young child, he met Seesurrun Peerthum and was a good friend with Chandraduth.

Figure 13: Balam Nursimooloo



Source: Photo by Satyendra Peerthum from the AGTF Collection

Balam Nursimooloo provided a detailed description from what he remembered of Seesurrun during the late 1920s and early 1930s. He described my great grandfather as being a short person with a very dark complexion and who had a moustache. He always wore a *dhotee* and tied a handkerchief around his head, just like almost all rural Hindu Indo-Mauritian men in those days. He was a quiet and sometimes a reserved person who did not interact much with the residents of Cottage, but rather spent a lot of his time with his friends and in-law on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate, when not at home.

The father of Nursimooloo was also a cart driver; he knew Seesurrun Peerthum and they were friends. Between the 1910s and the early 1930s, during the inter-crop season (between November and June), when sugarcane was not being harvested, it was a common practice among cart drivers such as Seesurrun Peerthum and Nursimooloo, to engage in other activities. Their time was taken up with the transportation of vegetables on behalf of vegetable growers and to deliver “goods procurement list” for shop keepers

from the villages, such as Cottage, to Port Louis and to transport these supplies back to the villages for them.

They would leave Cottage at 11 p.m. or midnight and arrive at Port Louis by 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. and they would leave their carts at the Immigration Square. During the early morning, they delivered their vegetables at the Port Louis Central Market. Later on during the same morning, when the shops on Farquhar and Corderie Streets, as well as on the adjoining streets, opened, they would deliver their goods procurement list. By the early afternoon, they waited for the shopkeepers from Cottage and its surroundings to arrive by train and purchase their goods which were loaded onto the carts and start their return trip back to the North of the island.

The cart drivers were paid a fee by the vegetable growers and shopkeepers for their service. Between the 1910s and the 1930s, this was done once or twice a week and provided the cart drivers, such as Seesurrun Peerthum and Nursimooloo, with an additional source of income.

It is evident that, Seesurrun spent little time at home, since he left for work before 5 a.m. and returned in the evening. His wife and his young children managed their property in Cottage. Apart from his work as a cart driver, Seesurrun also personally looked after his property at Bois Mangué which he visited almost on a daily basis. By the early 1930s, in order to supplement his earnings from his properties in Cottage and Bois Mangué, Seesurrun tried to acquire some land near the village of Goodlands.

Why did Seesurrun try to obtain a third plot of land? It may well be that he remembered that Peerthum, his father, never managed to purchase any property due to difficult circumstances in life and always remained dependent on the pay he earned as a day labourer and later on, as an 'engaged labourer'. In addition, he had to depend on other people to raise his children and his father did not leave him with any inheritance in terms of property or money. At the same time, Seesurrun had relied for many years on the generosity of Nundlall the *sirdar* in order to earn his living and to purchase his first property. He wanted to achieve some type of financial independence, become a secure property owner, earn enough money to feed his wife and children and leave an inheritance for them, so that they would not have struggle a lot after his death. However, fate had something else in reserve for his family.

Seesurrun tried to acquire a small plot of land near the village of Goodlands by making a verbal agreement with a Franco-Mauritian estate-owner there and provided him with a deposit. He also promised to make several installment payments over several years. The objective of Seesurrun was to obtain a half-*arpent* of marginal land which was located on the perimeter of the estate owner's property. Seesurrun invested a lot of his savings into clearing his plot of land which was rocky, uneven and not very fertile.

At the same time, he tried to clean a deep well in order to obtain water to irrigate his land. Unfortunately, Seesurrun spent most of his money in trying to convert his newly-acquired property from marginal land into good arable land. As a result, he failed in making his installment payments and the Franco-Mauritian planter seized Seesurrun's land as well as the deposit that he had provided. Since it was a verbal agreement, it was difficult to resort to the law to get his money back.

This specific event had a huge impact on the lives of Seesurrun and Sookbassea Peerthum. After all, it traumatized both of them since they lost most of their savings. It may have also ruined the already fragile health of Seesurrun who had suffered from the Spanish Influenza in 1919. On 11th November 1933, Seesurrun Peerthum passed away at the age of 46 in Cottage and was cremated on a spot close to the village and Forbach Sugar Estate.

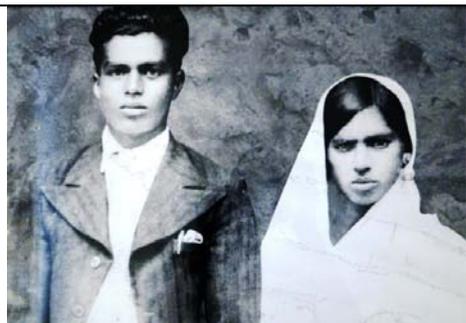
Sookbassea became a widow at the age of 37 and was left with the arduous task of bringing up several children, the management of two properties including an ox, a cart and several cows by herself. The year 1933 was truly a difficult year for Sookbassea because in February 1933, her father passed away and nine months later, her husband died. Ramdhuny Nundlall was cremated in the same place as his son-in-law.

## **6. The Story of Chandraduth and Hurbunsea Peerthum: The Early Years**

In the middle of this family crisis, Chandraduth Peerthum, my grandfather, who was only 16 years old, had no choice but to leave school after barely completing Standard VI. He took over his father's work as a cart driver on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate and assisted his mother and his brothers and sisters in the management of their properties in Cottage and at Bois Mangué. This sudden transition in the life of Chandraduth was a long and painful process which required him to be mentally, emotionally and physically strong and mature. Fortunately, he was able to rise to the occasion and shouldered his new responsibilities and help his mother Sookbassea bring up her children and the management of their properties. During most of the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s, he continued his work on Labourdonnais Estate.

In 1938, a religious wedding was performed for Chandraduth and Hurbunsea Rashpassing in the small village Grand Gaube in the North East corner of Mauritius. Chandraduth went to his wedding from Cottage to Grand Gaube in a hired car. My grandfather was 21 years old and Hurbunsea was 17 years old, and they were never legally married unlike his parents! Several weeks later, during the course of the same year, a group picture was taken at a photo studio in Port Louis. In that historic picture, Chandraduth was dressed in a suit with a fountain pen in his pocket and Hurbunsea was dressed in a beautiful *saree* which had been bought for her marriage. They took this group picture with members of the Naga family from Brisée Verdière because Chandraduth's elder sister had married in that family. Today, copies of this important 72-year-old picture hangs in the homes of almost all of their children and some of their grand children.

Figure 14: Photo of Chandraduth and Hurbunsea Peerthum which was taken in 1938



Source: Courtesy of Satyadeo Peerthum and the Naga family of Brisée Verdière

Hurbunsea Peerthum, my grandmother, was born on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1921 at Grand Gaube. She was the daughter of Rashpassing, a cart driver who transported goods from Grand Gaube to Port Louis, and back again. It was Thakoor Rajparsing, her great grandfather who came to Mauritius from Bihar, India, through the port city of Calcutta during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. When Thakoor Rashparsing arrived at the Immigration Depot, his name was not recorded as "Rajparsing" by the clerk of the Immigration Department but as "Rashpassing". The name has remained unchanged for more than one hundred and fifty years.

Hurbunsea gave birth to her first son, Satyadeo Peerthum, on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1939, barely a year after her marriage at Grand Gaube. His birth was registered in August 1939 at the Civil Status Office of Poudre d'Or. On 15<sup>th</sup> March 1941, she gave birth to her second child, Sattéeanund Peerthum, my father, once again in Grand Gaube. Between 1939 and 1953, Chandraduth and Hurbunsea had eight children, and two died at childbirth. The other children who were born during this period were: Saramate (Sita) in 1943, Satyabharat in 1945, Mitradeo in 1947, Suttyparkass in 1949, Bissoondeo in 1951 and Sunitee in 1953.

## 7. The Story of Chandraduth and Hurbunsea Peerthum during the 1940s and the 1950s

During the 1930s and 1940s, Chandraduth Peerthum developed a very close and lifelong friendship with Hurrparsing Ramnarain, the Trade Union leader and member of the Mauritius Labour Party. My father and his elder brother always called him "chacha". During the Second World War and the 1950s, Chandraduth Peerthum was a member of the village panchayat or a type of council of village elders and became a well-known figure in the locality, just like Ramnarain and Narsimooloo. In September 1943, in the aftermath of the tragic Belle Vue Harel massacre, he was one of the individuals who transported the body of Anjalay Coopen on his shoulders from the estate camp of Belle Vue to be cremated on a plot of land which had been donated for that specific purpose and located immediately to the North of Cottage. During the same period, Chandraduth, along with his two younger brothers, Gianduth and Soorajdutt, became active members of the Syam Sevaks of the Jan Andolan or People's Movement which was being led by Pandit Basdeo Bissoondoyal and Sookdeo Bissoondoyal.

During the 1930s and 1940s, he helped Sookbasseea to manage their properties in Cottage and Bois Mangué. He played a crucial role in bringing up his younger brothers and getting his elder sisters married between the mid-1930s and mid-1940s. At the same time, Sookbasseea, Hurbunsea, Chandraduth, with the help of his younger brothers Gianduth and Soorajdutt and relatives, were able to build a large wooden house, with windows and corrugated iron roof.

This was the first house of its kind to be erected in Cottage. In the aftermath of her father's death, Sookbasseea was able to obtain some furniture made of ebony wood and decorative China ware

which were put on display in her new home. Unfortunately, the passage of the famous cyclone of 1945 destroyed their house, and they lost part of their belongings. Between 1945 and 1946, they built another wooden house, with windows and corrugated iron roof which was much smaller than the previous one.

During the 1940s, the personal doctor of Sookbasseea was Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam on whose lap my father sat during one of his house calls in Cottage in 1945. Three years later, since she was able to sign her own name in Bhojpuri and Hindi, my great grandmother was one of the few Indo-Mauritian women in Rivière du Rempart district to vote in the historic General Elections of August 1948. It is not surprising that she voted for Dr. Ramgoolam who was elected as the candidate for the first time as representative of the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart district.

Chandraduth continued to work as a cart driver on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate until the late 1940s. In 1947, with his wife and children, he temporarily went to live at Mission Cross Road, Lallmatie. For one year, he resided in the house of Roopchand Manna and his wife Mrs. Manna who was the sister of Chandraduth.

My grandfather worked as a cart driver with Mr. Naga, his brother-in-law and a *métayer* who had obtained several acres of cane land near Lallmatie and Grande Retraite which belonged to Union-Flacq Sugar Estate. Chandraduth transported sugarcane from the Lallmatie and Grande Retraite area to the sugar mill of Union-Flacq, around 5 kilometres away. However, after more than a year, he decided to return to Cottage with his family, where he continued to work as a cart driver for Labourdonnais Sugar Estate until 1950. After two to three years, he obtained enough money with the financial help of Sookbasseea, to buy a new cart and ox. Between the mid-1950s until the early 1960s, he delivered sugarcane for St. Antoine Sugar Estate as well as for Labourdonnais Sugar Estate. During the 1940s and the 1950s, in his spare time, Chandraduth was involved in planting, cultivating and selling of vegetables on the land which his family owned at Cottage. At the same time, he was also involved in the harvesting and transportation of sugarcane from the land which the Peerthum family owned at Bois Mangue.

While the 1950s was a period of prosperity for my grandfather, it was also a time of great trials and tribulations which forever altered his life. After all, during this period, his wife died, his mother passed away and his house at Cottage was swept away during a flood. In November 1956, Hurbunsea Peerthum passed away at the Civil Hospital of Port Louis at the age of 36, while trying to give birth to her tenth child.

She was cremated in the village of Cottage by her husband on the same spot where the Seesurrin Peerthum and Ramduny Nundlall were cremated in 1933. Chandraduth Peerthum found himself in a situation almost like Peerthum, his grandfather, more than half a century earlier in Grand Bois. Chandraduth's wife died at a young age, and he was left with feeding and taking care of eight children with four of them less than ten years old.

During that difficult and dark period in his life, my grandfather could still rely on his mother's moral support and financial help. By the mid-1950s, Sookbasseea transferred her property of Cottage to Chandraduth who managed the land with the help of his children. A few years earlier, in 1949, she purchased a half *arpent* of land in the village of Lallmatie next to Mission Cross Road and close to Bon Accueil. During the course of the same year, she built a small house with the help of her children and moved there. After having resided in Cottage for 23 years, Sookbasseea moved to Lallmatie in order to live with Soorajdut, her youngest son and last child, who was only 18 years old and had opened a tailor's shop at Brisée Verdrière.

By the mid-1950s, Sookbasseea bought a plot of land around one third an *arpent* in size in the centre of Lallmatie village, close to the main road and the old cinema. She moved from Mission Cross Road to live there with Soorajdut, until she passed away in 1958. At the same time, she gave an ox, cart, her house and land next to Mission Cross Road to her son Gianduth.

In 1956, Sookbasseea sold her property at Bois Mangue for Rs. 9,000. She kept Rs. 6,500 and the rest of the money or Rs. 2,500, she distributed among her five daughters who got Rs. 500 each. Sookbasseea used the money to build a new house on her newly-acquired property in the centre of Lallmatie village. She also intended to leave this house and land for Soorajdut. Barely two years after the death of Hurbunsea, Chandraduth's wife, his mother passed away in December 1958 at

the age of 62 in Lallmatie. She was cremated at the Old Cremation Ground of Cottage where her husband, father and daughter-in-law were also cremated. Today, this place has been mostly neglected since the 1980s.

The death of Sookbasseea was a huge blow to Chandraduth, his children and his siblings, since she was the only person who provided them with emotional and financial support for more than a quarter century. I grew up hearing stories about the personality and achievements of Sookbasseea Peerthum. She was a unique woman who led an extraordinary life and could serve as an epitome to all modern Mauritian women. She had her own savings in the local Colonial Bank and she was financially independent and did not always rely on her children. Within her lifetime, Sookbasseea was able to generate enough money to purchase three different small properties, and she ensured that her children received their inheritance. She was an independent and progressive woman who had a strong character and tried to forge a destiny for herself and her children.

Unfortunately, in 1959, hardly a few months after this family tragedy, a flash flood, which originated from La Nicolière, swept through Cottage and destroyed my grandfather's house. He and his children lost all their possessions and had to start from scratch. It goes without saying that the period between 1956 and 1959, was the darkest period in Chandraduth's life, as well for his children, as they were struck with three major tragedies in a row. Fortunately, within a few weeks, my grandfather and his children, with the help of his nephews and some of the village youths, were able to rebuild their house. A few months later, he was able to plant and cultivate vegetables on his land and was able to purchase a new ox and cart.

During the early 1960s, Chandraduth continued to work as a cart driver on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate which he eventually gave up. Between the early and late 1960s, he worked as a general worker for the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District and continued to grow his vegetables which he sold at the market of Goodlands. During the late 1960s, he left his work as general worker and kept himself busy by growing and selling vegetables. One day during the mid-1970s, Mr. Ramsewak, the President of the General Workers' Federation (GWF) and his followers came to Cottage to lay a wreath on the spot where Anjalay Coopen and her comrades were cremated. It was Chandraduth Peerthum who showed them the place, and this moment is captured in a black and white photo. By 1977, he became eligible for an old age pension which helped to supplement his income. Chandraduth Peerthum passed away during the first week of August 1980. He was cremated on the funeral ground of Cottage where his father, mother, grandfather and wife had also been.

As I complete this report for the Indentured Immigration Committee of the Truth and Justice Commission, I am doing my *devoir de mémoire* as a descendant and fulfilling my tryst with destiny as a young historian. In addition, I pay tribute to the sacrifices, struggle and achievements of my ancestors whom I have been researching for more than 7 years at the Civil Status Office, the Mauritius National Archives, the MGI Indian Immigration Archives and through interviews with my father and Mr. Narsimooloo. However, the search for them goes on.

ABBREVIATIONS: CSO: Civil Service Office  
MGIIIA: Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives

<sup>1</sup> CSO/Flacq/ 1886, Reg.1, ff 406.

<sup>2</sup> Saloni Deerpalsingh, *Desi Roots: Diaspora Looking Back* (MGI 2002), p.19.

<sup>3</sup> H. Ly Tio Fane Pineo, *Lured Away: The Life History of Indian Cane Workers in Mauritius* (MGI, 1984), p.69.

<sup>4</sup> Pineo, *Lured Away*, p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Iswarduth Nundlall, *Music in Mauritius*, Terre Rouge, 1984.

Figure 15: Chandraduth Peerthum on the left with Mr. Ramsewak



Source: Courtesy of Bissondeo Peerthum

# MY FAMILY HISTORY

SEETUL RAMCHURN  
*Research Assistant, TJC*

*"History turning a blind eye bore him not witness  
History standing mute told not his full story  
He who first had watered this land with his sweat  
And turned stone into green field of gold  
The first immigrant He, son of this land  
He was mine, he was yours, he was our own"  
Abhimanyu Unnuth*

I have chosen to write my Family History because while working in the MGI Archives, I observed every day people coming to conduct research on their origins with great enthusiasm. This inspired me and I decided to do the same. I also wanted to know why, although we live on the same island, our way of living is so different from others? After questioning my relatives, I obtained my answer.

Whatever we are today is all due to our ancestors. Whatever the culture, rituals and traditions that we follow today exists because our ancestors brought them from their country. Their perseverance has proved to be a guide of our life. It has shown us the path to follow and how to become examples for the next generation.

All the information obtained has come from interviews with family members and documents found at the MGI Archives and the Civil Status Office. It was not difficult for the researcher to trace my family history but it is a lengthy exercise.

The immediate problem I encountered at the IIA was when I discovered that there were two people with the same immigration number. My ancestor bore the immigration number, 140704. Using this immigration number, I conducted research on my ancestor but surprisingly found another immigrant with the same Immigration number. In addition to Ramchurn 140704, there was also Beehary. Beehary arrived on the *Julia* in 1854. On the same ship and in the same year, I found Ramchurn with immigration number, 140734. Which one was related to me? Was it possible that my ancestor was Beehary and not Ramchurn? Or did they make a mistake on the immigration number of Beehary? I have not yet answered these questions and further research is needed regarding immigration numbers 140704 and 140734 to confirm his origins. For the present time, for my family tree, I researched Ramchurn 140 734, as this is the more likely ancestor, but this has still to be confirmed.

## MY ANCESTORS

### Ramchurn and Mareetcha Beehook (1<sup>st</sup> Generation)

My ancestor set foot on the island on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1854. His name was Ramchurn, immigration number 140734. He was 17 years old and he came to Mauritius as a single indentured labourer. He was 'shipped' from Calcutta. The ship in which he travelled was called the *Julia* and its number was 562. The name of the Captain was "E. Warehouse". Ramchurn had a scar on his left thigh. He married Mareetcha Beehook in Mauritius.

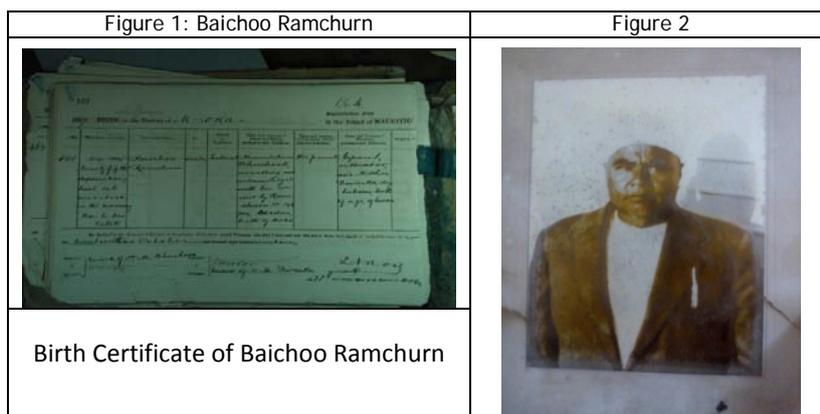
**Information on his family background consists of what is in the archives.** Ramchurn's family came from the village of "Seekooree" in what is today Bihar, Province of "Moner" and District of "Patna". Ramchurn came here in search of employment and settled in Mauritius. He was indentured to Samouilhan in the District of Moka.

According to information obtained orally from my grandfather, Sookdeo Ramchurn, Ramchurn 140734 worked as "labourer" at Bar le Duc Sugar Estate. Later, he became a *sirdar*. He also stated that Ramchurn 140734 was the owner of a large plot of land but after his death, a South Indian entrepreneur misappropriated the land. As Maratcheea Beehook was illiterate, she was tricked into putting her thumb print on a legal paper. Subsequently, she lost all her property and led a life of poverty.

### Baichoo Ramchurn (2<sup>nd</sup> Second Generation)

Ramchurn and Mareetcha Beehook were married probably in the 1890's and they settled down in the village of "Dagotière" in the District of Moka. On 25<sup>th</sup> September 1897, they gave birth to a son who was named Baichoo Ramchurn. I have not obtained any more information regarding the deaths of Ramchurn 140734 and Mareetcha Beehook.

According to oral history interviews, Baichoo Ramchurn was a "Saudi" also known as "Halway". During his free time, he used to sell "bhaja", "Kajha" and "gulab Jamun" [<sup>1</sup> Indian savouries]. Baichoo Ramchurn used to wear "Dhoti" and a "Paltot" (Eng trans. Coat). He also tied a handkerchief on his head. He always carried a clock with him (fig. 1).

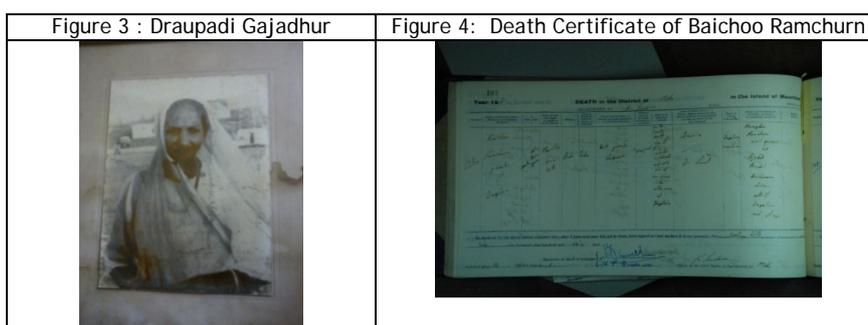


According to my uncle, Gyanduth Ramchurn, Baichoo Ramchurn started working at a very young age. He worked as a labourer on Bar le Duc Sugar Estate. He was a hard worker as well as being a very strict person. He lived in a house built of straw. He married Sohodry in the 1920's who was from Rivière du Poste. No one in the family could give details on the background of Sohodry. Gyanduth Ramchurn mentioned that Baichoo Ramchurn's marriage did not last long as his wife passed away after two years, leaving behind two sons, Kapeeldeo Ramchurn (my grandfather) and Baldeo Ramchurn.

Baichoo Ramchurn remarried Draupadi Gajadhur. Draupadi Gajadhur came from Melrose and settled in Dagotièrè after marriage. Draupadi used to wear a *sari* and *horni*. She wore traditional jewelry such as 'chan' bracelets, 'chumka' earrings, as well as 'champal, (Indian slippers) on special occasions. At all other times, she remained barefoot.

Draupadi Gajadhur was a housewife. She reared two cows and goats and used to wake up early morning to prepare 'farata' for my great-grandfather. She also used to prepare maize rice also known as 'macaille rice', sweet potato, taro 'violet'. Then she went to cut grass in the nearby field and feed and milk the cows. On special occasions, she prepared 'canned fish' and meat for the whole family. Draupadi Gajadhur cooked food on 'firewood' using a 'pukni'. The utensils she was using at that time were as follows: 'marmite', 'caraille', 'deksi'.

Baichoo Ramchurn and Draupadi Gajadhur had four sons and two daughters. Their names are as follows: Hurrydeo Ramchurn, Sookdeo Ramchurn, Ramdeo Ramchurn, Sahadeo Ramchurn, Radhika Ramchurn and Permawtee Ramchurn. Baichoo Ramchurn passed away at the age of 64 on 25 July 1961 in the village of Dagotièrè. The cause of death was Uremia.



### Sons and Daughters of Baichoo Ramchurn (3<sup>rd</sup> Generation)

Baldeo Ramchurn was a religious person. He wore his shirt 'kamiz', 'dhoti' and 'phenta' (head dress). Every morning he went to the temple for prayer. Once back home, he spent his day reading spiritual books like the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Vedas*. Baldeo Ramchurn was a vegetarian. He married Phoolmutt Soomarchund and had eight children.

Kapildeo Ramchurn, my grandfather was the second son of Baichoo Ramchurn. He started working at the age of 14 for Ramdin Sugar Estate situated at Cluny. Then in 1954, he worked as labourer at Mon Desert Alma sugar-estate. At the age of 55, he left his job because of a mild heart attack.

He married Jasso Gunness, my grandmother (fig. 5) and they had 11 children.

Hurrydeo Ramchurn was the third son of Baichoo Ramchurn. He worked as 'chief finance officer' for the Ministry of Education. He worked there for fifteen years. In 1966, he joined politics and he was elected in 1976. He became Minister of Youth and Sports. Hurrydeo Ramdeo married Hanumanjee in 1958. They had one daughter, Amrita Ramchurn.



Figure 5: Jasso Gunness

Sookdeo Ramchurn worked as a school teacher for ten years. In 1965, he left the job and joined the Ministry of Youth and Sports. He retired as 'Principal Youth Officer'. Sookdeo Ramchurn married Ansuya Putty and they had one daughter, Ambika Ramchurn. Sookdeo Ramchurn lives in Quatre-Bornes. He is a spiritual person. The inhabitants of Dagotièrre and Quatre-Bornes have a great respect for him. He is the disciple of 'Sai Baba'. Today, Sookdeo Ramdeo is in-charge of a 'Sai Ram temple' in Quatre-Bornes. He spent his time in the 'Sai Ram temple', attending spiritual ceremonies and singing devotional songs.

Ramdeo Ramchurn went to the Royal College. He won scholarship and left for England for further studies. After completing his studies, he came to Mauritius and work as a 'Veterinary'.

Sahadeo Ramchurn married Uma Ramleka. He used to work as accountant for Desbro Industries. In 1977, he left Mauritius and went to settle down in England. He has two sons.

#### Sons of Kapeeldeo Ramchurn (4<sup>th</sup> Generation)

My father, Prem Ramchurn is the eldest son of Kapeeldeo and Jasso Ramchurn. My father started voluntary social work at the age of twelve. He also worked as 'Clerical Officer' in the Ministry of Agriculture. My father is very famous in the village of Dagotièrre. Everyone knows him by the name of Bhai (brother) Prem. He is now retired but still spends most of his time doing social work. He is the Secretary of old age pensioners and Gemini Senior Citizens. He organizes outings for elderly persons.

His second brother, Deoraj Ramchurn, is self-employed. He married Pavitree Ramborrnun and they have four children. His third brother, Mehess Ramchurn, worked as a gardener. He married Premila Ramdahin and they have three children. His younger brother, Satiadeo Ramchurn, worked as messenger. He married Parbawtee Poonith and they have one son.

Ramchurn 140734 came to Mauritius as a contract labourer and a single man. Since the 1854, the family has lived in the region and the family has become part of its landscape. The Ramchurn family is quite famous in Dagotièrre, the village where they live. On every major occasion such as prayers, weddings, birthdays, they are always seen together. Most of the members of the recent generation are well-educated and hold high-profile jobs.

#### References

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2. MGIIIA PE series - Distribution list.
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4. Oral history interviews.



ORISSA ORIGINS:  
THE CAHOOLESSUR FAMILY

DREESHA TEELWAH  
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Although the family of Coowaloosur is today considered a 'Bihari' family, during the course of its family history search, it found it had origins in Orissa. Orissa is located West of the State of Bengal. The family history was reconstructed with the help of the family, especially Mr. Tarkaswar Coowaloosur. Today the family lives in Mare D'Albert. Mr. Tarkaswar Coowaludur is fifty five years old and was born at Mare D'Albert. His father's name was Rampersad Cowaloosur, but his Orissa origins come from his mother's side, Daiwontee Cowaloosur, born Dausoo.

His father, Rampersad Cowaloosur, was born in 1912 in the District of Pamplémousses. He was a priest and also lived in Mare D'Albert.

Tarkaswar's grandfather, Seedheal Cowaloosur, was born on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1873 in the District of Pamplémousses.

Seedheal's father had come as a free passenger, and not as an indentured labourer, from the District of 'Arrah' or from the village of 'Darbang' or 'Darwan'. According to his Birth Certificate, he worked as gardener. When he arrived, he brought with him a Ramayana which has survived in the family (fig. 39).

Jeetny 216284, the mother of Seedheal, came to Mauritius at the age of nine in 1858.

Her father's name was Boodhoo and they came from Cheettupore village in Hazaribagh District and from Ramghur *pergunnah*. She came aboard the ship *Venilia* No. 816, from the port of Calcutta.

Mr. Coowaloosur's mother's name was Daiwontee Cowaloosur, born Dausoo. She was born in October 1924. Her father (his grandfather) was Ballram Dausoo, born on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1890 in the District of Grand Port and became a priest. His grandfather was always well dressed; he wore 'dhoti' and 'pagri' (turban). His 'dhoti' was up to the ankles. Ballram Dausoo was not like the traditional 'pandit', but was a 'purrohit'. Very little is known about him. The written material he brought, however, has survived and that gave an indication of his origins, as they are in Oriya.

His great-grandfather's name was Soodasie Dausoo, a *sirdar* at Ferney Estate.

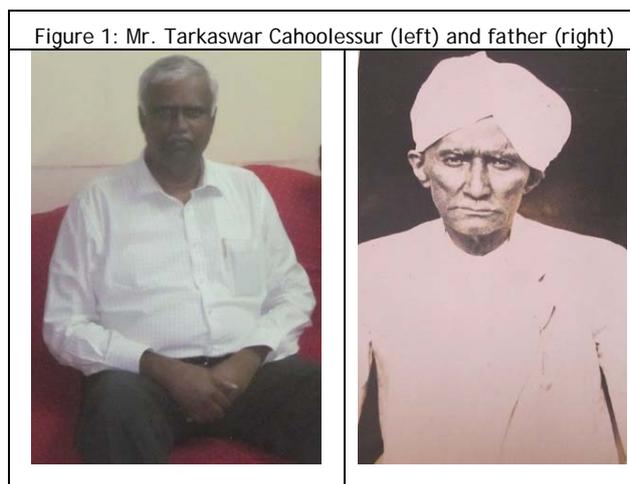


Figure 2: Birth Certificate of Seedheal Cowaloosur

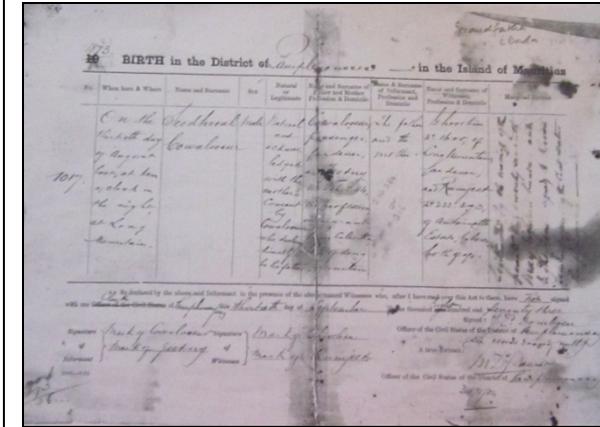


Figure 3: Birth Certificate of Daiwontee Dausoo

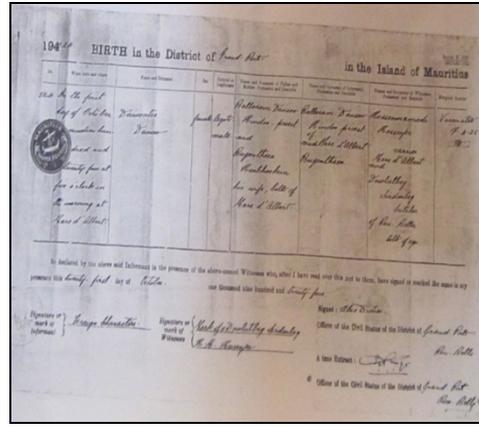


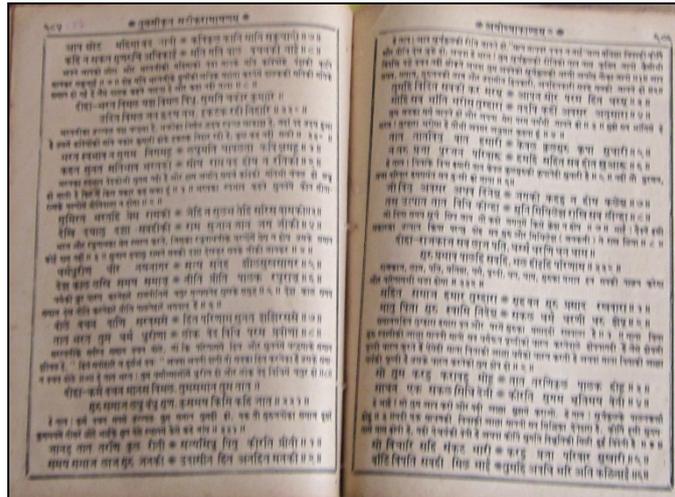
Figure 4: Birth Certificate of Ballram Dausoo



Figure 5: Marriage Certificate of Ballram Dausoo and Bugottea Hurhhookun



Figure 6: Ramayana brought by Cowaloosur



Soodasie Dausoo brought written material from India in Oriya which has survived to this day. This is a pamphlet which states that Soodasie Dausoo owned a shop specializing in the repair of musical instruments in India. The pamphlet is in two languages: English and Oriya, according to the interviewee. It is based on this pamphlet that the family has been able to trace its Oriya origins.

# ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF DESCENDANTS

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## DESCENDANTS TODAY

*Vijayalakshmi Teelock, Vice-Chairperson*

The aims of the analysis of interviews of presumed descendants of indentured labourers are to uncover the world views, life styles, thoughts and perceptions of persons representing a sample of descendants of indentured labourers still living, working on sugar estates or in sugar industry. This is to facilitate further analysis and understanding of the situation of descendants of indentured labourers in accordance with the Act of the Truth and Justice Commission whose main objective is to “make an assessment of the consequences of slavery and indenture labour during the colonial period up to the present”.

A chapter on what the descendants themselves think and feel was thought absolutely necessary by the Commission given that any analysis of consequences must study the immediate descendants. These persons for the most part aged over the age of 70, are those to have first felt, seen and heard the impact of indenture through the lived experience of their grandparents or parents, transmitted to them through mainly an oral medium.

The term ‘presumed descendants’ has to be used because many Mauritians have no idea of their own family history and indeed of Mauritian history. One can fairly assume that being of Indian origin their roots are in the indenture system, it has also been established that many Indians came before and after indenture period.

Sugar-related work by a person of Indian origin however does not distinguish between an indentured or a non-indentured person and many examples exist of the similarity of experiences.

It is therefore not a problem for the Commission that people interviewed did not know where they came from or assumed they were of ‘indentured’ origin.

These analyses of interviews with persons who had previously lived and worked on sugar estates was conducted in the 2007-2009 period, when the Voluntary Retirement Scheme was in progress. They were conducted by research staff of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and donated to the TJC who wished to know how Mauritians lived on those estates and what people felt about their lives there and what memories they had. Three themes suggested themselves: first, the life experiences of the people, and if and how have their lives changed over the years; secondly, for those with ‘memories’ of their parents’ and grandparents’ lives, to follow their evolution up to today and third, whether there were any variations regionally; fourth, how were Inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic interactions on estates, and lastly, what do they think of their history?

The interviewees were between 65 and 70 years of age and their work-related memories were good: they provided factual information about their working lives. They talked little, however, about emotions, thoughts and more subjective issues. About 70% of interviewees were males and the ethnic /religious proportions reflected very roughly the religious/ethnic population of Mauritius still living on sugar estates in the regions studied today.

The semi-structured interviews have been conducted by research assistants with interview sheets. All interviews were recorded on either audio or videotapes and an archival form created containing basic information about the informants. These 400 interviews were copied on CDs and donated to the Truth and Justice Commission. The Commission undertook to transcribe these interviews as a gesture of its appreciation for the donation.

The methodology used in analyzing oral interviews continues to be discussed and debated in academic circles and interpretations of the same interview often vary among scholars. For this reason, the Commission requested scholars from varying disciplinary traditions and training to assess the consequences on indenture on descendants. This as the reports show, proved a very fruitful exercise. As much as there is variation in the views of informants, so is the situation in the interpretations of this experience by scholars possible.

The objectives of the Commission are also to ensure the memory of Mauritians particularly of indentured and slave descent are not forgotten and thus the creation of Oral History database is considered absolutely essential for the preservation of the nation’s memory.

## REPORT

By AMIT MISHRA  
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### 1. WORK CONDITIONS

In terms of the nature of work, there was continuity with the indentured period in terms of gender and age division in plantation work. Men were doing the *Gran Bann* or harder work, such as cutting the cane, loading it into carts, working in mills etc. while women were supposed to do the *Ti Bann* or lighter work like weeding, separating leaves from the cane, planting, rearing animals, working in the gardens or as domestic help in the estate owner's household. Women were paid less and sometimes, half the wages of male workers. In addition, however they also did the household chores before, and after, this 'light' work: preparing meals, looking after the cattle, preparing children for school or work etc.

Ethnic profiling also continued from indenture days where most of the artisans/non-field workers were Creole Christians.<sup>1</sup> Out of the 18 Creoles interviewed, 9 respondents did not work as field labourers.<sup>2</sup>

Mobility was restricted on a sugar estate even after indenture. The majority remained in occupations related to the sugar industry: in the fields or the mill or in associated sectors such as work as mechanics of machines, drivers of lorries etc. Sugar was the only major crop grown at that time. Additional income was derived from cow rearing and selling milk by women, poultry and goat farming, providing domestic help, growing vegetables etc.

Mobility occurred within the sugar industry and many respondents had gone up in the hierarchy e.g. from labourer to *sirdar* or changed jobs from being a labourer to a cart driver, a miller or a truck/lorry driver, a machine operator, a watchman or a mechanic. Some even secured jobs as messengers. However, this applied to male workers only as female workers could only aspire to being a *sirdarine*<sup>3</sup> or providing domestic help

During the process of centralisation, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, sugar mills closed down. Many labourers who lost their jobs, had to move to another mill. Some relocated and started tobacco and tea cultivation. However, some of the alternative vocations did not provide a regular income, and they had to return to work on the sugar estates.<sup>4</sup>

The life-style of some improved because their parents had moved up or were liked by the plantation management. Life for many did not change much even if their parents had moved up in the hierarchy of the plantation. They had to start from scratch like everyone else. R/348 's mother was a *sirdarine*, implying that the income levels were high; yet he started working at the age of 8 years looking after the poultry, then as a labourer in cane fields and finally in the mill working on machines.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes, accidents led to such situations. Young girls had to start work: R/234's father was a *Sirdar* who lent money to other labourers but she had to start working at the age of 7 because her father could not work<sup>6</sup> and her mother, also a labourer, was the only earner in the family.<sup>7</sup>

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus was quite difficult for most of those interviewed. For women, particularly, working life actually became harder for them. In their grandparents' and parents' time (i.e. indentured period and one generation after), women did not work as labourers. They reared cattle, cut grass and undertook gardening jobs. However, gradually with the pressures of large families, which increased requirements and expenses, a desire to earn more to move upwards forced more and more women to take up regular jobs as labourers. What made things much more strenuous for them was that they continued to do cattle-rearing and cutting grass etc.,

along with new job as labourers, and they also had to look after the families and do the household chores. There were not many opportunities of mobility available for these women. In some rare cases, women remained as labourers throughout their working lives, primarily because in the sugar production, most of the occupations, except labour on the fields, were male activities.

Since the 1940s, most felt that there had been considerable improvements in the working conditions, compared to the times of their grandparents and parents. The late 1960s were considered as turning point when they started getting equipment, uniform, basic attire like shoes and gloves, sick leave, higher rates of wages and regular payments, less exploitation etc. There was a difference of opinion as to the input of leaders who secured these benefits. Based upon their personal political opinions, they cited the role of trade union leaders such as Jugdambi Sharma, Ramnarain, where others mentioned the role of 'SSR' and others still, Paul Berenger.

The employment card introduced after Independence was considered a very useful step taken by the post-colonial Government to ensure fair treatment for sugar estate workers and to entitle them to facilities such as equipment, uniform, leave, medical, although some of these facilities had existed for other categories of workers and their implementation always remained questionable.

Most interviewees did not like the hierarchy: the *sirdar* was described as exploitative, rude, dishonest and dominating. They would have to perform personal work for him such as bringing wood or grass etc. Some also mentioned physical violence. Several mentioned that the *Sirdar* could fire any labourer who displeased him. One respondent mentioned that as late as 1982, he lost his job because of a fight with the *Sirdar*.<sup>8</sup> The *Sirdars* interviewed, however, insisted that they were always very protective and good to their gang of labourers.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. WAGES

Wage levels always remained low, resulting in economic pressure on the families. Poverty forced women to work as labourers and even forced children to work at an early age, pushing them to leave school as they could not afford to pay for their education. In this context, large families in labouring classes thus faced a critical situation. Many respondents have stated that their parents had 8-10 children, several about 12, and some respondents even had 18 siblings.<sup>10</sup> In the labouring classes, human beings were considered as capital - more members in the family meant more income; but then, it severely restricted the growth of the younger generations - more children meant more expenditure on their education and general well being. Since the parents did not earn enough, larger families forced, not only the women, but also most of the children into work at a very early age, depriving them of a natural childhood and overall growth.

Wage rates differed across regions and across estates. Children called *chokras* (Hindi for children) were not allowed to work officially<sup>11</sup> but received anything from 20 cents to 50 cents per day in the 1930s and 1940s. This increased with their age and type of job.

Workers in the mill were paid more and artisans received higher salaries but put in long hours, especially during harvest time, when the mill was running to full capacity. A shift system was in operation as it had existed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and they had to work during the night. Wages were calculated initially on a daily basis then week and eventually on a monthly basis, according to the work. There were certain jobs like grass-cutting, cane-cutting and loading, tree-cutting where the wages were determined on piece meal basis.

Women were always paid less for their labour, and the standard rationale was that as women performed lighter jobs, they were paid less. In several cases it was found that the wages paid to women were actually half (or almost half) of the men's wages.<sup>12</sup> This stereotyping has its roots in the patriarchal discourse which does not find women capable of doing several things because of their relative physical 'weakness' compared to men. This was supported by the Colonial Administrators because it ensured relatively cheaper labour. We have several responses to support that women were doing almost the same work as male labourers, and yet they were being paid considerably lower.

Since the period of indentured labour, there were several deductions from the wages for one pretext or another: this system continued in the 1930s and 1940s. The actual wage obtained was

always less than that agreed upon. This practice was still continuing in the 1950s and 1960s when *sirdars* had the power to mark any one absent and deduct that day's wages, if the work was not done to the expected standard, making the actual wage payments less than the stipulated rates.

### 3. LIVING CONDITIONS

Living conditions have changed considerably during the 20th century. Many have bought their own property and built their own houses made of concrete although a few stated they lived in rented accommodation.<sup>13</sup> There were some unfortunate cases where they had lost their house through its sale and had to move to the camp.<sup>14</sup>

Most had lived on estate camps and gradually moved out to the villages. Living on a camp was a sign of poverty - those who were poor and could not afford lived on camps and there was a sense of accomplishment in building one's own house.<sup>15</sup> However, there was also some nostalgia for camp life. It had several advantages: wood was obtained for cooking, grass for animals etc.<sup>16</sup> Most importantly, living near one's place of work saved much time, effort and resources and made life easier and more pleasant. However, the camp houses were not available for all the labourers and those who owned houses were not given one, even if they wanted to stay on camps.<sup>17</sup>

For women particularly, marriage had an important influence on changing their places of residence - from village to estate camp or vice versa.

Living conditions were not very good; houses were made of straw; there was no electricity and sanitation was poor. The most critical aspect was that these conditions had a significant impact on the hygiene and health conditions of the population. There was a lack of clean water supply and toilets and in this, there was not much difference between camps and villages. Several camps and villages had no water supply and the residents had to take water from natural sources like wells, lakes or the river, and even the sea. Even for those which had water supply, this was very inadequate - one tap for the entire camp - people were filling water even at midnight or very early in the morning.<sup>18</sup> In those camps and villages which did not have the tap water, the residents often had to travel far away to fetch water from some natural resource.<sup>19</sup> This limited the availability of water for cleaning etc.<sup>20</sup> The quality of the water was also a matter of concern because several reports and documents mention the fact that people were using the same source of water for washing clothes, utensils, and then collecting it for cooking and drinking. Another matter of concern was the availability of toilets. Toilets were common, constructed away from the residences and were basically make-shift arrangements without proper arrangements for disposal. Some camps and villages did not even have that and residents were going in the open to defecate. These factors had serious repercussions on the health of the residents.

The 1960s were of the turning point for critical changes in living conditions - houses were now being built with concrete and electricity was being provided. A major cyclone, Carol, hit the island on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1960, causing massive devastation on the island. Most of the respondents referred to this cyclone as the reason for which houses started being built of concrete.

As occupational/ethnic policy existed, this was reflected in housing provision on estates. Labourers were housed in barracks or straw huts. Artisans had individual houses away from barracks. These were bigger, more spacious, built of concrete (while labourers' houses were made of straw or iron sheets).

### 4. EDUCATION

Education appears as a critical domain where a huge gap is observed in levels of education between male and female populations, as well as the existence of several dominating patriarchal stereotypes.

Getting an education was difficult because it was not free, and people had limited means for sustenance. Most of them worked and had no spare money to pay for school fees, buy books, stationery and dress. For some more unfortunate ones, even if they were admitted to good schools,

they were forced to leave in the middle<sup>21</sup> of their studies or even if attended the school they could not pay to sit the examinations and therefore could not have the certificate.<sup>22</sup> Another difficulty was distance – schools were often far away and the child had to walk several kilometres to attend school. This was a waste of their time and energy, as most of them were also working. They could not cope and simply abandoned their studies.

Despite these difficulties, many of the male respondents did manage to go to school and studied from standard III to standard VI (most of the respondents who went to school fall in this range) and a few even passed the CPE.<sup>23</sup> However, most of them were doing both: working and going to school. When they left school, they started working as labourers or at some other menial occupation in the sugar industry, which seemed to cause some kind of disappointment among those who had obtained higher qualifications, despite all the odds.<sup>24</sup> Very few could really make the transition.<sup>25</sup> Apart from low levels of education and a lack of opportunities, the critical factor for them not being able to make the shift in their work was the fact that the education was not linked with the requirements of the job market, and students were not given the vocational training which would have enabled them to make the crucial shift. Only one respondent has stated that he learnt carpentry at the RCA and then went on to work as a sampler in the laboratory on the sugar mill.<sup>26</sup>

For women, the level of education was very low. Only one respondent went up to standard VI, one up to standard IV and a few up to standard III and it had no links with the educational levels of the parents as R/272 points out.<sup>27</sup> Even in the informal institutions of instruction (like *Madarsa* or *Maktab*) and *Baithka* (or temples) their presence was very low, depriving them of almost all the advantages of education. Some of them could not go because there were no schools nearby, or had no proper dress; or had to drop out because of a lack of resources or some casualty like the death of the father or mother. But for many of them, it was the parental/ societal perception that 'it was not required for the girls to go to school because their place was at home' and general apathy that deprived them of education. In some cases, it was also opposed to maintaining control over girls' activities: 'if the girls are educated, they will write letters to boys' and therefore it was not good for them to go to school.<sup>28</sup> In several cases, male siblings went to school but girls were not allowed to go to school. It is interesting to note that these patriarchal/moralistic stereotypes were not limited to one ethnic community or only to Indic religions – respondents from Hindu, Tamil, Muslim and Christian all thought alike on the matter of depriving the girls of education.<sup>29</sup>

A closer look at the responses suggests that there was an interest among the women in education and it is significant to note that some of the female respondents regretted the fact that they did not go to school, and had they been educated, life would have been different for them.<sup>30</sup>

For education among the Indian diasporic community, community-cultural organisations, and *Baithkas* and *Maktabas* had a distinctive role particularly for those children who could not attend the formal system of education. These taught primarily Indian languages, religious teachings, general morality which was imbibed with religious-cultural value systems of those ethnic communities and basic literacy skills. However, some of these were running parallel courses and even awarding degrees like *Vidyavachaspati*, *Madhyama*, *Prathama* etc. following the education system in Sanskrit from India.<sup>31</sup> These institutions played an instrumental role in reinventing/ reasserting the diasporic identities along ethnic/linguistic and religious lines.

## 5. INTER ETHNIC AND INTRA ETHNIC RELATIONS; RACISM

During the indenture period, labourers from different religions/ ethnic communities were housed together, without much consideration given to their religious/ethnic affiliation, on the estates. The plantation system did not differentiate much between the groups. It is interesting to note that almost all the respondents echoed the same appreciation of the peaceful coexistence of different communities in camps and villages. Most of the respondents underline the fact that different communities lived together in harmony, had mutual cooperation, helped each other, shared each others' values and customs and most importantly celebrated cultural religious festivals like Holi, Cavadee, Maha Shivratri together. The place of interaction and common celebration was usually the *Baithka*. Almost all the respondents underline the critical role played by *Baithkas*, as the critical space of shared belonging for everyone, in bringing the communities together. It was, however, near perfect living in harmony. Incidents did occur though, such as when some people put

other people's houses on fire, which sometimes was fatal as well. Respondents did not elaborate upon the communities involved or the responsible factors behind such violent acts of hatred.<sup>32</sup>

Cohesion was evident primarily within the Indian community, among the Hindu, Tamil, Telugu and Marathi communities. There were a few Muslims living on camps; so interaction was limited with Muslims. Those Muslims, who were on camps or villages, lived in harmony with others and even participated in each others' religious/cultural celebrations.<sup>33</sup> Christians lived separately on the camps<sup>34</sup> primarily because of different kinds of jobs in which they were involved (as artisans mostly) which put them in another set of housing, away from labourers' barracks. This must have reduced the opportunities and occasions for their interaction with other religious/ ethnic groups. Perhaps because of their job profile<sup>35</sup> or for some other reason, these Christians considered themselves as superior and did not interact much with other communities. It was also stated that because these artisans were Christians, they were protected by the British masters and given better houses.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the harmony that appeared to reign, the extent to which this interaction and harmonious cohabitations led to more inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships (i.e. through marriage) is not very clear, and we only have a few indications of this. If we look at the history of indentured period, we have many instances of inter-ethnic and inter-caste marriage taking place. These appear to be reduced as a result of consolidation of identities along caste, ethnicity and religious lines. But the sample under analysis in this report does not give explicit information on this. We have only two explicit cases of inter-communal marriages<sup>37</sup>, though some informants have mentioned that their grandmother spoke a foreign language and some informants mentioned the fact that a caste system existed and was practised in marriages.<sup>38</sup>

There are indications that the structures of dominance and exploitation were based on racism but these remains very subtle, except one case where respondent (R/197) clearly states that white plantation owners did not like black people, and *sirdars* were pressurised by the white field managers to mistreat labourers.<sup>39</sup>

## 6. REFLECTIONS/ PERCEPTIONS OF LIFE

The most striking reflection from the respondents concerns the younger generation - for most of the respondents, the younger generation does not respect elders, they lack values, do not want to work hard, while the youth were well mannered earlier. It indicates a serious generation gap in Mauritian society. With rapidly changing times, different generations have different priorities, value systems and norms of public behaviour. But in Mauritian society, these transitions appear very abrupt. There is an agonizing gap between the generations which needs serious consideration and investigation. It reflects a cultural gap as well as a 'cultural-identity' crisis that the younger generations are facing in terms of finding a fine balance between the traditional 'values' and contemporary compulsions.

Overall, there is a general sense of progress and accomplishment: 'have everything, no regrets'<sup>40</sup>; 'living conditions in Mauritius in better than past'<sup>41</sup>; 'proud to be a Mauritian'.<sup>42</sup> The most striking reflection of this sense of accomplishment comes from a 70-year-old woman - 'from childhood wanted to have own house and perform prayers, finally now have own house and celebrated Durgapuja.'<sup>43</sup> Some also reflect upon the way out - 'there should be more interaction between parents and children'<sup>44</sup>; 'younger generation should be more patient and work hard to get good education and secure good job. Give the best at work...so that country could progress.'<sup>45</sup>

However there are reflections which also indicate people's disillusionment. Some are more precise - 'life was better earlier'<sup>46</sup>; 'things were cheaper earlier, could save' etc. Some regret lost opportunities - 'not happy with life, would have been different if had been to school'<sup>47</sup>; and some are reflections of a general discontent with philosophical stroke of material v/s the moral - 'in the past there was poverty but people were honest....Nowadays even if they are educated yet they are dishonest. Nowadays people are more interested in material gains, in the past people were more religious'.<sup>48</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Opportunities need to be created but there should also be training for people in skills. Basic reform in the education of children is required to make them more receptive to the changing requirements of the global economy and able to compete at par in the age of global competitiveness. Otherwise even if the economy gets diversified and new opportunities are created through global business networks and capital, opportunities will be captured by outside talent.
2. Distance and cost of education seem to be the two crucial constraining factors for the children not going for Higher Education. Distance remains unresolved at least in the Tertiary Sector. Some students spend 4-5 hours a day travelling to the University and the level of tiredness is high. There could be two possible solutions for this - either taking the institution closer to the students by opening campuses in different parts of the island or bringing the students closer to the University by providing residences near the University. This will contribute to developing a community consciousness and a sense of togetherness among the younger generations by providing opportunities to interact more closely which is sorely missing. The example of Singapore can be cited. It is an island nation like Mauritius and the National University of Singapore had 10 student residential halls for their students and for foreign students.
3. It appears from the responses that there were very limited avenues available for the redress of work place grievances. Labour Tribunals need to be strengthened and legal advice provided free.
4. The generation gap is widening. Initiatives to bridge this gap must be initiated. More opportunities for inter-generational exchanges must be created and one must make the youth sensitive and accommodating towards the specific needs and outlook of older generations.

# WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF MAURITIAN SUGAR ESTATE WORKERS AFTER INDENTURE

by

LEO COUACAUD  
*Consultant TJC*

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*For illustrations relevant to this Project, see Appendix 7 on CD.*

## INTRODUCTION

It is ironic that we seem to know so much about the fate of indentured labourers in Mauritius and know so little about the experiences of workers in the sugar industry after the end of indenture. A cursory review of the literature on the history of employer and employee relations in the Mauritian sugar industry reveals that a majority of studies have focused overwhelmingly on the indentured labour period (e.g. Bissoondoyal 1984, 1986; Carter 1995; Allen 1999). That is not to say that no studies have focused on the working and living conditions of sugar estate workers after the end of indenture. For instance, the historian Daniel North-Coombes (1987) has provided us with a compelling account of the 1937 and 1943 strikes in the Mauritian sugar industry and what working conditions were generally like in the first half of the twentieth century. And the anthropologist Burton Benedict (1961), who conducted fieldwork in Mauritius in the 1950s, has provided us with a detailed study of the living conditions of Indo-Mauritians in villages and to a lesser extent in estate camps, a majority of whom were still reliant upon work in the sugar industry during this period. Nevertheless, one struggles to find any studies that address both the working *and* living conditions of sugar estate workers in Mauritius since the end of the indentured labour period. The following study represents a modest attempt at redressing this gap in the literature.

To rectify this imbalance in the literature, I will be relying to a significant extent upon the oral testimonies of elderly sugar estate workers, most of whom are between the ages of 60-80, and were interviewed by research assistants working for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF). In 2009, three research assistants, Stephan Karghoo, Christelle Miao Foh, and Dreesha Teelwah, along with the assistance of a number of community facilitators, interviewed over four hundred respondents from different parts of the island who had either worked on a sugar estate or had some form of association with the Mauritian sugar industry. The informants were asked to reflect upon not only what working conditions were like in the Mauritian sugar industry when they were younger, but also aspects of their private lives and cultural customs. For the purposes of this study, however, I will not be focusing on such things as wedding ceremonies, religious celebrations, rites of passage, inter-ethnic relations, or any other feature falling under the more general rubric of the cultural customs and practices of sugar estate workers in the earlier part of the twentieth century. To do so would take the study well beyond the scope of the mandate of the Truth and Justice Commission (TJC), one of the aims of which is to address the “consequences of slavery and indenture labour during the colonial period up to the present”.<sup>49</sup>

Some might argue that to ignore the cultural customs and practices of elderly sugar estate workers is to ignore a vital dimension of the “consequences” of the indentured labour period in Mauritius. However, I would beg to differ from this view. As many scholars would agree, culture is an autonomous product of the mind, and cannot so easily be reduced to either physical or material constraints, or the direct effects of working in the Mauritian sugar industry. By this, I do not mean to suggest that working and living conditions in Mauritius during the indentured labour period did not have any effect in shaping the cultural customs of Indian immigrants and their descendents. To do so would be very short sighted. But it is another thing entirely to argue that Indian immigrants came to Mauritius, empty-headed as it were, and let their lives be completely dictated to them by sugar planters. Culture, no doubt, was one of the few areas in which sugar planters found it more difficult to interfere in the lives of their employees. The example of African slaves who were brought to Mauritius before indentured labourers came from India and other parts of the world is an apt illustration. Many of their rights may have been denied to them as human chattel by slave owners, but that did not prevent African slaves and their descendents from finding ways to express themselves through music and dance or to cease practicing their spiritual beliefs.

The main benefit that stems from using oral interviews as a source of information to reconstruct the past is that it allows informants to express in their own words what life was like in Mauritius in the earlier part of the twentieth century. That the views of ordinary Mauritians was not adequately reflected in the decisions that were made by the social, political and economic elites that ran the colony prior to it becoming an independent nation should not surprise us. However, an inevitable ramification of this power imbalance is that we know very little about how ordinary Mauritians felt about the various kind of issues that were the order of the day in the fledgling colony’s history at

the onset of the twentieth century. As a method of research, then, oral history can help us to redress some of these imbalances in the historical record and it can shed new light on old debates as I hope shall become evident in the course of this study. The type of people interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants and their community facilitators includes the views of field labourers, skilled artisans, *sirdars*, job-contractors, markers and other estate personnel. This study does not pretend to be able to encompass the views of all of these informants. Given that field labourers are the most numerous employees in the Mauritian sugar industry, it is inevitable that their views will receive more consideration than others. But this should not be taken to mean that the views presented in this report have been accepted uncritically, or without being exposed to some form of critical scrutiny.

There are instances for example where the informants tend to confuse certain details or fail to adequately specify at what point in time the events being alluded to in the interviews occurred. To a certain extent, this is to be expected, as we are dealing with events that occurred some time ago and peoples' memories are limited by personal interests and biases. Yet in spite of these limitations, one can still discern recurring themes in the interviews pointing to similar experiences that Mauritian sugar estate workers experienced in the earlier part of the twentieth century. As I was not involved in collecting the interviews myself, and cannot read Creole and Bhojpuri or speak either competently, the two main languages the informants used to express themselves, I have had to rely on the assistance of a number of research assistants employed by the TJC. I designed a template that required the research assistants to listen to the interviews and write down details pertaining to a list of criteria I tried to ensure remained as open-ended as possible whilst focusing specifically on working and living conditions. Thus, I do not think it can be objected that the informants have been asked leading questions or that a narrow body of data has been chosen that seeks to only elicit critical views of the Mauritian sugar industry. This much can be discerned by referring to the questionnaire used by the AGTF's research assistants and the template I had the TJC's research assistants use which are included at the end of this report. (Audio records and transcripts of the interview are available too.) What I should also add is that I have chosen to interpret their views in accordance with one of the main criteria of the TJC Act, which is to address the "consequences" of the indentured labour period, and which I primarily interpret to mean how *Labour Laws* have affected the lives of sugar estate workers.

In addition to the oral testimonies of field labourers and other personnel involved in the Mauritian sugar industry, this study refers to a number of official enquiries commissioned by the British colonial authorities to investigate the working and living conditions of sugar estate workers both during and after the end of the indentured labour period. Towards the end of the indentured labour period, the British colonial authorities finally became more serious about tackling some of the injustices and abuses that had become a pervasive feature of the system at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1875, a Royal Commission was convened by the colonial government after being petitioned by a group of Indian immigrants who presented a list of grievances. When immigrants from India originally signed a contract agreeing to come and work in Mauritius they were promised they would be paid a basic wage and provided with free housing, medical assistance, and rations. However, many of the planters subsequently reneged on this agreement and either failed to pay indentured labourers the money they were owed for work they had completed or in many cases withheld their wages in order to try and re-indenture them. In addition to this, the medical attention they received was often less than satisfactory or their rations were arbitrarily reduced and they were forced to carry a ticket in order to allow them to travel beyond the radius of the sugar estate where they were housed and worked. Yet despite the fact that the 1875 Royal Commission highlighted these irregularities and made a number of recommendations to rectify this situation, many sugar estates in Mauritius were still failing to meet their legal responsibilities even after the end of the indentured labour period.

Nor should one assume that the official enquiries commissioned by the British colonial authorities were completely impartial or conducted as thoroughly as they might have been. One notices not only obvious discrepancies between the 1938 Hooper Commission and a similar enquiry by the Moody Commission in 1943 for example, both of which were commissioned to investigate the machinations of the Mauritian sugar industry after strikes by small planters and monthly-paid workers. But even in the Annual Reports of the Labour Department, established in 1938 to ensure that employers and employees met their legal obligations and to appoint field inspectors to conduct regular inspections of sugar estates, one also notices discrepancies in the reports written by the

alternating Directors of Labour and Labour Commissioners. Where the 1938 Hooper Commission confidently declared for example that housing conditions in sugar estate camps were satisfactory and that planters were doing all they could to comply with the necessary Labour Ordinances and the Department's regulations. The 1943 Moody Commission unhesitatingly affirmed that sugar estate housing conditions in the north of the island left much to be desired, and that hospitals and medical dispensaries on sugar estates were often poorly equipped. Nor was the Labour Department above making the same kind of mistakes and displaying a pronounced sense of inconsistency in the official reports it released from one year to the next based on its inspections of sugar estates. Even so, these reports still provide us with an invaluable source of information about how working and living conditions in Mauritius have evolved over the course of the twentieth century and provide a welcome point of comparison to the oral testimonies of the informants interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants.

The crucial question put before us by the TJC is whether or not employers in the Mauritian sugar industry have been meeting their legal responsibilities since the end of indenture and how one should evaluate their actions in the broader context of what they have done or failed to do in the past. The answer to this question depends upon how one is to interpret the wording of the TJC Act, and one of its main criteria, which as I have already indicated, is to assess the "consequences of slavery and indenture labour during the colonial period up to the present". The meaning of this terminology is not as straight forward as it might seem. In the English language, the word "consequences" conjures up such commonplace meanings as "it is a result of" or it is "an implication of" the following. But can one go so far as to argue that sugar estates in Mauritius are culpable for the consequences of their actions if we are taking into account a time frame extending well beyond the twentieth century? "Truth Commissions", as they have come to be collectively referred to internationally, are relatively recent innovations intended for the most part to address crimes or wrongs committed against humanity in the twentieth century. Yet in spite of the wide yawn separating the indenture and post-indenture periods in Mauritian history, I intend to argue that the Mauritian sugar industry does appear to be culpable for the reckless and at times callous manner in which it has treated its workforce. And, in particular, of flouting its legal responsibilities under existing *Labour Laws*. However, I should also add that this judgement is not necessarily applicable to all sugar estates in Mauritius, some of which have a record of treating their workers well beyond what was required of them by law.

## FINDINGS OF THE 1875 ROYAL COMMISSION

In order to make the case that the Mauritian sugar industry is culpable for its past actions, it is essential that we demonstrate that the industry has a poor track record when it comes to the way it has treated its workforce. One way of establishing this is to refer to the judgements that were handed down by the 1875 Royal Commission and to compare these findings to the industry's track record in the post-indenture period. The 1875 Royal Commission was convened by the British colonial authorities after being presented with a list of grievances by a group of Old Immigrants who principally complained about abuses relating to the ticket-pass system enshrined in the 1867 Labour Ordinance. Not being sufficiently conversant in English, their complaints were presented to the colonial government by Adolphe de Plevitz, a planter of German descent who offered a more comprehensive list of complaints of the injustices being committed by other planters under the indenture labour system in Mauritius. In their report, the Royal Commissioners sought to address both the petition of the Old Immigrants (or time-expired indentured labourers) and the various accusations outlined in Adolphe de Plevitz's pamphlet. The complaints outlined in de Plevitz's pamphlet were broader in scope and not only included criticisms of the behaviour of planters but also the failure of the colonial authorities to protect their British subjects. As part of their enquires conducted between 1872-1874, the Royal Commissioners interviewed various witnesses and visited 51 sugar estates and consulted the record books of estates to determine the validity of the accusations made by the petitioners and de Plevitz.

It is not the intention here to address all of the complaints pursued by the Royal Commissioners. Some of them, such as those pertaining to recruitment methods of immigrants from India, legality of contracts entered into in Mauritius as opposed to India, conduct of stipendiary magistrates empowered to pronounce verdicts on disputes between planters and labourers, ill-treatment of labourers by planters, or the abuse of the ticket-pass system, no longer seem to be relevant as they pertain more strictly to the indentured labour period. However, when it comes to complaints concerning the non-payment of wages and planters and *sirdars* or job-contractors making illegal deductions from the wages of labourers, or planters failing to provide adequate lodgings and sanitary conditions in estate camps, not only is it possible to demonstrate that these abuses continued after the end of the indentured labour period, but they are complaints that often appear in the oral testimonies of elderly sugar estate workers themselves. According to the 1875 Royal Commission, the non-payment of wages constituted one of the worst abuses of the indenture labour system as reflected in the large number of complaints brought before the courts by both Old and New Immigrants alike (Frere and Williamson 1875:582). Apart from keeping wages in arrears often for two to three months or more, the Royal Commissioners drew attention in particular to the "double-cut", a cunning method by which planters reduced the wages of labourers two days for every day they were recorded as being illegally absent. As the Royal Commissioners point out in their report, the double-cut was not in itself illegal, as what was originally viewed by the British colonial authorities with some degree of apprehension when it was first proposed by the planter-dominated Legislative Council, eventually passed into law with the passing of Ordinance No. 16 of 1862 (cf. Frere and Williamson 1875:303-311). It was the actual manner in which the double-cut was used by planters, not to mention *sirdars* and job-contractors, to make deductions from wages by recording labourers as absent when they did not complete a set task that the Royal Commissioners deemed to be illegal.<sup>50</sup>

Not only did the double-cut enable planters to save enormous sums of money on wages,<sup>51</sup> but even more remarkably, immigrants who sought to lodge a complaint with the authorities or were imprisoned for an offence were fined a further two days of wages everyday they were absent, and in many cases it was used as justification to prolong their contracts or to force them to re-indenture. As the Royal Commissioners point out in their report, this illegal use of the double-cut had become customary amongst planters and encompassed a wide range of deductions ranging from fining labourers for the theft of thatch or the loss of tools and even collecting grass or *brèdes* from rivers and streams without permission (Frere and Williamson 1875:310-311). But it was with respect to marking labourers as absent when they did not complete set tasks and making deductions from their wages without recourse to the decision of a magistrate which the Royal Commissioners found particularly objectionable. This "fiction", as it was described by one prominent colonial official

who was interviewed by the Royal Commissioners, consisted of marking a labourer as “sick” for not completing a set task even despite the fact that the labourer had in fact worked on that day.

Regarding deductions for unfinished tasks, we have been generally informed that men are required to complete their tasks next day; and that, failing to do so, they are marked sick, or have some other marks put against their names, signifying “malade travail, ” and are cut as if sick. The grounds on which this fiction, as the Surveyor-General calls it, is defended, are, that if the man has been put to task work and cannot finish his task, he is supposed to be sick in proportion to the work left unfinished; thus a day’s work upon the roads being to break 25 baskets of stones, or 150 baskets in the week, he is supposed to have been sick for two days, and fined accordingly (Frere and Williamson 1875:310).

What confirmed how widespread this illegal practice was for the Royal Commissioners was when they consulted the pay books of sugar estates. Upon inspecting these books, such as those of a member of the Chamber of Agriculture, whose conduct the Commissioners presumed should have been more exemplary than others, they found clear evidence that the proprietor of the estate had been fudging his records (Frere and Williamson 1875:312). Apparently it was common practice for planters to mark labourers as absent for unfinished tasks in the columns of their books, but when asked by the Royal Commissioners to inspect their books and pay-sheets, it was evident that pencil notations had been deliberately rubbed out to mislead the Commissioners.

However, we should not be deluded into thinking that the illegal use of the double-cut to make deductions from wages of labourers was only restricted to the planters. Although mention is often made in the literature on indentured labour in Mauritius to the usurious rates of interest charged on loans to labourers by *sirdars* and job-contractors, rarely do we find any reference to the fact that *sirdars* and job-contractors also took advantage of labourers and “robbed” them of their wages (Frere and Williamson 1875:403). The 1875 Royal Commission seems to be less clear about the evidence against *sirdars*, who, like job-contractors, were resented by planters because they could not control them and also because they were highly dependent upon them. With respect to job-contractors however, which the Royal Commissioners point out in their report is “closely connected with the *Sirdar* system-the *Sirdar* being, in fact, a job-contractor under another name”, the evidence is much clearer. The Commissioners cite a report by a Stipendiary Magistrate named Mr. Daly, who, based on his half-yearly inspection of estates in the district of Savanne, claimed that

[J]ob contractors are, of all employers, the most unscrupulous in endeavouring to profit by the curtailing of their servants’ wages, as he had, within the first six months, detected a system of illegal and unjust marking as absent, men whose amount of work or task did not satisfy the employing job contractor. He also, on the next page, mentions two cases, one at “Beauchamp,” and another at “La Flora,” where job contractors had marked for the forfeiture of wages, as if the labourer had been really absent, men who had not performed their allotted task (Frere and Williamson 1875:414)[.]

In fact, there is also evidence of job-contractors resorting to the double-cut in order to prolong the contracts of labourers in their gangs and of making false records in their pay-books. Just like planters, job-contractors were able to take advantage of the 1862 Labour Ordinance to mark as absent labourers who had to walk five miles to work and thus spent half their time walking rather than working, or of being able to gain one month of work at no expense if a labourer was absent 14 days in a month (Frere and Williamson 1875:416, 418). One of the reasons planters resented job-contractors was because they were able to gain these benefits without having to provide the same kind of facilities that planters were required to by law. Yet there is evidence that some job-contractors owned or ran their own estate camps and of even providing rudimentary medical care in some cases.

The 1875 Royal Commission is more equivocal when it comes to its pronouncements on the state of lodgings in estate camps. According to the Royal Commissioners, it was not until a new ordinance was introduced in 1867 that planters were required by law to provide lodgings for their labourers, as the provision of lodgings had until then depended upon the contractual agreement signed between the parties prior to the immigrant leaving India. However, as the Commissioners go on to point out in their report, it had in fact become customary for indentured immigrant labourers from India to be housed by planters, and initially it would appear that many were housed in the former

lodgings of slave labourers. The Royal Commissioners state that most dwellings in estate camps were made of thatch and straw, but they also visited several estates that had stone range barracks, among them “Mont Choisy”, “Bois Rouge”, “Trianon”, “Antoinette”, “Espérance”, “Bel Air”, “Benares”, and “Labourdonnais”, which struck the Commissioners as being superior to the more common thatch and straw huts (Frere and Williamson 1875:353). It turns out however that some of the labourers preferred thatch and straw huts to stone range barracks, the reason presumably being, according to one medical expert, that thatch and straw huts were healthier because “you cannot get contagion out of stone walls”. It apparently never struck this medical expert or the Royal Commissioners that labourers preferred thatch and straw huts because they would not have been nearly as hot as the stone range barracks which were made no doubt of local volcanic stone and were less well ventilated than thatch and straw huts. Some labourers were also forced by planters to build their own dwellings. Yet nor does this mean that labourers were not willing to avail themselves to lodgings provided for them at the expense of planters after being required by law. After Ordinance No. 31 of 1867 was introduced, servants had brought 75 complaints against masters, but only 11 were proved because of the ambiguous wording of the law.<sup>52</sup>

Concerning its pronouncements on sanitary conditions in estate camps, however, the 1875 Royal Commission is much less equivocal. Perhaps in view of the recent malaria epidemic that claimed thousands of lives several years before the proceedings of the Royal Commission in 1867, the Commissioners were emphatic about the need to maintain sanitary conditions in estate camps and to ensure that planters did their bit to reduce the risk from pestilence. They complained about the numerous untidy camps that they saw on their estate visits, of pigs and other livestock running amok amongst piles of refuse that had not been properly disposed of, and of inadequate latrine provision.

On 206 estates from which we have received returns, there are only 13 on which there are any arrangements whatever for conservancy in the camps. At “Providence,” as mentioned before, we found one camp swarming with pigs and filth, but the other as clean and neat as could be wished. So also at “Beauchamp,” where the people were certainly well-treated, the camp was in bad repair, dirty, untidy, and swarming with pigs. The very excellent camp at “Labourdonnais” was dirty, notwithstanding that there was a most suitable “*parc à cochons*” for the pigs; and while the planters object to Government appointing the medical men, because it will sever the connection between the labourers and their employers and put an end to the interest the planters take in their labourers, they will not hear of being made answerable for state of the camps, in which they lodge their labourers and foster the causes of sickness, because if they should trouble themselves upon those subjects, the labourers will leave them, and go to other estates where they are allowed to do more as they please (Frere and Williamson 1875:351).

The general view at the time, both amongst planters and British colonial officials, was that Indian immigrants cared little about hygiene and would have refused to re-engage if planters interfered and forced them to maintain cleaner dwellings. The Royal Commissioners seem to have seen through this ruse, however, and suggested it was more likely that planters used this reasoning as a convenient excuse to avoid having to pay the cost of improving sanitary conditions in estate camps. As the Commissioners point out in their report, they had evidence before them that Indian immigrants were willing to use latrines when planters made these available in estate camps (Frere and Williamson 1875:351). And upon asking a stipendiary magistrate who conducted half-yearly inspections of estates if he thought that sanitary conditions were worse in camps or the villages of Indian immigrants, they were told that conditions seemed more preferable in villages than estate camps (Frere and Williamson 1875:350).

The Royal Commissioners did not reject out of hand the planters’ argument that Indian immigrants were less conscientious about hygiene than Europeans seemed to be, pointing in particular to their propensity to use cane fields when latrines were not available. Nonetheless, they were adamant that planters should be held to account and “made answerable, not only for the health of their labourers, but that their habits do not tend to injure, not only their own health, but that of others.” In their report, the Commissioners make a number of recommendations regarding how planters might improve sanitary conditions in estate camps, the introduction of a system of latrines being one of the most important conditions they identified (Frere and Williamson 1875:591). In addition to this, they also recommended that inspectors should be empowered to enforce

compliance with sanitary regulations and to penalise offending parties without the need to resort to police intervention.<sup>53</sup> The Commissioners were no doubt unaware of how prescient their recommendations would later turn out to be. In the early 1920s, J.F. Kendrick, a medical expert working for the International Health Board, a philanthropic organisation funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, came to Mauritius and wrote a report in which he urged the colonial government to tackle the hookworm epidemic gripping the colony. Until Kendrick's report, which was released in 1920, it was not generally known how many people suffered from hookworm disease; but according to Kendrick, as many as two-thirds of the population were suffering from this parasitic form of disease (cited in Balfour 1921:15). Kendrick's report left no doubt that failing to address the island's sanitation problem, in particular the shortage of latrines in rural areas, would have disastrous long-term consequences for the health of the wider population. Yet in spite of these recommendations, sugar estates continually failed to tend to this problem well into the twentieth century.

## WORKING CONDITIONS OF MAURITIAN SUGAR ESTATE WORKERS AFTER INDENTURE

The working conditions of sugar estate workers in Mauritius have changed quite considerably since the end of the indentured labour period. The construction of large factories and in particular the mechanization of tasks that used to be done by hand has radically transformed the industry, leading to massive reductions in the size of the workforce. But upon comparing the description of cultivation and planting techniques summarised in the 1875 Royal Commission (Frere and Williamson 1875:289-292) with that of the Hooper Commission, which was written in 1937 (Hooper 1937:113-118), it is remarkable how little things had changed within the first half of the twentieth century. Not only were the cultivation and planting techniques very similar, but even the tools that labourers used do not appear to have changed very much. Tools such as the *pioche* (hoe), *pince* (crowbar), and *gratte* (scraper), were still being used in the first half of the twentieth century to carry out tasks such as removing rocks and weeds that were being performed in the nineteenth century. And although neither the 1875 Royal Commission, nor the Hooper Commission, deign to mention it, it is more than likely that most labourers were also working in the cane fields bare-footed and without any form of protective clothing. The consequences this had for the likelihood that labourers sustained work-related injuries will be discussed at a later point. To begin with, however, I would like to reproduce the Hooper Commission's description of what working conditions were like in the first half of the twentieth century in Mauritius. In spite of the fact that the Commissioners acknowledged there was no uniform method of cultivation in the Mauritian sugar industry, as conditions varied not only from one region to the next, but also from estate to estate, nonetheless, their summary provides us with a very good overview.

The tasks may be divided into two categories: that of planting and reaping virgin canes in the first place, and that of growing and reaping ratoon canes in the second. The majority of the operations prior to cutting and loading the canes are performed in the inter-crop season.

### (a) Virgin canes.

Dealing with virgin canes first, we find that the first task is that of 'désavannage' and 'parement'. The operation of 'désavannage', 'parement' and 'déchicotage' in the case of land not free from stones, taken together, consists of clearing the land generally, uprooting all ratoons which may be growing in the soil, and arranging the stones in lines. This operation is followed by 'fossoyage' or holing. 'Désavannage' 'parement' and 'fossoyage' are tasks making a very heavy demand upon the physical capacity of the worker, 'fossoyage' or holing being perhaps the heaviest of the three. All three are sometimes performed as one operation.

### 'Épierrage'.

The next task is 'épierrage' or clearing the land of stones and rocks. This is occasional work and does not always form part of the normal work of a labourer on a sugar estate. This is followed by 'pinçage', which consists of removing the stones from the holes with a 'pince' or crowbar.

### Planting cane tops

The land having been prepared for planting, the next operation is that of putting the cane tops into the soil. As soon as the labourer is in possession of the tops he makes them ready for planting, that is to say, he pulls off all superfluous leaves from the top and puts it in the hole, arranging it in such a manner that it sprouts easily; at the same time, he puts in manure and then covers the tops with earth.

### **Weeding**

The next operation to be performed is that of weeding. Weeding is the task of removing all necessary grass which has grown up round the cane and is known as 'nettoyage'. It is divided into several operations. The first weeding takes place about one month after planting is followed by the operation known as 'repiquage' which consists of placing fresh tops in the holes where the top previously planted has not taken root. This work is paid for at rates by the day, according to the amount of work to be done: there is a special rate for each of the operations.

### ***Spreading manure and subsequent weeding***

Then comes the operation of *spreading manure*. This consists of spreading pen or artificial manure over the soil according to the needs of the cane. It is considered to be a light task. The task of *spreading manure* is then followed by the second weeding, which takes place about two months after the first weeding, though the exact time would depend on seasonal variations of rain and heat, to be followed in turn by as much as five or six weedings and this is followed by a last weeding known as 'dépaillage' which consists of removing the straw from the cane. 'Dépaillage', which is sometimes required on two occasions, is generally done some fifteen or twenty days before cutting. The above constitute the number of tasks which are performed during the inter-crop season with reference to virgin canes.

### **Cutting the cane**

The next task is the first task of the crop season, which consists of cutting the cane, which is the principal task of all. It is generally admitted that the cutting of virgin canes is a harder task than the cutting of ratoon canes and higher rates are correspondingly paid for cutting virgin than for ratoon canes. It is estimated that a strong labourer can cut three tons per day, though this would not apply to B.H.10/12, the limit being two or two and a half tons per day, owing to the fact that the cane is of crooked growth and is tougher than the ordinary cane. This task includes that of carrying the cut canes to the railway line where the truck is standing; or to the path where the cut canes will be loaded onto carts to be taken to the factory, in the absence of a railway line. In the case of most small planters there is no railway line in existence and the cut canes have to be carried to the pathway in order to be loaded there on to a cart. It should be borne in mind, however, that if the place where the canes are being cut is situated a long way from the place to which the canes have to be carried in order to be loaded on the cart, the task becomes increasingly difficult of performance and, in all probability, a man who could cut a maximum of three tons per day when the task is situated near to the point to which he has to carry the canes to have them loaded on the railway trucks or cart, could not cut more than a maximum of two and a half tons a day. The task of cutting is frequently paid for at so much per *gaulette*, or measure of ten French feet.

### **Loading and transport**

The next task is that of loading and transport. This is one single task. The canes are picked up and loaded on to railway trucks standing nearby and then taken by stream traction to the factory.

### **(b) Ratoon canes**

The first task to be performed in connection with ratoon canes is that of 'revelage', which consists of arranging the straw in the inter-lines separating two lines of canes after the crop has been cut. This is a task usually performed by women. It is not regarded as a task making very severe demands upon the physical powers of the workers. This task is followed by that of *spreading manure*, which consists of spreading pen or chemical manure, or both, according to the estimated needs of the soil. The spreading of chemical fertilizers is frequently performed by small boys, and is an operation that can be finished at any time.

**'Buttage' or earthing up; 'nettoyage'**

*Spreading manure* is followed by an operation known as 'butage' or earthing up which consists of covering the manure placed on the ground with soil. This is also considered to be an easy task. The next task in connection with ratoons is that of 'nettoyage' which may consist of as many as six operations as in the case of virgin canes.

**'Dépaillage'**

The operation of 'nettoyage' is usually followed by 'dépaillage', which is carried out just before cutting begins. 'Dépaillage' consists of removing all superfluous leaves adhering to the cane. 'Dépaillage' completes the number of operations performed during the inter-crop and is followed by the work of cutting and transporting the cane, the conditions of work being the same in respect of ratoons as in the case of virgin canes, subject to the proviso that rates for cutting ratoons are slightly lower than in the case of virgin canes, as the work is considered to be of a slightly lighter nature. These are the principal operations performed on a large estate, from the clearing of land preparatory to planting, up to the operation of crushing the cane in the factory.

The Hooper Commission's description of cultivation and planting techniques in the Mauritian sugar industry in the first half of the twentieth century is admittedly limited in some respects, as there is no reference for example to how estate land was ploughed prior to planting, be it either by oxen or mechanized tractors. But it should suffice for our present purposes, as the type of tasks that it describes are the same as those described by the elderly sugar estate workers who were interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants, most of whom were field labourers.

As the Hooper Commission's description of cultivation and planting techniques in the Mauritian sugar industry in the first half of the twentieth century implies, the main criterion used to distinguish men and women's work is the physical strength required to do arduous tasks. Lighter tasks such as *spreading manure*, weeding and removing straw from cane was usually performed by women or a third group of workers consisting of women, children and invalids and also appears to have been used as justification for paying them less than men (cf. Hooper 1937:166). However, it would also appear that women were required to perform more physically demanding tasks than men normally performed and were perhaps better suited to doing such as cutting cane, loading it, and the removal of stones. In an undergraduate dissertation by a student of the University of Mauritius who interviewed four elderly female sugar estate workers, some of whom were still working at the time, several of the informants complained about having to perform physically demanding tasks in the past like loading cane. "We had to walk on the 'mardier' [wooden plank] to put the cane in the 'corbeil' [cane barrow]. It was ... very exhausting work for ladies like us. We had to put the cane on our head and walk along the 'mardier', which was very high. We used to fall down too (Sooben 2009:17)." The elderly female sugar estate workers interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants echoed this sentiment, but several of the informants<sup>54</sup> also claimed they were paid less for doing tasks men normally performed. It is difficult to determine the veracity of this claim. For instance, if we refer to the Annual Report of the Labour Department (ARLD) of 1945, which provides a detailed breakdown of the tasks men and women were supposed to perform and their rates of pay as outlined in an amendment to the Minimum Wage Ordinance of 1934, it states that women who work in the *Grande Bande* were not exempt from doing any tasks "except holing, uprooting, forking, and crowbar work".

In Mauritius, the "Grande Bande" and the "Petite Bande" is a way of organising workers into teams who are responsible for performing specific tasks going right back to the early days of indenture. These groups are still used in the Mauritian sugar industry today, and as I alluded to above, the main criterion used to distinguish the tasks that each group should perform is based on the physical strength required to perform certain tasks. This criterion has been used as further justification to determine the wage levels of workers in the two groups, with the obvious ramification that labourers who work in the *Grande Bande* are paid more than those working in the *Petite Bande* (or "granban" and "tiban", as Mauritian sugar estate workers more commonly refer to them in Creole). Yet while it does not appear that women were exempt from doing physically demanding tasks such as cutting and loading cane for instance, tasks often described by both male and female informants as being the province of men who worked in the *Grande Bande* and which they accordingly rationalized was the reason men were paid more than women. The ALDR of 1945

indicates that women who worked in the *Grande Bande* were being paid less for doing tasks that appear to be little different to that which men who worked in the *Petite Bande* performed (ARLD 1945:24-26). According to the ARLD of 1945 men who work in the *Grande Bande* are “required to perform any sort of unskilled or semi-skilled labour on a sugar estate”, while men who work in the *Petite Bande* are “required to perform the same sort of labour ... but with a reduced task and not bound to do holing”. This sounds like the same type of tasks that women who worked in the *Grande Bande* were expected to perform, and indeed if we compare the ARLD of 1956, which reproduces a copy of a collective agreement reached between the Mauritius Amalgamated Labourers’ Association and the Mauritius Sugar Producer’s Association, it states that women working in this group were not expected to cut or load cane.

Women, Class, I, Grande Bande-Labourers capable of performing and required to perform any task appertaining to unskilled labour, but not bound to do holing, uprooting, forking, crowbar work, loading, cutting, heaving cleaning, heavy *buttage*, [and] *spreading manure* involving the carrying of a load of more than 18 kilos of manure per basket” (ARLD 1956:21-22).

Thus it entirely conceivable those female sugar estate workers who were not covered by this agreement would have been paid less than men were. And by the same token, we should not rule out the possibility that those female sugar estate workers who were covered by this agreement were also paid less than men for doing similar types of tasks if their employers failed to abide by the collective agreement.

Further light can be shed on these claims by referring to *Labour Laws* that have been enacted over the course of the twentieth century and how they have affected female sugar estate workers. It is of interest to note that until 1973, no law had been introduced delineating what types of tasks female labourers were expected to perform.<sup>55</sup> Although the Minimum Wage Ordinance of 1934 stipulated the rates of pay and types of tasks to be done by both male and female labourers, the amendment the colonial government made to the ordinance in 1944 was principally aimed at ensuring that sugar estates complied with the law and paid labourers the wages they were entitled to, as one of the main conclusions to stem from the 1943 Moody Commission report was that the failure of the industry to implement minimum wage rates was one of the chief causes of the 1943 strike. This apparent neglect of the rights of female labourers, which probably goes some way towards explaining why they were paid less for doing some of the same types of tasks as men, may also reflect their marginal position in the Mauritian sugar industry since the days of indenture. As Marina Carter (1992:115-116) has pointed out, Mauritius was exceptional insofar as after 1842, it was the

only [British] colony which failed to engage Indian women as indentured labourers. The numbers of women formally employed on estates was consequently never very high, even in the principal sugar-growing districts ... In 1846 9% of the total Indian female population was registered as part of the plantation labour force. At the time of the malaria epidemic in 1867, less than 100 women were reported as working on the sugar estates. By 1871, when the next census was taken, this figure had risen, even so, only 7% of women [or 1,808 Indian females out of a total estate population of 24,425] were officially employed as plantation workers.<sup>56</sup>

With the end of indenture, however, the rate of women’s participation rates in the Mauritian sugar industry’s workforce gradually increased. According to Vijaya Teelock (2009:360), the Great Depression to a significant extent accounted for this increase. “Another effect of the Depression was to bring more women into wage labour: in 1921, there were for example, 9,373 Indian women working, by 1931 this had jumped to 14,674.” These participation rates continued to increase after the Great Depression as more female labourers joined the ranks of the Mauritian sugar industry.

Probably no singular explanation can account for this dramatic rise in female participation rates in the Mauritian sugar industry as the twentieth century unfolded. The elderly female sugar estate workers who were interviewed by the AGTF’s research assistants provide a number of different reasons as to why they decided to become labourers. Some women for example were forced to work after their husbands were incapacitated by a life-crippling injury, while others stated that after their husbands died, they had little choice but to become labourers in order to look after their children. Many of the informants also indicated that they opted to become labourers after

getting married, though without always providing a succinct explanation for their actions. One is tempted to ascribe this decision to the need for women to play their part in contributing financially to the upkeep of poorer families, in view of the fact that there would be more mouths to feed after getting married and having children. But as tempting as it might be to point to rising levels of poverty as a way of accounting for these increases in female workforce participation rates, one has to temper this possibility against the knowledge that many women did not feel compelled to enter the workforce but instead preferred to stay at home in order to raise children or to work on their own land and to rear livestock (cf. ARLD 1950:30). One also has to ask why it is that sugar estates in Mauritius, which previously had shown an aversion to employing female labourers during the indentured labour period, increasingly opted to employ more female labourers over the course of the twentieth century. These numbers continued to increase such that by the end of the Second World War, female labourers accounted for almost half of the Mauritian sugar industry's workforce, or a maximum of 18,126 female labourers at the height of the crop season in 1945 (ARLD 1945:46). It is important to note, however, that more female labourers tended to be employed during the inter-crop period whereas men made up the bulk of field labourers during both the inter-crop and crop periods. The same logic used to determine how much men and women should be paid for the types of tasks they performed, also seems to account for the industry's preference to employ more women to do lighter tasks between crops and for men to do heavier tasks such as harvesting cane when the crop has to be harvested.

As indicated earlier, after independence, a law was finally introduced restricting the types of tasks female sugar estate workers were allowed to perform. It was part of a wider political movement in the 1970s led by Paul Bérenger and the Movement Militant Mauricien that sought to improve the working conditions of Mauritian workers. Although it may not have appeared so at the time, the introduction of a series of laws requiring sugar estates to provide workers with protective clothing represents perhaps one of the most important advances made on behalf of labourers in the Mauritian sugar industry by the trade union movement.<sup>57</sup> The failure or lack of willingness on the part of most sugar estates to furnish their employees with basic protective clothing is one of the most frequent complaints that appear in the interviews of elderly sugar estate workers. Perhaps more any other complaint, this issue demonstrates the callous attitude of the Mauritian sugar industry towards its workforce, for it appears that most sugar estates would not have felt compelled to do anything until forced to do so by the intervention of trade unions and the subsequent ratification of these demands by the national government. Although both male and female labourers often complain in their interviews of not being provided with protective clothing and of having to provide their own tools, the most poignant testimonies are usually furnished by elderly female sugar estate workers. For instance, one informant<sup>58</sup> complained she would hurt herself when she had to remove straw from the sugarcane just prior to it being cut by male labourers (the process described as *dépaillage* in the Hooper Commission's summary above). She also says that she used to wear "*linz lakaz*", that is, her everyday clothes to work, and that workers were not provided with uniforms, boots, gloves and masks until after independence. Similarly, in Pamela Sooben's (2009: 16-17) undergraduate dissertation referred to earlier, the elderly female sugar estate workers she interviewed complained of having to remove straw from sugarcane. In order to protect themselves, they wore long socks over their hands, but that still did not prevent the straw from piercing their old socks and drawing blood from their hands. "When the *sirdar* asked us to remove 'divet' from sugarcane, especially 'canne coulou', we would run away because these 'divet' pierced our old socks, hands and fingers. We also used to get rashes". These women also complained of finding it difficult to cook for themselves after a day's work because of the injuries they sustained to their hands while working in the cane fields without gloves (Sooben 2009:8).

It is instructive to compare photos taken of sugar estate workers in Mauritius in the first half of the twentieth century with ones taken more recently (see opposite page). In the older photos, the male and female labourers working in the cane fields are all working bare-footed and are attired in their everyday clothes. Whereas in the more recent photos, they are wearing boots and gloves to protect their feet and hands, a hat or scarf to cover their heads, and their uniforms are made of much thicker and sturdier material.<sup>59</sup> If we are to go by the interviews collected by the AGTF's research assistants, it would appear that for much of the twentieth century, most Mauritians got around without any form of footwear whatsoever. For example, one informant<sup>60</sup> states he had little choice because tennis shoes were too expensive in those days. While a number of other informants describe the type of footwear they wore when footwear became more affordable, such as the "tanga", "mariposa", and "kalpa", which from what I have been able to gather were canvas

slippers of some sort and sandals made of wood. Apparently, these types of footwear were not suitable for working in the cane fields and the informants usually opted to work bare-footed instead. Yet in spite of their lack of financial means, poverty did not prevent labourers from finding ways to protect themselves while working in the cane fields. Once again, the oral testimonies of female labourers are highly instructive in this respect. Some women wore long-sleeved shirts that they borrowed from either their husbands or a male relative in order to protect their arms from the sun and insects in the field, and many female labourers wore an apron made of “goni”<sup>61</sup> which they wrapped around their skirts to protect the outer layer of their clothing from wear and tear. Also, as Pamela Sooben (2009:8) points out in her undergraduate dissertation, female labourers used old socks to protect their hands when they had to remove straw from sugarcane, and as time passed more female labourers wore “chapeau la paille” or straw hats to protect their heads from the sun.

One could argue the Mauritian sugar industry may not have seen why they had to provide their workforce with protective clothing when for a greater part of the twentieth century they went without footwear and worked in their everyday clothes. To do so though would be to invoke the same type of reasoning that planters resorted to in the days of indenture to avoid incurring expenses on the grounds Indian immigrants faced worse conditions in their country of origin and there was no need to make any improvements. As the Royal Commissioners pointed out in their 1875 report, however, Mauritius was not India, and the planters bore a moral responsibility to ensure that they provided working and living conditions of benefit to the wider society (Frere and Williamson 1875:352). In any event, it is still odd that the colonial authorities themselves never seem to have recognized the importance of legislating for the provision of protective clothing for field labourers on sugar estates even though measures had been put in place to compensate workers for work-related injuries. The enactment of the 1931 Workmen’s Compensation Ordinance covered workers who were incapacitated as a result of a work-related injury for a period of more than seven consecutive days. In addition to this, the Factories (Safety of Workers) Ordinance was enacted in 1939, but it principally applied to factory workers. Prior to 1960, the Annual Reports of the Labour Department do not provide details about the type of injuries that field labourers sustained on the job as they only focused on factory workers. In 1960, however, for the first time, the Labour Department provides a detailed breakdown of the type of injuries field labourers complained about to labour inspectors. Where the previous focus had been on factory workers, now the inspectors broadened their enquiry to include statistics of different industries, “cause of injury”, “nature of injury”, “location of injury”, and “duration of incapacity”. Of particular interest are their statistics for the sugar industry. As the statistics illustrate, out of a total of 3,152 work-related injuries recorded for the sugar industry in 1960, a majority of these injuries were of short duration, affected the upper and lower extremities, resulted in contusions, abrasions, and punctured wounds, and were caused by stepping on or striking against objects and the use of hand tools. In other words, the kind of injuries that field-labourers who are not provided with protective clothing are likely to sustain (ARLD 1960:53-57).<sup>62</sup>

But perhaps the most serious complaint that comes out of the interviews with elderly sugar estate workers are those pertaining to non-payment or under-payment of wages. It most clearly demonstrates a long-term pattern of exploitation by personnel in the Mauritian sugar industry going back to the early days of indenture. As I pointed out earlier, the 1875 Royal Commissioners concluded one of the worst abuses committed by planters were the illegal deductions they made from the wages of indentured labourers. It is highly disconcerting to learn, therefore, that these abuses appear to have continued well after the end of the indentured labour period. These abuses have not only been documented in the various enquiries convened by the colonial authorities into the machinations of the Mauritian sugar industry after the end of indenture, but are also underlined in more recent commissions of enquiry convened after Mauritius became a republic. More often than not, complaints pertaining to illegal deductions made from wages primarily apply to job-contractors, but in the interviews collected by the AGTF’s research assistants, there is also evidence that estate personnel and managers have been complicit in these abuses. A point not lost on the commissioners involved in both the Hooper and Balogh Commission enquiries (Hooper 1937:166-167; Balogh 1963:149-151), who noted that these abuses could not have continued without the tacit knowledge or cooperation of the managerial staff of the Mauritian sugar industry. The crucial question that remains, however, is how it is possible that these abuses were allowed to continue despite the fact that they have been extensively documented in the various commissions of inquiry into the Mauritian sugar industry convened since the end of the indenture labour period.

The passing of the 1922 Labour Ordinance marks an important turning point in the history of Mauritius as it finally did away with the use of penal sanctions in civil contracts between planters and labourers and coincided with the end of the indenture labour system. However, it only covered immigrants and did not theoretically apply to Mauritian-born labourers and the forfeit of wages for breaches of contract was still allowed under this ordinance. It was only with the passing of the 1938 Labour Ordinance, which sought to implement the recommendations of the Hooper Commission of enquiry into the 1937 strikes, that fining labourers for bad or negligent work was finally disallowed. This ordinance was applicable not only to monthly but also casual workers and was responsible for introducing a raft of changes such as a six day working week and eight hour day, legislating for over-time work, the registration of trade unions, maternity allowances for women, the regulation of sanitary conditions on estate camps, and paved the way for a transferral of power from the Protector of Immigrants to the newly created Labour Department. Yet in spite of these legislative changes, there is evidence that job-contractors, *sirdars* and estate managerial staff were still marking labourers as absent when they failed to complete a set task or forced them to redo tasks they designated as unfinished. The use of the double-cut, or fining labourers two days wages for everyday they were absent, seems to have been discontinued with the end of the indenture labour system, although Daniel North-Coombes (1987:30) claims it was still being enforced in 1938. But that does not mean that the practice of marking labourers as absent when they had done a day's work, or "maron", in the words of the elderly sugar estate workers themselves,<sup>63</sup> and making illegal deductions from the wages of labourers was itself discontinued.

The oral testimonies of elderly sugar estate workers are quite emphatic on this point and suggest the practice was widespread in the Mauritian sugar industry. It affected both male and female labourers and the informants describe being forced to redo tasks or marked as absent and having their wages deducted by not only *sirdars* and job-contractors, but also field supervisors, markers and estate managers. For instance, one female informant<sup>64</sup> says that at the sugar estate where she worked, *sirdars* were harassing labourers all the time and would tell them that their work was not satisfactory, and of being forced to start all over again. She said that at times the situation got so frustrating that she just wanted to sit down and cry. Another informant<sup>65</sup> describes the *sirdars*<sup>66</sup> where he worked as being very strict with workers and forcing labourers to collect wood for them, and alleges that when "markeurs" (i.e. pay-roll clerks) paid workers, they would rob them of their wages. An informant<sup>67</sup> who rose from being a field labourer to work as a marker himself, also describes *sirdars* engaging in these illegal practices, referring to it in French as "trucages". Describing his responsibilities as a *sirdar*, another informant<sup>68</sup> said that at the sugar estate where he worked, the "kolom" (or field supervisor) would check on the work of *sirdars* and labourers and that if he was not satisfied with the quality of the work, he would mark labourers as "ena sans al maron"<sup>69</sup> and that they "pa gagn zot kas".<sup>70</sup> Similarly, another informant<sup>71</sup> states that the manager of the estate where he worked would order *sirdars* to tell the labourers to redo their work if he was not satisfied with the quality of their work, even if they had done it properly. As the informant points out, "misie-la" (the estate manager) would come and check on the labourer's work after two days, hence by this time some of the weeds could have grown back, making it easier for him to find an excuse to tell the labourers to redo their work and deduct their wages. The informant added that he and his workmates could not contest the orders of the estate manager and they had no choice but to complete the "latas" (or load of work), even if they found it too difficult. Of course, this would have also made it easier to deduct the wages of labourers on the pretext that they had failed to complete the task required of them.

It should be pointed out that a number of informants confirm that there were instances of labourers not doing their work properly and describe *sirdars* and other estate personnel who they worked under as being very reasonable and pleasant to work with. But that should not detract from the fact that abuses have taken place, and that practices that one would expect to be more characteristic of the indentured labour period, continued after the end of indenture.<sup>72</sup> Complaints pertaining to the non-payment of wages, and in particular job-contractors, appear in the reports of various commissions of enquiry convened to investigate working conditions in the Mauritian sugar industry since the end of indenture but the problem never appears to have been stamped out. The Labour Department, later renamed the Ministry of Labour in 1962, and the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations in 1974, started documenting the complaints of labourers in their annual reports as early as 1938, and complaints pertaining to the non-payment or under-payment of wages are one of the most common complaints that appear in their reports.<sup>73</sup> As can be seen from their reports between the years of 1951-1980/81, which actually document the sums involved, the sums

of money are quite significant, but it is also important to bear in mind that not all of these complaints would have applied to the sugar industry, and that a large number of the complaints were eventually resolved and in most cases labourers were reimbursed for lost wages.<sup>74</sup> But in view of the fact that these abuses were so extensively documented, year-in, year-out, in the annual reports of the Labour Department and Ministry of Labour, why were they not stamped out? To arrive at a better understanding of this complex issue, it is necessary to review what the various commissions of enquiry into the Mauritian sugar industry have had to say on the matter.

Most of the commissions of enquiry that have been convened to investigate the machinations of the Mauritian sugar industry since the end of indenture have principally focused on complaints pertaining to insufficient wages and the failure of millers to pay small planters a fair price for their cane. Since these complaints do not appear in the oral testimonies of the elderly sugar estate workers who were interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants, I do not intend to pursue those issues here. The first commission convened after the end of indenture was the Hooper Commission. The Hooper Commission was convened to investigate the 1937 strikes led by casual workers and small planters. Amongst other issues, it states that

One of the principal complaints of the casual labourer is that before paying him his wages, the contractor, or *entrepreneur*, caused more work to be done by him than he was paid for, by using a false *gaulette*, retaining the difference for himself; the labourers claim that very often they are at the mercy of the contractors, as they do not know, or are not told, the amount of work they have done and have to take what the contractor gives them. They allege that the estates openly connive at the breach of the law by contractors, whose names occasionally are fictitiously borne on the estate books as estate employees, in order to save the contractor the necessity of paying the licence fee; and that estates frankly expected the contractors to take a small percentage of the pay of workers per *gaulette* in part payment for their services (Hooper 1937:166-167).

Noting the frank admission by some estate managers as to their lack of knowledge of precisely how much contractors were paying casual labourers since they paid contractors a lump sum for performing an agreed upon amount of work and left the payment of labourers in their hands. The commissioners recommended that one way of countering this problem was to have the estates pay labourers directly and to introduce a more thorough system of record-keeping of hours worked by labourers and wages paid, and that "the amount and remuneration for all tasks should be made public by being posted up on a board and that the measurement of all fields should be posted up". The commissioners also appear to have accepted the labourer's claim that contractors were cheating labourers by under-recording the amount of work they were actually doing by employing misleading methods of measurement (i.e. the French *gaulette*).<sup>75</sup> As it turns out, both recommendations were subsequently passed into law with the passing of the 1938 Labour Ordinance.

The Moody Commission was convened to investigate strikes led mostly by monthly workers in 1943 and does not discuss any complaints pertaining to the non-payment or under-payment of wages. However, these complaints resurfaced when the Balogh Commission was convened in 1962 to investigate further turmoil in the Mauritian sugar industry. Once again, the complaints primarily related to job-contractors contriving to pay labourers less money than what they were owed through the manipulation of the piece-rate system of payment.

Complaints have in fact been raised against this system for a long time. Allegations have been made to us and previous commissions about fraudulent practices. The main charge has been that in the conditions of unemployment or threatened unemployment, especially in the period between the crops when the labour market is slack, some job-contractors manipulate the piece rates by altering the task in such a way as to absorb for themselves the part of the remuneration due to the workers (Balogh 1963:149).

The commissioners go on to point out that it is "impossible to ascertain the truth of these allegations", even despite the fact they were aware that "A number of successful prosecutions indicate that there is some substance to these complaints".<sup>76</sup> At the public hearings convened to hear these allegations, the Mauritian Sugar Planter's Association, the main organisation representing millers and large planters, strenuously denied the allegations and assured the

commissioners that it was inconceivable these abuses were taking place, as measures had specifically been put in place to “exclude such malpractices” along the lines first recommended by the Hooper Commission. Yet it is interesting to note that at least with respect to ensuring estates and job-contractors kept accurate records of hours and wages earned by labourers after the 1938 Labour Ordinance passed into law, the Labour Department was continually turning up evidence of poor recording keeping practices and for which labour inspectors often fined them. These protestations of innocence may sound somewhat hard to believe coming from an industry that does not have a very good track record when it comes to honouring their legal agreements and who, with the benefit of hindsight, and the oral testimonies of elderly sugar estate workers, appear to be directly implicated in perpetuating these abuses. But of course the sugar estates have always had a vested interest in making sure the job-contracting system was not abolished as it would have put an end to one of their main means of recruiting workers, particularly since the industry has consistently been moving towards the employment of casual workers and the retrenchment of monthly or full-time workers for the greater part of the twentieth century.

In line with the findings of the Hooper Commission, the Balogh Commission proposed that the best way to eliminate these abuses was for the estates to pay labourers directly. But in contrast to the 1961 Meade Economic Report, it stopped short of calling for the abolition of the job-contracting system, even though the commissioners stated that they hoped “eventually the job-contracting will be replaced by more conventional methods of labour recruitment” (Balogh 1963:151). They, too, it seems, recognized the job-contracting system played a vital role as a method of recruiting workers for the sugar estates and desisted from making any recommendations that would hamper the ability of the industry to hire workers. The next time that complaints about job-contractors resurfaced was in the 1983 Manrakhan Commission of enquiry into the Mauritian sugar industry. The commission’s allusion to this complaint is very brief, and for the most part relates to the fear labourers had of being employed on less favourable terms under job-contractors as a result of further pushes to mechanize the industry and retrench full-time workers during the 1980s (Manrakhan 1983:118-119). The key words here are “less favourable terms”. In a conversation I had recently with the secretary of the Sugar Industry Labourer’s Union, Mr. Revanand Ramjuttun told me that as more sugar estate workers accept Voluntary Retirement Schemes (VRS), many are re-employing with job-contractors under less favourable terms. Not only are they forced to sacrifice many of the benefits that they used to enjoy as full-time workers, but they are also being paid less than they were before and their bargaining power has been completely diminished. Thus, one is tempted to question just how beneficial VRS redundancy packages actually are for the average sugar estate worker in Mauritius.

## LIVING CONDITIONS OF MAURITIAN SUGAR ESTATE WORKERS AFTER INDENTURE

One of the main purposes of the AGTF's oral history project was to find out more about estate camp life as it is recognized that this way of life is fast disappearing.<sup>77</sup> But underlying this recognition was the problematic assumption that residents of estate camps are purported to be the direct descendants of the first waves of indentured labourers from India who were housed on the estates. This uncritical assumption is reflected for instance in the Hooper Commission's report which in comparing the complaints of casual and monthly workers during the 1937 strikes, states that monthly workers "are the descendants for the most part of the original indentured immigrants (Hooper 1937:161; cf. Hooper 1937:176). This assumption appears to be informed by the belief that estate camp populations are stable communities that have been insulated from demographic fluctuations and change. Thus, according to this line of reasoning, estate camp residents should be viewed as being the most direct descendants of the "original indentured immigrants", as the Hooper Commission report describes them, because their living conditions most closely approximates what life was like for indentured labourers during the nineteenth century and their communities have remained largely undisturbed. But as the Annual Reports of the Labour Department show, after the end of indenture, estate camp populations were not in fact stable communities consisting of people who it can be claimed were the direct offspring of former estate camp residents, as these communities were subject to back and forth movements and the injection of new arrivals. For instance, in 1945, the Labour Department undertook a census of estate camps and not only determined that just under 50% of the population were born outside the estate camps but that "workers easily move from camp to village and back again as it suits their convenience, [while] others are firmly attached either to their village or to their estate camp".

There is another reason why this assumption is problematic. As I pointed out in a subsequent review of the various memoranda that were written detailing how to initiate the AGTF's oral history project, it is problematic to refer to estate camp residents as the "descendants of indentured labourers" without mentioning the thousands of time-expired *and* non-expired indentured labourers<sup>78</sup> who moved off the estates and established independent villages. The movement "A form of liberation: from the camp to the village", as Raj Virahsawmy (1984) has famously described this process, was already under way before the end of the nineteenth century, and it would appear that a majority of Indian immigrants were living in independent villages well before the turn of the twentieth century. As Benedict (1961:27) points out, "In 1861 there were 84,727 (44% of the Indian population) Indians living on estates. Ten years after the number had dropped to 61,893 (28% of the Indian population). By 1904 there were only 40,426, (approximately 15%) Indians left on estates". The reason it is problematic to refer to estate camp residents as the "descendants of indentured labourers" is because this implies that they are the only, or the most representative, descendants of indentured labourers living in Mauritius today. In this usage, the term is too finite and not flexible enough and seems to imply that it possible to accurately determine who can be regarded as a more genuine or "original" descendent of an indentured labourer. Rather than try to determine who is a true descendent of an indentured labourer, in this report I will be primarily focusing on Mauritian sugar estate workers, or in other words people working in the sugar industry after the end of indenture who are at the very least second or third generation born Mauritians.

A further consequence of this problematic assumption is that the AGTF's research assistants did not adequately query elderly sugar estate workers about Mauritian villages because of the ostensive focus on estate camp life. But that does not mean that the informants do not describe what their own living conditions were like if they did not live in an estate camp. In the process of describing what living conditions were like in estate camps, informants who have lived in villages most of their lives invariably reflect upon their own living conditions, and as such it is possible to get some sense of what life was like in Mauritius's villages in the earlier part of the twentieth century. In addition to the oral testimonies of elderly sugar estate workers, we also have the benefit of being able to draw upon the anthropologist Burton Benedict's ethnography of Mauritian villages in the 1950s. Benedict briefly describes living conditions in estate camps, but for the most part his ethnography is principally taken up with exploring village life and the ramifications of it for Indo-Mauritians

living in an agrarian society dependent on the export of a single cash crop. Benedict's ethnographic descriptions of village life in Mauritius is an indispensable aid for understanding what the living conditions of sugar estate workers were like in the earlier part of the twentieth century, and I will be frequently returning to his work in order to buttress my descriptions of living conditions in estate camps. Then there are also the Annual Reports of the Labour Department and the various commissions of enquiry into the Mauritian sugar industry that provide us with further observations that Benedict overlooks in his ethnography.

For the average sugar estate worker living in an estate camp in the earlier part of the twentieth century, the day began like most other days, rising at 5-6am in the morning to go to work after being awoken by the "Lappel", a man charged with waking up all the workers, or even as early as 1-2am if it was the harvest season. How early they rose depended on not only how far the estate camp was from the field where they had to work, but also if the estate provided a lorry to transport them, or if they had to walk there by foot or were lucky enough to hitch a ride on a passing bullock cart. Most workers took some breakfast before they set off for work usually consisting of tea and bread, and sometimes a little left over curry, and if they had sufficient time they would offer a prayer for the hard day of work ahead. Women normally woke up somewhat earlier than men did, as they also had to prepare breakfast for their husbands and the other members of the family. After brushing their teeth with charcoal and using either their fingers or a piece of guava stick for this purpose, they would set off for work and came back after midday sometime and ate something prior to commencing their daily chores. Women and children were the ones who were primarily responsible for carrying out these household chores, which normally consisted of fetching water and washing clothes, and collecting wood for cooking and grass for any cows or livestock that they kept. Going by the oral testimonies of the informants, these chores took up most of their afternoons, as the estate camps often lacked potable water and bathing facilities, thus forcing them to walk several miles in order to collect it from a river or to bath in. This can be seen in the photographs on the opposite page depicting scenes from estate camps showing children about to set off or returning from collecting water in metal cans. And then there are also images of women washing their clothes by the side of rivers and streams on volcanic stone outcrops, an indelible image which is perhaps one of the most iconic images of Mauritian life.

The camps themselves, or "langar", as the informants describe them, which is a Creole term for barracks, were usually made of *ravenal* and had thatch roofs and earthen floors.<sup>79</sup> They might also be made of a combination of materials, consisting, for example, of wood, stonewalls and corrugated iron. Over the course of the twentieth century though, concrete housing and semi-detached dwellings became more common in estate camps. Camp inhabitants describe "polishing" earthen floors with cow dung every week or once a fortnight, and red clay was particularly sought after with women being prepared to walk several miles in order to collect it. It is conceivable that some of the camp inhabitants would have built these structures themselves, and there is also evidence that they kept livestock in close proximity to their dwellings, much like their forefathers had done during the days of indenture. Of course, back in those days, there was no electricity to begin with, so most camp inhabitants relied on candles and kerosene lamps for lighting, and if the camp inhabitants were fortunate enough, a regular supply of water could be accessed through a public tap or well in the camp. Cooking facilities varied, with some camp inhabitants opting to cook on their verandas, or even inside their own dwellings over a pile of stones referred to as a "foyer" by the informants, sometimes resulting in fires that destroyed dwellings. While others preferred to cook in a makeshift kitchen located outside their dwellings and used either wood or sugarcane for these purposes. The informants also state that toilets and bathing facilities were usually not attached to their dwellings and were at some distance from where they lived and were used by all of the camp's inhabitants. Some estates had schools, medical dispensaries, crèches, and transported workers to the nearest district hospital if required, or that failing camp inhabitants were forced to walk to school and the nearest hospital by foot, or gave birth with the help of a midwife in their own dwellings.<sup>80</sup>

Informants also complained about crowded living conditions and the filthy state of some estate camps.<sup>81</sup> It appears that most estate camps offered very poor toilet provisions as many informants state that they were forced to go in the cane fields while others indicated that they had no choice but to build their own toilets when estates failed to provide them.<sup>82</sup> Informants also pointed out roads in estate camps were not tarred and therefore muddy and that camp inhabitants fought over having to wait in line in order to collect water from public taps.<sup>83</sup> The cramped living conditions

that characterised estate camp life also fostered disputes between neighbours, and the best that they could do to create a sense of privacy in their barracks was to erect makeshift barriers with either a sheet of corrugated iron or a partition made out of jute bags or *ravenal* as the case may have been. Furnishings were usually quite sparse and consisted of little more than wooden beds to sleep on and mattresses made of grass, or people slept on jute bags and used them to cover their bodies to keep warm at night. The only other possessions that estate camp inhabitants seemed to own was the utensils that they used for cooking, and according to one official report (ARLD 1945:3), most estate camp inhabitants kept very few possessions because of the frequency of fires. Others tried to make do with the little that they had and decorated their homes with pages from newspapers that they plastered on their walls.<sup>84</sup> Some estate camps also had footballs fields and shops run by “Chinese” shopkeepers that offered credit to their clientele; as well as *Baithkas*, temples, chapels and *Madrassas* to serve the religious needs of their workers. According to one informant,<sup>85</sup> estate camp life was very pleasant, as all the facilities were free, but she also stated that others looked down upon people who lived in estate camps. She pointed out she could not find brides for her sons as they were living in a camp and did not own their own homes.

According to Benedict the standard of living in estate camps during the 1950s was generally lower than that of most villages and appealed most strongly to the poor. This is because living in estate camps offered the advantages of steady employment, free housing, and possible concessions from estates for planting vegetables and gathering fodder for livestock. He points out that most camps consisted of “rows of small barrack-like cubicles of wattle and daub” and that some camps had “recently constructed semi-detached dwellings of cement”. Benedict draws attention in particular to the poor state of housing and lack of amenities, a finding that was still being echoed by ad hoc committees that were commissioned to enquire into estate camp housing conditions 30 years later.<sup>86</sup>

Except on a very few estates the housing offered is very poor. The buildings are of poor quality insufficiently ventilated and illuminated. The cubicles are small. Latrines are often very unsatisfactory, built in a row some distance away. Paths are often muddy and drainage is usually poor. Some camps have small shops, but for most of his needs the camp dweller must walk to the nearest village which may be some distance away. Unlike villages, camps are rarely located on bus routes. Cinema and other forms of recreation, as well as schools, are not to be found in camps, but in villages and towns (Benedict 1961:54).

In addition to a number of other drawbacks such as lack of privacy, property and tenure, and obligation to work, Benedict states that living in estate camps had come to be associated with low status because it was believed that crowded living conditions promoted promiscuity. Yet despite noting that these living conditions appealed primarily to the poor, who according to Benedict were drawn to estate camps because of free housing and steady employment, he also seems to have been under the general impression that “the pattern of moving from the estate camp to the village persists” and that only monthly workers were allowed to live in estate camps (1961:27, 54). As I alluded to above, the Annual Reports of the Labour Department indicate there was back and forth movement between villages and estate camps, and hence there is every reason to believe that sizeable numbers of impoverished villagers resettled in estate camps a generation after the first waves of indentured labourers moved off the estates. This is confirmed by the oral testimony of one elderly sugar estate worker,<sup>87</sup> who stated it was only poor people who did not own property that went to live in estate camps. Nor was it unheard of for some estates to allow daily or casual workers to live in their camps (cf. ARLD 1961:19-20, 50).<sup>88</sup>

Although the elderly sugar estate workers who were interviewed by the AGTF’s research assistants confirmed that life was very difficult in the past, or wracked by “*boukou mizer*” as many informants described it in Creole, that does not mean estate camp life was viewed only negatively. Actually, many of the informants looked back on estate camp life with a certain degree of fondness and described inter-ethnic relations as being harmonious and everyone living like a “family”. Holidays were often opportunities for families to get together, and depending on the occasion, a goat would be sacrificed and consumed, or a special meal of canned fish curried with tomatoes was cooked to celebrate the occasion if finances permitted. During the harvest season, rituals were also performed and offerings made to the goddess *Kalimaya* to ensure a good harvest, and more often than not, it was conducted with the active support and participation of estate managers and was usually led by *sirdars*. Masses and prayers were also organised for Christian and Muslim workers.

The informants also describe estate managers distributing presents to children at Christmas time and receiving bonuses during harvest season. And parents telling their children stories at night in the absence of modern day forms of entertainment such as radio and television. Nonetheless, these reminiscences were tempered by the view that “Christians”, or in other words, skilled Creole artisans and their families,<sup>89</sup> lived in superior housing and sometimes looked down upon the inhabitants of estate camps. While the paucity of reflections on the family life of white managerial staff points to a certain amount of social and possibly racial distance between employers and estate camp inhabitants.

One of the reasons why Benedict suggests that living conditions in villages were superior to those in estate camps is because the quality of housing was generally better. Housing varied, but according to Benedict (1961:55), there were three basic types.

The houses are of three basic types, the wattle and daub hut with a thatched roof and clay floor, the galvanized sheet iron house built upon a wooden frame and usually with a wooden or cement floor, and the more ambitious wooden, stone or cement house built on a concrete foundation with wooden or concrete floors.

One informant<sup>90</sup> who was interviewed by an AGTF research assistant described the more lavish type of housing that could be found in some villages as “lakaz tol vitrinn”<sup>91</sup> and the people who owned it as living like “tourists”. Yet it would also appear there were not all that many differences between most village dwellings and the type of housing found on estate camps prior to the 1960s. As Benedict (1961:55) points out, huts made of wattle and daub were quite common, as were earthen floors laid over stone foundations, and while poor families did their cooking on verandahs, others did it in a “separate hut of sheet iron located in the yard”, and apparently housing in villages was also crowded (cf. Benedict 1961:12).<sup>92</sup> Similarly, although most village dwellings had their own yards, something that estate camp inhabitants could not claim to have, pit latrines and the bucket system were the most common methods of conservancy, and it is likely that in the absence of these, villagers would have used nearby cane fields. Benedict also states that household chores were primarily the responsibility of women and children,<sup>93</sup> and that these included doing such things as re-plastering earthen floors with red clay and cow dung, collecting water from the village fountain or nearby rivers and streams if fountains were lacking (cf. ARLD 1945:3), and walking long distances to collect wood for cooking and fodder for livestock. Rearing cows and selling milk in order to generate additional sources of income also seems to have been quite common in villages and primarily the responsibility of women, a view I frequently encountered in the oral testimonies of the elderly sugar estate workers interviewed by the AGTF’s research assistants.

The other reason why Benedict suggests living conditions in villages were superior to those in estate camps is because they were less isolated and enjoyed access to social services and recreational facilities funded and maintained by government and village councils. Some of these amenities included public fountains, medical dispensaries, government schools, agricultural services, public transport, electricity, police and fire protection, shops, cooperative credit societies for small planters, post offices, social welfare centres, football fields, cinemas, and religious organisations and edifices. But as Benedict (1961:56) points out, even in spite of these advantages, the economic fortunes of most villagers in Mauritius still principally derived from labouring in the cane fields. (In fact, most of the elderly sugar estate workers interviewed by the AGTF’s research assistants began working as “chokra” or child labourers, and like their forefathers before them, they worked as sugar estate workers until they retired.) This had two important ramifications. Firstly, it meant that during the inter-crop season when work was scarcer and wages were lower, labourers had to find other ways to make ends meet. One way of doing this was to find ways of turning agricultural and natural products into cash. Mention has been made of rearing livestock and selling cow’s milk, but arranging concessions from estates to plant vegetables in between lines of sugar cane or collecting *bredes* from the banks of rivers and streams and ravenal fronds from forests was one way of doing this, as was renting land from other villagers to grow cane and cash crops or planting market gardens in one’s own yard.<sup>94</sup> According to Benedict (1961:74-76), however, the proceeds from these efforts were always converted into cash, because the average Mauritian required cash to purchase almost all of his basic needs, thus suggesting to him that there was little evidence of subsistence farming in Mauritius.<sup>95</sup>

The susceptibility of labourers to the seasonal cycles of the sugar estates had another important ramification. It made them reliant on credit to tide them over during the inter-crop season (Benedict 1958; cf. Balogh 1963:60). Some of the most pertinent examples of these credit relations include Sino-Mauritian shopkeepers extending credit to their clientele and the loans that *sirdars* and job-contractors made to labourers to bind them more effectively to them. Benedict states he found no evidence of job-contractors charging high interest rates on these loans. But he (Benedict 1958:217) also points out that “A man who accepts a loan from a job contractor would feel obliged to work for him.” He adds that job-contractors recovered their money by making deductions from the wages of labourers during the crop season, and if the oral testimony of the elderly sugar estate workers quoted earlier is anything to go by, this may have offered another opportunity to make further deductions from the wages of labourers at usurious rates. According to Benedict (1958:217), *sirdars* employed on estates had “much the same relations of borrowing and lending” with monthly workers, and that this arrangement ensured *sirdars* had an interest in employing labourers who they loaned money to. Thus notwithstanding the fact that some villagers had better housing and enjoyed access to government-funded social services and recreational facilities, what the foregoing discussion underlines is that the life of a sugar estate worker living in a village prior to the 1960s would not have been drastically different to that of an estate camp inhabitant. They may have had a wider range of economic options, but the casual worker was just as susceptible to the seasonal fluctuations of the sugar estates as the monthly worker was, and recourse to alternative economic avenues to make ends meet, such as *métayage* and share-cropping for instance, or relying on credit from shopkeepers and job-contractors and *sirdars*, seemed to have been the lot of most Mauritian sugar estate workers in those days.

Evidence of similarities in the living standards of casual and monthly workers can also be gleaned by reflecting on the diet and health of sugar estate workers in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Benedict (1961:11) states that after the Second World War, there had been an improvement in “living standards, including a better standard of nutrition and health”. The principal measures Benedict relied on to make this assertion were increased fertility and a sharp reduction in mortality rates, in addition to the gradual eradication of malaria and development and welfare programmes financed by gains from the post-war boom in sugar production. However, there may be grounds for disagreeing with some of Benedict’s prognoses. To begin with, it is not entirely clear that sugar estate workers benefited themselves from the post-war boom in sugar production, because as the Balogh Commission (1963:30-31, 53) stressed, real wages rose very little between 1939-1957 and was one of the main complaints aired by sugar estate workers who testified before the commissioners. What is more, the Balogh Commission (1963:61, 128-130) raises doubts as to whether funds allocated to help sugar estate workers build homes with interest free loans by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund reached its designated target.<sup>96</sup> In addition to this, the Annual Reports of the Labour Department, and the various commissions of enquiry convened to investigate the Mauritian sugar industry since the end of indenture, provide reflections on the living standards of sugar estate workers in the earlier part of the twentieth century, and cast doubts on some of Benedict’s prognoses. Drawing upon Major Orde Browne’s earlier enquiry into labour conditions in Mauritius, the Moody Commission (1943:32) concluded that: “The picture is ... that of a poorly-paid, undernourished, sickly population, capable of only such limited output of work that an increase of wages offers little promise of improved performance.” Only two years later, the Director of Labour was issuing further warnings about the sickly state of Mauritian sugar estate workers in the 1945 Annual Report of the Labour Department.

When a group of labourers in the sugar industry is seen, when their appearance is noted, their bare feet, their ragged clothes, their eye-balls yellow with fever, their small stature, their emaciated limbs with outstanding bony joints, their shins often scaly as a result of malnutrition ... it is possible to ask whether the higher cost is paid by the purchaser of the sugar or by the producer of it (ARLD 1945:8-9).

It is in Major Orde Browne’s 1943 report on labour conditions in Mauritius that the subject of the malnutrition of the sugar industry’s workforce begins to receive more sustained attention. According to Major Orde Browne, the diet of Mauritian sugar estate workers was noticeably deficient in protein and showed a marked dependence on rice and carbohydrates. Major Orde Browne’s observations are not only corroborated by the Annual Reports of the Labour Department, but are also reflected in the oral testimonies of the elderly sugar estate workers interviewed by the AGTF’s research assistants, and in Benedict’s own description of the diet of casual workers living in

villages. As part of their attempt to determine the cost of living for labourers working in the sugar industry, which the Minimum Wage Advisory Board used to assess claims put before them for wage increases in industrial arbitration disputes, the Labour Department had begun to gather detailed estimates of the budget of labourers. A notable feature that comes out of their estimates of the budget of the average labourer working in the sugar industry is the small proportion of their wages they spent on protein. Apart from fish, goat's meat was the principal form of animal protein consumed by the average sugar estate worker. The elderly sugar estate workers interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants also testify to the lack of protein in their diet. In their oral testimonies, the informants state they mostly ate rice and various types of vegetables, and could only afford to eat meat on special occasions. As I pointed before, this normally consisted of purchasing canned fish which they curried with tomato when relatives visited, or sacrificing a goat for New Year's Eve. Benedict's description of the diet of sugar estate workers living in villages lends further support to this finding. He reiterates that goat's meat was only consumed on special occasions and for lunch the average sugar estate worker or a person of less means usually ate rice with potato curry and some leafy green vegetables (1961:15, 78, 81).

The poor health of the average sugar estate worker in Mauritius led Major Orde Browne to speculate on the presumed inefficiency of the industry's workforce. Major Orde Browne (1943:61-64) drew attention to the limited hours of work that sugar estate workers completed in comparison to the descendants of Indian immigrants working in the plantation sectors of other British colonies. Yet although Major Orde Browne had some intimation as to how prevalent *ankylostomiasis* was amongst the Mauritian sugar industry's workforce, he not only seems to have underestimated how debilitating the disease was in assessing the inefficiency of Mauritian sugar estate workers, but he also appears to have been ignorant of the efforts already made to combat this parasitic form of disease as a result of previous enquiries, and suggested the most effective solution lay in educating the population about improved sanitary habits. I myself only became aware of the true extent of this epidemic after reading Andrew Balfour's 1921 report on medical and sanitation matters in Mauritius. Balfour was commissioned by the British colonial authorities to conduct an enquiry into Port Louis's deteriorating sanitary conditions and to find a way to combat the malaria epidemic crippling the health of the colony's population. In the course of his enquiries, Balfour read a report written only one year earlier by a medical expert working for the International Health Board, a philanthropic organisation funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, named J. F. Kendrick. Kendrick discovered that more than two-thirds of the colony's population was suffering from *ankylostomiasis*, or hookworm disease as it is more commonly known as, and that the highest rates of infections were recorded amongst the labouring classes in the colony's rural areas (cited in Balfour 1921:18). Kendrick urged the colonial authorities in Mauritius to cooperate with the International Health Board in trying to eradicate the disease, and it appears the British did not hesitate in taking up the generous offer of financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation after being actively encouraged to do so by Balfour.

While there was little doubt amongst the colonial authorities in Mauritius as to how debilitating malaria was, as it led to a noticeable increase in mortality rates, one of the reasons that hookworm disease seems to have escaped their attention is because its symptoms were not as readily discernible as malaria's. The number of deaths attributed to *ankylostomiasis* in Mauritius in the year 1920 was only 16, but Balfour (1921:15) questions the accuracy of these figures in his report, and suggests it was probably responsible for raising the island's death rate, due in part to the fact that it weakens "resistance to disease".<sup>97</sup> Yet although hookworm disease may not lead to as many observable deaths as malaria, its affects have been shown to be just as lethal, as it not only leads to a higher incidence of foetal mortality rates, but has also been implicated in stunting growth and impairing cognitive development, as well as increasing susceptibility to other diseases. According to Kendrick's report, one of the primary causes of the spread of hookworm disease was poor sanitary conditions, and in particular the inadequate provision of latrine systems, indeed the very type of conditions that were noticeably deficient in estate camps and rural areas (cited in Balfour 1921:18).<sup>98</sup> But in his report, Balfour also drew attention to the affect that the use of human manure as a fertilizer in the sugar industry, or the *Engrais system* as it was referred to in French, had in broadcasting the disease amongst the Mauritian population.<sup>99</sup> Balfour made it quite clear in his report that the Mauritian sugar industry could no longer continue to use human manure in the cultivation of its cane fields. He even went so far as to say that those who continued to ignore the health of the population out of pecuniary considerations would not only be morally culpable, but should also be held legally accountable (Balfour 1921:81-89). It seems the sugar industry took

Balfour's recommendations seriously, because according to Alfred North-Coombes who wrote a comprehensive account of the Mauritian sugar industry in 1937, the *Engrais* system had been discontinued at the time of his writing his account of the industry.<sup>100</sup>

But when it came to improving sanitary conditions and introducing a more effective latrine system, which was one of the principal recommendations to come out of Kendrick's report on hookworm disease in Mauritius, there is evidence many sugar estates were negligent in complying with their legal obligations as first stipulated in the 1878 Labour Ordinance and reiterated in subsequent labour ordinances promulgated after the end of indenture. Although the 1937 Hooper Commission insisted that housing and sanitary conditions in estate camps were satisfactory, the 1943 Moody Commission was much more condemnatory. Based on their inspections of estate camps in the north of the island, which is where the 1943 strikes led by monthly workers first flared up, the commissioners stated that "much remains to be done to improve housing, health and sanitation, and the general amenities of living" (Moody 1943:58). The commissioners were particularly critical of the state of latrines in estate camps, and suggested that it encouraged labourers and their families to "adjourn to the neighbouring bush or field, apparently quite unconscious of the fact that their action constitutes a grave danger to the general health in the spread of *ankylostomiasis* and other diseases". Labourers who testified before the commissioners also complained of lack of access to potable water in estate camps and having to walk long distances to obtain water for drinking and domestic uses. One can detect a similar degree of inconsistency in the Annual Reports of the Labour Department, which in 1938 for instance concluded "that the conditions of camps where labourers reside, was on the whole satisfactory" (ARLD 1938:14). Then in its 1943 and 1944 annual reports was proclaiming that "housing conditions on estate camps are still poor" and of the need to improve sanitary conditions (ARLD 1943:5; ARLD 1944:4). The newly appointed Director of Labour, Mr. R.C. Wilkinson, who assumed his duties in 1944, claimed that even if provided with suitable sanitary conveniences, labourers would prefer to use "neighbouring cane fields" (ARLD 1944:4). But as Mr. James Stirling, who replaced Wilkinson as Labour Commissioner in 1951, pointed out in the ARLD of 1954, after estates built more detached concrete dwellings for families with kitchens, bathrooms and toilets, labourers took a keen interest in their proper maintenance and were making effective use of the bathrooms and camp latrines (ARLD 1954:11). And as I alluded to earlier, Benedict also drew attention to the poor condition of latrines in estate camps in his ethnography, the fieldwork for which it is important to bear in mind was conducted at the end of the 1950s, showing that not much had improved in that time.<sup>101</sup>

The key point to underline here is that so long as sugar estates continued to neglect their responsibilities and failed to provide sanitary conditions in estate camps it is inevitable this would have encouraged labourers to use cane fields and contributed to the spread of hookworm disease amongst the Mauritian population. Hookworms are dependent on human hosts to reproduce which they do by passing from the intestine as eggs before being deposited in faecal matter where they grow into larvae and wait for their next hosts to mature into adults. Failing to provide hygienic or suitable latrines and in effect ensuring that labourers had little choice but to use cane field provides ideal conditions for hookworm parasites to thrive, as it is through soil contamination that the disease is spread. Of course, one cannot lay the blame squarely on the shoulders of the sugar estates, as there is every reason to believe that villagers who lived within the vicinity of an estate would have used the cane fields if they did not have a system of conservancy in place in their own homes (cf. ARLD 1945:3). And things would not have been helped by the fact that most Mauritians went around barefooted for a greater part of the twentieth century, as hookworms find their way into the intestinal tracts of human hosts by penetrating either feet or hands before moving up through the body. In addition to this, the fact that many Mauritians had earthen floors in their homes would have provided ideal conditions for the larvae of the hookworm parasite to reproduce, as studies have shown that the disease is more prevalent in rural areas because housing in urban areas is more likely to have wooden or concrete floors (Desowitz et al. 1961; Hotez 2008).<sup>102</sup> Yet the fact remains that most sugar estates would have been aware of the relationship between poor sanitation and the spread of hookworm disease as the colonial government made every effort to implement the recommendations of the International Health Board and launched a comprehensive education campaign to combat the disease. Therefore to flout these responsibilities, and which the Annual Reports of the Labour Department indicates was continuing up until at least 1953-1954, which is the last time the department's labour inspectors made a concerted effort of registering breaches of health regulations in estate camps,<sup>103</sup> constitutes a reckless act that exemplifies a lack of respect for the health and well-being of others.

The irony is that those sugar estates who neglected to abide by their legal responsibilities and to improve sanitary conditions in estate camps not only endangered the health of their workforce but also handicapped their own economic prosperity. As Major Orde Browne alludes to in his report, the combined effects of hookworm disease and malnutrition, and anaemia, the primary symptom of *ankylostomiasis* infection, which leads to depletion of iron levels as a result of internal bleeding, all conspired to lower the efficiency of the Mauritian sugar industry's workforce. A similar point has been made in a study investigating the debilitating effects of hookworm disease on Indian immigrants working on colonial plantations in Sri Lanka (Hewa 1994). The author suggests that the ineptitude of the colonial government and the derogation of responsibilities on the part of planters impeded attempts by the International Health Board to combat the disease. Hewa is particularly critical of the role of the colonial planters who she argues wantonly disregarded their legal obligation to introduce a more effective latrine system and to improve sanitary conditions in estate camps. As Hewa (1994:86-87) points out, the principal reason why planters sought to avoid their obligations, even though it would have led to a vast improvement in the health and well-being of their workforce, and presumably their long-term profits, is because of the short-term financial outlay it would have required. She also suggests that the colonial government was complicit in these abuses because of the *laissez-faire* policy that they pursued in Ceylon. One cannot say the same thing, however, about the colonial government in Mauritius.

It is not possible to ascertain from the documents available, with certainty, that the colonial authorities in Mauritius fully cooperated with the International Health Board and implemented all of its recommendations. But it appears so. This not only included an initial three year campaign of medically treating patients in an attempt to reduce the disease over the short term but also a far-reaching education campaign that targeted the broader Mauritian population. Lectures were organised and pamphlets distributed and notices pinned up to educate the public about the consequences of poor hygiene; and the colonial authorities even managed to procure a film from the International Health Board, named "Unhooking the Hookworm", which it showed in cinemas around the island. The Annual Reports of the Medical and Health Department also indicate that the colonial government made concerted efforts to eradicate the disease by constructing pit latrines in towns, villages and schools, and by replacing wooden buckets with metal buckets where the bucket system of conservancy was in use. In combination with on-going medical treatment, these measures continued for a number of years after the International Health Board had completed their work in Mauritius, but after the Second World War, it seems that the Medical and Health Department no longer considered it necessary to report on the incidence of hookworm disease.<sup>104</sup> One would assume that the only possible explanation for this about face is because *ankylostomiasis* rates of infection must have begun to decrease in the advent of the successful measures that had been introduced by the colonial government to combat the disease. However, the Annual Reports of the Medical and Health Department indicate that cases of hookworm disease were still being reported in hospitals and medical dispensaries after the Second World War. In any case, it is more than likely that as the island developed over the course of the twentieth century the attendant conditions that are associated with urbanisation eventually heralded the demise of hookworm disease in Mauritius.

The important question that remains is what set of factors and at roughly what point in time did these changes conspire to diminish the severity of hookworm disease in Mauritius. I have already alluded to what some of those factors may be. They include not only general improvements in healthcare but also the increasing use of footwear by the wider Mauritian population and of course the construction of more wooden and concrete homes. Looking around Mauritius today, one struggles to find any evidence of thatch and straw huts with earthen floors, and the elderly sugar estate workers who were interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants, all point to Cyclone Carol in 1960 as being a key turning point in terms of the shift from non-concrete to concrete housing. What we can be certain of, however, is that these changes and the marked improvement in the living standards of the Mauritian population over the course of the twentieth century have not been brought about as a result of working in the sugar industry alone. Much remains to be done in order to properly understand patterns of urban settlement and development in Mauritius, but perhaps one of the most outstanding achievements its citizens can claim is their ability to persevere and lift themselves up by their own bootstraps. This is ably documented in Benedict's ethnography, which describes how resourceful villagers and estate camp inhabitants were in terms of their ability to transform agricultural and natural products into sources of income. And of course, one must not forget the high rates of home ownership in Mauritius and in particular how widespread concrete housing is for a developing island nation. Even though many of the elderly sugar estate workers

interviewed by the AGTF's research assistants emphasised how difficult life was in the past, they also told them they were proud of what they had achieved in their lives and pointed out they were eventually able to purchase a plot of land and to build a house for themselves and their families.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

As stated from the outset of this study, the most comprehensive accounts that we have of the lives of Mauritian sugar estate workers in the post-indenture period comes to us from Daniel North-Coombes and Burton Benedict. It is instructive to compare their respective accounts of the lives of sugar estate workers after the termination of the indenture labour system in Mauritius, as each of them had different objectives and foci due in part to their methodological biases. For instance, where North-Coombes was more concerned with class-conflict and the various forms of exploitation that existed in the Mauritian sugar industry, Benedict evinced an approach that sought to pay greater attention to the living conditions of ordinary Mauritians, even if this meant that he tended to overlook signs of class-conflict and tension in Mauritian society. In the final analysis, both approaches are of equal value in any attempt to reconstruct the history of Mauritian society, but what this study has shown is that it is just as important to consult the opinions of those affected by these events. The voices of elderly sugar estate workers has shown to us there were important matters that have been overlooked by both North-Coombes and Benedict, and which places the recent past into sharper relief. I am thinking in particular of the fact that estate managerial staff and *sirdars* and job-contractors conspired to abuse the rights of labourers by continuing to mark them as absent, or "marron", and deducting their wages for failing to complete unreasonable estimations of set tasks. One would have thought that these abuses would have discontinued after the end of indenture, but quite clearly, that was not the case.

Upon further inspection, however, Benedict's observations turn out to be extremely prescient insofar as he seems to have anticipated that tensions between sugar estate workers and planters would eventually come to a head. As early as 1961, Benedict was warning that if "Indians" and "Franco-Mauritians" failed to come to terms with the legacy of the indentured labour period, that this would have negative repercussions for social relations between the two groups in the future. Yet as instructive as these observations may have turned out to be, Benedict failed to make an extremely important distinction. It is one thing to narrow the source of the conflict down to ethnicity, but what Benedict ignored was the class relationship underpinning this tension. Benedict was writing at a time when studies of "plural societies" were very much in vogue and came out of an older anthropological tradition that stressed order and stasis, rather than conflict and change. This is reflected in the fact that Benedict (1961:23) reduced the source of these societal tensions to the indentured labour period, and ignored more recent commissions of enquiry convened to investigate the Mauritian sugar industry. As the Moody Commission (1943:162-168) pointed out in its recommendations, a climate of suspicion and distrust tended to characterise relations between the industry and its workforce, and the Commissioners were insistent that the most pressing problem facing the industry was the "human factor". A point both the 1963 Balogh and 1983 Manrakhan Commissions<sup>105</sup> would return to in their later reports.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is thus essential to cease to conflate the conduct of the managerial staff and personnel who have played a key role in running sugar estates in Mauritius with the presumed ethnicity of the stakeholders in that industry. This not only risks exacerbating racial and ethnic tensions, but it also does a disservice to those people who it is presumed share the same ethnicity and hence interests, as those who manage the affairs of the Mauritian sugar industry. By the same token, it would be equally advisable to cease conflating the identity of sugar estate workers with their presumed ethnicity or ancestry, as this not only ends up downplaying the uniqueness of their experiences and the heterogeneity of this workforce, but it also risks inciting the ire of other Mauritians who believe they share a similar cultural background. In the final analysis, it is personnel in the sugar industry, and not “Franco-Mauritians” *per se*, who are responsible for having perpetrated the abuses that sugar estate workers have had to endure since the end of indenture. Perhaps during the period of slavery, one could more easily have described the society existing at the time in Mauritius as consisting of two relatively homogenous groups, that is, slaves and planters. But since then, Mauritian society has become highly diversified, no more so than in the last one hundred years, and consequently it is important to distinguish who is responsible for committing acts that might be considered unjust or morally reprehensible.

From the claims that have been presented in this report, at the very least, one would think that certain aspects of the Mauritian sugar industry need more effective regulation and to ensure these abuses are not still being committed. In particular, the job contracting system, which according to all reports is alive and well in Mauritius, is seemingly responsible for continuing abuses with the apparent complicity of the sugar industry. This was pointed out by Mr. Revanand Ramjuttun, the secretary of the Sugar Industry Labourer’s Union and it was disconcerting to learn from an elderly female sugar estate worker who I personally interviewed in 2010, that after taking up a VRS offer, she re-employed as a casual worker and complained of being denied most of the basic rights she formally enjoyed as a full-time worker. Another issue to consider is whether those sugar estates that failed to comply with sanitary regulations should be held accountable for the spread of hookworm disease in retrospect, as an amendment to the 1931 Workmen’s Compensation Ordinance made it possible to claim compensation from industries responsible for the spread of diseases amongst their workforce. There are also the allegations of the Balogh Commission which raised concerns about the manner in which funds were handled by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. This issue never seemed to have been adequately resolved.

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# LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF DESCENDANTS OF INDENTURED LABOURERS

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## INTRODUCTION

Mauritius was a sugar plantation colony whose development relied essentially on the availability of plantation land, cheap labour and inflow of capital from metropolitan country.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, slaves from Madagascar, the African and neighbouring Continents constituted the main source of free labour capital until the abolition of slavery in 1835.

Following the emancipation of the slaves in 1834/1835, the Royal Commissioners (1909), reported that the freed slaves were unwilling to work for their former masters who, thus, had recourse to Indian indentured immigrants as source of labour. Allen (1999, p.16) affirms that facing scarcity of agricultural labour estate owners with the support of the colonial governments of Mauritius had Indian opted for Indian immigrations as alternative source of cheap labour.

He published that approximately 9,000 apprentices purchased their liberty before the collapse of the apprenticeship system in Mauritius in March 1989. While the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) estimated to over 60,000 the freed apprentices in March 1989.

In keeping with Allen (1999, p. 15), the following historical events encouraged the institutionalisation of the indenture system as 'new labour regime'.<sup>106</sup> Firstly, labour scarcity resulting from high mortality rates amongst the slave population before the abolition of slavery. Secondly, the labour crisis following the withdrawal of the ex-apprentices from the estates after the abolition of slavery and, thirdly, the expansion of sugar production as the economic mainstay of the colonial economy.

Mass unemployment in the labourers' country of origin furthered this labour movement to the host developing countries facing labour shortages. The 'exodus' of the Indian Diaspora is part of the dynamics of the capitalist system of production and should be situated within the social, economic and political situation prevailing in India and Mauritius.

The successive failures of the importation of African, Malagasy and Chinese indentured labourers gave impetus to the importation of Indian indentured immigrants, commonly referred to as *Coolies*. The *Coolies* came as agricultural labourers to meet the increasing demand of labour intensive sugar plantations for a cheap and docile labour force that was the nucleus of the Capitalism production system.

According to Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, the importation of Indian labourers between 1829 and the first half of 1834 was a failure and it is only as from the second half of 1834 and following the official abolition of slavery in 1835 that large-scale immigration of Indian indentured labourers spurred. Except for temporary suspensions, during the indenture-ship period, between 1834 and 1924 (the system was officially abolished in 1939), the AGTF recorded that approximately 450,000 Indian labourers migrated to Mauritius with some 290,000 remained permanently on the island and approximately 160,000 returning in their home country and others migrating to other countries.

The importation of Indian indentured labourers slowed down as from 1906. In 1909, the Royal Commissioners (1909, pp. 15-16) reckoned that one third of the estate labourers were Indian immigrants that were introduced under the indentured system and the remaining two thirds were Indo-Mauritians referring to natives of Hindu faith.

The forced and voluntary diasporic movements of Europeans, Africans, and Indians and of other Diasporas, and successively their permanent settlement on the island, transformed and forged Mauritian contemporary social, economic, cultural, religious and political landscapes.

This report describes the living and working conditions of the sugar estate labourers in 21<sup>st</sup> century Mauritius. It is part of a research project entitled 'Oral History of Descendants of Indentured Labourers', whose objective is: to uncover the life experiences of the descendants of indentured labourers that were, or are still, living and working on sugar estates.

This project aims at addressing one of the Truth and Justice Commission's (TJC) missions to assess 'the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present'.

In accordance with the objectives of this research, this report is divided into two parts:

The first part is on the working conditions of the estate workers and the following themes are developed: (i) occupation patterns; (ii) gender discriminations amongst the work force; (iii) work duties and promotional prospects (iv) Child Labour; (v) wages and other work benefits, and (vi) wage cuts and discriminatory practices.

The second part is on the living conditions of the estate workers, and especially the estate camp residents. The following themes are examined: (i) subsistence; (ii) housing conditions and constructions; (iii) academic education and mobility; (iv) Community life and inter-ethnic relationships; (v) family life, roles and duties including child development; (vi) Dressing and (vii) Displacement.

### **Methodology**

This report is based essentially on the interpretation and analysis of oral interviews conducted by the Research Assistants of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund in the period 2008-2009. The life of the former estate workers is retraced through the analysis of 18 transcripts of the interviews.

Unfortunately, the transcripts provided limited data on the working and living conditions of the estate workers because the interviewers focused on the cultural and religious practices, and they did not probe important issues that came out of the interviews, such as infant mortality, gender-based violence against women, alcoholism and the father abandonment of matrimonial roof.

In some instances, interviewers asked leading questions and short-ended questions that directed the respondents' responses and did not yield rich information as they restricted the respondents' answers.

### **Treatment of Data**

The transcripts were analysed in line with the objectives of this research. Relevant extracts of informants' testimonies are included to sustain analysis. These extracts are in the language used in the interview followed by a translation into English.

Regional and individual variations were identified in the living and working conditions of the former estate workers and in the sugar estate practices. Besides, because of chronological discrepancies and memory flaws, the respondents got confused about certain political and economic events which they associated the Trade Unionist Movement to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam.

Much caution was taken to ensure the accuracy of the information. Consequently, I engaged in triangulation to ensure reliability and validity of evidences gathered. The various life-experiences were documented as far as possible and by crosschecking with the information presented in the reports of Mr. Coucaud and Dr. Mishra.

However, since all versions of memory recollections and of life-experiences have to be taken into consideration because of their significance for the respondents, the various versions compiled are included in this report.

Unfortunately, because of time constraint, I was not able to conduct proper archival research. For this reason, I relied on the two reports of the above-mentioned TJC researchers as secondary sources to corroborate the information compiled from the transcripts.

### **Limitations of the report**

As stated earlier, the above-mentioned oral history project aims at investigating the consequences of indentureship on the descendants of the Indian indentured labourers. It should be highlighted that this analysis is not representative of the life-experiences of the descendants of the Indian immigrants that migrated to Mauritius under the indenture system, in that the sample of respondents was limited to former sugar estate workers who are assumed to be of Indian indentured descent. The white-collar and other blue-collar employees were not interviewed.

Furthermore, Mauritians of Islamic faith, descendants of indentured Labourers, also were not interviewed. In fact, although the majority of Muslims who migrated to Mauritius were free Gujarati traders, yet, a minority came as indentured labourers.

The people interviewed are assumed to be of Indian indentured descent based on their names that are of Indian origin, their religious background and their occupational categories (they are agricultural and estate workers). However, even if the majority of Mauritians categorised as Indo-Mauritians might be of indentured descent, some of them might be descendants of Indian immigrants who arrived on Mauritian shores as free passengers and as free traders.

In addition, during post-Independence Mauritius, many Mauritians of Hindu faith converted to Roman Catholicism and changed their names to 'Christian/European' names. Hence, some Mauritians presently categorised under the group 'General Population' are of indentured descent.

All respondents and their parents are natives of Mauritius. The grandparents of some of the interviewees are of Indian origin such as the grandparents of Mardemootoo, and his father's elder brother as well, came from India to work as builder. The father of Pentiah's wife told her that her grandfather was from India. Goinsamy's grandmother on his father's side came from Chennai as agricultural worker.

Their knowledge of family history remained restricted to one or two generations because of limited genealogical memory. In addition, some did not know their grandparents who died before their birth or when they were underage. They did not know if their ancestors came as indentured labourers or free passengers, and when and why they migrated to Mauritius.

For example, Bhudyea's mother and grandparents died when she was young. She does not know their origins and thinks that her elders might have come from abroad.

Moreover, most interviewees have never heard of the terms *coolie*, *travayer engaze* (Eng. trans. Indentured labourers) and other related terms. In fact, only Goinsamy stated that he had heard the term *coolie*. His father, grandmother and people living the neighbourhood told him that his grandfather was a *coolie* who worked as watchman on the estate.

For most of them, they thought that their ancestors came from India and guessed their Indian origins based on their patronymic name, religious background (they are of Hindu faith) and population categorisation (they are classified as Indo-Mauritian).

This report is based on a limited sample of interviews; out of 400 interviews conducted, only 18 transcriptions of the interviews conducted in Mauritian Kreol were analysed. Interviews conducted in Bhojpuri and other Indo-Mauritian languages were not analysed because of my lack of competence in these languages. This sample represents 4.25% of the voices of the former estate workers.

Taking the respondents' names as indicator, it seems that amongst the 18 interviewees, one male belongs to the 'General Population' group (his name sounds European) and one female is of mixed Sino-Mauritian and Indo-Mauritian origins (her father was Sino-Mauritian and her Mother Indo-Mauritian).

Consequently, this document is not an in-depth analysis of the working and living conditions of the former estate workers, and the data presented should be considered as indicative of the life-experiences of the respondents.

Gender	Age (years old)	Region Born	Region Living	Occupation
Female	75	Bonne Mère	Bonne Mère	Labourer
Female	72	Belle Vue Harel	Plaine des Papayes	Labourer
Female	65	Camp de Masque Pave	Camp de Masque Pave	Labourer
Male	58	Bonne Mère	Bonne Mère	Plumber
Female	Unknown	Surinam	Trois Boutiques	Labourer
Female	63	Ti-Verger	Camp de Masque	Business owner
Male	83	Belle Vue Pilot	Pamplemousses	Labourer
Male	Unknown	Ferney	Plaine Magnien	Labourer
Female	Unknown	Henrietta	Plaine Magnien	Labourer
Male	Unknown	Reunion - Vacoas	Rose Belle	Labourer
Female	Unknown	Unknown	Plaine Magnien	Labourer
Male	82	Plaisance - Rose Hill	Plaine des Papayes	<i>Sirdar</i>
Male	Unknown	Petite Rivière-Noire	Grande Rivière Sud Est	<i>Sirdar</i>
Male	72	Camp de Masque	Unknown	<i>Sirdar</i>
Female	66	Camps Cheveau - Mapou	Plaine des Papayes	Seamstress
Male	82	St. Antoine	Camp de Masque	Tailor
Female	68	Montagne Blanche	Unknown	Labourer
Male	66	Bénarès	Unknown	Labourer
Female	60	Trou d'Eau Douce	Fuel	Labourer

The workers' profile shows that the most of them were born during the pre-Independence period (in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s). The interviewees, age groups indicate that the latter's working life correspond to the Great Depression period when the Sugar Industry faced serious backlash because of declining sugar prices.

In the sample, the labourer strata is over-represented, which implies that the other occupation stratum such as *Sirdar* (Labourer supervisor) and the *métayer* (Sharecropper) are under-represented and not represented.

## 2. WORKING CONDITIONS

### Occupational Patterns

Family histories revealed a generational transmission of occupations with the respondents and their elders (parents and grandparents) performing almost similar jobs. For generations, they were estate agricultural workers employed as labourer and/or *Sirdar* (Eng. trans. Overseer).

Furthermore, across generations some respondents have been working for the same estate, since estate workers were recruited amongst families already working for them.

For example, Goinsamy and his sisters worked as field labourer, on St. Pierre estate as his father and his grandmother on his father's side. Tyaciitee was working as plumber on Fuel Estate and now his daughter does as well.

*...Eh ou bane paren ki travay zot ti pe fer? samem labourer mem...Be eski ou ti pe travay dan karo kann? wi karo kann...St Pierre...ou bann frer ou bann ser eski zot ti pe travay dan karo kann? wi ti pe travay dan karo meme...<sup>107</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: And your parents which job did they do? Same labourer...But you worked in sugar cane field? Yes in sugar cane field...St Pierre...Your brothers and sisters were working in sugar cane field? Yes they also worked in sugar cane field...)*

Based on the testimonies, even if the respondents faced limited employment opportunities, their children and the present generations were able to seize opportunities offered and are not working as agricultural labourers.

*...Lerla monn gagn enn garson li travay la doine apret enn an enn an parla monn gagn mo tifi li travay miss Beau Bassin linn marye Beau Bassin apret mo ena troiziem tifi savedir dan tifi mo deuziem tifi liapel Madhumati inn parti linn all Australie...<sup>108</sup>*

*(Eng. trans. Then I got a boy he when works as customs officer then after approximately one year I got a daughter she works as teacher in Beau-Bassin she is married in Beau-Bassin later I got a third daughter, which means amongst the daughters my second daughter is named Madhumati she went to Australia...)*

Differences in occupational patterns were identified with the respondents' children and grandchildren working as office workers or public servants and doing white-collar and blue-collar jobs. Most interviewees stated that their children were not agricultural labourers and do not work on estates.

For example, the children of Mardemootoo work as public servant and in the private sector. They are proud of their children who have contributed to the upward social mobility of their family.

Differential occupational patterns across generations are indicative of horizontal and vertical socioeconomic mobility. There is a direct correlation between vertical and horizontal mobility and academic educational achievement.

#### Gender discriminations amongst the work force

Despite the Annual Reports of the Labour Department and Ministry of Labour prior to 1973, analysed by Couacaud, indicating that women should be paid equal wages for doing equal work, differential wages between men and women persisted. This discriminatory practice was corroborated by testimonies which revealed that women and children were paid less than men and even half less.

*...si ou pe koup kann enn misier pe koup kann zot la payy ti parey? Non misier la pu gagn so zurne pliss. Kifer? Pa kone sa bann blan la zot la lua sa beti...Ti travayy bann madam fer bann gro travay bann misier fer...<sup>109</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: if you were cutting cane and they were cutting cane, did you earn same salary? No, the men earned more money for the day's work. Why? I do not know it was the White's law women did light work men did arduous work)*

The nature of the work performed by women and children and the differences in their physical predisposition justified unequal wages. Women and children were supposed to do lighter tasks such as *spreading manure*, weeding and *depaiaz* (Eng. trans. removing straw from sugar cane) that demanded less physical strength, whilst men did arduous work, such as loading and unloading sugar cane and stone-breaking because they were physically stronger than the former. In other words, women were paid less because their work output were supposedly less compared to that of men.

## Child Labour

Under colonial rules and in the post-Independence period, child labour was sanctioned and institutionalised. *Chokras* (Eng. trans. Child labourers) and women were a source of cheap labour for the estates.

Furthermore, child labour was a means for families to secure additional income. Children had a financial obligation towards their families, and hence all the respondents started working at an early age, as young as 7 years of age.

Dananan started working at 7 years of age; he earned 20 cents per working day and at 15 years of age, he worked as sugar cane cutter when he earned approximately 1.50 rupees per working day.

When Bawol was a child, he worked as poultry keeper and earned 15 rupees per week.

Hence, most respondents were deprived of their childhood because from a young age, they took on adult responsibilities. In his analysis, Mishra reveals how because of minimal wage practices, large families forced not only children, but also juveniles to work thus depriving them from 'natural childhood and overall growth'.

## Work duties and Promotional Prospects

The respondents who were *Sirdars*, initially were labourers and later were promoted to the post of *Sirdar*, such as Mardemootoo who was employed as labourer and then was promoted to *Sirdar* and Goinsamy.

Often, their promotion was accompanied with a wage upgrade and for some, like Satianand, it was an opportunity to become a landowner. He started working as a field labourer in 1949 and in 1962, he was promoted to *Sirdar* and the same year, he bought a plot of land where is currently living.

In the hierarchy of Management, the *Sirdar* and the field labourers were at the bottom the pyramid. The *kolom* (Eng. trans. Field supervisor) also named, by some informants, as the *Ti-Sef* (Eng. trans. Small Chief) was the middle manager. The estate manager, referred to as the *Gran-Sef* (Eng. trans. Great Chief) was at the top of the pyramid.

## *Sirdar*

Both men and women could be a labourer supervisor. Yet, *Sirdars* outnumbered *Sirdarine* (Female labourer supervisor). Some respondents mentioned that the *Sirdar* was a literate<sup>110</sup> person, but it seems that literacy was not a core promotional criterion, given that some *Sirdars* were illiterate.

For example, Dananan started work as field labourer and when the *Kolom* saw that he was a hard worker and was meticulous in his work, he was promoted to *Sirdar*. He stated that he is illiterate because he abandoned schooling at an early age to start work.

The main duty of the *Sirdars* was to supervise the field labourers and to take attendance. Other work obligations varied from one estate to the other; for example as on some estates, they did supervision work and on others, they did manual work as well.

For instance, when Bawol arrived at the field, he recorded the names of the labourers who were present and absent, the time they arrived and the number of labourers present. He gave the records to the *Kolom*. There were approximately 4 to 5 groups of labourers, both men and women.

Each *Sirdar* supervised a group of approximately 25 labourers.

When Mardemootoo worked as *Sirdar* on Rose-Belle Estate, he had to control the pay-slips of the labourers every Thursday and on Fridays; the management (he might refer to the *Kolom* and *Marker* (Eng. trans. Payroll office)) came to his office. When the labourers received their payment, they signed to attest that their pay was accurate and he sent them to the Accounting Department.

Some interviewees stated that the *Sirdar* decided when lunch-time was and at what time work finished, distributed work tasks and gave instructions (that the *Kolom* gave him the day before) to the labourers. Others like Mardemootoo declared that the Section Manager (that is the Field Supervisor) distributed the work tasks and informed the labourers in which sections (the fields were divided into sections) they worked.

The *Sirdar* was answerable to the *Kolom* who controlled the labourers work at the end of each working day. When the *Kolom* was not satisfied with the quality of the work, he scolded the *Sirdar* who, subsequently, scolded the labourers and, sometimes, even hit the workers.

Bhudyea testified how when the *Gran-Sef* blamed the *Ti-Sef*, the latter reprimanded the *Sirdar* who, subsequently, scolded the labourers and at times took his revenge on the labourers for having been blamed. The *Gran-Sef* and the *Ti-Sef* were 'White' men and Dananan affirmed that the Estate Manager was in contact neither with the *Sirdar*, nor with the labourers.

The sugar estate was structured. As per the estate power structure and line of command (top-down line of command), the Estate Manager gave instructions to *Kolom* who passed on the orders to the *Sirdar*.

Even if the Labour Ordinance Act 1938 regulated the working hours to 8 hour, yet it seems that the piece-rate system of payment was maintained and apparently, the *Sirdar* took advantage of the system. Satianand testified that the more work the labourers completed, the more money the *Sirdar* earned.

#### Field Labourers

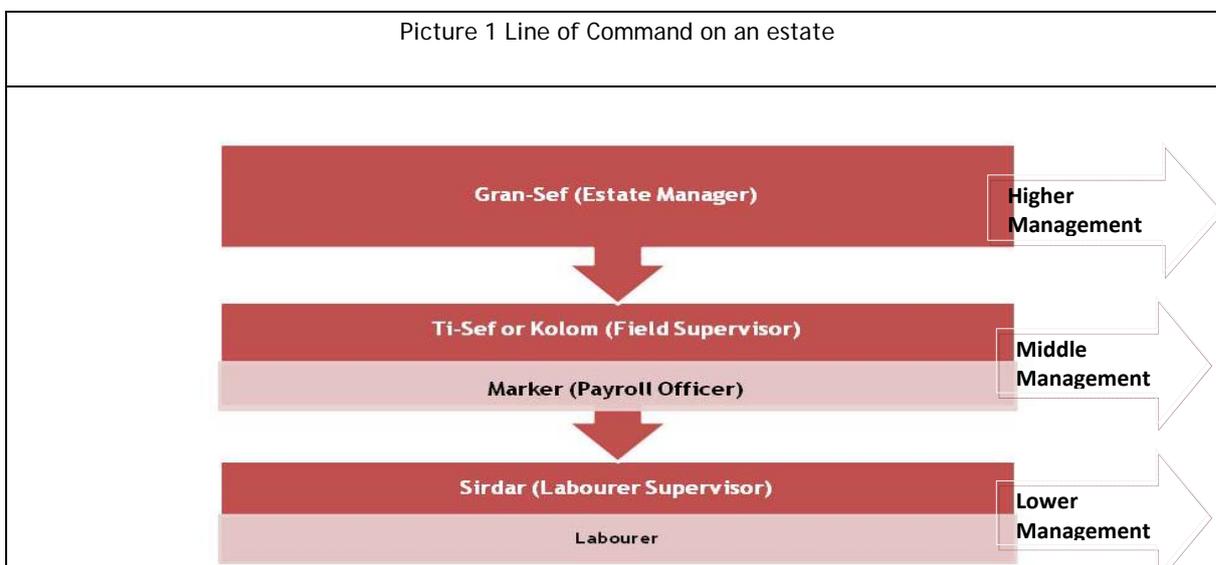
The conditions of the labourers working for job contractors, and of others who worked for the estate, differed. It seems that those working for the job contracts experienced more discrimination (see Couacaud report).

The labourers' working day started at three or four in the morning and finished at approximately four in the afternoon. They had one-hour lunch at noon and brought their lunch. They were obliged to reach the field on time at six in the mornings if not they were *marron* (Eng. trans. they were caught and done). During cane-cutting season, they worked from three in the morning.

*...kiler ou ti bizin ale dan caro pu coupe canne? sa 3hr du matin...3hr du matin nu ale.nou coupe canne parfois 2hr nu p vini parfois 2hr30 nu p vin lakaz...<sup>111</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: At what time you went to the field to cut sugarcane? 3 hrs in the morning...we went at 3 in the morning sometimes at 2 we are back, sometime 2 hrs 30, we back home)*

*In the past there was no alarm clock, some respondents like Mardemootoo attested that*



*there was someone who fer lapel (Eng. trans. muster) to wake up to cook food.*

*...Lapel ! wi dan le matin pa lapel tusel ena enn dimunn ki kriye pu kui manze pa ti ena reveyy naryein pa ti ena enn dimunn li kriye be kan la ti tipti li pu kriye leve be pu kui manze ou kompren la. Letan li fini kriye lapel pu kui manze apret ena enn lerr li kriye pu lapel alor la tu travayerr bizin la tu seff seksion bizin la...<sup>112</sup>*

*(Eng. trans:...Muster! Yes in the morning not only the muster there was someone who screamed to cook there was no alarm clock there was nothing someone called the camp was small he called to wake up to cook food you understand. When he finished calling to cook food there was a time he called and all the worker had to be there and the sections managers)*

However, it seems that the working hours varied from one estate to the other, and from one period to the other. For in the 1920s, Goinsamy's started work at seven in the morning and finished work at one in the afternoon. In the 1940s, Narrayanee worked from seven in the morning until three in the afternoon.

While some respondents walked to their place of work, for others, a lorry drove them to and from their place of work. For example, a lorry picked up Goinsamy who was living in Flacq and drove him to and from Belle Vue. But, sometimes, he did not wait for the lorry that picked them at 2 in the afternoon and walked back home.

Indumatee was working in Sans Souci and was living in Bonne Mère. A lorry fetched her in the morning and drove her back in the evening. She was back home at five in the evening.

The provision of transport facilities became mandatory with the proclamation of the Labour Acts 1975 that lays down that when an employee's place of work is more than 3 miles from his/her place of residence and the worker is required to work between 9.00 p.m. and 5.00 a.m., the employer should provide him/her with transport. Where facilities of transport by bus are available at the time the worker is required to start or to cease work, a sum equivalent to the bus fare for the return journey between his usual place of residence and the place of work.

The field labourers' work was physically strenuous, and they were forced to work whatever the weather conditions because, in the past, they did not benefit from sick leave and of local leave. Even if, in keeping with the Royal Commission Report (1909), after the outbreak of Suma in 1902, mechanical transport and traction engines were used for the transportation of sugar cane, yet, the respondents affirmed that sugar production relied essentially on manpower, there were no machines and no animals. Indeed, mechanisation of labour-intensive field operations, such as removal of old cane stubbles, planting and sowing, was a late 20<sup>th</sup> -century incentive as a solution to labour shortage.

### Wages and other work benefits

The Industrial Relations Act 1973 stipulates that the Trade Unions should take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees understand and observe all health and safety precautions, whether established by Law or by agreement and, in particular, make use of protective equipment.

Before the amendments to the Act and to the Sugar Industry Relations Act 1983, it seems estates did not provide protective clothing (gloves, boots, mask and coats) to the field labourers who went to work with their *linz lakaz* (Eng. trans. House clothes) and bare-foot. Some, like Indrawatee, sewed their own protections such as long sleeved blouses to protect their arms and trousers to protect their legs. Because it was slippery, they did not wear slippers, as they could hurt themselves and lose their slippers.

Based on Bawol's testimony, following the Trade Unionist's lobby, they were provided with protective clothing, but the estate deducted the purchase of these equipments from the labourers' salary, and hence they were paid less.

*...En oui, tabismen ti pe donn nou iniform. Envan na pa ti pe donn sa, ale ale ler sindika ine fer, bann sindika ine diskite. Apre kan finn fini, lera ine pass lalwa, sindika ine pass lalwa ki bizin ena travayer, bizin donn linz, soulye ek bot ek legan. Lera inn redir nou lapey, dan sa lapey la inn redir inn donn nou. Pa kalkile linn koup nou larzen, ek samem li finn donn nou bot ek linz ein...<sup>113</sup>*

*(Eng. Trans: Yes the estate provided uniforms. Before they did not provide, when the trade union was set, the union discussed. After discussion they passed a law, the union passed a regulation that they should provide clothing, shoes and boots and gloves. Then they reduced our salary, they deduct from our salary. We did not think they reduced our salary, with this [Money] they gave us books and clothings)*

Hence, they often injured themselves; for example, they got rashes in their hands and legs, were bitten by insects like *mouss zaun* (Eng. trans. Yellow fly) and got other skin irritations and bruises. They had no health insurance, and when injured or ill, they relied on herbal medicine or went to the estate hospital/medical dispensary that delivered free basic health services.

None of the respondents complained about the estate medical dispensary was poorly equipped. This can be explained by the fact that the estate workers attended the estate medical dispensary for small injuries and for serious injuries and illnesses they went to the nearest civil hospital.

Regarding tools, while some estate provided the labourers with tools such as billhook, hoe, and scrape, others like Dananan used their personal equipments that they purchased.

During the 'bad old days'<sup>114</sup>, the rights of the estate workers were not recognized, neither respected nor protected, until the Labour Movement in the 1930s such as the Society for the Welfare of Mauritian Workers and later the Trade Unionist Movement, fought for better wages and work conditions. Their fight, subsequently became the main thrust of the Labour Party and the Mouvement Militant Mauricien's political campaigns.

The 'bad old days' and the harsh and oppressive working conditions on the sugar estates led to the small planters' riots of 1937 and 1945 and to the strike of 1938. The labourers claimed better wages and better working conditions. Although she was young, when these events happened, Neelvadee testified how her mother used to narrate her stories about the strike on Belle Vue Harel.

The latter told her that people were killed during the riots and that members of a whole family were shot dead in St. André.

Later, various international declarations and law-abiding agreements obliged the Local Government to regulate the working conditions of the employees, including agricultural and non-agricultural workers. However, it should be noted that the sugar estate casual workers are presently still facing the same discriminatory practices, as a backlash of the current social and economic crisis.

The Lalit Movement in 2009 published that Rose-Belle Sugar Estate, a State-run sugar estate, was employing labourers on a casual basis and the latter, unlike the other employees, received gloves and nets only and were not given raincoats, boots and tools. Moreover, the estate sent an overseer to supervise gangs of casual labourers. These casual labourers were formerly employed labourers who for the last 10-15 years took their Voluntary Retirement Scheme lump sum and a plot of land. Now, the estate labourers received a daily wage of 171 rupees only and did not receive either a sick leave or a local leave nor pension, nor any other job security<sup>115</sup>

Regarding wages, some respondents were paid a fixed rate according to the task accomplished, such as the number of *gaulettes* (Eng. trans. measuring unit approx. 12 feet) of sugarcane harvested and the *arpent* (0.43 hectare) of land worked. Others were paid a fixed rate per working a day. Based on Mardemootoo testimony, labourers received salary increments and at the end of year, a bonus as well.

While the labourers were paid at the end of the week, usually on Fridays or on Saturdays, it seems that the *Sirdars* received monthly remuneration, such as Mardemootoo's salary which, each month, was paid directly in his bank account.

Apparently, modes/ways of payment varied from one estate to the other. On some estates, the *Kolom* gave the salaries to the *Sirdar* who paid the labourers. On other estates, the labourers collected their salaries in the *Kolom* office.

Bhudyea declared that the *Sirdar* came to her place weekly to pay her. Later, she went to the office to pick up her salary and was paid every 15 days. The *marker* listed the names of the labourers for payment.

The testimonies on wages paid varied, but these discrepancies arose from different working periods. Furthermore, when comparing the estate remunerations practices, slight differences were identified in the remuneration of labourers. Nevertheless, overall, wages remained low as illustrated in the examples below. Minimal wages kept the estate workers in poverty and had various collateral consequences. Low wages fostered child labour, forced women to work and promoted small-scale farming.

The Royal Commission Report (1909) confirmed that agricultural estate labour was on the whole cheap labour, with wages ranging from one to three rupees a month for boys and eight to nine rupees for men.

In 1962, when Satianand worked for FUEL Estate, he earned 15 rupees per full working-day and was paid 39.90 rupees per full working week as *Sirdar*. He stated that a labourer earned approximately 4.10 rupees per full working day. During his trial period, he was paid in kind with 13 pieces of bananas. When he started working in 1949, women were paid 2.75 rupees per full working day and later they were paid 3.15 to 3.30 rupees per full working day.

When Goinsamy started working at 7 years of age as tobacco labourer for Vergé Estate, he earned 20 cents per working day. When his grandfather was promoted to *Sirdar*, he increased his salary to 25 cents per working day. When his work duties changed, he was paid 50 to 75 cents. On Beau Vallon Estate, he earned 1.50 cents per day's work for weeding. In 1965/1966, he started working for Constance Estate as labourer and earned 5.25 rupees per working day. When he worked as sugarcane cutter, he was paid 3.68 cents for 1 ton of sugarcane and 5.25 rupees for 1 to 6 tons of sugarcane. If he completed 55% and 80% of his work task in one day, he was paid 4 days' work and 6 days' work respectively.

Mardemootoo worked in the sugar mill for 50 cents per day's work and later for 60 cents per working day. Afterwards, he worked as field labourer for 1.50 rupees per week. Each year, his salary increased with the rise in the cost of living and his workload also increased. His last salary amounted to two rupees per week. In 1951, he enrolled in the Army and came back in 1954 and took employment on Rose Belle Estate.

It seems that on some estates, for the cane-cutting season the labourers were paid more, which encouraged them to work harder. For example, Pentiah's wife earned three rupees and her husband five rupees per days work. Later, she earned five rupees and her husband 10 rupees per working day. During the cutting season, if they cut two tons, or 2½ tons, or three tons of sugarcane they earned additional money.

### Wage Cuts and other discriminatory practices

All respondents denounced the practice of wage cut as penalties, when work did not meet the *Kolom's* quality standards. In their respective reports, Couacaud and Mishra show how this practice was a customary means to fine and penalise the labourers.

When the *Kolom* was not satisfied with the quality of the work of a labourer, either he did not pay the latter his working day, or, he marked the latter as absent, and hence the labourer was not paid his/her day's work or the *Kolom* ordered the labourer to redo the work the next day, which implies that the latter lost a working day.

*...Si travay pa ti bon ki arive lerla? Si travay pa bon li koup ou larzan...linn fini met ou maron...komie li koupe? Zoune net...<sup>116</sup>*

*(Eng. Trans: If the work was not good, what happened? If the work is not good, he reduced the salary...he already penalised you...how much did he cut off? One day)*

Pentiah's wife testified that one day, her father came back home disappointed and without his salary. He told her mum that the 'White' (referring to the field supervisor) came and he was not satisfied with the quality of the work. He told the labourers to redo the work on Monday and then they will be paid. When the Labour Party came to power, they ordered the Estate Managers that every day, they should check the labourers' work and ask them to redo the work the same day because the latter were 'poor' and needed the money to feed their family. As from then her mother started making savings to buy food and clothing that did not have before.

Another customary practice of ordering the labourers to return home, because they were few minutes late in the morning, was an overt way of cutting the labourer's wage who, in the log book, was recorded as absent.

*...Siss zerr bizin rent dan karo. Siss zerr ou travay ti pe komanse? Wi maa enn tigit si tar la ou retourn lakaz si ou vinn tard. Kisanla ti pe retourn ou? Sirdar la...<sup>117</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: At 6 o'clock had to reach the field. Your work started at 6 o'clock? Yes if you were a little late he returned you home if you late. Who returned you home? The Sirdar)*

Employers took advantage of the 1862 Labour Ordinance to mark as absent, labourers who had to walk five miles to work and thus spent half their time walking.

The labourers were not paid for when they were marked as days absent. Hence, when they were ill or after giving birth, they did not perceive a salary. However, in instances of maternity, Bawol declared that the estate provided them milk for approximately three months.

Because of these harsh discriminatory practices, the labourers perceived the *Sirdar* and the *Kolom* as being harsh and unjust. They used their power and authority in an abusive and oppressive way. Yet, the perception of *Sirdars* is not unanimous, *ena ou gagn move ena ou gagn inpe bon<sup>118</sup>* (Eng. trans. There were good and bad *Sirdars*).

Although corporal punishment was not sanctioned, it was a common practice. However, as stated by Dananan, the *Kolom* did not hit nor ill-treat the *Sirdar*, but the former gave instructions to the

latter to hit and even dismiss the labourers who did not do their work properly. When dismissed, they did not receive any compensation.

The degree of the punishment was not as harsh as during the slave period. Such practices exemplify the gap that existed between the Law and the application of the Law.

### 3. LIVING CONDITIONS

#### Subsistence

Motivated by the willingness to improve their living conditions and to offer to future generations opportunities of a better life, the respondents worked hard and tried, as much as possible, to make savings. Subsequently, several interviewees testified that they were horticulturalists<sup>119</sup> and that their parents were *métayers*. These activities, small-scale farming and sharecropping, were alternative economic avenues.

For example, Satianand's family was poor and to make ends meet, they practised small-scale farming; they cultivated land and reared cattle for sales. His father worked as labourer and was a *métayer* as well. His father and uncles rented a field in Clemencia (located on the West Coast Southeast of Camp de Masque Pave) of approximately 1 *arpent* or 1½ *arpent*. It seems that it was marshy land and between 1944 and 1945, they cultivated rice. Gradually with the savings they made, his father and uncles bought two or three plots of land.

Many of the estate workers interviewed lived a semi self-sufficient lifestyle. They practised small-scale farming as a means of subsistence and as a source of additional income as well. They cultivated vegetables and fruit, mostly, cassava, potatoes, sweet potatoes, *pommes d'amour* (Eng. trans. tomatoes), banana and *chou chou* (Eng. trans. chayote or christophene). They reared livestock, mostly cows for milk and chickens, for their personal consumption, and they sold the surplus.

*...Li ti plante avec li ti pe vende osi ti ena 1 bout la ter? Wi so mama ti don li. E Kombyen la livr ti pe vende? Pa kone 5 sou si pa 10 sou...Dimounn ti pe achete? Wi mo mama ti pe, ti pe vende...<sup>120</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: he was cultivating [land] and selling as well there was he had a plot of land? Yes his mum gave him [a plot of land]. How much the pound was sold? Do not know 5 cents or 10 cents...People bought? Yes my mum sold...)*

Bawol confirmed that they earned more money with rearing livestock. He had a cow and with the sales of the milk, he earned approximately 70 rupees per month. He sold the milk to a merchant who sold the milk in town.

Compared to nowadays, they were less dependent on the consumption market to feed themselves. Hence, they could afford to make savings to invest in land. Consequently, most of the respondents who were initially tenants or whose parents were tenants are now property owners.

For example, Dananan is now a small planter and the owner of three or four fields. It seems that he gave one field to his son. He employs people and sells his crop at the market. His field are means to secure revenue.

They bought essentially canned food, bread, fish and sardine. Those who were not provided with free ration purchased rice and oil as well. All the respondents stated that, long ago compared to nowadays, food was relatively cheap. However, life was expensive, given the prevailing socio-economic context. They were financially poor but they did not starve because they were, to some degree, self-sufficient and *Manze li labondanss kass ti mizerr aster nu ena kass manze mizer<sup>121</sup>* (Eng. trans. food was abundant money was poor now we have money food is poor).

For example, Dananan estimated the cost of rice was 5 cents a pound; bread, 1 cent, and sardine, 3 cents. Bhudyea bought fish for 40 to 60 cents that she found relatively cheap.

According to the Royal Commission Report (1909, p. 11), small planters consisted of Indians cultivating from half an acre to 100 acres of land. The *morcellement* movement had been going for a considerable number of years (since the 1840s). Most Indian immigrants and Indo-Mauritians bought their land under a system of payment in five annual instalments and often, they agreed to pay high prices of the land. It was considerable financial burden until the purchase money was paid off, which might take more than five years. The closing of small sugar mills allowed the estate owners to divide portions of their land among Indian small planters who constituted an important section of the community.

The report went further, expounding that the colony's prosperity and progress relied on these small planters.

This semi self-sufficient lifestyle allowed people to survive harsh living conditions in estate camps, and especially during the Second World War, when food was further rationed and especially rice. As stable food, potato and cassava were substitute to rice and people shared and/or bartered their harvest.

The residents lived a rather natural lifestyle. They practised recycling; they used the sugarcane by-products such as the sugarcane fibres to feed the cattle; they used natural material to construct toys and used the cans as glasses. For example, Satianand fetched a cart of sugarcane fibres to feed the two cows they reared. A cart of food lasted 2 to 3 days. After the cutting season, the fibres were scarce and they fed the animals with grass. They sold the milk to a wholesaler who came to Clemencia on a motorcycle to buy the milk that he sold in Port Louis. The milk was stored in *bidon de lait* (Eng. trans. Tin).

They were aware of their environmental and natural resources and the importance to preserve resources for future generations. Hence, they were cautious not to waste food and other resources, and of the dangers of overconsumption.

However, it should be stressed that even though it is a popular belief that all the descendants of Indian immigrants were/are small planters, which implies that they lived a semi self-sufficient lifestyle, in fact, some of the respondents did not practise small-scale farming. Since they lived in estate camps, they were provided with free ration and they were dependent on the consumer market. The credit facilities that the shopkeepers offered to their clients ensured that the latter could feed themselves.

*...Zot aste manze? Wi laboutik. Ouswar zot plante? Non laboutik...kot nou ti pe pran rasyon zot donn nou credi...Ler ou gagn lapey ou paye...<sup>122</sup>*

*(Eng. trans. You bought food? Yes [at the] shop or you grew? No [at the shop]...where we bought food they provided credit...when you get your salary you pay back)*

The workers were provided with a ration card on which the Estate Management wrote the number of children. The Royal Commissioners reported that most estate owners issued rations and the value of the labourer's rations ranged from four to six rupees a month. However, many township day labourers who were Coloured Creoles received from 50 cents to 1 rupee a day without rations<sup>123</sup>.

When they went for food shopping, they presented the card to the shopkeeper who gave them their ration as per the details on the card. But, along the lines of the testimonies, it seems that rations to which they were entitled, varied from one estate to the other.

Goinsamy had 5 pounds of cassava and of potato that lasted approximately two days and bought cornflour and taro. For Bhudyea, they had ¼ oil, ¼ soap and ½ pound of rice per week.

### Housing conditions and constructions

The estate econo-ethnic hierarchical organisation was reproduced in the residential segregation of the camps that was based on occupation. Residential segregation was common practice on the sugar estates. There was a camp for the agricultural labourers, including the *Sirdars*; and another where the artisans who worked in the sugar mill lived. *L'Etat-Major* (Eng. trans. The middle

managers) lived separately. Accordingly, the estate employees occupied different spaces according to their job status, which implies that they enjoyed different facilities.

*...Tu labourerr mem. Tu travayy dan le champ mem. Wi so madam so zom tu. Be bann artizan kot ti pe reste? Bann artizan ti ena dan kamp apart. Parski artizan tipe travayy dan Moulin. Leta mazor li travayy dan seksion li seff seksion sa, sa zot lakaz separe...<sup>124</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: All labourers. All worked in the Champ. Yes wives and husbands. But where the artisans stayed? The artisans were separate. Because the artisans worked in the mill. The managers worked in the section (office) he is the manager of the section, his house was separated)*

The house construction materials were overt indicators of differential treatment. The labourers lived in thatched houses, whilst the artisans' houses were made of corrugated iron-sheet and it seems the latter enjoyed better living conditions. The living conditions in the camps, where the agricultural labourers lived, were rudimentary compared to the camps where the artisans lived. Even if the artisan and the labourers were manual workers, the latter had a lower status compared to the former.

The houses of the agricultural labourers were either individual *Maizon kaka vas* (Eng. trans. Houses made with cow dung) or were *langard* (Eng. trans. Sheds) divided into several rooms.

While some respondents testified that the camp houses were not numbered, others like Mardemootoo stated the contrary. He lived in a *Maizon kaka vas* number one and consisting of three rooms. Regarding the sheds, the names of the families were written on the doors of the rooms that they occupied.

The traditional *lakaz kaka vas* were thatched houses made with cow dung and bamboo or aloe sticks. The floor and walls were glazed with cow dung that was mixed with white and red soil. White soil acted as cement and solidified the cow dung. The houses consisted of two rooms, one room for the parents and another for the children and in-laws.

These constructions were not resistant to rain and cyclonic weather. Satianand recollected how Cyclone *Carol* destroyed his family house. The houses' remains were used to rebuild the houses in iron-sheet. The sheets of fuel tanks were sold one rupee each sheet and used to construct the houses.

According to Bawol, when the houses were destroyed, it was the estate's responsibility to rebuild them. A guardian checked which houses were in ruins and in a good state and informed the estate management. The latter, then, made a check and gave instructions to the building contractors to repair the shattered houses.

However, it seems that on some estates, the houses were constructed in cement like in Camp Softerre that, as per Mardemootoo's statement, consisted of *block* houses. The residents were built with the blocks after the Cyclone *Gervaise*.

Taking on Bhudyea's statement, Friday was the appropriate day for glazing for the reason that it was a praying day. The association between prayer and cleaning might be because of the religious conviction that the house has to be clean for prayer as a sign of respect. Cleanliness is commonly conceived as visible sign of purity. For prayer you should be clean inside and outside.

The sheds were made up of 15 to 20 rooms that were separated by gunny bags and each family occupied two rooms. For example, when Dananan was a child, he used to live in Helvetia camp that consisted of a *hangar* and his family lived in two or three rooms. There was no toilet; thus, they used the estate toilet and no bathroom, so they fetched water from the public tap.

*...lakaz dan kan ti ena bann separasion arr goni...ena goni bare la lot fami la rest la bas pa ti ena toilet pa ti ena naryein kaka brit partu lor bord sime mem dan kann kot gagne...Pa ti ena pa ti ena igien ditou...<sup>125</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: the houses in the camps there were separations with gunny (bags)...there were gunny separating there...another family there living over there was no toilet there was nothing defecating everywhere along the road side in the sugarcane [field] where they could...there was no hygiene)*

Regarding furnishings, the testimonies diverge on which furniture were provided. Some mentioned there was a wardrobe only, others, that there were twin beds as well, but without mattresses, and some that there was no furniture. As mattress, they used gunny bad filled with grass.

In the camps, there was no sewage, nor waste water system. The toilet system was rudimentary. Toilets were, in fact, common pit latrines that consisted of a deep hole in the soil, and sometimes a cover was placed on the hole. Hence, for hygiene reasons and because of the bad smell, the pit latrines were built at a certain distance from the houses.

Some respondents, like Dananan, mentioned that in some camps, there were no toilets and thus people practised open defecation.

The bathroom, as well, was a separate and independent unit built in the yard and consisted of a drum filled with water. Each family in the camp built his own bathroom with iron-sheets. Some had a roof, while others were not covered. Some respondents also mentioned that they bathed at the river or the public tap, such as Mardemootoo who went to the river to bathe and fetch water and for laundering. After Cyclone *Carol*, the Government installed a public tap at the upper end of the camp. Bawol stated that an inspector checked whether the water was drinkable.

Since there was no electricity, most people used petrol lamps, gas lamps and candles to light up their homes. For cooking, there was no kitchen and the camp residents built a fireplace with three stones and wood either inside the house or under the veranda.

According to Dananan, after the Voluntary Retirement Scheme, some of the camps were destroyed and the land divided into plots of 6 perches.

### **Academic Education and Mobility**

It is a commonly-held belief that the descendants of the Indian immigrants benefited from opportunities of academic education. In fact, many respondents revealed that their parents did not send them to school and they acquired only basic literacy and numeracy skills.

However, their children went to school and are more academically educated than they are. They did not want their children to experience the same harsh and deprived life. They wanted a better life and more prestigious work for the latter.

While some respondents went to school, others either did not attend school, or abandoned schooling at an early stage. Those who abandoned schooling before the end of the primary cycle are illiterate, whereas those who continued until the end of the primary cycle have acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The children started school at 6 years of age. Some of them abandoned schooling at approximately 8 years of age (after Standard 3 that is equivalent to the third year of primary educational cycle) or went to school until 12 years of age (Standard 6 that corresponds to the end of the primary educational cycle). Based on Satinanand's testimony, it seems that, after Standard 6, some children continued to take literacy and numeracy courses until 18 years of age, and the latter became primary school teachers.

For those who attended school, before and after school hours, the children worked in the fields and did household work. For example, before going to school, Satianand fetched water and from sunrise until nine in the morning, he was *gardyen zwazo* (Eng. trans. Chasing away birds). He went to the field to chase the birds that ate the rice cob. After school hours, he helped his father in the field to collect and transport *pommes d'amour* and to fetch food for the cows. He left school at 12 years of age, after finishing his primary educational cycle and, one year later, started working as field labourer on FUEL Estate.

Academic education was not compulsory and for the Colonial Government, the formal education of the children of Indian immigrants was a priority. Even if legal provisions were made for the setting up of half-time schools for the formal education of Indian children, in the obligatory subjects of ordinary schools up to Standard 4, it seems that this initiative failed.

The obligatory academic subjects were French, English, Arithmetic and Hindi and as from Standard 7 (that corresponds to the first year of the secondary education cycle) they learnt Algebra. In the past, there were no private tuition and as Mardemootoo affirmed, teachers were severe and hit children as punishment, when the latter misbehaved and did not work.

School started at 8 hrs 30 and finished at three in the afternoon. They had one hour for lunch at noon. The teachers did not care for their academic education only, but for the holistic development of children like hygiene habits, such as when the children reached school the teachers checked if they were clean and neat.

The Law stipulated that in the half-day schools, an Indian dialect might be substituted for either French or English and the teachers should demonstrate the ability to speak and write at least one Indian language.<sup>126</sup> Yet, the Royal Commissioners reported that, in practice, advantage was not taken of this provision on the grounds that there was no public demand for the establishment of such schools. However, based on testimonies gathered, other reasons might be brought forward to explain the failure of such initiative.

Firstly, while some parents were conscious of the importance of academic instruction as a means of upward mobility, for others, their daily survival was their main preoccupation. Indeed, we should not forget that, in the past (pre-and post-Independence Mauritians) *la vi ti dir* (Eng. trans. Life was harsh) and families were living *dan la miser* (Eng. trans. in poverty). Children, and especially boys, were primarily perceived as additional man-power that supplemented the family's financial budget.

For example, Mardemootoo stopped schooling when his father remarried, and to be able to stay with his stepfamily, he had to start work to contribute to the family budget. Dananan abandoned schooling at 7 years of age to start working. His grandfather on his mother's side did not consider academic education as a priority. The latter found that going to school was a waste of time and that instead, he should work to earn a living.

*...Li dir tu pagli hawe abhi bez ba bida karathawe lekol parheke...Wi li dir avoy li mo donn li 20 sous zurne mo pu fer li ramass sini parski mo mem mo sidar ounn kompren. Aster mama ki pu fer telmen sa lepok la kuma mo pe dir ou kuyon...<sup>127</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: he said you are mad it's a problem you send him to school...yes he send him [to work] I will give him 20 cents per day he will pick up caterpillars because I am Sirdar you understand. Now what mother will do at that time people were stupid)*

Secondly, often schools were remote from the respondent's residential place and thus, they had to walk to and from school. For example, there was no school in Mapou, the nearest school was in Pamplemousses and there was a school in Poudre d'Or. Hence, to go to school, Bawol caught the train at eight in the morning and when there was no train, he walked either to Pamplemousses or to Poudre d'Or. He went to school until Standard 2 and learnt French and English and once a week, there were Hindi classes.

Thirdly, even if respondents stated that both boys and girls went to school, some families did not send girls to school because of conservative traditional value systems that were prejudicial to girls. The female respondents who went to school abandoned schooling at a much earlier age than the male respondents. In addition, they got married at an earlier age than men.

Most female respondents were 5 to 10 years younger than their husbands and got married when they were adolescents. For example, Pentiah was 25 years of age when he got married and his wife was 12 years old. Bhudyea got married when she was 13.

*...Be eski ou ti kone kifer bann fami pa avoy zenfan lekol? Zot dir kan tifi al lekol zot pu vinn move zot pu zuenn garson zot pu kontan garson sipa pu ekrir lett garson akoz sa pann avoy lekol.Be mo krwar zist mo papa kin fer sa...<sup>128</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: you know why families did not send their children to school? They said when girls go to school they will turn bad [girls] they would meet boys fall in love would write letters to boys that is why did not send to school. I think only my father did that).*

Indrawatee's father did not send her to school because he believed that when girls go to school, they became 'bad girls' because they would fall in love in a boy and would write love letters. She should not forget that long ago arranged marriage was the prevailing marriage system. Girls were expected to obey their parents and to accept their parents' spouse choice as a socially-and culturally-accepted behaviour. They had to abide by the cultural agreements.

She started working at 9 years of age, she looked after her siblings and did domestic work. She got married at 17 years of age and her husband was ten years older. However, her half-sisters went to school because her stepmother and stepparents sent them to school.

In keeping with the testimonies, some of the respondents that did not have formal education went to the *Baithkas*<sup>129</sup> or to the *Madrassas*<sup>130</sup> in the early evening. These teaching institutions played an important role in the enculturation, socialisation and education of the Indian Diaspora. The *Baithkas* played a central role in the transmission of Indian languages, religious beliefs and cultural value systems to adults and children.

In fact, even though some of the respondents were not literate in English and French languages; yet, those who went to the *Baithka* might be literate in an Indian language (whether Hindi or Bhojpuri). This informal school delivered, primarily, religious education and literacy and numeracy courses in Indian languages. However, it seems that some delivered literacy and numeracy courses in other languages (in French and English).

As per the respondents' declarations, in each region and even in each estate camp, there were two *Baithkas*, one Puranic and another Vedic. The *Baithka* was a structured association (the *Baithka* society) with a President and a Treasurer. It was not just a teaching place but a gathering and socialising place as well, where the local population of Hindu faith met for religious ceremonies and for celebrating.

For example, in the evening Satianand's father went to the local *Baithka* that was a building of approximately 10 ft long and 10 ft. large that could contain 20 to 25 people. Women did not go except to teach the children and to learn Hindi. He went to the *Baithka* as well where he learnt Hindi.

*...Baithka la ti ena enfin dan sak lendrwa la ti ena baithka asosiasyon alor laba bann dimunn reuni zot koze parfwa ena ramayan , zot fer ramayana sak fett ki vini...ena bann zom bann zom mem pu ena bann madam rarr li all baithka li sa zist kumadir bann zenfan lirr...<sup>131</sup>*

*(Eng. trans: Baithka there was one in each region there was Baithka association so people gathered there they talk sometime there a Ramayana<sup>132</sup>; they do Ramayana at each festival...there were men the men only there were women rarely went to the Baithka just for children to read)*

Bawol (who was the Treasurer and the President of the society for seven years), went to the *Baithka* at five in the evening to learn Hindi. The *Baithka* Society with the contribution of its members paid for a teacher to teach them Hindi and later they learned more subjects.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, long ago, education was not free and accessible to everyone. Education was, and is still, elitist. The Free Primary Schooling Law was passed in 1944, and in 1976 and 1988, free Secondary Schooling and free Tertiary Education were introduced respectively. The Basic Compulsory Education Law was proclaimed in 1993 and only in 2005, was compulsory education extended up to 16 years of age.

### Community life and inter-ethnic relationships

While some estate camps were ethnically homogenous, others were ethnically heterogeneous. In ethnically diverse camps, the camp residents testified that there was social and ethnic cohesion. The residents lived in good neighbourhoods and there were no inter-ethnic clashes or divisions.

Yet, these testimonies should be considered with caution as it transpired from interviews that there were ethnic antagonism and religious segregation and that there were signs of inter-ethnic divisions. Inter-ethnic contacts were thus restricted.

For example, a respondent mentioned that long ago, Creoles were thieves and the Indo-Mauritians were afraid of them. Such statements uncover negative ethnic/racial stereotypical representations of people categorised as Creoles persist that are prejudicial to the latter. They are still perceived as bad people.

Another interviewee mentioned that for weddings, other religious groups were not invited and endogamy prevailed as a marriage pattern. People were not allowed to marry outside their religio-linguistic groups; for example, as a Tamil could marry neither a Marathi nor a Roman Catholic. Children had to obey their parents and accept the spouse their parents chose for them (an arranged marriage was the norm).

Intra-ethnic relationships were also harmonious and the *Baithka* (association) promoted ethnic unity. It seems that all the Hindu residents were members of the local *Baithka* and for special occasions, such as weddings and religious festivities and other ceremonies, all members voluntarily participated in the organisation of these festivities.

For example, Goinsamy was member of the *Baithka*. In the Helvetia camp, there were approximately 500 to 600 houses. There were 25 to 30 people living in the camp who were members of the society.

Testimonies revealed that this sense of group membership helped maintain group cohesion and the *Baithka* was inherent to the camp internal organisation. Wedding preparations were overt signs of this social organisation.

### Family life, roles and duties

The respondents' life was conditioned by their work. They had limited free time, since they spent their time working for survival. They woke up in the early morning, but women woke up before their husbands (usually at three or four in the morning) and came back from work in the early afternoon (between two and four in the afternoon) depending on the work load and the distance between their places of work and residence.

During their free time, those who were small planters, especially men, worked in their fields. Women and children did household chores and *masone* (Eng. trans. Glazed) the walls and floor of their houses with cow dung mixed with white and red soil.

At night, they were so tired after a day's work that they did not have much time for family discussions. Usually, storytelling time was after dinner and during bad weather, when people could not go to work. The elders, most of the time, narrated stories *lor la miser* (about their harsh living conditions), on their childhood memories and on religio-cultural traditions and practices. None of the respondents stated that their elders narrated stories on indentured-ship or slavery.

For example, when Goinsamy was 8-9 years of age, his grandmother on his mother's side did not tell him how she came to Mauritius. They were poor and at that time, people spent most of their time working and, when at home, they did housework. Hence, they did not have much time for storytelling.

Storytelling time was not only a relaxing and nostalgic moment of reminiscences that ensured generational transmission of past memories. It had a social function as well.

On the one hand, it was a bonding moment that strengthened family ties. It contributed to generational bonding and, hence, kept family members close. In addition, it furthered good

*entente* between neighbours and, therefore, maintained community cohesion and social order in estate camps.

On the other hand, it was a means of educating and socialising for future generations. Often it was an opportunity for parents to transmit to their children moral values and principles and guide the latter to achieve greater success in life.

For example, Tyaciitee's parents gave him much cautionary advices such as that, firstly, he should learn at school to be *enn gran dimunn* (Eng. trans. To be a great person), in other words, to be an achiever in life. Secondly, he should never hang around with thieves; otherwise, he might become a thief. They warned him of dangers of bad peer influences that could lead him astray. Thirdly, he should always look forward and never backward in life, which implies that he should be longsighted and not be rooted in the past to achieve in life. All these admonitions served to teach him to be safe and seize opportunities of social mobility and of better living conditions.

Before the introduction of radio and television after Independence, the wealthy families possessed a gramophone to which they listened at night. Bhudyea's family was too poor to buy a gramophone; so she went to her neighbour's house to listen. Record players and later electronic appliances were luxury goods that were accessible to wealthy families solely. They were thus signs of wealth and social status.

The family patterns showed that, in the past, large families were favoured, with families composed of 6 to 12 members. Parents had 5 to 11 children. A number of children meant additional manpower that was an extra source of income for the family and, subsequently, greater opportunities of upward socio-economic mobility for the whole family. For example, Satianand has two sisters and four brothers and for him, children have a financial and social duty towards their family, and especially their elders.

Furthermore, according to Satianand's statement, long ago, the number of children was a social status indicator. It was a symbol of prestige and respect in the community. The more children a person had, the higher his social status was, and, subsequently, he acquired higher prestige in his community. It seems that for people social representation was an important life aspect; a person's social worth was founded on the number of offsprings.

While in some families, children enjoyed their childhood, in other families, they were robbed of their childhood either because of child labour, or because from a young age, they endorsed family responsibilities. Some respondents, like Pentiah, did not have time to play because he worked and helped his mother.

Those who had time to play attested that, in the past, boys and girls played together and there were no problems. Schools, as well, were mixed. Gender segregation is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century construction that was introduced by the feminists who were exposed to European values (many went to study in Europe and came back to Mauritians). Even if gender struggle is inherent in the history of society, in Mauritius gender issues, and especially women/girls issues took on a greater visibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In some instances, respondents, when they were children, did household chores to help their parents and gave a hand to their parents in the fields. But, earning a living and household chores were the primary responsibilities of parents, and children gave a hand only. For example, as from 11 years of age, Satianand helped his father in the fields.

In other instances, it was the children primary responsibilities, and especially the girls' responsibilities, to do household work, while their parents were at work. The children worked to contribute to the family budget as well.

For example, Bhudyea did not go to school because it was her responsibility to do household chores and to look after her handicapped sister who died at 6 years of age. She wanted to go to school but she could not, and they were poor.

Housekeeping has always been the primary responsibility of women whose primary roles have, for years, been limited to the private sphere of the family. Women were seen as housewives and mothers first.

Living in relative poverty, and because of the resulting feeling of deprivation, women were forced to work to help their family make ends meet. Women worked either as labourers or as domestic workers. Before and after going to work, they had to fulfil their as wives and mothers duties.

Women carried a disproportionate share of everyday-life burdens. They had to juggle household chores, child-rearing, social life and their work life. Hence, they faced, and continue to face, the triple burden of job, childcare, and housework with little and even no support, either from their partners or the Government especially since, long ago, the Colonial Government did not offer social welfare to ease their load.

For instance, Bhudyea started work as a field labourer on Mon Désert Mon Trésor at 27 or 28 years of age after her marriage. She woke up at three or four in the morning and before leaving for work, she cooked a meal and had to reach the field at six o'clock. Her husband woke up after her at 5.30 after she had finished cooking.

Pentiah's wife woke up at four in the morning, prayed, fetched water (2 to 3 buckets), cooked a meal, got her children ready to drop them at a neighbour's place who looked after them when she was at work (there was no nursery and pre-school system at that time). When she came back at three in the afternoon, she fetched her children, gave them a snack and then did housework. Her husband woke up later.

Women endured domestic violence in silence as they were trapped in the cycle of violence and were not empowered to leave abusive relationships for various reasons. such as religious, economic and cultural oppression. One female respondent testified that she was abused by her husband who was an alcoholic. She left him twice but returned eventually. The first time she abandoned the matrimonial roof, she went to live at her mother's with her baby daughter. He asked her to return home and she did so. She gave birth to two daughters, and when she was pregnant of her son, he was once more abusive with her. She let home again and went to live at her sister's. When she gave birth to her son, he again asked her to return.

She did not mention whether she was abused between these two episodes of violence reported. Given that, firstly, alcohol abuse was an aggravating factor (two respondents mentioned that their husband were alcoholics) and, secondly, that domestic violence was recurrent, and not an isolated incident nor a one-time occurrence nor a one-off incident, she might have continuously been abused.

The interviews revealed that, long ago, father's abandonment of the matrimonial roof was common practice that was encouraged by the fact that people, especially people of Indian immigrants, did not engage in civil marriages but in religious marriages. Hence, they had no legal obligations towards their spouses. Serial monogamy, it was also customary; since some respondents and their parents got married twice or trice. For example, Dananan had two wives. The father of Gionsamy and Bhudyea married twice.

Furthermore, life expectancy was short, since many informants lost either one of their parents when they were young or their siblings, when the latter were underage. Unfortunately, because of lack of probing we do not know the causes of deaths. Yet, the following reasons might be suggested for the short life-expectancy of adults and infant mortality: firstly, poor health services and follow-up, secondly, poor nutritional input to sustain hard living and working conditions.

For instance, Dananan grew up with his mother and grandparents. Mardemooroo was declared by his mother who died when he was approximately 9 years of age. Pentiah's parents did when he was a child.

### Dressing

Nowadays, almost all people have a wardrobe with a wide choice of clothes, shoes and other accessories and even those living in relative poverty can secure adequate dressing. In the past,

people did not have a wardrobe and did not have such a wide option. They did not have the financial means to buy clothes, jewelry and shoes. Hence, they wore the same garment and pair of slippers for a week that they washed at the week-end and during their bath.

They had a shower once a week and, on the same day changed their clothes. Often they did their laundry, while having a shower.

Clothing was a sign of wealth as only wealthy people could afford a wardrobe. Satianand declared that a pair of shoes cost between 3.50 to 4 rupees; that was expensive for poor families. Those who could not afford to buy slippers walked bare-foot.

It should be noted that because of their financial situation, in keeping with the testimonies, weddings lasted one or two days only and women did not wear jewels. They did not receive jewels as dowry. Given that culture is not part of the scope of this research, we shall not concentrate on cultural dimension of camp life.

### Displacement

The estate workers' lifestyle can be conceived as a semi-sedentary life style, in that they often moved from one estate to the other, following forced or voluntary dismissal. When dismissed, they had to find a new job on another estate, and sometimes they resigned from their previous work for a better-paid job with better conditions on another estate.

When dismissed, they could no longer stay on the estate camp and, as Dananan testified, they were given one week to move out. Thus, within one week, they had to find a new work and living places. Most of the time, they lived on the same estate where they lived. There was no Law to protect the estate workers' rights, such as in instances of forced dismissal and to regulate notices of eviction and compensation.

For example, in 1960, after Cyclone *Carol*, Mardemootoo's father got a promotion and they moved from Camp Softerre on Mon Désert Mon Trésor Estate to live on Beau-Vallon Estate. In 1951, he enrolled in the army, and when he came back in 1954, he started working as Office Clerk and then as *Sirdar* for Rose-Belle Estate. In 1959, he took employment as *marker* on Mon Désert Mon Trésor Estate until 1989. In the meantime, he built his house in Rose-Belle where he lives now.

Bawol was working on Labourdonnais Estate and lived in the estate-camp. After the destructive aftermath of the cyclone in 1960 (either Cyclone *Alix* or Cyclone *Carol*), the mill closed and the estate-workforce was divided. A group of workers, including him, went to work and live on Belle-Vue Harel Estate for approximately 60 years. They enjoyed the same benefits on the estate; they earned the same salary and were provided with clothing. In the meantime, he purchased a plot of land.

Those who purchased plots of land like Pentiah and Bawol, transmitted them to their son and descendants. Some, like Pentiah, inherited land from their parents. Hence, all the respondents interviewed were not living in estate-camp but were living in their own houses.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this Report was to uncover the working and living conditions of the former estate workers. After this brief analysis, we can conclude that the estate-workers whether they were living or not in the estate-camps, were 'poor' and led a deprived life. They faced discriminatory practices at work that were by the Colonial Government. They were exploited and oppressed.

When compared to those presently living in relative poverty, the estate-labourers did not lead a comfortable life. They did not receive adequate academic education and health care. They had to struggle to make ends meet and to afford the basic necessities.

Even if the *Sirdar* earned more than the labourers, still they shared the same rudimentary living conditions. However, given than in the sample analysed, none was an *artisan*, there is no information to compare the conditions of the labourers with those of the *artisans*. Hence, to construct a comprehensive picture of the life of the estate workers, this research should be extended to the *artisans* and to the *Kolom* to hear their voices on their life experiences.

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<sup>11</sup> AGTF/09/51/01; AGTF/09/54/01; AGTF/09/200/01; AGTF/09/206/01; AGTF/09/279/01; AGTF/09/303/01; AGTF/09/328/01; AGTF/09/332/01.

<sup>2</sup> AGTF/09/423/01 mentions 'labourers were Hindus, and artisans Christian'.

<sup>3</sup> Only three respondents mentioned the presence of a *sirdarine* and only female respondent mentioned being alleviated to the position of *sirdarine* but 3 years later she again started working as labourer. (AGTF/09/122/1)

<sup>4</sup> AGTF/09/184/01 learnt tailoring but had no regular income and came back to work on estate, became *sirdar* with help of father.

<sup>5</sup> AGTF/09/348/01

<sup>6</sup> Does not explain why.

<sup>7</sup> AGTF/09/234/01

<sup>8</sup> AGTF/09/235/01

<sup>9</sup> e.g. AGTF/09/146/01; AGTF/09/122/01 (women *Sirdar*)

<sup>10</sup> AGTF/09/318/01; AGTF/09/344/01; AGTF/09/270/01; AGTF/09/312/01; AGTF/09/388/01 to give some examples.

<sup>11</sup> Almost all the respondents, including women, started working on odd jobs at an very early age.

<sup>12</sup> Just to quote some: AGTF/09/148/01; AGTF/09/197/01; AGTF/09/184/01

<sup>13</sup> AGTF/09/279/01

<sup>14</sup> AGTF/09/271/01 (father fell ill and had to sell the house).

<sup>15</sup> AGTF/09/278/01; AGTF/09/320/01; AGTF/09/359/01

<sup>16</sup> AGTF/09/Naiko/01 (number not given) and AGTF/09/52/01

<sup>17</sup> AGTF/09/52/01; AGTF/09/61/01

<sup>18</sup> AGTF/09/256/01

<sup>19</sup> AGTF/09/70/01 mentions about women going to sea on carts to wash cloths and collect water.

<sup>20</sup> AGTF/09/215/01 (respondents mention that people were not taking a bath for several days).

<sup>21</sup> AGTF/09/407/01

<sup>22</sup> AGTF/09/430/01

<sup>23</sup> AGTF/09/341/01

<sup>24</sup> AGTF/09/341/01 He obtained the CPE from Queen Victoria RCA and School Certificate from Eastern College; yet he could not get an job and had to work as labourer.

<sup>25</sup> AGTF/09/184/01; AGTF/09/168/01

<sup>26</sup> AGTF/09/94/01

<sup>27</sup> AGTF/09/272/01 Her mother was educated up to Std VI, she went only up to Std III because parents were poor and then her elder daughter did not go to school at all because she had to take care of the younger siblings.

<sup>28</sup> AGTF/09/238/01 (respondent is a Muslim lady) and AGTF/09/244/01 (respondent is a Tamil lady).

<sup>29</sup> just an indicative reference - AGTF/09/221/01 (Muslim); AGTF/09/340/01 (Hindu); AGTF/09/244/01 (Tamil) and AGTF/09/54/01 (Christian) .

<sup>30</sup> AGTF/09/262/01; AGTF/09/317/01; AGTF/09/340/01

<sup>31</sup> AGTF/09/379/01

<sup>32</sup> AGTF/09/70/01; AGTF/09/238/01 and AGTF/09/319/01

<sup>33</sup> AGTF/09/234/01; AGTF/09/326/01 and AGTF/09/449/01

<sup>34</sup> AGTF/09/449/01; AGTF/09/54/01

<sup>35</sup> AGTF/09/54/01, although she contradicts herself later by saying everyone, including Christians, lived together like family.

<sup>36</sup> AGTF/09/146/01. Another respondent (AGTF/09/200/01), himself a Christian, refutes this. For him artisans were smarter people and therefore better treated, not because they were Christians. Houses for artisans were bigger and better on estate camps.

<sup>37</sup> AGTF/09/106/01 - Husband Tamil, the wife Hindu and AGTF/09/303/01 - Husband Hindu, the wife Telugu.

<sup>38</sup> AGTF/09/224/01; AGTF/09/352/01

<sup>39</sup> AGTF/09/197/01

<sup>40</sup> AGTF/09/341/01

<sup>41</sup> AGTF/09/285/01 (female).

<sup>42</sup> AGTF/09/320/01

<sup>43</sup> AGTF/09/359/01

<sup>44</sup> AGTF/09/336/01

<sup>45</sup> AGTF/09/320/01

<sup>46</sup> AGTF/09/128/01

<sup>47</sup> AGTF/09/317/01 (female).

<sup>48</sup> AGTF/09/379/01

<sup>49</sup> See the Truth and Justice Commission Act, 2009.

<sup>50</sup> According to the Royal Commissioners, it actually worked out that labourers were fined two days' wages and one-fifth of a third day for every day they were marked as being illegally absent or sick.

<sup>51</sup> See pages 323-324 of the Report for an attempt by the Royal Commissioners to estimate for the year 1871 the amount of money planters allowed themselves to save through the illegal use of the 'double-cut' .

<sup>52</sup> According to the said Ordinance, planters were required to provide "sufficient and wholesome lodging according to the usage of the colony" which, as the Commissioners pointed out, could have been interpreted any number of ways.

<sup>53</sup> These recommendations were legally enshrined in the Labour Ordinance of 1878.

<sup>54</sup> See interview 09/122/01 for example.

<sup>55</sup> See the amendment to the Regulation of Wages and Conditions of Employment Ordinance 1961, as enshrined in Government Notice No. 134 of 1973. This is despite the fact that the Annual Reports of the Labour Department and Ministry of Labour, prior to 1973, indicate that women should be paid "equal wages for doing equal work" in their various Labour Ordinances.

<sup>56</sup> In her later work, Carter (1994, 1995) states that a number of female indentured labourers were employed on a temporary basis or verbal contracts that did not appear in the official figures. She also points out that those women who were not officially employed often helped their male partners to complete set tasks or spent their time sewing vacoas bags or rearing livestock for their families.

<sup>57</sup> See amendments made to the Industrial Relations Act of 1973 and the Sugar Industry Regulations 1983. Certain categories of field-labourers were in fact provided with protective clothing prior to 1973, but it was only after the ratification of the aforementioned laws that protective clothing was made available to all monthly and casual workers.

<sup>58</sup> Interview 09/234/01.

<sup>59</sup> The benefits of being provided with uniforms made of thicker material, such as "khaki", which appears to have become more common after Independence, rather than wearing lighter everyday clothing made of cotton, should be obvious enough in an industry that subjects its workforce to various sorts of hazards, such as burning cane, shortly before it is cut for instance. Similarly, providing workers with boots would not only have ensured they did not damage their own footwear, it would have protected them from the kind of abrasions that are bound to follow as a result of working barefoot in cane fields that are often strewn with rocks and stones and other types of projectiles. And of course, sugar cane leaves are highly abrasive and can irritate the skin and lead to rashes, if gloves are not provided, which is one of the reasons why the elderly female sugar estate workers quoted above complained of getting rashes when they "tire divet". It

is also important to bear in mind that the Sugar Industry eventually started spraying cane fields with harmful pesticides and would not have provided their workers with protective masks until forced to do so by Law.

<sup>60</sup> Interview 09/123/01.

<sup>61</sup> This is a Creole expression for a jute or gunny bag.

<sup>62</sup> A review of the subsequent Annual Reports of the Labour Department shows that the number of work-related injuries recorded continued to steadily increase over the coming years, with the Sugar Industry consistently accounting for most of these work-related injuries, and as per usual, the majority of injuries were of the sort described above. After 1975, however, when employers were finally required by law to provide all monthly workers with protective clothing, one begins to discern a noticeable decrease in the number of work-related injuries of field-labourers recorded in the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations as it had then become known by.

<sup>63</sup> The etymology of this term warrants further research. According to *Diksjoner Morisien*, in Mauritian Kreol, the term has two meanings. On the one hand, it can refer to a runaway slave or a maroon. On the other hand, it can refer to someone who is marked as being absent without notice. Consequently, there may be an etymological link between the two meanings, and indeed, it is quite possible that the latter meaning derives from the term's prior association with runaway slaves in Mauritius.

<sup>64</sup> Interview 09/340/01.

<sup>65</sup> Interview 09/409/01.

<sup>66</sup> In the interviews we have consulted, the informants do not appear to make a distinction between *sirdars* and job-contractors, most probably because they refer to both of them as *sirdars* or overseers. This may explain why I have not been able to find a specific example of a job-contractor committing these abuses.

<sup>67</sup> Interview 09/449/01.

<sup>68</sup> Interview 09/104/01.

<sup>69</sup> In Kreol, this means they might be put absent.

<sup>70</sup> In Kreol, this means they would not receive their salary.

<sup>71</sup> Interview 09/77/01.

<sup>72</sup> The complaints listed above only constitute a small fraction of what is in fact a much larger number of complaints made by sugar estate workers pertaining to the non-payment or under-payment of wages in the interviews collected by the AGTF's research assistants. I have deliberately omitted names of specific sugar estates, out of tactfulness, but it would appear that these abuses were being committed on sugar estates right across the island.

<sup>73</sup> The informants' claims are lent further support by the other contraventions listed in the Annual Reports of the Labour Department and Ministry of Labour which include not only "[i]rregular keeping of account books", "[f]alse entries in books of accounts", "[j]ob contractors failing to provide weekly pay sheets", "[j]ob contractors failing to make entries in book", but also "[a]sking [workers] to do work over again after many days", "[u]sing false gaulette [or method of measurement]", "[d]educting fine from wages due for work", "[f]ailing to credit labourers with full amount of work done", and "[f]ailing to credit labourers with full amount of wages due".

<sup>74</sup> After 1981, the Ministry of Labour stopped compiling and releasing Annual Reports, so that it is not possible to determine if these abuses continued.

<sup>75</sup> It is supposed to be a measurement of 10 feet, but *sirdars* and job-contractors often employed longer sticks to get more work out of their workers at a lower cost.

<sup>76</sup> In the ARLD of 1961 that was released before the Balogh Commission was convened in October 1962, 1,226 complaints for non-payment of wages and 218 complaints for under-payment of wages had been brought to the notice of Labour Inspectors. The amounts claimed in rupees were respectively 67,255.34 and 7,430.48, of which workers were paid out Rs. 47,942.68 for non-payment of wages, and Rs. 4,219.00 for under-payment of wages. It is not possible to determine what percentage of those complaints applied to sugar estate workers, because the Labour Department fails to make this distinction in their reports. But in view of the fact the Sugar Industry was the largest employer of labour in Mauritius until quite recently, it is more than likely that sugar estate workers brought a majority of these complaints forward.

<sup>77</sup> There are probably at best only one or two estate camps left in Mauritius.

<sup>78</sup> See S.J. Reddi (1984) and Richard Allen (1999) for their accounts of the high rates of absenteeism and desertion from estates by indentured labourers during the nineteenth century.

<sup>79</sup> The informants often describe them as "lakaz lapaille" in their interviews.

<sup>80</sup> See interview 09/383/01 for example.

<sup>81</sup> See interview 09/112/0 for example.

<sup>82</sup> See interview 09/449/01 for example.

<sup>83</sup> See interview 09/52/01 for example.

<sup>84</sup> See interview 09/149/01 for example.

<sup>85</sup> Interview 09/160/01.

<sup>86</sup> I am referring to the "ad hoc" committees convened in 1978 and 1982 to investigate the conditions of housing and amenities in estate camps (cited in Manrakhan 1983:121-123).

<sup>87</sup> Interview 09/278/01.

<sup>88</sup> According to this report, the dwellings of casual labourers were “either built by the management at some time in the past or built by the estate habitants, often with estate help. In many cases the management declined responsibility for the upkeep of such dwellings, on the grounds that the inhabitants were non-entitled and could leave if they wished”.

<sup>89</sup> The interviews also indicate that not all skilled artisans were Creoles, as a good many were also Hindus and Muslims. The aforementioned categories are the informants’, not the author’s.

<sup>90</sup> Interview 09/86/01.

<sup>91</sup> This means house made of corrugated iron sheets with windows.

<sup>92</sup> This is no doubt partly related to the fact that Mauritian families were much larger in the earlier part of the twentieth century, which is another interesting feature that comes out of the AGTF’s oral history project.

<sup>93</sup> We should add that girls seemed to have shouldered a greater burden in the performance of household chores than boys did. A number of the female informants indicated they were required to sacrifice their education to look after their younger siblings, while their parents went to work. And some fathers forbade their daughters to go to school because they considered home to be a woman’s place. This disparity in rates of school attendance between boys and girls is reflected in the ARLD of 1938, showing that out of 20,078 “Indian” children that went to primary school, only 5,908 were girls.

<sup>94</sup> We do not address the working and living conditions of small cane growers in this study, or “petits planteurs” as they are better known as in Mauritius, since it seems that very few were interviewed by the AGTF’s Research Assistants. Benedict describes the family life of some wealthier small planters living in villages who derived a substantial proportion of their income from growing cane and were not required to sell their labour to make ends meet. According to Daniel North-Coombes (1987.9), however, a majority of small planters were not able to solely rely on this type of livelihood as their main source of income and worked as labourers on sugar estates at different times of the year.

<sup>95</sup> While one might agree with the general tenor of Benedict’s observation of their being little evidence of subsistence farming in Mauritius at the time he was conducting fieldwork, I must confess I find it somewhat hard to believe that small-holders or rentiers who grew vegetables or reared livestock did not consume any of the natural products they produced. This much is confirmed by referring to the ARLD of 1948, which shows that based on a household survey of sugar estate workers living in estate camps and villages, 11% of estate-camp households produced food for their own consumption as compared to 25% of village households (ARLD 1948:28-31).

<sup>96</sup> According to the Balogh Commission’s estimates of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund’s accounts to the end of 1961, although it had amassed Rs. 43 million from the annual levy on sugar exports to the United Kingdom and investments and rental fees, it only spent Rs. 17 million of that amount on housing and community welfare programmes. Most of the difference, amounting to some Rs. 25 million, had been invested in fixed-term deposits for 10 years.

<sup>97</sup> Evidence of the presence of *ankylostomiasis* was recorded in Mauritius prior to Kendrick’s Report. But according to Balfour, it was only after the advent of the use of microscopes to examine stool samples that it was possible to determine the true extent of infection rates. This raises an important question: was *ankylostomiasis* brought to Mauritius by slaves or indentured labourers? It could not have existed in Mauritius prior to human settlement, as it has evolved in symbiosis with human populations and cannot survive without a host to reproduce itself. And evidence indicates that of the two types of *ankylostomiasis* that exist, that is, *Necator americanus* and *Ancylostoma duodenale*, neither are found in Europe or colder regions of the world, as these parasites can only survive in tropical climates. It is most likely then that African or Indian slaves brought it to Mauritius or that it was brought by indentured labourers from India, Africa or China.

<sup>98</sup> I was not able to get my hands on Kendrick’s Report, as it is not available in the National Library or National Archives of Mauritius. I have had to rely on Balfour’s account of it instead.

<sup>99</sup> In one passage of his Report, Balfour (1921:88) describes barefooted “Indian” children stranding on top of a manure heap on a sugar estate and watering it, making it very likely they would have contracted hookworm disease, if they did not already have it.

<sup>100</sup> Despite spending several pages describing the history of the use of manure as a fertilizing agent on Mauritian sugar estates over the past one hundred years, North-Coombes (1993:76-82) only writes one line on the *Engrais* system and the use of human manure to cultivate cane plants. “[H]uman excreta”, he says, “has ceased to be employed owing to the dissemination of Hook Worm”. Andrew Balfour’s (1921:87-88) report indicates that the practice was very widespread at the time he visited Mauritius, which is why he singled out its discontinuation as one of the most important ways to combat the spread of hookworm disease, also pointing out that these conditions “probably have not their parallel in any other part of the world. The main industry in Mauritius is sugar cane cultivation. The cane requires fertiliser and, as Victor Hugo said, possibly with some truth, “the most fertilising and effective of manures is human manure.” Unfortunately, in the Tropics it is also the most dangerous. This fact was not recognised.”

<sup>101</sup> The ARLD of 1950 provides a comprehensive summary of living conditions in estate camps in Mauritius confirming many of the assertions made in this report (ARLD 1950:83-85).

<sup>102</sup> It is possible that one of the reasons why red clay was highly sought after by Mauritians living in dwellings made with earthen floors is because clay is less likely to support the reproductive cycle of hookworm larvae. Studies show that infection rates are much lower in areas where clay is present, whereas sandy or loamy soil appears to be more conducive to the successful reproduction of hookworm larvae (cf. Desowitz *et al.* 1961; Hotez 2008). Thus sugar estate workers in Mauritius might have specifically sought out red clay to combat the spread of diseases like hookworm, and was possibly common knowledge, or a form of folk-knowledge as it were. It is well-known, for example, that one of the reasons Indian peasants plaster their floors with cow dung is to deter vermin infestations. On the other hand, it may have been purely for aesthetic reasons.

<sup>103</sup> I am not certain why, but towards the end of the 1950s, the Labour Department ceases to provide detailed information about inspections of estate camps, a trend which becomes even more pronounced in the 1960s, when no further details are provided. It cannot be a reflection of the declining population of estate camps, and, hence, their declining importance

in the eyes of labour inspectors, who increasingly focus on factory inspections at the beginning of the 1960s, because at the end of 1982 there were still 143 estate camps with a population of 31,000 people (Manrakhani 1983:122). Much the same as it had been throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps it is a reflection of the diversification of the Mauritian economy and the corresponding importance Labour Inspectors began to accord to the inspection of other industries and the increasing numbers of factories.

<sup>104</sup> My knowledge is limited by the incomplete series of the Annual Reports of the Medical and Health Department available at the National Archives in Mauritius. However, what I have been able to determine with some degree of certainty is that it was at the end of the 1930s that the Medical and Health Department first started to scale back the work of the so-called "Hookworm Branch".

<sup>105</sup> The Manrakhani Commission indicates that adequate provision of drinking water and toilet facilities for sugar estate workers was still an outstanding source of concern in their 1983 Report.

<sup>106</sup> Mishra, A. 2009.

<sup>107</sup> AGTF 09/56/01, lines 44-54.

<sup>108</sup> AGTF 09/85/01, lines 80-83.

<sup>109</sup> AGTF 09/196/01, lines 377-385.

<sup>110</sup> But we do not know if the referred to French and English literacy .

<sup>111</sup> AGTF 09/1951/01, lines 627-630.

<sup>112</sup> AGTF 09/394/04, lines 398-398.

<sup>113</sup> AGTF 9/79/01, lines 1017-1021.

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.lalitmauritus.org>

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> AGTF 09/56/01, lines 520-527.

<sup>117</sup> AGTF 09/191/01, lines 630-634.

<sup>118</sup> AGTF 09/191/101, line 710.

<sup>119</sup> Term refers to people who practise low-intensity farming as subsistence pattern.

<sup>120</sup> AGTF 09/103/01, lines 766-772.

<sup>121</sup> AGTF 09/82/01, line 544.

<sup>122</sup> AGTF 09/56/01, lines 724-737.

<sup>123</sup> Royal Commission Report (1909, pp. 15-16).

<sup>124</sup> AGTF 09/82/01, lines 506-509.

<sup>125</sup> AGTF 09/82/01, lines 461-470.

<sup>126</sup> The Royal Commission Report (1909, p. 41).

<sup>127</sup> AGTF 09/82/01, lines 323-327.

<sup>128</sup> AGTF 09/412/01, lines 99-102.

<sup>129</sup> Refers to an informal Hindu school often attached to a Hindu temple.

<sup>130</sup> Refers to an informal Muslim/Arabic school often attached to the *Masjid* (Mosque).

<sup>131</sup> AGTH 09/85/01, lines 249-259.

<sup>132</sup> An ancient Sanskrit epic.

# LIFE HISTORIES OF DESCENDANTS - SELECTED HISTORIES

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to document the lives of people in 20<sup>th</sup> century Mauritius through the use of oral history. It does so through the following 10 life histories which provide an overview of the lives of several informants who were interviewed for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund's Oral History Project. These subjects, seven men and three women, were chosen because they have either led extraordinary or unusual lives that set their experiences apart from most other Mauritians who come from a similar socio-cultural background. Or, alternatively, because their experiences shed light on the kind of experiences other Mauritians are just as likely to have experienced and which provides further insights into what life must have been like for a majority of Mauritians in the not so distant past.

Each of the life-histories are structured similarly and cover, firstly, the childhood memories and experiences of the informant, followed by their working life, then marriage and home life, and, where possible, some information about the present condition of the informants. Each life-history also has an introductory paragraph briefly summarising some of the most salient features that came out of the interviews with the informants.

## 1. THE LIFE HISTORY OF BHEEM MOONEEAN

### 1.1 Introduction

Mrs. Bheem Mooneean's life provides an insight into the life of a female Sugar Estate worker and the double-burden of being a mother and a labourer. She describes the harsh treatment meted out to labourers by *sirdars* in her 40 years as a Sugar Estate worker, and the domestic chores that kept her busy until the late hours of the evening after returning home from work. She also describes the enjoyment she derived from singing songs at weddings as she was growing up as a child and the traditional medicine she used to cure injuries and illnesses.

### 1.2 Childhood

Mrs. Bheem Mooneean was born at Fond du Sac to Veedwantee and Ghootur. Both of her parents were Mauritians. They used to rear cows. She had 11 siblings. Her grandparents came from *Desh* (India). She remembers only her paternal grandfather. His grandfather's name was Varann and he used to wear a "dhoti".

Mrs. Bheem Mooneean said that her parents were poor and thus, during her childhood she lived in a house made of straw and partitioning was done with "fatak". The walls were dressed with soil of white colour and the floor with cow dung and soil of red colour. Her mother and elder sister used to dress the walls and floor. The house consisted of a room which was quite large and two small rooms. The kitchen was made of straw and its roof of corrugated iron sheets. The latrine was made of straw too. Once their latrine caught fire. Her father beat all the children and asked them who set the fire. Her parents used to buy "Chataye phâtal phâtal" and put bed-sheets on them for her and her siblings to sleep. Given that they did not have water facilities and electricity at home, they had to use kerosene lamps and younger children had to collect water in "piti piti tol" while elder children and parents had to carry water in "gamal". Since her parents had many cows, they had to fill four barrels of water a day.

As a child, Mrs. Bheem Mooneean used to play "goulidanta", hide and seek and marbles. She learnt how to play "Goulidanta" by observing other children. She used to buy the marbles from the shop which she could obtain for. She could have 2 to 3 marbles with 1 cent. She used to make like a triangle and play with the marbles. Moreover, her elders used to tell her stories.

Mrs. Bheem Mooneean's parents did not send her to the government school found in the village of Plaines des Papayes, because of "Lakar Sunga"-an old man who used to tie a "pagri" and stroll with a stick. They believed that the "Lakar Sunga" would kidnap her. Instead, they sent her to the *Baithka* where she studied up to "vartame". At the *Baithka*, there were no classes during the

weekend. Sometimes she used to run away from the *Baithka* to go to play. When she saw her parents going to collect water and coming back with their "gamel" of water she used to hide behind someone's house.

When she had 7/8 years old she used to accompany her elder sister when she went to sing songs on the eve of wedding ceremonies because their house was in a corner near sugarcane fields and her sister was afraid to go alone. Consequently she learnt wedding songs and "dholok". She said that it was a tradition to sing these songs. As she grew older, she and her four friends used to sing free of charge at wedding ceremonies. On Friday they used to sing "sandya", "mahadev", "sadi" and "Devta" songs. But she no longer does so because all of her friends have passed away.

### 1.3 Working Life and her Daily Routine

After her marriage Mrs. Bheem Mooneean used to rear cows. She used to wake up at 2 a.m., steal straw, fill about two barrels of water, cook food, milk her cows and boil water for them. She said that she started to work after having her first child. She worked as labourer on Beau Champ Sugar Estate for about 40 years. Her work consisted of removing dry leaves, planting, applying manure by carrying the basket of manure on her head, dropping cane sets in furrows and harvesting sugarcane. She worked from 4 a.m. to 12/1 p.m. But before leaving for work, she used to follow her usual morning routine. She used to work under the supervision of a *sirdar* who used to note her presence, assign to Mrs. Bheem Mooneean her work and paid her at the end of the week before the lorry came to take her home. In case she had already left the *sirdar* used to go to her place to pay her. She earned Rs. 1.50 per day. Her wage increased gradually. During the 40 years that she worked on Beau Champ Sugar Estate she worked under the supervision of many *sirdars*. Some were cruel. They used to treat some workers unfairly, which resulted in fighting on the Sugar Estate. When she failed to do her work properly, the *kolam* talked rudely to the *sirdar*-who then talked rudely to her and returned her work back to her. She even worked when she was pregnant. But during her pregnancies she said that she did not feel at ease when she had to remove dry leaves. She further added that if the *sirdar* asked the "sahib" to give her another task instead of having to remove dry leaves because she was pregnant, the "saheb" used to ask her to remove grass on the edge of the road. She also told the interviewer that when she was pregnant, she was told not to come to work if she was not able to carry out her tasks. She did not have boots and gloves. She said that when "mariposa" was introduced, she bought a pair.

When her work was over, Mrs. Bheem Mooneean used to cut four packets of grass. Since she returned home in a lorry, it was an advantage to her, as she could load the grass on the lorry. It was not easy though, she said. After the lorry dropped her off, she had to carry the packets of grass on her head. On reaching home, she had to clean the stable and feed the cows. But she said that she preferred to look after the cows herself because she felt that it was not safe for her children to do so following what had happened to her. Her friend's cow lifted her and held her up by bending its head. As a result she was afraid that her cows might do the same with her children and they might get hurt. Then she used to wash her hands and face, make tea, wash clothes, take her bath and cook food until nine in the evening. After her children went to sleep, she used to dress the floor with cow dung. She used to sleep at 10/11 p.m.

A prayer was performed before harvest. The owner and *sirdars* used to bring canes at the mill and a priest used to do a prayer and bless the mill. Only when she worked close to the mill could she attend the prayer.

She did not live in camps. But she knows about Camp Dubreuil, Camp Beau Champ and Camp "Trwa Dilo" because she used to visit her friends who lived on the latter camps.

### 1.4 Marriage and Home Life

Mrs. Bheem Mooneean got married at the age of 16. Her marriage was an arranged "Puranica" marriage. Her parents invited people verbally. Only family members were present. On Friday songs were sung and *Hardi* was applied on her. On Saturday night the actual wedding ceremony took place. Her "bharat" came by cars- there were two of them she said. "Kachu" was served. But she did not apply "Mehendi". She wore a "sifonn ké saree"-which was of pink colour. Her saree cost Rs. 50. She had a simple hair style. It was her sisters-in-law who combed her hair. She applied just a little face powder. She said that nowadays a person is paid around Rs. 1,500/Rs. 1,000 to get the

bride ready. But this was not the case for her wedding. Her husband wore a "dhoti". No "katha" and "Tilak" were performed.

Following Mrs. Bheem Mooneean's wedding, she went to live at Ernest Florent. She gave birth to 8 children at home with the help of a midwife. She cannot understand why nowadays women have problems during their delivery and why they need to have a caesarean. She never went to the hospital when she was ill despite the fact that civil hospital did exist. She used homemade remedies instead. Once she accompanied her mother and elder sister to the sugarcane fields. She was still a child. Her mother and sister were removing "fatak" trees with a hoe. She pulled a "fatak" tree with her hands and got hurt. To cure her, they applied crushed "lalyan"- "latik-wa" and then tied the wound. And when she had a cough, Mrs. Bheem Mooneean used to drink "karha"- turmeric and cloves in milk.

Mrs. Bheem Mooneean also reflected on the food she used to eat as a child and the festivals she used to celebrate with her parents. She said that her father used to receive half a pound of rice and she used to receive a quarter pound of rice. She said that she could not understand how her father shared such a little amount of rice equally among his twelve children. He used to place twelve small plates and put half a "kalchul" of rice in each of them. And when eggplant was cooked, her father used to give each of them a spoon of eggplant so that all his children would have an equal amount of food to eat. Her father also used to give them a little milk to drink in food cans. Her different meals had the following components: "mar-wâ mé bhaat dal ké" 2 chilly dal ké mis ké"; boiled tapioca; boiled sweet potatoes with tea; tomato chutney (tomatoes were obtained on the fields) and "bred ke Bouyon"; or dholl and "bred ke bhaji". The festivals they celebrated included "Fagwa" and New Year. On "Fagwa", there was no "dhamâr", as is the custom nowadays. Her father used to go to the "baithka" where he used to apply a "tika". When he came back, he used to bring "tika" for the children. Her mother used to cook "tekwa". "Batat" was not cooked. On Fagwa she did not play with colours because her parents did not buy colours for her. On New Year, her mother used to purchase two new outfits for her and her eleven siblings: one for 1<sup>st</sup> January and one to wear when they went to visit their maternal grandmother. Her outfits were made of a cloth known as "zenn zenn". Mrs. Bheem Mooneean said that nowadays festivals are celebrated with great pomp and that she always wears new clothes on such occasions. But in the past, she used to wear old and mended clothes on festivals, with the exception of New Year. On New Year she used to eat chevon.

### 1.5 Later Life

Mrs. Bheem Mooneean is still a resident of Ernest Florent. Out of her 11 siblings, only two sisters are still alive.

## 2. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MRS. CHENDRADOO LACHAMAMAH ('ELO')

### 2.1 Introduction

A female *sirdar*, Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah led an extraordinary life that very few other Mauritian women experienced. She was actively involved in the trade union movement during the 1970s and 1980s, and has always been particularly concerned with fighting for the rights of female Sugar Estate workers. Upon retiring she became a social worker, offering her services to the handicapped, the sick and the elderly. Now 80 years of age, Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah offers words of advice for today's generation of Mauritian women.

### 2.2 Childhood

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah who is also known as Elo was born at Bonne Veine to Mr. Mwsliah Yerriah and Mrs. Sitama Yerriah. Both of her parents were labourers on Bonne Veine Sugar Estate-which was later known as Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate. Her mother also used to rear cows and poultry, selling the milk at 2 cents a quarter litre and eggs at 2-3 cents each. Her parents had a plot of land on which they used to cultivate sweet potatoes, tapioca, "arouy", cornflour, "larout" and banana for the family's own consumption. Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah had 2 sisters and 1 brother.

The house of the Yerriah family was made of straw and rocks. The floor and walls were dressed with a mixture of white soil and cow dung. Their house consisted of 2 rooms and a small room known as "godon". They used 1 of the rooms as a living-room. They had a separate kitchen and a separate latrine. They used kerosene lamps and "lalanp kinke". They used to fill water from common taps. But when water did not run through the taps Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah used to fetch it from the well-which was far away. Other people used to fill the water for her out of fear that she might fall in the well. She also used to fetch water from the river.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah went to Reverend Walter School until 1946 and studied up to standard VI. She had no shoes and uniform. She used to wear whatever clothes she had. Classes started at 9 a.m. and were over at 3 p.m. In the morning a teacher taught her "Catechism". She also learnt arithmetic, English, French and Hindi-the only oriental language taught at the time, songs and stories. She said that there were a long table known as "pipit" (desk) and a long bench on which she used to sit, and she used to write on a slate. Lunch time was between 12 and 1 P.M. She had no money to buy cakes. Once she took 1 cent from her mother's "kapsen" box she was beaten. Her father used to help her with her studies.

When Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah left school her school Headteacher, Mr. Edward Reverend Walter, did his best to make her mother understand that she is intelligent and to convince her to allow her to pursue her studies. He told her mother that he would appoint Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah as a lower primary school teacher. She could teach students of either standard 1 or 2. He would finance her studies with the money that she would earn. But in vain. Her mother said that given that they were poor she could not accept. If she allowed Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah to continue her studies her child/children would be neglected. She would not be able to rear her cows. According to Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah this was important for her mother: to rear cows and sell the milk she obtained, manure and the calves her cows gave birth to, to earn money in the latter ways. Despite that she had to abandon her studies in 1946 Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah continued to enrich her knowledge by reading whatever reading materials she could have at hand.

When Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah was still under seven years of age, her father got badly hurt on his workplace and he was transported to hospital. He stayed in hospital for 5 days. He vomited blood. Given that her mother's wage and the money that her mother obtained by rearing cows were not enough to feed the family, her father went to see "misie-la" to get a light job like watchman or cleaning as he started to recover. The staircase leading to the office consisted of 32 steps. The "misie blan-la" kicked his father and his father "roul tou sa peron-la" and fell down. She had gone to give tea to her father and witnessed the incident. She found that very shocking. When she asked "misie-la" why he had beaten her father, he replied that her father was looking for work. If her

father was hurt, what could he do? She brought her father home and gave him his tea. After witnessing that incident she felt like leaving school and to look for work to help her mother. This made her "dir" (tough). From that day she had a grudge against "misie-la". As a result after a few years, that is, when she was 13/14 years old, when "misie-la" was passing with his car while she was carrying grass on the road she did not move on the other side to let him go. "misie-la" complained about her behaviour to her father and when the latter questioned her she replied that there was sugarcane on the other side. If she would have moved on the other side her packet of grass would have knocked against the cane and would have fallen down. There was no one to pick her packet of grass for her. She was alone. Her father did not tell her anything.

When she was 7/8 years old her mother fell ill. The doctor prevented her from moving and said that she was going to die. Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah therefore, had to prepare their meals with the help of her father. She had to look after her younger sister. A Muslim woman milked their cows and Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah delivered the milk to clients. She used to go on foot. But her mother recovered and resumed her normal routine.

Despite her mother's recovery, Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah used to wake up at 3.30/4 a.m., that is, at the same time that her mother used to wake up. She used to help her mother by doing the small household jobs that she could do. After that even if it was still dark she used to cut grass and feed the cows before going to school. On returning home she had to cut grass again. She used to dress the floor and walls on the days on which she did not go to school early. On the latter days she did not cut grass in the morning. She also used to accompany her mother to wash clothes at the river. Hence, given that she was busy during the day, she used to play at night. She used to play with both girls and boys since no prejudices existed at that time. They used to play "Sapsiwaye", "lamarel", hide and seek, "goulidanta" and marbles. Moreover, her parents and neighbours used to tell her very interesting stories at night. She used to sit on jute bags since mats were not available at that time. She liked to listen to stories in which there were songs. But she does not remember them. She still remembers one of the stories which her parents and neighbours used to tell her. It is a very simple story. She related that stories in the social centre and even received a prize. The story is as follows.

There was a king and his servant. The king had a son and the servant a daughter. Both children used to go to school together. When they grew up they fell in love. The king was against their love. The king started to pester his servant's life. The king told his servant: "I can no longer bear you. You should leave the country. But the servant replied: "since I was young I have worked with you, I have got married, my wife died, I have a daughter, now you are asking me to leave". The servant said: "no. Given the course that things were taking I cannot leave". One day the king told his servant: I wish to drink ox milk. See where you can get it. You bring it and give me to drink". The servant was shocked. He became anxious. Where will he get that? He knew that ox do not have milk. The servant returned home and told his daughter: "you know, the king has put me in a dilemma. He has asked me to look for ox milk". She went at the king's place and started to wash some dirty jute bags by beating them in the yard. The king said that the noise was preventing him from sleeping. Then the king came out and asked his guards and "Sepoy" to ask her to stop making noise because he wanted to sleep. What was she doing? Then the servant's daughter told the king: You want to drink ox milk. But the cow is expecting. I will bring milk I will give you". The king asked her: The cow is expecting! Where have you heard that?" The servant's daughter replied but it was because the cow is expecting that I can bring milk for you". Then the king said: "no, no, no. This is false the ox cannot expect. Go, tell your father that I have forgiven him. Tell him not to worry". The king himself left the country. The king's son still loved the servant's daughter. He came back and married her. The informant said that it is something that would never happen.

### 2.3 Working Life

After leaving school Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah started to work as labourer on Bonne Veine Sugar Estate. She was recruited by an entrepreneur. The entrepreneur also used to note down her presence and calculate her wage. She was paid as per the workload she could complete. She worked from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. She used to apply soil in maize and plant sweet potatoes. She worked under the supervision of a *sirdar*. At first she earned 20 cents per day. But her wage increased gradually. When she started to receive Rs. 1.25 she had to work very hard. She could have a rest only on the pretext of going to the toilet. She had 1 hour for lunch: 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. But she said

that her job on Bonne Veine Sugar Estate was not secure. The white people did not compel her to work. She could go to work only one or two days. But she was compelled to work out of poverty. Moreover, the other labourers and her were not assigned an equal workload. She had no gloves, masks and boots. Given that since the age of 14 Mrs. Chendradoo could not tolerate the fact that people were being mistreated, that someone react violently with another person and someone saying things difficult to hear, once she talked rudely to a *kolom* and threatened him to "pik sa fousi-la dan ou figir" because he was about to knock against her when she was picking canes in grass and putting them on the road. On another instance she hit a *sirdar* with a hoe because he mistreated a worker. Even if the worker had completed his/her load of work the *sirdar* told him/her that he/she still has 5 "golet" (from gaulette, about 12 feet) to complete.

Owing to some problems which she was facing on Bonne Veine Sugar Estate, Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah went to work at Trianon where she worked as a *sirdarine*, an uncommon occurrence in the Mauritian sugar industry. She did this work for four years (1955-1958) and was required to supervise the work of both women and children. She said that she always treated the labourers under her supervision well. Working as a *sirdarine* gave her experience in measuring the workload labourers had to perform, and it was also during this time that she first started to become involved with the trade union movement. After Trianon Sugar Estate was sold to Mr. Hardy, the latter renamed the latter Sugar Estate as Highlands Sugar Estate and appointed a new manager: Mr. Coombes. On noticing her intelligence the new manager gave her a job in the office and provided her with accommodation in the camp of Bagatelle given that since Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah joined Trianon Sugar Estate, she had to rent a house. As part of her responsibilities, she used to arrange the shop, check books and *ramas bann let ki vini*. She worked on Highlands Sugar Estate for 14 years. She used to go to work at 5 a.m. and return home at 4 p.m. She said that it was difficult for her to perform such a hard work for such long hours given that she had to take care of her small children and husband. By 11 a.m./12 p.m. she no longer felt like working. Despite these difficulties, she was still able to seize the opportunity of being a camp resident to cultivate some vegetables and sell them at the market of Rose-Hill to generate an additional income.

While she was working on Highlands Sugar Estate, that is, in 1968, Plantation Workers Union sent her a letter asking her to become a member of trade unions. Despite resistance from her husband because of fears concerning problems it would create with her employers, she accepted. Her main motivation behind joining Plantation Workers Union was the various injustices that women were subject to on the Sugar Estate. She said that she learnt about some of these injustices during her childhood itself by overhearing the conversations of her parents. But by working on different Sugar Estates she could witness all of them and she herself suffered from some of these discriminations. It was very painful for her. She revealed that *sirdars* used to beat women with sticks. She mentioned a case whereby a female worker of Bonne Veine Sugar Estate was beaten by a *sirdar*. The woman was hurt and Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah had to accompany her to hospital. Men and women were assigned their load of work on an unequal basis. For example if men were assigned 125 "golet", women received 115 "golet". In their wage rate too there was disparity, that is, if a woman was paid 5 cent per "golet", a man earned 15 cents per "golet". When a woman work more than her work load she was not paid for that surplus work. Instead, the entrepreneur used to give the extra money that the women should have earned to other people with whom he was well acquainted. Women were not given proper treatment and proper medicine at the hospital. When they got hurt only a small medicine was applied to their wounds and they were asked to go to work on the next day. Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah had witnessed male nurses sexually harassing female patients. Women were also exploited sexually by Sugar Estate workers, namely the administrator and *sirdars*. But women could not protest against all these injustices.

Hardy was an Anglo-Ceylon. Whatever happened on his Sugar Estate had to remain within the Sugar Estate and only "bann sef" could solve the problem. But on noticing Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah's way of talking and acting the white people understood that they could not ask her to leave trade unions. So the *kolom* told her that when she wanted to go to trade unions he would allow her to go because women were being mistreated too much. As a member of trade union she attended many seminars. She used to meet with representatives of different places in Port Louis to discuss.

In 1970, Sir Sewoosagur Ramgoolam introduced the system of card whereby her job on the Sugar Estate was secure. All male labourers were assigned the same workload, she as all the other women

were assigned the same workload, work started and finished at a specific time. She started to earn Rs. 2.50 per day. She claimed that Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam undertook several measures in favour of the poor. She and the other members of trade unions asked for gloves and masks since when mosquitoes bit workers, some had difficulty in opening their eyes and others got high fever. In 1970 they started to receive gloves and masks.

Following her husband's retirement and since none of her sons had reached the age that they could work on the Sugar Estate she was asked to leave the camp. She thus, returned to Bonne Veine in about 1972/1973 and worked there till her retirement. Even if not like on Highlands Sugar Estate, but at Bonne Veine too she had to work a lot. On her return at Quartier Militaire in 1972 she and the other members of trade unions asked for boots because they used to hurt themselves with their hoe while working and had to tie their wounds and go to work despite that they were suffering. She also affirmed that when the Labour Inspector came on the Sugar Estate she could not talk with them. The Labour Inspectors were bribed.

During the Prime Ministership of Jugnauth she and the other members of the Plantation Workers Union organised a press conference on Louis Lechelle Street at Port Louis. During the conference she raised the issue of the inequality in the wage rate of men and women.

On 19 August 1984 she talked on trade unions and on 4 September they talked about that on television. After her speech: Mrs. Bappoo sent her a letter on 7 Jan 1985 for an interview following which she appointed Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah as a member of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund to represent female labourers. She was determined more than ever since now she had someone to back her in her endeavour. After less than 2-3 months she brought a team of "inspector travay" on Bonne Veine Sugar Estate. Misie Jacques Carey was furious. She used to note down all the injustices inflicted to women and submit the paper to Mrs. Dubois when she went to committees. Mrs. Dubois raised these issues in parliament. When labourers retired without receiving their lump-sum she brought the matter to the office and helped them to get their lump-sum. When labourers were mistreated and that they absented themselves without leaving any paper, she went to Mon Desert Alma to discuss their case and help them to get their work back. As a member of trade unions she also asked for a female nurse who could attend female patients, that men and women be given the same load of work and that there should be no disparity as far as their wage rate was concerned. But she said that the disparity between the wage rate of men and women still persist. She and the other members of trade unions also asked that women should retire at the age of 58 and men 60. Their demand was approved. After 2-3 years they asked that women should retire at the age of 55 and men 58. But she retired at the age of 58 instead of 55 because the manager told her that she should continue to work since there was no one to represent labourers and give her a favour by making her work somewhat less. On retiring in 1988 she also left Plantation Workers Union. When Navin Ramgoolam became Prime Minister in 1995 the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund was dissolved.

#### 2.4 Marriage and Home Life

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah married Errayah Chendradoo at the age of 18. It was an arranged marriage. Her wedding tent was made of bamboo and "lingouz" which needed to be cut. "prela" was rented by the Sugar Estate. During her wedding her neighbours helped her. Her marriage ceremony lasted 3 days. On Friday a paste of turmeric was applied on her. Saturday had gone by. On Sunday the wedding ceremony took place in her yard. She wore a cream *saree* and her husband wore a "langouti", "palto" and a white shirt. Although Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah could not afford to celebrate her wedding with great pomp, many people attended it and vegetarian food was served to the guests. She also confessed to being a victim of domestic violence for quite some time. She stated that her husband used to get drunk and hit her when she returned late from work or prepared dinner too late.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah gave birth to ten children at home with the help of a midwife and described the rituals that were performed afterwards. For instance, she said that after bathing on the ninth day after the birth of one of her children, she had to light camphor and apply "sindour" near water, and that it was only after performing the latter ritual that she could touch water. Her mother-in-law told her not to touch the cooking pot for 40 days because according to her mother-in-law she was still impure. But one of her mother-in-law's relatives objected by asking her mother-

in-law the following question: if Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah did not have anyone to cook food for her and her family members, would they remain hungry? The relative told Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah to cook but to ask the fire for forgiveness.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah also described the home remedies and traditional medicine that her mother used to cure injuries and illnesses. For instance, when Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah had an upset stomach her mother used to boil mint or "ayapana" for her to drink. And when Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah hurt her hands or feet, her mother used to crush and heat curry powder or buy "jawagn" and crush the "jawagn" together with onion and apply it to her wounds. Following in her mother's tradition, Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah said that rather than taking her children to hospital, normally she preferred to use natural remedies such as "lordanet", "delwil bwar", "delwill kamomi" or honey which she purchased from the pharmacy.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah is a Telugu and learnt both the Telugu language and prayers from other children's parents. She said that nowadays many kinds of festivals are celebrated, but that in the past she used to assist only the religious festival of Ram Bhajan that was performed by her mother and neighbours. In order to be able to assist Ram Bhajan, she had to fast for a period of forty days. But in order to conserve her strength for work, she used to eat sweet dishes during the day and vegetarian food in the evenings. If she wished, she could continue to fast for a fortnight after Ram Bhajan was over.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah also described how she celebrated New Year as a child. She said that a few days before the New Year, her mother used to sew new clothes for her and her siblings. On the eve of New Year her mother used to dress the floor and walls and place all their clothes outside the house. On 1<sup>st</sup> January they used to wash all the clothes at the river; her mother used to bath her siblings and her and put on their new clothes. After that her mother used to prepare cakes and rice milk, pray, and then give them the rice milk and cakes which were left, to eat. On the second day of the New Year, however, Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah's mother used to take a cock from the poultry she used to rear and light a camphor. After spreading perfume near her cows for prosperity, she used to kill and eat the cock. She also used to cook *farata* with tapioca flour since during the period of "rasionman" (rationing) flour was not available.

## 2.5 Later Life

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah is 80 years old and resides at Bonne Veine, Quartier Militaire. Since 1995 she started doing social work. As part of her duties, she cares for handicapped children, the sick, elderly people in homes, and goes to church. Reflecting upon the past, she said that she has done many extraordinary things in her life and has always been happy and never worries when she has problems.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah also expressed her views on the condition of women nowadays. She said that although the situation of women has improved, they are still discriminated against in the workplace and are exposed to sexual exploitation. For instance, she reiterated the fact that in the Mauritian sugar industry, men still earn a higher wage than women.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah also discussed what she believes women in Mauritius must do to further improve their conditions. She said women have to stand on their own feet and must fight for their rights. She also advised them to seek advice from their predecessors, be sincere as far as their married life is concerned, to be honest in their life, and to always be courageous.

Mrs. Chendradoo Lachamamah still believes in and follows her elders' sayings. She always keeps only one broom in her house. She never keeps her broom in a standing position because according to her elders, the broom too has to rest. She always switches off her lights at 9 a.m. since her elders used to say that lamps should be extinguished at 9 p.m. According to her elders the lamps had a meeting place near the river. If they did not extinguish their lamp at 9 p.m. and that it would not reach the meeting place in time, the other lamps would question it about its lateness.

### 3. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MR. BALDEO CHUMMUN

#### 3.1 Introduction

Mr. Chummun Baldeo life provides an insight into the life of a male Sugar Estate worker. Mr. Chummun Baldeo describes the different tasks that he performed on Beau-Plan Sugar Estate and recounts the accident he had on his workplace. He also reveals the harsh treatment meted out to him by *sirdars* and what is more shocking is that he says that he had to resign. He even states that the "blan" used to play tricks on him. He provides very little and most of the time ambiguous information on his personal life.

#### 3.2 Childhood

Mr. Chummun Baldeo was born at "Medine Camp de Masque". He had 2 brothers and 1 sister. He was the second child of his parents. His father owned an ox cart. He used to carry manure, sugarcane and so on. Given that Beau-Plan Sugar Estate did not have their own transport facilities while carrying out works near the mill, building canals and irrigating canes, his father also worked for the latter Sugar Estate. His mother was a housewife. Mr. Chummun Baldeo said that his family moved to Plaines des Papayes afterwards. But he did not mention exactly when his family shifted to Plaines des Papayes. His house was of straw and the floor was dressed with soil and cow dung. Mr. Chummun Baldeo still remembers the cyclone of 1945 and Carol and so on very well. During the latter cyclones it was horrifying. He could not go out at all and his parents used to put him beneath the "khatya" out of fear that their house might crumble.

At first he said that as a child he had to play with his brothers in the yard. They used to play with balls, some "Goulidanta". But while ambiguously explaining how he used to play "Goulidanta" he said that he used to play it with friends. He and a few other boys also used to throw and hit small balls. He learnt the latter games by observing children elder than him. Apart from playing he did not have any other leisure activities. During his free time he used to cut grass for his mother.

Regarding school, initially he said that he did not go to school because he had to look after children. Immediately after he said that he did go to school a little but he did not set foot. What he said here is quite confusing.

During his childhood there were trains in Mauritius. He did travel by train with his grandmother, for example.

#### 3.3 Working Life

At first he told the interviewers that he joined Beau-Plan Sugar Estate at the age of 12/13. But at another instance of the interview, however, he stated that he did work before that without mentioning exactly at what age and for how long. He just said that he did so when he was small. To be more precise, when his father worked for Beau-Plan Sugar Estate there were two "misie"- "misie" Guy and "misie" Zack. They liked his father very much and told him to ask his sons to come to work. Mr. Chummun Baldeo therefore, started to look after the oxen of the Sugar Estate. There were about 200-300 oxen. He had to make sure that the oxen remained on the pasture. He earned about 45-55 cents per day. He revealed that while performing the latter task he had an accident once. He said that on the day of his accident, At 11.30 a.m. he had to bring the oxen to the park for grazing. While the oxen were eating on the "laplenn" near the office of Beau-Plan, he and his friends were swinging on the flowers of "banann bookie" which were hanging on the road. The oxen were going around them. There was a *Kolom* who was cruel. On hearing the sound of a motorcycle and on noticing that it was the cruel *kolom* who was coming, He and his friend came down quickly. There was a cow who had just given birth. She was very "moved". When Baldeo Chummun came down she started to run after him believing that he was going to take her calves away. He fell down. The cow started to hit him. As Mr. Chummun Baldeo pointed out, when a cattle in a herd starts to hit someone all the cattle in the herd would follow. So all the other cattle followed the cow. The white persons who worked in the office hit the oxen with big sticks. Meanwhile Mr. Chummun Baldeo managed to escape. His face and hands got hurt. The Muslim taxi

driver who used to bring all Sugar Estate workers who were hurt to hospital, brought Mr. Chummun Baldeo to Montagne Longue hospital before bringing him to Pamplémousses Police Station. At the Police Station, he could not talk since he spoke mainly Hindi. He just said "yes yes" and was crying. A *sirdar* who was somewhat related to Mr. Baldeo Chummun' family informed his father about what had happened and his father went to visit him in the afternoon. He was crying. He stayed at the hospital for a few days. He still has scars on his hands.

At the age of 12-13 he used to collect the manure produced by the mill at Beau-Plan while crushing sugarcane, in a basket and throw it in a "mel". He earned 55 cents per day. He worked from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. He worked under the supervision of a *sirdar*. The *sirdar* used to beat him with a wood or "sagay" when he played with friends instead of working, failed to do his work properly. It used to hurt. But he said that he had to accept.

While performing the latter task he had to wake up at 5 a.m. He used to get ready quickly; take his big basket of food-bread and a "gadmanze" in which there were maize rice with any curry or tapioca flour, for instance, which were prepared by his mother and grandmother; take his "big palto" and leave for work. He went to work on foot. Beau-Plan Sugar Estate was about 3 or 4 kilometres from where he lived. He had to be dead on time. If he reached his workplace at 7.05 a.m., that is, 5 minutes late, the "markriye" used to ask him to return home. While returning home he used to play on the way and reached home at 1 p.m. He lied to his elders by telling them that he reached work late because they woke him up late. So he returned home.

After that he started to apply salt in furrows (he did not say exactly when). It was he who decided to perform the latter task. He had to apply 2-4 sacks of salt daily. He was given half of a tin of oil. He had to put the salt in it and to apply handfuls of salt. He followed his "lali". Both the *kolom* and the *sirdar* used to give him orders. If he missed a furrow the *sirdar* used to call him and asked him why he missed that furrow. The *sirdar* also used to beat him with a "sagay" or a *kolom* used to tell the *sirdar* to ask him to go back home since he was not following orders. He earned Rs. 1.25 per day. On rainy days when he worked from 7 to 9-10 a.m. he was not paid. He had to stop working on rainy days because the salt dissolved in his hands.

When applying salt he used to leave home before 6 a.m. It took him 1 hour to reach his workplace. He had to rush when he was late. Even if for the latter task he was given a workload, by the time he completed his work and reached home it was already 4 p.m.

As part of the "ti bann" he also used to pick up and burn the "siendan" weeded by workers of the "gran bann". At the age of 15-16 he integrated the "gran bann" and used to weed "siendan", remove dry leaves and plant canes. The "blan", *sirdar* and *kolom* used to come on the sugarcane fields at 15.45 p.m. to countercheck his work. On the days on which he weeded "siendan" the "blan" used to play tricks on him. He used to bring some bits of "siendan" with him. They dig the soil to see if Mr. Chummun Baldeo had properly weeded the "siendan". While digging the "blan" used to put a bit of "siendan" which he brought with him and said that Mr. Chummun Baldeo did not do his work properly and he was not paid for that day. He returned home by crying. Mr. Chummun Baldeo said that he had to undergo through all these hardships. The *sirdar* used to tell him when he had to have lunch. During lunch time he used to rest or play a little-he used to "galoup galoupe".

When he had a problem he could talk only to the *sirdar*.

The Sugar Estate did not provide him with any tools. When he weeded "siendan", for instance, he had to bring his own hoe. He had no boots, gloves and uniform. He used to wear the clothes that he used to wear at home while going to work. He had no holidays and thus, then he was ill for 2-3 days and did not go to work he was not paid. It was during the prime ministership of Ramgoolam that he was provided with the latter facilities.

A prayer was performed before harvest. He used to see a priest coming at the mill. The priest used to perform a prayer. The *sirdar* did not allow him to assist the prayer. He believes that the prayer was performed so that no accident would occur, the mill would not break down, no worker would get hurt.

He did not live on the Sugar Estate camp. But he did know about the Sugar Estate camp because he had a friend who lived there and on the request of his friend's mother, Mr. Chummun Baldeo used to go at their place during lunch time. He and his friend used to sit outside and have their lunch.

### 3.4 Marriage and Home Life

He does not remember very well about his wedding. He married at the age of about 25-26 and his wife was 15-17. His wedding ceremony lasted for 3 days from Saturday to Monday.

During his childhood's food was sold on rations, that is, his parents could buy only a specific amount of food. They used to buy maize rice, for instance. In difficult times his parents used to cultivate tapioca and sweet potatoes for the family's own consumption. When he grew up, however, food was abundant. His parents could buy rice-"gro diri", flour and "fonde" where they were sold at the cheapest price. He used to grow vegetables for his own consumption.

### 3.5 Later Life

Mr. Chummun Baldeo is 76 years old and still resides at Plaines Des Papayes.

## 4. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MR. CYRIL

### 4.1 Introduction

From early in his life Mr. Cyril quickly rose through the ranks of the Mauritian sugar industry. Starting as a *sirdar* when he was 19, he briefly worked at the docks in Port Louis before deciding to return to Sugar Estate work as a "ti kolom". Eventually he was promoted to the post of field manager, and describes some of the benefits he enjoyed from his employment. He also describes his wedding ceremony and his views on young people and family life in Mauritius today.

### 4.2 Childhood

Mr. Cyril was born in 1936 at St Hubert. He was the youngest of nine children. His father was the manager of St Hubert Sugar Estate and his mother was a housewife. His parents always spoke to him in French. When he was between five to six years of age, his family moved to Eau Bleu near Rose-Belle.

As a child, Mr. Cyril used to play "lamarel", rope skipping, and hide and seek. He also used to take an old bicycle tyre, turn it and run after it. He was also fond of playing with kites and used to make them with bamboo, newspaper since "Muslin" paper was not available during the war, and "lakord lafisel". There was no radio, but gramophones were popular in those days. After dinner, his mother used to tell him stories like "Ti Pouse".

Mr. Cyril attended the pre-primary school of Mr. S. Toste at Curepipe. For primary school, he attended Loreto Convent and pursued his secondary studies at St Joseph College. Mr. Cyril studied up to Form III. His teachers used to teach him mostly in French.

Mr. Cyril said that in his school days teachers were very strict. He had to be well behaved; otherwise, he could be expelled from school. He was never beaten. But at times his teachers used to pull his ears a little or he had to stay back 30 minutes after school hours. When he turned 15, his parents retired and the whole family moved to Rose-Hill.

### 4.3 Working Life

Mr. Cyril started to work at the age of 19 on Le Val Sugar Estate. He worked as a *sirdar* and had to supervise the work of about seven or eight women who used to apply salt and plant canes. Initially, another *sirdar* taught him his work. He said it was not difficult for him to learn since he was the son of a Sugar Estate worker and was often on sugarcane fields. If he had to complain about the workers under his supervision, he made the complaint to the "assistant". But he said he did not have to complain about the workers very often because in his opinion people in the past were more respectful. He said the workers under his supervision were very good. When they failed to do their work properly, he used to ask them to redo it until they did it properly.

After working as a *sirdar* for one and a half year, Mr. Cyril worked at the docks in Port Louis. There was a long "tapi roulan". Bags used to pass on it. There was a counter. He had to watch if the counter was functioning properly and to give a report on how many bags had passed on the "tapi roulan". He said he found this task boring and resigned after less than one year and went to work on Rivière Noire Sugar Estate at Cité La Mivoie. He obtained a job as an assistant on the sugarcane fields of the latter Sugar Estate. He had to assign to *sirdars* their work and tell them how much workers should be paid as per their work load. He said that the post of assistant was somewhat better than that of *sirdar*, because as an assistant he had more responsibilities and was rewarded accordingly: he earned a higher wage, that is, Rs. 250 per month while as a *sirdar* he was paid Rs. 5 per day; he had a small office; he was given a bicycle and a house made of corrugated iron sheet.

In 1959 when he was 23 years of age Mr. Cyril went to work on Mon Trésor Mon Désert Sugar Estate, as he believed that he would have a brighter future there. Mon Trésor Mon Désert Sugar Estate comprised of two big sections namely Union Vale and Sauveterre and three small sections which are: Mon Trésor, Mon Désert and Deux Bras. At first, he joined the section of Union Vale as a "ti

*kolom*". His tasks were almost the same as the ones he performed at Rivière Noire Sugar Estate. But he said working at Union Vale was better, because the Sugar Estate was bigger than that at Rivière Noire. He received the same wage. But if he did his work properly, he could have an increment of Rs. 15-25. He was also given a house and a motorcycle to go on his rounds. The house was made of corrugated iron sheets, and the partitioning was done with "ravinal" leaves. It consisted of two rooms, a kitchen, dining room, small living room, toilet and bathroom. When the first assistant in section Mon Trésor was ill he went to replace him just for one harvest.

After that he worked as "assistant employe an shef" in the sections of Mon Trésor, Deux Bras, Union Vale and Sauveterre respectively. As "assistant employe an shef", he had to replace the "employe an shef" when he was ill or on holidays. He was responsible for the section where he was working. He had to make a work plan, arrange the wage book, and pay the workers. He said he earned a meagre wage of Rs350 per month and enjoyed the following benefits: a small house made of concrete and a motorcycle to do his rounds. He then worked as "employe an shef" in the sections of Mon Trésor for about one and a half years and in the section of Deux Bras for about two to three years.

Mr. Cyril was promoted to the post of field manager in 1979. At that time, there were two field managers. He was in charge of the three smaller sections: Mon Désert, Mon Trésor and Deux Bras. He had to supervise the "assistan an shef's" work. He had to ensure that all the work was completed within the set timeframe. He said that the Sugar Estate used to make a work plan that all the workers had to respect. The harvest season, for instance, used to start in July and had to be over between 10 and 15 December. He earned a meagre wage of Rs11. He made his rounds in a car and had a driver. He had a gardener. He also received a large house made of concrete. His house was on the section of Mon Désert close to the factory manager's house.

When he joined Mon Trésor Mon Désert Sugar Estates, Mr. Cyril used to wake up at 5 a.m. and reached work around 6 a.m. He always prayed before going to work and asked God to help him with the day ahead. At around 9 a.m., he used to go home, eat a piece of bread, and return to his workplace. Most days his work was over at 4 p.m. Normally, he had to work for 8 hours. When problems like sugarcane fields caught fire or a wagon had derailed, he had to go to work even at night time. He said that Sugar Estates no longer face these problems. He also revealed that when he was working, there were many prejudices. As a worker of the Sugar Estate, he could not go abroad for holidays. In fact, he did not have any holidays. According to Mr. Cyril, workers were subject to a form of slavery.

#### 4.4 Marriage and Home Life

Mr. Cyril got married at the age of 29 and his wife was 17. He said his marriage was a love marriage. He got married in a church at the parish of Rose-Hill. The priest performed the prayers and songs were sung. After performing the prayers, the priest asked him if he and his wife wanted to get married because he was required to obtain their consent, and then blessed them. They exchanged rings. The wedding ceremony lasted about three quarters of an hour, he said.

Mr. Cyril wore an ordinary "konflo" of dark colour for his wedding and his wife wore a long white dress with a little veil on her head. He did not invite many relatives because he could not afford to do so. He invited his relatives by sending them cards through the post. Mr. Cyril said that it was important that people marry people that follow the same culture as theirs. Otherwise, it may lead to social discord. For example, if a Catholic person marries a person who is a Protestant, the Protestant will not go to the church. Following his marriage he has two children: a son and a daughter.

#### 4.5 Later Life

Mr. Cyril is presently a resident of Rue des Corbigneaux, Morcellement Blue Bay. Mr. Cyril said that through his grandchildren, he notices that there has been a change in schools as far as discipline and the ways that teachers should disciplined pupils are concerned. Nowadays, teachers cannot talk rudely with pupils, teachers cannot do this and they cannot do that. He said that every day he hears the same story: pupils striking in schools. If he and his friends had done the same during his school days, they would have been expelled he said.

Mr. Cyril explained why nowadays some children tend to deviate from the right path. He said that in the past, women did not go to work. They looked after their children. Consequently, children benefited from a close family life. But nowadays, while some children's parents are at home when they return from school, for others none of their parents are there when they reach home. Or at night only one of their parents is at home. He believes this is enough for some children to lose self-control and to become drug addicts. He thinks people should be giving this issue more consideration.

## 5. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MR. DOOKHIT DEEWAN

### 5.1 Introduction

Mr. Dookhit Deewan describes his childhood as well as the experiences of his grandfather, an indentured labourer who came to Mauritius from Bihar after promises of making him rich. He also describes his responsibilities as a *sirdar* working on a Sugar Estate, aspects of his wedding ceremony, and some of the criteria his stepmother used to choose his wife. Just like for his grandfather, the Ramayana is very important to him and he still reads it to this day.

### 5.2 Childhood

Mr. Dookhit Deewan was born in the village of Plaines des Papayes. Mr. Dookhit Deewan knew his grandfather. He still remembers how his grandfather narrated to him his life in Bihar and how he came to Mauritius at the age of 15 as an indentured labourer. Given that life was very harsh in Bihar at that time they fooled his grandfather and managed to persuade him to come to Mauritius by telling him that in Mauritius “vir ros gagn larzan”. The only possessions that his grandfather took with him on the voyage were his bag and a copy of the Ramayana. According to Mr. Dookhit Deewan’s recollection of what his grandfather told him, on board the ship his grandfather was not treated like a human being but rather like an animal.

Upon landing in Mauritius, Mr. Dookhit Deewan said that his grandfather continued to be mistreated. “enn bann blan” brought his grandfather to a Sugar Estate-the name of which he does not know. The owner of the Sugar Estate made his grandfather work. His grandfather lived in camps for many years. Eventually his grandfather was able to save some money with which he bought a small plot of land in the village of Plaines des Papayes once “slavery” (that is, indentured labour) had been abolished.

Mr. Dookhit Deewan’s father worked as a *sirdar*. He does not remember his mother, not even her name, since she died when he was very young. He has four sisters and had two brothers.

The house of the Dookhit family was made of straw. It consisted of two rooms separated by a jute bag. There were no kitchen, toilet and bathroom. Food was cooked in a corner of the house on fire wood and they took some straw and “enn-de goni finn bare” to make a bathroom. They had to fetch water from a well found half a kilometer away. They carried the water in a container made of tin and washed their clothes near the well itself.

As a child, Mr. Dookhit Deewan used to play *boul kadak* also known as *boul kaskot*, *goulidanta*. He also used to play with marbles and small seashells. In the evenings, his grandmother and grandfather used to tell him stories like “Salanga and Sadablich” in Bhojpuri. His grandfather and grandmother also used to sing Ramayana songs and other songs related to the stories they narrated. He said that he still remembers these songs.

Mr. Dookhit Deewan went to Plaines des Papayes School and studied up to standard VI. Classes started at 8 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m. During Mr. Dookhit Deewan’s first two years at school, classes were conducted outside and benches and a small blackboard were placed beneath a tree. Hence, when it rained classes were interrupted. From standard III to standard VI, however, he used to study in a proper class-room with corrugated iron roofing. In the class-rooms too there were benches and blackboards. His teachers addressed him in Kreol but taught him in English and French. As a Hindu, Mr. Dookhit Deewan also studied Hindi at school and performed Hindu prayers like “Jai Jagadi Swaheré, shanty shanty shanty”. But when it was the turn of Christian pupils to pray, he used to do other things, such as gardening and planting.

He did not bring food to school. At times his grandmother used to bring food for him. The school was quite far. But when he grew up he could go home on his own for lunch. For lunch he used to have a little rice, dholl and chutney.

### 5.3 Working Life

Mr. Dookhit Deewan joined Beau-Plan Sugar Estate at the age of 14 years old. His work consisted of removing grass, weeding "siendan" and carrying out works meant for children. He earned 35 cents per day. Work started at 7 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m. During working hours he had to work non-stop, because even if he had been working very hard but had just taken a pause of 15 minutes and that his "sef" caught him, he would be marked as absent. But since the *kolom* saw that he used to do his work properly, Mr. Dookhit Deewan was made *sirdar* at the age of 17. As a *sirdar*, in the morning Mr. Dookhit Deewan had to note the presence of the 25 labourers who worked under his supervision. He used to carry a pole in his hand. He used to measure a pole of 10 "pie" and assign to each labourer his/her workload. He worked from Monday to Saturday. But in case the sugar factory did not have enough sugarcane to crush, he had to work on Sundays too. He used to receive sugar twice in a year: when harvest started before June and In December on the eve of New Year. When he was ill or had a minor injury he could go to the Sugar Estate's hospital. The hospital offered its services free of charge and there was a nurse to take care of him. If however, he had a serious health problem or was badly hurt he had to go to Montagne Longue Hospital.

After waking up in the morning he used to brush his teeth, drink tea and leave for work at 5-6 a.m. He used to go to work on foot. From Plaines des Papayes he used to go to work at Kalbas, Beau-Plan, Pamplemousses, for example.

### 5.4 Marriage and Home Life

During Second World War, Mr. Dookhit Deewan received a ration card from the government. The amount of food that he should receive was indicated on it.

Mr. Dookhit Deewan Married at the age of 18 and his wife was 16. It was his step-mother who chose his wife. According to him, his step-mother chose his wife because for her she was a nice girl or belonged to a good family. However, he does not know what criteria his step-mother used to determine that his wife was a nice person. He met his wife on the day of his marriage itself.

In the past there was no need to go to invite people personally for a wedding and to give them a wedding card. In Hindu religion there was a "Thakur"-which according to Mr. Dookhit Deewan was a professional. His family members just decided who they wish to invite and the "thakur" took a "betel" and a clove and invited these people on their behalf. The people accepted the invitation. The "thakur" also "dres tou zafer mariaz". They paid him Rs. 2/Rs. 2.50 for his services.

His marriage ceremony lasted six days. Tilak and safran were performed on Monday and Wednesday respectively. On "safran" Mr. Dookhit Deewan was bathed with a paste of turmeric. He said that "safran" was important because there was no make-up in the past. During the latter ritual he wore an ordinary shirt and a "ti" pair of trousers/"enn ti langouti". Since there was no radio and television women sang from Monday to Friday.

The wedding ceremony took place on Friday night. Mr. Dookhit Deewan left Plaines des Papayes for Highlands-where his wife lived, at 4 p.m. It was the first time that he was going to the latter place. He was not even aware of its existence before. He went by car-there were about 5 to 6 cars, as "bann Ioto Ford Canada" had just been introduced. Yet, the speed of these cars was not as good as those of today's and the roads were not well-built. He therefore, reached Highlands, at 6 p.m. He had to bring gifts for his wife. They included: her *saree* and gold jewelry namely "chan, kanpur, jumka and sikri". Once at the bride's place the two families and Hindu priests came together to marry them. The Hindu Priests did prayers. In the past people abided strictly to rites and rituals. Hence, He got married, his marriage was over and he and his wife left his wife's place at the time specified by the Hindu Priests. They returned to Plaines des Papayes by 2 in the morning. On Saturday his wife and him with some relative went back to his wife's home to perform a ritual.

There was no honeymoon however. Mr. Dookhit Deewan married on Sunday and had to go back to work on Monday. He said that he was not paid for the six days he was absent for his wedding. Nor did "misie-la", the estate owner or manager, offer him any wedding present or attend his wedding. However, Mr. Dookhit Deewan said that the guests who attended his wedding gave him 2/5 pounds of rice, 1/2 pounds of dholi and 5 pounds of flour as wedding gift.

He managed to go to Bihar twice and to meet the family to which his grandfather belonged.

### 5.5 Later Life

Mr. Dookhit Deewan still lives in the village of Plaines des Papayes. But he can no longer walk. He does not have any souvenir of his grandfather not even the Ramayana that his grandfather brought with him to Mauritius. He does, however, still read the Ramayana.

## 6. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MRS GOOLAMUN BEEBEE MARIAM

### 6.1 Introduction

Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam has never been officially employed but that has not stopped her from living an active life and finding ways to contribute to her family's income. She describes the activity of making "vakwa" bags, a trade she learned from her mother and that she was very successful at before plastic bags replaced "vakwa" baskets. She also describes aspects of her home life and the importance of the Muslim festival of Eid to her and reading the Namaz several times a day.

### 6.2 Childhood

Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam was born at Camp de Masque Pavé to Yusuf Modabaccus - a jeweler, and Beebee Abeda Caunaye - a housewife. She had two sisters and two step-brothers. Her parents did not send her and her sisters to school because the school was too far from where they lived. Only her step-brothers were allowed to go to school. But she and her sisters went to the "maktab" where the Imam taught them the Muslim religion and Muslim alphabets. She completed all her classes at the "Maktab". Her studies at the "Maktab" enables her to do "Namaz", read the *Quran* and the "Karma". She reads the "Karma" at night. It is a form of protection for her.

Hence, during her childhood Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam's routine was as follows. She used to wake up before six a.m. to do her prayer. After that she used to have her breakfast. She used to have biscuits and tea for breakfast. After breakfast she used to learn her lessons, Help her mother by looking after her younger sister and then leave for the Maktab at 7 a.m. As a child she also used to play with her friends, sisters and step-brothers. They used to play with dolls which their parents bought for them. Moreover, she used to play hide and seek with other girls. At night her maternal grandmother and mother used to relate stories to her.

### 6.3 Working Life

Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam did not work before marriage. After her marriage too, her husband did not allow her to go to work. She, however, used to make baskets from "vakwa" at home, as plastic bags were not available at the time, and the baskets made from "vakwa" used to sell well she said. She used to sell a basket for 20-25 cents. Originally, she learned to make the "vakwa" baskets from her mother. She had to make the "vakwa" into two pieces, let the two pieces dry, straighten them and then she could start to make the baskets. But Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam does not make them anymore, as "vakwa" is no longer cultivated in Mauritius.

### 6.4 Marriage and Home Life

At the age of 18, Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam married Ayup Goolamun who was a *sirdar* in the civil service. She had an arranged marriage. She got married six months after her parents chose her husband. Her relatives came to her wedding by car and bus. The wedding took place at her place. Her wedding tent was made of bamboo and "parayla". Her Nikka was short and celebrated over just one day. Her husband's relatives sent her a dress, "horni" and "tous" of red colour. She applied Mehendi to make herself look pretty. Her husband wore trousers, an "aba" and "pagri". Her mother gave her earrings and "Tori" for her wedding.

A prayer known as "Fateya" was performed before food was served. When she got married rice was not available. Bread and beef were prepared. It was the relatives who slaughtered the ox.

After her marriage Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam went to live at Montida. Her house was made of straw and rocks. The living-room was of corrugated iron sheets. The floor was dressed with soil. Her house consisted of 3 rooms and two small rooms known as "godon". She shared the house with her husband's three brothers and their wife. Each of them had their own small kitchen outside. Her neighbours were from different religious backgrounds but they lived in harmony and unity. She spent most of her time at home because her husband did not allow her to go to work.

Apart from making baskets from "vakwa", Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam used to do household chores, chat with her sisters-in-laws and sew clothes. There were no water facilities. She and her sisters-in-laws had to collect water from their neighbours' house. They did not go to the river to wash clothes. They used to wash their clothes with the water they got from their neighbour. Her sisters-in-law taught her how to cook curries and "roti". She used to make "roti" with crushed maize and wheat.

Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam gave birth to eleven children: seven daughters and four sons, at home with the help of a midwife. She had to pay the midwife. After giving birth to her babies, she was given "kasar" to eat. The "kasar" was made of crushed rice, ginger, "methi", "chamsur", water and sugar. "The kasar" was meant to give her strength and to purify her stomach. Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam said it was her mother who taught her how to prepare the "kasar". She, in turn, taught her daughters how to prepare it. Although Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam and her children used to consult a private doctor when they were ill, she also used medicinal plants and herbs. She used to plant mint and ayapana. She used to give her children ayapana to drink when they were vomiting. The ayapana used to purify their stomach.

The most important Muslim festival for Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam is Eid. After seeing the moon in the month of Ramadan, she begins her "roza"-a fast, which lasts for one month. She cannot eat and drink between 5 a.m. and 6 p.m. After fasting for one month she celebrates Eid. She cooks nice food- "briyani" and "vermisel", wears beautiful clothes and goes out. She said it is a happy moment for her. As a Muslim, "Namaz" is also important for Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam. She must read "Namaz" five times a day at specific times, but added that when one has difficulties, one can read it at other times. She also mentioned in her interview that "Moharam" is the first month in the Muslim calendar. For Muslims, each New Year starts with "Moharam".

#### 6.5 Later Life

Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam is residing at Mosque Road Camp de Masque Pavé. Two of her daughters and one of her sons have passed away.

She expressed her views on the youngsters of today. Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam firmly states that nowadays youngsters do not respect elders. It was of no use to give advice to them because they will do things only if they want to do them.

## 7. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MR. GROOCHURN BEEANDEWO

### 7.1 Introduction

Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo discusses improvements that trade unions made to his working conditions as a Sugar Estate worker and the difficulties he has experienced in life. At an early age, his father was bed-ridden, and Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo had to give up his studies at school to look after his two younger sisters while his mother went out to work to support the family. He also describes the difficulties his wife had giving birth to their children when health care in Mauritius was still rudimentary and the type of food he ate and how rare it was to eat meat in the past.

### 7.2 Childhood

Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo was born in the village of Jouvance d'Épinay on December 29, 1934, to Bala - a *sirdar* on Grande Rosali Sugar Estate - and Sushil. The members of the Groochurn family had their own house, which was made of straw. The walls and floor were dressed with cow dung. The living room was partitioned with corrugated iron sheets so that Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo's mother could have a place to cook. He said that his family was poor and used the corrugated iron sheets as a precaution against fire. In their house, there were a bed made up of four wooden boxes, and a table of inferior quality made of wooden planks. Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo's sleeping mattress was made of "petiver" and at night he used to cover himself with jute bags. They did not have water and electricity. For lighting, they used kerosene lamps, and they had to fetch water from a spring found at Jouvance. They carried the water in a container made of tin and stored it in a barrel at home. His mother used to go to the river three or four times a week to wash clothes. He used to go with her and bath in the river.

Where he lived the houses were far from each other. As a result, he said he did not have many friends. Among his few friends there were both boys and girls-even grown up girls of 12/13 years old. He and his friends used to take a little cart, build a "laryaz" on the road-which was rocky at that time. They also used to make a small whole and play marbles; play "kanet triang" and "Goulidanta".

He went to Kongoma School. Given that his school was close to his house he went on foot. He used to bring a piece of bread in a bag or his mother used to give him a *roti* to bring to school. His parents used to give him 20 cents-which he had to use for the whole week. It was up to him to decide whether he was going to spend the 20 cents on one day or during the whole week. He said he does not remember much about his teachers, since the difficult moments he has experienced in his lifetime has made it difficult for him to remember such information. He just said that they taught him in Creole and Hindi. During the break at school he and his friends used to play hide and seek to kill the time. They used to converse in Creole because the majority of the pupils were Christians. But he had to abandon his studies in his first months in standard III to look after his two younger sisters after his father fell ill and his mother started to work. His father was bed ridden. He was forced to sell their house, but since his father was a *sirdar*, he managed to get a house on the Sugar Estate camp. His mother had to prepare the food and milk the cows before going to work. Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo had to make his sisters ate on time and drank the cow milk by putting it in their bottles. After his father died and his sisters grew up and were able to take care of themselves, Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo started to work.

### 7.3 Working Life

Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo started to work at the age of 14 on The Mount and Beau Plan Sugar Estate, more precisely, in the section of Grande Rosalie. He joined a group of child labourers and was paid 50 cents per day to apply salt. He worked from 7 am to 6 pm in the evening. He said that applying salt was a very hard task because the sugarcane fields were far from each other. It was his mother who got him the job with the Sugar Estate.

Afterwards he had to fetch the food of five "manev masinn" from their house and bring the food to the mill. One of them might live at d'Épinay, another at lakrwaze La Nicolière. He did that on foot

and barefoot. He carried the basket of food on his shoulder. He worked up to 6 p.m. He said that as a camp resident he had no choice but to perform whatever task(s) "misie-la" assigned to him. Indeed if he refused he said that "misie-la" could throw him out of where he was living or remove his door.

Owing to the lack of "manev masinn", "misie-la" compelled him to work as "manev masinn". He worked as "manev masinn" for 15 years. His work consisted of "amar vagon" and "trap lam". He started to work on Monday at 5 a.m. and went back home on Sunday at 7 a.m. He worked night and day. But he said that when he reached the mill and that there were many machines weighing canes he could rest for about 1-3 hours. If on the next day he stayed at home "misie-la" used to come at his door. He had no specific time to eat. He earned Rs2.25 per day and a fixed surplus of Rs9. He said that his wage was not enough. His chief was the "masinn" driver.

When the Sugar Estate changed its technique of carrying sugarcane to the mill, Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo and the other five "manev masinn" were told that there was no work for them. But after trade unionists had a discussion with "misie-la", a deal was struck and he and the other five workers were sent to cut and load sugarcane. He was integrated in a group of labourers and was placed under the supervision of a *sirdar*. Apart from supervising his work, the *sirdar* used to take down his presence and calculate his wage as well. But it was misie-la who was in charge of everything. He performed the latter task for 30 years. Before harvest he used to perform a prayer at home. He invoked his saints and "gran dimounn". During the harvest season he used to wake up at 1 A.M, go to work on bicycle and start to work at 3 a.m. Harvesting and loading sugarcane were very hard since there was not an exact time at which his work was over. Nonetheless, Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo was happy when it was harvest season because it was an opportunity for him to earn more money. He even claimed that during the harvest season, his wage was higher than a *sirdar's*. During intercrop season, however, he earned a fixed wage. He used to weed "siendan", remove rocks and plant, for instance. Initially when he used to go to work during rainy days he was asked to go home at 9 a.m. and was not paid at all. But when trade unionists-Ramnarrain and Jugdambi, fought against this injustice he started to receive half of his wage when he was sent back home at 9 a.m. on rainy days. Moreover, when doing the following tasks: removing dry leaves, "grataz" and cleaning, he was assigned a load of work which he could complete by 11 A.M while before trade unions began to fight for workers he had to work up to 3 p.m.

At first he had to buy his own tools. But when the government enforced regulations<sup>1</sup> and trade unions started to work in the interest of labourers the Sugar Estate gave him a "laserp" every 2 years. Afterwards (he did not mention exactly when) he even received money to buy his hoe. Thanks to trade unions he also started to receive holidays, sick leave and "local" and a bonus at the end of the year.

With the enforcement of regulations<sup>2</sup> he started to receive boots, gloves and uniform as well. The Sugar Estate did not organize any party. He and the group of labourers with whom he worked used to celebrate together. But the *sirdar* used to make them complete their load of work beforehand. When he and his wife had their children the Sugar Estate gave them about Rs200/Rs300 to buy milk for their new-born babies. During his final years on the Sugar Estate he started to receive 5 pounds of sugar as gift for New Year.

When he was about to retire he paid the trade unions Rs. 22 per month. He retired in 1994 at the age of 60 years old. He said that on retiring he was somewhat sad but was also happy to retire and receive his lump sum and that he benefited from his "local" and sick leave. What he liked about his work is that when working conditions improved thanks to trade unions, his job on the Sugar Estate was secure.

#### 7.4 Marriage and Home Life

Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo married at the age of 25. His marriage was an arranged one. His mother asked his neighbours to look for a partner for him. His wife lived at Belle-Rose. He married one year after meeting her for the first time.

He confessed that caste system did exist in the past. For Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo, however, caste system means inequality between rich and poor, that is, social class, since he said that he was a poor man and thus had to marry a poor woman. If a family was somewhat richer than him they

would not have accepted to marry their daughter with him because he would not have the means to feed her. He had to marry a woman belonging to the same social rank as his.

His engagement took place in a "baitka". A small "hawan" was performed. He then offered two olive cakes to his wife. He and his wife did not receive any gifts because people were poor: "tou dimounn dan bez mem" at the time Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo said. Following his engagement he went to meet his wife once in a month because he had to work.

For his wedding, Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo invited his relatives and some people in the locality verbally because he could not afford to give them cards. He was a member of the society and also of that of a youth club. Consequently both members of the society and youth club helped him during his wedding. His wedding tent was made up of bamboo. Since he was a worker of the Sugar Estate, the Sugar Estate allowed members of the society to cut bamboo on the riverside for his wedding. His wedding ceremony lasted for six days. Given that he worked as "manev masinn" he had 6 Holidays for his wedding. But if he worked as canecutter at that time he would have had no holidays. His wedding was a simple wedding as he puts it: "marye ki ou pe marye enn mar-enn marye mizer". He said that his total wedding expenses came to Rs700 and that nowadays one cannot get a sack of flour for that amount. He bought a sack of rice or flour for his wedding from the Chinese shop on credit. He did not have the means to buy coke for his guests.

Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo's wife gave birth to their children at home with the help of a nurse from the Sugar Estate's hospital. The nurse came to see his wife only for the first two days following her deliveries. After that, he had to take care of her himself to the best of his ability, and if she was not well he brought her to civil hospital or consulted a private doctor. After his wife had their second child, Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo's wage was no longer sufficient to feed his family and his wife started to work as labourer. She left their children with an old woman and paid her one rupee per week. He said that one rupee was a considerable sum of money in those days.

Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo also said that he used to eat various types of food. He mentioned eggplant and "bann bred". Fish was abundant because merchants came to people's homes to sell fish. But he used to eat meat very rarely, maybe once a year when his parents managed to save some money and buy a pound of meat, or a neighbour slaughtered a goat or a hen was to be sold. He used to buy a pound of "gro diri", or rice, for 30 cents. He said that life was hard in the past and he had to work very hard to earn 30 cents: "Ou bizin trime terib. Ou bizin travay lanwit lizour parey kouma mo bann gran dimounn travay. Ladan pena ler. Kan ounn ale seter o kontrer, katrer-sinker ou vini".

### 7.5 Later Life

Mr. Groochurn Beeandewo is now 76 years old and is a resident of Shivala lane, Jouvance D'Épinay. Groochurn Beeandewo claimed that there is a world of difference between today's youngsters and those of the past and he accounted for this change. He said many youngsters do not want to work and do not respect their elders. He said that in the past parents used to threaten their children by telling them that a thief would pass by to deter them from going out, but that children no longer believed their parents and instead will go out and look for the thief! For him development and education are responsible for this change in attitude. In the past only the children of the rich were educated. Poor people used to believe what the educated people used to tell them. But since education is free all children: both poor and rich are educated and poor people can no longer be fooled. Out of 100 only 5 parents may refuse to make an effort to send their children to school. He said that they should make sacrifices for their children.

He also provided some reflections on how youngsters can lead a more successful and meaningful life and should behave. According to him, youngsters must learn to make sacrifices, must work, and must not incur unnecessary expenses. Working for the country means a bright future, he said. They should respect people.

## 8. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MR. PANDOO SAYAJEE ROW

### 8.1 Introduction

Although Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row lost both of his parents at early age, he went on to live an exciting and varied life that saw him join the army at 18 and was stationed in Egypt for a number of years after the Second World War. Apart from a brief stint as a Sugar Estate worker when he returned to Mauritius for the first time, he has worked in the agricultural section of the civil service for most of his life on returning to Mauritius for good. He also describes the significance of worshipping Ganesha and the Ganesh Chaturthi festival to him as a Marathi.

### 8.2 Childhood

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row was born in the village of Melrose. He lived in an extended family consisting of himself, his parents, two elder siblings, uncle, aunt and cousin. The Pandoo family lived in a long house made of straw and the floor was dressed with cow dung. The floor was dressed every Saturday. There were small benches in the house. There might also have had one or two Chair(s) made of wood. He used to sleep either on jute bags, a "nat" or "Khatya"-a bed made of coconut rope and wood. At bed time his elders used to tell him how they worked, how they collected food that they had to fetch wood from the mountains to cook food.

Both of Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row's parents were labourers on a Sugar Estate. He still remembers how his mother used to wait for her friends and then they used to go to work together. He used to accompany her to the road. His mother used to hold him. He had big cheeks. She used to touch his cheeks. Then he went back. He lost his mother when he was about 4 to 5 years old and his father at the age of 7. Both died due to ill health. After the death of his father it was his uncle and aunt who looked after his brother, sister and him.

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row had to attend Church of England school-a Protestant school in the village of Montagne Blanche. He refused to go to school because he had no one to motivate him to do so. His uncle could not pay much attention to him given that he worked in his ox cart and got tired. He claimed that if his parents were still alive it would have been different. His uncle used to force him to go to school. His uncle used to beat him and bring him to school. He said that if his uncle had not forced him to go to school he would not have studied up to standard VI.

Creole was the medium of communication at Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row's school. Given that it was a Protestant school, he was required to perform catechesis. He also learned the history of France and England, arithmetic and geography. Hindi was the only oriental language that was taught at Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row's school. He did not mention whether he attended these Hindi classes. But he did state that he learnt some Marathi from his paternal grandparents who came from Kolhapur Maharashtra. He also had to sing "God Save the King" at school because Mauritius had not yet become independent.

At the beginning his uncle did not give him money when he went to school. But afterwards he received 1 cent at times since his uncle did not always have money to give him. He used to buy "gram". He used to bring rice with curry to school.

As a child he used to play "goulidanta" with a wood sharpened on both edges, "disel" and with marbles and kites-which were made up of lakord lafisil", wood and muslin paper. At times he used to make the kites by himself and at times his brother used to make them for him.

### 8.3 Working Life

After completing standard VI in 1942, Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row worked as messenger. However, upon turning 18, he enrolled in the army. He embarked on a ship with many other people bound for Egypt in December 1946, that is, during peacetime. On December 24, 1946, he reached a place called Quassassin where there was a military base and received three months of training. At Quassassin there was sandstorm and he had to cover his bread with *messtin*. He also had to be careful otherwise crows could take his piece of bread away. After that he was posted to other places where he was required to watch over an ammunitions warehouse. He said that at times army education officers used to come at the warehouse and teach them English. He even got a small

certificate. Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row said he was treated very well. He was given a bed and was issued clothes. There was a recreational centre where he could listen to music. There was a piano. There was "nafi" where he could sit and drink something.

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row came back to Mauritius in October 1950 and received a small sum of money that was destined for him as a returning soldier. Given that there was no progress in Mauritius initially he worked on Sans Souci Sugar Estate for about 1 year. But when La Nicolière was being built He started to repair a canal meant for La Nicolière and carried rocks here and there. He earned Rs.1.75 per day. But his wage was not enough. In 1952 He therefore, enrolled in the army for another 3 years. For him working in the army was better. He was sure that on his return he would receive a small sum of money. And on rejoining the army, he got the opportunity to work as an assistant pay clerk. His work consisted of calculating the money that workers should receive every week.

After his stint in the army was over Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row worked as a relief worker in the civil service in "Bois des Forêts". He used to plant eucalyptus and pine trees. After about two years he had to look for other work because the relief work was over, and he managed to get a job in the civil service in the agricultural sector in the tea division. He was then shifted to work at Réduit in Central Experimental Station (CES) which dealt with vegetables. Overall he worked for 25 years in the agricultural sector and retired. During that time he was also the secretary of a cooperatives Society which gave loans to planters who cultivated sugarcane.

#### 8.4 Marriage and Home Life

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row got married when he was 23. His wife was 15. He invited only close relatives and people in his locality. He invited them personally and did not give them cards. He said that nowadays many people including friends are invited to weddings. But he could not afford to do so for his wedding. On Friday, he got engaged. He had to offer his wife a chain. On Saturday, "safran" took place. He got married on Sunday. On Monday, he said that he went at the bride's place again. On Tuesday, another service was performed. He wore trousers and a shirt and might have worn a costume. His wife wore a *saree*. He also gave his wife jewels to wear in her hands. He bought the jewellery on credit from a jeweller who used to come from Port Louis at the end of every month. Vegetarian food such as "sonz, pouri", potatoes and "dal tipwa" were served from Friday to Monday. It was only on Tuesday that non-veg food was prepared. He performed these services because he had to follow tradition and had he not done so his uncles would have felt that his prayer was incomplete. After his marriage He and his wife have 5 children.

All the food that Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row used to eat in the past is available even today. During the Second World War many ships did not reach Mauritius on time. Consequently there was a scarcity of food and the inhabitants received food on rations. During the war he used to eat potato chips, maize rice with curry since rice was not abundant, farata, biscuits, Lentils, red beans which people used to cultivate and dry, Bomli, and "pwason blan".

Ganesh Chaturthi is the most important festival for Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row. He said that A month before the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, a prayer is performed. At the society a group of people sing songs three or four times in a week in praise of Ganesha. An idol of Ganesha is built and placed at the society. Every day he prays and offers coconut and flowers to Ganesha. On the last day many people congregate at the society. They dance and beat "dholok" and play the "jal". On the next day the idol is immersed in the river on the road of Sans Souci. On their way to the river, people dance and sing.

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row said that he should worship Ganesha first because Ganesha removes all evil forces. Worshipping Ganesha should also ensure that he will be bestowed with intelligence. He said that according to legend, Shiva told Ganesha that they should go round the world and the first to come back would be declared the winner. There were several vehicles. Some had lions. Some had birds, for instance. Ganesha had a mouse. Everyone went. But Ganesha made a circle, wrote Rama in it and go around it. Shiva said that Ganesha was intelligent and declared him the winner. Shiva further said that people would worship him first. Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row feels good when he prays. He also celebrates Maha Shiva Ratri.

### 8.5 Later Life

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row is still a resident of Melrose. He stressed the importance of independence for him as a Mauritian. He claimed that due to the independence of Mauritius, he is free and thus can travel to any country he wants. Before independence, he could be prevented from entering certain countries. He could go only to England and other Commonwealth countries. The enthusiasm with which Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row told the interviewer about the significance of independence undoubtedly leads one to conclude that he likes to travel to other countries.

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row also discussed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the first prime minister of Mauritius, and his contribution to the nation's progress. He said that Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam had a special kind of intelligence. He never hurt or criticised people. Even during elections, he only said good things. He used to relate his sufferings and recognized the need for change. Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row said that thanks to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, there has been much progress in Mauritius.

Mr. Pandoo Sayajee Row provided some advice to youngsters on how they can lead a meaningful and prosperous life fulfil their responsibilities and the country can progress. According to him youngsters should be patient. They would not obtain all that they want easily. They should continue their studies. If they are not educated they would not get a good job. The government chooses deserving people. They should work. They should love their work. If a job allows them to earn a living, whatever that job may be, they should work seriously. They need to earn money. Their wives and children should live. They should be punctual. Then the country will progress. Everyone should work.

## 9. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MR. PERSUNNOO GOKULANAND

### 9.1 Introduction

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand's life is somewhat out of the ordinary for Mauritians of his generation as he would go on to become the chief attendant of a Sugar Estate laboratory. This work gave him a great sense of satisfaction and upon retiring at the age of 60, his employers rewarded him by buying a plane ticket for him to visit India with his wife. Sadly, Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand passed away in 2010 and is survived by his wife and son.

### 9.2 Childhood

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand was born in 1939 at Sans Souci. He was the sole child of his parents. His father's name was NunKumar. His father studied up to standard VI and worked in the laboratory of Sans Souci Sugar Estate. His job was to test samples of sugarcane and sugar. His mother's name's was Sarosatee and she was a housewife.

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand grew up in Sans Souci Sugar Estate camp. He said that there were approximately fifteen barracks made of corrugated iron sheets and partitioning was done by walls. Five families lived in one barrack. Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand and his parents had two rooms and they built their own latrine because according to Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand, the latrine built by the Sugar Estate was unhygienic. There was a common tap on every street. They used to fill water from these common taps. And for lighting, they used kerosene lamps.

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand had many friends in the estate camp and in the nearby villages, namely, Montagne Blanche, Melrose and Ti Pake. He used to play marbles, "goulidanta", and with kites that his father made for him. His father also bought a ball for him and he used to play with about four to five friends in a large open area between two barracks as there was no playground for children. But his mother did not allow him to play in the morning.

He went to Church of England School-a Protestant school found at Montagne Blanche. He used to go to school on foot. He had to walk about 1 kilometre. He studied up to standard 5 at the latter school. The teachers talked in Kreol but at the time he could not speak Creole properly. After school, that is, after 4 p.m., he used to go to the *Baithka* where he learnt Hindi. When his lessons were over, he used to listen to stories told by elders because he had nothing to do and that even radios did not exist at the time. He found these stories very interesting. Every month he also used to attend the simple *hawan* that a Hindu priest used to perform at the *Baithka*.

When Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand was a child there were trains all over Mauritius. At Montagne Blanche There was only one train for passengers. It used to leave Montagne Blanche for Rose-Hill at 6 a.m. and came back in the evening. He did travel by the latter train. He liked to travel by train.

When Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand was 10 years old the Sans Souci sugar factory was destroyed. His father lost his job and they lost their house in the estate camp. Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand moved with his parents to his maternal grandmother's home in the town of Quatre Bornes. In the town of Quatre Bornes, he learned to speak Kreol properly. He did not mention at which school he did his standard VI. He pursued his secondary studies at Central College in Rose-hill. He studied up to form 4. Everyday he used to walk to school from Remy Ollier Avenue Quatre Bornes, which he said was about one and a half or two kilometres from his school.

### 9.3 Working Life

After leaving college Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand stayed at home for two years. In the meantime, his father had been appointed as chief attendant in the laboratory of Beau Champ Sugar Estate by Mr. Auguste Harel. Given that his father was in charge of the laboratory of Beau Champ, he was able to appoint him as an attendant in 1956. About 10 to 15 people worked with Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand. They used to carry out tests and he used to work on the results they obtained and submit his calculations to the chemist. For example, he said that if the mill had to crush 3000 tons of canes he had to calculate how many hours the mill took to crush the 3000 tons of canes, for how long had it been broken and if the mill had not been able to crush all the canes how many were left on the platform. The administrator could call him before the chemist asked him about his

calculations. If the mill had been able to crush only 2800 tons of canes 200 tons should be on the platform. He and the chemist had to give the same figures. What he liked about the chemist was the fact that he used to ask him if the administrator had already asked him for the figures. When he said yes the chemist did not make his own calculations and gave the figures which Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand had given to him. Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand earned Rs55 every month for the work that he did. He said it was a considerable sum of money at the time. He used to work from Monday to Sunday and even on holidays. His work started at 4 a.m. and was over by 6/7 p.m. He thus, used to wake up at 3 a.m. He used to bring food that was prepared on the eve to work. There was an oven at the laboratory and he used to heat his food. He used to do prayer and did not eat before going to work. When he reached his workplace he said they used to make tea which he used to drink.

Following the retirement of his father in 1970, Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand was made chief attendant. He said he always received good treatment and was held in high esteem by all "misie blan". The Sugar Estate reimbursed him all the expenses that he incurred. Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand retired in 2000. On his retirement, the manager gave him a plane ticket to go to India. He felt that this acknowledged his skills and the high esteem his manager held him in and took his wife with him when he went to India. On his return from India, he was called back to work, and worked for another six months. But since he had already reached 60 years of age by that time, his son asked him to stop working and he agreed.

#### 9.4 Marriage and Home Life

On moving to Beau-Champ with his family, Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand did not live on the Sugar Estate. Rather, Mr. Harel built a house of corrugated iron sheets near the mill for them. On striking Mauritius, cyclone Carol destroyed their house. But the Sugar Estate rebuilt their house and this time the house consisted of 3 rooms and two "godon".

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand married at the age of 21. His wife was 17. Like many other people of his generation, his family chose his wife. They invited guests by handing out cards. His marriage ceremony lasted for three days. It was a "Puranika" wedding. He said that many people attended his wedding. He wore a dhoti and claimed that at the time, Hindu priests officiating at weddings forced the bridegroom to wear a dhoti for their wedding. His wife wore a *saree*. The Hindu priest performed a ritual before his wedding and vegetarian food was served on all three days. He and his wife have a son from their marriage.

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand said that he fasted for all Hindu festivals. The Hindu festivals he celebrated included *Shivrat*, *Divali* and *Fagwa*. During *Shivarat*, he used to make the pilgrimage to Grand-Bassin. For *Divali*, at first he used to light "Ponga", (flowers of the banana tree). Later on, earthen lamps were introduced, and finally people started to put electric bulbs. On *Fagwa*, his parents used to prepare several cakes that Hindus used to eat, such as "lados", and shared them with other people. He said that he kept this tradition alive. When Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand lived in the estate camp at Sans Souci, on *fagwa* elders used to go to Montagne Blanche. They used to beat the "dholok" and play the "jal" while walking there. He used to join them. Residents of Melrose and Ti Pake also used to go to Montagne Blanche, where all of them used to dance and sing. They used to celebrate the whole day. He said he no longer remembers the songs they used to sing. But after leaving Sans Souci, he and his family started to play with colours on *Fagwa*. He said that he also used to celebrate the arrival of the New Year. For New Year, he used to buy two to three pounds of goat to eat.

#### 9.5 Later Life

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand passed away on August 17, 2010. However, in the interview, he was able to share some of his views on the present direction of Mauritian society. In his opinion, the customs of Mauritians have changed. For example, he said that in the past, women were "pli en respectable". He believed that when a woman goes to do prayer she must wear a *saree*.

Mr. Persunnoo Gokulanand also pointed to the negative effects of the education system on today's pupils. He claimed that nowadays pupils must work very hard. If they do not take private tuition, it is not certain that they will pass their examinations, and as a result, they are often left exhausted

by their workload. Whereas in the past, this was not the case, as pupils only went to school and did not have to take private tuition.

Based on his own working experiences, Mr. Persunoo Gokulanand also offered advice to younger Mauritians on how they should behave in the workplace if they wish to get ahead in life. According to Mr. Persunoo Gokulanand, if youngsters do their work properly and cooperate with their employers, they stand to benefit from the various advantages that employers can provide. But if they react irrationally, or somewhat violently, they will have very little opportunities.

## 10. THE LIFE HISTORY OF MR. RAMLALL RAMDUTH

### 10.1 Introduction

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth's life problematizes the romanticized view of the social mobility and prosperity of Mauritius's small planters. He not only describes his working routine as a small planter, but also his work on Beau Champ Sugar Estate before becoming a small planter. Despite the hardships he had to undergo, he said he has no bad memories of Sugar Estate work and was still working on the plot of land he inherited from his mother in 2009.

### 10.2 Childhood

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth was born at Quatre-Cocos to Raghubir Ramlall and Sonia Ramlall. Both of his parents were Mauritians. His father was a labourer. In 1960 he obtained a plot of land from the Ministry of Agriculture, more precisely, from Sir Satcam Boolell. He used to cultivate sugarcane and vegetables. After his father's death it was his mother who continued to cultivate the land. He had 3 brothers.

As a child Mr. Ramlall Ramduth did not play any games. When he was at home he used to do gardening, cut grass and look after animals. Regarding sports, he used to play only football. But there was not a good playground as he put it: "enn ti laplenn kraz kraze". His parents used to tell his brothers and him stories until they fell asleep. He no longer remembers these stories.

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth went to school at Quatre-Cocos. Given that his school was close to where he lived he went on foot. The school was made of shingles and when it rained, sometimes it used to pour inside. On those occasions, he had classes on a hill under a tamarind tree. He used to sit on a rock since there were no chairs like nowadays. He was taught English, French, mathematics and geography. After completing his standard VI, he went to Central College in the village of Flacq and studied up to form 2.

### 10.3 Working Life

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth joined Beau Champ Sugar Estate at the age of 23/24. His tasks consisted of harvesting sugarcane; "siyone ek pikan pios" since there were no machines at that time and removing grass, for instance. He worked under the supervision of a *sirdar*. The *sirdar* used to assign to him his workload and to pay him his wage every Saturday. He earned about Rs 3.03 per day. Sometimes the *sirdar* used to mistreat him. When he failed to do his work properly the *sirdar* sometimes used to tell him not to come to work. He had to acquiesce. He then used to go to see the *sirdar* and tell him that he was poor and had a family to support. He should give him work. The *sirdar* used to tell him that he should do his work properly.

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth said that he had to persevere because if he quit his job, he would not get a job elsewhere because at the time there were not many jobs in Mauritius. He said that nowadays, many jobs are available in Mauritius. There are factories, hotels, and a lot of development. But in the past this was not the case. Mr. Ramlall Ramduth also discussed the "*kolom*" he worked under and claimed that the *kolom* was superior because he was a white person: "Blan li pou res so blan mem". The *kolom* used to get around by motorcycle because the fields were far from each other.

When Mr. Ramlall Ramduth started to work on his parents' plot of land he used to wake up at 5 a.m., brush his teeth, have his bath, do his prayer, drink tea and leave for the fields. He used to bring food-*farata*/rice with curry, which was prepared by his mother, to work. Initially he found the work difficult. But he had a positive attitude since he said that any work is difficult at the beginning but it becomes easier as one gets used to it. His wife also worked with him. He used to plant sugarcane and vegetables, cut canes during harvest, and after two and a half months or 3 months he used to pick the vegetables. When there was a lot of work he used to recruit women to plant canes and pick vegetables. The women started to work at 6.30/7 a.m. and finished at 2 p.m. He paid them Rs. 2 per day. If a woman was absent on 1 day she had to complete her pending work on the following day.

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth said that in the past work was hard. He and his wife used to carry the vegetables they grew, on their heads, and took them home to be collected by lorries. But in 2009 he said that the lorries come to collect the vegetables from the fields, and he no longer has to bear the transport costs either. He also mentioned that he could not afford a bicycle since life was very expensive and that he could not even afford a pair of sandals at the time.

Ramlall Ramduth also had to employ people to cut canes. He, his wife and his workers did not have gloves and boots. As a planter Mr. Ramlall Ramduth used to just pray God before harvest. A cart used to bring the canes which his workers harvested "lor balans". After the canes were weighed, they were loaded on wagons. Wagons brought them to a mill known as Alvi. He had stopped to cultivate the plot of land which his mother gave him a few months ago due to ill health.

#### 10.4 Marriage and Home Life

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth married on 15 February 1977 at the age of 27. It was his mother who chose his wife. He did not meet her to see his wife very often before they were married. He said he could only meet her 1-2 days or once in 2-3 months. He had a religious marriage because according to him civil marriages did not exist in the past. The caste system did not exist. He could not remember how long his wedding ceremony lasted. He thought it only lasted one day; but his wife said it lasted for 3 days-Saturday-Monday. He then added that on Saturday elderly people danced and sang "santé letan mangoz".

He used to buy rations. He had a ration card. It was red. For example, nowadays he can buy 1-2 sacks of rice or the quantity of rice he needs. But in the past he could buy only the amount specified on the ration card, that is, just 5-10 pounds of rice, for instance, since rice was not abundant. If there were 4 persons in a house they could buy 20 pounds of rice in a week, that is, 5 pounds of rice for each of them. He used to eat the vegetables he grew. But he said that there were not all kinds of vegetables like nowadays. Despite that his family reared poultry, she-goats and goats he rarely ate a cock curry or *chevon*. He used to eat *chevon* on New Year. Now there are big big shops and there are many types of food. Chicken, fish and "tomat", for instance, are abundant and he can eat them every week. Yet, this was not the case in the past.

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth also pointed out that there was no television in the past. As a result, when he was at home on Sundays, he used to go to watch a film during the morning session. But he could go only when he had enough money. In fact He revealed that the money he earned was not always sufficient to feed his family. Nowadays, however, he has a television at home and can watch all kinds of programmes.

Nowadays there are many festivals like independence and Christmas. But in the past he used to celebrate festivals rarely because he did not have enough time to do so.

#### 10.5 Later Life

Mr. Ramlall Ramduth is still a resident of Mahatma Gandhi Road, Quatre-Cocos. He stays at home.

#### Conclusion

Even if these ten life histories portray the lives of Mauritians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century yet, they do not provide a full picture of Mauritian lives during the latter period. There are many other interesting aspects of Mauritian life in 20<sup>th</sup> century Mauritius which could not be explored due to time constraint and thus, which need to be explored by future researcher who should continue to work out the life history of the other informants who were interviewed for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund's Oral History Project. For example, one can learn some new aspects of Mauritian life in 20<sup>th</sup> century Mauritius through the interviews of the following informants. M. Bisnauthsing Kewalparsad was 100 years old in 2009. He said that he used to go at his relatives' place by ox cart. Another informant, Mrs. Khaitoo Taramonee, aged 67 in 2009, worked on a Tobacco field for 1 year during her childhood. Mrs. Harradan Premnath who was 57 years old in 2009 worked as Pond-keeper and gardener for Fuel Sugar Estate before starting to work as a labourer on the latter Sugar Estate and being promoted to the position of *sirdar*. The last but not the least, Mr. Eustasie Joseph Ben who was 80 years old in 2009, studied up to standard VI and after five to six years of training, he worked as a tailor for several years at Grand-Gaube. At the age of 29 he went to live on the camp of Fuel

and he used to sew and there, stitch the clothes of camp residents who were Sugar Estate workers. Mr. Eustasie Joseph Ben did not allow his wife and daughters to go to work because he believes that a woman's place is at home and that man should be the breadwinner. As a result he did not even send his daughters to secondary school. His sons, however, did attend secondary school and three of his sons are occupying white-collar jobs.

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6. Informant: Mrs. Goolamun Beebee Mariam. Interviewers: Mrs. Jaya Goolamun and Stephan Karghoo. Date of interview: 23.09.2009. Location of Interview: Mosque Road Camp de Masque Pavé. Interview Reference Number: 09/202/01.
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9. Informant: The late Mr. Persunoo Gokulanand. Interviewer: Mrs. Jaya Goolamun. Date of interview: 15.09.2009. Location of Interview: Damree Lane, Bel Air. Interview Reference Number: 09/242/01.
10. Informant: Mr. Ramlall Ramduth. Interviewer: Nishi Kissoonah. Date of interview: 22.07.2009. Location of Interview: Mahatma Gandhi Road, Quatre Cocos. Interview Reference Number: 09/102/01.

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<sup>1</sup> I believe he meant Labour Laws.

<sup>2</sup> I believe he meant Labour Laws.

# FREE IMMIGRANTS ON AN ESTATE CAMP - THE CASE OF CAMP ANEEROOD

SMITA GYA  
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# Free Immigrants on an Estate Camp - The case of Camp Aneerood/Camp des Routes

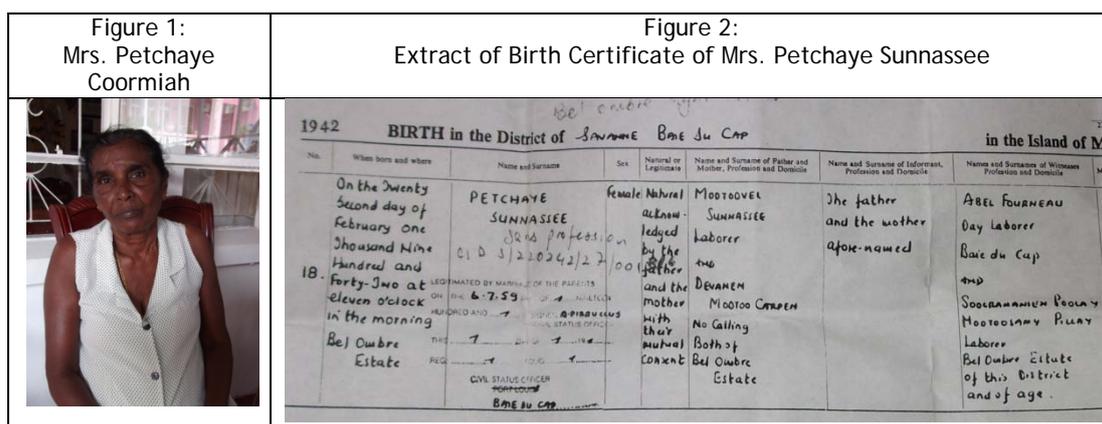
## INTRODUCTION

Camp Aneerood has been chosen as it contained some descendants of immigrants who had come on the same ship from India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these were also not indentured but who faced similar conditions to the indentured.

Camp Aneerood, a former sugar estate camp, lies in the vicinity of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, in Savanne District. Camp Aneerood later came to be known as Camp des Routes. It is believed that Camp Aneerood owes its name to a *Sirdar* known as Aneerood, who used to recruit Indians as indentured labourers for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> This camp is representative of many such camps established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which have survived to this day. The memories of the former inhabitants of this Camp are also very vivid.

The history of the inhabitants has been reconstructed mainly through oral interviews of former estate camp residents, supplemented by some archival research in immigration archives. All photos shown here were lent by the families mentioned in this chapter.

### Mrs. Petchaye Coormiah and Mrs. Devanen Sunnasee Family



Mrs. Petchaye Coormiah, maiden name Sunnasee, 69 years old, was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1942 in Camp des Routes and spoke about her childhood on the estate camp.

### Estate Life

#### The Banyan Tree

Mrs. Coormiah remembers how she used to play under the Banyan tree, which dominated the entrance of the camp. The banyan tree had a social and religious importance in the life of the inhabitants of the camp. In the evenings, labourers who returned from their work, used to gather under the banyan tree to talk, share their views and opinions and play social games like domino. Special festivals, like the *Holi* (*Phagwa*) and *Sankranti*, and Tamil festival of “Camon” was also celebrated under that tree, where children used to have fun by playing hide and seek with their friends. Mrs. Sunnasee, her mother, also remembers how the festival of *Holi*, in Tamil known as “Camon” was celebrated with fervour under the Banyan tree. Mrs. Coormiah recalls how she used to sit under the banyan tree with her close friends in the evenings and sing old Hindi movies’ songs in round. Near the banyan tree there existed also a *baithka* which was made of straw.

## Estate Houses

The estate houses were made of straw and the walls and floors were coated with cow dung and mud paste. Each estate house, generally known as “langar”, comprised of four rooms and one outdoor kitchen. One estate house was shared between two families; each family had two rooms respectively. The outdoor kitchen was found in a corner of the verandah, where each family used to cook food in its respective kitchen. There was a common outdoor toilet made up of three compartments which was shared by the inhabitants of 5 to 6 estate houses.

The estate houses were found near a canal. The canal water was used by the inhabitants to wash clothes and for other household purposes. There was no tap water and the inhabitants used to carry water from another canal known as “Pani bwarwa” for cooking purposes. A *kovil* (Tamil temple) was found near that canal in which the deities Ganesha and Mariamen were worshipped. According to Mrs. Coormiah, her great grandparents constructed this Tamil temple and cow dung was used to line the floor and walls of the temple.

## Estate Hospital

On Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, there was a hospital which was found near the sugar factory. The estate hospital provided free healthcare facilities to the inhabitants of Camp des Routes. However, major surgical operations were not practised in the estate hospital. For instance, Mrs. Coormiah’s grandmother once suffered from appendicitis and she had to go to Victoria Hospital at Candos, Quatre Bornes, for her surgery.

## The Estate Shop

Near Bel Ombre Sugar Estate; there was a Chinese shop which was run by a Chinese family. They were commonly known as “Chinois Macao” by the inhabitants. The shop was named “Ah Soy”. There was another Chinese shop at St. Martin, a nearby village, which was named “la boutique Lompai”. These shops stocked a range of everyday items like rice, dried lentils (*dholi*), fish, more specifically the *snoek* fish, which was commonly consumed by the inhabitants. Labourers used to obtain rations in the form of rice, flour, oil and *dholi* on a fortnightly basis from Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. The rations were given on the estate camp itself. Mrs. Coormiah’s father used to give 2 lbs of flour, which he received as part of the ration, to a bakery at Chemin Grenier, which was ran by a person of Chinese origin named “Atouna”, and in return he would get 4 loaves of bread which he shared among his children.

During times of hardship, wild tomatoes, cassava and sweet potatoes were consumed. The diet of the inhabitants was quite varied. Jackfruit, lentils, lima beans, taro formed part of the diet of the inhabitants. For special occasions, for instance when relatives came to visit the inhabitants, ‘pilchard’ in tomato sauce was cooked accompanied by the Indian bread known as “farata”.

## The Inhabitants

There existed a spirit of brotherhood among the inhabitants of Camp des Routes. Everyone formed part of the same family; the family of Camp des Routes. There lived people of different ethnic groups; Tamil, Telugu and Indians, excluding Muslims. According to Mrs. Coormiah, there were no ethnic barriers and caste issues which existed among the inhabitants of the camp. A watchman guarded the entrance of Camp des Routes for the security of the inhabitants.

During wedding times, all the neighbours, irrespective of their ethnic background, gave a helping hand to make the event a success. Weddings used to be celebrated at night. There was no electricity facility provided in Camp des Routes and the inhabitants used to light burning torches at night. The “Nagara” was sung when the bridegroom came in the camp.

Night life in Camp des Routes was quite animated. Children used to play hide and seek behind the estate houses. Story telling by the elders was a common practice and children used to gather under the verandas and listen to their grandmothers’ stories before going to bed.

Next to Mrs. Coormiah’s house lived an old couple, known as *dada and dadi* Muttur. Dada Muttur used to sell roasted peanuts and chickpeas (Bengal gram) to the estate camp’s children in order to

earn his living. Dada Muttur also taught the camp's children Hindi in the *baithka*, which was found near the banyan tree. Mrs. Coormiah's grandmother also used to sell roasted chickpeas, peanuts and popcorn. She used to walk to and from Camp des Routes to St. Martin, Bel Ombre Primary School, Baie du Cap and as far as Choisy in order to sell her homemade snacks. She was commonly known as "nani gram" by the children of Bel Ombre Primary School.

Mrs. Coormiah's grandmother used to live in another estate house in the same camp. She was born and got married in Camp des Routes itself. She used to speak fluent Tamil, which she also taught to her grandchildren. Mrs. Coormiah refers to her grandmother as being a "Coolie" as the latter's parent came from India. Mrs. Coormiah's grandfather used to work as a labourer at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate and also as a huntsman (*piqueur de chasse*). He passed away at the age of 40. Consequently, her grandmother had to work as a labourer for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate in order to be able to keep the estate house at Camp des Routes.

In the mornings, a man, employed by Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, used to wake up the inhabitants of the camp by shouting "Bhaat Pakao! Outho Outho!" This was a common practice in order to wake up the labourers. Mrs. Coormiah's grandmother used to go to work at 5 a.m. and was back at 3 p.m. She also reared cows and collected an average of 9 litres of milk per day. Cow rearing was a common activity among the inhabitants of Camp des Routes. There was a common stable made of straw comprising of several compartments at Camp des Routes which was shared by the inhabitants. The construction materials for the stable were provided by Bel Ombre Estate.

Mrs. Coormiah's father, Mr. Mootoovel Sunnasee, *alias* Tamby Sunnasee, worked as a *Sirdar* for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. He was an active trade unionist who had fought for the rights of the labourers. He was born at Dagotière, and after his marriage he came to live at Camp des Routes. Mrs. Coormiah's mother, Mrs. Devanen Sunnasee, had seven children, among whom Mrs. Coormiah is the eldest one. Mrs. Coormiah did not go to school as she had to look after her younger brothers and sisters. She started to work as a labourer at the age of 10 along with her mother for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, where she earned 75 cents per day and at the age of 12 her daily salary was increased to R. 1.



Mrs. Devanen Sunnasee, maiden name Mootoocarpn, presently aged 88 years, was born at Camp des Routes. Her father worked as an "entrepreneur" for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. Her mother got married at the age of 12 years. Mrs. Sunnasee did not go to school and she got married at the age of 16 years at Camp des Routes. After her wedding, her husband, who used to reside at Rose-Hill, came to stay at Camp des Routes and worked as labourer in the "grand bande" for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. He used to earn a fixed salary of Rs.100 per month in addition of a weekly ration of rice, salt, Bombay duck, *dhol* and coconut oil. In order to help her husband financially, Mrs. Sunnasee began to work as a labourer after her marriage. She also reared cows in Camp des Routes and each family owned a compartment in the stable of the camp. Five of her children were born at Camp des Routes and two at St. Martin village. Mr. Sunnasee was forced to leave the camp with his family. His fault was that he

dared to smoke a cigarette in front of a white overseer in the field. This was considered to be an act of disrespect toward his employer and he was ordered to leave Camp des Routes on the same day.

<p><b>Figure 4:</b> Extract of Birth Certificate of Mrs. Devanen Sunnassee</p>	<p><b>Figure 5:</b> Mr. Mootoovel Sunnassee and Mrs. Devanen Sunnassee</p>

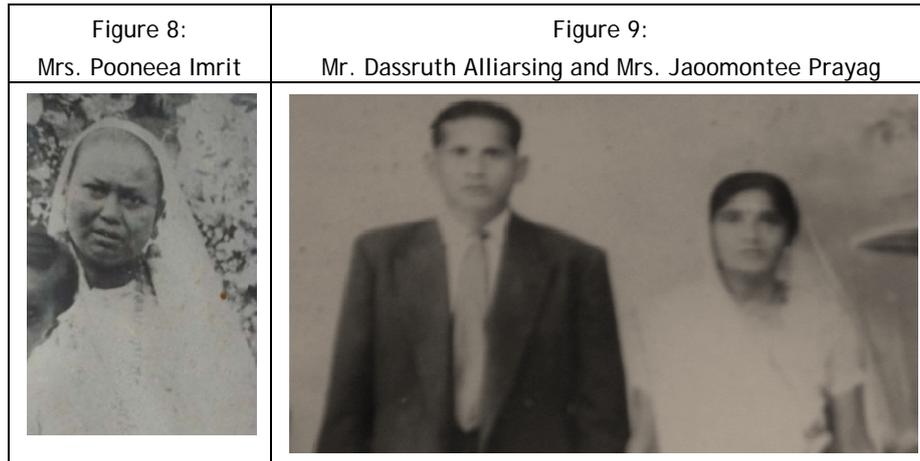
## DHUNPUTH FAMILY

<p><b>Figure 6:</b> Mrs. Mayawantee Dhunputh</p>	<p><b>Figure 7:</b> Mr. Ramlugunsing Alliarsing</p>

Mrs. Mayawantee Dhunputh, maiden name Alliarsing, 73 years old, was born at Camp des Routes. Her paternal grandfather, Mr. Ramlugunsing Alliarsing was 20 years old when he arrived with Mr. Subaghra and Mr. Deerpalsingh from India in the same ship. Mr. Ramlugunsing lived in the village of Gahmar in the district of Gazipur, India. When these three men came to Mauritius, they were allocated an estate house comprising of 6 rooms at Camp des Routes and were given three consecutive days of rest. Mr.

Ramlugunsing brought the Ramayana, a sacred epic, along with him. He used to read the Ramayana every morning before attending work.

Being impressed by his courage and determination, Mr. Frederic Robert, the then estate manager, employed Mr. Ramlugunsing as a *Sirdar* for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. Mr. Ramlugunsing began to practice interline cropping in the fields at Bel Ombre where he planted potatoes, maize and peanuts. He married Maneea at Camp des Routes and after the birth of his first child, namely Mr. Dassruth Alliarsing (Mrs. Mayawantee Dhunputh's father), Maneea passed away. Mr. Ramlugunsing then cohabited with Pooneea Imrit at Camp des Routes itself. Mrs. Pooneea Imrit was a well-known dressmaker of her time and she used to sew clothes for nearly 500 people in Camp des Routes. She also supported her husband and at night, she went to guard the estate's potato fields along with her husband.



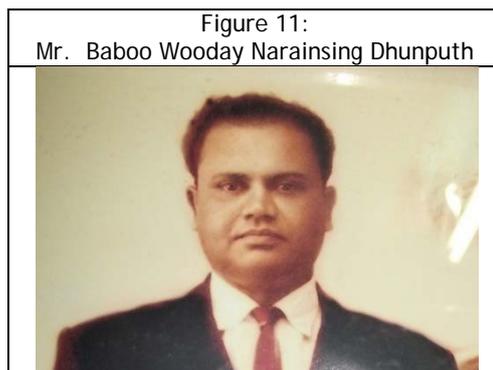
Mr. Dassruth Alliarising married Jaoomontee Prayag, who lived in Port Louis. Mr. Ramlugunsing had two brothers named Luchmunsing and Ram respectively, who both stayed in India. Luchmunsing once came to Mauritius and stayed for one year with his brother. The latter was married in India and had three sons there. Ramlugunsing gave his brother money to purchase land in Gahmar village in India. With that money, Luchmunsing bought 10 *arpents* of land and till today this plot of land is known as “Maurice hola khet” in Gahmar village.

Figure 10:  
Extract of Marriage Certificate of Mr. Dassruth Alliarising and Jaoomontee Prayag

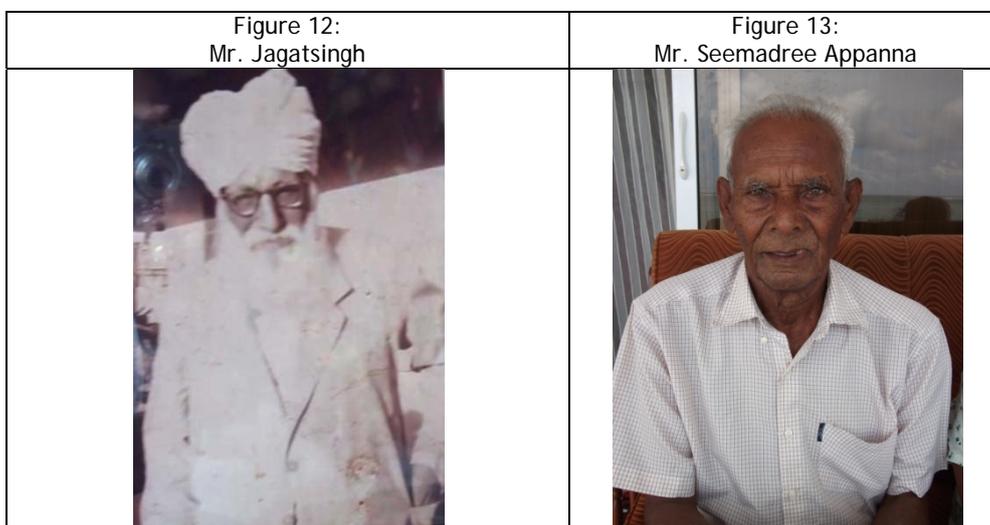
GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS							
Form of Marriage under Ordinance No. 28 of 1912							
No.	Date and place of Marriage	Names and Surnames of parties	Age and place of Birth	Place of Abode of parties	Condition, rank and profession	Names and Surnames of parties whose consent is required with their rank, profession and domicile	Names and Surnames of witnesses and relatives present with their rank, profession and residence
1935	In this parish January nineteenth and thirty five in the afternoon Port Louis	DASSRUTH ALIARSING and JAOMONTEE PRAYAG	Twenty six years Mauritius (el)	Port Louis	bachelor proprietor	—	Kampersad Kanaye Civil Servant and D. Luckheeram proprietor both of this town and of age

Mrs. Mayawantee married Mr. Baboo Wooday Narainsing Dhunputh at the age of 14 years and left Camp des Routes to settle in Surinam village. Mrs. Mayawantee’s grandfather, Mr. Ramlugunsing, managed to purchase 60 *arpents* of land between the village of Chemin Grenier and Surinam. Mr. Ramlugunsing passed away at the age of 90 years.

At Camp des Routes there was a stream named “Mootlama Ruisseau” from which the inhabitants used to collect water for household purposes. Two other rivers were known as “grand la riviere” and “reso” respectively. The river water was used for drinking and cooking purposes.



Mr. Kylashsingh Dhunputh, a relative of Mrs. Mayawantee Dhunputh, aged 62 years, was born at Camp des Routes in 1949. His father's maternal grandfather was Mr. Ramlugunsing Alliarsing. His father's name was Satnarainsing Dhunputh, a well-known huntsman of his time, and mother's name was Partabkore Jagatsingh. Mr. Jagatsingh, his maternal grandfather came from the Punjab region in India. Mr. Jagatsingh came to Mauritius as an Indian sepoy and worked as a prison warden at the prison of Beau-Bassin.



#### Interview with Mr. Seemadree Appanna

Mr. Seemadree Appanna, 85 years old, was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1926 at Camp des Routes. His father, S. Appanna, Immigrant No. 402 054, came to Mauritius on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1888 at the age of 7 years from Kommadi village, located in the regional subdivided state of Vizagapatam in India, on the steam ship *S.S Taiif*. He was first 'distributed' to Riche Bois Estate and later was employed as a labourer at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. Mr. S. Appanna passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1935. Mr. Seemadree Appanna's mother, Camamah Pothyah, was a Mauritian and also worked as labourer. The couple had 8 children, four daughters and four sons respectively. Mr. Appanna was four years old when his father passed away. His father used to wear a shirt, a *dhoti* of knee length and a turban. Mr. Appanna also remembers that his father used to draw a monthly salary of Rs. 8. The weekly provisions were purchased at the estate camp shop, named "Ah Soy", which was found at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. In addition, ration was received on a weekly basis; every Friday his father went to the "magasin" (storehouse) of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate to get only rice as ration. Vegetables and pulses had to be purchased in the Chinese shop.

Mr. Appanna's mother used to rear cows in Camp des Routes and the milk was sold in order to obtain an extra income for the family. Only the surplus milk was consumed by the children. At the age of 5 years, Mr. Appanna had already started helping in the household and also looked for cow fodder. He did not go to school due to financial difficulties. From the age of 7, he went to work in

the field along with his parents and earned 15 cents a day. The working hours were from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. The labourers obtained their break times between 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. During harvest time he earned 20 cents per day as salary. When Mr. Appanna was 10 years old, he earned 30 cents a day while his mother earned 35 cents daily. At 18, he was employed by Bel Ombre Sugar Estate and obtained a flat monthly salary of Rs.12. By that time no rations were given to the labourers. At 20, he began to work as a carter for the estate and earned Rs.42 per month. He performed this job for five consecutive years and transported 4 tons of sugarcane per day. Mr. Appanna left Camp des Routes when he was 26 years old. He could no longer stay in the estate camp as he gave up the job as a carter for working for a private planter, as the latter paid him a better salary of Rs. 5 per day.

He recalls that the estate houses were made of 6 rooms; two rooms respectively per family. The kitchen was found in the veranda and there was an outdoor toilet for each three estate houses. No tap water and electricity facilities were provided in the camp. The inhabitants used to light up petrol lamp at night and after dinner time, storytelling by elders common from 8 p.m. to around 9 p.m. Children used to play until 11 p.m. in the camp. The inhabitants used to have dinner before dusk and fish and chicken were consumed only once a month.

Mr. Appanna remembers that the *Phagwa* festival was celebrated under the Banyan tree of the camp. Moreover, there existed 3 *baithkas* near that tree, namely, for the Telugus, Tamils and Hindus. There were two “kalimayas” in the camp, for the Tamil and Telugu ethnic group respectively.

## BISSOONDEOO SUBAGHRA

Mr. Bissoondeoo Subaghra, aged 92 years, was born in 1919 at Camp des Routes. His paternal grandfather came as a labourer from India. His grandfather also worked as a recruiting agent. Along with him came four other persons, Mr. Deerpalsingh, Mr. Sooknanandsing, Mr. Ramlugunsing, his uncle Mr. Benimado Subaghra and his father respectively. Mr. Subaghra’s father was 18 years old when he came to Mauritius and later he worked as chief *Sirdar* for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate.

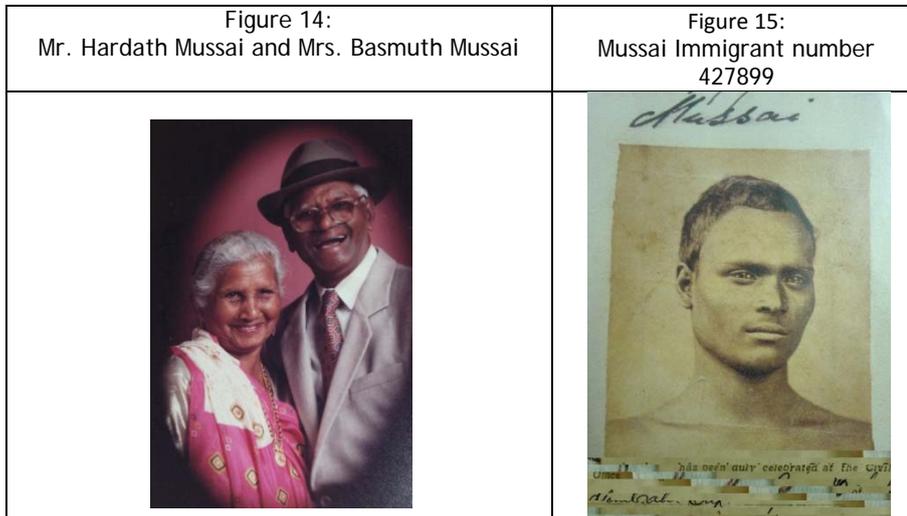
Mr. Subaghra states that when he was born, there was a severe drought in India. His grandfather requested his uncle to return to India in order to help his family financially there but the latter never returned back to Mauritius. His grandfather’s family lived in Gahmar village, presently located in Ghazipur District in India. His grandfather decided to come when he heard that Mauritius needed labourers to work the land.

Mr. Bissoondeoo Subaghra went to Baie du Cap RCA School at the age of 6 and studied until Standard 6. At that time children of Camp des Routes either went to the Primary School of Chemin Grenier or of that of Baie du Cap. Children used to leave Camp des Routes at 6 a.m., walked for 3 long hours, bare feet, and reached school at 9 a.m. School used to end at 3 30 p.m. Back to Camp des Routes Mr. Subaghra had to wait for his father to come back home in order to prepare dinner. His mother passed away when he was 6 years old. Sometimes he and his father used to have dinner at 8 p.m. His father passed away in 1964 at the age of 92 years. Mr. Subaghra got married at 19 years old in the year 1938 at Camp des Routes. He had three children, among whom one passed away at the age of 7 years.

Mr. Subaghra joined the Army on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1948 and he was shifted to Egypt for 5 months and returned to Mauritius on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1949. During his stay in Egypt he was imprisoned for 3 months. Mr. Subaghra had a rich work experience. When he returned to Mauritius, he worked as a labourer and earned 20 cents per day. Afterwards he worked as *Sirdar* for Bel Ombre sugar estate. At the age of 22 he bought a cart and one ox and worked as carter. He also worked as *métayer* along with his brother on a plot slightly less than a hectare (one *arpent*). In 1990 he owned 35 *arpents* of land under the *métayage* system. He was elected at the village council election of Chemin Grenier in 1950 and held the post of secretary of village council. He was president of the Poor Law Office from 1960 to 1965 and that of Social Welfare Centre of Chemin Grenier from 1965 to 1966 respectively. Mr. Subaghra also was the owner of a cinema named “Lotus” at Chemin Grenier.

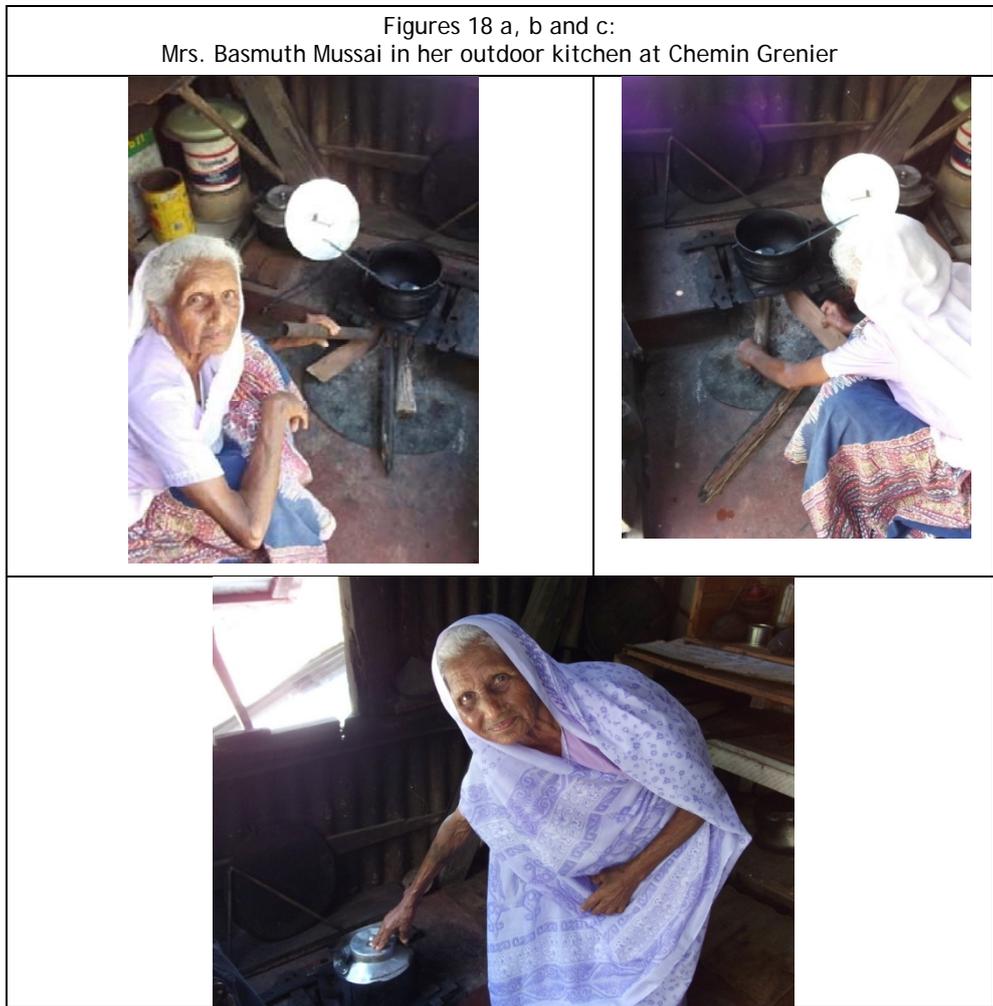
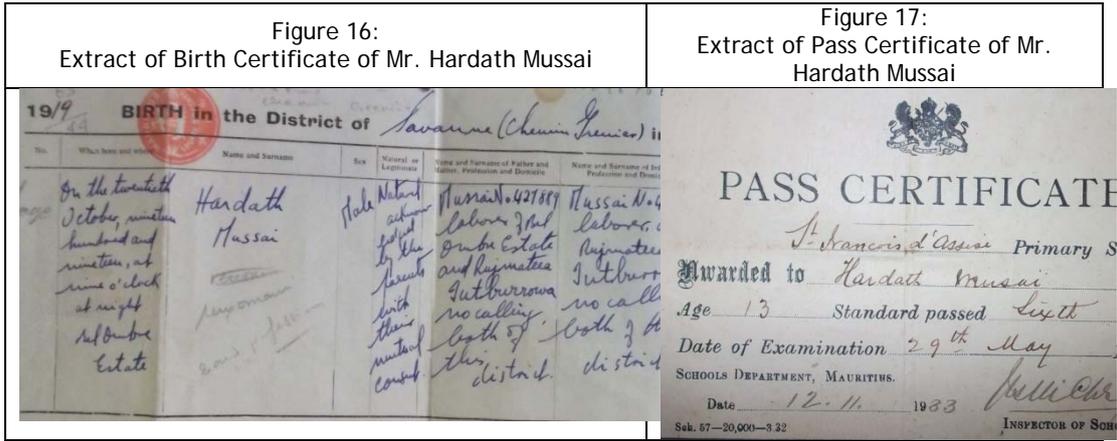
## MUSSAI FAMILY

Mr. Hardath Mussai, presently lives at Chemin Grenier. He is 91 years old and was born at Camp des Routes. His mother died when he was 3 months old. His father, popularly known as Gulam Mussai, bearing immigrant number 427899, came at the age of 22 as an indentured labourer from India on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1905 with the hope to earn a better living in Mauritius. He used to wear a *dhoti*, a turban and was always bare feet. He embarked at the port of Calcutta on the Steam ship *S.S Surada*, bearing ship number 1407.



In India he lived in Thakuradan village, found in the state of Basti, found in the administrative District of Danpata. His father's and mother's name was Gulam and Mangari respectively. Immigrant Mussai 427899 was employed at Combo estate, at Terracine, located in the Savanne district. Later he shifted to Surinam and got married at Camp des Routes and he managed to purchase 25 *perches* of land which he later bequeathed to his son. Mr. Mussai passed away at the age of 55 years in 1944.

Mr. Mussai went to Baie du Cap RCA School and studied until standard 6. Kreol and French was the medium of teaching in his school and he learned the Hindi language in the *baithka* located at Camp des Routes. His maternal uncle, used to teach Hindi in the *baithka*. When he left school at the age of 13, he used to give a helping hand to her maternal grandmother in the field. He worked as a labourer and afterwards learned hairdressing from his uncle until he got married at the age of 20 in 1939 and his wife was aged 15 years. After his wedding he was employed as a grade 1 labourer at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate and earned Rs. 8 per month. Work started at 5am and he returned home at 6 p.m. At the age of 35 he worked as driver at Bel Ombre Estate and at the same time he was a *métayer*. His wife used to rear cows, goats and poultry at Camp des Routes. Mrs. Mussai also worked as an apprentice mason at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. She also helped her husband on the land they owned under the system of *métayage*.



Mr. and Mrs. Mussai have 6 children, who are all boys. According to Mr. Mussai, there were around 300 persons who lived at Camp des Routes. The estate houses, "langar", comprised of 4 to 6 rooms, made of straw. There was no bathroom facility in the camp and the inhabitants used to bathe in the nearby river. When he began to work as a driver he left Camp des Routes and in 1960 he bought a plot of land at Chemin Grenier where he constructed his house and shifted there in 1962.

Mr. Rohit Mussai, their eldest son, was born at Camp des Routes on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1941. He too went to Baie du Cap RCS School, like his father, and studied until the 6<sup>th</sup> Standard. His father did not

want him to work as a labourer; therefore he learned the profession of tailor. He still works at a tailor at Chemin Grenier.

## MARIAYE VAYAVORY

Figure 19:  
Extract of Birth Certificate of Mrs. Mariaye Vayavory

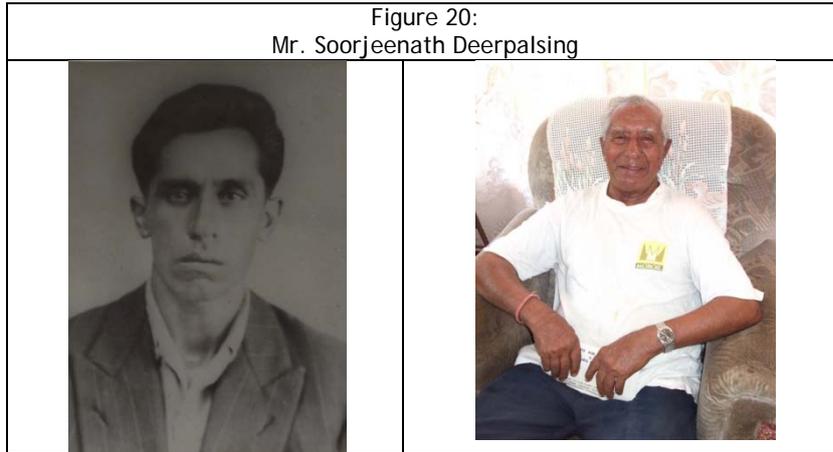
No.	When born and where	Name and Surname	Sex	Natural or Legitimate	Name and Surname of Father and Mother, Profession and Domicile	Mar.
197	in the district of Bel Ombre Camp des Routes Bel Ombre in the evening Bel Ombre	MARIAYE Chellen	female	legitimate	VENHADION Chellen Labourer and Aparaye POTRECEAN Group both of this district	

Mrs. Mariaye Vayavory, maiden name Chellen, presently aged 83 years, was born at Camp des Routes. Her mother passed away when she was one years old. Her father, Mr. Chellen, was in charge of Camp des Routes. He was employed by Bel Ombre sugar estate to look after the camp. Any problems that the inhabitants faced in the camp had to be reported to him first. He was also in charge of the cleanliness of the common stable found in the camp. About 12 men worked under his instructions and they used to clean the stables.

Mrs. Vayavory did not attend school. She has 2 children; one son and one daughter, and 7 grandchildren. She worked as a labourer at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate and work started at 7 a.m. and lasted till 4 p.m. She started to work at the age of 10, where she earned 20 cents per day. Her work consisted of manually de-rocking and weeding of the field. At that time, it was a common practice for children to work. She got married at the age of 17 and went to stay at her husband's place at Camp Diable village. After one year, she and her husband settled at Bel Ombre in another estate camp.

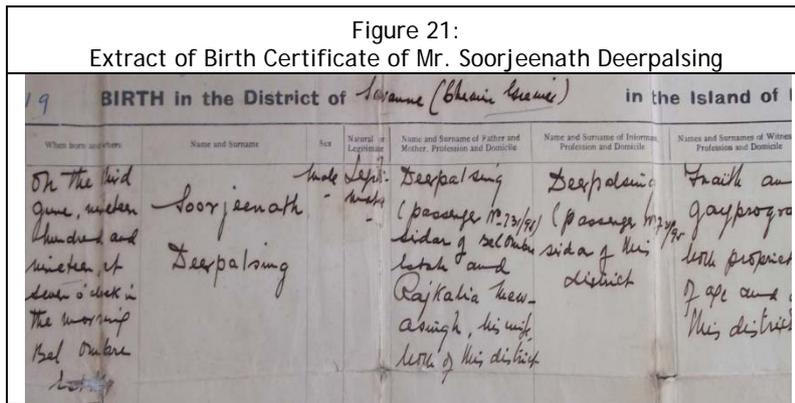
There were two estate camps in Bel Ombre; one known as Camp Bel Ombre and the other as Camp des Routes. Mrs. Vayavory recalls how one night fire broke out in the stables found at Camp Bel Ombre, during which the animals could not be saved and all perished in the fire. She also remembers that the estate houses were made of straw and comprised of 6 rooms respectively. Her wedding took place at night and all the neighbours in Camp des Routes gave a helping hand in the wedding preparation, irrespective of their ethnic background. Her wedding tent was made of bamboo poles covered with palm and coconut leaves. Mrs. Vayavory keeps good memories of her stay at Camp des Routes.

## SOORJEENATH DEERPALSING



Mr. Soorjeenath Deerpalsing, presently aged 92 years and residing at Chemin Grenier, was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1919 at Camp des Routes. Her mother’s maiden name was Mewasingh and prior to her wedding she used to reside at Solferino, Vacoas. Mr. Deerpalsing’s father named Deelasing Deerpalsing came as a free passenger, bearing passenger number 731/95, from India on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1895 on the Steam Ship *S.S Wardha*. The latter passed away in 1942 at the age of 75. His father worked as a labourer for Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. At that time, recruiting agents were getting 1 pound of rice and Rs. 1 per month per head of labourers whom they brought from India. The labourers were under 5 years of contractual labour.

According to Mr. Deerpalsing, Camp Aneerood bears its name from a recruiting agent known as Aneerood. Aneerood was employed by Bel Ombre estate to recruit labourers from India. Transport cost for the labourers was provided by the estate to the recruiting agents. It cost around Rs. 60 per head to bring labourers to Mauritius. However this money was repaid back to the estate by the labourers themselves once they were employed. Rs1 was deducted on a monthly basis from their salary and at the end of their 5 years contracts; they would have totally repaid the sum of Rs. 60 to their employers. Once the labourers reached Mauritius, they had to take the oath in front of a magistrate that they would respect the conditions found in their contract. For Bel Ombre, the labourers went to the Souillac Court for oath-taking.



Mr. Deerpalsing’s father lived in Gahmar village, located in Gazipur District in India. According to him, when his father came to Mauritius, there were also 60 other persons who came along in the same boat. His father married in Mauritius and 9 months after his arrival, his cousin, named Sooknanand, also came to Mauritius. In India, his father had two brothers who lived with his mother. Mr. Deerpalsing’s parents had 4 children. Mr. Deerpalsing was the only son. One of his sisters passed away in 1935 at the age of 14 of fever, only three days after being married.

Mr. Deerpalsing’s father first worked as a labourer before occupying the post of a *Sirdar* at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. After his retirement, he worked as the Sugar Estate Warden and he then

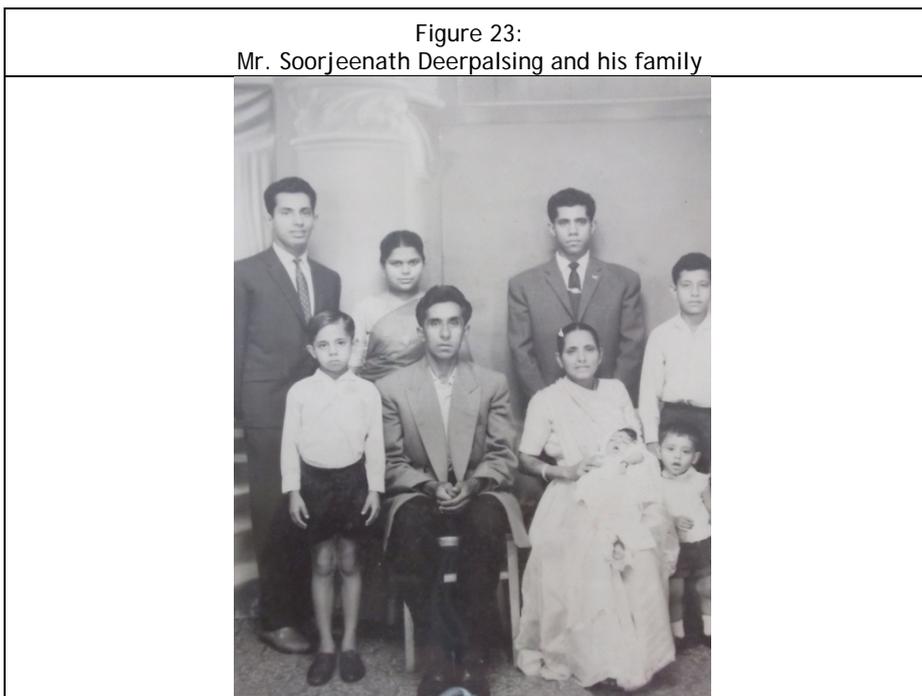
earned Rs.8 per month. His ration comprised of rice, *dholl*, salt and oil. His father used to send money to his brothers in India, with which they purchased 200 *arpents* of land in Gahmar village. In 1934, Mr. Deerpalsing's father fell ill and Mr. Deerpalsing had to look after his family. When Mr. Deerpalsing was 15 years old, his father suffered from dysentery and passed away on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1941. The latter was incinerated at the Cemetery of St. Martin. After some years, his mother passed away at the age of 84 years.

Figure 22:  
Extract of Death Certificate of Mr. Deerpalsing Deerpalsing  
(Free Passenger bearing number 731/95)

Registration District		Savanne	Certified Extract of a Death Entry (Prepared on the Civil Death Act 1902)	
Service de l'Immigration			Service de l'Immigration	
Bureau de l'Immigration			Bureau de l'Immigration	
Registered by		Marcil L.	CERTIFICATE NUMBER	1502/1941
Registered par			Date de l'inscription	
DECEASED - DEFUNTE				
Surname	Deerpalsing	NID Number		
Names	Deerpalsing	No. de carte nationale d'identité		
Occupation	Labourer			
Profession	Labourer			
Address	Bel Ombre			
Marital Status	Single	Date and Time of death	13/02/1941	23:00
Statut matrimonial	Célibataire	Date et heure du décès		
Religion	Hindu	Sex	M - Male/Masculin	
Religion	Hindou	AGE	75	Year(s)/Ann(e)
Place of Birth	Calcutta	Age		
Place of Death	At Home, Bel Ombre			
Place of Burial/Cremation				
Lieu d'inhumation/crémation				
SPOUSE - CONJOINTE				
Surname		NID Number		
Names		No. de carte nationale d'identité		
FATHER - PERE				
Surname		NID Number		
Names		No. de carte nationale d'identité		
MOTHER - MERE				
Surname		NID Number		
Names		No. de carte nationale d'identité		

Mr. Deerpalsing attended the Primary School of Chemin Grenier and obtained a pass mark of 97.5 when he was in standard 6. Unfortunately, he could neither continue school nor did he work as a school teacher or in the police force as these jobs were reserved for people of Christian faith. At the age of 13 years he had to work as a labourer and earned 35 cents per day. He also helped his mother who owned land under the *métayage* system. Mr. Deerpalsing got married when he was 19 years old, when his wife was aged only 15 years. On 9<sup>th</sup> February 1953, he left Camp des Routes with his family to settle at Chemin Grenier.

Figure 23:  
Mr. Soorjeenath Deerpalsing and his family



<sup>1</sup> Deerpalsing, Kishore, document submitted for *métayer* case to the Truth and Justice Commission on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2010, TJC/13/14 (a).

VOLUME 3

**CONTEMPORARY HISTORY,  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

**PART II**

**GENS DE COULEUR**



# PART II

## GENS DE COULEUR

VIJAYALAKSHMI TEELOCK  
*Vice-Chairperson*

BENJAMIN MOUTOU  
*Commissioner, TJC*

# THE 'COLOURED POPULATION'

PROFESSOR MARC SERGE RIVIÈRE

*Team Leader*

DR. NIRMALA (CHERIEANNE) CARTA

*Researcher, TJC*

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The research team would like to express its gratitude to all families and individuals who have contributed to this in-depth study of the 'Coloured Population', both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues. Without their invaluable assistance, our work would not have been completed.

A special thank you to Roselyne Ithier who typed this Report so meticulously.

To the following Libraries and Archives, our warmest thanks: The M.N.A., the Alfred North-Coombes Documentation Centre, Rodrigues and the Nelson Mandela Centre's Database; the National Library of Mauritius; the Carnegie Library; the Municipal libraries of Port Louis, Quatre-Bornes and Rose-Hill, and the M.G.I. Library. A special thank you to the Librarian of the Port Mathurin Library for making us feel welcome.

Finally, we are most grateful to the Truth and Justice Commission for entrusting such an important project to us; to Professor Boraine and Dr. V. Teelock, we wish to extend our most sincere thanks. To all the authors, past and present, whose works are quoted, or referred to, in this study, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude.

M. S. Rivière,  
Cherianne Carta  
28 June 2011

«Et si le métissage était une chance à saisir et à cultiver ? [...] L'idée d'une pureté originaire de chaque communauté culturelle est un mirage que les générations perpétuent pour forger leur identité [...] Le métissage est le mouvement même de la culture, pourquoi en avoir peur?»

[Eng: "And what if *métissage* were an opportunity to seize and exploit? [...] The idea of the original purity of each cultural community is an illusion which generations perpetuate in order to forge their identities [...] *Métissage* represents the progress of culture, why be afraid of it?" - our translation]

(Aude Emmanuelle Hoareau, *Concepts pour penser créole*, St. Denis: Zarkansiel, 2010, p. 13)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project is geared to an in-depth analysis of the *Gens de couleur* (Coloured population) in Mauritius, during the colonial period, under the French and British authorities, and since Independence, up to the present day. It seeks to establish that the 'Coloured Population', as 'Libres de couleur', was as much the victims of repressive measures and injustice during the French occupation (1715-1810) as descendants of slaves and, later in the nineteenth century, indentured labourers. After the capture of Isle de France by the British (1810), there ensued a long, hard fight by the 'Coloured people' for their Human Rights, as regards educational rights, the right to political representation and the right to land ownership, faced with increasing pressure to sell properties.

The origins of the 'Coloured Population' as products of cohabitation or marriages between individuals of European, Asian, African, and other, origins, are discussed in Chapter I. Evidence that the *Gens de couleur* were victims of real social, religious and political prejudices from the Whites under the French and the British, is provided from archival and published material in Chapter II. One of the chief priorities of the 'Coloured Population', after the British take-over, was the right to equal education and political representation. The various stages of the long fight for access to education in primary and secondary schools, notably the Royal College, are explored in Chapter 3.

Through the constant endeavours of Coloured Tribunes, such as Rémy Ollier, Léoville L'Homme, Sir Virgil Naz, Sir William Newton and Dr. O. Beugeard, among others, a relative victory was achieved, when Coloured boys were admitted to the Royal College and returned to Mauritius as lawyers, doctors, notaries, and eventually, politicians, elected in the Port Louis Municipal Elections (1850), and the first Legislative Elections of 1886 under Sir John Pope-Hennessy. This being the turning-point in the history of the 'Coloured Population', political, social and cultural progress was rapid in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the labours of Eugène and Edgar Laurent, Raoul Rivet, and Dr. Maurice Curé, culminating in the arrival on the political scene of Gaëtan Duval (the Creole King) in the 1960s. Yet, when all is said and done, the *Gens de couleur* were granted political rights much more rapidly than descendants of Indian settlers and indentured labourers, at the end of the nineteenth century.

The impact of Independence (1968) on the 'Coloured Population' and the waves of emigration (in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, in particular) towards Australia, the U.K., Canada, and South Africa, among other countries, are analysed in Chapter 4. This exodus left a cultural, social and political void in the lives of the *Gens de couleur* who were left behind, from which the community has found it hard to recover. The weak representation in Parliament nowadays is evidence of this, and the lack of opportunities for 'Coloured people' in the Ministries and Civil Service continues to be indicative of this loss of a power-base within the nation.

The issue of landownership, and the 'perceived' constant threats from the 'Whites' (Franco-Mauritians), and eventually from the Indo-Mauritians, to properties which belonged to a small number of Coloured families in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are examined in Chapter 5. It is shown that, whilst that community was at one time in possession of one-fifth of the lands available, it gradually lost its economic position and was forced to sell to either 'Franco-Mauritians' or Indo-Mauritians in the twentieth century. The result is that the 'Coloured people' became employees on sugar estates, rather than owners; to day, only one or two Coloured families are holding on to relatively large areas of land.

Rodrigues is a case on its own, being essentially a 'Creole' island, where colonization, slavery and indentured labour appear to have left a relatively small imprint on the people's psyche. Instead of striving for group identity, or strong individual identity, the Rodriguans seek some kind of 'island' regional identity. There is less concern with such appellations as 'descendants of slaves' or *Gens de couleur* today among the islanders, and a faire degree of intermarrying between communities (the *Rouges* - descendants of White Creoles or *Libres de couleur* - and the *Montagnards* - true descendants of manumitted slaves) indicates that the political and cultural, albeit not the social, divisions are blurred. This is confirmed by interviews with individuals from long-standing families on the island and other research.

Due to time-constraint (this research was launched in February 2011, 18 months or so after other projects), a small number of in-depth and quality interviews were conducted with 'Coloured' families - 17 in Mauritius and 7 in Rodrigues. An analysis of those interviews and significant extracts are presented in Chapter 7. Semi-structured interviews were carried out to seek out present 'Coloured' individuals' views on: group identity; political representation of the community; prejudice, if any, in personal and professional lives; the economic, social and cultural contribution of the group to Mauritius; the impact of waves of emigration from the 1960s to the 1980s; access to employment; women and inter-communal marriages; how 'Coloured' youths envision the future. It is found that such appellations as *mulâtres*, *Gens de couleur*, mean little to the young, and less young, individuals who wish to develop their own 'Mauritian' identity. The past may well be behind them.

From archival research, consultation of printed material, oral interviews, a number of recommendations emerge that would impinge directly on the 'Coloured Population' in the future. Notably, they need to be reassured that they will never have to fight once more for their political, educational, employment and cultural rights. The study opens out on the concept that *métissage* is, not only inevitable in the global village, but something to be aimed at, since it is the true mark of an intercultural nation. Overcoming the social and cultural barriers between communities will result in an increasing *brassage* through intermarrying and socializing between communities. But for this to happen, the leaders of our 'Rainbow Nation' must give an example and stop fostering communalism for the sake of personal and party advancement. Numbers of votes matter less, in the end, than people, and duty to oneself even less than the national good. The history and development of the 'Coloured population' may be a microcosm of the Mauritian people, and many lessons may be drawn from it. Indeed, as Lord Bolingbroke once stated, "History is philosophy teaching by examples."

## INTRODUCTION

This project is geared to undertaking an in-depth study of the 'Coloured Population' (*Gens de couleur* or *population de couleur*) in order to assess whether they suffered, in any way, from the consequences of slavery during the French and British periods and in post-Independence Mauritius. The period under study is, accordingly, wide-ranging (1715-2011), and the subject extraordinarily complex. Since the project was set in motion very late in the proceedings of the Truth and Justice Commission, as late as February 2011, and because the researchers had a little over four months, to complete a challenging task, to say the least, some restrictions have had to be put into place. For example, the number of semi-structured interviews has necessarily been limited, to 17 for Mauritius, and 7 for Rodrigues. However, this was a conscious choice, namely to focus on in-depth interviews with knowledgeable and interesting representatives of 'Coloured' families on both islands. Rather than go for quantity, we opted for quality, as the analysis of the interviews will demonstrate in Chapter 7, the sample being most representative of age, gender and experience in life.

*Gens de Couleur* or the 'Coloured Population' find their origins, as explained in Chapter 1, from a *brassage* of several groups of immigrants into Mauritius/Isle de France from the earliest times (1721), when French colonists and *engagés* (contractual workers) started trickling into the country, first under Governor Denis Denyon (1722-1725), and then under his French successors, notably under Mahé de Labourdonnais (1735-1746). The individuals, commonly known as *Gens de couleur libres* in archival records, included freeborn persons in Isle de France who were the resulting off-springs from intermarrying between individuals of African, Asian, Chinese, French, and later British, origins. Skilled craftsmen from France (mainly Brittany and Normandy), India (Pondichéry, the Coromandel and Malabar coasts), China and other Asian countries, cohabited with, and/or were married to, descendants of slaves and manumitted slaves during the French period (1715-1810). The slaves or freed persons had various ethnic backgrounds; they were for example, Guineans, Lascars, Malabars, Malagasies, Malays, Mozambicans or various others of African origins. Chapter 1 explores the origins of the 'Coloured Population' under the French and British authorities through published and archival material, to arrive at a better understanding of: (a) the complex phenomenon of racial *métissage*; (b) the links between *Gens de couleur* and slaves, freeborns, indentured labourers, free settlers and 'Creoles' born in Mauritius and its dependencies. Detailed data on the ethno-cultural backgrounds of Coloured families shed considerable light on the position of the *Gens de couleur* as an intermediate, and downtrodden, class and community in the colonial period.

The fight for political representation and Human Rights was as hard for the 'Coloureds' as it was for descendants of slaves and manumitted slaves. Indeed, the lines of demarcation are so blurred during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that it is hard to say that 'Libres de couleur' were better off, at least not until the 1830s. Although they were able to acquire land, officially and ostensibly under the *Lettres patentes* (*Code Noir*) of 1723, Chapter 5 shows that it was not until the 1740s that grants of land were made available to them, and that the Coloured landowners began to make their mark on the economy of Isle de France only in the late eighteenth century. Any decrees of the *Assemblée Coloniale* in the 1790s, for political representation for 'Coloureds' on parish or other councils, were soon forgotten under Napoleon I, and more especially during the administration of General Charles M.I. Decaen (1803-1810). The *Code Delaleu* (1767)<sup>1</sup> and *Code Decaen* (1805) gave little chance to such an underprivileged and politically 'ignored' community as the *Gens de couleur*.

With the British take-over (1810), the long-cherished hopes of the 'Coloured Population' rose again, only to be constantly crushed by the British occupiers who saw an advantage in siding with their natural allies, the 'White' plantocracy. Chapter 4 follows the long, hard struggle for political rights, and the numerous indignities suffered, along the way, as a result of prejudices and racial bias. The shocking obvious 'apartheid' policy of the Church authorities, as regards interment and funerals, as well as tolerated divisions during religious rites, such as confession and communion, demonstrate the sufferings endured by a defenceless 'Coloured Population'. Testimonies and petitions, handed in to successive British Governors, provide ample evidence of active discrimination against the 'Libres de couleur' and their descendants. Their few tribunes had to fight vigorously in the 1820s and 1830s for the most basic Human Rights which were denied to an

ever increasing community. It was not until Rémy Ollier, in the *Sentinelles* (1843-1845), and a few of his dedicated successors, who belonged to the 'Coloured Population', took up the fight, that political representation became a reality in the Port Louis Municipal Elections of 1850, when the first *Gens de couleur* became councillors.

The problems and issues relating to their religious, social, economic and cultural identities, are addressed throughout this project. Access to education remained a clear priority from 1800 onwards, through the 1820s and 1830s, when petitions were repeatedly presented to British Governors such as Sir Lowry Cole (1823-1828), Sir Charles Colville (1828-1833) and Sir William Nicolay (1833-1840), for the creation of primary schools and colleges for disadvantaged coloured boys and girls, in specific deprived areas such as Plaines Wilhems. Archival evidence is provided to back up the claim that the 'Coloured Population' was, as Evenor Hitié has claimed, "subject to a form of moral slavery", downtrodden and denied the basic right to free education.<sup>2</sup> Reverend Jean Lebrun, the London Missionary Society, and later, in the 1840s, Bishop Collier and the eight Loreto Sisters, who arrived in Mauritius on Monday 8 September, 1845, as well as the Christian Brothers, were to restore a semblance of balance in favour of a 'Coloured community' that lagged far behind the 'Whites', although, they enjoyed far more privileges than the indentured families.

With the 'Coloured' intelligentsia knocking constantly on the doors of the Royal College, these were finally opened to *Gens de couleur*, and mulatto boys began to shine and win scholarships.<sup>3</sup> Lawyers and doctors, notaries and politicians, returned to reinforce this community in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, before their leaders, such as Sir Virgil Naz, Sir William Newton, Dr. O. Beaugeard, the last two being laureates of the Royal College, stamped their indelible mark on the colony's politics. Despite a high franchise, the Elections of 1886, under Sir John Pope Hennessy, were a turning-point in the history of hard-fought political representation for the *Gens de couleur*. The new wave of 'Coloured' politicians could look forward, as well as back to the steep ascent achieved by their forbears. They subsequently fought to preserve their hard-earned social, political and economic, as well as educational and cultural, rights. The Laurent brothers, Raoul Rivet, Dr. Maurice Curé, the founder of the Labour Party, and other successors of Rémy Ollier, never forgot the high price which their community had paid, in terms of indignities and sufferings, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In effect, the 'Coloured Population' appears to have maintained its close affinities throughout with French culture, as they sought to forge an identity through being Francophone and Francophile, this despite the failure of the Retrocessionist Movement in the 1921 elections.

Landownership, access to economic benefits and the perceived constant threats from 'Whites' to property owned by the *Gens de couleur* in the late nineteenth century, and throughout the first half of the twentieth century, are at the core of Chapter 5. The Coloureds' erroneously paranoid fear of Indo-Mauritians to their social and economic position, as well as to their newly-acquired political influence from the 1920s onwards, were to unify the 'Coloured' community under the leadership of Gaëtan Duval 'The Creole King', at the height of his campaigns against Independence in the 1960s. Clearly, the 'Coloured Population' has always been, and continues to be, divided in its allegiances; some were pro-British, others pro-French; some pro-d'Épinay and others anti-'esclavagistes'; some sided with the Whites, others were anti-White. Herein lies their main weakness in social, cultural and political terms; not without justification, the community was said to bear the mark of Cain and Abel. Some of the *Gens de couleur*, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, despised the *Ti-Créoles* and would not stoop to certain types of work. Moreover, they would not contemplate marriage outside their community - hence, some sort of 'caste system' prevailed. But all this has changed recently; interviews with young 'Creoles' reveal that history matters less to them than to their elders, and that intermarrying is no longer a taboo for the 'Coloured Population'. Being Mauritian matters more than 'group belonging'.

Above all, labels, as Chapter 7 indicates, no longer hold water; the appellation of *Gens de couleur* appeals less and less to descendants of the 'Libres de couleur'; the notion of *métissage* is seen in a positive light. With the massive exodus of *Gens de couleur* in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, towards Australia, the U.K., Canada and South Africa, among other countries, a cultural and social void may have been created, but the 'Coloured people' left behind have abandoned their former spirit of ghettos, or 'cloisonnement' (erecting barriers), against an imagined invasion by other communities, especially *Ti-Créoles*. The young envision the future with optimism and an openness that augur well for a multicultural and unified nation. Professions are open to all, and our

interviewees are not in dread of 'cultural nepotism' that their ancestors deplored. Women, as Chapter 7 underlines, appear more open and more enlightened in respect of inter-communal marriages and socialising with other communities.

But, as our recommendations indicate, Mauritius should not return to such communalism and apprehensions as blighted the 'Coloured Community' from the 1810 to 1880. A community must not be made to fight inch by inch for equal rights, equal education, and equal political representation. The waves of emigration of the 1960s and 1970s were, partly at least, caused by the leaders of the Creoles insisting on their 'malaise' and instilling fear into a community. Once the *Gens de couleur* had left to ensure "a better life for their children", Mauritian cultural life suffered a serious blow. Yet, others grew stronger to take the place of our artists, singers, writers, teachers and intellectuals who had emigrated, as Chapter 4 makes us aware. In a spirit of reconciliation, the nation must ensure that those Mauritians who have emigrated, and continue to do so for family and professional reasons, are not branded as 'traitors' - a sad term used during a Diaspora convention a few years ago. They should be welcomed back with open arms and, indeed, be given incentives - tax or otherwise - to return to their homeland. The Mauritian *émigrés* (expatriates) can only enrich the 'Rainbow Nation' through their experiences abroad; the 'brain drain' will thus eventually produce positive results for the country, but only if we behave as mature adults and cease to point the finger at those who have left. Older Mauritians should be given an opportunity to come home and give back to Mauritius what Mauritius has bestowed on them in their school days. Access to employment should be made easier for older generations of 'Coloured people' or of any other community now living abroad. The nation also lives through its 'Creole' Diasporas in Australia, Canada, France or UK. *Métissage* must be viewed a positive factor, a sign of enrichment in such a nation as ours - such is the message sent out by our greatest *Métis* poet, Edouard Maunick, and such is the conclusion of this 'Study of the Coloured Population'. In this respect, the 'mulatto' or 'métis' communities, in the global village, constitute the very ideal of reconciliation which we should be aiming at, for only through it will the 'cloisons' [social barriers] come down and a unified 'people' emerge.

This Study, however, is neither entirely philosophical nor purely idealistic, but it opens out on practical 'Recommendations' and suggestions. Rodrigues is a case apart, as being chiefly a 'Creole island'. A research trip, undertaken by the team, has resulted in a better understanding of the complexities of Rodriguan society, with its apparent uniformity (see Chapter 6). Perhaps, there is a lesson to be learnt from Rodrigues: 'Group belonging' ostensibly matters to Rodriguans less than individual identity and national identity. The consequences of slavery and a 'demeaning past' seem to have impacted less on the island, precisely because the people's first priority is to cope with the harsh realities and problems of survival on a daily basis. But, on the other hand, Rodrigues is disadvantaged because its people are largely 'Creole' - hence descendants of slaves. Would a predominantly Indo-Mauritian island be allowed to lack such basic educational resources and infrastructures? Some kind of reverse discrimination, or affirmative action, is therefore called for, if we are to give Rodriguan youths the same opportunities - educational, cultural, social and political - as Mauritian youths. Perhaps, therein lies a microcosmic image of a 'Coloured' and 'Creole' community through the ages; in Rodrigues, one finds the tangible impact of a society that can become neglected, because of its isolation, because of its origins and because it does not clamour loudly enough. Hence, one of our recommendations, which should *also* be one of the most urgent pleas of the Truth and Justice Commission, is that Rodrigues should be made a special case for positive discrimination, in terms of funding for education (at primary, secondary and tertiary levels). In connection with Rodrigues, too, interviewees suggested that the island's history be re-evaluated and re-written so that young people might be given a more authentic picture of their past, and that this be put in a truly culturally Creole context.

Education appears to many people to be the most effective means of reconciliation in the long term, that is education in its broadest sense. Not only must future generations be empowered through knowledge of the past, but they must, at the same time, be taught citizenship, moral and civic values that will set right many injustices of the past. A 'quality education' for our young people would foster respect for other communities. An utter condemnation of divisive hate-language and words such as 'Mozambique', 'Mulâtres', 'Malabars', would be an essential first step towards this goal. But, of course, at national level, our politicians and statesmen must behave accordingly, and not foster the kind of communalism that has been observed on a number of occasions recently. Numbers, especially numbers of votes, should matter less, if we are to evolve

as a nation; smaller communities, such as the 'General Population', and the 'Coloured people' within it, and Sino-Mauritians, may not have the numbers. However, the Mauritian people must recognise the fact that all communities have made a vital contribution to our history, irrespective of their origins. "History is philosophy teaching by examples," declared Lord Bolingbroke. Perhaps, educating the young through the teaching of a balanced history of Mauritius, rather than a revisionist history, is the way forward. Only then, can cultural memory take on its true significance for young Mauritians - seeing the present through the past and envisioning the future through the present. Otherwise, old *clichés* will persist, and the dawning of the Justice and Truth era will be a forlorn hope. Finally, the Government should not look upon this Commission as an exercise in whitewashing the past indignities and sufferings of such communities as that of 'Libres de couleur', and descendants of slaves.

## CHAPTER 1 - Origins of the 'Coloured People'

### 1.1. Definitions

*Créole*: In the first issue of *Revi Kiltir Kreol*,<sup>4</sup> Arnaud Carpooran drew attention to the complexities associated with the word *Créole* and to its etymology. He argued that, if there was a degree of uniformity in defining a Creole language, such was not the case with regard to the 'Creole Man'; this will depend on his 'realities' and his 'cultural specificities' (p. 1). Moreover, Robert Chaudenson has underlined the importance of the local connotations attached to the word *Créole* in Mauritius: "*Kreol* (just like *créole* in the local regional French Language) is used to qualify any individual who is neither Franco-Mauritian (White), nor Indo-Mauritian, nor Sino-Mauritian. This appellation is therefore reserved either to *métis* or to individuals of the Malagasy or of the African type, with relatively clear physical features."<sup>5</sup> Carpooran, however, warns us against taking this definition for granted: "It is worth noting that this definition, however widespread, is not, for all that, unanimously accepted."<sup>6</sup> Consequently, because of the complexities and ambiguities that surround the term 'Creole', in this report we prefer to utilize the term 'Coloured'.<sup>7</sup>

In the seventeenth century, the terms 'Créole' and 'criolle' were used, as they were later in the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* (1732), to signify a "European born in the islands."<sup>8</sup> According to Chaudenson, even in the early decades of the eighteenth century, complexities began to arise as the term 'Créoles' designated "individuals who were manifestly *métis* (1703) and even Black people (1704, 1722, 1725)."<sup>9</sup> The term *métis*, itself, is used to signify individuals with parents or grandparents of two different races, or 'biracial'; *mestizo* or *mestee* are used in North America and Canada, in particular, to refer to 'half-breeds', an old-fashioned term that is often pejorative. In South Africa and much of English-speaking Southern Africa, the term 'Coloured' is relied upon to describe people of mixed races, though not of Asian and/or African descent.<sup>10</sup>

What of Mauritius, then? European visitors in the early nineteenth century had no difficulty in making a distinction between 'Creoles' (Europeans born on the island, or individuals of European descent) and *métis* or individuals of mixed blood or 'mulattoes'. The latter term was used for the first time in popular English Literature before 1597. From the Spanish and Portuguese expression, *mulato*, *mulata*, the word meant "of mixed breed, from mulo (mule) or 'mongrel'". Hence, the word came to mean "a child of two races". *Webster's Online Dictionary* gives the following definitions of the noun 'mulatto':

- "1. An offspring of a black and white parent.
2. The offspring of a negress by a white man, or of a white woman by a negro, usually of a brownish yellow complexion."<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, a 'tragic mulatto' is a phrase that describes "an archetypical biracial person, or fictional character, usually of African and European descent, who is assumed to be sad, mentally ill, destructive, or suicidal."<sup>12</sup> Though not self-destructive nor suicidal, Alexandre Dumas' *Georges* (1843) in a novel set in Mauritius, is the mid-twenty year old son of a wealthy mulatto, who has a large plantation and is the owner of several hundred slaves. The 'mulatto', Dumas himself being one, bears considerable scars and is regarded, in Mauritius, as being clearly inferior to the Whites. Dumas' maternal great-grandfather was a descendant of African slaves, and the author may have wished to raise awareness of racial issues in former French colonies in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although it bears the name of Dumas, it is reported by many that *Georges Le Mulâtre* was the work of Mauritian-born author, Félicien Mallefille.<sup>13</sup>

The different shades of *métis* or mulattoes in Mauritius had been commented upon by Auguste Billard, during his visit to the island in 1817; in a letter of 27 February of that same year, an over-confident Billard noted:

*"It is easy, up to a point, to distinguish the pure-blooded Europeans from the blood that is mixed with African blood; a brown or olive complexion, especially under the eyes always betrays doubtful origins [...]"*

As for mulatto women, he draws an even clearer racial distinction, by indirectly criticizing them for wishing to cross the social frontiers and for their lack of morality:

*"There is between White and mulatto women a demarcation line which the latter try to cross. However, those dangerous mulattoes avenge the contempt with which they are treated, by stealing the White mother's sons, as soon as they are susceptible to their charms."*<sup>14</sup>

On 24 May, 1803, a contemporary of Milbert, P. Brunet, who belonged to the Academy of the Loire-Inférieure, reached Isle de France in the *Célestine*. In his *Voyage à l'Île-de-France, dans l'Inde et en Angleterre* (1825), Brunet gives the following accurate profile of social classes on the island:

*"I would divide them into three classes: firstly the Whites; secondly, the mulattoes and the freed slaves; thirdly, the mulattoes and the Black slaves [...] The Coloured people may be divided into mulattoes, born of Black people and free Whites; freed slaves; and mulattoes or Coloured people from India [...] The third class, or that of slaves, is very large and more varied than perhaps in any other colony."*<sup>15</sup>

## 1.2. *Libertinage and concubinage*

We are very close to the real profile of the population of Mauritius in the 1800s. During their two-month sojourn on the island, when the *Uranie* called here on 5 May, 1818, on her voyage round the world (1817-1820), Louis and Rose de Freycinet had the leisure to observe a multicultural society. Louis de Freycinet, in his official account,<sup>16</sup> criticized, in no uncertain terms, the *libertinage* of mulatto women; they are described by him as 'Vénus noires', beautiful, with the most enticing eyes, long and rather curly hair. They reportedly reached the age of puberty early and were passionate and seductive in their love-making.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, abortions were frequent among black and coloured women, as was syphilis, yet further proof, in his eyes, of their immorality. (p. 386).

The European bias, which is noticeable in *Commandant* Louis de Freycinet's writings, is even more striking in his wife's. Rose de Saulces de Freycinet kept a diary consisting of a series of long letters to her cousin, Caroline, after she had stowed away illegally in the *Uranie* in 1817. Those letters were published in 1927, as the *Journal de Madame Rose de Saulces de Freycinet*.<sup>18</sup> In her diary, Rose is even less sympathetic to the complex nature of Mauritian society; she uses the strongest language to condemn the 'concubinage' that is rife on the island largely because of the loose morals of mulatto women; at the Champ-de-mars, she remarks:

*"All those pretty and well-shaped girls are kept by the rich men, young and old, of Mauritius. I shall add, to the great shame of men, even fathers lavish on those wretches, luxuries which their own children often go without. Can you believe, dear friend, that one would not find two men here who do not keep one of those girls in fine quarters, fine clothes and served by five or six black servants [...]?"*

*Some men even set up home with these women, have a dozen children by them and have no other house but theirs; these men are not married. By their actions, they are forced to withdraw from society, for these women are never received publicly. They provide a good education for their children, who are almost white; several even send them to England and France [...]*

*What is to become of this population? Will they always be completely segregated from the Whites? Creole women generally abhor those women who cause the ruin of their families and the breakdown of so many marriages. Several wealthy men, wishing to ensure their children's or their mistresses' future, in the event of their own deaths, buy land in their names. A few women already own substantial properties in their own right."*<sup>19</sup>

This *tableau* of the role of mulatto women sheds light on many aspects of the origins of the 'Coloured Population' born during the French colonial period, and after the British occupation of 1810. However, it would be erroneous to claim that *libertinage* and 'concubinage' were the only sources of the emergence of the 'Coloured Population', which also arose from mixed marriages between Whites and men or women of Asian and African origins. Yet, *libertinage* was a fact of life in the 1830s and 1840s, when Mrs. Alfred Bantrum gave a colourful picture of 'Creole' ladies - in

the sense of mulattoes - at the Champ-de-mars; the seductive 'Coloured' women once again became the target of a European lady's ire and high moral principles.<sup>20</sup> Nor did some local intellectuals lag behind visitors in their condemnation of the culture of pleasure promoted, seemingly, by the 'Coloured women'; in his *Statistiques de l'Île Maurice* (1838), Baron d'Unienville reflected on the White and 'Coloured' Creoles, given "avec abandon, avec passion, aux plaisirs de la société, aux jouissances de luxe."<sup>21</sup>

### 1.3. Mulattoes and 'métis' during the French colonial period (1721-1810)<sup>22</sup>

In a series of articles that appeared in *5-Plus* (9 October-4 December, 1994), Jocelyn Chan Low plotted the development of 'Le peuplement français de l'Île de France', when the nation became a true melting-pot. Bernardin de St. Pierre, in his *Voyage à l'Île-de-France* (1769), had been highly critical of the White settlers' *mores*, in particular those of soldiers, veterans of the Indian Campaign and of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763):

*"Finally, the last war in India brought here, like waves of scum, bankrupt individuals, ruined libertines, rascals, rogues, hunted out of Europe for their crimes and from Asia by our misfortunes, who tried to build their fortunes on the public ruin [...] There was no longer any chaste woman, nor any honest man; all trust disappeared, all was destroyed."*<sup>23</sup>

St. Pierre's charge is backed up by evidence brought forward by Chan Low (1994), of gender imbalance and of a lack of police control. Chan Low thus stressed the presence of quarrelsome soldiers, bad citizens and rascals, under the influence of Bacchus, who harassed female slaves (23 October 1994, p. 15).

Nor were early French settlers free from blame, driven, as they were, by self-interest, or escaping Justice in France; many of them deserved the charge brought by St. Pierre. 'Concubinage' was rife among young Creoles and French officers lured by easy access to female slaves. In a letter of 20 August, 1783, Governor Souillac deplored this practice: "Almost all officers cohabit publicly [with slaves]" (Chan Low, 13 November 1994, p. 15). Likewise, many French merchants, settling in the Isle de France, cohabited with female slaves or Coloured women. Some married freed slaves - such later on was the case of Benoît Ollier from the Lyon region, who arrived in 1789 and later married Julie, a freed slave born in Mauritius; they gave birth to Rémy Ollier, who was to become one of our greatest journalists, in 1816.<sup>24</sup> *Mésalliances* and *de facto* relationships were the direct result of an imbalance between settler men and women. Between 1717 and 1770, as noted by J.-M. André, a total of 1,718 contractual workers from France arrived; they were carpenters, bricklayers, masons, blacksmiths and other artisans.<sup>25</sup> Yet, those men generally came alone; families, as a rule, only arrived in Isle de France from French ports from 1743 onwards. There was, thus, a serious disequilibrium between genders at the peaks of La Bourdonnais' efforts to import a workforce (1743: 161; 1744: 128 workers).

Chan Low provides the following statistics: in 1778, there were 1,727 white women out of a total white population of 4,417; in 1809, white women numbered 2,671 out of a white population of 6,227 (27 November, 1994, p. 15). Rampant promiscuity and *mésalliances* led to the emergence of a mulatto and *métis* class. De l'Estrac also highlights the arrival from Pondicherry of free Indian contractual workers; others came from Karikal, at La Bourdonnais' instigation, as well as Indian slaves from the Coromandel Coast.<sup>26</sup> At the peak of Dupleix's glory in Pondicherry, there was a population of 70,000, of whom 2,000 were Europeans and 2,000 *métis*.<sup>27</sup> Not only did a considerable number of those *métis* reach Mauritius, but Indian free settlers, or later freed Indian slaves, contracted liaisons or marriages with *petits blancs* or Coloured individuals. The *Conseil de Pondichéry* sent 300 workers on three-year contracts to Isles de France and Bourbon in 1729; 100 approximately had left from Chandernagor in December 1728 and the rest came from other Indian districts.<sup>28</sup> Indian contractual workers trickled in well until the end of the French period (1810), and many married into other classes and groups, since, for the most part, the men travelled alone.

While in 1735, the population of Isle de France consisted of 648 slaves and 190 Whites (de l'Estrac, I, p. 118), by 1766, the total population had risen to 20,098, of whom Nagapen notes the following:

Colonists and families : 825

Women and "filles" : 337

Children : 668

Workers and Surgeons : 168

a) Total of Whites and Freed slaves: 1,998

b) Slaves : 14,100.<sup>29</sup>

De l'Estrac, for his part, refers to the presence of many *petits blancs* who subsisted in poverty and married freed slaves; thus, in 1776, the Census showed that among a White resident population of 3,431, 1,738 were artisans (902 men and 337 women; 305 boys and 194 girls). Half of this White population was made up of what was commonly known as *petits blancs* who worked as carpenters, ship-builders, masons, stone-cutters, and others as servants on large estates. They married freed slaves, when they could not find White partners. As a result of 'concubinage' [cohabitation] or mixed marriages, there were born "those enfants de mille races" [multiracial children], who would later be called "Gens de Couleur". The gap between the so-called pure Whites and the *petits blancs* and coloured off-springs grew wider.<sup>30</sup> The material conditions in which lived the *petits blancs* and the shortage of white women in their group, as well as their lack of access to 'Whites', made them succumb easily to the charms of freed slaves or Coloured women. It is to be noted that La Bourdonnais, himself, had a liaison with a black laundry woman, after the death of his first wife, in 1738; by this *blanchisseuse*, he begat a daughter, Marie-Madeleine Mahé, in 1739, who later died without issue.<sup>31</sup> The Governor also had an illegitimate son, Jean-Jacques Santerre, born in Paris on 14 July 1741. He left his two natural children a pension of 800 and 12,000 *livres* in his will.<sup>32</sup>

#### 1.4. *Métis* of White and Asian origins

By the end of the eighteenth century, an intermediate category, the 'Gens de Couleur', born of Whites and negresses, or Whites and Asiatic women, or White and freed slaves, had emerged. Nagapen, however, points out justifiably that the society of Isle de France/Ile Maurice was "imbued with pigmentocracy".<sup>33</sup> De l'Estrac is right to underline that the *Blancs* made "a clear distinction between 'mulattoes' and *métis*. According to this classification, mulattoes were of mixed blood but the products of Whites' relationships with African slaves, while the word *métis* designated the mixture of White and Indian bloods."<sup>34</sup> So, it is fair to say that, going back to the French colonial period, the very foundation of society in Isle de France, was racist.<sup>35</sup> There existed all nuances of colour, and a very heterogeneous group was born of illicit or unwanted unions. Perhaps, this is why many 'Coloured individuals' in the 1950s and 1960s referred to their group as the 'Race de Cain et d'Abel'. Let us not forget that the *Lettres Patentes du mois de novembre 1723*, commonly known as *Code Noir*, prohibited marriage between white subjects of Louis XV, of either sex, with Blacks "sous peine de punition et d'amende arbitraire". Priests were forbidden to marry such couples, and cohabitation was strictly barred:

##### *Art. 5.<sup>1</sup>*

*"Deffendons à nos sujets blancs, de l'un et de l'autre sexe, de contracter mariage avec les noirs, à peine de punition et d'amende arbitraire, et à tous curés, prêtres ou missionnaires, séculiers ou réguliers, et même aux aumôniers des vaisseaux, de les marier ; deffendons aussi à nos d. sujets Blancs, même aux noirs affranchis ou nés libres, de vivre en concubinage avec des esclaves ; voulons que ceux qui auront eu un ou plusieurs enfants d'une pareille conjonction, ensemble les maitres qui les auront soufferts, soient condamnés chacun à une amende de trois cents livres ; et s'ils sont maitres de l'esclave, de laquelle ils auront eu les dits enfants, voulons qu'outre l'amende, ils soient privés tant de l'esclave que des enfants, et qu'ils soient adjudés à l'hospital des lieux, sans pouvoir jamais être affranchis ; n'entendons, toutefois, le présent article, avoir lieu lorsque l'homme noir affranchi ou libre, qui n'etoit pas marié, durant son concubinage avec son esclave, épousera dans les formes prescrites par leglise, la dite esclave, qui sera affranchie par ce moyen, et les enfants rendus libres et légitimes."<sup>36</sup>*

This harsh prohibition did not, seemingly, deter many white settlers or French officers from infringing the express wish of the monarch. Nor was the punishment enforced; rather, the French authorities turned a blind eye both to the debauchery prevalent at that time, and to the cohabitation between slaves, freed or otherwise, and masters, or freed slaves and slaves still in chains.

The arrival of Indian workers, settlers and slaves during the French period has been referred to above. It added another shade of colour to the mosaic population. Among Indian stone-masons imported, were the Tamils, free settlers who arrived at Isle de France. An early settler, during the governorship of Dumas, bore the name of Chabrimoutou and married Antoinette Moutaly. *Métis*, born of white fathers and Indian mothers, came from Pondichéry. Portuguese *métis* bore the names of: Antoinette de Monty, Philippe du Rosaire and François Xavier Termillion and were among the free Indians to settle here. The first known work contract was signed by Apen Candury and is dated 9 April, 1734.<sup>37</sup> So many Indian workers were present that the French authorities resolved to appoint a 'Chef des Malabars', or a 'liaison officer'; the first, according to de l'Estrac, to occupy this post was Denis Pitchen, a slave owner and the son of an Indian couple, freed and baptized as Catholics.<sup>38</sup> Pitchen is derived from Pitcha, an early Tamil settler and a stone-mason, whose grave, inscribed in Tamil, is to be found at the Cimetière de l'Ouest. The family grew fast, married both into the 'Coloured Population', and in the Tamil community. An appendix to this chapter is provided on the marriages of the Pitcha/Pitchen family in the 1880s and 1890s.

### 1.5. Chinese and other communities

During the French colonization period (1721-1810), accordingly, there occurred what de l'Estrac calls a "brassage de toutes les races" which gave rise to the 'Gens de Couleur', "an expression which is also used to designate the totality of the 'Libres'." <sup>39</sup> That the white masters were particularly attracted to Indian slave women in the eighteenth century is known; often, the latter became concubines and wives of their masters, according to statistics provided in Musleem Jumeer's thesis.<sup>40</sup> The concubines were generally freed Indian slaves; thus, between 1768 and 1789, out of 347 freed slaves, 188 gained their freedom from their white masters; of those 188 women, 138 had given birth to 244 children. They are known also to have acquired land and properties, and *métis* Indian concubines seem to have played a significant role in the emergence of the 'Coloured community' in the eighteenth century. This was the direct result, according to Jumeer, once more of the imbalance between genders; in 1776, for each woman, there were three men on the island.<sup>41</sup>

One should, albeit to a lesser extent, include the Chinese at the source of this mosaic of the 'Coloured Population'. In their study of Chinese emigration, H. Ly Tio Fane-Pineo and Edouard Lim Fat have pointed out that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a reluctance, on the part of Chinese women, to accompany their emigrating partners.<sup>42</sup> De l'Estrac, for his part, drew attention to the fact that there were a number of Chinese artisans, marine carpenters and sailors, who had settled in Isle de France before, and during, La Bourdonnais' governorship.<sup>43</sup> Very early on, only "a few Chinese had married local women, hence the majority of the immigrants had to evolve a mode of life devoid of the soothing presence of womenfolk," concluded Ly Tio Fane and Lim Fat.<sup>44</sup> It is reported by Joseph Tsang Man King (*viva voce*) that the very first Chinese settler in the 1720s married a Monty, probably of Tamil origins, giving rise to a mixed family. No doubt, despite the absence of archival evidence, there were mixed marriages or various degrees of cohabitation between early Chinese workers or settlers and individual women belonging to the freed slave or Coloured community, but a detailed study is required on this.

### 1.6. *Métis* and the 'Coloured Population' after the British occupation (1810-1968)

Pigmentocracy was already prevalent when the British captured Isle de France in 1810. The *Code Noir* had been integrated into the *Code Delaleu* first (1767) and then into the *Code Decaen* (1804). The Coloured Population was, by 1810, a very heterogeneous and underprivileged community / class, in social and political terms, frowned upon by the French Whites and, after the 1810 take-over, also by the British Whites. The gap between the *grands blancs* and *petits blancs* had widened, and that between the former and the mulattoes and *métis*, was wider still. In 1809, the population consisted of:

6,227 Blancs

7,133 Libres (including former Indian slaves)

55, 422 Slaves. <sup>45</sup>

Freed Coloured slaves were beginning to gain advancement through concessions of 156 *arpents* of land.<sup>46</sup> 'Libres' gradually became known as 'Gens de couleur', but were not recognized as deserving of political or educational, or basic human rights. At the end of the eighteenth century, Mauritius was already a multiethnic and multiracial society, but the privileges belonged to a minority of Whites who declared themselves to be of pure French blood. 'Creoles', including mulattoes, in the modern sense of the word, as Danielle Palmyre defines them, <sup>47</sup> were seen as outside good White French society, since it was the "groupe le plus métissé, ouvert à tous les brassages," in the words of Jean-Claude Véder. <sup>48</sup> The 'Coloured people' displayed clear physical traits that linked them with their African or Asian ancestors, while the White ascendancy made the 'Coloured people' at times objects of mockery among their own African or Asian counterparts. The appellation *mulâtre* [mulatto] or *métis* was, and is still today, hurled as pejorative terms and abuses - at least, it was commonly the case from the 1950s and 1960s up to recently. Véder also rightly argues that, rejected by other cultures and ignored in the nineteenth century for long spells, Creoles, including the 'Coloured people', rallied around the Church.<sup>49</sup> Palmyre underlines the fact that, with few exceptions, "historically, the professionals of the middle class from towns in colonial Mauritius, were often the descendants of black female slaves and white masters, had pale skin, were free and educated, but did not possess land. Even if social mobility has spread, the colonial classification persists."<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the removal of whatever little land the Coloured descendants of white masters possessed during the nineteenth century, was to become a feature of the power play between Whites, Coloureds and wealthy Indians in the twentieth century (see later 'Land ownership among the Coloured people').

## CHAPTER 2 - The 'Coloured Population' and its growth

### 2.1. The Coloured, victims of racial prejudices

The *métis* and 'hybrid', 'Libres', whom the official nineteenth-century documents referred to as 'Coloured population', did not attempt to acquire more land and often failed to hold on to the few (156) *arpents* they were given as concessions. Prejudices survived from the French colonial days during the British period; for example, an Ordinance of 1779 prohibited entry by the Whites into the 'Quartier des Libres' and punished any infringement by fines.<sup>51</sup> Yet, Indian women, not deterred by the coloured status of their children, had them baptized, without naming their fathers, according to Jumeer.<sup>52</sup> But, this did not secure access into 'good society'; in fact, these children were ostracized both by the Whites and the Indians. A similar story unfolded, when it came to Coloured children with freed slave mothers. Even though their numbers increased, hostility between the White and 'Coloured Population', as Rose de Freycinet noted,<sup>53</sup> increased in the early nineteenth century. By 1833, there were:

66,000 Slaves

8,000 Whites

18,000 'Hommes de couleur'<sup>54</sup>

The causes of this white antagonism was, partly, rivalry between the two groups of women, White and Coloured, but, above all, it can be explained by the abolition of the status description in the Ordinance of 1829, as discussed below. Various actions by the 'Coloured Population' to convince the British authorities of their Human Rights will be explored below, under 'Political representations'.

The most shocking example of racial prejudice and an 'apartheid' policy, was the funeral rites and practices for the White and Coloured or Slave Populations. In *l'Esclavage à l'Isle de France (Ile Maurice, de 1715 à 1810)*, Karl Noël waxes indignant, and rightly so, at the Church's discriminatory practice of underlining, through funerals, the inferiority of the Black and 'Coloured Populations' right up to the 1830s. Coffins of slaves and free Coloured individuals were placed on two stones, at some distance from the Church and exposed to the gazes of passers-by and to the mercy of the elements. Moreover, the case of M. Betuel, in 1823, who wished to be buried alongside his Coloured son in the 'Coloured' cemetery, is recalled by Noël as having shocked the 'Coloured Population'. The trustee, Mr. Chrétien, followed his instructions but was helpless, when white relatives appealed and had the body exhumed. The *Procureur Général* gave in to their pleas that this burial had brought shame on the family. Thus, even the great leveler, Death, became a pretext for clear 'apartheid' practices, manifestly supported by the Catholic Church.<sup>55</sup> A few days later, the Appeal Court Judges upheld the decision of the *Procureur Général*.

Other cases in the 1820s and 1830s demonstrated the wide gap between the Whites and the 'Coloured Population'. Archival documents support this, and Evenor Hitié refers to those practices of interment at length.<sup>56</sup> He recalls that, according to an Ordinance of 1783, ratified by the Vicomte de Souillac (6 February, 1783, Article 6), bodies of slaves, and presumably 'Coloured people', had to be carried to the Cross or the Church's entrance, where the funeral rites would be administered. Then, they would be left on two stones at some distance from the Church, until such time as the priest would collect them for burial.<sup>57</sup> Hitié too expressed indignation: "One can understand that men, imbued with prejudices could contribute to this Ordinance, but how could members of the Mauritian Clergy sanction it, since it went against the very fundamental principles of a religion which they professed?"<sup>58</sup>

Among papers relating to the 'Coloured Population' at the Mauritius Archives is to be found a moving and strong condemnation of the funeral rites described above, by a delegation of 'Coloured' men on 30 July, 1830. A petition was presented to Governor Sir Lowry Cole on this occasion, and it deals with the need for a Central College for Coloured children, but it also touches upon a number of recent cases of interment; for instance, in February 1826, Mlle. Bussac having died, her father had given instructions that she be buried in the Cemetery for Whites. When the *cortège* arrived at the gate, the watchman refused it entry on the grounds that he had orders from

the Commissioner of Police *not* to allow the remains of 'Coloured people' to be buried in the 'Cimetière des Blancs', without his authorization. Told of this, the father, a white man, appealed, but to no avail.<sup>59</sup> A second instance of such blatant violation of Human Rights occurred on 4 June, 1826, when Mlle. Boucherat, a Coloured person, passed away. Once more, her father wanted her to be buried in the 'Cimetière des Blancs', but the watchman resisted and declared that he had no official permission from the Police Commissioner: "The parents of the young dead person resisted; the watchman resisted in turn; finally, the parents gave in, out of respect for the sacred grounds where they were."<sup>60</sup> The petition concluded in 1830: "If we have objected to the existence of a separating wall forcefully, it is because we wished to underline the odious nature of this demarcation line that still exists [...] Thus, a thick wall separates our mortal remains from those of our fathers, while perhaps a ditch separates a respectable Coloured man from a white criminal whose head fell under the executioner's axe [...]"<sup>61</sup>

Significantly, the Police Commissioner, Mr. Furniss, did not intervene, nor did he try to resolve the problem. In a letter to the Private Secretary of the Governor, T.E.S Viret, of 20 July, 1830, he claimed that he had only heard of the two incidents afterwards: "In regard to the two cases of the burials of Miss Bussac in February and Mlle. Boucherat on 4 June, I have only to observe that I now hear of them for the first time and, if it was desired to inter their bodies in any particular part of the ground, I can only regret that they did not refer this to the Police, as the *Gardien* requested them to do [...]"<sup>62</sup> In fact, both sets of parents had done just that.

Other prejudices and unfair practices in the Church are objected to in Petitions of 1826 and 1830; a revolting distinction was made between Whites and Black/Coloured people at the time of Communion, when they received the host at different tables. Moreover, the Church persisted in having two separate registers for baptisms, marriages and deaths, despite the Ordinance of 16 December, 1829. A petition was signed on 30 July, 1830 by the following Coloured individuals:<sup>63</sup> H. J. Bruils, *alias* Dorestan; C. Shelesfort (a carpenter); A. Ricard, *alias* Ferxier (a carpenter); Lalandelle (a carpenter); E. Baillaud (the son of a baker, "legitimated since 11 years"; E. Joronc [?] (a shopkeeper); P. Berger (a sailor); F. Bussière (a horse doctor); A. Margéot (a clerk at a baker's); J. Dantoine (a bad subject); La Poujade (a sailor); A. Blaize (17 or 18 years of age, now a clerk in the Internal Revenue Office); Max Vilbro ("very impertinent; is a clerk in the Internal Revenue Office"); J. A. Raoul ("clerk to Messrs. Georges Brothers, shopkeepers"); Dubord (a working jeweller); P. Quéland ("employed at a bakery, nothing against him!"); J. B. Cloridor ("was formerly a Finman, is now a fiddler playing at balls"); Raoul; L<sup>s</sup>. Siccard (a carpenter, "nothing against him"); L<sup>s</sup>. Morin, *alias* Mandone (a shoe-maker); Bazire (a carpenter); Frellanges (a cabinet-maker); J. Bernard (a carpenter); Théo. Routier (a carpenter, "worked at the late Simonet's"); A. Collet ("had property; is a natural son of Cécile S<sup>t</sup>. Aubin"); J. B. Benoît (a "teacher to Government Blacks at the Matricules"); J. B. Houet ("a promoter of cabals, carpenter by trade"). This list is signed by Chief Commissioner of Police, Furniss, and dated 7 August, 1830, after an enquiry had been carried out into the background of the petitioners, all Coloured men. One last example of general racial prejudices against 'Coloured people' occurred at the Theatre in Port Louis in 1830. Henri Bruils, who worked as a clerk at the 'Grefe au Tribunal de première instance', worked on the case of several 'Coloured people' who had been refused entry to the Theatre's *Café*, owned by M. Coignet. Resigning his job at the *Grefe*, Bruils took up the challenge in court, but it is unlikely that he won at this stage of the history of 'Coloured people'. Only with the arrival on the scene of Rémy Ollier, and other Coloured champions in the 1840s, were the rights of 'Coloured people' more fully vindicated, as explained in the section 'Political Representations' below. In his sometimes excessively passionate and polemical history of this community, Evenor Hitié is quick to point the finger at the Colonial Authorities - perhaps too quick; after the British take-over, Hitié noted: "The 'Coloured Population', alone, remained downcast, sad, as if this population were treated as idiots, crushed under the yoke of prejudices that did not allow it to move upwards."<sup>64</sup> And between 1790 and 1803, although officially they had rights, they received little respect,<sup>65</sup> as discussed in 'Political Representations'.

## 2.2. The Growth of the 'Coloured Population' within the 'Population Générale'

So it is that the term 'malaise créole', coined by Roger Cerveaux, a Roman Catholic priest, on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1993, and elaborated upon in an interview in the *Week-End* a week later, existed among the Coloured, even during the French colonial period and during the first half of the nineteenth century. And as if to further emphasize the loss of an identity that had been so hard to

forge, the term 'General Population' was coined, from the outset, as a generic term to incorporate the 'Coloured people', but also anybody who did not belong to the Hindu and Muslim or Chinese communities.<sup>66</sup> Chan Low and Reddi explain: "First used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is a colonial category which has little to do with social reality. However, it subsumes different ethnic categories, one of which is the Creole community."<sup>67</sup> If one goes by a broader definition of 'Creoles', as it applies to people of mixed descent, excluding the Whites,<sup>68</sup> according to Chaudenson, then this term 'General population' was used by Colonial Authorities to create a new melting-pot that would deprive minorities, such as the Coloured, of their true identities. And, of course, the *Ti-créoles* were to remain throughout even more invisible. Chan Low and Reddi argued that "the overall impact of a century of racism, racialisation and cultural oppression was to further deprive the Creoles of a petty [petite] bourgeoisie capable of forging their emancipation [...] In 1920, in a population of 75,000, 5,000 constituted a coloured élite, 20,000 a petty [petite] bourgeoisie of dark colour, possibly light skinned, and the rest were dockers and manual workers."<sup>69</sup>

Though to a lesser extent, the identity of the 'Coloured Population' suffered equally during the nineteenth century, "a century of racism". Rémy Ollier, who carried the flag with the *Sentinelle de Maurice* during a brief period in the 1840s, referred to the large and growing numbers (60,000) of Coloured; yet he made it clear that there were 30,000 mulattoes and 30,000 Black people - an indication of the prejudices of the Coloureds themselves towards the *Ti-créoles*.<sup>70</sup> The following tables (1 and 2) show the growth of the 'General Population', although the census exercises of the nineteenth century do not reveal the actual numbers of 'Coloured people' within this broad category.

Year	General Population	Total Population	Slaves
1771 <sup>a</sup>	Whites and Mulattoes: 10,000	65,000	55,000
1817 <sup>b</sup>	Whites: 7,376 Free Coloured: 11,000	98,325	79,943
1825	Whites: 8,009 Free Coloured: 14,831	96,272	63,432
1830	Whites: 8,592 Free Coloured: 18,877	96,779	69,476
Notes			
<sup>a</sup> Charles Grant, <i>The History of Mauritius</i> , London: W. Bulmer: 1862 (1801).			
<sup>b</sup> Baron d'Unienville, <i>op. cit.</i> , (1838) - statistics for 1825 and 1830 also come from this source.			

Year	General Population	Total Resident Population (excluding military and sea passengers)	General Population as a % of total population
1846	52,852	158,462	29.98%
1851	54,497 (Increase of 3%)	180,823 (Increase of 14.11%)	30.2%
1861 <sup>a</sup>	117,416 (Increase of 62.9%)	310,050 (Increase of 72.01%)	26.4%
1871	99,784 (Decrease of 15% on 1861)	316,042	31.6%

1881	110,881	359,874	32.4%
1891 <sup>b</sup>	114,668	370,588	32.3%
1901	111,937	371,023	33.1%
1911	107,432	368,791	34.3%
1921	104,216	376,485	36.1%
1931	124,589	393,238	31.5%
1944	143,056	419,185	29.3%
1952	148,026	501,200	33.8%
1962	203,652	681,619	33.4%
Notes			
<sup>a</sup> "The population was to be divided into two classes: the General Population and the Indian Population" (Proceedings of the Census Board of 9 February, 1861, quoted by M. Dinan, <i>Mauritius in the making</i> , Baie du Tombeau: Caractère Ltée, no date, p. 12.			
<sup>b</sup> These statistics for 1891 to 1962 (without our fourth column) were obtained from Dinan, <i>Ibid.</i>			

Within the broad category of 'General Population', it is more difficult to establish the growth of the 'Coloured Population', but a few local historians have left us statistics that are significant. According to de l'Estrac, quoting Pitot's tableau for 1833, the population consisted of: 66,000 slaves; 8,000 Whites and 18,000 'Coloured people'.<sup>71</sup> In Evenor Hitié's estimation, out of a population of roughly 400,000 [in fact, 316,042], 20,000 were white and 35 to 40,000 Coloured.<sup>72</sup> This figure, in Hitié's thinking, would also include descendants of the white English population married to Coloured women. During the 1886 elections, the Reformers wanted only 4,000 individuals to vote, out of a population of 360,000, remarks Vijaya Teelock.<sup>73</sup> Of these, only a 'handful' of Coloured individuals would have voted, because of the high property qualifications - probably no more than 500. No doubt, they also felt threatened by the Indian *élite*, since there were, by comparison, 300 registered Indian electors.<sup>74</sup> But Benjamin Moutou puts the figure of Coloured voters at 6,637 out of 11,786 voters who qualified despite the high franchise.<sup>75</sup> The 'Coloured Population' had continued to grow from 1810 onwards; its intellectual *élite*, according to Henri Leclézio in *Mauritius Illustrated* (1914), "may be reckoned at about 5,000 persons" in the 1910s, "well-educated persons for the most part, of an intellectual equal to that of the generality of the members of the white population."<sup>76</sup> From here onwards, the Coloured intelligentsia mustered all the available troops during the 1920s and 1930s, under the leadership of Eugène and Edgar Laurent, Emmanuel Anquetil, and later Dr. Maurice Curé, the founder of the Labour Party (as analysed below in 'Political Representations').

### 2.3. Religious Affiliations of 'Coloured people'

The *Lettres Patentes* of 1723 or *Code Noir des Isles de Bourbon et de France* had imposed the Catholic religion on the slaves; Article 1 stipulated: "Tous les esclaves qui seront dans les Isles de Bourbon, de France, et autres Établissements voisins seront instruits dans la religion catholique apostolique et romaine, et baptisés [...]"<sup>77</sup> In fact, this was a concession to the role of religious instruction, since in the *Code des Antilles* (1685), slaves were meant to be baptized first, before receiving instruction. Yet, it is clear that religion meant very little to the slaves or freed slaves.<sup>78</sup> The work, done by Lazaristes, in the early French colonial period, among slaves and freed slaves, was to have a long-lasting impact:<sup>79</sup> "Above all, they took care not to baptize, without due consideration, the slaves who, then known into general 'concubinage', would not be able to receive the sacrament of marriage." It was only on 11 March, 1725, three years after colonisation, that the first slave couple was baptized: Pierre *alias* Laverdure and Marie Madeleine. On the same day, the Vice-Préfet Apostolique, M. Borthon, blessed their marriage.<sup>80</sup> From that point on, Catholicism became generally the religion of slaves and of their descendants, including Coloured children born either of cohabitation with white masters, or from other social communities.

It is not necessary to dwell on this aspect of the 'Coloured Population'. In his book, *Les Chrétiens à l'île Maurice*, Benjamin Moutou has analysed the religious beliefs of the 'Coloured

Population' in a chapter,<sup>81</sup> and in particular, in the section 'Les Chrétiens dits population de couleur' (pp. 141-142). Moutou divides the Christians in Mauritius into five groups: (a) Mauritians of French origins, 'Blancs'; (b) Mauritians of African, Malagasy or any other related origins; (c) Indo-Christians; (d) 'Hommes de couleur'; (e) Christians of Chinese origins.<sup>82</sup> In the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, the vital role played by the 'Bienheureux Père Laval' (1841-1864), in his apostolate and dealings with freed slaves and 'Coloured people', cannot be over-emphasized. He manifestly deserves to be our first saint and is rightly known as the 'Apostle of Mauritius'.<sup>83</sup> On this apostolate was built the future faith of Coloured individuals in the nineteenth century. It was also kindled by the educational missions of the Loretos and Christian Brothers, who through their schools from 1845 onwards, gave Coloured children the opportunity to acquire knowledge, as examined below in the chapter on 'Education'. The Clergy, under a number of Bishops, starting with the religious renewal that occurred with the arrival of Mgr. Collier (Bishop, 1841-1847), was dedicated to their task of baptizing children and adults, and spreading the good news among the Coloured or *métis* population:<sup>84</sup> "The Church, for its part, was emerging from half a century of religious stagnation, to renew itself and shine again with a Pentecostal light."<sup>85</sup> It was no coincidence that Mgr. Collier's arrival coincided with that of Father Laval who "regenerated Catholicism in depth and in a lasting manner."<sup>86</sup>

Jean-Claude Véder stresses the link between the heterogeneous Creole community and Christian Churches: "Longtemps rejetés par les autres cultures et ignorés par les hommes politiques, les créoles mauriciens se sont ralliés autour de l'Eglise." The majority, he adds, belonged to the Catholic Church.<sup>87</sup> While for a long time in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church was White or European, things are changing fast, and this pressure for change is generated by the Coloured and Creole Clergy. Chan Low and Reddi regarded the active role of the Catholic Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a mixed blessing:

*"The intervention of the Catholic Church, while ushering a new view of life, was to prove detrimental on several fronts [...] contrary to the Caribbean, where the blacks appropriated Christianity and created a black Church, the Creoles in Mauritius were subject to the racial practices which pervaded the Catholic Church. The use of two crucifixes, one in bronze for the blacks, one of silver for the Whites, the administration of communion in order of races, remained the practice even after the legal abolition of racial discrimination in 1829."*<sup>88</sup>

The Catholic religion, however, has provided a solid and constant anchor for the 'Coloured Population' for three centuries. Faith and Catholicism became an integral part of Coloured people's identity. Early mixed marriages<sup>89</sup> were celebrated by the Catholic clergy, and Indian mothers did not hesitate, as pointed out above, to have their Coloured children baptized. Although it is impossible to determine the exact number of Coloured Christians in the various censuses, the 'General Population', which included the Coloured, provided the largest number of Christian believers from the 1846 Census onwards:

Year (Census or other sources)	Total Population	Catholics	Other Christians	Total Christians
1788 <sup>a</sup>	40,000 - 45,000 appr.	43,473	-	-
1851	180,823	93,561	8,105	101,666
1861	310,050	47,758	4,560 <sup>b</sup>	52,318
1871	316,042	81,789	7,310	89,099
1881 <sup>c</sup>	359,874	107,441	8,890	116,331
1891	370,588	105,448	5,491	110,919
1901	371,023	103,256	4,975	108,231
1911	368,791	103,176	3,728	106,904
1921	376,485	100,077	3,595	103,672
1931	393,238	110,717	3,939	114,656
1944	419,185	136,049	3,377	141,185
1952	501,200	142,460	5,356	147,816
1962	681,619	218,572(32.1%)	10,683	229,255
Notes				
<sup>a</sup> See Nagapen, <i>Histoire de l'Eglise</i> , p. 52.				
<sup>b</sup> <i>Ibid.</i> , p. 76. This figure of 4,560 includes 2,821 Protestants (unspecified) and 692 Church of England followers.				
<sup>c</sup> Dinan, <i>op. cit.</i> , p. 24. Also for 1891-1962.				

For the sake of economy of space, we have stopped at 1962, but it is obvious from this table that Christians were, and are, a major component of Mauritian Society, even after the arrival of Indentured Labour, and that among Christians, the Catholic Church had the largest majority of disciples. Besides Catholics, among Christians, one can note: The Church of England; the Church of Scotland and a broad category of 'other Christians'. Today, a considerable number of Christian sects and Churches have sprung up, making the picture even more complex. The Census of 2000 indicates that out of a grand total of 1,178,848 people, there were 278,251 Roman Catholics; 101,050 'Other Christians', which adds up to 379,301 Christians, as against 799,547 non-Christians. Monique Dinan notes that between 1871 and 2000, there was a growth of 1.13% among Christians per year; of these, the number of Catholics grew by 0.95%, as against a growth of 1.16% for Hindus and 1.21% for Muslims. She also adds that, between 1952 and 2000, when all Christians are taken together, there was a growth of 1.65%, due to "the increase registered by the sects".<sup>90</sup> There is little doubt that there was a parallel increase among the 'Coloured Population' which, by tradition, belonged to the Christian faith.

Very early on, in the nineteenth century, we know that Reverend Le Brun, who arrived in Mauritius in 1814, preached extensively to the 'Coloured Population'. He also had renewed success in gradually setting up primary schools (see 'Education' below). As a result of his mission and charisma, a number of Coloured families converted to Protestantism. Hitié names the following individuals and their families: "Vilbro; Auguste Icery; Hégésipe Gérand; Henry, Bruils; Boudard; J.B. Courtois; Etienne Roussel; Abrard; I.F. Noël, and "a hundred other families" who changed their religion". Hitié concludes: "It was, from that moment on, that the independent Church of Reverend Le Brun received in its folds thousands of disciples."<sup>91</sup>

In a recent article in *Week-End*,<sup>92</sup> B. Burrin has retraced the early days of the Adventist Church under the leadership of Pastor Paul Badaut, a French missionary, who arrived in the *Oxus* on 2 April, 1914 and stayed until 1920. His six years' mission in Mauritius sufficed to set up a solid congregation, hailed by Léoville L'Homme, as the product of strong faith and vigorous missionary work. But our famous poet added: "It was Mlle. Rosalinde (Rosie) Le Même who declared herself to be the first Adventist in Mauritius in 1912; she also lent considerable assistance to Pastor Badaut in his mission." On 24 November, 1914, the Pastor baptized, by immersion, near St. Jean, 24 disciples, and when he left in 1920, the Adventist Church was kept going by such zealous laymen as O'Brien, Moïse Johnson and Mozart Noël, all *métis* Mauritians. No doubt, all Christian sects deserve a fuller treatment in an attempt to trace the emergence and identity of the 'Coloured Population', but shortage of space does not allow for it.

## CHAPTER 3 - The Struggle for Education for the Coloured

### 3.1. The 'Coloured people' with few educational opportunities

The team drafting the 'Education Project' has dealt at length with the history of Education in Mauritius during the British period, in particular. The focus, in this section of the 'Coloured Population Project', must, accordingly, be on the commitment of Coloured intellectuals to broadening the educational horizons of Coloured children. In a very real sense, the fight for Education became the chief priority and main objective of their political representations to the British authorities, as demonstrated below.

During the French colonial occupation (1721-1810), Education for white children was provided by private and fee-paying schools. Girls were generally educated at home by governesses or tutors. Yet, in his *Memoirs* of 1740, Governor La Bourdonnais had expressed to Contrôleur Général Orry the need to open up education to as many local children as possible: "It is high time, I think, for you to consider a College in the Isles where our youths would be educated and taught to read, write, and even Latin and Mathematics. A school for orphaned girls would also be desirable."<sup>93</sup> Research, however, indicates that, with a few exceptions, freed slaves, their descendants and Coloured children, did not benefit greatly from this innovative idea under the French. It is reported that Joseph Dupré, the son of a settler who arrived in the *Bourbon* on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1759, ran a primary school in Port Louis exclusively for wealthy children. Aware of the need for education, François Julien du Dresday, Chevalier Desroches (Governor from 1769 to 1772) acquired two sites near the *Jardin de la Compagnie* on 20 September, 1770. On one of these, were erected the buildings that were to house a parish school, set up by Abbé Claude Bernard Challan. It became known as the *École de l'Abbé Challan* (1772-1776); it is thought that the administrators opened up the school to poorer children.<sup>94</sup>

Abbé Challan was succeeded by Abbé Charles Quinlan, a lay priest and chaplain, who gave the school the name *Collège de l'Isle de France*, where classes were held from 5 October, 1778 on. In recognition of this innovation, the French administrators applauded "a project formed to establish in this town [Port Louis] a College for the Creoles of the colony."<sup>95</sup> This school or college, however, appears to have been restricted to white children. A boarding school for girls was, likewise, founded in 1781 by Veuve Dufour and Marguerite Poupelain, who applied for permission on 16 February, 1781. Since the fees for boarding were 100 *Francs* per month, and half of this for external students, it is unlikely that Coloured or freed slave children, would have attended the school.<sup>96</sup>

Without going over the same ground as the 'Education Project Team', it is obvious, in our view, that the first real attempts to open up Education (primary especially) to the 'Coloured Population' occurred after Reverend Jean Le Brun had arrived in 1814. He was to found the first free primary school in Port Louis and, subsequently, other primary schools for boys and girls across the island. These establishments were initially founded by the London Missionary Society, and later by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. But the financial difficulties encountered by Reverend Le Brun were enormous; several of his schools failed, notably in Port Louis, Piton and Camp Yoloff.<sup>97</sup> One finds, in the Mauritian Archives, a Prospectus for a free school at Rivière du Rempart, sent to Governor Sir Lowry Cole by Rev. Le Brun, on 26 September, 1826. In this document, the latter refers to an existing building capable of housing 60-80 children. The Reverend, however, asks the Government to send twelve sponsored students at the cost of £50 per annum each, from "among the most distressed and meritorious people", that is descendants of slaves and Coloured children. The less than generous Sir Lowry Cole, who never entirely espoused the Coloured cause, does not appear to have acceded to this request,<sup>98</sup> even though the Prospectus spelt out the urgent need for Education in the Rivière du Rempart District: "Il existe au quartier de la Rivière du Rempart un nombre assez considérable d'enfants auxquels les pères noirs ne peuvent donner une éducation [...]"<sup>99</sup>

Strictly because of Reverend Le Brun's efforts, a number of primary schools were founded and blossomed by 1851 (see Appendix I to this section). Le Brun was, at the time, in Hitié's opinion, looked upon by the freed slaves and the 'Coloured Population', as "the architect of their intellectual emancipation."<sup>100</sup> However, the political struggle for access to Education for the

disadvantaged Coloured went on alongside Le Brun's endeavours. In the 1820's, their representatives demanded their 'common rights', since they felt despised and side-lined by the British Government, at least up to 1826. For a total population of 100,000, there were few free schools. On 16 January, 1826, Augustin Icery presented a petition to Sir Lowry Cole that stated strongly the case for greater access to Education: "The limited education, received by Coloured young people, will not enable them to better themselves in the future and acquire an in-depth knowledge of the abstract sciences." This was put down to the isolation of Coloured children and their inability to compete with their White counterparts: "The number of children in the 'Coloured Population' is increasing annually, and they require a more complete education so as not to stagnate in a state of ignorance that may be detrimental to the country at large."<sup>101</sup> Hence, a Central College for Coloured youths was required, and as soon as the Governor approved this, a Prospectus was to be issued. This petition was signed by a number of Coloured representatives, including Duclos; Z. Arlanda; J.-B. Nayna; G. André; Renaud; Dumolard; Doucher; Morelle; Icery; Cantin *et al.* It was then sent to the Secretary of the Committee of Public Instruction, Baron d'Unienville, by Secretary Barry. He referred, in so doing, to the "Prospectus and estimate for the establishment of a Public School for the instruction of children of the 'Coloured Population' of this colony [...]", and asked that the Petition be submitted to the Commission of Public Instruction.<sup>102</sup>

The said 'Prospectus' of 1826 took as its objective the creation of "an establishment which was to be devoted specifically to education and be named the 'Central College for the youths of the Coloured Population'."<sup>103</sup> The cost of this College was then put at 25,000 *piastres*, with subscriptions of 200,100 and 50 *piastres* to be called for among prospective parents. There would also be voluntary subscribers, and the Government was required to lend its support. All shareholders/subscribers would be represented by a Board empowered to administer and organize the College, where teachers would be asked to teach the following: Reading in French and English; Writing; Geography and Geometry; Drawing; French and English Grammar; Mathematics in French and English, and all useful Sciences.<sup>104</sup> This document was signed by Jean-Baptiste Nayna.

Other leaders of the 'Coloured Population' in the 1820's were 'real mulattoes', according to Evenor Hitié, namely: Jean-Baptiste La Bonté, the son of a Frenchman from Auvergne and a freed slave woman, Ova; Félix Jacmin and Jean-Baptiste Tabardin.<sup>105</sup> La Bonté, in particular, was a forceful and eloquent leader, who went to see Governor Farquhar to plead the Coloured cause and their need for more extensive rights, notably in Education. Farquhar, being sympathetic in 1820, had a quiet word with Telfair, the same Charles Telfair, who set up a school for slaves at his Bel Ombre Estate from 1823 onwards.<sup>106</sup> Hitié points out that Telfair assisted with the drafting of the 'Prospectus' of 1826, referred to above.<sup>107</sup> For all that, at the time, there was little movement forward towards a College for Coloured adolescents under Sir Lowry Cole's administration (1823-1829). A little too emotionally perhaps, Hitié bemoans their fate: "This population remained without support and endured a harsh form of moral 'slavery' from 1803 to 1810 under the administration of General Decaen and from 1810 to 1830, over 20 years, under the British administration."<sup>108</sup>

Deprived of any opportunity of educational advancement, Coloured leaders came back to the charge in 1830, when the governorship had passed to Sir Charles Colville. In that year (20 March, 1830), a delegation from the 'Coloured Population', led by Joseph Maingard, Jean Cantin, J.C. Dioré, H. Dupuy, Augustin Icery, A. Gourges, J.-B. Nayna *et al.*, met the Governor and presented yet another petition which recalled Icery's earlier endeavours (1826). They stressed once more the vital need for a "Central College destined exclusively for the Coloured youths, a project submitted to your predecessor [...] We long, indeed, for the realization of this project [...] but since we had only obtained a personal subscription of 100 *piastres* from the Governor of the colony, it became impossible to envisage the completion of this project."<sup>109</sup> From 1830 on, Coloured leaders continued to plead for access to Education, while deploring the conditions in which their community laboured and the civil and political prejudices which confronted them. Despite the Ordinance of 1829 stipulating that in future, there would be only two categories of people, Free and Slaves, the Human Rights of the 'Coloured Population' continued to be ignored. The two petitions of 1826 and 1830 had been largely ignored by two unsympathetic Governors, Lowry Cole and Colville, who rejected the 1830 address, while showing his personal antipathy to the Coloured leaders.<sup>110</sup>

### 3.2. The Royal College

As early as 23 April, 1811, the *Lycée Colonial* had become the *Collège Colonial*. It was Governor Robert Farquhar who had named it the 'Royal College' on 27 January, 1811. The 'Education Project' has drawn attention to the necessary admission of Coloured boys for the first time in 1832. While a few private schools existed for Coloured children at primary level, it was only in 1835 that Michel Severimoutou opened a Colonial Academy for boys and girls in Plaine-Verte.<sup>111</sup> From 1818, the 'so-called' English scholarships were opened to white boys only and allowed them to become lawyers and doctors at U.K. Universities. Meanwhile, the enlightened Lord Glenelg, as Colonial Secretary, expressly ordered Governor Nicolay in 1836 to liberalize education. For in 1836, he had received, in London, a Coloured delegation led by Volcy Hitié, a disciple of Reverend Le Brun, and Lisis Letord; they had brought a voluminous 'Cahier de doléances' on behalf of the Coloured Community. A motion in the House of Commons for a Commission was unfortunately defeated.<sup>112</sup> However, the breakthrough had arrived; from 1832 onwards, the Coloured boys shone like the Southern Star at the Royal College. One only has to look at the Laureate Boards at the present Royal College, Curepipe, for the period 1818 to 1914 - when the new building was erected in Curepipe - to see the huge intellectual strides made by the 'Coloured Population'. According to Albert Pitot, the English supported the 'Coloured people' against the Franco-Mauritians in the 1830s,<sup>113</sup> which led to the admission of Coloured boys to the Royal College, this, in spite of Governor Colville who did not approve of this liberation policy.

### 3.3. Rémy Ollier

Vijaya Teelock has observed that as a result of the vibrant leadership of Rémy Ollier, in the *Sentinelle de Maurice* (first issue: 8 April 1843), published three times per week, constituting a presse de combat, "the Coloured Population played a preponderant role in politics [...]" She adds: "Rémy Ollier and Reverend Le Brun had left a trail of educated, socially conscious and practically motivated men and women who were to take up battle for liberal reforms. The influence of Rémy Ollier continued long after he had passed away."<sup>114</sup> The first Coloured lawyer, significantly, emerged in 1842, Athanase Volcy Hitié, and the first Coloured notary, G. Lalandelle, qualified in the same year. Ollier's contribution, in political terms, will be assessed briefly in the next chapter. From 1823 to 1839, no English Scholarship was given, but from 1839, Ordinance no. 6 prescribed that such scholarships were intended "to enforce the use of the English language as a medium of instruction." With the arrival of an English Rector in 1841, Mr. Joseph Deas B.A., Coloured boys stood a better chance. By 1852, the College was open to all sections of the population,<sup>115</sup> although very few Indian boys attended.

Although in the *Sentinelle* of April 1843, Rémy Ollier pledged to redress injustices borne by whatever class and by people of whatever colour, he was committed to fighting prejudices that prevailed against the 'Coloured Population', in the first instance. *La Sentinelle*, a new 'political newspaper', was to 'signal abuses' and "call all Mauritians to an intelligent unity."<sup>116</sup> Promoting liberation, the newspaper, edited in English by Baker, was known as *The Mauritius Watchman*, set out to "watch over the rising spirit of liberty," and "promote the happiness of the majority of people."<sup>117</sup> The fight for greater political representation will be analyzed in Chapter Four that follows. Ollier's contribution to fostering greater access to education for 'Hommes de couleur' in *La Sentinelle* was of great significance for the political and social development of his community. In a petition sent by Ollier to Queen Victoria in 1843, and signed by many Coloured leaders, he stressed that the 'Creole Population' represented 70,000 people, or two-thirds of the total population. Yet, they enjoyed but few of the privileges of British subjects, and deserved to be equal to the White population in terms of rights.

Education remained at the forefront of the political debate, thanks to Rémy Ollier's preoccupation with it. He himself had opened a school at d'Entrecasteaux St., Port Louis, and another at Plaine-Verte in the 1830s.<sup>118</sup> On 3 June, 1843, Ollier published a major article, 'La Population de couleur' in *La Sentinelle*, in which he proclaimed: "We are the equals of white men in our hearts and intelligence." But what should we make of people's origins and the colour of their skin? He replied: "What stupidity! Odious differences, however!"<sup>119</sup> The integration of classes he deemed indispensable for children of one country; a 'société de couleur' has been formed, in which

members share a common friendship and which has been polished up by Education! In *L'Express* of 22 January, 1995, on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ollier's death (1845), Yvan Martial wrote: "Rémy Ollier, un libérateur pour les Mauriciens d'aujourd'hui!" Amédée Nagapen remarked on the fact that Father Laval and Ollier were contemporaries.<sup>120</sup> Like Voltaire, Ollier became the defender of the oppressed, and like the *philosophe*, he believed in the liberalization of Education to give a louder voice to the oppressed, for Ollier the 'Coloured Population'. Ollier should never be forgotten by Mauritians!

## CHAPTER 4 - Political Representation: A long, hard fight. Social, Economic and Cultural Contribution of the 'Coloured Population' to Mauritius.

### 4.1 Prejudices and repression

The *Lettres patentes (Code Noir)* of 1723 were to remain in force until the abolition of slavery in Mauritius, consecrated first in the *Code Delaleu* (1767), and then in the *Code Decaen* (1804). Articles 5-9 of the *Code Noir* prohibited sexual relations between Whites and slaves; Articles 11-16 imposed strict restrictions on their movements; Articles 21 and 22 stipulated that the fruit of their labour belonged, not to slaves but to their masters, and the notorious Articles 39-47 proclaimed that slaves had no status (civil or political) and were reduced to the conditions of 'chattels' [*meubles*], which masters could sell, as they wished.<sup>121</sup> On 4 February, 1794, a Decree of the Convention abolished slavery in the French colonies, except for Martinique, but on 17 July, 1802, Napoleon Bonaparte was to restore it in all French colonies, in agreement with the legislation that preceded the Revolution of 1789.<sup>122</sup>

During the French period, the 'Coloured Population' had suffered from the same repression and the Whites' prejudicial conduct towards them as free slaves. An Ordinance of King Louis XV, ratified at Compiègne on 20 August, 1766, reiterated the contents of the *Lettres patentes* of 1723 and forbade all priests in Isles de France and Bourbon to baptize any children of 'Coloured people' as free, unless the mothers could provide irrefutable evidence that they were born free.<sup>123</sup> Ordinance 224 in the *Code Delaleu* repeats *verbatim* the *Lettres patentes* of 1723, for example forbidding marriages between Whites and slaves, as well as cohabitation (Article 5).

Yet, during a short period following the Convention's abolition of slavery in 1793, the Colonial Assembly of Isles de France and Bourbon debated, and endeavoured to legalise, the human rights of slaves and 'Coloured people'. In 1791, even before the first Abolition, the *Assemblée Coloniale* of 8 September, decreed the necessity to uphold Justice and declared: "Coloured people, born of free fathers and mothers, will be admitted to all future parish and colonial assemblies, if they have the required qualifications."<sup>124</sup> The same Assembly affirmed that Municipalities would register as electors "Coloured citizens born of free fathers and mothers, who meet all the criteria stipulated by the Constitution." It proclaimed: "All Citizens are equal in the eyes of the Law."<sup>125</sup>

However, at its sitting of 18 January, 1793, the Assembly, while stressing the rights of Coloured citizens, stated that foreigners and free Coloured individuals would only be declared French citizens after a period of five years as residents in the colony. The strongest support for Coloured citizens came in Article 15: "All Frenchmen, having rights as citizens, are eligible throughout the colony."<sup>126</sup> This clearly signifies that all 'free' citizens were equal and that "all posts, employment and other public functions" would be filled through a system of meritocracy, a belief reinforced by the Assembly on 3 December, 1793.<sup>127</sup>

With the advent of the restoration of slavery by Napoleon I, those nice sentiments were lost sight of. The divisions among the Coloured leaders did not help their cause; Hitié argues rightly that in the 1820s and 1830s, many supported Adrien d'Épinay because they were themselves landowners and possessed slaves.<sup>128</sup> But the decisions of the Colonial Assembly, summarized above, rankled in the light of prejudices aimed at their community. Napoleon's decision arrested the progress of Human Rights for 'Coloured people' for thirty years; Hitié argued: "It is such a great monstrosity that it had the effect of a retrograde step of 30 years in terms of the rights of Coloured Population."<sup>129</sup> Throughout the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s, in their political representations to a succession of Governors, Coloured leaders were to come back again and again to the decrees of the Colonial Assembly (1791-1793).

Having received many written representations from Coloured leaders in 1832, Lord Gooderich, Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote an open letter to Sir William Nicolay, in defence of the rights of free slaves and 'Coloured people'.<sup>130</sup> Adrien d'Épinay, while publishing the letter in the *Cernéen*, which referred to the decisions of the Colonial Assembly discussed above, rebutted the Colonial Secretary's arguments. The response, signed also by H. Koenig and E. Dupont, made the point that the Act of 1794 no longer applied, that circumstances had changed

since the 1790s, and that the fiery language, used by Lord Gooderich, was potentially divisive and was likely to cause trouble in the colony. In any event, why had the British Government not granted the 'Coloured Population' its rights between 1810 and 1833? This is good point, perhaps.<sup>131</sup> Fuelled by the representations of 'Coloured people', supported by some high-profile Ministers in London, the controversy raged on and the campaign for the rights of the Coloured and Freed slaves intensified.

On 19 February, 1833, the Catholic Church's 'apartheid' policy had come under attack; Mgr. Slater (the Catholic *Vicaire Apostolique*) would hear the confessions of Coloured and White people at different times! The *Cernéen*, for once, vented its indignation: "Mgr. is, no doubt, ignorant of the fact that no such distinction exists in our society, and that nothing could, accordingly, be worst received than such an announcement that is likely to divide Mauritian Society."<sup>132</sup> The reference here is to the Ordinance of 1829 that recognized only two classes: Slaves and Free people. In another article in *Le Cernéen*, reference was made to the French decrees of May 1791, April 1792 and February 1794: "Coloured men, residing in French colonies, born of free parents, are entitled to enjoy the rights and privileges of French citizens; among others, the right to vote in the elections for their representatives and be eligible for parish and colonial assemblies [...] The Act of 4 April, 1792 proclaims that free blacks in the colonies must enjoy the same benefits political rights as Whites." The signatories are unknown, but the published letter was addressed to Sir William Nicolay, Downing St., and dated the 28 October, 1832.<sup>133</sup> One sad, albeit, realistic footnote to this letter is an acknowledgement that *not all* 'Coloured people' were intent on vindicating their rights, and that many had even lost sight of them.

#### 4.2. A Sustained fight for the 'Coloured' rights

The fight was a long and bitter one, and the opponents, the White oligarchy, tenacious and embattled. Around Thomi Pitot and Adrien d'Épinay, stood the white conservatives, such as M. Mallac, *Procureur Général* in 1824, who wrote to Colonel Barry, Secretary-in-Chief, against the enfranchisement of slaves through marriage, on 30 December, 1824: "People benefit then from the ease with which slaves can be enfranchised through marriage - this is an abuse [of the Law of 1814]".<sup>134</sup> The only way to remedy this is to ask for evidence that: the free white man has owned the slave woman he wishes to marry for three years; that she has been legally transferred to him and registered, and enforce that enfranchisement by marriage costs of 100 *piastres*, to be paid into the *Caisse de Bienfaisance*.

Ordinance No. 57 of 1829, meanwhile, had stipulated that there would be only two different statuses: free persons, whether by birth or enfranchisement, and the other, the slave population. By Order of Council of 30 January, 1826, published in September, 1826, all owners of slaves were forced to provide to the Registrar "an account" of their slaves, their births, enfranchisement or deaths; there would be a bi-annual return of slaves, to take effect from 1 January, 1830. Signed by G. A. Barry, Chief-Secretary to the Government Council, this Ordinance was published on 19 December, 1829 in the *Government Gazette*.<sup>135</sup> This was to create the very first official Registry of slaves and of freed slaves, including their Coloured descendants. The first article was vital: "Les Registres de l'état civil, destinés à inscrire les déclarations de naissances, mariages et décès, ne seront, à l'avenir, que sous deux titres, l'un pour la population libre, soit par naissance, soit par affranchissement, l'autre pour la population esclave."

For all that, the pressing demands of the 'Coloured Population', as regards their rights to education and political representation, continued mostly to fall on deaf ears.<sup>136</sup> True to say, the 'Coloured Population' remained divided and recalled their affinities with France, Britain or Asian countries; 'Libres' slowly became synonymous with the 'General Population', and there were many alliances made with Franco-Mauritians. Nagapen, in his *Histoire de l'Église*, justifiably remarks about the 1830s: "Splits and divisions broke out in the colony, with a French party, an English party, a White party and a Coloured party."<sup>137</sup> And the 'Coloured Population' moved freely between all those interest groups. Pierre de Sornay spells out the frustration of this community: "[After 1810] the free slaves and the free Coloured expected, from the new Government, a more liberal recognition of their rights. It is certain that self-interest was the first motivation of those who offered their services. The reactions were based on individual needs."<sup>138</sup> Though betraying some anti-Coloured bias, this assessment is not far from the truth.

The Council of Government, established in 1825 and amended in 1826, included no nominated Coloured individuals in the 1820s, but only people of European descent - chief landowners and merchants. We have to wait until the Municipal Elections of 1850, following the new status of the Municipality of Port Louis, for Coloured candidates to stand, and for Coloured electors to make a small impact. Their grievances and hopes had been expressed by Rémy Ollier to the British Monarch in a petition of 21 March, 1843, and could be summarised as follows: 1<sup>0</sup> They wished to be represented on the Council of Government; 2<sup>0</sup> They wanted to have access to the Civil Service; 3<sup>0</sup> They asked for a Municipality to administer Port Louis; 4<sup>0</sup> They wished that the Royal College would take in more Coloured boys.<sup>139</sup> The small number of Coloured electors at the Municipal Elections aroused the indignation of this community. On 4 February, 1859, *La Sentinelle* rallied the Coloured people to register and vote.<sup>140</sup> The inherent capacities of Coloured voters were stressed mainly to boost the community's morale; the list of candidates was published by the same newspaper (No. 1005; 13 February, 1850), and the results duly published following the elections. There was a decided *rapprochement* between the White and Coloured communities. Considering the high franchise - only 250 residents voted -, the elections marked a turning point. Louis Léchelle<sup>141</sup> was elected as first Mayor; in those days, the Municipality was based at the corner of Edith Cavell Street and Mère-Barthélemy Street.<sup>142</sup>

This break-through, in the election of a few Coloured individuals on a Council of 28, was in no small measure due to Rémy Ollier's militancy in *La Sentinelle* from 1843 until his death in 1845; such calls to arms as in the issue on 3 June, 1843, indicate his personal commitment: "Our aim is to defend the ignored rights of part of the Mauritian population."<sup>143</sup> Though passionate about the 'Coloured Population', Ollier was also fighting for what he called "the fusion of all classes", which he deemed to be vital for the children of a united country. Even the exclusion of 'Coloured people' from balls, as at Lady Gomm's ball, where 250 White colonists and 100 'aliens' were present, was reason enough for Ollier's outspoken public reprimand: "We want to be adequately represented in national festivities."<sup>144</sup> Of 35,000 mulattoes and 35,000 black Creoles, only 10 were invited! A scandal, according to *La Sentinelle* of 1843, as Ollier lashed out!

Following Ollier's death on 26 January, 1845, Charles Henry Leal took over the newspaper and campaigned for an 'enlarged franchise' and the right to vote for 'Coloured people'.<sup>145</sup> As a result of Ollier's previous campaigns, Hippolyte Lemièrre had become the first Coloured man to be nominated to the Council, followed by Léchelle. Ollier's successors, as leaders of this community, were: Émile Vaudagne, Lisis Letord, Fanchin Foulquirot, Arus Fourieux, Dorcy Letord, Pierre L'Homme, Evariste Vanmeerbeck and Léoville L'Homme.<sup>146</sup> With improved education, the Coloured intellectuals were more numerous and ready to lend a hand in the rights campaign.

#### 4.3 The 1886 National Elections under Pope-Hennessy

A list of 'Government pupils at the Royal College from 1828-1844' reveals an increasing number of Coloured students; for June 1840, one notes: Aimé Raynal; Prospère Brouard; Kiumphally; Letourneur; d'Emmery; Jules Mamarot; Peter Collard *et al.* Names do not tell the whole story, as we know, and the degree of *métissage* in others is difficult to determine. The fact is that many laureates from this prestigious college came back as lawyers, doctors and politicians, as well as high-powered civil servants. It was not, therefore, without cause that Governor John Pope-Hennessy (1883-1889), an Irish 'enfant terrible' of the British Government, chose the Royal College to make his famous speech 'Mauritius for Mauritians'.<sup>147</sup> The Governor declared at a prize-giving ceremony in 1883 that his policy was to appoint as many Mauritians as possible to administrative or civil service posts. In a second speech at the same College (1884), he announced the appointment of M. Pellereau, a laureate of the school, to the post of Chief Justice, even though he changed his mind thereafter and appointed Eugène Leclézió.

The changes in the Constitution, allowing for 27 members of the Council, and the role played by the Reformists and Liberals are sufficiently well known for us not to dwell on this here.<sup>148</sup> Suffice it to remind ourselves of the vital part played by Coloured men in the political campaigns, such as Sir William Newton (1842-1915), whom Pope-Hennessy described as the 'greatest Coloured man in Mauritius'.<sup>149</sup> A brilliant student at the Royal College, the son of William Newton and Maria Louisa Perrot, he became a personal friend of the Governor and as a Reformist, he was seen as an inspirational leader. Though a member of the Council in 1885, he was defeated in the 1886 elections. Elected as a representative for Port Louis in April 1889, he replaced de

Coriolis on the Council, and was later a member of the Executive Council from 1906 to 1911. A statue at the Place d'Armes, inaugurated in 1992, commemorates this Coloured man's contribution to the political history of Mauritius, at a time when only 12,000 men voted out of 220,000 adults. Only ten members were elected, while 8 were to be *ex-officio* members, and 9 nominated. The truth is that mainly the Whites and a few Coloured individuals were eligible to vote because of the high franchise, high literacy criteria and property qualifications.<sup>150</sup> The Coloured *élite* also clearly feared the rise of the Indo-Mauritian community.<sup>151</sup> In the first Legislative Elections in Mauritius (1886), the Democrats, de Coriolis, Cécilcourt Antelme and Dr. O. Beugeard, another Coloured man,<sup>152</sup> a laureate of the Royal College in 1850, were carried in triumph through the streets. They had advocated a high franchise and had criticized openly the Governor, which led to his recall. After Pope-Hennessy's return in 1889, Beugeard resigned from the Council, although he became a nominated member in 1893. The Democrats won an emphatic victory over Newton's party which lost every seat. For the first time, among the nominated members on Council, sat an Indo-Mauritian, General Louis Gnanalicarayen (1830-1891). Thanks to Pope-Hennessy and a considerable input from Coloured leaders, such as Sir Virgile Naz (1825-1901) born in Seychelles, Mauritius had a constitution that was to last more than sixty years. Even though the *ex-officio* and nominated members outnumbered the elected members, the principle of Legislative Assembly elections had been established.<sup>153</sup>

#### 4.4. Occupations of the 'General Population' in 1885

*In Mauritius in the making*, Monique Dinan has shown that, under Pope-Hennessy, the Civil Service grew considerably: "In 1881, the British administration held the first examinations for the admission of young Mauritians to the Civil Service. This was the start of the process of democratization and meritocracy in the public sector."<sup>154</sup> In order to assess the progress that had been achieved by the 'Coloured Population', in terms of professions, one must turn to the Census of 1881 and other data of 1885. The Census indicates that the number of children receiving instruction in 1881 was as follows, out of a population of 359,874:<sup>155</sup>

Schools	General Population	Indians	Total
(1) Royal College	314	4	318
(2) Government Schools	4,851	1,423	6,274
(3) Private Schools	4,807	1,072	5,879
(4) At home	888	341	1,229
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10,860</b>	<b>2,840</b>	<b>13,700</b>

Appendix No. 17 of the Census of 1881 thus brought home the fact that, while the General Population had blossomed forth, the Indian population was severely disadvantaged. Another indicator of the educational progress achieved by the 'General Population', which included the 'Coloured people', is provided by the *Blue Book* for 1885; a considerable number of Civil Servants deemed to be Coloured, by their names, occupied clerical posts in the Civil Service. A few examples will suffice: (a) Station Masters: Aliphon, E. (since 1885); Bedos, E. (since 1881); Bernard, E. (since 1884); Fayolle (since 1882); Mahon, J. (since 1881). (b) Clerks and Senior Clerks: Adirouben, L.A. (Saving's Bank); Armand, J. (Secretary, Royal College); Furlong, M. (Chief Stipendiary Clerk, Grand Port, since 1883); Pasquet, A.S. (Chief Clerk, Receiver's Office, since 1885); Rivière, Napoléon (Joint District Clerk, Savanne, since 1882); Rivière, J.C. (Acting Financial Clerk, Medical Department, since 1885); Sénèque, Aristide (Railways, Plaine Lauzun, since 1885). (c) Inspectors of Distilleries: Bigaignon, A. (since 1873); Bruneau, H. (since 1877); Pinguet, Raoul (since 1880); Romanet, A. (since 1880); Rose, G. (since 1885). (d) Poor Law Guardians: Bouchet, Georges (Flacq, since 1878); Cordonan, Dr. A. (Rivière Sèche, since 1878); Dubois, Dr. L. V. (Pamplemousses, since 1885); (e) Miscellaneous: Government Printer, Seychelles, Forget, H. (since 1883); Deputy Postmaster, Philippe L. (since 1886).

Countless other references<sup>156</sup> indicate that Coloured men were well positioned to develop even further, in terms of education and culture. Returns under 'Education' in the *Blue Book* (1885) showed that the following Coloured students had won the English Scholarships from 1882 to 1885,

alongside their white counterparts.<sup>157</sup> Bonnin, Louis (1882); Rouget, François Auguste (1883); Serret, Eugène (1884); Cochemé, Ernest Alfred (1885); Coméra, Ezéhias had replaced James Croft who had won a scholarship in 1882, but had died in the U.K. Thus, the intellectual strength of this population is apparent from the fact that *five* out of eight potential scholars came from it.<sup>158</sup> The years 1885 and 1886, and the 1880s in general, appear to have been a culmination of years of endeavour to put the Coloured community on the political and educational map, and they indeed marked a turning point in its national status as an *élite*, both intellectual and political. The 'General Population', as a whole, continued to grow in numbers; it was made up, in 1885, of 63,337 Males and 56,182 Females, forming a total of 119,519, out of a population of 370,404, with 4,150 births and 857 marriages in this community.

As regards professions, if one excludes agricultural and manual labour, the following statistics indicate the strides that had been made by the 'General Population', including the 'Coloured people'. The professional class had included, in 1861 and 1871, the following numbers which grew further still in 1881, although figures for 1881 are not available in the Census (1881):

Professions (General Population)	1861	1871
Barristers-at-Law	35	43
Catechists	12	43
Chemists and Druggists	34	54
Clerks (non commercial)	740	1031
Midwives	14	61
Ministers of Religion	51	80
Musicians	30	41
Professors and Teachers	398	468
Sisters of Mercy	166	280
Source: 'Census of Mauritius [...] taken on the 4 <sup>th</sup> April, 1881.' <sup>159</sup>		

It may be assumed that numbers for 1881 continued to be as high as, or were higher still than in 1871. Political emancipation for the 'Coloured Population' appears to have gone hand-in-hand with professional development and academic growth.

#### 4.5. Continuing political leadership and commitment in the early twentieth century

Jocelyn Chan Low and Sada Reddi justifiably draw our attention to the fact that, in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "the Coloured class had not yet come to terms with its own identity. It sought to forge its identity within French culture, a process which Robert Furlong dubs as an 'aliénation volontaire'." <sup>160</sup> There is not sufficient scope in this Report to analyse the Retrocession Movement, and the part played in it by Coloured individuals, notably Dr. Maurice Curé, Edgar and Edouard Laurent, and Raoul Rivet. Teelock explains: "There were many underlying reasons for part of the population to want Mauritius to return to France. Some felt an affinity with French culture, while others were fearful that the British would institute discrimination against the 'Coloured Population', as was the practice in South Africa." <sup>161</sup> The Franco-Mauritians refused to lend support to the Movement, despite having strong cultural ties with France, because they had a strong interest in the economy and sugar industry. With the campaign coming to a head in 1919 and 1920, Dr. Curé called for General Elections; when they did come in January 1921, 72% of voters went against the Retrocessionists, <sup>162</sup> who all lost, and the Movement came to an abrupt end. Benjamin Moutou comments: "Après la défaite des rétrocessionnistes aux élections de 1921, le combat des hommes de couleur entra en veilleuse." <sup>163</sup> Nagapen, for his part, remarks: "La thèse de la réannexion de l'île de France fut reléguée aux vieilles lunes." [The thesis of the re-annexation of Mauritius to France was relegated to distant dreams]. <sup>164</sup>

A key figure in the launch of the Retrocessionist campaign was Edouard Laurent, surveyor and journalist (1864-1928). He was one of the most militant members of the *Action Libérale* movement and founded the newspaper *La Patrie*, in which he published a series of articles entitled 'Mauritius between France and England', where he proclaimed the advantages of Retrocession.<sup>165</sup> Laurent went too far in his attack on Governor Sir John Chancellor who obtained the suppression of the newspaper through General Simpson, Commander of the British troops.<sup>166</sup> Edouard Laurent continued the fight by amalgamating his newspaper with the weekly *La Croix du dimanche*, to found *Croix et Patrie*, a daily, in which he published an open letter to Governor Chancellor on 23 November, 1918, calling on him to espouse the cause of Retrocession. He ended his days in Réunion, where he died in January 1928. Though a 'Réunionnais' by birth, he was, for all intents and purposes, looked upon as a *métis* and a strong supporter of the Coloured cause.

Yet, this Retrocession Movement was the start of the glorious involvement of Coloured individuals in Mauritian politics on a grand scale. *Le Mauricien*, under a young, Raoul Rivet, who had replaced Eugène Henri, became, in Teelock's words, "the organ of a political movement," supporting, as it did the Revision Movement, led by Alfred Gellé, Gaston Gébert and Dr. Reynolds Laurent. They proposed a House of Representatives of 21 members, of whom 17 would come from the 'General Population' and 4 from Asian communities. The subsequent events are described in detail by Vijaya Teelock and need not detain us.<sup>167</sup> The contribution to Mauritian politics of Coloured individuals is well-known: Emmanuel Anquetil (1885-1946), Unionist and Politician;<sup>168</sup> Eugène Laurent, Lawyer and Politician (1823-1901; *D.M.B.*, pp. 921-922);<sup>169</sup> Dr. Maurice Curé (1886-1977, *D.M.B.*, pp. 1969-1973; Doctor and politician and founder of the Labour Party); Guy Rozemont (1915-1956; *D.M.B.*, p. 931; Secretary-General of the Labour Party in 1941; third President in 1947, an eloquent and charismatic orator, who was the first elected member for Port Louis at the General Elections of 1948 and was re-elected in 1953); Raoul Rivet (1896-1957), Journalist of international renown and Politician, who helped to set up the *Union Mauricienne* in 1924: "His ideal was to shake off the apathy of the thinking *élite* towards the Colonial Authorities" (*D.M.B.*, p. 899). So many other notable members of the Coloured community come to mind, as regards their active role in politics. Perhaps a Ph.d thesis will one day be written on the subject. The culmination of waves of political action of this community was the arrival upon the scene of the 'King of Creoles', Gaëtan Duval, a lawyer with a silver tongue and a brilliant mind, totally devoted to the cause of his community, the greatest 'Coloured tribune of them all', Leader extraordinaire of the 'Parti Mauricien'. The traditions of political activism have been taken over and upheld by his son, Xavier Luc Duval, now at the helm of the P.M.S.D. It is left to past and future biographers of Gaëtan Duval (e.g. Alain Gordon-Gentil) to describe at length, and in meticulous details, the achievements of the Champion of *Creolité* from the 1950s onwards.

From Sir William Newton in 1885-1886, and before him, Rémy Ollier (1843-1845) (who died so young at 28) to Eugène Laurent (1910s), another 'Roi créole', in Moutou's estimation,<sup>170</sup> to Emmanuel Anquetil, and on to Sir Gaëtan Duval, the Coloured men and women of Mauritius have reasons enough to feel proud of their 'sons' and 'Tribunes'. From repression and a harsh beginning under the French, a slow and painful struggle for Human and Educational Rights under the British (1810-1885), to Anquetil's political rallies of 30,000 workers at the Champ-de-mars in 1938,<sup>171</sup> at which spoke Fritz Moutia, Edgar Millien and Mme Barthélemy Ohsan, the Coloured political caravan had come a long way. But the crowning glory and the peaks were yet to come, in terms of popular support, from 1960 onwards under Sir Gaëtan Duval. After Independence in 1968, the caravan could only slow down or go downwards, as a result of the exodus of Coloured families, gripped by apprehension of an Indian take-over, the possible loss of employment, and the loss of the educational and social climate that had previously prevailed.

#### 4.6. Exodus towards distant lands: A loss of political 'critical mass' for the 'Coloured Population'.

At a rally of the Mauritian Diaspora a few years ago in the Octave Wiehe Theatre of UoM, some of our compatriots accused returning Mauritians of having betrayed their country by leaving around 1968. Such animosity is not acceptable in a civilized and 'global village'. Members of a nation should be free to come and go as they please and remain 'good patriots', while becoming 'citizens of the world'. Reconciliation begins when we can respect the rights of others to follow the dictates of their professional careers, and the demands of their family ties. The present Government had repeatedly expressed its wish, through the P. M. and Ministers, to see Mauritian

ex-patriots return to these shores to retire or rejoin the workforce. One of our recommendations suggests that this be actively promoted and that emigration to other lands be not held against Mauritian *ex-pats* abroad. Tax incentives should be offered to facilitate this return journey to one's native land; one does not just have one identity, but several identities, according to the thinker and writer Amin Maalouf, depending on where, and when, one leads one's life.

The statistics speak for themselves over the period of time (1961-1982) marked by the emigration of the 'Coloured Population', and to a lesser extent, the Whites, to Australia, Britain, France, Canada and South Africa, among other destinations. Gaëtan Duval is said to have instilled fear, wrongly, in this Coloured community, to such an extent that they could not envisage a stable and peaceful existence in their homeland. In her study, *Une île éclatée*,<sup>172</sup> Monique Dinan reflects: "From the year 1965 on, emigration became a reality of Mauritian life." *L'Express* of 23 November, 1965 expressed a national mood of apprehension: "Mauritius is afraid, but the people are, above all, depressed."<sup>173</sup> On 10 February, 1967, the same newspaper proclaimed ironically, taking the high moral ground: "Emigration has become a poisonous subject. Should it ever "succeed", M. Gaëtan Duval, Leader of the P.M.S.D., should draw from it a political aura, since it is he who as, Minister of the Government Coalition, created anew the possibility [...]"<sup>174</sup> In the years that followed, suffice it to say that wave after wave of emigration reduced considerably the Coloured community. Dinan has given many telling statistics; the following Table 6 (Dinan's Tableau XVI, p. 139) underlines the growth of official emigration towards Australia:<sup>175</sup>

1968: 2,037	1973: 545	1978: 30
1969: 1,645	1974: 301	1979: 31
1970: 1082	1975: 84	1980: 54
1971: 1004	1976: 50	1981: 41
1972: 877	1977: 25	1982: 18
Total (1968-1972): 6,645 <sup>176</sup>	Total (1973 - 1982): 1,179	

Dinan concludes that emigration slowed down towards Australia after 1972, but calculates that between 1961 and 1982, some 11,792 individuals left. However, she also notes that "the new generation," born in Australia, "feels at home."<sup>177</sup> Of course, not all emigrants were 'Coloured', but the vast majority belonged to the 'General population'. When one adds to the above figures of 'New Australians', those who made their new homes in the U.K. (7,221 from 1961 to 1972, and 2,031 from 1973 to 1982 - the figure for official and non-official migrants may be as high as 21,941),<sup>178</sup> France (14,203 official and non-official migrants between 1961 and 1982), and Canada, among other countries (1,268 official and non-official migrants, 1960-1982),<sup>179</sup> one begins to understand the title of Dinan's work and the scale of Coloured emigration.

What was the impact of this large exodus on the 'General Population', its political viability, its social, cultural and economic life, and its political representation? Between 1973 and 1982 alone, after the main waves of emigration, 36,178 are deemed to have left these shores to emigrate (Dinan, p. 232.) And, *in-toto*, over 25 years, some 66,000 migrated (p. 231). This may demonstrate the inherent 'débrouillardise' ('self-reliance') of Mauritians, but there was a huge void left in terms of the country's intellectual and cultural life that those who remained behind took some time to fill. Fear of the future was one of the reasons for emigration, but economic uncertainty was the other main cause of departure. The general conclusion reached by Dinan reinforces our recommendation to facilitate the return of Mauritian ex-patriates: "The Mauritians [who left] will return, if one knows how to welcome them back." (p. 236) Above all, "let us all endeavour not to impede the social and economic development of Mauritius [...] Communalism and ideologies have too often obscured the paths to the future," for Mauritius is "a country oversaturated with political partisanship." (p. 239)

#### 4.7. Cultural richness and loss: The 'Coloured Population's' contribution to cultural life.

Perhaps, the real impact of a relatively large-scale Coloured emigration has been felt in high culture; that is not to say that other communities, in particular, the Indo-Mauritians, Sino-

Mauritians, Franco-Mauritians, and Moslems, have not made a huge contribution to it before and since 1968! What the 'Coloured Population' has always been good at, has been Literature, the Theatre, Music, Ballet, Opera, the Visual Arts and all forms of oral communication. One may think in high Literature of: Léoville L'Homme,<sup>180</sup> our finest poet alongside Malcolm de Chazal; Arthur Martial (1899-1951), born at Alma (Moka) who published *Au pays de Paul et Virginie* (1928-1929) and the novel for which he is best known, *Poupée de chair* (1933), as well as a historical novel, *Grand Port* (1935) set against the background of 1810. He also wrote for the Theatre, *La Pénitente* (1928), *Mirages* (1939) and *En un acte* (1946).<sup>181</sup>

It is clear, of course, that not all our *métis* writers, who live overseas, do so because of some kind of 'enforced' emigration. Some chose to study and reside abroad, such as Marie-Thérèse Humbert, the author of the internationally acclaimed novel, *À l'autre bout de moi* (1979), or the illustrious Jean Fanchette, a member of a highly-respected family (his brothers Régis, Serge, Rex and Claude are equally esteemed in Mauritius). Jean Fanchette, born on 6 May 1932 and a laureate of the Royal College, Curepipe, in 1950, specialized in Psychiatry in Paris, before discovering his immense literary talent with the bilingual journal, *Two Cities* (1959). He won the Paul Valéry Prize in 1956 for *Les Midis du Sang*, and the Fénelon Prize for *Archipels* (1958), as well as the Mascareignes Prize for *Psychodrame et Théâtre Moderne* (1972).<sup>182</sup> A literary prize is awarded each year in his name (Jean Fanchette Prize) and requires the presence here of Nobel Laureate J. M. G. Leclézio.

Our greatest living poet is a mulatto or *métis*, Edouard Maunick; he has sung the joys of his life as a mixed-blood Mauritian, but has also reflected on the complexities that this entails. Perhaps, he, above anyone else, embodies the combined highs and lows, manifest through three centuries, of what it has meant to be a *Georges, le mulâtre* (1843), as described by Alexandre Dumas (see above). Not without cause, our most intuitive writer, Malcolm de Chazal, wrote in the preface to *Petrusmok*: "This country cultivates sugar cane and prejudices. Here is a League of Nations where the war of prejudices is endemic and painful, especially as regards racial prejudices."<sup>183</sup> Marcel Cabon (1912-1972), another *métis* writer,<sup>184</sup> revered for his *Namasté* (1969), his masterpiece, and *Kélibé-Kéliba* (1951), would have agreed with Maunick and Chazal, as would have many other Coloured writers such as G. André Decotter, novelist, dramatist, literary critic, journalist and painter, as well as editor of *L'Essor*.

Those few examples, as well as the achievements of Yves Forget in the world of the Theatre in the 1950s, 1960s, and beyond, and those of Henry Wilden, the operatic tenor, who emigrated and performed at the Sydney Opera House in Australia, the poetry of Jean Uruty, who also made his way to the Antipodes, the fine multifarious talent of other actors, writers and artists (Serge Constantin, for example) and critics of art and literature (such as Jean-Georges Prosper, himself a talented poet), all this points to a massive presence of Coloured families in the artistic and cultural life of Mauritius, and a major loss through emigration. Historians, such as Rivaltz Quenette, and numerous educators have, likewise, made an immense contribution to our scholarship and culture in Mauritius.

#### 4.8. Conclusions

Our country, having experienced the quite considerable loss of its Coloured intelligentsia, must be on its guard not to allow a similar haemorrhaging of its most talented and intelligent young people in future. Should they decide to pursue their careers abroad, for whatever reasons, let us not point the finger at our Diasporas, but *in a spirit of reconciliation*, let us welcome them back with open arms, whenever they choose to come back to the fold. Dinan ends her book with this most potent and insightful observation: "A quality dialogue can take place between our communities; from it, we shall emerge stronger. Let us not cut off our roots completely; they testify to our belonging and to a response to a call from the past that is a vital extension [into the present and the future]."<sup>185</sup> This Study shows that, in its remembrance of the past, lies the strength of the 'Coloured Population'. Perhaps, *métissage* could well serve as an example of the enrichment and growth that would ensure from mixed-blood communities in a 'rainbow nation'.<sup>186</sup>

It would not be amiss to quote Edouard Maunick, before closing this part of our analysis of the trials, tribulations and joys of *métissage*; in his preface to *Anthologie personnelle*,<sup>187</sup> 'Dire avant d'écrire', our greatest living Coloured poet writes:

*"Our identity, of necessity multiple, is heard more clearly in our Creole language, than in our writings, even with its fascinating alphabets. More a people than races, we add up our loyalties to the Orient, the West and to Africa, to create a symbiosis, most certainly a difficult one to achieve, but which alone is capable of feeding our daily lives, more assuredly than a plate of rice, the 'rougaille' of salted fish or the 'fricassée' of red lentils. Our ancestors all come from somewhere; we have the mission to perpetuate their exile in a land that has become our native land [...] We find nothing strange in our mixtures, however unusual they may be. On the contrary, as 'métis' in varying degrees, and at different levels, we instinctively cultivate a model garden."*<sup>188</sup>

As Voltaire said in *Candide* (1759), "Let us cultivate our garden!" Perhaps, in a 'global village', *métissage* is inevitable and is the surest way towards international peace.

## CHAPTER 5 - Landownership, political rights and identity (1723-1968)

### 5.1. Origins of the group under the *Code Noir*

The situation of the 'Coloured Population' in Mauritius throughout history has to be considered within the context of the Mauritian plural society and its successive transformations. The group is framed under the French period by the legislation introduced by the *Code Noir*. The *Code Noir* of 1723 (enforced in 1766 on the Isle de France) resulted in a social hierarchy which distinguished the 'Whites', the 'Libres de couleur' and the 'Slaves'.

As Arno and Orian state, the group of 'Libres de couleur' appeared in the census for the first time in 1767 (one year after the enforcement of the *Code Noir*). It was mainly composed of freed slaves and indentured labourers from India.<sup>189</sup>

While blood-mixing (*métissage*) prevailed in the colony before 1766, the *Code Noir* institutionalised a rigid colour bar between the Whites and the 'Libres de couleur', which had consequences for the social and economic life. As Barnwell and Toussaint explained, the 'Coloured' people could not be received in Whites' houses; they could not attend the Royal College; they were registered separately at the 'Etat Civil'; they were buried in a different section of the cemeteries and their corpses had to remain outside the Church for the funerals.<sup>190</sup>

The structural domination of the White group was also reinforced by the fact that the 'Coloured' group represented at that time only 15 % of the free population, and was very diversified in terms of blood-mixing and origins.

But at the same time, the social barrier was not totally closed between the two groups. Economic alliances took place, mostly by way of inter-group mixing and wedlock. Some white merchants married 'Coloured' women, which allowed the 'Coloured' to enter into the profession of merchant, while they were at that time excluded from the professions of 'négociant' and planter, which remained monopolized by the Whites. For instance, Benoît Ollier, a white merchant arrived on the island in 1789, married a freed slave born on the island, called Julie. They gave birth to the first 'Coloured' political activist, Rémy Ollier (1816-1845).<sup>191</sup>

The 'Libres de couleur' started to have access to land possession in the 1770s. Most of the 'Coloured' landowners were then persons with a privileged position within the Colonial Administration. Under the 'concession' system, the 'Libres de couleur' were allowed to buy their plots of land (while the Whites were granted land for free). Freed slaves could also be granted a plot of land by their former owners. According to Richard Allen, the percentage of concessions granted to 'Libres de couleur' between 1770 and 1789 varied from 9 to 23%.<sup>192</sup>

The limited access of 'Libres de couleur' to the land and the privileged position of buyers contributed to the integration of these 'Coloured' landowners into the land elite during the French period.<sup>193</sup> This integration in the elite was to be embodied in the political sphere during the French Revolution, on the ground of a common interest for the fight against maroonage (as both groups were slave-owners). (See below 5.2).

As a result of their combined acquisition of land and demographic expansion, the 'Libres de couleur' group became a serious protagonist in the economy of the island between 1806 and 1830.<sup>194</sup> In 1822, the 'Libres de couleur' represented 38 to 48% of landowners, while they composed 69% of the free population, according to the *Statistiques du Baron d'Unienville* (1826).

### 5.2. The sugar mono-culture and the strategies of alliance/ competition with the Whites

The sugar mono-culture was boosted after 1825 when Mauritian sugar was granted access to the British market at the same duty as sugar from the Caribbean. This gave rise to a fierce competition for land between the two groups, the Whites and the 'Libres de couleur'.

As the Whites possessed more capital (thanks to their economic and matrimonial alliances with the British), and capital was compulsory to make the huge investments required by sugar processing, they managed to monopolize the sugar economy. In 1831, the Whites owned 92.5% of sugar mills and 82.4% of sugar land, while they represented only 31% of the free population. The 'Libres de couleur', therefore, had no choice but to give up the sugar industry and concentrate on 'cultures vivrières' (manioc, grains, coffee, cotton).

The share of 'Libres de couleur' in the total free population increased from 51.3% in 1806 to 68.9% in 1830. Though they were more than half of the free population, they possessed less than 15% of land. However, they managed to double this share (from 7% in 1806 to 13.4% in 1830). Despite the fact that the Whites monopolized the sugar industry, the 'Libres de couleur' also managed to increase their share of cane land from 0.4% in 1806 to 7.5% in 1830, and their share of sugar mills from 3.2% in 1806 to 17.6 % of the sugar mills in 1830.

With the 1839 sugar crisis, many white planters went bankrupt. As a consequence of this, they were obliged to sell their plots of land. The massive cession of lands was called 'Petit Morcellement' (1839-1846). Thanks to the 'Petit Morcellement', the 'Coloured' landowners were augmented with freed slaves who thus gained access to land. However, the number of freed slaves (apprentices) who obtained lands remained limited. Allen says that only one-third of the buyers were freed slaves and that their plots were very small (46 % were less than 2 *arpents*).<sup>195</sup>

One major consequence of the 'Petit Morcellement' was to widen the gap between the sugar plantation economy, dominated by the Whites and some wealthy 'Coloured' landowners on the one hand, and the 'secteur vivrier hors plantation', which became mainly the property of the poor 'Coloured population' and Creoles (descendants of slaves and apprentices).

Within the 'Coloured population', the owners who derived their wealth from the privileges acquired during the French period (1721-1810), sought to dissociate themselves from the emerging group of apprentices. Valuing their racial and cultural proximity with the Whites, they tended to identify themselves more with the cultural and social norms of the White dominant minority. Thanks to their access to secondary education, they could eventually pretend to a upward socio-economic mobility.

In 1829, indeed, the British Administration suppressed the 'colour bar' between the White group and the 'Libres de couleur'. In 1846, the two groups were mingled into one single category called 'Population Générale' in the census (while the freed slaves were then still categorized separately). The 'Coloured population', therefore, gained access to secondary education, which meant that they could aspire to socio-economic mobility and started challenging the Whites in the professional sector, mostly in the Civil Service and in professions such as lawyers and doctors.

But they would never be treated as equals by the Whites. Precisely because of their eagerness for upward social mobility, the 'Coloured population' was considered by the Whites as the 'vertical invader'.<sup>196</sup> Although the colour bar was formally suppressed, discrimination remained strong in social and professional practices, including in the British Administration, which continued to favour the Whites in terms of access to the Civil Service.<sup>197</sup>

The practice of endogamy replaced the former institutional colour bar in the relationships between the Whites and the 'Coloured population'. The Whites, who became bankrupt and entered into financial and/or matrimonial partnerships with wealthy 'Coloured' families, were excluded from the group and 'fell' into the 'Coloured' group, being discriminated against by their own group.

Therefore, the racial bar between the White group and the 'Coloured' group was not totally hermetic. It was characterized by a 'hemi-permeability', i.e. permeability or crossing from only one side to the other,<sup>198</sup> i.e. the genetic flux existed, but it was practised only by the White group towards the 'Coloured' group. As a consequence of this, the 'Coloured' group was constantly increased by the numbers of White people who 'fell' into it. Of course, this has to be understood within the context of a plural society, inherited from the system of slavery, in which the society is considered to be structured vertically, according to a hierarchy combining the two criteria of colour and wealth.

Exceptionally, those from the 'Coloured' group who could satisfy the combined criteria of wealth and 'acceptable' pigmentation could pretend to cross the floor and form part of the White elite. Political alliances also played an important role in this ability to cross the colour bar upward.<sup>199</sup> For example, Octave Guibert, the nephew of Georges Guibert, a lawyer and a member of the Legislative Council, married the daughter of Sir Virgil Naz, who, in spite of being a 'Coloured', was a wealthy planter and a member of the Chamber of Agriculture and of the Legislative Council.<sup>200</sup> Both Georges Guibert and Sir Virgil Naz, thus united by family bonds, were members of the Reformist Party created in 1884. However, this ethno-social upward mobility remained an individual phenomenon.

The relationship between the 'Coloured' group and the White group changed as the Mauritian sugar plantation system evolved and was further complicated by the integration of a new component, the indentured labourers who emigrated from India.

### 5.3. Indentured labour and the ethnicization of the Mauritian society

With the modernization of the sugar technologies, the sugar plantation system in Mauritius underwent structural changes. The evolution of sugar technologies gave rise to a centralization of sugar processing in bigger plants. This centralization also induced a second 'morcellement' of sugar lands.

The 'Grand Morcellement', which started in 1867, resulted in the integration of the former indentured labourers into the plantation system, as small planters. With the settlement of former indentured labourers within the small plantation, the whole plantation world became ethnicized, i.e. the labour and economic activities became specialized on an ethnic basis.<sup>201</sup>

The 'Grand Morcellement' and the system of small Indian plantations resulted in a further marginalization of the 'Coloured' and Creole population from the sugar plantation system. Allen shows that, during the 'Grand Morcellement', many 'Coloured people' had to sell their lands to the Indo-Mauritians, because of insufficient resources to sustain sugar cane plantation and processing.<sup>202</sup>

Every group invested in 'economic niches' within the division of labour. The Whites retained the dominant position, i.e. in the economic activities which required most capital. The 'Coloured' and Creole population became predominant in the factories and the building industry. In 1952, 49.5% of the 'Coloured' and Creole workforce were employed in these two sectors.<sup>203</sup>

The 'Coloured' group constituted an intermediate elite within the 'General Population'. Their position was the result of the following main factors: race (the closest position to the Whites within the racial hierarchy) and wealth (which conditioned economic partnerships with the Whites).<sup>204</sup>

### 5.4. Political representation

The beginnings of political representation in Mauritius dated back to the French Revolution. When the French Revolution reached Mauritius and the first Colonial Assemblies were set up in 1791, they were monopolized by the Whites, mostly planters and 'négociants'. As a result of this, the 'Coloured population' sought political citizenship and was initially opposed by the Colonial Assemblies. The reason was that the Whites feared that granting political citizenship to the 'Libres de couleur' would lead to the emancipation of the slaves.<sup>205</sup>

But eventually, the 5<sup>th</sup> Colonial Assembly of 1794 granted the 'Libres de couleur' the right to participate in the political life of the colony, in accordance with the Decree of the 1789 *Constituent Assembly*.<sup>206</sup> This increased liberal attitude of the White elite to the 'Libres de couleur' was the result of a common concern of the two groups, who were both landowners and slave-owners, about a possible upheaval of the slaves, as in Haiti. The fear that the slaves (who then represented 80% of the total population of the island) could become a menace, as in the Caribbean, and opposition to the abolition of slavery, were two major factors which contributed to forging greater solidarity between the Whites and the 'Libres de couleur'.<sup>207</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Colonial

Assembly on the island eventually recognized only two categories of the population: the 'citizens' and the 'non-free'.

But, General Decaen, arriving on the island in 1803, suppressed the revolutionary institutions, therefore putting an end, both to the period of political autonomy and, consequently, also to the political citizenship of the 'Libres de couleur'. Decaen restored the colour bar between Whites and 'Libres de couleur'.<sup>208</sup> The colour bar, which was therefore, once again, imposed from outside, by the French metropolis, was to the advantage of the White group.

After the capitulation of the Isle de France to the British in 1810, the White elite gradually strengthened its political monopoly, thanks to lobbying strategies, and despite the fact that, in the first years of British rule, the local elite was denied any political representation.

But in 1817, the first British Governor, Sir Robert Farquhar, allowed the White landowners to set up the 'Conseils de Commune', which were local political assemblies inspired by the Colonial Assemblies of the Revolutionary period. The role of these 'Conseils de Commune' was to administer the local affairs, mainly on the issues of money, supplies and public health.<sup>209</sup> The criteria of eligibility to the 'Conseils de Commune' enabled the White elite to prevent the 'Coloured', as well as the British, from being members. The Whites thus managed to hinder the 'Coloured' population's political participation.<sup>210</sup> But the 'Conseils de Commune' were suppressed by the British Authorities in 1821.

The 1832 Constitution granted some political rights to the White elite in the Colony. The White planters obtained a political representation as non-official members (i.e. nominated by the British Governor) on the Legislative Council, while the 'Coloured' planters were denied political representation.

In 1846, the British Colonial Authorities gave the 'Coloured' planters access to the Legislative Council as non-official members. The first non-official 'Coloured' member of the Legislative Council was Hippolyte Lemière.<sup>211</sup> By 1846, the first generations of 'Coloured people' who had studied at the Royal College, following the opening of secondary education to the non-Whites in 1829, had embraced liberal professions, such as doctors or lawyers, and were emerging as a new political elite. Forming political alliances with sections of the White oligarchy, they became serious political challengers.<sup>212</sup>

This political alliance of the new 'Coloured' professional elite with a section of the White elite was embodied in the *Comité d'initiative pour la Réforme*. The *Comité* was created in 1882 to oppose the projects of land reform imposed by the British in 1874 (expropriation of lands located near the rivers). The *Comité d'initiative* also claimed the need for elections to choose members of the Legislative Council.

The *Comité d'Initiative* was composed of both Whites and 'Coloured people', on the basis of common land interests. Its chairman was Lois Raoul, a 'Coloured man' who was also a non-official member of the Council of Government, and a contributor to *Le Cernéen*, the newspaper of the White oligarchy. Other 'Coloured' members of the sugar plantocracy were part of the *Comité d'Initiative*: William Newton, Povah Ambrose (Director of *Blyth* and non-official member of the Council of Government), Virgil Naz (a wealthy sugar planter who was to become the President of the Chamber of Agriculture) and Dr. Eugène Laurent.

The 1885 Constitution finally granted the 'Coloured' population the right to vote. It, therefore, allowed the 'Coloured' landowners to be elected as non-official members at the Council. But at the same time, the restricted franchise maintained a monopoly of the landowning elite - both White and 'Coloured' - in politics. Moreover, the Whites still constituted 90% of the electorate.

A new political movement called *Action Libérale* was created in 1907 to vindicate the slackening of the franchise and the right to vote being given to the middle class i.e. to small planters, employees and other workers. *Action Libérale* was composed of professionals from three groups: White, 'Coloured' and Indo-Mauritian. It was founded by Dr. Eugène Laurent. The Franco-Mauritian lawyer, Edouard Nairac, was Vice-President. The Indo-Mauritian Goolam Mohamed Issac, was also a member of *Action Libérale*.

Although *Action Libérale* politically opposed the oligarchy, it cannot be said that it was on the basis of race or ethnicity, as *Action Libérale* was composed of various ethnic groups, including the Whites. Rather, it expressed the political emergence of the class of professionals ('professions libérales') such as doctors and lawyers, who challenged the plantocracy.<sup>213</sup>

After World War I, a Retrocessionist Movement was created to call for the retrocession of Mauritius to France. The Retrocessionist Movement was composed of former members of *Action Libérale*, both Franco-Mauritians, such as Anatole de Boucherville and Hervé de Rauville, and 'Coloured people' such as Edouard Laurent and Dr. Maurice Curé.

The ideal of a retrocession to France was not merely a political claim. It was also backed up by the quest of the 'Gens de couleur' for cultural identity, and, in particular, for the recognition of their French origins, culture and language (for which they were in competition with the Whites) as legitimate. As Boudet shows, this quest for cultural legitimacy was clearly intertwined with the issue of political competition between the various ethnic groups for citizenship.<sup>214</sup> The Retrocessionist Movement, which was formed out of an alliance between White and 'Coloured' members, called for political citizenship for the entire 'Coloured' group. Its opponent, the Anti-Retrocessionist Movement, was an alliance of the White sugar oligarchy (including Emile Sauzier) with Indo-Mauritian sugar planters.<sup>215</sup>

The defeat of the Retrocessionist Movement at the 1921 General Elections marked the end of the retrocessionist project. It also marked a new step in the integration of political elites from various ethnic origins: the designation of two Indo-Mauritian landowners, Dunputh Lallah and Rajcoomar Gujadhur, as nominated members in the Government Council, epitomized this political alliance of the White and Indo-Mauritian planter elites. A new political movement, the *Union Mauricienne*, was set up in 1926 by White and 'Coloured' professional elites, former members of *Action Libérale* and the Retrocessionist Movement, as a reaction against the monopoly of the sugar oligarchy and their Indo-Mauritian allies on the Government Council.

The progressive integration of the various ethnic elites within the political sphere (the Legislative Assembly) was disrupted after 1937 because of an upsurge of social opposition among the masses. The conflict hit the plantations first, then spread to the other sectors of the economy, mainly the docks. The social upsurge was crystallized in the first mass party, the Labour party, created in 1936 by Dr. Maurice Curé, a former member of *Action Libérale*, *Mouvement Rétrocessionniste* and *Union Mauricienne*. This reflects the emergence of a political force where the Coloured political elites derived their political power from contact with the masses (through their professional occupations which gave them a power of mobilization). They no longer formed just a group of landowners.

The British Authorities then acknowledged the necessity to move towards constitutional changes in order to open up the political arena to the masses. From 1947 onwards, the British Authorities set up a 'consociational' model of political system, as Boudet shows, i.e., a power-sharing system in which political affairs are in the hands of ethnic elites representing the various segments of the plural society.<sup>216</sup>

The 'Coloured' elite was indeed represented in the Consultative Committees which were set up in 1945 and 1946 by the British Authorities to bring the various ethnic elites together and discuss the issue of constitutional reform. Edouard Laurent, for instance, was part of the first Consultative Committee of 1945, established to introduce ethnic representation in politics.

Some non-elected individuals who belonged to the 'Coloured' elite were also part of the second committee of 1946, which discussed the issue of universal franchise: Maurice Curé, Edgard Laurent, Raoul Rivet.<sup>217</sup> Edgard Laurent and Raoul Rivet, who later were to join the *Ralliement Mauricien*, were actually opposed to the introduction of the universal franchise, while their former partner in the *Union Mauricienne*, then the leader of the Labour party, Dr. Maurice Curé, was in favour of it.

The *Ralliement Mauricien* was created in 1952. Those 'Coloured' elite, chiefly made up of professionals, joined together with other former members of the *Union Mauricienne*, which included members from other ethnic groups, such as the Indo-Mauritian Mohamed Razack and the

Franco-Mauritian Jules Koenig. The *Ralliement Mauricien* advocated the creation of a 'Mauritian nation' in order to guarantee to each ethnic community the rights to participate in national affairs. The *Ralliement Mauricien* was also founded in order to oppose the Labour Party which was progressively being 'indianized', following the 1948 elections, when Seewosagur Ramgoolam replaced Guy Rozemont as the leader of the party.

The implementation of the 'Good Loser System' (1965), which later became the 'Best Loser System' (1966), as part of the ethnic power sharing system,<sup>218</sup> gave rise to ethno-politics. While the political elites engaged in political coalitions, the masses were divided along ethnic lines. As a result of this, violent clashes broke out on various occasions; in 1965 and 1967, the nation witnessed ethnic riots ('bagarres raciales'). This was the sign of the dissociation, which characterizes consociational arrangements, of power sharing between ethnic elites on the one hand, and on the other hand, the acutely-divided political arena.

### 5.5. Identity and culture

Throughout the British period (1810-1968), the identity issue was closely linked with the issue of the political citizenship of the 'Coloured' group and the respective political 'weight' of the various ethnic groups in competition with each other to enter and/or maintain themselves within the political arena.<sup>219</sup>

In particular, the relations of competition/alliance with the Whites were also conditioned by their relationship with the other groups of the Mauritian plural society. During the slavery system (1766-1834), when the common 'enemy' of both the Whites and 'Libres de couleur' was the slave group (suspected of potential uprising and 'marronnage'), the two groups were political allies. But with the development of the sugar mono-culture (1825), leading to fierce competition over capital and resources, the Whites entered into political, matrimonial and financial alliances with the British, who were purveyors of capital.<sup>220</sup> Conversely, the 'Coloured people' were ostracized, until the British Government granted them political status, thus allowing them to enter the Legislative Assembly. Then, political alliance strategies were at play between a section of the White group, opposing the oligarchy, and members of the 'Coloured' elite.

With the emerging political competition of the Indo-Mauritian wealthy planters, in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the White political elite split into two factions. As the oligarchy embarked on political alliances with the wealthy Indo-Mauritian landowners, another section of the White group, working as professionals, embarked on alliances with the 'Gens de couleur' having the same professional occupations as theirs.

Thus, throughout the colonization period, the issue of cultural identity for the 'Gens de couleur' was characterized by a series of paradoxes. As they shared some ethnic markers with the Whites - the French language and culture - those ethnic markers were mobilized in order to emphasize the cultural continuum between the two groups and justify their political alliances, especially against the Asiatic groups. But at the same time, in another respect, race emerged as a strong marker of ethnic difference between the two groups, especially with a view to stressing the domination of the White group at the top of the social hierarchy. During the decolonization period (1947-1968), with the enforcement of universal franchise and the subsequent introduction of ethno-politics with the 'Good Loser System', and then the 'Best Loser System', the political conditions of identity production changed. The 'Coloured' political leaders were split into two, with on the one hand, the *Parti Mauricien* and on the other hand, the Labour Party. The issue of ethnic identities then became connected with the issue of nation-building and Independence: the 'Coloured' political elite wanted to promote the idea of representation within the nation and the legitimacy of their contribution to the nation-building process.

With the rise of ethno-politics during the decolonization process, and especially with the introduction of the 'Best Loser System', the political mobilization of the masses emphasized the ethnic identity of the leaders and their ability to represent their ethnic group. The 'Coloured' leader of *Parti Mauricien*, Gaëtan Duval, called the 'King of Creoles', epitomized this new conception of ethnic identity, based on the representation of the masses: Gaëtan Duval's ethnic identity was presented as 'Creole' rather than 'Gens de couleur'.

The loss of landownership, when the 'Coloured' group was rejected from the plantation system, was vital to the loss of power. But the changes in the political system, with decolonization, especially the changes in the recruitment of political elites - no longer through landownership but through ethnic representation - helped to re-legitimize group identity.

The 'Coloured' group was further weakened by the huge emigration movement which took place in the years before Independence, mainly to Australia. This emigration movement resulted from Gaëtan Duval's electoral discourse on the 'Hindu menace' (the 'péril hindou'). The discourse about a 'Hindu menace' aimed at mobilizing the electorate against the Hindu majority, but it actually had an adverse effect, when the voters actually flew away from the country. This great loss for the 'Coloured group' further weakened their political identity.

## CHAPTER 6 - 'Coloured Population' of Rodrigues

### 6.1. Slow Colonisation

Any historical sketch of the colonisation of the island of Rodrigues sets it apart, and highlights its differences, from Isle de France/Mauritius. Clearly, there were several aborted attempts by the French to colonise the island before 1750, when a "small permanent colony" was established.<sup>221</sup> During his well-documented visit, Abbé Pingré found 100 people living on Rodrigues, including about ten Frenchmen, although from those 100 must be deducted the two crews of small French ships.<sup>222</sup> In 1803, General Decaen ordered the few colonists and their slaves to evacuate the island, for fear of a British invasion that subsequently took place in 1809, through a landing at Anse aux Anglais. Neglected under the French authorities, Rodrigues was to witness a period of 'start-stop-start' colonisation under the British, as agriculturalists and fishermen from Mauritius made their way over to the small island. In his excellent study, J.-F. Dupon declared: "After a period of military occupation, the colonization of the island, thenceforth British, was to start anew, led by colonists from Mauritius who used slaves from the coast of Mozambique and the East Coast of Madagascar."<sup>223</sup>

### 6.2. Early European 'White' settlers

Philibert Marragon, who arrived in Rodrigues on 12 May, 1794, with his wife, Marie Jeanne Elisabeth Guillon de Neuville, and his mother-in-law, settled above Oyster Bay. He soon took possession of 400 *arpents* at Les *Soupirs*, on a hill between Oyster Bay and Mont Charlot, a property and plantation which he named *L'Orangerie*.<sup>224</sup> Marragon's grave, and his wife's, can still be visited today at *L'Orangerie* where he lived till his death in 1826. His daughter, Séraphine, born there on 30 July, 1802, lived with her parents until 1826, after she had married a businessman from Port Louis, Charles Pierre François Pipon. She became the owner of *L'Orangerie* in 1826, had 66 slaves and 17 free children. When she left for Mauritius, she gave permission to her slaves to live on her land, *Jardin Mamzelle* that became a squatting area for emancipated slaves.<sup>225</sup> Séraphine Pipon died at La Chaumière, Savanne, in 1892.

When Marragon carried out his first Census in 1804, he found 82 slaves and 22 'Whites' on Rodrigues, of whom at least half - or 11 - were of mixed blood. The following Table is borrowed from Alfred North-Coombes' seminal work, *The Island of Rodrigues*:<sup>226</sup>

	Mar- ragon	Le Gros	Gorry	Roche- taing	Bré- hinier	Total
HOUSEHOLD (Individuals)	6	1	1	13	1	22
LAND (arpents) conceded	400	100	-	350	-	850
cultivated	100	25	70	70	-	265
SLAVES						
Mozambique	8	-	9	12	3	32
Malagasy	7	1	5	3	2	18
Talinga	4	1	-	-	-	5
Guinea	1	-	-	-	-	1
Malay	-	1	-	-	-	1
Bengaly	-	1	-	-	-	1
Born at Rodrigues	17	2	5	-	-	24
<b>TOTAL SLAVES</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>82</b>

From Marragon's Census (1804), we know that another early settler, who came from Bourbon, *via* Mauritius, was: E. Rochetaing, a fifty-five-year old, who took with him Marie, a *mulâtresse libre*, and her daughter. He was given a concession of 350 *arpents*, which he called 'Mon Plaisir'; it lay between Malartic, Mont-Lubin and St. Gabriel.<sup>227</sup> Germain Le Gros, who landed in 1792, with his partner, Frémont, was a master mariner and engaged in fishing. They settled on the Northern foot of 'Le Piton' on 100 *arpents*, part of 'Les Soupirs'; this was later handed down to Séraphine Marragon. In 1812, Le Gros owned the boat *La Séraphine*, a schooner and did so until

1816, when Marragon took over.<sup>228</sup> For his part, Michel Gorry made his living from the land rather than the sea; he had settled at Oyster Bay, with Roger and Boulerot, both fishermen. When they left for Isle de France, Gorry moved up country to a property called 'Les Choux'; there, he first grew indigo but, later, confined his activities to growing only what satisfied his family's needs. Early settlers, who relied on fishing for their livelihood, included D. Raffin who settled in 1803 and started a fishery, with 20 slaves, as well as Lecloud and Gautier.<sup>229</sup> Lecloud had arrived earlier than Raffin with 16 slaves.

Most of the early colonists were of European origins and regarded themselves as 'Whites', but it is known that several were *métis* themselves or cohabited with female slaves or *mulâtresses*, as was the case with Rostaing. Commenting on the relatively 'recent populating' of Rodrigues, Dupon wrote: "Some of these colonists engaged in, for some time, a direct slave trade and disregarded the British legislation."<sup>230</sup> Marragon and Rochetaing were probably the only true 'Whites' in Rodrigues' history. Statistics provided by Dupon put the population, during the early years of British colonization, as follows:

1820: 200 (Source: *Almanach of Mauritius*)

1827: 123 (*Ibid.*)

1845: 495 (*Ibid.*)

1861: 699 (Fr. François, Catholic Missionary)

1862: 756 (*Ibid.*)<sup>231</sup>

From those statistics, Dupon concludes: "This assessment allows, one can see, little room for true colonists and their descendants, at most about ten families."<sup>232</sup> North-Coombes put the population in 1809 at 41 slaves and 8 other residents,<sup>233</sup> while Baron d'Unienville declared, in 1830, that Rodrigues was capable of receiving a much larger population, and that it was essential for the Government to send a surveyor there to establish concessions.<sup>234</sup>

At the very start of the Government's policy of granting land concessions, between 1815 and 1830, those only rarely surpassed 350 acres, or 135 *hectares*. Subsequently, they were limited to about 108 acres. Because Rodrigues did not share in the sugar cane boom of Mauritius, it ceased to be of interest to the British Authorities very early in the history of colonization. The small settlement under Marragon (1794-1796), who had the title of *Agent Civil de la République* (1794), led to a semblance of colonization because of the British threat, but it really started in 1825, with the arrival of C.T. Hoart, as Government Surveyor. His Report has been discussed at length by North-Coombes, who saw it as "the first of its kind", for it proposed the division of the 'Oriental' side of the island into 78 plots of 108 *arpents* (112 acres). Hoart also recommended that those plots be granted to "deserving families from Mauritius, who had the means of bringing them into cultivation."<sup>235</sup> The population of Rodrigues in 1826 was put at 123 by Hoart, and divided as follows:<sup>236</sup>

	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	Total
Europeans	7	5	8	-	20
Freed	2	1	-	-	3
Slaves	49	28	12	11	100

In his chronology, Antoine Chelin has highlighted a most important arrival at Port Mathurin on 20 October, 1843: that of John Henderson, the first Brigadier of Police and, later on, the Police Magistrate.<sup>237</sup> Accompanied by five constables, he landed from the *Isis* (Captain John Marshall).<sup>238</sup> This was to mark the beginning of some kind of Law and Order on Rodrigues. Five years earlier, Special Justice C. Anderson was dispatched by the Governor of Mauritius to gather information on Rodrigues. He spent six days and reported the following establishments:

- (i) *Madame Pipon's, [Marragon's daughter, who was then owner of L'Orangerie] with 66 slaves and 17 free children.*
- (ii) *Messrs. Bessière and Husson's, on land formerly belonging to Gorry, with 36 slaves and 17 free children.*
- (iii) *Mr. Eudes', at Grand Baie and Sygangue, with 19 slaves and 8 free children.*

*Ninety-nine of these slaves were predial. In addition, Gabriel Bégué, who had settled on the land now forming part of the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Gabriel, had 4 predials; a certain Jean Marie had one and, likewise, Gonnet who had in addition 13 free men employed in his fishing establishment. The apprentices were working longer hours than the law allowed, their clothing were inadequate and their huts miserable, but they were well fed and extensive ground was allotted to them.*<sup>239</sup>

Another settler, Charles Lenferna de Laresle, Mrs. Pipon's bailiff, returned to Rodrigues, after a stay in Mauritius, and opened a fishery with Furcy Labour who lived at 'Les Soupirs' in the 1840s.<sup>240</sup>

Table 8 has already drawn attention to the gender imbalance that prevailed in Rodrigues, especially among slaves, from the start; Bertuchi, who visited the island much later in the 1920s, remarked that in the early days, "great immorality prevailed. Each woman had three or four husbands, in some cases as many as six. The children were brought up together, the husband in power at the time exercising the role of father to all."<sup>241</sup> Many descendants of slaves took to the hills after the Abolition of Slavery (proclaimed and diffused in Mauritius and Rodrigues in 1839) and became known both as 'Montagnards', and, according to Dupon, also as 'planteurs', 'habitants', 'laboureurs', 'piti nation', "désinane vénielle, beaucoup moins péjorative que celle franchement insultante de 'mouzambique'." <sup>242</sup> Several of the descendants of 'Whites' or *métis*, whom we interviewed, used the word *Zabitants* for descendants of slaves, but they did not mean any insult by it.

As for families of European or French descent, Dupon notes in 1967: "Though extremely spread out, they are represented by a small number of names, common in Réunion, and perhaps also in Mauritius: Roussety, Bégué, Rivière, Meunier, Legoff, Perrine, Lévêque."<sup>243</sup> We know some of the dates when the early settlers bearing European names, emigrated from Mauritius, or from elsewhere, to Rodrigues: Charles Weder (before 1827); Mathieu Roussety, a master-fisherman and trader (about 1842); his brother Auguste Roussety (1844); Jean-Marie Meunier (about 1840); Zéline Labour (about 1840); Bercy Labour, with four young children (1845); Désiré Calamel (1845); Charlotte and Marie-Louise Perrine (1846); Marie-Jeanne Geneviève, with a daughter (1846); Ferdinand Bonnelle (1846); Clodimir and Emilien Jean (1846); Louis François, his wife and five children (1848); Pierre Raffault (1848); the Legoff, Lévêque, Ithier, Castel and Allas families (later than the 1840s).<sup>244</sup> Descendants of the early *Café au lait* settlers, as they are known, or *Rouges* - because they grow red in the sun - gladly recall the adventures of their pioneer ancestors (see below for some families). Parish Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths draw attention to the evolution of *Rouge* families. Gabriel Bégué, the ancestor of a powerful landed family, settled in 1825 on land now forming part of the Parish of St. Gabriel, which was bought or acquired, in a part-exchange deal, by the visiting priest, Father Thevaux (Parish priest from November 1850 to May 1851). He erected a "latanier hut 50 ft. long by 24 ft. wide", a primitive Church which became known as St. Gabriel from "the owner's name" - the Saint being later declared the patron saint of Rodrigues.<sup>245</sup>

There is much evidence, oral and written, to indicate that cohabitation between 'Whites' and descendants of slaves and 'mulâtresses' was common, not least because of the infrequent visits of priests to Rodrigues. Father Thevaux celebrated 50 marriages and baptized 400 individuals during his six-month stay in 1850. In December 1848, Brigadier Henderson had noted that when *H.M.S. Isis* called at Port Mathurin in 1844, its chaplain Rev. Mr. Brown offered to baptize and marry locals, but that "there were then only five married couples on the island, the inhabitants being reluctant to have their marriage ceremony performed by any civil commissary or magistrate."<sup>246</sup> A.J. Bertuchi concludes from information that he gathered at first hand: "A few white Creoles from Mauritius and Bourbon came to settle on the island and intermarried with the blacks, which accounts for a section of the population being of a 'café au lait' colour. Some of these settlers

were the descendants of the French who had been expelled from the settlement of Port-Dauphin, in Madagascar." <sup>247</sup> Descendants of 'White' families, today, also point out that many of early ancestors intermarried. Indeed, Bertuchi adds that "other Whites married Whites, which explains that they are, in appearance, like Europeans, except in their habits and customs which, through a prolonged stay, have merged into those of the blacks." <sup>248</sup>

Emigration of 'mixed-blood' or 'White' families appears to have slowed down as the nineteenth century wore on. <sup>249</sup> From his analysis of statistics available, Dupon was able to assess that "if one examined the origins of deceased people, one noticed that, from 1860 to 1865, 40% to 50% were born in Mauritius [...] However, from 1870 to 1875, this percentage dropped to 10%." <sup>250</sup> Moreover, Rodrigues seems to have missed out altogether on Indian emigration and Indentured Labour in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1962, the first official Census that allowed individuals to declare their belonging to a community, indicated that of a total population of 18,333 inhabitants, 117 deemed themselves to be Hindus and 378 Chinese. <sup>251</sup> Indeed, early Indian and Chinese emigrants to Rodrigues had blended well with the Creole Mass through intermarriage (see Appendix I). Early Chinese and Indian settlers were actively engaged in Commerce and Trade, a "system of barter and credit [that was] all one-sided", according to Bertuchi. For example, Acacia seeds, collected and used for this barter, were exchanged against the necessities of life. <sup>252</sup> While the arriving Mohammedans retained their religion, North-Coombes explains that "most of the Chinese have now embraced Christianity, either as Anglicans or as Roman Catholics, and most of them now regard themselves as Rodriguans. Many of them have married native Rodriguans and live very happily with them." <sup>253</sup> (See Appendix II)

### 6.3. Education

The role of the Catholic, Anglican, or other Christian, Churches was significant in moulding the population of Rodrigues into an entity. Though not always unified at the start, the population is now showing less signs of communalism than Mauritius. Dupon warns us, though, to look for divergences and nuances:

*"The relative homogeneity of the population has not, for all that, excluded nuances. Fr. François remarked in 1862: "The population is divided into two perfectly distinct classes: the indigenous people or farmers, scattered here and there, can be numbered at 400 over the spread of the Mountain, and the fishermen who have mostly come from Mauritius and work for about twenty small bosses, small mulattoes or blacks; the latter number about 300 and live on the coast." <sup>254</sup>*

According to the first Catholic priest, Fr. F. Thevaux, 1850, some 11 years after the Abolition of Slavery had been announced in Rodrigues, there were 350 non-baptised individuals, and a hundred 'Catholic' Mauritians who had come to trade in salt fish. <sup>255</sup> In his Chapter, 'The Churches and the Schools', Alfred North-Coombes has adequately discussed the contribution of Churches (Catholic and Anglican, to begin with) to this 'brassage' of the Rodriguan population. <sup>256</sup> The role of Father Thevaux in assuaging the jealousy and animosity of the "twenty or so master fishermen, who ran the fisheries all around the coast," cannot be overstressed. Several 'Rouge' inhabitants we spoke to, stressed the vital contribution of the Catholic Church to the development of schools and colleges. In 1843, a former court usher, Mr. Christopher Mann, and Mrs. Henderson, the wife of the Brigadier of Police, were the only teachers. By 1866, a school-master and a school-mistress had been appointed. <sup>257</sup> From October 1866 to August 1867, Father Frédéric Muijhe, a Belgian priest, ran the Government school but insisted on 'Catholic prayers being said at the start and at the end of the day. Little wonder that he was recalled to Mauritius, after causing much conflict with the authorities. In September 1869, Fr. Emile Hilaire became the first 'curé' of Rodrigues and greatly developed the Parish of St. Gabriel. <sup>258</sup> From then on, schools began to flourish; the Church of England College of St. Barnabas and the Catholic College of St. Louis were the culmination of much hard work, when they were registered on 13 December, 1961 and 12 April, 1962 respectively, before merging to become the Rodrigues College. Prior to the creation of St. Barnabas and St. Louis Colleges, young Rodriguans had to do their secondary schooling in Mauritius. Above all, what the Christian Churches did was to promote education for *all* Rodriguans, irrespective of colour or creed, thereby working towards greater homogeneity and interculturalism among the people.

Over the years, a small Protestant/Anglican community had emerged. As early as August 1876, Anglicans petitioned the Mauritian Government for a clergyman to be sent to Rodrigues. Early Anglican families included such *métis* as the Waterstones, Vandorous, Bennetts and Capdors, among others.<sup>259</sup> Some had been descendants of British officers; others still were shipwrecked and decided to stay on the island, such as William Vandorous. One or two came as clergymen, as was the case with William Waterstone and C.A. Capdor, in 1881.<sup>260</sup> Bishop Peter Royston visited Rodrigues in 1881, and afterwards, a catechist, Edward Francis, was sent in March 1883, to be followed, in March 1886, by Pierre Edmé Gellé who had been a missionary in Madagascar.<sup>261</sup> What is apparent from any sojourn in Rodrigues today is that 'Montagnards' and 'Rouges', and 'Anglicans', other Christians, and Catholics cohabit in peaceful harmony; hence, religion has been more of 'cement', than a source of disunity, in Rodrigues between classes and communities. As for 'nuances' and 'hidden prejudices', these are only detectable to the sharp-eyed observer, such as Dupon who comments: "Aujourd'hui encore, les éléments asiatiques mis à part, de subtiles nuances distinguent les Rodriguais et d'une façon générale, les plus clairs d'entre eux, de fait souvent pêcheurs, qui allient parfois les yeux bleus de quelque ancêtre picard à une peau bien pigmentée, professent un amical mépris à l'endroit des plus sombres, ceux de l'intérieur [...]"<sup>262</sup> And, while nowadays habitations of both groups show a remarkable similarity, when Bertuchi visited the island in the 1920s, he noticed that some of the inhabitants' houses were made of vacoas, acacia poles and latanier palm leaves, while "the more prosperous construct[ed] their houses entirely of wood." These had wooden floors, which became the fashion, on account of the Rodriguans' passion for dancing.<sup>263</sup> For all the homogenization sought and achieved through religion, and the democratic ideals of some of the people, the scars of slavery remained in the early colonization period even if slaves, according to individuals spoken to during the research trip, were well treated by such owners as Marragon and Séraphine Pipon. In fact, Marragon was so kind to his workers that Rochetaing "complained bitterly about Marragon's attitude and the lawlessness of his run-away slaves."<sup>264</sup>

#### 6.4. Present descendants of early 'White' or *Métis* settlers on their ancestors

A number of structured interviews were conducted in Rodrigues and will be analysed separately and summarized in Chapter 7. In addition, during a research trip, a number of descendants of early settlers were spoken to in order to determine: (a) How their ancestors and they saw Rodriguan society in the past and today? (b) What information they could shed on the 'Coloured Population' in the nineteenth century and at present? (c) Whether they felt that slavery and its abolition had left an indelible mark on Rodriguan customs and lifestyles? The individuals interviewed in this context will be referred to as 'X., Y., Z.'.

##### 6.4.1. A member of the Ithier family

The Ithiers came to Rodrigues from Mauritius, and it is likely that the first Ithier to do so was Victor, who accompanied Beyts on the *Hattonbum* which arrived at Port Mathurin on 19 August, 1888, after an unusually long passage of 19 days.<sup>265</sup> The speaker [hereafter X.] stressed that his great-grandfather may have come from Brittany, and was the father of Jean-Baptiste Ithier, who married Miss Eva Hombrasing. They had thirteen children. Whilst the ancestor [Victor] is said to have been a sea captain, Jean-Baptiste Ithier had settled on a concession of 14/15 *arpents* at *La Ferme*,<sup>266</sup> where the family still owns land today. X., the interviewed person, pointed out that his own father was a pastoralist and agriculturalist who owned a farm called 'La Ferme Piments' at *La Ferme*, land which, on his father's death in 1976, was divided between his children whom he had by a Miss Meunier - another very common 'Rouge' name in Rodrigues. The Ithier family, from Jean-Baptiste onwards, grew such crops as maize, haricots, vegetables, as well as keeping cattle. They originally had, in their employ, descendants of previous slaves, all freed since the family did not settle at *La Ferme* until the 1880s.

A brother of Jean-Baptiste's, Bonnet Ithier, left for Mauritius early on and settled in the Flacq District; he is buried at St. Julien Cemetery. There is a 'Camp Ithier' in the vicinity of Flacq/Trou d'Eau Douce, that is said by X. to be connected with the Rodriguan branch of the Ithiers. Some of Jean-Baptiste's daughters were well-educated and became teachers at the local *La Ferme* primary school, but the more common practice, in olden days, was to encourage children to abandon their primary schooling to work on the farms, tending to the crops and animals. This was the case for the individual interviewed. There were no *débouchés* for students other than

work, and few could go to Mauritius to pursue their studies. The Ithiers are also reported to have rented extra Government land in the days of Jean-Baptiste Ithier, to grow additional crops which were transported to Mauritius for sale. In Mauritius, it is likely that the Ithiers owned land in the Beau-Bassin, as well as the Flacq Districts. Large 'White/Coloured' families were the order of the day; the interviewee's father also had 13 children, as had his father before him.

X. also pointed out that, at the time of his grandfather and father (born in 1912, he died in 1976), one tended to marry other 'White' individuals, i.e. intermarry; for example, of the five daughters of Jean-Baptiste's, two married Ithier cousins, one a Roussety, another married an Albert, and so on. 'Mulâtres', he regarded as pejorative, and despite X. acknowledging the existence of cohabitation with 'darker' women, he stressed that a 'mésalliance' was, at the time of Jean-Baptiste, considered taboo. Such pejorative terms as 'Mozambique' and 'Chevette grillée' were used, in the old days, for the 'Montagnards', but are no longer in common usage. At *La Ferme*, the 'White' families have always been the: Roussety, Ithier, Meunier, Bouton, Allas families, among others, all agriculturalists. Unable to travel to Mauritius for their secondary education such families had their children taught privately or publicly until the end of the primary schooling. Many members of the Ithier family, in the early twentieth century, knew how to read and write from an early age - perhaps because they were taught by their elders, notably aunts of the interviewee. The Church also fostered education among the families.

As for the descendants of freed slaves, they were treated as domestics, given the right to build their own homes on the family's land, as well as grow their own vegetables. Because 'White/Coloured' families were fond of food, domestics were hired to prepare copious meals and to work in the fields, and were remunerated per day's work. They were not looked upon as inferiors, nor were they exploited. All Ithiers owned various-sized plots and used workers who were descendants of slaves, but these were well treated. Slavery has, in the interviewee's viewpoint, left little impact on the psyche of the Rodriguan population today.

Emigration to Mauritius has already been referred to. The interviewee's parents left for Mauritius, with their youngest daughter, and died there. Other Ithiers have emigrated to Australia (mainly Melbourne), while a number remained at *La Ferme*. The lack of good positions and the attractions of Mauritius and Australia are seen by the interviewee as reasons for this; he himself spent over twenty years in France. A niece of the interviewee is living in Malvern, Victoria, Australia as is her father. So it is that the lure of distant climes was too strong for even the most reasonably comfortable pastoralist families of Rodrigues. This constitutes a change, since Bertuchi observed, in the 1920s, that Rodriguans were "quite averse to emigration [...]. Not all the tales of a thousand Eldorados will make leave their little isle."<sup>267</sup>

#### 6.4.2. A member of the Gontran[d] family [whom we shall call Y.]

Y. is a former teacher and a highly respected member of the Port Mathurin community, a writer and local historian. Interviewed at his house, he stressed the importance of Rodriguan 'séga' and accordion music as a unifying factor that was inherited from both slavery and French colonists. Explaining who the 'Gens de la Montagne' or 'Zhabitants' were, he indicated that many freed slaves were offered the opportunity to return to Mauritius, but that they refused, preferring to squat on some high lands. Mme Pipon's slaves [Séraphine Pipon, nee Marragon] were reportedly in that position, but chose to stay on *Jardin Mamzelle*, after her departure, cultivating maize and manioc, and living in huts. The terms used for descendants of slaves, 'Zhabitants' and 'Montagnards' or even 'Noirs', Y. sees as not pejorative, while the 'Whites' were described as 'Zens la Kotte', 'Café au lait' or 'Mulâtres, the latter being a more offensive appellation. 'Bène Mozambiques' was not used in a 'nasty' way, to begin with, but became pejorative. 'Zens la kotte' were originally fishermen or marine carpenters.

Some areas were exclusively 'White', such as sections of Port Mathurin, but many were mixed, for example Oyster Bay or Rivière Cocos and Anse Mourouk. The Catholic [and to a lesser extent, the Anglican] Church is perceived by Y. as having cemented the population, by creating primary schools open to all, and through other forms of education, music and French. Catholic priests are said to have banned Kreol, at one time, from the Church, and Fr. Thevaux's role is said by Y. to have been crucial in developing education and in the spread of Christianity. Some 'Gens clairs' married one another, but many men were tempted by cohabitation and by 'Sega Tambours'

in the hills, which were decried by the Church, because of ensuing rampaging immorality and the births of illegitimate children. Hence, priests kept a watchful eye, and 'White' men became more secretive. Yet, all along, families, who were of 'café au lait' complexion, thought it unacceptable for their young people to marry outside their community, an indication that prejudices did exist in the nineteenth century, according to Y.

Y.'s ancestors, the Gontrans [also spelt Gontrands] came from Brittany, *via* Mauritius. Ferdinand Gontrand, the ancestor, arrived with Father Hilaire in September 1869, when the latter took up his post as the first *curé* of Rodrigues, in what became a parish of the Diocese of Port Louis.<sup>268</sup> When he left Rodrigues for good in September 1880, Fr. Hilaire donated his properties to Ferdinand Gontrand; no title deed had been issued when the land was surveyed in 1878.<sup>269</sup> The Gontrands continued to occupy the land, known even today as 'Concession Gontrand', until an instrument of acquisition was granted on 13 September, 1894, by the Registrar General's Department of Mauritius, to Mr. Ferdinand Gontrand and his heirs.<sup>270</sup> Y.'s father saw himself as being of Breton origins, but Ferdinand Gontrand married Palmyre Colette, a *métisse* of Mozambique origins, with whom he begat 12 children, 8 boys and 4 daughters - large 'White' families being the order of the day at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the sons, Elysée, fought at the Battle of the Marne for the British in World War I.

The 'Zens de la Kotte' had money, being mainly owners of fisheries. Cohabitation, started by 'Ségas Tambours', led to many illegitimate children being born out of wedlock and outside the community, but Y. stressed that they were recognized and accepted by their fathers. 'Rouges', he explained, came from the fact that 'Café au lait' men would go fishing and be scorched by the sun. The Catholic priests practised discrimination in the 1890s, so the story went, when the front benches were all allocated in Church to the 'Rouges'. Illegitimate children were baptised on Fridays and given the names of their fathers to avoid future incestuous relationships, likely on a small island. Many descendants of 'White' settlers went off to fight in the First World War (1914-1918), while Y.'s father took part in World War II. Several Gontrands continued to live at St. Gabriel, on the 'Gontrand Concession', or 'sous le vent', as it was known. Yet, others had fishing posts at *Anse Baleine*, where they also bred goats.

The Gontrand children did not go to school until 1906, when a primary establishment was built at Rivière Cocos. At Port Mathurin, where some Gontrands set up fisheries, the girls were educated at home, and it is known that Ferdinand Gontrand, a 'Choir boy' to Fr. Hilaire, had been taught to read and write in the 1870s. Ferdinand died before the First World War, and his wife Palmyre in 1937 - she had been married religiously to him. Their children and descendants were listed by Y. as follows (m: married):

1. Elizène, m. Charles François (7 children)
2. Léonard, m. Yeyette François (8 children)
3. Ferdinand Achille, (born 1907), m. Louise Pierre (7 children)
4. Emile, m. Olivia Raffault of Oyster Bay (8 children)
5. Roger, m. Léonida Allas (9 children)
6. Madeline, m. a Roussety (3 children)
7. Mabelle, m. first an Elysée; then a Meunier (10 children)
8. Fernand, m. Olive Ismaël (of Persian descent) (6 children)
9. Ida, m. Noë Meunier (10 children)
10. Abel, m. Edith Roussety (11 children)
11. and, 12. Elysée and Élie died young.

Intermarriage within the 'Rouges' is illustrated by this, but marriage to *métis* is also brought out. To support such large families, 'White' men had to fish, as well as set up plantations. The son of Elizène, Fernand, acquired land on *Ile aux Chats*, where a little maize was cultivated. The 'Rouges' employed 'black workers' as domestics and labourers, but treated them well, feeding them and allowing them to grow their own crops. Rice was a special treat for all and was served only once a week on Sundays, on account of it having to be imported. Domestics were paid wages on a daily basis, and often workers were given a loan of the masters' boats to go fishing. The 'Montagnards', through the system of 'barter', traded in maize and crops to the shopkeepers (Indians or Chinese) in return for other goods. Y. pointed out that this was very much to the advantage of shopkeepers.

In his youth, Y. stated, slavery was not an issue, nor discussed much. Freed slaves, who came from Mauritius after Abolition in 1839, were fishermen. They lived or survived through work, even though their skills were limited: 'Rouges' later often referred to the work of descendants of slaves as sloppy, and the phrase 'travail Zhabitants' has survived to designate 'unsatisfactory work'. 'Rouges' were not just fishermen and pastoralists; a few were excellent carpenters, as for 'Ton. Bébert Rose', who built some excellent colonial homes at Port Mathurin. Other members of the Rose family had cattle at *Baie du Nord* or *Baie aux Huîtres*, while also repairing and building 'pirogues'.

#### 6.4.3. A Member of the Castel family (called Z.)

Several members of the Castel family have gained prominence in Rodriguan society; North-Coombes indicated that they arrived in Rodrigues from Mauritius, as *métis*, later than the early settlers. Z. indicated, during the interview, that increasingly, divisions ('cloisons') between communities were disappearing, as the young generation intermarries, so that 'Rouges' and darker-skinned individuals set up homes together. He identified social and economic factors as the chief causes of this, and since the majority of Rodriguans are *métis*, it is not surprising that social prejudices have not survived. He used another expression to describe the 'Montagnards': the 'Gens de la Campagne'. Areas, where non- 'campagnards' are numerous, include: *La Ferme*, Port Mathurin, *Anse aux Anglais*, *Baie aux Huîtres*, *Camp du Roi*.

Trade and Port Mathurin can account for the visible wealth in some areas. Yet, many descendants of freed slaves worked 'under the yoke of early colonialists', namely rich merchants. When they succeeded in freeing themselves from this yoke, they took refuge in the hills, either to become 'their own masters', or to 'lord over others'. However, today, in schools, divisions are not noticeable and a certain 'fellowship' prevails. Workers nowadays share jobs in hand without any reticence, and at a social level, there are few problems. Balls attract people from all communities. In this, the Catholic and Anglican Churches have played a prominent role, the *Centre Carrefour*, run by the Church, attracts all types of persons, although 'Montagnards', often 'pale skinned' but 'disadvantaged', attend more regularly. 'Campagnards' have the legal rights to enjoy fertile lands in the mountains, but they pay a lease - 'bail' - (about Rs 400 per year) that is renewed every so many years (20 years in most cases).

One major source of concern is illiteracy among the 'Campagnards'; many still do not send their children to school, as used to be the case in the past. Others earnestly wish their children to have a good education, but the latter have great difficulties in going to and from school, walking long distances. Since 1990, education has made huge strides, but a criticism that is frequently voiced is: "If Rodrigues were a Hindu colony, the population would be taken better care of." The amount of money spent on libraries by the Mauritian Government is ludicrous; the collections do not allow for project work or research by school children. Hence, Rodriguan adolescents struggle to reach the same standard as their Mauritian counterparts, through no fault of their dedicated teachers. The Kreol language is unanimously accepted by all communities; hence, the fight is won in this respect. It is a strong unifying element. Most children also love French and work hard at it, but they are not as proficient in English as Mauritian children.<sup>271</sup> The previous snobbishness, associated with French, as displayed by 'Rouges' families, is fast disappearing.

For all their willingness to progress, Rodriguan children manifestly lag behind their Mauritian counterparts at secondary level, because of a scarcity of resources, facilities, equipment and funds. Z. underlined the fact that 'Gens de la Campagne' often appear more conscious, nowadays, of the importance of education than 'Gens Clairs'; the reverse was true in olden days. Rodrigues forms more professionals - e.g. teachers and doctors - than it needs; returning to one's island after University studies is not a common practice. Scholarship winners (Laureates) often stay on abroad; the few doctors who return are not recognized for what they are worth by visiting Mauritian professionals and either feel neglected, or are unable to keep abreast of new techniques. After a while, Z. assumes, they are discouraged.

#### 6.4.4. Impact of slavery

Slavery, it would appear, has not left an indelible imprint on the psyche or character of descendants of slaves. X., Y. and Z. pointed out that, rarely - if ever - had he heard 'Campagnards' state: "I am a descendant of slaves." Local historians do not dwell on slavery, and no one seems to

discuss at length the implications of the 'Truth and Justice Commission'. Artists in Rodrigues even look at slavery with a pinch of salt and have published amusing tales concerning freed slaves, according to Z. As for local politicians, they do not put undue emphasis on communalism or the legacy of slavery. For all that, to a candid observer on a visit, Rodrigues *does* suffer considerably in its present infrastructures (social, physical and educational)<sup>272</sup> from the fact that it has been, and is largely, a 'Creole' island blighted by its past. Would the island lag so far behind, if it had been populated by large numbers of Hindu/Moslem labourers, or indeed 'White' colonists? It is manifest that Rodrigues has missed out on 'Indentured labour' and, hence, it is more than a little neglected. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will take some time to set those reversals right, but the people of Rodrigues remain generally optimistic about their future and are 'grands débrouillards'. The present and the future are of greater concern to them, justifiably, than the past. One of our recommendations, however, is that in the field of Education and literacy, the Government of Mauritius, and of Rodrigues, ought to do more for the island and, by treating it as a special case, we should invest a great deal more in the dependency's educational infrastructures (see Recommendations).

#### 6.5. Rodrigues: Landownership

The Project Teams, working on Projects (a) on 'Land', and (b) on Rodrigues, will present its own separate findings on the two issues. Our concern here is to include a few details about the 'Coloured Population' borrowed from the *Recueil de documents pour servir à l'histoire de Rodrigues* (1969).<sup>273</sup> The list of land concessions on Rodrigues from 1817 to 1871 mentions herein the following individuals of 'Coloured' origins. Reference is to M.N.A. File R/R2. Obvious French 'White' and British names are excluded.

#### Land Concessions

Vol. 24 No.	Names	Dates	Descriptions/sites
68	Germain <u>Legros</u>	29.9.1820	3 sites of 108 <i>Arpents</i> , <i>Anse-aux-Anglais</i> and <i>l'Hermitage</i> .
140	<u>Delaître</u> (substituted to M. Rochetaing who abandoned the place)	14.8.1817	<i>Trois-Ilots</i> , 2 sites of 108 <i>Arpents</i> in Rodrigues.
Vol. 25 No. 100	Dame Avice, wife of <u>Chenard</u>	21.7.1830	A site of 108 <i>Arpents</i> at <i>Anse-aux-Cannes</i> ; 'pêcherie' at <i>Islet-aux-Insectes</i> .
No. 103	Gabriel <u>Bègue</u>	27.8.1829	3 sites totaling 324 <i>Arpents</i> on Rodrigues.
85	Antoine <u>Charles</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 1882 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
86	Albert <u>Haoust</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 1638 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
88	Emma <u>Félicité</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 3333 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
89	George <u>Edouard</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 2935 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
90	Pierre <u>Raffaut</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 4836 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
91	Ozélie <u>Carel</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 1870 sq. yards,

			Port Mathurin.
111	Marie Rose <u>Portalis</u>	13.10.1866	Plot of 2987 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
112	Marie Aurore Claire <u>Winters</u>	13.10.1866	Plot of 1846 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
141	Charles <u>François</u>	31.7.1867	Plot of 8404 sq. yards, Oyster Bay.
152	Albert Haoust; Joseph <u>Berton</u> ; Fernand <u>Bonelle</u>	16.9.1867	Plot of 400 acres, Rodrigues.
165	Marie Palmyre <u>Francois</u>	20.12.1867	Plot of 3863 acres, <i>Trèfle</i> , Rodrigues.

No. Vol. 30	Names	Dates	Descriptions/sites
198	Béline <u>Médicis</u>	18.2.1869	Plot of 2472 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
200	Ozélie <u>Clarel</u>	28.4.1869	Plot of 25 acres, <i>Trèfle</i> , Rodrigues.
201	Ozélie <u>Clarel</u>	28.4.1869	Plot of 60 7/10 acres, <i>Montagne François</i> .
208	Désiré and Ninka <u>Lalande</u>	31.12.1869	Plot of 100 acres, <i>Diamond Bay</i> .
219	Messrs. <u>Télescourt</u> and <u>Lauricourt</u> , Jean Félix	3.5.1871	Plot of 1972 sq.yards, Port Mathurin.
220	<i>ibid.</i>	3.5.1871	Plot of 3944 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
221	Ernest <u>Allas</u>	3.5.1871	Plot of 937 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
223	Jean Evenor <u>Meunier</u>	3.5.1871	Plot of 3289 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.

At the M.N.A., one also finds the following details under 'Rodrigues Land Concessions' (1845), *Extracted* from the books 'Domaine', Archives Office, 1845' (TB 6/4).

No. 162, F. 197	<u>Duessy</u> , Wm.	25.1.1821	216 <i>Arpents</i> in <i>Anse East North East</i> .
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Of special interest are the following details concerning the Marragon family:

No. 160, F. 182	Mr. <u>Marragon</u>	29.9.1820	324 <i>Arpents</i> and the 'jouissance' of <i>Îlot aux Fous</i> and <i>Îlot aux Crabes</i> for a fishing establishment.
No. 161, F. 183	Mad <sup>e</sup> <u>Marragon</u>	29.9.1820	216 <i>Arpents</i> at <i>Baie aux Huîtres</i> .

In his short introduction to this table, J.-F. Dupon commented: "De 1817 à 1830, les concessions de terres, qui s'ajoutent aux cessions en jouissance des îlots du lagon, sont de 108 arpents (environ 43,2 hectares ou multiples de 108 arpents à l'exception d'un employé du gouvernement (250 arpents)". He adds that small concessions multiplied at Port Mathurin, measuring ½ hectare or 1/10 hectare, which shows a real development of this urban agglomeration.<sup>274</sup> Finally, it is to be noted that on 31 December, 1869, George Jenner, who had replaced Edward Stevens Messiter, as Police Magistrate on 14 May, 1862, received a land concession of 24 6/10 acres at *Bambou*, Rodrigues, while Thomas Morris [John Morris' descendant] was also granted a concession of 15 acres at *Bambou* on 31 December, 1869. In his analysis of the economy of Rodrigues, Dupon observed in 1967:

*"As for lands appropriated, they represent about 1/7<sup>th</sup> of all cultivated land, and if one were to exclude the Catholic Church which, with about 40 hectares, was by far the biggest landowner on the island, and less than 10 owners who had 5 to 10 hectares each, the average property would be well below 2 arpents. The Napoleonic Code, as applied to Mauritius, was partly responsible for this division of land [...]"*<sup>275</sup>

As for the 'squatting system', we leave it to the 'Land' and 'Rodrigues' teams to discuss this at length. One major contributor to legalizing the system was Georges Jenner, Magistrate. North-Coombes explains:

*"As regards land, Jenner, unlike his predecessors, limited the inhabitants' practice of occupying crown lands as they pleased, and succeeded in inducing the Government to take positive action. The result of this was that a number of so-called "squatters" became owners of land on easy terms of payment, though as yet no rent was exacted from those who continued to cultivate crown land on verbal leases."*<sup>276</sup>

Today, the entire system of 'leases' has been developed and legalized; less resentment prevails, and the gap between landowners and 'lease holders' has narrowed.<sup>277</sup>

## CHAPTER 7 - Interviews with members of the 'Coloured Population'

### 7.1. Introduction

A study of the 'Coloured Population' of Mauritius was done through semi-structured interviews which were conducted in Mauritius as well as in Rodrigues. The importance of this study lies in seeking the point of view of the 'Coloured Population' today, concerning important issues such as their past and present relationship with the economy, family origins, employment, youth and their recommendations to bring more Truth and Justice for the 'Coloured Population', as well as for the Mauritian society.

We analyse the identity construction of our interviewees since it can be defined through their identity, be it personal or social, as it is expressed today. As identity is often linked with culture, we will also focus on the latter in our analysis. Many authors think that the identity of individuals cannot be conceived without an interaction with other groups and communities in the society of which these individuals are members. That is why we will look at the interactions of individuals with other people, and, by extension, attempt to understand what are the relationships of the group, to which they belong, with other groups.

*Gens de Couleur* in Mauritius include descendants of manumitted slaves and of free coloured immigrants to the island. Moreover, this group is characterised by the fact that its members came to the island of their own accord or were brought to the colony under contract so as to practise a trade or craft for a specified period of time. However, it is also true that the 'Coloured Population' includes descendants of 'Freed Slaves' who married individuals from other groups. To this extent, they have a very complex history and identity as a community. Do present-day *Gens de Couleur* live with this complex identity and are they aware of it? Such are the questions we attempted to partly answer.

### 7.2. Methodology

We have been conducting semi-structured interviews, allowing the interviewees to answer rather freely without being too oriented. Each interview was conducted in about one hour and concerned questions relating to group belonging, emigration in the post-Independence period, the role of women in their families, the degree of openness towards other communities and the interviewees' recommendations for a better Mauritian society.

The identity of the 'Coloured Population' is dynamic and in the context of our research, we found that our interviewees agreed to say that the group to which they belong, is not the 'Coloured Population', but rather the 'Creole community' or the General Population. Some even said they considered themselves as being Mauritians ahead of belonging to any other group. Concerning the inhabitants of Rodrigues, they considered themselves as belonging first of all to Rodrigues Island rather than belonging to any other group.

We interviewed 24 persons, 17 in Mauritius and 7 in Rodrigues. 16 of the persons being interviewed have chosen not to remain anonymous. The following table illustrates the number of interviewees by age and gender:

	Women under 45	Over 45	Men under 45	Over 45
Rodrigues	1	0	2	4
Mauritius	2	4	2	9

The time-constraints (since the research only started on 18 February, 2011) did not allow for a larger number of interviews. The team resolved to do in-depth interviews rather than extend the number of interviewees, over a period of 3 months.

The following table outlines the profile of our interviewees through their professions:-

I1	Journalist for more than 25 years
I2	Writer
I3	Politician
I4	Social worker
I5	Journalist
I6	Teacher
I7	Priest
I8	Accountant
I9	Bishop
I10	Journalist
I11	Manager
I12	Manager
I13	Historian
I14	Teacher
I15	Manager
I16	Housewife

For the interviewees who prefer to remain anonymous, their professions are as follows:-

I17	Librarian
I18	Manager
I19	Hairdresser
I20	Journalist
I21	Apiarist
I22	Manager
I23	Accountant
I24	Engineer

### 7.3. Analysis

#### 7.3.1. Concerning the term 'Coloured Population'

Regarding the term 'Coloured Population', most of the persons who have been interviewed think that it is a term which does not make much sense nowadays; they prefer other terms like 'métis' or 'créole' or Mauritian, since according to them, the term 'Coloured Population' was given by white people to categorise people who were not white.

Some of our interviewees prefer the term 'General Population', with which they have no problem, whereas others think it is a group to which everyone can belong.

*I.13 : « Pour moi ca fait pas l'ombre d'un doute ma famille s'est toujours considérée comme faisant partie de la population de couleur donc je me suis jamais considéré comme faisant partie de ce qu'on appelle les Blancs à Maurice et voila donc ce que je peux vous dire »*

Translation: "For me it is obvious that my family has always considered itself as forming part of the Coloured population; so I have never felt I belonged to what is called Whites in Mauritius that is what I can say".

#### 7.3.2. Concerning Family Origins

The interviewees are of European, African as well as Indian origin, and this is seen as a source of enrichment by the respondents. The family origins are of great interest to the interviewees as they outline the lives of their ancestors and what they passed on them; we have even got access to a bill for a marriage reception in 1901, amounting to Rs 405.80 which can be seen in the following document.

This document illustrates the importance of commemorating family events which helps much in redefining one's own identity.

See Appendix (photos) Document 1

### 7.3.3. Concerning Emigration

Many members of the interviewees' families went abroad namely to Australia after Independence ; this period was in fact marked by the emigration of Mauritians of the 'Coloured Population' fearing the so-called Hindu hegemony, as the power was going to pass on to Hindu Mauritians, the latter forming the majority in terms of numbers.

Some said, however, that there was the same percentage of emigration among other communities, concluding, therefore, that the 'Coloured Population' was not the only group which had emigrated. However, our interviewees accept the fact that in the post-independence period, there have been a lot a Mauritians who have emigrated towards Australia.

I.13: « *ceux qui sont partis sont des traîtres pour moi non j'ai toujours considéré que c'est une erreur grossière il y a plein de pays ça peut être l'Irlande ça peut être l'Italie ça peut être la Grèce ça peut être l'Égypte où ceux qui sont partis travailler ailleurs sont une richesse pour le pays peut-être plus que dans le cas des mauriciens parce que l'argent qu'ils gagnent à l'étranger ils renvoient dans leur pays et c'est une source de revenus pour leur pays vous comprenez il y a autant d'irlandais aux États-Unis qu'en Irlande il y a autant d'Italiens aux États-Unis qu'en Italie et ça double la population italienne et la population italienne en Italie et la population italienne aux États Unis donc c'est une richesse mais le tout c'est à rétablir des communications entre ces deux-là c'est ce que nous nous faisons pas assez ».*

Translation : *"Those who left were traitors for me no I have always considered that it was a big mistake there are lots of countries it could be Ireland it could be Italy it could be Greece it could be Egypt where those who went to work in another country brought a richness to their country perhaps more for Mauritians because money they get in foreign countries they send it to their country and this is a source of revenue for their country you see there are as many Irishmen in the United States as in Ireland there are as many Italians in the United States as in Italy and this doubles the Italian population in Italy and in the United States so it is a richness but what is important is that there is communication between these two that is what we do not do enough".*

- I.7 : « *Alors enne de bann peur c'est se faire domine par la classe hindoue ah sa to pa tir dan mo la tet ensuite premiere emigration concerne middle management c'est bann dimounn ki gagn enn ti job professeur lekol primer la polis par examp zonn ale pour gagn enn role ekonomik enn asiz ekonomik parski laba to pena grand diferans ant enn dimounn ki travay manuelman ek de fwa bokou pli bien peye ki enn dimounn ke enn klerk ke ressi gagn white collar skills dan enn ti job pou mwa de rezon majeur epwi ena ki dan enn ti job enn ti job epwi sonn anvi venture enn kout nou al dekouver que l'herbe n'est pas toujours verte ailleurs ».*

Translation : « *So there are those who were afraid to be dominated by the Hindu class this is obvious for me then the first emigration concerns the middle management which concerns people having a job like a teacher or policeman they emigrated in order to have an economic role as there is no big difference between a manual worker there who may be better paid than a clerk who has a white collar skilled job these are for me the two major reasons which made them want to go for adventure to discover that the grass is not greener elsewhere".*

I.6 : « *Je dois dire que l'indépendance elle-même n'a pas provoqué chez nous une émigration pour fuir les séquelles pas des séquelles mais des effets de l'indépendance où on craignait que les Hindous les Indo-Mauriciens n'est ce pas fassent aux créoles ce que les Blancs avaient fait maltraité ça on a craint ça hein même les Indiens menaçaient les autres ils disaient to guette la après l'indépendance to guette tous banne femmes dans Maurice pou nous comme ca une dame qui était la belle-mère de ma fille a entendu quelqu'un lui dire ça comme après l'indépendance pou nous tous banne femmes pou nous c'est vrai c'est pas exagéré hein elles croyaient ça ».*

*Translation : « I must say that Independence by itself has not caused emigration to go far from the consequences not the consequences but the effect of the consequences where there was a fear that the Hindu the Mauritians of Indian origin treat creoles the way Whites had mistreated them this we have feared this even Indians threatened others saying that after Independence all women would be theirs there was a woman who was the step-mother of my daughter who has heard someone say that after Independence all women would be theirs this is true it is not exaggerated they believed this would happen”.*

#### 7.3.4. Concerning access to employment (Discrimination, Privilege)

Access to work has been rather easy for the persons interviewed and they say that a networking among the *Population de Couleur* can help in recommending someone for a job or, for some, getting one themselves. This networking is based on friendship within the *Population de Couleur*. Concerning access to work it has also been pointed out that nowadays, many young people work for not much money.

*I.6: « Il y a une fille qui a un nom bien indien et elle postule pour un poste à la MIE mais cette fille qui a un nom bien indien a épousé quelqu'un qui a un nom bien créole son nom de jeune fille était un nom indien mais son nom de femme est un nom créole et on lui a dit après (elle n'a pas eu le poste) si tu avais un autre nom t'aurais été choisie ».*

*Translation: « There is a girl with an Indian name who has made an application at the MIE but this girl who had an Indian name was married to someone who had a Creole name her maiden name was Indian but her married name was a Creole name; she was told afterwards (she was not recruited for the post) that if you had another name you would have been chosen ».*

#### 7.3.5. Concerning relationship with other communities

For most of the interviewees, the 'Coloured Population' has an open mind, when dealing with persons belonging to other communities; there has even been religious conversion in a family due to interreligious marriage.

*I.13: « Ca change allons prendre par exemple dans nos écoles moi quand j'entre au Collège du St. Esprit je fais un peu figure d'exception aujourd'hui je sais au collège du Saint-Esprit on rencontre des Mauriciens de toutes races de toutes cultures sans aucun problème ça fait 30-40 ans ça a changé de tout au tout ce n'est plus la même chose je connais l'époque où les propriétaires de campement appartenaient à une seule communauté aujourd'hui c'est loin d'être le cas j'ai connu l'époque où ceux qui roulaient dans des belles voitures venaient d'une même communauté ça n'est plus le cas donc les choses évoluent c'est j'ai aucun doute là-dessus et c'est tant mieux rien n'était réservé à une communauté et interdit aux autres ».*

*Translation : « This has changed; take for example in our schools myself when I started St.Esprit College I was among the exceptions whereas today I know that in St. Esprit College there are Mauritians of all cultures without any problems since 30-40 years this has changed totally it's not the same thing I know the period when owners of a second house were from one community only today this is far from being the case I knew the time when those who travelled in beautiful cars were from only one community this is no longer the case things have changed this I am sure and it is for the best nothing is reserved for one community and forbidden for others”.*

*I.13 : « (...) On veut faire croire mais ça n'existe pas dans la réalité les politiciens veulent nous faire croire que toutes les personnes allant à la chasse viennent d'une communauté que tous ceux qui ont un campement c'est une communauté tous ceux qui vont aux courses c'est une communauté mais il suffit d'ouvrir les yeux et de savoir que ce sont des mensonges il n'y a pas de catégorie il y a des mauriciens qui s'intéressent à la chasse il y a des mauriciens qui s'intéressent aux courses il y a des mauriciens qui veulent avoir un campement un point c'est tout (...) Il y aura de plus en*

*plus de mariages mixtes hein ça va être de plus en plus accepté il y aura des enfants avec un papa hindou et une maman musulmane une maman créole et un papa hindou et ce mauricien - là il sera encore moins communaliste que moi parce qu'il aura vécu avec deux cultures sur sa tête ».*

*Translation : « (...) They make us believe it but this does not exist in reality politicians make us think that all persons going to hunt come from one community, that all those who have a second house come from one community, that all those who watch horse-racing are from one community, but we must open our eyes to know that these are lies there are no categories; there are Mauritians who are interested in hunting, there are Mauritians who are interested in horse-racing there are Mauritians who want to have a second house that's all (...). There will be more and more mixed marriages it will be more and more accepted; there will be children with a Hindu father and a Muslim mother, a Creole mother and a Hindu father and this Mauritian will be even less communalistic than me because he would have lived with two different cultures”.*

*I.1 : « les gens qui ont les moyens payent et se retrouvent entre eux ce qui est intéressant c'est se retrouver entre eux donc à ne plus être exclusivement ethnique il devient socio- économique et c'est clair que les enfants qui sont dans ces établissements payants sont les enfants qui ont plus de chance d'avoir fait un voyage avant l'âge de 12 ans à disneyworld ne serait-ce qu'avoir été à la Réunion alors on arrive on est lauréat à 18 ans au Collège du St Esprit on n'a pas forcément voyagé on est resté à Maurice ».*

*Translation: «people who have the means pay and find themselves together what is interesting is not to be exclusively ethnic it becomes socio-economic and it is clear that children who are in paying schools are children who have more of a chance to have done a trip before 12 years old to Disneyworld just a trip to Réunion Island we can be a Laureate at 18 years old at St. Esprit College and not having travelled we have stayed in Mauritius”.*

*I.13 : « allons prendre par exemple dans nos écoles moi quand j'entre au Collège du St. Esprit je fais un peu figure d'exception aujourd'hui je sais au Collège du Saint-Esprit on rencontre des Mauriciens de toutes races de toutes cultures sans aucun problème »*

*Translation: “Let's take the example in our schools. Myself when I started school in St. Esprit I was among the exceptions; today I know at St. Esprit College we encounter Mauritians of all races of all cultures without any problem”.*

### 7.3.6 Role of women within the family

Women within the interviewees' families have been contributing a lot to giving a structure to the family, since whether they worked or not, they have contributed to the well-being of the members of their families. Their ability to cope with work as well as with domestic tasks is clearly revealed by the interviews together with their determination to head the family in case of the death of their husband, leaving a household with small children to look after and a living to gain through hard work. Far from being a story, the role of women in the families' history, as well as at present, leads us to conclude that the stability of the family depends on the way they handle current and daily situations as well as taking important decisions, such as the type of education to be given to children and grandchildren, one of our interviewees points out.

According to some, the 'Coloured Population' is composed of creative people having artistic qualities. Many Coloured people are most successful at artistic works, and this is a specificity of this group. It is also argued by our interviewees that facilities of expression in the French language resulted in many people from this group going into jobs where this would be useful; that is why in the past (as this is no longer the case, according to one interviewee) journalists were mainly from this group.

Speaking French is very important for this group; only two interviewees out of 24 choose to speak in Creole even if they spoke French as well as Creole. Concerning the French Language, then, two of our interviewees said that French, as well as English, are important in schools, more than the Creole Language. One interviewee took the example of the importance of knowing French and English which allowed a young person to work abroad in the Tourism Sector. For the said interviewee, if there were no teaching of French or English, the Creole Language could not have the same impact on the success of this person.

I.11: « *quand je suis revenu de France, à la mort de mon père un des chocs que j'ai eu une des images pas choc je vois ma mère signer un chèque du vivant de mon père elle n'a jamais signé un chèque et c'est la génération de ma mère dans la génération qui est la mienne toutes mes belles sœurs ont travaillé et ma femme travaille* ».

Translation : « *when I came back from France when my father died one of the things that choked me was when I saw my mother sign a cheque when my father was alive she never signed a cheque and this was the generation of my mother and in my generation all my sisters-in-law have worked and my wife works* ».

I.13 : « *Il y a une évolution je prends le cas de ma mère c'est très typique je l'ai connue femme au foyer et ensuite elle se retrouve veuve à 36 ans avec 6 enfants à nourrir et toujours habituée à être femme au foyer elle est obligée de travailler pour nourrir ses six enfants donc voilà un p'tit peu ce qui s'est passé donc je crois d'une génération à l'autre ma grand-mère elle n'a jamais travaillé elle s'est toujours occupée que de son foyer et de son mari ma mère a connu un peu les deux expériences une dizaine d'années où elle a été femme au foyer et ensuite elle a dû devenir le gagne-pain de la famille et mon épouse et ma fille s'imaginent pas femme au foyer et restant à la maison pendant que le mari va travailler il y a un partage des responsabilités familiales ménagères également.* »

Translation: « *There has been an evolution. I take the case of my mother; this is typical; I knew her as a housewife and then she became widow at 36 years old with 6 children to bring up and was always a housewife; she was obliged to work to feed her six children that is how this happened. So I think that from one generation to another, my grandmother never worked she always looked after her house and her husband. My mother has known the two experiences for about 10 years and afterwards she had to be the breadwinner of the family; and my wife and my daughter do not imagine themselves as housewives and staying at home, while the husband goes out to work, there is a sharing of domestic tasks also* ».

### 7.3.7 Landownership

One of our interviewees has his family owning a 'propriété sucrière' (*Mon Repos*, acquired in 1850) in the North, a region where he says considerable properties have been owned by the Coloured Population until 1900 where the owners were white people, as stated by the interviewee whose family owns this *propriété*. He said that as from 1900, the ownership of the land in the North of the country passed from the 'Coloured Population' ownership to the White Population.

As we can see in the following figure, for the ownership of *The Mount*, the change from the Antelme family to de Rosnay indicates the change from the 'Coloured Population' ownership to White ownership as from 1908.

See Appendix (photos) Document 2

The interviewee's family remains therefore one of the exceptions among the 'Coloured Population' to own a *propriété sucrière*. The following picture is that of the first owner of the land, Mrs Louise DUPONT-FELINE, in 1840. The picture taken at the interviewee's house is in the Appendix as well as other pictures of his family.

See Appendix (photos) Document 3

According to this interviewee, of the GENTIL family, the landowners in the North included the following families in 1880: Hermans, Guillot, Duhamel, Laroche, Latour, Mesnard, Chauvet, Collard, Perille, Diore...

A land plan dated 1880 by Descubes illustrates landownership by the Coloured Population in this period.

### 7.3.8 Comparison between women and men

There are no significant differences between men and women in their interviews, except that women have proved to be able to cumulate domestic tasks as well as professional ones, even if they were not fully employed. All men interviewed argued that women had played a great role in their families, in the past and at present, as already said, but what we have seen is that women interviewed all worked, and even men interviewed think it is normal for women to work. The education of children in the families of our interviewees has been influenced by decision-taking by women in order to bring them up or to choose a certain type of education. The following examples illustrate, in the first case, a woman bringing up alone her six children and, in the second case, a young woman brought up alone by her mother:-

I.13: « *elle se retrouve veuve à 36 ans avec 6 enfants à nourrir et toujours habituée à être femme au foyer elle est obligée de travailler pour nourrir ses six enfants* ».

Translation: "She finds herself a widow at 36 years old with 6 children to feed and having always been a housewife, she finds herself obliged to work in order to feed her six children".

I.14: « *Disons moi j'ai été élevée avec ma maman disons mon papa ils se sont séparés depuis que j'avais un an donc je vois comme si ma maman a joué pleinement son rôle de femme maman en même temps* »

Translation: "I can say I have been brought up by my mother, as my father and she parted when I was one year old; so I see that my mother has played wholly her role as a woman and mother at the same time".

We have seen in these two cases that the personal identities of these women are predominant in their lives more than their group belonging. This is an indication of the gap which exists between what people really live and the group identity which may be attributed to them in terms of 'Coloured Population' belonging. This is clearly outlined by the young interviewees, as we will see later.

### 7.3.9 Comparison between young people and old people

It is important to compare the interviewees' answers according to their age, as Cohen-Emerique<sup>278</sup> states that "*quelque fois nous croyons implicitement partager les mêmes codes culturels que d'autres populations de la même nationalité, alors qu'en fait ils sont très éloignés de notre manière de voir les choses du fait que ces populations appartiennent à un autre milieu social ou une autre génération, par exemple*". « *Dans le contexte mauricien, selon ce que dit Cohen Emerique (ibid.) dans tout contexte multiculturel, on pourrait avoir tendance à croire que nous sommes proches des personnes appartenant à la même communauté alors qu'en réalité, nous pouvons être très différents du fait que les classes sociales soient différentes ou qu'il y ait différentes générations en situation.* »<sup>279</sup>

The young interviewees (up to 45 years) are rather in favour personal identity where what is considered as being important are values and interests rather than belonging to a specific group. In fact, the sense of belonging to a community, as it is outlined in Mauritius, seems to be more important for older interviewees compared to young ones.

Furthermore, young people are more oriented towards the present and the future, rather than the past, which is an attitude which we expected. There is a clear demarcation from the group identity in favour of personal success and a society of *métis*, even if this attitude is shared by two of our older interviewees. This similar attitude is illustrated in the following examples:-

I.9: « *il y a un livre de ... que j'aime beaucoup et qui dit nous sommes tous des métis je crois que l'histoire de l'humanité est un grand métissage* »

Translation: « *there is a book that I like a lot and which says that we are all métis I think that the history of humankind is a great métissage* »

I.15 : « *la population créole se dessine un nouveau profil je crois qu'avec le métissage je crois qu'on fait partie d'une génération qui sont un produit même de ce véritable métissage de culture de personnes d'expérience aujourd'hui le terme créole je crois est approprié à ça mais demande aussi une réflexion pour évoluer dans une plus large panoplie pouvoir dessiner un nouveau terme je crois et des noms sont cités des gens de couleur je crois le terme métis me semble beaucoup plus approprié parce que le métissage veut dire vraiment les racines de cette communauté qui est née et très franchement à partir de deux arbres et je crois deux arbres assez distincts assez différents en terme de culture, différents en terme de couleur de peau de pigmentation et culturellement* ».

Translation: "The 'Creole Population' has a new profile. I think that with the metissage, I think that we form part of a generation which is a product of this real metissage of culture of persons of experience. Today the term Creole, I think, is appropriate for this but requires also some thinking for us to stand in a larger setting in order to have a new significance I think, and the names of coloured people, I think, the term métis is more appropriate because 'métissage' really stands for the roots of this community which was born from two distinct branches quite different in terms of culture and in terms of skin pigmentation, of pigmentation and culturally speaking".

#### 7.3.10 Reported forms of racism

There are forms of racism which have been denounced; for example in the work recruitment process, there has been a neglect of Mauritians of African origins through a certain degree of discrimination when recruitment goes on. Furthermore, white Mauritians created a segmentation, even if the 'Coloured Population' is of white and of Indian/African origins. This is represented in our research by a perception of the culture and all work being done by the 'Coloured Population', whereas white people were rather spectators of the work being done by the 'Coloured population'.

I.6 : « *les Gens de Couleur ont une liberté de pensée les Gens de Couleur ils vont à la messe les dimanches ils s'amuse et tout ce qui n'existe pas chez les blancs il y en a qui sont des libres penseurs ils sont marginalisés tout de suite ils sont marginalisés regardez Malcolm de Chazal maintenant on le vénère mais il a été marginalisé toute sa vie par sa propre communauté ses amis étaient des gens de couleur hein Malcolm de Chazal il n'est pas le seul (...) parce qu'il donnait son opinion* ».

Translation: « *the Gens de Couleur have a freedom of thought the Gens de Couleur they go to the mass on Sundays they have fun and this does not exist in the White population they have a freedom of thought they are marginalised see Malcolm de Chazal now we like him but he has been marginalised all his life by his own community his friends were Coloured People. Malcolm de Chazal, he is not the only one (...) because he gave his opinion*".

#### 7.4 A comparative point of view between Mauritius Island and Rodrigues Island

See Appendix (photos) Picture 1

Concerning persons interviewed in Rodrigues, we note that there is a high sense of belonging to the island and the sense of belonging to a community does not exist. It is true that 98% of inhabitants of Rodrigues are Christian and are of African origin, frequently named 'Creoles' in Mauritius.

That is why the term 'Coloured Population' does not make any sense for inhabitants of Rodrigues who have a sense of national identity over and above any other sense of belonging; this

difference compared to Mauritians who have been interviewed indicates the importance of conducting interviews in Rodrigues. One of our interviewees in Mauritius island says he admires the attitude of people in Rodrigues:-

*I.2 : " j'admire les Rodriguais qui sont tous Rodriguais vous n'avez pas de Sino-Rodriguais ou d'Indo-Rodriguais etc. Je trouve que c'est un exemple à suivre et ça c'est une chose que nous n'arriverons jamais à faire tant qu'il y aura la constitution que nous avons n'est-ce pas puisque c'est basé sur l'ethnicité des Mauriciens justement ».*

*Translation: "I admire Rodriguans who are all Rodriguans you do not have Sino-Rodriguans or Indo-Rodriguans etc. I think that this is an example to follow and we will never be able to do this until there is a Constitution that we have isn't it as it is based on ethnicity of Mauritians".*

The composition of the population of the two islands allows us to have a different point of view of the two societies with different ethnic and religious origins.

Therefore, we can see the importance of social identity, compared to personal identity; success in life is related to group belonging, even if the persons who have been interviewed and who are rather young give priority to personal identity through personal choices and interests.

In Rodrigues, we see that there is a big difference with Mauritius as all the interviewees in Rodrigues consider themselves first and foremost as Rodriguans, and it would not be thinkable to say 'Sino-Rodriguais' as we would say 'Sino-Mauricien' in the Mauritian context. Furthermore, the perception of skin colour is different as stated below; a white Rodriguan can be fisherman, whereas in Mauritius this is less likely to happen.

*I.17: « on ne peut pas dire à Rodrigues que disons ceux qui ont la peau claire ou sont blancs avec des yeux bleus sont de la bourgeoisie et ceux qui ont la peau noire sont les prolétaires si vous allez disons à Baie aux Huitres vous verrez des gens aux yeux bleus qui sont pêcheurs et qui parlent créole donc dans ce sens-là je pense quand on arrive à Rodrigues il faut se laisser un peu dépaysé il y a pas au départ une bourgeoisie une classe prolétaire c'est une société beaucoup plus homogène tous les enfants vont dans la même école nous allons tous dans le même hôpital».*

says one of our interviewees, who explains the difference between Mauritius island and Rodrigues island and we can see that the perception of Rodriguans of their island is quite different to the perception of Mauritians of their island.

*Translation : " one cannot say that in Rodrigues those who are of light coloured skin or who are white with blue eyes are of the bourgeoisie and those with black skin are proletarians if you go say to Oyster Bay you will see people with blue eyes who are fishermen and who speak Creole so in this sense here I think that when you arrive in Rodrigues you must let the country change your way of seeing things from the start there is not one bourgeoisie class and one proletarian class it's a society which is much more homogeneous all children go to the same school we go to the same hospital"*

#### 7.4.1 Politics in Rodrigues

*I.3 : « En 1967 il y a eu la campagne pour l'indépendance de Maurice et ... est venu ici sachant que Rodrigues a 99% de Créoles il a utilisé le mensonge à 100% si je vous dis ça c'est pour vous dire que aujourd'hui aussi on continue à le faire dire aux Rodriguais si ou pas voter bateau pas pou vini ou pou crever la faim l'église pou ferme pou nourri cochon et ainsi de suite les gens écoutent les gens ont voté le PMSD contre l'indépendance en association avec l'Angleterre à à peu près 98% et puis moi après l'indépendance je suis arrivé j'ai quitté la France je suis arrivé ici en 1966 et c'était encore dans la bataille pour l'indépendance et j'étais pour l'indépendance de Maurice parce que l'indépendance c'est une manière c'est la route c'est pourquoi en '76 nous avons dit aux Rodriguais Rodriguais deboute lors to deux lipieds '76 et la il y a eu*

*depuis 66, 78 c'est bon de connaître un peu l'histoire de Rodrigues politique et en '68 les autres sont venus pour dire aux Rodriguais refusez le drapeau mauricien le 12 mars 68 c'est pourquoi on n'a pas pu hisser le drapeau le 12 mars 68 on a hissé le drapeau le 12 mars 69 ce qui fait que Rodrigues fête l'indépendance de Maurice de la République une année en retard ».*

Summary of quote: *In 1967 there has been a campaign for independence of Mauritius and someone has come and has used lies to convince Rodriguans that they should vote against Independence in 1968 the leader of PSMD told the Rodriguans that they would become poor if they voted for independence. That is why the Mauritian flag was drawn up only in 1969.*

We can see that what our interviewee is saying is that a politician has come to Rodrigues to ask Rodriguans to vote against the independence of Mauritius and even in 1968, there are those who came to Rodrigues asking to refuse the Mauritian flag and that is why it is only in 1969, one year after the Independence day, that Rodrigues lifted the Mauritian flag.

## 7.5 General conclusions

### Under-representation of the 'General Population'

The 'Coloured Population' forms part of the general population which is officially considered as such in the Constitution of Mauritius. Mauritians from this group are under represented in several areas of the society, be it economic, social, cultural or political sectors of Mauritius.

### Group identity in Mauritius

The older persons interviewed refer to the social belonging and to the community belonging, whereas more young people consider, first and foremost, personal identity.

Concerning the social identity, as already mentioned, our interviewees who refer to this type of identity feel they belong to the *Population de Couleur* but for most of them, what matters most is the belonging to the Creole group and 'General Population'. From the point of view of Tajfel (1982), social identity is being aware of belonging to a group, and this includes all the representations and symbolic elements shared by members of the same group. All the representations and the symbolic elements contribute to the social position of the group.

If social identity concerns the attributes of the group, personal identity implies the personal traits, from the point of view of Tajfel and Turner (1986). So, we can say that the interviewees who are younger are more oriented towards the individual, by emphasizing the interests and the values, whereas the older interviewees have a strong sense of community belonging.

*I.15 : « Le problème de la communauté créole c'est je crois qu'elle ne s'est jamais intégrée si elle n'a pas sa place aujourd'hui je trouve qu'elle n'a pas abordé une réflexion sur son avenir dans la société ça veut dire toute réussite que ça soit politique économique sociale culturelle demande un investissement à long terme (...) moi je suis dans une compagnie sondage j'ai besoin d'employer des gradués c'est clair ça on n'a pas besoin de chiffre pour montrer vous recevez 100 applications moi je déduis aujourd'hui si vous voyez 4 gradués créoles c'est beaucoup les autres personnes aussi me disent dans les services financiers c'est encore plus peu ça veut dire par rapport à des postes de responsabilité aujourd'hui que ce soit professionnel le créole est sérieusement en retard sur les autres communautés ».*

Translation: *"The problem of the Creole Community I think is that it has never really been integrated if it has not its place today I think it has not done any thinking about its future in the society it means that all success be it political economic social or cultural requires a long term investment (...) myself I am in a research company I need to employ graduates it's clear you do not need figures to show if you have 100 applications, I conclude that if you see 4 Creole graduates it's a big number; in other sectors as in the financial sector it's worse concerning posts requiring a certain*

*responsibility today in the professional area the Creole is seriously lagging behind compared to other communities”.*

Qu'est ce qui a manqué au niveau de Maurice ?

I.11: « *Je crois qu'il y a un momentum qui a été brisé ok sur une démarche sur la recherche d'une identité culturelle mauricienne parce que l'identité mauricienne n'émergera qu'avec un dialogue des discussions des échanges ben disons les intellectuels et je crois que cette frange qui pouvait amener un point de vue et une contribution à l'émergence de l'identité mauricienne ben il y a une bonne partie de cette tranche là qui est partie ça aurait pu être formel ou informel vous savez en parlant vous et moi l'échange enrichit déjà nos points de vue et nos quêtes vers une identité quelconque c'est dans la fréquentation de l'autre c'est dans les interactions avec l'autre pas nécessairement s'asseoir autour d'une table et débattre formellement autour de la question moi je dis il y a un ensemble peut-être il y a plus d'informel que de formel ».*

Translation: *“I think there is a momentum which has been broken in the search for a cultural Mauritian identity because the Mauritian identity will emerge only with a dialogue, discussions, exchanges among intellectuals and I think this group which could make a good contribution to the country has left the country this could be informal or formal you know while speaking you and me this exchange enriches already our point of views and our quests towards an identity it is in interactions with others not necessarily around a table to discuss formally about this question there is perhaps more informal than formal” .*

## 8. Recommendations emerging from the interviews

Education has been mentioned several times and it implies more than one age-range; in general our interviewees would like education to cater for young people for them to have more respect for others, education should also be for parents

I.11 :« *Je pense certainement à l'éducation pas l'éducation des enfants je pense à l'éducation des parents des adultes je pense qu'il y a de l'investissement à faire pour amener une réflexion je crois qu'il y a des rôles modèles à venir inculquer le sens de la responsabilité et de la contribution du pays et je crois que les rôle modèles peuvent venir de partout je crois qui ont réussi quelle que soit leur appartenance ou groupe ethnique, il faut que eux aussi ils viennent partager comment ils ont réussi il faut pas faire une chose créole quoi il faut que ça soit une démarche nationale »*

So that they can bring up well their children, Mauritian history and citizenship should be taught at school.

- We see that education is very important in the interviewees' perception of how things can be better in Mauritius, and their expectations are clearly oriented towards a qualitative education accessible to all Mauritians and a sense of citizenship.
- Concerning Rodrigues, there are recommendations concerning the change which should be brought about in the way people of Rodrigues are seen in Mauritius:-

I.19 : « *Voilà il me semble comme si dirait par rapport à toute la question d'histoire je trouve que c'est une merveilleuse occasion de mettre en valeur l'histoire propre de Rodrigues et puis je pense que ça a été un peu corrigé parce qu'il y a des prises de conscience de cela mais souvent par exemple dans les livres d'école on représentait le Rodriguais celui qui amène une cajotte poule sur la tête on présentera rarement un Rodriguais dentiste on présentera rarement un Rodriguais pharmacien ou même s'il y a des Rodriguais dentiste médecin et professeur (...) la terre c'est des stéréotypes ça je pense qu'il faut par exemple pour que les Rodriguais travaillent la terre il faut que ça soit rentable on ne peut pas attendre que la pluie tombe disons il faudrait de l'irrigation des marches etc. pour les produits je sais par exemple récemment à Gravier il y avait des milliers de limons qui tombaient car il n'y avait pas de marché*

*pour ça et même s'il y a des effort qui sont faits ça je pense des stéréotypes mettre en valeur l'histoire de Rodrigues et oui puis je vous dis encourager les Rodriguais dans cette grande aventure ».*

Translation: « Concerning the question of history I think it is a good occasion to valorise the specific history of Rodrigues and then I think that this has been partly corrected because of sensitisation but often in school books for example Rodriguans were represented as carrying a hen cage on their head and rarely are the Rodriguans represented as a dentist, doctor or teacher (...) these are stereotypes Rodriguans need to cultivate their land and they cannot wait for rain to fall there needs to be irrigation and a market for example at Gravier there were hundreds of lemons which fell and there was no market even if there are efforts being made there are stereotypes the history of Rodrigues should be valorised and encourage Rodriguans in this great adventure”.

Furthermore, concerning the specificity of the Creole language in Rodrigues, the study of Creole in schools should be adjusted, as well as for public holidays:-

*« se enn kestion kultur ek relizion par examp bann konze public bann jour ferie isi dan rodrigues ena enn jour ferie pou maha shivaratree ok kouma la repiblik isi pa konpran nanie kip e pase enn minorite kip e viv sa alors que pour la fet de la vierge alor que se enne fet katolik la plupar pena konze li enn lane sur deux donk enn lot fet kretienn ki kapav existe fet dieu a lepok tou sa mo krwar ti bizin reget bann zourferie a rodrigue en fonction de la vie rodriguaise par examp le 12 octobre qui est le jour de l'autonomie de rodrigues dimounn travay sa zour la alor ti bizin enn konze sa zour la ena lot conges public ki nou pa konserne monn pran maha shivaratree li kapav enn lot fet religieuse isi nou na enn minority dimounn kapav dan milie profesionel ena bann kamarad de foi hindou ki bizin la me seleman le jour ferie li bizin rekalkile an fonksion de l'histoire de la culture de la religion »*

Translation : «it is a cultural and religious question for example the public holidays here in Rodrigues there is a public holiday for Maha Shivaratree but here we do not understand anything there is a minority which lives this whereas for the Assumption Day it is a Catholic celebration it is once every two years and another Christian celebration would be Fête Dieu all this should be reviewed and the public holidays should in relation with the Rodriguan life for example the 12th October which is the day of the Autonomy of Rodrigues people work on this day and it should be a public holiday on this day. I have taken the example of Maha Sivaratree it could be another religious day where a minority of persons in the professional area some Hindu friend are concerned. However, the public holidays should be recalculated following the history of culture and religion”.

We can see the specificity of Rodrigues which needs to be looked into for a better contextualised life for Rodriguans, be it for religious celebrations as to celebrate their autonomous status.

<p><b>Picture 1</b> Place of meeting with one interviewee, library in Port Mathurin in Alfred North-Coombes Building</p>	<p><b>Picture 2</b> One of the ancestors of the Gentil family who owns the <i>Mon Repos</i> property</p>
	
<p><b>Picture 3</b> Another proprietor of <i>Mon Repos</i>, ancestor of one of our interviewee</p>	<p><b>Picture 4</b> Mrs. GENTIL, mother of one of our interviewees, picture taken with his permission, at his place</p>
	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that urgent consideration be given to the following, easily implemented, actions on the part of Government and the nation:

1. That all Mauritians living abroad, in other countries, who emigrated, either at the time of Independence or more recently, be actively encouraged to return to Mauritius and be welcomed with open arms. A system of Tax Incentives for pensioners or older people should be set up to this end; young people should better be paid in their first graduate positions.
2. That the accusation of 'betraying Mauritius', or any such divisive language or hate discourse, be severely dealt with through a *Bureau* that would investigate accusations of racial abuse against individuals. The use of terms 'mulâtres', 'mozambiques', or such appellations, should be actively punished, as must be any communalistic initiatives or behaviour. Communalistic movements should be discouraged.
3. A programme of Education in civic, humanistic and moral values, aimed at strengthening bonds between communities, should be introduced at all levels, primary, secondary and tertiary. A series of manuals, with gradual and varying contents, should be prepared to this end by teams of educators. A similar public programme of citizenship should be available to adults at large.
4. That a new history of Mauritius be written by a research team, emerging from the Truth and Justice Commission, and using some of the ideas mooted by many communities. This history should emphasise the contribution of *all communities/groups* to the development of the Mauritian nation. A good example of this approach is Jean-Claude de l'Estrac's *L'île Maurice racontée à mes petits enfants*. On the other hand, histories based on one community - e.g. Sino-Mauritians, the 'Coloured Population' - should be actively discouraged. A simplified version of the history of slavery and indentured labour, could also be envisaged for school children.
5. That a *Ministry of Intercultural Affairs* be created by the Government, with the Minister belonging, in turn, to different communities. The programme should be suggested by leaders of various communities in Mauritius.
6. That a programme of *Affirmative Action or positive discrimination*, in the educational area, be launched in Rodrigues to allow young Rodriguans better access to the latest material and resources. The lack of educational resources in Rodrigues is apparent to all, and a relevant Tertiary College, based on the current urgent needs of Rodriguans, should be set up. Education is the key to progress in Rodrigues but it must be offered on their door-step - not only in Mauritius.
7. The Government of Mauritius has a duty to be seen to, but also to genuinely, erase *nepotism* that leads, for example, to individuals being appointed, or promoted, on the basis of "whom you know". This approach and attitude are especially divisive and prevalent in the Civil Service and Ministries. Until it is eradicated, no *Justice* or *Truth* will prevail, and no *Trust* will exist in those in power. Nepotism is, in effect, a form of corruption, and a system of appeal procedures, against either a lack of promotion, or not being appointed, should exist in the country's Civil Service. Australia is a good model of such an appeal system.
8. Political representation of the 'General Population', and the Creoles in particular, and leadership at the top of Government, are essential for the community to retain its confidence in Government. Reference to the community through political parties is insufficient. The community (Coloured and Creole) does not feel that its politicians are eager to look after the 'Creole' interests; rather, they look after their own. A 'malaise créole' still persists because of this among the disadvantaged.

9. The reactions and actions of Government against some daily newspapers, with a 'Creole' leadership - as opposed to other newspapers with Indian financial support - indicate a clear bias against 'Creoles' and any form of critical thinking in the press. Freedom of the Press needs to be restored absolutely, and fairness must prevail. All media must receive the same treatment.

10. A public and in-depth debate on the findings of the Truth and Justice Commission must be held nationwide, lest the communities and those who have worked hard on the Report, should feel that their efforts have been in vain, and that much Truth and sought-after Justice have been brushed under the carpet. This debate should be at grassroots level, on national television and on radio. Truth and Justice Commissioners could be asked to take part. A synopsis of key issues should be produced with the *approval of the Prime Minister and President of the Republic*.

11. Financial compensation or reparation by the 'Coloured Population' for any ancestors who may have been slave-owners, is unthinkable, since the *Gens de couleur* are themselves partly descendants of slaves, and the distribution of 'White' and 'slave' blood is impossible to evaluate. Any such attempt at labelling the *Gens de couleur* as descendants of *esclavagistes* should be discarded altogether and will have a thoroughly divisive and psychologically negative impact.

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MNA NB 127: *Ibid.* (1897-1899).  
MNA NB 45: 'Notarial Acts, Harscher, Flacq District (1816-1822)'.  
MNA NB 56: 'Notarial Acts, Montocchio, Flacq District (1822-1840)'.  
MNA NB 57: *Ibid.* (1840-1854).  
MNA NB 58: *Ibid.* (1854-1857).  
MNA B6: Mauritius Blue Book (1880).

MNA B6: Mauritius Blue Book (1885).

MNA B6: Mauritius Blue Book (1911).

MNA TB6: Rodrigues (1826-1843).

(Found at MNA): Delaleu, M. 1766. *Code des Iles de France et de Bourbon (Code Delaleu)*

Deuxième édition. Port-Louis: Imprimeurs du Gouvernement.

(II) The Nelson Mandela Database on Slave Family History (1823, 1826, 1835): <http://mandelacentre.gov.mu>.

*Mulâtres* and *Mulâtresses* in the following:

- Black River District (1823 - *mulâtres* and *mulâtresses*).
- Black River District (1826 - *mulâtres*).
- Black River District (1826 - *mulâtresses*).
- Plaines Wilhems (1826 - *mulâtres*).
- Plaines Wilhems (1826 - *mulâtresses*).
- Rodrigues (1826 - *mulâtres*).
- Rodrigues (1826 - *mulâtresses*).

(III) Diocese of Rodrigues: St. Gabriel Registers of Births and Marriages, (1896-1921).

(IV) 'Alfred North-Coombes Archives', Alfred North-Coombes Documentation Centre, Anse Quitar, Rodrigues: Several manuscript notebooks held by the Centre, including:

- 86/3 'Visits to Rodrigues, 1937-1989';
- 73/2 'Ships'.
- EE1-EE2 'Newspapers, 1858-1916';
- A.332 'Almanach de l'île Maurice';
- 69/1 'Ex-Apprentices';
- 45/12 'Various';
- 5/1945 'Correspondence de Maragon, 1795-1806';
- 7/45 'Report by W. Kelly on Rodrigues, 1857';
- 13 'Notes from Annual Reports, 1851-1942'.
- 45/12 'Précis on Education, 1871-1933' and 'Scholarships', 1938.

<sup>1</sup> J.B.E. Delaleu, *Codes des Isles de France et de Bourbon* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Isle de France: Imprimerie Royale, 1777).

<sup>2</sup> E. Hitié, *Histoire de Maurice* (Port Louis: Engelbert, 1897), Vol. 1, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> See List of Laureates (1818-1914), Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> Port Louis, Nelson Mandela Centre (No. 1, February 2002), pp. 1-14.

<sup>5</sup> R. Chaudenson, *Des Hommes, des îles, des langues* (1992), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> A. Carpooran, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> In *Paul et Virginie* (J.B. David, translator ELP, 2008), Paul is a Creole, rather than a mulatto, the son of a Breton woman, Marguerite and a Creole (p. 5).

<sup>8</sup> Chaudenson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> MacShane, Denis, and Martin Plant, David Ward, *Power! Black Workers, their unions and the struggle for freedom for South Africa*, South End Press: 1984, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Tsang Man King, 'Langue et littérature', in *Notre Librairie* (No. 54-55, juillet-octobre 1980), pp. 103-104.

<sup>14</sup> A. Billard, *Voyages aux colonies orientales, Réunion: 1990*, p. 35 - our translation.

<sup>15</sup> Paris: 1825, pt. II, pp. 26-27 - our translation.

<sup>16</sup> *Voyage autour du monde entrepris par ordre du Roi [...]*, 1817-1820, Paris: Pillet, 1827-1839.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 384-385.

<sup>18</sup> M.S. Rivière (ed.), *A Woman of Courage*, Canberra: National Library, 2003 and *Rose des Vents*, Stanley: E.O.I., 1996.

- <sup>19</sup> M.S. Rivière, *A Woman of Courage*, p. 34.
- <sup>20</sup> *Recollections of Seven years' Residence at the Mauritius or Ile de France*, London: 1830, p. 56.
- <sup>21</sup> Paris: Barba, 1838, Vol. 1, p. 252.
- <sup>22</sup> Pierre de Sornay points out that this population lived in the "Faubourg de l'Ouest" and the "Camp Libre" in Port Louis (*Ile de France - Ile Maurice*, 1950, p. 276).
- <sup>23</sup> Paris: La Découverte, 1983, pp. 109-110 - our translation.
- <sup>24</sup> *Dictionary of Mauritian Biography* [hereafter *D.M.B.*], p. 894.
- <sup>25</sup> *Les Engagés de la Compagnie des Indes*, Lorient: Service Historique de la Marine, 2004, p. 127.
- <sup>26</sup> *Mauriciens, enfants de mille races*, Port Louis: Caractère Ltée, 2004, p. 171.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.
- <sup>28</sup> André, *op.cit.*, p. 129.
- <sup>29</sup> A. Nagapen, *Histoire de la Colonie, Ile de France - Ile Maurice*, Port-Louis: Diocèse, 1996, p. 29.
- <sup>30</sup> De l'Estrac, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 113-115.
- <sup>31</sup> See M.S. Rivière, *La Plume et l'Épée*, Vacoas : Editions Le Printemps, 2005, p. VII.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>33</sup> *Histoire de la Colonie*, p. 121.
- <sup>34</sup> De l'Estrac, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 172.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 98.
- <sup>36</sup> M. S. Rivière (ed.), *Les Codes Noirs*, Mauritius: Osman, 2009, p. 22.
- <sup>37</sup> De l'Estrac, *op. cit.*, Vol 1, p. 178.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.
- <sup>39</sup> De l'Estrac, Vol. 1. p. 188.
- <sup>40</sup> 'Les Affranchis et les Indiens libres à l'Isle de France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1721-1803) (Doctoral Thesis, 3<sup>e</sup> Cycle, Université de Poitiers).
- <sup>41</sup> De l'Estrac, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 189.
- <sup>42</sup> *From Alien to Citizen: The Integration of the Chinese in Mauritius*, Stanley: E.O.I., 2008, p. 166.
- <sup>43</sup> De l'Estrac, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 213.
- <sup>44</sup> *Op.cit.*, p. 167.
- <sup>45</sup> A. Toussaint, *Histoire des Mascareignes*, p. 46.
- <sup>46</sup> De l'Estrac, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 161. Moutou points out that non-Whites and Coloured individual families owned 630 of 1,627 'domaines' of Mauritius in 1810 (*Les Chrétiens*, p. 141).
- <sup>47</sup> *Culture Créole et foi chrétienne*, Pointe aux Sables: 2007, p. 44.
- <sup>48</sup> *Dire Dieu jusqu'à le célébrer ensemble*, Roche Bois, 2004, p. 197.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.
- <sup>50</sup> Palmyre, *op. cit.*, p. 45 - our translation.
- <sup>51</sup> De l'Estrac, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 191.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 192.
- <sup>53</sup> See above.
- <sup>54</sup> De l'Estrac (Vol. II, p. 77) quotes A. Pitot, *Esquisses Historiques* (1828-1833), p. 301.
- <sup>55</sup> K. Noël, *L'Esclavage*, Paris: Two Cities, p. 69.
- <sup>56</sup> *Histoire de Maurice*, Port Louis: 1897, p. 44.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.
- <sup>59</sup> Mauritius Archives: H.A 80, folio 1.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> MNA: HA 80.
- <sup>63</sup> In the order in which they appear (MNA: HA 80). The police clearly attempted to discredit the signatories. We have given the names, both to identify Coloured people, and to show some of their professions.
- <sup>64</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 131 - our translation.

- <sup>65</sup> In *Les Chrétiens de l'île Maurice*, Moutou stressed that, under the Ordinance of 1829, the 'Coloured people' obtained the right to inherit and gift properties (p. 145).
- <sup>66</sup> J. Chan Low and S. Reddi, 'Malaise Créole - Towards a new ethnic identity?' in *Towards the making of a multi-cultural society*, edited by S. Nirsimloo-Gayan, Moka: MGI Press, 2000, p. 228.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.
- <sup>68</sup> See above for Chaudenson's definition.
- <sup>69</sup> Chan Low and Reddi, p. 231.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.
- <sup>71</sup> De l'Estrac, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 77.
- <sup>72</sup> *Histoire*, p. 247.
- <sup>73</sup> *Mauritian History*, Moka: MGI Press, 2009, p. 339.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.
- <sup>75</sup> Moutou, *Ile Maurice*, no date, p. 59.
- <sup>76</sup> London: Macmillan, 1914, p. 139.
- <sup>77</sup> M. S. Rivière, *Les Codes Noirs*, p. 20.
- <sup>78</sup> Noël, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
- <sup>79</sup> A. Nagapen, *Histoire de l'Église*, Port Louis: Diocese, 1996, p. 14.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>81</sup> Port Louis: Best Graphics, 1996, pp. 34-155.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- <sup>83</sup> See Nagapen, *Histoire de l'Église*, pp. 123-142.
- <sup>84</sup> See Nagapen, *Histoire de l'Église*, p. 105 ff.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105 - our translation.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105 - our translation.
- <sup>87</sup> Véder, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.
- <sup>88</sup> Chan Low and Reddi, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
- <sup>89</sup> Moutou signals that between 1842 and 1849, the following numbers of Catholic marriages were celebrated in Port Louis: 1842 (131); 1843 (190); 1844 (223); 1845 (259); 1846 (375); 1847 (452); 1848 (434); 1849 (564); in *Les Chrétiens*, p. 280.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- <sup>91</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 171 - our translation.
- <sup>92</sup> 'Les premières années de l'Église adventiste à Maurice', *Week-End*, Sunday 8 May, 2011, pp. 70-71.
- <sup>93</sup> See M. S. Rivière, *La Plume et l'épée: Mémoires de Mahé de La Bourdonnais (1740-1742)*, Vacoas : Eds. Le Printemps, 2005 - our translation.
- <sup>94</sup> We wish to express our gratitude to Marie-France Chelin-Goblet who has put at our disposal the manuscript notes of her father, Antoine Chelin, on the education of young people under the French administration, 1721-1810.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Notes, p. 4.
- <sup>96</sup> Chelin, Notes, pp. 8-9.
- <sup>97</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
- <sup>98</sup> MNA: HA 16.
- <sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>100</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 92 our translation.
- <sup>101</sup> MNA: HA 70.
- <sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>103</sup> MNA: HA 70.
- <sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>105</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
- <sup>106</sup> See M. S. Rivière, *No Man is an Island*, Stanley: E.O.I., 2008, pp. 150-152.
- <sup>107</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 168 - our translation.
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.
- <sup>109</sup> MNA: HA 80 ('Coloured Population').

- <sup>110</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
- <sup>111</sup> Nagapen, *Histoire de la Colonie*, p. 75.
- <sup>112</sup> Nagapen, *Ibid.*, p. 68.
- <sup>113</sup> De Sornay, p. 104.
- <sup>114</sup> Teelock, *Mauritian History*, p. 337.
- <sup>115</sup> De Sornay, pp. 445-446.
- <sup>116</sup> O.J. Bijoux, *Rémy Ollier. Sa vie et son œuvre*, Port Louis : Nouvelle Imprimerie Coopérative, 1910, p. 153 : 'Prospectus de *La Sentinelle*'.
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.
- <sup>118</sup> *D.M.B.*, p. 895.
- <sup>119</sup> Bijoux, *op. cit.*, p. 262 - our translation.
- <sup>120</sup> J.-G. Prosper (ed.), *Mémorial Rémy Ollier*, Moka: MGI Press, 1995, p. 40.
- <sup>121</sup> Rivière, *Les Codes Noirs*, pp. XXX-XXXI.
- <sup>122</sup> Moutou quotes Evenor Hitié: "The whole Coloured Population went to bed free and woke up the next day as slaves." (*Les Chrétiens*, p. 140) - our translation.
- <sup>123</sup> Ordinance 170, ratified on 29 August, 1767, at Isle de France, and at Bourbon on 9 November, 1767 (Mauritius Archives, *Code Delaleu*, Port Louis: Mallac, 1826, Article III, p. 170).
- <sup>124</sup> *Le Cernéen*, No. 115 (22 February, 1833) - our translation.
- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* - our translation.
- <sup>126</sup> 18 January, 1793 - our translation.
- <sup>127</sup> *Le Cernéen*, No. 115 (22 February, 1822).
- <sup>128</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
- <sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82 - our translation.
- <sup>130</sup> *Le Cernéen*, 19 February, 1833.
- <sup>131</sup> *Le Cernéen*, 22 February, 1833.
- <sup>132</sup> *Le Cernéen*, 19 February, 1833 - our translation.
- <sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* - our translation.
- <sup>134</sup> MNA: HA 15.
- <sup>135</sup> No. 246, 19 December, 1829.
- <sup>136</sup> Hitié, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
- <sup>137</sup> Nagapen, *Histoire de l'Église*, p. 98 - our translation.
- <sup>138</sup> *Isle de France-Ile Maurice*, p. 89 - our translation.
- <sup>139</sup> B. Moutou, *Ile Maurice*, p. 56.
- <sup>140</sup> *La Sentinelle*, 4 February, 1850, No. 1001.
- <sup>141</sup> Marie Jean Baptiste Léchelle (1789-1856), Financier, was Mayor for four years, from 1850-1863; in April 1850, he sat on the Council of Government (*D.M.B.*, p. 52).
- <sup>142</sup> Nagapen, *Histoire de la Colonie*, p. 73.
- <sup>143</sup> Bijoux, *op. cit.*, p. 170 - our translation.
- <sup>144</sup> Bijoux, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
- <sup>145</sup> Teelock, *Mauritian History*, p. 338.
- <sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337.
- <sup>147</sup> Rivière, *No Man is an Island*, p. 257.
- <sup>148</sup> Teelock, *Mauritian History*, pp. 339-340.
- <sup>149</sup> *D.M.B.*, pp. 369-370.
- <sup>150</sup> Teelock, *op.cit.*, p. 340
- <sup>151</sup> In 1886, there were only 353 Indian and Muslim electors.
- <sup>152</sup> *D.M.B.*, p. 194: Onésipho Beugeard (1832-1898), son of François Lazard Beugeard; resident surgeon of the Civil Hospital (1865-1876); leader of the democratic party in the 1880s; Director of the Beau-Bassin Asylum.
- <sup>153</sup> Elected members in 1886 were: Port Louis (O. Beugeard and G. de Coriolis); Black River (V. Geoffroy); Plaines Wilhems (C. Antelme); Moka (H. Leclézi); Pamplemousses (C. Planel); Rivière du Rempart (E. Antelme); Flacq (H. Adam); Savanne (V. Naz); Grand Port (H. Portal). Teelock, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

- <sup>154</sup> Dinan, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- <sup>155</sup> Census, 1881, p. 30.
- <sup>156</sup> MNA: B6. *Blue Book*, 1885, ‘Statutory’, Mauritius Archives.
- <sup>157</sup> There were only 2 scholarships awarded annually.
- <sup>158</sup> MNA: B6. *Blue Book* (1885).
- <sup>159</sup> Mauritius, *Mercantile Record*: 1881, p. 30.
- <sup>160</sup> Chan Low and Reddi, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
- <sup>161</sup> *Mauritian History*, pp. 346-347.
- <sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347.
- <sup>163</sup> *Ile Maurice*, p. 67: “The campaign was put on the back-burner” – our translation.
- <sup>164</sup> *Histoire de la Colonie*, p. 112.
- <sup>165</sup> De L’Estrac, Vol. 2, p. 222.
- <sup>166</sup> *D.M.B.*, p. 434.
- <sup>167</sup> *Mauritian History*, pp. 350-355.
- <sup>168</sup> *D.M.B.*, p. 905.
- <sup>169</sup> Sir Edgar Laurent, Doctor and Politician (1885-1968), founded the *Union Mauricienne*, a brilliant student of the Royal College; elected at the Municipal Elections of 1927 and a Mayor of Port Louis, he remained a shining star and a champion of the ‘Coloured Population’ (*D.M.B.*, pp. 1048-1049).
- <sup>170</sup> *Ile Maurice*, p. 62.
- <sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- <sup>172</sup> Port Louis: Best Graphics, 1985, p. 39.
- <sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40 – our translation.
- <sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- <sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.
- <sup>176</sup> If one goes back to 1961, from then on, 9,044 official emigrants headed down under.
- <sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- <sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- <sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- <sup>180</sup> Arthur Pierre Léoville L’Homme, poet, librarian, journalist (1857-1928), *D.M.B.*, p. 276.
- <sup>181</sup> *D.M.B.*, p. 949.
- <sup>182</sup> *D.M.B.*, pp. 2164-2165.
- <sup>183</sup> *Petrusmok*, 1952.
- <sup>184</sup> *D.M.B.*, pp. 1962-1964. He also wrote a biography of Sir S. Ramgoolam.
- <sup>185</sup> Monique Dinan, *Une île éclatée*, p. 239.
- <sup>186</sup> Aude-Emmanuelle Hoareau, *Concepts pour penser créole*, Réunion, 2010: “Le métissage est le mouvement même de la culture, pourquoi en avoir peur? [Metissage is the natural evolution of culture. Why be afraid of it?” (p. 13).
- <sup>187</sup> Paris: Actes du Sud, 1989.
- <sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8 – our translation.
- <sup>189</sup> T. Arno, C. Orian, *Ile Maurice. Une société multiraciale*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1986, pp. 37-38.
- <sup>190</sup> P.J. Barnwell, A. Toussaint, *A Short History of Mauritius*, London: Longmans, 1949, pp. 143.
- <sup>191</sup> A. Toussaint, *Le mirage des îles : le négoce français aux Mascareignes au XVIIIe siècle*, Aix-en-Provence: EDISUD, 1977, p. 23.
- <sup>192</sup> R.B. Allen, *Creoles, Indian Immigrants and the Restructuring of Society and Economy in Mauritius, 1767-1885*, 293 p. (Ph. D. Thesis: History: University of Illinois), 1983, pp. 111-113.
- <sup>193</sup> C. Boudet, *Les Franco-Mauriciens entre Maurice et l’Afrique du Sud : identité, stratégies migratoires et processus de recommunaurisation* (Ph. D. Thesis: Political Science: Institute of Political Studies of Bordeaux, France), 2004, p. 59.
- <sup>194</sup> J.-F. Dupon, *Contraintes insulaires et fait colonial aux Mascareignes et aux Seychelles : étude de géographie humaine*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 4 volumes, 1620 p. (Ph. D. Thesis: Geography: University of Lille III, France), 1977, p. 546.
- <sup>195</sup> R. Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-176.
- <sup>196</sup> T. Arno, C. Orian, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- <sup>197</sup> T. Arno, C. Orian, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

- <sup>198</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, 2004, p. 68.
- <sup>199</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, 2004, p. 71.
- <sup>200</sup> *Dictionary of Mauritian Biography*, Vol. 11, October 1943, p. 345.
- <sup>201</sup> Boudet, *op. cit.*, 2004, p. 76.
- <sup>202</sup> R. Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-234.
- <sup>203</sup> H.C. Brookfield, 'Pluralism and geography in Mauritius', *Geographical Studies*, vol. V, N°1, pp. 10-11.
- <sup>204</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
- <sup>205</sup> R. d'Unienville, *Histoire politique de l'Isle de France : 1789-1791*, Port Louis: Mauritius Archives Publications, 1975, p. 76.
- <sup>206</sup> The National Constituent Assembly (in French: '*Assemblée nationale constituante*') was formed from the National Assembly on 9 July, 1789, during the first stages of the French Revolution. Following the storming of the Bastille on 14 July, the National Constituent Assembly became the effective Government of France.
- <sup>207</sup> R. d'Unienville, *Histoire politique de l'Isle de France : 1791-1794*, Port-Louis: Mauritius Archives Publications, 1982, p. 124.
- <sup>208</sup> H. Prentout, *L'Isle de France sous Decaen 1803-1810. Essai sur la politique coloniale du Premier Empire et la rivalité de la France et de l'Angleterre dans les Indes orientales*, Paris: Hachette, 1901, pp. 123, 255-256.
- <sup>209</sup> A. Pitot, *L'Isle de France : Esquisses historiques 1810-1823*, Port Louis: Coignet, vol. I, 1910, pp. 164-165.
- <sup>210</sup> V. Teelock, *Bitter Sugar: Sugar and Slavery in 19th-Century Mauritius*, Moka: Mahatma Gandhi Institute, 1998, p. 31.
- <sup>211</sup> L.R. Quenette, *L'appel aux urnes*, Moka: Mahatma Gandhi Institute, 1986, p. 2.
- <sup>212</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
- <sup>213</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, p. 109 .
- <sup>214</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
- <sup>215</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
- <sup>216</sup> C. Boudet, 'L'émergence de la démocratie consociative à Maurice (1948-1968)', *Annuaire des Pays de l'Océan Indien*, Vol. XVII, 2003, pp. 325-336.
- <sup>217</sup> A.S. Simmons, *Modern Mauritius. The Politics of Decolonization*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, pp. 95-97.
- <sup>218</sup> C. Boudet, *op. cit.*, 2003, pp. 325-336.
- <sup>219</sup> C. Boudet, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
- <sup>220</sup> Many families of British origins were assimilated into the Franco-Mauritian group as a result of these matrimonial alliances: Bathfield, Blyth, Rogers, Taylor, North-Coombes, etc. C. Boudet, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- <sup>221</sup> *Recueil de documents pour servir à l'histoire de Rodrigues*, Mauritius Archives Publications, No. 10, Port Louis : Coquet, 1969, p. 7.
- <sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>223</sup> 'L'Isle Rodrigues: Expérience de développement d'un milieu tropical dans l'Archipel des Mascareignes', in *Extrait des Annales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Aix*, Tome XLII (1967), P. 10.
- References are to this bound, re-typed, copy - our translation.
- <sup>224</sup> Alfred North-Coombes, *The Island of Rodrigues*, Frist edition 1971; revised edition 2001 (Mauritius: Book Printing Services Ltd.), p. 56.
- <sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- <sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61. See also L.J. Paul, *La Police à Rodrigues*, Roche Bois: High Quality, 2000.
- <sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- <sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55. According to Bertuchi (*The Island of Rodrigues*, London: 1923), Le Gros left his seven slaves in his will (1840) to Louise "dite Le Gros" and his property 'Les Soupirs' to Séraphine Pipon (p. 26).
- <sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58. Raffin gave his name to a spot known today as 'Anse Raffin'.
- <sup>230</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 10 - our translation.
- <sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11 - our translation.
- <sup>233</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
- <sup>234</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- <sup>235</sup> G.O. No. 25, dated 15.3.1826, quoted by A. North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
- <sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- <sup>237</sup> A. Chellin, *Une île et son passé*, Réunion : CRI, 1989, p. 236.
- <sup>238</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 82. In 1845, there were 324 inhabitants of whom 84 were 'White/Coloured'.

- <sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- <sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- <sup>241</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- <sup>242</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 12. *The Planters and Commercial Gazette* of 19 July, 1877, showed ample prejudice when it said of the 'zhabitants': "It is difficult to shake the inhabitants of Rodrigues from their torpor and nonchalance [...] They are contented to plant the maize and manioc necessary for their own consumption, but besides that, they wish to work neither for themselves, nor for others."
- <sup>243</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 12 - our translation.
- <sup>244</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 271. One of the most eminent 'Coloured' *métis*' of Rodrigues in the early days was Blaise Pacy who replaced Marshall as Police Chief; he arrived in December 1843 and was a man "of strict integrity" (*Ibid.*, p. 84).
- <sup>245</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
- <sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- <sup>247</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- <sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>249</sup> A 'Report on Crownland and Forests at Rodrigues' (1880) noted that 103 people had left because "there was no [economic] security for them and their families."
- <sup>250</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 11, *The Planters and Commercial Gazette* of 19 July, 1881, encouraged Mauritian settlers to emigrate: "The population is very limited and the soil rich and fertile, and it can easily be cultivated." By 1883, there were 1,581 inhabitants, and in 1884, 1,636, in 1890, 2,010.
- <sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>252</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- <sup>253</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
- <sup>254</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 11 - our translation.
- <sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>256</sup> North-Coombest, *op. cit.*, p. 22 ff.
- <sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.
- <sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227. In July 1881, the Bishop of Mauritius, Mgr. Peter Royston, celebrated at least 14 baptisms; the *Planters and Commercial Gazette* reported that one of the children of the pilot at Port Mathurin, M. Vandorous, took the name *Euryalus*, in memory of the ship that had brought Sir Napier Broome and Lady Barker, in June 1881, to Rodrigues (15.7.1881). The school at St. Gabriel opened in 1881.
- <sup>259</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
- <sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.
- <sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242. The first full-time official Anglican priest in charge of the Parish of St. Barnabas was J. W. Courtes Lavers from 26.7.1903 to 29.2.1908.
- <sup>262</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- <sup>263</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- <sup>264</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- <sup>265</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
- <sup>266</sup> *La Ferme* was developed as from 1890.
- <sup>267</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- <sup>268</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
- <sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.
- <sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.
- <sup>271</sup> The first scholarships to enable young Rodriguans attend secondary schools in Mauritius were offered in 1938, as suggested by Le Roy.
- <sup>272</sup> A report by A. Boucherat on 31 May, 1886, deplored the fact that: "During the bad season, December to April, Rodrigues is literally shut out from the rest of the civilized world. Hope something will be done to change this state of affairs." Thankfully, the network of roads is now much improved and adequate.
- <sup>273</sup> Edited by J.F. Dupon, *Mauritius Archives Publications*, No. 10, Port Louis: Coquet, 1969.
- <sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- <sup>275</sup> Dupon, *L'Île Rodrigues* [...], p. 15 - our translation.
- <sup>276</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 96. See also Dupon, *L'Île Rodrigues*, p. 15.

<sup>277</sup> In 1885, writing in the *Planters and Commercial Gazette* (21.5.1885), a 'Gentleman' deplored the 'barter system' and proclaimed: "The unfortunate small cultivators and producers of the island must be delivered from the chains of a monopoly which amounts to absolute tyranny."

<sup>278</sup> 2002, p. 96.

<sup>279</sup> In Savrimuthu-Carta, « La construction identitaire des adolescents à l'épreuve du 'communalisme' à l'île Maurice », Thèse de Doctorat, Université de la Réunion, 2010.

VOLUME 3

**CONTEMPORARY HISTORY,  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys

**PART III**

**CONSEQUENCES OF SLAVERY AND  
INDENTURE ON SOCIAL STATUS,  
CULTURE AND ETHNICITY**



**PART III**

**CONSEQUENCES OF SLAVERY AND  
INDENTURE ON SOCIAL STATUS, CULTURE  
AND ETHNICITY**

**BENJAMIN MOUTOU**

*Commissioner - Truth and Justice Commission*

**VIJAYALAKSHMI TEELOCK**

*Vice-Chairperson - Truth and Justice Commission*

# **RACISM DISCOURSE, POLICY, PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE IN MAURITIUS**

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*'..If prejudice is a monster, it is a protean, ubiquitous, treacherous one; in order to destroy it, one has to scrutinize and attack the socio-economic infrastructures which generate it, the cultural foundations which feed it; reforming them is the only way to extirpate the monster.'*<sup>1</sup>

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Several authors have contributed to this report and need to be acknowledged and thanked for their important work. The research team on *Race Discourse, Policy, Practice and Experience* has, in general, submitted data or provided research assistance, which has been useful in analysing the consequences of racism in Mauritius, in order to fulfil the mandate of the Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission. The data collected is synthesized, analysed and presented in this report. The collection and collation of data, however, would not be entirely possible without the additional assistance of administrators at the TJC. Thus, we would also like to thank the administrators and commissioners of the TJC, who facilitated the logistical aspects of running the project and also assisted in sourcing valuable contacts for the research.

Readers of this report will note that it includes substantive extracts from interviews and observations. The reason for including these extracts is so that the actual words and experiences of Mauritians are expressed. The extracts are also included to support or advance arguments made by the team. These extracts were supplied by three key researchers on the team: Nosipho Mngomezulu who has researched the experiences of the youths in Mauritius; Sophie Le Chartier who has researched the general experiences of racism as well as the role of institutions in promoting racist practices; Ingrid van der Heijden who researched the construction of identity and race among the Franco-Mauritians and Tsidi Tshabalala (the team's clinical psychologist) who investigated the psychological burdens of racism. Research assistants: Yogita Kunvar, Dreesha Teelwah and Nitisha Chacoory conducted general observations and interviews on gender and racial discrimination. Thus, I would also like to thank all members of the team who contributed to the project, including research assistants who helped us at the last moment. As the final editor of this reports, however, I (Rosabelle Boswell [nee Laville]) take full responsibility for the collating and analysis of the data. Finally but by no means least, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to the Mauritians who contributed to this research project. Without your input, we would not have the deep understanding (which we now have), of the legacies of racism and its impact on the population.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the discourses, practices and experiences of race in Mauritius. This is no small task, given the complexity of identities and the complexities of social structure in Mauritius. The society is affected by racial prejudice, is cut across by class and caste and is still largely patriarchal. Furthermore, as a modernising State, Mauritius is experiencing new waves of immigration, the increased use of internet technology, an increased participation in global business as well as increasing numbers of international tourists. These changes are impacting on social relations transforming Mauritius into a globalised society and its people, global citizens. In view of the transformative capacity of globalisation one might ask why one would 'need' the investigation of racial discourses and practices, especially at a time when Mauritius is experiencing positive economic growth and has relative social stability. Is there not a risk that a report of this nature will bring about instability or further distrust? We, the team members, argue that this is not the case. As we found out, Mauritians long for an honest reflection on the past as well as an honest account of the present.

Secondly, elsewhere (and as one of the team members for this research project noted), in the South Africa, where there was a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), 'a context where pluralism is seen as a fragile matrix, discussion of inter-racial discord is seen as a negative, destabilising peace (Kayser 2005:18)' (Mngomezulu 2011). Thus this report also argues (apart from the fact that the Government of Mauritius has approved the creation of a Truth and Justice Commission), that developing societies need to achieve both social and economic advancement. No society can claim to have 'progressed', if it has a significant percentage of its population either living in poverty and/or experiencing racial marginalisation on a daily basis (Das, Kleinman, Ramphele, Reynolds 2001). It is the finding of this team that the negative legacies of slavery and indenture are still evident in Mauritius and continue to impede social justice and economic progress.

The data collected for, and presented in, this report specifically focuses on the descendants of slaves and the descendants of indentured labourers. As is noted in the report, it is not easy to clearly and definitively distinguish between these two categories mainly because slavery has been abolished for nearly two centuries in Mauritius and also because the population of Mauritius has experienced significant interethnic mixing since the abolition of slavery. However, in the course of this research, there were individuals who identified themselves as descendants of slaves or descendants of indentured labourers, referring to either phenotype or immigration records to assert a particular identity. In compiling this report, we have remained sensitive to issues of identity construction and assertion but have not lost sight of the fact that a significant percentage of slave descendants and indentured labour descendants exist in Mauritius and that these identities, as well as the fact that the experiences that flow from these are real.

The data collected for the report was collected intermittently over a period of two years. However, the report does not claim to offer an exhaustive account of racial experiences in Mauritius, and it is proposed that this report be read in conjunction with the more detailed, individual and mostly anthropological accounts produced by the researchers on this project.

The report begins with an analysis of the origins of race discourse, tracing this back to the mid 1450s, when Pope Nicholas V endorsed a Papal Bull which enabled the Portuguese to enslave black Africans in the Congo. While slavery itself predates the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was from this time onwards that Europeans became 'involved' more systematically in the enslavement of black Africans. With regard to Mauritius, it is noted that from the beginning of the Enlightenment era in Europe, Science was used to assert the existence of races and their unequal treatment. Prominent scientists of the day, such as George Cuvier, Johannes Blumenbach and Carl Linnaeus, set the foundation for racist thinking. Literary giants, such as Voltaire, also promoted racist thinking, ranking black Africans lower than all other identified racial groups. The works of these scholars promoted a trait-based concept of race in which members of a particular race group are believed to be geographically located. Thus, racial groups are the way they are because they evolved separately in different geographical locations. In doing so, they also developed particular physical and intellectual capacities.

The work of these scientists and scholars emerged into the public sphere, influencing public opinion, social discourse and ultimately the Law. In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte's reassertion of the *Code Noir* in France's territories (a set of laws designed to regulate the slave system and categorise black slaves as property), led to the consolidation of racist practices in society. The *Code Noir* was implemented in Mauritius and attempted to fully control the lives of slaves and their descendants.

Who were these slaves? Although this report does not offer a substantive account of that history, it is important to note that there were also slaves of Indian origins in Mauritius. From what we gather from secondary sources on the treatment of slaves in general, these individuals must have also experienced the same hardships as those coming from Africa. Furthermore, the abolition of slavery in 1835 and the arrival of indentured labourers from the subcontinent of India in Mauritius continued the legacy of slave practices. As historians on Mauritius, such as Megan Vaughan, Vijaya Teelock and Marina Carter, remind us - the system of apprenticeship ensured the oppression of slave descendants and then indentured labourers after abolition.

A key argument made in this report (as well as most of the evidence supplied in this report) suggests that Mauritians with a visually discernable African ancestry have experienced, and continue to experience racism more directly and regularly than others in Mauritian society. These individuals, today discussed as slave descendants, find it difficult to experience belonging to a Mauritian society and also experience discrimination in various social and economic spaces across the island. Secondly, it is argued that there is a similar experience among those who may be identified as indentured labour descendants. For the latter, however, there is also discrimination on the basis of caste, such that (and the Social Stratification project should provide further information on this), caste becomes an essential category with biological overtones. A further argument made in this report is that race relations in Mauritius are cut across by age and gender. Therefore, to address the issue of racial inequality and discrimination in Mauritius, the Government and/or other responsible bodies will need to factor in these cross-cutting issues. Lastly, the report discusses the long-term psychological and social consequences of racism in Mauritius, specifically the entrenchment of racist thinking and practice and the normalisation of these.

Finally, the above noted quotation is taken from a literary analysis of Alexandre Dumas, novel entitled *Georges* which was published in 1843 and which concerns the racial fortunes of a mulatto man in Mauritius. This story illustrates the difficulties involved in overcoming racism and racist thought in Mauritius. The fortunes of Georges also indicate the complexity of race in Mauritian society during the time of slavery. This report documents a continuation of this social complexity and of the embedding of racism in Mauritian society. Unlike Dumas' novel, however, this report offers recommendations for the Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission.

## INTRODUCTION

The achievement of a democratic society depends not just on the good will of its citizens; it also requires both insight and political will among its leaders to achieve equality and justice. By approving the creation of a Truth and Justice Commission (TJC), the Mauritius Government is pledging to commit itself to the achievement of equality and social justice in the society.

Mauritius is a young democracy which forms part of a global society that prides itself on the protection and advancement of Human Rights. Mauritius also aspires to be a model society and economy among the developing countries of the global South. To achieve these important objectives, it is important for the current and democratically elected government, to pursue not only economic partnerships with emerging and established economies, but also social justice. To this end, the Government of Mauritius has, following the example of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), mandated a Truth and Justice Commission to investigate the legacies of slavery and indentured labour.

This report should be read in conjunction with the nine other reports commissioned by the Mauritius Government on the subject of the legacies of slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius. The report does not pretend to offer an exhaustive account of the myriad ways in which the much maligned concept of race has been abused and utilised to entrench power and privilege in Mauritius. Nor does it claim to offer data that is unknown in Mauritius regarding the issue of race in the country. This is because the purpose of this research is not completely academic but rather applied, in which there is an effort to discover and reveal to the Mauritian public the various facets and implications of racism in Mauritius and to suggest ways in which to eradicate racism.

Thus, many of the stories, experiences and reflections on racism, racist experience and the discourse of racism, discussed in the findings of this report, will be familiar to Mauritians and those tasked with 'putting things right' but this does not mean that the findings are invalid. On the contrary, what the researchers in this project have done and are expected to do by the Truth and Justice Commission is to reveal to the Mauritian public in as much detail as possible: the nature, form, experience and discourse of racism in Mauritius. In other words, to bring to light, that which has been hidden from public view or not publicly discussed. This means that while some of the content may be familiar to the Mauritian public, what this report hopes to do is to offer a substantive account of the taboo and rarely publicly articulated subject of race in Mauritius.

Thus far, while a number of scholars both national and international have debated the issue of identity in Mauritius, - none have offered a substantive analysis and recommendations for change. This fact is elaborated upon in the brief literature review on the subject of race offered further on in this report.

The report itself is structured as follows: first, a brief rationale for the study is offered and the research team is introduced. This is followed by a review of recent and historical literature on race and includes a contemporary definition of the concept. The literature review reveals possible methods and methodologies (theory of method) to assist in the study of race in Mauritius. It also indicates 'gaps' in the analyses of identity in literature on Mauritian society. These gaps also indicate the relative concern of not discussing the issue of race, not just among the population but also among those tasked with investigating issues of identity more broadly.

The substantive parts of the report, which contain the findings of the research team, are divided into several parts. Part 1 considers the role of discourse in the construction of race; Part 2 discusses socialisation and experiences of racism; Part 3 discusses cross-cutting identities and racism, in other words, how does class and gender influence racial experiences; Part 4 reflects mostly on the psychological burdens of racism, discussing the impact of racist events and aversive racism. Part 5 of the report contains the recommendations and conclusions. As the evidence is based on narrative (interviews, conversations and observations), these are indented throughout the text for ease of reference. The analyses of the data by the Team Leader are distinguished from the data collected by the researchers and research assistants.

## The Rationale for the Study

Reflecting on transatlantic slavery and its impact on slaves and their descendants, the author, James Dawkins<sup>2</sup> notes that in the 1800s: [...] the British Government and Crown [...] sanctioned the use of racism in order to rationalise the existence of the slave trade, justify the forced subjugation of Africans, and to mitigate rising public dissent towards the profitable enterprise, (BBC 2007, cited in Dawkins 2010:8). Another source clearly indicates the profit made by slave owners in the British Empire. In 1838 some 800,000 people were freed throughout the Empire. The slave owners were paid some 20 million pounds Sterling for the loss of their labour. This amounted to approximately 40 percent of Britain's national budget at the time or some 1.34 billion pounds Sterling in today's money. The slaves received nothing (BBC online 2007). It would be 'easy' to argue that all that slave descendants (and those who suffered under slavery and indenture) need is monetary compensation. However, this report documents the long term non-fiscal damage which racism has wrought in Mauritius. Thus (and as the research team argues) there is a real need for more substantive work and research on the range of reparations needed to heal Mauritian society.

Referring to a range of sources, Dawkins argues that racism dramatically impoverished African slaves and their descendants. Citing the work of Crawford (2003), Dawkins (2010: 18) argues that, 'the oppressive and forcefully inhumane conditions that were imposed on Africans, generated cultures of fear, mistrust, uncertainty, racial resentment, sexual objectification and self-hate upon slave plantations. They also created conditions of abject poverty, profound mortality via the gross overworking of slaves, ignorance through the strict prohibition of reading and writing, and mental, spiritual and material dependence on the slave master'. These pathologies, Dawkin argues, continue into the present day. In the United States, the descendants of African slaves are still among the poorest of Americans; they experience high rates of incarceration and single parenthood, as well as drug addictions. While members of this research team do not believe that slave descendants and those categorised as the descendants of indentured labourers did not possess any resilience in the face of such horrors. We do agree that similar patterns of disadvantage and suffering are evident in Mauritius. We feel, like James Dawkins, that reparations are necessary and very long overdue.

This project, identified as Project 4, forms a part of the *Culture and Ethnicity* project of the Truth and Justice Commission (TJC). Following the inscription of Le Morne mountain (a symbol of liberation from slavery and oppression in Mauritius) as a World Heritage, the Mauritius Government mandated the creation of a Truth and Justice Commission to investigate the legacies of slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius and to produce recommendations regarding the nature of reparations to these disaffected populations.

The purpose of Project 4 is to investigate the contemporary discourse, policy, practice and experience of race in Mauritius. The investigation of racial experiences via the above-noted 'frames' is necessary, as it hopes to determine, in a holistic manner, the particular legacies of slavery and indenture in Mauritius.

We chose to examine 'discourse' because we feel that in Mauritian society, one can identify the normalisation and internalisation of pernicious ideas about 'race'; ideas that emphasise the inequality of people and encourage assumptions about their personality and potential as human beings.

In our research, we found that racial 'discourse' is based on, and fed by, assumptions and ideas about those perceived to be racially different from the Self. We also found that the system of slavery in Mauritius and the continued oppression of slave descendants are largely justified by racist discourse. As the slave system became less palatable to enslaving nations, it became necessary to promote racist discourse. If those enslaved were fundamentally different from, and inferior to, the enslavers, then slavery could be justified.

After the abolition of slavery and the achievement of independence from colonial rule, racist discourse was perpetuated to continue the social and economic oppression of slave descendants. The economic system of capitalism in these states (including Mauritius) needed an oppressed working class so that profits could be maximised. In the period of slavery, justification for the system came from crude interpretations of evolution and natural selection (Social Darwinism) and

the subsequent development of scientific racism in Europe and America. Black Africans were socially constructed as an inferior race in need of civilisation and Christianisation. In the post-abolition phase and after independence, racist discourse includes the promotion of more subtle, but still pernicious, ideas about the intellectual capacity and rationality of slave descendants. We also note that in this period, there are increasingly complex assumptions about the purported inferiority of the African phenotype and involves the construction of racial difference as real. Thus people would argue that they find it difficult to 'understand' slave descendants because they are so 'different' from 'us'.

We also chose to examine racial practices in Mauritius because discourse does not stand alone. Racist practices flow from racist discourse. Thus we found that although not publicly sanctioned, racial practices flourish in Mauritius and affect every sphere of social existence - socialisation, schooling, sports, work, marriage and religious belief. In short, we have attempted to provide a glimpse of what the South African historian, Paul Maylam, says was missing from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which is the 'broader destructive impact of the whole system' (Maylam 2005:138).

Policies and experiences of racism emerge from the racial discourses and practices mentioned previously. For this reason, we also chose to examine these two things. However, given the fact that Mauritius did not institutionalise segregation, it has been notoriously difficult to ascertain how social policies might encourage racial discrimination. We feel that these issues might be better addressed by a policy analyst and also a legal expert, i.e. individuals who might be in a better position to decipher the *precise* ways in which existing policies, as well as laws, continue to discriminate against certain sectors of the society. At the time of our research, we came across a report commissioned by the Mauritius Government regarding discrimination in Mauritian law. However, our efforts to obtain a copy of this report in order to follow up on claims made, was not successful. Our suspicion (given the data we have already collected) is that it is not so much the policies and laws themselves that are problematic but rather their *interpretation* by Mauritians.

Those who have conducted research for this report are fully cognizant of the fact that the achievement of reparations involves a complex process. Part of the rationale for this project is that we wanted to investigate some of the social complexities that the TJC would have to confront. From the perspective of this project for instance, we are aware that it is near impossible to assess what the legal experts call the *quantum of damage* caused by slavery and indentured labour or one could say that it is impossible to calculate the depth and breadth of damage caused by the institutions of slavery and indentured labour. The trauma, mistrust, poor levels of community cooperation, self-doubt and other pathologies of oppression are difficult to quantify and may be passed on (as we note in Part 4 of this report), from one generation to the next. What our research hopefully does is to shed light on this complexity so that a multilevel and multipronged approach can be taken in addressing the legacies of slavery and indentured labour.

This report, however difficult this is, also makes an attempt to distinguish between the experiences of slavery and indentured labour. While the TJC Bill suggests that these two experiences may have been familiar and that both experiences are important to our understanding of the legacies of slavery and indentured labour; it is our contention that there is a qualitative difference between the racial experiences of slave descendants and the experiences of indentured labour descendants. Put very succinctly, those identified as slave descendants or more accurately as Creoles, experience racism more directly if not more profoundly in Mauritius. Those identified as descendants of indentured labourers experience a cross-cutting range of discriminations based on their class, caste and gender. Because racial discourses, practices and experiences overlap with discriminations experienced on the basis of class, caste and gender, it was sometimes difficult for us to tease out the varying strands of discrimination and to carefully and critically explain what we were observing and hearing.

This 'discovery' presents a challenge (as we argue at the end of this report) to fully and properly conclude a discussion regarding reparations. Furthermore (and this is also discussed), the issue of who is a slave descendant and who is an indentured labour descendant also needs clarification. The research revealed that only a few have internalised these categories of identification. Creoles were more likely to appropriate and speak about slave descendants. Others often referred to them as just 'Creoles.' Creoles rarely referred to themselves as Afro-Mauritians (Benoit 1985).

Another reason for doing this research is to show that, in contrast to what some Mauritians may believe, ethnic and racial categories are not easily delineated. For example, indentured labourer descendents may have slave descendent and slave owner ancestry and those who are considered as Franco-Mauritians or as the visibly identifiable descendants of Europeans on the island also have mixed ethnic and racial ancestry. In our research among Franco-Mauritians we found that this topic was assiduously avoided or that white ancestry was rigorously asserted.

In short, it is not easy to identify 'racially' pure groups or those whose ancestry has not included more than one racial group in Mauritius. However, that is not to say that racial identity is not imposed on or assumed by Mauritians. Our research revealed that an African or black identity was/is regularly imposed on Creoles regardless of their mixed heritage and that Creoles themselves readily accepted this racial label as a way of attaining a meaningful space and identity in Mauritian society. Similarly, we found that Franco-Mauritians were keen to assert a pure 'white' racial identity as a way of securing a fixed identity and the prestige that comes with it. Ultimately, the view of this research group is that the TJC and the Government of Mauritius needs to focus on the political question of reparations and to perceive reparations as a moral duty to the past of suffering primarily endured by those of slave and indentured descent, rather than attempt to identify people on the basis of their purported race.

A careful and critical response to reparations also involves a critical review of a superiority complex, which involves a sense of entitlement and propensity to oppress in social milieu where power and privilege have been held, for a very long time. The critical response, as we explore at the end of this report, will involve a concerted effort on the part of Government to work with civil society groups in bringing about a society in which there are higher levels of mutual respect and recognition.

Thus, this report is critical of compensation, not in the sense (as we shall reveal in more detail later), that it should not happen at all but that those involved in the provision of reparations remain aware that financial compensation may not achieve 'full' reparations or that it might reduce the potential for full and deep reconciliation in our society. Deep reconciliation is also important because the present generation of slave descendants and indentured labourer descendants also have to manage their existence in a social setting that this cut across by other forms of boundary making and discrimination. There is also a deeply entrenched patriarchy (rule of society by men) in Mauritius and there is also the achievement of social stratification via caste classification.

The research is also motivated by the broader (but no less important issue) of the protection of Human Rights in Mauritius. As is noted in this report, discrimination in general (i.e. on the grounds of ethnicity, culture, gender and age), diminishes the protection of Human Rights both nationally and internationally. In its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations is concerned to eradicate discrimination and to decrease the possibilities for acts of extreme prejudice (i.e. genocide, xenophobia and ethnocide). As a signatory to various conventions of the UN regarding the protection and advancement of Human Rights, the onus is on the Mauritius Government to critically review the legacies of slavery and indentured labour and to determine the extent to which these legacies affect the implementation of a Human Rights culture in Mauritius. Furthermore, what we have documented here clearly indicates that a good number of Mauritians are violating the Mauritian Constitution,<sup>3</sup> particularly the right to freedom from discrimination:

#### Protection from discrimination

(1) Subject to subsections (4), (5) and (7), no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect.

(2) Subject to subsections (6), (7) and (8), no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting in the performance of any public function conferred by any law or otherwise in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.

(3) In this section, 'discriminatory' means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, caste, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex whereby persons of one such description are subjected to

disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages that are not accorded to persons of another such description.

The right to freedom of movement:

#### 15. Protection of freedom of movement

(1) No person shall be deprived of his freedom of movement, and for the purposes of this section, that freedom means the right to move freely throughout Mauritius, the right to reside in any part of Mauritius, the right to enter Mauritius, the right to leave Mauritius and immunity from expulsion from Mauritius.

Such restriction is punishable by Law:

(4) Where any person whose freedom of movement has been restricted in pursuance of subsection

(3) (a) or (b) so requests -

(a) He shall, as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any case not more than 7 days after the making of the request, be furnished with a statement in writing in a language that he understands, specifying the grounds for the imposition of the restriction;

(b) Not more than 14 days after the making of the request, and thereafter during the continuance of the restriction at intervals of not more than 6 months, his case shall be reviewed by an independent and impartial tribunal consisting of a chairman and 2 other members appointed by the Judicial and Legal Service Commission, the chairman being appointed from among persons who are entitled to practise as a barrister or as an attorney in Mauritius;

(c) He or a legal representative of his own choice shall be permitted to make representations to the tribunal appointed for the review of his case;

The above, then, constitutes our motivations for doing this research project.

## Literature Review

The literature on racism is vast. This literature review offers an overview of the varied conceptualisations of race and a discussion of the articulation of race in Mauritian society. To assist the reader in understanding the relevance of the literature to ideas about race, a summary of the literature is offered before delving into the literature itself. It is hoped that this will serve as an early and easier means of orientation for the reader of this report.

## Summary

In summary, the literature strongly suggests that race is diversely defined and is diversely experienced and perpetrated. Scholars of Psychology, Anthropology, History and Sociology report that there are different words used to describe race, that there are different levels of racism; that racism can be explicit and implicit; that racism can be compounded by gender discrimination; that racism can and does influence long term health and opportunity and that it is context specific. What this means is that race is not a concept that is defined by those deemed to be in power. It is also a term whose meaning changes over time and individual and community experiences of race and racism will also therefore change. Race, according to the literature as well as the findings of the researchers on this project, can also be identified in phenotype and in behaviour. Thus an individual may outwardly appear to be 'white', but his behaviour and social associations will lead him to be classified as Creole or Black. Furthermore, even supposed absolute racial categories (i.e. white or black) are not necessarily so.

Thus while a Creole individual may be perceived as 'black' by certain members of the society and perhaps treated in a very negative way, this is not necessarily going to be his experience among

other white members or black members of the community. Furthermore, racial experience, as the literature and our findings show, is also situational. In other words, a particular social context can produce specific experiences of racism. This might, for example, encourage the victim to avoid such a context on the basis that this will protect him or her from racial victimisation. But other spaces of socialisation such as school, church, social and sports club and the workplace may place the individual in a racialised environment reasserting the experience of racism. Furthermore, elements of one's socialisation (i.e. language ability, class, place of residence) may emerge in other contexts and leave the individual vulnerable to marginalisation and racism. What the findings of this report also, therefore, reveal is that those routinely discriminated against on racial or gender grounds risk becoming isolated from social and economic interaction. However, they are rarely completely immune from racial experiences, especially in societies that are deeply racialised such as Mauritius.

The following discussion on race, as diversely conceptualised and experienced, has been instrumental or important in our theorising and framing of 'race' as discursive. As noted previously, this means that race is not a fixed concept only deployed by those believed to be in power. It is also a term that is also used and deployed by those who outwardly do not appear to have power or resources. The use of the term among those oppressed means that racism can also be perpetuated by the victims of racism. This is part of the vicious cycle of racism, as it does not always require the presence and actions of the powerful in order for racism to survive and persist from one generation to the next.

Furthermore, it is our view that race discourse (which involves the use of symbols, literature, images, artwork, music and a range of means of communication in society), can and has been effectively used in Mauritius to promote particular racial stereotypes, empowering some and disempowering others. The point about race discourse is that it is not always overtly visible or noticeable. Statements, utterances, documentation (i.e. in the form of stories in school books for example), can become a part of daily existence and appear to be perfectly normal and acceptable. However, and as is shown in this report, a closer look at these statements or utterances coming from respectable citizens or a closer look at school text-books or newspaper articles, can reveal the persistence of racism in Mauritius.

Having summarised a few key findings regarding race, it is now possible to provide direct references to literature on race as a means of further orientation.

## Scientific Racism

Scientific racism, although not apparently prominent in Mauritius in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, served to justify the system of slavery and the oppression of Africans. Scientific racism is a form of racial discrimination which uses science to rationalise the placing of people on a hierarchy according to skin colour. In most cases, this process involves the down-trodding of blacks and the elevation of whites. The basis of scientific racism has been thoroughly and continuously challenged by social scientists, who point to both bias and flaws in the arguments put forward by scientific racists (see for example Alland 2002, Gould 1984 and Montagu 1999).

By the time that Carl Linnaeus, a botanist and trained taxonomist, began his work in the mid 1700s, there was an increasing interest in the classification of things, including human beings. Initially interested in botany and the classification of plants, Linnaeus eventually published a book *Systema Naturae* in which he identified five race groups, including a group called *Monstrosus* which included a range of mythological half-human creatures. In 1775, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach attempted to refine this categorisation. He created a typology of the races and published a book entitled, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, in which he focused on physical morphology. This shifted the identification of peoples from the geographical to the physical. Thus, according to Blumenbach, Asians were Mongoloid people, Europeans: Caucasoid and Africans: Negroid. Blumenbach was not alone. Other 'scientists' such as Georges Cuvier argued in favour a polygenism theory which supported the view that human groups had evolved in geographical isolation after the Biblical expulsion from Eden.

In Gould (1984) it is argued that 'scientists' in the Americas (in this case, Stanley Cartwright) went as far as to define psychological conditions particular to black and at that time, the slave population. One of the conditions identified, was *Drapetomania* - which Cartwright defined as the insane desire to run away! There were also climatologists, religious individuals, politicians, immigration officials and medics who helped to categorise racial groups and to associate them with specific behavioural tendencies and capacities. In Cartwright's view for example, it was imperative to make slaves work hard for long hours because this would assist in developing the lung capacity of blacks, who in his view were an indolent people affected by the humid and tropical climate of Africa.

Craniometry, the measuring of brain volume, for example, was yet another important means of establishing racial hierarchy. This 'science' was used to determine the intellectual capabilities of the identified races. For, it was believed that brain volume (which is what craniometry measures) was indicative of intelligence (Montagu 1999). Thus, if it could be proved that blacks had a smaller brain volume than whites, such a finding could be used to further justify white control of resources and the management of the emerging economy.

The results were, according to the 'scientists', conclusive: Caucasians (whites) had larger brain volume and Negroids (blacks) had the smallest brain volume. As Montagu (*Ibid*) and others remind us however, such tests were skewed to produce the desired results. Caucasian skulls were filled with much smaller beads so that a greater final volume could be attained. Secondly, no distinction was made between differences in physiognomy. The smaller framed (and therefore smaller brain) Negroids and Mongoloids (Asians) would proportionally have smaller heads and brains versus the larger framed Caucasians. Moreover, it has been found (see Montagu 1999) that there is no direct correlation between brain volume and intelligence, because the latter is a result of the integration of biology, nutrition and socialisation. These particular facts were not included by the 'scientists'. Ultimately, scientific racism encouraged the horrors of the Holocaust. Eugenics, the practice of racial purification, commenced not in Germany during World War II, but in America, when immigrants and the poor were sterilised to prevent the proliferation of inferior progeny. Decades later, during World War II, the Nazis attempted their own purification, by exterminating the Jews and initiating the impregnation of white European women to increase the Aryan race.

Many of the arguments put forward by scientific racists were used, not only to justify slavery, but also to justify the continued oppression of people of colour. In America, race was medicalized. Sterilization of the poor was instituted to improve white racial stock (Alland 2002). In brief, the discourse of race in science was purveyed as a source of Truth about human beings and the world and was used to promote systems of oppression such as slavery. Science was construed as rational reflection on the world, and scientific research went largely unquestioned, perceived as an objective and politically neutral endeavour.

What the literature also reveals is that race discourse is forged, not only by the use of science, but also art, fiction, traveller accounts and philosophy. During the Enlightenment period in Europe, there was deep focus on what it means to be human, to be moral, educated and civilized. This period of reflection produced great works of art, music, literature and philosophy. Such reflection is clearly and deeply evident today in the many artistic and cultural exhibitions which tourists visit in Europe. However, and as the historians remind us, the time and space to reflect was 'sponsored' by the slave system, which generated substantial profits that enriched merchants and the landed gentry in Europe. The merchants and other wealthy patrons, paid artists to produce the works of art we see today. The artistic production of this time can still be viewed in many parts of Europe and some of these (such as representations of identity and of Africans at the Africa Museum in Tervuren, Brussels) are not politically neutral pieces. They too serve to confirm a discourse on Europe and Caucasians as superior.

In Mauritius the traveller accounts of Bernardin de St. Pierre (in the 1700s in Mauritius), while producing a very rich account of Mauritius society in those early years, reinforced literary stereotypes of blacks as labourers and slaves and whites as owners and managers. However, de St-Pierre did pay attention to detail and in doing so, he disrupted certain racial stereotypes, particularly stereotypes of Franco-Mauritians as a culturally and economically homogeneous group characterised by their civilized behaviour. What de St-Pierre revealed is that there were high levels of decadence and *laissez-faire* among the propertied classes in Mauritius in the 1700s and that the

Franco-Mauritians were not a homogeneous group. Their distance from the metropole of France, isolation on the islands, the youth of those sent to the island as well as the unequal nature of the society produced an internally differentiated group in which there were continuous efforts to maintain or achieve privilege. Although there appear to be no detailed studies of the gender profile of the early settlers, studies done in Brazil, another place in which slavery thrived, shows that the high ratio of settler men to women resulted in a more brutal system of slavery in that country and also how life chances are linked to skin colour in that society (Lovell & Wood 1998).

The spread of social as well as a racial discourse gained ground in the 1700s. This was supported by the fact that (and as the historian Megan Vaughan reminds us), a number of prominent scientists such as the astronomer and geographer Abbé de la Caille, the explorer Philibert Commerson and the botanist Pierre Poivre, visited Mauritius in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These individuals brought with them the discourse of Enlightenment which promoted not only the pursuit of science and discovery but also the supposed 'protection' of lesser races from themselves. Thus at this early stage already (and with the reinstatement of the Code Noir in 1804, initially decreed by Louis XIV in 1685), there was a potent discourse of race that was being formed in the European colonies.

However, the story and discourse of racism predates this period. Briefly, while the first slaves arrived in Mauritius under Dutch colonial rule in 1638, slavery was already thriving or at least, gathering momentum among European powers. In 1452, Pope Nicholas V Papal Bull *Dum Diversas* empowered the King to enslave non-Christians. Although slavery was not legal in the Netherlands but it was justified outside of it. Thus between 1596 and 1829 hundreds of thousands of black Africans were sold in the Dutch territories of Guiana, the Caribbean and Brazil. From 1700 Britain joined France, Portugal and the Netherlands as major slave traders. However, while there is a better sense of the experience of slavery (and ultimately of racism) under French rule in Mauritius, it is not exactly clear how the first Dutch settlement was managed. One does not obtain a sense of the specifics of social relations between those enslaved and their masters at that time. This is not helped much by the fact that the accounts of slaves themselves are scarce. As Sidney Mintz argues, we do not know enough about what the slaves thought of their experience and how they actually related to their masters (1992). It is therefore clear that more in-depth research is needed on social relations in the period of slavery. There were substantive responses to slavery and scientific racism from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. A discussion of these however, is beyond the scope of this report. However, it is important to keep in mind that the race discourses generated during the years of slavery are still apparent in Mauritius today.

## Class and Race

Karl Marx argued that slavery involved the 'primitive accumulation of capital' (Marx 1906:738)<sup>4</sup> and that 'the veiled slavery of the wage earners in Europe needed for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the New World' (Marx 1906:833).<sup>5</sup> Thus and as argued previously, slavery was necessary to the establishment of the industrial revolution in Europe and for the enrichment of those countries and of Europeans in the colonies. The investments made at the time continue to benefit those countries. It is our hope that the project on the Economics of Slavery initiated in the TJC, will reveal the exact or approximate fiscal benefits gained from the slave system. It is also our hope that in considering the process of reparations, that the government will turn to this time in history to enter into a dialogue with 'developed' nations such as Britain, France and the Netherlands in order to discuss and seek ways to achieve reparations for slave and indentured labour descendants.

Our interest lies in the social and political legacy of these inequalities. One finds that in Mauritius in which there was the experience of slavery, those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder today are also those who do not possess the means of production. They rarely have access to land, equipment and other vital material resources. Instead they are inserted into the economy as labourers and workers. Their 'race' is used to justify and perpetuate their oppression. The maintenance of this group at the margins of the society serves a double purpose. It reaffirms discourses of superiority and inferiority and it maintains the capitalist system, which relies on an oppressed working class to generate profits. 'Beneath' this group is yet another layer, a set of people considered the underclass. As one woman at a famous IRS in Mauritius told me very casually,

these are 'the unemployed and the unemployable'. In other words, they are of no use to society at all. 'Above' the marginalised, are those who obtain, to varying degrees, benefits in society. As we show in this report, these benefits in Mauritius depend on the right mix of social and phenotype attributes. A lighter skin colour can present opportunities for social and economic mobility, but only up to a certain level, at which the mechanism of racial discrimination kicks in.

In the 1990s, as Mauritius entered its second phase of industrialisation and the economy was managing very well on its income from tourism, it was common to hear that race and racism are no longer issues of concern in Mauritius and that class is rapidly replacing ethnicity as a form of categorisation and source of social exclusion. In this report it is found that while Mauritius is becoming a more class-oriented society this is not necessarily leading to the displacement of race and racism. Those who have experienced upward class mobility still experience varying degrees of racial exclusion and/or racism.

Furthermore there is evidence of the combination of racism and class differentiation. As Mauritius becomes a more prosperous society, those who are the poorest in our society and have least control over the country's resources are increasingly those who are of darker complexion and report experiences of racial discrimination.

In Maylam's discussion on racism in post-apartheid South Africa, he notes that although class division still marks the landscape, there, 'Racial assumptions continue to pervade public discourse... racism is rigorously proscribed - instances of racism draw wide media attention. At the same time popular understandings of South African society remain heavily racialised, even if more implicitly than explicitly' (Maylam 2004:139). Mauritius is different to South Africa. There was no institutionalisation of apartheid in Mauritius, except in the period of slavery and indenture and in the period leading up to 1928. After that, we note a more complex picture of class in Mauritian society. As in South Africa, the end of segregation did not mean that racism disappears. As we show in this report, racism continues to flourish both explicitly and implicitly.

While decades of integration in Mauritius have produced a phenol-typically mixed society in which it is increasingly difficult to visually identify clear-cut 'population' groups, the categorisation of a race group in Mauritius (as elsewhere in the world) depends on ever increasing means of identification. Physical, social and visual markers of difference, such as hair texture, skin colour, language spoken are used to distinguish between individuals and to add to the plethora of markers used to identify race. The overall purpose of this is to allocate or remove power and privilege. Such gross simplifications of phenotype variation are usually accompanied by cultural and social stereotypes of the groups concerned.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the scholarly literature on Mauritius society has focused on ethnicity. In part this focus reflects changes in the social sciences in the 1960s, when for political and 'aesthetic' reasons the word 'race' came to be replaced by 'ethnicity'. In Mauritius however, it seems to be that the term ethnicity was a useful way of avoiding the more contentious term of race. Moreover and as the study presented here shows, the word race is not part of public discussion in the way that ethnicity often is. Nevertheless, the biological undertones of race remain even in the use of the term ethnicity in public space.

## **Post-structural Analyses of Race**

In the 1980s, post-structural analyses of society and culture gained momentum. In Europe and America, it was at that time that ethnicity was fully interrogated as a social construct and ethnic identity was perceived as part of a political process. Post-structural understandings of identity encourage a relational understanding of identity, unravelling how groups define themselves and categorise others. Some categorisations may be explicit and rely on overt stereotyping as a way of creating an out-group. Whereas others may be more implicit, relying on aversive racism to create in-groups and out-groups. While these take into account categorisations or externally defined identities, it is important for the purposes of this research to establish how personal racial identity is also established.

A quick outline of the development of ethnicity studies in Mauritius will have to suffice. Ethnic conflict in the Balkan states and elsewhere in the world emphasised the instrumental nature of ethnicity and its role in promoting primordialism (a definition of identity as essential and fixed) and discrimination. A good twenty years earlier, the work of the anthropologist Frederik Barth (1969) had sparked a discussion critically reflecting on the construction of ethnic identity. In Europe and Mauritius the anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (see Eriksen 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000) was at the forefront of this discussion. The interest then, was how do socially constructed nation-states retain their integrity and cohesiveness in a time of: globalisation; calls for the realisation of minority rights and ethnic war? Eriksen (and his predecessor in Mauritius), Burton Benedict (1965), explored the dynamics of plural existence in Mauritius. Both he and Benedict examined interethnic relations and the broader issue of the relationship of ethnic groups to the nation. However and as we argue in this report, it is race rather than ethnicity which demands our attention in Mauritius. For ethnicity is a euphemism used to disguise race.

An interrogation of race and racism in Mauritius needs to offer definitions of the concept. For Mauritius it is possible to argue that definitions of race derived from the country of origin gained precedence on the island. In the period of slavery the works of famous French scientists such as Georges Cuvier and (racist) philosophers such as Voltaire were not always available or accessible to all. However the fascination with racial difference was. This is evidenced in the parading of the South African born Saartjie Baartman, renamed the Venus Hottentot in Paris and London in the early 1800s. Baartman became part of the kind of freak shows popular across Europe at the time and was perceived by the scientists to be an example of her racial stock. There was prurient interest in the genitalia of Baartman and when she died, Cuvier and his colleagues surgically extracted her genitalia and preserved it in the *Musée de l'Homme* in Paris. In the accounts of Cuvier and Voltaire, races evolved separately in different regions of the world and black races were perceived as less talented and less intelligent than the Europeans.

This view of separate evolution (or polygenism) was very popular among pseudo-scientists and persisted into the Twentieth century. According to the American scholars, Garn & Coon (1955) for example, race is the 'taxonomic unit below the species level'. In short, Garn proposes that races indicated subspecies of humans that fundamentally had differing capabilities. In the 1980s and under the apartheid system in South Africa, it became increasingly clear that race was more of a 'political construct rather than social fact' (Boonzaier & Sharp 1988, see also Taylor 2004, Wade 2002, Wellman 1993, Hartigan 1997). However, saying that something is socially constructed does not do away with its experience as something that is real.

Investigating possibilities for the elimination of race as a useful concept in society, Glasgow (2009) says that it is difficult to avoid the ontological question concerning race, which is: is race real? If so, it would be difficult and inadvisable to call for the eradication of race in society because race will be a fundamental part of people's experience. Thus, in the US, African American comedians at the Apollo theatre use racial epithets to build an atmosphere of common experience and to tap into what they feel are racially specific humour. Outsiders (or specifically those who are not part of the designated racial group) are not 'permitted' to use these epithets as these are considered to be offensive.

In this research it is argued that race itself is not real but that people experience it and speak about it as though it is real. Racial humour for example, seemingly harmless, serves to reinforce the reality of race. This is expressed through a shared sense of suffering - particularly among the Creoles interviewed. A number of phrases which Creole speakers use further assist in this reification and concretisation of race. These assist in the remembrance of past experiences of economic or racial suffering and have made it into public space. These include '*les temps margoze*' (a time of bitterness, because the *margoze* vegetable is very bitter), a time of individualism '*bef dans disab sakenn guette so lizié*' (each one must take care of him or herself).

Glasgow argues that academics (like most 'ordinary' people) rely on three things to assert the reality of race. The first is *Superficial theory*, which relies on phenotypes, and classifying people by the way they look (hence the 'superficial' language). In our research we found that this was certainly the case, that Mauritians rely heavily on superficial language to assert a racial identity or categorise people in racial terms. However, the *effects* of the language are not at all superficial. The words cut deep.

The second entity used by scholars to assert the reality of race is *Genetic racial realism*. Glasgow argues that in this people are classified by their genetic make-up (specifically the “genetic material that significantly determines what we look like) rather than the way they superficially look. The third is *Populationism* which looks at ‘genetic ancestry’.

About ten years ago (1999) the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture (NMCAC) initiated a genealogical project on the ‘origins’ of Afro-Mauritians. The latter were encouraged to come forth and to supply information regarding their ancestry. Genealogical research was conducted to ascertain as far as possible, who the various peoples’ ancestors had been. However, we have not yet implemented a genetic analysis of African or Indian descendants’ ancestry.

Most recently, there was significant debate on the forensic use of DNA in Mauritius. As far as we know, members of parliament overwhelmingly rejected the use of this science for purposes other than the tracing and arresting of criminals (Law Reform Commission Discussion paper April 2009).<sup>6</sup> There was also opposition to the retention of a database in which the DNA of those convicted would be kept for a specified period. The argument is that doing so would promote the criminalisation of Mauritians. In the research we found that there are many people who could be interested in using this science to learn more about their ancestry. This is especially significant when it is considered that the historical data we have on slave (and perhaps to a lesser extent) indentured descendants is insufficient.

Although there were no such definitive definitions of race in Mauritius, it is clear from the research findings that essentialist views of race are prominent in Mauritius today. More pointed critique of race in Mauritius emerges in late 1990s in the work of local and international scholars including: Carpooran (2002), Chan Low (1999), Carroll and Carroll (2000), Carter (2000), Alpers (2000), Diene (2001), Laville (2000), Hookoomsing (1993, 1995, 1998), Miles (1999), Michel (1998), Nave (1998, 2000), Romaine (2006). There is unfortunately no space in this report to fully discuss the particular contributions of these authors on the subject of race. However, one can and must note that all of them have pointed to the continuation of racial discrimination in Mauritius, particularly against Creoles.

This work has not been easy. A common argument is that such a discussion may adversely affect the image of the tourist destination, as Mauritius trades on its identity as a culturally diverse and harmonious society in which equality prevails. However, the opposite seems to be the case. In July 1999 there was an article in the newspaper *La Voix Kreol* which stated that there are only five Creole directors out of the then 52 directors on parastatal and private boards. It would be interesting to see whether this number has increased and what are the reasons given for changes and non-changes to these executive boards. It will be also important to assess to what extent various ethnically-oriented media produce particular racial discourses and how people respond to these discourses.

To a certain degree the racial identity is dependent on external definition. However and as the work of Simmons (2006) shows, racial identities can be influenced by various local factors and historical impacts. This is relevant for the study on race and racism in Mauritius because it suggests that the local version and understanding and experience of racism may in several ways be locally specific. Simmons (2006) assessed the experiences of black immigrant students versus the experiences of white citizens in the United States, she found that:

‘There were tense moments as both black and white students reflected on their lives, identities and lived experience. Black students were looking for more than a ‘race is a social construction’ response—being black was central to their identity, and to them race was very real.’ (2006:2).

In other words, the black students did not wholly accept the discussion of race as socially constructed because for them, race was experienced as ‘real’.

Simmons conducted the same experiment in the Dominican Republic, situated on the island of Hispaniola off the coast of the US. She found that there, blacks ‘were surrounded by people who phenol-typically looked like them—ranging from light to dark—but did not, in most cases, define themselves as black.’ (2006:3). This result initially baffled the researcher but she later concluded

that the answer as to why the Dominicans she encountered did not identify themselves as black resided in the particular history of the Dominican Republic.

Simmons argues that we come to understand who we are in racial terms by a process of racial enculturation. Without that, we may not develop a racial identity. She also argues that racial categorization and processes of racial enculturation are contextually specific. The Dominican Republic, as she found out, has a long history of indigenous and immigrant population. This is in contrast to the United States where racial enculturation is informed by the historical experience of slavery as well as past law. The Jim Crow laws and the 'One Drop' rule in the US for instance, forced the categorization of all those with African ancestry as black, regardless of variation in skin colour in this population. In the Dominican Republic on the other hand, those who would otherwise be considered as black in the US, perceived themselves as 'mixed' in the Dominican Republic. This is because racial enculturation in the Dominican Republic includes references to indigenous or Carib identity (*Indio*). Those in the Dominican Republic however, Haitians (their poorer neighbours across the island of Hispaniola) are perceived (by the Dominicans) as black. What also interesting in the latter is the conflation of blackness, geography and poverty.

In conducting this research it is evident that there are multiple processes of racial enculturation in Mauritius. In the first instance, this happens with reference to the historical process of slavery. At that point in time, a clear distinction was made between white and black. This distinction was not necessarily hierarchical, for, as we understand it, in the time of slavery there were also very wealthy black Malagasy people who owned slaves and occupied the upper echelons of Mauritian society. Racial identity is also constructed at the level of the community. In some churches for example, the 'white' members of the congregation still sit at the front or separate from the 'black' members of the congregation, creating the impression of fundamental racial difference.

## **Aversive Racism**

However, most recently race scholars have focused on the less overt, apparently less intentional and not easily perceived racism that persists in multicultural societies. This is described as aversive racism. Aversive racism consists of various micro-aggressions, the latter are according to Sue, Capodilupo, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal and Esquilin (2007:271) 'brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour. Perpetrators of micro-aggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities.' Writing about North America, the authors say, 'White Americans have difficulty acknowledging race-related issues because they elicit feelings of guilt about their privileged status, threaten their self-images as fair, moral and decent human beings, and more important suggest that their 'unawareness' allows for the perpetuation of inequities and harm to people of colour (2008:227). Aversive racism consists of various micro-aggressions, which are not easily identified by the victims and are cumulative. Sue et al say that micro-aggression 'themes' include criminality and incompetence for African Americans and foreignness and invisibility for Asian Americans. Micro-aggressions can include: micro-insults, micro-invalidation and micro-assaults.

Post-structural approaches to identity also encourage a more holistic view of the self as an entity 'constructed' socially, historically, politically and economically. Politically we find that identity is not only 'constructed' by the state, it is also forged by local and daily experience perhaps, by interethnic interaction, religious experience, technology, music and healing values. Increasingly, our identities are oriented by exposure to new media. This seems to be the case for younger generations of Mauritians, who may be politically conscious but are more profoundly technologically oriented. The latter is significant because it can shape our openness to difference/diversity and it can create new solidarities both locally and trans-nationally. In the work of Floya Anthias (1998) for instance, she notes the increasing size of global working-class diaspora and its possibilities for creating a transnational working-class solidarities.

In recent times we see the persistence of racism, as territorial borders dissolve and international migration increases. In Europe this has resulted in the reification of a mythical European identity

via the creation of the European Union. Such reifications are continuously challenged by an increasingly diverse population (Evens Foundation 2002). Bill Clinton's Advisory board on Racism had the following to say in 1998, (a) racism is one of the most divisive forces in our society, (b) racial legacies of the past continue to haunt current policies and practices that create unfair disparities between minority and majority groups, (c) racial inequities are so deeply ingrained in American society that they are nearly invisible, and (d) most White Americans are unaware of the advantages they enjoy in this society and of how their attitudes and actions unintentionally discriminate against persons of colour (Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race, 1998).

In Africa, scholars on racism note the integral role of the state in the creation of ethnicity and race (see for example the work of Abebe Zegeye 2001) and the difficulty of addressing the legacy of racism (Hamber and Kibble 1998). According to Valji (1998) a telephone survey conducted among White South Africans in 1997 to determine their view on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), 44 percent stated that the former (apartheid) system was not unjust and 46 percent of whites surveyed believed the TRC was a ruling party 'witch hunt' to discredit the former government. In the case of this research this is not the case because it is the present government which has implemented the process of a TJC and whatever its motives, it and the Mauritian public will have to come to terms with or address the results of the research produced on the legacy of slavery and indenture.

One of the questions asked by historians involved in the process included whether the TRC in South Africa had not created a 'homogenized internal identity of victimhood' (see Valji 1998, note 6). Quoting Colin Bundy (2000), Nahla Valji says that South Africans 'intended to build one unified nation... [but may have risked legitimising] the formation of an "increasingly deracialised insiders and persistently black outsiders"'. The proposed research examines a range of contributions made by the slave descendant and indentured labourer population, as well as the injustices experienced. By doing this, it is hoped that the researchers will avert the potential pitfall noted by Valji.

Another significant finding of the South African TRC was the long-term psychological effect of apartheid on people's sense of self and the sense of their capabilities. The work of clinical psychologists indicates the increasing salience of sensitivity to racism in the therapy offered to people of colour. One finds for example, that a number of clinical psychologists are now employing the narrative therapy technique. Narrative therapy was developed during the 1970s and 1980s, by the Australian Michael White and David Epston of New Zealand. In their book, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*, they discussed the use of narrative as a means to achieving more focused and effective therapy. In short, we produce stories of ourselves and these stories do not only 'narrate' our life but also produce our sense of self. Narrative therapy offers a non-pathological approach to therapy and therapists are able to identify less developed stories of ourselves and 'thicken' these with the help of our friends, colleagues and family members in order to help 'victims' deal with insufficiencies or overemphasised areas of their lives. In research done we found that poverty and racism constrict individual identity, binding people to dominant stories and fixed identities as either the 'poor' or as 'poor blacks'.

An important element of this research was to investigate the contributions of slave descendants and indentured labourer descendants to Mauritian society. Given the generally divisive nature of slavery and indentured labour, it is interesting to see to how these institutions have brought a diversity of people together and how people have made important contributions to society despite the hardships faced by them and their ancestors. Investigating contributions will allow the TJC to avoid homogenising the population as victims. Teelock (1998) and Nwulia's (1981) account of maroon communities and slavery strongly suggests that the population endured many hardships and surmounted them in creative and lasting ways.

In the following section we introduce the various communities in Mauritius. In each of these we note the social as well as the racial construction of identity, almost as if the latter is a normal and an acceptable aspect of social construction in general. It is our contention that these constructions mislead the Mauritian public about their identity, which in many instances, is diverse and mixed. It is our view that socio-cultural organisations and social clubs should be regularly scrutinised by civil society, to ascertain whether these do not promote communalist tendencies and practices.

## Research Methods and Methodology

The following offers a brief overview of the research methods employed in the research for this project. With regard to these, there are: an outline of the use of qualitative method; a discussion on the relevance of obtaining of consent for the research; a summary of the locations in which research was done, as well as a list of the range of people interviewed. If there is a tentative mention of the locations in which research is done, this is because there is a need to protect the identities of those who have offered potentially controversial discussions on racism in the country.

The research methods employed in conducting the research for this project were qualitative. This means that the research team put much emphasis on the collection of narratives (stories), the establishment of focus groups (for group interviews) and conducting of individual interviews. Interviews were conducted across the ethnic, class and religious spectrum, although the bulk of the research focused on Creoles and Franco-Mauritians. In studying the experiences and views of Franco-Mauritians, the researchers effectively employed the strategies of those 'studying up' (Avery 2004). This involves substantive networking in a rather closed community, a different presentation of the Self, overt projection of a professional identity and continuous affirmations of neutrality, as well as demonstration of focus (on the part of the researcher) on the interview process. Research among the poorer members of our sample also involved networking and the building of rapport, but this appeared to be much easier for most of our researchers because these informants were also agreeable to the work of the TJC. The interviewees also appeared to be more trusting of the researchers and more willing to share their experiences.

The fact that research team contains a majority of anthropologists also reveals another emerging fact. Anthropologists are able and willing to confront and engage with the issues of political and social concern in our present society (Smith 1999) and Government should make use of their important intercultural skills in addressing contemporary challenges.

As can be gleaned from the extracts cited in this report, the racial identity and allegiance of the researchers were also regularly interrogated by Mauritians. People wanted to know whether a white researcher for example, was on their 'side' in the discussion. In our work, we have thoroughly discussed these issues and resolved to maintain neutrality and objectivity in the research process.

The interviews contained some of the key research questions noted below. However, those interviewed were encouraged to provide a full narrative of their experiences. This resulted in what social scientists call 'semi'-structured interviews. In these, the informant or interviewee is asked only a few key questions which serve to convey the main objective of the research and thereafter, with little additional control of the interview, the interviewee is encouraged and expected to discuss their personal experiences.

It is acknowledged by those employing the qualitative method of interviewing that interviewees may not be unbiased sources of information. Therefore, in this research, the team has attempted to cross-check data collected and verify information obtained from the interview processes. In Social Sciences, this is known as the triangulation of data.

Most important for the purposes of this research project is the issue of informed consent. In conducting this research, great care has been taken to ensure the anonymity of informants in order to protect them from possible reprisals or further discrimination. In this regard, the TJC method for achieving anonymity and the protection of informants was followed. With regard to informed consent itself, each potential participant was carefully informed of the purposes of the project and were asked if they understood the task in which they were about to participate and were subsequently offered a full consent form to sign. Further details regarding the exact requirements of the TJC, regarding consent forms and informed consent, is available from the Commission itself.

Unlike a quantitative study, no quota was set for the total number of interviews conducted. The objective was to obtain detailed accounts of individual and group experiences of racism so as to establish the nature or form of racism experienced rather than its extent in numerical terms. However, in total, approximately 200 people were interviewed for this project. This includes a cross-section of Mauritians, ranging from those who identify themselves as Franco-Mauritian to those who self identify as Creoles.

In an effort to understand the more intricate aspects of discrimination and to make allowance for alternative forms of social categorisation, the researchers on this team also investigated the impact of age and gender on the experiences of racism. The team members also investigated the role of particular locales on experiences and discourses of race. Thus, research was conducted in schools, marketplaces, factory settings, offices and in public spaces. It was hoped that this would help to ascertain the extent to which racism occurs in such spaces and/or the extent to which race remains valid in such places.

The research also involved a critical review of concepts used for social organisation in Mauritius. Thus, the team did not take for granted that there was a universal understanding and potential experience of race in Mauritius. Our findings (which we elaborate on in the body of this report), are that while the word ‘race’ was not continuously or overtly used to describe population groups in Mauritius, other terms such as *kominote* (community), *nasyon* (caste) were often used as substitutes or synonyms for race. Thus, to the outsider, it would appear that race is of no concern or of no importance to Mauritians, whereas closer attention to idiomatic expressions reveal a deep and enduring concern about, and interest in, race.

However, all the interviews conducted were transcribed, archived (in physical and digital format) and should (with permission from the TJC and thereafter the manager of the archives), be available for consultation.

The research team consisted of: four social Anthropologists (Rosabelle Boswell, Sophie Le Chartier, Nosipho Mngomezulu and Yogita Kunvar), a Clinical Psychologist (Tshedi Tshabalala), a Senior Social Scientist (Ingrid van der Heijden), and three research assistants: Dreesha Teelwah and Nitisha Chacoory.

## Research Questions

The key research question for the overall project was:

**What are the legacies of racism and experiences of racism by slave descendants and indentured labour descendants in Mauritius?**

Related questions which were asked in the course of research included:

1. What social policies existed or currently promote racism in Mauritius since the abolition of slavery?
2. What are the rights safeguarded by the Mauritian Constitution and what are ordinary Mauritians’ experiences of these constitutional rights?
3. How does the policy of ethnic representation influence race relations leading to charges of communalism?
4. How are particular groups in Mauritius (i.e. Creoles, Franco-Mauritians, Hindus) represented and how do they represent themselves? Does race feature in these representations?
5. How does the history of race relations in Mauritius influence the present experiences of inhabitants?
6. What are Mauritians’ experiences of aversive racism and how does it impact on their social identity?

With regard to the issue of the practice and experience of racisms, the following questions were asked:

7. How does class influence race relations in Mauritius and how does class impact on economic behaviour and experience?
8. How does geographical location and dispersal influence individual/group experience?

9. What are Mauritian's experiences of racism in the workplace?
10. What are youth experiences of race and racism in contemporary Mauritius?
11. What is the experience of mixed race slave descendants/indentured labour descendants in contemporary Mauritius?
12. What does the prevalence of racism stress in Mauritius?
13. What are the particular racial experiences of slave descendant and indentured labourer descendant women in Mauritian society?

These questions were allocated to the researchers on the team and they were tasked with developing further research questions to assist in 'answering' the key questions noted above. In the following, an overview of the research locales is offered, as well as the motivations for these research locales and the challenges experienced in conducting research there. It must be noted that this is not merely an academic exercise. In discussing the research locations and offering insight into the challenges of research in specific locales or among certain groups, the research team hopes to shed light on the dynamics of race relations in Mauritius.

## Research Sites

The research sites for this project were carefully chosen. The objective of the team was to obtain a representative sample of slave descendants and indentured labourer descendants, in order to fully document the experiences of these segments of the Mauritian population. However, this was not the only concern. In investigating the discourses and experiences of racism in Mauritius, it was important to interview also Mauritians beyond the above-noted categories. How do those who do not identify with slave or indentured labour descent view and construct identity in Mauritius? How do these constructions influence self-perception and interaction between those designated as marginal and the rest of society? What social networks exist which enable, as one blogger put it, 'cultural navigation'? What scope exists for social and ultimately economic mobility? Do specific sites impact on the construction of identity and the experience of race?

To address these complex questions, the research team conducted interviews and observations in interviewees' homes and workplaces, as well as in public spaces such as churches, schools and marketplaces. In other words, multi-sited research was done (Marcus 1995). The exact places of research are documented in the individual reports.

With regard to the study on the psychological burdens of racism, the clinical psychologist worked in several places. She notes the following:

In addition to my preliminary meetings held with Dr Kowlessur (Medical Superintendent) and Dr Naga (who is a Consultant in charge and Head of Clinical Department), at the Brown Sequared Mental Health Care Centre, as well as Mr Lutchmun, the Executive Director of National Agency for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA), in Port-Louis, the following summary can be provided pertaining to Mental Health services:

The centres visited are as follows:

- **Chrysalide** situated in Bambous, on the main road close to the stadium in a well-secured building. It caters for women substance abusers who are addicted to a range of drugs from alcohol to other drugs such as heroine. It is a residential centre providing treatment and rehabilitation. Although it initially catered for women from diverse groups, ages and socio-economic backgrounds, it has extended its services to include transvestite men. According to its Director, their clients are mostly Creoles, then Muslims and Indians.
- **HELP De Addiction Centre** situated in Hindu House in Port Louis, the premises are big, and well-secured. The centre is easily accessible as it is on the highway. It is a mixed residential rehabilitation centre which provides services to both females and males. Before admission to

the centre, the clients attend pre-admission educational programme with his or her family. Most of the clients are said to come from poor socio-economic background.

- **Centre D' Accueil de Terre Rouge** located in Terre Rouge. The premises are secure and accessible. It is close to the main road. It is a male residential centre which offers a 9-week programme. Most of the staff is ex-drug addicts who have been free from drugs for many years. The centre does not provide Codeine/Methadone substitution therapy as do the above two. The Director, in an interview, reported that the problem of substance addiction has no skin colour and no money, implying that the centre has served people who are doctors, accountants and well as relatives of politicians.
- **Etoile D'Espérance** in Moka, caters only for women alcoholics. The centre is housed in a well-maintained house, which provides a therapeutic environment with its garden and trees that complement each other to provide a private home and homely environment. According to the Director, the centre has served mostly Hindus and Creoles ..."we have had Muslim, no Chinese. We have had Whites and foreigners".
- **Mahatma Gandhi Ayurveda Centre** found in Calebasses is an outpatient centre and has four branches in Paillote, Goodlands and Rose-Belle Sugar Estate. It offers counselling for smoking, alcohol and drug abuse. According to the Director, services are offered by Physicians who provide consultation and dispensation of Ayurvedic Medicine- natural medicine and Massage therapist.
- **Kinouete** situated in Port Louis, and works mostly with detainees, while they are in prison and follows them up until discharge. Both **Kinouete** and **Mahatma Gandhi Ayurveda** do not house residential clients. Of all centers visited, **Kinouete** has most counsellors (Social Workers and Psychologists/Psychotherapists and volunteers). They work a lot with the prison-system and have recently been stopped by the Government. A lot of volunteers working for **Kinouete** highlighted that Government's decision is unjust to the detainees.

## Research Issues

### *Research on Mauritians in General*

One of the reports, which involved two intensive months of anthropological fieldwork in the region of Black River on the West Coast of the island, documents the experiences of Mauritians in general. The region of Black River was initially chosen for the fieldwork because of its association with the history of slavery and the development of ethnic relations with indentured labourers from about 1835.

It is documented that, historically (as recently as 6 years ago), Black River Village was a simple fishing village composed essentially of Creoles assumed to be of slave descent and commonly referred to as Afro-Creoles or Black Creoles and of Marathi that have migrated from the Black River Gorges, Cascavell (located before Flic-en-Flac), Henrietta and other regions to Black River and of a small community of 'Franco-Mauritians'<sup>7</sup> that were the big estate owners in the region such as the Maingard Family, Maurel Family, Pilot Family and De Ravel Family.

The demographic profile of this region is currently undergoing a rapid transformation, with foreigners settling in the region and Coloured Creoles<sup>8</sup> migrating from urban regions to Black River. This new population profile is impacting on the employment structure, social and ethnic interaction and on social stratification that was traditionally based on ethnicity and occupation.

A research assistant accompanied the researcher during these two months of fieldwork to assist her on the field with note-taking and conducting interviews, when the researcher was not free.

Approximately one month's additional fieldwork has also been carried out in other localities such as in Goodlands and in 'urban' areas, for example, Rose-Hill. Hence, even though the initial focus was on the Black River region, the sample size was expanded to people living in other regions of the island so as to obtain a more representative view of the extent of racism/communalism in Mauritius and to uncover possible geographical differences in experiences and practices of racial/ethnic discrimination.

A combination of qualitative research methods has been used for primary data collection: in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews and observations. Most of the interviews were conducted in 'Kreol' to make informants feel more comfortable, but some were conducted in French or in English with those who felt more at ease in these mediums.

With regard to sampling and since this research is a qualitative study, no quota was set for the number of informants to be interviewed as emphasis was on the quality of information rather than on the quantity. In line with the objectives of the research, the informants were, as much as possible, representative of gender, social class status, occupational groups and religious/ethnic composition of Mauritius.

At the end of three months fieldwork, 80 interviews had been conducted, including 10 informal interviews, of both men and women aged 18 years old and above. The interview sample included also some main socio-economic actors who consented to participate in the research. Namely, the Human Resource Managers of the British American Investment Group and the Food and Allied Group, the President of La Sentinelle Ltd. and of the Mauritius Employment Federation and the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporate Social Responsibility Programme.

Informal interviews were also conducted with the Human Resource Manager of the Beachcomber Group and ABC Motors Group and also with the Attorney General.

However, the policy-makers that is to say, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition all declined to be interviewed. The Minister of Justice conceded an informal interview and thus we are unable to use the data gleaned from that conversation in this report. The testimonies of these important individuals in our Government would have helped to obtain a better sense of the policy-making process in Mauritius from its conception to its implementation such as policy formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation. Unfortunately, these lacunae have not been filled, in due to the unwillingness of the above to participate.

Given time constraints for data collection and to ease the informant identification process during fieldwork in Black River, the researcher was assisted by a facilitator, who lives in the region. The facilitator's duties were to ease the researcher's access to the research setting and identify and introduce the interviewer to the interviewee. Hence, informants were selected through judgment sampling.

To thwart possible biases resulting from sampling errors such as the facilitator selecting informants that share the same perceptions and expectations and of the same gender, ethnic and age groups, informants were also identified through a snowball effect and random sampling. Hence, the sample was extended to residents outside the facilitator's personal network to give opportunities to each ethnic group to participate in the research and, hence, ensure the representativeness of the ethnic and social class composition of Mauritius.

A facilitator was also used to identify Sino-Mauritian<sup>9</sup> interviewees because the researcher experienced difficulties in gaining access to this group. The Sino-Mauritians tends to be a 'closed' community, which does not easily offer 'access' to those racially different from them. This fact was also confirmed by the Sino-Mauritian facilitator. The researcher (a non-Sino-Mauritian) experienced numerous rejections for interviews from members of this community. Consequently, a Sino-Mauritian facilitator had to be used to identify potential informants who agreed to participate in the research.

The research team was fully conscious of the potential biases generated in using facilitators and of using the snowball sampling technique. With regard to the latter, it was a concern that informants might have identified research subjects of the same age, class and networking as themselves, who might in turn have reproduced similar accounts of racial discrimination. There were also concerns that biases may occur in the identification of Sino-Mauritian interviewees who were selected among the members of the Hua Lien Club that is known to be a club for the Sino-Mauritian elite. However, because of time constraints (hastened by the numerous refusals for interview), the researcher allocated to this task did not have the opportunity to interview Sino-Mauritians who are not members of this club.

The 'Franco-Mauritian' participation is also noticeably absent from the work of this researcher but was fortunately 'taken up' by another researcher. The latter (a South African of European descent) experienced 'better luck' in interviewing Franco-Mauritians. However, even she found that like the Sino-Mauritians, the Franco-Mauritians constitute a minority and closed community with rigid and deeply-rooted racial barriers which make it difficult for *non* Franco-Mauritians to gain access to the latter and gain insights into their stereotypes and personal experiences. However, through informal social encounters and observations, it was possible to get fragmented information on social behaviour and attitudes that may or may not be useful displays of their idiosyncratic beliefs of their own racial superiority.

## Research on Youth

The research on the youth offered better prospects for the allocated researcher. This was a segment of the Mauritian population which was relatively open and candid about their experiences of racism in Mauritius. Again, we noted the salience of skin colour to the research process. As a black woman from South Africa, the researcher was better able to access the Creole youth and women of Mauritius. Most of this work, yielded rich data on racial experiences among the youth.

The first interviews were conducted in the rural community of Rivière Noire at St. Esprit College, a confessional school where the researcher spent his/her first two weeks interviewing 18 students, conducting four life histories there. St Esprit College has a majority Creole student population due to the fact that it is a Catholic school and that the community in the area is largely Creole. At the school, access to the classrooms was provided and one was able to interact meaningfully with students inside and outside of interviews.

Two weeks were also spent conducting interviews with students and teachers at St. Mary's West College in Petite Rivière. St. Mary's West, is also a new secondary school in the area catering to a large Creole students population, mainly from urban areas. The first racially mixed school was College Ste Marie in Palma, where a further two weeks were spent interviewing 18 youths of different 'racial' backgrounds. The latter school is a private fee-paying Catholic school, which is rather different from the other confessional schools at which research had already been done. The school is clearly racially diverse, with teaching staff and students representing the whole spectrum of Mauritius' rainbow nation. At this particular location, there was lively engagement in the focus group discussions which enabled students of various 'racial' backgrounds, to participate in the discussion. This offered a unique experience to witness how students talk about race with persons outside their racial groups.

Interviews were also conducted in SSS Souillac with five teachers and twelve students from predominantly Indian backgrounds. SSS Souillac is an all-female Government College, where interviews were mainly conducted with Form VI pupils. The field research time at SSS Souillac provided access to a majority Indian student population group. These were also informative and helped to explain the varied experiences of teachers in Mauritian Education System. At Keats College, there was the opportunity to speak to eight young women from Creole, Indian, Chinese and Muslim backgrounds. There the researcher was able to engage students of different religious and racial backgrounds in focus groups which proved to be informative on race discourse amongst youth. At the same school, she was also afforded the opportunity to speak extensively to the Headmaster and gained an understanding into his views on contemporary Mauritius, the school curriculum and issues of equality in the Education System.

The researcher also conducted fieldwork at Régis Chaperon School, in Rose Hill, where she interviewed the Headmaster and seven students. The all-boys school has gained a notorious reputation in the past decade and when the school was visited, it was in a terrible condition, with broken windows and a faulty sewerage system that left a pungent smell in the air. At the school, issues of discipline, parent-teacher cooperation, equality of Education in Mauritius, as well as the challenges of schooling in Mauritius's competitive school-ranking system, were discussed. Two days were spent at Port-Louis SSS, an all-girl College, which was newly-built. There, the researcher was able to conduct three life history interviews with girls from different socio-economic and racial backgrounds.

In an attempt to gain a greater understanding of life outside of secondary schools, focus groups were also constituted with students who had finished schooling. Focus group interviews were also implemented with youths from Vallijee Church. Approximately thirty youths attended, but about only about 10 of these were really vocal during the interview process. It was apparent that of those who did not speak, there was a great deal of shyness and reluctance to participate in the proceedings, even though there was a competent interpreter present.

Finally, a focus group of seven participants was also conducted, mainly with older youths from Bois Marchand *Cité*, a low-cost housing development area. The participants were mostly concerned about the economic instability in the area. In Roche Bois, another focus group was conducted with 6 young people from the *Mouvement pour le Progrès de Roche Bois*. These young people receive assistance from the centre which treats alcohol and drug abuse amongst youths and their parents. The area has a notorious reputation for violence and drug abuse and whilst some participants attended school, many did not.

## Research on the Franco-Mauritians

This part of the research project focused on the contemporary realities of the Franco-Mauritian community in Mauritius. As already noted, it was conducted by a South African of European descent. This is noted because it made a 'world of difference' to the informants, as the researcher experienced some initial difficulties but was able to obtain a deep understanding of racial and community dynamics among the Franco-Mauritians. As also noted in the executive summary of this report, the research conducted makes use of, and cross-references with, research already done on these communities in Mauritius and as such, the team is building on knowledge that has been generated by scholars preceding the time of the Commission. Nevertheless, this research specifically unravels the conflated elite position of Franco-Mauritians in contemporary Mauritius. The following questions were asked:

1. What are the normative interpretations on what it means to be Franco-Mauritian?
2. How does the history of colonisation in Mauritius influence the present experience of the Franco-Mauritians?
3. What experiences of racism do they encounter on a daily basis and how does it impact on the Franco-Mauritian individual experiences of self-worth and their collective sense of national and social identity?
4. What kind of class positions do Franco-Mauritians hold in Mauritius? What has changed from their historic elite positions?
5. Describe some of the ambiguous acts of ethnicity. (Not all white ethnicities are dominant and not all whites are privileged).
6. What are the exclusionary practices of Franco-Mauritian discourse?

Over a period of 4 months, the researcher was able to contact and interview 24 participants who were identified as Franco-Mauritians. The age range of the sample spanned 23 years - 82 years old. She felt that the perspective of Franco-Mauritian youths could better reflect the contemporary situation. However, she relied on older Franco-Mauritians to present their views on Franco-Mauritian life, past and present. Unfortunately, she was unable to conduct any focus groups with Franco-Mauritian youths. All together she was able to interview an equally gender representative group and participants spanned a range of occupations. Every Franco-Mauritian interviewed defined themselves as having European ancestry and as practising Roman Catholics. Most Franco-Mauritians, also interviewed, lived in The North, West and Central Mauritius. Residential areas of interviewees included Curepipe, Rose-Hill, Floréal, Black River, Tamarin and Grand-Baie. Some were interviewed at home, others in their workplace. It was not only interviews that informed the research but also participant observation in shopping malls, social clubs and bars, in church, at the beaches and in other public spaces.

Because there are various Franco Mauritian landscapes, the research needed to be multi-sited. Multi-sited research purports that ethnographic subjects cannot be culturally understood from one specific terrain under one specific set of conditions, and reinforces the fact that subjects in different sites under various conditions need inform an ethnography.

## Research on Gender

The research on gender and racism was not well-executed. We had a number of good observations initiated by two research assistants. However, these did not yield data of sufficient substance for us to discuss the issue of gender and race in a separate section of this report. We hope, however, that this topic will be further investigated in the near future and that this report is able to provide sufficient insight into the specific experiences of women in particular, in a racialised space. We offer a brief discussion on gender and race in Section 3 of this report and use data from other archives (*Aapravasi Ghat* interviews on gender and identity) to supplement our discussion on this important issue.

## Psychological consequences of Racism

The Clinical Psychologist, who was part of this project, used mostly interviews and observations to gather her data for this report. She indicates that:

A total of 17 interviews (thus formal and informal) were conducted in July and August 2011- which includes 9 preliminary meetings with Directors of the NGOs mentioned earlier, and those in Public Service. At these meetings, research objectives were outlined and introductions to the institutions offered. Follow-up visits to these institutions and other meetings have produced eight life histories and one focus group. All life histories have been archived and are stored to CDs.

### Observation of Health Care professionals in Government institutions:

The researcher is not trained in the assessment of physical features, that is a description of skin tone and colour, hair texture, body shape and other physical/biological make-up often used in categorizing people into racial groups. Through informal interactions with the staff in public facilities, the researcher came to learn that the protocols that govern public institutions and its hierarchical structure means the researcher cannot interview a junior staff member without his or her senior being aware especially during working hours. This, together with the participants' reluctance, means that when conducting interviews at the office and during office hours, the researcher needed to be cautious of organizational issues.

With regard to Psychologists and Social Workers, the nature of their work which is characterized by working according to appointments, long hours for those on calls, overload and their alternative daily movement between institutions or centres. This seems to suggest that the researcher should look into scheduling their interviews on weekends or after hours, whenever possible.

Although Public Servants specifically Psychologists agreed to be interviewed, they do not only wish to remain anonymous, but requested not to be audio taped. This could possibly mean that by virtue of working for the state, they belong to an organization with governing rules. Perhaps, they feel their personal and professional opinions may be misread as representation of their institutions. One wonders if their responses are embedded in the ethics of their profession, which places such emphasis on confidentiality and boundaries.

In comparison to public serve personnel, there has been a generally positive response from NGOs. The researcher was able to visit and conduct interviews with qualified and unqualified Counsellors (which include Psychologists, Social Workers, Therapists and people with long standing experience in the counselling field ) working for these NGOs. The researcher still plans to contact the rest of the NGOs list under NATReSA and diversify the population to include Medical Doctors in these set ups. In contrast to public service, it is in the NGOs where the researcher have seen and interacted with people from different ethnicities that exist in Mauritian society.

## PART ONE

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF RACIAL IDENTITY

*Researcher: What race would you say you are?*

*Participant: Catholic*

*Researcher: I mean the colour of your skin, what race do you identify as in forms etc?*

*Participant: Creole*

*Researcher: What makes you Creole?*

*Participant: \*pauses\* Speaking Kreol.*

*(Interview001\_01062010)*

*Researcher: What does a Creole person look like?*

*Participant: Creoles are black people*

*Participant: A Creole is someone like me, nasyon.*

*Researcher: What does nasyon mean?*

*Participant: Same as 'Mazambik', we are distinct from others, we came from Africa.*

*(Interview022\_27062010)*

*Focus group meeting 27 June at Bois Marchand, Christopher (20) and Maygane (28).*

*Researcher: How do you define your race?*

*Participant: Normally I would say I'm Christian and Chinese.*

*Researcher: have you ever felt you were treated differently because of your race?*

*Participant: I have \*pauses and taps feet\* I think so, yes, maybe it's because I'm white, they think I'm more intelligent than them.*

*Researcher: do you identify yourself as white?*

*Participant: they think I'm white. I think they think that, I don't know.*

*Researcher: what do you mean when you say white?*

*Participant: I'm not saying I'm white like a tourist. Like in school, we see Creole, Chinese, Muslim and Indians. But when you see like a Chinese like me they call them blanc, white, that happens to me. You see it in the colour of the skin, they see my light skin and they will say white. Normally I will say I am Chinese, they say blanc.*

*Researcher: do you identify Chinese as white*

*Participant: like my friend, D, he is Chinese and he is white. There is also this girl, she has light skin and is mix, I would say she is white*

*(Interview011\_09062010)*

*'....paski bon si nou vin lo term relizyon se la plipar kreol ki tit el katolik e kreol e a moris zot don identite kreol pli boku ban ki in desandan esklav c ta dir ban*

afro morisyen e li vin inpe komen nou dir li vin lor kuler so lapo e seve en promyer baz...kalite seve...se kan nou dir lapo brin pa dir nwar me brin e seve nwar nu dir seve krep ti seve seve mozanbik...'<sup>10</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...Because if we consider the term religion mostly Creoles were Catholic and Creoles in Mauritius they give the Creole identity mainly to the slave descendants that is the Afro-Mauritians and it comes a little how would say that on skin colour and hair type primarily...hair type...it is when we say brown skin not black skin we say brown skin and black hair we say frizzy hair short hair Mozambican hair...)

*'...Par les cheveux surtout pour les créoles, vous pouvez distinguer leur leur cheveux...A moins qu'ils ont le cran rase, des cheveux crépu...bon, un indien on va, on va surtout savoir que c'est pas un créole ou un chinois, mais il sera peut-être musulmans ou tamoules c'est pas vraiment différent...'<sup>11</sup>*

(Eng. Trans.:...By the hair especially for the Creoles, you can distinguish their hair...except if they are shaved, frizzy hair...but, an Indian we will above all know it is not a Creole or a Chinese, but he might be Muslim or Tamil it is not really different...)

Anthropologists both national and international have conducted substantive research on the nature of identity in Mauritius. Most of these researchers and authors concur that the public articulation of Mauritius as a *multicultural society*, as well as the national slogan of 'unity in diversity' encourages the public to focus on differences and ethnic diversity. In what follows, we offer evidence of the construction of specific 'communities' in Mauritius and the ways in which these constructions serve to reinforce ethnic (cultural) and racial boundaries. We attempt to outline some of the key discourses of the time and to explain how these encouraged or attempted to dissuade Mauritians from engaging in racist classifications.

## Official and Public Discourses

As the Social Stratification project of the TJC (2011) confirms, when the Indian indentured labourers arrived in Mauritius, they did come to the island with unchanged ideas about and experiences of caste. Relationships struck on the journey from India to Mauritius, dock marriages, the practice of hypergamy and the mimicking of higher caste behaviours and practices were all experiences which the indentured labourers might have had on their travel to Mauritius. Thus, while they might have been versed in the ideal ways to maintain religion and identity (i.e. *via* the official religious discourses), they were also humans who altered and attempted to change practices and beliefs in order to meet their particular needs. Once in Mauritius and among a myriad of concerns (including survival), there remained a deep concern in maintaining caste-specific identity and hierarchy, especially regarding the issue of crossing waters which could defile the individual. In Mauritius, it is possible (and this needs further investigation) that the idea was that one could reverse or attenuate the spiritual pollution caused by the travel over the sea to Mauritius by reasserting and strengthening caste specific rituals and practices. As the Indian descendants were far from home and were in a space in which there were competing beliefs and practices, it became imperative to reassert caste identity, not only to maintain privileges but to maintain the illusion of purity, which is vitally important to the maintenance of one's identity. To acknowledge a common identity as Mauritians could have jeopardised existing system, privileges and the illusion of control. However, and as many scholars have noted (see the writings of Oddvar Hollup on caste in Mauritius for example), the concern with the maintenance of caste identity is not one which has evolved 'organically' since the arrival of indentured labourers. What the literature tells us is that there were concerted efforts on the part of scholar-politicians (the Bissondoyal brothers for instance) who promoted the reification of caste in almost essentialist terms. This practice has led, as we discuss further on in Section 5 of this report, to the institution of socio-cultural organisations which can promote racial and ethnic segregation in Mauritius.

A quick overview of the development of the franchise and of democracy in Mauritius since abolition suggests that these were very slow and tortuous processes. The abolition of the Colour Bar in

Mauritius in 1928 appeared to pave the way for a more racially-integrated society. However, and despite this important change, racism remained institutionalised or at least a very salient feature in Mauritius. Politicians remained largely male, white and wealthy. Businesses in the 1930s remained mostly white-owned and male-run. It was only in 1947 that the vote was extended to the literate in Mauritius and this saw the gradual transformation of a racially-oriented political system. But even so, the underlying discourse then was that only literate people could understand the meaning of equality and of democracy. Women were largely excluded from this newly-enfranchised population and the many illiterate slave descendants and descendants of indentured labourers were excluded.

In the 1980s, there was a concerted effort in Mauritius to promote a national identity, one based on 'Mauricianisme'. This ideal was not readily embraced by everyone, partly (we argue), because the movement and ideal were associated with the working class and the politics of Creoles via the MMM political party. The following extract from one of the individual reports generated by a researcher, part of this project, offers more detail on this particular period in history and the identity issues at stake:

In line with the interviews of Firoz Ghanty and Jean Claude de L'Estrac, 1969 to around 1982 was a period of national identity construction and building of national culture, but about 1970 to 1972, racism was rife and there was the revival of Hinduism and an Indianisation of Mauritius which led in 1983 to the division of the Hindu community into subgroups.

...82, de manière un peu mythologique et mythique, est présenté comme un grand moment d'unité nationale. Au contraire, puisque le MMM gagne les élections, le MMM n'est perçu comme un parti communal, raciste ou ethniquement centré. Il est perçu comme un parti national qui se bat pour la lutte des classes, qui refuse le communalisme, qui prône le Mauricianisme...Mais en vérité c'est un peu faux parce que quand on regarde de près...on constate que même en 83, une majorité de Mauriciens d'origine indienne, de foi hindoue, n'avaient pas voté parce que le Parti Travailleiste fait à lui tout seul près de 30% des sièges au plan national et pour faire ce résultat là, il est clair que le Parti Travailleiste a dû faire près de 60-70% des voix d'électeurs hindous, c'est-à-dire que même là où il y a eu un élan, mouvement qu'ils avaient retrouvé d'ailleurs les hindous n'ont pas été à ce rendez-vous là. Ils sont restés fidèles au Parti Travailleiste pour des raisons que l'on peut expliquer amplement...<sup>12</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...82, is presented in mythological and mythical ways as a great moment of national unity. On the contrary, since the MMM wins the elections, the MMM is not perceived as a communal, racist or an ethnically centred party. It is perceived as a national party fighting for the class struggle, that refuses communalism, that promotes Mauritianism ... but in fact it is somewhat false because when we have a close look...we note that even in 83 a majority of Mauritians of Indian origins, of Hindu faith did not vote because the Labour Party on its own counts 30% of the seats at national level and to reach this result it is obvious that the Labour Party has had to cast about 60-70% of the Hindus electoral vote, that is even where there was a gathering of forces, a move that excluded the Hindus. They were not there but had remained faithful to the Labour Party for reasons that we can thoroughly explain...)

'...C'est-à-dire dans cette première période qui a vécu le MMM entre 1969 la naissance du MMM et on va dire 1982 ; il y a eu une très grosse prise de conscience de tout ça, où la honte a commencé à disparaître, où les descendants d'esclaves assumaient, ils disaient oui je suis descendant d'esclaves, les descendants d'engagés l'assumaient aussi donc ça était une période extraordinaire de construction réelle de l'identité et de la culture nationale et c'est-à-dire il y avait plus de honte à ça. Donc voilà cela a été une grande période. Et puis il y eut une recomposition à partir de 1983 où effectivement on a voulu garder les divisions et à ce moment là il y a eu une autre prise de conscience qui s'est faite en parallèle dans la communauté indoue. Ramgoolam père avait pu faire une espèce d'unité de la communauté

indoue qui était une grande masse un peu uniforme. Mais à partir de 1983 ; les subdivisions ont commencé à paraître...à réapparaître. On a commencé à parler du télugu, du marathi, tamoule, etc. etc. rajpoute, il y a des sociétés qui vont naître. Où ça veut dire qu'il y aura plus cette espèce de grosse cohésion. Chaque composant de la communauté indoue va se retrouver. Mais chez le créole ça ne peut pas se faire parce qu'il n'y a pas d'élément pour savoir précisément de quel pays ils sont originaires...<sup>13</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...That is during the first period of the MMM between 1969 and we shall say 1982, there was mass awareness of all this, when shame started to disappear, where the slave descendants accepted (their descent), they said "yes I am a slave descendant, the descendants of indentured labourers also accepted it", hence it was a great period which saw the real construction of identity and of a national culture and there was no shame in it. Hence it was a great period. And then there was a reconstruction as from 1983 when in fact they wanted to preserve divisions and as from then there was another awareness building in parallel in the Hindu community that was a large mass somewhat homogeneous. But as from 1983 subdivision started to appear...to reappear. We started to talk of Telegu, of Marathi, Tamil etc etc. Rajput, groups will be set up. Where it means this kind of mass cohesion won't exist anymore. Each component of the Hindu community will find his bearings. But among the Creole it won't be possible as there are no elements to know their exact country of origin...)

## Discourses in the construction of Communities

The following extract from one of our individual reports reveals the various ways in which Creole identity and community are constructed, as well as the construction of race in the Creole community.

The conceptualisation of who is a Creole and of *Creolité* (English Translation: Creolity) differs from one informant to another but two perspectives can be identified from the information gathered. The first reveals a biological definition of *Creolité*, emphasising the 'Pure-bred Creole'. From this perspective for someone to be identified as a Creole, they have to possess specific phenotypical features. In other words, that person needs to have 'black' skin and other characteristics associated with the African phenotype, this is because: '*...kreol ces desendan esklav, kan nou pe koz kreol ces afrikain...*'<sup>14</sup> (English Translation:...Creole is a descendant of slave, when we talk of Creole we are talking about an African person...)

The second perspective emphasises biological hybridity and cultural heterogeneity among Creoles. From this perspective, all those who either speak the dialect of Kreol and live on the island or are Creoles, regardless of their religious/ethnic background. Thus:

'...Créole c'est nous, tout le monde, tout le monde qui parle le Créole. Du moment que tu parles le Créole, c'est notre langue natale ; la langue officielle à Maurice c'est l'anglais mais le Créole, c'est notre langue natale, donc on est tous des Créoles...Créole c'est une nationalité, il n'y a pas de races qui parlent le Créole, même le blanc aussi parle le Créole...Donc, comme tu dis, le blanc est un Créole, l'Indien est un Créole? Oui et c'est la seule langue qu'on parle tous à Maurice...'<sup>15</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ...We are Creoles, everyone, all people who speak Kreol. As long as you speak Kreol, it is our mother tongue; English is the official language in Mauritius but kreol is our mother tongue, hence we are all Creoles...Creole is a nationality, there is no race speaking Kreol, even the whites also speak Kreol...Hence, as you say the white is a Creole, the Indian is a Creole? Yes and it is the only language that we all speak in Mauritius...)

Another argument in the construction of identity and community is that for some (as we see below), there are no 'pure' Creoles exhibiting the exact phenotypes of black Africans left on the island because of intermarriage and sexual relations.

'...Parski nepli en pir Kreol. Pir Kreol pena sa. Aster ki pena pir Kreol, sekinn ne isi, nou tou nou ansam. Me pir, depan nou lorizinn mem nou pa pir. Parski inn amenn nou isi o fer sekinn amene, noun melanze, nou pa pir nou....Sekinn ne dan enn lil...be nou tou Kreol...parski nou tou nou ne lor enn lil....pou mwa ki savedir Kreol. Tou kreol! Me selman li, li enn Kreol-Indien, li li enn Kreol-Mizilman, senn-la li enn Kreol-Sinwa...kan ti amen Kreol la li ti ankor, malgas, kan ti amenn Afrikin la, li ti ankor Kreol me Afrikin. Me nou tou Kreol. Se ki fe ki nou nou pena idantite, alor, nou nou Kreol-Kreol...'<sup>16</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...Because it is no more a pure Creole. There are no pure Creoles. Now that there is no pure Creole, those who are born here, we are all together. But pure depends since our origins we are not pure. Because we were brought here that brought mixture, we are not pure...those who are born on an island...we are all Creoles...because we are all born on an island...For me who is a Creole. We all Creoles! But he, he is a Creole-Indian, he is a Creole-Muslim, this one is a Creole-Chinese...when the Creole was brought he was still Malagasy, when the African was brought he was still African but Creole. But we are all Creoles. But we do not have an identity hence we are *Creole*-Creoles...)

However, even among those clearly defined as 'black' Creoles, there is further racial distinction, which condemns those at the very bottom of the racial hierarchy to extreme marginalisation:

...speaking of the Creole context, one scholar stated that 'there is division within Creole community of who is a Creole. Those who cannot help but *look* Creole, that is you can see they have African ancestry, are most affected by marginalisation. There is different grading of Creoles depending on mix, the blackest of Creoles marginalised by other Creoles' (Interview023\_08072010).

In the final analysis, we find that it is very difficult to identify where the Creole community begins and where it ends. The previous quote is especially interesting because it highlights the fact of heterogeneity in Mauritius and how people have adopted hyphenated identities (i.e. Creole-Muslim) in order to publicly indicate the various strands of their ancestry and identity. The interviewee quoted above also indicates the ambivalent situation in which Creoles find themselves because: (1) Creoles do not have these alternative strands of identity (they are Creole-Creoles) and (2) the low value placed on Creole identity itself because not to have another strand of identity (i.e. Indian, Chinese, Muslim) via which one can forge an identity, is believed to deprive a person of identity altogether.

In the following extracts we note the reconstruction of Creole identity via the discourse of victimhood in the story of slavery. It is our view that this is happening because there is a 'need' to reassert boundaries around the Creole community and to give it value (by establishing a definitive source of identity and history of Creoles) in the culture-conscious space of Mauritius.

It is possible, however, to also cynically argue that some Creoles have appropriated and transformed the discourse of victimisation and suffering apparent in the story of slavery and that they are now reinterpreting the story to argue that their ancestors were resilient and that this resilience is now helping them to confront the legacy of slavery. The discourse of resilience and freedom have now replaced the historical discourse on slavery as an experienced marked by humiliation and suffering. Those intent on using the transformed discourse for political purposes are now doing so, as a way of gaining leverage and support from the slave descendant population. It is also our view that the transformation of the discourse of slavery is not the sole project of selected Creole politicians but rather the work of politicians and scholars who actively search for, and promote, narratives of resilience in the history of slavery.

Here we run into some difficulties. For, a closer look at the historical literature on the story of slavery in Mauritius strongly suggests to us that the story of slavery and the involvement of Creoles in it were something that has long been suppressed. Thus, it is our counterargument that, the 'new' discourse on slavery as a time of resilience and search for freedom, is an important part of

the process of providing counter-narratives about race in Mauritius. Such narratives seek to displace the negative stereotyping of slave and indentured labour descendants. They are positive discourses in the sense that they seek to restore dignity and hope to those who have experienced marginalisation. The latter is very important because in Mauritius, there is rarely a discussion on how scholarly work might contribute to the reconstruction of racial discourses. If we consider how (in the past), scholarly and scientific outputs were important to the consolidation of scientific and social racism, we should not be so quick to dispense with scholarly work on identity issues in Mauritius. We shall return to the issue of discourse and identity construction at the end of this report in the section on recommendations. For the moment, we are focused on that the fact that the transformation of the discourse of victimisation is a potent means of rejecting popular, negative (and racist) discourse about Creoles:

In line with the above testimony and further substantiated by Claudine's statement, the descendants of slaves have embraced the Creole identity, whereas others have not. Some Creoles have also transformed this identity into one of racism and suffering. This is why the term Creole is now commonly associated with the Mauritians of African descendants.

'...tou dimunn ki res lor lil se bann kreol me selman nu ena enn tandans pu dir ki nu bann desandan esklav nunn pran li depi o komansman mem. Kuma dir kan enn dimunn pu get mwa la, pa bizin dir ki kiete sa kreol sa, kuma nu dir dan langaz ki nu abitie koze, kreol sa, malbar sa, sinwa sa, blan sa, non. Kuma truv mwa, nu figir mem dir nu enn kreol, parski nu desandan esklav depi in pran nesans nu dir nu nu kreol, kuma dir ni in fini ankre dan sa idantite kreol la...'<sup>17</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...All people who live on an island are Creoles but we have the tendency to say that we slave descendants we took it since the start. That is when a person looks at me, there is no need to say who (I) am (I) am a Creole, as we use to say in our language, it's a Creole, it's an Indian, it's a Chinese, it's a white. When they see me, my face tells them that I am Creole, because we are descendant of slaves since our birth, we say we are Creoles, that is we are rooted in this Creole identity...)

This tendency to Africanise the Creole identity is based on racial characteristics and also on linguistic factors. A Creole is not only a person of African phenotype but also someone who has to speak the *Kreol* language to be considered as a Creole. Hence, based on this construction of the Creole identity, the Coloureds (commonly designated by the pejorative term Mulattoes or bastards) are not considered as Creoles but as a distinct category because not only of their racial characteristics but also because they may refuse to speak *Kreol*.

However, it is not enough to identify people in terms of their perceived ethnic group. A few of the informants did not identify themselves as Creoles but as members of a particular class. Georges, for example, identified himself in terms of social class. For him there are two worlds, that is two social classes, the *monde ouvrier* (English Translation: Working Class) and the *monde cadre* (English Translation: Management Class). He is proud of being of the working class. This is, as we argue, an important way in which to diversify the Creole identity and perhaps to remove it from the ambit of suffering and victimisation to one of perseverance and triumph.

'...Alor pou mwa mo rasin kouma dir se se sa se sa lorizin ouvrye mond ouvrye, kouma dir kan mo get mo papa ki pe travay, mo mama ki pe travay, pou mwa se sa mo lorizin, se sa mo rasin. Kouma dir de sa mond ouvrye la ek ki kouma dir malgre, ki zordi mo pe travay enn ti, enn ti travay korek , me selma kouma dir mo pa blie sa lorizin ki mo sorti, se enn enn milie ouvrye...'<sup>18</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...So for me my origins are this working class origin, that is when I looked at my father working, my mother working, this is my origin, this is my roots. How to say that, from this working class and how to say that, even though now I am working, I have a fairly nice work, but I do not forget my origins where I am from, it is a working class...)

According to him, there are two ways of considering the proletariat class, on the one hand, there are those who are not motivated and have developed a fatalistic approach to life, and on the other

hand there are those who are conscious of the importance of education and want to revalorise the working class. But there are people who, when they climb the social ladder and have achieved success, tend to forget their origin that they find is a shame.

'...mond ouvrye sa veu dir bann dimoun ki travay manuelman. Li kapav kouma dir bann mason, li kapav kouma dir bann menuizie...zafer ki monn konstate seki ena ena de mentalite du mond ouvryer. Ena enn mentalite ouvryer seki ena zenes ki malerezman kouma dir...papa peser, mason ainsi de suit ek finaleman kouma dir zot zot dan enn espes moule kot zot rest ladan mem ek ki kouma dir zot dir be se enn sentimen fatalist ki ki pran zot, zot dir koumsa ki wai be ki zistwar la li koumsa ek nou pa pou kapav sanz narien... Me deziem mentalite ki monn touve ek ki sa mentalite la osi ki li diviz en de, se enn premie mentalite dir koumsa be vwala mo dan sa monde ouvryer la...me selma kouma dir souvan ena bann paran du mond ouvryer ki consien ki sel fason pou sorti, se ledyasyon. Alor zot inkilke sa dan zot bann dan zot bann zenfan. Ek zenfan la kouma dir li resi monte sosialman, o nivo bann letid. Fale resi monte ek kan li resi ariv la ba...fer tou mo posibil pou ki kouma dir mo valoriz sa mond ouvryer la ek konsientiz kouma dir bann zenfan ki dan enn le monde ouvryer consientiz zot ki kouma dir mem si nou sorti dans enn mond ouvryer, nou kapav arive dan la vie...E deziem, malerezman deziem fason...seki souvan bann paran du mond ouvryer enkor enn fwa zot motiv zot bann zenfan pou al de lavan dans letid. Don zot tou seki zot bizin, ek ki zenfan la resi ariv enn moman, li resi ariv enn bon bon nivo, ek malerezman seki monn konstate, seki li blie sa plas kot linn sorti la, li envi blie sa sa monde ouvryer kot linn sorti...'<sup>19</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...The working class means manual workers. It can be how to say that a mason, it can be, how would you say this... a craftsman...something I have observed that the working class has two mindsets. There is one mindset of the working class that unfortunately the young people how say that...father is a fisherman, mason etc and finally let say that they are in a matrix in which they remain and they say that they are impregnated of a fatalist feeling, they say that their story is as such and that they won't be able to change it...but the second mindset that I observed and it is also subdivided in two parts, it is a first mind frame that states that here is I am in this working class...but how say that often there are working class parents that are conscious that education is the only means of get out. Hence they inculcate it in their children. And the child succeeds in moving up socially, at educational levels. And when he succeeds...he does everything to valorise the working class and sensitise the working class children that even though we come from the working class they can succeed in life...and second (mind frame) unfortunately...is that often working class parents again motivate their children to succeed in education. (They) give them all that they need and the children succeeds, he succeeds in reaching a good level but unfortunately what I observed is that he forgets where he comes from, he wants to forget the working class from which he comes...)

The above extracts suggest that socioeconomic mobility can encourage dissociation from one's economic and cultural roots. Among Creoles, this dissociation is perceived as a betrayal of the group in favour of a lifestyle and the social world in which the 'real' Creoles are excluded. Dissociation is also contrived as a form of aversive racism because dissociation implies disdain for, and a rejection of, a former lifestyle and of former associates. However, those leaving their 'old' world behind do not consciously leave but are doing so unconsciously and under pressure from the demands of the new social and economic situation. It is also noted by one of our researchers however that '...people's knowledge of their origins is limited to their grandparents and most of those interviewed did not have exact information about their origins but guessed their family ancestry based on their phenotype and on what they have learned or read on Mauritian history.' This means that informants may argue that their ancestors came from Africa or Madagascar because of their perceived physical traits but also because the story of slavery has become an integral part of the nationalist discourse:

'...Tou dimounn pou apel mwa enn desandan esklav, parski mo apel Georges Cangy, mo seve demi krepri dan mo latet, mo bat ravann, mo sant sega. Be zot pa pou dir mwa mo enn desandan esklav?...'<sup>20</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ... everyone will call me a descendant of slaves because my name is Georges Cangy, my hair is half frizzy, I play ravanne, I sing sega. Won't they say that I am a descendant of slaves?...)

Interestingly, the association with slave descent is not only one that is reinforced and maintained in nationalist discourse, but also via certain experiences. As the following interviewee suggests, that it is not only external definition but experience of contemporary hardship (possibly because of 'race') that qualifies an individual as a slave descendant person:

'...Li ti bann Baho non Mascareignes, de kote maternel li bann Baho. Aster, kan ou vinn par isi ou get la fami Cangy, nou zot dir nou sort sipa Pondicherry, ena dir sipa dan ki parti rezion de l'Inde nou sorti. Be kan mo get tousala de dan...Ou kone kan monn al resanti ki mo bann desandan bann desandan esklav ? Kan ou fer enn zafer, ou fer li par amour ou pou resi...Mo listwar mo panse ki mo bann granparan inn form parti dan lesklav. E la so disan, sa lavenn, disan dan lavenn esklav la, li ekziste...'<sup>21</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...They are Baho, no Mascareignes, on my mother's side they are Baho. Then when you look on the side of the Cangy family, they say we come from Pondicherry others say that we come from whatever part region of India. But when we look at all this...You know when we felt we are of slave descent? When you try to do something with love but you do not succeed...my history I think my elders were among the slaves. And the blood, this vein, the slave blood in the veins is present...)

What of the other groups? Sino-Mauritians are (according to one of our researchers) the second or third generation of Chinese immigrants who migrated to Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For example, Philip's parents and James' father and grandparents are of Chinese origins and arrived in the country at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century fleeing the Chinese civil war.

'...Non mes parents sont venus...Oui, nous sommes de la deuxième génération des immigrants...Pour fuir la misère et puis en Chine il y a une turbulence politique, la prise du pouvoir c'est-à-dire une guerre fratricide entre les nationalistes et les communistes donc et puis la prise du pouvoir des communistes. Donc il y a un avenir incertain, ils se sont sauvés pour venir...'<sup>22</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ... No my parents came...Yes we are the second generation of migrants...to flee misery and in China there was political unrest, political takeover, that is a fratricidal war between the nationalists and the communists and the political takeover by the communists. Hence the future was uncertain, they fled to come here...)

The first wave of immigrants came as indentured labourers and many of them returned back to their homeland because they could not adapt in Mauritius. The second wave of migrants can be considered as political refugees since they left their homeland because of civil war but with the intention to return after the war when the political situation would be stable, and also after having saved money in Mauritius. But finally, many stayed in their host country; hence, according to the informants, they identify themselves as Sino-Mauritians, as Mauritians of Chinese origins because, firstly, the Chinese Diaspora in Mauritius still has close ties with their country of origin, with families living in China, secondly, they continue to perpetuate, to some degree, their ancestral traditions and practices and finally because the local Sino-Mauritian community is a recent migrant community compared to the other groups.

However, according to Andy and Roger, even though the Indo-Mauritians and the Sino-Mauritians have maintained their cultural specificities, the latter have integrated into the Mauritian society faster, in two generations, for economic and pragmatic reasons. For them, their community is less

ethno-centric compared to the others and their ethnic barriers less rigid as they easily accept others.

'...Je crois parce que nous autres les chinois, c'était beaucoup plus facile hein. Que ce soit dans la gastronomie ou dans la vie de tous les jours. Nous intégrons facilement avec n'importe quelles communautés ; hindoue, créole. Peut être, peut être pour vous dire franchement avec les musulmans un peu moins, on dit ça la, avec une certaine méfiance vu leur façon de vivre, leur religion et tout. Sinon O.K...au contraire, il y a de plus en plus d'ouverture, il y a le coté pratique de la chose. A l'époque comme vous le disiez le chinois ; les premiers chinois qui sont arrivés étaient à la recherche non seulement d'une compagne, d'une assistante même... et puis à l'époque, je te fais remarqué, il y a plus de males : d'hommes que de femmes qui venaient...De nos jours ça se répète. Dans le faite que, il y a moins de garçons pour trouver des filles. Il y a plus de filles que de garçons. Les garçons la plupart partent donc là ou ils vont, ils vont prendre anglaise, française...'<sup>23</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ... I think for us the Chinese it was easier. Whether (it is) in gastronomy or in every-day life. We integrate in another community easily; Hindu, Creole, honestly maybe with Muslims a little less, we say it now with a little suspicion given their lifestyle, religion etc. Otherwise ok...on the contrary there is more opening, there is the practical side. At that time as you said, the first Chinese that came were not only in search of a partner but of an assistant too...and at that time I remind you there were more men than women that came...it is replicating itself now. In that there are fewer boys for girls. There are more girls than boys. The boys leave and they take an English, French...)

However, as we indicate further on, in our discussion on the youths and socialisation, the integration of the Chinese descendants is not as easy as is claimed by the previous informant. The identification of them as 'different' and in some cases, sub-human (see for example the racial epithet regarding people of Chinese descent), sets them apart from other communities in Mauritius and encourages racial exclusivity within the group. This presents an interesting issue for the TJC. The Bill requires an investigation into the legacy of slavery and indentured labour and our task is to investigate the historical and contemporary experience of racism. What do we do about those who fall into neither of these categories but experience either direct or aversive racism because they live in a pigmentocracy and culturally conservative society in which whiteness is privileged?

In our research, it was difficult to find members of the Indo-Mauritian community willing to discuss the issue of race and the experience of race. We had better luck in discussing the intersection of gender and racism in the personal experiences of Indo-Mauritians. We feel that the Social Stratification project will be best placed to discuss the quasi-primordial or essentialised discussions and experiences of caste and how caste discrimination can mimic racial discrimination.

## Unofficial Discourses and Policies

However, this report can offer some insight into how Creoles perceive Hindus and Franco-Mauritians and how they experience interactions with them. Overall, we found that there is a perception of homogeneity and cohesiveness among Indo-Mauritians. There is also the argument that Indo-Mauritians receive preferential treatment and have better experiences in the job market and in a variety of social spaces:

'...Parski ou al get enn travay, li get ou nom. Mo frer ti ena tou sertifika ki bizin pou al rod enn travay li dir li isi nou pa get sertifika, nou get zis ou non; si ou ti ena enn Singh dan ou non nounn donn ou travay-la. Li inpe lontan ha mo pe dir ou, me le fe ki zot kontign gard sa. Si ou non enn non Kreol, ou dosie al par anba be li pa zis ki se pou sa ki nou dir ki nou pena okenn drwa nou, parski nou pena personn pou defann nou...Ou kone kisisasa ou dan enn lopital, ou pe asize servant la pe koz langaz ou ou tousel zot inn fer enn lekip, ou pa pe konpran narnie ki zot pe dir...Letan ou trouv bann ners la vini, zot tou parey, zot tou koz

dan langaz ; servant la pe koz ar ners la sa osi li koz an langaz, koze pani amenn delo. Be nou ar ki nou pou koze ler-la nou ? Eski kouman mo pe dir ou la, koman pe dir personn pa resi, eski dan Kreol pena personn intelizan, pa fer mwa pans sa. Eski dan Kreol pena personn kapav al travay dan lopital, al fer servant ? Tou seki fer pa kapav zot dir ki nou pale; nou pa gagne! Pou anvoye mem soz-la me nou pa resi rantre, parski kifer, bann dirizan lopital lamem Indien, so ban dokter Indien, mo pa kont sa zafer ki dir ki mo ladan mwa, mo fer mo fami rantre li vre sa ; tou dimounn rod lavantaz, me si zot tou ladan zot tou fer zis zot fami rantre, be nou kan nou pou ladan, kan nou pou fer nou fami rantre ? Savedir ki nou pou fer nou ; toultan nou pou res par deryer mem ? se sa ki noule nousi...<sup>24</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ... Because (when) you look for a job, they look at your name. My brother had all the necessary certificates to look for a job, they told him here we do not look at certificates just names, if you had a Singh in your name we would have given you the job. It's been a while what I'm telling you, but the fact that they continue that. If you have a Creole name your file will go underneath it is not fair that is why we say we do not have any rights, because we have no one to defend us...do you know what it is you are in an hospital, you are sitting the servants (are) talking (in their) language you are alone and they regroup, you do not understand anything they are saying...when you see the nurse coming, they are same, they speak (in their) language, the servants speak (in their) language to the nurse...But we to whom we'll talk? As I am telling you, as I am saying no one succeeds, are there no intelligent people among Creoles? do not make me think so. Are there no one among Creoles capable of working in hospital, as servant? All that we try, they can't say we do not want, no we do not get! Would send the think but we are not able to get in, why? because the hospital director is Indian, his doctors are Indians, I have nothing against saying I am in it, I make my family get in, it is true, everyone looks for advantages, if they all in it and they all make their family get in, but we when we'll get in, when we'll make our family get in? Which means what we will do, each time we will stay at the back? It is what we want also..)

The last community which we wish to discuss is that of the Franco-Mauritians. The following is extracted from one of the individual reports:

The category Franco Mauritian was coined in written texts in 1908 (Boudet, 2005:36). A central motif to their name as Franco-Mauritian is their French ancestry and their use of the French language. Franco-Mauritians are described as "educated and elegant" (Personal communication, Anon., Flic-en-Flac, 5 June, 2010). Many characterisations of Franco-Mauritians have caught my attention in history books and through discussions with the islanders. Franco-Mauritians are generally perceived as aristocratic, upper-class, high society, highly cultured, privileged, the white plantocracy, the sugar oligarchy, as top of social hierarchy, as the historic bourgeoisie, and by and by, the economic elite.

Having colonised the island in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Franco-Mauritians were the pioneers of Mauritius, owning vast land and inscribing the French culture, language and traditions into the socioeconomic landscape. By 1870, 270 sugar factories were owned by white Franco-Mauritian families. The fact that Franco-Mauritians have traditionally been active in the economic and agricultural sectors was cause to call them the dominant or 'elite' minority.

Elites are socially and discursively constructed as elites, either by themselves or others. In Salverda (2010:96), Shore and Nugent state: "In order to constitute itself as an elite in the first place, the elite group must develop its own particularistic set of interests, norms and practices to differentiate itself from the masses". There needs to be a sense of belonging for members - they need to share common interests and goals.

For Franco-Mauritians, a sense of belonging is reinforced by tracing back their genealogies, and "consequently the boundaries of Franco-Mauritian community are set by family names, which lack traces of non-white blood" (Salverda, 2010:103). There seems to be a correlation between elite status, ethnicity and skin-colour.

Belonging to a community also correlates with a certain standard of living for elites. Franco-Mauritian families were considered the wealthiest in Mauritius, in that they owned big houses or *bungalows* with electric gates, security guards and alarm system, complete with an expensive car, a big dog, a pool and large tended-to garden. They were the population group who owned a second [holiday] home on the coast. Franco-Mauritians have servants - a cook, a cleaner, a childminder and a gardener - who are often not paid well or treated with respect (Personal communication, FV, Black River, 5 June 2010). Franco-Mauritian families send their children to private schools and most Franco-Mauritian children have opportunities to study abroad once they have completed school. They indulge in leisure activities - such as going to the beach, hunting, horse-riding, water-sports and overseas vacations. They only travel by car, never by bus, and shop in expensive shops and boutiques (Observation, Tamarin). Such depictions suggest a flamboyant lifestyle, reminiscent of colonial living. These descriptions, used to name and explain the position of Franco-Mauritians say something about the creation and upkeep of a colonial discourse of Franco-Mauritian that no longer applies within independent and modern-day Mauritian society. We need to remember that Franco-Mauritians cannot be characterized; their identity is not set in colonial stone.

Belonging is further maintained through family support and inheritance. The literature explains that elite are linked by a network of professional and social relations. Both formal, and thus visible, and informal networks exist (Salverda, 2010, p95). Elites rely on strong intra- and inter-group relations and social cohesion. The researcher heard of cousins or nephews taking over the family business, and still there are large Franco-Mauritian families that own big businesses in Mauritius e.g. Mauritian Commercial Bank. The stronghold of family in business serves to foster ethnic loyalty to the minority group (like endogamous marriage) and further efforts at self-preservation of the minority.

“They also seek to perpetuate their elite status and privileges by socializing and training their children to succeed them” (Cohen in Salverda, 2010:97).

They maintain their position by staying low-profile and avoiding to draw too much attention. The minority group is attempting self-preservation, self protection in the face of trouncing privilege.

Referring to the research findings, it appears therefore that Mauritians do racially categorise one another but that they do so with reference to a range of characteristics. They also use a range of discourses including race, class, caste and beliefs. References to diverse forms of categorisation can be attributed to the many social spaces in which people are able to define themselves. Furthermore and as the earlier discussion of identity construction suggests, identity in Mauritius, as anywhere else in the world, is situational (dependent on context): one’s age, class and gender can and does affect racial experiences. This is not say, that there is no class or group of people who routinely experience discrimination principally on the basis of race or their phenotype.

On the contrary, and what the following extracts from the individual research reports suggest, is that it is for a particular group of slave descendants in which all the elements of a stigmatised identity converge (poverty, stigmatised phenotype and place of residence) the experience of racism is most intense. For these individuals, racism is part of daily experience and is experienced in direct ways - encounters on the street, in the municipal offices, schools and hospitals. With regard to the above- noted quotations it is evident that just as there are different categories of black in Mauritius (i.e. we have those associated with the highest levels of poverty and are considered in public discourse as the *ti Creole*), also have categories of white in the country. Thus, a person of Chinese descent may be, by virtue of their middle-class status, considered white in Mauritian society. This is certainly apparent in the discussion presented in the following extract:

Whilst some Sino Mauritians are referred to as *jaune* (yellow), *blanc* (white) is also used to describe the lightness of Sino Mauritian skin. This white is also used to imply a class status, one female student from Port Louis SSS remarked that “people think that we are white because we are more rich. I am not proud to be Chinese, it is just my destiny that I was born Chinese. I have friends of different religions.” (Interview053\_02092010). Another student at Ste Marie, Palma, stated that he had little trouble gaining entrance into night clubs despite his minor status because as a Sino Mauritian he is perceived to be wealthy and will be allowed access to a night club. The association of lightness and high class status was a matter that few students commented much upon, but speaking of the Creole context, Arnaud Carpooran states that ‘there is division within Creole

community of who is a Creole. Those who cannot *help* but look Creole, that is you can see they have African ancestry, are most affected by marginalisation. There is different grading of Creoles depending on mix, the blackest of Creoles marginalised by other Creoles' (Interview023\_08072010). This pigmentocracy is not limited to within the Creole community alone, it seems that there is a public discourse of lightness, where lighter skin is seen to infer a superior status to persons who possess it.

Similarly a person of mixed race heritage or what is popularly referred to as a *Gens de couleur*, can be perceived as white because of his or her association with people deemed 'white'. Raced identities do not always take precedence because, in certain circumstances, other identities, such as place of origin, may become more important.

The findings also present the particular racial experiences of those identified as being of mixed race. These individuals are said to adopt the strategy of either associating with the Franco-Mauritians or European descendants in Mauritius or feeling caught in between the category of black Creoles and European descendants. As is evident from the following extract, racial identity is not fixed. Rather, it is something to be achieved and is continuously negotiated, depending on the reception of one's display of identity.

As stated by informants, people born from cross-breeding pejoratively referred to as Mulattoes are not considered as Creoles but are rather perceived as 'bastards'.

'...Se koumsa, enan Kreol resing...Kifer resing parski ou ena enn ti kouler, seve drwat ; enn Kreol milat ; ou pann tande milat, Kreol milat. Resing la milat form bann mem parti sa...ena so tibout ki azout lada : enn milat batar ; dimounn kav dir li enn milat batar. Parski li batar ; li ena ti seve, me li kler...'<sup>25</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...it's like that there are Racing<sup>26</sup> Creole...why Racing because you have some colour, straight hair, a Mulatto Creole; you have not heard Mulatto? Mulatto Creole? The Racing and Mulatto they are same...there is this small adding; a bastard Mulatto; people can say he is a bastard Mulatto because he is a bastard; he has small hair but he is fair...)

The 'half-breeds' form a distinct category, referred to as the 'Coloured people', because they do not have the adequate phenotype to be accepted by the Creoles and do not fit in to either of the other categories because they are 'hybrids' and also as put forward by Marie Michèle because the Coloureds consider themselves as Whites.

'...Comme si ils ont honte de dire qu'ils sont créoles. La plupart du temps quand ils sont un peu clair, et un statut social, comme si là finalement tu n'arrives pas à saisir qu'est-ce qu'ils sont là par rapport à eux tu te sens ti-créole. Moi je me sens ti-créole tu vois...Peut être ils se considèrent blancs. Certains oui peut être...Ils veulent se passer comme ça mais malheureusement aux yeux d'un blanc il est aussi noir...J'ai une collègue elle est créole, elle est assez clair. Une fois à l'école c'était la journée de l'enfant Africain et on s'est dit il faut faire une prière spéciale parce que vu qu'on est dans une école catholique. Elle me dit ayo moi je ne suis pas africaine moi...Et sa maman est aussi noire que moi hein. Et j'ai dit tu sais aux yeux d'un blanc tu es aussi noir que moi même si tu es un peu plus clair disons mais tu es aussi noir que moi...Le même jour elle...dit moi ayo moi je suis une vraie créole moi, je dois manger mon riz, mon cari tous les jours. Ce matin tu n'étais pas africain, la tu es créole. Ce qui est navrant ces gens là, ils ne savent pas où ils sont...'<sup>27</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ... As if they are ashamed to say they are Creoles. Most of the time when they are a little fair (skinned) and (have) a social status, then finally you cannot know who they are and in relation to them you feel an inferior Creole. Me I feel an inferior Creole you understand...Maybe they consider themselves as White. Some maybe yes...They pretend to be white but unfortunately for the whites they are black...I have a Creole colleague, she is fair skinned. Once at school it was the Day of the African Child and we said we had to say a special prayer as we are a Catholic school. She told me that she is not African...And her mother is as black as

me. And I told her you know for a white you are as black as me even though slightly fair but you are as black as me...the same day she...said me I am a real Creole, every day I need to eat my rice (and) curry. This morning you were not African now you are Creole. What is heart-rending is that these people do not know where they are from...)

'...kuma in gagn milat? se ki bann patron blan in abiz bann fam desandan esklav afrikin ou indyen lerala in melanze. Me aster la zot pa pe kapav abize, zot marye aster, se sa ki kuma dir sa popilasyon milat la in pran nesans. Si kuma dir sakenn ti respekte so kalite, ti pu truv zis 2 kalite ou 3 kalite, pa ti pu truv sa bann melanz la...'<sup>28</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...How got Mulattos? The white 'masters' abused women slave African descendants or Indians and then they mixed. But now they cannot abuse, they get married, it is how this Mulatto population was born. If each one respected its type, there would be only 2 or 3 types, there would have been no Mulattos...)

But they are not accepted by the Whites who consider them as Blacks based on the notion of purity and on the concept of the 'one-drop' rule that stipulates that any person who has as genetic heritage a single drop of black blood is considered as Black, as illustrated by Marie-Michèle's testimony above.

'...Kreol...ou apel bann kreol bann Oskar? We...Kifer ou apel zot bann Oskar? Zot nwar, be inn gagn bate lasenn dan lipie...'<sup>29</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...Creole...You name Creoles Oscar? Yes...Why you name them Oscar? They are black, they were beaten and had their feet enchained...)

In fact, the question of 'pure blood' is a salient factor in social identity construction even if the notion of purity is erroneous. The Coloured people are not officially recognised because for the civil society and authorities they are considered as Creoles even if the latter exclude them. Hence, the Coloured people are often illegally discriminated against and ostracised as they have no legal or even social recognition.

The data is not clear as to whether there is also a group similarly affected among the descendants of indentured labourers. It is possible that such a category may be identified in the research of the Social Stratification Research Group.

Thus, what one finds in Mauritius is the careful overlapping of identities to achieve maximum benefit either on (for both) material and social grounds. One also finds the careful deployment of the term 'race', such that interviewees argue that they are not being racist when they use the term 'race' but that they are only 'referring' to race that is, they are participating in a *normal* practice. What is evident is that racist thinking and practice have become so ingrained in Mauritian society that such perceptions are no longer perceived as problematic or abnormal. Race has become real, not only for those who suffer from racial discrimination, but also among those who perpetuate it. As in South Africa, it becomes impossible to refer to an individual without mentioning his or her race, as if mentioning this then explains everything - i.e. why she does not have a job, why he has been promoted or why she is a victim of crime.

However, it is also important to note that the overlapping identities serve other purposes. These identities are also useful in creating a sense of Self in a society that is multilingual, multicultural and diverse. The diversely-situated and negotiated sense of Self allows and encourages communication and interaction in the diverse society of Mauritius. For example, knowledge of, and respect for, local religious events allows non-adherents to live in relative harmony with their neighbours. But it goes further than this, publicly acknowledging and accepting one's multiple identities *softens* the perceived ethnic or racial edge of one's identity, allowing for others to communicate with and interact with a person. This practice is apparent among slave descendants, as the 'fact' of slavery is sometimes too hard to 'deal' with and to publicly articulate. Thus, we note that in social circumstances, race can disappear, as familiarity between, and knowledge of, one another grows and as individuals suppress or enhance other aspects of their identity in order to 'escape' the burden of race.

In the following extract from an individual research report, one forms a sense of the multiplicity of identities among Mauritians.

Although in the academic and political fields the terms ethnic group or community are used rather than the term race, based on the premise that for the policymakers and academics there is only one race which is the human race, the AVERAGE Mauritian on the contrary talks in terms of race or community.

Most of the informants interviewed mentioned that they do not understand what the concepts of ethnic group and ethnicity mean and few have heard of it. Those who answered knowing the meaning of ethnic group mentioned that the local ethnic groups are Tamil, Telegu, Muslim, White, Creole, Indian, Chinese and Madras. Their conceptualisation of ethnicity uncovers the correlation between ethnicity and religious affiliation with one's religion determining ethnic membership. Hence, as stated by Cheddy, a Tamil who converts to Roman Catholicism is longer considered a Tamil but a Creole: '*...parce que si si quelqu'un, est baptisé, il a changé de religion...appartiendra au au groupe catholique, ou créole...*'<sup>30</sup> (English Translation:...because if someone is baptised, he has changed his religion...(he) will belong to the catholic group, or Creole...)

For almost all the informants, community, race and religion are the same and these terms are used interchangeably. For example, for Marie Annique, a Creole and a Catholic is same: '*...nou papa ti enn Katolik, mo mama li enn katolik. Sa mem dir ou lontan dir Kreol...Kreol, se Kreol...*'<sup>31</sup> (English Translation:... Our father was a Catholic, my mother was a Catholic. That's what gives you a clue. In the olden days when we said Creole, we meant Creole...). This correlation is sustained by Mike who further explained that the term *Nasyon* (English Trans. Nation or Black Creole) refers to a person's religion, that is, to a Christian: '*...Zot pou dir twa non to enn nasyon twa...voila kreol...Enn nasyon veut dir kretien...*'<sup>32</sup> (English Translation:...They will say you, you are a *Nasyon* (Black Creole)...Creole...A *Nasyon* (Black Creole) means a Christian...)

*'...Li enn kominote kom si saken so relizion. komen nu dir relizion, nu pa pu dir so relizion, pu dir sa so ras malbar, sa so ras creole. kom si c zis enn fason de parler...'*<sup>33</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ... It is a community as if each one (has its) religion. As we say religion, we won't say his religion, would say *Malabar* (Indian) race, this (one) his Creole race. It is like a way of talking...)

In local conceptualisation, the term race refers to people's roots, origins and descent. A person's race might hence be determined by his/her ancestry and religion as well. All the informants talked of *Ras Creole* (English Translation: Creole (Race), *Ras Malabar* (English Translation: Indian Race), *Ras Sinwa* (English Translation: Chinese Race) and *Ras Indyen* (English Translation: Indian Race).

*'...ekout, pou mwa pena oken deferens...Petet enn bann lezot dimunn zot truv sa ena diferens ent kretien ek kreol pou mwa ena oken deferens mo consider mwa kreol... ah kreol, kretien mem sa mwa mo truve enn sel mwa. Mo enn sel mwa...'*<sup>34</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...Listen for me there is no difference...Maybe there are others who find there are differences between a Catholic and a Creole for me there is no difference I consider myself Creole...Creole and Catholic same, me I find it same. I am one...)

Yet for some like Kathy even though they believe there is only one race, the human race, they still talked in terms of *Ras Indyen* when referring to the people who came from India.

*'... le ras c pa nou p koz racist hein...nou p koz lor kote so kouler, lor so style ki li ete mem, ou truve vremen si li enn sinwa ou pou truve vremen li enn sinwa. Si li enn afrikain ou truve li enn afrikain...si li enn blan ou pou truve li enn blan...saken ena so prop limportans sa...wi par kont mo truve...ki ena enn...avek letem ou truve ki ena plisir chanzmen ki pou deroule...'*<sup>35</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...race does not mean that we are talking of racism...we are talking of colour, on his way of being, if he is a Chinese you will see that he is really a Chinese, if he is an African you will see that he is an African...if he is White you will see he is White...each has its own importance...Yes but I found that...over time there are lots changes that are occurring...)

For others like Andy and James, people use the term race such as *race jaune* (English Translation Yellow race) that can be seen as a pejorative designation of the Chinese, *race blanche* (English Translation white race) and *race Africaine* (English Translation African race) *race noire* (English Translation Black race) as a differentiating term used to differentiate people from various cultural backgrounds.

'...Mais à Maurice on ne peut parler de race...Je crois que qu'on ne peut pas utiliser cette expression par rapport à nos races, c'est une définition enfin dans un sens c'est-à-dire on utilise très souvent peut-être par rapport à nos habitudes, par rapport peut-être à notre façon de faire, de nos cultures mais pas nécessairement il n'y a pas cette notion de racisme qui veut dire que nécessairement la race auquel on se réfère est nécessairement inférieure, je vais dire par rapport aux autres races qui n'ont pas l'habitude de faire des choses comme ça, on fait les choses autrement sans pourtant dénigrer l'autre race...C'est pour ça qu'on parle de la race jaune, la race blanche et la race africaine, la race noire...'<sup>36</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:But in Mauritius we cannot talk of race...but it think we cannot use this expression in relation to our races, it is a definition that is in a sense we often use in relation to our habits, in relation maybe to our way of behaving, our cultures, but there is not necessarily this notion of racism which necessarily implies that the race to which we are referring is superior, I mean in relation to the other races that do not do things the similar way, we do things differently without necessarily denigrating the other race...that is why we talk of yellow race, white race and African race, black race...)

When asked about the membership criteria to be of the Creole race, many informants, such as Sylviana, Kathy and Claudine to name some, explained that Creoles are those who speak the *Kreol* language and that even though Indo-Mauritians (commonly referred to as Indians) and Sino-Mauritians (generally referred to as Chinese) speak *Kreol*, they do not belong to the Creole race. For them, Creole membership is not only based on racial characteristic, but religion is also a criterion, and you need to be a Catholic. Hence, a baptised Indo-Mauritian or Sino-Mauritian is not a Creole but simply a Catholic.

'...Creole kan ras petet nu kouler, nu langaz ki nu cozer kreol ek petet tou le temp in dir creole dan povrete. Mwa, seki ou pe dir mwa ben seki mo resenti c sa, pu mwa enn ti pe sa. Mo ras mwa ve dir mo rasin, mo rasin... Enn creole parski, mwa ve dir enn creole kot mo ete, ki mo langaz, ki mo stricktir koumen mwa mem ek mo langaz li corespon...mo enn creole, c mo langaz c mo premie langaz mo...in apran coze sa kreol. C pou sa ki mo dir ki mo enn creole...Koumen mo in dir ou c zis relizion ek kominote c la meme chose. Pu moi li mem zafer...'<sup>37</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...Creole when (a) race maybe it's our colour, our language that we talk Kreol and maybe each time we said Creole are in poverty. Me, what you telling me this is what I feel, for me it is a bit that. My race (for) me would mean my roots, my roots...A Creole because, for me means where I am, what is my language, how I am like me and my language are linked...I am a Creole, it is my language, it is my first language...I learnt (to) speak Kreol. That is why I say I am a Creole...As I told you religion and community they are same. For me it is the same thing...)

Besides all these differences, they mentioned that there are similarities between all these groups. As put forward by Jean Yves, they are all humans, and hence have the same blood but they are not of the same race.

'...pou mwa.... Nou tou nou disan rouz. E nou tou bann humin, sof ki petet ena enn bann sartin dimunn ki met zot a lekar. E pou mwa tou dimunn c dimunn, tou parski mwa mo enn dimunn ki respekte tou la religion, ki c swa to indien, ki to sinoi, ki to blan, ki to muzulmen e mo respekte tou...'<sup>38</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...For me...We all have red blood. And we all humans, but there are maybe some people that segregate. And for me all humans are humans, all because I am a human that respects all religions whether you Indian, whether you are Chinese, whether you White, you Muslim and I respect all...)

The final quotation noted above suggests a more liberal view of Mauritian society. However, this view is not always articulated in the society. It is a view which we have noticed is put forward by politicians and scholars, as well as relatively well-known and possibly affluent members of the society. It is argued that for these individuals who have access to other sources of prestige, power and identity, it is possible to present such liberal views of the society and of identity.

The research conducted also suggests that one's class status influences the view and experience of race. Those deemed to be of the middle class have a less negative view and experience of racism or at least, they have a less direct experience of racism. This encourages such individuals to perceive a more positive or equitable situation in Mauritius. However, as we note further on in the discussion on aversive racism, such individuals may also be concealing their personal experiences of racism, to foster the public perception that they are not victims. Indeed, we found that a discourse of success was imperative to those wishing to distance themselves from the stigma of victimhood.

Aline Wong, for example, believes in a mosaic and idyllic vision of Mauritius and sees in the Republic a model of pluralism: '*...je crois que Maurice est un modèle de pluri-culturel, multi-racial et je crois qu'on a la chance de vivre en paix...*'<sup>39</sup> (English Translation:...I think that Mauritius is a model of pluri-culturalism, multi-racial and I think we are lucky to live in peace...). But on the other hand, for others like Raymond, this representation of Mauritius does not reflect the social reality in which racial tensions permeate social interactions.

'...Je pense que quelque part c'est vrai parce que, disons à Maurice, on n'est pas arrivé à un niveau où on se bagarre entre communautés, il n'y a pas de bagarre entre communautés...on vit relativement bien entre communautés, en bon voisinage je veux dire mais dans d'autres pays ce n'est pas le cas...A Maurice, c'est vrai quand on regarde de haut comme ça c'est un mélange, un mélange de cultures, de couleurs, de religions, etc. Mais ca c'est vu d'en haut mais quand on rentre au plus profond de chaque personne, de chaque communauté qu'on voit qu'effectivement il y a des tensions, il y a encore des tabous à casser. Mais c'est surtout que beaucoup de personnes voient ça de haut...'<sup>40</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...I think that somewhat it is true, let say that in Mauritius we have not reached this point where communities fight between them, there is no fighting between communities...we live relatively well between communities, I mean in good neighbourliness but in other countries it is not so...In Mauritius it is true that when we look from above it is a blending, a blending of cultures, colours, religions etc. But this is a look from above but when we have deep insights of each individual, of each community we see there are in fact tensions, there are still taboos to break. But it's especially that many people have a look from above...)

The above extract also tells us that there is a concerted desire to portray one's group as homogeneous and members in solidarity with one another. In the following extract, it is evident that even seemingly fixed categories, such as the Franco-Mauritians, are a malleable and porous group. However, and as noted in the discussion on youth identity and race in Mauritius, we find that this category (and other ethnic categories) is deliberately hardened or becomes more essentialised as young people become adults.

Pheno-typical factors influence 'race' and lighter skinned Creoles often identify themselves with the Franco-Mauritians, while darker skinned Creoles identify with descendants of slaves.

Becoming a Franco-Mauritian involves being born into a Franco-Mauritian family, being brought up in a certain way. However, others who were not born to 'white' parents can also *become* a Franco-Mauritian. In this manner, class differentiation definitions and economic mobility add to the complexity of defining Franco-Mauritian.

The 'making' of a Franco-Mauritian is tied to historical constructions of whiteness, black, and Creole, embossed with occupying an elevated social political and economic standing and embellished by other symbols of ethnicity, which in the Mauritian context is ones behaviour, etiquette and discernable 'culture'. Religious practices, marriage patterns and traditions and discourses of family origins including ancestry and blood purity are also characteristics of the status of a Franco-Mauritian. The small size of the minority community also further emphasizes their sense of belonging and cohesiveness. But most importantly, while wealth is still a feature of many Franco-Mauritian families, it no longer is a defining one. Those Franco-Mauritians who don't posit an economic advantage are called the *petit-blanc* - the small whites.

"Culture and education are transmitted from generation to generation and we need to conserve this" (DL, TJC, 16 August 2010). This informant described the 'culture' of Franco-Mauritian to include hobbies and exclusive leisure activities such as water-sports, golf, tennis, hunting, and going to the races and theatre and cinema. These were perceived as cultured leisure habits. Travelling abroad was also said to give Franco-Mauritians a broader perspective and global knowledge which other (non-travelling) Mauritians do not have. The private school context is also believed to foster a different 'culture' (DL, TJC, 16 August 2010). Since the private school system is believed to be mostly occupied by whites and wealthier Indians, this perpetuates a particular (middle) class structure and ethos in these schools. The schools are also believed (by the informants) to isolate the scholars from the 'real' Mauritian context. Lastly, Franco-Mauritian etiquette prescribes whether you were a member of an exclusive club or associations. Franco-Mauritians describe themselves as 'Culturally European' (PG, Tamarin, 13 August 2010). ID (Grand Baie, 26 August 2010) mentioned that she finds it extremely difficult to establish social interaction with people in the *cit * because they had a different way of behaving.

Yet, defining the Franco-Mauritian as an elite is too sweeping. Even during colonial settlement, the European whites were not all considered racially privileged, e.g. the poor whites were not afforded the highest status. The colonialists were a diverse group of Frenchmen, some escaping the economic depression in rural Brittany, looking for greener pastures and a new beginning. Their racial superiority and power, under the colonial system, was defined by their possession of slaves after 1780s. This was an important marker of wealth and status (Salverda, 2010:72). They maintained their superiority and racial solidarity through the whiteness of their skin, the land and slaves they owned, and the French culture and way of life. The consolidation of a Franco-Mauritian elite took place through family ties, and business networks and marriage alliances.

In 1928, the Colour Bar was suspended and the organisation of the Franco-Mauritian group became disrupted... Their domination was no longer protected by institutionalised economic and social structures. They found that social distance from other populace replaced the functioning of the colour bar and Franco-Mauritian went about ordering their life along communal lines. They kept family ties and kinship networks tight and tended to their needs on their own (Personal communication, CB, TJC, 10 June 2010).

The long-established narrative of the Franco Mauritian community is that they hold a superior position in Mauritian society, owed to their historical privilege and heritage, better education, and strong family ties and networks. By and large, observations and perceptions from the outside are that Franco-Mauritians represent an isolated group of a few privileged people and form a closed community. "In Mauritius, the Franco Mauritian community is the least open" (Personal communication, RLM, 25 June 2010). This assumption was difficult to deflate as I initially struggled to get into contact with a diverse range of Franco-Mauritians to be interviewed.

Through discussion with Franco-Mauritians and non-Franco-Mauritians, the symbols of prestige attached to the construction of them as elite included normalised characterisations of their lifestyle that were not necessarily reflective of the reality for some Franco-Mauritians that were interviewed. The assumptions of a prosperous existence incorporated land ownership and people who hold management or directorship positions in major firms, businesses and corporations.

Franco-Mauritians tended to have high positions in the tourism industry and relied heavily on political affiliation and nepotism with government structures to prosper.

*Gens des Couleur* are historically referred to as 'freed men'. Nowadays, *Gens de couleur* are known for assimilating to a 'white' identity, conforming to white social values and sharing French language and Catholic faith. Although they had equal rights to Franco-Mauritian whites, when the Colour Bar was removed, they are still not afforded the privileges of Franco-Mauritians as they have 'black' ancestry and thus are still discriminated against because of their colour. This conundrum resonates with the situation of Coloured in South Africa with explanations of themselves as being 'in-between'. My neighbour said exactly this about herself and her identity as a *Gens de couleur*: "I am not 'white' enough to enjoy societal privileges and not 'black' enough to feel completely marginalised" (Pers. Comm. Madame Rena, 27 June 2010). It is similar to what LB (Rose Hill, 15 June 2010) said about being a *Mauricien Moyen*, an 'average Mauritian' - "not black, not white, not rich and not poor". They are considered not 'pure' white because of their mixed ancestry. In an interview with EN (St Jean, 15 June 2010, I was told that Franco-Mauritian spend a lot of their time tracing their genealogies and ancestry to prove they are purely Franco-Mauritian by tracking down whether marriages between mixed blood had occurred or not. Family names were also considered indicative of the purity of their blood and gene pool.

The concern with race among the Franco-Mauritians indicates to us, the research team, that they are also not exempt from potential victimisation on the basis of race. Furthermore, it also indicates that the discourse of whiteness, which is that whiteness be privileged in Mauritius, is deeply ingrained in the society and affects even those who might outwardly appear to be 'white'. The onus is on them, not to simply assume that they are white, but that they must PROVE that they are so.

Prestige and privilege are also attached to ancestry (in terms of origins) and clannish or family ties are significant markers of Franco-Mauritian identity. One Franco-Mauritian interviewed argued that family/ clannish ties are not solely responsible for success and prestige - some are self-made men. Others have never owned land, "We have never had one knot in a sugar cane plant" (PG, Grand Baie, 7 June 2010). There is also ascension to hierarchy of *Gens des Couleur* through education and marriage - by participating in a form of strategic endogamy (marrying within the group) they are able to form a new class of 'white', one that does not necessarily have historical ties to land ownership or slavery. However, it seems to the research team that the *Gens des couleur* are trying to belong to a community (i.e. the white community) in which they are not accepted. The 'white non-whites' have the economic status but cannot assimilate to this group (of white people) because they are not considered pure white. In the extreme, it is not physical characteristics which matter, but name that does.

Perceptions of Franco-Mauritians range from negative to complacent. Indian descendants and Creole domestic workers who work for Franco-Mauritians make references to a kind of master-slave relationship. They moan that they are not fed by their employers and that they are not treated well. In an interview with a Franco-Mauritian, however, it was also said that by far the most named group in society to be labelled as 'racist' have been the Franco-Mauritians<sup>41</sup>. However, we cannot take it for granted that all Franco-Mauritians are racist. From what the research team gathers, even within the Franco-Mauritian community, there are in-group fighting and competitive partnerships with others.

## CONCLUSION TO SECTION 1

It is evident from the above extracts and discussions that identity construction and especially the construction of racial identity is very complex in Mauritius. In its assessment, we propose that the TJC takes this into account. Race is not fixed among Mauritians although there is agreement that certain phenotype or physical markers clearly indicate an individual's racial identity. Secondly, while not all Franco-Mauritians perpetuate racism, it is interesting to note the extent to which racist ideas have permeated the community. Differences between groups are believed to be so substantive that it is difficult, or not possible, to socialise with, or engage with, those of a different race. This was especially noted in the discussion of one Franco-Mauritian who felt that they could really engage someone from the *cité* because their 'worlds' were so different.

The data also shows the difficulties experienced by those individuals identified as *Gens de couleur*. In their case, we found that being in a society in which whiteness is privileged and treated as the identity to aspire to, the *Gens de couleur* were caught in a double-bind. They wanted to be with the 'whites' but they could not because they have been identified as black. They cannot be with the 'blacks' because they are judged there to be *too* white. Moreover, their own rejection of blackness or to put it more mildly, their ambivalence about blackness makes it difficult for them to associate with darker skinned Creoles. The language of class (i.e. references to class and social differences), is used to explain why it is that communication and interaction with blacks are not possible.

It is also revealing that the seeds of racial discourse are sown early. It is at school, in the textbooks, classrooms and break-time banter that we saw the reinforcement of racial hierarchy and racist talk. In the following section, we document the processes of socialisation (especially among the youths) and how this influences both the practice and experience of race.

## PART TWO

### SOCIALISATION AND EXPERIENCES OF RACISM

In the following section of the report, the focus is placed on the youths of Mauritian society. A major research question of this team is: Does race experience and practice vary within generations and if so, why? The issue of youth experiences is of further significance when one considers that the Mauritian population is overwhelmingly youthful. Of the 1.3 million people living in Mauritius in 2011, twenty-one percent is less than 15 years old (CIA World Fact book 2011) and two-thirds of the Mauritian population or about 66 percent in 2011 was less than 34 years old. This section of the population also consists of a major segment of the economically active population. It is also this population that is forging new families, entering the workforce, socialising in the public sphere and actively engaging with new technologies. Thus, it is our contention that this large segment of the Mauritian population can offer a deep understanding of race dynamics in Mauritius. The global and scholarly discussion on youth suggests that the youth category is socially constructed. In this literature, the youths are often perceived and treated as a group in-between childhood and adulthood and as such, the youths are not autonomous, rational beings - instead, they are dependent, emotionally immature subordinates, prone to the creation of subcultures and deviant identities. In our findings, we note the opposite of this view. The Mauritian youths are creative, reflexive thinkers who do understand the dynamics of racial identity in their country. Moreover, they are actively engaging with transnational (i.e. across national borders) identities, commodities and social networks, in order to create a more vibrant identity and a better future for Mauritius. In what follows, we state where research was done, what was asked and what we found.

The research for this section of the project was conducted in various schools and social spaces where young people are to be found (see Appendix 1). This is documented in the section on research sites. The main finding is that racism and the experience of race are especially important to youths in Mauritius and that experiences and practices of racism vary across identifiable ethnic groups. From online blogs (conversations), formal interviews, informal conversations and observations, the team found that the youths are frustrated by the continuation of a pigmentocracy (social hierarchy based on the privileging of whiteness) in Mauritius. They are also frustrated by the lack of civil society engagement in challenging the continued construction of Mauritius as a racialised space. Some feel that the only way to retain one's sanity is by leaving the country, despite the fact that Mauritius needs well-trained professionals in all spheres of the economy to sustain development and modernisation. Among Creoles and those who openly accepted the designation of slave descendants, an important view was that the situation of Creoles (and ultimately of slave descendants) was negatively affected by the majority/minority politics in the country. The view articulated was that, as a significant minority, Creoles could never obtain advantages or even basic rights in Mauritian society. To clarify this, it continues to be difficult for Creoles to obtain employment in various spheres of the economy because those who are already established in those sectors, tend to employ members of their own ethnic group or they offer employment to those individuals who have the support of prominent business people or politicians. The youths referred to this support as 'backing'.

To sum up, the research on the youths revealed that race consciousness begins at a very early age. There are some schools in Mauritius which remain largely ethnically and/or race-specific. The ethnic and racial specificity of schools is an important issue, as we find institutional powers (either religious or civil), promoting the creation of such homogeneous schools in Mauritius. As we found out, these schools present a problem for pupils, who then experience racial stereotyping by outsiders (especially employers) because they are associated with such schools. In some instances, this may present advantages because the ex-pupils (especially ex-pupils of Star Schools for example) are positively stereotyped. In the research findings on rural and mostly Creole populated schools, it was found that those pupils experience negative stereotyping. It is assumed that pupils from these schools will not achieve much and will therefore not be of good use to the prospective employer.

## Multiple Sources of Stereotyping

In the following extract from the project on youth and race, we provide further evidence of the complex rules of race relations which youths in Mauritius are expected to learn and maintain. It involves the creation of racial stereotypes from a young age. The participant in the interview below is a young man of 19 years of age:

*Researcher: what is Creole?*

*Participant: A bus-beater*

*Researcher: what is a bus-beater?*

*Participant: A drum beater, someone who never has money, knocking on the bus for everything...but it is not his fault, it is because of circumstances that they are forced to beat buses.*

*Participant: Even if they have the money they have developed the habit.*

(Interview021\_25062010)

The above extract part of a discussion which took place in a focus group meeting in Valegie Church, a fraternity group aimed at 14-20 year olds. The above extract was the first assertion that was made, when asked what it meant to be Creole. The self-deprecating stereotype of Creoles as bus-beaters was very interesting to witness amongst urban youths. It appears as though years of negative stereotyping have infiltrated Creole self-image to the extent that young Creoles automatically respond with negative views of Creole identity. Whilst some students focused on religion, an open culture, and friendly disposition as characterising Creole identity, at the schools it was also found that when asked the same question, the overwhelming responses were of alcoholism, drug use, aggressive, being a spendthrift, and that Creoles love partying to their detriment. It is common knowledge that the years of negative stereotyping have influenced the negative view of African descent in Mauritius. Inferiority of slave descent still circulates in self-definitions by Creoles, where the terms *Nasyon* and *Mazambik* are used as a pejorative terms to refer to African ancestry (Project 4: Individual TJC Report on Youth and Racisms).

This view of perpetual inferiority due to slave descent is not helped by the lack of historical instruction on the agency and resistance by Creoles on the island. We found for example that some school text-books promoted the negative stereotyping of slave descendants:

Reading through the current Form 4 History book, it was astounding to note the invisibility of Creole history in the text books and the negative presentation of African slaves. In the history book one of the first passages recounting African presence on the island is rather telling of the racial discourse around slavery in secondary education. The passage is of an account of a slave rebellion where slaves burnt down a field. Using the passage as a reference, two questions are posed to the students asking “what were the problems created by slaves” and “what were the activities carried out by the Dutch”. Consistently I found that actions carried by slaves were cast as delinquency whilst European activities were cast as productive in Island development. There exists an overwhelming negative bias, and when it was enquired as to how teachers at the school felt about this material, one Creole teacher expressed that this was normal representation of Creole ancestry in text books. Thus it is not surprising that a negative self image of African ancestry is perpetuated amongst young Creoles today (Project 4: Individual TJC Report on Youth and Racisms).

There were also few or no positive role models for Creoles:

Further questions were asked about whether students learned about Creole leaders at school, and apart from Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, the students couldn't name any influential black or African icons either from Mauritius or abroad. Even contemporary Creole movements such as the Organisation of Creoles, Africans and Malagasy (OCAM), the Association Socio-cultural African and Malagasy (ASM) and the *Fédération Créole Mauricien* (FCM) were not known by the students nor were they mentioned in history or sociology text books. Comparatively European history is valorised and all example images in the text book were only of Indian people. In the entire history book, the only images of Creoles/Black people were in the instance of slavery and there was only one picture of a Creole represented as a professional. The invisibility of Creole representation in school

curriculums may also shed light on the self deprecating view Creole youth hold of themselves (Project 4: Individual TJC Report on Youth and Racisms).

This extract from the sub-project on youth identity and race reveals that racial stereotypes are well-entrenched in Mauritius and that this is feeding self-deprecating comments and perceptions. In responding to these perceptions of Self, it will be important for Government and civil society to create and support programmes that assist in the critical evaluation of schools and the ways in which these might become spaces for the promotion of equality and mutual respect. This is especially important when one considers that the experience of racism does not have to be direct for the individual to feel that his or her potential is limited or restricted.

What the researchers also found is that it is not only negative discourses which are transmitted from one generation to the next one, it is also racially negative perceptions and behaviours:

In an informal discussion with one participant who is out of school argued that non-racialism is common at school going age, he too felt race not to be important at school, yet when he left school he saw how race can affect his life. For some youngsters there does seem to be a fear that backing will become an issue as they get older and that job seeking in Mauritius is based on who one knows and being a certain race (Project 4: Individual TJC Report on Youth and Racisms).

It is not only this that is transferred but also the fears, concerns and self-limitations. This is clearly illustrated in the next extract, which reveals how slave descended Mauritiens, as well as those who do not consider themselves part of the Hindu majority, perceive their situation in Mauritius.

*Researcher: Do you think that dark skinned Creoles experience more discrimination than light skinned Creoles*

*Participant: It depends where you are, at University it doesn't matter whether you are dark or light like me, we are all marginalised because we are not Hindu.  
(Interview036\_09082010)*

*Participant 1: if you date a white girl you must take a different approach, you must buy her flowers.*

*Researcher: and you don't have to do this for a Creole girl?*

*Participant 2: it is easier with a Creole girl, you are not as shy because you are of the same race.  
(Interview016\_14062010)*

The research team also found that socialisation to accept ethnic and racial differences happens in sports but that this is not common because for a very long time, sports (i.e. football) was racially segregated in Mauritius. The following extracts confirm this and explain how people attempt to overcome these 'prescriptions':

BLC (Black River, 27 July 2010), whose grandfather owned land on a sugar estate in St Pierre, intimated that racism depends on the perspective of the person regarding the other. In his story, he spoke about how, many years ago, when he played soccer for the National division team, all the teams were separate.

I played soccer or football for First Division team and for the National team here. I started at 17 in First Division and stopped at thirty four. So I've been a soccer player for 18 years at the First Division level and National team. So, I think sport for me at a certain level is the best school of life because, at that time, I was playing soccer, you had in Mauritius different teams. You had Franco-Mauritian teams, the Indian teams, the Muslim teams and the Creole teams.

**Researcher:** Separately?

**BLC:** Separately and then after a few years I've started I was still in junior school and Government decided to change everything and to mix all the teams. So I didn't stop. Then I played for several different teams. So I played for who was supposed Indian team, I played for Creole team, I played for Muslim team. So it learned me to know all the communities very well,

their behave, their thinking, their religion and it help me to understand them a lot more and also to understand their way of living and thinking which is one to the other quite different on certain things, you know. So, for me it helped me a lot in life the sport because you know at that time when you were playing at that level in Mauritius, you were accepted everywhere. Once I walked in somewhere, even to talk about business or whatever, you will always have someone who says: 'you are the one playing soccer, no?' I said: 'yes'.

And...

JCH: Falcon. Ok, it's a club, which still exist but which is now a-, has been a plot of land which is still a club but bought by the MCB, which is-, its their-, its their well, social club, for the employees there. For instance, at the time, I'm talking let's say 1980's, you have football clubs Ok, each community would have its football club. You would have the Dodo: the Whites, Racing Club: for the general population—

Researcher: Fire Brigade.

JCH: Fire Brigade would be basically people from the fire brigade, but they would also selected people from all avenues outside, you have the Hindu Cadets: for Hindus, Muslim Scouts: only Muslims, then you had the Fire Brigade, some-, then later you had the Sunrise. Fire Brigade and Sunrise opened up the way because it was very open. And you started having Whites playing in either of these teams, or general population in these teams and then in some time, I don't remember when, cause I'm not a football fan, the government scrap all this. They say: "Ok, we're going on a regional basis." And this, more or less contributed to killing football in Mauritius.

Association with particular schools and also the situation of slave descendant families in impoverished areas also foster racial stigma. Residence in these areas also means that the Creoles and members of the working class are *confined* to, and expected to participate in, class and 'race' specific leisure activities. Unfortunately, these are also activities which reinforce negative stereotyping. For example, drinking alcohol in taverns or setting up parties and entertainment which involves the consumption of alcohol. In contrast, we found that for the middle classes and some Franco-Mauritians, the construction of the racial stereotype involved leisure activities which reinforce positive stereotyping. For example, sporting and leisure activities for the Franco-Mauritian and middle-class youths involves golf, windsurfing, sailing and for the very wealthy: hunting, tennis, etc. To refine this even further, even the consumption of particular types of alcohol is stereotyped. Thus, most of what is consumed by the lower classes is deemed to be of inferior quality and reinforces the inferiority of the lower classes, whereas the setting (exclusive clubs such as the Suffren for example), as well as what is consumed by the middle classes, reinforces their superior sense of taste as well as their inherent superiority in terms of class and race.

## The pressure to conform

The findings also show that while some young people are rejecting the prevalent discourses on race, there is enormous pressure to conform to the dominant ethos, to accept racial prejudice and to follow the social path established by the previous generation in order to achieve similar levels of privilege and power:

Race for many of youths seems to be inconsequential, largely because for many of them so far, they have never lived in a society where race is an ever pervasive force limiting ones opportunities so far in life. Indeed, in an informal discussion with one of the participants who is out of school, he informed me that non-racialism is common at school going age, he too felt race not to be important at school, yet when he left school he saw how race can affect his life. For some youngsters there does seem to be a fear that backing will become an issue as they get older and that job seeking in Mauritius is based on who one knows and being a certain race (Project 4: Individual TJC Report on Youth and Racisms, pg 29).

There are others being highly pressured to promote segregation and racial and ethnic exclusivity. Where are they receiving these pearls of 'wisdoms' from? It is evident from the findings that

parents play a particularly role; this is proved in the following extract, which documents the pressures experienced by Mauritian youth:

However at this stage of their lives (secondary school level), it seems that race is something that concerns their parents, this was exemplified to me in one interview with a Sino-Mauritian student from Port Louis SSS.

“My best friend is Muslim. My mother gives us pressure to find Chinese friends. She told me to make more Chinese friends because I have many friends who are not Chinese. I have other Chinese friends who only have Chinese friends. My mother always thinks Chinese, Chinese, Chinese. (Interview053\_02082010)”

Her account is similar to other students who state that personally they choose friends regardless of race, but for their parents, race does matter in decision regarding who their children should interact with. For young people, specific community belonging is not at the fore of how they identify themselves and each other. While they may be aware of differences in skin colour or religious practices, these factors did not seem to be of importance when it came to making friends at school or activities they engaged in. Outside of school however, it was found that students interacted mostly amongst persons of their own race. Amongst school leavers, it was also found that there was a greater emphasis on race than at school going level, with participants gravitating towards their own racial group the older they got. It seems that the school environment create spaces where multiculturalism is really fulfilled. Outside of these spaces it seems that there is a great emphasis on preserving families and cultures, at home multiracialism seems to become more of a matter of tolerance of diversity than unity in diversity (Project 4: Individual TJC Report on Youth and Racisms, pg. 30).

Religion and religious entities also play a role in determining interethnic and ‘racial’ interaction. Religion seemed to be a strong motivator in the selection of a potential spouse from within the youth’s religious community:

Researcher: would you date someone of a different race?

Participant: No. My family is very strict and I will only marry a Roman Catholic guy.

Researcher: would it matter if he was Indian or White?

Participant: I wouldn’t marry a white or Indian Catholic, Creole only.

(Betsy 17, St Esprit)

Our view on the above is twofold: First, there is the pressure from religious authorities to marry within the belief group. The other is that religion forms an integral part of a *publicly valued* Creole identity. In the absence of a publicly valued and validated identity, Creoles seem to have gravitated to, sought solace in and a sense of self from, the Catholic religion. One could also argue that as Mauritius is a very religious society, religion also permeates the diverse social settings of the island society. Religion influences schooling, social life, choosing a marriage partner, yearly rituals, friendships and identity. To provide an example that is not exemplified in the research findings of the individual reports: In Mauritius, there are a number of religious youth associations which encourage a rededication to Christianity through abstinence and non-alcoholism (i.e. the Young Pioneers in Central Flacq). These groups not only pray for the strength to abstain from premarital sex and alcohol consumption but also engage in religiously exclusive social activity which reinforces group solidarity and, to a certain extent, isolation.

Furthermore, the right to religion is also a fundamental right, supported by the Mauritian Constitution. However, we asked whether this was not problematic because such schools have a big impact on identity and some have argued (see Boswell 2006) that these institutions carry particular discourses of suffering - which encourage slave descendants to accept their lot (via a theology of suffering which includes statements such as ‘blessed are the poor’ for instance), as a marginal people. The churches also elevated the French language above *Kreol*, as most Catholic services are still conducted in French. This indirectly implies that the latter (i.e. *Kreol*) is not good enough for the business of worship:

It was found that Catholicism was a major part of defining Creole identity, and indeed use of the term Catholic is seen to be synonymous with Creole. One participant informed me that "Catholic refers to Creole which is also used to mean Christian, I was a member of the *Mouvement International des Etudiants Catholiques*, the organisation was meant only for Creole students." (Interview36\_09082010).

Furthermore and as the following extract suggests, allowing the proliferation of religious organisations risk promoting racial and social exclusion:

This sentiment was interesting since the participant attended the University of Mauritius which doesn't allow for persons to form organisations that exclude people based on community, yet because of the conflation of race and religion, a race based organisation was allowed to form. It was also found that even *non-pratiquant* (non-practising) Catholics saw Catholicism as an important part of defining oneself as Creole. Three of the colleges at which research was conducted were confessional schools: St Esprit, Ste Marie Palma and St Mary's West. Confessional means that these are schools funded by the Catholic Church and both Creole youth focus groups were conducted with church groups in Vallijee and Bois Marchand. The Catholic Church seems to play a big role in the Creole community. One of the organisations I visited at the forefront of introduction of Kreol at schools is the *Institut Cardinal Jean Margeot* in Rose-Hill.

Moral domination of religion and hierarchy served to keep religion 'pure' without appropriation for a long time but now Kreol is present in some Catholic churches. Anti-Creole sentiments exist in institutional practices in Mauritius, there should be a revolution, a change of this in all institutions including the church (Interview020\_20062010).

There is also pressure to conform so that freedom of movement can be achieved. The 'right' marriage (which implies the right kind of social mobility), can help the individual to achieve this and we found that great emphasis is placed therefore on getting married to the right name:

"With the right name I could attain anything, get into clubs" (DL 16.08.10)

'The Rogers don't marry other names.'

The above strongly suggests that one's name and associated pedigree are significant in determining identity, which in turn determines access to differently privileged kinds of spaces. Persons, with the wrong names, were deemed not to have the 'right' identity and therefore were denied membership to the Dodo Club. And even among those individuals who appear to be 'white' Franco-Mauritians, not all possess the right social and economic connections (another way to create identity), which helps to further validate their whiteness. Thus, 'looking white does not make you white' (anonymous).

Thus for Franco-Mauritians, marrying outside the community has never been well-perceived and has often led to disinheritance and virtual banishment. Skin colour was once the predominant marker of group identity and corresponded largely with class boundaries; thus marrying outside the community was considered marrying down.

Pressure to conform is relatively unavoidable for Hindus, as caste is also very significant in determining identity in a quasi-biological kind of way. Caste practice evident in a number of spheres is particularly evident in endogamy (marrying within the group) among Indians in Mauritius, further evidence of this can be found in the TJC report (Project 4) on Social Stratification:

It is essential to differentiate between a hypergamy (marriage between a man and a woman of inferior status) which is more or less acceptable and a hypogamy (marriage between a woman and a man of inferior status) which is always blameworthy. The word for a mixed marriage is *samkara*. It always has a pejorative connotation: it implies disorder leading to a-dharma, the negation of the dharma (Claveyrolas 2011:15).

And

Long ago, love marriage was not accepted and inter caste marriages was strictly forbidden. If it happened that a daughter in law came from a lower caste, then the mother in law would never eat the food cooked by her daughter in law. (Gya and Teelwah in Claveyrolas 2011:45).

With regard to parents, it was found that parents are keen for youths to maintain racial and ethnic boundaries, thereby promoting the idea of fundamental differences existing between clearly established groups. In the Social Stratification Report, there are many examples of arranged marriages to prevent the religious and social problems of pollution which may arise from the mixing of *jati*. In some cases, the socialisation begins very early because grooms are chosen for young girls as soon as these girls become pubescent. There is the very tragic story in the report of a young pregnant woman who was killed by her relatives for choosing a mate from a caste lower than her father's caste. Thus, a young person may not necessarily be denied a friendship with a person of different religion or 'race', but the moment when marriage is being considered, the young person is pressurised to find someone of his or her own kind.

## CONCLUSION TO SECTION 2

It is our conclusion that socialisation from a very young age, plays a major role in determining the experiences of slave descendants and descendants of indentured labourers. While the latter may not be expected to consume alcohol, it is found that their social lives are also constrained by the expectations of the older generation, the religious authorities, the school context and the places in which they reside. Thus, all these factors conspire to foster a relatively restricted existence for the youths of Mauritius. Indeed, in the school context itself, we found that the youths are able to experience a measure of freedom from these constraints. But once outside the school context, they are expected to conform and perform their assigned 'racial' or ethnic identity. Conflict arises when the individual does not conform as expected by family, friends and religious community. This is exemplified by the young person interviewed, who was at loggerheads with his mother for wanting to have Muslim friends despite his identity as a member of the Chinese community. It is our view that substantial work has to be done by the Government to valorise the contribution of the youths in Mauritius to the creation of a unified and mutually respectful society. At present, the social organisations and structures of our society, while seeking to preserve diversity, are in fact emphasising and encouraging differentiation. It would be our recommendation that the Government and civil society carefully investigate how these various social organisations operate and to initiate an awareness campaign to help Mauritians see their society in a more democratic light. We will elaborate on how this might happen in our recommendations.

## PART THREE

### CROSS-CUTTING IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES OF RACISM

In this section of our report, we attempt to discuss the cross-cutting identities and experiences of racism. It is our view that it is difficult to disentangle discourse from experience, as discourse informs experience and experience helps to produce discourse. In the following, we consider the effect of class and gender on racial experiences. We found that class mobility can temporarily elevate the status of an individual otherwise treated as a member of an inferior racial group or caste. However, economic mobility is no guarantee of ‘progress.’ In our first example, we discuss the situation of Franco-Mauritians who, in general, are perceived (erroneously) as belonging to same class and are therefore believed to share in the same experiences. We argue that for greater equality to exist in Mauritius, there is a need to explode myths of racial homogeneity and boundedness. We discuss how this might be achieved in our recommendations. In what follows, we attempt to unravel racial myths and show how these reinforce segregation and the discourse of racial superiority.

#### The Myth of Racial Homogeneity

One of our individual reports on racial experiences documented the cultivation of an elite discourse and ‘mystique’ in the Franco-Mauritian community so as to perpetuate a myth of control and unassailable superiority. How is this myth of control achieved and/or perpetuated? The observations and interviews of one of researchers, found that there is significant heterogeneity within the Franco-Mauritian ‘racial’ group and yet it is the *historical* perception of the Franco-Mauritians which prevails. In this, they are all seen as wealthy, spendthrift members of the class elite of Mauritian society. However and as our researcher noted:

The Franco-Mauritian interviewed so far do not all consider themselves privileged of ‘elite’. While their historical privileges construct Franco-Mauritians as a privileged and dominant minority, a look at contemporary Mauritius aids in conceptualising the Franco-Mauritians as not so privileged any longer. Such normalised depictions of the Franco-Mauritian lifestyle were sometimes evident in interviewees’ discussions and by observing their homes and where they lived. But mostly, their spendthrift nature was not apparent. Franco-Mauritians nowadays no longer enjoy the wealth and prestige that their colonial ancestors once did and the modern realities of Franco-Mauritian identity show that their identities are in flux.

BLC speaks to many different factors detailing the rise and fall of the Franco-Mauritian,

**BLC:** It is mainly the White who came to develop the country and then imported the slaves to work and so on. So they had the privilege at that time of getting land from the previous Government, French Government or English Government. So they had this privilege to get the land from that time and then let’s say, when they imported the Indian to work here, they were not imported as slaves. They were imported as coolies, as workers in the many sugar cane fields and so on and also then when they abolished the slavery, they benefited from some land as well.

**Researcher:** The Indians?

**BLC:** The Indians right not the Creoles. The thing is that the White people (Franco-Mauritians) know better how to make use of their assets, how to multiply their assets and make it work and they invest mainly in sugar cane. At one time, sugar had a good price on the international market. They made some money out of it and they reinvested this in their own business or in a different business, something like that. Some of them succeed, some of them didn’t succeed.

So let's say, the percentage of white inhabitants in Mauritius as you know is very few compared to Indians.

**Researcher:** Very few.

**BLC:** So it is for that reason the person globally perceived the White Mauritian as the richest. It's not true. Probably percentagewise comparatively on the number of White people living in Mauritius, possibly yes, you have a better percentage who are rich because we are very few. But now let's say you have more; let's say Indians who have majority of population, you have more Indians than White people rich. The thing is that White people we are ten thousand or twelve thousand; Indians they are four hundred thousand or five hundred thousand. So, you can't compare really. So, you have a lot more Indians who are richer than the Whites, but they see the Whites as richer because most of the Whites, they know how to sow money, but not the new generation let's say me like our family all my father/brothers and so on they were working and had a job to have a living. They didn't possess any assets or big pieces of land and so on. No. they work. They invest their money in some land or in a house or something like that. That's it.

The above extracts also suggest that it is not only historical perception of white privileges, but that members of the 'community' also see themselves as possessing inherent qualities that enable them to achieve prosperity. This myth of intellectual and ultimately racial superiority pervades the discussion on Franco-Mauritian achievements. There is the stereotyped and racist belief that whites are better at investing and safeguarding their assets. Moreover, they achieved their wealth with very 'little' support since it is argued that whites did not receive much in the time of slavery and colonisation, especially with regard to 'pieces' of land obtained. In the latter part of the conversation, we note the issue of visibility. Franco-Mauritians or Whites in Mauritian society (and the differentiations within the category) are deemed to be more visible by virtue of their small number. The interviewee suggests that it is difficult to ascertain how many people of Indian descent are in fact as wealthy as Whites (even though s/he argues there are more wealthy Indians than Whites), because there are simply more of them in our society. The mentioning of the number of Indians also smacks of racism, particularly the not so subtle inferences of overbreeding and 'lack of control' which is not apparent among the small number of Whites, who (by positive inference) not only know how to 'sow their money' but also their 'seed'! Perceived differently, the visibility issue is also racist, suggesting that differentiation between blacks or 'Gens de couleur' are invisible or generally disregarded by Mauritians because 'we' do not generally perceive differences within categories of black people - they are all the same. Whites, however, are visible and therefore, valuable.

Further on, the interviewee confirms that poor whites exist in Mauritius.

**Researcher:** I mean are they any poorer Whites?

**BLC:** There is. For sure, there is.

**Researcher:** Yes.

**BLC:** Yes, for sure there is. I know some people who don't have money probably to buy their cigarettes every day or to put gasoline in their car or who don't possess a car, a bicycle or a motorcycle.

**Researcher:** Yes.

**BLC:** So there is. Yes, there is, but in their family you always have brothers or uncles who have money who help them, give them some bucks every month. It's like that.

The above confirms that there are different classes of Whites, that they are those who cannot even afford the basic necessities of life. However, these individuals are 'looked after' by wealthier members of the family. As to what has happened to the inherent superior qualities of investment and intellectual capacity etcetera among this segment of the population, one is left wondering.

Our observations confirm that they are far many more people of African descent living in slum like conditions in Mauritius. There appeared to us to be none or very few Whites living in deep poverty. The above interviewee did not even mention those people, as if they did not even exist in considerations of wealth and contributions to the making of Mauritian society. More attention is given to what are perceived as direct competitors to this community 'voiced fears of being overshadowed by the more populous Hindu population and finally in 1968 the consolidation of the Hindu political elite... However, independence did not significantly change the economic power of the Franco-Mauritians - they still own sugar plantations, and are the backbone of the economy.'

## How Poverty degrades Racial Cohesion

The discussion on class and race also needs to consider the possibilities of socioeconomic decline among the Franco-Mauritians (the historical socioeconomic elite) and the rise of elites in other ethnic groups. Among the Franco-Mauritians, this is a reality. Increasing poverty is tarnishing the racial myth of superiority as well as what one of our researchers, calls the 'elite mystique'. The extract from one of the individual reports indicated the following:

Most of them spoke about the fear that preceded the elections in 1968; of ethnic or political rebellion and a subsequent re-possession of their land. So before and after 1968, many Franco-Mauritians left the country - similar to events in South Africa before and after the 1994 presidential elections. This Franco-Mauritian Diaspora is a new form of the classic Diaspora (i.e. the black Atlantic Diaspora) as they immigrated to South Africa, Toronto, Canada, and Australia. However, those who stayed behind were able to buy the land of those who left and maintain their dominant authority as a minority as they fund economic ventures and are active role players in the Tourism Industry.

Tourism in fact remains largely in the hands of the Franco-Mauritians. It has remained a private industry and the Government's Ministry of Tourism has been termed merely a facade. Their power as economic rulers and capitalists changed in 1968. Their ethnic dominant core in plural Mauritian society began to wane. Furthermore, their political power has declined now that other Mauritians are striving for power and privilege. Interviewees spoke of emerging elites from other groups of Indians, Creoles, and *Gens des Couleur*.

Whites drove BMW back then, if you saw a BMW you knew it was a white, but now there are Indians too.<sup>42</sup>

The symbols of the once elite Franco-Mauritian are changing - and interviewees spoke about some Franco-Mauritian shifting from their inherited white bourgeoisie mansions to simple bungalows. They are no longer exclusively the economic elites. There are poor Whites in Tamarin. Foundations of authority are corroding, and they no longer have political power. Franco-Mauritians are no longer a dominant minority due to their loss of cultural and political dominance.

CEN (Curepipe, 12 August 2010) said that although Franco-Mauritians still own the majority of sugarcane land, there are other emerging sugar barons:

CEN : No, the Franco-Mauritians are still, I would say, the majority the owners of sugarcane lands. But now that we don't talk, there are a lot of Indian families or Chinese families or Muslim families that own a lot of land.

Researcher: Hmm.

CEN: I would not mention any families but in one of the sugar industry there is an Indian family who is the majority.

CEN: They own the land but they let the people who know the business run it.

Researcher: Ya.

CEN: They say we have the majority understanding of the sugar industry so we run it. Because they don't know how to run it. You know if you don't know how to drive a car, you have a nice car, you get somebody to drive the car and you take advantage of the car hmm. Instead of colliding it against a tree.

What the above extract shows is that even in the face of decline, racial stereotypes are maintained, almost as a way of maintaining the last shred of power, the ability to stereotype, denigrate and belittle the other. Uihmann, Brescoll and Machery (2010) describe this as Bayesian racism, which they say involves a strong belief that it is rational to discriminate against people based on their racial stereotype. They confirm that Bayesian racism is also a means at keeping low status groups in their 'place'. Such rationalisations, they also argue, may be due to threats to the ego or the self.

In the above, the Franco-Mauritian interviewee argues that Indians now have money but still no aptitude to use it skilfully. They still 'need' white people to do that for them. In short, without Whites, the country (including Indian descendants and Creoles) would experience a major decline. This quote suggests that Franco-Mauritians are 'threatened' by the presence of a growing Indian elite and feel the need to belittle or racially marginalise Indians by stereotyping them.

The above extract also tells us that dominated groups now produce emerging elites and that this group is economically diversifying the population. Thus, it is a possible to argue that increasing wealth also challenges racial cohesion and stereotyping. As the numbers of middle class Indian descendants and Creoles increase, so will the level of racial cohesion and stereotyping drop. In our recommendations, we point out that the increasing wealth of Mauritius will play a vital role in erasing stereotyping and racial cohesion, as more people will become educated and will begin to reflect critically on the negative consequences of segregation and racial denigration.

However, CB (TJC, 10 June 2010) argues that the economic core of society is still the Franco-Mauritians, largely due to their social responsibility and tourism activity. She argues that their economic visibility and power have enabled them to occupy positions of power in the society. Racial myths of superiority, as well as actual economic power, have encouraged others, especially the Creole population, to still consider the Franco-Mauritians as the privileged class - the elite. The elite status is maintained, not only by access to jobs and money, but also to social practices (leisure activities for example) and the use of symbols of power (the bungalow, the car, the shopping district/mall, clothing and type of alcoholic drink consumed etcetera).

## How Money is used to Secure Racial Privilege

If we assume that this privilege is maintained, how is it being maintained? We get a clue from the following extract which explains that the establishment of social networks at a very early age and the role which such networks play in establishing privilege for individuals:

JCH Oh yes! Oh yes! How do you call it, "deli-de-faciesse" we call it in French-, "deli-de-faciesse". "Faciesse" is your face in French, "deli"-, "deli" is an offence, I'm translating it literally, "deli-de-faciesse", "Déli-de-faciesse". It's looking on how you look and they don't give you a job or don't allow you in, they also call "deli-de-faciesse" it's also because of your name. You can see someone very, very, not (?) with examples, but someone with a different name, let's say-, when you have-, for instance a name like mine, Ok, it's easier to get in some place than for others.

Researcher: Why?

JCH: Why? Because let's look at myself, here we deal with insurers, insures "pardon!" insurance Ok, the insurers are in the private sector Ok. Most of these people, most of our clients, I would say huge-, a large part of our clients, let's say White owned companies Ok, you have managers who are Whites, who-, who I happened either to know socially or from school days Ok, and its incredible that Mauritius is very small, for instance it would be easier for me to get access to the CEO of IBL, who's a school friend of mine or the CEO of-, what is this, not KPMG, it's (?), it's PriceWaterHouse, school friends. These are ties which go long way back Ok. Let's say somebody without these

connections, professionally let's say we have same qualifications, you would get access but it would-, maybe more difficult. Like, I mean in South Africa you do businesses (?) courses, in Mauritius too but it helps whether you've been school friends or not, it tends you to scale down but I think it would take few generations to disappear but it would replace by golf, by school, by-, but this is-, at that time it's still the relationship you build up in the time which-, and it's (cough) it's easier to deal with these people because we know each other, you have something I think-, we share the same culture maybe. So, somebody you don't, let's say an Indian, I would be perfectly at ease with him but it's not the same relationship, of course with time I'll built up the same relationship, I'll built up a relationship but it won't be the same because "bon", you got memories with the people, it's different, it's different.

The same point is made by Creoles, which is that Creoles are unable to progress in the society because they lack the networks that Indians and Franco-Mauritians have:

The is also among the Creole informants a shared perception that the Indo-Mauritians have more chances of socio-economic mobility because they enjoy more privileges in the form of racist type 'patronage' in employment such, as in education and they can easily find a job in the public sector, for example with the District Council and Government. For example, Jacques stated that Mauritian society functions by 'patronage' but since there are few Creoles at decision-making and policy-making levels, the Creoles are at a disadvantage since they have no representative to back them. For example, Jerry believes that his application for an NHDC house has been rejected because of his race and because he had no 'political patronage'. Also, for the Elections of 2005 a Private Permanent Secretary promised him to give him a job if he won the elections. But after the Elections he did not respect his promise and instead gave jobs to five Indo-Mauritians.

*'...beaucoup de gens qui vont dire que les hindous sont privilégiés, parce qu'ils ont ça, ils ont ça. Quelque part oui. Parce que s'ils ont de la famille qui travaille dans tel...hisser...Tu comprends ce que je veux dire là?... Que c'est vrai quelque part, pour avoir un emploi, pas tout hein, il y a des exceptions aussi, pour avoir un emploi des fois peut être c'est un peu plus facile pour eux mais déjà ils ont l'avantage d'avoir un certificat que eux ils n'ont pas. Donc de toute façon à ce moment là ils sont inégaux tu vois...surtout dans le gouvernement ça existe beaucoup, ça existe beaucoup. J'ai une amie qui elle, elle est tamoule et elle est dans le gouvernement pendant je ne sais pas combien d'années, Vanessa, au moins enn 12 ans, 13 ans et elle a beaucoup d'expérience et elle a « apply » pour un travail mais elle n'a pas eu, parce qu'elle dit parce qu'elle est tamoule, parce que l'autre personne qui devrait rentrer est le beau-frère ou soit le cousin de quelqu'un qui est plus haut et ça c'était flagrant...mais dans le secteur privé je crois pas que c'est aussi flagrant mais dans le secteur public c'est très très flagrant...'<sup>A3</sup>*

(Eng. Trans.:...many people will say that the Hindus are privileged because they have this, they have this. Somehow yes. Because if they have a family working here...pull...You understand what I mean?...that somehow it's true, to get a job, not all, there are exceptions also, to get a job sometimes maybe it is easier for them already they have the advantage of having a certificate that they (Creoles) they don't have. Hence anyway by then they are unequal you see...especially in government there are many, there are many. I have a Tamil friend who has been in the government I do not know for many years, Vanessa for at least 12-13 years and she is experienced and she applied for a job but she did not get it because she says because she is Tamil, because the other person that was to get the job is the brother in law or cousin of a high ranked person and it was obvious...but in the private sector I don't think it is that obvious but in the public sector it is very obvious...)

The informants, as testified by Kathy and Claudine, pointed out that even though slavery has been abolished, the Blacks are still being treated as slaves because they are exploited by their employers, and their working conditions are harsh as they are underpaid and work long hours to earn a meagre salary for subsistence only. The Blacks refer to both the Indo-Mauritians and the Creoles who constitute the servile labour force.

## How Racial Segregation is maintained in Leisure

However, it often happens that social mobility is insufficient and it is the race of the individual which counts for more. This racial exclusion happens on a daily basis and serves to exclude members of certain racial groups from spaces of power:

JCH: Actually I got married in 2006 and I stopped going out because I've got kids now, so I'm not, I'm a bit out of this now. But I've a friend who always-, well he always, he jokes about it, there was one little story, he works in the public sector and he's a magistrate and you know as lawyers and magistrate are very, I don't know how to say that in English, very "collet monté", very proud of their job and 'I'm a magistrate and in Mauritius we speak English, we've been to UK to study.' And stuff like that, so, and, when I got to his building, which his father owned- he works in the building and I went to see to him there-, he was there, I went to see him and we met there in the afternoon, actually the guy in the entrance said: 'Sorry sir, you can't park there.' And he had a beautiful BMW, 'Sorry you can't park there.' Ok. Ok, fair enough he parked outside, I arrived about ten minutes later, I got in.

Researcher: And you were not driving a beautiful BMW.

JCH (Laugh): I had a Peugeot, Ok. And the guy said 'Hi' and just got in, parked and so: 'Where did you park?' I said but: 'Into the parking.' He told me: 'How did you get in?' 'But I got in by (?) that's it.' He told me: 'The guy threw me out.' And he was: 'Ah you see, this is because you're White.' Could be true, could be true. Could be the way you speak to the people, if you're rude people just: 'I got the power, you just stay out.' I don't know but he often speaks about this, it was a big discretion about our group of friends, and they said: 'Ok-' well, this is because he's very rich, (44:43 - 44:45) but for him, it's still a-, it used to be an issue, I don't know now but it used to be very much an issue for him.

Researcher: So interesting.

JCH: So this funny incident we remember but there were many examples like this.

Researcher: Can you think of any other—

JCH: Examples?

Researcher: Yeah.

JCH: Something like that?

Researcher: Even that you read in the newspaper or, it doesn't have to be—

JCH: There is one incident which is more recent, we're talking about this (fouf!), I'd say at least fifteen years ago, ten years ago, one more recent incident was the son of a former finance minister, this was in the newspaper, I don't know whether it's true and he was refused access to The Zanzi Bar or one of the night clubs in Grand-Baie because people didn't know who he was and he was denied access to the club, and for him it was a big thing because he was the son of a finance minister and it was-, and he said it was because of racism, because the guy came alone and they saw him as an Indian boy coming to have fun and they didn't want him to get in, they didn't want him in, and he said it was racism. Well, some-, a friend told me, Ah! It was one of my colleague here who told me about this, they went to a private club with-, it was French or British friends and they will not-, they were just ten metres apart, (laugh) the foreign woman and her husband (who was a black guy) arrived in front of the door, he wasn't allowed in.

Researcher: Was he a Mauritian?

JCH: He is Mauritian yeah, but he is black. And his friends went in, as he is a lawyer I think, he made a big thing about it, but he wasn't let in, allowed in, you see. These are small incidences but this is racism, clearly, clearly.

The following extract offers further vivid examples of the ways in which class can be used to exclude certain 'racial' groups from accessing spaces of power. This is especially the case with regard to leisure activities associated with particular race groups. As the above and the following conversations show, allowing these individuals access would allow them to transgress established racial barriers and would bring into question the value of the white and black race. Specifically, the white race would be perceived as having less value (tainted by the presence of the black) and the black race (if permitted to access the site) would be perceived as having more value than what is normally accorded to it in other contexts. In the following, we see extreme examples of this control of space and identity.

Researcher: And can we talk about racism on a social level?

JCH: Like?

Researcher: Where would you-, if you had a period of space, where would you--?

JCH: Ok. There are private jobs, I'm not talking about what you have in Flic-en-Flaq, shots or things like that, Ok. I'm talking about this, you have Dodo Club, exclusively for what? You have Racing Club, Ok, for general population and degeneration split on whether you're, how would I explain that? The type of (?), the type of money you have, the (?), the Racing Club would be about this, because then you have the Cercle de Rose-Hill, Ok, and Cercle de Beau-Bassin, then you would have the Triveni, this is a gymnasium (laugh). Gymnasium, no, no, no. Racing Club is just behind the-, you're just mixing up, Racing Club just behind the (?). (?) is there and you go straight up it's Racing Club, Ok. Triveni would be for-, no, no, no, no (--), the Tamils. What would you have? Triveni, Lua Yen, Lua-, Lua Yen in Eau-Coulee. What else do you have?- This for Chinese, you also have one in Port-Louis which is (?), this is in Port-Louis. What else do you have? There must be some smaller clubs, but these are the major ones, Ok. None-Whites wouldn't be admitted in this club, the Dodo Club.

Researcher: Dodo Club, yeah.

JCH: People-, even the Cercle de Rose-Hill wouldn't admit people-, would admit a White for instance from upper class, so to speak. But wouldn't admit an Indi-, and Indian or a Muslim in the Cercle de Rose-Hill, that would be unthinkable.

Researcher: An Indian or Muslim.

JCH: No chance. No chance whatsoever. No chance whatsoever, even now. Even now. So, is there exclusivity based on the minimal coloured skin, they are considered racially negative.

What the research team also found is that racism is so profoundly entrenched in Mauritius that whiteness is strongly correlated with social mobility. There are different kinds of Whites and for each, different levels of social mobility and different levels of access to the ultimately Whites only spheres of social interaction:

Whilst some Sino-Mauritians are referred to as *jaune* (yellow), *blanc* (white) is also used to describe the lightness of Sino Mauritian skin. This white is also used to imply a class status. One female student from Port Louis SSS remarked that "people think that we are white we are more rich. I am not proud to be Chinese. It is just my destiny that I was born Chinese. I have friends of different religions." (Interview053\_02092010). A student at Ste Marie, Palma, stated that he had little trouble gaining entrance into night clubs despite his minor status because as a Sino Mauritian he is perceived as wealthy and will be allowed access to a night club. The association of lightness with high class status was a matter that few students commented much upon, but ...this pigmentocracy is not limited to within the Creole community alone, it seems that there is a public discourse of lightness, where lighter skin is seen to infer a superior status to persons who possess it.

There are many examples of the manner in which discrimination among classes overlap with racism in Mauritius. There are also a number of examples to prove discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. But in Mauritius, communalism or discrimination on the basis of ethnicity is a 'useful' euphemism:

As pointed out by Firoz Ghanty, communalism is another local taxonomy for racism which is the base of primary capitalism. Initially, the local economy was in the hands of about eleven Franco-Mauritian families that used to constitute the local economic power but now the profile of the capitalist class has changed. In around 1997, Mr. Ghanty set up an observatory of racism and a National Vigilance Group but it did not work because of the boycott not only from the politicians but also the civil society, which found that the observatory was a threat to their racist beliefs and lifestyle.

*'...A Maurice le communalisme est un joli mot pour ne pas dire raciste. En faite je ne parle plus moi de communalisme, je parle de racisme. Maurice pour moi est un pays raciste majoritairement...Qu'est ce que veux dire dans la politique le communalisme. Ça veut dire tel parti va favoriser tel communauté, c'est évident et je cite le Parti Travailleiste, continue de dire que le pays appartient au hindous et donc il favorise les hindous, le PMSD dise qu'il favorise le créole au MMM ça n'a jamais été une pratique...C'est ce que certains journalistes appellent, le communalisme scientifique et je déteste ce mot parce que quand on dit communalisme scientifique ça peut rappeler des théories Nazis, ça peut rappeler les ethnies, ça peut rappeler des choses détestables. En faite, il y a ce qu'on pourrait appeler une vraie volonté, une vraie real politique ce qu'on pourrait appeler du « quota ». C'est-à-dire chaque communauté doit obtenir en proportion numérique une part des biens des richesses de tout ce qui est produit dans le pays...'<sup>44</sup>*

(Eng. Trans.:...In Mauritius communalism is a nice word for not saying racist. In fact I speak rather of racism than communalism. For me Mauritius is mostly racist...what communalism means in politics? It means that this party will favour this community, it is obvious and I refer to the Labour Party, (it) continues to say that the country belongs to the Hindu and hence it favours the Hindu, the PMSD says it favours the Creoles in the MMM it has never been the practised...it is what some journalists named scientific communalism and I do not like this term because when we say scientific communalism it might remind Nazi theories, it might remind ethnic groups, it might recall appalling things. In fact there is what we might name a real will, a real politics of what we might call 'quota' that is each community has to get in numeric proportion a share of the wealth and resources of what is produced in the country (Gross National Product...).

The research also revealed some glimmer of hope for the racial situation in Mauritius. In her interview<sup>45</sup> with a woman involved in NGO work, the Clinical Psychologist on the team found that, while the 'norm' is that races are segregated in many areas of social life, there are attempts to bridge the racial divide. This is spurred on by growing awareness of poverty in Mauritius and also the role of the Catholic Church in raising awareness of poverty. However, and as the following extract suggests, it is still difficult to interact on a personal and familial level across the race groups. There is also insistence on racial purity of one's ancestors. As this particular interviewee confided (earlier on in the conversation, thus the reader should refer to the actual transcript), she comes from a poor white family, but she had a 'good name', one that indicated that there had been no racial mixing:

**Interviewer 2:** In my discussion with Franco-Mauritians now, they tell me that lot of Franco-Mauritian women, they are doing a lot of social work, charity work, community work a lot. They are volunteer (...) prostitution work, NGOs (...) why you think so?

**MR:** Because we are in touch more with poverty now. And our group too, the same category group; we made with women what we call micro credit for houses. And it works

**MT:** You were giving credit to?

**MR:** To women and they were paying back. That was wonderful. So let's say they have no electricity, it was through the (...) we knew that there were genuine cases. So we go and visit the houses, talk to these women and all that. And it was good. Maybe (...) you will see (...), but there were an interaction, they were happy to see white ladies. We could take time to come and visit them (...) they would ask me, "Are you nun?" I said no. "Are you paid for that?" I said no and so.

Interviewer2: (inaudible voice to the second interviewer)

MR: Let's say at school they are good friends, different communities, but very few receive different community in their house.

MT: Ok this something that I have also been told about, I know some of the questions I would ask is very personal. Do you yourself have friends across communities?

MR: I have lots of friends. When I was at the prison at Riche Lieu, there is a teacher, he is coloured man what we call, a *métisse*, and Mr. Tulsy, a wonderful friend; but my husband likes him very much. I've got a young (...) that makes ceramics with me. My husband (...) (laughing)

Interviewer2: So do they come to your home?

MR: Oui

Interviewer2: (inaudible voice of the second interviewer)

MR: We are not uhh we are not, we don't have a big social life. We don't receive a lot, except our family. We have big families and we receive them. I've got very good friends in Australia. We still visit her when we got there. They are coloured people.

MT: And your own children, do they have friends under other ethnic groups?

MR: Yes the same thing, at school yes. My elder granddaughter when she had anniversary she invite two of us but the second one no.

Interviewer2: You think that younger generations are more opened?

MR: Yes and no. yes on provisional side.

MT: Tell us more about that.

MR: That is they don't like to invite for dinner to people if it is for work, for business but I don't think they would like to invite for anniversaries. It takes time. I'm not excusing ein but my son, one of my son; two days ago he told me about a school friend, call Obeegadoo, (laughing) (...)uhh they speak Creole, they say "Mark, that's my anniversary I invite you, come there is a ceremony in church and you must come to have lunch with me" Mark went lunch with Obeegadoo, very far from business work; and there were Xavier Duval (laughing) Xavier Luc Duval, Richard Duval. There was champagne. But he is a funny boy. He came to Mark, Mark has (...) it's business. They sell also sport goods And he said last time you gave me a pair of sport shoes and this time (laughing) (...) They are not racist but we do not have to opportunity to mix.

Interviewer2: But how would you open at those opportunities?

MR: We must work on that

### How Gender Relations and Racism Interact

It was our intention to fully investigate the cross-cutting implications of gender relations and racism. Our research encompassed both women and men. However, given the scale of this project and the fact that we did not have sufficiently qualified personnel to initiate the research on gender, we were not able to obtain significant observations or interviews on the subject. However, we have noted the following issues, especially as they pertain to young Creole or slave descendant women. First, black skinned women in Mauritius experience the worst of racism. They are often the ones to be harassed and harangued. They receive the poorest levels of service. They are most discriminated against in public and government spaces. They experience racism from family members and in their marriage (from their in-laws). They find it difficult to obtain decently-paid work and are encouraged by a positive discourse on whiteness (the privileging of whiteness) to alter their appearance so as to appear more white. Extracting and summarising from the interim monthly reports of our replacement researchers (Ms. Teelwah and Ms. Chacoory), it was found that at hair salons in Mauritius, black skinned Creoles are likely to receive very poor treatment and inferior

levels of service, being relegated to 'rookie' or new hairdressers with little experience or being told that their 'type' of hair is not dealt with in a particular hair salon.

The ability to speak French, or if one has a profession or career that is considered middle class, helps the individual to obtain better levels of service in supermarkets, hair salons and places of business. The issue of how one's career is ascertained is that in hair salons, each individual is expected to fill in a form detailing her personal details. However, in other places, one's skin colour (as well as dress) will ultimately determine what kind of service one receives.

It was also found, interestingly not in the actual data on gender and race but on the data dealing with psychological consequences of racism, that white Franco-Mauritian women also perpetuated a form of racism - one involving association and dissociation. Specifically (and this was gleaned from the interview data of an NGO Manager), the women participate actively in charity and volunteer work with the poor but often do so as a way of attaining a particular identity, one which valorises charitable acts among women as a sign of morality. Charity, as we have noted in the research, is also a way of dissociating from the poor (and ultimately the blacks) because it structures the relationship with them without allowing them to fully engage with the self (i.e. whites).

Furthermore, it also stereotypes the poor because it publicly constructs them as people in need, as dependents who are unable to help themselves. That is not to say that all charity work falls within these parameters or that all women involved in charity rationally pursue charitable acts in order to appear moral. What we can argue, however, is that there is a powerful religious-racial discourse at play in Mauritius, one which socially constructs the white woman as the epitome of physical and moral purity.

By participating in such acts of moral purification (charity) and by doing this in defined social spaces, the white woman manages to support and perpetuate this discourse of purity and also control the purity of home space - as she does not 'recevoir' or receive blacks as equals into this home space. It would seem to us (as a general trend), that on the part of the white Franco-Mauritian men, it was important for them to maintain the purity of spaces in the public sphere. Thus, they tend to control access to leisure spaces and to control access to jobs and opportunities, doing so in various ways, conscious (deliberate barring of access) and unconscious (through micro-aggressions or in references to lack of 'fit' of the prospective black employee in the company).

Ethnic solidarity also perpetuates racist practice. This was also found among women of Indian descent. It was found in one textile factory that the majority of employees were Hindus because the Manager believed that this was good for cohesion and productivity in the factory. Hindus tended to 'stick together' to defend the interests of their co-ethnics, if there was a quarrel or dispute regarding a work matter. Creoles, on the other hand, were mostly part-time workers who supplied the factory with semi-finished goods produced from home. The impact of this on the individual development or career/income prospects of the Creole woman may need to be assessed. It would seem to us that this arrangement disadvantages Creole women because they are not really protected by Labour Laws of our country and may not fully understand the implications of the work contracts to which they agree. As noted previously, not only are Creoles stereotyped, but they are also compelled to become invisible and are isolated, so as to avoid potential ethnic or racial conflict in the workplace. In the following, we document the experience of a young Creole woman with racism in Mauritius:

Marie Michèle testified how at secondary school she experienced racial discrimination because she is a Black Creole and people tend to make Creoles feel that they are different and lazy. She was given racist nicknames such as 'Macumba' and 'Bongo' because she is tall and Black. For her, racism is when you consider and also make another person feel inferior.

*'...Il y a tout le temps des gens qui m'ont fait remarquer que j'étais pas la bonne couleur, que j'étais pas ceci, que j'étais pas cela. Comme les sœurs de grand-mère, je t'avais dit qu'elles étaient plus ou moins teint clair, quand j'étais petite et moi je vivais beaucoup avec ma grand-mère et tout, quand j'étais petite on me disais tu sais il faut te mettre de la poudre parce que déjà tu as un désavantage d'être comme ça, maintenant il faut essayer d'améliorer ça un petit peu, il faut ceci, il faut cela, il ne faut pas marcher au soleil pour que tu ne sois pas plus grillée que ça. Quand j'ai rencontré mon mari, pareil ma belle mère ne m'acceptait pas du tout parce que*

*j'étais trop noire pour son fils. Comme si tout le temps comme si on m'a fait, que j'étais vilaine, que j'étais ceci, que j'étais cela. On m'a tout le temps fait voir que j'étais pas, pas nécessairement dans la bonne communauté...tu vois ce que je veux dire, donc tu vois pour moi c'est pas nécessairement raciste en tant que communauté mais c'est raciste de la personne qui se sent mieux supérieure parce que untel a cheveux un peu plus droit, un teint un peu plus clair, pour moi ce type de raciste là, j'ai subi beaucoup plus que d'autres...*<sup>46</sup>

(Eng. Trans.: ... there has always been people that reminded me that I was not of the right colour, that I was not this, that I was not that. Like my grandmother's sisters, I told you that they were somewhat light skinned, when I was young and I lived with my grandmother, when I was young they told me that I had to put powder as I was already disadvantaged by my look, now I have to try to improve it a little, there is need for this, there is need for that, I should not walk in the sun so as not to be more roasted. When I met my husband, same my mother in law did not accept me because I was too black for her son. As is all the time as if they made me (feel) that I was ugly that I was this that I was that. They always made me observe that I was not, necessarily in the right community...you understand what I mean, hence you see for me it is necessarily racism as a community but racism of the person that feel better superior because this person has straight hair, fair skin, for me I experience this type of racism more than others...)

Many informants such as Marie Michèle, Jean Yves and Jason stated that the Creoles are racist among themselves because of the differences in wealth and social class, with the wealthy Creoles seen as being 'snobbish' and having feelings of superiority.

*'...dan largen ena blan nwar tou sa ki fer mo pou al dir ou kouler lapo ? ki fer mo pa dir ou zis blan la ki kumsa ? ena nwar si kumsa. Ki fer mo pou dir ou zis blan la ki pa bon ? dan tou komunote ena bon ena pa bon ki ou pense nwar ki ena largen la li li pa racis ?...Ena nwar ki ena largen li nwar li racis...Pou li li dir ou ki ou pli inferyer ki li ki fer aköz li ena largen. Pou li, li p pense kan li ena largen li blan, ounn kompre la largen ki blan. Pa kouler lapo ki blan. Kouler lapo la sa enn lot zafer sa. Me dan moris largen ki blan. Ou ena largen ou kav ki ou ete ou kav muzulmen ou kav blan ou kav sinwa, madras kreol kan ou ena ou largen ou met la, pouvwar la vini...*<sup>47</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...in money there is white black all this why I would tell you skin colour? why I would tell you only white who are like that? there are blacks like that. Why I would tell you only the white that is not good? in all communities there are who are good there are good there are not good what you think the black who has money is not racist...for him he tells you that you inferior than him because he has money. For him he thinks that because he has money he is white, you understand money which is white. Not skin colour that is white. Skin colour is something else. In Mauritius money that is white. You have money, you can be a Muslim, you can be a white you can be a Chinese, Madras, Kreol when you have money you put it there power comes...)

For a long time, Marie Michèle has felt inferior because of her skin colour, her social status – she is from a 'poor' family background – and geographical location – she lives in Black River. Her light-skinned family members, parents-in-law, school friends and strangers made her feel inferior because she is Black and of African phenotype. There are still people who adopt racist attitudes and behaviour towards her such and there are people who are taken aback that she is a qualified teacher and has official tertiary qualifications as it goes against peoples' mind-set (they assume that she is a menial labourer).

In line with Marie Michèle's testimony, their reaction is rooted in a long held stereotypical perception that all Blacks are lazy under-achievers and perform only menial and low paid jobs: *'...disons que créole ine faire pou bat simen...*<sup>48</sup> (Eng. Trans.:...let say that Creoles are meant to be masons...)

She feels that people are astounded by her personal achievements because they are not used to see Black Creoles succeed in life. People still hold to negative clichés that Creoles are not ambitious and lazy; hence those who achieve in life are victimised by others, stereotypical attitudes.

Even if the informants denied being racist or communal, they all showed to some degree pre-conceived racial/communal prejudices and perceptions when talking of people from other ethnic groups. These racial/communal tensions especially between the Indo-Mauritians and Creoles might stem from, firstly, the fact that they are the two main ethnic groups in the country with the former and especially the Hindu Mauritians openly claiming their majority and superiority; and secondly from Mauritius' historical path with the Indo-Mauritians and Creoles having different past history and life experiences. This racial/communal antagonism seems to date back to colonial times and is rooted in the country's past development strategies, policies and political history.

In an interview<sup>49</sup> conducted by the Clinical Psychologist on this research team, her interviewee said that there were many women approaching the drug rehabilitation NGO (Natresa). Many of these were very poor women who had turned to dealing in drugs as a way to survive and also as part of their work as sex workers. Since sex work is illegal in Mauritius (and therefore unregulated), these women were often at the mercy of unscrupulous 'pimps' (controllers) and also clients who abused them. A large number of the women coming to the centre and also those found in the jails were Creoles - a good number of which (exactly what number was not established), are from Rodrigues Island. The argument is that these women easily fall prey to the promises of the drug dealers on the island because they are desperate for a better life and feel that they can dramatically improve their circumstances, if they participate in the trade. It is also our view that because these women occupy the lowest rung of the socioeconomic hierarchy, it is easier for them to be drawn into sex work and drug dealing. This is because they have fewer options open to them, especially as they seek to achieve their goals:

MT: Now coming back to your work. When you look at your work, the service that you are offering and the people what you have been assisting, what did the distribution in terms of the population.

ML: Most of them are Creole. And secondly, Muslim and afterward Indian. And you will see because here we have prisoners, the ex-prisoners who have come here. And also in the Women prison you will see the same thing. Most of the women in the prison are Creole, secondly Muslim and then Indian. Because here in Mauritius, most of the prisoner they have been linked to drug, they are in prison because of drug trafficking or for the women sex work. Because they are on a soliciting ground. And most of them are Creole. Now they are Creole and most of the women they came from Rodrigues. They came directly from Rodrigues or the mother, father or grandmother they came from Rodrigues. And here we have made a survey analysis to know why most of them are from Rodrigues and here there are drugs and at Rodrigues we don't have drugs, hard drugs we don't have. In Mauritius we have drugs, we think here it is poverty and the dealers have a good population for exploitation to sell drug and a good field for exploitation. We think that it is for this reason but I don't...

MT: So you haven't made in sort of formal research into it?

ML: No am not a specialist in survey but I think it must be with someone who is a specialist in this work.

MT: Talking about origins, like you say lot of them come from Rodrigues. Are there some whose parents maybe come from Mauritius itself? As if they were brought here in Mauritius.

ML: I do not understand your question.

MT: Ok am asking whether, besides, who else came from Rodrigues, are there other Creoles with the same problems?

ML: The creoles from Mauritius, it is because they are in prostitution or the partner was a dealer. Because here in Mauritius the partner, the dealer and the pimp is the same person. And it's why most of the women here are still in drug. The men, they put the women in drugs because afterwards the women can go into prostitution to bring money for the drug.

## CONCLUSION TO PART 3

In this section of the report we have attempted to show how cross-cutting identities, that is: gender and class affect racial experiences. We found that a strong myth of racial superiority is maintained among some Franco-Mauritians. Not only are they seen as the elite by others, but they also seek to perpetuate this myth. A closer look at this myth reveals that it includes references to superior intellectual capacity and economic management and class. However, the conversations and interviews with Franco-Mauritians revealed that there is significant heterogeneity within the group and that there is also diversity in terms of intellectual capabilities and money management. Increasing poverty is degrading racial cohesion in this group. They appear to no longer 'speak to one another' and social networks, although still relevant, are falling apart. The last spaces in which racial cohesion can be maintained is in leisure spaces, where symbols of racial power persist and where an individual, regardless of his or her achievements can be routinely excluded on the basis of his or her dark skin. Nevertheless, class mobility is encouraging racial integration. Friendships develop via shared class aspirations and activities. These friendships are, however, mostly still masculine, as it is men who tend to occupy the public sphere in Mauritius.

With regard to the complex issue of gender, we found that racial myths and stereotypes permeated gendered categories. For Franco-Mauritian women, there was pressure to maintain a high level of propriety and morality, almost as if they were women still living in the Victorian times! They participated in a range of charity work, not only because they are fully aware of poverty in Mauritius, but also because this validated their position in the social hierarchy as pure, moral beings. In this sense, they are juxtaposed to the Creole or black women, who are deemed to be on the lowest rung of the society, stereotyped as drug dealers and sex workers. Assumptions about the nature of Indian descendants are legion. For instance, as we noted, women of Hindu origins were being employed and Creole women were not being employed at one factory because the idea is that there is inevitable ethnic solidarity among Hindu women. This view does not take into consideration the fact that these women might choose to differentiate between themselves on the basis of age, class, caste, interest or home location.

## PART FOUR

# UNDERSTANDING THE BURDENS OF RACISM

In this section of our report, we wish to draw attention to the following issues and questions. What are the long-term consequences of racism on the population of slave descendants and the descendants of indentured labourers? How is long-term trauma of this nature articulated among the affected populations? What services exist in Mauritius today, to assist those in need of therapy to cope with racist experiences? It is evident from our reflections on those experiencing psychological trauma from racist experiences, that this can cause debilitating symptoms and long-term damage to the psyche. The following section is structured as follows: First we offer a brief overview of the possible links between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the experiences and behaviours to be found among slave descendants. Second, we offer an outline of the Mental Health Services to be found in Mauritius today, as per the overview of the clinical psychologist on the team. Third, we discuss evidence for destructive behaviours and the possible reasons for maintaining these. Finally, we discuss racist events in Mauritius and the ways in which people have responded to these.

### The Issue of PTSD among Slave Descendants

According to the Social Worker, Joy Degruy Leary, African Americans, who are descended from slaves, may continue to experience what she calls, Post-Traumatic slave disorder (PTSS) a variation of the well-known syndrome of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She says, 'On September 11, 2001, Americans became more familiar with PTSD. Lots of citizens were reported to be suffering from the disorder as a result of witnessing the destruction of the World Trade Towers and those trapped inside'.

With what is known about trauma, is it probable that significant numbers of African slaves experienced a sufficient amount of trauma to warrant a diagnosis of PTSD? The following are a list of some of the conditions that give rise to mental and/or emotional traumas which justify the diagnosis of PTSD and which are consistent with the slave experience:

- A serious threat or harm to one's life or physical integrity;
- A threat or harm to one's children, spouse, or close relative;
- Sudden destruction of one's home or community;
- Seeing another person injured or killed as a result of an accident or physical violence;
- Learning about a serious threat to a relative or a close friend kidnapped, tortured, or killed;
- Experiencing intense fear, terror, and helplessness;
- The stressor and disorder is considered to be more serious and will last longer when the stressor is of human design.<sup>50</sup>

It is her view that the experience of slavery has produced certain 'survival' behavior among African Americans, which continue to affect their quality of life today. The issue and the experience of slavery was never substantially dealt with in the US and, in fact, the situation of African Americans was exacerbated with the institution of the Jim Crow Laws, which barred African descendants from access to good schooling and medical care and severely controlled freedom of association and interracial marriage until 1954. The passing of time and the compounding of the effects of the legacy of slavery are important, not only to the story of the US, but also to the story and legacy of

slavery in Mauritius. Eyerman (2001) and Soyinka (2002) both bemoan the absence of a global discussion on the issue of slavery. In the view of Soyinka (*ibid*), slavery is perceived and treated as a mere 'incident in the course of history' (Soyinka 2002:22).<sup>51</sup>

## Mental Health Services in Mauritius

The Clinical Psychologist on the team noted the overburdened mental health institution and services in Mauritius, as well as the difficulties of addressing racism-related stress in Mauritius. This suggested to us that even if there are a number of people presenting themselves for counseling (and as we argue further on many will not), they are unlikely to experience a full and proper service because of the overburdened facilities:

Medical services are free, but private practice and non-governmental organizations play a large part in meeting the needs of the people. There is only one big institution for mentally ill patients named Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre. The institution was opened more than a century ago in 1879 to accommodate 260 patients and it now accommodates up to 900 patients. The Brown Sequard Mental Health Care has a Psychiatry Department which has one consultant, who is the Head of Clinical Department, and six senior specialists. The Psychology Department has five clinical Psychologists. The Social Work Department has one Senior Social Worker and two auxiliaries. The Occupational Therapy Department has one Occupational Therapist and two assistants. The nursing division is made up of more staff. The Psychologists and Social Workers as well as Psychiatrists offer services to other hospital on rotational basis as part of decentralization of Mental Health Services.

The Ministry of Women Rights: Child Development and Family Welfare have a total of eight Psychologists thus including professionals in the field of Psychology; they are posted in seven centres named Family Support Bureaus. These centres are 24-hour facilities. Their huge clientele is victims of sexual assault and domestic violence; they deal with children and families. As part of their duties the counselling staff (thus Psychologists, Social Workers) in these centres provides services to shelters as well. They are said to work long hours since they work on calls too and have a high work load<sup>1</sup>.

The National Agency for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA) has thirteen treatment and rehabilitation centres working with it. The centres are spread around the country and two of the thirteen are situated in Rodrigues. NATReSA plays an important role in providing support such as finance and educational material. Moreover, it facilitates the detoxification of substance abusers in collaboration with the hospitals. Six rehabilitation centres were visited during the month of August. Each centre is governed by the Board. Under the Board, there is a Director/Officer in charge who is responsible for day-to-day administration of the centre. The Director is assisted by administration staff (often paid) and then Therapists/Counsellors/Medical Doctors who either work on contract or as volunteers. In some other cases there are volunteers from the members of the community who provide support to the centre, offer seminars or talks.

All the centres provide individual, family and group counselling/psychotherapy. Some provide in house medical treatment or arrange transport for their clients to consult at the relevant hospitals. They offer holistic care in the form of occupational therapy (skills and vocational training), psychological care and spiritual care, as well as follow up/out-patient services. All centres are involved in outreach programmes often aimed at the youth and those at risk, they recognize that substance abuse or addiction is problem an increasing problem in the society. A lot of these centres have employed Psychologists on contractual basis; the Psychologist works part time and has half days consultations on specific days in the week. As a result, one Psychologist then turns to work for more than one institution. The centres accept clients from all walks of life, different ethnicity, religion and class. Although they could not provide on paper statistical data on the demographics of their clientele, the anecdotal information from Directors and Counsellors in these centres indicate that the majority of their clientele are Creoles of African descent with poor socio economic status, followed by Muslims.

The Clinical Psychologist also made the following observations and gathered the following data:

Interviewees ranged from 30 years-old to +60 years-old male and females although mostly female. They are from different ethnicities. They identified themselves as Creole because they had African ancestors (from one or both parents), then the Franco-Mauritians, Indo Mauritians, Muslims and Sino- Mauritians.

Most of the participants are initially hesitant to consent to interview and refused to be audio-taped. Once rapport is established, participants turn to ask about my clinical experience and that of racism in South Africa. I often felt that I am only allowed entry into their world or life experience, if they feel comfortable or somewhat I acknowledge and seem knowledgeable about the issue of racism in South Africa during, and post the apartheid era. After interrogating me, the interviews turn to follow much better. Although their interrogations might seem to stem from an obvious and healthy curiosity on my South African background, it seems to have assisted in bridging the gap during interviews on participants' outright and overwhelming initial responses of "there is no racism in Mauritius...in South Africa you had it, and it was bad" (almost meaning barbaric).

At the beginning stage of my field work, the response that there is no racism in Mauritius made me feel that by talking about racism (not so much slavery and indenture ), I am bring forth divisions within a community living in harmony. By virtue of coming from a country with a history of institutionalized racism, I felt burden to explain how South Africa dealt with it or continuously deals with these issues. I psychologically had to remind myself and monitor my own responses. I therefore found myself using words such as discrimination, unfairness, emotional response to discriminations interchangeably, in an effort to conceal the nature of my enquiry.

Thus, and as noted previously in the discussion on method and methodology in this report, it is evident that our researchers had their own racial identity interrogated in the course of the research, making it exceedingly difficult to maintain objectivity in the research process. Nevertheless, being highly trained researchers, they were sensitive to these potential challenges and adapted their responses accordingly, using opportunities to discuss their personal experiences in the research 'field' with their fellow research colleagues and the team leader. It was evident from the Clinical Psychologist's findings that there were a number of people keen to deny the existence of discrimination and racism in Mauritius. The researcher notes that in the course of research:

A female professional said "the issue of discrimination is not present is an issue of the past. The society's psychological problems are mainly due to breakdown in family structures and effects of globalization...cost of living has gone up and demands that both parents should work and leaving children unattended. "

Male professional in a hospital said "Discrimination at the work place is not there or allowed, there are laws and regulations governing that. (Later in the interview the same participant said) however there are cases at times at work that people claim they have been discriminated and they are very hard to prove for example, we handle cases/complains about privileges around more over time, placement in a better ward"

Another participant said there is "no discrimination as in the past where ethnic groups will stay alone for example there was a place exclusively for Whites or Indians thus fading out we are now a mixture of people living together and working together in public service. Discrimination is no longer visible, in that sense. But class discrimination people are now more materialistic, and they no longer interact because they are busy"

However, and as the following extract from an interview suggests, if there is no discrimination, then why is it that the number of people affected by the complex socio-pathologies increasing? The interview provides an answer. It is because racism and differentiation do exist in Mauritius and people are finding it very difficult to cope with this. The interviewee also notes that the majority of those affected come from the Creole community or, at least, the more impoverished communities on the island:

MT: I suppose in my question I was going to ask, the people that come here for treatment, today are they, if you were to describe them, would you say they are people who work, people who don't have employment, their level of education what is it like?

JA: So I can say that if someone is a drug addict today, before they were ok, they have a family life, they have their job. But when we become drug addicts, we leave it away. So we have policemen coming here. We have relatives from ministers, we have all kind of people with educational background top, we have joint accountant. Unfortunately they go for alcoholic problems. I don't know, we can't evaluate someone why you are a drug addict, why you are an alcoholic, its complex.

MT: And with division of the population, would you say you get in more of a certain ethnic group? Or getting less? When you look in at the demographic, would you say that you get in more let's say white people or Hindu people more, Muslim people more?

JA: We have many Muslim people and Creole people. So what you call it, here we call it "*banlieue*" "*cité*". They are too complex. So if someone has a drug problem it's upgrading each time. It's always like this. We have one and then we have two, we have three. It's growing up. It's very difficult. I saw it in a news papers last week, there are ten thousand drug addicts in Mauritius. But I can say that there is more and more

MT: And what do you think it's making the number to grow, like what making it worst now.

JA: You know Mauritian people are frustrated people. There are too many categories. The rich become richer and the poor become again poor. So there is not the sharing of the cake. It's very difficult because when you see at the top, the government is not playing the role as you want. To become someone who works in the government sector, private or public sectors. This is the difference. Public sector, we have only Hindus, from their region. In the town, it's very difficult for a Creole to have a good job in the government sector. I don't know why it's like that. It's a long time situation.

MT: And what do you think can be done to correct it.

JA: Since two years we have a priest, a Creole priest, whose name is Jocelyn Gregoire, who wanted to created something between the Creole. There was a good start but now he can't. This has stopped because you know, they have their rich people who come and the top of the church also its like that, we have the white people, never you see a black people becoming a bishop.

MT: So all the bishops are white.

JA: Yes

As the Clinical Psychologist notes:

Inherent in the logic of the concept of democracy is the premise that the more directly people are able to participate in political decision-making about things that affect their lives, the more those decisions will be acceptable to their needs, values, cultures and environmental situation. Thus, implementation of such decisions (having a broadly-based support in both majority and minority needs, culture and social values) receive maximum popular support.<sup>52</sup> The notion of democracy in Mauritius seems to be considered as nonexistent. Those interviewed referred to the lack of political representation in National Government as a contributing factor to Creole marginalization; Creoles do not have a political voice. The political system is said to favour Indo- Mauritians who are in the majority. They talked at length about privileges afforded to Indo- Mauritians. These advantages ranged from greater to easier access to positions of social influence and political power, to the presumption that Indians when, seeking employment and in other social situations will always get their needs met.

Job opportunities in public service were mentioned as one area which should represent the multiethnic nature of Mauritian Society. However, participants indicated that Creoles are not represented in civic positions and education is not the only issue for their unemployment, it is the skin colour and names.

In informal conversations, the Clinical Psychologist collected the following sentiments:

"...in public sector, you have only Indian employees. In the town it's difficult for Creoles to acquire a job, I don't why? But it's like this and it's been a long time"

"Whether you have an overseas qualification that is not important, you need to know someone or be a friend of some, you need to have the right name...." (Referring to Hindu Surname).

"At work place- Doctors in civil society are mostly Indian, in Hospital Pharmacy mostly Muslim-when someone has power, he wants to keep his own ethnicity, in the Hotel mostly are Creole-Education at University- less Creole, Indians are generally in large numbers"

"In Government especially, people are employed mostly because they know someone who knows someone or they are a cousin of ...however people seem to be afraid to talk about these things"

"It is easy to see that government is not an equal opportunity system. Creoles do not get same job opportunities or a corresponding pay despite education, walk in Government facility- see how many Creoles you would see? It would be all Hindu's, Muslim maybe, rarely a Creole. In 1974, out of 90 there were about 15 Creoles in Police force, in other places of work such as construction industry-never see a Creole person, even to serve tea in Ministers office, will not find them...recruitment officers come from majority population and they are keeping the status quo. Law is not reflected in reality- equality- is not present, just walk to these places of work and see..."

She went on to say that:

Although participants mention that formal laws on equality do exist and are important in ensuring how Mauritian society should run, many feel that equality is a "word on paper not in reality". They state that the economic and social ills in Creole community still thrive as a result of marginalization. In an effort to explain consequences of marginalization a lot of professionals referred less developed areas such as Roche Bois, Triolet, "villages populated by fisherman" and Sites; that they are characterized by poor infrastructure/housing and living conditions. These areas are said to have high poverty levels, low levels of education and family problems are common (parents abusing substances, children ill disciplined, teenage pregnancy, school absenteeism etc)

Frequently, participants quoted language to further demonstrate how marginalized Creole culture is stating that Kreol is not used as a medium of instruction in public schools nor taught as a subject. They elaborated that Kreol, is not only a language for Creoles but it is spoken nationally yet it is not accorded same status like French and English.

"In schools, other languages from Indian and Chinese Communities are taught as subjects...Look who the Head of Government is; everything of that culture is okay. That is why there is a problem; Creoles do not have enough representation, their language is not in school..."

In addition, those interviewed who consider themselves Franco-Mauritians commented on political marginalization of Franco-Mauritians too; however they consider Creole's social, economic and political marginalization as the worse in the sense that it continuous from slavery period to contemporary times.

When asked what their identity is, most professionals would answer that they are firstly Mauritian, and then perhaps include religion and later or rarely say their ethnicity/community. They acknowledged that Mauritian society is divided along communal lines and class. For most of them, these divisions are maintained by the constitution and politicians. Seemingly, politicians' electoral campaigns turn to lean on ethnic solidarity.

Professionals interviewed (majority are females) especially those who over and above their formal work have volunteered their services in different areas (such as NGO promoting adult education or counselling), seem to have chosen their field lifestyle. They have immersed themselves in community work thus as this a sign of racial maturity and understanding of social injustice. In their accounts, they level criticism to dominant groups and their own racial groups. They believe in the equality of races, are committed and devoted to advancing good course and justice.

For example she quotes one informal interviewee who said:

"I have made a choice that any institution working to promote discrimination, I would not join, here I work as a consultant...and this particular work I do although offered in Catholic schools, in these schools there are many religions, and more than 50 % are not catholic. If it was meant only for Catholics I would not do it- for that matter I am not fully employed, I provide consultant services here because I still want to be independent from ideologies."

As it has been highlighted earlier not all participants acknowledged with ease that ethnic discrimination or prejudices exist in Mauritian society. Those who easily agreed they generally voiced out that; it will take time for people to change their mind about others especially towards the general population thus referring to Creole community. Participants had knowledge and awareness of widely held stereotypes in Mauritian society. They explained these stereotypes from a historical perspective. When speaking of Creoles, participants typically saw the long lasting impact of slavery as an issue for this community. Popular stereotypes portray Creoles as lazy, drug addicts and lacking positional drive to succeed.

Professionals highlighted that when "you look at the history of slavery you understand impact of racism, you understand why they're that way, they got nothing to hang on to . . . The Hindus . . . could hold on to their tradition and their religion, that's why it's easier for them to go up the ladder, the cultural and social ladder and it's easy for them to have a culture of education that the Creole don't have. They don't have a base and you can't even blame them. That doesn't mean it's an excuse for what's not happening to them . . . But as a group, it's understandable that they're the ones who are poorer and ...it's been built-up from what had happened to the culture itself, their absence of culture"

The researcher interpreted this as follows. She argues that in a way, Creoles (that is slave descendants) had their identity stolen from them in the course of enslavement. It is her initial view that perhaps, as Creoles do not have 'culture', they are unable to have something of value upon which to build their identity and aspirations. One could interpret this data differently. It is possible to argue that because a fixed identity and known heritage are very important in Mauritian society and are considered significant in the kind of contribution that an ethnic group can make to the construction of the nation and, if Creoles are deemed not to have an identity, then they are generally perceived as unimportant and have nothing of value to offer in the making of the society in which they live. This can have devastating consequences for an individual or a group because what they do offer is not publicly valued and in general they are perceived as not 'useful' in the society. This disregard generates poor self-esteem and self-doubt. As the Clinical Psychologist notes in a conversation with an informal interviewee:

"There is a problem of perception among Creoles themselves, I know one woman, with whom we worked a lot together (now she is a social worker) and once looked after my children...I know her well, she would not want to talk in public forums- I remember her saying: "There are many important people here and I cannot say anything"... (We were in of our projects, where we were doing education). I asked her how can you say that?... see the internalized sense of unworthiness- does not have courage to say what she thinks, no self esteem in front of people she perceives as important".

It is important to note that almost all participants are in the social work and psychology related field, the nature of their work keeps them close to social problems. They indicated that marginalization of the Creole population has resulted in most of them being poorer and not being able to get out of the situation. They highlighted that there is a close link between poverty, lack of education, unemployment and substance abuse. Although they are not excusing individual responsibility that a person has in life towards their own development, their explanations indicate that environmental factors play an important role in maintaining the status quo of Creoles as group; over time their conditions are by-product of many factors.

The latter view is further developed in the following extracts<sup>53</sup> from formal interviews that the researcher conducted during the research process. In the following, the interviewee agrees that most of those coming for assistance are Creole but that they (the Creoles) are the source of their own problems. They ought to have been 'taught' from a young age to assume personal responsibility for their lives and to reject the impositions of the powerful:

M.T: OK, if you look at the profile of your clients, which communities do they come from?

N.T: uhh you have first Creole, uhh Muslim and Hindus

M.T: So the Creoles are in large numbers then followed by Muslims?

N.T: Yes and then Hindus.

M.T: And looking at the large numbers of Creole, why large numbers of Creole population? What are the contributing factors to that?

N.T: Uhh, the reason why they are the bigger part, I think that there is poverty issue; big poverty issues which make them go into drug dealing or drug use. Most of them have been drug dealing or have someone in their family or in their near environment with drug dealing and they go into drug use. And drug use makes them even poorer. Uhh as for the, even for the Muslim it's the same thing. It's not so much poverty for the Muslim, its more wanting to have more money.

M.T: When you say its poverty for the Creole, can you describe to me the poverty, the nature of poverty in that population.

NT: Uhh a lack of, it's not a lack; they have gone to school very little.

M.T: So no level of education.

N.T: No level of education. Sometimes it's a bit parents not taking care of the children, making that the children are on the street or have been nurtured by either foyer where they live or the neighbours or people who know them. Now being poor mean not having appropriate food to eat, not having either a house on their own or a house made of (...). Because I have been working with persons who needed housing, low-cost houses. And they prefer to stay where would not be a structure.

M.T: So there is also problem of that. And you look at this kind of problem that the community is facing, where do they actually come from these problems.

N.T: Am I wrong if I see their own making? Their personal responsibility. And then there is also before any school, it was a shared responsibility between the parents, the children and the teachers. But since it happens since some time where parents have to work for long hours, their children are penalized. They don't have their parents to look after them. They return to their home and there are no parents, they can do whatever they want. And I am talking about children who now are adults. Young adults but adults.

M.T: So you saying that the adults (...)

NT: Yea parents had to leave them on their own because they had to work. At that time they were working in textile industries. When you work in industries, it begins at six. Leaving your house at 05hr30 or 06hr00 and returning home at seven. And the parents leave everything on the back of the teacher. You know before, a teacher could scold a child or give him a slap something like this; and the parents would say maybe he has done something wrong that's why you got this from your teacher. But now it's not like this; if a child got bitten or scolded; you have the parent who will come at school and either give the worst thing to the teacher or it's a police affair. It becomes a big issue.

## **The Experience of Micro-aggressions**

In the courses of research done by this team, it was found that Creoles, who are currently defined as slave descendants, routinely experienced racist attacks. It is our view that the experience of these events is cumulative because very few of our interviewees expressed the view that they were seeking assistance or counseling for these incidents. The research on racist events (large-scale ones at least) suggest that victims tend to repress their emotional and other responses to such events. They also 'endure' day-to-day micro-aggressions - verbal insults, invalidations, stereotyping etc.

One could argue that this is because responding to racial discrimination involves the public assertion (and ‘owning’) of an identity (i.e. black identity) that is not positively valued. Any response could involve additional humiliation. Furthermore, and as the following discussion on the literature<sup>54</sup> regarding racist events shows, it may be very difficult for the public to empathise with the victims because the negative racial discourse about them and the political clout of the ‘racial’ majority encourage the favouring of perpetrators’ accounts.

The Clinical Psychologist was also particularly interested in how mental health institutions work in Mauritius and whether any counseling is offered to people who might come forward for reasons regarding racist experiences. In brief, she found that people did not come forward to discuss racial experiences *per se*, but often couched this experience in the ‘language’ or discourse of stress. The researcher felt that this was largely because it is difficult to raise the issue of race and racism in Mauritius without being stereotyped or marginalized even in an institutional setting (see the above denial of the existence of racial discrimination by the therapists) and that it is also difficult for individuals to fully acknowledge that they have been racially victimized and that they continue to be victimized.

In our research, we investigated what our interviewees termed as racist events. Vera, Hernan and Feagin (In Blumer & Solomos 2004:66-77) conceptualise a racist event as ‘... a distinguishable happening, one with some pattern or theme that sets it off from others, and one that involves changes taking place within a delimited amount of time.’<sup>55</sup> For them, the key dimensions of racist events, as involving white perpetrators, with the victims or targets being ‘people of colour’. An analysis of racist events includes an examination of:

- “The immediate context, particularly the social structure, spatial setting, and temporal frame
- The panoply of instruments used in the ritualised practices.
- The playing out of actions in a ritualised and iterative sequence.
- The psychological and motivational impulses, including the socially sanctioned and personal ideologies
- The longer-term aftermath and societal consequences.”<sup>56</sup>

These key dimensions all have nuances within them, which the authors expand upon in the chapter. Particularly relevant is the following: On the grand scale, racist events involve the use of guns and burning crosses, whilst instruments of non-violent events can include “biased bureaucratic reports, hidden inquests, empty review procedures, the touting of equality policies never enforced, denial of earned recognition, exclusionary socialising, and covert maintenance of housing segregation.”<sup>57</sup>

In the final recommendations in Section 5 of this report, we shall return to the latter form of non-violent racist events as addressing these. The recommendations are crucial to the achievement of a more equal and just society in Mauritius.

Regarding the importance of emotion in racist events, Vera, Hernan and Feagin (2004:66-77), argue against what they typify as a “social science approach that sees emotions as blinders to our ‘rational thinking’”. Whilst the reaction of shock and outrage are the norm in researchers when learning about racist events, the social science approach usually lauds objective enquiry as the way towards an understanding of social phenomena such as this. Moreover, in terms of the victims’ experience of racist events, living in a modernised society such as Mauritius, where a powerful national discourse is that Mauritius is a society where there are ‘no problems’, compels victims to repress emotional reactions to many racist events. To be ‘emotional’ in a democratic, modern State might imply the irrationality and social immaturity of the person expressing their outrage and hurt.

The authors, instead, suggest an approach that does not result in the ‘suppression of full human reactions’: they advocate a “holistic and sociological approach requir[ing] that all human faculties be used for researching and understanding.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, reflexive Sociology was part of the methodological approach, where the authors’ “research practice is subjected to the same critical gaze as the social phenomena we study.”<sup>59</sup>

With regard to pathology and 'normalcy' in racist events, the authors maintain that much of the conventional thinking around racist events pathologises the perpetrators - thus situating their actions within the wider, and "hard-to-understand 'structures of evil'".<sup>60</sup> The authors refer to an American case, that of the "Betty Osborne rape-and-murder case to show how the perpetrators were upstanding citizens in many ways - i.e. they fitted in as normal, not as predisposed to acts of 'lunacy'." By placing the acts of racists in a wider and 'difficult to understand context', the underlying rationale for perpetrating racist acts is not interrogated. Thus, the perpetrators are simply constructed as 'evil' and worthy of either pity or contempt.

As the authors say: "Crucially our methodological approach leads us to the view that, the events we observed are - in their communities and at their many recurring points in societal times, and for their actors and observers - unequivocally normal and taken for granted".<sup>61</sup> For these reasons, the authors maintain that the explanatory method of 'pathological' mental structures is ineffective as a means to understanding racist events - it leads you down what the authors' term 'a blind alley'.<sup>62</sup>

If we understand this correctly, it suggests (for the purposes of this project) that we need to investigate critically racist events. We need to ask questions about what we may generally perceive as normal and accepted behaviour in a democratic society. Why is, it for example, as noted in the countless interviews conducted amongst rural Indian descendant inhabitants via the *Aapravasi Ghat* Trust Fund Project, were cane workers so poorly treated and routinely racially discriminated against? What really happened in Goodlands in the period following the death of Kaya? Why are some Creoles there still so traumatised by the destruction of their property? With regard to the Goodlands events, we found it very difficult to unearth the full story. The rumour is that an allegedly extreme political group, known locally as Voice of Hindu (VOH), had a role to play in the racist violence which took place there. However, without firm evidence, we are unable to say exactly what happened. However, it is clear to us that the people who were on the receiving end of the violence are still traumatised by it, some ten years later.

But it is not only the exceptional racist events that we should pay attention to. We ought to also interrogate the daily experiences of racism, micro-racial events which in the long run accumulate and dramatically affect the psychological state of the individual. In the period of slavery in the US, there must have been a number of people who felt that the subjugation of black Africans and their torture on a regular basis was perfectly normal and acceptable. Similarly, as we noted in the overview of daily experiences of racism among slave descendants in Mauritius (see for example the above noted case [Section 4] of the black professional who was barred from entering company property because he is black), there are some people who feel that what some Creoles are experiencing is to be expected and perfectly normal. In the following extract from a report of the Clinical Psychologist on the team, the following was documented in respect of the experiences of domestic workers:

For those who spoke of domestic work, they indicated that in the early 1970s, domestic work was not regulated. White people as employers of domestic workers were not in favour of changes regarding remuneration and off days, for example no work on Sunday. Slowly the conditions of domestic workers changed. However, it appears that the attitudes of employers took time to change.

"When I come back to Mauritius after 20 years ....I used be mortified when... Whites talk disrespectfully about helpers as though they were objects... things which will be humiliating about poverty such as not being responsible, their way of life and the helpers would seem disengaged...."

It is not only in the domestic sphere that one finds the daily infliction of racism:

In the realms of the church, the older generation indicated that in the Catholic Church, Priests and Nuns were all White people. The church is said to have had discrimination, maybe less now.

"At the beginning when I joined the convent... back then, I heard that you [i.e. as a Creole nun] must give a 'dowry' you will have better treatment, if you do not, you will be forever in the kitchen. I have seen other Nuns being frustrated by this situation"

The Clinical Psychologist also added the following from her informal interviews:

"There are Colour issues in the society: when I was growing up, we were marginalized, not treated the same, and were too white for Creoles, for the Chinese were too black they did not like to mix with us. At School, as I was lighter, I got better treatment; more preferred-.... I was uncomfortable with it. I learned to see through that also- lightness was seen as beautiful".

"...Maybe for our children, it is different- as they are going to mixed schools and interact with others, playing football. They have not known the compartmentalization. But one day they came home so irritated and angry that they were called "blanc...white rat"- they were furious. I sat down with them, we normally talk about these things, and explain that there is a history behind that...when I was young, white people could say anything; at least now the balance is coming up though I am not saying discrimination is just... is like Creoles can revenge by calling names."

It is generally difficult to estimate the prevalence of racist incidents over a lifetime because of personal and environmental factors. Since racism related life events may happen infrequently, they may be seen as not serious enough for many people to confront and may not even be recalled, unless asked about<sup>63</sup>. For example one lady who is in her thirties, interviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010, when asked to narrate a personal race based incident, she took longer to respond and requested to express herself in Kreol. Upon completing her story, parts of it off record, she disclosed that she was speaking of this incident for the first time. She had gone to a Government Department to apply for a VISA/passport because she had received an invitation from her brother in Canada. The Secretary serving said: "The person assisting was not there yet I could see the person...I went home and was sad... it's difficult for me to explain....talking about it now, I feel angry...we have democracy but still these things happen..." and later off record she reported feeling better after talking.

Some scholars argue that racism exerts its influence, not only through direct personal experience, but also vicariously through observation and report. Experiences of prejudice and discrimination that happen to members of one's family and close friends, as well as those involving strangers can be quite distressing. They can create anxiety, sadness, and anger among many emotional reactions. Paradoxically, they can also teach valuable lessons<sup>64</sup>.

There is no universal, so-called cut and dry response to psychological distress. Individual differences in personality, resilience, coping style, unique personal experiences, strength of ethnic self-determination, family closeness may buffer or mediate response to psychologically toxic events<sup>3</sup>. Each of the participants' response to the question, how they react emotionally to race-based incidents directed at them or those they know, gave various answers such as the following:

"I feel so infuriated, I feel so discouraged and start thinking for our kids and great grandchildren, what can we do about it...My feeling is that Creole population have been so ill treated and oppressed...I keep telling my children...If I had been a Creole girl living in Mauritius myself, I would so much hate white people"

"I was shocked when I hear about dowry in the church. However, at the time when I joint, the convent was more open"

"Accept it as a fact of life, ignore it or avoid it"

"I cry"

"I know before what to expect, it does affect me, its fatality, I take it in...When we meet as ex-police officers, we talk about how it was for us; we did not get things because we are Creoles...but we laugh now and say well, they can go ahead..."

"I feel sick when people make racial statements, I find I cannot just listen, I confront them- am notorious for that ...Racial events annoy me... and the generation before us, I can understand because I would say there were not open minded. I fear for younger people. I don't understand why would today people still have their children's birth day party at the Dodo Club, I don't go there, I don't put my feet there because I don't support or cushion discrimination...in actual fact I do not belong to any club. In that way discriminative attitudes are passed on from one generation to another, thus my fear. ..It's too little people who are moving and becoming open minded, would it be 10 generations down when these things stop, it's sad."

" I have told my children not to come home quickly from abroad- its unpatriotic but I do not care, if here somebody takes a position you deserve, it would be very hard and it would hurt but when it happens in France, you understand that you are a foreigner".

Episodes of ethnicity or race-based maltreatment can occur in a number of different venues, such as work, for example lack of promotion, refused access to service. They can be perceived experiences or happen in a real form as in harassment. The effectiveness of coping responses may vary depending on the context in which the maltreatment occurs. Mostly, people do not only need to manage racism, emotional consequences such as feelings of anger, nervousness, frustration and hopelessness. They need to manage their concerns about short-term and long-term effects on those members of their group, including their friends and family.

The researchers on this project also found that there are organisational decisions which may foster the development of racist events. We noted this example earlier in our discussion on gender and race (in Section 3 of this report) but it is worth re-analysing here. In one 'mostly women only' textile factory, the Manageress said that although she did not want to employ only members of a particular ethnic group (Hindu), she felt that this was the best policy because it promoted '*plus de cohérence*' (more integration). If she did not, there would be more infighting. She also said that she noted that when it came to the 'protection' and advancement of one's own group, some of the women were willing to tell 'little lies' to protect members of their ethnic group from sanction by the boss. The same women would not do this for members of other ethnic groups or people whom they perceived to be racially different from them.

The same Manageress also relayed a story regarding reverse racism which she witnessed at Belle-Mare beach on the East coast of the Island. She suggested that even victims are capable of initiating racist events. She explained that she was taking a group of colleagues and visitors to the beach and she came upon a group of young Creole men offloading beer crates from a truck. Amongst them was a Franco-Mauritian youth also assisting with the offloading of the crates. It appeared to the Manageress that the sight of white man doing hard labour was so unusual that one of the Creole men said: "Hey, we have just commemorated the 1<sup>st</sup> February (abolition of slavery), now we have a white guy working for us, lifting things. Hey, are you gonna flog us?" The haranguing of the Franco-Mauritian and reminiscence of the role of 'his ancestors' as slave owners, carried on for a quite a while and the Manageress was astonished at the intensity of the abuse. However, as she was with tourists and people who did not understand *Kreol* however, she did not feel that it was her place to intervene and left the young men to their own devices. It is our view, however, that even if the Manageress had been on her own, it would have been near impossible (and unadvisable) for her to intervene, as she is of a different ethnic and racial group to the men and she is a woman. As we discuss further on, race and gender converge to produce a particularly volatile mix in Mauritius where women of colour (in particular) experience higher levels of discrimination.

Vera, Hernan and Feagin (2004) argue that the routine suppression of emotions and empathy is essential to carrying out the operations of racism (both in the violent, and non-violent form). In Mauritius (and through the various examples cited in this report) we found that the suppression of emotion was an important way to avoid potentially volatile situations. The following extract offers an example:

**BLC:** You know sometimes, you can have a - let's say when you are driving or something like that, you can have a cross with whatever who else. It can be another community an Indian or a Muslim. It depends how you react also.

**Researcher:** Yes.

**BLC:** If I will treat him as a Creole or an Indian or a superlative, yes, he can tell me "yes, you fucking whitey" or something like that, you know, but if you talk well, no problem. Tell him: "hey listen, what are you doing?"

**Researcher:** Yes.

**BLC:** Not if you start swearing it's normal and between them it will be the same thing, you know. If tomorrow I have something with you on the road, you are driving. You mismanaged or

whatsoever, I'll tell: 'hey what happen?' But if you swear at you, you will swear at me. So, it is the same reaction.

**Researcher:** The drivers here are terrible.

**BLC:** Yes, sure they are terrible

**BLC:** Like last time, I was going a motorcycle in front of me just turned on the left without signal, nothing. He just turned. I braked behind him, he stopped and do like that with me.

I said: 'Hey, listen what's happening?' 'You don't take your flasher out nothing and, at the last minute, you take your flasher and you just cut in front of me, what you want me to do?' So it goes like that and then I said: 'Listen, close your mouth man, I am going'. He said: 'Ya, you are swearing at me'. I said: 'No, I am not swearing at you. I tell you close your mouth. It is not a swear.' It just finished like that you know, but if you start swearing yes, he will start to tell you bloody white or something like that. It can happen. As I've told you it depends on your reaction compared to them. If you start treating him as a coolie or a black, he will do the same thing. It depends how you react.

However, for those designated as socially inferior in the society, it may be more difficult to avoid the trauma that comes with routinely experienced racism:

The woman psychologist I spoke to told me of her experience in the workplace where a Creole woman relayed her trauma to her openly, saying,

"You will understand, because you are white and my mother worked for the white sugar barons...you can know my suffering" (ID, Grand Baie, 26 August 2010)

## The Impact of Racist Events

In our research, it has been difficult to separate racist events from political events or to ascertain the degree to which racist events are highly politicised. In the following extracts, we document experiences of key 'racist' events in Mauritius and how people felt about these experiences:

The period of independence was marked by the 1968 racial riots and the aftermath of this racial unrest, according to Georges, left a feeling of distrust, instability and fear among the minorities living not only in the region of Plaine Verte and Port Louis, but also in the surrounding areas that led to mass delocalisation from Plaine Verte to neighbouring towns such as Beau Bassin and Rose Hill.

'...konsekans kouma dir ki sa finn ena pou le pey, mefians ki ti ena a enn moman done dan le pey, linstabilite osi koumadir ki ti ena dan le pey, la per osi de fami, kouma dir ki ti enn minoritye dan enn lendrwa, la per koumadir ki zot ti ena pou res dan sa lendrwa la. Kouma zot ti pe bizin demenaze a enn moman done...kot zot kapav koumadir en sekiryte ek kouma dir proteze...'<sup>65</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...how to say that the consequences on the country, the suspicion there was in the country at a point in time, how to say that the instability there was in the country as well, the fear also of families, how that say that it was a minority in a region, how to say that the fear of living in this region. They had to move at a point in time...where they are how to say that in security and how to say that protected...)

The social unrest of 1999 following the death of the local singer Kaya at the hands of the police was also perceived and described as racial disturbance that were exacerbated by latent feelings and experiences among the Creole minority of perceived racial discrimination and practices commonly referred to as *malaise Creole* (Eng. Trans. Creole unrest)

In the following extract we note the interpretation of a seemingly random event which, when it happened, shocked a number of Mauritians regardless of their ethnicity:

JCH: ...we had two or one severe incident-. When was that? It was, (ouf!) (?) 19-, 92, -3, -4, -5 I don't remember when we had the Zaic, an Egyptian team who played in Belle-Vue Stadium, it was an Egyptian team against the Mauritius-, Mauritian team and a section of the population went in and were shouting for Egypt. After that, Egypt lost and eventually, they burnt the sugarcanes that were surrounding the sugar fields. They came in Port-Louis and started rioting in Port-Louis. So this was really tensed, police came in and was-, it wasn't more than that, but this brought a sense of insecurity in the people, said: "Well why they keep on acting like that?" And this was an issue, and I don't know if it was the same day, there was also a big, another incident, severe incident where the Muslims (27:13 - 27:18), they burned down the casino, more or less call it casino, gaming house let's say, Ok, and they just-, it was really well planned because they just blocked the entrance and set fire to the building, it was (?) (?), it was a French former military man who was a tourist passing by and he said this attack was like a commando attack. It was planned, it wasn't spontaneous, it was something planned, nine people were killed in this, they got the people and they were sentenced to forty-five years in prison, but nine people were killed, among those was a pregnant woman, nine months old-, with a child almost-, to be born in the coming weeks, she was killed in this incident, 'C'est L'Amicale de Port-Louis' which was burnt, it must be, (ouf!) when was that? 97 I would say something like that and it was really bad and (... ...), I would say there was a hundred thousand people at this funeral, because people were very very shocked that this incident—

Researcher What do you think sparked the riot, that they--?

JCH It wasn't a riot, it wasn't spontaneous, what sparked the riot is the same thing that sparked a riot in 1999, two reasons: there were a feeling-, let down, and there was a feeling-, they weren't getting their fair share of-, the 'gateau national', the national riches, they were left out, really left out and that's-, I think it reverse around this, some reasons for 1999. With the actual President being the Prime Minister at that time, he-, he was very distrustful of Muslims, he threw the (?)out, that was a good thing, all the (29:36 - 29:39) here in Mauritius, and taken out by police out of Mauritius, that's one-, because there was some-, actually what the (?) wanted to do, they wanted to invest in mosque and (?) and stuffs like that without going through the government and the guy didn't tolerate that and threw these people out and also, same time he didn't recruit Muslims in the government, that was (?), people thought-, this is why now you will see-, so they had to survive these people, either they turn to drugs or they are-, how you call this? Hawkers. This is why there's so many hawkers who are Muslims because (?) or self-employed, they set up small businesses which are now grown businesses and-, and this is why you see so many Muslims who are self-employed in Mauritius, even if it's a very small part of the population, they are self-employed because they couldn't rely on the government, they couldn't get access necessarily to the public-, to the private sector, and it's very rare that you would see people, particularly those who couldn't afford to go abroad to study, getting good jobs so they had to manage to get something to survive, Ok.

Researcher: And (31:09 - 31:12), in government, is there still that kind of (??)?

JCH: What?

Researcher: (?), discrepancy?

JCH: Oh yes definitely, the Hindus get best of-, always in the Government and they say-, and you see that the Muslims and the Creoles don't-, well it's simple because, an argument of the people is that 35% of the people is general population: Whites and Creoles. And well, when you see the public sector this doesn't reflect the same proportion, in police, in general public sector it's not the same proportion and this-, you feel this.

JCH: It's the same here, it used to be worse than that, when I was, I was talking about twenty years ago it was even worse than that. Even at school it was (?) we were even able to play together, but there was at school-, I was really shocked at that time, you had basketball teams: White team, Chinese team, others. Same school but at twelve they would play on three different

grounds with very distinct groups of players-, which wasn't the case at my school, but it existed. Racism existed, now-, it's not as bad as it used to be.

Researcher: Can we talk about racism now? When you say it exists now, in what forms?

JCH: In what form? There's a feeling of racism, let's say in the public sector against Creoles, you feel that when they come at the social security, police services, whatever-, all the services, they don't-, they are treated badly. That's one. The Hindus would say: "We don't have access to public sector, the Whites keep the jobs." Sometime (?)—

Researcher: Private or public?

JCH: Sorry?

Researcher: Public sector?

JCH: Private sector.

Researcher: Private sector.

JCH: Private sector. Ok, so now with the politicians, what I feel there's a reverse racism, that is-, Ok, the big thing was democratisation of the economy. What they were trying to do is say Ok, it's not giving the opportunity to everyone to -, to open a successful business, they were just trying to curve down the White economy for sure, those who own this-, everything and-, and give the opportunities to their friends and that's what its (?), because it's not even open, it's very selective on a particular group or groups of people.

## The Continuing Economic Disparities

The problem of racism is that it did not end with the abolition of slavery, the abolition of the Colour Bar in 1928, the achievement of Independence from colonial rule or even the various amendments to the Mauritian Constitution. Our research team found that the economic legacies of slavery (economic inequality, lack of access to the means of production and ownership), continue today. In fact, the extracts noted below indicate a worsening of the situation, as Mauritius becomes a more economically liberal society in which maximum profits are to be made. It is our view that this rather uncontrolled accommodation of capitalism will have disastrous consequences for our country because we will not have dealt with the legacy of inequality in our society and will be compounding our problems by making the society more hierarchical in class and monetary terms. The Tourism Industry, our third pillar of the economy, has brought many benefits to Mauritius. However, we still feel that this sector needs careful monitoring by Government and Civil Society because it may replicate the same structures of inequality present in the era of colonisation:

In line with the testimonies, it seems that in Mauritius there is social cohesion but at surface-level only. At deeper-level Mauritius is an openly racist and bigoted country. For example, for Jacques and Raymond it is rare that Mauritians mix. Covert racism/communalism towards Mauritians can also be observed in the recruitment process at managerial levels in some private companies such as in one of the main hotel groups in Mauritius. The hotel Directors often recruit foreigners at middle- and higher-management levels, even though there are Mauritians that have all the capacities, qualifications and experiences requested for these jobs.

'...Aujourd'hui le gros problème que moi je vois, c'est qu'il y a trop d'expatriés qui travaillent dans les hôtels. Ce n'est pas l'expatrié qui est un problème. C'est de ne pas donner la chance aux Mauriciens ; c'est ça le problème. Et ça par contre je crois que le siège est bien conscient...Il y a des gens qui ont fait beaucoup d'années, qui aspirent à avoir ce poste de management-là et qui ne pourront jamais. Moi, ça m'est arrivé à moi d'ailleurs. C'est pourquoi c'est une raison pour laquelle j'ai changé d'orientation. J'ai fait 22 ans au front office comme on l'appelle, l'accueil, etc. et logiquement aujourd'hui j'aurais dû être comme on l'appelle un room division manager...J'aurais dû

être aujourd'hui room division depuis très longtemps mais je n'ai jamais eu l'occasion d'être parce qu'il y a toujours eu quelqu'un...il y a eu un Franco-Mauricien ; après le Franco-Mauricien, il y a eu l'étranger et ça va être l'étranger après...Je ne comprends. Je ne comprends pas pourquoi on ne donne pas sa chance au Mauricien...Mais je sais la carrière que j'ai faite. Je connais, je sais la connaissance que j'ai de ce domaine là et quand je vois les expatriés ou les autres personnes qui viennent et leurs prestations, je me dis je n'ai rien à envier à ces personnes là. J'ai pour autant sinon plus qu'eux en tant que bagage pour faire le travail...<sup>66</sup>

(Eng. Trans.:...Today the big problem that I observe, is that there are too many expatriates working in hotels. It is not the expatriates the problem. It is not giving their chance to Mauritians; it is the problem. And this I think the head office is conscious of that...there are people who have many years (of service) that aspire to have this management post and who will never get it. Me, it happened to me. It is one reason why I changed my path. I worked for 22 years at what we call the front office, the reception etc and logically today I should have been, as we call it, room division manager...I should have been at that point now since I have worked a good number of years at room division but I have never had the occasion to be as there has always been someone...there has been a Franco-Mauritian; after the Franco-Mauritian there has been the foreigner and it will be the foreigner after...but I know the career I had. I know the knowledge I have of this field and when I see the expatriates and other people who come and their performance, I tell myself I have nothing to envy to these people. I have the same if not more knowledge to do the work...)

This tendency to prefer qualified foreigners especially White people to qualified Mauritians can be considered as a legacy of colonialism whereby Whites and Europeans were seen as superior. This racist practice is seen as normal and is disguised under the justification of preserving cohesion amongst the staff, preserving the organisation's culture and ensuring the integration and adaptation to the organisation culture as mentioned by the President of the Mauritius Employment Federation (MEF).

Another reason put forward by organisations for favouring expatriates is the lack of qualified personnel. For example, Mr. Ramesh, Consultant in Human Resource Management of British American Investment justified the recruitment of expatriates at management level by the lack of qualified and experienced Mauritians, especially in Human Resource Management. Hence, that is why they recruited a South African woman (who cannot speak French nor Kreol) who is not familiar with the Mauritian historical, social, cultural and historical specificities as Human Resource Manager.

*'...je dirais que nous cherchons à avoir des affinités c'est n'ai pas forcément...quelqu'un d'une religion vers une autre religion blanche la religion blanche c'est peut être quelqu'un de religion afro-créole ou de religion africaine ou alors de l'origine indienne ou chinoise...il faut se comprendre pour arriver à lancer et aujourd'hui l'affinité ou les point communs on essaie d'avancer le plus vite possible...donc c'est important qu'on se comprenne...et pour se comprendre se n'est pas simplement si vous voulez tiens il a un très beau diplôme il a fait oxford et l'autre il a fait...oxford qui est d'origine chinoise disons et l'autre il a fait une petite école à la réunion qui est un blanc et...je prends le blanc parce que il est sympathique on va le faire dans un critère comme j'ai dit toute à l'heure affinité...je connais des compagnies où les musulmans prennent les musulmans les indiens prennent les indiens et les blancs prennent les blancs ça existe mais aujourd'hui je vous ai parlé de la chance que nous avons que l'éducation a prit de l'importance et deuxième chose qu'on a tendance de dire a ne pas dire ou a oublié c'est que beaucoup des entreprises sont gérés par la communauté européenne les blancs il y a une diversité importante de main d'œuvre de toute origine et de tous niveau social de plus en plus et tant mieux...'<sup>67</sup>*

(Eng. Trans.:...I would say that we want to have affinities it is necessarily...someone of one religion towards another white religion it is maybe someone of Afro-Creole religion or African religion or of Indian or Chinese relation...we need to understand each other to launch and today affinities or common points we try to move on as fast as possible...hence it is important that we understand each other...and to understand each other it is not simply if you want he has a nice diploma he did Oxford and the

other he did...oxford who is let say of Chinese origin and the other he went to a modest school in Reunion who is white and...we take the white because he is nice he will do that based on criteria as I have said before affinity...I know companies in which Muslims take Muslims Indians take Indians and the whites take whites it exists but today I have told you about the chance that we have that education has become important and second thing that we tend to say not to say or to forget is that many of these enterprises are managed by the European community the whites there is a significant diversity of manoeuvres of all origins and of all social levels more and more and that is good...)

Mr. Ramesh statement was supported by Mrs. Jackie Demetriou, Human Resource Manager of British American Investment who declared:

*...I believe that most companies in Mauritius will bring in expats if it is a lack of experience and skills in a particular area. And the policy is that he will bring (...) for a specific period of time. There is an expectation that those expats will develop the locals those particular skills. And they were in the contract (...) they will go back (...) it has to be extended for a certain period they will go back. And if there is transferred, the skill and the knowledge to the local people. Now you just mentioned that Mauritians, the fact that there have the qualification to do the job. A qualification doesn't mean that a person can do the job; it's the start. Qualification need to have the knowledge...<sup>68</sup>*

According to her, local companies seek foreign expertise to develop local skills, and expatriates work under contract for a limited period of time. But, reality is different as, in fact, cases of unfair discrimination against Mauritians such as forced dismissal have been reported. For example, some companies were blamed for using unethical and dubious means to force Mauritians who have a long career to resign, and expatriates were recruited to hold their post. Also, promotions were denied to Mauritians and instead newly-recruited foreigners were promoted.

During his interview, Mr. Francois De Grivel, former President of the Mauritius Employment Federation, mentioned that there are cases of discrimination that have been reported to the MEF but none were experiences of discrimination based on skin colour, in other words, cases of racial discrimination, for it is apparently normal that employers recruit amongst their immediate network, in their community which as stressed by the latter and other Business Managers, is not considered as communalism. But which is in fact racism.

For them, during recruitment exercises and especially at management levels, qualifications and competence are not the sole selection criteria, inter-personal affinities such as friendship or shared socio-cultural values, are also taken into consideration to ensure synergism, good entente and performance management. However, Mr. De Grivel highlighted that good governance implies competence diversification at management levels that lead to progress and expansion.

It was also found by one of our researchers (Sophie Le Chartier) that the pretext of the 'comfort zone' was useful in promoting communalism and, ultimately, racism. Thus, employers argued that in aiming to achieve 'comfort', they were not in fact infringing the rights safeguarded by the Mauritian Constitution; they were instead seeking to achieve cohesion and integration in their businesses:

For example, James, a Sino-Mauritian business owner, testified that in recruitment practice, the principle of comfort zone is also applicable. It is not communalism to recruit a co-religionist as it is normal to want to work within, and *preserve*, ones *comfort zone*.

For him, communalism is when someone privileges his/her ethnicity whatever the person's competence and qualifications and discards a person because of his/her ethnic affiliations.

For instance, communalism is when a Sino-Mauritian employs a fellow Sino-Mauritian who is under-qualified and discards a qualified Creole only because he is Creole.

But if both are qualified and the Sino-Mauritian is recruited, it is not racism nor communalism, but the maintenance of comfort zone to ensure personnel efficiency and productivity.

*'...Si j'ai quelqu'un un chinois qui est tout aussi qualifié et prenez que ce soit un indien ou un créole qui est tout aussi qualifié...Je vais choisir le chinois...Vous allez finalement choisir le chinois? Ah ben sans aucune hésitation...Je l'embauche sans aucune hésitation pour la bonne et simple raison parcequ'on partage des affinités communes...il est communaliste parceque il ne tient pas en ligne de compte ce qui est mérite, ce qui est compétence, alors lui c'est un communal mais toutes choses étant égales s'il choisit quelqu'un de sa communauté toute chose étant égale, je me pose la question s'il est communaliste?... c'est-à-dire que on est communal quand on fait du favoritisme quelque soit les raisons derrière, c'est-à-dire du favoritisme par rapport à quelqu'un d'autre de sa communauté quelque soit sa compétence, quelque soit son efficacité, quelque soit ses qualités...'<sup>69</sup>*

(Eng. Trans.: ... If I have a Chinese who is qualified and take an Indian or a Creole who is as qualified...I will choose a Chinese ... you will finally choose a Chinese? Yes without hesitation...without any hesitation I employ him for the simple reason that we share common affinities...he is communal because he does not take into consideration merit, competence, hence he is communal but if everything is equal if he choose someone of his community if everything is equal. I ask myself if he is communal?...that is we are communal when we practice favouritism whatever the reasons behind, that is favouritism in relation to someone of his community whatever is competence, whatever his efficiency, whatever his qualifications...)

Although they assert that respecting one's comfort zone does not mean that they are racist and is rather a form of fair discrimination, it is obvious that the concept of a so-called comfort zone is in fact a disguised form of racism in that it is a disguised means of justifying racism and is a breach of the laws of Human Rights.

Indeed, in line with Mrs. Jackie testimony, it seems that fair discrimination is common practice in recruitment exercises and is not seen as a breach of the Labour Act, but rather as a loophole in the Law that allows employers to discriminate fairly against people.

*...What is fair discrimination, you can only fairly discriminate (...) of a position...So yes we do discriminate, I went for an interview in an hospital and I decided I want to become a doctor and I don't have the qualification, so I will be fairly discriminated against because I don't have the minimum qualification to do that job. Unfair discrimination basically if you are discriminating against the person because of their gender, because of their race, because of their ethnicity, because of their sexual preference. That is unfair discrimination. Let me give you another example of fair discrimination, if you are running a Chinese restaurant and you want to maintain the ethnicity of the Chinese restaurant, so you want to have Chinese waiters because it adds to the ambiance and attracts the customers. That is fair discrimination because you want to maintain ethnicity...'<sup>70</sup>*

For James and Andy, it is normal that people mix with those who are similar and hence with people they feel comfortable with and at ease with because they share similar characteristics. Their statement implies that it is normal for people to stay within their community and to have limited interactions with others with whom they do not share common characteristics, as they are different.

Moreover, still in line with their testimony, the question of comfort zone dictates people's attitudes, behaviour and interactions such as in recruitment and spouse choice. Thus, even if they assert that Sino-Mauritians are not racists, we can query to what extent the Sino-Mauritian community is opened to others?

Another reason put forward by James and Andy to justify that respecting one's comfort zone is not racism is based on their conceptualisation of racism. For them, racism is when someone or a race feels superior or inferior to another person or race.

*...C'est de se sentir supérieur dans une race, quand quelqu'un est raciste forcément il ou elle croit que sa race à laquelle il ou elle appartient forcément elle est supérieur aux autres races, c'est la définition du racisme...soit quand je dis supérieur moi ce que je voudrais ajouter pas nécessairement supérieur, ça pourrais être*

*supérieur inférieurement...A ce moment le concept de supériorité devient un concept de on se sent inférieur...<sup>71</sup>*

(Eng. Trans.:...it is feeling that his race is superior, when someone is racist he or she thinks his or her race is superior to others, it is the definition of racism...but when we say superior I would like to add not necessarily superior, it could be superior inferiorly...then the concept of superiority becomes a concept we feel inferior...)

According to the Andy, Mauritians are not racists because they do not carry this superiority/inferiority complex. Furthermore, in Mauritius we do not talk in terms of races but in terms of communities, and a community is determined by culture and cultural practices and religion: '*...zot in diviz li par, kuma mo pu dir sa, par relizion...*'<sup>72</sup> (Eng. Trans.:...they divided it, how would I say that, by religion...).

It can be said that the weight ascribed to the comfort zone during social encounters results from the absence of cultural blending in Mauritius, since the religious and ethnic barriers are rigid and unmoveable and hence, people tend to stay within their cultural group.

Cultural differences are still deeply present and maintained, with the other being perceived as an 'alien'. The fact that the principle of comfort zone is sanctioned and has been normalised leads us to question whether people want to break down racial/communal barriers or if, in fact, they prefer to maintain and perpetuate these barriers that give them a feeling of security and membership to a group.

Although the Creoles mentioned that the Indo-Mauritians and Whites are racist, whereas the Creoles are not racist but rather open to the other communities: '*...kreol pa racis li...*'<sup>73</sup> (English Translation:...Creole (are) not racist...), fieldwork revealed that racist attitudes, practices and prejudices cross ethnic groups and social classes, in that the Creoles like the other informants hold communal/racist languages and discourses, when talking of others and racist/communal attitudes towards others.

For example, for Hansley, the Whites and Indo-Mauritians are racist because they do not like Creoles but the latter are not racist. He feels that he is racially victimised and discriminated against because he is Black and of slave descent.

## CONCLUSION TO SECTION 4

The burdens of racism are many. In this report, we have noted a few of the more significant burdens which Mauritians of all skin colours continue to experience today. The impact of the emotional and psychological burden of racism cannot, in our view, be underestimated. For many people of slave descent and also those of indentured descent, racists impose a continuous feeling of inadequacy, inferiority and marginality on the least favoured in our society. Slave descendants and the least favoured among the indentured descendants need to continually respond to this victimisation in an attempt to salvage their dignity. The victimisation happens despite the guarantee of basic human rights to dignity and equality in the Mauritian Constitution. In our next section, we argue that the Mauritius Government, together with Civil Society and international institutions interested in supporting our country to achieve true democracy, need to address, not only issues of structural, but also social inequality in Mauritius.

## PART FIVE

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is difficult to offer a definitive conclusion to a report as important as this one. It is also a challenge to suggest recommendations which speak to our research findings and, at the same time, take into account the multiple realities of Mauritians. However, as stated at the start of this report, this is not an academic exercise. We have a duty to present to the Government of Mauritius practical and feasible recommendations which it can use in its efforts to achieve social and economic justice in our country. However, this work demands critical and scholarly reflection. In our work, we have found that those victimized by racial discrimination in Mauritius use a range of strategies of means to resist and subvert stereotyping. In brief, they use what James Scott (1990) calls 'hidden resistance' to subvert and oppose the impositions of the powerful. In our accounts, we have not highlighted these methods of resistance, mainly because it is thoroughly documented elsewhere (C.f. Boswell 2006 and Vaughan 2005). In music, dance, poetry, oratory, story-telling, acts of defiance and personal success, slave descendants in Mauritius, as well as the most impoverished and marginalised of the Indian Indentured labourers, continue to fight oppression and racial invectives (Reddy 2001).

In the discussion on Truth Commissions, it is noted that these can become another space of resistance. In brief, the space and time offered by an entity like the TJC can offer those racially discriminated against, the space to publicly express their rejection of racism and inequality. Critics of the South African TRC (see Bundy 2000, Maylam 2005) may argue that such entities do not really offer a politically neutral space for these personal and vivid expressions of suffering, nor do they completely extirpate the regime of violence which led to the creation of the commission.

In conducting our research in the homes and communities of Mauritians, we in a sense, took the TJC to the streets, removing it from the 'spectacle' of the TJC hearing room and allowing individuals to speak about their trauma in spaces that they feel at ease in. What we found has not been entirely captured here. The testimonies of individuals in camera were emotionally moving, and said far more than we could ever capture with words.

We also feel, as Priscilla Hayner (2001) argues in her discussions on Truth Commissions, that it is very difficult to achieve reconciliation and to obtain the whole truth in a Truth Commission. However, we hope that in presenting the information in this report, we have revealed a great deal more than what was either previously known, or more importantly, what was PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED about race and racism in Mauritius.

The following points identify our recommendations to the Government. We offer a multi-pronged approach in the hope that the issues of continuing poverty, poor self-esteem and marginalisation in our society will be taken seriously. We look forward as researchers, Mauritian citizens and people of the global South, to a workable set of solutions to the problems and difficulties experienced by those interviewed for this project. We would like the Government to pay special attention to the infringement of Constitutional Rights in Mauritius and to take the necessary actions to prevent infringements of the said rights.

We recommend:

1. That financial reparation is sought by the Government from the historical slave trading nations (Netherland, England, France) for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of communities and settlements where slave descendents are in the majority.
2. That financial reparation is provided to individual families of Creole and African descent. We feel that this should take the form of investments in important shares and resources, so that this community and its descendents are better able to create a more stable social and economic existence going into the future. While we recognise that Indian indentured labour

descendants have been severely affected by the experience of indenture, this experience appears not to have been as extensive as that which has been suffered by the African descendant people in Mauritius. Furthermore, our cases conclusively show that African descendants are experiencing the worst circumstances in contemporary Mauritius, suggesting that the system of slavery has been most pernicious and its legacy more enduring.

3. That a system and policy of affirmative action be implemented in Mauritius to address the social and economic imbalances created and fostered under slavery, indenture and colonialism. This system and policy of affirmative action must take into account that slave descendants in particular have been discriminated against in employment, access to land and a range of resources (including for example, bank loans). In the first instance, women of slave and indentured descent should benefit from this system of affirmative action. While it is acknowledged that it is presently difficult to define who is a slave/indentured labour descendant, policy-makers (and Government) should ensure that positive discrimination occurs. This might also require a moratorium on the employment of White and Males for a specified period of years.
4. There should be a thorough revision and amendment of employment policy in Mauritius. Employers contravening Constitutional Rights (i.e. right to employment?) should be fined or prosecuted. In our research, we came across several companies refusing to employ slave descendants or members of lower castes in positions of authority on the basis that these individuals would compromise the 'comfort' presently enjoyed by employees. The use of the word 'comfort' masks efforts to maintain a racially exclusive workplace. It also bars access to those individuals who would make our society more democratic and racially inclusive.
5. The membership policy (written or verbal) of social clubs should be scrutinised for any infringement of Constitutional Rights. At present, the rules of these clubs vary and discriminate on the basis of race and class. Because our society is cut across by race and class (i.e. non-Whites are also the poorer members of our society), these clubs actively exclude such members. We also found instances where 'Blacks' with the 'right' class credentials were excluded on the basis of race. Social clubs infringing the Constitutional Rights of Mauritians should be penalised.
6. The funding of culturally-based social organisations should be abolished. While we recognise and uphold the ideal of unity in diversity, it is felt that the funding of these socio-cultural organisations fosters social division as no equality of funding allocations can be achieved. Moreover, some socio-cultural organisations are funded, whereas others are not. Beyond this, some socio-cultural organisations use their connection with Government in order to launch their own political careers.
7. There should be a thorough and critical survey of resources allocated for Education per region. At present, the areas mostly inhabited by slave descendants and members of the lower caste are receiving less investment. This is apparent in the South of the island. Government must create incentives for better qualified teachers to enrol at the schools in the South so that a better level of education can be obtained. A system of teacher re-deployment may be created to partly achieve this goal, as might an additional stipend for teachers in these areas.
8. A thorough interrogation of Education in less well-resourced areas is also required. Parents in these regions and communities must be supported in their efforts to educate their children. Where necessary, child support grants must be instituted so as offer stipends for educational purposes.
9. A thorough revision of minimum and maximum work hours must also be implemented, so as to curtail exploitative work conditions, especially for those who are poor in our society. Government should perhaps revise its minimum wage policy so as to ensure that Mauritians are not being exploited.

10. The system of private lessons offered by registered teachers must be thoroughly scrutinised, if not abolished/made illegal. This is because we have found that teachers are not giving their best in their classes, reserving the crucial information needed by scholars for the time of private lessons. Poorer members our community, also the lower-caste members of indentured descent, as well as slave descendants, are not able to pay for these additional classes. This produces poorer examination results among this cohort. Ultimately, the system of private lessons also infringes on the scholars' Constitutional Rights to education and, ultimately, their right to play as children in our society.
11. Discrimination at any level in our society must be made illegal. This includes any real or perceived discrimination in treatment at hospitals (crucial, especially at general hospitals), Government offices, education facilities, workplace interviews, shops, marketplace or places of worship etc; in other words, anywhere in our public sphere. Discrimination prevents access to the wide range of resources presently available in our society. Those perceiving/experiencing discrimination must have access, not only to the Ombudsman, but also a secondary reporting officer in their own communities.
12. Provision should also be made to outlaw 'hate speech' in our country. No one should have the right to publicly offend others by using racial epithets.
13. The exact process of reporting and recording of these offences needs to be communicated to, and confirmed by, an established anti-racism/anti-discrimination unit (ADU). We recommend three levels of reporting (local community representative, ADU, then Ombudsman). The exact operational characteristics of this unit can be thought through by a selected group of stakeholders.
14. Institutions must desist from promoting the celebration of difference in our society, especially that which confirms fundamental or primordial difference between Mauritians. To this end (while recognising diversity), it needs to pay careful attention to primordial discourse. Any reference to the fundamental qualities of indentured descendants versus slave descendants VS. Colonial descendants should be avoided. Such primordial 'talk' emphasises racial distinctions and promotes discrimination. Members of our political leadership must set the example by not using 'hate speech' involving racial epithets and/or discussions on the fundamental racial or ethnic qualities of our population. 'Hate speech' must become illegal.
15. Positive discussion on diversity as well as the commonalities that Mauritians share should be made available online, in the written and audio-visual media. While not wishing to curtail the freedom of the press, a critical and thorough assessment of the present media is necessary to ascertain which sources of media increase or promote discriminatory practices. Those promoting discriminatory practices and discourse must be heavily sanctioned, or at least challenged.
16. Positive discussion on the contribution of Creoles to the making of Mauritian society should be encouraged and supported, verbally and financially by Government via the proposed Anti-Discrimination Unit.
17. It will be the duty of the proposed Anti-Discrimination unit (ADU) to follow up on complaints from the public and from Government regarding such infringements. The ADU will also be responsible with maintaining a deeper respect for diversity as well as democracy.
18. It will be the task of the ADU to also scrutinise social and economic policies emerging from Government, advising the latter on sections or parts of policies which may in fact promote discriminatory practices. The ADU will be able to make recommendations to the Government regarding such policies and how to make these more socially inclusive.
19. The ADU will also work closely with social work organisations and entities, Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and units, teachers, recently-qualified Therapists, Counsellors, community representatives and other individuals working with the broader public, to inform and discuss matters relating to discrimination and marginalisation in our society. The

objective of this is to ensure that there is ongoing public dialogue on these matters and that people feel free to express their opinions and to talk about their experiences in our society.

20. Together with the relevant Ministries dealing with youth, gender issues and leisure (Tourism), the ADU will offer advice, implement workshops and discussion forums to effect dialogue on parenting, gender relations and equality, the image of Mauritius to the tourist world and issues of discrimination in the leisure space.

In conducting this research, we, the team members of this project, learned a great deal about Mauritian society. We also realise the responsibility that we have been given in being offered to do this work on behalf of the TJC and the Government of Mauritius. It is our hope that what we have written here will be sufficient to convince the decision-makers that this society needs to change for the better, that our work be taken seriously and that some of our recommendations will see the light of day. We firmly believe that Mauritians are deserving of a more equitable society, regardless of the colour of their skin. We also firmly believe that the youths of Mauritius deserve a better future, one in which they are not afraid to dream of a happier future or to pursue their aspirations. It is not acceptable in a democratic society that people should be afraid to pursue their dreams; that they should feel marginalised, disrespected, excluded and hopeless. It is also not acceptable that others should feel that they can disrespect, exclude or marginalise. We are hopeful, as a team of dedicated researchers, young people and citizens of Mauritius, that our dream of a truly democratic society will be realised in our lifetime.

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<sup>7</sup> The term 'Franco-Mauritian' is commonly used to refer to the Mauritians of European descent.

<sup>8</sup> The term 'Coloured Creoles' refers to people of mixed blood who are also commonly referred to as Mulattoes.

<sup>9</sup> Term that refers to Mauritians of Chinese origins.

<sup>10</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/NF035/T/GoodLands/9July2010, lines 70-78

<sup>11</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/CH013/T/BeauBassin/23May2010, lines 318-331

<sup>12</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/CL030/T/BaieDuTombeau/29June2010, lines 240-255

<sup>13</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/FG010/T/BeauBassin/18May2010, lines 251-264

<sup>14</sup> TJC/2/SLC\_AL/IN/HL008/T/Caredas/17May2010, line 325

<sup>15</sup> TJC/9/SLC/IN/DB MR115/T/LaPointeTamarin/25May2010, lines 302-315

<sup>16</sup> TJC/9/SLC/IN/SW116/T/Bambous/27May2010, lines 112-133

<sup>17</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/JP CP007/T/VillageBougainvilliers/13May2010, lines 211-217

<sup>18</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/AB015/T/RiviereNoire/26May2010, lines 224-228

<sup>19</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/AB015/T/RiviereNoire/26May2010, lines 236-275

<sup>20</sup> TJC/9/SLC/IN/GC PG167/TGrandGaube/06July2010, lines 185-186

<sup>21</sup> TJC/9/SLC/IN/GC PG167/TGrandGaube/06July2010, lines 66-98

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<sup>24</sup> TJC/9/SLC/IN/SW116/T/Bambous/27May2010, lines 551-571

<sup>25</sup> TJC/9/SLC/IN/FL168/T/GoodLands/09July2010, lines 138-146

<sup>26</sup> Racing refers to a private club for the Coloured Creole bourgeoisie called Racing Club located in Trianon

<sup>27</sup> TJC/2/SLC/IN/MH011 012/T/MontCalm/21May2010, lines 1468-1490

- <sup>28</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/JP\_CP007/T/VillageBougainvilliers/13May2010, lines 1041-1045
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- <sup>30</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/CH013/T/BeauBassin/23May2010, line 622-624
- <sup>31</sup>TJC/2/AC/IN/AD021/T/Tamarin/7June2010, lines 335-336
- <sup>32</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/MG016/T/LaPointeTamarin/26 May2010, lines 119-121
- <sup>33</sup>TJC/2/SLC AL/IN/SP003/T/LaMivoie/11 May2010, lines 905-910
- <sup>34</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/FL YL009/T/LaPointeTamarin/17 May2010, lines 311-322
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- <sup>39</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/AW054/T/StJuliend'Hotman/14December2010, lines 507-508
- <sup>40</sup>TJC/2/SLC/IN/ER032/T/BlackRock/2July2010, lines 271-278
- <sup>41</sup>Informal discussion, Sophie Le Chartier, Mauritius, 11 June 2010.
- <sup>42</sup>Informal discussion with my neighbour Madam Rena, Mauritius, 27 June 2010
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- <sup>45</sup>TJC/11/MT/IN/MR 06/T/Vacoas/18August2010, Lines 263-292
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- <sup>56</sup>*Ibid*, p. 68
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- <sup>58</sup>*Ibid*, p. 72
- <sup>59</sup>*Ibid*, p. 72
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<sup>73</sup> TJC/2/SLC AL/IN/HL008/T/Caredas/17May2010, line 493

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE CASTE SYSTEM IN MAURITIAN SOCIETY

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## INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at understanding how the caste system had evolved in Mauritius since the indentured days and how far the situation today was a consequence of indenture.

Some fundamental questions were: How was the caste system lived and experienced by indentured s. What was the situation with descendants today? Is the caste system, as it is lived today in Mauritius, a consequence of indenture? Is there evidence that the colonial powers used the caste system as an instrument of social control? If so, what were the consequences? Is the Mauritian caste system discriminatory and, if so, who, among the indentured s and their descendants, suffer from it? What links can be established between the Mauritian caste system and the current identity and national construction processes?

Considering the omnipresent taboos linked with the Indian and Mauritian caste systems, and considering the complexity and specificity of the original Indian caste system, a study using a series of transversal themes, which were expected to reveal Mauritian caste realities, was attempted. These were marriage, commensality (sharing food and drink) and political and religious affiliations.

A definition of a 'Mauritian' organization of castes was attempted, as well as its relationship with other identity categories such as class, ethnic and religious affiliations. An analysis of distance and originality vis-à-vis the Indian system was undertaken as well as a diachronic dissociation i.e., caste system in India at the times of indenture, caste system during the sea voyage, caste system while settling in estate camps, and then in villages and, to a lesser extent, caste system today.

Our goal is here to evaluate the respective roles of the Indian system, of indenture and of Mauritian society in the lives of indentured individuals and in the lives of their descendants.

To our knowledge, no such study has been carried out in Mauritius. The research was almost entirely carried out through fieldwork, complemented by insights from the consultant anthropologist's prior work in India and Mauritius and the researchers' previous historical studies into, and knowledge of, Mauritian life. The first phase of the study consisted of approximately 100 interviews conducted from June to November 2010 in the South of the island in the villages of Union Vale, Trois Boutiques, L'Escalier, Plaine Magnien, Tyack/Britannia and Chemin Grenier; in the East in the villages of Laventure, Grande Retraite, Petite Retraite and Bois D'oiseau, and in Plaines Wilhems, in the region of Trianon. Most of the interviews were formal and recorded and lasted from 30 to 90 minutes. Written notes were taken for non-recorded informal interviews. These were conducted in the language used by informants, i.e., Bhojpuri or Creole, or a mixture of both. In the second phase of the project, a sample of 300 questionnaires were administered to the active population to gather their views on the subject. Relevant information from 400 interviews, gathered by the *Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund* in 2009, was also used.

It was clear that many Mauritians, even those of Indian descent, were unaware of the Indian caste system and of Indian realities. There is also a double-discourse in Mauritius concerning castes: there is both a temptation to officially deny the existence of castes in Mauritius, and also a criticism of the Mauritian caste system. It was therefore necessary to evaluate these realities before analyzing them.

Researchers faced major difficulties in studying a taboo subject.<sup>1</sup> First, because castes are politically incorrect in Mauritius, no informant stated being proud of the existence of the caste system in Mauritius, and very few spoke about the more positive, non-discriminatory dimensions of it (i.e., solidarity). Many were ashamed of the continued existence of the caste system in Mauritius, which explains the constant temptation to deny its existence.

Secondly, castes are associated with complex and conflicting perceptions of India by descendants. On the one hand, Indian Hinduism is seen as original and authentic. The tendency to have recourse to Indian priests and temple builders has reinforced this dependence on "true" Hinduism. Mauritian Hinduism is perceived negatively, as a 'second-class' religion which has lost its practices and representations, and is mixed with other (Creole/Malagasy) practices and representations. On the

other hand, the caste system is also seen as the foremost example of the 'bad', 'degenerated' Hinduism practised in India. In this perspective, Mauritian Hindus see themselves as having managed to purify Hinduism from the discriminatory social practices originally linked with it.

Our aim was, then, to understand how and why the caste system could be criticized on one hand, but still practised by the same person. No judgement is made here on whether the caste system should be maintained or not. Castes are viewed as a cultural construction, a 'choice' made by a society in order to organize itself. Here, only an examination of the realities of Mauritius and the potentially discriminatory practices are investigated.

Due to the shortage of time and lack of other research, we were not able to evaluate the understanding and practice (if any) of the caste system in Mauritian non-Hindus. Most populations, originating from India, carried the caste system with them. Indian Muslims also shared this system with Indian Hindus or, at least, were not unfamiliar with it. Tamil-speaking Hindus were interviewed, but the bulk of the information emanates from Bhojpuri and Telugu-speaking informants. The general perception among non-Indians is that the caste system has a Hindu/Indian specificity that has a discriminatory element.

The Mauritian caste system could not be fairly evaluated without an objective knowledge of its foundational Indian ideology, its Indian practical realities and its Indian ways of dealing with it, or against it.

## 1. THE CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

The subject has been abundantly treated by historians, sociologists and anthropologists. This will be reviewed in light of several questions related to our study. Our aim was to understand the caste system in Mauritius during indenture, and the assessment of the caste system by modern India; the attitude of the Indian authorities towards the caste system, the solutions that were foreseen and tried and with what results, to compensate the discriminatory dimensions of the system.

The Hindu-Indian population is divided in 'castes' in a hierarchical system. Globally, one was born in a caste, married in the same caste, and one transmits the caste to one's children.

The caste system is based on a logic of purity related to Hindu representations. Some castes are 'high' and 'pure' whereas others are 'low' and 'impure'. The caste system is fundamentally hierarchical and discriminatory.

But, even if most of the barriers have been maintained till now, there is a fundamental flexibility in castes that has long been under-estimated.

India is a multi-religious nation. It is the second largest country in terms of absolute number of Muslims, although Hindus form up to 80% of the population. It is crucial not to confuse 'Indian' (the nationality) and 'Hindu' (the religion). If the ideological foundations of the caste system are indeed religious, and specifically Hindu, neither Indian Muslims, nor Indian Buddhists, Christians or tribal populations have ever been able to leave the caste system or to remain apart. Non-Hindu Indians are also organized along hierarchical caste lines. One could say that the caste system permeates Indian society.

### General definitions: Caste in Sociology

'Caste' as a category needs to be precisely defined, from a comparative sociological perspective and more specifically within Indian studies.

The Larousse dictionary defines caste as:

CASTE, feminine noun, from the Portuguese *casta* (race).

- Endogamous social group, having generally a hereditary profession and precisely ranked in the hierarchy of a society.
- Pejorative. Group set apart by its privileges and its exclusiveness regarding other persons not belonging to the group: to be caste minded.
- Each of the three adult forms of social insects: female (or queen), male and neutral (laborer, soldier).

In this extensive definition, caste is a social class having a particular status and a hereditary professional function. Often cited are *Hindu* Brahmins, as well as African *griots*. Most of the time, caste corresponds to a very privileged and exclusive social class.

The use of the 'caste' terminology in 'Zoology' is all but neutral for us, as we will explain later. Zoology then means a group of animals having the same ascribed activity; most of the time one can take as an example the most socially organized species such as bees. Each 'caste' then designates a 'social' function: laborer or soldier, for instance.

## Definition in Mauritian and European History

In Mauritius, the term has been used since the 18<sup>th</sup> century to describe different groups of African slaves or whole ethnic groups, i.e., 'de la caste des Chinois'.

Inside African societies themselves, the term 'caste' has been 'mobilised', at least as a descriptive or heuristic tool. Some anthropologists have indeed tried to describe the hierarchical social organization of certain African societies, using caste structure.

In Europe, and in the West generally, the use of the term 'caste' is limited to two contexts. On the one hand, it is used for its pejorative connotations. We then speak about caste as a fixed category that standing firm on its privileges and socially reproduces itself inside the group as much as possible. On the other hand, in a more scientific perspective, the term is used in the context of the Indo-European ideology around the functional three-tiered society, as described by George Dumézil as early as 1948. The caste then corresponds to different hierarchical 'states' of European medieval societies (nobility, clergy and *Tiers-Etat*), each one being associated with pre-existing social functions.

## The *Hindu* caste: Religion, discrimination and solidarity

Despite the various usages and polysemy, the 'scientific' definition of 'caste' will be used concerning the Indian domain, and secondly because it helps us limit our project.

Caste, here, will only be defined with reference to the *Hindu* social organization. It creates a system in which all elements - castes - cannot be defined except by the relative position they hold in the whole system.

The term 'caste' thus refers to two Sanskrit terms, *Varna* and *jati*, although we refer mainly to the second term.

The term *casta* was introduced by the Portuguese in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Until then, it was used in the Natural sciences. It is interesting that the term *jati* signifying 'birth' in Sanskrit, has also been compared to the naturalist notion of species (*Herrenschmidt*). In the Hindu perspective, men are not isolated among living beings. They are inserted in a hierarchical continuum comprising animals (at the bottom of the hierarchy, themselves 'hierarchised'), men and deities (at the top of the hierarchy).

Speaking about a 'hierarchised' continuum means that, from the Hindu point of view, there is no fundamental break between the different categories (or 'species'), whether they are animal, human or divine. In Hinduism, there exists permeability of each category. Men can be divinized, and gods often easily take human appearances or are represented under the physical or psychological appearance of men and animals. This continuum also helps us understand the logic of transmigration, each living being able to be re-born under another category.

But the absence of distinction does not mean equality. One cannot neglect the omnipresent and unambiguous hierarchy. This opens the road to complementarity but also to discrimination. If the continuum speaks about transmigration, the 'hierarchised' side of it stands for the overall judgment of the *karma*. Low castes, in this perspective, are only inferior because they were considered inferior in their past life. High castes are superior because their past *karma* made them so. Each category deserves its relative position in the system and must live with it. Criticizing the hierarchy is an insult to the logic of transmigration.

## Castes as *VARNA*

*Varna* are first defined as 'colours'; they are symbolic attributes of 'socio-professional categories'.

The *VARNA* system is composed of BRAHMINS, KSHATRIYA and VAISHYA, who are all 'twice-born'; they underwent a ritual initiation justifying their superiority on the fourth *Varna* category: SHUDRA.

The *Varna* system organizes society according with Dumézil's 3-tiered division: the first three in the hierarchy is given a social function (Priesthood for Brahmins, Governance for Kshatriyas, and Commerce for Vaishyas) whereas the last *Varna*, Shudra, is supposed to be at the service of the three higher *Varnas* (service and agriculture).

The Untouchables do not belong to this system; they are literally 'out-caste', outside of the '*Varnas*', or '*a-Varna*' ([a], privative prefix in Sanskrit). Thus, there is no fifth *Varna*. But Untouchables do have *jati*.

## The Purusha myth

The hymn X, 90 in the sacred texts of the *Rig-Veda* provides the myth of origin of the *Varna*.

Each *Varna* was born from the sacrificed body of the original man (Purusha). As a result of the sacrifice, horses and cows, among others, were born. For our purpose, we will remember that Brahmins were born from the Purusha's mouth (hence their function of priesthood linked with knowledge and sacred speech); Kshatriyas were born from his arms (hence their function as warriors and kings); Vaishyas were born from 'highlights' and Shudras from his feet.

The language of sacrifice, crucial to the understanding of *Hinduism* and of the *Hindu* socio-religious system in general, expresses, in a same myth, hierarchy and complementarity.

Complementarity, first, because the *Varna* language is 'organicist'. This is a logics founded on the assimilation of the society to a body. Such a language supposes that each part, even the most insignificant, is necessary to the whole system. This whole, body or society, cannot function if only one of its part is ill. The head is nothing without the thighs, for instance.

In the same way, the language of sacrifice needs, beside the SACRIFIED, a PATRON whose role it is to organize and finance the sacrifice (a KSHATRIYA, ideally) and also a SACRIFICER, the priest, the one who knows the ritual (a BRAHMIN, ideally). The role of the patron of the ritual (the Kshatriya) is to keep social and cosmic order, which includes the necessity to resort to the Brahmin's ritual services and, more simply, to support financially the Brahmins who are supposed to have no personal fortune. As far as the Brahmin is concerned, his role consists in performing the rituals in the name of the Kshatriya patron. Here again complementarity exists.

Hierarchy remains, however, given the fact that in India, as everywhere else, the different parts of the body are not equivalent, in terms of purity and prestige. The head is the noblest part and it is the Brahmins who are born of it. The feet, touching the ground that is potentially impure, are the least noble parts of the body and the Shudra are born of them. Today, in India, turning one's feet towards someone or touching his head is still considered rude and even dangerous for the other one's integrity. In the same way, rivers are believed to have a 'head' (upstream) and 'feet' (downstream). Upstream is always purer. Contrary to women, men bathe upstream, so that they are not contaminated by women's impurities. Similarly, upper castes bathe upstream and lower castes downstream.

## Status and dominance

Furthermore, it is important to note that the hierarchy between castes implies a separation between status and dominance. The economic and political power falls to the Kshatriya, but the pre-eminence, in terms of status, falls to the Brahmin. He is purer than the Kshatriya but he is financially dependent on the Kshatriya and he performs the rituals in his name. The pre-eminence of the Brahmin's status depends on his having the monopoly of the sacrificial act that is necessary to keep order in the world.

Even though there exists a hierarchy and professional specialization, the *Varna* are not tightly-closed groups: those born from mixed marriages may find the status of their original male ancestor again, under certain conditions. It is essential to differentiate between a hypergamy (marriage between a man and a woman of inferior status) which is more or less acceptable and a hypogamy (marriage between a woman and a man of inferior status) which is always blameworthy. The word for a mixed marriage is *samkara*. It always has pejorative connotations: it implies disorder leading to a-dharma, the negation of the dharma. Mixed marriages have helped the Brahmins to explain the existence of multiple *jati*, genetically speaking, coming from the four *Varna* (Tambiah). We may also think, along with *Lingat*, that the projection of castes within the *Varna* helped them to give the huge diversity of societies in the Indian sub-continent a powerfully unifying 'code of indianity'.

It is the deep relation with the ritual that establishes the hierarchy in the society of *Varna*. Only the Brahmins can teach, learn and recite the sacred texts (Veda). As far as the Kshatriya and the Vaishya are concerned, they are allowed to hear the Brahmins reciting. The Shudra have no right to recite or to hear the sacred texts. This so because Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaishya are 'twice-born' (*dvija*): they have undergone the initiation 'upanayana samskar' that gives access to these texts. After the 'upanayana' ceremony, they wear the sacred thread distinguishing the 'twice-born'.

## Castes as *jati*

The logic of the *Varna* system lies mainly with the teaching of the sacred texts. However, what is reality like? Today, the Untouchables represent nearly one fifth of the Indian population, and the Shudra about a half. It is fair to say that the Brahmins (5%) represent a small group only, mainly in cities, just like the Kshatriya and the Vaishya (who live in the North of India only). In all the Southern half of rural India, for example, almost only Shudra and Untouchables can be met. Needless to say, oppositions between the *Varna* rarely happen in everyday life, contrary to the 'jati' that are actual castes.

Each *jati* belongs to a *Varna*: there are several 'jati' of Brahmins as well as many *jati* of Shudra (*jati* of farmers, of shepherds, of basket-makers, of blacksmiths) and even of sacred puppet-masters. The Untouchables themselves are divided into castes of barbers, launderers or travelling beggars.

Here is the true hierarchy. The '*Varna*' belongs to the sphere of learned but it is the *jati* that the average Indian experiences.

Belonging to a *jati* is considered a natural fact. Through his birth, each one owns characteristics that are shared by the members of the same *jati*, and not by others. One is born in one's caste (*jati*) and one dies in it. As the son of a blacksmith, one is born a blacksmith and one dies a blacksmith, even if it is not the job actually practised. The caste is hereditary and endogamous: one will marry a blacksmith's daughter only. Each caste has its rituals and its values: that is why they can ignore each other, and that might be one of the factors of the relative so-called 'Hindu tolerance'. On the other hand, they all belong to the same hierarchy, experienced daily because it is forbidden to accept food from an inferior caste for fear of being 'polluted' by it. Thus, all the castes of farmers will refuse food from Untouchables, and sometimes even, from shepherds, when the same shepherds will, in turn, refuse food from farmers, saying that their own caste is in reality superior to that of farmers. Obviously, disputes are numerous and hierarchy varies according to regions. Besides, some castes try to climb up the scale of purity by copying their rituals or daily practices (food, clothes) on high castes, even if such a strategy (called 'sanskritisation' because it

copies elite, Sanskrit, Brahminic habits) has its limitations because other castes will not recognize them as such.

### THE HINDU ORDER

All these considerations must be embedded in a more global logic, that of the *Hindu* socio-cosmic order as well as that of *Hindu* Ethics.

*Hinduism* has absolutely nothing to do with the democratic idea of universal equality. Similarly it has nothing to do with the idea of a universal moral of Good and Evil, as it is described in the Judeo-Christian ideology, for example.

For *Hinduism*, what is good for one person may be evil for another one. Consequently, it is amoral for a Brahmin to eat meat or drink alcohol even though meat and alcohol may be desirable or necessary for the Kshatriya, since they give him strength to fight, which is his duty. Such is the meaning of Krishna's sermon to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, taken from the *Mahabharata*. It is, indeed, an essential text of modern *Hinduism*. So each one must abide by his/her relative status in society and not by a moral that would be good for everyone.

Caste is not the only criterion. What is good for one person depends on his *Varna* as well as on his *ashrama* or stage in his life (depending on his situation as a 'student' - brahmacharin- or as a 'maître de maison' -grihastha, particularly). This is called *Varnashramadharm* ('the order according to one's caste and age).

In the Hindu set of thoughts, each one is constrained and obliged to follow their own dharma (svadharma), i.e. to conform mainly to the rules dictated by their caste.

### The Logics of Purity: Segregation and Complementarity

Even more than for the *Varna*, it is the logic of purity that gives a framework to the hierarchy of the *jati*. It is always a relative purity. The relative status of each *jati* is assessed according to the social and professional occupation that is archetypically linked with it. The caste of barbers (even if only a few people belonging to this caste actually do this job) is impure because their archetypical activity is perceived as polluting (due to the contact with facial hair considered impure).

Within the relations between the *jati*, there is a link between separation - in order to avoid risks of staining by a caste with lower status- and complementarity between economic and ritual tasks. Exchanges of food and water transmit the characteristics of the one who gives them, and they are carefully controlled. Each one refuses to accept what comes from people with lower status (but, on the other way round, they can give, without risks). In the same way, marriages, most of the time still arranged by parents today, carefully avoid all misalliance between *jati*.

The nightmare of a caste is clearly pollution. More than purity, it is the risk of being polluted that structures the system. Pollution mostly happens by contact. The normative texts prescribed, in the extreme, minimum distances to be respected between low and high castes. Even the shadow of an outcast should not reach a high-caste person. Today, contact taboos are limited to intrusive forms such as ingestion of food prepared or served by an inferior and sexual relations, for example.

In this perspective, the purest is the one who has the most to lose and who fears the most. So he is the one whose *jati* is the highest in the hierarchy and who has to abide by the most constraining rules of life. Neither commensality (sharing of food) nor re-marriages for widows are allowed in high *jati* who generally practice a more or less strict vegetarianism and who advocate marriages of very young girls (promises and engagements as soon as they are pubescent, for example).

One of the consequences of such a logic of purity is discrimination and/or spatial segregation, in many villages. High castes, 'the pure', Brahmins or farmers for example, live in the heart of the village. Around them, the service castes (craftsmen) have been set up. And away from them, there

is the Untouchable area, whose members are not allowed to get water from the pond or the local well, are not allowed to have tea in the village common places or to enter the other castes' houses.

Order exists because of the complementarity and because of the 'jajmani' system that links the castes together on a hereditary basis. A family of farmers always asks the same blacksmith to fix their plough, and the blacksmith is paid in grain each year when the harvest is over. However, the system is bound to disappear because of the modernization of agriculture. Complementarity also and mostly works through rituals. Thus, the religious territory of a village is divided into several shrines, each of them being patronized and frequented by one or several castes. Even though the Untouchables have long been forbidden to enter the high castes' shrines, their own worshipping habits were necessary to the prosperity and the protection of the whole village. Some from a very high *jati* may need the knowledge and the power of the divinities and of the priests from a low *jati* if a matter is thought to be within their remit (calming down an ancestor coming back under the shape of a possessing spirit, for example). The Untouchables are needed for many processions and ceremonies (funerals, for example) that require the presence of a drum (an impure instrument because it is made of the skin of a dead animal that only Untouchables are allowed to touch).

The caste system inevitably means describing the status of male Hindus. Women belong to the caste of their father and abide by the rules, and especially those concerning marriage. Later, women will belong to the caste of their husbands. Even when a woman marries upward in the caste hierarchy, the risk is high as in-laws may refuse the food she cooks, even in her own house.

But, more generally, women are vectors for 'pollution'. Their assigned place (included as Goddesses in the Brahminic Hindu iconography) is on the left. This is the 'polluting' side in Hindu thought: the left hand is reserved for polluting activities, and the right hand for eating; you circumambulate a shrine clockwise in order to keep your pure right hand close to the Gods. Similarly, women sit at the left of men because of the purity hierarchy not unrelated to caste ideology.

### **Castes and social classes**

Today, there are poor Brahmins (many of them are cooks to satisfy the taboos about food) whereas there are Untouchables who are ministers or high political authorities. Therefore, religious castes are not equivalent to social classes. Nevertheless, discrimination exists and led to the policy of positive discrimination (quotas).

For several decades, there has been a debate on whether class correlated with caste, reflecting the fact "the whole interpretation of the social evolution of the Indian world in the modern age was at stake" in this debate, as Pouchepadass points out. By underlining the Hindu specificity of castes, with an ideological basis lying on religious purity, Louis Dumont has been abundantly criticized by those who think that castes represent only one particular case in the theory of social stratification. According to the latter, castes would only be a local rationalization of relations in terms of universal domination or exploitation, or even the ideological mask of class differences.

The Marxist perspective, has mainly given greater importance to castes as archaic and superficial structures, that are bound to disappear in the modern context of class society.

Indeed, along with globalization and the balance of powers in modern Capitalism, Indian society has, like others, integrated class logic. As early as the end of the 19th century, an Indian elite appeared and became the core of the independence and Nationalist movements. This elite has characteristics other than the caste criteria. Education, jobs, and relationships with the colonial powers were important criteria required to belong to this elite. And so, the discourse by this elite that prevailed during Nationalist struggles against the colonial powers and then through the destiny of independent India, adopted a great part of the vision of a modern India that would leave behind the structure of castes, thought to be archaic and confined to village life. However, it is difficult to ignore the fact that most of this elite belonged to the higher castes.

Nothing indicates that the importance of the caste system is declining in the history of modern India. Rather, with Indian modernity appeared a certain number of pressure groups that focused on

caste-identity. On one hand, this was meant to reactivate solidarity between pre-existing networks. On the other, the caste system was used as a means to obtain privileges and particularly, quotas. With the same mind-set, a certain number of more or less regional parties appeared, established according to caste criteria, to maximize gains in the electoral field. Thus, they behaved more as pressure-groups than traditional social and religious associations. In this democratic logic and for electoral purposes, castes are mainly used for their competitive potential.

Castes and classes present different realities and social handicaps tend to reinforce each other. Lower castes are still the poorest and the most oppressed in Indian society.

### **Castes, Colonialism and Democracy: Governance, Census and Positive Discrimination**

Several writers stress the role of the British Colonial Powers in the hardening of the caste system in India. The British attempted census-taking of the Indian population to categorize it in order to govern more efficiently. They thus contributed (unintentionally for some) to fossilize social realities that were more flexible than they had believed. The necessity for a person at the time to declare his caste, and the stakes behind a written classification, once for all, linked to a national hierarchy (whereas castes were village-bound or regional, to start with) gave a new reality and a new meaning to a system that the British, themselves, condemned for its discriminatory nature.

For others, it is the strategy of 'divide and rule', of the British who used the caste system in order to sap the wish for an Indian National Union that might have turned against the British Empire.

Finally, in a less Manichaean but deeper way, the British relied on Brahmin informers in their quest for knowledge and efficient government of India. So it was the Brahmins' point of view that was used as the whole picture, though Brahmins were only 5% of the population, which was not shared by non-Brahmins. Similarly, the sometimes rose-colored version of an organic system where there is a place for each and where each activity is necessary to the good order of the whole, the former being as noble as the latter, is essential in Brahminic rhetoric. Gandhi largely contributed to the spread of the ideology of 'each man in his own place', in a system that would rely more on complementarity than on hierarchy. Sometimes carrying the argument to the extreme, he imposed the term 'Harijan' (God's child) instead of 'Untouchable', showing his wish, not to ban Untouchability (and not to ban the caste system), but to put forward the noble role of Untouchables in Indian society. It is significant that Untouchable campaigners have followed the opposite path for several decades. Today, they call themselves 'Dalit', i.e. 'the oppressed', and they claim acknowledgement and compensation for having being discriminated against.

The State's role is ambiguous, to say the least. The 1950 Constitution abolished Untouchability. There exists a policy of 'reservations' that has been reinforced (quotas for employment in the public sector, reserved places for Untouchables and Tribal populations in Universities so that higher castes would not keep highly-qualified jobs for themselves. Today, the caste-certificate has become a very useful document for becoming a civil servant. Non-Untouchable low castes also claim quotas, which they get, for electoral motives. Thus, instead of disappearing, the castes have crystallized and have become passports for employment in the Public Sector. Some people or some castes even declare themselves more 'impure' than they are, hoping to be included in quotas: this is a perfect example of perverse side-effects of a policy that meant to be generous (very much like 'positive discrimination' and minorities in the USA). More important, the policy of quotas reinforced the impact of birth on the allocation of jobs. It also caused riots and deaths (murders and suicides by fire) when castes were in the process of being defined as eligible for benefits. As a result, quotas give more strength to a concept (caste identity and lobbying) that is fundamentally anti-democratic. It is no wonder, then, that universal suffrage does not work well in India and that Indian people vote less for ideas than for their castes.

## Caste Mobility: Renunciation, Devotion, Conversion, Sanskritisation

Castes have been the subject of multiple prescriptions in normative texts, the most famous being undoubtedly the *Manus Mriti* ('The Laws of Manu'), at the beginning of our era. They have also drawn the attention of travellers and observers for a very long time. In each case, they have been presented as made up groups that were stable in time and with clearly defined characteristics. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, terms such as 'people', 'tribe' and 'nation' were synonyms of 'caste'. These inspired huge ethnological collections during the British period when the customs of supposedly distinct groups had to be recorded. More recently, this work is at the origin of the collection of volumes *People of India* with K.S Singh at its head ('Anthropological Survey of India'), though written in a national perspective. However, since the 1950's, the perspective has radically changed and the ways one chooses to get out of the caste system have been examined, paralleling the evolution and the flexible dimension of a system that was thought to be rigid to the extreme (with the expected consequence that would be its explosion at the imminent entry of India in modernity).

There are some factors that cause the dissolution of castes. For example, there are some jobs that were not present in traditional hierarchy: bus-drivers, computer technicians or bicycle repairmen, to name a few. Indeed, a Brahmin caught in the dense crowd of Bombay is very well aware that he touches 'Untouchables'. As far as the Brahmin engineer is concerned, he will give up vegetarianism in the cafeteria of the firm but will go back to it at home in the evening.

However, the main misinterpretation by observers of caste system in India was, and remains, their underestimation of historical and sociological realities of their evolution. Castes, as social groups, are no more rigid and unchanging than Western social classes.

The very obvious proof of that is the permanent place of castes at the heart of the contemporary evolution of India, in spite of the occurrence of world Capitalism and of a class logic. The strength of castes lies in the fact that they do not necessarily need fundamental harmony. It is a system based essentially on relationships, where each one can find his place in relation to the other one. Each one's position is called into question and is the subject of permanent negotiations, since it is not sanctioned by any texts approved unanimously. The castes that call themselves *Kshatriya* are innumerable, even if they are considered *Shudra* by their neighbors and commonly treated as such.

**Is caste mobility possible? Several common strategies have been employed.**

On an individual basis, it is already possible for a woman to marry outside her caste and, so doing, to adopt her husband's caste, ideally higher than hers. But this remains an exception to the rule. Individuals may also join philosophical, devotional and political trends such as the Arya Samaj which advocates individual equality and denies the hierarchy of castes. Here again, though, historical and daily realities have soon caught up with those egalitarian attempts. The Arya Samaj is a movement often seen as being in the hands of higher castes.

On an individual basis again, there are essentially two historical and philosophical ways of getting out of a caste. The first is by 'renouncing'. In the *Hindu* universe, to renounce the world is to renounce the world of castes. Everything that does not belong to renouncing belongs to the caste, and so, to renounce means to leave the caste. The *Hindu* individual, who renounces, does not risk being polluted any longer. It is something that he advertises by covering himself with ashes from funeral pyres, because they are the most impure possible. He does not have to follow the social and religious logic of the world of castes any longer. Theoretically, any *Hindu*, whatever his caste, may 'renounce', once he has accomplished his duties, as a 'student' and as a 'family head'. Dumont explained very well to what extent the extreme hierarchy of castes made sense only as a counterpoint with the extreme individualism of 'renouncing'.

On an individual basis, *Hindu* devotional trends (*bhakti*) suggest 'renouncing' through devotion. It means that the divinity should be reached by way of personal and emotional contact with it. In this relationship, compared to physical passion or filial affection, for example, the identity of the caste does not matter. The bards of the *bhakti* (the mystic poets Tulsidas or Kabir, for example) promoted disregard for caste considerations and individual equality within the divine relationship. Yet, like the attempts by the Arya Samaj, such trends have broken into the realities of castes, through only in the devotional dimension, but not in everyday realities.

On an individual basis, but more often on a collective one (whole castes), conversion has been the strategy used by Untouchables especially, to leave behind the identity of a discriminatory caste. Starting off with the logic that castes are *Hindu* structures, giving up *Hinduism* was supposed to help converts escape from the infamous hierarchy that was part of castes. But that was to forget about the fact that, in India, castes are not only defined by religious affiliation, but also by the form of the organization of the whole society. Consequently, those Untouchables, recently converted to Buddhism, to Islam or to Catholicism, are still considered Untouchables. That they reject the way they are called and replace it with another appellation does not keep the high castes of the village from not accepting to share their meals, for example. Conversion of whole castes in India is evidence of a rebellion against the caste-system and its hierarchy (like Ambedkar leading his whole caste to Buddhism), but it is often unsuccessful.

Another historical strategy, most often used by whole castes was, not choosing to get out of the system, but trying to find a more enviable place within it. Thanks to the impetus often given by a now richer elite, castes resort to strategies known as 'sanskritisation'. It means changing caste practices and customs by matching them with high castes' norms and by severing them from customs with low caste connotations. The end of animal sacrifice during worship, the presence of a Brahmin priest, the passage to vegetarianism especially, are evidence, one generation later, of practices compatible with claiming a higher caste status. Once this is achieved, it becomes possible to marry daughters (preferably rich ones) to sons (less rich) from higher castes.

## CONCLUSION

Without denying the discriminatory power of the caste system, and without supporting the Brahmins' perspectives of the system as a functionally harmonious system, it would not be correct to portray the caste system as uniformly harmful and ideologically racist. To start with, a social structure, they are also social links and, to a lesser extent, they represent units of solidarity. Caste networks are indispensable to the Indian liberal economy as well as to the rising of most regional political parties.

Until recently, the caste logic also rested on a network of relationships called *jajmani*. The village barber worked for the same patron as his father. Hereditary networks, even though they were organized into their own hierarchy, represented vertical solidarities that reached beyond caste antagonism. Revolts, militancy and pressure groups (including those with vote-catching objective) have long formed such 'factions', i.e. the multi-castes vertical section of the village society that brings together the dominating and the dependent.

It can be said that political circumstances (colonialism, vote-catching in modern democracy) have partly manipulated caste hierarchies in order to support identity claims or access to privileges. Portraying castes as uniformly negative, highlighting their hierarchical function and freezing their inherent stability prove that the caste system and its logical tenets are misunderstood in the West.

We have to bear in mind that the intrinsic logic of the caste system draws its inspiration from religion. It is the relative purity of individuals and groups that remains the determining criterion. As such, the caste system probably works in the same way as discrimination.

According to the 1949 Indian Constitution, even if it is not always the case, all temples must remain open to all *Hindus* (Untouchables included, and also Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, hence the problem of the definition of *Hinduism*). In fact, only public temples are concerned. The others do not have to be opened to Untouchables, even if there is pressure on those temples managed by private associations through incentives offered. In reality, either private institutions strictly forbid Untouchables to enter, or Untouchables simply do not dare. However, Untouchables do go to the main temples for regional pilgrimages.

In India, discrimination on grounds of castes is forbidden by the Constitution, and has been the subject of several laws (Untouchability Offences Act, in 1955; Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act in 1989). Discrimination is an offence against the Law.

But it is not forbidden in the least to assert one's belonging to a caste, in itself. In fact, the *jati* identity remains strong, especially in rural areas where it is at the core of social interactions. Their dynamism belies some critics' forecast that saw, in castes, a brake upon the country's growth and social structures as bound to disappear. Although the regulation of exchanges has become more flexible in large cities, and although people in general resent bringing up the issue of castes no longer existing, the *jati* still play an essential political and economic role. The development of communications and the media, and the Indra's participation in the process of globalization have entailed the rise of an important middle-class that partly clouds caste identities. The opposite seems to be true: social and political stakes, the development of forms of organizations based on *jati* at all levels of society tend to crystallize identities. These dynamics help to keep fine distinctions of status as private matters, particularly for marriages, whereas a more general mobilization in political action calls for reifying caste identities in pseudo-ethnic terms.

## 2. CASTES IN MAURITIUS DURING INDENTURE AND TODAY

In a well known article entitled 'The Disintegration of Caste and changing concepts of Indian Ethnic Identity in Mauritius' (1994), Oldvar Hollup argued that the Indian caste system had been widely simplified in Mauritius and that this applied to all *Hindu* diasporas. Benedict (1961), Jayawardena (1968), Mishra (1979) and van der Veer & Vertovec (1991), but to mention a few, all concurred that the Indian caste system "was never successfully established overseas" (Hollup 1994). More importantly, it was argued that caste differences among overseas Indians, were understood differently in terms of content and meaning by descendants.

### Who are the indentured s? What about Indian realities?

Indentured history, and the way it is perceived in Mauritius today, are central in historical and the Mauritian contemporary construction of identity.

There is on the one hand, the overarching perspective which is the link with roots and origins. On the other, there is the 'Mauritian' perspective. 'Indenture' provided the founding narrative of Indo-Mauritian identity, even if the latter has been built through the denial of some of realities of indenture.

One must acknowledge that, through ignorance or political strategies, the public discourse on indenture has given birth to many strong myths of identity, often historically inaccurate or far-fetched. Indentured s have been presented in various forms: as kidnapped slaves (Tinker 1974) or, on the contrary, as proud conquerors coming to Mauritius to bring their India's wisdom and age-old civilization (Benoist 1989, Hazareesingh 1973) and as 'scab labour' depressing the wages of ex-slaves.

In all cases, indenture stands as a pivotal period in Mauritian history. Academic research in history and anthropology for the period 1835-1907 can begin to give us fair bases for an objective and more nuanced vision of indenture. However, research (Allen, Benoist, Hazareesingh, Tinker) often lacks the perspective of the host country, India, and the economic and social conditions there and their overall representations of candidates for indenture.

Whatever the Mauritian realities of indenture may have been, the only way to understand them requires the evaluation of the individuals' subjective real-life perceptions. It is thus necessary to put them in the light of Indian pre-indenture realities of the immigrants.

As Marina Carter (1995) explains, sordid realism (describing indenture as just another Slave Trade) or, on the contrary, revisionist temptations (s as colonists), have blurred historical visions. The first important point lies in the evolution of indenture during the whole period. Indenture in the 1830s was radically different from indenture twenty years later, not to mention the last decades, of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One must also remember that, as is the case for slavery, there is no such thing as a unique history and experience of indenture. Individual situations were very different from one another, between the Sepoy fleeing colonial repression, the indebted peasant and the migrant looking for a better future.

The majority of the indentured candidates were peasants. But the *proletarianization* of India (Carter & Deerpalsingh 2000) as well as the collapse of local craft and artisan industries due to aggressive British policies (Deerpalsingh 2000) probably brought others than peasants to emigrate.

From these varied and contrasting experiences, how did the caste system evolve in Mauritius? It was a blend of the realities indentured s were leaving behind in India and their local experiences in Mauritius. The local context of Mauritius, as a plantation society, urged indentured s to adapt, until they created a new sound definitely Mauritian, group at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This process accounts for some of the ruptures, still present nowadays, between India and Mauritius.

The taboo and inaccuracy of Mauritian conceptions of the caste system must be paralleled with the Mauritian fundamental ignorance of the Indian caste system. Thus, it is crucial to question preconceived ideas and legends concerning the conditions of indenture. What were the indentured labourers' living and working conditions already experienced in India? What was fundamentally new to them in the servile system they faced in Mauritius? We know about certain servile systems in India in the nineteenth century. What were the links of Indian candidates for indenture with the land, the migration process, the domination hierarchy, etc.?

If one focuses on indentured labourers coming from the Bhojpuri territories (which approximate to today's Bihar Jharkand and East Uttar Pradesh), amounting for approximately 60% of the indentured labourers brought to Mauritius (Benedict 1961), we do know the general pattern of caste prevalence and repartition, for instance.

The Bhojpuri territory is ambiguous in India. It is not recognized as an administrative region, and has never been (Servan-Schreiber 1999). 'Bhojpuri country' is the region where the Bhojpuri language is spoken, even though the language is not fully recognized. Though spoken by more than 50 million people all over the world (both in India and in the Diaspora), it is still considered a rude and unsophisticated language (*motiya bhasa*). It is officially considered a minority 'dialect' in India, whereas other languages such as Kashmiri, Sindhi, Punjabi or Oriya, far less massively spoken, have been officially recognized as main languages of the Indian nation. Indian Bhojpuri language has never had access to the status granted to Bhojpuri in Mauritius (on the radio and in television broadcasts, for instance).

That is the reason why, among others, Bhojpuri culture in India has long striven for its coherence above territorial frontiers. As a result, other identity criteria have been downgraded. First among them, the caste hierarchy is more flexible among Indian Bhojpuris. Bhojpuri Brahmins are not the fierce defenders of socio-religious orthodoxy which they are in other, more territorialized, regions such as Mithila, for instance (Servan-Schreiber 1999). Many institutions are open to all, and Bhojpuri leaders do not promote an elite and Brahminic culture. Bhojpuri leaders more often address the unifying power of the language in their discourses. In the Bhojpuri land, so they stress, it is as important to speak Bhojpuri as to be Muslim or Hindu, or to be Chamar (low caste leather worker) or Brahmin.

The real caste identity of indentured labourers may be different to what is listed in official registers of immigrants for reasons well studied by historians. Individuals are declared under caste names (Ahir) but also with sub-caste names, professions, or regional origins (Bengali). We cannot be sure how far the British understood the 'caste' terminologies of potential immigrants. Secondly, emigration offered an opportunity for upgrading one's caste status. Opposite strategies were also used, however, to secure the right to emigrate. These strategies were known to the British who started inspecting the hands of emigrants to check for signs of the immigrants having performed manual labour. The registers thus show a multi-caste type emigration, quite representative of the Indian caste distribution (Deerpalsingh 2000; Servan-Schreiber 2010). True enough, peasant castes were over-represented, but such is already the case in India itself (Tinker 1974).

In India, Brahmins did not represent more than 5%, while low caste Shudra and Untouchables amounted for more than half the population. In 'Bhojpuri country', *Ahir* was may be the most numerous single caste (it still represented 11% in 1979, according to Blair); Muslims were also numerous (15%).

The same gross percentage seems to have been prevalent in India, and in indenture, with a huge majority of Untouchables and Shudra, some Vaishya and Kshatriya, and a very small minority of Brahmins. This parallel between castes, percentage in India and in indenture is also true of religions: approximately 15% of Indians were Muslims (Servan-Schreiber 1999) and 15% of the Bhojpuri indentured were Muslims (Deerpalsingh 2000).

In the 1830s to 1850s, the indentured population also consisted of Tribal groups who gradually became merged with the *Hindu* population. This is evident from a sample study of Civil Status Records of this population. In their new identity papers, they did not put down any caste. A new identity thus appears to emerge in Mauritius, that of casteless Hindus, due to indenture.

One can infer that the numerous 'Vaish', identified in Mauritius today, probably belonged to other castes before indenture. This is to be regarded as another example of upward caste mobility. But such upward mobility often goes hand in hand with temptations to deny the popular origins they shared with other indentured peoples. This reluctance to acknowledge their real history may explain the MGI's insistence that caste information of indentured not be revealed to public. This attitude is reminiscent of descendants of slaves in Mauritius as well as descendants of convicts in Australia. In Mauritius, however, this is tied up with claims of political representation and caste quotas.

Upward mobility was also possible through inter-caste marriage. Numerous examples exist in family histories.

## What happens to caste during indenture

Observers, such as Hollup, have focused on the loss of caste identity during indenture. Three main arguments, linked together, are used:

- The fact of leaving India;
- Crossing the 'black waters' (*kala pani*);
- Settlement in estate camps.

More precisely, the length of the voyage, the distance from the Indian homeland have been stressed as factors leading to the impossibility of exporting the caste system. On board the ships, commensality was the main issue. Once in the Mauritius camps, the occupational neutrality, the obstacles to caste endogamy, the actual sharing of living and working conditions with non-Hindus have all been considered fatal to maintenance of the Indian-style caste system among indentured s. A rigorous assessment of such issues leads to a more nuanced conclusion.

- Leaving the Indian territory

Let us first quote a very common discourse, contemporaneous with indenture: that of the Hindu Nationalist ideology in India. This ideology arises in India the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the anti-colonial and nationalist movements. The necessity for arousing a feeling of unity led some leaders to foster the idea of a unique land linked by Hinduism. It is based on the idea that India is, consubstantially and exclusively, Hindu.<sup>2</sup> The Indian landscape is identified with a Hindu Goddess (Bharat Mata, 'Mother India'), which is restated and built by pilgrimage networks linking the various *Hindu* sacred places all over India (Claveyrolas, 2008). As a result of such an ideology, Muslims and Christians cannot claim an Indian identity: "In India, one can only be *Hindu*' (ibid). But this ideology also stresses that one can only be *Hindu* in India.

A second, and more recent, discourse, is linked to the first: that of Indianists, who came to the conclusion that the *Hindu* identity was entirely expressed through caste membership. In an earlier section ('Castes in India'), the idea that this belonging lies on the logic of purity stressed by *Hinduism* through a permanent concern to protect oneself from ritual pollution thanks to strict living conditions, mainly caste endogamy, and the taboos of contact and commensality with inferiors.

One of the symbols of this link between leaving India and the disintegration of caste is the supposed tradition of 'depot marriages', when candidates for indenture would marry just before departure in order to satisfy the needs and preferences of planters for married couples. But Marina Carter (1995) among other Researchers, stresses that such depot marriages, even when not respecting caste or religion criteria, were actually too few to disrupt endogamous traditions as a general rule.

- Crossing the Black Waters

The perception of the crossing of Black Waters - *kala pani* - has become a key narrative of indenture in the literary academic community. Indologists Louis Renou and Jean Filliozat,<sup>3</sup> explain that, 'travelling by sea is a disruptive behaviour in social and private life', resulting in a necessary expiation process. Travelling by boat means both exposing oneself to living conditions concretely

incompatible with caste purity requirements (promiscuity, commensality, etc.) and leaving the only territory where it is possible to be a *Hindu*, and to belong to a caste. These concepts were supposedly put to the test on board the ship.

Alternative concepts of the caste system have, however, emerged as a result of indenture. Friendships formed on board by individuals were described as '*jahaji bhai*' (brothers of the boat) and this equalitarian relation has been preserved up to today in many families. This, however, involved *Hindu* and non-*Hindu* families. Further research is required on *jahaji bhai* relationships and marriage restrictions between, them as has been undertaken for Guyana. The questions are: Did such relations, and marriage strategies, disrupt caste differences, or did they reaffirm them?

It is, as a consequence, necessary to re-focus on castes as both structural and flexible. One must remember the original flexibility of the Indian system, naturally enhanced in exceptional contexts. Indian *Hindus* are familiar with stories explaining and justifying why a Brahmin was led to eat dog meat, because in such or such a-dharmic conditions, it was still better for him to break this taboo than to die. Much significantly still, it was his duty! It will not come as a surprise that the boat crossing the sea from India to Mauritius was sometimes assimilated to the temple of Juggernaut (a famous pilgrimage place where castes are supposed to be erased through devotion), where caste restrictions could be temporarily suspended without breaking the overall taboo and further consequences.

Caste regulations were not totally absent from the boat. Brahmins and high castes managed to keep their purity by refusing to eat cooked meals on board or benefiting from certain occupational exemptions (Carter 1995).

The theoretical perspective of associating the departure from India with a disintegration of caste system does not hold, therefore, as detailed indentured studies and family histories have shown.

The association of losing one's caste with the sea voyage constitutes a Brahminic vision of caste and *Hinduism*. Thus, by continuing to use this perspective, we are perpetuating an ultra-minority elite perspective and applying to the experience of the majority of the population which was not of those origins. Only orthodox high castes were concerned with the strictest taboos and prescriptions. An Untouchable individual walking in the streets, bathing, eating, worshipping, was only marginally concerned with pollution preoccupations and with the consequent possible loss of his caste-*jati* identity.

Leaving India was probably never a taboo for non-Brahmins. The actual experience of immigrants needs to be fully researched by more in-depth detailed studies. Furthermore, South Indian experiences of caste were different and Tamils were not so concerned with the automatic loss of caste identity through indenture. Similarly, Tribals, Muslims and Christians did not have any reason to bother about the taboos of leaving Indian territory and crossing the sea.

The tradition of inter-province or inter-region migration was prevalent in Northern India and in 'Bhojpuri territory' (Servan-Schreiber 2001, 2010). There are also well documented traditions of river and maritime voyages which contradict the representation that individuals' caste and other identity were incompatible with their leaving their region.

If one turns to popular traditions, and not to 'elitist' textual ones, it is observed that the repertoires of Bhojpuri folksongs in India are all centered on exile. Ironically, it is only, once he was settled in Mauritius, that the Bhojpuri 'eternal immigrant' relegated as secondary the traditional themes of the exiled individual (*bideshiya*)! As a result, it seems difficult to associate the departure of Indian indentured labourers for Mauritius with to the rupture of a fundamental taboo, and to an inevitable radical loss of caste identity.

It is also important to question the perception of caste as a rigid hierarchical system. The caste system was contested, sometimes violently, throughout India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a far different situation from the stereotype of individuals passively submitting to caste oppression. This stereotype of the 'docile' 'submissive' victim came to be shared in Mauritius by White planters, Creoles, but also by Mauritian Bhojpuri themselves (Boodhoo 1999, Hazareesingh 1973). Rather, it is the combative and aggressive reputation of the Bhojpuri that justified their massive incorporation

in the Mughal and British armies, or their leading role in the famous Sepoy mutiny against the British.

Orthodox elites in India have managed to elaborate various strategies to cope with these taboos, and particular vigilance was exercised during sea voyages and upon the return journey. Gandhi's refusal to submit to such rites kept him apart from his caste his entire life. The British recognized these taboos as the case of the Bengal regiment, essentially composed of Brahmins, Kshatriya and high-caste Muslims, were exempted from being sent out of India.

### Settling in estate camps

The first Indians to arrive in the 1830s, 1840s, shared the same living and working spaces as the ex-slave population still on the estates. Ritual purity and occupational specialization were left behind during the sea voyage and the installation in camps. These spaces have been cited as presenting obstacles to the reproduction of the Indian caste system in Mauritius by Hazareesingh and Benoist, among others, who stated that Indian indentured labourers waited until they left the estates to settle in villages (in the 1880's) to reproduce the Indian social structure.

In the camps, the absence of spatial segregation and of occupational specialization is presented as incompatible with castes rules and regulations. But detailed reports from sugar estates show that, when requested, estate owners acceded to high caste immigrants, and Muslims, desire to be housed separately from other (lower caste) immigrants breeding pigs. Thus, the caste system did survive in spatial arrangements on estates and as important criteria in private life, especially as far as marriages were concerned. As for settling regulations when it comes to acquiring land, Allen notes that 'it was not uncommon for persons of the same or comparable caste status to purchase land near one another in a specific locality' (167), adding that other criteria were to be considered, such as religious affiliations and *jahaji bhai* relationships.

Regional origins were yet another important identity marker. The historical record shows 'a certain propensity for immigrants from the same home district in India to settle near one another' (Allen, 167). Marina Carter (1995) also explains how the strategies of 'returnees' for recruiting new labourers reinforced the process of bringing together people from the same district and villages. This strategy, based on the returnee's social network enabling him to contact and convince new candidates, was bound to help maintain caste solidarity and logic.

Castes with the largest numbers of individuals, such as the Ahir, the Chamar or the Dusadh, were probably more prone to endogamy and consequently, to a reinforcement of their caste identity, whereas castes with fewer members, incapable of maintaining endogamy, were probably led to renegotiate their status in the local hierarchy through new marriage and life-style strategies. The universe of plantation estates was not at all unknown to Bhojpuri s, as these existed in India as well. The estate camps would not necessarily represent a major rupture with the compulsory conditions of the caste system.

To conclude, indentured immigrants from Bihar were able to leave their native region and thus were not necessarily prone to caste identity loss. Neither were they individuals submitted to a fixed caste logic unable to adapt to new living and working conditions or to contact with other cultures. Indenture for this group did necessarily involve the loss of the caste system.

MAURITIAN VOICES: A SELECTION OF ARCHIVAL NOTES

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview JF18/A/PLAINE MAGNIEN/ 16/07/2010		
FOLDER No:	S/A18		
Interviewers:	Dreesha (Research Assistant) and Smita (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:		Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	Hindu		
Location of interview :	Plaisance, at her place		
Date of interview :	16 July 2010		
Starting time: 16 00	Finishing time: 16 40	Duration: 40 mins.	
Mode of recording:	Audio-phone		
Language used :	Creole and Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	Good We had to make several pauses, as interviewee was regularly interrupted.		
Other people present:	Her grand children, but afterwards she left.		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	The interviewee is 70 years old. She lives at Plaisance, Plaine Magnien. Her mother reared animals (cows). Her father on the other hand did several jobs like: vegetables seller, driver. He even worked in the army. The interviewee has five children; four sons and one daughter. She had four sisters and five brothers. The interviewee married at the age of seventeen. She lived at Saint Pierre and later came to live at Plaine Magnien. The interviewee belongs to the <i>ravidas</i> caste group. She also member in a Rajput socio religious organization. One of the daughters-in -aw of the interviewee is a Halwaii.		
Summary of main points	<p>She mentioned several castes like: maraze, ahir, halwaai, dusads, chamaar. She stated that the ravidas and chamar are the same.</p> <p>High castes did not eat in home of low castes. The low castes as well were embarrassed to eat in home of high castes. The interviewee made it clear that up to now the high castes did not eat in low castes' homes. The low castes sat outside to eat and the high castes threw the utensils in which the low castes ate.</p> <p>She stated that the low castes were of dark complexion and the high castes were of fair complexion.</p> <p>High castes and low castes dressed in the same way.</p> <p>At Saint Pierre there was a well in the high castes yard.</p> <p>Concerning Baharia pooja, the high castes did the sacrifice of "bouc" and the low castes on the other hand did the sacrifice of pigs.</p> <p>The high castes did not eat pig, but the low castes ate.</p> <p>She stated that in the past low castes did not get jobs in offices.</p> <p>Now even the high castes came at her place for wedding.</p> <p>Concerning politics- party loyalty seems to be important for the interviewee. She also stated that in the past in socio religious organizations they made campaigns on caste line.</p> <p>When choosing people to cook food in weddings; caste was important.</p>		
Personal Observation	The interviewee was really embarrassed when she stated that she is from the Ravidas caste group. After that we took a pause as someone called her. After the pause, when she came back she told us that her "grand dad" was an indenture and she was a high caste, Her daughter too got married in high caste- Halwaai, Her sisters too getting married in high caste and that her daughter in law too is from a high caste more precisely the Halwaai. She seemed a bit ashamed of her caste identity that is why she started telling us about her close ones who got married in high castes.		
Remarks	The interviewee was really embarrassed when she told us that she belongs to the ravidas caste group. She looked down. Her tone also changed. She was also embarrassed when we asked her to tell us more about Rahh pooja. She lowered her tone when she mentioned the word "cochon".		

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview PB10/A/PLAINE MAGNIEN/ 08/07/2010		
FOLDER No:	S/A10		
Interviewers:	Dreesha (Research Assistant) and Smita Gya (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:		Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	Hindu		
Location of interview :	Plaine Magnien at her place		
Date of interview :	8 July 2010		
Starting time: 10 00	Finishing time: 10 45	Duration: 45 mins	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole and Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	Good		
Other people present:	None		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<p>The interviewee is 65 years old. She grew up at Cluny; presently she is living at Plaine Magnien. She has three children. Her grandfather and grandmother (father's side) came from India. She was a Telugu but married in a <i>Hindu</i> family. She did not go to school and did not work. She has eleven brothers and five sisters. Before marriage she was from the <i>redcolou</i> caste.</p>		
Summary of main points	<p>She mentioned several castes : dhobi, chamar, ahir  She stated that high castes did not invite low castes at their wedding. The high castes did not eat at low castes place.  She stated that in the village of Cluny, caste was important  When neighbours fought, people said that they are chamar.  She stated that there were many Babujee where she lived (in Cluny)  She was from the redcolu "gotra". Once a priest asked her about her gotra and, she had to ask her sister in law about that.  In making friends; caste was not important, the interviewee had friends from different ethnic groups.  The interviewee mother did not look at the caste issue when she married her children. Her brother and sisters married in different castes. Some of her brothers even married in low castes. It should be noted that most of her brothers and sisters had an arranged marriage.  She pointed out that in the past low caste did not have the right to enter high castes houses. The interviewee "grand mama" did not let others enter.  Low castes did not have the right to enter in temples.  Concerning Baharia pooja; the low castes did a sacrifice of a pig and the high castes on the other hand gave a "bouc" (GOAT).  She told us that someone even killed her daughter because the latter loved a low caste boy and was also pregnant of his child.  She knows that her neighbours are from the low castes. But they go to eat at each other's place.  Many people get baptized so as to get good jobs.  Politics- party loyalty shapes her voting behaviour.</p>		
Personal Observation	<p>When doing the interview, we get the impression that even though the interviewee knows quite a lot on the caste issue but caste does not seem to be very important for her. Before and after the interview she made it clear that she does not lay emphasis on caste. However, it should be noted that the interviewee knows the caste of all her neighbours. She helped us a lot for our field work. We found that she is aware of almost all the people (those who live at La Grotte Road, Plaine Magnien) castes.</p>		
Remarks	When she mentioned the word "cochon"; she seemed very embarrassed and she smiled.		

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview R012/A/PLAINE MAGNIEN/ 09/July/2010		
FOLDER No:	S/A12		
Interviewers:	Smita Gya (Researcher) Dreesha Teelwah (Research Assistant)		
Name of Interviewee:	R.O.	Anonymous	
		Not Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	<i>Hindu</i>		
Location of interview :	Plaine Magnien		
Date of interview :	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2010		
Starting time: 12:20pm	Finishing time:12:47pm	Duration: 26min24sec	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole and Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	Not so good		
Other people present:	Grand-child and Niece		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Oogar, aged over 80-years, was born at Grand Bois. She does not remember her exact age and also at what age she got married.</li> <li>• Her father passed away when she was a child and her mother worked as a at Grand Bois.</li> <li>• She does not remember her grand-parents. She had one brother and two sisters, who all passed away.</li> <li>• Among her 6 children, 2 passed away.</li> <li>• She is well aware of Jaat/Paat.</li> <li>• She talks in a low tone due to health problem</li> <li>• She belongs to the <i>Kurmi</i> caste which is within the <i>Vaish</i> caste</li> <li>• She gave useful information about how previously people of higher caste were indifferent to people belonging to lower caste in Mauritius</li> </ul>		
Summary of main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At first she confused caste with ethnicity and gave example of Jaat as creole and Muslim</li> <li>• She said that even among the Vaish caste there are differences. The <i>Vaish</i> caste is further divided into lower <i>Vaish</i> and higher <i>Vaish</i> caste. For instance the Halwai caste belongs to the lower <i>Vaish</i> group</li> <li>• The kurmi caste is higher than the koyri caste</li> <li>• Among the lower caste, there is the <i>Rabidas</i> caste and the <i>nonia</i> caste, and then the lowest caste is the <i>Dosad</i> caste. All these castes are subcastes of the Chamar caste.</li> <li>• Caste is still very important for her. She will never eat or drink water at a Chamar's place as the low caste people rear pigs and eat pork.</li> <li>• When she was invited at a Dosad's wedding, she went and leave a gift but did not have food or drink there.</li> <li>• Previously, people from the Dosad caste accepted that they belonged to a lower caste and accepted not to be invited to sit and eat inside a higher caste's house. But now these people of lower caste get angry and do not accept to be treated like this.</li> <li>• In the past, caste played a very important role in arranged marriages. She got married in her own caste and married all her children in the same caste.</li> <li>• Long ago, if a person belonging to the Chamar caste accidentally touched the dress of a high caste, then the high caste person immediately went to have a bath and wash his/her clothes.</li> <li>• During childhood, she was not allowed to have friends of lower castes.</li> <li>• Previously, all priests were from the Brahmin caste. She firmly believes that a priest from a Brahmin caste will be more knowledgeable than a priest from the <i>Vaish</i> caste</li> <li>• People belonging to the Chamar caste were not allowed to touch golden jewelleryes.</li> <li>• She also talks about the <i>dhobi</i> caste, which is considered to be a low caste</li> <li>• River was used by both higher and lower caste</li> <li>• She worked as a at Mon Desert Mon Trésor Sugar estate and casteism was not present on workplace</li> <li>• All caste used to have Godna of the same design</li> <li>• Long ago, love marriage was not accepted and inter caste marriages was strictly forbidden. If it happened that a daughter in law came from a lower caste, then the mother in law</li> </ul>		

	<p>would never eat the food cooked by her daughter in law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There existed two types of kalimaye, one for high caste people and one for low caste people. These kalimaye are still present today at Plaine Magnien</li><li>• She is not aware if there is casteism in politics.</li></ul>
Personal Observation	<p>She was not afraid to talk about the low caste people and did narrate clearly how low caste people were treated long ago, how people considered them to be of inferior nature</p> <p>Interview was carried out in a veranda and her niece translated some of our questions from Creole to Bhojpuri to her</p>
Remarks	<p>THE INTERVIEWEE HAD HEARING PROBLEM AND TALKED IN A LOW TONE</p>

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview GP05/A/TROIS BOUTIQUES/ 11/06/2010		
FOLDER No:	M/B141		
Interviewers:	Dreesha (Research Assistant) and Smita (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:	G.P.	Not anonymous	x
Ethnicity:	Telugu		
Location of interview :	Trois Boutiques at her place		
Date of interview :	11 June 2010		
Starting time: 10 22	Finishing time: 11 33	Duration: 1hr 11 mins	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole		
Sound condition:	Good		
Other people present:	Her grand children		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<p>The interviewee is 66 years old. She was born at Port Louis. She grew up at Quatre Bornes. Later when she got married she came to live at Trois Boutiques. She has 3 children. She was very at ease to talk about the caste issue. She is from the <i>naaggotu</i> caste group (HIGH CASTE).</p> <p>The interviewee sister got married in a <i>Hindu</i> family; her father did not like and fought a lot.</p> <p>The interviewee's brother married a girl from a low caste. In the Telugu community they use the word <i>gotra</i> to refer to caste. She said that in the Telugu community there are four castes: the first one The <i>telga</i>, the second one the <i>naaggotu</i> and the other two she does not remember.</p>		
Summary of main points	<p>The interviewee family were <i>telga</i> . This caste group as she pointed out used to make oil. She got married in the <i>naaggotu</i> caste group. The <i>telga</i> is a higher caste than the <i>naaggotu</i>. However there is not a big gap between these two. The <i>telga</i> is the highest caste and then comes the <i>naaggotu</i>.</p> <p>The interviewee's father did not like that she was married in the <i>naaggotu</i> caste group. He rarely came at the interviewee place but whenever he present himself he neither eat nor drink. The interviewee father in law was really angry and one day he told him that if he did not drink a glass of water he will have to take his daughter away, then the interviewee's father had a glass of water and in the evening even ate at his daughter's place.</p> <p>The interviewee got 2 wedding proposals, but his father rejected both because of the caste factor. The interviewee engagement was broken one week before it took place because his father learned that the boy was from a different caste. Her father once even told her that he will cut her throat if she marries in another caste.</p> <p>Concerning her brother's wife who was from a low caste, the interviewee's father did not eat when her daughter in law prepared food. He never took water from her hands. But when the daughter in law was pregnant he was very happy and said that a <i>telga</i> is coming- that is a new <i>telga</i> will be joining his family.</p> <p>The interviewee also talks about <i>nonia</i>- low caste in the <i>Hindu</i> community. She said that the <i>nonia</i> perform prayers with pig. She was referring here to sacrifices. The interviewee's neighbour is a low caste and once the interviewee even asked her neighbour about her caste but the latter said that she forgot about it.</p> <p>During weddings and prayers the priest still asks about the "gotra" (caste). Nowadays anybody can become a priest, in the past only high caste became priest. In the past only the high caste had the right to go in the "mandiram" (temple). She even points out that in L'escalier there are three kovils. The first one for the high castes, the second one for the low castes and the last one for the lowest castes. At la Barraque kovil the priest still asks about caste before performing prayers. She further argues that she prays <i>Mahavishnu</i> and this god is a high caste. She remembers that a low caste woman once came in the mandiram and she was slapped by a high caste man; she was even asked to go away. The Tookay kovil at Camp Diable is for the high caste.</p> <p>In making friends- caste was unimportant</p> <p>The interviewee's father in law considered the caste issue when he married his children. One brother in law of the interviewee married a low caste. He did not inform his parents, he went to marry at the girl's place because he knew that his father would make issue concerning the caste of the girl. When he returned home with his bride he was beaten by his elder brother. The low caste girl was ignored by her in laws, for instance, for new year everybody were invited except her. The father in law never talked with her daughter in</p>		

	<p>law. Once the girl's mother came and the father in law told her that she is a low caste. The low caste girl was fed up and in the end she left her home. However the interviewee, whose caste was higher than her in laws, was well treated as compared to the other daughter in law who belong to a lower caste.</p> <p>The high caste put a "godna" (tattoo) on their forehead. The chain that a bride receives from her in laws when she get marry is different, for instance, the one for the high caste is in the form of a betel leaf and the one for the low caste in the form of a bowl. The high caste put a "phooli" (piercing) in their nose.</p> <p>As far as work is concerned high caste used to beat low castes with whip. The interviewee father in law got beaten by a high caste.</p> <p>The high castes used the well n the locality, low castes did not have the right to use it. The low castes used taps. In the past only high castes became <i>sirdar</i>. Now any caste can become a <i>sirdar</i>.</p> <p>There were dhobis in the locality; they are considered to be low caste. The high castes never give them clothes to wash. Only the wealthy people took the service of the dhobis.</p> <p>When the interviewee married her children she considered the caste factor. One of her daughter in law is a <i>Hindu</i> but from the <b>Babujee</b> caste. However her daughter married in the Tamil community and not in a high caste. But the boy stays at his in law's place and even started to adopt the rituals and customs of the Telugu.</p> <p>Politics- ethnic factor important</p>
Personal Observation	The caste factor is important for the interviewee. The daughter of the interviewee also agrees that her mother still attaches importance to caste.
Remarks	At some point when the interviewee mentioned the word "cochon" (pig), her tone not only changed but her expression as well changed. She made an expression of repugnance.

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview ET03/A/TROIS BOUTIQUES/ 16/JUNE/2010		
FOLDER No:	M/A134		
Interviewers:	Dreesha Teelwah (Research Assistant) and Smita Gya (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:	E.T.	Not anonymous	
Ethnicity:	Telugu		
Location of interview :	Trois Boutiques at her place		
Date of interview :	16 June 2010		
Starting time: 10 00	Finishing time: 11.00am	Duration: 1hour	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole		
Sound condition:	Good		
Other people present:	None		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<p>The interviewee is 76 years old. She has four children. She has only one sister who lives at Mare D'albert. Her father worked at La Jonchée as <i>sirdar</i>. Her mother was a at Ferney. The interviewee reared cows and hen. She got married at the age of fourteen. She lived in the camp Mon Desert Mon Trésor. The interviewee is from the "<i>kanpolou</i>" caste. Her father too was from the same caste. The interviewee mother on the other hand was a "<i>salolou</i>". The interviewee has a <i>godna</i> on her forehead.</p>		
Summary of main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She was already working by the age of nine and she stated that her <i>sirdar</i> was a <i>maraz</i>.</li> <li>• Her uncle looked at the caste issue before marrying her.</li> <li>• The interviewee's sister married in a low caste. The husband was a drunkard and her sister left her husband.</li> <li>• The interviewee had friends from different ethnic groups.</li> <li>• She did not go to school; she went to mandiram. There caste was unimportant.</li> <li>• She told us that once she was helping in a wedding at Mon Desert Mon Trésor; more precisely in the estate camp of Mon Desert Mon Trésor, she was helping to fill water. A lady threw all the water she filled, because that lady was unaware of the caste of the interviewee. The interviewee mother in law even went to fight over there because of that issue.</li> <li>• The high castes people perform prayers prior to the low castes people.</li> <li>• High castes and low castes used the same taps for filling water.</li> <li>• Both high and low castes used river water but the interviewee went to another place in the river to bath (in the upper course of the river as she was of high caste).</li> <li>• Low castes did not have the right to cook food in high castes weddings. The interviewee grand mother went to weddings but never ate there.</li> <li>• High castes gave the sacrifice of "bouc" (goat), the low castes on the other hand gave the sacrifice of pig.</li> <li>• Both castes dressed in the same way.</li> <li>• She considered the caste issue when she married her children. Even for her grand children, the interviewee stated that she will take the caste factor into consideration.</li> <li>• Before voting, she does not look at the castes of candidates.</li> </ul>		
Personal Observation	<p>The caste factor is important for the interviewee. She also tends to think that because of caste that the wedding of her sister and brother in law came to an end. The question of purity also seems to be important to her. This was confirmed when her neighbours stated that she still does not eat at low castes weddings.</p>		
Remarks	<p>When she mentioned the word "cochon" (pig) her tone changed. She started playing with her hands. She seemed a bit hesitated to admit that <i>telga</i> was the highest caste. She was giving us the impression that her caste is the highest. For instance during field work; she told us "mo bien grand nation moi" (I am from a high caste). Now that she had to admit that <i>telga</i> is the highest; she seemed a bit embarrassed. Please note that the consent form was explained before the interview to the interviewee. After the interview, she told us that she looks at only party and then vote.</p>		

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview GS19/A/TROIS BOUTIQUES/ 28/05/2010		
FOLDER No:	M/A134		
Interviewers:	Dreesha (Research Assistant) and Smita Gya (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:	G.S.	Anonymous	
		Not Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	Telugu		
Location of interview :	Trois Boutiques, at his place		
Date of interview :	28 May 2010		
Starting time: 11 00	Finishing time: 12 07	Duration: 1 hr 07 mins	
Mode of recording:	Audio-phone		
Language used :	Creole		
Sound condition:	Good		
Other people present:	None		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee is 63 years old. He is also known as Dev. He was born at Trois Boutiques. He stated that he is from the <b>Telgavolou</b> gotra (caste).</li> <li>• He has two sons and one daughter. All of them are married. One of his sons even married a <i>Hindu</i> girl. (Before the interview he told us that he is proud to have a <i>Hindu</i> girl in his family.)</li> <li>• He has three sisters. His father worked as <i>sirdar</i> at Savannah Sugar Estate and his mother as at Mon Desert Mon Trésor Sugar Estate.</li> <li>• Many of his nephews married in the <i>Hindu</i> community. Her wife’s family belongs to the <b>salolu</b> caste. According to him, there is not a big gap between the <b>telga</b> and <b>salolu</b> caste.</li> </ul>		
Summary of main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caste was as per occupation, For instance, the <b>salolou</b> sew clothes, and those who made shoes were considered as low castes. The hairdressers were also considered as low castes. He mentioned several castes like: <b>Brahmans</b> who represent intelligence, then the <b>kshatri</b> who represent the arms, the <b>Vaish</b> who represents the stomach and the <b>shudras</b> who represent the feet. He also mentioned the caste <b>manlolou</b>.</li> <li>• Low castes were made to sit outside and the “banc” (bench) on which they sat, was kept in a garden.</li> <li>• Castes were important in the past, for instance high castes did not mingle with low castes.</li> <li>• He told us that once an engagement was broken a few hours before because they learned that the boy at a time was working as hairdresser and the hairdresser job is considered as a job performed by low castes. They blamed the family that they hide the caste of the boy. (But it should be noted that the family was a high caste only the occupation of the descendants were hairdresser).</li> <li>• Parents did not let friends from other ethnic groups to enter their house.</li> <li>• At school caste was not important.</li> <li>• His family ask about the gotra (caste) when they go to see a girl for marriage.</li> <li>• Presently, according to the interviewee, caste is disappearing in Trois Boutiques.</li> <li>• He stated that the low castes are progressing now, for instance they are more intellectuals in their house as compared to high castes. (Here the interviewee mean that low caste are sometimes more educated than high caste people)</li> <li>• He also knows about caste in the <i>Hindu</i> community, he mentioned that some castes in the <i>Hindu</i> community do sacrifice of animals, some gave the sacrifice of “coq” (cock) and “bouc” (goat) and others did the sacrifice of pig.</li> <li>• Brahman who did prayers at low castes place did not eat there.</li> <li>• He stated that the dhobi were of fair complexion and they were really beautiful people.</li> <li>• At work, caste was not important. They look rather at the personality (character) of the person.</li> <li>• Both castes (high and low) had the right to go to kalimaye and mandiram.</li> <li>• He also talks on politics. For instance the politicians refused to put two high castes candidates to contest election in the same constituency.</li> </ul>		
Personal Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee seems to know about caste from publications and documentary films. For instance, he talks about Swami Dayanand and even makes reference to the bible and the situation in India.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After the interview he told us to watch some documentary films on a specific channel, where we will get more information on caste.</li><li>• The interviewee, even though he is from the high caste, he is not too strict about the caste factor, because after the interview he told us that he goes to eat at low castes' places also. The fact that he does not attach too much importance to the caste issue can be explained by this fact</li></ul>
Remarks	<p>There was an expression of pride when he stated that he is a <i>telga</i> (high caste). He was much hesitated when he mentioned the word "<i>Ti cochon</i>" (pig). Whenever he mentioned the word "<i>cochon</i>" he played with his hands. At some point he did not even wanted to mention the word <i>cochon</i> and instead he said "<i>bel bel zafer la</i>" (these big things). There was a smile on his face when he mentioned that, he also looked down. At a point he stated that in the <i>Hindu</i> community there is a group who did prayer with pigs, at that time he lowered his tone and looked around him.</p>

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview DB12/A/TROIS BOUTIQUES/ 03/June/2010		
FOLDER No:	M/A132+M/A133		
Interviewers:	Smita Gya (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:	D.B.	Anonymous	
		Not Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	Hindu		
Location of interview :	Union Vale, Trois Boutiques		
Date of interview :	03 June 2010		
Starting time:11 01am	Finishing time:11 19am	Duration: 18 min	
Mode of recording:	Audio-phone		
Language used :	Creole & Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	People talking behind and background noise		
Other people present:	Her children and her neighbour		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lady at first was very reluctant to talk. She agrees to do the interview only when her son convinced her that the interview will last only a few minutes. Consequently the questionnaire could not be administered properly and I had to go directly on the subject. The interview was done in her garden.</li> <li>• Mrs. Boodhun is over 80 years old. Her mother was Bengali (In Mauritius often confused/considered as a caste).</li> <li>• She got married at 9 years old and she gave birth to 13 children</li> <li>• <b>She is one among the oldest people who lives in Union Vale estate camp</b></li> </ul>		
Summary of main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She confirmed the fact that caste system did exist in the past. For instance she said that people from the Kurmi caste will marry only within their caste</li> <li>• Her parents used to live at Camp Diable, and then they moved to Union Vale estate camp, where she presently stays.</li> <li>• Jaat (caste) was very important when wedding took place</li> <li>• She stated that in Union Vale presently there are people of the following caste: <b>Chamar and Doosad</b></li> <li>• 'Madras' (Tamils) was defined as being a 'nation'</li> <li>• She stated that <b>Bhouya</b> is a 'ti nation' (low caste)</li> <li>• <b>Rabidas</b> caste used to sew shoes, and they are considered as being among the lowest caste</li> <li>• (The purity factor was present), for instance if a <b>Doosad</b> or a <b>Chamar</b> sat on a bench, it had to be washed</li> <li>• In the past, in High caste weddings, low castes were not invited</li> <li>• And if ever they were invited then a separate table was kept for the low caste people</li> <li>• (Purity factor) if a <b>Chamar</b> or <b>Doosad</b> went to fill water from a tap, the Brahmin caste would not touch the buckets of those low caste but will take water from the tap in a another bucket</li> <li>• If wedding took place at a <b>Chamar's</b> place, the high caste people would neither attend that wedding nor would eat there</li> <li>• (She is aware of Kaccha/Pakka); she said that if a <b>chamar</b> is a gardener, then the High caste people may buy his/her vegetables but if food is cooked by a low caste then the high caste people would not accept that food</li> <li>• Moreover when a Brahmin came to perform prayers at the houses of low caste people then he used to only take the <i>dakshina</i> as this is bought not cooked, he would not eat there</li> <li>• Long ago, people used to ask about other people's caste. If ever a low caste came at the place of a high caste for fixing matrimonial alliances, high caste people would not give water to drink of a bench to sit to that low caste person.</li> <li>• High caste people would not drink water at the house of a low caste</li> <li>• Before, each caste had to look for a bride/bridegroom in his/her own caste. Presently it is not the case, inter-caste marriage do take place</li> <li>• Previously, if a daughter-in-law came from a low caste family, she had to endure the swearing of her in laws. Some sons were obliged to leave the house of his parents because he married a girl from a low caste</li> <li>• Both low caste and high caste dressed the same way</li> <li>• She considered the caste factor when marrying her children but could not do so for all her children. Some of her children married in other caste than that of hers</li> <li>• There was one <i>kalimaye</i> in the locality and both high and low caste used to pray there</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The occupation of <i>sirdar</i> was based on education rather than on caste factor. There were also <i>sirdars</i> of low caste</li> <li>• The 'Whites' did not use the term 'grand nation/ti nation' at the workplace</li> <li>• At first she said that <i>Baharia pooja</i> was performed by all castes, and then afterwards she said the contrary. The animal sacrificed differ; high caste sacrificed goats and low caste sacrificed pigs</li> <li>• All caste used to have a <i>godna</i>(tattoo). The significance of the godna is that if you have a godna then "when your mother dies, you will go to meet her one day"</li> <li>• Bengali women used to have a godna on their forehead and also on their hands and arms</li> <li>• A Doosad or Chamar had to marry his/her son/daughter in the same caste not in a higher one</li> <li>• She confused ethnicity with caste</li> <li>• One of her son married a Christian girl. Another son married a girl for a lower caste, she was forced to accept as it was a love marriage</li> <li>• She was proud to reveal that her daughter and grand-daughter married in her own caste (Ahir)</li> </ul>
Personal Observation	Caste was very important in fixing wedding. Parents had to accept that their children married a lower caste only if it was a love marriage
Remarks	ALL QUESTION COULD NOT BE ADMINISTERED TO HER AS SHE HAD RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS AND WAS IN A HURRY TO FINISH THE INTERVIEW. ONLY KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT CASTE WERE ASKED.

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview BL01/A/PLAINE MAGNIEN/ 07/07/2010		
FOLDER No:	D/A2		
Interviewers:	Dreesha Teelwah (Research Assistant) & Smita Gya (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:		Anonymous	✓
		Not Anonymous	
Ethnicity:	<i>Hindu</i>		
Location of interview :	Plaine Magnien, at her place		
Date of interview :	07 July 2010		
Starting time:13 00	Finishing time:14 01	Duration: 1 hour 1 min	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole and Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	(background noise)		
Other people present:	Her daughter in law and her grand children		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee is 80 years old. She has seven children- 4 sons and 3 daughters. She is from the <b>Babujee</b> caste group (high Caste). When she stated that, there was an expression of pride in her face. Her tone also became louder.</li> <li>• The interviewee's father in law was an indentured . The latter came to Mauritius from Banaras. As far as her mother in law is concerned, the latter's father was bringing indentured s to work in Mauritius (He was an agent).</li> <li>• Her husband and also her father in law were very strict about the caste issue. Before the interview (when she was alone with us). She told us that all her children married in the <b>Babujee</b> caste group; only later in the presence of her daughter in law she revealed that one of her son married a Telugu girl. And the interviewee blushed and her tone changed when she revealed that.</li> <li>• Therefore it can be seen that, the interviewee tried to conceal things; especially that one other daughter in law is a Telugu. But in the presence of another daughter in law, she had to reveal it. It should be noted that, the daughter in law, who was present during the interview was also from a high caste. In fact the daughter in law caste is higher than that of her in laws. When we asked the interviewee whether she eats at low castes wedding; She said yes. But her daughter in law contested that in some way and pointed out that they do not eat at low castes wedding. She did not say that her mother in law does not eat at low caste wedding directly; but she said that at her parents' place (mother and father place), they did not eat at low caste wedding. When she was saying that, she was making a sign to us that her mother in law too does not eat at low caste place. After the interview, the daughter in law told us that her mother in law so not eat at low castes weddings.</li> <li>• When talking about the <b>chamar</b>, she seemed very embarrassed.</li> <li>• The interviewee is of fair complexion (which is attributed to high caste people) and when we asked her about the <b>chamar</b> caste, she blushed. There was a smile on her face, she began playing with her hands and look at her daughter in law. One of her daughter married in the N..... family, supposedly a high caste. When saying that, there was an expression of pride on the interviewee face. When we asked her to give more details on <i>Rahh pooja</i>, (previously performed by the low caste people), she again blushed, smiled and started playing with her hands.</li> </ul>		
Summary of main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She mentioned several castes like: <b>ahir, dhobi, kurmi, Vaish, nonia, dhobi, Halwaai, chamar</b>. In the past people did not like to marry their children in the <b>dhobi</b> caste. She laid emphasis on the caste issue when she married her children. She stated that they all married in the <b>Babujee</b> caste group. Only one son married in Telugu.</li> <li>• At school- caste was unimportant</li> <li>• The interviewee stated that at home, they used to talk about caste.</li> <li>• In the past, high caste did not eat in the wedding of low castes</li> <li>• According to her in the <b>Babujee</b> names there is the suffix Varma and in the <b>maraze</b> name there is Sharma or Chowbey.</li> <li>• She mentioned the caste "gossayne" (High caste) which accordingly is both <b>maraze</b> and <b>Babujee</b>.</li> <li>• She stated that B..... who was from the <b>kshatri</b> caste, and tried to break the caste system in Mauritius but failed.</li> <li>• She stated that the low castes' way of talking were different and she used the word "grossier" (vulgar) and "batayer" (someone who like to fight), in order to define their way of talking.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She told us that in Plaine Magnien, there is a particular place where all people of <b>Junglee</b> caste (a sub caste) live. She added that all <b>junglee</b> are of dark complexion and they married among themselves. She refused to marry her daughter with a boy from the <b>junglee</b> caste, even though the latter had a good job.</li> <li>• She seemed proud of her fair complexion and a bit shy about her Telugu daughter in law's complexion. After the interview she told us that all her daughter in law are of fair complexion, only the Telugu daughter in law has a dark complexion. When we tried to investigate whether there is a link between complexion and caste, the interviewee stated that high castes were of fair complexion and low castes of dark one. However this statement was not recorded.</li> <li>• High castes daughter in law who married in low castes house refused to eat the food cooked by their mother in law.</li> <li>• Concerning politics- for her party loyalty shapes voting behaviour.</li> </ul>
Personal Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caste factor among the high caste, here referring to Babujee caste, is very important</li> <li>• People from high caste still don't eat at the wedding of low caste people. They do attend the wedding but won't eat there</li> <li>• The interviewee's father in law was a recruiting agent of s from India. May be his caste played a key role for this occupation</li> </ul>
Remarks	<p>This is a very interesting case study whereby the interviewee shows interest in talking about the caste system in Mauritius.</p> <p>In this interview we learned about a new caste, the 'junglee', perceived as a low caste in Mauritius. These people are viewed as people of dark complexion and of bad manners, especially for being impolite. The interviewee stated that they lived in a remote hilly place of Plaine Magnien and people of this caste have a tendency to group together.</p>

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview SG09/A/PLAINE MAGNIEN/ 16/07/2010		
FOLDER No:	D/A4		
Interviewers:	Dreesha (Research Assistant) & Smita Gya (Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:	S.G.	Anonymous	
		Not Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	Hindu		
Location of interview :	Plaine Magnien at his place		
Date of interview :	16 July 2010		
Starting time:9:30am	Finishing time:10:30a.m.	Duration: 1hr	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole		
Sound condition:	Background noise		
Other people present:	His wife		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee is 70 years old.</li> <li>• He worked as at Mon Desert Mon Trésor S.E and also as driver at Aviation Civil.</li> <li>• Presently he is not working. He has four brothers.</li> <li>• He has four children; two daughters and two sons. He has six grand children.</li> <li>• He does not remember his grandparents, more precisely from the maternal side. But he remembers his grandparents- paternal side. His grandfather was a <i>sirdar</i> at Gros Bois and his grandmother reared animals.</li> <li>• From information we obtained from field work; we learn that the interviewee is from the <i>Ravived</i> caste.</li> </ul>		
Summary of main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the interviewee one's caste is shaped by his/her occupation. He mentioned several castes: chamar, Halwaai (they make cakes), naw (hairdresser), telli (they made oil), maraze (priests), ahir and koiri.</li> <li>• The interviewee stated that, there was a suicide at Mahebourg because of the caste issue.</li> <li>• His grandmother told him that in the past, they choose people as per caste in weddings to make them eat.</li> <li>• There were more creoles in the civil service. The <i>Hindus</i> on the other hand were dominating in the agricultural sector. <i>Hindus</i> were baptized to get job. Even Mon Père (Priest) asked people to be baptized so as to get job as teacher.</li> <li>• Concerning the way of dressing, godna and in the making of friends, caste was not important.</li> <li>• Concerning politics- Part loyalty is more important.</li> <li>• There were different kalimaye for each caste.</li> <li>• The interviewee attended Rahh ke pooja.</li> </ul>		
Personal Observation	When talking about caste, the interviewee tone was quite loud. He seemed angry. At one point we even took a pause. The interviewee told me, that there had been many injustices due to caste issue. People of high caste did many "dominière". I also tried to ask him about his caste identity when we took a pause but he simply told me: "mo pas in dire ou mo pas croire lor la!".		
Remarks	The facial expression of the interviewee is the same as that of a person who had been victim of injustices and the latter is trying to voice out. The interviewee told us that he does not believe in the caste system but his neighbours (information obtained during field work) stated that he does not mingle with the high castes. Taking the case of Mr. Gopaul he seems ashamed to reveal his caste identity that is why he preferred to tell me that he does not believe in the caste system. Some days after the interview, I met the interviewee and he told me that he is Ravived.		

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/OH07/SG.DT/Interview PB14/A/L'ESCALIER/12/07/2010		
FOLDER No:	S/A14		
Interviewers:	Dreesha (Research Assistant) and Smita Gya ( Researcher)		
Name of Interviewee:	P.B.	Anonymous	
		Not Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	<i>Hindu</i>		
Location of interview :	L'escalier at her place		
Date of interview :	12 July 2010		
Starting time:14 00	Finishing time: 14 50	Duration: 50 min	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole and Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	Background noise		
Other people present:	Her sister in law; the latter also participated in the interview		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee is 63 years old. She lives at L'escalier. She grew up and even got married at L'escalier.</li> <li>• She has two brothers and four sisters.</li> <li>• Her mother and father worked as at Savannah Sugar Estate. They also reared animals.</li> <li>• The interviewee has five children; three daughters and two sons. She got married in the Halwaai sub caste. Her parents were chamar.</li> </ul>		
Summary of main points	<p>For the interviewee someone belongs to a particular caste because of his/ her occupation. For instance those who were educated were called Brahman, those who worked with leather were called chamar, those who washed clothes were called dhobi, those who made garland were called malli, those who cook cakes were called halwaai, those who made utensils of clay were called kahar.</p> <p>She told us that the dusads reared pigs and they did "raah ke pooja". She even explained us how this ritual was carried out.</p> <p>Her children are married in high castes.</p> <p>When she was a child she had friends from different ethnic groups. In making friends caste was not important.</p> <p>High castes did not eat at low castes place. The high castes did not eat in the utensils of the low castes</p> <p>Both high castes and low castes were allowed to go in temples.</p>		
Personal Observation	<p>So far concerning our other interviews, when we ask a woman about her caste identity, she does not tell us the caste of her husband, which has become her caste too after marriage. They tend to tell us the caste of their parents. They first of all identify themselves with the caste or sub caste that they belonged to before marriage. However when we asked Mrs. Boodhun about her caste identity; she told us she is halwaai (the caste of her husband).</p>		
Remarks	<p>The interviewee was very hesitant to talk. When she mentioned that her parents were ravidas, she played with her hands. She seemed very embarrassed.</p>		

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/7/RC_VM/IN/AM 22,23 /A/Grande Retraite/15 <sup>th</sup> September 2010		
FOLDER No:			
Interviewers:	Vickram Mugon {Research Assistant} Riteshwaree Chacoory {Research Assistant}		
Name of Interviewee:		Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	Muslim		
Location of interview :	Grande Retraite		
Date of interview :	15 September 2010		
Starting time:	Finishing time:	Duration: 1hr 47 mins	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Creole		
Sound condition:	Good		
Other people present:	Two Daughter in laws		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <p>The informant was a Muslim man of 86 years old. He was born at Caroline. He did not go to school. He married at the age of 18 years old. He has 5 children. He worked as a merchant selling flower pots, culinary tools, home tools and equipment in his mobile van from street to street.</p> <p><u>Grandparents:</u></p> <p>His grandmother's name was Chandi and she lived in Grande Retraite. She was a housewife and used to look after him and his brother.</p> <p><u>Parents of the informant</u></p> <p>He did not know her mother. His father did not go to school. His father had two sons. His father had re- married another woman and thus got a step brother. His father worked in the fields of Constance sugar estate. His father also worked in the lawn of the whites.</p> <p><u>Work:</u></p> <p>At the age of 10, he cut canes and performed 'dépaillage'<sup>4</sup> in the fields. He also worked as a pest killer and spread fertilizers and fumigants in people's house to prevent against harmful insect like Malaria. He had around 15-20 years of working experience in this field.</p> <p><u>Marriage:</u></p> <p>He married when he reached 18 years old. He mentioned that long ago, Muslim marriage was almost the same. It's nowadays that it is being celebrated with more enthusiasm. He also stated that in 'Nikaah'<sup>5</sup>, everybody group together and read kuran and had dinner.' The 'Miaji' also known as 'Imam' (Muslim priest) was the one who perform the marriage. The Muslim priest needed two witnesses for the marriage ceremony. He also told that Muslim marriage was similar to Christian marriage.</p> <p>According to his daughter in law, before fixing a marriage, in Muslim community, they had to look for lunar period which is auspicious for the marriage.</p> <p>The informant stated that marriage in the same clan was not allowed.</p>		
Summary of main points	<p><u>Life in village:</u></p> <p>In Grande Retraite long ago, there were many straw houses where all Muslim, 'maraz' and Hindu were all mixed and living in the same village. He still remembered during cyclone carol in 1960, there were only houses made up of straws and there was a single Muslim house and 3 Hindu families living in the village. One of the Hindu possessed an iron sheet while the other two lived in straw houses. Clothes were available to the residents of the village, but many could not afford as they were poor and did not have enough money. There was very few shops available during 1945, thus people were provided with rations and even benefit credit facilities with the shopkeepers.</p> <p><u>Relationships with other communities:</u></p> <p>He had a nice relationship with other communities as he used share cakes during Eid or any other festivals.</p> <p><u>Socio religious groups:</u></p> <p>In this village, long ago, there was no mosque, recently a mosque and a madrassa were built. In this madrassa only kuran book was being read in Urdu not in Arab. The kuran nowadays have many versions in Urdu, English, French, Arab, Creole and Urdu. According to his daughter in law, children are at ease to understand kuran in Creole translation than other languages.</p>		

	<p><u><i>Religion and Rituals:</i></u></p> <p>The informant said that in the past, there was no mosque at Grande Retraite. He had to go on foot to Bon Accueil mosque. He had to go Brisée Verdière mosque during Eid festival to do 'Namaz' prayer. For doing namaz prayer, man had to wear 'bonnet'<sup>6</sup>. In 1968, Muslim men used to wear red and black cap. He spoke about when a Muslim child is born, Allah send a 'pharishta' with the child. He also mentioned that everything one does, Allah is listening and the prophet convey all the messages of Allah to the humanity. He said that the Muslim festivals were all same in the past and is still being celebrated. According to him, among <i>Hindu</i>, Puranic and Vedic are just two different names, but the prayers are same.</p> <p>He remembered 'ghoon' festival which was celebrated mostly in cities in the past. Piercing in belly and other parts of body was a type of game which brought a sense of happiness.</p> <p><u><i>Caste:</i></u></p> <p>His daughter in law mentioned that the difference in caste lies just in prayers being performed. She said that there were castes like Sunni and Shiah. It was a small difference in prayers. She further explained that the prayer that made this difference was known as 'fathiya'. Though there are many castes, yet, he revealed that there is only one prophet. This prophet is known as Mohammad but he had many assistants. He did not bother about the Gujratis.</p>
Personal Observation	He did not want to talk about caste issues and preferred to stay quiet. He was a religious person and always refers to Allah. He had a nice relationship with his neighbours from different communities.
Remarks	He also did not like to share in details his religious belief regarding prayers he usually performed.

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/7/RC_VM/IN/KR 16,17 /A/Petite Retraite/02 <sup>nd</sup> September 2010		
FOLDER No:			
Interviewers:	Vickram Mugon {Research Assistant} Riteshwaree Chacoory {Research Assistant}		
Name of Interviewee:	K.R.	Not anonymous	
Ethnicity:	Hindu		
Location of interview :	Petite Retraite		
Date of interview :	02 <sup>nd</sup> September 2010		
Starting time: 1 <sup>st</sup> session:10.30am 2 <sup>nd</sup> session:11.30am	Finishing time: 11.30 a.m. 12.11 p.m.	Duration: 1 <sup>st</sup> Session:1hr 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session:39.21s	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	Noise made by grandchildren		
Other people present:	Grandchildren and neighbour.		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<p><b><u>Background Information</u></b></p> <p>The informant is a widow of 72 years old. She was living with her grandparents. She has been the president of old age group of Petite Retraite since 11 years old. She is a 'snack seller'<sup>7</sup> in textile factory of Denim De L'île Ltée.</p> <p><b><u>Grandparents of the informant:</u></b></p> <p>Her grandparents were living together with her parents.</p> <p><b><u>Parents of the informant :</u></b></p> <p>Her parents had 5 sons and 1 daughter. Her brothers died due to 'dysphonic' disease during Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam period, when he was practicing medicine in Mauritius. She added that the Dr Ramgoolam had been treating these cases.</p> <p><b><u>Education:</u></b></p> <p>She went to Laventure and Bois D'oiseaux primary school. She had studied till Form I at Darwin college of Flacq. She pointed that previously there was only 'below and first'<sup>8</sup> and there were no tuition facilities.</p> <p><b><u>Childhood games:</u></b></p> <p>Though she was already married, she was very childish and used to play marbles with boys, sap si yai, play with elastic bang, feathers of coq, skipping ropes made up of piled of long strong grass known as ' laliane'</p> <p><b><u>Marriage:</u></b></p> <p>She was married when she was 13 years old. Her grandparents had chosen her groom. Her marriage was celebrated till 8 days where 'geet gawai'<sup>9</sup> function was being held all these days. Her marriage was done in puranik.</p> <p><b><u>Living conditions of the informant:</u></b></p> <p>She lived in a straw house with her husband but she was not happy in her in law's house and returned to her parent's house after one week of her marriage.</p>		
Summary of main points	<p><b><u>Life in village:</u></b></p> <p>She mentioned that previously life was difficult, as one had to work or rear animals, save money, rear children, buy land or something else. Even renting a house was expensive. They had to eat boiled sweet potatoes, boiled cassava, and 'satwa' and maize rice in the absence of rice. According to her, Petite Retraite was a good place, were initially straw houses were present and afterwards houses were congregated of iron sheets.</p> <p><b><u>Ethnic group/Caste:</u></b></p> <p>In Petite Retraite, she said that there were no Creole and Muslim communities. There was only <i>Hindu</i>, Telugu and Tamils. Among the <i>Hindus</i>, she explained that people of Ahir caste were in majority in the village.</p> <p><b><u>Baithka:</u></b></p> <p>She went to <i>baithka</i> to learn Hindi. There were two <i>baithkas</i> in the village; one of them was for the 'parjatiya' and other to the low caste. The <i>baithka</i> for parjatiya was found next to a kovil of the main road of Petite Retraite, while the other was found at a person's garage. Her grandparents did not see high and low caste and send her to Mr. Bhunjun's garage. In both <i>baithka</i>, activity such as 'Varshik Utsav was organised on a yearly basis. In these <i>baithka</i> she revealed that the names of people donating for the <i>baithkas</i> were being voiced out in public<sup>10</sup>.</p>		

	<p><b><u>Kalimaye :</u></b> In the kalimaye of her village, people used to sacrifice 'khasi'<sup>11</sup> and 'pathi'<sup>12</sup>. In the past, she mentioned that the meat of the sacrificed animals were being cooked in the kalimaye itself and later on people used to take the raw meat as an offering at home and prepared for food. Nowadays, she said that people no longer do such sacrifices in the kalimaye.</p> <p><b><u>Rituals:</u></b> She indicated that in puranic marriage, the sister in law was one who had the right to put vermilion on the bride's forehead after the groom application of vermilion on the bride's forehead. But in Vedic, this was not the case, only the groom put vermilion on the bride's forehead in the bride's room not in 'Mandap'<sup>13</sup>. High caste people performed rituals for 'grand dimoune'<sup>14</sup>. For the rituals, she indicated that these people offer the spirits 'roti'<sup>15</sup>, 'sardine'<sup>16</sup> and 'tapawan'<sup>17</sup>. While low caste (Ravidas) people sacrifice pigs when a son is born in the family to their 'khul Devta'<sup>18</sup> within 40 days. She revealed that the small dough which was offered to the spirits during this prayer was cooked together with the pork meat. She also stated that Durga pooja was not being performed in the past. She herself performed Durga pooja for 9 years continuously and invited many people at her place.</p> <p><b><u>Marriage and Caste :</u></b> In the past, she explained that grandparents did not let children to grow at age of 16-18 years old, thus, they married these children at a younger age. She revealed that her father made a big sin in marrying another woman from another caste in spite of her present wife. Thus, an elder person from the Ahir caste in the Petite Retraite gave him a punishment and was a lesson for all the people committing a similar mistake. Her father had to wear a garland of garden snail and make round the village with this garland. Her father did not say a word as he was guilty. She said that almost all her children had married in 'Monton' caste except one in Baboojee as her son had a love marriage. The Baboojee caste did not bother about their caste since 'Monton' caste was considered high caste and the boy possessed a good job and a house. She also indicated that now intermixed marriage are becoming popular like Creole and Tamils are marrying persons from other ethnic groups.</p> <p><b><u>Caste:</u></b> She spoke about low caste people were being looked down by high caste people in the past at any event. Even if someone of high caste invited a low caste person to give a help in a function at his place, other relatives (high caste people) were mocking these low caste people and they were looked down.</p>
<p><b>Personal Observation</b></p>	<p>She demonstrated her childhood games she played with her friends. However, when she talked about caste system in her family, she was lowering down her voice and looked a bit scared. She was afraid if someone of her family members entered in the living room while talking on this issue.</p>
<p><b>Remarks</b></p>	<p>She was very friendly and happy to impart her life experience. She gave a lot of examples regarding her own life and others on caste and religious issues.</p>

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:	TJC/7/RC_VM/IN/TB 19/A/Petite Retraite/14September2010		
FOLDER No:			
Interviewers:	Vickram Mugon {Research Assistant} Riteshwaree Chacoory {Research Assistant}		
Name of Interviewee:	Tara Bisram	Anonymous	
Ethnicity:	Bhojpuri		
Location of interview :	Petite Retraite		
Date of interview :	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2010		
Starting time: 10.30am	Finishing time: 11.14 a.m.	Duration: 39.42s	
Mode of recording:	Audiophone		
Language used :	Bhojpuri		
Sound condition	Not so good, noise made by children and television		
Other people present:	Son, grandchild, daughter in law and neighbour.		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <p>The informant is a widow of 82yrs old. She was born at Rivière du Rempart. She was the sole child of her parents. At the age of 16, she married and she came to live at Bois D'oiseaux in an extended family. She has three children. She was a and worked for planters. Her husband had his own ox cart. She came to live with her nuclear family at Petite Retraite.</p> <p><u>Parents of the informant</u></p> <p>She did not know her mother as her mother died shortly after her birth. His father plant tobacco on his own plot of land.</p> <p><u>Grandparents of the informant:</u></p> <p>Her paternal grandfather was born in Mauritius and he died in 1982. He had been working as a <i>sirdar</i> in the planter's field.</p> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <p>The informant did not go to school.</p>		
Summary of main points	<p><u>Life in village:</u></p> <p>The village of Bois D'oiseaux had only one borehole, afterwards the residents were provided with a common tap and finally got private taps at home. She was poor, thus could not even buy clothes as she did not have money .She indicated that when the cyclone Carol passed away in 1960, houses were broken down. The informant's son mentioned that after 1982, there has been development in Mauritius like creation of jobs. She specified that in Petite Retraite, there was a village hall where the roof was of concrete. In this village, there was a Tamil shop on the main road that led to the camp.</p> <p><u>Wage:</u></p> <p>Her initial salary as was Rs. 1.</p> <p><u>Kalimaye :</u> In kalimaye, rituals were being performed by people every year. However, she pointed out "Roti"<sup>19</sup> was being offered to god in kalimaye. The informant's son related that in 1980's, goat was sacrificed in kalimaye.</p> <p><u>Religion:</u> Informant's son stated that Vedic movement 'Arya Samaj' was introduced by Pundit Mohit.</p> <p><u>Marriage and Caste:</u> In the past, she said that people were taking 'jaat- paat'<sup>20</sup> into consideration. One had to marry in the same caste as his/her. She further explained that if one marries in another 'jaat', he/she becomes a stranger in that family. However, if one marries in the same jaat, then all families and relatives are united.</p> <p>She revealed that in her family, except Muslims and Ravidas, she could marry her children to any caste and religion.</p> <p>She also indicated that high caste people did not let low caste people to touch their things especially preparing of food. If ever, low caste were seen to prepare food at one's place, high caste people will leave that place and go away.</p>		
Personal Observation	She could not relate too much as she was helping her daughter in law to prepare food. His son was interfering and did not let his mother to reflect about the past.		
Remarks	Her life was good but she was poor. She was very serious concerning caste system and did not mention her own caste. She gave general views about castes in her village and her own experience.		

INTERVIEW CD REFERENCE NO:			
FOLDER No:	A1 /01/02		
Interviewers:	Vickram Mugon {Research Assistant} Riteshwaree Chacoory ( Nitisha) - {Research Assistant}		
Name of Interviewee:		Anonymous	✓
Ethnicity:	Indo- Mauritian ( <i>Hindu</i> )		
Location of interview :	Laventureure		
Date of interview :	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2010		
Starting time: 10.15am	Finishing time: 11.46 a.m.	Duration: 1hr 31s	
Mode of recording:	Audio-phone		
Language used :	Creole and Bhojpuri		
Sound condition:	Child making noise		
Other people present:	Wife of the informant, grandchild		
Technical problem:	None		
General review	<p><b><u>Background Information</u></b> The informant is 72 yrs old. He was born at Crève Coeur but he knows his history since living in the village of Laventure. His parents had 11 children: 7 boys and 4 girls. He worked as a rice planter, and vegetable planter.</p> <p><b><u>Parents of the informant</u></b> According to him, there was no work for people in the past. His parents reared goats and cows. His father was a seller also known as 'commerçant' used to sell dried foodstuffs commonly referred as 'grain sec' to get an income. In addition, his father also works as a caretaker in a school.</p> <p><b><u>Education:</u></b> There were no government schools in Laventure at that particular time, but he did join Aided School that was managed by the society in Laventure. He was about 12yr when he got opportunity to join the primary level (1<sup>st</sup> Std) for about 6 months and afterwards, the government took the school he could not continue as he had already reach the age of 13yr. His children could not complete their studies as school was not free at that time and they had financial problem. His children had studied up to form 5 level.</p> <p><b><u>Childhood Memories:</u></b> He used to go to school and went to cut grass also known as (coupe l'herbe). When the school had been constructed, his father worked there as a caretaker.</p> <p><b><u>Food</u></b> He highlighted that during 1942-1945, there was world war, they did not had enough food to eat, they used to eat 'biya bouille'<sup>21</sup>, 'manioc'<sup>22</sup> and ' fruit a pain'<sup>23</sup>. With the help of government they were able to manage.</p> <p><b><u>Marriage:</u></b> His father had chosen a girl for him to get married. He had no choice as there were lots of responsibilities regarding his family. He was pressurised to marry at the age of around 25yrs in order to look after his 6 younger brothers and 4 sisters. After marriage he had 5 children (2 sons and 3 daughters). He had to struggle a lot to meet the needs of the family.</p> <p><b><u>Work:</u></b> The interviewee highlighted that it was very difficult to get a job; sugar estates were not giving work at that time. Even 80% one has to work in the harvest period so they could be employed. At the age of 12years old, he quit school and started to work as a rice planter at Mare D'Australia. He used to walk for long hours to reach his work. He did not have a permanent job and worked as a temporary wherever he got a job contract. As a result, he started to plant vegetables including chillies in his own plot of land.</p> <p><b><u>Housing infrastructure</u></b> They were living in an extended family consisting of 25 family members. The informants had taken loan and money from people and even mortgage their jewels in order to get contract and build a house. The kitchen was made up of soil also referred as 'matti ke la cuisine' The house was being cleaned by applying cow dung on the floor which was known as ''maçonner''<sup>24</sup>. He informant's wife stated that when she first entered her in- laws house, the bedroom only consists of a single bed and a small chair. When his brothers settled down and his children also grown up, all of them built their own houses and lived separately.</p>		

<p>Summary of main points</p>	<p><u><i>Life in village:</i></u>                  In the past at Laventure, the lanes were too narrow. The roads were covered on both sides with grasses. Everybody used to live deep inside the village. In the past, there was a borehole from which they used to fetch water from it. Afterwards, the village inhabitants got water from water pumps. During drought period, they used to get water from someone who had sufficiently collected water. Long ago, many buses did not pass through the village and after long hours some buses came into the village. His children were not being able to continue their studies due to these transport problems.</p> <p><u><i>Wage</i></u>                  His father worked as caretaker and received a pay of Rs. 30 on a monthly basis. This salary was spent mostly on the studies of the children. As rice planter, he used to receive a salary of 50 cents per day at the age of 12 years.</p> <p><u><i>Socio Religious groups / Shivala:</i></u>                  In Laventure, there were two 'baithka'<sup>25</sup>, one Guruduth pathshala also known as 'Guruduth Arya Samaj' which was situated near his house. While the other Arya Samaj was far away almost at the other end of the village. Youngsters were not interested in joining the society and people build houses far away and could not walk to the Arya Samaj. Conflicts between families and long distances were the main cause for the establishment of the two societies. According to him, for any person, it was necessary to be part of a society to benefit all the facilities provided by them. The 'Pradhan'<sup>26</sup> were person who were taking decisions and tackle any problems that prompt up in the society. The Guruduth Arya Samaj had a major hand in the construction of the Vedic school. All <i>Hindu</i> went to these societies. (Note: He mentioned that in Laventure there were only <i>Hindu</i> and 2 Christian families )</p> <p><b>Facilities provided by Society:</b>                  The informant appreciated the facilities provided by the Arya Samaj society. Such as woods (lalvesse and bamboo) were provided to build houses. However, members of society also helped to cook food and provide free catering and good hospitality in marriages. In case of death, a compensation of Rs 2000 was provided to the grief family by the society. The grief family now receives an additional of Rs. 500 that is provided by the society from the government subsidies.</p> <p><b>Fine/ punishment in case of absentees in society:</b>                  He highlighted that in the past, if someone was absent in society ( Arya Samaj), the person has to pay a fine of Rs 5 and do 'hawan'<sup>27</sup> at his home as punishment for the number of weeks not visited or participated in the functions of the society. But, nowadays there are not such rules as youngsters are not interested to be a member or joined in this society.</p> <p><b>Shivala:</b>                  The interviewee stated that there is only one shivala present in Laventure commonly known as 'Jharnat Shivalaye'. It was the first shivala which was first constructed in Mauritius in this village, but it was not recognised to be the oldest temple as it was not registered at an earlier period. The informant never went to shivala as he is an Arya Samajist who believes that ''jahan yaad karo, bhagvaan wohi''<sup>28</sup>.</p> <p><u><i>Religion and Rituals</i></u>                  According to the informant, he mentioned that before there were Mumbai, Indians, Tamils and all communities, but no one knew anything about their background families as all live together. Being an Arya Samajist, he used to go to Arya Samaj society and do prayers at home. He mentioned that, ''Dharma par jiyah, dharma par kaam karah''<sup>29</sup>. They usually performed 'yaj'<sup>30</sup> every month among themselves and chant mantra of god 'gayatri mantra'. His father had knowledge of Ramayana, while in his case, he did not know much about it but he told that he had not forgotten his dharma. He mentioned nowadays people every Friday do Ramayana in society which was mostly absent in the past.</p> <p>He highlighted that Aneerood Jugnauth (Prime Minister at that period) insisted that Ramayan should be access to all and all learned persons should become priests and be good preachers and perform marriages.</p> <p>He added that a 'hawan' needs only a few items which are much cheaper to gather to perform the ritual. While prayers at the shivala need more items and it is more costly than performing a hawan. Furthermore, he said that god is not satisfied with money but with love, a simple offer of flower pleases him.</p> <p>In Laventure, they did not know about the type of rituals others performed at their home. He mentioned that some people used to sacrifice animals such as male goat known also as 'khassi' to please god.</p> <p><u><i>Politics</i></u>                  The interviewee affirmed that in elections there should not be any 'jaat- pat' all should be united. He stated that one should look for his own benefits and services and give a vote in the election. From 1967, he never voted 'MMM' political party as he always supported the 'Travailist' party, believing that this party had struggled a lot to win the elections. In addition, he felt proud relating that the party include majority of <i>Hindus</i> who are leading the country. He did not want break up of parties instead support one party that will lead a mandate up to 5years.</p> <p><u><i>Marriage including religion and caste:</i></u>                  In the past, there were lot of 'jaat-pat'<sup>31</sup>. The interviewee's wife related that she did not know about caste before her marriage at 19yr (around 1963's). She mentioned that she had first heard</p>
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	<p>about caste after marriage when arrived in Laventure. She related her own daughter's issues regarding caste system. Her daughter had loved a boy from a high caste family, though she was a low caste and did not know much on caste system, so she did not accept it.</p> <p>Moreover, she related another fact when she was a child at that time ( may be around 1950's), she witnessed a relative of hers ( <i>Hindu</i> boy)who brought a ' kilyoline'<sup>32</sup> at her place, ''père ale ba, robe pehenké, père ale ba beni karké lejay,Calcutteea lage kaise rahi''<sup>33</sup> The priest were forced to left by the certain person known as 'deputé'. The Christian girl was then converted to <i>Hinduism</i> through marriage and purification done by 'yaj' in the Arya Samaj mandir and she had to wear traditional <i>saree</i> like a <i>Hindu</i> bride covered from head to toe.</p> <p>Around 1990, a friend's son of the informant loved a Christian girl who was very fluent in Hindi. The Christian girl was from a sect known as 'bado'. These people from the sect are commonly reputed to be vegetarians and who do not work on Saturday. She went to London University and learned Hindi language and astonished everyone by her communication in 13 languages. Even the <i>Hindu</i> priests could not compete with her in talking. Nowadays she worked as a Hindi teacher. Thus, the <i>Hindu</i> man married the Christian girl and they have their children and lived a bit far from Laventure.</p> <p><u>Caste:</u></p> <p>The informant related that in the past, (time not specified) elderly persons especially people from abroad, and 'maraz'<sup>34</sup> use caste system to create differences between people. In addition, he added that residents including children of Laventure did not see the differences nowadays and all (high and low caste) live together.</p> <p>The interviewee's wife stated that though all castes seemed together now but radio is playing a crucial role by disclosing all such issues to public. (i.e. caste issues involving Vaish, Rajput, Arya Samaj, etc...) to public. Furthermore, she illustrated that, 'apan apan siri ke sab koy apan apan'<sup>35</sup>.</p> <p>These issues should not have been mentioned on radio as nowadays children are intelligent, going to school or colleges, moving together ( with high and low caste) and even ministers are implied with such get together.</p> <p>The informant's wife elaborated that upon her arrival at Laventure people were talking about 'jaat-pat'<sup>36</sup>. She further related that there is a majority of Vaish and Kowri castes among the inhabitants of the village.</p> <p><u>Conclusion:</u></p> <p>Comparing the life in the past and present, the past was very harsh to live than nowadays with so many facilities available. The interviewee's wife elaborated that how ancestors and elders in the past could manage together with their children to face the hardships. Furthermore, she added that nowadays, life is much better and the Prime Minister Ramgoolam had done lots for the welfare of people. Both people and the government help and got courage from each other to move forward in life.</p> <p>The informant even said that the ancestors had always been examples of good sources of cultures and values. The ancestors, who had taught these people, became good recipients who are practicing them and are in good path while others who could not understand these cultures and values, don't respect elders and go astray and away from dharma.</p> <p>Concerning, caste system present in Mauritius, he mentioned that 'jaat pat ke mithayke'<sup>37</sup> and caste should not be remembered and thought about such issues. If <i>Hindu</i> and Muslims are not living as brothers, how could they live with the people from abroad? So, <i>Hindu</i> and Muslims should be united to be a good example of brotherhood in the country to the people abroad. In the past, there was little intermarriage (between <i>Hindu</i> and Muslims or Christians) now these are mostly frequently seen.</p>
<p><b>Personal Observation</b></p>	<p>The informant was not keen to elaborate caste issues regarding different castes present in his village. He was restricted only to the Arya Samaj Society and did not know much about other societies. The wife of the informant could not relate much on the caste system because of interference of her husband.</p> <p>Though they stated they had to struggle lot in life, it could be concluded that nowadays they have a good living with a suitable concrete house and all the facilities and comforts.</p>
<p><b>Remarks</b></p>	<p>The informant seemed to struggle a lot to meet the basic needs of his family. He has elaborated establishment of Arya Samaj in much details rather than caste issues. The <i>baithka</i> plays a crucial role in people living in Laventure village.</p> <p>Being an Arya Samajist, he does not believe in idol praying and think that those who could not understand god's presence, they moved to shivala and other places. For him dharma is a great thing and one need to adhere to it in order to lead a virtuous life.</p> <p>In politics, he always support the '<i>Hindu</i>' as he believed that <i>Hindu</i> will lead the country and he still affirms that caste system still exist in the country especially during elections and he emphasised that it should not have been given such a great importance.</p> <p>He even stated that the new generation does not bother about the caste in their daily life.</p>

### 3. CASTES IN MAURITIUS: AN ANALYSIS

In Mauritius, in public, most people interviewed stated they did not lend much importance to caste considerations. However, community actions strongly reflect caste identities and show that this has not only remained strong in some areas but is re-emerging in new forms through the subsidizing of socio-religious associations and lobbies (Gahlot Rajput Maha Sabha, Arya Ravived Pracharini Sabha, or Vaish Mukhti Sangh, for example), all openly displaying caste differences and hierarchies. At the individual level, caste endogamy is still practised widely.

The contexts in which caste is still present in Mauritius, among descendants of indentured labourers are:

- Wedding arrangements
- Commensality
- Devotional practices (low castes sacrifice pork, high castes sacrifice goat or have stopped animal sacrifices)
- Politics (for national and local or even student elections, most of all in vote-catching strategies engineered by candidates),

where caste has ceased to matter during and after indenture are friendships, estate working conditions.

#### The Mauritian terminology and classification

In Mauritius (as in India), the caste hierarchy is not fossilized. The identification of each caste's place in the overall system is permanently debated and negotiable. Furthermore, it depends on the context, and on the people interviewed. This is another indication of the extent of mobility between castes and fluidity in definitions of caste.

As such flexibility existed in the original Indian system, it is not really possible to state conclusively that fluidity in caste relationships is a result of indenture and/or of a possible slowing down of casteism in the contemporary Mauritian context.

However, it is fair to say that indentured migration contributed to social mobility for some as those who wished for a higher caste identity were able to do so through changing patronymics or caste names. The Bhojpuri land, and its migration tradition, offers many such examples, whether it consists in adopting the name of a superior caste or attaching it to the original caste name, or adopting a generic name which is not a caste name. Kurmi, in India, asked to be recognized as Kshatriya Kurmi, for instance. Teli asked to be recognized as Vaishya and low caste Noniya want to become Cauhan (a Rajput - i.e. Kshatriya - clan name). Most interestingly, the untouchable Dusadhs decided in Lahore in 1923 (during the Dusadh Mahasabha) to become Rajput. Mauritian Dusadhs followed the trend and are also known as Rajput (a Kshatriya caste) today.

At first sight, Mauritians seem mainly concerned with caste as '*Varna*':

People are then classified as follows:

Maraz, corresponding to the Brahmin *Varna*

Babujee, corresponding to the Kshatriya *Varna*

Vaish, corresponding to the Vaishya *Varna*.

These three categories are better known as '*grand nation*', while all others are '*Ti nation*'. '*Grand nation*' correspond to the Indian 'twice-born' population.

*Maraz* and Babujee are sometimes referred to as 'high castes', and Vaish as 'intermediary castes', while others correspond to 'low castes'. Depending on the context, Vaish can also be 'high castes'.

Certain terminologies refer to occupational specialization: *Dhobi* are still associated with laundry workers, *Chamar* with leather workers, etc. In Mauritius, many even exclusively associate a caste name with an occupation. The Brahmin will then be the priest, even if many priests (in India and in Mauritius) are of lower caste. Even the funeral specialist, bound to be lower caste because dealing with the impurities of death, is called *katha maraz* only because dealing with ritual matters, but notwithstanding the fact he is certainly not a Brahmin.

Others confuse ethnic categories with caste ones, or mix both of them: some individuals are referred to as 'dhobi [*Hindu* caste name] Creole [ethnic terminology]'.

More generally still, the caste-*Varna* category is blurred by many other classificatory categories:

- The subdivisions of '*Varna*' in *jati*: Koiri et Kurmi for example, are cited as castes in Mauritius, but so are the all-including 'Vaish' category Koiri and Kurmi belong to.
- The subdivision in gotra: along lineage lines, such as gwalbansh, perceived as a caste in Mauritius (belonging to the Ahir category) whereas it was originally a lineage group only.
- Geographic origins: Tamils, Telugus, and Marathis are frequently assimilated to caste names.
- Ethnic categories: the '*Hindu* caste' category is also cited as an identity claim.

A tentative classification and organization of castes is presented, pending further research. The associated occupation is included in brackets:

- **GRAND NATION**

Brahmin - maraz [ritual and intellectual matters]

Babujee - Katri + Ahir [rear cows] (gwalbansh; dharor, ghanreri)

- **INTERMEDIARY CASTE**

Vaish - Kurmi-Koiri [planters, worked with turmeric] - Halwai [cooked sweet] + Telli [trade in oil]  
+ Kahar - [pottery makers] + Tohar (made iron)

Rajbhar - [fill water]

Bostom

- **TI NATION**

Chamar - [made shoes] (Ravidas; Nonia [made salt/dig holes]; Bhuyan; Dusad-Rajput

Dhobi - [washermen]

Dom - [basket makers, made cooking ustensil]

Nai - [barber]

Junglee

Time did not permit to study Southern and Eastern Indian practices.

In Mauritius, it appears that Telugus associate caste with *gotra* (clan) and organize them hierarchically. The most common Telugu *gotra* in Mauritius: TELGAOLOU [make oil], NAAGGOTU, CAMPOLOU/KANPOLOU, REIDCOLOU, MARKANDE, SALOLOU, NAVDEKTA.

Among Tamil-speaking, the main castes in Mauritius are:

## To what extent the Indian caste system has been replicated in Mauritius?

There are many similarities in Mauritius with the Indian system. The key-features of the Indian caste system

- Caste endogamy

Intermarriage (in terms of castes) has generally been taboo within the Mauritian Hindu community. Interviewees remember endogamy constraints and the difficulties faced by those who tried to bypass them until recently. Suicides or, at least, individual or familial dramas, are typically linked with controversial (exogamic) love-affairs and tentative marriages. Still today, it is not uncommon to hear about parents marrying their children according to caste criteria.

- The same logic as in India prevail in Mauritius, in particular a stricter control over the choice of girls' marriage partners. Parents will prefer marrying their son to a lower caste girl than their daughter to a lower caste boy.
- In the same way, as is the case in India, re-marriages (after divorce or widowhood) are classically arranged in a caste lower than that of the first marriage.
- Last but not least, women are secondary in the patriarchal caste system, in Mauritius as in India. They have no individual caste, passing from their father's caste to their husband's caste.
- Devotional practices that, in Mauritius, previously spearheaded by women (at home and at the local *kalimaya*) allowed them to maintain their pre-marriage beliefs, practices and individual habits or preferences (towards a shrine, a deity or whatever devotional practice).
- The growing institutionalization of devotion in Mauritius (i.e., replacement of *kalimayas* by monumental temples controlled by a male-members' 'temple society' and where a male specialist officiates, probably contributes to reducing Mauritian *Hindu* woman's free choice concerning the individual devotion they practice.
- Then, commensality

Until a few years ago, high-caste persons would not share their food, nor drink water, with low-caste persons, if prepared by low castes, or in low-caste houses. During low castes' wedding ceremonies, if a high-caste individual was invited, he would only offer a gift, without drinking or eating. During high-castes marriages, food will be prepared by high-caste members, and if low castes are invited, they would be served last, and eat separately.

In the estate camps, river water was shared by all, even if it seems probable that high caste people would be served first, and would bathe upstream. All castes were supposed to use the same taps, but certainly not the same containers for water. Certain wells were located close to high-caste houses, and were reserved for them.

- Purity

The purity factor was prevalent in Mauritius among indentured labourers and their descendants, leading to a caste hierarchy.

Although as in India in recent decades, the issue of physical contact with other castes is less important, people still have stories of high-caste individuals bathing soon after they had been touched by a low-caste person. Commensality regulations, based on purity factors, have also been prevalent in Mauritius. High-caste members, for example, certainly bought uncooked food (and food that probably accepted from-low caste members, but never cooked food. The very *Hindu* criterion of 'cooking' (transforming the food by incorporating the very nature of the individuals cooking it) prevails in Mauritius too. As a matter of fact, the *pacca* (cooked)/*kaccha* (raw) duality translating this cooking terminology, sometimes appear in Mauritian discourses. But in contemporary Mauritius, very few higher castes refuse to socialize with so-called lower castes in public life. However, in the private space, inter-caste taboos are still alive. High-caste in-laws typically refuse to eat at their lower-caste daughter-in-law's place, or the meal that she would prepare, would often create familial tensions.

- Visible features of caste belonging

There are few visible markers of caste belonging present today in Mauritius. Tattoos, for example, (known as *godna*) used to be caste-bound: the form and the place of the tattoo strictly depended on one's caste. There is poor knowledge or memories of *godna* in the Mauritian population which indicates that its influence has all but disappeared in Mauritius. In the same way, clothes (length of dhoti, type of turbans) and jewellery which formerly indicated one's caste have all but disappeared. These items, although still worn, have lost their traditional role in categorizing *Hindus*.

What Mauritians have retained is also some of the stereotypical occupational specializations which categorized *Hindus*, such as that Chamars were leatherworkers, or that Ahirs were cattle-farmers and that Brahmins were priests. Behind this stereotypical occupational specialization associated with each caste group, lies the hierarchy of the whole system, according to purity criteria. What underlies it is a type of discrimination: Dusadhs rear and sacrifice pigs, and they eat pork meat; high castes rear cattle and sacrifice or eat only where they are not vegetarians, chicken or mutton. Pork is intrinsically associated, in India and still more, it seems, in Mauritius, with dirt and impurity. The recurrent reluctance, or even revulsion, of most interviewees, when asked to comment on pig rearing and pork meat, on sacrificing or consumption habits, or even to pronounce the word 'pig', is linked to their repugnance to evoke lower-caste persons. It is clear that activities considered 'impure' is linked with so-called 'impure' castes. But the logic can be inverted: the low castes are considered 'dirty' and 'impure' *because* they work in activities considered 'impure'.

Patronymics also reflect caste identity. Even when Dusadhs call themselves 'Rajputs', if they keep their original patronymics traditionally associated with the Dusadh caste, the identification will remain: they would still be considered 'lower caste' by the upper castes.

- Taboo

The taboos remain the most visible and problematic marker of the operation of the caste system in Mauritius. The very first reaction, shared by almost every interviewee, consisted of negating the existence of castes in Mauritius or refusing to speak about them. Many among interviewees even express fear to speak freely about the subject and requested anonymity. Others requested that part of the interview not be recorded or even erased.

Upper caste persons were proud of their identity. A wife will associate herself with her husband's caste whenever it is superior to the one she was born in. In fact, she will proudly retain her birth caste whenever she married in a lower caste. Conversely, and expected, was that most lower-caste interviewees claimed not to know their caste belonging.

All, low or high caste, were embarrassed about evoking low castes. It is true concerning family histories (it takes a neighbour's intervention to 'recall' to the interviewee and force her to admit, that one of her daughters did marry into a lower-caste family). It is also true in a general manner, when it comes to recognizing the very existence of castes known as 'low'. The term 'Chamar' or 'Dusadh' or the associated occupational or devotional habits such as rearing or sacrificing pork (what is associated with Dusadh in India) is expressed in a derogatory manner.

- Discrimination

Believing that castes belongingness refers to a hierarchy based on natural criteria seems to be losing ground in contemporary Mauritius. The local, more universal, versions of such conceptions appear when interviewees state that the only caste is that of God, or that there are only two castes, men and women. As a consequence, the most overt and/or violent forms of discrimination, whether physical (low-caste individuals being slapped for entering a temple) or psychological (in-laws refusing food from lower-caste daughter in laws) are cited, but only as examples from the past.

However, castes are still, in Mauritian popular belief, associated with a certain type of characters, which can be described as discriminatory and derogatory. Thus the stereotype of *Chamar* is that of

an alcoholic and quarrelsome person. When an inter-caste marriage is broken up, one often uses such classifications as a cause. When one criticizes a quarrelsome individual, or when one wants to insult him, one will accuse him of being a 'Chamar', or a 'Dusadh'. If, in India, such a negative use of terms constitutes a punishable offence, it is not so in Mauritius.

### Conclusion: An ambiguous evolution

Interviewees spoke in contrasting terms of how things were 'before' and how they are 'today'. However, the evolution in the Mauritian caste system is far from being so simple and unequivocal. It is even somehow remarkably paradoxical. On the one hand, Mauritians speak of a former time when 'caste' was important, and how it no longer is. Numerous elderly persons have described how they were married according to a caste criteria, and how typical family conflicts narratives, were sometimes turning to tragedy, because of caste incompatibility between two youngsters. They stressed that this would not be allowed to occur with their own children. Since this is impossible to state for a fact without accompanying studies, one can, nevertheless, tentatively conclude that inter-caste marriage is more frequent and feasible than 'before'.

In the same manner, numerous 'softenings' of caste-based rules have been noted. 'Before', only Brahmins could be priests. This is not the case anymore. The 'Brahmin' identity has even become somehow the equivalent of 'priest', so that a lower caste who becomes a priest 'becomes' a Brahmin though they were not born in that caste. Others, particularly, lower castes, have changed their caste names to leave this stigma behind. The *Chamars* have become *Ravived* and *Dusadhs* became '*Rajput*'.

At another level, status demands from organized low-castes groups, asking for more egalitarianism, are recognized. Some interviewees stressed that *Dusadh* must be called *Ahir* if one wanted to be polite; and it was not easy today to prevent low-castes from entering temples. Furthermore, many persons of low-caste origins have achieved an enviable social and economic position. Their wealth has made it possible for them to become 'sanskritized' in their everyday-life and devotional habits in order to be accepted as middle or high castes. Intermediary situations also exist, when high-caste members, who previously would not even speak or interact with low castes, now do speak and sit close to them, even if they might still hesitate to share meals with them.

Mauritian voices very strongly stressed the 'equalising' effect experienced in the past on estate camps among immigrants and descendants. The camp inhabitants saw themselves as members of one family, with all residents being equal members. Caste, as a discriminative criterion, seems to have played a very minor role. One can wonder to what extent this perception is linked with nostalgia and idealized memories of a social structure that is currently disappearing. Neither social relationships (friendship, for instance), nor the school or plantation world seem to have replicated the caste system hierarchy, nor imposed suffering from caste discrimination. Even if the '*sirdar*' often (but not always) belonged to high castes, this was supposedly due to their better education (they knew how to write and count), not so much to 'superior' status in terms of socio-religious purity. Interviewees remarked that '*sirdars*' today are not exclusively high-caste members.

According to this omnipresent vision, caste is perceived today by many Mauritians as an invention of unscrupulous politicians who use it for vote-catching purposes. Many recall playing with children from all castes and religions in the camp, which, they emphasise, is less evident today. Many also stated very strongly that they used to vote according to the proposed electoral list, even though they actually perceived elections being reflecting 'clientelism' following caste lines. The so-called 'socio-cultural organizations' are also cited as campaigning according to the castes backgrounds of the candidates.

The end of camp life signified the end of this period of acculturation to other cultures and castes for as indentured s and their descendants moved out of the sugar estates, local (inter-caste) solidarities that used to regulate camp living conditions may have been affected. Detailed, in-depth village studies are required to understand the ''camp to village' process better. Caste criteria may have been present to regain lost identity or as a tool for betterment, or through marrying within one's own caste, or/and through re-affirming one's 'Indianness'.

Reformist movements, initiated to fight caste prejudice, have not succeeded in shaking off 'caste' prejudices themselves. The Arya Samaj movement is a case in point. Most reforms, such as

promoting vegetarianism and the ban on ritual sacrifices, for instance, helped level the caste hierarchy. However, at the same time, the refusal of high-caste Arya Samajists to inter-marry with low-caste Arya Samajists (because they still reared pigs, according to Hollup, 1994) proved the complexity and permanence of the caste ideology. As a result of this refusal, the Arya Sabha split and low-caste Arya Samajists founded the Arya Ravived Pracharini Sabha in 1935.

Another example of the ambiguous evolution of castes in Mauritius will focus on castes and professional specialization. Most professions considered 'impure' have disappeared and are not considered as 'polluting' as before. But priesthood is still associated with higher castes. And when it is not, the Brahmin monopoly is a cause of conflict. Inside the Sanatan Dharma Temple movement, the Vaish have historically fought against this monopoly: Indian Brahmins were brought to Mauritius to train priests. High castes also dominated the Hindu Maha Sabha since its creation in 1925 where lower castes were excluded. Before, the Vaish took control of it in 1985 and founded the Sanatan Dharma Temple Federations. One year later, Brahmins created their own distinct organization, the Shri Sanatan Dharm Mandir Parishad!

Today, there are various attitudes towards this: for some, Brahmins should be looked down upon for their pretension to be the 'ideal' priests, while for others, they are proud when their priest is a Brahmin. Others still yearn for the times past when priests were (or so it is believed) all Brahmins.

It is thus possible to argue that the evolution of the Mauritian caste system parallels that of India. Modernization, Education, geographic mobility and urbanization appear to be conditions for the extinction of *jati* differences to the benefit of the *Varna* hierarchy. But castes in Mauritius are not restricted to the *Varna* system.<sup>38</sup> Public discourse of Hindu Mauritians sometimes echo this conception even though most Hindu Mauritians are aware of their *jati* identity. Most know it and are also aware of the fact that the ideal marriage for their children would be with someone in this same *jati*. If '*Varna*' only determined social stratification, why would *Dusadhs* and *Chamars* generally not inter-marry (since they are both Untouchables)?

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preliminary remarks

The whole research team started tackling the project with a few preconceived ideas which proved to be misconceptions.

Our original guess was built on the idea that the Mauritian realities were severely cut off from the essence of the Indian caste system. Both the bibliography and the Mauritian general discourse on indenture and castes were misleading.

First of all, the bibliography described a logical incompatibility between indenture and the caste system. Such a system is supposed to have disintegrated during indenture (leaving India, crossing the *Kala pani* dark waters and settling in estate camps).

Second, the general taboo and ignorance that was shared in Mauritius as regards castes was mistakenly perceived as a symptom of its disintegration. We were prone to believe that a population confusing *Varna*, *jati* and ethnicity, for instance, was hardly able to live and think according to the regulations of the Indian caste system. At first, it seemed that the holistic Indian caste system needed a context where an overall balance of castes of distinct status would be reproduced, what has been constantly under-evaluated as a reality in Mauritius indenture history. Most of all, the caste system in India rules the whole Indian society, regardless of religious affiliations, and we initially doubted that the Mauritian communities of Indian origin could manage to preserve a caste system in a society with important populations radically unfamiliar with such a logic.

As a consequence, we started the project thinking that whatever was to be found as a social stratification system, and whatever were the discriminations promoted by this system, we should be careful to analyze them as a purely Mauritian process and construction.

True enough, all the implications of the Mauritian caste system must definitely be understood and considered a product of the specific Mauritian history, and of what is at stake locally when it comes to identity and political claims. In the same way, any discriminative process observed must be understood in the very Mauritian context. From this perspective, castes as they have been experienced by Mauritian Hindus during indenture and afterwards, are at least partially the product of the very process of indenture.

Nevertheless, and despite such methodological precautions, we have to admit that we were often surprised by what was to be found.

The caste system as it is found in Mauritius is certainly not cut off from the Indian logic. It reproduces the same fundamental search for purity that guides this sociological hierarchy according to the *Hindu* socio-religious ideology.

- Global evaluation of the project

While the research team was realizing the misconceptions carried by both the Mauritian common discourse and the bibliography, we also realized how crucial this project could be for scientific research as well as for TJC and its national unity concerns.

Of course, our project suffers from several limitations. More precisely, it could be improved by a more exhaustive field research covering all ethnic backgrounds (notably Muslims) and more numerous regions in Mauritius. Participant observation could be implemented more thoroughly in order to cross-check oral information that can always be misleading when it comes to caste issues. It is nonetheless hoped that our project could stand for a sound preliminary step for further research.

- **Global conclusions**

**1/ Castes exist in Mauritius**

- In Mauritius, caste stratifications are a much more pervasive system than has been assessed previously and than Mauritians are ready to admit.
- The long-lasting taboo about castes in Mauritius has probably caused most misconceptions about the issue.
- Castes in Mauritius are certainly not restricted to the *Varna* system. The *jati* hierarchy is deeply structuring social links.
- *Hindu* Mauritians are not unfamiliar with the ideology of purity (basis for the original Indian caste system). This is bound to foster discrimination and segregation against those low castes considered "impure" and "dirty" (they rear and sacrifice pigs, and eat pork).
- Crucial features of the caste system and ideology have never completely disappeared in Mauritius. Think about marriage caste-rules, or food-sharing habits, most of all.
- Three phases must be stressed in the evolution of the Mauritian caste system: 1/ Leaving India and crossing the "dark sea" has weakened without definitely destroying caste identity; 2/ In the Mauritian context of the estate society and of a multicultural society, many caste dimensions have been relativised, and some have disappeared; 3/ caste identity has been re-introduced as a means to artificially foster communalism through homogenizing pressure groups and political lobbies.

**2/ In Mauritius, castes are more political than religious**

- Contrary to the Indian caste system that can still be described as mainly religious, the caste system in Mauritius appears essentially political. It is one in many identity criteria that can be mobilized to claim recognition, national resources or separation from a "national" history.
- Most examples of discrimination on a religious basis that were part and parcel of the Indian system have been banned from the Mauritian realities. In Mauritius, castes are but one of many social stratification dynamics, and an important part of the population is not concerned at all.

**3/ A dangerous resurgence of castes in Mauritius**

- Though many re-inventions of caste dimensions appear rather artificial in the Mauritian modern context, it seems that unscrupulous pressure groups using castes as a vote-catching or state-wealth catching medium, can indeed re-introduce discriminative habits in order to stress their difference from "others".
- Castes resurgence in Mauritius is linked with a claim to religious roots away from Mauritius. The more anti-Creole Mauritian Hindus will want to appear, the more they will be prone to reintegrate casteism. The more Mauritius will be recognized (and be proud) as an original nation born from the interpenetration of various cultures (from Europe, Africa and Asia), the more Indian casteism will disappear.

**What should not be done? The dangers of positive discrimination about castes**

Mauritius is a pluri-confessional nation, mainly populated by Hindus. And so is India. India has a longer history of dealing with such identity stakes, first as a colony to be managed, then as a nation to be built. Surely some lessons can be drawn from the comparison.

First of all, sixty years after having banned untouchability from the Constitution, the observer is forced to recognize that the untouchable stigma and discrimination have not been fundamentally erased in India. Then, quotas that have been implemented for more than half a century in education or public employment, if they really helped discriminated against castes to go up the social ladder, have proved negative because fossilizing the overall caste logic. Last example: when Indian authorities forced Hindu temples to open their doors to all Hindus (including untouchables), they usefully broke a taboo but did not prevent privately owned temples to select their devotees, nor public temples to discourage unofficially low castes to address their devotion there. As a result,

temples in India (apart from huge pilgrimage sites) are still remarkably frequented along caste lines.

Castes are, first, a private matter. As it has been described in this report, marriages, food-sharing and devotional habits are the most important criteria illustrating casteism, in India and in Mauritius. The promotion of anti-casteism in the public sphere (through legal processes), though important symbolically, cannot reach the private sphere directly.

In addition, considering that castes in Mauritius are not as lively and structuring as they are in India, the risk is huge to be counter-productive and to fossilize discriminative stratifications. This is a reasonably good reason for hesitating to implement quotas, for instance.

Then, one must also acknowledge the main difference in this respect between India and Mauritius. The whole Indian social system, whatever one's religious belongingness, is dependent on the caste system. As for Mauritius, only Hindus, and not all of them, are concerned with casteism. Casteism must be described as one among many social stratification dimensions of Mauritius (class, ethnicity, gender, etc.). And caste discriminations are also shared only by one of the many Mauritian communities: the general representation of low castes as dirty because working leather or rearing and sacrificing pigs, is certainly not shared by Creoles.

Quotas aiming at correcting the caste discriminations in Mauritius would be perceived, and would effectively represent, a huge lever for increased ethnic discrimination, for example. If a percentage of public jobs are reserved to low caste Hindu Mauritians, this will increase the over-representation of Hindus in the Mauritian public jobs.

This is the second reason for being cautious about caste quotas in Mauritius: they would tend to deny and increase other social stratification realities that are as disruptive to national unity and equity.

#### What could be tried, and how?

*« Lorsqu'on est incapable de voir dans l'être que son identité ethnique et son appartenance religieuse, c'est que quelque part, on a raté notre indépendance ou du moins on n'est pas à la hauteur de cette indépendance en tant que nation [...] Le communalisme, c'est une des plus grandes tragédies de Maurice. Il illustre une incapacité à surmonter des fantasmes collectifs et historiques » (Abhimanyu Unnuth, Mauritian author, L'Express, 31/07/2009).*

In this recent article, Abhimanyu Unnuth points out the real issues. One cannot help remembering that the same author has himself been active in promoting the fantasy Indo-Mauritian identity founding narrative. The first pages of his major literary production, *Sueurs de Sang (La Pasina, 1977)*, may be read as a picture of Indians as eternally linked to Mauritius: they are described as discovering it, fighting for it and they are its legitimate owners (Claveyrolas 2012). Time has passed since the 1970's in Mauritius, and probably the legitimate goodwill to rehabilitate Indo-Mauritians' history was not possible without paving the way for the current "collective and historical fantasies" Mauritius now faces. Communalism and fantasies go hand in hand. Fantasies, particularly those founding so-called Indian rooted communities or identities, do need to be corrected in Mauritius. And this is deeply linked with caste consciousness.

#### • Census corrections

Opposite to the uncertain results of quota policies, we would recommend to be cautious about fossilizing and reinforcing casteism through official recognition. Remember the role of British colonial power in the fossilization of caste categories in 19th century India. We mentioned both a social control motivation ("divide and rule") and a perverse side-effect of the will to categorize the population. Once again, Mauritius illustrates such a process. Mauritian census categories fossilize the difference between "Indo-Mauritians" and the "general population". Both categories are grossly misleading. "Indo-Mauritian" evokes a mixed couple (an Indian woman with a Mauritian man, for example) or an individual with both nationalities (Indian and Mauritian), rather than someone being Mauritian of Indian origin. As for the "general population", it has often and rightfully been denounced as a useless and disrespectful residual category.

So-called "Indo-Mauritians" are all "Mauritians" before anything else and, nonetheless the recent (and respectable) popularity of root-tracing, their relation to India does not interfere with their loyalty to Mauritius. But the tendency of a growingly ambiguous relation to India, used to differentiate Hindu Mauritians with Creoles descendants of African slaves, mainly, must be taken with much caution. The more Hindu Mauritians will feel "Indo-Mauritian", the more they will be prone to respect and reintroduce caste logics and barriers. Our recommendation would then be to suppress or change census categories so as to allow Mauritians to identify themselves with categories other than "Indians" and to control the existence, activity and financing of so-called "socio-cultural associations".

No positive evidence has been found concerning colonial power or estate owners widely using castes as a means of social control of the labor force in Mauritius. Nevertheless, one has to be cautious about the fact that categorizations born during or even after indenture, and certainly being fossilized since then, represent a danger for the Mauritian nation, and an obstacle to its unity.

- **Penalizing caste discrimination**

First of all, the Mauritian society should protect itself from the worst aspects of caste discrimination, and its promotion.

In a very concrete perspective, caste discriminations should be penalized. The nation should have the legal means to sue any individual or organization promoting casteism in the official sphere, whether it is in official political discourses, or in the media, or in professional contexts. Advocating such perceptions as the relative "nature" of individuals, their relative rights and duties, according to it, should be assimilated to racism, and penalized. In this respect, both the panegyrics of casteism and the usage of pejorative, and insulting, caste terminologies should be equally penalized.

The role of political and religious leaders, and their promotion of potentially negative dynamics reinforcing casteism, should be watched carefully, and controlled. As casteism is a matter particularly raised during electoral campaigns, any usage of caste for vote-catching purposes, and the general clientelism along ethnic and caste lines, should be watched and punished.

We must add to this the necessary promotion of meritocracy in the professional sphere, and the penalization of caste discrimination in the selection and promotion of employees.

Nevertheless, some, more private and precisely religious dimensions of the caste system cannot be penalized. It is certainly not legitimate for the Law to interfere in ritual pollution matters: one cannot force high castes to accept pig sacrifices in their temples if they see it as polluting. In the same way, one cannot sue a family refusing to marry their daughter to a lower caste individual. Education will probably prove more reliable for this purpose.

- **Educating towards a shared history and identity (school system and media awareness campaigns)**

The most important recommendation proposed would be to implement serious and long-term educating programs valorizing the shared dimensions of all Mauritians' history and identity. Fighting communalism in Mauritius has a direct and long-term impact on casteism. If the quest for roots is respectable, it should be contextualized in a definitely Mauritian identity.

The school system (via text books and national programs) should be revised to incorporate more recent approaches of the Mauritian history. The need is 1/ to break the global division line between indenture and slavery in such a way that descendants of both slaves and indentured labourers realize their common historical fate in Mauritius, and their effectively shared living and working conditions in the estate system that resulted in common representations and practices that ought to be valorized whereas they are denied and forgotten. 2/ to promote the shared popular culture of indentured and slaves descendants. This popular culture needs to be valorized against current temptations to promote an invented root in Sanskrit elitist and orthodox Indian culture. The more people will be conscious and proud of their truly popular roots, the more they will realize their shared past and roots with all Mauritians.

Generally speaking, it appears that Mauritians are remarkably unfamiliar with their history. They are all the more sensitive to mythologies and invented "roots" that unscrupulous or ignorant elites tend to promote. Scientific research in history and anthropology is now available for training school-teachers and increasing their awareness of a Mauritian identity in the making.

Mass-media awareness campaigns can also be used in the same perspective, stressing the "all-Mauritian" history and identity.

Patrimonial events or sites could also be mobilized in order to promote this shared conception of identity. The actual heavy tendency for any celebration in Mauritius, whether patrimonial or religious, is to clearly distinguish oneself from the other. The Ganga Talao pilgrimage for the Hindu Maha Shivaratri festival, as the Catholic Père Laval pilgrimage or Muslim Muharram festivities were in the past shared by all communities. This is less and less true and should be corrected. Controlling the organization, and jointly implementing festivities on a non-religious national basis (as is the case for - originally Hindu-Divali festivities, for instance) seems feasible and potentially able to keep all communities together in the Mauritian nation.

Patrimonial sites are communalist-biased and commemorations there are increasingly religious (Hindu sacrificial prayers on November 2nd at the Apravasi Ghat, and claims for the Morne mountain to become a Catholic "sacred mountain"). The memories of slavery, as the memories of indenture, being dealt with separately, rapidly become rivals.

Promoting museums, sites and institutions that would deal jointly with the whole history of Mauritius would help make every citizen aware of what he shares with others. In this respect, the "Aventure du Sucre" museum can be used as a successful attempt to present proudly, but without dwelling on the dark side nor transforming indenture in a glorified conquest, what every community has brought to the building of a unique and potentially unitary nation.

Language policies can also be mobilized to foster unity. The recognition and promotion of Creole as the Mauritian global language seems recommended.

Census categories are an encouragement, and sometimes an obligation, to define oneself according to communalist categories. The more such communalist categories will prevail, the more casteism will be valorized in the Hindu Mauritian communities. Casteism being incompatible with Creolity, for instance, the promotion of an all-Mauritian original identity leaves less and less space to caste consciousness and realities.

- **Breaking the taboo of caste in private sphere**

One should be concerned about the apprehension and fear most people have when it comes to caste issues. Such a taboo seems the worst possible ground for awareness and evolution.

So, we would firmly advocate to break the taboo of caste in Mauritius; firstly, in the public sphere. This means allowing and encouraging scientific research to be pursued and publicized, for example; secondly, in the private sphere, thanks again to the school system and mass-media.

The false discourse denying the existence of castes in Mauritius is damage able to low castes, in the first place, who feel ashamed of their identity, while it allows high castes to feel proud of their so-called superiority. A better knowledge of Mauritian history, a deeper investment in it, may be used as a way of equalizing the status of different castes. Mauritian citizens having traced their roots were disappointed to learn that the caste of their ancestors was actually lower than what they, nowadays, pretend to be. This might well be the truth for many Mauritians. As a matter of fact, Vaishya, for example, have never represented such a huge part of the Indian Bhojpuri population, which means that Mauritian Vaish were probably lower castes in India who "became" Vaish somewhere in the process of indenture. A sincere tracing of roots might help realize the relatively coherent popular culture of most indentured ancestors, far from any Sanskritic or Brahmanic pretensions. Once again, this should be stressed as a reason for pride: ancestors and descendants of migrant populations did manage their way up, and did build today's nation.

Castes may be presented as a secondary, residual system that needs to be fought against in modern Mauritius. Everybody knows about youngsters unable to marry because of caste system (let alone

committing suicides). Promoting free marriage, and stressing un-free marriage imposed by caste considerations could be the subject of a global awareness campaign.

- **Promoting Mauritian Hinduism**

As will be repeated later on in these recommendations, religious Hindu authorities in Mauritius are not univocally pro-castes. A general discourse, including in religious spheres, criticizes Indian Hinduism for precisely this reason that it validates casteism. Mauritian Hinduism is then promoted as more modern and liberal compared with Indian Hinduism described as archaic and degenerate.

However, the general logic of castes recently re-appeared subtly or was reinforced in the Mauritian Hindu context via Indian influences. Take the omnipresent tendency to replace Mauritian ritual structures by an architecture imported from India, conceived and built by architects and artists brought from India. Mauritian Tamil temples, for instance, are more and more monumental structures reserving a specific space (*garbhagriha*) for the deities. This space is increasingly forbidden to others than religious specialists, and common devotees cannot touch the divine images any more. The overall logic justifying this new religious organization of the ritual space lies on purity, the need to preserve the pure divine image, and the risk impure individuals represent for her. Of course, ancient *kalimaye* were also probably a 'hierarchised' space, from which certain individuals thought impure, were excluded. We know that the order in which "*prasad*" (the offering returned to the devotee once ritually consumed by the deity) was distributed depended on castes (and gender). But most ritual spaces such as *kalimaye* were also "self-service" places where each individual could perform rites according to his personal knowledge, needs and preferences.

*Kalimaye* are slowly but surely disappearing from the Mauritian landscape, and are being replaced by monumental Indian-style temples. No doubt promoting the protection of *kalimaye*, and/or their renovation, and even embellishment or enlargement in a style closer to the Mauritian *kalimaye* tradition would help maintain Mauritians Hindus away from the new reinforcement of the caste logic.

Encouraging Hindu Mauritians to recognize their local roots, as advocated before, will certainly allow them to be proud of their original, Mauritian, Hinduism and to stop relying on the Indian model, thus disregarding the past Mauritian Hindu traditions.

#### **Religion and the Nation: Stressing a vigilant neutrality**

The role of the Mauritian State is not neutral, and we recommend that it enforces a more vigilant neutrality concerning religious affairs.

The Indian case is once more inspiring. The Indian Constitution, promulgated in 1950, organizes the relation between the State and religion in the frame of a regime known as «secularism». But the writers of the Constitution did not build this relation upon the principles of a separation of State and religion, as in the case of French «laïcité», nor on the exclusion of religion, but, rather, on the interdependence of religion and the State. India has never made religious unity the frame for political unity. Intrinsically plural itself, Hinduism played its role in accepting religious plurality.

In India, the confessional belongingness is part and parcel of the legal definition of social identity, reflecting the traditional acceptance of religious plurality. This is the «Unity in Diversity» first promoted by Nehru.

In India, universal laws, enforceable to all citizens, are penal, administrative and commercial laws. But such laws coexist with other laws (family and succession laws, mainly) differing according to confessional belongingness. Such personal laws are monitored by the same unitary State. Note that the differential treatment of religious communities had already been set up by the British colonial power.

However, such tolerance raised certain limits. The partition of India and Pakistan was experienced with violent bloodshed, and on a religious basis. As a consequence, Nehru and other national leaders were worried about certain groups defending identity and religious particularities at the expense of national unity. All manifestation of excessive loyalty to such or such belongingness appeared dangerously opposed to the compulsory loyalty to the Indian nation.

But what about castes? Castes, and Hinduism, in India keep an ambiguous relation with Indianness. In a coextensive perspective, the individual living in the caste system has been described as Hindu and Indian. But some Hindus deny and criticize casteism. And also, Muslims living under casteism are definitely not Hindus. And Sikh, Jain or Buddhist Indians, though living under casteism, do not acknowledge their legal assimilation to Hinduism.

In the Indian historical context of growing communalism, this is mainly a question of loyalty. How can non-Hindus stay loyal to the Indian nation, in the first place, when it is shaped by Hindu-inspired casteism? How can the Indian nation inspire loyalty when it treats its citizens differently, according to the hierarchical ideology of casteism, and according to the tolerant ideology of pluri-confessionalism?

Casteism in Mauritius may illustrate such a dilemma.

We argue, partly following OddvarHollup (1994:297), that, more than an overall disintegration of caste, «caste differences among overseas Indians came to be understood differently in terms of content and meaning ». Caste associations, for example, are conceived and manipulated as interest groups lobbying for political purposes. Behind caste identity, one finds a potential lever for pressure groups in order to have access to national resources. As the Mauritian State helps neutrally all religions, and funds equally the so-called “socio-cultural associations”, the risk (already verified) is to encourage a blossoming of many such associations whose goal will be mainly to capture part of the State resources. The descendants of Indian indentured labourers have already split between Muslims and Hindus, then Hindus split between Bhojpuri (so-called “Hindus” in Mauritius) and Tamils. Tamils are being more and more separated from Telugus. Inside Hindus, Arya Samajists and Sanatanists still represent two different and sometimes (according to the context) opposed communities.

No need to go further to realize the risk of such a tendency for national unity.

Other essential information would stress that castes are never very far behind different communities and their definitions. When Arya Samajists split in two different movements, this was along caste lines, between high castes and low castes, the latter creating the “Arya Ravived”. And Tamils do not share the caste system of Bhojpuri. They are mostly (as is the case in India) from relatively low castes, and quasi none of them are Brahmins.

This means that castes are a potentially powerful criterion for going on claiming an ever more specific identity, always separated from the “other”, and thus a potentially useful criterion for claiming right to State resources.

One of the most efficient rhetoric for backing such identity claims is to resort to so-called Indianness, the legitimate right to trace and find one’s roots again. True enough Mauritian Hindus are generally sufficiently cautious about the caste system they think prevail in India. They generally do not hold it as a desirable model to be imported again.

The more and more orthodox practices promoted by socio-cultural organizations (financed by the Mauritian state) probably participate in discrediting the relatively universal ritual skill in favor of a caste monopoly of ritual expertise. Notice that we underlined the role of this ritual monopoly as founding the whole Indian original caste system. There may be no broad gap between a reinforced ritual monopoly, an increased hierarchization and an increased discrimination through “pollution” representations thought of as more and more central.

Castes as identity criteria are mobilized under cover of religious faith to be respected. One must be aware not to play the game of unscrupulous pressure groups ready to reintegrate casteism in Mauritius even if it means undermining national unity and equity.

India (its history of castes and attempts to eradicate them) warns us about such a temptation; Mauritius sometimes seems to take the same dangerous path. We think that a greater dose of secularism-*laïcité*, separating more sincerely the State from religious affairs, is necessary for an all-Mauritian identity to prevail and flourish. The Mauritian state is sometimes too lenient about religious affairs, too prone to participate and validate them. The result is dependence on religion

making it uneasy for the State to interfere or correct unscrupulous use of religions. Casteism is definitely a good illustration of this.

Notice that all religious federations and "socio-cultural" associations are not unscrupulous manipulators of the religious factor and of the caste system. Many among them favor, or would like to favor, Mauritian traditions of Hinduism. The State being the main funder of such organizations, it seems legitimate enough in our perspective to lean on them, and control them also, in order to encourage and implement a dissociation of Mauritian Hinduism from any casteist tendency. Funding and controlling local schools for student-priests, managed by Mauritian religious authorities, would certainly answer the needs of these organizations and free them from the dependence on India they somehow regret.

- **Promoting national social programs: Welfare State**

The Welfare State is probably one of the main obstacles to communalism. Communalism can be seen as motivated by a desire to differentiate oneself from the other in order to capture scarce national resources. As a perverse result, much government funds are devoted to these blossoming communalist organizations. The overall logic should be reversed, through implementing national (regardless of each beneficiary's community) social programs concerning health or education, for instance.

Ultra-liberal policies harden the competition for social advantages, and consequently stimulate the tendency of citizens to gather in pressure groups along any identity lane available in order to capture these advantages.

It is observed that in India castes have been seen as a medium for denying and justifying class inequalities. One of the main advantages of a welfare state policy is to recognize class and wealth differences between citizens that need to be regulated. Recognizing social class categories leaves less room for ethnic or caste categories.

As a general conclusion, castes in Mauritius are but one of many stratification systems. They should not be considered apart from ethnic or religious categories.

Castes in Mauritius do correspond to an original (India-born) system based on discrimination and segregation. Hierarchical perceptions persist, and low-castes are still ashamed of their identity. Marriage practices are still endogamous, which slows the process of caste disintegration. But our investigation shows that caste discrimination is not and has never been the general and most important rule in Mauritius. From this perspective, caste discrimination cannot be a priority in the national agenda against discrimination.

We nevertheless wish to insist on the **contemporary ambiguity** concerning castes in Mauritius. The use of caste identity as well as religious identity, and the artificial but sometimes dangerous acclaimed link with Indian roots, is increasingly mobilized at the expense of Mauritian national identity and consciousness. This relatively recent tendency could well result in an increased discrimination against Mauritian low caste Hindus, and, in time, against all Mauritians not belonging to the Hindu caste system.

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<sup>1</sup> Books by Burton Benedict 50 years ago, and more recently, by Pavi Ramhota and Suzanne Chazan in 2010 were removed from the bookshops.

<sup>2</sup> Among others, please refer to Claveyrolas 2008 and Sumathi Ramaswamy (2006, 'Enshrining the Map of India: Cartography, Nationalism, and the Politics of Deity in Varanasi' in Gaenszle & Gengnagel eds, *Visualizing Space in Banaras. Images, Maps, and the Practice of Representation* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag : 164-188).

<sup>3</sup> *L'Inde classique* (1985, vol.1, p. 610).

<sup>4</sup> Manual trashing of canes.

<sup>5</sup> Muslim marriage.

<sup>6</sup> Cap.

<sup>7</sup> It means selling of snacks ( *samoussa* and croquettes, veg and non-veg).

<sup>8</sup> She refers 'below' to be pre-primary and 'first' to be standard 1.

<sup>9</sup> Singing function (wedding songs).

<sup>10</sup> This means that the more people were giving higher donation for the *baithkas*, the higher the applause and respects were being given to these persons in the past.

<sup>11</sup> It means scapegoat.

<sup>12</sup> It means small goat.

<sup>13</sup> It refers to the podium where bride and groom are seated together to perform the wedding rituals.

<sup>14</sup> It means spirits of dead elder persons.

<sup>15</sup> Bread.

<sup>16</sup> Salmon.

<sup>17</sup> It is a term used for white rum by *Hindus* when performing the rituals.

<sup>18</sup> It refers to the family clan's god.

<sup>19</sup> She is referring to *kheer* (Rice cooked in milk) and *puri*.

<sup>20</sup> Caste.

<sup>21</sup> Boil seeds.

<sup>22</sup> Cassava.

<sup>23</sup> Bread-fruit.

<sup>24</sup> Spread and polish.

<sup>25</sup> It could refer as a place which is managed by a society where people of similar interest meet together and organise various activities and also acts as a school to provide education to children.

<sup>26</sup> Head of the society (it can also be executive /board members of the society).

<sup>27</sup> Ritual similar to 'yaj' - pouring *samagri*, *ghee*, incense sticks in the sacred fire.

<sup>28</sup> This statement means that God is present everywhere, wherever one remembers him, he is there.

<sup>29</sup> He means that one should live and do actions according to dharma.

<sup>30</sup> Pouring of oblation in a sacred fire.

<sup>31</sup> Caste.

<sup>32</sup> Christian girl.

<sup>33</sup> Christian priest wearing a long dress came at the *Hindu* boy's place to purify the Christian girl to take her back home.

How could they let Christians live at Calcuttea (referring to *Hindu*)'s place?

<sup>34</sup> Priests or high caste ( Maraz Caste).

<sup>35</sup> It could means that every caste has its own hierarchy and should be private.

<sup>36</sup> Refer to footnote 9 (i.e. Caste).

<sup>37</sup> Castes system should be eliminated.

<sup>38</sup> This idea has been conveyed in studies by Hollup (1994) and more recently, Chazan and Ramhota (2009).

# THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCAR OF SLAVERY ON DESCENDANTS

*A psycho-social approach to people of "pure" or mixed African and  
Malagasy origin in the Republic of Mauritius.*

DR. PAULA LEW-FAI  
*Consultant*

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## 1. AIM OF THE REPORT

The aim of this report is, as per terms of reference, " to provide consultancy services with respect to furthering the Commission's understanding from a psycho-social point of view of the behavioral attitude of people believed to be of pure or mixed African and Malagasy origin and who are ranked among the poorest class of citizens of this country, given that:

- (a) Many do not own any property and live in housing estates as leaseholders;
- (b) Illiteracy is rampant in their milieu and many are unable to find employment in government services or private sector. Insecurity of employment has led many into casual work, hard manual labour which are poorly remunerated;
- (c) Social life impedes proper schooling of children;
- (d) Prevalence of alcoholism and other addictions;
- (e) Loss of self-esteem;
- (f) Tendency to overspend despite poor income;
- (g) Marked absence of the spirit of mutual aid, self help, self-reliance and
- (h) Frustration as a result of a perception of being excluded from public affairs."

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Since the report has to be achieved within a short period of time, i.e. five months, no new field work could be initiated. However, collection and analysis of statistical data have been carried out during these months. Cf. 3.

We have drawn from the following:

- 1) Our long and extensive research / action work on marginalization processes, deprivation and poverty at international level within institutions such as the CNRS ( "Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique") in France, UNESCO, UNFPA (1996-1999), UNICEF (2000-2001), the EU for Mauritius and Rodrigues within the Poverty Alleviation Program of the EU (1999-2001) and Empowerment within the Chagossian and Agalean communities. Our latest research was done in 2008 and 2009 on Social Needs Analysis on two deprived areas of the Black River District.
- 2) Psycho-social aspects in studies done in the Republic of Mauritius and other countries having experienced slavery and/or racism and discrimination based on ethnic differentiation.
- 3) Statistical data in some relevant sectors, compiled and analyzed according to ethnic origins. This section is more like probing more objectively the given assertion that slave descendants are excluded from mainstream development. Given more time, analysis would have taken on board precise evolutions across time, relating data to social, economic, political dynamics as well as emergence and consolidation of cultural pressure groups. In itself, this would have constituted a whole thesis program. In spite of these limitations, it is an enterprise that has required patience, perseverance and resilience<sup>1</sup>. First of all, to obtain the data, to select and afterwards, to disaggregate them according to the ethnic communities. For this time consuming exercise, the only way of operating was to go through each list of names and note down the community according to family and first names ( baptism names mainly). Family names in some cases of our target population are of no particular relevance. Some minor errors may have been introduced in this lengthy compilation, based on some subjective interpretation of names. But overall, the research assistants have been very meticulous and cautious. We are thankful to them.

### 3. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

#### 3.1 Bias at work

Right from the start, let us emphasize the fact that research and, even more, reporting through mass media can be biased. Many authors working on people of African origin highlight the tendency of the media and others to over report the negative aspects of black communities, and to grossly under-report their positive aspects. The tendency to attribute the negatives of a discriminated community to the community as a whole, gives distorted perception of the community.

The negative stereotypical portrayal of blacks, especially those from slave descent has had detrimental effects on the psyche of members of these communities, who are constantly associated with negative and demeaning images of themselves. Not strong enough to resist negative psychological attributes, they internalize these negatives as truths. These, in turn, influence the perception that other communities have, adversely affecting inter-relationships and power-relationships which structure social and economic positioning as well as collective identity.

#### 3.2 Complexity of inter-related factors

Suppression of slavery history in the Republic of Mauritius has helped to keep their descendants in a state of instability, confusion, and self-loathing. This has produced and maintained low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy and low self-image, generating a low regard for those who are of the same community, creating an environment of envy, distrust, disloyalty, and hatred within the community. These are complex processes at the heart of the dynamics involved in the relationships between the individual, groups of affiliation and society, at large.

Institutionalized adverse conditions, discrimination creating economic stagnation<sup>2</sup> and distress foster an environment ripe for dysfunction at different levels, individual and the community. Limitations on income continue to hinder prospects for upward mobility and bring forth increased frustration resulting in health issues such as hypertension and other stress related illnesses.

These conditions are slowly being investigated and should be more researched to understand more fully the trauma that has been endured and repercussions in terms of access to land, social and economic networks, capital and social prestige, experience of social and economic repression<sup>3</sup>.

Psycho-social issues are rarely dealt with, apart from a judgmental point of view, stressing stereotypes of laziness, lack of will to come out of poverty, lack of entrepreneurship, social ills associated with the community.

Because of serious lack of information in this sector, this report will focus mainly on some psycho-social dynamics that impede mobilization of resources, both at individual and group level for people of "pure" or mixed African and Malagasy origin to gain access to a meaningful position within the Mauritian society.

The complexity of inter-relationships between ethnicity and class cultures is such that we shall not be able to devote as much attention to the gender issue and its analysis as we would have wished.

Whenever possible, in the statistical data, we have disaggregated them, bearing in mind the following structure of the population:

At December 2010 (CSO Vital statistics)

- Population
  - On the island of Mauritius : 1,245,289 inhabitants
  - Rodrigues : 37,837
  - Other islands: 289
- According to 2011 estimates of population:
  - 0-14 years: 21.8% (male 145,185/female 139,579)
  - 15-64 years: 70.7% (male 457,743/female 463,875)
  - 65 years and over: 7.5% (male 38,944/female 58,391)
- Ethnic groups:
  - Indo-Mauritian : 68%
  - Creole : 27%
  - Sino-Mauritian : 3%
  - Franco-Mauritian: 2%
- Religions (2000 Population Census):
  - Hindu 48%, Roman Catholic 23.6%, Muslim 16.6%, other Christian 8.6%, other 2.5%, unspecified 0.3%, none 0.4%
- Languages (2000 Population Census):
  - Creole 80.5%, Bhojpuri 12.1%, French 3.4%, English (official; spoken by less than 1% of the population), other 3.7%, unspecified 0.3%

Though limited, because of lack of time, we hope that this report will generate both more objectivity and interest in researching psycho-social dynamics at work in situations of deprivation and powerlessness; specially, when historical trauma, as in the case of slavery, continues to affect a whole community. It is our interest as a nation to come to terms with these powerful mechanisms, which, repressed, are all the more powerful in suppressing hope and fighting spirit, deepening structural marginalization processes in modern Mauritius. This is the real issue

### 3.3. Terminology

For the sake of expediency, we shall use the term Creole in a restrictive way, with connotations to only "people believed to be of pure or mixed African and Malagasy origin". Reference here is made to class positioning, i.e. working class culture, the "ti-créoles" compared to "créoles bourzwa". The term "gens de couleur" will be used in the accepted association with populations of mixed European origins, the upper middle class "elite".

In the statistical analysis of data, to comply with the official distribution of the populations in Mauritius, we shall use the term "General Population" whenever it is not possible to identify accurately class positions. For example, in the division of labour according to ethnic origins, this term will be used, in the knowledge that status and salaries often follow the hierarchy of "colours" ("pigmentocratie"). Again, in the education sector, the same will be used, in the knowledge that geographical locations of schools can give indications of class identities, mainly working class or not.

## 4. FACTS, FIGURES, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### 4.1 Facts and Figures<sup>4</sup>

It is impossible within this report to study the whole process of discrimination and segregation that affects Creoles. The facts and figures given below are to be considered, as said earlier in the introductory remarks, as “des coups de sonde”, on a more objective basis than the overall and repetitive discourse that is done on a recurrent basis about discrimination of Creoles in public life.

#### 4.1.1 Housing: CHA Estates in 2011

Post independent governments within the welfare for all politics have more or less adhered to the promotion of social housing policy, providing and extending house ownership with specialized institutions being set up, as for example the Mauritius Housing Company (MHC) and the National development Company Ltd (NHDC). These, however cater mostly for the needs of middle and low-income households, leaving aside marginalized populations, among them many Creoles and Rodriguans.

In this section, we shall pay attention mainly to “*Cités CHA*” (Central Housing Estates). These were built after cyclone Carol in 1960 destroyed the very precarious houses of poor people, mostly Creole living in the suburbs of Port-Louis and towns of Plaines Wilhems.

In 2011, there were in all 16,883 lessees in 128 CHA Estates. Cf. for complete details Appendix: Table 1.

- Among them, 11,145 were Creoles, representing 2/3 of the total number of lessees.
- Rents per annum paid by Creole lessees are around Rs.360, with a very few exceptions: the lowest Rs. 81 being in Baie du Cap and highest Rs. 1200 in Quatre Bornes.
- Out of 128 CHA estates, 74 of them have more than 50% of their lessees among Creoles Cf. Table 1 on following page.
- The most significant feature is these data is that Creoles tend to be in overall majority in bigger housing estates (starting from 101 lessees and increasing up to more than 400 lessees (874 for La Cure and 923 for Barkly).
- Among CHA housing estates from a total of 201 lessees and more, in the following 15 estates, Creoles lessees represent more than ¾ of lessees: Pamplemousses, Abercrombie, Pointe aux Sables, La Chaux, Atlee, La Caverne, Allée Brillant, Richelieu, Mangalkhan, Malherbes, La Briquetterie, Vallijee, Roche Bois, La Cure, Barkly.

Table 1: CHA 2011- Lessees with more than 50 % of Creoles						
Housing Estates with less than 20 Lessees						
	Name of Housing Estate	N° of Lessees	N° of GP Lessees	% GP Lessees	Total Rent (Rs) p.a.	Average rent p.a.
1	Providence	2	2	100	300	150
2	Les Salines	3	2	67	162	81
3	Baie du Cap	3	3	100	900	300
4	Quatre Bornes	5	3	60	3,600	1200
5	Cascavelle	5	5	100	2,575	515
6	Petit Verger	6	3	50	1,616	539
7	Bain des Dames	8	6	75	1,295	216
8	Chamarel	8	8	100	2,386	298
9	Trou aux Biches	9	9	100	3,986	443

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10	Congomah	12	7	58	2,114	302
11	Camp Sonah	12	9	75	2,748	305
12	L'Unité	14	13	93	2,209	170
13	Trou d'Eau Douce	18	16	89	10,003	625
14	Poste De Flacq	19	19	100	9,450	497
15	Anse Jonchée	20	16	80	2,746	172

Housing Estates between 21 and 60 Lessees						
16	Mamzelle Street	24	19	79	6,413	338
17	Petite Rivière	26	18	69	5,820	323
18	Ruisseau des Créoles	30	22	73	2,793	127
19	Sebastopol	31	18	58	5,411	301
20	Caroline	32	26	81	5,346	206
21	L'Embrazure	34	31	91	9,601	310
22	Riche en Eau	38	22	58	5,982	292
23	Poudre D'Or	41	22	54	6,755	307
24	Henrietta	42	27	64	8,866	328
25	Médine Camp de Masque	50	25	50	6,543	262
26	Grand Bay	51	36	71	14,332	398
27	Riche Terre	52	47	90	18,970	404
28	La Mivoie	54	46	85	14,487	315
29	Cap Malheureux	55	34	62	12,901	379
30	Beaux Songes	57	37	65	19,399	524

Housing Estates between 61 and 100 Lessees						
31	Bel Ombre	67	34	51	9,861	290
32	Grand Gaube	69	65	94	18,891	291
33	Petit Bien	74	38	51	14,117	372
34	Camp Diable	81	46	57	24,191	526
35	Phoenix	82	50	61	16,622	332
36	Triolet	84	57	68	15,727	276
37	St. Croix	84	69	82	35,393	513
38	Central Flacq	86	58	67	21,182	365
39	Bassin Road	86	59	69	17,965	304
40	Bel Air Rivière Sèche	87	63	72	19,294	311
41	Roche Brunes	90	63	70	16,724	265
42	Tranquebar	93	67	72	10,980	164
43	Case Noyale	96	82	85	26,185	319
44	Pointe aux Piments	98	57	58	23,498	420

Housing Estates between 101 and 200 Lessees						
45	Tamarin	104	60	58	27,226	454
46	Olivia	117	103	88	44,180	429
47	St. Pierre	123	62	50	26,124	421
48	Surinam	136	98	72	25,897	264
49	Ville Noire	157	94	60	39,191	426
50	Souillac	165	94	57	28,826	310
51	Argy	166	134	81	42,891	322
52	Baie du Tombeau	171	147	86	41,978	286
53	Goodlands	182	120	66	51,089	426
54	L'Agrément	200	118	59	43,638	373

Housing Estates between 201 and 400 Lessees						
55	Pamplemousses	204	161	79	59,776	371
56	Abercombie	204	184	90	51,956	282
57	La Ferme	221	121	55	51,270	424
58	Beau Séjour	221	141	64	41,624	297
59	Beau Vallon	234	128	55	45,746	357
60	Pointe aux Sables	252	200	79	80,940	407
61	La Chaux	300	244	81	110,549	453
62	Atlee	326	272	83	64,437	237

Housing Estates with more than 400 Lessees						
63	La Caverne	419	419	100	100,545	320
64	Allée Brillant	462	360	78	134,256	374
65	Richelieu	560	518	93	219,158	424
66	Mangalkhan	588	505	86	163,908	278
67	Malherbes	602	524	87	166,391	320
68	Stanley	604	434	72	142,551	413
69	La Briquetterie	614	529	86	210,375	398
70	Pailles	634	402	63	152,543	380
71	Vallijee	643	504	78	189,153	376
72	Roche Bois	654	571	87	242,622	427
73	La Cure	874	808	92	372,036	461
74	Barkly	923	788	85	258,905	332
<b>Total</b>		<b>16,833</b>	<b>10,202</b>		<b>3,644,030</b>	

#### 4.1.2 Education: SC Candidates in 2009 and Passes

Studies on poverty in the Republic of Mauritius (Etude pluri-disciplinaire, 1997; Pre-identification study, 1999) as well as grass root work in local communities highlight the multi-faceted causes of low achievements among children of poor Creole communities. Already at CPE (Certificate of Primary Education) level, drop-outs concern a third of an age group in schools located in deprived areas. As mentioned earlier, poverty and low education are found in all communities in Mauritius. However, working on a UNICEF project for the drop-outs of the school system (Lew-Fai, 2000), we observed that many Creole youngsters very early set aside their dreams, highlighting overt racism towards Creole populations in the school and work institutions, internalized inferiority complex, socialization processes which comply to self-fulfilling prophecy.

The following table indicates the number of candidates at 2009 School Certificate examinations and passes by sex and ethnic community<sup>5</sup>. For more details as per school names and average number of credits, cf. Tables 2 and 3 in Annex.

	GP		Non-GP		TOTAL	
	Candidates	Pass	Candidates	Pass	Candidates	Pass
BOYS	989	701	4,954	3,645	5,943	4,346
GIRLS	1,507	1,183	5,790	4,835	7,297	5,534
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,496</b>	<b>1,884</b>	<b>10,744</b>	<b>8,480</b>	<b>13,240</b>	<b>9,880</b>

% of SC passes: 75%

% of SC passes Boys: 73%

% of SC passes Girls: 76%

% GP candidates / total no. of candidates: 19%

% GP boy candidates / total no. of boy candidates: 17%

% GP girl candidates / total no. of girl candidates: 21%

% GP Passes / total no. of GP candidates: 75%

% GP boy passes / total no. of GP boy candidates: 71%

% GP girl Passes / total no. of GP girl candidates: 79%

% Non GP Passes / total no. of Non-GP candidates: 79%

% Non GP boy Passes / total no. of Non-GP boy candidates: 74%

% Non GP girl Passes/total no. of Non-GP girl candidates: 84%

We can observe the following:

- We must highlight here that % of passes from GP candidates is comparable to those from Non GP candidates (75% to 70%; 71% for Boys to 74%; 79% for Girls to 84%)
- Except in colleges found in deprived areas and created especially for students coming from poor backgrounds ( ex. Loreto Convent Bambous Virieux, College Fatima for girls; Collège du St. Esprit Rivière Noire, Collège Père Laval for boys) where the gap is at least 20%
- The average number of units is also comparable.
- It seems that once the Form 111 has been achieved, GP students like Non GP students try to achieve their SC.
- This could corroborate what is found at field level, when girls and boys as young as 11, are left, as drop-outs, to fend on their own. And then at 14, failure at Form 111, lack of economical means (for lunch, purchase of uniforms and books), obligation to look after younger siblings or obligation to look for work as apprentice, orientation and harder studies, impossibility to pay for private tuition etc. There are two main periods of drop-outs, at primary level (standard 6) and at college (form 111).
- These are crucial periods and, if elimination is done at such a young age before 15 years old, peer pressure for misconducts can induce many of these youngsters into social ills.
- Further study should be done between CPE and Form 111 to analyze the rates of failure and reasons for dropping out.
- Once this is done, proper measures could be taken to cater for these youngsters.
- We should also be able to analyze vocational and professional training (rates of recruitment and certificates obtained, in what field, at what age) and see how this sector can attract and retain them

#### 4.1.3 Work

##### 4.1.3.1 Public Service in 1962, 1975, 2005

The choice of three years 1962, 1975 and 2005 are due to two main reasons: before and after Independence and exodus of general population elite to Australia, coupled with a rough estimate of work cycle (30 years) for the renewal of labour force and recruitment of a new generation.

We need to recall here that it was in 1829 that coloured people "gens de couleur": obtained civic rights and access to the Royal College. At the end of the century, they could be appointed civil servants.

Evolution can be summed up as follows, according to Social Fabrics (SF 1998), and our analysis of data collected from the civil service, concerning the percentage of GP:

In 1901: 89.7% (SF 1998)

In 1946: 70% (SF 1998)

In 1962: 55% (Present report)

In 1975: 28% (Present report)

In 1985: 15,5% (SF 1998)

In 1992: 11.4% (SF 1998)

In 2005: 31% (Present report)

##### Detailed analysis: Public Service Staff 1962

Table 3 A :Public Service Staff 1962 according to ethnic communities and salary per annum						
Total No. according to salary and ethnic communities <sup>7</sup>						
% according to all public sector and total salary						
Per annum	GP	Hindu	Muslim	Chinese	Total	Total %
< Rs. 5,000	163	153	69	42	427	25.97
Rs. 5001-10,000	141	127	48	13	329	20.01
Rs. 10,001-15,000	317	102	37	14	470	28.59
Rs. 15,001-20,000	125	33	22	17	197	11.98
Rs. 20,001-25,000	91	17	9	4	121	7.36
Rs. 25,000 and above	76	13	6	5	100	6.08
Total	913	445	191	95	1644	100%
Total (%)	55.54	27.07	11.62	5.78	100%	

Per annum	GP (%)	Hindu (%)	Muslim (%)	Chinese (%)
< Rs. 5,000	17.85	34.38	36.13	44.21
Rs. 5,001-10,000	15.44	28.54	25.13	13.68
Rs. 10,001-15,000	34.72	22.92	19.37	14.74
Rs. 15,001-20,000	13.69	7.42	11.52	17.89
Rs. 20,001-25,000	9.97	3.82	4.71	4.21
Rs. 25,000 and above	8.32	2.92	3.14	5.26
Total (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%

Per annum	GP (%)	Hindu (%)	Muslim (%)	Chinese (%)	Total (%)
< Rs. 5,000 p	38.17	35.83	16.16	9.84	100%
Rs. 5001-10,000	42.86	38.60	14.59	3.95	100%
Rs. 10,001-15,000	67.45	21.70	7.87	2.98	100%
Rs. 15,001-20,000	63.45	16.75	11.17	8.63	100%
Rs. 20,001-25,000	75.21	14.05	7.44	3.31	100%
Rs. 25,000 and above	76.00	13.00	6.00	5.00	100%

We can observe the following:

- In 1962, there were in total 1644 public servants with 913 from the General Population (55 %)
- 27 % Hindus, 12% Muslims, 6% Chinese
- Salaries are more or less evenly distributed in four parts:
  - 26% of staff earn a salary of less than Rs. 5,000 per annum
  - 20% between Rs. 5,001 to Rs. 10,000
  - 28% between Rs. 10,001 to Rs. 15,000
  - 11% between Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 20,000; 13% More than Rs 20,000
- Among GPs, they are more numerous to earn more than Rs. 10,000 per annum than other communities. They are in the Chief, Principal and Senior Executive Officer group.
- Likewise, they are more than other communities in the above Rs. 15,000 salary group - High administrative level in the Public Service Commission, Finance, Judicial, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ministry of Works and Internal Communications, Police and Telecom.<sup>8</sup>. These would belong to the General Population elite "Gens de Couleur" or Franco-Mauritian
- Hindus, Muslims and Chinese are found in the less than Rs. 5,000 salary group

Detailed analysis: Public Service Staff 1975

Table 4A : Total no. according to salary and ethnic community <sup>9</sup>										
% according to all public sector and total salary										
Salary per month <sup>10</sup>	GP		Hindu		Muslim		Chinese		Total	Total (%)
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
< Rs. 500	30	58	263	167	92	69	25	93	797	31.73
Rs. 501 - 1,000	51	85	97	85	58	29	20	42	467	18.59
Rs. 1,001 - 1,500	144	25	149	17	66	3	23	4	431	17.16
Rs. 1,501 - 2,000	126	24	149	12	65	5	36	0	417	16.60
Rs. 2,001 - 2,500	44	9	60	2	22	2	6	0	145	5.77
Rs. 2,501 - 3,000	24	2	18	3	8	2	3	0	60	2.39
Rs. 3,001 - 3,999	30	3	35	3	33	0	14	0	118	4.70
Rs. 4,000 & above	34	1	23	2	11	1	5	0	77	3.07
Total	483	207	794	291	355	111	132	139	2512	100
Total (%)	19.23	8.24	31.61	11.59	14.13	4.42	5.25	5.53	100	

Table 4B: Distribution in % according to salary per month within each community									
Salary per month	GP		Hindu		Muslim		Chinese		Total (%)
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	
< Rs. 500	6.21	28.02	33.12	57.39	25.92	62.16	18.94	66.91	
Rs. 501 - 1,000	10.56	41.06	12.22	29.21	16.34	26.12	15.15	30.22	
Rs. 1,001 - 1,500	29.81	12.08	18.77	5.84	18.59	2.70	17.42	2.88	
Rs. 1,501 - 2,000	26.09	11.59	18.77	4.12	18.31	4.51	27.27	0	
Rs. 2,001 - 2,500	9.11	4.35	7.56	0.69	6.20	1.80	4.55	0	
Rs. 2,501 - 3,000	4.97	0.97	2.27	1.03	2.25	1.80	2.27	0	
Rs. 3,001 - 3,999	6.21	1.45	4.41	1.03	9.30	0.00	10.61	0	
Rs. 4,000 & above	7.04	0.48	2.90	0.69	3.10	0.90	3.79	0	
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Salary per month	GP		Hindu		Muslim		Chinese		Total (%)
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	
< Rs 500	3.76	7.28	33.00	20.95	11.54	8.66	3.14	11.67	100
Rs. 501 - 1,000	10.92	18.20	20.77	18.20	12.42	6.21	4.28	8.99	100
Rs. 1,001 - 1,500	33.41	5.80	34.57	3.94	15.31	0.70	5.34	0.93	100
Rs. 1,501 - 2,000	30.22	5.76	35.73	2.88	15.59	1.20	8.63	0.00	100
Rs. 2,001 - 2,500	30.34	6.21	41.38	1.38	15.17	1.38	4.14	0.00	100
Rs. 2,501 - 3,000	40.00	3.33	30.00	5.00	13.33	3.33	5.00	0.00	100
Rs. 3,001 - 3,999	25.42	2.54	29.66	2.54	27.97	0.00	11.86	0.00	100
Rs. 4,000 & above	44.16	1.30	29.87	2.60	14.29	1.30	6.49	0.00	100

We can observe the following:

- In 1975, there were in total 2512 public servants with an increase of 868 from 1962 (Nb: 1644) in 13 years
- 690 are from the General Population (28 % compared to 55 % in 1962, a decrease by almost half). 19 % are male GP and 8 % female GP
- 1085 are Hindus (43% compared to 27% in 1962); 32 % are male Hindus and 11 % female Hindus
- 466 are Muslims (18 % compared to 12% in 1962); 14 % are male Muslims and 4 % female GP
- 271 are Chinese (10% compared to 6% in 1962); 5 % are male Chinese and 5% female Chinese;
- Salaries per month
  - 32% of staff earn a salary of less than Rs. 500 per month (lower clerical class, general messenger)
  - 18% between Rs. 501 to Rs 1,000 (mainly upper clerical class)
  - 17% between Rs. 1,001 to Rs. 1,500
  - 16% between Rs. 1,501 to Rs. 2,000;
  - 16% more than Rs. 2,000
- Compared to 1962, GPs are in intermediate salary groups, mainly male GPs, less high executive and high administrative. Female GPs, like other females are in the lowest salary groups<sup>11</sup>
- Other communities, especially males are more than in 1962 in the same intermediate salary group, between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000 (lower executive class) and in higher administrative jobs in the above Rs. 3,000 salary group.

Detailed analysis: Public Service Staff 2005

Table 5: Public Service Staff 2005 according to ethnic communities and salary per annum

Total 5A: Nb. according to salary and ethnic community. % according to all public sector and total salary										
Salary per month	GP		Hindu		Muslim		Chinese		Total	Total %
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
<Rs 10,000	3	14	88	75	24	32	3	5	244	2.76
Rs. 10,001- 15,000	827	554	1661	1082	462	355	64	90	5095	57.71
Rs. 15,001- 20,000	449	170	637	144	198	110	36	45	1789	20.27
Rs. 20,001- 25,000	257	91	224	62	49	14	28	19	744	8.43
Rs. 25,001- 30,000	191	62	190	47	33	14	13	11	561	6.35
Rs. 30,001- 35,000	33	13	73	13	14	6	4	7	163	1.85
Rs. 35,001 - 40,000	7		19	4	4		1		35	0.40
Rs. 40,001 & above	73	11	61	15	15	3	15	4	197	2.23
Total	1840	915	2953	1442	799	534	164	181	8828	100
Total %	20.84	10.36	33.45	16.33	9.05	6.05	1.86	2.05	100	

Table 5B: Distribution in % according to salary per annum within each community								
Salary per month	GP		Hindu		Muslim		Chinese	
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)
<Rs 10,000	0.16	1.53	2.98	5.20	3.00	5.99	1.83	2.76
Rs. 10,001- 15,000	44.95	60.55	56.25	75.03	57.82	66.48	39.02	49.72
Rs. 15,001- 20,000	24.40	18.58	21.57	9.99	24.78	20.60	21.95	24.86
Rs. 20,001- 25,000	13.97	9.95	7.59	4.30	6.13	2.62	17.07	10.50
Rs. 25,001- 30,000	10.38	6.78	6.43	3.26	4.13	2.62	7.93	6.08
Rs. 30,001- 35,000	1.79	1.42	2.47	0.90	1.75	1.12	2.44	3.87
Rs. 35,001 - 40,000	0.38	0.00	0.64	0.28	0.50	0.00	0.61	0.00
Rs. 40,001 & above	3.97	1.20	2.07	1.04	1.88	0.56	9.15	2.21
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 5C: Distribution in according to ethnic community within each salary group									
Salary per month	GP		Hindu		Muslim		Chinese		Total (%)
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	
<Rs. 10,000	1.23	5.74	36.07	30.74	9.84	13.11	1.23	2.05	100
Rs. 10,001- 15,000	16.23	10.87	32.60	21.24	9.07	6.97	1.26	1.77	100
Rs. 15,001- 20,000	25.10	9.50	35.61	8.05	11.07	6.15	2.01	2.52	100
Rs. 20,001- 25,000	34.54	12.23	30.11	8.33	6.59	1.88	3.76	2.55	100
Rs. 25,001- 30,000	34.05	11.05	33.87	8.38	5.88	2.50	2.32	1.96	100
Rs. 30,001- 35,000	20.25	7.98	44.79	7.98	8.59	3.68	2.45	4.29	100
Rs. 35,001 - 40,000	20.00	0.00	54.29	11.43	11.43	0.00	2.86	0.00	100
Rs. 40,001 & above	37.06	5.58	30.96	7.61	7.61	1.52	7.61	2.03	100

We observe the following:

- In 2005, there were in total 8828 public servants with an increase of 6316 from 1975 (No: 2512) in 30 years
  - 2755 are from the General Population (31 % compared to 28 % in 1975, an increase of 3%). 21 % are male GP and 10% female GP.
  - If we compare with the figures of Social Fabric 1998, 15,5% in 1985 et 11,4% in 1992, the increase is two fold
  - 4395 are Hindus (50% compared to 43% in 1975); 34 % are male Hindus (32% in 1975) and 16 % female Hindus (11% in 1975)
  - 1333 are Muslims (15 % compared to 18% in 1975); 9 % are male Muslims and 6 % female Muslims
  - 345 are Chinese (4% compared to 10% in 1975); 2 % are male Chinese and 2% female Chinese;
  - Salaries per month
    - Only 3% of staff earn a salary of less than Rs.10,000 per month (lower clerical class, general messenger)
    - 58% between Rs.10,000 to Rs. 15,000 (mainly upper clerical class)
    - 20% between Rs.15,001 to Rs. 20,000
    - 8% between Rs.20,001 to Rs. 25,000;
    - 6% between Rs.25,001 to Rs. 30,000;
    - 4% more than Rs.30,000
  - Compared to 1962 and 1975, GPs are in intermediate salary groups, mainly male GPs, but at executive level, between Rs. 20,001 and Rs. 30,000, male GPs on average are as well represented as Hindus (around one third). At higher executive and administrative levels, between Rs. 30,001 and Rs. 40,000, male Hindus represent almost half of this salary group. Over Rs. 40,000, male GPs are slightly more numerous than male Hindus (37% and 31%)
- Other communities, as in 1975 are in the intermediate salary group, mainly between Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 (upper clerical class)

We can see from this overview that there are pivotal periods for access of GP to the Public Service: before, and after, Independence, decrease and in 2005, an increase in recruitment compared to the eighties and nineties, political events such as 2005 General Elections.

Different factors have contributed to these evolutions concerning the general population recruitment in the public service. We just recall some:

- The massive emigration of the elite to Europe, Canada and Australia just before Independence
- The development of the private sector after Independence and the recruitment of GPs in commercial banks, private regional and international business; etc.
- Massive recruitment in the public sector and standards of recruitment not fulfilled by potential GP candidates
- After cyclone *Carol* in 1960, development of construction and recruitment of GP skilled workers

- Rise in educational standards of candidates and at the same time, lack of them from GP candidates
- Factors of discrimination which cannot be really measured and which discourage GP children from entering the competition
- Harassment in some forms or other in relationship with lobbies, group pressure.

#### 4.1.3.2 Para-Public: Ports Authority, Cargo Handling Corporation and Central Electricity Board

We have chosen these three companies because of traditional distribution of labour force, dockers, semi-skilled or skilled workers among Creoles.

Table 6: Mauritius Ports Authority Staff, 2011				
General Population (GP) and Non-GP according to Departments and Gender				
	GP		Non-GP	
	M	F	M	F
Corporate Department			2	1
Administrative & Legal Services	1	2	33	31
Human Resources			4	1
Finance Department			12	6
Internal Audit Department			2	5
It Services			6	0
Port Operations Department	19		39	1
Marine Department	90	1	189	2
Port Development Department			5	
Estate Management Unit	10		67	
Technical Services Department				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>47</b>

We can observe the following:

- On a total staff of 529, 479 are males, 50 females ( mainly in administrative, legal and finance department, mostly non-GP)
- Among the male staff, 32% are GP; 68% Non-GP
- GPs are mainly in the marine department (32% of those in the Department) and in ports operations Department (31%)

### The Cargo Handling Corporation

The Cargo Handling Corporation Limited is a private company with state shareholding; it manages port handling operations: loading, unloading, delivery and reception. It is a full-fledged operator, which has entered into a concession contract with the Mauritius Ports Authority for general cargo, dry bulk and container handling at Port Louis.

	Hindu		GP		Muslim		Chinese	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Executive Assistant	6	2	2	2	1	1		
Driver	8		9		7			
Security Guard	18		20		5		3	
Operator (P&E) Grade 1 (on contract)	11		4					
Port Worker (on contract)	1		7		4			
Assistant Terminal Superintendent	6		7		1			
Senior Supervisor (operations)	3		27		2			
Terminal Assistant	72		47		24		1	
Foreman (ship)	6		15		5			
Foreman (shore)	15		10		2			
Plant Operator Grade 1	36		24		4		1	
Shore-worker (Personal Basis)	29		59		6		1	
Operator Plant & Equipment Grade 1	36		37		13		1	
Planning Officer	10		5		1			
Port Worker Superior Grade	15		45		5			
Port Worker	13		31		10			
Tradesman Grade 1	2		14					
Tradesman Grade 2	4		12		1			
Winchman	22		51		13			
Technician Portique	11		26		5		1	
Foreman Lasher	1		6		4		1	
Lasher	43		139		24		3	
RTG Operator	11		20		8		2	
Plant & Equip. Operator Sup. Grade	10		11		1		1	
Plant Operator	37		34		7		1	
Reception Officer	7		5		3			
Senior Logistic Officer	3	1	8				1	
Plant Supervisor	7		5					
<b>Total</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>

We can observe the following:

- On a total staff of 1481, 1446 are males, 35 females
- Among the male staff, 52% are GP; 35% Hindus and 12% Muslims
- GPs are mainly on the following posts:

**Less than 40%**

- Terminal assistants (47 out of 144; 33%)
- Plant operator Grade 1 (24 out of 65; 37%)

**More than 40%**

- Security guards (20 out of 46; 43%)
- Operator plant & Equipment grade 1 (37 out of 87; 43%)
- Plant operator & Equip. operator (45 out of 102; 44%)
- RTG operator (20 out of 41; 50%)
- Port Worker (31 out of 54; 57%)
- Foreman - ship (15 out of 26; 58%)
- Winch-man (51 out of 86; 59%)
- Foreman -shore (10 out of 17; 59%)
- Technician Portique (26 out of 43, 60%)
- Shore-worker (Personal basis) (59 out of 95; 62%)
- Lasher (139 out of 209; 67%)
- Port Worker superior grade ( 45 out of 65; 69% )
- Tradesman grade 1 & 2 (26 out of 33; 79%)
- Senior supervisors - operations (27 out of 32; 84%)
- Mechanic (8 out of 8; 100%)
- Team leader plant operator (6 out of 6; 100%)

The Central Electricity Board

	Hindu		GP		Muslim		Chinese	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handyman-1	12		2	1	6			
Handyman	47	1	8		13			
Customer Service Agent	18	6	2	1	10	1		
Clerk/ Cashier	20		3	1	10			
Senior Technical Officer	43		15		11		2	
Engineer	40	3	5		6		1	
Technical Officer	34		15		1	1	1	
Driver/ Senior Driver	37		4		13			
Teller	3	6				2		
Senior Engineer	9	1			2		1	
Cadet Technician	28		19		14		1	
Technician (Fitter/ Pipe Fitter)	5		6		1			
Technician (Fitter/ Turner)	8		13		1			
Assistant Shift Foreman	7		7		5		1	
Operator	3		8		1			
Meter Reader (Contract)	15		6		8			
Assistant Technician (Line-works)	30		4		2			
Technician (Line-works)	80		20		17			
Technician	56		70		11		2	
Office Attendant/ Senior Office Attendant	25		3		3			
Handy worker	19	6	14	4	11	2		
Technician-1	86		34		15			
Administrative Assistant	28	12	14	9	13	3		2
Technician (Electrician)	16		2		5			
Cleaner- Greaser	6		8		2			
Technician (Fitter/ Welder)	5		9		1			
Telephone Operator/ Senior Telephone Operator	7	2	1	2		1		
Meter Reader	95		16		26		1	
ADM Assistant (PTH)	6		3		1			
Shift Foreman	6		4		3			
Accountant	5	2			2	1		
Stores Orderly	10		2		1	1		
Technical Assistant	11		5		1		1	
Technician (Fitter)	29		42		5			
Senior Technician	9		3					
Trainee Engineer	10	4	1		5	1		
Cadet Engineer	9	4	2		7	2		
Asst. Technician 1.	14		5		8			
Trainee Technician	17		16	1				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>

We can observe the following:

- On a total staff of 1944<sup>13</sup>, 1881 are males, 126 females
- Among the male staff, 25% are GP; 59% Hindus and 16% Muslims
- In comparison with Cargo Handling, the % of GPs and Hindus is inversely proportional (52% GP and 35% in Cargo)
- Meter readers are mainly Hindus (95 out of 138; 69% ); GPs 16 out of 138; 12%
- GPs are mainly on the following posts:

#### Less than 40%

- Technical and Senior Technical Officer (30 out of 122; 25%)
- Handy worker (14 out of 56; 25%)
- Technician I (34 out of 135; 25%)
- Cadet technician (19 out of 62; 31%)

#### More than 40%

- Trainee technician (16 out of 34; 47%)
- Technician (70 out of 139; 50%)
- Technician fitter (42 out of 76; 55%)
- Technician fitter piper (13 out of 22; 59%)

Analysis from these three sectors confirms the absence of Creoles in sectors which require less skill. It will be interesting to analyze evolution over time and re-composition of labour division along ethnic lines.

#### 4.1.4 Poverty and Deprivation <sup>14</sup>

##### 4.1.4.1 Measured in monetary terms: Absolute and Relative poverty line

The Republic of Mauritius does not have a national poverty line “minimum vital type”, i.e. the cost of resources minimum to maintain a minimal standard of living. More than income-based poverty, taking into account adjustments for household size and composition, consumption expenditure is usually used, giving an indication of a poverty line incorporating basic needs.

The use of World Bank \$2 a day poverty line, equivalent to Rs760 in 2001/2002 shows that this criteria measuring absolute poverty (less than 1% of the population) is not relevant (Cassimally in: Poverty in Mauritius, 2008, p.86).

The relative poverty line, measuring more the inequality of well-being among households is, therefore, used, based on half of the median household income per adult equivalent (recommended by the World Bank). From household surveys (HBS) in 2001/2002, the relative poverty line is Rs.2,800 for a one person household and Rs.6,700 for an average household of 2 adults and 2 children. It concerns 7.7 % of the population. <sup>15</sup> Although focused on inequality and not very appropriate to monitor actual level of poverty, the following characteristics of those most vulnerable to poverty can be observed from the HBS surveys in 2001/2002:

- Couples with unmarried children (54%)
- One-parent households with unmarried children (14%)
- Single member households (11%)

Associated characteristics are as follows: single headed households headed by women, households with an elderly parent living alone and households headed by uneducated persons.

For all these figures, distribution according to ethnic communities is unavailable.

#### 4.1.4.2 Measured in non-monetary terms: The HDI and the RDI

The most well known is the UN human Development Index (HDI) which is not a poverty indicator per se. It is a composite index measuring basic opportunities for human development such as education (adult literacy, combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment, health status (life expectancy at birth) and standard of living (GDP per capita). According to The HDI of 2006 (for year 2004) Mauritius had an HDI value of 0.8 and ranked 63 out of 177 countries (one of high human development countries and with Seychelles, the only African countries in this group). Again, this index gives a general insight in the comparison with other countries but does not reveal inequalities according to disadvantaged regions and sub-regions of Mauritius.

On the basis of data collected from Housing and Population Censuses, a Relative Development Index for administrative regions (Municipal Wards and Village Council Areas - VCAs) has been construed to measure regions with low relative development. As with the HDI, it is not a poverty index per se but as a composite index, it gives indications of deprivation such as amenities within households ( piped water, electricity, flush toilet, concrete dwellings or not, rooms used for living purposes), house ownership, primary and secondary enrolment, educational attainment, literacy and employment rate. Again, this ranking of administrative areas can be useful in targeting areas of deprivation but fieldwork shows that being an aggregated index, it does not necessarily reflect actual pockets of poverty. Besides, various other services are not included at a reasonable disaggregated level to cover the basic daily needs that are lacking in some critical areas. The implementation of a Social Register at the Ministry of Social Security could serve as a basis to track poverty more on a day-to-day level, as well as its composition and evolution over time.

Because of the absence of a "national poverty line", lack of more complete data and lack of disaggregation at ethnic level, we cannot say that Creoles are more or less than others in situations of poverty. However, coherent data gathered in different sectors as well as in many detailed field studies show that inter-relationship of factors causing poverty (housing, education, employment and finance, health, access to networking), more present among Creole communities increase risks of falling into pauperization and poverty.

#### 4.1.5 Mental Health

The statistics which follow concern inmates at Brown Sequard Psychiatric Hospital, the only public hospital for mental health. Collected data have to be set in the context of general health services in Mauritius where coexist a public sector ( lacking equipment, trained personnel, financial means except for very specific interventions, ex. cardiology) and a private sector ( generalists, specialists, clinics) which, in collaboration with foreign investors, cater for the needs of well-off families.

It must be remembered that a clearer picture of mental health in Mauritius needs to be completed by the following data disaggregated according to ethnic origins, sex and age group:

- 1) Consultations in the private sector and nature of ailments
- 2) Regular consultations at Brown Sequard Psychiatric Hospital and nature of ailments

We must also bear in mind that lack of means (financial and social in terms of family or neighbourhood networks to look after ill persons) contributes for the most part to the referral of them to the public psychiatric hospital. A more precise study of the institutional processes from first visit to internment (episodic to permanent) as well as history of mental ills, treatment and support needs to be done.

The following table gives a distribution of inmates in 2011 according to ethnic origins, sex and age groups, irrespective of ailments.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 9 : Inmates of Brown Sequard 2011**

All diseases by ethnic origins, sex & age group

**HINDU**

	> 25 yrs old	26-45 yrs old	46-60 yrs old	60 yrs +	Total
Male	2	26	47	19	94
Female	5	25	32	21	83
Total	7	51	79	40	177

**GP**

	> 25 yrs old	26-45 yrs old	46-60 yrs old	60 yrs +	Total
Male	3	20	54	39	116
Female		12	25	19	56
Total	3	32	79	58	172

30%                      30%                      43%                      48%                      41%

% Total Inmates

Among GP: Males 68%; Females 32%

GP males on total inmates: 28%

GP females on total inmates: 13%

Total GP on total inmates : 41%

**MUSLIM**

	> 25 yrs old	26-45 yrs old	46-60 yrs old	60 yrs +	Total
Male		8	14	7	29
Female		10	6	11	27
Total		18	20	18	56

**CHINESE**

	> 25 yrs old	26-45 yrs old	46-60 yrs old	60 yrs +	Total
Male		5	4	4	13
Female		1	1		2
Total		6	5	4	15

**TOTAL INMATES**

	> 25 yrs old	26-45 yrs old	46-60 yrs old	60 yrs +	Total
Male		5	4	4	13
Female		1	1		2
	10	107	183	120	420

	> 25 yrs old		26-45 yrs old		46-60 yrs old		60 yrs +		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Hindu	1		15	13	33	25	12	11	110	39%
GP	1		13	3	37	15	36	12	117	42%
Muslim			3	7	14	4	7	8	43	15%
Chinese			3	1	2		4		10	4%
Total	2		34	24	86	44	59	31	280	100%

**Schizophrenia:**

67% of all inmates, irrespective of sex, age and ethnic origins

42% of inmates with this ailment are of General Population

Male GP almost one third of all inmates with same ailment (87 out of 280, i.e. 31%)

The following observations can be made:

- GP inmates, irrespective of sex, make almost half of all inmates (41%)
- GP male inmates are 28% of all inmates, 46% of all male inmates
- Among GP inmates, males represent 68% and females 32%
- As with other communities, the number of inmates increases as from 46 years age groups
- **A diagnosis of schizophrenia**
  - 2/3 of inmates ( 67% ) , irrespective of age, sex and ethnic origins
  - Nearly half of them are in the age group of 46-60 years old
  - Males are more numerous ( 64% ) than females
  - 42% of inmates suffering from schizophrenia are of General Population
  - Male GP are almost one third ( 31% ) of all inmates with same ailment ( 87 out of 280)

## 4.2 Psycho-social Analysis and Interpretations

### 4.2.1 Housing

Historical conditions to land access in 1872 for the Indian indentured labourers by the Royal Commission have been a major factor in the setting up of housing plans for individuals as well as the community, pulling together resources for long term goals. Lack of economic opportunities offered to “ex-apprentices” from the slave population as well as absence of provision for them as far as land was concerned have contributed to “nomadism”, transitory dwellings according to job opportunities. Unstable labour market coupled with absence of “*enracinement*” that a permanent house can foster have contributed to lack of savings for investment in housing from slave descendants. They are the most destitute in this sector and inhabit mostly “*Cités*”.

Housing conditions and environments, as already pointed out by many observers are such that promiscuity is a problem, whether in camps or in overcrowded houses of “*Cités*”. The following observations can be made:

1) Housing conditions of those, «less visible poor», i.e. those who do not readily come forward for income or social support, are located on the outskirts of the capital or in squatting areas. We know from field studies (Pre-identification, Social Needs Analysis,\*\*) that many of the poorest live in open camps and squatting zones across the island. Their number and ethnic distribution are not known exactly. However, a predominance of Creoles and Rodriguans, leaving their island and looking for employment in Mauritius is observed.

2) “*Cités*” although inhabited by all ethnic communities are more generally inhabited by Creoles. Cf. Section Facts and Figures\*. The social needs analysis conducted recently in Bambous and Rivière Noire confirm the acuteness of the housing problem already noted in precedent studies on poverty: overcrowded, lack of amenities and social infrastructure (Moutou, 1996; Etude Pluri-disciplinaire, 1997)

3) Housing problem is not confined to “*Cités*” since some families although not in living in iron-sheet or thatched houses, whether in Mauritius or Rodrigues face hardships. For, after long fought struggles for the purchase of a piece of land, at some point of the household income cycle, families start constructions in concrete but find themselves trapped, often through unemployment, living in «ene la coque vide», hardly able to cope with basic necessities, especially when housing loans are involved. Illiteracy, difficulties to cope with administration, lack of efficient network place these families in great vulnerability and risk of repossession. Compared to Asians, among whom land is symbolically very important, solidarity among the extended family is fundamental and upward social mobility is encouraged, among Creole populations who aim at getting out of their destitute conditions, neighbourhood and social networks are of no help. In fact, they are looked down and ridiculed.

4) Again, among squatters, field work shows that even if they include all populations, deprived sections of the Creole population tend to stay longer in such housing conditions. More in-depth and longitudinal studies need to be done to assess the causes, lengths of stay, geographical mobility and facilitating factors in getting out of squatting.

5) Ownership of land / house is usually associated with independence from landlords' wish or strategy. It is a sign of long term investment, sense of capitalization and transmission to next generations. It supposes an idea, an ideal of lineage, a valued position of self in a succession of generations, a representation of ancestry, therefore an apprehension of self / sacrifices / choices / sublimation process based on a sense of history. Denied of existence and of any form of future, slave descendants are in an impossible situation to look beyond the immediate and cater for a more stable future, a permanent home being one of its concretizations.

Housing like education are fundamental assets; they suppose that equal access is given to all. They suppose also social conditions in which individuals operate, which allow

projections, representations of proportionate rewards for self and group. When these conditions are broken "nou perdan touzour", resignation breeds closure. A different historical implementation of Asians and sense of self-realization over the past may explain the presence or absence of individual and group sense of sacrifice, desire of social promotion, capitalization and transmission.

#### 4.2.2 Education

For a complete analysis of structural, historical and social factors, readers will refer to Report on Education (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011).

As mentioned already, research in the Republic of Mauritius has never on societal level analyzed trends according to ethnic identities and economic status.

However, in many international studies on discriminated minorities (whether in respect to numerical, racial, political or cultural domination), strong correlations are observed between poor educational achievements and low economic status (UN Conference, Genève, 2000).<sup>17</sup>

To these known consequences of slavery, we shall add what other known authors suggest:

- The difficulty encountered in writing may be related to the inherited past, a dominance of oral and myth of book when the Code Noir forbade slave owners to teach slaves to write and read." *L'écriture relevant donc du mystère et du pouvoir.....le passage se ferait du cri à la parole* » (Confiant, 1995)

- Dislocation of families, " more a group of life shards strung together" (See further in the report), lack of space and promiscuity, emotional and financial insecurity have a direct impact on the value attached to children, valued when economically active or when contributing to family resources through care of children or help in households. The environment at large (family and network of neighbours) is not conducive to investment in formal education. The whole socialising process is set on short-term goals, fitting in the immediate survival strategies of families. Getting out of poverty as many case studies have shown, has been through determination (parents, usually mothers or self, against the disapproval of environment) to succeed in the school system

- According to Du Bois (1899, re-ed., 1996), faith in educational movements has been dampened by ongoing ridicule and denouncement, which serves to impede the will of many slave descendants to pursue self-development.

#### 4.2.3 Work and Attitude to work

There are many obstacles to proper access on the job markets. We shall underline here:

- a) Drop outs from the school system through early family responsibilities<sup>18</sup>
- b) Lack of educational achievements to compete in adequate terms in job recruitment
- c) Explicit or unconscious discrimination on the basis of origins, starting in the selection of CVs through criteria of family names, color and bias in interviews
- d) Social discrimination on the basis of residential areas. Stereotypes exist concerning areas "bons quartiers" "quartiers résidentiels" and other "difficult areas" associated with delinquency, drugs and prostitution. People located there are stigmatised and negative evaluation tends to operate in their recruitment.
- e) Lack of motivation from the people who are discriminated against.
- f) Self-renunciation in competition on the labour market and feeling of inadequacy
- g) Lower performance and attitudes to work. Work, especially among youngsters is to be associated with some dose of fun and enjoyment<sup>19</sup>. Value of work is not central as in other

cultures - absenteeism being high on certain occasions "lundis cordonniers". Unreliability to meet deadlines, "péna parole", etc. are social judgments regularly gathered on a day to day level. Bias like rumors function on a set of existing elements but they are dramatized, used on a discriminatory basis. More objective data needs to be gathered and analyzed in order to deconstruct these prejudices and bring change.

- h) Some researchers (Cf. first section of "Breaking the Psychological Chains of Slavery", Akbar (1996) state that slave descendants still carry the attitude they had towards "work" during slavery. Reference is to the toilsome and unprofitable work of slaves on a daily basis, to the fact that Sundays and holidays were a transitory emancipation from work. Hence, the association of work with enslavement, not working with freedom and a continuous state of mind hindering entrepreneurship.
- i) Restructuration in the labour market gives birth to growing concerns about future means of living among unemployed youngsters and those, coping with the educational system. Young married adults facing precarious jobs as "journaliers, cé qui pé gagné" are compelled to live with parents/ in-laws. The value of education, already low in the social environment is decreasing rapidly "a quoi bon travail, quand pas sire gagne travail". Parents, having made the necessary efforts and sacrifices, obliged to cope with changing conditions of entrance on stable labour market feel cheated. With the rising costs of living, this unexpected change gives rise to frustration and feelings that "pli ça va, pli vinne difficile pou débatta". Formerly, "ti capave trace, tracé" through a succession of casual jobs before proper entrance on stable labour market, and setting up families of their own. Additional family tensions, inactivity among youngsters and young adults breed high consumption of alcohol, drug addiction and prostitution among young women.

#### 4.2.4 Poverty and Deprivation

Housing conditions, poor conditions of living, low access to education and health, precarious jobs, underemployment and unemployment are structural causes that generate poverty and deprivation. Poverty cycles are reproduced, hindering social and economic integration. Reports stress psychological problems that children encounter, reduced vertical mobility, risks of sexual exploitation and high occurrence of risk behaviors.

Poverty, multi-faceted, cuts across all communities. It is an extremely difficult exercise to pin-point what is its exact link with slavery. However, what can be said from studies done on this subject from structural trends and indicators as well as field studies, mentioned before, is that an aggregate of indicators show more massive marginalization processes affecting Creole communities<sup>20</sup>. Some "specific" features can be observed:

- **Poor, not really poor, could be ordinary**

In field work, a less known issue is raised about segments of Creole population who are "poor, not really poor, could be ordinary". The threshold here separating the «ordinary», from those who «could be ordinary» is perceived by members of the community to be more of a socio-cultural nature. Stress is laid on life-styles, attitudes to life, options for the present instead of the future. Deprivation is less here in economic terms; it has nevertheless repercussions on life prospects of families and younger generations. Socialized in consumption patterns that they would not be able to afford, restricted access to stable labour market for low-skilled groups, the younger «could be ordinary» generations are facing increased risks of falling into the poverty trap and high levels of frustration.

Observed among youngsters in many deprived areas in Mauritius and Rodrigues, it is the loss of life prospects, expected to be widening with increased opportunities in education and overall development of the Republic of Mauritius that induces a pessimistic view of the future. The term «mi-normal» used by youngsters reflects this anxiety, that the process of «normalization», i.e. becoming ordinary citizens remains a life-long process, never to be achieved. Whereas the older «could be normal» generations stay in their condition through social deprivation, the younger «could be normal» generations run the risks of staying so, through increasing economic deprivation. High level of alcoholism among these

youngsters, as young as 12 years old as could be witnessed on many sites, cases of suicide translate deep concerns about this loss of sustainable life perspectives and pressure from the environment to get into «ordinariness». In Rodrigues, likewise, the gap between aspirations, expectations and limited prospects offered to new generations create fears of pauperisation for families who are coping with extra charges of grown up children and for the latter themselves, « falling below » the socio-economic status of parents.

- **Threshold of “pauvre”, “in pé dans bien”.**

There is a significant difference between Rodrigues and Mauritius on what is considered necessary in order to be able to cope with the basic necessities, as evaluated by participants themselves. In Rodrigues, to be “in pé dans bien”, in general, total income is expected to be half from that in Mauritius, both for an average family composed of parents and 4 children (2 of secondary education age and 2 of primary education age)<sup>21</sup>.

- **Poverty associated with discrimination measures**

In Rodrigues, unlike in Mauritius, the discrimination factor in the production of poverty is more political (Rodrigues in comparison with the island of Mauritius) than social. Unemployment and precarious jobs are due to impoverishment of the lagoon, land erosion, access to water, seasonal changes, a decline in jobs in the Civil Service. In Mauritius, due to centralisation and mechanisation in the sugar industry, disappearance of sand extractors, decrease of demands on small artisans or employees in the construction sector through emergence of bigger firms/ groups offering the same services, less recruitment in the EPZ sectors are indicators that the labour market is offering lesser opportunities to the population concerned in this report. Risks of downward social mobility and poverty, although associated with structural reasons are also strongly connoted with discrimination measures.

- **Poverty and culture of today.**

Sacrifices for education of children, savings, good management of loans and family budgets are strong elements of change. This investment in the future supposes socialisation processes, which enable self and collective projection in better life prospects, a cost analysis of efforts and potential rewards, abilities to postpone immediate pleasures. Dynamics at work in families, getting out of poverty, show the strengths of these elements. Again, the social environment of families, positive role models, implicit “social contract” of solidarity, binding members of family to “repay” or help others is a powerful factor in the mobilisation of families, not only for the present but also for the future.

Absence of sense of belonging, sense of personal history as mentioned before, incapacity to think the future, induce life-styles, as for example, ways of spending and saving which penalise whole families. The possible shift from poverty to ordinariness, linked with change in lifestyle and mentalities, leading to empowerment in different sectors of life demands a reconstruction of self in a perspective of history.

In its absence, living on credit, overspending on occasions of celebration (weddings, first communion) are ways of positioning self and the family, acquiring respect and dignity, whatever the price to pay.

Strategies implying self-sacrifices, individual as well as collective, as observed among Asian communities are strongly related to a strong notion of self, past, present and future.

The relationship to space and time has to be structured since early childhood and is done through many socializations processes, which are transmitted from generations to generations. When the past does not form part of history, when “lineage” cannot exist, projection in the future is blocked and the present overwhelms all our perceptions. Strategies cannot be set up, especially when in the absence of assets, financial and cultural, hope does not exist. Material conditions together with symbolic resources such self esteem and sense of belonging to a group socially valued help individuals to position themselves in a favourable social comparison (Tajfel, \*)

A fragmented social identity scatters inner resources and, instead of favoring resilience, increases sense of loss and despair. Compensating lack of inner resources may take different forms from overspending and incapacity to make budget / provisions for the future to "amizé, boire"<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.2.5 Mental Health

The diagnosis of schizophrenia that has emerged in Section on Mental Health (42% of inmates suffering from schizophrenia are of General Population) is in line with studies made overseas. For example, individuals in the lowest categories of both education and income are twice as likely to meet the criteria for a major psychiatric diagnosis. Often, African Americans are **over-diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic** and under-diagnosed as affectively disordered. Researchers observe that the overall notion that slaves are subhuman and intellectually inferior has proven to be detrimental to their mental health. Williams and Williams-Morris (2000), postulating that African Americans have been the victims of both institutional and internalized racism examined their internalized impact. Living in a segregated environment that impedes socioeconomic mobility, the slave descendants show acceptance of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes linked to their ancestry and this type of acceptance often leads to anxiety, feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness<sup>23</sup>.

Again, the negative impact of institutional racism on mental health is observed in Studies such as the Epidemiologic Catchment Area Study (ECAS) and the National Co-morbidity Study (NCS) in the USA. Robin and Regier's (1991) analysis of the ECAS suggested that adults in the lowest quartile of socioeconomic status based on income, education, and occupation are approximately three times more likely to have a psychiatric disorder than those in the highest quartile.

J.P. Muyard (2005), J.G. Leary (2005), C. Sterlin (1993) also studied transmission mechanisms of the impact of slavery. In the first stages, slavery generated an extinction of life drive (Eros) among slaves. Such an aggression, physical as well as psychological, remodeled all the energy of the person with consequences on memory, sexuality, aggressiveness/passivity patterns (See further: Reversal into the opposite).

Coping with reactivations of these instincts can result in forms directed

- Towards others (vandalism, thefts, crimes, etc.).<sup>24</sup>
- Towards Self (passivity and extreme shyness, pseudo-debility, psychosomatic illnesses, drug addiction, schizophrenia, suicide, etc.).<sup>25</sup>

Increased distress and frustration usually result in health issues such as hypertension and other stress related illnesses, requiring treatment. Treatment requires money and very often, not treated at the start of the illness, the poor and unfortunate end up, abandoned by relatives, in very distressful conditions in psychiatric hospitals or in hospices for old people. A specific study should be undertaken in this field.

Sense of legitimacy, dispossession of self, cognitive dissonance, inner conflicts are interwoven. They result from the social structure of slavery. On a more individual level, they are linked with a wide spectrum of factors:

#### Impossibility to position oneself in a lineage

We know from anthropological studies made in Africa and Madagascar the importance of lineage, ancestors and the dead ones in the definition of self. Personality is not conceived as in the Western world: dependency is not given a negative value and search for protection is constant to avoid feeling of being abandoned (Cf. for example Mannoni, réed. 1997). Self in traditional agrarian societies has its saliency through family roots and most importantly, from the encounter of two lineages. The vertical symbols that they embody through rituals mark the different generations. In the case of slavery, these ruptures in the succession of

generations through the dysfunction of families and absence of reference to ancestry laid the basis for dispossession of self.

It is known that transmission of values across generations foster resilience and help to project oneself in the future. The culture of the immediate, overspending and living without accumulation of capital - finance, education, material goods, as mentioned earlier - are also related to the obliteration of the past and impossibility to position oneself in a lineage.

### 1) Fear and Search for protection

In the traditional world, sense of self is borne and reinforced through communion with the exterior (*L'Afrique symptôme*, 2009). Social cohesion is pursued and valued in that it fosters self-esteem. In the case of slavery, identification mechanisms through lineage and community cannot operate, resulting in deterioration or destruction of identity, loss of reference and dysfunction of self. Threats and fear are generated, not only from the social system, causing deprivation of freedom, public as well as private rights. They are also produced by dislocations of the personality system itself, resulting in incapacity to think in terms of self-protection<sup>26</sup>. Fear of threats from the outside, the occult or divine forces invades all sectors of life and challenges all logics for protection (Eve, 1992; Boswell, 2006). These irrational fears are destructive forces and all sorts of "arrangement", implying affective, economic means are designed to counteract immediate or future threats. Instead of fighting against a system, energies are devoted to the search for protection, physical, emotional and spiritual.

The different generations of slave descendants have coped with these hardships, the first generation bearing the brunt of much distress, the second one with reactive behaviors to the shock encountered initially, and successive generations with more or less coping strategies to fend off the trauma of lost origins and loss in nothingness.

### 3) Importance of occult forces

Cross cultural studies ( cf. for example Benoist, 1993; *L'Afrique symptôme*, 2009) show that still today, mental health in Africa, Madagascar and slavery marked societies is differently conceived, compared to the Western world. In traditional societies, a mentally ill is a consequence of exterior forces, occult or divine, for ex. «Djinn», «Zaar», «Rab», "Mauvais Lizié". Illness results from an intervention linked with an offense that has been committed towards a divinity or another human being who has requested the powers of a divinity to intervene against the offender.

«Sorcery» or occult traditional practices are still potent in Mauritius. These practices have been studied. Different observations here and abroad point to the following:

- The importance of rituals, interpreted by dominant cultures as superstition. But they have a real, symbolic efficiency in that they are conceived to reconcile the individual with the group, taking off the feeling of solitude and alienation that results from broken links with significant others.
- The transmission of rituals, especially in popular cultures ensure transmission of memory, of values. This transmission facilitates affective support, reinforces resilience. Myths, histories, stories, legends in their repetitive and secure narration lend meaning to exile, eradication of culture (Rousseau C., & al, 2001).
- A traumatized group can revive if the members are able to reconstruct new myths and legends ( as in the case of other immigrants in Mauritius)
- Such reconstruction will operate best if the trauma is integrated, "assumé". This is not the case in the sequels of slavery in the Republic of Mauritius.
- Sorcery will use these different identification supports in the project process, orienting the person to possible sources of "malère", "mauvais oeil", "le mal existe" and help the reorganization of effects<sup>27</sup>.

- Quacks exploit the strong quest of reconciliation and cohesion, grounded in the definition of the person.
- All popular cultures, because they are produced in distressful living conditions have some "magical component". In the context of slavery, this "pensée magique" is magnified by the destruction of ancestral origins, hence creating dualities and conflicts between needs rooted in the core personality and more objective elements.

### Reversal into the opposite

Reversal into the opposite is a well-known defence-mechanism (Freud, 1915). It is one of the four vicissitudes of the instincts: repression, sublimation, turning around upon the subject's own self, which is closely linked to reversal into the opposite. In *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, Anna Freud (1936) included turning against the self in the list of defense mechanisms enlisted by the ego in its struggle against guilt-inducing instinctual impulses, citing this process as one of the most primitive ones, "as old as the conflict between the instinctual impulses and whatever obstacle may be erected against them."

Freud explained how the opposition love/hate depends on the economic polarity of pleasure/displeasure and the real polarity of ego / external reality in the dynamics of the psyche. The initial ego / reality opposition (or internal / external reality opposition) differentiates internal and external according to a sound objective criterion—the internal being the continuing pressure of the drive, which is inescapable, and the external being subtle stimuli that can be avoided. When the symbolic world is disturbed, affecting representational contents, a reversal of affect occurs, involving processes such as the turning around of activity into passivity and the reversal into opposite of the "contents" of the love / hate pair. This also applies to the whole notion of the sadism / masochism pair. Without falling into the psychopathological dimension, many daily, "ordinary" attitudes and behaviors rest on the reversal into the opposite as a defense mechanism.

However successful these strategies can be, research today shows that whether in the treatment of the mentally ill or coping behaviors, their unconscious foundations are not properly studied.

### 4.2.6 Psychological Health

#### 4.2.6.1 Low self-esteem, stigma of inferiority and resilience

We know from existing studies on slavery in Mauritius and elsewhere that the denial of human liberties stripped individuals of any sense of self-sufficiency, both physically and mentally. Anti-African prejudices and stigmatization have and still operate inter and intra-communities.

Still nowadays, among poor citizens of the Republic of Mauritius, stereotypes prevail on Creole communities, which stress their lack of ambition, a "certain philosophy of life" which reduces their chances of getting out of poverty<sup>28</sup>. Collective support in distress cases among Indians, Muslims and Chinese populations is a strong factor in providing basic elements for recovering sense of self-sufficiency and pride. But the sub-conscious doubts about one's legitimacy, sense of worth are destructive forces drawn from the coercive system of slavery.

The historical enforcement of a debilitating inferiority complex, which reinforces a self-loathing mentality result in individual and collective resignation to the threat of facing harsh reprisals, acceptance of lost opportunities for self-development and upward mobility, undermining efforts to achieve self actualization. The psychological beatings experienced by many slaves have forced them to surrender silently to the forces of severe chastisement for those seeking self-improvement and freedom from the plantations. What is best known today is the legal and social structure which denies all rights to slaves.

We need to deepen our understanding of the pernicious dynamics that have been generated from these enforcing laws, in terms of internalization, of being of no value at the individual level, of unhealthy projection towards significant rivals - inter- and intra-communities- as for example, under the subtle social hierarchies slowly being set down between field-slaves v/s house-slaves,

between slaves and Indian labourers<sup>29</sup>. These hierarchies, as will be mentioned later, have been set up to foster dissension and ensure supreme rule over potential rebellions.

Negative mental conditioning was reinforced by their owners and much of the rest of white society, through harsh treatment, and brutal reprisals, for seeking any form of knowledge of themselves or the world at large. Men were stripped of any form of pride and or self-respect, by being humiliated in front of their families for any attempt at seeking any resemblance of justice. Women were often taken from their husbands and raped at their owner's discretion. This further diminished the male's sense of self-worth as well as the women's (Du Bois, 1903). Being forced to work without compensation dragged slave descendants further into the psychological quagmire of self-loathing and depression. It is generally accepted today that one of the most damaging aspects of the institution of slavery and oppression is the development of self-loathing, with people starting to believe that they deserve the treatment that they receive.

This sub-conscious inferiority complex can be attributed to forced disconnection from the source of self-concept and identity. Fear of the other, fear of the other's judgment, " le regard de l'autre" at the same time measuring oneself as if in a constant power struggle to overcome inferiority complex diminish one's mental strength and corrupt the position of Self: "La fierté est affiliative et la honte désaffiliative." <sup>30</sup> Shame of self<sup>31</sup>, moral masochism <sup>32</sup> cannot be expressed (Cyrułnik, 2010) and result in emotional disorders.

Reconstruction of self demands not only change in the "regard de l'autre" but also change in social norms:

*"Les mécanismes de dégage ment exigent un travail en profondeur... Pour sortir de l'intimidation et redynamiser ses potentiels créatifs... Transformer son rapport aux normes sociales ...».* Gaulejac, 1996, p. 255.

Such a reconstruction is to be done as early as possible at an age (Schoore, 1998) when a child, around 5 to 7 years old is able, with the maturity of the nervous system, to have an accurate representation of time and relate past information ( traces, experiences) with the present and a dream of the future. Resilience, based on security at early stages of life, helps in this cognitive restructuring and getting out of confusion (Cyrułnik, 2010). Pivotal support systems or parental substitutes, as studied on trauma experienced by immigrant children, contribute to the repairing and healing process, through verbal expressions and images that change shame into pride.

Without this healing process, individuals may be tempted to indulge in self-punishment behaviours, failure conducts and resignation attitudes through illness or risk behaviours. These in turn increase feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness and shame (Tantam, 1998). "La boucle est bouclée".

Reconstruction of self also demands reworking at societal level for stigmatization and production of shame, worthlessness and powerlessness does not operate at the individual level only. It affects also deprived areas and "Cités". Identity of an area like Roche-Bois is a social construct, linked as inhabitants pointed out, with the issue of poverty «*Dimoune qui fine reste ici, banne ti dimoune pauvre ki reste dans la case tole, la case la paille; banne dimoune en dehors mal considere zot, zot pauvre*». Stigmatization increases in the case of visible, spatial references of small confined localities: risks of social labelling affect inhabitants inside the locality as well as outside (looking for jobs, going out with girls/boys of other localities). Changes in the social image of these stigmatized areas, as it is being done in Roche-Bois, can generate new positive local dynamics.

#### 4.2.6.2 Effects of internalized racism and negative stereotypes <sup>33</sup>

Studies have found a positive correlation between internalized racism and alcohol consumption, lower self-esteem, lower ego identity, low emotional intelligence among children. Other studies have revealed that the stigma of inferiority can negatively affect one's self-efficacy and confidence in performing various tasks. This concept applies to both race and gender. McCorkle's research (1991) disclosed that the victims of internalized racism typically experience lower self-esteem and lower ego identity. Children of mothers who score high on internal racism experience low sociological-emotional development, Delgado (1998) posited that internalized racism can affect very young children. In a recent study of 4-year-old African American preschoolers, approximately 75% of them preferred to play with their European American peers over their African American

peers. In addition, over 50% of them expressed their feeling of inferiority to their European American counterparts. According to Latif and Latif (1994), slavery produced a psychic trauma for African Americans. Counselors have to assist African Americans in recognizing some of the symptoms. The primary symptoms include their conscious and unconscious desire to be accepted by European Americans.

Negative stereotypical portrayal of minorities in general has had detrimental affects on their psyche. Constantly bombarded with negative and demeaning images of themselves and not strong enough to resist the psychological onslaught by the media and others, they succumb to accepting the negatives as truths. Suppression of their accomplishments in many countries has helped to keep them in a state of instability, confusion, and self-loathing, maintaining low self-esteem. Feelings of inadequacy and low self-image generate a low regard for those who look the same, creating an environment of envy, distrust, disloyalty, and hatred within the communities themselves.

These studies show that internalized racism is potentially as harmful as institutionalized racism due to their profound psychological and mental effects. In other words, Creoles in Mauritius do not experience the overall value of being of African descent. Shame of one's origins, especially when it remains repressed, is a powerful weapon of destruction - other's and/or self - (Harder, 1995; Gaulejac, 1996; Cyrulnik, 2010; Martin, 2006). It depersonalizes, surrendering to others power of judgment, evaluation, sanction and reward. Inner control is extremely fragile. Is this one cause of the diagnosis of schizophrenia (42% of inmates suffering from schizophrenia are of General Population)?

There are three ways of coping with negative stereotypes by the victims:

- To defend one's group at all cost, criticizing dominant groups without any differentiation ( " attitude victimaire" and/or reference to the " théorie du complot")
- To set up individual strategies along references and values of dominant groups, rejecting those associated with shame and indignity
- To work out a certain "distanciation" from both groups, which involves emotional intelligence, consciousness of emotional and social components of discriminations ( Forges, 1998)

Constant adjustments to cope with intimidation as defense mechanism leave lasting scars on learning processes, memory. They induce behaviors such as retreat or avoidance, "évitement", to reduce dissonance; they alter relationship with significant others from early childhood<sup>34</sup>. Reversal in the opposite operates through superiority complex and «nouveaux riches» behaviors.

Without a collective sensitization and opposition from victims, it is known that individuals perceive themselves as responsible for their situation through an internalization process, giving more value and importance "surestimer" to the causal role of self instead of situational factors. The Pygmalion effect, implying perceptive and unconscious cognitive operations is such that individuals tend to adjust "auto-realisation" to social prophecies. These processes are complex ones, unconscious and less modifiable than conscious ones<sup>35</sup>. On the other hand, it is also known that through illusionary correlation (Hamilton, 1976), society tends to "over-estimate" negative acts done by discriminated groups and "underestimate" their positive actions. In Mauritius, society functions in such a way that whenever Creoles are in situation of misconducts or show anti-social or delinquent behaviors, social categorization comes upfront and "confirms" social predictions. Individual responsibility is less emphasized as it is the case with other communities.

*"Le processus de catégorisation sociale se déclenche automatiquement lorsque nous sommes en présence d'individus appartenant à des catégories sociales stigmatisées et fortement associées à des stéréotypes négatifs." Channouf, 2010, p.72.*

## 5. SOCIAL IDENTITY, GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS, WORTHLESSNESS AND POWERLESSNESS

### 5.1 Sources of a fragmented social identity

#### 5.1.1 Economic status and skin colour.

Nearly all the studies done on trans-oceanic slavery communities, have pointed out, worldwide, a fragmented social identity through division within these communities. Two of the biggest dividers are economic status and skin. Lighter skinned slaves or labourers from India were given the most lucrative jobs within the slave community, such as working as servants within the slave-owners home, running errands outside of plantation grounds, usually better dressed and fed than those of darker skin. The masters boosted the ego of the lighter-skinned slaves who in turn despised those working in the fields or as woodcutters, stone cutters, coming mainly from Mozambique (Moutou, 2003). Darker skinned slaves and those with more pronounced Negroid features would usually encounter more difficult living conditions on the plantation. Deemed to be the most inferior of the supposedly inferior race, treated as such, they were usually housed far from the plantation house, and in close proximity to the fields in which they were forced to work. They were given the most demanding jobs, the most basic living quarters, and the least appealing clothing. In consequence, the act of giving better treatment to the lighter skinned slaves served as a tool in which slave owners kept an element of dissension and strife among the slaves.

This difference in treatment between the lighter skinned slaves and those of darker skin had tremendous psychological effects on slaves and free blacks years after the abolishment of slavery. The preference and status given to lighter skinned blacks had the effect of influencing the latter that they were indeed superior to the darker skinned blacks. In many instances, they would willingly inform their owners on the activities of the others. Rewards given to them for informing reinforced their loyalty to the slave owner and increased the distrust and disdain between the two groups of slaves. The repeated incidents of informing, reward, and punishment, created a psychosomatic cycle in which field workers and servants were continuously at odds with each other, thus making it easier for the slave owner to control the slave community.

To divide the community as a whole was to take the unity out and turn the hate inward. After extended periods of mistreatment, dark skinned slaves, reaching psychological exhaustion began to accept the belief that they were inferior to the lighter skinned blacks, reinforcing an inferiority complex, which in turn affected their behavior towards other dark skinned slaves. Displaying an attitude of submissiveness towards the lighter skinned slaves, they would have no qualms about becoming informants, taking sides against other dark skinned slaves.

If these different social stratifications, according to skin colour and division of labour on the plantations, "pigmentocratie" were set up between those freed before 1835, who will become the "elite" and those freed after 1835, i.e. the bulk of slave descendants, more importantly, economic competition after 1835 between «ex-engagés» and «ex-apprentis» left the latter in a marginalized situation since the colonial policies did not provide any form of training and access to land was denied to them. Competition is therefore set both within the community and among other communities, in a situation when "ex-apprentices" have to survive without hardly any asset. We know from conflict theories that competition for restricted resources accentuates categorization and social conflicts, giving rise both to negative discrimination towards more fragile groups and favoritism to members of one's group.

We have to study more in details not only the social and economic consequences of this unequal exposition to survival in a fast changing society but also the identification processes, development of sense of worth, resilience and coping strategies.

### 5.1.2 Religious and Popular culture in the search of identity

Religion is a powerful reference system that moulds personality from early childhood. It permeates family and social values; their transmission is both informal and formal. Beliefs, core religious messages are translated into words, interiorized and transmitted according to cultures, both in terms of civilizations and class cultures. In the case of slaves and their descendants, Christian faith encompasses all sorts of contradictions. With the intrinsic spiritual message, it had and still has to compose with the political and social - elite / popular -components.

#### 5.1.2.1 Disqualification of spirituality anchored in African traditions and freedom from alienation.

Almost all studies on slavery have pointed out the problematic rejection of core spiritual African/Malagasy beliefs and compulsion to cope with alien Christian faith (Nagapen, 1999; Moutou, 1996; Palmyre, 2007 ). Traces of these traditional beliefs are being slowly unveiled and rehabilitated as having inner logics and no longer considered as mere superstition. But this process, rehabilitation of popular culture within an "inculturation" approach, is new and needs to go further.

In comparison with Indian indentured labourers, who could practice their religious beliefs without encountering affective and cognitive dissonance, embracing an alien faith was for the slaves an enterprise of self-destruction, a denial of self, dissolving basic structuring of personality.

At the same time, the slavery system fostered fascination with what was dominant as system of reference. We should be able today to consider reasonably the havoc made in such conflicting inner situations, in the incapacity to share totally a single valued system of beliefs, giving sense and direction to one's life. Once these beliefs destroyed and new ones internalized through coercion and obedience to authority, personalities can be border-line and even use splitting defense mechanism.

Churches, however, played and continue to play a pivotal role in the search of identity, social and political recognition among slave descendants. Whether as a means of upward social mobility or obtaining social recognition, it is a fact that identity issues here are closely related to religious ones. These are intimately interwoven as it appeared in " Le Malaise Créole" , mentioned before, rendering them all the more complex, combining race and class elements in a structure of power. Church hierarchy, heavily drawn along colonial lines, is nowadays challenged and visions of faith, inclusive of popular Creole culture are generating new patterns of identity, more respectful of repressed African or Madagascan traditional beliefs.

#### 5.1.2.2 New forms of religious identity

Mauritius follows the trends observed in other countries with a history of slavery i.e. the conflicting tendencies between inherited traditional patterns of religious beliefs, based on popular culture and Christian faith linked with the elite culture of the slave owners.

Search of collective identity and social emancipation is very often related with Church affiliation. However, gaps between the Creole popular world and Christian institutions have challenged religious authorities. The "Malaise Créole" as well as multiplication of religious branches or sects questioned traditional practices. New communities with ostentatious discipline, strict moral code, obedience to new religious leaders / preachers, recruitment through charity organizations and proselytism reveal the need of protection and search of security from supernatural powers, "the magical world" (cures and miracles) and search of new social relationships which convey a sense of belonging.

These new forms of religious congregations reconstruct, in their own legitimate or illegitimate methods, individual loss of meaning, profound alterations in the conception of self/ others/ invisible world. These new shifts should not be considered as simple signs of popular fickleness, effects of fashion or temporary influence / indoctrination.

We are at a period of history where, everywhere, people renegotiate their multiple identities, at loss for new references. This process is transnational. What is specific in our case is that in addition to structural factors that compel to reassess ourselves, Creole communities feel somehow abandoned by the very institutions which represented and still represent their way out of despair. Institutional mediations are thought to be too complex. In a world of disruptions at all levels, a more simple approach to religion and taking on board traditional beliefs captures the minds, affects and souls of new converts, disillusioned by traditional faith. The often utilitarian role of religion as provider of identity, social promotion and protection from the “mal”, in spite of shifts in the religious institutions, remains unchanged. We assist at the same overpowering influence of fear in the psyche of slave descendants.

Rites, pilgrimages, sanctuaries are coherent means for older generations to reduce fear and threats (*Etude des comportements religieux*, 1995). Younger ones, though challenging these beliefs and adopting new forms of religious practices in fact show the same pattern of fear, fragility, imagined sense of persecution from unknown threat. This long quest for protection is not a contemporary contextual one. It is linked to the inherited trauma of abandonment from all forces of nature and creation.

Some international organizations / sects, under cover of charity, channel and exploit this unconscious fear while at the same time responding to the need for entertainment, dramatization, “mise en scène” and creation of myths, support for identification for those at loss of reference.

## 5.2 Social competition, social comparison, worthlessness and powerlessness

### 5.2.1 Envy, jealousy and lack of solidarity

The psycho-social dynamics generated at the time of slavery have produced, as with black communities in the West Indies, Brazil or the USA, an «implosion» of Creole communities. Violence against the dominant system is repressed and transformed into violence against Self. (J.G. Leary, 2005).

Social competition and social comparison are dynamics inherent in any society, be it mono-cultural or multi-cultural, egalitarian or not. Social performances and positioning of social groups are closely linked to a sense of belonging and affiliating processes. These are related with sense of gratification, through concrete or symbolic gains or rewards, immediate or long term. Group or collective identification rests on contextual factors, tactics and strategies within a global social framework. Seeds of dissension, division, as mentioned earlier, have been deliberately sown at the period of slavery and after 1835, between the “ex-engagés” and “ex-apprentices” and are present still today, as we have seen in many studies, specially related with poverty. The following, however, can be observed:

#### 5.2.1.1 Solidarity in survival: inter and intra generations

Solidarity, based on survival, as a value enacted already between slaves and “*marrons*”<sup>36</sup> shows itself through the following patterns:

- Grandparents taking care of young grandchildren (migration of Rodriguans to Mauritius, separation of partners, abandoned women having to work)
- Grown up children living with parents (teenage/ single mothers, married girls on separation with partners, coming home with children, young married adults being unemployed, young married adults without housing)
- Help, from parents, in-laws, in terms of small financial loans or in nature (rice, milk, etc)
- Elderly parents usually ill, living with their children’s family.

In these cases, additional charges induce a downward mobility process. Change in the social fabrics and individualistic strategies for survival among the generations of parents of to-day leave younger generations in greater distress than before.

- Case studies of getting out of poverty show differences with Asians, the impact of intra-generational solidarity - help in formal education or financing of studies / private tuition, mutual concrete help in house construction, loans for special events, etc. - operating as a real safety net. It is transmitted to younger generations as a primordial value of care from elders to younger ones. Among Creoles, solidarity will not often go beyond exchange of daily commodities, small loans and services performed in tragic events (death and illness).

#### 5.2.1.2 Inner contradictions among the upward mobile

Families, making sacrifices in order to get out of poverty feel the pressure of the environment «dimoune pas capav guette ou arrivé» Witchcraft is sometimes thought to be used as in Rodrigues to alter the successful course of a family.

Social comparison breeds envy and jealousy: these feelings cut the upward mobile from the root community. Mixed with envy is the recurrent fear of being left out in the same dreary life conditions while the system is reinforced by the recuperation of the brightest among the community. Conflict between being loyal to the community and not having to identify with the powerful is a powerful source of inner tension.

The sense of inner self may be endangered under a superficial ego, struggling to find a way out and compelled to “compensate” in such strategies as overspending.

#### 5.2.1.3 Against shame and rejection: Compensating practices

Finding a space between rejection from one’s community and acceptance - never achieved - by the dominant becomes a perilous social exercise, with its cycle of success and failure, attitudes of arrogance “ *vantardise*” as marks of distinction, hatred for one’s roots while claiming the same root identity in order to acquire social recognition and legitimacy. To achieve power and dignity, the way out is to emulate dominant value systems, to dissociate oneself from contamination of fracture and humiliation. Narcissic damage is compensated by different ways: yearning for power and status, acquisition of prestige goods, self defense against shame through *mythomania* ( Amiel-Lebigre, Gognalons-Nicolet, 1993 ).

«*Tout traumatisme est susceptible de déclencher le mythe comme processus de défense* ». Durand, 1999, p. 10.

«*La mythomanie protège d’un danger de mépris vu dans le miroir que composent les autres... Le mythe protège le groupe contre un danger de délutation ..... Compenser une blessure narcissique en inventant un masque merveilleux* ».

Fabrication of myths that compensate for the lack of self-esteem is translated through theatrical actions “ *un théâtre de l’honneur mettant en scène la prestance (élégance vestimentaire, signes extérieurs...), des rôles qui provoquent l’estime de l’entourage. Tout manquement à cette apparence constitue une déchirure* ».

Ways of living, spending, entertaining, looking up or down according to social stratification, coping with shame and denial or pride of one’s own root are all a composite picture of both collective and individual dynamics. They cannot be fully understood unless set on the background of inherited patterns, themselves intricately woven with “rapports sociaux” of class and race<sup>37</sup>.

Personal social loss in the climbing of the social ladder barely exists for upward mobile of other communities who, on the contrary, use same or similar success stories to capitalize on their social image, pride and resilience. If compared to a race, it is not only the starting phase which is strewn with hurdles, it is each successive phase which brings its own solitude, fury and challenge to cope with conflicting loyalties.

#### 5.2.1.4 Mixed groups: A lesser degree of cognitive dissonance

Groups with "more European blood" or descendants of those considered as free before 1835, commonly called "Créoles bourzwa" ou "faire blanc" were and are in a more favorable social position: the choice in their identity process was a "natural" one, the desire to climb the social ladder being aligned according to references set up within the dominant colonial culture. Rejection of the past, especially with the African folklore in order to be recognized socially "va de soi".

Less subject to self-denigration and hatred, they are capable of transcending particularities to meet higher social and economic objectives.

#### 5.2.1.5 Division: Taking the unity out and turning hate inward.

It has been observed in Mauritius, among those working with poor Creole population, that at some point of collective mobilization for better life conditions, for example in community based or mutual aid organizations, solidarity does not last long. Social combat with leaders from the community find its objectives rerouted towards quest of self-rewards, inflation of the ego, narcissism, search for the limelight. Simultaneously, grass root members are disappointed and tend to fall into social reclusion. Seems to be reactivated here the old fear of informants, traitors to the community. Such an observation has also been found elsewhere. One explanation is that division and sole mastership of destinies resting among the dominant has, as mentioned earlier, diminished forms of altruism, balance between one's interests and others' being rarely achieved. So deeply entrenched is the controlling power which has been inherited. So deeply internalized is violence against self and same.

It is known that only when a common exterior threat / enemy is clearly identified that submission to a leader is efficient (Garapon, 2002). Rehabilitating a degraded self and collective image is a sine qua non condition in the search of repairing images that give courage and resilience.

#### 5.2.1.6 Leadership and short sighted competition: Funny and entertaining

In a multi-cultural context such as Mauritius, the struggle of ethnic leaders for ideological and political space is a constant one. Closely related is a growing local concern with roots, "ancestry" and identification with "natural" leaders.

In several studies across countries, slave descendants have shown division and fragmentation in their social and political struggles. In the USA for example, until the recent election of President Obama, research has shown that within the black community, leaders were been put down by their own people. Two factors, according to scholars could explain such a rejection. The first one is that during slavery, slave leaders were either eliminated, isolated, killed, or ridiculed as "slave bodies with master heads." In other words, the leader was nothing more than the master's pawn. The second one is that in slavery, "the clown" was an essential tool for survival. Playing the clown saved slaves from feeling the wrath of their masters. Being entertaining was a coveted status because from nothingness, slaves could emerge in the master's favour. This identification process is still ongoing through comedy or entertainment rather than in the intellectual sphere. Funny and entertaining are attributes expected from role models, to such an extent that Black organizations are not only fragmented but have been reduced to the stereotype of "party and dine". Counter role models not confined to the entertaining stereotype and encompassing other skills than athletics are gradually rebuilding aspirations of younger generations, mitigating the dramatic effects of slavery on leadership.

Until this rebuilding is complete, at all levels, grass root or at upper echelon of social involvement, in political parties, leadership is very often subject to intra community misinterpretation, rivalry, dissension and constant threat of being illegitimate. Long-term objectives are re-oriented according to short-sighted status competition. We mentioned before that in many NGO or CBO projects involved in community empowerment or poverty alleviation, leaders once empowered find themselves challenged by others or cut themselves off from the community through impossibility to solve the equation of being

genuine representatives of those they defend while working with the funding parties. The psychological stress is such that in many cases, choice follows the lines of the dominant. "Vendu", treason, fickleness, capacity of being easily bought by the powers of the moment, pawn, the social image of Creole leadership in Mauritius is still associated with absence of proper will, resilience and power of negotiation. We see here the long life patterns of stereotypes, functioning within the transmission mechanism by internalization of the members themselves of what significant others, serving their own self interest select, project and reinforce within society.

This particular legacy from slavery time is a crucial issue. Uncovering the dynamics that have generated and maintained negative associations of slave descendants' organizations while fostering new ones is essential to liberate proper empowering forces from both inside and outside the community.

Empowerment of leaders within Creole communities therefore goes hand in hand with empowerment of the whole community, especially in the analysis of inherited associations and images of leaders and leadership. Significant others in the political, economic fields use this inherited weakness, and today as in the years of slavery, "congenital inferiority" implicitly underlies many social discourses and actions. This vicious circle has to be broken at the conscious or unconscious level. New symbols of leadership are necessary to instill ambitions, sustainable life projects which lift up individuals as well as the community.

In a brief comparison within Asian communities (Indian, Muslim, Chinese) in Mauritius, their "natural" leaders have never been in such an "illegitimate" position as were slave leaders or "marrons" who could unite and provoke rebellion. Asian communities, in spite of intra-community dissension or competition endorse their leaders; in return, based on this mutual contract, leaders have less intra-community fighting to deal with and can concentrate all their energies on group fundamental issues of social and political issues. Identity creation and claims are less problematic both at individual and collective levels.

### 5.2.2 Contrasting patterns: Unified against others. The Indian indentured labourers

In the initial phases of Indian settlements, the identity formation of the immigrants is to be understood in the context of their nature of work and new social setup, totally different from the experiences of the mother-land. They presented a unified Indian labour identity against the plantation regimes and this identity was asserted by groups as well as individuals.

At the same time, despite all hardship, many emigrants, especially from lower castes, did feel some improvement over their condition in India, given their experiences back home where they were permanently consigned to the fringes of rural Indian society as untouchable, tenants-at-will, and landless labourers with little hope of improvement in life. Indian identities became sharper in the later phase of their settlement, starting to live as a community in the villages. The Indian settlements were largely based in isolated areas, often a few miles away from the nearest town. Kin ties often played a role in determining post indenture settlements. Imams and Pandits were the leading figures within the communities, and under rural farming conditions, the social structure of the villages was similar to that in India. In these villages, informal social institutions also existed in order to celebrate marriages, coordinate religious ceremonies and celebrations. Similar to Indian villages, there were Panchayats (village councils) to settle local disputes. Members were affluent people of the villages who were chosen on the basis of caste, intelligence or education.

Less pressure towards assimilation in dominant Christian beliefs, rejection by slave descendants of Indian immigrants in the social competition for goods, services and esteem of the dominant led to a more unified identity. More collective day-to-day cooperation could be reinforced, since at source, no conflicting system of values and identification as in the case of slaves, acted as regressive forces to deter from social upward mobility.

Social competition to obtain the favour of the dominant acted as a powerful force of dissension and dislocation of leadership among descendants of slaves. Inversely,

counterparts in the Chagossian, Agalean and Rodriguan communities, show that long-term traces of symbolic scars differ in nature and scale.

### **5.2.3 Contrasting patterns: The cultural capital of Chagossians, Agaleans and Rodriguans**

#### **5.2.3.1 Transcending social differentiations: A distinct collective identity.**

Chagossians, Agaleans as well as Rodriguans identify themselves above all to specific cultural capitals linked to the characteristics of their islands. A distinct homeland district history and tradition as cultural capital is produced, reinforced by perceptions of ostracism by Mauritians i.e. people born on Mauritius island, feelings of resentment at being left out of mainstream development "Parent Pauvre de la République". As in any identity choice and alignment, partners and stakes determine the positioning of all parties.

In the case of Chagossians, Agaleans and Rodriguans, the common denominator is the struggle against what is perceived as structural domination to obtain access for better economic, social and political recognition. This is especially true in the case of the forced exile of Chagossians. In fighting exists but the sense of belonging, especially among uprooted or migrant communities on the island of Mauritius, helps to reduce cognitive dissonance and enables inner energies to focus on structural issues. Ilois and Rodriguan cultures present a positive rural identity as response to negative stereotyping (rural upbringing, social conservatism, traditional behaviours and attitudes, authentic values, alternative way of living and healing). Even if poverty exists and may be more vicious than on Mauritius, descendants refer less to the traumatic past of slavery. Theirs are histories with less social rivalry, negative discrimination, social comparisons pertaining to leadership, collective resources and upward social mobility strategies with reference to Indian immigrants.

#### **5.2.3.2 Repercussions on involvement in sectors of activity**

As a result of these different historical settlements and power dynamics, inhabitants' involvement in sectors of activity are different. Among Chagossians, Agaleans and Rodriguans, there is theoretically no domain of activity which is "chasse gardée" due to competition among ethnic communities or to taboo related to animal breeding. Worry about perception by ethnically different others does not act as an obstacle in engaging in entrepreneurial activity, in a social comparison with Asians perceived as more business minded but money grabbing and dishonest. Agricultural activities to get out of poverty are not, as in Mauritius, looked down by Creoles as a result of negative stereotyping towards Indian immigrants.

#### **5.2.3.3 Reversal into the opposite**

Negative social discrimination has resulted less than on Mauritius island in patterns of social representations among Creoles which are not acceptable because of their connotations with Indian immigrants. Consumerism as compensation for the bitter life endured seems to be less salient as anti-model, an asserting way of being different to the Asian model of hoarding and sacrificing for the future, for generations to come. In the educational sphere, Rodriguan youngsters suffer less from social comparison than their counterparts in Mauritius.

## **5.3 Family and the disjointed quality of relationships**

### **5.3.1 Dysfunctional families: shards of life strung together**

Social ills in Mauritius cut across ethnic communities. The same structural causes (lack of financial means and education, unemployment, housing and promiscuity, etc.) are at the root of their production. However, in all field work, local and elsewhere, these combined causes have had deeper effects among slave descendants in that slavery, as most researchers agree on, has affected the family the most.

The selective breeding of the biggest and strongest slaves was a profitable endeavor for the slave owner but devastated the slave family structure. It was a method that reinforced the idea that slaves were little more than human livestock, which were to be used and / or abused at their owners' whim. The psychological toil that the practice of selective breeding took on slaves is presumably immeasurable, and a valuable tool with which to wage psychological warfare against slaves. Due to selective breeding, some slaves were deprived of the right to develop monogamous family relationships. Through it, slaves could be forced to copulate with those that the master deemed suitable for breeding purposes, in order to ensure that he had a ready supply of strong able-bodied slaves to perform labor at the highest rate possible.

Psychologically, selective breeding influenced slaves to believe that family relationships were of little value, and fostered insecurity and anxiety within the slave psyche concerning the stability of a family unit. Fornication and adultery were eventually seen as everyday facts of life, especially for the stronger slaves who were more likely forced to engage in the selective breeding process. Hatred and rivalry could develop between the stronger slaves and the weaker slaves. Weaker slaves would more than likely suffer severe psychological trauma, when and if their mates were forced to copulate with one or more of the stronger male slaves. They would invariably suffer from feelings of inadequacy due to their limited mate selection and/or copulation opportunities, while the stronger males would most likely take on the alpha male persona, and tend to dominate most aspects of slave community life. The struggle between the stronger and weaker males could lead to assaults, suicide, murder, thefts and nervous breakdowns. Nervous breakdowns would most likely occur in the weaker male slaves, due the psychological pressure of being dominated by the stronger males within the slave community, as well as the slave owners and white society as a whole.

Female slaves forced to copulate with the stronger males would also most likely suffer psychologically, especially in the area of self-esteem.

Single parent households of today, at the lowest echelon of society - mostly headed by women - children from different fathers, high rate of teenage pregnancies as in Rodrigues (Lew-Fai, 1998), very often considered by the general public as a "way of living", compared to other communities in the same life conditions, contribute heavily to the reproduction of poverty. What is less understood is that this "way of living" does not come from nowhere and it acts as a powerful deterrent to get out of poverty.

### 5.3.2 Missing fathers and lone mothers

Hegemonic forces of the slavery system, colonisation and post 1835 work policies affected slave descendant males more negatively through isolation and fewer resources to contribute positively to the acquisition of a respected status.

A man's identity is, in part, measured by his ability to take care of himself and his family. When a man feels that he cannot provide for those that he is responsible for, his sense of self worth is significantly lowered. One who is not adequately providing for his family in some instances begins to lose respect from his partner and children, which increases sense of guilt and inadequacy. Lack of upward mobility coupled with added pressure of tension with partner and children, creates intense feelings of frustration within the individual.

The symptom of single headed families with the marked absence of the father and children from different partners is related, according to many authors, to the destruction of the role of the father during slavery. Since men could not do the basic things such as provide and protect his family, their role having been eliminated or disqualified, they have just stopped caring. They go from place to place having children and moving on to the next one. Today, precarious jobs, unemployment, rejection on the labour market increase this disqualification process. The mother's role was destroyed because, during slavery, a mother could not properly nurture and protect her children from the slave master. Now, slave descendants' women continue to have children at a young age, not knowing how to take care of them, hence perpetuating the cycle of the missing father and the lone mother. The

latter's distress is increased because of rapidly changing conditions in the work-force and coping work behaviours that do not match today's demands.

Without attributing undue importance "une détermination en dernière instance" to slavery as source of present family dislocations, we have to acknowledge that it contributed a lot to the disjointed quality of family relationships. Psycho-social Studies on memory and transmission of behavior patterns compel us to consider the impact of images, both explicit and subliminal, when they are anchored in a collective memory.

The psychological stress experienced by many slave descendants' males goes unnoticed by mainstream society until it manifests itself in the form of drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, psychosis, suicides, etc. The internal and external tension experienced also lead to health issues such as hypertension, cancer, and mental disorders, which only exasperate an already fragile condition. Difficulties in finding their ways on the labour market add to a fragile ego, trying to exercise authority. Again, here it may be symptomatic that Male GP are almost one-third (31%) of all inmates with same ailment (87 out of 280). Cf. section on statistics.

Machismo is in part responsible for the failure of many of them to share their feelings, as well as their perception that no one really cares. Many in lower socio-economic conditions are too busy struggling to obtain the bare essentials for survival, to take notice of the suffering of many around them.

Matrifocality is therefore a result of destruction of nuclear and extended families combined with a fragile status of men, inversion of roles, absence of authority figures. Children are facing increased difficulties in the absence of fathers to structure themselves in a stable way (Minde, 1992). Shame leaves its mark from early childhood (Schore, 1998). Self representation forms itself in such a way that children expect from others a type of relationships based on domination, "écrasement", violence and response to violence as normal reactions. All social programmes to sensitize the public on domestic violence will not be really fruitful if they do not address the issue of violence linked with conditions of living as an internalized code of behaviour, resulting from fear, shame, oppression and a way of asserting oneself in a world of nothingness.

### 5.3.3 Growing up: Boys and Girls on the margins

Anthropological research has always highlighted the importance of rituals "rites de passage" in the process of growing up. Their importance lies in the visible signs set up by a given community to its members in the life cycle and sequences which are associated with new responsibilities, acceptance of them and sense of worth. In their absence and absence of recognized "father" images or substitutes, growing up in a "feminine" world - grandmothers very often "dépassées", working mothers and aunts, less present to-day through long working hours and unable to respond to new demands of parenting - is becoming more and more problematic. The future is bleak for these youngsters, traditional support being wrecked through harsher life conditions. Social comparison with those, more well off with both present living conditions and life perspectives, throw many of them out of hope.

From our own studies in Mauritius and Rodrigues (Lew-Fai, 2000), we have observed that what is termed as "adolescence" with its period of relative tolerance towards behaviours and experimentations of young ones is absent in popular culture. Getting a job for the young boy and being able to position oneself on the " marriage market" for the young girl are very early objectives ( as from 11-12 years old). These are associated with recognized attributes of adulthood. Patterns of behaviours can change dramatically onwards as strategies are set up to acquire these attributes as soon as possible. Language, adoption of attitudes which are considered "male", "viril" exhibit a code of violence more or less explicit among young boys. Gangs are formed and membership confers identity, value, sense of belonging, where they are inexistent before. New rituals ( from harmless to more destructive ones) and identification to a leader are ways to cope with conflicts between shame, absence of significant adults to allow positive projection, poor self representations and dreams about self and the future.

Risk behaviours leading to juvenile delinquency, gang formation, prostitution, early pregnancies (Lew-Fai, 1998, 1999) “we have nothing to lose”, while constant in all poor and popular environments can be greater in scale and frequency because of a constellation of disruptions which have long been harboured from generation to generation. Ours is not a fatalistic approach. Nor is it one which lends to slavery all the origins of “malaise” or “mal être”, poverty and associated social ills. It has been a traumatic event and we need sense of measure and will (Garland, 2002) to discern more carefully the added injury it has inflicted over years in order to re-establish self and collective pride, foster resilience among new generations of boys and girls that their dreams of “normality” may be fulfilled i.e. to leave the margins of society and not perpetuate life on its margins.

## 6. The Challenge

The successive political issues in Mauritius have been and are still intricately woven with identity issues, i.e. “purity” in reference to ancestral traditions and trans-culturality as creation of new cultural and value patterns, re-interpreting heritage.

In order to achieve control or maintain hegemony, dominant groups construct fictions and homogeneity relating to various intra-community groups. Myth, legend and history as fictions against others enable the crafting and reinforcement of power. Struggle between the desire to obtain an “essential” identity that makes for political currency among the dominant groups and the experience of new cultural values, transiting in all ethnic communities has been and is still a main issue for power relationships.

More openness is needed in reflections on history to loosen existing controls over meaning and identity, political will not to reify ethnic groups as bounded wholes, unified and undifferentiated, allowing unsettling recombination of identity and society.

As long as slavery and the multiple trauma that it brought along are repressed and do not enter national social representations as symbolically significant and dynamic, social identity of slave descendants will remain in a vacuum, with no basic valued components to build upon. It is vital that new cultural dynamics, resting on heritage but reviewed within local dynamics be generated. Myths of purity and their prevalence in the collective unconscious should be deconstructed. Self-referential beliefs and real knowledge systems should be promoted in all fairness within a trans-cultural approach to life and society, fostering real pride and resilience for all. This is a first challenge for the whole of Mauritian society.

The second one, more specific to slave descendants, lies in the interplay of six factors: 1) A history of enslavement, servitude and oppression; 2) Demographic composition; 3) Economic positioning and intensifying competition with other communities; 4) Racial prejudice and discrimination; 5) Resources, internal structure, dynamics and leadership of the community itself, and 6) Capacity for self-determination and self-empowerment.

## 7. Recommendations for Empowering Mauritians of “pure” or mixed African and Malagasy origin

### 7.1 Recognition of distinctive African and Madagascan references

- To reject an essentialist approach<sup>38</sup> but to anchor identity with references to the popular past, actualizing this identity process, if necessary, in appealing to transnational forms of identity.
- To open up to wider sets of possible options within discursive, political, economic and social space.
- To introduce “socio-biography” of groups with particular emphasis on history and the forging of patterns in values, attitudes and behaviors<sup>39</sup>

*‘L’historisation est aussi une manière d’aider les agressés. Ecrire ou raconter l’histoire d’un blessé constitue un plaidoyer qui tente d’expliquer les causes de son amoindrissement afin de rendre moins écrasant le regard des autres’ p. 27.*

- To bring about change in feelings of shame and hurt through recomposition of inherited or internalized negative associations with slavery

### **7.2 Setting up of specific historical and cultural programs for a sense of belonging**

- Via community-based organisations, to offer parents and youngsters sensitizing sessions on their social, cultural, spiritual, artistic heritage through story telling sessions, "ateliers d'expression culturelle" in order to anchor identity<sup>40</sup>
- To understand the intricacies of social identity and religious identity and aim at their separation
- To organize interventions in educational institutions, involving teachers and students in order to limit cognitive dissonance within the parameters " dominants-dominés" and superiority associated with White / Western culture
- To design specific programs on parenting skills and socializing processes which anchor identity on the assertion of values centered on the family as a unit. Break a nomadic conception of family, transforming shards of life strung together into a whole pattern of common desires, aspirations and projects.
- To work with children on specific themes related to slavery and resilience
- To offer to youngsters identity support programs, adapted to meet their needs and rituals on entering adulthood. Identity construction and healthier management of identity crisis would be ensured instead of transiting through gangs, delinquency, violence, misbehaviors
- To develop clear strategies which will facilitate process of cohesion and sense of responsibility within the communities
- To recognize the importance of the "invisible world" and its impact on coping behaviours
- To recognize and develop knowledge about conceptions of health, ills and traditional cures in an holistic approach,
- To acknowledge and know better the importance of the body, energy, rhythm and skills
- To collect and share information on essential questions such as suffering, ills, death according to popular beliefs (Augé, 1984)

### **7.3 Setting up of a Trust for Education and Training: in search of Black Diamonds**

- To operate cognitive recomposition regarding education and training, changing negative perceptions among children and parents and self-defeating behaviors.
- To work at area level for a "designation" process by all parties, including families, re-affirming the importance of formal education and lending meaning to school institutions
- In order to foster positive role models, not only "funny and entertaining" and lift up aspirations, particular attention should be given to the search of "Black diamonds" <sup>41</sup> and education. Gifted children could be encouraged within a stable, studious environment to concentrate on their studies and serve as role models for others.
- Grants, sponsorships, scholarships to alleviate extra charges on the family or even temporary shelters when house conditions are not favorable could be set up.
- Mentors on a volunteer basis could monitor progress on a regular basis
- Teachers could be offered incentives to work with young children of deprived areas on non-traditional ways of learning
- Kindergartens as well as specialized schools for the handicapped children with participation of families could respond to real needs

### **7.4 Negotiation from strength**

- To learn to build both political and economic strength from a position of strength instead of thinking in terms of targeted victimization and pawns.
- To discard fragmented ineffective efforts and learn to network well together, without planning to rip each other off.
- To stop being satisfied on physical and sexual validation instead of knowledge and arts.

### 7.5 Need to work on discriminations, stereotypes, internalization of negative images, building of self and group esteem

- To have more research done on explicit or implicit structural discrimination and social stereotypes and prejudices affecting slave descendants
- To foster self and group esteem through cognitive restructuring, deconstruction of stereotypes, restoring self-confidence, pride and resilience through regular focused group meetings with help of social specialist / therapist
- To work on outcry of racism that emotionally cripples the community, alleviating inferiority complex, complacency, and impotence of action.
- To free minds from cognitive blindness and mental paralysis, through regular focused group meetings with help of social specialist / therapist<sup>42</sup>

### 7.6 Need for detailed disaggregation of data for a more objective analysis of social justice and formulation of new social policies

- To gather and analyze statistical data over a long period of time, taking into account criteria of gender and ethnic communities in their disaggregation<sup>43</sup> with detailed historical analysis of social, political and administrative structures.
- Particular attention should be given to the field of psychiatry, delinquency and crime
- To assess ( over time) with more precision, ways of living and equal access of Creoles to
  - land and housing
  - labour and its division from slavery, post 1835 for “ex-apprentices” in manual, semi-skilled and skilled work
  - social and economic networks ( from day-to-day survival to powerful lobbies)
  - education from pres-school to tertiary education, rates of failure / success and drop-outs
  - savings and earnings ( from traditional to new)
  - family structures, dynamics and evolutions ( evolutions of roles, expectations, frustrations, gratifications, inter-generational relationships)

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<sup>1</sup> In all, a list of 47,258 individual names has been analyzed according to family and first names. They are as follows:  
Housing (CHA 2011): 16833 lessees  
Education (SC candidates and Passes 2009): Boys 5943; Girls 7297  
Public Sector Staff (1962= 1651; 1975= 2512; 2005= 8628)

Para Public Sector ( Ports Authority 2011= 529; Cargo Handling Ltd 2011= 1481; Central Electricity Board CEB 2011= 1944

Brown Sequard Inmates 2011= 420

Note: We wanted to analyze data concerning Prison Inmates 2011 but they were incomplete; they are therefore not included in the report.

<sup>2</sup> *“Even when laws, policies and programs appear in a formal sense to be objective and impartial, they may be skewed in implementation by public administration to favour one set of ethnic claimants over others. This ethnic skewing can be applied to matters of substantial value, including government contracts, access to land, credit, capital, business licenses and foreign exchange, and to a variety of public services such as higher education, municipal amenities, housing, water supply and recreational facilities.”* Esman ( 1997) in: *Poverty in Mauritius, 2008*

<sup>3</sup> *“In a period of growing inequalisation and wealth getting concentrated in the hands of a few, interculturality is under great strain. Creole groups are emerging and increasingly holding discourses around the idea that they are excluded from the system. There is resentment over the fact that they are heavily underrepresented in the public sector and that opportunities are not the same for everyone in a society which calls itself democratic”.* *Poverty in Mauritius, 2008*

<sup>4</sup> There is an open debate in some countries, for example, recently in France as to the necessity of disaggregating data according to ethnic origins, its relevance and social use. However, if done within a perspective of social justice, such an analysis can help to deconstruct myths of equal opportunity as well as victimization. Cf. Conférence mondiale contre le racisme, la discrimination raciale, la xénophobie et l’intolérance qui y est associée. Nations Unies. Comité Préparatoire. Première session. Genève, 1-5 mai 2000. Rapport : Étude des effets sur les enfants appartenant à des minorités et les enfants de travailleurs migrants de la discrimination raciale dans les domaines de l’éducation, de la formation et de l’emploi. The report recommends a detailed analysis : *« L’élaboration de statistiques et d’indicateurs ainsi que leur désagrégation en fonction de la condition de migrant, de l’appartenance raciale, nationale ou ethnique ou de l’appartenance à une minorité permettront d’améliorer sensiblement la mise en évidence des problèmes et la formulation des politiques aux échelons national, régional et international”.*

<sup>5</sup> Cohort analysis is recommended in future studies to observe more fully the selection mechanism within the educational system. In our example, disaggregation of children who were candidates at CPE level in 2004, their rates of pass as well as at HSC level in 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Note: Table does not include 472 candidates from 5 colleges due to difficulty to know if they are boys or girls through their names. Among them, 129 are GP with 93 passes; 343 Non GP with 230 passes

<sup>7</sup> For details, cf. Annex Table4

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Annex Table5 General Population the Public Service 1962

<sup>9</sup> For more details in the Public Service Staff for 1962, 1975 and 2005 cf. Annex Table 4 to Table 9

<sup>10</sup> Staff lists are given with salaries per month, not per annum as in 1962

<sup>11</sup> In 1975 and 2005, we have disaggregated data according to sex.

<sup>12</sup> For all details, cf. Annex Table 10

<sup>13</sup> For all details, cf. Annex Table 11

<sup>14</sup> A recent report on Poverty has been carried out by the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF). We have not been able to consult it.

<sup>15</sup> *« 7,157 families living in 229 pockets of poverty across the island”.* 2007/2008 Budget.

<sup>16</sup> In Annex Table 12, details of ailments are given for each ethnic group, according to sex and age.

<sup>17</sup> The Report concludes that : *“ Il est impossible de recenser toutes les catégories d’actes qui constituent une discrimination raciale contre des enfants de migrants ou de minorités dans le domaine de l’enseignement et de la formation. Les recherches à ce sujet sont minces et elles portent généralement sur certains pays ou certaines minorités au détriment d’autres. Les statistiques et autres données pertinentes sont encore plus minces »*

<sup>18</sup> A survey carried out by *Le Mouvement d’Action Catholique des Enfants* in Rodrigues indicated in 1993 that out of 264 children at work, 44 were between 6 and 12 years old, and 220 between 13 and 16. The major reasons for entrance on the labour market at these early ages were poverty and failure in the school system.

<sup>19</sup> In recent years with the emergence of IT sector, youngsters from Creole origins are massively recruited. The criterias of selection in the BPO sector are within their reach ( recruitment at SC and HSC levels), “ cultural” assets in communication and languages, flexibility in adjusting to odd hours working ( greater than among Asians). These “transitional” jobs offer short term economic freedom and long term careers for those who persevere. It is noted however that turn over is high: in some cases it is linked with work conditions, considered difficult; in others, drop outs are due to a shift to another company after a week-end’ s meeting with partners working elsewhere.

<sup>20</sup> *“Some people argue that the Creole group is responsible for its own plight, that they do not have a culture of savings and that they have developed a culture of dependency. Many cultural stereotypes are attached to them. There is also the argument that they fled from the sugar camps and did not want to work the land but there is enough historical evidence now that they were made to leave the camps. Land which is a major asset was never appropriated by them. On the other hand as a consequence of the “grand morcellement”, the Indians bought small plots of land. The possession of land by this group became an important means to sustain their livelihoods and also contributed to the mobility of the group. The landless poor are perhaps disproportionately present in the Creole group”* *Poverty in Mauritius, 2008.*

<sup>21</sup> Difference is mainly due to: Cost of renting/ paying loan for housing, cost of transport to go to work, to send children to school, less in Rodrigues since adults as well as children tend to walk long distances, self-subsistence in Rodrigues - families living mainly on products of vegetable gardens, own fishing, and, from time to time, at selling seasons, from cattle and poultry rearing -, private tuition for children rare in Rodrigues villages, necessities reduced to a minimum.

<sup>22</sup> These practices are well-known stereotypes : *«Tout réside dans l’engrenage de l’environnement du chef de famille qui reste emprisonné par le groupe d’amis dans lequel il évolue... En tant qu’individu, l’homme créole appartenant irrémédiablement à un groupe auquel il ne peut se soustraire et se retrouve contraint de boire, de manger et de s’amuser exclusivement dans ce groupe».* Eriksen, 1989

- <sup>23</sup> « *Des processus perceptifs cognitifs et émotionnels sub-liminaux qui sont de véritables reflets des rapports sociaux et des mémoires collectives héritées d'un passé proche ou lointain, interviennent de manière automatique* ». Channouf, 2010, p. 14
- <sup>24</sup> On a milder dimension, « triangaz », « trasă », according to Palmyre (2007) are forms of transgression « de la loi du maître », inspired by strategies of stealth and cunningness from the " marronnage" .
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. for example, Camilleri (1990)
- <sup>26</sup> A. Romaine (2003) suggests « *une conception prosécutive de la personne vivant constamment sous la menace, la peur [...] Le secours vient du dehors...le couple «menace-recours» étant une boucle de fatalité, laissant peu de place à l'espérance... la recherche est de salut temporel sans référence à la promesse d'un salut éternel..* »
- <sup>27</sup> « *Dans le système traditionnel, l'individu est toujours en communion avec l'extérieur. La maladie survient lorsque la cohésion de tout cet ensemble est détériorée ou détruite. La prise en charge des tradipraticiens consiste tout d'abord en des rituels qui visent à une réconciliation entre l'individu et la communauté. Est malade celui qui ne se reconnaît plus membre de groupe et se sent solitaire, n'ayant pas ou plus besoin des autres. La maladie survient toujours d'un autre, du désir d'un autre qui ne veut plus que vous soyez ou que vous soyez moins qu'avant. La sorcellerie va donc utiliser les boucles identificatoires, les identifications projetées. Découvrir le persécuteur autorise à le haïr ou l'aimer consciemment* » L'Afrique symptôme, 2009.
- <sup>28</sup> This on-going stereotype has itself a long history and has been used by many visitors of the last centuries such as Rev. Beaton (in Mauritius between 1859 - 1864) '*Le nègre mauricien est pataud, boucan et de bonne humeur mais manque d'ambition, de vision et d'honnêteté et de franchise. Il a en général très peu de besoin. Il peut de ce fait travailler que deux jours dans la semaine et gagner suffisamment pour se satisfaire. Il est un philosophe car il ne se plaint pas de son état. Son objectivité, c'est de gagner de quoi pour mener sa vie comme il l'entend, c'est-à-dire, débonnaire et désintéressé*'. Mentioned in : Moutou, 2003
- <sup>29</sup> 'Les Noirs de toutes les castes se réunissent les jours de repos sur des places séparés de la ville du côté du camp des Noirs ou de celui de Malabares. Cependant, ces derniers ne se mélangent pas avec les africains pour lesquels, ils témoignent le plus grand mépris'. Milbert, 1812, p.181.
- <sup>30</sup> 'La fierté est affiliative et la honte désaffiliative' (Nathanson, 1992)
- <sup>31</sup> Starting by given names which bring self-disdain and shame. Cf. Romaine (2006), Chanson (2008)
- <sup>32</sup> « *La honte dépersonnalise en attribuant à l'autre le pouvoir d'un regard sévère....la honte reste muette...Les mots de la honte sont difficiles à dire par crainte de la réaction de l'autre....L'ambition peut être un excellent masque de la honte, en tant que sursaut compensatoire qui donne à l'humilié la force de se réhabiliter mais dans cette légitime défense la honte demeure la référence....* ». Gaulejac, 1996, p.230
- <sup>33</sup> For research on this theme, cf. for example Devine (1989), Forges (1998), Hamilton, (1996), Plous (1995).
- <sup>34</sup> The attachment theory (Bowlby, 1978) shows the primordial importance of security as " empreintes" in the memory, enabling resilience processes to be set up after a trauma. " *Inversement, si le blessé n'a pas intériorisé dans sa mémoire une base de sécurité, le même événement devient une défaite supplémentaire. Son image se détériore* ».
- <sup>35</sup> Channouf refers to " *processus complexes inconscients, hérités de la socialisation à travers ses différentes instances, stockés de manière indélébile sous forme d'émotions, de croyances, faux raisonnements et clichés. Processus plus rigides, plus résistants au changement...Processus liés à la constitution neurobiologique faite de structures cérébrales sous-corticales et de structures corticales dont les liens, selon les neurologistes sont complexes* ».
- <sup>36</sup> This solidarity between slaves and « Marrons » is well described by Nagapen (1999)
- <sup>37</sup> « *Chez R. Bastide (Ré-ed.1996), les styles de vie ne peuvent être réellement compris qu'une fois mis en relation avec l'espace social, c'est-à-dire avec le système des écarts distinctifs entre groupes sociaux, système qui ne doit pas être appréhendé de manière statique, mais dynamique* ».
- <sup>38</sup> "Culturalistic "approaches can very often be « essentialist », serving the interests of a few. ( Severino, Ray 2010)
- <sup>39</sup> « *L'historisation est aussi une manière d'aider les agressés. Ecrire ou raconter l'histoire d'un blessé constitue un plaidoyer qui tente d'expliquer les causes de son amoindrissement afin de rendre moins écrasant le regard des autres*' Cyrulnik, 2010, p. 26.
- <sup>40</sup> « *L'histoire de l'esclavage est une histoire sans archives, une épopée à l'envers, la longue et terrible rumeur des grands bateaux chargés de chair noire et muette* » (Gerbeau, 1970)
- <sup>41</sup> With as example, the histoire Madame Françoise, "femme marronne" ( Nagapen, 1999)
- <sup>42</sup> « *L'objectif est d'analyser les freins psychologiques qui comportent des biais, des erreurs et des distorsions au niveau du jugement des compétences, des productions et des qualités des individus du fait des stéréotypes sociaux, des préjugés individuels et du contexte social et économique* ». Channouf, 2010, p.18
- <sup>43</sup> " *Il faudrait donc encourager les États à collecter et diffuser des données spécifiques sur la situation des enfants appartenant à des minorités et des enfants de travailleurs migrants dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la formation et de l'emploi, y compris des données sur l'âge de sortie de l'école, les niveaux d'alphabétisation, la participation de groupes particuliers à la formation professionnelle et les taux de chômage par rapport à la communauté en général, avec une ventilation par sexe et par groupe minoritaire ou de migrants* ». Conférence mondiale contre le racisme, la discrimination raciale, la xénophobie et l'intolérance qui y est associée. Nations Unies. Comité Préparatoire. Première session. Genève, 1-5 mai 2000.

VOLUME 3

**CONTEMPORARY HISTORY,  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

**PART IV  
EDUCATION**



# PART IV

# EDUCATION

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## EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR REPARATION

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### List of Abbreviations

C.P.E.	Certificate of Primary Education
PVE	Pre-Vocational Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
PTSS	Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
TVE	Technical and Vocational Education
RCA	Roman Catholic Anglican
ZEP	Zone Education Prioritaire
UTM	University of Technology, Mauritius
BEC	Bureau Education Catholique
MITD	Mauritius Institute of Training and Development
IVTB	Industrial and Vocational Training Board
NTC	National Trade Certificate

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education is usually seen as a means to get people out of poverty, a vector of social mobility, a tool for peace and reconciliation, but when education fails to do the above, social cohesion is threatened and instabilities of diverse kinds are bound to arise. Multicultural Mauritius, whilst peaceful on the surface, has all the ingredients necessary for a social explosion, but only if managed carefully and if its education system is organised and delivered in a manner that permits and ensures genuine equal and equitable chances/opportunities for the children of the descendants of slaves and indenture, it would go a long way towards the creation of durable peace in the country. Peace, as Martin Luther King notes, is not about the absence of conflicts but the presence of justice. Can Mauritian education ensure social cohesion and justice? Education in the post-Independence period has no doubt been informed by the history of the country, and this history has had ramifications for the different segments and communities of Mauritian society.

The education team of the Truth and Justice Commission, amongst a number of other questions, seeks to address the following : 'Conditions of education of slaves, ex-slaves, indentured labourers and descendants, the state of 'enforced illiteracy' and its consequences on the slave population, the consequences of denial of education; consequences of non-inclusion of an oral culture. This Education Report also examines the articulations between the past and the present and how education can therefore be used as a tool for reparation and thus mitigating the tensions and injustices resulting from a history of injustice and oppression.

In order to answer the questions posed above, the Report examines the patterns of inclusion and exclusion during the colonial period. It argues that the denial of education to the children of slave descent and indentured labour meant that the oppressed, (for a very long time) could not reverse the unequal power relation, could not access resources and, in some cases, lost what they possessed and had to remain subjugated to the colonisers. The abolition of slavery and the arrival of indentured labour from India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century not only changed the demographic profile of the island, but also provoked a different response from the Colonial Government in as far as education is concerned. The colonial education project was a violent one and harmed the colonised in diverse ways. The role of institutions, particularly the Church, in repressing the culture and identities of the non-white is also discussed.

The democratisation of education during the post-colonial period opened up several windows of opportunity, but discriminations and inequities persisted. Several legislations marked educational developments both in the colonial and post-colonial period, but legislations are not enough to create equitable outcomes, as the Report demonstrates.

The Report argues that, whilst post-colonial education has contributed to producing a greater pool of expertise and relevant manpower in the country, several types of injustices such as curriculum injustice, linguistic injustice, socio-economic injustice, to name but a few, have continued to mar the educational system. The greatest aberration of the system is that it demands of Mauritian children that which they do not possess, the cultural and linguistic capital, and remnants of a Eurocentric model of education. In short, the Mauritian school does not cater for the heterogeneous cultures, diverse talents and multiple intelligence of the country. The system has for many years been failing the disadvantaged children, particularly those of Creole background.

Whilst 'illiteracy' is no longer enforced as during the slave period, the former still prevails amongst a relatively important section of the population. Enforced illiteracy had several consequences such as: a lack of opportunity to acquire assets, dispossession of land, denial of political rights, and these impacted on future generations in multiple ways. But illiteracy is the result of a system failing the children. Children fail the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E) exams without having mastered the skills of reading and writing. Schooling in Mauritius has not favoured an oral culture, which is generally closely tied to the 'being' of the child. Working-class children, particularly those of slave descent, have experienced multiple forms of identity repression and denial, making it hard for them to connect to schools with middle-class values and ethos.

Failure rates are concentrated in the deprived zones of the country where ZEP (*Zones d'Education Prioritaire*) schools have been set up. The deprived zones have important conglomerations of families of both indentured and slave descent but the latter are more predominant. Given the high failure rates, the State has opened up a number of pre-vocational classes/schools to cater for those who do not make it in the last year of primary schooling. The fact that Pre-vocational Education (PVE) schools capture large numbers of children from both slave and indenture descent, particularly those belonging to the working class, the education team also undertook a survey of the PVE schools to establish the extent to which these schools actually provide a second chance to the more deprived. The reality of the PVE School, however, is a sad one. The way in which education is organised and delivered shows that the emphasis is on access, with little concern, if at all, for equitable outcomes.

The debate on 'reparations' is a complex and a rather ethnicised one. Some segments of Mauritian society believe that the descendants of slaves have enough privileges and resources from the State and that there is no need for more, while others are of the view that the legacy of slavery is such that it demands reparation. Without the latter, peace and reconciliation will be threatened.

The methodology adopted for the study is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary data was obtained through a survey of pre-vocational schools, and a voice was given to some of the main actors in the educational process, particularly the students of the pre-vocational sector, through the use of Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Plans, policy documents, newspaper cuttings, the *Hansards*, as well as some relevant hearings, were also used. In addition, the education team organised 2 major workshops - one on the theme of *Consequences of slavery and indentured labour and their implications for contemporary Mauritius*, the other on *Consequences of slavery and indentured labour - Social Justice*, where former Ministers of Education gave their views on how the past has informed the present in the educational field.

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Mauritian society is very different from the past. The country has emerged from a history which has been marked by deep divisions characterized by conflict, racism, untold suffering and injustice. But today, the Republic of Mauritius is relatively stable and peaceful although cohesion and reconciliation are not complete and can perhaps be never complete, since reconciliation can be both a goal and a process. However, whether it is a goal or process or both, it should be worked at, so that a more just society, for each and everyone, irrespective of creed, colour, ethnicity, race and gender be obtained.

Cohesion and reconciliation depend heavily on our ability to see and understand what is happening today, right now - more than 40 years after Independence with all the learning and consequences (some visible and others not so visible) that our slave and indentured history has left us with. The legacy of the unequal power relations and deep divisions that existed between the haves and the have-nots, the White and the Non-White, the coloniser and the colonized, has taken many forms, and has had many consequences. Digging into the implications of this legacy, particularly as pertains to the educational arena, is a complex task since education in multiethnic Mauritius is often shaped and influenced by a number of forces with different vested interests. Several institutions have left their mark on education, some more positive than others. Education in Mauritius was, during the colonial period, a very rare commodity. When it did come on offer, it was for the privileged few. Enforced illiteracy had several consequences for the descendants of slaves and indentured labour, many of whom became assetless, powerless and voiceless as a result.

After the abolition of slavery and the arrival of indentured labourers, things started changing somewhat. The British Colonial Government was somewhat more willing and disposed to look into the educational requirements of the population but despite this, education was still largely limited to some sections of the society.

The imposition of a colonial curriculum on the descendants of slaves and indentured labour meant that a large part of their being and their experiences had to be put aside. Oral culture, which constitutes a central component of the people's lives, was not given its rightful place. Schooling was dominated by a written culture and a curriculum impregnated by the colonisers' culture and language. In the post-colonial period, some progress towards Mauritianisation of the curriculum has been made but the former did not mean an embracing of the local languages.

Educational policy-making has not always been made in an inclusive and participatory manner. While post-Independence policies have often talked about being inclusive and the need for quality education for all, the reality is a rather different one. Many children leave school illiterate and are often pushed to the fringes of society without much attention being paid to them. More importantly, education, which is supposed to be a vector of social mobility, has brought this only to some, thus causing a huge potential for conflict.

While examining issues such as the consequences of 'enforced illiteracy', the non-inclusion of an oral culture, the conditions in which the people of slave and indentured labour descent obtained education, the report emphasises the articulations between the past and the present. In so doing, it seeks to examine key questions such as what are the ingredients necessary to bring about durable peace and cohesion, give credence to national unity rather than simply talking about unity and remain divided. It will also explore the complexities associated with educational policy-making that make it so hard to move towards a genuine and true widening of opportunities for our children, while taking into consideration their multiple talents, their cultures and emotional intelligences. Whether Mauritian education has contributed to the emergence of a national identity and to Mauritianness is also a key question of concern and relevance to the education team.

Reconciliation is fundamental to the development of a just society and *vice versa*. Erik Duxtader and Fanie du Toit (2010) write:

Sometimes we think of reconciliation as our most prized idea, the next moment as cheap deception [...] sometimes it is a process, at other times it is a goal. Depending on the situation, it is the basis for national pride, institutional policy, a community initiative, or something that unfolds

between individuals. In some cases, it is all of these at once. Complicating things further, reconciliation evidently changes from over time and across contexts. Thus, not only is it possible to tie reconciliation in one precise meaning, but its dynamism makes it difficult to understand how reconciliation changes and transforms us.

And needless to say, education is perhaps one of the most powerful tools towards reconciliation but a lot depends on how it is organised and delivered and, most importantly, the extent to which equity is embedded in the system. One of the main arguments of this report is that education in the post-colonial period has been made more accessible but not equitable enough. President Wolfenhson from the World Bank has drawn our attention to how and why "*pride in one's own cultural identity is key for a community to take its destiny in its own hands*" but when schooling, in this case, Mauritian schooling, has for decades repressed the identity of the child, particularly that of the slave descendant, there is an urgent need for reparation.

In order to understand the myriad ways in which History has informed contemporary Mauritian education and the potential of the latter to constitute a tool of reparation, the education team has focussed on several dimensions of the Mauritian education system, whilst allowing the past to articulate with the present. The education team has also chosen to undertake a study of the prevocational sector in Mauritius so as to highlight how contemporary in-school processes speak to the persistent alienation of the children of slave and indentured descent, particularly those of the working class. The report is therefore built around the following outline:

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Broad Aims and Objectives of Education
- Chapter 2: Methodology
- Chapter 3: Slavery and Indentured Labour - Commonalities and Differences - the Broad Consequences of same on Education
- Chapter 4: Patterns of Exclusion and Inclusion
- Chapter 5: The Democratisation of Education in the Post-Colonial Period
- Chapter 6: The Case Study - PVE Schools
- Chapter 7: Education as a tool of reparation
- Chapter 8: Conclusion and recommendations

Chapter one examines the broad aims and objectives of education and in so doing, it shows the difference between a conservative and radical mode of thinking. It argues that education is an important instrument of social change but if efforts are not made to shift the emphasis from equality of opportunity to equality of outcomes, the debate on 'the rights to education' would be meaningless.

Chapter two concerns the methodology. It explains how and why a mixed methods mode of data collection was important for the study. It emphasises the pertinence of the 'voices' obtained through the hearings, the *Hansards* and the Focus Group Discussions. These go a long way in highlighting the wounds and the injustices as well as how educational policies are shaped and formulated at different periods of time. Two workshops were also organised with a broad range of stakeholders, including some former Ministers of Education and a survey of the prevocational sector was undertaken as part of the research plan and methodology. Since the prevocational sector captures large segments of children of working class slave and indentured descent, it was deemed appropriate to target them for the study.

Chapter three examines the commonalities and differences between slavery and indentured labour. It argues that, whilst both constitute two important economic systems based on exploitation and oppression, slavery has had worse consequences with huge implications for the psyche of the individual. Slavery, which has been described as a 'crime against humanity', and 'indentured labour' show us the extent to which people emanating from these two groups have been deprived of certain fundamental Human Rights - including the right to education. More importantly, the impact and implications of these two systems on people's identities and the disconnect that emerged between them as 'beings' and the larger system and sub-systems such as schooling are discussed.

Chapter four examines the patterns of inclusion and exclusion during the French and British colonial periods. The role of institutions such as the Church and the part played by some key figures in the education sector is also discussed. It also examines some of the legislations during those two periods and the implications of these for the descendants of slaves and indentured labour. More importantly, the question of linguistic and cultural exclusion and the implications of these for a stratified society such as Mauritius is discussed.

Chapter five first describes the contemporary educational system and explains how education has been democratised during the post-colonial period. It shows how despite the fact that more resources have been pumped into the educational sector, the latter remains highly inequitable. Those who are most hit are the children of the disadvantaged groups, made up largely of children of Creole background. The chapter also examines the reasons behind the high rates of failure amongst the Creole children and thereby shows the articulations between their slave past and their contemporary plight.

Chapter six is the Case study of the prevocational sector. This is the sector which accommodates the children who fail the C.P.E twice. Both teachers' and students' views have been sought on a range of topics such as the curriculum, teacher-student relationships, gender equality, home-school connection, identities, their understanding of patriotism and citizenship. Some of the findings speak to the multiple discriminatory practices/mechanisms, often 'unconscious', which contribute to the reinforcement of the young person's exclusion and highlight the fact that prevocational, which is supposed to offer a second chance to the students, does so for the very few lucky ones.

Chapter seven entitled 'Education as a tool of reparation' argues that the suffering and injustices, experienced by the descendants of slaves and indentured labour, cannot be repaired through monetary means. It is essential not to attempt to commodify such a complex history which continues to inform the present. This chapter borrows heavily from hearings at the TJC to highlight the various discriminatory practices and prejudices which prevail in contemporary Mauritian society and argues for the urgent need for some form of reparations. Education which caters for mixed abilities and heterogeneous cultures and backgrounds, coupled with some kind of affirmative action, seems to provide part of the answer. The chapter examines the potential that education therefore holds as a tool for reparation.

Chapter eight is the concluding chapter and it also makes some recommendations. The argument is that for contemporary modern Mauritius to become a more cohesive and just society and unshackle itself from the downside of its slave and indenture past, it should rethink its education and educational policy-making. A number of recommendations are made in that direction. It is the collective responsibility of a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that these are implemented.

## CHAPTER ONE

**BROAD AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION****1.1 Different Perspectives on Education**

Social scientists have been giving much thought to the important issue of education and its role in societies since times immemorial. Inevitably, they have held extremely differing views on the relationship between education and society. At one end of the spectrum, education is considered the most important 'ideological state apparatus', devised by the ruling classes, to ensure that society largely conforms to their ideas and interests. Gramsci (1957) is even more specific when he says that intellectuals, i.e. the upper sections of the products of the education system, "are officers of the ruling class for the exercise of subordinate functions of social hegemony and political government." Clearly, thinkers of this persuasion hold that education is an instrument forged by the ruling classes to serve and preserve their own economic and political power structure.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are many social scientists, politicians, educationists and educational planners who consider education as a very important instrument, if not the most important, of social change.

The role of education is to educate individuals within society and to prepare and qualify them for work in the economy, while helping to integrate individuals into society and teach them the norms, values and morals of society. However, there are 2 major sociological theories that differ greatly, when it comes to the role of education- Functionalism and Marxism.

By and large, many people view the role of education from a largely functionalist perspective. Education is largely linked to social stratification and is usually perceived as sifting, sorting and allocating people to their correct places in the economy and society. The idea of meritocracy is infused within the functionalist mode of thinking. But how meritocratic and just can an education system be, if it is not organised and delivered so as to cater for diverse talents and cultures and if it is informed and dominated by Eurocentric thinking. According to Marxist thinking, education is therefore seen either as a tool for the reproduction of inequality or an equalizer/ a tool of social mobility.

In Mauritius, education has played different roles at different times in the country's history but the way that education impacts on the different segments of society has been largely informed by the historical and socio-economic development of the country. In trying to analyse the consequences of slavery and indentured labour for education in Mauritius, one inevitably has to look at the way education was organised and delivered during the different historical periods.

**1.2 The Right to Education**

During the colonial period, education was largely denied to the colonised. The idea of education as a fundamental Human Right only saw the light of day as late as 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, of the Declaration notes:

*"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit...Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace...parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."*

### 1.3 Sources of Inequality v/s The Right to Education

However, during the colonised period, parents did not have a choice, nor even a say. But in the post-colonial period, Mauritian citizens do have a say, but despite such a say, there is very little that parents of working-class background can do to ensure that their children enjoy the fruit of education and development. The ADEA Report of 2006 for instance notes:

*"Mauritius has achieved commendable success in providing universal access to basic opportunities through its well established education system. However, the differences in achievement scores, for children attending the same level of education suggest that our system may not be addressing learning difficulties. Certainly, many sources of education inequalities exist. When questions about equal education inputs, processes and outcomes are raised in view of the Jomtien and Dakar objectives, we find that we are not yet meeting basic learning needs and ensuring a minimum level of competencies for all. Reforms in the primary education system must be geared towards reducing the differences in pupils' achievement as they progress in schools."*

Reducing differences in pupils' achievement and ensuring that the right to education is respected and enjoyed in all its forms, demands a whole range of interventions as well as a more holistic and humanist approach to educational reforms:

*"The production, positioning and consumption of knowledge are still far from a neutral objective and disinterested process; they are socially and politically mediated by hierarchies of Humanity and human agency imposed by particular relations of power."* (Bourdieu, 2004)

Questions such as who produces knowledge, for whom is knowledge produced and who it is consumed by and to what ends remain fundamental questions.

### 1.4 The Persistent Legitimation of Inequality

Looking at the broad aims and objectives of contemporary Mauritian education, in relation to the past, one is left with the impression that it is a system which caters for all. But the reality is that it revolves largely around an ideology of meritocracy and individual talent and in so doing, it often contributes to a legitimisation of inequality. When one starts deconstructing such legitimisation, one then starts understanding the underpinnings of Mauritian education and the extent to which Mauritius is still polarised and fractured.

### 1.5 A Holistic and Humanist Approach to Education

While the fracture and divisions of post-colonial Mauritius are very different to those of the colonial period, the people of indenture and slave descent have not been able to merge as one. The nation is still in the making and education has a major role to play towards healing people of the hurt and assisting to give meaning and value to 'Otherness'. But such meaning can only flourish and be enhanced when a National Education System allows for what the UNESCO Education Report entitled the 'Treasure from within' highlights. The UNESCO Report on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century states that education should centre around 4 pillars which are:

- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to live together and
- Learning to be.

There is no doubt that the colonial education system was very distant from what Delors was recommending but a question worth posing now is: the extent to which the contemporary Mauritian education system responds to these pillars. Making these pillars central to the education process could assist in achieving more equitable outcomes towards promoting a Mauritian identity, having an appreciation and understanding of 'Otherness' within our multicultural space. In short, a holistic and humanist approach to education can bring about a more just, cohesive society where reconciliation becomes more of a reality.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this study is a combination of several methods and instruments. Mixed methods research is currently defined as research in which the researcher collects, analyzes, and integrates qualitative research and quantitative research to study a problem. This approach to research is emerging as a methodology that encompasses philosophical assumptions, designs, and methods, and it has been heralded as “the third research paradigm” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14), and ‘a way of thinking’ (Greene, 2007). As part of the mixed methods approach, the education team had recourse to both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

The former included a survey of the prevocational sector (since it captures a large number of children of slave and indentured descent) within a broad case study framework. Qualitative methods consisted of unstructured interviews and FGDs.

#### 2.1 Primary and Secondary Data

Primary data was obtained from a variety of sources. The interviews carried out with teachers, policy-makers, researchers and administrators, as well as the Focus Group Discussions undertaken with students of the prevocational sector, constituted some very rich data.

Secondary data consisted of information sought from books, journals, newspaper cuttings, policy documents and educational plans/reports.

#### 2.2 Case Study of PVE

Though not so popular within certain disciplines, case study is often acknowledged as a powerful tool to describe and discuss certain realities. Reinharz (1992:174) notes: “*The power of the case study to convey vividly the dimensions of social phenomena or individual life is power that researchers want to utilise*”.

A case study approach can provide a way of thinking about the context that shapes the relationships and dynamics of the situation.

Case-study also allows a multi-perspectival analysis. This means that the research will include the voices and perspectives not just of the actors, but also of the relevant groups of stakeholders and the interaction between them. A salient characteristic of case studies is that it gives “*a voice to the powerless and voiceless*”. Children and young adolescents often constitute such a group.

#### 2.3 Random Sampling of the PVE Schools

A purposive random sampling was done out of a list of schools located mostly in the pockets of poverty of Mauritius. The list of poverty zones was retrieved from the National Empowerment Foundation, out of which 37 schools situated in those poverty zones were randomly identified for the survey to be carried out. The purposive sampling method is used mainly when a particular subset of people needs to be accessed for the survey. It is such that when taking the sample, those who do not fit a particular profile are rejected. A purposive sample can be defined as a non-representative subset of a larger population, and is constructed to serve a very specific need or purpose. A structured questionnaire was administered among PVE teachers and FGD with a group of 20 students in each of the sampled schools. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was meant to complement the data collected among teachers and students, within the broader case study of the PVE sector.

## 2.4 Hearings at the Truth and Justice Commission - Giving a Voice

We have had several hearings at the TJC and some of them have actually discussed the educational question and the kinds of injustices that pervade the post-colonial education period. When one segment of the population feels that it is being discriminated against and is sometimes a 'victim' of diverse forms and types of injustices, then there is cause for concern and there is a need to decry the injustices and bring remedies quickly. Certain "TRUTHS" do not generally go down very well, especially if those TRUTHS hurt the powerful and those benefiting from the perpetuation of the system but TRUTHS are important since the TRUTH serves the needs of those asking for greater transparency and accountability and can assist in empowering the marginalised and the most vulnerable sections of society. In short, it can assist in restoring Justice.

## 2.5 Hansard

*Hansard* refers to the official reports of the debates of a Legislative or a Parliament and its committees. Given that it was important to understand how History informs the present, the education team deemed it important to use the *Hansards* as an additional tool of research. The *Hansards* helped to uncover some of the debates on education at different points of the country's history.

## 2.6 Workshops

The education team held two workshops which had as their themes "Consequences of Slavery and Indentured Labour and its implications for Contemporary Mauritius" and "Consequences of Slavery and Indentured Labour on Education in Contemporary Mauritius - Social Justice and Education". The second workshop brought some of the former Ministers of Education to the same platform and assisted the researchers with a further appreciation of how educational policy-making is arrived at and its implications for Mauritian society.

## 2.7 Research Ethics

One of the most important goals of Research is the production of Knowledge. The only value that is central to Research is Truth, the aim being to produce true accounts of the social phenomena. However, such goals cannot be pursued at all costs. There are ethical issues involved in any social research, and they need to be taken seriously.

Researchers need to be aware of the need to take responsibility to secure the actual permission and interests of all those involved in the study. For this reason, given the large number of respondents (students and teachers), where the survey (administration of questionnaire and FGDs) were conducted, all had to fill in consent forms. Questionnaires have been treated with confidentiality, as have been the transcriptions emerging out of the FGDs. The team also ensures that there will be no misuse of the information obtained.

## CHAPTER THREE

## THE SEQUELS OF SLAVERY AND INDENTURED LABOUR AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE EDUCATION OF DESCENDANTS IN MAURITIUS

## 3.1 Introduction

Slavery and indentured labour are two distinctive oppressive systems with adverse consequences. There have been long debates among History, Human Sciences and Law scholars to define the two systems, some wanting to assimilate indentured labour to slavery (Tinker, 1974) or subsuming slavery and indentured labour under other concepts such as “servitude” (Mishra, 2009), others considering slavery in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as a radical form of oppression which is historically unique. We argue that the two systems are radically different, although there can be similarities in conditions of work or living. To understand their impact on education, it is important to consider each system on its own and see how those concerned have been compelled or /and brought to adopt different paths/trajectories.

Education problems cannot be solved on their own. They require a holistic approach. As Manning (2007, 16) states:

*“The past is gone and will not return, yet it weighs on our lives today. It influences not only the facts of our existence but the interpretation we give to them. The work of historians, therefore, is not only to study the past itself, but to assess the legacy of the past. This second task of historians, the assessment of legacy, is made more complex by its dependence on both the past and the present. The case of slavery - the legacy it has passed on to succeeding generations - is a question not only of understanding past enslavement, but of understanding how the effects of past injustice linger in a world where slavery is condemned and largely eliminated.”*

Talking today about the sequels or legacy of slavery and indentured labour means that these colonial past events have had consequences which still persist in the present times.

Today’s need to know about the legacy of slavery continues to provoke new questions and deeper research into the historical past of slavery. Why do the descendants of slaves encounter obstacles to enjoying full citizenship in modern nations? Does slave ancestry provide a lasting stigma, passed on to subsequent generations? *“These questions arise repeatedly, not only because of the specifics of slavery, but because slavery—the subjugation of people into abject submission before their owners—serves as a compelling metaphor for all the social problems of inequality and oppression.”* (Manning 2007, 17). This explains why different oppressed groups, including many among the descendents of indentured labourers, compare the situation of their ancestors to that of slaves.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to the work of the Truth and Justice Commission not only to capture the similarities in conditions of work and living between the two groups, but also to acknowledge that there is an ontological difference, a difference of nature between slavery and indentured labour. Otherwise, the sequels of slavery and of indenture would not be assessed in a fair manner and the relevancy of the whole Black/Creole struggle for reparation would just be erased.

### 3.2 Slavery and indentured Labour in Mauritius. Differences and commonalities.

Presenting the differences and commonalities between slavery and indentured labour in table-form may help capture the main issues dealt with in this chapter.

Slavery	Indentured labour
<b>Presence or absence of contract</b>	
The question of free-will and choice did not exist for slaves. The absence of any contract was a first indication of how their rights were being violated.	The fundamental difference between slavery and indentured labour is that in the latter, labourers were recruited on a contract basis which they had to sign and for which they were paid wages.
<b>Procurement process and trade</b>	
The procurement process of slaves was through rapt in African countries and trade between Africans and Europeans. The slaves showed their freedom of choice by leaving their masters' estates at the risk of death (marooning), Le Morne being the symbol of that fight for freedom.	There were rules of recruitment. The recruits had to appear before a Magistrate in the district of recruitment, and not the port of embarkation. Indian recruiters had to bear penalties, if rules were not observed. Recruitment and arrival were closely monitored. This is why the symbolic place for indentured labourers is their place of arrival, duly notified.
<b>Protector of slaves and indentured labour</b>	
There was no contract or Protector at the start of the modern slave trade under the French period. Under British rule, Protectors (Thomas in 1829 following the Colebrook Commission, Jeremie in 1832) were sent to improve the conditions of slaves but could not enforce any measures due to the French colonists' resistance.	Many reports were written against ill-treatment and proposals were made to better the conditions of immigration. Protectors were posted to ensure that the rights of the immigrants were being respected.
<b>Permanent or temporary system /Possibility of returning to homeland</b>	
Slaves were violently uprooted from their countries of origin with no possibility of ever going back. The idea of a homeland or ancestral land was therefore lost forever.	The contract stipulated that the labourers could go back to their country of origin after a number of years' work. Some of them did, in fact, return, while others chose to stay in Mauritius.
<b>Imposition or freedom of religion, culture and language</b>	
Slaves brought to Isle de France came from various areas of Africa and spoke different languages which they could not keep in such adverse conditions. Their languages were repressed and lost. The <i>Code Noir</i> (1723) imposed the Catholic religion on all slaves as soon as they reached the island. The British enforced the same rule. Religion was a control mechanism tool and formed part of the "deculturalisation" process of slaves.	In Indian settlements in the vicinity of the sugar estates, there were <i>baithas</i> or village clubs, where the immigrants would gather in the evenings and read their religious books. This institution provided the scope for the preservation of culture, language and religion as well as a place for developing a new social, economic or political consciousness. No religion was imposed upon them.
<b>Dismantling or maintaining of family system</b>	
They came from different backgrounds and cultures in Africa and Madagascar. The link with ancestral traditions and family system was	At the very outset of regulated emigration of Indian labour in 1843, legislative measures supported family migration. In 1868, instructions were issued that the proportion of 40

severed. Slaves were atomised and alienated, with strong implications for identity because the family, as the main cultural transmitter and socialising agent, did not exist, and this had a devastating impact on children of slaves and generations after them.	women to 100 men should be adhered to and remained in practice for the rest of the indenture period. The joint family system provided help and support even to distant relatives.
<b>Work and wages</b>	
Slaves were considered as a mere workforce and were paid no wages or salary. No capital accumulation was possible under the slave system. This made land and any form of property acquisition very difficult even after Abolition, when slave owners were compensated and ex-slaves abandoned to poverty.	Labourers were paid very low wages on which there was often a “double cut” (security for good conduct and passage expenses in case of premature repatriation). Wages were not increased from 1834 to 1915. However, this laid the foundation for future economic development.
<b>Reification and control</b>	
Slavery denied the humanity of some human beings by reducing them to the status of ‘goods and chattels’ ( <i>Code Noir</i> , art. 39) to be sold, traded, used, thrown away or punished with mutilation and torture. A special Legal Code ( <i>Code Noir</i> ) controlled the minutiae of a slave’s life in all its aspects, and exercised coercion over his mind. Slaves were considered a sub-human workforce, at the service of the owner’s economic power. These methods were still in force under British rule.	While control was not exactly of the same nature, the indentured labourers were also subject to diverse forms of oppression and harassment. Ex-indentured immigrants who had completed contracts and went around looking for alternative jobs were defined as vagrants and arrested by the Colonial Authorities. The latter also imposed passes with affixed photographs limiting their mobility.
<b>Property and land acquisition</b>	
Slaves could not own any form of property or inheritance ( <i>Code Noir</i> , article 21). Under British rule, (1829, Ordinance 43, 23), they could buy land but only through their master and with his approval.	Indians became landowners during the Great Parcelling which began in 1890. At the turn of the century, Indians had saved money and were soon able to buy land from their employers on very fair terms. Low-level managers of large estates were often rewarded with small amounts of marginal land by estate owners.
<b>Human Rights Issue</b>	
Slaves were deprived of what are considered today to be fundamental Human Rights	The fact that indentured labourers came during the British colonial period, after the Abolition of slavery, meant that their rights have not been impinged upon to the same extent as the slaves.

### 3.3 Consequences of enforced illiteracy on the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers

Many slave-holders deliberately imposed the “no education policy” as an enslavement tool and, as such, vigorously enforced tactics designed to prevent slaves from learning to read and write and deliberately kept them away from employment in services that involved writing. Slave-owners understood and knew that “knowledge is power” and if slaves were to gain any form of knowledge they would start contesting and challenging the system in place. As Paige and Witty (2003, 83) note: “ignorance was a valuable control mechanism, many slave-owners strictly enforced illiteracy.” The latter has had many consequences for the slaves and in many ways; some of these consequences impacted on subsequent generations.

#### 3.3.1 Internalization of certain ‘biases’

Slaves were made to believe that they were not intelligent and could not cope with academic studies. In order to maintain them as a docile workforce, the dominant classes gave them only manual jobs. This bias has been internalized by some Creoles, inhibiting them in their capacity to acquire formal and written knowledge.

### ***3.3.2 No opportunity for acquisition of assets and asset-building***

Enforced illiteracy also cut off the opportunity for asset-building for slaves and many generations of poor Creoles after them. In all administrative steps, from the simplest to the most sophisticated, in the legal sphere, trade, business and access to economically rewarding jobs, reading and writing even in their basic forms were required. Thus for generations, poor Creoles could not save enough to upgrade their living conditions and those of their descendants.

### ***3.3.3 No elite emerging***

Enforced illiteracy also prevented the emergence of an elite and leaders from popular class Creoles. This, in turn, prevented them from developing their own role models. The socially available models were always outside their own people, and they could not identify themselves with these models (White and Upper-class Creoles or 'Gens de couleur', and later on Indians and Muslims). Education is a powerful tool for the emergence of an organic elite and role models who might have given an impetus to the development of slave descendants.

### ***3.3.4 Lack of social capital networks***

As the slaves were violently uprooted from their cultural, religious, ancestral and family capital and a new reality and religion imposed on them, it was very difficult for them to bridge the existent language and cultural divide, to reorganise themselves and develop social capital networks. Moreover, there were no African or Malagasy traders or elite to support their struggle for freedom and rights when they came to Mauritius. They had to start again almost from scratch to create and invent a new Mauritian culture and way of life. The Apprenticeship Period deprived them of the time and economic means they needed as free people to reconstruct themselves. The massive arrival of competitors on the labour market contributed drastically to their impoverishment and low-class status.

### ***3.3.5 Deprivation of political rights***

Last but not least, enforced illiteracy deprived slaves and their descendants of access to their political rights. The Mackenzie-Kennedy Constitution, of 1947, allowed all citizens aged 21 who were literate enough to write a few lines in any language, the right to vote. It was mostly Mauritians of Indian origin who could seize the opportunity and hence enjoy political emancipation, whereas slave descendants could not do so. This meant that the Creoles were largely deprived of the possibility for political mobilization and advancement of their conditions.

## **3.4 Socio-psychological impact of slavery**

Slavery is deeply embedded in the unconscious mind. Most historical studies rely on documents or interviews in which texts and written speech are analyzed. This is quite insufficient as written material was produced by the masters, while the human experience and reality of slavery were suffered by the victims and buried in the subconscious. It is that subconscious that must be tapped and brought to expression. It is there that lies the foundational Creole identity based on the slave trader complex and its master-slave relationship, as well as ancestral stories and the mediation of the reality of the Other. The slave system induced a problematic construction of identity in which the self is forced to deny itself (Benoist, 1996). The mimetic relationship with the master can bring the slave's own self-destruction as he violently denies part of his own self that recalls the master. The question of identity is always problematic.

Mauritian society was built on initial violence. Creoles have painfully reacted to that 'undignification' process by psychic postures born in a spirit of resistance. Creole subconscious arises from this first trauma, from this fragmentation, from the loss of the maternal languages and the desubjectivation process which were inherent to the slave system.

In the study of the sequels of slavery, new concepts such as the "Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome" (Crawford & DeGruy Leary, 2003) have been devised to address the physical and psychological health problems, self-destructive impulses, family and relational difficulties of slave descendants. From the experiences collected in the study and cure of victims of rape, war veterans, victims of heart-attacks, victims of natural disasters and serious accidents, researchers have forged the concept of "Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome" (PTSS). Multigenerational trauma is also known through experiences of human groups who have experienced genocides, mass persecution and massacres in history. Regarding slavery as the starting traumatic experience, the "Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome" captures its devastating effects that have been internalized from generation to generation and continuously reinforced by systemic racism and discrimination on the social level. It means that slavery has consequences for all parties and for the whole of society sharing that history.

One of the most important concepts linked to the slave status is shame. Shame fuels the behaviour of the descendants of slaves, the shame of oneself and the shame to live. Thus the PTSS reveals a social illness that cannot be healed only through the treatment of individuals or of a group. Mauritian society has built its social relationships and representations and maintained a system of injustice which perpetuates the initial trauma and demand collective healing. "The PTSS requires not only personal, mental, emotional and spiritual healing but social justice." There is no healing without the latter.

### 3.5 Socio-economic disempowerment

The 'malaise créole' was one among the symptoms of that problematic identity and socio-economic construct in the power sharing and making in Mauritian history. Between 1980 and 1990, there were rapid changes in Mauritian economy and society which have led to substantial improvement in the life conditions and education from which Creoles have been excluded. R. Cerveaux, a Catholic priest, denounced the fact that Creoles were poor and marginalized in society and in the Church. According to Cerveaux, Creoles have been victims of slavery, of their own intelligentsia, of the alienating culture of the Church and of politicians pursuing their own interests. The 'malaise créole' was the result of a concentration of problems and an accumulation of hurdles to be overcome: a mix of cultural oppression and identity problems, prejudice and stigmatization which are sequels of slavery and its subsequent history, as well as socioeconomic difficulties, precarious employment, low wages, housing problems: "*Education in the broad sense was considered a key issue in reducing inequalities and repairing injustices towards Creoles' situation*" (Romaine, 2010).

### 3.6 Indian presence before Abolition and Indentured labour

Indians were present in the island since the Dutch period. There were Indian slaves, convicts, skilled workers, sailors, artisans, traders from Madras, and most particularly from provinces under French occupation, namely Pondicherry and Karikal on the coast of Coromandel, South of India. The expansion of sugar production as the economic mainstay of the colonial economy, the abolition of the slave trade and the high mortalities amongst slaves (which easily surpassed their birth rates) led to an acute shortage of labour on the island, so that even before slavery had been abolished, the planters were casting about for alternative sources of labour. (Reddi 1984)

During the occupation in 1810, the British had found a small but flourishing community of Indian traders (both Hindu and Muslim), already well-anchored in Mauritius. They seized the opportunities for the import and export trade that opened up from 1835 onwards. As free traders, they were able to accumulate the wealth and independence that empowered them to preserve their languages, religious observances and cultural practices, and they acquired the social prestige that made them an alternative point of reference for indentured Indians. They thus provided a counter to the atomising structures of the indenture system and the threat of cultural assimilation that it posed for indentured Indians and their descendants.

### ***3.6.1. A crucial transitional period: Apprenticeship and mass importation of indentured labourers***

The Apprenticeship System was a tentative attempt to keep the ex-slaves on the plantations and this formed part of a 'Great Experiment', as Stanley wrote in 1842 Ordinance. Moses Nwulia (1978, 89) observed: "The apprenticeship system converted chattel slaves into serfs" and it is quite understandable that the ex-slaves left the sugar plantations and settled elsewhere. They had nothing and the overwhelming bulk of the ex-apprentices were reduced to extreme poverty and malnutrition, so that their numbers declined steadily. The withdrawal of the ex-apprentices created a labour crisis for the colony and the Government resorted to the renewed importation of indentured labourers from India in large numbers to save the sugar farmers from ruin and the economy from collapse. The artisans who had been emancipated before 1850 had begun to emerge economically, but the massive arrival of indentured labourers changed the demographic ratio and the new labour situation brought the majority of them to a state of extreme impoverishment.

## **3.7 The indentured labour assets and social capital**

The situation of indentured labourers was very difficult on their arrival in Mauritius and they had to face many hardships. They had to adapt to a new cultural, religious and political environment. The conditions of work and living were harsh but their cultural, religious, ancestral and family capital, which they could bring with them and relate to, were an essential asset in their adaptation to, and development in, Mauritius

### ***3.7.1 Baithkas - an integrating mechanism for children of Indian indentured labourers***

The *baithkas* played a crucial role in the conservation and development of the Indian culture in Mauritius: the *baithka*. The system of *baithka* (which means a place to sit together), was present in many villages in India. Bhojpuri served as the vehicle of expression and communication. When they arrived in Mauritius, the Indian indentured labourers did not meet with administrative obstacles and continued freely with this social set-up of which they were used to in their villages (Hazareesingh, 1962).

One of the assets of the *Baithka* system was its flexibility. It was a veritable socio-cultural hub, a gathering place, where the migrants interacted with each other. The *baithka* exerted great influence on the social, cultural, political and economic life of the indentured labourers and their descendants. It was the seat of the *Panchayat* (village community/committee) where disputes and marriages would be settled, the welfare of the community discussed, villagers' hardship problems solved and support given. *Baithkas* provided the scope for the preservation of culture, language and religion as well as places for developing a new social, economic and political consciousness.

*Baithkas* played an important role in education as (1) it imparted religious education and transmitted knowledge, even if under an oral form; (2) it provided an identity and a sense of cultural belonging so that collective issues were discussed and decided in *baithkas*, so that everything pertaining to education was also dealt with collectively and had more social and political impact. It is through *baithkas* that the decision to learn how to sign in Hindi was taken and this allowed the first Indian candidates to be elected; (3) Asian languages were taught and spoken; (4) *baithkas* would provide the scope for political mobilisation and action which would lead to important changes in the education system.

### ***3.7.2 Economic elite and leading figures: the Mauritius-India network***

Moreover, the presence of Indian traders, well settled in Mauritius, was important in terms of support and economic help. Acquisition of land, due to the accumulation of a small capital, the conditions of sale of the Great Parcelling, the emergence of an economic and a political elite under the benevolent protection of the British rulers, more prone to respond to their needs to make Indians compete with the Creole elite, played an important role in their social emancipation. Indentured labourers were also supported by Indian lawyers and preeminent figures from India like Gandhi who visited Mauritius in 1901 and Maganlal Manilal Doctor who stayed from 1907 to 1912 and awoke strong political consciousness in the Indian masses. Local intellectuals, such as the Bissoondoyal brothers, struggled for the teaching of Hindi, and the *Arya Samaj* movement was very forceful on the question of education including that of girls.

The Indians were able to “construct an Indo-Mauritian identity within a triadic network of relations that incorporates their attachment to the land for economic survival, to the village for their ethnic consciousness and to the Creolised Mauritian society at large for a definition of their national self”. They were able to maximize their cultural assets and the benefits accorded by the British, as well as devise political consciousness and strategies to use education as a means of economic empowerment and social emancipation.

### 3.8 Slaves’ and ex-slaves’ identity construction and role of the Creole elite

The Indians’ difficult path is unique and quite different from that of slaves who were deprived of their assets from the start. Differently from the Indian Elite which was organically linked with the working class and acted in the global interest of Indians as a group, the Creole elite emerged in the competitive and individualistic context of struggle for emancipation (which could only be nominal and personal) and of struggle for power in which education was considered as the emancipating tool. Writing about the Mauritian Creole elite, Simmons argues “many were becoming Franco Mauritians in all but colour” (Simmons, 1986: 372). Unfortunately, this elite was culturally alienated from the low working-class Creoles in its attempts to be accepted and co-opted by the White group. A well-organised Creole peasantry who could possess land and some capital did not even emerge in Mauritius in the Post-Abolition period. From such a group, perhaps an educated elite and leaders could have emerged, but that did not happen.

As from 1936, Dr. Maurice Curé and other Creoles with progressive universal ideals were interested in the class struggle against capitalists and became the Founding Fathers of the Mauritian Labour Party. They collaborated with people of diverse ethnic origins and promoted the rights of the working class, irrespective of ethnic origin or creed. Their struggle had many positive consequences which were capitalised on by Indians but could not be by working-class Creoles. Though noble in its aim, this supposedly “non-ethnic” position of part of the Creole elite was disconnected from the socio-historical reality and dynamics of ethnicity and ethnic politics in Mauritian society as it had become after Abolition and specially in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This elite still holds the same position at present and counteracts any form of Creole cultural and political struggle. As regards education, the work of different Catholic religious congregations and later on the State schools reached the White and Free elites, then the Indian elite but failed to cater for the poor Creoles who were far from decision-making centres and were becoming part of a large working class and some of them part of a powerless proletariat.

The Pre-Independence period was disastrous for that group who was exploited by White and Creole elites alike for their interests. Without education, working-class Creoles had few means to become critical and take their own decisions. Moreover, despite class and race distinctions, Whites, upper-and working-class Creoles were seen by indentured labourers descendents as united by a common Catholic faith, an adherence to French culture and to the French language or its Creole derivative - Kreol. In the discussions around power-sharing for Independence, Creoles were marginalised and not recognized as the first Mauritians by the Constitution of Mauritius.

The immediate Post-Independence period was no better as large numbers of Creoles, mainly from the educated group but also from the working class, emigrated to various European countries and to Australia in the late sixties and early seventies. (Dinan, 1985) As well as depriving the Creoles of educated leaders, the administration of the country was practically totally taken by indentured labour descendents.

The economic, social and political plight of Creoles got worse and worse through the seventies, eighties and nineties. Their invaluable contribution to the economic and cultural development of the country was silenced, their history ignored and prejudices and unjust treatments inflicted to them. There was the Creole taboo before the ‘malaise créole’.

The 1999 February riots came as a climax to a long history of oppression and injustice. Kaya’s murder in prison was resented by poor Creoles as their symbolical *mise à mort* by the economically and politically powerful. Injustice towards a large group of the population, who had struggled and worked for the country, could no longer be perpetrated blatantly. Injustice could only destroy the social confidence of the different components of the nation and bring unrest and

instability. Chazan (2001) goes even further in suggesting that Kaya's death symbolized in fact the *mise à mort* of trans-ethnic Mauritian identity.

### 3.9 Different education paths / trajectories

#### 3.9.1 *Absence of mobility and persistent social injustice*

The paths of slave and indentured descents were different and depended on a large number of factors. Nevertheless, in post-Independence Mauritius, and the democratization of access to education, inequalities were revealed and even consolidated. Although poor children of indentured labourers also suffer from the system, the situation has developed in such a way that it is mainly generations of Creole children who have been, and still are, the victims of a series of decisions which go back to the slave period where the policy was to provide no education, and even enforce illiteracy as a means of control. The lack of economic resources and of political power, as well as their marginalization, caused by persistent social injustice, have disempowered Creoles even more, preventing them from achieving upward mobility.

The democratization of access to education could not be seized upon by poor Creoles. For decades now, problems have been diagnosed in the Mauritian educational system and seen to be centered around inequality, competitiveness, lack of relevance and insufficient access to higher levels of education. There has been a worrying rate of drop-outs at the level of primary education, with children leaving school without having acquired the basic literacy and numeracy skills. The highest drop-out and failure rates are persistently recorded in a number of schools located in disadvantaged areas, and it is no secret that the majority of children affected by such a situation are Creole children.

Low performance is known to be part of a cycle of poverty, with family and social problems that perpetuate the situation of marginalisation and exclusion in certain areas, mainly suburban areas of the country. A school with a poor reputation is caught up in a self-reinforcing cycle of low expectations, low morale and low performance; parents are insufficiently informed; the school lacks amenities, etc. It is known that school programmes should place the child at the centre of school activities, stress the need for early diagnosis and remediation, provide for strong linkages between the school and community and the need for the continuous concentration on the core competencies of reading, writing and numeracy (Parsuramen 2001, 38). But it seems that political will to change is lacking. Maintaining an unjust status quo has been long preferred to courageous decision-taking and implementation that would bring reparation.

### 3.10 Conclusion

As a 'crime against Humanity' perpetrated in the past, slavery has contributed to the psycho-social reality of individuals and groups who experienced it, and it still has devastating effects today. The consequences or sequels of slavery are disorders persisting after the injury inflicted by slavery, and there is room for an analysis of the psycho-social reality of the descendants of slaves today and for opening up new tracks towards their individual and collective healing. Treated as marginalized citizens, the descendants of slaves are struggling for the recognition of their Human Rights, according to the different United Nations Conventions signed by the Mauritian State.

Indentured labourers' descendants have been able to become upwardly mobile through political power and the democratization of access to education in independent Mauritius. Unfortunately, a just and equitable society is far from having been born out of Independence. Creoles are quite legitimately expecting long-overdue historical reparation towards them. Any reparation strategy will have to place education at the core of its process.

Today, there could be new opportunities for the people of Mauritius and for the Creoles, especially those of the working-class or lumpen proletariat. Education must be approached in a humanistic perspective in which the history and culture of all groups are taken into consideration. Education policy should be placed within its broader social, cultural, political and economic context, as an integral part of a human development strategy that places the people at the heart of the whole process. Education must help to engender a new Humanism, one that contains an

essential component and sets considerable knowledge of, and respect for, the cultures and spiritual values of different civilizations as a much-needed counterweight to a globalization of the world. If this is not urgently done, globalisation will reveal even more dramatically the inequalities of Mauritian society and paralyse it, as worldwide changes require new competencies and polyvalence on the labour market. This can polarize Mauritian society further and ethnic turmoil cannot be excluded. It is only through education, encompassed within a large vision of Mauritianness, that slave and indentured labour, descendants can finally unite within one Mauritian nation and make history.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## MECHANISMS OF EXCLUSION IN COLONIAL EDUCATION

In this chapter we examine the different mechanisms of exclusion during French and British colonisation. Although there were some policies which could be considered as genuine attempts at inclusion, our findings indicate that the existing inequalities in our educational system have their roots in some forms of exclusion in the colonial period which have impinged on educational achievements and social mobility. The analysis is grounded in basic historical information, which enables historical reading and discussion, and we engage critically with the events and phenomena to make sense of the past and to better understand the current situation. In a Truth and Justice perspective, *"time is regarded not only as a technical measure but a substance loaded with human-given meanings and moral issues"* (Ahonen, 2005). Our approach has been to adopt what contemporary research methodology in the History of Education considers as the important distinction to be made between the 'archives of memory' and the 'memories of archives' (Fitzgerald, 2005). Such a perspective coheres with the quest for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation as the challenge, therefore, is to interrogate the contents of the archives as well as the archives themselves to reveal their privileges, silences and absences.

## 4.1 Narratives of Exclusion

## FRENCH PERIOD (1715-1810): Education for Whites only

As early as 27 July 1736, a Treaty was signed between the Lazarist Congregation and the French East India Company in Paris which set up the Ecclesiastical Establishment of Isle de Bourbon and Isle de France. Catholicism became the official Faith of both islands. The Treaty made provision for educational services and contemplated the foundation of a college which would receive students as day pupils and boarding pupils (Ramdoyal, 1975). The *Code Noir*, whilst insisting on the obligation for the slave masters to have their slaves baptised, did not, however, make any educational provisions for the slaves.

*"The main concern of the colonizers was the provision of education to the children of the French settlers only, and especially to the free Franciliens who could not afford to travel to France to receive quality metropolitan education"* (Easton, 2011).

In 1790, the Colonial Assembly proclaimed that the State had to provide moral and political education to its citizens. In 1791, a school in Port-Louis was set up by M. Michelet and called "Le Collège National" and others were opened with an ephemeral existence. Some private tutors were employed by well-to-do families and their sons and daughters were sent to France to 'finish' (refine) their education. They were educated to occupy positions in the naval field. But most of the settlers devoted themselves to the development of the island as an agricultural colony. Those who acquired the rudiments of education joined the clerical staff of the Colonial Administration. But the need to establish an educational system was strongly felt in order to meet the needs of the new socio-economic profile of the French population and also to sustain the French colony.

## 4.2 Secondary Education for the Elite

After the French Revolution, it was understood that a uniform type of education would be made available to all, irrespective of their social class. In 1800, an adapted version of the 'Plan Lakanal' was implemented in the island with the setting up of *L'Ecole Centrale at Champ de Lort* as a national institution to provide secondary education for the elite. Primary education was recommended for the masses and primary schools were to be run as private schools. Hence, it was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that education started to become a concern for the French administrators. Under General Decaen (1803-1810), and following the Ordinance of 28 October 1803, the first Government primary school, *L'Ecole Centrale* became the *"Lycée de l'île de France et de la Réunion"* and provided both primary and secondary education. The Lycée was not only a Grammar School imparting basic education, but it was also a Naval School which imparted some military training. It became an elite school for the upper class of the White settlers. It

acquired regional repute and attracted foreign students from other French colonies in the Indian Ocean. Decaen also set up two primary schools for the education of coloured children. This could be considered as an attempt at inclusion, but it was a short-lived initiative as educational policies were more easily influenced by the bigger Whites plantocracy. In the same vein, there were also some early concerns for education of girls.

### 4.3 Education for girls

Decaen authorized the creation of two private schools for girls" (Duvivier, 1891). Commending the work of the school, Milbert (1812) "explains that the curriculum of the school was aimed at making girls look more graceful and agreeable to their companions and cultivating in them social graces and tenderness." He goes on to say that "music, drawing, French grammar, and sewing" were some of the subjects taught and also stressed that sewing was particularly useful as it fitted them for the role of housewives.

Women were socialized to accept their roles as wives and mothers as 'natural'. The socialization process in the school made the girls highly refined in their manners, while their academic knowledge remained scant. The one female school run by M. Deaubonne, during the French colonial period, closed in 1809. We can well imagine that the vast majority of slave women and girls did not have access to education. Had there been any form of education, it was left to some individual initiatives limited to the generosity of the slave masters. Some Parish priests of the Lazarist Congregation also catered for the education of slaves. However, the forms of exclusion were reinforced with the Napoleonic rule and the restoration of slavery.

### 4.4 The Colour bar system

Napoleon reintroduced the colour bar which was abolished during the French Revolution. This was highly prejudicial to the Free Coloured population who also aspired for education. Coloured children were excluded from the *Lycée Colonial* which was reserved for Whites and Europeans only. Decaen had the support of the White population who did not want to have their children sitting next to a coloured child at school. This system established a mode of social stratification in education based on the colour bar. As Prithipaul (1976) observed, this "*school system thus helped maintain the socio-cultural and economic disparities between the different social groups resident in the colony*" (p.62). Such a system would consequently impact our national collective memory, and especially on the psyche of the Creole community. The struggle for access of the coloured people to the Lycée, later known as Royal College was led afterwards by Rémy Ollier (1819-1845). This intense struggle of the coloured community would dominate the educational scene till the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Hence, during the French period, education remained the privilege of the Europeans. Both the Colonial Government and the Church as institutions did not cater for slave education. A few individuals mostly French missionaries (Lazarists), provided basic religious education and opened a few schools to cater for basic academic education of coloured and slaves. The history of French colonial period is therefore largely one of exclusion. The non accessibility to education meant that slave descendants continued to remain in an unequal power relationship for a very long time.

## 4.5. THE BRITISH PERIOD (1810-1968)

### 4.5.1 French language and culture and Anglicisation

In 1810, British colonisation did not lead to a significant number of British people settling in the country. As a result, there was no significant change in the composition of the population. With regard to the slave population, although the slave trade became illegal under British rule, real politics triumphed and early British colonisation was more marked by a period of political positioning of the new colonizers than real concerns for the lots of the slaves. The 1814 Treaty of Paris awarded the island, together with the Seychelles and Rodrigues, to Britain. The Treaty allowed the residents the right to keep their property, to enjoy their own religion, and laws and customs prevailing before the conquest (Napal, 1984, p.2).

This French domination of the country's cultural and social life ushered a new *rapport de forces* during the early period of British rule (1810-1835). Given that the same former colonial masters still exerted economic and social control over the country, this did not change much the situation of the slaves and also for the coloured population. On the political scene, on the one hand we had the White plantocracy and Catholic Church hierarchy, and on the other, the new British coloniser. Between these two forces was the coloured population who tried to find a way to protect to the best its own interests. Its allegiance was at abeyance, depending on the circumstances and the local forces at play.

The first British Governor, Robert Farquhar, and his successors developed a policy of *détente* with these local forces. British Governors had to secure to the best the interests of the British Empire by adopting an open door policy with the White sugar plantocracy who controlled the economy. But education became an instrument through which the British tried to secure their interests by a tactful policy of gradual Anglicisation. British Colonial policies devised strategies to anglicise the country.

#### 4.5.2 Granting of British Scholarship and Access to Royal College

In 1813, Farquhar renamed the *Lycée Colonial* as Royal College and approved Rev. Jean Lebrun's project to open schools for all students and especially for the affranchised (Ramdoyal, 1975).

As from 1818, British scholarships were awarded to the best students for studies in England. This was a means to anglicise the country but it also led to the emergence of a local elite. It brought, to a certain extent, some forms of inclusion because when the Royal College became accessible to the coloured, boys of African descents (Governor Nicolay as quoted in Ramdoyal, 1975) successfully availed themselves of the opportunity to study in Britain. In fact, the Royal College, then situated in Port-Louis alone, was a powerful Anglicisation tool, even if French studies remained quite strong. In 1829, by a Council Order, Governor Colville made it possible for coloured people to have access to the Royal College, but it was only in 1832 that Free Coloured students really gained access to that College against the will of White parents. The presence of the coloured students was not appreciated. There was much resistance against their presence. Interest in the education of the slave population also gradually found its way as voices rose from Anti-Abolitionist Societies in Britain and America for the abolition of slavery during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. British Humanitarianism first appeared in the 1800s and pride in British morality reinforced the arrogance of British Colonial Powers. The British sense of superiority as the world's leader in liberty and representative institutions concurred with their view of themselves as uniquely benevolent among nations. It was within this paradigm that some measures were adopted to improve the conditions of the slaves.

#### 4.5.3 The Negro Education Fund or The aborted inclusion

In 1827, under the pressure of British humanitarians, a slavery amelioration policy was adopted but the indulgence of early British Governors towards the opposition of the White planters contributed to the collapse of the implementation of the policy. The English planter Charles Telfair was the first to introduce education for slaves on his estate at Bel Ombre in 1829 (Quenette, 1982). The arrival of Thomas, a Protector of Slaves, in 1829 following the recommendation of the Colebrook Commission did not bring real improvement in the conditions of the slaves. Thomas met with strong resistance and defiance from the slave-owners. The hostile attitude of both the coloured people and the White against the new Protector, John Jeremie, in 1832 further demonstrates the deep aversion that prevailed against the Blacks.

Initial attempts at the inclusion of the slave population through education came with the Mico Charity Schools. In 1835, a sum of £ 25,000 was voted by the British Parliament as a voluntary contribution towards the Negro Education Fund for the erection of school houses in the colonies. In Mauritius, the British Colonial Office decided to place at the disposal of the Trustees of the Mico Charity the sum of £1000 towards the establishment of a Normal School in Port Louis, and a further sum of £780 in aid for the erection of schools towards the instruction of the former slave population. However, the imperial grant channelled through Mico was aimed mainly to transform

former slaves into 'an industrious peasantry' (Kalla, 1998), and not for mainstream education. The Mico Schools aimed at combining "religious instruction and moral training with the general enlightenment of the native mind."

The Mico Trustees entrusted the schools to Lebrun. Since Lebrun was a Dissenter, this created a lot of tension between the Colonial Authorities and both the Anglican and Catholic Churches. Lebrun's work was not limited solely to the provision of education, as he also conducted Sunday Schools with the study of the Bible. This was very much in line with what is called today "*missionary literacy*" (Pennycook, 2005), whereby reading and writing were made through the study of the Bible. However, not much could be achieved in terms of basic educational achievements for the slave population. The Negro Education Fund could then be considered as an aborted inclusion. Finally, it was the coloured population who benefited most from the schools of Lebrun and from other measures to improve the lot of the slaves (Teelock, 1998).

Quenette (1982) gives a thorough analysis of the opportunism of the coloured people who, after having benefitted much from Lebrun, would afterwards shift their allegiance to the Catholic Church. Lebrun invested much in the fight for the recognition of the rights of the coloured people. In fact, very few slave masters were in favour of sending the children of the slaves to Lebrun's schools, and access by the apprentices was quite limited. According to Quenette (1982), the threat represented by Rev Jean Lebrun forced both Anglican and Catholic Churches to become objective allies and they made it a common cause to close down Lebrun's schools. Thus, sectarian jealousies seriously impeded the progress of education amongst the slave population. But it was also a class struggle. The coloured people represented the emergence of a new middle class who aspired to education and social mobility. Soon, the coloured population allied itself with the White masters who had denied them access to the Royal College.

By 1842, the Parliamentary grant, previously made to the Mico Schools, was discontinued. In 1843, the Mico Schools were handed over to the State. This led then to the need for an ordered system of education, and the focus was no longer on the education of the slaves but on the provision of education to all. This 'concern for all' led to the neglect of the specific educational needs of the slaves. The demise of the Mico Charity schools and the Negro Education Fund represents a real tragedy for the slave population because they disappeared just four years after the end of the Apprenticeship period (1839), at a time when former slaves needed education as a tool for social mobility. With the abolition of slavery and the end of Apprenticeship, a new economy emerged in which the ex-slaves were superseded by Indian indentured labour. This systemic change inevitably led to a 'systemic exclusion' of the former slave population. It provoked a change in the priorities of the British colonisers with regard to its subjects. Indian immigrants became the new subjects of His / Her Majesty.

#### 4.5.4 Indian Immigrants: British educational concerns

By 1850, the Indian labourers formed more than half of the population and had contributed to the economic recovery of Mauritius which was the aim for which they had been brought to Mauritius. This rapid change in the profile of the population was a cause of concern and the British began to think about the education of the children of the Indian immigrants. In 1851, Governor Higginson drew the attention of both the local and British Governments to the need to improve the state of the Indians. But no education was provided to working-class Creoles or ex-apprentices. In 1855, out of 23,500 Creole children, only 5,500 were in school (4.3%). In 1872, there were 260,000 Indians out of 310,000 people, but only about 10% of those of school age attended schools. Governor Higginson continued to fight for the education of children of labourers.

Attempts to educate the Indian population encountered two major difficulties: the medium of instruction and the procuring of competent teachers. In what language should education be provided to Indians? The colonials wanted to use French as the medium but the Government wanted to use the Asian languages. Even among the British, there were serious debates because some of them wanted the medium to be English. In Government schools, the study of English and French was compulsory but it was not easy for poor children to study and master two foreign languages. On the other hand, trials were made with teachers from India but that proved a failure. In 1876, under Governor Phayre, vernacular schools (Tamil, Hindi, Marathi) were opened on sugar estates. After his

departure in 1882, these schools became Anglo-vernacular and many children gave up their schooling because their parents perceived this as an enforced cultural assimilation policy. There are two schools of thought amongst historians of education about the Anglo-vernacular schools. In 1882, there were 47 Government schools with 6,571 children enrolled and 57 grant-in-aid schools with 5,316 children enrolled (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.72).

#### 4.5.5 20<sup>th</sup> century: National literacy and Universal Primary Education

In the twentieth century, education became another source of major concern for the administrators as the standard and conditions prevailing in schools left much to be desired. Dr. Bateman, the first Director of Education, appointed in 1901, published a report in 1923 with the following concluding paragraph:

*"Schools exist in Mauritius and cannot now be closed, but they were better closed than remain monuments of wasted money and useless energy, where children are looked after, perhaps kept out of mischief, but certainly not educated."* (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.117).

In 1908, only about 7,000 of the 60,000 Indian children of school age attended school because they had to work. In 1908, however, a Labour Act was passed, which raised the age from 10 to 13 years at which minors might enter into a written contract. With this provision, the establishment of more schools and the improving economic conditions of Indians paved the way for future advances in Indian education (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.89). The Indian children continued to go to vernacular schools, and progressively their defiance against English and French subsided. Moreover, an analysis of the role of the Catholic Church in its missionary education during the British period would help to understand better the mechanisms of exclusion of the slave and Indian immigrants.

#### 4.5.6 The Catholic Church as an institution of inclusion and exclusion

The role of the Church in education during the colonial period has been ambivalent. Its presence in the evolution of education has been marked by forces and actions of inclusion and exclusion. Both Bishop Collier and Father Laval were imbued with the idea of St. De La Salle who, back in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century France, advanced the social heresy that the children of the poor should be educated. But the social forces at play during the colonial period very often put the Church off track its original mission. Critical literature in Catholic education, and especially about the role of Catholic schools, is inexistent in Mauritius. Also, common criticisms against the Church do not go beyond the limited role of Father Laval in the emancipation process of the *affranchis* which has since then been established by Colson (1980). In fact, the controversial position of the Church can only be understood in the perspective that it is an institution which has always been shaped in its own history by various socio-historical forces at play, and its actions have been underpinned by forces of progress and Conservatism. For instance, it was not until post-February riots of 1999 that the Catholic Church would show real signs of concern for the education of the Creoles. This could be explained by the fact that education, in its global sense, could not be envisaged before from an ethnic perspective. In the same vein, it was only in 2007 that the Church, through Bishop Mgr Piat, presented its Pardon to the slave descendants and himself as a descent of slave owner.

The 'historical retardation' of the Church's concern for the education of the slave descendants can also be explained by the deep-seated bias against Creoles of African and Malagasy origins. The Church structures are not immune from this black racism as its hierarchy and clergy have been dominantly White and descendants of slave masters. Its lay establishment has long been composed of middle-class Catholics who used to distinguish itself from the 'Creoles', who are debased and were often referred to as '*nwar cholo*' (rough and rogue). Mgr Amedée Nagapen (1984) explains this as the rule of the '*pigmentocratie*', based on the colour of the skin and which governs all social relations. Early forms of anti-black racism of the slavery days were in fact transformed into 'anti-kreol racism'. Such forms of ostracism in society were obviously present in Catholic educational institutions, and even in other institutions or movements.

In 1856, an Ordinance was passed (Ordinance No.6 of 1856) by the then Council of Government entitled 'an Ordinance for promoting elementary education among the poorer classes'. Today, there are 52 primary Catholic schools, 46 in Mauritius and six in Rodrigues and 17 secondary

schools. It was not until 2000 that five secondary schools were opened in regions predominantly inhabited by Creoles of slave descent. College Père Laval was opened in 1996 and four other colleges as from 2006 (viz. Loreto Bambous Virieux, Saint Mary's West of Petite Rivière, Saint Esprit Case Noyale and BPS Fatima of Goodlands). All other Catholic colleges prior to 2000 were situated in the Lower and Upper Plaines Wilhems regions, which were mainly inhabited by the upper and middle class during the colonial period.

Although some slave descendants did find educational opportunities through the Catholic primary schools and some secondary schools run by the Church, yet class and colour prejudices were prevalent in the colonial period. Each school population had its own socio-economic profile, and access was very much limited to one's social belonging. But in the case of Creole students of slave descent, few families would venture to seek admission to these schools for their children. This led to the exclusion of a vast majority of slave descendants. However, in the case where we could find some forms of inclusion, they turned paradoxically into mechanisms of social exclusion and control. The case of Notre Dame College is very interesting. This Catholic secondary school, run by the Congregation of the Filles de Marie, opened its doors in 1954 in Curepipe to cater for the education of the girls of the working class. This case demonstrates the social stratification which existed amongst the Catholic secondary schools, marked by the historical context. Mgr Amedee Nagapen describes the socio-historical context of the foundation of Notre Dame College:

“Comment expliquer l'empressement des Filles de Marie à répondre positivement à l'appel de l'évêque, Mgr D. Liston, et à ouvrir une institution secondaire à Curepipe -Road en 1954? Au tournant du demi-siècle, de grosses vagues soulevaient la société mauricienne. En premier lieu, le pays connaissait une poussée démographique sans pareille. En second lieu, de nouvelles couches de la population faisaient l'expérience de la mobilité sociale verticale. Troisièmement, la jeunesse féminine augmentait sensiblement en nombre, avec dans le même temps une accélération de la promotion féminine. Dans un tel contexte, il n'existait que six collèges.

Les Filles de Marie surent lire les appels de l'heure, les signes des temps. D'où leur engagement dans l'enseignement secondaire en faveur des filles de milieux défavorisé.” (Mgr. Napapen, Préface in Lyempermall & Harmon, 2004, p.4)

Notre Dame College became a school for the girls of the maid-servants living in the home dependencies of the White residences of Curepipe and Floreal. Loreto College of Curepipe then schooled the daughters of the Whites. This situation persisted so much with time that Notre Dame College became known as the 'Collèges des Noires' (The Black Girls' College). Whilst the intention of the Church was to serve the poor in education, however, Catholic schools became rather an agent of social reproduction in education than of social agency.

Hence, the British colonial period was, when compared to the French colonial period, relatively more inclusive than the French colonial period, but despite this, children of slaves and indentured labourers did not benefit from much progress and mobility. Sectarian jealousies and competition amongst the principal Christian churches also contributed to blocking the education of the slave population. The ambivalence of the Church in its actions of inclusion and exclusion also impacted on the educational achievements of both groups.

## 4.6 Forms of Exclusion

### 4.6.1 Political Exclusion

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indian immigrants moved into a period of 'Indian awakening'. The slave descendants till then, did not have any form of social, political and cultural organisation. The only place where the Creoles could gather was in the Church, mainly during Sunday mass and other celebrations, and this could at least have been a platform for them. But Church structures did not provide Creoles with any form of social organisation where they could address the societal issues with which they had to grapple with. The creation of the *Union Catholique* in 1877 did address social issues, but this organisation acted mainly as a powerful lobbying group of the bourgeoisie and it played a key role in the preservation of the interests of Catholic schools. Education of slave descendants was not at all the concern of this organisation.

*For Benoît (1985), "it is significant to historically show that even when the newspapers La Balance (2 April 1832-31 October 1835) by Berquin and La Sentinelle (8 April 1843-30 November 1853) by Rémy Ollier wanted to defend the unrecognised rights of the coloured people, they never voiced the opinion or propagandized the idiosyncracies of the Afro-Mauritians."*

Some bright poor Creole children managed to acquire education. Many benefited from the free tuitions given by middle-class Creole teachers. But no leadership emanating from the Creole people advocated the emancipation of the poorest. The Creole peasantry was destroyed at the time of emancipation. Very few managed to save, acquire and keep plots of land. The poor economic situation prolonged the day-to-day lifestyle that prevailed during slavery. For the poorest, education was not, and could not be, a priority. Everyday food had to be found and this was possible only through work. No economic or socio-cultural organization could support collective initiatives. The class-colour divide between Creoles played an important role in the marginalization of the poorest. While there were solidarity and support from first Indian immigrants towards the late-comers, this did not exist for the slave descendants in a highly hierarchical racist social organization which was the legacy of the French period.

#### 4.6.2 Cultural Exclusion

Durand and Durand (1978: 35 in Bunwaree, 1994: 31) write:

*"Les maîtres allaient jusqu'à interdire aux esclaves de chanter lorsqu'ils se réunissaient après le travail. Car la chanson, les rythmes appartenaient à leur culture africaine que les colons veulent voir disparaître à jamais en tant que maintien de leur identité, c'est-à-dire germe possible d'une révolte."*

The people of African origin lost their traditions, cultures, and languages and they were also the ones who were proselytized by Christian missionaries. In spite of this psychological trauma, they did show signs of resistance through the *sega* and other forms of cultural resistance. They reinvented new lifestyles and managed to keep some ancestral traditions which we can see in the popular religion which developed as a subterranean church (Pamlyre, 2008) within the official Catholic Church. Writing about the Mauritian Creole elite, Simmons argues that '*many were becoming Franco Mauritians in all but colour*' (Simmons, 1986: 372). This is in line with Sharp (1965) who quoting Macauley, explains that the colonial education system aimed at creating a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, moral and intellect. The French influence through language, culture and religion led to a far-reaching cultural alienation amongst the slave descendants. This has been compounded by the membership of the Creole community to a French Catholic Church. Although several initiatives have been taken in contemporary period to take into account the Creole culture within the Church, we note that Catechism is still for instance being taught at school in the French language and that the sacramental ceremonies for Catholic children, like baptism and the First Communion, are still dominantly French (Deponning of Filip Fanchette, Catholic Priest). We can also trace some forms of cultural alienation in the Creole community whereby signs of French mimetism, in terms of taste, colour and aesthetics, are displayed and the negation of everything which could be associated with Africa is still prevalent in its middle class. This group is often referred to as the '*Euro-Créoles*'.

In the case of the Indians, resistance took another form. At first, Indians did not trust the schools which they considered as too Westernised and Christian. This cultural resistance delayed their education in formal institutions. Indian culture was itself looked down upon by the dominant European culture. But the teaching and learning of Asian vernaculars went on in Government schools and the cultures of the different groups of Indian immigrants were, and are still, preserved through traditional learning networks, that is, informal or socio-cultural institutions such as the *baitkas*, *jammats*, and *madrassas*. The latter institutions still have a role to play in the preservation of these cultures, although Asian languages are now part of the primary school syllabus.

#### 4.6.3 Gender Exclusion

O.R.W. Connell (1987, 98-9) defines *Gender Order* as “a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity”. This term is used for the structural inventory of an entire society.

Education for girls only started in 18 May 1815, when Governor Farquhar approved the opening of a free day school for children of all classes and colour, including girls, in Port Louis. Although the proposal was opposed by the Catholic Church, a girls' school was opened (Ramdoyal, 1977). In spite of Farquhar's approval, education for girls was also divided along racial lines. A segregationist policy was enforced in the school. Black or Coloured girls were not given access to the school. The White parents threatened to withdraw their daughters, if girls from other racial groups were admitted to the school. The school's administration complied because it was not in its interest to antagonise the powerful White community, particularly the French. Amongst the Indian immigrants, traditions compounded the state of neglect of education for girls. Girls' education in colonial Mauritius underwent some further development in 1845, when Bishop Collier of the Catholic Church invited nuns from the Loreto Institute in Dublin, to help further the education of girls in Mauritius (Bunwaree, 1994: pp. 83-84).

However, the Irish Loreto Congregation, which at first provided education to bourgeois girls of Port Louis, imported the Victorian image of a woman and perpetuated the patriarchal order by reinforcing the traditional gender roles that subordinated women. Education programmes for girls entailed knowledge of how to be good wives, how to cook well, and instruction in maintaining an hygienic home environment. This was further pursued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the setting up of '*Les Ecoles Ménagères*'. Although over the years, changes in curriculum bridged the gender divide, yet, girls of the working class were limited in their ambition by this predominant bourgeois ideology of charity which confined girls to their future gendered defined roles of care-givers and home-makers. It was mostly girls of the Creole community who fell victims of this situation, whereas girls of the Indian community benefited from the emancipation work engaged by the Arya Samaj movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This Hindu reform movement laid much emphasis on education and social progress. Arya Samaj rejected child marriage and *pardah*, established equality between all human beings and so rejected casteism, and also equality between women and men, thus encouraging the education of girls.

#### 4.6.4 Linguistic Exclusion

Linguistic exclusion has been practised by the State of Mauritius since colonisation (International Hearing, Ledikasion Pu Travayer, 2009) against its own citizens. Language is a complex symbolic means through which knowledge is transmitted and transmuted, and where identities are constructed and expressed, and class legacies organized and imposed (Collins, 1999). As far back as the 1940s, two reports, namely Ward (1941) and J.E. Meade (1967: 208), during the British Colonisation, highlighted the fact that our current linguistic policy and practices represent major obstacles to an efficient education system. Ward (1941: 11) stated:

*“I now come to the work the teachers are called to do. The first and greatest problem here is the medium of instruction”. For J.E. Meade (1967: 208), the linguistic issue is the ‘greatest handicap to successful education.’*

Today, children of slave and Indian immigrants' descent are still deprived of a mother-tongue based curriculum. This situation explains persistent class inequalities in our educational system.

English has been kept as the sole medium of instruction, whilst it is a foreign language for the majority of Mauritians. In fact, it is a key element in reproducing social inequality (ADEA Report, 2005). We also consider that the exclusion of Mauritian Kreol as a medium of instruction in our educational system, by the time that it has emerged as the *lingua franca* of all slaves and indentured labour descendants, has caused great prejudice to the Mauritian child. The harm is still being done. It has been much more pronounced for children of slave descent who represent a majority of the working class and the down-trodden.

There have been remarkable strides made with the recognition of Mauritian Kreol at national level since Independence. It is now being introduced as an optional language in primary schools. In spite of the benefits, in terms of cultural reparation for children of slave and indentured labour descents, yet, it is too premature to assess what would be the significance of this measure. Given that Mauritian Kreol is still not introduced as a medium of instruction, it still does not enhance the democratisation of our educational system.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

Hence, the narratives of exclusion and the political, cultural, denominational, gender and linguistic forms that exclusion took during the French and British colonial periods give an indication of the consequences of slavery and indentured labour. However, we might consider such policies as the opening of the Royal Colleges to the Coloured, the granting of scholarships and vernacular language policy in the early period of British colonisation and other measures in the late period of colonisation. Yet, the sequels of slavery since French colonisation and indentured labour, after the abolition of slavery, were compounded by a series of controlled and uncontrolled circumstances which led eventually to relative inequalities in educational achievements between the slave and the Indentured labour descendants.

Recent research, however, has shown that colonialism did significantly affect development patterns and that the identity of the colonizing power is important to subsequent growth (see Grier, 1997; Bertocchi and Canova, 1996; Hanson, 1989; and Harrison, 1985). The French Colonial Empire differed greatly from the British in its political and economic treatment of the colonies. Education was a key component in the French philosophy of a centralized Empire. Students were required to speak French, and all vernacular languages were forbidden, which resulted in large numbers of the population failing to achieve any kind of literacy. The British were more decentralized in their colonial approach. Issues such as domestic policies and budgetary matters were resolved by the Colonial Legislatures. British colonial education policies made a conscious effort to avoid alienating the native culture, by allowing teaching in the vernacular languages and training teachers from the indigenous tribes in Africa and India. But it was the local elite who demanded the same type of education as their colonial overlords because they readily saw its economic and political advantages. This explains why the local elite in Mauritius, during colonisation and after Independence, have not brought about any real significant reform.

## CHAPTER 5

**THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD AND DEMOCRATISATION OF EDUCATION****5.1 Context of the post-Independence period**

Mauritius acceded to Independence without a war of liberation and without a national revolutionary spirit. Opinions were divided on the question of Independence, and it was in an atmosphere of conflicts and tensions that the country achieved its Independence in 1968. Before Independence, schools did not effectively foster an Imperial sentiment in Colonial Mauritius; neither does present Mauritian education foster a Nationalist sentiment.

Education, which can be regarded as an arena for the development of Patriotism or Nationalism, did not occupy this role in pre-Independent Mauritius. Neither has it taken up this role after Independence. Hobsbawm's (1964: 166) assertion "that the progress of schools and universities measures that of nationalism, just as schools and especially universities became its most conscious champions" is perhaps correct for 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, but not for Mauritius. If Hobsbawm's meaning of 'schools' can be restricted to an expansion of school places and greater access to knowledge, then this has certainly happened in Mauritius, but no sense of Nationalism, belonging and sharing has actually emerged. There is no nationalist ideology: divisions which existed during the colonial period remain except that they are now more disguised." During the colonial period, there was nothing to unite the ethnically and linguistically diverse Mauritian population; even their oppression was not enough to unite them. Education too was organised in such a way as to keep the different groups divided. Prithipaul (1976) explains that, although there was an expansion of education in the British colonial period, discrimination on the basis of creed, colour, race and sex persisted in Mauritius. In post-colonial Mauritius, efforts to democratise education continued but issues which speak to equity, cohesion and the making of a nation have remained insufficiently addressed.

**5.1.2 The Post-Colonial Period**

This section details some elements of the first Educational National Plan (1971-1975 Plan) of politically 'decolonised' Mauritius and the most recent Plan called '2008 - 2020 Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan'. It argues that, while increasing levels of resources have been pumped into the education sector in the post-Independence years, (with emphasis on infrastructures and access), very little has been effectively done to turn Mauritius into an equitable, inclusive, sustainable and more just society. Divisions exist between the different communities, and if education is not made to provide a more equitable outcome, Mauritian society runs the risk of being further polarised under these conditions; hence reconciliation and peace become very difficult to attain.

**5.1.3 The 1971-1975 Plan**

The development strategy that the Government wanted to implement is clearly laid out in the 1971-1975 four year-Plan:

The most important resource of Mauritius is its manpower. A well-motivated force possessing the requisite mental and physical skills for a modern economy is the most valuable economic asset. While the cultural background and progress of education in Mauritius have provided the basis for an intelligent and adaptable labour force, there is a need to create the skills required to meet the demand generated by prospective economic development. This would require a change in the quality and content of education, from its present generally academic emphasis to more technical and vocational orientation at all levels. (1971-1975 National Plan 68)

As early as 1971, three years after Independence, mention was made of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE).

The educational policy formulated by the Government in the 1971-1975 Plans had the following objectives:

- To provide free education for all children at primary level.
- Opportunity for secondary and vocational training for at least 60 per cent of boys in the age group 15-19 by 1980.
- A balanced curriculum which will include technical subjects and integrated Science at all level.
- Technical and Vocational orientation of education at secondary and post-secondary levels.
- Equality of educational opportunity for all according to their educational potential.

The objectives in the 1971 - 1975 Plan and the general philosophy behind it was very much in line with the International Development strategy put forward in the second United Nations development decade, but an analysis of the objectives reflect a certain number of inequalities in the strategy to be adopted. The very fact that education was to be made free at primary level, but not compulsory, implies that there could well be a section of the population who would not be attending schools. Moreover, there is no mention of pre-primary schooling which, unlike the other educational sectors, remains largely fee-paying. We shall come back to this later.

The second objective is the most astounding one. The Plan grossly neglects Mauritian girls. Mention is made of opportunity for secondary and vocational training for at least 60 per cent of boys in the age group 15-19 by 1980, but nothing is mentioned for the girls. In this respect the plan reminds us of the situation of the colonial period when girls were strongly discriminated against and were deprived of education. The third objective speaks about a balanced curriculum. The policy-makers seem to imply that the inclusion of Technical Subjects and integrated Science at all levels brings about a 'balanced curriculum'. In the years immediately after Independence, the curriculum was very much the same as the colonial curriculum. Attempts to bring about a new curriculum only started when the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) was established in 1973. The fourth objective refers to Technical and Vocational education TVE, but there is no indication as to why and how the country should have more of such education.

The Government may have been prompted to promote Technical and Vocational Educational after the World Bank launched a 'new' educational policy with a strong vocational content (World Bank, 1974). A number of projects were financed by the World Bank, but the end of the 1971-1975 Plan, Vocational education had not achieved the desired results, namely to reduce unemployment. Critics went as far as to say that Vocational Education did not even get off the ground, in spite of the Government's effort. The question of Pre-Vocational Education constitutes an important element of this study since it is a platform that caters for large numbers of disadvantaged children of slave and indentured descent.

The fifth objective has little meaning in itself. 'Educational potential' is a term drawn from Ideology rather than Science. It is difficult to square the idea of equality of educational opportunity with a practice in which entry into secondary school is based on CPE, a competitive examination, resulting in a large percentage (some 35-40 %) of students failing. The optimum use of one's educational potential depends on a host of factors, but the latter have often not been taken into consideration.

#### 5.1.4 The post-1975 plans and Democratisation of Education

Several Educational Plans have been developed between 1975 and 2010. These include:

- Master Plan of Education of 1991;
- The Action Plan of Mauritius of 1998;
- The Education Reforms, 2001-2005;
- The Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan, 2008-2020.

Between the first post-Independence Plan 1971-1975 and the most recent one, i.e. that of 2008-2020, a number of progressive initiatives that point towards greater democratisation, have been adopted but the high rates of failures at the C.P.E., the entrenchment of the private tuition, robbing children of their childhood, the language issue, especially the utilisation of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, have not been addressed adequately, thus posing important challenges to the State.

The problems mentioned here constitute some of the major weaknesses of the system. Needless to say, the high failure rate at the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E.) represents an important wastage of human capital and a potential threat to peace in Mauritius (Bunwaree, 2001).

## 5.2 Democratisation of Education

According to Bissoondoyal (2011), the country talks about democratization of secondary education but forgets about past initiatives to do so. The first step after Independence was taken by Sir Kher Jagatsingh in the 1970s, with the setting up of 15 Junior Secondary Schools. Then came free secondary education under SSR in 1977. The objectives of the Junior Secondary Schools and of free secondary education were not just to follow the same academically-oriented curriculum of the few existing State and Confessional schools. A Form III exam was devised by the MIE for post-Form III orientation after the Forms I-III curriculum was revamped to include some new areas, such as Industrial Arts and Home Economics. But the Form III exam was hurriedly withdrawn, even after the question papers had already been printed, due to the opposition of traditionalists and vested interests. The idea of a Form III exam was again mooted on and off, but not much came out of it. The most sustained effort was made by Kadress Pillay, Minister of Education between 1997 and 2000. He had proposed to build 60 identical lower Secondary Schools to get rid of the competition at the primary school level. This again came to nothing in the face of opposition from the same groups of vested interests.

### 5.2.1 Vested interests and lobby groups

The vested interest referred to by Bissoondoyal (2011) is a perennial problem of Mauritian society and highlights the complexity of a small multi-ethnic country, where elite groups within particular communities 'fight' each other to preserve their interests, and these trickle on to the education platform. These are often not in the best interest of every Mauritian child. These vested interests often create winners and losers. The most vulnerable and disadvantaged are those who do not have much of a voice, and they constitute the losers.

Education reforms between 2000 and 2005, and 2005 and 2010, meant that it was left to Minister, Steven Obeegadoo, from 2000 to 2005 to launch the most comprehensive Reform of the Secondary School structure so as to divide them into Forms I-V Secondary Schools and Form VI Colleges, with the construction of some 50 new Secondary Schools. But it was short-lived as Dharam Gokhool, who was sworn in as Minister of Education in 2005, preferred to walk backwards in the name of Reform, and empty slogans like 'world class education', instead of consolidating the progress already achieved.

Bissoondoyal's comments about the policies and actions of different Ministers of Education show how regime changes sometimes contribute to preventing a building-block process and continuity in Educational Reform (Bissoondoyal, 2011).

## 5.3 The 2008-2020 Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan

The strategic goals of the 2008-2020 Plan include the following:

- Improve completion rate at upper secondary level and minimise wastage at secondary education level.
- Improve all aspects of quality education through measurable learning outcomes.
- Undertake regular review of curricula to respond to the emerging needs of the economy and society.
- Ensure that students obtain optimal opportunities for academic and self-development.
- Introduce support technology in the system.
- Continuous in-service training of school personnel at all levels.
- Increase access to secondary education for children with special educational needs.
- Improve effectiveness of Secondary School Management System.
- Ensure equity among public funded schools.
- Create a strong Quality Assurance System to secure internal efficiency and quality teaching and learning.

## 5.4 Difference between rhetoric and reality

While the goals are lofty and mention some great ideals, the reality emerging from the ground so far shows us that disparities and inequalities persist and curricula changes remain very limited. For instance, the Plan states it will ensure that students obtain optimal opportunities for academic and self-development, but a glance at the Pre-vocational sector (Section 6) for instance, shows us that “opportunities are hardly optimal.”

Despite the strategic goals established by the different plans and all the attempts at reforms, the Mauritian Education System remains quite inequitable, with implications for the children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Out of every 100 boys and 100 girls enrolled in Grade one, only 39 boys and 46 girls reach Form Five (the end of the five-year secondary schooling). Moreover, only 13 boys and 16 girls reach Upper Six (the final year of the secondary schooling sector).

According to some sources, some 28% of any given cohort in Mauritius completes only 6 years of education, and they absorb some 14% of total public spending, while 20% of the most educated in a cohort receive 35% of all public spending on education. The system is therefore biased in favour of the highly educated.

When an important component of the population is forced to withdraw and lose access to public spending on education, the inequitable aspects of education become even more manifest. However, inequalities in education are not due to the financial resources only, but also to the content of the curriculum, the type of teachers, the teaching and learning strategies in the classroom, and the school- teacher relationship, to mention but a few factors.

## 5.5 Curriculum justice, Linguistic Injustice and Private tuition in the post-Independence period

Legislative debates, spanning decades, highlight how issues of curriculum and language, amongst other things, remain a fundamental problem of our Education System, and how they continue to hamper the promotion of social justice

One of the legislators in the 1983 debates notes:

*“There is another important problem which I would like to mention also, and unless something serious is done about it, we will never be able to reduce this inequality. In fact, the handicap which affects poor students in the country is the question of private tuition. Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to make it clear that I am not against private tuition as such. Some students, who are weak, need be given a boost. But, once private tuition becomes institutionalised, once private tuition starts in standard I, II and III, this I think is criminal. When I made a surprise visit last Monday in a primary school, I was really surprised and shocked to see the students of Standard II attending classes as from 8.00 am. How can you expect these poor children, to undergo such cramming at that tender age? At the age of five, six or seven, it is really impossible. We, the grown-ups, after five or six hours of continuous work, feel the need to rest; but these poor children are being overburdened from 8 a.m. up to 5 p.m., receiving private tuition. In many cases, as soon as they are admitted to Standard I, the next day, they are told: “Well, if you want to take private tuition, you come. We’ll start on such a day and this is the price, etc.” (Hansard, 1983)*

Private tuition is still a huge problem today. Education may well be free but very often the poor cannot afford private tuition, which impacts on their performance. In a system where reward and recognition are largely based on academic performance, working-class children of slave and indentured descent have very little chance to succeed.

Mr. N. Virasawmy, Parliamentarian, in 1974 argued that

*“The Government refuses to see one basic flaw in our primary education system [...] it is the medium of teaching. You cannot teach young pupils the unknown through the unknown in primary education. As you have to teach the three R’s : Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and it has to be done through the known which is the mother tongue of the child and the mother tongue of the child finds no place in primary education. We have to throw away our prejudices, we have to look at our problems objectively. Let us look at it so. What is the real mother tongue? I*

*am not speaking of ancestral language but of the real mother tongue. Here I am not implying that foreign languages should be banned. Far from this, I know for sure that if you begin with the mother tongue of the child, you enable the child to learn a foreign language better." (Hansard, vol. 1. 1974)*

In his intervention in 1976, Mr. N. Virasawmy stated:

*"I want to be very clear here, because my views have been misinterpreted, perhaps misunderstood by some. It is axiomatic that the best medium of teaching is the mother tongue of the child, because when he goes to a primary school it is to learn first of all three subjects: reading, writing, arithmetic, and also to develop his senses, and the best medium to teach him these new skills is his mother tongue, and in this country there are two major mother tongues. They are Creole and Bhojpuri, Bhojpuri being spoken mainly in the countryside and Creole mainly in towns. But in the countryside the kids are bilingual as a matter of fact. They speak both Bhojpuri and Creole and if I suggest that we should do some research and if I have stood very firmly in favour of Creole it is for practical and economical reasons, because it would be very difficult to start something with two languages. This is why I suggested Creole, because it is cross cultural, because it is spoken by kids in towns and in the countryside." (Hansard, vol 1. 1976)*

On the other hand, in response to Mr. Gokhool, Minister of Education in 2007, Mrs. Labelle said:

*"May I take it from the Minister that, despite all recommendations by UNESCO and other organisations for the use of mother tongue, specially as he mentioned, for kids who have difficulties, it is still the policy of the Ministry not to take into account the use of mother tongue for a better acquisition of literacy and numeracy in our country." (Hansard, Debate No. 07 of 2007)*

The question of prioritising Academic Education over Technical Education is still very prevalent today. Despite 'democratisation', the curriculum and system of assessment has hardly changed, thus giving little opportunity to those who are not academically gifted to shine. "Vocational and technical education" is still largely seen as a sector for the less academically able.

Mr. Canabady (*Hansard*, vol. I & II 1982):

*"When the Hon. Minister of Education thinks of the reform he has to bring, we should stop this old colonial system of academic education and we should start thinking of real technical education. I would like to stress that point more because, at present, only those who are considered unfit for academic education are being channelled to the technical education whenever it exists. This is very strong because we do not want pupils to think that only those who cannot cope with academic education go for the industrial sector, when we know that much of our economic future depends on that particular sector. Of course, in that light, there is much need for manpower planning."*

## 5.6 Free Education - who benefits and who loses?

Free education, which was granted in 1977, has certainly had unintended benefits for the Mauritian population, e.g. for the poor, particularly girls and women (Bunwaree, 2005). Those who would not have been able to afford education manage to send their children to school. This provoked a big generational shift for some segments of Mauritian society. Education has therefore been an important tool of mobility for some. But the question that needs to be posed are: how and why have working-class children of slave descent been able to benefit to the same extent as working-class children of indenture descent?

While a number of Universities have mushroomed up in Mauritius in the recent years, the numbers of Creole children attending these Universities remain few in numbers. There is no official data collected along ethnic lines at University, but it is common knowledge that very few Creole children make it to the University. Increasingly, those without tertiary education will find it hard to find a job in the emerging sectors of the economy.

We shall come back to the question of Higher Education in a later section of this chapter, but for now let us turn to the causes of poor performance at C.P.E. since this exam, which has remained largely unchanged, determines the life chances of every single Mauritian in many ways.

## 5.7 Causes of poor performance and failure at C.P.E

There are a number of reasons as to why children perform poorly and/ or fail the C.P.E in such large numbers. These include: an irrelevant curriculum, the non-utilization of the mother tongue as a language of instruction, the lack of adequately-trained teachers, the absence of relevant remedial education, the lack of resources for private tuition, a strong disjuncture between the school culture and the home culture, and lack of parental involvement. These are just some of the causes. Another cause, which is increasingly being talked about, is the lack of relevant and quality pre-primary education.

## 5.8 Pre - Primary school

Poor and no attendance at pre-primary schooling by the economically weaker sections of society may also be a reason for the poor performance of children at C.P.E. While there is no scientific study available to show the correlation between the two, it is a well-known fact that poor families in a number of deprived zones cannot afford to send their children to pre-primary schools. In recent years, Government has made an effort to subsidise pre-primary education and to create some more pre-primary schools units but this sector needs attention. The first few years of a child's life, before entering the primary school, are crucial for the child's development and creativity.

Yet, this sector has, contrary to all other sectors of the Mauritian Education System, remained fee-paying and neglected for a relatively long period of time. Issues of quality and relevance are also burning issues within this sector and may have had consequences for children of the poor, particularly Creole children.

Discussing the pre-primary sector, Mr. E. Francois, Parliamentarian during in 1974 notes:

*"The Pre-Primary Education is practically non-existent in Mauritius. The Municipality of Port Louis for a few years has been running a pre-primary school – a kindergarten. Apart from the Municipality of Port Louis, there are a few people or organisations who have been operating on a rather private basis. But what have we seen? Those who can afford have done everything possible to see that their children have some sort of pre-primary education. They are to pay for that to such an extent that when their children join primary schools, those very children are admitted either in the second standard or the third standard as it is called normally. They do not start from the lowest standard. So, right from the beginning, we can see that there is inequality of opportunity in education, and as soon as the children start their education, the parents, as well as their teachers, have in mind one thing: the junior scholarship examination, and everybody, that is, the child, the parents, and the teachers work, put pressure on the child in order that he may be the lucky winner of a scholarship. Why do we have such a situation? This has been criticised by many people. Those who have been in education for quite a long time, who have long experience in the teaching profession, why do we allow certain people to benefit from free secondary education whereas the majority of children attend private secondary schools" (Hansard, vol. 1 of 1974).*

Many years have elapsed since E. Francois's intervention, and much progress has been made regarding Pre-Primary Education, but important gaps and issues remain unresolved in this sector. It is only the well-to-do who can afford good, safe and quality Pre-Primary Schools. More recently in 2005, it was argued that:

*"To ensure more equitable access to pre-primary education in regions of greatest social needs, three pre-primary units will be constructed at Quatre Cocos, Rivière des Créoles and Vacoas. Five new pre-primary schools will be operational during the coming financial year at Grand Sable, Baie du Tombeau, Bambous, Cascavelle and Terre Rouge. The upgrading of norms and standards of private pre-primary schools will also be pursued." (Hansard, Debate No. 10, 04.04.2005. Mr. P. Jugnauth).*

However, Pre-primary Schools have seen the light of day in only a couple of these localities.

As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest failures of the contemporary education system is the high failure rate of children at the end of primary school. The State has tried to address the problem by setting up 'Zone Education Prioritaire schools.' The idea behind the ZEP Schools was to resource the 'failing schools' better and to give them more attention, but in-school processes and the relationship between the home and the school have remained as they were before, thus causing

very little improvement. The results of the ZEP Schools assist in showing us how class and ethnicity can overlap. Many of the schools listed below are located in zones identified as poverty zones.

### 5.9 ZEP School - C.P.E. Pass Rate 2003 - 2010

	School	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Zone 1	Résidence Vallijee GS	41.5	36.1	36.2	32.8	42.9	58.3	44	48.3
	Emmanuel Anquetil GS	9.2	16.9	22.4	19.7	20.1	26.7	23.3	25
	Guy Rozemont GS	21.3	25.5	11.1	10.4	37.5	19	17.2	21.4
	Hurrypersad Ramnarain GS	34.2	32.7	34.4	42	43.4	46.1	47.3	54.5
	Jean Eon RC	20	3.4	50.9	48.5	40.4	53.6	48.8	45.3
	La Briquetterie GS	26.3	25.8	13	28.4	22.6	9.6	13.5	12.1
	Louis Serge Coutet GS	25.2	12.8	24.4	12.5	17.9	13.7	16.1	6.9
	Marcel Gabon GS	20	33.6	20.4	30.1	37.8	25	19.6	16.5
	Nicolay GS	26.2	36.2	36.7	39.5	24.5	31.6	28.4	38.3
	Pointe Aux Piments GS	21.4	27.2	33.1	38.4	32.3	36.6	23.1	33.7
	Pte Aux Sables GS	41.2	45.5	30	30.4	30.2	27.3	21.6	26.7
	Seeneevassen GS	34.5	23	38.5	53.8	31.6	36.2	31.5	35.9
	Surtee Soonnee GS	40.3	38.2	46.2	57.1	51.5	35.8	43.3	44.7
	Xavier Christian Barbé GS	42.9	55.2	45.5	35	35.8	29.3	33.3	31.7
	Zone 2	André Bazerque GS	43	34.9	23.7	33.3	41.7	39	43.8
Barkly GS		30.8	28.3	38	22.5	20.8	24.1	9.3	22.7
Aimé Césaire GS		30.5	46.2	35.3	18.6	26.5	40.8	33.9	41.4
R. C. NuckchadyGS		36	28.6	31	34.1	29.4	16.7	51.5	41.9
Zone 3	Bois Des Amourettes GS	60.9	65.1	45.6	57.6	58.3	69.6	61.1	79.2
	Révd Espitalier Noël GS	25.5	38.5	44.2	45	37.8	47.9	53.8	25.7
Zone 4	Black River GS	40.8	43.1	37.7	34.8	44.4	61.1	48	29
	Candos GS	34.1	29.2	23	37.5	28.1	20.8	36.5	40.7
	Cascavelle GS	16.3	14.6	11.6	26.5	28.9	48	50	34
	Petite Rivière GS	34	31.8	35.5	42.5	48.3	43.1	40.2	43.2
	Richelieu GS	32.7	31.1	30.2	32.9	51.2	48.7	37.5	44.4
Rodrigues	Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant Jesus RC	26.9	40	56.6	62.8	58.5	63.2	62.1	57.9
Overall		30.9	31.4	32.8	36.5	36	35.9	35.3	37

Such overlapping is striking when an analysis of who fails is undertaken. While children of the working class are the ones who constitute the bulk of those who fail, the vast majority of them are Creoles. How can one speak of a just and cohesive society when so many young people are pushed to the margins of society, with futures unplanned? The situation of the Creole children failing has not changed much over the years. The situation seems to be rather alarming in some localities. The District of Black River is a case in point and largely inhabited by slave descendants. Since 1982, attention has been drawn to the plight of children in Black River, but the situation has changed very little over the years, as reflected by the high failure rates at C.P.E. in Black River. A Parliamentarian intervening in 1982 had the following to say:

*"Les enseignants et le maître d'école de Case Noyale RCA leur a demandé. Là, ils m'ont raconté le drame des enfants de Rivière Noire. A leur avis, les élèves ne sont pas intéressés aux sujets académiques enseignés à cause du programme de C.P.E. qui est très chargé et aussi, peut-être, à cause de la présente méthode d'enseignement. Ils ont suggéré que des écoles techniques, des écoles pratiques, soient mises sur pied et qu'on adopte une méthode d'enseignement spéciale pour les enfants – les fils de pêcheurs et de travailleurs – qui vivent une vie tout-à-fait différente des autres Mauriciens. A travers cette rencontre, M. le Président, j'ai appris beaucoup de choses. Il y a un fort pourcentage d'absentéisme de la part des élèves, car beaucoup vont à la pêche ou dans les bois pour chercher du fourrage ou faire du charbon en compagnie de leurs parents, pendant les heures de classe. Ils ne comprennent pas la nécessité de l'instruction. Figurez-vous aussi, M. le Président, que beaucoup de ces élèves sont déjà ivres le matin, en entrant dans la salle*

*de classe, et d'autres se procurent du vin à midi, pendant la récréation, dans l'unique boutique existante ou alors, simplement, chez eux. Lorsque je racontais cela, il y a quelque temps, à un collègue, il a cru que je plaisantais et il a lancé : It's the joke of the year ! C'est vrai, M. le Président : Le vin et le tilambic sont devenus le café de beaucoup de gens à Rivière Noire. "*  
 (Ms. A.Navarre. vol. I & II, 1982)

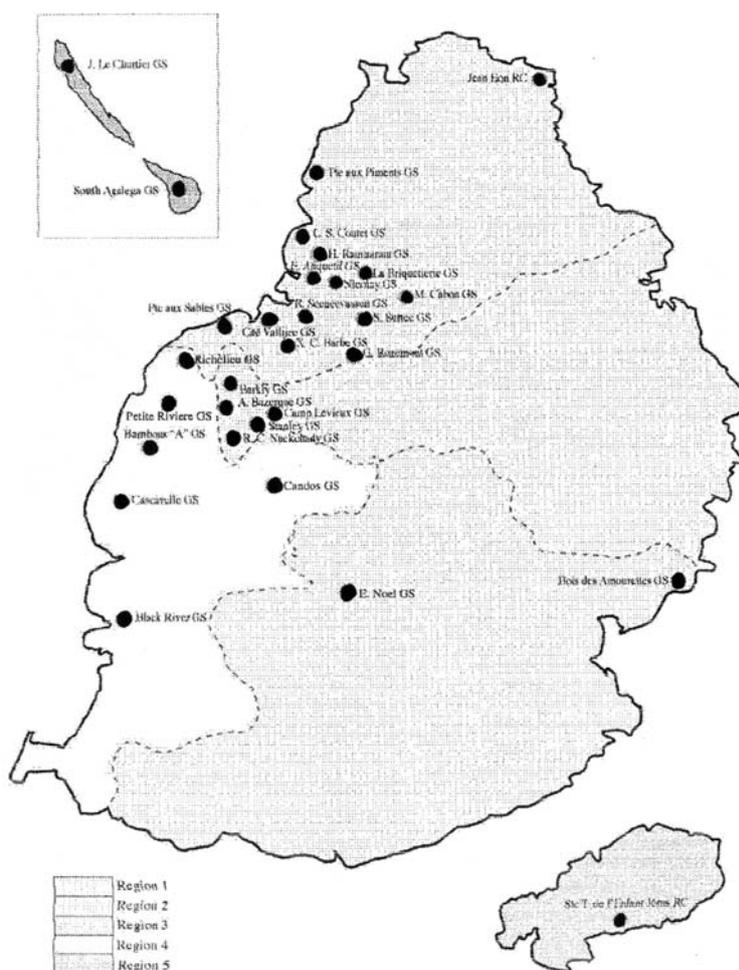
This view has been reinforced by what some teachers currently working in the schools in the Black River District have to say.

### 5.10 Spatial Inequalities and Poor Performance

Poor achievement level strongly correlate with spatial inequalities in Mauritius. The map below shows the location of the ZEP Schools. A number of the schools listed are found in localities identified by the Government as poverty zones.

Poverty zones are not inhabited by people of slave descent only. Some descendants of indentured labour, particularly those of the working class, also inhabit the poor neighbourhoods. Social dislocation such as prostitution, high rates of teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, high level of unemployment, often compound the problems of the poor. In these conditions, poverty becomes more complex and no doubt affects the school performance of children living in the deprived zones. The map below shows the poor performing schools, located in the deprived zones.

### Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources LOCATION OF ZEP SCHOOLS



### 5.11 Decentralisation of Universities and spatial inequalities

The Government is currently talking about the decentralisation of Universities, with the view of democratising education further, but those who fail C.P.E will not be able to aspire to attending those Universities. While those new Universities have already been ear-marked and there may well be certain deprived zones (as per the list above) not too far away from the sites, the poor children of slave and indenture descent will still not be able to access the Tertiary Sector. Admitting students to Institutions of Higher Learning in Mauritius requires that they satisfy certain criteria and passes in Higher School Certificate, but many young people of Creole background are already out of the system at a much earlier level of the schooling system and therefore have no chance of making it to University.

Democratising Education requires an understanding and interpretation of Education within a continuum. Sectors cannot be analysed in isolation; a holistic perspective is required.

### *5.12 The Mauritian Higher Education*

It must be remembered that the outputs of one sector are the inputs of the other sector. Education in Mauritius should be analyzed as a continuum - Higher Education being the summit of this continuum. But, who makes it to Universities is a key question that needs to be posed when interpreting Mauritian Education and society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A number of Institutions of Higher Learning have been set up in the country, but with little opening for the children of the deprived and the disadvantaged.

Between 1968 and 1981, the foundation was laid for four principal Institutions of Higher Education, which were:

- The University of Mauritius, which grew out of the College of Agriculture;
- The Mauritius Institute of Education, designed to replace the Teacher's Training College;
- The Mahatma Gandhi Institute, originally intended to be a tribute to the multicultural nature of the country;
- The Mauritius College of the Air, which started out as a sort of extension to secondary school, designed to work through the national TV network.

In recent years, some Tertiary Institutions, such as UTM and the Charles Telfaire institute, have opened up. Contrary to the University of Mauritius, these institutions are fee-paying and they do not necessarily attract the best 'best performers' of the system. Often, the 'best performers' of the system are those who are economically strong and who possess the necessary cultural capital. In other words, the State continues to privilege the children of the elite.

## **6. Conclusion**

Contemporary Mauritius is now speaking of 'One graduate per family' as part of its vision of Education but families of slave and indenture descent, particularly those who are poor and also continue to suffer from social dislocations and poverty-linked pathologies mentioned earlier, will hardly ever be able to fit into the above vision. The system fails them at a rather young age, and they may not even be able to dream of being at a University.

It is true that the State has continued to make efforts towards greater democratisation by building more schools and making transport free for all students, but if democratisation is to be more meaningful, there needs to be a fundamental reform of the system. This reform has become even more urgent, now that the country is aspiring to become a Knowledge Intensive Economy, with greater emphasis on the mental rather than on the manual. Emerging sectors of the economy demand new skills and aptitudes which only a few possess. Addressing the mismatch between the products of the Education Sector and the labour market requires that policies directly relevant to the children and youth of disadvantaged groups, particularly those of slave descent, should be borne in mind. In other words, policies speaking to equitable education, allowing for the utilisation of the full potential of the child and allowing for a more just society, should be urgently developed and implemented.

## CHAPTER SIX

**THE PREVOCATIONAL SECTOR IN MAURITIUS: A CASE OF MORE JUSTICE OR CONTINUED INJUSTICE**

The Prevocational Education (PVE) Sector caters for pupils who have failed C.P.E twice. This failure represents many of the injustices of the system. The reasons of why children fail have been established in the previous chapter. PVE is supposed to offer a second chance for children from the disadvantaged segments of Mauritian society, the vast majority of whom being of slave descent.

**6.1 The Nature of the Prevocational Sector**

The Prevocational Sector, in Mauritius, caters for around 4,000 students left out in the cold at the end of the primary cycle, as a result of their inability to meet the established benchmark for promotion to the mainstream in the secondary sector. As there is no other well-organized system or structure to provide for further learning opportunities and equal facilities to this category of students, a new Prevocational Education Scheme was launched in 2001, with a view to providing the necessary environment for the growth and development of these children, and also for developing learnability to eventually help them live a socially acceptable and economically self-sufficient life style (Ministry of Education & Human Resources, 2011).

The new scheme developed, for both public and private institutions and was aimed at ensuring equity in educational services. It offered learning opportunities with a view to mastering essential competencies in order to ensure Functional Literacy and Numeracy and basic learning competencies for further achievements.

The Prevocational Education Scheme proposes a shift in the pattern of traditional academic elitist educational goals to a more child-centered and need-based learning. However, the actual praxis is different in educational institutions governed by the State and Private sectors. Prevocational classes in State Secondary Schools tend to be more academic, while in Bureau d'Education Catholique (BEC) schools, much emphasis is laid on an inclusive pedagogy, where students are encouraged to participate in the various activities tailored according to the needs of those students, for example, cookery classes for both boys and girls.

**6.2 Broad Aims of the Study**

The main questions that the PVE survey seeks to answer are: (a) How fair is this sub-system within the larger system? (b) Is the sector really providing a second chance? (c) Is the PVE bringing about more social justice or is it a case of continued injustice? The main objectives of this case study of the PVE sector are to explore the extent to which children's experiences of schooling allow them to climb the social ladder. In other words, the study attempts to examine the various in-school and out-of-school processes, affecting students attending PVE, so as to understand the scope of their integration into mainstream society. Whether the PVE Sector provides assistance towards the establishment of a more cohesive society is a question that needs to be posed. In order to answer these broad concerns, a survey of some 35 schools having PVE classes, based in diverse locations, particularly the poverty-stricken zones, were chosen and some 35 focus group discussions (with one in each school) were carried out.

**6.2.1 The specific objectives of the study are:**

- (1) To examine the extent to which teachers are equipped to teach children from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those of slave descent and indentured labour descent attending the PVE.
- (2) To assess whether in-school and out-of-school processes within the PVE sector are assisting toward the empowerment of the children and actually providing a second chance.
- (3) Explore different avenues available, and which could be used in assisting towards ensuring better futures for children attending the PVE sector.

### 6.3 The themes of the questionnaire

The survey questionnaire included the following themes: curriculum, language and linguistic issues, gender equality, teacher-student relationship and teacher-home relationship. Views and perceptions of teachers on a range of issues relating to those broad themes, were sought. Different elements and sub-themes around those broad themes contribute to understanding and interpreting the broader interrogations of the survey.

### 6.4 The FGD themes

Some of the themes included in the FGDs are: Identity of students/ the perceptions of slavery and indentured labour; the experiences of primary schooling; what *prevoc* is doing for them, the aspirations and expectation; the knowledge of what generally happens to students who leave *prevoc*; the understanding of the notion of (i) citizenship (ii) being a patriot and patriotism and (iii) 'Ile durable'; the views on the use of Creole as a medium of instruction and as a fully-fledged language to be introduced in the school; parents' involvement in the education of their children, reading and reading habits; curriculum at *prevoc* and subjects the students can study.

Before presenting the findings of the study, it is perhaps important to understand the profile of those who attend PVEs.

### 6.5 Who attends PVE?

As mentioned before, those who fail the C.P.E twice are those who enter the Prevocational sector. All Secondary Schools, except for a few elite schools, have prevocational classes. As mentioned earlier, those who fail the C.P.E are mostly children from a working-class background. While the vast majority of them come from ZEP schools, some come from other poor performing Primary Schools.

A large number of the students attending PVEs are from broken families, single-parent families, absent parents. Moreover, their parents have had very little schooling themselves and often cannot connect to the 'culture' of the school.

Table 2 shows the pass and failure rates at C.P.E. Those who fail are those who have a very inequitable start in life, in other words, starting point is one of an unequal playing field. It shows the failure rates at C.P.E. over a number of years. It is the output of this system which constitutes the inputs of the PVE sector.

Year	Number examined			Number passed			% passed	% failed
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Total
1982	28,537	14,983	13,554	15,513	7,852	7,661	54.4	45.6
1983	24,883	12,857	12,026	12,894	6,345	6,549	51.8	48.2
1984	26,386	13,673	12,713	13,488	6,435	7,053	51.1	48.9
1985	27,937	14,250	13,687	14,516	7,144	7,372	52.0	48
1986	35,019	17,747	17,272	18,289	8,868	9,421	52.2	47.8
1987	32,844	16,717	16,127	17,078	8,247	8,831	52.0	48
1988	31,181	15,888	15,293	17,521	8,395	9,126	56.2	43.8
1989	26,836	13,681	13,155	15,989	7,805	8,184	59.6	40.4
1990	28,416	14,307	14,109	16,588	7,874	8,714	58.4	41.6
1991	35,255	18,094	17,161	20,383	9,941	10,442	57.8	42.2

1992	35,453	18,057	17,396	21,620	10,453	11,167	61.0	39
1993	32,887	16,757	16,130	19,270	9,362	9,908	58.6	41.4
1994	29,535	15,094	14,441	18,074	8,663	9,411	61.2	38.8
1995	27,733	14,222	13,511	18,121	8,791	9,330	65.3	34.7
1996	25,629	13,129	12,500	16,737	8,120	8,617	65.3	34.7
1997	25,230	12,926	12,304	16,452	7,981	8,471	65.2	34.8
1998	24,804	12,528	12,276	16,622	7,823	8,799	67.0	33
1999	26,388	13,448	12,940	16,970	8,044	8,926	64.3	35.7
2000	28,058	14,444	13,614	18,617	8,836	9,781	66.4	33.6
2001	29,120	14,960	14,160	19,017	8,953	10,064	65.3	34.7
2002	27,842	14,486	13,356	18,079	8,641	9,438	64.9	35.1
2003	27,510	14,252	13,258	17,219	8,065	9,154	62.6	37.4
2004	27,332	14,084	13,248	17,217	8,152	9,065	63.0	37
2005	27,117	13,981	13,136	17,596	8,244	9,352	64.9	35.1
2006	25,007	12,942	12,065	16,987	8,028	8,959	67.9	32.1
2007	24,050	12,368	11,682	15,915	7,428	8,487	66.2	33.8
2008	23,664	12,299	11,365	15,957	7,633	8,324	67.4	32.6
2009	22,620	11,764	10,856	15,411	7,328	8,083	68.1	31.9

Large numbers of children who fail C.P.E. are from working-class backgrounds, often those not having the 'habitus' and 'ethos' required by the school. Children of slave descent are disproportionately present within this group; this highlights the fact that the chances for disadvantaged Creole children to be upwardly mobile remain very slim. Can contemporary Mauritian Education bring some kind of reparations? Is the PVE Sector helping to remedy some of the problems and assisting in the empowerment of the child?

## 6.6 Findings from FGDs: Giving a voice to children of slave and indentured descent

FGDs were carried out with a diverse student population within the PVE Sector in different geographical areas around the island. Questions and topics raised with students were mainly related to their identities, past and current school experiences, daily life experiences, their family life and parent involvement in their studies, and their knowledge of topics such as citizenship, 'Ile durable', patriotism.

Most Prevocational students could not describe their primary school experiences as being a happy one. In fact, they were labelled as 'good for nothing' and they were badly treated by their class teachers. Even before the final year exams, they were considered as failures and their seats were reserved in a far corner of the classroom.

FGDs and other interviews assisted in obtaining some kind of triangulation.

A summary of the responses to each FGD theme has been made below:

### 6.6.1 Identity of students/ the perceptions of slavery and indentured labour

Many students described themselves as Creoles or Indians. Some of the Creole children called themselves Catholic but very few could actually connect with their slave or indentured past. Creole students reported that certain 'pejorative' (sometimes seen as racist) terms were used by other non-Creole groups in describing and/or addressing them.

### 6.6.2 The experiences of past and current schooling

Prevocational students could not describe their primary school experiences as a wonderful one. Many of them were labelled as 'good for nothing' and stereotypes of diverse kinds were often used by teachers. They were considered as failures and their seats were often reserved in a far corner and in back row of the classroom. Some students reported that their teachers used racist terms in class like 'Mazambik', 'Noireau'. Creole students reported that Hindu teachers would 'guet zenfant malbar plis', 'Pas pren nu conte'.

Students also reported the bad treatment that they received from their teachers and this included physical, as well as verbal, abuse. One of the students even reported that her punishment was to kneel down on 'filao' seeds, while others were often beaten with a stick.

The following are some of the terms used by teachers to describe the students. These were mentioned when students were asked to recent their experiences:

- Sa bann zanfan la bizin fout zot dan enn kwin
- Aret vinn lekol. Al zet le kor
- Mous kaka, zako, kouyon
- Latet kokom, orit sek, latet sek, latet pike, toke, retarde, torti
- Al travay dan kamion salte, al netoy twalet parski zot pa konn lir
- Bon a rien, inbesil, sovaz, bann kaka, bourik
- Resamble zako
- Mazambik, sinwa nef
- Vinn barr zanfan so plas, vinn sof sez dan lekol, vinn pran dipain al lakaz
- Zot bann mongol
- Amenn gro kaye pou narien
- Faye batar
- Miss la get nek sa bann indien la, pa get bann kreol ditou

### 6.6.3. What *prevoc* is doing for them:

Students without any hesitation showed a preference for Prevocational classes, as compared to primary schooling. They enjoy a better treatment by their class teachers and for them, this is a great relief as to what they were compelled to bear in primary school. In some well-organised schools, students even felt privileged to have activities tailored to their specific needs and this acted as a positive reinforcement to boost their desire to attend school and to dream of a better future. In the other schools, there are one or two activities reserved for the Prevocational students, like swimming and music, but those activities are not practised on a regular basis. In general, students were satisfied with the way their time-tables were planned, with a good balance between academic and non-academic subjects.

Their relationship with mainstream students, as well as teachers, was also discussed. The responses varied from one school to another. Some reported being well-treated both by the students as well as teachers from the mainstream, while others described their relationship as being warm with the students, but quite unfriendly with teachers, who have already formed a prejudiced opinion of them. Others described their relationship with their mainstream friends as being hostile, since they are looked down as being 'zelev prevoc'.

Coming to activities organized jointly for both mainstream and Prevocational students, very few can be mentioned, like music day and sports day.

#### 6.6.4. The aspirations and expectations

When students were asked what they intended to do after their three years of Prevocational Education, most of them answered 'IVTB'. Some of the well-informed ones even corrected as 'MITD'. Still, they were observed to have low expectations. Most of them cited their technical courses at IVTB as if from a predefined list, namely mechanic, plumbing, electric, carpentry, while those living in the coastal regions added the broad term 'travay lotel', with a few mentioning the job of waiter. Some students even said that they would prefer to enter the job market immediately after their Prevocational classes, while a handful would like to pass C.P.E and integrate mainstream and later get a good job.

For the girls, the aspirations were somehow different and varied from one school to another. In very few distinct institutions, most of the students wanted to pass C.P.E., integrate mainstream and have a good job. Those aspirations simply reflected the quality of education they are receiving at school. In those same schools, those who preferred to enter the labour market, had very original ideas of what they will be doing in the future. A student mentioned operating a day care centre, while another said that she would create her own jewelries and sell them. Another one said that she wanted to operate a florist shop. In schools where students do not have great aspirations, 'hairstylist' was on the top list for future jobs.

#### 6.6.5. The knowledge of what generally happens to students who leave *prevoc*

Only a minority knew about those who have gone through Prevocational Education, completed IVTB training successfully and are now in employment. Those students tend to take these people as models, and they would also tend to choose the same career path as their models. We also learnt that in some deprived regions of Mauritius, unsuccessful Prevocational students have become drunkards, drug addicts and even delinquents.

#### 6.6.6. Students understanding of the following concepts: "Citizenship, Patriotism and Ile Durable"

The fact is that these terms are quite popular; students acknowledge having heard these words, but failed to explain or give definition of same. Overall, the response to this part of the FGD was poor. However, students, from most of the schools visited, claimed that teachers had never come up with discussions/ explanations around these topics.

Answers given by students:

Citizenship: zot tou res ansam, dimounn ki inn ne dan moris, dimounn moris,

Patriotism: inn tande me pa kone

Ile Durable: enn lil ki prop, lil ki pou dir lontan

#### 6.6.7. Their views on the use of *Kreol* as a medium of instructions and as a fully-fledged language to be introduced in the school

Students are happy with the use of 'Creole' as a medium of instruction in class as they are less able or some even fail to understand English and French. They claim that the use of 'Creole' in class enables them to better understand concepts. However, they also admitted that English and French are also very important to learn, as they will have to deal with a wide range of clients, according to the field of their professions. Almost all students welcomed the idea of introducing 'Creole' as a subject, as they feel more at ease with 'Creole' and above all it is their mother tongue'. It should be noted that in some private schools, students are taught 'Creole' as a full-fledged language.

Answers given by students:

Kreol nou langaz

Nou pli kapav konpran kreol

Nou servi kreol tou le zour

Nou abitye avek sa langaz la,

Nou bizin kapav konpran angle ek franse osi sinon nou pa pou gagn enn travay

Nou kontan kan nou prof. servi kreol pou explik nou, aköz nou pli kav konpran

#### 6.6.8. Parents' involvement in their Education

Of the population surveyed, most of the students came from broken families, single-parent families, had absent parents and a handful live in shelters. Very few of them get some kind of assistance from their parents at home, while doing homework and other activities. This is due to illiteracy among parents or due to a lack of time, because of overtime at work. Some of them even get help from elder siblings. Rarely do parents come to enquire about students' performances at school. Besides, parents are even failing to share basic knowledge on sexual reproductive health. Student said that in the case of any query about their biological growth or any other related issues, they prefer to discuss with friends or opt for self-exploration, as these issues are rarely discussed by teachers and parents. However, girls said that their mothers used to inform them about their physical and biological changes, but this information is very restricted, as they feel reluctant to discuss such issues. Almost all students are aware of HIV/AIDS, but have little information about how to protect them from such a disease. Most of the schools visited do not have a permanent School Counsellor, but from time to time, specialists would intervene on a case to case basis.

Answers given by students:

Paran pa gagn letan get nou aköz zot travay

Paran pe tro kone seki nou fer dan lekòl

Paran pann al lekòl

Paran pa la pou ed nou

Paran pa gagn letan pou vinn lekòl aköz zot travay

Nou pay PTA me paran pa vinn renyon

Mama ti deza koz avek nou lor sex

Nou al demann informasyon avek mama - most girls said so

Nou demann kamarad/ papa ti koz avek nou

Pa kapav koz avek papa, papa pou bate

Gagn Sida kan de disan zwin

Bizin servi kapot

#### 6.6.9. Reading and Study Habits

Students said that they liked reading, but unfortunately they do not know how to read English and French. A handful admitted that they hate reading because it is a boring and tedious exercise. The reading materials they mentioned are as follows: Books, Newspapers and Magazines. Moreover, they said that books with colourful pictures are more appealing to them. Few students said that they do not have access to a school library, as it is meant for mainstream students or they have been banned from entering the library, because of few students who would disrupt the silence and make a mess of the materials in the library. Very few said that teachers are doing reading practices in class, but they read the text and explain it in 'Creole' to students.

#### 6.6.10. Curriculum at Pre-Voc and Subject which they are Studying

Students are more or less happy with the PVE curriculum. They look forward to get a certificate at the end of their PVE schooling. They see the subjects they are studying, as a stepping-stone to their future career. However, they would prefer to have more practical classes in subjects like: Food and Nutrition, Computer, Agriculture, Science, Fashion and Fabrics, Wood-work, Sports, Music and Basic Electricity. Unfortunately, schools do not make space for PVE students to use the specialist rooms. Students have been doing these subjects without appropriate exposure to the various elements of the subject. In some schools, students said that they have limited access to specialist rooms, as those are reserved for mainstream students, for they had to prepare for important exams for the subjects which they study:

Isi nou fer bouko size ki pou ed nou kan nou pou al rod enn travay

Nou kontan fer sa bann size la me pena ase pratik

Nou ti pou kontan si ti fer bann klas pratik apre ler lekol

Nou pli kontan pratik ki lir ek ekri

## 6.7 Conclusion

While the PVE Sector has been developed and instituted to provide a second chance to those who fail C.P.E., very few of the students actually get a second chance. The learning experiences and the assessment proposed to pupils persist in not drawing from the personal experiences of the children, nor do they relate to their specific learning styles. In short, what is learnt, how it is taught and how it is assessed has not changed much from the Primary School except in a few of the Prevocational Schools. Resources, especially those relating to practical classes, are often not available for children attending *prevoc*. Many of them complete their three years at PVE without knowing where they will land up; some do end up at NTC Foundation Course, but there is no research available to know what exactly happens to those young people after the few years of post-primary schooling.

Can we speak of Justice under these conditions? If the young people are made to internalise their failures and to believe that something is wrong with them, when actually it is the nature of the curriculum content, the pedagogy and the culture of the school - often with all of those forming part of a dominant culture - there is an urgent need to rethink, revisit and repair all the wrong, much of which has been largely informed by the colonial history of the island. The next chapter in fact addresses the question of reparations.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## EDUCATION AS A TOOL OF REPARATION

## 7.1 Mobility of Human Beings and Encounter of Cultures

Mobility of human beings, ideas and things entails encounters and the production or reproduction of similarities and difference, as those who move or who are moved always tend to position themselves or be positioned in relation to those they meet. Slaves were not only moved; they were uprooted and this uprooting has had several consequences, the most important one perhaps being the loss of traditions and cultures, one's heritage and identity, as already discussed earlier. The Indian indentured labourers were also moved but there was an element of choice here; they may have been pushed by some harsh circumstances but the final decision was theirs. There was some space for 'free choice and decision-making' in their movement, and this forms the basis of some of the differences that exist between these 2 systems, and which have been discussed earlier.

Cultures, with the power to cultivate and enforce ambitions of dominance, define not only themselves, but also the less empowered cultures that they encounter and humble in their 'culture game' (Oguibe, 2004). Hence, an African proverb states that 'until the lions produce their own historian, the story of the hunt will glorify only the hunter' (Achebe, 2000:73). There exists a small group of historians in Mauritius, but so far, Mauritian historiography is not necessarily produced within a homogenous perspective and does not always necessarily uncover the whole truth and 'the hunter' may not be totally unmasked and de-glorified. On the other hand, the work of the Truth and Justice Commission can go a long way towards establishing the Truth, proposing ways for reparations and bringing about Justice. This is why the Education Team has also chosen to use the hearings of the Truth and Justice Commission, opinions expressed in the press, parliamentary debates, amongst other findings, to think through the question of reparations in relation to Education.

Education in a number of post-colonial societies is still largely seen as the one factor that champions static dichotomies and 'boundedness' of cultural worlds and knowledge systems. And because of the colonial context in which the problematic 'education' was introduced, it is an education at the service of forces with ambitions of dominance. The latter has often been violent and has represented a cultural invasion of such importance that repairing the harm, the wounds and the diverse scars is a daunting task. Questions such as what should be repaired and how to repair remain most pertinent.

In multi-cultural Mauritius, debates around the question of reparation for the descendants of slaves arose out of the 'malaise Créole', referred to earlier. This malaise is itself a legacy of slavery and the neglect of Creole community by the State in the post-Independence period. Discussing the notion of reparations and compensation in Mauritius can have some kind of ethnic connotations; it is often perceived as the Creole community asking for more. Accompanying that is the stereotyping that goes with it, basically suggesting that the Creole community spends most of the time merry-making and do not work hard enough. An article which featured in the *Mauritius Times* of 26 February 2004 notes:

*"There is no case for compensation at all. The descendants of slaves have received more than whatever compensation is now being requested for. Since the days of SSR, they have been receiving all sorts of privileges; for e.g low-cost housing and the various funds that have been established to dish out all manner of assistance to them. The present government and its predecessor have established the Fishermen welfare fund, a 'nou dibou ensam', different micro credits, and provided assistance to sand diggers, ZEP (Zone d'Education Prioritaire' and set up other funds. Has any accountant ever calculated the enormous amount of money making up these funds and the assistance? This should be sufficient enough in terms of compensation and reparations."*

## 7.2 Non financial reparations

Some people believe that reparations can be done through monetary means but the complexity of Mauritian history and the facts of the contemporary situation weaken the case for financial compensation. This same idea has been very aptly put forward by the Parliamentarian Alan Ganoo in the Parliamentary debate no. 40, of 7 November 2003, when he notes:

*"Money is not a solution to poverty, not when poverty is culturally embedded, transmitted from generation to generation. There must be compensation... But it must be intelligent and work towards sustainable development. Sustainable development refers to the harnessing of resources for future generations. Giving money to individuals is unfortunately one way of making them vulnerable to consumerism and to the forces at work in a capitalist society. This will not necessarily generate future resources. It is not freeing them from mental shackles. We need to look how to empower our brethren of African descent to think critically about their assets and to make the best out of these so that future generations can benefit from these. It would be more intelligent to fund projects that look at community development [...]"*

## 7.3 Education as an asset for social, economic and cultural empowerment

Those made voiceless, powerless, assetless and futureless by slavery and indentured labour should look upon Education as one of the most important assets of modern times. Reparations within the world of education can revalorize the identity of the person, can make him or her upwardly mobile, can give him/her tools and knowledge to integrate the economy, in short can empower the descendants of slaves culturally, economically and socially.

## 7.4 The Pertinence of Truth and Justice Commissions for Reparations

Truth and Justice Commissions usually help to put into perspective a culture of impunity, to promote transparency and accountability, have the potential to heal past wounds, to provide a platform for citizens to engage with their fears and expectations, social justice. For this to happen, there needs to be reparations. Some of the hearings that have been done in Truth and Justice Commissions, inclusive that of Mauritius, have actually spoken of reparations and others have pointed towards the need for it. While historical periods and contexts are very different, many of the hearings across the board point to the need for healing, the need for forgiveness, the need for greater accountability and the urgent need of redress. The Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission which is digging in the consequences of a relatively distant history cannot, unlike many other Truth and Justice Commissions, bring the actual perpetrators of the violence to the platform but several voices emerging from the hearings speak of the violence perpetrated in the world of Education as well as the present-day prejudices and discriminatory practices that children of slave and indenture descent are having to experience. The former are much more pronounced amongst children of slave descent.

While the Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius has been asked to look into the consequences of both slavery and indentured labour on Education, the Education Team's findings point clearly to the fact that people of slave descent have been more exploited than descendants of the indenture labour and continue to remain more marginalized and discriminated against than other group.

The fact that ethnicity is no longer used as a 'category' in the Official Census and data is often not collected along ethnic lines, may make it difficult to argue in favour of any kind of Affirmative Action for the Creoles but there is enough of evidence from the ground that Creoles are discriminated against and do not enjoy the same fruits of development and do not enjoy the fruits of development to the same extent as others do. In an article entitled 'Blacks out in the cold in Mauritius', Selwyn Ryan notes: "Mauritius is widely regarded as a model plural society in which power is shared by all ethnic communities except perhaps of the black Creole." Discrimination and racial stereotyping also persist. The work of Bunwaree (1997), Eriksen (2007) and Geetanjalee Gill (2010) highlight this [...]"

It is perhaps the continued and persistent marginalisation of the Creoles which has led to the emergence of a number of Creole socio-cultural organization, clamouring for a more equal

treatment and for reparations. Some members of these socio cultural organizations actually deponed at the TJC.

## 7.5 Colonial Education- a violent project and the hearings at TJC

If Colonial Education is essentially a violent project, in Mauritius as in many other parts of the developing world, such violence took the form of hegemony through a particular form of Education: the 'simulacrum of an education system'. Fonlon (1965) notes that Education is repressed where it should have fostered, tamed, instead of inspiring, and enervated rather than hardening. It succeeded in making slaves of its victims, to the extent that they no longer realized that they were slaves, with some even seeing their claims of victimhood as ornamental and the best recognition possible'.

Often those who see themselves as 'success stories' of an externally imposed System of Education and who have acquired a certain set of values wish to continue imposing such same values and curricula contents on the young. Often what is selected as course materials is totally irrelevant to the realities of the child, thus provoking important forms of symbolic violence referred to in several hearings. How can such happenings be repaired?

## 7.6 Themes teased out from the hearings and giving a voice

Many of the deponents referred to the linguistic and cultural injustice, the discriminatory practices and prejudices that children of slave descent have to face in the schooling system. They see this as largely responsible for the students' failures and exclusion. Some people of indentured descent also deponed, but there was very little connection made to the education question.

A number of deponents of slave descent have also evoked the high failure rates of children at C.P.E. level and have highlighted the correlation that exists between poverty and school performance. Children of Creole background, particularly those from the working class, are often subject to diverse types of 'violence' and more importantly, see their life chances withering away from a rather young age. Education, which is seen as a passport for mobility, is often perceived as blocking the door for these children.

## 7.7 Deponents voices

One of the deponents noted that:

*".....if a child is made to do what he likes in school, he will attend regularly."*

Another deponent argues that:

Teachers often discourage children, telling them that they are losing time at school and this is often accompanied by insulting remarks. To set things right, we need a cultural change in the education system. Teachers must be made to respect the cultural identity of these children. The children in the ZEP schools, mostly Creoles, must be given Creole teachers who won't use insults which could apply to themselves as well. That's what I mean when I speak of Reform, it must be cultural and not just pedagogical...

Another deponent said:

*"....I cannot live fully as a Creole if my language is denied admittance in schools...."*

Some other deponent noted:

You cannot compel my children, in order for them to obtain a sixth subject, compel them to learn either Urdu, Tamil, Telugu or Marathi, but give them their language like you have given to the others. In this way, my children will also have a sixth subject because you are speaking about Education to me and consequently, you must carry out an Education System in which you are recognizing all the children of Mauritius and in what language they will make most progress... .

Only some of the hearings have been selected. But it is clear that they all highlight the gross injustices that poor children of slave descent face within and outside the educational system.

A number of voices from the hearings corroborate with those of the students of slave descent and indentured labour who participated in the FGDS. Their descriptions of their lives and their engagement with us regarding different facets of their schooling experiences, highlight the diverse forms of violence that many children continue to experience today. The cultural violence done to them within the schooling set up, explained in earlier chapters, assists in putting the 'reparation' debate into perspective. But for Education to constitute the tool of reparation, it has to be reformed in a fundamental manner.

## **7.8 Education as a tool of Reparation**

Given the various atrocities of the Educational System and the stories unfolding from the data obtained, it is important to understand that Education will only be able to constitute a tool for reparation if a multi-pronged approach is used. The latter will draw from symbolic action, Affirmative Action and institutional re-engineering to bring about transformation. While the next chapter details out the recommendations proposed by the Education Team towards reparation, it is important to note that the Education Team is of the opinion that the injustices and violations of rights associated with slavery and indentured labour cannot be monetized and therefore proposes the setting up of some kind of fund from which resources can be obtained to implement the recommendations proposed.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In a sense, the road to cohesion, reconciliation and a meaningful national unity puts us in the middle of a two-way street: reconciliation and cohesion offer an opening for a better appreciation and understanding of the fault-lines that currently divide us as a nation, just as our cleavages and divisions provide us with an opportunity and platform to understand the nature of the undertakings to which reconciliation and cohesion must be dedicated to.

In as far as Education is concerned, there is still so much more that needs to be done. But one key ingredient is that is necessary to rethink and revisit Education so that the playing field can become more levelled in some kind of consensus and the non-politicisation of the educational tool. (Bunwaree, 07 Feb 2011). But such consensus has to be informed by the TRUTHS and aspirations of the people, which, in turn, are informed by their cultural and social matrix, as well as the realities of the classroom. Consensus does not mean one or two powerful segments of society deciding what is best for all, but rather nationwide consultations which give a voice to cohesion between and amongst us.

It is a problem that cuts across institutions, politics, communities and culture. With multiple facets and formulations, the question of the role of Education in promoting Social Justice must be asked but, with the acknowledgment that easy answers may be just another name of disappointment. But the Education Team has no doubt that there are a large number of well-intentioned Mauritian citizens and policy-makers who are striving to make Mauritian Education more inclusive, more just, and in so doing contribute to making Citizenship become more meaningful.

**Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Deconstructing the history and memory of certain people and places can assist in highlighting the various forms of oppressions and injustices that people have been subjected to, as well as the need for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Forgiveness and reconciliation play a central part in helping to break the vicious cycle of bitterness, hostility and grievance that is at the root of many continuing conflicts around the world. If the slate is not cleaned and 'ubuntu' not, entrenched peoples' grievances will lead to alienation, vengeance and conflict. Education certainly holds many answers towards reparations and forgiveness, but it is the collective responsibility of all that does so.

The findings, inclusive of the hearings constitute a solid base which informed the recommendations made below. The recommendations include:

**Recommendations****1. Apology from the Church, the State and the Corporate World**

When the scars of multiple injustices and oppressions continue to haunt a society, it is important that those who have been responsible in some way or other, directly or indirectly present, an apology to the victims. It is therefore important that the Church, the State and the Corporate World present an apology to the descendants of slaves and indentured labour. This, though symbolical, can contribute to addressing wounds which run deep and can facilitate the healing process.

**2. The Creole Language, Politics of Recognition and Improvement in Performance and Achievement**

Creole should be recognized and introduced as an ancestral language in schools. It should also be accepted as a medium of instruction. Worldwide, it has been recognised that teaching and learning in one's mother tongue can have a positive impact on children's' achievements and performances. Mauritius is still lagging behind on this score. Using Creole as a medium of

instruction without neglecting the teaching and learning of English and French (which remain major linguistic assets in this increasingly globalised world) would go a long way towards improving the performance of the linguistically and culturally disadvantaged and in so doing, assist in minimising the current waste of the country's human capital.

Introducing Creole as an ancestral language has already been agreed in principle, but this should be carried through by means of the necessary Legislation, and implemented as rapidly as possible.

The purpose of introducing Creole as a medium of instruction, as well as an ancestral language in Primary Schools, will assist in enhancing a politics of recognition and give Creole the same status and treatment as that of other languages in the School System, throughout the curriculum. The introduction of Creole in schools as a medium of instruction, as a language of support and as an ancestral language will be an important symbol of national recognition of the place and importance of Creole culture and identity and their contribution to enriching Mauritian multiculturalism and cohesion. In so doing, Education can contribute efficiently towards reconciliation and durable peace.

### **3. Bhojpuri - Revival of Oral Culture**

As far as Bhojpuri is concerned, it is viewed as an important vehicle to preserve oral culture, particularly music (*samgit*), folk songs, story-telling and theatre. Women have played an important role in preserving and transmitting this village oral tradition, reflecting an interesting part of Mauritian culture, both in preserving and in creating new elements. Measures should be devised to introduce elements of the language within the Hindi classes, this being considered as more economically and socially viable in the present context.

### **4. Review the Curriculum, Heterogeneous Cultures and Mixed Abilities**

The Mauritian school curriculum is exam-driven rather than driving exams, thus posing critical questions on content and styles of teaching and learning. There is therefore a need to reorganise and reframe the curriculum so as to review the assessment modes, the content and ensure a more child-centred learning. A modern curriculum informed by an inclusive pedagogy should balance the 'creative' with the 'academic', and respond to the needs of children with more varied forms of intelligence, diverse cultures and talents.

The new curriculum could easily be worked out to cater for the higher achievers at one end of the scale with a variety of enrichment programmes, and for the children at the other end of the spectrum with special programmes (during school hours) designed to help late developers and slow learners catch up with the rest of the class. In short, a curriculum which addresses the heterogeneous cultures, class backgrounds and the mixed abilities of children should be the order of the day.

### **5. Introduction of New Subjects and an Institutionalised Reward System for Children at all Levels**

Subjects such as Citizenship Education, Arts, Music, Gardening /Agriculture and Sports should be introduced and assessed. Citizenship Education should consist of 3 core parts - one on Political Literacy and History, one on Intercultural Education and one on Family Life and Sex Education, incorporating the specific implications of associated problems such as HIV AIDS and teenage pregnancies. Assessment modes should therefore change to something more rigorous and regular but in the overall context of the abolition of the C.P.E.

Assignments/projects and regular class tests, which cater for the diverse talents and potential of the child, should be developed. This should be accompanied by an institutionalised reward strategy. Children, particularly slow learners, should be given recognition for what they can do, instead of being relegated to the back rows of the class, which tends to be the practice right now. A well-thought out reward strategy can go a long way towards re-establishing the self-esteem of the child and help towards healing and greater social justice.

## **6. Abolition of C.P.E Exams and Adoption of an effective Regionalisation at Secondary Level**

Getting rid of the fierce competitive exam and teacher-centred learning that the C.P.E. represents should be accompanied by child-centred 'Extra learning' opportunities which can be built into the daily time-table, and run concurrently with a programme of 'extra murals' or an 'enrichment programme' at the end of each day. This will obviate the need for private tuition, which should be done away with, as an institution, and will have the added advantage of allowing children to enjoy their childhood. The abolition of C.P.E. and children being transferred to Secondary Schools in the locality/region will also help towards a greater mix of students of all abilities and backgrounds. This can also create a window of opportunity for the regionalisation of scholarships at higher levels of secondary schooling.

## **7. Move towards a more Consolidated Counselling, Psychology and School Social Work Service at the Primary and Lower Secondary levels**

Teams made up of Counselors, School Social Workers and School Psychologists, should visit the schools on a regular basis. The teams' terms of reference should be clearly spelt out. They need to work closely with the classroom teacher to identify children with problems, vulnerabilities and risks, as well as the slow learners so that all possible remedial action can be identified and implemented at an early age. Such work should be done in a coordinated manner so that there is a concerted effort towards the true empowerment of every child, particularly those in the deprived zones where social pathologies and social dislocations exist and affect the child in more ways than one.

The newly created **Ministry of Social Integration**, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Children's Rights, should develop a common platform for this particular purpose. The Office of the Ombudsperson for children could also be part of this process. This particular office could launch a national campaign to this effect and thus draw some volunteers who have the necessary expertise to help with this endeavour. This could turn into a nationwide initiative, thus helping to move towards reconciliation, peace and social justice, albeit indirectly.

## **8. Revisit Teacher Recruitment and the Need for Innovative Teacher Training- (needs to be more relevant to slavery and indentured labour)**

These would be the greatest thorn in the side of any reformer of the Educational System: the resolution of this problem is central to the issue, and the solution will require able wielding of both carrot and stick. Some suggestions: initially, a lot of money will need to be spent to (a) get rid of the worst elements in the profession, including some trade-union leaders, and (b) employ young graduate trained teachers on short-term contracts from abroad. These would lead and help train 'teaching teams', using improved objectives and methods. We need to introduce such concepts as 'whole-class teaching/ no child left behind/ peer-teaching/ co-operative learning techniques into every classroom.

More importantly, the recruitment policy and pay packets of primary school teachers should be revisited so that the teaching job gains more status and attracts some of the best talents in the country. Teachers should be innovators and testing them for their innovative capacities and their commitment to the utilisation of multiple talents should also be done at the time of recruitment. An effective audit of the contents and relevance of Primary School Teacher training, as it is being done at the MIE, should also be undertaken with a view to adapting it to multicultural set-ups and modern trends of teaching worldwide without forgetting the realities of the local context.

## **9. Turn the PVES into NEW ACADEMIES. Optimising on the Creative Potential of Mauritian Youth (needs to be more relevant to slavery and indentured labour)**

It will be necessary to establish at least 3 new Academies for the development of creative Art, Music and Sports. These would help identify talent early, and help train teachers to work with the New Curriculum. They would also be able to offer short holiday courses for all students both at Primary and Secondary levels. The emphasis would be put upon the Creative Arts, Western and Modern forms of Music, Drama and Athletics and Sports. With access to scholarships within the system for these subjects, this single measure would go a long way by way of compensation, especially for those Creole children in Pre-vocational classes in Mauritius who have little or nothing

of a Sports programme, no real Art class or classroom, no Drama classes. This is more of a short-term measure to cater for the existing PVES but as the abolition of C.P.E. takes place and the effective nine-year schooling is implemented, all children would have been exposed to all the subjects and be given the chance of being part of the mainstream.

#### **10. Leadership and Administration of Schools**

Leadership and effective management at school are crucial to discipline and success. Absentee Heads and tardy, lazy school teachers should be sanctioned. The appointment and selection of Head Teachers and Rectors should not be based on qualifications and seniority but should be informed by rigorous testing of their general behaviour, ethics, morality and personality. As school managers and leaders, they should be able to develop a school strategy reflecting the values and aims of the school. It should ensure the empowerment and success of each and every child and teacher without simply focussing on the '*pourcentage de réussite*' [pass-rate] as the sole measure of success.

#### **11. Turning Failing Schools into Success Stories**

A large number of primary schools, particularly in the deprived zones, constitute failing schools. Many of these have predominantly Creole children as their school populations. A couple of those schools should be turned into model innovative schools on a pilot basis where young and able people are encouraged to work with the deprived children on a voluntary basis with the view to consolidating the children's learning skills and aptitudes. A partnership programme between the school teacher and the volunteers should be worked out so that well-defined goals and means of achieving same are defined. For this to happen, there is a need for more space and autonomy at the school level.

#### **12. A Multi-Stakeholder Approach for 'L'Ecole des Parents' [School for parents]**

To consider and treat parents as fully-fledged partners in Education is important in coordinating and consolidating responsibility-sharing and convergent objectives in children's schooling process. In this view, schools need to build up strong networking with parents as well as develop projects and programs empowering them in their effort as educators. Training and animation sessions, adapted to their environment and cultures, would keep up their interest and consolidate their competencies in sustaining their children's learning. The intergenerational dialogue, as well as reinforcement of certain values, would also constitute part of the core programme. An "Ecole des Parents" focusing on these objectives in each school would definitely help improve the success of students.

#### **13. The Development and Consolidation of a Reading Culture**

There is an urgent need to develop a sustained reading culture in the country. Different stakeholders such as the District Councils, the Social Welfare Centres, Community Development Centres, should work together to develop a mechanism/ platform where parents and their children would be invited to regular reading sessions and other fun activities. This would have the advantage of building a community spirit in the locality concerned, as well as developing a reading culture across generations. The intergenerational dialogue, as well as reinforcement of certain values, would also constitute part of the core programme of the 'Ecole des parents et enfants'. Some sort of financial incentives for parents who are assisting with the development of reading skills of their children should be worked out with the business sector within the overall framework of Corporate Social Responsibility.

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# THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION BY DESCENDANTS OF INDENTURED LABOURERS

SHEILA RUGHOONUNDON

*Writer*

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## INTRODUCTION

This report is based on events related to me by many of the respondents who were interviewed in the years 1995 to 1997 with regard to the social development among the Indo-Mauritian community. My research work culminated in the publication of a book whose title is "La Femme Indo-Mauricienne - Son Cheminement."

During their narration, my respondents, about a hundred men and women, told us about events that have marked their lives or their parents' lives. They also told us about the numerous prejudices and intolerances that shattered so many lives in a discriminating manner until the first half of the Twentieth Century.

From the time of the French occupation of the island of Mauritius, the trend was to give privileges to the higher classes and to those affiliated to the Christian Church. No one cared about the humble and poor people who were brought in mostly to work in the sugar cane fields. Indian immigration, which started even before the abolition of slavery, reached its peak in the middle of the nineteenth century, so much so that they soon formed the majority of the population on the island.

Literacy, education and such academic developments were meant only for the privileged classes. During the nineteenth Century and the first part of the twentieth Century, there was absolutely no question of promoting the welfare and advancement of the descendants of slaves and later of the Indian immigrants. And the divide between Christians and non Christians was too wide a gap which, at a later stage, caused the non Christians to rise against the injustices caused to them. They were unfortunate enough because culturally they did not belong, were meant to be kept apart and to be ignored except as labourers.

Once the Indians settled on the island, they set up their own social network of *baitkas*, evening schools and language tuition as well as madrassa for the Muslims. That was part of their culture. They did not wait for the Government to educate their young ones. Descendants of slaves had come under the influence of the Catholic Church. They were taught that their duty was manual work and obedience to the privileged classes. God had to be obeyed and it was the will of God that they spend their lives serving their masters.

## EDUCATING THE DESCENDANTS

The second generation of Indian immigrants did not want their children to continue in the same ruthless and hard path that they had to take. They witnessed too many injustices from the employers, as related in the report of the Royal Commission. So there sprang some among them who became social leaders, who began to think of ways of giving their offspring some education for a better life in future. Even as they toiled day and night to provide for their families, they also got involved in teaching in the vernacular language. And when that was possible, they dutifully sent their children to school for general education because otherwise, these children will be stuck in tilling the land for others.

Schools were few and far between. Even then, children walked bare foot up to three miles one way to attend schools, come rain or shine. Some of the schools were state owned while so many others belonged to the Christian churches, Roman Catholic and Protestant. However, the prevailing tendency, more so at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to admit mostly non Indian children to schools. All the more so since all the teachers came from the Christian community. They had so many prejudices against non Christians that relationships were very rough edged.

In the meantime, demand from the Indian community for admission of their own children in schools grew. The authorities could not forever refuse the increasing appeal from the Indian community and gradually more and more of the new generation were admitted in schools all over the country. Also, more and more educated Indians wanted to work as probationers in schools until they can become qualified teachers. But the choice of accepting probationers rested solely on the head masters of the schools and there have been many tales of discrimination in this domain as well.

While more and more primary schools opened their doors to children of all races, there were no rules for admission. Admission to schools depended on the decision of the school master who decided who to turn away. Excuses such as the classes are full were put forward and so the Indian community had to pressurize the Government and the missionary schools to admit their children. And when that did not work, they decided to open schools with the help of the locals. It was not an easy job, money was scarce and for Hindu parents to part with their hard earned money for the education for their children was no easy job. It was an everyday struggle but the social workers persevered in spite of all the odds.

At the secondary level, it was the same story. The Royal College of Curepipe was the only state college up to the 1930s. Almost all the teachers at this institution were of French and British origin. They favoured people of their own racial appurtenance and religion. The Royal College of Curepipe admitted only whites and Christian students and private establishments favoured their own kind. However, here too Government had to give way in face of the increasing pressure from non Christians belonging to the labouring class and finally a few young men of Indian origin were accepted little by little. At the same time, as from the thirties, private colleges, run by the intellectuals of a new order, were set up to provide for the increase in the student population.

When the Teachers Training College opened its doors in 1945, more and more non Christians were trained and naturally intake of non Christian children in schools also became more regular. The pace was now set and more and more primary as well as secondary schools opened their doors, more teachers were trained and the creole and non Christian children rose up to the challenge. Soon, some of them were going abroad for further studies and the story became one of an upward trend.

Non Christians made a very big effort in propagating education by voluntary work, especially concerning the education of girls. Literacy of girls in the non Christian community had a social repercussion in liberating women who started going out to work for a salary. They were no longer cloistered at home while the rate of literacy kept going up.

But the path of education for the first non Christian girls was fraught with perils as related by my respondents who have themselves been subjected to untold prejudices, taunts and insults. It must be noted that all educational institutions were funded by government and they were not entirely private. The cases below are first hand materials that I have personally collected through direct interviews with the persons concerned or their children.

### **MRS. ROHINEE ROY, BORN RUGHOO**

*Pensionnat Bunel* in Curepipe refused to admit her in January 1930, in spite of being the winner of a scholarship because, according to the female Director, "We do not accept people wearing an Indian dress." The matter was brought forward at the Legislative Assembly. Not able to unravel the dilemma, the Director of Education suggested that, in a matter of conformity, the Government would bear all the expenses related to the education of Miss Rughoo if she accepted to have private tuition instead. Her father refused. Months went by. The Director of the school finally relented in March but wrote a note saying that the young woman would be accepted if she agreed to be called *Renee*. As a result, Miss Rughoo lost three months of schooling and had to work hard to catch up in class.

And at the end of the first quarter, she did so well that she was made to write all the answers of her questionnaire all over again in the Director's office to make doubly sure that she had not had recourse to some tricks!

### **MRS. MOKSHDA KISTOE-WEST**

She came out second at the Junior Scholarship examination, *ex aequo* with a Christian who was admitted at the Loreto convent in 1944. The nun in charge of the school stated they were not admitting non Christians. Her father went to seek help in higher quarters and a week later she learnt from her friend that she was expected at the college. For having been so daring, things

became very stressful for her. For example, while walking quietly along the pavement to catch the train home, she heard one of the girls walking alongside shout to her: "Do not walk with us! Walk on the other side of the road!"

Or the St. Esprit boys who made fun of her: "Don't you think that you would be better off working as a maid for us?" She was terrified at so much hostility but after some time, no one took notice of her except when she had to be punished in class. Was the punishment justified? She has always wondered!

### **MRS. RASSOULBIE ALLEESAIB**

In 1930, Rassoulbie Alleesaib had been working for the last 24 years as a teacher. She had gladly replaced the Headteacher for several months at the school in Belle Vue Maurel, looking forward to becoming head of a school in her own right. However, her superior had other plans. When she protested, she was told "You have to accept that we cannot promote a woman at the head of the school." Léon Auguste Vollaire was promoted in her place. She nursed her crushed feelings as best she could.

### **MR. V. MOHONEE**

It was the year 1916. Mr. Mohonee was the child of very poor labourers working on a sugar estate in St. Pierre. One of his acquaintances told him that if he changed his religion and with the good results obtained at school, he could be given a teaching job in an Anglican school. He shared this piece of news with his parents who agreed. The Anglican Church became richer by one more member. Mr. Mohonee was sent to Surinam to work but he was very unhappy because the new religion did not appeal to him nor was he at ease in a milieu which was different from his original culture. All sorts of stratagem were brought out to prevent him from walking away. Among other things, the priest under whose supervision he was working, presented him to a lady who could become his wife. He was lucky enough to come across Mr. Chuttur who went to see the head of the Anglican Church to free his colleague from his promise.

### **MRS. SHANTA DYALL, BORN BUNDHOO**

She came out first at the Junior Scholarship examination in 1947 and was admitted at the prestigious Loreto Convent in Port-Louis but with one condition: that she would be called by a Christian name. She did not object. But this acceptance has carried its weight all throughout her working life. Her School leaving certificate bears her first name as Chantal, name given to her unofficially instead of her registered first name which was Shanta. She told us about the embarrassment felt and the need to explain each time her Christian name was mentioned: "I had to carry my birth certificate to prove my saying." And even then, many brows were raised out of disbelief at her story.

## A FEW EXAMPLES OF DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION IN THE 1930s AND 1940s

- **Change of names**

It must be reminded that all non Christians entering the Loreto convent were given new names that were of Christian origin. They were not allowed to play Volley Ball either and were told to make balls of sand to play with during recess. All this nonsense stopped by 1950 when questions were being put at the Legislative Assembly by influential members who dealt with these new challenges on an official level.

- **Primary schools**

**1940:** A group of learned Hindus in the village of Camp Fouquereaux decided to open a school for general education because they noticed that there were never enough seats for their children at the local school. This pattern was repeated especially in the region of Moka and Flacq where several villages opened their own schools.

**1950:** Unable to sustain the running of these schools, the supervising committee usually appealed to the Government to take over. One such school where Government stepped in helpfully was situated in Castel. However, the authorities wanted to give a new name to the school, that of a local land owner of Christian origin to the school. Given that the school was founded by Hindus, there was a huge protest and after much wrangling, the school kept its name and came to be known as Shri Shamboonath Government School.

- **Mr. Bundhoo**

He was a scholar who attended the Royal College at Curepipe in the second decade of the last Century. His reputation was made as a very good primary school teacher, but when the time came, he did not get a promotion as expected. According to his daughter, it was hinted to him beforehand to him that he should embrace Christianity but he refused. He wrote an anonymous letter to the press which was printed in *L'Oeuvre*. He was found out and was sent away without more ado.

- **Cultural values**

Several of the girls who have been to Catholic schools were easily influenced by the mention of hell in Bible classes which they attended regularly. They felt a necessity to be converted and one of them even had nightmares of burning in hell because of not belonging to the right community. Others were caned for speaking Bhojpuri among friends in school, or were addressed in insulting tones "So you did not get married, did you? on their first day of work at the hospital.

- **Mr. Alleesaib**

Only one of the three potential candidates was going to be promoted as inspector of schools. The first one was a Muslim, the second one a Protestant and a Hindu was third on the list. Given the state of things at that period in the thirties, number two came out first, although seniority was the rule. Mrs Bhunoo, his daughter, told us it was a hard blow for her father. He was deeply disappointed and saddened but had to carry on as best he could.

- **Lise Renee Rajahgopal, born Venchard**

This lady stated to me frankly that her father accepted to be baptized in order to get a job in the Police Force in the early 30s. According to several witnesses, this was common occurrence up to four decades in the last century either in government employment or in the private sector. It is well known that many of those who changed their religion in exchange for a job were ruthlessly rejected and looked down upon by members of their family as well as the community.

- **Deviamball Vencatasamy**

Her father, a graduate, was called upon to teach at the Royal College of Curepipe while the Second World War was raging. As soon as he appeared in class on his first day, all the white boys of the class walked out.

- **Injustices and inequalities**

Rajeshwarsing Seenundun told us that, after brilliantly passing the 6<sup>th</sup>. Standard exams, was refused admission at the Royal College in 1929 because he had not studied Latin. He had no other recourse but to work in the factory at Highlands from 5am to 5pm like his father before him.

There came a time when rumours were rife that some students knew beforehand about questions coming out in questionnaires of the Higher School Certificate examination. That was in 1926, the press mentioned it and it created fervent debates. However, was it a coincidence or not! The next year, two Muslim boys from the Rose Hill Mohamedan Aided School came out winners of the scholarships.

## CONCLUSION

Whatever could be the provisions of the law, the set up in Mauritius was such that non Indians got favours in education, employment and all public life for a very long time. Even if they were better qualified, those of Indian origin were not considered fit or worthy unless they showed an affinity which was acceptable and that was not on grounds of academic performance. It boiled down to changing one's religion. Become a Christian and one will immediately rise in status.

History of Mauritius shows the great struggle that went on starting well before the setting up of the Labour Party in 1936. Political pressure began to build up and the silent murmur became louder and louder. The press, such as *L'oeuvre*, *Arya Patrika*, *Arya Vir* and *Advance* helped to arouse the consciousness of the people until Government had to give in by setting up the Public Service Commission in the late forties of the last Century.

The culmination of political struggle was the 1948 Constitution which gave the right to vote to every single adult living on the island. This can be seen as the foundation of democracy in Mauritius. From then on, it was believed, any injustice will be questioned in the Legislative Assembly and non Christians were assured that injustices and discriminatory action of the past would disappear and they would be given their rightful place in society.

There is no doubt that there existed a way of thinking that was discriminatory towards a section of the Mauritian community, be it cultural, religious or otherwise.

Whilst a swallow does not make a summer, so can we say there is no smoke without fire. Our stories might be taken with a pinch of salt for lack of proof, but it is the duty of the Truth and Justice Commission to record in its report the facts that could be perceived as discrimination. If nothing else, we may call it a series of blunders based on unfair motives that was very distressing for a community who asked for nothing else but to live in peace and justice.

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VOLUME 3

**CONTEMPORARY HISTORY,  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

**PART V**

**HEALTH**



# PART V HEALTH

BENJAMIN MOUTOU

*Commissioner, TJC*

**THE HEALTH OF SLAVES,  
INDENTURED LABOURERS  
AND  
THEIR DESCENDANTS IN MAURITIUS**

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*“For years this little island was regarded as the Sanatorium of the East, and people flocked from the unhealthy heats of India to recover their shattered constitutions in the salubrious air of the Southern colony. But, since the outbreak of Malaria, the conditions have changed. It has been looked upon by the outside world with averted eye.”*

(Lieutenant-Governor Hubert Jerningham, 1892)

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# PART I : DIET AND NUTRITION

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This study provides a brief description and analysis of the dietary intake and nutritional status of slaves (imported mainly from Madagascar and Mozambique) and Indian indentured labourers, and their descendants on the Island of Mauritius, covering the French (1715-1810) and British (1810-1968) colonial periods, with some comparison with contemporary Mauritians. Those bondsmen were mostly employed as labourers on the sugar plantation. The quality of life of slaves or indentured is a complex topic since each plantation had its own unique way of being run, and their experiences on the plantation differed in their access to food, housing and clothing, and treatment and punishments.

Mauritius had no native inhabitants, and between 1642 and 1835 it was a classic slave society. Slavery dominated the Mauritian economy and way of life from the earliest colonial times until emancipation in 1835. The economy was dependent on the French planters, who were in turn dependent on slave labour. In between 1807, when slave trade was abolished by the British, and the abolition of slavery in 1835, slaves were illicitly imported from the East African coast to satisfy the labour demand in an expanding sugar economy. With the abolition of slavery in 1835, an alternative form of labour was found in the importation of indentured labourers mainly from India (Boodhoo 2010, Fokeer 1922, Teelock 1998, Valentine 2000).

Although slaves accounted for more than 75% of the island's population between the 1730s and the 1820s, information about most aspects of slave life remains sketchy, especially during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but relatively more information became available for the indentured labourers under the British administration. However, available information on food rations, diet and nutritional deficiency diseases was usually incomplete and sketchy. Moreover, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, not much was known about food and its relationship to health and disease. However, the nutritional requirements of slaves and indentured in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, were similar to what people require today, and they too needed a balanced diet (Allen 1999).

The owners most probably knew that the productivity of their field workers, and therefore their own profit, were related to their workers' diet, but they knew nothing of basic nutrition. Few people at that time understood what vitamins were and their connection to diseases. Hardly any slave owners knew how to create a balanced diet with appropriate amounts of nutrients. It should be noted, though, that slaves relied almost totally on their owners for their food provisions, whereas indentured labourers were given a food ration plus a basic wage. Some slaves and indentured could sometimes supplement their diet with food from provision grounds, fishing or gathering wild vegetables and fruits, although both groups frequently complained of inadequate or irregular food rations provided by the owners (Boodhoo 2010, Teelock 1998).

The nutrition of slaves and indentured will be described and analysed under the following headings: (i) Food supplies and consumption and dietary pattern; (ii) Malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies; (iii) Alcohol consumption, and (iv) Nutrition and Health Education. Regarding food supplies and consumption and dietary pattern, the information will be presented under the following periods; (i) Slavery during the French period; (ii) Slavery during the British period, (iii) Indentured 1835-1900, and (iv) The 20<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding the other sections, historical information is more sketchy and only information available for specific times will be presented, while we attempt to give as comprehensive a picture as possible.

## 2 FOOD SUPPLIES AND CONSUMPTION, AND DIETARY PATTERN

### 2.1 Slavery during the French Period (1715-1810)

#### *Le Code Noir* and Food Rations

During the early French occupation, the Island never attained food self-sufficiency and relied on France for its food supplies, including salted meat and fish, beans, oils and fats, biscuits and wine. Other foods needed to feed the population, like rice, maize and pulses, were imported from India and Madagascar.

*Le Code Noir* (or the *Black Code*) of 1685 enjoined slave-owners to provide food to their slaves as follows:

- Slaves aged 10 years and above: every week 2½ ‘*pots, mesure de Paris*’ of manioc flour or three cassava roots weighing at least 2½ pounds each, or equivalent foods, with 2 pounds of salted beef or 3 pounds of fish, or other foods in similar proportion. Provision of alcoholic drinks to slaves for subsistence was prohibited.
- Children from weaning age to 10 years: Half of the above food ration.

The above ration which provided only about 1,000 Kcal daily (500 kcal for children) was definitely inadequate to meet the total daily needs of the slaves who therefore had to produce or look for additional foods to supplement their rations. In fact, the land grants in the French period stipulated that one third of the land had to be planted in provisions for slaves (Teelock 1998). The fact that *Le Code Noir* contained clauses related to punishments for stealing food products and animals suggests that the foods rations were insufficient and that slaves had to steal for their subsistence. However, the stipulations of the *Code Noir* were rarely respected (Fokeer 1922).

The revised *Code Noir* of 1723 did not specify a food ration in quantitative terms but left it to the local administrators to decide, although their recommendations had to receive the prior approval of the French Crown before implementation.

#### Agriculture and food supplies

When Mahé de Labourdonnais arrived as Governor of the *Isle de France* and *Isle Bourbon* in 1735, there were 2,760 inhabitants on the island, including 1,448 slaves. When he left the Island in 1746, there were 3,000 whites, 600 Indian immigrants and coloured, and 14,400 slaves (Filliot 1974).

During the French occupation, Mascarene economic development was governed by Labourdonnais’s strategic considerations, with emphasis upon producing the foodstuffs and naval stores to the main French expeditionary forces in the Indian Ocean. The arrival of Pierre Poivre as the colony’s first Royal Comptroller (1767-72) heralded a serious attempt to encourage the large-scale production of tropical commodities such as cotton, indigo and spices. These attempts to transform the Island into a plantation colony failed. Competition from established producers of these commodities, periodic natural disasters which destroyed crops, and the lure of much more maritime activities combined to undercut the island’s potential development as a bastion of plantation agriculture. For four decades, the island served as an increasingly important commercial *entrepôt* (warehouse) for the Western Indian Ocean, especially when the island was designated a free port. The number of vessels calling at Port Louis each year rose from 78 in 1769 to a record high of 347 in 1803 (Allen 1999).

In an attempt to make the colony self-sufficient in food supplies and protect the inhabitants from famine, Labourdonnais introduced manioc or cassava (from Brazil and the Island of St. Jago) as a strategic staple food: cheap, abundant, and relatively secure from destruction by cyclones, as well as from the risk of capture in transit. He promoted the expansion of agriculture by the introduction of other products (rice, wheat, beans, oats and many other plants) from every known region of the tropical world. Salted beef, rice and other grains were imported from

Madagascar. Labourdonnais especially developed the sugar cane industry and built a flour mill as well as other factories (Anderson 1918, Fokeer 1922).

Sugar cane, first introduced by the Dutch during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, had been reintroduced following the French arrival in 1721. However, despite the active encouragement of Labourdonnais and his immediate successors, the cultivation of sugar cane soon languished to the point where the industry was unable even to satisfy the local demand for sugar. A growing demand for arrack, needed by the French naval expeditions, spurred a modest increase in production late in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. By 1810, the island had 9,000 to 10,000 *arpents* planted in sugar cane (Allen 1999).

In 1756, while many of the colony's planters became rich as a result of high income derived from their agricultural produce (to meet Government demand for food stuffs and naval supplies), the island could not feed itself and relied upon provisions from Ile Bourbon, Madagascar and India to survive. However, the agricultural sector was overall underdeveloped - in 1766, less than 200,000 of the island's 400,000 cultivable *arpents* had been distributed to colonists, and less than one-fourth of all granted land had been brought into production. In 1789, only 1,000 *arpents* were planted in cane and the colony contained only 8 to 10 sugar mills producing a mere 300 tons of sugar a year. On the other hand, the commercial sector was booming as a result of the designation of Port Louis as a free port in 1769. Therefore, the low level of commodity production at that time underscores the colonial propensity to pursue commercial rather than agricultural interests (Allen 1999).

#### Diet of slaves

Slaves were generally fed on high carbohydrate foods like manioc, sweet potatoes and maize, and for protein foods, they relied on lagoon fishing for fish, and some raised livestock for animal produce. According to Bernardin de St. Pierre, slaves were given 3 lbs of manioc daily (about 2,000 Kcal, negligible protein) or 2 lbs of maize (3,500 Kcal, moderate in protein). Usually the slaves started work at day-break with only a meal of boiled maize or manioc cake. After having laboured the whole day, the slave was obliged to search for his food in the woods and lived on unwholesome roots. White inhabitants did not eat maize or manioc, giving it instead to slaves, cattle and poultry (Filliot 1974, Fokeer 1922, Teelock 1998).

Apart from common diseases, Dazille also linked the poor health of slaves to their tasteless, monotonous and hard to digest diet based on manioc (often poorly cooked) and *brèdes*, and only a few could afford a *curry* of some animal and vegetable products with chillies. The Indian culinary was introduced early into the colony, as early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the Island housed many Indian, as well as African, Malagasy and Malayan slaves. About 10% of the colony's slaves were of Indian origin, although there was also a community of Indian merchants, artisans and craftsmen (Allen 1991, Dazille 1776).

The slave population grew steadily until the British conquest as follows:- 1735: 648 slaves, 1767: 15,207 slaves, 1787: 33,382 slaves, 1807: 65,367 slaves. In 1807, there were also 6,489 Whites and 5,912 free coloured inhabitants (See Chapter on "Disease Pattern").

## 2.2 Slavery during the British Period (1810-1835)

The formal incorporation of Mauritius into the British Empire in 1810 brought an end to the island's role as an important regional free port. The island lost its commercial position, and also many of the wealthier inhabitants returned to France with their money leading to the colony's economic hardship. Mauritian colonists eventually turned to sugar production for the imperial market. At the end of the French occupation 1806-10, some 9,000-10,000 *arpents* were planted in cane. However, it was not until late 1820s that sugar began to dominate the island's economy. In 1825, the repeal of the preferential tariff on West Indian sugar entering Britain revolutionised Mauritian agriculture. The area planted in cane dramatically increased to 51,000 *arpents*, and the island's metamorphosis into a sugar colony was under way (Allen 1999).

The local slave regime was, by many accounts, a rigorous one marked by high rates of mortality; it was also a regime which apparently became more oppressive as the cultivation of

sugar spread, the aim of the colonists being “to extract from the slave the utmost possible amount of labour” (Allen 1999).

### 2.2.1 Sea voyage

During their long ship voyages from the African coast to Mauritius, 30-40 days, slaves were fed on rice or maize and small portions of fish. Disease was commonplace and many died during the voyage from various disorders and infectious diseases, including smallpox. The crowded conditions on board the ship also caused huge mortality (Baker 1996).

### 2.2.2 Food production and food supplies to slaves

#### Food imports

Although prior to the Indian immigration in 1834, the French and African populations lived partially on locally produced wheat, maize, potatoes, beef, pork goat and milk (Wilson 1946), the shift to a single cash crop economy was accompanied by much increased imports of rice and wheat from Madagascar, India, South Africa and other countries. Even so, the massive contraction of land producing any other crop than sugar cane must have severely limited the variety of foods eaten by slaves, thus reducing the quality of their diet (Baker 1996).

#### Food supplies to slaves

The British administration took a keen interest to ensure the slave food provisions. Slave food habits continued on from the 18th century. The following systems of food procurement for slaves were used:

- i. Distribution of rations every day or every week;
- ii. Allocation of a plot of land (prescribed by Law) to slaves for cultivation of staples (this dated from the French period);
- iii. Slaves were permitted to farm individual plots of land and grow their own provisions and rear cattle and poultry.

None of these could actually ensure an adequate supply and variety of food to slaves. Owners who preferred to distribute rations depended on availability and financial liquidity, quite apart from their own willingness to follow the legal requirements which were quite low. Moreover, locally-grown supplies were often destroyed by cyclones and drought, causing serious shortage bordering on famine. It is not known what each estate actually produced and whether this was sufficient. (Teelock 1998).

A 70-kg. male slave working on a rice plantation is estimated to expend about 4,400 kcal during an “easy day” of repair work and 8,700 kcal on a “hard day” during the harvest, making an average energy expenditure of 5,500 kcal over the year in order to maintain the slave’s body weight and strength (Blogen 2004). So, if we suppose that a male adult slave in Mauritius weighing 60 kg., he would need between 3,800 to 7,500 kcal per day with an average of 4,700 kcal. It is known that work on the sugar plantations was more intense compared to other cultivations. The duration and amount of labour required by each slave varied with the season; hence, the slaves’ energy expenditure also changed with seasons.

Therefore, the rations provided were barely sufficient and slaves had to produce, steal or gather in the wild, foods to supplement their rations. The task system allowed time to slaves who finished early and still had the strength; they were able to attend to personal tasks like gardening, fishing or gathering wild foods to add supplemental foods to their diets; however, the system was unfair to the weaker or older slaves. But there is no evidence of the types and amounts of those supplemental foods. This supplementation allowed the slaves a more varied diet than just the rationed food they were given (Blogen 2004).

Despite the variety of methods employed to provide food for slaves, their diet was nutritionally inadequate: the aim was to barely cover the caloric needs but the diet was inadequate

in protein (especially if they did not fish nor had livestock) and vitamins and minerals (if they did not have vegetables gardens nor collect wild fruits and vegetables).

### Changes in diet 1810-1833

The staples of the slave diet were rice, mainly imported from India, and loaves or cakes made from the locally-grown manioc root. Some masters continued to supply maize, which had been displaced as the main local food crop when manioc was introduced by Labourdonnais. Potatoes were also a common item but green vegetables only rarely supplied. Protein was occasionally available in the form of salted meat or fish but infrequently enough to be regarded as a special treat. Typical festive provisions for New Year's day were a bowl of salt, three bowls of rice, a little meat and a glass of 'arrack' for each slave. Rice and maize were the two principal food items in the slave diet. The sheer monotony of the diet was indeed the commonest impression at that time. The manioc cake was quite unpalatable and had to be gulped down by drinking large quantities of water (Anti-Slavery Reporter 1831, Baker 1996, Telfair 1830).

With all its minor variations, the diet of slaves seriously threatened their physical well-being. The slave diet was deficient in the calories necessary for physical labour, in protein needed to rebuild and repair body tissues and in vitamins to ward off infections and deficiency diseases. If the slaves' diet ever approached adequate standards for maintaining health and sustaining hard labour, it was through their own efforts rather than through their masters' indulgence. Protein was much more likely to come from fishing or from livestock such as pigs and fowls reared in their own time, than from their masters' food allowances. Green vegetables which they grew themselves were the likeliest sources of vitamins and other nutrients (Baker 1996).

Manioc cakes were less nutritious than rice. On the other hand, a diet too dependent on rice increased the risk of beriberi; in Mauritius, beriberi was identified, even though its dietary causes were not known (at that time). Indeed Charles Telfair (1830) referred to its ravages on an 'epidemic' scale (Baker 1996).

### Food rations

Food provision to slaves consisted of maize, rice, manioc, sweet potatoes and was distributed by owners according to their availability. Food rations were normally distributed to slaves on a daily or weekly basis. The 2 lbs of maize given in the 'French' period were converted by the British as being equivalent to 5 lbs of manioc or 30 ounces of prepared manioc, or 5 lbs of sweet potato (*patate*) which was not available in the rainy season between October and February. When these were not available, it was substituted by 1½ lbs of rice. On some estates, rations would be distributed straight after work in the evenings, so that slaves could begin preparing dinner. Sundays were also ration days. This daily ration provided 2,500 to 3,500 kcal of high bulk and high carbohydrate food; while maize and rice contained moderate amounts of protein, manioc had negligible amounts. Therefore, the slaves had to supplement their diet with other foods (protein, vegetables and fruits) by their own means. Telfair claimed he provided each slave with 600 pounds of rice or 1,000 pounds of maize per year, i.e. equivalent to 3,000 to 5,000 kcal per day, apart from vegetables, yams, *cambards*, sweet potatoes, and groundnuts grown on his estate. But the slave ration consisting of only 1.25 pounds of maize or 3 pounds of manioc was also reported by Governor Cole in 1825 (Allen 1999, Teelock 1998, Telfair 1830).

Rice was given when other foods were not available. On some estates, rice was given once a week on Sundays, while on weekdays, they were fed manioc. Aside from manioc, slaves received half a herring and 1 lb of salt every Sunday. Disputes with owners occurred over the measurement of rations, with complaints being lodged about smaller measures being used (Teelock 1998, Boodhoo 2010).

On large plantations, slaves also received salt, 2 ounces of salted fish or meat (occasionally) and a cup of 'arrack'. On some estates, slaves could take as much cane juice as they liked. Women who were nursing were fed from 'the master's table' for 2-3 months. Slaves also grew their own provisions: *brède* (greens) while those in forest estates could hunt for the *tandrac* (hedgehog). Coastal estates had many slaves employed as fishermen and others picking 'bambaras' ('sea slug') (Teelock 1998).

If food supplies to slaves on small estates were deficient, it was felt that this was compensated for by the less strenuous work of cultivating manioc, grain and vegetable gardens and transporting these goods to market. Some slaves had access to provision grounds, while others were permitted to engage in petty trade (Teelock 1998, Allen 1999).

#### Cash crop v/s staple foods

By the 19th century, the practice of reserving one-third of estate land for planting food provisions for slaves was not widespread and many estates were in a state of abandon. Sugar cane became more popular and profitable and because of the labour shortage, slaves were not allocated to subsistence crops that would not yield revenue. Between 1808 and 1830, land devoted to sugar production more than quadrupled to 11% of the island surface area and over the same period, the area of cultivation of manioc or cassava (a staple of the slave diet) had been more than halved. Far more spectacularly, the area under cultivation of the various grain crops almost disappeared. Therefore, when required, sugar estate owners bought food supplies from Government or small estates to feed their slaves (Baker 1996, Teelock 1998).

Between a third and a half of estate lands were cultivated in sugar and the rest in other cash crops (cloves and coffee) or food crops (manioc, maize, sweet potato) or animal farming (cattle, pig, poultry) or covered with forest. Food crops were probably planted by able slaves, after the sugar harvest, with the weak slaves employed in cattle and poultry farming (Teelock 1998).

#### Supplementing the food ration of slaves

A feature that developed in later years of slavery was the practice of providing slaves on sugar estates with individual plots to farm for their own provisions to supplement their food rations. The slaves produced mainly root crops (high in carbohydrate) and some vegetables, but the type and amount of food produced varied widely from estate to estate. Other slaves fished, hunted or simply gathered wild fruits and vegetables: *brèdes* (greens) which grew in abundance all over the island. Therefore, slaves had traditionally supplemented the rations given by the owner by procuring their own food through a variety of means. A Civil Commissary observed that the quality of food was good by looking at the 'state of the slaves' (Teelock 1998).

A wide variety of some 78 types of vegetables and fruits grew on the Island but it is not known whether slaves, in fact, enjoyed the same variety in their diet on a regular basis (Telfair 1830, Baker 1996).

The smallest estates produced only what was necessary for subsistence. The living conditions of the slave and owner were not vastly different and many of the owners were themselves destitute and could not feed slaves. In smaller estates that have enough land, it was common practice to allow slaves as much as they liked. However, there were wide differences in the amount and variety of food available between, and within, sugar producing districts, as well as between large and small estates (Teelock 1998).

On the sugar estates, slaves were allowed to consume sugar cane and sugar, adding considerable calories to their diet. So, despite their heavy work, they were reported to appear 'well-nourished'. On some estates, slaves freely drank molasses and cane juice with a marked increase in their calorie intake, as carbohydrate-rich sugar provides considerable energy (Teelock 1998).

#### Women and children

Males outnumbered females and only a small proportion of adult slaves lived in family groups, while the majority was single-parent, overwhelmingly female headed. Slave women faced immense difficulties to be able to care for, or even feed, their young children. Slave women often complained of ill-treatment, sexual exploitation, were obliged to work unduly hours despite having young children to care. And the insecurity of women necessarily increased the vulnerability of children and the impermanence of family life. If babies suffered from inadequate maternal care, they did not remain babies for long. As children, they soon faced directly the mistreatment (e.g. they were put in chains, flogged) which had made maternal care so difficult. Clearly, the nature of

the power structure meant that children could not rely on support from parents who were themselves so vulnerable to their masters (Baker 1996).

Slaves were provided mainly with starchy foods in their rations. But if meat became available, plantation labourers were first to receive it, and the last to receive meat would be the children and the aged for this was considered too costly. The owner considered the provision of food as an investment in labour and constantly neglected children who needed proper nutrition for growth (Teelock 1998).

Slave women had to carry out their domestic tasks in addition to their agricultural work. Based on a study in Nyasaland, on average, every woman spent about 7 hours daily on such routine domestic tasks as preparing cereals, fetching water and collecting fuel and leaves from the bush for food and food preparation (Proc. Nutr. Soc. 1946).

#### Complaints and punishments regarding food

Between 1832 and 1835, common complaints registered related to lack of proper food (in quantity and/or quality) and meal times, overwork, Sunday work and ill-treatment. The biggest culprits were the richest districts on the island and in particular, the large owners. Priority was given to work, and meal times shortened or very often done away with altogether. Some owners supplied cooked food and other uncooked food to reduce the time allowed for meal break so that slaves would not waste time preparing it, although the slaves would have preferred otherwise (Baker 1996, Teelock 1998).

There were also many complaints relating to punishment (flogging with leather hide) for stealing or allegedly stealing food (mostly for personal consumption or friends and rarely for sale). Punishments were also meted out to children for stealing or alleged stealing, or even to slaves for complaining. On some estates, the denial of food became a form of punishment. Slaves placed in the stocks or in prison, for example, often went for days on nothing more than manioc root and water (Teelock 1998).

### 2.3 Indentured labourers 1835-1900

Despite the clandestine importation of more than 30,000 slaves during the first years of British rule, it became apparent during the 1820s that the local slave population was inadequate to meet the labour needs of the colony's expanding sugar industry; this situation was compounded by the high mortality among slaves, especially during the cholera epidemic of 1819. After the abolition of slavery in 1835, as all the ex-slaves abandoned the sugar plantation (as a result of their bitter experience) after their period of apprenticeship (March 1839), indentured labourers were imported from India to supply the colony with cheap labour. By 1846, Indian immigrants comprised more than 35% of the colony's total population and soared to 192,634 in 1861 or 62% of the total population. By early 1880s, importation of Indian indentured labourers already showed signs of exhaustion and ended by 1910 (Allen 1999).

The island was fast changing into a sugar economy. By the mid-1850s, production exceeded 100,000 tons a year, and Mauritius, fortunes were linked irrevocably to those of sugar. The 1850s and early 1860s was commonly regarded as the heyday of the Mauritian sugar industry and the island's economic prosperity. However, by 1890s, the island was again facing severe economic difficulties (Allen 1999).

#### 2.3.1 Sea voyage

Act XV of 1842 redefined the Indian indenture system by laying down new structures for recruitment and registration at the Indian depots and regulating the sea voyage. Concerning food, a supply of rice, bread, biscuit, flour, oatmeal, to the amount of seven pounds and five gallons of water was proposed every week for each passenger. Food was also to be provided to each passenger for 48 hours after their landing at the Depot in Mauritius or during their stay at the quarantine stations. This was just a survival ration providing less than 2,000 Kcal and 2.5 litres of water per day (Boodhoo 2010).

On board the ships, only biscuits were distributed in the morning, while cooked rice and *dholl* were served in the afternoon. However, Indians were not used to European type of food, such as biscuits (sometimes infested with weevil or hard to break). Indians were used to eating *chupaties* (unleavened cakes made of flour). Later, rice became the main food item on board. Moreover, children and infants did not have any proper food. Women who lost their appetite while they were sick were unable to feed their babies. This was reported to be a major cause of death among infants and babies during the voyage (Boodhoo 2010).

On board the ships, Indians were affected by three main diseases: typhoid fever, diarrhoea, and dysentery and cholera. Overcrowding on ships, insanitary conditions, poor quality of food and drinking water, and insufficient ventilation contributed to high morbidity and mortality (Boodhoo 2010)

### 2.3.2 Food production and supplies

On some estates, Indians cultivated vegetables and reared animals such as cows, goats or pigs. Estate owners allowed the rearing of animals inside the camp, in order to encourage labourers to stay on their estates. In the same way, some planters provided land to labourers for them to cultivate gardens (Boodhoo 2010).

Rice and *dholl* and other Indian food items were imported. Rice was imported from Madagascar and Java, and increasingly from Bengal, when Indian immigration intensified. The quantity of rice imported and supplied to the workers depended sometimes on food prices abroad. The 1860s were particularly difficult when the price of rice shot up in India, because of poor harvests caused by floods. In the second half of the century, Indians could buy certain food items from the shops on the estates or from the hawkers. There were complaints about the high prices of foods such as poultry, pigs, goat, fruits and vegetables (Boodhoo 2010).

Many Indians had other food resources which they produced themselves, such as milk, poultry, meat and vegetables. The sale of animals brought a substantial increase in their revenue. This trend, which started in the mid 1850s, accelerated in the decades that followed, as Indians moved to set up independent enterprise, as soon as they terminated their contract with the estates. However, not all estates of the island provided facilities to Indians to keep animals or cultivate gardens (Boodhoo 2010).

Indians could improve their consumption of vegetables and milk following the *morcellement*, when they moved to the Indian villages and produced vegetables and reared cows, apart from growing sugar cane (Boodhoo 2010).

### 2.3.3 Indian diet

Most of the Indians came from rice-and-flour eating areas in India. On the estates, they were provided with food items that were familiar to them: rice, flour and *dholl*. They refused to consume manioc and maize or food unknown to them. Rice remained the main ingredient in any meal, but it sometimes happened that its importation was affected by poor production in India, the main supplier. Immigrants, drawn from different parts of the subcontinent, had many variations in cooking and eating customs (often based on the caste appurtenance). Due to their various taboos, their food at first was simple and monotonous. Some variations became possible only on some estates, where they were allowed to do some gardening, and rear animals and poultry. When shops were opened on the estates, more Indian food items, such as spices, became available (Boodhoo 2010).

### 2.3.4 Food rations of indentured labourers

One of the regulations of Ordinance No.6 of 1845 defined the weekly provision of food rations. Before 1842, 'usual rations' were mentioned without giving any details. Indians complained of food items that were unfamiliar to them. Employers had, therefore, to provide Indian food items such as, rice, ghee (clarified butter), *dholl*, salted fish, tamarind, salt and sometimes tobacco. Attempts to provide local food items like manioc and maize to Indians failed. Planters also preferred to distribute imported rice instead of cultivating local foodstuffs on their estates. The Indians, who formed the bulk of the population (in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century), were mostly semi-vegetarians, whereas ex-slaves consumed mainly rice, *brèdes* (greens), salted fish or boiled salted beef. The Whites ate rice, salted beef and fish, and a lot of vegetables. The Typical Indian meals included rice, *dholi*, vegetable curry and salted fish, garnished with *chutney* (Boodhoo 2010).

Food rations were provided to indentured labourers in lieu of part of their wages, i.e. they received five rupees or ten shillings a month as wages and food and a clothing allowance, in addition to free housing on the estates and free medical attendance. The daily rations were as follows: two pounds of rice for one man, one and a half pound for one woman, half a pound of *dholi*, two ounces each of salt, mustard, oil and tamarind. This was a ration high in carbohydrate, moderate in protein, low in fat, with low levels of B-vitamins. The ration (if provided in full and regularly) was slightly more than adequate for an adult's needs; however, it often had to be shared with other members of the family. Labourers who freely drank cane juice experienced a marked increase in calories as carbohydrate-rich sugar provided considerable energy (Boodhoo 2010, Mishra 2009).

Estate owners often provided either salted fish or *dholi*, but not both, saying that Indians preferred *dholi* to fish. However, this ration did not cover the needs of labourers with families, women and children too young to work. Those who became sick, while at work, received the whole ration, while those who did not attend work at all did not receive any ration. Rations were distributed on Saturdays during the 'entre coupe' (non-harvest) season and on Sundays during the harvest season. Rations and wages were given to labourers who fell sick or had an accident at work. Those who were sick and absent from work did not receive any wages or rations. But working conditions varied widely from estate to estate (Boodhoo 2010).

For the field work on the estates, the labourers were organised into three gangs (McMillan 1914):

*La Grande Bande* and *La Petite Bande*, with weekly rations of: 12½ lbs of rice, 2 lbs of *dholi*, ¼ lb of oil and ¼ lb of salt. This ration providing 3,800 Kcal daily is adequate to meet the energy and protein needs of one labourer, and if supplemented with some vegetables and fruits, would also cover his vitamin and mineral needs; but this ration was also shared with other members of the family.

The third gang consists of the boys "chokras" with weekly rations of: 10½ lbs of rice, 2 lbs of *dholi*, ¼ lb of oil and ¼ lb of salt. This ration providing 3,300 kcal daily largely exceeded the energy and protein needs of a 10 year-old boy, but was shared with other members of the family.

However, work contracts were not uniform, with different allowances for foods, lodging and medical care, although there were suggestions to uniformise all contracts (Boodhoo 2010).

Food rations remained a major issue throughout indenture as rations were often reduced or stopped altogether for those absent from work or sick, thus causing great difficulties to workers and their families. Labourers complained about food ration distribution as being irregular or insufficient (Boodhoo 2010). The Royal Commission (1865) found that it was a universal practice to give ¼ lb of rice over the 1½ lb, as stipulated in their contract. Further, salt fish was replaced by a double allowance of *dholi* (Teelock 2009).

## 2.4 The 20<sup>th</sup> century

While the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a recovery from the various natural and economic disasters of the 1890s, the problems facing the Mauritian economy remained fundamentally unchanged. The outbreak of World War I in 1914 spurred a short-lived recovery in sugar prices which soared to astronomical levels by 1920 before falling back to pre-war levels by 1925. The island's mono-crop economy could not cope with the global depression that began in late 1929 and the social and economic distress created by this situation led to widespread political protest that contributed to the rise of the Mauritius Labour Party in 1936 to represent the interests of agricultural and other workers, and small planters. This set the stage for the movement leading towards Independence which came on 12 March 1968 (Allen 1999).

By the 1940s, the main staple food of the Island was rice, particularly in the case of the Indian section of the population; pulses were also used, and a valuable element was the oil in which the foods were cooked. Animal protein was mostly in the form of fish, meat being scarce. A limited amount of wheat flour was used; fruits and green vegetables were cheap and plentiful at most times of the year. Milk and dairy produce were rarely used owing to the scanty supply. The diet as a whole contained too large a proportion of carbohydrates to protein. Of the vitamins, there appeared to be a shortage of vitamins A and B, though not usually to a serious degree; there was some indication of a calcium deficiency (HMSO 1943).

In fact, in 1939, the Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire (HMSO 1939) noted with regards to the Colonial territories:

- i. that the problem of proper nutrition was of great importance to the British Empire, involving as it does, general administration, particularly in regard to agriculture, public health work, and the maintenance of virile populations;
- ii. that throughout the greater part of the Colonial Empire there was a low standard of living in which ignorance was an important factor;
- iii. that malnutrition was one of the chief causes of the excessive infant mortality in most Colonial territories;
- iv. that the single most striking feature was the almost complete absence of milk and animal products from most tropical diets.

The Committee had no doubt that improved nutrition could bring great benefits to the general improvement in the standard of health and well-being in the Colonies. It made several recommendations to improve nutrition and it was left to each Colonial Government to decide on their application in its own territory. The Committee considered the first requisite was the supply of energy needs and an attempt to increase the quantity of foodstuffs consumed by increasing the variety in order to improve its nutritional quality. Because of the low energy yield per acre of animal products, the Committee recommended a combination of cereals and legumes as nutritionally valuable, as well as soya beans, groundnuts, red palm oil, fruits and green leafy vegetables. Animal products were regarded as most desirable (although their energy yield per acre was low), and livestock production would also contribute to agricultural development. The Committee thought that fish was the animal product which might be more useful than any other in supplementing Colonial diets and encouraged the development of Colonial fishery resources. Although the Committee considered milk to be the 'most valuable of all foods', it pointed to the dangers of contamination of fresh whole milk in tropical climates and considered cheese, curds and ghee to be less risky. It also suggested the import of dried skimmed milk (as a relatively cheap source of protein, calcium and B-vitamins) by the colonies (at any rate for use in bulk) to partially make up for the shortfall in local milk production and increased consumption (HMSO 1939).

#### 2.4.1 Food rationing during the Second World War

Until the First World War (1914-1919), the bulk of imported rice was paddy. The grains were husked in the home by pestle and mortar, followed by sifting. These implements were a feature in almost every Indian home. During and immediately after WWI, refined rice replaced the paddy. Although at first the rice was unpopular, one of the common complaints being that "it did not hold in the stomach", it was soon accepted generally. The supply of all imported foods, i.e. cereals, pulses, meats, dried fish and oil was constant throughout the pre-WWII years (Wilson 1946).

During WWII a food rationing system was generally implemented mostly through Chinese shops. At no time did rations furnish more than 2,000 kilocalories per person; at some periods, the rations only furnished 1,400 kcal. Sweet potatoes and cassava were not rationed and generally used, but would be too bulky and virtually impossible to make up for the 800 kcal deficit (it was estimated that 2,800 kcal was the minimal requirement for a typical labourer during the crop period). Apart from bread, which was not always available and had to be made from ration flour, no other energy foods were available. Although white sugar was not rationed, the ration included 125 grams of brown sugar per day (equivalent to 600 kcal), which is approximately twice the

amount of sugar consumed per day per man-value pre-WWII. Sweet potato was generally disliked and was chiefly used in mixture with flour in chapattis. Cassava was appreciated by all, and maize was most popular among Creoles (not Indians) (Wilson 1946).

In 1941, the Labour Department estimated that in the inter-crop season, the typical labourer would be consuming 2,700 to 2,900 kilocalories and around 3,200 kcal during the sugar cane harvest season. Labourers cutting cane during the 1942 harvest were found to be consuming approximately 2,450 kcal and 2,600 during 1943. The calorie supply of field labourers during this period averaged at 2,300 kcal. During 1944, harvest labourers were eating approximately 2,800 calories. (Wilson 1946).

Visits to labourers' homes during the war period confirmed extreme feeding difficulties. The failure of rice supplies and its substitution by flour which, unlike rice, must be prepared in some way before cooking, led to general nutritional malaise. Apart from bread, the only ways known to the local population for preparing flour involved the liberal use of oil and frying, which caused digestive problems, when consumed in large amounts at that time (Wilson 1946).

#### 2.4.2 Food supplies

Food supplies in the 1940s were dominated by the import of the staple rice (60,000 tons) followed by *dhol* (3,000 tons) and lentils (2,000 tons), salted fish, soya oil (1,000 tons) and potatoes (1,000 tons) for a population of over 400,000. Several thousands of heads of cattle normally came from Madagascar. Considerable quantities of butter, ghee, cheese, wheat flour, lard and various other items, which the Island could hardly produce for itself, were also imported. Despite the rising cost of rice import, the possibility of making greater use of locally-produced foodstuffs as a partial substitute for rice was considered but it was feared that it would be resisted, due to ingrained food habits (HMSO 1943).

There was a low consumption of dietary nutrients even between 1925 and early 1942, after which the food conditions changed owing to the war. Protein was adequate, but there were serious deficits in niacin and moderate deficits in thiamine, riboflavin, calcium and vitamin C. (Wilson 1946).

Furthermore, it was shown in the Annual Report of the Health Department in 1936 that a hypothetical dietary, yielding some 63 grams of protein and 2,800 calories, was well within the economic reach of the average agricultural labourer and his family. It was also pointed out in this Report that pulses, leafy vegetables and a small variety of tomato, all commonly consumed, would supply sufficient protective elements. A possibility of insufficiency of animal protein appeared to be the most deficient feature of the labourer's dietary (Wilson 1946).

British experts in London estimated that the daily energy requirements for adult workers in the colonies were as follow in table 1 (Proc. Nutr. Soc. 1946):

	Heavy work	Light work
Male	2,460 to 3,125	2,146 to 2,560
Female	2,340 to 2,825	2,070 to 2,550

In 1942-43, there was serious shortage of essential foodstuffs (that continued until 1945). The amount available was the bare minimum, and the supplies of animal fats, edible oils and protein were insufficient to maintain a reasonable level of nutrition. As a result, evidence of deficiency diseases increased in hospital and dispensary practice. In 1946, food supplies improved (especially in the case of rice, cattle and salted fish) except for wheat flour, *dhol*, bacon, ham, salted meat and lard. The food balance sheet of 1948 showed an overall increase in the supplies of some foods, notably rice and fresh milk, but low supplies of B-vitamins. However, the food balance sheet contained insufficient information on locally produced food supplies. It was notable that a high proportion of calories was obtained from sugar (20% of total calories). The colony was

producing relatively little food at that time, viz. maize, insignificant quantities of rice, some potatoes and other root crops, vegetables and fruits. The bulk of the food was, accordingly, imported from the East and Far East and from Australia. The whole island economy was dependent on a single crop (sugar cane) which constituted 97% of the domestic export value. As a result of the higher prices paid for sugar in the 1950s, land formerly used to produce food crops was diverted to sugar cane plantations, thus making locally-produced foods (including animal protein and vegetables) more expensive (MHD 1943, MHD 1945, MHD 1946, MHD 1948, MHD 1950, MHD 1952).

Based on food supplies data, the average calorie supply per man-value was estimated at 2,487 kcal/day and protein 54.9 g/day during the period 1925-39; in 1940, the figures were 2,774 kcal and 59 g protein respectively. Food supplies were at a lowest during 1942-43, with an energy supply per man-value of 2,023 kcal/day and protein 48 g/day before rising again as from 1944. During the war period, there was therefore a significant drop in the supplies of calorie, protein as well as certain vitamins and minerals like calcium, vitamin A and B-complex vitamins, indicating the possibility of hunger and malnutrition during the period 1942-44 (Wilson 1946).

Rice provided 57 percent of calories pre-WWII but by 1944, wheat was supplying 42 percent of total calories, causing a major change in food habit. This change from rice to wheat flour occurred suddenly as a result of the Japanese occupation of Rangoon (Burma) (from whence the bulk of the colony's rice supplies were imported). There was also a marked fall in the supply of pulses, an important source of protein and B-vitamins in the mostly vegetarian diet of the Indian population. However, the slightly higher protein content of wheat flour compared to rice, made good the protein deficit quantitatively, but not the B-complex vitamins deficit. Rice as the main staple was largely replaced by wheat flour, maize and manioc during the war period (Wilson 1946).

In 1940, nearly 40% of the Island's surface (total area 460,775 acres) was under agriculture, of which the major part (151,000 acres) was under sugar cane plantation. Various food crops were also cultivated on a much smaller area of about 9,600 acres, including manioc, maize, rice, potatoes, ground nuts, sweet potatoes, taro (*arouille*), bananas, pineapple, coconut, vegetables, orchards, tea and coffee (HMSO 1943).

#### 2.4.3 Food consumption and diet

From enquiries made by the Labour Department in 1938 and 1942, a field labourer consumed (per man-value) about 480 grams of rice, 75g flour or bread, 40 grams pulses, 20g potato, 20g manioc, 17g fresh/salted fish, 4g meat, 70g leafy and other vegetables, 30g milk, 10g fruit, 60g sugar and 18g oil per day in the pre-WWII years (i.e. pre-rationing). Such a diet would supply 3,000 calories and 70 grams of total protein. The field labourer consumed somewhat less (2,800 calories) intercrop and somewhat more (3,200 calories) during harvest. There was a calorie shortage compared to the pre-war period in the diet of the labourer during 1942, 1943 and to a lesser extent in 1944 (-22%, -19% and -12% respectively). Periodical examination of the labourers' diet during the period 1942-43 revealed a serious fall in protein consumption during 1942-43 (a mean of 38g in 1942). Of perhaps greater importance as far as the working efficiency of the labourer is concerned, is the sharp fall in the B-complex vitamins in the labourer's diet in 1943-44 (Wilson 1946).

After 1942, the ration of flour was generally consumed by Indians chiefly in the form of *farahatas*, whereas Creoles ate noodles and bread as well. Curries were eaten at each meal and were most often made from green bananas, pawpaw, Jack and bread-fruits. *Brèdes* (green leafy vegetables) and *pommes d'amour* (a small tomatoes) chutney were frequently eaten, the latter raw and generally accompanied by chillies, ginger, tamarinds, onions, garlic; coconut and mint were also habitually used (Wilson 1946).

Fish and octopus were eaten daily in the fishing villages. Fish was sold daily in coastal villages and on most estates, while it was less available in towns, and frequency of purchase depended on the income level. Salted fish and *bomli* (dried Bombay duck) were sold in all Chinese shops and eaten once or twice a week. Indians ate fish (fresh or salted) more often, and meat or eggs less often, while Creoles ate meat several times a month. Very little milk was consumed generally (Wilson 1946).

*Brèdes* generally grow wild and were normally eaten several times a week. Two meals were eaten daily, in the morning and the evening. The main item of both meals in the case of Indians, consisted of 1 or 2 *farahtas*, with a curry or *fricassée* and chutney or *bouillon*. In some villages, flour and sweet potato mixture in a ratio of 1:1 was used for making *farahta* and to make the meal more substantial. Oil was used in the preparation of all dishes (Wilson 1946).

Goat meat was eaten on a small scale by Hindus, in the lower groups, once or twice a week in small amounts. Creoles, on the other hand, ate varied sources of animal food, whenever they could get it, and generally managed to have some sort of animal food at least three times a week (Wilson 1946).

*Brèdes* (green leafy vegetables) were eaten practically every day by Hindus and Creoles. They were often picked wild. The two common methods of preparation, namely a *bouillon* in which the water is eaten with rice, and *touffé*, that is, steamed with a little vegetable oil, entailed relatively little loss of vitamins; only some 50% of the vitamin C, the most labile vitamin, being lost in each case (Wilson 1946).

The nutritional profile of the typical diet of an Indian agricultural worker in the 1930s was estimated to provide 2,800 kcal, with the following nutrient to energy ratios: carbohydrate 74%, protein 8% and fat 18%, i.e. a high carbohydrate diet, low in fat and moderate in protein (MHD 1936).

#### 2.4.4 Nutritional quality of diet

Data from a survey on the cost of living conducted in 1941 showed that calories, protein and iron were approximately adequate in all income groups, with higher intake of protein, iron and calcium in the upper income groups, due to higher consumption of fish, meat, eggs, wheat flour and milk. Thiamine (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), Vitamin A and ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) were low in all groups. Parboiled<sup>1</sup> rice, the variety generally consumed locally, contained appreciable amounts of B vitamins, but unfortunately, the cooking water was generally thrown away with loss of thiamine and riboflavin (Wilson 1946).

The daily use of green leafy vegetables (*brèdes*) and tomatoes (*pommes d'amour*) which grew wild and abundantly all over the island, by the whole population was an excellent habit. Those leafy vegetables supplied most of the vitamin A, and vitamin C, and an appreciable proportion of the calcium and B-vitamins requirements for the bulk of the population. The use of spices and chillies added flavour to the predominantly vegetarian diet (Wilson 1946).

Parboiled rice is a fairly good source of vitamins of the B-complex vitamins. In fact, the drop in the supply of B-vitamins since 1942 was due chiefly to replacement of parboiled rice by white flour. The practice of discarding the soaking and boiling water during rice cooking entailed the loss of 55-80% of the vitamin B1. In the field labourer's diet, 75% of the total protein was furnished by cereals (mainly rice and flour), 15% by pulses, and only 4.7% by animal food (Wilson 1946).

#### 2.4.5 Children's diet

Babies were often breastfed until two years of age, although they frequently received a supplement of local 'corn-flour' (in fact, manioc starch), when only two or three months old. At about six months, they were given bread and began to eat *farahta* (Indian pancake) at a year or eighteen months. Faulty infant feeding, especially weaning, was a cause of malnutrition and high infant mortality (Wilson 1946). A pre-war survey showed 95% of school children brought a meal to school consisting mainly of *farahta*, followed by maize, bread or rice supplemented chiefly with vegetables and sometimes with animal protein (mainly for semi-skilled workers)(20%) or pulses (10%), plus sweetened tea or water, and 25% had some milk. The school snack provided about 400 kcal and 10 grams protein. 86% of schools reported a deterioration of the apparent health and energy of pupils since the war (Wilson 1946).

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<sup>1</sup> Parboiling is a process whereby the rice is soaked sometimes as long as 4 days and then steamed for 10 to 20 minutes. This allows the B-vitamins to diffuse into the endosperm and prevents excessive loss during milling.

## 3 MALNUTRITION AND NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES

### 3.1 Malnutrition

#### 3.1.1 Slaves

##### Diet and mortality

Even with the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, there was no improvement in the conditions of slaves on the plantations. The 1832 Census showed high mortality amongst slaves; thus, little changed regarding slave nutrition and health (Boodhoo 2010, Teelock 1998).

During the British period, owners normally gave priority to slave labour for food provisions at the expense of children. The vicious cycle of malnutrition and infectious diseases resulted in high mortality and growth retardation in the early years of childhood. It was only when children entered the labour force that the slave-owners would provide them with a more varied diet. It was also possible that slave parents supplemented their children's diet but the extent of this is not known (Teelock 1998).

Slaves in Mauritius, whether male or female, did not often live longer than middle age. If high mortality rates reflect harsh living conditions, the Mauritian slave regime was particularly cruel at this level (Valentine 2000).

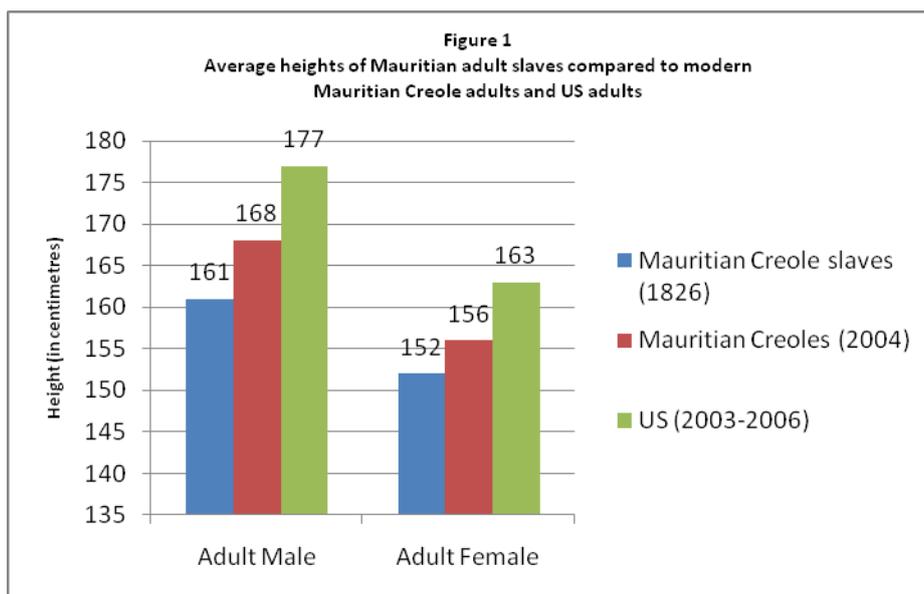
##### Height of slaves

Height-for-age of children is accepted as an indicator of the long-term (chronic) nutritional status in childhood. There is evidence that the nutrition of Mauritian slaves was inadequate. Adult human height is the result of both genetic and nutrition: height is affected by occurrences in childhood as well as by genetic inheritance. A lack of suitable food, disease and too much physical activity – such as overwork – in childhood all reduce the nutrients available to the growing body, and result in decreasing average heights (Baker 1996, Teelock 1998, Valentine 2000, WHO ...).

A comparison of the heights of 3,739 slave children aged 4 to 18 years, with the NCHS<sup>2</sup> Growth Charts made in 1826, showed that the heights of Mauritian slave children were significantly below the NCHS reference throughout the age range studied. These differences in heights may have a genetic component, particularly since some Mauritian children had Indian and Malay ancestry, but it seems likely that malnutrition, disease, and hard work played a part in keeping the slave children short in stature. At 18 years of age, boys were about 25 cm shorter and girls about 15 cm shorter than the NCHS reference for the respective sex (Valentine 2000). Both slave boys' and girls' growth curves started to level off much earlier than the NCHS growth curves, indicating that the nutrition of slave children was inadequate to support growth, as well as hard physical labour to which they were subjected at a young age. Figure 1 compares the heights of Mauritian Creole slaves (i.e. born in Mauritius), and modern-day Mauritian Creole adults and US adults. It is obvious that Creole slaves were shorter than even their modern-day descendants as a result of the chronic under nutrition, hard labour and disease prevalence which they experienced during the slavery days.

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<sup>2</sup> The United States National Center for Health Statistics Growth Charts (1976) were also recommended by WHO as reference for international use (WHO 1983). Nowadays, the new 2007 WHO Growth Curves are used.



Sources:

1. Valentine B. 2000. *The Dark Soul of the People. Slaves in Mauritius, 1835*; Grahamstown, South Africa: Barbara Valentine (producer); Pretoria: South African Data Archive (distributor), 2001.
2. NCD. 2004. Mauritius Non-Communicable Disease Survey 2004. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. Republic of Mauritius.
3. NHSR. 2008. US National Health Statistics Reports, Number 10, (October 2008).

### 3.1.2 Indentured

The expansion of the sugar industry created more problems for owners as far as health care and the supply of food were concerned. There was a correlation between sugar production and slave mortality, due to, among other reasons, severe labour, insufficient food and living conditions. The 1832 Census revealed continued persistent high mortality figures in most estates, as a result of little improvement in the provision of food and health care for slaves (Teelock 1998).

The average height of 120 adult Indians (aged 20 to 39 years) who arrived from Calcutta in 1843 was 159.2 centimetres (calculated from data available at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute) compared to 167.5 centimetres for contemporary Indo-Mauritian male adults (MOH 2004). This indicates that the Indians immigrants were chronically undernourished even before their arrival to Mauritius.

Data on heights of Indian children in the early colonial period are not available, but a small study in 1942 on primary school children (5-13 years) showed average weights much below European norms at that time and Creole children had higher weight-for-height than Indian children (Wilson 1946).

During the malaria epidemics of the mid-1860s, it was observed that many Indians (especially those coming from Calcutta) could not resist the onslaught of various fevers, and they died because they were already exhausted by hard work in the cane fields. They were found to be weak and vulnerable to disease, due to poor nutrition believed to be related to their religious food taboos. Quinine was the main medicine for fever. In 1905, one Official wrote: "Indians are old at fifty". They suffered from various other diseases like bronchitis, pneumonia and heart disease. Indians were already in deplorable physical conditions when they arrived from India (Boodhoo 2010).

It should be noted that, in the 1870s/1880s, although it was compulsory for men (Indian labourers) to attend the estate hospital when ill, women and children often did not, either due to ignorance or cultural norms or poor hospital conditions (including food not being to their liking). Children were often not vaccinated. Women would not deliver in hospitals and gave birth in their

huts with the assistance of traditional midwives (*dais*). They attended hospitals only in case of complications. This resulted in high child and maternal mortality on the estates. But things gradually improved, when medical care and living conditions in estate hospitals improved (Boodhoo 2010).

In the 1920s, about a third of total deaths was among under five year olds', indicating that malnutrition among under 5's was an important contributing factor, apart from infectious diseases (MHD 1922).

### 3.1.3 Twentieth Century

#### School children

Apart from infectious and parasitic diseases in the 1920s, malnutrition among school children was also widespread ("thin and sometimes emaciated frames") in the schools of the slums of Port Louis. This deplorable state of child health led to the appointment of a School Medical Officer to examine school children in Port Louis for developmental and health problems, including infectious and parasitic diseases, and promote health and hygiene of school children. School medical examination in Port Louis started in mid-1922 and the most common diseases found were worm infestation (mostly *ankylostomiasis*), malaria, anaemia, scabies and *pediculosis*. The School Medical Service was extended to the districts of Plaines Wilhems and Flacq in 1923 (Balfour 1921, MHD 1922, MHD 1923).

#### Mother and child care

A survey of medical practitioners in 1943 revealed that they believed that malnutrition was common among the lower wage-earners of the colony. Those affected were mostly labourers of Indian origin, children and adolescents, pregnant and nursing women. A majority considered that malnutrition had increased during the war period (i.e. up to April 1943), and that there had been deterioration in the health of the working class in the past 25 years (i.e. 1918-43). A majority of doctors also stated that breastfed infants were usually given supplements (e.g. corn-flour, arrowroot starch, gruel, bread soup, rice or cow's milk, in that order), a practice that was detrimental to the health and nutritional well-being of the infants (Wilson 1946).

In order to address the high maternal and infant mortality, qualified midwives were placed on sugar estates from 1918 onwards, but unfortunately the scheme was defeated by the unwillingness of the poor to use the services, albeit provided gratuitously, mainly due to the fact that for a meagre remuneration, the *dais* accepted to do the laundry. This problem was addressed by Health Education and the training of *dais*. A health visitors' scheme was also started for home visits to provide maternal and newborn care, and educate young mothers in the care and upbringing of infants, including hygiene and infant feeding. The Poor Law Department provided support to deserted and widowed mothers and neglected children (MHD 1924).

It is known that malnutrition, in all its forms, increases the risk of infectious disease and early death. Protein-energy malnutrition, for example, plays a major role in half of all under-five deaths each year in developing countries. In 1942, Mauritius, with an infant mortality rate of 163 per 1,000 live births, was among the highest in the British colonies (Cf. Seychelles 55‰ and Fiji 63‰), (WHO 2000, Proc. Nutr. Soc. 1946).

#### Indian labourers

The majority of the manual labourers appeared to be definitely undernourished, and this was borne out by the improvement which took place in the weight and height of prisoners undergoing sentence. Some further support was given by the generally expressed view that the labourer of the present day was less robust than the worker of a generation ago. An important factor in this change was probably the abandoning of the former system of issuing rice as part of wages. This never formed more than a basic ration but it did, at least, encouraged a full, if unbalanced, diet (HMSO 1943).

Indian labourers generally worked for six hours a day and five days a week, and it was not possible to make them work longer hours to increase efficiency due to their poor physique and low

performance. The poor work performance of the Indian labourer in Mauritius was linked to the poor physique of the average worker, even compared to the Indian labourers in British Guiana. There was also a widely expressed view that the worker in Mauritius in the 1940s could not accomplish the output of the man of 50, or even 25 years ago. Various reasons were adduced for this: ill-health, undernourishment, drunkenness, inherent laziness, etc., according to the point of view of the speaker (HMSO 1943).

The Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire (1943) observed that:

*“The picture is, therefore, that of a poorly paid, undernourished, sickly population, capable only of such a limited output of work that an increase of wages offers little promise of improved performance. Such a position must obviously be equally disastrous for the employer and the worker.[...] obviously the primary need is for a determined attempt to reduce the prevalence of hookworm and malaria. Efforts with this object has been in progress for many years past, but activities have been limited chiefly to the Medical Department; the cooperation of the Education Department is essential if the rising generation is to be made fully aware of the dangers of these diseases and the steps necessary to combat them” (HMSO 1943).*

A possible consequence of malnutrition was the relatively low working efficiency of the average Indian labourer even in the pre-WWII period. Since 1942, there was a further reduction of efficiency, particularly a reduced capacity for sustained effort. For example, in the pre-1942 period a cane-loader would average 7-8 tons/day, whereas in the 1944-45 crop, the average loaded had fallen to 2-3 tons. Though often other nutritional factors have operated, the fall in the level of nutrition has probably played an important part. There was a drop in the supply of calories (from 2,487 to 2,023 calories per man-value per day) and other dietary nutrients. The role of the B-vitamins in energy metabolism is well-established. The fall in calories, coupled with the further fall in B-vitamins from a previously low level, is probably the main nutritional factor responsible (Wilson 1946).

#### Nutrition Unit and Nutritional Studies

Because of severe food shortage and nutrition problems created by the WWII situation, a Nutrition Unit was created in the Medical and Health Department to advise on nutrition and carry out nutrition education (including hygiene and mother-craft education) all over the island, using three travelling vans. However, in 1945, its activities were suspended and staff diverted to deal with the *poliomyelitis* epidemic and finally in 1951, the Unit was abolished due to budgetary constraint. In 1948, an Interdepartmental Nutrition Committee was set up to collect information and to formulate a general food programme for Mauritius (MHD 1944, MHD 1945, MHD 1948, MHD 1951).

During that period, several research studies were carried out on the nutrition of the population, including anthropometric surveys and a study of nutritional deficiency symptoms among school children, food habits, experimental feeding of school children, relation of malnutrition and malaria, haemoglobin surveys and nutrition of field labourers, as well as chemical analysis of local foodstuffs (protein, calcium, phosphorus, oxalate, vitamin C and iron contents). Studies were also carried out on local preparation and the use of yeast (as a source of B-complex vitamins), and local preparation and the use of shark liver oil as a source of vitamin A (Wilson 1946).

#### Supplementary Feeding Programmes

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in order to combat malnutrition among the vulnerable groups, various supplementary feeding programmes were implemented. Government food subsidies were also granted on the staples, rice and wheat flour, in order to protect the lower-income group of the population.

It was thought that the solution for the dietary improvement of the labouring class ought to be largely bound up with education, whereby modern ideas could be inculcated in school children for improved nutrition. A recommendation was, therefore, made for the introduction of a simple mid-day meal for all pupils in elementary schools, to include milk (if possible), even if this would entail the import of powdered milk or preserved foods. This would not only provide much-needed

nourishment for the child, but would also permit the introduction of various desirable novelties in foodstuffs, in connection with the campaign for the encouragement of home-grown produce. The mid-day meal could also be combined with the distribution of nutritional supplements such as cod liver oil, iron or vitamins. This would certainly result in a beneficial effect on the health and physique of the rising generation, while, in addition, the nutrition education imparted would be far better appreciated by the pupil (HMSO 1943).

In order to combat malnutrition among school children, in 1947 a hot mid-day school meal was started in the Grand Port Area for 1,600 children and a snack consisting of a milk drink, biscuits and yeast tablets (rich in B1, B2 and B3 vitamins) for 1,000 additional children. The nutritional status (height and weight) of children was monitored by the Health Officer of the Education Department (MHD 1947). Food yeast was imported from Jamaica and successfully tried in various foods, including bread, as a possible solution to increase coverage (MHD 1948).

Subsequently, a School Milk Scheme was started in April 1950, providing a full-cream milk drink<sup>3</sup> (as there was prejudice against the use of dried skimmed milk) to all primary schools of the Island (MHD 1950) and a school snack continued to be provided throughout the 1980s.

During the 1980s, dietary supplements (dried skimmed milk and corn soya milk) were also provided to pre-school children and pregnant and lactating women (MOH 1979-80).

However, although the free issue of a light meal to labourers at the beginning of their day's work was considered to be a sound investment for the employers, the suggestion was not pursued (HMSO 1943).

The Government has been providing blanket food subsidies on 'ration' rice and wheat flour since the 1970s up to this date in order to ensure minimum supplies of the basic staples to the most vulnerable sections of the population, even during difficult economic periods.

#### Nutritional Status of Children

A survey (1942) of rural school children showed that Creole boys were, on average, 600 grams heavier than Hindu boys of the same height. Creole girls were also heavier. This indicates a higher level of malnutrition among Hindu children. The nutritional status of non-school children appeared to be slightly inferior to that of school children. Children who did not attend school, estimated at roughly 50% of the children in the colony, were generally from poorer parents and helped them in the home and in the field (Wilson 1946).

A Nutrition Survey of pre-school children (0-5 years) in 1985 showed no difference in the prevalence of stunting (i.e. low-height-for-age) between Creoles and Indo-Mauritians (average 21.6%) although the prevalence of underweight (i.e. low-weight-for-height) was higher amongst Indo-Mauritians children (26% v/s 19%), i.e. although both groups were about the same height, Creole children being heavier than Indo-Mauritian children (MOH/UNICEF 1988). This trend is further confirmed by the 2004 NCD/Nutrition Survey on children 5-18 years, which shows that the height growth curves for both groups are almost the same and close to the WHO reference curve for both males and females. However, Creole children were taller than Indo-Mauritian children after puberty (see Figures 3 and 4). This shows that the linear growth of children of both ethnic groups has equally caught up with the WHO norms since the first generation of children of slaves or indentured labourers. It is known that linear growth of children is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors, particularly the state of health and nutrition of the children and their mothers.

#### 3.1.4 Malnutrition and infectious diseases

Malnutrition is often the result of a synergistic effect between food deficiency and infections, such as malaria or hookworm. Many diseases are known to be directly caused by a dietary deficiency, while others are aggravated by them. An inadequate diet itself weakens resistance to infectious diseases and leads to weakness and lack of well-being.

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<sup>3</sup> A drink consisting of 20 grams of milk powder and 10 grams raw sugar, providing 137 kilocalories, 5.1g protein and 187.5 mg calcium at a cost of approximately 5.9 cents per child.

A deficiency of nutrients can result in an increased susceptibility to various nutrient-related diseases. Protein-calorie malnutrition results from regular deficiencies of energy and protein; it predisposes the body to infections and diseases, can cause liver damage, and can possibly result in death (Bloninger 2004).

Balfour observed that the chronic malarious child was so debilitated that his output of work was diminished by 75 to 90 percent and his physical strength by two-fifths, compared to a normal child of the same age living in a non-malarious district (Balfour 1921).

Malnutrition was prevalent in Mauritius. A study carried out on the nutritional state of children in rural villages and the sugar estates showed the close relationship between malnutrition, malaria and anaemia. Malnutrition was more frequent among children living in malaria-prone villages (especially in the coastal belt). The study also demonstrated that supplementary feeding of malarial children was beneficial and enhanced drug action, as well as improving nutritional status. A malaria survey (1942-44) revealed that infected young children showed Vitamins A and B-complex deficiency signs. Several village level nutrition surveys were carried out to study the nutrition state of children (MHD 1944, Wilson 1946, MHD 1948).

An outstanding factor was the prevalence of infectious diseases, notably *ankylostomiasis* and malaria; these two, alone were responsible for an enormous loss of vital energy every year. Hookworm is, of course, not normally a disabling or fatal disease; nevertheless, it has a constant debilitating effect producing a varying degree of anaemia and predisposing the victims to other diseases. Malaria, again, is limited in its obvious effects to periodical disability for a few days only; nevertheless, its cumulative effect upon energy and enterprise must be very great. Concerning diet, the labourer was not adequately nourished; while he might have been seldom actually hungry, his meals did not provide him with the necessary sources of nourishment and energy. This coupled with the aforementioned prevalence of diseases, affords an adequate explanation of the poor physique and lack of energy of some of the workers. A remoter, but important, consideration was the cumulative effect on the rising generation; weakly parents could not bear healthy children, and the babies were furthermore handicapped by poor nourishment and prevalent diseases, which they were ill equipped to resist.

## 3.2 Nutritional deficiency diseases

### 3.2.1 General deficiencies

A survey of Medical Practitioners in 1943 revealed the following observations relating to various nutritional deficiencies or infectious diseases: cases of *stomatitis*, *oedema*, *peripheral neuritis*, skin *dermatoses* and ulcers, spongy and bleeding gums, enlarged or infected tonsils, anaemia, diarrhoea, and bronchitis and pneumonia were commonly observed. Cases of *pellagra* or night blindness, Bitots' spots and *keratomalacia* were rare. This indicates that the labouring class commonly suffered from iron, thiamine and riboflavin deficiencies and less commonly from vitamin C, niacin and vitamin A deficiencies (Wilson 1946).

However, an examination of rural school and non-school children (in 1942), based on clinical signs, showed an almost complete absence of the more marked and characteristic deficiency states such as *beriberi*, *pellagra*, night blindness and scurvy. No cases of nutritional or famine *oedema*, involving the lower extremities, were noted. Only 5 cases of Bitot's spots were seen (i.e. 0.1% of 4,864 children) (>0.5% being indicative of a public health problem). Rickets, although frequently observed in poorly-fed children at Child Welfare Centres, was not diagnosed in older children. *Peripheral neuritis* was not observed at all. *Pellagrous dermatitis* was not observed in children. Dental caries was found in 79% of children examined (Wilson 1946). In view of the several nutrients deficits noted between 1925 and 1942, the relatively low incidence of clinical deficiency signs suggests a possibility of sub-clinical conditions or functional impairment which could not be detected at that time.

Concerning nutrient deficiency diseases during the 1940s, scurvy was absent, while rickets and *pellagra* appeared rarely; *beriberi* was more common, though diagnosed cases were less than

50 in most years. In addition, cases of *avitaminosis*, amounting to several hundred per annum, were reported from the various dispensaries; these were ill-defined but suggested deficiencies of vitamins A and B. The condition was mostly confined to the Indian population and was more common among females than males. Anaemia was also prevalent; some interesting work was done in this connection, in treatment with yeast extract, which was a by-product of sugar manufacture. Results were encouraging and offered the prospect of a cheap and ready means of remedying this condition. Malaria and hookworm seriously affected the health of the population and several Departments of the Medical and Health Department were detailed to deal with those two diseases (HMSO 1943).

Other vitamins like B6 and B12 might also have been deficient, although they were not all recognised at that time as many manifest themselves in more or less the same signs as weakness, neuropathy and *dermatosis* (Blonigen 2004).

However, it should be noted that the symptoms of nutrient deficiencies overlap. *Dermatitis* can result from deficiencies of zinc, riboflavin, or niacin. Muscle weakness and fatigue are symptoms of vitamin C, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, and folate deficiencies. A loss of appetite can be the result of many different vitamin deficiencies. Mental symptoms can occur with a niacin or vitamin B12 deficiency. Inadequate protein intake on a regular basis would have led to a protein deficiency, resulting in a weakened immune system; deficiencies of vitamins A and C also results in a weakened immune system and an increased susceptibility to infection. Skin problems could have been worsened by the wet conditions that the slaves and indentured worked in throughout the planting season, making them more susceptible to infection (Blonigen 2004). As many of these symptoms were prevalent before the 1950s, it can be concluded that the working population in fact suffered from multiple micronutrient deficiencies, although all could not be diagnosed at that time.

### 3.2.2 Thiamine (B1) Deficiency (*Beriberi*)

*Beriberi* (which means “extreme weakness” in Sinhalese) is a disease affecting the nervous system and is caused by a deficiency of vitamin B1 (thiamine) in the diet; it affects both children and adults. In a population afflicted by *beriberi*, a large number of people are found to be suffering from loss of appetite, malaise and general weakness, especially in the legs. Such a condition, which greatly reduces work capacity, may persist for months or even a year until suddenly the disease develops and may lead to sudden death. In Mauritius in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the mortality rate from *beriberi* was estimated at 5 to 40 percent (WHO 1974, Anderson 1918).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was still a debate on whether *beriberi* was caused by a germ or nutritional deficiency. It was commonly associated with a poor monotonous diet, high in carbohydrate and low in protein and fat. It became a public health problem with the introduction of steel rice mills producing decorticated rice in the 1870s, stripping it of its vitamin B1. Production of parboiled rice eventually ensured a rice of moderate vitamin B1 content (WHO 1974, Anderson 1918).

*Beriberi* existed in Mauritius in an endemic form since 1808. Sporadic cases occurred in different parts of the island, in prisons and in hospitals. In 1878-79, the number of cases increased and the disease spread rapidly all over the island, reaching epidemic proportions. The disease was controlled in 1880.

The treatment for *beriberi* included the administration of desiccated yeast (a good source of vitamin B1) and a good diet of eggs, fresh milk, vegetables, soups, and oatmeal. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was sometimes treated as an infectious disease (Anderson 1918).

Outbreaks of *beriberi* in the local population in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century followed the importation of refined rice (deficient in vitamin B1) that was mostly fed to Indians on the estates and prisoners (on account of its cheapness). Deaths from *beriberi* continued to be recorded through the 1920s. The disease was almost entirely confined to the Indians and was sporadic among the Chinese population. The Medical and Health Authorities later wisely encouraged the importation of parboiled rice to control the problem. As a result of this measure, *beriberi* virtually disappeared by 1950s (Anderson 1918, MHD 1923, Wilson 1946).

### 3.2.3 Riboflavin (B2) deficiency

Riboflavin deficiency symptoms include poor appetite and growth, muscular weakness, and extreme sensibility to touch and temperature. Changes in the mouth and mucous membranes, known as *cheilosis*, *stomatitis*, and *glossitis*, are also characteristic of a riboflavin deficiency. These dermatitis symptoms generally develop gradually as the deficiency worsens (Blonigen 2004).

Skin conditions related to riboflavin deficiency were noted in 1942 and the prevalence of the condition was confirmed. About 10 percent of school children were affected; boys slightly more than girls. The incidence increased during the cold weather (May to October). Infants below two years were rarely affected and the condition was very rare among adults, and was then entirely restricted to young male adults. The highest incidence occurs around puberty. The affection did not appear to be connected to hookworm or malaria infection. It was commonly found in cool and damp districts (Vacoas, La Caverne, Henrietta) with a fluctuating regional incidence. There appeared to be no difference in incidence between Africans and Indians; the condition had not been seen in children of European or mixed descents (Wilson 1946).

In places where the diet is likely to be deficient in riboflavin, the presence or absence of clinical deficiency signs often depends on seasonal variations in the quality of the diet (WHO 1974).

#### 3.2.4 Vitamin C deficiency

Sailors landing at the Port Louis harbour during the administration of Labourdonnais (1735-1746) were found to be stricken by scurvy. This was due to a lack of vitamin C in their diet on board of ships that did not include fresh fruits and vegetables. Labourdonnais even set up special hospitals to treat the affected sailors (Boodhoo 2010).

No marked symptoms of *avitaminosis C* were noted during the WWII period. Tropical fruits (litchis, mangoes, loganberries) were plentiful during the summer months, November to February. The abundance of vegetables (and fruits like guava and *masson*, both rich in vitamin C) during the cooler months of May to October replaced the seasonal lack of fruits and the possibility of vitamin C insufficiency was restricted to the period March-April-May. There were also leafy vegetables (particularly abundant in the cooler months) and bananas available almost throughout the year. Cyclones and droughts exerted a very marked influence on the supply of foodstuffs, particularly fruits. Fruits accounted for only a third of vitamin C intake of the lower-income groups; leafy and other vegetables are the main source (Wilson 1946).

#### 3.2.5 Anaemia

In the 1920s, anaemia was already a health problem; it was commonly found during school medical examination and was mostly attributed to malaria, malnutrition, worm infestation (*ankylostomiasis* and *schistosomiasis*) and poverty (MHD 1922).

In the 1950s, nutritional anaemia continued to be one of the most serious health problems. It was widespread in the working class and affected mainly women in their childbearing period and young children. In women, anaemia was invariably exacerbated during pregnancy and lactation. The prevalence of anaemia was lower among the middle class, but women were more affected than men. However, no section of the community was protected or immune from anaemia. The severity of the disease was conditioned by low dietary iron intake and losses through parasitic infection (especially by hookworm and *ascaris*, and sometimes malaria) and it was, therefore, routinely treated with iron supplementation and de-worming. A striking improvement in the anaemia situation became evident with the success of the malaria eradication programme coupled with an improvement in the post-war food supply position (MHD 1952).

#### 3.2.6 Pellagra

*Pellagra* results from a niacin deficiency, and is characterized by skin lesions—skin that is cracked, scaly, is darker in colour, and hardened. Other symptoms include delirium, depression, anxiety, and fatigue (Blonigen 2004).

In 1948, a *pellagra* outbreak occurred in Beau-Bassin Prison and dietary improvement was introduced. As prisoners showed some unwillingness to take yeast tablets (containing vitamins B1, B2 and B3), food yeast (3 g per head) was incorporated in the pulses and was undetectable. Some

cases were reported among the population, but the outbreak in prisons might have been related to maize-based diet (MHD 1948, MHD 1950).

## 4 ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

### 4.1 Production and import

Rum being derived from molasses was an industry existing wherever sugar was made. In Mauritius, prior to 1895, a distillery was attached to almost every sugar estate, and over 100,000 litres were produced per month, bringing high amount of revenue to the Government. But with decreasing exports to Madagascar and East Africa, the revenue from the sale of rum fell significantly, and most of the distilleries closed their doors, thus greatly decreasing the level of alcohol consumption on the Island (Anderson 1918).

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, liquor consumed in the colony was either imported or manufactured locally. Imported liquors included whisky, brandy, gin, vermouth, rum (very small quantities), liqueurs and cordials, wine of every description, ale beer porter and cider. The local product was rum, obtained by the distillation of sugar cane molasses. It was generally consumed as it comes from the distillery, or after having been artificially coloured or flavoured, subsequent to distillation (*Rhum préparé*). Later, large quantities of “prepared rum” on the market were replaced in the form of local “brandy” or “liqueurs” (Balfour 1921).

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, wine or country liquor were manufactured mainly from imported dried raisins and on a small scale from local fruits, such as guavas, prunes and bananas. There were 13 wine factories in Port Louis (MHD 1949). Local production of beer started in 1963, using imported malted barley from Australia and Europe.

### 4.2 Sale

Retailers, hotels and inn-keepers as well as taverns, restaurants, refreshment rooms and public billiard rooms were authorised to sell alcoholic beverages, but the opening hours and authorisation to consume “on” or “off” premises was strictly regulated for each facility. Chinese shops, scattered all over the Island, supplied their customers, who belonged mostly to the working classes, with liquor, principally rum, in pints (*chopines*), and in small measures, popularly known as *topettes* or *petits baquets*, which is consumed on the premises. The maintenance of control and order over drink shops or drunken men was carried out by the Police (Balfour 1921).

The health and social consequences of this overindulgence raised concerns among the authorities. This affected mainly the working-class population (fishermen, artisans, agricultural and dock labourers, and the lower classes) although it also became noticeable among the younger generation and the Indian population. To address the situation, the authorities decided to strengthen control on sales of liquor, prohibit the giving of liquor as payment for salaries and wages, or as a gratuity, and promote awareness on the dangers of alcoholism (Balfour 1921).

### 4.3 Consumption

There was an alarming increase in the consumption of rum from 1909 to 1920. During the period 1909-19, the average annual consumption of rum was 1,022,785 litres. In the year 1919-20, it reached 1,832,589 litres, i.e. exceeding the average of the preceding 10 years by nearly 80%. Therefore, within a period of about 10 years, the per capita annual rum consumption increased from 2.74 to 4.95 litres (Balfour 1921, Kuczynski 1949).

High alcohol consumption had been the cause of sickness and mortality among slaves, apprentices and troops. During the 1825-40s period of sugar expansion, the widespread distribution of liquor to slaves as an incentive to work proved to be detrimental as slaves turned into alcoholics. The amount and frequency of arrack distribution differed on each estate but ranged from as little

as once a week to several glasses a day. Liquor became cheap and freely available as slaves began to distil it in their huts and sell it to other slaves. Alcohol consumption increased dramatically during the crop season and affected both men and women. It led to various social ills including fighting among slaves, general disorderliness, theft, lateness at work, insubordination, accidents and, even sometimes, suicides. There were also many unlicensed liquor shops in the districts (Teelock 1998).

Alcohol abuse also became the cause of great concern during indenture period, when an increase in drunkenness caused a reluctance to work among Indians. On some estates in the 1840s, rum was even distributed free together with the rations. It was realised that high alcohol consumption was detrimental but the Government was reluctant to increase taxes on arrack production as this would be unpopular among distillers, and it took no measures to decrease consumption as sale of rum-generated important revenue for Government (Teelock 1998, Boodhoo 2010). High-sales of rum and locally-made wine, both almost exclusively consumed by the Coloured population, were regarded, to some extent, as symptomatic of low vitality and limited interests in work (HMSO 1943).

Consumption of alcoholic beverages increased by 50% from 1961 to 2007. Energy supplies from alcoholic beverages increased from 29 kcal *par caput* per day in 1961 to 44 kcal *par caput* per day in 2007, i.e. equivalent to about 4 and 6 grams of alcohol *par caput* per day respectively. While in 1961 alcohol consumption was mostly in the form of spirits followed by beer and wine, in 2007 that pattern has changed to mostly beer followed by spirits and wine (FAO 1961, 2007).

## 5 NUTRITION AND HEALTH EDUCATION

### 5.1 Multiracial population

In a colony with formerly a majority of illiterates, with diverse racial, religious and social habits and customs, mass awareness creation was found to be a prerequisite to any activities in the field of health and nutrition. Some success was obtained in dealing with the heterogeneous population of this colony, with a population of 425,000, of which 60% were of Indian origin (Hindus, Muslims, and Chinese), 35% Coloured and 5% European. The Hindus were mostly semi-vegetarians (and would eat only goat meat, fish and eggs) although some were vegans (abstaining from all flesh foods and eggs). The Muslims ate beef, avoided pork and fasted during Ramadan. The White and Coloured communities had, in general, the same food habits and had taken to the liberal consumption of rice, curries and spices. As with all insular communities, changes and new ideas were generally unpopular (Wilson 1946).

### 5.2 Second World War dietary changes

#### Need for nutrition education

Prior to the war, there was practically no interest in nutritional matters, and the subject was looked upon as irrelevant in terms of local conditions, even by educated persons. The sudden failure of rice and other food supplies in 1942, highlighted the problems of food and feeding. Consequently, the need for nutrition education was acknowledged as a need to create awareness (targeting non-educated masses and educated differently) on the importance of nutrition, encourage the adoption of good nutritional and culinary practices and the avoidance of detrimental ones, the preparation of the population for changes in foods and food habits either for purely nutritional ends or necessitated by war conditions. The latter, in view of the revolutionary changes provoked by the war, assumed prime consideration in 1942. However, awareness campaigns were based on a thorough knowledge of local conditions and practices (Wilson 1946). Useful work on Nutrition Education was carried out by the Nutrition Unit of the Medical and Health Department (MHD 1943). Nutrition Education talks were also given to mothers at Child Welfare Centres (MHD 1948).

#### “Flour-rice”

“Flour-rice” (a form of small noodles made of wheat flour to look like rice grains) was devised as a substitute for rice. Until 1942, the working population ate 400 to 500 grams of rice a day and only a little flour, chiefly in the form of fried *chappatis* or *farahtas*, which they complained were harder to digest. When rice supply suddenly failed, and as bread was often scarce, the population found itself compelled to consume flour in large quantities, thus causing dietary distress. An intensive campaign was launched to teach the population how to prepare “rice flour” and bread so that wheat flour became more acceptable in their dietary habits (Wilson 1946).

### Targeted strategies for Nutrition Education

Nutrition Education strategies targeted different groups of the population differently, as follows:

- In urban areas, exhibitions proved to be the most popular methods. An exhibition was organised at the Municipality of Port Louis (pop. 50,000) with stands on Malaria, Hygiene and Nutrition. Cooking demonstrations comprised the making of “flour-rice”, bread and leaven-making, soup-making, preservation of various vegetables and fruits in season, directions for infant-feeding, formulas for feeds, directions for weaning, etc. Pamphlets were also distributed. A similar exhibition was organised in Curepipe during a fair and visited by some 15,000 people. Town people are perfectly willing to come to a centre; rural people are more refractory (Wilson 1946).
- In rural areas, three vans were organised for demonstrations in cooking, elementary hygiene and child care, on similar but simpler lines to the Exhibition. Posters were also fixed around the vans, when parked. The audience was assembled before the arrival of the van. This was the only way in which Indian women could be made to attend the demonstrations. There was also the promotion of a vegetable garden with seeds distribution and flour-rice demonstration. Each place was re-visited several times to maintain contact with the inhabitants. Regular courses in nutrition and hygiene were organised for the staff so as to maintain motivation, and the vans inspired a certain degree of confidence and comfort among an uneducated population subjected to revolutionary changes and severe privations (Wilson 1946).
- For the educated population: Short article of nutritional interest with recipes were inserted in the press; a series of 24 ten-minute talks on general principles of nutrition and the best methods of meeting war-time difficulties, was delivered, and a course of lectures, ten half-hour periods, on the practical aspects of nutrition, proved successful. Lectures were also given to the various learned bodies (Society of Arts and Sciences, Medical Association, etc., 5,000 copies of an elementary book on nutrition were rapidly exhausted (Wilson 1946).

The lack of knowledge of child hygiene and nutrition locally was appalling. Young infants a few months old were fed on scalding sugary tea, and were subsequently weaned on pure starch gruel. Parents were very attentive to advice, and thousands of mothers called at the Exhibition for advice. As instructions were somewhat complicated, they were written down for them so that they could get someone else to read (Wilson 1946). In general, it was found that the better-educated and better-housed sections of the community showed the lowest infant mortality rates (MHD 1922).

### 5.3 Health education

A campaign against *ankylostomiasis* (hookworm infestation) was started in 1922, with massive health education supported by conferences, lectures and printed materials (thousands of posters and pamphlets) (MHD 1922, 1923).

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, mass Health Education was carried out with the use of cinema films portable projection apparatus (electric power). Films on mosquitoes, Malaria, flies, rat menace and hookworm were shown. Films were shown free of charge in schools and at open air exhibition (MHD 1923).

Health Education on hygiene and nutrition in primary schools, with the participation of teachers, was part of the School Medical Service activities in the 1950s. Health exhibitions were also commonly held for pupils and the general public (MHD 1952).

It is noteworthy that in the 1940s, there were 40 cinema halls on the Island which were almost entirely dependent on the patronage of the poorest classes. Motor bus service was available, and there were race meetings at Port Louis (HMSO 1943).

## 6 DISCUSSION

The diet of the inhabitants of the Island of Mauritius evolved over the French and British colonial periods, as a result of changes in the ethnic composition of the population, food supplies consideration and economic transformation of the island. The Island was never self-sufficient in food supplies and always relied on food imports to feed its population, despite attempts at food self-sufficiency under French Governor Mahé de Labourdonnais. The basic food staples evolved as shown in Table 2 below.

Early French period	Maize was the main staple of slaves
Under Labourdonnais	Manioc displaced maize as the main staple of slaves
Early British period (1810-1830)	Shift to sugar mono-crop economy and rice became the staple food of slaves followed by maize and manioc
British period (1835-1900s)	Rice established as the main staple with arrival of Indian indentured labourers
British period (1940s to 1968)	Wheat flour became the second staple to rice following the rice supply shortage due to the Second World War
1980 - 2000	Rice and wheat flour became equally important staples

During the French and early British periods, the working population was mostly slaves of Madagascar or East African origin. Slaves during the French period were fed on locally-produced manioc (*cassava*) and sweet potatoes, and locally-produced or imported maize, occasionally supplemented with a little salted fish or salted meat. Many slaves could obtain additional protein foods from fishing or keeping livestock in their own time; vegetables were rarely supplied and slaves relied on wild vegetables (*brèdes*) and fruits which became less abundant, with the increasing mobilisation of land for sugar cane plantation. Apart from the poor diet of adult slaves, slave women faced immense difficulties to care for, or properly feed, their young children leading to child malnutrition and high mortality.

With the transformation of the island into a mono-crop sugar economy in the early part of the British occupation, local food production was largely abandoned and rice was imported to feed the slaves. Rice and maize became the two principal food items, followed by manioc, in the slave's monotonous and tasteless diet, with occasional animal protein foods and small quantities of vegetables. The massive arrival of Indian immigrants from 1834 onwards reinforced the position of rice as the main local staple for the whole population, although after WWII, wheat flour rivalled with rice as the second staple. During WW2 the population also had to face a severe food stress. The Hindu section of the population mostly used pulses to supplement their diet in protein, although fish (salted or fresh) was also occasionally consumed. In addition, other sections of the population (Creoles, Muslims and Chinese) also occasionally consumed meat. Milk consumption was low. Vegetables and fruits (mostly seasonal) were commonly consumed. Labourers who freely drank cane juice experienced a marked increase in calories as carbohydrate-rich sugar provided

considerable energy. Although African slaves and Indian immigrants came with their own traditional food habits, this evolved over time, with considerable blending in the dietary pattern of the population.

The diet of the working population during the colonial period was predominantly vegetarian and very small quantities of animal products were consumed. Milk consumption was particularly low. In general, the diet was high in carbohydrate, low to moderate in total protein, and very low in animal protein (considered to be of high-biological value) and fats. Consumption of vegetables and fruits was variable, depending on availability and seasonality. Calcium and iron also appeared to be generally deficient. Deficiencies of vitamins A, D and C were sometimes reported but deficiency of the B-vitamins was much more common. In fine, while the diet more or less covered the minimal energy requirements of the working population (and probably inadequate during periods of intense activity as during harvest time), it could not be considered nutritionally adequate. It was generally a bulky diet that lacked variety and nutritious foods. A bulky diet had a low energy and nutrient density, and the workers felt replete before ingesting sufficient amount of energy and nutrients to meet their nutritional needs. Moreover, both slaves and indentured labourers often complained that they were given less food than the amount stated as food ration, and their distributions were not always regular.

So, throughout the whole period of colonisation, the diet of slaves, ex-slaves and Indian immigrants contained essentially high amounts of carbohydrate (including high sugar consumption) and was low or moderate in protein, low in fat and high in bulk.

Year	1938-42	1961	1980	2007
Kcal per capita per day	No data available	2,372	2,622	2,965

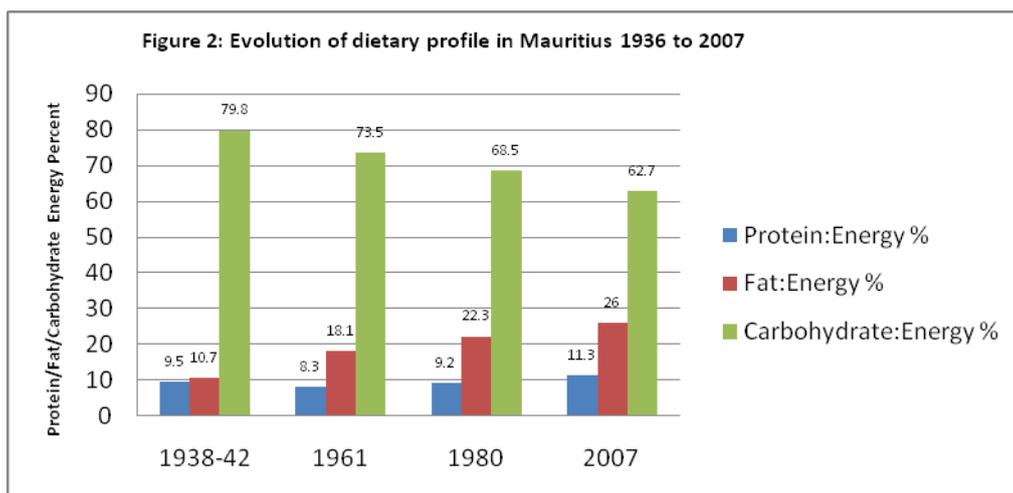
Sources:

1. Wilson Frank A. (1946). *Nutritional investigations in Mauritius (1942-45)*. Government Printer, Port Louis, Colony of Mauritius. (Based on typical diet of a field labourer in 1938-42. FAO Food Balance Sheet not available prior to 1961).
2. FAO Food Balance Sheets for Mauritius 1961, 1980 and 2007. FAO. Rome.

Food Balance Sheets could not be obtained prior to 1961, but from 1961 to 2007 there was an increase per capita of energy supplies (see Table 3), while there was a gradual fall in the amount of carbohydrate-energy and a concurrent increase in the level of fat-energy - see Figure 2 (FAO 1961, 1980, 2007).

In addition to the overt signs of vitamin and mineral deficiencies, chronic sub-clinical deficiencies of vitamins (A, Bs and C) could also have resulted in fatigue and increased susceptibility to infection. Chronic caloric deficit, coupled with B-vitamins, and iron deficit caused muscle weakness, loss of appetite and fatigue, leading to low working efficiency.

Although anaemia was a serious problem during the 1900s until the 1960s generally affecting the lower-income groups of the population, it was particularly common among the Indian section of the population and affected mostly women of child-bearing age and young children. The disease was generally associated with Malaria as well as hookworm infection. With the eradication of Malaria, improved sanitation, public health measures (including iron supplementation and free shoes or boots to school children and labourers) and improved nutrition, anaemia ceased to be a major public health problem by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Alcohol consumption was high among slaves and ex-slaves, although later on it also became a problem among Indian labourers. With the consumption of salted meat and salted fish, the sodium intake of slaves and ex-slaves would tend to be on the high side.

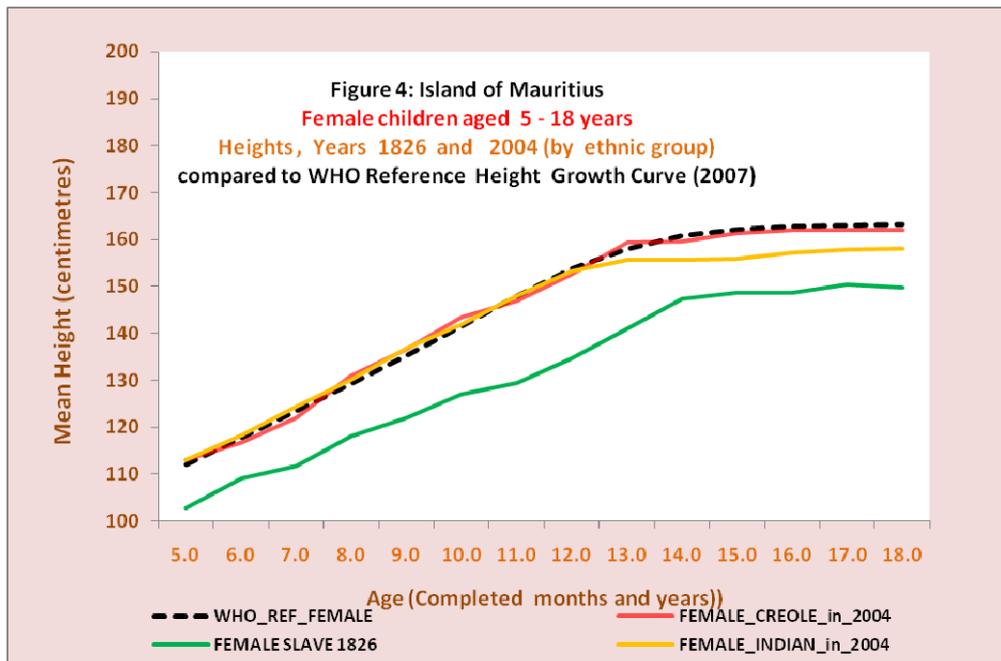
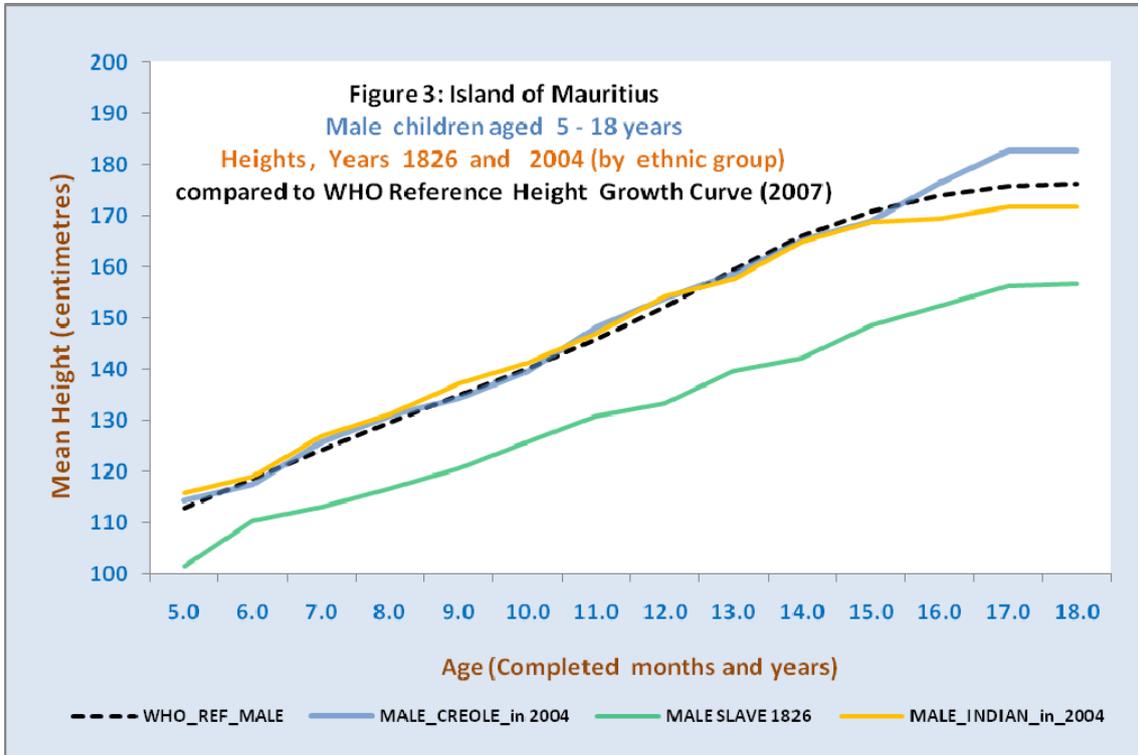
The Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire noted that malnutrition was one of the main causes of the excessive mortality in most Colonial territories and that the single most striking feature was the almost total absence of milk and animal products from most tropical diets (HMSO 1939). In Mauritius too, the infant mortality rate was very high (although it fell considerably after Malaria was brought under control) and the main causes were malnutrition and repeated infectious diseases.

As a result of chronic malnutrition and hard physical labour at a young age, slave children were subjected to severe growth retardation, as evidenced by their short stature by age 18. Figures 3 and 4 show that the heights of Mauritian slaves' children (both boys and girls) (in 1826) were far below the WHO Reference throughout the age range 5 to 18 years, while contemporary Mauritian children (Creoles and Indians) (in 2004) have caught up with the WHO Reference, except for the post pubescent difference between Creoles and Indians. It is known that stunted growth among children is related to chronic protein-energy deficiency as well as to repeated episodes of infectious diseases. In 1942, a small number of primary school children were found to weigh much below European norms at that time and Indian children had lower weight-for-height than Creole children. Newly arrived Indian adult male immigrants were also less tall than male Creole slaves (159 and 161 cms respectively) although the heights of contemporary adult male Creoles and Indians are close (168 and 167.5 cms respectively). That is, early generations Creole slaves and Indian immigrants were of short stature, but the descendants of both groups gained several centimetres by 2004 and nearly caught up with the WHO norms.

Apart from poor diet and the high prevalence of infectious diseases in Mauritius during the colonial period, the underlying causes of malnutrition were, most importantly, the low standard of living, followed by lack of awareness coupled with certain prejudices. The low standard of living of the labourers was the result of inadequate food rations, low wages insufficient to supplement their rations and too little food provisions from family production or gathering in the wild. The economic policy prioritising the production of cash crop (sugar cane) for export further decreased available land for food production.

In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the eradication of Malaria, improvement in primary health care, sanitation and water supply, improvement in the standard of living and continued improvement in food supplies (including food subsidies and supplementary feeding programmes for the vulnerable groups), malnutrition, vitamin deficiency diseases and anaemia gradually declined, so that by end of the century, the country began to face the emerging problem of non-communicable diseases and obesity, although anaemia is still common among adolescent girls and underweight persists among young children. The mostly non-vegetarian diet is high in energy, fat, sugar and salt, and low in fibre contents. Although vegetables and fruit consumption trebled from 1961 to 2007, the present level (of about 300 grams *par caput* per day) is still far

below current recommendations. Increasing alcohol intake and decreased levels of physical activity further contribute to the development of obesity. This tendency is worsened by the increasing consumption of 'fast-foods' and packaged snacks, and the adoption of sedentary leisure activities (mostly television and electronic gadgets) by the young population (MOH 2004, FAO 1961, 1980, 2007).



## 7 CONCLUSION

Therefore, based on the findings of this study, the evolution of the diet and nutritional status of the inhabitants of the Island Mauritius can be summarised as follows:

- a. The slaves of African origin were on a mostly vegetarian high bulk diet, having high carbohydrate and low protein content, with occasional consumption of salted fish or meat. Alcohol consumption was high among slaves, especially on weekends. They needed high caloric intake in order to meet the energy requirements for their intensive labour. Their caloric intake barely met their needs, resulting in chronic under-nutrition of both adults and children, as evidenced by stunted height of both adults and children. The diet was monotonous and deficient in various vitamins and minerals. Overall mortality was very high and life expectancy very low (hardly reaching middle age).
- b. The Indian indentured labourers were mostly vegetarian, with occasional consumption of animal protein and little milk. Their diet was high bulk, high carbohydrate and low to moderate in protein. Vegetable consumption was higher than among slaves. B-vitamins deficiencies and iron deficiency anaemia were prevalent. Their caloric intake barely met minimal needs resulting in chronic under-nutrition. Both overall and infant mortalities were high and life expectancy was low. Indian labourers in the 1940s had poor physique and low work performance related to their poor diet and recurrent diseases, and seemed to suffer premature ageing. The prevalence of malnutrition, coupled with Malaria and other infectious diseases (including hookworm infestation), gave rise to a sick and debilitated population. Faulty infant feeding, especially weaning was a cause of malnutrition and high infant mortality.
- c. From 1950s to 1980s, Malaria eradication and improvement in water and sanitation and socio-economic measures led to improved health and nutrition status of the descendants of slaves and of indentured labourers. Their nutritional status improved with increased protein intake, a more varied diet, free distribution of food supplements to the vulnerable groups and Government subsidies on staple foods. Prevalence of vitamin deficiencies decreased gradually, although anaemia among adolescent girls was still common and prevalence of child underweight (particularly among Indo-Mauritians) remained relatively high. The average diet remained relatively high in refined carbohydrate, although the fat content had increased considerably. Infant mortality was rapidly decreasing and life expectancy was increasing as a result of better health and nutrition.
- d. After the 1980s the population was faced with the problem of overconsumption and dietary imbalance, with increasing per capita caloric supply as well as increasing fat content of the diet and although the carbohydrate content gradually decreased from 1936 onwards, carbohydrate to energy ratio was still elevated at more than 60% in 2007. High consumption of alcoholic beverages and fatty/salty foods, and inadequate consumption of vegetables and fruits are a serious concern, as well as increasing consumption of alcohol and low level of physical activities. Obesity and non-communicable diseases started as a public health problem among adults. The height growth of children below 18 years has reached the 2007 World Health Organisation norms, and obesity is an emerging problem among children, although underweight still persists among young children. Mauritius is now reaching the level of human development indicators of emerging market economies, with a low level of infant mortality and a relatively high life expectancy, with concomitant high prevalence of non-communicable diseases (including diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and cancer).

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## PART II: DISEASES PATTERN

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Health and illness in a population are associated with factors that relate to the surrounding environment, the climate, the housing and sanitary conditions, the food habits, the quality of water and the working conditions of the people. The types and scale of ill-health and diseases in a population reflect the living conditions of the people and the way they manage their lives. The disease pattern at a given point in time is not only the biomedical disorders caused by ill-health, but also a reflection of harm done by the prevailing social, economic and political environments.

The disease pattern in Mauritius during 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are given under the following headings:

- Slavery and indentured labour
- Pre-Independence
- Post-Independence

### 2 PERIOD OF SLAVERY AND INDENTURED LABOUR (1715-1916)

Statistics of the population of Island of Mauritius before the arrival of indentured labour is shown at table 4:

Year	Europeans	Free	Slaves	Total
1735	190	-	648	838
1767	3163	587	15207	18777
1777	3434	1573	25154	29761
1787	4372	2235	33382	40439
1797	6237	3703	49080	59020
1807	6489	5912	65367	77768
1817	7375	10979	79493	97847
1827	8009	14831	63432	86272
1830	8135	18019	64919	91826

The food consumed by the slaves consisted of *cassava* mixed with vegetables and meat cooked under unhygienic conditions. The daily intake of this insipid food was a possible source of ill health to the consumers. The climate with frequent passage from hot to cold weather and vice versa was another common cause of illness among the slaves who did not wear appropriate protective clothing. Their lifestyle which included abuse of alcoholic drinks and having multiple sex partners was detrimental to their health. Furthermore, they were subjected to harsh working conditions and the workload was well beyond their physical capacity, resulting in fatigue and exhaustion.

The clinical manifestations of common diseases prevalent among the slaves in “Ile Bourbon” (Reunion Island) and “Ile de France” (Mauritius) as described by Dazille\* in 1772 are summarised as follows:-

- (a) Fevers associated with respiratory infections including pneumonia, or with signs and symptoms of what is now known as typhoid fever or with spasms of voluntary muscles signalling tetanus; reflecting a hostile disease environment with exposure to infectious diseases.
- (b) Digestive disorders with diarrhoea, dysentery, scurvy and worms infestations, which relate to consumption of food that was either contaminated or deficient in essential nutrients or both.
- (c) Venereal diseases such as gonorrhoea and syphilis were common with urinary and ophthalmic complications. The prevalence of these conditions was connected with the practices and behaviour of individuals.

The abolition of slavery created the need to look for alternative sources of labour, to cope with the ever increasing demands for workers in the expanding sugar plantations. From 1834 to 1912, around 450, 000 indentured labourers also called coolies were brought to Mauritius. They were housed in dingy shelters, under unsanitary conditions, without potable water and latrines. The source of water was from wells and rivers. They were exposed to a new disease environment. They had to cope with new work requirements, adapt to changes in diet, and learn new hygienic practices suitable for life on sugar cane plantations. Contaminated food and water through faecal-oral route were ideal conditions for dysentery. Poor nutrition gave rise to nutritional diseases such as: beriberi and scurvy. The other common diseases included respiratory infections, *diarrheal* diseases and parasitic infestations.

In addition to prevailing common ailments and diseases, Mauritius witnessed several outbreaks of epidemics. Those that caused devastating effects on the economy and demography of the Island, included smallpox in 1792, cholera in 1854, Malaria in 1868, plague in 1899 and Spanish flu in 1919. These epidemics were responsible for more than 440, 000 deaths from 1792 to 1919. Some of these diseases were brought to control, while others became endemic and were eradicated much later, when appropriate technologies were developed. Notes on the epidemics that have marked the history of Mauritius are given in the next pages.

## 2.1 Leprosy

Leprosy has affected humanity for over 4000 years. It was recognized in the ancient civilizations of Egypt, China and India. Leprosy and cures for it were described in the Vedas (Atharva-Ved). The first-known written documentation on Leprosy dates back to 600 BC (Sushruta Samhita).

The causative agent is *Mycobacterium Leprae*. It was discovered in 1873 by G.H.A Hansen in Norway, which witnessed a rapid increase in the number of Lepers in the 1830's. Leprosy is an infectious disease. It is transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contacts with untreated cases. Untreated it can cause progressive and permanent damage to the skin, the peripheral nerves, the limbs, the eyes and the upper respiratory tract.

Not all people who are infected by *Mycobacterium Leprae* will develop Leprosy, because the body is naturally immune to the bacteria. It is estimated that due to genetic factors, only 5% of a population is susceptible to get the disease. Marginalised and under-served communities are most at risk. Leprosy is contagious but infectivity is low. It is transmitted via droplets from nose and mouth, during close and frequent contacts with untreated cases. The incubation period is about five years. Symptoms can take as long as 20 years to appear.

Leprosy came to Mauritius in 1770 with the slaves from Madagascar, where it was introduced from Mozambique. In 1781 a commission was set up to inquire into the prevalence of the disease and in 1803, the lepers were exiled to Ile Curieuse, from where many escaped to Seychelles.

In 1850s the laws against lepers were relaxed and leper-beggars were seen wandering in the streets of Port Louis and in the country side. As from February 1857 the Catholic hospice of St. Lazare, situated in the north of Port Louis, was used as Leper's Asylum with the support of public

charity, under the care of Dr. Poupinel and the sisters of mercy. In 1860 the government decided to subsidize the hospice for care and hospitality offered to the lepers.

However there was no law compelling compulsory segregation of lepers, who used to come and go to the hospice as they pleased. Many lepers stayed in the home of their family, marry an unaffected person, thus continuing to propagate the disease. Leprosy infected prostitutes also used to spread the infection.

Year	Study	Population	Number of Cases		Average Death Annually
			Inpatient	Outpatient	
1879	First Leprosy Census	360,000	243	519	288
1887	Leprosy Commission	370,000	209	500	40

On the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1924 all the patients from St. Lazare - 27 in all - were transferred to Powder Mill and put under the care of 3 sisters of charity with medical supervision by the government Medical Officer in charge of Long Mountain hospital. The Powder Mill became the Leper Hospital and later in 1970, it was integrated into the skin disease unit of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital with 40 beds and an average of 34 occupied throughout the year. The staff comprised 2 sisters of Mercy, one departmental Supervisor, 7 female and 9 male attendants. The responsibility for medical care was taken over by specialist dermatologists. This institution served as the treatment centre for all leprosy cases from the island of Mauritius and from all its dependencies. The first group of eight patients from Rodrigues was admitted to Powder Mill in 1928.

The common pre-modern treatment was Chaulmoogra oil, product of a tree called 'Chaulmoogra adorata'. It was used externally as well as internally. Taken orally it was extremely nauseating. Given by enema it could cause peri-anal ulcers and fissures. By injections it caused fever and local reactions. However the oil remained a popular treatment, despite its side-effects, until the introduction of sulfones.

Since its introduction in Mauritius in 1770, leprosy had remained endemic in the country till late 1990s. All components of the Mauritian society were affected. Throughout history, lepers were ostracized by their communities and families. This old age stigma associated with the disease, was an obstacle to self-reporting and early treatment. The situation was bleak, given the incurability of the disease by traditional medicines.

There was need to educate the population and encourage the lepers to come forward and receive treatment. Around 1952 an association called "Les Amis de Moulin à Poudre" was founded to look specifically after the welfare and well-being of lepers. Raoul Follereau, famous crusader against discrimination towards lepers, visited Moulin à Poudre on several occasions. His visits usually coincided with the World Leprosy Day, which was launched in 1984 at the initiative of Raoul Follereau, himself.

The first break-through in the treatment of leprosy occurred in 1940s, with the development of the drug Dapsone. It was effective but the duration of the treatment was too long, even a lifetime making it difficult for patients to follow. Moreover by 1960s the Mycobacterium Leprae had developed resistance to the drug.

In 1981 a WHO (World Health Organization) study group on chemotherapy of leprosy, recommended Multi Drug Therapy (MTD) which combine three drugs: dapsone, rifampicin and clofazimine. This drug combination kills the pathogen and cures the patients.

The final assault on *Mycobacterium Leprae* was made in 1980s and the multidrug therapy was the key element in the strategy to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem in the Republic of Mauritius. The leper hospital was closed in 2006.

## 2.2 Smallpox

Smallpox, also known as *variola*, is a highly contagious febrile disease characterised by successive stages of skin eruptions. The causative agent is a virus, transmitted usually by direct contact with the patient through airborne droplets. It may also be spread through handling of articles, contaminated by the patients. The incubation period ranges between 6 - 14 days. It is reported that during epidemics, as many as 30% of those infected, were killed by the disease, and between 65% - 80% of survivors were marked with deep pitted scars, most prominent on the face.

Smallpox is believed to have originated over three thousand years ago in India or Egypt. It was one of the most devastating diseases known to humanity, disseminating populations through repeated epidemics across continents. In 1798 Edward Jenner demonstrated that inoculation with cowpox could protect against smallpox, and brought the hope to control the disease through vaccination. However, in early 1950s - 150 years after the introduction of vaccination - an estimated 50 million cases of smallpox were occurring in the world every year. In 1967 the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched its plan to eradicate the disease and the global eradication of smallpox was certified by the World Health Assembly in 1980.

In Mauritius, cases of small pox were reported as far back as 1771. But the first major epidemic occurred in June 1792, when a slave ship from South India reached Port Louis with smallpox on board. The disease spread rapidly among the population, amidst heated debate over the practice of inoculation. Some slave owners asserted their right to inoculate their slaves, while others were vehemently against this practice because of the possibility of the inoculated person developing a severe infection and transmitting smallpox to others. Megan Vaughan of Nuffield College Oxford writing on Social History of Medicine has made the following observations on the attitude adopted by the colonists "Eighteenth-century colonial medicine was largely geared to keeping the bodies of slaves and workers productive and useful, but formal medicine never had a monopoly. Slaves on Isle de France brought with them a rich array of medical beliefs and practices from Africa, India, and Madagascar. We have little direct historical evidence for these, but we do know that many slaves came from areas in which forms of smallpox inoculation were known and practised."

By September 1792, the death toll by the smallpox epidemic had risen to 4,000 in a total population of 98, 000. The authorities were alarmed with this turn of events and decided for the inoculation of all the slaves. By January 1793, the epidemic was finally brought under control.

In addition, two other severe smallpox epidemics occurred in the country. In 1856, several immigrants' ships arrived from India with smallpox on board. Eight coolie ships had to be put on quarantine. At that time Mauritius was already under the grip of the second great cholera epidemic. The quarantine station was overcrowded and the Flat Island as well as Gabriel Island had to be requisitioned for quarantine purposes. The vaccine against smallpox was introduced in Mauritius in 1801.

The other epidemic came to Mauritius in 1891, by a ship coming through Reunion Island with smallpox on board. Some important factors and practices were responsible for furthering the spread of the disease - the lack of vaccine in the Island at the outbreak, the ignorance and the superstitions of the natives, and the wakes-that is the custom of watching the dead before funeral. Numerous persons were infected during the epidemics and many developed the disease. But mortality was not heavy because the authorities had recourse to vaccination which was made compulsory. The last indigenous case was reported in 1913. However, vaccination against small pox was maintained until 1981, when it was stopped after the global eradication was certified by the World Health Organisation and subsequently endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 1980.

## 2.3 Cholera

### Brief History

Cholera is an acute intestinal infection, caused by ingestion of contaminated food and water with *Bacterium Vibrio Cholerae*. Transmission via direct person to person contact is rare. The incubation period varies from less than one day to 5 days.

*Cholera Vibrio* is transmitted via the faecal-oral route. When swallowed it grows in the intestines and produces a poison called enterotoxine that causes profuse, painless, watery diarrhoea leading quickly to severe dehydration and death, in the absence of prompt treatment. However, most *Vibrio Cholerae* infections are asymptomatic. An estimated 5% of infected persons will develop *Cholerae Gravis*.

Worldwide, seven *cholera pandemics* have occurred since 1817. The first six occurred between 1817 and 1923. All these pandemics originated in Asia and subsequently spread to Europe and the Americas. The causative agent, *Vibrio Cholerae* was identified in 1883 by Robert Koch.

*Modern methods of treatment and control are:*

*(a) Curative measures.*

- Hydration to replenish fluid loss caused by diarrhoea and vomiting. Intravenous fluid is a life saving procedure.
- Pharmacology plays a secondary role in the management of cholera. However, treatment with an antibiotic to which the *Vibrio Cholerae* is susceptible, diminishes the duration and volume of fluid loss and thus hastens clearance of organisms from stool.

*(b) Preventive measures*

- Consume boiled water, and hot meals.
- Education in environmental control is critical for the prevention of cholera. The source of *Vibrio Cholera* is human excrement and the most common vehicle of infection is water. Environmental control must focus on keeping these elements apart.
- Public health planning and engineering of water conservation and sewage disposal.

*(c) Prophylactic measures*

- Vaccines prepared from either attenuated or killed *Vibrio Cholera* are available in the market, for protection against cholera. However, vaccination provides protection only for a limited period.

### Cholera in Mauritius

Six cholera epidemics visited Mauritius in the years 1775, 1819, 1854, 1856, 1859 and 1862. During eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the health professionals had no notion about the real cause of the disease. Some blamed the atmospheric conditions, others even thought of occult forces. One medical report on cholera ends with these words “The disease is of so mysterious a nature as to be beyond the search of human investigation that rests with the Divinity alone.”

Two of these epidemics were particularly virulent. The 1819 epidemic killed more than 2,000 people. There was little or no understanding of the disease among the people and the health workers. Ignorance resulted into panic and disarray in the population. The 1854 epidemic raged over the Island with an extreme violence, killing more than 12, 000 people in a population of 181, 000. The population was at a loss to comprehend what was happening. There was despair and

desolation everywhere. Two eminent personalities participated actively in bringing support and assistance to the victims of cholera. They were Dr. Edouard

Brown Sequard, famous physician who later became a member of “College de France”, and Father Jacques Désiré Laval, Catholic Missionary who devoted his life, to the welfare of the poor and the destitute.

However, Doctors were able to trace outbreaks of cholera epidemics with the arrival of Coolie Ships from India. It was observed that the epidemic was occurring during the hot season, which coincided with the intensification of cholera in India. The infested ships were put on quarantine at the mouth of Grand River North-West. But quite often there were infringement of quarantine laws, as local people used to communicate with those on board the ship, thus contributing to the spread of the germs inland. As from 1862 the quarantine laws were tightened and observed rigorously.

It is significant that some pertinent observations were made in medical reports on the cholera epidemics. It was observed that the invasion by cholera was mild in the well-watered district of Moka, which had streams with swift course to the sea. It is also reported that the fatal power of the epidemic did not affect persons who lived on Montagne Chamarel situated 1000 feet above sea level and rather isolated from the populous areas. Another observation concerns the Chinese population of the island, who suffered the least form cholera epidemics because they never drank any liquid except tea, infused in hot water.

### **Ancestral Remedies**

The medical profession modestly admitted that, being uncertain of the actual cause of the disease, they could only combat the symptoms. Their remedies consisted of:

- (a) Purgatives were used ‘to drive out the vitiated contents of the bowels’ which contained the cholera poison.
- (b) Emetics and fluids were administered to assist Nature in getting rid of the poison.
- (c) Opium was given to soothe the abdominal cramps and check excessive evacuation.

## **2.4 Malaria**

Malaria is an infection caused by plasmodium parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected anopheles mosquitoes, called Malaria vectors, which bite mainly between dusk and dawn. Four species of plasmodium parasites, vivax, ovale, falciparum and Malariae - can infect humans and cause Malaria. Vivax and falciparum Malaria are the most common and falciparum is the most deadly. In 2008 around, 247 million cases were reported worldwide and nearly one million deaths mostly among children in Africa, where a child dies every 45 seconds of Malaria. It is an acute febrile illness. Symptoms appear between 10 to 15 days after the infective mosquito bite, with fever, headache, chills, and vomiting. If not treated within 24 hours, the falciparum Malaria can progress into severe illness, often leading to death.

In 1880, Alphonse Laveran identified the causative agent of Malaria in red blood cells of Malaria patients. In 1885, Ronald Ross discovered that Malaria was transmitted by Anopheles mosquitoes. It is estimated that the burden of disease caused by Malaria can result into significant economic losses, leading to a decrease of the gross domestic product up to 1.3% in countries with high levels of transmission.

The health costs of Malaria include expenditures on treatment as well as prevention. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), in countries with high levels of transmission, the disease accounts for up to 40% of public health expenditure. It is also observed that Malaria disproportionately affect poor people who have limited access to health care or cannot afford treatment, thus trapping entire families in a downward spiral of poverty.

Malaria was unknown in Mauritius during French occupation (1715-1810). Significant outbreaks of Malaria occurred in 1856 - 1859, 1862 and 1865. But the first serious epidemic struck the Island in 1867. It was a major calamity causing 40, 000 deaths in a population of 333, 000. Ronald Ross qualified the epidemic as the greatest disaster in Mauritian history. Thereafter, Malaria remained endemic in Mauritius until 1950's. The result was a serious source of wastage in terms of manpower and money, through deaths and reduction of population; loss of manual labour in plantations, factories, farms etc; sickness among labourers and officers, incapacitation and deaths among higher officials and soldiers.

In 1907, Sir Ronald Ross, Nobel Laureate and Professor of tropical Medicine, University of Liverpool, was invited to visit Mauritius and report on measures for the prevention of Malaria in the colony. His recommendations focussed on 3 types of activities:

- (a) Treatment of the sick with anti-Malarials
- (b) House protection to exclude Anopheles mosquitoes, through wire netting and other means.
- (c) Mosquito reduction through destruction of breeding sites and drainage of marches.

A Malaria unit was created to coordinate all works connected with Malaria. The control programme advocated by Ross could not be carried out totally, but the incidence of Malaria decreased greatly. In 1948, Mauritius launched a three-year project with the view to eradicate Malaria by residual spraying of houses with D.D.T and hexachlorocyclohexane. There was a remarkable decrease in the incidence of the disease but one could not talk of eradication because, Malaria was still present, although at a much reduced rate. In 87 years, from 1865 to 1952 Malaria had already killed 413, 000 Mauritians.

The final assault was made in 1960. A motivated and dedicated staff with an excellent organisation, supported by an active participation of the community, succeeded in producing rapid and excellent results. The strategy consisted of surveillance and treatment of all detected cases with spraying of the foci. The last indigenous case was found in 1965. In 1972, a sero-epidemiological survey confirmed the absence of local Malaria transmission since 1965. The World Health Organisation (WHO) certified that the eradication of Malaria from Mauritius was an established fact. This was a remarkable public health achievement.

However, Malaria came back to Mauritius in 1975, after devastation caused by cyclone Gervaise, which created abundant new breeding places for mosquitoes. An outbreak of plasmodium vivax Malaria occurred in Roche Bois where immigrant workers from Africa and India were staying. They had come to support post-cyclonic cleanup and reconstruction works. Furthermore, the island was hit by a series of cyclone between 1979 and 1983. Malaria transmission peaked in 1982 with 623 indigenous cases. The technical support of the WHO was sought to launch the Malaria elimination programme. Mauritius was determined to restore the country's Malaria free status. The campaign was a combination of indoor residual spraying, destruction of all mosquito breeding places and robust surveillance. It succeeded in reducing the number of locally transmitted cases to 3 by 1989. The last indigenous case of Malaria in Mauritius was detected in 1997. But Mauritius is situated in an unstable Malaria zone and Malaria vector is present in the island. The risks of re-introduction of the disease are real. Hence very strict measures are taken to prevent a resurgence of Malaria. These measures include:

- (a) Surveillance - Ensuring that all aircrafts coming from malarious countries have disinfection carried out in conformity with international health regulations.
- (b) Active case findings - all passengers from malarious countries are visited by health surveillance officers.
- (c) Residual spraying - routine spraying of port and airport areas at six monthly interval
- (d) Larviciding - potential mosquito breeding grounds are treated with insecticides at regular intervals.

- (e) Malaria prophylaxis - drugs for Malaria prophylaxis are dispensed free of charge to travellers proceeding to malarious countries.
- (f) All Malaria cases are treated free of charge and followed up for a period ranging 3 to 12 months.

## 2.5 Plague

Plague is a deadly infectious disease caused by bacterium which is transmitted between animals and humans by the bite of infected rat fleas, which deposit the bacillus from its saliva, excreta and urine into the skin wound. The incubation period is 3 to 7 days. Patients experience a sudden onset of fever, chills, head and body aches and weakness with vomiting and nausea. Clinically the disease manifests itself in 3 forms - bubolic, septicaemic and pneumonic - depending on the route of infection. Plague can be a very severe disease with a case fatality ratio of 30 % to 60 % if left untreated.

### Brief History

Plague is believed to have caused more fear and terror than any other infectious disease in history. It has been responsible for multiple epidemics and at least three great pandemics:

- The first pandemic originated from the Middle-East during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. It spread to the Eastern Mediterranean region, killing almost half the population in these areas.
- The second pandemic struck Europe between 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, destroying nearly 40% of Europe's population - 25 million people were killed out of a population of 125 million.
- The third pandemic began in China in 1815 and spread to all inhabited continents with devastating results.

During the third pandemic, researchers succeeded in identifying the plague vector and the plague bacterium. In 1894 Alexandre Yersin isolated the germ and developed a treatment, an antiserum to combat the disease. He was the first to suggest that fleas and rats may have been responsible for the spread of the disease. Subsequently the bacillus was named *Yersinia pestis* in his memory.

### Plague in Mauritius

According to reports plague reached Port Louis in April 1890 with passengers coming from Madagascar, but the major epidemic outbreak occurred in January 1899, in the region of Plaine Verte at Calicut Street. The disease spread rapidly throughout the Island killing 1,147 persons. From then on, Plague became endemic in Mauritius until 1927, when it disappeared from the Island. It is estimated that a total of 7900 people died of plague in Mauritius between 1899 and 1927. As the cane fields were infested with rats, the authorities imported mongoose to eliminate the rat population. However when the rat population was controlled, the mongooses started eating the sugarcane and had to be eliminated in their turn.

Statistical incidence of death and disease of plague patients indicates that out of five patients four died as shown in table below:-

Year	No. of plague patients	No. of Deaths	Mortality Rate
1899	1416	1147	78.9%
1900	796	593	74.5%
1901	1093	805	73.6%
1902	505	386	71.3%
1903	1305	1035	74.2%
1904	568	449	79.0%
1905	308	251	81.5%

#### *Control measures undertaken*

- Vaccination of persons conducting anti-plague activities.
- Fumigation of contaminated houses.
- Destruction of huts inhabited by plague patients.
- Eradication of rat population
- Treatment of the sick with antibiotics - streptomycin or tetracycline.

## 2.6 Diphtheria

Diphtheria is an infectious disease. The causative agent is *Corynebacterium* also known as Loeffler's Bacillus. It spreads from person to person by respiratory droplets from the throat through coughing and sneezing. The incubation period is 2 to 5 days. The majority of victims are children below the age of 10. The symptoms range from moderate sore throat to life threatening diphtheria of the larynx/ respiratory tract. The disease can be fatal. Between 5% to 10% of diphtheria patients die even if properly treated. Untreated patients remain infectious up to 2-3 weeks. The treatment consists in the administration of diphtheria antitoxine and antibiotics. The effective control of diphtheria in the population is carried out by mass immunization.

Diphtheria was present in Mauritius since the earliest period of its history, with sporadic outbreaks. However in 1878 the disease started in Moka District and spread rapidly to Port-Louis and to the Southern Region. During this first epidemic the cause of the disease and its treatment were not known. Consequently no skill could rescue the victims from the claws of death.

After 1878 there was no other epidemic of diphtheria until 1901, which witnessed a mild and easily controlled episode. This was followed by an outbreak in 1907 that lasted for 3 years. By this time Loeffler's Bacillus was well-known and antidiphtheria serum was available. The Government had also opened a Medical Laboratory at St Pierre under the charge of a bacteriologist. Although this epidemic was more severe and extensive than that of 1878, injection of antidiphtheria serum to all the affected and suspect cases became a very effective weapon against the disease and a fatal issue was very rare.

As from 1961, Mauritius is protected against diphtheria, through a vaccination programme that also includes immunization against pertussis, tetanus and poliomyelitis.

## 2.7 Dengue Fever

Dengue fever also called Breakbone fever occurs everywhere in tropical and sub-tropical countries especially along the seaside. It is caused by dengue viruses that are transmitted to humans through the bites of infective female day-biting *Aedes* mosquitoes. *Aedes albopictus* is the local vector. There are four serotypes of dengue viruses. Infection in humans by one serotype produces lifelong immunity against reinfection by the same serotype, but only temporary and partial protection against other serotypes. The incubation period is 2 to 5 days. In some countries dengue fever recurs only after 20 to 30 years interval, most probably because in these cases the immunity produced is of long duration.

The disease is endemic in more than hundred countries. The World Health Organisation estimates 50 million dengue infections worldwide every year. Dengue fever is a severe flu-like illness that affects infants, young children and adults, but seldom causes death. The clinical feature is either a mild fever or an incapacitating disease with high fever, severe headache, retro-orbital pain, muscular and joint pains and rash over face, neck and extremities and haemorrhagic manifestation in very serious cases.

There is no specific treatment for dengue fever. Destruction of mosquito hiding places and protection against mosquito bites are essential to control the spread of the disease.

In Mauritius, the dengue epidemic first occurred in the summer of 1873. It lasted only 6 to 8 weeks, and was not fatal. The disease came with the coolies from India. It started in Port Louis and quickly spread to all the districts. Everybody, in every house was ill. The daily work in the country came to a standstill whilst the disease lasted.

The second epidemic occurred in June 2009 when around 250 cases were recorded. Once introduced in the country, dengue fever is very difficult to eradicate and tends to recur periodically. Furthermore, there are many high risk environmental pockets in the island, favouring the spread of imported viruses of the disease in the local mosquito population. In addition, Mauritius has extensive trade and travel links to dengue endemic zones. Hence, there is a real need for a plan to prevent and control dengue fever.

The surveillance tasks for inter-epidemic period, as established by health authorities include:

- (a) Situation monitoring through active case detection of all arrivals from dengue endemic countries.
- (b) Passive detection in the community.
- (c) Spraying operations for adult mosquito control.
- (d) Larviciding for source reduction.

### 3 PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD (1917-1968)

In 1917, the population of Mauritius was around 370 000. Slavery was already abolished in 1835 and the indentured labour ended in 1916. The country was under British colonial rule since 1810. Mauritius with its dependencies formed part of the British Empire. The livelihood of its inhabitants was dependent on export of sugar and the British imperial economic policy.

Mauritius was on the move from oligarchy to democracy. But the health situation was catastrophic. In a report to the Secretary of State for the colonies on medical and sanitary matters in Mauritius, Dr. A. Balfour wrote “its general unhealthiness had reached a degree unparalleled in any similar tropical dependency of the empire.” He added that Port Louis was regarded as the “filthiest port in the world” and concluded “if only Mauritius were freed from the diseases, which render it notoriously unhealthy its future might be assured”. Furthermore, inside the country there were glaring disparities between what was known as urban and rural areas. This is spelt out in very clear terms by Dr. Tekman Rajkoomar in his book entitled “Medical Services in Mauritius” under the heading “The two faces of Mauritius”, it reads as follows:-

“In the towns of Plaines Wilhems and Port-Louis, the educated and well-to-do people enjoyed all the amenities of city life: electricity and telephone, good water supply, schools and colleges, tarred roads, fresh fruit and vegetables in the market, good hotels and restaurants. There were also many forms of entertainment like cinemas and theatres as well as facilities for sports.

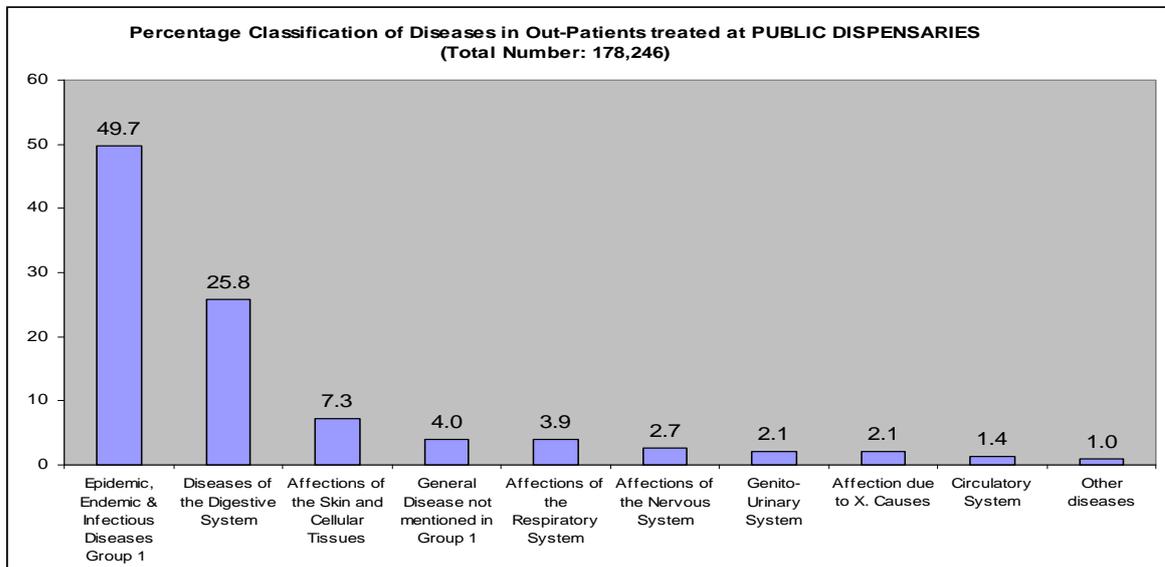
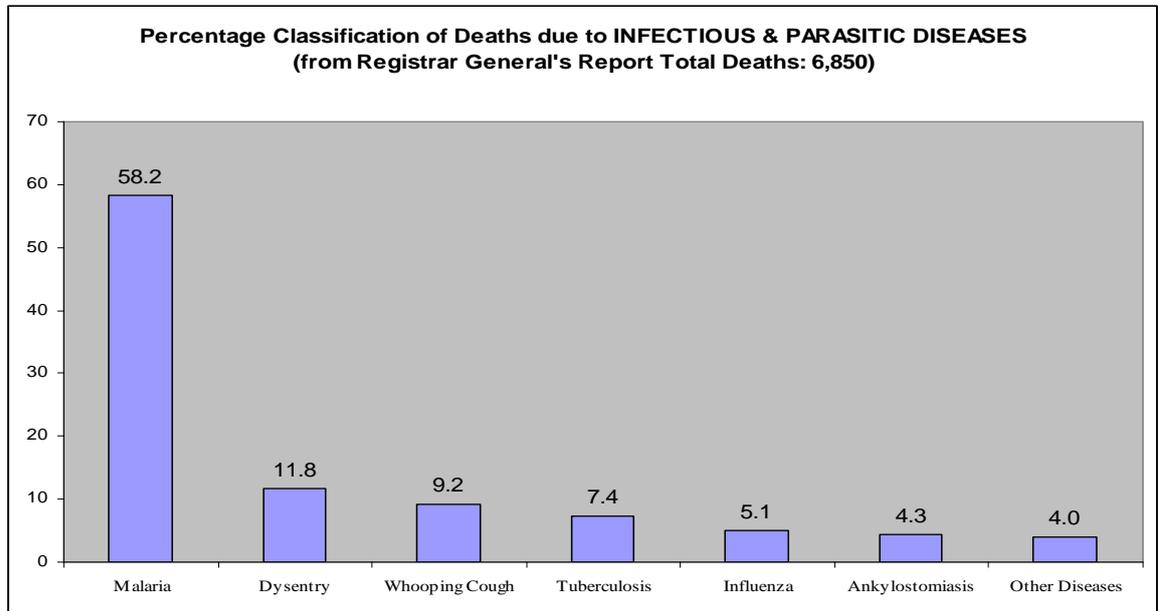
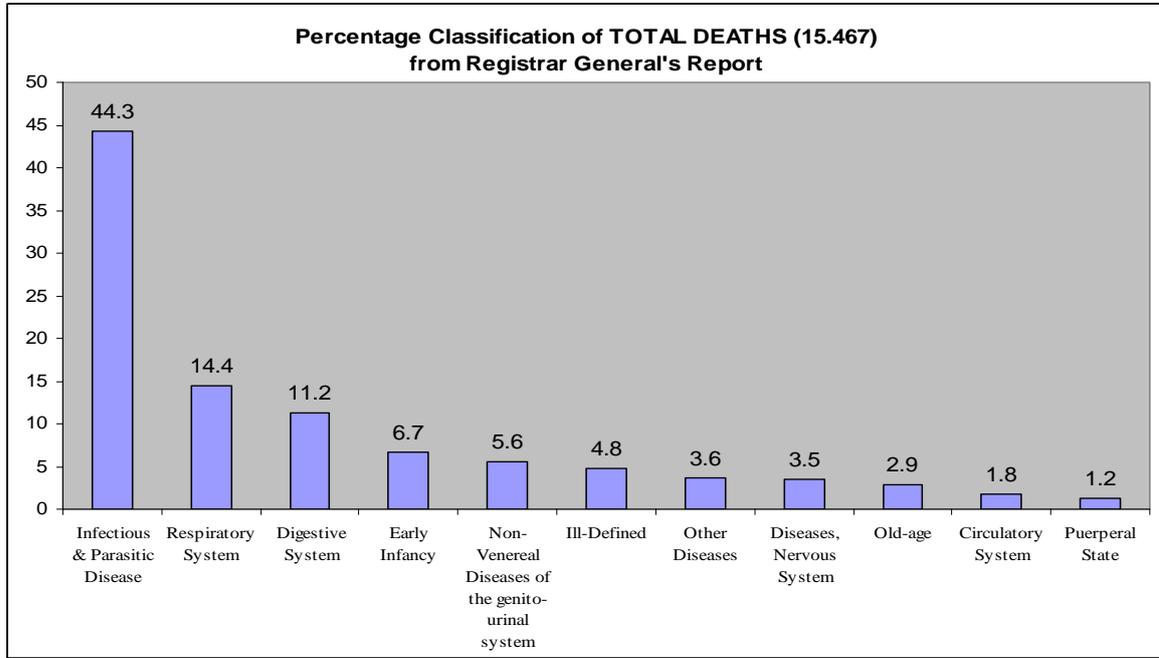
By contrast, the people in the rural areas were left to themselves. They walked bare footed on muddy roads and rarely attended the few primary schools scattered far and wide in the district areas. Little wonder that nobody could reach the colleges which were the exclusive preserve of the privileged few. Ignorance, poverty and disease created a vicious circle from which there was no escape. Half the children died before reaching the age of ten. Mothers died in their teens or early twenties, after giving birth to two or three children, from “maternal exhaustion syndrome”, a condition of extreme anaemia and malnutrition. Children, who survived, were pale specimens of humanity. The life expectancy was 32 for males and 34 for females.”

The population in 1921 and 1962 censuses were 376,485 and 681,619 respectively. Selected vital statistics (Table 7) indicates the rapid population growth as from the fifties.

Year	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate	Rate of Natural Increase	Infant Mortality Rate
1921 - 1925 (Average)	39.0	31.0	8.0	141.8
1936 - 40 (Average)	33.9	27.7	6.2	155.6
1945	38.5	36.1	2.4	188.0
1950	49.7	13.9	35.8	76.3
1955	41.8	12.9	28.9	67.2
1965	35.4	8.6	26.8	64.1

Morbidity and mortality statistics are useful for the study of the health status of a population and its evolution overtime. Figure 5, borrowed from the Annual Report of 1931 of the health department, shows the causes of death in the Island and also the principal causes of attendances at the dispensers. It confirms the predominance of infections and parasitic diseases during pre-independence period. The disease load in the population is not fully reflected in the official health services reports, because many episodes of illnesses were dealt with at domiciliary level by the application of traditional methods or through the intervention of medicine-men, - (the dais, the healers, the priests and the sorcerers also called “Ojhas” - although the effectiveness of interventions by “Ojhas” is questionable). The major problems faced by the health authorities during this period were infectious and parasitic diseases; Provision of safe water supply to the population; Malnutrition and anaemia; Impending population explosion.

Figure 5:



### 3.1 Spanish Flu

This was the deadliest epidemic that hit humanity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, killing nearly 80 million people world-wide. It struck Mauritius in May 1919 at a time when the Island was confronted with poverty, unemployment, Malaria, bacillary dysentery and pulmonary tuberculosis.

Being of viral origin with an incubation period of 8 days, it spread like wild fire affecting more than one third of the population. The clinical manifestations were fever, irritating cough and extreme weakness, causing all family members to be bedridden. No effective treatment, neither vaccine nor antibiotic was available. People died by the thousands and had to be buried in common graves. The epidemic lasted for 6 weeks and had killed 11, 194 victims, in a population of around 365, 000.

### 3.2 Pulmonary Tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease caused by mycobacterium tuberculosis. Poverty, overcrowding, poor living conditions and under nutrition contribute to the development and spread of pulmonary TB. It was a dreadful and fatal disease until late 1940's, when effective anti-tuberculosis treatment was introduced, with the advent of Streptomycin, P.A.S (para-aminosalicylic acid) and isoniazid. The following table indicates death per 100,000 population from pulmonary tuberculosis for the period 1941 - 1949.

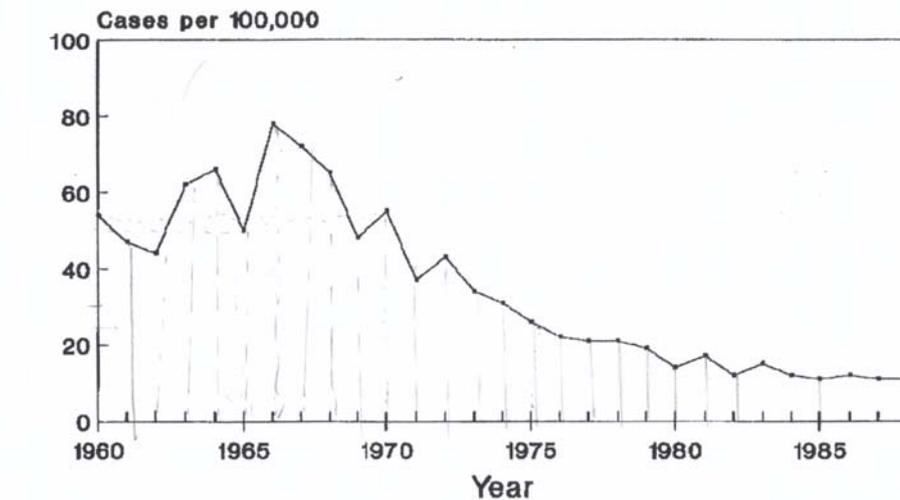
Years	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Death Per 100,000 population	50.83	47.06	51.67	51.49	55.24	45.49	38.39	60.20	65.24	50.78

In 1949, tuberculosis was included in the list of notifiable diseases and compulsory medical certification of deaths was extended to the entire districts of Port Louis, Moka and Plaine Wilhems. These measures provided some precise information on the magnitude and nature of problems caused by tuberculosis.

A World Health Organisation (WHO) assisted tuberculosis project became operational in 1965. Curative as well as preventive activities including health education, case finding and B.C.G vaccination were developed. An assessment of this programme, carried out in August 1989 by a WHO team revealed the following:-

- (a) From 1960 to mid 60s the incidence of notified pulmonary TB increased from 45 - 50 to 70 - 75 per 100, 000 population.
- (b) From mid 60's to early 80's, the notified incidence decreased to 15 - 20 per 100, 000.
- (c) The conclusion was that the magnitude of TB problem had decreased to 1/5 in 15 years, as shown in Figure 6. This was described as a drastic decrease, due to effective implementation of TB control measures combined with socio-economic development.

Figure 6:  
Incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis Mauritius, 1960-1988



Source: Mauritius MOH

The TB situation has continued to improve and the incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis for period 2000 - 2010, has been brought down to 9 - 11 per 100 000 population.

### 3.3 Poliomyelitis

Poliomyelitis is a viral disease caused by an enterovirus known as poliovirus. It affects mainly children and adolescents. One, in two hundred infections, leads to irreversible paralysis. 5 to 10% of those paralysed would die, when their breathing muscles become immobilised. The virus enters the body through the mouth and multiplies in the intestine. It invades the nervous system and can cause paralysis in a matter of hours.

The clinical features usually appear 7 - 10 days after infection. They include fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in neck and pain in the limbs. Some cases show signs of meningeal irritation which end up with paralysis of a group of muscles. Death is usually due to paralysis of respiratory muscles.

There is no cure for Poliomyelitis, but it leaves behind a trail of paralysed victims who will need lifelong rehabilitative support. However, Poliomyelitis can be prevented. Vaccination can protect a child for life. The first vaccine, discovered in 1955 by Dr. Jonas Salk, was an inactivated polio virus vaccine that is administered by injection. Later a live polio vaccine, (Sabin vaccine) taken orally was available.

In February 1945, Mauritius witnessed its first polio epidemic. It was a sudden outbreak of acute Poliomyelitis. The first cases were notified from Rose-Hill. It spread quickly to other districts. The peak of the epidemic was reached in the third week of March 1945. The total number of cases notified was 1,103. There were 80 deaths.

Assistance for the rehabilitation of polio cripples was sought from United Kingdom. A hospital was established at Floréal to cater specifically for polio cases. Professor Seddon arrived in April 1945 to take clinical charge of Polio patients. In May 1946, he was succeeded by Dr. M. Fitton.

An orthopaedic workshop was set-up to manufacture splints, artificial limbs and other aids for the cripples.

An epidemiological investigation was also carried out. It concluded that the epidemic was an outbreak of an endemic disease. Malnutrition, overcrowding and an increased prevalence of intestinal disease were present all over the Island. The infection spread mainly by means of healthy carriers. It was also spread from faeces by flies or by contaminated food.

A second out-break of polio epidemic occurred in June 1959. It lasted 14 weeks and left 99 paralysed victims. A Sabin vaccination campaign was launched in August 1959. 195 000 children aged between 6 months and 10 years were vaccinated, out of a total of 203 000 in this age group. This marked the beginning of polio eradication programme in Mauritius.

### 3.4 Schistosomiasis

Schistosomiasis is a parasitic disease. It is also known as Bilharziasis, in honour of Theodore Bilharz, who in 1851 discovered the causative agent of the disease in Egypt. There are three different forms of the disease- urinary, intestinal and vascular.

Urinary schistosomiasis must have existed in Mauritius before 1810. In a Study entitled "Topographie médicale de l'Isle de France" conducted by Chapotin in 1812, mention is made of the presence of symptoms under the name "pissement de sang" (pissing blood). But the first case reported in Mauritius was in 1890. In 1933 it was established that schistosoma haematobium, a Trematode worm was the parasite that caused the disease and the snail Bulinus Cernicus was the intermediate host.

The life circle of this parasite involves two hosts. Eggs released in fresh water, hatch into a miracidium which penetrates and infect the snail (Bulinus Cernicus) present in the water. Inside the snail the miracidium multiplies asexually producing cercariae, which are able to enter its primary host via pores in the skin and migrate to the organs like the gut, spleen and liver, where it matures into a sexually reproductive adult. The mature form undergoes a second migration and lays eggs in the walls of blood vessels of the bladder. The eggs are excreted in urine and released into water containing the susceptible snail and thus the cycle is propagated. Mature parasites have a life span of up to 20 years, during which period many batches of eggs may be laid.

Study of the intermediate host suggests that Bulinus Cernicus is unique to the island and appeared in Mauritius millions of years ago. It evolved slowly in its present form. The parasite (schistosoma haematobium) was introduced in Mauritius in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century by slaves coming from Africa and Madagascar.

Human contamination occurs through bathing and washing clothes in rivers, and cultivation of watercress. Five yearly statistics of attendances at dispensaries and hospital outpatients are given below to show the evolution of Schistosomiasis in Mauritius from 1928 to 1962.

Period	Attendances	Number of cases diagnosed	Number of cases per 1000 attendances
1928 - 1932	685,920	396	0.58
1933 - 1937	1,319,225	1,213	0.92
1938 - 1942	1,741,663	1,213	0.70
1943 - 1947	1,484,108	1,902	1.28
1948 - 1952	1,784,009	1,991	1.12
1953 - 1957	2,372,361	1,949	0.82
1958 - 1962	5,029,697	2,359	0.47

From 1960's onwards the prevalence of the disease continued its downward trend. By 1975 Schistosomiasis was limited to 3 districts - Pamplemousses, Port Louis and Grand Port. It was gradually reduced because of outpatient treatment, improvement of water supplies and sanitation including environmental management initiated with Malaria control activities. By 1986, no patient was admitted to hospital with a primary diagnosis of Schistosomiasis and Mauritius was heading towards elimination status.

### 3.5 Hookworm

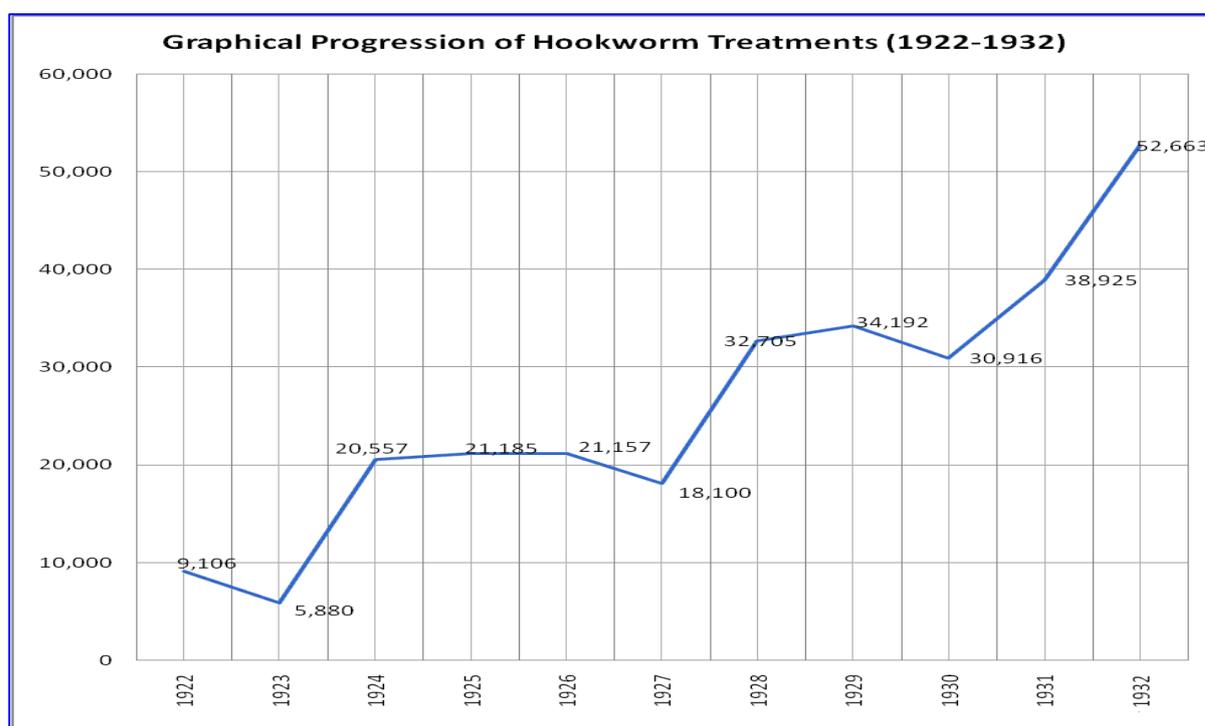
Hookworm infection had become a major sanitary problem. The warm climate, poor sanitation, soil pollution with human excreta and barefooted population, were factors that constantly exposed people to re-infection by *Ancylostoma duodenale* also known as roundworm.

The life circle of the parasite starts with the excretion of eggs in the stools of infected persons. The eggs hatch in the soil and develop into larvae that penetrate the skin of persons walking barefoot on soil contaminated by human faeces.

The infection was so widespread and important that in 1922, the authorities had to set-up a Hookworm Branch under the charge of a medical officer. In 1932 the estimated rate of infection among labouring classes, who were all barefooted, was around 85%. Hookworm infestation was responsible for blood loss, severe anaemia and slow growth among the victims.

In 1934, the number of cases treated in dispensaries and hospitals was 22,587 and the number of deaths due to ankylostomiasis was 108 in a population of 391 807. The figure 7, borrowed from the annual report of the Department of Health indicates hookworm treatments in the Island.

Figure 7:



### 3.6 Filariasis

Filariasis is a chronic disease due to threadworms that obstruct lymphatic vessels causing enormous swelling of tissues (elephantiasis) which affect the scrotum and legs.

The life circle of the parasite starts with the adult form living in the lymphatic organs, circulating system and tissues of vertebrates, including men. The female adult produces larvae called microfilariae which reach the peripheral blood or lymphatic vessels, from where they are ingested by a blood sucking mosquito (intermediate host) which deposits the filariasis on the skin of the host.

Lymphatic filariasis was introduced in Mauritius on several occasions during the past three centuries, reflecting the waves of human migration to the Island. A study conducted by S. Gebert of the Entomological Laboratory of the Department of Health, concluded that filariasis was present all over the Island, although the infection was very low in some districts but alarmingly high in the districts of Black River and Port Louis, where the rate of infection varied between 21% and 28%. The study also confirmed that mosquitoes were the main vectors, with *Culex fatigans* being the more important one.

The incidence of the disease began to decline after 1950 - 1951, which coincided with wide scale D.D.T spraying for Malaria control. In fact filariasis disappeared from Mauritius without any specific intervention. It is assumed that the combined action of mosquito control activities against Malaria and economic development was responsible for the interruption of filariasis transmission.

### 3.7 Typhoid

Typhoid fever is caused by a bacteria known as *Salmonella Typhi*, a highly virulent and invasive enteric pathogen, identified in 1881 by Eberth, German bacteriologist. Only humans are affected by ingestion of food and water contaminated with excreta from carriers of typhoid bacteria. This infection is closely associated with poor food hygiene and inadequate sanitation.

The incubation period is between 5 to 21 days after infection. The symptoms include fatigue, headache, abdominal pain and fever. A furred and coated tongue is typical of typhoid. Occasionally intestinal perforation and haemorrhage may occur. The diagnosis is confirmed by the presence of typhoid bacteria in urine, stools and blood. Usually typhoid fever results in lifelong immunity.

Typhoid like disease existed in Mauritius right from the time when the first settlers came to the Island. The disease would last for weeks and even months. The fatality rate was high and almost half of the victims died, until the discovery of chloramphenicol, which was a very effective antibiotic in controlling the disease.

In February 1956 a small epidemic of typhoid broke out in Grand Port district. 50 cases were notified. Health education, sanitation campaign, mass inoculation with TAB vaccine and treatment with Chloromycetin succeeded in controlling the situation within one month.

Humans are the only source of infection of typhoid fever. The transmission of *Salmonella Typhi* is by faecal-oral route. Consequently, any programme aimed at preventing the development of typhoid in a population, must include measures to improve sanitation and food hygiene, which are closely linked to socio-economic development.

### 3.8 Scabies

Scabies is a parasitic skin infection caused by mites. It is a highly communicable disease and it spreads easily from person to person on physical contact, often affecting an entire household.

The parts commonly affected are hands, in between fingers, the wrists, the axillae, beneath breasts of women, genitalia and inner aspects of the thighs. The dimension of the problem can be measured from statistics on scabies, borrowed from the annual report of the department of health.

Year	Population	Attendances at dispensaries and hospitals outpatients	Admission to hospitals (number)
1932	388,400	6257	399
1933	390,497	8178	440
1934	393,733	6446	331

Scabies had become a serious problem and a nuisance causing suffering especially to children and embarrassment to other members of the family because of overcrowding. It was also an indication of poor living conditions.

### 3.9 Malnutrition and Anaemia

In the mid 50's malnutrition and under nourishment became a common cause of morbidity and mortality, particularly amongst infants and school children. Anaemia was rife as evidenced in the following table:-

Year	New cases (in and out-patients)	Rate per 1000 population
1956	36,074	63.4
1957	40,063	68.2
1958	45,873	76.0
1959	45,484	73.2
1960	36,456	57.1
1961	34,899	53.2
1962	29,895	43.9
1963	40,407	57.6
1964	38,392	53.2
1965	49,450	66.7

This situation was a cause for serious concern to the health authorities. From August 1956 to December 1959, a WHO team headed by Stott carried out an extensive dietary survey. It was found that iron deficiency anaemia was wide-spread in the Island, particularly amongst women and children. The causative factors were identified as being: low dietary iron, blood loss through hookworm infestation, cooking losses of iron and iron requirements for adolescent, menstruation, pregnancy and lactation.

Measures recommended to combat anaemia include iron therapy and control of parasitic infections, especially hookworm and ascaris infestations.

### 3.10 Measures Taken

The last quarter of this period corresponding to 1950's and 1960's, will be remembered for the bold and scientifically sound health initiatives taken by the health authorities. These initiatives were translated into programmes that proved to be very effective at the community level. These included Malaria control programme, the tuberculosis control programme and the vaccination programme against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis. In addition an innovative, people centered family planning programme received wide acceptance from the population. The successful implementation of these programmes made Mauritius complete its epidemiological and demographic transition. Furthermore, diseases like amoebiasis, helminthic infections, gastroenteritis and enteric fever were eliminated by public health engineering works that ensured safe disposal of human waste through a sewage system development, and provision of safe water supplies.

## 4. THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Since 1960, Mauritius has developed from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a middle-income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial and tourist sectors.

The backbone of the Mauritian economy has been sugarcane till the 1980`s. At that period of time the Mauritian economy was very vulnerable to fluctuating climatic conditions such as cyclones and droughts as these lead to a decrease in sugar production and revenue. Therefore the government had to diversify the economy from the mono-crop king sugar. This lead to the emergence of the textile industry in the 1980`s and later on the tourism industry. Today our main source of income comes from the tourism sector followed by the services sector and cane industry.

As the economy evolved, the standard of living has increased quite rapidly. Mauritians started to lead sedentary lifestyles with more frequent use of motor vehicles as means of transportation. Such rapid development has brought new difficulties like lack of proper infrastructure (e.g. Traffic jams) and environmental hazards.

### 4.1 Emergence of Chronic Diseases

Mauritius has also undergone a demographic and an epidemiological transition from communicable to non-communicable diseases over the past few decades. The first half of the century was mostly dominated by infectious diseases (such as Malaria, small pox, cholera, etc) whereas the second part of the century has seen an increase in the number of Non-Communicable diseases *and* ageing of the population. Metabolic syndrome started to appear in the eighties. Nosocomial infections crept in, in the nineties.

### 4.2 Achievements of Independent Mauritius in the Health Sector

Few countries have achieved so much in so short a time. The main achievements of modern Mauritius can be listed as follows:

- 1.The eradication of Malaria (Eradication program started in 1949, as from 1956 no case of death due to Malaria has been reported).
2. The supply of clean pipe water throughout the island.
- 3.The control of population growth.
- 4.The introduction of Family Planning methods has led to planned families (parents were able to better educate their children).
- 5.Improvement of health by an integrated approach of control of Hookworm and Amoebiasis, provision of shoes to school children and boots to labourers and supply of school meals and milk to school children.

6. Regionalisation of Health Services and distribution of resources equitably to all parts of the island.
7. Introduction of specialised care like cardiology services, neurosurgery, dialysis centres and dental care.
8. The increase in the number of doctors and nurses has led to an easily accessible health service.
9. The visits of foreign teams in cardiac surgery, neurosurgery and renal transplant have greatly helped in the training of local doctors and nurses. Today complicated cases are being dealt with by local teams.

### 4.3 Life Expectancy

An increase in life expectancy (see Table 12) leads to a gradual ageing of the population resulting in an insidious development of chronic degenerative diseases.

	1961-1963	1971-1973	1980-1984	1989-1991	1993-1995	1996-1998
Male	58.2	60.5	64.4	65.6	66.4	66.6
Female	61.9	65.9	68	73.4	74.8	74.4

With independence on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1968, Health Services were regionalised, the existing structures improved and new centres built to provide health care to every part of the island.

Two new regional hospitals were built, the S.S.R.N Hospital at Pamplemousses in 1968 and the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital at Rose Belle in 1990. Many Primary Health Care Centres were opened such as Community Health Centres, Area Health Centres, Dental Clinics, Family Planning Centres, and Mediclinics.

Special operation units like the Cardiac Surgery Centre, the Renal Transplant Unit and the Neurosurgery Unit, all based at SSRNH were commissioned. The setting of those centres marked the beginning of the development of high tech medicine in the country.

### 4.4 Cardiac Centre

In the early 1990s, most of the cardiac patients had to travel abroad for interventions. Therefore such type of treatment was not affordable to poor families. The inauguration of The Cardiac Centre, situated in Pamplemousses in 1999 was a major milestone for the health system of Mauritius. Cases like Cardiac Surgery (adult and paediatric), Angioplasty, Vascular Surgery and Thoracic Surgery are routinely performed at the Centre. All the services provided are free of cost and are accessible to all Mauritians. With the growing years, thanks to the dedication of the medical and paramedical staff, the Cardiac Centre has developed into a Centre of Excellence in the field of cardiac surgery and cardiology both locally and abroad. It also plays an important role in the field of Medical Tourism. Patients from neighbouring islands like Madagascar and Comoros come to the Centre for treatment. The Cardiac Centre is the only ISO Certified health institution of the country. It is also the only Clinic of the island dealing with Paediatric Cardiology.

There have also been few successful missions carried out abroad by a team of doctors and paramedical staff from the Centre, e.g. The first Cardiac Surgery in Madagascar, Botswana and Comoros.

Table 13 gives the statistics on interventions carried out at the Cardiac Centre in the field of Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery in Mauritius

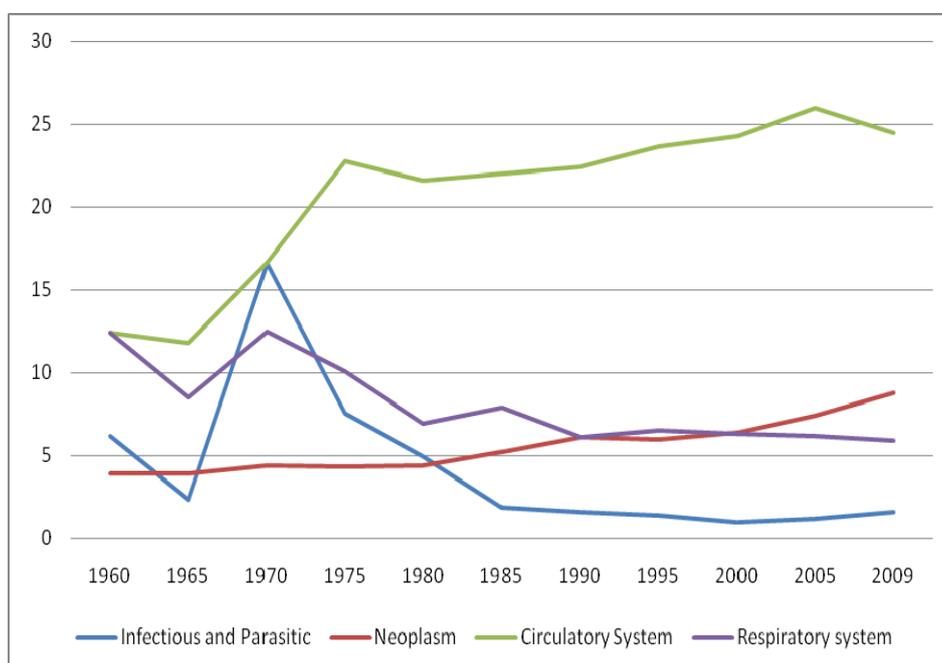
	Year										
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Cardiac Surgery	348	410	383	415	470	510	533	526	457	476	487
Thoracic Surgery	-	-	-	44	81	37	24	9	5	20	21
Neurosurgery	300	314	223	177	234	222	185	255	208	219	146
Vascular Surgery	-	-	-	-	-	104	104	160	172	87	121
Angiography	763	947	959	1392	1257	997	1052	832	782	919	986
PTCA	133	222	273	350	457	199	262	174	159	36	144
ASD closure	-	-	-	-	-	59	79	132	160	8	3
PDA closure	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	4	3
PDA coiling	-	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	10	3	9

#### 4.5 Current Trends

According to available data compiled since 1960, the mortality rate of infectious and parasitic diseases has encountered a considerable decrease. The reasons of this decrease are mostly the anti-Malarial campaign started in the 5<sup>th</sup> decade of the century, improvement in the quality of domestic water supply and easier access to education which led to a rise in the standard of living and quality of life of Mauritians.

On the other hand, this change in lifestyle has also led to greater access to cars and machinery. Mauritians started to lead sedentary lifestyles coupled with more and more day to day stress resulting in a dramatic rise in the mortality rate due to Non-Communicable Diseases such as Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Diseases and Cerebro-vascular diseases. Leading authors like KIRKLIN have described a phenomenon in developing countries and which is verified in Mauritius, that countries with fast growing economies experience a rise in the prevalence of Non-Communicable diseases coupled with a decrease in the prevalence of infectious diseases as shown at Figure 8.

Figure 8:  
Mortality Rate per 10,000 mid-year population



The first NCD Survey was carried out in 1987. Since then regular surveys at 5-6 years' intervals have been carried out in 1992, 1998, 2004 and 2009. These surveys have documented the prevalence of NCDs. Mortality rates due to NCDs show a five-fold increase in deaths caused by diabetes mellitus, as shown at table 14.

Table 14:  
Death rates due to NCDs

Underlying cause of death	Year						
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Heart Diseases	13.1	13.4	13.6	14.4	14.8	15.9	13.9
Cerebro-vascular Diseases	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.6	7.6	6.1
Hypertensive Diseases	2.3	1.6	2.6	1.5	1.7	2.5	4.3
Diabetes Mellitus	3.8	5.3	8.2	9.9	12.9	14.7	16.5

#### 4.6 Diabetes Mellitus

The number of patients diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus in the population aged 30 years and above, has doubled between 1987 and 2009, as shown in table 15. The causes of this increase are attributed to a rise in standard of living, consumption of high glycaemic index food, leading a more stressful life and less daily physical activities.

	1987	1992	1998	2004	2009
Male	14.2	16.3	18.4	18.9	28
Female	14.5	17.4	20.6	19.7	25.8
Total	14.3	16.9	19.5	19.3	26.9

#### 4.7 Hypertension

The prevalence of hypertension has also increased from 30.2 % in 1987 to 37.9 % in 2009. This is due partly to modern lifestyle with stress at work and on road or because financial and social tensions.

	1987	1992	1998	2004	2009
Male	31.7	26.5	30	29.7	40.5
Female	28.7	26.1	29.5	29.9	35.4
Total	30.2	26.2	29.6	29.8	37.9

#### 4.8 Overweight and Obesity

Since 1987, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of people who are overweight or obese. The prevalence of obesity has increased nearly three-fold from 6.3 % in 1987 to 16 % of the total population in 2009. This can be related to a more sedentary lifestyle, consumption of rich food and alcohol and greater access to cars.

	1987	1992	1998	2004	2009
Male	3.1	5.2	6.4	5.6	11.3
Female	9.2	14.5	15.4	13.7	20.5
Total	6.3	10.2	11.5	10.3	16.0

#### 4.9 Physical Activity

In 2009, only 16.5% of Mauritian adults aged between 25 to 74 years were undertaking sufficient physical activity to meet the national guidelines of 30 minutes of leisure time activity per day to maintain good health.

#### 4.10 Cancer

Cancer has become the third major health threat after diabetes and cardiovascular diseases in the Republic of Mauritius. Nearly 1400 new cases of cancers and 950 cancer deaths occur each year. In 2008, cancers accounted for 11.9 % of all deaths in the country. There were, in total, 2286 and 3280 new cases of cancer in men and women respectively between 2005 and 2008. The total number of new cases has risen by 41% in men and 40% in women between 1992 and 2008.

The incidence and prevalence of the different types of cancers vary in different parts of the world. In Mauritius, breast cancer in females and cancer of the colon and rectum in males are the commonest, while in children acute leukaemia is the commonest (as shown in the Table 18):

Males			Females		
	Number	%		Number	%
Colon	320	14	Breast	1239	37.8
Prostate	241	10.5	Cervix	334	10
Lung	220	9.6	Colon	159	4.8
Oropharynx	186	8.1	Ovary	183	5.6
Lymphoma/Leukemia	192	8.4	Uterus	166	5
Stomach	182	8	Leukemia	73	2.2
Bladder	112	4.2			

### High Risk Factors for Cancer

Although the exact causes of cancer are unknown, the development of cancer is often associated with life styles, diet and environmental conditions. Cancers of the lung, throat, mouth and oesophagus have been directly linked to tobacco smoking. Cancer of the cervix has been linked to sexual transmission and certain Human Papilloma Virus subtypes. Diet has also been linked to causation of cancer of the bowel, stomach and breast. Infection with Hepatitis B and C viruses is associated with liver cancer.

### National Cancer Control Program

Many cancers with known causes can be prevented and their incidence will eventually fall. Many patients with cancer can be cured of their disease with adequate therapy, if detected early. Patients with incurable cancers should expect to receive a good quality of life. A four year National Cancer Control Program has launched in 2010.

The main objectives of this program are:

#### 1.Cancer Prevention

Certain cancers may be easily preventable, e.g. Cervical cancer (by promoting sexual health) and lung and other tobacco related cancers (by banning of smoking in public places and air pollution control).

#### 2.Screening and Early diagnosis

The outcome of cancer treatment is generally improved when cancers are detected at an early stage as in cervical and breast cancer. Cancer may be diagnosed early by proven screening methods. Therefore Public Awareness Campaigns have been started to alert the population about cancer symptoms which will lead to early diagnosis.

#### 3.Curative therapy (free of charge to hospital patients)

The treatment modalities of most types of cancers are surgery (provision is being made to recruit a surgical oncologist), radiotherapy (the current infrastructure has been upgraded e.g.: the linear accelerator at Victoria Hospital has been modified) and chemotherapy (availability of more than 40 chemotherapeutic drug, stem-cell transplant, hormonal and immunotherapy).

#### 4.Palliative care

To offer the best symptomatic and supportive treatment to incurable cases such as liver, lung and pancreatic cancers is important.

In general, one third of all cancers is preventable, one third is treatable and the remaining third is at present incurable. Palliative care provision, which includes the control of pain and relief of symptoms need to be structured and patient-centred. This aspect of cancer control, costs little and yet is important in improving the quality of life of cancer patient.

#### 4.11 Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HIV is a retrovirus that affects cells of the immune system. It destroys or diminishes the efficiency of our antibodies. During the first stage, the person has no really noticeable symptoms. However, as the infection progresses, the immune system becomes weaker, and the person becomes more susceptible to so-called opportunistic infections. The most advanced stage of HIV infection is acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). It can take 10-15 years for an HIV-infected person to develop AIDS. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Mauritius dates back to 1987 when the first HIV positive case was detected. Since then the number of recorded cases has continued to increase and according to statistics produced by the AIDS Unit of the Ministry of Health, the rate of progression was mild during the early years following detection. Since 2003, the country seems to be heading towards a critical phase with the rate of increase assuming an almost exponential trend. And it is predicted that it would become still sharper in the years to come. So, the causes of this trend and the social impact on the society should be analysed and ways have to be found to be able to counteract this crisis.

The main mode of HIV transmission was heterosexual but nowadays the main route through which it occurs is through the sharing of injecting needles in intravenous drug addicts (IVDA). Up to 95% of the newly current cases of HIV infection is contracted by IVDAs. The modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS are:

- Having unprotected sexual intercourse(anal or vaginal or oral)
- Transfusion of contaminated blood
- Sharing of contaminated needles
- Between a mother and infant during pregnancy(child birth and pregnancy)

Contrary to many African countries, where the main reason of HIV spread is due to sex, in Mauritius, the transmission is mainly through needle exchange among drug users. According to the AIDS unit of the ministry of health, most of those who are HIV positive live in Port Louis and in the region of Plaines Wilhems. It accounts for 74% of the total HIV cases for the country. To counteract this rapid increase in the number of HIV positive patients, the Government has initiated a number of actions:

- 1.A needle exchange program has been started since 2006 to prevent needle sharing among drug addicts.
- 2.The Methadone Substitution Therapy was launched to encourage IVDAs to quit drugs.
- 3.Antiretroviral therapies are provided free of charge by public hospitals.
- 4.Creation of AIDs Unit and Harm Reduction Unit to coordinate field work.
- 5.Sex education has been started in Secondary Schools through the school health program to educate children about the risks of unprotected sex.
- 6.Mass Media awareness campaigns have been initiated to sensitize and educate the population about HIV/AIDS (what is HIV, its methods of transmission and precautions to be taken to avoid infections and to prevent the stigmatisation of those living with the disease).
- 7.Free HIV screening programs (results are kept confidential).
- 8.Compulsory HIV screening test to all foreigners prior to the issue of work permits.

9. Free distribution of condoms to sex workers.
10. Proper training and recruitment of additional staff, from peer educators, nurses and doctors to tackle the increasing number of HIV positive patients.
11. Creation of an AIDs Hotline.
12. Construction of a new wing in Beau-Bassin Prison to house HIV positive inmates therefore preventing transmission to HIV negative inmates.
13. Prevention of mother to child transmission program.
14. The Paediatric HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support program is currently being finalise to enable better management of paediatric patients.

#### 4.12 H1N1

Diseases due to human influenza viruses have huge health and socio-economic consequences. Two forms of influenza diseases are known: seasonal and pandemic.

Seasonal influenza occurs every year in the winter months of temperate climates. It can cause death among persons with pre-existing diseases like chronic heart diseases, respiratory diseases, etc and is responsible for work days loss and absenteeism from school. A yearly vaccine is available for the prevention of seasonal influenza.

Periodically the seasonal human influenza virus combines with an animal influenza virus to generate a novel virus that results in a pandemic, spreading across the globe in all age groups and during any time of the year. Major past epidemics includes the Spanish influenza of 1918, the Asian flu in 1957 and the Hong Kong flu in 1968 which caused over million deaths each. Besides disease and deaths, pandemic influenza has huge socio-economic impacts by: putting pressure on the health system, disruption of trade and commerce, restriction of travel, social disruption and mass panic.

The only way to prevent the arrival of a pandemic strain of influenza lies in the active surveillance. In 2003, the world saw the emergence of an avian influenza, the H5N1 that is found in the poultry population of Asia. The H5N1 virus is associated with high mortality and has pandemic potential, although it has not spread across the globe. Since April 2009, a novel human virus H1N1 has emerged simultaneously in USA, Mexico and Canada. With the extensive travel and trade links existing between Europe, Africa and Asia, the arrival of the virus in Mauritius was inevitable.

**What are the symptoms of Influenza A H1N1?**

They are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu, and include:

- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fever ( $\geq 38$  C)
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Vomiting & diarrhoea, in some cases

In some cases there may be complications such as difficulty in breathing and pneumonia. Pregnant women, younger children and people of any age with certain chronic lung or other medical conditions appear to be at higher risk of more complicated or severe illness.

How is Influenza A H1N1 virus transmitted?

The virus is transmitted in two ways:

- by inhaling contaminated droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- by touching objects and other surfaces which may be contaminated by infected droplets being deposited on them, and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes without washing hands.

What are the preventive measures?

- Washing of hands frequently with soap and water.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Use of face masks.
- Cleaning of hard surfaces such as table tops, door handles and taps regularly using any usual cleaning product available commercially.
- Reduction as much as possible in the time spent in crowded settings.
- Ensure good ventilation in living spaces by opening of windows as much as possible.

In the presence of respiratory illness:

- The nose and mouth should be covered when coughing or sneezing, with a tissue if possible, then the tissue should be disposed in a closed bin after use.
- Hands should be washed immediately after coughing or sneezing to reduce the spread of the virus from the hands to other people.
- Limited contact with other persons to prevent spread of infection.
- Those ill should stay home until symptoms have cleared up.

Vaccination

Influenza vaccines are one of the most effective ways to be protected from contracting illness during influenza epidemics and pandemics. Vaccination is therefore recommended in order to boost the body's resistance against the new influenza, and help ensure public health as the pandemic evolves. About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies against the virus develop in the body and provide protection against infection. The Government has recently put into use thermal scans at the port and airport in order to screen all passengers arriving in the country.

#### 4.13 Chikungunya and the Re-emergence of Dengue in Mauritius

Chikungunya was first described in Tanzania in 1952, whilst Dengue Fever and Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever were first recognised in the 1950s during the Dengue epidemics in Philippines and Thailand.

Chikungunya fever is caused by Chikungunya virus which is a member of Alpha virus. There is one serotype of Chikungunya so far and so immunity is believed to be life-long. DF/DHF is caused by Dengue virus which belongs to genus Flavivirus family Flaviviridae and includes serotypes 1, 2, 3 and 4. Therefore when a person has had the classic Dengue (i.e. infection by one serotype), a second infection later by another serotype increases the likelihood of suffering from DHF.

An outbreak of Chikungunya occurred in the Comoro Islands in early 2005. Due to the extensive travel and trade links between the Islands of the Indian Ocean, Mauritius rapidly became affected. The first case in Mauritius was reported in late 2005. It was a Comorian citizen who had arrived in the island few days earlier. Dengue has re-emerged in Mauritius in 2009 after more than 30 years, but the outbreak was short-lived because of the institution of control measures and the arrival of cooler and drier weather. The re-emergence was probably caused by introduction of DENV-2 by unrecognized infective travellers. In 2008, an imported case of dengue was diagnosed in a child returning from India, but control measures were rapidly instituted and no local transmission occurred.

No case of dengue hemorrhagic fever was recorded in this outbreak, probably because the population has not been exposed previously to another serotype. The vector of the outbreak was likely to have been *Ae. albopictus* mosquitoes, which are widely distributed in Mauritius (*Ae. aegypti* was eradicated from the country in the early 1950s as a result of a DDT indoor-spraying campaign in 1949-1951 to control Malaria). However, the rapid increase in the number of observed cases in June 2009 is more consistent with an *Ae. aegypti*-borne dengue outbreak, and a new comprehensive entomologic study is needed to exclude the possibility that *Ae. aegypti* has recently been reintroduced into Mauritius.

#### 4.14 Action Plan

To prevent the propagation of the virus, the following measures are in force:

1. Larviciding and fogging operations in affected regions
2. Proper outbreak investigations and control
3. Clean up campaigns have been stepped up by providing waste litter bins in high risk areas.
4. Cleaning up of bare lands and river banks where waste accumulate
5. Wasteland management by legal actions against offenders
6. Ensure elimination of breeding sites from irrigation areas
7. Supplement workforce for vector control
8. Sensitize planters on proper water storage for irrigation
9. Launch of national awareness campaign
10. Incorporate health promotion in the school curriculum
11. Surveillance of travellers from dengue-endemic regions has been instituted e.g.: the thermal scanner, recently installed at the airport.

#### 4.15 Road Traffic Accidents

Since its Independence in 1968, the Republic of Mauritius has undergone fast economic growth. The standard of living has greatly increased during the past years. Things which were unaffordable to the common man few years back have now become at reach of most of the citizens. There has been a rapid increase in the number of motor vehicles on our roads.

Since the road network of the country has not been designed to cater for so many vehicles, an increase of fatal and non-fatal accidents has been noticed. Table 19 shows the trend in Road Traffic Accidents in Mauritius from 2000 to 2010.

**Table 19:**  
**Statistic of Casualties of Road Accidents in Mauritius for Years 2000 to 2010**

Year	Fatal	Seriously injured	Slightly injured	Total
2000	163	266	2862	3291
2001	126	288	2850	3264
2002	158	216	2530	2904
2003	131	291	2276	2698
2004	144	245	2562	2951
2005	136	358	2266	2760
2006	134	348	2040	2522
2007	140	500	2415	3055
2008	168	517	2746	3431
2009	140	479	3036	3655
2010	157	352	3032	3541
Total	1597	3860	28615	34072

With a view to counteract this increase in the number of road accidents, a Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has been set up to manage the traffic throughout the island and promote safety and security measures to reduce the number of road accidents and casualties through the application of the 4 E's concept:

- Education:** To sensitize and create awareness among the population on road safety.
- Enforcement:** To enforce road traffic laws related to road safety with a view to improve the behaviour and attitude of road users.
- Engineering:** To identify/gather and forward significant information respecting improvement needed in our road structure to concerned authorities like TMRSU, RDA and the parent Ministry.
- Evaluation:** To analyze records statistics and trends of road occurrences and to develop action plan and remedial measures.

#### 4.16 Education

Education is one of the four pillars whereby much emphasis is being laid to inculcate a road safety culture in the population. The road safety unit is engaged on delivering lectures on road safety matters to road users as hereunder;

- Schools children (primary and secondary),
- Senior citizens,
- Professional drivers,
- Police officers (police training school)

With a view to increase awareness among the population, the unit is also often engaged in organizing and conducting campaigns on road safety in collaboration of the Ministry of public infrastructure, Land transport and Shipping. The unit is also involved in seminars /exhibitions on road safety on several occasions to increase awareness.

Much progress has been made in improving road user behaviour. Education shows people how to use the roads safely and tries to persuade them to change unsafe behaviour, while effective enforcement and appropriate penalties to deter people from potentially dangerous behaviour. The general public is also sensitized on road safety matters through the daily `info route` on radios.

#### 4.17 Enforcement

The Traffic branch and the regular police are permanently deployed in a systematic way with priority to track down traffic offences related to road safety. Regular crack down on drunken drivers throughout the island and joint speed checks operations with handheld radars are also being performed. To achieve a better result in enforcement of traffics laws each police divisions has a team `Divisional Traffic Police` (operational since December 2009) operating in their respecting divisions (district).

Motorway Patrol is a sub unit of the traffic branch providing a permanent policing on the motorways from Grand Bay to SSRIA on a twenty four hours basis with main objectives to provide security to the public and to prevent and detect offences.

Year	Exceeding speed limit	Alcohol test	Other Road Traffic Offences	Total
2002	30155	900	24539	55594
2003	39442	716	22597	62755
2004	31521	442	26368	58331
2005	20352	212	25290	45854
2006	31455	256	37750	69461
2007	31191	183	33227	64601
2008	20963	214	25934	47111
2009	37166	274	27283	64723
2010	53718	256	21347	75321
Total	295963	3453	244335	543751

#### 4.18 Engineering

Information respecting shortcomings, damages, hazards and improvement needed in road structures are gathered and transmitted to concerned authorities for necessary actions. These information are received from:

- Examination of spots of road accidents,
- Surveys carried at accident prone areas,
- Observations during police patrols,
- Complaints from the community,
- During community forum organized by the police at different localities.

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## PART III: HEALTH AND LIVING CONDITIONS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Living healthier and longer is one of the fundamental tenets of life. Individuals, institutions, communities and governments work incessantly to ensure the health and well-being of societies. For centuries, scientists have been trying to understand and measure the dynamics of health and subdue diseases. Successes have been achieved. Epidemics of diseases are being reined and, in some cases, wiped out of planet earth (smallpox 1980). Lifespan has doubled within decades in many countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, disparities still persist in some regions and in less developed economies. The explanation lies in a web-matrix of complex factors. Physical environment, clean air, safe water and houses, healthy workplaces, community living, customs, traditions and beliefs, health care services and access to facilities contribute to good health. People are happier, healthier and work better in congenial working conditions. Also, genetics and gender have an influence on the health status of individuals.

And yet, the history of human civilization on health and living conditions as far as slavery and indentured labour are concerned is a dark spot carved on stone. Historians, writing about the health of slaves and indentured labour in the 18-19<sup>th</sup> century Mauritius, have portrayed a picture that has left an impression of 'quasi torture' and an extremely harsh life with death as liberation from persecution (Teelock 1998, Barker 1996, Nwulia 1981). The general consensus is that these labour constituted an asset for the planter owners and a necessity for the colonial powers for the exploitation of land in pre-industrial times. Slave labour was so essential to the economy that the French colonists defied all attempts of the authorities to enforce abolition of slavery. If the human labour force was a critical factor for the colonial administrations, inevitably the health of the slaves and the indentured labour should have been paramount to promote their interests. Was it so?

Two sets of conditions are discernable. Raiding, abysmally shocking transactions over their capture, physical and emotional suffering, beating and battering, injuries, and undernourishment were not alien to the treatment meted out to the slaves before, during and after their immigration to the island (Barker). The indentured labour had a different set of conditions for their recruitment, voyage to Mauritius, care and treatment and their housing and contractual working agreements (Teelock 2009, Boodhoo 2010).

In 1920, C.E.A Winslow defined Public Health as "the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals". In the country of the colonizers, the field of public health was expanding very rapidly in the light of evolution on several fronts. Medical knowledge was gaining grounds and, industrial revolution was beginning to shape twentieth century engines of growth of emerging economies. The transition from using the sail for trans-Atlantic travels to steam engines and mechanical power narrowed the time to cross the oceans and facilitated movement of people. So did the travel of epidemics as the West Bengal cholera in 1832 reaching the shores of Britain

If, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the physical environment such as clean water and air, good sanitation, safe houses and roads were most important factors impacting on the health status of individuals, late 20<sup>th</sup> century public health in Mauritius saw a seamless relationship bonding with lifestyles on top of the physical, social and environmental factors. The epidemiology of diseases shifted from communicable to non-communicable diseases. Likewise, the weight of pathologies shifted. Physical activity, weight control, healthy nutrition, stress management, limiting alcohol use and avoiding smoking have now become more important for the maintenance of good health.

This paper will try to examine the factors that shaped the state of health or ill-health of the slave population, the indentured labour and their descendents till Mauritius gained Independence in 1968. The last section will cover the period of post-independence health developments in the Island.

## 2. SLAVERY AND INDENTURED LABOUR

The history of slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius takes its roots in the presence of visitors and settlers of colonial empires stretching over a period of two and a half centuries starting in the eighteenth century. Stuck in the trademark trappings of possession of the island, de-possession of its resources, trade rivalries, strategic presence for control of trade routes lapping the Indian Ocean and economic exploitation for the production of sugar were the dominant reasons explaining the Dutch (1698-1710), French (1710-1810) and British (1810-1968) occupation of the Island.

To achieve those ends, the occupier-residents initially brought slaves mainly from Mozambique, Madagascar, East Coast of Africa and some from India. Altogether, some 100,000 slaves were brought in during the period 1715-1810. With the abolition of slavery in 1833, the British, through the British East India Company, looked towards India as a source of cheap labour to lubricate the economic machinery they were establishing in the country to pursue the leftover work of the slave population.

## 3. POPULATION AND HEALTH DURING THE DUTCH OCCUPATION

The Dutch first landed in Mauritius in 1598. The Island was uninhabited. With the arrival of the first Governor Cornelis Simonsz Gooyer came 25 men included a 'ziekentroosta'- translated as 'le chirurgien (cumulant aussi les fonctions de barbier et d'apothicaire)'.<sup>1</sup>

Gooyer in his record on 30 July 1638 wrote there was in the detachment a 'barbier well provided with everything in the way of both medicines and instruments'. Vijaya Teelock<sup>2</sup> makes mention in a translated document (from Dutch) 'among the list of goods required by the inhabitants in 1665, 1 case with medicines'.

1665 is the earliest record in the history of Mauritius of the presence of a 'chirurgien' and a chest of medicines.

At the time of abandonment of the Island by the Dutch in 1710, the population counted at 894 individuals including 507 whites and 387 blacks (Balfour 1921).

## 4. HEALTH CONDITIONS, CARE AND TREATMENT OF SLAVES

This section will focus mainly on the health conditions, care and treatment of the slaves from their port of origin to the time of their liberation from bondage that runs beyond abolition of slavery in 1834 during the transition period that indentured labour supplanted them.

Before dwelling on the subject, two points need clarification: (1) literature on the health situation of the slaves in the eighteenth century is scanty (Teelock, UOM) and of doubtful reliability (Valentine 2000); and (2) a culture of medical practice existed in the home environment of the slaves which they carried with them in their new environment. For example, inoculation against cholera was practiced by the slaves. And in 1888, Dr. Daruty de Grandpré mentions of elderly creoles knowing cures for leprosy and other cutaneous diseases.

The history of slavery is the history of inhuman treatment, misery, exploitation and violation of human rights scarring the dignity and self-esteem of individuals in the innermost sanctum of their body. Historians concur on this thread of slaves' life-course journey.

Anthony J Barker in *Slavery and Antislavery in Mauritius, 1810-33*, describes a livid picture of the treatment the slave population had to endure from the time of their capture and throughout their stay in the island until emancipation. 'Shock and detachment' are the words used by Stanley Elkins to describe the ordeal most slaves were subjected to, before embarkation on their journey to their new destinations. Kidnapping, raiding, trading, fierce discipline on board over-cramped vessels, often flogging, chained and underfed were common features for the slaves. To dissuade any

attempt to mutiny on board the ships, there is report that ‘two guns loaded with grapeshot were kept pointed at the male slaves while bags of nails were ready to be strewn on the decks to hinder movement’ (Barker 2000). Between 1811 and 1827, the mortality rate on slave vessels, sailing from the East African, Malagasy and Comorian ports to Mauritius, was estimated as ranging between 7 % and 20%. Deaths rates among Liberated Africans brought into the colony between 1813 and 1826 and working for British government officials ranged between 20-60% (Stephan Karghoo).

On arrival, once sold and possessed by their ‘masters’, the slaves were put to their tasks - majority of them in the agriculture sector and the rest as artisans or domestic workers. Under both conditions, the hours of work were long and arduous, typically from dawn to dusk.

Despite all efforts of peopling the Island with colonists from the Island of Bourbon (Reunion), the administration of Governor Maupin (1729-1735) proved to be very unpopular with the French planter/colonists and the attempt proved to be a failure.

Mahé de Labourdonnais arrived in Port-Louis in 1735 and observed the prevailing degree of ‘anarchy’. The infrastructure to support a colony of settlers was lacking. He observed there were no hospitals, stores, fortifications, navy or army to sustain living conditions and provide security against threats of potential invaders from outside. The fear came also from ‘black maroons who lived as savages in the woods and attacked in gangs the settlements where they committed the greatest of excesses.’ He also related how he ‘discovered the secret of destroying them (runaway slaves) by arming blacks against blacks and in forming a constabulary of negroes from Madagascar who finally succeeded in purging the Island of most of those bandits’.

One of the first actions undertaken by Labourdonnais was the construction of a hospital in Port-Louis to replace a wooden structure that accommodated about 40 beds. He took great care in identifying an appropriate site to locate the hospital near the harbour with good ventilation. The first wing of the hospital was ready to accommodate the first patients in January 1740 when a cyclone completely damaged the wooden 40-bed hospital. A hospital without water supply was inadmissible. Labourdonnais identified that water from Grand River North West could be diverted to supply the hospital and the city of Port-Louis.

At the time of the departure of Labourdonnais in 1764, the population was, according to Abbé Raynal, estimated at 3,163 white, 587 freed slaves and 15,022 slaves. By 1830, Mauritius had the third largest number of slaves in the British Empire.

#### 4.1 Shifts in the composition of the population between 1767-1807

Changes in the composition of the population harboured fear implications in the minds of the colonists.

The following tables show the proportion of the whites decreasing from 16.9% to 8.3% between 1767 and 1807 whilst the free coloured increased from 3.1% to 7.6%. The proportion of the slaves increased from 80.0% to 84.1%.

The slave population increased by 77% (15,027 to 65,367) over the four decades compared to 51.2% for the whites (3163 to 6489) and 9.0% (587 to 5912) for the free coloured.

As early as the 1740s and throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the island had a disproportionate average of eight slaves for each of its white inhabitants. Runaway fugitives were reported to pose a serious threat to life, limb and property. They also coupled murder, arson and kidnapping with plundering and destruction of crops, livestock and buildings.

Year	Whites	Coloured	Slaves	Total
1767	3,163	587	15,027	18,777
1777	3,434	1,173	25,154	29,761
1782	3,831	1,418	28,352	33,601
1785	3,379	2,138	33,134	37,651
1787	4,372	2,235	33,832	40,439
1788	4,457	2,456	37,915	44,828
1797	6,237	3,703	49,080	59,020
1806	6,798	7,154	60,646	74,598
1807	6,489	5,912	65,367	77,768

Year	White	Free Coloured	Slaves	Total
1767	16.9	3.1	80	100
1777	11.6	3.9	84.5	100
1787	10.8	5.5	83.7	100
1797	10.6	6.3	83.1	100
1807	8.3	7.6	84.1	100
% change	51.20%	90.00%	77.0%	

## 4.2 Health of Slaves

Writing about the health of slaves in 1772, Dazille postulated that long hours of work, poor nutrition, insalubrious water and their in-adaptation to the humid and torrid climate put their physical resistance to the limit of fatigue. Little time was allowed for recuperation and they often fell victims to and suffered from irascibility. They could not resist exhaustion and succumbed to a host of diseases. Most common diseases were typhoid, worm infestations, bronchial infections, intestinal affectations of diarrhoea and dysentery and depression. To overcome these maladies and to let off the steam, the slaves spent their little night time unwinding in sex and alcohol. The result was a vicious cycle of hard work, exhaustion and free lifestyle.

The most common form of treatment applied by Dazille as was prevalent in Europe, was bleeding the body of toxins 'il est presque toujours nécessaire de faire précéder tous les remèdes d'une ou plusieurs saignées, soit du bras, soit du pied, parce que la fièvre est ordinairement beaucoup plus forte' and the use of emetics.

Discrimination against the slaves during their living was oppressive. Even after death, on a visit to Mauritius and South Africa in March 1844, James Backhouse wrote: 'The place of sepulture is divided into several compartments, to accommodate the prejudices of the living, for these even separate the ashes of the dead. The main burial-ground is surrounded by a wall, and another separates the portion occupied by persons of white skin, professing Christianity, from that in which the coloured people are interred! So strong is the prejudice that slavery has nursed'

## 5. FRENCH COLONIZATION

In a successive wave of interest and occupation by the French, colonization of the Island started with the arrival in June 1715 of Dufresne D'Arsel who named it Ile de France. On 24<sup>th</sup> December 1721, about 15 people arrived in Port-Louis accompanied by a chaplain and a surgeon. The Order for settlement of population was started in 1722. The population was counted at 160 persons.

An expedition from Bourbon to Mauritius arrived on 8 December 1722 on the *Ruby* with 65 slaves comprised of 27 men, 18 boys and 20 women. Almost immediately, 15 men and 4 boys became maroons. Why? The story of the dark ages of slaves in Mauritius unfolds in all its dimensions.

The historiography of slavery, under all three administrations (Dutch 1638-1710, French 1715-1810 and British from 1810 until abolition of slavery on 1 February 1835, is replete with cases of maroonage, desertion and vagrancy. By early 1820s, maroonage rates had climbed to a stunning 11-13 per cent. (Richard B Allen). Even after abolition of slavery, maroonage persisted. An average of 7.7 per cent of the island's apprentices was apprehended for desertion each year between 1838-37.

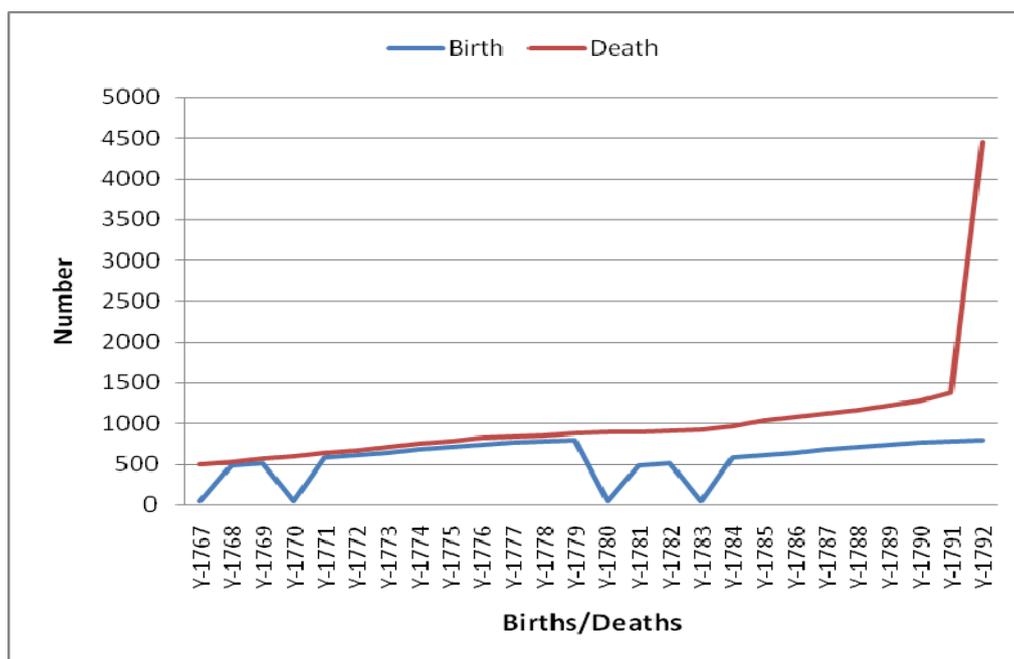
Running away from their masters became a natural avenue of escape to avoid the misery and ill-treatment meted out to extract the physical labour of the slaves<sup>4</sup>. What were the harsh conditions imposed upon the slaves are covered in great detail by Vijaya Teelock. Maladministration of justice, denial of rights in-human treatment, non-application of anti-slavery act, perpetration of 'illegal' entry of slaves from Madagascar in the 1820's, innumerable complaints to the Protector and failure to apply the manumission of slaves in 1812 left an indelible scar, physically and psychologically. According to Barbara Valentine three ways out of slavery were: maroonage, manumission and mortality and most common of these in Mauritius was death. How all these conditions impacted on the health of slaves are reflected in their numerous complaints made and ultimately in the levels of mortality.

### 5.1 Mortality

Seven episodes of epidemics struck the Island during the French administration in 1742, 1754, 1756, 1770-72, 1782-83 and 1792-93 leaving behind heavy casualties. It is reported that the epidemic in 1756 killed 50% of the slaves and 20% in 1770. Mortality of slaves was always very high. A yearly death rate of 30 per thousand was reported during the period 1767-1824 (D'Unienville).

The graph 9 shows that deaths outnumbered births at all times during the years 1767-1792. High mortality, preponderance of males among the immigrants and the general segregation of keeping male and female slaves apart did not allow family formation leave aside stable families.

Graph 9: Number of Births and Deaths in the slave population 1767-1792



Understanding the real nature and extent of the harsh conditions of slavery is fraught with inaccuracy as different writers on the historiography of slaves have presented facts and figures that are fragmentary, lacking in accuracy or contradictory. Vijaya Teelock, in 'Breaking the Wall of Silence' posits that the sources were planter centered, mainly official records, or European travellers' writings. Also, planters' families did not keep many records and, if they did, would not likely share them with non-white historians. Seemingly no slave-based sources existed, and so also no way of ever reaching the "inner world" of the slaves.

Moreover, tracking of demographic events was not easy for the slave population, as civil registration of births, deaths and marriages was introduced in the Island in March 1793 nearing the end of French colonization. Previous to the promulgation of the decree, records of baptism, marriages and burials were the responsibility of the parishes. It was in July 1805 that Governor Decaen issued a decree providing for the registration of births and deaths of slaves.

## 6. HEALTH CONDITIONS OF INDENTURED LABOUR

Health conditions before arrival, during the voyage and their stay

The historiography of Indian migrants recruited to work on the plantation economy, their health status and the conditions of their stay in Mauritius are linked to endemicity of diseases from where they originated in India, the terms of recruitment, application of Ordinances regulating their work and medical treatment, housing conditions, sanitation and their wages.

The country and place of origin of the migrant workers, the Indian sub-continent was a most hostile disease environment. Malaria and cholera were prolific in endemic or epidemic forms. Accustomed to living in disease prone areas, the workers had a level of immunity that afforded a degree of protection. However they were not immune to diseases in their new environment.

Before the arrival of indentured labour from India in large numbers, the British had made several attempts to recruit workers in the neighbouring countries mainly from Madagascar. Finally, it was

the abolition of slavery in 1834 that gave an impetus for large scale immigration of cheap labour from India.

Recruitment of labour had its own peculiarity. At that time, minimal measure of control was exercised on the recruitment process. And that opened the doors for abuses with respect to their recruitment procedures, treatment on the voyage and in Mauritius. Mortality on board ships bringing immigrants from India was high.

The table 23 shows an increase of 36.5 per cent deaths over a three year period (1858-1860) on board ships from the port in Calcutta. Over the same period infant deaths increased by 57.2%, 77.5% and 72.5% respectively from the ports of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. There was necessity for greater vigilance in the examination of infants presented for embarkation.

Port	Year		
	1858	1859	1860
Calcutta	2.62	2.56	4.14
Madras	.49	.60	.76
Bombay	.57	.99	.76
Calcutta (Infants)	12.40	9.79	28.99
Madras (Infants)	1.30	2.87	5.78
Bombay (Infants)	1.96	2.88	7.14

Food served on board the ships was also a bone of contention. Quantity, quality, time of servings and catering for infants and pregnant mothers were often not to the liking or needs of the Indian passengers. In the Report No 20 of 1860 of the Immigration Committee, it was recommended that all the arrangements to address the shortcomings be placed under the responsibility of the Medical Officer on board the ships.

On the arrival of the coolies, the passengers were medically examined and placed under quarantine if the need arose. The Lazaret at Flat Island was visited and found to be deficient in ample supply of good water.

Early contracts made in India did not specifically mention that lodgings be provided to the immigrants. However, as for the slaves, it was generally understood that accommodation should have, de-facto, been provided by the planter employers. It was through the proclamation of Ordinances that the employers were made to provide labourers with 'sufficient and wholesome lodging according to the usage of the colony'.

The outcome was evident. Visiting the log-huts in January 1864 Sir Gabriel Froppier remarked they were not good. But, (cynically) he added that under 'present difficult circumstances encountered by the planters, it was next to impossible to enforce considerable improvement' and 'if there is one to suffer, it must be the coolie'. He added that the 'labourers seem to be perfectly content with these rudely built huts' for they 'never made complaints'. If the dwellings were kept tolerably clean inside, such was not the case around the huts. Straying animals around the huts were bound to create an environment that would certainly not be conducive to a clean and healthy environment.

Despite all the criticisms levelled against the behaviour and social habits of Indians as indenture, yet the case for their importation was supported in a correspondence to Governor Gomm by Stanley.

*'The abolition of slavery has rendered the British Colonies the scene of an experiment whether the staple products of imperial countries can be raised as effectually and as advantageously by the labour of free men as that by slaves. To bring that momentous question to a fair trial, it is requisite that no unnecessary discouragement should be given to the introduction of free labourers into our colonies'.*

(Stanley to Governor Gomm, 22 January, 1842, MA, SA 33/47)

Vijaya Teelock in Mauritian History quotes: 'And Mauritius was the first of the colonies in which this great Experiment was attempted... although at first there was much concern over the protection of immigrants' rights, and a desire to strike a balance between planters' wishes and immigrants' rights, these rights were later abandoned.'

To what extent these rights were safeguarded right from the time of recruitment is minuted in the Royal Commission Report of 1875, paragraph 4066. 'Notwithstanding, very frequently persons are recruited as agricultural labourers who ought never to be accepted as such'.

In fact, non observance of the terms of the Labourer's Contract on housing, medical care and treatment facilities, food and payment of wages were the sources of resentment expressed by the immigrants. The Royal Commission Report of 1875 is very candid on the recruitment process. At paragraph 4044, the whole system of recruitment in India was denounced on the following counts: (1) The recruiters in India, (2) The Protector in Mauritius, (3) The employers of labour (4) The Police, (5) The Magistrates and (6) The Legislative Council as the framers of the Labour Laws. On the last point, the Report found that in matters of the application of a New Labour Law of 1867 to address the issues of vagrancy, idleness, improvidence, inhumanity towards each other during epidemics, filthy habits and, participation in the crime of *dacoitee*, the 'Law was enforced both by the police and the Magistrates in such a reckless and indiscreet manner as to cause cruel hardship to a number of the Majesty's subjects' and that 'the spirit of the law was too often overlooked and even the letter of the law was often far out-stepped by the manner in which it was carried out'. Investigating on the form of treatment expended to the immigrants, William E Frere and Victor A. Williamson had acknowledged that the 'traditions of slavery' still prevailed on the island's Indian residents modelled on old fugitive slave laws.

How these affected the health and productivity of the indenture is understandable. Deduction of wages to pay agents and recruiters in India, travel needs, monthly contribution for return journey back to India, absenteeism for sickness or other reasons were practices that affected their morale and health. The system of keeping wages in arrears and the 'double cut' were found to be unacceptable by the Royal Commission Enquiry (1875). They formulated the opinion that Articles of the Ordinances were 'universally overlooked both by planters and Magistrates and other Government Officers'. Large sums were annually, illegally deducted from the wages of labourers. As for food, the Commission found that it was a universal practice to give ¼ lb of rice over the 1½ lb stipulated in their contract. Further, salt fish was substituted by a double allowance of *dholi*.

The only holiday allowed was on New Years' Day. On other holidays, most often the practice was to deduct their wages if they took leave and frequently including their rations too. By Ordinance No 17 of 1841, the only work that the labourers were 'obliged' to do on Sundays was work of immediate necessity (*corvée*) up to 8 am. The provision of this Ordinance was hardly respected. Record of pay-books were kept in such manners that, on inspection were found to be worthless for the great irregularities amounting to deliberate and intentional fraud and inadmissible as evidence of proof in any enquiry.

Interpretation for offences of illegal absences, desertion and vagrancy were often not contemplated according to law with the result that in many cases there were great injustice and hardship caused.

According to their contracts, lodgings were to be provided to the immigrants on the estates they were recruited. The camps were often stuffy and damp with no openings to allow circulation of fresh air. Around the 1930's the labourers occupied the accommodation previously used by the slaves. With the arrival of the big wave of workers in the late nineteenth century, the housing situation became very alarming causing great harm to their health. The Royal Commission found great diversity in the arrangements of the camps. Some, constructed at great cost were of good

repair while in others the dwellings were scarcely fit for human habitation. Paragraph 4080 of the Report is eloquent: 'the camps generally were in a filthy condition externally, owing to the quantity of animals allowed to run loose about them, a state of things due mainly to the aversion of employers from interfering to enforce cleanliness and order, for fear of offending their labourers, and also from the state of the law, which does not make the proprietor personally liable for the condition of his camp'.

The Ordinance of 1845 established that each estate employing forty labourers or more was required to operate a hospital to provide treatment to the workers. The Royal Commission of 1875 made an explicit incursion into the state of hospitals and their management.

All the above provisions, applied or overlooked had an impact on the health of the Indians. Ordinance No. 6 of 1845 provided for the creation of hospitals with certain norms on the estates. Previous to the Ordinance of 1845, the few hospitals that existed were in such deplorable conditions that Magistrate Anderson observed 'the hospitals on the establishments which I have seen, are generally more calculated to increase disease than to alleviate sufferings..'

The Report found 'the Hospital Ordinance (No. 29 of 1865) to be incomplete unless supplemented by the regulations' that ought to be so' by the General Board of Health, but was not framed as should have been. According to the Ordinance No. 29, there should be:

- A hospital with accommodation at least 4 beds and with certain space in proportion to each bed.
- A medical attendant visiting the hospital once or twice a week according to the size of the estate.
- Store such medicines as may be considered necessary by the Stipendiary Magistrate.
- A hospital attendant qualified to attend the sick and to keep a Hospital Register.

Enquiries had also shown that there was hardly a Hospital in the Island (except one at Midlands), that could be considered complete. The buildings were considered excellent in structure but were such in 'character as for it to be a gross misnomer to call them hospitals at all'.

As regards the hospital attendants, in vast majority of cases they had no qualifications that made them fit for their duty of attending the sick. The Report found the Registers as simply valueless for the purposes of statistics or as evidence of stay in hospitals.

In the 1870s, the sanitary conditions of the Island had reached a deplorable state. Application of Health Ordinances was often not observed much to the detriment of the sick needing medical care. A tug-of-war type of mentality existed between the Council of Government, the planters and the Indian immigrants on the provision of hospital care (Boodhoo).

In 1909, the Royal Commission investigations had observed that in a Military Report dated 1905, there was much scope for improvement in the sanitary condition of the Island. Malaria, dysentery, enteric fever, tubercle, and syphilis were prevailing extensively. During the 15 months that the Commission was working, the diseases were on the increase. Most of the food consumed in the Island was imported. With custom duty applied on all foodstuffs, prices were high to the detriment of the working classes. Scarcity and dearness of the food were, according to the Commission members, some of the causes of high sick and death rates.

In 1908, Dr. Ronald Ross submitted his comprehensive report on measures for the prevention and control of Malaria. In the summary of facts regarding the amount of Malaria, the report mentioned the abnormally high death rates in the population and the costs to government, loss of labour, labourers' loss of wages and losses to the general community.

Of particular interest is the observation of a high number of children found with enlargement of the spleen, 62,000 out of 182,000. How sustained Malaria-related morbidity affected the young population's health and the plausible generational effects on chronic metabolic diseases need further investigations.

## 7. PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES UNDERTAKEN IN MAURITIUS

A proper understanding of measures undertaken to improve the health infrastructure in Mauritius has its origin in the developments taking place in Europe. Many of the initiatives taken and the Ordinances promulgated were patterned on British models though with a lag in their implementation.

## 8. 18TH, 19TH-CENTURY PUBLIC HEALTH IN BRITAIN AND EUROPE

18<sup>th</sup> century medical sciences in Europe were lagging in modern scientific knowledge as the ills of the human body was yet to be fully understood. Causes of illnesses were based more on ancient beliefs (Dazille) such as humours, bodily tensions or on cultural dogmas. Practice of medicine was strongly influenced by the theory of contagion (person to person causation) and miasma, (transmission of diseases by noxious invisible gas). In 1854, Dr. John Snow founded the science of epidemiology and the germ theory. The modern era of public health did not begin until the 1880s, with Louis Pasteur's germ theory and production of artificial vaccines.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the growing towns of Britain were characterized by overcrowding, poor housing, bad water and contagious diseases.

Three massive waves of epidemics struck the nation between 1830s and 1840s. In the first, two influenza epidemics and the first outbreak of cholera claimed thousands of lives. The second wave encompassed major epidemics of influenza, typhus, typhoid and cholera between 1836 to 1842 and the third wave saw serious outbursts of smallpox and typhoid in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, major sanitary measures were undertaken that transformed the public health landscape. Introduction of the railroad in the 1820s and the telegraph in the 1850s brought the towns closer. A new urbanization culture started growing calling for measures to dispose of sewage, tackle the problem of overcrowding and the accompanying problems, mainly hygiene and water supply.

Further, to come to grip of the unsanitary conditions prevailing in those days, Government funded investigations in the conditions of health in towns and the countryside in the 1830s to the 1860s.

It was common belief in those days that diseases were the main reasons for poverty, and that preventing diseases would reduce poverty and cut down morbidity and mortality rates.

Adding weight to the theory, Thomas Mc Keown, a physician and demographic historian put forth the view that the growth of population in the industrialized world in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was due not to life-saving advancements in the field of medicine or public health, but instead, to improvements in overall standards of living, especially diet and nutritional status resulting from better economic conditions. His historical analysis called into question the effectiveness of some of the most basic and widely applied techniques in the public health armamentarium, including sanitary reforms, vaccination, and quarantine.

In the mid nineteenth century, the health status of the population in Britain was summarized in high mortality and low life expectancy.

In England and Wales in the six decades 1841-50 to 1891-1900 Infant mortality-rates as a sensitive indicator of health were 153, 154, 154, 149, 142 and 153 respectively. Infant deaths to children raised under ideal conditions of good sanitation, clean environment and breastfed were about 80-100 per thousand live births compared to levels of 300 or higher for inner city rates. Poverty, poor housing and sanitary conditions and insalubrious environments were factors contributing to high levels of infant mortality. Surprisingly, infections transmitted by doctors and midwives were also attributable to infant deaths during childbirth. The work of Holmes, Boston (1843) and Semmelweis (1858) showed that simply scrubbing and washing of hands and disinfection of instruments had a significant influence on the decline of mortality- simple measures with tremendous impact.

Life expectancy at birth was about 40 years by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. By 1900 it was about 47 years for man and about 50 for woman. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, living standards improved substantially and most people were better nourished. There were also huge improvements in public health with sewers being dug under cities and clean water supplies created. By the early 1930s life expectancy for man at birth was about 60 and rose to about 65 in the 1950s. Today life expectancy at birth is 77 for man and 81 for woman in the United Kingdom.

Two important reasons have been advanced to explain why public health in Britain did not receive much attention for many years.

1. Most governments felt they should not interfere too much in people's lives.
2. Any large scale public health improvements would be very expensive, and taxes would have to be raised.

At first the government tried to prevent illnesses among the population by public sanitary measures.

The first public health measures were based upon the idea that miasmas (bad smells) caused diseases. Although the idea was wrong, the measures against the miasmas involved a greater focus on cleanliness, and this improved public health.

Between the 1830s and 1940s investments in sanitary and legislative measures coinciding, in parallel, with scientific and medical breakthrough made a leap-frog progress in the health of the population. Development of vaccines, antibiotics, medical instruments for better and more accurate diagnosis, new drug formularies and use of anaesthetic agents during operations contributed significantly in improving health and saving lives.

## 9. LANDMARK DEVELOPMENTS OF HEALTH SERVICES IN MAURITIUS

Several distinct phases in the history of health development are discernable in Mauritius. The period up to the 1850s was characterized by a minimalist health care system during slavery and indenture. Between 1850s and the end of the century the colonial government started, a gradual introduction of a system of health services modelled on the pattern in Britain. Dreadful damages caused by episodes of epidemics in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an acceleration of public health measures and the creation of health infrastructures in terms of hospitals and dispensaries until the time of Independence in 1968. The new post-independence government, in parallel with the private sector, invested heavily in infrastructure, personnel, medical and paramedical training institutions and a regionalized outreach system (Map 1 at annex). To-day, it is viewed as a 'medical hub' and an envy of countries in the region. In a welfare state where health services are free for primary, secondary and tertiary care, high expectations for a modern health service with state-of-the-art cutting edge technologies are creating qualitative and quantitative 'medical system stress' for the future.

Building a foundation for medical and sanitary measures relies on the availability, collection, analysis and reporting of population data, vital events and causes of death.

Civil and vital registration was introduced in England and Wales in 1837 (DV Glass 1973) and an international classification of causes of death was first approved in 1900. The first comprehensive population census in Britain was undertaken in 1801.

In Mauritius, the 'Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire by R. R. Kuczynski (Vol 11), Oxford University Press, 1949, presents a very comprehensive set of data on the population and vital events from 1753 till the mid 1940s. Time series data, though incomplete, for births, deaths and marriages for the slaves, Indian migrants, free coloured, and the Whites are available. However, the information becomes more complete and meaningful with compulsory reporting and registration of vital events and the holding of population censuses. An Order in Council of 30 January 1826 required that information on all births and deaths shall be communicated to the Registrar within a month of the event. After abolition of slavery in 1835, registration of vital events

was unified in 1837, putting an end to all distinctions among the population thus limiting the scope for disaggregation of data by status, slave/indenture. The first population census was conducted in 1846.

Measures taken to improve the system of health care and treatment were based mostly on the outcome of findings and recommendations of Enquiries and Reports of Commissions on health matters. The main reports are listed below.

- Report of the Committee to Investigate the History and Particular Conditions of the Cholera Epidemic of 1854, F. Bedingfeld.

The Report gives a detailed account of treatment administered to patients with symptoms of cholera with relative success. Spread of the disease was mainly by proximal contamination with patients suffering from cholera. This was pointed out by the more numerous cases of incidence of the disease among the ex-apprentices living in the same dwelling as the patient or visitors.

- Royal Commission Report 1909

The Council of the Government of Mauritius had appointed a Commission to investigate and report upon the condition and resources of the Colony as regards administration and the financial situation with a view to introduce such economies in the establishments and expenditure as may be possible without detriment to the public interests.

On Medical and Sanitary Services, the Commission had recommended three important measures:

1. Reorganization of the Medical and Health Department
2. Improvement in the quarantine laws and
3. Implement the measures advocated by Dr. R. Ross for the prevention of Malaria.

On 1, the Commission had observed: (a) an over centralization of managerial responsibilities at headquarters and (b) overburdening sanitary measures in the district of Port-Louis and Plaines Wilhems to the health department when it should have normally been the responsibility of the Municipalities.

On 2, the Commission expressed the view that the laws should be amended to match those in Britain and Ceylon.

On the issue of Malaria, the Commission believed that the recommendations of Dr. Ross should be carried out to the fullest extent to render the colony more salubrious.

The Report on Hospitals (Chapter XX) had recorded that under proclaimed Ordinances, immigrants were 'to receive all medical aid on the respective estates to which they attached' but was in many cases 'little more than a declaration that there should be a hospital on all estates' and as a general rule 'the law was a failure'. The Stipendiary Magistrate had noted that 'not one of the sugar estates possesses a building provided with everything required by a hospital and as to the building, it was a mockery to call it a hospital.

In general, it was on the goodwill of the planter to decide whether to provide the type of accommodation, care and treatment as required. Some were willing to play the game as the case of the hospital in Midlands while others provided a semblance of the services and yet others were simply neglectful of their obligations.

- Report of the Committee on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies and Protectorates, June 1910.

The terms of reference of the Committee were the following:

- The general question of emigration from India to the Crown Colonies.

- The particular Colonies in which Indian immigration may be most usefully encouraged.
- The general advantages to be reaped in each case:
  - ❖By India itself
  - ❖By each particular Colony

It is interesting to note two remarks made in the report concerning indenture and time-expired immigrants. First, the general result of the enquiry was to show the existence of serious abuses affecting the immigrants and an absence of proper legislative and administrative measures for their protection and second, according to universal testimony the Indian immigrants when justly treated are a singularly quiet, law-abiding and easily managed class not to occasion any political trouble'.

➤ Report on the Prevention of Malaria in Mauritius Ronald Ross, 1908

The terms of reference were to report on measures for the prevention of Malaria in Mauritius.

Some measures proposed by Dr. R Ross included:

- Periodic medical examinations of children in schools and on estates and the continuous treatment of all of them found with enlargement of spleen.
- Continuous house-to-house distribution of quinine
- Continuous performance of minor works where required in towns and villages
- Appointment of a Malaria Authority, personnel, and conduct of annual Malaria report.

➤ The Epidemics of Mauritius, Dr. D Anderson, 1918

The book written in 1911 as a Thesis for a degree of Doctor of Medicine and later updated by two chapters on the Geography, Industries and History of Mauritius was published in 1918. It gives a concise and comprehensive description of the episodes of epidemics that struck the Island in the nineteenth century. It presents a chapter on Sanitation in the country as at that time followed by a descriptive outbreak and effects of the epidemics of: leprosy, cholera, small-pox, (1856 and 1891), Malarial fever, dengue, beri-beri, diphtheria (1879 and 1907-9), plague and the phagedæni.

➤ Report on Medical and Sanitary Matters in Mauritius, Dr. A. Balfour, 1921

The term of reference entrusted to Dr. Balfour was to investigate the sanitary conditions of the Colony and the measures needed for the general improvement of the health of the population.

Of a wide encompassing nature, the document reported on:

- Communicable diseases and sanitation
- Structure of the Medical and Health Departments
- Health conditions prevailing in the country
- Medical and health facilities *viz.* hospitals including sugar estate hospitals, dispensaries, infirmaries, orphanages and crèches, reformatory and industrial school, school health, water supply, collection, removal and disposal of excreta and refuse, disposal of sullage water, conditions for preparation, treatment, transport, sale and storage of food and drink, slaughter houses, disposal of the dead and, streets, housing and town planning.

➤ Report on Health Conditions in Mauritius, Dr. A. Rankine, March 1944

The aim was to report on ‘a scheme embodying a long-term policy for the improvement of health conditions generally .... and, to form part of a general development programme’.

Beginning with a brief review of prevailing health conditions and the broad principles to guide future orientation and policies, the report presented an organigramme with guidelines for a reformed set-up in administration, laboratory, medical and health divisions. It concluded with proposals for the provision of essential health services in the districts and re-grading of salaries, staff requirements, maintenance of infrastructure including buildings and equipment, establishment of school health service, measures for increased production and marketing of certain foods.

- Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire by R. R. Kuczynski, 1949.

Published in 1949, Volume 2 (out of 3) of the Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire gives a very detailed and comprehensive demographic presentation of facts and figures between 1753-1946 and covering the Dutch, French and British occupation of Mauritius. The demographic data, disaggregated often by origin and sex on slaves and the indenture, reconciled, corrected and updated on analysis of other authors on the subject matter are as complete and accurate as was available then.

- Social Policies and population Growth in Mauritius, Richard M. Titmus, 1960.

The Report on Social Policies and Population Growth in Mauritius by Richard M. Titmuss and Brian Abel-Smith was presented to the Governor in 1960. The term of reference was to ‘advise the Government of Mauritius as to the provisions to be made for social security, bearing in mind the resources of the territory and the needs of its people’.

- The Economic and Social Structure in Mauritius, J. E. Meade, 1960.

The terms of reference were ‘to survey the economic and social structure of Mauritius and to make recommendations concerning the actions to be taken in order to render the country capable of maintaining and improving the standard of living of its people, having regard to current and foreseeable demographic trends.

In its conclusion, a set of 129 recommendations were made to deal with the numerous problems in the various sectors of the economy. The unequivocal point of the report was the high population growth rate with the potential to rise at a level that would thwart and negate all developmental efforts.

- Fertility change in Mauritius and the impact of the family planning programme, Christos Xenos, 1977.

The Report outlines the post world war II demographic changes and the transition from high to low levels of mortality and fertility in Mauritius.

From 3.1 % in the period 1952-62, the population growth rate dropped to 1.9 % in 1962-72, resulting in an aversion of about 100,000 populations on predicted values with two thirds attributed to a drop in fertility and one third to net emigration.

Three major contributory factors to the decline in fertility were: (a) widespread postponement of marriage; (b) massive decline in marital fertility, and (c) Use of contraceptive methods.

While postponement of marriage was more pronounced among the Hindu and Muslim communities, contraception was practised by all the groups.

- Non-Communicable Diseases Survey Reports, MOH, 1987, 1994, 1999. 2004, 2010.

The Ministry of Health commissioned a team of International Experts with wide experience in the field of Non Communicable Diseases Epidemiological Surveys to make investigations on the prevalence of associated risk factors in the population in 1987. An International Advisory Committee was set-up to monitor implementation of the recommendations and to advise

government on the course of action to curb down the trends. Follow-up longitudinal surveys were conducted on the sampled population in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009 to track the long-term outcomes.

Important findings in the NCD survey, 2009:

- The prevalence of diabetes has increased by over 60% since 1987 in adult and for every known case of diabetes, there was one newly diagnosed case.
- The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the Mauritian population aged 25-74 years was 23.6%: 24.5% in men and 22.8% in women representing 172,400 people.
- Using the European Body Mass Index (BMI) cut-points, the prevalence of obesity was 16.0%: 11.3% for men and 20.5% for women and the prevalence of overweight was 34.9%: 34.7% in men and 35.1% in women.
- Thus, 50.9% of the participants were overweight or obese. The rate for men was 46.0%, and for women, 55.6%.
- Using the ethnic specific BMI cut-points, the prevalence of obesity was 43.3% (47.9% for women and 38.4% for men) and the prevalence of overweight was 22.3% (20.3% in women and 24.4% in men). For BMI, the Asian-specific cut-points were applied to the Hindu, Muslim and Chinese populations while the European cut-points were applied to the Creole and other (Franco-Mauritian) population.
- Thus, 65.6% of the participants were overweight or obese. The rate for men was 62.8% and for women 68.2% giving an estimated 477,000 people between 25 and 74 years of age obese in Mauritius in 2009.
- The prevalence of hypertension was 37.9%: 35.4% for women and 40.5% for men.

➤ The NCD Report in 2004 for Rodrigues showed the following:

#### Diabetes Mellitus:

The prevalence rate of Type 2 diabetes in adults aged 20-74 years in 2004 was found to be 9.4% with a downward trend from the 10.6% documented in 1999. In 1992, the prevalence was at 8.1%.

Case ascertainment of diabetes in the population remains at 40% showing that three in every five persons with diabetes still do not know that they have the disease and among males, the case ascertainment rate is still around 22% and with a rising trend over the years.

The rate of poor control in those with the disease remains high with 60.4% of all diabetics surveyed being poorly controlled. In 1999, the prevalence of poorly controlled diabetes was 37% and this figure has fallen down.

#### Hypertension:

The prevalence of hypertension continues to remain around 32.8%, after having peaked at 36.8% in 1999. Case ascertainment rate continues to increase from 40.1% in 1992 to 50.1% in 1999 and 60.1% in 2004 and the level of poor control of blood pressure in those with the disease remains at 37%.

#### Overweight and Obesity:

Obesity has increased during the period 1992 to 2004 with a sharp increase noted during the period 1999 to 2004 from 19.6% to 22.9%. The prevalence of overweight in both males and females has not changed much over the years and stays at around 31-34%. The prevalence of overweight and obesity in 2004 was around 55% with the condition being more prevalent among women than among men.

### Tobacco Consumption:

Tobacco consumption continues to decrease steadily with current smoking among males decreasing from 58.4% in 1992 to 39.1% in 2004. In females there was a decrease from 1992 to 1999 (i.e. from 4.9% to 1.7%) but during the period 1999 to 2004 there is an increase to 4.5%.

### Alcohol Consumption:

The prevalence of abusive alcohol intake in males was 19.1% in 1992; this level dropped to 9.8% in 1999 and since then it has shown a dramatic increase to attain 40.9% in 2004. Among women, although the levels are relatively much lower, there has been a significant increase during the period 1999 to 2004 to reach 5% in 2004 from 0% in 1999. Abusive alcohol intake remains a major health problem despite health education and a number of measures (legislative, fiscal and others) taken to discourage people from drinking excessively.

In many ways, the findings of the reports prior to Independence triggered actions by the colonial administration to redress the prevailing sanitary and public health situations.

### Mauritius: Paradise Lost

Comments made by some observers and authors were eloquent on the state of sanitation in the colony.

In 1920, Dr. Balfour reported 'that despite the many advantages of the Colony, its general unhealthiness had reached a degree unparalleled in any similar tropical Dependency', and concluded that 'it was a case of Paradise Lost, and it remains to be seen if the sequel, Paradise Regained, will ever become an accomplished fact.' He had noted that generally there was a want of cleanliness everywhere on the Island and applicable to the whole population of the Colony. Moreover, about the deficiencies in hospitals, he had complained of an absence of ambulances, laundries, incinerators, disinfecting apparatus, poison cupboards, lavatories and temperature charts.

Making a comparison in the death rates of troops in various British Colonies for the years 1860-1864, Dr. Andrew Davidson reporting into the Causes of Malarial Fever in Mauritius commented that there was only one conclusion to be derived in that the Island was never a healthy place. The mortality was nearly three times that of Great Britain.

## 10. THE HEALTH SYSTEM IN MAURITIUS

Nineteenth century epidemiology in Mauritius was dominated predominantly by infectious diseases. In Europe, the germ theory on the principle that a specific disease is caused by a specific organism was established in the 1870s. Vaccine against cholera was discovered in 1879, against typhus 1896 and against plague in 1897. The same year (1897) Dr. R. Ross established that Malaria was transmitted via mosquitoes.

On the technological side, the stethoscope was discovered in 1816, use of drugs in anaesthesia in the early nineteenth century, use of antiseptics in surgery in 1867, discovery of X-rays in 1895, blood typing opening the door for transfusion in 1901, use of insulin in the treatment of diabetes in 1922 and the 'miracle' antibiotic drug streptomycin in the treatment of tuberculosis and other diseases in 1943.

All these developments had an impact in the health sector in Mauritius. Application of the Ordinance of 1844 saw the establishment of hospitals on sugar estates, creation of the Medical and Health department with two divisions catering for the curative and preventive services in 1895. Ordinances on sanitary and public health matters proclaimed during the nineteenth century culminated in the consolidated Public Health Act of 1925. The scope of this Act covered a large number of health issues on (1) Sanitation; (2) Infectious or Communicable Diseases; (3) Certificate of Death; (4) Dangerous Epidemic Diseases; (5) Disposal of Effluents by Hotels; (6) Leprosy; (7) Protection of Foods; (8) Food and Water Supply; (9) Hospitals and Dispensaries; (10) Cemeteries;

(11) Cremation; (12) Building Permits according to Sanitary Requirements, and other miscellaneous issues.

By 1901, there were seven hospitals in the public sector, namely the Civil Hospital, Barkly Hospital and district hospitals in Pamplémousses, Montagne Longue, Flacq, Grand-Port and Souillac. Altogether there were about 1000 beds in the general hospitals, 400 at the Barkly Hospital and 50 beds at the Lepers' Hospital in Poudre D'Or. Victoria Hospital was opened in 1922.

At the time of independence in 1968, the Island of Mauritius with a population of 781,615 inhabitants had 8 general hospitals 46 dispensaries including 2 in the prisons, 11 out patients departments, 13 specialized units for tuberculosis (1); chest diseases (1); maternity wards (7); mental hospital (1), Lepers' hospital (1) and prisons hospital (2). There were also 22 Sugar Estate Hospitals; 20 Sugar Estate Dispensaries, and 5 Nursing Homes. 7 Maternity and Child welfare Centres and 35 Social Welfare Centres providing Maternal and Child Health services were subsidized institutions.

In 2009, the Island, with a population of 1,237,283 inhabitants had 5 regional and 2 district hospitals, 2 community hospitals and 5 specialised hospitals in the fields of psychiatry, E.N.T, Ophthalmology (Moka in 1972), chest diseases and cardiac surgery. 757 outreach clinics for Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning, Community Health and Vaccination complement the hospital set-up. Map 1 (annex) shows the wide geographical distribution of the services within a radius easily accessible by the population. The Cardiac Surgery Centre at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital (SSRNH) commissioned in 1999. Other high-tech units include renal transplant and neurosurgery. Two new regional hospitals were built, the SSRNH Hospital at Pamplémousses in 1968 and the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital at Rose Belle in 1990.

## 10.1 Laboratory Services

In 1887-1888, an outbreak of rabies followed by the cholera epidemic of 1899 and the 'surra' in the cattle population alerted the medical profession and confirmed the need for the creation of laboratory services to isolate causative agents. In 1909, a small bacteriology service was set-up at the Civil Hospital in Port-Louis and run by a qualified pharmacist. A more expanded laboratory with autoclaves was started in Malsain in St. Pierre in July 1907 before a transfer to the Agricultural Research Station in Réduit in December 1908. The Central Laboratory at Candos was opened in 1958. Dr. Rankine had recommended that laboratory facilities be regionalized to all the major hospitals to make facilities immediately available to the staff. Now, the laboratory covers eight distinct fields, namely biochemistry, haematology, bacteriology, parasitology, virology, hispathology, cytology and blood transfusion. The Medical Laboratory Services also provide facilities for practical training of medical and paramedical students.

## 10.2 Blood Transfusion Service

Blood transfusion service was started around 1925. The Blood Bank was started in 1953 in the private sector. The government service was inaugurated in 1959. A Blood Donor's Association was launched on 10 November 1999 with the aim of educating, informing and recruiting people into the act of donating blood voluntarily and regularly. At present, around 80% of blood is collected through voluntary donors. With a growing number of patients with cancer, renal problems and cardiovascular diseases as well as sophisticated medical interventions carried out in private clinics and hospitals, the blood bank has a rising demand for blood.

## 10.3 Radiology

Radiology services were introduced in 1922 and modernized in 1950. A training school for radiographers was started in 1962 and radio protection measures effectively put into practice in 1994. Magnetic Resonance Imaging was introduced in 1997. The X-Ray Department provides two distinct services: the Therapeutic Radiography and the Diagnostic Radiography Services. The Department of Therapeutic Radiography was started in 1956 to provide treatment through linear

Accelerator and Cobalt Machine (in 1982) to cancer patients. The Therapeutic service consists mainly of giving radiation to patients.

With expansion of the radiology services, a school for training of radiographers was started in 1962.

## 10.4 Maternal and Child Health

Maternal and Child Health is one of the corner-stones of any public health measure worthy of its name to tackle maternal and infant mortality. The figures for infant mortality were 161, 141 and 154 per thousand births for the periods 1911-1920, 1921-1930 and 1931-1945. As a comparison, in Britain the rate was around 150 per 1000 births in the 1900's. In his Report, Dr. Balfour made a strong case to start the training of midwives, establishment of a maternity ward at the Victoria hospital and (if possible) a ward for the treatment of infantile complaints related to disorders of nutrition and dietetic diseases. Dr. de Chazal, a Mauritian, made a generous contribution with the prime object that the fund be utilized to provide maternity nurses to the poor women. Through trials and tribulations the Maternity and Child Welfare Society took off the ground on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1926 and by 1935, it was regarded as a permanent feature in the life of the Colony.

## 10.5 Training

Worldwide, the healthcare industry is a large employer of human resources. Combining medical technology and the human touch, the industry diagnoses, treats, and administers care around the clock to the needs of the sick in all their stages. The health sector comprises a wide range of services from hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities, home care services, ambulatory services and the offices of doctors, dentists and pharmacists. A number of essential complementary services such as laboratories, transport and catering add to the list. At all levels, dedication to the job by skilled professionals, technicians and technologists, and the mix of the different professions determine and shape the quality of life of the people served.

In Mauritius, prior to local training of nurses started in 1904 at the Civil Hospital, skilled health personnel were recruited from overseas to run the institutions. In 1944, Dr. Rankine reported the need to set up training facilities for the expanding health sector. As a start, sanitary officers, technicians and technologists were initiated by the highly qualified heads of institutions in such fields of radiology, physiotherapy and pharmacy. A three-year programme of training of nurses was started in 1946.

Training of health personnel evolved in phases.

The Faculty of Science at the University of Mauritius set-up in 1965 started training for technologists and sanitary officers. In the last decade, the University moved to a three-year course for doctors and completed by further training in Universities in Britain and France. The University has now upgraded the training to a full medical education course.

The Mauritius Institute of Health was established in 1969 with the objective to undertake training at national and regional levels and research in the health sector and health related disciplines. Through regional and international cooperation and developing linkages with training and research institutions, the Institute has further increased the range to Post-Graduate medical education with the University of Bordeaux.

Private Medical and Dental institutions have opened faculties for the training of medical and dental professionals with demands from new players to cater also for the needs of the region.

## 10.6 School of Nursing

Training of nursing students was started in 1906. One of the sore areas of the Health Care System was the supply of trained nurses. The first batch of students was registered in 1906 and qualified in 1908. However it was only in 1946 that real ground was covered with a formal three-year course in nursing and has continued progressing with the passage of time.

The Report of Dr. Rankine contained important policy measures designed to potentially change the landscape of health services post second-world war II. Improvements were proposed for better housing, sanitation, water supplies, standard of nutrition, ante-natal and maternity services, infant welfare programmes, school medical service, health education, electro and physiotherapy departments in all regional hospitals, dental services, nursing including better training and recruitment of a larger number of nurses for district nursing and on sanitation. Adoption of these measures had far reaching impact on the health of the population.

## 10.7 School Medical Service

Dr. Balfour had noted in his report that the growing child should, after the age of five years, come under the care of the School Medical Officer, a service that was inexistent and yet most needed where a large number of children were victims of parasitism, ankylostomiasis, worm infestations, schistosomiasis, scabies, pediculosis and the sanitary state of schools in a disgrace. School absenteeism was high at nearly 33 %. Started as a part time scheme in the 1920's, a structured school medical service was launched in 1952. Through the School Health Service, children were supplied with milk and iron tablets to overcome nutritional deficiencies and shoes to protect against infestations. The outcome was a significant improvement in anthropometry of children.

## 10.8 Water Supply

Most of the intestinal and food borne infestations had their origin with the quality of water used for domestic and drinking purposes.

Water supply in Mauritius developed in three distinct systems starting in the Port Louis region, the Mare aux Vacoas and the districts' water supply systems.

The supply of piped water to the city of Port Louis goes back to some two centuries when water from the Grand River North West was diverted to the inner city by the Canal Dayot. The City is supplied with treated water from the Pailles Filtration Plant since 1926.

The Mare aux Vacoas supply system was inaugurated on 3 March, 1888. Water from this system serves the Upper and Lower Plaines Wilhems, part of Port Louis, localities on the Western coast and some areas in the south. The water is filtered and chlorinated at La Marie filter plant before distribution.

The third district system supplies filtered and chlorinated water to the rest of the Island.

Today nearly 100% of the population has access to safe drinking water through piped water on premises (UNICEF 2003).

## 10.9 Private Sector

Private practice of medicine always existed in Mauritius. The Dutch, French and British had a two-tier system of health service in the Island. The private sector was resorted to mostly by the whites and the free coloured and those Indians who could afford to pay for the services.

Besides the General Private Practitioner Service, there are a number of private clinics that operate in the Island complemented by a large number of pharmacies scattered in the country, the latter also providing counselling services.

## 10.10 HIV/AIDS

The first case of AIDS was diagnosed in 1987 and since then the number of cases has been growing steadily to reach a cumulative figure of 3671 among Mauritians and 170 non-Mauritians, (Total: 3841).

To counteract the rising number of HIV positive patients, the Government has initiated a number of actions:

1. A needle exchange program has been started since 2006 to prevent needle sharing among drug addicts.
2. The Methadone Substitution Therapy was launched to encourage IVDA's to quit drugs.
3. Antiretroviral therapies are provided free of charge by public hospitals.
4. Creation of AIDS Unit and Harm Reduction Unit to coordinate field work.
5. Sex education has been started in Secondary Schools through the school health program to educate children about the risks of unprotected sex.
6. Mass Media awareness campaigns have been initiated to sensitize and educate the population about HIV/AIDS.
7. Free HIV screening programs (results are kept confidential).
8. Compulsory HIV screening test to all foreigners prior to the issue of work permits.
9. Free distribution of condoms to sex workers.
10. Proper training and recruitment of additional staff, from peer educators, nurses and doctors to tackle the increasing number of HIV positive patients.
11. Creation of an AIDS Hotline.
12. Construction of a new wing in Beau-Bassin Prison to house HIV positive inmates therefore preventing transmission to HIV negative inmates.
13. Prevention of mother to child transmission program.
14. The Paediatric HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support program is currently being finalized to enable better management of paediatric patients.

## 10.11 Vaccination

Influenza vaccines are one of the most effective ways to be protected from contracting illness during influenza epidemics and pandemics. Vaccination is therefore recommended in order to boost the body's resistance against the new influenza, and help ensure public health as the pandemic evolves.

Government has been implementing a child vaccination programme since 1801 against smallpox which was stopped in 1981, after WHO declared the world free of smallpox following global eradication. Nowadays there is a universal immunisation programme to protect children against common diseases, including tuberculosis, diphtheria, poliomyelitis, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and hepatitis (UNICEF 2003). With the ageing of the population came the need to also offer protection against flu that may increase morbidity among the aged. Flu vaccine is therefore given freely to all senior citizens and those who are at a greater risk of falling victims to influenza of viral origin.

## 10.12 Primary Health Care

The concept of Primary Health Care (PHC) has been applied in Mauritius since Independence (1968). The essential components of PHC are integrated in the health care system

and covers health education for the control and prevention of diseases, supply of food and nutrition, safe water and basic sanitation, maternal and child health care including family planning, immunization against major infectious diseases, prevention and control of endemic diseases, treatment of diseases using appropriate technology, promotional of mental health and provision of essential drugs in relation to the prevailing pathologies.

In line with the policy of the Government to improve the health status of the population, Mauritius has achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals ahead of the target date of 2015.

## CONCLUSION

1. Ill-health took a heavy toll of lives of slaves and indentured immigrants.
2. Access to health services was not easily and adequately available.
3. Often denied of adequate food and a balanced diet, proper sanitation and shelter and harsh labour conditions caused undue harm to their physical and mental health.
4. Some timid measures to improve living conditions were undertaken by the colonial administration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century often with a lag on health services development in Britain.
5. Post-Independence Mauritius witnessed a significant improvement in public health measures and services within the welfare state concept leading to a decline in and levelling of morbidity and mortality across all ages and population groups.
6. Having successfully managed the demographic and epidemiological transitions, Mauritius missed the opportunity of managing the risk transition in between the two phases thereby getting trapped in non-communicable diseases.

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Map 1: Mauritius and Rodrigues showing the Health Service Points in 2005



## PART IV:

### TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AMONG SLAVES AND INDENTURED LABOURERS

*"..[I]t is almost an everyday occurrence that medical skill, having exhausted itself in its endeavours to cure these distempers, physicians are obliged to acknowledge themselves beaten, and allow, or, very often, suggest the appeal to unorthodox treatment."*

Lieutenant-Governor Hubert Jerningham, 1892

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mauritius is a settler society, peopled by successive waves of migration spanning over a period of some 400 years. Each wave of migration brought its own specific social and cultural ways, beliefs and practices, resulting into a rich multilayered and kaleidoscopic society. Overtime food habits and culinary arts, medication and healing practices as well as social organization of immigrants underwent transformations through living together and culture contacts. Those divergent beliefs, culture and practices contributed to folk medicine. New settlers re-invented or improvised new medication using their own knowledge and skills of plants and materials available and their understanding of the diseases, often attributed to the invisible in the first place. Recourse to the natural and supernatural elements for explanations and means of dealing with health problems was the only choice as shown by oral history and tradition. Scientific explanations and remedies gradually unveiled new methods of healing and medications for diseases. However, folk medicine continued and continues to be used either as complementary or alternative means of treatment.

For the purpose of this study, three main theories will be looked into to explain worldviews, beliefs and practices among slaves and Indian immigrants to Mauritius:

1. The theory of spirit
2. The theory of poison
3. The theory of germs. These theories will underpin discussions of the different systems pointing out the logic behind social and cultural practices as regards health and treatment of diseases.

## 2. SOME ANCIENT THEORIES RELATING TO DISEASES

Folk medicine and traditional healing exist since time immemorial. The causes of diseases were attributed to the natural elements which were then enigmas to man and beyond the control of his power. His natural instinct for survival led him to search for cures in nature namely plants (leaves, stems, barks, roots, fruits, seeds), clay, stones, and metals etc. to find relief from pains and sicknesses. Supernatural powers were called upon and healing dances, trances, rituals in the forms of incantations, invocations, prayers, offerings and sacrifice were performed to cure diseases.

### 2.1 The theory of spirit

Beliefs founded on the basis that disease and death, are the works of devils and demons, witchcraft, the Evil Eye etc have their roots in antiquity. Disease and death were not considered as the result of natural causes. Certain varieties of diseases such as hysteria, dementia, epilepsy, convulsions, and the delirium of fever were perceived as the actual working of an evil spirit that has attacked the patient. Diseases such as cholera, because of its sudden and unexpected appearance and the capriciousness in the selection of victims, suggested the idea that they are caused by demons. The belief in the origin of disease from spirit possession is still common, even in rural England today (P. K. Maity). Fits, the falling sickness, ague, cramp, warts are all believed to

be caused by a spirit entering the body of the patient. The idea that the spirit which is working the mischief is therefore logical; it can be scared by a charm or by the exorcism of a sorcerer (Cooke). The major causes of ill health and diseases are attributed to possession by evil spirits/ intrusion of spirit in the body; angry deities with reference to taboos; angry ancestors; witchcraft.

## 2.2 The theory of poison

The theory of poison is associated with the “rich lore of serpents” of the Indian, Chinese and Buddhist traditions (Alex Wayman). According to the Indian tradition, poison comes from the realms of plants (roots) and animals while the Buddhist theory stresses on psychological poisons, both based on the notions of purity and impurity. Elimination of poison consists in ritualistic performances converting poisons into non-poisons using the four elements, that is earth, fire, water and wind. Similarly, infection of any sort was attributed to the penetration of poison in the body either through insect bites, intake of food or taking in bad air. The general treatment consisted of sucking the poison out and the application of *sinapisme* of herbs, or practicing *la saignée* and use of purgatives in the form of oil or infusion commonly called *lavement*. This practice prevailed well into the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century until the theory of germs was put forward by bacteriologists.

## 2.3 The theory of heat and cold

The theory of heat and cold has persisted to this day. It is closely related to the humoral theory whereby each humour was also associated with the physical environment and the change of seasons or climates, and exposure to excess of heat, coldness, dryness or wetness causing an imbalance in the body. Bloodletting or *la saignée*, purges and enema were means to restore the balance. This theory which remained dominant well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century made its way into folk medicine. A new physical environment and sudden change of climate with different seasons, were perceived as the cause of ill-health as evidenced in Mauritian folklore and folk beliefs. Excess of either manifests itself in the form of inflammation or *chauffement* in the Mauritian context *rafraîchi* is taken to eliminate heat. Some of the most common *rafraichis* are *orge* and *grain de lin*, roots of the coconut tree, tender leaves of the *Bois d'Oiseaux* among others (Gopauloo, 2010).

## 2.4 Cosmology, nature and traditional medicine

Pre-historic and simple societies lived in unity and harmony with nature, and with the laws of the universe. The notion of a power that permeates all beings is a thread throughout the natural societies (Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 1959). All aspects of reality and of nature are perceived as expressions of this non-material and mysterious essence behind the physical phenomena, expressing a synchronistic and symbiotic interconnectedness of all things within the natural order, becoming a survival imperative for the individual and for the collective to maintain a balanced relationship to this other world and with the spiritual forces that inhabit it. Successful hunting, plentiful harvesting, fertility, physical well-being and healing are all manifestations of this balanced relationship. Disease and misfortune are direct expressions of the same kind of interruption within the energy system.

This energy or awareness of an interconnected intelligent “Other”, behind the perceived reality, bears many names. The African Masai call it *ngai*; the Australian Aborigines call their dreamtime *alcheringa*, *ugud* or *jugur*. These primordial energies correspond with the Chinese *Ch'i*, the *Ki* of the Japanese and the *prana* or *akasha* of the Indians, the universal matrix.

This symbiotic relationship between man and the natural order is man’s reliance on plants for his own survival. Healers and Shamans can access into the “vegetable mind” within nature in order to learn directly from plants what their medicinal properties are and how they should be employed. Plants that are now considered toxic possessed a privileged status as sacred plants in many cultures. Tobacco is sometimes called “flesh of the Gods” in the Amazon Basin; the coca plant, in South America, is the cornerstone of the medicinal practices of the Andean cultures, considered to be a divinatory master plant....Cannabis, opium or *gandia* and other narcotic plants which are considered harmful to health have been used in rational doses to cure illnesses.

Different traditional systems of medicine prevail - the Chinese system of medicine from plants and insects, the Indian medical systems which include Ayurveda, *Siddha* in South India, as well as the *Unani* system, which has its origin in the ancient Greek medicine. Traditional folk healing practices were widely prevalent until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The advent of science and the theory of germs has gradually dissipated the beliefs that foul odours propounded by the miasma theory, or evil spirits could cause a person to fall ill, and supplanted traditional medicine.

### 3. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ATTITUDE/BEHAVIOUR OF SLAVES AND INDENTURED TOWARDS DISEASES AND HEALTH SERVICES

Anthropological studies show that the notion of hospital was alien to both slaves and indentured labourers. In both African and Malagasy as well as in Indian cultures, the sick were taken care of by the family and the healers of the clan or community. The sick was surrounded by kith and kin or rejected altogether depending on the perceived cause of the disease. Hospitalisation and confinement were unknown to migrants, forced or free, and as far as possible they evaded public health services. Official reports on epidemics and diseases are replete with instances of sick people hiding their diseases, evading vaccination<sup>4</sup>, running away from hospitals, taking French leave or clamour to be discharged. Hospitalisation was looked upon as a punishment. Women, especially the Indians, avoided hospitals as they abhorred being examined by male doctors. Incidents on board the ship were numerous. Childbirth was a woman's affair.

In addition to this cultural aspect, hospital care was lacking in both physical and humane conditions so much so that patients' health deteriorated, if not physically, psychologically leading them to commit suicide. Poor sanitation in Mauritius and contamination of water supplies were attributed to the "filthy habits of the natives and the Indian population" (Anderson, 1854). They were perceived as culprits, which instilled very low self-esteem among the lower classes. Dr. Bolton reported pollution of rivers in relation to Malarial fever thus: "The water was dark coloured and gave evident sign of the washing of large quantities of dirty clothes along the course of the rivers".

#### 3.1 The social stigmas and diseases

The origins of diseases as well as their propagation were attributed to slaves and Indian immigrants as they were most afflicted by them. They were not perceived as victims of the oppressive systems but as vectors of diseases. The evils of working and living conditions which the systems imposed on them were rarely questioned by the authorities. If any measures were taken, they were haphazard for instance in the case of leprosy. Leprosy was introduced into Madagascar from the Mozambique Coast at the commencement of the eighteenth century and the disease came to Mauritius with the slaves in 1770. Tombe who visited Ile de France in 1801 says that he saw "many lepers amongst the black population of the Island", which consisted of 60,000 slaves, two-thirds being Mozambiques, and one-third Malagasies and Indians (Anderson, 1854).

Although a Commission on Leprosy had inquired into the prevalence of the disease in 1781, nothing was done until 1803, when the lepers were exiled to Ile Curieuse, some 500 miles north of Mauritius. In the 1850s, leper- beggars in Port Louis and villages had become a threat to the civil society. However, it was only in 1868 that the Government started to subsidize the Roman Catholic Hospice of St. Lazare at Vallée des Prêtres, as a leper asylum. Dr. Poupinel who treated patients at the asylum was of the opinion that the disease was also probably propagated by trades people, servants, and laundresses.

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<sup>4</sup> As regards smallpox, evasion of vaccination was believed to be the common cause of spread of the disease and death. Mr. Walter reported that "a considerable number of Mohammedans every year evade the Law relating to vaccination the folly of those who endanger their own lives and those of others."

### 3.2 Fear of removal to hospitals and loss of personal property

In the case of the plague epidemic, while the mode of its propagation by rats and fleas was not yet established, “disinfection was carried on in such a way that it was soon considered synonymous of ‘destruction of property,’ and, as the compensation granted by Government was always inferior to the value of the articles damaged or destroyed, the people removed their infected goods and chattels and lodged them elsewhere as soon as they suspected a case of Plague on the premises”. The blame was always laid on “ignorance and obstinacy of the uneducated classes”. They hid their sick members of the family, which are often discovered only when other inmates of the house or hut have become infected.

For instance the Chinese shopkeepers removed their sick at night so that their shops should not be disinfected and would scarcely inform the Sanitary Authorities if there were rats in their shops. Balfour pointed out the great difficulty in fighting plague due to “concealment of cases, difficulties in diagnosis and getting cases removed to hospitals, lack of faith in the protective powers of plague vaccine, want of cooperation in the anti-rat campaign etc.” Again sleeping on or near the ground, among poorer inhabitants was recognized a considerable danger.

The inspectors often had to bribe their Creole or Indian neighbours to denounce the removal of the sick, and to point out the shops where rats were seen dead or alive. On sugar estates the planters were also held responsible for the spread of Plague for failure to inform the Sanitary Authorities of dead rats in the estate’s grain store.

As regards the 1891 smallpox epidemic, the blame for the spread of the disease was laid on “the ignorance, stubbornness, and superstition of the natives” despite the fact that it was to mainly to an “insufficiency of vaccine at the time of the outbreak”.

### 3.3 Lifestyle, food and clothing

Dazille deplores the living conditions of slaves and attributes the causes of diseases to poor food, inadequate clothing for a tropical climate, libertinage, overwork and extreme physical exhaustion, little rest and liberal consumption of strong liqueurs such as *guldive* and *taldia*. He says that the root of manioc and especially the way it was prepared for consumption by slaves were the main cause of malnutrition and the high mortality rate among the Negro population of Isle de France. Slaves were afflicted by many types of diseases and died relatively young. Their life expectancy was short compared to that of the white population. As regards the indentured labourers, Balfour (p. 24) observed that the diet (consisting of salt fish and *dhol*, rice, ghee or oil and salt only) provided by sugar estates hospitals to patients suffering from dysentery and diarrhoea was unsuitable and “inhumane”. No supplement of nourishing food such as milk was given to patients for reasons of economy. *Beri-beri*, the food deficiency disease “attains epidemic prevalence”; it was believed to be due to the habit of eating highly polished rice. In the same way, Indian and Creole “habit of closing up all windows of sick rooms especially at night” was viewed almost as a cultural deficiency, and was responsible for the spread of diseases. It was hardly ever admitted that many Indians died from pneumonia because they were given inadequate clothing and could not afford to buy any with a meagre wage.

Balfour also observes that alcoholism favours pneumonia and “of late years many among the Indians have taken to drink and are becoming even more careless of their health than usual, suffer accordingly.” (p. 51) He further observes that rum-drinking has become a way of life among the Creole population and also among the better class of Indo-Mauritians. He adds that the “Indians are less fitted than the Creoles to withstand its ill effects...” (p. 54)

However, the epidemics did not choose their victims. Jerningham writing about Mauritius in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was appalled at the way cholera and smallpox had “scourged” the island “turning one of the fairest spots on earth into a veritable charnel-house, and leaving traces of mourning and affliction in every home.”

He also stresses on the psychic conditions of an afflicted population, the trauma that characterized the Mauritian society so much so that “... everything from a mere headache, in an

ascending or descending degree, is impetuously denominated *la fièvre*... A child upset by unwholesome food, a man annoyed by any inconvenience which might befall him elsewhere without notice, is immediately said to be under the influence of the dominant sickness, and is treated accordingly.” (p. 16)

#### 4. TRADITIONAL HERBAL MEDICINE

Since the arrival of the first settlers, Mauritius was considered to be an ideal spot for the cultivation of exotic and medicinal plants. Even formally educated medical practitioners had faith and relied heavily on medicinal plants, particularly in the absence of scientific explanations of the causes of diseases and relevant remedies (Dazille, Anderson, Balfour). The ordinary people as well as the elite treated the sick members of the family in the home relying on their own experiences and knowledge. Plants and water were popularly used.

Slaves and indentured labourers had their own repertoires of medicines and healthcare practices which they had recourse to in times of sickness and epidemics. They relied entirely on their own knowledge, judgement and skills and on nature's bounty in the island. They sought plants and materials they were familiar with and shared experience handed over across generations in their lands of origins. Each group had its own pharmacopeia and rituals. The slaves originating from Madagascar contributed immensely to traditional medicine which includes plant therapy, invocation ceremonies, ancestor worship, trances, *gris gris* or *cri -cri*.

The indentured labourers had come from different cultural regions of India and had brought along native methods of healing, embedded in their belief systems and worldviews, for instance sun worship, tree worship, river worship and worship of the earth, which are still practised in some forms or other. Indentured labourers have also contributed to medicine through their knowledge of plants and metals derived from popular knowledge of the Ayurveda, the Siddha and the Unani medical systems among others.

Slaves as well as indentured labourers, arriving in the new land completely different from their homelands, adapted to new forms of healing and they constituted new pharmacopoeias. Plants had been introduced by naturalists and travellers and were acclimatized. Poivre, Daruty, Aublet, Rouillard, Guého and recently A. Gurib-Fakim have inventoried some of these plants. Names of plants that had been used by slaves and indentured labourers, and those that are still used to day by their descendants have been listed in the text.

According to Guy Rouillard and Joseph Guého, authors of *Histoire des Plantes d'Intérêt Horticole, Médicinal et Economique a l'île Maurice Volume I*, “une trentaine d'années après l'occupation par les Français, Jean Baptiste Fusée-Aublet fut envoyé à l'Isle de France afin d'y “établir un laboratoire qui pût fournir les comptoirs en médicaments, un jardin qui rassemblât les plantes qui pourraient devenir avantageuses à la colonie [...] Mes provisions, ajoute-t-il, me donnaient les listes de botaniste et de premier Apothicaire Compositeur de la Compagnie des Indes à l'Isle de France”.

The authors trace the interest in medicinal plants to the beginning of the colonisation of Mauritius. The Dutch made a list of the main medicinal plants that they came across in 1677. The first French settlers also searched for means of healing and curing diseases among the vegetation they lived. Migrants from Africa, India and China subsequently brought with them more therapeutic practices of healing with plants.

In his account of his voyage to Isle de France in 1812, Milbert observed that the rich biodiversity of the island was harnessed in view of curing a number of diseases. He refers to *Le lilas des Indes* and the following plants and their uses in the Isle de France which are indicative of medicines used by slaves, Coloured, and Whites:

1. Le Palma-christi, dont l'huile est un puissant vermifuge ;
2. Le gingembre (*anomum zingiber*) vient aussi facilement que le *curcuma*: on l'emploie également en médecine et dans la cuisine ;

3. Le benjoin (*benzoinum amygdaloides*). Indigène de Siam, de Sumatra. Exhale une odeur. La fleur de benjoin est un excellent pectoral; on l'emploie contre les obstructions ;
4. Le papayer (*carica papaye*). La papaye est un excellent vermifuge ;
5. Le jacquier: Le fruit est un puissant aphrodisiaque ;
6. L'huile de rarabé, un muscadier sauvage, originaire de Madagascar est aromatique. Les Malgaches se frottent le corps et les cheveux avec cette huile ;
7. Le harame: Le jus est blanc, résineux et aromatique. Les femmes malgaches en font une pâte qu'elles regardent comme un cosmétique précieux pour préserver la peau ;
8. Le tanguen: Les Malgaches font un usage fatal de son fruit qui contient un poison mortel. C'est une mancenille ;
9. L'avang-biri: Plante à grandes écoses carrées coulent une fève qui est un anti-hémorroïdal ;
10. Le raven-tongharts: Plante balsamique ;
11. Le vaguinang-boua: Sa racine est un bon vulnéraire ;
12. Le coutoubanda: Sorte de pimprenelle qu'on applique aux enflures ;
13. Le voai-marang: Arbuste dont l'écorce a des qualités astringentes ;
14. Le son-di-fa-fa: Les Malgaches se frottent le corps de sa feuille lorsqu'ils ont essuyé des fatigues, et ces frictions les raniment et les rafraîchissent ; ils prétendent que la feuille de cette plante est incorruptible ;
15. Le bois montbrun: Arbrisseau dont l'écorce est employée en médecine ;
16. L'herbe divine ou de Flacq ;
17. L'aya-pana et le coulier sont des plantes médicinales de Brésil ;
18. L'herbe blanche, végétale, indigène et vermifuge.

Milbert also refers to the *Les Yolofo*s who arrived as slaves from West Africa (page 163). He wrote: «Ils se font remarqués au tatouage bizarre par lequel ils s'imaginent décorer certaines parties du corps : ainsi, par exemple, ils se dessinent sur le ventre un large soleil qui le recouvre tout entier, et ressemble à une espèce de cuirasse». It was deemed apparently as a protection against the evil which includes diseases, mishaps, death etc.

#### 4.1 Some common diseases and healing with plants

Petite fougère ou Tambavine : The word *tambave* draws its etymology from the Malagasy term *tambavi* which means “maladies de la première enfance”. A number of recipes exist to cure this disease, mostly using a combination of plants such as *Tambavine* with *chandelier à piquants*, *gros ayapana sauvage* or with *Fahame* and *vouatouke*, and other plants. ) Jerningham speaks from personal experience about this disease that was very common in Mauritius even in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

“A disease incident to children, named *tambave* or *carrean*, is also easily and readily cured by herbalists, after medical aid has proved abortive.... The disease manifests itself in children. They refuse to eat, become pale and emaciated and slowly droop under their parents' eyes. Herbalists propose a mixture. After the first dose or two, there is instant relief and the child is restored to the mother's arms.”

Langue de bœuf: Dr. Chapotin in his *Topographie médicale de l'isle de France* (1812), speaks about a species of “*ceterach* », which Malagasies used at that time. This plant is prepared in infusion /decoction and is taken by breast-feeding women (mothers, and nannies, often slaves), whose milk is improper for feeding babies. Daruty indicates its use as “*dépurative et calmant*” in case of hepatitis, *tambave* and cough.

*Bois d'harrange (Haronga madagascariensis)*: A handful of harounhe leaves is boiled in one litre of water. The infusion is cooled. Several cups are taken a day pour “faire revenir les règles”. The milky juice of the *bois d'haroungé* is rubbed in the part of the body infected with *darters*.

*Patte poule à piquants (Toddalia asiatica)* According to Bouton (1866), the skin of the roots is used by Telenga doctors in India against intermittent fever. All parts of the plant have very stimulating properties. The bark of the plant is employed as tonic and *depurative*; *la sève et la résine* (resin) possess abortive properties. It can be used for abortion without affecting the mother's health. The fresh leaves are used against abdominal pains, headache and syphilis. The ripe fruits are used in gargles in case of sore throat and bronchitis, and also in bath, and as a tisane for diuretic, and on wounds as cataplasm. Daruty names it *Toddalia aculeata* and states that it holds medicinal properties to cure the following diseases and sicknesses: Abscess of the breast on women who are breast feeding women; Asthma, Bronchitis, *fièvre paludienne*.

Neem, *Nime. Margosier* - this last variety originates from S.E. Asia. (*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss) All parts of the plant possess a resin having antiseptic properties. Céré refers to it as “Margosier de Trinquemalay”. Thompson - *Melia azadirachta*. Boyer - *lilas sacré*. Daruty calls it *lilas sacré or Nime*. He indicates that the bark is “febrifuge”, astringent, bitter. It is recommended in case of fever, in appetite and to cure wounds.

*Lilas de l'Inde (Melia azedarach)* Origins India grows up to 5 to 15 metres high. Bouton says that the bark and the roots are considered as a powerful *vermifuge*. Dr. Chapotin, in his *Topographie Médicale de l'île de France*, prescribed infusion of two big fresh bark of the root, boiled reducing the liquid to a cup...”To Daruty it is a tonic as well as a *vermifuge*. He writes :

“*Les Indiens, pendant la durées des épidémies de éra que nous avons subies, suspendaient des rameaux et des feuilles de lilas, qu'ils considéraient comme un préservatif, à la porte et jusqu'à l'intérieur de leurs cases.*»

*Sensitive (Mimosa pudica* L.) originates from South America. There are two varieties, *hispida* and *unijuga*, the latter is more abundant in Mauritius. It was introduced by Abbé Rochon who named it *Anakuey*, a Malagasy name. Bouton writes that the leaves and the stems of the plant possess narcotic and sedative virtues. Daruty recommends it as a remedy for diphtheria of the pharynx. In fact it was a remedy of patent Sylvain transmitted to him by his father, a Creole of Martinique. It is to be used in preparing a gargle with *grain de lin*. A cataplasm of the leaves of *bois noir sinapise* on the neck

*Ayapana (Triplinervis)* originates from the Amazon Bassin. It has a solid reputation as medicinal plant. It was brought by Baudin because of its panacea properties.

*Orthosiphon (Artistatus)*. It is widely used by Javanese to treat infections of the kidney and the liver.

*Baume du Pérou (Plectranthus madagascariensis)*. It grows on rocky mountain slopes. Bouton calls it “Petit baume” or “Baume sauvage”. He says in decoction it cures bronchial infections, contusions. Daruty says it is a good expectorant used in case of cough and cold.

*Toc Maria, Tocque Maria ( Salvia coccinea Etlinger)*

*Abrisseau* originating from South America, had already been cultivated at Le Réduit in 1816. The *mucilagineuses* grains are used to prepare cooling drinks. The grains are used against dysentery and diarrhoea.

Thyme derives its name from the Egyptian word *tham*. It was known to Egyptians who used it for embalmment of mummies. The plant was highly honoured and venerated by the Ancient

Greeks and the Romans. Priest included thyme in sacrificial offerings. The Romans used it as condiment and medicinal plant.

*Melisse batarde* (*Stachys officinalis* L. ) It is a European plant. Bojer singled it out in 1837. It was grown in gardens as medicinal plant. It is no longer to be found in Mauritius.

*Betel* (*Piper bettle*): It has its origins apparently in Malaysia. Very anciently cultivated and propagated in Tropical Asia. Much later it was introduced in Madagascar, East Africa and Les Antilles. Mastication of *betel* dates back to antiquity. Herodotus (340 B C) refers to it. This practice is current among Hindus, Malays, Indonesians and even Polynesians. Daruty says that the *betel* is a *sialagogue*, febrifuge, a powerful pectoral, and can stop the secretion of milk.

*Poivrier Sauvage* or *betel marron* (*Piper barborenze*). According to Daruty it is “diuretique, stimulante, contre le gonorrhoea et les fleurs blanches”. *Betel marron* or *liane de poivrier sauvage* is according to Daruty “ febrifuge, antiscorbutique, depurative” and is recommended for children.

*Citronelle*, Lemon Grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*). It probably originates from Malaysia or Ceylon. It is now widely cultivated in the tropics. It is present in Mauritius since the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. It figures on Aublet’s list. Bouton writes : «Les feuilles en infusion donnent un breuvage fort agréable, diaphorétique, excitant et pouvant être avantageusement substitue au thé.” Daruty indicates its use in decoction against eruptions of the *cuir chevelu*. As *diaphorétique*, ‘pour faire transpirer abondamment donner une décoction chaude de graines de coton, de sommités de vieilles filles, de citronnelle, de capillaire, des racines de vétiver”.

*Chiendent*, Bermuda grass, couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*). In the medical domain, it is an emollient, has cooling properties and is indicated in cases of inflammation.

## 4.2 Information based on field work/interviews

Some plants were used by slaves, indentured labourers and the General population for healing. These have become part and parcel of the Mauritian cultural heritage and way of life. The following list plants and the ailments against which they are used, is based on information gathered from herbalists, village healers and inhabitants.

*Ayapana* - vomiting  
*Citronelle* or lemon grass - fever, cold and cough  
*Bétel* - cough  
*Camomile* - fever, indigestion, vomiting etc.  
*Catepen* - fever  
*L’herbe de bouc* - fever  
*Lingue* - skin diseases  
*Savonnier de l’Inde* - cholera/dysentery  
*Lilas de Perse* - skin diseases  
*Lila de l’Inde* or neem - smallpox  
*Tourterelle* - anemia  
*Sensitive* - sleeplessness  
*Anana sauvage* - abortion used by slaves  
*Baume du Perou* - fever  
*Tulsi* or *basilica* - cold, cough and digestive ailments, rafraîchi  
Quinine: Malaria  
Eucalyptus- Malaria, child birth  
Banana green - diarrhoea  
Ginger - cough  
Onion - antiseptic  
Garlic - blood circulation  
Clove - tooth ache

## 5. HERBS AND FORMAL MEDICAL TREATMENT

Herbs were used to complement the healing effect of formal medical treatment as evidenced by government's reports, travellers' and residents' accounts and ocular witnesses. Medical science relied very heavily on plant derived medicines for curing patients in the hospital and that well until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lieutenant- Governor Jerningham gives a firsthand account of the inadequacies of scientific medicine on the island, its utter helplessness and recourse to popular medicine and healers. The extensive quote below illustrates the situation in 19<sup>th</sup> century:

“Two ordinary illnesses dysentery and diphtheria, are very rife in Mauritius, and against them medicine often proves utterly helpless... But, fortunately, this approved science is supplemented by successful empiricism. Certain herbs, known or assumed to be known only in certain families, are the ingredients incorporated into draughts, which are looked upon as sovereign remedies for these two distressing maladies... It is almost an everyday occurrence that medical skill, having exhausted itself in its endeavours to cure these distempers, physicians are obliged to acknowledge themselves beaten, and allow, or, very, suggest the appeal to unorthodox treatment... So far this is recognized, that for diphtheria the Government authorizes the employment of unqualified practitioners, and in all cases of the real or supposed disease they are immediately summoned, it be universally felt that if cure is possible it can be attained by this means... But when recognized means have been used to the utmost without effect, while amelioration at once attends the efforts of strangers to the profession, it must be frankly conceded that their discoveries, whatever they may be, are invaluable... Doctors know, or say they know, the components of these beneficial *pharmacopoeias*, practitioners are not at liberty to make use of them. Unless cogent reasons exist against the herbs being allowed to rank among legitimate remedies, it would certainly appear to be a step in the right direction to at once employ them under proper authority...” (Jerningham, pp. 16 -18)

The section below on 18<sup>th</sup> century medical treatment with special reference to the slaves and traditional medicine shows that alternative or complementary healing practices had changed very little over almost two centuries. For instance the remedies for *fièvres putrides* were *la saignée* and the use of *tisanes* (pp. 45-55) as summarized by Dazille in these terms:

« Il est sensible que les boissons acidulées conviennent a tous égards dans les fièvres putrides, & l'on a dans l'Isle de France ce remède sous la main: l'orangeade, la limonade, la bigarade, sont les tisanes ordinaires que l'on doit employer dans ces cas. Ce secours que la nature semble fournir avec abondance dans ce pays comme des moyens les plus propres a remédier aux effets du climat, est bien préférable aux tisanes émoullientes qu'on y emploie presque toujours dans les maladies putrides, puisque plusieurs de ces émoullients entrent dans la nourriture ordinaire des Nègres ; leur usage doit être regarde comme une des causes de leurs maladies... ».

Another instance when herbs were used was «Si le ventre est météorisé de manière à suspendre les évacuations, il convient de donner des laxatifs quelque fois émétiques, & d'appliquer sur le ventre des cataplasmes d'herbes aromatiques [...] J'ai vu quelquefois faire usage dans le cours de cette maladie d'apozèmes nitreux, auxquels on ajoute des sels purgatifs, *le tamarin, la manne, la casse et la tartre stibiée...*» He adds that «toutes ces tisanes doivent être préparées sans ébullition, et mêmes quelque-unes sans feu». He recommends “la guérison des fièvres intermittentes par l'usage du *quinquina*,” - a plant that grew in abundance in Réduit, until the woods were cleared to build the University building, according to Naiken, seller of medicinal plants.

Regarding gonorrhoea or *chaude-pisse* <sup>5</sup>Dazille writes, «Dans les termes où je faisais usage de ces remèdes, je n'ai point vu l'écoulement arrêter avec les tisanes charges des principes extractifs de *l'ortie blanche*, de la *queue de cheval*, la *mille-feuille*, *l'herbe au charpente*, la *bistorte* ou autres plantes toniques, auxquelles on attribue mal a propre la propriété d'arrêter l'écoulement de la gonorrhée car l'expérience démontre toujours le contraire» (pp. 199-204).

«Il est inutile d'observer que les tisanes apéritives, ainsi que celles des bois sudorifiques dont quelques praticiens font usage, sont absolument contraires dans cette maladie, puisqu'elles

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augmentent l'inflammation» (pp. 186-7). And to « faire apparaître l'écoulement, de rappeler la gonorrhée à son premier état, pour effet on prescrit des tisanes adoucissantes de grain de lin ou de fleurs pectorales ; on fait prendre aussi, selon les circonstances, deux ou trois bols par jour, chacun de quatre grains de camphre, et huit grains de nitre, on applique sur les parties infectées, des cataplasmes de farine de lin ou de pulpe d'herbes émollientes, à quoi on ajoute une poignée de camomille et de mélilot, afin de modérer un peu leur propriété relâchante; le plus souvent, je donne même de préférence aux cataplasmes de mie de pain et d'eau végéto-minérale; on a soin de les renouveler de trois en trois heures.» (Dazille, p. 217)

Venereal diseases were very common among the Negro population, and did a lot more ravage among them. The diseases are more complicated as Negroes suffer also from many other diseases chiefly scurvy, and so extremely difficult to treat. (Dazille, p. 150).

Medicinal plants were used to complement and reinforce treatment prescribed by medical science. A very good example from first-hand expérience, is given by Dazille, and he elaborates, “ Lorsque les symptômes vénériens résistant aux frictions, je suis dans l'usage de faire prendre le jour d'intervalle, entre chaque friction, une cuillerée à café d'une solution de douze grains de sublime corrosif, dans une pinte d'eau distillée: on prend cette petite quantité de solution mercuriale, mêlée avec du lait, du bouillon, ou dans une légère infusion de fleurs pectorales, telles que celles du bouillon blanc, de *guimauve*, de *violettes*; on peut même substituer à ces fleurs, les sommités de ces mêmes plantes, ainsi que toute autre infusion adoucissante ; on a soin de choisir celle qui convient le mieux à l'estomac du malade.» (p. 159)

For des maladies vermineuses, characterised by vomiting, he prescribes «vomitifs produisent de fort bons effets... toutes les préparations antimoniales sont efficaces contre les vers; j'emploie pour boisson, les infusions de *camomille*, de *mélilot*, l'eau de *chiendent*, même la *limonade*, et l'eau bouillie avec le mercure cru. Je purge de jour à autre ordinairement...» (p. 109)

For diarrhoea and dysentery, Dazille stated he fed patients principally, in the first few days, with “des crèmes de riz à l'eau et du sucre...” and prescribes even “des fortes décoctions de riz connues en Asie sous le nom de cange”. (p. 162)

For diseases of the chest and lungs, chiefly common among Negroes, which is often characterised by weak pulse and weakens the sick person, he employs remedies that will activate the blood system, les vaisseaux. He writes “... ainsi contre l'usage ordinaire, il convient de mêler aux incisifs, les aromatiques légers, pour réveiller l'oscillation et diviser l'humeur engorgée dans la substance du poulmon: *la fleur de camomille*, de *sureau*, de *mélilot*, *l'écorce du citron*, fournissent par une légère infusion de l'eau, une boisson aromatique et légèrement incisive...” (p. 122)

For inflammation, *des cataplasmes anodins* with milk or *liquides adoucissants* are placed on the vesicles. For l'ophtalmie vénérienne, l'on fait l'usage de boissons adoucissantes telles que l'eau de veau, le petit lait, et les infusions de *fleurs pectorales*; on prescrit aussi plusieurs lavemens émollients... trois bols par jour composés chacun de quatre grains de camphre et huit grains de nitre. » (pp. 249 - 254)

## 5.1 Plants and epidemiology

Plants and their derivatives were used by medical men during the several epidemics that struck the island. The cholera epidemic that devastated the island of Mauritius in 1854 was the third of its kind in intensity since the epidemic of smallpox of 1792 and that of cholera of 1817. The government report on the 1854 cholera epidemic shows that practically no improvement had been made to detect the real causes of the epidemic. Jerningham writing on Mauritius in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was appalled by the conditions in Mauritius. He observes, “Mauritius has frequently been scourged by cholera and smallpox, which have paid her untimely visits, with deadly result, turning one of the fairest spots on earth into a veritable charnel-house, and leaving traces of mourning and affliction in every home.”(p. 15)

The miasma theory which dates back to the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century B. C. in Ancient Greece, was still resorted to, to explain the cause of cholera, Malaria, plague, leprosy and other deadly fevers. The cause of the epidemic was attributed to foul smells and an impure atmosphere, deemed

polluted by the physical environment and filthy living. Poor sanitation, dubious sources of water supply, housing conditions, overcrowded living spaces, co-habitation of animals and man, poor ventilation, burial grounds, unattended rivers and canals, ill-drained marshes and filthy habits are indicated as some of the causes of atmospheric pollution.

#### Cholera, *ayapanah* and other plants

Treatment of cholera still was given according to knowledge of scientific medicines that was available; doctors relied heavily on traditional medicines. The report on the 1854 carries ample evidence of the use of plants and their derivatives in the treatment of cholera, in the form of infusion, *sinapisme* or cataplasm. Plants namely *ayapanah* was used in infusion or decoction. *Ayapanah* stands out as a major medicinal item though other plants might have been used. *Ayapanah* and ginger infusion mixed with brandy was also commonly given to patients by Mauritian doctors, which is still a very common home-made medicine today in the treatment of cold, cough and chest congestion. Plant-derived products namely oil was used as purgatives and for massage or frictions. Plant based products included mustard, castor oil, opium, ginger, bark (not indicated which one), camphor, olive oil, turpentine oil etc. For children eucalyptus oil in milk was used.

Stimulants such as wine, brandy, porter, gin, champagne and ether were used during the stage of reaction. Castor oil was very frequently used as an *enema*. *Sinapisme* or cataplasm were also used by some doctors. Mustard plasters or poultices on the chest or the abdomen were used or as “an emetic generally rubbed with dry towels or the hands to stimulate the lineaments” Anti-choleric pills made of ginger powder and extracts of opium were administered as a preventive measure.

There was much scepticism as to the contagiousness of Cholera. Different kinds of treatment were adopted by doctors practising in the Island at that time. The treatment of each depended on the opinions held with regard to the cause of the disease and its contagiousness. Some believing it to be due to a “carbonization of the blood, a want of oxygen in the blood, as in suspended animation, collapse, and asphyxia,” recommended the cold- water *douche*. Others simply dashed water on the patient’s face, and said that it was as good as the *douche*, and condemned the latter as causing more rapid collapse. A second class of physicians paid special attention to the vomiting and diarrhoea, and tried to arrest these by dilute sulphuric acid and calomel combined with *opium*. A third group, gave emetics and purgatives, in spite of the antecedent or actual vomiting and purging, and thus tried to drive out the poison ; afterwards rubbing the patient and keeping him warm. A fourth filled their patients’ stomach with *tisanes*, the *Ayapanah* infusion being considered the best, with ginger and brandy as well.

Experts such as Sir Ronald Rogers of the Cholera Institute of Calcutta advised barley-water, and *opium* in the promontory stage, and common salt as well. Diet to consist of barley water or farinaceous food, arrow-root or corn flour, custard and soups.

#### Ulcer - *camphor* and *sorrel leaves*

The poorer classes which comprised descendants of former slaves and indentured labourers were often afflicted by ulcer. Dr. Rouget’s treatment was “found most efficacious.” He used “Hanson’s cauterisation of the ulcer with pure carbolic acid... and afterwards the dressing of the wound was done with powdered *camphor*...” The wound rapidly healed despite a few relapses. A poultice of powdered *camphor* and pounded *sorrel leaves* (*Oxalis corymbosa*) was frequently used by the common people for ulcers (Anderson, 1854).

#### Leprosy and *Chaulmoogra* oil

Beaupertuis and Crocker’s intramuscular injections were used for the treatment of leprosy. However, the *Chaulmoogra* oil was the commonest treatment. Dr. Poupinel preferred this oil to all other treatments, to be continued over 4 to 5 years internally as well as externally, either in pearls or in milk. He said that “cleanliness, open-air work, and good food were of utmost importance” and that “the classes of people most vulnerable to the disease could afford none of these” (Anderson, 1854). Furthermore, the disease was most prevalent among the Indians although the coloured race was in general more vulnerable. *Acajou* and *Gurgeon* oil were also used for cicatrization.

## Diphtheria and *tisanes*

As disinfection of rooms was not thorough, the diphtheria, *beri-beri*, and plague epidemics had become more or less endemic in the Island. Moreover, “the Indian and black servants steal the contaminated clothes from the infected rooms before the disinfection has taken place” and it was “impossible to force sulphurous fumes into a thatched Indian, hut or into a black man's shanty”. Recourse to compulsory burning down of the “thatched houses and shanties” caused much suffering and distress to the inmates. Recourse to healers such as Gentrac and Flauricourt were common.

### Gentrac, the healer

Before the discovery of the *Bacillus diphtherice* and *serotherapy* all forms of therapy for diphtheria failed. Anderson (1854) writes “... a layman in Mauritius of the name of Gentrac, who had made out of simple herbs a secret remedy, which when applied to the patient's throat before the fourth day of the disease, was invariably successful, – and from morning to night this man was hard at work curing the little ones”. Gentrac's *tisanes* were so successful that Professor Brown Sequard of the College de France “persuaded him to visit Paris, and try his remedy on the children, who were dying from Diphtheria by the hundred at the Trousseau Hospital. The Paris Academy at once placed the children under his care but his remedies here had no effect...” Gentrac failed in his endeavour because “the herbs he used in Paris, though the same in every respect as those of Mauritius, grew on French soil [...] the same plants have different properties according to the soil they grow in”. Gentrac returned to Mauritius, very disappointed. He however imparted his secret knowledge to Monsieur Flauricourt, who became as successful a healer in Mauritius.

### Dengue (Dandy or backbone fever): *chiendent*, *vouatouc(ke)* and *mustard*

*A firsthand account from a healer's attempt at self-medication (1854):*

“The symptoms were typical with pains in my feet and hands and a slight feverishness. These symptoms lasted the whole day and night, and the next day the doctor declared it to be Dengue, and a rubeolar eruption covered my whole body, producing an intense pruritus, especially of the scalp, and more swelling of the face, hands, and feet than before. So great was this irritation that for a couple of hours I off and on kept my head under a tap of cold water, and took during the day two or three warm baths containing bran and bicarbonate of soda and medicinal herbs (*chiendent* and the *vouatouc*). Neither the secondary fever nor the irritation lasted longer than a couple of days and the eruption disappeared....”. Warm baths and drinks concocted from medicinal plants namely *chiendent* and *vouatouc* were used against the disease in many families.

Generally, the treatment consisted of cold *camphorated* water-compresses to the head with lots of *mustard* foot-baths, which relieved the headache. Quinine was given empirically without any good result.

### Ankylostomiasis and the oil of *Chenopodium* or *botrys*

In his report, Balfour explains the use of plant medicine in curing Ankylostomiasis (p. 21-23). He writes, “Oil of *Chenopodium* is now generally regarded as the most satisfactory vermifuge in ankylostomiasis. It is interesting to note that the plant, from the fruits of which the oil is distilled, grows plentifully in Mauritius as a common weed. There it is known as *Botrys*, its scientific name being *Chenopodium ambrosioides* var *anthelminticum*”.

Scientific distillations from the local *botrys* plant were made by Dr. Tempany. The yield of oil being “too low... In addition to placing the local plant under cultivation, he was going to obtain from the USA... high-class seed for planting to obtain a satisfactory yield of oil of good quality”. He strongly advised the cultivation of *Chenopodium* on a large scale and of other drug-yielding plants under scientific control “as the island appears to be well adapted for the growth of many kinds of medicinal herbs and trees.” As the oil of *Chenopodium* was likely to possess a considerable market value, a profitable industry might be established in Mauritius in view of the uncertainty of the future of sugar cultivation. He however observes that the recent introduction of carbon tetrachloride, already widely used, may possibly “oust oil *Chenopodium* from the first place in anti-hookworm remedies”.

Besides stressing the need for education of the populace in matters of hygiene and the public in health matters and trained hospital personnel, Balfour recommended (p.140) the “cultivation of medicinal plants” to alleviate economic difficulties and supplement revenue from sugar so that the colony could invest in public health.

### Malaria and *Eucalyptus*

The outbreak of Malaria in Mauritius was explained in terms of the effluvial theory, and treatment consisted of quinine therapy. The use of aromatic herbs and the making of bonfires were advised to chase out mosquitoes. In the 1960s, bonfires of *eucalyptus* leaves were strongly recommended on estate camps. During fieldwork in Beauchamp, elderly informants referred to *eucalyptus* as a deterrent to the propagation of Malaria.

### *Rubeficient (Rubefacient): Mouroungue*

Anderson notes the great usefulness of the *mouroungue* tree. Besides its widespread use as a source of food - “the leaves and fruit are cooked and eaten with rice”, the bark and roots were powdered together and used as a *rubeficient* poultice.

## 5.2 Interview with a local herbalist

Jay Mootosamy, 43 years old, seller of medicinal plants, and a practitioner of herbal medicine who has graduated from folk to ayurvedic medicine were interviewed. Both concur that plants have remained a source of medicine for all Mauritians and that Mauritius has its own repertoire of herbal and folk medicine.

Jay Mootosamy owns a medicinal plants stall at the Port Louis market. He attributes his trade calling to his patrilineal lineage, belonging to the caste having as profession natural healing in India. The know-how was brought by his great grandfather who came to Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The knowledge has been passed on to him by his elders across four generations and he has enriched it through practice, experience and personal search as new diseases have appeared.

Jay Mootosamy has earned not only national but also international fame. He has created his own website and foreigners often contact him for advice and purchase of herbs. His trade has suffered considerable setbacks with ruthless deforestation of lands destroying plants of great medicinal importance. His grandfather used to offer some 600 types of plants and three generations later there are only about a hundred available. Among the plants which he offers, a large number of them were used by indentured labourers and continue to be used by their descendants, and other Mauritians as popular folk medicine. Some of these plants have transcended their medicinal meanings and acquired spiritual and religious significance because of their potential medicinal properties. The courtyard of every Hindu temple prides itself of the *lila de Perse* or *neem*, the betel, the *basilica* or *tulsi*. Many families have these plants around their residence.

*Lila de Perse* or *neem* was very commonly used to cure smallpox, mumps and measles, and other epidemic diseases. According to Jay, it is anti-bacterial and it kills microbes; it protects from infection, purifies the blood and can cure many diseases. Systematic bath with solution of *neem* and Indian green *safran* over a period of seven days cures the diseases. It is an antiseptic and is used to cure *maladie Sept Soeurs*, the disease of the Seven Sisters. It is an age-old tradition and was a widespread practice among indentured labourers especially during epidemics.

When the inmate of a home is suffering from *maladie Sept Soeurs* or smallpox, a string of *neem* leaves is placed across the top of the doorways and windows to inform visitors that the house need to be kept “clean”. Any transgression would rouse the anger of the Seven Sisters which would manifest itself in sudden intensity of disease. It is believed that as the *neem* leaves dry up, the skin eruptions subside and heal. Antibiotics or any other pharmaceutical products aggravate the disease. Cleanliness, in terms of personal hygiene and the immediate environment, and vegetarian food are vital. The bath is prepared with *neem* leaves and *safran vert*. If the disease is more serious, the leaves are ground, made into small balls and consumed.

Besides *neem* leaves, Jay Mootosamy sells readymade products, in the form of oil and cream made from *neem* or Aloe Vera. There is a growing demand for these products as they are readily available and easy to use. *Neem* oil is described as miraculous by his customers who have used it for skin problems.

Betel chewing is an ancient tradition and was very common among indentured labourers until the 1950s. Betel leaves were sold at the market by a close relative of Mr. Mootosamy. It is said to strengthen the gums, to prevent bad breath, help digestion and prevent gas. Lime, cloves and aniseeds were wrapped in betel leaf and chewed. In fact, aniseeds forms part of local folk medicine and are consumed in decoction with mint leaves. The juice of betel leaves is used to cure cough, cold and respiratory obstructions.

The *tulsi* is a very common medicinal plant according Jay Mootosamy. A lot of basilica is used to prepare a drink which is consumed during the fasting period. It is taken to start the fast and break the fast as it is a good *digestif*; it prevents heart burns, and cleanses the digestive system.

Curcuma or *safran vert* has multiple functions. It protects the skin. *Safran* in milk is used to cure cough and remove phlegm. Our informant cautions that this medicine must not be taken for more than two or three days. Exceeding the dose leads to irritation of the digestive system. *Safran* is also an antiseptic; it protects against impurities.

Our informant says *tiraita* or *sene* is also recommended for curing *la fièvre endan*, a fever which persists and affects the palate. *Saponaire* is also used. Aloe Vera or *Mazambon* has become fashionable in natural healing. *Ayapana* is generally taken in infusion to stop vomiting, diarrhoea and gastro- enteritis problems. An overdose causes constipation.

A combination of plants is often used to cure a particular disease. *Citronelle* or lemon grass holds many digestive virtues. Infusion of *citronelle* is always mixed with ground ginger and honey. Jay Mootosamy offers plants that are not easily found in family gardens. He has *l'herbe de Flacq*, prepared in the form of *tisane*, to cure diabetes. He explains that the dosage is very important. He prepares it and includes a plant to counteract the side effects.

According to our informant all ethnic groups in Mauritius consume medicinal plants. "*Toutes les couches sociales, politiques, professionnelles dont les médecins, les vedettes du cinéma, de la musique, stars, techniciens ....*", go to his stall. He points out that Indo-Mauritians suffer mainly from digestive problems because they do not consume yogurt which is an integral part of traditional Indian cuisine.

*Lingue* is used against dermatological problems such as eczema, skin eruptions, the itch and also against digestive problems such as heart burns and gastric states. It is prepared in infusion with other plants namely *pok pok*, *bois de l'eau*, *bois de chandelle*; the infusion is consumed and added to bath water. Jay has a hundred varieties of tisanes for prostate, kidney stones etc. For these diseases even doctors recommend *tisanes*. He offers only dried plants, naturally dried in the sun. "*Tou plant kan li sec li preserve so bienfaits plus longtemps*". Plants lose 75% of their medicinal virtues if artificially dried.

Plants are consumed in the form of an infusion or decoction. Poultices of plants and/or clay are widely used to cure wounds, draw out excess cold or heat, and remove pain in the body and in cases of sprains and swellings. Leaves are crushed and placed on the infected region to stop bleeding, disinfect and neutralize poison. They are also used raw in cataplasm which is normally used

The main threats are deforestation, the excessive use of pesticides and herbicides, the importation of commercial herbal products which are flooding the market and pharmaceutical products. Dosage, indicating effectiveness and side effects, is also prescribed.

## 6. AYURVEDIC MEDICINE AND OTHER PRACTICES

Herbal medicine is gaining widespread popularity not only among consumers but also dealers. Home-made remedies are gradually becoming commercial activities. There are many practitioners as ayurvedic medicine has become a revolutionary activity. A practitioner<sup>6</sup> says that his interest in natural herbal medicine lies in his childhood experience: “I was still young when he came to live at his paternal uncle’s place in Quatre Bornes. When I was small, I used to suffer from stomach ache very often. One night I could not sleep due to the pain, and my *chachi* (uncle’s wife), took a root, crushed it to make a *lok* and I drank the medicine. I recovered, and since I have never suffered from the same ache.”

Our informant explains that herbal medicine was used by our ancestors and there were medicines for all types of diseases whether stress, cough or skin diseases. “*Hamni ke pourvasa, dada, pardada ke zamane, eye nani ke zamane se, ton ton ke zamane se, hamni keanelansa hiyan, jan pourvasa log se...ancestors anelansa, aaj ayurved pehela ta...*» In the days of our ancestors, grandfather, great grandfather, since the days of our grandmother they have been using plants; they brought with them in some form what is called today ayurvedic medicine.

He adds. “Our ancestors used to suffer from much pain in the body. It was a common health complaint among our ancestors, our great grandfather, father etc. Hospitals *dour rahale*, were far; they treated their pains in the family itself, among *dadi* and *dada*. Moreover they did not have the time. But they performed *Yaj* or hawan regularly and chanted the Ramayana.

He recalls that his *dada* and members of the family would never go to hospital when sick. It was the same in the days of his ancestors according to what he heard his *dada* say. Members of the family looked after each other at home, doing *sewa*. Moreover, there were very few hospitals and were far away. They relied solely on home-made remedies. His *dada* who was a nursing officer, also knew a lot about *tisanes* and had great faith in them. He used to give injections to patients and also advised them on *jaribouti* medicines. For kidney stone *bois de ronde* was recommended. He has learnt a lot from his *dada* as he always used to accompany him on his trips. He adds that leaves, roots and bark of trees have medicinal properties. Ayurvedi pills are made from leaves and also clay; they are also available in the form of powder.

*Jaribouti* or any parts of the plant used for ayurvedic medicine is not exposed to insecticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers; manure is used for the plants. There is strict quality control and a high sense of professionalism in the production of ayurvedic medicine. It works slowly but surely. There are several healing techniques; transcendental meditation, yoga, *jaribouti* or ayurvedic medicine, chanting of the Ramayan, horoscope etc. “*Ghar mein* (at home) or any sacred spot where there is *pooja paat ... sewa kari* (prayer and social service) produces vibration. Patience is most important in this form of healing”, concludes our informant.

### 6.1 Traditional healers

On estate camps both Creole and Indian communities had *femmes-sage* or mid-wives practitioners. After delivery the mother is given a tablespoon of oil of the *de lila de Perse* or *neem* (available on the market) on empty stomach. It was done over a period of 12 days. This treatment was given to the mother to clean the uterus and heal any injury or bruise that might have occurred during the process of delivery. Mothers, who have had several babies delivered at home under the expertise of the mid-wife, say that women who underwent caesarean did not consume the oil of *Lila de Perse*. At bed time mothers take half a glass of green *safran* boiled in milk, to keep the body warm and prevent it from catching cold besides acting as an anti-septic.

Bath was a ritual. Depending on availability, five or seven types of leaves are required for the bathing ritual: camphor leaves. leaves of *eucalyptus, citronelle, lila, feuille d'argent,, lingue,*

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<sup>6</sup> The informant, aged 68, has graduated from folk to Ayurvedic medicine in his practice. He participated in the project on condition that he remained anonymous. Like most healers, he believes that the power or knowledge of healing is sacred.

*l'herbe cahtte, feuille rouge, catepen, feuille zemblon, feuille sampo*, which is a sweet-smelling (it could be camphor leaves). The leaves are boiled in a large *deksi* or rice-cooking recipient till the water turns yellow or green. First, a mug containing at least a litre of water is kept aside to bathe the baby. Before the bath, the baby's scalp is rubbed and massaged with a paste made of dhal *petit pois* mixed with coconut oil to remove *tambave* or prevent its formation.. The *dhall* is soaked overnight and ground into a thick paste. After the bath the baby's body is massaged, and is made to do simple arms and legs exercises. The baby wears *kajol* or kohl made from the soot of burnt castor oil, as a protection against the evil eye. *Hingue* or *massala* and *kesar* were the main medicines during post delivery period.

*Hingue* was a home-made preparation that was consumed by the new mother over a period of 9 to 12 days. It is taken after bath, massage and body-warming. This is followed by *eau de vie* or brandy and *kesar*. The ingredients were available in grocery shops and markets more especially at the central market. The ingredients consist of *mangrella* (cows were fed *mangrella* to increase milk production) dried raisin. The spices were ground on the *roche cari* (curry stone). The mixture was made into small balls and dipped in a flour paste and fried in ghee. *Hingue* was imperative for the breast-feeding mother.

The mother's whole body was massaged with warm oil of coconut boiled with garlic by the midwife, especially the abdomen "*pou mette li dans so place*". In post natal treatment the mother ate another home-made medicine known as *kesar* for cleansing, reconfiguring and firming the lower part of the body. It was consumed on empty stomach or around 9 a.m. once a day over a period of 9 days. It was concocted with *pistache* or ground nut; 7 or 9 cereals namely *dhall petis pois, lentille rouge, zamberique, dhall embrevade, moonque ke dhall, lentille noir,...*; dried ginger; cardamom, grams; sugar. The cereals and the groundnuts were roasted and powdered on the *roche carri*. The paste of cereal, made into small balls, was cooked with sugar, dried ginger cardamom and water.

## 6.2 Other healers

There exist several other methods of healing and different categories of healers. The practitioners are placed into a social hierarchy on the basis of cultural constructs and the perception of practices. Religious and spiritual healers occupy the highest rung of the social ladder, followed by herbalists and folk healers usually practised by elders. Healers having recourse to the world of spirits occupy the lowest rungs of the ladder. The last category consists of several types of healers depending on the materials used for healing and the medium called upon in divination, whether good spirits, the spirits of ancestors, the folk divinities or the evil spirits.

Religious healing consists in performing simple or elaborate ceremonies seeking the grace of the highest divinities or God which manifests Himself in various forms. The ceremonies are usually presided over by a priest known as *maraz* or *poossari* either at the residence of the sick person or in a temple, river, lake or the sea. Indentured labourers could afford to have very simple ones, so they relied on the Tamil temple and the shrine of kalimaya for prayers. They also organized communal *Kathas* in *baithkas*, and participated in the ceremonies organized by the Tamil temples. All indentured labourers irrespective of places of origin in India had recourse to the Cavadee, fire-walking and sword-climbing prayers for health purposes. All participants in the ceremonies interviewed said that they were carrying the Cavadee or walking on fire for health purposes. Women participants often carried a sick child or an infant. While some participants were doing the penance for healing a current disease, others were fulfilling vows for having recovered.

Selvam Chenghen whom we interviewed explained that the *Kanji* is a special offering to Goddess Draupadi. People perform *Homana* that is *hawan* so that the goddess would protect people getting *malade li yeux, la rougeole etc.* Tamils also celebrate the fire-waking ceremony and Cavadee. These are preceded by a long period of fasting.

Regular prayers, fasting, penance, vows, offerings, rituals, pilgrimage and *neuvaines* that is fasting for nine consecutive days or weeks, are generally observed. Many informants say that they have recovered after having prayed to *Mama Tookay*, well-known Tamil temple at Camp Diable. Indentured labourers also prayed to *Père Laval, Saint Antoine de Padoue* and *La Vierge*. In the course of time, many Indian immigrants and their descendants turned to Christian divinities for

health purpose, without however undergoing any form of conversion. Elders testify that they have prayed in the church, grottoes etc for the health of a member of the family.

Other forms of folk medicine comprise passes, marking, bone-setting, massage and home remedies involving the elements, especially water and fire and certain specific metals. For *coup de soleil*, water is used and for *amidale tomber*, a steel spoon. Many people turn to the *ojha* and the *traiteur* or *longaniste* for healing, especially when the cause of ill-health is attributed to evil spirits or the wrath of the dead.

## CONCLUSION

1. Use of medicinal plants in the forms of infusion, decoction and cataplasm complemented allopathic medicine throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, reliance on plant medicine gradually diminished as new medical discoveries and inventions were made in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
2. Since the last decade especially with fundamental change in lifestyle, propelled rapid industrialization and modernization, and the toll taken by non-communicable diseases interest in plant-derived medicines has re-emerged. Herbal medicines are proposed as alternatives to scientific medicines. There also an increasing *prise de conscience* in traditional remedies namely plant therapy.
3. Traditional medicines are being reinvented and repackaged to meet the needs of consumers. There is a growing industry of herbal teas. It is claimed that they can provide relief to a wide range of health problems, from minor ailments and cure cancers. The Bois Cheri tea estate offers *Citronelle* tea, *Ayapana* tea and *Tulsi* tea and La Chartreuse offers *Thé vert* or Green tea.
4. The manufacture and commercialization of herbal medicines and cosmetics under the Ayurvedic label have developed considerably over the last two decades. “Herbal” or “natural” is the maitre-mot in marketing strategies.
5. There is growing faith in ayurvedic medicine and acupuncture. Formally trained practitioners from India and China as well as Mauritians are working on a full time basis in the island. Specialized clinics and pharmacies have been set up in various parts of Mauritius.
6. Oil and water therapies coupled with exercises have also gained in popularity. Health clubs and wellness centres are mushrooming. They offer treatment of oil massage, water therapy in the form of sauna, meditation and yoga.
7. As part of the conservation of the intangible heritage programme, UNESCO is actively engaged in carrying out inventories of traditional and folk or popular medicine and forms of healing in all parts of the world., for example at Le Morne. Indigenous cultures /societies are specially being studied in view of preserving these cultural elements. However, multinational pharmacological concerns may take undue advantage of traditional knowledge and skills. Pharmacological enterprises are tapping the rich biodiversity in developing countries to find cures for new diseases.
8. The recent growth of religious fervour and ritualistic celebrations in Mauritius is indicative of a latent ill-health in Mauritian society. Many people turn simultaneous to healers of various descriptions, from priests to diviners, to recover from illnesses.

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## PART V: MENTAL HEALTH

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission has to make recommendations to improve the health and quality of life of descendants of slaves and indentured labourers. To achieve this end, it was important to probe deep into the treatment meted out to their ancestors, as regards the provision of food, excess alcohol consumption, housing conditions, health care and working conditions, etc.

Ill-treatment meted out to the slave population and of indentured labourers and its bearings upon both types of immigrants and their descendants up to this day. The inhuman treatment meted out to the slaves from their capture and shipment in frail sailing vessels was characterized by a high mortality rate, up to 30% from West Africa, and an average of 12% for those captured from the Eastern side of the continent and from Madagascar. This has been the subject of moving descriptions by historians (e.g. Filliot). The traumatic experience endured by the survivors must have left deep scars on them; the miracle is that they were able to survive and that both men and women were passed fit for work, once landed.

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the country's medical science was still rudimentary and depended largely on herbal remedies. It was still a matter of the law of the survival of the fittest.

The main interest, at that time, was to have slaves and indentured labourers who were in good physical health, and no one was too concerned about their mental health, unless the person in question was absolutely mad.

When did we start to recognize the psychological effects of slavery and the consequences of the ill-treatment suffered by the indentured labourers? Did the patients and their families seek help for their psychological ailments?

If we are looking at what can be done to improve the mental health programme in Mauritius, we need to ask some important questions, such as:

- Which mental disorders affected the slaves and indentured labourers?
- Whether there was racial inequity in the delivery of mental health services?
- What aspects of racism and discrimination caused emotional and psychological harm to victims, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?
- Whether there are risks and resilient factors among the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers?

We have searched through reports and stories about slaves in Mauritius, and we have not come across any writings about the psychological trauma of the slaves in Mauritius.

We are trying to look into what could have happened to them or what marked the slaves, without much evidence to substantiate this work. Hence, the scarcity of information, records and reports on psychiatric treatments have tested our efforts to produce this paper.

Previously, only acute cases and those who were very disturbed and violent needing admission came to the Mental Hospital and in those days, many never recovered. This was, to some extent, responsible for the stigma attached to the Mental Hospital, and many patients who needed psychiatric care were afraid to come forward.

The difficulty of the Medical and Social Service Team Task lies in the widespread belief among all strata of the Mauritian population that mental illness cannot be cured and is "irrecoverable". Its cause is sometimes attributed to some supernatural powers, such as "mauvais zair" or "diable", in which case, no human being can cure it.

Mental illness has been a serious and growing problem over the years. In the period 1880 to 1945, mental patients were brought to the Mental Hospital only when they were very disturbed and when other methods of treatment had failed,

In 2000, there were, overall, 79,000 contacts with Health Services by persons with mental disorders (counting primary health care visits, outpatient attendances, hospital admissions and admissions to private clinics). That represents an average of one contact a year with Mental Health Services for every 15 persons in the country. Traditionally, Mental Health Services have been provided centrally at the Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre. It provides in-patient care for many different types of cases, including for those who are mentally ill and for mentally handicapped patients, and for those who need long-term care, alcoholics and others who have been in the Centre for many years and for whom it has become their home.

Patients who were willing to see private doctors for their mental illness, or even who showed signs of psychosomatic problems were either being treated as outpatients, or were admitted to the Mental Hospital, and few of them even went to private clinics.

The Mental Hospital and the Psychiatric Units at the Regional Hospitals have been providing a service to anyone willing to consult them for any mental illness, and this is reported in the increasing numbers of attendances.

There is now less stigma attached to seeing a Mental Health specialist, and those willing to combat the taboo are freely attending psychiatric care. However, admission to the Mental Health Care Centre is still difficult to accept.

Psychiatric care has remained the least developed type of care in Mauritius, and a lot still has to be done to improve the status of Mental Health.

## **2.METHODOLOGY**

We have been to the National Archives to consult relevant books, documents and papers and were given access to the Medical and Health Department's Annual Reports from 1885 to 1960.

The Lunatic Asylum had been keeping some records and general statistics, and they were reported as Special Return of the Government Lunatic Asylum.

From these documents, we were able to draw information about the patients who were residing there, the services and the facilities.

This is a desk study of the materials provided, and we are trying to understand the mental diseases pathway and psychiatric care in Mauritius.

We are looking at the types of treatments and care given to persons with mental illnesses. This will give us an understanding of how psychiatric care has evolved in Mauritius.

We do not pretend to know all the causes of mental illnesses here, nor can we link mental illnesses to a specific group of persons or regions of Mauritius.

We suggest that a study be done, at a later stage, of specified groups of descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, to identify disorders and risk factors for mental illnesses. But it is more important and relevant to gather more data about their resilience to mental illnesses.

## **3.LEGISLATIONS**

During the British occupation (1810-1968), the asylum admitted and treated patients with mental disorders. These patients (lunatics) were placed there, and the rules about their keeping were simple, they were in a place of safety and there was a provision of basic needs.

### **Lunacy Ordinance Act of 1906**

The first legal instrument which regulated the admission and treatment of Mental patients in

Mauritius was the Lunacy Ordinance (Act) of 1906.

This Act made provision for the custody of criminal and non-criminal mental patients. The General Mental Hospital was the only place where mental patients were kept and treated in Mauritius. The Central Board, consisting of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, a District Magistrate, a Medical Practitioner, was to meet once a month and inspect the hospital, and the patients in it, as well as transact all such other business as was required under the Act.

Whenever mental patients were kept at Poor Houses, there was an obligation for prior written consent by the Minister of Health. The Act made provision for licensing of private Mental Hospitals. The Governor-General was able by Proclamation to declare that any place shall be used as a mental hospital, and that any enactment concerning a mental hospital shall apply, or cease to apply, as the case may be, to that place.

The District Magistrate in the area from which the patient was removed, was responsible to sign the order which committed the patient to the Mental Hospital. An application to the Clerk of the District Court for the district in which the patient was residing, stating his desire to obtain an order for the removal of his patient, had to be made before the patient was received into the Mental Hospital.

For a pauper patient of unsound mind, an application also had to be made to the Magistrate, as provided in the Social Aid Act.

The person seeking the committal order replied to the Magistrate on oath about his belief that the alleged patient was insane, the grounds of his belief, the reasons why he desired the removal of the alleged patient to a Mental Hospital, whether he or any other person was willing to pay or contribute towards the maintenance of the alleged patient in the Mental Hospital.

There were two Commissioners appointed for Mauritius. When they received an Order of the Magistrate for the examination of an alleged patient, they would meet at the time, and at a place specified in the Order, usually at the Mental Hospital, and personally inspect and examine the person named in the Order. When they agreed that the alleged patient was insane and a person fit to be removed, they would draw up and sign a certificate to that effect.

Where the two, or any two of the three Commissioners, differed in their opinion about the admission of a patient to the Mental Hospital, the Central Board would reexamine the person and make appropriate recommendations.

Patients' relatives were ordered to pay for the support and maintenance of the patient admitted, whenever they had sufficient means to do so. Whenever there were no next of kin able to maintain or support the patient, the Permanent Secretary would be charged.

A patient in a Mental Hospital, under an order of a Magistrate until his final discharge, was governed by the provisions of the Code Napoléon relating to the guardianship of persons of age.

The patient would be discharged by the Central Board to his relatives' care for a period of leave from the hospital or permanently after his cure. There was an Occupational Department on the hospital premises, where the mental patients would be rehabilitated by doing different manual activities.

Criminal mental patients were admitted or discharged from the Mental Hospital upon the order of the Prime Minister, after consultation with the Minister.

There were different registers kept at the Mental Hospital: the Book of Admissions, Discharges book, Medical visitation book, Case book, Visitor's Book. All these would be available to the Central Board to review especially in the case of any patient who had been confined in the Mental Hospital.

The Act also made provisions relative to the custody and protection of patients in the Mental Hospital, and when there would be improper treatment of patients or misconduct towards a patient by a person, the latter would be liable to imprisonment.

The Lunacy Act constituted the law governing the admission of mental patients to the Mental Hospital for a long time. As it was not compatible with patients' rights principles and services development, there was a need to change the legislation.

In July 1966, measures were taken to come up with another legislation, the Mental Health Ordinance (No. 31 of 1966), but it did not come into force, as it was not proclaimed.

On 21 June 1974, the Solicitor General's Office had a new draft legislation prepared, but there was no consensus on who would be responsible for the admission and discharge of patients.

By 1980, WHO published a paper on Mental Health Legislations, and the Ministry of Health made a contribution on this, which then served as guidelines for the preparation of a new bill.

It was only in the 1990s that serious work was done to prepare a new Mental Health Care Bill, after a report on "Principles and Proposals for the improvement of the Mental Health Care System in Mauritius", by a WHO visiting team of mental health experts led by Dr Tom Fryers and colleagues (1992). The draft bill was discussed at length by technical experts of Brown Sequard Hospital as from 1995. The bill was also discussed at Parliament and proclaimed in December 1998.

## **Mental Health Care Act 1998**

The Mental Health Care Act, is a comprehensive legislation providing for the admission, treatment and care of mentally ill patients. It sets up the necessary infrastructure for Mental Health Care, the conditions of admission of persons suffering from mental problems, the treatment and the conditions of living of patients at Mental Health Care Centres, the protection of mental patients, their rights and the principles applicable to accused persons who plead mental disorders or are found to be unfit to plead to a criminal charge. It makes psychiatric services more accessible through the decentralization of care, and makes the admission and discharge of both voluntary and involuntary patients possible.

Any mental patient can be examined and treated with his/ her informed consent at any one of the six psychiatric facilities in the country, and thus mental patients are not discriminated against.

Even the involuntary Patients are allowed to go on leave from the hospital for a period determined by the Commission, so as to facilitate their reintegration into society. The parents or relatives of these patients are involved in their care plan, and this would help them to continue with their follow-up appointments.

The Mental Health Board advises and recommends to the Ministry of Health in all matters relating to the care, protection of patient's rights, training of nursing and paramedical staff, and investigations of complaints and grievances of patients, patients' next-of-kins, visitors and staff.

The Mental Health Commission reviews matters relating to the admission, treatment, leave, discharge and continued treatment of patients. It brings to the notice of the Board any breach of discipline, professional misconduct and violation of patients' rights.

There are now new amendments being proposed to the Act, which are being discussed and would ensure a better treatment and service of mental patients. There is a need to destigmatise further the treatment of mental illnesses.

The Law is necessary as a safety net for the protection of patient's rights and the improvement of quality care, but there is still a lot to be done to change attitudes and beliefs about mental illness and patients with mental disorders.

## **4. MENTAL HOSPITAL**

The Barkly Asylum, Beau-Bassin, was a Government institution consisting of infirmary wards, where paupers were received and maintained, as well as an orphanage with a school attached, a separate compound where all the harmless patients from the Government Lunatic Asylum were maintained, and a hospital for the sick inmates of the institution and the district. Sections for paupers, orphans and imbeciles were under the control of the Protector of Immigrants and Poor Law Commissioner. The hospital was administered by the Medical and Health Department. In the Poor Law branch, there were six wards - two for females and four for male paupers- containing 13 beds. In the Imbeciles' compound, there were 100 beds- 68 for males and 32 for females. Three buildings in the middle of the grounds formed the orphanage, where 42 orphans were maintained and educated.

The Hospital had four wards containing 153 beds, a maternity ward of 6 beds and a ward with forty beds for females, the latter buildings being away from the main structure. At the extremity of the grounds were five wards with eighteen beds for contagious diseases.

The staff of the Poor Law section numbered fifty-one persons, and that of the hospital thirty-five persons. The buildings included two chapels, one for Roman Catholics and the other for Protestants. In addition to the institution a sewing class was conducted, under the direction of a seamstress, which catered for all the able-bodied female paupers, who helped in the production of the clothes for the inmates of both the Poor Law and Medical branches.

The grounds of the Institution (about 80 acres) formed part of an old sugar estate, which derived its name from the beautiful pond, Beau- Bassin. The establishment was lit up by electricity and with its roads and the cottages of the resident officers, it had the appearance of a village of about 620 souls. It was named after Sir Henry Barkly, K.C.B. who, at the time of its inception, was Governor of Mauritius.

### **The Brown Sequard Mental Hospital**

The Barkly Asylum became known as the Brown Sequard Mental Hospital in 1879, and was named after the distinguished Mauritian-born, Neurologist, Brown Sequard. The number of beds had increased to 875, and the hospital was the largest one for Mauritius. The Hospital has 7 dormitories of 475 beds for acute cases and 18 dormitories of 400 beds for the chronic patients.

The Psychiatric Hospital changed its name after the proclamation of the latest Mental Health Care Act, (1998), to be known as the Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre. Facilities were the same as the buildings were partly renovated, and living conditions improved.

A new complex, which retained the name Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre, was built next to the old hospital in 2002, which caters for some 360 acute patients. There are also separate wards for younger patients, males and females, aged under 18 years old.

The old Brown Sequard Hospital has remained a home for the 400 or so chronic patients, some of whom have been institutionalized for more than two decades.

## **5. GENERAL HOSPITALS**

Although there has always been one Mental Hospital, patients with minor psychological disorders and physical illnesses attended local Area Health Centres and General Hospitals.

Regional Mental Health Services for outpatients and some in-patients in medical wards have been provided since the late 1990s throughout the country, including Rodrigues Island, as part of a decentralisation process of Mental Health Services, where patients with mild to moderate psychiatric illnesses are treated. There are now 9 Psychiatric Outpatients Units around the island at the different Regional Hospitals. The liaison Psychiatrist in the Regional Hospitals would be treating these patients, whenever he is called.

Moreover, a visiting Psychiatrist travels to Rodrigues every four months where, during one week, he attends to both outpatients clinics, and in-patients. Whenever, a patient needs more extensive psychiatric care, he/she would be transferred to Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre.

In the 1998 NCD Survey, 16 per cent of adult males were heavy drinkers. Heavy alcohol intake may result in a variety of health problems, including a number of psychiatric disorders. Although Alcoholics are admitted mainly at Brown Sequard and at Flacq hospitals for long-term care and rehabilitation, short-term detoxification of alcoholics is done at the Regional Hospitals, in the medical or surgical wards, where patients are primarily admitted. There are about 30% of the admissions at the General and Regional Hospitals caused alcohol-related illnesses. About 70% of admissions at Brown Sequard MHCC are due to alcohol problems.

## Admissions at the Mental Hospital during the period 1885 to 1945

This review of the Special Returns of the Government Lunatic Asylum has led to a better understanding of the treatment of mental patients as far back as 1866.

The normal bed capacity corresponding to the actual floor space available in the institution was about 660 beds. This was divided into: 9 male Dormitories, 1 female infirmary, for the common people, and 2 private quarters with 14 rooms for females and 11 rooms for males.

There were 2 Day Rooms, one for males and one for females, for occupational and other activities.

There were 34 cells for violent and suicidal patients.

Patients were allowed out in the airing court and grounds for daily exercises. Patients also were allowed to work in the outer gardens and were also allowed out in the town (1932 *Mauritius Blue Book*).

They were entertained with gramophone music, Police Band playing once a month; games like cards, draughts, dominoes, chess and loto were favourite games. Male patients would play football. Periodicals and papers, both English and French, were sent by people interested in the welfare of the patients, but these were never enough. There was a piano in the female Department which was used occasionally by patients, friends and relatives. There were monthly masses for Roman Catholics and 2 Church of England services during the year (1932).

Patients were employed at the Mental Hospital, doing agriculture and gardening, carpentry, mattress-making, and tinsmith for the men while the women were doing the house work, sewing and drawing water.

The diets of patients were different for the Europeans and Creoles and Indians: Beef, lard, chicken and coffee and more of the basic foods were given to Europeans, whilst tripe was for the Creoles. Indians were given more rice and dhol, lentils and beans, salted fish like the Creoles. Extras, like eggs, milk, chocolate, were given to those who were on a 'sick diet'.

There was overcrowding in the wards and with the rapid increase in the population, a serious problem had to be faced.

Often, admission was sought for feeble-minded children, and the presence of these children in the hospital, constituted a most difficult mental nursing problem.

The males admitted were mainly skilled, unskilled workers and unemployed, whereas the females were mostly housewives. They were both within the age group 21- 40 years.

The patients were identified as; Europeans, Creoles and Indians. The majority of in-patients were from the Indian population: 364 out of 498 in 1885. There were also an average of 7 Chinese admitted yearly.

Admissions and re-admissions were coming mainly from the District of Port-Louis, 137 out of 262 (1885). There would be an average of 3 males admitted from Rodrigues yearly.

The forms of Mental Disorders in 1885, that patients were suffering from were: Dementia, Chronic Mania, Senile Dementia, Mania, Sub-acute Mania, Epileptic Insanity, Epileptic Imbecility, and Imbecility. Patients were divided into four classes: Maniacal and dangerous; Quiet and chronic; Melancholy and suicidal; Idiotic, Paralytic and Epileptic. They were grouped in different wards according to the class to which they belonged; this was to facilitate their treatment and management. Later in 1945, Acute Confusional Insanity, Schizophrenia and Manic Depressive illnesses were diagnosed and managed.

Seclusion and physical restraint were used to prevent injuries and to calm violent patients.

The Medical Superintendent, Medical Assistant, Matron, Four Nurses and Head Attendant would reside in the quarters provided in the Asylum. The others including, nurses, cooks, seven warders, 30 male servants and 13 maid servants, would be working on shift during the days and nights.

The number of in-patients, on an average around 770 daily, has showed little variation from year to year, despite the rate of increase of the population of the island. This is due to the active treatment at the Outpatient Department and to the monthly provisional discharge by the Central

Board, of patients who, though not cured, have sufficiently improved to stay outside the hospital, and lastly to the yearly transfer to Poor Law Houses of old chronic mental patients, who are neither troublesome nor dangerous, and who usually have no relatives to look after them.

A rather disquieting fact was the incidence of alcoholics as first admissions; they constituted nearly one-fourth of the male admissions. Further, there was evidence that alcoholic intoxication, here, was an aggravating factor in other mental illness, precipitating relapses and thus increasing the number of readmissions.

Members of the Red Cross and Mental Health Association visited patients and provided amenities and moral support.

The prejudice against this hospital was waning, as was evidenced by the increasing number of patients attending the Outpatients Department.

The Outpatient Clinic steadily assumed greater importance and was attended by an ever-increasing number of patients. It functioned as an important Therapeutic Centre for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses. Mostly, Neuroses were treated there, but a number of psychotics also called for treatment and advice.

Insane population of the Colony as at 31 January 1958 was 1,292; of these, 62.6% were males and 37.4% were females. Out of these, 588 were at the Mental Hospital and the rest were on probation, on leave and in convents.

The rate of insanity per 10,000 population was 20.89 for an estimated population of 618,516, as at 30 June 1958, including Rodrigues, the rate per 10,000 in the urban areas were 38 and 14.7 in rural areas.

Causes of Insanity: the major etiological factors according to their importance were Alcohol, heredity, epilepsy and stress.

The proportion of Epilepsy in the country was quite high, and the main causes of epilepsy were:

- a) Brain damage, and asphyxia at birth;
- b) Acute delirious illness with pyrexia in early childhood;
- c) Congenital and hereditary and degenerative disorders;
- d) Infectious diseases like typhoid fever, whooping cough, measles.

These factors also accounted for the greatest number of cases of mental deficiency seen in outpatients.

Syphilis was not considered a major problem until two cases of General Paralysis of the Insane and one case of Tabes were discovered.

The BSH, with its Outpatient Department, continued to cater for the different types of mental patients. Chronic Schizophrenics, manic depressives and the feeble-minded formed the bulk of the permanent hospital population. The manic depressive patients represented the highest percentage of those admitted for the first time in 1961; there were also many psychoneurotics.

The most striking feature was the admission of 27 Opium Addicts in 1961. Opium addiction per se does not cause mental illness, but it leads to ethical depravity. The severity of the addiction is such that nothing will stop the addicts from getting their drugs.

On the other hand, Gandia addiction was then widespread and is a cause mental disturbance and, together with alcoholism, it causes aggravating factors in other mental disorders, precipitating relapses and thus increasing the number of readmissions.

## Treatment Administered

In the period 1881 to 1945, the treatments consisted of seclusion, physical restraints, occupational therapies, group therapies and few medications that were available.

In 1947, Dr. Comty introduced Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT), at Brown Sequard Hospital. Although its mode of action is still not clear, its effectiveness in the treatment of mental illness is well-established.

“Shock Electrique” commonly known here, sounds more shocking and frightening. Many people wrongly believe that ECT is administered to patients as a form of punishment. Patients who are disturbed and aggressive usually improve rapidly and calm down after 3 to 4 ECT treatments. ECT is a very useful method of treatment of mental illness, especially in cases of severe depression.

In March 1958, a new approach to psychological problems was found and Group Therapy, including the new Sevadon technique, a well-established feature in the treatment of patients.

As regards treatment of Schizophrenia, two conflicting trends of ideas were under investigation. Certain psychiatrists were of opinion that Paranoid Schizophrenia should be treated by Insulin therapy, and others only by psychotherapy combined with large doses of tranquilisers.

Cerebral stimulation in the treatment of psychoneurosis was introduced that year.

Occupational Therapy also gave excellent results and a great number of patients benefited from that form of treatment.

Work on Electroencephalography started that year and some interesting results had were obtained. The introduction of this new important diagnostic method marked a great step forward in the medical history of the colony.

The usual mode of treatment followed classical lines:

Eletroplexy, Insulin therapy, psychotherapy and leucotomy in some cases where other forms of treatment had failed.

The drugs used most extensively were: Vitamins, Antabuse, phenobarbitone, Epanutin, tridione, largactil, equanil, Dexedrine, niamid, frenquel and stelazine.

## 6.MENTAL DISORDERS

Mental illnesses in Mauritius have followed the same trend as worldwide, and Psychiatrists who came back from their overseas training diagnosed and treated these at the Psychiatric Hospital, with the same available medications.

Most patients would complain of “la tête fatiguée, tête vide or tête faire mal” and attend hospital on their own, Those with severe mental illnesses, would come accompanied by their relatives and the complaint would be: “Li cause n’importe, li tann tapaz dans la tête (hallucinations), Li faire désordre” (behavioural problems). Often the symptoms are more severe than what they tend to report.

Cases have been recorded using the ICD 1975 revision, in the different groups as follows: Alcohol Dependence Syndrome, Psychoses, Neurotic disorders, Subnormality/Mental Retardation, Dementias, Epilepsy and Behaviour Disorder.

Between 1995 and 1998, cases treated as in-patients at the Brown Sequard Psychiatric Hospital were Alcohol Dependence Syndrome 54%, Schizophrenic psychoses 24%, other Psychoses 13%, Depression 4%, Anxiety 1% and Drug dependence 0.6%.

In 2005, using ICD 10, the list of mental illnesses was lengthened, including all commonly known disorders (Tables 2005 and 2009).

The mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of alcohol, was 50%, Schizophrenia 30.4% and disorders due to multiple drug uses 1.7%.

There are other less common disorders like Alzheimer's Disease, Sleep Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Conduct Disorder which have been treated more recently.

## 7. SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drug use has been closely associated with our immigration history. Illicit rum production by slaves under the French colonization (1715-1810). After the abolition of slavery in 1834, the then British Administration brought Indian indentured labourers who came with their culture and traditions. They introduced cannabis, known as gandia, while the Chinese immigrants, who came during the same period, introduced opium to the colony. However, these drugs, gandia and opium and illicit rum, were traditionally used in a controlled socio-cultural context in certain localized areas. They were mostly consumed by adults without much serious public concern.

In the mid-sixties, the craze for drugs, as highlighted by the popular music and the Hippy culture, reached the shores of Mauritius. The drug situation changed radically from its controlled socio-cultural use in the late seventies, with the introduction of a crude form of heroin known as "Brown Sugar" from the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent, through the Indian sub-continent. Brown sugar was smuggled through the airport, harbour and through postal packets. Mass drug proliferation developed a Mauritian drug sub-culture, with its own conventions and jargons. Mauritius was then facing a real "brown sugar" epidemic by mid 1980s. It was estimated that the number of heroin addicts vary between 5,000 and 20,000.

Subsequently, in 1986, a Commission of Enquiry on drugs was set up. The National Advisory and Research Council on Drug Addiction (NARCODA) was set up under the chairmanship of the Ministry Health in 1986, with representatives of various Ministries to coordinate the anti-drug activities. But as it did not deliver, the National Agency for the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers (NATReSA) was set up in 1996. The Police and the Customs and Excise Departments are responsible for the enforcement of the legislations against drug abuse and trafficking. Special Units have been set up, namely the Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit (ADSU). They are supported by the National Coast Guards in the surveillance of land, water and air routes. An important component in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking is certainly drug education and proper use of information. The Brown Sequared Hospital was until 1986 responsible for the treatment of drug addicts. The National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts, Vacoas (NCRA) took over the medical treatment of drug addicts, i.e. the detoxification and then followed the assisted by the NATReSA.

Since 2002, there is a Drug Centre in Beau-Bassin which is a specialized Unit for the treatment of male Drug Users. They are detoxified and rehabilitated, whilst they are put on substitution Methadone therapy.

## 8. MEDICAL TREATMENTS

Treatments of mental disorders with medications have been available generally at the Brown Sequared Hospital; Hypnotics, Tranquilisers, anti-psychotics and anti depressants were standard treatment given to all mental patients.

As the numbers attending the Outpatients Department and the in-patients wards have been increasing, there has been a tendency to make a rapid diagnosis and towards the administration of psychotropics.

Medications available are:

Neuroleptics: Chlorpromazine, Haloperidol, Thioridazine, Terfluxine, Flufenazine Decanoate.

Anti-depressants: Amitryptiline, Dothiepin, Imipramine, Fluoxetine.

Hypnotics and Tranquilisers: Alprazolam, Nitrazepam, Diazepam.

Patients are sometimes not willing to take these medications, because of the side effects, and a lot of persuasion and collaboration from doctors and relatives are required.

With more research and better molecules, that is with less side effects, treatment of mental illness has been improving. Combined with psychotherapy and occupational therapy, the majority of patients do not require admission to the Mental Hospital, but are treated as outpatients.

Psychiatric care is now considered less stigmatizing and patients are willing to take their medical treatment. Moreover, many people are seeing private Psychiatrists, as they can afford the consultations and want better medications. Newer molecules are used in the private sector, and the public hospital is also making an effort to make these available.

## 9. OTHER TREATMENTS

Although there may be a prevalence of about 22% of mental illness in the population of Mauritius, only one in four will see a psychiatrist. There is a considerable proportion of people with a mental problem who seek the help of Religious priests or even "Treter".

The causes of mental illness are multifactorial: rapid changes in society, dysfunctioning families, lack of employment, poverty, and also exclusion.

Patients tend to consult professionals for physical illnesses but self-prescribed medication is also used and bought off the counter. Local brews and tisanes are often taken.

However, as a rule, people will wait for the problem to aggravate to the extent of being unmanageable; then they will bring the patient to the Mental Hospital or seek private care.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Mental Health care has to be accessible to all, and prevention of mental illness is very important to have a society which is productive and content.

People need to be sensitized about mental illnesses and the promotion of Mental Health. As they become more educated, they will be more interested in looking after their own mental health.

There should be more Psychiatric Units around the Island both for easier access, and to break the stigma attached to attending a Mental Health Care Centre. Even in Primary Health Care, Mental Health Care can be given by the general practitioners.

Training of more professionals in Mental Health, from nurses, general doctors, psychologists, and psychiatrists is necessary. Also the paramedical people, like medical social workers and community health care assistants should be available in the system.

## 11. CONCLUSION

The idea of slavery is often visualized as prisoners with chains, subject to bondage and harsh punishment or physical abuse. However, most people fail to realize that the most powerful type of slavery is "Mental Slavery", as described by Noble Drew Ali. This type of abuse is often not identified as abuse because the victims do not realize they are being abused, since there being no physical pain being inflicted. The deceptive tactics of "Mental slavery" embeds itself within the deeper regions of the subconscious, while disconnecting the higher faculties of consciousness to create a "Social Zombie".

This "Social Zombie" refuses to accept any type idea of psychological progression as they fear the pain of "thought", conscious action, or material deficiency due to active expression and utilization of higher mind faculties. It was, and is, the unfortunate effectiveness of the dehumanization of "Willie Lynch" curriculum that has its victims perpetuating psychological and physical destruction onto themselves. To relinquish the parental rights of Willie Lynch, instructions must be provided to reverse the psychosis of self-destruction and victimology. As we exist in a time of disorder, confusion and psychological chaos, it is paramount that one should educate themselves and utilise

internal direction to ensure future progression and the reduction of a self-defeating mind state.

Often, a well-respected “Doctor” is needed before the sceptic begins to take select theories as fact. In this case, a book written by Dr. Joy De Gruy Leary has emerged as a scholarly defence against sceptics that perpetuate the feeling that “mental slavery” does not exist. The following has been stated: “ While African Americans managed to emerge from chattel slavery and the oppressive decades that followed with great strength and resiliency, they did not emerge unscathed. Slavery produced centuries of physical, psychological and spiritual injury. Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing lays the groundwork for understanding how the past has influenced the present, and opens up the discussion of how we can use the strengths we have gained to heal” .

We would like to stress the fact that we are not in a position to pretend that we know the psychological problems which affected the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, as we have no documented reports of these.

From the book *Slavery and Antislavery in Mauritius, 1810-33*, there are many paragraphs relating to the psychological traumas inflicted on the slaves and their detailed behaviours, such as regression and inability to work. Some were so dehumanised that they committed suicide. It was unfortunately seen by some as a normal consequence or fate.

The ill-treatment of slaves and indentured labourers, obviously affected them at the time, but they had to be resilient and continued to fight for their survival.

We can recommend that a study be carried out on a group of individuals who are descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, where we can then identify risk factors for mental illnesses and resilient factors, which have helped them to survive the difficulties which their ancestors had sustained.

May be we could look into their behaviour also to see how they have dealt with difficulties, and discover more about their coping skills.

We cannot assume that the consumption of daily ration of alcohol by the slaves have made future generations turn out to be alcoholics. There is no evidence of this, although we know that alcoholism can have a genetic effect.

This study will demand more resources, both human and financial, and will only be possible, if a sample of that population made up of descendants of slaves and indentured labourers were to be identified.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## PART VI:

# HEALTH CHALLENGES AND OVERALL CONCLUSION

## 1. HEALTH CHALLENGES

Survival from epidemics during the French and early British administration, the control of infectious and parasitic disease followed by a population explosion during pre-independence period, a very successful family planning programme and the emergence of chronic non-communicable diseases with an ageing population during the post independence period, characterise the evolution of the disease pattern in the country.

In the early 1980's Mauritius had completed its demographic transition. The country was in a relatively safe economic zone with a rising income per capita. There followed a shift in the pattern of work. Sedentary factory work replaced hard physical labour in the sugar-cane field. Household appliances substituted manual labour at home. Sale of cars and two-wheeled vehicles increased annually. Eating-out particularly high glycaemic index food (fast foods) became commonplace and watching television, a favourite pastime. Within a decade, non-communicable diseases (NCD) manifested themselves in the population. Mauritius was ill-prepared for the 'risk transition' phase leading to NCDs. The outcome is the epidemic of NCDs of an unprecedented magnitude according to global comparison.

Within a short period of time, the life expectancy of the population increased from 33 years in 1944 to 51 years in 1952 and within the next ten years it increased by a further 10 years to reach an average of 61 years in 1962. Thereafter, life expectancies of males and females increased more gradually with more gains on the female side. In 2008, the figures for males and females were 69.3 and 76.5 years. The downside of the entrenchment of chronic diseases in the population is an increase in the burden of diseases in later life. Statistics on healthy life expectancy for 2007 show figures of 62.3 and 69.5 years for males and females respectively, meaning a deficit in the quality of life of 7 years.

The health sector in Mauritius is facing a 'double barreled' threat. After successful control of Malaria, poliomyelitis, smallpox and reigning in the vaccine related diseases, and a rapid demographic transition in the list of achievements, the country is facing challenges from two sources.

The National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and Plan of Action 2009-2015 (MOH&QL), pinpoints areas of concern and new challenges on the horizon. Rising teenage fertility, abortions, unwanted pregnancies, high number of caesarean deliveries among some sections of the community, domestic violence and violence perpetrated to children are emerging areas for action.

Twentieth century ailments are rooted in the dynamics of changing determinants of health. Modern day lifestyles overlap with the environment to create threats of new and re-emergence of 'previous' diseases. HIV/AIDS, Chikungunya, H1N1 and mutated AH1N1 viruses overlap with diseases of modern day lifestyles. Mauritius had joined the league of the industrialized countries which are grappling with the epidemiology of non-communicable diseases. Surveys conducted over the last three decades point towards a worsening of the prevailing situation for type II diabetes, hypertension, obesity and cancers. Care and treatment to patients suffering from chronic diseases including dialysis is a heavy drain on the scarce health budget. Cardiac and renal surgeries and amputations are on the increase annually.

The health sector, in a welfare state is responding to this situation by introducing, sophisticated technologies and pharmaceuticals for the care and treatment of the sick. However we are dealing with chronic conditions requiring life-long treatment. The ageing process is entailing an increase in the burden of chronic diseases, often requiring costly high-tech interventions. The cost of health care is escalating. The limited resources are stretched beyond sustainability.

Chronic non-communicable diseases are now the main causes of morbidity, death and disability in the country. Non-compliance to treatment is a cause for concern and contributes to rising complications. A national health policy must aim not only at treatment of the sick, but also at taking vigorous measures to prevent the occurrence, development and entrenchment of morbidity, necessitating invasive treatment such as amputations, cardiac surgery and renal dialysis. The preventive measures should also include commensurate rehabilitation to match the demand. The N.C.D. survey reports for the last three decades indicate that the national authorities have not been able to control the epidemic of non non-communicable diseases; yet low cost and highly effective measures are available to prevent the development of these diseases and their complications.

Most non-communicable diseases result from poor food habits, unhealthy lifestyles including stress, substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs) and physical inactivity. They are largely preventable. The strategies to prevent their onset and reduce complications include early detection, good nutrition, exercise and stress management. The care of chronic conditions goes beyond the walls of health care institutions and permeates in the living and working environment of the individual. It requires family support, community involvement and a team of dedicated health workers, capable of providing continuing care. The challenge for decision makers is to mobilize the community for public participation in the fight against NCDs and to empower individuals in self-management of chronic diseases within an environment that promotes healthy living.

## 2. OVERALL CONCLUSION

Over the last two centuries, the Island of Mauritius witnessed a tremendous transformation in its social, economic and political landscape as well as its demographic and racial composition, the epidemiology of diseases and lifestyle pattern of its population. Mauritius had no native population. When it was colonized by the French in 1735, there were less than 1,000 inhabitants; they used the island mainly as a free port and warehouse. When the British took over the island in 1810 there were about 80,000 inhabitants and at the time of abolition of slavery in 1835 the population was estimated at 91,000 inhabitants. Throughout those periods, more than 75% of the inhabitants were African slaves and the rest mostly European colonists. In order to service the fast expanding sugar island economy, cheap indentured labour was imported from India. The total population rapidly increased to nearly 230,000 by 1855 (about 40% of African or mixed origin and more than 50% of Indian origin); this transformed the racial composition of the population. The population reached nearly 370,000 by 1900 and 500,000 by 1950, stabilising the composition to about 60% Indian and the rest mostly Creoles and minorities of European and Chinese origins. A population explosion occurred after 1950. The population is presently levelling off at about 1.3 million, growing at a declining rate and at below replacement level fertility. It is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

The epidemiological changes that followed can be broken down into four phases (see Figure 10).

- i. During the early French period, the island was relatively healthy and was even regarded as a sanatorium for visiting travelers. Diseases were introduced inadvertently by the early settlers. Outbreaks of measles, cholera and smallpox in the later French period caused heavy casualties. The population density was very low and was made up mainly of African slaves working for the trading economy and agriculture. As health facilities were minimal, the inhabitants commonly used traditional medicinal remedies. Mortality among slaves (which outnumbered births) was high as a result of diseases and harsh conditions.
- ii. This was followed by 70 years (1850 to 1920) of a succession of epidemic outbreaks, which, coupled with the harsh living and working conditions required by the sugar economy, resulted in very high mortality and morbidity, leaving the island with a sick malnourished population constrained to low work productivity. Their lifespan was reduced as a result of poor physical condition and premature ageing. The health and nutritional status of children was even worse as evidenced by very high infant mortality and retarded growth.

- The cholera epidemic was followed by Malaria, plague, Spanish influenza, poliomyelitis and measles causing thousands of deaths. Other infectious diseases afflicting the population during the period included dysentery, intestinal worm infestation, tuberculosis and leprosy.
  - The plague epidemic was followed by the epizooty *surra* (1902) that decimated the animal population and disrupted the transport and sanitation system.
  - The population commonly had recourse to traditional medicine (including the services of *dais*) due to the inadequacy of health services as well as prejudices against their utilisation.
  - The population lived on a predominantly vegetarian, high-carbohydrate rice-based diet that barely met their energy needs and was nutritionally inadequate. Vitamin deficiency diseases and anaemia were common.
  - The prevalence of malnutrition coupled with Malaria and other infectious diseases (including hookworm infestation) gave rise to a sick and debilitated population.
- iii. Between the Post-World War II and up to 1980s, there was a dramatic change in the epidemiological profile of the island.
- The breakthrough in Malaria control coupled with improvement in public health measures and health services within a welfare state concept led to a rapid decline in mortality and morbidity across all ages and population groups.
  - Various other developments during that period contributed to improve the health status of the population (particularly women and children), including improvement in sanitation, access to safe drinking water, universal vaccination and a primary health care system covering the whole island as well as a network of regional hospitals providing secondary and tertiary care. Health services were free as well as primary education.
  - To combat malnutrition in the impoverished population (GNI per capita: US\$ 1,280 in 1981), especially among the low income groups, food subsidy on staple foods and supplementary feeding programmes targeting children and pregnant and lactating women were put in place. This positive discrimination policy shielded the vulnerable segments of the population from hard economic times.
  - Fall in mortality coupled with increased longevity resulted in a population explosion that seriously threatened the economic survival of the country; this was addressed with the setting up of a successful family planning programme that brought the island's population to replacement level in the mid-1990s.
  - The diet of the population gradually improved nutritionally with quasi disappearance of clinical deficiency diseases although anaemia and child underweight continued as a problem. However, the average diet remained relatively high in refined carbohydrate with the fat content having increased considerably.
- iv. By 1980, the country was facing a severe economic crisis and had to embark on a stringent structural adjustment programme. Despite the difficult economic circumstances, Government maintained the welfare state services like free health and education, and food subsidies in order to protect the population, especially the vulnerable groups. Eventually, the economic reforms undertaken transformed the country into a middle-income economy with a GNI per capita of US\$ 3,870 IN 2000.
- The Human Development Index (HDI) which is a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development encompassing health, education and income, rose from 0.525 to 0.701 between 1980 and 2010 placing Mauritius in the high HDI category and giving the country a rank of 72 out of 169 countries, being the highest in Sub-Saharan African.

- The growth performance of children (an outcome of health and nutritional status) confirmed that the population as a whole benefited equitably from public health measures with child malnutrition relegated to marginal levels in all groups.
- However, improved economic status and living conditions led to overconsumption and dietary imbalance, and in increasingly sedentary lifestyle with concomitant high prevalence of obesity and non-communicable diseases (including, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and cancer).
- The health, social and economic consequences of non-communicable diseases at epidemic proportions is alarming and a cause for concern for both Government and society.
- Traditional medicine is regaining popularity as a result of increasing prevalence of chronic diseases and, concerns about overuse of pharmaceuticals. Ayurvedic medicine and acupuncture are even offered as parallel medicine in the health care system.
- Centres offering modern forms of traditional medicine, like various massages, spas, saunas, yoga, meditation, etc. are mushrooming over the island, and supermarket shelves are loaded with various herbal teas (*tisanes*) and other naturopathic products.

We, therefore, conclude that:

- The country has been able to effectively control and virtually eliminate the main contagious and deficiency diseases afflicting the population from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Mauritius has made substantial progress in the health sector through a nationwide system of care accessible to all and free of charge in the public sector.
- Having successfully managed the demographic and epidemiological transitions, Mauritius missed the opportunity of managing the risk transition in between the two phases, thereby getting trapped in non-communicable diseases.

Figure 10: Major Epidemics, Cyclones and Health Indicators in Island of Mauritius from the 18<sup>th</sup> c. to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

	1735	1807	1830	1855	1901	1972	2000
Population Island of Mauritius	Total 838 Slaves 648	Total 77,768 Slaves 65,367	Total 91,826 Slaves 64,919	Total 226,628 GP* 97,842 Indians 128,786	Total 371,170 GP* 108,422 Indians 259,086	Total 826,199 GP* 236,867 Indians 565,248	Total 1,151,094
**CDR/IMR			1831 26.8/7		1871 40.3/18	1972 7.9/63.8	1975 8.1/50.1
NCD							1980s to Date 6.7/15.9
'Flu A H1N1							2006-7
Chikungunya							2005
Severe Cyclone		1818 1816-17			1892 1945	1945 1960	1975
Measles							
Polionyeitis							
Spanish 'Flu							
Surra (epizooty)					1919 1902		
Plague					1899		
Malaria				1856-59/62/65 1854	1867 1856/59/62	1975	
Cholera		1775			2		
Smallpox	1773 French	1792			1856		
	Period	1810	British Period	1835	British Period	1900	British Period
						1968	Post-Independence
							2000

\* GP = General Population (mainly of Africa or mixed Afro-European descents)

\*\*CDR= Crude Death rate (per 1,000 population)

\*\*IMR= Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births

Main epidemic outbreak

Other outbreaks of diseases

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  3. See part 2: Disease Pattern.



**VOLUME 4**

**HISTORY, ECONOMY,  
SOCIETY AND MEMORY**

**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

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## Preface

Volumes three and four contain all the research reports, technical studies and surveys carried out by the team of consultants, researchers and volunteers appointed by the Truth and Justice Commission. Where the Commission could not find appropriate or qualified persons, Commissioners have headed teams of younger researchers to study a particular topic. The mandate of the Commission is to investigate the history of slavery and indenture, its consequences and suggest reparations. It was clear that two years would not allow for the task of reviewing 350 years of history and consequently, the Commission focused on a number of topics for in-depth study. Assessing the consequences or even identifying descendants was less easy as the reports show, since so few Mauritians are aware of their history and still less of their family history. Consultants, scholars and researchers have expressed their personal views on issues, and it is clear that not all views converge. The Commission has studied and considered all views expressed and given its own views in its report in Volume 1. It is understood that the views expressed here are those of the writers themselves, and not those of the Commission.

There are many myths and perceptions about Mauritian history that Mauritians have. This has become evident from the nationwide surveys undertaken by the Commission to seek the views of, not only those who are vocal and visible, but also of Mauritians who do not normally have the chance to express their views publicly. The analysis of these surveys by various consultants and researchers are reproduced here, while the original interviews and transcripts are to be found in Volumes 5 and 6. Some interviews have been 'anonymised' to protect the interviewees.

The studies were regrouped under twelve projects monitored by the Commission. In each project, a Team Leader was appointed responsible for guiding and supervising the studies and preparing the final report for the Commission. In some projects, however, Team Leaders could not be found and so Commissioners acted as Team Leaders.

The most important set of studies for the Commission has been those which directly examined the situation of 'descendants' of slaves and indentured labourers and which sought their views. However, it was important also to study descendants of slave owners as well, since slavery is both about slaves and slave owners. Among descendants of slave and indentured labourers, *métissage* has led to difficulties in identifying who were descendants, and it is clear in Mauritius, that phenotype is the popular delimiting factor in deciding who may be a descendant of a slave or indentured labourer. Yet these stereotypes are not only misleading but dangerous and need to be vigorously corrected. Not all 'blan' (white) are descendants of slave owners, as not all those with an African phenotype are descendants of slaves, and not all Indians were indentured labourers. For the population of mixed origins, we have used the term 'gens de couleur' to refer to descendants of the following relationships: a) whites and Afro-Malagasy and b) whites and any other group. These represent also persons of a higher social class.

It is, above all, the variety of life experiences of Mauritians that is highlighted in these studies, and it is hoped that they will prove material for institutions and individuals in the future to better plan people-centred policies, more in line with Mauritians' wishes, interests and expectations.

Vijayalakshmi Teelock GOSK  
Vice Chairperson  
Truth and Justice Commission



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VOLUME 4

**HISTORY, ECONOMY,  
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**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

**PART VI**

**SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY**



**PART VI**  
**SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY**

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## SLAVE TRADE 1720s-1820s

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the objectives of the Commission is to enquire into the history of slavery and indenture and to uncover truths hitherto hidden, ignored, falsified or simply forgotten. Focus has been on those parts of history that might have an impact on society and economy today. Recommendations for the direction of further study are given as well as institutional support for these studies recommended to achieve a more complete picture of the history of slavery and indenture.

The Commission, having noted that so few Mauritians know their history, have adopted the approach of providing as large a spectrum of Mauritians with the information and tools to study Mauritian history and especially the history of slavery and indenture. The Commission believes that 'knowledge is power' and empowering Mauritians to guard against the forces of reaction is the safest way to ensure that systems such as indenture and slavery do not repeat themselves on Mauritian soil. Mauritians must have the tools as well as the information to research their own history in a scientific manner. Although much research has been undertaken in Mauritius and overseas on slavery and the slave trade, it is nevertheless true that many of these searches reflect personal academic interests and opinions, often based outside Mauritius and do not address the concerns of Mauritians. The Commission has been privileged to have the support of many historians in Mauritians and overseas who have understood the need of Mauritians and responded to its work positively.

There has also been a historic reluctance to address or confront problematic issues of Mauritian society. Perhaps the belief was that these concerns would go away with time. But the enduring legacies of slavery, emancipation and indenture have ensured that the debate never really goes away and, in fact, resurfaces from time to time. It has become all too common, in order to present to foreigners the image of an idyllic Mauritius, to hide our history of inequality, injustice, racism, casteism, communalism and prejudice. Despite the fact that Mauritians continue to endure these experiences daily, few institutions, public and private, admit this publicly or even attempt to deal with it. Those who perpetrate injustice are guilty, but those who stay silent in the face of injustice, are equally guilty.

### Slave Trade

The slave trade to Mauritius was started to supply the island with cheap labour and as any commercial venture, as a profit-making activity. Without the establishment of a slave society and economy, there would have been no Ile de France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and no sugar industry in 19<sup>th</sup>-century British Mauritius. While the economic contribution of the free persons to the setting up of the colony is amply recognized in daily life (street names, books, plaques, genealogies, buildings and archives) the memory of slaves who built Port Louis' infrastructure, who cleared the land for the first sugarcane, wheat, manioc and indigo plantations, who built and manned the French fortifications and naval squadrons, or provided the domestic labour in all households is barely known or seen in everyday life. Most Mauritians are unaware that the cobbled streets they walk on in Port Louis, the classified fortifications they visit, the 18<sup>th</sup>-century stone buildings they enter were built with the labour of slaves. The slave trade permitted many in Mauritius and France, to make small or big fortunes that later were invested in estates, land and businesses. Thus the fortunes of many today were built on the prosperity of those who traded and used slave labour in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

It is therefore crucial that these facts be known and acknowledged and that memorialisation in daily life and in a permanent way is established. The TJC has focused on accumulating historical data on the 18<sup>th</sup> century as these are lesser known in Mauritius as most archives are located out of Mauritius. Some of the information gathered has been inputted in the form of databases and made public through the International Conference on the Slave Trade launched by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius on 11 April 2011. Popularisation of research will allow for more targeted historical research and more voices to be heard. It will allow also for more memorialisation policies and activities that are more historically accurate.

In addition to understand better the slave trade, the TJC has undertaken selected studies of French slavery in Isle de France. The economic contribution of slaves and their cultural heterogeneity is

highlighted. Preliminary research was carried out in Mozambique and France but it is clear that more of the sources that exist need to be consulted. For France, Thomas Vernet from the University of Paris 1 (Sorbonne) was solicited to assist, while in Mozambique, TJC secured the services of Benigna Zimba of Eduardo Mondlane University. Both were provided with 1 research assistant in those countries to undertake a survey of sources. A large number of volunteers also assisted TJC's search mainly from France: Mr. Jean Yves Le Lan provided free advice and data from his own database; Patrick Drack digitized a large number of documents to allow us to construct a digital historical database.

The traditions and culture of Mauritians of African and Malagasy origin are currently being erased from our physical and cultural landscape through tourist, ecotourism and IRS projects. It is also a matter of great concern that 'Maurice Ile Durable' project or National Strategy for Sustainable Development makes no mention of protecting the culture of people in the physical landscape of Mauritius and of ensuring access to sites of great emotional and spiritual value to Mauritians.

Questions that Mauritians continue to ask themselves show many perceptions that don't conform to the archival evidence. TJC has attempted to investigate some of them and answer some of these questions. For example,

**Where do I come from?** It is generally felt that of all groups in Mauritian society, those descended from slavery are unable to trace their ancestry. The Origins project has gone some way towards answering this question in Mauritius but more needs to be done to attempt to identify more precisely the villages from where slaves came. In addition, TJC has collected many Civil Status Records as possible on the slave population with the help of Mr. Patrick Drack in France and hope to recommend the establishment of a Genealogy Centre in Mauritius.

**Where did slaves disembark?** This has been a perennial question and with reason. Public perception goes as follows: The French can claim to have first landed in Vieux Grand Port the Indians at Port Louis at Aapravasi Ghat, but what of slaves? There is no memorial except the one at Pointe Canon chosen for no other reason than the availability of space. It is important to memorialize; if no site is found, the Memory group will make suggestions as to what is an appropriate place.

**How many slaves came to Mauritius?** This is a question that has never been answered, and to which academic historians have stated was impossible to find an answer, given slave ships carried slaves to both Mauritius and Réunion. A slave trade database is being compiled so that Mauritians can access at the click of a mouse all ships arriving in Mauritius, as well as those undertaking coastal shipping i.e., from Souillac, Mahebourg to Port Louis.

**What was the importance of the slave trade and slavery for and in Mauritius? What was the contribution of slaves to the economy and society of Mauritius?** Slavery is often considered in Mauritius to be a separate institution from whatever else was going in Mauritius. It is rarely seen as a product of colonial society and economy, and slaves are not seen as an intrinsic part of Mauritian society in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. How important was slavery to the economy of Mauritius? What was the value of slave labour? What was the extent of their participation in the economy? What ideology did slavery create in Mauritius? Why was there so much opposition to the abolition of the slave trade? Who benefited from the slave trade? What was the extent of Government participation in the slave trade? Why was there such a big increase in the slave trade in the 1770s?

### **Organisation of Report**

The Slave Trade report is therefore divided into three parts: a review of the slave trade, a proposal for a slave trade database, and an inventory of sources on the slave trade and slavery found in one of the most major repositories in France. As parts of the work of the TJC is presented in electronic format, only a description and summary of the contents of the databases and inventory are given here. The databases are found in volume 5 of the final report.

## PART ONE SLAVE TRADE

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## INTRODUCTION: STUDYING THE SLAVE TRADE TO MAURITIUS 1720s TO 1820s

### 1. THE INDIAN OCEAN IS NOT THE ATLANTIC

The study of slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean has more often than not been based on previous studies of the Atlantic world. Yet these were, and are, two vastly different worlds.

As far as Mauritius is concerned, it is the specificity of the nature of the European slave trading in the Indian Ocean that interests us and the differences with the Atlantic world. Given the short time span available to the Commission, searches have been concentrated on selected themes in relation to the slave trade. Recommendations for further studies are made. Because the focus of slave trade studies was on the Atlantic, the ports which traded in slaves from those heavily involved in this Atlantic trade have been studied in far greater depth and publicised. The Indian Ocean trade, and in particular the Mascarenes trade, have been neglected even though Mauritius with its excellent and safe harbour (compared to Réunion), became in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the headquarters for the European slave trade.

Some of the differences need to be highlighted before looking at Mauritius proper. In the Atlantic, Britain was the largest trading power, while in the Southwestern Indian Ocean, the French dominated the slave trade. The Mascarene Islands were used as a base to engage in the slave trade, with slaves being taken from Madagascar, India and Eastern Africa to the Mascarene Islands, but also to South Africa, South East Asia and the Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> France was without question the largest slave trading nation in the Indian Ocean at the end of the 1780s. According to Daudin, the total value of its long-distance trade — trade with Africa, Asia, America and re-exports to the rest of Europe — was equal to £25 million. The total value of British long-distance trade was only £20 million. The growth of French long-distance trade from the 1710s had been faster than the growth of English trade.<sup>2</sup> It is also contended by some historians that the main support to long-distance trade, the plantation system, was larger and more efficient in the French colonies than in the British ones.

In past research, the methodology traditionally employed in studying the French slave trade in the Indian Ocean was based on studies of the Atlantic trade. The structure of the slave trade, the itineraries, financing, arming, networking and type of trading were studied. However, this ignored the fact that while the slave trade was a specialist's activity for the British, French ships were, by contrast, used both for the slave trade and direct trade with the West Indies. In the Americas, the French needed slaves for their plantations and so, according to Daudin, "As buying slaves was the main reason why plantation owners in the West Indies had to go into debt, the slave trade was more prone than other trades to long repayment periods. As the financial position of plantation owners declined continuously during the eighteenth century, their debts were more and more difficult to recover for French traders". Footnote missing

The slave trade has often been described as a 'triangular trade' and this refers mainly to the Atlantic. This was not necessarily the case in the Indian Ocean or for Mauritius. Evidence of 'quadrangular trade' appears more and more in the recent literature.<sup>3</sup>

While we can find the list of ships arriving in Port Louis or departing from French ports, we do not know yet how many of these went to East Africa and Madagascar and procured slaves as most of the time, the cargo is not listed. The sources relating to these will have to be studied as well.

### 2. THE DISAGGREGATION OF FIGURES

Up to 2009, it was not possible to say exactly how many slaves came to Mauritius. Figures were always aggregated with Reunion island. Disaggregation of figures for Mauritius and Reunion has been started and needs to continue. It will only be possible to arrive at a disaggregated figure once entries in the database are complete. Only then, when the total number of slaves actually brought and sold in Mauritius is known, will we be better able to understand and assess the social, economic, demographic and cultural impact of slavery on the island.

### Assessing importance of the slave trade through a database

To assess the importance of the slave trade, knowledge of French commerce and trade is also necessary. However, because sometimes the slave trade was activity carried out surreptitiously, it is not always known whether ships carried slaves or not, as they are not listed as 'passengers', but as cargo. We need to know and determine how many ships in general traded with, and arrived in Mauritius and assess which may have brought slaves. The differences in figures between the various works of historians and others are largely due to different sources being tapped in different countries. There exists no single study that has so far collected and put these various sources together and attempted a holistic analysis. At the Truth and Justice Commission, in Mauritius, we have initiated this work and we expect that this work will be continued by institutions and scholars in the future in Mauritius. Thomas Vernet from France and Benigna Zimba from Mozambique have been kindly assisting us with this research, and we expect these two persons to be closely connected to future projects on the slave trade. Thomas Vernet, Anwar Chuttoo and Sharonne Philips have designed, and contributed to, a comprehensive database of all ships arriving in Mauritius since 1721, and in the search for additional information on potential 'slave' ships. Jean Yves Le Lan has voluntarily contributed his database on Lorient. The aim is to collect, as far as it is possible, all potential slave voyages from the various repositories in France, Mauritius, Portugal, India and the UK. Currently, the TJC has focused its research on material available in Mauritius and France.

Recent research with aggregated figures, compiled by Richard Allen, up to 2009, are presented in Table 1 for the Indian Ocean as a whole.

Table 1: Numbers of slaves exported from the Indian Ocean  
(by period and region of origin and not necessarily to Mauritius)

Exported from	Period	Total
Madagascar	1670 - 1769	35,314-37,931
Madagascar	1770 - 1810	46,203-53,427
Madagascar	1811 - 1848	43,808-51,365
Eastern Africa	1670 - 1769	10,677-11,468
E Africa	1770 - 1810	99,614-115,189
E Africa	1811 - 1848	75,767-88,835
India	1811 - 1848	4,994-5,327
India	1670 - 1769	14,755-15,739
SE Asia	1770 - 1810	3,804-4,759
Total		334,936-384,040

Of the total estimated by Allen to date (2010, *Journal of World History*), the French slave trade is still by far the most substantial in the Indian Ocean:

Portuguese total	41,875 - 83,750
Dutch total	43,965 - 66,465 slaves
British total	10,525 - 12,539 slaves
French total	334,936 - 384,040 slaves

However, this figure does not include those slaves who never made it on board the ships. Those who were captured or traded but did not survive the march or the captivity in the slave depot are not accounted and cannot be accurately calculated as yet, given lack of information.

### 3. BRIEF REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

The difficulties encountered by scholars in the past are being slowly overcome with the advent of new technologies and means of communication. There is also a better mastery of two of the three required languages to study the slave trade: many French historians are now fluent in English and similarly, Anglophones are becoming conversant in French. Access to Portuguese-language archives is no longer a barrier as it used to be. Digital databases, some online, mean that slave ship data and

inventories can move across continents without the scholars having to undertake expensive trips. For historians in Mauritius, however, it is still expensive, given that access to online databases is not always free. Nevertheless, research in several locations has been facilitated to enable scholars to review substantially past historiography.

### Earlier historians of Mauritius

For Mauritius, *Auguste Toussaint* was undoubtedly the greatest compiler of data for Mauritian history before the 1980s. On the subject of trade and commerce, he compiled an impressive list of ships with details of tonnage, destinations for the period 1773 to 1810. In this, Toussaint listed 515 slaving voyages between 1773 and 1810. This data includes tonnage, size of cargoes and slave mortality. However, the slave trade *per se* was not his focus of interest, and he does not include much more information in the published versions. His private papers are not to be found in Mauritius.

Toussaint concluded that by far, the largest number of ships left from Bordeaux, and not from Breton ports such as Lorient etc. for the Indian Ocean. In his list, the numbers of ships leaving French ports were as follows:

Bordeaux	267
Lorient	166
Marseille	129
St. Malo	54
Nantes	40

*Vernet*, several years later, with further research, has more or less maintained this list in order of priority: Bordeaux ('loin devant les autres'), then Lorient, Marseille, Nantes and then Saint-Malo, Le Havre and La Rochelle.

*Jean Marie Filliot* was the first historian to focus exclusively on the slave trade; he conducted a detailed survey of the trade to the Mascarenes, with a periodisation that is still used today by most historians of the slave trade.

More generally, *Daget and Mettas* documented hundreds of voyages including those to the Indian Ocean, in Jean Mettas' *Répertoire des expéditions négrières françaises au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*; *Daget's Nantes and Ports autres que Nantes* (Paris, 1984). José Capela produced *O Tráfico de Escravos nos Portos de Moçambique, 1773-1904* (Porto, 2002) with a section on the Mascarenes on pages 311-27.

The difficulty with these is that Mettas did not consult local Mauritian sources, while Toussaint did not consult French sources. Thus Toussaint could estimate the trade from ships reaching Mauritius but did not have access to the data on ships leaving France.

It would be fair to say that most studies have concentrated on the periods for which most data is available fairly easily i.e., after 1767 when the Royal Government took over the island. As yet, we know very little on the pre-1767 slave trade and on the illegal trade after 1810. Toussaint stated that he was not able to find any sources for the pre-Royal period, except for the pre-Labourdonnais period. The only historian to have worked on it was Albert Loughon, and no other scholar has attempted to estimate figures of the trade, still less the slave trade.<sup>4</sup>

Recent work such as that by Jean Yves Le Lan, Richard Allen, Thomas Vernet, Pier Larsson, Pedro Machado and Satyendra Peerthum has enabled us to obtain more details about the post-1767 trade.

Only Le Lan has focused on Company Trade, thus allowing us an insight into trade before 1767, as his research is carried out in Lorient. He has generously provided the Commission with a list of ships belonging to the FEIC practising the slave trade between 1720 and 1756 and thus was the second, after Albert Loughon, to attempt to examine the pre-1767 period. For departures from Lorient and from the Mascarenes up to 1760 he uses Filliot and Mettas: 46,000 slaves were traded in total without counting those ships starting from the Mascarenes.

More recently, Richard Allen's research shows that Mauritius not only played a central role in the expansion of the French slave trade in the Indian Ocean, but that the volume of the slave trade to the Mascarene Islands was much larger than previously believed.

### Secondary sources

As stated previously, a quantitative study of the slave trade is difficult, given the absence of statistics and accurate figures, especially for the early period. However, this will be attempted. An excellent review of statistical material available for the 18<sup>th</sup> century exists in Toussaint's *La Route des Iles*. Recent research that may improve Toussaint's observations on 18<sup>th</sup> century material and possibilities for future research is being investigated.

Toussaint recommended several studies as an initial 'preview' of French trade. These are also valid for the slave trade. According to Toussaint, Arnould's *Commercial handbook* contains a good chapter on French islands<sup>5</sup>, while Pierre Blancard's opinion on French trading with the Mascarenes is also relevant. However, the most cited source of statistics, Baron D'Unienville's *Statistiques de l'île Maurice* is criticised by Toussaint, especially 18<sup>th</sup> century data for 1773-1809. Definitions are questioned as it is not clear for Toussaint what D'Unienville meant by *nationaux, grands caboteurs, étrangers*.

As far as particular ports' contribution to Mascarene trade is concerned, Toussaint has noted Rambert's list of ships leaving Marseille for the Indian Ocean between 1767 and 1785, of which 18 were bound for the Mascarenes. For 1785 to 1789, Toussaint gives the figure of 33 ships for the Mascarenes. Dermigny, in *Cargaisons Indiennes*, listed ships also from Marseilles and more particularly gave an insight into the workings of the slave trade through the papers of the Solier family between 1781 and 1791, of which 6 voyages included Mauritius. For the period 1769 to 1785, 147 ships left French ports bound for Mascarenes. He even studies the ships leaving the Mascarenes to engage in the slave trade in East Africa.

Other more recent secondary sources include Toussaint once more, Filliot, Mettas, the Geneamau database, Daget, Capela, Jean-Yves Le Lan, Richard Allen, Thomas Vernet, Pier Larsson, Pedro Machado, Satyendra Peerthum, as well as those who focussed on specific ports such as Saugera, Binaud for Bordeaux, Mettas for Honfleur, Forcari and Sannier for Nantes. An exhaustive bibliography is attached to this report.

The focus of Richard Allen has been on the period between 1768 and 1810, when according to the latest figures, there was a total of 641 confirmed slaving voyages made between 1768-1809. He has thus added to Toussaint's original 515 voyages by a re-reading of the *Déclaration d'arrivées* and by adding further sources derived from British lists. According to him, the dramatic increase in the volume of the slave trade between 1768-1809 may be due to three principal causes:

In 1769, the islands were opened to free trade carried out by all French nationals.

In 1784, free trade privileges were extended to Americans.

In 1787, free trade privileges were granted to all other foreign nationals.

These events turned the Mascarene Islands into a major regional commercial *entrepôt* and into an important centre for slave trading, not only in the Southwestern Indian Ocean, but also a base from which slave trading expeditions to South Africa and the Americas were launched.

According to Richard Allen, the 549 vessels currently known to have transported slaves to the Mascarenes between 1768 -1809 may represent 50-55 per cent of all such voyages during this period (See Table 2).<sup>6</sup>

From	Period				Total
	1768-79	1780-89	1790-99	1800-09	
Madagascar <sup>a</sup>	32	18	32	147	229
Mozambique <sup>b</sup>	37	27	51 <sup>c</sup>	81 <sup>d</sup>	196
Swahili Coast <sup>e</sup>	11	16	24	33	84
India <sup>f</sup>	11	1	8	1	21
Muscat	2	--	--	--	2
Anjouan	--	1	1	--	2
Multiple <sup>g</sup>	1	3	5	--	9
Not reported	4	1	--	1	6
Subtotal	98	67	121	263	549
TO	[1770-79]		[1790-92]		
Cape of Good Hope <sup>h</sup>	--	3	--	--	3
Caribbean via:					
Mozambique	5	35	14	--	54
Swahili Coast	1	11	2	--	14
West Central Africa <sup>i</sup>	2	8	3	--	13
Not reported	1	5	1	--	7
South America via Mozambique	--	--	--	1	1
Subtotal	9	62	20	1	92
GRAND TOTAL	107	129	141	264	641

## Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Madagascar, including Antongil Bay, Bombetoc, Fort Dauphin, Foulpointe, Matatam, Ste. Luce, Ste. Marie, Tamatave.

<sup>b</sup> Mozambique, including Mozambique, Ibo, Inhambane, Querimba, Quelimane.

<sup>c</sup> Includes 20 voyages from the Ile de France to Mozambique presumed to have returned to the Mascarenes.

<sup>d</sup> Includes 24 voyages from the Ile de France to Mozambique presumed to have returned to the Mascarenes.

<sup>e</sup> Swahili Coast, including Côte d'Afrique, Kilwa, Lindi, Mafia, Mombasa, Mongale, Mouttage, Zanzibar.

<sup>f</sup> Including Anjengo, Bengal, Cochin, Coringa, Coromandel Coast, Goa, Goudelour, Karikal, Mahé, Malabar Coast, Pondichéry, Yanam.

<sup>g</sup> Multiple provenances, e.g. Kilwa and Madagascar, Madagascar and Mozambique.

<sup>h</sup> Via Mozambique.

<sup>i</sup> Angola, Cabinda, Malimbe.

(Source: Richard B. Allen, The Constant Demand of the French: The Mascarene Slave Trade and the Worlds of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' *Journal of African History*, in press).

Another innovative approach has been the attempt at a more precise and up-to-date *quantification* of the slave trade, even though the 18<sup>th</sup> century was 'not the age of statistics'.<sup>7</sup> Economic and accounting historians of the slave trade believe that the study of slavery and the slave trade, from an economist's or financial analyst's perspective, allows them to study history more 'objectively' than traditional historians because they are studying history 'without passing judgement'. This self-laudatory approach ignores, however, the fact that economic historians can only study what is quantifiable, such as trade statistics, prices, tonnage, numbers, heights and weights of slaves, rather than deal with 'intangible' issues of history such as identity or culture loss, mental and physical stress, mobility, laws, consequences on family life or the sense of loss felt as a result of being removed from one's homeland. It is extremely useful, however, as most of this Literature emanates from France, where indeed the bulk of documents exists in Paris at the Archives Nationales as well as in Departmental Records in various ports and towns of France.

#### 4. THE 'LANGUAGE' OF THE FRENCH SLAVE TRADE

We have used the French terms, since often, there is no exact translation in English. A glossary is provided.

- the *armateur* who was not only a ship owner, but an entrepreneur who engaged in maritime trade and was engaged in a variety of economic activities. He normally had

considerable personal capital and was experienced in hiring able captains, in choosing the right ship, etc. He also owned part of the cargo.

- The *négociant* was a merchant who also fitted out ships, was involved in maritime insurance and in banking. In the eighteenth century, the term came to imply large-scale commercial ventures, and especially international maritime trade.<sup>8</sup>
- The *négrier* which was a vessel engaged in the slave trade.
- *Nègre Pièce d'Inde* : a slave between the ages of 15 and about 25 to 30 years, in good health, not limping and with a full set of teeth.
- *Négrillon/capors*: young male slave between ten and 14 years.
- *Négritte/caporine*: young female slave between ten and 14 years.
- *Captains* were not only responsible as Commanders of ships, but also for carrying out trade on the African Coast.
- *Agents* or *Commissionnaires* were in charge of the sale of the cargo on the arrival of a ship in the colonies and worked as intermediaries between slavers and the planters.<sup>9</sup>
- *Indiennes*: cloth imported from India used in the slave trade
- *Mise hors* means to equip a ship; in the case of a slave trading ship, it is to collect all the goods, crew and find the funds to equip the ship.
- The *Calfats* or *Caulkers* were workers employed in the naval construction industry. They were in charge of traditional caulking applied to wooden vessels, generally to ensure that the joints between all the planks of wood inside and out were watertight.<sup>10</sup>

Those on board the ship included:

- The *Tonnellier*<sup>11</sup> was responsible of the quality of water and of its good conservation to prevent any type of contamination that could result in the loss of both slaves and the crew members.
- The *Carpenter* was the one in charge of the laying out and fitting of the ship, mainly for the transportation of slaves.
- The *Chirurgien* was assigned to protect and insure the crew members and the slaves against diseases; he was very often in charge of the branding of the slaves too.
- The *Cuisinier* was in charge for feeding the crew and essentially of hundreds of slaves aboard.
- The *Mousse* or *Mate* was generally an apprentice sailor recruited from the age of ten to sixteen years old.<sup>12</sup> He was assigned to the maintenance and cleaning of the ship.
- The *Master Gunner* was in charge of the ship's guns and ammunitions during the voyages.
- *Mise hors* means to equip a ship; in the case of a slave trading ship' it is to collect all the goods, crew and find the funds to equip the ship.

## 5. PERIODISATION

It is important to establish a periodisation to understand better the slave trade, whether it be the operation of the trade, the numbers and origins of slaves, as well as the sources of information.

A preliminary periodisation for the Mascarenes was established by Filliot.<sup>13</sup> This has been adapted to the Mauritian situation as follows:

Year	
1721-1727	1721 represents the beginning of settlement of Mauritius by the French East India Company. It represents also the period when Mauritius was governed by Bourbon or Pondichéry
1721	In 1721 the <i>Ruby</i> is sent to trade in slaves in Madagascar.
1727	Mauritius was given the right to trade directly with Madagascar.
1735	Arrival of Governor Labourdonnais.
1735-1746	Administration of Governor Labourdonnais. He was instrumental in expanding the slave trade.
1735	<i>Conseil supérieur</i> regulates the slave trade: Article 12, for example. Company will charge 200 piastres per slave for bringing slaves from India, also for the distribution of slaves arrived, rewards were offered to officers.
1741-1744	Very little information is available
1746-1767	This period represents the post-Labourdonnais Company administration.
1746-1750	Less precise information is available and a decrease in numbers of slaves imported is noted and a shortage of slaves is felt on the island
1750	After 1750, the slave trade resumed.
1754	Reward given by Governor David to officers bringing in slaves is stopped.
1762 - 1766	Filliot found no statistics for this period but that does not mean there were no slaves imported.
Post-1767	Marked difference in the data emanating after Company rule.
	Due to the greater number of ships arriving, and because of the outbreak of war in the Indian Ocean, information is more voluminous. However, these sources are silent about the number of slaves on board. Hence, the need to collect all ship lists and then analyse whether they could be carrying slaves or not.
1767-1790	Royal Government administration was an economic boom for islands. Trade was liberalised on 29 November 1766. Port Louis became a free port.
1787	Inhabitants could trade anywhere in Madagascar. Post-1789 there was also a higher number of manumissions (Filliot 89)
1790-1803	Revolutionary Government administration
1790 - 1793	Sugar cane cultivation expanded because of the revolt in Saint Domingue.
1794	Slave trade ban but numerous violations occur with the help of corsairs.
1803-1810	Napoleonic administration
1802	30 Floreal An X (20 Mai 1802); the slave trade was permitted again on the grounds that cultivation and prosperity were suffering. <sup>14</sup>
1810-1825	Beginning of British rule
1807	The slave trade became illegal but it continued.
1825	It is the passing of Trade Bill that effectively ended the slave trade

## 6. THE SOURCES

Primary sources are scattered between Europe, the Mascarenes, Eastern Africa and India. The most obvious of sources on slaves arriving would have been Customs Records on arrivals of slaves for tax purposes. These are totally missing for the earlier period. Toussaint found that most statistics covered the post-1767 period. Toussaint's *La Route des Iles* gives an excellent account and description of the type of goods imported but next to nothing about slaves, except the figures. These, however, are not reliable. Illegal trading, fraud and falsification of documents were also rampant, leading us to question the sources. A holistic approach and understanding the mechanisms of fraud in Illegal trading will help us make more accurate assessments of the numbers involved.

Toussaint found several discrepancies in the sources, as historians continue to find out today. He compared his own ship lists, compiled from documents from the Mauritius National Archives with the published writings of Dermigny, Deschamps and Furber. The French historians, for their part, had looked at lists of ships sent out to the Indian Ocean by private merchants, commissions issued by FEIC for the same destination. Ships entered at Port Louis. He came to the conclusion that the two lists did not match and that there had been an underestimation of the number of ships actually arriving in Mauritius.<sup>15</sup> In 1783, on Dermigny's list, only 10 ships are mentioned as having left France for Mauritius, and another 31 ships were bound for other destinations. Yet, lists of arrivals in Port Louis mention 64 ships. For Commissions, issued by FEIC, 30 ships left Lorient bound for Mauritius; yet, 36 are listed as having arrived in Mauritius between 1785 and 1790.<sup>16</sup>

Among primary sources, we have also used sources recommended by Toussaint and categorised in the following way:

- the Admiralty Records or *Amirauté*
- the shipping registers
- Bureau des Classes et Armement
- The Customs (La Douane)
- The Police and Service des Ports.

However, in assessing slave trade figures, other statistics need to be used, as well as Census returns, Maroonage Registers, advertisements for sales of slaves, genealogical and demographic data to estimate how many arrived or were born locally.

- *Déclarations d'arrivées and congés de navigation*

In the MNA, the *déclarations d'arrivées* provide rich information on ships and their voyage to Mauritius. We have complete records from 1773 to 1810, although in a bad state. The *déclarations diverses* also contain all kinds of maritime contracts, while the *congés de navigation* contain commissions given to ships. Unresearched as yet are the notarial records recording slaves and purchases of slaves.

- *Customs Records*

Customs records only start at 1797; so it is not clear where slave tax records were kept, if they were paid at all. Even after the establishment of the Customs Department, there is no evidence that duties were paid by ships on arrival at Ile de France, especially as this was an unstable period for the island.

- *Bâtiments arrivés à l'île de France depuis 1er avril 1806*

The Decaen papers contain lists of ships for 1806 and 1809, consisting of 117 pages: *Bâtiments arrivés à l'île de France depuis 1er avril 1806*.

- *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers*

The newspapers also record arrivals of ships, but they only start in 1773. Of the *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers*, only three years have been found so far in Mauritius. There is no sign of any others. Toussaint was unable to find them during his searches. A thorough search was again made in Mauritius and only copies from 1773 to 1776 were found. According to Vernet, these are quite

indispensable, as “la gazette est vraiment riche sur les mouvements de navires négriers.”<sup>17</sup> A preliminary search in France in the Archives d’Outre-mer revealed only a few pages found interspersed between the folios in the volumes of the C4 series.

It is incomprehensible to us that of the first French newspaper printed in the Indian Ocean, there is not a complete set to be found in France, Reunion or Mauritius. Recently however, it has come to the attention of the TJC that some copies belonging to the Leclezio Collection have been sold to the staff of the Mauritius Commercial Bank.

- *Mauritius National Archive OB, OC, F and GB series*

In the Mauritius Archives the OB, OC, F and GB Series are the richest, but the documents have deteriorated over the years, making many illegible. The TJC has digitized the most important ones. These will be donated to the National Archives, the University of Mauritius and other repositories.

The OC 57 series contains the ‘Congés de Navigation’ which provides information on the names of the ships’ Captains, *armateurs*, the weapons and the number of the crew on board (Appendix 1).

- *French National Archives*

Preliminary research has been undertaken at the National Archives in Paris, in Bordeaux at the Archives Departementales and Ministère de la Marine. The C4 series were consulted, and an inventory was compiled relating to slavery in Isle de France and published. This series has yielded much material and constitutes a gold mine for scholars of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Isle de France. It is to be hoped that the inventory of the remaining microfilms will be completed in the implementation phase of the TJC recommendations.

Due to lack of time, archives relating to Madagascar G5 and C5 were not consulted.

The Archives of the Ministère de la Marine were also consulted, in particular JJ Marine. The *Série Marine JJ* represents information from Archives of the *Depot* of maps and plans and also from the Hydrographic Service of the French Navy. It contains information before and after the French Revolution in 1789. The diversity and volumes of these documents, kept at the National Archives of Paris, have led to their classification in ten respective *Sous-série*. Among these, the 4JJ Marine contains the most information on voyages to Mauritius, Mozambique and Indian Ocean These will soon be online in 2012. These are:

- i. 4JJ/74: Voyages dans l’océan Indien. 1738-1769.
- ii. 4JJ/75 à 85: Voyages aux îles de France et de Bourbon. 1682-1788.
- iii. 4JJ/86 et 87: Voyages à Madagascar et sur les Côtes Orientales d’Afrique. (1666-1788).
- iv. 4JJ/144/A à 144/O: Journaux, extraits de journaux, rapports et lettres : Voyages sur les Côtes d’Afrique, dans l’océan Indien, en Chine, aux Antilles, dans la Mer Rouge, en Amérique du Nord et du Sud, dans l’océan Atlantique, dans les mers d’Europe, sur les côtes de France, dans la Méditerranée. 1666-1846.

The complete list is to be found in Appendix 2.

- *Bordeaux*

As Bordeaux was the prime slave trading port for the Indian Ocean, these were the first Archives outside Paris to be consulted. Private Archives were also consulted for information on slave trading companies. A complete set from the Fonds Monneron in the Fond Privés at the Archives Municipales de Bordeaux was copied and inventoried to allow for an in-depth study of one family (list in Appendix 3).

## 2. THE SLAVE TRADE TO MAURITIUS

### 1. THE SLAVE TRADE AND THE MERCANTILE SYSTEM OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

French Mercantilism in the Indian Ocean began in earnest after the establishment of the East India Company. Colbert was given the task of creating this Company and take over all 'affaires de la Marine'.<sup>18</sup> Out of the 15 million *livres* worth of shares, the King himself owned 3 million, with others going to the French Authorities and Officers of the Finance. The merchants were in a minority, with Nantes possessing some 200,000 *livres* worth of shares, Bordeaux 400,000 *livres*, and Lyons, 1,000,000 *livres*.<sup>19</sup>

In Jean Meyer's *La France et l'Asie: Essai de statistiques (1730-1785). Etat de la question*, it is estimated that over 1,000 trips were made from France to the Indian Ocean: at least 493 ships went to India and China, while about 397 ships were bound to the Mascarenes between 1730 and 1785.<sup>20</sup> Meyer estimates that Weber and Dermigny have underestimated figures for India. Weber, for example counted only 179 ships. China was not as much of a destination, as the Mascarenes and India since it was less profitable.

The French East India Company participated directly and indirectly in the slave trade. When it was not profitable for the Company to engage in it, they relinquished their rights to private traders from whom they also derived financial benefits in the form of a duty of 13 *livres* per slave introduced in the islands. Because they had a monopoly over trade in Asia, they were able to obtain goods used in the slave trade at very cheap prices and sell these to the slave traders who needed goods to exchange for slaves, as well as to clothe slaves.<sup>21</sup> Indian textiles were preferred by slave traders to French textiles.<sup>22</sup>

There were three main destinations for the slaves: Louisiana, St. Domingue and the Mascarenes. The King instructed Captains to bring back certificates for each slave arriving and for each slave sale, to enable the Company to receive 13 or 15 *livres* raised by the King for every slave. In exchange, they benefited from exemptions for port duties and duties on goods used in the slave trade, as well as on sugar.<sup>23</sup>

In addition the Company also owned slaves who worked in various capacities. When the King took over the island in 1765, the slaves belonging to the Company were ceded to the King. There were in 1769: 162 Malagasies, 436 Guineans, 345 Creoles, 254 Mozambicans, 25 Indians, 2 Creoles from Bourbon, 1 from Pondichéry and 3 from Macao for a total of 1,228 slaves. They were divided into 662 men, 139 boys, 21 young male children, 271 women, 126 girls and 9 nine female infants.<sup>24</sup>

French slave trading in the South West Indian Ocean was started in Madagascar to supply Bourbon island, colonised earlier in bbbb. The slaves engaged in agriculture and the women among them married, or cohabited with French men, due to the shortage of French women. Indian prisoners were also left there. Distinctions between French on the one hand, and Malagasy and Indian on the other, appeared some years later in 1674, when an Ordinance of Jacob de la Haye Article 20 ordered that there would be no marriages between French and *négresses* or between *noirs* and white women. The term 'slave' also appears for the first time in Bourbon.<sup>25</sup> It is there that slavery, as it is understood in Mauritius, became established with maroon hunts, separate Parish Registers and domestic servants being treated as property.<sup>26</sup>

#### 1721-1735

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 1715, when Guillaume Dufresne D'Arset took possession of Mauritius in the name of the King, slavery and the slave trade were already established in neighbouring Reunion (Bourbon). It started in earnest in Isle de France after the island was ceded to the FEIC on 2 April 1721.<sup>27</sup> Mauritius, until 1735, was subservient to Reunion. From 1721 to 1767, however, although the FEIC controlled the island, the French Government was increasingly present through Royal Commissaries, Directors of the FEIC nominated by the King, and the Syndics chosen by the Assembly of shareholders.

According to the Lougnon data, some 156 ships called at Mauritius, and 162 at Bourbon between 1721 and 1735, before Labourdonnais arrived.<sup>28</sup> Of these, most were Company ships, according to Toussaint, outfitted either in France or India. Only 2 foreign ships were noted.

A total of 650 slaves, according to Filliot, were brought to Mauritius from Madagascar, Mozambique, India and West Africa.<sup>29</sup>

Between 1721 and 1727, Mauritius was governed from Reunion (Bourbon) or Pondichéry, and thus traders could not bring slaves directly to Mauritius. However, a letter of Governor Denyon dated 4<sup>th</sup> November 1722, notes that on 11<sup>th</sup> September, the *Ruby*, Captain Grenier, arrived in Port Bourbon on 4 November from a slaving voyage in Madagascar. He had left on 7 October.<sup>30</sup> Clearly, Company directives were not being followed.

#### How many came between 1721 and 1727 to Mauritius? Look in censuses

In 1727, Mauritius was given the right to trade directly with Madagascar, without going through Reunion, to build ports, warehouses and houses. With the arrival of Governor Dumas, according to Filliot, trade increased.

#### 1727-1734

##### How many came between 1727 to 1734?

In 1732, M. Teinturier de Gennicourt, an inhabitant of Ile de France requested the Governor that he be allowed to bring slaves at 100 *livres* each. He also advised that Madagascar was a surer source of supply rather than the Guinea coast because Malagasy slaves were better workers and 'more intelligent'. Slaves from Guinea had the tendency to maroon and *be perfides*. The FEIC has also sold slaves from India at 3 to 4 piastres *d'achat* and 1 piastre for food during the voyage.<sup>31</sup>

Thus preferences for certain types of slaves for labour began to be expressed as early as then. It was not only the price, but their propensity for hard work, to maroon, that were taken into consideration. Linking ethnicity to occupation started at a very early stage and can be said to have continued throughout Mauritian history.

#### 1735-1746

The period between 1735 and 1746 is crucial for the establishment of the slave trade, since Governor Labourdonnais chose Mauritius, rather than Reunion, as his base of operations to expand French influence in the Indian Ocean. Vast infrastructural works were envisaged to transform Port Louis into a capital, port, warehousing and commercial centre. Slave labour was seen as the most reliable source of labour, although a certain amount of free labour was also brought in, in the form of French *engagés*, and skilled Malagasy and Indian workers and artisans.<sup>32</sup> While books on Mauritian history focus on the 'Founding Fathers' of Mauritius, the economic contribution of the underclass from all countries to the foundations of the French colony remains as yet unrecognised.

When Labourdonnais arrived in Mauritius in 1735, there were 638 slaves among the 838 persons living in Mauritius. He personally took charge of acquiring slaves for the island and undertook the massive construction projects in Mauritius: roads, houses, the port, a naval base, the Botanic Gardens etc. Labour from France, Madagascar, Mozambique, West Africa and India was tapped.

According to Filliot, 1,200 to 1,300 slaves were brought annually (Filliot 71). Within five years, the number of slaves had quadrupled to 2,612, while the number of French had barely doubled.<sup>33</sup> From Port Louis, several voyages were made to procure slaves in India, Madagascar, and Mozambique, while Company ships brought slaves from West Africa.

Toussaint has stated, however, that for the administration of Labourdonnais, there were no statistics available.<sup>34</sup> Certain figures can be gleaned from the C4 series which Toussaint did not probably have access to.

A letter, for example, from Labourdonnais states that the the ship *le Mozambique* arrived with 360 slaves, of whom 260 had died.<sup>35</sup> The *Duc d'Anjou* came back from Madagascar on 22 June 'et

nous remit de sa traite 114 esclaves, 170 bêtes à cornes, 38 milliers de riz blanc et 26 milliers de riz en paille.<sup>36</sup>

Labourdonnais also wrote of the slaving mission of the *Aigle* :

« L'Aigle partit d'ici le 27 avril pour Madagascar commandé par le Sieur de la Baume et revint le 9 juillet avec 70 esclaves, 15 bêtes à cornes, 12 milliers de riz blanc et 29 milliers de riz en paille. Il partit le 18 suivant pour aller chercher du riz et du bled à la Côte Malabare. »<sup>37</sup>

And of the *Jupiter* :

« Le 29 juillet, le Jupiter commandé par M. Chevert arriva avec sa cargaison de l'Isle de Madagascar le 9 septembre et nous remis 123 esclaves, 161 bêtes à cornes, près de 15 milliers de riz en paille et environ un millier de riz blanc. »<sup>38</sup>

Much therefore remains to be included in the lists compiled by Toussaint and others as far as the early history of the slave is concerned.

### Slavery in French economic history

In Mauritius the *Code Noir* is often quoted as a measure introduced to protect slaves and thereby, the humanity of this law is often applauded. This view is not justified, if one analyses the reasons why it was introduced. The logic was purely financial and responded to the need to declare slaves as a good which could be insured so that any loss of slaves could be compensated for.

McWatters has analysed the relationship of the slave trade with the Mercantile System that was emerging in 18<sup>th</sup>-century France; the 'Ordonnance de Commerce' of 1673, according to her, brought together the private sector and the State to regulate trade and to protect legitimate businesses from bankruptcies or remove some of the obstacles in obtaining credit.<sup>39</sup> However, when it was found that the *Ordonnance* did not allow the insuring of human beings, the *Code Noir* was introduced to declare slaves as '*bien meubles*' (Article XLIV); in other words, possessions which could be insured and inherited as fixed assets. In case of loss of slaves during a revolt, bad weather or disease, compensation could be claimed.

In 1741, the Company authorized the Governor General to permit all French citizens to purchase their own goods and to procure slaves from Mozambique, Madagascar and India. However, this permission according to Filliot, was 'illusory' as there was an insufficient number of boats on the island to engage in trade. The Company not only lent out its boats, but taxed all arrival of goods, causing French inhabitants to claim a return to the pre-existing situation.

Free trade was abolished in 1746.<sup>40</sup>

### 1746-1767

This period represents not only the post-Labourdonnais Company administration, but also the period for which less precise information is available. There appears to be a decrease in the slave trade, probably due to the Wars of Succession in Europe.

After 1750, the slave trade resumed, and some 1,300 to 1,400 slaves were brought every year to the Mascarenes. There also appears to be more slaves being brought from Mozambique than Madagascar.

For the period 1762 to 1766, so far very little information has been obtained as far as numbers of slaves arriving. Filliot feels that this is because illegal slave trading was going on.<sup>41</sup>

### 1767 - 1790

When Mauritius became a French Crown Colony in 1767, the Company's monopoly was abolished. An economic boom ensued for the islands. Thousands of slaves were needed to work in the ports and to supply passing ships. A Director for Slave Trading was appointed e.g. Maudave and Benyowski. There was subsequently a huge increase in the slave trade which has been studied and interpreted in various ways by historians.<sup>42</sup>

The effects on slave trade were felt soon after in Mauritius. The ratio of slaves to free in Mauritius jumped from 1:5 in 1767 to 1:9 in 1783.

Although the focus of historians has been on the French East India Company, the French Government was very much involved, directly and indirectly, in the slave trade from the beginning. In the Indian Ocean, they turned a blind eye to the hostilities occurring between different European powers in Europe. Thus, despite official hostilities between France and Portugal, in the Indian Ocean, officials of both countries engaged in an extremely lucrative trade which included slaves. This had been the case since the period of Labourdonnais. Frauds were also known, but not suppressed nor investigated fully

Thus, despite the official relations that may have existed between European countries and their desire to separate their trading spheres, ship Captains, slave traders, merchants did not care too much for these imperial ambitions and carried on contraband trade whenever possible.

### Of *primes* and frauds

According to Roman, the system of *primes* was at the heart of the slave trading system. However, not all trading ventures were profitable and as elsewhere, profits were calculated as the difference between the cost of outfitting a ship and the amount collected during sales of slaves. Profits took a long time to accrue as planters never paid for their slaves on time.<sup>43</sup>

The slave trade could never be profitable for the King, unless France had a monopoly over the slave trade with the Madagagascar. There were too many people bringing in slaves illegally. If this had been stopped, profits would have been more. A letter of 3 September 1771 outlines this problem clearly: Governor "Desroches n'a pas signé une instruction pour la flûte du Roy *La Normandie* que M Poivre m'adressa pour le Capitaine de recevoir 8000 piastres à bord et d'en acheter des noirs pour le compte des particuliers nommément du Sr. Amat qui était dès lors parti pour Batavia [...] concurrence des particuliers qui font la fraude" [...] "qui ne paient ni frais d'armement, ni les autres charges des vaisseaux équipés aux frais et risques des particuliers" [...] "le commerce a procuré 7,000 noirs à la Colonie depuis mai 1770 jusqu'à may 1771. En cette année si la fraude reprend, on n'en traitera peut-être pas 700".<sup>44</sup>

Apart from the fact that free trade was established, the boost to the slave trade came also in 1776 from the *prime* of ? paid per slave traded beyond the Cape of Good Hope. In October 1784, an *arrêt* of 26 October replaced the exemption of *demi-droit* by a 'gratification' of 40 *livres* per *tonne jauge*.<sup>45</sup> The aim was 'to revitalize the trade'. It was essentially a 'bounty' system 'consisting of State subsidies paid in function of ton burden and could amount to more than one-quarter of the initial investment'.<sup>46</sup> In the Memoirs of Angenard, Second Lieutenant on board a slaving ship, the latter writes that he obtained a monthly salary of 25 piastres, 2 slaves for himself, a commission of one *franc* per every slave that he traded.<sup>47</sup> The *Arrêté du 5 juin 1785* further gave 4 *livres* per head of slave introduced into Mauritius.

According to Roman, the Government almost 'invited' fraud in slave trading, when it gave a 40 *livres prime* for every *tonne jauge* of a slave ship: 'miraculously' ships' tonnage increased. The *Baron Binder* of 450 to 602 *tonnes*,<sup>48</sup> the *Saturne* initially listed as being 350-tonne, when built suddenly reappeared as a 475-tonne ship at this time.<sup>49</sup> According to Roman, "à vrai dire les hésitations et les atermoiements du gouvernement s'apparentent à de la tolérance, voire de l'approbation tacite".<sup>50</sup>

From 1787 the inhabitants of Ile de France could trade anywhere in Madagascar. This must have further contributed to the numbers of slaves arriving.

### 1790-1803

It is also felt by historians that from 1790, sugar cane cultivation expanded because of the revolt in Saint-Domingue. This, it is claimed, led to a rise in the slave trade. However, there are no corresponding figures to show a rise in sugar exports from Mauritius to France. The slave trade was also declared illegal. Despite the ban on the slave trade by the Revolutionary Government in France, slave trading continued fraudulently in the Indian Ocean. Corsairs were particularly active in continuing this illicit trade.

### Corsairs *cum* traders

Another feature of the colonial slave trade in the Indian Ocean was that those practicing it did not engage solely in it. They transported other goods as well and, according to Villiers, they very easily shifted from one kind of trade to another. Corsairs turned slave traders when the need arose, and then became planters and merchants, the most famous example being Robert Surcouf. The reconversion *course-traite-commerce* could be practised in the Indian Ocean. Corsair activity became prevalent when regular trading was no longer possible. That there was a human cargo was immaterial to the traders. The French Marine had given them its blessing to trade through the '*lettres de marque*' and indirectly blessed also the slave trade. *Le Coureur* also recently explored also participated in this type of trade.

Various tactics were employed to circumvent the ban on slave trade. For example, merchants falsified official destinations: the *Sans Culotte*, armed by Marouf and Le Mème, though officially going to Madagascar to purchase rice, went instead to Mozambique and took on 340 slaves bound for Reunion island.<sup>51</sup>

### 1803 - 1810

On 30 Floréal An X (20 Mai 1802), the slave trade was permitted again on the grounds that cultivation and prosperity were suffering.<sup>52</sup> Napoleon had concluded a Peace Treaty with the British at Amiens on March 26 1802. During the month of April, he received in Paris a delegation of Deputies from Nantes, Bordeaux and Marseille, to whom he promised the re-authorization of slave trade.<sup>53</sup>

On the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1802, the Colonial Assembly of Ile de France legalized the slave trade; the same decision was taken by the Colonial Assembly of Bourbon Island on September 28.<sup>54</sup> This period was marked by a fierce revival of the French slave trade activities in Mozambique. Eric Saugera<sup>55</sup> states that :

*"La fièvre négrière échauffa les esprits: on arma partout en quelques mois des dizaines de navires pour la Côte d'Afrique. Ce retour à la légalisation du trafic négrier comble les vœux du négoce métropolitain qui souhaitait sa reprise officielle, pour l'humanité, même la morale, et pour nos colonies qui la réclament indispensablement."*

Saugera has outlined the slaving activities of La *Confiance*. The *Confiance* was armed in Bordeaux for Ile de France on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1802, with Captain Sr. Paul Castagnet and as *armateur*, Jacques Conte. On 10<sup>th</sup> August 1802, in Mozambique, the Captain declared that he was in possession of 15,000 '*patacas espanholas*' for the slave trade and other goods that would be sold in Ile de France. 516 slaves were disembarked from the ship in Ile de France on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1802. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of the same month, the sale of the slaves from the *Confiance* was already advertised in a local newspaper, "*s'adresser à Icery, à l'établissement Monneron au bord de la mer, où est la traite, tandis que les officiers vendent leurs noirs de port permis à bord du navire.*" During this period at least twelve Portuguese ships arrivals in Port Louis, Ile de France have been recorded between 1802-07.<sup>56</sup>

## 2. HOW TRIANGULAR WAS THE SLAVE TRADE?

It is clear that for the Indian Ocean, the classic picture presented of the slave trade (and for the Atlantic), of a 'triangular' slave trade is not quite accurate. It was traditionally believed that ships left France laden with European goods, went to Africa to exchange them for slaves and then on to the Americas to sell the slaves for colonial goods which were then taken back to Europe. Even for the Atlantic Ocean, this classic picture has its flaws. The reality, as Pétré-Grenouilleau has shown, is that they did not simply import slaves; they also exported them. The same situation existed for the Indian Ocean, as Richard Allen has recently clearly demonstrated.

Historians have concluded that to understand better the slave trade and the issue of profitability beyond the figures, one must not rely on the official itinerary of a ship, but one must actually follow the real trajectory and pay close attention to the timing of the voyages, their tonnage and the goods that they contained and country for which they were *really* destined.

The practice of diverting ships bound for the Indies, or going back to Europe for short slave trading voyages to Madagascar and Eastern Africa, started as early as 1723, according to Filliot.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, voyages, officially listed as going to China, meant also stops at Mauritius and Reunion and included trips to the Malagasy and East African coasts. The ships leaving France contained a cargo destined for the Mascarenes where they could be sold easily. Trips destined to India and China, which stopped at the Mascarenes. Those stopovers, should not therefore be viewed as simple transit stops, but rather as ones which could yield substantial profits as these goods did not necessarily sell well in India or China. Indians, according to a *mémoire*, ate little, dressed with cloth made locally. Thus, European goods were not purchased by Indians, but rather by Europeans and others who had settled in the Mascarenes. Thus, in the *mémoire*, it was seen as beneficial as the profits of sale of European goods were made in Mauritius.<sup>58</sup>

High-tonnage ships bound for China also stopped at the Mascarenes and on the East African coast and Madagascar. It appears, therefore, that stopping at the Mascarenes was important for the longer voyages to China and India to be profitable. For the East India Company, an anonymous pamphlet written in 1785 states: "one can afford to lose in India because the benefits of the islands are between 100 and 200%".

Meyer uses the example of two ships, *L'Auguste*, 990-tonne, and heavily armed with 22 canons, which departed on 18 November for China with 175 men. The cost was 776,252 *livres*. Of this amount, the cargo destined for Pondichéry was worth 511,229 *livres*, while the cargo for China was worth only 420 *livres*. By contrast, the *Puysieux* weighing 700 tonnes, with 20 canons and 144 men, with a cargo worth 601,090 *livres*, left Lorient on 21 October 1752. 66,437 *livres* worth of goods were bound for Bourbon, 108,377 *livres* for Isle de France and 188,402 *livres* for China.<sup>59</sup>

An innovation brought by French East India Company ships coming into the Indian Ocean was that they did not use French textiles in the slave trade; Indian textiles were far cheaper and so, when they brought French textiles, they sold it off in the Mascarenes where they were bought at high prices by the French settler population. Indian textiles were also purchased in India and then exchanged for slaves destined for the Mascarenes and the Americas.

More evidence of the distinctiveness of the Mascarenes and Indian Ocean trade comes from the research of Max Guerout who has also been examining the history and shipwreck of the *Utile* which left Malagasy slaves stranded on Tromelin Island for several years. He describes the trade as a '*double traite*' (double trade). He believes that historians have ignored the shorter trips made by the same ships that made long-distance voyages.<sup>60</sup> Both Toussaint and Mettas missed these short trips in their lists. Richard Allen has come to the same conclusion and is also substantially reviewing Toussaint's and Filliot's figures. Thus, during the Seven Years War (1756-1763), when the Governor based in Mauritius banned the slave trade, his orders were ignored by the Captain of the *Utile*, Jean de Lafarge, who embarked, not only cattle and rice from Madagascar, but slaves also. Many other such cases abound. East Indian Company ships also carried slaves during the ban, but this information never entered Company account books. One example is the *Jesus Maria Jose* which, in 1761, carried 210 slaves from Mozambique to Mauritius. When the ship reached Mauritius, the Company had to buy the slaves at 55 *piastres* each.

*Double traite* also occurred with ships going from France to Mozambique. The *Constance Pauline*, belonging to Frabaud & Co from Marseille, went from France to Mozambique but also made other trips: between August 1788 and July 1789, to Ile de France and back. The same occurred from Bordeaux: *La Victoire* left on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1783, reached Mauritius on 8 November, then to Kilwa, where it bought 200 slaves and then on to Bombetoc (Madagascar), when it bought 80 slaves. We do not know yet how many reached Mauritius. The same ship went back to Mozambique, bought 162 slaves and went on to the Cape and Haiti. Cochon Trop Long owned the *Oiseau* which left Bordeaux 2 March 1786, made 5 voyages, 4 of which were between Mauritius and East Africa. His last trip was to the USA. According to Guerout, there was perfect 'synchronism' in activities between Marseilles and Bordeaux between 1781 and 1792.

### Outfitting the slave ship

The 'success' of a slaving voyage depended on the careful planning and the work of three individuals on board the ship: the barrel-maker ('*tonnelier*'), the carpenter and the cook. The

carpenter had to rebuild the interior of the hold to accommodate as many slaves as possible; the comfort of slaves not being a major consideration. But the ship also had to accommodate other items: provisions, water, cargo etc. The barrel-maker had to supply abundant fresh water, particularly for long distances or lengthy voyages.

The financing of slave voyages was a high-risk venture. French long-distance trade, including slave trade voyages, was an expensive high-risk venture. Either only the wealthy could engage in, or those who had also invested in other ventures. Long-distance trade could generate very high profits because of *arbitrage* and because the costs of high investment declined as distances increased. The financing of the slave trade has, however, been little studied generally, even though evidence points to the fact that banks and international commerce did finance the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>61</sup> Whether the same occurred in the Indian Ocean remains to be established.

Our preliminary reading indicates that for the Indian Ocean, much of the capital required was financed through the 'sociétés' (companies) created, and where various groups and individuals provided the funds with the main person retaining majority shares. Moreover, those who financed the slave voyages were, more often than not, from existing merchant families, i.e. in St. Malo. When they did not have sufficient funds, they associated with merchants from other ports or even with the nobility.<sup>62</sup> In Mauritius (Ile de France), one of the early companies to be created and to engage in slave trading was *no less than* one created by Mahé de Labourdonnais himself, on the ships *Aigle* and *Parfaite* in 1742 and *Jupiter* and in 1744.

An interesting study by Albane Forestier has looked at the slave trade from the point of view of principal-agent problems in the port of La Rochelle, between 1763 and 1792. This appeared particularly acute in long-distance trade where the principal *armateur* had no control over what the agent was doing in the trade; the jargon called this 'agent opportunism'.<sup>63</sup> Solutions found included a reliance on kinship ties because "family disapprobation require low monitoring and enforcement".<sup>64</sup> According to Forestier in La Rochelle, most kinship links were established through the settlement of a son or a brother in the colonies. Religion played a role as a 'a low-cost screening device'.<sup>65</sup> Protestants dominated the trade in La Rochelle, despite the fact they were a numerical minority. Another guarantee against 'agent opportunism, was the "social sanctioning power" of the community. How else did the principal agent ensure that Captains and crew did not engage in practices detrimental to his business? The Admiralty, created to regulate maritime shipping, became a 'third party enforcing agency' and expected written contracts between the *armateur* and his crew members. Copies were sent to the Admiralty. Incentives were another way of minimising the hiding of information and ensuring the 'optimum effort' was ensured. Thus, in La Rochelle, 'commissions for captain and officers, by tying the pay to output and productivity, served to align the agents' interests with those of the *armateur*'.<sup>66</sup> Colonial Agents received between 2 and 5 per cent of the slave sale; Captains' monthly wages amounted to 150 to 200 *livres* per month and 5 to 7 percent commission on slave sales. They were also sometimes given a slave and bonuses. This ensured that slaves were taken care of during the voyages. According to Leforestier, these salaries were high.<sup>67</sup> According to Forestier, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, "the Captains and agents also acquired shares in the ventures". Out of the 211 ventures, listed by the Admiralty, Captains had shares in 45 of them, i.e. about 21.33% between 1763 and 1792, a trend which increased. The sale of *pacotilles* was another incentive, although some *armateurs* did not allow it. With inspection being relatively slack, it appears that Captains turned a blind eye to it, as many were involved in it and made a little profit from it. Finally, the possibility of promotion always existed from sailors, to Captains to *armateur*. Captains became outfitters, some even purchasing plantations.

Although this information deals with the Atlantic trade, there is no reason to suppose that there was any difference in the Indian Ocean, as a quick perusal of the names of ships, *armateurs* and Captains, reveals that the same people were involved in both Atlantic and Indian Oceans.<sup>68</sup> The development of these networks, born from slave trading and other activities, created a moral community "in which mutual trust could flourish and which benefited to commercial activities". It led to a trading bourgeoisie with an ideology that underpinned social and cultural norms and which could be differentiated, at the national level, from other socio-economic groups.<sup>69</sup>

In Mauritius, the emergence of this trading bourgeoisie has been well-documented by Auguste Toussaint in his various works. The links between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds have yet to be studied. Some preliminary studies have been carried out, in comparing efficiencies of British

*versus* French traders, with English traders being considered more efficient, because of the 'personal nature' of French business structure.<sup>70</sup>

### 3. PROFITS, PORTS AND PRICES

The differences between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean's experience of the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century are quite stark. Two examples: in contrast to the Caribbean where the Haitian revolution and a fall in plantation production decreased long-distance trade 'for a generation', in Mauritius sugar and plantation production increased. Secondly, the impact of European wars on the slave trade differed in the two oceans. Unlike in the Atlantic, in the Indian Ocean the wars were not necessarily detrimental to the slave trade or trade in general, as corsair activity in particular proved very profitable.

Thus, "War changed the way trade investments were conducted, but it did not shut down all opportunities for profitable operations". The Mascarenes, where the bulk of the maritime traffic was centred, also served as a naval base. It was rare to find any voyages specifically destined for the Mascarenes, unless they were small ships with small tonnages, where the investment resembled one in *droiture*.

The *Seven Years' War* differed in its impact on slave trade:

1. It reduced considerably slave trading from Nantes to Atlantic but what about other ports? To Indian Ocean, for example?
2. French figures have not been compiled completely and averages are calculated from, for example, mortality rates on board a small number of ships.
3. There was a boom period in 1780s for the Atlantic, but what about Indian Ocean? In the Indian Ocean too, a huge boom in slave trade was caused partly by the rise in the Swahili states.

A third area of difference between the two oceans is the profits derived from the slave trade which was possibly more consequential in the Indian Ocean than in the Atlantic. This deserves further study in the future.

### PROFITS

The profits emanating from the slave trade have been the subject of study in the Atlantic Ocean for a long time by pre-industrial economists and cliometricians. According to Daudin, there are three methods to study slave trade profits: first, theoretical results from competition theory; secondly, theoretical reconstruction of profit rates, and thirdly, examination of traders' accounts.<sup>71</sup> The different estimates of annual profit rates, based on the second method, range between 7.1 per cent and 30 per cent.<sup>72</sup> Estimates of annual profit rates, based on the third method, range between 8 per cent and 10 per cent.<sup>73</sup>

For the Indian Ocean, it would appear from the Literature that there was more chance of the Indian Ocean slave trade being in the long run more profitable than in the Atlantic for the period after 1780s. Daudin's study thus recommends the use of Private Archives to calculate the profits of the slave trade; in other words, to examine the aggregate data of one *armateur* and one vessel. There are, however, few detailed studies of voyages relevant to giving a conclusive answer. We are better able to understand the mechanism and operation of the slave trade through recent works of French historians published by the *Anneaux de la Mémoire Association* in Nantes.

Research so far on sources on Mauritius does not reveal much about profits derived from the slave trade: in 1760s, profits from Madagascar were considered negligible for locals, according to a letter from Governor Dumas on the 'Bénéfices de la traite à Madagascar' in 1768:

*"Si la traite produit des esclaves il faut en compléter les ateliers du Roy et ce complet va au moins à 300, après quoi il faut encore les distribuer aux habitants à peu près au prix qu'ils*

*reviendront et recevoir en paiement leurs denrées, de tout cela peut-il entrer un sol dans la caisse? ”<sup>74</sup>*

However, on other occasions, profits were clearly made. Captain Francois Remi Cotte of the *Saturne* wrote to the *armateurs* that he had made a 92% profit from trading 503 slaves at 760 *livres* per slave in and selling them for 1600 *livres*.

A word about currency is necessary here. *Livres* were used in public offices since the foundation of the island. The *Livre* was a ‘nominal coin value of about one-fifth to about one-tenth of the value of the Spanish dollar and *doublons* (the latter being legally current at 16 spanish dollars). However, individuals and companies and Customs kept accounts and subscribed engagements in Spanish dollars. One *livre* was about \$10 (Spanish) in 1790s. With the Imperial Government Rule, the currency used was *francs*, at the rate of five *francs 50 centimes* for the Spani dollar. By 1810, 200 hundred *sous*, ten *livres* or two rupees of colonial money made one dollar.<sup>75</sup>

Where did the funding come from? Historians seem to concur on this point that most had have been quite wealthy to have engaged in it. Wealth could have come from inherited fortune or through marriage to a rich family or to have accrued from accumulated profits during trade. We do not have enough information about the genealogies of families to study this in depth.

Agents and *armateurs* were the principal persons involved in the economic side of the trade: agents received commissions for the sale of slaves for all transactions. Captains too benefited, while the *armateur*, often sitting in La Rochelle or Nantes etc. had to wait for the profits to materialise slowly from the time the slaves were sold, since plantation owners took their time to pay. Profits were thus long-term profits. This no doubt led Garesché to write: “Expeditions for the slave trade only make victims now [...]. Captains, agents are the only ones to benefit from it, and the *armateur* is forced to bear loss or grow old waiting for profits”.<sup>76</sup> Risks involved in those days included shipwrecks, revolts, disease etc. in the Atlantic, as in Indian Ocean, or seizures of ships by the enemy, notably the British.

Finally, according to McWatters, most research about the Atlantic underscores the fact that trade was not highly profitable, but provided modest market returns. Indeed, an individual voyage could be interpreted as a lottery in which the possibility for great profits (or losses) existed, depending on the confluence of a number of market and political factors, but this is not conclusive because of the absence of detailed accounts.<sup>77</sup>

Calculations have begun to be made for the Americas, but not for Indian Ocean, as historians have yet to coordinate their research efforts. While Richard Allen has focused on ships arriving in the Mascarenes, Vernet has looked at those which left the East African coast but did not necessarily reach the Mascarenes.

Pétre-Grenouilleau notes: “[...] que la durée d’amortissement du prix d’un captif est courte (un an et demi à la Barbade anglaise, vers 1645), que l’individu en question représente un capital toujours disponible, et qu’il ajoute au prestige de son propriétaire”.<sup>78</sup> The return from slaves, in terms of production, was also discussed in various reports to the Chambre de Commerce at Nantes. For instance, in the Archives Départementales, the amount of sugar produced is discussed, relative to the cost of slaves in different years.<sup>79</sup>

## PORTS

It is also important to look at the role of specific ports engaged in the slave trade to the Indian Ocean and the Mascarenes specifically, as there are significant differences between the Indian Oean and the Atlantic. The most important port for French slave trading for the Atlantic was Nantes, but not so for the Indian Ocean. Five main ports were engaged in the Indian Ocean.

According to Toussaint’s compilation in *La Route des Iles*, between 1773 and 1810 for private (non-Navy) ships:<sup>80</sup>

Bordeaux	267
Lorient	166
Marseille	129
St. Malo	54
Nantes	40
La Rochelle	22
Brest	22
Le Havre	7
Sete	4
Rochefort	4
Painboeuf	3
Bayonne	2
Honfleur	1
Pauillac	1
Toulon	1

What about Naval ships?

We will therefore look at each of these ports briefly and assess the volume of ships arriving at Isle de France and which were possibly carrying slaves.

The general situation of trade in these ports will be analysed first, and then information given about their relationship with Mauritius, wherever information is available. The percentage of slaves taken away from their homeland by the ships leaving these ports has been estimated as: Nantes 41.3 per cent, Bordeaux 11.4 per cent, La Rochelle 11.3 per cent, the Havre 10.8 per cent.

### BORDEAUX

The first ship to arrive in Mauritius carrying slaves was the *Bretagne* from Pondichéry.

As Bordeaux came late to the slave trade, it faced tough competition from other ports, and this may have been a reason why it switched its source to the Eastern African coast. It developed rapidly, having a rich hinterland and producing wine. Thus trade flourished, including slave trade. It became France's second slaving port after Nantes.

According to Eric Saugera's work, the first slave ship started out from Bordeaux in 1672 and last one in 1837. Between those dates, some 480 ships left Bordeaux for the French Caribbean and carried 150,000 or more Africans from their homeland.<sup>81</sup>

The first trading venture was in 1674. The destinations of the Bordeaux ships were diverse: ships went to obtain supplies in Guinea, the Gold Coast, Angola and Mozambique. The Indian Ocean plays a small part in early years.

Out of 386 slaving ships, the destinations were as follows:

270	St. Domingue (Haïti)
31	Martinique
13	Guadeloupe
14	Cuba (19 <sup>th</sup> century)
37	Mauritius <sup>82</sup>

According to the Bureau des Douanes in Bordeaux, it was not a triangular trade but rather a quadrangular trade.<sup>83</sup> However, Bordeaux found in the slave trade a complement to her existing trade which began to make her the second slave port of France, next to Nantes. In estimation of scholars, the trade involved 130,000 to 150,000 slaves taken away in 480 expeditions, thus representing 11.4 per cent of the total leaving French ports.<sup>84</sup> The figure of 480 ships is higher than the estimate of Saugera. It was not a specialist's activity and, according to the Conservatoire, the ship Captains undertook many other voyages other than slave voyages. Ships used at first were small ships, sloops, goëlettes and corvettes, but after 1763, ships had a higher tonnage, 250 to 500 tonnes.

Our knowledge of slave trading from Bordeaux is partly limited, due to fire occurring in the Port Archives in 1919.<sup>85</sup> The *Journaux de bord* are our only detailed source for daily events occurring during a slave trade voyage. The log book of the *Patriote* from Bordeaux to Mauritius, for example, is one such example, showing that there was not a simple triangular trade: It left Mauritius on 10 April 1789 and arrived in Bordeaux on 17 February 1791. Numerous slave trading stops took place along the way.<sup>86</sup> The voyage of *Licorne* is also interesting: although the slaves were destined for the Atlantic voyage, this ship made a stop over in Mauritius, according to Toussaint on 4 June 1787 before going to Mozambique to procure slaves, and then on to the Cape of Good Hope where some slaves were disembarked before making the Atlantic voyage.<sup>87</sup>

From 1783 to 1793, in total, some 262 slaving voyages were made out, of which 80 ships to the Indian Ocean went from Bordeaux, increasing its share of the slave trade from 5 to 12 per cent.

The first ships from Bordeaux appear to have arrived as early as 1773, clearly having come to engage in the slave trade, judging from their destinations in the South West Indian Ocean (see database): the *Aventurier*, a 150-tonne *senau*, made one voyage in 1773-4 from Bordeaux to the Indian Ocean. It made several trips within the region: to Kerimba, Madagascar, Bourbon and Mauritius, and back to Bordeaux.<sup>88</sup> It was commanded by Brugevin. The *Affiches, Annonces {...}* of 13 January 1773 noted that the ship made two stops in Kerimba and Madagascar, before arriving in Port Louis on 9 January 1773, loaded with slaves for Mr. de la Maretty. It then went to Bourbon in March 1773. Another trip was made to Mozambique in 1774. It arrived in Port Louis on 22 June 1774, but the future owner of slaves was not mentioned in the records.

Two further trips were made to India but no cargo was listed in the *Affiches, Annonces et Avis divers*.<sup>89</sup>

The *Bourbonnaise*, commanded by Descormiers, arrived in Mauritius in December 1773 from Kerimba. This originally privately-owned *goëlette* had previously made several trips from Port Louis to Black River District, transporting wood, then made longer trips as a King's ship to Bourbon and, by the end of December, it was going again as a private ship to Kerimba. As for the *Alliance*, it arrived in Mauritius in September 1774 from Bordeaux but there are no records of stops in Africa or Madagascar.

Not much activity occurred in the 1770s from Bordeaux to the Indian Ocean. In the 1780s, many more ships arrived only to stop again from 1794 to 1795, probably because of the abolition of the slave trade. Corsairs and non-French ships continued supplying Mauritius with slaves illegally. A large number of American ships left Bordeaux to come to the Indian Ocean in this period of 1794-5, but there were no French ships from Bordeaux, it would appear.

Table 3 List of ships arriving in Mauritius from Bordeaux

Name of Ship	Nationality	Tonnage	Port d'armement	Captain	Port of departure	Date of Arrival
<i>Bourbonnaise</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Descormiers	Kerimba	8 December 1773
<i>Bretagne</i>	French	444	Bordeaux	Mancel	Pondichéry	28 November 1773
<i>Alliance</i>	French	330	Nantes?	Macé	Bordeaux	17 September 1774
<i>Aventurier</i>	French	180 (150)	Bordeaux	Brugevin	Kerimba	22 June 1774
<i>Citoyen</i>	French	280	Nantes	Groleau	Bordeaux	11 August 1774
<i>Bretagne</i>	French	444	Bordeaux	Mancel	Bordeaux	16 October 1775
<i>Vaillant</i>	French	300	Bordeaux	Brugevin	Bordeaux	22 April 1776
<i>Vaillant</i>	French	300	Bordeaux	Brugevin	Bordeaux	23 June 1778
<i>Mouche</i>	French	93	Bordeaux	Bonneau	Bordeaux	15 August 1779
<i>Castor</i>	French	428 (440)	Bordeaux	Dupin	Lorient	13 December 1781
<i>Princesse d'Henin</i>	French	490	Bordeaux	Olanier	Bordeaux	16 September 1782
<i>Union</i>	French	375 (347)	Bordeaux	Roy	Brest	3 August 1782
<i>Garonne</i>	French	482 (400)	Bordeaux	Nicolle	Brest	9 August 1782
<i>Iris</i>	French	400	Bordeaux ?	Forget	Brest	17 July 1782
<i>Jeune Aimée</i>	French	380	Bordeaux	Couzicot	Bordeaux	16 September 1782
<i>Auguste</i>	French	398 (360)	Bordeaux	Boudein?	Brest	30 July 1782
<i>Bienvenu</i>	French	552	Bordeaux	Merlan	Brest	1 August 1782
<i>Brabant</i>	Flamand?	NIL	Bordeaux	Devries	Bordeaux	19 November 1782
<i>Pacificateur</i>	French	390	Bordeaux	D umas	Brest	30 July 1782
<i>Tançrède</i>	French	420	Bordeaux	Gourrège	Bordeaux	31 July 1783
<i>Union</i>	French	400	Bordeaux	De la Motte	Trincomalé	? September 1783
<i>Jeanne Cécile</i>	Imperial	300	NIL	Baer	Bordeaux	27 November 1783
<i>Garonne</i>	French	482	Bordeaux	Nicolle	Goudelour	8 July 1783
<i>Bellamy</i>	French	300	Bordeaux	Comte	Bordeaux	29 September 1783
<i>Bonne Espérance</i>	Imperial	400	Ostende	Tempier	Bordeaux	27 June 1783
<i>Princesse d'Henin</i>	French	490	Bordeaux	Dupuy	Trincomalé	19 September 1783
<i>Casimir</i>	French	350	Bordeaux	Bernard?	Bordeaux	4 August 1783
<i>Iris?</i>	French	400	Bordeaux	Forget	Trincomalé	8 July 1783
<i>Calypso</i>	French	280 (250)	Bordeaux	La Fuente	Bordeaux	9 August 1783
<i>Victoire</i>	French	400	Saint-Malo	Michel	Bordeaux	7 November 1783

<i>Hippopotame</i>	Imperia l	700	Bordeaux	Van den Berghen	Bordeaux	1 July 1783
<i>Aimable Marine</i>	French	400	Bordeaux	Chassaing	Trincomalé	28 August 1783
<i>Courrier Impérial</i>	Imperia l	NIL	Ostende?	De Saint- Valéry	Bordeaux	28 May 1783
<i>Discrète</i>	French	470	Bordeaux	Boyreau	Ile d'Aix	18 April 1783
<i>Jeune Stanislas</i>	French	400	Le Havre	Menard	Bordeaux	22 December 1783
<i>Maréchal de Duras</i>	French	406 (440)	Bordeaux	Compère	Trincomalé	21 November 1783
<i>Maréchal de Duras</i>	French	406 (440)	Bordeaux	Compère	Ile d'Aix	18 April 1783
<i>Asie</i>	French	640 (750)	Bordeaux	Ichon	Bordeaux	23 August 1783
<i>Comte de Fumes</i>	French	430	Bordeaux	Girouard	Bordeaux	8 September 1783
<i>Comte de Péronne</i>	Savoyar d	NIL	Bordeaux	Barboro	Côte de Coromandel	1 December 1783
<i>Comte de Péronne</i>	Savoyar d	NIL	Nice	Barboro	Bordeaux	16 February 1783
<i>Comtesse de Chinon</i>	French	500	Bordeaux	Boulbard	Bordeaux	20 August 1783
<i>Ombevrest?</i>	Imperia l	200	Bordeaux	Reyders?	Bordeaux	19 August 1783
<i>Pacifique</i>	French	450	Bordeaux	Fautrel	Bordeaux	26 June 1783
<i>Merceron</i>	French	514	Bordeaux	Rouden	Bordeaux	30 July 1783
<i>Marie- Clorinde</i>	Imperia l?	272	Bordeaux	Jacob	Bordeaux	22 August 1783
<i>Constant</i>	French	450	Bordeaux	Pons	Bordeaux	6 September 1783
<i>Glaneuse</i>	French	380 (500)	Bordeaux	Lalanne	Bordeaux	16 September 1784
<i>Hasard</i>	French	90	Bordeaux	Brousseau	Bordeaux	8 January 1784
<i>Licorne</i>	French	480	Bordeaux	Brugevin	Bordeaux	27 February 1784
<i>Calypso</i>	French	250 (280)	Bordeaux	Taudin	Cochin	2 May 1784
<i>Constance</i>	French	350	Lorient	Giron	Bordeaux	11 January 1784
<i>Asie</i>	French	640 (750)	Bordeaux	Ichon	Trincomalé	23 September 1784
<i>Sully</i>	French	580	Bordeaux	Tabois	Bordeaux	30 August 1784
<i>Maréchal de Mouchy</i>	French	628	Bordeaux	Gramont	Pondichéry	9 November 1784
<i>Maréchal de Mouchy</i>	French	628	Bordeaux	Gramont	Bordeaux	5 May 1784
<i>Prévoyance</i>	French	180	Bordeaux	Onno	Bordeaux	18 December 1784
<i>Marquis de Castris</i>	French	500	Bordeaux	Marchés?	Bordeaux	27 March 1784
<i>Neptune</i>	French	1030 (1000)	Bordeaux	Martignac	Bordeaux	9 October 1784
<i>Pondichéry</i>	French	550	Bordeaux	Leloup de Beaulieu	Bordeaux	17 February 1784
<i>Bienvenu</i>	French	552	Bordeaux	Merlan	Trincomalé	12 February

						1784
<i>Elisabeth-Sophie</i>	French	400	Bordeaux	Massot	Bordeaux	20 August 1784
<i>Vicomtesse de Noailles</i>	French	700	Bordeaux	Grandmont	Bordeaux	26 June 1784
<i>Constant</i>	French	442 (450)	Bordeaux	Pons	Trincomalé	23 May 1784
<i>Dorade</i>	French	236	Bordeaux	Castaignet	Bordeaux	25 June 1784
<i>Brabant</i>	French	350	Bordeaux	Roquefeuil Labistour	Bordeaux	28 June 1784
<i>Actif</i>	French	137	Bordeaux	Taudin	Bordeaux	9 December 1785
<i>Hasard</i>	French	90	Bordeaux	Brousseau	Calcutta	21 June 1785
<i>Pacifique</i>	French	450 (500)	Bordeaux	Descombes	Bordeaux	12 November 1785
<i>Merceron</i>	French	514	Bordeaux	Courrège	Batavia	21 February 1785
<i>Fouine</i>	French	100	Bordeaux	Bourbon	Bordeaux	16 April 1785
<i>Garonne</i>	French	420	Bordeaux	Cousicot	Bordeaux	23 June 1785
<i>Dorade</i>	French	236	Bordeaux	Castaignet	Madras	22 September 1785
<i>Éléonore</i>	French	220	Bordeaux	Sanguinet	Bordeaux	9 December 1785
<i>Chancelière de Brabant</i>	French	600	Lorient	Tréhouart de Beaulieu	Bordeaux	4 August 1785
<i>Bretagne</i>	French	500	Bordeaux	Dechezeau	Bordeaux	17 September 1785
<i>Roi Henry</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Lemaitre	Bordeaux	25 July 1785
<i>Paquebot de Bourbon</i>	French	184 (200)	Bordeaux	Wuibert	Bordeaux	22 December 1786
<i>Horizon</i>	French	471 (600)	Bordeaux	Balguerie	Bordeaux	4 July 1786
<i>Fouine</i>	French	100	Bordeaux	Le Fèbre	Cape of Good Hope	28 April 1786
<i>Nancy</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Couronnet	Bordeaux	22 May 1786
<i>Chancelière de Brabant</i>	French	600	Bordeaux	Tréhouart de Beaulieu	Pondichéry	15 May 1786
<i>Six Frères</i>	French	550	Bordeaux	Saulnier	Bordeaux	20 May 1786
<i>Voiture des Dames</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Vergès	Bordeaux	26 March 1786
<i>Clarie</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Fontenelle	Bordeaux	15 June 1786
<i>Docteur Pangloss</i>	French	470	Bordeaux	Laperche	Bordeaux	5 May 1786
<i>Désir</i>	French	308	Bordeaux	Dumas	Bordeaux	26 December 1786
<i>Courrier de l'île de France</i>	French	166 (200)	Bordeaux	Letexier	Bordeaux	19 September 1786
<i>Oiseau</i>	French	Nil	Nil	Ventre	Bordeaux	19 June 1786
<i>Roi David</i>	French	438	Bordeaux	Jalineau	Bordeaux	11 December 1786
<i>Amiral de Port-Louis?</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Courrège	Bordeaux	28 March 1787
<i>Noir de L'île de France</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Boulbar	Bordeaux	9 June 1787
<i>Aimable Victoire</i>	French	650	Bordeaux	Tempié	Lorient	1 January 1787

<i>Bonne Union</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Dusaux	Bordeaux	7 April 1787
<i>Garonne</i>	French	420	Bordeaux	Ichon	Bordeaux	19 June 1787
<i>Imposant</i>	French	800	Bordeaux	Fermirot	Bordeaux	2 August 1787
<i>Licorne</i>	French	480	Bordeaux	Brugevin	Bordeaux	4 June 1787
<i>Saint-Denis</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Voisin	Bordeaux	12 May 1787
<i>Triomphe?</i>	French	250	Bordeaux	Jaulery	Bordeaux	30 April 1787
<i>Sully</i>	French	580	Bordeaux	Tabois	Bordeaux	16 May 1787
<i>Port-Louis (ex-Comte de St André)</i>	French	400	Bordeaux	Barboutin	Bordeaux	23 March 1787
<i>Prévost de la Croix</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Dubreuil	Bordeaux	9 June 1787
<i>Prince de Poix</i>	French	450	Bordeaux	Boyer	Bordeaux	20 August 1787
<i>Auguste</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Boissière	Bordeaux	9 October 1787
<i>Confiance (Diligent)</i>	French	70	Bordeaux	Laurent	Bordeaux	5 May 1787
<i>Euphrasie</i>	French	184	Bordeaux	Labat	Bordeaux	4 September 1787
<i>Mathurin</i>	French	600	Bordeaux	Viger	Bordeaux	18 October 1787
<i>Modeste</i>	French	350	Bordeaux	Rontaunay	Bordeaux	6 October 1787
<i>Motais de Narbonne</i>	French	338	Bordeaux	Lalanne	Bordeaux	13 February 1787
<i>Pacificateur</i>	French	422	Bordeaux	Saulnier	Bordeaux	20 August 1788
<i>Nécessaire</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Bourbon	Bordeaux	1 October 1788
<i>Paquebot No 4</i>	French	NIL	NIL	De Coriolis	Bordeaux	28 July 1788
<i>Oiseau</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Lemercier	Mozambique	30 May 1788
<i>Motais de Narbonne</i>	French	338	Bordeaux	Dupin	Bordeaux	17 April 1788
<i>Désir</i>	French	308	Bordeaux	Dumas	Quiloa	3 January 1788
<i>Désirée</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Laurent	Bordeaux	12 October 1788
<i>Bretagne</i>	French	600	Bordeaux	Texier de la Villeafeuve	Bordeaux	3 September 1788
<i>Brilliant</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Le Maître	Bordeaux	29 June 1788
<i>Chorèbe</i>	French	500	Bordeaux	Pourcin	Bordeaux	23 November 1788
<i>Duchesse de Maillé</i>	French	250	Nantes	Attimont	Bordeaux	23 February 1788
<i>Dudon</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Bizard	Bordeaux	23 February 1788
<i>Euphrasie</i>	French	184	Bordeaux	Labat	Mozambique	16 August 1788
<i>Actif</i>	French	137	Bordeaux	Cibaut de Nique	Bordeaux	26 April 1788
<i>Aigle</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Pons	Bordeaux	2 September 1788
<i>Aimable Thérèse</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Griffon	Bordeaux	3 June 1788
<i>Revanche</i>	French	NIL	La	Robin	Bordeaux	23 August

			Rochelle			1788
<i>Alexandre</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Damis	Bordeaux	20 September 1788
<i>Président Le Berthon</i>	French	305	Bordeaux	Feuilherade	Bordeaux	18 August 1788
<i>Pérou</i>	French	450	Bordeaux	Sanguinet	Bordeaux	28 July 1788
<i>Petite Dorade</i>	French	200	Bordeaux	Lauratet	Bordeaux	14 January 1788
<i>Sans Pareil</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Seignac	Bordeaux	15 February 1788
<i>Oiseau</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Lemercier	Quiloo	27 November 1789
<i>Aimable Marie</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Jussan	Bordeaux	23 October 1789
<i>Deux Soeurs</i>	French	90	Bordeaux	Compère	Bordeaux	1 February 1789
<i>Diane</i>	French	425	Bordeaux	Cochon	Bordeaux	18 May 1789
<i>Comte de Fumel?</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Valleau	Bordeaux	7 March 1789
<i>Comtesse de Conway</i>	French	300	Bordeaux	Marc	Pauillac	25 December 1789
<i>Cerf</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux ?	Brun	Bordeaux	2 December 1789
<i>Baron Le Fort</i>	French	550	Bordeaux	Courrège	Bordeaux	14 June 1789
<i>Bailli de Suffren</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Bidard Delanoë	Bordeaux	25 July 1789
<i>Emengard?</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Montant	Bordeaux	23 July 1789
<i>Félicité</i>	French	750	Bordeaux	Beltremieux	Bordeaux	24 August 1789
<i>Georges</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Marraud	Bordeaux	13 April 1789
<i>Hippolyte</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Boissière	Bordeaux	15 August 1789
<i>Père de Famille</i>	French	350	Bordeaux	Le Duc	Bordeaux	16 January 1789
<i>Sans Pareil</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Seignac	Bordeaux	25 September 1789
<i>Porus</i>	French	NIL	La Rochelle	Robin	Bordeaux	23 November 1789
<i>Protée</i>	French	395	Bordeaux	Royé	Bordeaux	2 February 1789
<i>Vicomte d'Urtubie</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Descombes	Bordeaux	8 June 1789
<i>Vicomtesse de La Bintinaye</i>	French	316 (350)	Bordeaux	Collineau	Bordeaux	2 February 1789
<i>Ville de Bordeaux</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Duranteau	Côte d'Afrique	2 July 1789
<i>Ville de Bordeaux</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Duranteau	Bordeaux	16 January 1789
<i>Honorine</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Dufourg	Bordeaux	9 June 1789
<i>Lévrier</i>	French	441	Bordeaux	Laperche	Bordeaux	26 November 1789
<i>Surprise</i>	French	40	Bordeaux ?	Dujardin Lintederin	Bordeaux	22 December 1789
<i>Patrie</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Voisin	Bordeaux	24 June 1789
<i>Patriote</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Barbazan	Bengal	6 December

				Lafont		1789
<i>Patriote</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Lafont	Bordeaux	5 March 1789
<i>Aimable Théodore</i>	French	158 (200)	Bordeaux	Bechier	Bordeaux	13 April 1789
<i>Archimède</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Barboutin	Bordeaux	28 May 1790
<i>Aigle</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Brion	Bordeaux	20 May 1790
<i>Dogue</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Dupin	Bordeaux	9 April 1790
<i>Marie Flore</i>	French	NIL	Brest	Montagne	Bordeaux	11 June 1790
<i>Bonne Henriette</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Jagault	Bordeaux	16 July 1790
<i>Courrier de l'Île de France</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Lespiaut	Bordeaux	16 July 1790
<i>Aimable Rosalie</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Jussain	Quiloa	18 September 1790
<i>Félicité</i>	French	750	Bordeaux	Beltremieux	Quiloa	2 August 1790
<i>Fille Unique</i>	French	NIL	Rochefort	De Fontenelle	Bordeaux	8 January 1790
<i>Paquebot No. 4</i>	French	441	Bordeaux	De Coriolis	Bordeaux	29 January 1790
<i>Belle Arsène</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Darribeau	Bordeaux	7 June 1790
<i>Citoyenne</i>	French	200	Bordeaux	Mamineau	Bordeaux	13 December 1790
<i>Chasseur</i>	French	532	Bordeaux	Le Gouardun	Mozambique	7 August 1790
<i>Chasseur</i>	French	532	Bordeaux ?	Le Gouardun	Bordeaux	18 January 1790
<i>Trajan</i>	French	NIL	Nantes	Boutet	Bordeaux	16 December 1790
<i>Jeune Créole</i>	French	409	Bordeaux	Delarue	Bordeaux	20 February 1790
<i>Licorne</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Hostein	Bordeaux	22 July 1790
<i>Henri IV</i>	French	NIL	La Rochelle	Goinard	Bordeaux	12 February 1790
<i>Hernoux (ex-Pacificateur)</i>	French	422	Bordeaux	De Grissac	Bordeaux	18 September 1790
<i>Indien</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Despriet	Bordeaux	23 November 1790
<i>Nécessaire</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Bourbon	Bordeaux	16 May 1791
<i>Dominique</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Thomas	Bordeaux	26 May 1791
<i>Aimable Rosalie</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Jusran?	Mahé	5 April 1791
<i>Perrier</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Micheau	Bordeaux	24 August 1791
<i>Marquis de Lafayette</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Delot	Quiloa	5 November 1791
<i>Tronchin?</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Deschiens	Bordeaux	24 August 1791
<i>Ville de Bordeaux</i>	French	500	Bordeaux	Chenu	Bordeaux	24 May 1791
<i>Bellone</i>	French	400	Bordeaux	K/nell	Bordeaux	11 February 1791
<i>Bengale</i>	French	300	Bordeaux	Fallouard	Bordeaux	22 June 1791
<i>Bon Frère</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Lude	Bordeaux	21 November 1791

<i>Bonne Marie</i>	French	450	Bordeaux	Larrieu	Bordeaux	2 June 1791
<i>Emegard?</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Sanguinet	Bordeaux	24 February 1791
<i>Fauvette</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	De Siest	Bordeaux	16 August 1791
<i>Horizon</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Dubreuil	Bordeaux	18 July 1791
<i>Ile de France</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Crassoux	Bordeaux	7 June 1791
<i>Indien</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Despiet	Quiloa	19 April 1791
<i>Honorine</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Dufourg	Bordeaux	30 May 1791
<i>Jeune Fany</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Seguin	Bordeaux	22 September 1791
<i>Jean-Bart</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Gedron	Bordeaux	19 December 1791
<i>Lafayette</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Delot	Bordeaux	19 January 1791
<i>Cerf</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Brun	Bordeaux	5 February 1791
<i>Aimable Françoise</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Lagrée	Bordeaux	21 November 1791
<i>Pérou</i>	French	450	Bordeaux	Roger	Bordeaux	16 July 1791
<i>Aimable Américaine</i>	French	450	Bordeaux	Gauthier de Rontaunay	Bordeaux	1 February 1791
<i>Calvados?</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Barrabé	Bordeaux	14 February 1792
<i>Périer</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Micheau	Mozambique	3 July 1792
<i>Aimable Lucile</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Sanguinet	Bordeaux	18 July 1792
<i>Actif</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Toureau	Lorient	12 March 1792
<i>Réciproque</i>	French	700	Bordeaux	Cochon	Bordeaux	22 July 1792
<i>Paquebot No. 4</i>	French	441	Bordeaux	Coriolis	Bordeaux	17 May 1792
<i>Valentin</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Etasse	Bordeaux	20 June 1792
<i>Sophie Désirée</i>	French	150	Bordeaux	Martin	Bordeaux	20 June 1792
<i>Patriote</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Brizard	Bordeaux	14 July 1792
<i>Pauline</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Feuilherade	Bordeaux	7 May 1792
<i>Nélée</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Albert	Bordeaux	20 August 1792
<i>Bailli de Suffren</i>	French	600	Bordeaux	Couturont	Bordeaux	28 August 1792
<i>Nestor</i>	French	200	Bordeaux	Duhart	Bordeaux	11 May 1792
<i>Saint-Jean de Loüe</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Voisin	Bordeaux	20 March 1792
<i>Mangoff Georges?</i>	French	480	Bordeaux	Monstey?	Bordeaux	15 January 1792
<i>Sans Pareil</i>	French	50	Bordeaux	Seignac	Bordeaux	12 February 1792
<i>Bien-Aimée</i>	French	NIL	Brest	Montagne	Bordeaux	23 July 1792
<i>Constance</i>	French	350	Bordeaux	Margeon	Bordeaux	20 August 1792
<i>Archimède</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux ?	Barboutin	Bordeaux	14 July 1792
<i>Deux Frères</i>	French	600	Bordeaux	Frères	Bordeaux	9 September 1792
<i>Bon Frère</i>	French	160	Bordeaux	Lude	Mozambique	25 July 1792
<i>Ami de Saint-</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Laclaverie	Bordeaux	17 September

<i>Dominique</i>						1792
<i>Aigle</i>	French	600	Bordeaux	Pons?	Bordeaux	27 July 1792
<i>Dragon</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Rontaunay	Bordeaux	5 October 1792
<i>Bonne Union</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Calefort	Bordeaux	5 March 1792
<i>Peggy</i>	French	230	Bordeaux	Nazereau	Bordeaux	28 April 1792
<i>Consolateur</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Castaignet	Bordeaux	9 November 1792
<i>Indien</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Legouardun	Bordeaux	4 July 1792
<i>Liberté</i>	French	250	Bordeaux	Lemême	Bordeaux	29 January 1792
<i>Lafayette</i>	French	300	Bordeaux	Delot	Mozambique	9 July 1792
<i>Jeune Fanie</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Seguin	Ceylan	6 March 1792
<i>Leauty?</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Piquesamy	Bordeaux	24 January 1792
<i>Fauvette</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Desiest	Batavia	5 March 1792
<i>Expérience</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Maurepas	Bordeaux	12 May 1793
<i>Calvados</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Barabé	Côte d'Afrique	1 October 1793
<i>Paquebot No. 4</i>	French	441	Bordeaux	Coriolis	Quiloo	5 September 1793
<i>Tigre</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Perocheau	Aleppey	9 July 1793
<i>Tigre</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Pérochau	Brest	18 January 1793
<i>Valentin</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Jalineau	Surate	11 February 1793
<i>Trois Frères</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Maraud	Bordeaux	7 May 1793
<i>Paquebot No. 4</i>	French	441	Bordeaux	Coriolis	Quiloo	21 January 1793
<i>Consolateur</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Castaignet	Ceylan	22 May 1793
<i>Louis-Marie</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Abeille	Bordeaux	21 August 1793
<i>Argilète</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Montaut	Pondichéry	30 July 1793
<i>Argilète</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Montaut	Bordeaux	28 February 1793
<i>Navigateur</i>	French	NIL	Saint-Malo	Le Joliff	Bordeaux	11 March 1793
<i>Discrète</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Leigoie?	Bordeaux	12 May 1793
<i>Maryland</i>	Amer	Nil	Nil	Speak	Bordeaux	31 August 1794
<i>Columbus</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Pell	Bordeaux	20 November 1795
<i>Bareng?</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Beach	Bordeaux	11 June 1796
<i>Anne-Catherine</i>	Amer	400	New-York	Preble	Bordeaux	25 August 1796
<i>Elisabeth-Sophie</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Pierce?	Bordeaux	5 January 1796
<i>Elisabeth-Sophie</i>	Amer	562	NIL	Skinner	Bordeaux	6 September 1797
<i>John</i>	Amer	NIL	Salem	Derby	Bordeaux	5 May 1797
<i>Jean et Richard</i>	Amer		Nil	Nowland	Bordeaux	5 June 1797
<i>Henry</i>	Amer	190	Salem	Bullock	Bordeaux	29 December 1797

<i>Brothers</i>	Amer	148	Salem	Felt	Bordeaux	31 December 1797
<i>Sultan</i>	Amer	190	NIL	Clement	Bordeaux	30 December 1797
<i>Lévrier</i>	Amer	183	NIL	Hunt	Bordeaux	24 September 1797
<i>Harmonie</i>	Amer	211	NIL	Pinston?	Bordeaux	7 October 1797
<i>Kitty</i>	Amer	120	NIL	Trask	Bordeaux	20 January 1797
<i>Molly</i>	Amer	300	NIL	Stamper	Bordeaux	24 January 1797
<i>Colombus</i>	Prussian	400	Nil	Prutz	Bordeaux	30 September 1797
<i>Belisarius</i>	Amer	200	Salem	Crowninshield	Bordeaux	17 May 1797
<i>Cérés</i>	Amer	310	NIL	Hodge	Bordeaux	14 September 1797
<i>Sally</i>	Amer	180	Salem	Webb	Bordeaux	7 June 1797
<i>Recovery</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Roppe?	Bordeaux	8 April 1797
<i>Fleur de la Mer</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Coleman	Bordeaux	21 May 1797
<i>Fortune</i>	Swedish	NIL	Stockholm	Norlin	Bordeaux	29 May 1798
<i>Huron</i>	Amer	Nil	Nil	Brown	Bordeaux	17 March 1798
<i>Rosalie et Betty</i>	Prussian	Nil	Nil	Gelhard	Bordeaux	18 August 1798
<i>Greyhound</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Bradbury	Bordeaux	16 August 1798
<i>Lodoviska</i>	Oldenb	200	Nil	Butner	Bordeaux	25 July 1799
<i>Louisia</i>	Hamb	Nil	Nil	Asmuube	Bordeaux	27 January 1800
<i>Huron</i>	French	250	NIL	Saint-Guiron	Bordeaux	25 May 1800
<i>Kelty?</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Worth	Bordeaux	17 May 1800
<i>Gloire</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Emit?	Bordeaux	18 May 1800
<i>Sophie Charlotte</i>	Prussian	Nil	Nil	Van Straalen	Bord'	4 April 1801
<i>Union</i>	French	750	NIL	Larcher	Bordeaux	4 October 1802
<i>Union</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Rivière	Bordeaux	27 October 1802
<i>Pacificateur</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Carsimille	Bordeaux	3 September 1802
<i>Pacificateur</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Taudin	Bordeaux	25 September 1802
<i>Paix</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Hardouin	Bordeaux	9 May 1802
<i>Brave</i>	French	210	NIL	Sère?	Bordeaux	9 September 1802
<i>Surprise</i>	French	70	Bordeaux	Rigal	Bordeaux	21 May 1802
<i>Vénus</i>	French	200	NIL	Gaudric	Bordeaux	23 June 1802
<i>Surprise</i>	Amer	Nil	Nil	Bill	Bordeaux	8 February 1802
<i>Eugénie</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Dupuy	Bordeaux	23 September 1802
<i>Psyché</i>	French	Nil	Nil	Bonsergent	Bordeaux	10 December 1802

<i>Amitié</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Seguin	Bordeaux	15 August 1802
<i>Aigle</i>	French	600	Bordeaux	Dufour	Bordeaux	22 November 1802
<i>Diane</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Montaut	Bordeaux	14 May 1802
<i>Réparateur</i>	French	500	Bordeaux	Duranteau	Côte d'Afrique	28 November 1802
<i>Frères Unis</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Plaideau	Bordeaux	5 December 1802
<i>Good Friend</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Cochrane?	Bordeaux	5 June 1802
<i>Commerce</i>	Amer	NIL	Salem	West	Bordeaux	31 May 1802
<i>Confiance</i>	French	360	NIL	Castagnet	Bordeaux	17 October 1802
<i>Réparateur</i>	French	500	Bordeaux	Duranteau	Bordeaux	10 June 1802
<i>Charles-Maurice</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Darribeau	Bordeaux	26 August 1802
<i>James</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Dufourq	Bordeaux	23 April 1803
<i>Adèle</i>	French	40	NIL	Dupin	Bordeaux	5 June 1803
<i>Béatrix</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Béraud	Bordeaux	13 January 1803
<i>Gange</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Amelin	Bordeaux	28 February 1793
<i>Aimable Lucile</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Langlois	Bordeaux	13 April 1803
<i>Estelle</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Fichet	Bordeaux	1 May 1803
<i>Erinna</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Cappé	Bordeaux	29 June 1803
<i>Essai</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Larré	Sumatra	10 December 1803
<i>Diane</i>	French	Nil	Bordeaux ?	Montaut	Chine	7 February 1803
<i>Suzanne</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Donaü	Bordeaux	10 May 1803
<i>Trois Frères</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Bouillaud	Bordeaux	12 August 1803
<i>Mentor</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Chevelaure	Bordeaux	5 February 1803
<i>Sophie et Auguste</i>	French	250	NIL	Boyreau	Bordeaux	17 April 1803
<i>Zéphir</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Voisin	Bordeaux	27 June 1803
<i>Julie</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Dupeyral	Bordeaux	5 July 1803
<i>Frères Amis</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Plaideau	Bordeaux	15 October 1803
<i>Hydre</i>	French	600	Bordeaux ?	Callé	Nantes	7 January 1803
<i>Gustave</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Rondeaux	Bordeaux	5 May 1804
<i>Gustave</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Rondeaux	Quiloa	14 November 1804
<i>Adèle</i>	French	40	Bordeaux ?	Coutance	Balemboang	31 August 1804
<i>Confidence</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Knowles?	Bordeaux	4 January 1804
<i>Stillman?</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Pearson	Bordeaux	22 June 1804
<i>Elisa</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Hatch	Bordeaux	28 June 1804
<i>Monerve</i>	Amer	224	Nil	Ward	Bordeaux	24 July 1804
<i>Henriette</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Henry	Bordeaux	10 June 1804

<i>Pucelle</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Fillietar?	Pégou	15 May 1804
<i>Bordeaux Packet</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Cowes?	Bordeaux	29 October 1805
<i>Charles</i>	Amer	180	Boston	Percival	Bordeaux	27 April 1805
<i>Brellonne</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Perroud	Bordeaux	21 February 1805
<i>Elisa</i>	Amer	NIL	Salem?	Hatch	Bordeaux	11 February 1806
<i>Ranger</i>	Amer	NIL	NIL	Bates	Bordeaux	8 March 1806
<i>Auguste</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Henry	Bordeaux	31 January 1809
<i>Auguste</i>	French	NIL	NIL	La Case	Bordeaux	8 January 1810
<i>Eugène</i>	French	NIL	Bordeaux	Rondeaux	Bordeaux	2 June 1810
<i>Emilie</i>	French	NIL	NIL	Graffin	Bordeaux	13 January 1810

(Source: Compiled from Toussaint, *La Route des Iles*)

### LORIENT

In Jean Meyer's study, *La France et l'Asie*, it is estimated that over 1,000 trips were made from France to the Indian Ocean. From 1730-1734, according to him, only one *armement* of the East India Company left Lorient. This increased considerably after 1746 but dwindled again a few years later. Latest figures, compiled by Le Lan for the recent Slave Trade conference organized by the TJC, estimated at about 92 000, the number of slaves whom the Company exiled, using Lorient as a base.

The first ship from Lorient to bring slaves to Mauritius was *La Méduse* which embarked 237 slaves from Juda. Between 1728 and 1756, all ships appear to have gone to West Africa to procure slaves.

Table 4 Ships arriving from Lorient

Year of Departure	Name of ship	Port of trade	No. slaves Embarked	No. slaves disembarked	No. deaths	Destination
1728	La Méduse	Juda	237			Ile de France
1729	La Diane	Gorée	302	248	54	Ile de France
1729	La Vierge de Grâce	Gorée	380	291	89	Ile de France
1730	La Badine	Gorée	200	37	163	Île de France - Pondichéry
1738	Le Griffon	Sénégal	250			Ile de France
1744	La Favorite	Gorée	438	356	82	Île de France - Île Bourbon
1749	Le Dauphin	Gorée	52			Île de France
1749	Le Bristol	Gorée	350	267	83	Ile de France
1749	L'Hercule	Gorée	500	353	147	Ile de France
1750	Le Chevalier Marin	Gorée	240	169	71	Ile de France
1756	Le Duc de Béthune	Gorée	388	289	49	Ile de France
Total					738	

(Source: Translated from Jean Yves Le Lan, 'Les armateurs privés de la traite lorientaise pour l'île de France, 1769 - 1791' and 'La Cie des Indes et la Traite des Noirs', 17-20)

Haudrère has stated that the slaving voyages, with 630 slaves on board, between 1729 and for 1730 were a total failure because of the high mortality. He has described these voyages as a 'hecatomb'.<sup>90</sup> In one ship, out of the 200 slaves, 35 died before reaching the Cape and another 30 died in transit at the Cape, due to the cold and not being properly clothed. 93 more died en route to the Mascarenes. 42 disembarked, out of whom 11 died during disembarkation.



The FEIC had two main trading posts in West Africa: Juda in Dahomey and Gorée in Senegal. In Gorée, a fort had been built where French traders, their slaves and goods were 'secure'. According to Le Lan, « la Compagnie avait de nombreuses implantations de traite en Afrique, dont deux importantes: un fort à l'île de Gorée au Sénégal et un à Juda au Dahomey ainsi que de nombreux points de contact baptisés escales. Un fort était une infrastructure mettant à l'abri les ressortissants français, les captifs et les marchandises, des vélicités adverses alors que les escales n'étaient que des parcelles de terrain sur lesquels les chefs indigènes avaient autorisés les français à commercer. »<sup>91</sup>

In addition to these ships, the C4 series mentions another ship, the Fleury, which was to bring slaves from Senegal, but this is not mentioned in Le Lan's list, for some reason.<sup>92</sup>

Le Lan has analysed the 19 voyages mentioned by Mettas to Ile de France between 1769 and 1791. He found that of the 19 ships, only 3 definitely came to Mauritius, while 5 others probably came; the others went to on to seal the slaves in the Caribbean.

In bold and larger characters are those which landed slaves in Mauritius, The others went to the Caribbean

Table 5 : Slaving voyages from Lorient through Île de France from 1772 to 1791

N°	Année	Nom du navire	Tonnage en tx	Equipage	Nom du capitaine
1	1772	<i>La Digue</i>	360	/	Louis Saint-Pierre, puis Robinot Desmolières
2	1774	<i>L'Espérance</i>	360	/	Robinot Desmolières
3	1776	<i>Le Duc de Vrillère</i>	600 ou 500	/	Pierre de Sabetery
4	1776	<i>Le Gracieux</i>	400 ou 500	53	Louis Totin, puis Dupuy
5	1776	<i>La Bouffonne</i>	150	/	Deschiens de Kerulvay
6	<b>1784</b>	<b><i>Les Deux Frères</i></b>	<b>220 ou 250</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>Trochut puis Cazal</b>
7	<b>1785</b>	<b><i>Le Mozambique</i></b>	<b>130</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>Dubreuil</b>
8	1785	<i>Le Fabius</i>	300 ou 250	33	Bridard de La Noue
9	1786	<i>La Modeste</i>	180	/	Dufilhol
10	1786	<i>Le Breton</i>	1093	80	Guesdon
11	1788	<i>Le Félix</i>	361	/	François Dubreuil
12	1789	<i>L'Amitié</i>	380	40	Antoine François Jalabert
13	1790	<i>L'Assemblée Nationale</i>	300	/	Gouraud

14	1790	<i>Le Stanislas</i>	600 ou 300	/	Clément Barnabé Fournier
15	1790	<i>L'Amitié</i>	380	/	Antoine François Jalabert
16	1791	<i>Le Patriote</i>	300 ou 250	/	/
17	1791	<i>L'Actif</i>	/	/	Toureau

Table 6: Circuit des opérations de traite au départ de Lorient passant par l'Île de France de 1772 à 1791.

Année	Nom du navire	Date de départ de Lorient	Circuit pour la traite	Port de vente de la traite	Date de retour
1772	<i>La Digue</i>	17/04/1772	Île de France, 05/08 au 14/09/1772; Queringue <sup>93</sup> , 18/11/1772; départ, 22/02/1773	Cap, 18/07/1773	Lorient, 20/12/1773; Nantes, 04/01/1774
1774	<i>L'Espérance</i>	05/05/1774	Île de France, 18/09/1774; Afrique; Île de France, 30/05/1775	?	?
1776	<i>Le Duc de Vrillère</i>	16/01/1776	Île de France, 22/09/1776; Bengale; Île de France, 23/06/1778; Mozambique; Ile de France, 10 juin 1779	?	?
1776	<i>Le Gracieux</i>	26/03/1776	Île de France, 22/07 au 29/08/1776; côte de «Kankibar», arrivée, 11/09; Cap de Bonne-Espérance, 13/03 au 14/04/1777	Cap, 16/06/1777; départ, 12/09/1777	Le Havre, 02/11/1777
1776	<i>La Bouffonne</i>	26/05/1776	Île de France, 16/11/1776 ; Mozambique; Île de France, 20/07/1778; Cap de Bonne-Espérance; Île de France, 17/04 au 05/06/1779; Madagascar; Mozambique, 03/07 au 09/07 ; Querimbe, 12/07 au 12/08; Quiloa, 16/08; départ, 11/10 ; Diégo Gracia, 02/12 au 18/12/1779; Île de France, 02/01/1780	?	?
1784	<i>Les Deux Frères</i>	12/02/1785	Île de France, 13/10/1785	Île de France, 05/02/1787	?
1785	<i>Le Mozambique</i>	05/05/1785	Île de France, 07/11/1785; Querimbe	Île de France, 06/10/1786	?
1785	<i>Le Fabius</i>	17/12/1782	Île de France, 23/06 au 17/08/1786; Cap de Bonne-Espérance, 03/09 au 16/11/1786	Martinique, 06/01 au 16/01/1787; Cap, 24/01; Port-au-Prince, 02/02/1787	Lorient, 05/08/1787
1786	<i>La Modeste</i>	25/04/1786	Mozambique; Île de France, 06 ou 10/06/1787; Oïbo; Mozambique, 06/12/1787	Île de France, 16/02/1788	?
1786	<i>Le Breton</i>	22/12/1786	Cap de Bonne-Espérance, 11/03 au 23/03/1787; Île de France, 05/05 au 27/06/1787; Mozambique, 16/07; départ, 04/12/1787; Cap de Bonne-Espérance, 03/01/1788; départ, 12/02/1788	Saint-Marc, 25/03/1788	Nantes, 21/09/1788
1788	<i>Le Félix</i>	19/04/1788	Île de France, 20/08 au 02/09/1788; Mozambique	Cayes, 25/06/1789	Cayes, 03/08/1789
1789	<i>L'Amitié</i>	06/01/1789	Île de France, 06/06 au 27/07/1789; Île de Bourbon, 29/07 au 01/08; Quiloa, 12/08 au 05/11/1789; Cap de Bonne-	Cap, 12/02 au 17/02/1790; Port-au-Prince, 20/02; départ,	Nantes, 03/06/1790

			Espérance, 05/12 au 25/12 1789	21/04/1790	
1790	<i>L'Assemblée Nationale</i>	08 ou 15/02/1790	Île de France, 1605/1790; Mozambique, départ, 12/10/1790	Cap, 30/12/1790	?
1790	<i>Le Stanislas</i>	14/03/1790	Île de France; départ, 11/08/1790; Saigon; Île de France, 22/04/1791; Quiloa	?	?
1790	<i>L'Amitié</i>	27/10/1790	Île de France, 29/05/1791	Saint-Marc, 31/01/1792	?
1791	<i>Le Patriote</i>	?	Île de France, 27/10/1791; Batavia; Île de France, 14/03/1792; Mozambique; Île de France, 26/10/1792	?	?
1791	<i>L'Actif</i>	?	Île de France, 12/03/1792; Mozambique; Île de France, 26/07/1792	?	?

Twelve companies undertook these 19 trips, trading some 6,205 slaves and some 2,910 slaves to Mauritius alone between 1771 and 1791.

### MARSEILLES

Marseilles developed a powerful set of merchants in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, from 250 merchants to over 750 by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. According to latest figures, most of these went to the Americas, and it was only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> that they came to the Mascarenes.<sup>94</sup> Many reasons have been advanced for the lack of interest before this period, all the more so intriguing as voices were raised against the slave trade: lack of knowledge of Atlantic compared to other ports, lack of freight (they only had wines and cloth).<sup>95</sup> They were also more used to quicker returns, having traded with Mediterranean countries for so long. One of the most important of slave traders was Georges Roux, who owned the

On Toussaint's list was the *Felicité* on 9 July 1793. Although trade resumed after 1803. Only a few ships made it to Mauritius from Marseilles: the last ship was the *Paquebot de Marseilles* whose captain was Chauvin in 20 September 1805.

The destinations of these ships was as follows:

Marseille	102	Kilwa	5	Moka	4
Batavia	6	Surat	2	CGH	2
Pondichéry	1	Mozambique	1	Mongale	1
Wampou	1	Kerimba	2	Goa	1
African coast	1	China	1	Canton	1
Calcutta	1	Aleppey	1		

But the main reason for the rise of Marseilles in the slave trade was the *prime* offered in colonies for every head of slave brought as from 1784.

### ST. MALO

In the French slave trade, St. Malo ranks as perhaps the fifth port and deserves its appellation as the port of corsairs. It started slave trading later than other ports and began when trade restrictions were imposed by peace treaties; it preferred more traditional activities. The *Malouins* entered the slave trade timidly:

1748 - 1775: 4 voyages per year

1751: 10 voyages

1753: 9 voyages

1763- 1778: 86 voyages, 6 per year

1763-1770: 52 voyages

1170- 1778: 34 voyages

The biggest trader was Magon de la Balue between 1717 and 1744, but it is between 1748 and 1788 that there was a real boom with largest fortunes made in Marseilles; Magon armed several slave trading ships, *Zélé*, *Le duc de Choiseul*, *Le Duc de Praslin*, *Le Modeste*. Charles Carrière has compiled a list of some 40 merchants engaged in the slave trade. How many came to the Indian Ocean is not yet known, nor how many of those engaged in slave trading acquired plantations in Mauritius in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

129 ships set sail from Marseilles to the Mascarenes between 1773 and 1819 alone, according to Toussaint. On Toussaint's list, 134 ships are listed as having arrived or werearmed in the Mascarenes from Marseille. Buti says that it was because of the terms of the Seven Years War and the Treaty of Paris, that the sugar islands in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean became more important and the plantation economies started emerging.<sup>96</sup>

However, they seem important for the Indian Ocean, especially for the Huguenot traders among them. According to Carrière,<sup>97</sup> they also belonged to Freemason Societies, La Loge Saint Jean d'Ecosse, in particular. Names of ships reflect this freemason influence: *Les Bons Amis*, *La Concorde*, *l'Union*. Among famous names of traders were Aenaud, Beaussier, Bigaud, Chauvet, Dallest, Mathieu, Solier, Martin and Salavy. Many were also academics.

Rambert lists 18 ships bound for Mascarenes between 1767 and 1785.

For 1785 to 1789, 33 ships are listed. Dermigny in *Cargaison Indiennes* lists 6 voyages from Marseilles between 1781 and 1791.

How many were engaged in slave trading remains to be determined.

Among the Captains of ships, many names are familiar to Mauritians today: Audibert, André, Blancard, Bouille, Carosin, Fabre, Mariette. Simon was in charge of the *Auguste*, the *Euphrosine* and the *Pintade*. Pinatel headed the *Iris* and the *Malabar*. Rimbaud captained the *Sardine*. Most ships appeared only once or twice, and very few came for more than 4 voyages. At this stage, it was not possible to find out how many or which made other shorter trips during their stay in the Indian Ocean. The last ship, according to other traders joining in after the Wars of Succession.

For Mauritius, in the early years of French colonization, St. Malo was the first port to supply slaves regularly, and many 'Malouins' were actively engaged in the slave trade to Mauritius and Reunion. The best known (Malouin) is Governor Labourdonnais himself. Other Governors, such as Bouvier de Lozier and Rene Magon, also contributed to the expansion of the slave population on the island.

From Port Louis, several voyages were made to procure slaves in India, Madagascar, and Mozambique, while Company ships brought slaves from West Africa. Many of these ships' Captains and traders were from St. Malo.

However, as Roman reminds us, while the corsairs were active in periods of war, during peace time, they were active in trading and in commerce, of which the slave trade played a vital part. How important for the Indian Ocean, and particularly for Mauritius, was corsair activity, has not yet been estimated by historians, who have chosen to study the more 'heroic' past of St. Malo and its people than its corsair and maritime activities.

Roman has also looked at the earlier period, when slave trade was becoming a necessary part of commerce, but was not yet a trade manned by 'professionals'. Many undertook one voyage and then ceased.<sup>98</sup>

There was no barrier between different maritime activities. People engaged in all maritime activities, depending on the circumstances. The existence of '*négociants/négriers*' or merchant/slavers was a reality; in other words, people who were merchants were also involved in the slave trade. In St. Malo, the best example and the most famous of these persons was Mesle de Grandclos, whose biography has been written.

**Mesle de Grandclos:** The extent of his activities in the Indian Ocean and, in particular with Mauritius, needs to be examined. He amassed a huge fortune from his commercial activities in the Atlantic. As well as engaging in the Indian Ocean, he inevitably became involved in political activities during the Revolutionary period. He had to flee France for a short period and still had considerable funds left even when his possessions were seized. During one trip to China on the *Modeste*, he made 800% profit.<sup>99</sup>

85 ships from St. Malo alone came to Mauritius between 1775 and 1810. Many of these also had been to Eastern Africa, India and Batavia and brought back slaves.

**Louis Athanase Ohier** was born in 1730 in a modest maritime family and became Captain of several slave trading ships. At the age of 9, he embarked for Pondichéry, and again in 1742-43. Contact with slave trading began when he was on the *Grande Vigilante* commanded by his uncle, Louis. Other ships included in 1753-4, the *Heureux Captif*, in 1755, the *Perle* which was the 11<sup>th</sup> ship of the grandfather of Surcouf.

In 1757, he married Nicole Merven whose brother Joseph Merven had settled in Mauritius. His son was Louis Marie Joseph who in 1776-7 was a volunteer on the *Severe* commanded by his father. He embarked on several trading missions and was captured by the English several times. Other trading missions included:

- 1760-1: *Amaranthe*, armed by Chateaubriand and commanded by Claude Dominique Avice
- 1764: *Heureux*<sup>100</sup>
- 1766:, 1769, 1776, *Sévère*
- 1783: arrived in Mauritius on the *Deux Soeurs*
- 1785: *Mesry* (6<sup>th</sup> slave trading trip on Mesry)
- 1790: *Bon Ménage* which went later to Pondichéry

Did he become rich? An inventory of his belongings at time of death of his wife in 1781 lists substantial property. From 5 of his slave trading ventures between 1763 and 1777, he collected some 15,000 *livres* or on average 3,000 *livres* per voyage. On the 5 voyages, some 2,200 Africans were captured as slaves, with a commission of 2%. In addition, most slave trading ships also carried *pacotilles* and so revenues far exceeded the 45,000 *livres* from slave trading alone.

**Beaugeard**, a millionaire by today's standards is an interesting case to study. Apart from slave trading, he was also engaged in number of voyages to India and China and invested massively in his voyages. 8 slaving voyages between 1763 and 1770 in Indian Ocean and only 4 after 1771 to 1778:

- Betsy*: 50-ton, journey of Port Louis (Orient) to Aleppey on 19 February 1799.
- Mentor*: two trips to Zanzibar between 1802-1803.
- Rencontre*: between and 7 February 1803 and went to Zanzibar in August 1803.
- Robust*: Went to Zanzibar on 29 December 1807 and 31 December 1808.
- Captained the ship *Sultany* flying Arab colours
- Uni*: also on 15 December 1803 and on 12 June 1804 went to Zanzibar.

**Magon:** There were also a small number of traders involved. Apart from Magon, there was also his nephew Magon de la Lande, who organized 16 voyages after 1763, together with Nouail de la Villegille; René de Chateaubriand, the brothers Surcouf, Beaugard, Le Breton de Blessin, Sebire des Saudrais.<sup>101</sup> How many of these came to Mauritius is unknown as yet.

If the ship *Maurepas* going to St. Domingue and the *Comte de Maurepas* are the same, the ship is interesting, for after trading in high seas, it becomes a *vaisseau de cote* in Mauritius and is finally shipwrecked. The Captain, Magon, is the same throughout.

**Le Bo:** Many were associated by kin. Françoise Datour, according to Roman, widow of Le Bo, organised 4 expeditions, her son-in-law, took over Joseph Le Gentil, with 2 voyages, in 1763-4,

while her daughter, who married P. J. Mesle de Grandclos, sent 25 ships between 1763 and 1777. He recruited his brother-in-law as Captain, Louis Marie Harrington, who also became *armateur* before the Revolution.

*Captains* trading after 1763 included : Jean Baudry, Paul Hardy, Jean Francois Corbille, Merven. Grandclos employed Nicolas Le Gue, Joseph Daniel des Landes, Dominique Jallobert, Baudran de Maupertuis, Louis Athanase Ohier, Toussaint Leforestier, Charles Ozelle and Pierre Carre.

#### Decline after 1770

St. Malo's trade in slaves appears to decline after 1770. In later years, many traders abandoned slave trading. Pottier de la Houssaye continued, as did Mesle de Grandclos. But the others, Hercouet, Deshaies, Harrington, Dubois and Fichet Desjardins, abandoned the trade.

Toussaint, who consulted archives relating to arrivals in Mauritius, noted that between 1769 and 1810, only 54 ships arrived from St. Malo. According to Roman, who has tried to complement this information by consulting French archives between 1771 to 1792, 100 ships left for the Indian Ocean, 4 per year. Saint Malo sent 54 to Ile de France and 24 to China and India. Ten of them passed through Lorient, Marseille and Bordeaux, a fact of which Toussaint, was not aware, according to Roman. 8 never reached their destination, 2 were seized by the British, three were shipwrecked and 2 are not known and 1 was abandoned in Bordeaux. Many St. Malo slave traders relocated to other ports.

Ships involved in slave trading included: the *Victoire* in 1783 from Bordeaux and 3 from Marseille: the *Duc d'Orléans*, *Bon Ménage* and *Eugenie*.

#### 1793 to 1803

Trade continued but was much slower; ships coming out of St. Malo to Indian Ocean included: the *Bon Ménage* belonging to Harrington, that came to Mauritius, traded in slaves in Mozambique and took them to Martinique. Between 1793-4, the *Navigateur* of Captain Lejof, with young Surcouf on board, undertook 2 voyages to Mozambique: it bought over 1000 slaves, but we do not know yet how many came to Mauritius. In 1795, Surcouf armed a ship *La Créole* to trade slaves in Mozambique. Other possible slave ships to the Mascarenes include: *Général Moreau* belonging to Corson and Deshays, commanded by Le Forestier, *Minerve*, *Fortune* and *Marengo* going to Mauritius. Only *Petite Africaine* was a known slaver; at 143 tonnes, it was armed by Le Mème and Gautier and commanded by Jacques Pinou des Prairies. It was taken by the British on 20 Fructidor An IX according to the *armateur* on its way from Zanzibar to Mauritius.<sup>102</sup>

**Surcouf** This family, including the grandfather and great uncle of Robert Surcouf, had been trading in slaves since the 1720s. St. Malo played its role in the illegal slave trade, with Robert Surcouf operating between 1815 and 1824.

Table 7: Ships arriving from Saint-Malo

Name of Ship	Tonnage	Captain	Port of departure	Date of Arrival
<i>Frogerus</i>	296	Sophie Désirée	NIL	14 April 1773
<i>Amitié</i>	Nil	De Faguès	Antille	11 December 1773
<i>Saint-René</i>	140	Girron?	Saint-Malo	25 January 1776
<i>Aimable Victoire</i>	NIL	Ruellan de Gallinée	Saint-Malo	1 September 1776
<i>Moissonneur</i>	140	Dubois	Pondichéry	8 December 1776
<i>Diligent</i>	NIL	La Villecollet	Saint-Malo	11 February 1777
<i>Père de Famille</i>	180	Drieux	Saint-Malo	15 February 1777
<i>Confiance</i>	80	Lecorre	Mozambique	22 April 1779
<i>Confiance</i>	80	Lecorre	Côte d'Afrique	4 November 1779

<i>Confiance</i>	80	Lecorre	Batavia	30 April 1780
<i>Aurore</i>	250	Restif	Saint-Malo	13 February 1786
<i>Aurore</i>	749	Tardivet	Saint-Malo	24 June 1789
<i>Beauté</i>	NIL	Loisel	Yanaon	16 March 1784
<i>Bonne Foi</i>	80	Louvel Desvaux	Saint-Malo	8 July 1789
<i>Bougainville</i>	630 (400)	Rostaing?	Lorient	11 November 1783
<i>Bougainville</i>	400 (630)	Longueville	Saint-Malo	29 July 1788
<i>Comte d'Artois</i>	150	Rouillard	Saint-Malo	11 March 1788
<i>Comte de La Luzerne</i>	NIL	Morin	Saint-Malo	4 September 1788
<i>Comte de Latouche</i>	250	Girodroux	Saint-Malo	18 March 1789
<i>Comte de Narbonne</i>	250	Le Péru	CGH	20 June 1781
<i>Comte de Thiard</i>	370	Avice	Saint-Malo	24 November 1789
<i>Comtesse de Maillé</i>	300	Lévesque	Ile d'Aix	11 May 1783
<i>Grand Saint-Pierre</i>	200 (390)	De Lorme	Lorient	13 December 1781
<i>Indien</i>	250	Bazin	Saint-Malo	23 August 1786
<i>Jean-Louis</i>	300 (410)	Heuzé	Lorient	12 December 1781
<i>Julie</i>	NIL	Ruault	Marseille	23 April 1792
<i>Lévrier</i>	140	Desesmaisons	Pondichéry	13 December 1787
<i>Lévrier</i>	140	Bourdé de la Villaubert	Saint-Malo	31 December 1786
<i>Louise Marie</i>	340	Michel	Saint-Malo	15 January 1788
<i>Louis-Marie</i>	340	Damas	Saint-Malo	27 January 1792
<i>Maréchal d'Estainville</i>	200 (230)	De Lalande Le Brun	Saint-Malo	12 May 1789
<i>Marie Jeanne</i>	180	Rouxel	Saint-Malo	29 May 1785
<i>Marquis de Castries</i>	300	Le Breton	Quiloa	1 November 1784
<i>Marquis de Castries</i>	300	Le Breton	Saint-Malo	15 February 1784
<i>Marquis de Vaudreuil</i>	NIL	Roger	Saint-Malo	3 April 1787
<i>Marquise de Saint-Pern</i>	350	Gaillard	Saint-Malo	29 December 1787
<i>Moissonneur</i>	140	Dubois	Pondichéry	12 January 1778
<i>Mont Marin</i>	NIL	Bouillet	Saint-Malo	23 February 1789
<i>Navigateur</i>	300	Le Joliff	Mozambique	25 September 1793
<i>Navigateur</i>	300	Le Joliff	Mozambique	4 March 1794
<i>Navigateur</i>	NIL	Le Joliff	Bordeaux	11 March 1793
<i>Père de Famille</i>	180	Morand?	Pondichéry?	21 September 1778
<i>Petite Manon</i>	120	Hérisson	Saint-Malo	27 October 1787
<i>Pontbrilliant</i>	NIL	De Lalande Lebrun	Saint-Malo	28 December 1787
<i>Prince d'Henin</i>	250	Villecollet	Saint-Malo	5 October 1787
<i>Prince d'Henin</i>	250	Bouan	Saint-Malo	24 March 1789
<i>Printemps</i>	NIL	Sauvage de Beauséjour	Bengal	3 December 1775
<i>Sainte-Anne</i>	300	Astruc	Lorient	15 September 1774
<i>Sainte-Anne</i>	NIL	Henouet	Saint-Malo	27 March 1777
<i>Saint-Esprit</i>	300 (280)	Longueville	Surate	20 February

				1786
<i>Saint-Esprit</i>	330 (280)	Longueville	Pondichéry	3 December 1786
<i>Saint-Esprit</i>	330 (280)	Duclos Guyot	Saint-Malo	22 August 1785
<i>Sainte-Thérèse</i>	NIL	Delot	Saint-Malo	7 November 1783
<i>Saint-Yves</i>	NIL	Delaunay	Saint-Malo	10 June 1790
<i>Sophie</i>	NIL	Gervaise	Saint-Malo	20 July 1789
<i>Suffren</i>	NIL	Delamarre	CGH	16 April 1790
<i>Suffren</i>	NIL	Lamarre	Saint-Malo	13 November 1789
<i>Surprise</i>	150	Royé	Saint-Malo	29 August 1787
<i>Trois Cousins</i>	522	Henoust	Pondichéry	9 March 1785
<i>Union</i>	NIL	Le Bonhomme	CGH	23 October 1782
<i>Union</i>	400	Le Bonhomme	Lorient	19 August 1781
<i>Victoire</i>	400	Michel	Quiloa	20 May 1784
<i>Victoire</i>	400	Michel	Bordeaux	7 November 1783
<i>Voyageur</i>	NIL	Mancel	Calcutta	1 March 1792
<i>Succès</i>	NIL	Duclos Guyot	Saint-Malo	26 August 1792

Source: Compiled from Auguste Toussaint, *La Route des Iles*

## NANTES

We have little information yet on how many ships arrived in Mauritius before the end of Company rule. The latest research on Nantes-Mauritius slave trade comes from Alain Romaine who noted some 15 ships registered with the *Amirauté* and who went to Mozambique to procure slaves.<sup>103</sup>

Name of Ship		Tonnage	Captain		Date of Arrival	
<i>AIMABLE-NANON</i>	frégate		Glier		15/04/1748	ARM
<i>DRAGON</i>	navire	800	Nicolas-Jacques Le Cerf	110	17/01/1748	ARM
<i>SULTANE</i>	vaisseau	600	François Lossieux	103	13/01/1748	ARM
<i>TREIZE-CANTONS</i>	frégate	480	Arnous	71	03/01/1749	ARM
<i>MONTMARTEL</i>	vaisseau		Guenichon		05/06/1757	
<i>GRACIEUSE</i>	frégate	200	Louis-Antoine de Saint-Martin,	68	16/03/1762	ARM

## 1763 TO 1792

According to McWatters, who has studied trade from this port for the period 1763 to 1792, the total number of ships 'outfitted' at Nantes rose from 127 to 230 per year; the average tonnage increased from 182.28 to 235.97 tonnes.

The corresponding averages for departures of *négriers* are 29 in 1763 and 21 in 1792; average tonnage rose from 117.52 to 233.7 tonnes.<sup>104</sup> The trade expanded to other centres in the late eighteenth century, with a decline in the dominance of Nantes-centred operations after the Seven Years' War. From then on, trade increased, with the average number of vessels departing from France each year and returning compared to that experienced in the pre-war period. Growth brought a greater participation of traders from other centres, including Bordeaux and La Rochelle. Prior to the war, vessels originating in Nantes represented more than 50 per cent of the trade, but only about 40 per cent in the period immediately following the war. The percentage of captives

carried by vessels from Nantes also declined from approximately 50 per cent before 1759 to less than 40 per cent after 1763.<sup>105</sup>

During the period between 1773 and 1810, studied by Toussaint, a total of 43 ships came from Nantes to the Mascarenes. How many traded in slaves is not yet clear.

1772 and 1778: However, as far as the Indian Ocean and Mauritius were concerned, ships from Nantes were not numerous. Only 7 ships are armed for the East African coast between 1772 and 1778.

1783 and 1793: Only 14 or 15 arrived between 1783 and 1793, as against 80 from Bordeaux. It appears that there were cash-flows and liquidity problems, and they could not supply Arab and Portuguese intermediaries with the required amount of *piastres*. They thus preferred to engage in trade with partners who could purchase Nantese or French products.

#### LA ROCHELLE

Generally, according to Deveau who has focused on the Caribbean, 427 ships left La Rochelle to engage in slave trading.<sup>106</sup> As with Bordeaux and Nantes the French Government allowed them, from 1716 to trade privately in slaves as long a tropical products were brought back to the port: wood, sugar coffee etc. According to Deveau, these were extremely profitable ventures.<sup>107</sup> The boost to trade came in 1784 with a *prime* of 40 livres given to every *tonne jauge*. Evidence is fragmentary since we do not have in France private archives of slave trading companies. However, there is physical evidence that companies improved their economic status with trading families living in middle class neighbourhoods in La Rochelle today. It makes slave trading all the more inhuman since the gains were not necessarily worth the cost in human lives.

As elsewhere, slave trading was a family affair. Few would undertake the financing of a slave voyage alone and usually took on partners from the family and shared profits proportionately. Trade dwindled during the Revolutionary Period and ended completely by 1792 because of the revolution in Haiti. The slave traders organized lobbies to maintain the trade and were supported by metal and textile manufacturers who were supplying slave ships. They sent a representative, Jean Baptiste Nairac, to defend their cause in the National Assembly on the grounds that lack of trade would bring ruin to the port. The slave trade was maintained.<sup>108</sup>

As far as Mauritius was concerned, 39 ships are listed by Toussaint and said to have arrived in Mauritius in this period with the last ship arriving in 1790. Twenty-two of these are said to have carried Captains, who engaged in multiple voyages, included Robin, Lalande, Desplannes/De planne.

Table 9: Ships arriving from La Rochelle

Name of Ship	Tonnage	Captain	Port of departure	Date of Arrival
<i>Henri IV</i>	NIL	Goinard	Bordeaux	12.2.1790
<i>Porus</i>	NIL	Robin	Bordeaux	23.11.1789
<i>Revanche</i>	NIL	Robin	Bordeaux	23.8.1788
<i>Amitié</i>	350	Bargeaud	Brest	1.8.1782
<i>Bonhomme Richard</i>	650	Quenet	Calcutta	18.2.1785
<i>Alcyon</i>	NIL	Desplannes	Cape of Good Hope	14.5.1791
<i>Alcyon</i>	NIL	De Planne	La Rochelle	5.10.1790
<i>Alexandre</i>	212 (200)	Layssard	La Rochelle	3.10.1774
<i>Amitié</i>	350 (250)	Milleret	La Rochelle	11.8.1788
<i>Archiduc</i>	550 (650)	Dorchmand?	La Rochelle	1.3.1784
<i>Atlas</i>	350	Lalande	La Rochelle	28.9.1786
<i>Bonhomme Richard</i>	650	Quenel	La Rochelle	9.1.1784
<i>Capitaine Cook</i>	300	Mariette	La Rochelle	25.6.1788
<i>Constance-Adèle</i>	NIL	Régnaud	La Rochelle	17.1.1793
<i>Créole</i>	80	Robin	La Rochelle	24.4.1783
<i>Deux Maris?</i>	300	Savary	La Rochelle	18.4.1785
<i>Duc de Normandie</i>	NIL	Chouteau	La Rochelle	5.10.1792
<i>Espiègle</i>	130	Robin	La Rochelle	26.9.1785
<i>Henry IV</i>	NIL	Webb	La Rochelle	6.9.1791
<i>Heureux</i>	140	De Lalande	La Rochelle	22.8.1783
<i>Insulaire</i>	120	Lafontaine	La Rochelle	28.11.1784
<i>Jolie Henriette de Ribaucourt</i>	800	Le Breton de la Vieuville	La Rochelle	11.4.1784
<i>Marie Magdelaine</i>	80	Rajot de Beurivage	La Rochelle	5.6.1774
<i>Nautile</i>	NIL	K/nell	La Rochelle	23.12.1788
<i>Neptune</i>	240	Boutet	La Rochelle	11.4.1786
<i>Neptune</i>	240	Deplanne	La Rochelle	29.9.1787
<i>Neptune</i>	240	Deplanne	La Rochelle	4.3.1789
<i>Revanche</i>	NIL	Lucet	Rochelle	6.11.1790
<i>Baron de Montmorency</i>	263	Crassoux	Lorient	19.1.1782
<i>Cérès</i>	320	Giraud	Lorient	28.1.1775
<i>Fargès</i>	900	Mugny	Lorient	30.1.1779
<i>Trois Amis</i>	900	Bonfils	Lorient	30.4.1777
<i>Archiduc</i>	550 (650)	Renard	Madras	3.8.1785
<i>Indien</i>	NIL	Robin	Mahé	14.5.1792
<i>Trois Amis</i>	850	Bonfils	Mahé	29.5.1775
<i>Chavillon</i>	NIL	Neveu	Rochefort	22.9.1776
<i>Amitié</i>	350	Bargeaud?	Trincomalé	22.8.1783
<i>Bordelais</i>	1200 (1100)	Marin de Marnière	Yanaon	26.11.1777
<i>Comte de Maurepas</i>	550	Robinot des Moulières	Lorient	26.7.1775

## BREST

There was very little slave trading between the Port of Brest and Mauritius. Most ships were Government ships, and it is not known whether they carried slaves before 1762. However, the last slave trading ship the *Épervier* from Brest went to the Indian Ocean and to Mauritius; it made its slave trading journey from Ibo disembarking on 3 January 1785. Although the records showed a Brest to Brest trip, they fail to mention the slave trading trip to Ibo. We do not know yet how many slaves came to Mauritius.

From Brest also came some well-known names, such as the Trebuchet family.

Table 10: Ships arriving from Brest

<i>Name of Ship</i>	Ton- nage	Port d'arme- ment	Captain	Date of depar- ture	Port of departure	Date of Arrival	Stop 1
<i>Lys</i>	du roi		Jean-Baptiste- Charles de Lozier- Bouvet		brest	15/11/1749	
<i>Anglesea</i>	720		Marc-Antoine Selle		brest	30/07/1749	
<i>Apollon</i>	du roi		Thomas-Herbert de La Porte-Barré		brest	22/03/1750	
<i>Diligente</i>	500		Pierre-Léon Maugueret		brest	16/04/1761	
<i>Aactif</i>	du roi				Brest	10/02/1762	
<i>Minautore</i>	du roi	Brest		NIL	brest	10/02/1762	
<i>Zodiaque</i>	du roi	Brest		NIL	brest	10/02/1762	
<i>Comte de Grasse</i>	250	Brest	Trébuchet	NIL	Trincomal é	23.9.1783	
<i>Comte de Grasse</i>	250	Brest	Trébuchet	NIL	Brest	3.8.1782	
<i>Epervier</i>	250	Brest	Bouchet	NIL	Brest	15.5.1784	ibo
<i>Marie Flore</i>	NIL	Brest	Montagne	NIL	Bordeaux	11.6.1790	
<i>Ville d'Archangelsk</i>	600	Brest	Dufrese	NIL	Brest	1.5.1789	
<i>Belle Reine</i>	NIL	Brest	Tanguy	NIL	Brest	1.12.1791	
<i>Bien-Aimée</i>	NIL	Brest	Montagne	NIL	Bordeaux	23.7.1792	

Source : Toussaint, *La Route des Iles for 1780-1810*, Le Lan database for 1729-1765

## LE HAVRE ET HONFLEUR

According to Eric Saunier, the Hague and Honfleur saw the start of about 500 slaving voyages.<sup>109</sup> Out of these, however, according to Toussaint, only one came to the Indian Ocean between 1773 and 1803 from the Hague and 7 from Honfleur. None appear to have come during Company rule.

Slave trade increased dramatically, according to Saunier, after the French Government *offered prime* of 40 *livres* for each *tonneau de jauge* and 160-200 *livres* for every slave disembarked in the colonies

## ROCHEFORT

The hinterland at Rochefort was ideal for trading, as it supplied the crew required for long-haul voyages, even though slave trade was not that important. The *Boulongne* and the *Boutin*, both of equal tonnage, arrived on the same day in Mauritius (see slave trade database 1729-1765). Whether they carried slaves is not known yet.

Non-European ports have rarely been considered in the list of ports being studied for the slave trade. But as the list below shows, these were numerous. Our knowledge of the slave trade will not be complete unless these are studied too and their role in the slave trade examined. Also of

concern is the fact that on Toussaint's list, the ports of departure for some 326 ships out of a total of 3,183 ships are not listed.

Table 11: Ships arriving from other ports

<i>Achem</i>	1	Villefranche	1	Providence	7
<i>Ajengo</i>	1	Aden	2	Bourbon	8
<i>Antille</i>	1	Amsterdam	2	Aleppey	9
<i>Antongil</i>	1	Bayonne	2	Lubeck	9
<i>Baie Delagoa</i>	1	Bimlipatam	2	Sourabaya	9
<i>Balemboang</i>	1	Elseneur	2	Chandernagor	10
<i>Barcelone</i>	1	Gothenbourg	2	Montevideo	10
<i>Bassorah</i>	1	Inhambane	2	Livourne	11
<i>Belfort?</i>	1	Lindy	2	Surat	12
<i>Bencoolen</i>	1	Malacca	2	Ibo	14
<i>Beverly</i>	1	Mombasa	2	Kerimba	14
<i>Bord'</i>	1	Newhaven	2	Lisbonne	14
<i>Cadix</i>	1	Samarang	2	Réunion	15
<i>Cap de la Virginie</i>	1	Ste. Anne	2	Moka	16
<i>Charleston</i>	1	Ténériffe	2	Sérampore	17
<i>Charlestown (Antilles)</i>	1	Altona	3	Macao	20
<i>Chatignan (Chittagong)</i>	1	Buenos Aires	3	Manille	20
<i>Cowes</i>	1	Côte de Coromandel	3	Trincomalé	21
<i>Divirapatnam</i>	1	Ile Coetivy	3	Canton	23
<i>Emden</i>	1	Java	3	Goa	24
<i>Gloucester</i>	1	Newport	3	Zanzibar	24
<i>Gloucester (Amérique)</i>	1	Padang	3	Bombay	25
<i>Gulslatte</i>	1	Pulopinang	3	Chine	25
<i>Halifax</i>	1	Sète	3	Cochin	27
<i>Ile aux Frégates</i>	1	Aldabra	4	Madras	27
<i>Ile de l'Assomption</i>	1	Goudelour	4	Côte d'Afrique	28
<i>Lousiane</i>	1	Ile Praslin	4	Mahé	28
<i>Madagascar</i>	1	Nouvelle Angleterre	4	Sumatra	31
<i>Madère</i>	1	Rhode Island	4	Mascate	33
<i>Mafia</i>	1	Rio de La Plata	4	India	34
<i>Mers de L'Inde</i>	1	Saint-Domingue	4	Baltimore	39
<i>Moz</i>	1	Yanaon	4	Copenhague	49
<i>Nagapatam</i>	1	Coringuy	5	New York	54
<i>Nantucket</i>	1	Pégou	5	Calcutta	57
<i>Naour</i>	1	Ceylan	6	Philadelphia	60
<i>Negapatam</i>	1	Côte de Malabar	6	Kilwa	63
<i>Pepperell Boro</i>	1	Pégou	5	Boston	68
<i>Port Louis</i>	1	Ceylan	6	Salem	73
<i>Saint-Sébastien (Espagne)</i>	1	Côte de Malabar	6	Cape of Good Hope	80
<i>Siam</i>	1	Galle	6	Bengal	85
<i>Stockholm</i>	1	Rangoon	6	Seychelles	94
<i>Tamatave</i>	1	Wampou	6	Tranquebar	103
<i>Mozambique</i>	136	Batavia	196	Trawemunde	124

## PRICES

Accounting historians have also been investigating how the accounts of the slave trade were kept. A unique journal, the *Guide du commerce*, written by Gaignat de l'Aulnais in 1771, has led to a detailed and equally unique historical study by Cheryl McWatters.<sup>110</sup> According to McWatters:

*"Le Guide du commerce [...] est le seul ouvrage à présenter de manière détaillée le traitement comptable des opérations de la traite négrière, notamment des diverses transactions relatives à la « cargaison » humaine".*

In this journal, McWatters highlights the basic documents required for a slave trading expedition, according to Gaignat. These were: "*Le journal de traite, le livre de factures, le journal de vente*"

*des noirs et achats en retour et enfin le grand livre*" [Eng trans: *The slave trading journal, the receipt book, the sales of slaves book, and purchases book and finally the big book*]. Although written for Atlantic voyages, it seems unlikely that it would have been any different in the Indian Ocean, since many of the ships and Captains were the same. A greater search of the accounts of slave traders might reveal as yet unknown facets of the history of slavery and slave trade.

To assess the value, in modern terms, of the price of the slave, one must look at the prices at which slaves were bought and sold in the country of origin, as well as when they were landed in Mauritius and when they were traded internally. Not all trading was carried out in currency and slaves, in the country of origin, were often exchanged, but this exchange often involved currency.

Slaves continued to bring in revenue from transactions, even after they were sold to a master for they could be hired to others. Thus in 1735, the *Conseil Supérieur* fixed the tariffs of hire of slaves at 15 *piastres*.<sup>111</sup>

There were also those who were simply captured and kidnapped from their villages and where no trading took place. This is currently impossible to quantify. But oral tradition in Mozambique exist and deserve further study. Benigna Zimba has recommended that memorialisation of this part of the history of slave trade should be included in future representations of slavery in Mauritius.

The medium of exchange was at first textiles, rum and muskets. But the Malagasy increasingly began to demand hard currency, in Spanish *piastres*. By 1807, the French trader, Sylvain Roux, wrote that slaves cost 45 *piastres* as well as 2 bales of blue cloth. i.e. forming 80% of the transaction.<sup>112</sup>

The French Government believed such trade could only be profitable, if it had exclusive rights over Madagascar slave trading, because it could not compete with private traders:

*"La traite à Madagascar: La partie nord de Madagascar ne peut nous être utile ici pour la traite du Roi et des esclaves, que lorsque le Roi y aura fait un établissement exclusif [...] "*<sup>113</sup>

It appears that traders had goods produced in India, which Malagasy traders did not want, and they were forced to ask for hard currency in piastres:

*"L'exportation des piastres à l'île de Madagascar, ils ont fait fabriquer dans les différentes parties de l'Inde des marchandises qu'ils connaissent propres à déguster ces insulaires de ne consentir à traiter qu'en piastres les esclaves de cette Isle [...]"*.<sup>114</sup>

Currencies became increasingly used; one must also bear in mind the multiplicity of currencies at the time and fluctuations in the value of each currency during wars, for example, or depending on the economic fortunes in France and in Europe generally. *Piastres* or *livres* were the currency used in Mauritius.

Prices ranged widely according to the country of origin at the time. Prices mentioned here refer to a male adult slave, the typical slave sought after for the various tasks being undertaken in Mauritius.<sup>115</sup>

In the early years of 'Isle de France', slaves could be procured for 100 *livres*. In 1732, the East India Company bought Indian slaves at 3-4 *piastres* per head in India.

Within Mauritius, however, in 1738, slaves were being sold for far more at 200 *piastres* per slave.<sup>116</sup> This was still the case in 1745 for Mozambican and Malagasy slaves, while West African slaves were the most preferred and sold at 250 *piastres* per slave.<sup>117</sup> By 1758, this had gone up to 400 *piastres* for a slave from Madagascar.<sup>118</sup>

In 1763, it was stated that the Company was selling slaves cheaper than private traders: Malagasy and Mozambican slaves at 25-30 *piastres* per slave, while those from Goa fetched 40-45 *piastres*.<sup>119</sup> On 30 November 1767, M. Poivre provided details of prices of slaves:<sup>120</sup>

Pièce d'Inde and from Guinea: 720 *piastres*      Mozambique: 540 *piastres*  
 Madagascar: 360 *piastres*                                  Indian: 300 *piastres*

Prices fluctuated in the country of origin and according to traders or so it would seem:

1774:      25 *piastres* according to Mayeur  
 1787:      115 *piastres* according to Dumaine  
 1806:      90 *piastres* according to Froberville

#### HOW WERE SLAVES SOLD IN MAURITIUS?

Slaves were sold in various ways if they were introduced legally.

- Slaves brought by the Company would be 'distributed' between the various inhabitants who had required them.
- Others would be sold by the notary usually in his office
- Slaves were also sold at auctions. One recorded site of sale was at the Place d'Armes.
- In the 1790s, because of the smallpox epidemic, slaves were sold on board after being vaccinated. This occurred on the *Saturne* whose voyage has been described in detail by Alain Romaine.<sup>121</sup>

Information about the arrival of slaves on ships was given to the public by a poster appearing on walls, at least in the 1760s:

*"chaque vaisseau chargé de nègres sera annoncé par une affiche ou avis général et les noirs seront distribués à chaque habitant sans préférence, à raison de ses besoins ou de ses forces au prix dont on conviendra".*

We have not been able to trace any of these posters so far since those repositories at the time of writing have not provided access yet, notably the MCB and the MSIRI.

When Liberated Africans were brought, they too passed through the same Customs House as slaves. A certain continuity thus existed in the sites used for embarkation. After formalities were completed, they were taken to the Immigration Depot where they would be registered as indentured immigrants just like the indentured labourers who were later brought from India.

These sites need to be adequately memorialised, since currently there are no such sites related to the landing of slaves in Mauritius. While other landing places exist for people who have come as immigrants, such as the Salines or at the Aapravasi Ghat, a memorial place for those people brought as 'cargo' is also necessary so that the Mauritian population may see and understand the full breadth and all facets of how immigration has occurred in Mauritius.

#### THE GOODS

Ships brought back slaves as well as rice, cattle and sacks made of 'vacoa' in exchange for *piastres*, muskets, cloth from Madagascar. From Mozambique, ivory, gold and cowries were traded in exchange for Spanish *pataques*, pottery from Bengal, arms and ammunition and *eau de vie* and foodstuff. From Europe and India, textiles were one of the most important cargo purchased.

The textile trade deserves a special mention as it plays a major role in the slave trade, due to the demand for cloth in Africa and to the need to clothe the slaves in the colonies. Up to 60% of the cargo would be composed of textiles.<sup>122</sup> But it was not any clothing that was demanded by slave

traders; Indian printed or painted cotton were in high demand. These cloths had been made in India but gradually, they began to be manufactured in France. They were commonly called '*indiennes*' in French because they had been originally imported, printed or painted from India and gradually copied by French manufacturers. These '*indiennes*' were exchanged for slaves in Africa by French traders. According to Gilles Forster, constituting a cargo for slave trading was not cheap as African chiefs were often quite demanding. 60 to 80% of the costs of the slave trading expedition would be taken up by purchasing of the cargo. The demand for textiles and other goods could not be met by one trader alone and the cargo leaving France was often constituted with the help of manufacturers outside France. Textile manufacturers in Switzerland often supplied these '*indiennes*'.

However, this history is also linked to the flight of Protestants from France and Switzerland, when they also took with them the knowledge and textile trading which was linked to the slave trade. While people are familiar with the abolition of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, another event also occurred, namely the ban on importing painted cloths. The flight of Protestants is linked to the opening up of new factories along the Rhine to produce these '*indiennes*'.

With the wars in Europe in the 1750s and early 60s, contacts between Dutch and French companies were disrupted since French traders turned inwards in Europe towards the Swiss to supply them with the '*indiennes*'. The spiritual unity and marriage links of Huguenot diasporas strengthened these business contacts between manufacturers of '*indiennes*' and those involved in with the slave trade. After 1759, when the ban on production of painted cloth was lifted, many Swiss textile manufacturers settled in France, notably the Jeanjacquier, Pasquier and Koenig families.

A language of the textile trade exclusively destined for the slave trade emerged: *guinées blanches* ou *bajutapaux, bleues, guingas, korrots*.

#### 4. THE SLAVE VOYAGE

##### TRAUMA DURING THE PASSAGE

Much has been written about revolts and mortality on board ships and very little will be said of this here. More recently, attention has been focused on the state of mind of slaves during the wait in the slave depot, and during the transportation on ships and the psychological trauma that ensued. If narratives of the passage abound for immigrants later in the century, they are sorely missing from the slavery record in the Indian Ocean; only the acts of slaves give us some indication of their state of mind.

The journal of the *Espérance* also shows the psychological trauma endured by the enslaved through the case of one female slave who allowed herself to die. She was described as being '*tracassée*' or worried, '*roulant d'un bord sur l'autre et chantant ensuite est tombée dans un assoupissement dont elle est morte*'.<sup>123</sup>

In some cases, the crew took the trouble to avoid any additional trauma for the slaves. Again, on the *Espérance*, when a baby and mother died, they were thrown overboard, with the baby being later found in the belly of a shark. This discovery was hidden from the slaves for fear of upsetting them, since it was feared that this might lead to a revolt.<sup>124</sup>

What enslaved peoples felt and thought as they boarded the ship taking them away can only be guessed at by those of us today. One can only imagine those moments through accounts of people who witnessed this departure. Henry Salt, witness to these moments, reflected on this:

*"I subsequently saw several dances of the same kind, in the slave-yards on the island of Mozambique; but on these occasions it appeared to me that the slaves were compelled to dance. I shall never forget the expression of one woman's countenance, who had lately, I understood, been brought from the interior. She was young, and appeared to have been a mother, and when constrained to move in the circle, the solemn gloom that pervaded her features, spoke more forcibly than any language, the misery of her forlorn condition. If there be a sceptic who*

*hesitates to approve of the abolition of the slave trade, let him visit one of these African slave yards, a short time before a cargo of these wretched beings is exported, and if he have a spark of humanity left it will surely strike conviction to his mind".<sup>125</sup>*

Figure 2: Mossuril, from which thousands of Africans were forced to leave their homeland



(Source: Henry Salt, *Voyage to Abyssinia [...]*, 1814)

One has yet to calculate the numbers who died during the long walk to the coast, from the interior to the Mozambique for example; Epidariste Colin estimated it to be half:

*" Les négociants ont des agents qui pénètrent jusqu'a 250 et 300 lieues dans les terres pour faire les premiers achats et expéditer les noirs par bandes de 4 à 500, sous la conduit d'un chef [...] accompagné de noirs ladines (civilisés). Et la troupe marche à petites journées, et bien souvent pendant la nuit. Durant ce voyage, où l'on traverse des déserts, la troupe manque quelquefois de provisions, et ne se nourrit alors que de raciness et de plantes qu'elle rencontre sur son chemin: elle arrive enfin à Mozambique, diminuée au moins de la moitié. Ces esclaves alors sont accablés de fatigue et de besoin, et ont déjà quelques symptômes de dysenterie" .<sup>126</sup>*

## 2. MORTALITY AND REVOLT

Slave mortality on board ships has yet to be quantified accurately by statisticians and demographers. Estimates range from 10% to 50%, depending on the length of the voyage, supplies on board, disease, resistance of slaves etc. From East Africa, the figure was 21%. From West Africa, mortality was estimated to be between 25 to 30%.<sup>127</sup> According to Richard Allen, the 'overall mortality' appeared higher than for the Atlantic.<sup>128</sup>

The voyage from Madagascar took about 21 days and mortality rates were about 12%, while Mozambique voyages which took longer had on average a 28% death rate.

However, as Gerbeau reminds us, distance does not necessarily explain levels of mortality since other factors may be responsible: the illegal status of the voyage, for example, and the need to cram as many slaves on board, the spread of disease etc. In the 1790s, this had not changed. The *Saturne*, however, registered 9 % mortality during its voyage, in November 1793 from Kilwa, a lower percentage than the 14% figure provided by Allen and Filliot.<sup>129</sup>

When the French East India Company administered the island, it rewarded officers for bringing slaves alive.<sup>130</sup> According to Le Lan, this is because it hoped to make huge profits of the slave trade. Regulations were established for this purpose. Rewards were given to the Captain, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

lieutenant for every slave brought alive to Mauritius. Thus, in June 1724, the Company acknowledged that officers were undertaking perilous missions that required intelligence and dedication, if slaves were to be brought alive. In addition to recommending that the best officers be engaged in this trade, a list of remuneration, according to the grade of officers, was established. The lower orders, sailors etc., did not receive anything.

Table 12: Pay given to naval officers trading in slaves

Côte d'Angole/Iles d'Amérique			Côtes d'Indes/Iles françaises			Côte du Sénégal/Iles françaises		
Grade	Solde/mois En livre	Gratif. En livre	Grade	Solde/mois En livre	Gratif. En livre	Grade	Solde/mois En livre	Gratif. En livre
Capitaine	150	12 L	Capitaine	150	7L	Capitaine	150	5L
1 <sup>er</sup> lieutenant	120	2L 10 s	1 <sup>er</sup> lieutenant	120	2L 10s	1 <sup>er</sup> lieutenant	120	1L 10s
2 <sup>ème</sup> lieutenant	90	1L 10s	2 <sup>ème</sup> lieutenant	90	1L 10s	1 <sup>er</sup> enseigne	60	0
1 <sup>er</sup> enseigne	60	0	1 <sup>er</sup> enseigne	60	0	2 <sup>ème</sup> enseigne	50	0
ens ad honores	20	0	ens ad honores	20	0	1 <sup>er</sup> maître	0	1L
1 <sup>er</sup> maître	0	1L	1 <sup>er</sup> maître	0	1L	1 <sup>er</sup> chirurgien	gré à gré	1L 10s
1 <sup>er</sup> chirurgien	gré à gré	3	1 <sup>er</sup> chirurgien	gré à gré	3			
		20 L			15 L			9 L

Source: Le Lan, 10.

By 1749, this reward had increased to 25 *livres* per slave brought alive and 70 *livres* for every cargo exceeding a certain number.<sup>131</sup> Thus, for a ship carrying 400 slaves and with a mortality rate of 25%, this reduced the slave cargo to 300 slaves. On the first 200 slaves alive, 25 *livres* per head would be given, totalling 5,000 *livres*. On the 100 remaining, 70 *livres* per slave i.e., 7000 *livres* were paid. Total rewards thus would amount to 12,000 *livres*. This was distributed as follows:

- To Captain .....	6000 <i>livres</i>
- To Lieutenant .....	1650 <i>livres</i>
- To 1 <sup>st</sup> enseigne.....	900 <i>livres</i>
- To 2 <sup>nd</sup> enseigne...	675 <i>livres</i>
- To surnuméraire...	225 <i>livres</i>
- To Surgeon .....	1650 <i>livres</i>
- To maître.....	900 <i>livres</i>

However, the fact that revolts often caused the deaths of slaves, a small part of the mortality can be attributed to these. It was disease, ill health and change of diet that caused heavy mortality.

### Revolt and escape

The revolts of slaves on board have been studied to some extent by several authors: Peerthum, Allen, Filliot. Both revolt and escape occurred on board and appeared to have been expected, when the ship was being outfitted for voyage i.e., extra strong fences, more guards etc were provided. For ships bound for Mauritian ships, a number have been documented in earlier studies: Allen's database of voyages lists only 23 voyages with revolts. Vernet's transcription of the journal of the *Espérance* also shows escapes occurred among women as well.

Epidariste Colin who was on board these slaving voyages made several observations on the voyages to the Mascarenes: "Je dirai d'abord qu'on embarque trop d'esclaves sur les navires de traite". On the one which he observed, a ship of 100 tonnes, there were 318 slaves on board: only 128 reached Mauritius alive. Had it taken only 200 slaves, he commented, mortality would have been much less.<sup>132</sup> He was also against the practice of putting the strongest men in irons. This practice made the people more likely to revolt.

The change in diet proved fatal for many slaves; it was months before they were fed on vegetables. There was little variety as they were fed on rice twice a day, and rarely had maize or millet. The

worst feature of the voyage, according to Colin, on board was the excrement piling up in barrels and which was only seldom changed every quarter: the smell itself made slaves more ill. Ventilation was a huge problem, despite incense being burned to counter the putrid smells. Dysentery was the greatest killer.<sup>133</sup>

## Conclusion

Attempts to abolish the slave trade during the French period had been aborted by the slave traders themselves. But in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was less possible. In French ports, the *commerçants* of the Hague attracted all those traders, French and British, and it became the centre of opposition to the abolition of the slave trade. The Hague refused any extension of Human Rights in 1791 to free coloured population of the port. This has earned the port a notorious reputation for defending slavery.

Freemasonry was also closely linked to both the slave trade and its abolition, as many traders were also members of the freemason societies as well as of the *Amis des Noirs*.

After 1815, it is almost impossible to trace the trade between Mozambique and Mauritius since the slave trade was officially abolished in Mauritius and everything carried out in an even more surreptitious manner than before. An illegal slave trade ensued. Estimates of the illegal slave trade are based on material wherever this information is provided accidentally i.e., when a ship was seized or sunk or a revolt occurred. Sometimes, as Laurent Pavlidis has shown, it came from ports that had little to do with the slave trade. Accurate figures have not been compiled as yet, but the most recent estimate is that 52,550 slaves were illegally imported. Mozambican slaves formed the majority of slaves (60%) before 1806-1808. After that period, illegal trading led to Malagasy slaves being brought in. The percentage of Malagasy slaves in the total slave population rose from 25.1% to 36.8 % in 1826.

## 3. MEMORY AND IDENTITY

### 1. THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

A large number of studies have been undertaken on the slave trade and published in various works:

(a) on internal networks, slave routes by Alpers and Zimba, Alpers and Teelock, MGI conference papers, all show active local involvement of Arab French Portuguese traders, local Makhuwa and Yao chiefs, Portuguese and French officials.

(b) Lesser known and more recently, there has been a spate of studies on the owners and outfitters of the slave ships, the 'armement' of the slave ship. These *armateurs* and their associates entered into slave trading ventures hoping to make 'potentially significant financial returns'. Risks varied, depending on the political and economic situation of the time, but with increased risk came increased expected returns.<sup>134</sup>

Another feature according to Daudin, was the fact that it was a relatively closed network of people involved in it. The merchants and traders did not seek external funds, hence it was a 'close circuit' network. This was corroborated by Meyer's analysis: "L'examen des parts de navires nous conduit à admettre une circulation des capitaux en vase clos."<sup>135</sup> Often friends or family were recruited in these trading ventures. Most agree that the family connections were important in the slave trade being the business of fathers, sons, uncles etc., as well as relatives by marriage. However, this appears to be less so in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>136</sup> The fact that by then, there was already a member of the family settled in the colonies was an added factor in facilitating the slave trade.

Furthermore, Eltis and Richardson have shown that English slave traders were more efficient than the French ones. Stein argues that the personal nature of business structures in the French Atlantic

impeded the development of an efficient organization and prevented merchants, reluctant to work in sectors where they lacked a commercial network, from adapting to new opportunities.

Carrière's study of the Marseilles merchants, although not focussed on the slave trade, clearly demonstrates this. Of the 76 merchants in Marseilles, of whom were studied, 482 71% per cent married among themselves. They did not take each other to court but resolved matters amicably (*règlement à l'amiable*),

According to Carrière's study of merchants in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Marseille, the classic company was "a family enterprise with perhaps one brother serving as a silent partner and the other actively managing the "affaire." An average firm would employ about four clerks or commis, who would handle the books and ecritures though rarely the strongbox, which stayed in the possession of the head of the firm. Some, usually sons of negociants, would eventually make their way to full partnerships. Surprisingly, there is little evidence of travel abroad by either young apprentices or full partners. Travel expenses, like fixed assets, were rarely listed in the account books and no doubt were minimal [...] A suspicion of parochialism is also suggested by the absence of foreign languages in the training of apprentices and by a lack of commercial manuals [...] On the other hand, the account books (*grands livres*)-those of the Roux and Bruny firms, for example, were superb specimens of legibility and clarity, with double entries and indexes".<sup>137</sup>

Table 13: Religion of leading Rochelais slave-trading families.<sup>138</sup>

3. Religion of the leading Rochelais Families

Rochelais families	Protestants	Catholics
Admyrault	X	
Belin	X	
Carayon	X	
Charuyer	X	
De Beaussay	X	
De Jarnac	X	
De Richemond	X	
Dumoustier de Frédilly	X	
Dumoutier	X	
Fleuriau	X	
Garesché	X	
Giraudeau	X	
Goguet		X
Guibert		X
Nairac	X	
Perry	X	
Poupet		X
Rasteau	X	
Seignette	X	
Suidre	X	
Thouron	X	
Van Hoogwerff	X	
Vivier	X	
Weiss	X	

Sources: A.C.M., Ilc 3424 / 25, Garnault (1900).

2. Kinship connections between leading *armateurs* and colonial firms

Rochelais families	Kin-owned plantation	Kin-centred colonial firm
Admyrault		
Belin	X	
Carayon	?	
Charuyer		X
De Beaussay		
De Jarnac		
De Richemond	X	
Dumoustier de Frédilly	X	
Dumoutier		
Fleuriau	X	
Garesché	X	X
Giraudeau		
Goguet	X	
Guibert	?	X
Nairac	?	X
Perry		
Poupet	X	X
Rasteau	X	X
Seignette	X	X
Suidre		
Thouron		
Van Hoogwerff		
Vivier		
Weiss		

Source of table: Le Forestier, 'Principal-Agent Problems in the French Slave Trade'.

There has also been some writing on the origins of the families involved. As in La Rochelle and Bordeaux, there was a large number of Protestants, and many slave traders consequently were Protestant. In other ports such as St. Malo, they were all Catholic. The slave trade would also appear to involve a family network, which linked the port to colonial-based companies (Table 13). In Marseilles, 15% of merchants were Protestants, most of whom intermarried. The Swiss connection meant that financing was more readily secured for their ventures than others.<sup>139</sup>

We have few detailed individual studies of slave traders operating in the Mascarenes. Recently, Thomas Vernet has published on Morice who started the French slave trade with Zanzibar, through the log (*journal de bord*) of the *Espérance*. Morice was perhaps different to most traders but combined the talents of diplomat, explorer, medical man and businessman. His ships carried interpreters speaking Arabic and Swahili and goods but not only for the trade in slaves, but also to supply Mauritius, which was always short of foodstuffs. There have also been studies of Crassous de Medeuil. The genealogy of one family is reproduced below.

Although in the early years of the slave trade to the Mascarenes, the *armateurs* and traders came from France, by the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some of the trading was carried on from Mauritius. A total of 72 merchants and traders are listed in Port Louis and a good number were involved in the slave trade. Allen has quoted, for example, Messrs. Closnard, Cloupet, Collique, Drieux, Geoffriou, De La Rochelle, Le Blanc, Rolland, Le Bouchet, Le Bourdé, Dahuy Solminiac, La Corte, Laurent Raphaël, d'Hotman and Vally. Louis Monneron also had family links with merchants in India, while Morice focused on slave trading with Zanzibar. Sharonne Philips has reconstructed part of the family's history in Mauritius.

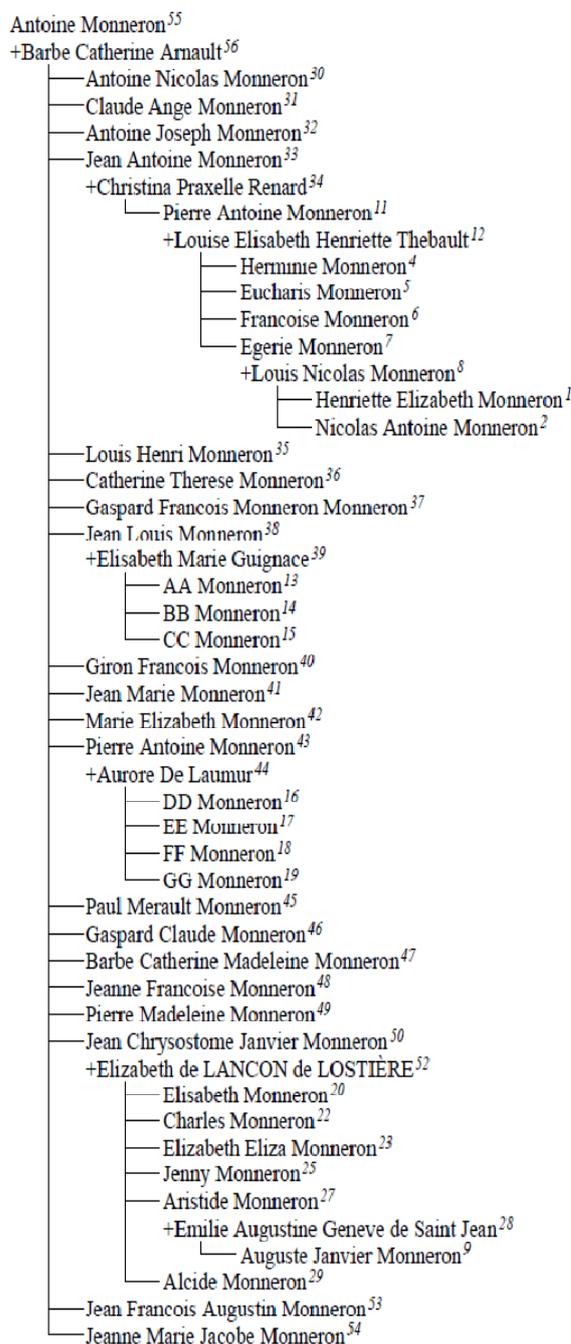
### The Monneron Family

Originally from Annonay in the Ardèche region of France, the Monneron family is also known as the *Monneron des Mortier* descended from a family of Huguenot<sup>140</sup> lawyers. Antoine Monneron was a successful and rich Government advocate who married Catherine Barbe Arnault in February 1733. Out of their twenty children, they lost ten sons and daughters at an early age. The Monneron family was therefore left with ten heirs: Claude Ange Monneron, Antoine Joseph Monneron, Jean Antoine Monneron, Gaspard François Monneron, Jean Louis Monneron, Jean Marie Monneron, Pierre Antoine Monneron, Paul Mérault Monneron, Jean Chrysostome Janvier Monneron and Jean François Augustin Monneron.

Figure 3 Location of the Annonay village in Ardèche, France and Monneron Brothers

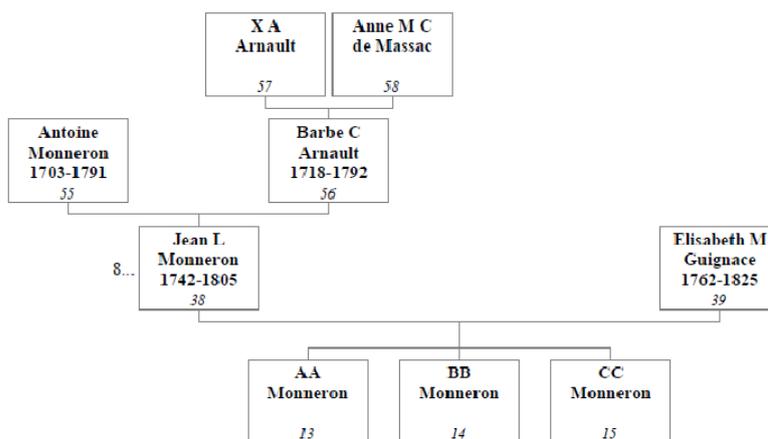


Claude Ange Monneron, the eldest brother, was born on 15 April 1735, in Antibes. He earlier decided to engage himself in the French East India Company where he began to work as an assistant merchant.<sup>141</sup> He worked under Dupleix who was Governor General of the French establishment in India at that time. In 1785, he was sent to Mauritius as Administrator General. Even though the family was wealthy, most of the Monneron brothers decided to join the French East India Company, as sons of most noble families did in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. According to Jean-Yves Le Lan, “Le négoce est souvent une affaire de famille, l’affaire familiale est poursuivie de génération en génération, les enfants développant quelquefois leur propre société en s’expatriant parfois dans une autre ville”.<sup>142</sup> The Monneron were also known to be Freemasons in the *Loge de vraie vertu*.

List of descendants of Antoine Monneron and Catherine Barbe Arnaud<sup>143</sup>1. DESCENDANTS

Jean Louis Monneron born, in 1742, joined the Company as an agent in 1769. He married Elisabeth Marie Guignace with whom he had three children and became a very successful merchant in Pondichéry.<sup>144</sup> He quickly made a fortune and became a member of the prestigious Freemason group made of merchants, the *Loge* of Pondichéry in 1771. Following the Revolution, France's ruling Constituent Assembly made him Deputy for the French Indian Settlements in 1789.

5. Jean Louis Monneron and Elisabeth Marie Guignace



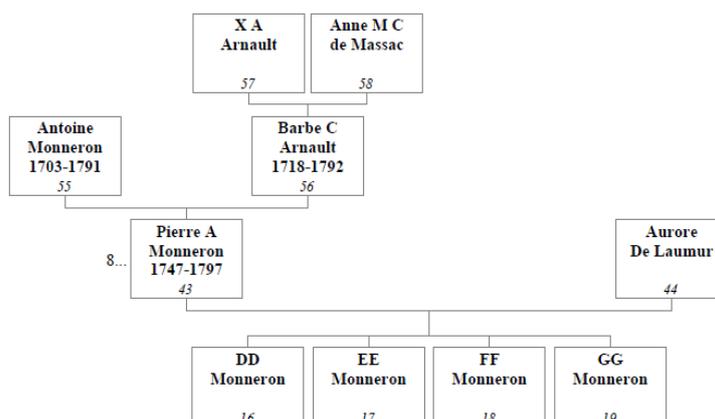
On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1789, Louis Monneron was elected as a supplementary member of Parliament; he was admitted to the National Assembly on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1790, where he presented a memorial on the French colonies, including Isle de France. In 1790, the inhabitants of Isle de France went to Paris to present Memorial before the National Assembly. These were in contradiction with one another. The inhabitants argued that Louis Monneron had sown doubt about Isle de France no longer being strategically important for the FEIC in the Indian Ocean.<sup>145</sup> According to them, the French East India Company could neither abandon Pondichéry as it was a strategically-located colony:

*" Nous pensons même que cette place doit être regardée comme un poste avancé qui défend nos îles; et qu'elle doit opérer une diversion favorable à nos entreprises à la Côte Malabare et dans le Bengale. Il est donc très politique de conserver Pondichéry, d'achever ses fortifications, de le garnir de troupes en quantité suffisante pour assurer sa défense et pour inquiéter les Anglais".<sup>146,</sup>*

Ile de France represented a perfect stop for the trade activities of Louis Monneron in the Indian Ocean. He was even engaged in slave trading activities. L.M Cullen and P. Buttel (1980)<sup>147</sup> state that on the eve that his fortune was to be confiscated by the British, Louis Monneron gave to his brother Pierre Antoine the responsibility of an expedition to trade on the Mozambican Coast. Pierre Antoine embarked 250 slaves, supposed to make a profit of 20,000 *livres* when sold in Isle de France, but unfortunately was shipwrecked in the Mozambican Canal before reaching Port Louis.

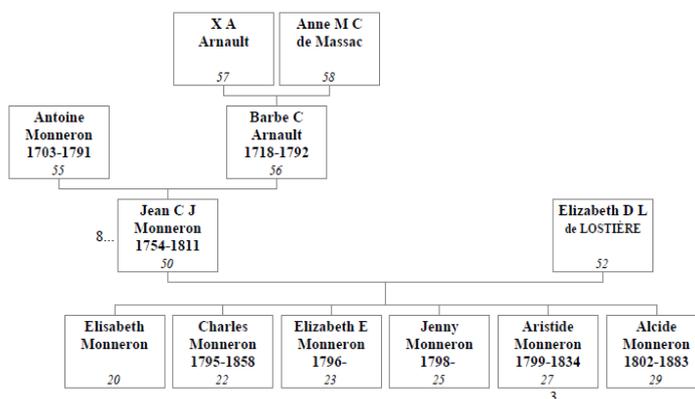
Pierre Antoine Monneron was an *armateur* and merchant. He was born on the 16 January 1747. He came to Isle de France in 1786 where he married Gertrude de Laumur on the 25<sup>th</sup> November of the same year. He was nominated as deputy of the National Assembly in 1790.<sup>148</sup> He died on the Arabian Coast in 1797

6. Pierre Antoine Monneron and Aurore De Laumur



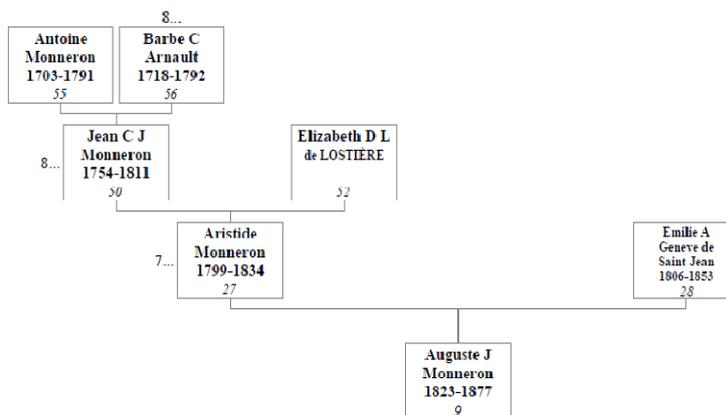
Jean Chrysostome Janvier Monneron was born on 17 September 1754 in Annonay, France. He came to Isle de France on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1799 on the *Warren*. He married twice, once to Marie Francoise Aimé Mezereon, and then to Elizabeth de Lancon de Lostière on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1794 in France. He had six children: Elisabeth Monneron (*no date of birth available*), Charles Monneron born in 1795, Elizabeth Eliza Monneron born in 1796, Jenny Monneron born in 1798, Aristide Monneron (1799-1834), Alcide Monneron (1802-1883).

**7. Jean Chrysostome Janvier Monneron and Elizabeth de LANCON de LOSTIÈRE**



Jean Chrysostome was also a merchant and *armateurs* and member of the General Assembly. He was the owner of 145 acres at Savanne in 1805 and owner of the *Espérance* in Moka from 1719 to 1818. He died in 1811 in Black River District in Mauritius.<sup>149</sup>

**3. Aristide Monneron and Emilie Augustine Geneve de Saint Jean**



Above is the family tree of Aristide Monneron who married Emilie Augustine Genève de Saint Jean, aged fifteen on 18 March 1822 in PortLouis, Mauritius with whom he had one son: Auguste Janvier Monneron in 1823. Emilie died on 18 November 1853, aged 47.

**REPRESENTATION OF CORSAIRS**

Today, while many French families are proud of their corsair ancestry, they are less public about the slave trading involvement of that ancestry: “Si le titre de corsair est loin de déplaire dans nos annales de famille, ce n’est pas sans regret que nous trouvons celui de négrier”.<sup>150</sup> The same could probably be said of many families in Mauritius where some parts of family histories are thought best left hidden or conveniently forgotten.

However, the extent of corsair involvement in the slave trade was not negligible and must be recognized. Much of French maritime activity, and especially, corsair activity, involved, at some time or another, a slave trading component.

Robert Surcouf's participation in the slave trade is a case in point. While he is portrayed as a daring navigator and adventurer in a number of studies about him in Mauritius, his past as slave trader is not often mentioned. He started at the very young age, of 16, when he embarked on the *Aurore* in 1789. Apart from Mauritius, the ship went to Pondichéry and Mozambique, where 600 slaves were purchased for the Caribbean. Back in Ile de France in 1791, he found employment in the *Courrier d'Afrique* which engaged in the slave trade with Mozambique and later on *La Revanche*. Two further slave trading voyages were undertaken on *Le Navigateur*, when 312 slaves were purchased in Mozambique and a further 360 in Madagascar. In 1795, he was given the command of the *Créole* and proceeded on an illegal slave trading mission and was even threatened with prosecution. It is from then on that his 'career' as a corsair began. Roman, however, believes that Surcouf continued slave trading activities; the *Marie Ann* in 1819 went from Senegal to Martinique and in the *Victor*. Between 1815 and 1827, of the 20 expeditions organized by Surcouf, 6 of them, Roman believes, were slave trading voyages.

Although detecting the slave trade was difficult, today it is possible through a detailed study of tonnage, cargo on board, to infer slave trading. When a small boat carries more food than the crew could possibly eat, one can infer that there would be more people, such as slaves, on board. The number of days spent in a particular location, such as on the Malagasy or East African coast, or the trajectory are also possible indications of the slave trading activities of a ship.

The ease by which corsairs could switch to the role of slave traders also implied that their ships could be easily adapted. In Mauritius, the most famous of such vessels was *La Confiance* which had 3 masts, was of 364 tons, armed by a Bordelais, Jacques Conte. After capturing 8 British ships, Jacques Conte, according to Roman, was tempted by the profits and armed her for slave trading. In May 1802, she embarked 500 slaves who were sold in Mauritius. Its next trip was also for slave trading, but this time, it visited India to purchase of textiles, then on to Angola, where 400 slaves were purchased for Surinam.

Moreover, the links between the French traders and merchants in the Mascarenes and those in France must be established in order to understand how trade and commerce were practised. Their role in the colonies and in promoting anti-black attitudes in France needs to be documented further, as well their contribution to role as in the economic and ideological institution of slavery.

## 2. CULTURAL TRANSITIONS IN THE SLAVE TRADE

### 2.1. NUMBERS AND ETHNICITIES

In addition to aggregate numbers, an idea of the proportion of slaves being brought from diverse ethnic and geographic origins is important to understand the cultural background of slaves and their descendants. A rough compilation derived from R. Allen's work shows the following:

Year	Country of origin	Percentage (%)
1670-1769	Madagascar	70% of slaves
	Mozambique/Swahili coast	19%
	South Asia	9%
	West Africa	2%
1770-1810	Mozambique/Swahili coast	60%
	Madagascar	31%
	South Asia	9%
1811-1848	Mozambique/Swahili coast	59%
	Madagascar	38%
	Southeast Asia	3%

It is clear that at different times, different sources of slaves were tapped, thus influencing the cultural composition and cultural evolution of the island. By 1753, in Mauritius the French had begun to categorise the slaves according to their region of origin and their propensity for certain types of work:

- From Guinea -including all slaves from West coast of Africa

- From Mozambique - the whole of the East African coast, Ethiopia, Egypt, from the Cape of Good Hope to Port of Suez
- From Madagascar
- Indians traded on the Malabar coast and east of Cape Cormorin.<sup>151</sup>

This categorisation was to be used continually in Mauritius in surveys of slaves, definition and occupational allocation; it contributed to the emergence of new categories that defined slaves' identities. These categories remained throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continue today to influence Mauritians' perceptions of their origins.

As can be seen, these terms were not only highly subjective at that time, but also by covering very large range of geographical origins, they included people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. However, categorisations did not coincide with how people in those regions saw or defined themselves. The task of unravelling the different origins of the diverse people who made up this uniformising category of 'Mozambican', 'Indian', 'Malagasy' etc. has started with the Origins project at the NMCAC and needs to continue, if we are to understand more about the real origins of slaves.

The slave registration returns, produced nearly a century later between 1826 and 1835, show roughly the same categorisations being used. However, new categories were included which reflected changes in Mauritian slave society: 'Créole' i.e., slaves born locally. It is from these registration returns, that one can see the multiple ethnicities present in Mauritius during slavery:

#### Country of origin starting with the most populous:

**Créole de Maurice:** By 1826, Shell has estimated roughly a third of the population was locally born

**Mozambique:** The second largest group including, as in 1765, all those from the Eastern Africa coast and mainland.

**Malgache:** The third largest group among slaves, also comprising all different groups in Madagascar, including a certain number of Mozambicans exported to Madagascar.

The following groups are represented in much smaller numbers:

Créole de Bourbon  
Créole des Seychelles  
Indien / Indienne  
Malay  
Diégo Garcia  
Anjouan  
Guinea  
Yoloff  
Rio de Janeiro  
Malabar  
Créole de Goa  
Créole de la Providence  
Créole de Rodrigues  
Arabe Mozambique  
Créole des Six îles  
Arabe  
Cochin

In a few years, if the collection of data continues on the slave trade in Mauritius and in France, it may be possible to trace the ship by which slaves arrived, even though we may not find the actual place of origin. By combining data from slave registers, an examinations of the real itinerary, information about the sale of slaves obtained from notarial records, we believe a complete picture for some families can be put together.

There appears also to be a correlation between the surname of a slave and the ships trading in slaves.

An example lies in the slaves who arrived in Mauritius in 1793 having embarked from Kilwa, although they did not necessarily come from Kilwa, and possibly from further inland. Through papers relating to onward of *primes* for each slave, detailed accounts were kept, and the owner of the slaves was mentioned. In this case, Bonhomme and Frappier and Co. bought 441 slaves from Kilwa. Years later, the slave registration returns reveal that in 1826, Bonhomme is listed as having 186 slaves. Some of them bear 'marques d'inoculation': this is consistent with the period when they were brought since an epidemic had broken out, and slaves were vaccinated. By 1826 however, there were not only slaves born overseas but a large proportion of locally born slaves, with 90 Creole slaves, 76 slaves from Mozambique or from East Africa. Only 6 slaves were Malagasy, confirming that his cargo was purchased from Kilwa. 57 were women and were to be found mainly in the Creole group.

A *Mozambique* was therefore anyone from Eastern Africa.

### 'MOZAMBIQUE' AND EASTERN AFRICAN

Trade with Mozambique started with Reunion island and continued later with Mauritius.

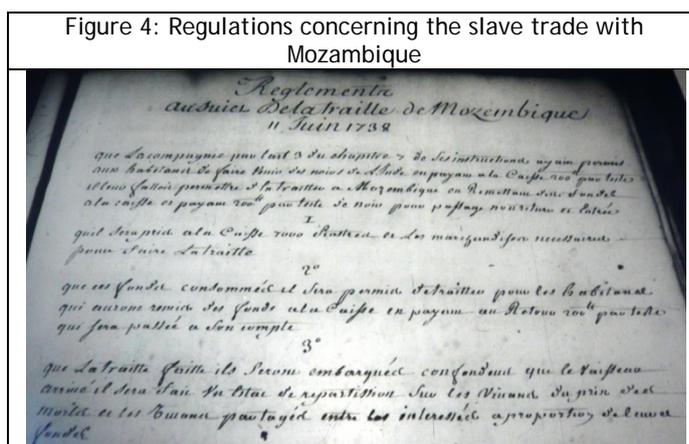
Count Ericeira recommended to the Capitaine-General of Mozambique to provide all facilities for the French slave trade with Mozambique.

In 1721, two French ships went to Mozambique, the *Duchesse de Noailles* and *L'Indien*.

Almost 13 years later, in 1733, the next ship, the *Vierge de Grâce* went to Mozambique. It took 356 slaves on board, but only 147 arrived alive to Reunion. In 1735, Labourdonnais recommended that a trading station should be established on the West Coast of Madagascar to carry out the slave trade with Mozambique and with the Portuguese.

In 1736, the *Légère* and the *Jupiter* traded successfully.

The June 1738 regulations, concerning slaves from Mozambique, made provision for 200 *livres* to cover the passage, food and entry duty:



*La Glorieuse* had difficulty because smallpox having broke out there; it went on to Kerimba but took a few slaves and returned to Mozambique, and then to Mauritius.<sup>152</sup>

In 1739 the *Mozambique* arrived with 360 slaves, of whom 260 had died.<sup>153</sup> In 1746, the *Sumatra* traded in slaves in Mozambique<sup>154</sup> 1,000-2,000 slaves a year for a period of five years from 1735 to 1740.<sup>155</sup>

After the departure of Labourdonnais, trade slumped somewhat. In 1750, *the Princesse* was sent to trade slaves in Madagascar and Mozambique.<sup>156</sup> Between 1750 and 1752, 4 French ships went to Mozambique to trade slaves in exchange for rice and butter.<sup>157</sup> By 1753, more and more slaves were required for Mauritius. Negotiations with Portugal were recommended so that trade in Mozambique could take place and establishments were proposed.<sup>158</sup> The definition of what was a *Mozambique* appears at this time, as "noir Mozambique qui comprendra toute la côte orientale d'Afrique d'Abysinie d'Egypte, depuis le Cap de bonne Espérance jusqu'au port Suez".<sup>159</sup>

We do not know where exactly the Mozambicans were placed, but they generally worked in the port and on plantations, because they were robust; 20 were on the estate of Demoiselle Gillette Robin, at the *habitation Duplessis*.<sup>160</sup> The French went to the ports of Inhambane, Mozambique Island and those of Cabo Delgado.

Although Portuguese laws did not allow foreign ships in Portuguese ports, these laws were circumvented whenever necessary. The Portuguese needed foodstuffs from Isle de France and turned blind eye, if necessary. The French also went to Ibo (Kerimba Island) which was not under Portuguese administration. The French were known in Mozambique as..... and they traded with the Machiefdom, a tribe known traditionally as traders like the Yao further inland.

Due to fact that much of this was illegal, trading, figures are sketchy. It would seem that some 1,300-1,400 slaves a year were brought to the Mascarenes. By 1758, the French controlled the commerce of the whole coast from Mombasa to Kilwa, up to Ibo.<sup>161</sup>

In 1759, Vigoureux was one of the slave traders. He was given a ship the *St. Luc* to trade in Mozambique. He also ordered slaves from other ships, such as the *St. Antoine*. In Article 32 of the same letter, on 6 July, a Portuguese ship arrived in Port Louis, *Jésus Maria Joseph*, with 210 slaves from Mozambique.<sup>162</sup>

Although it has been stated in the secondary literature, stereotypes of slaves started, when the slave trade increased in the 1760s onwards, the evidence from the French National Archives show stereotyping and categorizing of various ethnicities in one group quite early in the slave trade.

Thus 'Mozambican' slaves became trusted as were West African slaves; they were considered trustworthy enough to be recruited for the defence of the island. Women slaves from Mozambique were also appreciated for their reproductive capacity. Statements made at the time smack of breeding attempts: "Nombre trop modique de négresses Mozambique ou Bengalie [...] chaque vaisseau en apporte 12 ou 15 [...] elles peuplent plus et sont moins debauchées".<sup>163</sup>

## SWAHILI COAST

East Africa is considered separately here from 'Mozambique' simply to show that, although the ports were located in what is East Africa today, the actual origins were diverse, as slaves were brought from the hinterland that stretched right into the interior going as far as Malawi and Mozambique. Thus, the journal of the *Espérance* although marking slaves as coming from Zanzibar, lists one *Makonde* slave having died of smallpox.<sup>164</sup>

When the French Government took over Mauritius in 1766, a new era in the slave trade ensued. Eastern Africa was highly sought after by the French. But until the 1750s, there do not appear to have been many slaves shipped out from the Swahili coast.

Morice can be said to have inaugurated the slave trade with East Africa.<sup>165</sup> He negotiated and signed the famous 100 year-old treaty with Sultan bin Ibrahim at Kilwa to supply him with 1,000 slaves a year. According to Vernet, Morice was "un négrier très avisé, tout à la fois excellent diplomate et communicant, co-armateur très attentif à ses intérêts financiers, et ex-chirurgien de marine adepte d'un traitement préventif massif lors d'une épidémie de variole".<sup>166</sup>

The French also wanted to give exclusive rights to the Portuguese to the slave trade in the Mascarenes, on condition that French traders were given similar rights in Portuguese trading posts such as Kerimba, Mozambique and others.<sup>167</sup>

In 1770, the slave trade increased with Eastern Africa and five times more slaves were brought from Mozambique than from Madagascar.

Between 1785 and 1790, approximately 1,500 slaves left for the Mascarenes each year.

In 1793, corsairs raided the Mozambican coast. According to Filliot, the need for new slaves arose because of the increased rate of manumissions.

On 4<sup>th</sup> February 1794, the slave trade was suspended, but corsairs and planters collaborated to circumvent the ban. On 25<sup>th</sup> September 1796, a corsair attacked Inhambane but failed. Early in October, some 100 men, led by French corsairs, attacked the town of Ibo and, two days later, Kerimba island. On 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2 French ships attacked Lorenzo Marques and burnt the fortress. In 1796, the French expelled the Portuguese from Delagoa Bay and competed with the British and Portuguese for the ivory trade.

Napoleonic wars disrupted trade. An annual average of 9,000 slaves in the late 1780s declined to just over 2,300 in 1794.<sup>168</sup>

At the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was a 'free for all' period with corsairs, Americans and Brazilians competing. On 30<sup>th</sup> April 1796, the American ship *Active* came to look for slaves and carrying on board, 2,500 Spanish *pataques* and Bordeaux wine. The Spanish ship *Nossa Senhora da Guia* also came from Buenos Aires bound for Mauritius with 4,000 *pataques* to buy slaves. Portuguese ships, the *Felix de St. Jose* and *Galgo* left Lisbon for Mauritius but was stopped by the British in 1793.

#### 'WEST AFRICA'

In 1728, the *Méduse* went to Ouidah to purchase some 400 slaves. Several other ships made the voyage to West Africa, among which were: the *Vierge de Grâce*, the *Diane*, the *Duc de Noailles* and the *Badine*.

In 1729, 2 other ships went to Ouidah and Senegal but because of the high death rate, this source of slaves was discontinued.

By 1731, the FEIC had a monopoly of the slave trade in Madagascar and thus banned the trade with India and Senegal.

Between 1739-1744, under Governor Labourdonnais, some 100 slaves were brought. In 1750, the *Hercule*, the *Chevalier Main*, *Bristols*, brought 789 slaves, out of the 1090 who embarked. This represented a 30% death rate.

The last ship to bring in slaves from West Africa was possibly the *Duc de Choiseul*.

The location where they lived is found in archival maps of Camp Yoloff and Camp Bambara in Mauritius. No memorial is in place commemorating their presence there in Mauritius,

#### 'INDIA'

1728 witnessed arrival of first Indian slaves in Mauritius under French rule. They were sent to the estate of Philippe Lenoir, Governor of Pondichéry.

Governor Dumas brought back free Indian workers and apprentices, some 13 Bengali slaves and 100 young boys and girls from Pondichéry.

A further 173 slaves were sent to prospective settlers from Pondichéry who hoped to settle in Mauritius.

In 1730, 45 more slaves arrived from Pondichéry; in February 1731, a further 11 and in October 1731, 38 slaves and 35 'coolies' arrived.

In 1732, Teinturier de Gennicourt, habitant de l'île de France, reported that "La compagnie a aussi fourni des noirs de l'Inde 3 à 4 piastres d'achat et 1 piastre de nourriture pour le transport".<sup>169</sup>

In 1735, a "règlement of the Conseil Supérieur Article 12, authorised traders to "faire venir des noirs de l'Inde- paiement de 200 piastres pour chaque à la compagnie pour nourriture et transport".<sup>170</sup>

In 1735, 10 slaves were brought. This figure increased when private individuals were also permitted to bring in slaves from India. Labourdonnais' brother-in-law sent '*trois petits noirs et trois petites négrittes de 8 à 9 ans*'. He introduced 70 more slaves for his personal use.

In 1750, the desire was still there to bring in slaves from India, as well as other areas for the Company.<sup>171</sup>

Apart from Pondichéry and Bengal, Goa was also tapped for slaves. The *Dargenson* was sent to Goa in 1751 by Governor David.<sup>172</sup> Slaves from Goa were still brought in 1762.

In 1760, very few slaves arrived due to bad condition of the FEIC.

Allen has documented several ships arriving with Indian slaves after 1772; for the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a whole, he has estimated that between 19,750 and 23,900 slaves arrived from India. Some examples of vessels are the *Chandernagore*, which arrived with 135 Bengal slaves; *Les Amis Réunis* from Jaggernaupooram with 300 slaves (1792), the *Heureuse Marie* with 7 Bengali slaves (1792).<sup>173</sup> Further research is needed on Asian slaves arriving not only from India, but also from South East Asia. However by the time of the 1847 census, no ex-slave reported having been born in India, thus signifying there were few if any from the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

#### 'MADAGASCAR'

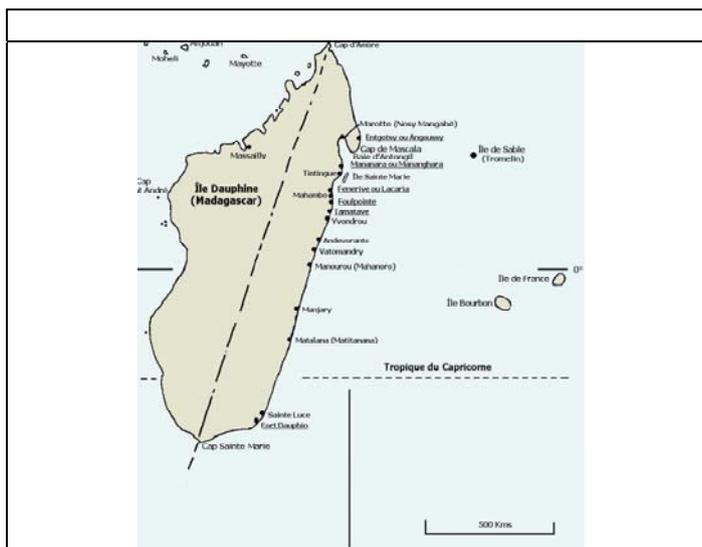
From the French East India Company's point of view, Madagascar was ideal as a source of supply of slaves for the Mascarenes, since it was cheaper than procuring slaves from India or West Africa. It also had the monopoly of trade with Madagascar, except for a brief period between 1742 and 1746, when private traders were allowed to trade. The Company had much difficulty in maintaining this trade, however, according to Le Lan. He notes that the last slave trading voyage of the Company arrived in 1767; the *Walpole*, carried 200 slaves, and not a single slave was for the Company.

According to one inhabitant Teinturier, it was better to procure slaves from Madagascar because "ceux de Madagascar sont meilleurs ouvriers, plus intelligents" (Eng.trans. they were better workers, more intelligent). Les noirs de Guinée ont tendance au marronnage et à la perfidie".<sup>174</sup> However, as the colonists found, proximity with Madagascar tempted Malagasy slaves to maroon more often than Malagasy. It was, therefore, not advisable to send them to the recommended port, as they could easily steal vessels and escape to Madagascar.

In 1729, Lanux recommended that the East coast of Madagascar should be tapped for slaves as the voyage would be shorter and, therefore, there would be less mortality among slaves. He estimated the cost of a slave to be 20 *piastres*.

FEIC: During this period the East coast was divided, according to Le Lan, into various parts: the North with excellent harbours, from Antongil Bay to Tamatave; towards the South, from Tamatave to Saint-Luce where there was no natural harbour, and the South where the Bays of Sainte-Luce, Manaviva and Fort Dauphin were located. The closest and safest to Mauritius was Antongil Bay and later Foulpointe. Their hinterland supplied large numbers of slaves. In 1733, the Company did try to replicate its activities in Senegal by building a permanent trading post in Antongil Bay at Nosy Mangabé, but it failed. From 1750, Foulpointe became more important. According to Le Lan, Gaillard, Valgny, Duverger, Laval occupied the post of Head Trader. Antongil, Tamatave, Fénériver, Mananara, Engontsy et l'île Sainte-Marie were secondary posts. Although Fort Dauphin was the most healthy port, there were few slaves in the hinterland, and so the Company used this port more for other trades in rice and salted meat.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, Antalaotra slave traders transported slaves. Although the East coast is believed not to have been used, the beginning of the trade with Mozambique may have led to establishment of a trading post to house slaves from Mozambique. Many slaves were brought from East Africa originally and resold to French traders on the East coast of Madagascar.



### 1767-1790

After 1767, ship arrivals to Port Louis from Madagascar tripled and continued right up to 1822. Toussaint's figures of some 20,000 slaves being brought to the Mascarenes from Madagascar has been revised recently by Larson who estimates a much higher figure of 60,000 slaves.

Foulpointe, Fenerive, Mahambo, Titingue, Ste. Marie, Mananara and Antogil Bay became trading posts for the French. Foulpointe became the principal slave-trading port for the French. Foulpointe received a 'Directeur des Traites'. In this capacity, Maudave (1768-1771) was appointed to be followed by Benyowski 1774-1776.

Prices shot up at Foulpointe, in 18 months from 20 *piastres* to 70 *piastres*.

In the 1770s, Central Madagascar became the next source of slaves. By 1777, two-thirds of slaves shipped to the Mascarenes came from the Central Highlands.<sup>175</sup> Some women even led the slave trading caravans into the interior.

### 1803-1810

1807: Traders moved South to Tamatave which became the headquarters of slave trading for the Mascarenes. Illegal trade continued after the abolition of the slave trade, with slaves transiting in the Seychelles from East Africa and Madagascar, before being brought to Mauritius. It is believed now that the figure of 3,500 slaves imported into Mauritius is closer to the reality, from 1800 to 1810, and that over 6,000 came from 1810 to 1820. Allen's figures are, however, much higher.

### BRANDING AND BAPTISM

According to Filliot, slaves in Madagascar were branded at the site of trading itself, or if they had been purchased in the name of the King, they bore the mark of the King. This was usually the letter 'R' for '*Roi*'.

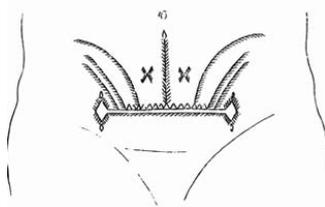
Those being sold to private individuals had the initials of the patronyms of the future owner. In 1770, in Foulpointe, slaves embarking on the '*Normande*' were branded with the following initials:

18 slaves branded 'B' for Chevalier Bruny	9 slaves branded 'T' for Trudon
6 slaves branded 'M' for Michel	9 slaves branded 'V' for Voisin
4 slaves branded 'A' for Amat	20 slaves branded 'G' for Grenier
1 slave branded 'L' for Abbé Lebrun	1 slave branded 'S' for De St Pierre

In addition to branding, slaves in Mauritius were also found to have scarification patterns on them. Preliminary analysis reveals that some appear to be colonial scars, while others were traditional scarification marks. Further research is required on this that would link these scars to particular ethno-linguistic groups.

The slave registration returns of 1826 indicate that many slaves from Eastern Africa were listed as having tattoo marks. According to information obtained from Benigna Zimba, the Makonde were the ones who performed extensive tattooing on their faces and bodies. Makonde were the group that practised scarification rather than other groups in Mozambique.

There are visible common traits between known Makonde tattoos and those found on slaves. According to Lars Krutak, the face and other parts of the body “contained chevrons, angles, zigzag and straight lines with an occasional circle, diamond, dot, or animal figure.” According to him, “after the cuts have been made with the traditional tattoo implements (chipopo), vegetable carbon rubbed into the incisions producing a dark blue color.” This blue colour was also observed on the bodies of slaves in the 1826 slave registration.



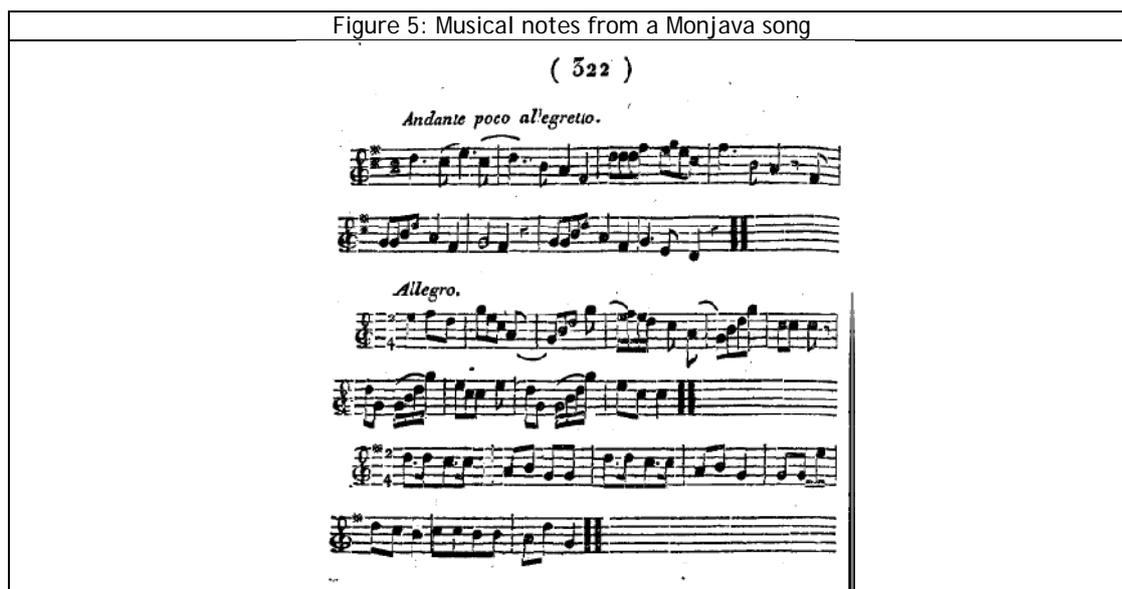
Henry Salt and Epidariste Coin’s descriptions of tattoo marks on different groups need to be compared with the marks found on slaves arriving to Mauritius.

Makua are described as ‘strong athletic race’. At the time of his list, the fashion was to “make a stripe down the forehead along the nose to the chin, and another in a direct angle across from ear to ear, indented in a peculiar way.” They file their teeth to a point “ [...] they are likewise fantastic in the mode of dressing their hair; some shave only one side of the head, others both sides, leaving a kind of crest, extending from the front to the nape of the neck, while a few are content to wear simply a knot on the top of their foreheads.”<sup>176</sup>

We also find out that they are “fond of music and dancing, [...] and have a favourite instrument called the *ambira* formed by a number of thin bars of iron, of different lengths, highly tempered and set in a row in a hollow case of wood.”

Epidariste Colin’s description echoes that of Salt: the preference for Makuhuwa slaves. Tattoos consisted of an oval mark on the temples and a smaller oval between the eyes. The Monjavas could be recognised by the star-shaped tattoos on the body and on the cheeks, as well as 2-3 horizontal marks above the temples. They were less robust than the Makhuwa tribe.

However, they were exhausted by the time they reached the coast and many perished once on board. Colin also noted the love for music and the similarity with the *tsega* found in the Mascarenes. The music was full of sweetness, and he even reproduced some musical notes:



Source: Epidariste Colin, *Travels...*, p.322

Tattoos for Colin represented the 'caste' identity of the different ethnic groups, many of which came to Mauritius. Women of the Sofala group also pierced their upper lip and their tattoos consisted of curved lines from forehead to temples and there were points on the cheeks and body.

Another 'cultural mark' was the baptism of slaves, as they filed into the slave ships prior to embarkation. This was the practice before embarkation in Madagascar and Mozambique, according to researchers in both countries.

Machado added another dimension in his study of the competition between Portuguese and Asian traders on the Mozambican coast. They did not want slaves to be taken by Arabs and Indians because they were not Christian. Neither did they want them taken to non-Christian countries, such as India and Persian Gulf.<sup>177</sup> However, this was quite difficult to control.

Despite this, one also sees in the registration returns, mention of non-Christian slaves.

When we have understood the importance of the French slave trade in the Indian Ocean and the accounting, mechanics and economics of the slave trade, the numbers involved in the Slave Trade will be better assessed. The numbers of slaves contained in all ships that left the African and Malagasy coasts need to be compiled, and an aggregate figure arrived at. How many left the interior and where they came from, how many reached the coast, how many were embarked on board ships, how many died or escaped on the way and how many actually arrived, need to be studied to quantify the full extent of the slave trade.

There are also those slaves transported on Company ships not officially trading in slaves but who 'picked up' slaves en route. It has been difficult to estimate these and further thorough searches are required to bring in information from unlikely sources. Le Lan points to one example when a ship was attacked by Indian pirates. It is only through the report of the attack that we learn that 25 male and 15 female slaves were killed on the *Jupiter*.<sup>178</sup> Another example is the *Le Massiac* which, in 1762, on route to Mauritius captured the British ship *La Betty*. It took as hostage the pilot and 50 slaves out of the 250 on board.<sup>179</sup>

In Mauritius, these figures need to be compared with the official censuses, tax rolls, and Customs Returns Reports of the slave trade to assess the level of discrepancy between the figures and arrive at the real volume of the slave trade. Much of this data has been collected at the TJC for the benefit of historians and statisticians who now need to correlate all this information.

Many Mauritians of African and Malagasy descent regret the fact that they do not know where they come from. It was thus essential to address this issue, and the TJC has done so in its recommendations. The approach has been multidisciplinary but it is not possible to locate exact

origins through archival search, as these yield mainly the port of departure from Africa and Madagascar, and not the origin of the slave. To undertake this study DNA testing of a sample of Mauritians, believed to be of African and Malagasy origin, is required.

Justification for this approach may be sought in the words of one historian of the slave trade, Deveau:

*"S'il est temps d'écrire une histoire mondiale, prenant en compte l'ensemble des peuples (la redondance est parfois nécessaire...), il faut aller la chercher là où, jusqu'ici, l'historien s'est peu aventuré. Familier de la source écrite jusqu'à la virtuosité dans ses analyses, il semble, en revanche, complètement démuni devant d'autres types de sources comme la mémoire orale, ou la mémoire gestuelle que la chorégraphie peut abondamment livrer, pour ne rien dire de l'analyse musicale. C'est pourtant là qu'il faut aller chercher l'histoire des esclaves. Mais avant d'y arriver un immense travail de déculpabilisation reste à faire pour délier les langues qui n'osent pas évoquer un passé considéré comme dévalorisant, une sorte de tache indélébile qui collerait aux gènes familiaux et que l'on s'efforce de dissimuler. D'autre part ce type d'informations complètement déconnectées de leur cadre chronologique demande des méthodes d'analyse qui restent encore largement à mettre au point. Des croisements avec les sources écrites ou les données archéologiques donneront en particulier d'excellents résultats."*

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

## OA 57 Series, Mauritius National Archives

1. Le Senau, *La Louise Elisabeth*, 11 juin 1777. Du port de 275 tonneaux, monté de 30 canons et armé de 30 hommes d'équipage.
2. Le Senau, *Le Déodat*, Capitaine Duminy, 30 juin 1777. Du port de 30 tonneaux et armé 35 hommes d'équipages.
3. Le Senau *La Mimy*, 8 juillet 1777. Capitaine Blaudelot, armateur, M. Nally du port de 150 tonneaux, monté 2 canons et armé de 22 hommes d'équipage.
4. Le Brick *L'amphitrite*, 22 juillet 1777. Buffard, Capitaine et Armateur. Du port de 35 tonneaux, monté de 2 canons et armé de 12 hommes d'équipage.
5. La goélette *la Jeannette*, 16 août 1777. Capitaine Jean Colette. Du port de 40 tonneaux, monté de 4 canons et armé de 2 hommes d'équipage.
6. La goélette, *La Luronne*, 22 juillet 1777. Capitaine Lavilléon et armateur S.Marin. Du port de 35 tonneaux et armé de 10 hommes d'équipage.
7. Le Senau, *L'Abysinie*, 13 octobre 1777. Capitaine Jean Baptiste Le Bel et armateur le Sieur Morne. Monté de 6 pierriers et de 25 hommes d'équipage.
8. Le Vaisseau *Le Pierre*, 23 octobre 1777. Capitaine Vielle et Armateur le Sieur Dogué, du port de 50 tonneaux, armé de 12 hommes d'équipage.
9. Le vaisseau *Bardi*, 31 octobre 1777. Capitaine Boudin, Armateur le Sieur Blaise de Molloud. Du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 6 canons et armé de 30 hommes d'équipage.
10. La Brick du Roy, *Le Bon Conseil*, 22 novembre 1777. Capitaine et Armateur, le Sieur Brauthomme. Du port de 50 tonneaux et armé de 19 hommes d'équipage.
11. Le Brick *Le Luron*, 18 mars 1778. Capitaine François Elie Sciet de la Rougelière, Armateur Sieur Etienne Bologne. Du port de 60 tonneaux, monté de 2 pierriers et armé de 14 hommes d'équipage.
12. Le Brick *Le Pierre*, 30 mars 1778. Capitaine Commandant, Jean Pierre Poirier, Armateur le Sieur Dogué. Du port de 60 tonneaux et armé de 15 hommes d'équipage.
13. Le Brick *Le Luron*, 16 Avril 1778. Capitaine le Sieur Toulon et armateur le Sieur Etienne. Du port de 70 tonneaux, monté de 2 pierriers et armé de 15 hommes d'équipage.
14. La goélette, *l'Aimable Christine*, 15 mai 1778. Commandant le Sieur François Gabriel de Page. Du port de 80 tonneaux, monté de 8 pierriers et armé de 11 hommes d'équipage.
15. Le Brick le *St Pierre*, 9 juin 1778. Capitaine Charles Gassin et Armateur le Sieur Dogué. Du port de 60 tonneaux et armé de 12 hommes d'équipage.
16. Le Vaisseau le *St Pierre*, 11 juin 1778. Commandant le Sieur Jacques François Deschiens de Villefeu. Du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 4 canons et 16 pierriers. Armé de 30 hommes d'équipage.
17. La goélette la *Jeune Julie*, 1 juillet 1778. Capitaine, Charlemagne Maré de la Rabinais. Du port de 40 tonneaux et armé de 9 hommes d'équipage.
18. Le Brick *L'Heureuse*, 24 juillet 1778, Capitaine le Sieur L'Aiea, Armateur les Sieurs Pelot et Dupont. 6 hommes d'équipage.
19. Le Senau *La Colombe*, 3 août 1778. Capitaine et Armateur, Jean Olivier, du port de 54 tonneaux, monté de 13 canons et armé de 20 hommes d'équipage.
20. La *ville St. Malo*, 10 août 1778. Capitaine Julien Boulbard, Armateur N.Pilot du port de 50 tonneaux, monté de 4 canons mariné et armé de 24 hommes d'équipage.
21. Le Brick *La Confiance*, 11 Aout 1778. Commandant Jean Hugué, Armateur le Sieur C. Aubin du port de 80 tonneaux, monté de 6 canons et armé de 20 hommes d'équipage.
22. Le Senau *l'Auguste*, 12 août 1778. Capitaine le Cos Duquillio, Armateur Le Merer. Du port de 140 tonneaux, monté de 4 canons et armé de 25 hommes d'équipage.
23. Le Vaisseau *Le Vigilant*, 22 août 1778. Capitaine N. Condé, Armateur le Sieur Bricole. Du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 2 canons et armé de 2 hommes d'équipage.

24. Le Brick La *Marianne*, Le 7 septembre 1778. Capitaine Sébastien Boileau et Armateur le Sieur Thomas Boileau, son frère. Du port de 60 tonneaux et armé de 16 hommes d'équipage.
25. Le *Languedoc*, 30 septembre 1778. Capitaine Le Bonhomme, Armateurs les Sieurs Manu et Rolland. Du port de 150 tonneaux, monté de 2 canons et armé de 25 hommes d'équipage.
26. Le Brick *L'Auguste*, 12 septembre 1778. Capitaine Antoine Alloche, Armateur le Sieur L'Ecroignard. Du port de 50 tonneaux, monté de 2 pierriers et armé de 10 hommes d'équipage.
27. Le Vaisseau, *Père de Famille*, 16 Septembre 1778. Capitaine Jean Michel Boudin du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 8 canons et armé de 45 hommes d'équipage.
28. Le Senau *Louise Elisabeth*, 27 septembre 1778. Capitaine Yves le Guen, Armateur les Sieurs Pitot Frères et Desvaux de Marigny. Du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 10 canons et armé de 26 hommes d'équipage.
29. Le Brick *L'Aimable Christine*, 30 septembre 1778. Capitaine Jérôme Galiby, Armateur Laurent Raphail. Du port de 80 tonneaux, monté de 3 pierriers, et armé de 14 hommes d'équipage.
30. Le Brick *L'Auguste*, 13 novembre 1778. Capitaine Joseph Leanec, Armateur l'Ecroignard. Du port de 50 tonneaux, monté de 2 pierriers et armé de 11 hommes d'équipage.
31. Le Brick *St Pierre*, 16 novembre 1778. Capitaine Gambin, Armateur le sieur Dogué. Du port de 50 tonneaux et armé de 8 hommes d'équipage.
32. Le Senau La *Baptistine*, 18 décembre 1778. Capitaine François Dumargazeau, du port de 150 tonneaux, monté de 8 canons et armé de 24 hommes d'équipage.
33. Le Vaisseau La *Marguerite*, 22 janvier 1779. Jean Vincent Morice du port de 180 tonneaux, monté de 8 canons, 10 pierriers et armé de 32 hommes d'équipage.
34. Le Vaisseau Le *Prévost de la Croix*, 7 février 1779. Capitaine Utter, Armateur Oury. Du port de 330 tonneaux, monté de 8 canons, 2 pierriers et armé de 38 hommes d'équipage.
35. Le Senau le *Grand Bourbon*, 22 février 1779. Capitaine Robinot de la Semme, Armateur S. France. Du port de 180 tonneaux, monté de 2 canons et armé de 28 hommes d'équipage.
36. Le Senau *Languedoc*, 26 février 1779. Capitaine Jean Belaret, Armateurs les Sieurs Blancs et Rolland. Du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 2 canons, 8 pierriers et armé de 13 hommes d'équipage.
37. Le Senau La *Petite Victoire*, 1 mars 1779. Capitaine Motais, Armateur le Sieur Amie. Du port de 140 tonneaux, monté de 4 canons, 2 pierriers et armé de 33 hommes d'équipage.
38. Le Brick *Pluton*, 28 avril 1779. Capitaine François Morice Faure. Du port de 50 tonneaux, monté de 6 canons, 4 pierriers et armé de 11 hommes d'équipage.
39. Le Brick du Roi, *La Bourbonnaise*, 6 juillet 1779. Capitaine le Sieur Norbert Jean François Le Nolais. Du Port de 30 tonneaux et armé de 11 hommes d'équipage.
40. Le Vaisseau La *Caroline*, 11 juillet 1779. Capitaine Jean Jacques Piroite Lejongard. Du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 8 canons et armé de 40 hommes d'équipage.
41. Le Vaisseau *L'Entreprenant*, 20 juillet 1779. Capitaine Jacques Vilhout, Monté de 2 pierriers t armé de 12 hommes d'équipage
42. Le senau le *Bourbon*, 6 août 1779. Capitaine le Sieur de la Serre. Du port de 250 tonneaux, monté de 2 canons et armé de 30 hommes d'équipage.
43. Le Brick La *Marianne*, 6 août 1779. Capitaine le Sieur Boileau, du port de 60 tonneaux, monté de 4 pierriers et armé de 17 hommes d'équipage.
44. Le Brick Le *Pluton*, 5 août 1779. Capitaine Le Sieur Alexine Jojelme. Du port de 50 tonneaux, monté de 4 canons, 6 pierriers et armé de 14 hommes d'équipage.
45. Le Senau La *Charlotte*, 26 avril 1779. Capitaine et Armateur Charles Gervais Guillaume de la Malle. Du port de 160 tonneaux, monté de 5 canons et armé de 28 hommes d'équipage.
46. Le senau la *Colombe*, 31 avril 1779. Capitaine et propriétaire le Sieur le Roche. Du port de 180 tonneaux, monté de 16 canons et armé de 22 hommes d'équipage.
47. Le Brick le *St Pierre*, 2 septembre 1779. Capitaine le Sieur Borue, du port de 50 tonneaux et armé de 14 hommes d'équipage.
48. Le Vaisseau *Cérès*, 15 août 1779. Capitaine et Armateur le sieur Jacques François Deschiens de Villefeu. Du port de 80 tonneaux et armé de 30 hommes d'équipage.

49. Le Vaisseau Particulier le *Duc de la Vrillière*, 24 septembre 1779. Capitaine le Sieur Pierre de la Batterie. Du port de 500 tonneaux, monté de 12 canons et armé de 84 hommes d'équipage.
50. Le Vaisseau La *Sainte Thérèse*, 16 octobre 1779. Capitaine le Sieur Joseph Pichard du port de 180 tonneaux, monté de 6 canons et armé de 6 pierriers.
51. *L'Entreprenant*, 5 octobre 1779. Capitaine Jean Gilbert, du port de 50 tonneaux et armé de 14 hommes d'équipage.
52. *Le Triton*, le 19 octobre 1779. Capitaine le Sieur Antoine. Du port de 500 tonneaux et armé de 50 hommes d'équipage.
53. Le Senau, *La Baptistine*, 26 octobre 1779. Capitaine Le Sieur Dumargaró. Du port de 150 tonneaux, 6 canons, 2 pierriers et 28 hommes d'équipage.
54. Le Brick *L'Amphitrite*, 6 décembre 1779. Capitaine Commandant Le Sieur Boudin. Du port de 240 tonneaux et 12 hommes d'équipage.
55. Le Vaisseau, *Le Diligent*, 18 décembre 1779. Capitaine Commandant, Le Sieur Gilbert. Armateur Le Sieur Drieux. Du port de 100 tonneaux et 18 hommes d'équipage.
56. Le Vaisseau particulier, *le Père de Famille*, 31 décembre 1779. Capitaine Commandant, Jean Baptiste Ville, Armateur le Sieur Drieux. Du port de 250 tonneaux et 36 hommes d'équipage.
57. Le Senau *La ville St-Malo*, 15 Janvier 1780. Capitaine Commandant Julien Boulbard. 150 tonneaux, 4 canons et 24 hommes d'équipage.
58. Le Senau La *Languedoc*, 4 Février 1780. Capitaine François Marie Faure du Renoir. Armateur Le Sieur B. Rolland. Du port de 150 tonneaux et 25 hommes d'équipage.
59. Le Senau *La Philippine*, 10 février 1780. Capitaine Deschiens de Kerulvay. Du port de 60 tonneaux, 10 canons et 80 hommes d'équipage.
60. La Brick *La Marianne*, 6 mai 1780. Capitaine Alexis Goisslux. Du port de 60 tonneaux, 4 pierriers et 7 hommes d'équipage.
61. Le Senau *Les Deux Amis*, 18 mai 1780. Capitaine et Armateur le Sieur Chauvinot. Du port de 130 tonneaux, 2 canons et 20 hommes d'équipage.
62. Le Vaisseau *La Sainte-Thérèse*, 16 juin 1780. Capitaine Alain de Fey. Du port de 240 tonneaux, 6 canons et 34 hommes d'équipage.
63. Le Vaisseau *La Pintade*, 25 octobre 1782. Capitaine Moulin. Du port de 100 tonneaux, 6 canons et 30 hommes d'équipage.
64. Le Senau *St-Louis*, 31 octobre 1782. Commandant le Sieur Jean Jacques Noel Lenoir. Du port de 195 tonneaux et 22 hommes d'équipage.
65. Le Senau *Charlotte*, octobre 1782. Capitaine Alexis Josselme, Armateurs les frères Josselme et Guelle. Du port de 150 tonneaux, 2 canons et 22 hommes d'équipage.
66. Le Vaisseau *Deux Cousines*, 22 novembre 1782. Capitaine et Armateur Sébastien Boileau. Du port de 75 tonneaux et 15 hommes d'équipage.
67. Le Vaisseau *Neptune Royale*, 26 novembre 1782. Capitaine Le Sieur Jean Béquet. Du port de 100 tonneaux, 4 canons et 35 hommes d'équipage.
68. Le Vaisseau *Betsy*, 4 décembre 1782. Capitaine Claude, Armateur Dubuig. Du port de 450 tonneaux, 8 canons et 5 hommes d'équipage.
69. Le Vaisseau Le *Bèlejaire*, 4 décembre 1782. Capitaine Le Pelletier, du port de 250 tonneaux, 2 canons et 35 hommes d'équipage.
70. Le Vaisseau *Bufon*, 7 décembre 1782. Capitaine Gabriel David Foucault, Armateur Admyrourd. Du port de 800 tonneaux, 24 canons et 100 hommes d'équipage.
71. Le Vaisseau *La Fille Unique*, 14 décembre 1782. Capitaine Chenu, Armateur Le Roux. Du port de 14 canons et 30 hommes d'équipage.
72. Le Vaisseau la *Sainte-Thérèse*, 14 décembre 1782. Capitaine Jean François Jourdan, Armateur Le Grand. Du port de 200 tonneaux et 20 hommes d'équipage.
73. Le Brick *Catherine*, 25 février 1783. Armateur le Sieur Écroignard, du port de 106 tonneaux, 4 canons et 18 hommes d'équipage.
74. Le Vaisseau *Losterley*, 27 janvier 1783. Capitaine Adam Louis, Armateur Le Roux. Du port de 700 tonneaux, 24 canons et 86 hommes d'équipage.

75. Le Vaisseau *Le Chevreau*, 5 mai 1783. Capitaine Commandant Le Pelletier, Armateur Le Roux. Du port de 350 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
76. Le Senau La *Petite Victoire*, 18 mars 1783. Capitaine Etienne La Touche. Du port de 150 tonneaux, 6 canons et 20 hommes d'équipage.
77. Le Senau Le *Nicobard*, 7 mai 1783. Capitaine Le Sieur Antoine Le Richaudu. Du port de 80 tonneaux et 20 hommes d'équipage.
78. Le Vaisseau *Le Chevreau*, 7 juin 1783. Capitaine François Motais de la Chateignerais. Du port de 350 tonneaux, 10 canons et 45 hommes d'équipage.
79. Le goélette *La Santé*, 12 juin 1783. Capitaine Jean Marie Gauchard, Armateur Doguet. Du port de 30 tonneaux et 12 hommes d'équipage.
80. Le Vaisseau *Chevreau*, 7 juin 1783. Capitaine François Motais de la Chateignerais. Du port de 350 tonneaux, 10 canons et 45 hommes d'équipage.
81. La goélette *Santé*, 12 juin 1783. Capitaine Jean Maré Gouhael, Armateur Dogué. Du port de 30 tonneaux et 12 hommes d'équipage.
82. Le Vaisseau *Marquis de Fleury*, 20 juin 1783. Capitaine Jean Bazin, Armateur Le Roux. K. Du port de 214 tonneaux et 45 hommes d'équipage.
83. Le Brick *La Créole*, 25 juin 1783. Capitaine et armateur, Joseph Grafons. Du port de 90 tonneaux, 4 canons et 18 hommes d'équipage.
84. Le Senau *Utile*, 5 juillet 1783. Capitaine Pierre Alexandre Constantin de Lettre, Armateur les Sieurs Barbier et de Lettre. Du port de 110 tonneaux et 22 hommes d'équipage.
85. *Astre de l'Europe*, 5 juillet 1783. Capitaine Bidard, Armateur d'Arifat. Du port de 500 tonneaux et 50 hommes d'équipage.
86. Le Vaisseau *Pacifique*, 18 juillet 1783. Capitaine Descombes et Armateur d'Arifat. Du port de 500 tonneaux et 50 hommes d'équipage.
87. Le Brigantin *Jeannette*, 18 juillet 1783. Capitaine Honoré Blancard et Armateur Pigeol de Cancy. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
88. Le Vaisseau *L'hippopotame*, 25 juillet 1783. Capitaine Belguesi et Armateur d'Arifat. Du port de 700 tonneaux et 80 hommes d'équipage.
89. Le Brick La *Diane*, 20 juillet 1783. Capitaine Luc Montigny et Armateur Duquilles. Du port de 50 tonneaux, 15 hommes d'équipage.
90. Le Vaisseau *Betsy*, 11 avril 1783. Armateur Dubuig, du port de 450 tonneaux et 50 hommes d'équipage.
91. Le Navire *Fille Unique*, 5 avril 1783. Capitaine Louis Vuton Chatusse. Du port de 90 tonneaux et 18 hommes d'équipage.
92. Le Vaisseau *Bonne Espérance*. Capitaine André Ville et Armateur Bonhomme. Du port de 450 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
93. Le Vaisseau *Vicomte de Souillac*, 18 août 1783. Capitaine Jean Bazin, Armateur Le Roux. K. Du port de 240 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
94. Le Vaisseau *Émilie*, 24 août t 1783. Capitaine Deloge et Armateur d'Arifat. Du port de 200 tonneaux et 32 hommes d'équipage.
95. Le Vaisseau *Losterley*, 25 septembre 1783. Capitaine Arnaud Louis Adam et Armateur Le Roux.K. Du port de 700 tonneaux et 90 hommes d'équipage.
96. Le Brick Le *Créole*, 18 septembre 1783. Capitaine et Armateur Joseph Crasson. Du port de 100 tonneaux et 25 hommes d'équipage.
97. Le Brick *Nestor*, 7 octobre 1783. Capitaine Jean Collet. Du port de 100 tonneaux et 15 hommes d'équipage.
98. Le Vaisseau *Atana*, 17 octobre 1783. Capitaine Claude Donjon et Armateur Le Roux.K. Du port de 100 tonneaux et 80 hommes d'équipage.
99. Le Vaisseau *Ésperance*, 18 octobre 1783. Capitaine Jean-François Monnier et Armateur Le Roux .K et Oury. Du port de 350 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
100. Le Brick *Jeune Annette*, 23 octobre 1783. Armateur Duquilles, du port de 200 tonneaux et 16 hommes d'équipage.

101. Le Vaisseau *Bélizaire*, 25 novembre 1783. Capitaine Jean Rondineau. Du port de 150 tonneaux et 36 hommes d'équipage.
102. Le Vaisseau *Geneviève*, 25 novembre 1783. Capitaine Jean-François Balierre. Du port de 600 tonneaux et 45 hommes d'équipage.
103. Le Vaisseau *Betsy*, 4 décembre 1783. Capitaine Jean-Michel Boudin. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
104. Le Brick *Trois Frères*, 24 décembre 1783. Capitaine Dutertre du port d 50 tonneaux et 13 hommes d'équipage.
105. Le Vaisseau *Dalirans*, 30 décembre 1783. Capitaine Michel Simon et Armateur La Rochette. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
106. Le Navire *Antoinette*, 29 décembre 1783. Capitaine Maureau. Du port de 250 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
107. Le Vaisseau *Aimable Marie*, 4 janvier 1784. Capitaine Le Pelletier. Du port de 450 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
108. *Catherine*, 12 janvier 1784. Capitaine Simion, du port de 86 tonneaux et 18 hommes d'équipage.
109. Le Navire *Diane*, 26 janvier 1784. Capitaine André Eymat. Du port de 55 tonneaux et 12 hommes d'équipage.
110. Le Vaisseau *Petit Cousin*, 3 janvier 1784. Capitaine Jérôme Gaybin et Armateur Lambert. Du port de 50 tonneaux et 20 hommes d'équipage.
111. La goélette *Marie-Françoise*, 9 février 1784. Capitaine et Armateur François Daneau. Du Port de 40 tonneaux et 17 hommes d'équipage.
112. Le Navire *Sainte-Anne*, 11 février 1784. Capitaine Ricaud et Armateur Duquillan. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
113. Le Navire *Sylvie*, 14 février 1784. Capitaine et Armateur Victor Chardin. Du port de 70 tonneaux et 6 hommes d'équipage.
114. Le Vaisseau *Fille Unique*, 7 février 1784. Capitaine Jean Toussaint Gilbert et Armateur Le Roux.K et Oury. Du port de 400 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
115. Le Vaisseau *Cheval Marin*, 15 mars 1784. Capitaine Jacques Devillbon et Armateurs les sieurs Devillbon et Gilles. Du port de 200 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
116. Le Vaisseau *Saint-Michel*, 16 mars 1784. Capitaine Collet, du port de 300 tonneaux et 25 hommes d'équipage.
117. Le Vaisseau *Rose*, 16 mars 1784. Capitaine et Armateur Jean-Baptiste Gallet. Du port de 1000 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
118. Le Vaisseau *Gagne-Petite*, 3 avril 1784. Capitaine et Armateur Jacques Muletier. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 41 hommes d'équipage.
119. Le Brigantin le *Pelopas*, 6 mai 1784. Commandant Pierre de la Villeblanche. Du port de 70 tonneaux et 13 hommes d'équipage.
120. *Bailhy de Sulfaen*, 6 mai 1784. Capitaine René Gilbert. Du port de 250 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
121. Le Navire *Tana*, 17 juillet 1784. Capitaine Jean Mani Dayot, du port de 150 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
122. Le Vaisseau Particulier *La Victoire*, 13 juillet 1784. Capitaine Louis Rouillard. Du port de 400 tonneaux et 45 hommes d'équipage.
123. Le Vaisseau *Le Bon*, 13 juillet 1784. Capitaine Jean Gilbert. Du port de 100 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
124. Le Navire particulier *Franc-Maçon*, 15 juillet 1784. Capitaine et Armateur Arnaud Buffard. Du port de 120 tonneaux et 20 hommes d'équipage.
125. Le Brick *Jeune Annette*, 19 juillet 1784. Capitaine Pierre, du port de 100 tonneaux et 20 hommes d'équipage.
126. Le Navire *Jeannette*, 23 juillet 1784. Capitaine François Le Bel. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.

127. Le Navire *Coureur*, 31 juillet 1784. Capitaine Hive Leguere et Armateur Pilot frères et Coureur. Du port de 150 tonneaux et 20 hommes d'équipage.
128. Le Navire *Les Deux Cousines*, 7 août 1784. Capitaine Thomas Boileau. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 25 hommes d'équipage.
129. Le Navire particulier *Aventure*, 3 septembre 1784. Capitaine Pierre Dibot, du port de 300 tonneaux et 25 hommes d'équipage.
130. Le Navire particulier *Sainte-Anne*, 3 septembre 1784. Capitaine François Abé. Du port de 200 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
131. Le Vaisseau particulier *Betsy*. Capitaine François Motais de la Chateignerai. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 45 hommes d'équipage.
132. Le Navire Particulier, *Les Bons Amis*, 14 septembre 1784. Capitaine Joseph Luais du port de 220 tonneaux et 25 hommes d'équipage.
133. Le Navire *Chevreau*, 1 octobre 1784. Capitaine Pierre Fleuriot, Armateur s le sieur Oury et compagnie. Du port de 350 tonneaux et 35 hommes d'équipage.
134. Le Navire *Bailly de Suffren*, 3 novembre 1784. Capitaine Jean-Michel Boudin. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
135. Le Navire, *Comte d'Arloin*. Capitaine Etienne Maillard. Du port de 550 tonneaux et 50 hommes d'équipage.
136. Le Vaisseau *Glaneuse*, 8 novembre 1784. Capitaine Gabier et Armateur Labat. Du port de 550 tonneaux et 50 hommes d'équipage.
137. Le Brick *Belle Union*, 18 novembre 1784. Capitaine et armateur, Antoine la Richaudu. Du port de 60 tonneaux et 15 hommes d'équipage.
138. Le Navire *Brabant*, 20 novembre 1784. Capitaine François Modeste Dumargaro. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 40 hommes d'équipage.
139. Le Navire *Marquis de Capries*, 2 décembre 1784. Capitaine Charles Desgravelles. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 50 hommes d'équipage.
140. Le Navire *Vicomte de Souillac*, 13 décembre 1784. Capitaine Jean Alexandre Bazin et armateur Oury et Le Roux.K. Du port de 300 tonneaux, et 36 hommes d'équipage.
141. Le Navire particulier La *Jeanne-Cécile*, 25 Juillet 1784. Capitaine Joseph Maut de St-Pierre. Du port de 800 tonneaux et 35 hommes d'équipage.
142. Le Vaisseau *Concorde*, 25 février 1785. Capitaine Félix Boufovire. Du port de 800 tonneaux et 45 hommes d'équipage.
143. Le Navire *Brabant*, 21 mars 1785. Capitaine Arnaud Louis Adam. Du port de 350 tonneaux et 30 hommes d'équipage.
144. Le Navire *Marquis*, 1785. Capitaine Charles Gravier et Armateur Jean-Pierre Bertrand. Du port de 300 tonneaux et 50 hommes d'équipage.

## Appendix 2

### Centre d'accueil et de recherche des Archives Nationales (CARAN) Paris



Inventory  
Série JJ in CARAN

REFERENCE	COTE	PAGE	YEAR	DETAILS OF VOYAGE
Série Marine JJ	MAR 3JJ/352 à 357	Carton 85 No 8	1755- 1772	Recueil de 9 pièces jointes toutes relatives sur <i>iles de France et de Bourbon</i> . Observation et opérations de l'Abbé de Caille à l'île de France, <u>les îles et écueils de l'archipel au nord de l'île de France par le sieur Grenier - mémoire sur les travaux du Port-Louis de l'île de France par le Sieur de Tromelin</u>
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 75 5	59	1711 et 1729	Journaux des vaisseaux <i>l'Adélaïde</i> , commandant Houssaye pour les îles de France et Bourbon et le Courrier-de-Bourbon commandant Gillet
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 75 13	60	1723	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Triton</i> , commandant de Jonchée de la Goletrie de Lorient aux îles de France, Bourbon, Penmanche
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 75 15	60	1727	Journal du Vaisseau <i>l'Expéditions</i> commandant Marsay de Lorient aux Canaries îles de France et Bourbon et retour par le pilote Geoffroy
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 19	60	1733	Journal de la <i>Méduse</i> commandant Féré de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon naufragé à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 21	60	1734	Journal de la frégate <i>Saint-Michel</i> commandant d'Esprêmesnil de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 22	60	1736	Journaux des vaisseaux le <i>Duc-d'Anjou</i> commandant Gilbert Deschenais et l'Amphitrite de Lorient à l'île de France et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 24	60	1739	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Prince-de-Conty</i> commandant de Selle de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 25	60	1739	Journal du <i>Griffon</i> commandant Hay de Lorient à l'île de France et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 26	60	1739	Journal du <i>Héron</i> commandant d'Arquistade de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 30	61	1742	Journal du <i>Fulvy</i> commandant d'Arquistade de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, Madagascar et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 31	61	1742	Journal du <i>Fulvy</i> , même campagne par le pilote <u>Maurice</u>
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 32	61	1742	Journal du vaisseau le <i>Maurepas</i> commandant de Selle de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, retour.
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 33	61	1742	Journal du <i>Maurepas</i> , même campagne par le pilote Barbotin
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 34	61	1743	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Triton</i> commandant Bart de Lorient aux îles de France, Bourbon et Martinique
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 35	61	1744	Journal de la <i>Favorite</i> de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon par le pilote Barré
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 76 36	61	1746	Journal de la <i>Favorite</i> commandant Gouardun de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, retour.
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 37	61	1745	Journal du <i>Philibert</i> commandant de Frémeri de Macao à la Grenade par les îles de France et Bourbon (extrait)
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 38	61	1747	Journal du vaisseau le <i>Triton</i> commandant du Tertre de Saint-Malo aux îles de France et Bourbon retour à Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 39	61	1747	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Fulvy</i> commandant de la Palisade de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon retour à Brest
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 40	61	1747	Journal du Vaisseau <i>l'Argonaute</i> commandant de la Londe de l'île de France à Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 41	61	1747	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Content</i> commandant Joannisse de Lorient à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 42	61	1748	Journal de la frégate <i>l'Anglesea</i> commandant de Selle de Brest à l'île de France, Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 43	61	1748	Journal du Vaisseau <i>l'Auguste</i> commandant de Saint-Médard de l'île de France à Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 44	61	1749	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Dauphin</i> commandant le Sanguinet de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 45	61	1749	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Bristol</i> commandant Lehoux de Lorient aux îles de France, Bourbon, de France
Série	MAR 4 JJ 76 46	61	1749-	Journaux de la frégate <i>l'Anglesea</i> , commandant de la

Marine JJ			1752	Selle, <i>la Mutine</i> , commandant d'Après de Manevillette, <i>Le Glorieux</i> , <i>le Rouillé</i> , <i>la Sainte-Reine</i> (commandant Lafargue), par le pilote Aubert ( <i>l'Anglesea</i> , de l'île de France à Brest, <i>la Mutine</i> de Lorient à l'île de France, <i>Le Rouillé</i> de l'île de France à Ouessant).
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 47	61	1750	Journal de la frégate la <i>Sainte-Reine</i> , commandant de Lafargue de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, retour.
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 77 48	62	1750	Journal de la <i>Fière</i> , commandant Caro, de Penmance aux îles de France et Bourbon et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 49	62	1750	Journal du <i>Philibert</i> commandant Mamynaud-Brunet de Penmance aux îles de France et Bourbon et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 50	62	1750	Journal du <i>Glorieux</i> , commandant d'Après de Mannevillette de Lorient à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 51	62	1750	Journaux du <i>Glorieux</i> , commandant d'Après de Mannevillette et des Treize-Cantons de Lorient à l'île de France et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 52	62	1750	Journal du <i>Glorieux</i> même campagne par le commandant
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 53	62	1750	Duplicata de 51
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 55	62	1752	Journal du <i>Mascarin</i> , commandant Kerlero de Rosbo de Lorient à l'Isle de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 56	62	1752	Journal de l' <i>Achille</i> commandant Lévesque de Beaubriant de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 58	62	1754	Journal du <i>Duc-de-Béthune</i> commandant de Surville de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 59	62	1755	Journal de la <i>Gloire</i> , commandant Hay de Lorient à l'Isle de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 78 60	62	1758	Journal du <i>Duc-de-Béthune</i> , commandant de Saint-Romain de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 61	62	1756	Journal de la <i>Compagnie-des-Indes</i> commandant Maugueret de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 63	62	1757	Journal de la frégate X..., de Goa aux Laquedives et à l'Isle de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 64	62	1757	Duplicata de 63
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 66	62	1759	Journal du <i>Saint-Luc</i> commandant du Montet à l'île de France, perdu à Mozambique
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 67	62	1759	Journal du <i>Boutin</i> commandant de Kerengal de Lorient aux îles de France et de Bourbon retour à Rochefort
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 68	63	1760	Journal de la <i>Diligente</i> commandant Maugret ou Magueret de Lorient aux îles de France et de Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 71	63	1761	Journal du <i>Vengeur</i> commandant de Pallière de Bourbon et au cap de Bonne-Espérance, à l'Isle de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 79 71bis	63	1761	Duplicata de 71
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 80 73	63	1761	Journal du <i>Comte d'Agenson</i> commandant Marion-Dufresne de Port-Louis aux îles de France et de Bourbon retour à Lorient par le pilote
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 80 74	63	1761	Journal du même par le commandant
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 80 75	63	1761	Journal du <i>Boulogne</i> commandant de Saint-Romain de Rochefort à l'Isle de France et à la Grenade pris par les Anglais
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 80 76	63	1761	Journal du <i>Vaillant</i> commandant Bouvet de Lorient aux îles de France et de Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 80 77	63	1761	Journal du <i>Fidèle</i> commandant Roche de Lorient à l'Isle de France puis en course jusqu'à l'île des Tonneliers
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 80 78	63	1761	Journal du <i>Comte d'Artois</i> commandant Jouannis de l'Isle de France à Batavia aux îles de France et de Bourbon et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 80 79	63	1762	Journal du Vaisseau le <i>Berryer</i> commandant de Sanguinet l'aîné de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon
Série	MAR 4 JJ 80 80	63	1762	Journal du <i>Bertin</i> , commandant de Bec-de-Lièvre de

Marine JJ				Lorient à l'île de France et Port-Louis
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 81	63	1762	Journal du <i>Chameau</i> commandant Prévot de la Croix de Lorient à l'île de France, Bourbon et Penmance
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 82	63	1763	Journal du <i>Vaillant</i> commandant Bouvet de l'île de France à Lorient (inachevé)
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 83	63	1763	Journal du <i>Villevault</i> (Vilvaut) commandant Rosbo de Kerlero de Lorient aux Isles de France et Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 84	63	1763	Journal de la flute <i>l'Adour</i> commandant de Joran de Lorient à l'Isle de France et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 85	63	1763	Journal de <i>l'Ajax</i> commandant de Sanguinet cadet de Lorient aux Iles de France et Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 86	63	1763	Journal du <i>Comte-de-Provence</i> commandant Beaulieu-Tréouhart de l'île de France à Madagascar et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 87	64	1762	Journal du <i>Comte-De-Choiseul</i> commandant Minvielle de Cordouan aux îles de France et Bourbon et au passage
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 88	64	1763	Journal du <i>Condé</i> commandant le Chevalier de Bellesme de l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 90	64	1764	Journal du <i>Grand-Bourbon</i> commandant Galouchau de Bordeaux aux îles de France et Bourbon et à Marseille
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 81 91	64	1765	Journal du <i>Comte-d'Artois</i> commandant Marion-Dufresne de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, et retour.
Série Marine JJ	MAR/4JJ/82/92	64	1766	Journal du <i>Saint-Louis</i> , Commandant Villebague-Magon, de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, et retour, par le pilote
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4JJ 82 93	64	1766	Journal du même, par le pilote Joseph Durenne
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4JJ 82 95	64	1766	Journal de <i>l'Heureux</i> , commandant Le Fer de Bauvais, de Lorient à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4JJ 82 96	64	1767	Journal de <i>l'Outarde</i> , commandant Magny, de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et retour par le commandant
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4JJ 82 97	64	1767	Journal du même par le pilote Canut
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4JJ 82 98	64	1767	Id., par le second pilote Roussel
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4JJ 83 99	64	1767	Journal du <i>Dauphin</i> , commandant Kerangal, de l'île de France à Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 83 100	64	1768	Journal du <i>Marquis-de-Beuvron</i> , commandant Boisquenet, de Lorient à l'île de France, par le commandant
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 83 101	64	1768	Journal du même par le pilote Rouault
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 83 102	64	1768	Journal du <i>Massiac</i> , commandant Villebague-Ribretiere, de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 83 103	64	1768	Journal de la corvette le <i>Vert-Galant</i> , commandant de Lafontaine, de Lorient à l'île de France, par le pilote Bourbon
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 83 104	64	1768	Journal de la frégate <i>la Boudeuse</i> , commandant de Bougainville, de l'île de France à Saint-Malo (déficit)
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 83 105	64	1769	Journal du <i>Marquis-de-Sance</i> , commandant La Londe, de Lorient à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 106	64	1769	Journal du <i>Duc-de-Choiseul</i> , commandant Joannisse, de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon, et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 107	64	1769	Journal du même, par le pilote David
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 108	65	1770	Id., par le pilote Demigotarde (jusqu'à l'île de France) et journal du Laverdy, commandant Prévot de la Croix de l'île de France à Lorient par le même
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 109	65	1769	Journal de la <i>Paix</i> de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 110	65	1771	Journal du <i>Fort</i> , commandant Michelle de Brest à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 111	65	1771	Journal de <i>l'Unique</i> , commandant Bourde de Lorient à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 112	65	1772	Journal de la Flute la <i>Normande</i> , de l'île de France à Lorient
Série	MAR 4 JJ 84	65	1773	Journal de la <i>Victoire</i> , commandant Joannisse, de Lorient

Marine JJ	113			aux îles de France et Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 84 114	65	1773	Journal du <i>Mascarin</i> , commandant Crozet de Manille à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 85 115	65	1774	Journal de la flute la <i>Normande</i> , commandant Prévot de la Croix, de Lorient au Cap de Bonne-Espérance
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 85 115 bis	65	1774	Journal du même, du Cap aux îles de France et Bourbon retour à Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 85 116	65	1774	Journal de la flûte <i>'Africain</i> , commandant du Plessie-Paumard, de l'île de France à Bourbon et Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 85 117	65	1773	Journal de la <i>Victoire</i> , commandant Joannisse de Lorient aux îles de France et Bourbon et retour
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 85 118	65	1773	Journal du <i>Marquis-de-Marboeuf</i> , commandant Josset de Lorient à False-Bay, l'île de France à Brest par Beniowzky explorateur de Madagascar
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 85 119	65	1775	Journal de <i>'Espérance</i> par le 2ème commandant Daniel Savarit de Zanzibar à l'île de France (extrait et duplicata)
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 85 120	65	1788	Journal de la flute <i>'Etoile</i> commandant de Foucault-Pontbriant de Rochefort à Brest et à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 86 1	65	1666- 1668	Journal d'un vaisseau de <i>Pernambouc</i> au Cap de Bonne-Espérance, Bourbon et Madagascar
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 86 13	66	1731	Journal de la frégate <i>'Astrée</i> , commandant Dulesle-Pezeron, de Lorient aux Canaries, Côte d'Afrique, baie des Saintes, Madagascar, île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 86 14	66	1731	Journal de <i>'Hirondelle</i> , commandant A.P de Castillon, de Lorient à Gorée, île de France, Madagascar, île Sainte-Marie, Fort Dauphin, Lorient
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 86 15	66	1732	Journal du Vaisseau la <i>Vierge-de-Grace</i> , commandant Bichard, de Lorient à l'île de France, Mozambique, île de l'Ascension, Lorient.
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 86 27	67	1750	Journal de la <i>Princesse-Emilie</i> , commandant Duguilly de l'île de France à la côte Ouest de Madagascar
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 86 29	67	1755	Journal d'un vaisseau de l'île de France à Madagascar
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 86 30	67	1756- 1758	Journal du Boat <i>le Favori</i> , commandant Moreau de Pondichéry à l'île de France, Bourbon, Madagascar et du Senau le Rubis, commandant Desjardins, de l'île de France à Pondichéry
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 87 31	67	1756	Journal de la frégate <i>le Cerf</i> , commandant Morpheu, de l'île de France à l'île Mahé
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 87 35	67	1756	Journal du vaisseau le <i>Phélyppeaux</i> , commandant de Sanguinet l'aîné, de l'île de France à Madagascar
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 87 38	67	1757	Journal de la frégate la <i>Gloire</i> , de l'île de France à Zanzibar, Mombasa etc.
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 87 39	67	1757	Journal du même, même campagne
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 87 59	68	1774	Journal de la <i>Marie-Adélaïde</i> , commandant Moreau de l'île de France à l'île de la Fortune
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 87 65	68	[17..]	Journal de la goélette le <i>Cheval-Marin</i> , commandant des Chiens de l'île de France aux Seychelles (Extrait)
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 87 68	69	1788	"Gazette de France" 5 Décembre 1788, voyage de <i>'Hirondelle</i> commandant Vaude de l'île de France à Pondichéry
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 144 B 1	98	1742- 1744	Extrait du Journal du <i>Fulvy</i> , commandant d'Arquistade de Lorient à l'île de France, Bourbon et Madagascar
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 144c 7	101	1748- 1749	Extrait du journal de <i>'Hercule</i> aux îles de France de Bourbon, Madagascar et Mahé
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 144 c	103	12 Février 1742	Rapport de M. de Tronquidy commandant le <i>Héron</i> sur son voyage à l'île de France
Série Marine JJ	MAR 4 JJ 144 D 16	107	1773- 1775	Journal du voyage de M. de Trobriant commandant l'Etoile dans la mer des Indes; île de France et de Bourbon, Seychelles, Bengale, Gange, Pondichéry, Moka, Cochin, Socotora, Cotes d'Arabie, Ceylan, Indes. Merguy, Malacca, Bornéo, Banka, Chine et retour (avec nombreuses observations et description de villes et de comptoirs. 195 p

### Appendix 3

#### Inventaire des documents du Fond Monneron

#### The Municipal Archives of Bordeaux



**Fonds Monneron**

1. 122 S 1 - Lettres du Vicomte François de Souillac, ancien Capitaine de vaisseau, gouverneur général pour le Roi aux îles de France et de Bourbon (27 Septembre 1770 - 19 Avril 1778)
2. 122 S 2 - Lettres de Chevreau, Intendant des Îles de France et de Bourbon (25 Juillet 1770 - 1st Aout 1782)
3. 122 S 3 - Lettres de Bellecombe (1778)
4. 122 S 4 - Lettres de Warren Hastings, gouverneur Général du Bengale (Décembre 1778)
5. 122 S 5 - Lettres d'Alexandre Dow (Juillet/Aout 1778)
6. 122 S 6 - Lettres J.P Auriol (1778 - 1779)
7. 122 S 7 - Lettres de Foucault (7 Septembre 1779 - 2 Mars 1781)
8. 122 S 8 - Lettres de L. Collins (19 Janvier - 8 Février 1780)
9. 122 S 9 - Lettres de Montigny (28 Mai 1780 - 9 Mars 1784)
10. 122 S 10 - Lettres de Boësses agent du Roi à Batavia (20 Décembre 1781 - 12 Mars 1784)
11. 122 S 11 - Correspondance entre Louis Monneron et M. Falck, gouverneur général des établissements hollandais à Ceylan (8 Novembre 1781 - 18 Juin 1784)
12. 122 S 12 - Lettres de Denis de Launay, Intendant Commissaire Général de la Marine (12 Juillet 1782 - 12 Mai 1783)
13. 122 S 13 - Correspondance du Chevalier des Rois, commandant à Trinquemalay (7 Septembre 1782 - 30 Décembre 1783)
14. 122 S 14 - Lettres du Bailli de Suffren (24 Février 1782 - 9 Septembre 1783)
15. 122 S 15 - Correspondance du Comte Charles Georges d'Hoffelize, Brigadier des armées du Roi, commandant en chef de l'armée française des Indes Orientales (30 Septembre 1782 - 18 Janvier 1783)
16. 122 S 16 - Lettres du Chevalier de Cuverville (25 Décembre 1782 - 21 Février 1783)
17. 122 S 17 - Lettres de Costebelle, lieutenant de vaisseau commandant la frégate la « *Nayade* » (2 Décembre 1782 - 1 Mars 1783)
18. 122 S 18 - Lettres de Perrier de Salvert (29 Avril 1782 - 24 Mai 1783)
19. 122 S 19 - Lettres de Desgrange (2 Octobre 1782 - 4 Mars 1783)
20. 122 S 20 - Lettres de Charles Joseph Pâtissier de Bussy - Castelnau (15 Juin 1782 - 2 Aout 1782)
21. 122 S 21 - Lettres de Duchemin, Brigadier Colonel des volontaires étrangers, commandant les troupes françaises envoyées dans l'Inde pour soutenir le Nabab HeyDer Ali (14 Mars 1782 - 3 Aout 1782)
22. 122 S 22 - Lettres d'Augustin François Motais de Narbonne, Commissaire des Colonies, Ordonnateur de l'armée française des Indes Orientales (14 Janvier 1782 - 26 Aout 1783)
23. 122 S 23 - Lettres de Igran Angelbeck (9 Janvier 1782 - 8 Mai 1783)
24. 122 S 24 - Lettres de Ravenel, Intendant de l'Escadre, embarqué sur le Héros (2 Juin 1782 - 3 Aout 1784)
25. 122 S 25 - Lettres de C.D Krayenhoff (10 Février 1782 - 6 Juin 1784)
26. 122 S 26 - Lettres de Beaubrun, fournisseur de l'Escadre (27 Février 1782 - 23 Juin 1785)
27. 122 S 27 - Lettres de Philippe et Antoine Couve, armateur à Marseille (3 Mai 1796 - 30 Décembre 1800)
28. 122 S 28 - Lettres de Pierre Louis Monneron Fils (4 Juillet 1801 - 1er Avril 1802)
29. 122 S 29 - Correspondance Jean Louis Voidet, ancien commissaire des guerres, régisseur de l'Octroi municipale et bienfaisance de Lyon - Louis Monneron. (7 Novembre 1801 - 9 Mars 1802)
30. 122 S 30 - Copies de lettres expédiées par Louis Monneron (Janvier - Mai 1781)
31. 122 S 31 - Subsistances militaires (1794 -1795)
32. 122 S 32 - Correspondance Générale (1789 - 1807)
33. 122 S 33 - Mémoires et requêtes présentés par Louis Monneron (1790)
34. 122 S 34 - A classer

122 S 1 - Lettres du Vicomte François de Souillac, ancien Capitaine de Vaisseau, Gouverneur général pour le Roi aux îles de France et de Bourbon. (27 Septembre 1770 - 19 Avril 1782)

**Article 1** - Extrait de l'Ordonnance du Roi concernant les fonctions dont les officiers de la Marine seront chargés sur les escadres et à bord des vaisseaux. Signé par Etienne Claude Chevreau et daté du 27 7bus 1776.

**Article 2** - Ordonnance du Roi, extrait de l'article. Signé par Chevreau (*Article non daté*)

**Article 3** - Extrait de l'Ordonnance du Roi, signé par Etienne Claude Chevreau et daté du 27 7bus 1776.

**Article 4** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron au Port-Louis, Isle de France. Signé par Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du 27 Aout 1780.

**Article 5** - Ordres et instructions du 21 8bus 1780 pour le Sieur Louis Monneron, agent de la Marine au Cap de Bonne Esperance. Signés par Le Vicomte de Souillac, chevalier de l'ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis, capitaine des vaisseaux de sa majesté, gouverneur général pour le Roi aux Iles de France et de Bourbon et Denis Nicolas Foucault, conseiller du Roi en ses conseils, intendant de Justice, Police, Finances de la Guerre et des Colonies et Président des conseils Supérieurs aux dites Îles.

**Article 6** - Copies des instructions données au Sieur de Montigny agent de la Marine au Cap de Bonne Esperance. Signé par Denis Nicolas Foucault et datée du 7 Février 1779.

**Article 7** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron, signé par Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du 23 8bus 1780.

**Article 8** - Lettre du Vicomte de Souillac adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron à l'Isle de France et datée du 6 Janvier 1781. *{Reçu par l'Argus le 2 Février & répondu le 24 du même mois}*

**Article 9** - Deuxième Lettre du Vicomte de Souillac adressé au Sieur Monneron à l'Isle de France et datée du 7 Janvier 1781. *{Reçu par l'Argus le 2 Février et répondu le 24}*

**Article 10** - Lettre du Vicomte de Souillac adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron et datée du 4 Mars 1781.

**Article 11** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron et agent et Correspondant de la Nation Française à l'Île de Ceylan. Signé par François Vicomte de Souillac & Etienne Claude Chevreau. 1781

**Article 12** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron, au Port-Louis Isle de France. Signé par Etienne Claude Chevreau & Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du 28 9bus 1781.

**Article 13** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron. Agent de la Marine Française à Ceylan, au Port-Louis Isle de France. Signé par Etienne Claude Chevreau & Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du 29 9bus 1781

**Article 14** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron et signé par Le Vicomte de Souillac. *{Document non daté}*

**Article 15** - Lettre du Sieur Etienne Claude Chevreau au Réduit, Isle de France. Adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron Agent de la Marine Française à Ceylan et datée du 15 Janvier 1788

**Article 16** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron, signé par Le Vicomte de Souillac Datée du 27 Avril 1782 et reçu le 16 Juin de la même année.

**Article 17** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron. Au Port-Louis, Isle de France et signé par Etienne Claude Chevreau & Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du le 10 Juin 1782.

**Article 18** - Duplicata de la lettre datée du 10 Juin 1782. *{Article 17}*

**Article 19** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron, au Port-Louis, Isle de France et signé par Etienne Claude Chevreau & Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du 27 Juin 1782 et reçu le 1er Avril 1782.

**Article 20** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron à l'Isle de France. Signé par Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du 14 Juillet 1782.

**Article 21** - Duplicata de la lettre datée du 24 Juillet 1782. *{Article 20}*

**Article 22** - Lettre adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron au Port-Louis, Isle de France. Signé par Etienne Claude Chevreau & Le Vicomte de Souillac et datée du 24 Juillet 1782.

**Article 23** - Duplicata de la lettre datée du 24 Juillet 1782, reçu le 16 Aout et répondu le 1er 8bus. *{Article 22}*

**Article 24** - Copie de la lettre écrite par M. Le Vicomte de Souillac & Etienne Claude Chevreau à Mr. Le Chevalier de Suffren et datée du 24 Juillet 1782.

**Article 25** - Copie de la lettre écrite par M. Le Vicomte de Souillac & Etienne Claude Chevreau à Mr. Falck le Gouverneur de Ceylan au Port-Louis, Isle de France et datée du 25 Juillet 1782.

**Article 26** - Copie de la lettre écrite par M. Le Vicomte de Souillac & Etienne Claude Chevreau adressé au Sieur Beaubrun, Agent de la Marine Française à Goa et datée du 25 Juillet 1782.

**Article 27** - Lettre du Vicomte de Souillac adressé au Sieur Monneron à l'Isle de France le 3 aout 1782.

**Article 28** - Lettre écrite par M. Le Vicomte de Souillac & Etienne Claude Chevreau adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron au Port-Louis, Isle de France et datée du 23 7bus 1782.

**Article 29** - Lettre du Vicomte de Souillac adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron à l'Isle de France et datée du 14 Mars 1784.

**Article 30** - Lettre du Vicomte de Souillac adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron à Pondichéry et datée du 8 Aout 1785. *{Contenant aussi un duplicata}*

**Article 31** - Duplicata de la lettre datée du 8 Aout 1785. *{Article 30}*

**Article 32** - Lettre du Vicomte de Souillac adressé au Sieur Louis Monneron au Port-Louis, Isle de France et datée du 29 Avril 1787.

- <sup>1</sup> Teelock, *Mauritian History*.
- <sup>2</sup> Auguste Toussaint, J.M Filliot and Richard Allen.
- <sup>3</sup> See for example works of P. Brest, R. Allen, T. Vernet and M. Guerout. Details in Bibliography.
- <sup>4</sup> Lougnon, *Le mouvement maritime aux îles de Bourbon et de France prenant les premières années du règne personnel de Louis XV*, Archives Départementales de la Réunion, 1958.
- <sup>5</sup> Arnoult 1791, Blancard 1806.
- <sup>6</sup> Information compiled from the works of Richard Allen for Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund Report, 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> Quoted by Toussaint 97 from Deschamps.
- <sup>8</sup> Robert Forster, *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Mar., 1975), pp. 162-165.
- <sup>9</sup> Albane Forestier, Principal-Agent Problems in the French Slave Trade: The Case of Rochelais Armateurs and their Agents, 1763-1792, Working Paper No. 13/05, Department of Economic History, LSE, April 2005, p. 4
- <sup>10</sup> 'Sea your History, Discover the 20<sup>th</sup> century Royal Navy and its people', <http://www.seayourhistory.org.uk>
- <sup>11</sup> Patrick Rabau, « *Bordeaux au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Le commerce atlantique et l'esclavage* », Document pédagogique d'accompagnement pour les classes des cycles 2 et 3, publié par le Musée d'Aquitaine. Bordeaux, France.
- <sup>12</sup> Website on Traditional occupations, Description of a *mousse*. <http://www.genealogie.com/v2/genealogie-en-ligne/ancien-metier>.
- <sup>13</sup> See Filliot, Tome II, pp. 51-63.
- <sup>14</sup> Filliot, Vol. II, 84.
- <sup>15</sup> Toussaint, *Route*, 126.
- <sup>16</sup> Toussaint, *Route*, 128.
- <sup>17</sup> Email communication.
- <sup>18</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 20. To understand French commerce, one can consult for example, Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les négoce maritimes français XVII<sup>e</sup> - XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Edts Belin, 1997 and Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l'Ancien régime*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1972, vol 1.
- <sup>19</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 21.
- <sup>20</sup> Meyer, *Histoire économie et société*, <http://persee.fr>.
- <sup>21</sup> Brigitte Nicolas, *Lorient Port de Traite de la Compagnie des Indes*, in 83.
- <sup>22</sup> B Nicolas, *Lorient Port de Traite*, 97.
- <sup>23</sup> Le Lan, *La Compagnie des Indes et la Traite des noirs*, 2.
- <sup>24</sup> MNA : OA 109 (1769), dossier 4, ff 32.
- <sup>25</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 29.
- <sup>26</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 33.
- <sup>27</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 40.
- <sup>28</sup> Toussaint, *Route*, 96.
- <sup>29</sup> Filliot, Tome II, 68-69
- <sup>30</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén.MM De Nyon, Dumas, de Maupin, Gouverneurs, Lettre de Denyon, ff. 38.
- <sup>31</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén.MM De Nyon, Dumas, de Maupin, 1732 *Requêtes au Roi par Teinturier*
- <sup>32</sup> See Database of Le Lan and CD
- <sup>33</sup> Roman, *St Malo*, p.223.
- <sup>34</sup> Toussaint, *Route des Iles*, 96.
- <sup>35</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 *Correspondances générales M. de La Bourdonnais, Gouverneur*, Lettre du 20 novembre 1739.
- <sup>36</sup> COL-C4-4-005.
- <sup>37</sup> COL-C4-4-005.
- <sup>38</sup> COL-C4-4-007.
- <sup>39</sup> Cheryl. S. *McWatters*, 'Investment returns and la traite negrière: evidence from 18<sup>th</sup>-century France', *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, 18,2, July 2008, 162-163.
- <sup>40</sup> Filliot, Tome II, p.44.
- <sup>41</sup> Filliot, Tome II, p.75.
- <sup>42</sup> Before the 1970s, those researching included Alpers, Toussaint and Lougnon. After this came the work of Jean Michel Filliot whose excellent work is being supplemented by a number of scholars such as Richard Allen, Thomas Vernet and Pier Larson.
- <sup>43</sup> Deveau, La Rochelle, p. 21-22.
- <sup>44</sup> COL -C4-28 1771 -29, 3 septembre 1771, *Traite des noirs sur le vaisseau du Roy*.
- <sup>45</sup> Roman, *St Malo*, p.42.
- <sup>46</sup> Forestier, Principal-Agent.
- <sup>47</sup> Roman, *St Malo*, p.251.
- <sup>48</sup> Roman, *St Malo*, p.256.

- <sup>49</sup> Case reported by Alain Romaine, 'Sur les traces enfouies d'un négrier : Le Saturne', Paper presented at the International Conference, Slave Trade, Slavery and Transition to indenture in Mauritius and the Mascarenes 1715-1848 11-13 April 2011, Truth and Justice Commission in collaboration with the University of Mauritius and Cemaf/Paris 1. He quotes from ANF F12 1653. One must not confuse Alain Roman French historian and Alain Romaine, Mauritian anthropologist.
- <sup>50</sup> Roman, *St Malo*, p.256.
- <sup>51</sup> Quoted from the *Memoirs of Angenard*, in Roman, *St Malo*, p.251.
- <sup>52</sup> Filliot, tome II, 84.
- <sup>53</sup> Saugera Eric. '*La traite des noirs en trente questions.*' Document downloaded from, <http://hgc.ac-creteil.fr>. Editions Geste. 2003. Pg. 34.
- <sup>54</sup> Gerbeau Hubert. '*L'Océan Indien n'est pas L'Atlantique. La Traite illégale à Bourbon au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle.*' Un article publié dans *Outre-mer*, No 336-337, Décembre 2002, Paris, p. 79-108 (Coordination du dossier thématique 'Traites et esclavages : vieux problèmes, nouvelles perspectives?' Par Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, p.1-282).
- <sup>55</sup> Saugera Eric. '*La Traite des noirs sous le Consulat (1800-1804), une approche méthodologique.*' Extrait de '*La Traite Négrière Coloniale, Océans Atlantique et Indien, Regards Croisés, Europe, Afrique et Amérique.*' Colloque ADEN, Dakar/Gorée. 15-18 Novembre 2007. Page 2-6.
- <sup>56</sup> Toussaint, *Route*, p.263-73.
- <sup>57</sup> Filliot Tome II, 66.
- <sup>58</sup> Lacretelle, Pierre-Louis de. *Mémoire à consulter, et consultation pour les négocians faisant le commerce des marchandises des Indes; contre la nouvelle Compagnie des Indes. Paris, 1786, 91 pages et 32 pages de pièces justificatives*, quoted in Meyer, 'France et Asie'.
- <sup>59</sup> Meyer, 'France et Asie', 304.
- <sup>60</sup> Max Guerout, 'Le navire négrier 'Utile' et la traite Française aux Mascareignes', *Cahiers des Annales de la Mémoire*, no. 9, Nantes 2006.
- <sup>61</sup> Petre Grenouilleau, *Les Traites négrières*, 2004, 328.
- <sup>62</sup> Roma, *St Malo au temps des négriers*, 76.
- <sup>63</sup> Forestier, *Principal-Agent*, 2.
- <sup>64</sup> Forestier, *Principal-Agent*, 15.
- <sup>65</sup> Forestier, *Principal-Agent*, 17.
- <sup>66</sup> Forestier, *Principal-Agent*, 23.
- <sup>67</sup> Forestier, *Principal-Agent*, 24.
- <sup>68</sup> The list used by Le forestier has ben compared with Toussaint's list of 3,198 ships.
- <sup>69</sup> Forestier, *Principal-Agent*, 36.
- <sup>70</sup> Forestier quoting Peter Stein, 26.
- <sup>71</sup> Guillaume Daudin, 'Profitability of slave and long-distance trading in context: the case of Eighteenth-century France', *The Journal of Economic History*, 64, 1, March 2004, 147.
- <sup>72</sup> Daudin, 'Profitability', 145.
- <sup>73</sup> Daudin, 'Profitability', 145.
- <sup>74</sup> COL-C4-20 *Ile de France Corr.* Gén. M. Dumas '1768' Lettre de M. Dumas sur les bénéfices de la traite à Madagascar.
- <sup>75</sup> State of currency in Mauritius, Sub-Committee's report on currency and exchange, 26 November 1834.
- <sup>76</sup> Forestier, 'Principal-Agent', 12.
- <sup>77</sup> McWatters, 'Investment returns', 162-5.
- <sup>78</sup> Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les négocees maritimes français XVIIe - XXe siècle*. Paris: 1997, 29.
- <sup>79</sup> A.C.M., 4J 1610, letter of 15th July 1780.
- <sup>80</sup> 277-299
- <sup>81</sup> Silvia Marzagali, *Bordeaux et la Traite Négrière*, 146.
- <sup>82</sup> D. Binaud, Conservatoire de l'Estuaire de la Gironde, *Le Trafic Negrier de Bordeaux*,1.
- <sup>83</sup> Musee National des Douanes, 'Le commerce colonial bordelais au 18e siècle', Bordeaux, La porte des Antilles, [www.musee-douanes.fr](http://www.musee-douanes.fr).
- <sup>84</sup> See also, Laurent FORCARI, 'Nantes et l'océan Indien, 1783-1810', Mémoire de Maîtrise, octobre 1995; See also D Binaud, Conservatoire de l'estuaire de la Gironde, *Le Trafic Negrier de Bordeaux*.
- <sup>85</sup> A number of works however have been published on Bordeaux slave trade, but little on Indian Ocean: P Butel, *Les Négociants Bordelais, l'Europe et les îles aux XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne, 1974; P Davigo, *Le lancement de la Traite Negrière à Bordeaux entre 1729-1743, ou la formation du capital négrier Bordeaux*, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, 1990; P Butel, *Negoce et industrie en France et en Irlande au XVIIIe et au XIXe siecle* Paris CNRS 1980, 65-73; Marzagalli et Bonin, *Ports, Négoce, Océans aux XVI au XXe siècles*, PUB, 1999, 297-301. P. Viles., *The Shipping Interest of Bordeaux 1774-1793*, Harvard University Press, unpublished Phd, 1965.
- <sup>86</sup> This Journal de bord is in the Société Archeologique de Bordeaux. Other accounts include the document on La Licorne from Bordeaux to Mozambique edited by Gabriel Debien, in *Le journal de traite de La Licorne au Mozambique 1778-1788*, Etudes Africaines offertes à Brunshwig Paris, EHESS, 1983, 91-116.
- <sup>87</sup> Silvia Marzagalli, *Bordeaux et la Traite Négrière*,
- <sup>88</sup> Toussaint, *Route; Annonces et Affiches* of 8 December 1773.
- <sup>89</sup> See *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers* of 27 July 1774 and 17 August 1774.
- <sup>90</sup> Haudrière, *Projets et échecs de la Compagnie des Indes dans le commerce des esclaves au XVIIIe siècle*, 79.

- <sup>91</sup> Le Lan, 3. For more information on the French slave trade with West Africa, see Philippe Haudrère and G. Le Bouëdec, *Les Compagnies des Indes, Collection Ouest-France*, 2001 and Patrick Villiers, 'Les établissements français et les débuts de la station navale française sur les côtes occidentales d'Afrique de 1755 à 1792' in *A la découverte de l'Afrique noire par les marins français (XV° - XIX° siècle)*, Rochefort et la mer, Vol 12, Publications à l'Université Francophone d'Étè-Jonzac, 1998.
- <sup>92</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 *Correspondances générales M. de la Bourdonnais, gouverneur 1739 M. de Cossigny, ingénieur*.
- <sup>93</sup> Very probably Kerimba.
- <sup>94</sup> Gilbert Buti, *Commerce honteux pour negociants vertueux*, p. 210.
- <sup>95</sup> Buti, 203.
- <sup>96</sup> Gilbert, *Marseille Port Négrier au XVIIIe siècle*, Anneaux, p.173.
- <sup>97</sup> Buti, *Commerce honteux*, p. 215.
- <sup>98</sup> Roman, *St. Malo*, p., Mes savent que jusuis,
- <sup>99</sup> Roman, *St. Malo*, p., Saint Malo : corsairs et negriers, p.53.
- <sup>100</sup> Roman, *St. Malo*, p., Corsairs, p.49.
- <sup>101</sup> Roman, *St. Malo*, p., Corsairs et Négriers, p.45.
- <sup>102</sup> Roman, *St. Malo*, p.259.
- <sup>103</sup> Romaine, 'Sur les traces'.
- <sup>104</sup> McWatters, 'Investment returns', p. 168.
- <sup>105</sup> Jacques Weber, 'La traite négrière nantaise de 1763 à 1793', *ÉTUDE STATISTIQUE*.
- <sup>106</sup> Deveau, *La Rochelle second port négrier français*, p.117.
- <sup>107</sup> Deveau, *La Rochelle*, p.120-121.
- <sup>108</sup> Deveau, *La Rochelle*, p.124.
- <sup>109</sup> Saunier Eric, 2007, p.23.
- <sup>110</sup> McWatters & Yannick LEMARCHAND, 'Comptabilité et traite négrière. Le Guide du commerce de Gagnat de l'Aulnais, 1718-1791', 210.
- <sup>111</sup> C4-2-049 *Règlement du Conseil Supérieur touchant les habitants l'île de France Article 8*.
- <sup>112</sup> Larson, 45.
- <sup>113</sup> COL-C4-20 *Ile de France Correspondance Général M. Dumas Gouverneur Général 1768*
- <sup>114</sup> COL-C4-20 Corr. Gén. Dumas Copie présente à M. Poivre le 15 May 1768. A Monsieur Poivre commissaire Général de la Marine faisant fonction d'Intendant aux Isles de France et de Bourbon.
- <sup>115</sup> COL-C4-(24) 1758 Corr. Gén. Magon, Gouverneur, Lettres au Conseil Supérieur, Lettre du 21 septembre 1758.
- <sup>116</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 Corr. Gén. de M. de la Bourdonnais, Gouverneur 1738, Fourniture de chaux pour l'île de France.
- <sup>117</sup> COL-C4-4 (58-59) 1740-1745 Corr. Gen. M. de la Bourdonnais, Lettre du 13 avril 1745.
- <sup>118</sup> COL-C4-10 1758 Corr. Gen. Magon
- <sup>119</sup> COL -C4-15 1763-1765 Corr. Gén.M. DesForges Boucher, Mémoire sur les noirs
- <sup>120</sup> COL -C4-18-420 1767 Corr. Gén.M. Poivre, intendant, 30 novembre 1767, M. Poivre
- <sup>121</sup> Romaine, *Sur les traces*.
- <sup>122</sup> B. Etemad, *Investir dans la traite*, quoted in Gilles Forster and *la Traite négrière*, p.196.
- <sup>123</sup> Vernet, *La première traite française à Zanzibar*, p.495.
- <sup>124</sup> Vernet, *La première traite française à Zanzibar*, p.517.
- <sup>125</sup> Henry Salt, *Voyage to Abyssinia*...p.37.
- <sup>126</sup> Epidariste Colin, *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*, 1809, p.312.
- <sup>127</sup> See Filliot, *La Route* for a detailed study of the slave trade to the Mascarenes.
- <sup>128</sup> R. Allen, p.15.
- <sup>129</sup> Romaine, *Sur les Traces*, 469 slaves arrived alive in Mauritius out of 515 embarked in Kilwa.
- <sup>130</sup> Service Historique de la Marine de Lorient (SHML) - Recueil des contrats du 17/12/1727 au 23/03/1740 - 1 P 74 , folio 41, reproduced in Le Lan, p.10.
- <sup>131</sup> SHML - Registre des délibérations - 1 P 305 - liasse 69 ff 106 verso and 107 recto, quoted in Le Lan, p.11.
- <sup>132</sup> Colin, *Annales*, p.325.
- <sup>133</sup> Colin, *Annales*, p.326-328.
- <sup>134</sup> Daudin, *Profitability*, p.161-164.
- <sup>135</sup> Jean Meyer, *La France et l'Asie : essai de statistiques - 1730-1785 : état de la question, Histoire, économie et société*, 1, 2, 1982, p.297 - 312, available online on website of Le Ministère de la Jeunesse, <http://www.persee.fr>, p.11.
- <sup>136</sup> Meyer, *La France et l'Asie*, p. 304.
- <sup>137</sup> Forster, Review of Carriere, *The Journal of Modern History*, p.165.
- <sup>138</sup> Forestier, *Rochelais*, p.17-19.
- <sup>139</sup> Forster, Review of Carriere, *The Journal of Modern History*, p.164.
- <sup>140</sup> Members of the Protestant Reformed Church of France or French Calvinists
- <sup>141</sup> The Monneron Issued, Soho Mint. <http://www.sohomint.info/issued.html>. Second Paragraph, website visited on the 29/06/2011

- <sup>142</sup> Le Lan, Jean-Yves. *Le monde des négociants et du négoce, le Commerce colonial et les négriers*. samedi 1er décembre 2007. www.histoire-genealogie.com
- <sup>143</sup> Civil status informations from Geneanet.org, *le site de référence des généalogistes*, Website visited on 01/07/2011.
- <sup>144</sup> *Liste des négociants au XVIIIème siècle*. P. 107.
- <sup>145</sup> *Mémoire présenté à l'Assemblée Nationale, par les habitants des Iles de France et de Bourbon, actuellement à Paris*. 1790. Bibliothèque Numérique, www.gallica.bnf.fr. Page 14-15.
- <sup>146</sup> *Mémoire présenté à l'Assemblée Nationale, par les habitants des Iles de France et de Bourbon, actuellement à Paris*. 1790. Bibliothèque Numérique, www.gallica.bnf.fr. Page 10.
- <sup>147</sup> L.M Cullen and P. Butel; *Négoce et Industrie en France et en Irlande aux XVIIIème et XIXème siècles*. Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1980, pp. 65-73.
- <sup>148</sup> *Recensement de 1795; Dictionnaire de Biographie Mauricienne* pp. 1073 and 1074.
- <sup>149</sup> G.Rouillard; *Histoire des domaines Sucriers*, pp. 228, 230, 310 and 391.
- <sup>150</sup> Roman, *St Malo*, in particular ch. 10, p.274.
- <sup>151</sup> COL-C4-7-2 1751-1753 Corr. Gén. David, de Lozier Bouvet, 1753 *Mémoire concernant les îles de France et de Bourbon, Distinction par classes de noirs, tarifs pour chaque espèce*.
- <sup>152</sup> COL-C4 7-30.
- <sup>153</sup> COL-C4-3 1738-1739 Corr. Gen. M. de la Bourdonnais, Gouverneur Lettre du 20 novembre 1739
- <sup>154</sup> COL-C4-5 1746-1748 Corr. Gen. M. David, Gouverneur, Correspondances avec l'Isle Bourbon
- <sup>155</sup> We are still attempting to estimate more accurate figures.
- <sup>156</sup> COL-C4-6-2 1749-1750 Corr. Gen. David, Gouverneur Lettre du 8 novembre 1750.
- <sup>157</sup> Capela and Medeiros, La Traite au départ de Mozambique vers les îles francaises, in *Slavery in South West Indian Ocean*, 251, quoting from Fritz Hoppe, p.76.
- <sup>158</sup> COL-C4-7-2 1751-1753 Corr. Gén. David, de Lozier Bouvet, 1753 M. Projet de L'abbé de la Tour.
- <sup>159</sup> COL-C4 -7 Mémoire concernant les îles de France et Bourbon 1753
- <sup>160</sup> COL-C4-11 1759 Corr. Gén., Magon, Gouverneur.
- <sup>161</sup> Jackson-Haight, M., *European Powers and South-East Africa.., 1796-1856*, (London:1942), p.108.
- <sup>162</sup> COL -C4-13 1761 Corr. Gén. Desforges Boucher, Gouverneur Lettre du Conseil Supérieur du 4 Septembre 1761.
- <sup>163</sup> COL -C4-15 1763-1765 Corr. Gen. Desforges Boucher, Mémoire relatif à l'Isle de France.
- <sup>164</sup> Vernet, *La première traite française à Zanzibar...l'Espérance 1774-1775*, 2011, p.518.
- <sup>165</sup> Vernet, *La première traite*, p. 478.
- <sup>166</sup> Vernet, *Morice*, p.479.
- <sup>167</sup> COL-C4-15 1763-1765 Corr gén. Desforges Boucher Mémoire sur la position actuelle des établissements français.
- <sup>168</sup> Sheriff, *Ivory and Spices*, p.46.
- <sup>169</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén. De Nyon, Dumas, de Maupin, 1732 Requête au Roi par M Teinturier de Gennicourt.
- <sup>170</sup> COL-C4-2 Corr. Gén. Maupin, Labourdonnais, 1735 Conseil Supérieur de l'île de France, Règlement touchant les habitants l'île de France.
- <sup>171</sup> COL-C4-6 1749-1750 Corr. Gén.David, 1750, *Réflexions anonymes pour l'intérêt de la Compagnie des Indes*.
- <sup>172</sup> COL-C4-6 1749-1750 Corr. Gén.David, 1750, *Réflexions*.
- <sup>173</sup> R. Allen, 'The Constant Demand of the French', *Journal of African History*, 2008.
- <sup>174</sup> COL-C4-1 1714-1732 Corr. Gén. MM De Nyon, Dumas, de Maupin, Gouverneurs 1732: Requête au Roi par M Teinturier de Gennicourt, habitant de l'île de France.
- <sup>175</sup> Larson, 28 MSS copy.
- <sup>176</sup> Salt, *Travels*, p.42.
- <sup>177</sup> Pedro Machado, *Journal of Slavery and Abolition*.
- <sup>178</sup> SHM Lorient., *Extrait du journal du pilote pour constater les morts du dit vaisseau*, 1 P 181 - 371/4, in Le Lan, p.13.
- <sup>179</sup> SHM Lorient., *Registre de délibérations*, 1, 305 liasse 70 - pièces 207 and 208, in Le Lan, p.14.

# INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS FOUND IN MICROFILMS OF THE C4 SERIES (Nos. 1-63)

Found in

FRENCH NATIONAL ARCHIVES

CONCERNING SLAVERY

COMPILED

by

YOLA ARGOT-NAYEKOO

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Under the supervision of

THOMAS VERNET

*The published version for public circulation will be accompanied by CDs containing copies of the documents. High Resolution. Copies of same will be distributed to public libraries.*

## PREFACE

*Thomas Vernet*

Les trafics d'esclaves dans l'océan Indien ont soulevé beaucoup moins d'intérêt que la traite atlantique, tant du point de vue de la recherche académique que d'un public plus large. Ce déséquilibre est encore persistant de nos jours, la production historiographique sur la traite atlantique demeurant particulièrement abondante. Cependant la traite liée aux Mascareignes n'est pas un sujet d'étude nouveau pour les historiens puisque dès la fin des années 60 des travaux approfondis y sont consacrés, principalement conduits par Auguste Toussaint et Jean-Michel Filliot.

D'autre part, on observe depuis quelques années un intérêt croissant pour les traites dans l'océan Indien, dont la diversité et la complexité ne cessent d'être soulignées. En effet elles ne concernèrent pas seulement des esclaves africains et malgaches, mais également originaires d'Inde, d'Asie du sud-est ou encore d'Asie orientale. En outre, les négriers furent français, portugais, néerlandais ou anglais, mais les réseaux de traite étaient aussi animés par des musulmans africains et arabo-persans, ou divers groupes issus de l'Asie et de l'Afrique. Parallèlement à l'étude de ces divers flux de traite, les diasporas africaines dans le pourtour du bassin de l'océan Indien font également l'objet d'une attention croissante de la part des chercheurs, dans l'archipel des Mascareignes comme dans le golfe Persique ou en Inde - où l'on trouve encore de nos jours de petites communautés d'origine africaine.

Au sujet des Mascareignes, et de l'île Maurice en particulier, il faut souligner que l'esclavage, en tant que pratique sociale, puis ses héritages, ont suscité davantage de travaux que la traite en elle-même, en partie en raison des contextes politiques et des revendications identitaires propres aux sociétés des Mascareignes. Par ailleurs, assez curieusement, la traite illégale (à partir de l'interdiction de la traite par les Britanniques en 1810) semble avoir davantage mobilisé les historiens que la traite légale - on pense en particulier aux travaux d'Hubert Gerbeau sur la Réunion.

Le premier ouvrage qui livre une estimation du trafic négrier en direction de l'Île de France à partir de recherches poussées est la célèbre étude de l'historien mauricien Auguste Toussaint, *La route des Îles*, publiée en 1967. Bien qu'elle repose presque exclusivement sur les archives disponibles à Maurice et, surtout, ne se focalise pas sur la traite, *La route des Îles* demeure toujours un excellent point de départ pour entamer des recherches sur la question, livrant des pistes particulièrement utiles sur les fonds d'archives. Quelques années plus tard, en 1974, Jean-Michel Filliot publie *La traite des esclaves vers les Mascareignes au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ouvrage de référence sur la question. Pour livrer ses estimations chiffrées, l'auteur s'appuie sur une impressionnante masse documentaire, issue de très nombreux centres d'archives, principalement en France. Cette synthèse, devenue un classique, est elle aussi incontournable. Elle a néanmoins ses défauts. Ainsi l'auteur n'a pas - ou peu - consulté certaines séries, principalement la série COL C4 des Archives Nationales de France, présentée ci-dessous. Sa connaissance des sociétés d'Afrique orientale et de Madagascar est assez limitée, son usage des fonds d'archives parfois superficiel, et surtout des travaux plus récents ont démontré que la traite vers les Mascareignes était plus importante qu'il ne l'avait évaluée.

A la même époque, dans les années 70, des spécialistes des sociétés africaines s'intéressent à la traite française, en particulier Edward Alpers, qui étudie la traite dans la région de Mozambique et de Kilwa (sud de la Tanzanie). Jusqu'à nos jours, des recherches sur les traites sur le littoral est-africain ou à Madagascar continuent d'être conduites, en petit nombre, mais elles demeurent des travaux éparpillés et n'apportent pas toujours de détails très précis sur la traite liée à l'île de France.

Plus récemment, Richard Allen a livré de nouvelles estimations de la traite en direction des Mascareignes, révisant à la hausse les chiffres de Filliot (R.B. Allen, « The constant demand

of the French : the Mascarene slave trade and the worlds of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries », *Journal of African History*, 49(1), 2008, pp. 43-72). Pourtant, là encore, bien que très précieuse, son étude ne peut pas être considérée comme définitive car son auteur n'a pas consulté les archives françaises. D'autre part, les chiffres donnés concernent la traite globale vers les Mascareignes, sans distinguer Bourbon et l'Île de France.

Ce très bref aperçu historiographique démontre qu'une étude véritablement exhaustive de la traite légale en direction de l'île Maurice, qui serait en mesure de livrer des estimations très fiables, reste à conduire. La masse d'archives à traiter, et leur extrême dispersion, rendent ce projet difficile à accomplir pour un chercheur travaillant seul. Un tel travail réclamerait une étroite collaboration entre plusieurs spécialistes et des coopérations institutionnelles, susceptibles notamment de dégager des moyens financiers conséquents.

Nous espérons que les jalons posés par la Truth and Justice Commission, éclairés par les recherches passées, encourageront ce type de recherches collectives. Le présent inventaire pourra, nous le croyons, y contribuer.

Les fonds d'archives préservés par les Mauritius National Archives (Coromandel, Petite Rivière) évoquant la traite ont été très bien décrits par les travaux de Toussaint, Filliot, et Allen. Il n'est pas nécessaire de les présenter ici. Nous décrirons par conséquent les principaux fonds situés en France, beaucoup moins connus et moins exploités.

### Présentation des principaux fonds d'archives français mentionnant la traite et l'esclavage associés à l'Île de France (1715-1810)

(Les fonds marqués d'un astérisque ont été consultés ou sondés par Thomas Vernet)

Les fonds d'archives français évoquant, d'une façon ou d'une autre, la colonie de l'Île de France avant la souveraineté britannique sont extrêmement nombreux et dispersés dans toute la France. Heureusement, outre l'étude de Filliot, il existe dorénavant un excellent guide des archives française portant sur la traite et l'esclavage, publié sous la direction de Claire Sibille : *Guide des sources de la traite négrière, de l'esclavage et de leurs abolitions*, Paris, La Documentation Française, 2007. Même lorsqu'il ne rentre pas dans les détails, cet ouvrage fournit d'excellentes pistes de recherche, sa consultation est donc particulièrement recommandée.

Ce guide commet toutefois une très curieuse omission : il oublie de mentionner la série Colonies C4 (*Île de France*) que nous présentons ici, alors qu'il mentionne toutes les autres séries relatives à la correspondance officielles des colonies françaises.

#### Colonies COL C4 *correspondance à l'arrivée, Île de France\**

Référence exacte : FR ANOM / COL C<sup>4</sup>

Lieu de préservation :

- Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence (manuscrits originaux)
- Archives Nationales, Paris (microfilms)

Contenu : 153 volumes, 1714-1810

Cette série constitue, de très loin, le plus important fond d'archives portant sur la colonie de l'Île de France depuis sa création jusqu'à la conquête britannique. La traite des esclaves, et plus encore la place de l'esclavage dans la colonie, y sont l'objet de mention innombrables tant les administrateurs et les milieux économiques de la colonie sont concernés par la question de la main-d'œuvre servile. La richesse évidente de ce fond pourrait laisser croire qu'il a été largement exploité par les historiens. Il n'en est rien. A de rares exceptions tels les travaux de Megan Vaughan, très peu de spécialistes se sont attachés à l'utiliser à sa juste valeur, voire à s'y intéresser d'une façon ou d'une autre. On ne peut cependant en être totalement surpris tant les recherches approfondies sur la vie de la colonie durant la période française sont restées - étrangement - peu nombreuses.

Cette lacune peut également s'expliquer par l'absence quasi-totale d'inventaires de la série COL C4, qu'ils soient publiés ou manuscrits<sup>1</sup>. Chacun des 153 volumes contenant plusieurs centaines de folios, on comprendra qu'étudier la série sur un sujet de recherche précis réclame un travail d'investigation considérable.

Ainsi c'est la richesse de ce fond, l'absence d'inventaire, et plus généralement sa méconnaissance, qui nous ont conduits à le privilégier, dans un premier temps, dans le cadre des travaux d'inventaires initiés par la Truth and Justice Commission.

Quel est le contenu de la série COL C4 ? La série inclut toute la correspondance officielle envoyée depuis la colonie de l'Île de France et reçue par le secrétariat d'Etat à la Marine. Elle préserve donc d'abord les lettres et rapports produits les gouverneurs et les intendants de l'Île de France, ainsi que les diverses branches de l'administration locale sous leur autorité. Mais on y trouve également toutes sortes de lettres et de mémoires rédigés par des particuliers, principalement des négociants et des planteurs de l'île. Les sujets abordés sont extrêmement divers et reflètent les diverses compétences de l'administration : finances, diplomatie, affaires militaires, marine, travaux et fortifications, affaires agricoles, hôpitaux, négoce, etc. Ces divers sujets sont parfois regroupés au sein d'un même « dossier » dans chaque volume de la série. Tous sont susceptibles d'évoquer l'esclavage sous un angle ou un autre.

Parmi les types de documents qui évoquent le plus traite et l'esclavage, nous trouvons par exemple : les recensements des « esclaves du roi » (esclaves au service de l'administration et des forces militaires de la colonie), la correspondance portant sur les relations avec la colonie de Mozambique, avec Madagascar, ou avec la côte swahili, les compte-rendu d'expéditions maritimes, les innombrables « mémoires », « projets », ou recensements, décrivant l'état de la colonie et les moyens de la développer, etc. Ainsi administrateurs et élites de la colonie ont le souci constant de sécuriser, de développer, et de diversifier l'apport en main-d'œuvre servile, tant la « soif d'esclaves » semble permanente. Citons également les quelques cas de journaux tenus par des administrateurs, tel celui de René Magon (intendant ?? gouverneur ?? de XXX à XXX), qui évoque les mouvements de navires négriers à une époque pour laquelle nous n'avons aucune archive maritime locale.

L'inventaire de COL C4 que nous publions ici démontre à quel point les mentions de l'esclavage sont fréquentes et éparpillées dans des documents de tous types. Nous percevons ainsi combien l'esclavage occupe les esprits des dirigeants et des négociants de l'île à cette époque.

#### Autres séries des Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer

Il n'est pas possible de citer ici l'ensemble des séries des Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer qui mentionnent l'Île de France. Nous invitons donc à consulter *Guide des sources de la traite négrière, de l'esclavage et de leurs abolitions*, qui les répertorie. Ces séries sont généralement disponibles en microfilm sur le site des Archives Nationales de Paris, mais il est préférable de se renseigner au préalable.

Citons néanmoins :

- COL C<sup>2</sup> *correspondance à l'arrivée, Compagnie des Indes et Inde française\** (1649-1835).
- COL C<sup>3</sup> *correspondance à l'arrivée, île Bourbon* (1614-1811), 31 volumes.
- COL C<sup>5A</sup> *correspondance à l'arrivée, Madagascar\** (1642-1789), 9 volumes. Certains volumes livrent de nombreux détails sur la traite entre l'Île de France et Madagascar vers 1767-1789.
- Série B *correspondance au départ* (1666-1816)\* : il s'agit des lettres et instructions adressées aux gouverneurs et officiers des colonies entre la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle et les premières années du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les séries COL B 201 à 215, 224 et 225, 235 à 238, 251 à 253, 264 et 265 concernent l'Île de France et Bourbon.
- DPPC<sup>2</sup> EC, *état civil* : registres d'états civils, dont quelques registres paroissiaux d'esclaves de l'Île de France (exemple : Moka 1770-1810, Port-Louis 1728-1810, etc.).
- DPPC COL G<sup>1</sup>, *recensements* : recensements de l'Île de France, 1776, 1780, 1788-1789. Exemple : COL G<sup>1</sup> 505/07 : « Recensement général des noirs (hommes, femmes, enfants) appartenant à la Compagnies des Indes au 20 avril 1761 ».
- DPPC GR, *greffes* : procédures judiciaires 1778-1810.
- DPPC NOT, *notariat* : notaires de l'Île de France.

### Archives Nationales, Paris

Les Archives Nationales, à Paris, détiennent toute une documentation qui ne se trouve pas aux Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer. Le nombre de séries intéressantes étant là encore considérable, nous renvoyons à nouveau au *Guide des sources de la traite négrière, de l'esclavage et de leurs abolitions*.

Quelques séries :

- Marine JJ, *service hydrographique\** : cette série, très bien inventoriée, préserve de nombreux journaux de bord originaux, beaucoup d'entre eux sont issus de la Compagnie des Indes. Certains concernent des voyages de traite. On y trouve également des documents divers livrant des renseignements sur les lieux de traite. Exemples :
- 2JJ58 : des voyages à Madagascar et à l'Île de France (1709-1753)
- 3JJ : des voyages à Madagascar et aux Mascareignes,
- 4JJ : nombreux journaux de bord (ou extraits) de la Compagnie des Indes ou voyages dans l'océan Indien en général. Extraits de journaux de bord négriers.

Il faut souligner que les journaux de bord de la Compagnie des Indes seront très prochainement mis en ligne par le service des Archives Nationales.

- Marine B<sup>4</sup>, *campagnes navales* : un transfert d'esclaves entre Pondichéry et l'Île de France en 1773, des traites à Madagascar en 1775-1776, traite à Mozambique.
- Marine C<sup>7</sup>, *dossiers personnels* : sur le naufrage de l'*Utile*, traite à Kilwa, transfert d'esclaves de Pondichéry.
- 100 AP, *Fonds Rostaing* : les premières forges de l'Île de France (Mondésir). On trouve notamment un « état général des esclaves de l'établissement de Mondésir (1772) ».
- MC, *minutier central des Notaires Parisiens* : des documents sur des entreprises commerciales liées à la traite : contrats d'association, d'armement..., etc.

### Autres fonds d'archives en France

Au-delà des archives nationales, les archives départementales et municipales, ainsi que les divers centres d'archives du ministère de la Défense (Service Historique de la Défense), peuvent également s'avérer d'un intérêt considérable pour l'histoire de l'esclavage à Maurice.

Nous présentons ci-dessous une très brève sélection de ces fonds. Cette liste ne se veut en rien exhaustive, elle vise plutôt à encourager des recherches documentaires véritablement abouties et à promouvoir l'étude de l'esclavage durant la période française de l'île Maurice, parent pauvre de l'historiographie.

### Bibliothèque Municipale de Caen

« Papiers du Général Decaen », *ms. in-fol. 177\**.

Charles Mathieu Isidore Decaen, originaire de Caen, officier de l'armée de Napoléon, fut gouverneur ?? [voir son titre exact] de l'Île de France de 1803 ?? à 18 ????. Tous ces papiers furent déposés à la bibliothèque municipale de Caen. Ils sont décrits, de façon plus ou moins détaillée, dans G. Lavalley, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque municipale de Caen*, Caen, 1880, pp. 131-156.

Bien qu'elle recoupe en grande partie la série COL C4, cette documentation est particulièrement riche. Il inclut ainsi des documents originaux que l'on ne trouve pas dans COL C4, par exemple une correspondance diplomatique en arabe envoyée par l'imam de Mascate. Il faut noter que Decaen rassembla des mémoires très divers rédigés avant son arrivée sur l'île, principalement dans les années 1780. Ils décrivent l'état général de l'Île de France, exposent des projets autour de la traite, du négoce ou de l'amélioration de la colonie, et livrent des descriptions de zones de l'océan Indien fréquentées par les Français. Pour la période de l'administration de Decaen, outre la correspondance générale, de nombreux documents mentionnent des recensements d'esclaves, en particulier ceux qui furent achetés par les autorités.

Citons par exemple les documents suivants, particulièrement pertinents :

- volume 44 :
- ff. 259-264 : sur la population
  - f. 338 : recensement de l'an XIV
- f. 340 : un recensement en 1808
- f. 344 : un état des Noirs de l'Etat en l'an XIII
- f. 357 : achat de Noirs par l'Etat de prairial an XII à prairial an XIII
- f. 358 : « Noirs d'artillerie »
- f. 405 : « Etat sommaire des esclaves de l'Etat au 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1809 ».

- volume 94 :
- ff.1-28 « Bâtiments arrivés à l'Isle de France depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> avril 1806 » (jusqu'au 25 avril 1809)
- ff. 59-117 : « Rapports des bâtiments arrivés à l'île de France depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> avril 1806 ».

Ces deux listes mentionnent des expéditions négrières et permettent de compléter les déclarations d'arrivée que l'on trouve aux Mauritius National Archives.

### Lorient, Service Historique de la Défense - Département Marine

Le port de Lorient, base métropolitaine de la Compagnie des Indes, fut très étroitement lié à l'Île de France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les archives du Service Historique de la Défense y sont riches, elles livrent surtout les armements des navires de la Compagnie, puis des armateurs privés de la ville jusqu'en 1790 (les archives des années postérieures à 1790 ayant été détruites). Le célèbre répertoire de Jean Mettas (*Répertoire des expéditions négrières françaises au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Tome II : ports autres que Nantes*, Paris, Société Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer, 1984) en fait largement usage.

Plus récemment, Jean-Yves Le Lan et Yves Banallec ont dressé, grâce à ce fond, la liste des navires ayant pratiqué la traite au départ de Lorient, avant puis après la suspension de la Compagnie (Y. Banallec et J.Y. Le Lan, « La compagnie des Indes et la traite des Noirs », in N. Dodille (dir.), *Idées et représentations coloniales dans l'océan Indien*, Paris, PUPS, 2009, pp. 33-55 et communication au colloque *Traite, esclavage, et transition vers l'engagement à l'île Maurice et aux Mascareignes, 1715-1848*, TJC/University of Mauritius, avril 2011).

### Bordeaux

Bordeaux fut le principal port lié à la traite dans l'océan Indien après la fin de la Compagnie des Indes. Les travaux d'Eric Saugera sur la traite bordelaise, particulièrement fouillés, sont extrêmement précieux sur la question. Ils livrent d'innombrables pistes de recherche archivistiques sur la période du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle mais - fait beaucoup plus rare - également sur la reprise de la traite française qui suivit la paix d'Amiens en 1802. L'Île de France fut concernée de très près par ce mouvement et accueillit en 1802-1803 un nombre importants d'expéditions de traite lancées de métropole. On consultera donc les travaux suivants :

E. Saugera, *Bordeaux, port négrier XVII<sup>e</sup>-XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, Karthala, 1995 (rééd. 2002).

- « Pour une histoire de la traite française sous le Consulat et l'Empire », *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, 76, 282-283, 1989, pp. 203-229.

- « Les armements négriers français vers l'océan Indien sous le Consulat », in C. Wanquet et B. Jullien (dir.), *Révolution française et océan Indien [...]*, Saint-Denis et Paris, Université de la Réunion / L'Harmattan, 1996, pp. 103-112.

Voici une brève sélection de quelques fonds utiles présents à Bordeaux :

#### Archives Départementales de la Gironde

On peut trouver en ligne les archives de l'amirauté de Guyenne (série 6B) : passeports et soumission, entrée et sortie des navires: <http://archives.gironde.fr/lecture/6b.asp>

Le *Guide des sources de la traite négrière, de l'esclavage et de leurs abolitions* signale par ailleurs :

- XXXXX(réf)<sup>3</sup> : Journal de traite du *Duc d'Harcourt* 1748-1751 (Bordeaux - Angola - Île de France)
- U négociants *dossier Letellier* : traite de la *Céline* à Kilwa en 1795 (en partie publié dans L. Bergès, *Terres d'esclaves, histoires de la traite, Afrique, Aquitaine, Amérique*, Bordeaux, Archives Départementales de la Gironde, 2009, pp. 179-180).

#### Archives Municipales de Bordeaux

- Fonds Monneron : famille très active dans le commerce et la traite de l'Île de France.

#### Nantes

Bien que Nantes fût de très loin le premier port négrier de France, les armateurs nantais se sont peu intéressés à l'Île de France et à la traite dans l'océan Indien.

#### Archives Départementales de la Loire Atlantique

- Fond Bourcard : divers navires de traite partis de Nantes, correspondance sur la traite à Madagascar et Mozambique.

- Série C : archives de la chambre de commerce de Nantes avant 1790. J.-M. Filliot signale trois dossiers (1716-1788).

#### *Archives Municipales de Nantes*

- Papiers de Coiron, négociant : sur des ventes d'esclaves à l'Île de France, Bourbon, Saint-Domingue, 1790-1822.

#### **Marseille et Toulon**

Marseille arme un nombre assez important de navires négriers vers l'Afrique orientale à partir de 1787, la plupart font escale à Port-Louis et, parfois, y débarquent des esclaves.

On consultera en priorité les travaux de Gilbert Buti :

- « Marseille, port négrier au XVIIIe siècle ? », *Cahiers des Anneaux de la Mémoire*, 11, 2007, pp. 162-178.

- « Commerce honteux pour négociants vertueux à Marseille au XVIIIe siècle ? », *Cahiers de l'histoire et des mémoires de la traite négrière, de l'esclavage et de leurs abolitions*, Le Havre, 2008, pp. 199-220.

On trouve quelques informations sur des armements négriers dans les fonds suivants :

- Service Historique de la Défense - département Marine, Toulon : registres matricules et rôles d'équipage.

- Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille-Provence : L. XVI, fonds Pierre Honoré Devoulx (1790-1802).

#### **Archives Départementales de la Réunion : Fonds de la Compagnie des Indes**

Ce fond, particulièrement intéressant, est bien décrit dans les ouvrages suivants :

- A. Toussaint, *La route des îles*, pp. 152-156.

- *Guide des sources de la traite négrière, de l'esclavage et de leurs abolitions*, pp. 320-322.

- J.-M. Filliot (p. 236) signale que l'inventaire établi par A. Lougnon est excellent.

Les archives départementales contiennent également une importante collection de périodiques des Mascareignes antérieurs à 1848.

#### **La Rochelle**

Bien que la Rochelle soit le second port négrier français en nombre de voyages, les Rochelais n'ont quasiment pas armé pour l'océan Indien, et en particulier pour la traite.

Les investigations conduites par T. Vernet ont confirmé le nombre extrêmement restreint de voyages.

#### **Archives Municipales de La Rochelle\***

- EEARCHANC 43. (EE Marine, ms. 277), « Navire 'La Créole'. Pièces y relatives établies par Crassous de Médeuil capitaine en 1<sup>er</sup> et armateur » : traite à Kilwa du navire la *Créole*, cap. J. Crassous de Médeuil, 1783.

- EEARCHANC 47 (EE Marine, ms. 281) : papiers du navire négrier le *Pactole* (cap. J. Crassous de Médeuil), naufragé en 1789, puis récit du naufrage du *Don Royal*.

#### **Archives Départementales de la Charente-Maritime\***

Il existe de bons inventaires. Des investigations dans les séries et documents susceptibles de concerner la traite en lien avec l'Île de France n'ont pas relevé d'expéditions.

Il serait cependant nécessaire de parcourir intégralement les archives de l'amirauté de La Rochelle, qui sont en ligne. Mais il est extrêmement peu probable d'y trouver mention de cargaisons d'esclaves dans l'océan Indien :

[http://bd.archivescanadafrance.org/acf/doc.xsp?id=FRAD017\\_000000001\\_d0e50&fmt=tab&from=providers](http://bd.archivescanadafrance.org/acf/doc.xsp?id=FRAD017_000000001_d0e50&fmt=tab&from=providers)

#### **Conclusion**

Cette liste n'est pas exhaustive. Il faut consulter le guide, Filliot, et les divers travaux liés au négoce et au commerce négrier des divers ports français, ainsi que Saugera sur la période du Consulat. La tâche n'est pas finie : ce n'est qu'un bref aperçu ! Nous espérons qu'il encouragera les chercheurs à s'emparer de cette documentation considérable pour faire toute la lumière sur la traite liée à l'Île de France et la pratique de l'esclavage dans la colonie.

COTE	DESCRIPTIF
<b>COL C4-1</b> <b>1714-1732</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>générale MM De</b> <b>Nyon, Dumas, de</b> <b>Maupin, Gouverneurs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. de Nyon, gouverneur de l'Île de France à M. de Heauville, lieutenant du Roi dans la même Île et réponses de celui-ci 1722-1723</li> <li>→ Lettre de M. de Nyon du 04 Novembre 1722 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ « Le 11 septembre, le vaisseau Le Ruby- Capitaine le Sieur Grenier a mouillé en rade » : expédition pour la traite des noirs de Madagascar pour laquelle il est parti le 7 Octobre</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettres de M. de Nyon, gouverneur, du 22 septembre et 4 décembre 1724</li> <li>→ « 50 noirs marron ont déclaré la guerre au Port Louis du nord ouest avec effusion de sang dans la nuit du 27 au 28 avril. »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etats des employés de la Compagnie pour les comptoirs de l'Inde 1727 (papier provenant de M. Des Boisclairs, capitaine des vaisseaux de la Compagnie des Indes)</li> <li>→ Article du 2 Juin 1726 à l'égard de 3 nègres pris pour détachement : « tous les noirs marron qui seront pris en vie pour détachement lui appartiendront et si les noirs sont tués dans la poursuite, la Compagnie paie 100 livres par main gauche de noir qui sera rapportée »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettres de la Compagnie des Indes à M. Maupin, gouverneur de l'Île de France et au Conseil de la dite Île (5 extraits) 1729</li> <li>→ 25 septembre 1729 Lettre de la Compagnie au sieur Maupin sur la distribution des noirs aux habitants</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M. Jonchée de la Goletrie (Projet pour l'établissement de l'Île de France donné à la Compagnie des Indes), lettre du 26 Avril 1729</li> <li>→ Article 6 à l'égard des noirs marron : « lorsqu'il y aura 60 soldats dans les ports, on peut avoir 2 détachements dans le bois, un dans chaque port, c'est le moyen de les contenir et empêcher d'aller au marronnage »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1730 Ordonnance du conseil</li> <li>→ Sur le pouvoir de juger les noirs ou criminels. Ordonnance du 29 avril contre le nommé Antoine, esclave de Charles Pignolet condamné à être pendu</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1730 Mémoire concernant le gouverneur M. de Maupin</li> <li>→ Article 20 –mention de l'esclave de Charles Pignolet qui a volé 1 fusil à poudre et 6 balles à son maître</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1732 Le conseil supérieur de Bourbon (affaire relative au libellé de M Teinturier de Gennicourt)</li> <li>→ Sur les esclaves achetés à Madagascar</li> <li>• 1732 Requêtes au Roi par M Teinturier de Gennicourt, habitant de l'Île de France</li> <li>→ Fournir aux habitants des noirs en quantité suffisantes au moins au nombre de 12 à 15 maniant haches, en égard à la quantité de bois dont l'Île est entièrement recouverte</li> <li>→ Achetés 100 livres par tête</li> <li>→ Les tirer de Madagascar plutôt que de Guinée car ceux de Madagascar sont meilleurs ouvriers, plus intelligents. Les noirs de Guinée ont tendance au marronnage et à la perfidie.</li> <li>→ La compagnie a aussi fournit des noirs de l'Inde 3 à 4 piastres d'achat et 1 piastre de nourriture pour le transport</li> <li>→ Il faut empêcher la compagnie de garder les meilleurs noirs au détriment des habitants de la colonie</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-2</b> <b>1733-1737</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales MM. de</b> <b>Maupin, de La</b> <b>Bourdonnais,</b> <b>Gouverneurs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1733 M de Maupin, gouverneur, lettre du 19 Mars à M. de Cossigny : détails sur les travaux, etc. ... affaires de soldats plus 2 lettres du 4 février</li> <li>→ Nécessité d'esclaves pour la construction</li> <li>→ Les soldats serviront à faire des battues contre les noirs marron</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1734 M Mahé de la Bourdonnais, gouverneur</li> <li>→ Extrait des ordres particuliers donnés à M. de la Bourdonnais : construction d'un hôpital pour éviter que blancs et noirs ne soient confondus -« construire deux salles, l'une pour mettre les noirs et l'autre pour les malabars indiens avec vue grande cour, le tout construit en pierre »</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1735 Le conseil supérieur de l'Île de France</li> <li>→ Règlement du conseil supérieur touchant les habitants l'Île de France</li> <li>→ Article 8 : tarif du louage des noirs fixé à 15 piastres.</li> <li>→ Article 12 : faire venir des noirs de l'Inde- paiement de 200 piastres pour chaque à la compagnie pour nourriture et transport</li> <li>→ Article 13 : sur le maïs et la nourriture des noirs des habitants</li> <li>→ Article 15 : corvées dues à la Compagnie pour ses travaux : acquittement annuel de 2 journées par tête de noir au dessus de l'âge de 14 ans- recensement pour contrôler</li> <li>→ Article 18 : sur les noirs pris à la Compagnie par les habitants</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-3</b> <b>1738-1739</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales M. de La</b> <b>Bourdonnais,</b> <b>Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1738 M. de la Bourdonnais, gouverneur général</li> <li>→ Détail de tout ce qui s'est passé dans l'Île dans le courant de l'année 1737</li> <li>→ Utilisation des noirs élevés à être charpentiers, calfats, forgerons, pour la construction</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1738 M. de Cossigny, ingénieur</li> <li>→ Concernant le bois</li> <li>▪ Utilisation de 2 noirs avec scie à l'anglaise pour faire par jour 90 pièces de planches</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1739 Mahé de la Bourdonnais, gouverneur général</li> <li>→ Article 17 : « les corvées de noirs exigées sans trop de violences » ne doivent plus durer</li> <li>→ Article 18 : faire venir annuellement 100 noirs de Pondichéry et Chandernagor pour être vendus aux Îles sur demande des habitants- 100 piastres pour leur introduction dans l'Île</li> <li>→ Lettre du 20 novembre 1739</li> <li>▪ Vaisseau le Mozambique est arrivé avec 360 noirs dont 260 morts</li> <li>▪ Comment chasser les noirs marron en utilisant des noirs fidèles</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1739 M. de Cossigny, ingénieur</li> <li>→ Projet de conduire à la Loge l'eau de la Grande Rivière- recours aux noirs</li> <li>→ Des Noirs du Sénégal arriveront à bord du vaisseau Fleury</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1739 Extrait du registre des délibérations du Conseil Supérieur de l'Île de France</li> <li>→ Article 36 : attaques des noirs marron</li> <li>→ Article 42 : noirs indiens pris à voler</li> <li>→ Copies de pièces reçues de Pondichéry au sujet du naufrage de la Subtile commandée par M. Champlores, parti de l'Île de France le 18 octobre pour venir à Madagascar charger du riz et prendre 180 noirs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1738 Fourniture de chaux pour l'Île de France</li> <li>→ Utilisation de noirs - détail des dépenses : paiement pour vente de 10 noirs à 200 piastres pièce</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-4</b> <b>1740-1745</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales M. de La</b> <b>Bourdonnais,</b> <b>Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1740 Mahé de la Bourdonnais</li> <li>→ Navigation, traite et commerce : liste des bateaux partis en traite</li> <li>▪ Duc D'Anjou- commandant Dezert- revint le 22 Juin de Madagascar- 114 esclaves</li> <li>▪ L'<i>Aigle</i>- 9 juillet- Madagascar- commandé par le Sieur La Baum- 70 esclaves</li> <li>▪ La Paix- côte est de Madagascar le 9 Juillet- 123 esclaves</li> <li>▪ La Subtile-naufrage) commandée par M. de Champlorel- 190 esclaves- à Mangaëls</li> <li>▪ Le <i>Fulvy</i> – arrivé le 21 Octobre- 362 esclaves vivants dont 6 enfants sur 625 traités</li> <li>▪ La Légère, commandée par le Sieur Gautier- 17 février- Baie d'Antongil-Madagascar)- ordre de traiter des bestiaux et des esclaves</li> <li>→ Note sur les noirs marron dont le plus dangereux est le second chef Sans Soucy</li> <li>→ Etat des esclaves de la Compagnie</li> <li>▪ Les noirs Yolof, Bambara et Guinée sont beaucoup plus robustes</li> <li>→ Affaires de justice impliquant des noirs</li> <li>▪ « Négresse incendiaire pendue »</li> <li>▪ « Deux négresses indiennes ont donné du poison à la Dame Dacquerville, leur maîtresse »</li> <li>▪ « Second chef des noirs marrons Sans Soucy, roué et brûlé vif ; une négresse de sa</li> </ul>

	<p>bande fut pendue le même jour et deux autres fustigés »</p> <p>→ Affaires générales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lettre du 3 février 1740- le Héron-parti en traite à Madagascar le 28 septembre- retour le 2 janvier- 30 esclaves et 2 enfants</li> <li>• 1740 Instructions pour M. St Martin</li> </ul> <p>→ Chapitre 12 : Les troupes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 3 sur le détachement de « 24 noirs fidèles choisis pour aller dans les bois à la poursuite des noirs marron »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 13 Avril 1745- ?</li> <li>▪ « Les noirs de Guinée, qui par un esprit de corps sont pourpoint au marronnage, se font meilleurs que les autres »</li> <li>▪ La Compagnie forme des noirs dans l’escadre</li> <li>▪ « Les noirs malgaches et Mozambique se vendent couramment 200 piastres ; qu’auparavant un noir de Guinée vaut bien 250 piastres »</li> <li>▪ Offre de noirs à la Compagnie</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1745 Délibération du Conseil</li> <li>▪ Proposition à M. de la Bourdonnais de prendre des noirs des habitants le nombre nécessaire pour compléter avec ceux qui lui sont adressés avec la Favorite, « l’on pourra prendre de la Compagnie le nombre de 500 ou environ pour embarquer sur l’Escadre » [...]- tarifs des loyers</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-5</b> <b>1746-1748</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales M. David,</b> <b>Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondances avec l’Isle Bourbon</li> <li>→ Lettre du 27 Janvier 1746, M. Deballade sur le vaisseau Le <i>Sumatra</i> – traite au Mozambique</li> <li>→ Tarifs des noirs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1747 Affaire de M. Meygnier, chirurgien-major, propriétaire d’un marais à sel à l’Isle de France</li> <li>→ Lettre au Conseil Supérieur de l’Île de France</li> <li>▪ Emploi des noirs, formés à faire le sel et à cultiver la saline</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1748 M. de Rostaing, commandant la Frégate La Favorite</li> <li>→ Lettre du 25 Mars 1748 au Conseil</li> <li>▪ corvées des noirs pour les fortifications de l’Île et dédommagement</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Récapitulation de toutes les entreprises faites à l’Isle de France avant l’arrivée de M. David et des règlements, 30 septembre 1748</li> <li>→ Médicaments et nourriture des esclaves, entreprise du sieur de Marsac , 30 juin 1742</li> <li>→ Règlement sur le droit d’entrée des noirs, 31 Décembre 1738</li> <li>→ Règlement pour la distribution des noirs, 17 Avril 1739</li> <li>→ Règlements au sujet de la traite de Mozambique, 11 Juin 1738</li> <li>→ Concernant la vente et introduction des esclaves, 13 Juin 1731- 11 Septembre 1733-2 Juillet 1740- 16 Mars 1741</li> <li>→ La répartition et décharge des noirs, 21 Juillet 1736- 31 Décembre 1739</li> <li>→ Gratification des officiers pour la traite des noirs et bestiaux</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-6-1</b> <b>1749-1750</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales, M. David,</b> <b>Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1749 M. David, gouverneur général</li> <li>→ Lettre du 27 Janvier 1749</li> <li>▪ Arrivée du <i>Sumatra</i> de Madagascar le 27 avec quelques esclaves</li> </ul>

<p><b>COL C4-6-2</b>  <b>1749-1750</b>  <b>Correspondances</b>  <b>générales, M. David,</b>  <b>Gouverneur</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1750 M. David, gouverneur</li> <li>➔ Instructions pour le sieur Gosse, allant en traite à Foulpointe - Madagascar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achat de « noirs mâles de 10 à 20 ans et des négresses de 10 à 14 ans »</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Lettre du 8 novembre 1750 : tout ce qui se passe sur l'Île depuis le 17 juin 1750 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Le 10 juin- La Princesse est expédiée à Madagascar et au Mozambique pour chargement en noirs</li> <li>▪ Construction d'un hôpital pour noir à Moka « Lieautaud »</li> <li>▪ Les noirs employés à la culture de l'Indigo –M. de Rostaing</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Lettre du 8 novembre 1750 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ « Pour compléter la quantité de 150 noirs de Guinée-accordée par la Délibération du 27 Février 1749, il a été débité la somme de 25569 monnaie des Îles, pour valeur de 103 noirs [...]»</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1750 Conseil supérieur aux directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Le 25 mai- L'Hercule- cargaison de 500 noirs dont 353 arrivés vivants</li> <li>▪ Le 7 du mois- Le <i>Bristol</i> venant du Sénégal- 350 noirs dont 267 vivants</li> <li>▪ Le 3 du mois suivant-Le chevalier marin, capitaine Sieur Pintauls- cargaison au Sénégal de 240 noirs dont 169 arrivés vivants</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1750 Mémoires divers</li> <li>➔ M. Lenormand, habitant de l'Île, antérieur à 1766 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sur comment favoriser la destruction des noirs marron</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Réflexions anonymes pour l'intérêt de la Compagnie des Indes au sujet des Isle de France et de Bourbon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nécessité de faire traiter des noirs de Madagascar, Mozambique, Inde, Guinée pour la Compagnie</li> <li>▪ Utilisation des esclaves pour la construction des angards : « 40 à 50 esclaves pour mettre 5 à 6 milliers de café en coque au soleil prend plus de 2h »</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>COL C4-7-1</b>  <b>1751-1753</b>  <b>Correspondances</b>  <b>générales, MM David,</b>  <b>de Lozier Bouvet,</b>  <b>Gouverneurs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1751 Extrait d'un mémoire sur les fortifications de l'Île, par le Maréchal de Saxe</li> <li>➔ Grand objet de dépense : quantité de noirs nécessaires ; Il faut prendre des Noirs à Madagascar pour économiser.</li> <li>• 1752 M. David, gouverneur général</li> <li>➔ Réponse de M .David au mémoire présenté à la Compagnie d'au mois d'août 1752 ayant pour titre « Réflexions sur l'Île de France » <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dépenses en noirs-frais achat et transport de 1100 noirs du Sénégal du 30 juin 1748 au 1<sup>er</sup> Juillet 1749</li> <li>▪ Traite de noirs à Goa- vaisseau le Dargenson en 1751</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>COL C4-7-2</b>  <b>1751-1753</b>  <b>Correspondances</b>  <b>générales David, de</b>  <b>Lozier Bouvet,</b>  <b>Gouverneurs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1753 M. De Lozier Bouvet, gouverneur général</li> <li>➔ Lettre du 21 Janvier 1753 concernant la destruction des noirs marron <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ « Une compagnie d'infanterie de 86 hommes non compris les officiers à hauts cols, pour être employée à la destruction des noirs marron »</li> <li>▪ Les noirs marron sont un des plus grands fléaux dans toutes les colonies</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Instructions à M de la Bourdonnais du 11 Octobre 1753</li> <li>➔ 30 Avril 1753 concernant la relâche du Maréchal de Saxe et autres vaisseaux dont : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ La Glorieuse- venant de Mozambique en direction de Quérimbe</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ 31 octobre 1753 Mémoire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 1 sur la nécessité de noirs dans les deux îles</li> <li>▪ « La Compagnie sait à présent de M. Dupleix et de M. Louet ce qu'on peut attendre de noirs de nos comptoirs de l'Inde, ainsi que de Goa et de Mozambique. La traite à Madagascar, incertaine, donne à présent moins que jamais » les vaisseaux à Foulpointe n'ont ramené que peu d'esclaves depuis fin Avril à Octobre.</li> <li>▪ « Les malgaches sont toujours dangereux à l'Île de France : on peut les faire passer à Bourbon où ils le sont moins »</li> <li>▪ « nous avons aux îles Quérimbe deux bâtiments à suivre un commerce ouvert par M. David »</li> <li>▪ Il est important d'avoir des noirs du Sénégal dans la marine des deux îles car ils peuvent suppléer aux matelots, calfats d'Europe, charpentiers et aux lascars de l'Inde.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>ne peuvent être suppléés par aucun autre noir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Préférence des noirs en général pour le service de la Compagnie car un salaire est versé aux commandeurs et à quelques noirs ouvriers.</li> <li>▪ Les officiers de la Compagnie apportent des noirs de Madagascar en fraude</li> <li>▪ Article 2 sur la gratification accordée aux officiers qui vont en traite à Madagascar</li> <li>▪ Article 3 sur les esclaves pris à loyer par la compagnie</li> <li>▪ Article 4 sur les noirs marron</li> <li>▪ Articles 5 sur les travaux et ouvriers blancs et noirs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le Conseil Supérieur 1753</li> </ul> <p>➔ Extrait des ouvrages faits à l'île de France depuis le mois de juillet 1753 par M. de Cossigny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Envoi à M. de Rostaing de 50 esclaves- tailleurs de pierres, maçons, charpentiers, pour la construction d'un fourneau pour la fonte</li> <li>▪ Journées d'ouvriers et d'esclaves employés à la Loge, à la Grande Rivière, à la provision du fourrage, à la réparation du chemin venant de la Montagne Longue</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1753 M. L'abbé de la Tour-projet concernant les îles de France et Bourbon</li> </ul> <p>➔ Le commerce des noirs à la côte africaine est nécessaire : grande disette de noirs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moyens de réussir ce commerce : demander au royaume du Portugal de permettre le commerce au Mozambique</li> <li>▪ Projet d'établissements sur cette côte</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1753 Mémoire concernant les îles de France et de Bourbon</li> </ul> <p>➔ Distinction par classes de noirs, tarifs pour chaque espèce :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ De Guinée- toute la côte occidentale d'Afrique</li> <li>▪ De Mozambique- toute la côte orientale d'Afrique, d'Abyssinie, d'Egypte, depuis la côte de Bonne espérance jusqu'au port de Suez</li> <li>▪ De Madagascar</li> <li>▪ Indiens traités à la côte Malabar et à l'est du cap Comorin</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-8-1</b> <b>1754</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales M.de Lozier</b> <b>Bouvet, Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 1<sup>er</sup> Mars de la Compagnie à l'occasion du mariage des employés, sur le terme « créole »</li> <li>▪ Concerne à l'île de France les « filles métisses provenant d'un sang noir meslé avec le blanc et non les filles nées de blancs et de blancs »</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1754 Le Conseil Supérieur</li> </ul> <p>➔ 12 janvier 1754 sur la suppression de la gratification sur la traite des noirs proposée par M. David pour les employés de l'île</p> <p>➔ 12 Mars : retour de la Glorieuse partie pour aller en traite à Quérimbe le 15 septembre, revenue le 8 présent mois- capitaine sieur L'Esquelen- traite de 33 noirs et 69 noirs à Madagascar. 99 esclaves vivants.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1754 M. de Cossigny</li> </ul> <p>➔ La Frégate la Pierre est arrivée le 8 septembre de Foulpointe chargée de 2 esclaves</p> <p>➔ 12 Mars : retour de la Glorieuse de Quérimbe qu'avec 33 noirs car les portugais sont occupés à bâtir une citadelle pour empêcher les étrangers d'y venir commercer</p>
<b>COL C4-8-2</b> <b>1754</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales M.de Lozier</b> <b>Bouvet, Gouverneur</b>	<p>➔ Courtes réflexions sur le marché entre le sieur Vigoureux et la Compagnie, arrêté par le Conseil Supérieur le 24 Octobre 1753</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sur la perte des noirs due aux travaux de la Compagnie</li> </ul> <p>➔ Etat des fournitures que le sieur Vigoureux a faite à la compagnie en septembre et Octobre 1753 en conséquence de son marché accepté par le Conseil Supérieur le 24 Août de la même année- 589 esclaves vivants.</p> <p>➔ Ecrits entre le Conseil et M. Cossigny – Lettres relatives du Conseil à la Compagnie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lettre du 11 mars 1754 de M. Cossigny « Les esclaves arrivés du Bengale et de Mozambique et de Madagascar, quoique modique en quantité me donnent lieu de les demander tous pour être appliqués aux travaux dont je suis chargé »</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1754 M. David, ex-gouverneur général-Mémoire justificatif</li> <li>➔ Extraits de diverses lettres écrites par la Compagnie à M. David pendant sa régie au Sénégal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Du 15 Octobre 1740- traite de plus 500 noirs en Gambie</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Tableau d'un atelier pour l'exploitation de bois <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ L'exploitation occupe journellement 136 noirs</li> <li>▪ Etat des frais pour 136 noirs-nourriture, vêtements..</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-9-1</b> <b>1755-1757</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1755 Gouverneurs M. de Lozier Bouvet</li> <li>➔ Lettre du 07 Octobre 1755 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ La Ville Pix, destinée pour Ste Marie de Madagascar ira d'abord à Foulpointe pour ramener des noirs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1755 Le Conseil Supérieur</li> <li>➔ Le 24 Octobre 1755 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Le vaisseau du Sieur Vigoureux a traité 53 esclaves à Madagascar</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1756 M. Magon, gouverneur</li> <li>➔ Journal de M. Magon depuis le 2 décembre 1755 jusqu'au 24 Juin 1756 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Noirs introduits en fraude pour les particuliers</li> <li>▪ Recensement des noirs de la compagnie</li> <li>▪ 31 Octobre- arrivée de la Pierre de Foulpointe avec 95 noirs. 12 noirs ont été mis sur l'entreprise des bois au port du sud est, 30 envoyés à Bourbon et le reste vendus aux habitants</li> <li>▪ 2 Novembre- les noirs loués des sieurs Vigoureux et de 3 autres ont été reçus au nombre de 470</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-9-2</b> <b>1755-1757</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1756 M. de Candos</li> <li>➔ 20 Février 1756- recrutement des noirs de la Compagnie</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1756 M. Magon, gouverneur</li> <li>➔ Suite du journal de M. Magon à partir d'Avril <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toutes les arrivées et départs de vaisseau survenus dans l'année</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-10</b> <b>1758</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales</b> <b>M. Magon,</b> <b>Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1758 M. Magon, gouverneur</li> <li>➔ Journal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 octobre 1757-Mouillage du Nécessaire à Foulpointe- sieur Duverger- n'apporte que quelques noirs malades</li> <li>▪ 6 octobre 1757-53 noirs venus pour le compte de la Compagnie sur a Fièrre et sur le Nécessaire. Confiscation de 5 noirs car ils avaient été embarqués en fraude</li> <li>▪ 16 Octobre- a fait vendre à l'encan, le petit nombre d'esclaves venus par la Fièrre et le Nécessaire car impossibilité de les soigner et pure perte pour la Compagnie</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Lettre du 21 septembre 1758 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Le 13 juillet, la <i>Pénélope</i> est arrivée de Foulpointe avec 265 noirs en cargaison et 39 en fraude qui ont été confisqués au profit de la Compagnie. Une centaine des plus « beaux » ont été placés sur le vaisseau le <i>Centaure</i> le 1<sup>er</sup> Aout, parti pour l'Inde en passant par Bourbon</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1758 Lettres au Conseil Supérieur</li> <li>➔ Lettre du 21 septembre 1758 de M. Magon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Le 28 mai, le <i>St Charles</i> est arrivés de Foulpointe chargé de 212 esclaves. Les plus beaux ont été choisis pour les travaux de la Compagnie et le reste distribués aux colons</li> <li>▪ La <i>Pénélope</i> est à Foulpointe, la traite est commencée et ramènera 300 noirs</li> <li>▪ La gaulette le <i>St Benoist</i> est arrivée de Ste Marie le 30 mai avec 3 esclaves</li> <li>▪ Le 29, le <i>Cigne</i>, prise anglaise de M. Daché, est arrivé de Madagascar avec 54 noirs qu'il a traités à Ambaniam</li> <li>▪ Le 5 juillet, le vaisseau la Clotilde- armateur sieur Vigoureux- est arrivé avec 116 noirs de Tamatave</li> <li>▪ La <i>Pénélope</i> est arrivée de Foulpointe le 13 avec 265 noirs de cargaison. 39 ont été confisqués pour la Compagnie</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Le 24 Aout, le vaisseau le <i>St Charles</i> est arrivé de Foulpointe avec 262 esclaves mais 213 dans le plus triste état</li> <li>▪ Le 24 Aout, le <i>Ruby</i> est arrivé, armé par des particuliers de l'Inde- traite à Madagascar- 300 noirs</li> <li>▪ Noirs traités à Madagascar- les meilleurs pour la Compagnie et le reste pour les habitations à raison de 400 piastres le noir c'est-à-dire 60 piastres en sus du prix d'autrefois</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Lettre du 21 Septembre 1758 de M. Magon</li> <li>▪ Le 28 mai, le <i>St Charles</i> est arrivé à Foulpointe avec 212 esclaves</li> <li>▪ Le 29 juin la corvette le <i>Cigne</i>, prise anglaise, est rentrée avec 54 noirs</li> <li>▪ Le 5 juillet la <i>Pénélope</i> est rentrée de Foulpointe avec 265 noirs plus près de 40 en fraude que M. Le Fourniaudau a fait confisquer</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1758 M. Mondion, commissaire de la Marine à la suite de l'escadre des Indes</li> <li>➔ Recensement des gens qui prennent leurs vivres dans les magasins de la Compagnie</li> <li>▪ Ne sont pas compris les noirs, femmes et enfants des habitants : au nombre de 6443 et les noirs de la Compagnie : 2651</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1758 M. Dagan conseillé</li> <li>➔ Lettre au Conseil Supérieur du 18 aout 1758</li> <li>• Mentionne 20 esclaves Mozambique de Demoiselle G Îlette Robin, habitation Duplessis</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-11 1759 Correspondances générales, M. Magon, Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Réponse de M. Gosse à la lettre et au mémoire de M. Magon, 10 Juin 1759</li> <li>➔ La petite quantité de noirs pour la pesée et l'emplissage des sacs de blé occasionne une lenteur</li> <li>• Lettre de M. Cossigny concernant les fortifications</li> <li>➔ « le grand port n'était pas fortifié comme il devrait l'être » [...] car « avoir tenu un trop grand nombre d'esclaves au Réduit sur ordre du Sieur Aublet au lieu d'en avoir envoyé une centaine au Sieur Desny »</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-12-1 1760 Journal de M. Desforges Boucher, Gouverneur, à commencer du 28 mai 1759 jusqu'au 1<sup>er</sup> octobre inclus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 Octobre 1759</li> <li>➔ La frégate La <i>Gloire</i>, arrive de Madagascar avec 86 noirs- M. Laval, commandant</li> <li>• 4 Novembre 1759</li> <li>➔ Les noirs venus par la frégate La <i>Gloire</i> ont été distribués en vendus à différents habitants et particuliers, suivant l'ordre de répartition du 19 Octobre signé de M. Magon</li> <li>• 10 Novembre 1759</li> <li>➔ Visite de l'hôpital avec M. Candos, conseiller inspecteur : fixation de la quantité de noirs et négresses que le service des malades demande d'y acheter et demande de répartition</li> <li>➔ 28 noirs de la Maréchaussée : non suffisant pour les détachements qu'exigent les fréquentes incursions des noirs marrons- augmentation au nombre de 50 avec fourniture d'un pistolet et mousqueton-préférable au fusil pour couvrir les bois</li> <li>• 11 novembre 1759</li> <li>➔ Partage des noirs de la Marine en 3 classes pour servir à la défense de l'île: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Noirs fusiliers : les plus surs en les plus fidèles</li> <li>- Noirs lanciers en lesquels on ne peut accorder qu'une médiocre confiance</li> <li>- Noirs pionniers, dont on ne peut tirer aucune autre forme de service</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 Novembre 1759</li> <li>➔ Revue de tous les noirs de la Compagnie attachés aux travaux de la terre, dont la distribution pour la Défense de l'île sera la même que celle des noirs de la Marine</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 Novembre 1759</li> <li>➔ Le <i>St Luc</i>, donné par la Compagnie à M. Vigoureux est parti pour faire une traite de noir à Mozambique</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 Janvier 1760</li> <li>➔ Le <i>Cygne</i>, petit bâtiment particulier appartenant au sieur Frichot arrive de Madagascar avec une modique traite de noirs qu'il y a faite pour le compte de l'armateur.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat de la consommation par mois, juin 1760</li> <li>➔ Pour 1850 noirs et négresses : mahis 110 000</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Juillet 1760</li> <li>➔ M. Candos, conseiller commandant Port du sud-est fait part de la disette absolue de vivres pour les noirs de la Compagnie travaillant aux fortifications de ce port</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-12-2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat de la consommation par mois par personne, juin 1760</li> <li>➔ Pour 1850 noirs et négresses de Compagnie : mahis 110 000</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Réponse à la lettre de M. le Comte D’Aché au Conseil en date du 2 Aout</li> <li>➔ 227 noirs dans les vaisseaux de l’escadre et dans ceux de Chine</li> <li>➔ Les équipages des vaisseaux ont été complétés l’an passé « des noirs, tant ici que de Madagascar [...] ces noirs sont bien braves »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Moudion à Mrs Les Syndics et Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes, 20 décembre 1760</li> <li>➔ Manque de vivres</li> <li>• « à la fin de ce mois plus de ris pour les noirs, malabares et même pour les blancs à qui on en fournit »</li> </ul>
<b>COL –C4-13 1761 Correspondances générales, M. Desforges Boucher, Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal de M. Desforges Boucher</li> <li>➔ 10 Novembre 1761</li> <li>• « Le S. Guintin amène du port avec une compagnie de ses noirs chargée de parcourir la côte de tout l’intérieur du port pour veiller aux mouvements de ses ennemis ... »</li> <li>➔ 17 Mai 1762</li> <li>• L’<i>Aventure</i>, appartenant au Sieur Panon arrive de Madagascar avec une soixantaine de noirs</li> <li>➔ 1<sup>er</sup> Aout 1762</li> <li>• L’<i>Aventure</i>, appartenant au S. Panon arrive de Madagascar avec une trentaine de noirs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 4 septembre 1761</li> <li>➔ « M. D’Estaing nous a amené 89 chinois, 33 cipayes, 33 topaze et quelques esclaves de caste malaye et autres ;[...] les malay et autres esclaves ont été vendu à l’encan au profit de la Compagnie. Des 216 noirs appartenant à la Compagnie lesquels avaient été embarqués sur le <i>Condé</i> et l’<i>Expédition</i>, il n’en est revenu que 118 [...] nous avons seulement fait mettre sur les travaux les invalides et autres hors d’état d’être à la chasse aux marrons »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 14 Mars 1761 des Syndics et Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes</li> <li>➔ « vous annoncez à la Compagnie par votre lettre du 12 l’Etat des esclaves employés aux divers travaux de l’Isle de France [...] l’état « ne contient que le nom des noirs et les distinctions de sexe sans aucune désignation des vieux, ni des jeunes, ni e genre de travail auquel ils sont occupés ... »</li> <li>➔ Sur les loyers des noirs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extrait de la lettre par apostille du Conseil Supérieur de l’Île de France du 4 Septembre 1761 répondant à celles de la Compagnie depuis Janvier 1760 jusqu’au 21 Mars 1761</li> <li>➔ Article 2 : « il n’est pas de l’intérêt de la Compagnie de diviser les noirs par brigade [...]« la Compagnie a reçu le recensement général des noirs qui lui appartiennent »-total de 2021</li> <li>• Nègres et négresses de Guinée, Mozambique, Malgaches, Américains, Ma...-?, Créoles, Indiens, et Manilles : 878</li> <li>• Enfants de moins de 14 ans : 48</li> <li>• Enfants plus jeunes qui ne servent pas encore : 191</li> <li>• Au port S.E : 329</li> <li>• A la Marine : 552</li> <li>➔ Article 29 : « suivant le recensement de 1761, il y a sur les forges de M. de Rostaing 645 noirs et 40 blancs»</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• « les noirs de Foulpointe ont refusé de (? <i>Illisible</i>) à la baie d’Antongil à M. de Laval</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal de Desforges Boucher</li> <li>➔ Mardi 7 Mars 1761</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ « On a roué un noir ce matin de la nation Yolof [...] »</li> <li>➔ Du Vendredi saint 9 Avril au mardi 13 Avril</li> <li>▪ « il y a dans le quartier de Moka la moitié de blancs et encore plus de noirs qui ne- ? pas la messe même le jour de Pâques.il n’y a que 3 paroisses dans une île qui a 40 lieues de tour et des distances fort éloignées »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettres de divers</li> <li>➔ Lettre du Conseil Supérieur du 4 Septembre 1761</li> <li>▪ Article 1 : Le 19 décembre 1760, le <i>St Antoine</i>, bâtiment portugais était entré dans le port venant de Mozambique avec des noirs traités pour le compte de M. Vigoureux</li> <li>▪ Article 18 : M. d’Estaing avait amené 89 chinois ou chinoises, 33 cipayes, 33 topazes et quelques autres esclaves. Les chinois sollicitaient sans cesse pour s’en aller ; les cipayes et les topazes faisaient le service ; les malais ou autres esclaves avaient été vendus à l’encan au profit de la compagnie. Des 216 noirs de la compagnie embarqués avec M. d’Estaing, il n’en est revenu que 115.</li> <li>▪ Article 32 : Le 6 juillet était arrivé un vaisseau portugais nommé Jésus Maria Joseph avec 210 noirs de Mozambique.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL –C4-14-1</b>  <b>1762</b>  <b>Correspondances</b>  <b>générales, M.</b>  <b>Desforges Boucher,</b>  <b>Gouverneur</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre au Conseil Supérieur, 31 Décembre 1762</li> <li>➔ Lettre des Syndics et des Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes au Conseil Supérieur de l’Isle de France du 31 décembre 1762 pour exiger des éclaircissements sur l’énorme quantité de lettres de change que le Conseil a tiré sur le caissier de la Compagnie depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> mai 1761 (pp. 2-137).</li> <li>• Le Sr. Voix écrivain de la Compagnie prétend justifier que l’origine de ses lettres de change est légitime par la valeur qu’il a fourni est celle des noirs de ports permis à lui allouer dans les divers voyages qu’il a fait à Madagascar ; qu’il a donné ces noirs à louer et les a vendus ensuite (p. 50).</li> <li>• Selon les recherches de la Compagnie, le Sr. Voix n’a pu faire que deux voyages à Madagascar sur le <i>Dargenson</i> et s’il a traité des noirs, c’est en fraude (p. 51).</li> <li>• La Compagnie demande pourquoi le Conseil accorde-t-il des ports permis en esclaves apar dangereux pour ces officiers en ce que ces esclaves avaient toujours à faire et ne supportent jamais la mortalité de ceux embarqués pour le compte de la Compagnie (pp. 65-66).</li> <li>➔</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 janvier 1762</li> <li>➔ Lettre de M. Desforges Boucher du 18 janvier 1762. Le vaisseau de guerre Le <i>Fortuné</i> et la frégate La <i>Silphide</i> expédiés le 26 juillet à Ceylan et à l’embouchure du Gange pour ramener une cargaison de blé, riz et autre ration comestible pour la subsistance de l’île mais la <i>Silphide</i> ayant eu un problème de navigation et risquant de couler, le capitaine du <i>Fortuné</i> l’escorta jusqu’à Rodrigue où ils rencontrèrent une escadre anglaise (pp. 140-141).</li> <li>• Le <i>Batave</i> expédié de Batavia par M. de Cossigny apporta une cargaison de riz et de sucre en décembre 1761 (p. 143).</li> <li>• Arrivée de La <i>Silhouette</i> qui a fait une traite de riz à la Baye Antongil est arrivée le 25 septembre avec du riz et du salé : ce bâtiment a ramené l’équipage de la flûte L’<i>Ut Île</i> qui a péri sur l’Isle aux Sables proche de Madagascar (p. 145).</li> <li>• Le <i>Gange</i> a fait deux traites de bœufs au Fort Dauphin dont la moitié sont morts dans la traversée (p.145.).</li> <li>• Le <i>Rubi</i> envoyé au Fort Dauphin pour y prendre les salaisons que M. de la Fontaine devait y faire, n’en a rapporté qu’une trentaine de milliers de bœufs salés : la guerre qui est allumée entre les gens du pays ne lui ayant pas permis d’en faire davantage (p. 145).</li> <li>• M. Bouvet envoie le secours de blé de Bourbon (p. 146).</li> <li>• Les Princes de la Côte de Coromandel sont révoltés de la domination des Anglais et désirent tous de voir arborer le pavillon français sur leur côte (pp. 149-150).</li> <li>• La frégate la <i>Gloire</i> a péri dans le nord de la Baye d’Antongil ayant 400 milliers de riz (p. 151.)</li> <li>• Détails sur la force de l’escadre anglaise arrivée par division à l’île Rodrigue le 19</li> </ul>

	<p>juillet 1761 (p. 152).</p> <p>➔ Extrait de la lettre écrite de l'Isle de France à la Compagnie par M. Desforges Boucher en date du 18 janvier 1762 (p. 153).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Les vaisseaux le <i>Comte d'Artois</i>, le <i>Dargenson</i> (?) et le <i>Mery</i> expédié de Batavia arrivèrent à l'Isle de France le 6 décembre avec un chargement de riz, sucre, arack et quelques autres effets propres à la subsistance (p. 154).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 janvier 1769</li> <li>➔ Lettre de M. Desforges Boucher au Duc de Choiseul du</li> <li>• « Les Anglais qui comptaient intercepter tous nos bâtiments surtout ceux de Batavia se font morfondre pendant trois mois à Rodrigues sans nous enlever une seule chaloupe : deux bâtiments chargés sont venus de l'Isle de Bourbon et un vaisseau Portugais qui arrive de Goa chargé de blé, et en autres matières comestibles achevait de mettre l'Isle de France dans une meilleure posture pour la subsistance qu'elle n'a été depuis près de trois ans (...) : toutes les fortifications que j'ai cru devoir faire à la Côte étant à leur perfection, je m'occupe maintenant à retrancher l'établissement du Port du nord-ouest » (p. 161).</li> <li>➔ Lettre de M. Desforges Boucher du 20 mars 1762 au sujet de la nomination des trois plus anciens lieutenants au grade de capitaine (p. 166).</li> <li>➔ Lettre de M. Fremicourt : la retraite de MM. De Longchamps et Ligeae capitaines, le corps se trouve hors d'état par son petit nombre de faire le service tel qu'il doit être fait en temps de guerre (pp. 168-171).</li> <li>➔ Copie de la lettre écrite par M. le Président Ogier, ambassadeur de France au Danemark à M. Desforges Boucher gouverneur à l'Isle de France, aout 1761. M. de Marchis étant entré au service du Roi de Danemark, a été choisi pour Directeur de la Compagnie Danoise dans le Bengale et il enverra au moins un vaisseau chargé de comestibles et de marchandises le plus ut île à la colonie (pp. 172-173).</li> <li>➔ Lettre de M. Pavigné à M. Desforges Boucher du 8 juillet 1761.</li> <li>• « Le 29 juin (...) nous avons eu connaissance d'un vaisseau qui ayant arboré pavillon hollandais, a tiré quatorze coups de canon (...) » (p. 174)</li> <li>➔ Lettre de Desforges Boucher du 20 juillet 1762 à MM. Les Syndics et Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes à Paris (pp. 178-222)</li> <li>• Travaux et exercices militaires (pp. 178-179)</li> <li>• Gratifications des soldats (pp. 179-180)</li> <li>• Le salut de l'Île de France dépend de la conciliation des chefs (pp. 180-181).</li> <li>• Chargement de café de Bourbon à l'insu de M. Bouvet (pp. 181-182)</li> <li>• Arrivée de 300 Chinois par l'expédition du Comte d'Estaing. Ces Chinois étaient des hommes libres, enlevés par force de Bencoul où ils n'étaient que marchands, ayant perdu de plus grand nombre de leurs femmes et enfants sur deux bâtiments achetés par M. le Comte d'Estaing à Batavia. On les a dégoûtés par de mauvais traitements (pp. 183-184).</li> <li>• La culture de la terre (p. 184). Les cultivateurs ont été obligés de prélever sur le maïs et sur les autres grains la quantité nécessaire pour faire subsister leurs esclaves (p. 187).</li> <li>• Travaux militaire (p. 187)</li> <li>• Un cinquième des noirs de chaque habitation retenu pour faire porter aux différents lieux d'embarquement de la Côte le bois dont le port et les travaux avaient besoin (p. 188).</li> <li>• « Dix milles bouches à la fois qu'il a fallu délivrer des vivres... ». L'importance d'encourager l'agriculture (p. 189).</li> <li>• Terrains concédés aux anciens militaires. La Compagnie doit permettre des traites de noirs pour faire délivrer à chacun pour développer leur concession et se fixer dans cette île (pp. 190-191).</li> <li>• Travaux auxquels les esclaves de la Compagnie doivent être employés (p. 191).</li> <li>• Augmentation du prix des vivres, boissons et marchandises. Il ne sera tiré de lettres de change que pour les pensions alimentaires (p. 192).</li> <li>• Cherté des vivres et dépenses excessives (pp.194-195).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L'inspection des magasins et des vivres (p. 196).</li> <li>• Insuffisance de troupes (p. 200).</li> <li>• Location de noirs pour construire les chemins nécessaires pour faciliter la communication (p. 201). Le nombre de manœuvres n'a pas excédé dans cette année celui de 200 » (p. 202).</li> <li>• Suppression de toute espèce d'entreprise et coupe de bois selon les ordres du Roi (p. 203).</li> <li>• Des mémoires diffamatoires contre toute l'administration (p. 208).</li> <li>• La chasse aux esclaves marron par la maréchassée noire (pp. 212-213).</li> <li>• Plusieurs vaisseaux envoyés à Madagascar pour traiter des vivres (p. 216).</li> <li>• « Mettez-moi en état de faire traiter 2,000 noirs par année (...) pour distribuer aux habitants (...) vous verrez votre colonie devenir florissante (p. 218). Les idées de Desforges Boucher pour développer la colonie (p. 218).</li> <li>➔ Extrait des instructions données à M. le Comte d'Arché chef d'Escadre daté de Versailles le 23 janvier 1757 (pp. 223-224)</li> <li>➔ Compte rendu d'un officier pointeur de la Compagnie d'artillerie chargé de la conduite de l'école établie à la batterie royale de l'Isle de France- 30 août 1762 (pp. 225-226).</li> <li>➔ Etat Général du Bataillon de l'Isle de France après le départ des vaisseaux de la présente expédition – 20 septembre 1762 (pp. 228-231).</li> <li>➔ Etat des Chinois embarqués sur le <i>Comte d'Artois</i> pour passer à Batavia (pp. 232-233).</li> <li>➔ Etat des officiers de la marine de la Côte reformé qui ont composé les états major des vaisseaux existants en cette Île (pp. 234-242).</li> <li>➔ Note général à quoi se monte la quantité de vivres et autres provisions pour la nourriture des troupes tant blanches que noires (pp. 243-250).</li> <li>➔ Arrivées et départs des vaisseaux en 1761 avec les noms des capitaines, lieux d'où ils viennent ou lieux où ils vont et la date (pp. 251-258).</li> <li>➔ Campagne de Jean Henry Lebrun aux Isle de France et de Bourbon de 1744-1762 (pp. 266-272).</li> <li>➔ Etat des noirs Macoute tant en prix tant par les noirs de maréchassée que par les noirs appartenant à différents particuliers depuis le 15 septembre 1759 à juillet 1762 (p. 273).</li> <li>➔ Lettre de Desforges Boucher au Duc de Choiseul du 20 juillet 1762 sur la position de l'Isle de France et des évènements qui se sont passés dans ces mers l'année dernière (pp. 274-279).</li> <li>➔ Instruction pou M. de Maudave 28 février 1762 concernant la guerre (pp. 280-286).</li> <li>➔ Copie de la lettre de M. de Maudave à M. Desforges Boucher du 20 avril 1762 (pp. 287-297).</li> <li>➔ Copie de la lettre en chiffre écrite par M. Desforges Boucher à M. de Maudave à la Côte de Coromandel en date du 4 août 1762 (pp. 298-305).</li> <li>➔ Lettre de M. Desforges Boucher à MM. Les Syndics et Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes du 20 juillet 1762 sur la guerre aux Indes (pp. 306-307).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1762 - Le Conseil Supérieur</li> <li>➔ Délibération du comité du 11 janvier 1762 sur la quantité actuelle de vivres de la colonie et la destination des vaisseaux qu'on doit employer (pp. 309-316).</li> <li>➔ Le comité s'en remet à M. Desforges pour donner à M. de Maudave une instruction générale pour la conduite des opérations à faire, les partis à prendre dan les affaires majeurs concernant la guerre – 28 janvier 1762 (pp. 317-319).</li> <li>➔ Etat des hommes effectifs à nourrir en pain et riz à l'Isle de France au 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1762 (pp. 320-326).</li> <li>➔ Lettre de Desforges Boucher du 13 mai 1762 concernant un mémoire daté du 28 avril 1762 qu'il a adressé à la Compagnie sur un projet de croisière pour se procurer des denrées et marchandises de nécessité dans la colonie (pp. 327-330).</li> <li>➔ 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1762 : Lecture prise du plan d'opération proposé définitivement par M. le Chevalier de St Georges chef s'escadre, d'après le mémoire qu'il a fait le 2 mai 1762</li> </ul>

	<p>(pp. 331-337).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Liste des vaisseaux sortis du port de l'Isle de France depuis le 24 juin 1762 jour de l'arrivée du Chevalier de St Georges (pp. 338-342).</li> <li>➔ Arrivée des vaisseaux dans le port de l'Isle de France depuis le 24 juin 1761, jour de celle du Chevalier de St Georges (pp. 343-345).</li> <li>➔ Règlement provisoire du 29 juillet 1762 pour l'exploitation des bois tant de ceux de construction indispensables aux travaux de marine, de fortifications et autres relatifs au service du Roi et de la Compagnie, que de ceux qui sont nécessaires aux habitants qui en font la coupe sur leurs terrains (pp. 348-356).</li> <li>➔ De par le Roi : défenses d'exploitation de bois de toutes espèces – 29 juillet 1762 (pp. 357-359).</li> <li>➔ Instructions pour M. de Sallieze Christy capitaine des vaisseaux du Roi, commandant le vaisseau de Guerre Le Vaugue et le <i>Condé</i> et de la frégate la Fidèle (pp. 360-363).</li> <li>• « Il se rendra à Foulpointe où il prendra des salaisons et des bœufs en vie, ce dont il en convient ici, comme aussi des noirs pour fortifier son équipage» (p. 360)</li> <li>➔ Instructions pour M. de Joannir capitaine de frégate chevalier de l'ordre royale et militaire de St Louis commandant les vaisseaux de Guerre Le <i>Comte d'Artois</i>, le <i>Fortuné</i> et le <i>Darguenon</i> et de la flute le <i>Massiac</i> et chef de l'expédition de Batavia – 27 juin 1762 (pp. 364-365).</li> <li>➔ Lettre de Desforges Boucher à la Compagnie des Indes du 4 aout 1762</li> <li>• Le vaisseau particulier Le <i>Cigne</i> est allé en traite à Madagascar pour le compte de ses armateurs (pp. 371-372).</li> <li>• Le vaisseau Le Lys a mis à la vo Île pour d'où il doit rapporter une cargaison de bœufs (p. 372).</li> <li>• Le vaisseau le Choiseul est arrivé avec 400 bœufs vivants de 440 qu'il a embarqués à Foulpointe (p. 372).</li> <li>➔ Instruction envoyée à M. de Surville, capitaine de St. Louis, capitaine de frégate commandant le vaisseau le <i>Fortuné</i> (pp. 374-375).</li> <li>• Force de l'escadre anglaise arrivé par division à l'Isle de Rodrigue le 19 juillet 1761 (pp. 376-377).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1762, Desforges Boucher, gouverneur</li> <li>➔ Lettre du 20 Septembre 1762 à Messieurs les Syndics et Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes à Paris</li> <li>▪ Chasse au noir marrons : « la quantité de noirs marrons qui sont détruits et pris par la maréchaussée noire que j'ai remis sur pied prouve qu'elle suffit pour le moment présent pour leur destruction »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Etat des noirs marron tués et pris tant par les noirs de la Maréchaussée que par les noirs appartenant à différents particuliers depuis le 15 Novembre 1759 jusqu'en Septembre 1762</li> <li>▪ 234 tués par les noirs de la Maréchaussée</li> <li>▪ 429 tués par les noirs des particuliers</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL –C4-14-2</b>  <b>1762</b>  <b>Correspondances</b>  <b>générales, M.</b>  <b>Desforges Boucher,</b>  <b>Gouverneur</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1762, Mémoires et projets, renseignements divers</li> <li>➔ Mémoire du Comte d'Estaing : Notes sur l'île de France, 11 Mars 1762</li> <li>▪ Il devrait y avoir des détachements composés de 50 européens et 50 noirs perpétuellement occupés à parcourir la côte [...] pour observer la flotte ennemie</li> <li>▪ Plus de 4500 noirs tirés de Madagascar en 3 ans, dont plus de 1000 devenus marrons.</li> <li>▪ « pour faire faire à près de 500 nègres l'apprentissage de tous les métiers qu'exige le travail du fer ou le service d'une forge où ils sont parvenus par nos soins à égaler leurs maitres »</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Etat actuel de l'établissement de M. de Rostaing et Hermans dans lequel M. de la Tour de S. Igest est associé de tiers depuis le mois de Janvier de la présente année 1762</li> <li>▪ Messieurs de Rostaing et Hermans furent obligés de louer des nègres et charretiers à différents particuliers</li> <li>▪ « On tirera seulement et à perpétuité de l'établissement la nourriture de 1800 à 2000 noirs sans aucun préjudice à la subsistance de tout le peuple qui y est attaché »</li> <li>➔ Estimation de la valeur intrinsèque de tout ce qui compose l'établissement</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 800 esclaves dont environ 720 d'Inde, dont 2/3 de mâles, tous ouvriers tels que forgerons, taillandiers, cloutiers, serruriers, charbonniers, charpentiers, menuisiers, tonneliers, scieurs, bourreliers, tailleurs de pierre, maçons, charretiers. Tous ont un emplacement où ils sont logés dans des maisons alignées ayant chacune leur jardin ; le tout faisant un bourg divisé par quartiers surveillés par des commandants nègres.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Frais de régie actuelle, engage d'européens et autres dépenses</li> <li>▪ To île pour l'habillement des nègres y compris les sarots à 2 chemises, 2 mouchoirs et 2 caleçons par nègre ou 2 jupes par négresses et 2 sarots pour les nègres fondeurs ou forgerons ; évalués à 6000 piastres</li> <li>▪ Gratifications aux commandants nègres et noirs ouvriers : 6000 piastres</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoires sur les îles de France et de Bourbon à la paix de 1762- Plan de défense proposé pour ces deux îles</li> <li>➔ « les noirs de la côte de Guinée et les Mozambique sont ceux sur lesquels on compte le plus ainsi que les créoles des deux colonies. Il y en a assez dan les deux îles pour en faire une troupe qu'on porterait à 1000 au bout de quelques années [...] »</li> </ul>
<b>COL –C4-15 1763-1765 Correspondances générales, M. Desfortes Boucher, Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire de M. Godeheu, 1763</li> <li>➔ Mémoire sur la défense des îles de France et de Bourbon, Paris, le 20 Mai 1763</li> <li>▪ La maréchaussée de noirs-2 brigades de 16 noirs domestiques parmi les plus braves et les plus fidèles que M. de la Bourdonnais avait établie pour donner la chasse aux noirs marron a été abandonnée- pourtant efficace- récompense pour chaque prise- faveur pour les maitres qui donnent un noir à ce corps par des préférences sur les traites des noirs.</li> <li>▪ « On pourrait encore former comme autrefois 500 à 600 noirs à marcher ensemble à tirer et à servir le canon »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire sur les colons blancs</li> <li>➔ Nombre des noirs peu proportionnel à celui des colons</li> <li>▪ En 1735 : 69 colons et 332 noirs- 290 négresses-194 négrillons- 124 négresses-total : 940</li> <li>▪ En 1739 : 107 colons et 409 noirs-377 négresses- 280 négrillons- 183 negresses - total : 1249</li> <li>▪ 5 habitants sur 107 possèdent plus du 6<sup>e</sup> des noirs existants dans la colonie</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire sur les noirs</li> <li>➔ La Compagnie vend des noirs à prix plus bas que les particuliers</li> <li>➔ La compagnie peut se procurer des noirs par la traite à Madagascar, Mozambique- valent 25 à 30 piastres et Goa-valent 40 à 45 piastres</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dépouillement du recensement général de l'Isle de France, 20 Mai 1763</li> <li>➔ Nombre de noirs par catégories et quartiers</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire sur les travaux Civils, Militaire et de la Marine</li> <li>➔ Article 1 : des ouvriers</li> <li>▪ Nombre d'ouvriers en 1754 : 1872 dont 880 noirs esclaves- 558 négresses</li> <li>▪ Nombre de noirs de la Compagnie selon le recensement du 24 novembre 1762 : 1929 dont 1083 noirs- 581 négresses- 265 négrillons et négrittes</li> <li>▪ Travaux des noirs</li> <li>➔ Article 2 : des matériaux</li> <li>▪ La pierre : atelier composé de 10 tailleurs de pierre européens et de 90 noirs</li> <li>▪ La brique : 2 briquetiers blancs et 10 noirs sont suffisant pour la brique ordinaire grâce au moulin à réduire</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Travaux de marine</li> <li>▪ La Compagnie a besoin d'un grand vaisseau de 6 à 700 tonneaux et de 2 frégates de 4 à 500 tonneaux pour les traites de noirs, de bœufs et de grains</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Récapitulation de l'Etat Général de la dépense de l'île de France, 20 Mai 1763</li> <li>➔ 1929 esclaves de la Compagnie: 119544 piastres</li> <li>➔ 50 m. piastres (? pour achat d'esclaves à Goa et Mozambique</li> <li>➔ Vente d'esclaves</li> <li>▪ 1600 V ? achetée à Goa réduite à 1400 à 540 piastres: 756000 piastres</li> <li>▪ 1200 V ? à Madagascar réduite à 1000 à 360 : 360000 piastres</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire relatif à l'Isle de France</li> <li>➔ La population de l'Isle de France</li> <li>▪ « La population de noirs a toujours été négligée. On aurait du traiter différemment ceux qui sont nés dans l'Isle de ceux qu'on y amène. Ces derniers perdent difficilement le souvenir de leur pays. Ils savent que les vents sont généraux pour Madagascar, que quelques uns de leur compatriote y sont retournés sur des chaloupes, aussi cherchent-ils la plupart à s'évader par la même voye »</li> <li>▪ Le peu de vêtements des noirs conduit à l'adolescence au libertinage</li> <li>▪ « la pernicieuse habitude des femmes de Madagascar de détruire leur enfant avant terme ou en bas-âge »</li> <li>▪ Nombre trop modique de négresses Mozambique ou Bengalie – chaque vaisseau en apporte 12 ou 15. « elles peuplent plus et sont moins débauchées »</li> <li>➔ Les militaires</li> <li>▪ Sur l'emploi des noirs à la défense de l'île</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Réflexions et Idées Générales, depuis le mois de Novembre 1759 sous le gouvernement de M. Boucher, 1764</li> <li>➔ De la traite des noirs à Madagascar dont la Compagnie a le privilège exclusif</li> <li>▪ Commerce frauduleux pour le compte de particuliers sur les vaisseaux de la Compagnie</li> <li>▪ Ente 1760 et 1763, il a été introduit au moins 2000 esclaves par an sur l'île de France et Bourbon</li> <li>▪ Tarif et valeur des noirs en 1760 et 1763</li> <li>▪ Traite frauduleuse du Sieur Laval, habitant aux Plaines Wilhems et du nommé La Bigorne, interprète de la langue malgache et habitant à la Rivière des Créoles du Port Sud-est</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1764, Desforges Boucher, gouverneur</li> <li>➔ les soldats chasseurs forment une compagnie de garde chasse qui veillent à la conservation du gibier tout en écartant les noirs marrons</li> <li>➔ « les esclaves contenus par des actes de religion sont beaucoup plus doc îles et moins sujets au marronnage »</li> <li>➔ chemins réparés cette année grâce aux corvées de noirs mais insuffisant : « il faudrait 200 à 300 noirs employés uniquement à ce travail »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1764, Mémoires et projets ; Renseignements divers-</li> <li>➔ Réflexions sur les îles de France et Bourbon ainsi que sur la constitution de la Compagnie des Indes</li> <li>➔ Première partie</li> <li>▪ Le manioc jugé nécessaire par Mahé de la Bourdonnais « à la subsistance des nègres de l'Isle de France- source d'économie parce que « la culture est aisée et le produit considérable »</li> <li>▪ Emploie des noirs pour le curage des ports et les corvées qu'exigent les travaux publics</li> <li>➔ Deuxième partie</li> <li>▪ Mentionne la possibilité de les remplacer par une chiourme de 2500 ou 3000 forçats car il faut beaucoup de noirs et ils coutent cher</li> <li>▪ Article 37 : « la valeur de toutes les choses apportées d'Europe, de le Chine, de l'Inde ou de Madagascar seront payées à la Compagnie par les habitants [...] à l'exception néanmoins des noirs de Madagascar que le- ? se réserve de fournir aux habitants de façon que leur nombre soit toujours suffisant et ne devienne jamais trop fort en proportion de celui des blancs »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire, M. Amat, 31 Octobre 1764</li> <li>➔ Projet d'une nouvelle forme d'administration aux îles de France et de Bourbon</li> <li>▪ Compensation en cas de perte de nègre : tué ou estropié en travaillant pour le compte du roi, il en sera tenu compte à l'habitant, soit en lui donnant un en remplacement soit en lui payant la somme de 150 piastres.</li> <li>▪ Les troupes : deux détachement chaque semaine composé de 40 hommes et 2 officiers auxquels le gouverneur donnera une route pour chasser noirs déserteurs ou</li> </ul>

	<p>marrons. Chaque nègre pris vivant vaudra 10 piastres de gratification au détachement qui s'en sera emparé-chaque nègre tué ne vaudra que 2 piastres de gratifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tout nègre déserteur ou marron sera remis à son propriétaire moyennant la somme de 25 piastres qu'il paiera comptant au Roi</li> <li>▪ Habitants : « chaque vaisseau chargé de nègres sera annoncé par une affiche ou avis général et les noirs seront distribués à chaque habitant sans préférence, à raison de ses besoins ou de ses forces au prix dont on conviendra »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1764, Projet de secours pour les Îles de France et Bourbon</li> <li>➔ Réflexions sur le retard des constructions et fortifications</li> <li>▪ « en partant au mois de mars on arrivera en juillet. On trouvera alors les nègres de la Compagnie dispersés et vendus parce qu'ils lui sont inutiles n'étant plus chargés de l'entretien de la colonie ni des travaux auxquels ils étaient destinés [...] »</li> <li>▪ « Si au contraire on part dans le mois d'octobre ou novembre , on pourra en arrivant choisir sur les nègres de la Compagnie 5 ou 600 nègres dressés, exercés au travail, habitués au pays, qui dès le mois de mars 1765 pourront travailler avec célérité aux ouvrages [...] »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essai d'un projet pour les Îles de France et Bourbon, 26 Juin 1764</li> <li>➔ besoin de noirs en quantité pour être vendus aux habitants, pour les ouvrages, pour la défense de l'île et en temps de guerre</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations sur les Îles de France et Bourbon, Octobre 1760</li> <li>➔ Dénombrement : 1400 à 1500 noirs l'île de France</li> <li>➔ Garde de l'île: environ 3000 habitants et noirs capables de prendre les armes en cas de nécessité</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extraits de lettres, 1765</li> <li>➔ 31 Juillet 1765</li> <li>▪ La Compagnie envoie chaque année à peine un vaisseau pour la traite de noirs à Madagascar</li> </ul>
<b>COL –C4-16</b> <b>1766</b> <b>Correspondances</b> <b>générales, M.</b> <b>Desfortes Boucher,</b> <b>Gouverneur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1766, Desfortes Boucher, gouverneur</li> <li>➔ Lettre du 1<sup>er</sup> Avril 1766 à Monseigneur le Duc de Choiseul- ?</li> <li>▪ Concernant le renvoi en France du nègre nommé Charles Auguste, appartenant à M. de la Verdière</li> <li>• 1766, Conseil Supérieur</li> <li>➔ Lettre du 29 Mars 1766</li> <li>▪ Concernant le renvoi en France du nègre nommé Charles Auguste, appartenant à M. de la Verdière</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1766, Mémoires divers des Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes</li> <li>➔ Montants de la dépense générale en noirs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1766, M. de la Palière, capitaine de vaisseau de la Compagnie des Indes</li> <li>➔ Comment les Îles de France et Bourbon peuvent devenir en quatre ans de bonne administration, le grenier et le boulevard des Indes</li> <li>▪ La Compagnie a 1400 noirs et 600 négresses tant pour le Port que pour les Marins et divers ateliers</li> <li>▪ 3 grands vaisseaux pour Madagascar- 2 pour les noirs-1 pour le riz</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extrait du voyage du tour de l'île de France fait au mois de septembre 1766</li> <li>➔ Sur le haut du Morne qui était autrefois l'as Île des noirs marrons- ce morne a communication à la grande terre par une coupée de montagnes sur laquelle ils avaient établis un pont levis- ils y avaient formé un établissement</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1766, M. de Landivisian</li> <li>➔ Lettre du mois d'Avril 1766</li> <li>▪ La compagnie a dans l'île 2000 esclaves ouvriers</li> <li>▪ Les habitants ont environ 15 000 esclaves sur leurs habitations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1766, M. Anthoine</li> <li>➔ Lettre au Conseil Supérieur, 3 Décembre 1765</li> <li>▪ « les secours spirituels sont nécessaires pour les noirs dont l'esclavage n'est toléré dans la religion chrétienne que sur le principe de la propagation de cette religion »</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Législations pour les colonies des Îles de France et Bourbon</li> <li>➔ Ordonnance du Roi concernant les affranchissements des nègres esclaves aux Îles de France et Bourbon, 20 Août 1766</li> <li>▪ Adopter les mêmes dispositions que pour les colonies françaises de l'Amérique</li> <li>▪ Article 1<sup>re</sup> : une permission d'affranchir doit être obtenue préalablement auprès du Gouverneur, Lieutenant général et de l'Intendant</li> <li>▪ Article 2 : tout affranchissement sans cette permission est considéré comme nul- les maitres seront privés de leur esclaves qui seront vendus au profit de Sa Majesté</li> <li>▪ Article 3 : Ne sont autorisés à être baptisés comme libres que les enfants de gens de couleurs ou de sang mêlé dont la mère est reconnue affranchie</li> <li>▪ Article 4 : les enfants baptisés comme libres ayant une mère esclave sont considérés comme esclaves- les maitres en seront privés et condamnés à une amende- les esclaves vendus au profit de Sa Majesté</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1766, Mémoire sur la position actuelle des établissements français au Cap de la Bonne Espérance et sur celle de la Compagnie des Indes</li> <li>➔ Le recensement général des noirs n'excède pas 40 000 têtes dans les deux îles</li> <li>➔ Commerce particulier d'Inde en Inde</li> <li>▪ Les portugais auront seuls la permission de commercer dans les deux Îles : ils pourront exporter des noirs de leurs établissements d'Afrique à condition que les vaisseaux français jouissent de la même liberté à Mozambique, Quérimbe et autres comptoirs portugais.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL –C4-17</b> <b>1767</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>Générale, M. Dumas,</b> <b>Commandant Général</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1767, MM. Dumas et Poivre, Lettres communes</li> <li>➔ Ordonnance concernant le prix provisoire du pain</li> <li>▪ Défense de vendre du pain aux noirs</li> <li>➔ Ordonnance concernant la police des nègres, 29 Septembre 1767</li> <li>▪ Article 1 : devoir de faire instruire et baptiser les esclaves dans les 3ans suivant leur acquisition</li> <li>▪ Article 2 : devoir des maitres de rapporter au Syndic le certificat du curé attestant que leurs esclaves non baptisés ont été envoyés au catéchisme</li> <li>▪ Article 3 : en cas de vente d'un esclave non chrétien, le propriétaire doit fournir à l'acheteur le certificat du curé attestant l'instruction au catéchisme</li> <li>▪ Article 4 : ne peut être commandeur noir à la direction des nègres qu'un noir de religion catholique apostolique et romaine</li> <li>▪ Article 5 : il est interdit de faire travailler les nègres les dimanche et jours de fêtes</li> <li>▪ Article 6 : il est interdit aux particuliers de vendre un esclave chrétien à un gentil ou mahométan</li> <li>▪ Article 7 : il est défendu à tout sujet du Roy de contracter mariage avec un noir ou pour les sujets blancs, noirs affranchis ou nés libres de vivre en concubinage avec un esclave- s'ils sont maitres et esclave, les enfants ne pourront être affranchis - s'il s'agit d'un noir affranchi ou libre en concubinage, il épousera son esclave qui sera alors affranchie et les enfants rendus libres et légitimes.</li> <li>▪ Article 8 : défense à tout noir, malabar, lascar, noir libre ou noir esclave de jouer ou de s'assembler pour jouer de l'argent ou des bardes</li> <li>▪ Article 9 : il est interdit au noir de porter une arme offensive, ou gros bâtons ou couteaux flamand sauf au noir munis d'un billet de leur maitre expliquant le motif du port d'arme</li> <li>▪ Article 11 : il est interdit aux noirs de vendre des marchandises sans billet mentionnant la permission de leur maitre</li> <li>▪ Article 12 : il est interdit d'acheter aux esclaves non porteurs de billet de leur maitre des marchandises telles que bardes, nippes ou meuble</li> <li>▪ Article 13 : il est interdit aux noirs du Roy et de la Compagnie qui auront élevé volaille ou cabris de les vendre sans permission du conseiller chargé de la police</li> <li>▪ Article 14 : il est ordonné au maitre de fournir 2 livres de mahis ou autre denrée équivalente par jour à leurs esclaves ainsi que l'habillement nécessaire par année.</li> <li>▪ Article 15 : les esclaves infirmes par vieillesse, malades ou autres doivent être nourris et entretenus par leur maitre- s'ils doivent être admis à l'hôpital, les maitres devront</li> </ul>

	<p>payer 6 sols par jour pour la nourriture et entretien de chaque esclave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Article 16 : les esclaves non nourris et entretenus par leur maitre pourront se plaindre auprès du Procureur Général de sa Majesté</li> <li>▪ Article 17 : il est interdit de donner plus de 30 coups de fouets à son esclave</li> <li>▪ Article 18 : les esclaves qui partent en commission pour leurs maitres sans billet en marque de reconnaissance et sans lumière seront condamnés au fouet et aux travaux publics pendant un mois</li> <li>▪ Article 19 : il est interdit à tout habitant, malabar, lascar, noir libre de donner retraite ou d’attirer à leur service un noir ne leur appartenant pas</li> <li>▪ Article 20 : tout lascar, malabar indien, et autres noirs cesseront leurs danses et tamtam à onze heures du soir, rentreront chez eux sous peine de punition exemplaire</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nombre de laboureurs</li> <li>➔ par quartier</li> <li>▪ Quartiers en général : 2270 esclaves dont 1206 laboureurs</li> <li>▪ La montagne longue : 1525 esclaves dont 806 laboureurs</li> <li>▪ La rivière du rempart : 775 esclaves dont 413 laboureurs</li> <li>▪ Flacq : 2050 esclaves dont 1092 laboureurs</li> <li>▪ Le Port Bourbon : 550 esclaves dont 293 laboureurs</li> <li>▪ Moka : 1700 esclaves dont 905 laboureurs</li> <li>▪ Plaines de Wilhems déduction faite des noirs de M. de Maudave : 3000 esclaves dont 1597 laboureur</li> </ul>
	<p>➔ Les esclaves du Roi de la Compagnie sont au nombre de 2400, aucun d’eux ne sont occupés à la culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autres esclaves résidant au port : 2000</li> <li>• Ceux de l’établissement des forges : 800</li> <li>• Ceux de la sucrerie : 530</li> <li>• Ceux de l’entreprise de M. Maudave : 400</li> <li>• Ceux des particuliers entrepreneurs ou habitants qui s’occupent à construire, à faire des bois : 1000</li> <li>• Total : 7130</li> <li>• population totale d’esclaves est d’environ 19 000 dont à peine 6000 ou 7000 laboureurs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dépenses annuelles</li> <li>➔ mortalité sur les esclaves à raison de 5% : 1500 piastres</li> <li>➔ traitement du chirurgien et frais d’hôpital à raison de 12 piastres par tête de noir : 720</li> <li>➔ pour habillement de 60 noirs dont 15 piastres par tête : 900</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tableau raisonné des avances et produits pour une habitation de 312 arpents</li> <li>➔ « on fait un noir bon scieur en 3 jours, bon équarrisseur en 15 jours »</li> <li>➔ « 60 têtes de noirs bien assortis par castes peuvent couter lorsque le commerce particulier est un peu florissant 500 piastres l’un dans l’autre, soit 30000 »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie du Réquisitoire de M. le Procureur Général à Messieurs du Conseil Supérieur de l’île de France, 22 Octobre 1767</li> <li>➔ évasion de l’esclave nommé Jolicoeur appartenant au sieur Mangeot, prêté pour le corps de garde</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des ouvriers</li> <li>➔ Dépenses pour les noirs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• « Nous avons 5 à 600 noirs guinéés- il serait fac île de s’en pourvoir si on ordonnait au commandant de Gorée d’en avoir toujours 100 à prêts à embarquer- sans cela obligation de traiter à Mozambique ; traite couteuse et toujours incertaine selon la disposition du gouverneur portugais- on ne peut employer les noirs de Madagascar dans le port à cause de la proximité avec leur patrie et danger qu’il y a à ce qu’ils enlèvent les embarcations- on peut les confier aux Mozambique mais ceux de Guinée valent infiniment mieux et couteront bien moins au Roi »</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions pour les commandants de quartier de l'Île de France et Bourbon, 27 Octobre 1767</li> <li>➔ La culture de la terre est livrée aux mains des esclaves et la population blanche est trop peu nombreuse</li> <li>➔ L'esclavage à l'Île de France est « doux » : laborieux et fidèle, l'esclave peut toujours espérer sa liberté de la bonté de ses maîtres</li> <li>➔ Un noir qui fera une bonne action à la guerre doit espérer la récompense de sa valeur : celui qui sauve la patrie ne doit pas demeurer esclave</li> </ul>
<b>COL –C4-18 1767 Correspondance Générale, M. Poivre, intendant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Détails relatifs à la prise de possession de l'Île de France par le Roi</li> <li>➔ ouvriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ « La compagnie a beaucoup de noirs ouvriers, il conviendra au Roy d'en acheter environ cinq ou six cents, choisis pour les différents travaux »</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discours prononcé par M. Poivre aux habitants de l'Île de France à son arrivée dans l'Île</li> <li>➔ Sur l'humanité des esclaves et la nécessité de bien les traiter</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des objets nécessaires pour former une traite de 2400 noirs à la côte de Mozambique avec leur prix</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tableau raisonné des avances et des produits d'une habitation de 312 arpents</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traite de Madagascar, 30 Novembre 1767</li> <li>➔ Sur les impositions sur les esclaves et les bœufs à Foulpointe</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des ouvriers blancs et noirs esclaves arrêtés pour le compte du Roi en 1767 pour les travaux de l'atelier des bois établi au port du sud-est, et du montant de la dépense qu'ils coûtent au Roi, relevé sur les deux états généraux, 10 Novembre 1767</li> <li>➔ 86 noirs esclaves, 38 négresses, 18 négrillons, 15 négrittes, en tout 157 têtes d'esclave, à raison de 60' de mahis chacun</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Novembre 1767, M. Poivre</li> <li>➔ Prix courant de la compagnie pour un noir <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pièce d'Inde et de Guinée : 720</li> <li>▪ Mozambique : 540</li> <li>▪ Madécasse : 360</li> <li>▪ Indien : 300</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Ces esclaves sont partagés sur différents travaux : four à chaux, briqueterie, charronnerie, moulin à poudre,</li> <li>➔ Plusieurs sont ouvriers mais la plupart sont manœuvres</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des ouvriers blancs et noirs esclaves arrêtés pour le compte du Roi en 1767 pour les travaux de la Marine</li> <li>➔ 337 noirs esclaves ouvriers, matelots, calfats, voiliers ; 121 femmes négresses, 69 négrillons, 79 négrittes, en tout 606 têtes d'esclaves</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des ouvriers blancs et noirs esclaves arrêtés pour le compte du Roi en 1767 pour les travaux de la Marine au port du Sud est, 10 Novembre 1767</li> <li>➔ 11 noirs esclaves, 4 négresses, 3 négrillons, 1 négritte</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordonnance concernant la police des nègres, 29 Septembre 1767 <i>Cf C4-17</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Novembre 1767, M. Poivre</li> <li>➔ Les noirs de la Maréchaussée : troupe composée de 89 nègres dont 18 seulement sont libres. Plusieurs de ces noirs sont mariés ou comme mariés et ont femmes et enfants</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Novembre 1767, M. Poivre</li> <li>➔ Sur les esclaves du Roi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 352 pour le service</li> <li>▪ 265 attachés aux travaux</li> <li>▪ La maréchaussée noire est composée de 71 esclaves</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Novembre 1767, M. Poivre</li> <li>➔ La corvette du Roi l'étoile du matin a relâché à Mozambique 7 esclaves appartenant à des colons portugais pour être ramenés au Brésil: ils s'étaient échappés, avait enlevé des pirogues et avaient rejoints le bâtiment du Roi.</li> <li>➔ Besoin de traiter des esclaves à Mozambique</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Novembre 1767, M. Poivre</li> <li>➔ Il y a onze ans, le nombre d'esclaves était d'environ 18 000</li> <li>➔ Il en a été apporté près de 8000 nouveaux tirés de Madagascar</li> <li>➔ « Les esclaves de Madagascar ne se multiplient point, leur femmes sont de l'usage affreux de détruire leur fruit »</li> <li>➔ Les indiens et les guinéés se multiplient beaucoup, les Mozambique moins et les madécasses point du tout</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aperçu de la quantité de poudre de guerre nécessaire pour l'approvisionnement de l'Île de France, 10 Novembre 1767</li> <li>➔ « Chaque redoute sera garnie de 43 blancs habitants et de 95 noirs armés dont 60 d'entre eux seront instruits à servir le canon des 6 redoutes »</li> </ul>
<b>COL-C4-19</b> <b>Mémoire à consulter pour les habitants de L'Isle de France 1769</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requête des habitants de L'Isle de France qui a donné lieu au procès criminel poursuivi contre eux</li> <li>➔ Obstacles à l'accroissement de ces colonies : « Nous remplirons alors envers nos esclaves les devoirs que l'humanité et le Code Noir nous prescrivent pour leur nourriture et leur vêtement... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes de l'insolvabilité de ces colonies</li> <li>➔ « Les créanciers font même dans l'impossibilité d'être jamais payés, vu la diminution de leurs biens, la non-valeur des habitations, des noirs et de tous leurs effets mobiliers. »</li> <li>➔ « Le contrat de leurs dettes (les habitants) provient d'un monopole exercé sur les besoins physiques et le remplacement nécessaire de leurs noirs. Il est aisé de prouver qu'il est entré à l'Isle de France plus de dix mille esclaves de Madagascar depuis 1759. Ils ont été vendus l'un dans l'autre au moins mille livres faisant au total dix millions. S'ils eussent été traités par la Compagnie et livrés aux colons à 360 livres suivant le traité de ses tarifs, L'Isle de France aurait sur ce seul article six millions quatre cent mille livres de moins en dettes passives ».</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Désordres dans tous les genres d'administration de ces colonies depuis 1759</li> <li>➔ « On a fomenté des guerres à Madagascar pour y ruiner la culture, et y traiter depuis 1759 plus de dix mille noirs au compte particulier avec les effets et les vaisseaux de la Compagnie. On a vendu ces esclaves aux habitants obligés de remplacer la mortalité de leurs noirs jusqu'à 2,000 livres quoique la Compagnie dut ou put les leur fournir comme par le passé à 360 livres : on a exporté et même vendu par cupidité au Cap de Bonne Esperance un grand nombre d'esclaves de Madagascar ou de ces colonies pour réaliser plus promptement et plus sûrement ses fonds ».</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isle de France carton 85, no. 44 Subsistance de première nécessité</li> <li>➔ « ...cette Île doit nourrir non seulement ses cultivateurs et leurs noirs mais aussi une garnison plus ou moins nombreuse (...) est-il plus avantageux à la Compagnie que cette subsistance soit le fruit et produit de la culture des terrains de l'Île ou qu'elle soit une suite du transport s'en ferait de France et de Madagascar.»</li> <li>➔ « L'essentiel dans cette colonie est la nourriture du noir et dès qu'on peut assurer intérieurement et pour toujours leurs subsistance qui est celle du plus grand nombre, il peut devenir facile de se procurer celle des Blancs par du secours étranger qui en parti est reconnu pour le plus avantageux à la Compagnie et à la colonie. On fait compte dans l'Île de 6,000 noirs et de 2,500 blancs...»</li> </ul>
<b>COL-C4-20</b> <b>Île de France</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>Général M. Dumas</b> <b>Gouverneur Général</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extraits des registres du Conseil Supérieur de l'Isle de France</li> <li>➔ Recensement des Esclaves à l'Isle de France « Tout noir ou négresse esclave qui n'aura point été déclaré dans le recensement, sera confisque et vendu au profit de la Commune »</li> <li>➔ « Chaque habitant sera tenu de déclarer au Syndic de son quartier de son quartier</li> </ul>

1768	<p>ceux de ses noirs qui seraient marrons... »</p> <p>→ « Les Syndics écriront aussi sur leur registre les noms, âge et sexe des esclaves non chrétiens qui décéderont. »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copie des Instructions données par M. Dumas aux Commandants des quartiers des Isle de France</li> </ul> <p>« Mais tout pays ou la culture des terres est livré aux mains des esclaves comportent une population trop courte en blancs pour n’avoir pas besoins d’autres ressources, l’Isle de France surtout qui est encore dans son Berceau se trouve dans ce cas. Heureusement que l’humanité avec laquelle les esclaves sont traités... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lettre de M. Dumas sur les bénéfices de la traite à Madagascar, 1768</li> </ul> <p>→ « Si la traite produit des esclaves il faut en compléter les ateliers du Roy et ce complet va au moins a 300, après quoi il faut encore les distribuer aux habitants a peu près au prix qu’ils reviendront et recevoir en paiement leurs denrées, de tout cela peut-il entrer un sol dans la caisse ? »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lettre à M. Poivre, Les Expéditions de traites de M. Dumas. Au Port-Louis, Isle de France le 27 Février 1768.</li> </ul> <p>→ « La traite de Madagascar était fermée par la saison contraire, M. de Clouart me proposa un voyage à Mozambique ; mais j’avais si souvent entendu dire a M. Poivre qu’il n’y avait rien dans les magasins et je savais d’ailleurs que les traites de nègres à Mozambique exigeaient un tiers de la mise de hots en Piastres, au moins un quart... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nègres et négresses pris par M. Dumas pour le servir. Au Port-Louis, Isle de France le 28 Février 1768</li> </ul> <p>→ « En conséquence je pris a mon arrivée vingt quatre noirs et négresses a la Compagnie des Indes dont le rôle ci-joint, six des quatre ont été envoyés a Bourbon pour me procurer des chevaux en échange. J’espère être en état de payer le prix de ces noirs au Bureau de Commerce.... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lettre de M. Dumas au Port-Louis, Isle de France le 29 Février 1768.</li> </ul> <p>→ Concernant la course des noirs marron.</p> <p>→ La traite a Madagascar « La partie nord de Madagascar ne peut nous être ut Île ici pour la traite du Roi et des esclaves, que lorsque le Roi y aura fait un établissement exclusif... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traite de Madagascar, lettre de M. Dumas au Port-Louis, Isle de France le 7 Juin 1768</li> </ul> <p>→ « Foulpointe au contraire entre les bœufs et riz offre une ample traite d’esclaves, depuis l’établissement de cette colonie cette traite d’esclaves a été le grand objet de la cupidité. Elle fit la fortune de Labourdonnais qui en abusa quelques fois... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traite de Madagascar, Copie d’une pièce justificative de la dépêche de l’expédition du Vaisseau le Laverdie</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copie de la Lettre de M. Poivre en réponse du 12 May</li> </ul> <p>→ « Quand à Foulpointe il n’y a pas de doute que les noirs n’exigent des piastres pour la traite de leurs esclaves ainsi il est inutile d’y envoyer la <i>Garonne</i> si les esclaves sont l’objet principal de sa traite.... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copie présente à M. Poivre le 15 May 1768. A Monsieur Poivre commissaire General de la Marine faisant fonction d’Intendant aux Îles de France et de Bourbon.</li> </ul> <p>→ « L’exportation des piastres a l’île de Madagascar, ils ont fait fabriquer dans les différentes parties de l’Inde des marchandises qu’ils connaissent propres a dégouter ces insulaires de ne consentir à traiter qu’en piastres les esclaves de cette Isle... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copie du 2 Placet présenté à M. Poivre pour les sieurs Laval et Pigeot de Carcy. 16 May, traite a Madagascar.</li> </ul> <p>→ « 6 particuliers quêtant seuls possesseurs des nègres ils seraient maitres de leurs prix, outre que cette opinion c’était celle de l’émigration de ces mêmes nègres ... »</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copie des instructions données avec Glemet Régisseur en chef des traites du Roi sur la prise de possession du poste de Foulpointe.</li> </ul> <p>→ « L’Isle de Madagascar peut fournir le plus abondement a cette colonie les vins, les bœufs et les esclaves... »</p> <p>→ « Toutes les précautions seraient vaines si les vaisseaux particuliers étaient admis a</p>	

	<p>traité en concurrence avec le Roi. Les armements particuliers ne pouvant le couvrir que par une traite abondante de noirs, et ils ne peuvent la rendre telle qu'en les achetant en piastres... »</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordre donné au Sieur Glana et aux Commandant des Vaisseaux du Roi le 27 May 1768.</li> <li>➔ Traite des particuliers inconciliables avec les traites du Roi à Madagascar.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie de la lettre de M. Dumas ay Sieur Glemet datée du 28 May 1768.</li> <li>➔ « Je vous prie d'acheter et de faire embarquer pour mon compte six bœufs pour la boucherie que vous marquerez, car la viande est trop chère à .... J'aurais aussi besoins de quatre petites négresses propres à élever au service de ma maison... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie du mémoire du Sieur Glemet du 14 Avril 1768</li> <li>Traite à Madagascar</li> <li>➔ Esclaves à Foulpointe, Madagascar</li> <li>➔ « La <i>Garonne</i> pourra faire deux voyages d'esclaves... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Dumas au Port-Louis Isle de France le 10 Juin 1768. Description des noirs libres par M. Dumas.</li> <li>➔ « Cela nous donne une petites peuplade de noirs libres qui je vous l'avoue ne me parait ut Île a rien, c'est un peuple timide et lâche, qui ne peut jamais être défenseur, ni cultivateur... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Par le Vaisseau le <i>Laverdy</i>, ay Port-Louis, Isle de France le 11 Juin 1768, de M. Dumas.</li> <li>➔ Les frais des nègres</li> <li>➔ Frais reliés aux esclaves marron</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie de la réponse de M. Poivre du 28</li> <li>➔ « Vous me parlez dans votre lettre de vos projets sur les noirs de Maréchaussée depuis votre arrivée dans l'Isle, Il vous a plus de vous emparer de ces noirs qui en leur qualité d'esclaves du Roi ... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre sur les corvées des nègres destinés pour les travaux. Au Port-Louis, Isle de France le 13 Juin 1768.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Dumas par le Vaisseau le <i>Laverdy</i> au Port-Louis, Isle de France le 23 Juin 1768</li> <li>➔ « Car deux vaisseaux de plus de 50 canons, nous seraient ici fort ut Îles pour la traite des bœufs et des esclaves. »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Dumas, du Vaisseau au Port-Louis Isle de France le 26 Juillet 1768</li> <li>➔ « Aux traites de bœufs et d'esclaves sur lesquelles il nous faut forcer si nous ne voulons périr faute de mains d'œuvre... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Dumas, au Port-Louis le 31 Juillet 1768</li> <li>➔ « Mais quand serons nous pourvus de nombres d'esclaves qui nous est nécessaire pour le service du port ... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de N. Dumas au Port-Louis, Isle de France le 2 Aout 1768</li> <li>➔ « des vaisseaux ayant la capacité, celui des bœufs et des esclaves en exige une plus grand3e encore des plus gros vaisseaux que les flutes nous seraient plus ut Îles ... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre au Port-Louis le 3 Aout 1768 de M. Dumas</li> <li>➔ « Sur toutes les acquisitions de biens fonds, têtes d'esclaves, marchandises, sommes prêtées par contrat, billets simples... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie du Journal remis a M. Dumas pour M. de Clonart Commandant la flute l'<i>Ambulante</i></li> <li>➔ Traite d'esclaves à Madagascar</li> <li>➔ Traite d'esclaves à Mozambique</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie des observations de M.de Clonard sur la traite de Mozambique.</li> <li>➔ Il me semble que si le Ministre pouvait obtenir de la cour de Portugal la permission d'aller traiter des esclaves a Mozambique... »</li> </ul>
COL-C4-21 Île de France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protestation</li> <li>➔ « Les noirs de détachement ou de maréchaussée comme on voudra les appeler sont par leur intuition et ... »</li> </ul>

<p><b>Correspondance Générale, Journal de M. Dumas Commandant Général, 1768</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulté d’aller conférer avec M. Poivre</li> <li>➔ « M. Poivre m’a dit qu’il n’avait pas même de quoi expédier l’ambulante qu’il ne pourrait lui donner de quoi faire une traite, c’est-à-dire de quoi rapporter 200 ou 250 noirs... »</li> <li>➔ « Je crois que le Manioc est une nourriture plus saine pour les esclaves que des viandes gâtées... »</li> <li>➔ « Copie du Procès verbal sur les aménagements à pratiquer pour rendre la flute <i>Ambulante</i> plus propre a la traite des noirs... »</li> <li>➔ « je ferai régler aujourd’hui ou demain la ration des noirs de détachement de manière qu’il n’y ait point de double emplois à faire... »</li> <li>➔ « En arrive le Navire le <i>Prudent</i> Bâtiment particulier appartenant au S. Neve Commander par les S. Villeblanche .... Côte Ouest où il a traité quelques esclaves... »</li> <li>➔ « Le Navire le <i>Prudent</i> porte environ cent soixante millier de riz et 26 noirs ou négrillons...»</li> <li>➔ « l’objet des esclaves et du riz ne doit-il être pris en aucune considération dans cette partie de Madagascar... »</li> <li>➔ « La <i>Garonne</i> pourra faire deux voyages d’esclaves et bœufs vivants en attendant le retour de l’<i>Ambulante</i>... »</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 22 Juin</li> <li>➔ « Avant que le Roi puisse fournir un noir aux habitants par le moyen de ses traites ... »</li> <li>➔ Lettre du mois de Juillet « billet servi a l’achat des fonds ou d’esclaves... »</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 26 Juillet</li> <li>➔ Est arrivé le Senault le <i>Bellecombe</i> venant de Foulpointe ou il a traité des esclaves parti de Bourbon... »</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du mois d’Aout</li> <li>➔ « Et si l’on parvenait à traiter à Foulpointe des esclaves en marchandises le succès de cette opération... »</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Vivres des noirs de détachement et travaux des noirs du Port.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lettre du mois de May faisait mention du commerce de la traite des noirs.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lettre du 13 May faisant mention de la traite d’esclaves à Foulpointe.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lettre du mois d’Aout concernant les noirs de Foulpointe consentant à traiter leurs esclaves sans piastres.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lettre du 19 Septembre faisant mention d’esclaves Malgaches fugitifs qui ont enlevés une pirogue.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lettre du 20 Septembre, Le Navire <i>Montmartel</i> parti faire la traite d’esclaves a Mozambique et faisant aussi mentions de malades a bord.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 23 Octobre</li> <li>➔ « Le salut de cette colonie dépendait peut être du succès de la première traite d’esclaves... »</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL-C4-22</b></p> <p><b>Île de France. Correspondance General, M. Poivre. Intendant Général, 1768</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre à l’Isle de France le 8 Janvier 1768. Habillemeent des noirs</li> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre l’Isle de France le 21 Février 1768.</li> <li>➔ Les noirs de Maréchaussée et la multiplication des noirs marron dans l’Île.</li> <li>• Expédition, extrait de Madagascar</li> <li>➔ Traite d’esclaves à Foulpointe</li> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre du 16 Juin 1768</li> <li>➔ Voyage négrier de la flute la <i>Garonne</i> au Fort-Dauphin</li> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre du 6 Aout 1768</li> <li>➔ Voyage négrier de la flute la <i>Garonne</i> à Madagascar</li> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre du 6 Aout 1768</li> <li>➔ Prix des esclaves pour la traite a Mozambique et a Goa</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre du 25 8bre 1768 → Voyage négrier de la flute du Roy l'<i>Ambulante</i> a Mozambique</li> <li>• Voyage négrier de la flute du Roy l'<i>Ambulante</i> a Foulpointe, Glemet chargé des traites</li> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre à l'Isle de France → Voyage négrier de la flute du Roy l'<i>Ambulante</i> a Mozambique, rapport de traite ; huit esclaves de Mozambique seulement.</li> <li>• Voyage négrier de la flute du Roy l'<i>Ambulante</i> du 4 Avril 1768 a la cote d'Afrique</li> <li>• Lettre du Commissaire de la Marine faisant fonction de contrôleur aux Isle de France et Bourbon → La Flute l'<i>Ambulante</i> taxé pour avoir frauduleusement transportées des noirs de la Cote est de Madagascar.</li> <li>• Lettre faisant mention de noir confisqués à bord de la flute l'<i>Ambulante</i></li> <li>• Lettre du 23 Octobre 1768 faisant mention d'esclaves de Madagascar égarés sur l'île</li> <li>• Voyage négrier (de 6-7 mois) de la flute du Roy l'<i>Ambulante</i> a Mozambique, rapport de traite ; huit esclaves de Mozambique seulement.</li> <li>• Lettre du lieutenant de la troupe nationale → Noirs de Maréchaussées</li> <li>• Lettre du 23 Octobre 1768 → Noirs marron a la route du Tombeau, des noirs et négresses interrogés.</li> <li>• Lettre datée du 25 Octobre 1768 → Lettre faisant mention des problèmes liés a la traite des noirs a Madagascar par la Cour du Portugal</li> <li>• Extrait de la lettre de M. Poivre du 30 9bre 1767 No. 20 → Achat de 653 noirs par M. Poivre de la Compagnie des Indes pour le service du Roi → Prix détaillé des esclaves</li> <li>• Extrait de la lettre de M. Poivre du 30 9bre 1767 No 12 → M. Dubreuil Ingénieur en Chef en charge du recrutement des esclaves et leurs prix pour la réparation des bâtiments a l'Isle de France</li> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre pour la traite de 2400 noirs à Mozambique et Madagascar, pour les travaux de l'Isle de France</li> <li>• Traite d'esclave à Mozambique pour les travaux du Roy, cette lettre fait aussi mention du fait que Madagascar fournit très peu d'esclaves.</li> <li>• Extrait de la lettre de M. Poivre du 30bre 1767 → Tentative de la Bourdonnais de mettre des noirs esclaves et libres sur des vaisseaux de guerre.</li> <li>• Extrait de la lettre de M. Poivre du 21 Février 1768 → Multiplication des noirs marron et pillage des habitations</li> </ul>
<b>COL-C4-23</b>  <b>Île de France</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>Générale, Conseil</b> <b>Supérieur.</b> <b>Fonctionnaires Divers.</b> <b>Mémoires et Projets.</b> <b>1768. M. Codere,</b> <b>Conseiller Rapporteur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoires et projets renseignements divers 1768 → « C'est au mois d'Octobre qu'il convient de prendre ces nègres à la Cote et de leur faire passer ensuite le Cap de Bonne Esperance... »</li> <li>• Copie de la lettre écrite à M. les Sieurs Des Roches et Poivres, 15 aout 1768 → Les noirs de Maréchaussée du Roi</li> <li>• Ordre Royal et Militaire du Sr. Louis Commandant en chef d'une légion, Colonel infanterie. → Nécessité d'un commandeur blanc ou noir parmi les esclaves</li> <li>• En ce qui concerne les esclaves qui proviennent de la traite.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Les différents types de travaux effectués par les noirs</li> </ul>
<b>COL-C4-24</b> <b>Correspondance de M. Poivre, Intendant, 1769</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compte de M. Dumas 1767 et 1768: Six négrillons provenant de la traite du Fort Dauphin à trois cent livres chaque. Port Louis Isle de France 14 décembre 1768.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre – 12 janvier 1769. Etablissement de Madagascar : « (...) je prévois que la dépense de cette table sera très considérable et absorbera une grande partie des effets de traite qui étaient destinés à nous procurer des bestiaux et des esclaves. »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre du 1<sup>er</sup> avril 1769</li> <li>➔ Le gouverneur Portugais de Mozambique a porté plainte contre le capitaine de la flûte <i>L'Ambulante</i> envoyé l'année dernière à Mozambique pour y tenter une traite d'esclaves qui n'a pas réussi. Ces derniers se sont adressés au S. Gens pour se procurer secrètement des esclaves à la Baye de Fernand-Valoze.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Lettre de M. Poivre du 2 juillet 1769</li> <li>• Besoin d'esclaves pour les travaux de la colonie. Plusieurs moyens proposés pour se procurer des esclaves : faire passer à la Côte de Guinée les vaisseaux expédiés ; solliciter à la cour de Portugal la permission de traiter à Mozambique 2000 noirs par année</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 4 juin 1769 : extrait de la lettre de M. Steinauer et Poivre du 13 janvier 1769</li> <li>• « Les noirs de maréchaussée établis pour courir sur les nègres marrons et protéger les plantations transformés par M. Dumas en troupe réglée occupée à monter la garde ont entièrement oublié l'esprit de leur primitive instruction... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 3 février 1769 : extrait de la lettre de M. Poivre du 17 juin 1768 no. 70 sur les noirs de maréchaussée</li> </ul>
<b>COL-C4-25</b> <b>Correspondance Îles de France et Bourbon, Conseil Supérieur, 1769</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suite de l'information sur la gestion du S. Glenet 16 janvier 1769</li> <li>➔ « Le S. Olivier avait reçu du S. Glenet trois cent soixante piastres que M. de Clouard avait prêté au S. Glenet qui avait chargé Olivier de lui acheter des noirs...il nous a déclaré ensuite que sur cette quantité de noir que l'on a débarqué sous son nom à l'Isle de France il ne lui appartient que 14 esclaves passés sur la <i>Normande</i> et deux négresses sur la <i>Garonne</i>, adressé au S. Merven...22 esclaves qui lui appartient et qu'il n'avait pas pu faire embarqué sur Le <i>Postillon</i>... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information faite par le Sr Audirac sous-commissaire de la marine touchant la conduite du S. Glenet chef de traite pour le Roi à l'Isle de Madagascar</li> <li>➔ Concernant la traite frauduleuse dont le S. Glenet paraissait être accusé : « ...le S. Leborgue qui nous a déclaré que lorsque le S. Glenet achetait des noirs le S. Leborgue faisait les prix des noirs...lorsque la flûte La <i>Garonne</i> est venue à Foulpointe, il y avait soixante-quatorze noirs traités en effets et enfermés dans la nègrerie et qu'en outre de ceux là le S. Glenet en avait environ douze dans sa case et que de ces noirs il n'en a été embarqué à bord de la <i>Garonne</i> qu'environ trente huit à trente neuf... » 13 janvier 1769.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M. Dumas commandant des Îles de France et de Bourbon 16 juillet 1769</li> <li>➔ « D'un autre côté les frais énormes du fret journalier des petites embarcations du salaire des esclaves nécessaires à tous les travaux... l'entretien annuel de tous ces ateliers se borne à la nourriture des esclaves dont l'achat était prescrit par les instructions... »</li> <li>➔ Noirs en fraude saisis</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire à consulter pour le Sieur Rivalz de Saint Antoine Conseiller Supérieur de l'île de France 1768.</li> <li>➔ Affranchissement des esclaves</li> <li>➔ Détachement de noirs pour la pêche de la tortue</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoires et projets – Renseignements divers 1769</li> <li>➔ « L'Afrique en deçà du Cap commençant à s'épuiser de nègres, l'occasion du commerce...les Indes en ouvrira une pour fournir l'Amérique avec les nègres de Madagascar... »</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire sur l'Isle de France</li> </ul> <p>➔ « C'est Madagascar qui doit fournir des esclaves et des troupeaux à notre colonie ... »</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation des esclaves du Roi en corps de troupe</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire sur la subsistance des troupes et des esclaves</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire sur le moyen plus économe, le plus facile et le plus sur de faire les travaux du Roi à l'Isle de France</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A l'Isle de France le Roi possède environ 1,000 têtes d'esclaves. Avantages à retirer des esclaves. Mémoire sur l'Isle de France</li> </ul> <p>➔ « On ne peut parvenir à ce but que par le moyen d'un établissement à Madagascar qui peut seul augmenter promptement la population des nègres dans l'Isle de France, qui peut se commencer avec une somme de 50 mille francs par an... »</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note sur M. A.</li> </ul> <p>➔ « Il faudrait donc par ce calcul trois arpents environ pour la nourriture de dix nègres pendant un an... En partant de cette supposition, le ministre pourrait ordonner que chaque colon entretient constamment sur son habitation deux arpents de terrain cultivé en manioc ou en camanioc ou en patates ou en cambares suivant les différents quartiers par chaque dizaine d'esclaves»</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire :</li> </ul> <p>➔ « ...le projet d'un établissement à Madagascar remplit parfaitement il procurera à l'Isle de France une importance considérable d'esclaves et de troupeaux annuellement et l'on doit être assuré que plus elle augmentera le nombre de ses esclaves, plus celui des colons Européens s'accroîtra proportionnellement et plus l'agriculture prendra de vigueur... »</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idée de l'Isle de France : Il est nécessaire pour l'entretien de l'artillerie de l'Isle de France 2,000 nègres instruits au fusil, lance, sabre et javelots, 2,000 nègres pour servir l'artillerie, 2,000 nègres pour porter les vivres.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations sur l'Isle de France</li> </ul> <p>➔ « Il y a dans les deux Îles de France et de Bourbon environ 45,000 esclaves dont le travail peut suffire à la subsistance de quelque population...l'abondance de ces colonies dépend principalement de la multiplicité des esclaves dont la population pourrait être portée jusqu'à soixante mille dans chaque île...Le commerce des noirs à la Côte d'Afrique est encore plus essentiel à vivre que celui de Madagascar par la qualité des esclaves... Il y a quatre espèces d'esclaves à l'Isle de France dont la variété est nécessaire pour la division qui règne heureusement entre ces castes et qui empêche les conspirations si dangereuses pour les colonies et leurs habitants... »</p>
<p>➔ Règlement d'administration pour les Îles : « rendre les traites d'esclaves absolument libres à Madagascar sans s'embarrasser de la manière dont elles s'y feront ...l'essentiel étant d'avoir des noirs aux îles...détruire à l'Isle de France le marronnage par le rétablissement des noirs de détachement qui est la seule milice en état de faire cette chasse...accorder aux castes libres la distinction qu'ils doivent avoir sur les esclaves et leur concéder cinquante gaulottes carrées de terrain par famille en état de les cultiver...»</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsistance de première nécessité : « ...heureusement une seule subsistance est certaine, c'est celle des noirs, la racine de manioc...on fait compte dans l'île de seize mille noirs et mille cent cinquante blancs...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration des Îles de France et de Bourbon pendant l'année mil cent soixante dix neuf communes avec M. de Steinhauer</li> </ul> <p>➔ Amnistie pour les noirs marron qui reviendraient chez leurs maîtres ; la liberté à tous les esclaves du Roi qui formaient un corps de maréchaussée très utile contre les noirs marron.</p> <p>➔ Etat général des esclaves...remis dans les magasins du Roi à l'Isle de France de l'année 1769 par les flutes de sa Majesté provenant des traites établies pour le compte du Roy au Fort Dauphin, Foulpointe et Manourou Isle de Madagascar...</p> <p>➔ Récapitulation des dépenses à faire dans la colonie : 500 noirs pour le Roi ; 100 noirs à</p>

	<p>vendre aux particuliers a 200</p> <p>→ 1769 - hôpitaux : Dépenses de la Compagnie pour les malades blancs et noirs</p>
<p><b>COL-C4-26</b> Ile de France Correspondance Général M. des Roches du Dresnay, Gouverneur Général, 1770</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondance de M. des Roches faisant un état des lieux a la colonie, un décompte du nombre de personnes présents et des dépenses encourues pendant l'année.</li> <li>→ « le nombre d'esclaves ouvrières et autres attachée est de 800 environs. »</li> <li>• Résultat de l'opération de décompte faite.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondance de M. des Roches datée du 20 Juillet 1770.</li> <li>→ « Si on en était la, il n'y aurait plus de marronnage de la part des noirs ni des baignades de la part des blancs à craindre »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie de la lettre annoncée, écrite par M. des Roches le 20 Juillet 1770.</li> <li>→ « Je veux et j'entends que les noirs de l'habitation d'en bas, y fassent leur résidences et ne soient occupés sur le sol même que de l'habitation, ainsi je prévien.... »</li> <li>→ « Je demande les placques a manioc, et j'avertis que désormais il ne sera plus fourni de vivres a d'autres qu'aux noirs dont la propriété départage entre.... »</li> <li>→ « ...j'irai moi-même en personne chercher les noirs qui m'appartiennent... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevée de M. des Roches sur la situation de la colonie datée du 21 Juillet 1770. (Section Ville de Port Louis)</li> <li>→ « La Ville de Port Louis ne se ressemble plus depuis six mois ; les noirs y sont à découvert. »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire sur le nombre d'esclave présent sur l'Isle et d'autres choses émanant de Provost.</li> <li>→ « Il leur demande s'ils peuvent cependant lui procurer la facilité d'introduire dans la colonie 50 à 60 esclaves sur le Bâtiment du Roi. »</li> <li>→ « Sa situation après tout ce qu'il vient de faire se trouva par la perte d'une vingtaine d'esclaves et le dépérissement de son habitation... »</li> <li>→ « Mais si le S. Provost a réussi en travaillant pour la propriété publique, il n'en a pas été de même de ses affaires particulières ; il a trouvé son habitation dans un état déplorable, le nombre de ses esclaves considérablement diminué en ayant perdu trente deux pendant ce dernier voyage. »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondance de M. des Roches sur l'état de la colonie et sur les abus et dégénération à la colonie.</li> <li>→ « Pendant l'absence de dix jours que j'ai fait pour aller a Bourbon et en revenir, un feu qui couvait parmi les esclaves a éclater tout d'un coup de manière alarmante. »</li> <li>→ « On a appris qu'il paraissait dans tout les coins de l'île des troupes considérable de noirs marrons. »</li> <li>→ « Ils ont attaqués ouvertement les passants dans les chemins, ils ont enlevés des Nègresses de tout coté, ils ont assassinés des noirs et même un blanc a été victime de leur fureurs »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondance de M. des Roches sur l'état de la colonie et sur les abus et dégénération à la colonie.</li> <li>→ Esclaves fugitif.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire de M. de Saline.</li> <li>→ « les 2000 manœuvre doivent incontestablement être tous esclaves.. »</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL-C4-27</b> Ile de France Correspondance Général M. Poivre Intendant, Divers Mémoires et Projets, 1770</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de M. Poivre, Intendant, datée le 31 Mars 1770</li> <li>→ « Il y a une somme d'environ 30 milles pour autres d'esclaves Mozambique nécessaires au service du roi »</li> <li>• Articles officielles écrite par François Julien Du Dresney et Pierre Poivre datée le 20 Juillet 1770</li> <li>→ « Nous avons défendu et défendons très-expressément a tout Colon, Habitant, ainsi qu'a tout particulier de quelque état, condition et qualité qu'il faut a tous gens de couleur, libre, affranchi ou esclave de transporter hors de cette ile.... »</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 2 : Le Port et la Marine</li> <li>➔ « cet article est d'une très grande étendue. Il faut d'y expliquer. On doit d'abord chercher a employer aux service du port et de la Marine. Le plus de noirs qu'on n'y pourra au lieu de matelots Européens... » "Il ne convienne point de se servir de noirs de Madagascar pour armer aucune embarcation... »</li> <li>➔ « Les noirs apprendront avec le temps leur métier, et remplaceront ceux qui viendront à marquer... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dépense du 2eme article : « 350 noirs pour les service du port de tous les ateliers à qui il faut donner pour les encourager... »</li> <li>➔ Article 3 : Les Magasins en travaux</li> <li>➔ « 100 noires a 2. par mois de gratification – Rs. 2,400... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 4 : Militaire et travaux</li> <li>➔ « Dépenses pour les travaux...30 noires manoeuvre à proportion. 2 bons travailleurs de pierre blancs... »</li> <li>➔ « Marchandises nécessaire pour la consommation de Isle et résultat des dépenses : 1000 noires a 600 .....Rs. 600, 000</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 Correspondances générales Chevalier Desroches Gouverneur Général</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• janvier février mars</li> <li>➔ résultats de mes observations sur notre établissement aux Îles de France et Bourbon</li> <li>1° 3 millions piastres ou soi en roupies doivent suffire..</li> <li>9° Il y faut au moins 4000 hommes effectifs y compris 400 hommes d'Artillerie, J'y voudrais ajouter 400 noirs esclaves attaches a l'artillerie</li> <li>10° Le roi ne doit pas avoir d'autres esclaves...la vente du surplus donnera de grand moyens pour favoriser l'agriculture pour le défrichement des terres...</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28-3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 janvier 1771 Tournée a Bourbon</li> <li>➔ Des gens plonges dans une misère affreuse..familles de Bourbon n'ayant pas un seul esclave</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28-5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 mars 1771</li> <li>➔ au sujet du préfet apostolique</li> <li>-supplie au Monseigneur de donner un bénéfice simple au préfet, M Contentot</li> <li>-nous avons déjà établi deux paroisses</li> <li>-cette ville de Port Louis, comme une cloaque de vices..commence apprendre une forme inestimable.. les habitants devenus miliciens aiment et respectent leurs état, séparé des noirs dont la fréquentation les plongeant dans le libertinage..</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 mars 1771</li> <li>➔ 7000 noirs entrés en 1770 dans les deux Îles pour le compte de particuliers, du a 'la police que j'ai établie dans les Bâtiments du Roy et a la faveur que j'ai accordé au commerce..'</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 mars 1771 Mémoire –divers</li> <li>• inventaire après décès de Samocet</li> <li>• régiment de la Motte</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28-18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 mars 1771</li> <li>➔ L'aventurier Sr Lubin</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 Correspondance générale Chevalier Desroches, Gouverneur Général</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avril, mai, Juin conseil supérieur</li> <li>➔ cérémonie de Pâques</li> <li>➔ inventaire du Cailleau Garde Magasin Générale</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 avril 1771</li> <li>➔ milices</li> <li>➔ piastres</li> <li>➔ naufrage d'un bateau anglais</li> <li>➔ visite d'un bateau espagnol, boucherie</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 avril 1771</li> <li>➔ Sr. Brayer</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 avril 1771</li> <li>➔ Approvisionnement, dépense du Génie</li> <li>➔ elles sont exorbitantes. Les journées d'ouvriers seules montent à 165,000 livres indépendamment de quelques 400 et quelques noirs</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28-37</b>	28 avril 1771 Giroflerie
<b>COL -C4-28-38</b>	De Morigny – Affaire de femme
	24 juin 1771 Mission secrète pour se procurer des plantes
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 -6 Correspondance générale Chevalier Desroches, Gouverneur Général</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• juillet aout septembre</li> <li>• 2 septembre 1771</li> <li>➔ vaisseau particulier le <i>Télémaque</i> envoyé l'année dernière par ses armateurs au Mozambique, Le Sr Berguet chef de traite sur ce navire et le Sr Charpentier capitaine. Le Sieur Brayer et Regade ont porté plainte contre Charpentier, ils lui ont ôté le commandement de leur vaisseau</li> <li>• 2 septembre 1771</li> <li>➔ Rivaltz de St Antoine et Sr Chalan sont arrivés sur <i>L'Actionnaire</i> clandestinement 'sans ordre, sans lettres, sans aveu de vous' et a répandu la terreur parmi les honnêtes gens</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 - 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Génie de terre et de mer, travaux du port</li> <li>-Creusement des canaux et des mouilllements, faire de Trou Fanfaron un port de sureté propre à recevoir une escadre pendant la mauvaise saison, relèvement des carcasses du port,</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 -11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Poudre de guerre</li> <li>'qu'entre autres choses la poudre de guerre a été délivrée sans mesure à qui voulait parce que c'est l'effet la plus sûre pour traiter des noirs au Mozambique et à Madagascar'.</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 -13</b>	➔ Corvette à Rodrigues
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 -21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• le 3 septembre</li> <li>➔ Le navire particulier le St André armée par M de Verdière s'est perdu en arrivant a Mozambique ou il allait traiter</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 -29</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 septembre 1771</li> <li>➔ Traite des noirs sur le vaisseau du Roy</li> <li>• Desroches n'a pas signé une instruction pour la flute du Roy LA Normandie que M Poivre m'adressa pour le Capitaine de recevoir 8000 piastres a bord et d'en acheter des noirs pour le compte des particuliers nommément du Sr Amat qui était des lors parti pour Batavia</li> <li>• -concurrence des particuliers qui font la fraude '...qui ne paient ni frais d'armement, ni les autres charges des vaisseaux équipés aux frais et risques des particuliers'</li> <li>• -le commerce a procuré 7 000 noirs à la Colonie depuis May 1770 jusqu'à May 1771. En cette année si la fraude reprend on en traitera peut être pas 700'</li> </ul>
	➔ Instructions donnes a Fournier – intérieur de l' île
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-28</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 septembre 1771</li> <li>➔ Abus dans la réception des grains- aujourd'hui on est obligé d'aller à Madagascar acheter du riz des noirs de cette île...</li> <li>➔ je suis qu'il n'y a pas d'esclaves (hommes, femmes ou enfants) qui ne coute 20 sols par jour. On présentera la dessus de tableaux illusoires tant qu'on voudra main mon calcul n'est pas faux et c'est à peu près 1000 écus par jour qu'il en coute. La moitié de cette somme donnerait 1000 ouvriers blancs au service et 3000 bons noirs</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-31</b>	• 4 septembre 1771

	→ Complot de désobéir les ordres Du Roy
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 - 43</b>	•Octobre Novembre Décembre 1771
	•2 octobre 1771 → petite vérole : ‘elle a commencé à manifester vers le mois de M. Elle n’a point discontinué depuis... et un nombre prodigieux de noirs, même quelques blancs y ont passé, et y passant journellement. Ce n’est pas étonnant puisque pendant le cours de l’année dernière, le commerce particulier a procuré plus de 7000 noirs nouveaux, et je crois qu’il avait pas encore eu d’exemple d’une traite aussi forte...’
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-56</b>	•le 6 Octobre 1771 → Projet d’établissement pour le progrès de l’île: •une ville au centre de l’île favoriserait et protégerait les établissements qui se feraient de proche en proche → N’y ayant pas plus de maîtres dans les villes qu’il y en a aujourd’hui dans une seule...il n’aura pas plus d’esclaves. Je suis même persuadé que l’on verrait pas plus dans la ville militaire officiers de marine emmènent leurs domestiques blancs d’Europe...dans l’état actuel des choses, on ne peut parvenir à se faire servir des blancs parmi une multitude d’esclaves avec lesquels ils ne veulent..ne doivent être confondus.’
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-57-61</b>	•9 octobre 1771 → petite vérole
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-67</b>	•22 novembre 1771 → Deux frégates ...à Port Louis – chaloupe de guerre <i>The Hawke and Leceuf</i>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-69</b>	•22 novembre 1771 → subsistance et état des grains à Bourbon → le riz tiré de Madagascar pour aller faire la traite au Mozambique
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-70</b>	•22 novembre 1771 → Montée du piastre → La <i>Normande</i> revenue de Madagascar sans un seul bœuf, et seulement avec cent quatre-vingt milliers de Riz. Mais elle a deux cent noirs pour le compte des particuliers’. → Le Commerce a traité 7,000 mille noirs et les bâtiments du Roy moins que je n’avais dit encore peut être aucun. → Le chef de traite du Roy est soupçonné de négliger les intérêts qui lui sont confiés pour faire ses affaires, celles de ses amis et de sa famille’ -Arrivée du <i>Jason</i> et de <i>L’Américaine</i> -Arrivée du navire espagnol <i>Le Tenerife</i> -départ de Desroches
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-74</b>	•23 novembre 1771 → Traite de bœufs Madagascar → Nous n’avons tiré cette année que mille bêtes à corne tout au plus et en supposant que <i>l’Africain</i> , <i>L’Ambulante</i> , et <i>Le Vaillant</i> qui sont encore à Foulpointe nous en rapportent 600. → -le 25 novembre : <i>l’Africain</i> est revenu avec 318 bêtes
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-82</b>	•25 novembre 1771 → Casernes évacués → casernes en palissade et couvertes de pailles – 24 cases pour loger 400 hommes
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-83</b>	•Traite des noirs pour compte des particuliers → L’Intendant lui donna une instruction pour livrer 8000 piastres au Capitaine, qu’il refusa. ..La <i>Normande</i> revenue, ‘elle rapporte seulement 180 milliers de riz, pas un bœuf, et environ 200 esclaves, on dit tout est pour Sr Amat. → Capitaine Sr Rosbo devait traiter des bœufs pour le Roy ..
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-90</b>	•26 novembre 1771 → petite vérole → l’épidémie tend à se dissiper entièrement. Elle s’étend au contraire dans les

	<p>campagnes mais avec la même b�nignit�..</p> <p>→ ..les gens les plus pr�venus sont forc�s de reconnaitre combien il �tait important d'�tablir l'h�pital hors de la ville.</p>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771-91</b>	<p>•26 novembre 1771</p> <p>→ L'Intendant lui reproche deux choses. Ne pas achever les routes de premi�re n�cessit�. Je n'ai que vingt noirs � moi...comme je jouis d'environ deux mois de 12 noirs que le Roy m'accord�</p>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 -92</b>	<p>•26 novembre 1771</p> <p>→ Reproche de l'Intendant :,...il �tait n�cessaire de d�truire les noirs marrons �tabli dans le milieu de l'Isle, de rassurer les habitants qui y avaient des concessions, d ;encourager la culture dans cette partie important que j'ai place trois compagnies d'infrie . Liste d�taill� des travaux de construction.</p> <p>→ 'les noirs libres et blancs �taient confondus. J'ai s�par� les couleurs, j'ai attaqu� le vice et les crimes et j'ai au moins d�truit le scandale et le d�sordre.'</p>
<b>COL -C4-28 1771 Conseil Sup�rieur Premi�re -61</b>	<p>•8 D�cembre 1771</p> <p>→ M�moire pr�sent�e par L'Abb� Voysin</p>
<b>COL-C4-28 1771 -93</b>	<p>•Etat des d�penses de l'ann�e 1771</p> <p>→ ...on ne verra jamais clair dans les d�penses que lorsque tous les noirs du Roy seront vendus jusqu'au dernier. Le seul bon usage que l'on put faire c'est de former des matelots, mais les abus seront toujours plus grands que les avantages</p>
<b>COL-C4-28 1771 -96</b>	<p>•18 D�cembre 1771</p> <p>→ Concessions retir�es aux environs de la Baye aux Tortues</p> <p>→ Les d�vastations de Jacques Roux pr�s de la Baye aux Tortues jusqu'au de la de la Grande Baye sous le pr�texte de fournir du bois a pour le service du Roy</p> <p>→ Etat de l'environnement a cet endroit : pas une goutte d'eau</p> <p>→ Je viens d'apprendre qu'il a retir� tous les titres des concessions qu'il a pu surprendre aux habitants auxquels nous les avons accord�s au nom du Roy. il a voulu rendre inutiles des titres aussi l�gitimes et aussi respectables tels enfin que sans abus�e de notre pouvoir, nous n'avons plus celui de les annuler – il a, contre les termes expr�s de l'Ordonnance, donne des ordres arbitraires signes de lui seul et destructeurs de ceux que nous avons sign�s en commun.</p> <p>→ ...</p> <p>→ le m�me abus d'autorit� se commettait � l'�gard de quelques pauvres habitants des trois ilots qui sur la foi des Ordonnances des concessions que nous leur avons accord�es jouissaient paisiblement de leurs terrains, y avaient fait des plantations, m�me de caf�. On les leur arrachait contre tout droit pour favoriser les gens riches ou aim�s...</p> <p>→ je les ai r�tablis dans leurs propri�t�s par les ordres dont je joins ici copies..</p> <p>→ un de ces ordres �tait n�cessaire pour arr�ter l'indiscretion des arpenteurs et peut �tre de biens d'autres personnes.</p>
	<p>→ no.2 Copie d'un ordre donn� par M Poivre au Sr Merle arpenteur le 13 novembre 1771 – concernant terrain Grand mange a Trois Ilots</p> <p>→ Copie d'un autre ordre donn� par M Poivre au Sr Merle arpenteur le 21 novembre 1771 – concernant</p> <p>→ Copie d'un Troisi�me ordre donn� par M Poivre au Sr Merle arpenteur sans datte</p> <p>→ Copie de l'ordre donn� par le Chevalier Desrochers au Sr Merle arpenteur le 18 d�cembre 1771</p>
<b>COL-C4-28-98</b>	<p>•18 D�cembre 1771</p> <p>•Mr Desvaux de Marigny</p> <p>•Recommandation de Monseigneur</p>
<b>COL -C4-29 1771 Correspondance g�n�rale, M. Poivre, Intendant</b>	<b>Divers M�moires et projets</b>

C4-29-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 janvier 1771</li> <li>➔ ouragan</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 6 janvier 1771</li> <li>vaisseau le <i>Massiac</i></li> </ul>
C4-29-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 avril 1771</li> <li>➔ épicerie – cultivations des plantes au jardin Mon Plaisir</li> <li>➔ ‘nos colons ne sont pas assez agriculteurs pour avoir donné à des plants aussi précieux les soins qu’ils exigeaient’</li> </ul>
C4-29-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 avril 1771</li> <li>➔ Cantonnement des troupes - a Petite Rivière, la Caze Noyal, Bell Ombre ou le Poste Jacotet, l’extrémité des Plaines Wilhems, la baraque du gouverneur, le Grand port, les Quatre Cocos, Flacq, la Poudre d’Or, la Rivière du milieu de l’Île.</li> <li>Mais Desroches a diminué le nombre des cantonnements.</li> </ul>
C4-29-3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22 août 1771</li> <li>• épicerie</li> <li>➔ seconde expédition aux Îles Philippines et aux Mollusques</li> </ul>
C4-29-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ternay 15 May 1772 et 25 août 1771</li> <li>➔ Papier monnaie</li> </ul>
C4-29-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 août 1771</li> <li>➔ approvisionnement</li> <li>‘les huit bâtiments arrivés n’avaient apportés. Point ou presque point de provisions. ‘je vous supplie qu’il nous soit portés de France des ??...de viande salée dont moitié en lard et moitié en bœuf</li> </ul>
C4-29-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 août 1771</li> <li>• Port nord-ouest - opération de Curement</li> <li>➔ le port a toujours manqué de matelots, d’officiers et surtout de charpentiers...</li> </ul>
C4-29-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 août 1771</li> <li>➔ Hôpital –la règle était parfaitement établie dans les deux hôpitaux lorsque M le Chevalier Desroches est arrivé en Juin 1769..depuis cette époque les dépenses de nouvel hôpital ont été considérables... »</li> <li>➔ le transport journalier des vivres nécessaires aux malades détournent beaucoup des autres travaux... »</li> </ul>
C4-29-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 août 1771</li> <li>➔ fortification –‘la partie militaire ne me regarde point »</li> <li>➔ ‘anciennes batteries tombent en ruine’</li> </ul>
C4-29-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 août 1771</li> <li>➔ concession – ‘les concessions avaient en général été faites sans discernement, sans économie, sans un plan, bien déterminé’.</li> </ul>
C4-29-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 août 1771</li> <li>➔ Projet d’une ville au milieu d’une ville à la mare du Boucan-</li> <li>➔ ‘C’est de la ville de Port Louis que tous les transports de vivres doivent être faits. Les chemins qui y conduisent sont montueux et difficiles . Les transports ne peuvent s’y faire qu’à tête d’esclaves... »</li> </ul>
C4-29-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 août 1771</li> <li>➔ Organisation intérieure</li> <li>➔ ordonnance du roi pour créer des milices nationales</li> <li>➔ L’Intendant n’a plus eu aucune correspondance dans l’intérieur de l’Île</li> <li>➔ la nouvelle organisation introduite par M Desroches est défectueuse qu’elle ne convient pas à une colonie agricole... »</li> </ul>
C4-29-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 août 1771</li> <li>➔ Chemins</li> <li>➔ les habitants doivent fournir quatre journées de corvée par tête d’esclaves. Pour exiger ces corvées il faut avoir un recensement fidèle de tous les esclaves de la colonie</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ depuis 1769 à ce jour, Mrs les commandants de quartiers ont disposé des corvées suivant les ordres de M Le Gouverneur General sans que j'aye eu la moindre connaissance... »</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 aout 1771</li> <li>➔ épiceries</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 aout 1771</li> <li>➔ Curement du port</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-32</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 aout 1771</li> <li>➔ Lettres de change</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-33</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 aout 1771</li> <li>➔ Traite du Cap de Bonne Esperance</li> <li>➔ employé Périchon : il nous a envoyé pour plus de cent mille écus de provisions</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-36</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Septembre 1771</li> <li>➔ Envois à faire de France - Etats général des Besoins</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-38</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 Septembre 1771</li> <li>➔ Approvisionnement de France</li> <li>➔ le vaisseau 'Berryer' n'a apporté que 95 au lieu de 407 tonneaux de comestibles." il ne trouve pas une seule quart de viande salée'</li> <li>• liste des vaisseaux du Roy et bâtiments particuliers.</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-43</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 octobre 1771</li> <li>• Milice nationale</li> <li>• Sont 'des cultivateurs métamorphosés en officiers ...ont changé leurs pioches contre des épauettes'</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-44</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 octobre 1771</li> <li>➔ Affaire particulier troubles</li> <li>➔ abus d'autorité dans le cas de M Rivaltz de St Antoine</li> <li>➔ Lettre e <i>St Antoine</i> Conseiller au Conseil Supérieur à M Maissin et Colonel d'Infanterie et Commandant des Milices Nationales</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-47</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 octobre 1771</li> <li>➔ imposition sur le café</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 octobre 1771 de carton 161<sup>6</sup> no 13</li> <li>➔ Liquidation de la compagnie</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-53</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 novembre 1771</li> <li>• approvisionnement par le <i>Drago</i> 450 tonneaux</li> <li>épidémie de petite vérole, le vaisseau n'a pu atterrir avec des bleds Bourbon regorge de bleds achetés, 'famine a Isle de France'</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-48</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 novembre 1771</li> <li>➔ Maladie endémique</li> <li>➔ petite vérole apporte par le navire le florentin armateur le Sr Brayeur venant de Mozambique avec une traite d ; environ 300 esclaves on assure que les officiers de ce bâtiment ont commis la faute de cacher dans leur navire 4 esclaves attaques pas cette maladie</li> <li>• il en meure douze par jour dans la même ville de port louis</li> <li>• comme je n'ai aucune espèce de correspondance de l'intérieur je ne peux savoir rien vous dire de certain</li> <li>• jusqu'ici la maladie n'a emporté que fort peu de blancs. elle a fait ses ravages parmi les noirs</li> <li>• J'ai fait établir sous le vent du port un petit hôpital isole uniquement destine de recevoir les malades attaques de la petite vérole. Cet hôpital contient deux cent lits.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 novembre 1771</li> <li>• Voyage de Gouverneur Desroches aux îles Amirantes</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-29-48 1771 Ordonnateur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1771 Correspondance Courcy</li> </ul>

<b>COL -C4-29 1771, Conseil supérieur</b>	<p>➔ 6 octobre 1771-1772 Conseil Supérieur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire du Conseil sur des points 'obscur' de la législation</li> <li>• signataires ; Delandes, De Chazal, Codere, L'Abbe Gallois, Denis de la Coudray, Dalencon...Anthoine,</li> <li>• arrivée de bateaux, suppression de papier monnaie etc.'</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procès-verbal septembre 1771</li> <li>• contre la suppression papier monnaie</li> <li>• En ce que l'un des motifs de la suppression du papier monnaie, semblerait devoir interdire à ces îles tout le commerce avec les adjacentes les Indes et la Chine qui n'est envisagé que comme de luxe, Tandis qu'ils.... des premières nécessités, pour l'importation des noirs, leurs vivres et de leurs vêtements</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-29 1771 Divers Le Ministre à Desroches et Poivre</b>	<p>➔ 4 avril 1771 copie de la dépêche à Desroches et Poivre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tromelin pour aider dans le curage du Port</li> <li>• situation actuelle des finances</li> <li>• travaux au port, envoi de Brest des ustensiles de feu et de fonte nécessaires pour le cure molle</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-29 1771 Chevalier de Ternay, Commandant Général</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 octobre 1771</li> <li>• entre de la Belle Poule en armement</li> <li>• Lettre du Conseil supérieur de Pondichéry à Desroches et Poivre</li> <li>• les vaisseaux et les dépenses</li> <li>• Rivaltz de St Antoine</li> <li>• M. Heugel</li> <li>• L'Abbe Gallois</li> <li>• Marion Dufresne</li> <li>• Cossigny</li> <li>• Comte de Lamerville</li> <li>• Monteil</li> </ul>
	<p>➔ divers projets – Mozambique – Kilwa –</p> <p>➔ lettre en arabe</p> <p>➔ Brayeur de Barre –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• esclaves du Roy- cout détaillé de la traite a Mozambique et projets au Mozambique</li> <li>• sur les 3866 esclaves qu'il proposa d'exporter de Mozambique, il estime qu'il y aurait 480 morts dans les traversées</li> </ul>
<b>ni date ni auteur</b>	<p>➔ 1771 Mémoires et projets – renseignements divers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sur le commerce des Indes</li> <li>• plan de l'entrepôt</li> <li>• légion africaine</li> <li>• commerce de l'Inde</li> </ul>
	<p>➔ Prospectus et résultat d'une expédition de commerce aux Indes, à la Chine et aux îles de France et des Bourbon</p>
	<p>➔ renseignements divers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• copie d'un extrait de L'abbé Rochon</li> </ul> <p>➔ Janvier 1771</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observations de Cheveau</li> <li>• nourriture pour invalides</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions secrètes pour M Corde Commandant La Corvette du Roy Le Nécessaire au cas de séparation l'expédition pour prendre des plantes de girofliers</li> <li>• vocabulaire malais-les nombres, conversation sur les plantes</li> <li>• préparation de caisses de terre</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-9</b>	<p>➔ Mémoires relatif à l'approvisionnement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pour les 2 900 noirs dans les deux îles – nourris avec du maïs et du riz</li> <li>• pour la traite à Madagascar il est indispensable d'envoyer les articles nécessaires :</li> </ul>

	eau de vie fusils a baguette, poudre, balles,... ( ? carre, ceinte)
<b>C4-29-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avril 1771 – Isle de France - Poivre et Desroches</li> <li>• la traite de Madagascar n'est pas abondante : les nègres qui en proviennent sont paresseux, méchants et toujours prêt à s'échapper'</li> <li>• pensaient qu'il serait 'avantageux pour nous d'obtenir de la cour de Portugal la permission d'avoir ...une certaine quantité d'esclaves</li> <li>• Poivre voulait 2000 esclaves de la cote d'Afrique</li> <li>• Malgache ne pouvait travailler dans le port: 'ils sont si jaloux de leur liberté que pour s'évader ils enlèvent ; les bateaux qu'on leur confiés'.</li> <li>• Il est de principe que rien ne serait plus avantageux aux Portugais que de nous vendre des esclaves. Ils en ont une grande quantité qu'ils leur deviennent à charge par les frais de nourriture. D'ailleurs ils ne peuvent en égard a la religion, en vendre a aucune autre nation étrangère, et ce qu'ils en fournissent..à Goa qu'au Brésil n'ont pas un débouché suffisant pour la quantité qu'ils en entretiennent.</li> </ul>
<b>C4-29-1</b>	<p>→ 28 avril 1771 de Versailles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copie de la lettre à M Desroches à Poivre</li> </ul>
<b>mémoire non daté 1770-1771 ?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire apostille sur toutes les parties de l'administration des Îles de F et B après la remise faites de cette administration par la compagnie des indes au gouvernement français</li> <li>• Articles 1-68 dont no. 5 bâtiments civils, no.10 boulangerie ; no.11 bois, no.12 bray ou goudron, no.20 communes, no.22 concessions, no.31 filles à marier, no.44 Madagascar et Mozambique, no.47 malabares, no.52 noirs, no. 54 ouvriers, no. 68 viandes salées etc.</li> </ul> <p>'..19 a 20 mille noirs dont 6 000 seulement employés a la culture de la terre, , il nous faudrait 20 000 noirs cultivateurs..'</p>
<b>COL -C4-29-1 1771 Îles de France et Bourbon Fonds</b>	<p>→ Fonds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des bâtiments a Bourbon</li> </ul> <p>→ De Bellecombe et Cremont</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation important sur la nécessite indispensable du paiement en piastres pour l'appointement des officiers</li> <li>• dépenses faites 1771</li> </ul>
	→ Juillet 1775 Mémoire sur la manière de pourvoir aux dépenses du Roy dans l'Inde
	<p>→ Dette du Roi aux Îles de France et Bourbon – Papier a M Poivre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liquidation des Créanciers de la Cie des Indes</li> <li>• Etat des 'lettres de change 'extraits correspondance Maillard</li> <li>• liquidation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bureau de l'Inde 1778</li> <li>• Création d'une nouvelle monnaie de papier pour la somme d'un million de livres</li> </ul>
	→ Etat des dépenses pour 1770
<b>COL -C4-30 Correspondance Desroches, Copies de lettres de M Desroches a M Poivre, Agriculture, 1772</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 mars 1772</li> <li>• Liste de Bâtiments Particuliers Le <i>Bruny</i>, Le <i>Boynes</i>, Le <i>Chevalier Desroches</i>, Le <i>Bertin</i>, L'<i>Aigle</i>, L'<i>Athalante</i>, Le <i>Desforges</i>, La <i>Concorde</i> La <i>Garonne</i>, Le <i>Mrq de Narbonne</i>, La <i>Louise</i>. L'<i>Union</i>, La <i>Curieuse</i>, 2 de M Marion, La <i>Créole</i>, Goélette de M Desribes, Le <i>Thetis</i>, L'<i>Heure du Berger</i>, Le <i>Curieux</i>, L'<i>Africain</i>, L'<i>Ambulante</i>, La <i>Corizante</i>, Le <i>Prudent</i>, Le <i>Vert Galant</i>, Le <i>Vigilant</i>, Le <i>Comte de Menou</i>, Les 2 Goélettes du Roi, le <i>Grand Bourbon</i>, Le <i>Coureur</i>.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 avril 1772</li> <li>• Second ouragan</li> </ul> <p>Et délai dans le départ de La <i>Normande</i> Échoue sur le sable Trop d'hommes</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 juillet 1772</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dauphin frégate</li> </ul> <p>‘les anglais ont une croisière continue établie sur nos îles Rodrigues et Madagascar...’</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aux Seigneurs du Conseil Supérieur De Pierre Rio Capitaine de l’<i>Athalante</i></li> <li>• Le Sr Voisin Sous Commissaire de la Marine monta à bord ‘pour faire son choix pour les besoins du service du Roy de la quantité de 64 têtes d’esclaves</li> </ul> <p>Quarante noires pièces d’inde à 1000 # 40,000  Douze femmes pièces d’Inde 10,800  Et douze capors à 9,600  Total 60,400</p> <p>15 des noirs furent enlevés en présence de M Maingard Capitaine du Port</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quelques jours après, Voisin lui demanda de reprendre les noirs.</li> <li>• Le Ministère leur demande de réduire les dépenses</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 mars 1772</li> </ul> <p>➔ Noirs employés aux travaux du Pouce</p>
<p>➔ Etat d’abandon de l’île en 1767</p>
<p>➔ Distribution des noirs esclaves</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expédie la flute La <i>Garonne</i> à Madagascar pour commencer nos exportations d’esclaves</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problèmes avec le commandant</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture des terres</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Création d’une milice</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Port et armement</li> <li>• Etat de l’île en 1767:</li> <li>• ‘des ateliers mal montées et tout au plus six cent esclaves. J’ai remis à mon successeur seize cent quarante esclaves répartie sur les différents travaux... »</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liste de tous les ouvrages rendus</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles magasins du Roy</li> </ul> <p>a augmente le nombre d’esclaves attache aux magasins de 7-8 a ‘de cents esclaves’ ‘augmentation a été nécessaire’ ‘pour la conservation des effets du Roy et surtout des grains qui demandent à être remues continuellement mais encore pour les transports considérables nécessités par les établissements de M Desroches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 10</li> </ul> <p>L’Hôpital je l’avais reçu avec vingt- vingt-cinq esclaves, je l’ai remise avec cent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 11 Connaissance des produits naturelles</li> <li>• J’ai trouvé les deux colonies dans l’ignorance la plus profonde sue toutes les productions naturelles de leur sol’..les médecins eux mêmes, au milieu des plantes les plus salutaires n’employaient pour le traitement des malades que des herbes, des racines, des écorées desséchées, transportes de France et qui avait perdu toute propriété par un si long transport’...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• les coulons-Colons voyaient perire sous leurs yeux, faute de remède, de malheureuse esclave..</li> <li>• article 12 navigation</li> </ul>
<p>➔ le 7 février 1772</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lettre de Poivre à Monseigneur</li> <li>• culture de grains</li> <li>• cause de la décadence</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 avril 1772</li> </ul> <p>➔ Lettre de Poivre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noirs fugitifs avant l’arrivée de Desroches</li> <li>• ‘Lorsque M Desroches est arrive ici, on n’entendait point parler de ces noirs marron. Nous avons un e marechaussée. Composée d’environ quatre vingt hommes, partie libres, parties esclaves du Roy... ’</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M Desroches... l'ordre de donner la liberté a toute cette marechaussée' ainsi a leurs femmes et enfants</li> <li>• les a disperses en petites peuplades dans différents quartiers de l'Île ou il leur a partage des terres à cultiver'</li> <li>• quelques petits détachements de cinq ou six hommes qui ayant perdu (? leur vie casanière l'habitude des courses dans les forets ont eu peur eux mêmes des noirs marrons</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-30</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>Desroches 1772</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre de 20 juillet 1772</li> <li>➔ Curement du Port</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1772</li> <li>➔ Etat des dépenses à faire aux Îles de France et de Bourbon pour le Service du Roy pendant l'année 1772</li> <li>à l'île de France 3 235 441</li> <li>à l'Île de Bourbon 367 890</li> <li>Total 3 603 231</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-32-20</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>Générale,</b> <b>Maillart</b> <b>1772</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Octobre 1772</li> <li>➔ Liquidation de la Cie des Indes</li> <li>• Conditions difficile: deux ouragans, sécheresse, petite vérole et ayant enlevé aussi beaucoup d'esclaves. »</li> <li>• La plus part des habitants n'ayant pas même de quoi se nourrir aujourd'hui, n'y eux n'y les esclaves... »</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le 10 aout 1772</li> <li>➔ Suppression de papier et monnaie pas enregistré</li> <li>• Etat des finances</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le 13 Octobre 1772</li> <li>➔ Poivre arrangement avec Verdier pour procurer des esclaves pour le service du Roy</li> <li>• Le dixième des esclaves traits iront pour le Roy</li> <li>• Vaisseau Le fort fait naufrage à la cote de Mozambique</li> <li>• 36 esclaves embarqués sur un navire portugais pour Bourbon. Il en est mort 16 pendant le voyage et 20 qui coutent avec le vaisseau etc. 630 piastres.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le 19 novembre 1772</li> <li>➔ Travaux du Génie – réparations des bâtiments du Roy tant civils que militaires occasionner des débats et un excès de dépenses du Chevalier Tromelin sur le curage du port par ouvriers blancs et noirs, manouvres esclaves etc.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le 18 décembre 1772</li> <li>➔ M Codere désire vendre une habitation et des esclaves: Mde de Modave la Cadette manqué de ressources</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le 23 décembre 1772</li> <li>➔ Etat des vaisseaux et allégés coulés été échoués dans le port nord ouest</li> <li>• Relevés des sentences qui ont...été rendus par Maillart</li> <li>• Etat des vaisseaux coulés dans le port</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• le 7 octobre 1770</li> <li>➔ Extraits des lettres écrits a Versailles par le Duc de Praslin</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 Aout 1767</li> <li>➔ Etat des noirs et négresses esclaves remis par la Cie des Indes à Monsieur Dumas pour son compte...liste de 24 noms, castes et âges</li> </ul>
<b>COL -C4-41</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>Générale Maillart,</b> <b>Intendant ;</b> <b>Correspondance</b> <b>Générale, Maillart,</b> <b>Intendant.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le 16 janvier 1776</li> <li>➔ Précision concernant a une affaire d'eau Tribunal Terrier</li> <li>Certains particuliers ont besoin de faire passer l'eau dans leur terrain et on fait une requête au Tribunal Terrier.</li> <li>➔ Les esclaves des propriétaires qui saignent la rivière</li> <li>Mais à qui doit l'entrepreneur il s'adresser: à l'Intendant ou au Tribunal terrier pour ériger une action</li> </ul>

<b>Relation entre Pondichéry et les Îles 1776</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mémoire de Sr. Bruneau à M Maillart, Intendant concernant Benyowski et le comptoir de Madagascar</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 avril 1776</li> <li>• concernant les opérations de curage au port</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 juillet 1776</li> <li>• Disette de gens de mer, inconvénient</li> <li>• “nous n’avons plus un homme à donner”.</li> <li>• En vain parleront-on de lascards....a peine arrivés ils ne songent qu’une occasion de retourner dans l’Inde, et ne rendent que de médiocres services..</li> <li>• J’ai, pour le cabotage du Roy mis ... des noirs esclaves du Roy</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 août 1776</li> <li>• Réponse à la lettre de Monseigneur concernant la nomination de Berguet au grade de Chef de traite à Madagascar</li> <li>• M Benyowski prétend avoir ‘un privilège exclusive de toute l’Isle..</li> <li>• On ne peut pas envoyer un chef de traite à Madagascar que lorsque sera .....sur cet établissement...</li> </ul>
	<p>→ 8 septembre 1776</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Au sujet des girofliers du Jardin du Roy</li> <li>• Visite de Ternay et La Brillane au jardin de Monplaisir pour voir des girofliers en fruit</li> <li>• ‘On en a cueilli un bouquet de 27 clous</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nous avons cru dans cette occasion de vous donner au jardinier noir esclave du Roy à Mon Plaisir une marque de satisfaction en lui accordant sa liberté...Charles Rama, à sa femme, légitime nommée Catherine et à leurs filles Créole nommée Marie, âgée de sept ans ..confie à ce noir deux jeunes esclaves du Roy créole ‘</li> <li>• A donné du mahis à un navire particulier <i>La Nathalie</i> partie sur la côte de Mozambique faire une traite en 8bre 1775</li> </ul>
	<p>→ 1776</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achats d’esclaves et marchandises</li> <li>• Liste des esclaves du Roy, nom, âge, caste, occupation – etc.</li> <li>• Exemple: Raphael, noir Mozambique forgeron âgé de 21 ans pour 1830 –10-1</li> </ul>
	<p>→ Lettre du 9 septembre 1776</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• de Maillart Dumesle répondant au Monseigneur</li> <li>• tirer directement de Pondichéry les toiles nécessaires à l’habillement des esclaves du Roy</li> <li>• Pense que Pondichéry ne pourra payer la dette de 124 305 ..</li> </ul>
	<p>→ 9 septembre 1776</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre concernant Les dépenses faites pour le vaisseau Le Brillant</li> <li>• Bordereau des traites</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Réponse à la Lettre concernant les dépenses qui entraînent l’entretien des noirs du Roy</li> <li>• Compte détaillé concernant habillement nourriture, accessoires-chapeau mouchoir</li> <li>• 3000 noirs l’Isle de France et 889 à Bourbon</li> <li>• 6 sols par jour par noir</li> <li>• Atelier de noirs du port, de l’artillerie</li> <li>• Plusieurs avaient pris goût parce que je ne les avais pas forcés à choisir-leur métier</li> <li>• ‘C’est avec douleur que je vois sortir 72 jeunes beaux noirs pour faire de tambours’</li> <li>• ‘On sentira la différence. IL faudra prendre des blancs très chers..’</li> </ul>
<p>→ 16 décembre 1776</p> <p>Lettre concernant naufrage de l’<i>Ut île</i></p>	
<b>COL C4-43 Correspondance</b>	<p>→ 1 Aout 1775</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du Chevalier de Ternay</li> </ul>

<p><b>Générale, Le Chevalier de Ternay 1775</b></p>	<p>→ Concernant le Commerce particulier Elle ne sera jamais une colonie de commerce L'introduction des noirs est peut être un des plus grands fautes qu'ait jamais fait la Compagnie; il ne fallait que pour son service.il ne fallait que de petits habitants cultivateurs comme je l'ai souvent répété' L'Isle de France se soutient 'grâce à de dépenses énormes'</p>
<p><b>Extraits des lettres du Chevalier de la Brillane</b></p>	<p>→ Le 22 juin 1777 no. 81</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La Dauphine commande par M De Tromelin le Cadet a amène de l'Île de Sable 7 régesses qui avaient été laisse depuis 15 ans et un négrellons ne depuis le naufrage</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL C4- 44</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 30 juin 1777</li> <li>→ Mariage secret de Chevalier de Lort avec Melle Meriniac, fille d'un soldat qui s'est marie a une négresse en inde. Demande opposition dans le future à ces mariages</li> <li>→ Dessin d'une pompe de navire janvier 1777</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informant le monseigneur que le mulâtre Hector a été pendu.</li> <li>• Hector ne savait pas qu'il était Intendant et qu'il avait l'habit d'un bourgeois quand il l'a insulte.</li> <li>• Recommande que l'administration doive avoir un uniforme pour se distinguer des autres. 'les rues sont continuellement pleines d'esclaves, de noirs ou mulâtres libres, de soldats, de matelots, d'ouvriers...d'arsenal et d'étrangers qui sous prétexte qu'ils ne reconnaissent pas un chef se croient tout permis'.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL C4- 45</b></p>	<p>→ 8 février 1777</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondances relative au naufrage du Bricole</li> <li>• Rapport sur un coup de vent violent le 27 et 28 janvier 1777. La flute <i>La Bricole</i> a échoué. Il revenait de Goa avec une cargaison de noirs qui avaient la petite vérole. Équipage était en quarantaine.</li> </ul>
	<p>→ 12 avril 1778</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre concernant l'Insuffisance des fonds pour les îles</li> <li>• La peur de la disette a encourage la culture et le nombre d'esclaves augmentes</li> <li>• Passe de l'embaras à l'abondance</li> </ul>
	<p>→ Mémoires et rapports sur le plan de Morice et Kilwa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan d'opérations pour le commerce de la cote orientale d'Afrique</li> <li>• Estime qu'il peut traiter 3000 esclaves 1er année et 2000 la 2e année</li> <li>• Kilwa Mozambique et Quérimbe</li> <li>• Base a Surat pour les marchandises se vendre moins cher que les arabes</li> <li>• 3-4,00 esclaves suffiront pour Île de France, sans y comprendre bourbon</li> <li>• Un voyage en Amérique est égale a 'peut être trois voyages de l'Île de France a la cote d'Afrique'</li> <li>• Morice a besoin de poudre de guerre, baïonnettes fusils, etc. Morice estime que les nègres couteront 25 piastres par tête a Kilwa et plus cher a Quérimbe et Mozambique</li> <li>• Mise hors 170 000 piastres 1ères année et 70,000 2 e années</li> <li>• Projet d'un établissement a la cote orientale d'Afrique</li> <li>• Mémoire sur la cote d'Afrique</li> <li>• 1779 ?</li> </ul>
<p><b>COL C4- 46 1777 Extrait des registres du Conseil Supérieur</b></p>	<p>→ Procès criminel contre le nomme Benoit Giraud Mulâtre et le nomme César, noir esclave du nomme Deslandes habitant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convaincu d'injures et d'attentat prémédite en la personne de M Foucault Intendant</li> <li>• Condamne à être pendu et étranglé a la potence dresse a la place des exécutions, ses biens, si aucun sont, confisques au profit de Sa Majesté,</li> <li>• Renvoyé le nomme esclave absous de l'accusation</li> </ul>
	<p>→ Juin 1777 Réflexion sur la surabondance des grains aux îles d de France et de Bourbon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surabondance 'embarrassante' de blé et les magasins sur remplis.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Le Ministère ne s’attendait pas a cette surabondance...Il recevait sans inconvénient dans les magasins du Roi tout le blé et le riz</li> <li>Au magasin: L 1, 600,000 de blé .... Des récoltes de 1774, 1775 indépendant de la consommation journalière</li> <li>Tableau par Ternay pour Ile de F et B montre: 1772 411,000 1773 1, 278,037 1774 1, 202,237 1775 3,004, 812 1776 5, 004,812</li> <li>Ministère ne comprend pas comment il peut avoir autant quand l intendant disait en 1774 qu’’il ne voyait point arrive la récolte de 1774’</li> <li>Essayer de diversifier: essai de coton, café, indigo mais pas fac île à trouver. Ministère propose <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d’exporter à Pondichéry-pas praticable</li> <li>établir des porcheries pour consommer les criblures en blé échauffé-vu débouche, pas sensible??</li> <li>convertir en eau de vie une partie du blé-le cout? Difficile île de calculer la dépense</li> </ol> </li> <li>M Maillart propose de réduire le prix du blé qui est actuellement 17 sols? A 2 piastres le % pesant reviendra a 12 “</li> <li>Discussion sur le papier monnaie et lettres de change donc proposition de réduire n’est pas accepte</li> <li>Peur que le colon ne soit dégouté</li> </ul>
	<p>→ 1777</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projet de dépenses pour les îles de France Bourbon Rodrigues etc. Très détaillé</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47 suite 1778 Îles de France et Bourbon La Brillane et Foucault</b>	<p>→ 3 avril 1778</p> <p>→ Donnent avis que la goélette, la <i>Pourvoyeuse</i> a essuyé ...qui l’amis en Expédie pour Rodrigues des ‘subsistances et rafraichissements nécessaire au Poste’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A subi un ‘coup’? en mer qui a emporte 6 hommes de l’équipage et 5 noirs du Roy.</li> <li>Nous ne pouvons néanmoins leur faire parvenir qu’après les révolutions</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47 1778</b>	<p>→ 20 avril 1778</p> <p>→ Les naufrages du navire <i>Maurepas</i></p> <p>→ Arrive d’un navire particulier la <i>St Anne</i> venant de cap Esperance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apportant détails des passagers du <i>Maurepas</i> naufrages à la cote de Madagascar sur le banc des tertres?? Le 19 juillet, suaves par un navire hollandaise</li> </ul> <p>Vaisseaux qui ont mouille dans ce port: Le <i>St Anne</i> venant du cap le 16 <i>Fitzjames</i> du cap le 18 Le <i>Deodat</i> venant du cap le 19 Le <i>Pondicherry</i> venant de Chine Le <i>Modeste</i> le 20 Les 3 <i>Amis</i> le 20</p>
<b>COL C4- 47 Naufrage du navire particulier la Cérés 1777</b>	<p>→ 1777</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rapport suivant lettre de M Gonet sur le naufrage. Sauve du naufrage: 60 balles de to îles de l’inde</li> <li>L’armateur du navire; Salomon réclame le passage de 2 officiers et 12 hommes</li> </ul>
<b>Lettre de Billy 3 février 1778 du Cap de Bonne Espérance au Monseigneur</b>	<p>→ 3 février 1778</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Naufrage du <i>Maurepas</i></li> <li>du Navire hollandaise la <i>Bagt Krust</i> Captain le Sr Andries expédie pour compte de la Cie pour faire une traite à Zanzibar et de retour le 25 janvier, pris à son bord 24 passagers du naufrage <i>Maurepas</i></li> <li>Sur la cote de Madagascar arme par M.M Bernier et Goulade a Lorient, en état parti le 10 May dernier ayant 108 hommes de l’équipage et 6 passagers...</li> <li>85 hommes ont péri, , est reste un matelot qui n’a pas pu s’embarquer pour cause</li> </ul>

	<p>maladie,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reste dans la baie St Augustin, un noir libre aussi matelot, que des noirs du pays, ont fait esclave.</li> </ul>
	<p>→ Extrait de la déclaration qu'a fait au Cap de Bonne Esperance devant le sieur Billy Pr Mulerre capitaine du <i>Maurepas</i></p> <p>→ État du vaisseau, liste des officiers et passagers décèdes etc.</p>
	<p>→ Déclaration du Sr Beaulieu chirurgien major sur le comte de <i>Maurepas</i> naufrage à la cote de Madagascar, Port Louis 28 aout 1778</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Maurepas</i> a pointe Ste Marie sur les brisants, détails sur le naufrage</li> <li>• Dans la crainte d'être attaques par les 'nègres qu'on voyait déjà s'attrouper en grand nombre.</li> <li>• Après quelques jours, 'force par la faim et soif', Île furent forces de descendre a terre: 'il n'y avait que deux noirs sur le rivage' conduisirent ces français a un village ou on leur donna quelques peu de vivres Le chef fit faire une tente pour les coucher mais dans la nuit, deux ou trois cents nègres investirent cette tente, dépouillèrent les français et leur laissèrent ensuite la liberté'</li> </ul>
<b>Port-Louis le 23 avril 1778 no. 20</b>	<p>→ 27 aout 1778 Bureau L'Inde Naufrage du <i>Maurepas</i> avec liste des homes naufrages</p> <p>→ 8 septembre 1778</p> <p>→ Bureau L'Inde Naufrage du <i>Maurepas</i></p> <p>Soupçon sur M Canaple d'avoir contribue a la perte des 72 hommes abandonne sur le <i>Maurepas</i></p>
<b>COL C4- 47 1778</b>	<p>Mémoire relative au procès criminels des esclaves aux Îles de France et de Bourbon par Delaleu</p> <p>→ Désire que le roi faire une loi pour la police générale des esclaves et particulièrement par la manière de juger et de punir les délits et les crimes qu'ils peuvent commettre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le code noir continent tout mais les lois ont été faits pour le régime de la compagnie des indes, mais 'la localité et l'expérience semble indiquer qu'il serait ut Île de simplifier les procédures a faire pour constater les vols faits par les esclaves et a mitiger même, par rapport a eux, les peines prononcées par les ordonnances, contre les voleurs avec effraction et autres vols qualifiés</li> <li>• En effet la plupart des vols de cette espèce commis par les esclaves sont de peu de conséquence et la peine de mort parfois autant plus rigoureuse qu'elle ne remédie pas au mal malgré des exemples réitérés,</li> <li>• L'on sera peu étonne que ces tristes exemples produisent si peu d'effet, quand on considérera, d'une que ces Îles, et principalement cette Isle de France reçoivent annuellement un très grand nombre d'esclaves nouveaux de toutes sortes de pays et de castes par lesquels les exemples parles sont absolument inutiles et d'un cote que la plupart des esclaves poursuivis pour des vols qualifiés et autres, ont commis leurs crimes loin de la ville ou ils sont ..et exécutés; d'ou ils relatent que leurs camarades voyant pas la punition sont beaucoup moins intimidés.</li> <li>• L'on peut encore ajouter a ces considérations que les travaux en tous genres ne se font dans ces Îles qu'avec les bras des esclaves; que la mort naturelle en enlevé annuellement un grand nombre que le série conséquemment opérer un bien de ménager la vie des esclaves criminels et de les employer aux travaux publics.</li> <li>• Sa Majesté a déjà adopte ces vues dictes par ? l'humanité en autorisant le règlement de..1775. Il serait fac Île de faire une chaise?? distincte et séparée pour les esclaves coupables de vols qualifiés ou autres crimes de cette époque même?? la mort, et de leur appliquer une marque qu'?? Fit reconnaitre afin qu'en cas d'évasion il sera puni??</li> <li>• confondus avec les esclaves mis a la chaine sois pour marronnage au troisième chef soit pour tout autre cause</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47-72 1778</b>	<p>→ 3 mai 1778 Complot d'empoisonnement Port Louis</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No 224 lettre au Monseigneur ‘Cette colonie trop fertile en événements tragiques, viens encore d’offrir une nouvelle fois..on vient d’exécuter 4 noirs et 3 négresses appartenant a M de Sarny habitant de cette Isle, accuse d’avoir forme le complot de l’empoisonner les 4 noirs es 2 des négresses ont été brules vifs la 3ème a été fouettée et marquée et condamnée a la chaîne perpétuelle.. Sarny a échappé a l’effet du poison a pris qu’une petite...que le chirurgien chez lequel il avait préparé, Après des interrogations et des menaces la négresses qui servait la liqueur a avoué avoir ajouté une substance donnée par un autre esclave, composée de racines</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47 1778</b>	<p>➔ Port Louis 12 juin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Réponse la lettre du 9 février 1777 concernant la précision demandée de la Brillane et Maillart concernant les mesures prises pour recensement des îles</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47 Lettre à Brillane et Foucault 1779</b>	<p>➔ 7 février 1779</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Réception du recensement des îles le 12 juin 1778 no 84. il approuve que ce sera fait tout les 4 ans .difficile île d’en faire tout les ans.</li> <li>Il y eu un accroissement depuis les révolutions</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47-110 1778</b>	<p>➔ 12 janvier 1778 État général des esclaves du Roy existant et réflexions a cet égard</p> <p>➔ Port Louis Recensement des esclaves du Roy et aussi détails sur chacun des chefs des services qui leur et confié 3,084 esclaves dont:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1732 noirs 765 négresses 349 négrillons 238 négrittes</p> <p>Importants de monter la juste valeur de ce qu’on peut tirer en quantité de bras</p> <p>➔ Sur les 3084 têtes de noirs, il y a 381 qui sont infirmes ou hors de service, soit parce que les uns sont dans un état d’épuisement ou. Caducité qui ne permet plus de les employer aux travaux qui exigent de la force ou de la rigueur, soit parce que les autres parvenus a l’âge de décrépitude, sont atteints d’infirmités qui exigent les plus grands ménagements pour ne pas hâter la destruction. ON est obligé par conséquent de les abandonner les ¾ du temps aux soins de leurs propres conservations, et ceux qui sont encore susceptibles de faire quelque services ne peuvent être employés qu’a des travaux d’enfants qui comme vous le ...bien, ne sont pas une grande sensation dans les mouvements ou il faut des tempéraments robustes et rigoureux...</p> <p>➔ 349 négrillons et 238 négrittes également jusqu’a 9 à 10 ans ne sont pas employés</p> <p>➔ Les 765 négresses sont a peu près en état de travailler mais s’occupent de leurs enfants</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1732 noirs: sur eux reposent ‘tous les peines, toutes les fatigues, l’exécution enfin de tous les travaux mais ils osent aussi a ; hôpital, sont marrons</li> <li>Nous avons recours aux noirs des particuliers - Avons acheté donc 180 noirs pour le curage du Port-lettre commune du 28 avril no. 65</li> <li>Les noirs du roi étant sujets a toutes les révolutions de l’humanité : la mort, les maladies, la caducité, la vieillesse, les mères d’allaiter les enfants, les femmes de faire des enfants,</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47 Correspondance</b>	<p>➔ 1er Septembre 1777 concernant la déclaration du Roi des noirs introduits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1777 Concernant la lettre reçue le 12 mai du monseigneur-1er Septembre sur ‘l’introduction dans le Royaume, des noirs, mulâtres et autres gens de couleur libre ou esclaves de l’un ou de l’autre sexe; ensemble les modèles d’état qui doivent vous être remis chaque mois les noms des gens de couleur ou autres qui ont été embarqués pour France pendant les mois précédents et ceux venant de France qui auront été débarqués dans la colonie pendant le même temps..’</li> <li>Imprime en affiche dans tous les quartiers, dans la gazette,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuse réception de lettre de Mgr 30 septembre dernier et jointe avec conseil par le Roi sur la déclaration conçu. la police des noirs</li> <li>Pièce ci joint:</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47- Arrêt du Conseil Supérieur 1778</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 12 juin 1778</li> <li>• qui oblige tout ceux qui postulant dans la colonie sous le nom d'avocats procureurs ou praticiens postulants à justifier leur qualités titres capacité et bonnes mœurs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrêt du conseil supérieur</li> <li>• Casse deux actes émanes du juge royale sous le nom d'ordonnance de la police, fais défenses abus officiers de la juridiction de faire des règlements etc.</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47- Arrêt du Conseil Supérieur 1778</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 7 juillet 1778</li> <li>• Qui ordonne que l'édit du roi henry II du mois de février 1556 concernant les femmes grosses et le recèles de grossesse sera lu et publie de trios en trios mois aux prônes des messes paroissiales</li> <li>• Pg 6</li> <li>• Mesures prises pour la sureté des enfants conçus par des moyens déshonnêtes ...</li> <li>• Ces lois ne doivent plus être négligées</li> <li>• Grossesses due au crime de la débauche, femmes devenue mère savant une union légitime</li> <li>• Pg 7</li> <li>• Edit de 1556 Peine de mort pour une femme qui serait convaincue de cesser la grossesse de son enfant</li> <li>• C'est un parricide, elle prive à la fois le religion d'un chrétien et l'état d'un citoyen</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47- Arrêt du conseil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• défend de percevoir les droits dont ces officiers ont ordonne l'imposition que les praticiens avaient introduits Contrôle des actes et des exploits</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47- Arrêt de règlement du Conseil Supérieur 18 novembre 1778</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 16 novembre 1778</li> <li>• <b>Concernant la forme de tenir les registres des baptêmes, mariages et sépultures et les formalités à observer pour la rédaction et la validité de ces actes</b> Etat de la situation actuelle: J'ai examine moi même plusieurs registres des paroisses de la colonie et j'ai eu le déplaisir de voir les contraventions y multiplies a l'infini, qu'</li> <li>• Il y a plusieurs actes nuls ou vicieux et que quelques uns des desservants...paroisses se sont rendus coupable d'une infraction d'autant plus répréhensible, que les effets portent préjudice irréparable aux citoyens...</li> <li>• Oubli des règles:</li> <li>• Les gens ne présentent leurs enfants que 2-3 ans après le baptême</li> <li>• Le jour de la naissance est omis ou était âge <i>environ</i></li> <li>• L'excuse donne est que les enfants sont proie a une maladie les 9 premiers jours- 2</li> <li>• Les parrains ont signe au lieu du père-qui rend l'acte absolument nul'</li> <li>• Article VIII les cures ou prêtres desservants feront tenus d'écrire sur trios registres durement .paragraphes les actes de baptêmes mariages et sépultures des blancs, un des registres à être envoyés au dépôt des colonies</li> <li>• Art IX Actes de baptêmes mariages et sépultures des noirs libres ou esclaves tenu seulement deux registres l'un déposé au greffe, l'autre demeurera en la possession du cure</li> <li>• Art X Fait la cour inhibition et défenses aux dits cures ou prêtres desservants de donner lesdits actes la qualité de <i>Monsieur ni Madame...</i></li> <li>• aux parties qui ne seront pourvus d'office honorable, ou reconnus nobles et surtout aux gens de couleur et aux gens de métiers</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4- 47 1778</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 27 avril 1778</li> <li>• Mémoire Port Louis</li> <li>• Sur le commerce les îles peuples par de gens 'que la misère a chasse de leur patrie, dans l'espoir de trouver les moyens de réparer dans les colonies les...de la fortune, Ils y arrivent la plupart sans argent, sans talent, sans métier ut île, et sans envie de se livrer aux travaux champêtres'</li> <li>• Font de petit commerce qui nuit aux négociants et aux détaillants</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La moitié de Port Louis est occupée que par des boutiques</li> <li>• Boutique de premier ordre: au nombre de 12 - Alimentent des boutiques du 2e ordre: qui fournissent à des boutiques de 3e ordre:</li> </ul>
<b>No. 209 duplicata 20 juillet 1778</b>	Embarquement des soldats pour former les équipages des traits à Madagascar, au cabotage, et même aux voyages
<b>COL C4- 47- suite Lettre à Mgr 1778</b>	<p>→ 31 mars 1778</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Port Louis Lettre à Mgr conçu...Les Deux Amis etc.</li> </ul> <p>Sr Hertel capitaine du régiment de l'île de France se marier avec demoiselle Panon fille d'un habitant de Bourbon, lui a donné une habitation avec 30 noirs, donne sa démission</p>
<b>Port-Louis no. 284 1778 Brillane à Monseigneur</b>	<p>1 octobre 1778</p> <p>Fournitures pour le Brillant</p> <p>Choisir cent hommes de bonne volonté parmi les noirs</p> <p>Pour la guerre</p>

<b>COL C4-48 1778 Correspondance Générale, M. de la Brillanne, Maillard, Foucault</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 Octobre 1778, Foucault</li> </ul> <p>→ Concernant les dépenses en consommation des esclaves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Faute de maïs, les noirs du roi ont été nourris avec du biscuit pendant plus de quatre mois</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-49-1 1779 Corr. Gén. M. de la Brillanne et Souillac, Gouverneurs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des serviteurs noirs embarqués à bord du vaisseau de Cartet Le Marin pour l'île de France, Mars 1777</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-49-2 1779 Corr. Gén. M. de la Brillanne et Souillac,</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note sur la défense et travaux de fortifications, 1er Septembre 1779</li> </ul> <p>→ les travaux vont reprendre avec plus de vigueur par le moyen de 500 noirs environ qu'on a obligé aux habitants de l'île de France de fournir</p> <p>→ sur la dépense en noirs pour les fortifications</p>
<b>COL C4-50-1 1779 Corr. Gén. Foucault et Chevreau</b>	<i>Pas d'information relative à l'esclavage dans ce registre</i>
<b>COL C4-50-2 1779 Corr. Gén. Foucault et Chevreau</b>	<i>Pas d'information relative à l'esclavage dans ce registre</i>
<b>COL C4-51 1779 Correspondance Générale, fonctionnaires divers, mémoires et projets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le Chevalier des Rosy, chargé des travaux pour fortifier cette colonie</li> </ul> <p>→ 12 Septembre 1779, à M. Masse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "si vous me permettez de faire venir mille noirs Mozambique, en 4 ou 5 années, nous auront fait une enceinte [...]"</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projet d'instructions pour le Chevalier de Ternay, chef d'escadre des armées navales, 1er Mars 1779</li> </ul> <p>→ des noirs libres ou esclaves pour renforcer l'armement des vaisseaux</p>
<b>COL C4-52-1 1780 Correspondance Générale, le Vte de Souillac</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 Juillet 1780</li> </ul> <p>→ recensement des esclaves du Roi au 1er Mai 1780</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ total de 3206 esclaves</li> <li>▪ perte de 58 esclaves en 2 ans</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-52-2 1780 Correspondance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 Octobre 1780</li> </ul> <p>→ "les troubles qui ont agité l'île de Madagascar ont fait renchérir les esclaves à un taux excessif de sorte que M. de Cossigny n'a pu faire traiter qu'un très petit nombre</p>

Générale, le Vte de Souillac	d'esclaves pour son compte [...]"
COL C4-53 1780 Correspondance Générale, Foucault, Intendant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarques et observations sur le projet de dépenses à faire pour les établissements situés au-delà du cap de Bonne Espérance, pendant l'année 1781; 3 Décembre 1780</li> <li>→ habillement, armement, équipement, fourniture pour les troupes et les esclaves du Roi</li> <li>→ recrutement-troupes novices matelots noirs du Roi</li> </ul>
COL C4-54 1780 Correspondance Générale, Mémoires et projets, renseignements divers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annonces, Affiches et avis divers, 29 Novembre 1780</b></li> <li>→ Entrée des Noirs Marrons en prison de la Commune depuis le 23 jusqu'au 29 novembre</li> <li>• <b>Annonces, Affiches et avis divers, 6 Décembre 1780</b></li> <li>→ absences de noirs (avis de recherche)</li> <li>→ entrée des Noirs Marrons en prison de la Commune depuis le 30 Novembre jusqu'au 6 Décembre</li> <li>• 1er Décembre 1780, Observations générales sur les diverses dépenses faites pour le compte du Roi</li> <li>→ l'emploi des noirs du Roi et leur utilité</li> <li>• Aperçu de ce que le département de la Marine aura à payer en France pour solder les dépenses de l'administration des îles de France et Bourbon faites pendant les exercices 1780 et 1781</li> <li>→ Noirs du Roi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "il y en a actuellement environ 4000 dont on suppose toujours 400 à l'hôpital"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
COL C4-55-1 1781 Correspondance Générale, M. le Vicomte de Souillac, Gouverneur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Octobre 1781</li> <li>→ "l'un de nous ayant déterminé d'envoyer dans l'Inde avec l'escadre de M. le comte Dirvés la quantité de 1000 noirs dont partie est nécessaire au service de l'artillerie et dont le surplus doit former un corps pour le commandement d'un officier supérieur, nous avons pris le parti d'en acheter 600 et de compléter els 400 restants [...]"</li> <li>• Achat de Noirs pour l'expédition de l'Inde</li> <li>→ les administrations des Îles de France et Bourbon sont déterminés à acheter 1000 noirs pour l'expédition de l'Inde</li> <li>• Matricule des Noirs achetés pour l'expédition de l'Inde à compter du 24 Septembre 1781</li> <li>→ noms des vendeurs, dates, prix, noms des esclaves</li> <li>• Noirs du Roy</li> <li>→ ordre de réduire le nombre des Noirs du Roy, de ne conserver que les Noirs ouvriers avec leur femme et leurs enfants; et ceux attachés au service des hôpitaux</li> <li>• 10 Octobre 1781</li> <li>→ "un objet de dépense très (?) que nous avons été obligés de faire: l'achat de 230 noirs esclaves que nous avons jugé qu'il était indispensable d'attacher au service de la Marine et celui de l'artillerie"</li> <li>• Expédition de l'Inde</li> <li>→ Armées du roi</li> <li>nombre de noirs dans l'artillerie par vaisseau; total : 378</li> <li>• Ordonnance pour la formation du détachement de l'artillerie destinés à partir dans l'Inde</li> <li>→ Formation de deux compagnies pour le service du Parc</li> <li>"tous les noirs ouvriers ou qui auront quelque talent seront mis par préférence dans les deux compagnies attachées au parc".</li> </ul>
COL C4-56-1 Correspondance Générale, M. Foucault et Chevreau, Intendant, 1781	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat des personnes employées au service des hôpitaux du Roy au 1er Janvier 1781</li> <li>→ Hôpital du Port-Louis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Charles Renaud, chargé de l'hôpital des noirs, entrée à l'hôpital le 1er avril 1780</li> </ul> </li> <li>→ <b>Asime, interprète des noirs, entrée à l'hôpital le 1er Juillet 1779</b></li> <li>• Etat de comparaison du prix des journées de malades évalué sur les dépenses des dits hôpitaux pendant les mois d'avril à septembre 1781</li> <li>→ journées de malades des noirs</li> </ul>

	<p>prix des journées du noir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hôpital Royal du Port-Louis, Extrait des registres des procès verbaux, 1er Aout 1781,       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Infirmiers noirs           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ depuis 1777 certains noirs du Roy "en qualité d'infirmiers puis on en a loué aux particuliers suite à la hausse du nombre de malades"</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Hôpital des esclaves malades           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "le local était trop resserré. pas assez de place pour séparer les différents genre de maladies et les maladies contagieuses"</li> <li>▪ "confusion pour les remèdes car les esclaves ne retiennent pas leur nom ni celui de leur maitres et changent de place"</li> <li>▪ <b>les noirs créoles et ouvriers répugnent à venir à l'hôpital et préfèrent rester chez eux</b></li> <li>▪ défaut de salle pour les noirs vénériens. murs en palissades pourries</li> <li>▪ selon les ordres de M. l'Intendant on a séparé les esclaves malades dans le bâtiment qui servit avant de Magasin à l'artillerie, plus spacieux, plus sain mais pas entouré, plein d'ouvertures, certains noirs s'échappent</li> <li>▪ <b>"nécessité d'un hôpital bien entouré où l'on peut maintenir les esclaves comme l'ancien l'hôpital avec distribution par salles, une salle pour les négresses enceintes pour y venir faire leurs couches au lieu d'accoucher dans leur paillettes où elles perdent presque tous leurs enfants, une salle pour les lascars avec une petite cuisine séparée pour eux attendu qu'il ne prennent absolument d'autres aliments que ceux préparés par les gens de leur caste et de leur religion"</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Prospectus de la dépense concernant les esclaves du roi, 1er aout 1781       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ nourriture: mahis</li> <li>➔ habillement           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "celui de chaque noir est composé de toile bleue, un chapeau, un mouchoir gris - 1865 noirs"</li> <li>▪ "celui de chaque négresse est composée de toile bleue, d'un chapeau et de deux mouchoirs - 883 négresses"</li> <li>▪ "celui de chaque négrillon est composé de toile bleue et de deux mouchoirs- 317 négrillons jusqu'à 7 ans"</li> <li>▪ "celui de chaque négritte est composé de toile bleue et de deux mouchoirs- 248 négrittes depuis 10 jours jusqu'à 7 à 8 ans"</li> <li>▪ total de 3263 esclaves</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ mortalité des esclaves           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 119 en 1779</li> <li>▪ 149 en 1780</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>COL C4-58-1</b> <b>1782</b> <b>Correspondance Générale, le Vicomte de Souillac</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lettre du 3 novembre 1782 du Vicomte de Souillac       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ "la 12ème [lettre adressée] du 1er Novembre est l'état des noirs et négresses morts pendant les mois de juillet, aout septembre et octobre, au nombre de 106"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mémoire présenté à M. le Vicomte de Souillac et à M. Chevreau, sur la nécessité absolue d'un bâtiment en pierre pour y établir l'hôpital des esclaves malades par le commissaire préposé au détail des hôpitaux Le Chanvalon, le 16 Octobre 1782       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Le 1er hôpital avant l'arrivée de M. Chevreau était de 20 toises de long, sur 17 pieds de large et 6 pieds de hauteur, ayant du jour d'un seul côté. aucun moyen de renouveler l'air-obscurité</li> <li>➔ M. Chevreau a accordé pour l'hôpital des noirs une salle qui servait autrefois de magasin à l'artillerie qui a 18 toises de longueur, toises de largeur et 9 pieds de hauteur, elle laisse passer l'air des deux côtés, elle est par conséquence mal faite           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ce local est hors de l'enceinte de l'hôpital, ce qui apporte des difficultés</li> <li>▪ il n'est pas entouré:" la vigilance ne peut empêcher que chaque malade reçoivent du dehors par les fenêtres des aliments, des fruits et même des boissons"</li> <li>▪ il ne présente aucun moyen de séparer les différentes maladies</li> <li>▪ <b>les noirs évitent donc l'hôpital et cachent leurs maladies autant qu'ils le peuvent. Ils se font traiter en secret par des malabars ou se traitent entre eux"</b></li> <li>▪ <b>"la population des négresses du roi diminue à cause de l'augmentation du</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p><b>libertinage et n'ont pas même un asile pour faire leurs couches. Elles perdent presque tous leurs enfants"</b></p> <p>→ "on peut sur l'emplacement qui servait avant d'hôpital de blancs élever un bâtiment en pierre qui servira d'hôpital pour les noirs. Ce sera en quelques sortes une dépendance de l'hôpital des blancs et avoir un lieu en commun, les secours seront plus faciles, plus prompts et moins dispendieux."</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plan du cimetière du Port-Louis</b></li> <li>→ <b>cimetière pour les blancs attenant au cimetière pour les noirs</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>COL C4-58-2</b> <b>1782</b> <b>Correspondance Générale, le Vicomte de Souillac</b></p>	<p>Pas d'information relative à l'esclavage dans ce registre</p>
<p><b>COL C4-59-1</b> <b>1782</b> <b>COL C4-59-2</b> <b>1782</b> <b>Correspondance Générale, M. Chevreau, Intendant</b></p>	<p><i>Pas d'information relative à l'esclavage dans ce registre</i></p>
<p><b>COL C4-60</b> <b>1782</b> <b>Mémoires de M. le Vicomte de Souillac et de M. Chevreau</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nottes sur l'administration des Isle de France et de Bourbon</li> <li>→ destination générique qu'il faudrait donner aux esclaves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ il en existe à peu près dans les deux iles 3600</li> <li>▪ à conserver pour le port: 500</li> <li>▪ infirmes, estropiés ou vieillards: 400</li> <li>▪ en remplacement des pions indiens: 40</li> <li>▪ au moulin à poudre: 60</li> <li>▪ à donner au compte du munitionnaire (hôpitaux, magasins, boucherie, boulangerie, gardiens de troupeaux, moulins, équipage de canots et chaloupes, ateliers des forges, menuiserie, maçonnerie, briqueterie : 600</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tableau général et abrégé de la population de l'Isle de France , suivant les recensements de Janvier 1785</li> <li>→ total noirs libres: 363 dont <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Port Bourbon: 16</li> <li>▪ Flacq: 12</li> <li>▪ Rivière basse du Rempart: 16</li> <li>▪ Pamplémousses: 16</li> <li>▪ Rivière Noire: 13</li> <li>▪ Moka: 9</li> <li>▪ Plaines de Wilhems: 4</li> <li>▪ Ville de Port-Louis: 277</li> </ul> </li> <li>→ total noirs esclaves: 31908 dont <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Port Bourbon: 2619</li> <li>▪ Flacq: 3537</li> <li>▪ Rivière basse du Rempart: 2668</li> <li>▪ Pamplémousses: 6140</li> <li>▪ Rivière Noire: 3157</li> <li>▪ Moka: 2372</li> <li>▪ Plaines de Wilhems: 2843</li> <li>▪ Ville de Port-Louis: 5446</li> <li>▪ Sa Majesté le Roi de France: 3126</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noirs du Roy</li> <li>→ nécessité d'en diminuer le nombre en temps de guerre</li> <li>→ plus de 1900 noirs ont été achetés ou loués pour le service de l'Expédition de l'Inde. Il n'en est pas revenu 400 à l'Isle de France</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ 694 sont morts dans les hôpitaux du Port Louis entre le 1er juillet 1781 jusqu'au 15 septembre</li> <li>• Noirs du Roi</li> <li>➔ Mémoires du Roi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ l'intention de Sa Majesté est que le nombre total soit fixé à 1200</li> </ul> </li> <li>➔ Réponses et observations de MM. les administrateurs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ en temps de paix, une réduction du nombre des noirs du roi sera très avantageuse</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat Général des noirs et négresses, négrillons et négrittes appartenant au Roi qui se sont trouvés à l'Isle de France en 1783- tableau avec: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ noms</li> <li>➔ désignation des castes</li> <li>➔ âge</li> <li>➔ numéros des médailles dont ils sont porteurs</li> <li>➔ métiers</li> <li>➔ endroits où ils sont détachés pour les noirs qui ont une destination fixe</li> <li>➔ observations (mariés en face d'Eglise ou non, marrons, décès)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Noirs du Roy- fourniture en subsistance, Juillets 1783 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Etat des vivres qui doivent être fournis des magasins du roi pour la subsistance des noirs ci après, 1783 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ commandeur: 1/4 de livre de viande salée, 2 livres de riz ou mahis par jour et 3 de sel par mois</li> <li>▪ noirs ou négresse: 2 livres de riz en paille ou de mahis par jour et 2 de sel par mois</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noirs du Roy- fourniture en effets d'entretien, Juillet 1783 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Etat des effets qui doivent être fournis des magasins du roi pour l'entretien des noirs et négresses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 mouchoir, 1 chapeau, 6 toile bleue</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Noirs du Roy- fourniture en effets et ustensiles, Juillets 1783 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Etat des divers ustensiles à délivrer des magasins du Roi à l'usage des noirs et négresses du roi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ pour 1 commandeur: 1 moulin à mahis, 1 pilon pour le riz en paille, 1 marmite de dimension 4 pts, 2 cuillers de bois, 2 couteau flamand, 2 nattes pour couchette des noirs</li> <li>▪ pour 2 sous commandeurs: 1 moulin à mahis, 1 pilon pour le riz en paille, 1 marmite de dimension 4 pts, 2 cuillers de bois, 2 couteau flamand, 4 nattes pour couchette des noirs</li> <li>▪ pour 100 noirs ou négresses :10 moulins à mahis, 10 pilons pour le riz en paille, 10 marmites de dimension 10 pts, 100 cuillers de bois, 100 couteaux flamands, 100 nattes pour couchette des noirs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rôle des noirs Forgerons du Roi attachés aux ateliers couverts d sa Majesté et qui se sont trouvés y exister le 1er Juillet 1783 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ noms</li> <li>➔ numéro de médaille dont ils sont porteurs</li> <li>➔ même rôle pout les charpentiers, menuisiers et autres ouvriers du port ainsi que pour les ouvriers du Génie, de l'artillerie</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mémoire relatif au noirs et négresses du Roy aux iles de France et de Bourbon, 1er aout 1782 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ nécessité de choisir un officier d'administration chargé spécialement et exclusivement des noirs</li> <li>▪ il devra constaté le nombre de ces esclaves, désignés par leur noms, âge, sexe et talents divers</li> <li>▪ il devra fixer invariablement la manière dont ces esclaves doivent être nourris et entretenus pour calculer le montant des dépenses</li> <li>▪ l'usage de médailles continuera d'avoir lieu, numéro noté à coté du nom de l'esclave</li> <li>▪ proposition de faire tous les 2 mois la revue de ces noirs, assisté d'un chirurgien</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pour examiner les esclaves</li> <li>→ emploi et distribution des noirs</li> <li>→ loyer des noirs et bénéfices que l'on peut en tirer</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feuille d'observation au sujet de la Nègrière du Roi aux Isles de France et de Bourbon</li> <li>→ inconvénients d'avoir des noirs et négresses enfants et invalides</li> <li>→ "l'humanité s'oppose à vendre des invalides dont presque tout le temps de la vie a été employés aux travaux les plus pénibles"</li> <li>→ "les femmes, dont l'utilité pour la plus grande partie se réduit à porter des pierres sur leur tête pour les travaux [...]"</li> <li>→ "il y a celles qui sont enceintes ou nourrices, lesquelles ne rendent aucun service tout une partie de l'année, il ne faut au moins les loger, les nourrir, les habiller et leur donner des ustensiles"</li> <li>→ nécessité de vendre certains noirs aux habitants- garder les noirs mâles les plus robustes</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-61</b> <b>1782</b> <b>Mémoires de M. le Vicomte de Souillac et de M. Chevreau</b>	<i>Pas d'information relative à l'esclavage dans ce registre</i>
<b>COL C4-62</b> <b>1783</b> <b>M. le Vicomte de Souillac et de M. Chevreau</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 26 Mars 1783, Port-Louis</li> <li>→ "le seul canal qui conduise l'eau à la ville est dans un état de dépérissement [...] les nègres et négresse du voisinage viennent y laver leur linge et ceux de leurs enfants, d'autres s'y baignent et même des libertins y jettent des charognes et y font d'autres ordures pour le seul plaisir de faire le mal"</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 18 Aout 1780</li> <li>→ Sieur Weller de Wallems, bourgeois du Port-Louis a été embarqué sur la frégate la <i>Silphide</i>- la voix publique lui reproche des massacres d'esclaves</li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-63-1</b> <b>1783</b> <b>M. Chevreau, Intendant</b>  <b>Mémoires et projets, renseignements divers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettre du 30 Mai 1783</li> <li>→ Article sur les esclaves du Roi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ mortalité qu'a engendrée en grande partie le vaisseau L'Alexandre</li> <li>▪ les cultivateurs ont fournis tout ce qu'ils ont pu d'esclaves</li> <li>▪ dépenses qu'occasionnent les esclaves</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etat nominatif des noirs de loyer employés dans le détail des constructions et ateliers couverts pendant le premier quartier de l'année 1783, 3 Avril 1783</li> <li>→ Constructions en radoub <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Charpentiers</li> <li>▪ Calfats</li> </ul> </li> <li>→ Ateliers couverts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Forgerons</li> <li>▪ Cloutiers</li> <li>▪ Chaudronniers et ferblantiers</li> <li>▪ Gouliers</li> <li>▪ Tourneurs</li> <li>▪ Charrons</li> <li>▪ Menuisiers</li> <li>▪ Tonneliers</li> <li>▪ Bourliers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>COL C4-63-2</b> <b>1783</b> <b>M. Chevreau, Intendant</b> <b>Mémoires et projets, renseignements divers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affiches et avis divers</li> <li>→ Entrée des noirs marrons en prison de la commune depuis le 11 jusqu'au 17 septembre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Noms des noirs, des maitres, date</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> On trouvera un bref aperçu, d'une utilité limitée, dans A. Loughon, A. *Documents concernant les Iles de Bourbon et de France pendant la régie de la Compagnie des Indes [...]*, Nérac, Archives Départementales de la Réunion, 1953.

<sup>2</sup> *Dépôt des papiers publics des colonies.*

<sup>3</sup> Guide, p. 192.

# A SLAVE TRADE DATABASE FOR MAURITIUS

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## 1. PURPOSE

In order to arrive at an improved assessment of the volume of the slave trade to Mauritius, and the actual number of slaves having been disembarked in Mauritius, it has been thought necessary to start an inventory of all ship arrivals, using a variety of sources located in several countries. For various reasons, many ships do not list the number of slaves whom they are carrying and, therefore, this information has to be gleaned from other sources and all the 'snippets' of information correlated.

As most sources are to be found for the period 1767 onwards, when the Royal Government took over the island, this period has also been the focus of historians. This information is readily available through the works of Toussaint, Filliot and Allen. It was important, therefore, for the Commission to collate data for lesser-known periods: pre-1767 for the French East Indies Company period and post-1815, which was the period of the illegal slave trade. Also, since many Mauritians were anxious to know 'where slaves landed' for memorial purposes, it was thought necessary to delve into these periods.

It is also necessary to include in the calculations, those ships/persons/slaves destined for Mauritius, but who never arrived. A preliminary study has been undertaken with the assistance of Thomas Vernet who has provided the Commission with all the references relating to the slave trade to Mauritius from the East African coast, from his personal research. This includes, not only those who arrived, but also those who were embarked but never arrived, due to revolt, shipwreck, diseased etc. This information will be inserted in the database. Information is being compiled by Benigna Zimba from Mozambique to supplement this data from Mozambican Archives and, hopefully, in the future from Portuguese Archives.

A simple slave-trade database has been created which lists all ships arriving in Mauritius. This endeavour is similar to that compiled by Toussaint and, later, by Allen where all details of ship voyages are listed. All possible details have been listed about the voyages. The database has so far inputted information from the *Déclaration d'arrivées* found in the Mauritius National Archives, the *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers*. To complement this, the *Amirauté*, the *déclarations diverses* and the *registres de congé de navigation* has given additional information on tonnage, ship crews and owners. This was followed by selective searches in France which need to be continued. The Commission has also tapped into the work of numerous associations in France who are compiling data from French Departmental Archives on Mauritius. We have taken into consideration that some of this is the work of amateur historians and that much of the work is not referenced. Great care has been taken to verify the information provided by these associations.<sup>1</sup>

The database will serve the needs of future scholars, individuals and institutions as a reference tool. The database may be added to by scholars doing future searches in notarial deeds, inventories of possessions, Civil Status lists etc. for various studies.

We have taken into consideration changes in the names of ships, changes in tonnage, especially when primes were offered per *tonneau jauge* in 1784.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF DATA

There are many issues to consider, when inputting and analyzing the information compiled, and to be taken into consideration at the start of the study:

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### Changes in the type of information supplied:

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It has been observed that the first volumes indicate the number of slaves but cease to do so in subsequent volumes.<sup>2</sup>

---

### Ships from Madagascar are treated as suspect:

Ships from Madagascar needed to be all recorded. Although the number of slaves carried on board were also small, the voyages were frequent and numerous. Most carried beef and cattle, but slaves were often part of this cargo. Thus, all ships from Madagascar were listed, unless it was expressly stated that they were not carrying slaves. Will all these small but frequent voyages amount to a lot? We shall see.

---

### Ships trading during prohibition are treated as suspect:

Furthermore, ships arriving from slave trading areas during periods of prohibition i.e., before 1802 and after 1815, should all be treated as 'suspect', and as possibly carrying slaves but listed, for example, as '200 tortues'. A classic example of this is the *Sans Culotte* which, during the period of prohibition, could not officially carry slaves; thus officially it went to Madagascar to purchase rice:

*"Le traite des noirs étant interdite, nous prîmes des expéditions, pour Madagascar où nous devions charger du riz [...]"*

They did not go to Madagascar and went instead to Mozambique: "[...] nous fîmes dans cette île en très peu de temps et a beau compte une forte belle traite [...] Le 20 mai nous appareillâmes, ayant à bord 340 noirs."<sup>3</sup>

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### Duplication:

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When all the ships' lists consulted have been compiled, duplicates will be removed, as often the same ship had different names and so was listed twice. Records will be combined, when it is found that the same ship is listed twice.

---

### Changes in names:

---

The same ship changed names when it was sold. For example, Mesle de Grandclos from St. Malo sold several of his ships to the French Navy or to corsairs: the *Baron Binder* became *Duguay Trouin*, the *Sénégalien* became the *Allègre* and the *Américain* became the *Républicain*.<sup>4</sup>

---

### Confusing terminologies:

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Some terminologies were confusing or were too general to be useful; i.e., the location African Coast or "Côte d'Afrique" did not indicate whether it was from East Africa or more South-Eastern

---

Africa.

Once this data is compiled, it can be scrutinised by statisticians, and an idea formed of how many came as slaves to Mauritius, and of their value. Added to this compilation will be those who were embarked in their country of origin but who never arrived for various reasons.

This will allow scholars to make the following statistical analysis:

Number of voyages towards slave trading zones of which:

x% of voyages sure to have embarked slaves

x% of voyages for which there is a strong possibility of slaves on board.

If it is not possible to estimate, with greater accuracy, the number of slaves, one can at least find the number of ships that arrived with slaves.

### 3. THE 'VOYAGES DATABASE'

The 'Voyages Database' aims at helping researchers to analyse the slave trade happenings for the period 1715-1848. The database keeps data about the ships involved in the slave trade. Ship data, such as the length, depth, draught are recorded. Information about the different ports where slave trade occurred are also recorded. The database also allows to keep track of the different voyages happening during that period in time. Details of events occurring during the voyage are also recorded, for example, dates of departure, date of arrival, the different stops made along the journey, and any trade happening during those stops. We also keep track of the status of voyages.

The database generates dynamic summary reports such as:

1. The number of voyages during a specific period of time;
2. The number of slaves on board at Port Louis for different years;
3. The number of stops for a particular voyage;
4. The number of voyages undertaken by a specific ship;
5. The number of voyages undertaken by specific year and ship; and
6. The outcome of different voyages (e.g. completed as intended, wrecked, captured by the British).

Many of these reports are accompanied with graphs (line charts, pie charts) which allow the large amount of data to be interpreted through a visual interface. This will enable easy analysis and interpretation of results. Such graphs will also highlight trends during specific periods in time.

The database has been designed in such a way that it provides a user-friendly interface for both data entry and analysis of data. The database is secured and requires user authentication. It also provides different levels of access. It has been developed over a web-based architecture, so that maintenance is easy. The database is deployed using Open Source Software such as Apache, MySQL and PHP.

In order to save on the amount of data entry to be done into the database, the data from the Excel sheets available were imported into MySQL and an interface created to sanitise the data. A PHP script was then written to transfer the relevant voyage records to the voyages database. Ships are given a sequence number, since different ships can have the same name and flag. The script written causes any repeating ship's name to have a sequence number higher than the last encountered one. It will be up to the researchers to determine, based on the voyage details, whether they consider these to be the same ship and make necessary updates.

Subsequent entries into the database will have to be done *via* the user interface forms provided with the system. The system allows for details that can be re-used to be selected from drop-down lists, and these lists can be dynamically populated.

The database has been designed in such a way that it allows flexibility - for example, if a new outcome for ships is encountered, this can be easily added to the system and the reports will reflect the new changes. The design of the database is such that it can be easily upgraded to cater for other periods of time and other types of voyages in the future. The different entities involved in the voyages database are shown in the UML class (fig. 1). Some sample input screen and sample report for the database (figs. 2-7). These are based on sample data entered into the system and do not reflect actual data.

Figure 1: Different entities of the database

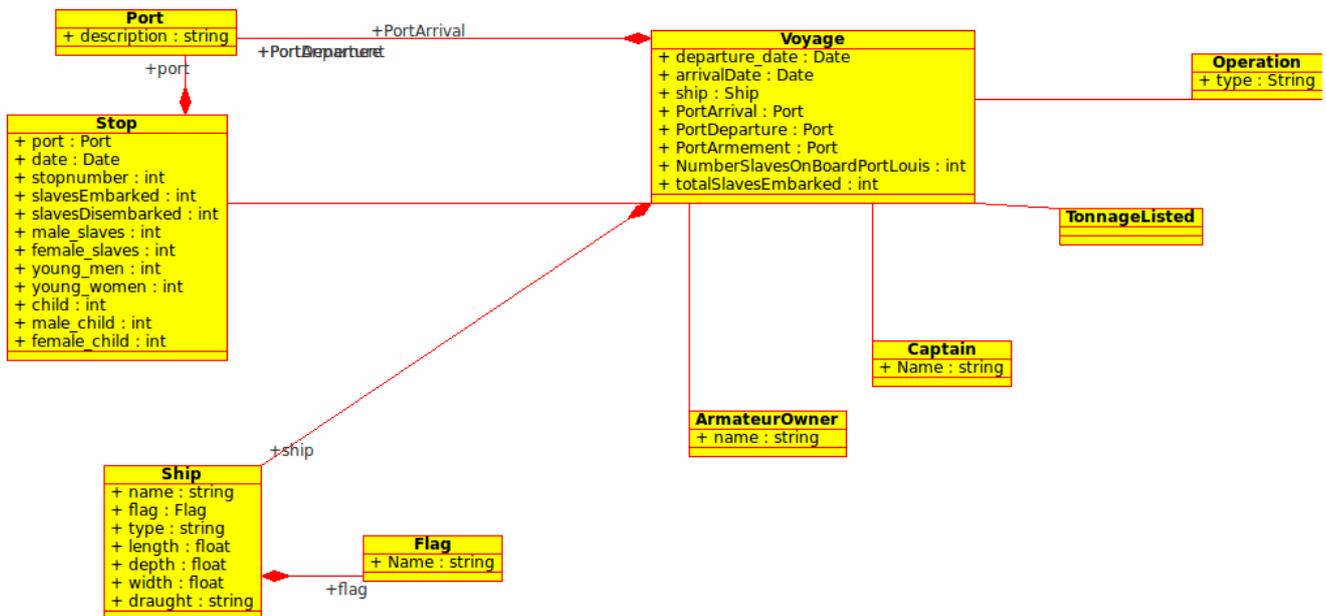


Figure 2: Screenshot for allowing capture of voyage details

*Truth and Justice Commission*

Data Validation  
 Raw Data  
 Ship Type  
 Ship Type  
 Armatoowner  
 Captain  
 Flag  
 Operation Type  
 Port Place  
 Ship  
 Voyage  
 Voyagestatus  
 VoyageType  
 Reports  
 Logout

Add to TABLE: Voyage

[Go Back](#)

Type	negrier
Status	Wrecked
Departure Day	2
Departure Month	12
Departure Year	1789
Ship	Abyssinie / French / 0
Port Armement	La Rochelle
Departure Port/Place	Lorient
Arrival Day	1
Arrival Month	1
Arrival Year	1780
Arrival Port/Place	Port-Louis
Total Slaves Embarked	400
Slaves Onboard At Pious	300
Crew	
Crew Death	
Goods Carried	
Navigation Time	
Legal	<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/> unknown
Comments	

Figure 3: Screenshot for displaying voyage details captured

Truth and Justice Commission

Data Validation  
[Raw Data](#)  
[Ship Type](#)  
[Ship Type](#)  
[Armateur/owner](#)  
[Captain](#)  
[Flag](#)  
[Operation Type](#)  
[Port Place](#)  
[Ship](#)  
[Voyage](#)  
[Voyagestatus](#)  
[Voyagestype](#)  
[Reports](#)  
[Logout](#)

TABLE: Voyage

Search  Search (\*) Show all

Type = Please Select

Exact phrase  All words  Any word

Add succeeded

Voyage Id	Type	Status	Departure Day (*)	Departure Month (*)	Departure Year (*)	Ship	Port Armement	Departure Port/Place	Arrival Day (*)	Arrival M
7	negrier	Wrecked	2	12	1789	Abyssinie / French / 0	La Rochelle	Lorient	1	1
6	negrier	Completed as Intended	2	2	1876	Actif / British / 0	Isle de France	La Rochelle	2	12
5	negrier	Completed as Intended	2	3	1876	Comte de Toulouse / French / 0	La Rochelle	La Rochelle	2	3
4	negrier	Taken by the British	2	2	1897	Comte de Toulouse / French / 0	La Rochelle	La Rochelle		
3	negrier	Wrecked	1	1	1897	Dromadaire / French / 0	0	0		
2	negrier	Completed as Intended	12	3	1700	Deux-Couronnes / French / 0	Lorient	Sables d'Olonne	12	3
1	negrier	Wrecked	12	12	1800	Valincourt / French / 0	Lorient	Isle de France	31	12

Page 1 of 1 Records 1 to 7 of 7  
[Add](#) [Inline Add](#) [Grid Edit](#)

Figure 4: Screenshot of report - Summary of status of voyages over different years

Truth and Justice Commission

Reports

Voyages Status Summary by Year

NUM VOYAGES (SUM)	Departure Year				
Voyage Status	1700	1789	1800	1876	1897
Completed as Intended	1	0	0	2	0
Taken by the British	0	0	0	0	1
Wrecked	0	1	1	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

Page 1 of 1 Groups Per Page All Records -  
 1 to 3 of 3

Figure 5: Screenshot of report - Summary of status of voyages

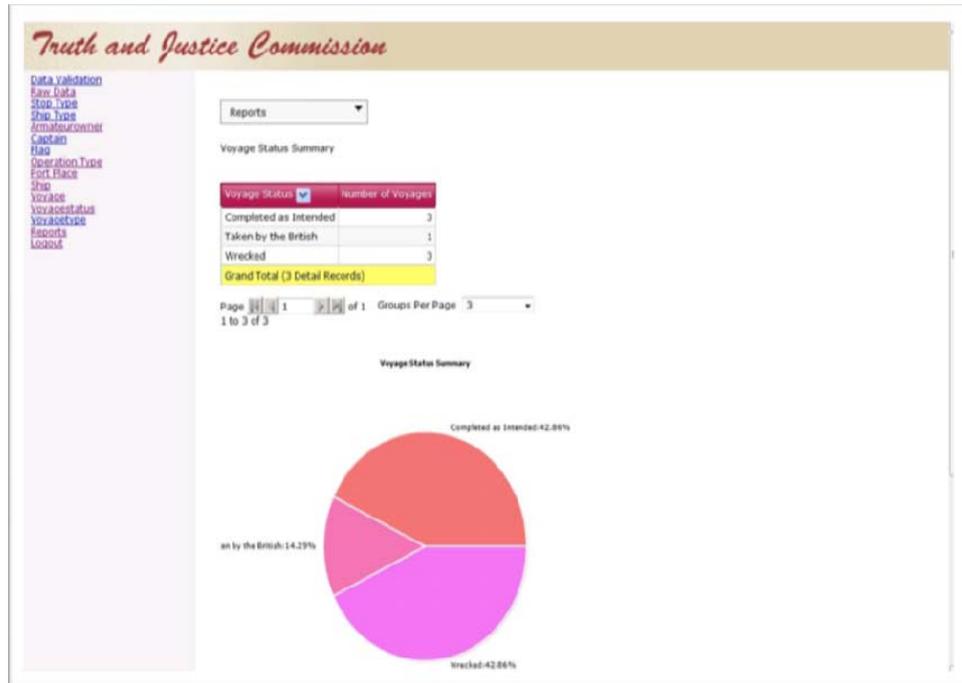


Figure 6: Screenshot of report - Summary of number of voyages by ship with data filtered



## 4. LIST OF FIELDS AND THEIR EXPLANATION

<b>Name of ship</b>	According to Toussaint, this appears generally accurate, although sometimes names are misspelt. Many are names of females, of places with freemason connotations ( <i>Deux Amis, Trois Frères</i> etc.)
<b>Name of ship master</b>	Mortality being high on board, often the name appearing at beginning of the voyage is different from that at destination, as the person may have died during the voyage
<b>Name of owner</b>	This is obtained from the <i>congés de navigation</i> or private papers.
<b>Type of ship</b>	This is either a <i>bâtiment</i> , a <i>navire</i> or a <i>vaisseau</i> . According to Toussaint, all of these could include large and small ships. However, Toussaint recorded at least 24 different types of ships. There were also privateers (corsairs), semi-privateers and Company ships most of which would be armed.
<b>Nationality</b>	Private merchant ships would rarely be armed.
<b>Port of registry</b>	Many ships were registered in France, but once here, they were commissioned for shorter local trips, such as the slave trade and were involved in the quadrangular trade. So they are also listed as registered in Mauritius. Those built in Mauritius and moving solely between Mauritius and Bourbon are 'Creole' ships but do not sail on other longer routes.
<b>Tonnage</b>	This was generally calculated in French <i>tonneaux</i> , while for foreign ships, it is not possible to state according to Toussaint whether foreign measurements of tonnage were used. The French <i>tonneau de jauge</i> corresponds to 42 cubic feet or 1.44 cubic metres. The British freight ton is 40 cubic feet or 1.132m.
<b>Armament/Artillery</b>	This refers to arms and ammunition carried by ships, usually carried by slaving ships ( <i>négrriers</i> ), corsair ships, Company ships (Indiamen). Information on this is derived from the <i>congés de navigation</i> .
<b>Crew</b>	The crew consisted of roughly one man per 10 <i>tonneaux</i> , according to Toussaint. Therefore, any ship which was not a military or corsair, carrying more than this, would be considered as carrying more than the cargo stated, i.e., slaves.  Crew would often consist of Europeans/Americans, <i>lascars</i> , African slaves etc.
<b>Passengers</b>	Information may not be complete for this as ships were not required to state the number of passengers. However, the <i>Affiches, Annonces et Avis divers, déclarations d'arrivées</i> , would have this information.
<b>Cargo</b>	The part that interests us most is the slave cargo which normally should be recorded by the Customs Department, but no records are found for this for early years. The slave cargo is to be inferred from the destinations and arrivals. Wine, foodstuffs, textiles, domestic products and manufactured goods, in order of priority, would be listed as well as slaves and animals. The provenance of a ship, as well as large amounts of food and water on board, can help us determine whether slaves would have been on board or not.

<b>Destination</b>	Almost all long-distance trading ships came to Isle de France, not Bourbon, which had no facilities for repair and no safe harbour. Even short-distance trading ships came to Mauritius on their way to, or from, Bourbon. It is important to know for our purposes if a ship was in transit ( <i>en relâche</i> ) or if the final destination was Mauritius as this would determine whether the final destination of the slaves was Mauritius or not.
<b>Ship details</b>	This includes ship's name, nationality, type (legal/illegal) or type of boat, date and place of construction, length, width, depth, draught, tonnage, guns and weapons, port of armament, <i>Armateur</i> /owner, Insurer, name of Captain, Crew, No. of crew, Cargo, death of crew, the voyage.
<b>Origin</b>	Means the country of origin or seaport from which the ships came to Port-Louis. This information is not always available in the different sources studied, especially for triangular slave trade voyages, but nevertheless, according to Toussaint, <sup>5</sup> most of the voyages had their starting point in Isle de France.
<b>Date of Sailing</b>	The date of sailing is very often not complete; for example, in some cases, the year might be missing. This information is available in the <i>Amirauté</i> and <i>Police Records</i> .
<b>Ports of Call or Stops</b>	Ports of calls were more present during triangular trade voyages, also known as <i>long cours</i> trade. We can guess that it was for supplying needs. We have many examples of stops throughout the various sources, and we can also examine the ships of different nationalities that came to Isle de France.
<b>Accidents and Incidents</b>	Accidents during voyages vary, from hurricanes, diseases on board and slaves revolts; these cases are available in the <i>Amirauté</i> Records and <i>Sous-Série Colonie C4</i> .
<b>Date of Arrival</b>	We agree with Toussaint's observation that we can never know accurately whether the date of arrival stated in the <i>Amirauté</i> Records is the actual date of arrival of these ships. It is difficult to determine whether the ships have spent one day or more in the port, before the entry was made in the <i>Amirauté</i> Records. Nevertheless, the duration of voyage is available for some ships.
<b>First stop</b>	Fields would include the several stops made by the ship by numbering the stops e.g., stop1: no. of slaves, no. of men, no. of women, no. of boys, no. of girls/stop no. 2 would include similar details thus, stop2, totalslave2, men2, women2, boys2, girls2. The date of return (Port return), date of return (Date return), no. of Men, Women, Girls, Boys.
<b>Observation</b>	Fields are left also for 'observations under'.
<b>Results of voyage</b>	This includes the number of ship again, the principal country behind the trade (country principal), the location of the principal, Circumstances of any interruption, the event, its date, place of interruption of the voyage, wreckage, prize, fire, mutiny, Port of return, date of return and observations.

## 5. USER MANUAL

### Slave Trade Database User Manual

The Slave Trade Database contains details about voyages dealing with slave trade. The Slave Trade Database has been built around Open Source Technologies, namely Apache [2], MySQL [3] and PHP [4].

To deploy the application, MoWeS Portable II [1], has been used and provides for set-up of WAMP on any Windows system. To launch the database, open the contents on the pen-drive provided and double-click on "*TJC-DoubleClickMe*". This will launch the different services (Apache and MySQL) and the application will start, as shown in Figure 1 below.

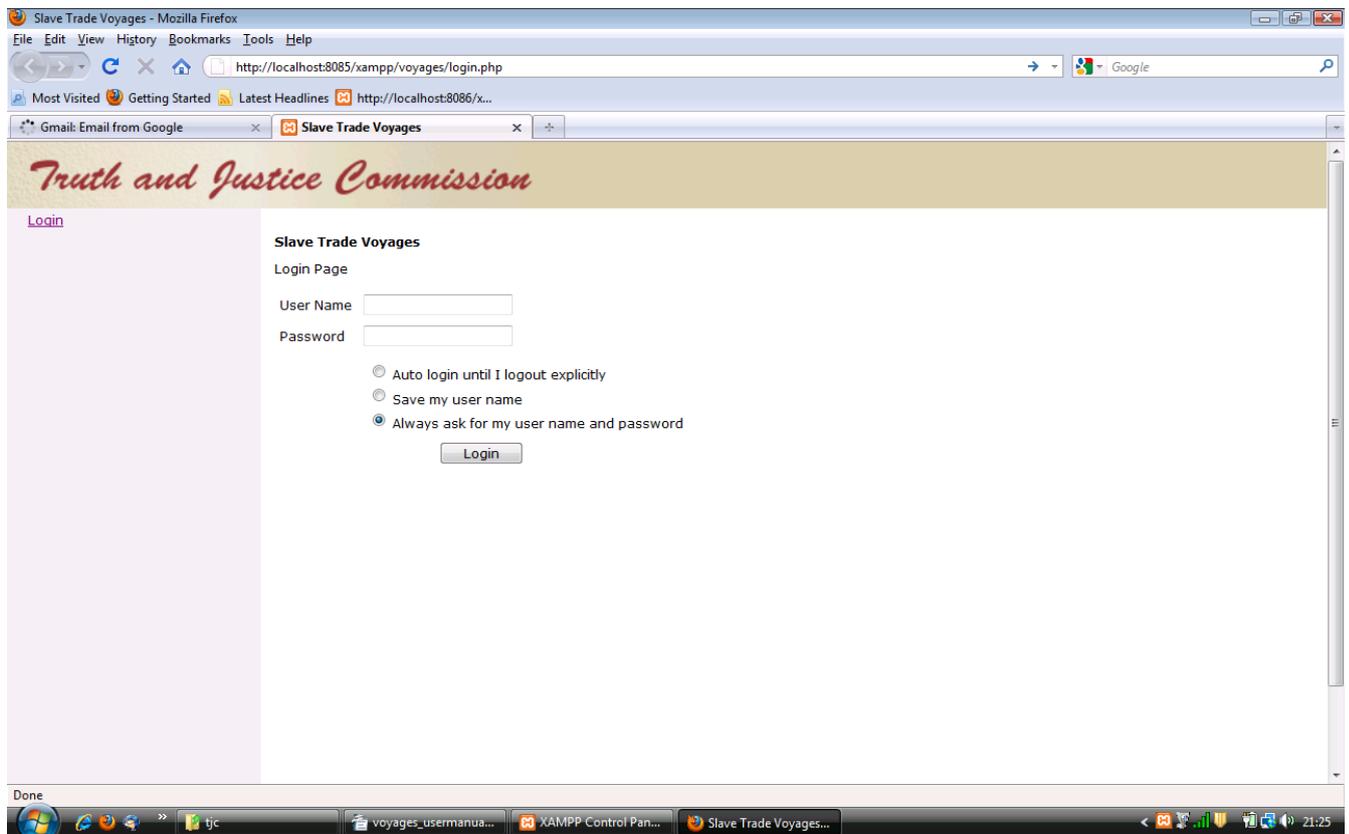


Figure 1: Slave Trade Database Launched

The *User Name* "tjc" and *Password* "tjc" gives full access to the system, as shown in Figure 2.

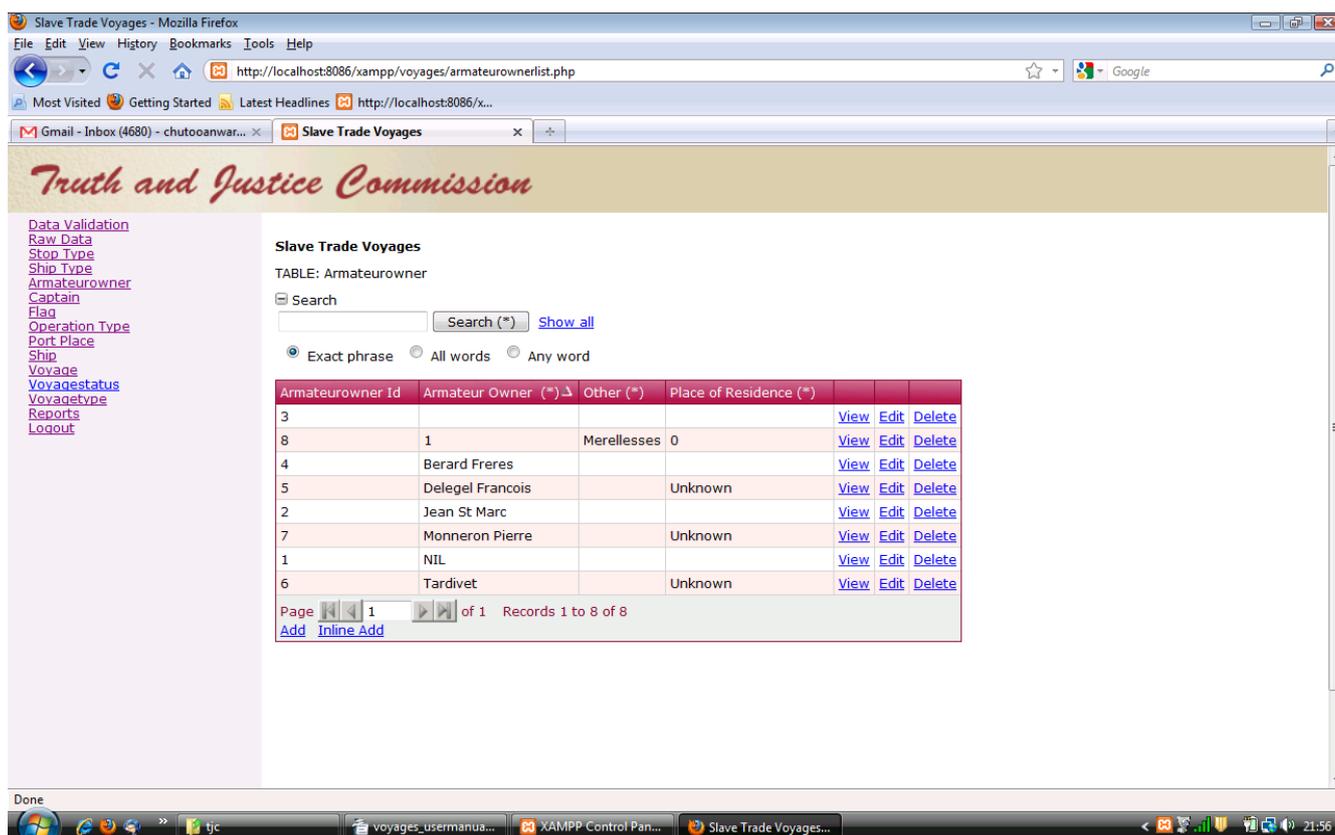


Figure 2: Slave Trade Database

The menu on the left allows the users to navigate to different pages of the system. All the pages, except for report, are modeled in a consistent way: the user is presented with a list of existing entries and he/she can view, edit or delete the entry, while he/she can also add a new entry. The different categories are for example ships, captain, *armateur*/owner ports and voyages. The purpose of each of these is summarized as follows:

1. **StopType**: Defines the different types of stops made by the ship during the voyage (examples could be *traite*, *ravitaillement*)
2. **Ship Type**: Defined the type of ship (examples are *Vaisseau*, *Navire*)
3. **Armateur/Owner**: Define the *Armateur* and owners of the ship for the voyage
4. **Captain**: Defines the captain for the voyage
5. **Flag**: Defines the countries the ships were listed with
6. **Operation Type**: Defines the different types of operation that can happen (armement, désarmement)
7. **Port Place**: Defines the different ports
8. **Ship**: Defines the details of the ship
9. **Voyage Type**: Defines the types of voyages (*négrier*, unknown)
10. **Voyage Status**: Defines the outcome of the voyage (completed as intended etc)
11. **Voyage**: Defines details about the voyage.

The main page for the database is the Voyage link, while the other pages are used so that the different values can be viewed as drop down lists when entering voyage details, as shown in Figure 3 below, where the Type field is showing values entered in the Voyage Type:

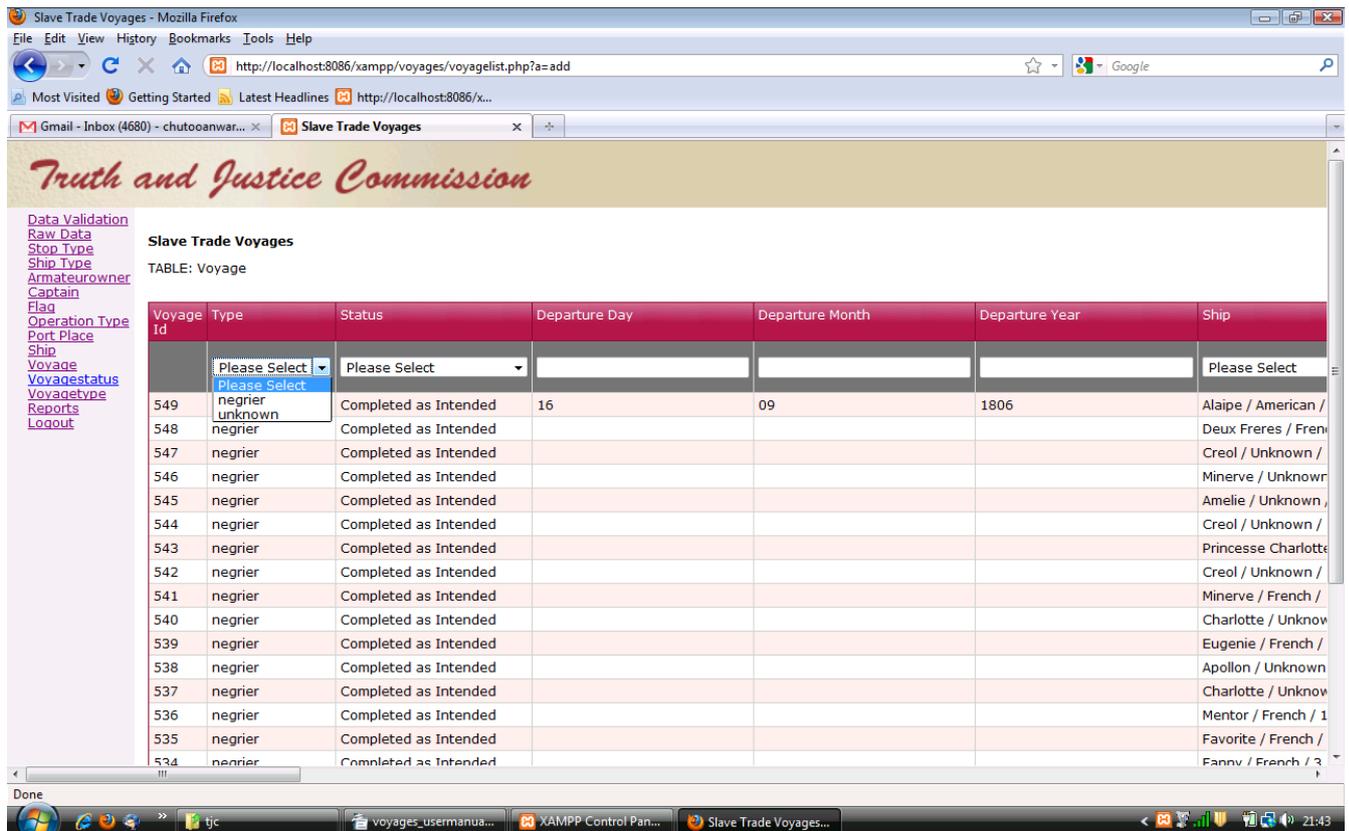


Figure 3: Entering Voyage details

The above mechanism allows the system to be extensible in the future, by allowing new parameters to be entered into the system. The different reports created for the system will be automatically modified accordingly.

Once basic details about a voyage is entered, other parameters like the *VoyageCaptain*, *VoyageArmateurOwner*, *VoyageStops*, *VoyageOperations*, *VoyageTonnages* can be filled in by scrolling to the right of the document and clicking on the relevant links. These options are kept separate from the main entry page, since there can exist more than one of each of them. The model adopted is that of the master-detail pages, where the master can have many related detail records. For example, on clicking on the *VoyageOperations* link for a voyage, the following page is displayed, as shown in Figure 4:

**Slave Trade Voyages**

Master Record: Voyage  
[Back to master page](#)

Voyage Id	Type	Status	Departure Day	Departure Month	Departure Year	Ship	Port Armement	Departure Port/Place	Arrival Day	Arrival Month	Arrival Year	Arrival Port/Place	Total Slaves Embarked	Slaves Onboard At PLouis	Crew	Crew Death	Navigation Time
547	negrier	Completed as Intended				Creol / Unknown / 2	0	0	14	06	1807	Isle de France	18	18	0	0	

TABLE: Voyage Operation

Search   [Show all](#)

Exact phrase  All words  Any word

No records found  
[Add](#) [Inline Add](#)

Figure 4: Page allowing Voyage Operations to be added

On clicking on *Add* or *InlineAdd*, the operations for that voyage can be added.

The raw data link contains all data that had been entered into an Excel sheet and has been imported into the system, although they are not sanitized data.

Different reports have been created to represent the patterns of the voyages. These can be accessed by clicking on the *Reports* link in the menu, and clicking on the drop down list "*Reports*", where the different reports available in the database will be shown. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

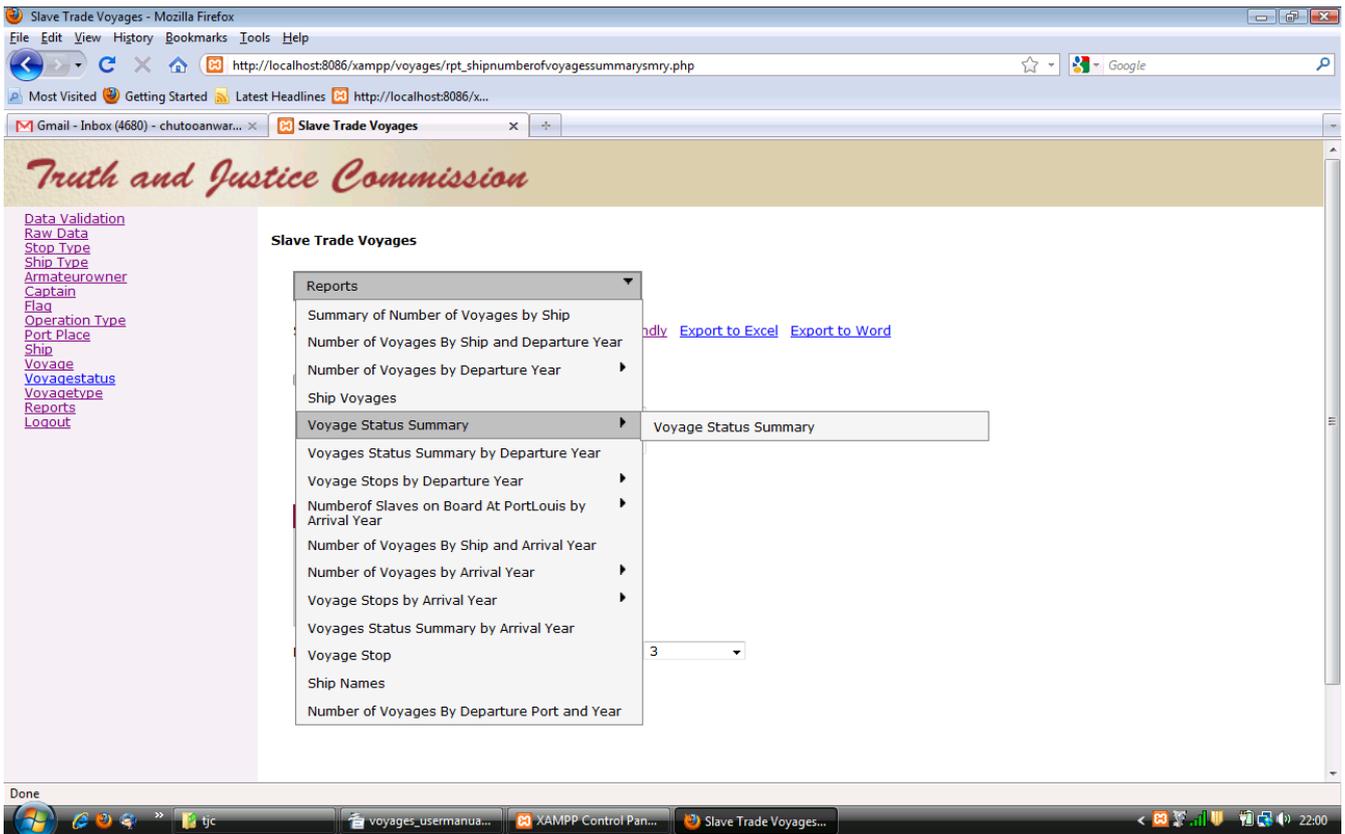


Figure 5: Accessing reports in database

The data accessed *via* the different reports can be exported to Excel, Word or HTML with the menu removed, by clicking on the Export to Excel, Export to Word, Printer Friendly links respectively. This allows the data to be easily extracted from the system. The reports also contain diagrammatic representations of the data (line charts and pie charts), as shown in Figure 6:

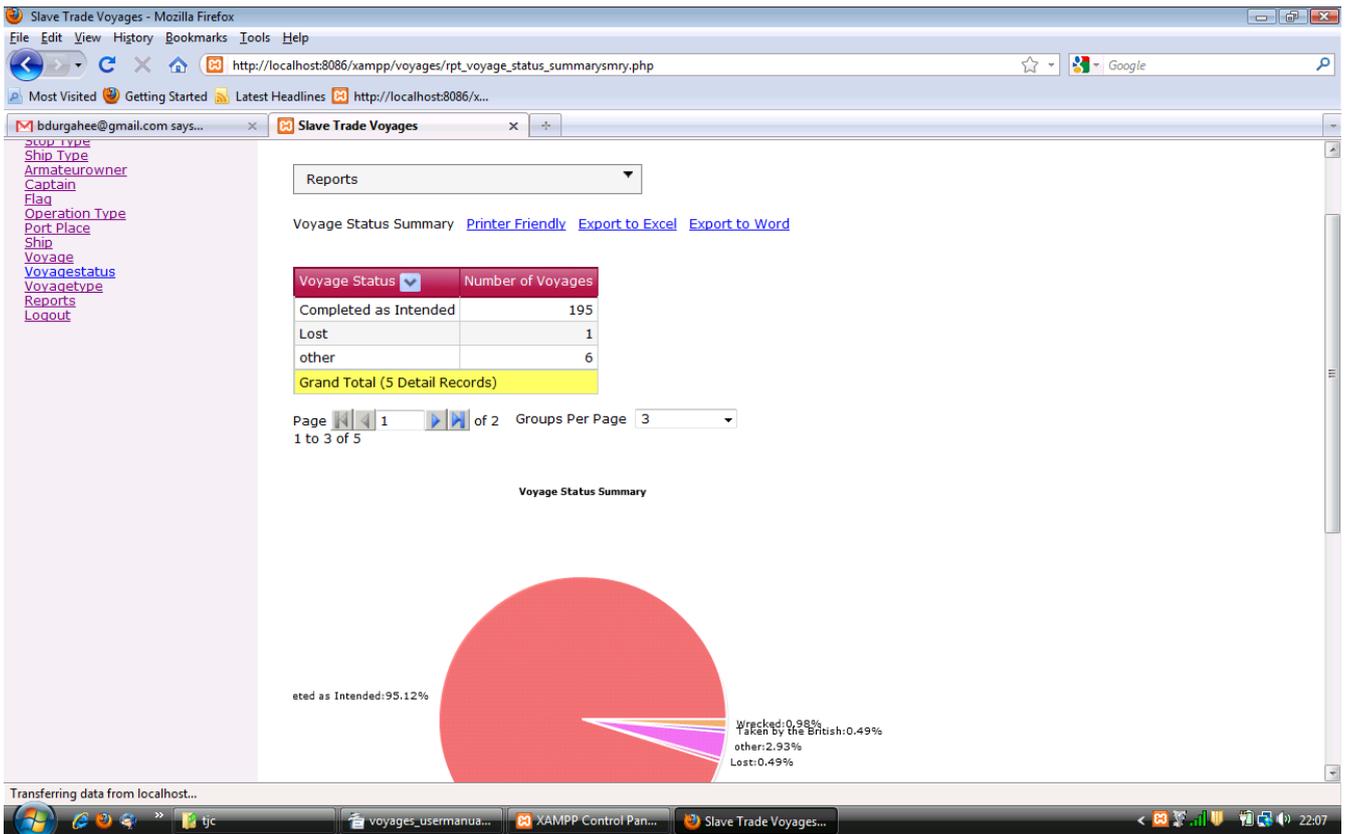
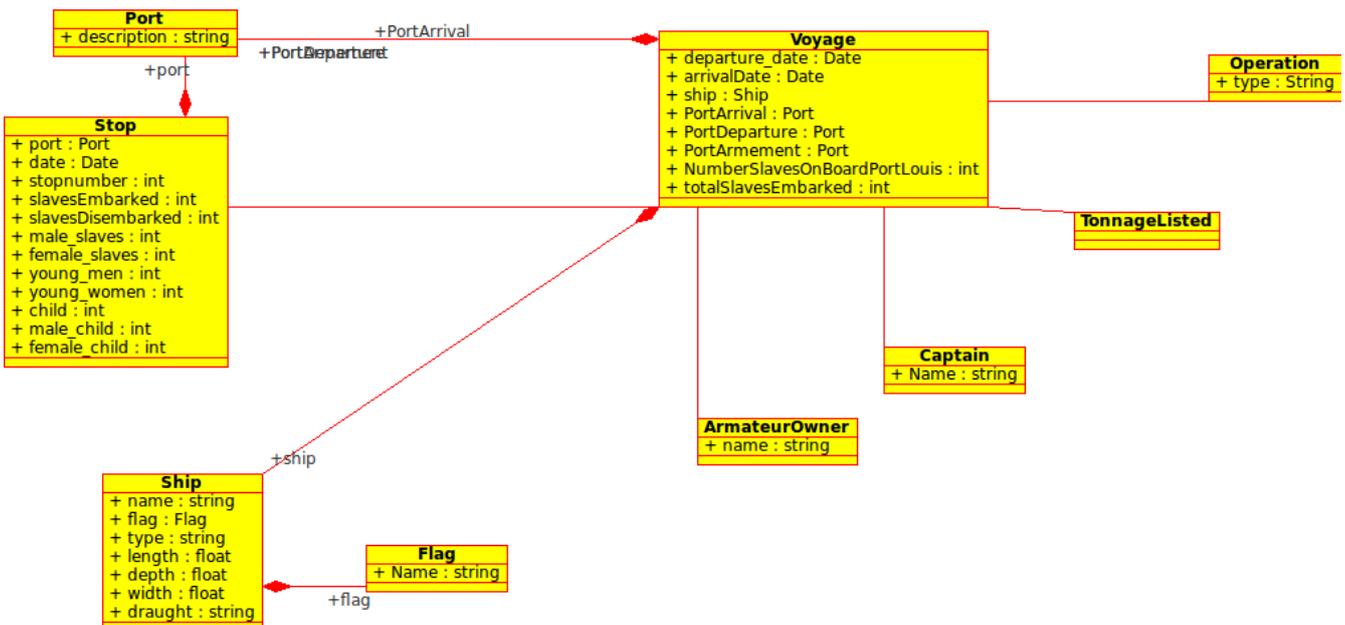


Figure 6: Showing sample Pie Chart

All the reports created in the system are dynamic. That is, they reflect the actual content of the database. If new data is added, the reports will change accordingly.

**Technical notes:**

The overall system can be modelled, using the following class diagrams:



A voyage is composed of the following entities: Ship, PortArmement, PortArrival, PortDeparture, Stops, Armateur/Owner, Captain and the Tonnage listed. The voyage can consist of more than one Captain (following death of the first Captain for example), many stops, and can have different Tonnages as reported from different sources.

- Although the database has been distributed via MoWeS, the different services (Apache, MySQL, PHP) can be installed on a computer and the relevant files restored as appropriate. This can give better performance.
- The port on which the Apache within MoWes is listening is port 8085. If this port is already in use in your system, modify the configuration for Apache to listen to a different port.

**References:**

- [1]: <http://www.chsoftware.net/en/mowes/mowesportable/mowes.htm> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)
- [2]: <http://www.apache.org> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)
- [3]: <http://www.mysql.com/> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)
- [4]: <http://www.php.net/> (last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

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- 1 Data sheets of Jean Yves Le Lan for example.
  - 2 Email from Thomas Vernet to Vijaya Teelock, Friday, January 8, 2010 9:52 AM.
  - 3 Quoted from the memoirs of Angenard, in Roman, *St Malo au temps des Négriers*, 251.
  - 4 Roman, *St Malo au temps des Négriers*, 247.
  - 5 Toussaint Auguste, *La Route des Iles. Contribution à l'histoire maritime des Mascareignes*. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1967. p. 119.

# SLAVE TRADE TO MAURITIUS AND THE MASCARENES

## 1780s TO THE 1870s

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## INTRODUCTION

In our Mozambican pre-colonial history, the period between 1790/95 and 1842 is important to slave trade to Mauritius, the Mascarenes and Réunion. Around 1815-20, in the Zambeze Valley the annual export of slaves reached 2,500 to 4,000. The first official Portuguese abolition of slave trade in 1836, did not result in the substantial reduction of these numbers of slaves traded to the ports of the Indian Ocean.

**Main agents involved in the process of capture and internal selling, before slaves embarked in the ports of the exportation.**

- **African Agents:** Yao, Xeiques from Afro-Islamic kingdoms such as Quitangonha, Sancul, Sangage and Angoche), *prazeiros* from the Zambeze Valley, Portuguese colonialists from Inhambane, Nguni groups that dominated in Delagoa Bay and Barra do Limpopo in Gaza.
- **Foreign Agents:** Xeiques from Afro-Islamic territories such Zanzibar, East Africa, Kenya, Somalia, French, Portuguese and Indians.

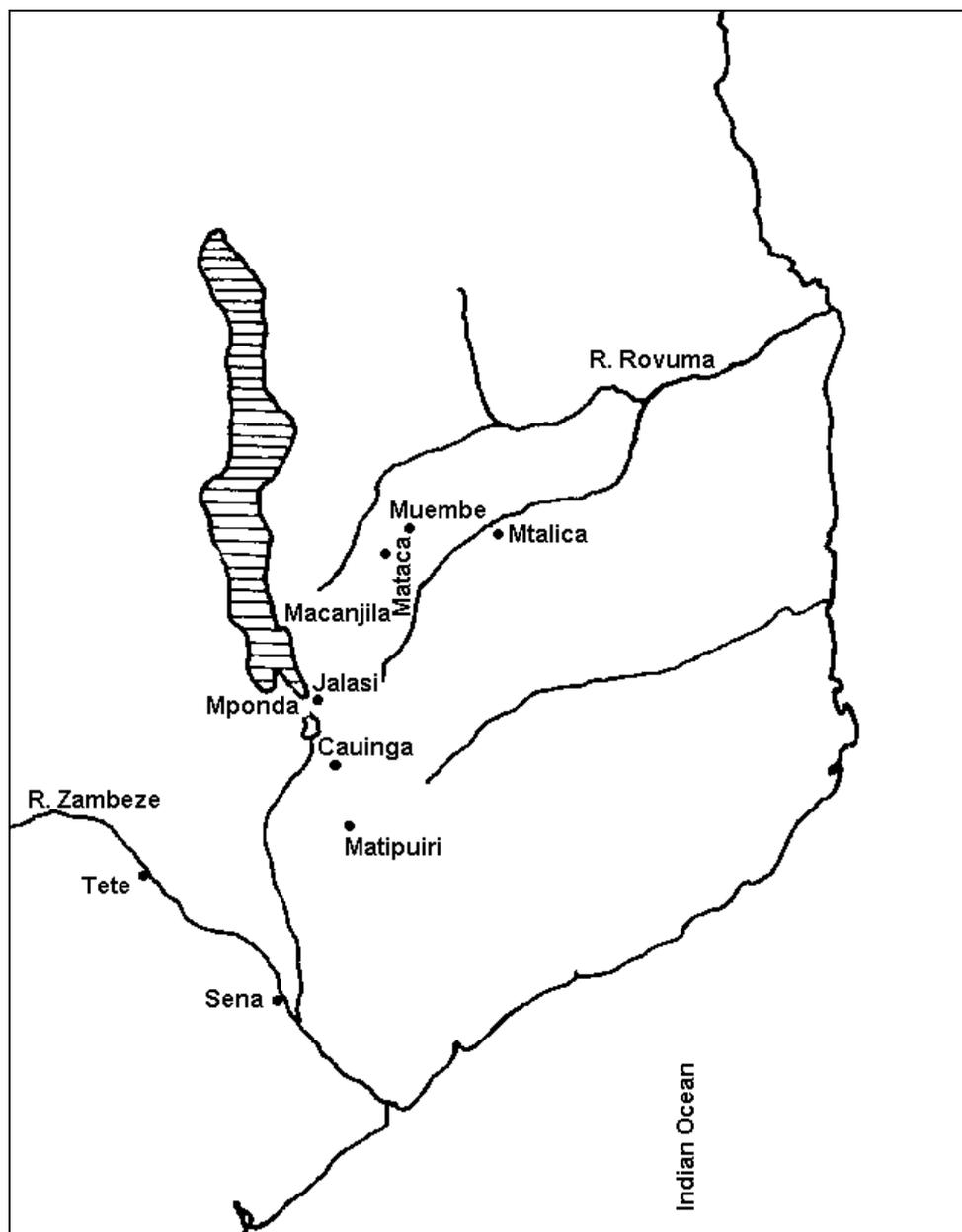
**Main ports for export of slaves:**

- Ilha de Moçambique, Ilha do Ibo, Tingué, Angoche, Quelimane, Sofala, Inhambane, and Delagoa. In other words, exports occurred from practically all over the coast.
- It is always important to distinguish between place of capture and ports of selling. Again, from North to South, in this period, slaves came mainly from:
- Niassa, regions inhabited by the Macua - Lomué, Xeicados of Sancul, Sangage, Quitangonha, and Angoche, Inhambane, Delagoa.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE YAO STATES

The importance of the Yao States to the volume of slave exports from Northern Mozambique to the Indian Ocean

Figure 1: The Yao States during the second half of the nineteenth century



Source: *História de Moçambique: Primeiras sociedades sedentárias e impacto dos mercadores (200/300-1886)*, 2nd ed., vol. I (Maputo: Departamento de História da Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1988:123).

In Northern Mozambique, Mtaça and Mkanjila were two of the most important African States which played a crucial role in the enslavement of the local population.

The Mtaça State was founded by Mtaça I, Che Nyambi (governed between *ca.* 1850 to 1878-79) was the brother of Aku Azitini (Ms.) and for most of his government Che Mtaça I lived in Muembe,

formerly also known as Nove. Mataca I might have ascended to the power around the 1850s, which is when the Portuguese presence in the Niassa territories, occupied by the Yao, was very weak. It is interesting to note that a "Mataca" Chief/King is always chosen among a council of women of the Mataca family. The women must be the sisters of Mataca main rulers, and so the elected people are actually the nephews of the Mataca.

According to David Livingstone and other sources in 1866, Mataca I lived in Muembe or Mwembe, which is a region that is still located in today's District of Muembe; at that time, about 1000 people inhabited Muembe, the capital of the Mataca State.<sup>1</sup> In the 1860s, Mataca I, Che Nyambi, was a powerful statesman and well-connected to the commercial routes that linked the interior of Niassa with the Indian Ocean.<sup>2</sup> Because of a strong wave of Ngoni invasions, Mataca I moved out of Muembe in 1878-1879 and resided, for a time, on the Eastern side of the Luângua River. He died there in 1878-1879 and he is buried in Mkonde.<sup>3</sup>

The State of Makanjila emerged around 1870-71 and, together with Mataca, was an indispensable source of slave trade to the Islands of the Indian Ocean including Mauritius. Yao Chiefs bearing this name usually belonged to the Phiri clan. They inhabited regions of the Masaniga territory. In 1866, when Livingstone traveled through this region, the Makanjila lived in M'sawize, which is located Eastwards of Mavago.<sup>4</sup>

In the following table, one aspect that should attract our attention is the port where slaves departed to the Indian Ocean. A significant number of slaves were exported from Ilha do Ibo (Northern province of Cabo Delgado) and were part of the slave caravans coming from the Yao States, particularly those under the leadership of Mataca in Makanjila.

During the period between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ilha do Ibo was negatively affected by frequent attacks of the Sakalavas and the Makhuwa resistance against trade and enslavement of the local population. This situation changed from 1820 onwards, when Ilha do Ibo became an important port of slave exports. Until *circa* 1830, Yao merchants traded exclusively with French slave traders. After 1830, the Yao slave trade from Ilha do Ibo extended to the Americas.<sup>5</sup>

Year	Ship	Trip known or port of departure	Observations	Destination
1857	Portuguese Lancha: <i>Azem de Janga</i> .	Ibo - Zanzibar	Some Slaves, 12 members of the crew, 4 passengers, 2 Bathias (1 <i>melitane</i> & the other <i>baizano</i> ).	Zanzibar
1857	Portuguese Lancha: <i>Boa Noticia</i> .	Ibo - Moçambique	Some Slaves, 14 members of the crew e 1 passenger (Baneane)	Moçambique
1857	Bate Portuguese <i>Palmeira</i> .	Ibo - Zanzibar	Merchandise and slaves, 12 members of the crew e 1 passengers Portuguese.	Zanzibar
1857	Portuguese Lancha: <i>Tejara</i> .	Ibo - Zanzibar	Diverse merchandise including slaves, 11 members of the crew.	Zanzibar
1857	Portuguese Lancha: "20 de Novembro".	Ibo - Zanzibar	Left with few slaves 14 members of the crew.	Zanzibar
1857	French <i>Barca: Maris Stelle Aigle</i> .	Bourbon - Ibo - Madagascar.	Left with slaves including 19 members of the crew e 2 French passengers	Madagascar
1857	Pangaio Arabe: <i>Jacimini Parfaite</i> .	Moçambique - Madagascar	Few slaves, 17 members of the crew & 1 French passenger	Madagascar
1857	Pangaio: <i>Dungomora</i> .	Ibo - Zanzibar.	Left with slaves including 20 members of the crew & 4 passengers (Mujojos).	Zanzibar

1857	<i>Patacho Amburguer.</i>	Zanzibar - Ibo - Moçambique.	Diverse merchandise, few slaves, 8 members of the crew, 1 Portuguese passenger and 1 passenger (mujojo).	Moçambique
1750	<i>Pangaio árabe: Fatather.</i>	Madagascar - Ibo.	Captain Abdala Arribado, 40 members of the crew.	Ibo
1857	<i>Lancha Portuguesa: Cosinga Maji.</i>	Ibo - Moçambique.	Left with few slaves, 8 members of the crew e 4 Portuguese passengers.	Moçambique
1857	<i>French Barca: Maris Sletle.</i>	Ibo - Moçambique - Madagascar	It took slaves from Ibo Island to Moçambique, 19 members of the crew, 4 French & Portuguese passengers	Comores
1857	<i>Pangaio árabe: Massa Panga.</i>	Ibo - Zanzibar	17 members of the crew & slaves	Zanzibar
1857	<i>Brieu Frances: Alirendrs.</i>	Ibo - Nocibes	15 members of the crew & slaves	Nocibes
1857	<i>Arabic Pangaio: Ambucange.</i>	Ibo - Madagascar	Taking 1 Captain, Sahide, & 10 members of the crew.	Madagascar
1857	<i>Pangaio: Filmote.</i>	Ibo - Madagascar	14 members of the crew, 1 Captain, Amicu.	Madagascar
1857	<i>Arabic Pangaio: Fatlather.</i>	Ibo - Madagascar - Mauritius.	Left with a few slaves including 21 members of the crew.	Anjo & Mauritius
1857	<i>Arabic Pangaio: Parate.</i>	Ibo - Madagascar	18 members the crew, 1 Captain Assene and 3 passangers <i>Bathias</i> .	Madagascar
1860	<i>Portuguese Lancha: Novidade.</i>	Ibo - Quiloa	Merchandise, 6 members of the crew and 1 passenger	Quiloa
1865	<i>English Lancha. Situation.</i>	Ibo - Cruzeiro	Merchandise and more than 16 slaves.	Cruzeiro

Documentary Source: Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha do Ibo, 1857.

Table 2: Ships traveling from Mozambique on the route to the Mascarenes, 1857 to 1867

Year	Ship	Trip known or port of departure	Observations	Destination
1857	6 Arabic <i>Pangaios</i> .	Mocímboa - Moçambique - Mauritius & Reunion	All <i>Pangaios</i> carried unspecified number of slaves & members of the crew	Mauritius & Reunion
1857	French ship <i>Alphonsino &amp; Nantes</i> .	O'Amira Island (Cabo-Delgado) - Reunion	Loaded exclusively with slaves Members of the crew	Reunion - Seychelles
1857	French Ship: <i>Maris Stelle</i> .	O'Amira (Cabo-Delgado) - Madagascar	Left only with unspecified number of slaves 19 members of the crew	Madagascar
1860	<i>Pangaio Arabe: Jacimini.</i>		It took slaves, varied merchandise, & 17 members of the crew	Madagascar
1853	Ship <i>Amburguer</i> .	Ibo - Moçambique (Island)	The ship took slaves to Moçambique (Island)	Mascarenes
1750	<i>Pangaio árabe: Fatather.</i>	Madagascar - Ibo - Moçambique	Merchandise that included slaves	Mauritius
1857	Ship French: <i>Maris Stelle</i> .	O'Amira (Cabo-Delgado) - Moçambique	It took slaves from O'Amira (Cabo Delgado) to Moçambique (Island), 19 members of the crew, & 4	Comores

			passengers	
1866	Ship French: <i>Alirendrs.</i>	Moçambiqu& Seychelles	Transported slaves brought to Moçambique (Island) by 6 Arabic <i>pangaïos</i>	Seychelles
1867	Arabic <i>Lancha: Fatlather.</i>	O'Amira (Cabo-Delgado) - Madagascar	This lancha left with slaves & 21 members of the crew	Anjo

**Documentary Source:** Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Island de Ibo, 1857; Vila do Ibo: Comunicado. In: Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha do Ibo; Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha de Ibo, 1860; Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Mov. Port. Ibo, 1853; Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha do Ibo, 1850; Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha do Ibo, 1866; Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha do Ibo, 1867.

The majority of ships that came to do the traffic, were under disguise and had a number of small *pangaïos* (small boats) which used to collect slaves within satellite ports and/or other far away located points of concentration. It is important to note that they first gathered slaves and then transported them to bigger ports, to be transported in big ships.

In the case of French merchants, they always had 6 to 10 *pangaïos* responsible for bringing slaves in small numbers from satellite ports. From these, slaves were then transported in bigger ships towards the Comores, Nocibes, Anjo, Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles. Local merchants known as *Mujojo* (or *Ajojo*) were responsible for the capture and sale of the slaves transported in *pangaïos*, in small numbers.

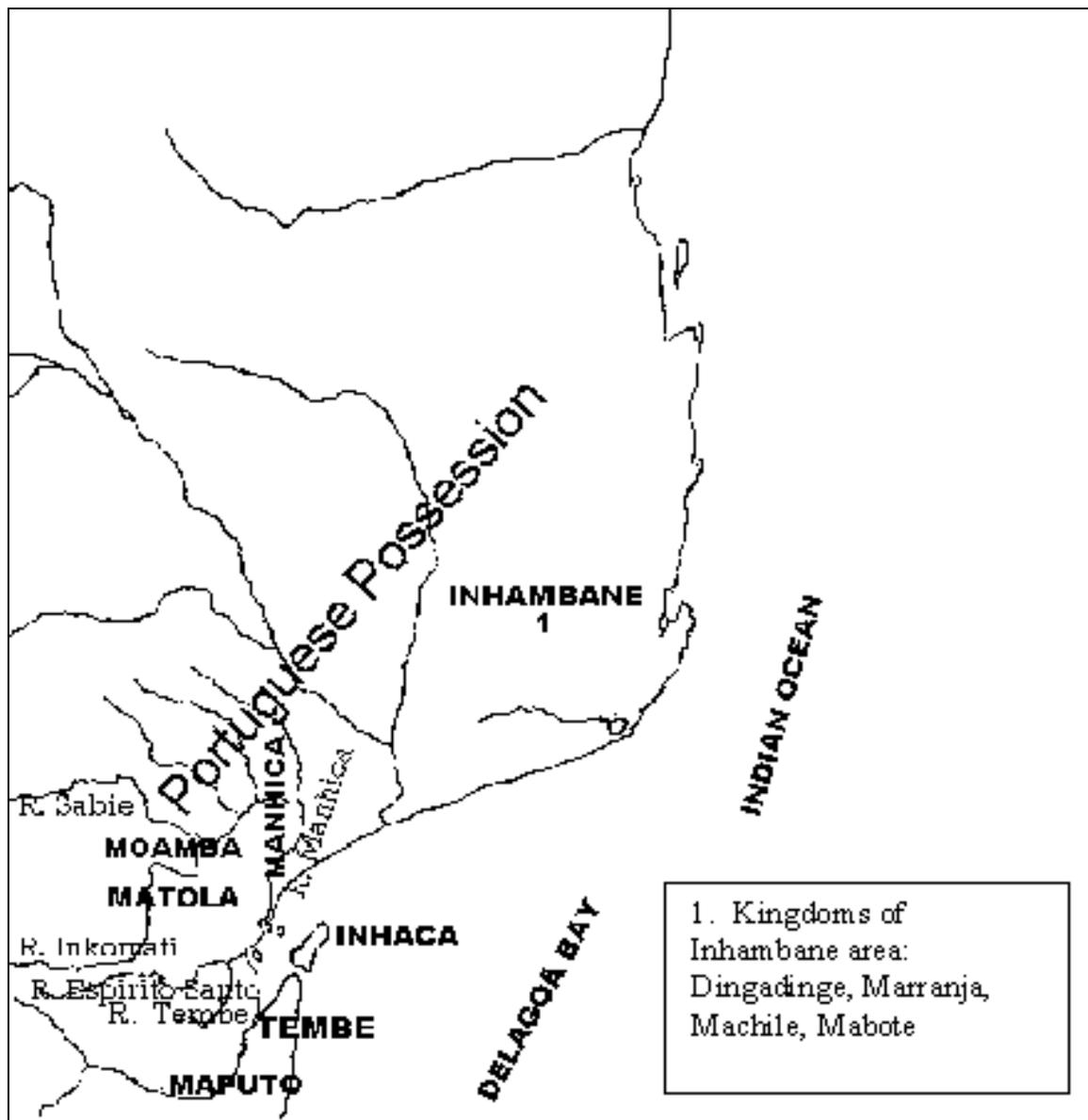
The *Mujojo* were merchants, mainly inhabiting Cabo Delgado, and specialized in the sale of slaves and cloth known as *fazenda* and *fazenda cafreal* (Kaffir cloth). The *Mujojo* also used to steal slaves from one place to another and redirect the trade of slaves according to the needs of the merchants of ships that transported the slaves to the Mascarenes. These Mozambican archival sources do not clarify precisely, why the *Mujojo* often formed part of the passengers in the trips to the Islands. It is also unclear if they returned to Mozambican territory for further transactions.<sup>6</sup>

Another concept that deserves our attention is "Baneane." *Baneane* were Hindu merchants coming originally from Surate and Cambaya, who had settled in Diu and Damao. They first started commercial transactions with Eastern Africa, from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

By all means, and to a certain extent, both *Mujojo* and *Baneane* are definitely part of Mozambicans who are now part of the Mauritius population.

## CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

Figure 2: Southern Mozambique and Delagoa Bay, c. 1798 to 1823



Documentary source: Benigna Zimba. "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles: Southern Mozambique, Ca. 1720 to Ca. 1830." Ph.D. Michigan, 1999, p. 43.

In terms of the population size, although the following sample illustrates the South, the situation in the North was very similar.

Table 3: Approximate Numbers of inhabitants, Southern Mozambique, 1823

Kingdoms	Approximate number of inhabitants
Maputo	Ca. 20,000
Inhaca	10,000
Matola, Moamba, Mpfumu, Mabote, Mamalong, and Maghoy.	Ca. 100,000
Areas extending from the Cape Correntes to the Inhambane	Ca. 100,000
Documentary source: Benigna Zimba. "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles [...]" p. 242.	

From the 18<sup>th</sup> through a larger part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American and English whaling ships frequently visited Delagoa Bay. This business was not necessarily associated with additional exports out of the Bay, but these ships carried large quantities of tin ware, soap, tobacco, muskets, gunpowder, and other items, to exchange for local products.<sup>8</sup> As in many other places of Africa, agricultural production was the basis of subsistence in these territories. There was active production of rice, which was consumed locally and then transported from Delagoa Bay port to Ilha de Moçambique. Between 1784 and 1838, such territories as Delagoa Bay, Inhaca, Mabote, Manhiça, Mpfumu, Maputo, Moamba, Mamalong, Maghoy, and Tembe produced: rice, various sorts of grains, beans, peas, cabbage, lettuce, onions, Indian corn and maize, oily seeds (*gergelim*, *mafurra*), millet, sweet potatoes, pineapples, pumpkins, plantains, tropical fruits, vegetables, sugar cane, indigo, oranges, lemons, pineapples, bananas, and cocoa tree.<sup>9</sup>

According to the Cape Archives in this period, Asia, Africa, Europe, and America were connected because of shipping from Mauritius and Madagascar through Delagoa Bay, which involved, for example, the English ship *Warrens* that transported 120 tons of oil and elephant seals from Delagoa to London in 1819, and the freighters *Orange Grove* and *Andromache*, which travelled from Delagoa to Simons Bay in 1823. This shipping, mainly between 1819 and 1823-25, was part of the export trade from Mauritius, Madagascar, Table Bay, Cape of Good Hope, Liverpool, Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Portsmouth, Boston, Copenhagen, and London. Before arriving to their final destinations, the ships first travelled around Calcutta, Bombay, and Batavia, which is the reason why Delagoa Bay became one of the intermediate stations of this complex overseas shipment.<sup>10</sup>

## WHAT WERE THE BIRTH NAMES OF SLAVES EXPORTED FROM MOZAMBIQUE?

While tracing the history of slavery and the slave trade, it is difficult to know the slaves' original African names or surnames. This situation applies particularly to the case of slaves exported from Inhambane and Ilha de Moçambique under the Portuguese administration.

Because they travelled abroad already baptized, from the 1760s onwards, Inhambane slaves became known as the best of the Colony, and were sold in large numbers.<sup>11</sup> Through baptism, slaves received European names, which are those in the Registers of Export and Immigration. In a number of cases, baptized slaves did not know their birth names. Despite this situation, we should mention that according to Mozambican tradition, the names of the regions were also very often the same as those of people. In other words, it helps to emphasize that the names in Tables 3, 4, and 5, for example, were certainly the original names of a number of slaves exported specifically from the ports of Inhambane, Delagoa Bay and also Ilha de Moçambique.

Table 4: African proper and geographic names: The kingdom of Inhambane in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

Names of Chiefs, sub-Chiefs, and common people in the Inhambane kingdom	Names of the corresponding territories
Injarra, Beo, Gembe., Mucouana, Baquene, Marranja, Machile, Gembe	Regions inhabited by the Bittonga
Bembe	Munhembe
Chibanga Mullala (name of common person)	Bittonga territory
Munhembe, Inhamposa, Inhamussa	Marranja, Machile, and Bittongas
Muazambo, Manhepe and Tiane	Bittonga territory
Documentary source: Correspondência de Inhambane, 29 de Dezembro de 1760	

## HOW DID THE TRAFFIC OCCUR?

### Examples of Inhambane, Southern Mozambique, 1720s to *cc.* 1830

To a larger extent, the process of capturing slaves occurred first within the system of dependency created by tributary relations and hierarchic structure among the Kings, Chiefs, and other subordinated people. In this first instance, we concentrate on the dynamics and consequences of the complexity of tributary relationships.

Table 5: Tributary relationships: Southern Mozambique, 1727 to *c.* 1830

Year	Name of the Territory	Name of the Ruler(s)	To whom they were tributary
1727	Dingadinge(?)	Kambe, Jan Mosse, Jan Bidieme	Dingadinge
1727	Tembe	Jan Mosse, Jan Bosse, Schambe, Jan Bisse, Mabote,	Tembe
1727	Soewaane(?)	Mahohe, Mawotje, Magombo	Soewaane
1760	Marranja, and Machile (in the Inhambane area)	Beo, Gembe, Mucouana, Baquene, Munhembe, Inhamposa, Muazambo, Manhepe, Tiane and Inhamussa	In 1760, they were temporarily tributary to the Portuguese
1784	Area of Mabote	Mabote	Matumbane and Grão Caixa
<i>ca.</i> 1790 to 1800	Tembe	Joveh, Wangoveh, Mutwal, Mallambaneh, Wancome, Panelleh, Maputo, Machelembey, Corro, Chenandlo, Gomano, Machechewan, and Goumano	Capela or Tembe
<i>ca.</i> 1800	Modai(?)	Modai	Moamba
<i>ca.</i> 1820	Maputo	Maputo	Temporarily tributary to the Vatwah
1823	Inhaca	Inhaca	Maputo
1823	Panyelly (located southwest of the Tembe kingdom)		Independent
1823	Maputo	Maputo	Tembe
<i>ca.</i> 1820 to 1823-24	About 32 unspecified chiefdoms		Tembe
1824	Mabote	Mabote	Maputo and Matola
1824	Matola	Matola	Temporarily tributary to

			Tembe
1824-25	Maputo and Tembe	Maputo and Tembe	Temporarily tributary to the Portuguese
1824-25	Maputo and undefined number of Maputo's tributary chiefdoms		Temporarily tributary to Tembe and the Portuguese
After 1830	Territories around Modai, Moamba, and Mpfumu		Temporarily tributary to Mpfumu and Modai

Documentary source: Benigna Zimba, "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles [...]" pp. 129-131.

Merchants gathered slaves gradually. The ship *Kaap* reached Delagoa Bay on 19 April 1722, thus initiating the so-called Dutch period in Southern Mozambique. Dutch shipment to Mozambique occurred as a part of Netherlands shipping to Asia between 1595-1795, which was organized by the so-called *Voorcompagnieën* (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC). This enterprise lasted until *circa* 1795, after the company's final outward voyage on 26 December 1794. Dutch hegemony over shipping lasted for a large part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. More importantly, Dutch merchants encouraged slave trade in the region, particularly in Inhambane and Delagoa Bay. The Dutch used to gather slaves step by step in very small numbers of one, two, to four and five. However, trade occurred daily, so that at the end of one or two months, kingdoms and chiefdoms involved in slave traffic, such as Dingadinge, Kambe, and Jan Mosse, sold a small number of slaves to Dutch merchants.<sup>12</sup> For example, a description at the time, explains how transactions occurred:

*"Friday 26 September: Captain [Chief] Dingadinge sold us slaves and elephant tusks, which we [paid] with some aracc [brandy.] ... Tuesday 30 September: ... we got 2 slaves. ... Wednesday [8] October: Captain Kambe brought us two slaves whom we took on board, and some great corals".*<sup>13</sup>

The hegemony of the Dutch faced Portuguese but, principally, French competition for slave trade.

## THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE MAFUTRES (FRENCH) IN THE SLAVES' EXPORT FROM INHAMBANE TO THE MASCARENES

In Inhambane, French slave-traders were known as *Mafutres*.

From the 1720s to the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was no significant interruption of French slave trade with Eastern Africa. Within the context of the so-called Western Indian Ocean System, between 1721 and 1810, there was no considerable demand for slaves from Portuguese East Africa. Precisely for this reason, the Mozambique slave trade under French merchants, sailing from the Mascarene Islands, Ile de France and Bourbon, became relevant. For example, in 1760, Mozambique's Governor Pedro de Saldanha de Albuquerque granted a license to José Basílio Leitão to sail to Mauritius in order to deliver Frenchmen shipwrecked in the galley *St. Tomé*, and also to sell slaves there.<sup>14</sup>

Luís Correia de Mattos, Inhambane's Governor, wrote on 5 July 1788, an extensive document inculcating Muslim merchants, Portuguese, but, principally, African local merchants to sell slaves to the *Mafutres* (French). Mattos accused Sir Baltasar Manuel Pereira de Lagos of allowing a French ship on the Inhambane shores and negotiated with them for a number of slaves. For Mattos, this was a scandalous example to local Africans, considering that he warned and recommended avoiding the *Mafutres* in Inhambane.<sup>15</sup>

Later on, an eight-point document, dated 4 May 1790 and signed by Manoel Galvão da Silva, formulated conditions what French ships should do about Mozambique slaves. The item number two formulates that French ships were obliged to declare to port's Customs Services all merchandise on board. Ship-owner(s) should follow this procedure upon the freighter's departure.<sup>16</sup> Other similar references are very short texts that state, for instance, "[...] conditions for transporting slaves to the Mauritius" or, "[...] on the French ship, *Coureur*, and slave's

shipment.”<sup>17</sup> Altogether, these documents point to the importance of the French phase of slave trade in Mozambique. In 1796, the French destroyed the Portuguese factory in Lourenço Marques; this event strongly impacted on the ongoing slave trade.<sup>18</sup>

Generally, for the period 1800-1854 there was an active traffic among ports of Mozambique and plantations in the Islands of the Indian Ocean.

### Prices of slaves along the coast of Mozambique

Prices varied in time and space. Sales of female slaves in the division of Tete are an example of prices current in Northern Mozambique during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. José Francisco de Oliveira, a notary working in Tete, elaborated a list of 64 female blacks who, in 1769, were sold to Portuguese slave-owners.<sup>19</sup>

Many of these women were mothers of small babies and young children, but the list has names of old women, too. Female slaves sold with their children were highly valued and in Tete, this pattern continued. For instance,

- (1) *Nhacudiva* and her son cost 05” *maticais* and so did *Vanderubzenhe* with her baby.
- (2) *Pande* and her son cost 05” *maticais* and *one tanga* (piece of cloth).
- (3) *Muera* and her daughter were sold for 05” *maticais* and five *tangas* (piece of cloth).
- (4) On the contrary, women without children, like *Capinda*, *Chinambene*, or *Quemberembe* to mention a few, were sold for prices varying between 03 and 04” *maticais*, and one to two pieces of cloth. An exception to this case is *Chaco*, who without children, costs 05” *maticais*.
- (5) Old women had very little value. Such were the cases of *Macassenhe*, who cost 02” *maticais* and *one tanga*, and *Tassarireona* who was sold for only 1.05” *maticais*.<sup>20</sup>

By 1799, there were clear problems with the prices of slaves. In that year, Francisco Guedes de Carvalho Menezes da Costa was the Governor of Mozambique, when he observed problems with shipping to the French Island of Mauritius.<sup>21</sup> After finishing his mandate, da Costa wrote in 1804 a fifty-page document addressing the relationship between France and Portugal, and the shipment of merchandise, including slaves. His manuscript focused on the “[...] external war between France and Portugal, whereas [...] inside, Portugal dealt with the problems of the [Muslim merchants] ...”<sup>22</sup> Da Costa recalled problems that he faced when he was Governor, lamenting that in 1799, Diogo de Souza was in charge of the exportation of 6 French slave ships to Mauritius. These ships travelled under Portuguese flags, thus bringing no particular benefits to the Colony. Because of this and many other irregularities with the French shipping of slaves out of Mozambique, da Costa suggested new terms of trading between these two countries:

*[...] Slaves transported from Mozambique to the French islands [of the Indian Ocean] should pay proper rights as well as having the necessary authorization so that this export results in profits for the Portuguese Throne [...]*<sup>23</sup>

## HOW MANY SLAVES MIGHT HAVE TRAVELLED TO MAURITIUS?

Based on secondary sources that summarize a significant number of archival sources available mainly in Lisbon, Portugal, we finish this report with a rough idea of human beings who compulsorily left Mozambique for Mauritius.

Year	Ship	Trip known or port of departure	Observations	Destination	Total per year	Documentary Source
1670 - 1769		Mozambique - Mascarenes		Mascarenes	10,677	Alpers <sup>24</sup>
1721	<i>L'Indien</i>	Bourbon-Moz. Bourbon	Some slaves	Recueil		Capela <sup>25</sup>
1733	<i>Vierge de Grâce</i>	Bourbon-Moz. Bourbon	Went with 368 slaves	Recueil		<i>Ibid.</i>
1736	<i>Légère</i>	Mascarenes Moz. Mascarenes		Filliot		<i>Ibid.</i>
1736	<i>Jupiter</i>	Mascarenes Moz- Mascarenes		<i>Ibid.</i>		<i>Ibid.</i>
1742	<i>Aigle</i>	Bourbon-Moz. Moz.		Recueil		<i>Ibid.</i>
1742	<i>Parfaite</i>	Bourbon-Moz. Bourbon		Recueil		<i>Ibid.</i>
1744	<i>Parfaite</i>	Bourbon-Moz. Bourbon		Recueil		<i>Ibid.</i>
1744	<i>Jupiter</i>	Bourbon-Moz. Bourbon		Recueil		<i>Ibid.</i>
1750	<i>Gloriosa</i>	Mascarenes Moz. Madagascar Mascarenes	Captain Lucas Duguily in Moç. with 300 to 400 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 13, No. 30
1751	<i>Gloriosa</i>	Mascarenes Moz. Mascarenes	Went with 500 slaves	<i>Ibid.</i>		<i>Ibid.</i>
1751	<i>Chalupa de Mr. De Bosse</i>	Mauritius-Ibo-Mauritius	Made slaves in Ibo Island	<i>Ibid.</i>		<i>Ibid.</i>
1752	<i>Gloriosa</i>	Mascarenes Moz. Mascarenes	Captain, Ville Neuve, went with 33 slaves	<i>Ibid.</i>		<i>Ibid.</i>
1770-1810	<i>N<sup>a</sup>. S<sup>a</sup>. da Conceição e Pérola</i>	Mozambique - Mascarenes	Captain, Francisco		99,614	Alpers <sup>26</sup> Capela
1775		Mozambique (15/11/1775)- Mauritius-Mozambique.	Bertrand			
1777	<i>Aventurier</i>	Ibo-Mascarenes		Filliot		<i>Ibid.</i>
1777	<i>Diligent</i>	Ibo-Mascarenes		<i>Ibid.</i>		<i>Ibid.</i>
1783	<i>La Geneviève</i>	Nantes (28/11/1781)- Moç.-Mascarenes Moç. (1784)-Martinica (30/8/1784)		Mettas e Eltis		<i>Ibid.</i>
1789	<i>Africana</i>	Mauritius-Madagascar -Moz. (15/8-26/9/1789) Mauritius				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 59, No. 9, 52
1790	<i>Paquete de Bourbon</i>	Bourbon-IIhas de Cabo Delgado	It sank in Matundo Island			<i>Ibid.</i> based on AHU, cx. 61, No. 35
1793	<i>Situation</i>	Bourbon-Moz. (12/5/1793)- Bourbon				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 64, No. 18
1793	<i>Paquete de Azia</i>	Moz. (16/10/1793)- Mauritius	Senhorio, Francisco António Caminha			Capela
1796	<i>Activo</i>	Mauritius-Moz. (30/4/1796)-Mauritius	Capitain, Rivalt			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, sec. XVIII-VI.50
1796	<i>Leneguet</i>	Mauritius-Moz. (23/5/1796)-Trancabar	Captain, Tardivet			Capela
1796	<i>Hoop</i>	Mauritius-Moz. (25/5/1796)-Cabo				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHM, sec. XVIII-VI. 52
1797	<i>American ship</i>	Mauritius-Moç. (13/4/1747)-Mauritius	Captain, Clark			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHM, sec. XVIII-VI. 54
1797	<i>Nossa Senhora da Guia</i>	Buenos Aires-Moç. (10/7/1797)- Mauritius	Captain, Demercio de Palácio			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHM, sec. XVIII-VI. 56
1798	<i>S. Sebastião</i>	Moz. (23/5/1798)- Madagascar and Ilhas de Leste	Senhorio, José Guezzé			Capela based on AHM, c.1365, fl. 89
1799	<i>Luiza</i>	Mauritius - Madagascar - Moz. (4/9/1799)				<i>Ibid.</i> , AHU, cx. 83, No. 54

1800	<i>Chalupa Chasse-Marée</i>	Moz. (1/10/1800)- Seychelles	Senhorio, Joaquim do Rosário Monteiro			<i>Ibid.</i> , AHU, c.1365, fl.127 vs.
1801	<i>Diligente</i>	Moz. (17/71801)- Bourbon-Goa	Senhorios, Velgy Darcy, Giva Sancagi e Joaquim do Rosário Monteiro			<i>Ibid.</i> , AHU, c. 1365, fl. 139
1802	<i>Pequeno Gustavo</i>	Seychelles - Moz. (14/2/1802)				<i>Ibid.</i> , Based on AHU, cx. 96, No. 53
1802	<i>Bergantim francês (French Bergantim)</i>	Mauritius (16/3/1802)- Moç (14/4/1802)				<i>Ibid.</i>
1802	<i>Fanim</i>	Mauritius (28/3/1802)- Moç. (12/4/1802)				<i>Ibid.</i>
1802	<i>L'Aurore</i>	Mauritius -Anjoane (6/3/1802)-Moç. (30/3/1802)				<i>Ibid.</i> AHU, cx.92, No. 109
1802	<i>Pequeno Paulo</i>	Mauritius-Moç. (3/4/1802)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 93, No. 3
1802	<i>Indiano</i>	Nantes-Moç. (20/5/1802)-Mauritius				<i>Ibid.</i> , AHU, cx. 93, No. 53
1802	<i>Simples</i>	Bourbon (8/5/1802)- Moç. (22/5/1802)				<i>Ibid.</i> , AHU, cx.93, No. 49
1802	<i>Ana Joaquina</i>	Quelimane-Moç. (23/7/1802)-Mauritius (8/12/1802)-Moç. (24/12/1802)	Senhorio, Gabriel João dos Anjos e C <sup>a</sup> .de Damão. Saiu de Quel. com 365 slaves .			<i>Ibid.</i> , AHU, cx. 93, No 92; cx. 96, No. 34 and 79
1802	<i>Le Jeune</i>	Mauritius (28/10/1802)- Moz. (9/11/1802)	Senhorio, António da Cruz e Almeida			Capela, based on AHU, cx. 96, No. 53
1802	<i>Bemvindo</i>	Bourbon-Seychelles - Moz. (4/2/1803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 97, No. 53
1803	<i>Le Destin</i>	Mauricias (15/4/1803)- Ibo-Moz. (13/5/1803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx.97
1803	<i>General Izidro</i>	Moz. (13/5/1803)- Mauritius Bourbon				<i>Ibid.</i> , AHU, c. 1365, fl. 171
1803	<i>Bonesti</i>	Moz. (24/5/1803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 97, No. 24
1803	<i>Ilha de França</i>	Mauritius -Moz. (6/1803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 104
1803	<i>Lamosse (?)</i>	Moz. (20/6/1803)- Seychelles				<i>Ibid.</i> , Cx. 97
1803	<i>La Jeuré (?)</i>	Mauritius (19/4/1803)-Moz. (12/71803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 104, No. 50
1803	<i>Diligente</i>	Mauritius (24/6/1803)-Moz. (19/7/1803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 100, No. 86
1803	<i>Navegador</i>	Mauritius (26/7/1803)-Ibo-Moz. (13/8/1803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 104
1803	<i>Baupten (?)</i>	Seychelles (6/10/1803)-Moz. (23/10/1803)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based, AHU, cx. 97
1803	<i>Boa Esperança</i>	Rio da Prata-Moç.- Mauritius-Moç. (6/12/1803)	Espanhol			<i>Ibid.</i> , based AHU, cx. 97, No. 24
1803	<i>Louré</i>	Mauritius -Moz.				<i>Ibid.</i> , based AHU, cx. 104, No. 50
1804	<i>Paralen (?)</i>	Seychelles (30/12/1803)-Moç. (24/1/1804)	Passport of English surrender			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 105, No. 41
1804	<i>Suzana</i>	Moç. (14/2/1804)- Mauritius - (31/3/1804)-Moç.	Sebastião José Roiz bought with the French			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 105, No. 56, cx. 106, No. 37; cx. 107, No. 18; c. 1365, fl. 185
1804	<i>Expédition</i>	Mauritius (18/2/1804)- Moç. (8/4/1804)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 106, No. 11

1804	<i>General Izidro</i>	Moz (15/4/1804) - Mauritius	Proprietário, António Salvador Monteiro; Fretado por António da Cruz e Almeida e Eleutério José Delfim			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, c. 1365, fl.182,vs
1804	<i>Boa May</i>	Seychelles (24/5/1804)-Madagascar -Moç. (24/6/1804)	French, apparently bough by Vicente Guedes da Silva e Sousa			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 106, No. 74 e c. 1365, fl. 190 vs
1804	<i>Esperança</i>	Moç. (9/6/1804)-Seychelles	Senhorio, Sebastião José Rodrigues			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, c. 1365, fl. 185
1804	<i>General Izidro</i>	Mauritius (23/5/1804)-Moç. (11/6-11/7/1804)-Bourbon	Bought by Sebastião José Rodrigues			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 106, No. 90 e c. 1365, fl. 186
1804	<i>Carlote</i>	Mauritius (26/5/1804)-Moç. (29/6/1804)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx.106, No. 115
1804	<i>Boyahia</i>	Seychelles (10/07/1804)-Moç. (4/8/1804)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 107, No. 56
1804	<i>Marjé</i>	Seychelles -Moç. (4/08/1804)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 107, No. 57
1804	<i>La Rochelle</i>	Bourbon (2/9/1804)-Moç. (30/9/1804)				AHU, cx.108, No. 40
1805	<i>Águia</i>	Mauritius (4/12/1804)-Moç. (7/1/1805)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, c. 1365, fl. No. 11
1805	<i>Duas Irmãs</i>	Mauritius (1/3/1805)-Moç. (11/3/1805)	It is going to carry 150 slaves, which merchants from Moçambique own him.			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 110, No. 11
1805	<i>Águia</i>	Mauritius (1/3/1805)-Moç. (11/3/1805)				<i>Ibid.</i> , <i>Ibid.</i>
1805	<i>Papilon</i>	Mauritius (28/2/1805)-Moç. (11/3/1805)	It was supposed to carry 150 slaves. (Sold out)			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 110 e cx. 112, No. 68
1805	<i>Elisabet or Isabel</i>	Mauritius-Moz. (13/7/1805)	Captain, Latiner			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 112, No. 37 and 85
1805	<i>Duas Irmãs</i>	Boubon-Moz. (9/8/1805)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 112, No. 62
1806	<i>Eugénia Africana</i>	Moz. (12/2/1806)-Bourbon	Senhorio, Joaquim do Rosário Monteiro			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, c. 1365, fl.206
1806	?	Moz. (10/11/1806)	Senhorio, António Salvador Monteiro			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 117, No. 60
1806	<i>General Isidro</i>	Moz (14/11/1806)-Maurícias	Senhorio, António Salvador Monteiro			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, c. 1365, fl. 218
1807	<i>Eugénia Africana</i>	Moz. (28/4/1807)-Quel.-Mauritius ou Bourbon	Senhorio, Joaquim do Rosário Monteiro, slaves, 193/130			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 119, No. 82 e c.1365, fl. 1vs
1804	<i>Ninfa do Mar</i>	Moz. (14/12/1807)-Mauritius	Senhorio, Manuel António da Fonseca. Saiu com 300 slaves, arribou a 24/3/1808 desiste de ir ao Rio e pede para ir às Mauritius			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 121, No. 92 e c. 365, fl. 224; BNL, coleção Tarouca, No 53
1808	<i>Santa Delfina</i>	Moz. (27/2/1808)-Inhambane-Mauritius	Senhorio, Sebastião José Roiz			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx.122, No. 61 e c.1376, fl.1vs
1808	<i>Adelle</i>	Moz. (21/3/1808)-Mauritius				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on, AHU cx. 122, No. 84
1811-	<i>Passe-par-</i>	Mozambique -			75,767	Alpers

1848	<i>tout</i>	Mascarenes				
1813		Seychelles (17/9/1813)-Moç. (2/10/1813)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx.145, No. 10
1813	<i>Daphon</i> (?)	Mauritius (27/09/1813)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 145, No. 15
1813	<i>Maria</i>	Seychelles (26/9/1813)-Moç. (13/10/1813)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 145, No. 53
1816	<i>Trinfo da India</i>	Moç. (8/8/1816)- Madagascar -Boubon	Senhorio, João Rebelo de Albuquerque			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, c. 1376, fl.138
1824	<i>Fronde</i> (?)	Moz. (27/9/1824)- Bourbon				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 192, No. 110
1824	<i>Angelica</i>	Moz.(27/9/1824)- Bourbon	Went with 253 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1824	<i>Zefir</i>	Bourbon-Inhambane- Moz. (27/9/1824)- Bourbon	Went with 234 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i> e cx. 199 <sup>a</sup> , No. 9
1824	<i>Dois Irmãos</i>	Bourbon-Inhambane- Moz. (27/9/1824)- Bourbon	Went with 243 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1824	<i>Maria</i>	Bourbon-Inhambane- Moz. (27/9/1824)- Bourbon	Went with 205 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1824	<i>Gustava</i>	Mauritius -Moz. (27/9/1824)Mauritius				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1824	<i>Angelica</i>	Moz.(27/9/1824)- Bourbon	Went with 278 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1824	<i>Luisa</i>	Moz.(27/9/1824)- Bourbon	Went with 111 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1824	<i>Zefir</i>	Inhambane-Bourbon	Went with 179 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 199 a), No. 9
1826	<i>La Clémentine</i>	Bourbon-Inhambane (30/3/1826)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on BNL, reservados
1826	<i>Celestina</i>	Bourbon-Sofala- Quelimane (21/6/1826)-Moç- Bourbon				AHU, cx. 202, No. 38
1826	<i>Frederica</i>	Moz. (15/9/1826)- Madagascar				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 203, No. 102
1826	<i>Paulina</i>	Moz.(?) (28/11/1826)- Boubon				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx.206, No. 49
1826	<i>L'Espiegle</i>	Bourbon-Lourenço- Marques (25/12/1826)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1827	<i>Carolina</i>	Moz.(15/5/1827)- Bourbon				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx.208, No. 102
1827	<i>Cosmopolite</i>	Inhambane (17/8/1827)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, <i>Ibid.</i> , based on cx.210, No. 67
1827	<i>Le Vieux Bellier</i>	Bourbon-Inhambane (?) (25/9/1827)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 211, No. 79
1827	<i>Zephire</i>	Bourbon-Madagascar - Inhambane (25/9/1827)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i> , <i>Ibid.</i>
1827	<i>L'Evrier</i>	Bourbon-Inhambane (?) (25/9/1827)				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on <i>Ibid.</i>
1827	<i>Escuna francesa</i>	Madagascar	This ship sank in Inhambane			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on BNL, reservados
1828	<i>Dois Irmãos</i>	Moz. (26/1/1828)- Bourbon				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 213, No. 40
1829	<i>Les Deux Frères</i>	Bourbon-Moz. (17- 26/1/1/1829)-Bourbon	Captain , Pierre Adam			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 218, No. 38
1829	<i>Elisa</i>	Bourbon- Moz.(18/9/1829)	Captain, Francisco José da Silva Ericeira. Slaves 534/523			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, cx. 223, No. 45, Santana, II, p. 835 <i>Ibid.</i> Eltis
1830	<i>Les Deux Frères</i>	Bourbon (8/7/1830) L.M (28/7/1830)- Bourbon				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on Santana, II. p. 48
1831	<i>Antoinette</i>	Bourbon-LM-Moz.	Attacked by the			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU,

			population located northwards of L.M. (??)			cx.252, No. 54
1833	<i>Le Théodore</i>	Mauritius-Tamatave-Moz.				<i>Ibid.</i> , based on Santana, III, p. 560
1833	<i>Bergantim with American flag</i>	Mauritius - Ibo (1833?)	To make up to 150 slaves			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on Santana, II, p. 471
1851	<i>Grognam</i>	Bourbon-Ibo (28/8/1851)	French			<i>Ibid.</i> , based on AHU, GG.Moç., cx.31, No. 87

Source: José Capela. *O Tráfico de Escravos nos Portos de Moçambique, 1733-1904*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2002.

<sup>1</sup> Livingsstone, *Viagens e explorações no Zambeze e na África Central* (1880); João de Azevedo Coutinho, *Memórias de um velho marinheiro e soldado de África*. (Lisboa: 1941: 182).

<sup>2</sup> Livingsstone, *Viagens e explorações no Zambeze e na África Central* (1880).

<sup>3</sup> Manuel Gomes da Gama Amaral, *O povo Yao: Subsídios para o estudo de um povo do noroeste de Moçambique* (Lisboa: IICT, 1990:52).

<sup>4</sup> Eduardo da Conceição Medeiros, *História De Cabo Delgado E Do Niassa*, (Maputo: Cooperação Suíça, 1997), p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Eduardo Medeiros, *As Etapas Da Escravatura No Norte De Moçambique*, (Maputo: Universidade eduardo Mondlane, 1988, pp. 27-28.

<sup>6</sup> Fundo do distrito de Cabo Delgado: Movimento do Porto da Ilha do Ibo, 1850 to 1860; Benigna Zimba. "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles: Southern Mozambique, Ca. 1720 to Ca. 1830." Ph.D. Michigan, 1999, pp. 322-341.

<sup>7</sup> Carlos Serra. "O Capital Mercantil Indiano Em Moçambique (1687/1835) - Um Sistema De Pilhagem." Departamento de História, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1978. (Unpublished).

<sup>8</sup> Benigna Zimba "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles," p. 163.

<sup>9</sup> Benigna Zimba "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles [...]", pp. 137-138.

<sup>10</sup> Mapa da entrada e saída dos navios na Baía de Lourenço Marques, 17 de Julho de 1826; Ships Arrival and Departures 1818, "Port Captains," PC 3/1, SABD, Cape Town; Ships Arrival and Departures 1823-25, "Port Captains," PC 3/2, SABD, Cape Town; Benigna Zimba. "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles," pp. 172-175.

<sup>11</sup> See "Escravos de Inhambane, " 1762, in *Relações de Moçambique setentrista*, ed. António Alberto de Andrade (Lisboa Portugal: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1955), p. 212.

<sup>12</sup> Benigna Zimba, "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles [...]", pp. 30; 222-227.

<sup>13</sup> Dag Register gehouden aan Rio St. Jao Vaz, 7ber September 1727, pp. 422-423.

<sup>14</sup> Sources: Edward A. Alpers, "The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721-1810), " *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* X, 37-40 (1970): 82; Eduardo Medeiros, *O Tráfico de escravos de Moçambique para as Ilhas do Índico, 1720-1790* (Maputo: Núcleo Editorial da Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1987), pp. 31-40; Provisão do governador de Moçambique, Pedro de Saldanha de Albuquerque a José Basílio Leitão, 17 Abril 1760, "Cx 17, " Doc 71, AHU, Lisboa; Benigna Zimba. "Overseas Trade, Regional Politics, and Gender Roles [...]", pp. 245-251.

<sup>15</sup> Inhambane 5 de Julho de 1788, in *Inventário do século XVIII: introdução, sumários, transcrições*, ed. AHM (Maputo: AHM, Undated), pp. 84-87.

<sup>16</sup> Conditions auxquelles sont ... les navires français, pour faire le traite des noirs à Mozambique, aos 4 de Maio de 1790, "Cx 60, " Doc 21, AHU, Lisboa.

<sup>17</sup> Sobre Maurícias, 1788, "Cx 56, " Doc 57, AHU, Lisboa; Navio francês Le Coureur de visita a Moçambique em 1791, "Cx 63, " Docs 20-21, AHU, Lisboa.

<sup>18</sup> Lacamichande Motichande a Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, "Cx 90, " Doc 4, AHU, Lisboa.

<sup>19</sup> Escravos represados, in *Inventário do século XVIII: introdução, sumários, transcrições*, ed. AHM (Maputo: AHM, Undated), pp. 205-208.

<sup>20</sup> Escravos represados, pp. 207-208.

<sup>21</sup> Francisco Guedes de Carvalho Menezes da Costa, capitão de artilharia, à Vossa Alteza Rainha de Portugal, Lisboa, aos 6 de Janeiro de 1804, "Cx 105," Doc 18, AHU, Lisboa.

<sup>22</sup> Francisco Guedes de Carvalho Menezes da Costa, aos 6 de Janeiro de 1804.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Benigna Zimba, Edward Alpers, and Allan Isaacman, eds. *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa*. Maputo: Filsom Entertainment, Lda., 2005.

<sup>25</sup> José Capela. *O Tráfico de Escravos nos Portos de Moçambique, 1733-1904*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> See Alpers.

VOLUME 4

**HISTORY, ECONOMY,  
SOCIETY AND MEMORY**

Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys

**PART VII**

**INDENTURED IMMIGRATION**



## Part VII

# INDENTURED IMMIGRATION

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6. Early History of Indenture	<i>Satyendra Peerthum</i>
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## ABBREVIATIONS

ARPI: Annual Report of Protector of Immigrants

MNA: Mauritius National Archives

WBSA: West Bengal State Archives

NAI: National Archives of India

PRO: Public Records Office, now The National Archives, Richmond, London

OIOC: Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library, London.

PP: British Parliamentary Papers

## TRIBAL ORIGINS

Tribal Indians constitute one of the most ignored groups in Mauritian historiography and was thus the first focus of our enquiries on Origins. Reconstruction of this history has been accomplished by a study of archival documents and documents consulted at Civil Status Office and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute consisting of lists of arrival of immigrants, Emigration Agency Certificates and Immigrant Photographs. The difficulty was that as no Indo-Mauritian claim tribal ancestry, detailed family histories could not be undertaken. Few of the people approached wanted to acknowledge their tribal identity, and the reasons for this need to be explored further in future.



The “tribal” origin can be obtained from the PE series of documents, which contain lists of arrival of immigrants and from the PCs set of documents, which consists of emigration agency certificates. Research on the PG series database provided a few photographs for the period 1834 to 1844. These photos were correlated with the description shown in the PE and PC series.

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A word must be said on the sources. For the period 1834 to 1844, when many Tribals arrived in Mauritius, marriage certificates were not available. A sample therefore of 544 tribal immigrants out of the 54,956 immigrants who came between 1835 and 1844 was used. For an even smaller group, the emigration certificates and the marriage certificates are available. Death certificates of the tribes were collected at the Civil Status Office. This task was somewhat eased as

some of the data collected at the MGI Archives had information about their date of death. A number of oral history interviews were also conducted to assess the level of knowledge of Mauritians, memory as to the existence of tribals in Mauritius.

Due to lack of time, the focus has been Indian tribes from the North of India who were the first to come into Mauritius on contract labour. They were referred to as Dhangar or the ‘Hill-Coolie’ and were preferred by the recruiters in the 1830s. However, the proportion arriving in Mauritius began to dwindle and by the end of the nineteenth century, the recruitment of the tribes had stopped. This is because, they were the ones who suffered the most during sea voyages and the mortality rate the highest among them.

Figure 2: Arrival of Tribal People			
Year	1835-1839	1843-1844	TOTAL
Private system	31	0	31
Government system	0	512	512
TOTAL	31	512	543

(Source: Compiled from IIA PE1-PE15 - arrival of immigrants in Mauritius & and PC 2 - PC 209 - Emigration Agency Certificates)

Of the 543 tribals people studied<sup>1</sup>, 31 came under private control and 512 came under the supervision of Government. They were of the groups termed ‘Munda’, ‘Oraon’, ‘Santal’ and ‘Gond.’ These tribes were all grouped together under the generic term Dhangar. In the registers, many of their names ended with the suffixes ‘ee’, ‘oo’, ‘ram’, i.e., Luckhee, Kalindee, Mungree, Dhanoo,

Bhickoo, Pandoo, Bhuddoo, Boodhoo, Mungooram, Muneeram, Rameeram. These names are deformed from the original names as those registering them were not familiar with these names and did not know how to write the names correctly.

However, it has been found that they were in minority compared to other Indian labourers but still agents preferred them because they were hard worker and willing to labour in the island. From 1845, there was more demand for labour because of a boom in the production of sugar cane. Agents could not rely on the minority and concentrate upon other sources of labour. Hence the early enthusiasm of the “Dhangars” as field hands dried up.

### Origins of Tribal people

The principal region of origins of tribals was Chota Nagpur e.g. the districts of Hazaribagh, Ramghur, Ranchi, Midnapore, Purulia, Jobburpore, Bancoora, Nagpur and Gaya. The regions of Nagpur, Ramghur, Ranchi and Hazaribagh were particularly ‘favoured’ by recruiters between 1843 and 1844 (Fig.1).

The tribes were embarked at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, after being recruited from these districts. Comparatively more tribes were brought from Calcutta than from Madras and Bombay. It has also been noted that between the years 1843 and 1844, tribals could be found on every ship leaving Calcutta. These ships include the *Northumberland*, *Adelaide*, *Futtle Karim*, *Appolline*, *Nakin*, *Robarts*, *Duke*, *Orient*, *Isabella Watson* and *Bangalore* carried a high proportion of tribals under governmental control.

Figure 3: Port of Embarkation						
Year	1835-1839		1843-1844		TOTAL	
Depot	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Calcutta	28	90	508	99	536	98
Madras	3	10	0	0	3	1
Bombay	0	0	4	1	4	1
TOTAL	31	100	512	100	543	100

Source: IIA PE1-PE15 & PC2-PC209

It will be observed that of the 31 tribal people who came under the private importation scheme, 90% of them were embarked at Calcutta, 10% of them were embarked at Madras and none of them from Bombay.

However, under the management of government, 99% of them were embarked at the depot of Calcutta, 1% of them at the depot of Bombay and none from Madras.

99% of the tribals were embarked at Calcutta between the years 1835 and 1844.

The comment written on the PC registers: “not-cooking on board”. Indicates that the tribes were not allowed to cook on board either because they were provided with food or other reason.

In India, they ate meat, fish, turtles, eggs, crabs, and bivalves. They also consumed root crops, tubers, fruits and honey<sup>2</sup> but on board to Mauritius they were provided with only rice, salted fish and water. It may be possible that the change of the diet, as a result of their immigration may have attributed to the increase of mortality among them. This may explain why the death rate among the “Hill-Coolies” or the “Dhangars” was considerably worse than those from the plains.

The gender ratio was unequal (fig. 4). Of the 31 tribals that came were under private control, no women or children arrived. Out of the total of 512 tribals who came between the years 1843 and 1844, 75% (388) were men, followed by 16% (80) women, children 7% (10) and 2% (10) were unknown. This is consistent with existing literature (Hazareesingh K and Bissoondoyal U) where they stated that the idea was to come to Mauritius for a short while and return.

Figure 4: Tribals by category

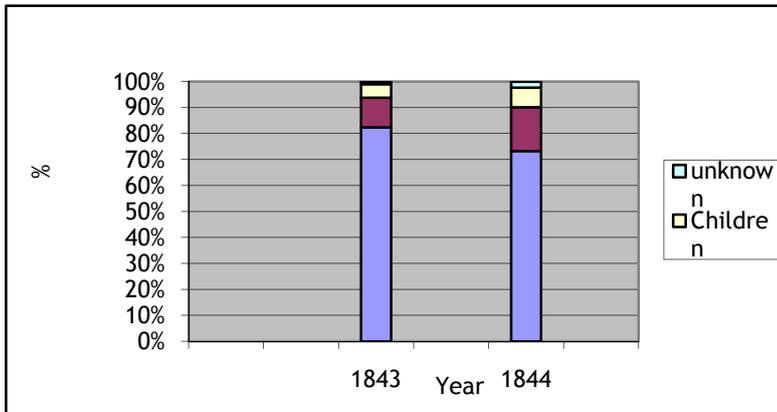
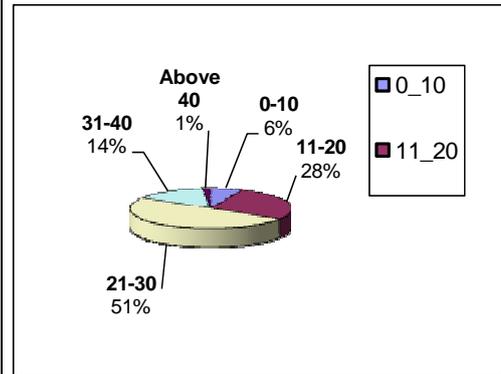
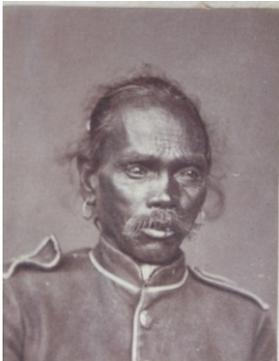


Figure 5: Age groups of Tribals



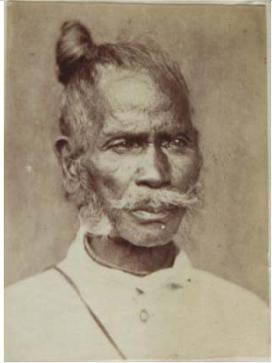
The profile required matched those during the Slave Trade: the desire of planters was for those able to perform hard manual labour. Thus, mainly young males were recruited. Of the 543 tribals, 6% of the tribes were under the age group 0-10 years. 28% were aged between 11-20 years and 51% between 21-30 years. Only 14% were between 31 and 40 years and only 1% were above 40 (fig.3).

**Iconography of tribals from Chota Nagpur**

Shreemutty 41293	Bissonauth 41416
	

The PG series provides photos of tribals. Shreemutty, No. 41293, was photographed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1881 (Height 1m 39). She migrated to Mauritius from Ranchi and was shipped on board the *Appolline* at the age of 24 on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April in 1844. She was accompanied by her husband Nundoo. She was a Dhangar and was described as having good teeth and a scar on her right leg.<sup>3</sup>

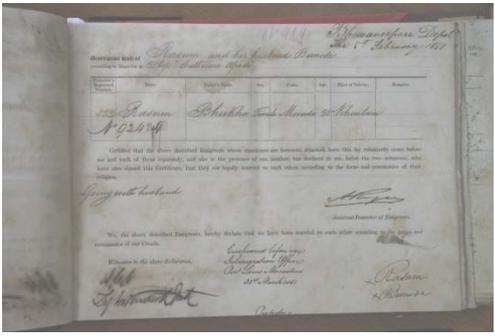
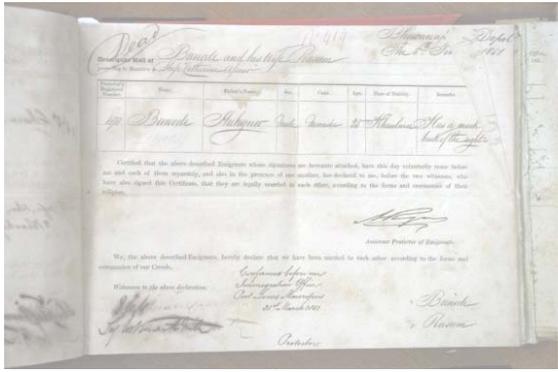
Bissonauth No. 41416, photographed on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1884 was 1 m 57 tall. He was a Dhangar and migrated from Ranchi. He arrived on board the *Nankin* at the age of 14 on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1844. He had a long scar on his chin and also a mole above his right elbow. He was employed as a labourer.

Pandoo 40335	
	<p>Pandoo, No. 40335 pictured here on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1890 (Height 1m50). He was a “Dhangur” arriving in February 1844 at the age of 25. He migrated from Nagpore aboard “Orient”. He was described as having good teeth, a mark on his forehead and a black mark on the right side of his breast. He was sent to work to Mr. Hunter and Company and was employed as a labourer.</p>
Source : PE 15 and PC 197	

**Mundas**

Mundas constitute another tribal group arriving in Mauritius in the early days of indenture.

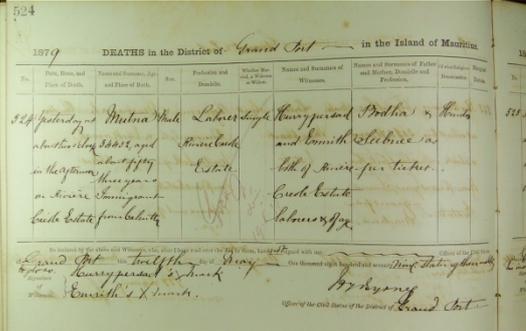
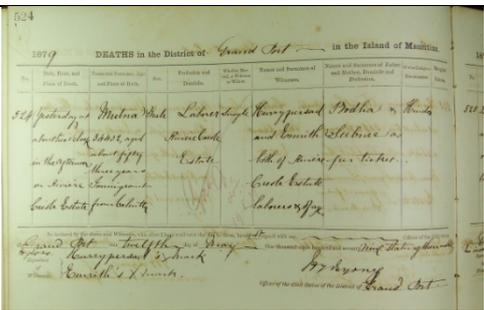
Rusum from Ranchi district, No. 92424 who arrived on board the *Catherine Apcar* certified before the Emigration Office in Calcutta that he was married ‘according to the rites and customs of his religion’, to Bunode. Bunode was described as having a mark on the back of the right shoulder. Both of them were Munda. Both came to Mauritius in 1851.<sup>4</sup>

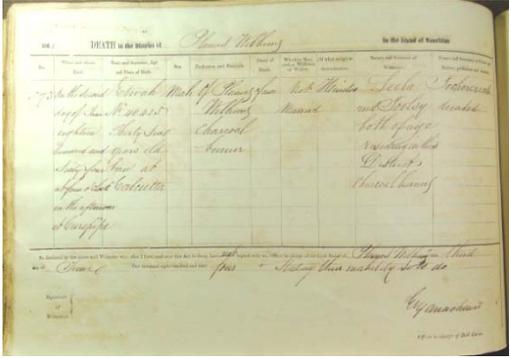
<p><b>Marriage Certificate of Rusum to Bunode</b></p>	<p><b>Marriage Certificate of Rusum to Bunode</b></p>
	

<p>Marriage Certificate of Bissoo and Randhee</p>	<p>Bissoo, No. 92973, was a Munda who emigrated with his wife Randhee, also a Munda from Ranchi in 1851. They were shipped on the <i>Fazel Currim</i>. He had a scar on the back of his left shoulder. His father's name was Gopalah. At the Emigration Depot in Calcutta, they certified they were married. It appears from the certificate that they were accompanied by their two daughters, Roopnah and Deepun. <sup>5</sup></p> <p>(Source of photo MNA:IIA PE 36 and PC 424)</p>
	

**Death Certificates**

Out of the 543 immigrants, only half have been traced: 125 died and some 116 returned. What happened to the other half is unknown as yet. Some may have settled in Mauritius, others may have also died or returned. A brief account of those who died in Mauritius is given here.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Death Certificate of Sonatun</b></p>	
	<p>Sonatun, No. 39479, was a Dhargar, who migrated from Hazaribagh in February 1844 aboard <i>Isabella Watson</i>. He arrived at the age of 22. He was described as having good teeth, both ears bored, two large round marks on the left arm. He was sent to Mr A. Joly and was employed as labourer. He died on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1863. The cause of death was fever which was prevalent in the 1860s<sup>6</sup></p>
<p>It seems that on his death certificate, Sonatun carried two immigration numbers. When research was carried on the other immigration number i.e., 29261 at the Archives, it was found that Sonatun was registered twice on both PE 14 and PE 15 registers respectively. Both registers gave the same information as mentioned above. It can be presumed that there may have been an error on behalf of the administration at that time.</p>	
<p>Mutna, No. 34432, he was a Munda, who migrated from Ramghur in December 1843 on board the 'Adelaide'. He arrived at the age of 18. He was described as having marks on both arm and on belly. He was sent to work to Mr. Adam and Company and was employed as labourer. He died at Grand Port on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 1879.<sup>7</sup></p>	

	<b>Death Certificate of Etwah</b> <b>Source : Civil Status Office</b>
<p>Etwah, No. 40415, was a Dhangar who migrated from Ranchi in February 1844 aboard <i>Orient</i>. He was described as having good teeth, both arms marked and a mark on the left knee. He was sent to Mr. Hunter and Company and worked as labourer. He came to Mauritius on the same ship with his father, Jhoopah, No. 40411. Etwah died at Plaines Wilhems in June 1864 from fever.<sup>8</sup> It is interesting that his death certificate describes him as a ‘Hindoo’ and no longer as a Dhangar and having been born in Calcutta. Transformations in identity from ‘tribal’ to ‘Hindu’ thus seem to have occurred quite early during indenture. As he was not married and had no children, his real origins and life story are today forgotten.</p>	

Lalchand, No. 3719, was a Dhangar who migrated from Nagpore in April 1843 aboard *Juliana*. He arrived at the age of 24 and worked as Labourer. He died in Port Louis on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1866 from fever.<sup>9</sup> Lalchand carried the name and the Immigration number of his father.

Doolarsing, No. 34441, was a Munda who migrated from Ramghur in December 1843 aboard ‘Adelaide’. He came to Mauritius at the age of 27. He was sent to Mr Adam and Company and was employed as labourer. He had uneven teeth, a mole left side of the neck, scar on right arms and shoulder. He died at Savanna on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1863. The cause of his death was fever. (Source: Civil Status Office)

Figure 6: Arrival of tribals in Mauritius in 1851

Immi No.	Name	Name of father or mother	Presidency	Sex	Age	Caste	District	Remarks
92188	Boyjoo	Bhautoo	Calcutta	M	21	Oraon	Hazaribagh	Distributed by Lanougarede on the 9th April 1856
92, 196	Soophul	Boodhoo	Calcutta	M	27	Munda	Hazaribagh	
92, 203	Boodhoo	Bheekhoo	Calcutta	M	22	Munda	Ranchee	Distributed to Mr. Pierre on the 20 <sup>th</sup> April 1866. Died at Flacq 12 July 1866
92, 237	Dhurwah	Bucktowar	Calcutta	M	21	Ooran	Ranchee	Tax paid up to 2/4/56
92, 239	Loudyel	Unknown	Calcutta	M	45	Ooran	Ranchee	Distributed by Mr. Duhamel 14/4/56
92, 248	Jourah	Faugooa	Calcutta	M	24	Ooran	Ranchee	Distributed by Mr. Duhamel 14/4/56 (Died Moka 10/11/1873)
92, 268	Meetoo		Calcutta	M	19	Munda		
92, 274	Soorjun	Unknown	Calcutta	M	45	Munda	Ranchee	engaged Mr. Wilson (Died at Plaines Wilhems 14/9/73)
92, 282	Perul	Dinnoo	Calcutta	M	35	Santal	Puroolia	
92, 373	Rughoo	Gobin	Calcutta	M	21	Santal	Puroolia	
92, 374	Gungadhun	Khodyram	Calcutta	M	24	Santal	Midnapore	

92, 375	Kaulloo	kawol	Calcutta	M	25	santal	Midnapore	Distributed by Mr. Blancard on the 21 <sup>st</sup> April 1856 Died 9/2/1906 Black River
92, 376	Poorun	Choytun	Calcutta	M	27	Santal	Midnapore	
92, 447	Muncheea	Ram	Calcutta	F	15	Cole	Hazaribagh	Died at Plaines Wilhemes 10/3/1873
92, 424	Rasur	Bheekha	Calcutta	F	25	Munda	Ranchee	Died 9/7/53 Savanne
92, 426	Pudery	Sunrah	Calcutta	F	21	Munda	Hazaribagh	
92, 446	Whinthaly	Chingoro	Calcutta	F	16	Cole	Hazaribagh	Died on May 1851
92, 452	Tauramony	Roopnarain	Calcutta	F	24	Munda	Purooliah	

(Source:Compiled from IIA PE 36 series)

There is evidence of tribal presence in Mauritius as from 1851 also. The principal places of origin of the tribals, as mentioned before (see fig. 7), were Chota Nagpore division and the districts of Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Midnapore, Purulia. These people came aboard *Catherine Apcar*. They arrived on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1851. Ships like *Mohassur*, *Fazel Currim*, *Hyderabad*, *Bellatine* and *Lucknow* also carried a small proportion of tribals. Aboard ships *Catherine Apcar*, *Hyderabad* and *Futtay Mobarruck*, there were few women and children also. The table above shows that the tribal groups arriving in the country are as follows 'Munda, Santal, Oraon and Khol'

Sandhoo, No. 94044, was a Munda who migrated from Hazaribagh in 1851 aboard *Hyderabad*. She came with her daughter Soumitra, no. 94 071 and the latter was four years. They returned to India on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1857. <sup>10</sup>

In conclusion, we have seen that the tribal groups arriving to Mauritius included the Munda, Oraon, Santal, Gond and Khol. The majority of them were young males and came chiefly from the Chota Nagpur region. Between the years 1843 and 1844, there were a few women and children also who arrived in Mauritius. The tribals were found on every ship leaving Calcutta. After 1844, there were fewer immigrants from the tribal group. Their heavy mortality on board the ships which took them to the island and to the estate discouraged the recruiters from recruiting them. However, some tribals continued to arrive on the island, throughout the period of indenture.

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF INDENTURE IN MAURITIUS, C.1825-1839

In Mauritius, Indenture is associated with the year 1834, with the abolition of slavery and with Indian labourers. It is little known that Indian labourers were brought in as early as 1825 by Adrien d'Epinay, 10 years before slavery had been abolished. On his estate at Haute-Rive in Rivière-du-Rempart District, it appears they worked side by side with slaves in the sugarcane fields. D'Epinay wanted to show his slaves that free men did not consider it a dishonour to perform manual labour in the cane fields. This could be considered as the first experiment with indentured Indian labour. But few sources are available to study this 'experiment' further.

The next recruitment came in 1828, when a handful of Indian labourers were brought in. One of them, Peerkhan of Calcutta, was employed by Mr. Sampson, and the second one, Ojjar, a Bengali also from Calcutta, was employed by Mr. Latour St-Ygeste.

The following year, the Commercial Agents of Gaillardon & Co., a Mauritian trading company, went to India with the objective of importing cheap Indian labour. They had the firm support of the British Colonial Government of Mauritius. On 21<sup>st</sup> September, the *Albion* dropped anchor in Port Louis harbour with 500 male labourers, 9 females, and one child on board. Over the next four weeks, around 600 additional labourers were brought into the colony in small batches. By mid-October 1829, there were over 1,100 Indian labourers in Mauritius.

These early experiments do not appear to have been successful, as the Indian community in Mauritius convinced these new immigrants that the wages which they were receiving were too low and encouraged them to strike for better pay. The employers themselves did not honour the agreements that they had made, and most of the Indians wanted to terminate their contracts. Within a period of less than a month, a large number of Indians began to desert the sugar plantations and showed increasing signs of insubordination toward their employers. By late October 1829, John Finiss, the Chief of Police, ordered the repatriation of the rebellious Indian labourers. Between the end of October 1829 and May 1830, they were returned to Calcutta and Madras in several small batches.

1830-1834: There was only a trickle of immigrants arriving between 1830 and 1834. In 1830, about 10 labourers were introduced and between 1831 and 1832, another 29 from India by Mr. Bickajee, a wealthy and influential Indo-Mauritian. In January 1832, Mr. Passmore, a wealthy and prominent Mauritian merchant, relaunched the idea of large-scale importation of Indian labour. In Réunion island, between 1826 and 1830, around 3,012 Indian workers from the French colonies of Pondichéry and Karikal had been introduced.

1833: Another 29 labourers were introduced. Although the overwhelming majority of these very first indentured Indian labourers came from Calcutta, some were also from Madras. For example, one labourer, called Mootoosamy, was employed by Mr. d'Arifat and another one called Ramsamy was employed by Mr Langlois.

1834: 4<sup>th</sup> August 1834, the newspaper *La Balance* announced the arrival on 1<sup>st</sup> August of the *Sarah* in Port Louis, with 29 Indian cultivators. The arrival of these labourers served as a prelude to the start of large-scale Indian immigration with the coming of the *Atlas* on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 1834, 36 'Hill Coolies' of the Dhangar caste (originally from the hills of Bihar in Eastern India who were then living in Calcutta) signed a five-year labour contract with George Charles Arbuthnot of Hunter-Arbuthnot & Company, a major British trading company in Mauritius, in the presence of C. McFarlan, at the Calcutta Police Head Office. Once the labourers agreed to the terms and conditions, they placed their thumb mark on the contract, and on a separate list, which contained the names of the 36 labourers, they placed an 'X' next to their names. Their *sirdar* (overseer) was Soorooop who was assisted by Subaram. In all, there were 30 males and 6 females among Arbuthnot's labourers. Some of their names are Callachaund, Dookhun, Bhomarah,

Bhoodhoo, Lungon, and Bhudhram. Their labour contract was written in Bengali. The salary for the males was 5 Rupees per month, while for female labourers, four Rupees per month. The sirdar's salary was 10 Rupees per month and the assistant sirdar around 8 Rupees per month. They all received six months' pay in advance before boarding the *Atlas*. One rupee was deducted by Hunter Arbuthnot & Company to pay for the return passage to India. They had paid for the immigrants' journey from Calcutta to Port Louis. They were also to be provided with food, clothing, lodging and medical care. The ship also carried a large cargo of rice. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Monday morning, Arbuthnot wrote to Governor Nicolay, requesting that: 'they be allowed to land 36 Hill Coolies from the ship *Atlas*, whom they intend to employ on their Estate, under guarantee that they shall not become a charge on the Colony'. Permission was granted. These first Indian labourers were, according to Brenda Howell, 'the pioneers of a migration which was eventually to transform the character of Mauritian life and industry.' Between November 1834 and April 1839, during the first wave of Indian immigration, around 25,468 Indians were introduced, amongst whom were around 23,281 males, 727 females and 175 children. Almost 15,000 came from Calcutta and Bombay and over 9,000 from Madras and modern-day Andhra Pradesh. More than half of these first Indian immigrants belonged to rural tribes known as the Oraons, the Mundas, Bhumijes, and the Santals.

In May 1839, immigration from India was suspended, only to be renewed in January 1842, when it became 'state controlled' and 'State sponsored' by the British Governments of India and Mauritius. A Protector of Immigrants was also appointed in Mauritius.

## RECONSIDERING ‘CRIME’ IN PORT LOUIS: AFRICAN APPRENTICES AND INDIAN LABOURERS

The period from 1835 and 1839 are crucial periods in Mauritian history and deserve a reconsideration as ex-slaves and the first indentured labourers have been viewed rather negatively in official colonial reports. Historians have also tended to focus on events in the rural areas and less on what was going on in Port Louis. Yet Port Louis was a place which welcomed people from all sorts of backgrounds as well those escaping from something and wishing to blend into the incredible mix that constituted the town of Port Louis. Among these, were those who escaped from their employers and estates and hoped for a better life in town. When caught, both apprentices and indentured labourers found themselves imprisoned in the same place, the *Bagne* and were treated as ‘criminals’.

Today, we urge a reconsideration of the way in which they were portrayed and instead to view their acts, individual and collective, as ‘acts of resistance’ or ‘non-cooperation’ against the social and economic conditions of slavery, apprenticeship system and early indenture. These acts included ‘clandestine’ activities such as theft, robbery, gambling, and black-racketeering.

In the 1830s’ the *Bagne* Prison and, to a lesser extent, the Prisons of the Court of Justice became suddenly overcrowded.<sup>11</sup> In 1836, there were 23 cases of theft, 1 case of arson, and 1 murder in Port Louis and 56 apprentices were imprisoned for these crimes. The following year, for the first time, Indian labourers were convicted for various crimes such as theft, arson, and murder. By 1838, there were 68 cases of theft, 3 case of arson, and 13 murders in Port Louis and 92 apprentices and 10 Indian labourers were convicted and imprisoned. During the following year, there were 82 cases of theft, 4 cases of arson, and 13 homicides in Port Louis and 91 apprentices and 38 Indians were imprisoned.<sup>12</sup> The rise in crimes by Indians was reported on in June and July 1838 by *Le Cernéen*, so much so, it became a major source of concern for the Colonial Authorities,<sup>13</sup> as this coincided with the ending of the apprenticeship system and the introduction of more indentured labourers. Overcrowding in prisons resulted.<sup>14</sup>

### THE INDIANS

In the last week of February 1836, Captain Weir, the Special Magistrate for Port Louis, reported to George F. Dick, the Colonial Secretary, that ever since the beginning of the previous month, there had been a gradual influx of Indian labourers into the colony’s capital from the sugar-producing rural Districts. The majority of these Indian workers had been introduced into the colony only a few months before and they were arrested as vagrants near Government House and the Casernes Centrales. Furthermore, in the month of February alone, 84 Indians were caught and incarcerated at the *Bagne* which was already crowded.<sup>15</sup> Immediately, the following day, Governor Nicolay, clearly recognizing the urgency of the situation, ordered some of the Indian vagrants to be moved from the *Bagne* Prison to a makeshift prison in the Magazine or the same large building which served as a warehouse for the storage of goods which were taken off ships anchored in Port Louis harbour. During the last week of that same month, W.W. West, an English sugar planter and owner of the Vale Estate in the District of Pamplemousses, wrote a lengthy letter to the Colonial Secretary in which he made a number of interesting observations. He explained that he employed more than 50 Indian labourers and that over the past several months, it became a common practice for them to escape from his sugar estate to order to go to Port Louis.<sup>16</sup>

To deter Indians from leaving their estates, the Prison Committee suggested that no distinction must be made when it came to the punishment being inflicted on prisoners of the *Bagne*. Both maroon apprentices and vagrant Indians were to be punished in the same manner.

One of these punishments included the task of cleaning and repairing of the streets of Port Louis. But this did not work.<sup>17</sup> Between 1836 and 1837, the monthly average of Indians who were imprisoned in the *Bagne* increased from 48 to 148 or almost tripled. In general, the population of the *Bagne* may be described as a floating population because each month, hundreds of apprentices

and Indian labourers were incarcerated for a period of either a few days or a few weeks. In addition, during this brief period, the floating population of this large colonial prison increased sharply from 5,221 to 9,090 or by 40%.

The effect of having prisoners who were not real criminals led to the prison resembling a Depot rather than a prison *per se*. This 'floating population' had thus transformed a lieu of incarceration into a building where people moved within it relatively freely: 'The establishment therefore partakes more of the character of a 'Depot' than that of a regular place of incarceration.'<sup>18</sup>

Why did Indian labourers leave plantations when they were fed, clothed, housed and paid for their work? If official reports are to be believed, there were very few complaints from the labourers. One reason was the double-cut system reported as early as 1838 by James Backhouse and Thomas Hugon.<sup>19</sup> When they came to Port Louis to complain, as the slaves before them, 'they were lodged in the *Bagne*, till their masters were summoned.'<sup>20</sup> Backhouse was also afraid that unless there were controls, 'there was a danger that it might ultimately grow into another species of slavery'.<sup>21</sup> Hugon provided another explanation in 1839:

*"By the too rigid discipline of most plantations, the Indian labourer is subjected, without the smallest advantage to the master [...] the obligation of the Indian labourer in being provided with a 'billet de passe' to venture beyond the boundary of the estate during out of working hours, is a 'tracasserie', to which the Indian has never been used in his own country, it is an abrogation of personal liberty, to which he would never consent and which he has not subscribed to by merely engaging to services of the ex-apprentices who were exempted from it. The subjection of the Indian to it can never be defended on several estates, the system has been given up...I am told however the abandonment of the system has extended since the Emancipation of the apprentices to so many estates that it could hardly be said to exist at present [...]"<sup>22</sup>*

He, too was afraid that indenture might also be likened to slavery: 'So sensitive are these men that the least semblance of an assimilation to the preceding condition of the servile class should be carefully avoided and the stocks on the estate ought to be quietly removed as being a great eyesore to freemen.'<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, being tied to one employer was not 'free labour' and the labourers were keenly aware of this:

*"They [the Indian labourers] object as freemen to the false position in which they have been placed, by being bound down to one master. It is no severe reproach to the man who has possessed slaves to say that, he has 'despotic habits' which he had to change entirely when he comes into contact with freemen, here the first check to those habits has been the recent Emancipation of the apprentices. The productive existence, of this colony, depending entirely on the resort of Indian, or other foreign labourers, this measure must be considered in that respect, to have been very opportune and in the future and general interests of the island [...]"<sup>24</sup>*

Thus, the plantation owner could not, and would not, change overnight. In Port Louis, by contrast, their work was recognized; they found work as dockworkers, carters, boatmen, domestic servants, messengers, and a handful as masons and carpenters. Some even took over work performed previously by apprentices and ex-slaves.<sup>25</sup> Indian carters were particularly highly paid as reported in February 1839, by *Le Mauricien*, 7 Rix Dollars per month by some employers, while ex-slaves earned 4 Rix dollars. *Le Mauricien* warned that raising the wage would encourage ex-apprentices to ask for higher wages.<sup>26</sup>

## THE APPRENTICES

If apprenticeship was meant to teach slaves a profession and they were paid, why did apprentices maroon? In the *Bagne* they joined their fellow slaves who had been imprisoned there before abolition of slavery.<sup>27</sup> The presence of so many maroon apprentices is clear evidence that many slaves did not want to remain as apprentices after abolition. Thousands ran away from the estates but many were promptly hunted and arrested in maroon apprentices hunts, reminiscent of slave maroon hunts.<sup>28</sup> But there was another reason: like the slaves, many had lodged complaints with the Special Magistrates against their former owners and were being kept in protective custody at the *Bagne* until the Special Magistrates of Port Louis investigated their cases.

By the end of 1836, Backhouse reported that there were 139 apprentices imprisoned there, and by 1837, 172. Many were still there up to the last day of the abolition of apprenticeship.<sup>29</sup>

But the rise in the 'crime' rate could also be interpreted in another way: as an enslaved people expressing their newly-found freedom. The Acting Governor of Mauritius explained it as 'arising not unnaturally from the sudden change in the condition of an uninstructed population'.<sup>30</sup> According to the Colonial Office, this was the opposite of what had occurred in the Caribbean.<sup>31</sup>

This increased activity of ex-apprentices and Indians was also of an economic nature. The Chief Commissary, John Finiss, reported that smuggling, theft, and gambling were rampant in Port Louis and almost 20,000 Rix Dollars was changing hands every day among the apprentices.<sup>32</sup> An informal economy had emerged in Port Louis, undetected up to then by authorities. Adding to this was the more legitimate aspects as the Commissioners of Eastern Inquiry reported, Government slaves had been employed as 'caulkers, divers, and boatmen attached to the Port Department',<sup>33</sup> and just before abolition, there were 929 urban slaves working in the wharfs and in the shipping activities of Port Louis harbour.<sup>34</sup>

Legitimate and not so legitimate business merged, and in 1838, Finiss reported that during the 1830s, many of these slaves/apprentices were suspected of stealing merchandise being landed at the docks in Port Louis. The colony's Police Chief wrote: 'The individuals employed on the wharfs, and in the boats for shipping, are for the most part of bad character and connected with a considerable number of persons of the same class, who aid them in removing their plunder, establishing themselves in the neighbourhood of the Bazaar and wharfs, near which, there are a number of small lodgings, where they easily deposit their plunder, which I think might be materially checked by the 'Bazaar Post' and the 'Marine Police'.<sup>35</sup>

To counter this increase in illegal activities, in April 1836, Finiss proposed to set up a secret service. He explained:

*"Since I have been at the head of the police. I have never ceased to represent the necessity of a secret police for the detention of robbers and thieves etc. Constituted as society is here, no known agent of police can succeed and even though in many cases rewards have been offered, and to a considerable amount, in only one instance did they produce any discovery, and that was accidental."*

Six individuals would be recruited and trained to become police agents and report on the illegal activities in Port Louis. Two agents would undertake undercover surveillance in the Western Suburb or Camp des Malabars, two in the Eastern Suburb or Camp des Noirs, and two in the centre of Port Louis. Those working in the Western and Eastern suburbs would be paid 10 Pounds Sterling each per month and those working in the city centre 15 Pounds Sterling. They would also be entitled to 'gratuity to be paid on any particular discovery or execution'. A vital part of this plan was that each of these police agents/informants would not be known either to one another or to members of the Police Department, except to the Police Chief himself. Finiss explained that the police agents who would be appointed would be familiar with the district where there would be posted. In addition, they would have to gather information from all the public areas in their respective districts especially the public canteens, bazaars, and residential areas. They would be required to provide a written daily report and briefing to Finiss in person. The Chief of Police would note all the information in a secret diary.<sup>36</sup>

Finiss was hesitantly provided with a budget for only one year, of £50 per month and not exceeding £600 per annum for his secret police experiment.<sup>37</sup> Exactly a year later, the Chief of Police reported that between July 1836 and May 1837, just over £141 had been spent; he had hired a group of trustworthy individuals who supplied him with regular information about the clandestine activities in their respective districts. However in September, they were discovered due to their own carelessness by those individuals they were spying on and who were involved in various illegal activities. After that month, these agents became useless and resigned. But, others had been recruited and he had arrested the notorious criminal, Bouchy, who was now in prison as well as the most notorious thieves of Port Louis. He nevertheless, expected domestic thefts in the isolated parts of the town and its suburbs to continue and even increase, 'as emancipation advances'.<sup>38</sup>

Thefts increased partly because this money was used to pay for the purchase of freedom of family and close relatives.<sup>39</sup> This was also reported in July 1838, in *Le Cernéen*: in an article entitled 'Progression des vols après l'abolition de l'esclavage à Port Louis': 'Certains (les apprentis) avaient eu l'audace de déclarer publiquement qu'ils s'étaient servis de fausses clés pour se procurer de l'argent pour le rachat de leur liberté selon une clause de l'acte de l'abolition de 1833'.<sup>40</sup> It also shows that ex-slaves, despite their illiteracy, were fully aware of manumission laws and of impending freedom.<sup>41</sup> More symbolically, however, is the desire not to be freed by someone else, but to *free themselves*. Finiss stated:

*"There is also a feeling amongst the apprentices in Port Louis that it will be a dishonor to them if they do not effect their own emancipation before the period of general freedom arrives, there is consequently a great increase in domestic thefts and robberies which will increase rather than diminish."*<sup>42</sup>

Finiss' statement indirectly helps us to understand why those who could not purchase their freedom, preferred to run away and run risk of being arrested and imprisoned. Pride, not submissive behaviour, as it often portrayed in public discourse in contemporary Mauritius, characterized slave behaviour. This short study of apprentice and indentured behaviour in a crucial moment in Mauritian history, the 1830s, helps to show that oppressed people in Mauritius have never bowed their heads and accepted their fate silently. They showed many innovative ways to overcome their servitude and fight the system. We are only at the beginning for our search to understand the consciousness of the oppressed in Mauritius.

## IMPACT OF VAGRANCY LAWS ON LABOUR MOBILITY

This problem continued to prevail even till 1890s and its gravity could be gauged by the fact that out of 209,001 complaints filed against Indian labourers between 1860 and 1885, about 72% accounted for illegal absence and desertion. Planters' response was obvious, - rather than recognising these frequent occurrences of absence and desertion as labourers' vent of protest against the inconsiderate working conditions and repressive disciplinary structure of plantations and their naïve attempts to move out of contractual bindings of indenture; illegal absence and desertion were termed as habit of Indian labourers who were blamed as habitual idlers not wanting to work. And therefore, instead of addressing the grievances of immigrant labourers through reforms and relaxing the harsh legal provisions of indenture, planters resorted to repression - several punitive laws were initiated to discipline errant labourers for illegal absence and desertion, the notable ones being the Ordinance 21 of 1843, Ordinance 22 of 1847, and Ordinance 7 of 1849 which entrusted to the police and planters enormous powers to punish labourers in case they tried to break away the shackles of indenture. Absence and desertion were declared criminal offences and the concept of vagrancy as a criminal category was introduced to deal with the immigrant labourers who had deserted the plantations. All the labourers found outside the plantation were convicted for vagrancy.

Authorities blurred the critical difference between desertion and vagrancy, and defaulters for both offences were put on trial for the offence of vagrancy. This fundamental oversight continued till the 1890s, even when the initial vehemence to 'hunt' vagrants decelerated to a great extent because of the shift in the priorities of planters and Colonial Authorities. In 1893, J.W.P. Muir-Mackenzie<sup>43</sup> reported this gaffe and recommended that a deserter should be dealt with under the provisions of Labour Ordinance dealing with the offence of desertion, and not under a general vagrancy law. He was also very critical of treating free labourers as criminals - 'an Indian labourer is not to be exposed to bullying by the rank and file of the Police, and treated as a suspected criminal merely because he may prefer free labour.'<sup>44</sup>

Initially, planters tried to meet the loss of labour with introduction of new labour as well, in addition to forcing the existing labourers to reengage. But the introduction of huge number of labourers from India in the 1840s and 1850s, and a subsequent increase in Old Immigrants changed the demographic order of the island. Planters got a readily available stock to bring into the terms of indenture. They cajoled existing labourers to continue with contractual service through legal barricades on their mobility. This proved to be more cost-effective than introducing new labourers. Planters had adopted the strategy to re-introduce the Old Immigrants into the plantation through Vagrancy Laws, despite the fact that they were trying to sustain themselves through alternative vocations such as gardeners, carters, dock labourers or hawkers.

The 1860s were the period of economic crisis and depression for the sugar economy of Mauritius, primarily due to the changing composition of world sugar market and a sharp decline in the price of sugar on the export market. It also marked a decline in the arrival of new immigrants from India. Instead of adopting more productive structural changes in the system of production - which they eventually did in late 1870s onwards through *Métayage* and *Morcellement*, the Mauritian Government and plantation lobby adopted a one-dimensional response by criticising the instability of labour market responsible for the crisis and responded by coercive strategies of labour control.

Free labourers were blamed for the volatility of the labour market and crisis situation, and harsh legal provisions were made to push free labourers to enter into contractual service. The most compelling among such legal initiatives was Ordinance 31 of 1867. Under the new Ordinance, the Old Immigrants had to carry the ticket all the time and any immigrant found without such a ticket was labelled and prosecuted as a vagrant. In addition to this ticket, which was required since 1847, they were now required to obtain a pass from the Police also. And the time assigned to obtain both these passes was one week - what happened in most of the instances was that they were arrested while on the way to obtaining these passes or during their search of an alternative job, and either

restored to the previous employer or sent to the vagrant depots and employed on public works with mere allowances hardly sufficient to sustain themselves.

The deliberations over possible ways of handling vagrants also strengthen the proposition that the official intent for Vagrancy Legislations and arrests of Old Immigrants as vagrants was to curb their mobility rather than to convict them as criminals or get rid of them. Despite rendering the Old Immigrants responsible for all the crimes and disorder in the island, neither the planters nor the Government were willing to lose them by deporting them, though the Vagrancy Laws provided for the deportation of 'incurable vagrants'. By the 1850s, the arrests for vagrancy became so massive that the prisons were overcrowded many times more than the planned capacity to house convicts. Taking a serious note of 'fearful conditions' of vagrants, the Port Louis Prison Committee recommended for deportation of all Indian vagrants in 1851.<sup>45</sup> The Governor, however, rejected this outright. For the Government, this would have entailed a loss of labour as the vagrants were employed in public works.<sup>46</sup> Apart from overcrowding in prisons with the increase of vagrants, the authorities were also worried about the 'moral pestilence' of the vagrants because of possible contacts with 'hardened criminals' in prison. Despite labelling vagrants as criminals, the authorities were apprehensive that close contact with real criminals would pollute the mindset of vagrants and spoil their value as labourers. To accommodate an increasing number of vagrants and, most of all, to separate the vagrants from hardcore criminals, a separate Vagrant Depot was established in 1864 at Grande Rivière. This Vagrant Depot was modelled to function like the English-Work Houses aimed at instilling docility and a sense of duty among the errant Old Immigrants by a strict disciplinary regime. The Inspector General of Police, Major Anson, recommended the establishment of a separate Vagrant Depot to separate Indian vagrants from ordinary criminals on the grounds that:

*"By thus separating the Indian immigrants from the ordinary criminal classes, a treatment suitable to the circumstances of their race can be applied, whilst their isolation will materially facilitate the claiming of labourers by their employers and the restoration, on the expiration of their sentences, to the estates to which they may have been indentured."<sup>47</sup>*

This passage from his recommendations exemplifies, in no uncertain terms, the quintessential rationale of the entire anti-vagrancy drive - to curtail labour mobility, after the expiry of indenture and to restore the Old Immigrants to plantations. The Police Commission also noted that after the stipulated punishments, almost all the vagrants entered into contractual labour for one year, and in many cases for two or three years.<sup>48</sup>

Reflecting upon the Vagrancy Legislations in Mauritius, an official from the Indian Government made the following observations in 1873:

*"On the whole then, the tendency of Mauritius legislation has been, I think, towards reducing the Indian labourers to a more complete state of dependence upon the planter and towards driving him into indentures, a free labour market being both directly and indirectly discouraged."<sup>49</sup>*

About ten years later, even Ashley Eden, a member of Indian Civil Services who was very instrumental in the suppression of Santals uprising in India, made a note that 'the tendency of the colony was to treat as vagrants all Indians who did not choose to labour on the estates.'<sup>50</sup>

The influence of slavery on Vagrancy Laws indicates clearly in that in a period of economic crisis, planters initiated a criminal category of pre-emancipation labour regime and by using such legal instruments as ticket of status, police pass, certificates of employment, etc. they tried to regulate the occupational and geographical mobility of Indian labourers. Anti-Vagrancy Legislations were used across all the locations of Indian indentured immigration to curtail mobility, but the severity of punishment was most severe in Mauritius.<sup>51</sup> The intention was to ensure the availability of labour and to have a hold over the economic independence and wage-bargaining power of Indian labourers. Fulfilling the legal requirements to acquire the status of a bonafide free labourer was so complicated, time-consuming, expensive and, above all, so manipulated and ill-interpreted that labourers were compelled, and often chose, to re-engage with the same employer, on a similarly repressive contractual obligations, or at times at even lower wages.<sup>52</sup>

From a colonial viewpoint, Indian immigrant labourers had only three places in Mauritius to live in - at work, in hospital or in gaol, since the Labour Laws virtually left no scope for them to be found anywhere else.

# AN OVERVIEW OF LABOUR LAWS RELATING TO ILLEGAL ABSENCE AND VAGRANCY

## Introduction

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## 1. LABOUR LAWS REGULATING ILLEGAL ABSENCE AND VAGRANCY

Major General Hay, the Acting Governor of Mauritius, wrote to the Colonial Secretary in 1854 about vagrancy among Indian immigrants in Mauritius:

*“an evil (vagrancy) which, in addition to the loss it entails on the employer of labour, is fraught with moral and social mischief, and is, as I believe, the source and basis of much of the crime of the island [...] removal of this monstrous evil would require the Government to continue its most strenuous efforts to do so.”*<sup>53</sup>

Since the beginning of indenture, planters had been cautious about the availability of labour because plantations were high investment ventures and the introduction of immigrant labourers added to their costs. Runaway labourers thus meant permanent loss of ‘capital’ and hence, stringent labour regulations were supported. The main focus of legislative attention was to control the loss of labour - illegal absence, temporary desertion, and vagrancy. In definitional terms of laws, illegal absence and desertion involved a breach of contract because these were associated with the labourers under indenture, while vagrancy was associated with the free labourers who had completed their contractual obligations. However, vagrancy was defined in very loose terms, primarily to include the desertion and labourers’ refusal to work under within confines as criminal offences because vagrancy was considered to be a more serious crime and as a threat, not only to the plantation system, but to the society as whole.

From the late 1840s, the problem surfaced of how to deal with immigrant labourers who had completed their ‘industrial residence’ but did not want to continue on the same plantations with the same working conditions. After completing five years of industrial residence, many immigrant labourers decided to explore alternative options, which did not go down well with planters who wanted them to continue working on estates. According to colonial perceptions these Old Immigrants did not want to continue working on the plantations because they were ‘habitual idlers’ and because of their ‘unsettled habits’ and ‘erratic character’.<sup>54</sup>

By the 1850s, desertion and vagrancy became one of the primary concerns of the plantation lobby and the Colonial Authorities. In 1845, it was reported that about 6% of the total Indian labourers in Mauritius were deserters and another 11% were illegally absent.<sup>55</sup> They argued in favour of suppressing such conduct with stringent legal initiatives.

The first legal initiative of the Colonial Government to control desertion and runaway was contained in the **Order in Council of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1838** which provided for such punishments as: idle and disorderly persons condemned to imprisonment with hard labour for 14 days; a rogue and vagabond for 28 days, and an incorrigible rogue for a period not exceeding 6 months.<sup>56</sup>

**Ordinance 21 of 1843** prohibited Indian immigrants from working in shops or docks without prior approval so that they could not desert the plantation and take up another post.

**Ordinance 42 of 1844** defined the ‘idler’ as a person without the means to support himself and his family and as a burden. In order to curb the tendency of desertion and idleness among the Indian indentured labourers, this Ordinance made such penal provisions as: all such persons were to be convicted by the Stipendiary Magistrate and sentenced to hard work on public works like highways and streets for a period not exceeding one month. This Ordinance reiterated the same punitive provisions as provided in the Order of Council in 1838.

**Ordinance 22 of 1847** was introduced in order to clearly identify the immigrants who had completed their contracts and those still under indenture through a ticket system as proof of status. All the Old Immigrants had to carry a ticket. It also fixed the territorial limits for the Indian labourers and in the event of their crossing these geographical boundaries, it provided for arrest and criminal prosecution without a warrant. Any Old Immigrant who failed to produce this ticket, or was not able to satisfy the authorities about his occupation or was found outside the boundaries, was liable to punishment as a vagrant.

**Ordinance No. 16 of 1852** defined a vagrant as a person ‘who have no fixed domicile, or any means of subsistence, and who, being able to labour, do not habitually work at any trade or profession’, and provided for imprisonment and hard labour as punitive measures for vagrancy. It

also introduced the concept of ‘vagrant hunts’ which were no less punitive and violent than the ‘maroon hunts’ during slavery. During the period of vagrant hunts, which were organised very frequently with the support of planters, police and authorities could enter any premises to ascertain the status of inhabitants. They swept across large areas, and any Indians found outside the plantations, on whatever pretext, was arrested as vagrant.

**Ordinance 4 of 1864 (Article 16)** did away with the distinction between desertion and vagrancy, while the punishment for both the offences had been different before in terms of quantum. Vagrancy was always punished severely. This Ordinance made it possible for an indentured worker, found guilty of desertion of an estate for a couple of days, to be condemned to imprisonment of six to nine months.<sup>57</sup>

In the 1860s, several other legislations were passed to control vagrancy. Legislative measures reached their apogee with the promulgation of **Ordinance 31 of 1867**. An average of 12% of the total Indian population was arrested for alleged vagrancy in the 1850s and the early 1860s. The authorities wanted more overarching and stringent legislation to detect and discipline ‘vagrants’. The Protector of Immigrants, appointed to safeguard immigrants’ interests, expressed frustration with the failure of existing laws in diminishing vagrancy.<sup>58</sup>

Epidemics, which afflicted the island in the 1850s and the 1860s, led to the deaths of more than 11% of the Indian population. The most affected area was the town of Port Louis where one third of the population perished because of the malaria outbreak. Official estimates were that mortality rates were higher in the ‘Indian villages’ and Port Louis which were also inhabited by the Old Immigrants. This led to a very strongly prejudiced view in official circles that these outbreaks were outcomes of the unhygienic habits of Indian labouring classes particularly of Old Immigrants. Governor Barkly, in his report to the Secretary of State, affirmed that the high mortality was primarily caused by the ‘agglomeration of people of dirty habits in wretched and overcrowded huts - constructed without the slightest regard to sanitation and grouped together often in most unsuitable localities.’<sup>59</sup>

Ordinance 31 of 1867, or commonly referred to as the Labour Law of 1867, surpassed all the previous legislations in severity and intolerance against Old Immigrants. It was validated by the highest levels of Government in Mauritius and the need to maintain hygienic standards in the island. It gave enormous powers to the Police and planters to apprehend labourers. This Ordinance was the most comprehensive legislation to regulate the occupational and personal spheres of Indian immigrant labourers in Mauritius, and it remained in practice till the end of century, albeit with certain modifications, despite being the subject of the numerous condemnations as extremely repressive.

In order to understand how the Labour Law of 1867 was instrumental in regulating the geographic and occupational mobility of Indian immigrant labourers in Mauritius, the clauses most relevant need to be examined:

- i. The Protector of Immigrants shall, upon proof of him of any immigrant having duly completed his industrial residence, register such immigrant as an old immigrant, giving him a ticket as such, with his portrait thereon[...] (Article: XXXIX)
- ii. Introduction of Pass System: Every Old immigrant not under engagement by written contract of service, shall be bound to appear at the Central Station of Police for the district in which he is resident, and to justify to the Inspector of police.., his designation as Old immigrant upon production of his ticket and further to declare to the said officer his place of abode, and occupation, employment, or other means of subsistence. The said officer shall thereupon deliver to such immigrant a pass.

Every immigrant on completing his industrial residence and receiving an Old Immigrant’s Ticket, and every old immigrant on the expiry of his written contract, shall, within eight days, appear before the said officer of police of the district in which he resides or has taken his abode, and shall make declaration as above. (Article: XLIII)

- iii. Any old immigrant not being engaged under written contract of service.., who shall fail, on demand of any Magistrate, or of the Police, to produce his pass, or a certificate of

engagement duly signed by a Stipendiary Magistrate, shall be liable to be detained and forwarded to the Immigration Depot, and if it shall appear that he is not following any bona fide employment, whether on his own account or in the service of a third party, and that he has no visible means of subsistence, he shall be deemed to be taken as a vagrant. (Article: XLVI)

- iv. Any Immigrant found in a district where he has no residence, or in a house or premises, and being unable to give a satisfactory reason for his being in such district, house, or premises, as the case may be, may be arrested by any officer or constable of police, without warrant[...](Article: XLVIII)
- v. If any labourer desert from his employer's service, it shall be lawful for such employer, or any servant of such employer acting with his authority and on his behalf, without a warrant and without the assistance of police to apprehend such labourer in any public place where he may be found[...](Article: LI)<sup>60</sup>

The Labour Law of 1867 gave enormous powers to the employers and the Police who did not require any warrant to enter any premises; they could arrest any person on the pretext of his being a vagrant and keep him in prison till the time it would take for an investigation. In addition to these, the Vagrancy Ordinance of 1867 made it compulsory to obtain a new ticket on each instance when there was a change of residence, as well as permits of discharge and on engagement for each employment.

A careful reading of these clauses of the Labour Law highlights certain features which were particularly articulated to curb the freedom and mobility of Old Immigrants - photographs had to be affixed to tickets (making them more costly); the need for an additional identification document and location in form of Police Pass, and confining these Old immigrants to fixed locations was also initiated.

The most significant change was the extension the right to challenge the status and to apprehend Old Immigrants, to ordinary people and planters' agents, a right which was more than often abused by planters' agents to exert their control over the labourers. The Procureur Général's statements, justifying these stern measures, were a most reflective articulation of colonial prejudices and contempt of the Indian immigrants, and implied doubts in the ability of free Indian labouring classes to sustain themselves by pursuing an independent occupation:

*"There are a great number of immigrants who are without tickets, being either deserters from service, or parties who have lost their tickets and being without papers of any kind,...These parties lead a precarious existence; when provisions are cheap, they live upon the bounty of their friends, in the time of scarcity, they are destitute, and in the time of epidemic, as recent experience has shown, when they are sick, they are turned out dead,...]Many of them turn to a life of plunder, robbing or pilfering at night and sleeping in the canes or in their comrades' house by day.*

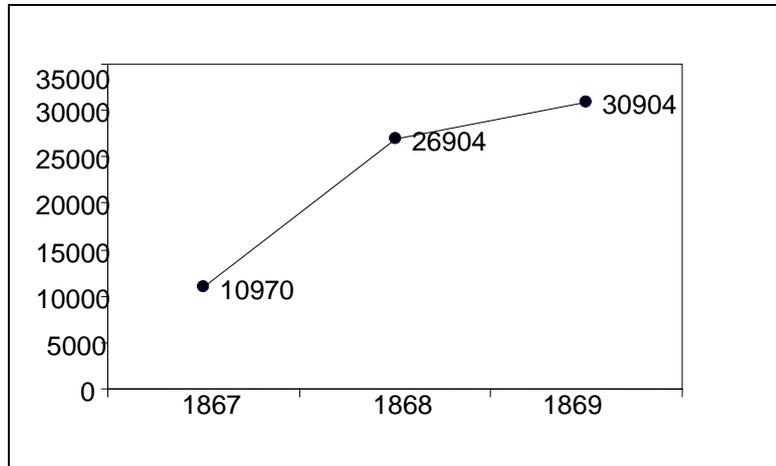
*There is also another class who are equally if not more dangerous to society: they are Old Immigrants who have no visible means of subsistence. They pass themselves off as gardeners, and half a dozen of them squat upon a small piece of ground, perhaps ¼ of an acre, which they rent, and they nominally live upon the produce of this ground but they are well known to the police as thieves and vagabonds.*

*It is from these classes that the perpetrators of gang robberies so prevalent of late years, are recruited. The Police Returns upon this subject, in answer to a series of questions framed by myself show the magnitude of the evil[...]*

*It is a well known fact that Indians will never work if they can live a life of idleness and I am confident that this system will soon convince the vagabond class that they can no longer unmolestedly lead a life of idleness and that they will in consequence be driven to seek for honest employment. "<sup>61</sup>*

Promulgation of this Act and its enthusiastic pursuit by disciplinary agencies had the obvious outcome and the numbers of arrests of so-called vagrants multiplied by three times in the next two years, as after the enactment of Ordinance 31 in 1867 - from 10,970 in 1867, these increased to 26,904 the following year (fig 40).

Figure 7: Arrests for Vagrancy, 1867-1869



Throughout the decade of the 1860s, Government indeed dealt with vagrants very zealously and as the following table shows, between 1861 and 1871, an average 11.5 to 17.2 per cent of the total male Indian population in Mauritius was arrested on charges of vagrancy.

Figure 8 : Arrests of Indians for Vagrancy, 1861-71

Year	Total Arrests	% of Total Male Indian Population
1861	23371	15.7
1862	16668	11.0
1863	-	-
1864	18834	12.5
1865	18382	11.4
1866	19416	12.0
1867	16884	11.5
1868	22357	15.8
1869	23916	17.2
1870	16880	12.0
1871	12096	8.5

Source: ARPI, 1861 - 1872, Kuczynski, R.R., Demographic Survey, pp. 780-785

Opposition to these laws came from the Indian Government An official from the Indian Government made the following observations in 1873:

*“On the whole then, the tendency of Mauritius legislation has been, I think, towards reducing the Indian labourers to a more complete state of dependence upon the planter and towards driving him into indentures, a free labour market being both directly and indirectly discouraged.”<sup>62</sup>*

At more or or less the same time, the Royal Commission, in its report of 1875 in Mauritius, also noted that the Vagrancy Laws amounted to nothing less than unbridled harassment of the Indian population.<sup>63</sup> It also confirmed many of the grievances highlighted in the petition of Old Immigrants, especially regarding the attempt to restrict labour mobility, and took a strong stance against the Protector of Immigrants and the Inspector General of Police for their failure to protect the interests of the Immigrants in Mauritius.

The Royal Commission recommended a complete reform of the Immigration Office in Mauritius and a regular and thorough inspection of sugar estates. The Secretary of State endorsed most of the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission and instructed the Governor of Mauritius to revoke most of the harsh provisions of the Ordinance of 1867.<sup>64</sup>

**Ordinance 12 of 1878** abolished the harsher aspects of the 1867 laws and provided for a more efficient system of checks for errant planters, especially Article 284 which empowered the Governor to take action against the bad planters who were misusing the provisions of the Labour Ordinance. Punitive actions for vagrancy continued.

**Ordinance 12 of 1922** finally repealed the penal clause in the regulation of labour.

## 2. THE ISSUE OF WAGES

From very beginning of the system in 1834, Indian immigrants were employed on fixed wages and stipulated rations to work on plantations. This was to be increased every year according to the Government of India, through **Act XXXII of 1837 (of the Government of India)** and accepted by the Government of Mauritius.<sup>65</sup>

Initially, however, there were rampant violations of contractual obligations on the payment of wages and for the first time, the **Order in Council of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1838** provided for the strict obligation of the payment of wages and provided the opportunity to the indentured labourers to seek redress by making a complaint to the Court of Stipendiary Magistrate who had the power to order the full payment of arrears due to the labourer or terminate the contract.

**Ordinance 15 of 1852 (Article 10)** made the withholding of payments a punishable offence, and the employer had to pay £10 compensation to the complainant, if the charges of non-payment of wages were proved. **Article 11** of the same Ordinance provided that if the arrears were due for more than 3 months, this amounted to breach a of contract and the indentured labourer had the right to claim the end of contract.<sup>66</sup> This Ordinance also provided for the seizure of the property of the employer to pay the arrears of wages due to the labourers.

**Ordinance 31 of 1867**, one of the first comprehensive and overarching Labour Laws repealed all the Labour Ordinances till then, extended it to all labourers including domestic servants, and handicraftsmen or even overseers of labour of any origin if their monthly wages were below £4.<sup>67</sup>

**Ordinance 12 of 1878** authorised the Protector of Immigrants or any Inspector of Immigrants to represent the labourers in the matter of the dissolution of the contract, if the labourer's wages were not paid for three consecutive months.<sup>68</sup>

**Labour Ordinance 12 of 1922** reduced the time to one month. If the labourers' wages were not paid for one month, he was entitled to the dissolution of the contract, by making an appeal in the Court of Stipendiary Magistrate. Even if the labourer did not make a complaint, and wages were not paid for three consecutive months, the Protector had the right to request the dissolution of the contract on the ground that the interests of labourers were protected in the said contract.

Figure 9: Complaints by Indian Labourers against their Employers, 1878 - 1898

Year	Complaints for Non-Payment of Wages (cases entered)	Total Complaints
1878	816	1672
1879	503	823
1880	558	822
1881	1107	1378
1882	291	418
1883	323	671
1884	373	492
1885	494	589
1886	358	435
1887	269	323
1888	959	1009

1889	246	298
1890	225	275
1891	125	174
1892	101	142
1893	85	119
1894	57	72
1895	55	80
1896	114	126
1897	88	102
1898	88	106
<b>Total</b>	<b>7235</b>	<b>10126</b>

(Source: ARPI for years 1878-99)

The planters' habitual defence was the absence of liquidity. But an overdue of wages had more to do with the attitude of planters than an actual crisis of funds. Planters always avoided the wage payments on some pretext or other and a minor fault on the part of labourers provided them with an opportunity to forfeit all the accumulated wages of errant labourers. In addition, the non-payment of wages often pushed labourers into a debt trap of money lenders, and this eventually pushed the Immigrants to extend their contracts, as desired by the planters.

### Double Cut

All the Labour Laws stipulated the wage and ration levels and employers were strictly prohibited from employing any indentured labourer below the stipulated rates. However, the Labour Laws provided also for employers paying less than what was legally stipulated through the 'double cut' or deduction of two days of wages for an absence of each day. This was primarily introduced to control illegal absence and habitual idling among the indentured labourers. This was practised by the planters as early as 1839<sup>69</sup> and obtained legislative endorsement in **Ordinance 22 of 1847**.<sup>70</sup> The planters' explicit authority in applying this 'double cut' without any reference to protective authorities such as Stipendiary Magistrates, was established by **Ordinance 16 of 1862**.<sup>71</sup> Rampant misuse ensued. In 1874, the former Assistant Protector of Immigrants in Mauritius, Robert Mitchell reported that 'double cut' reduced the wage bills by one third on good estates and one half on bad estates to what should have been actually paid to the labourers.<sup>72</sup> The Royal Commission also condemned it, describing it as a 'monstrous system'.<sup>73</sup>

The 'double cut' system remained in effect even with the supposedly pro-labour **Ordinance 12 of 1878**, though it tried to put some control on planters' use of this provision by making the approval of a Stipendiary Magistrate mandatory, as well as stipulating compulsory reporting to the Protector.<sup>74</sup> This 'monstrous evil' was abolished only through **Ordinance 13 of 1908**.<sup>75</sup>

By the mid 1860s, it was becoming apparent that the overall system of maintaining labourers on estates was not cost-effective. The decade of the 1870s witnessed a period of improvements in some facilities provided to indentured labourers on the plantations - housing, medical, food and other provisions which added hugely to the costs of labour. In order to cut the costs, planters now shifted to employing labourers on short-term contracts, and that too through contracts, rather than engaging them directly on the estates. Under this arrangement, planters were not obliged to maintain labourers for the non-working part of their lives and had to pay wages only for the work performed. This strategy helped them to cut the costs of labour to a great extent.

### 3. CHANGING STRATEGY, 1870S ONWARDS

We shall now briefly describe the planters' strategy of labour control and certain crucial shifts in 1870s onwards. We shall argue that strategies of labour control should not be seen as monolithic, static responses from the masters, but we shall put them in a larger context of the needs of production system, interests of the capitalist classes and changing dynamics of labour-master relationship. Planters responded to the crisis of the sugar economy and its sinking prospects in the 1860s by forcing labourers to continue to work on plantations under contractual bindings and anti-vagrancy legislations facilitated planters' attempts to effectively curtail the prospects of labour mobility or give any scope for labourers' bargaining to increase wages. This strategy helped

the planters in coping with the demands of the industry at that time, but by the mid-1860s it was also becoming apparent that the overall costs of maintaining labourers on estates was not very cost-effective. The 1870s were also a period of certain improvements in facilities provided to the indentured labourers on plantations - housing, medical, food and other provisions which immensely added to the costs of labour. In order to cut costs, planters now shifted to employing labourers on short-term contracts, and that too through contracts, rather than engaging them directly to the estates. Under this arrangement, planters were not obliged to maintain labourers for the non-working part of their VRS and had to pay wages only for the work performed. This strategy helped them to cut the costs of labour to a great extent. But the most striking shift in the realm of labour relations took place in form of *Métayage* and *Morcellement*<sup>76</sup>. Finding the large scale cultivation economically unviable, planters decided to lease the plantation part to the old immigrants and concentrate on production of sugar by consolidating it and making it more cost-effective. In a severe financial crisis, because of the sinking fortunes of Mauritian sugar in the wake of global competition, planters had no financial resources to invest in the improvement of plantation, and this moved them to separate the plantation of sugar cane from the making of sugar. They transferred cultivation part to the Indian population through the *Métayage* and *Morcellement* processes. It was a decisive shift towards a crucial reversal of the earlier policy of regulation of labour mobility to a phase of labour relations where mobility of labourers was promoted, and they were encouraged to move out of plantation and either buy or lease small plots of lands to grow sugar cane. As scholars like Raj Virahsawmy, Richard Allen and M. D. North-Coombes have argued, this strategic change in labour relations had very enduring consequences for the Indian labour Diaspora in Mauritius, and it facilitated the growth of a new class *petits planteurs* in the social order of Mauritius which, in course of time, played decisive role in the future course of the Mauritian political economy and social-cultural space.

#### 4. LEGAL RECOURSE FOR PROTECTION

Despite the proviso for redressal, agencies like the Protector of Immigrants and the Stipendiary Magistrates, Indian labourers seldom received any reparation for their ordeal because, rather than protecting the interests of these labourers and saving them from harassment at the hands of planters or Police, these officials mostly remained indifferent or commended the need of a strict legislative mechanism to put labourers' VRS in order.<sup>77</sup> During the indenture period, the overall system of legal/judicial recourse was tilted in favour of planters, an indication of which can be traced from what Geoghegan reported in 1873, after examining the cases brought by employers against labourers and vice versa. His report shows that planters won 91% of cases brought by them, while Indian labourers won only 38% cases.<sup>78</sup>

This one area of the colonial legal structure in Mauritius needs a more detailed investigation.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

What this report proposes to look into is how the term 'vagrancy' acquired new meanings in the context of an Indentured Labour regime and the multiplicity of ways in which it was conceptualised and appropriated as a ploy to regulate the geographical and occupational mobility of labour. We have also tried to ascertain that the real intention of anti-vagrancy legislation was not the prevention of crime among the old immigrants,<sup>79</sup> as it was often promulgated by the colonial authorities, but to restrict their mobility away from the estates, even after the completion of indenture, and therefore to ensure their availability for work on plantations by placing stringent legal constraints on old immigrants' efforts to move beyond the confines of plantations and the contractual obligations of indenture, so as to pursue a vocation of their choice.

We have also tried to show that despite strictly determined scales of wages and punitive provisions for non-payment of wages in the Labour Laws, planters resorted to every possible trick to avoid paying wages right up to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which severely curtailed the mobility of indentured labourers.

Another point we have tried to emphasise in this Report is that the Labour Laws, during the indentured period, should not be studied as static and monolithic legal proclamations. But these Laws should be evaluated by situating them within a larger context of multiple strategies adopted

by planters and the colonial authorities, in response to the requirements and challenges which the plantation economies had to face in the changing global contexts and the restructuring of commodity productions under the Imperial Order.

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# REGULATING THE MARRIAGES AMONG THE INDENTURED LABOURERS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN MAURITIUS

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## INTRODUCTION

*Colonial perspectives:* According to the Colonial Officials, the relatively low proportion of women immigrants in indentured immigrant population on the plantations led to unstable sexual relationships and affected order on plantations through social instability, sexual promiscuity, high crime rates. This volatility of men-women relationships fostered immoral ways of living, abduction and exploitation of women immigrants. This led to violent clashes between the immigrant labourers and even the murders of wives or men involved in the relationships.<sup>80</sup> Murders of wives by the husbands occurred mostly because of distrust, jealousy or betrayal by the women partners which was considered 'rampant' in Mauritius, although it was often termed an 'epidemic' in the colonial lexicon. As late as in 1880s, among the Indian population, 21 wives were murdered by the husbands.<sup>81</sup> Indenture in this respect undermined the institution of marriage.

The Royal Commission noted that the custom of polyandry was an accepted custom in Mauritius and often a group of immigrant men would keep one woman in their housing unit who would cook their food and satisfy them physically. The most disturbing effect of this custom, according to the Royal Commission, was that it led to much quarrelling among the immigrants, and sometimes even murders. This prejudiced view of Colonial Authorities, based on Victorian notions of social order and moral standards, has been shared by the majority of scholars of indentured Diasporas of the old type who study indentured emigration in terms of the continuation of slavery. These scholars argue that 'the disproportion between men and women was the main factor in shaping the life of the coolie lines'<sup>82</sup> and 'Indian social life in Mauritius presented a disquieting spectacle.'<sup>83</sup>

Since the relative scarcity of women was related to disorder on the plantations, for the purpose of maintaining order on the plantations and encourage a structured/stable settlement in some kind of family pattern, the Colonial Authorities adopted a double-pronged strategy: first, they tried to increase the numbers of immigrant women by legally fixed quotas and second, they put a close guard and legislative regulation over the marriages among the immigrant indentured community.

In addition to this real crisis on the plantations, the regulation of marriages among the immigrant population was also rooted in the larger orientalist project of civilizing the 'barbaric Orient' by the British Empire and building new societies in the newly-acquired colonial territories. The underlying rationale behind this was the notion of cultural ascendancy which perceived Indian culture and social practices as anomalous, resulting in the moral degradation, particularly in the immigrant set up.

To address the concerns over the disproportion of sexes among the Indian communities on the plantations and also to stabilise the labouring population in Mauritius (for the other labour importing colonies as well) Colonial Authorities fixed the quota of women mandated who could be taken along with the male emigrants, encouraged the family emigration from India. A bounty of £2 was paid to those immigrants who came with 'legitimate' wives. However, this led to another forms of disorder whereby widespread instances were reported of selling of daughters or wives, using marriage ties to bring women to Mauritius and then selling them off to make extra profits by the sirdars and returnees. In 1860s, 'many sirdars and overseers brought two and sometimes three women with them' as their wives who were, as the Protector reported, sold or transferred to other men to make money.<sup>84</sup> Abuse of indentured women also occurred by the plantation owner and managers leading to numerous offspring who today still be identified through their mixed Asian and European origins. Many of these form part of the Coloured population who form the subject of subsequent chapter.

## REGULATION OF INDIAN MARRIAGES

In the initial periods of indentured emigration, the Colonial Authorities had been lenient concerning cohabitation among Indian immigrants. Their primary concern was to secure the supply of labour on plantations, and since women were not employed in Mauritius, they cared the least for them. A Royal Commission reported that before 1853, no law existed in Mauritius specifically providing for celebration and recognition of Indian marriages.<sup>85</sup> However by 1850s, with the large influx of Indian immigrants and a sizeable number of Indian labourers in the colony, the Colonial Authorities had to ratify marriage legislations. In 1853, provisions were made under **Ordinance 21 of 1853** to recognise the marriages solemnised between the members of the Indian immigrant community

according to the Civil Code, and the immigrants who wanted to marry had to produce a 'Certificate of non-marriage' to check for polygamy or abduction of already married women.<sup>86</sup>

In 1856, regulations were introduced under **Ordinance 3 of 1856** to recognise marriages between the immigrants who embarked from Indian ports as married couples. Immigrants who were already married and arrived with their wives from India, had their marriages recognised as valid in Mauritius, only if they had been already declared before the Protector at the port of embarkation in India. Any intending emigrant, who was married in India and wanted to come to Mauritius with his wife and children (if any), had to declare that he was lawfully married to such a woman according to the forms and ceremonies of their religion, and that the children (if any) accompanying them were the lawful issue of such marriages. This declaration was signed by two witnesses in front of the emigration agent and upon his satisfaction, then the Protector at the port of embarkation issued a certificate of marriage. Copies of some of these are to be found in the MGI Archives. Upon their arrival in Mauritius, these married couples had to present themselves in front of the Protector of Immigrants and declare that they were married. After the verification of identities, the Protector issued to them a certificate. Thus, Indian marriages celebrated in India acquired legitimacy in Mauritius only when they were registered and recognised by the Protector and when a certificate was issued to the married couples on payment of 2s.<sup>87</sup>

One consequence of indenture, because of the relative scarcity of women and their crucial importance in performing the domestic chores at the plantations, was that the usual custom whereby husbands' families obtained a dowry from their wives' families, was reversed in the diasporic setting, and often the grooms paid a premium to the wife's father or relatives. In one report, an immigrant *Doyal* of Flacq, paid a huge sum of \$137 to get married to *Bagmanea*. This practice of paying the bride's price was not limited to any particular section of the Indian immigrants, and another immigrant *Virapatim*, of South Indian origin, paid several hundred rupees to get married to *Taylamen*.<sup>88</sup> However, we need to be extra cautious in celebrating these instances of bride-price as 'women empowerment' and 'source of additional income for the Indian women',<sup>89</sup> as scholars of diaspora with feminist convictions attempt to assert today. Sources underline that these were often forced sales of women,<sup>90</sup> and considering the fact that the money was often paid to the father or relatives of the brides who, on many occasions, 'sold' their daughters or female relatives, colonial descriptions of women's subjugation appear to be more tenable than those of the revisionist scholars of diasporic women.

Controlling the illegal emigration of women disguised as wives by the sirdars and returnees and then their subsequent sale in the colony remained a primary preoccupation of the Colonial Authorities' marriage related legislations. The other underlying assumption of the administrators' attempts was that by making the registration and declaration compulsory, they would be able to make the matrimonial alliances in the immigrant community more stable, and thus curb sexual immorality. Therefore, the registration and declaration of marriages which was the main thrust of the marriage Ordinance, continued and was reinforced in the form of a double registration in the Marriage Ordinance 17 of 1871. All the immigrants arriving with their wives and children had to declare and obtain certificates for their marriages twice - once at the port of embarkation where the Protector had to verify their claims of being married, and then again upon their arrival in Mauritius where the Protector would give them the certificate, without which their marriages were not legally valid and children legitimate.<sup>91</sup> Considering the ignorance of emigrants and the general aversion among them for the cumbersome registration process, the Government of India made conscious efforts to emphasise the significance of the registration of marriages before embarkation. A. O. Hume, who was Secretary of the Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department which administered the indentured emigration, made a special request to the Judicial Secretary of Bengal government to inform intending emigrants that, unless they registered marriages before departure from India and obtained a certificate from the Protector, their marriages would not be held as valid in Mauritius.<sup>92</sup> Any immigrant, who wanted to get married in Mauritius, had to obtain a certificate from the Protector in Mauritius to testify that he had arrived unmarried in Mauritius.<sup>93</sup>

The next legislative intervention came in the form of **Ordinance 26 of 1890** which made certain modifications to the marriage registration process. Now the Protector in Mauritius had to certify the identity of the married couples arriving in the immigration depot and issue the certificates before these couples left the depot.<sup>94</sup>

Another consequence of their migration to Mauritius was the non-respect of their traditions: the Indian Government expressed concern and anxiety for the Indian population living in Mauritius, particularly the manner in which most of the cohabitation among Indians were declared as immoral and illegal by the state. It reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that because of existing Marriage Laws, most of the Indian children in the colony were illegitimate, even if their parents had been married under native rites.<sup>95</sup> The Indian Government pressed the Colonial Office to influence the Government of Mauritius into adopting the Marriage Ordinance of Trinidad which recognised marriages performed according to religious rites.<sup>96</sup> Although the Colonial Office deferred the implementation of Trinidad Marriage Ordinance in Mauritius, it expressed its concern about the Mauritian Government, and a Committee was appointed to enquire into the procedures connected the Indian marriages in Mauritius, under J. B. Kyshe, the Registrar General in March 1882. This committee accepted the insistence of Government of India to be consulted regarding the matter of Marriage Laws. The Protector of Immigrants proposed to set up his office for the registration of marriages, but it was rejected by the Procureur Général and the said committee failed to intervene in making the marriage procedures more convenient for the Indian population.<sup>97</sup>

The Indian Government was particularly concerned about the relatively very few numbers of registered (legally recognised) marriages. In 1866, the Protector of Immigrants had reported only 112 marriages in 1866 and 166 marriages in 1867.<sup>98</sup> By 1872, the situation had not improved.

Figure 10: Number of Marriages Registered 1872-1881

Year	Marriages
1872	343
1873	305
1874	344
1875	308
1876	402
1877	649
1878	783
1879	882
1880	723
1881	1051

(Source: L/PJ/6/79, File No 1585/1882. OIOC)

J. W. P. Muir Mackenzie, deputed by the Government of India to enquire into the conditions of the Indian population in Mauritius in 1893, reported that the majority of Indians cohabiting were not listed in the registers. However, they were not bothered about that and as a result, a large number of perfectly moral and orderly unions, regarded as marriages by parties and the social system they belonged to, were rejected by the authorities in Mauritius. It is worth noting that Muir-Mackenzie was concerned that ‘an unmerited stigma is cast on the morality of the Indians, and injury results to their self-respect and moral character.’ He found the compulsory civil marriage registration to be an unworkable and unsuitable institution and called for an urgent alteration in the Marriage Laws of Mauritius because the recognition of marriages in Mauritius should not be more difficult for Indians than in their own country.<sup>99</sup>

The consistent pressure from the Indian Government continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite being born in Mauritius, a large segment of the Indian population was considered illegitimate as the alliances of their parents were not recognised. This was not a very comforting situation for the social and political stability of the colony. The Colonial Office was well aware of the ridiculousness of declaring the majority of the population as illegitimate. The Indian community in Mauritius was also gradually becoming conscious of their plight, and attempts were being made to articulate their concerns. In his representation to the Royal Commission of 1909, Manilal Doctor demanded the recognition of marriages performed among the Indian communities according to their religious rites.<sup>100</sup>

In 1912, the Government of Mauritius passed the most elaborate ordinance regarding the registration of marriages among the Indian population. This was ‘The Civil Status (Indian Marriages) Amendment Ordinance, 1912’. Primarily aimed at making better provision for the registration of

Indian marriages, this Ordinance recognised the validity of marriages solemnised according to the religious traditions of immigrants and conducted by the Indian priests (both Hindu and Muslims) who were appointed by the Governor for the celebration of marriages in a district or territory specified by the Governor. Colonial Authorities were perturbed by the disinterest of the immigrant community in having their marriages registered, and therefore, to make the registration of marriages more convenient for the immigrant community, all the designated priests were given a register and a schedule of certificate in which they were to register all the marriages celebrated by them and then forward each case to the Civil Status Officer within a week who would then enter the details in the Register of Marriages.<sup>101</sup> The Ordinance made it lawful ‘for any priest without previous publication and without any other formality required by Ordinance 26 of 1890 to solemnise marriage between Mohamedans or Hindu of the same religion as such priest, and such marriage shall, subject to the provisions of this ordinance, be valid as if it had been celebrated by an officer of the Civil Status.’<sup>102</sup>

This Ordinance was a breakthrough in the regulation of marriages in the Indian community in Mauritius, as for the first time it recognised the area for the religious belonging of the immigrant population and entrusted to a religious mediator from their own community the performing and certifying of an act of marriage which was previously limited to the Civil Status Officer from the ranks of the Colonial Authorities. This Ordinance also had significant implications for the immigrant community. Under this Ordinance, persons getting married, if they met other conditions relating to minimum age, same religion and non-marriage, would marry according to their religious rites and have it registered by a designated priest. This law thus eased many procedural complications, and immigrants could now register their marriages and live as ‘legally approved’ married couples.

The immediate effect was the rise in Indian marriages. The Census of 1921 recorded religious marriages for the first time (Table 11).

Table 11: Marital Status of Indian Community 1921, 1931

Year \ Marital Status	Civilly	Religiously	Concubinage
1921	17,083 Male 17,674 Female	13,976 Male 14,244 Female	22,279 Male 22,624 Female
1931	24,088 Male 23,660 Female	7,803 Male 7,824 Female	17,029 Male 18,146 Female

(Source: Census of Mauritius and Its Dependencies 1921, 1931)

For the year 1931, returns are combined for Indo-Mauritians and Other Indians, as there were fewer Indians not born on the island.

Ridley, in his report on the conditions of Indian Population in Mauritius in 1941, mentions that among the Indian population in Mauritius, 17% were married civilly, 6% religiously and 12% lived in concubinage.<sup>103</sup>

## WIFE RESTORATION

Another consequence of indenture and of the scarcity of women on the plantations was the resulting instability of marriages. There were reports of wives being enticed away by other immigrants and women moving out of the matrimonial alliances for more attractive options. The Royal Commission noted that Indian immigrants filed 68 complaints in the year 1871-72 about wives being enticed away or harboured. Archival records show that this was one of the primary concerns of the male population in Mauritius who requested the authorities to restore their wives. Such occurrences of the breaking of alliances also hampered the prospects of family emigration from India as husbands were apprehensive about their wives being kidnapped or lured away, once they came to Mauritius.<sup>104</sup>

The very first exclusive Ordinance relating to Indian marriages in 1856 made specific provisions to address this. All the District Magistrates were given the legal power to look into the complaints about enticing away or harbouring wives, and any person found guilty was to pay a £50 fine or face

imprisonment with hard labour for a period not exceeding six months.<sup>105</sup> Ordinance 12 of 1870 even extended the purview of the Law to non-Indian wives of Indian immigrants whilst making the fine Rs 500; it was to be imposed along with imprisonment.<sup>106</sup> However, legal redress was available only if the husband and wife were married according to Civil Law. In the 1850s, since most alliances among Indians were not legally recognised, the protection was meaningless and husbands had recourse to extra-judicial methods: quarrelling, physical assault and in extreme situations, even murders.

Feminist scholars of indenture have asserted the common paternalist nature of the male Indian immigrants and colonial authorities and interpreted this gesture as a desperate attempt to restore control over women and maintain power to decide their partners.<sup>107</sup> There is no denial of the fact that the Indian male psyche was not at all comfortable with Indian women taking decisions about leaving a relationship and/or choosing another partner. The reaction was often extremely violent. The question remains whether the women were making informed decisions or whether they were 'lured' or tricked? Further research is needed. While relationships between Indian men and women are explored totally and official reports abound concerning wife murders, male suicides, unacknowledged by the academic community and by colonial officials at the time, were the abuse of power on the part of all those in the upper hierarchy on the plantation and sexual abuse in the academic scholarships as well as by colonial officials. Within the descendant today, it is widely spoken of but concrete examples are still spoken about in hushed tones, offspring being quire present in Mauritian society. Elsewhere as in Fiji, such stories have become famous.<sup>108</sup>

## **AGE OF MARRIAGE**

Early marriage was common in India despite British attempts to regulate it. In Mauritius, the need to regulate the age of marriages was felt. The 1856 ordinance fixed the marriageable age of men and women at 18 and 15 years respectively and any person getting married before this age had to obtain permission of the Governor.<sup>109</sup> Ordinance 28 of 1912, while fixing the marriageable age as 21 years for intending husbands and 18 years for the intending wives, also gave space for child marriages by allowing the marriages to be celebrated between the couples below the prescribed age if the parents had given their consent to it.<sup>110</sup>

## **PATTERN OF MARRIAGES**

The patterns of marriages among the Indian immigrants can be traced from the certificates of marriages at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and Civil Status Office and from the several reports on the condition of Indian immigrants in Mauritius. All the reports as well as existing writings like Marina Carter's work show that the most of the marriages among the immigrants were intra-regional - North Indians, Tamils, Telugus, and Marathas getting their partners from the same regional communities - with few instances of inter-regional marriages as well. The other important pattern was that the majority of marriages were performed with the bride and groom being from the same religious community. As already mentioned, the occurrence of remarriages and widow marriages was also very common.<sup>111</sup>

In Indian society, the most prominent site of the working of the caste values was marriage. At this level also, owing to the relative shortage of women, immigrants had to be flexible in terms of their traditional belief in endogamy. But immigrants tried their best to observe the sanctioned deviations in their marriages and in most cases, marriages were of the kind described as hypergamy, in which men from high castes married women from lower castes, a practice which was approved in India also.<sup>112</sup> In the absence of the options of choosing their marital partners from within the same caste, the other criterion adopted by the immigrant community in Mauritius was that of common regional and linguistic origins. This emerged as the most decisive factor in forming the matrimonial alliances, especially among the Tamil and Telugu immigrants.<sup>113</sup>

One positive consequence of indenture was the change in obstacles to marriage. Widow remarriage, could be ascribed to the relative scarcity of the women<sup>114</sup> and not as a critical social-cultural reform taking place in the indentured labouring community. In Mauritius, unlike the societal restrictions in India which prohibited the remarriages of widows, the circumstances were more conducive, and widows re-married, some more than once.<sup>115</sup> This can be understood by examining practices in India: because of the traditional marriage practices in India, leading to a huge age gap

between spouses, there was a higher proportion of widows. Many widows suffered from social stigma and often from greedy family members who stole their property. They were an easy prey for the recruiters and agents who were desperately looking for women emigrants to meet the desired quota. Thus, among single women who migrated to Mauritius, there was a significant proportion of widows wishing to forge new matrimonial alliances even in the emigration depots.<sup>116</sup>

## DEPOT MARRIAGES

Before their actual departures, intending emigrants had to stay at the emigration depots at the ports of embarkation in India for long periods of time to complete several formalities, so that required numbers could be counted. Apart from mostly single men and some married couples, there were a considerable number of single women, as well who were mobilised by the recruiters to meet the required quota of women for the emigration. As Hugh Tinker has pointed out, despite separate boarding arrangements and strict segregation of sexes, there were enough opportunities available for the immigrants of both sexes to interact. Such relationships served everyone's interests - for male immigrants found a partner in a land where Indian women were scarce, while women felt a sense of security during the voyage to the unknown. For the Colonial Authorities, it offered the promise of stability. Considering those pragmatic advantages, the authorities approved these alliances and certificates of marriage were issued to immigrants, despite the fact that most of these marriages were not in conformity with the social-religious rites.<sup>117</sup>

However, individual experiences of marriage are highly revealing and allow us to reconstruct in greater detail the social life of indentured immigrants. Marriage patterns among Indentured Immigrants in the early years of immigration are particularly interesting, since they allow us to see the impact of migration on the social life of immigrants. We can understand how far they were able to maintain the social organisation which they had brought with them. It was only possible to undertake a limited study for the purposes of the work of the Commission, but this shows that the process of uncovering the full extent of our history must continue.

The marriage patterns among indentured immigrants in Mauritius in two periods were studied. The first was between the years 1850 and 1860, representing the early years of indenture, and the second in the 1880s representing the years when indentured immigration had slowed down.

### 1850- 1860

Between these years, approximately 43,183 women arrived in Mauritius from India under the Indenture system. These women were needed in the colony for purposes of marriage according to most historians as due to the scarcity of women, there was a significant change in the attitude of the Indentured Immigrants. Although marriage was a central feature of their lives, they would discard many of the characteristics of 'typical' Indian culture, norms, customs, values and adapted to the local situation. Concepts of marriage not common in India were accepted by the Indians. Caste, religion, age, widowhood, single life, arranged or religious marriages were no more an issue for these immigrants.

## MARRIAGE PROCEDURES

In this particular period, the information available in the marriage certificates differed completely. Earlier, the acts were handwritten, in French and with limited information. Around 1856, the format of the certificates had changed to a printed version, in English. Perhaps it was one of the changes which were implemented by the English Administration, when they took over the colony from the French Administration.

There were several administrative processes around registered marriages, certificates of non-marriage, publications of marriages, marriage fees, orphan marriages and witnesses. Under **Ordinance No 21 of 1853**, the information available on the married certificates in the 1850- 1860 period varied slightly. Until the year 1854, all the information available on a marriage certificate was handwritten and in French, but as from 1855, all the certificates were printed and in English. These amendments were probably due to the change from French to British administration.

This is evidenced by the study of marriages of some 500 individuals through documents such as marriage certificates, certificates of non-marriage, notices of marriage, documents concerning the collection of marriage fees, orphan marriages and witnesses. Most of these procedures, as stated earlier, were not understood by Indian immigrants who were used to celebrating marriages in their traditional manner. A sample of 100 out of the 500 marriage certificates were selected for more intensive study in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of indenture on marriage patterns in this period. This study also shed light on the types of marriages such as inter-religious, inter-ethnic and inter-caste marriages.

Figure 12: Age of Husbands at marriage

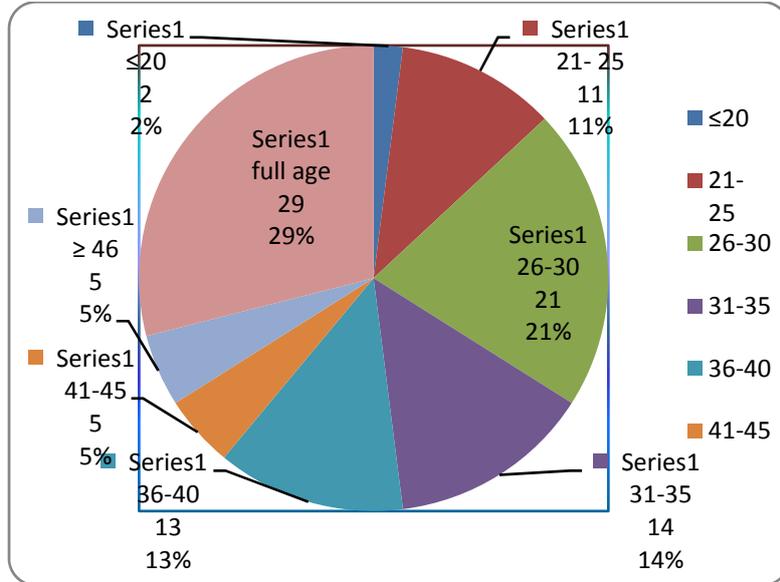
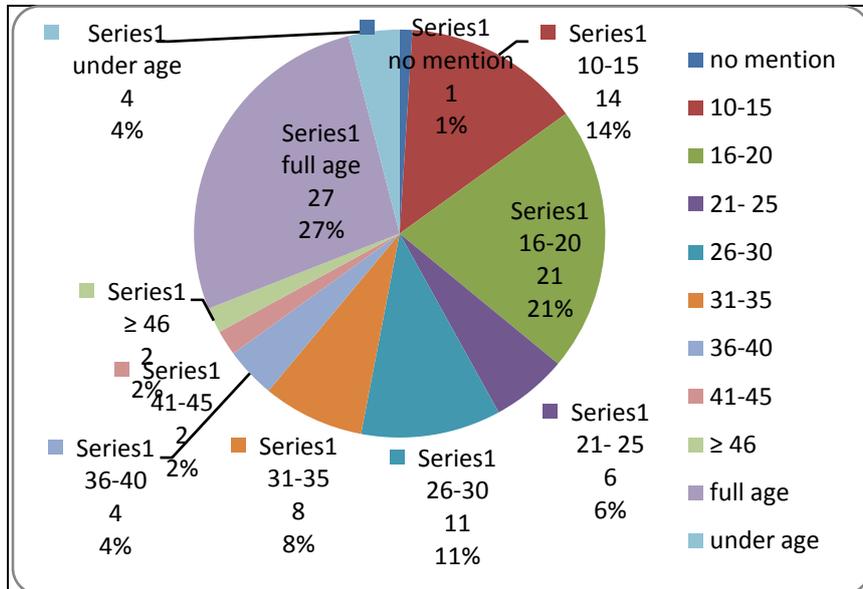
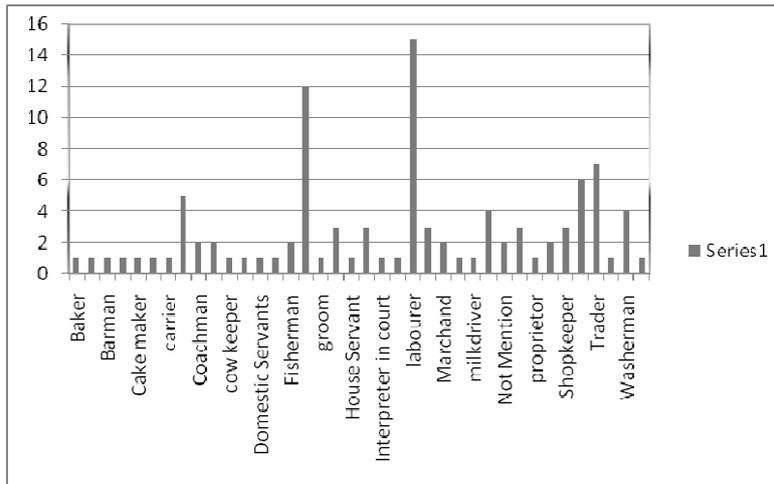


Figure 13: Age of Wives at marriage



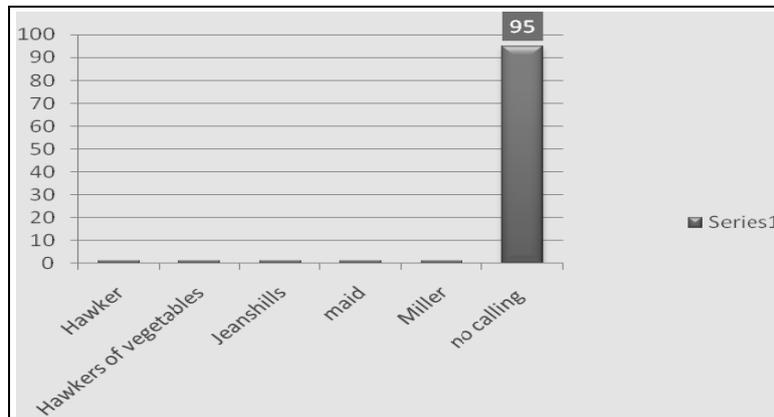
Sources: Compiled from Marriage Certificates 1850-1860

Figure 14: Occupations of Husbands



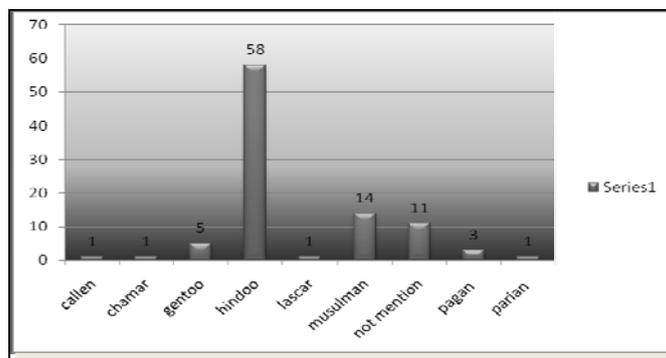
Source: Compiled from marriage lists 1850-1860

Figure 15: Occupations of Wives



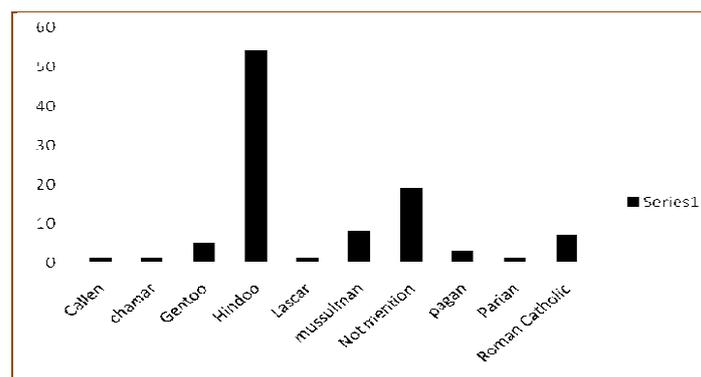
Source: Compiled from Marriage Certificates 1850-1860

Figure 16: Religion Of Husbands



Source: Compiled from Marriage Certificates 1850-1860

Figure 17: Religion of Wife



Source: Compiled from Marriage Certificates, 1850-1860

### Certificate of Non-Marriage

According to the Marriage Laws, every immigrant who wanted to get married had to produce a Certificate of non-marriage before The Civil Status Officer. This Certificate was available from the Protector's Office. If they failed to prove that they were free from any existing contractual obligations, the marriage would not be registered. This was clearly stated in the **Article 8(3) of Ordinance No 21 of 1853**:

*"An Immigrant shall produce a certificate of the Protector of Immigrants in this colony, stating their names, ages, castes, places of birth and number of their ticket. The said certificate shall mention that to the best of the knowledge and belief of the protector, the person named in such certificate is not married. A Fee of one shilling shall be paid for each certificate."*

### Orphan Marriage

Usually the orphans especially girls, were under the safeguard of the Protector of Immigrants. If the orphans wanted to get married, they needed the written consent from her guardian. Otherwise, the marriage would not take place. Usually, a marriage certificate was produced before the Civil Officer.

### Publication of marriage

Another important feature was the publication of the proposed civil marriage two consecutive weeks prior to the proposed date of marriage at the Civil Status Office within the district where the marriage would take place. According to prevailing local laws, anyone could object to the marriage, if it was published. As it was clearly mentioned in the **Article 10 of Ordinance No 21 of 1853**:

*"The Publication of marriages shall be posted up on a board hung in a conspicuous manner near and out of the office of the officers and bearing for title in apparent and legible characters the words "PUBLICATION OF MARRIAGES".*

### Marriage Fees

Following the **Ordinance No 21 of 1853**, most indentured immigrants could not afford a civil marriage. The fees were too costly for them, around £ 2-8-0:

	£	s	d
Certificat de Publication.....	0	2	0
Acte de mariage.....	0	6	0
Certificat du Protecteur des Immigrants.....	1	0	0
Certificat du Protecteur des Immigrants.....	1	0	0
<b>Total Fees.....</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

### Witnesses

How were the witnesses chosen? Could they be strangers met at the Civil Status Office? Were they people readily available at the CSO to be witnesses?

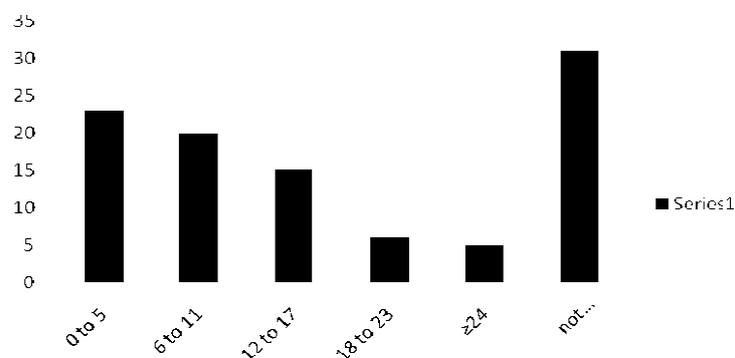
These civil marriages were considered to be more of an administrative duty for immigrants. The local administration did not consider that these complex procedures were not understood by illiterate immigrants and for many, this may have been the *raison d'être* which prevented more Indian immigrants from being legally married. Throughout this period, there was a low ratio of registered Indian marriages compared to marriages of Coloured or ex-apprentices.

### AGE DIFFERENCE

Given the scarcity of women, it was not unusual for the age difference of the couple to be more than 24 years. As the age of consent in India was 12 years, many immigrants followed traditions and married their children off at an early age to ensure their future, or for property and financial stability of the other family. Usually, when an immigrant was married at an early age, she would have her children very early too. In this way, the next generation came early too.

It is possible that the large increase in the Indian population was due to the pattern of early marriages. This needs to be further explored by demographers.

Figure 18: Age profile of marriage partners

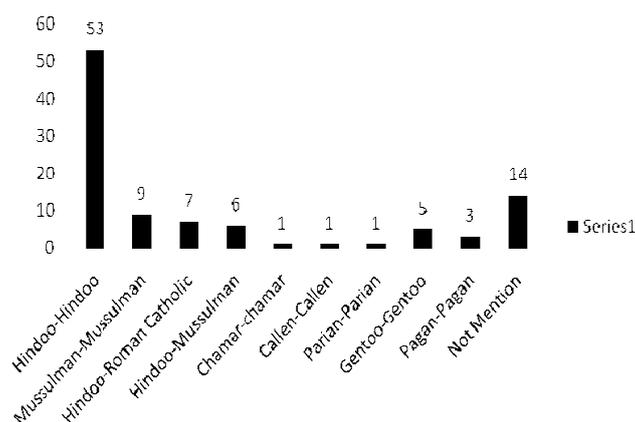


Source: Compiled from Marriage Certificates 1850-1860

### INTER-RELIGIOUS AND INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

When they reached the depot, Indian immigrants had begun to develop a different lifestyle that would be forced upon them by circumstances. One of those adaptations was in the area of marriage. Many opted for inter-religious marriages. But a study of these early marriage patterns shows that on the whole, if they could, immigrants maintained existing religious and caste criteria.

Figure 19: Percentage of inter-religious and inter-caste marriages



Source: Compiled from Marriage Certificates 1850-1860

Many historians have attributed the reason for inter-ethnic marriages to the scarcity of Indian women. But this may not be the only reason. Many Indian immigrants married Coloured or ex-apprentice women to improve their material conditions. In *Slaves, Freedmen and Indentured Labourers in Colonial Mauritius*, Richard Allen has shown how ex-apprentices had bought land and property. Another group to purchase land at this time were new women immigrants residing in the colony. There were a wide range of single women who would purchase land during, and after, the *Petit Morcellement* (Tables 20 and 21). Indeed, it can be observed that the percentage of Indian women purchasing land was very low compared to ex-apprentices or ‘*Gens de couleur*’.

**Social Characteristics of persons purchasing land during and after the *Petit Morcellement* (1839-1859)**

Purchaser	1839-1842	1843-1848	1849-1859
Individual females *	18.9%	20.6%	18.0%

\*Gens de couleur and ex-apprentices

**Characteristics of Indians purchasing land, 1840-1869 (in %)**

Purchaser	1840-1849	1850-1859	1860-1869
Individual plots			
Individual female*	7.7	2.9	12.9

\*Indians

## CONCLUSION

The Marriage Laws in Mauritius were essentially based on the premise that indigenous customs of the Indian immigrants were immoral and against the basic principles of civilised cohabitation, and therefore that they could pose a serious threat to the plantation order, if not regulated. Marriage Laws in Mauritius were modelled on British/ European patterns of 'civil' marriages which involved complicated concerns regarding inheritance, succession and property rights, and not merely union of a man and a woman. The main purpose of the emphasis on registration of alliances was to make these alliances 'legal' and to create a new social order on plantations. Unfortunately, because of the technical complexities, as well as expenses involved in the process of declaration of marriages before a Magistrate, most of the immigrants could not afford to follow this registration process, and therefore their marriages, though solemnised according to religious rituals, were invalid according to the Law, and their children were technically illegitimate. Therefore, instead of making things simple and legally sound, for the majority of the population, these marriage Ordinances made things more complicated and a dehumanising experience for a considerable time in the history of indenture. Many of their children were denied inheritances and admissions to schools because they could not prove their legitimate parentage, merely because their parents' marriages has not been registered.

In one respect, indenture and strict controls on mobility brought a certain measure of 'cultural and social stability'. Since movement on an estate was restricted, it led immigrants to mix with one another, irrespective of backgrounds, rear their children together, sit under the same tree to sing, talk, perform rituals etc. Their children played together as the women washed clothes in the same river. Despite harsh conditions, this type of 'cocooned' life was experienced on plantations.

New social institutions were thus created on plantations through indentured contracts. This constitutes one of the social consequences of indenture.

According to Brij Lal, as far as women are concerned, 'Indenture promoted a new egalitarian ethos and a freer society, which respected individual initiatives. Women were employed on the plantations as individuals in their own right. Control over their own hard-earned income gave them a measure of power and economic and social independence.'<sup>118</sup>

If sugar under slavery was bitter, sugar under indenture was bittersweet.

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## CHILDREN OF INDENTURE IN MAURITIUS

### INTRODUCTION

Child labour in Mauritius was present in Mauritius since the early establishment of the island. During the period of the slave trade, children were also a commodity to be bought and sold. During the period of indentured immigration, many children accompanied their parents to Mauritius and some came as orphans. Officially, they did not come to work but many ended up doing estate labour or in domestic service.

At the beginning of indenture, many children were left on their own and wandered about with nothing to do. Later their own families made them work to earn a wage. The notion of 'childhood', as we know it today, was inexistent. A 'child' was officially according to the Blue Book of 1870 a person below 10 years of age. On the estate, many of these children were involved in minor field tasks such as picking up sugarcane stalks which falling off carts and bringing them to the sugar factory (Figure 61).

Figure 20: Wages of children					
Age of labourer on day of engagement	1 <sup>st</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	2 <sup>nd</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	3 <sup>rd</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	4 <sup>th</sup> Yr- Shilling per month	5 <sup>th</sup> Yr- Shilling per month
7 - 9 inclusive	2	4	6	7	8
10 - 12	4	6	8	9	10
13 - 16	6	8	10	11	12
17 - 20	8	10	11	12	13
21 upwards	10	11	12	13	14
Source: MNA:B2/ Blue Book/1860					

This is a clear indication that children started working at a very early age. This tradition was carried on with the descendants as evidenced from interviews carried out of persons in their 70s and 80s today. Many of those interviewed stated that they were unable to attend school or play simply because they had to work. Those interviews showed that in general, those persons were only 10 to 13 years old. Those interviews showed that in general those persons were only 10 to 13 years old.<sup>119</sup> Those children, together with their parents, had to bring regular revenue to the family. It also happened that sometimes children did not receive money as a compensation for the work they did. Instead, they received rations which were as valuable as money back then.

This shows that whatever the religion, ethnic group, whenever someone was poor, they tried to help families to alleviate the economic crisis which mostly each and every family faced during the early 1900s. Those children, together with their parents, had to bring in a regular revenue to the family. It also happened that sometimes children did not receive money as a compensation for the work they carried out. Instead they received rations which was at that time, as valuable as money.

The role and place children occupied within the Mauritian society and the way of considering them varied considerably. In institutions such as the Government Orphan Asylum and the Reformatory, they were given what could be described as 'correct' treatment: food, lodgings, moral instruction and they were taught a trade. There, they were prepared to become industrious in a society which valued labour. Indian children tended to be viewed as persons who would take over from their parents in field labour and domestic work. Thus, education would change the mentality of children and it is not surprising that many resisted such education for their children. Many plantation owners were antagonistic. They 'considered knowledge as a dangerous thing'.<sup>120</sup> The fear that education might lead to rebellion was as real as it had been during slavery.

Children in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could be considered as 'little adults'. Many worked long hours but received meagre salaries and could not enjoy their childhood. The child was no more than 'a person above ten years of age'.<sup>121</sup> It was only in 1908 that an Ordinance controlling child labour was passed. It specified that 'no written contract shall be passed with any minor under 13 years of age. Any minor of the age of thirteen and upwards up to sixteen shall be free to engage under written contract of service for one year only with the consent previously obtained of the parents or guardian'.<sup>122</sup> There was a 'Laissez aller'. This Ordinance shows that despite the fact the legal age for working by law was acceptable to be thirteen years of age, someone of that age was still too young to work. It was only towards the end of indenture that the situation began to change.

Indian parents' approach to childhood needs also to be considered. Children were considered as 'objects' by their parents. For example, many Indian parents of the female children seemed to look forward to the time when the girls would arrive, at the age of puberty with a view to sell them to any Indian who may offer the highest price for their possession'.<sup>123</sup> The words 'sell' and 'possession' indicate that those children were considered as objects by their own parents. Many of them did not give much affection to those children, especially girls who were considered as a burden. Children were also seen as sources of revenue because many looked forward to that moment when they would be able to sell their daughters.

## ORPHANS

Orphan children were particularly vulnerable sections of society under indenture, and a case study of the Orphan Asylum has been presented here to highlight the plight of orphan children in Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Government Orphan Asylum is an institution established during the second half of the nineteenth Century, more precisely in 1859. It was situated at the Powder Mills at Pamplémousses. However, it was interesting to note that such an institution was not unique to Mauritius for it existed in other colonies such as British Guyana. One of the reasons for its establishment was that those colonies, including Mauritius, faced a different crisis to the economic one. But the chief object of its establishment was that many of those children did not have a home because their parents had passed away. They were left parentless either when they were still on board, or when they landed in Mauritius. Once those children landed and before the Government Orphan Asylum was finally established, those children were distributed as domestic servants or were simply destitute. In cases where children were too young to work, they were sent to families willing to take care of them 'on condition that' when old enough to work, the children would become domestics and remain as such for a stipulated number of years'.<sup>124</sup> With all these matters in mind, the Government considered that it would be important to set up a place where children would be taken care of 'to become useful members to the community'.<sup>125</sup>

Many of the residents of the Government Orphan Asylum were not real orphans since many had families, but whose situation was too precarious to afford keeping their children at home. Most of these families could be classified as 'single parent' families. Due to poverty, many of those children, girls specially, were married at a very early age. Otherwise, as soon as those parents felt that they could cater for their children, they claimed the guardianship back from the Government Orphan Asylum. For example, the children Natamoney, Ponnedy and Vurdarajooloo were given back to their father Balkistnen No. 376828.<sup>126</sup> In other cases, children whose parents experienced economic difficulties could not ask for their guardianship again. A good example was that a petitioner who claimed that he 'was a widower and could not look after the child and wants her therefore to get married as soon as possible'. This was a way of alleviating the burden of poverty which existed already and which could accentuate the problem of poverty even further.

When the institution opened its doors on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1859, Reverend Ansoorge and his wife, two missionaries, were in charge of the Government Orphan Asylum. An interesting point to add is that children from different ethnic groups were received into the establishment; namely African, Indians, Europeans, as well as Creoles of African and Indian descent (Fig.62). The majority of orphans, however, were of Indian origin.

Children's Origins	Males	Females	Total
Indian immigrant	98	44	142
Europeans	1	4	4
Africans	28	5	33
Mauritian of Indian or African extraction	37	19	56
Total	164	71	235
Creoles of African origin	10	1	11
Total	174	78	252

Source: MNA: B6/Blue Book/1864

During their stay at the Government Orphan Asylum, those children received the basic necessities for a better standard of living. One of the various duties handled by the institution was educating those children freely or in cases of sickness, providing medical treatment to them. They were taken to the hospital which was found on the premises of the Government Orphan Asylum itself. Being a 'home' for those children, they also received rations which were improved regularly because the institution made sure that those children were fed properly so that they enjoyed a healthy. Nonetheless, despite all the efforts made to control any outbreak of diseases or viruses, children were contaminated very often. For example, in 1875, 25 children at the hospital suffered from 'wounds, 7 with fever, 4 with dysentery [...]'.<sup>127</sup>

The Government Orphan Asylum laid emphasis on education which involved religious instruction as well. The GOA offered 'Christian education',<sup>128</sup> and many of those children, of Indian origin, who were more familiar with Christianity, asked to be baptized. But the Reverend in charge of the GOA agreed to do so only when he judged that those children had 'received enough religious instruction to understand their request...'.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, education at the institution implied the preparation of those orphans for their lives at a time they would leave the GOA; they received tuition in English, Tamil or Hindoostanee, Arithmetic and Geography'.<sup>130</sup> In addition, just like today, those children had to sit for exams and those who performed well were rewarded. In order to encourage students, a prize-giving ceremony was organized. On that day, children participated in Tamil and Nagri singing competitions. They were also marked on their reading and writing skills on the same day.

The various means of assessing those children changed sometimes. In exceptional cases, as in 1874 and 1875, it was impossible to compare the capabilities of the students because 'the mode of judging the proficiency of each child was not exactly the same'.<sup>131</sup> Firstly, in 1874 as such, 'it was necessary for each pupil in the lower standards to obtain ten marks out of a total of fifteen; and for pupils in the fifth and sixth standards to obtain fifteen marks out of a total of twenty five'.<sup>132</sup> Those who performed well at school had better job prospects ahead, but one interesting fact is that those who were once students were at the GOA were in turn employed as teachers at the institution or 'those ex students of the GOA, now employed as teacher over there will be transferred to the reformatory as teachers or instructors with a salary'.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, all the boys and girls were 'apprenticed to useful trades and occupations'.<sup>134</sup> The tasks were assigned by gender (Table 4). All the boys were trained in manual work. They could exhibit their work in workshops which were found at the GOA and some of their products were sold. On the other hand, girls performed well in cooking, ironing and sewing. In both cases, the students were efficient.

Number of boys trained	Trades
8	Blacksmiths
7	Carpenters
1	Cartwright
3	Compositors
6	Assistant schoolmasters
2	Photographers
1	Basket maker

Source: MNA: B2 Blue Book, 1864

From the same table, it can be observed that although the majority of boys were trained for manual jobs, some were also trained into more high-status jobs, such as photographers or assistant schoolmasters. This was because when the orphans left the GOA, they were placed ‘under contracts of apprenticeship for 3 years’.<sup>135</sup> In other words, they were trained at the GOA first and then they ‘worked’ on a contractual basis with professionals to develop their skills. But those boys had to be fit enough to work to be ‘good tradesman who will not take an apprentice unless he is well advanced’. It also happened that in some cases the boys were not fit for ‘any special trade’. In such cases, they were given domestic employment.

Furthermore, rules and regulations also applied to the children at the institution and those who did not respect them were punished severely. In cases where children were involved in grave offences like indecent behaviour, they were flogged and then expelled. Timothy, for example, found guilty of extremely indecent conduct, was flogged.<sup>136</sup> Conversely, girls were treated differently. They were punished but not as severely as boys. A special mention was made to notify that ‘no special punishment be in future inflicted on girls’ but nothing has been found regarding the punishments inflicted to those girls before that preventive measure was implemented.

During the indentured period marriage was considered as an outlet for girls. At the Government Orphan Asylum, it was no different. When the girls were grown up, they were allowed to get married with the Reverend’s permission. In cases where the girls were still young, immature and unfit for marriage, despite the fact that they sought permission to get married, they were not allowed to do so. In exceptional times, some children still insisted on getting married and a dispensation of age was provided. But it was done only when the Reverend considered that the girls were mature and that the marriage would benefit them. This was done in other institution like the Beau-Bassin Asylum which proceeded in the same way. For example, ‘the girl ‘Jhoyee Soobrayen, who was living abandoned in Port Louis and is now at the Beau-Bassin Asylum, received an offer of marriage which would be in her interest to accept [...]’.<sup>137</sup>

Eventually the number of children at the Government Asylum decreased considerably, compared the year when it was opened. The change in the number of residents could be observed after a short time. For instance, it decreased over two years; in 1864, there were 337 children and in 1866, there were only 252 children. The situation worsened in 1870 where the number of children dropped again. The protector of Immigrants declared that ‘[...] the institution will in a few years have scarcely any children left, because the yearly drain by those discharged has not been filled up by the number admitted.’<sup>138</sup> This led to a series of measures which were beneficial to the children as soon as the Government Orphan Asylum ceased its activities. It involved the transfer of those children to other orphanages. Some of the main institutions who took care of the rest were: ‘Marie Réparatrice’, ‘Filles de Marie’, ‘Couvent du Bon Secours’ and the ‘Barkly Asylum Orphanage’. The criteria for admitting orphans in those institutions varied widely and were not similar to those of the GOA. For example, most of those institutions preferred girls, even though boys were welcome. Not only were there distinctions made between admission for boys and girls, but in places like ‘Marie Réparatrice’, only Indian children were admitted. The table below shows the criteria of admission into each institution.

Figure 23: Criteria for admission to Orphan Asylum

Institution	Criteria for admission	Cost of each child per month
Marie Réparatrice	Indian children only	10 shillings
Barkly Orphan Asylum	Children from every ethnic group	-
Filles de Marie	-	12 shillings
Reverend P. Ansonge	Hindustani-Tamil speaking children	12 shillings
Protestant Benevolent Institution	No Indian children	-

# UNDERSTANDING THE CHINESE IN MAURITIUS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

China is better seen today through her Diaspora all across the world. The Chinese men and women, distinctive figures in the regions where they settled, played an important role in the development of commerce and participated in the creation of entire Chinese communities outside China, thereby transforming a part of their host country into a “little China”. The history of the Chinese in Mauritius remains widely unknown to a Mauritian audience, and even the Sino-Mauritians (descendants of Chinese immigrants), are not aware of their ancestors’ contributions, except only their contributions to the commerce guild. In order to understand the reasons behind the successive flow of Chinese immigrants and how they settled and adapted themselves in Mauritius, it is important to look back at the migration history of China and the history of the Chinese in Mauritius, addressing mainly the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries’ historiography of the Chinese in Mauritius. This would portray the community which played (still maps) an important role in the development of the country. We will also look at the present situation of the Chinese in Mauritius, taking a glance at the observations of the Sino-Mauritians on their own community. Interviews and meetings with Sino-Mauritians help us to understand the feelings and perception of these people and their past and contemporary history. The experience of this community began in China itself and impacted on the development of Mauritius.

## 2.0 CHINESE MIGRATION; THE ROUTE TO MAURITIUS

The migration process from China can be understood by 6 inter-relating factors which gave an opportunity to the Chinese to look for new horizons: the development of China’s maritime trade and commerce, the interactions with South east Asia, the Growth of the Chinese population, the expansion of military power in Western countries, the impact of Europe on China and Southeast Asia and finally the disruption of China’s domestic order.<sup>139</sup> These elements promoted and triggered the desire to migrate among those who wanted to seek a better and more secure future. However, for migration to be possible in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Chinese had gone through a long perilous journey before being able to found Diasporas across the world. The first coming of the Chinese to Mauritius remains unknown to Mauritians; so we shall begin by addressing the different reasons that triggered Chinese immigration to Mauritius and why their history has been overlooked.

### CHINA IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

For long decades, emigration in China was forbidden by Law. It was not until China was ruled by the Ming dynasty (1368 to 1644) that emigration began through maritime trade. As Kuhn (2008) explains, “From the time of the Ming dynasty, ruled by the Emperor Yongle (1405-1431), seven vast maritime expeditions were commissioned to the Southeast Asian waters and to the Western part of the Indian Ocean as far as the Persian Gulf.”<sup>140</sup> There were potential trade markets outside China, but having to face internal attacks from the Mongols, the Government decided not to pursue maritime trade. Furthermore, private maritime trade was also prohibited as the Court of the Ming Dynasty feared that free contact with foreigners could let to plots against the dynasty.<sup>141</sup> Even so, the pressure for overseas trade gained such momentum that the Government could no longer turn a blind eye to the phenomenon, and in 1567, maritime interests overcame the trade ban. By the 1550s, ports in Macao and Manila were opened up, which facilitated trade with such foreign nations as the Portuguese, Spaniard and Dutch.<sup>142</sup>

Under the Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1911), ruled by the Manchus, trade at the start was again banned. It was only until 1727 that the ban was lifted, when the government felt that the country had secured its stability. Trade outside the Chinese borders gained momentum once more: “The expansion of Chinese shipping into the European colonies of the Southeast Asia was the precondition for Chinese emigration.”<sup>143</sup> The increasing market drew numerous Chinese rattan-sailed junks from the Southeast coast into the Southeast Asian trade routes. “As south China commercial interest expanded, merchant junks began to carry passengers into colonial port cities such as Manila and Batavia (Jakarta). Thus, these merchants bridgeheads became the routes through which Chinese migrants of all classes could find work and opportunity outside their crowded homeland.”<sup>144</sup> The economical and political decline of the country during the Qing Dynasty also favoured an increasing willingness to migrate among the Chinese. The Qing Dynasty however, near the end of its rule, brought disgrace to its subjects, worsening their living conditions. It was a period of economic crisis led by corruption, rebellion and natural disasters. The Chinese were also

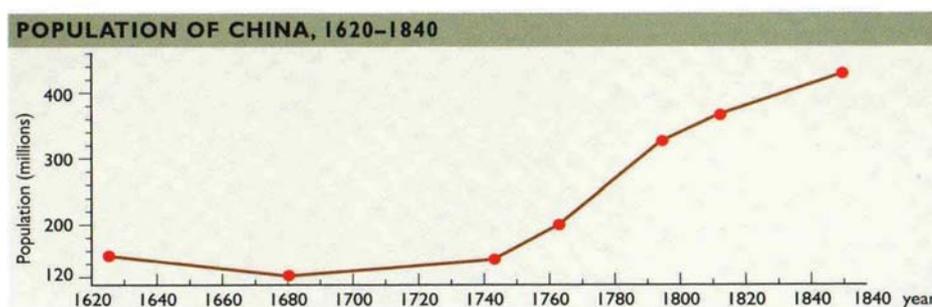
unable to circumscribe an opium chaos. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of utter chaos for China. The country had to face the two shameful Anglo Chinese wars against the opium trade and at the same time, deal with the worst Civil War ever in its history; the Taiping Rebellion.

### The Opium War and instability inside China

From 1839 to 1842 occurred the first Anglo-Chinese War for opium. The British introduced opium massively as a drug<sup>145</sup> whereas, before, in China, opium was being used as a medicinal ingredient; its recreational use was limited, and strict laws regulated its use.<sup>146</sup> The drug was widespread in Chinese society and the Qing Government attempted to end the opium trade, but its hard work was hampered by corrupted local officials. The Chinese Government made illegal the consumption of this drug, and British traffickers continued illegally to introduce the addictive drug within China's borders. The situation worsened and reached its peak with the outbreak of the First Opium War between the British and the Chinese which eventually ended with the defeat of the Chinese. From 1856 to 1860, the Second War for Opium took place, which again resulted in a Chinese defeat. This Second War coincided with the Treaty of Nanking, which is known to mark the end of the first Opium War. At the same time, in 1850 and 1864, the Qing Government had to face the Taiping<sup>147</sup> Rebellion, where soldiers seized of Nanjing.<sup>148</sup> These were the worst civil wars ever in the history of China where approximately 20 million people died. The dynasty, failing to confront internal and external challenges, abdicated in February 1912. Henceforth, China was heading towards becoming a Republic.

## CHINA IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Figure 24: The increasing population in China from 1620 to 1840.



(Source: Lynn Pann, *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas, Second Edition*, p. 53, taken from the Gernet, 1982)

The 20<sup>th</sup> century defines Modern China, starting with the revolutionary period. Soon after the end of the dynasty, there were hopes that the establishment of a Republic would lead a new era for China; a China that would be prosperous and gain the respect of foreign powers. This hope was eventually dashed with successive political instability and corruption. In 1949, “the people’s liberation army of Mao Zedong defeated Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists”.<sup>149</sup> This heralded the start of Communist Party in China. “As the Chinese communist party’s grip on the Chinese mainland tightened over the next few years, hundreds of thousands more people headed south for British Colony of Hong Kong.”<sup>150</sup>

In between the periods of chaos, the population of China increased more rapidly than the country could sustain. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the population reached more than 100 million, and despite the “foreign invasion, civil war, outbreaks of rebellions, natural calamities and epidemics”<sup>151</sup> between 1620 and 1670, which had cut down half of the population, the population had tripled through the 1800s. By 1850, it was noted that the population had reached 430 millions.<sup>152</sup> As a result, the amount of food and land available for the population declined rapidly: “With acreage per capita

growing scarcer in relation to population, migration became one of the several strategies for family survival. Those who went abroad promoted and sustained China's foreign trade by establishing a continuous presence in South East Asia as essential coadjutors of western colonialists and revenue-hungry local monarchs."<sup>153</sup>

### 2.3 MIGRATION: PLACE AND PRESENCE OF THE CHINESE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

The migration pattern of the Chinese can be characterized as tropical, coastal and urban. In fact, the Chinese tend to be more concentrated in tropical regions; "about 97% of them lived in the areas between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. This is due to economic opportunities available in the Southeast Asia and the Caribbean because of European exploitation and investment in these areas during the 19<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>154</sup> The proximity of China and Southeast Asia and the climatic similarity of the Tropics to the South China provinces may have contributed to the concentration of Chinese in those areas. Furthermore, the restriction imposed on Chinese immigrants in countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA and South Africa, limited the Chinese immigrant's choice. The tendency for Chinese immigrants to move towards the South may be due to the historical fact that invasion was from the North, and migration towards the South. This was probably natural to some ethnic communities such as the Hakka people, a group who trekked historically from the North towards the Southeast coast. The North in the minds of the Chinese often signified danger and the South prosperity: "The Southeast Asia along the shore of the Gulf of Siam, the west coast of Malaya and the western part of the North coast of Java is the largest concentrations of Chinese. In the Caribbean, they found mostly in Cuba, Jamaica and Trinidad. In Africa, the Chinese population is far more numerous on the islands of Mauritius and Madagascar than on the continent itself."<sup>155</sup>

Figure 25: Distribution of Overseas Chinese, 1963

DISTRIBUTION OF OVERSEAS CHINESE, 1963					
<b>Asia</b>	<b>15,859,820 (96.58%)</b>				
Thailand	3,799,000	Philippines	1,51,759	Christmas Island	2,100
Hong Kong	3,197,081	North Borneo	104,855	Pakistan	1,700
Indonesia	2,545,000	India	53,252	Ryukyu	785
Malaya	2,461,322	Japan	46,858	Ceylon	450
Singapore	1,302,500	Laos	24,360	Jordan	40
Vietnam	1,035,000	Korea	23,575	Afghanistan	28
Burma	420,000	Brunei	21,795	Iran	14
Cambodia	260,000	Saudi Arabia	10,000	Iraq	9
Sarawak	229,154	Timor	5,113	Lebanon	6
Macao	160,764	Turkey	3,300		
<b>Anglo-America</b>	<b>295,489 (1.79%)</b>				
United States	237,292	Canada	58,197		
<b>Latin America</b>	<b>148,709 (0.91%)</b>				
Cuba	31,039	Ecuador	4,171	El Salvador	515
Peru	30,000	Costa Rica	3,000	Aruba	486
Jamaica	18,655	Nicaragua	3,000	Curaçao	443
Trinidad	12,000	Panama	2,960	French Guiana	308
Mexico	10,000	Chile	2,950	Argentina	240
Brazil	6,748	Venezuela	2,580	Haiti	204
Surinam	5,700	Colombia	1,400	Uruguay	152
Guatemala	5,234	Dominican Republic	1,060	Bolivia	35
British Guiana	5,000	Honduras	817	Paraguay	12
<b>Oceania</b>	<b>52,572 (0.32%)</b>				
Australia	19,800	Fiji Islands	4,943	Samoa	301
New Zealand	9,500	(Australian) New Guinea	3,000	Solomon Islands	200
Society Islands	6,948	New Britain	2,000	Ocean Island	80
(West) New Guinea	5,000	Nauru	800		
<b>Africa</b>	<b>43,734 (0.27%)</b>				
Mauritius	23,266	Angola	500	Liberia	27
Malagasy	8,901	Rhodesia & Nyasaland	303	Congo	24
South Africa	5,105	Kenya	150	Ethiopia	18
Réunion	3,000	Uganda	70	Morocco	11
Mozambique	1,735	Zanzibar	70	Cameroon	3
Tanganyika	522	UAR (Egypt)	27	Nigeria	2
<b>Europe</b>	<b>20,586 (0.13%)</b>				
Great Britain	12,000	Italy	313	Austria	30
Netherlands	2,400	Belgium	300	Sweden	24
France	2,000	Spain	210	Luxembourg	20
Soviet Union	1,236	Portugal	143	Greece	12
Denmark	900	Czechoslovakia	96	Switzerland	11
Germany	800	Poland	88	Norway	3

Source: Sen - Dou Chang, *The Distribution and Occupations of Overseas Chinese*, pp. 97-100.

### 3.0 THE BUILDING OF A COMMUNITY: THE CHINESE ARRIVE IN MAURITIUS

#### 3.1 First Presence of the Chinese in Mauritius

The first people to visit the Mascareignes Islands “may well have been the Malaysians or Chinese sailors who were criss-crossing the Indian Ocean long before Europeans arrived on the scene.”<sup>156</sup> In 1402, a map world of Chu’an chin “plots several islands east of Africa and “between 1405 and 1433, a series of naval expeditions brought the Chinese to eastern Africa and their presence has been confirmed by archaeological excavations.”<sup>157</sup> However, the Chinese at that time were only explorers, not colonisers.

The first to settle in Mauritius were the Dutch in 1638. They expanded sugar cultivation to Mauritius and brought labour from Bavatia. Batavia was founded by the Dutch in 1619 and its population was mostly composed of Chinese immigrants, traders and victims of kidnapping. An account of “Francois Leguat who visited Batavia in 1697,” described his encounter with the Chinese people as being “as white as French-men”, hardworking and talented in commerce.”<sup>158</sup> Thus, it was not unlikely that the Dutch should introduced slaves from Malaysia and China, Bengal, the Malabar Coast or Extreme Orient to Mauritius.<sup>159</sup> However, “since the Dutch abandoned Mauritius around 1710, there are no known descendants on the island from this period.”<sup>160</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, colonized by the French and the British, Mauritius became a colony deeply depending on the slave labor for its plantation workforce.

#### 3.2 Chinese Slaves and Freed Chinese

The presence of Chinese as slaves in the history of the country is specific to a short period of time and a small group of individuals. During their research, various scholars such as Huguette Ly-Tio-Fane-Pineo (1985) and James Ng and Marina Carter (2009), came across documents attesting the presence of Chinese slaves at Isle de France. And for some of these, they have been able to trace their history after emancipation. Indeed, James Ng, during his research, found “in 1761 two natives of Macao listed among the register of the government slaves; while; in 1792 a 60 year old male Chinese slave was recorded as having died in Flacq. Another, Jean Benoit, born on the Isle de France of Chinese parents, is reported as having died in the same region, in 1791.”<sup>161</sup>

Likewise, Huguette Ly-Tio-Fane-Pineo, during her investigations, has found the existence of two Chinese by the name of Gratia and Pauline who were brought from Canton and enfranchised by their owner, Louis Vigoureux, in 1745 at the end of his life. The latter gave Gratia the sum of 500 *piastres* and 2 slaves and to the child that Pauline was carrying a yearly pension until adulthood.<sup>162</sup> Later, “the census of 1776, lists a Gratia Vigoureux as residing in Port-Louis at the “Rempart”. She is described as 40 years’ old, a seamstress and the owner of 3 slaves.” Like Gratia and Pauline, “one male Chinese slave was enfranchised. Hyacinth Ambroise described in the 1780 census as a 26 year old Chinese from Macao was the freed slave of Jean Michel Dumont.” He married Marie Jeanne, a Creole of 15 years in Flacq on 2 Fructidor of Year III of the Revolution, at the age of 40.<sup>163</sup> On Reunion Island (Bourbon), one also knows of the presence of Chinese slaves. The existence of two baptized Chinese women was noted; Denise married in 1760 and Marie Josephe, wife of Francois Ranga in 1765.<sup>164</sup> The manumission of Chinese slaves obviously created a free Chinese community in the Isle de France.<sup>165</sup> However, and somehow, the free Chinese community which existed during the French period “had disappeared, through death and through absorption of descendants into the Creole population.”<sup>166</sup>

Apart from the few Chinese slaves identified, the presence of some other 300 Chinese slaves over a short span of time was also noted. In 1760, Le Comte D’Estaing captured 300 Chinese in the West Indies and brought them to Mauritius. Juste as J.P. Coen<sup>167</sup>, le Comte D’Estaing wanted to put to practice the ideas of a permanent Chinese settlement as existed in the colonies of the West Indies, in Mauritius. According to Wong Kee Ham (1996), this highlights that the Mascareignes Islands were in need of people to enhance the value and maintain small shops and business. The Chinese were reputed to run these types of activities, but in Mauritius, they were supposed to engage in other alien activities. The victims refused all the propositions of the officials to work in the maintenance of the gardens, or to cultivate a parcel of land granted to them, or to work with local planters. They claimed their right to return back to their natal country in a petition to the Governor Desforges, and the latter granted their request.<sup>168</sup>

The failure of Europeans Official to successfully maintain the Chinese people in Mauritius may be explained by what Wong Kee Ham (1996), has observed as the inability of Europeans to understand the Chinese economical and social diversity. Indeed, in the colonies of the West Indies, from where the Europeans from Bourbon imported sugar, the Chinese had largely contributed to the establishment of the plantation of sugar cane.<sup>169</sup> The Europeans were confused about Chinese merchants and coolies. They wanted to radically “transform” those 300 Chinese merchants into 300 Chinese coolies but did not succeed.

### 3.3 Chinese Coolies

There were several attempts during the British period to import Chinese labourers to the island. Unfortunately, many of them were unsuccessful. In July 1811, Governor Farquhar asked the Governor of Java, Sir Stanford Raffles, to send Chinese labourers. When the Chinese arrived in Mauritius, Governor Farquhar found himself faced with a “parcel of vicious and vagabond Chinese artisans and outcasts,”<sup>170</sup> instead of the hardworking men he expected. The parcel was eventually sent back. Around 1828, another attempt was made to recruit Chinese labourers. The scheme, established by the late William Gordon, who ascertained that Chinese could be hired without difficulty as indentured agricultural servants, was put into practice. A number of labourers were recruited from Penang and Singapore, but when they arrived in Mauritius, they were not satisfied with the terms and conditions of their contracts. They eventually abandoned their work and became vagrants. It was noted that in August 1829, 400 Chinese were brought and they were described by Captain R. Vickers as being “inferior workers and turbulent, despite being given daily rations, clothing and 6 Spanish dollars monthly.”<sup>171</sup> Their attitude towards the planters was also described as most disrespectful. The labourers would exhibit “immediately on their landing, a disposition to impose on their employers,” and the planters “had no power to compel the labourers to perform their agreement (...).”<sup>172</sup>

An increasing flow of Chinese immigrants occurred from 1840 to 1844, when emigration was temporarily suspended in India, and the Government turned towards the Chinese as a source of labour despite its past negative experiences with the latter. During that period, 8000 of Chinese landed in Mauritius, 3000 between December 1840 and July 1843 and 5000 up to 1844. The Chinese were then “seen as the saviours of the sugar economy,”<sup>173</sup> but cases of bad attitude and/or ill-treatment were still very present. James Ng and Marina Carter (2009) remarked that in a few cases, they found that the Chinese were very little seen as victims but rather instigators of the disorder<sup>174</sup>, for example, the case of 18 Chinese working on the Queen Victoria Estate. The latter complained of ill-treatment on the part of an Indian “Sirdar” and a Creole overseer but were sanctioned to 8 days in prison and a salary deduction as it was reported that the Chinese behaved in a threatening manner. The behavior of the Chinese also made cohabitation an issue. An Estate manager in 1841 responded to a complaint made by the Chinese: “They are the worst introduction made into the Colony; they are very insubordinate, passionate and so lazy that the Indians have reproached them for their idleness which has given rise to several disputes between them.”<sup>175</sup> In December 1843, “Ajee, a Chinese carpenter employed by Bestel in Plaines Wilhems complained of assault by a group of Indians.”<sup>176</sup>

The hardship of the work meant that the Chinese did not remain long in that area. Some became vagrants; many were sent back to their country of origin, and others still left Mauritius for other countries such as Reunion Island and/or went to urban areas to perform skilled work where wages were higher. The resignation of the Chinese is possibly due to the drop of wages for Estate labourers, the lifting of suspension of emigration from India and also the fact that Chinese labourers had a background of artisanship, craftsmanship and urban work<sup>177</sup>.

### 3.4 Chinese Presence in Commerce and Free Chinese Immigrants

Ly-Tio-Fane-Pineo (1985) stated that the foundations for a permanent Chinese settlement in Western Indian Ocean were laid by Robert Townsend Farquhar, the first British Governor of Mauritius. He truly believed that Chinese immigrants would greatly contribute to the development of the country. In parallel with the importation of Chinese labour, came free Chinese migrants. The arrival of this type of migrant coincided with a boom in the economic expansion of Mauritius for the next century.

It all started, when Hayme, a Chinese who settled in Mauritius petitioned in 1821 to recruit Chinese at his own expenses; he received the full support of the Governor Farquhar. The latter gave him “the assurances that the immigrants he would bring back would be welcomed to the government.”<sup>178</sup> By 1826, Hayme returned back with 5 associates: Whampoo, Hankee, Nghien, Hakkim and Ahim. The men Hayme brought in Mauritius were clearly merchants and traders.<sup>179</sup> During the war in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Nanking Treaty 1842, small traders were ruined by the Traid organisation. These traders either had to associate with the “Traid” or move to Canton to work in Port activities. Knowing that his men were not coolies but business men and that a labourer was the lowest social class, Hayme made sure to restrict community activities to retail trading since working as a labourer would “lower the social placement of the community.”<sup>180</sup> A list of 26 Chinese in the Faubourg de l’Est in the year 1828 shows the activities of the Chinese. Of the 26, 10 of them were “colporteurs”, 12 were merchants, 2 dressmakers and one waterman (batelier) and carpenter.<sup>181</sup>

Figure 26: Free Chinese Arriving in Mauritius, 1837 - 1860

Year	No. of Chinese	Year	No. of Chinese
1837	10	1850	125
1838	12	1851	48
1839	28	1852	69
1840	59	1853	50
1841	59	1854	50
1842	44	1855	70
1843	49	1856	71
1844	64	1857	118
1845	45	1858	208
1846	58	1859	215
1847	62	1860	379
1848	104	<b>Total</b>	<b>2197</b>

Source: Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo. H , *Chinese Diaspora in Western Indian Ocean, 1985*, p. 112.

James Ng (2001) presented an interesting analysis of Chinese commerce in Mauritius for the years 1833 to 1846, a period which is said to be the start of Chinese commerce in Mauritius. The immigrants came with the intention of doing commerce. They would request a permit of two to six months, which allowed them enough time to sell their merchandise bought along to Mauritius. James Ng also referred to a category of Chinese immigrants as “*les voyageurs de commerce*”. This category of individuals’ tasks was to make sure that the goods ordered from Asia reached their destination and were in good condition. Once their job was accomplished, they would, most of the time, be employed by merchants and worked as “commis” until the expiring date of their stay in Mauritius. At the end of their residential permit, some would extend their permits while others would either continue working for big merchants such as Hayme, who employed them or be self-employed.<sup>182</sup>

Chinese businessmen such as Hayme and Ahine were very autonomous and resourceful.<sup>183</sup> They engaged in activities that were exclusively done by the Whites. They would import goods in large quantities together with some Chinese labour. Their shops were never out of stock and their prices would defy any competition.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, the social transformation which occurred in Mauritius from the 1830s with the liberation of slaves and the arrival of indentured labourers, offered more trade prospects to the Chinese. The Chinese set up their businesses at strategic points and received a type of clientele who “were not readily accepted by the Europeans.” In Port-Louis, they settled between “le camp des noirs” and “le Camps des Malabar”<sup>185</sup> and traded between these two local communities.

Their commerce expanded through rural, as well as urban areas. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Chinese population was geographically well distributed. “The network of village and estate shops was so extensive that small groups of Chinese were presented in almost every hamlet on Mauritius.”<sup>186</sup> They would engage in various activities but retail trading remained the most prominent (table 4).

Figure 27: Principal occupation of Chinese in Mauritius 1952

Principal Occupations of Chinese in Mauritius, 1952		
	Chinese Males	Chinese Females
Agriculture	15	8
Bakery Manufacturing	73	4
Wine Industries	71	6
Footwear Manufacture	79	5
Footwear Repairs	37	17
Clothes Manufacturing	33	68
Furniture Manufacturing	54	
Printing and Publishing	21	1
Chemical Products	11	6
Metal Product Manufacture	19	
Repair of Vehicles	39	
Construction	47	
Wholesale Trade	82	2
Retail Trade	4,382	137
Insurance	22	
Road Transport	33	
Water Transport	14	
Government Services	62	6
Educational Services	43	42
Medical and Health Services	11	16
Business Services	13	1
Recreation Services	48	
Domestic Service	34	37
Restaurants and Taverns	151	3
Barbers and Beauty Shops	10	1
Photographic Studios	33	

Source: MA BIA 1952 Census.

(Source: Carter. M & Ng Foong Kwong J, *Abacus and Mah Jong: Sino-Mauritian Settlement and Economic Consolidation*, p. 99.)

The economic rise of the Chinese created a certain phobia and jealousy among the White population. On the 27 October 1843, a petition was signed by most traders of European origins about the suspicious provision of goods by the Chinese. The petition did not get through, as it was said to be un-founded. However, some Chinese entered into other illegal, or rather as a journalist of *Radical* (Newspaper) described them - ingenious activities. The system of retailing introduced by the Chinese demonstrated their ability to do business with other people and adapt themselves to the local way of living.

« (Ingéniosité chinoise) L'Assistant surintendant des revenus Hitié fit un raid dernièrement dans une boutique de Chinois de la capitale et n'y découvrit d'abord rien. Puis, en examinant la mesure en étain dont se servent les Chinois pour vendre du rhum à leurs clients, mesure qui a nom Topette dans la langue créole, M. Hitié s'aperçut que le céleste avait trouvé un moyen ingénieux d'augmenter ses revenus tout en faisant du bien à ceux qui venaient boire chez lui. Le boutiquier avait fixé de la cire à cacheter, trois pièces de cinq sous au fond de sa topette, ce qui lui faisait économiser du rhum et empêcher ses clients de s'enivrer. Ce philanthrope, faisait ainsi comme le disions tout à l'heure du bien à sa bourse et ses clients. Chose assez difficile, problème considère comme insoluble mais facilement résolu par l'ingénieur compère. Or M. Hitié ne considéra pas la chose d'un œil aussi bienveillant. Car les points de vue différent selon la profession et ce trait d'ingéniosité d'un Chinois qui nous ravit parce qu'il nous fournit un écho intéressant, très intéressant même, eut le don d'exaspéré le policier qui veille de chez M. Hitié, comme la garde veillait autrefois, à la barrière du Louvre sans réussir, cependant, à empêcher la mort d'entrer. Le céleste fut traduit en cour et condamné à Rs.20 d'amende par M. Magistrat Le Gras hier. »<sup>187</sup>

The success and ability of the Chinese doing business may lie reside in their inner-selves but it mostly rests on their unique family, community and kinship ties.

### 3.5 Community and Clans

Chinese traders have been discussed by many authors during their visits to Mauritius throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Jacques Gerard Milbert (1806) depicted the Chinese as being very reserved almost individualistic and driven to melancholy.

*«Les Chinois que j'ai eu l'occasion de voir à l'île de France m'ont paru réservés et peu communicatifs. Ils sont libres, ne fréquentent pas les esclaves et recherchent la compagnie des blancs. Ils passent dans les cafés à fumer leur pipe tout le temps qui n'est pas réclamé par les affaires. Ils sont naturellement enclins à la mélancolie.»<sup>188</sup>*

A century later, Hervé de Rauville (1908), gave a pretty similar description of the Chinese, as that of Milbert, in his travel log entitled «Ile de France contemporaine». The author portrayed the Chinese as being very reclusive and having their own authority and rules. In other words, the community formed a state within a state.

*«Les Chinois dédaignent l'étranger et s'en méfient; partout où ils sont, ils s'isolent des autres races avec lesquelles ils n'entretiennent que des relations commerciales. A Maurice, ils forment un Etat dans un Etat et ils ont construit à Port Louis une pagode qui leur sert en même temps de lieu de culte, de palais de justice, de salle de jeux et de bourse. Ils ont leur organisation judiciaire spéciale non reconnue par la loi mais à l'autorité de laquelle ils se soumettent lors d'un commun accord.»<sup>189</sup>*

Others books emphasized the blooming business of the Chinese. Sir Cécilcourt Antelme (1886), a member of the «Conseil Législatif» stated: «Partout où vous avez un passage de créoles, vous êtes également certain de rencontrer une boutique chinoise.»<sup>190</sup>

The Mauritius Royal Commission of 1909 described the Chinese residents in the island as followed:

*"The Chinese residents in Mauritius are for the most part small shopkeepers, and in the country districts they almost monopolise this trade. They are in nearly all cases immigrants, and so far, have not mixed much with other races of the island."<sup>191</sup>*

The portrait above gives a clear sense of a Chinese community in the colony. The Chinese lived within themselves, were very much their own masters and were recognized for their skills in doing business. The Chinese community's relationship with other communities depended mainly on business.

There were different strategies which the Chinese had established to help their fellow countrymen. The "cycle" was a form of credit organization where a group of people would contribute a fixed amount monthly which would be lent to the person offering the highest interest or to each person, in turn, according to the participant's names had been drawn. The "cycle" is used to help an individual who wanted to open a shop at the beginning of their careers.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, Chinese shops in Port-Louis would help to accommodate Chinese a retailer coming from rural areas who had come to Port-Louis to purchase their goods. Having purchased their goods, he would stay at a "Kou-on", a place where he could keep his purchase and spend the night before returning to his shop. People having the same patronym would usually stay together and over time, each clan would have their own "Kou-on."<sup>193</sup> The chief representing the Chinese community known as the "Kapitan", was a very important element among the Chinese community. He represented the community in front of the Governor and ensured that his fellow-men were being provided with necessary facilities. The contribution of the clans was vital in the construction of the Chinese community;

*«Les associations claniques ont servi à focaliser l'énergie de cette communauté à l'ordre des pagodes. Ces associations (kwongs) sont basées sur le principe de clan/patronyme et ayant une fonction vitale, s'occupant des besoins de cette communauté en matière d'emploi, de maladie, de décès, de services religieux et rassemblements. Ces associations fonctionnaient grâce aux cotisations des volontaires et ont pu survivre car elles étaient attachées à une pagode»... «Ces pagodes, berceaux de la culture millénaire chinoise transmettant les valeurs du confucianisme, du taoïsme et du bouddhisme, constituent des jalons de notre implantation à Maurice. De même que le patrimoine du pays tout entier.»<sup>194</sup>*

The Chinese community appeared to be a well-knit and homogenous community. Nevertheless, like many Asian groups, behind lie ethnic division; each of them had different customs, spoken

languages and ways of living. The majority of the Chinese came from the province of Kwangtung whose capital is Canton, and others came from the province of Fukien and Hainam Island. Within each province lie different ethnic groups and different clans. The people who came from Kwantung are divided into two groups. The Nam-Shun originated from Nam Hoi and Shuntack, and the Hakkas originated from Cahin Chu, also known as Keh-Long. “The Hakkas are considered as people of mixed blood and are called “Macayah.”<sup>195</sup>

Before the arrival of the Hakka in Mauritius, the Cantonese and the Fukienese were the only one withholding political and cultural power. The death of Afan Tank Wen, the second leader after Hayme in June 1900 provided the opportunity to the Hakkas to challenge the hegemony established by the Cantonese. Each group wanted to fight to gain leadership over Cohan Tai pagoda, the religious and political headquarters of the community. The fight for power and leadership among the different ethnic groups caused great disturbance in the public peace. The battle led to the arbitration of the Supreme Court which issued a decree on the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1906. It was decided that 15 members of different ethnic groups would manage the pagoda; 5 of whom shall always be from the Canton tribe, 5 of the Hakka tribe and 5 of the Fukien tribe. According to Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo (1985), the sharing of power had caused a “break with the tradition which vested absolute authority in an elected leader” and “destroyed the delicate mechanism by which unity within the community was maintained; it also curtailed the leader’s prestige in conducting his negotiations with the government.”<sup>196</sup> The fierce division and competition among the community itself had led to its gradual loss of the Chinese power in Mauritius.

## 4.0 THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE: SINO-MAURITIANS AND THEIR DECLINE

### 4.1 Socio-Economic Success v/s Decline of the Chinese Community

The division into ethnic groups, competition between the different clans for political power marked the beginning of a profound change in the community’s functioning. The change had other consequences for the way the Chinese people live, causing them to lose more and more their culture - their “Chineseness”, and adopt a more “European” way of life. These changes are very visible and members of the Chinese community are rather desperate about the situation as their fellow countrymen turn a blind eye on their millennium of culture and traditions and emigrate to other countries for better economical prospects. The despair was not often voiced out, but the words of Philip Li Ching Hum resume the fears of the community; “*I find that the Chinese are losing their culture, it breaks our hearts*”<sup>197</sup>. Furthermore, they associate their community’s decline with the economical and social development of the community;

*“...unfortunately today, what do we find, the Chinese community is disappearing. Formally we were 30,000, today it is 18,000. It is because of what? Because of brain drain. There is no meritocracy; they feel that...what’s the use of investing in Pound Sterling, in Euros, Dollars, US Dollars in university studies and come back with meek salary of Mauritian devalued money. So they prefer to stay abroad. It is said that outside Mauritius, you have more Sino-Mauritians than inside today.”*<sup>198</sup>

The actual situation is the result of years and years of the community enduring sufferings, while trying to create a better future for the younger generations. However, in doing so, the Chinese have also “prevented” the younger generations from knowing the harsh living conditions which their ancestors had to bear; « *Au delà de la cinquantaine, les gens se souviennent de la misère et du long chemin parcouru, mais la jeune génération ne s’y retrouve pas.* »<sup>199</sup> However, those who remember these sufferings have preserved and transmitted to their children their culture, especially their strong attachment to their ancestors’ country of origin: “*We were fortunately not cut off from our roots in the Mei Xian. There still exists a tradition which specifies that when a boy is born in Mauritius, he should be also registered in the region of his ancestors. We are also aware of where our parents and grandparents lived and grew up.*”<sup>200</sup> These links were at the basis of the Chinese culture. The recognition and respect of the young for the older generations have not changed: “*They have prolonged the road for us, pouring their sweat and their tears, the least we can do now is to pay tribute to them. They contributed to what made Mauritius what it is today.*”<sup>201</sup>

## 4.2 Negotiating New Identities in the wake of Colonisation and Christianisation

However, not all members of the younger generations are really aware of the importance of their ancestors' contribution to what Mauritius is today, and they are even less aware of the sufferings they endured since they first came to the Island. During colonial times, especially with the first and second wave of immigration, the Chinese were victimised or oppressed by the colonial regime. The oppression was articulated covertly in many aspects of the functioning of the colony. Behind the apparent economic success of the Chinese in Mauritius, resides injustice to faced with which they were forced to silence their fear of losing what they had or fear that they would not be allowed to have any social mobility.

Ever since their arrival in the Colony of Mauritius, they started experiencing an inhumane treatment: *"They were treated as aliens, they were given a certificate; a blue card on which day they landed in Mauritius, and very often their name are not well pronounced. The British took pleasure in giving them name just like the general population; they were given all types of names."*<sup>202</sup> Many Chinese immigrants, on arriving to Mauritius, declared themselves only by giving their surnames. Thus, all the meanings belonged to a name; ancestral and clan attachments and other meanings were changed.

The new generations born in Mauritius also bears traces of the colonial influences on their naming pattern. The Chinese, looking for social mobility, needed to be accepted by the rest of the population. They needed to gain access to education and other facilities for that to happen. In almost every facet of their lives, they had to "forget" their ancestral culture and adopt the norms of the colonial powers.

*"Whenever they had to open a shop, they must seek the blessing of the oligarchy. This where we found the Chinese, most of them were Christianised. Some of you will not agree with me when I say that most of the Chinese were not converted "à leur propre gré". Indirectly (...) was imposed on them. Because the doors of Lorette, the doors of Priest running colleges. If you don't bear the name, the Christian name, you will not gain access to such colleges."*<sup>203</sup>

*"Many Chinese converted because they have to get access to education; otherwise, they will be condemned to stay in the shop. From generation to generation, they will be the same shopkeeper; there will be no social mobility. That's why they have, in spite they have been converted, they still retain their Chineseness, they still retain their soul."*<sup>204</sup>

## 4.3 COLONIAL DOMINATION POWER; THE CASE OF THE SHOPKEEPERS

The willingness to change even their identity was influenced by the need to escape the form of "slavish" life they lived, through education. Behind the doors of the lucrative Chinese shops hid unspoken sufferings. In the colonial times, all those other than the Europeans and their descendants were victims of their domination and the Chinese felt they were prejudiced against in the same way as any member of the other communities. Most of them suffered the dominations of the sugar magnate.

*"We suffer the same faith, we suffer the same destiny, we get the same destiny. The liberated slaves, indentured labour and the free immigrants shared the same common destiny. When the wipe of colonialism is slashed, no one was spared. Even the Chinese shopkeeper, he has to bear. Do you know what injustices the Chinese suffered when they run a shop? ...you can't collect your money at the end of the year, the sugar magnate; you have to provide them with gifts. You must provide them with "cadeau l'année". The contribution of the shopkeepers cannot be under estimated. They have introduced the system of credit- "carnet la boutik" to feed the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers"*<sup>205</sup>

*"The shopkeeper is a sort of adviser, banker, moral support to them. So they shared the same faith. The Chinese shopkeepers, they work day and night to feed the hungry population. It is not true to say that the Chinese has been privileged. It is not true because, they also, they were looked down upon by the colonial powers...today if we have seen the disappearance of the Chinese shops in the villages, it is because they have considered it a sort/form of slavery. Life in the shop is a sort of slavery, day and night, he has to feed the whole village. He is the first to wake up and the last to go to bed."*<sup>206</sup>

These Chinese shops have greatly contributed in the development of rural areas and their contribution cannot be underestimated;

*“As a Minority in Mauritius, the contribution of the Chinese Community has often been overlooked. It nevertheless brought enormous changes in terms of knowledge of the land, innovative ideas, leadership and enhanced our local cultural and religious diversity.”<sup>207</sup>*

Till now, these shops are among the most visible monuments of our cultural heritage. Their involvement in the wider community was very important; they provided the basic necessities of poor villages, helped in their development and contributed to a “modern Mauritius”. They were completely integrated in the local context at the risk of losing their own culture and becoming a “true” Mauritian:

*« S’il y a une valeur culturelle Chinoise qui se perd à Maurice selon lui, c’est la « la langue des ancêtres...ce n’est pas négatif à 100% car cela veut dire que les Mauriciens Chinois vivent plus comme des Mauriciens que comme des Chinois. »<sup>208</sup>*

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The contribution of the Chinese, in the mindset of more than one, was seen as that outcast to the economic development of the country. Their apparent economic success shadows came from labour, callous living conditions and dominations they had to suffer for almost two centuries during their presence in Mauritius. The new generations of Sino-Mauritians have been spared all these sufferings, at the cost of “forgetting” their roots and culture. The contribution of this community resides far beyond the field of economic development; they nurtured relationships both within and outside their communities and contributed to the well-being of every Mauritian. They lived within every community of the island, irrespective of ethnic barriers, bringing their milestone to the development of the country by innovative ways of helping people and developing business.

However, while looking forward to the younger generations moving up the social ladder, the community has been faced with relegating their past sufferings and conditions to a loss of memory. To some extent the community preserves only the legendary hardworking capacities of the Chinese people. History itself has played a role in this parody depiction of this community which has often been limited to hard labour or to distinctive figure of the Chinese and their astonishing economic development through over the last two centuries. These people fled their countries to form new communities all across the world. Most of them would not return to China after the Communist take-over and found no other solution but to stay and secure their future in their adopted countries.

Today, after an incredible economic success, the Chinese seem to face their decline due to various factors. Many young Sino-Mauritians are looking for better prospects elsewhere in the world; turning a blind eye to what their parents and grandparents had built through will power and hard work. There is an outcry of the community that they should be given due recognition of their contribution to the overall development of the country; a recognition for their history and past sufferings by all Mauritians in the hopes that they may revive the community, by attracting younger generations to stay and build their future in this country to which they now belong.

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## 7.0 INTERVIEWEES' PROFILE

### 7.1 Interviewee One Mr. Poon Yow Tse

Name of interviewee: POON YOW TSE Poon Yune Liong

Place of Birth: Mauritius

Date of Birth: 2/11/1928

Nationality: Mauritian

Current occupation: free lance journalist

Age: 82 years old

Date of interview: Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010

Interviewer: Christelle Miao Foh and Mr. André Li.

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#### Observations

At two o'clock in the afternoon this Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010, I waited for Mr. André Li the field guide near the Nam Sum Society building, rue Arsenal Port Louis. Then, we drove towards the end limits of the Chinatown to meet the Informant Mr. Poon Yow Tse. We stopped in front what appeared to be an old wooden house, painted in a sky blue color. The house though extremely beautiful seems to be in a state of "délabrement". As we passed through the front gate, there was the basic old fashioned toilet and the rudimentary bathroom to the right. We entered the house through the kitchen and ended straight at the end in what appeared to be Mr. Poon's study room. It was filled with books covered with newspapers to preserve the books. I could not take my eyes off the structure of the wooden house. It was an authentic colonial house. When I peeked through the room, it saddened me to see how abandoned it was. There was dust everywhere and the rooms were not properly maintained.

Mr. Poon was in his study and his eldest son, Jeremy, was by his side. Mr. André made the introduction and explained the purpose of the interview. Mr. Poon seems very thrilled and has no objection to it. However, he did not want me to record his voice and wanted to do an old fashioned way interview. Mr. André Li explained that it would be easier for me to write the report later and that what he would be saying won't go to the public. Mr. Poon then allowed me to record the interview with much hesitation.

Mr. Poon's eldest son Jeremy asked me who was in charged of the project and before I could reply, he asked me if it was Vijaya Teelock and said that she was one of his teachers at MGI School. Curiously, during the interview, he did not interfere in the conversation nor added any extra detailed even when his father was talking about his<sup>209</sup> private life. He would sit silently and immobile for the one-hour interview.

The interview went on well and after that, Mr. Poon asked for my name, after I made him signed the consent form. We talked for a few minutes outside the recording interview and I noticed that the conversation was very easy going and open-hearted than that of the recording interview.

#### The summary of the life history of Mr. POON YOW TSE

Mr. POON YOW TSE Poon Yune Liong was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1928 in Mauritius. He went back to China at the age of 16, to continue his studies there. He finished his high school and went to the university in Pecking. His studies finished, he came back to Mauritius to work. Mr. Poon is known to be a public figure, since he is a journalist and writes article for the various Chinese gazettes.

#### Mr. Poon's parents

Mr. Poon's father was born in China and came to Mauritius in 1922. He came to Mauritius because in China there was extreme poverty: *"... ti telman miser, pa ti pe gagn so lavi e se grass a enn kamarad ki f'inn deza vinn moris"* One of his friends who lived in the same village helped him to migrate to Mauritius. When he arrived in Mauritius, his father stayed at la rue Rémy Ollier and worked as a hairdresser. He rented an emplacement on la rue royale *"loue enn ti salon de kwafer kot lari royal vizavi Lai Tong"*

Mr. Poon's parents were already married when his father came to Mauritius. His father came first and then his mother. His mother remained a housewife, taking care of their 3 children; 2 daughters and 1 son (Mr. Poon).

#### **Mr. Poon's grandparents**

He never saw his grandparents and doesn't know anything about them. He only saw the familial tomb where his grandparents were buried in when he went to China.

#### **Mr. Poon's educational path**

He did most of his schooling at the Chinese middle-school found in Port Louis. After his Junior Year in Mauritius, his father sent him to China to continue his Senior Year (form 4, 5 and 6) in China. He was 17 years old by then. He did 3 years in the Senior Year and 3 years at the University where he studied Languages; Chinese and French.

In the Chinese middle school of Mauritius, he studied in Hakka dialect. His teachers were mainly Chinese and when it was time for French and English lessons, a Creole teacher would do the lessons. One episode that he remembered during his time in the Chinese middle-school was that during war time - China against Japan, teachers and students contributed to send money to China. "It was an act of patriotism" he said with much fervor. During the 6 years he studied in China, he did not have any trouble adapting himself to their lifestyle. The reason why his father sent him to China was to let him discover his roots and not to forget his origins "*pou pa blie mo rasinn. Mo rasinn se touzour lasin*"

His two sisters did not go to school. His father was stubborn and old fashion-minded, he did want them to go to school "*tifi rest lakaz*"

#### **Mr. Poon's career/ working experience**

He came back to Mauritius at the age of 23. He worked in his old school, the Chinese middle-school as a teacher. He was teaching Mandarin and Hakka. And was paid around 200 rupees a month. Afterwards, he worked for an industry *The International Fashion Limited* which was managed by people from Hong Kong. They needed a person to translate from Chinese to Creole. At that time, Mr. Poon says that many young Chinese didn't know how to speak Mandarin or Hakka. His monthly salary as a translator was 3, 000 rupees.

He got a job at Chinese Daily Mirror a few years later and ever since he has been a journalist. We would write articles concerning mainly amendments to Commerce laws because this would be the main interest of the Chinese community since many of them have businesses.

#### **Mr. Poon's personal life and family**

He first met his wife when he was teaching. His wife was still a student but at that time, they were still friends. A few years later, they met by chance and fell in love. They didn't do a traditional wedding. They announced their union in the local Chinese newspaper and flew straight to China for their honeymoon. Together they had 3 sons. All of them do professional work such as engineer and IT. One of his sons migrated to Canada and the others often travel for work purposes.

#### **Mr. Poon's identity**

Mr. Poon has a very strong connection with China. He says that his heart will always turn toward his roots.

**7.2 Interviewee 2 Mr. Wan Sin Cheung****Name of interviewee:** WAN SIN CHEUNG**Date of Birth:** 1/12/1912**Place of Birth:** Mexian, China**Current occupation:** Retired**Nationality:** Chinese till 1962 and Mauritian onwards.**Age:** 99 years old**Date of interview:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010**Interviewer:** Christelle Miao Foh and Mr. André Li.

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**Observations**

At two o'clock in the afternoon this Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010, I met Mr. André Li the field guide near the Atrium at Rose Hill bus station. He was accompanied by a man and a woman whom he presented as the daughter and the son in-law of the interviewee. Near a shop, the woman opened a glass door that led to a narrow staircase. At the end of the stairs, we entered directly into what appeared to be a very large living room. The woman asked us to sit on red sofas while she called her father.

During that time, I was very anxious as it was my first time doing a formal interview with someone within my community. I was nervous as I knew what the psychology of Chinese community towards strangers was and I was afraid of their reaction. The Chinese people tend to be very suspicious when strangers enter their private life and they tend to be on the defensive side. On the other hand, I was hoping that they would open up but deep inside, I knew that I had a certain limits that should not cross or else, the interviewee would retreat himself.

A few minutes later, the woman came into the living room accompanied by her father Mr. Wan Sin Cheung. He appears to be a very healthy man which contradicts his 98 years. When Mr. André Li did the presentation and the purpose of our coming here, Mr. Wan seemed very confused for having so much attention. He kept asking what was the purpose of asking him questions and what was I going to do with these information. His daughter told him that I was working for a company who writes stories about people. Then, she told me and André, that it is better that we say it in the simplest way because her father would not understand what The Truth and Justice Commission is about. Then she told her father that I wanted to know his experience in coming to Mauritius and that again I was going to write a story about it. Mr. Wan looked at me for a second and I saw his eyes softened and he was more relaxed and agreed to be interviewed non-anonymously.

The interviewed lasted about 35 minutes and what seems amazing is that Mr. Wan at 98 years old can still speak properly and have a very good memory. He also kept all his official documents such as passports, naturalisation certificate and receipts of payment of naturalization and boat ticket to China neatly through all these years. The interview was conducted in Chinese dialect; Hakka and Creole.

During the interview, I noticed that I couldn't ask too much detail about the construction of business. While asking about this subject, I sensed a bit of tension from the interviewee daughter and son-in-law. It is perhaps that there must have been some family matters around the business or may be that, they simply did not feel at ease to talk about it freely.

After the interview, we talked a bit longer and Mr. Wan Sin Cheung was much more at ease to a point that he started showing us pictures and documents. He made us visit his house and showed us which part he constructed first and how. The presence of Mr. André Li helped a lot too, because they both started chatting about people they knew in common and also, Mr. André Li speaks Hakka fluently which had helped me a lot before, during and after the interview.

**The summary of the life history of Mr. Wan Sin Cheung**

Mr. Wan Sin Cheung was born the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1912 in Mexian, China and is the son of Mr. Wun Tey Nian a trader and Mrs. Tia Song Moy, housewife. Like many Chinese immigrants, he bears only a surname on his identification card. He came to Mauritius in 1926 at the age of 14 with his cousin who was already established in Mauritius.

### **Mr. Wan's parents**

Mr. Wan Sin Cheung is the son of Mr. Wun Tey Nian a trader. Mr. Wan Sin Cheung's father came to Mauritius as a trader and he had a shop at La Bute. The shop he owned was selling cloth. After a few years, his father went back to China and died there. His father died long before Mr. Wan Sin Cheung went to Mauritius. His father had 4 brothers and one sister.

Mr. Wan Sin Cheung's mother, Mrs. Tia Song Moy is a housewife. She came to Mauritius at the age of 70 years old as her son paid for her trip. She died 12 years later at 82 years old.

### **Mr. Wan's childhood in China**

He went to school till Standard Four and had to walk to school with homemade shoes, made by his mother. He was been taught in Hakka. He left school at 13. He had a big house with 3 rooms and he shared his bedrooms with his brothers and sister. Mr. Wan Sin Cheung said that he had a good life in China because his father was a wealthy man "... *dan sa lepok la mo papa ti ena cash, na pa ti pass miser*"

### **Trip of Mr. Wan Sin Cheung to Mauritius in 1926**

It took about 40 days to travel from China to Mauritius. Mr. Wan Sin Cheung first took a boat from Mexian to Hong Kong. He stayed in Hong Kong for about 10 to 15 days. Then he took another boat from Hong Kong to Mauritius with a transit through Singapore. He was not sad to leave China because he had many of his cousins were in Mauritius.

### **1<sup>st</sup> day in Mauritius**

The first thing he recall when he arrived in Mauritius was that the Town (which I presumed was Port Louis) was sad "*partout kas kasse, trist, trist*". He went to stay in a shop called Ah-Piang the first day.

### **Mr. Wan's working experience**

He worked in Ah-Piang shop first for 6 to 7 years. His salary was 12 to 15 rupees per month which included lodging and food. He was being paid every month but did not have his money in hand; instead it was written in a book. After 7 years in Mauritius, he went back to China to visit his family and also because he did not quite like Mauritius. In china, he worked in a wine factory.

He came back to Mauritius after some time. He came back because his father had a share in the shop and he had to take the share of his father. By his 30s, he came to live in Rose-Hill; he learnt the job of a shoemaker. He learnt it with a Creole. He learnt how to design and cut out the design. He was distributing shoes in Port-Louis, rue Deforges. He remembered that arriving at the bus stop in Port-Louis, he had to pay Rs. 1 to child who nearby to help him carry his shoes to rue Deforges. He was making 1 rupee profit on low-quality shoe and 2 rupees on good-quality shoe but it was very rare.

### **Learning Creole**

He learnt Creole while working in the shop. He would write the words in Creole with Chinese characters.

### **Mr. Wan's personal life and family**

He married at about 35 years of age. It was an arranged marriage. He decided to get married because he was getting old. He married at the Cathedral; guests would give them 3 rupees as a gift for their wedding. Before he married, he was baptized. His wife told him that he had to be baptize or else the wedding will not be held.

He had 7 children; 4 sons and 3 daughters with his wife. He has one son in Canada and the rest are still in Mauritius.

# LIBERATED AFRICANS IN COLONIAL MAURITIUS

## ‘FREE’ AFRICANS IN MAURITIUS AFTER SLAVERY

One of the most common stereotype in Mauritian history is of the African slave and Indian indentured labourer. It is important however that Mauritians know that Africans and Malagasies were also brought as labour after abolition of slavery. Their archives are found in the ‘Indian Immigration Archives’ found at the MGI. This history deserves to be better known by Mauritians, as many members of the Creole community originated from them, as the case studies show.

### 1.1 Who were the Liberated Africans?

*‘The Apprentices are those Negroes who have been rescued from slave-ships since the abolition of the Slave Trade’* Captain Richard Vicars (British Military Officer who supervised the Government Slaves and Apprentices during the 1820s)<sup>210</sup>

Almost a generation before the abolition of British colonial slavery, the Imperial Government of Great Britain passed *The Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade* in 1807 which outlawed the importation of slaves into its slave colonies and set down the first regulations for captured slaves on the high seas. In March 1808, an Order-in-Council was passed by King George III, which stipulated that Africans or negroes who were seized on slave ships by the British Royal Navy would be forfeited to the British Crown as ‘prize negroes’. The Mozambicans, other East Africans, Malagasies and some Comorians who were captured on these slave vessels by the naval forces of Great Britain, were also called ‘Liberated Africans’, ‘Government Apprentices’, ‘Government Blacks’, ‘African Recaptives’ and ‘Prize Slaves’.

#### Origins

The ‘Liberated Africans’ came mainly from Mozambique, other parts of East Africa, Madagascar and the Comoro Islands. Around 30% came from Mozambique and the coastal areas and Great Lakes region of East Africa. Among the Mozambicans, the Liberated Africans came from the powerful and large tribes such as the Yao, Makua, Maravi, Lomwe and Nginodo. Around 69% were Malagasies and around 1% were Comorians. They came mainly from Central, Eastern and North-Western Madagascar which included important and large tribes such as the Merina, Sakalavas, the Betsimiarakas and natives of the East Coast of the ‘Grande Ile’. The Comorians came from tribes who lived on the four main islands of the Archipelago of the Comoros, namely Grande Comore, Mayotte, Moheli and Anjouan.

#### Ports of embarkation

Between 1811 and 1827, the Liberated Africans or ‘captured slaves’ were embarked at Mozambique Island, Ibo, Angoche, Sofala and Quelimane on the Mozambican coast. The other East African ports were Zanzibar, Kilwa, Mombasa, Mafia, Pemba and Malindi. On the Malagasy coast, the ports of embarkation were Tamatave, Mahajunga, Foule Pointe, Fort Dauphin, Sainte Marie, Antongil Bay and Diego Suarez. From the Comoro Islands, the Liberated Africans were embarked at ports located on Grande Comore, Mayotte, Moheli and Anjouan.

They were transported by the French and Portuguese and other European slave traders in fast-sailing brigs and schooners from the East Coast of Africa, Madagascar and the Comoro Islands to their respective destinations including Mauritius. It was extremely rare for Arab dhows to sail all the way to the Mascarenes Islands with their slave cargoes. There were many European slave traders who introduced Mozambican and East African slaves through Madagascar and the Seychelles.

### **Mortality during the voyage**

*“Relentless as was the cruelty of these men [slave traders] towards the negro on his passage, and reckless as they were of the mortality which the crowded hatches occasioned....If a leak arose, no compunctions of conscience prevented the throwing overboard of the live slaves to lighten the vessel, which added to the mortality originating with their capture, augmented by the journey to the shore, the number of deaths from suffocation on the passage, the cause we have previously specified, and the slaughter of the helpless and infirm to support themselves immediately on their disembarkation....”<sup>211</sup>*

All of the Liberated Africans who were rescued from the slave ships in the South-West Indian Ocean and eventually landed in Mauritius experienced the full horror and trauma of the slave voyage. Between 1811 and 1827, the mortality rate on slave vessels, sailing from the East African, Malagasy and Comorian ports to Mauritius, was estimated as ranging between 7% and 20%. During the 1810s and 1820s, the slave trade cost the lives of thousands of African, Malagasy and Comorian slaves who were illegally introduced into Mauritius and the lives of dozens of Liberated Africans who were captured and landed in Port Louis.

In December 1826, P. Salter, the Acting Collector of Customs, submitted a *Return of Negroes Apprenticed at Mauritius and Its Dependencies* to the Commissioners of Eastern Enquiry. This document clearly showed that between 1813 and 1826, out of 2,998 Prize Negroes landed in Mauritius, around 291 died even before being apprenticed. There were 2,390 males and 608 females or a ratio of almost 4 to 1. During that entire period, more than 9% of the Liberated Africans died within less than a month after landing and before becoming Government apprentices. Many died as a result of diseases such as dysentery, cholera, and the small pox, as well as from severe cases of malnutrition and dehydration which prevailed on the slave vessels sailing between Madagascar and East Africa to Mauritius and its dependencies.

### **The testimony of Captain Charles Letord (Dorval)**

Between December 1826 and November 1827, Captain Charles Letord or Dorval testified before the Commission of Eastern Enquiry. Several months earlier in London, in May 1826, Dorval had also testified before the parliamentary *Select Committee on the Mauritius Slave Trade* of the Honourable Charles Buxton.

Captain Dorval, who commanded *Le Coureur*, the slaving vessel involved in illegal slave trading, was considered to be one of the most notorious slave traders in the Indian Ocean. He described the state of the slave vessels which were always extremely overcrowded, with diseases being rampant and the high mortality rate. Slaves were provided with small quantities of rice, maize and salt fish, hardly enough food to survive. They were chained in pairs and were almost never brought on the ship's deck for fresh air. Many of these slaves, including the Liberated Africans, reached Mauritius physically and psychologically exhausted and afflicted with disease.

Between 1811 and 1821, Charles Letord claimed to have made several voyages between Mauritius and East Africa and Madagascar and to have introduced thousands of slaves illegally into the colony. According to Richard Allen, between 1811 and 1827, between 50,000 and 65,000 slaves were illegally introduced into Mauritius. During the same period, 2,998 Liberated Africans were landed in the colony, which represents between 4 to 6% of the total number of slaves illegally landed in British Mauritius.

### **The British Vice-Admiralty and the seizure and condemnations of slaving vessels**

Slaving vessels and slaves captured by British Navy in the South-West Indian Ocean were sent to be condemned at the Vice-Admiralty Courts of Mauritius and the Cape Colony. Between 1808 and 1827,

around 65 vessels and 5008 Prize Negroes were condemned. Around 29 slave vessels were condemned and 2,010 Liberated Africans landed at the Cape Colony during the same period, while in Mauritius, around 36 slave vessels and 2,998 Prize Negroes were condemned at the local Vice-Admiralty Court. There were also about 53 slave seizures with the capture of 540 newly-landed slaves at different locations on the Mauritian coast.

The number of slaves seized on land represent about 18% of all the Liberated Africans landed in Mauritius. The overwhelming majority or 82% of them were captured on the high seas and brought to Mauritius by the Royal Navy. They had to serve a period of indenture which lasted 14 years and in the process, they became known as 'Government Apprentices' or Liberated Africans. The slave traders who were prosecuted by the British Vice-Admiralty Court had to pay a total of £124,000 for fine-breaking imperial anti-slave trade regulations.

### **Landing of Liberated Africans**

The seized Liberated Africans landed between 1811 and 1827 at the Customs House. The first batch brought to Mauritius, under the British administration, had been on board a large Arab dhow *Othmany*, captured in late April 1811 by the Royal Navy off the coast of East Africa, sailing in the direction of the Mascarenes Islands. By mid-May, the Arab ship and 120 African slaves landed in Port Louis and were handed over to the Collector of Customs. They were employed as servants in the Police Department.

The Liberated Africans were landed, registered, and underwent a medical examination at the Customs House. They were placed under the authority of the Collector of Customs and the Customs Department and became the 'wards' of the British Government'. They were housed at the *Bagne* for several days and weeks in order to allow them time to recover from the ordeal of the slave voyage and to acclimatize themselves to the local climate. Those who were sick were sent to the Labourdonnais or Military Hospital. With the demand for labour in Mauritius, they were either employed in Government Departments or assigned to private employers through the means of an indenture contract.

In 1827, the last Liberated Africans, 12 of them, were brought to Mauritius.<sup>212</sup>

### **The indenture contracts of the Liberated Africans**

*"The Apprentices are those Negroes who have been rescued from slave-ships since the abolition of the Slave Trade, and are bound by the Collector of Customs for the period of fourteen, and latterly for seven years to private individuals, who, by the indentures they sign, engage to teach them a trade or occupation by which they may earn a livelihood."* (Cpt. Richard Vicars, *op. cit.*)

According to the Royal Order-in-Council of March 1808, the Liberated Africans had to be apprenticed for a period of 14 years, so that they might receive instructions from the masters or employers to whom they would be assigned. The purpose of this indenture was to supposedly to 'train' the Liberated Africans or Prize Negroes in a specific job, so that they would be able to support themselves in the future and eventually become free and productive members of colonial society as skilled or semi-skilled artisans/workers.

Before a private employer assumed charge of a Liberated African, he or she was required to enter into contractual obligations or an 'indenture agreement', a process known as 'articling', with the Collector of Customs, who acted on behalf of the Liberated African and the local British Colonial Government. The employer was bound to furnish the apprentice or the Liberated African with sufficient food, clothing, medical assistance and to instruct him or her in a trade or 'other useful employment.' The apprentice also had to be baptized and be instructed in the Christian religion. In reality, there was no formal articling process for Liberated Africans who were employed in the Departments of the local British Colonial Government. During his indentureship, the apprentice had to obey honestly and obediently his master, as well as learn the trade which he was being taught. The indenture agreement was signed by four individuals, the Collector of Customs, the apprentice, the employer and a witness.

### **Distribution of the Liberated Africans**

By 1839, they were divided into three groups: the first group of around 1,979 Africans and the majority were employed privately by 660 mostly British Colonial and Military Officials, British residents and some Franco-Mauritian planters (Charles Telfair had 91 Liberated Africans). The second group was employed in the Offices of the local British administration and the third were enlisted in the land and sea forces. Governor Farquhar and the members of his inner circle hired 560 apprentices, or just over 23% of them. By 1827, there were 1,798 Liberated Africans still serving their masters and working in Government Departments.<sup>213</sup>

Figure 28: Details of 14 Liberated Africans on 14-year Indenture Contract

No	Name of Apprentice	G	Caste	Date	Occupation	Name of Master
1	Couracé	M	Baptized as Christian	07.April.1815	House servant	Solivard Abrien
2	Bouta	M	Baptized as Christian	08.April.1815	Mason	R.T Farquhar
3	Nateke	M	Baptized as Christian	08.April.1815	Carpenter	R.T Farquhar
4	Poutaouro	M	Baptized as Christian	08.April.1815	Mason	R.T Farquhar
5	Amifs	M	Baptized as Christian	08.April.1815	Stone cutter	R.T Farquhar
6	Soncolo	M	Baptized as Christian	08.April.1815	Stone cutter	R.T Farquhar
7	Milatou	M	Baptized as Christian	08.April.1815	Blacksmith	R.T Farquhar
8	Milo	M	Baptized as Christian	05.April.1815	House servant	Effingham Lindsay
9	Jolopoa	M	Baptized as Christian	05.April.1815	Cook	James Rendle
10	Véroano	M	Baptized as Christian	05.April.1815	Groom	James Rendle
11	Couraré	M	Baptized as Christian	05.April.1815	House servant	Sir Robert Barclay
12	Mouthanary	F	Baptized as Christian	05.April.1815	Laundress	James Rendle
13	Mouatoukoa	F	Baptized as Christian	05.April.1815	Laundress	James Rendle
14	Navacoula	M	Baptized as Christian	05.April.1815	House servant	Sir Robert Barclay

(Source: Compiled from MNA/Z7/E/Volume 4, Indenture of Apprentices for 1815)

A survey of indenture agreements for the period between the 1810s and the 1830s show that male Liberated Africans were apprenticed as masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, house servants, stone cutters, horse handlers, porters, gardeners and carters. Female apprentices were apprenticed as seamstresses, cooks, washerwomen, maids, and gardeners. Unlike slaves, these were skilled trades through which the Government apprentices could earn wages.<sup>214</sup> The following statement by the Commissioners of Enquiry (1826) describe fully the economic contribution of the Liberated Africans and what the Government and employers owed them:

*"...the ordinary rate of colonial hire for the labour of a negro in one year, and considering the number of years these negroes have laboured, the severity of that labour, and the profits of the sugar plantations for some years past, a compensation might justly be due to the negro for past service rather than any claim of indemnification be asserted by the master for his present release."*

(Extract from Report of the Commissioners of Eastern Enquiry upon the Slave Trade at Mauritius (June 1829))

Government apprentices were paid very low wages. In September 1828, the local British Colonial Government officially established monthly wage rates for the Liberated Africans and set up an 'Apprentice Fund'. At the end of each year, the apprentices were paid 75% of the money from this Fund, while 25% would be kept in the fund, in theory, to cover the cost of their maintenance which was not always carried out.

In July 1836, Cunningham, while reporting on the state of the Apprentice Fund, observed that 'From this account, it will appear that above £16,000 has been earned in this colony since 1827 by government apprentices, during renewed periods of service, and while still under the care of the Collector of Customs and that over £12,000 has actually been paid to the apprentices...'

During that same year, the total amount of money in the Apprentice Fund was £4,288 and by 1838, it had more than doubled, to £8,712. These facts clearly show to what extent apprentice

labour was valuable in Mauritius during the slavery era. After all, it was a precious commodity which was coveted by the local British Colonial Officials and, to a lesser extent, by the slave-owners.

Figure 29: An account of money paid into the Colonial Treasury on account of the Government Apprentice Fund 1836

Date	By whom paid	Sums	Totals
1830 Jan 25	Col Draper	£ 79.8.6	
1830 June 18	Col Draper	96.13	
1831 May 11	Col Draper	327.9.3 ¼	
1832 June 16	Col Draper	472.9.3 ½	£ 976- ¼
1833 Feb 7	W Cunningham	532.9.6 ½	
1833 April 13	W Cunningham	443.2.4	
1833 July 5	W Cunningham	585	
1833 Oct 18	W Cunningham	283.9.3 ½	
1843 Feb 4	W Cunningham	210	
1843 Aug 5	W Cunningham	275	
1835 April 14	W Cunningham	400	
1836 Feb 10	W Cunningham	287.13.3 ¼	3016.14.5 ¼

### High mortality among the Liberated Africans

Between 1813 and 1827, out of the 2,998 landed in Mauritius, around 9% died before being apprenticed. 59 of the 206 Liberated Africans who were employed by the local British Government also died while in service. This represents a death rate of more than 28%. Among those hired to Colonel Lindsay, around 61% perished; for those hired to Colonel Draper, the death rate was 50%; for Reverend Jones of the London Missionary Society, it was 43%; for Charles Telfair the death rate was 39% and for Governor Farquhar, it was 39%. In general, between 1813 and 1827, around 965 Liberated Africans died, with some missing or unaccounted for. This means that during that period, 32% or almost one-third of all the Liberated Africans died. In 1830, Captain Vicars, who had been in charge of the Government Apprentices for several years during the 1820s, confirmed that the death rate among the Liberated Africans was much higher than those among the Mauritian slave population. He stated that it was common for them to be overworked and treated worse than slaves. Three years earlier, P. Salter, the Acting Collector of Customs commented that 'it is to be observed that many of the inhabitants do not in their declarations distinguish between slaves and Prize Negroes.'

## CASE STUDIES

### 1. Celestine Hecate

Celestine was a Liberated African of Malagasy origin who landed in Mauritius in 1817 from a captured slave ship by the British Royal Navy. She was apprenticed for 14 long years as a maid to an unnamed colonist who resided in the Plaines Wilhems District and by July 1831, her period of forced servitude came to an end. In October 1830, Auguste Naissin, a young Liberated African male, and Celestine made a request with the Collector of Customs to be married which was granted. The two Liberated Africans had shared an intimate relationship for many years during the 1820s and the early 1830s and through which they had four children. Unfortunately, the marriage never took place and they separated for unspecified reasons. By 1833, Augustin Naissin had passed away and the personal papers of Celestine were still in his custody.

In July 1833, Celestine showed up at the office of Mr. Icery, the Chief Commissary of Police of Plaines Wilhems; she requested for her papers to be retrieved from the Late Augustin Naissin. A few days later, her papers were obtained and given to her. During the first week of August 1833, Celestine went to see Mr. Chignard, the Clerk to the Guardian of the Government Apprentices, who worked in the Customs House in Port Louis under the supervision of the Collector of Customs. She submitted her papers, along with a letter from Mr. Icery outlining her story, and she also argued that her apprenticeship had come to an end in 1831. Mr. Chignard wrote a letter addressed to Mr.

George C. Cunningham, the Collector of Customs, which contained her bio-data and other relevant documents.

Shortly after, the Collector of Customs sent a letter to the Colonial Secretary in which he recommended to Governor William Nicolay that Celestine be granted her 'Act of Freedom'. After analysing her bio-data, the letters from Chignard and Icery, George Cunningham described Celestine as being 'of good character and capable of earning the livelihood for herself and four children.' A few days later, Governor Nicolay gave his assent and the Collector of Customs issued an 'Act of Freedom' for Celestine. In August 1833, the same month that the British Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act, Celestine Hecate was able to secure her freedom and began her new life as a legally free person with her children.<sup>215</sup> There are several important stories from the records of the Office of the Collector of Customs, like the one of Celestine Hecate, a time-expired Liberated African woman.

The experience of Celestine highlights her struggle to secure her freedom, to be able to earn enough to support herself and her children and to carve out a place for herself in a highly-stratified, complex, male-dominated and racist colonial society in Mauritius during the last years of slavery. While some of the circumstances in the life of Celestine Hecate and her children were unfortunate, she was a proud person who did not wait on the local colonial system to secure her freedom. She took the initiative of getting the process started, worked the system to her advantage. Her actions, as well as those of several Liberated Africans during the 1820s and the 1830s, which are being illustrated, clearly show that they were capable of human agency.

## 2. The Liberated Africans on Charles Telfair's Bel Ombre Sugar Estate

Charles Telfair was a British planter, slave-owner, who formed part of Governor Farquhar's inner circle. He employed the greatest number of Government apprentices in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Mauritius during the slavery era. Therefore, it is not surprising that in March 1827, the Commissioners of the Eastern Inquiry Commission requested P. Salter, the Acting Collector of Customs, to draw up a detailed list of all Prize Negroes or Liberated Africans who were apprentices to Telfair. It showed that a total of 91 Liberated Africans, or 78 males and 13 females, had been apprenticed to the British planter ever since 1814.<sup>216</sup>

Barely three years after arriving in Mauritius, Telfair had only one male apprentice, namely Henry Chaloupe. In 1818, when he purchased Bel Ombre estate, along with his business associates, there were 40 apprentices, 35 males and 5 females in his service. However, during the course of the same year, 14 apprentices died, 12 males and 2 females. Furthermore, with the exception of Henry Chaloupe, a time-expired Liberated African of Malagasy origin, Damihiti, a male apprentice, who was indentured in October 1814, was the longest serving Liberated African who was assigned to Telfair. By October 1828, Damihiti's apprenticeship was scheduled to come to an end and he continued to work for Telfair just like Henry Chaloupe.

Telfair had accepted apprentices whose masters had rejected them, passed away and left the colony. Many of his government apprentices were Prize Negroes who were sent to him within a month after having been captured on slave ships and had landed in Mauritius. In August 1816, six Prize Negroes, Koutouvoula, Yadalou, Stchamlibé, Ramême, Diamarra, and Routorizaff, from the captured slave vessel *Creole* were assigned to him. During the following month, five Liberated Africans, Scezoure, Ferevanani, Mandimbe, Moica, and Songale, who were seized on the slave ship the *Gustave* were sent as apprentices to Bel Ombre.<sup>217</sup>

Between 1827 and 1836, there were several Liberated Africans who still working on the properties of Charles Telfair. In September 1833, the Collector of Customs informed the Colonial Secretary:

*"I have received an apprenticeship from Mr. Chs Telfair, requesting that the four apprentices 'Simons, Simon' 'Pierre par Berand', 'Virgine Hecbezar' with her three children Babit Constant & Celine & Clementine Sauyez' with her three children, 'Joseph, Jean Charles & Anne Marie', may on account of this good conduct receive this entire freedom.*

*The apprenticeship of the 'Simons, Simon' expired 4<sup>th</sup> February 1831, that of Pierre par on this 4<sup>th</sup> October 1829, that of Virgine on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1829 & that of*

*Clementine on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1831, and as it is stated that they are capable of earning an honest livelihood without becoming a burthen to the Community, I humbly submit that Mr. Telfair's request be granted.*"<sup>218</sup>

In 1832, the Collector of Customs made several requests to Charles Telfair to pay up the arrears which were owed to the Apprentice Fund for the wages of several semi-skilled and skilled artisans Liberated Africans who worked for him. In January 1833, Colonel Draper, the Acting Collector of Customs, asked Governor Nicolay to instruct Mr. Laborde, the Government Advocate, to lodge a case in court against Mr. Telfair in order to collect more than 940 £ in arrears which were still owed to the Apprentice Fund.<sup>219</sup>

### 3. The Story of Henry Chaloupe

Henry Chaloupe was a Liberated African of Malagasy origin. On 6<sup>th</sup> June 1810, he was captured together with 2 Malagasy slaves on the vessel the *Amazon* by a ship of the British Royal Navy and soon after, he landed on the island of Bourbon.<sup>220</sup> On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1811, he was apprenticed to Charles Telfair in Réunion Island.<sup>221</sup> He did not know how to read and write and knew only the language of his country specifically the language spoke by the Merina in Central Madagascar. Chaloupe was educated for several months by Abbé Colin, the Chief Catholic Priest of Bourbon. He able to learn to read and write and do basic Maths. He was baptized and became a Christian and was taught to read the Bible. During the final weeks of 1811, he was brought to Mauritius and worked at the residence of Charles Telfair as his personal servant in Port Louis.

In 1814, he was sent to work on Bois Chéri Sugar Estate where he saved enough money to purchase the freedom of Françoise, a Malagasy slave woman. She also became a Christian and got married to Henry and soon after, gave him a daughter. Françoise was also employed as a housemaid by Telfair. Unfortunately, she passed away in 1818 and barely a year later, Henry Chaloupe purchased the freedom of Arsenne, another Malagasy slave woman, who became a Christian and got married to him. In 1829, Henry was still married to her and they had several children. The first child of Henry was also baptized as a Christian and was educated at Bel Ombre Sugar Estate.

In 1819, Chaloupe was moved from the estate of Bois Chéri to Bel Ombre Sugar Estate which had recently been purchased by Telfair and some of his close associates. Telfair employed him as an 'économé' or a junior administrator and gave him a pay increase. Henry was again relocated to Beau Manguier Sugar Estate where by the late 1820s, he became 'chef sucrier', in charge of sugar production and supervised a large number of slaves. He also owned his own house as well as a slave. He earned a salary of around £60 per year and enjoyed other privileges. On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1825, his 14-year period of apprenticeship came to an end and Telfair requested the Collector of Customs to give him his Act of Freedom. However, four years later, in 1829, Henry Chaloupe was still working for Charles Telfair as the head of sugar production at Beau Manguier. It becomes evident that out of all the Liberated Africans who were landed and apprenticed in Mauritius, Henry Chaloupe's story is the most successful account of a Liberated African who achieved social mobility and social integration in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Mauritius during the slavery era.

### 3. The Case-Study of Céleste Madeline

In August 1838, Céleste Madeline, a Malagasy woman, showed up at the office of the Collector of Customs and claimed that she was a time-expired Government apprentice who was illegally being held in servitude by Mr. Vilbro, a French trader in Port Louis. Furthermore, Céleste claimed that she had been brought as a child slave to Mauritius in 1817, as a Liberated African, because her ship the *Joséphine* was captured off the coast of Madagascar by a British naval cruiser and its slave cargo was landed at Port Louis. She also claimed that she was ill-treated by Mr. Vilbro and his wife and she wanted to obtain her freedom through legal means.

The following day, Céleste returned with four time-expired apprentices of Malagasy origin, Marianne Rassal, Sophie Malabar, Pelagie Zebangh, and Saundar Essanhat who were able to confirm her story. After all, these four individuals testified that they had first met her on the slave ship called *Joséphine* more than 21 years before. However, Céleste Madeline was then called Artzam, a Malagasy of Hova origin. After hearing these testimonies, Cunningham also became convinced that Céleste Madeline was Artzam.

Without losing a moment, the Collector examined his records and found that Artzam was in fact a child of 11 years who had been listed as being one of the slaves on the *Joséphine*. In addition, the record stated that the slave child called Artzam was dead. However, Cunningham also reported: 'The age and marks borne by this woman [Céleste] appear to correspond with those of the record...'. It became increasingly evident that Céleste was Artzam and that she had lived in Mauritius in a state of servitude for more than 21 years. While her case was being examined, she was allowed to stay at the *Bagne* in Port Louis. Barely a week after her first visit to the office of the Collector of Customs, Céleste also informed Mr. Cunningham that Vilbro still held her son, Adolphe, who was 9 years old and she feared for his well-being.

On behalf of this unfortunate time-expired Government apprentice, the Collector of Customs was able to secure custody of Adolphe and reunite him with his mother at the *Bagne*. In addition, more than three months later, thanks again to the intervention of Mr. Cunningham and also of Mr. Chignard, the Clerk of the Customs Office, Céleste was able to obtain her freedom and that of her son. It was also discovered that only a few weeks after being landed, she was apprenticed to Mr. Vilbro who, in 1818, declared to the Collector of Customs that she was dead. Unfortunately Vilbro's claim was never investigated. The case of Céleste is a rare one in which a Mauritian Liberated African woman was able to obtain her freedom, secure custody of her son, get justice for her suffering, and even receive a financial compensation from her former master.<sup>222</sup>

#### 4. The Liberated African Maroons

Between January 1820 and November 1826, around 1,357 Liberated Africans marooned. There were 1,085 males (or 80%) and 272 females (or 20%).<sup>223</sup> In 1820, 138 Government apprentices, 109 males and 29 females, escaped from their masters and mistresses and by 1825, this figure rose to 256 on 221 males and 35 females. However, in 1826, due to sharp decline in the number of Government apprentices, between January and November of that same year, only 162 ran away. In all, during this period, 862 or 64 % all the Prize Negroes who ran away were captured, while 36% remained uncaught. In all, there were 679 males and 183 female maroon apprentices who remained at large, with the males representing almost 79% and the females 21%. In 1820, 67 Liberated Africans were captured by the anti-maroon detachments, and this figure increased four years later to 195 only to decline sharply to 90 in 1826. Thus, there was a correlation between the decline in the number of Liberated Africans who marooned and those who remained uncaught.

Many of the maroon Liberated Africans who were caught in Port Louis and in the rural districts were sent to the *Bagne*. According to the *Bagne Book*, between 1828 and 1833, annually a few dozen Prize Negroes were incarcerated there until their masters came to fetch them, such as in the case of Maurice. He was a Liberated African in the service of Mr. Campbell who was sent to the *Bagne* on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1834. Maurice was claimed the same day by his employer.<sup>224</sup>

The Liberated Africans represented one of the African and Malagasy groups in Mauritius that were not 'creolised' or enslaved. How far, and for how long, they were able to retain their African and Malagasy identities remains to be further researched. The public did not distinguish between slaves and Liberated Africans. John Finiss, the Chief Commissary of Police, wrote: 'Many of the inhabitants do not in their declarations distinguish between slaves and Prize Negroes.'<sup>225</sup> Employers as well saw them as nothing more than a source of cheap labour, just like their slaves, which had to be exploited to the maximum in a colony which was always plagued by labour shortages. The Commissioners of Eastern Enquiry took a special interest in the condition of the Liberated Africans and in their report, the Commissioners concluded that the Prize Negroes were treated no better and, in some cases, even worse off than the slaves.<sup>226</sup> Barker has concluded that 'It is not impossible that the planters concerned treated this casual labour force more harshly than the slaves they actually owned. What is certain is that in the Farquhar years they were operating free from any external humanitarian supervision or control.'<sup>227</sup> Maroonage was the only escape from this new form of servitude called apprenticeship.

During the late 1820s and early 1830s, there were 9 Liberated Africans, 7 Malagasies and 2 Mozambicans, who were reported as having marooned in Moka District. One among them was L'Amour, a young male Liberated African in the service of Charles Telfair. He was reported as having marooned on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1828. There is evidence from the archival record that he was recaptured and returned to Telfair.<sup>228</sup>

**Figure 30: Details of 9 Maroon Government Apprentices  
in Moka District 1828 - 1831**

Year	No. & Register No.	Names of Apprentices	Caste	Dates of Escape	Dates of Declarations	Dates of Capture
Nov 1828	1 (No.155)	Sage	Malgassy	Nov 12	Nov 20	
Dec 1828	2 (No.172)	L'amour	Malgassy	Dec 25	Dec 25	
Feb 1829	3 (No.16)	Victor	Malgassy	Feb 2	Feb 5	
Mar 1829	4 (No.30)	Février	Mozambica	Mar 12	Mar 16	
May 1829	5 (No.55)	Licie Hurry & Son enfant	Malgassy	May 13	May 15	
Aug 1829	6 (No.75)	Lundi	Malgassy	Aug 24	Aug 26	
Sept 1829	7 (No.82)	Melani	Malgassy	Sept 15	Sept 22	
Aug 1830	11 (No.103)	Songor	Mozambica	Aug 30	Aug 31	
Avril 1831	15 (No.29)	Diamas	Malgassy	Mar 20	Apr 2	Apr 1
Total	Nine Liberated Africans					

Source: Compiled from MNA/IA 40, Registre des Marronages de Moka, 1826-1833

### 5. The Story of Fritz, the Liberated African Maroon Leader

*"This man struck terror among the residents in the district of Savanne to such an extent that it became impossible to allow a black slave to go on an errand without an armed guard. Vandalism and criminal acts have decreased sharply with the arrest of this notorious government apprentice."*

(Observations of M. Virieux, Procureur-General, at the trial of Fritz and his companions at the Supreme Court in Port Louis in December 1825.)<sup>229</sup>

On 21 June 1825, Fritz, a 30-year-old maroon Government apprentice of Mozambican origin, was captured along with four other maroons by Edouard Vinay, a Police Officer, and a special maroon catching unit on Telfair's Bel Ombre Sugar Estate. Fritz was a former apprentice of Désiré Carosin and the leader of a small, but notorious, maroon band in the District of Savanne. He had been a maroon for more than two years and was always armed with a big stick and knife. His five followers were Lazare, a slave who belonged to Charles Telfair, Cotte, Jérôme and Hector, and Edmond.

Between January 1824 and June 1825, Fritz and his gang operated mostly in the Western part of the Savanne District, notably near Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, Baron d'Unienville's estate, Ruisseau des Créoles, and Montagne des Signaux de la Savanne. They were responsible for a number of thefts and numerous nocturnal raids on several sugar estates. Their diet consisted of beef, 'tandrac', eels, shrimps etc. According to local Colonial Officials, during one and a half years, they spread terror among the residents in the Western part of the Savanne District.<sup>230</sup>

In April 1825, in order to capture Fritz and his gang, a special maroon-catching task force was set up by Governor Sir Lowry Cole. It consisted of Edouard Vinay, a Police Officer, and Sieur François Le Cordier, leader of a maroon-catching unit in the Savanne, and ten free black maroon catchers. For a period of two months, they searched for Fritz and his followers, until they were finally captured in June of the same year at Bel Ombre. When cornered by the maroon catchers, Fritz put up a very stiff resistance which caused one of the members of the detachment to shoot him, while his followers surrendered without a fight. During his lengthy trial, Fritz and his men were incarcerated at the Civil Prisons on Government Street next to the Courts of Justice in Port Louis. He was accused of murdering a slave of Mr. Carosin, attempting to kill three other slaves, the kidnapping and the rape of a young female slave, armed resistance during his arrest, theft with violence, carrying out raids on plantations, and cattle theft.

In December 1825, Fritz and his former followers were condemned to death. On 14<sup>th</sup> January 1826, his testament was recorded by the Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court in the presence of *Procureur*

*Général* Virieux and a French Catholic priest. He confessed that he was guilty of most of the charges brought against him, except for the one count of murder and the three counts of attempted murder. Two days later, Fritz and his followers were executed in the yard of the Civil Prisons next to the present-day Supreme Court. In fact, Fritz, the Liberated African, was the last great maroon leader in colonial Mauritius.<sup>231</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In August 1827, P. Salter, the Acting Collector of Customs, reported that there were only 1,783 Liberated Africans still serving their masters/mistresses and working in Government Departments. Only a few Liberated Africans had completed their indenture contracts. The overwhelming majority of the Liberated Africans were still in a state of servitude less than a decade before the abolition of slavery in Mauritius.<sup>232</sup> In 1829, in their report on the slave trade to Mauritius, the Commissioners of the Eastern Inquiry Commission observed: 'That the majority of the negroes who are captured in slave ships would be desirous of returning to their country is probable.'<sup>233</sup>

According to the Return on Liberated Africans which was submitted by P.Salter, the Acting Collector of Customs, 5 Liberated Africans, 3 males and 2 females had completed their 14-year period of indenture, were given their Acts of Freedom and returned to their countries of origin. At the same time, between 1820 and 1827, there were 34 British colonial and military officials and some Franco-Mauritian planters who took around 60 Liberated Africans, who served them, to different overseas destinations such as England, India and the Cape Colony with the permission of the Collector of Customs.<sup>234</sup>

Figure 31

### Liberated Africans and their Employers who left British Mauritius between 1820 and 1827

Number	Name of Master/Mistress	Observations
1	Mr. Baron D'Unienville	Accompanied his master to England.
2	Col. G. A. Barry, Chief Secretary to the British Government	One male accompanied his master to England.
3	Mr. E. Byam	Two males accompanied his master to England.
4	Colonel Conyers of the 8 <sup>th</sup> Regiment	One male accompanied his master to England.
5	Colonel Dalrymple	One male accompanied his master to England.
6	Colonel Dumaresq	Accompanied his master to New South Wales.
7	His Excellency Sir Robert T. Farquhar, Governor of British Mauritius and its Dependencies	Two males accompanied Sir R. Farquhar to England; another one sent to Madagascar to teach the use of the plough. The fourth one unaccounted for and supposed to have been stolen.
8	British Government	The ten men unaccounted for were on board the colonial brig <i>Wizard</i> or <i>H.M.S Menai</i> on a voyage to Zanzibar and did not return since that time.
9	Countess of Holmer	Accompanied his mistress to England.
10	Mr. J. Lautier	Five males accompanied their masters to India as sailors on the Schooner <i>Courrier</i>

(Source: Compiled from MNA/ID 2/13, 'Return of the Number of Negroes who have been Apprenticed at the Mauritius and its Dependencies and the Names of the Persons to whom apprenticed each year since the capture and now remaining 1813-1826')

In February 1839, the Collector of Customs, Cunningham mentioned:

*"In 1828, in consequence of the letters of the Colonial Secretary dated the 19<sup>th</sup> March of that year [1828] and 12<sup>th</sup> of the preceding April [1827], a practice of renewing or prolonging the indentures of condemned had been adopted here."*

It is evident that between April 1827 and September 1828, the local British Colonial Government, under Governor Sir Lowry Cole, took new measures such as prolonging the indenture of the Government apprentices by seven years, established new monthly wage rates for them, and set up an 'Apprentice Fund.'<sup>33235</sup> In June 1833, the Collector of Customs informed the Governor that there were 1,388 apprentices with 367 children of apprentices who had passed away who were still under his authority.<sup>236</sup> This meant that between 1827 and 1833, or over a period of six years, there was a decrease from 1,783 to only 1,388 Liberated Africans still under contract or under the responsibility of the Customs Department.

However, between 1833 and 1839, there were dozens of Liberated Africans who had already completed their period of indenture. As a result, their employers, either private employers or the Heads of Government Departments, requested the Collector of Customs to give them their Acts of Freedom. They were seen as having successfully completed their training, and as capable of earning a living; they were practicing Christians, and some were even married and had children. In several instances, there were small groups of Government apprentices whom the employers were requested to free.

For his part, the Collector of Customs agreed most of the time with the requests and recommended the names of the Liberated Africans to the Governor through the Colonial Secretary. The Collector had to certify that the Government apprentices were fit for freedom. Then, it was up to the Governor to give his approval, which he usually did, and it was only then that the Liberated African was given his or her 'Act of Freedom' by the Collector of Customs. It is important to note that some of those who received their freedom were Liberated African women who had several children.<sup>237</sup>

In August 1833, there were several Liberated African women, such as Celine Rassoire and her six children, Sammah Chamouniah and her seven children, and Caroline Sampianada and her five children who obtained their freedom. They showed up at the Customs Department and asked to be freed because they were time-expired Liberated Africans or Government apprentices. Within several days, after obtaining Governor Nicolay's approval, George Cunningham, the Collector of Customs, gave them their 'Acts of Freedom' and noted that they were 'of good character, industrious and capable of earning a livelihood for themselves and their children'. These case-studies remind us of the story of Celestine Hecate who managed to secure her Act of Freedom during the course of the same month.

During the course of the same month, the marriages of several Liberated Africans, who were completing their period of indenture, were celebrated with the approval of the Governor and Collector of Customs. Thus, Phillis got married to Susannah, Lindor to Betsey, Alexander to Saminah, Azor to Celine, Bell to Caroline and Noah to Salam. It should also be noted that the indenture contracts of many of these Liberated Africans came to an end in 1829 and 1830. Unfortunately, they had to wait 3 to 4 more years before they obtained their Acts of Freedom from the Collector of Customs, and these time-expired Liberated Africans were still being allocated to other employers and Government Departments by the Customs Department. In August 1833, Collector Cunningham submitted the names of several time-expired Liberated Africans who had waited several years for their 'Acts of Freedom' to be issued to them such as:

*"Original apprenticeship expired 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 1829*

*Bell Cooralal*

*Azor Corpusira*

*Gheadere Eative*

*Pommade Napoomah*

*Jolicour Onamacoal*

*Original apprenticeship expired 12 Oct. 1829*

*Lafleur Rasar (female)*

*Celine Rapoire with her children Eliya, Anatole, Paul, Thome, Julien and Clarlotte*

*Saminah Chamouniab with her children Eugène, Marie, Augustin, Henry Hyandrier, Adolphe and Hphonsere*

*Original apprenticeship expired 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec. 1830*

*Noal Routte*

*Peter Routouzaffe*

*Jamer Ramasse*

*Adam Riendarffe*

*Job Lieyezaffe*

*Alexander Shudde*

*Milord Aadallah*

*Original apprenticeship expired 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 1830*

*Claroline Sampianave with her children Maria, Rose, Sylvestre, Marie Janne, James and Babelle*<sup>36</sup>

Gradually, during the 1830s, there were several Liberated African men and women who had completed their indenture contracts and were able to earn a living as skilled and semi-skilled workers. At the same time as they were securing their freedom and that of their children, they got married and secured their family ties. As the records of the Office of the Customs Department clearly revealed, some of the time-expired Liberated African men and women had become productive members, of society, and they managed to carve out a place for themselves in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Mauritian colonial society.

# EDUCATION AND MOBILITY

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## 1. BEGINNINGS AND DEVELOPMENTS TILL 1870S

In the colonial lexicon, planters, as well as the colonial authorities, depicted the Indian immigrant labourers as being ‘from the lowest and most ignorant classes of their countrymen who at present appear to be beyond the reach of the civilising and humanising influences of religion and education’.<sup>238</sup> Despite this awareness about the lack of education among the immigrants, the need to provide education to the labourers and their children did not fit into the scheme of things for planters, neither did it have the attention from the administrators in the first few decades because, for Mauritian authorities, Indian indentured labourers were primarily ‘transient sojourners’ who had come to Mauritius as labourers to work on plantations and would eventually return to their homelands. Therefore, there was no logic or requirement to provide them education. The more fundamental reason for this slackness towards providing education was the inherent logic of capitalist production system which does not permit any investment for which there was no material return. Since performing menial labour in the cane fields did not require any specific knowledge, there was no motivation for planters to invest resources in making arrangements for education of immigrant labourers or their children. Even the missionaries, who were considered to be very active in providing education to the underprivileged classes, somehow did not get involved in the ‘mission’ of educating the Indian immigrants. Superintendent of Schools, R. H. Walsh noted this inaction of missionaries in 1859 for which he put blame on ignorance of missionaries in languages spoken by the Indian immigrants,

*“[...] I am not aware of any efforts having been made on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church for the instruction of the Indians. None of their clergy in Mauritius, I am informed, are acquainted with any of the Indian languages [...]”*<sup>239</sup>

Despite this general lackadaisical attitude, colonial authorities at times put across the idea of educating the children of labouring classes, although there were no efforts towards its realisation, and it remained at the levels of rhetoric and individual opinion. Immediately after the commencement of indentured immigration from India, when the deplorable conditions of Indian immigrants attracted severe condemnation for the system from all quarters, Governor Nicolay proposed to establish a government controlled education system to spread education, especially among the children of labourers,

*“On the subject of Public Schools, I have lately laid before you some propositions [...] and if they should be adopted, I trust that there will at length be established throughout the colony a general system of schools, under the Control of Government, an object which I consider to be essential to the successful spread of education, specially among the children of labouring classes.”*<sup>240</sup>

Nicolay made this proposition in 1839; yet no efforts were made to provide education to the children of Indian immigrants till the 1850s. The first proposal for a comprehensive education system came from Bishop Chapman who visited Mauritius from Ceylon in 1850. He proposed that an annual grant-in-aid be provided by the Government and there should be an increase in the number of Protestant clergy, ‘especially [...] for planning and assisting in the instruction of the immigrant population’<sup>241</sup> The matter of providing education to the Indian immigrants caught the attention of the Mauritian Government with the arrival of Higginson as Governor in January 1851. When the Committee of the Mauritius Church Association proposed to set up a school in Port-Louis for elementary education in English and Tamil and to train teachers to teach in schools to be opened, with the help of Reverend Hardy who was engaged in providing education to the children of labouring classes in South India, Higginson opined that the proposal should not be neglected, and he was in favour of trying it out. Subsequently, with a grant of £ 200, an experimental school was started for the children of Indian immigrants in the Savanne district. An Indian school teacher was appointed to run this school and the medium was the vernacular. This experiment was not a success and had to be abandoned after few months because educating their children was not on the minds of the immigrant labourers and very few children came to attend.<sup>242</sup> However, another observer ascribes the possible reasons for the lack of attendance to the inability of Indian teachers who ‘had no experience in education’.<sup>243</sup>

Despite this failure of his initial experiment, Higginson was not deterred and in 1854, came the famous Minute of Higginson on education which was the foremost document on the education of Indian immigrants in Mauritius, covering almost all its aspects. In this Minute he announced that,

*“Time has arrived, when some systematic attempts should be made, to extend the blessings of at least the rudiments of Education and of Moral training to the children of our labouring classes - and the success of which would unquestionably prove alike beneficial to themselves, to their employers, and to the community at large.”*<sup>244</sup>

Higginson was trying to set up an educational system for the immigrants but he was aware of the ‘obstacles’ in making it a reality, which he attributed primarily to the background of the ‘uncivilised’ immigrants and their scattered pattern of settlement in Mauritius:

*“When we call to mind the class of men from which our Indian immigrants are chiefly recruited - the social position which they occupy here - their transitory residence - their ignorance of the English language and the different dialects spoken by them - their apprehensions of proselytism so easily alarmed - the surface over which they are scattered - and the absence of those civilising influences which, under a less exceptional state of Society, might be exercised over them - it will be obvious to all, that the obstacles to be overcome by the Government in maturing and introducing any general or comprehensive system for importing even the most elementary introduction to the Indian population are no light of ordinary character.”*<sup>245</sup>

He was well aware of the fact that reluctance would emanate from both the concerned parties - labourers as well as the planters. Since most of the children of immigrant labourers began to work on the plantations at an early age, a situation which not only contributed to the earning of their families, but also provided a relatively cheap labour to the planters (children were being paid less wages than adults), the reluctance would obviously come from both the parties, since sending the children to school would mean the sacrifice of immediate gains.<sup>246</sup> Despite these apprehensions, he was optimistic that the Government, which possessed the power and the means for moral and social advancement, would be able to succeed in setting up a popular education system for the immigrant population of the island.

For Higginson, the solution lay in making the education compulsory but without resorting to coercion. The main points of Higginson’s proposal to the Council were:

1. Schools should be opened in the most convenient localities for the use of one, two, or more Estates as the case may be;
2. As the medium of education, mother tongue could not be excluded and therefore education should be given in English and one vernacular language;
3. The teacher’s salary and school books should be defrayed from a fund to be raised by a trifling deduction from the labourers’ wages;
4. Planters were to provide ‘gratuitously suitable accommodation for the schools and for the residence of teachers’;
5. To meet the requirements of qualified teachers, initially some teachers were to be introduced from India but later a Normal School would be set up in Port-Louis at Government expenses to train teachers, proficient in English and Indian languages.<sup>247</sup>

The bottom line of Higginson’s proposal was the setting up of exclusive Indian Schools and financing it through a cut from the wages of immigrants. C. Kalla finds this proposal inadequate and ‘a feeler to gauge the reactions of the *sugarocrats*’ because ‘it did not make any mention of the curriculum or of religious instruction’, and ‘no mention was made of evaluation in the form of inspection.’<sup>248</sup> There had been no initiative for the education of Indian immigrants’ children by the time Higginson verbalised his proposals for the education of immigrant population, and the larger strategic concern for him was that whether the immigrants’ children should be included in the existing system of

schooling or a separate system in their familiar media needed be started; and if a new system was to be started what would be the logistic arrangements? The larger issue Higginson had to deal with was to choose a system and medium of schooling, and once these choices had been made, the curriculum and evaluation would have been obviously set forth by the administrators.

Higginson's proposal was submitted to a Special Committee of the Council of Government, which deferred the matter for more than a year before finally submitting its comments in May 1855. While agreeing with Higginson's concern for the need of education for the children of immigrants, the special committee dissented on the issue of separate Indian schools in the vernacular medium because it opined that an exclusive education system would not only prevent the assimilation of Indian immigrants with the Creole population and a permanent, cohesive settlement of the immigrants in Mauritius, but would be a sign of a discrimination against the Creole population. Reflecting the dominance of planters in the Special Committee, it wanted education to be more functional for the sugar industry rather than training people for other vocations - curriculum should be designed to train the labourers for 'the cultivation of the soil and ruder mechanical arts'.<sup>249</sup> The Report of Special Committee signalled the planters' obvious agenda behind supporting the education of the children of immigrant labourers in unambiguous terms - they wanted their dictates to be obeyed in deciding the essentials of the education system and use it as a means to further the interests of the sugar industry.

Upon receiving the Report of the Special Committee, the Colonial Office gave its authorization to Governor Higginson to go ahead with his proposal of compulsory education but with a cautious note about not infringing upon the 'prejudices' of the coolies.<sup>250</sup> Despite the disagreement of the Special Committee, Governor Higginson reiterated his preference for setting up separate schools for the children of immigrant population with vernacular medium of instructions. He proposed to augment the number of schools in each locality where a sufficient number of children could be found and on his initiative, two Indian schools were started in Port-Louis.<sup>251</sup> To explicate the reasons for his choice, he noted in the minute dated 12<sup>th</sup> November 1856,

*"Indian parents prefer their children being instructed in language spoken and best understood by themselves...they can very rarely be induced to send their children to the Government Schools at present constituted; whilst they do not manifest the same reluctance to send them to the few Indian Schools that have yet been attempted".*<sup>252</sup>

He intended to introduce the compulsory education because 'education can not be forced except by making it compulsory' and had the Compulsory Education Ordinance approved by the Council in 1857. This Ordinance made it compulsory for all the boys between six to ten years to attend the school if they resided within 1 ½ miles of the school. There was a £ 5 fine for restricting children from going to school<sup>253</sup> but unfortunately the medium of instruction, against the wishes of Higginson, was decided as French, which eventually earned the antagonism of the Indian Government. The Compulsory Education Ordinance could not ultimately take off because of the disapproval of the Government of India which objected to imposing compulsory education on the Indian population in the French medium on the grounds that it did not include their mother tongue and would lead to *creolisation* of Indian population.<sup>254</sup> According to Hugh Tinker, a noted scholar of the indenture system, this disapproval from Indian government came because of the treatment it expected for the Indian labour Diaspora in their adopted lands. Tinker argues that the Indian Government wanted the immigrants not to be assimilated, but to be treated as 'separate and unequal',<sup>255</sup> and therefore, it objected to the French as the medium of education because it would lead to the assimilation of the Indian Community with the Creole population. Whatever the logical push had been behind this objection, the Indian Government stalled the first attempts to introduce compulsory education for the Indian immigrants in Mauritius by this detrimental step, and it took more than two decades to recover from this and set forth a comprehensive education system for the Indian immigrants' children. The inadequate conditions of education among the immigrant population can be discerned from the relatively miniscule number of Indian children attending schools in the 1860s when the size of Indian labour Diaspora was more than two hundred thousands:

Table 1: Number of Children from Indian Community in Government Schools

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Children</i>
1864	822
1865	1169
1866	1729
1867	1287

Source: ARPI, 1868.

The next spurt in the development of education came in the post-Royal Commission era but, before going into that, we shall discuss the underlying motives of colonial administrators and planters efforts for promoting the education among Indian immigrants. By the middle of 1850s, the Indian labour Diaspora had acquired a numerically prominent presence in Mauritius with a sizeable number of young children and the colonial authorities began to call for rescuing these children from ‘stalid ignorance’<sup>256</sup> and ‘elevate their moral and social conditions’<sup>257</sup>. But did these benevolent civilisational intentions really induce the administrators like Higginson to take so keen an interest in promoting education or there were more matter-of-fact reasons behind it? Racial stereotyping of the Indian immigrants continued to be reflected in Higginson’s minutes on education where he traced the absence of civilising influences among them. The colonial authorities, as well as planters, portrayed these ignorant immigrants as undisciplined, destitute and a potential source of disorder and crime in the society, and they found educating these uncivilised characters to be only way out because education was supposed to make the Indian children ‘docile and useful subjects’.<sup>258</sup> Higginson echoed the same tune,

*“Knowledge is the surest guarantee of social order - as ignorance is the chief source of crime and immorality”.*<sup>259</sup>

There was a very strong pejorative undertone in the purpose of educating the children of immigrants. They were being educated, not for their overall growth, but to learn their obligations and limitations as servants. This was the rationale of the moral training programme of the Indian Reformatory School, which was set up in 1860 to restore vagrant children of immigrant population. The moral training programme was to teach these ‘vagrant children’

*“[...] the first principles of religion, the moral obligation of servants towards their masters [...] and those portions of the law relating to servants and masters, and of the criminal code with which it would be most useful for them to be acquainted”.*<sup>260</sup>

Those revelations of the colonial promoters of education make it clear that their innate motive for promoting education among the Indian immigrants was essentially based on the racist binary division of civilised/ barbaric where illiterate immigrant labourers were seen as barbaric and possible threats to the ‘civilised order of plantations’. Therefore, they were to be educated to dissuade them from turning towards the anti social disruptive ways of life. And it was not at all aimed at improving their general conditions by genuinely educating them.

After Higginson’s initial efforts, only occasional exertions were made during the 1860s and early 1870s. In 1866, ten new schools were opened<sup>261</sup>, but the problem of finding trained teachers in vernacular media again came in the way of extending the education system. A Superintendent of Government Schools noted, in his report for 1867, that ‘the greatest difficulty is experienced in finding men qualified to teach the Indian dialects, especially those which are spoken in Bengal’. His suggestion to solve this crisis was to set up a Normal School to train teachers for other schools, while the Protector opined that inviting teachers from India would be more pragmatic,

*“the object would be best attained by introducing school masters from India. While these would probably be better qualified to teach, they would also, through the influence of caste, be more likely to enlist the sympathies of the classes whence the children have to be attracted”.*<sup>262</sup>

This administrative uncertainty over the separation of schools for the different communities in Mauritius and the medium of education for the children of Indian Diaspora continued to encumber

the spread of education among the Indian immigrant community. Geoghegan reported in 1870s that 'education does not appear to be much attended to.'<sup>263</sup>

However, one significant attainment in the field of education during this period was the setting up of Grant-in-Aid school system which aimed at providing financial assistance to the non-Government schools. In later years, this system opened up the possibilities of setting up schools on the plantations because it reduced the financial burden on planters in running schools for the children of labourers which they were most hesitant to do, for its 'non-productive' implications. Adolphe de Plevitz, who was trying to secure a fair treatment for the immigrant labourers while maintaining a school on his estate for the children of Indian immigrants, was very much concerned with their education as well because he envisaged education as a vehicle of socio-economic emancipation and strongly believed that education would give the children the opportunity of improving themselves so as to be able to cope in their adult life in Mauritius.<sup>264</sup> He raised the issue of inadequate educational arrangements for the immigrant labourers on estates in the press and before the Royal Commission. He underlined the lackadaisical attitude of the Colonial Government which had not taken a single legislative initiative to promote education among the children of immigrant labourers and a lack of qualified teachers for the Indian schools.<sup>265</sup> The derisory arrangements of education for the children of Indian labour Diaspora were validated by the Royal Commission also. Royal Commissioners reported that 'the education was deplorably low among all classes of Indian population' and out of nearly 40,000 Indian population between the age of five and fourteen years, not more than one thousand were attending schools, and even among this infinitesimal number of school going children, the proportion of girls was negligible.<sup>266</sup> In spite of expressing serious concerns over the deplorable condition of education for the immigrant children, Royal Commission did not make any concrete suggestions for the setting up of a comprehensive education system. At the level of a vague suggestion, it recommended for 'some system of compulsory education' for the children up to ten years of age.<sup>267</sup>

## 2. DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN EDUCATION, DEBATES ON THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AND LANGUAGES TAUGHT

The steady development of 'Indian education' in Mauritius began only after the arrival of Arthur Phayre as Governor in 1874. Phayre's concerns were similar to Higginson - saving the Indian children from growing up as destitute.<sup>268</sup> However, he was clearer in his priorities and more in command of the situation than Higginson had been, and therefore he could attain certain landmarks in establishing an educational system for the children of Indian diaspora. The need for educating the children of immigrants was realised by colonial officials who witnessed the permanency in their settlement patterns. Those officials could visualise the growing prominence of Indian Diaspora in the economic realm of the island because of the large scale land acquisitions by the diasporic community. The Procureur Général suggested for government intervention in the education for immigrants, because he could envisage them as 'the future Lords and Masters of the land in Mauritius'.<sup>269</sup> In Phayre's opinion, English education was not of much use for the children of immigrant community, and he proposed languages spoken by the immigrants as the medium of education. In Phayre's scheme of education in vernacular medium, the Superintendent of Schools, Browne, noted his disagreement and proposed a two language system - English as the main language, and Tamil or Hindi as secondary language. He reiterated the scarcity of qualified teachers as the main obstacle for adopting the vernacular medium as the primary language of education. However, Phayre remained unperturbed and firmly decided to go ahead with his proposal of setting up of separate schools for immigrants' children in their own languages, especially Hindi and Tamil.

The medium of instruction for the Indian population remained one of the principal concerns in the domain of education throughout the colonial period and its consequences continue to sway the education system of post-colonial Mauritius. The Government of India consistently opposed adopting French and Creole as media of instruction for the children of Indian immigrants out of apprehension of their 'creolisation'.<sup>270</sup> The Government of Mauritius was not in favour of including Indian vernacular languages. The main argument for insisting on creole was the familiarity of Indian children (the majority of whom were born in Mauritius) with the Creole patois, and they were supposed to live their lives in Mauritius. Another reason for the opposition was the high expenditure in obtaining teachers from India to teach in vernacular mediums.

However, contrary to general perceptions, the Indian community was averse to sending their children to schools because their children were not taught in their native medium, there is one report which argues the other way. Muir Mackenzie reports that:

*“there is no evidence [...] that the Indian refrains from sending his child to school because the vernacular is not taught there”.*<sup>271</sup>

The main problem, according to Muir Mackenzie, was the teaching of two foreign languages - English and French, and therefore he recommended learning one language - preferably English but ultimately this was to be decided by the parents. For him the language mattered least as long as the children could be taught with practical knowledge, and therefore he argued for treating the language question according to the practical efficiency.

*“[...] it seems obvious that education in two languages must be of less practical use to the Indian than education in one [...] Indian will suffer in the ciphering and other practical subjects by being obliged to devote a considerable portion of his time to the acquisition of the second language”.*<sup>272</sup>

Similar concerns regarding the learning of multiple languages and its detrimental effects on general education levels of the Indian community was noted by Manilal Doctor in his deposition to the Royal Commission of 1909. He argued for English as the main language of learning at secondary level, and that second language had be optional between French or an Indian language.<sup>273</sup>

## 2.1 SCHOOLS IN INDIAN LANGUAGES

On Phayre’s insistence, the Education Committee finally assented to open the schools in immigrants’ languages on an experimental basis. To start with, three schools were opened in the Grand Port area under the supervision of Reverend Wright, which were later increased to five. These schools were in *Beau Vallon* (Hindi), *Plaisance* (Hindi), *St. Hubert* (Hindi), *Mare Chicose* (Hindi, Tamil and Marathi) and *Riche en Eau* (Hindi). Phayre’s ardent preference for vernacular schools over the Government schools led to consistent incongruity between the Governor (Phayre) and the Council of Government which was dominated by the representatives of the planters’ interests. Therefore, when Phayre left Mauritius, the fate of vernacular schools tumbled. New Governor, George Bowen, appointed an Education Committee to examine the working and efficacy of the vernacular schools. The Committee found the working of these schools highly satisfactory and well organised and creditable proficiency among the students, yet it recommended for the closure of these experimental schools. The main contention of the Committee for the discontinuation of these schools was related to the medium of instruction. The Committee opined that vernacular learning would be of no use to the immigrants, and that English education would be better for them. Further, the Committee found the expenditure on importing teachers from India uncalled for.<sup>274</sup> Upon the recommendations of this Committee, Governor Bowen decided to change the nature of these schools. Some were relocated, English was included as the medium of instruction, and these were rechristened as Anglo-Vernacular Schools after their administrative control was handed over to the School Department. At first glance, this emphasis on English appeared to be very progressive, since inculcate progressive values in the children of immigrants’, but the essential motivation of the administrative authorities for the education of immigrants’ children remained the same to make them capable of calculating their wages. This attitude exemplifies the discriminatory attitude of the colonial administrators who wanted the Indian immigrants to be labourers forever. The Protector for example, noted in his Report for 1881, ‘all that need to be taught is to be able to read and write and to master thoroughly the principles of addition and subtraction in order that they may be able to calculate their wages due to them and may be able to jot up their accounts’.<sup>275</sup>

## 3. DEVELOPMENTS AFTER ROYAL COMMISSION 1875

Considering the apprehensions of the Indian community, Colonial authorities in Mauritius were very careful about education being provided and propagated by the Church. Phayre ignored pressure from the missionaries to promote Church education so the children of Indian community could be induced to convert to Christianity, and his observations on ‘secular instruction’ were very

progressive and very much ahead of his times, and they remain an illustration of the State should not indulge in promoting religious education,

*“The pupils will for the most part, be children of Hindus or Mohamedans. It is not the duty of Government to provide for the conversion of these people. It would be wrong to do so without the consent of their parents or guardians; and a Government cannot, in my opinion, ever be sure of the voluntary consent of hundreds or thousands to the instruction of their children in a religion other than their own. The noble work of instructing these children in the truths of Christianity, may probably be left to the clergy of the Churches in the Colony, to be accomplished elsewhere than in school.”<sup>276</sup>*

This might have some disadvantages for the spread of education among the Indian community if we compare it with similar experiences of spread of education in India, particularly in the tribal regions, but in overall terms, it should be regretted because it saved the immigrant from a several essentials of their identity which were very critical for their surviving negotiations in an alien land and social-cultural setting, religion being one of them.

In 1883, a committee was set up under the Protector of Immigrants which recommended the creation of new primary schools under Government control, converting the Anglo-Vernacular schools into Second Grade schools and English as medium of instruction. Being the Protector of Immigrants, Trotter had first-hand experience of the appalling economic conditions of Indian immigrants and therefore, he made the most crucial recommendation of this committee - free education for the children of immigrants - for the first time in the history of education which had far-reaching consequences in the development of Education. Another set of important proposals were put forward by the Committee on Education in 1887. Taking a radical departure from the existing discourse, this Committee recommended the prohibition of employment of children between the ages of 7 and 12 until they had attended the 4<sup>th</sup> standard education. Another recommendation was making the education free for children upto age 12 years.<sup>277</sup> However, both these proposals, which would have possibly transformed the situation of education among the Indian community, were not implemented for practical reasons - the value of children's' work for their families and financial burden on the state.

The next major official development in the education of immigrants' children took place in 1891 when half-time schools were proposed. These schools were proposed to improve the crucial earning potential of the young children for their families. These schools would hold two sessions of three hours each, in the morning and afternoon; so that the value of children's contribution in the family income would not entirely lost. Children who worked in the morning would attend afternoon session, and those who worked in the evening, would attend the morning session. In the curriculum of these schools, children had the option to substitute English or French for one vernacular language, and the teachers in these schools were required to speak vernacular languages.<sup>278</sup> These schools were to be included under the 'grant-in-aid' schools and receive funds from the Government.

These provisions were reiterated again in the 1902 Code of Education. At long last, a tentatively organised and most importantly free education system was brought into being by 1910. Protector of Immigrants, J. F. Trotter, spoke before the Sanderson Committee stating that 'free but not compulsory education should be given to all, and there ought to be a school near every estate.' However he also admitted the limited reach of the education, that it was accessed only by the better class of the Indians.<sup>279</sup>

By 1880, there were 42 Government schools and 54 Grant-in-Aid schools in Mauritius, which increased to 47 and 57 schools in 1882,<sup>280</sup> and this rising trend in the number of schools continued thereafter. Yet the number of educated immigrants continued to remain at a low level. The situation did not show much improvement even till the end of first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Sanderson Committee, in its report, made similar observations underlining the poor state of education among the children of Indian community in 1910. The Sanderson Committee observed in its report that only about 7000 children of Indian parents were in the schools when the number of Indian children of school age was between 50,000 to 60,000. The solution for the problem, according to the Committee, was in starting schools on the estates, which was not being implemented due to the financial pressure.<sup>281</sup>

In a memorial<sup>282</sup> submitted to the Royal Commission of 1909, A. De Boucherville made the following observation on behalf of 'Action Libérale' committee, which reveals the deplorable state of education among the Indian diaspora:

*"In fact the bulk of Indo-Mauritian population do not attend any school. They are not allowed, to idle away their time. They are educated by labour, either being employed in field work - each estate having a numerous young 'chokras' (boys) - or made to assist their parents in their various pursuits and trades; or again, trained as domestic servants or cooks. These remarks apply exclusively to boys, as the girls stay at home, and married at an early age."*<sup>283</sup>

This memorial was also very critical of the existing educational system which made people suffer because 'education consists in cramming of a purely literary knowledge, instead of preparing skilled workmen, artisans, and agriculturists':

*"On the whole, there is an opening but for few belonging to the upper working or to the middle class, and the mass of the boys of the lowest classes are not prepared to earn their daily bread, and to become useful members of society. They leave school with a smattering of English, an imperfect knowledge of French, and the first notions of arithmetic; and however poor is the acquisition, it is sufficient to make them believe that it would be *infra dignitatem* to make use of a hoe or a tool. Moreover, their physical strength has not been developed, and the lighter manual work would be hard to them."*<sup>284</sup>

The following table of the figures of Indian children attending schools as per Census reports of 1901 and 1911, also corroborates the above observation regarding the low educational levels among the Indian diaspora in a very persuasive manner:

Table 2: Number of Children Attending Schools in 1901 and 1911

Schools/Population	1901(259086)*	1911(257697)*			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Government	European, White, Mixed and Coloured	3929	2560	2356	1652
	Indian	2773	595	2289	357
Aided	European, White, Mixed and Coloured	2226	1944	2162	1968
	Indian	1257	382	1376	410
Private	European, White, Mixed and Coloured	737	809	498	663
	Indian	233	92	278	129
Royal College	European, White, Mixed and Coloured	389	-	279	-
	Indian	19	-	38	-
At Home	European, White, Mixed and Coloured	68	105	76	147
	Indian	33	09	22	22

\* The figures within brackets is the total Indian population in the respective year.

^ for 1911 another category of 'not specified' schools had been listed and 730 ( 449M+281F) children from the General population and 498 (420M+78F) children from immigrant community were attending these schools.

Source: Census Reports for 1901, 1911.

#### 4. REASONS FOR APATHY TOWARDS EDUCATION AMONG THE INDIAN IMMIGRANTS

The demand for education from the Indian Diaspora did not come until the turn of the century. As a matter of fact, the Indian immigrants opposed the educational initiatives for their children till quite late, and this has been ascribed by the colonial authorities as well as by many scholars as the factor responsible for the restricted growth of education among the Indian Diaspora, despite the serious efforts made by the administrators. We have already examined the validity of the colonial claims for promoting education among the immigrant children. Therefore in this section we shall discuss only the possible reasons behind the immigrants' reluctance to send their children to the schools. Primary education was dominated by the Christian missionaries, and the curriculum for the children had obvious focus on the religious values of Christianity, which made it suspect in the eyes of the Indian immigrants. They feared that their children would be proselytised to convert into Christianity in these schools, and this apprehension prevented many of them in sending their children to schools.

The other major obstacle was the medium of instruction, which was a major issue of contention among the administrators as well. Barring a few years under Phayre's term, the medium of instruction remained predominantly Creole and English till the late 1880s and children had to learn multiple languages. The very first lessons in an alien language created a widespread lack of interest among the children as well as in their parents who could not visualise the 'far-reaching' benefits of English and French education as pronounced by the administrators. The completely alien medium of instruction further dissuaded the already apathetic diasporic community for whom the knowledge permeating through an alien medium was regarded as offensive to their value system, and which would make their children misfits in the community.

The Memorandum submitted by the Action Libérale Committee has underlined probably the most pragmatic reason behind the low attendance, and the reluctance from Indian parents in sending their children to schools. This Memorandum is very significant in terms of stressing the concerns of the immigrant population and the limitations of the existing educational system in addressing those concerns, which resulted in lower attendance at school. Since the majority of the immigrant population was from the labouring classes without much resources at their disposal, their expectations were quite practical - having education should help in raising their income and finding alternative employment. However since the avenues were very limited, and they were not being trained in vocational skills, they were not very forthcoming about sending their children to schools. They preferred to have their children do the odd jobs on the plantations and add to the family income.<sup>285</sup>

Similar concerns regarding education leading to unemployment were expressed by the Protector J.F. Trotter in his submission before the Royal Commission of 1909. He even found it would eventually lead to disorder and the degeneration of the people. Therefore, he recommended reducing the expenditure on education, and rather the creation of employment opportunities for the people already educated, instead of educating more.<sup>286</sup>

These views of Trotter were shared by Manilal Doctor who also conceded to the fact that with some education, the youths would find it degrading to do manual work and eventually get into bad company and commit crimes.<sup>287</sup> However, this should not lead us to the conclusion that Manilal Doctor was against education for the children immigrant labourers *per se*. Basically his criticism was targeted at the particular kind of education which was provided for the Indians in Mauritius and in the same deposition he demanded for more schools for the children of Indian immigrants closer to the estates or on estates because of difficulties they were facing in traveling long distances (5 or 6 miles) to attend school. He also criticised learning two foreign languages, English and French, and demanded that apart from English which should be the principal language, students should be allowed to choose between French and an Indian language.<sup>288</sup>

Further, in Mauritius, education was always fee-paying till the 1880s, which worked as another very crucial deterrent to the spread of education. The colonial administrators always opined that education should always be paid for by the beneficiaries because only then would its importance be realised. Instead of furthering its importance, the system of paying for education actually made it a premium service which became unattainable for the Indentured labourers who were

living in extreme hardship and for whom it was very difficult to spare resources for the education of their children.

#### 4.1 Economic Potential of the Children and Lack of Education

The other important economic factor, but which had been propagated the most in the colonial authorities' blame game, for the absence of children of Diaspora was their productivity potential for an economically distressed community. From a very early age, the children of indentured labourers began to lend a helping hand to their families in plantation work by taking up work that was not so physically demanding. The work of children on the plantations, which was encouraged by the planters as well because it provided them relatively cheap labour, contributed significantly to the incomes of immigrant families and reduced the financial strain. Colonial authorities and planters were also responsible for institutionalising child labour, and therefore deprive children of educational opportunities. Education was not made compulsory and in fact, child labour was never institutionalised and approved in the labour regime. Children who were over 9 years of age were allowed to work and were paid 5 s wages and after four years of work. At the age of 13 only, their wages were increased to 8 s, which was the rate of wages for an adult of 18 years- above.<sup>289</sup> This tempted parent to engage their children at a much early age, ever before reaching the age of 18 years. Also the labourers above the 12 years were provided full rations. This was well-defined institutionalisation and a blatant approval of child labour which deprived children of the opportunities to get education.

But this logic was at work only till the 1870s, and in the post - 1870 phase when the Indian immigrants gradually amassed modest amount of wealth, they made every possible effort to secure the best possible education for their children. In fact, the lackadaisical attitude of the colonial authorities who never made education compulsory in a clear manner, the insensitive response and refusal of support from the planters and the imposition of an alien medium of instruction deterred the spread of education more than the economic pressure of the immigrant community.

### 5. CHANGING ATTITUDES, DEMAND FOR EDUCATION

With the changing economic fortunes of the Indian labour diaspora, their attitude towards the education of their children also began to change. Despite acquiring considerable economic resources, they still felt handicapped because of their ignorance and they gradually focused on the education of their children, which they were now in a position to pay for. Indian children were educated in the traditional knowledge through *Baithakas* and *Madrasas*. In fact, *Baithakas* contributed very significantly not only to inculcating the initial education in the children but were also vital in the emergence of community consciousness among the immigrants. The first demand from the Indian immigrants for their participation in education, as traced by C. Kalla, came from the Muslim community towards the end of 1880s when a petition signed by more than 7,000 members of the Indian community was submitted to the Governor.<sup>290</sup> This sectarian classification of this petition by Kalla was falling in line with the distorted explanation offered by the colonial administrators to reject the petition, and it does not carry much weight as Kalla himself mentions that the petition was signed by members of diasporic community across the religious affiliations. The possible lead was taken by a group of Muslim merchants who were emerging as economically influential class among the Diaspora. At the turn of the century, the attitude of the Indian immigrants witnessed a gradual positive change in favour of educating their children, as Governor Jerningham reported to the Secretary of State, 'The half-time schools are rapidly becoming full time second grade schools, a proof that Indian parents are anxious to give to their children the full benefit of a whole day's education'.<sup>291</sup> This affirmative outcome of this changed attitude soon began to be reflected in the increased representation of Indian community in different 'white collar' vocations like clerks and some even went to European countries after being educated at the prestigious Royal College, as a report observed in 1906:

*"Many of their children are educated in the Government Schools, and have become clerks in Government and mercantile houses. Several have obtained the laureateship at the Royal College, and taken up liberal professions in Europe."*<sup>292</sup>

The diasporic community not only became more attentive towards having the basic education but also turned gradually sought access to more specialised and highly professional education like

Medicine and Law. In a petition to the Governor, members of Indian community tried to focus his attention on the confusion created from the discrepancies in the compatibility of Secondary Education between the Mauritian and Indian Education System and demanded special facilities for the diasporic Indians for their entry into Indian universities, especially in law and medical education.<sup>293</sup>

## 6. COMPARISONS WITH GENERAL POPULATION IN MAURITIUS

On the basis of the majority presence of the Indian diaspora in professional services, particularly civil services which require certain level of formal education, there has been a general observation (at least in the scholarly world outside Mauritius, and if people in Mauritius do not perceive it that way, it may be corrected) that the Indian community had been privileged in the access to education and had achieved high levels of education. However, if we look carefully at the empirical evidence available, the outcome is just the contrary, at least till 1930s. All the reports, Census returns and other sources of information point out, without any ambiguity, that the proportion of education was much higher in the other segments of population listed as General population (unfortunately it is a very broad category grouping together all the non-Indian people of the island and resulting in room for speculation about the proportionate access of education to different communities like descendants of slaves and the European population) compared to the Indian community in Mauritius.

According to Muir Mackenzie, in his Report presented in 1893, for the non-Indian children between the age of 5 to 15 years, out of the total 25,724, those children who attended schools were 13,400 or 52% of the total numbers. For the Indian population, the total number of children was 58,645 out of which only 3,700 were attending schools amounting for less than 7% of the total children of school-going age.<sup>294</sup> The following table compiled from the Census returns illustrate this trend in no uncertain terms:

Table 3: Number of School going Children 1901, 1911, 1931

<i>Year</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Indian including Indo-Mauritian and Other Indians (Female)</i>	<i>General Population</i>
1901		5,393	12,767
1911		5,420	10,531
1931*		14,793	14,194 (Gen Pop) 873 (Chinese)

Source: Census Reports 1901, 1911, 1931

\* From the 1931 Census, the Chinese Community was enumerated separately

In proportional terms, the figures were even more disquieting. According to the 1911 Census, the total number of children between 5 to 19 years was 89,544 among the Indian community, while only 5,420 or 6% children were attending. For 1931, the total number of school-going children from Indian community might have surpassed the total number of children from the General Population, the proportion remains much less. For the General Population, the proportion of school-going children was 26% and for the Indian population, it was still around 11% of the total children of the school-going age.<sup>295</sup>

Another important marker to show lower levels of education among the Indian community was their ability to read and write off. However this should be analysed with certain caution because it counted the ability to read and write English and French. In 1911 returns, 41.9% of the general population was listed as being able to read and write while only 1.7% of the Indian population was able to read and write. In 1931 returns, 40% male and 36% female from general population were able to read and write while only 5% for Indian male and 1% of Indian female had the ability to read and write.<sup>296</sup>

## 7. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER INDENTURED DESTINATIONS

While mentioning the development of education among the children of Indentured labourers in Mauritius, it may be worth bringing in some figures from other colonies which were importing the indentured labourers from India in order to bring in the comparative perspectives which will help to underline the general administrative apathy and low levels of education among the children of Indian immigrants in Mauritius. Surgeon Major Comin reported that in Trinidad about 19% of the total children were going to the school and in Demerara it was 20% of the total number of children among the immigrant community. For the Mauritius, as reported by Muir Mackenzie in 1893, only about 7% were going to school.<sup>297</sup>

An almost similar story appears in an official report presented to the Government of India in 1915. James McNeill and Chiman Lal made a detailed enquiry about the conditions of Indian immigrants in Trinidad, British Guiana, Jamaica, Fiji and Surinam.<sup>298</sup> For Trinidad there were schools within one to miles away from every estate.<sup>299</sup> In British Guiana, schools were very close to estates and in fact, the majority of estates had schools on site. Of the total children of school-going age about  $\frac{1}{3}$  were attending schools.<sup>300</sup> For Jamaica, also, about more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of children among the Indian community were going to school.<sup>301</sup> The level of education was remarkably high among the Indian immigrant population in the Dutch colony of Surinam where more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the total children of school-going age were attending schools.<sup>302</sup> Only for Fiji did they report that education among the children of Indians was not satisfactory, and that few were attending schools. According to this report, the primary reason for such higher levels of education among the children of Indian population in these colonies were primarily the encouragement of the colonial governments and the estate owners.

Now let us look at the figures for school-going children among the Indian community in Mauritius. According to the Annual Report of the colony for year 1908, only 7,000 children of Indian parents were going to school when the total number of children of school going age was between 50,000 to 60,000 which means that only about 12-14% children were attending schools even at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>303</sup> In the case of Mauritius, schools were not very close to the estates, often five six miles away,<sup>304</sup> which made it very difficult for the children to walk such long distances (there was no other means of transport available to that class at that time) just to attend school. Moreover, there was general disapproval among the planters towards the education of the children of labouring population, since it would lead to their exposure to other vocations and would make it difficult to obtain labour for the plantation work.<sup>305</sup>

## 8. CLASS ANALYSIS OF THE ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

It is worth exploring who the children were who had the access to education and those who were making it to the elite educational institutions like Royal College and, by the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century, even to the overseas destinations. Owing to the limitations of time and resources, we do not have much empirical evidence and would just make some observations on this based on two markers which indicate, and not thoroughly substantiate, towards a trend of the class belonging of these children and young students. Most of the reports underline a class privilege in access to education. J. F. Trotter, Protector of Immigrants, emphasised to the Sanderson Committee that only the better class of Indians liked to educate their children.<sup>306</sup> Manilal Doctor, in his deposition to the Royal Commission, argued the fact that education was beyond the reach of poor parents, even if there were scholarships. All the scholarships for Higher Education were awarded on the basis of qualifying examinations which needed extra learning; therefore, only the children of prosperous Indians would qualify for these scholarships, as their parents could afford private tuition for their children; and even if a poor parent wants to send his child to Higher Education establishments, it is most unlikely that the child would win a scholarship for that.<sup>307</sup>

Provisions for child employment also had its detrimental impact on the access of education for the children of poor parents. For those parents, sending their children to schools was basically the loss of opportunity and resources. Since there were not many opportunities available beyond the plantation sector and the education system was not linked with vocational training for other jobs, even those who benefited from education were not finding employment.

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# THE END OF THE INDENTURED LABOUR SYSTEM IN MAURITIUS

The question has often been asked: When did indentured immigration officially come to an end? This question can be answered in two ways: When did indenture come to an end legally? When did Indian labour immigration into Mauritius really end? The reason is that many labourers continued to arrive, even though the system of indenture had officially ended and these new non-indentured endured the same hardships as the indentured. Just as employers in the 1830s found it hard to adjust to 'free' indentured labourers as opposed to having slaves, they found it equally hard to distinguish between what was a 'free Indian' and an Indian who had come under the 'indentured' system. A life history of one family is also provided here as an example, but there are many others who also deserve to be known.

## THE ROYAL COMMISSION OF 1909 AND THE SANDERSON PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

In 1909, the Council of Government of Mauritius requested for a Royal Commission of Inquiry in order to secure a loan for the revival of the local economy. The Royal Commissioners discovered that there were still widespread abuses in the sugar industry such as the double cut system, the non-payment of wages of the indentured workers and mistreatment.

A careful reading of the report of Commissioner Swettenham and his fellow Commissioners to the Colonial Office shows that they felt that the importation of indentured immigrants to Mauritius from India should be permanently abolished. In 1910, as a direct result of the Commission's findings, the Earl of Crewe, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, appointed a Special Committee consisting of members of the British Parliament, under the chairmanship of Lord Sanderson.

The Committee investigated the social and economic conditions of indentured workers who were sent from British India to work in the various overseas European colonies. During the course of the same year, the Sanderson Committee Report was published and it recommended that the exportation of indentured labour to British Mauritius cease. It partially based its recommendations upon the fact that between 1900 and 1909, there was a gradual decline in the number of new indentured immigrants who were being brought to Mauritius.

## THE LAST INDENTURED WORKERS

The *Mauritius Almanac of 1913* provides important statistics on the last decades of the indentured labour system in the colony. Between 1906 and 1910, more than 1,700 indentured labourers arrived in Mauritius, while more than 3,400 of them left. There were thus twice as many indentured immigrants leaving rather than arriving. In addition, during the 1910s, thousands of former Indian sugarcane workers left Mauritius for India or for other sugar colonies such as Natal, Guyana and Fiji.

Between 1923 and 1924, around 1,395 labourers landed in Port Louis harbour and in May 1924, the last batch of indentured workers set foot on Mauritian soil. Most of these labourers came from the United Provinces and they had already worked in other British territories such as British Guyana, Trinidad and Natal in South Africa. By December 1924, more than half of these Indian workers were not satisfied with their working conditions and opted to return to India.

## MAHARAJ SINGH'S REPORT

In January 1925, Kunwar Maharaj Singh was sent by the British Government of India to Mauritius. As Hugh Tinker remarked, it was the first time an Indian official had been sent to study other Indians: '*At last an Indian official of standing had been deputed to examine the situation of overseas Indians*'. Maharaj Singh's objective was to investigate the social and economic conditions

of the Indian immigrants settled in Mauritius. The key question which he needed to answer was: Whether the colony still needed to import additional Indian labourers for the local sugar industry?

On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1925, Maharaj Singh submitted his report to the British Government of India. He stated that the Indian labourers and their descendants had achieved a lot in terms of social and economic progress and the indenture system should be terminated. A few weeks later, the British Colonial Authorities in India accepted his recommendation and indentured workers were no longer sent to Mauritius.

<sup>1</sup> The bulk of this research was completed by Seetul Ramchurn for a BA dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> Bose Nirmal Kumar, "*Tribal life in India*" (New Delhi Press, 1971), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> MNA: IIA PE 15 and PC 200.

<sup>4</sup> MNA: IIA PE 36 & PC 122.

<sup>5</sup> MNA: IIA PE 36 and PC 424.

<sup>6</sup> PE series.

<sup>7</sup> PE series.

<sup>8</sup> PE series.

<sup>9</sup> PE series.

<sup>10</sup> IIA, PE 36 series.

<sup>11</sup> MNA:RD 16, Police Report of John Finiss, Chief Commissary of Police, to George F. Dick, Colonial Secretary, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1838, Para. s 12-16.

<sup>12</sup> *Le Cernéen*, lundi, 22 mars 1847.

<sup>13</sup> *Le Cernéen*, 26 mai, 5 juin, 26 juin, 5 juillet 1838.

<sup>14</sup> Author's Analysis; See *Le Cernéen*, 26 mai, 5 juin, 26 juin, 5 juillet 1838.

<sup>15</sup> Letter of Captain Weir, Special Magistrate of Port Louis, to George F. Dick, Colonial Secretary, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1836, in MNA:RA 552, Select Letters of the Special Magistrates of Port Louis District to the Colonial Secretary.

<sup>16</sup> Letter of W.W. West, owner of Vale Sugar Estate, to George F. Dick, Colonial Secretary, June 27<sup>rd</sup> 1836, in MNA:RC, Petitions on Indian Immigration, 1836-1837; MNA:RD 10, West's Answers to Queries on Indian Immigrants, June 1836.

<sup>17</sup> MNA:RD 11, Minutes of the Meeting of the Prison Committee, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1838.

<sup>18</sup> MNA:B3, Report of the Prison Committee for 1837, Laws, Ordinances, Proclamations, & Government Notices, 1837-1839, p. 21.

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Para. 26.

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- <sup>72</sup> Report of R. Mitchell, dt. 21 July, 1874, cited in Tinker, Hugh, *A New System of Slavery*, p. 189.
- <sup>73</sup> *Report of Royal Commission, 1875*, Chapter XVII, pp. 284-329.
- <sup>74</sup> Articles 113, 114, Ordinance 12 of 1878.
- <sup>75</sup> *Report of Sanderson Committee, 1910*, Pt. III, p. 105.
- <sup>76</sup> *Métayage* was a form of share cropping in which large sugar estates were divided and leased mainly to the former agricultural labourers, and it still employed a significant degree of immobility because *métayers* or cultivators were tied to the particular estate. *Morcellement* was a more open system in which the subdivided estates were sold to the old immigrants who used the land for cane cultivation as well as to grow vegetables etc.
- <sup>77</sup> Report of the Protector of Immigrants, 16 December 1871, CO 167/501, PRO. However, on the occasions, Protectors of Immigrant reported the exploitation or harassment of indentured labourers.
- <sup>78</sup> Geoghegan Report 1973, p. 88.
- <sup>79</sup> Old immigrants, as defined by the Law, were the immigrants in Mauritius who had completed the period of their initial contract or 'industrial residence' and could move out of plantations to seize other opportunities of employment.
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- <sup>107</sup> Most notably by Rhoda Reddock.
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- <sup>115</sup> *Pitcher Report*, Chapter 3.
- <sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>117</sup> Tinker, p. 140.
- <sup>118</sup> Brij Lal, *Girmit, History, Memory*, p. 15.
- <sup>119</sup> The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund conducted some 400 interviews of 'descendants' of indentured labourers. These interviews were donated to the Truth and Justice Commission to facilitate analysis.
- <sup>120</sup> MNA:B2/IR Report of Mitchell on Wolmar estate/1872
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- <sup>123</sup> Marina Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers, Indians in Mauritius*, p. 252.
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- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>145</sup> Opium was produced in India or in British colonies from where it was shipped to China. Opium trade started in 1781.
- <sup>146</sup> Lee Peter, *Opium Culture; The Art & Ritual of the Chinese Tradition* (Park Street Press, Vermont, Canada) pp. 17- 20.
- <sup>147</sup> Taiping Rebellion was established by Hong. The fundamental purpose of the Taiping was to reform Confucianism and move towards Christianity.
- <sup>148</sup> Capital of Jiangsu Province, China. It was the Capital of the Republic of China before the Chinese Civil War in 1949.
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VOLUME 4

**HISTORY, ECONOMY,  
SOCIETY AND MEMORY**

Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys

**PART VIII**

**ECONOMY AND SOCIETY UNDER  
COLONIALISM. SLAVERY AND  
INDENTURE**



# ECONOMICS OF COLONIALISM, SLAVERY, INDENTURE AND OF THE CONSEQUENCES ON CONTEMPORARY MAURITIUS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project on the Economics of Colonialism, Slavery, Indenture and their consequences on Contemporary Mauritius covers the salient features of the complementary dual processes of economic development and under development of Mauritius from the periods of colonisation of the three European Colonial Powers, Holland, France and Britain, until today. Particular care was taken to be able to implement the mandate and, in particular the objects, of the Truth and Justice Commission as defined in Section 3(1) of the Act. A political economy approach was adopted so that due consideration may be given to the contribution of those who matter most: the enslaved peoples, indentured labour and their descendants.

Slavery and the indentured labour system in Mauritius were developed and sustained by Colonial Powers: the Dutch, the French and the British. Profit brought the first colonisers to Mauritius and has dominated life ever since.<sup>1</sup> There has been a striking continuity underlying the process of colonisation by each of the colonial powers: on the one hand, the development of specific economic and social structures and, on the other hand, economic exploitation and social oppression and exclusion. A rigid class and racial hierarchy was established.

A turning point was reached in the 1830s with the legal abolition of slavery and the importation of indentured labour from British India. Not only the trauma of slavery, but also the harsh conditions of apprenticeship and of abolition contributed to the leaving of sugar estates by ex-enslaved people. They were paid very low wages based on those of indentured labour and they lost the housing facilities and the land which they had been cultivating for decades. They could not reconcile their newly-acquired 'legal' freedom with their loss of basic necessities like land and housing. They were excluded from the new Capitalist System, and most of them earned a meagre living by fishing with primitive equipment and by working as stevedores, drivers and artisans. Many were somewhat permanently unemployed, forming a lumpen proletariat living on the margin of the plantation (sugar) economy.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the subservience of the economy to the British Colonial Empire with (amongst others) its free trade policy and adoption of the cheap labour policy and the frequent economic depressions in the international economy and in Mauritius led to a growing lumpenproletariat, together with unemployed ex-indentured labourers. Under such circumstances, other sectors of the economy would progressively come under the fold of very cheap labour, excluding those used to working for somewhat higher wages. Unemployment and poverty were very much prevalent by the last third of the nineteenth century and in the major part of the twentieth century.

The plantocracy kept on pressing for the importation of indentured labour to sustain its cheap labour policy, creating further unemployment and poverty. And the Colonial State caused further impoverishment of the labouring classes and the poor by levying heavy taxes on them. And the Royal Commission of Enquiry of 1909 essentially recommended measures in favour of the plantocracy, with hardly any for the labouring classes and the poor.

By then, the internal dynamics of the economic system, through the need to modernise the Sugar Industry to face international competition, created the conditions for the parcellisation of land. In the process, those excluded from the plantation economy did not, and could hardly, become buyers. On the other hand, those mainly from the ex-indentured labourers, the job contractors, the *sirdars*, the traders, the middlemen would become small landowners. A new social class of small and medium planters was born and a new business community and elite was in the making. The emergence of this new social class did not fundamentally have a major impact on the prevailing large lumpenproletariat and generally on the poor. The overall social structure would prevail, except with this new transformation: the plantocracy and the Colonial State would continue to be the supreme powers.

Another major turning point in the historical development of Mauritius was the unparalleled resistance of the labouring classes (especially in the 1930s and 1940s) to the oppressive and

exploitative system: the strikes and marches of the labourers and small planters of 1937, the strike of the dockers and labourers of 1938 and the strikes and marches of the labourers in 1943. Preceding these events, the Mauritius Labour Party was founded in 1936 by Dr. Maurice Curé, assisted soon afterwards by Emmanuel Anquetil. The Colonial State would react with a mix of approaches: repression, divide and rule tactics and accommodation.

On the societal level, a new bourgeoisie/elite emerged. Experts were sent by the British Imperial Government to study the economic and social state of affairs and to make recommendations: Meade, Titmuss and Balogh. The Colonial Power in the end controlled the situation and created conditions, with the help of the elite and the business community, to grant Independence to Mauritius. But, the perennial problems of unemployment and poverty were still prevalent. Social exclusion had become a permanent feature of Mauritius; economic power was still concentrated in the hands of the sugar oligarchy, whilst the new bourgeoisie stepped to the shoes of the Colonial Power and made its way slowly into the world of business. An entrenched economic and social system developed and nurtured over more than two centuries, prevailed.

During the post-Independence period, major changes took place: economic diversification, development of educational facilities like free secondary education and the setting up of public universities, expansion and improvement of the public health system as well as the private one, development of wide-ranging social security system. Moreover, fundamental changes to the economic and social structure did not materialise. Whilst economic power remains concentrated in a small minority, including the new and the old bourgeoisie, political power is controlled by the new bourgeoisie.

Depending on the prevalence of economic boom or depression, the labouring classes face alternate conditions of relative well-being or very hard times. Unemployment and poverty, admittedly on smaller scale than in the 1960s, are prevalent, so much so that social exclusion has not been eradicated. On the contrary, with ultra liberal economic policies and the international economic crisis, inequality is on the increase; factory closures are more frequent and poverty and social exclusion are still entrenched in Mauritian society.

Colonialism, together with slavery and indentured labour, has had consequences of a systemic nature. The policies of the post-Independence era have, only to a limited extent, succeeded in mitigating these consequences. But still, cheap labour policy has been adhered to; in new sectors, like BPO, and in new privatised services, like cleaning, working conditions are awful and, in the latter case, very low wages (about Rs. 3500) prevail. No doubt, improvements have been made in the economic and social fields. But the old capitalist system, reformed to a certain extent, still prevails with its obvious limitations like acute material disparity between the social classes, social exclusion, corruption and poverty.

## CHAPTER 1 THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

### 1.1 Introduction

According to the latest records, Mauritius did not have any indigenous population. Mauritius, as an entity, was created by European Colonial Powers in their quest for trade with, and for investment in, Asia. However, prior to their arrival and presence, there was much trade in the Indian Ocean involving the Arabs, the Asians (Indian, Malays etc.). To our knowledge, Mauritius did not acquire any major importance for the trading countries involved.

It was when the route around the Cape of Good Hope to the East Coast of Africa and to Asia was opened up for Europe that the somewhat isolated and uninhabited islands, like Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean became important as they were initially used as transit places by the ships from Europe trading with Asia.

The need for trade is the emerging industrial bourgeoisie is the emerging industrial bourgeoisie between Europe and Asia, amongst others, was consolidated with the development of the Industrial Revolution, and the emergence of Capitalism in Europe. In fact, International Trade expanded exponentially.

### 1.2 Emergence of European Colonialism

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, major transformations took place in International Trade, with geographical discoveries by European nations, initially led by Holland, Portugal and Spain. Further changes were taking place in various countries in the mode of agricultural production leading to the Agrarian Revolution in Britain. The latter was, in turn, followed by the Industrial Revolution. All these processes contributed to the emergence of Capitalism, a new economic system born from traditional feudal agricultural societies in Europe.

<sup>3</sup>On the one hand, markets for industrial produce from European countries were expanding and, on the other hand, plantation economic systems and plantation societies were being developed to produce goods for European countries: tobacco and coffee for consumption, cotton and indigo for the development of the textile industry, and sugar for consumption on a massive scale both domestically and industrially.

The economies of the new colonies in America, in the West Indies and in Asia were emphatically given an export orientation to satisfy the demand and the needs of European countries. To achieve this, the prevailing economic system in the colonies was sometimes destroyed and made subservient to the needs of the Colonial Powers; the cost of production was minimized with coerced labour and, later, with abundant, cheap labour, amongst other things. Ruthless oppression of the indigenous populations, and different forms of indentured white labour were initially used, leading to the near extermination of the local people, as in the case of the Amerindians. Ultimately, the enslavement of mainly African peoples and, to a lesser extent, of the Asian peoples, would turn out to be the means to ensure a regular source of abundant coerced labour and later of cheap contractual labour.

Commercial outlets and commercial supremacy led to industrial supremacy and *vice versa*. The various European Colonial Powers then engaged in an intense competition for markets for their industrial produce, for labour and land for their export-oriented industries in the colonies, and for the control of sea routes to reach their destinations. This intense intercolonial rivalry led to centuries of colonial wars among the main Colonial Powers: Spain, Portugal, Holland, Britain and France.

Whilst the initial major thrust of colonial expansion took place in America and in the Caribbean Islands in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, by the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Asia and the Indian Ocean became of major importance for the Colonial Powers. The somewhat isolated islands of the Indian Ocean acquired strategic importance for them. Mauritius, Réunion Island, the Seychelles, Rodrigues, the Chagos Archipelago, Tromelin, the Comoro Islands, etc. were colonized. On the

other hand, East Africa and Madagascar, together with some Asian Countries, like India and the Malay Peninsula, provided sources of slave labour.

### 1.3 The Dutch in Mauritius

The first settlers in Mauritius were the Dutch during the four periods of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in 1598-1638 and in 1658-64. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was intense rivalry between Spain and Portugal on the one hand, and Holland on the other hand, leading to wars between Holland and the other two countries. In particular, Holland was competed with Portugal with respect to trade with Asia, with India, China, Japan, Indonesia, etc. The trade for spices, among other things, was of major importance; by then the intense rivalry among the emerging mercantilist European Powers had already started in the Indian Ocean. The Dutch initially controlled the trade in pepper, cloves and nutmeg and defended the Moluccas Islands against any threatening European power.

Initially, there were small Dutch trading Companies, but after a few years, the Dutch State found that such companies were not very effective. Thus, it took the initiative to ensure that out of these small companies, a strong monopolistic trading company emerged, so as to be able to compete more effectively with the Portuguese in their trade with Asia. In 1602, the Dutch East India Company was thus established, so that the Dutch would control trade with Asia; P.J. Moree, writes: "A strong monopolistic commercial organization was considered to be the most effective weapon against the enemy in Asia, the Portuguese."<sup>4</sup>

The Dutch felt the need for a permanent refreshment station for the Dutch East India Company ships, because of the length of the voyages. Mauritius, with its good harbouring facilities and an abundance of fruit and birds, turned out to be appropriate for the Dutch.

They would set the tone for the way Mauritius would be used thereafter by other European Colonial Powers. Firstly, Mauritius would provide the ships with food, water and with a resting and recuperative place to the sailors and passengers of ships during their long voyages between Holland and Asia.

Secondly, the Dutch would start the process of deforestation by felling ebony trees and shipping them both to the Dutch possessions in Asia, and to Europe. The export orientation given to the 'development' of Mauritius became there and then the underlying thread connecting all Colonial Powers settling and controlling in Mauritius.

To provide supplies to the ships, and given the prevalence of very fertile land, the Dutch started, to some extent, the development of agriculture: rice, fruit trees, vegetables, sugar cane, and indigo. The Dutch also brought in cattle and poultry.

For all the tasks mentioned above, there was a need for hardworking manual workers: woodcutters and labourers in particular. Whilst the Dutch brought some workers with them, they resorted to the slave trade with Madagascar and brought slaves to Mauritius. Additionally, trade with Madagascar in cattle, rice and beans was carried out.

Thus, the Dutch would start a set of historical processes which would dominate the history of Mauritius: the introduction of the sugar cane, the production of a liquor, arrack, from sugar cane, using slaves from Madagascar as labour, developing trade between Madagascar and Mauritius, using Mauritius as a 'key' of the Indian Ocean, in Holland's rivalry with Portugal for trade with Asia, and using Mauritius as a port of call for its ships.

Finally, in spite of itself, Dutch settlement equally set the tone for the emergence of resistance to slavery by the slaves. The slaves marooned and moved into the forests, ready to attack the Dutch settlements, whenever necessary. So much so, that when the Dutch left Mauritius, there were some slaves in the interior: the first Mauritians and the first freedom fighters were born.

#### 1.4 French Colonialism

The international wars in the Americas and the Caribbean Islands and the wars among the European Powers had a bearing on intercolonial rivalry and the wars in the Indian Ocean, the details of which are not dealt here, due to lack of space.

The spice trade with Asia attracted French colonialism to that region; the French wanted to develop trade with Java, and the Malay Peninsula, but the presence of the Dutch prevented them from doing so. Moreover, just like the Dutch, the French needed at least a port of call in the Indian Ocean to allow its ships to reach Asia more easily and to be able to have some control of the corresponding sea routes. They initially settled in Bourbon Island, and later in Mauritius or Ile de France in 1721, not long after the departure of the Dutch. They also tried to settle in Madagascar, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but resistance from indigenous people of that country made them leave.

Moreover, by the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the French would be the main European power involved in the slave trade in the Western part of the Indian Ocean and in India in order to provide slave labour to the emerging plantation economies of Bourbon and Mauritius.

But, with the weakening of, first the Portuguese, and then the Dutch, the Anglo-French rivalry for colonisation of India and of Asia and for the control of the Indian Ocean and the corresponding sea routes would be the dominating issue of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, that rivalry was prevalent in Europe, as well as in the Americas, as reflected in the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48), the American Revolutionary War (1778-83) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15). The latter would lead to the defeat of the French both in India and in the Indian Ocean, with France losing both Bourbon and Mauritius. With the Treaty of Paris of 1814, Bourbon would be handed back to France, whilst the Capitulation Treaty between the French and the British with regard to Mauritius would become effective as from 1810.

By 1815, the 'hegemony' of British Colonialism in the Indian Ocean and in India became a reality and lasted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 1.5 British Colonialism

Mauritius was a 'unique' British colony in several ways. To understand the rationale underlying this uniqueness, we shall briefly examine the phases through which British Colonialism went and the particular characteristics of the Anglo-French rivalry, especially in the Indian Ocean.

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Britain undertook the colonization of North America. Initially, mercantilist Britain was interested in trade. By the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, British businessmen were among the first slave traders in the era of colonial slavery. Sir John Hawkins, who was a ship owner and entrepreneur, carried a cargo of enslaved Africans from the West African Coast to be sold in the Spanish Colony of Haiti, known then as Hispaniola. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the trade was enhanced, with the colonisation, first of Newfoundland, then of Virginia, New Britain and the Caribbean Islands etc.

The colonists or new settlers brought with them European indentured labour to work on the plantations or to practise their badly-needed specialized craftsmanship (carpenter, tinsmith, etc.). These workers had a contract of between four and ten years and were paid wages. The driving force of the emerging industrial bourgeoisie in Britain towards colonising North America was the pursuit of profit; Lawrence James wrote: "The pursuit of profit remained the most powerful driving force behind Britain's bid for North American colonies."<sup>5</sup> At that time, the settlers were accompanied by priests who would reassure the colonists that "God intended that the land, usurped by unreasonable people (i.e. the natives), be redeemed by British settlement."<sup>6</sup>

Intercolonial rivalry was rife in the Americas: in particular, Anglo-Spanish and Anglo-French. In the Caribbean Islands, the Spanish colonists were somewhat easily defeated by the relatively new British colonists. Furthermore, Virginia, in North America, would become a major plantation economy/society with the production of tobacco. Prior to a massive tobacco production at that time, tobacco was still a luxury in Europe, but thereafter, smoking became a commonly-accepted habit by the population at large throughout Europe. Britain imported Virginian tobacco on a

massive scale, and with a market for it in Europe, it re-exported much of the tobacco to European countries.

Labour supply was a major issue. The Amerindians could never be roped into the colonists' plan. Indentured white workers and convict labour from Britain, Ireland and Scotland were imported. In North America, very cold winters, on the one hand, and the prevalence of malaria, on the other, made matters worse. In the Caribbean Islands, very quickly, the British business community found out that indentured British labourers were not capable of satisfying the demand for sugar cane cultivation in the tropics. In particular, the planters, driven on by profit as a motive, wanted to maximize their investment in labour and wanted to recoup their costs of the transport of labour as quickly as possible, by making the labourers work very hard. The news of such a state of affairs filtered through to prospective workers back to Britain, so much so that labour shortage became somewhat permanent by the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. For some time, convict labour from Britain provided short-term relief, but this measure was not sustainable.

Then, the solution to what appeared as the insoluble problem of labour shortage was found: coerced African unpaid slave labour! Gradually, the enslaved African peoples would replace European indentured white labour.

Various Colonial European Powers created colonial plantation economies/ societies producing one or two commodities like sugar, cotton, tobacco, coffee etc., with coerced, unwaged African enslaved people as labour. All those plantation economies were very much labour intensive; thus, millions of African enslaved people to be used as unwaged labour were transported to the Americas and the Caribbean. It was the triumph of the 'most powerful driving force' of colonization, that of the pursuit of profit.

The British plantocracy was enriched; the British Colonial State increased its revenue very significantly through various duties and taxes; the colonies became, in turn, a market for goods manufactured in Britain, thus stimulating the industrial development in Britain.

But thereafter occurred the American War of Independence; there was an alliance between the Americans and the French, while France was defeated in Canada. British Colonialism would adapt to the new situation, as mentioned below. At the same time, by 1776, Adam Smith's book *The Wealth of Nations* was published. Up to a point, it would influence the thinking of the political elite in Britain and that of the British Government, especially with respect to slave labour and free trade.

The defeat of British Colonialism in the American War of Independence created the conditions necessary for a second wave of British Colonialism: Asia, (esp. India and China), Australia and hence, the Indian Ocean and the Cape of Good Hope became the new targets for expansionism, trade and investments. The sea routes to the East acquired major significance and Mauritius, of major strategic importance for the Colonial Powers. Intercolonial rivalry and, in particular, Anglo-French rivalry dominated the struggle for the control of sea routes to India, Asia and Australia. Hence the Anglo-French wars for the control of the Indian Ocean. In fact, intercolonial rivalry took on almost planetary proportions.

The third wave of British Colonialism reflected changes happening in the industrial and financial developments of the European Colonial Powers. Raw materials, labour and land became more and more important, leading to a scramble for Africa.

## 1.6 Concluding Remarks

The development of Capitalism in Britain and in Europe produced an offshoot Colonialism, initially driven by Mercantilism, then by industrial and financial capitalism.

Slave labour and indentured labour are labour systems developed and nurtured by the various European Colonial Powers. Plantation economies and societies would emerge where the economies of the colonies, and, in particular, of colonized islands like Mauritius would be tailor-made to satisfy the sustained pursuit of profit, the accumulation of capital and in the process, satisfy the demands/needs of the commodity markets of the European Colonial Powers.

Any thorough study of slavery, i.e., the system of coerced labour of enslaved peoples, can only be done in the context of the study of Colonialism and its ramifications. The coerced unwaged labour of the enslaved people, with its initial very high death-rate, ensured the 'optimal' minimization of the costs of the production of the planters and various related companies from Europe and, as a consequence, the maximization of profits. Moreover, following the resistance of the enslaved people, the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, the defeat of Britain in the American War of Independence, and the interests of the East India Company in India and Asia, slave trade and, later slavery, would be abolished in most of the British Empire, much later, in 1835.

But the plantocracy needed labour and, where necessary, it looked elsewhere for cheap labour. Thus, cheap indentured labour on a massive scale progressively replaced the labour of the enslaved people to secure, if not to perpetuate, the maximisation of profits and capital accumulation, and all the related financial/business interests of the Colonial Powers and, sometimes of new emerging interests from among the colonized peoples.

What should not be overlooked is that the various economic and labour systems were developed to satisfy the needs of emerging classes of people and the States in Europe: initially, a mercantile bourgeoisie, then an industrial and financial bourgeoisie from the Colonial Powers, and, obviously, of the plantocracy in the island-colonies. Thus, Auguste Toussaint wrote:

*"The mercantile bourgeoisie had had its day; at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it began to be replaced in Britain by a new bourgeoisie, born of the Industrial Revolution."*<sup>7</sup>

Slave labour came from Africa and Asia, especially India and the Malay peninsula. As for indentured labour in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Britain made good use of the reservoirs of cheap labour in its new colonies/semi-colonies: India and China. Auguste Toussaint would emphatically point out that, following the abolition of slavery:

*"The solution then was to turn to those vast reservoirs of cheap labour, India and China."*<sup>8</sup>

Thus for Mauritius, to understand the slave system and indenture labour system, the role played by French and British Colonialisms is of paramount importance.

## CHAPTER 2: THE FRENCH COLONIAL PERIOD

### 2.1 The Economic evolution of Ile de France

#### 2.1.1 The First Years 1721 - 1735

Ile de France was governed by the French *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* from 1721 to 1767. The first few years were particularly difficult and the French colony hardly took off. The *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* had a monopoly of trade, and this created conditions for fraudulent trade both in goods (especially foodstuffs) and in slaves. In 1725, there were 213 people in Ile de France, including 34 slaves<sup>9</sup>.

Moreover, by 1726, there were land grants: the upper classes (i.e. *l'état major de l'île*) obtained 312 *arpents* known as 'grande concession', whilst soldiers and workers obtained 156<sup>10</sup> known as 'petite concession'. The owners had to pay various taxes to the Government; this level of taxation and scarcity of labour caused many soldiers and workers to leave Ile de France. Whilst Ile de France and Ile Bourbon were governed as one political entity, there was an uneasy relationship between the two. Some *colons* in Ile Bourbon came to Ile de France; agriculture took off in Ile Bourbon, but not quite in Ile de France. There was an obvious need for labour, and slaves were brought from Madagascar. And by 1735, according to Labourdonnais, there was a population of 838, including 648 slaves.<sup>11</sup>

#### 2.1.2 Mahé de Labourdonnais and after

When Mahé de Labourdonnais met the Directors of the French East India Company in 1734, he convinced them of the need to find a safe harbour to break the strenuous long voyages between the Spice Islands (the Moluccas), India and Europe. There was a need for a place where travellers and crews could rest and restore their health, where ships could be refitted and repaired and fresh supplies of food and water could be obtained for the continuation of the journey. In his mind, Ile de France, of which France had claimed possession in September 1715, given its strategic position in the Indian Ocean, was the best location for what he had in mind. It was thus the intention of Mahé de Labourdonnais to develop Ile de France as a port of call, a stop-over and a transit station between Europe and Asia.

In particular, Port Louis was developed as a harbour which, in turn, provided for ship-building and ship repairs. Buildings for the governmental administration, hospitals and infrastructures in relation to water supply were developed. On the economic front, he developed agriculture, including the Sugar Industry, to some extent.

To be able to carry out these policies, Labourdonnais brought in labour, both free skilled labour from India and slaves from Africa, Madagascar and India. Some aspects of conditions of the enslaved people and other section of the labouring class are dealt with in Section 2.3.

The slave population grew steadily in size during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, from 2,533 in 1746, to 15,027 in 1767, to 33,832 in 1787, to 60,646 in 1806, to reach 63,821 by 1810, prior to the British conquest.<sup>12</sup> Their occupations consisted of agricultural labourers, household servants, fishermen, artisans, dock workers and sailors. The enslaved people faced a harsh regime. So much so, that the engineer Charpentier-Cossigny in 1753 wrote that "the company was hiring slaves, then starving them to death".<sup>13</sup> Just like Labourdonnais before him, Charpentier-Cossigny provided some form of apprenticeship to slave labour. According to him, "for every skilled slave in an 'atelier', there were another ten or so manual labourers performing the essential backbreaking tasks of breaking and carrying stones, digging trenches, loading and unloading ships, building roads". This 'vast army' of Government slaves included many women.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, most slaves were owned by small-scale owners. And by 1778, it was reported that many owners had effectively 'abandoned' their slaves.<sup>15</sup> With small-scale owners, it was also

easier for the slaves to escape. Whilst many of them managed to earn a living, others were in a state of poverty and destitution.

Moreover, by 1767, the French Crown took control of Ile de France and Ile de Bourdon, after having bought the two islands from a bankrupt *Compagnie des Indes* in 1764 for the sum of 7.6 millions *livres*.<sup>16</sup> Pierre Poivre, as the first 'Intendant', encouraged large scale production of cash crops like cotton, indigo and spices, but his attempt to transform Ile de France into a plantation economy failed.<sup>17</sup>

However, with the new administration, various major changes were carried out, which would create the right conditions for the development of international trade, to a very remarkable extent. By 1769, the *Compagnie des Indes* lost the monopoly of Asian trade and Port Louis was designated as a free port open to all nationals in 1787.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1780s, France was the largest trading power in Europe (and the world).<sup>19</sup> The total value of French long-distance trade with Africa, Asia, America and re-exports to the rest of Europe was equal to £25 million. The total value of British long-distance trade was only £20 million. The growth of French trade from the 1710s had been faster than the growth of British trade. The main support to long-distance trade, the plantation system, was larger and more efficient in the French colonies than in the British ones. Based on Daudin's work, it can be said that the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the golden age of the French ascendancy and prosperity in international trade. An essential ascendancy of long-distance trade and the most profitable aspect of such trade was the slave trade. The purpose here is to situate Labourdonnais' visit to the headquarters of the French East India Company in that wider ascendancy and the search for a convenient location for the establishment of a base for the development of French trade in the Indian Ocean. We must also bear in mind, in that connection, the recurrent rivalry between Britain and France for the control of India, and the need for France to establish a strong foothold in the Indian Ocean in order to consolidate its presence in the subcontinent.

The reference to French long-distance trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century aims to situate the growing importance of Port Louis as a centre of *entrepôt* trade. The importance of commercial activities and the lack of interest of the Isle de France colonists in agriculture were due to the lure of easy money. According to J. F. Dupon<sup>20</sup>, the growth of speculative transactions thwarted the establishment, at the Ile de France, of relatively permanent estates and plantations. Unlike at Ile Bourbon, this never became a feature of French settlement. There were then substantial incentives for the colonists to engage in commercial transactions. The manipulation of bills of exchange could generate profits of 25% to 35%, compared to yields of 5% to 6% for successful planters.

Besides, at a time when France was often at war with Britain, privateering was a great spur to commercial activities and local merchants derived much profit from their investment in these activities. The heyday of Ile de France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century came with the designation of Port Louis as a free port in 1787. Visitors to Port Louis in those days described the harbour "crowded with ships of numerous nations, the commercial sector lined with shops filled with provisions and merchandise from every quarter and with colonial produce and the adjoining streets plying their trade with a general appearance of abundance and prosperity."<sup>21</sup>

The embryonic state of domestic activities and the absence of domestic infrastructures contrasted with the flurry of trade in Port Louis. Before the British occupation, there was not a single street in Port Louis that was convenient for a carriage and scarcely any for a cart. People travelled on foot or on horses and the upper classes used *palanquins* which were manned by slaves.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Ile de France was an important transit place and *entrepôt* and a convenient stop-over on the long and arduous journey between Europe and Asia. This was reflected in the large variety of goods that were traded here, but also in the crowds of people who thronged the waterfront.

The trading environment between Ile de France and France was such that sailors and adventurers of all sorts, renegades or discharged soldiers, but also merchants and traders thronged the alleys and lanes of Port Louis.

Mauritius was then considered as a Mini-State.<sup>22</sup> A Mini-State has been defined as a State in which the exposure to foreign activities is so important that economic events are largely beyond its control. Goods which are produced tend to be exported; goods which are consumed locally tend to be imported, and the commodities which are both produced and consumed in the country tend to be services. Besides, a significant proportion of the services are used by foreigners in a Mini-State like Mauritius where external activities and services account for a substantial part of economic transactions.

Right from the start, the strategic position and the importance of external trade were determining factors in the settling and development of Mauritius. In many small States, economic activities pertain essentially to foreign trade and the domestic sector is confined to an ancillary or supporting role, providing goods and services to local workers in public services, transport, trade and distribution and maintenance and repairs of infrastructures and equipment. These services would not exist, were it not for the market provided by exports or by workers whose income is derived from exports.

In Mini-States, the domestic sector is thus a mere appendix of export activities, is largely dependent on them and cannot be planned exogenously. This statement gives an indication of the importance of external events-institutional, political and economic and external trade in these states and underlines the extent of their exposure to external shocks on which they have no control. Such is the situation which prevails in these countries which have to adjust and adapt continuously to the exigencies which derive from their small size or insularity and remoteness. This may also help us to form an idea of the difficulties which confronted the French administrators and colonists, when they undertook the task of creating a colony in such a remote location as that of Ile de France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Such were also the responsibilities and commitments which Labourdonnais had taken, following his meeting with the Directors of the French East India Company in 1734. After his arrival at Ile de France on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1735, Labourdonnais lost no time in setting about this task with zeal and determination. Unfortunately, a good deal of his time and the island's resources, scanty as they were at that time, were spent on refuting the accusations levelled against him and on a failed struggle against Britain in India.

Meanwhile, the bankruptcy of the *Compagnie des Indes* aggravated the situation of the Mascareignes and the plight of the inhabitants. It was only after the retrocession to the French Crown in 1767, that order was restored in the administration of the islands, and the engineer Tromelin was commissioned in 1772 to clear Port Louis harbour of several wrecks with which it was cluttered.

Port Louis harbour was the centre of intense maritime activity during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the island was reclaimed by the French Crown and Port Louis had become a free port. The new administrations transformed the place. The town was enlarged and embellished. In the rural districts, agriculture was stimulated. New development works were undertaken. More settlers were brought from France. According to Toussaint, Ile de France underwent a regeneration.

In 1769, 785 ships of all types berthed at Port Louis; there came 176 in 1783, 203 in 1789, 266 in 1791 and 347 in 1803. The number of arrivals declined sharply during the Napoleonic Wars: 177 ships arrived in 1806, 76 in 1809 and 25 only in 1810.<sup>23</sup>

The merchants of Ile de France invested large amounts in equipping vessels and crews for privateering expeditions and generally acquired substantial wealth from these activities, in spite of the high risks involved in such enterprises. Among the merchants, as A. Toussaint wrote, there was "l'attrait du gain et l'argent facile", i.e. the attraction of quick profits and easy money.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.1.3 The Business and Social Environment at Ile de France and the Lure of Easy Money.

Success at first, and then failure, such was the lot of the majority of people who went to the Mascarenes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in search of wealth. Bar a few exceptions, those who went to India or the Mascarenes did not go there to colonise the country; they went there to get rich and go back as soon as possible.<sup>25</sup> For them, Ile de France was just a transit place and a source of personal enrichment. A frenzy for easy money characterised the trading and business environment.

According to Daudin, the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the “era of international trade in which France had a prominent place”.

The average life expectancy was then barely fifty years, especially in the colonies, which Toussaint has described as a race against time. In that context, trade gives rise rapidly to speculation. Anglo-French rivalry in the Indian Ocean, the lack of appropriate legislation, an abundance of paper money, the absence of banks, all those factors promoted speculation and led to recurrent periods of scarcity, or prosperity.

Although speculation reached its peak during the French Revolution, it was present from the very beginning of colonization. There was much speculation during the last years of the *Compagnie des Indes* and some spectacular bankruptcies under the new administration.

At the beginning of the Revolution, the shortage of specie caused further bankruptcies among traders and ship-owners until the arrival of Decaen. In 1807, the tightening of the British blockade and the prevailing scarcity led to more bankruptcies. The traders were then the ruling class on the island and those with the largest share of the wealth. Under the previous administration there were barely 200,000 *piastres* in circulation, and there is no indication that there was an increase in specie under Decaen. On the other hand, there was a large increase of “paper money (credit notes) to compensate the shortage of metallic currency”.

#### 2.1.4 The Need for Capital

Besides the need for an abundant labour supply, another critical factor was the availability of capital. According to Allen, the foundations of Mauritian domestic capital formation were laid during last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the island flourished as a commercial *entrepôt* that attracted shipping from as far away as Northern Europe and the United States. According to the same source, the greatest spur to this activity was the island’s status as a base, from which French privateers preyed on British, and allied, shipping during the wars of American Independence, of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. The total value of the prizes is difficult to ascertain but large sums were involved. One Port Louis merchant house reported that the value of British and allied shipping, lost to locally based privateers between 1778 and mid-1781, totalled 24,000,000 *livres*. Other contemporary estimates put the value of captured Anglo-Indian shipping between 1793 and mid-1804 at £2,500,000; Auguste Toussaint estimated the value of prizes taken between 1803 and 1810 at almost 50,000,000 *francs*. The extent to which any of these monies found their way into the island’s agricultural sector cannot be determined with any precision, but increasing numbers of local merchants and seamen did invest in local properties over time. And given the blockade, some investment was directed to agriculture, especially to the production of foodstuffs. Moreover, following the rebellion of the enslaved peoples of the Dominican Republic, the demand for sugar in France and Europe increased significantly. In Ile de France, there was investment in the sugar industry by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until around 1806. Sixty sugar mills were in operation at that time and sugar exports by 1806 were around 4000 metric tons. M. Vaughan expresses a similar view when she wrote:

*“Furthermore, increased French commercial interest in the island combined with the profits of privateering and the collapse of sugar production in St. Domingue, were helping to finance the island’s nascent sugar industry. Finally the island seemed to have arrived at a situation in which commerce was financing agricultural production.”*<sup>26</sup>

#### 2.1.5 The British Blockade and the Decline and Fall of the Ile de France

As from 1806, the British Navy began the blockade of French trade in the Indian Ocean. The British blockade disrupted considerably the flow of maritime traffic to the island and seriously eroded the prominence of Ile de France in commercial activities and *entrepôt* trade and brought a sharp decline in the fortunes of local merchants and a series of bankruptcies. During the last years of Ile de France, there was a scarcity of specie in the colony and many businessmen were heavily indebted.

In order to counter the British blockade and ensure the maintenance of minimum supplies to the local population, the French Authorities at Ile de France reinforced the privateering activities in

the region, with the participation and support of leading local merchants and businessmen. These privateers preyed on British ships plying the Indian route. The excitement, with which news of some major “prises” were greeted in the island, underlines the dire situation of the local population during the last years of the Ile de France.

When Britain conquered Ile de France in December 1810, it inherited a colony which had been ravaged by war and deprivation. Mauritius had been neglected by the French who used the island’s resources to supply their ships during the war against Britain in India and generally left the inhabitants to fend for themselves. The finances were in a deplorable state following the British blockade of the island. Most of the colonists were heavily indebted. While it had prospered as a naval base and a trading port under the French, Mauritius became initially an outpost of minor importance to Britain. The absence of financial institutions, the lack of financial rigour and the reckless speculation, which characterized the last years of Ile de France, left deep scars on local financiers. It was the unenviable task of Governor Farquhar and his new British administration to bring some order in this chaotic situation.

## 2.2 The Emergence of the Coloured Population

As in colonial slave societies, there emerged in Ile de France an intermediate social class or social group between the slave masters and the enslaved people.

The demography of the Coloured Population represented certain special features. It was very small at the beginning, with only 587 in 1767. But by 1806, there were 7,154 Coloured people, whilst there were 6,798 Whites and 60,646 Slaves. The economic role of the Coloured was felt only in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They had different types of occupations;<sup>27</sup> they were: interpreters, Government functionaries, seamen, and skilled artisans, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, masons and tailors.

Furthermore, the Coloured People progressively accumulated some capital. The means to achieve this accumulation were through grants and the purchase of public land. Between 1748 and 1810, there were 410 such grants and sales.<sup>28</sup> Other means were through bequeaths and donations. Moreover, the property acquired was rather limited. In 1788, the Coloured People owned only 3.5 % of land, and by 1806, only 7.1 % of all inventoried land was theirs. By 1809, they were farming about 9 percent of all cultivated land.

Another source of revenue and capital for the Coloured People was through the purchase and sale of slaves and for their renting as well. According to the 1776 Census, the Coloured People owned 623 slaves; by 1809, they owned at least 8,163.<sup>29</sup>

The Coloured Population thus had a special relationship with the other social groups or classes in French Colonial Society. Their economic role was rather limited and was made worse during the period of Decaën who restored certain regressive legislation on landownership by the Coloured Population.

## 2.3 Labour Systems

### 2.3.1 Slave Labour

The predominant form of labour during the French colonial period was the labour of enslaved peoples who were brought mainly from Madagascar, East Africa, Mozambique and India. The enslaved peoples were chattel labour, considered as the private property of their owners. The *Code Noir* was proclaimed on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1724 in the form of *Lettres Patentes*.

Certain features of the 54 articles which constitute the *Code Noir* are highlighted. In its preamble, it is stipulated that:

*“[...] que l’Ile Bourbon est considérablement établie par le grand nombre de nos sujets, lesquels se servent d’esclaves nègres pour la culture des terres; que L’Ile de France qui est proche de la dite Ile de Bourbon commence aussi à s’établir [...]”*

A clear allusion to the exploit economically the enslaved people is included. The *Code Noir* was meant to ensure that the enslaved people remained as coerced, unwaged labour and to ensure their labour power could be reproduced to sustain the slave system. Thus, they did not have the right to own property, as Article 21 stipulated:

*“Déclarons les esclaves ne pouvoir rien avoir qui ne soit à leurs maîtres, et tout ce qui leur vient par leur industrie, [...]”*

Furthermore, they did not have the right to carry out commercial activities, unless allowed to do so by their masters. The punishment for any claimed offences/crimes were characteristic of the barbarism of old times. Having defined the enslaved people, as per Article 39, as:

*“Voulons que les esclaves soient réputés meubles et comme tels qu’ils entrent dans la communauté, [...]”*

The *Code Noir* further confirmed that status by explicitly specifying the slaves’ inability to receive any donation/heritage from the Whites, as per Article 51:

*“[...] déclarons cependant, les dits affranchis ensemble de nègre libre, incapables de recevoir de Blancs aucune donation entre vifs à cause de mort ou autrement, [...]”*

This oppression led to resistance by the enslaved people through maroonage. Governor Labourdonnais led a most violent campaign in his attempt to defeat the maroon community, training some slaves and dogs to carry out this campaign. Yet by 1797, there were 49,000 slaves out of a population of 59,000.

### 2.3.2 Indentured Labour

For colonies to survive, there was a need for labour across the world. Whilst slave labour was the predominant form of labour, there were also indentured workers from both France and India. From 1727 to 1740, 237 French workers as ‘engagés’ were brought from France.<sup>30</sup> From India, skilled workers were brought to build Port Louis harbour and to carry out various construction projects.

### 2.3.3 Other Forms of Labour

As trade between French colonial Power with China developed, there was a tendency for the French to bring Chinese labour by force, or otherwise, to Ile de France to cater for different types of occupations, just as they used their ‘comptoirs’ in India to transport Indian slaves and skilled workers to Ile de France.

As early as 1761, during the rule of the French East India Company, 300 Chinese with wives and children from Amboyna, were kidnapped by Admiral d’Estaing and brought forcibly to Ile de France.<sup>31</sup> They were forced to work as agricultural workers and were tied by rigid laws ‘prevailing in the island’; but they resisted and the Government had to accede to their request for repatriation.

Later in 1783, during the rule of the French Royal Government, with the policy of free trade, ships of different nationalities traded with Ile de France, which also involved the transportation of labour. L. Dermigny mentioned that more than three thousand Chinese were transported by English, French and Danish ships to Ile de France.<sup>32</sup> In particular, in a vessel belonging to M. d’Arifat, he transported 132 men, including shoemakers, blacksmiths, tailors and carpenters.

## 2.4 Concluding Remarks

French occupation of Ile de France followed the path defined by Dutch Colonialism. Ile de France was used as stop-over in carrying out trade with a resourceful Asia, especially China and India. Moreover, there was intense colonial rivalry, because British colonialism was equally competing for trade and investment in India, China and other parts of Asia. The intermittent colonial wars resulted in the defeat of the French by the British, thus creating the conditions for Mauritius to undergo a long spell of the dominant colonial power of the time. The impact on labour, demography and the economy of Mauritius was considerable and has had consequences to this day.

French colonialism depended on slave labour as the dominant form of labour, looking eagerly for skilled labour in India, China and France. That labour started clearing the forests, developing sugar cultivation and contributing to the development of Port Louis and Mauritius in general. Even today, due recognition is not given to this contribution.

However, just like the Dutch, the French would cause environmental degradation, albeit probably to a lesser extent. There was a demand for wood in India, especially in Calcutta. Fire was used to clear the land, and this had a very negative impact on the environment. As cited by Dr. Teelock, “under Company administration, deforestation had also occurred at an alarming rate.”<sup>33</sup> Admittedly, Pierre Poivre would try to control the situation.

Mauritius was set to follow the pattern of ‘development/underdevelopment’ imposed by both the Dutch and French colonialism: trade, profits and capital accumulation, economic exploitation of labour and environmental degradation.

## CHAPTER 3 BRITISH COLONIAL PERIOD AND SLAVERY (1810 - 1839)

### 3.1 Introduction

The acute Anglo-French rivalry during the 18<sup>th</sup> century culminated with the utter defeat of French Colonisation in India, in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere during the Napoleonic Wars. In the Indian Ocean, Britain conquered Ile Bourbon (later Réunion) and Ile de France, to be renamed Mauritius. The strategic importance of Mauritius, with its very good harbouring facilities at Port Louis, was given due recognition; with the Treaty of Paris of 1814, Réunion was handed back to France, whilst Britain kept Mauritius.

The defeat of the French was incorporated in a Capitulation Treaty signed and ratified on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1810. Three articles of the Treaty are particularly relevant to the future development, whether political, economic and social, of the colony of Mauritius:

Article VII: That the properties of the inhabitants, whatever they may be, shall be respected.

Article VIII: That the inhabitants shall retain their religion, laws and customs.

Additional Article I: The public functionaries of the French Government shall be authorized to remain within the colony for a reasonable time in order to settle and arrange the public accounts with the inhabitants of the colony.

The blockade of Mauritius and of France by the British Navy during the period 1804-1810 had made it impossible for any meaningful level of trade to be effective for the traders community in Mauritius. The production of sugar and arrack went down drastically, and a shift to agricultural production for subsistence took place. The environment was not favourable for trade agriculture and business in general; on the contrary, speculation for commodities and spices was rife.

### 3.2 The Economics of Slavery in the period 1810-1839

#### 3.2.1 Emergence of a monocrop economy - the Sugar Industry in 1810 - 1839

At the time of the conquest of Mauritius by the British, the new Governor, Robert Farquhar, was in favour of keeping Port Louis as a free port. Moreover, the prevalence of the British Navigation Laws imposed some restrictions on trade; thus, all trade with France was carried on in British vessels, and there was an eight percent duty on goods imported from Bourbon.

During the latter part of French rule, Port Louis was a free port and trade flourished so much that a class of merchants and traders was thriving. Moreover, as from 1806, the blockade by the British Navy, in the context of Napoleonic Wars, brought economic stagnation and even famine to Isle de France.

The uncertainties of the new situation under British rule, with regard to trade on the one hand, and the access to the British market for its sugar, once Mauritius became a Crown colony, on the other hand, created the right conditions for a sugar expansion. It should be borne in mind that, during French rule, following the loss of Saint-Domingue by France, there was an increasing demand for sugar in France and Europe. By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sugar production received a major boost: by 1806, there were 60 sugar mills, with a production of 6000 tons of sugar<sup>34</sup>. Arrack production also increased considerably. During the Napoleonic Wars, the neutral countries, such as US, bought sugar from Isle de France and sold it to France and Europe.

Corsairs and privateers also contributed in that trade. Moreover, the British blockade did have an impact in the end, reducing sugar production to only about 400 tons in 1810, albeit with 60 factories in operation.

Following the British conquest, a shift towards sugar cane cultivation and sugar production built on relatively recent past developments; this shift was further enhanced by the participation of some

British officials and investors in the process. The shift, therefore, developed somewhat in earnest. Planters started to invest more, not only in land, but also in the improvement of sugar milling equipment. Thus, in 1819, Charles Telfair introduced horizontal rollers in replacement of vertical cane crushers at Bel Ombre. This new technology made the crushing process easier and more efficient, so that more cane juice was obtained. Furthermore, in 1822, a steam engine was installed for mill drive at Belle Mare factory by Adrien D'Epinay. The steam engine made cane crushing more efficient in areas where water power was not available. This, until then, had to depend on animal or wind power, or even slave power for driving the mill. The number of sugar factories then increased rather dramatically from 60 in 1810 to 157 in 1823<sup>35</sup>. Sugar production progressively increased substantially as from 1815. The land area under cultivation equally increased substantially as from 1815, until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The rate of commercial sugar extracted from cane increased from 5 % in the period 1811-1820 to 6.00 % in 1821-1830<sup>3</sup>. And it is of interest to note that, already in 1806, 4,040 hectares of land were under sugar cane cultivation, whilst this became 3,636 hectares in 1812-1820 and increased dramatically to 10,504 hectares for the period 1821-1830<sup>36</sup>.

Moreover, planters were not happy with the prices they had to pay to Britain for their sugar, as they had to pay an additional 10 shilling duty, compared to the planters in the British Caribbean. The planters pressed the British Government to equalize duties on Mauritian sugar, and in this, they had the support of Governor R. Farquhar<sup>37</sup>. They sent memorials to the British Government in 1821 and 1823. In 1825, the Trade Bill was passed, and its impact on sugar production in Mauritius, on the economy and society of Mauritius would be far reaching, and beyond anyone's expectations. The area of land under sugar cane cultivation, and the production of sugar, grew at a very impressive rate as highlighted in the table below.

Year	Area
1812-1820	9,000
1821-1830	26,000
1831-1840	40,000
1841-1850	59,500
1851-1860	110,000
1861-1870	124,000

Source: The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, 1853-1953.

The area under cane cultivation increased by around 50 % in 1831-1840, when compared to 1821-1830. Between 1841-1850, and 1851-1860, the area almost doubled to reach 110,000 *arpents*.

The implications were, and are, very serious for Natural Resource Management; so much so that whilst in 1826, forests were two-thirds of Mauritius, by 1872 the area of Mauritius covered in forests was less than one-sixth<sup>38</sup>. The impact on water supply would soon be felt.

Similarly, there were big leaps in sugar production, as highlighted in Table 3.2.

Year	Production
1815	1,252
1824	12,167
1825	10,869
1826	21,244
1830	33,936
1840	41,024
1850	55,468
1860	130,375
Source: The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, 1853-1953.	

Between 1825 and 1826, sugar production doubled and further increased by more than 50 % by 1830 (33,963 metric tons) to reach 130,375 metric tons in 1860.

This economic transformation could only take place if, on top of the availability of the British market, certain conditions could be met; there had to be a compliant labour force in sufficient numbers, sufficient capital, appropriate development of infrastructures, close collaboration between the State and the economic forces and the mastery of scientific developments in sugar manufacture, in the development of appropriate canes and in the cultivation practices at the level of field-work.

In the context of the acquisition of the appropriate scientific culture, it is appropriate to note that the interest in Sugar Botany developed by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when there was a surge in sugar cane cultivation.

This interest was enhanced by the establishment of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences in 1829 by Charles Telfair, with the support of the Colonial Government; the latter provided financial support.

Having emphasized so far the implicit role of the plantocracy in developing sugar cane cultivation and sugar production, we should now consider the direct contribution of a key partner in the creation of wealth: labour. Thereafter, we shall consider the contribution of investors in bringing the capital necessary and the role of the Colonial State.

### 3.2.2 Value of Slave Labour (1823-1835)

#### 3.2.2.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to investigate the characteristics of slave labour based on occupation, gender and age, and model the determinants of slave prices between 1823 and 1835. We construct a unique data set from Notarial Acts on public slave auctions in Mauritius involving 5,580 slaves during that period. Firstly, we model price variation in relation to the slaves' specific characteristics. Secondly, we estimate whether slave prices vary much in relation to the sugar cane harvest season. Thirdly, we compute an estimated value of slave labour, using slave prices between 1823 and 1835. We take into account how the probability of the abolition of slavery may have impacted on slave prices, and hence on the value of slave labour. This may indicate whether slave-owners would alter slave prices or not in the event that slavery were abolished or might think that they would be compensated. Our results reveal significant variations in slave prices across occupation, age and gender, such that young males who are skilled are more likely to fetch higher prices. We note a gender disparity in slave prices where males are priced higher than females. In

comparison, the prices of older and unskilled slaves are also much lower. Lastly, we note that the value of slave labour varies significantly with sugar production and the price of sugar. It was observed that a rise in the price of sugar led to a two-fold increase in the value of slave labour.

### 3.2.2.2 Methodological Framework

The foundation for measuring the value of slave labour is the application of a political-economic model of asset-pricing<sup>39</sup> in which we assume that the value of slave labor is determined by traditional economic factors and public expectations about the long-term viability of slavery. The key intuition is that slave-owners as rational economic agents should react to changes in their subjective assessments of the probability of abolition: if the probability of abolition declined, then the expected value of slaves as assets should increase, and the price of slaves should also rise.

The standard model of asset-pricing is based on present value calculation. The asset-pricing model asserts that the value of any slave depends on the discounted present value of the annual net income, plus any capital appreciation (depreciation) expected over the life of the slave. The most obvious return from owning a slave was the income gained each year from the slave as a productive labourer. This includes the following:

- i. The physical output produced by the slave (that is the marginal physical product of the slave);
- ii. The value of the slave's output (that is the price of the output times the marginal physical product); and
- iii. The cost of maintaining the slave including food, shelter and any tools which were necessary for the slave to be a productive worker.

Two observations are pertinent at this point. First, note that it is the expected stream of income over the lifetime of the slave that is relevant to the calculation of the slave's market value. Second, so long as the anticipated annual value of output of the slave at least covered the expected maintenance costs over his or her lifetime, the price of the slave will be positive. This was the minimal condition for slavery to be 'profitable'. The annual production of the slave on the farm was the most obvious source of income from the investment in a slave, but there was another source of return to slave assets. The slave-holder would benefit from any appreciation in the price of slaves owned and also any natural increase in the number of slaves. The asset-pricing model predicates a world where slave-ownership brings financial returns to the slave-holder and where the price of a slave reflects those returns over time.<sup>40</sup>

The model<sup>41</sup> captures the potential sources of variation in the present value of slave-ownership that one would expect to observe. The easiest, in economic terms, are the 'price of output' and 'marginal product of labour' variables. If the price of sugar, or the productivity of slaves working in sugar, rises, then the price of slaves is expected to rise also. The time rate of discount represents the opportunity cost of the labour tied up in labour assets.

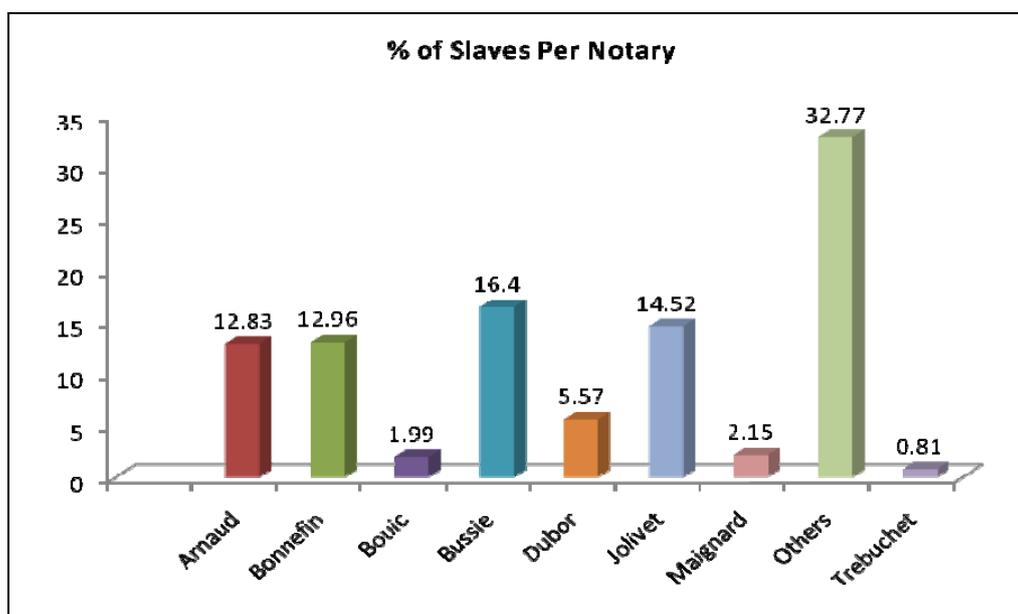
The interesting feature of the model is the impact on asset-prices of the probability that slavery will be abolished. Even a small risk of abolition had to be taken extremely seriously because it affected the value of the entire future income stream. If individuals changed their expectations, even slightly, about the persistence of the slave regime, the amount they would pay for their slave would also shift. A rational individual would then buy a slave if the expected present value of slave-labour exceeded the price at which slaves could be purchased at auction. In terms of the model, the price of emancipation would be greater under the British rule than before, with the near abolition of slavery. This, in turn, would imply that, *ceteris paribus*, expected present value of the slave also increased. On the other hand, if abolition seemed unlikely, then the price of emancipation would have remained essentially constant over time with, *ceteris paribus*, there would be no change in the expected present value of the slave.

### 3.2.2.3 Data Set and Data Representativeness

#### Data Set

The main source of information was the Notarial Acts in the General Inventory of Notaries which are located at the Mauritius Archives in Coromandel, Mauritius. Data was collected over the period 1823 to 1835 from all Notaries. Data on all variables used in our analysis were available only for 8 Notaries namely: Arnaud, Bonnefin, Bouic, Bussie, Dubor, Jolivet, Maignard, Trebuchet, as well as some others not specified in the Notarial Acts. The Acts document the sale of 5,580 slaves during auctions over this period. In addition to the selling price (in *piastres* or *livres tournois*), most records either stated the slave's gender explicitly, or that information can be inferred from the transaction's phrasing. Moreover, the slave's age, ethnicity, occupation and the auction date were reported. Figure 3.1 below shows the distribution of slaves across the main Notaries.

Figure 3.1 % of Slaves per notary



To assess its representativeness, our sample is compared to the slave population which is the 1826 census<sup>42</sup>.

Table 3 Comparing Slave 1826 Population and 1825-1835 Notarial Acts

	1826 census		Notarial Acts (1825-1835)	
	Number	%	Number	%
All Sample				
Male	33,330	62.24	4,327	77.57
Female	20,222	37.76	1,251	22.43
Total	53,552	100	5,578	100

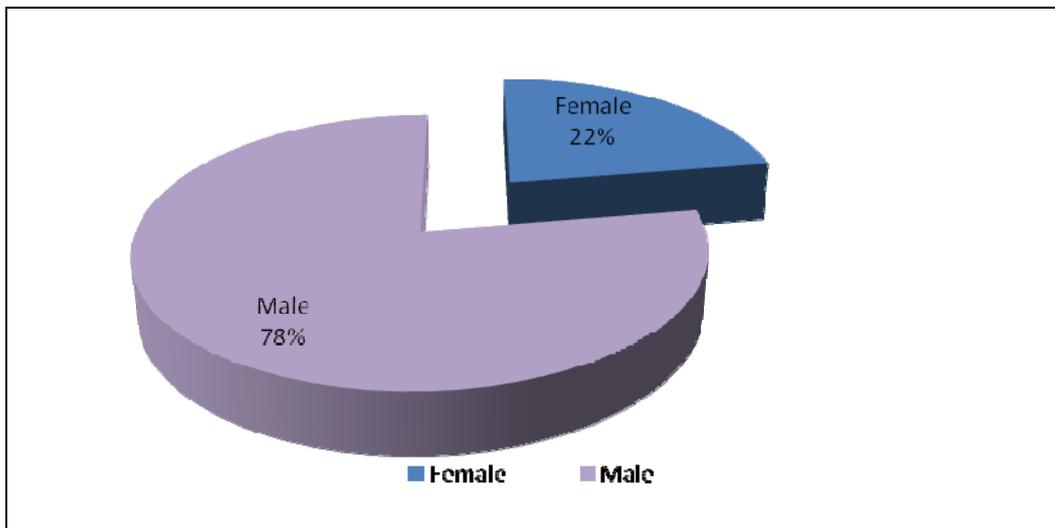
Our sample differs somewhat from the 1826 Census for the male-female ratio. We find that 62.2 per cent of the slaves are male in the census but this percentage is 77.6 in our sample. Males are therefore over-represented in the Notarial Acts<sup>43</sup>. However, our sample has the same age and ethnic characteristics as those of the slave population. We can conclude therefore that our sample is representative of the entire slave population during the period of study.

### 3.2.2.4 Data Analysis

#### (i) Characteristics of our sample of slaves

We analyse the distribution of the 5580 slaves in our sample from 1823 to 1835 by gender, ethnicity, occupation and age. Figure 3.2 below shows gender differences on our data, where 78 per cent of slaves are male and the rest, 22 per cent are female.

Figure 3.2: Distribution of Slaves by Sex



The larger share of slaves were the locally born, that is, 'Créole de Maurice' group with 41 per cent, followed by Mozambiques 33 per cent and 19 per cent Malgaches (see Figure 3.3 below). The large number of natives may possibly be the result of the ban of slave imports enforced by the British. There are reasons to believe that many planters would declare their slaves to be native to conceal the then prevailing illegal slave trade. Slaves from Madagascar and Mozambique are nearly equally represented while a small percentage consists of Indians (5 per cent). On average the ethnic distribution of slaves in this sample is a good representation of the slave population.

Figure 3.3: Distribution of Slaves

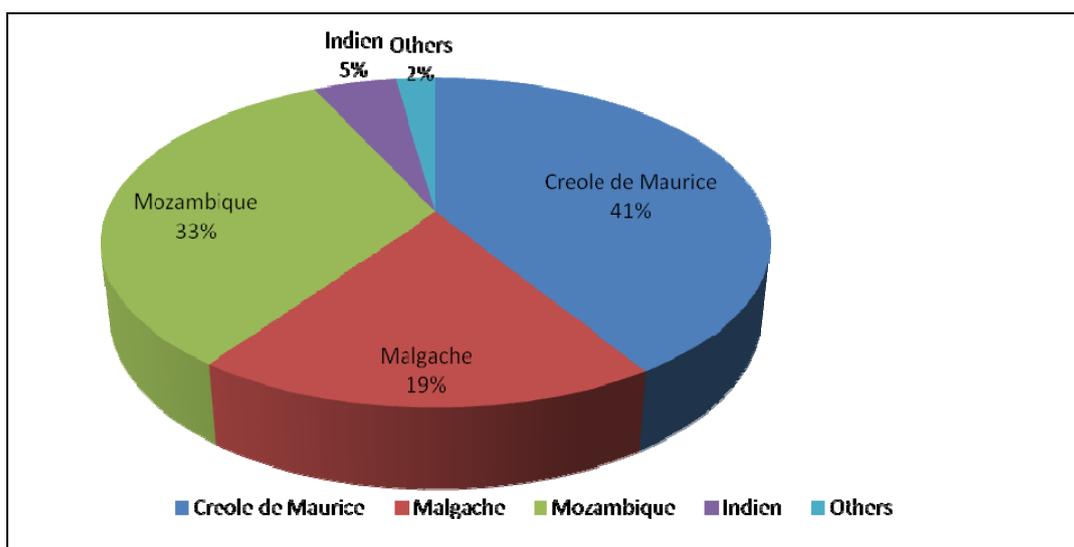
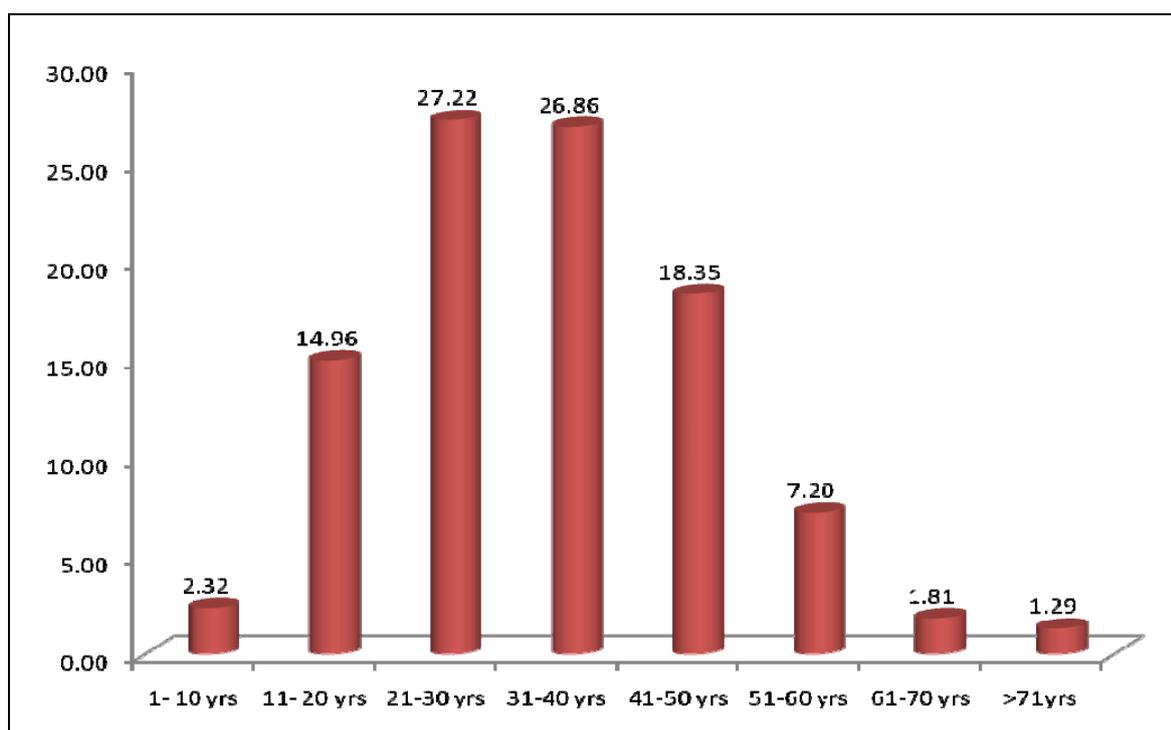


Figure 3.4: Age Profile of Slaves



From Figure 3.4 above, we note that 27.2 per cent of the slaves are within the age group 21-30 years, while 26.9 per cent are between 31-40 years. 18.4 per cent are aged 41-50 years, while around 15 per cent are between 11-20 years and 7 per cent are within the age category of 51-60 years. In addition, we note that the age-price profile which is the familiar bell-curved pattern identified in other slave economies.<sup>44</sup> We observe a higher average price of slaves of 308.56 *piastres* in the age group of 21-30 years, followed by 283.72 *piastres* for those slaves in the age group of 31-40 years. Those in the age category of 11-20 years also fetched higher prices averaging 273.77 *piastres*. The maximum price for children age below 10 years is 1,100 which is above the maximum values for the other age categories. In fact, this may well confirm the existence of an outlier in our data. As age rises, prices of slaves drop, as shown by Table 3.4 below.

(ii) Price Profile of Slaves

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Age</b>					
1- 10 yrs	129	183	134	30	1100
11- 20 yrs	833	274	137	50	1010
21-30 yrs	1516	309	146	25	1040
31-40 yrs	1496	284	148	25	1000
41-50 yrs	1022	200	122	20	1000
51-60 yrs	401	120	92	10	800
61-70 yrs	101	88	65	10	301
>71yrs	72	63	77	10	300

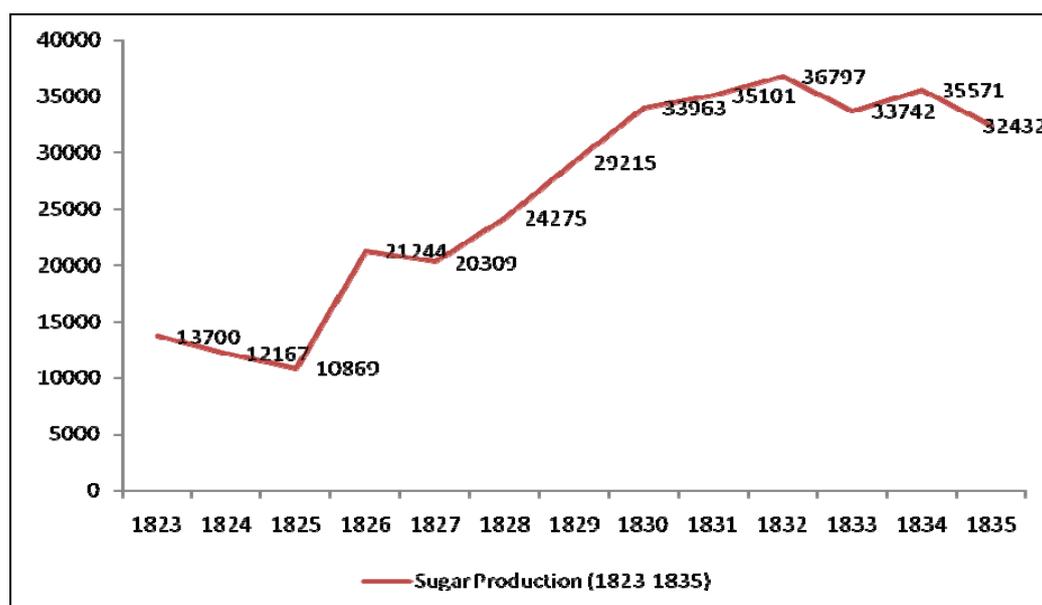
We find that male prices are higher than female prices. A male slave, irrespective of age, origin and occupation, fetched on average a price of 263.76 *piastres* relative to 227.19 *piastres* for a female slave. Further from Table 3.5 below, prices also differ across different origins. Créoles de

Maurice fetched a higher price of 283.73 *piastres* compared to the Malgaches and Mozambiques with respective prices of 261.95 *piastres* and 231.51 *piastres*. The ‘Indian’ slaves fetched the lowest price of around 150 *piastres*. In fact, non-native slaves were sold at a lower price. Creole slaves had the advantage of being better adapted to conditions in Mauritius and less subject to illness and marronage. In some way, ‘Indian’ slaves were ‘smaller’ people and were perceived to be less productive than their ‘African’ counterparts, while the ‘Creoles’ were perceived to be more adapted to local conditions.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Origin					
Créole de Maurice	2250	284	150	20	1100
Malagasy	1043	262	155	10	1000
Mozambique	1813	232	141	10	1000
Indian	264	150	94	10	600

From Figure 3.5, we show the trend in sugar production from 1823 to 1835, with a peak in 1826 and a continued upward trend till 1831, with fluctuations and an ultimate decline in 1835. The trend in sugar production over this time span is likely to be closely linked with slave prices and also anticipation about the abolition of slavery in 1835.

Figure 3.5: Sugar output from 1823-1835



Overall, we conclude that gender, ethnicity, occupation, age and sugar output appear to determine the price level of Mauritian slaves. Descriptive statistics, however, do not identify the individual effects of prices on each characteristic, as potential correlations across factors are not taken into account. For this purpose, we resort to multivariate econometric analysis.

### 3.2.2.5 Methodology

We investigate the characteristics of slave labour based on occupation, gender and age and model the determinants of slave prices between 1825 and 1835. We construct a unique data set from Notarial Acts on public slave auctions in Mauritius, involving 5,580 slaves during that period.

The microeconomic model of slave prices allows us, firstly to capture price variations in relation to slave’s characteristics and also sugar production in Mauritius. Second, we estimate whether slave

prices vary much in relation to the sugar cane harvest season. The model considers that slave prices may be sensitive to changes in the value of the goods (that is sugar) that they produced. This occurred because slave-owners expected to be able to expropriate the earnings from their slaves' labour for a longer period of time. Third, we test whether there was a change in attitudes about slavery over time. We specifically account for whether there was a change in expectations among planters about the long-run viability about slavery, and account for the "regime shift" during the periods 1810 and mid-1830s in the process that determined slave prices.

The Mincerian pricing model is applied to capture price variation in relation to the slaves' specific characteristics. The Mincerian equation is particularly appropriate when supply can sensibly be considered as price inelastic. Hence, following standard practice,<sup>45</sup> we regress log of slave prices on the slave's attributes and the slave's human capital, as well as the sugar output during that period. Moreover, we introduce timing variables and time-varying parameters to capture dynamic and seasonal effects.

The econometric model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \ln Price_{it} = & \lambda_0 + \lambda_1 Age_{it} + \lambda_2 Age_{it}^2 + \lambda_3 Sex_{it} + \lambda_4 Invalid + \lambda_5 CDM_{it} + \lambda_6 Mozambique_{it} \\ & + \lambda_7 Malgache_{it} + \lambda_8 Occupation_t + \lambda_9 \ln SugarOutput_t + \lambda_{10} Quarter_t + \lambda_{11} Time_t + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

where  $\ln Price_{it}$  is the recorded price,  $i$  denotes the slave identity,  $t$  is the time period and  $\varepsilon_t$  is the white noise error term. The explanatory variables are as follows:

- i. Slave's Attributes
  - a) Age is age of slave at time of sale;
  - b)  $Age^2$  captures the concave link between price and age;
  - c) Sex equals 1 if male; 0 if female;
  - d) Invalid equals 1 if invalid; 0 otherwise;
  - e) CDM equals 1 if 'Créole de Maurice'; 0 otherwise;
  - f) Mozambique equals 1 if of Mozambique origin; 0 otherwise; and
  - g) Malgache equals 1 if of Malagasy origin; 0 otherwise
- ii. Occupation
- iii. We include different types of occupation, namely pioche (labourer), manoeuvre (trainee mason), cuisinier (cook), maçon (mason), gardien (watchman), commandeur (overseer), charpentier (carpenter), charretier (carter), blanchisseur (laundress), calfat (caulker- factory work), cloutier (nail maker-factory work), cordonnier (shoe maker), forgeron (blacksmith), gardien de troupeaux (cattle keeper), matelot (sailor), menuisier, natteuse (mat maker), palfrenier (stable boy), pêcheur (fisherman), scieur (sawyer), and sucrier (sugar maker), among others.

The occupations were also split into factory work, field work and domestic/household work.

iv. Sugar Output:

$\ln SugarOutput$  is the log value of total production of sugar from 1823 to 1835.

v. Time of Sale:

- a) Quarter includes dummies for four Quarters in which the slaves were sold.  $Quarter_t$  equals 1 if slave was sold in  $t^{th}$  quarter; 0 otherwise where  $t = 1, 2, 3$ .
- b) Time is time dummies and equals 1 if slave is sold in a given year; 0 otherwise, where time dummies = 1823-1835

### 3.2.2.6 Findings

#### (i) Slave prices

Our results reveal significant variations in slave prices across age. Appendix 2 presents the first set of findings. First, we find a concave relationship between age and price, i.e. a term containing the square of age. A similar result was obtained for the US.<sup>46</sup> We note that on average, slave's highest prices were fetched in the age group of 21 to 30 years. A similar result was obtained<sup>47</sup> for Mauritius on a smaller sample size, where slaves at the age of 23 fetched the highest prices. Second, a male slave fetched a premium of 12.5 per cent. This estimate is larger than the 9 per cent figure by Kotlikoff, (1979) for Southern US and Newland and Segunda, (1996)<sup>48</sup> for Peru, but smaller than the premium of 25 per cent estimated by Chenny, St-Amour and Vencatachellum (2003)<sup>49</sup> for Mauritius. In fact, there was a strong demand for male slave labour which probably resulted from the demand for physical force in sugar cane plantations. Indeed, this is confirmed by very lower prices for handicapped or invalid slaves, a figure which is close to that found by Newland and Segunda (1996)<sup>50</sup> for Peru.

Third, the ethnicity dummy variable which differentiates between Malagasy, Créole de Maurice, Mozambique and others confirm the presence of a premium of 19.6 per cent for Créole de Maurice. For Cuba, it was found that non-native slaves were sold at a lower price. Native slave had the advantage of being better adapted to conditions in Mauritius and less subject to illness and marronage. 'Indian' slaves were 'smaller' people and deemed capable of lower physical effort<sup>51</sup> than their 'African' counterparts, while the 'Créoles' were perceived to be more adapted to local conditions. Mozambiques and Malgaches were considered slaves who could perform very difficult tasks.

Fourth, with respect to occupation, we find that Calfat (Caulker), Cloutier (Nail Maker), Matelot (Sailor), Scieur (Sawyer), Forgeron (Blacksmith), Commandeur (Overseer) were more likely to fetch higher prices. The premium ranges from 27.6 per cent to 45.8 per cent. These occupations necessitated particular skills. In fact, in Table 5 below, we present our second set of findings where we group the different types of occupations into three broad categories namely: factory work, household work and field work. The results reveal that factory workers fetched a higher premium of 29.8 per cent, compared to field workers, and domestic workers fetch higher prices of the order of 16.8 per cent relative to field workers. These premia are lower than those found for the US and for Peru.<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, human capital was valued positively by slave-owners despite Mauritius being an agricultural economy. Two reasons may explain this. First, Mauritius had an important rental market for slaves, regardless of occupation; urban slaves could be rented out to plantation owners, especially during the sugar cane harvest season. Therefore, as for other slaves, skilled slaves were also mobile across occupations. Moreover, the demand for skilled slaves reflects the isolation of the island from metropolises. Long journeys from Europe and the Indian Ocean implied that Mauritius had to develop local production of houses, clothing and shoes, among others, rather than relying exclusively on manufactured imports from Colonial Powers. The flexibility and local demand for output produced by skilled slaves explain their positive price premium.

Fifth, sugar production has a positive and significant effect on the prices of slaves. This result no longer holds true, once we include time dummies. This can be explained by the fact that the time dummies may also capture the change in sugar production over time, as slave trade arose mainly because of sugar production and the expansion of the plantation economy. Sixth, the time at which the sale took place is also important. A price increase of 13 per cent is found if the sale occurred in the fourth quarter. This indicates a strong seasonal component with peak prices coinciding with the sugar cane harvest<sup>53</sup>.

Lastly, time dummies are included to capture any variation in prices over time. We observe that, in the initial years of our sample, that is from 1824 to 1826, there was a negative and significant time effect on slave prices. However, as from 1827, slave prices show an upward trend. This can be explained by a peak year in slave demand and was probably a delayed consequence of the 1825 British equalisation of import duties.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, between 1825 and 1827, Mauritian sugar production nearly doubled from 10,869 to 20,309 metric tons.<sup>55</sup> Mauritian slave price increases are also consistent with price increases found elsewhere<sup>56</sup>, namely for the Atlantic Coast of Africa, where

real slave prices increased by 41 per cent between 1821-1825 and 1826-30. The cost of adjusting production to increase sugar exports could explain the two-year lag.

However, prices of slaves declined from 1831 onwards (as per Appendix 2) and 1832 (as per Appendix 3). Indeed, an expected abolition of slavery reduces an investment's time horizon used in calculating the net discounted expected value of owning a slave and, consequently, the maximum price a slave buyer is willing to pay. Slave-buyers, in 1827 till 1830, did not anticipate the 1835 abolition, despite the enforcement of the 1807 slave trade ban by the British in Mauritius after its conquest.<sup>57</sup> However, after 1830, the threat of abolition caused a decline in slave prices in the small island plantation economy.

(ii) Value of slave Labour

From the above, market prices for slaves reflect their substantial economic value. The prices for slave reflected two economic factors, namely the characteristics of the slave and the conditions of slavery such as age, sex, physical condition and skill level. A rational individual would then buy a slave, if the expected present value of slave-labour exceeded the price at which slaves can be purchased at auction.

We use data on sugar production, sugar prices and number of slaves from 1823-1835. Table 3.6 below presents the data used in the computation of the net present value of slave labour in Mauritius.

Year	Sugar Production(tonne)	Average Price of Sugar (£ per tonne)	Number of Slaves
1823	13,700	32.5	66,000
1826	21,244	33.6	63,000
1830	33,963	27.0	63,281
1835	32,432	37.4	61,652

Source: Computed

We first use equation (2) above to calculate the net present value of slave labour. Second, we estimate equation (5) which is an elaborated model of value of slave labour, taking into consideration the risk of the abolition of slavery. Even a small risk of abolition needs to be considered as this will affect the value of the entire future income stream. The possibility of slave revolts in groups, or escapes, either of which were likely to make the slave unavailable for service, would affect the value of slave labour. If an individual changed his expectations, even slightly, about the persistence of the slave regime, the amount he would pay for the slave would also shift.

The fact that slavery was profitable is obvious (Wahl, 1996).<sup>58</sup> Slavery brought in a new dimension to sugar plantations around the world, and in particular, for the Mauritian sugar industry. Investment in slaves generated high rates of return to planters. To estimate equation (2), one must decide on the appropriate interest rate. This decision is unexpectedly easy. It is quite clear that no interest rate below 3 percent makes any economic sense (Simon and Neal, 1971).<sup>59</sup> The rate of return on slaves was about 10 percent which was comparable to returns on other assets (Wahl, 1996).<sup>60</sup> Further, the  $U_t$  term in equation (2) is defined as upkeep costs in time  $t$ . In fact, upkeep costs were very minimal and would not affect our estimate. In addition, no account is taken here of any indirect economic damage to slaves and their off-springs due to the cultural and physical impoverishment of slavery, because any such account is extraordinarily speculative. Nor is any accounting made for mental and physical suffering due to slavery and its aftermath. We further assume that the useful life of the slaves vary from 10 to 20 years (Grynaviski and Munger, 2003).<sup>61</sup>

Our computation results are described in Table 7.

Table 7 Computation of Value of Slave Labour (Useful Life of the Slave - 10 years)			
	Discount Rate - 10% £	Discount Rate -7% £	Discount Rate - 3% £
1823-1825	12.22	16.12	23.59
1826-1830	35.40	46.68	68.32
1831-1835	23.63	31.15	45.60
Source: Computed			

Computation of Value of Slave Labour (Useful Life of the Slave - 20 years)			
	Discount Rate - 10% £	Discount Rate -7% £	Discount Rate - 3% £
1823-1825	4.71	8.19	17.56
1826-1830	13.65	23.73	50.84
1831-1835	9.11	15.84	33.93
Source: Computed			

We use different discount rates for simulation purposes to capture the variation in the value of slave labour over the different periods. We note that during 1823-1825, the average value of slave labour (whose expected useful life is 10 years) was in the range of £12 to £24 (around \$60 to \$120) under the different discount rates. From 1826 to 1830, which was the peak period for sugar production and sugar prices, the average value of labour nearly tripled in the range of £35 to £68. In fact, the correlation between sugar production and value of slave labour is very significant as a change in sugar output is translated into an almost two-fold change in the average value of slave labour. This 2:1 relationship is further confirmed with our above analysis on slave prices based on the Mincerian framework. The output elasticity from Tables 4 and 5 which is in the range of 0.163 to 0.175 further confirms this robust relationship between sugar output and value of slave labour. We further compute the average value of slave labour for those workers whose expected useful life is assumed to be 20 years. The value falls over the years with the age of the slave. A similar link is noted between age and price of slave in the auction sale.

#### Value of Slave Labour with the Risk of the Abolition of Slavery

Suppose the probability of escape is actually 0.001 in any given year and that the probability of emancipation is 0.001 and assume that the slave is expected to have a useful life of 10 to 20 years (similar simulation made by Grynaviski and Munger, 2003)<sup>62</sup>, the value of slave labour will change. The computation is presented in Tables 9 and 10 below.

Table 8 Computation of Value of Slave Labour (Useful Life of the Slave - 10 years)				
	Probability of Abolition	Discount Rate - 10% - £	Discount Rate -7% -£	Discount Rate - 3% -£
1823-1825	0.980	11.98	15.80	23.13
1826-1830	0.980	34.70	45.75	66.97
1831-1835	0.980	23.16	30.53	44.69
Source: Computed				

Table 9 Computation of Value of Slave Labour (Useful Life of the Slave - 20 years)

	Probability of Abolition	Discount Rate - 10%- £	Discount Rate -7%- £	Discount Rate - 3%- £
1823-1825	0.961	4.53	7.87	16.87
1826-1830	0.961	13.11	22.80	48.84
1831-1835	0.961	8.75	15.21	32.60
Source: Computed				

From the above, a low probability of abolition and emancipation would not affect the value of labour significantly. However, it may have been the case that, prior to the middle 1830s, it was widely believed that slavery would eventually not come to an end. After the mid-1830s, if our interpretation of the history is correct, there was little doubt that the slave regime would persist indefinitely. In terms of the model,  $P_{em}$  would be greater in the late 1820s. This, in turn, would imply that, *ceteris paribus*, the expected present value would increase. On the other hand, if abolition seemed unlikely, then  $P_{em}$  would have remained essentially constant over time with, *ceteris paribus*, no change in the expected present value.

#### Aggregate Value of Slave Labour vs. Aggregate Value of Sugar Output

From Table 10 below, we note that aggregate value of slave labour is much more than the value of sugar output. From 1826 to 1830, it can be observed that the total value of slave labour is twice as much as total value of sugar output in the economy. It is to be noted that any possible change in the value of the pound sterling during the period under study has not been taken into account.

Table 10 Computation of Aggregate Value of Slave Labour	Discount Rate - 7% (Useful Life 10 years)	Aggregate Value of Slave Labour	Discount Rate -7% (Useful Life 20 years)	Aggregate Value Of Slave Labour
1823-1825	£ 16.12	£1,039,740	£ 8.19	£528,255
1826-1830	£ 46.68	£2,947,399	£ 23.73	£1,498,324
1831-1835	£ 31.15	£1,945,832	£ 15.84	£989,469
Source: Computed				

Computation of Aggregate Value of Sugar Output				
Year	Sugar Production (tonne)	Average Price of Sugar (£ per tonne)	Total Value of Sugar Output	
1823	13,700	32.5	£ 445, 250	
1826	21,244	33.6	£ 713,798	
1830	33,963	27.0	£ 917,001	
1835	32,432	37.4	£ 1,212,957	
Source: Computed				

#### 3.2.2.7 Concluding Remarks

This section had analysed the characteristics and price variation of slave labour in Mauritius from 1823 to 1835. We have constructed a unique data set from Notarial Acts on public slave auctions in Mauritius involving 5,580 slaves during that period. The microeconomic model of slave prices has allowed us firstly to capture price variation in relation to slave's characteristics and also sugar production in Mauritius. Second, we have estimated whether slave prices varied much in relation

to the sugar cane harvest season. The model has considered that slave prices may have been sensitive to changes in the value of the goods (i.e. sugar) that they produced. This occurred because slave owners expected to be able to expropriate the earnings from their slaves' labour for a longer period of time. Third, we tested whether there was a change in attitudes about slavery over time.

Our findings reveal that there is a concave age-price profile and a significant price bias in favour of male slaves relative to their female counterparts. In fact, the strong demand for male slave labour which probably resulted from the demand for physical force in sugar cane plantations led to this gender price disparity. Furthermore, handicapped or invalid slaves were likely to fetch lower prices. The ethnicity dummy variable also shows that non-native slaves were sold at a lower price. Creole slaves had the advantage of being better adapted to conditions in Mauritius and less subject to illness and maroonage and were subsequently sold at a relatively higher price. With respect to occupation, we find that Calfat (Caulker), Cloutier (Nail Maker), Matelot (Sailor), Scieur (Sawyer), Forgeron (Blacksmith), Commandeur (Overseer) were more likely to fetch higher prices. These occupations necessitated particular skills; the result is thus in line with the human capital theory. This is further confirmed by the fact that factory workers and domestic workers fetched a higher premium.

In addition, sugar production has a positive and significant effect on prices of slaves. This result no longer holds true once we include time dummies. This can be explained by the fact that the time dummies may also capture the change in sugar production over time as the slave trade arose mainly because of sugar production and the expansion of the plantation economy. Lastly, the time at which the sale took place was also important. A price increase of 13% is found if the sale occurred in the fourth quarter. This indicates a strong seasonal component, with peak prices coinciding with the sugar cane harvest. Time dummies were also included to capture any variation in prices over time. We observe that in the initial years of our sample, that is from 1824 to 1826, there was a negative and significant time effect on slave prices. However, as from 1827, slave prices showed an upward trend. This can be explained by a peak year in slave demand and is probably a delayed consequence of the 1825 British equalisation of import duties.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, between 1825 and 1827, Mauritian sugar production nearly doubled from 10,869 to 20,309 metric tons.<sup>64</sup> However, prices of slaves declined as from 1831. Indeed, an expected abolition of slavery, after 1830, caused a decline in slave prices in the small plantation economy.

### 3.3 Labour Systems

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

As in the period of French colonization, colonies cannot survive without labour, and in particular without coercible, unwaged labour in the period of British colonisation from 1810 to 1839.

Moreover, there were several 'types' of labour: free labour (including that from the French period), unwaged coercible labour of the enslaved peoples of Africa, Madagascar and India, and the equally unwaged coercible labour of the convicts from British India. And lastly, in an attempt to compensate for a lack of labour on sugar estates following Emancipation, the last type of labour introduced was indentured labour, mainly from India. The unwaged coercible labour of the enslaved peoples was the driving force in wealth creation during the dramatic transformation in sugar production in this period.

#### 3.3.2 Labour of the enslaved peoples

The institution of slavery ensured that there was, on the one hand, a compliant, unwaged coercible labour to carry out all tasks required by labourers, factory workers, domestic servants and various skilled workers. On the other hand, there was a repressive legal apparatus, the *Code Noir* amongst others, to make sure that labour was indeed 'compliant'. Furthermore, the *Code Noir* dealt with various social matters such as the family of enslaved peoples which prevented consolidation of the community of the enslaved peoples.

We are not going to deal with all these issues as research has covered them to a certain extent elsewhere. In her work 'Bitter Sugar, Sugar and Slavery in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Mauritius', Dr. Teelock has

clearly demonstrated that the expansion of the Sugar Industry was solely responsible for unrelentingly causing much suffering to the enslaved peoples working on sugar estates through overwork, severe treatment and punishment, bad food supply and an 'unrelenting discipline'.

We shall, instead, highlight the fact that slavery was a system that involved the most extreme form of economic exploitation. The propaganda, value systems, belief systems and sometimes ignorance of the plantocracy, of the Colonial Society, in general, have permeated the psychology and thinking of people in even the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it is believed, in some quarters, that the labour of enslaved peoples can be conveniently ignored. Everything has been achieved by the colonists and their capital!

In section 3.2.2, we have estimated the value of the labour of enslaved peoples during the period 1823-1835, since it is agreed that the plantation economy then developed in Mauritius and, of course, slavery was 'officially abolished' on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1835.

### 3.3.3 Convict Labour

With Mauritius becoming a Crown Colony in 1815, the Sugar Industry had a major boost as Mauritius had access to the British market. Moreover, the dominant form of labour was that of the enslaved peoples; with the abolition of the slave trade, there was an urgent need for labour, although admittedly illegal slave trade flourished until around 1827, with some estimating that up to 30,000 enslaved individuals were illegally transported to Mauritius.

The first Governor of Mauritius, Robert Farquhar, was very much aware of the utility of Indian convicts in public works projects and in private enterprise, since he was Lieutenant Governor of Penang, an established destination for Indian convicts. Usually, in Mauritius slaves were used in public works. Further, the planters had to provide the Government with a certain number of slaves as "*Corvée*" labour every year.

There was thus a major issue of labour supply and Governor Farquhar found in the importation of Indian convict labour an opportunity to increase the workforce and, at the same time, to reduce labour costs. Convict labour needed only some rations for upkeep, as prisoners were already housed in prisons and there was no need to cater for further housing. As Clare Anderson wrote: "Convicts were cheap, controllable and easily replaced".<sup>65</sup> Their labour played a most important role "in building the communications necessary for the development of the sugar industry which was to place Mauritius at the centre of global trading networks."<sup>66</sup>

Thus, from 1815 to 1837, there would be a regular supply of mainly Indian convicts from Bombay and Bengal, and some from Ceylon; there were about 1500 of them in all. In 1815, there were 316 convicts of which the number increased progressively to 735 in 1818; thereafter, the number stabilised at around 600, but by 1834, it reached a peak of 986. In 1837, in the year when transportation of convicts took place for the last time, there were 730; this number would progressively decrease through deaths.

With time, the convicts were becoming old and invariably less productive. Furthermore, by 1834, the importation of indentured labourers from India started. It was felt that the convicts might have a negative influence on the newly-arrived indentured labourers. Thus in 1839, it was decided that there would be no more transportation of convicts. In fact, in 1847, a committee of Enquiry was set up to enquire into "the most advantageous mode of disposing of the labor of the Indian convicts [...]."<sup>67</sup> After having classified the convicts as effective, half-effective and invalid, the Committee reached the conclusion that:

- (i) "The cost of the maintenance of each effective labourer, after allowing for the ineffective, is as great as that of hired labourers"; and
- (ii) "Free" labourers from India, introduced expressly for the purpose of working on public work contracts, would be as cheap and effective as convict labour.

The major importance of convicts in the expansion of the Sugar Industry labour is highlighted by the fact that, in 1837 and in 1839, there were requests to reinstitute convict labour, because considerable savings would be made through their use in repairing roads and bridges which were

deteriorating. With the expansion of the Sugar Industry, the network became of vital importance for the transportation of sugar cane and sugar. As in the case of the ex-slaves, the convicts would be done away with, once an alternative source of cheaper labour had been found: indentured labour.

### 3.3.4 Indentured labour

With the abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807 in the British Empire, there would progressively be a problem of labour availability to sustain the various plantation economies in the Caribbean and in the Indian Ocean. In the Caribbean, with the increasing occurrence of slave rebellions, the matter was still worse.

With that in mind, Robert Farquhar, who had experience in the Moluccas Islands and experience as Governor of Penang as from 1802, had witnessed the presence of Chinese immigrants and, in particular, of Chinese labour in these British possessions. In 1807, he wrote to the British Government a document entitled 'Suggestions arising from the abolition of African Slave trade for supplying the demands of the West Indian colonies with agricultural labourers', whereby he proposed "a plan for the introduction of Chinese labourers, already so successfully employed in the British settlements in the Eastern seas, into the British colonies in the West Indies".<sup>68</sup> But the plan was not accepted because it was claimed that there were practical problems in its implementation. Moreover, this episode indicated already that the abolition of the slave trade was creating serious labour problems for the various plantation economies/societies in the British Empire. There is no doubt that, with the proposed abolition of slavery, the labour problem would become very acute, indeed. Certainly, for Mauritius, the planters were exploring, well before the enacting of the corresponding Legislation, alternatives ways to supply labour. The issue was on the agenda of the British Government. In 1827, A. D'Epinay was possibly the first planter who recruited and employed contractual Indian labourers. H. Ly Tio Fane-Pineo, in her work *Lured away - The life history of Indian Cane Workers in Mauritius* and R. Quenette in his book *La fin d'une Légende* referred to this.

In 1829, there were attempts to recruit indentured labour by planters from Singapore and India, without the involvement of the Government. On their arrival in Port Louis, they were sent straightaway to the sugar estates of the planters who recruited them. According to H. Ly Tio Fane Pineo, the labourers felt cheated because they had a meager salary and were assimilated to slaves. The labourers protested openly against their working conditions and left the cane fields. The Government had no alternative but to repatriate these labourers; moreover, the planters had to cover the costs involved.

Following this experiment, the planters sought and obtained the participation of the Government in the recruitment of indentured labourers from British India; the contracts would be signed before a Magistrate by the parties concerned. That would ensure that especially the indentured labourers would abide by the terms of the contract and, in particular, that the labourers did not change the sugar estate owner who engaged them in the first instance.

In the end, British planters, Arbuthnot and Hunter, recruited 36 'Hill coolies' who landed in Mauritius on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1834. And by 1842, there were 26,090 indentured labourers from British India, with 25,076 males and 1,014 females. This recruitment was made possible because the Arbuthnots were merchants and industrialists in British India. As owners of an indigo factory, the Arbuthnots in India identified the 'right' type of prospective 'Hill coolies'. Further, this business of labour recruitment would develop both in British India and in Mauritius, with many companies and businessmen involved. The British Empire already made use of that reservoir of cheap labour in Asia; this new development would create conditions for the British Empire to make enormous profits in this new lucrative business across the oceans.

### 3.3.5 The Labour of the Recaptives or the liberated slaves

Following the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire in 1807, the British Government sent its Navy to seize enslaved peoples on board French and other ships. Those slaves were referred to as 'liberated Africans', a misnomer as they were far from free. In effect, they were given to private employers or a Government Officer as apprentices or indentured labour for a period of up to fourteen years. In some cases, in spite of a somewhat liberal Legislation, these new apprentices were very harshly treated, no better than the slaves. Hence, historians are now using the term 'recaptive' Africans to describe this category of slaves/apprentices

During the period 1811 to the early 1840s, given the rapid expansion of the Sugar Industry and given the abolition of slavery and the uncertainties associated with the importation of indentured labour, these 'recaptive' Africans would play a most important part in helping to mitigate the unavailability of a sufficient labour force, somewhat like the Indian convicts. Moreover, the carrying over of 'recaptive' Africans was kept going until the late 1860s, when it was felt that the source of indentured labour from British India was reliable and provided much cheaper labour than the 'recaptive' Africans.

In 1811, the first group of 'recaptive' Africans, captured in an Arab vessel in May off the coast of East Africa, was brought to Mauritius.<sup>69</sup> The Colonial Authorities entrusted to the Collector of Customs the responsibility of 'taking care' of the 'recaptive' Africans and of allocating them to employers/Government Officials. This first group was handed over as menial workers to the Police Department.

During the period 1813-1827, according to the Collector of Customs 1827 list of 'recaptive' Africans, 2998 of them were transported to Mauritius. Many were very young, aged less than fifteen years old. The Collector of Customs gave preferential treatment to the Governor and Government Officials, so that about 500 of the African 'recaptives' were allocated to them. The three who received the most were: Governor R. Farquhar with 47, the wealthy planter/Government Official Charles Telfair with 91, and Charles Stoker, District Commander with 45.

Furthermore, during that same period, 206 of the 'recaptive' Africans were employed as labourers and manual workers within the Local Government, and 224 were in the armed forces. By late 1820s, the Colonial Government decided to extend the contract of the Government's 'recaptives' by seven years. It turned out that the Government was able to secure a pool of cheap labour from among the 'recaptives' at a time when the demand for labour was increasing. As it has been mentioned before, in 1829 there were failed attempts to recruit Chinese and Indian indentured labour from Singapore and India.

Moreover, the 'recaptive' Africans had a very mixed experience although, by Law/Regulations, they were supposed to have better working conditions than the enslaved population at large. There was a high death-rate on the one hand; on the other hand, a high percentage of them marooned. For example, between 1820 and 1826, 1085 males and 272 females marooned, but about 64% of them were re-captured.<sup>70</sup> This may explain why certain observers of that time have described the so called 'benevolent' attitudes/policies of British Colonial Authorities to the 'recaptive' Africans as a disguised slave trade and a pool of cheap labour readily available, as and when required.

## 3.4 Banking, Finance and the Economy

### 3.4.1 The Economy in 1810-1839: An Overview

The period prior to the British conquest of Mauritius was characterized by Anglo-French Colonial Wars and, in particular, the Napoleonic Wars. Trade suffered a lot; speculation was rife; industrial production went down, and uncertainties did much harm to trade and business in general. Following the British conquest in 1810, the British Navigation Acts initially impeded trade, especially with the ban on foreign ships, in spite of a declared policy of free trade by Governor Farquhar.

The Merchant Class was flourishing before the British blockade, as from 1806. But the immediate post-war period impacted negatively on trade and business in general for that class. Shipbuilding

went down because, on the one hand, there was a decrease in demand for ships and, on the other hand, there was stiff competition from shipyards in India and New South Wales. Furthermore, there was a great fire of 1816 which destroyed about half of the warehouses and buildings of the Merchant Class, followed by some destructive tropical cyclones.

According to A. d’Epinay,<sup>71</sup> “[...] pas un navire ne quitte l’île sans emporter plusieurs des riches familles en Europe [...]. Comme tous ces colons émigrants sont précisément ceux qui ont réalisé de la fortune, il en résulte que la Colonie devient de plus en plus pauvre.” There is no doubt that some of these emigrants were possibly leaving because they could not live under British rule. Moreover, the capital exodus resulting from movements of the wealthy would be a recurring feature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mauritius.

What was the response of the new British Colonial Government in Mauritius? Very early on, Governor Farquhar encouraged the setting up of the Bank of Mauritius in 1813 and later founded a *Société Agricole* with the objective of encouraging the development of the Sugar Industry. Further, in response to the requests for assistance from the Merchant Class after the fire, the Government took two measures. Firstly, a first loan of 100,000 dollars, followed by a second loan of 200,000 dollars were granted to the newly-created Bank of Mauritius; and secondly the Government passed, as a temporary and exceptional measure, the suspension of the Navigation Acts. As a consequence, Mauritius became a free port which would favour both external trade and agricultural production, with French ships being allowed to come to Port (see-table below).

Year	No. of British Ships	No. of Foreign Ships (of which French ships)	Total
1816	237	109 (84)	346
1817	272	148 (101)	420
1818	214	139 (105)	353
1819	234	128 (105)	362
1820	232	69 (56)	297

Source: Mauritius Almanachs

The impetus to trade was obvious, given that the French ships also stopped over at Réunion Island (ex-Bourbon Island). Equally, in the aftermath of the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, France felt the need to import sugar. Thus, as from 1816, Mauritius benefited from the temporary suspension of the Navigation Acts by exporting sugar to France, the more so since import tariffs in France were lower than in Britain, and French ships were coming to Port Louis. Thus agricultural production benefited too. But this trade came to an end in 1820, following lobbies from Réunion Island.

Meanwhile, the plantocracy lobbied the Colonial Government intensely in Mauritius and the Imperial Government in London to do away with the preferential tariffs on sugar imports into Britain in favor of the British West Indies. And, in 1820, Britain granted freedom of trade, so that Port Louis became a free port. In 1821, the British West Indies lobby in Britain succeeded in fighting back by arguing that Mauritius could not benefit simultaneously from free trade and preferential tariffs for its sugar.

In Mauritius, there were debates between the Merchant Class and the Planters Class. It should be noted, however, that with the expansion of the Sugar Industry, the Merchant Class (of French *colons*) would progressively invest in the very profitable new business. The Planter Class was led by A. d’Epinay who resolutely defended the interests of the expanding Sugar Industry, emphasizing that Mauritius should rely more on sugar production and should lobby for preferential import tariffs to Britain rather than for a waiver from the Navigation Acts. Meanwhile, sugar production received a boost from 1820 to 1825 thanks to exports to France and to the waiver from the Navigation Acts.

Nevertheless, the preferential tariffs for the British West Indies, together with the freight differential, represented a major disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the British West Indies, which proved to be

powerful competitors within the British Empire. The planters in Mauritius found support through the Sir R.T. Farquhar, ex-Governor, and other supporters of free trade in the House of Common, like Mr. Huskisson, then President of the Board of Trade. The Mauritius Trade Bill came to British Parliament on 21 March 1825. In the debates, Mr. Huskisson, in presenting the resolution, said:

*“This island is cultivated in the same manner as the West-India islands. I know of no advantage it has over them; whilst its greater distance, by increasing the expense of freight, and its frequent exposure to hurricanes would seem to place it under some natural disadvantages [...] I do not now apprehend that any serious prejudice can accrue to the West-India planter, as the quantity of sugar grown in that island is not considerable.”<sup>72</sup>*

The last comment would turn out not to be the case in the future, as sugar production increased exponentially over the next four decades in Mauritius. For his part, Sir R. Farquhar had this to say, amongst other thing:

*“Being thus frustrated in their speculation as to the free trade, they naturally became an agricultural colony, and in consequence of the successive hurricanes which destroyed the cotton and clove plantation, sugar was the only produce which enabled them to provide for their own subsistence, or to pay their taxes [...] Bourbon being severed, by the Treaty of Paris, from Mauritius, enjoyed all her ancient advantages [...] Mauritius was placed in this anomalous situation, since her connexion with Britain, that she was sacrificed to European policy; and, as to her trade, depressed, under some reference to our India system.”*

Sir R. Farquhar used some of the arguments of the plantocracy in Mauritius, with regard to the comparison with Bourbon and with regard to the impact of hurricanes on the destruction of cotton and clove plantations. Moreover, Sir R. Farquhar also placed the plight of Mauritius in the context of overall British Imperial policy. At the time of the British conquest, Mauritius was under the *aegis* of the East India Company, hence this influence on ‘our India system’. Indeed, Mauritius was conquered because of its strategic importance to the British Empire; for the same reason, and to some extent in defence of free trade, there would be an equalization of tariffs on the imports of sugar into Britain for all the colonies of the Empire.

The impact of the tariff equalization was enormous: the rapid expansion of the Sugar Industry, the flow of capital from British credit houses and merchant companies and the resulting investment in machinery and new technology. The Planter Class, conscious of the fierce competition for sugar in the British Empire and on the world market, was ready to attract British capital by mortgaging its sugar estates. A. d’Epinay wrote in his memo to Lord Goderich:

*“Une quantité considérable de machines fut en peu de temps achetée de la Métropole, plus de 150 machines à vapeur destinées aux sucreries, avec une bonne quantité de machines de tous genres, roués, alembic, générateurs, etc., furent importés dans la colonie. La dépense totale pour ces achats des machines importées à L’île Maurice pendant les années 1826, 1827, 1828 et 1829 s’évaluent à £ 140,058 qui, d’après Monsieur Huskisson, dépasse de beaucoup les achats des colons des autres colonies avec les marchands de la Métropole. Toutes les plantations furent hypothéquées afin de subvenir aux frais de construction de différentes manufactures et peu des colons sont parvenus à s’acquitter.”<sup>73</sup>*

In addition, there would be a fair number of British traders and businessmen who moved to Mauritius, becoming involved in various economic activities: internal trade, shipping, buying sugar estates, etc. They would join the Merchant Class of French *colons* and of Coloured People. It is of importance to note that there was already a Merchant Class of Indian origin, mainly South Indian, since the days of French colonialism; by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and during that same century, there would be another flow of Indian merchants from Gujarat and Bombay. They were involved in internal trade and external trade, especially trade with India. Some of these two strands of traders would be able to accumulate sufficient capital to become major owners of immovable properties, in particular, of sugar estates as well as money lenders.<sup>74</sup>

Similarly, as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were a few Chinese inhabitants in Mauritius; with the encouragement of Governor R. Farquhar, Chinese immigrants came to Mauritius, with some becoming traders, whilst others would have such occupations as marine carpenters, sailors and artisans.

### 3.4.2 Bank of Mauritius - 1813

During the period of French colonialism, there was no bank operating in Isle de France. It was only with the British conquest that Banking Laws were introduced and the first Bank was set up with capital from private individuals and with the active support of the Governor Sir Robert Townsend Farquhar. It is to be noted that Sir Robert Farquhar, through a proclamation dated 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1813, tried to institute a 'sort of Government Bank,' but he very quickly gave up the idea.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1813, a proclamation was issued whereby the new Bank of Mauritius was set up on the principle of a Chartered Bank. That same proclamation contained equally the new Banking Laws.

The initial capital was \$200,000; 200 shares of 1000 dollars each were issued. It was essentially an association of private individuals. It seemed that the Bank initially won over the confidence of the merchants, business in general and the public.

Moreover, the fire of 1816 was so devastating that many persons doing business in Port Louis suffered heavy losses. As a consequence of this, access to credit was severely affected. Thus the Bank called for assistance from the Government in October 1816. In its response, whilst the Government was favorable to various requests made, it made it clear that the Bank and the Government should be independent and that, in particular, it could not accede to the request that "*Government should guarantee the Bank paper in circulation.*"<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, the Government agreed to the following:

- i. The Government would receive "Bank paper into the public chest".
- ii. A loan to the Bank of 100,000 dollars.
- iii. An increase in the capital of the Bank by 100,000 dollars was allowed through the issuing new shares worth 100 dollars each.

Further, the Government recommended that:

- a) "*the object of the Government being to facilitate as much as possible the means of circulation among the merchants, recommends that no individual or mercantile house should in future have a credit exceeding 20,000 dollars at the bank and that no old debtor to that amount should have any new credit.*"
- b) "*a company Inspector shall be named by the Government, to be present, as a check upon the proceedings, at all the sittings of the Actionnaires*".

Also, the Government bought the 164 unsold new Bank shares and 8 original Bank shares which amounted to 24,400 dollars. Thus, Government had a direct stake in the Bank, on top of the loan of 100,000 dollars; this explained recommendation (b) mentioned above. In spite of all these measures, the Merchant Class was complaining of difficulties in acceding to credit from the Bank, and in May 1818, the Government granted a further loan of 200,000 dollars at a rate of interest of 6%.

As regards recommendation (a) the Government was concerned that a few individuals or companies were having access to a greater share of credit facilities.

Another problem facing the Bank and the economy was the shortage of specie. Moreover, in 1825, the Bank was closed due to bankruptcy and went into liquidation. It is to be noted that among the Directors of the Bank, there were certain well-known merchants: Gaillardon, Charles Pitot, Séries.

### 3.4.3 Petition for a new bank: 1826

Following the collapse of the Bank of Mauritius, and the equalization of tariffs on sugar imports in Britain, there was an attempt to set up a new bank in 1826. A petition was sent to the Governor to that effect, giving full details of prospective shareholders, initial capital and of its constitution. The need to provide a more solid foundation to the new bank by mobilizing ‘considerable capital’ and by being able to have sufficient specie, whenever necessary, was felt; the petitioners proposed to look for capital abroad.

The petitioners had a provisional committee constituted by the following personalities: Charles Pitot, J. Wiehe, Maure, Séries, G. Rougier Lagane, Gaillardon, J. Davy Junior, J. Delort and P. d’Epinay. The petitioners looked for capital from abroad; and the credit house, Cuttenden, Mackillogh & Co, based in Calcutta, agreed to contribute 100,000 *piastres* to the initial capital and to provide credit facilities of 300,000 *piastres*.

It was then proposed that the traders in Mauritius, mainly the French *colons*, would contribute 200,000 *piastres* to the initial capital, with each share priced at 1000 *piastres*. Thus the total initial capital would have been 300,000 *piastres*.

But the Acting Governor, General Hall, rejected the proposal in a letter dated 13 February 1827.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, the planters would persevere and would come up with a new proposal in 1832.

### 3.4.4 The Mauritius Bank - 1832

The attempt to set up a bank with the help of British capital would succeed in 1832. A. d’Epinay and his brother P. d’Epinay were the personalities who developed the necessary rapport with the British Financial houses Reid Irving & Co., Barclay Brothers & Co., and Fairlie Bonham, who would contribute significantly to the starting capital of 500,000 dollars (i.e. £ 100,000).<sup>77</sup> The contribution of the British investors was as follows (in dollars):

Reid Irving & Co.	85,000
Barclay Brothers & Co.	50,000
Fairly Bonham & Co.	50,000
A. W. Blanc	5,000
E. Robinson	5,000
Col. Johnston	5,000
	200,000
Source: The Charter of Mauritius Bank MNA	

The 300,000 dollars left were to be obtained by subscription in the colony of Mauritius. As the prevailing Banking Laws allowed for the Bank to start its operations once three-fifths of the starting capital has been raised, effectively, once 100,000 dollars were subscribed to in Mauritius, The Mauritius Bank started its operations. It appears that the remaining two-fifths of the capital were hardly subscribed to. Thus, the British investors would have contributed about sixty percent of the equity of the Bank.

Adrien d’Epinay would be the Attorney of the Bank and would be appointed Director as well. There was a Board of nine Directors, three of them would be British. The first three British Directors were: Andrew Laing, James Alexander Pierson, William Thompson, who could be replaced, when necessary, by respectively Charles Telfair, Edward Chopman and Henry Passmore. It is of interest to note the name of Charles Telfair who played an important role as a planter, a businessman and Government Official as from the British conquest. Among the first Directors in Mauritius, were Gaillardon, R. Laganne, Henry Adam, d’Epinay; later on, C. Wiehe would join them.

The Bank had to face the perennial issue of specie/metallic currency (mentioned early on) which was aggravated with the emancipation of slaves and the arrival of Indian indentures labourers. It is true that the labourers, who were paid in metallic currency, tended to save them by hoarding and brought them to India, whenever they returned. Further, with the influx of Indian labourers, consumption increased, causing an increase in imports which were paid in metallic currency. Moreover, there were other factors which contributed to the drain on the metallic currency: the

unfavorable balance of trade with India, Madagascar and Bourbon, Government policy of limiting expenditure and the holding back the excess revenue. In 1841, in a letter to Governor Sir Lionel Smith, G. Robinson, President of the Mauritius Bank complained:<sup>78</sup>

*“Your Excellency is doubtless aware of the high rate of wages paid to all classes of the labouring population, a rate, I may be allowed to observe, far beyond what is necessary for their wants, or even for their lavish indulgence: the fact, however, is undoubted, and the consequences of it are that a very large sum of money is monthly abstracted from the circulation of the colony, hoarded by the Indian labourers and those of other countries, until the time may arrive when they leave the colony enriched by their highly paid labour.”*

And yet, the labourers were being paid miserable wages. Both the British and French business communities jointly wanted very, very cheap labour. Similarly, as early as 1832, the Directors of the Bank wrote a letter to Governor Sir Charles Colville, opposing some amelioration policies in favour of the enslaved people. The Directors included: Gaillardon, A. d’Epinay, Andrew Laing, Pierson, W. Thompson, R. Laganne.

Faced with the scarcity of specie, the Mauritius Bank and the Mauritius Commercial jointly wrote a petition on 27 June 1842, requesting Government to undertake to furnish Indian labourers (who wished to return) with Bills on Calcutta and Madras, to accept demand for a local currency and to pass a law prohibiting the export of specie. The Government rejected the demands, but agreed to make monthly advances to both banks of £ 1200 for four months, to be paid back £800 monthly with interests.

The issue of the need for a local currency would be raised again during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further, through the Mauritius Bank, there was flow of capital back to Britain, especially to Reid Irving & Co. By 1847, with the economic crisis in London, Reid Irving & Co would collapse and so would the Mauritius Bank.

It must be highlighted that the Mauritius Bank did all it could to oppose the setting up of the Mauritius Commercial Bank in 1838; thereafter, there would be intense rivalry between the two banks. On the local front, in the polemics between *Le Mauricien* (which supported the Mauritius Commercial Bank) and *Le Cernéen* (the newspaper of A. d’Epinay), the point was made that the Mauritius Bank was charging a set of commissions to its customers, thus making credit very expensive.

#### 3.4.5 The Mauritius Commercial Bank - 1838

Just like the Mauritius Bank in 1832, the driving force behind the creation of the Mauritius Commercial Bank was the British business community, in particular the traders based in Port Louis or London trading houses with an office in Mauritius. The main company was Blyth, Brothers and Company. The latter played a most important part in winning support for the bank from both the Colonial Government and the Imperial Government in London.

The planters and traders in Mauritius found strategic partners in the British business community, just as the Mauritius Bank had done earlier on.

The starting capital was meant to be 500,000 *piastres*; with 3/5 of that amount, i.e. 300,000 *piastres*, the Bank started its operations on September 1838, as allowed by the Banking Regulations. Out of 198 individuals/group of individuals who bought the shares, about ¾ were mainly the French *colons*, and the rest were from the British business community; there were also a few Coloured and two Indians who brought shares. Moreover, about fifty percent of the shareholders bought less than five shares; thus they did not have voting rights, not owning the minimum of 5 shares.

A fair percentage (about 25%) of shareholders was planters or planters/traders. For example, Paul Froberville received financial compensation of £9020 in 1837 for 282 slaves; he was a big planter to possess so many slaves. Similarly, such British shareholders as Hunter, Chapman, Arbuthnot, were planters or planters/traders.

### 3.5 The Economics and Politics of Abolition of slavery

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

To understand the various issues concerning abolition of slavery, and the way people would react to them, it is important to recapitulate the social forces in Mauritius involved at that time. There was the British Colonial State in Mauritius and the British Imperial Government; the Planters Community were predominantly French, with some British planters. Moreover, there was an important presence of the British traders or financiers either through a company in Mauritius, representing their interests or through an office set up in Mauritius, and they provided credit to the planters to such an extent that around three quarters of the sugar estates were effectively owned by them in the early 1830s;<sup>79</sup> there was the labour of the numerous enslaved people, and finally the Free Coloured People.

The process leading to the abolition of slavery on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1835, had been dealt with thoroughly by various authors. We mention here certain salient features. Two events of the French period are of relevance: firstly, the victory of the enslaved people of Saint-Domingue against French colonialism and, secondly, the arrival of two delegates from France, Baco and Burnel, in Isle de France, to implement the French Revolution's decision to abolish slavery in the French Empire. The French plantocracy was worried that the slaves in Ile de France might emulate the events of St. Domingue. After all, they were dead against the abolition of slavery and they succeeded in getting Baco and Burnel sent back. After the British conquest, the plantocracy carried out an illegal slave trade, succeeding to bring into Mauritius about 30,000 slaves according to the Commission of Enquiry of Colebrook and Blair, and this with the connivance of British Governors and British Officials. Thereafter, they opposed the amelioration policies in favour of the slaves to such an extent that the whole programme turned out to be a failure. Yet again, they succeeded in initially getting Jeremie, sent by the British Government to implement the policy of abolition, returned after forty days of economic standstill. They sent on two champions, a lawyer, Mr. A. d'Epinay, to represent and defend their interests in 1830 and 1833 in relation mainly to the abolition of slavery and their representation in governmental decision-making.

#### 3.5.2 The Act for the Abolition of Slavery

On the 28<sup>th</sup> August 1833, the House of Commons in Britain approved "An Act for the Abolition of slavery throughout the British colonies; for promoting the Industry of the manumitted slaves, and for compensating the persons hitherto entitled to the services of such slaves."

The title of the Act is very misleading from one aspect in particular; this twenty-three page Act states on the last page, as per clause LXIV, the following:

*"And be it further enacted, that nothing in this Act contained doth or shall extend to any of the Territories in the possession of the East India Company, or to the Island of Ceylon, or to the Island of Saint Helena."*

This clause clearly contradicts the title which refers to abolition "throughout the British colonies". The non-abolition of slavery in India (one Territory in the possession of the East India Company) may have had a bearing on the development of the situation in Mauritius. Slavery in India would be abolished in 1843.

By this time, since the mid 1830s Indian indentured labourers were imported to Mauritius from a reservoir of very cheap labour in British India. Already, the policies of British Colonialism in India on land had caused an increase in landless peasants. With the maintenance of slavery in India, there is no doubt that, to some extent at least, this had contributed to the depression of wages of the Indian labour force; in turn, the prospective indentured labourers would be in a position to accept very low wages.

Thus, the following question arises: By so doing, did the British Imperial Government, possibly indirectly, contribute to the refusal of planters to pay decent wages to the emancipated enslaved people and hence to contribute to the latter's leaving the plantations 'en masse'?

Moreover, it is interesting to note that there were many debates and lobbies from the West Indian planters/slaves-owners before the Act was passed. The initial idea was not to pay any compensation to the slave-owners but to have a long period of apprenticeship; the latter which provided unwaged labour to the slave-owners would have helped to pay for the costs of emancipation. Thus, the enslaved peoples themselves were to finance their emancipation! Thereafter, in February 1833, the British Government came up with a proposition of £15 million loan and twelve years' apprenticeship<sup>13</sup>. The lobby of the West Indian planters/slave-owners and British financial houses led to the Government changing the loan to a gift and then to increase the gift to £20 million. It was then that the period of apprenticeship was reduced to six years for praedial slaves. It appears that there was concern about the implementation of the Act in so far as the various conditions attached to it are concerned. In fact, at a House of Commons sitting in June 1835, Mr. F. Buxton moved

*"That a select Committee be appointed to inquire whether the conditions on which the £20, 000, 000 £ were granted for the Abolition of Slavery have been complied with."*<sup>80</sup>

Moreover, after debates and the speech of Sir George Grey, Mr. F. Buxton withdrew his motion.<sup>81</sup>

However, the implementation of the Act in Mauritius justified the apprehension of Mr. Buxton. An Order in Council of September 17, 1834 defined the ways and means by which the apprenticeship system was governed. As Moses D. E. Nwulia wrote,

*"The Order in Council imposed heavy penalties on the apprentices for non-performance or ill-performance of their duties, whether the duties were obligatory or contractual.*

*Compared to the penalties imposed on the apprentices, the masters suffered only slight penalties for not fulfilling their responsibilities towards their apprentices."*<sup>82</sup>

The plantocracy wanted to sustain the expansion of the Sugar Industry and the Colonial State in Mauritius supported their efforts, irrespective of the impact on apprentices. The Order in Council turned out to be worse still at the level of implementation. So much so, that Lord Glenelg, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote a despatch to Governor Nicolay, asking him to call to the attention of the Special Magistrates "the frequency of punishments generally and particularly to those of a corporal nature which are stated to be far beyond the proportion in the West Indies of a merely similar extent of population."<sup>83</sup> Thus, in many ways, apprenticeship in Mauritius was similar to slavery, without the whipping, in most cases!

Furthermore, through the issue of the illegal importation of slaves during the 1810s and early 1820s, was raised during debates at House of Commons and those of Lords, it was found by Lord Glenelg that:

*"Their Lordships must all feel that the difficulties which surrounded the identification of any individual negro who had been illegally imported into Mauritius were all but insurmountable."*<sup>16</sup> During the debates, Lord Brougham said "that if we pay 500, 000 livres or 600, 000 livres in respect of illegally imported slaves, or in other words, for felony and piracy, it would be one of the most hateful operations ever perpetuated in the financial concerns of this country."<sup>84</sup>

### 3.5.3 The Economics of Abolition

The British Imperial Government agreed to pay £20 million in compensation to the slave-owners throughout the British Empire. The plantocracy in Mauritius, both British and French, together with the British credit houses obtained £2.1 million. The plantocracy sent a representative, Mr. A. d'Epinay, to Britain to defend their interests: firstly, to obtain financial compensation and secondly, for the British Government not to impose any penalty on the illegally imported slaves. However, it was difficult for Mr. d'Epinay to meet the Colonial Secretary or Officials of his Office, the representatives of credit houses, like Reid & Irving and Barclay & Co. made representations on his behalf and succeeded in organizing some meetings for Mr. d'Epinay to have with the Colonial

Office. It is to be noted that Reid & Irving and Barclay were those who contributed a major proportion of equity of the Mauritius Bank whose Director was Mr. A. d'Epinay.

On the other hand, the British Business Community in Mauritius expressed its concern to the Governor Sir C. Colville as far back as 1832 on Amelioration Policies for slaves and later on against the visit of Jeremie. In a letter to Sir Charles Colville, dated 3 April 1832, they requested a meeting between a delegation consisting of Mr. Hunter, Welbs, W. Thompson, J. Blyth and Sampson, to meet the Governor with respect to the Order in Council of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1831, on the amelioration of conditions for slaves. They highlighted in their letter that the security of immense capital from Britain and of their investment in the Sugar Industry.<sup>85</sup> Later on, on 15 June 1832, they wrote another letter implicitly supporting the 'agitation' against Mr. Jeremie's visit.<sup>86</sup> The convergence of interests between the French plantocracy and the British Business Community would manifest itself with the setting up of the Mauritius Commercial Bank in 1838, after the launching of the Mauritius Bank in 1832.

Following the payment of the compensation in the Caribbean Islands, there was the setting up of the 'Colonial Bank' in 1836, a bank which would become the Barclays Bank. There is no doubt that some compensation money went into the equity of the Bank. In Mauritius, twenty-two out of the twenty-four major trading houses contributed to the initial capital of the Mauritius Commercial Bank.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, during the public debates in connection with the setting up of the Mauritius Commercial Bank, it was revealed that compensation money was involved. Thus, a letter addressed to the Editor of *Le Mauricien* of 28 February 1838, contained the following:

*"Quant à la Banque actuelle, créée pour des opérations de finance sur notre indemnité, et pour liquider les propriétaires obérés, elle a atteint également son but, avec l'applaudissement de tout le monde [...]"*

It is to be borne in mind that compensation money was paid during the years 1836 and 1837, until December 1837 and the Mauritius Commercial Bank was opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1838.

The payment of the compensation money, followed by an increase in the price of sugar, had definitely a positive impact on the economy. There was much capital injected in the economy; consumption went up so that imports increased from £916,529 in 1836 to £1,035,783 in 1837, whilst exports was £831,050 in 1837 compared to £903,457 in 1836. Most probably, there might have been some investment in the Sugar Industry.

### 3.6 The aftermath of emancipation and the arrival of indentured labour

#### 3.6.1 Why did the enslaved people leave the plantations on Emancipation?

For quite some time, it has been claimed that, in both Mauritius and the Caribbean Islands, the emancipated enslaved people chose to leave the plantation as a consequence of the inhuman treatment and of the economic exploitation which they suffered during the days of slavery. Whilst this was possibly an issue influencing the movement of some the ex-enslaved peoples away from the plantations, the situation appears to have been somewhat different for the ex-enslaved peoples in general.

As there has been some valuable research in the Caribbean Islands on the issue based on evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the West India Colonies in 1842, we shall briefly review the findings of that research which enables us to put in context the movement of the emancipated enslaved peoples from the plantations in Mauritius. According to Douglas Hall,

*"By 1842 the immediate reactions of both planters and ex-slaves to the emancipation had occurred, and although some measure of stability had been achieved in labour relations there was general complaint on the part of employers of the scarcity, the unreliability and the high price of estate labour."<sup>88</sup>*

The evidence provided by the Select Committee came from the planters, not from the emancipated enslaved peoples; in spite of the in-built bias, the evidence would point to a different picture. In

fact, in British Guiana, the withdrawal of the emancipated enslaved peoples reflected far more positive reactions to prevailing rates of wages and local market prices and their desire to preserve their freedom.

Thus, almost all the ex-slaves remained on the estates of the planter Henry Barkly in British Guiana.<sup>89</sup>

Further, the emancipated enslaved peoples perceived their freedom in terms of retaining their rights to free housing and to cultivating plots of land allocated to them during the days of slavery for years. The abolition of slavery could only mean a betterment of their living conditions, together with reasonable wages. Instead, they were being asked to surrender these rights in the name of freedom! Effectively, the planter H. Barkly of British Guinea, in response to a question from Mr. G. Berkeley, a Member of the Select Committee, had the following to say:

*“Berkeley: In British Guinea have you known a belief to exist among negroes, that when they were made free the Queen gave them their houses and land.*

*Barkly: I believe that was a very general belief at first. I was told by the negroes on Highbury estate, when I went there, that it was all nonsense that the Queen made them free without giving them a free house and land, and they called upon me to carry out that proposition, by giving up the houses and grounds.”<sup>90</sup>*

Similarly in Jamaica, the evidence indicated that whenever labour was not coerced by imposing rent and was being paid regularly reasonable wages, there was the availability of continuous labour on the sugar estates.

In Mauritius, there was no Select Committee to investigate the conditions of the emancipated enslaved peoples, and research is lacking on that aspect. Moreover, the gargantuan appetite for fat profits by the planters, and the British credit houses, together with the active support of the Colonial State, drove them to look for alternative sources of labour, and especially very cheap labour. They found it in British India, where access to the vast reservoir of cheap labour and its relative proximity (and hence low transportation costs) would make it possible for them not to pay reasonable wages to the emancipated enslaved peoples or to give them access to free housing and land which they enjoyed for so many years. They would, thus, be able to compete more successfully with the West Indian planters, to expand further the Sugar Industry and to have a major share of the British market.

In fact, since during the Apprenticeship Period, apprentices were paid very low wages for their ‘extra service’ because there was already indentured labour since 1834 and the wages were based on the prevailing wage rates of indentured labour.

The following article from *Le Mauricien* of 12 February 1838 is very revealing indeed:

*“Il est impossible de ne pas conclure de là que notre position offre encore d’immenses avantages parce que la même raison qui fait que le travail libre sera ruineux pour la Jamaïque, nous empêche de souffrir du nouvel ordre des choses; c’est-à-dire que s’il est exact de porter les salaires d’un laboureur aux Antilles à 22 piastres 50 c. par mois, il ne le sera pas moins de ne les compter qu’à 5 piastres. Chez nous on a mieux procédé. Il est vrai que nous avons un terme de comparaison: les gages des laboureurs indiens. C’est sur ces gages que l’on a basé le prix de l’extra-service actuel et la transition s’opérera naturellement sur la plupart des propriétés. Nous pouvons donc en conclure que la position du maître vis-à-vis ses apprentis n’éprouvera pas un changement assez notable pour détruire l’équilibre actuel [...] Ceci nous explique une demande qui a été faite dernièrement par le Gouverneur aux Juges spéciaux de la colonie, au sujet du prix de l’extra-service. La métropole trouvait le salaire de l’extra-service un peu mesquin: nous comprenons son scrupule si elle avait les états de la Jamaïque sous les yeux.”<sup>91</sup>*

Thus, the *planteurs* in Mauritius were paying the apprentice labourers less than one-quarter of the wages paid in Jamaica! Even the Imperial Government found the wages for extra-service as

'mesquin', i.e. as petty. But the Imperial Government, having itself allowed the continuation of slavery in India, did not take any measures to remedy the situation. Thus, the Imperial Government, the Colonial Government of Mauritius, the French plantocracy and the British traders/financiers converge consciously in implementing a policy which knowingly would do much harm to the emancipated enslaved peoples. The latter would be excluded from the mainstream economy, deprived of any wages and of any land and housing in an increasingly monetised capitalist economy. The subsistence economy, to which the apprentices were used, was threatened by the capitalist economy. Their marginalisation and exclusion would be accelerated with the massive importation of indentured labour.

### 3.6.2 The new economic system and indentured labour.

Colonial plantation slavery was the worst form of exploitation, particularly economic exploitation, prevailing during the last five centuries. No wages, an oppressive social system, the destruction of the family, the denial of the humanity of the enslaved peoples, cultural extermination.

Indentured labour was imported in the context of the transformation of the economic system from a semi-feudal into a progressively capitalist economy. The conditions of indentured labour were, in many aspects, similar to those of slavery. A new system of economic exploitation was being instituted, the driving force being the profit maximisation and capital accumulation of the French *colons* and the British traders/financiers with active support of the British Colonial State and Imperial Government. Nevertheless, whilst there was continuity in terms of exploitation, the system was not 'a new system of slavery' as proposed by Hugh Tinker. With wages, and free housing and other facilities (just like slave labour), some *sirdars* and indentured labourers would be able to save and buy land later on, thus creating a Planter Class. That was impossible under slavery.

But, British colonialism created the fragmentation of labour by depressing wages; with the abolition of slavery, the British Colonial State would support the French *planteurs* in their use of the economic weapon to bring about this fragmentation. And this, on top of the prevailing oppressive Legislation on labour, cultural rights, family rights, social relations!

The exclusion of the ex-apprentices from the mainstream economy and the fragmentation of labour would have an impact even on modern Mauritius. Admittedly, in the history of Mauritius, political leadership has now and then used that historical state of affairs in defence of their interests.

### 3.7 Concluding Remarks

The period 1810-1839 in the history of Mauritius saw the creation of a monocrop economy, with the destruction of the cultivation of other crops. The driving force for fat profits and capital accumulation created conditions for a perpetual quest for coerced unwaged labour and later coerced waged labour.

Moreover, the Capitulation Treaty not only created conditions for the continuation of slavery until 1835, but created conditions for extensive corruption of the State apparatus. With illegal slave trade, the British Government was in connivance with the French *planteurs*; the civil servants, whether British or French, were generally biased in favour of the planters/slave-owners.

The value of slave labour for the period 1823-1835, gives an idea of the intensity of the prevailing system of economic exploitation. The viciousness of the system was crowned with a compensation of £2.1 million for slave-owners at the time of the abolition of slavery. And a new system of exploitation in the form of indenture labour would follow and be sustained during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## CHAPTER 4 THE BRITISH COLONIAL PERIOD AND INDENTURED LABOUR SYSTEM

### 4.1 The Organisation and Structure of the Mauritian Society and the Advent of Sugar

#### 4.1.1 The early form of organisation of sugar property.

According to 1832 Census of slaves, out of some 2,605 estates in Mauritius, 1,424 of them, which contained some 8,370 slaves, were not agricultural. 38,594 slaves lived on some 1,036 agricultural estates, of whom around 26,000 lived and worked in as slave-and sugar-related environment. The rural environment was characterised by a few large estates surrounded by a large number of smaller estates, some growing sugar cane, others not, but all linked to the larger sugar estates for jobs and services. The poorer French colonists looked forward to the owners of the larger estates to provide leadership or to obtain the protection which they needed in the rural districts where the colonists lived in “a state of continual disquietude and hostility from runaway slaves”.

The development of sugar cane plantations gave rise to a large number of establishments. Sugar cane was grown on numerous estates which were of different sizes. On account of the investment required and expenses involved, sugar cane could only be profitable on large sugar estates. Generally, estates with a large supply of slave labour concentrated on sugar cane cultivation which was the most labour-intensive crop. Sugar cane cultivation and slave-ownership went hand in hand. In 1830, only 74,839 of 272,022 inventoried *arpents* of land were under cultivation. There was still, at that time, a considerable amount of undeveloped land.

The advent of sugar cane resulted in the disappearance of small landowners and led to the creation of large sugar estates. Landownership soon came under the control of a handful of people. As from 1825, with the equalisation of tariffs and the resulting opening of the British market for sugar from Mauritius and the rapid growth of the industry, British companies began to show a growing interest in the island. They lent money to Mauritian sugar manufacturers on very advantageous terms to cultivate the plantations and purchase machinery for the mills. Some of those companies established themselves in Mauritius and opened branches in Port Louis. The arrival of British merchant firms revived trading activities on the island. Trade grew steadily especially as from 1830.

The most significant change in 19<sup>th</sup> century Mauritius was the dramatic expansion of the sugar industry and its gradual encroachment upon the society and economy. This period witnessed the transformation of Mauritius from a trading emporium to a sugar plantation economy. The advent of British rule was to drastically transform the economic, social and political life of Mauritius and upset its socio-economic and racial hierarchy.

Economic and social status, measured in terms of slave and landownership, became more important in differentiating between the colonists, and contributed to growing disparities between them. More importantly, it influenced the attitude and relations between slaves and their owners in this “extremely dramatic” transition and insertion into a sugar plantation economy. The slaves then constituted the bulk of the population. In 1826, there were 42,621 male and 26,455 women slaves. By 1835, when slavery was abolished, the slave population was estimated to be at 66,613.

In the early decades of British rule, the issues of slavery, slave trade and the amelioration of the conditions of the slaves were at the forefront of political upheaval and tension in Mauritius.

#### 4.1.2 The emergence of the sugar oligarchy

Interaction of slavery and sugar can be grasped fully, only with an analysis of the emergence of the sugar planters as an active force in local politics, in high finance and the judiciary. The investiture of quasi-military and political power in the hands of the social and economic elite contributed to the emergence of the sugar industry oligarchy, which took advantage of the new conditions created by the establishment of British rule and the expansion of the sugar plantation economy to consolidate its hold over the Mauritian society.

At the core of the opposition to the measures promulgated by the British Government for the improvement of the conditions of the slaves, there was the *Comité Colonial*. The *Comité*, which was created in 1827, was an outgrowth of the caucus which has campaigned successfully in the 1820s for the abolition of the discriminatory tariffs on Mauritian sugar imports in Britain. Besides their close connection with the sugar industry, members of the *Comité Colonial* they were also involved in trading and other activities.

With a large resident planter class owning much of the sugar industry, there was no serious intention on the part of the Colonial Authorities to challenge the entrenched, local economic interests. By 1832, control of the oligarchy over the political, economic and social life of the island had reached a point where they felt strong enough to confront British rule head on, with the use of physical force, if necessary. It was estimated that some 5,000 men formed part of those “resistance” associations.

Their leader was d’Epinay who had, by then, gained considerable influence and ascendancy over the local population. The weaving of the web of economic, political and social interests took place principally on the rural districts. Another group involved in the interplay of politics, family connections and race in the rural districts were the Civil Commissaries and their assistants, who took over from the District Commandants who had been reinstated by Farquhar in 1816.

In 1827, an Ordinance in Council was introduced to improve the conditions of slaves in Mauritius. This Ordinance appointed a Protector of Slaves. The Protector dealt with all criminal cases and, as guardian of the slaves, he heard their complaints and brought them before the Tribunals. The Ordinance limited the corporal punishment inflicted on slaves and regulated the size of the tasks on the plantations. A novel provision was the establishment of a government Savings Bank under the authority of the Protector for the preservation of slave property. The Slave was empowered to purchase his own freedom and that of his descendants, if he could prove the funds to be his own or hold a certificate testifying to his good conduct for the past five years.<sup>92</sup>

For the sugar oligarchy, the amelioration measures decreed by the British Government were the first step toward the emancipation of the slaves, hence their opposition to these measures. The expansion of the Sugar Industry and preoccupation over the supply of labour retarded attempts by the Governor and the Colonial Establishment to enforce these measures. The Bar and Bench were instrumental in obstructing the implementation of the Amelioration measures. It took five years for the implementation of the Amelioration orders in Mauritius. The influence of the Bar and Bench was also considered to be a prime cause of the colonist rebellion of 1832 over the appointment of Jeremie as Attorney General, in the place of Prosper d’Epinay, Adrien d’Epinay’s brother.<sup>93</sup>

The opposition of the sugar oligarchy to the Amelioration measures were centred around the appointment of the Protector of Slaves who bore the brunt of their attack. The creation of the post of Protector of Slaves caused much outrage and turmoil in the island. The colonists were of the opinion that this measure would give the slaves, with the backing of the British Government, a powerful instrument to challenge the right of their masters over them. Besides they feared that this would aggravate the problem of absenteeism on estates at a time when maroonage was still a serious and endemic problem, as it would provide slaves with an excuse to leave the estate to present their grievances before the Protector. By the early 1830s, the feverish debate surrounding the Amelioration laws and problems of communication in a rumour prone society accentuated the apprehension and nervousness of the colonists and fuelled a state of ferment in the colony. In 1831, Goderich the British Under-Secretary of State expressed his concern that Governor Colville had not bothered to report on the disturbed state of the colony.

#### 4.1.3 Slavery and Maroonage

In the reports and accounts of the structure and organisation of the early sugar plantation society in Mauritius, relatively little is said about the conditions and way of life of the slaves. Yet, they constituted the bulk of the population and in 1820, outnumbering the white population by the ratio of 10:1. Most of the slaves were confined to the estates. In 1832, 56% of the slaves lived on the estates and were thus isolated from the members of the ‘free population’. In spite of the constraints and restrictions placed on them, they influenced the island society in several ways.

Slaves were of diverse ethnic origins and background. But with the ‘Creolisation’ of the slave population, it is most likely that there was an amalgamation of different cultures from the early days of slavery. Further, slaves developed a network of relations and a way of life of their own that was independent from that of their owners.

The conditions of slaves differed from estate to estate and region to region. The common factor that bound them together in the struggle against the harshness of their condition was the constant pressure and coercion which was applied on them in the execution of their tasks and the hardships which they endured at work and in their life on the estate. Slave-owners who were often strapped financially sought to maximise the amount of work which they could extract from their slaves. The policies pursued by their owners in the treatment of their slaves resulted in high death rates among the slave population and contributed to their short stressful life.

Slaves did not take lightly to the conditions of their life on the estates. According to Teelock, Mauritian slaves, like those of other plantation colonies, had to endure harsh living and working conditions as well as the constant threat of physical and psychological abuse. In a typology of power systems, Teelock argues that “plantation despotism ranged at the very end of one extreme where violence was a “prima ratio” and the smallest infractions were often punished with the severest violence”<sup>94</sup>

Coercion and harsh treatment led to retaliation on the part of the slaves. The threat, posed by runaway slaves or maroons, fostered in the island a state of continued anxiety and hostility. As was the case elsewhere, the Mauritian response to maroon activity was harsh repression. In the 18th century, regular maroon hunts were organised by the authorities and colonists. Baron Grant noted in 1730 that fugitive slaves were treated like wild animals and shot ‘whenever the opportunity affords’. Some sixty years later, the fugitives continued to be shot at will; local detachments of police killed 102 fugitives between 1790 and 1812 a manifestation of colonial of paranoia and racism in its most violent and abhorrent form.

The level of maroon activity increased sharply following the cession of the island to Britain. 5,200 declarations of maroonage were made to the Colonial Authorities between 1810 and 1826, an average annual desertion rate of 11.2% to 11.7%. The rate of maroonage coincided with the plantation work cycle. There was an increase of desertions at the time of the more arduous field operations.

The colonists’ aversion to maroonage had two main causes: On the one hand the threat to personal security and property posed by maroon slaves who remained “active and resourceful protagonists”. A second strong motive of resentment on the part of the colonists was that maroonage deprived them of valuable labour which was an indispensable element for the profitability of their operations.

In these circumstances, the colonists, led by d’Epinay and the *Comité Colonial* mounted a strong opposition to the anti-slavery lobbying in the British political circles and the British Press. The idea of losing control over their slaves dug deep into the hearts of the colonists and their perception of property. Proposed Amelioration Laws sent further shock waves throughout the island. The colonists were also aroused by reports of the Anti-Slavery Society in favour of the emancipation of slaves in British colonies without compensation. News were received at the time by several commercial firms in Mauritius that the British Government had decided the immediate emancipation of slaves introduced after 1814 without compensation. This order was later rescinded following representation made in London by d’Epinay.

The problem of maroonage continued during emancipation and aggravated the labour crisis faced by the rapidly expanding sugar industry. The impact of shortage of servile hands was compounded by the sugar industry’s shaky financial conditions which included tapping costly alternative sources of labour. In these circumstances the threat of maroonage provided many slaves with a powerful weapon to renegotiate and alleviate the harsh conditions under which they lived and worked. Between 1835 and 1837, an average of 7.7% of the apprentices was apprehended every year for desertion.

Some of the slaves, once they were emancipated, abandoned field work and left the estates. They were granted squatting facilities by the Government. Some drifted to Port Louis and others settled

on the coast where they eked out a precarious livelihood from the sea. Their place in the island economy was taken by indentured labourers from India.

#### 4.1.4 The Rise and Fall of the Former Apprentices

Mauritian historians have given a good account of the “Grand morcellement” of the 1880s but much less it’s known or reported about what Allen calls the “Petit morcellement” of 1839-1859. The “Petit morcellement” refers to the subdivision of established estates following emancipation.

The “Petit morcellement” arose from the general desire of the former slaves to acquire land and thus to affirm their emancipation from their former servile status. The process, which began in earnest in 1839-40, accelerated rapidly in 1841 and 1842 when the number of sales of estate land seemed to have reached its peak. The “Petit morcellement” may be seen as an outgrowth of the turmoil of the post emancipation situation. It remained an important aspect of colonial life until 1846. Most of the estates comprised at the time large areas of uncleared and unused land. In 1830, only 74,839 of 272, 022 inventoried *arpents* were under cultivation.

The most pressing problem of Mauritian planters was the need to deal with the loss of a substantial portion of their labour force. It was against a backdrop of a severe, and possibly long-term, labour shortage that estate owners began to contemplate the subdivision and sale of part of their property. It was also an attempt on the part of the authorities to bring some order in a seemingly chaotic situation. After 1835, there was a precipitous decline in the size of the apprentice and ex-apprentice population. In 1836, at least 1,015 freed men, or nearly one-fifth of one district’s apprentice population had abandoned their homes and former masters within several weeks of acquiring their freedom. Large numbers of ex-apprentices occupied land after their emancipation often near the estates where their presence was perceived as a threat to public order and to the estates’ economic viability.

The socio-economic realities of post-emancipation Mauritius included a financially strapped sugar industry and the existence of a large and well-established Population of Colour. As an early solution to the labour crisis faded in 1840, estate owners moved to protect their interests. Hence, their attempts to bring back the ex-apprentices and tie them to the land through the “Petit morcellement”.

According to Allen there is also a need to examine the post-emancipation situation in Mauritius in terms other than those of labour supply and/or labour relations. The Mauritian authorities strongly understood that access and control of adequate amounts of capital were of equal if not greater importance to the supply of labour for the survival of the plantation regime. On a number of occasions, the authorities expressed their concern about the financial distress experienced by some planters. (Governor Gomm to the Colonial Secretary 1843; Gomm to Stanley in 1846).

There, is thus, a need to examine the “Petit morcellement” in the light of the financial problems that many planters had to face at the time. There was a strong speculative element in early *morcellement* activity. The financial incentives to subdivide an estate could be considerable. The subdivision of estate land yielded returns of 100-200 percent on the original investment for both large and small land owners. The involvement of the Coloured Population in the “Petit morcellement” became especially pronounced after 1842, precisely at a time when the sugar industry’s problems would have made tapping into the substantial financial resources held by some members of the Coloured Population an alluring option for many planters.

The labour and liquidity crisis of the 1830s and 1840s promoted, not only the parcelling of estates, but also the rise of a class of ex-apprentice gardeners and farmers. There were, in that connection, diverging opinions in official quarters at the time on the activities and contribution of the former apprentices in the island’s social and economic development. The standard view in many circles was that these individuals remained “ignorant, lazy and given to hedonism”. On the other hand, Governor Gomm, in 1846, expressed the opinion that the former apprentices had become “a thriving and improving class of the colonial population”. Some independent observers were equally impressed by the social and economic promotion of the former apprentices. The ex-apprentices small holders could be counted among the 30,000 Persons of Colour forming a middle class and fast rising in wealth and consequence.<sup>95</sup>

Yet within the space of just a few years, the seemingly halcyon days of the mid-1840s had vanished. According to Dr. Mouat, a missionary, in 1852, many of the freedmen who had squatted on small plots of land, lived in a state bordering on misery and starvation. A decade later in 1864, some observers despaired about the future of the ex-apprentice population. For Governor Barkly in 1866, “a large proportion of the former apprentices had never been tempted by high wages or the ambition of raising their children in the social scale. They added little in proportion to their numbers to the exportable produce and wealth of the colony.”<sup>96</sup>

## 4.2 Indian Indentured Immigration

### 4.2.1 The Early Influx of Indian Indentured Immigrants

The importation of Indian labourers in Mauritius began in earnest in 1834, with the introduction of 36 hill labourers and 39 labourers from Bombay by Arbuthnot. These labourers came to Mauritius on private five-year contracts. They had to pay for their return passage in case they chose to go back to India. In 1835, 1,160 men, 61 women and 33 children were brought in. Between 1836 and 1839, despite Governor Nicolay’s ban on further introduction of indentured labourers in the island, 22,615 men, 776 women and 192 children were brought. In the view of the Colonial Authorities and the planters, this early private introduction of Indian labourers on a five-year contract of service worked very well. The Colonial Secretary stated, in 1836, that the experiment, so far as it had been tried, met with great success. The planters praised the character and general disposition of the Indians whom they found to be far more efficient and intelligent at agricultural work than the Africans, despite the fact that a great number of the labourers who were brought in were very raw labourers. In 1836, a gang of fifty comprised only two or three who had ever handled a hoe. But the planters were generally so satisfied with those early immigrants that they declared that they would not keep a single apprentice on their estates, if they had the choice.

From 1836 to 1839, according to the Annual Reports of the Protector of Immigrants, 25,468 Indian indentured labourers were brought to Mauritius at a cost of nearly £280,000. This substantial immigration was, in all likelihood, funded with compensation money received by the planters after emancipation or loans based on compensation. Of all Britain’s sugar colonies, Mauritius was the one which weathered the problems of emancipation most successfully. Before 1834, Jamaica had produced twice as much sugar and British Guyana 75 per cent more sugar than Mauritius. Twenty years later, Mauritius had become Britain’s premier sugar colony: its sugar production was more than twice that of British Guiana and was nearly five times greater than that of Jamaica. Following emancipation, the compensation payments and the increased liquidity which this created made possible increased investment in sugar cane plantations and the number of sugar mills rose from 167 in 1833 to 203 in 1838.

The demand for labour created by this expansion was accentuated by the rising proportion of sugar factories converting to steam, the number of steam mills soaring from 69 to 130 during the same period. This expansion in capacity and the increased capitalization of sugar estates required a corresponding increase in production and an enhancement of the cultivated area to make such investments worthwhile. Between 1841 and 1860, the sugar cane acreage increased from 59,500 *arpents* to 110,000 *arpents* and sugar production rose from 41,024 tonnes in 1840 to 130,375 in 1860.

The key issue for the British Administration was “whether such large immigration of Indian labourers would not produce an oversupply of labour, thereby reducing the wages of the existing labour force or depriving them of their livelihood resulting in the creation of a nation of paupers”<sup>97</sup>. With the prospect of an unlimited supply of labour from British India, the chief reason would be removed on the part of the proprietors to induce the former slaves to settle down as regular labourers on fair terms. The planters, for their part, argued that the additional labour was required to provide the necessary man-power for the expansion of the Sugar Industry. As it turned out, some of the former slaves wanted to discard all the links with their former servile status and conditions and the sugar planters did little to retain them.

#### 4.2.2 The suspension of Indian Immigration. The Government subsidisation of immigration

Indian labourers in Mauritius were paid five rupees a month and were given rations. It was estimated at that time that an indentured labourer costs the estate Rs. 10 to Rs. 11 per month (inclusive of the cost of rations). Between 1834 and 1838, planters in the island spent £200,000 for the private introduction of Indian labourers. In 1839, the Apprentice System was repealed. In that same year, India suspended emigration to Mauritius following a public outcry in both Britain and British India over reports of the exploitation to which these early immigrants were subjected and abuses in the recruitment and transportation of labour, which raised in British public opinion the spectre of a new slave trade. As a result from 1840 to 1843, scarcely any new canes could be planted, heavy field work on estates was abandoned and sugar production dropped from 42,000 tonnes in 1840 to 27,500 tonnes in 1842.<sup>98</sup>

The planters reacted quickly in defence of the indenture system and to safeguard their investment. According to M. Carter, they had the support of some influential personalities from British India who stressed the destitution of indentured labourers in their own 'overstocked country' and upheld the notion that all parties would benefit from the indenture system. With the resumption of immigration in 1843, most of the sugar estates had to be extensively restored at any expense. Those estates did not return to full production until 1845.

In 1843, Government began subsidizing immigration from an annual fund of £25,000. In 1843, 30,000 Indian labourers were brought to Mauritius and by September 1844, 74,000 Indians - 67,112 of them male labourers had been brought in.<sup>99</sup>

This 'bounty' system coincided with the Government control of immigration. The subsidization stimulated the demand for indentured labourers. But in the face of a threat to the island's social balance and the island's capacity to accommodate such a large influx of population, Gomm, who succeeded Lionel Smith as Governor in 1842, favoured the Government control of Immigration. He strongly opposed the sugar planters' vision of an unlimited supply of labour. This led to frequent clashes in the Government Council between the Governor and the planters' representatives, who were supported by a 'small coterie' of British commercial agents and by the planter controlled press.<sup>100</sup>

On the other hand, in spite of his concern about the excessive importation of indentured labour and disputes with the sugar producers, Gomm had, it would seem, a very favourable opinion of the state of the colony and the sugar industry. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary in 1845 that "he might confidently affirm that no spot on earth presents a more cheering prospect of abundance than the surface of Mauritius". Financial considerations may also account for Gomm's attempt to restrict indentured immigration to Mauritius. In 1847 he lamented to the Colonial Secretary on "the never-sated vortex of immigration expenditure to the neglect of public works".<sup>101</sup>

In furtherance of the policy of the Government control of Immigration, Gomm, in 1844, introduced the contingent system which provided for an annual quota of 9,000 immigrants. Under these new arrangements, engagements could only be contracted at the Immigrant Depot, 48 hours after arrival in Mauritius. On estates, one-year contracts replaced the former five-year terms. These regulations were intended to safeguard as much as possible, the freedom of choice of the immigrant contracting an engagement in a new country during his period of "industrial residence" in the island.<sup>102</sup>

In practice, the scheme was a failure. The engagements at the Depot led to violent competition between estate *sirdars* bidding against each other for labourers. Wages were bid upwards by the fierce competition between planters to re-engage workers as their annual contract expired. No consistent policy for allotting immigrants ever seems to have been formulated or implemented, and many planters took advantage of loopholes in the regulations, competing openly against each other for new immigrants, raiding each other's estates for labourers and eventually dispatching their own agents to India to recruit workers.<sup>103</sup>

The result of this situation was a considerable disorganization of the labour supply on estates. The one year contract of service produced a high turnover of labour; absenteeism on estates reached a high figure. An official committee in 1846 published statistics which give an idea of the unsettled condition of labour on estates. The Committee reported that there were, at that time, 52,000

immigrant labourers in the colony of whom 35,000 were employed in agriculture: desertion, absenteeism and sickness further depleted the number of workers and the effective number of hands on estates was only 25,000. This figure was only slightly larger than the number of slaves employed on estates before emancipation, whilst between 1830 and 1846, the Mauritian sugar crop had increased by 47 percent.<sup>104</sup>

Certain events at the time brought important changes in British policy in support of the planters. During the mid 1840s, when an economic and financial crisis precipitated by the British Sugar Duties Bill threatened bankruptcy and ruin for the sugar plantations, the sugar planters won the support of British Parliamentarians and other influential circles in their favour. To plead their case, planters used the free trade issue which forced them into competition with sugar producers using slave labour, to demand compensation, not in monetary, but in manpower terms.

A bargain was thus made between the free traders and sugar producers. When he presented the Sugar Trade Bill in Parliament, Lord Russell, the Colonial Secretary, in order to conciliate the colonial lobby, promised them 'abundant immigration' and 'cheaper labour'. Thus, the planter lobby succeeded in their opposition to Gomm's argument for the control of indentured immigration.

Following the financial crisis of 1847, which bankrupted several British firms in Mauritius, instructions were given from London to granting urgent concession to the planting community in Mauritius. Acting on these instructions, Governor Anderson, who succeeded Gomm, introduced several political and economic reforms. These comprised an increase in the representation of planters in the Government Council, an increase in the annual intake of labourers and an increase in the contract length of service from one year to three years. In 1849, three-year contracts were legalized and as a result labour supply conditions on estates improved markedly.

#### 4.2.3 The role of the Colonial State

The Colonial State played a crucial and largely successful role in the years following the abolition of slavery. According to S Mintz, the political battle between the Metropolitan capitalist classes who favoured free trade and the colonial planters was partly eased by access to external but politically accessible labour pools.

The State regulated, not only the recruitment, importation, allocation and employment of labour, but it was also responsible for the financing of immigration.<sup>105</sup> Part of the cost of introducing labourers at public expense was recovered from the planters to whom labourers were allocated, the balance being drawn from general revenue. The incidence of taxation was then highly regressive. According to North-Coombes, when public Finances were healthy, fiscal concessions were readily extended to sugar growers. He argued that while tax relief was granted to the planter, the burden of taxation was carried by the poorer consumers in the Colony. Between 1843 and 1851, indemnities paid to private introducers of immigrants were financed by a duty on the sale of colonial rum. In 1851, the reduction in the export duty on sugar was partly offset by increasing the duty on rum.<sup>106</sup>

In 1852, the Government of India finally acceded to a long-standing request of Mauritian planters that a free return passage should in future be granted only in special circumstances. This measure, it was believed would create a resident agricultural labour force and eliminate the unsettled condition of labour on estates. In 1852, estates were also allowed to recruit immigrants in excess of their official quota. The following year (1853) private recruiters from individual estates were licensed to operate in India. From an annual contingent of 9,000 labourers, Immigration leapt to more than 10,000 annually in 1852-54; it reached over 20,000 yearly in the late 1850s.

In 1854, the cost of introducing 18,500 male and female labourers was £101,000 instead of £60,000 provided for in the estimates. To meet the increased charges, export duty on sugar was increased from 3d to 8d per 100lbs. Within a decade of Gomm's departure, sugar planters were thus at liberty to import a virtually unlimited supply of labourers in Mauritius. The protective machinery put in place by Gomm to defend the interest of immigrants was then at its most ineffective.

The Colonial Government was crucially aware of the economic importance of Indian immigration which was described as the sheer anchor of colonial prosperity.

*“It has asserted in official quarters that in times of increased competition on the world market, the state had the duty to help maintain the profitability of sugar cultivation and manufacture. There was moreover an obligation imposed both on the imperial and local government to support to their utmost ability, during this crisis, the struggling sugar growers [...] to aid the efforts and to diminish the cost of production; for in this lies the solution to the problem.”<sup>107</sup>*

These sentiments were repeated in their Annual Reports by Higginson’s successors, Stevenson and Barkly. In 1858, Stevenson described Indian immigration as “the generator of agricultural prosperity”. Barkly, eight years later, observed that the island’s commercial, as well as agricultural, interest had been maintained and enhanced by the introduction of Indian immigrants. The removal of previous restrictions on recruitment brought 174,000 new immigrants to Mauritius between 1852 and 1860. Employers paid the full cost of immigration. Finally in 1852, five-year contracts were reestablished for agricultural labour on estates.

For forty years, the island’s authorities presided over the importation of a work-force that was so large that, by 1871, Indians constituted 68 per cent of the Mauritian population. Regular large intakes of immigrants were justified by sugar planters on the basis of the loss of time-expired labour and the high absenteeism among indentured workers. As a result, in the course of the first four decades of indentures, the Local Government obtained the consent of the Metropolitan authorities to a series of concessions and measures which tended to increase the supply of Indian workers in Mauritius, whilst seeking to restrict the workers’ right to leave the estate to seek more lucrative employment elsewhere.

Under the indenture system, Indian immigrants in Mauritius were isolated for a time from the rest of the society in which they had been implanted. This may account for the absence of major racial friction in the 1840s and 1850s so long as the large majority of immigrants in the island were still serving their five years of industrial residence on estates. The special regulations which governed the relations between slaves and the free population in the island persisted to some extent under the indentures.

The Ordinance of 1827 had laid down the rights and duties of the slaves *vis-à-vis* the rest of the population. The Law catered for the slaves as a distinct group in the island’s community. The same spirit prevailed under the indentures and inspired Ordinance No. 16 of 1855 which led to the introduction of laws regulating the movement of Old Immigrants.

#### 4.2.4 The 1860s: Labour and Sanitary Problems

##### 4.2.4.1 The Old Immigrant Problem

As from 1842, Labour Legislation was enacted which was directed specifically against Indian Immigrants. The net effect of such Legislation was to subject immigrants to a number of restrictions and penalties from which non-Indians were exempt.<sup>108</sup>

According to Allen, the 1860s were a turning point in the history of the Mauritius Sugar Industry which saw an extensive restructuring of the Industry with the parcelling out of large tracts of land on some estates and the merging of other estates into larger financially more viable units. In the throes of a severe agricultural crisis in the 1880s, sugar estates were under pressure owing to the low sugar prices, scarcity of capital and adverse internal circumstances. That period saw the substantial acquisition of sugar property by Indians and the emergence of Indian cane farmers who would play an important role in the future development of the Mauritian Sugar Industry.<sup>109</sup>

The 1860s saw a dramatic decline in the number of New Immigrants in indentured service and a corresponding increase in the number of Old Immigrants working under contract on estates. In 1861, New Immigrants accounted for almost 40 per cent of all contractual workers. Within a decade, they made up only 15 per cent of the sugar estate work force. By the mid 1870s, the composition of the industry’s work force underwent further changes as Indo Mauritians (i.e. Mauritian-born Indians) became an ever-larger component of both Indian population as a whole and the sugar industry labour force.

For some thirty years, the segregation of the Indian labourers on estates remained virtually unchanged the social organization of the island's community. But when a large proportion of immigrants, after completing their period, left the estates, there began a process of evolution which brought in time a profound change in the structure of the island's community and determined to a larger extent the future development of the Sugar Industry.

#### 4.2.4.2 Insalubrious conditions and overcrowding

After 1865, the Sugar Industry faced difficult times. Beet competition on the world sugar market brought down prices of colonial sugar. In 1866, a severe drought in the North of Mauritius led to the abandonment of several estates, twenty estates were sequestered and had to be sold. As a result, a large number of labourers lost their employment. In January 1867, a Government circular to the Stipendiary Magistrates referred to the large number of immigrants whose engagements had recently been broken. In such cases, it was the duty of the Magistrates to see that the immigrants understood their right to have it explained to them that rice was likely to continue to be dear and work was to remain scarce for some time to come.<sup>110</sup>

At the end of their contracts, the Indians crowded into Port Louis. Insalubrity and overcrowding were major problems in Port Louis. There was, at that time no sewerage system or adequate drainage. In 1852, the British 'sugarocrats' newspaper, the *Planters and Merchants Gazette* described the filthy state of Port Louis with its open and stagnant drains and heaps of animal excretion. The utter want of scavenging sources was decried and the paper alluded to the nightly abomination that tainted the air to a degree sufficient to start a plague.<sup>111</sup>

This description of the physical and social environment of the areas where many of the labouring classes lived contrasted with the description of the conditions in the central part of Port Louis, where merchants and traders and people of the liberal professions resided. The planters and merchants lived in the 'White Town' which received all the amenities. They were separated from the rest of the inhabitants by spatial, economic and ethnic divisions.

Many new residents in Port Louis were ex-apprentices and labourers who had completed their contracts. As they were non-agricultural workers, who had rescinded their connection with the Sugar Industry, they were regarded by the authorities as unproductive labour and were left largely to their own devices.

Overcrowding was also a major problem. In 1859, for a population of 54,403 there were in Port Louis 3,541 houses, an average of 15.9 inhabitants per dwelling. Huts on the outskirts of the town sometimes lodged up to 30 persons for the night.<sup>112</sup>

On the sugar estates according to North-Coombes, "Indians lived in filthy and overcrowded camps. Their huts were poorly constructed, the 'cases' low and narrow having more the aspect of pigsties than of human habitations". By way of shelters, they provided no protection against the cyclonic gales which struck the island during the summer months. During the cyclone of March 1868, scarcely a dependency or hut in the various camps was left standing. Eighty-seven people were killed and 20,188 huts blown down or carried away by the storm. The water supply was generally defective. For washing or drinking, camp dwellers had to resort to polluted rivers and canals into which the effluent of sugar mills was disgorged. In this squalid environment, epidemic diseases thrived. The sanitary problems of the rural districts were on a larger scale in Port Louis where an apathetic Municipal Corporation proved incapable or unwilling to cater for the needs of a rapidly increasing urban population.<sup>113</sup>

In the early part of 1867, malaria broke out. The fever caused havoc in Mauritius and decimated the population of Port Louis and low-level Northern Districts. In Port Louis itself, out of a total population of about 80,000, 14,387 deaths were recorded in the first six months of 1867. The total death toll of the whole island rose to 25,824 in the first half 1867.

The malaria epidemic was the worst 'natural' calamity which Mauritius had ever experienced, causing the death of about 30,000 people within a year, with about 18,000 in the town of Port Louis. The epidemic reached its peak in May and June 1867. It carried off whole classes of people, forcing an exodus from the low-lying districts and paralyzing the services leaving gloom and

desolation in its path. There was a large displacement of the population, as people fled the low-lying disease-infested coastal regions for the upper more salubrious Central Districts of the island.

The difficulties of 1864 to 1868 reversed the brisk demand for labour which had prevailed during the preceding decade. Sugar cane cultivation was restricted on several estates; on others, it was given up altogether.

Recruitment of labour in British India dropped to a trickle after 1866. The agricultural labour in Mauritius soon consisted of a majority of Old Immigrants - the arrivals of 1850 to 1865 who were free to settle in the country and occupy themselves as they wished; these Old Immigrants now made up nine-tenths of the agricultural labour-force.

#### 4.2.4.3 The Labour Law of 1867

From the Sugar Industry's point of view the problem created by the Old Immigrants contained one main element: how to persuade immigrants to re-engage on estates once they had completed their period of industrial residence. From the Government's point of view, the problem was the smooth and successful integration of a large immigrant class into the existing structure of the island's society. The Labour Law of 1867 tried to deal with both aspects of the problem.

Governor Barkly wrote that this Ordinance, by continuing to hold the Old Immigrants under the same obligation of accounting for their place of residence and means of livelihood, as vested upon those who had not served five years in the colony, afforded a basis for many salutary reforms and were universally looked upon as a commencement of a new era of social improvement. According to him, hitherto from fear lest immigration would be stopped, in case the slightest restriction were imposed, the Old Immigrants had been allowed to live precisely as they wished and there could be no doubt that not only an increase of crime, but also a deterioration of the sanitary state of the island were mainly due to the licence this permitted. In his observations on the new Labour Law, Barkly echoed the views of the Secretary of State.

In a dispatch in June 1868, the Secretary of State outlined what was, in his view, the main cause of the fever in Port Louis:

*"The improper construction and overcrowding of the dwellings", particularity of "Indians in Port Louis" was first on the list of the main causes of the fever in Port Louis. He felt that the movement of Indian Labourers to Port Louis was the real cause of all the problems. They were an "uneducated uncontrolled class and were the principal sore of Mauritius."*<sup>114</sup>

However, in another dispatch, one month later in July 1868, the Secretary of State modified this opinion for he gave instructions to Barkly for the proper drainage in the capital and the establishment of proper habitation for the Indian population.

The opinion of the British Authorities about the causes of the epidemic was endorsed by the local press generally:

*"We do not think that there would be any large demand for fresh labour if the Government were to adopt stringent legislative measures to face the thousands of Old Immigrants to earn their livelihood in place of continuing to permit them to agglomerate with their more industrious comrades to the danger of public security and public health [...]. Something must be done, not to force idlers to work, not to coerce Old Immigrants into engagements on estates, but to induce them to accept regular employment [...]"*<sup>115</sup>

A general registration of Old Immigrants in the island was decreed under the Ordinance (Arts 43-49) and a 'pass system' introduced. Passes were required of Old Immigrants, not employed on estates. To obtain a pass, the old immigrant declared "his place of abode and occupation, employment or other means of subsistence". Under the Pass Laws, many restrictions were placed on the movement of Indians in the island; any change of address from one District to another had to be officially acknowledged on the pass. Those caught without their passes or other means of showing that they had visible means of subsistence were liable to be detained as vagrants.<sup>116</sup>

The ordinance of 1867 brought all Old Immigrants, not living on estates, under the control of the police. These harsh and repressive measures must, however, be seen in the context of the lack of organization and distress, which followed the outbreak of malaria in 1867; they may be explained to some extent, but hardly justified, as a means of controlling “those loose roving bands” who moved from place to place in search of work and crowded into the towns and villages all over the island.

The result of these measures was to drive back Indians to the estates, the proportion of Indians living on estates rising from 48 per cent of the total Indian population in 1867 to 58 per cent in 1870. Yet, in spite of the stringent enforcement of the new Labour Law, the number of labourers working on estates does not show any increase over that period.

#### 4.3 Banking and Finance

##### 4.3.1 Early Sources of Finance

The admission of sugar from Mauritius in Britain on an equal basis with West Indian Sugar in 1825 opened for the local industry great market prospects. When the 10% discriminatory duty was removed on imports of sugar from Mauritius, the price paid for the island sugar soared on the London market. In 1823, Mauritius sugar sold with difficulty for 26/- per/cwt; in 1827, the best grades of sugar from Mauritius fetched 58/-per/cwt. The equalization of duties brought a six-fold increase in sugar exports from Mauritius to Britain. Henceforth, the Sugar Industry became the mainstay of the Mauritian economy.

The expansion of sugar in Mauritius occurred within an extremely meager physical and financial infrastructure. For most planters, capital to invest in new machinery, land or additional labour was sorely lacking. It was estimated, in 1828, that an estate of 560.8 *arpents* with a mill and 125 slaves cost \$31,250, a price that few could afford.<sup>117</sup> A large part of the increase in sugar production had been undertaken and sustained on borrowed capital. Most estate-owners had sunk all their funds in the acquisition or expansion of their estate which left them with little capital to defray the running costs of the estate. The reliance upon personalized forms of industrial organization made many planters dependent on short-term credit for their operating expenses.

The chronic shortage of working capital and the fragility of estate finances led to a situation in which loans were raised by planters from sugar brokers or ‘bailleurs de fonds’ to cover their operating expenses. These loans were guaranteed by the standing crop but the crop proceeds depended on the vagaries of the weather and fluctuations in the price of sugar. The ‘bailleurs de fonds’ were usually local merchants or produce brokers who possessed substantial liquid capital resources of their own and good credit with the local banks. They provided planters with short-term credit and acted often as the town agent for the estate providing it with supplies and money and selling the crop.

The Industry’s development depended, to a large extent, on the structure of estate ownership and the system of crop finance. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Mauritian sugar industry consisted largely of individual or family-owned estates, and the structure of ownership remained highly personalized even after more advanced forms of industrial organization such as limited liability companies, began to be introduced during the 1880s. This reliance upon personalized forms of industrial organization limited the financial resources available to planters and made them dependent on short-term credit for their operating expenses even in boom times. The fragility of estate finances and the chronic undercapitalization of the Sugar Industry were a source of constant concern to the British Government and local planters. Following the example of Farquhar, successive Governors endeavoured to increase the financial resources available to the planters to promote sugar cultivation.

In a Review of the state of the Mauritian economy between the 1810s and the mid 1930s, Richard Allen assembled data from the *Blue Books* and Parliamentary Papers on the value of sugar exports, the balance of trade, the flow of species and ‘per capita’ value of imports from 1812-1814 to 1930-1934. In the absence of official data for the early years, and much discrepancy between the official records of sugar exports, where such records exist, and the figures compiled by Allen, these estimates should only be regarded as a relative indication for export values. Still, in the absence of

more accurate data, they provide an interesting insight into the changes in the Sugar Industry's finances and the island's economic performance over a span of 120 years.<sup>118</sup>

These figures give an indication of the net inflow of specie in Mauritius as from 1840. Between 1840 and 1847, the bulk of these funds came from large London merchants, who were the consignees of the island sugar crop as mentioned above. The abolition of the preferential West Indian tariff in 1825 led to a sharp rise in the price of Mauritian sugar in London. This attracted substantial British capital into the Industry.

The expansion of sugar production also relied, in a large measure, on the supply of Indian indentured labour. Field-work and manufacturing operations were then very rudimentary and relied heavily on manual labour. Under the prevailing buoyant demand for sugar on the British market, the volume of sugar exports from Mauritius depended on the acreage under sugarcane and the supply of labour. Cane acreage in Mauritius increased from 27,800 *arpents* in 1825 to 57,000 *arpents* in 1830, the number of factories increased from 157 in 1823 to 202 in 1833 and sugar output from 10,780 tonnes in 1825 to 33,960 tonnes in 1830.<sup>119</sup>

This raises the question of the sources of finance for the expansion of the Industry which was beyond the capacity of most planters. The figures mentioned above give an idea of the sums required in order to finance the expansion of the Sugar Industry. The bulk of these funds in the 1830s came from domestic sources and were provided by local businessmen who had made their wealth previously from commercial operations. Many of them owned substantial assets. In order to take advantage of the sugar boom, following the passing of the Mauritius Trade Bill, they diverted substantial amounts of funds from commercial operations, which were now in decline, into the creation or acquisition of sugar estates.

#### 4.3.2 Interbank Rivalry and the 1848 Crash

In January 1832, the Mauritius Bank had been established by British financiers and local planters led by d'Épinay, an outcome of his representations in London in 1831, in which he obtained the authorization of the British Government for the creation of a Bank in Mauritius. That Bank was, in a way, the colonists Bank, with d'Épinay as President.

On the 31st January 1838, a petition from the leading merchants of the island was sent to Governor Nicolay, requesting the establishment of a second bank. The petitioners asserted that the Mauritius Bank was too much under the influence of people who were not involved in commerce. The bank refused to take deposits to keep current accounts for its customers and to provide other services which were current in banking. The petitioners also complained about the rate of interest charged by the Bank on loans. The petition was signed by 27 Directors of British and Mauritian commercial firms.<sup>120</sup>

The proposal for the establishment of a second bank was opposed from the start by d'Épinay and other Directors of the Mauritius Bank. D'Épinay, in *Le Cernéen*, attacked the project in fairly virulent terms, while the project obtained the strong support of *Le Mauricien* and its editor, Eugène Leclézio. The controversy became increasingly harsh when *Le Mauricien* blamed d'Épinay's party for its openly hostile attitude towards the British Government at a time when the Colony was smarting under the decision of Britain to emancipate the slaves and the fear of the civil strife and disturbances which might ensue.<sup>121</sup>

Governor Colville gave his assent to the demands of the petitioners and the Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) began to operate on the 1st September 1838, when it made an initial issue of bank notes for \$300,000. With the opening of the MCB, the rivalry between the two banks became more intense. It took the form 'interalia' of several issues of bank notes and grants of credit by both banks. The MCB made two further note issues in 1838 for a total amount of US \$400,000. Other note issues amounting to US \$200,000 were made in 1839 and US \$200,000 in 1840. Such profuse issues of bank notes led to a flight of specie and a scarcity of currency in the island. The MCB took certain measures in an attempt to stem the flight of specie. These measures were ineffective. In the buoyant conditions of the 1830s and 1840s, planters borrowed large sums from both banks which obliged with frequent issues of notes and credit. There developed a precarious situation which required injections of additional funds from London to safeguard the solvency of the banks and of the Colony.

In 1848, four of the five London houses which financed a large part of the island's sugar crop were bankrupt. These houses provided the working capital of a large number of estates on the security of the product of these estates which was consigned to them in London. The failure of those great "millionaires"<sup>122</sup> caused dismay in the island and for a time paralysed trade causing the ruin of thousands in an unfortunate and misgoverned colony". Sugar property in the island became, for a time, practically valueless. The governor was authorized to make advances to planters not exceeding £150,000. According to Governor Anderson, the crash of 1848 sent the Mauritian economy into a considerable depression. The crash caused the failure of the Mauritius Bank, one of the two commercial banks then operating in Mauritius. Both banks had the privilege of note issue. In 1848, the Government issued a new paper currency, denominated in rupees, which was managed by the Mauritius Commercial Bank.

Several parties blamed the failure of the British firms connected with the island and the distress of the industry "on the almost universal error of compromising two to three times the needful amount of capital on the price of a sugar plantation". The weight of mortgage debt borne by estates arose, in large part, from the established practice in Mauritius of lending money to the sugar estates on the security of the standing crop "just as money is invested in Britain in saving banks and railway shares". The crash of 1848, however, had also other more fundamental causes.

The following extract is taken from the Report of Select Committee on sugar and coffee planting (1848):

*"From 1848 to the present time, the vacillation of parliament, the change of the legislation and the departure from what was understood to be the system to be adopted during the time that we lent out our money and sent out our machinery and carried on these works, has been such as to bring these enormous losses upon thus".<sup>123</sup>*

There was besides, in the case of Mauritius, the growing unilateral trade with British India and the heavy annual disbursements on the importation of indentured labour and the purchase of rice and other staples. A symptom of the imbalance in the island's trade with British India was the drain of Indian rupees which, at the official rate of 1/10 to the rupee, were hoarded or held at a premium and ultimately left the island in speculative transactions. The Colony was said to be approaching a state of barter in the course of which sugar may bring rice to a few people but would not provide wages.

There was also the growing burden of taxes over the past few years. There were reports of taxes going up by nine per cent, and establishment charges showed a corresponding increase. Besides the parties paying the Government dues with rupees had to submit to an eight per cent discount the rupees in the island, being officially rated at  $\frac{1}{10}$ , whereas it was really worth 2.<sup>124</sup>

### 4.3.3 The Heyday of Sugar

#### 4.3.3.1 High Prosperity in the 1850s

The crash of 1848 resulted in the write-off of the debt of several estates. But a substantial part of the capital invested in the Industry was not wasted where these investments had been used to purchase more powerful factory plant and to finance improved agricultural practices. The local French planters would become 'effective' owners of the sugar estates and factories, by buying at relatively low prices in many cases.

In 1848, although the principal British merchants connected with the island were bankrupt, the estates were generally in good working condition, complete with machinery and buildings. Output which had fallen to 34,286 tonnes in 1839 reached 61,247 tonnes in 1846 and 63,339 tonnes in 1849. After 1849, the Industry entered into a new period of rapid expansion and the output of sugar in the island rose to 150,480 tonnes in 1862.

Between 1852 and 1854, 17,859 *arpents* of land were put to cane and the total acreage under cane in 1865 was around 137,955 *arpents*. In 1858, there were 288 factories in Mauritius, the largest number of factories ever to operate in the island. Between 1850 and 1865, a total of 186,100 Indian labourers were brought in, with an average annual intake of over 11,600 male labourers.

The one-year engagements were replaced by three-year and ultimately five-year terms. These measures brought down the cost of labour and led to the spread of cane cultivation throughout the island.

The 1850s and first half of the 1860s have commonly been regarded as the heyday of the Mauritian Sugar Industry. The increasing value of sugar exports, large specie inflows and the growth in the value of imports per head, as well as the increasingly favourable balance of trade, confirm that this era was one of substantial economic growth and increasing economic prosperity in the Colony.<sup>125</sup>

Sugar production reached its peak in Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> century between 1850 and 1860. It was accompanied by a revival of the maritime trade between Port Louis and the main ports of the Indian Ocean and Europe. The increase in maritime traffic was due to the growing importance of industrial and commercial activities. It was facilitated by the Repeal of the Navigation laws by Britain in 1851. The elimination of these restrictions on trade opened the port to foreign vessels. It gave a considerable boost to the movement of ships and restored the prosperity of Port Louis. The port became once more the hub of maritime trade in the region. In 1850, 470 ships berthed at Port Louis and 136,000 tonnes of goods were handled. Eight years later in 1858, 825 ships berthed at Port Louis, which was the highest number of arrivals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the volume of freight handled reached 308,000 tonnes.

While there came only around fifty foreign vessels yearly since 1842, there arrived three times as much annually in the decade which followed the Repeal of the Navigation Laws. The competition of foreign vessels did not, in any way, diminish the number of British ships calling at Mauritius which on the contrary came in larger numbers.<sup>126</sup>

There was also the discovery of gold in Australia in 1851. The contacts taken by the Mauritius Commercial Bank in Australia at that time may have been instrumental in the opening of the Australian market for Mauritian's sugar and for Australian imports of the European commodities which transited in Mauritius before the opening of the Suez Canal.

Port Louis became once again the hub of trading activities in the southern Indian Ocean and the focus of the economic and social life of the Colony. A large part of these activities was connected with the importation of indentured labourers. Besides, a regular sea link was established with Europe.

#### 4.3.3.2 Improvements in Communication - The Construction of Railways

The spread of cane acreage and the setting up of factories inland posed a difficult communication problem. In the 1850s, a large part of the island's production was shipped to Port Louis from various coastal stations in Flacq, Rivière du Rempart, Pamplemousses and Savanne. The creation of new estates inland increased substantially the cost of building and equipping a factory and the cost of transport of sugar to Port Louis.

In 1856, the Chamber of Agriculture lobbied the Secretary of State for the construction of a railway in the island. The Longridge Report endorsed the recommendation to develop a railway network; it recommended that a loan could be granted provided the machinery was bought from Britain. Works on the Eastern and Northern railway lines began in 1862 and were completed in 1864 and the Central and Southern lines were opened to traffic in 1865.<sup>127</sup> The transport of sugar to Port Louis was thus greatly facilitated. Between 1880 and 1910, up to 100,000 tonnes of sugar were carried by rail annually. The total current revenues and expenditures of the Railway Department between 1901 and 1910 showed that the operation of the railways in Mauritius was generally quite profitable. The cost of building the Northern and Midland lines amounted to £1,066,795 and were paid by loans from the British Government. Additional expenditure of £477,058 was met by contributions from the General Revenue in 1862-67 and a loan of £100,000 from the Treasury. But the introduction of lorries and road transport after 1920, put an end eventually to the profitability of the railways.

The commercial activities progressed well. As the number of indentured immigrants increased in the 1850s and early 1860s, so did the volume of trade and traffic between the Indian ports and Mauritius. In 1850, 53 ships plied between the North Indian ports, from which most of the immigrants and cargoes came to Port Louis. In 1855, 93 vessels sailed on that route, 83 in 1860 and

90 in 1865. The transport of indentured labourers and the provision of their basic needs in food and clothing constituted the bulk of the transactions between British India and Mauritius. From the 1860s, exports of sugar to British India opened new prospects for bi-lateral trade and by the turn of the century more than half of the trade of the colony was carried out with the subcontinent.

The increased production and export of sugar led to substantial developments in the port area financed largely by foreign capital. According to Kalla, the attraction of capital to Mauritius for major development projects should be seen in the wider context of Industrial Colonialism. The European Industrial Revolution led to increasing demand for raw materials and food for their expanding factories and work force. The organization of production and space by the European powers in their colonies followed. In the case of Port Louis a flaring of activities took place in the harbour and port area. Three major docks were built during that period: The Mauritius Dry Docks were inaugurated in July 1857, the Stevenson Dry Docks in April 1859, and the Albion Dry Docks in April 1860.

The golden age of the Mauritius Sugar Industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a high rate of investment both within the industry and in the island in general. The failure of the London sugar brokers in 1848 had cut off British sources of finance. The capital now required to sustain the development of the Industry had to be raised to a large extent on the local market. In this period of sanguine expansion, there developed a situation of credit stringency. Prevailing interest rates even for short-term loans were prohibitive (12-25%). These very high interest rates “which doubled the amount of debt in three years”, made it virtually impossible for planters to refund the principal of their debts.<sup>128</sup>

#### 4.3.4 Signs of Decline

The hope during the early 1850s that a reviving economy would attract new British capital was disappointed, and for the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mauritius was not the object of substantial British investment. Signs of long-term difficulties began to appear during the second half of the 1860s, when the amount of specie entering the colony declined precipitously, a development which leveled the beginning of a growing capital scarcity problem. By the mid-1880s, signs of decline were discernible in other indices of economic performance such as the value of sugar exports, the balance of trade and the value of imports<sup>129</sup>. The falling world price of sugar, the higher cost of imported staples and several natural catastrophies in the 1860s were heavy blows for an economy, virtually exclusively dependent upon the resources of a single industry.

Planters responded to the developing economic crisis by a process of retrenchment, less frequent calls for the importation of labourers, the rationalisation of manufacturing operations and the improvement of operations to increase efficiency and cut costs. Between 1863 and 1903, the number of factories declined by 70 per cent, from 255 to 80. Share cropping became increasingly common during the 1880s, and by the late 1890s, one-fourth of the island’s sugar estates were engaged in this practice. At the same time, many estate owners began to subdivide their holdings and sell off small plots of land to Indian labourers.

From the second half of the 1860s, Mauritius once again faced very difficult times: a financial crisis in 1865, a severe drought in 1866 and the outbreak of malaria in 1867 created havoc in the island and resulted in a serious deterioration of the Sugar Industry’s finances. In 1866, 20 estates were sequestered as a result of the drought, and nearly all had to be sold. The outbreak of malaria in the following year led to the abandonment of several other estates and the closure of a large number of factories and brought confusion in the Industry. Seven years later, in 1874, the sugar crop was damaged by a severe cyclone. This created serious problems for financing the next crop. In 1875, there was a great pressure on the banks, owing to the scarcity of foreign bills of exchange and the high discount on local bills. At one stage, the local market was reported to be entirely bare of foreign bills.

The Oriental Bank set things moving on the issue of convertibility, when the Bank tried to raise £35,000 in sterling against an equivalent amount of Government notes. The Bank had to remit £75,000 to Britain for which amount no bills of exchange could be obtained. Under the urgent pressure of the Local Authorities and to forestall a run on the Treasury, the British Government

decreed in 1876 that the Indian rupee, a silver currency, would be the sole legal tender in Mauritius.<sup>130</sup>

This measure laid the foundations for the future prosperity of the Sugar Industry. The adoption of the rupee currency in Mauritius stimulated the bi-lateral trade with British India and secured for the Mauritian sugar industry a large and comparatively sheltered market at a time when the effect of the continental beet sugar bounties were increasingly felt in Britain and other European markets. Mauritius was drawn increasingly into the Indian financial and economic orbit.

The fall in the silver exchange rate gave Mauritian sugar, a rupee commodity, a large measure of indirect protection on the Indian market. In 1895-96, for example, following a sudden improvement in the rupee-sterling rate of exchange, British India imported 40,000 tonnes of beet sugar to the detriment of the island's product. Besides, a common currency sheltered the island's trade with India from the commercial losses and speculations which generally result from fluctuating exchange rates. Trade bills were negotiated at low and stable exchange rates, specie flowed freely in and out of Mauritius in the course of trade and the credit of Mauritius on the Bombay market remained high.<sup>131</sup>

The shipments of sugar from Mauritius to Bombay came to be concentrated in the hands of Indian firms which also supplied a large part of the island's requirements; this gave the Industry the benefit of comparatively low freight rate on sugar shipments to British India. Moreover, the lower trade margin on which the Indian firms operated ensured to the local producers the highest possible price for their sugar under the prevailing conditions.<sup>132</sup>

#### 4.3.5 The Chronic Shortage of Capital and Recurrent Financial Problems

##### 4.3.5.1 Shortage of Capital

In spite of the relative prosperity after 1890, the Sugar Industry's finances were often strained: these short-lived crises were mostly the result of the vulnerability of the Industry, and of the island, generally due to a shortfall in crop proceeds, the result of natural calamities - hurricanes, drought, epidemics or a drop in the price of sugar.

Whenever there is a difficulty, the market is very tight. In 1885 for example, following the 1884 crash on the world sugar market, Sir William Newton pleaded for restraint from the mortgagees in exercising their rights to tide over the temporary difficulties, and preserve the productive forces of the Industry.

One of the reasons behind the Government loan of Rs 6 million in 1892, after the disastrous cyclone of that year, was to allay the fear that, unless capital was introduced to stimulate commerce and agriculture, the following year might see a dearth of money in the island and leave a large population without employment.<sup>133</sup> On this, and other, occasions, assistance from the banks and local financiers were not sufficient to tide over the effect of the shortfall in crop proceeds.

On two other occasions, in 1898 and 1908, a small crop followed by a rise in the price of rice and other staples resulted in a deficit of 500 thousand and 700 thousand rupees respectively on crop operations. Several estates found themselves in difficulty. To help the Sugar Industry and business, the Mauritius Commercial Bank lent large sums to brokers and planters in the form of advances on dock warrants. On both occasions the Bank had to appeal to Government for assistance, and the currency commissioners were authorized to lend over one million rupees to the Bank. These loans were soon repaid when, after the next crop, money flowed back to Mauritius.<sup>134</sup>

The fundamental weakness of the financial structure of the island may be explained by the fact that the whole community lived on a year-to-year basis from the proceeds of the crop. It must be borne in mind that there were in Mauritius few accumulated fortunes; capital is almost exclusively domiciled in Europe and, as compared to Indian traders in India.<sup>135</sup>

The Royal Commissioners of 1909 referred to the scarcity of capital reserves in the island. They reported, that a fundamental disease of the Sugar Industry was, that a large proportion of the capital was in the hands of people who did not have enough capital to work it satisfactorily. The Commissioners also stated that there was, at that time, little prospect of a large introduction of

British capital or a substantial accumulation of local capital. The French Law of Succession, in force in the island, operated against the accumulation of capital. The Commissioners considered that it was a misfortune that no large banking company doing business in other parts of the East, had a branch in Mauritius. They believed that such an institution could meet an increased demand for accommodation or whether a period of depression in a way that the two existing banks, with their necessarily limited resources, could hardly be expected to do.<sup>136</sup> (confusing- please re-consider)

Moreover substantial remittances to Mauritians residing abroad further depleted the island's capital reserves: "We export a large part of the money from our production to [...] many people who spend such revenue elsewhere".

#### 4.3.5.2 The Sugar Estate Companies

The pressure of competition caused, in time, a profound change in the economic organization of the Industry. Whereas previously most estates had belonged to individual proprietors, several estates now became the property of public companies.

*"After having operated to date as individual properties under private ownership, the sugar estate takes the form of a corporate organization constituted by means of shares and through a particular evolution of affairs, we are confronted simultaneously with a subdivision of ownership of individual estates and the amalgamation of estates under common management. If the change in the system of ownership which is already so widespread were to become the norm the 180 to 200 individual sugar estates which now exist in Mauritius could be combined into 60 to 80 sugar estates companies; and it is to be expected that the outcome would be quite considerable. Already we notice an increase in the market value of sugar property together with greater facilities to secure such amount".<sup>137</sup>*

One of the factors, which brought about this fundamental change in the organization of the Industry, was the involvement of estates with finance companies. In 1897, several estates in the island were reported to be very deeply encumbered. When these estates became too involved financially, they were taken over by the finance companies in settlement of their debt: "A great many [estates] are mortgaged to the Oriental Bank; others have passed into the hands of companies that have kept them up. The Mauritius Estates Company and the Oriental Bank Estates Company have very large estates which had to be taken over...". In 1895, the Oriental Bank Estates Company owned or managed eight estates and was financially interested in several others. The Mauritius Estates and Assets Company had considerable sugar property in four Districts of the island. The Anglo-Ceylon Company owned six estates, amongst the largest in the island. The Credit Foncier of Mauritius, likewise, owned a number of large estates.

In 1909, there were in the island some 141 estates of over 40 hectares; of these 13 belonged to three British Companies, 24 to Mauritian Companies, the rest were owned by private companies and individuals, mostly resident in Mauritius.<sup>138</sup>

#### 4.4 *Métayage* and Morcellement

During the 1880s, sugar prices began a secular decline. Indebtedness increased and numerous estates were divided into small parcels and sold to Indian cultivators, many of whom fifteen to twenty years before had been indentured labourers. The number of factories tumbled from a peak of 288 in 1850 to 104 in 1892 and 66 in 1908. The parcelling out and sale of estates proceeded most rapidly between 1880 and 1900; it was checked in 1902.

After 1880, under the pressure of falling sugar prices and increasing competition for labour, some planters handed over part of their estates to their workers in the hope of binding them to the estates. Under the '*métayage*' system (tenant farming), the tenant farmers cultivated their land with sugarcane which was taken to the estate factory to be crushed. The '*métayage*' system gave way to "morcellement". Large portions of marginal or sub-marginal land were divided into small plots and sold to Indians, mostly for cash but also on deferred terms of payment. Between 1886, and 1895, there were 69 "morcellement" of estates in the island. A large number of Indians,

several of them part-time labourers on estates, thus occupied land, which estates could no longer work profitably and brought them back into production.

In 1907, Highlands Estate, with 2,975 acres under cane, was actually cultivating only 206 acres and had leased 2,419 acres to Indian small planters; on Reunion estate, planters cultivated over one third of the estate land. By 1907, Indian cane farmers owned 30 per cent of cane acreage in Mauritius, and produced 22½ per cent of the cane crop. According to Allen, the parcelling out of estates was a device by sugar estates, which were squeezed financially to appropriate the substantial sums owned by Indians in Mauritius. According to him, there is reason to believe that the Indian immigrants investment in property became increasingly important to the Sugar Industry's financial well-being as Mauritius economic crises deepened after the mid-1880s.

The extensive parcelling out of estate land, which began around 1875, heralded an important change in the organization of the Sugar Industry. Since 1858, the reduction in the number of factories allowed for important economies of scale. But the merging of factories required heavy investments and the sale of marginal land provided much-needed funds.

Allen asserts that the "Grand morcellement of the 1860s" and associated developments cannot be understood, without examining the various ways and means by which Indian immigrants capitalized upon the opportunities during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Allen also refers, in that connection, to the lack of adequate financial resources and reports of impoverished and destituted men in the Coloured Population.

The average sum owned by a Mauritian (i.e. non-Indian agricultural labourer) between 1851 and 1855 varied from £5 to slightly more than £8 a year, while that of Indian labourers ranged from £18 to £21 per year. The disparity was even more marked in the amounts standing to the credit of agricultural labourers at the end of the year. Mauritians averaged £303, compared to £11,399 for their Indian counter parts. The amount is even more impressive, when compared to the value of the deposits standing to the credit of artisans and mechanics (£4,542) and domestic servants (£7,327).

Many of the early sales of land to Indian immigrants in the 1840s during the 'Petit morcellement' were made by Creoles. The Creole landowners had often sunk all their capital in the acquisition of the land and did not have, or could not raise, enough working capital to cultivate it. As a result, many of these plots remained uncultivated many years after their purchase. The early 1880s, by contrast, saw the subdivision of an increasing number of sugar estates and other properties.

The beginning of the 'Grand morcellement' dates from around 1875. The parcelling out of estate land gained momentum during the 1880s and 1890s. By 1895, the scale was such that the Governor, Sir Charles Bruce characterized the increasing pace as 'inevitable'. He also noted that the Colony's sugar factories were being improved to handle the cane-produced by the growing number of small planters. He estimated, in 1896, that at least one-fourth of the year's sugar crop had been produced by small planters.<sup>139</sup>

'Morcellements' and the use of labour contractors reduced the planters' dependence on wage labour and enabled them to concentrate on the manufacturing side of the industry. The consolidation of estates which followed was an inevitable consequence of the high overhead costs of sugar production. According to Carter, the transfer of field-work on estates to job contractors was beneficial to planters in the short run; in the long-run, however, the development of Indian villages which it fostered provided a more direct challenge to the traditional sugar estate.<sup>140</sup>

In the same vein North-Coombes has argued that the initial acceptance and the subsequent opposition of the Colonial Establishment and ruling class to the use of an Indian peasantry and urban *petite bourgeoisie* can be explained by the fact that these activities would not only constitute competition for land but also the withdrawal of labour from the sugar sector.

The main advantages of the existence of the smaller planter class to the controlling interests of the Sugar Industry were a flexible source of low-cost cane supply and a reserve army of labour which could be drawn upon on a seasonal, or casual, basis to meet the changing labour requirements of sugar production. The small cane-planters thus served both the cane supply and the labour needs of the Industry.

## 4.5 Wages Rates in the Sugar Industry (1835-1909)

### 4.5.1 Shifting from Slave Labour to Indentured Labour

In 1807, the shipping of slaves to British colonies was forbidden and in 1808, slave trade was prohibited. When in 1810, the British took over the island, slave trade became illegal. In 1834, British abolished slavery. It was phased out on the island under a transition period known as 'apprenticeship'. However, in Mauritius and elsewhere, the sugar plantation economy, since its inception, had depended, for its success and profitability, on plentiful, cheap, coercible and disciplined labour force. Slave labour had, for centuries, been the backbone of plantation colonies.

To meet the increased demand for labourers required for the growth of the capitalist production system, a new labour regime was inaugurated in which labour began to flow from regions where people were unemployed, or displaced from agriculture or cottage industries, towards regions of heightened industrial or agricultural activity.<sup>141</sup> One of the most important, among such flows of labourers was the immigration of Indian labourers to work on labour intensive plantation settlements like Mauritius. Immigrants were tied to a contract of service, often entered into at the source of origin itself, for a fixed tenure and type of work to be performed, and they were legally compelled to observe the terms and conditions of the contracts.

Between 1820 and early 1830s, under the British period, Indian contractual workers were introduced by individual planters. In 1835, indentured labour system was introduced. In subsequent decades, hundreds of thousands of workers arrived from India. Mauritius was the first British Colony to embark on the 'Great Experiment' of importing an indentured labour workforce from the sub-continent. Since the Proclamation of the Abolition of Slavery in 1833, there was the urgent need to replace the local labourers liberated from slavery by an indentured workforce. This workforce, later on, became a majority population group. 453,063 indentured labourers were brought in Mauritius under the indenture Agreement. Labourers from the Indian Peninsula disembarked in Mauritius as from 1842 and originated from Colombo, Cochin, Pondicherry, Madras and Calcutta. These experimental importations of local planters were an evident means of overcoming the acute shortage of labour arising in the colony.

By 1850, there were 48,112 immigrants engaged by the sugar planters, their aggregate wages being £ 28,683, 7sh. and the average wages was 11 shg 11 d.<sup>142</sup> According to the contract of service, they were to receive 5 Rupees as wages every month; the daily ration was to be 2 pounds of rice, 1/2 pound of dhol and an adequate quantity of salt, ghee, oil and mustard. The immigrant was also to be supplied with one *dhoti* (loincloth), one blanket, one sheet and two caps. So that they might not become a burden on public funds on the termination of their contract, the employers had also to give an undertaking that the immigrants would be entitled to a free return passage to India at the end of their service. Later, the free return passage was abolished. In addition to these, they were also provided with free housing on the estates and free medical attendance.

### 4.5.2 Wage Payments, Absences and Double-Cut

In the colonial perception, this was bliss for the Indian labourers because in India, these labourers hardly earned more than two rupees a month and that too without any additional allowance which they received in Mauritius. There was a general consensus that the wages offered in Mauritius were enormously high compared to wages in India and, therefore, the Indian labourers work as wage labourers and better were their conditions by immigrating to Mauritius. At the very beginning of the system in 1834, Indian immigrants were employed on five rupees a month to work on plantations, and it was anticipated by the administrators that this would increase with time and the rising fortunes of the sugar economy. But, unfortunately, this increase never took place, and the figure of wages paid to the immigrant labourers remained the same for more than eighty years, and the increases remained occasional and short-lived. It even decreased on several occasions with the sinking fortunes of sugar economy.

Table 12 shows that the wages paid to immigrant labourers remained the same from the beginning till the end of the indenture system. But this is only in absolute terms, and if we consider the inflationary effects and calculate the real value of wages in relative terms, the immigrants actually received wages on diminishing rates.

Year	Average Monthly Wages (Rupees/Month)
1834	5
1848	5-7
1873	4-7
1881	5-7.42
1892	5-7.5
1898	4.54-5.44
1909	6
1915	5-6
<b>Source: Mishra (2010)<sup>143</sup></b>	

The planters used every possible trick to resist any increase in wages. The first such trick was to reduce the bargaining opportunities of the immigrants by importing surplus labourers and binding them to the same contractual obligations for as long as possible. In employing immigrant labourers under the same conditions, planters always insisted on longer contracts, in which they ultimately succeeded, and imposed severe restrictions on their mobility so that the labourers had no respite but to engage with the same estate on whatever wages it offered. When the intending immigrant was recruited, he was told he would receive wages of six months in advance in India itself. But from this advance payment, a considerable sum was spent even before the embarkation as payments to the recruiter by way of remuneration for recruiting the emigrant, to the other people involved in the process of embarkation and buying utensils and other essentials for the voyage. And thus the immigrants arrived in Mauritius with six months wages already paid to them, which implies that for the next six months, they would not receive any wages except the food.

There was also a big gap between the stipulated wages and what the labourers actually received. The two main deductions put into practice by the planters were monthly deductions for return passage and the notorious 'double cut' of wages. One rupee or one-fifth of the total monthly wages was deducted by the planters as a security for good conduct and to meet the passage expenses in case of their premature repatriation in the event of any misconduct. This accumulated deductions were to be refunded to the labourers upon the completion of the stipulated contracts. In practice, it was never returned to the labourers who were forced to re-indenture several times. The second, but the most widely applied, deduction by the planters which has earned an unsavoury reputation in the narratives of labour control in Mauritius was 'double cut' or deduction of two days of wages for an absence of each day, whatever the reasons might be for such absence.

This was practised by the planters as early as in 1839<sup>144</sup> and finally got the legislative endorsement in Ordinance 22 of 1847. Planters misused this provision both for the non-payment of wages, and also to curb labour mobility. The quantum of 'double cuts' was so high that in 1874 'double cut' reduced the wage bills by one-third on good estates and one-half on bad estates to what should have been actually paid to the labourers.<sup>145</sup> The 'double cut' was imposed by the planters for reasons other than unlawful absence of labourers (these reasons were most often meaningless in nature like absence because of imprisonment, or attending court proceedings). This was described by the Royal Commissioners as a 'monstrous system'.<sup>146</sup> Despite this persuasive condemnation, the provision of 'double cut' remained in force even in the supposedly pro-labour legislation of 1878, and it was abolished only in 1908 'when indentured immigration was in its last gasp'.<sup>147</sup>

On some estates planters even enforced deduction of four days' wages for absence of each day. In addition to these two universal deductions, planters made deductions from labourers' wages for their absence due to sickness, idleness, drunkenness, cutting of grass, losing tools, collecting firewood and on countless other similar unreasonable grounds, according to the planter's fancy. Planters used every possible excuse to defer the payment of wages in cash to the labourers. On innumerable occasions, irregular payments and heavy overdue amounts of wages were reported, despite the strict legislative provisions for weekly or monthly payments of wages throughout the indenture period.<sup>148</sup>

The Royal Commission reported that between 1856 and 1870, more than thirty estates had arrears for more than three months on an average per year. Planters' usual defence was the liquidity crunch. Sugar production was credit-based, in which planters take credit for production and repay

only when the final produce was sold in the market which, undoubtedly, provided limited liquidity at the disposal of planters. However, the overdue of wage payment had more to do with the attitude of the planters than the actual crisis of funds.<sup>149</sup> Planters were always avoiding the wage payments on some pretext or the other and a minor fault, on the part of labourers, provided them with the opportunity to forfeit all the accumulated wages of errant labourers. In addition, the non-payment of wages often pushed the labourers into a debt trap to money lenders who were usually *sirdars* loyal to the planters, and it was expected that it would force the immigrants to extend their contracts. Non-payment of wages was the most often quoted grievance of indentured labourers, and it accounted for the largest proportion in the complaints lodged by the indentured labourers.

Table 13 shows that complaints for non-payment of wages accounted for the largest part of the total complaints of Indian labourers against their employers. Despite this prominence, the redressal mechanism available for labourers to reclaim their wages often proved deficient in ensuring the payment of wages and arrears. On the majority of occasions, Magistrates and Courts connived with the planters and the labourers, who were mostly illiterate, found it very difficult to establish their dues because the wage registers were not properly maintained, and ultimately the claims of labourers were dismissed. In some cases, even when the instances of non-payment of wages were established, the legal procedures were notoriously slow and the Stipendiary Magistrates, who were entrusted to secure the payment of wages, had difficulty in obtaining the dues for labourers and convicting the defaulters. All these innate constraints of the wage payment made the stipulated wages into a longing which immigrant labourers could never attain.

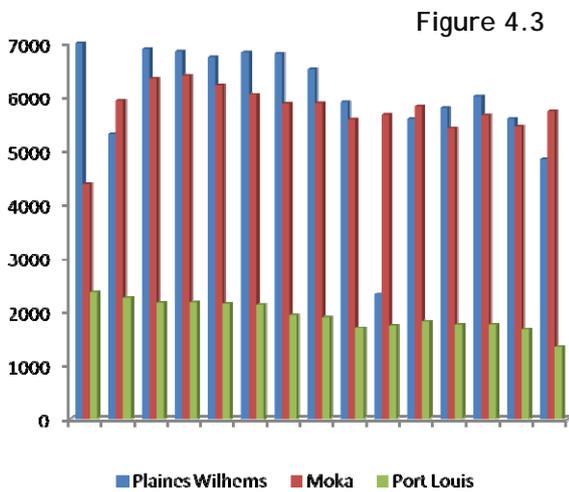
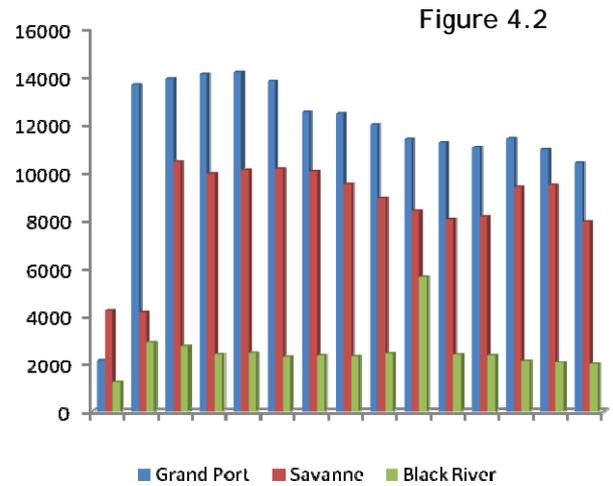
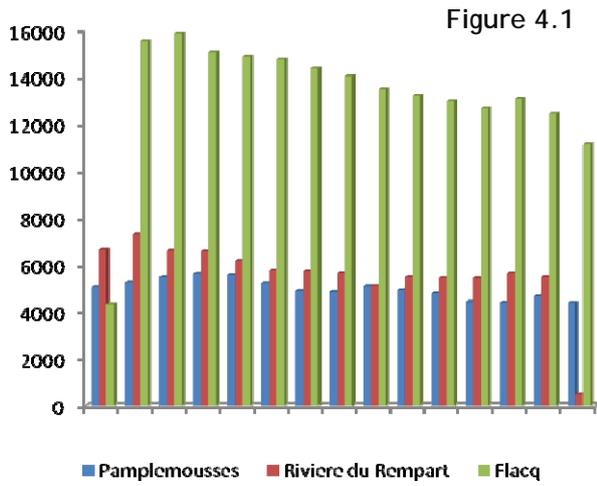
Table 13 Complaints by Indian Immigrants against Their Employees, 1878-1898

Year	Complaints for Non-Payment of Wages (Cases Entered)	Total Complaints
1878	816	1672
1879	503	823
1880	558	822
1881	1107	1378
1882	291	418
1883	323	671
1884	373	492
1885	494	589
1886	358	435
1887	269	323
1888	959	1009
1889	246	298
1890	225	275
1891	125	174
1892	101	142
1893	85	119
1894	57	72
1895	55	80
1896	114	126
1897	88	102
1898	88	106
Total	7235	10126

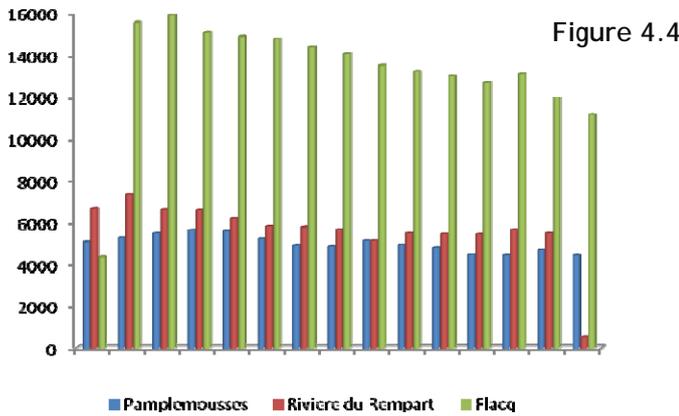
Source: ARPI for years, 1878-1899

#### 4.5.2 Wage Payments and Wage Disparity on Sugar Estates: Empirical Evidence

Data was collected from the Protector of Immigrants from 1878 to 1888. Information on average monthly number of *sirdars* and labourers per estate and District, average contract wage for *sirdars*, per centage deductions from wages based on the number of days lost in terms of sickness, imprisonment, illegal absences were made available. Data was also collected on the average number of days spent in prison, number of sick days or illegal absence. The data was used to focus on the working environment of *sirdars* and labourers in Mauritius from 1878 to 1888.



Figures 4.1 - 4.3 above show the number of *sirdars* working in the different Districts of Mauritius from December 1878 to June 1888. The highest number of *sirdars* is in the District of Flacq followed by Grand Port and Moka. There is low variation in the number of *sirdars* on the sugar estates across a particular District implying low mobility of workers across sugar estates and Districts



Figures 4.4 - 4.6 above show the number of labourers working in the different Districts of Mauritius from December 1878 to June 1888. The highest number of labourers is to be in the District of Flacq followed by Grand Port and the Plain Wilhems. We find a similar trend in the distribution of labourers as to sirdars in the above charts. The size of the sugar estates are often linked to the number of labourers and sirdars working on the plantations. The close link between the population of labourers and *sirdars* can be seen above.

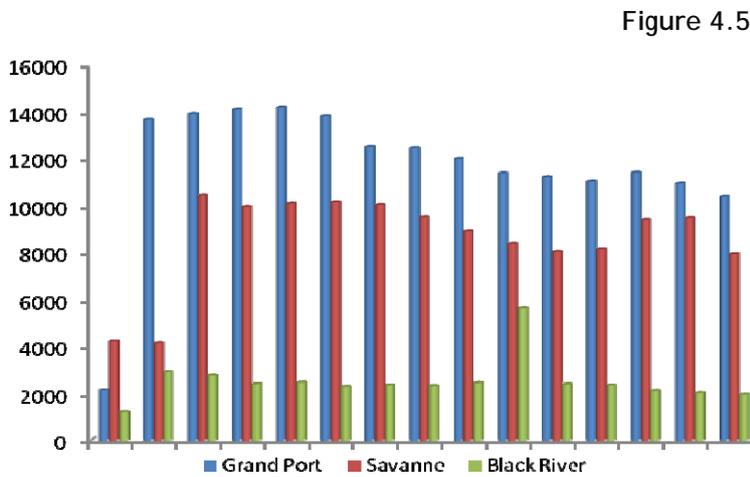


Figure 4.5

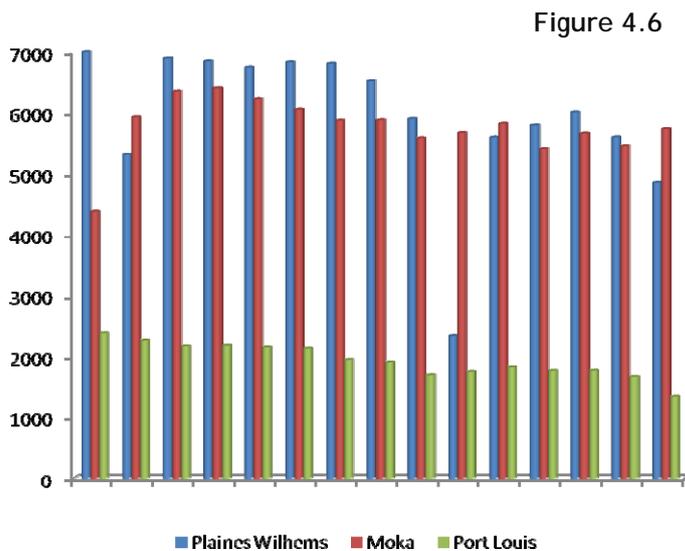


Figure 4.6

The second part of our analysis focuses on the average wages paid to *sirdars* and labourers over the period of study. Since there is not much variation in average wages for both groups over the years, we concentrate on the starting year that is December 1879 and the last year of our study which is June 1888. From Table 14, we note that the monthly mean wage of the *sirdar* is on average three times as much as that of the labourer. In addition, average deductions seem to be more pronounced for labourers than *sirdars*. In fact the average deductions were due to sickness, illegal absences, desertions, prison sentences among others which were more prevalent for labourers.

Table 14 Average number of male *sirdars*, labourers, wages contracted for, deductions and wages paid for the six months ending December 1879

Region	Monthly Average Number of Workers		Average Wages Contracted For		Average Deductions		Average Wages Paid	
	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers
	No.	No.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
North								
Pamplemousses	198	5484	16.52	6.49	0.40	1.03	16.11	5.45
Riv. du Rempart	241	6596	13.95	6.43	0.50	1.07	13.41	5.34
East								
Flacq	621	15878	17.95	6.98	0.47	1.35	17.48	5.62
Moka	307	6342	16.50	7.28	0.65	1.38	15.85	5.90
South								
Grand Port	570	13923	16.40	6.79	0.69	1.46	15.71	5.33
Savanne	453	10454	15.67	7.11	0.52	1.45	15.15	5.66
West								
Black River	138	2747	16.06	6.49	0.77	1.58	15.28	4.90
Centre								
Plaines Wilhems	287	6892	16.90	6.77	0.62	1.56	16.28	5.21
Port Louis								
Port Louis	91	2160	16.36	9.42	1.12	1.51	15.24	7.91
Total	2904	70475	16.26	7.08	0.64	1.38	15.61	5.70

From Table 15, though we may note a slight decline in wages for both *sirdars* and labourers in June 1888 across most Districts, the fall in wages has been greater for labourers. Overall, *sirdars* were still earning three times more and in some Districts like Flacq, Grand Port and Black River, the disparity in wages was even four to five times more for *sirdars*.

Table 15 Average number of male *sirdars*, labourers, wages contracted for, deductions and wages paid for the six months ending June 1888

Region	Monthly Average Number of Workers		Average Wages Contracted For		Average Deductions		Average Wages Paid	
	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers
	No.	No.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
North								
Pamplemousses	154	4294	16.13	5.65	0.54	1.41	15.59	4.24
Riv. du Rempart	181	5093	13.95	5.43	0.27	1.39	13.68	4.04
East								
Flacq	417	11260	16.14	5.37	0.42	1.46	15.72	3.91
Moka	242	5823	15.28	5.37	0.29	1.21	14.99	4.16
South								
Grand Port	373	10184	16.76	5.86	0.6	1.97	16.16	3.89
Savanne	300	8204	14.53	6.02	0.55	1.75	13.98	4.27
West								
Black River	93	1997	13.18	5.51	0.47	1.68	12.71	3.83
Centre								
Plaines Wilhems	160	4809	13.77	5.49	0.62	1.25	13.15	4.24
Port Louis								
Port Louis	64	1256	15.88	11.32	0.35	1.16	15.53	10.16
Total	1984	52920	15.07	6.22	0.46	1.48	14.61	4.75

From the above, we might not capture the variation in the size of sugar estates in the different Districts. By analysing the data by Districts, we may ignore important differences across estates in the different areas. As such, we analyse the data for the starting period December 1879 and the end of the period of study that is June 1888. The analysis is shown in Tables 16 and 17. We concentrate on those sugar states with the highest number of labourers (as a measure of size) in the different districts of Mauritius. In December 1879, we note that the sugar estates with the largest number of labourers were located in the Southern and Eastern parts of the island. For instance, Gros Bois, L'Etoile, Queen Victoria, Chamouny and Rose-Belle are those with the largest number of labourers. However, we did not find any significant relationship between number of labourers on the sugar estates and the wage rates paid to these workers.

Table 16 Size of Sugar Estate and Average Wage Paid to *Sirdars* and Labourers in December 1879

	Dec 1879	Sugar Estate	Average Number of		Average Wages contracted For.		Average Wages paid.		Sirdars. Rs. C.	Labourers Rs. C.
			<i>Sirdars</i> .	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i> Rs. C.	Labourers Rs. C.	<i>Sirdars</i> Rs. C.	Labourers Rs. C.		
1	Grand Port	Gros Bois	38.50	994.50	19.75	6.39	0.50	1.29	19.26	5.09
2	Flacq	L'Etoile	30.33	846.83	21.94	7.06	0.23	1.14	21.71	5.91
3	Flacq	Queen Victoria	23.33	832.00	23.80	6.82	0.28	1.34	23.51	5.47
4	Savanne	Chamouny	15.00	796.50	21.98	6.62	0.76	1.84	21.22	4.78
5	Grand Port	Rose Belle	44.83	791.17	15.06	7.29	0.41	1.33	14.65	5.95
6	Flacq	Sebastopol	21.00	780.50	19.15	7.22	-	0.96	19.15	6.25
7	Plaine Wilhems	Highlands	34.00	755.00	16.48	7.37	0.88	1.64	15.59	5.72
8	Flacq	Deep River and La Louise	30.67	753.83	16.53	6.89	0.73	1.36	15.79	5.52
9	Plaines Wilhems	Midlands	30.00	717.33	13.98	6.72	0.42	0.84	13.52	5.87
10	Flacq	Beau Champ	31.33	713.50	17.13	6.55	0.47	1.53	16.65	5.02
11	Rivière Du Rempart	Antoinette	15.00	705.83	15.90	6.82	0.36	1.44	15.53	5.38
12	Grand Port	St Hubert	17.50	683.50	14.43	6.44	0.62	2.37	13.80	4.08
13	Savanne	Riche Bois	21.17	682.50	24.01	6.90	0.55	1.08	23.45	5.81
14	Grand Port	Riche-en-Eau	32.67	673.50	19.51	6.57	1.04	1.92	18.46	4.63
15	Savanne	Constance	25.00	655.83	20.99	7.25	0.68	1.51	20.31	5.74
16	Pamplemousses	Rosalie	22.00	653.50	19.53	7.24	0.43	1.58	19.10	5.65
17	Plaines Wilhems	Stanley	25.17	648.67	15.38	6.50	0.47	0.72	14.91	5.77
18	Flacq	Sans Souci	22.00	644.67	28.10	7.72	0.12	1.50	27.98	6.21
19	Plaines Wilhems	Trianon	7.17	642.17	17.32	6.87	0.26	0.92	17.06	5.94
20	Flacq	La Gaieté	23.00	623.83	26.09	7.11	0.30	0.74	25.78	6.37
21	Moka	Alma	29.17	617.50	17.75	7.39	0.98	1.99	16.77	5.40
22	Flacq	Constance (Manes)	28.50	606.00	17.43	7.29	1.06	1.13	16.36	6.15
23	Flacq	Belle Rive	23.67	589.50	19.56	6.20	0.21	1.01	19.35	5.19
24	Savanne	St Aubin	24.00	585.17	16.33	7.27	0.74	1.72	15.59	5.44
25	Flacq	Bel Etang	19.17	583.50	21.51	6.71	0.88	1.91	20.62	4.79
26	Grand Port	Beau Vallon	14.67	567.83	20.90	6.27	0.64	1.24	20.26	5.00
27	Grand Port	Deux Bras	26.50	567.83	18.07	7.01	0.62	1.17	17.45	5.83
28	Rivière Du Rempart	Espérance	14.00	559.83	17.85	6.98	0.04	1.08	17.81	5.89
29	Grand Port	Mon Désert	15.33	559.00	13.65	6.13	1.00	1.96	12.65	4.14
30	Flacq	Belle Vue (Allendy)	22.83	558.50	16.48	7.47	0.40	1.34	16.08	6.12

The highest average wage rate was Rs. 7.47 for Belle-Vue Sugar estate in Flacq which is last in Table 17 in terms of employment of labourers. Our regression analysis also shows no positive significant link between size of the sugar estates and average wage paid to labourers. A similar result is obtained in June 1888 as shown by Table 17. We note that sugar estates in the Districts of Plaines Wilhems, Grand Port, Flacq and Moka namely Fressanges, Highlands, Gros Bois, La Lucie and

Agrement employed the largest number of labourers. The highest average wage paid to labourers in this period was around Rs. 6.43 on Riche-en-Eau sugar estate. Again our regression results, as well as figures from Table 17, do not reveal a positive correlation between the size of the sugar estate and average wage paid to labourers. This means that the average wage paid to labourers does not increase as the size of sugar estate increases. Across sugar estates, we also note that *sirdars* were earning more than labourers and the disparity was more pronounced. Their wage premium was in the ratio of 4:1 and even more on many estates. We also observe that there has been a decline in wages across all sugar estates from December 1879 to June 1888 and the fall apply to both the remuneration of *sirdars* and labourers.

Table 17 Size of Sugar Estate and Average Wage Paid to Sirdars and Labourers in June 1888

	June 1888				Average Wages contracted For.		Average Deductions.		Average Wages paid.	
	District	Estate	<i>Sirdars</i>	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i> .	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i> .	Labourers	<i>Sirdars</i> .	Labourers
1	Plaines Wilhems	Fressanges	30.3	864.1	17.43	5.45	0.84	1.23	16.59	4.22
2	Plaines Wilhems	Highlands	16.6	849	16.51	5.84	0.61	1.77	15.90	4.07
3	Grand Port	Gros Bois	24.6	775.5	25.45	6.19	0.21	0.49	25.24	3.70
4	Flacq	La Lucie	10.6	737	14.47	5.40	1.31	1.74	13.16	3.66
5	Moka	Agrément	25	693.6	21.27	5.40	0.22	1.26	21.05	4.14
6	Savanne	Britannia	25	688.3	19.98	5.74	1.34	1.75	18.64	3.99
7	Savanne	Savannah	25.1	661.6	14.74	5.53	0.33	1.35	14.41	4.18
8	Flacq	Beau Champs	18.3	657.1	19.08	5.39		1.62	19.08	3.77
9	Moka	Hermitage	17.3	650.5	16.56	5.09	0.38	1.21	16.18	3.88
10	Flacq	L'Etoile	25.3	642	20.27	5.42	0.80	1.73	19.47	3.69
11	Flacq	L'Unité	14.3	642	20.24	5.26	0.92	1.30	19.32	3.96
12	Grand Port	Beau Vallon (R)	36.3	636.8	14.94	6.29	0.77	3.04	14.17	3.25
13	Pamplemousses	Rosalie	22	624.3	21.10	5.58	0.18	1.43	20.92	4.15
14	Grand Port	Riche en Eau	17.6	619	11.34	6.43	0.55	2.71	10.79	3.72
15	Flacq	Queen Victoria	24.3	610.1	15.46	4.88	0.28	1.62	15.18	3.26
16	Plaines Wilhems	Stanley & Ebène	24.8	605.5	11.07	5.49	0.80	0.78	10.27	4.71
17	Plaines Wilhems	Henrietta	24.6	602.6	8.28	5.19	0.38	1.38	7.90	3.81
18	Flacq	Belle Rive	20	593	19.77	5.22	0.51	1.17	19.26	4.05
19	Flacq	Sébastopol	24.5	591.6	17.01	5.26		1.37	17.01	3.89
20	PW	Trianon	14	577.1	16.64	5.29	0.47	1.10	16.17	4.19
21	Moka	Mon Désert	20.8	571.6	15.64	5.39		1.24	15.64	4.15
22	Flacq	Bel Etang	15.5	571.1	20.03	5.90	0.68	1.51	19.35	4.39
23	Grand Port	Union Vale	20.6	557.5	19.09	6.05	0.67	2.57	18.42	3.48
24	Moka	Bon Air	19.1	554.8	18.17	5.27	0.16	0.93	18.01	4.34
25	Moka	Melrose	20	551.8	14.64	5.12	0.20	1.14	14.44	3.98
26	Savanne	Roche Bois	10	548.6	18.79	5.70	0.19	1.48	18.60	4.22
27	Moka	Helvétia	24	546	15.53	5.13	0.36	1.12	15.17	4.01
28	Flacq	St. Julien	27.3	545.5	15.52	5.53	0.35	1.74	15.17	3.79

## 4.6 Other aspects of indenture

### 4.6.1 The arrival of traders from India

The transport and presence of indentured labourers on a large scale had a major impact on trade and shipping between Mauritius and British India as from 1840s. British, Mauritian and Indian Traders were involved. The demand for textile products and foodstuffs from India increased considerably as the number of indentured labourers from India increased substantially in the 1840s up to the 1860s. On the other hand, the uncertainty of the international sugar market and the British policy of Free Trade created conditions for the export of sugar to British India. Trade between Mauritius and British India was significantly two-directional for a major part of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, following the First World War of 1914-18, Mauritian exports of sugar to India would fall dramatically, with Britain becoming over again the main market for Mauritius.

The transport of indentured labourers constituted another major aspect in the commercial transactions between Mauritius and British India during mainly the second half of the nineteenth century. To satisfy this demand for goods and for the transport of indentured labourers, major developments in shipping would take place, involving British, Mauritian and Indian Companies. Imports from India increased from 30% (of total imports) in 1865 to 50% in 1900; similarly, exports to India increased more dramatically from 11% (of total exports) in 1865 to 53% in 1900.<sup>150</sup>

In the latter case, sugar became a major item by the end of the nineteenth century. The exports to India included a fair degree of re-exports of goods from France, Australia and the neighbouring region, whilst goods from India as well were re-exported to Réunion, Madagascar and the Comoro Islands.<sup>151</sup>

Many Indian firms, especially from Gujarat, invested in the trade between Mauritius and India. The Table 18 gives an indication of their participation therein.<sup>152</sup>

Year	No of Ships from India	Ships Chartered by Indian Firms	
		No	%
1850	73	29	39.7
1860	118	31	26.3
1870	82	29	35.4
1880	78	45	57.7
1890	43	23	53.5
1900	29	12	41.4

As early as 1850, 40% of ships from India were chartered by Indian firms reaching nearly 60% by 1880. The Indian commercial houses involved established branches in Port Louis and some of the traders would go back to India after some time, whilst others would settle in Mauritius. Those going back would do so for various reasons such as retirement, death or business losses, repatriating profits and capital. In fact, many firms “ended in bankruptcy, real or contrived”, according to A. Jahangeer Chojoo.

The Indian traders expanded their business interests in Mauritius. They lent money to those buying land, taking mortgages on the land. They would participate equally in parcellisation of land or provide finance to those involved in land parcellisation.<sup>153</sup> Further, as their business developed, they became big financiers, investing in the sugar industry. For example, Jackaria possessed the largest sugar estate of more than 6,000 *arpents* by 1908; another would become a sugar factory owner<sup>154</sup>. Moreover, they provided finance to the sugar industry and acted as agents for the exports of sugar to India. They played a most important role in that context; Sir Philippe Raffray wrote:

*“The Mauritius planters were afraid they would soon find themselves competing with one another as in the past. They had still fresh in their memory the daily queuing of their respective brokers in the offices of the Indian merchants of Port-Louis, each having to up a few cents on the price offered by his competitor.”<sup>155</sup>*

Moreover, they would not sustain their investment in the Sugar Industry; as traders, they were more interested in speculation and some would make losses in the Sugar Industry during the depression of 1930s.

In parallel, there was a community of small traders of Indian origin who settled in Mauritius and who developed both in towns and villages.

#### 4.6.2 Social Stratification of Indian Immigrants

In the nineteenth century, the Indian immigrants consisted of traders and free passengers, whilst the indentured labourers would constitute the major component of Indians to settle permanently in Mauritius. Since the very beginning of their settlement, there was a certain degree of social stratification. With land parcellisation and the development of the economy, this social stratification would be given a new boost.

Prior to the land parcellisation, a commercial *bourgeoisie* had already settled, together with a growing middle class consisting of job contractors, *sirdars*, traders, middle-men, money lenders, intellectuals, then a class of planters (overlapping to some extent with the middle class). The labouring class would consist of small planters/labourers, landless labourers, gardeners and other manual workers on sugar estates. Whilst the different social classes would adapt, or try to adapt, to the existing colonial society, the agricultural labourers would be facing acute economic exploitation and social exclusion on the sugar estates, leading to their resistance in the form of the well-known protest of 1871, amongst others.

The social stratification is of importance in understanding the role played by the different social classes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, within the cooperative movement, and on the sugar plantations where class conflicts between small planters/labourers and the new Indian sugar magnates would take place and finally on the role of the new intelligentsia, especially in the struggles of the labouring classes and on the political front in general.

#### 4.7 Forests, the Environment and the Sugar Industry

The expansion of the Sugar Industry had a major impact on the lands, on the forests and on the natural environment. The need for land and for fuel to satisfy the expansion of the sugar industry had led to the felling of trees and the general destruction of forests. This destruction was particularly pronounced in the 1850s and 1860s.

By 1871, the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, was aware of the critical situation and “tried to stop more forests from being cut down, and to grow trees along rivers and streams as well as on mountains”.<sup>156</sup> In August 1880, in a comprehensive report ‘Report on the Forests of Mauritius, Their Present Condition and Future Management’, R. Thompson highlighted that “the want of fuel hitherto has not been much felt in the colony, owing simply to the extensive felling operations which have been going on during the past thirty years in the indigenous forests of the island [...]”<sup>157</sup> The Sugar Industry needed land not only for sugar cane cultivation, but wood (hence forests) for fuel to be used in the manufacture of sugar. The evolution of the area of land under sugar cane cultivation is revealing, as per Table 19.<sup>158</sup>

Year	Land Area ( <i>Arpents</i> )
1821 - 1830	26,000
1831 - 1840	40,000
1841 - 1850	59,500
1851 - 1860	110,000
1861 - 1870	124,000
1871 - 1880	123,000

The area of land under cane cultivation more than doubled between 1850 and 1870 from 59,500 *arpents* to 124,000 *arpents*. Similarly, sugar production more than doubled from 55,468 metric tons in 1850 to 126,980 metric tonnes in 1869. The demand for fuel obviously increased significantly.

The impact of deforestation is multidimensional; it affects the natural environment, agriculture and the health of the population at large. The soil is affected in such a manner that it encourages further deforestation by the sugar planters. In Mauritius, the soil is shallow, and when only reclaimed from forests, it carries a layer of humus of from two to six inches (i.e. 5 to 15 cms) in depth. The presence of this humus makes the soil extremely fertile and is especially suited for the cultivation of sugar cane. When exposed to sunrays and hot air, this humus decomposes and becomes dry and powdery and is no longer suitable for sugar cane cultivation. The sugar planter then abandoned it and used land which was still under forest; hence further deforestation took place.<sup>159</sup>

The destruction of forests had a major impact on water supply. According to R. Thompson,

*“[...] it is evident that unless measures are adopted for preventing the rapid disappearance of the private forests, even such as they are the perennial springs - which feed the rivers - will likewise disappear; or the quantity of water which they now yield will become much lessened. It is notorious everywhere on the island, that with the disappearance of forests, the perennial springs have either completely disappeared, or are considerably diminished in volume; rivers and streams which formerly ran dry, are now, during the drier months of the year, mere stagnant pools, if not altogether dried up.”*

Forests and forest soil conserve the rainfall by holding the moisture in ‘mechanical suspension’, preventing loss of it by evaporation, but giving it off in even quantities to the springs which go to feed the rivers.

Further, compact forests and belts of trees (for example by the side of rivers) act as screens to protect trees generally, and in particular, orchards and sugar cane plantations against the violent action of winds prevailing during cyclones. The question which arises is to what extent deforestation has contributed to the loss of or damage to sugar canes during the passage of cyclones over the island. Thus in 1866/67, 1868/69, 1874/75, 1879/80, the reduction in sugar production as a result of the passage of cyclones was respectively 19.5%, 33.9%, 39.3% and 28.8%.<sup>160</sup> The impact of these cyclones, in a rather short span of time, is considered to have contributed to some extent to the problems of the Sugar Industry at that time. And again in 1892/93, the reduction in sugar production was 42.5%; as a result, the Chamber of Agriculture asked for and obtained substantial loan from the Colonial Government.

Deforestation has an impact on the health of the population. The rivers and streams which have become stagnant pools during the drier months of the year provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes and various insects which are carriers of diseases. And this might have contributed to the spread of diseases.

Finally, the demand for wood, whether for fuel or for construction of buildings on the part of the population at large, created conditions for the private forest-owners to earn more revenue. The

forest-owners leased the forest lands to firewood-sellers, charcoal burners and timber merchants.<sup>161</sup> And R. Thompson added that “the charcoal burners are undoubtedly the most destructive agents, next to the sugar planter, in the work of demolition now going on with the fullest activity”.

For all the above reasons, R. Thompson made several recommendations, of which the key one is the purchase of about 30,000 or 35,000 acres of private forests. He gave two further reasons to justify that recommendation:

- i. *“The whole of the central ridge of the table land of the island, and which is the great watershed in which all the larger rivers take their rise, requires to be permanently retained under forests.”*
- ii. *“Protection is what is the most needed for the forests of Mauritius, and that protection it is not possible they can ever get so long as they remain at the will and mercy of private owners.”*

The second key recommendation made was that: “the Mountain Reserve Lines, to maintain Mountain Reserves at all, must be lowered”. It was understood that the Colonial Government would compensate financially forest-owners for the 30,000 or 35,000 acres to be bought. Moreover, for the lowering of Mountain Reserve Lines, Thompson recommended that this could be done either by purchase of the land involved or by proclamation under existing law. There was an old French Law which made provision for these reserve lines and which was interpreted strictly. Thereafter, amendments made under Ordinance No. 13 of 1875 (which governs forest property whether public or private) are such that these mountain reserves are no longer such but in name.<sup>162</sup>

The third and last key recommendation worth mentioning was the need to survey and demarcate the Crown Lands. It was then believed that more than 13,219 *arpents* of land were in a state of doubt and uncertainty as to legal ownership.

There was another report by F. Gleadow<sup>163</sup> on the management of forests and on advising Government on the purchase of lands for forestation to the value of Rs 1,500,000. Firstly, it is of importance to note that, according to F. Gleadow, the sum of Rs 2.9 million rupees was spent to buy about 25,000 *arpents*, most of which were recommended by R. Thompson. Secondly, the Report mentioned “the corruption of subordinates need not be insisted on. It is the natural corollary of the want of supervision”. According to Barnwell and Toussaint<sup>164</sup> there was widespread corruption with regards to the management of forests. Important planters, some of whom were members of the Council of Government cut down trees on Government lands near their estates. Further, according to Gleadow, Government surveyors drew false boundaries for Government lands, thus giving away Government land to estate owners. The latter rewarded these same Government surveyors with large bribes.

#### 4.8 Concluding Remarks

After the political turbulence in the 1830s in relation to the abolition of slavery, there would emerge a close collaboration between the Colonial State and the plantocracy during the nineteenth century with respect to economic policies and Labour Legislation. There were major differences at the political level, especially with the setting up of the Royal Commission to enquire into the treatment of immigrants in Mauritius in 1872 and later in the 1880s following the recommendation of R. Thompson to lower the mountain reserve lines.

The British Imperial Government adopted a Free Trade policy, pushing down the price of sugar, the plantocracy adopted a cheap labour policy and, to do so, flooded Mauritius with indentured labourers so as to be able to depress wages. Yet, in the late 1840s, when, for a short spell of time, indentured labourers could bargain for wages and secure rather higher wage rates, the plantocracy succeeded in winning over the colonial estate to introduce legislation from 1847 to 1867 to increase immigration of indentured labour and to have greater control on the immigrant population. This time, the economic weapon of bringing wages down concerned the Old Immigrants and further consisted in bringing repressive legislation against them.

The major social transformation resulting from the parcellisation of land would not affect the fate of the labouring classes, both on and off the sugar estates. Land parcellisation and *métayage* ensured that the expanding sugar factories were being run as efficiently as possible with sufficient supplies of sugar cane.

With repeated crises in the Sugar Industry, the pillar of the economy, the exclusion of the descendants of ex-apprentices was being consolidated. Poverty and unemployment were on the increase; this would be confirmed by the Royal Commission in its Report of 1909.

## CHAPTER 5 BRITISH COLONIALISM IN THE 20TH CENTURY

### 5.1 The Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - The International Sugar Market

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were intense debates in Britain between those defending free trade and those for protective tariffs. As the first Industrial Power in the world and as the most advanced economic country, free trade would benefit Britain in its broad interests in trade and finance. In particular, by 1846, the Anti-Corn Law League was able to bring the Government of the day to repeal the Corn Laws, that is trade in barley, wheat, oats etc. were open to foreign competition. Later in the same year, the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 was passed, thus doing away with preferential tariffs for colonial sugar and 'non-slave' sugar. The free traders, in alliance with the Agro-Industry (involved in the production of jam, marmalade, confectionery), was defending "a cheap breakfast table" for the British population and cheap raw material for the Agro-Industry.

However, following the economic crisis of 1847, there was a brief revival of some imperial preference for colonial sugar, but by 1874, all sugar tariffs were dismantled. Mauritius then went through some very tough times as from the 1880s till the 1940s. On top of low sugar prices, stiff international competition demanded that costs of production should be reduced. German subsidies depressed world prices which applied to transactions in all markets. Competition from Java and from even Germany and Austria in the main markets of Mauritius required a significant lowering of costs of production. This meant capital investment in the modernisation of factories and improvement in terms of sugar-cane cultivation. In the latter case, very cheap labour was of great help to the plantocracy. In the former case, there was the 'grand morcellement' referred to in Chapter 4, whereby the plantocracy mobilised funds by selling land to indentured labourers. Further, there was the merger of factories which had already started since the 1860s; this process is typical of the Capitalist System, as highlighted at the Mauritius Sugar Industry Conference of 1927 through the following statement:

*"In relation to the reduction in the number and the increase in the size of factories, it is to be remarked that this tendency is a manifestation of the natural law of development whereby smaller and less efficient units tend to become absorbed by the larger and more powerful units."*<sup>165</sup>

In fact, the family-owned sugar estates and factories of the nineteenth century would progressively merge to form ever bigger sugar companies.

Moreover, in 1870s, there was a depression in Europe, with prices of commodities in general going down.<sup>166</sup> But the main threat to sugar would come from the producers of beet sugar in Europe. Wheat from the US and Russia was invading Europe as a result of free trade, and the European farmers found in beet root production a convenient way to face this threat. Germany would emerge with a very 'low cost of production' thanks to various types of subsidies, in spite of free trade. In fact, British free trade accommodated slave-produced sugar as well as sugar subsidised by other exchequers. The cost of delivery of beet sugar from Germany to Britain would be somewhat less than that of cane sugar from the British colonies. Further, the factory performance of Germany would be much better than that of Mauritius for both factory output and sugar recovery.

Britain, the great Colonial Power would give due consideration first to its own economic interest rather than to its colonies; free trade meant cheap essential commodities for her and she did not apply countervailing duties against beet sugar bounties from Germany. The Caribbean Islands particularly found themselves in a very difficult situation; Mauritius managed to adapt to the situation thanks to the new destinations with India, Australia and South Africa, as these three countries provided markets for Mauritian sugar. Mauritian sugar exports to Britain decreased from 70,000 tons in 1870-74 to 14,000 tons in 1895-1899, and to 17,000 tons in 1900-1904. On the other hand, Germany and Austria-Hungary supplied Britain with 4 % of its sugar in 1870-74, and then 58 % in the early years of 1900 and 70 % just before World War I.

Moreover, Mauritius exports to British India were made sustainable, when the Government of British India imposed countervailing duties on beet sugar to protect its traditional suppliers including Mauritius, which the Imperial Government previously chose not to do. The pattern of sugar exports from Mauritius at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is given in Table 20, showing clearly the decrease of exports to Britain and the considerable increase to India. But the Caribbean Islands did not enjoy the relationship/proximity which Mauritius had with British India; and a Royal Commission Enquiry was appointed in 1896 in the Caribbean Islands.

Period	Destinations					Total
	Britain	Australia	India	South Africa	France	
60/61-62/63	66400	27300	2600	5400	17300	121
75/76-77/78	42600	38600	18200	3800		112
78/79-80/81	15100	47400	35400	7300		114
81/82-83/84	13200	54300	32300	9900		115
87/88-89	14500	31300	64700	8800		128
93-95	9300	16300	77000	14700		128

## 5.2 Economic Crisis and The Royal Commission of 1909

### 5.2.1 Background

In addition to the low price of sugar and the uncertainties of the international sugar market, there were some other events which accentuated the economic depression at the turn of the twentieth century in Mauritius: the severe cyclones of 1892, the bubonic plague of 1899, the surra disease of 1902, the increase in prices of basic foodstuffs like rice and *dhol*. In 1907, the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture asked the Colonial Government a loan of £600,000 to help sugar planters in improving the machinery of their factories and requested the Government to borrow £100,000 (1 £ = Rs. 15) for purchasing land in the context of its programme. The Secretary of State for the colonies did not agree with such a loan and suggested that there should be a Commission to investigate the condition and resources of the Colony. The *Action Libérale*, a political organisation /party, and other social/political forces campaigned for the setting up of such a Commission. In the end, the Royal Commission to inquire into the condition and resources of the Colony of Mauritius was set up in May 1909.

### 5.2.2 The Overall Economic and Financial Situation

The intensity of the monocrop economy of Mauritius was such that the cultivation of other food crops was marginalised and industrial diversification was almost inexistent. Any meaningful industrialisation that did take place was linked to the Sugar Industry: the cultivation of aloë to produce bags and the setting up of mechanical workshop to service the sugar factories. The country was heavily dependent on imports for its basic foodstuffs and all items of consumption; its exports consisted almost exclusively of sugar and its by-products like molasses and rum. In fact, the latter constituted more than 95 % of total exports. Whenever sugar prices were low for more than one or two consecutive years, there resulted an unfavourable balance of trade and a Government deficit.

This situation of Mauritius was somewhat typical of a colony which had been the victim of an extreme international division of labour and of international specialisation. As Jean Houbert wrote, "the colonial structure of international specialisation discouraged the diversification of economic growth."<sup>168</sup> Mauritius was on the periphery of the fast developing capitalist economic system on which it did not have any influence, let alone any control. Even the Royal Commission in its report had this to say:

*"[...] this excessive concentration of its resources upon one industry exposes it to serious difficulties and even dangers. It makes the colony entirely dependent upon the world price of sugar, over which it has no control."*<sup>169</sup>

Obviously, external trade played an important role and there was a prominent merchant class in Mauritius.

### 5.2.3 The Financial System and The Sugar Industry

Given the dependence of the economy on the Sugar Industry, the financial system in force in the Sugar Industry had a major bearing on the financial system prevailing in the country. First, it should be noted that most of the sugar estates were generally somewhat heavily mortgaged, with interest from 7 to 9 per cent. Further, all of them had Government loans. So much so, that the total debt of 55 (out of 66) estates possessing factories was about Rs. 12,000,000, with nearly one-third due to the Government.<sup>170</sup>

In addition to the interests mentioned above, most of sugar estate owners did not have sufficient working capital and, therefore, they needed borrowed money to run their estates. That is where their financial agent or 'bailleur de fonds' or broker came into play. The functions of the 'bailleur de fonds' / broker are clearly described in the Report of the Royal Commission:

*"By the end of the hurricane season, i.e. in April, they have exhausted the funds derived from the last crop and have to apply to a financial agent for assistance. This agent is called in Mauritius a bailleur de fonds. He is often a local merchant or produce broker, he has generally a substantial amount of liquid capital of his own as well as good credit at one or other of the two local banks, and when, as usually happens, the total amount of the money required for the estates which he is financing exceeds his own available resources, he borrows the balance from the bank, giving his own name and that of the estate owner as security. The planter submits to the bailleur de fonds a kind of budget for the coming year showing what he expects to have to pay for interest and other fixed charges, wages of employees and labourers, manure, rice and other stores, and in many cases for household and personal expenditure-in fact for all his anticipated outgoings during the year. He gives the bailleur de fonds the selling of the sugar produced on the estate and the right to demand, if necessary, a mortgage on the estate for any balance which may remain owing at the close of the year's transactions. The bailleur de fonds then becomes practically the business manager of the estate. He supplies the owner monthly with the funds required for fixed charges, wages, &c., he buys and pays for the manure, rice, and stores required for the estate, and, as the sugar is produced, he sells it and credits the owner with the amount realised. On all his outgoings in respect of the estate he debits the owner with the interest at the agreed rate, and on the other side of the account credits him with the interest at the same rate on the sums received for the sale of produce. At the end of the year the account is made up and the owner receives whatever balance there may be owing to him, or, if the balance is a debit one, gives the bailleur de fonds security for the amount."*

With this system, and given that estate owners tended not to develop a reserve fund for difficult times, they were almost invariably indebted. Moreover, it should be noted that some of them, including three English companies owning thirteen sugar estates, did not depend on the services of the broker. The estate owner had to pay interest and other commissions for the services of the 'bailleurs de fonds' as a financial manager and business manager; they tended to be around at least 14 per cent of the crop depending on the financial situation of each case.

There were risks and advantages of such a system: sometimes the broker might be a merchant or may be involved in running a sugar estate, so that conflicts of interest arose. On the other hand, by acting as a business manager for several sugar estates, the broker could purchase stores at lower prices. Further, some brokers ended up being estate owners, given that these estates became insolvent. Effectively, from brokers, two English companies became sugar estate owners.<sup>171</sup>

But, in the end, this financial system linking the broker with the Estate Manager, both as Financial Manager and town agent, turned out to be rather vicious. If the broker was dealing with a single year's loss on a single estate only, the broker might hesitate before committing himself further. But, in a year of low sugar prices and when he would be dealing with several estates, he would find himself in a tight corner; his liabilities would tempt him to provide further credit in the hope of an improved situation by the next crop-year. Thus the system encouraged further borrowing. And this risk was made worse, given the specific social reality of small Mauritius, as so aptly written by J.D. Elliot and N.G. Loughane:

*"In the small white community of Mauritius, closely bound together by the ties of inter-marriage and of long-standing family friendships, the influence of public opinion makes for lenient and sympathetic treatment of debtors whose insolvency is concealed and assisted by further credit often beyond the creditor's capacity to allow without endangering his own security."*<sup>172</sup>

But this financial system together with the associated social system mentioned above could well make matters worse, when it spilled over to the banking system. At that time, there were two banks in Mauritius: The English Bank of Mauritius and the Mauritius Commercial Bank. In dealing with the Sugar Industry, the latter found that its risk management was rather flawed. On two occasions, in 1898 and 1908, the Bank had had to apply to the Colonial Government for assistance. According to the Royal Commission of 1909,

*"In each case, the Government made the bank a temporary loan of Rs. 1,000,000 on good security and thus enabled it to avoid disaster."*

In the case of 1908, according to Hon. P.E de Chazal,

*"The last crisis we went through was due especially to the failure of two big brokers, Messrs Antelme and Régnard, which was the cause of large losses to our banks and to a good many traders and private individuals, causing discredit all round. The credit of the Mauritius Commercial Bank was entirely stopped with the Bank of India and Lloyd's Bank in London...The scare was great, the depositors having withdrawn large sums of money from the bank."*<sup>173</sup>

Moreover, the Government's action to save the Mauritius Commercial Bank was in breach of currency laws, but it received legislative sanction thereafter. And the Mauritius Commercial Bank survived as it paid the loan with interest within 3 ½ months.

Finally, capital exodus seemed to persist, if only as a result of foreign ownership of some sugar estates; moreover, with the deaths or the departure of some wealthy people, there was an exodus of capital of Rs. 20 millions. Yet there was a request for loan to the Colony.

#### 5.2.4 Landownership by the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century

Some indication of the approximate distribution of ownership of sugar estates, according to size and different social groups is obtained from the documents submitted by the Receiver General to the Royal Commission of 1909<sup>174</sup>.

According to these documents, at that time, there were 143 sugar estates with an overall acreage of nearly 80,825 hectares (200,000 *arpents*). Of these, 66 had a sugar factory and 77 did not have one. All the land forming part of the sugar estates were not under the cultivation of sugar, and a small percentage (10.3%) was under cultivation of other crops. As information on the cultivation of land by small planters on and off the sugar estates was not provided, it is not possible to consider the extent of sugar cane cultivation from the documents.

The breakdown of the acreage of the 143 estates is given in Table 21.

Acreage (Hectares)	Owners		
	No.	%	Cumulative %
0 - 40	1	0.7%	0.7%
41 - 81	13	9.1%	9.8%
82 - 121	10	7.0%	16.8%
122 - 161	4	2.8%	19.6%
162 - 202	10	7.0%	26.6%
203 - 404	28	19.6%	46.2%
405 - 808	35	24.5%	70.6%
809 - 1212	25	17.5%	88.1%
1213 - 1617	13	9.1%	97.2%
1618 - 2020	1	0.7%	97.9%
2021 - 2425	1	0.7%	98.6%
2426 - 2829	2	1.4%	100.0%
Total	143	100.0%	

The main features of the distribution of the estate land by acreage are: 26.6% of estate owners owned less than 202 hectares (500 *arpents*), 19.6% owned between 202 and 404 hectares (500 - 1000 *arpents*), whilst 51% owned between 404 and 1617 hectares (1000 - 4000 *arpents*). Only 4 estates had acreage above 1617 hectares (4000 *arpents*).

As far as ownership is concerned, the main groups were: the French/British settlers, Indian (both from abroad and in Mauritius), a mix of residents and non-residents, of whom the latter seemed to be most likely to be of French origin (based from their names), British (from abroad), and French (from abroad). Among the Indians, there are three who were traders, one of whom was based in Bombay and another one based in Pondicherry. Table 22 sums up the analysis of estates by acreage and “social categories”, as defined above, and as presented by the documents.

Acreage (hectares)	French/ British Colonist	British	French	Indian			Resident & Non Resident	Total
				Traders/ From Abroad	Other	Total		
0 - 40	1	0	0			0	0	1
41 - 81	9	0	0		5	5	0	14
82 - 121	8	0	0		2	2	0	10
122 - 161	4	0	0			0	0	4
162- 202	8	0	0		2	2	0	10
203 - 404	21	2	0	2	3	3	1	27
405 - 808	22	3	0	1		3	7	35
809 - 1212	14	5	4			0	2	25
1213 - 1616	10	2	0			0	1	13
1617 - 2020	1	0	0			0	0	1
2021 - 2425	0	1	0			0	0	1
2426 - 2829	1	0	0	1		1	0	2
Total	99	13	4	4	12	16	11	143

Thus, as expected, French/British settlers (they were residents) numbered 99 out of 143 of the owners, which represents 69.2%. Then the “Indians”, British, French and the category “Residents and Non-Residents” constituted respectively 11.2%, 9.1%, 2.8% and 7.7% of the owners.

Moreover, in terms of acreage of land owned, the British would have a relatively larger share of 15.8% than their percentage of ownership indicated. Table 23 gives the details.

Category	Hectares ( <i>Arpents</i> )	%
French/British Colon	51230 (126766)	63.6
English	12722 (31480)	15.8
French	3993 (9881)	4.9
Indians - Traders/From Abroad	3566 (8824)	4.4
Indians - Others	1676 (4147)	2.1
Resident/Non-Resident	7403 (18319)	9.2
Total	80590 (199417)	100.0

A feature of interest of the above table is that whilst the four Indians (traders and Indians from abroad) owned estates with an acreage of 3566 hectares (8824 *arpents*), the other twelve Indians, most probably emerging from among the indentured labourers, owned estates with an acreage of 1676 hectares (4,147 *arpents*) which is less than half of that owned by former Indians.

### 5.2.5 The Small Planters

As discussed in Chapter 4, the class of small planters developed from among the *sirdars*, the former indentured labourers, the middlemen and free immigrants when the sugar estate owners divided up their lands and mobilised funds to allow them to improve the manufacture of sugar. The small planters generally had problems of access to credit and of having a good price for their canes at the factory. In many cases, the small planters borrowed from the estate owner to whom he had to send

his canes; they equally borrowed from middlemen, predominantly Indian, who would charge high rates of interest and from shopkeepers.

The whole process of *morcellement* or parcellisation of land by estate owners and the purchase of the land by the new small planters can be illustrated by the following example<sup>175</sup> which reveals the problems faced by the emerging small planter class.

In 1900 and in 1901, there was a case of parcellisation of 283.2 hectares (700 acres) of land worth Rs. 180,000 by a planter, the Honourable L.G. Antelme. Thus the average price was Rs. 257 per acre (0.404 hectare). The purchase price ranged from Rs. 100 to Rs. 1,000 per acre, to be paid in five yearly instalments with interests at the rate of 8 percent per annum. Further, the landowner made an advance of Rs. 30 per acre to each buyer for 'faisance valoir', i.e. to cover the operational costs.

Firstly, a plot of 103 hectares (254 acres) was parcellised and was bought by 103 small planters, giving on average of 2.5 acres (1.01 hectares) per buyer. And the small planters fully paid the purchase price.

Secondly, another plot of 91 hectares (226 acres) was bought by 183 small planters, giving an average of 1.2 acres (0.47 hectares) per buyer. By 1909, the small planters had not completed their payment for the land. The two sales together gave an average of 1.7 acres (0.69 hectares) per small planter.

Finally, for the last portion of 89.4 hectares (221 acres) left out of the original 283.2 hectares (700 acres), the small planters could not pay for their plots of land. They abandoned the land and went away. They had paid only part of the purchase, and left, after having paid back the advance of Rs. 30 per acre to the landowner. But, the small planters left because the landowner stopped providing the advances for *faisance valoir* since 1907, and he claimed he had no available capital to do so. According to him, those who had not paid up half the purchase price of their plot of land abandoned them. The average of 1.7 acres (0.69 hectares) per small planter can be used to estimate that about 130 planters were involved in the purchase of the remaining 89.4 hectares (221 acres) and who later abandoned their lands. Thus from this case, about 30 % of the new small planters abandoned the land. More research is required to ascertain whether this was a representative sample. It appears that the small planters had not paid the full purchase price, even after more than five years, and many lacked the necessary capital for the operational costs of cultivating the land. As a result, they became dependent on the landowner for any required finance.

Some small planters resorted to middlemen who claimed exorbitant rates of interest. There was one case who borrowed Rs. 395 from a middleman and after two years, he had to pay Rs. 1,984 which represented capital and interests. In Paragraph 75 of the *Report of the Royal Commission 1909*, the authors highlighted that "they may adopt the cheaper but more dangerous method of a conditional sale of their land, or they may borrow from Indian or Chinese money-lenders at native rates of interest, which may be anything up to 60 or even 120 percent per annum."

The need for access to credit was cruelly felt by the small planters. Whilst some succeeded in mobilising their savings, etc., others could not and lost both land and money in the process.

#### 5.2.6 Labour and Poverty

The impact of the economic depression would be very severe on the labouring classes, whether urban or rural.

In particular, with a view to collecting maximum revenues through import duties and excise duties, the Colonial Government had a policy of preferential treatment for the rich at the expense of the labouring class and the poor. For example, the import duty on tea was 60 cents per kilo, whilst that on coffee was Rs. 8 per 100 kilos, i.e. 8 cents per kilo. And, of course, tea was consumed by the labouring classes rather than coffee. Similarly, the excise duty on rum was Rs. 1.67 per litre, whilst spirits had the same level of import duty. The average total revenue for the three years 1905-08 was Rs. 9,780,055 of which the main sources were:

Item	Revenue (Rs.)*
Customs	3,357,908
Licenses-professional, hawkers etc.	603,412
Excise duty on rum	1,169,464
Taxes on vehicles and animals	106,462
Stamp duties	135,696
Registration of deeds on transfers of property, incl. succession duties	106,812
Port, harbour and lighthouse dues	262,735
Post Office	144,924
Government Railways	2,325,959
Interest	883,643

Thus, the labouring classes and the poor who were the main consumers of rum contributed Rs. 1,169,464 to Government revenue, the third biggest contribution after customs duties and the revenue from Government railways. The poor were funding, to a great extent, the economic crisis which was not at all of their making. There was no income tax and the revenue for registration of deeds on transfer of property and succession duties amounted to a mere Rs 106,812. The Commissioners was impressed by the revenue accruing from the excise duty on rum. They wrote:

*“The excise duty on rum for home consumption is Rs. 1.67 per litre of 23<sup>o</sup> Cartier and varies with the strength. Next to import duties and railway receipts, it is the most productive source of revenue. It fluctuates a good deal in yield, however, owing mainly due to the action of rings of distillers. In 1907-8 it provided only Rs. 923,724 as compared with Rs. 1,242,444 in the previous year.”*

On top of that, during 1908, the import duty on rice brought Rs. 367,187 to the Colonial Government, which amounted to about 10 % of total import duties. And the Commission added, as per paragraph 143,

*“[...] but the rest of the well-to-do community, such as business and professional men and persons living on their own means, pay little in compassion with their taxable capacity.”*

Yet, labour was very plentiful, cheap and efficient, the abundance of which contributed to minimising the cost of production of sugar. Hon. P.E de Chazal clearly pointed out that “..., but as a whole the Indian immigrant is introduced to keep down the price of labour.”<sup>176</sup> Since the period preceding abolition of slavery, the policy of the plantocracy was to bring down and keep down the price of labour, and this with support of the Colonial State more often than not. To the question from a commissioner “Do you pay indentured coolie a much lower wage than the free coolie?”, Hon. P.E. de Chazal answered “Yes, because they came under an engagement.”

The low wages in the Sugar Industry seemed to have an impact on the level of wages in the country; when the labourer moved out of the plantation, he would tend to accept lower wages than others and tended to compete more favourably on the labour market.

The use of indentured labour as an economic weapon to keep wages low was yet again confirmed by Hon. E.C. Fraser, Senior Partner of Ireland, Fraser and company, in his deposition. When he was told that there was sufficient “stock of labour” and that the natural increase of the population would keep him going, he even suggested that:

*“If some arrangement were made when we wanted coolies, so that we could get one of the West Indian Islands, or some other Government, to recruit for us, that would be sufficient.”<sup>177</sup>*

Yet, the Commissioners were fully aware that more immigration would mean more unemployment and more poverty. The estate owners wanted at all cost an abundant supply of cheap labour during crop time; the consequences for available labour prevailing outside the plantation were irrelevant

to him, even if that meant more unemployment and more poverty during the inter-crop period. In a sense, it can be said that the estate owners did not mind the 'creation of poverty', if that were the consequence of availability of abundant cheap labour.

The following questions and answers between the Commissioners and Hon. E.C. Fraser are very revealing:

*"Question: If you have a surplus population unemployed, you would naturally have a large number of applicants for Poor Law relief, and if you import all you want at a time you are hard pressed for labour and keep them here, you are liable to that?"*

*Hon. Fraser: Yes, but I do not see that you can help it.*

*Question: You would prefer the expense of Poor Law to stopping immigration?*

*Hon. Fraser: I am afraid to say that there is a great deal of money spent on the relief of the poor, but I do not see that we can get over it; not at present at any rate."*

Further, in that state of economic depression, public works were decreased substantially and the general level of economic activity went down, so that unemployment and poverty were on the increase. So much so that about 18 % of the population of slave descendants and Indian immigrants was being given Government relief. The marginalised groups felt mostly the full brunt of the depression.

#### 5.2.7 The Recommendations of the Royal Commission

In various depositions of witnesses, the point was made repeatedly that there were malpractices at the level of the banking system and in the judiciary and proposals for remedial action were made. There were other proposals that recommended the setting up of large central sugar factories. The proposal for the creation of an Agricultural Bank was emphatically made. The Sugar Industry was still in favour of maintaining Indian immigration so as to bring down the price of labour.

Overall, the Commission did not include these proposals in its recommendations. Moreover, on top of the recommendations to reduce Government expenditure and to increase Government revenue, the Commission made certain key recommendations which would have a major impact for the future. They were:

1. The establishment of a separate Department of Scientific Agriculture to assist the Sugar Industry and also the development of other products.
2. To introduce and encourage the system of cooperative credit banks among small planters.
3. To report upon the practicability of irrigation on a large or small scale.
4. To review the French Law of Succession and the Company Law.
5. The Colonial Government should borrow a sum of £400,000 i.e., Rs. 6,000,000 to fund three projects:
  - i. £285,000, i.e., Rs. 4,215,000 for the rehabilitation of Government railways;
  - ii. £100,000, i.e., Rs. 1,500,000 to planters at six or seven per cent for the improvement of cultivation, factory machinery or mechanical traction and for a remunerative irrigation scheme;
  - iii. £15,000, i.e., Rs. 225,000 for assistance to small planters through the machinery of a cooperative central bank.
6. To increase Government revenue, amongst others,
  - i. an income tax of 2% was to be imposed, and

- ii. the reduction of the Governor's salary from Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 50,000.

Thereafter, some of the recommendations were implemented, but not the imposition of the income tax. Moreover, no recommendation for labour *per se* was made. The Royal Commission did not even try to mitigate the plentiful cheap labour policy. On the contrary, they expressed appreciation of the fiscal squeezing of labour and the poor through excessively high excise duty on rum and an unfavourable fiscal policy. Nor did they recommend any help to the small planters who lost their limited capital (draught animals) as a consequence of surra epidemic. In a sense, the Royal Commission dealt with some of the symptoms, and not the cause of the crisis. They did not refer to the British Free Trade policy and its consequences. They mentioned British investment in Ceylon and Malaysia, but failed to mention that they were in tea and rubber respectively, not in sugar production. On the other hand, they started to subtly sow the seeds of division when they referred to the "indolent character of the coloured Creoles."

### 5.3 Sugar Industry, Banking and Finance

#### 5.3.1 The International Economic Crisis

##### 5.3.1.1 The Lean Years. Record Sugar Prices, 1919-1920

The sugar market may be divided into two periods: 1916 to 1924 were years of higher prices with record ones in 1919 and 1920. After 1925, there started a rapid downward decline in price. The price of sugar increased from 11/7 per 50 kg in 1914 to 58 in 1920; it fell from 12/8 in 1926 to 4/9 per cent in 1935/36. This sharp drop in price in the late 1930s resulted from a profound disequilibrium in the world sugar market. The depressed economic conditions brought the sugar industries in the Caribbean Islands and Mauritius to near collapse.

The state of imbalance on the world sugar market arose from conditions particular to the trade; it was the direct result of the revived competition between beet and cane sugar after the First World War. During the war, the European Beet Industry had suffered extensive damage and the cane sugar producers expanded their output to compensate the resulting shortages on the world sugar market. Several former importers of beet sugar went over to cane. Britain the largest pre-war market for European beet sugar imported mainly cane sugar after the war. In 1913-14, cane supplied 53 per cent of the world sugar crop; in 1917-18, cane accounted for 78 per cent of world sugar; after the revival of the continental beet industry, the cane share of world sugar declined to 60 per cent. But the revival of the beet industry occurred at a time when the cane sugar industry itself was rapidly expanding, especially in Cuba.

The revival of the beet industry formed part of the policy of self-sufficiency and economic protectionism which gained favour in Europe after the First World War. The simultaneous increase in the production of cane and beet sugar soon outstripped consumption. This produced a heavy pile-up of world stocks which were dumped on near-saturated markets and precipitated the disintegration of the world sugar market. The price of sugar in the 1930s was brought down to seriously low levels.

The British sugar colonies were hard hit by the post-war collapse of the world sugar market. After 1919, they were granted some protection in London by means of preferential tariffs. But as the system of colonial sugar preference was based on the world price, it only provided partial protection to the British colonial producers against the rapid drop in the price in the price of sugar. As from 1928, Mauritius was deprived of the possibility of producing higher value added and marketable white sugar and was compelled to sell lower value added raw sugar to British refiners. In fact, the Imperial Government decided to impose higher customs duties on refined/ plantation sugar than on raw sugar. Within two years, Mauritius had to relinquish its industrial plant and its capacity to tap more remunerative markets. The net price to sugar producers in Mauritius, inclusive of preference, fell from Rs. 19.22 per 100 kgs in 1927 to Rs. 10.99 in 1936. The mean price for 1933 to 1938 was Rs. 11.81 per 100 kgs. Sugar production in Mauritius between 1919 and 1935 fluctuated between 200,000 and 250,000 tonnes, but after 1935, a series of bumper crops brought the Mauritian sugar output to 319,695 tonnes in 1938. The contribution of higher crops and gains in productivity, arising from factory improvements in the 1920s mitigated the impact of the depression years for many producers but not for the smaller ones.

The tendency in the 1930s was to put the blame for the crippling burden of debt borne by the industry during the “lean years”, on what was described as the reckless speculation of 1920, which, it was alleged, squandered a large part of the industry’s profits. The Financial Commissioners of 1931 wrote that a considerable part of the 1920 boom-year profits appeared to have been wasted in purely private expenditure and some of it to have found investment outside the Colony, leaving the estates no better off to face the “lean years”.

It may be argued, however, that the “reckless speculation” of 1920 was, in fact, little more than the normal reaction of sanguine estate owners and businessmen in the absence of a well-organized capital market in the face of a sudden unprecedented and short-lived boom. In their report the Economic Commission of 1947 referred to the fallacy of the concept of “the industry being burdened with debt”. Financing the purchase of estates with borrowed money is a long-standing custom in Mauritius. Far from being a problem, it is a feature common to a great majority of

enterprise in those parts which have adopted the joint-stock and limited liability principles. These loan creditors may be looked upon as preferred proprietors, such debt in UK would be secured by debentures and preference shares. The loans in Mauritius carried a right to a fixed interest charge.”<sup>178</sup>

It was the cumulative deficits on successive crops, rather than the overall amount of debt as such, which put such a strain on the industry's finances in the 1930s.

### 5.3.1.2 Cumulative Deficits on Crop Operations

Once the boom had subsided, the unsettled conditions on the labour market and the post-war increase in the cost of several requirements of production, including the price paid for planters' canes, prevented the industry from cutting down its costs fast enough to offset the sharp drop in sugar prices.

In 1926, the industry obtained a loan of Rs. 6mn from the Colonial Government, in 1927 it obtained a loan of 200,000 pounds sterling from the British Government and Rs. 3mn from the Colonial Government. Other loans were granted in 1930 and 1931. In 1930, the Government lent Rs. 3mn to the Sugar Industry from the Colony's Development Funds, to prevent several estates from going bankrupt, and in 1931, after a severe cyclone, another loan of 500,000 pounds sterling was granted by the British Government to make good the loss on property and crop. By 1931, the Sugar Industry was carrying deadweight of five successive loans amounting to Rs. 20mn, on which it could not repay either the principal or interest.

In 1929, Sir Francis Watts was sent by the British Government to inquire into the conditions of the Sugar Industry in Mauritius. In his report, he said that the cost of production of sugar in the island was below that of all producers, except Java and possibly Cuba. Yet, at the 1929 prices, the industry incurred a net loss of approximately 1 pound sterling per ton. The cost of producing sugar excluding all interest on mortgages and allowance for depreciation was 13 pounds 1 shilling and 2 pence per ton. In 1929, the London price was 12 pounds 2 shillings and 10 pence (including preference).<sup>179</sup>

Two years later, the Financial Commissioners reported that, through a drastic reduction in wages and salaries, made possible by the drop in the price of rice and other staples, the Industry had succeeded in keeping the loss on crop operations at the 1929 figure.

Because of the very low sugar prices, any shortfall in the crop from cyclones, droughts and other causes resulted in a substantial loss which increased the burden of previous losses borne by the industry. In 1930, the overall loss on the crop was Rs. 2 mn. The 1931 cyclone destroyed 30 per cent of the crop, with a net loss Rs. 6mn. In 1934, a drought cut the crop by 28 per cent and the Industry lost another Rs. 7mn.

As mentioned before, the Industry was assisted in 1930 and 1931 by loans from the Colonial Development Fund and the British Government. These loans forestalled a complete breakdown in the strained financial conditions of the Industry, but did not, for that matter, improve the financial situation of the sugar estates or restore the shattered confidence of local businesses.<sup>180</sup>

The Financial Commission of 1931 advocated an extensive capital reconstruction of encumbered estates.

*“All estates must be prepared to face the fundamental fact that they are carrying too heavy a load of capital; the profit now all goes in interest charges ... capital reconstruction of encumbered estates will effect an equitable distribution of the loss amongst the various interests concerned [...]”*<sup>181</sup>

The imposed capital reconstruction, with considerable losses to all the parties concerned, would have been virtually impossible in the conditions of 1931. Large-scale capital readjustments of estates depended primarily on the restoration of a certain balance between costs and prices inside the Industry. It was with this in mind that the Chamber of Agriculture made repeated requests for a guarantee by Britain, in one form or another, of a stable minimum price over a certain number of years.

In the year following, the adoption of the Jones Costigan Act in the US (see 5.3.1.4), the Secretary of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, Mr. Galea, wrote in 1935, that the Mauritius Sugar Industry would only be able to surmount the present crisis if the price of sugar was stabilized by the British Government around Rs. 7 per 50 kgs. As a matter of fact, the increased preference granted in 1932 on colonial sugar was largely neutralized by the continued drop in the world sugar price. As a result, the benefits to colonial producers were discounted in the proportion of 70, 78 and 75 per cent for the crop's of 1932/33, 1933/34 and 1934/35 respectively.<sup>182</sup>

### 5.3.1.3 Distress of the Sugar Industry

During the 1930s, a large number of estates found it impossible to provide for their current requirements without overdrawing, from year to year, on their accounts with the brokers. On the other hand, the brokers, with large sums already committed in several estates, had an interest in their continued cultivation and were willing to advance the required capital to keep these estates solvent.

The financial burden of keeping the industry going came to be borne in large part by the brokers and merchants. In 1935, it was estimated that the Sugar Industry owed Rs. 10mn to commercial firms in the island. An authoritative person stated that the brokers would be most willing to forego all interests, if they could recover the principal of their loans.

The drop in sugar prices in the thirties strained the system of industrial credit to breaking point. Debt generated more debt, and lending and borrowing, more lending and more borrowing until the Sugar Industry was on the verge of collapse under the sheer weight of accumulated arrears of debt.

### 5.3.1.4 The USA initiative and the Jones-Costigan Act of 1934<sup>183</sup>

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United States of America had already caught up with Britain as an industrial and economic power. This new balance of forces internationally had a major impact, amongst other things, on the international market and the price for sugar, especially following the defeat of Germany in the First World War.

Already, after Britain's decision to buy beet sugar from Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were moves in the British Caribbean Islands to develop closer ties with the US, and, implicitly, this would have taken place at the expense of Britain. There was concern in Britain but, cynically, Britain used this state of affairs in its favour during the negotiations leading to the Brussels Convention of 1902, and winning an agreement for the imposition of countervailing duties against subsidised sugar. Britain did, however, not use that facility in its dealings with Germany.

In 1935, in the USA, the Jones-Costigan Act was passed; the USA Government could then bring together some countries under its influence, whereby it had a preferential price for sugar. These countries included Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Haiti. In spite of all the severe problems of unemployment, poverty and labour protests and disturbances, Britain did not react to bring together its sugar exporting colonies in a preferential trade area to the same extent and, hence, to be able to have more substantial preferential tariffs and secure markets.

It would be only by late 1940s, after the relative weakening of its economic power, that initiatives would be taken by Britain to create some meaningful preferential agreement for sugar. In 1949, a delegation from Mauritius was sent to London to start preliminary discussions; it included for the first time two representatives of the 'small' planters, A. Osman and H. Vaghjee. These discussions were followed by further rounds of discussions and, in 1951, another delegation, comprising amongst others R. Balgobin, would be sent by Mauritius. And by 1951, the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement was signed.

Britain delayed as much as possible the process leading to the Agreement, at the expense of its sugar-exporting colonies, in spite of the initiative of USA in the 1930s. Moreover, for the first time, the Colonial State included representation of Indian planters' community in the delegation participating in the various rounds of discussions which led to the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. It seems that this event heralded a new era in the strategic alliance between vested interests linked to the Sugar Industry i.e. the new 'big' Indian planter community and the plantocracy.

### 5.3.2 Post-War Developments -The Surge of Sugar

#### 5.3.2.1 The Sugar Industry: Internal Development

The improvements in the financial and economic conditions of the Sugar Industry, from 1946 onwards, restored the industry's profitability and boosted the prospects of sugar. After several dismal years, conditions were buoyant once again and a general atmosphere of optimism prevailed in business circles, and in the island generally. Substantial sums were invested in the rehabilitation of estates, and the use of modern equipment made it possible for large additional tracts to be brought under cane. Besides the improvements in field and factory operations, the increase in output also resulted from the development of new cane varieties, particularly the M134/32, the wonder cane of the 1950s.<sup>184</sup>

As from 1946, an unprecedented series of record sugar crops, which lasted until 1959, brought the production of sugar in 1959 to a peak of 580,372 tons, about twice the tonnage produced in 1946 (290,958 tons). These record outputs coincided with a substantial increase in the price paid to producers. The improvements in the financial and economic conditions of the Sugar Industry restored the sector's profitability and boosted future prospects.

The cane acreage increased from 56,265 hectares (139,226 *arpents*) in 1945 to 70,441 hectares (174,303 *arpents*) in 1952. The improvements in fieldwork improved the efficiency of agricultural operations and led to substantial increases in cane tonnage and sugar output. In 1950-52, Mauritius produced close to 3 kgs of sugar per *arpent*, compared to the best pre-war performance of 2.54 kgs.

According to the Mauritius Economic Commission of 1947-48, these 'remarkable' increases in yield of sugarcane in Mauritius compared favourably with the performance in other cane sugar-producing countries. The efficiency of operations on estates brought down the cost of production and made Mauritius one of the most efficient producers of cane sugar in the world.

#### 5.3.2.2 The International Sugar Agreement and Commonwealth Sugar Agreement

As mentioned above, the improvements in field and factory operations coincided with substantial increases in the price of sugar. The net price nearly doubled from Rs. 24.96 per 100 kgs in 1946 to Rs. 48.05 in 1956. One important element behind the increase in price were the new arrangements that had been made after the war for regulating world sugar production and stabilizing the price paid to producers at export.<sup>185</sup>

A sugar conference was held in London in July 1953, which was attended by representatives of 46 States. A new International Sugar Agreement (ISA) came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1954 for a period of five years. A fundamental objective of the ISA was to ensure supplies of sugar to importing countries and markets to exporting countries at equitable and stable prices.

Concurrently, negotiations were held between exporting and importing countries of the Commonwealth. During the war, the British Government had purchased all the Commonwealth sugar. This arrangement was maintained after the war and in 1948, the British Government decided to extend the arrangement until the end of 1952. The price which was based on market conditions and other factors, was negotiated every year between the different parties. Thereupon, the colonial sugar producers and Dominion Governments insisted that the UK should continue to buy Commonwealth sugars after 1952 under a long-term Agreement. The Commonwealth Sugar Agreement (CSA) was signed on 21 December 1951 for a period of eight years, renewable by the consent of the parties every year.<sup>186</sup>

Between 1946 and 1953, the price paid by Britain on sugar imports from the Commonwealth was determined by the British Government in consultation with the Commonwealth producers. As from 1953, the conditions of sale of Commonwealth sugar on the British market were negotiated annually by the representatives of the producers and the British Government under the terms of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement.

Under the Agreement, the UK purchased every year a fixed quantity of their total export quota. This was known as the Negotiated Price Quota. Under the CSA, the export quota for Mauritius was 470,000 long tons, the same as under the ISA. The Negotiated Price Quota for Mauritius was 335,000 long tons. It was increased to 351,000 long tons as long as the New Zealand Government undertook to purchase its sugar requirements from the Commonwealth producers. The price was fixed every year by the parties so as to constitute a reasonably remunerative price for the producers. This arrangement benefitted the more efficient, i.e., lowest cost producers. As mentioned before, Mauritius was then among the most efficient producers of sugar in the Commonwealth.<sup>187</sup>

The policy of price determination, by means of negotiations between representatives of producers and consumers, with the overall objective of ensuring a remunerative price to producers, led to a growing divergence between the CSA and the world price. This led inevitably to growing distortions in the allocation of resources, to overproduction and an accumulation of stocks. Instead of being determined by the “free play of market forces”, prices were decided according to the relative bargaining power of the negotiating parties. This induced Colonial sugar producers to regroup in order to increase their influence in the negotiations with Britain.

Now, to revert to the situation in the Mauritius Sugar Industry in the 1950s, reference was made above to the series of record sugar crops produced by Mauritius between 1953 and 1959, which brought the island’s sugar output to 580,372 tons in 1959. Those record performances were achieved by an increase in the acreage under cane, very favourable climatic conditions and continuous improvements in field and factory operations. The course of events in Mauritius was strongly influenced, at that time, by two major issues: the explosive growth of the population and constitutional changes. The very rapid population growth, which followed the eradication of Malaria in Mauritius, weighed heavily on and clouded, economic growth prospects and compelled the Government to take urgent measures to restrain the runaway demographic situation.

In spite of high fertility rates, the population growth in Mauritius was checked by very high death rates due mainly to the prevalence of Malaria, which often exceeded the birth rates. Between 1901 and 1940, the crude birth rate averaged 35.6/00 and the crude death rate 33.1/00, the rate of natural increase of the population was 2.3/00, with large annual fluctuations in both birth and death rates. There was thus little change in population size during that period.

There were dramatic developments in the island’s demography after the war. Between the 1944 and 1952 population censuses, the annual rate of population growth shot up to an annual average of 2.26 per cent. The successful control of diseases and the eradication of Malaria led to a sharp drop of 32 per cent in the death rate in a single year, from 29.5/00 in 1946 to 20.1/00 in 1947. This very rapid decline in mortality was accompanied by an unprecedented rise in fertility. In 1950, the birth rate in Mauritius reached the highest ever level of 49.7/00, close to the world biometric record. The rate of population growth culminated at 3.12 per cent during the 1952-62 inter-censal period. The population grew by over 60 per cent in 18 years, from 419,000 in 1944 to 682,000 in 1962 and was projected to reach three million by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, if fertility rates remained at the same high level and mortality rates declined further as a result of progress in medicine and public health.

With the very narrow limits of Mauritius in terms of land and natural resources, the threat of overpopulation clouded the island’s future prospects and the very real danger of a Malthusian nightmare scenario dominated Government policy in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>188</sup>

During the 1950s, the economic growth of Mauritius depended essentially on the expansion of the sugar output. As mentioned above, 1959 marked the peak of Mauritius post-war prosperity based on sugar. 1959 was also a major land-mark in the Island’s political development with the promulgation of general elections based on universal suffrage.

As happened elsewhere, economic prosperity activated the process of political development. In a fairly short span of twenty years, 1948 to 1968, Mauritius evolved from the archaic status of a Crown Colony governed from Whitehall to that of a Sovereign State. The demographic explosion, on the one hand, and political emancipation on the other, led to a fundamental restructuring of the Mauritian economy characterized by a rapid growth of public expenditure and the diversification of the economy.

### 5.3.3 The Prelude to Independence

The future of the Sugar Industry was a major stake in the negotiations between the British Government and the Mauritian representatives which led the way to Independence. Britain, hard pressed financially, was anxious to divest itself of its colonies and curtail its role in the post-war international order. This change of policy was reflected *inter alia* in the decisions of the British Government to disengage its forces to the East of Suez and to broker, in that connection, a power-sharing agreement with the United States (US) Government.

Private negotiations were going on at the time between the British Government and local authorities which led eventually to the excision of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius. It appears that this was a condition set down by the British Government, for it to agree to the demands of the Mauritius Labour party and its allies for Independence for Mauritius.

While they wanted to curtail their international commitments, the British Authorities were eager to ensure that after Independence, Mauritius would not become a burden to the British Exchequer. In 1960, the British Government sent a team led by Professor Meade to Mauritius to assess the economic situation. Another team, led by Professor Titmuss, studied the demographic situation and the problem of overpopulation. In his report, Meade stressed the limits set to the development of Mauritius, owing to the island's small size and peripheral location and sugar monoculture. The urgency of the need for change was given additional impetus by the demographic explosion in the 1960s which followed the eradication of Malaria. The Meade report had a strong influence on the Government strategy and action in the years which preceded and followed the country's Independence in 1968. A recurrent theme was the need for economic diversification.<sup>189</sup>

Conscious of the wide exposure and vulnerability of Mauritius to the conditions in overseas markets and conscious also of the need to safeguard the Sugar Industry, the Government embarked on a full-scale economic diplomacy to expand Mauritius trading network, to diversify its export markets and build or strengthen relations with other friendly nations in the international sphere. The message conveyed by the Meade mission for an urgent restructuring of the Mauritian economy clearly emerged from a scrutiny of the contents of the report.

Economic diversification became the 'leitmotif' of both the Mauritian Government and the Business Sector in the 1960s. Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam took an active part in the negotiations with the British and French Authorities which led to the admission of Mauritius as a member of the Yaounde Convention in 1971. Substantial privileges ensured for the island, a preferential access for non-sugar products, in general.

The fundamental aim of the Government economic policy was to break out of sugar monoculture by means of a diversification of the Mauritian economy, hence the quest for new products and new markets. In the 1960s, this led to the formulation of an industrialisation policy through the establishment of industries that cater for the local market. Meade, for his part, had serious doubts about a strategy of industrialisation based on import substitution in the case of Mauritius on account of the small size of the domestic market and the lack of expertise outside the Sugar Industry. On the other hand, in his Report, Meade referred to the possibility of the establishment in Mauritius of "export platforms" which would draw on the abundant local labour force to produce commodities for export. But the small size of the domestic market, the island's peripheral location and the absence of raw materials set strict limits to the range of commodities which could be produced profitably in Mauritius. In the 1960s, the Government introduced measures to foster the development of industries catering for the local market through the issue of development certificates and restrictions on imports for certain pioneering ventures in industrialisation. But these measures fell far short of the Government objectives.<sup>190</sup>

As mentioned earlier, in its Report on the financial and economic situation of Mauritius, the Royal Commission of 1909 had written that there were few accumulated fortunes in Mauritius. Traditionally, a substantial part of the profits of the Sugar Industry was invested in Europe and South Africa, in the case of white estate owners and their affiliates, and in India, in the case of planters and merchants of Indian origin.

In the 1950s, the private capital outflow averaged about six million rupees, equivalent to almost 10 per cent of gross domestic capital formation. In 1964, the Government imposed a tax on the private transfer of capital overseas in order to restrain the drain on the island's financial resources.

The precarious financial situation of Mauritius at the time of Independence was further aggravated by the segmentation of the island's financial market. In 1967, Meade wrote:

*“Racial differences presented an important obstacle to economic development. This introduces an element of inflexibility which is particularly disadvantageous to development in a small economy. To confine each business jigsaw to the prices that can be fitted together within a single racial group of limited size, artificially increases the difficulty of building new concerns.”<sup>191</sup>*

The high concentration of land and resources in the Sugar Industry and the segmentation of the financial market produced inefficiencies in the allocation of resources and a lopsided pattern of development. In addition to the economic factors which can explain the predominance of the Sugar Industry in the island economy, there were also political and institutional factors at work which strengthened the hold of the Sugar Industry on the country's affairs. During colonial times, the plantocracy played a prominent role in the formulation of Government policy through its representatives on the Government Council. There was then an effective partnership in the administration of the island between the colonial establishment and the industry's representatives. The presidents of the Chamber of Agriculture were regularly consulted by the Governor on important matters and their opinion and advice were communicated to the Secretary of State in London.

Political and institutional factors have played a determinant part in the consolidation of the hegemony of the Sugar Industry in Mauritius. Reference has been made elsewhere to the informal partnership between the Sugar Industry and the Colonial Establishment in the administration of the island. This state of affairs lasted throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the constitutional changes and political emancipation which followed the end of the Second World War.

Until the late 1950s and early 1960s, the small but powerful Franco-Mauritian White elite held sway at the top of Mauritian hierarchy. Sugar, the crop and the industry, dominated the economic and political power-lines in the country. It was the economic, rather than the cultural and political, position of the White Franco-Mauritians that ensured their dominance of the Mauritian society. Even when they lost control of the Legislative in 1948, they continued through the Chamber of Agriculture to exercise substantial power, which occurred between 1936 and 1967. They watched, with growing concern, the emergence of the Indo-Mauritian community from its secular isolation on the fringes of the Mauritian society, to a prominent place at the centre of affairs in the country and this development.

The Franco-Mauritians remained a strong interest group throughout the island's history. The Sugar Industry was their power base. The decline of the Sugar Industry in the 1960s weakened their ascendancy over the island's affairs. When their political power, dwindled their economic power declined considerably. In the new Constitution of Mauritius, which was promulgated in 1948 and with the extension of the franchise culminating, ten years later, in universal suffrage, we can trace the early ominous signs of the irreversible decline of the Sugar Industry and the Franco-Mauritian community in local affairs.<sup>192</sup>

The access to power of a new class of politicians, the representatives of the lower-income and working-class sections of the population brought fundamental changes in Government policy and the administration of public affairs in Mauritius. With these changes, there followed inevitably a change in the relations between the Government and the Sugar Industry. One of the symptoms of the new order of things in the country was the encroachment of the Government over what was previously considered to be the private preserve of the Sugar Industry. This was reflected, *inter alia*, in the scope and attributions of the official enquiries into the problems of the Sugar Industry.

One and a half centuries of virtual sugarcane monoculture have created a powerful organisation which is rooted in the Mauritian social and economic system. Yet, the seemingly impregnable hegemony of sugar in Mauritius is now irrevocably, it seems, on the local industrial scene and in the

political sphere by a new class of politicians intent on doing away with the remnants of the old order.

### 5.3.4 The Diversification of the Economy

#### 5.3.4.1 Land Settlement Scheme

There were attempts in the 1930s and the 1940s to diversify production; the impact of the Second World War contributed partly to that endeavour.

In 1947, the Colonial Government appointed Mr. J. Bett as a Land Settlement Officer with the following terms of reference:<sup>193</sup>

- i. To investigate the possibilities of Land Settlement in Mauritius;
- ii. To inaugurate such scheme as to be approved;
- iii. To set up the first settlements;
- iv. To train up officers to maintain the scheme after the departure of the Land Settlement Officer.

It must be noted that, already in 1944, there was a Land Settlement Committee which prepared a Report on Land Settlement; this report was most useful to Mr. J. Bett and the project was part of an attempt to increase food production. The Cooperative Societies were consulted in the process by Mr. Bett. At that time, sugar production dominated the economy and the lives of the people of Mauritius. Then, agricultural production was distributed as follows:<sup>194</sup>

Table 24 Agricultural Production

Crop	Hectares ( <i>Arpents</i> )	% Island Area	% Cultivated Area	% Exports
Sugarcane	57386 (142,000)	32	78	96
Foodcrops	8083 (20,000)	4.5	11	NIL
Fibre	8083 (20,000)	4.5	11	NIL

In its preliminary findings, Mr. J. Bett wrote:

*“Applicants to be selected for small holdings, particularly on the initial schemes, must have experience, capital and qualities to ensure their success so that they may be an example to other applicants who became tenants on subsequent schemes.*

*[...] the provision of a career on the land under reasonably attractive condition should act as a brake on the ‘drift to town’ movement.*

*[...] The setting up of a useful and contented food producing community on the land is of permanent importance in the Island’s social and economic structure and it is the purpose of a Land Settlement Scheme to put into operation such an organised plan.”*

Applying the brakes to the ‘drift to town’ movement became another objective of the scheme.

Mr. Bett identified the following regions/localities to implement the scheme: (i) Rose-Belle, (ii) Crown Land Dick and Wooton and other Crown Lands, near Curepipe, (iii) Hermitage (iv) Chamarel, (v) Coastal areas with reasonable rainfall - Belle-Mare, Volmar, Trou D’eau Douce, Petit Sable, Grand Sable, St. Felix and, (vi) Areas at a moderate elevation, with a moderate rainfall: Trianon, Moka (Mon Désert), Long Mountain, Crève Coeur, Sebastopol.

These regions constituted about 4047 hectares (10,000 acres), part of which would need to be acquired compulsorily.

The recommendations of the report included the following:<sup>195</sup>

- i. A total number of 500 equipped holdings would be established during a ten-year period. The holdings would consist of 100 dairy, 200 mixed, 100 poultry and 100 market garden.
- ii. It would be desirable to have buildings, stock and crop insured.
- iii. The development of a co-operative small holding scheme would provide a useful second stage for applicants who had successfully completed their period of training.
- iv. Training facilities for applicants should be run by the Department of Agriculture.
- v. Loan repayments by holders should be over a period of ten years. Interest payments should be as low as possible, 2 %-3 %.
- vi. A large part of the capital expenditure for land would require to be put into a special land fund in order to be available for the purchase of land in large portions, if this was necessary. A sum of Rs. 2,000,000 should be ear-marked for this purpose.

This project represented the first serious attempt by the State to diversify the economy, albeit to a somewhat limited extent. Given the requirements of the applicants, the small planter community would be the main beneficiaries.

It is of interest to note that some of success stories in the production of food crops in Mauritius emanate from the chosen regions at that time; for example Belle-Mare and Trou d'Eau Douce further a fair number of them have been under some form of co-operative organisation from the very beginning.

#### 5.3.4.2 The 1960s

In 1960, the Meade Commission referred to “the terrifying prospects of overpopulation” and the need for urgent measures to tackle the runaway demography by means of a national programme of population control. It also referred to the strict limits imposed by the sugar cane monoculture on economic growth and job prospects in Mauritius.<sup>196</sup>

In order to deal with these problems, Meade advocated the diversification of the economy by the creation of new industries and an increase in job opportunities through the stabilization of wages. The most controversial measure, envisaged by Meade, was the imposition of a 5% duty on sugar exports with the aim of restraining sugar production in the island. The export duty became, henceforth, a highly contentious and recurrent issue in the relations between the Government and the sugar producers.<sup>197</sup>

The objective of the policy of economic diversification, advocated by Meade, was twofold: to provide productive employment for the growing labour force, and to prevent a serious deterioration in the island's balance of payments. As the Sugar Industry had virtually reached its natural limits, any further increase in employment would have to be found outside the Industry. This was no easy task. It would require a high rate of saving to secure the resources required for capital formation. It would also require finding new profitable investment outlets within the narrow confines of the Mauritian economy, and given the virtually total absence of entrepreneurship and technical know-how outside the industry.

Following the recommendations of the Meade Report, the Mauritian Government introduced, in 1964, a series of measures to foster the establishment of import substitution industries in the island. These measures contained a number of incentives in order to attract new industries: Import duty concessions or complete exemption in respect of raw materials plant and machinery, income tax relief and generous tax allowances on industrial buildings, plant and machinery. After the introduction of those measures, some 70 industrial companies began to operate manufacturing, manufacturing a whole range of products. Between them, those industries led to the creation of approximately 1200 jobs by 1970. This was seriously inadequate to keep pace with the rapidly-growing labour force nor could it prevent a decline in real per capita GDP and deterioration in the public finances and the balance of payments. To develop industrial production at the required rate, Mauritius would need to find foreign outlets for a large part of its manufacturing products.

As indicated above, serious constraints stressed were underlined by Meade, which hampered industrial diversification in Mauritius. On the other hand, in his report, Meade referred to the

possibility of the establishment in Mauritius of “export platforms”, which would draw on the abundant local labour free to produce commodities for export. The possibility of establishing an export processing zone in Mauritius was first mentioned publicly in November 1969, by Professor Lim Fat, who was the Head of the School of Industrial Technology at the University of Mauritius, after a visit to Taiwan and Puerto Rico. In his address, Prof. Lim Fat referred to the industrial free zones as “a topic which [...] can trigger off serious industrial investment in Mauritius.” An additional appeal of Taiwan and Puerto Rico to Mauritian businessmen and industrialists was that both countries showed important similarities with Mauritius. They were large sugar producers which had established dynamic industrial sectors based on the export of manufactured products. There were also the examples of Hong Kong and Singapore which had developed a thriving industrial export economy. By taking full advantage of their strategic position as “relay economies”, they were at the forefront of newly-industrialised countries.

The possibility of the establishment of an export processing zone in Mauritius was of immediate appeal to the authorities and to the business community. The White Paper on the 1971-80 Development Strategy and the 1971-75 Development Plan elaborated at some length the need to create the appropriate institutional and infrastructural conditions “for a substantial and quick break - through in export markets”. Starting from a very small manufacturing sector employing altogether an estimated 18,400 persons in 1969, the authorities envisaged an increase of 42,000<sup>198</sup> jobs in that sector by 1980. Of that number 25,000 jobs were to be created in export manufacturing activities.<sup>199</sup> José Poncini pioneered the export industry through cut diamond activities.

Economic issues loomed large among the preconditions for the achievement of Independence, as evidenced by the number of delegations which visited Mauritius in the 1960s. Among the problems and constraints which confronted the local authorities in the task of creating a viable economy, was the island’s extreme dependence on cane sugar. It was then generally agreed that the economic development of Mauritius required a diversification of the economy. Independence from Britain and the need for a fundamental reorientation of the economy induced the local authorities to look for new trading partners. The establishment of closer links with the European Economic Commission (EEC) provided a natural alternative for development for Mauritius, with its strong francophone heritage. Added to this was growing concern that the entry of Britain into the EEC would threaten the privileges enjoyed by Mauritian Sugar on the British market, under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. In 1970, Mauritius ratified the Yaounde Convention. It was thus the first Commonwealth country to establish formal economic and trade relations with the European Community, two years before Britain joined the EEC.<sup>200</sup>

The adherence of Mauritius to the Yaounde Convention opened up important trading opportunities for the nascent non-sugar export sector, and it provided a strong stimulus for the development of export processing industrialization in Mauritius. To Hong Kong industrialists and businessmen, it appeared that the facilities, given to Mauritian products in the EEC markets, provided a way of circumventing the restrictions imposed on their exports to the European Community. Henceforth, the necessary conditions existed for the establishment in the island of an important export manufacturing industry in which multinational companies of the Far East (Hong Kong and, to lesser extent, Taiwan) were to play a predominant role.<sup>201</sup>

#### 5.4 The Development of the Co-operative Movement

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1909, the Colonial Government appointed Mr. S. Wilberforce, from the Indian Civil Service, equipped with the experience in setting up of Cooperative Credit Societies in India, to “investigate the possibilities of establishing cooperative banks in Mauritius.”<sup>202</sup>

Mr. Wilberforce recommended that:

- i. Cooperative banks with share capital, in opposition to the Raiffeissen principle, should be introduced;
- ii. The liability of the members should be unlimited;
- iii. Profits should be placed in a reserve fund, but that fund can be used in the ordinary business of the Bank;
- iv. Some financial assistance would initially be given by the State to get the co-operative movement off the ground;
- v. Shares should be of small denomination, Rs. 10 in particular, so that their acquisition by the poorest might be possible;
- vi. Limits on the dividends and on the number of shares which one member may hold were defined.

It is to be noted the S. Wilberforce remarked that: “Raiffeissen objected to shares on the ground that poor people wanted to borrow and could not spend on shares, that shares encouraged a vicious desire for dividends [...]”<sup>203</sup> Further, Wilberforce wondered about the interest of the wealthy people from among the planters’ community in these cooperative banks. He found that: “It is doubtful if any rich Indians-whose interest are mainly opposed to the movement-will assist the banks...Moreover few wealthy Indians will become members.”<sup>204</sup>

There was some concern that, with the social stratification among the Indian immigrant population, a conflict of interest of the wealthy against the poor small planters might jeopardise the emerging cooperative movement. Unfortunately, history would prove this concern to be a very valid one indeed.

Moreover, some other principles were important to ensure the success of the cooperative banks: it had to be ensured that the loans would be used in productive sector (i.e. in cane production); the cooperative movement should not become dependent on the State, and education in cooperation for the members of the cooperative bank is fundamental to the success of the project.

As the prosperity of the cooperative banks would obviously depend on the prosperity of its members, the French Law of Succession, criticised by the Royal Commission, acted as a hindrance to the prosperity of the members (and hence of the cooperative bank) through the subdivision of any plot of land for succession purposes. S. Wilberforce made a gender-biased proposal, consonant with the demands of the Indians before the Royal Commission of 1909:

*“In the first place, I would suggest that among Indian female succession should be abolished in the presence, at any rate, of direct male issue. The interests of widows and married daughters are apt to conflict with those of a son, and their exclusion would lessen sub-division and disputes.”*

The threats and obstacles facing the emerging Cooperative Credit Societies, as the proposed cooperative banks were known, would soon prevail. As early as in 1914 some money lenders were proposing to lend money at reduced rates in localities with newly-established Cooperative Credit Societies, with the obvious objective of killing the societies as competitors.<sup>205</sup> By 1915, the threat of the wealthy shareholders materialised, as some of them took the maximum allowable number of shares. Then they got at least double the amount invested by them as loans from the Cooperative Credit Society, thus depriving the poorer shareholders of the chance of taking loans.<sup>206</sup> The conflict between, on the one hand, the sense of solidarity and cooperation characteristic of Cooperative

Societies and on the other hand, the values of selfishness of the capitalist world recurred again and again in the historical development of the cooperative movement.<sup>207</sup>

By October 1915, Mr. L. Jaigopal, of the Indian Civil Service, the Registrar of the Cooperative Credit Societies, left prior to the termination of its scheduled three-year contract, due to “difficulties in connection with administration”.<sup>208</sup> In his Annual Reports of 1914 and 1915, he made a critical evaluation of cooperative societies, indicating, amongst others, threats and obstacles facing the societies.

Whilst there were problems facing the cooperative movement, there were, however, an increasing number of the Cooperative Credit Societies over the years, with 29 such societies which had a total membership of 2,350, representing an average membership of 81 per society. There were progressively more societies charging interests less than the initially targeted 12 %; the range of such interests varied between 6 % to 10 %.

Moreover, by 1932, the amount of overdue loans had reached the sum of Rs. 160,561, representing 60 % of the total outstanding loans from 62 % of the borrowers. This state of affairs was the result of bad management and malpractices prevailing in some Cooperative Credit Societies, as well as inefficient legislation. The main defect at the level of management was “the granting of loans by committees to their friends and relatives with excessive liberality and for non-productive purposes and taking inadequate security.”<sup>209</sup>

In the 1930s, new legislation and improvement in the inspection of the societies brought a consolidation of the cooperative movement. However, all cooperative societies were restricted predominantly to only one area of economic activity: credit for the cultivation of sugar cane and, as a consequence, almost exclusively restricted to the community of Indian Small Planters. Thus, in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1909, the Cooperative Credit Societies were meant to assist in the end the Sugar Industry.

In 1945, Mr. W.K.H. Campbell, Cooperative Adviser to the Government of Mauritius, found that:

*“The societies, so far in existence, are not only confined to credit and to one community but also to one particular occupation only, namely sugar cultivation, and to those who own or occupy land suitable for this purpose.”*<sup>210</sup>

Another issue of importance was the exaggerated role of the State in the running of the Cooperative Credit Societies which, according to Campbell, was “cooperatively speaking, entirely wrong”:

*“Any cooperative possibilities in any century must depend on the energy, initiative, honesty and mutual trust of the people themselves.”*

There were threats not only from middlemen/money lenders and wealthy members of the credit society, but also from the less wealthy and educated classes in Mauritius. Campbell found out from the residents in Mauritius that:

*“Moreover there is probably rankling in their (i.e. the people’s) minds the memory of some particular occasion on which they have been swindled by some individual member of these classes, and, without much dispassionate consideration, they indulge in sweeping generalisations that they are all blackguards.”*

This issue seemed to have been important since the early days of the cooperative movement, especially given that the small planters were themselves illiterate. And it plagued the movement throughout its lifetime. In the 1930s, there was a case of criminal action against the secretary of a cooperative society who was found not guilty, having been given the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. Campbell was very critical of the capitalist middlemen in shoe production and in the marketing of milk. He proposed that the cooperative movement should move out of merely cane cultivation and deal with a wide range of economic activities: consumer stores, marketing of milk, shoemaking, transport, fishing, building better living societies, etc. and he proposed that

cooperation should no longer be a by-product of the Department of Agriculture, of which the Director is the Registrar of Cooperative Societies.

Effectively in 1945, the Cooperative Societies Ordinance No. 15 was enacted and came into operation on 1 October 1946, whereby registration was extended to all types of cooperative societies.

By 1947, a new Department of Cooperation was created with a full-time Registrar at the head and various major developments would take place in the years to follow. In 1948, the Mauritius Central Cooperative Bank Ltd (MCCB) was set up. In 1950, the Mauritius Cooperative Agricultural Federation was registered with the objective of promoting the agricultural interests of its affiliated societies. In 1951, the Mauritius Cooperative Union Ltd. was registered whose main objectives, amongst others, included the supervision of cooperative societies and the promotion of cooperative education. These institutions, known as secondary societies, provided the necessary high-level institutional network nationally for all Cooperative Credit Societies.

A wide range of Cooperative Credit Societies was set up in the 1950s and 1960s prior to the Independence of Mauritius in 1968. By 1968, the number of societies and corresponding members were as follows:<sup>211</sup>

Mauritius		
I. Secondary Societies	No. of Societies	No. of Members
Mauritius Central Cooperative Bank	1	226
Mauritius Agric C. Federation	1	167
Mauritius Cooperative Union	1	213
Tea Marketing Federation	1	3
	4	609

## II Primary Societies

There were 296 primary societies with 32,295 members in marketing societies for tea and fishing, then in transport, thrift, schools, consumers, printing, housing, better living, farming and industrial shoemakers.

Rodrigues:

In Rodrigues, there were 30 cooperative societies with 3,520 members.

Moreover, by the 1960s the annual reports did not contain any critical evaluation of problems facing the cooperative societies, whether of the aspects of management, of malpractices etc. This lack of critical evaluation does not help to assess the extent to which the cooperative movement and cooperative spirit and values were indeed prevalent among those who matter most: the people directly or indirectly involved.

In fact, following Campbell's remarks, it is appropriate to note that the small planters did not constitute a homogenous group. The big ones provided the stratum from which emerged the middlemen, job contractors and money-lenders/usurers. This wealthy minority controlled the Cooperative Credit Societies, preventing the real empowerment of the poor planters.<sup>212</sup>

## 5.5 The Labour Struggles of 1930s and 1940s

### 5.5.1 The Labouring Classes and the Depression

For the labouring classes, history tends to repeat itself. In the crisis at the turn of the twentieth century, the labouring classes were made to contribute very unfairly, when compared to the capitalist class and middle class, to Government revenue. In the lean years of the economic depression of the 1930s, yet again they would be made to contribute heavily to Government revenue as well as to the Sugar Industry.

The discriminatory taxation policy against the labouring classes was such that about 12 % of the total family income from those classes was paid in different forms of taxation: house tax, wage rate, excise duty on rum and tobacco, custom duty on tea and cotton cloth etc. In their report on the 'Financial Situation of Mauritius' of 1931, I.D. Elliott and N.G. Longhane wrote:

*"It is surprising, therefore, to see that it is against this class that so much of the fiscal system of Mauritius is directed, that it is this class alone which can be said to be heavily taxed in comparison with other countries."*<sup>213</sup>

By considering some typical examples, the same authors showed that the professional and wealthier classes would respectively pay about 8.6 % and 5.1 % of their incomes as taxes. Taxation in Mauritius, at that time, was in inverse order of capacity to pay.

The Colonial State by squeezing maximum revenue possible out of the labouring classes, was effectively contributing to their impoverishment. So much so, that Elliot and Loughlane wrote:

*"The extent to which the colony's budget is made to depend upon the rum-drinking habits of the poorest classes of the population cannot but be regarded as a very serious blot upon its financial system. There is no suggestion that the tax is imposed in the interests of temperance. It is wholly a revenue tax, operating as a surcharge on the income of the poor."*

The alcohol consumption together with physical exhaustion among the labouring classes was causing serious problems to their health; equally there was much concern on its impact to the labourers' productivity. In 1930, P de Sornay wrote :

*"Quoi qu'il en soit: l'ouvrier ne peut plus fournir la somme de travail que fournissaient leurs pères. L'indisposition qui autrefois passait presque inaperçue invalide aujourd'hui le travailleur pendant plusieurs jours."*<sup>214</sup>

Further, the labouring classes, especially the agricultural labourers, would have their wages reduced drastically as highlighted in the table below.

District	Arithmetic Mean of Monthly Earnings (Rs)		
	1927	1931	% Decrease
Port Louis	21.36	19.25	9.9
Pamplemousses	16.27	12.18	25.1
Rivière du Rempart	15.68	12.95	17.4
Flacq	13.04	9.45	27.5
Grand Port	11.13	10.76	3.3
Savanne	10.79	7.71	28.6
Plaines Wilhems	11.12	10.10	9.2
Black River	13.62	11.00	19.2
Moka	9.68	7.66	20.9

Mauritius	13.63	11.23	17.6
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For Mauritius as a whole, the reduction was 17.6 %, with drastic reductions for Savanne, Flacq and Pamplemousses being respectively 28.6 %, 27.5 % and 25.1 %.

Moreover, some sugar estates were making profits over the years, whilst others operating at losses were partly badly managed at the time of the boom year of 1921, when sugar prices rose to £90 a ton: buying estates at high prices and extending sugar cane cultivation to not very productive land.<sup>216</sup>

Further Elliott and Loughlane noted that:

*“A considerable part of the profits is said to have disappeared in purely private expenditure and some of it to have found investment outside the colony.”*

And Malcolm de Chazal wrote that remittances sent abroad should be taxed.<sup>217</sup>

In such economic depression, yet again the labouring classes were squeezed by the Sugar Industry whilst many estate owners could even contemplate capital exodus.

### 5.5.2 The Struggle of the Labouring classes

The sustained impoverishment of the labouring classes during the 1930s on the one hand, and the emergence of the Labour Party with its public meetings, on the other hand, created conditions for any fire to spread if there were a spark somewhere. Effectively, the 15 % decrease in the prices of the Uba cane variety by the Sans Souci and Rich Fund estates in the District of Flacq, triggered off protest, processions/strikes, marches, and generally agitation for better wages and against unemployment. This agitation started on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1937 and progressively spread to the North and the South of Mauritius. Initially, the labourers and small planters were involved; thereafter, other categories of workers, such as estate servants and dockers, became involved. And, at the Union-Flacq Sugar Estate, owned by the Gujadhur family, new sugar magnates of Indian origin, shots were fired by the estate management and four labourers/ small planters were killed and several others were wounded. During the autopsy, two were found to have been shot from behind.

The Colonial State obviously reacted by sending in the Police; more importantly, a Commission of Enquiry into the unrest on sugar estates was set up on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1937 under the chairmanship of C.A. Hooper. The events of 1937 are landmarks in the History of Mauritius, and in particular, in the History of the Labour Movement. The report of the Commission of Enquiry, referred to as Hooper’s Report, would equally bring an entirely new dimension in the way that industrial relations would be dealt with by the Colonial State, and invariably, by the employers, including the sugar oligarchy.

The main grievances of the small planter were:<sup>218</sup>

- i. Obligation to send their canes to one mill-owner;
- ii. They had to sell their canes through cane dealers, not directly to the mill-owners;
- iii. The planters were not satisfied with their share of sugar obtained from the mill owners for their canes.

On the other hand, the agricultural labourers’ grievances were:<sup>219</sup>

- i. Low wages;
- ii. They were recruited and paid by the job contractor, who they claimed did not give them their due.

Finally, Dr. M. Curé, the founder of the Mauritius Labour Party, made several requests through public meetings, memorandum and to the Commission:<sup>220</sup>

- i. The creation of a Cooperative Sugar Factory;

- ii. Increase in wages of Labourers;
- iii. The enforcement of the Ordinance on Minimum Wages of 1934;
- iv. Creation of Labour Department, with an British Director;
- v. Revision of the constitution of Council of Government with a view to obtaining proper representation of labouring classes;
- vi. The introduction of old age pensions;
- vii. Amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance of 1931.
- viii. Various measures in favour of Labour; repeal of Labour Ordinance of 1922, inspection of Labour, regulation of the work of women and children on sugar estates etc.

The Commission of Enquiry made certain key recommendations:

- i. The establishment of a Department of Labour and Social Welfare;
- ii. Pay of Casual labourers to be increased and to be made by the estate;
- iii. Establishment of Trade Unions;
- iv. Institutions of old age pensions and sickness insurance schemes;
- v. Setting up of conciliation Boards composed of employers and employees;
- vi. Setting up of a Committee of Experts and a Standing Committee of Small Planters.

Moreover, it ignored Dr. M. Curé's suggestion for the creation of a cooperative sugar factory which could have created a major breakthrough in the hegemonistic control of milling by the sugar magnates.

The labouring classes would have noticed that both the plantocracy and the Colonial State did not find it proper to take initiatives to tackle various problems like low wages, poverty etc. It was only through their struggles and loss of lives that there was a major response from the Colonial State. Similarly, in 1871, were it not for the resistance of the indentured labourers, as expressed in a petition with the help of A. De Plevitz and R. Modaliar to the Governor, most probably no changes would have taken place.

The struggles of the labouring classes proceeded further in the years to come. Thus, in September 1938, there were a strike by the dockers, claiming for an increase in wages and better worker conditions. The strike soon began to spread to other sectors, especially to the labourers on the Sugar Estate at Trianon. The Colonial State reacted by very repressive measures: Dr. Curé and Pandit Sahadeo were placed under house arrest, E. Anquetil, a trade unionist and a close collaborator of Dr. Curé, was deported to Rodrigues. The Colonial Government further decided to use direct repressive measures against the strikers: three hundred were arrested and 'black legs' were used to break the strike.<sup>221</sup> In fact, Governor Sir Bede Clifford asked the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate to recruit appropriate labourers on the sugar estates to step into the shoes of the dockers. He asked Mr Jules Leclezio, of Mauritius Sugar Syndicate "to arrange for the sugar syndicate to get into immediate touch with a selected number of estates to collect all the suitable labour required for unloading the trains and loading the lighters and to arrange with the representatives of the Railways to have these men transferred immediately by rail to the camp which was being provided for them at Quay D."<sup>222</sup> According to R. Quenette, the operation was a success and the Governor succeeded in its policy of 'divide and rule' to be used again in the future, when dealing with labour.

During the years that followed, there were various industrial disputes, especially by agricultural labourers, relating to mainly wages and shortage of foodstuffs. In the year 1943, there were many stoppages at work in the North by agricultural labourers from January to April with little result.<sup>223</sup> As from July, things got worse. There were strikes and cane fields were set on fire; in the end Police fired at a crowd at Belle Vue Harel Sugar Estate, killing three persons, one man, one woman

and an adolescent aged twelve. There was another Commission of Enquiry into these disturbances, chaired by S. Moody.

### 5.6 The Response of the Colonial State and the new Labour System

The Colonial State reacted by means of a mix of approaches. There was repression of the workers and of the leaders; there was firing against demonstrators. Thereafter, there were measures, taken following the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry which revealed an astute approach to control the situation in general, and to control labour in particular. The fundamental issues of unemployment, low wages, poverty and basic rights of labouring classes would not be properly addressed.

The appropriate legislation was enacted to provide for repressive measures by the State whenever there arose any industrial conflicts. 'The Public Emergency Powers Ordinance, 1938' was passed. Thereafter, other relevant legislation was passed, following the recommendation of the Hooper's Report. In particular, in 1938, the 'Industrial Association Ordinance' and the 'Workman Compensation Ordinance' were enacted. The former Ordinance introduced restrictions on the right to strike by the labouring classes. But the State decided not to have a Trade Unions Ordinance, instead there was the 'Industrial Association Ordinance'. In 1938, the Labour Department was created. All these legislations were to incorporate in law proposals of Dr. M. Curé, Leader of the Mauritian Labour Party. Thereafter, in 1943 and 1944, other legislations dealing with the establishment of the Court of Arbitration and of the Labour Advisory Board were enacted. The latter functioned as 'minimum Wage Board'.<sup>224</sup>

In the debates at the Council of Government on the 'Public Emergency Powers', the Governor said:

*"We do not expect that such disturbances will arise again in Mauritius because we have taken every conceivable measure that they should not happen."*

Yet in 1938, there were dockers' strikes and in 1943, there were strikes of agricultural labourers and related disturbances in the North which lasted for about eight months. The Colonial Government had simply avoided to address the basic issues of wages, unemployment, poverty and basic dignity and rights of the labouring classes. Instead, it developed institutions to control the labouring classes and to keep them quiet. Moreover, the Colonial Office advised the Governor to make some nominations at the Council of Government "to provide a useful antidote to the purely political agitations of Curé and his friends."<sup>225</sup> And in 1939, Mr. A. Osman and S. Seerbookun were nominated respectively as representatives of the small planters and the labourers.

Moody's Report conveyed clearly the problems relating the new Labour Department and the employers, on the one hand, and the labouring classes, on the other hand. Thus, the Commissioners wrote:

*"The labouring population as a whole seem to have little faith in the labour department. We formed the impression from what we heard that many officers of this Department make the assumption, largely unconsciously, that the main object of their activities is to keep labour quiet at any price."<sup>226</sup>*

Most probably, the labour inspectors had internalised the repressive legislation and the repressive control of the Labour leaders such as E. Anquetil and Dr. M. Curé as meaning effectively that Labour should be kept quiet and under control. The Colonial State was obviously trying to nip in the bud the influence of the Labour Party on the labouring classes and its role in defending their interests. In that context, E. Anquetil refused employment as a paid official of the Labour Department.<sup>227</sup> With regard to the employers, Moody's Report highlighted the fact that they were concerned mainly with the abundance of cheap labour, as had been the case so far. The Commissioners had this to say:

*"Some employers failed to appreciate the labourers' claim to a higher standard of living, their new sense of non-economic values and their rising demand for leisure and better conditions of employment, but on the contrary, still believed in cheap labour of low standard and forgot the human side of the problems of industry."*

The Labour leaders, E. Anquetil and Dr. M. Curé apart, there emerged other Labour leaders and Trade Unions among Sugar Industry labourers: H. Ramanarain, S. Jugdambi were two such leaders. In 1947, labourers' unions merged to form the Mauritius Amalgamated Labourers' Association, M.A.L.A., which became the Plantation Workers Union in 1959. This Trade Union succeeded in influencing the Government to bring legislation and to take decisions in favour of the labourers during the 1950s. Some of these are:

- i. Maternity Leave to women labourers;
- ii. A pension to retired employees of the Sugar Industry;
- iii. General welfare of the employees of the Sugar Industry.<sup>228</sup>

It is appropriate to note that another Trade Union of labourers was formed in 1948, the Mauritius Agricultural Workers Union by the newly-elected member of the Legislative Council, Dr. S. Ramgoolam, together with S. Balgobin and L. Badry.<sup>229</sup> According to C. Bhagirutty, that Trade Union was 'competing' against the M.A.L.A.

During the 1960s, in spite of the comments of Messrs. Balogh and Bennett (see Section 5.7), the Plantation Workers Union succeeded in influencing the Colonial Government to bring new legislation to make the Sugar Industry to:

- i. Provide permanent work to-day labourers who had been present for 80 % during crop season.
- ii. Provide for a severance allowance equivalent to fifteen days of wages per year of service, in case an employee was made redundant.<sup>230</sup>

#### 5.7 The Aftermath of the Industrial Strikes and Disturbances

The Colonial State's twin policy of repression of workers and their leaders on the one hand, and of control of the labouring classes through Legislation and through the setting up of the Labour Department and other institutions, on the other hand, would eventually triumph.

Wages in the Sugar Industry remained almost constant in real terms until the late 1950s. Meanwhile, there were major political developments leading ultimately to Independence in 1968; the struggles of the labouring classes seemed to have been somewhat marginalised in the process. The Imperial Government had sent experts, like Meade and Titmuss, to study the economic prospects and the social aspects of Mauritius, preceding the country's forthcoming Independence. By 1962, there was a Commission of Inquiry (on the Sugar Industry with terms of reference relating to the same old problems:

- i. Small Planters: access to credit, apportionment of sugar accruing to planters and millers and related problems;
- ii. Labourers: wages and salaries.

The Commissioners were T. Balogh and C.J.M. Bennett. It turned out that a fair number of recommendations made by the previous Commissions of Enquiry were not being implemented.

The mind-set of the employers was found by Balogh and Bennett to be still the same as that prevailing decades, if not centuries before. They wrote:<sup>231</sup>

*"There did seem to us to be an impression, probably by now hereditary, that the big industrial units in the industry are simply not interested in either the small man or his problems."*

Simultaneously, the labourer might then still be frightened to approach an overseer or manager on a sugar estate. Thus, as Moody *et al.* wrote, things were kept quiet. The relative ineffectiveness of the Trade Unions in looking after the interests of their members was obvious to the Commissioners. They found out that:

*“It is obvious that if the unions had been effective none of these complaints would have come before us...it has been suggested to us...that leaders neglect their members in order to pursue their personal ambition.”<sup>232</sup>*

Thus, not just the Labour Department, but also the Trade Union Leadership would help to keep things quiet. Meanwhile, the Commissioners “were both deeply impressed by the existence of misery and hardship among a considerable section of the labour force”, and hence, the Commission wrote:

*“On the basis of need we have no doubt that there is a substantial case for an upward revision of earning...”*

As far as small planters were concerned, there had been some improvements compared with the situation of the 1930s; various institutions were set up, e.g. The Sugar Millers and Planters’ Central Arbitration and Control Board. Nevertheless, the fundamental problems of apportionment of sugar between planters and millers were still unsolved. The Commissioners proposed a marginal increase to 68 % of the sugar to the small planters. One of the recommendations of Balogh and Benett was the setting up of a Sugar Authority, which would be taken up again in the Report by Avramovic in 1984. By the 1980s, the Mauritius Sugar Authority was set up.

## 5.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has clearly demonstrated that, just as in the 1870s, the driving force for some improvement in the living conditions and wages of the labouring classes was the struggle of the same labouring classes.

Not only did the plantocracy still look for “cheap labour of low standard”, but during the first half of the century, the Colonial State contributed to the further impoverishment of labouring classes, through a taxation system which made these same labouring classes contribute more than other social classes in terms of the proportion of their wages and salaries.

The Colonial State clearly demonstrated their support to the plantocracy, whilst it applied repressive measures against the labouring classes and their leaders. Moreover, Imperial Britain adopted a Free Trade Policy which depressed the price of sugar, causing untold suffering to its sugar-producing colonies and, in particular, to the labouring classes. Although the US, through the Jones-Costigan Act of 1934, provided support to producers in its sphere of influence (in the US itself, Cuba, Philippines, etc.), it was only in 1951, that Britain already a weakening Imperial power, introduced the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement.

Following in the footsteps of Dutch and French Colonialism, British Colonialism proceeded with slavery until 1835 and then introduce indentured labour. These two systems were born out of the needs of Colonialism and of Imperial Britain in the context of colonisation. Corresponding social and economic structures were developed: the bourgeoisie, a small minority of *ex-colonists*, owning land and other means of production at one extreme, and at other extreme, cheap abundant and efficient labour. An intermediate social class of so called ‘Coloured Population’ initially and later, an intermediate/middle class of traders, middlemen, professionals, small planters, emerged. The labouring classes and the poor were like commodities whose price (i.e. wages) were kept low; and generally, there was social exclusion. That exclusion was worse for those of the labouring classes and the poor who were not part of the mainstream Capitalist Sugar Economy. Colonialism ensured this continuity in its structures, with the formal end of slavery, and indentured labour was carried over into the twentieth century.

When there was resistance to that state of affairs, as in the 1930s and the 1940s, the Colonial State used ‘divide and rule’ tactics towards the labouring classes, in addition to its repressive policy.

On the eve of Independence, the monocrop economy still dominated the economic, social and political life of Mauritius. The repression by the Colonial State at the time of intense labour struggles would nip a certain type of leadership in the bud. Meanwhile, an alternative leadership emerged. Further, the Trade Unions were not be happy with their leadership, as highlighted by the Balogh Report.

Moreover, the continual policy of cheap labour consolidated the exclusion of those found outside the Sugar Industry, given that it had an impact on the labour market.

For the first thirty years of its life, the Cooperative Movement was heavily constrained by the need to supply canes to the Sugar Industry; whilst the Cooperative Credit Societies were certainly of great help to the small planters, the initial State help and intervention became a rather permanent feature of the Cooperative Movement. Further, with the emergence of a new intelligentsia and a new business class (middle-men, planters, traders etc.) among the Indian immigrants, the leadership of the Cooperative Movement did not develop the fundamental cooperative principles and values of cooperation. The value and belief systems of the new Capitalist System tended to predominate, posing serious threats to the Cooperative movement. The possibility of the genuine empowerment of the small planters community was quashed.

On the economic front, the economy grew from the very beginning, as part of the overall Colonial Empire, the centre of which was Europe. An extreme international specialisation within the Colonial Empire had produced a vulnerable, fragile economy.<sup>233</sup> With political independence, there was nevertheless economic dependence. The consistent policy of cheap labour, the reaping off of the wealth created during decades and centuries by the Imperial Britain, the Colonial State and the plantocracy, the resulting pressure of social problems, like unemployment and poverty, were the relevant issues.

This was the state of affairs at the eve of Independence, in spite of the massive political mobilisation on the issue of Independence.

## CHAPTER 6 POST-INDEPENDENCE MAURITIUS

### 6.0 Introduction

On the eve of Independence, Mauritius had the colonial heritage of a vulnerable, fragile economy produced by an extreme international specialisation within the British Colonial Empire.

In this last but one Chapter, our research indicates that whilst there have been major achievements on overall economic development, the share and the role of the labouring classes have not been given due consideration. The economic and social structures inherited from the past were not fundamentally challenged. Further economic strategies, which carried on with cheap labour policy, were implemented.

Labour is still considered as a commodity, and there is still a long way for it to be able to have its basic rights and dignity fully recognised.

As a result, gross income inequality, social exclusion and poverty (though on a smaller scale) prevail to this day.

### 6.1 Economic Diversification

#### 6.1.1 The Growth of Export Manufacturing

After the meagre results obtained by industrialization measures, based on import substitution, and as a result of an insightful Report by Professor E. Lim Fat, following his visit to Taiwan and Puerto Rico in November 1969, the possibility of establishing an Export Processing Zone in Mauritius was of immediate appeal to the authorities and the Business Community. The Government produced a White Paper on the 1971-1980 Development Strategy and the 1971-1975 Development Plan, which elaborated on the need to create the appropriate institutional and infrastructural conditions “for a substantial and quick breakthrough in export markets”. Starting from a very small manufacturing sector, which employed altogether an estimated 18,400 persons in 1969, the authorities envisaged an increase of 42,000 jobs in that sector by 1980. Of that number, 25,000 jobs were created in that sector. The results far surpassed all expectations. There was a large increase in jobs and a levelling of the island labour force, especially among women who left their former domestic occupations and flocked in large numbers to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the nascent Export Processing Zone.<sup>234</sup>

It is commonly assumed that investment in export manufacturing in developing countries is done almost exclusively by foreign (multinational) enterprises, but such an assumption is not substantiated, as the necessary data to support this assertion are seldom produced. There, the first question investigated in the study of the clothing export industry is. “How did Mauritius in such a short time span, 1970 to 1987, develop a thriving export manufacturing industry?” This question relates *inter alia*, to the sources of investment and technical and managerial know-how, the structure of ownership and the network of international connections. In 1989, the ownership structure of currently operating businesses was studied, since their incorporation, as well as the sources of equity and share of foreign investors. This involved a detailed study of 180 individual businesses. The information obtained through the study provided some useful insights into the sources of investment and the extent to which local entrepreneurship and capital interacted with foreign investment in the setting up and development of the Mauritius Export Processing Zone.<sup>235</sup>

According to a World Bank Report (World Bank, 1982), foreign investment played a major role in providing seed capital, and a large share of the equity capital in the MEPZ belonged to foreign investors. The contribution of foreign (multinational) companies was not confined to the provision of capital. They also provided the technical know-how through the presence of foreign technicians and/or licensing agreements and markets for the new companies established in the MEPZ.

The development of the MEPZ, however, has not been one of regular sustained growth. Between 1970 and 1997/98, and beyond, the MEPZ has gone through four distinct phases:

- i. An early phase of rapid growth between 1970 and 1976, when the number of export enterprises rose from four (in 1970) to 84 in 1976, employment increased from 640 to 17,000, and the total equity capital amounted to Rs. 105.5mn. Domestic sources provided Rs. 44.9mn or approximately 42.5 per cent of the equity. Foreign investors subscribed the balance, led by Hong Kong investors with Rs. 35.5 mn or 33 per cent of the capital.
- ii. The second phase of the development of the MEPZ covers the period 1977 to 1982, which experienced a substantial decline in the rate of growth of the sector, due to a number of factors. By the end of 1982, there were 122 enterprises operating in the MEPZ, 37 more than in 1976 and a number of closures.
- iii. The third phase, 1983 to 1987, saw a spectacular revival of export manufacturing. The number of enterprises increased from 198 in December 1984, to 408 in 1987; the value of exports increased from Rs. 2,150 million in 1984 to Rs. 6,700 mn in 1987, and employment which stood at 37,600 in December 1984, reached around 90,000 in December 1987, including an increasing number of expatriate workers. These spectacular results have made the EPZ the leading sector in the island, in terms of export earnings and employment. By 1988, the sector's net output exceeded that of the Sugar Industry.
- iv. We can note a fourth phase which began in the 1990s, characterised by a shrinkage of the clothing export sector and a decline in employment, with the closing of numerous businesses including some large foreign firms which had been operating in the MEPZ for a very long time. These firms employed numerous workers on a simple basic, Cut-Make-Trim (CMT) operations. With the changes in the international trading environment and the rise in the cost of labour, these CMT operations have left Mauritius and relocated elsewhere.

Turning now to the Mauritian enterprises operating in the MEPZ, it has been referred earlier to a large proportion of local equity capital in the MEPZ. Local investments amounted to Rs. 87.2 mn in 1970-83 and Rs. 76.1 mn in 1983-85 (in respect of enterprises covered in the Study, which were still active in December 1986/ March 1987), or 47.1 percent and 31.5 percent respectively, of the total equity investment during those two periods. The large percentage of local equity is characteristic of the MEPZ, which differs in this respect from the situation in Export Processing Zones in other countries.

In another Study,<sup>236</sup> the contribution of the Sugar Industry and the share of the main local groups in MEPZ equity was calculated. Total investment by sugar companies during the period 1970 to December 1984, in respect of operating enterprises in December 1984, is estimated at Rs. 36.9 mn or 42.9 percent of local equity capital - Rs. 86 mn and 18.9 percent of the estimated total equity capital of Rs. 195 mn. This only takes into account investment by sugar companies. It does not include investment by other firms in which sugar companies have a substantial share. If these firms are included, it is estimated that investment in MEPZ enterprises, originating directly or indirectly from the Sugar Industry, would amount to approximately 50 percent of the local equity capital.

#### 6.1.2 Tourism

The bulk of the windfall from the 1972-75 sugar boom accrued to the private sector. In the mid 1970s, as mentioned before, there were pervasive controls on exports of financial assets and taxes on the export of capital; quantitative restrictions on imports were fairly tight and there were strict regulations relating to import deposit schemes. Furthermore, no stock market existed and ratings on interest rates were set by the Bank of Mauritius, with different rates for priority and other sectors. Against this backdrop, an analysis of the individual sector trends shows that the investment boom did not relate to investment in sugar, but to investment in the nascent EPZ and more importantly to private residential constructions and residential construction for the Tourist Industry.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, there was a large increase in tourist accommodation as the hotels expanded and improved their facilities. The data show also that, based on past experience in relation to sugar, both the Government and the local entrepreneurs correctly perceived the sugar boom to be temporary. The entrepreneurs shunned investment in the sugar sector, hampered by taxes and regulations, and put their windfall savings into the EPZ and Tourism.

Moreover, Tourism developed into a major pillar of economic development in Mauritius by the early 1980s. The Mauritian Government took advantage of its tropical island appeal, sandy beaches, blue lagoons, good climate, security and absence of tropical diseases to promote Mauritius as an exclusive destination.<sup>238</sup> Mauritius has tended to promote a high echelon clientele rather than mass tourism; however, the financial crisis led to a change in its client base.<sup>239</sup>

The number of tourist arrivals, as well as the number of hotels, kept on increasing over the years. The table below gives an overview of the trend in some key statistics linked with the Tourist Industry.

Year	Number			Tourism Receipts (Rs. Mn)
	Hotels	Rooms	Tourist arrivals	
1975	34	1,499	74,597	135
1980	43	2,201	115,080	325
1985	55	2,630	148,860	845
1990	75	4,603	291,550	3,630
1995	95	5,977	422,463	7,472
2000	95	8,657	656,453	14,234
2005	99	10,497	761,063	25,704
2008	102	11,488	930,456	41,213
2009	102 <sup>1</sup>	11,456	871,356	35,693
2010	112 <sup>2</sup>	12,075	934,827	39,456
2011*			980,000*	42,500*

<sup>1</sup> Excluding seven hotels not operational because of renovation works.  
<sup>2</sup> Excluding seven hotels not operational because of renovation works.  
\* Forecast.

The number of tourist arrivals increased throughout the years ever since 1975, except in 1980, 1982 and 2009 where a fall of 10.3 %, 2.7 %, 6.4 % was respectively noted. The recent fall in 2009 is attributed to the international financial crisis which caused a global slowdown in the economic activity, which led to a drop in demand in the Tourist worldwide. This affected many people around the world and the unemployment rates peaked in several countries, especially in the US and Europe. Since most of the tourists visiting Mauritius came from European countries, the global recession affected the Tourist Industry in the year 2009. However, the Industry rapidly took off and the number of tourist arrivals during the year 2010 reached 934,827, representing an increase of 7.3% compared to 871,356 in 2009. The number of hotels was 34 in 1974, and it increased to 112 in 2010. This can certainly be attributed to the increase in the number of tourist arrivals. In order to cater for the increasing number of tourists, the room capacity increased by four-fold in 2000 reaching 8,657 compared to 1975, where the room capacity was 1499. In 2010, the room capacity increased to 12,075, which represents an increase of 39 % compared to 2000.

Tourism receipts increased drastically throughout the years from Rs. 135 million in 1975, reaching Rs. 14,234 million in 2000. Gross tourism receipts amounted to Rs. 39,456 million in 2010. Based on information on tourist arrivals and information from different stakeholders, the forecast for tourist arrival in 2011 is 980,000, which represents an increase of 4.8 % from 2010 figures.<sup>241</sup> Furthermore, according to the Bank of Mauritius, the receipts from the Tourism Industry would be approximately Rs. 42,500 million, which represents an increase of 7.7 % compared to the receipts of 2010.<sup>242</sup> This is an indeed good performance in view of existing conditions.

Tourists coming to Mauritius are mainly from European countries, with France being our main market. France has accounted for 31.6 % of tourists arrivals in 2009, followed by Reunion Island (12.0 %) and UK (11.7 %). In 2009, South Africa, Germany and Italy had a share of 8.5 %, 6.5 % and 5.9 % respectively. It should also be noted that arrivals from India represented a share of tourist arrivals that increased from 2.6 % in 2000 to 4.5 % in 2009. This can be explained by the intensive promotional campaigns that have taken place in the main cities of India.

Employment in the Tourist Industry stands at 27,161 in 2010, with restaurants, hotels and travel and tourism accounting for 2464, 20847 and 3,850 respectively. Employment in the sector has increased in 2007 and 2008 by 2.9 % and 8.3 % respectively. However, in 2009 the number of people employed fell by 6.1 % in 2009, and this can mainly be attributed to the economic crisis where hotels, tour operators, etc. were forced to keep down costs to be competitive. In 2010, employment in the sector slightly increased from 27,002 to 27,161 representing an increase of 0.6 %.

Establishments	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Restaurants	1805	2012	2251	2431	2464
Hotels	19536	20233	22314	20478	20847
Travel and Tourism	4457	4296	4188	4093	3850
Total	25798	26541	28753	27002	27161

The Tourist Industry is facing some problems regarding manpower since several cruise operators are now offering jobs to qualified personnel of the Industry. These people are leaving the local hotels and opting for jobs on cruises as the package seems more appealing. Thus, this is a matter of concern for hotels around the island. In order to retain the employees, they will certainly have to pay higher salaries and offer better working conditions.

According to the report 'Travel and Tourism Economic Impact Mauritius 2011', the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP is expected to be Rs. 46.1 bn. representing 14.4 % of total GDP. By 2021, the Industry is expected to rise by 6.5 % to Rs. 86.6 bn. representing 18.2 % of GDP, in 2011 constant prices. Direct employment in Travel and Tourism is expected to be 77,000 (13.6 % of total employment) and when including jobs indirectly supported by the Industry the figure is expected to be 168,000 (29.8 % of total employment) in 2021.

The Government has an ambitious plan to increase the number of tourist arrivals to 2 million by 2015; accordingly, a new marketing strategy is in place, exploring new markets like Russia and China.

A series of Government policies tend to restrict total or specific type of capacity.<sup>243</sup> Many luxurious hotels are available and some of them rank among the best in the world, providing an excellent service.

Several threats face the Mauritian Tourism Industry, namely the higher oil prices, the economic slowdown in European countries. The intense competition in the international Tourism Industry has become a matter of concern for policy makers and investors in this industry.

### 6.1.3 Financial Services and Information Communication Technology

On top of the three pillars of the economy, two other pillars have contributed to economic diversification: Financial Services and Information/Communication Technology (including Business Process Outsourcing)

Since 1988, offshore banking was introduced and led the way to the development of Mauritius into an international financial centre. There are more than 20,000 registered companies in the offshore sector. Among the recent developments in the sector, Mauritius has benefited from high inflow of Foreign Direct Investment in India. About 80 % to 90 % of Foreign Direct Investment into India flows through Mauritius in private equity, hedge funds and mutual funds.<sup>244</sup>

On the other hand, since 2001, the Information/ Communication Technology sector has developed at a fast rate. Much investment has gone into that sector and two ‘intelligent’ cyber towers, comparable to the best in Europe, have been set up. The intention is to transform Mauritius into a ‘cyber island’, which will attract companies from around the world to set up its operations like facilitating e-commerce and establishing call centres.

## 6.2 The Sugar Boom of 1972 and its aftermath

Mauritius is almost unique among Sub-Saharan African countries in terms of its economic performance over the last two decades. Confronted by a series of financial and economic crises, which brought the island on the verge of bankruptcy in 1979, which followed an unprecedented Sugar Boom in 1972-75, Mauritius has unequivocally undergone a successful stabilization and structural adjustment programme in the 1980s, diversified its economic and export base and embarked on a path of rapid and sustained growth in real GDP and real GDP *per capita*. Moreover, all this has been achieved in a relatively short space of time, between the late 1970s and mid 1980s. The speed and extent of adjustment imply a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness to economic stimuli which, is unusual in the Sub-Saharan African context. In 1972-75, Mauritius experienced a major (positive) trade shock due to a combination of record sugar output and boom prices. Through a fairly detailed study of the relevant data, the study by D. Greenaway and R. Lamusse<sup>245</sup> shows how a relatively short boom affected the financial and economic context of this highly-open monocrop economy and the responses of both public and private sector economic agents to this very significant externally-generated windfall. According to the methodology which was used in the work, the result of the computations show that in 1972-73 the windfall gain was worth 6-8 % of GDP (in constant 1972 prices). It peaked in 1974 at 28 % of GDP and, despite a production short-fall in 1975, owing to a cyclone, it still amounted to 19 % of GDP. This is clearly a very significant windfall. If the windfall is converted into a permanent income using a discount rate of 8 %, this being after a tax-rate of return realized by large sugar estates at that time, the windfall has a present value of 5 % of GDP. Even if other adjustments are brought in so as to refine further the calculation, whether the magnitude of the shock is calculated in current prices or present value terms, the 1972-75 sugar boom caused a major upheaval of the economy on Private Sector Savings, Private Sector Investment and the Government Budget.

The post-Independence trade policy regime in Mauritius was characterized by pervasive import control and a relatively high level of import restrictions. Nominal tariffs were relatively high, with a fairly wide dispersion and effective tariffs were even higher. A range of hidden tariffs were in place and there were relatively high export taxes on sugar. In addition, there was extensive reliance on quantitative restrictions. Besides, there was a tight control on public expenditure and overseas remittances in an attempt to reverse the increasing deficits in the public accounts and the Balance of Payments. These measures, however, were of no avail and could not ward off the 1979 fiscal crisis when, with barely two weeks of foreign exchange reserves, the Government was compelled to have a recourse to the IMF and the World Bank for emergency loans to prevent Mauritius from defaulting on its foreign trade and capital commitments. It was only with the new credits attached to the IMF Stabilisation and World Bank Structural Adjustment programmes and the implementation of the measures contained in these programmes, that the situation was brought under control.

## 6.3 The Sugar Industry - Signs of Decline - From Sugar Industry to Cane Industry

In the early 1980s, the Sugar Industry was still the leading sector of the Mauritian economy. The Sugar Industry and sugar-related by-products (spirits and molasses) accounted for about two-thirds of total commodity exports. In 1989-1991, taxes on the Sugar Industry amounted to around 6 per cent of total Government revenue and agricultural operations, predominantly the sugarcane crop and sugar manufacture, produced 22 per cent of GNP and employed 40 per cent of the labour force. Besides, the performance and profitability of the Sugar Industry had a major impact on the Mauritian economy. It was estimated at that time that if the Sugar Industry’s output declined by one-third, this would knock out 21 per cent of the goods based exchange revenue and bring a 7 per cent reduction in national income. The drop in income would be even more severe if we include secondary activities linked to the Sugar industry operations.<sup>246</sup>

In the 1982 General Elections, the Labour Party, which had managed the country since Independence, was routed and a new reformist group of politicians came to power, who were intent on bringing changes in the social and political set-up.

In the context of the ferment of ideas and desire for change, following the 1982 elections, there was a change of attitude and policy by the Government in its dealings with the Sugar Industry. In contrast to its earlier passive attitude in disputes between main stakeholders-the sugar estates, small planters and the labour force - the Government henceforth assumed a more direct role in the Sugar Industry's affairs.

In the face of a serious deterioration in the Industry's financial situation, the Government, in 1983, appointed a Commission of Inquiry to do an analysis of the financial problems of the Sugar Industry and the measures to be taken to redress the situation. There was disagreement between the Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Avramovic, and two other members, Prof. Manrakhan and Mr. Sithanen, with regard to the views and recommendations in the Chairman's Report, and Prof. Manrakhan and Mr. Sithanen submitted a dissenting report.<sup>247</sup> According to Dr. Avramovic, the Sugar Industry was in a state of "financial distress". Avramovic advocated, *inter alia*, the abolition of the sugar export duty on account of its perverse effects on the Sugar Industry. For Manrakhan and Sithanen, the fundamental problem of the Sugar Industry was not financial but one of labour relations.

The Chamber of Agriculture submitted its comments on both reports. It concurred with the findings of Avramovic about the financial plight of the Sugar Industry and deadweight of the export duty on the Industry's finances but opposed the creation of a Sugar Authority as recommended by Avramovic.

The Minister of Agriculture considered that neither of these reports could serve as a basis for the restructuring of the Sugar Industry and submitted a Policy Statement to the National Assembly on the restructuring of the Sugar Industry.

The policy statement was seen by the Government as a blue-print for the future of the Sugar Industry. The Statement identified the main issues which would determine the future of the Industry, the objectives to be assigned to the Industry, the financial parameters within which the Industry should operate in future, the Industry's ownership and management and the degree of Government control over its operations. The Policy Statement augured a radical change in the attitude of the Government towards the Sugar Industry. With the publication of the Policy Statement, Government asserted its right to participate in the formulation of measures with regard to the Industry's future. The Government would, henceforth, act as a "privileged partner" in the management of the Sugar Industry's affairs.

The concretization of the changes in the Government policy with regard to the Sugar Industry was embodied in the 1985-1990 Action Plan, published by the Sugar Authority in February 1985.<sup>248</sup> The Policy Statement and Action Plan contained a number of recommendations which would form the basis of future far-reaching changes in the operation of the Sugar Industry. These changes included the closure of several factories, a "thorough study" on the centralization and modernization of sugar factories, the separation of milling and planting activities and a wider share ownership of the Industry to include participation by Government, the planters and workers. Looking back on the outcome of these recommendations, we can argue that the insight shown by those involved in planning the future of the Sugar Industry had a determinant influence over the evolution of the Sugar Industry during the following two decades.

#### The Sugar Industry at a crossroad

In November 1991, the Chamber of Agriculture published a 100-page report on the Sugar Industry based on a substantial appraisal of the current situation of the Industry and future prospects. The Report addressed a number of problems relating to the prospect of reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the GATT trade negotiations, stagnation or decreasing revenue, the declining productivity of labour increasing costs, mechanization of field operations and the milling sector. A Joint Public and Private Sector Committee studied the Report and made recommendations to the Government. These recommendations contained measures aimed at improving factory efficiency and agricultural production and yields through a rebate of export duty in specific areas.

Although these findings and recommendations did not contain anything fundamentally new and striking, they reaffirmed the urgency of a solution to the Industry's problems and the direct involvement of the Government in the Sugar Industry's affairs. It was also an acknowledgement by all the parties concerned that every major policy-decision pertaining to the Sugar Industry was a matter of national importance.

#### 1994: An Eventful Year

1994 was an eventful year for the Mauritian agricultural sector and the Sugar Industry. With regard to the Sugar Industry there was a major shift in Government policy. In the 1994 Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance announced a number of far-reaching measures. According to the Chamber of Agriculture in its Annual Report "the contentious and long running issue of the export duty on sugar had now been effectively laid to rest bringing in its wake new relationship between the government and the sugar industry".<sup>249</sup>

In June 1994, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Government, the Mauritian Sugar Producers' Association (MSPA) and the Rose-Belle Sugar Estate which belongs to the Government and which is not a member of MSPA. In its Annual Report, the Chamber of Agriculture referred to "new spirit which now prevails between the government and the sugar industry in the face of a common threats and challenges". Another notable event was a Package Deal between the MSPA and six (Trade) Unions over pay and working conditions, extending from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1994 to 31 December 1997, which was hailed by the Sugar Industry as a breakthrough in industrial relations. In the field of energy generation from *bagasse*, another major development was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the CEB and the Union St Aubin Sugar Estate.

#### The Loss of Cane Land

The closure of several factories since 1990 and the acceleration of the process of centralization of milling operations have brought a substantial reduction in the size of the cane acreage in Mauritius. In 1990, there were 19 sugar factories operating in Mauritius. By 2007, 11 factories had ceased to operate and the number of factories was down to 8. The efficiency of a sugar factory is a vital element in the outcome of the cane sugar crop. The closure of several factories over the last two decades has accelerated the shrinkage of the cane acreage in the island. Between 1990 and 2007, the acreage under cane has been reduced by 13,350 hectares (33034.1 *arpents*).<sup>250</sup>

The loss of cane land has been particularly high among small planters. They cultivate tiny plots of less than one *arpent* and their holdings are often fragmented into minuscule and scattered parcels which increase the cost of cultivation. Besides, on account of the fairly frequent occurrence of adverse climatic conditions and lack of good husbandry, their yields have deteriorated over the years and many small planters are cultivating sub-marginal plots on which the yield is only a fraction of that obtained by sugar estates and large planters. Due to the absence of adequate records, their title of ownership is also often problematic. Moreover, much of the land is not irrigated or rocky. With the meagre yields which they obtain in return for all the exertion and resources which they devote to cultivating their plots, small planters are particularly prone to be attracted by the alluring opportunities and high prices offered by promoters in the tourism industry and the lucrative property market.

#### Clouds on the Sugar Horizon<sup>251</sup>

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, developments in the world sugar market conveyed indications of future drastic changes in the European Union (EU) Sugar Policy. There were much apprehension and alarm among the Mauritian authorities and the Sugar Industry at the news of impending major changes in the EU sugar regime.

In fact, since 1975, Mauritius has benefited from the EU sugar regime. Compared to other African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) countries, the small island economy benefited from the biggest annual sugar quota of 507,000 tonnes (representing 37 per cent) under the ACP-EU Sugar Protocol.<sup>252</sup> It enjoyed the high-price EU market where the guaranteed price of sugar was almost three times that of the world market price. Net sugar revenues were estimated at €4 billion over the last thirty years. The stability and predictability procured by the sugar protocol provided the necessary impetus for economic growth. Revenues from sugar were used to transform the economy from a

mono-crop stage to a five-pillar-based economy, with manufacturing, tourism, sugar, financial services and information and communication technology sectors. However, with the EU price reduction of 5 per cent in 2006 and a total of 36 per cent in 2009, the overall economic weight of the sector has fallen<sup>253</sup> (Rojid *et al.*, 2009). The sugar sector's contribution to GDP is now comparatively small, around 2.2 per cent of GDP in 2009. The 36 per cent price reduction meant considerable losses to the Sugar Industries of the 18 African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Sugar Protocol Signatory States (SPSS), as well as to their fragile socio-economic fabric which depended a lot on the sugar sector. Accordingly, measures had to be designed and funds had to be found to ensure adaptation. It is in this context that Accompanying Measures must be viewed as support to the ACP countries, details of which are given in section 6.5.

Forewarned about the threat of a sharp cut in the EU price for ACP sugar exports, the Mauritian Government and the representatives of the Sugar Industry took some fundamental measures to adapt to the new situation. In April 2006, the Government, after consultation with the Sugar Industry and with the approval of the European Commission, published the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy (MAAS) and the Action Plan 2006 - 2010. The Adaptation Strategy aims at an extensive reform of the sugar sector with the following main objectives: the re-engineering of the Sugar Industry to a sugar cane cluster, the establishment of a competitive and sustainable sugar sector, the fulfillment of Mauritius trade commitments. The MAAS emphasizes the multi-functional role of the Sugar Industry and its impact on other sectors of the Mauritian economy. Other measures were promulgated by the Government which aims at safeguarding the future viability of the Sugar Industry:

- a. Ensuring the cost competitiveness of the milling sector through mill centralization;
- b. The right sizing of the labour force and the creation of a more flexible workforce;
- c. The mechanization of field operations to improve the cost competitiveness of field work and increase sugar cane yields.

Accordingly, a certain number of measures were incorporated in the sugar reform in December 2007, after a deal was concluded between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA). The measures referred to the transfer of some 2000 A (*arpents*) by the MSPA membership to Government for agricultural and social housing purposes over the duration of the deal; a package for *métayers*; the enhancement of equity participation by employees and small and medium planters in the various components of the sugar cane cluster; an independent study on the Independent Power Producers (IPPs); the maintenance of the sugar apportionment ratio for the ten-year duration of the deal; the liberalisation of the price of imported sugar sold on the local market so as to eliminate losses incurred on the sale of imported sugar; and the inclusion of interest charges in the costs that could be recouped in respect of the VRS, the ERS and the Blue Print.

The MAAS is made up of projects and articulated along components and subcomponents destined to respond to the new market environment and address the constraints of the Sugar Industry. The first element resides in cost reduction. This is achieved *via* the closure of seven out of the existing eleven factories whereby three of the remaining four would each produce more than 100,000 tonnes of sugar; the right-sizing of human resources in production entities to reduce the level of labour costs, both in absolute and relative terms; recourse to seasonal labour; the substantial reduction of overhead costs at operational, administrative and institutional levels; the reduction of the level of indebtedness of sugar producers and the derivation of full benefits from economies of scale at all levels, namely corporate sector and small and medium planters. Secondly, another aspect rests on generating additional revenue which is achievable through the sales of a higher proportion of value-added direct consumption sugars that is moving from the current 15 per cent of total sales to 50 per cent or more through a bold, innovative and aggressive marketing strategy; the elimination of the loss incurred by producers on sugar sold on the domestic market; the reduction of the cost of the institutions servicing the Sugar Industry by 50 per cent; the rise in sugar output through the cultivation of high-sucrose cane varieties and higher earnings secured through the optimization of by-products.

In effect, the third aspect of the MAAS focuses on the optimal use of by-products through firstly an increase in electricity production from *bagasses* from 300 to 600 GWh and total electricity production from *bagasse*/coal from 750 GWh to 1700 GWh and also the production of 30 M litres of ethanol from molasses so as to allow a 20/80 ethanol/gasoline blend. Since there is a need to

reduce our dependence on fossil fuel, essentially with rising oil prices, the ethanol/gasoline mix and the production of ethanol from cane juice may be beneficial. Fourthly, the need to foster research to obtain and commercially use higher-fibre cane and even fuel canes. The fifth aspect of the MAAS discusses the 'pro-poor dimension'. The issues deal with the provision of attractive cash and in kind compensation for employees accepting the voluntary termination of their contract of employment in the context of factory closures or rightsizing of factory entities. The package includes the possibility to benefit from early entitlements to the retirement pension; the provision of re-skilling opportunities and loan opportunities to these employees. In addition, significant incentives and assistance to small planters are made available to enable them to regroup into larger units and thereby increase their yields and lower their costs of production. Support is also given to planters operating in economically and environmentally-difficult areas. The provision of a decent compensation package to employees working in service providing institutions that will be right sized is also made available. Employees having voluntarily terminated their contract of employment can also be part of the empowerment and welfare schemes being set up by Government.

The seventh aspect relates to additional measures implemented to address the problems posed by the current indebtedness of sugar factories. The last element of the MAAS is to create synergies among the different stakeholders and foster cane cultivation agreements between millers and planters to ensure an adequate supply of canes to the former and remove the sugar loss constraints faced by the latter. This will enhance participation in equity. The eight specific measures of the strategy are essentially meant to regroup small planters, sustain difficult areas under sugarcane cultivation, move out of sugar cane, centralisation, right-sizing of the labour force, increase contribution to national electricity production, shift to ethanol production and optimise the use of sugarcane lands. Among these eight measures, we will focus on the 'pro-poor dimension' aspect of the MAAS which is related to the right sizing of the labour force *via* the implementation of the VRS, which in reality has given way to a completely different picture.

The cancellation of the Sugar Protocol in 2009 and the sharp 36% reduction in the EU prices between 2006 and 2009 have compelled an urgent realignment of production costs in the Sugar Industry with the price fixed by the EU. The implementation of the measures prescribed by the MAAS and the Action Plan has led to a large retrenchment of the Sugar Industry labour force. For this purpose, the Government and the Sugar Industry finally agreed on a set of conditions and a compensatory package for the loss of employment in order to achieve the required reduction in the labour force whilst preserving industrial peace. This led to the establishment of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS). The VRS is in line with the right-sizing of the labour force and a reduction in the labour costs in the Sugar Industry. It offers a package to all employees of the Sugar Industry, wishing for an early retirement. Priority is given to those aged 50 and above. The package includes compensation in terms of cash payment, as well as land entitlement (about 300m<sup>2</sup>), exemption from income tax in respect of the cash and land compensation payable and housing loans at preferential rates. To date, around 15,000 people have benefited from the scheme.

Moreover, a major shortcoming of MAAS has been the rather disturbing overlooking of the issue of water rights; sugar factories used to have special water rights, but with their closure, there was the need to look into the issue, given especially the prevailing problem of accessibility to water. Further, the implementation of MAAS has had some significant problems. In the case of *métayers*, some of them from the South were unhappy that the case of possible buying of their land was not given sufficient consideration by the authorities. As far as labourers were concerned, a rather large number of those who have taken the Voluntary Retirement Scheme II were still not given their plots of land of seven perches by 2011. There are claims that the Government Departments concerned are taking much time to process the dossier.

#### 6.4 The Sugar Sector at a Glance

In 2003, exports to the EU and the US under preferential arrangements amounted to some 540,000 tonnes, whereas some 8,000 tonnes of special sugars were sold to 23 world market destinations. Domestic consumption of sugar was about 40,000 tonnes per year. The bulk of the exports were under the Sugar Protocol with 507,000 tonnes and some 20,000 tonnes under the Special

Preferential Sugar Agreement, while sales to the US under the Global Import Quota represent some 12,000 tonnes. The share of sugar production in the Mauritian economy has, over the years and in relative terms, dwindled to about 3.5 per cent of the GDP in 2003 (from 25 per cent in the 1970s). Sugar production represented about 19 per cent of foreign exchange earnings. However, the high prices offered by the EU sugar regime were unsustainable in the long term. In June 2005, the European Commission published legislative proposals to reform the Common Market Organisation for Sugar, which call for severe reductions in EU sugar prices and an end to the current system of national quotas (OECD, 2004).

The reforms impacted severely on ACP sugar supplying states, including Mauritius, and inevitably lead to the destruction of century - old traditions of sugar production with devastating socio-economic consequences. Under the new EU sugar regime, which lasts from 1 July 2006 to 30 September 2015, the EU reference price for both raw and white sugars encountered a staged cut up to 36 per cent by October 2009. The reform has led to the closure of most sugar factories and to date, only 4 sugar factories are operating on the island. The economic and social consequences are thus considerable. As the biggest quota holder under the Sugar Protocol, Mauritius is the most affected country. Proceeds from the export of sugar amounted to some €225 million per year on average, which helped Mauritius to meet a very high proportion of its food import bill. Between 1975 and 2000, the cumulative benefits to the country from *quasi*-transfers from European consumers amounted to about €2.6 billion, or 6.1 per cent of GDP. Mauritius will lose up to €895 million during the nine years of the implementation of the new sugar regime and suffers from a direct permanent loss of €95 million annually. The reduction in prices in the EU implies a shortfall in export earnings of €782 million over the period 2006-2015. The effective loss to the economy is, in fact, much higher when the social and environmental multiplier effects of the Sugar Industry are accounted for.

In 2009, the sugar sector earnings amount to Rs 8,490 million and the number of people employed in the sector is around 31,827. Employment in the sugar sector as a share of total employment is only 6.1 per cent (see Table 29). Sugar cane production has also been falling over the years from around 4.8 million tonnes in 2006 to 4.4 million tonnes in 2010. In fact, the production of sugar cane went down by 6.5 per cent from 4,667,234 tonnes in 2009 to 4,365,852 tonnes in 2010. This is mostly explained by a reduction of 2.7 per cent in the area harvested from 60,380 hectares (149,440.5 *arpents*) in 2009 to 58,755 hectares (145,418.6 *arpents*) in 2010 and a drop of 4.0 per cent in the yield of sugar cane per hectare from 77.3 tonnes to 74.3 tonnes. The production of sugar, consequently, went down by 3.2 per cent from 467,234 tonnes in 2009 to 452,473 tonnes in 2010. Compared to 10.02 per cent in 2009, the average extraction rate was 10.37 per cent in 2010, representing an increase of 3.5 per cent.

Table 29 Sugar Sector at a Glance

	2006	2009
GDP <i>per capita</i> PPP (US\$)	10,443	12,261
Sugar sector as % of GDP	3.7	2.2
Sugar sector contribution to GDP (Rs. mn)	6.723	5.353
Sugar sector earning (Rs. mn)	10,495	8,490
No. of employed in the sugar sector	41,355 <sup>e</sup>	31,827
Employment in the sugar sector as % of the total employment	8.2 <sup>e</sup>	6.1
No. of small planters* (as registered with SIFB)	28,353	24,556
No. of people in the sugar sector being trained and/or receive severance payments**	0	7,458
People in the sugar sector being trained and/or receiving severance payments as % of sugar sector employment	0	23.4
Area cultivated (ha)	70,801	64,000 <sup>P</sup>
Area harvested (ha)	66,732	60,503
Cane production (mn t)	4.749	4.667
Cane yield (t/ha)	71.2	77.1
Sugar production ('000 t)	505	467
Sugar yield (t/ha)	7.57	7.72
Special sugar production ('000 t)	83.1	90
Sugar production cost (raw value, bulk, ex-factory, €/t)	360***	395***

Source: Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Mauritius.

\*\*\* Valid only for the sugar corporate sector (i.e. excluding small and medium planters).

<sup>e</sup> Estimated and based on 2004 data; <sup>P</sup> provisional.

A more detailed picture of sugarcane production and cane yield by ownership can be seen in Table 30. We note that cane yield, as well as production of sugar cane, have declined significantly for *métayers* from 2009 to 2010, accounting for around 13 per cent and 12.4 per cent, respectively. A similar picture is depicted for estates in terms of cane production and also harvested areas.

Table 30 Production by Ownership: 2009 and 2010

Ownership	2009 <sup>1</sup>			2010 <sup>2</sup>		
	Area Harvested (Hectares)	Cane Produced (tonnes)	Yield	Area Harvested (Hectares)	Cane Produced (tonnes)	Yield
Estate	29,500	2,527,270	85.67	28,833	2,366,594	82.08
<i>Métayers</i>	807	40,038	49.61	813	35,062	43.13
Planters	30,073	2,099,926	69.83	29,110	1,964,196	67.47
Total	60,380	4,667,234	77.30	58,755	4,365,852	74.31

Source: CSO, Mauritius; <sup>1</sup> Provisional; <sup>2</sup> Revised

## 6.5 The Mid-Term Review of the MAAS

With the changing global environment and the EU sugar reforms, the Mauritian Government devised the MAAS in the form of a ten-year, 2006-2015, Action Plan.<sup>254</sup> The objective of the MAAS was to ensure the commercial viability and sustainability of the sugar sector for it to continue fulfilling its multi-functional role in the Mauritian economy. This objective could only be met through five major broad initiatives. Firstly, the transformation of the Sugar Industry into a sugar cane cluster, which means that the Industry moves from an essentially raw sugar producer to a situation where it produces several types of sugar that is raw, special, industrial and white; electricity from *bagasse*/coal using state of the art technology and ethanol using molasses. Secondly, the establishment of a competitive, viable and sustainable sector. Thirdly, the fulfilment of the trade commitments of the country. Fourthly, the reduction of the dependency on the import of fossil fuels generally and on oil in particular. Fifthly, the continuation of the multifunctional role of sugar and the support to national environment and social objectives.

As per the MAAS, measures had to be designed and funds found to ensure adaptation. It is in this context that Accompanying Measures must be viewed as support to the ACP countries. The EU allocated € 40 M for 2006 as an interim measure for ACP States and then € 1244 M as Accompanying Measures for the period 2007-2013, the allocation for Mauritius for the period 2007-2010 is some € 128 M. The latter figure is equivalent to 19% of the total for the 2007-2010 time-span. Eligibility for Accompanying Measures was conditional upon the submission of a Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy which was done in April 2006. As from that date, Mauritius has had an excellent performance in terms of the fulfilment of the conditions stemming from the indicators and the near totality of funds has been disbursed.<sup>255</sup> It is understood that Mauritius's performance is among the best among the ACP, if not the best. Inadequate performance leads to loss of funds which are subsequently reallocated to performing countries. Such a performance reflects positively on the relations of Mauritius with other lenders who have, over the past few years, decided to coordinate their action in respect of borrowing countries.

However, the market environment has changed significantly from the time the MAAS was envisioned. In 2006, in spite of several signals from the EU and the WTO, the complete phasing out of the Sugar Protocol (SP) and, in particular, of its triple guarantees of price, access and duration was neither to the fore, nor was it raised in the ongoing negotiations between the ACP and the EU in Brussels. Accordingly, this element was not factored in the MAAS.

Whilst the MAAS anticipated the major price decrease, it did not envision the phasing out of the quantity and duration guarantees. With the phasing out of the Sugar Protocol (SP), the Sugar Sector will have to operate in a fiercer market environment, with the following new features: There are no price, quantity and duration guarantees in contrast to those which existed under the Sugar Protocol and instead, there is a reference price which is set to determine future market price. Further, in the new sugar arrangements, Least Developed Countries (LDC) has precedence over the non-LDC ACP countries. Third, the "*double-trigger*" volume safeguards introduced in the Interim EPA arrangements renders the intra-region, intra non-LDC ACP and non-LDC ACP/LDC competition a fiercer one. With the erosion of the guarantee of individual country access, Mauritius has to safeguard a regional non-LDC quota, together with Zimbabwe, and, at the same time, protect its own individual access quantity against an ambitious Zimbabwe.

With fierce competition, there is a need to improve export performance, and export performance is conditional upon production, and this brings to the fore the need to expand production wherever there is scope and to limit production loss wherever possible.

The new market, set up in the EU, and the Long-Term Partnership Agreement (LTPA) with Sudzucker, open a vast array of opportunities for value addition in the Sugar Industry, now and in later years. One such item is branding which is expected to generate substantial additional revenue. However, branding and the acceptance of brands take time, and efforts are expected to materialise as from 2014/15 onwards. The LTPA implied a sea change in the production pattern, having to shift from the export of raw sugar as a commodity to that of white sugar a direct consumption product having to strictly comply with stringent food norms. In this regard, two refineries have been constructed and will operate fully as from 2010/11. The MAAS considered that

only 50% of sugars would be marketed as value added ones; in fact, 100% of exports would be in the form of value-added sugars.

As per the Mid-Term Review of the MAAS, in terms of production, the 520 000 t. of sugar envisioned as an average production in the MAAS appear to be unattainable. In fact, an average production of 450 000 t. over the next five years seems more realistic. It is noted that the first crop estimate, for the 2010 crop stands at 450 000 t. The figure of 450 000 t. takes into account, firstly, a climatic regime more akin to the 2006 -2009 period; secondly, the movement of land away from agriculture, for example the 2000 *arpents* under the 5 December 2007 deal, infrastructural needs of the country and the 920 hectares (2276.5 *arpents*) of the Highlands Project; thirdly, the removal of 1500 hectares (3,711.7 *arpents*) of land found in Irrigation zones; fourthly, land abandonment by small planters; and fifthly, a moderate derocking/regrouping scheme. It was suggested that an aggressive plan at the level of the small and medium planter sector would undoubtedly result in a higher average production closer to 480 000 t. The shift from 520 000 t. to 450 000 t. means a drop of 13.5%. A production of 480 000 t. means a lesser drop that is 7.7%.

Small and medium planters currently account for some 25% of total acreage under cane, some 18,000 hectares (44,540.3 *arpents*). According to the medium-term review, the production from the small and medium planter sector is essential for five key reasons. Firstly, the increase in production would enable the country to ship the supplies agreed upon at the ESA level, otherwise, Mauritius would be underperforming with all the attendant consequences. Second, enhanced production, coupled with economies of scale, would ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the small and medium planter sector. Further, enhanced cane supply would impact positively on the milling sector and other sugar/cane based downstream sectors, at a time when equity participation by employees and small and medium planters is being stepped up. Fourth, improved viability impacts positively on the 'pro-poor dimension' which is furthered given the participation of SMEs in the Field Operations Regrouping and Irrigation Project and lastly, land under cane, as opposed to abandoned land, affords better protection and preservation of the environment and fits well in the *Maurice Ile Durable* project and complies with the environment concerns of the EU. The extent to which all these objectives have been met needs to be evaluated.

## 6.6 The Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)

### 6.6.1 Historical Background

In 1993 and 1994, with the closure of sugar factories St. Antoine and The Mount, the Government and the Sugar Industry agreed to provide for a compensation for the employees in cash and kind, i.e. a plot of land for each employee.

Thereupon, in 1997, Government came up with a Blue-print on centralisation of sugar milling operations in Mauritius. One of the main features was the recommendation that employees affected by a factory closure would be offered compensation in cash and in kind, if they accepted to voluntarily terminate their contract of employment. The cash compensation was equivalent to 2.5 months per year of service and in-kind compensation in the form of a plot of land of an extent ranging from 540 to 720 square metres, with all infrastructural works. Moreover, the children of the employees are entitled to scholarships.

In 2001, this principle of compensation was extended to the growing activities of the Sugar Industry and the VRS was introduced. Two categories of workers were defined, those having more than a certain age and the rest. The offer was compulsorily made to those having more than a certain age. For the other employees, the employer has the liberty to choose to whom he makes the offer of a VRS but the decision to accept or reject the offer rests solely with the employee. This is the Early Retirement Scheme. Moreover, the older category was entitled to higher cash compensation, two months' compensation per year of service, plus the possibility to draw an early pension, as compared to 1.25 months on average for the others. The cash and in-kind compensation were to ensure the financial security of the planters. The provision of land is also highly valuable, providing a means to grow subsistence crops and/or to build a house, whilst at the same time it is an asset that can be handed down to their heirs. Depending on the category and the age of a VRS employee, he/she secures 4 to 6 times more compensation/value (value of land) than an employee

in any other sector who is paid the severance allowance. Around 8,000 employees accepted the VRS I.

Gradually, the intent has been to encourage the younger employees to accept the VRS. In this context, the VRS II was introduced in 2007. It was an improvement on the 2001 VRS in three aspects, namely the lowering of the cut-off age for entitlement to the highest level of compensation per year of service; the increase of the compensation package to younger workers; and the introduction of a re-skilling scheme. The age limit to benefit from a '2 months per year of service' compensation was brought from 50 years for women and 55 years for men to 45 and 50 years respectively. The package for the younger employees has been increased from an average of 1.25 months per year of service to 1.5 months (see Table 31). Employees who accept the VRS are entitled to the early receipt of the contributory retirement pension but at an actuarially calculated reduced rate. Thus, a person aged 50 would receive 60 per cent of his/her retirement pension.

Table 31 VRS I and VRS II Packages

Category of employees	Age (years or more)		Cash Compensation (months/year of service)	
	VRS I	VRS II	VRS I	VRS II
Female agricultural worker	50	45	2.0	2.0
Male agricultural or non-agricultural worker	55	50	2.0	2.0
All other cases including staff				
First 5 years of service			1.50	1.50
Next 10 years of service			1.25	1.50
Next 10 years of service			1.00	1.50
Remainder of service			0.75	1.50

(Source: Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy, 2006-2015.)

The effects of the reduced pension are more pronounced in the case of women for three reasons, namely their basic salary is lower than for men on account of the wage packages and remuneration orders prevailing in the Sugar Industry. Also, they retire younger, at 45 or 50 years, as opposed to 50 or 55 years for men and the actuarial factors used to compute retirement pension are lower. Lastly, they are often widows or are the only bread earner in cases where the husband is unable to work.<sup>256</sup> To provide support to women affected by the VRS, an amount of Rs 800 million<sup>257</sup> was included in the Action Plan 2006-2015 for adaptation and empowerment. These funds would go to safety nets, possibly in a revamped Social Aid Program. However, this specific project was not implemented. There is, in addition, an adaptation and Empowerment Policy to ensure that those employees who lose their jobs can be retrained with a view to encouraging them to move to other sectors or start small businesses. The re-skilling is done prior to an employee leaving in the context of the VRS II. So far, some 6,000 employees have been involved in VRS II.

VRS II is not financially attractive to the sugar estates in the short term but helps estates to mechanise field operations, which will not be possible, if the vast majority of workers remain as permanent employees, and to reduce labour costs in the long run. VRS II concerns around 6,000 agricultural and non-agricultural workers and many of these workers are replaced with workers employed on a seasonal basis in the short term. Over time, however, it is expected that the number of seasonal employees will be reduced. The cost of the new VRS amounted to more than Rs 3.6 billion, with an internal rate of return of 5 per cent. Cash compensation is paid in year one, while infrastructure costs and other social costs are incurred in years 2 and 3. Since higher number of employees accepted the VRS and the cost of infrastructure in respect of land given to the employees has gone up, the total costs of the VRS II has been revised upward from € 47 to € 97 million. The costs of VRS II amount to 14.4 per cent of total costs involved in the restructuring of the Sugar Industry. The cost of the VRS forms part of the accompanying EU measures and is financed both by the EU and also sugar cane producers/private sector.

26 sugarcane growing companies applied for the VRS 2 and the applications of all these companies have been processed and the payment of cash compensation and overseas leave due has been completed. They included 19 MSPA members, 4 members of the Cane Growers Association; the

SLDC, Rose-Belle SE and the SIT. In late 2008, Cie Sucrière de St. Antoine Ltée applied for the VRS 2 and payment of cash compensation was effected in December 2008. As at January 2009, 6,628 employees have opted for the VRS 2 and a total amount of Rs. 3.1 billion has been paid as cash compensation. If ERS, La Baraque, Belle Vue, Medine and FUEL, and Blue Print, St. Felix, Mon Trésor, Riche-en-Eau and Mon Désert Alma, employees are included, some 7,400 employees would be concerned with cash compensation representing some Rs. 3.74 billion<sup>258</sup>. Land to be converted would amount to 350 hectares (866.1 *arpents*). In May 2010, there were 78 sites which are to be given to employees having accepted the VRS 2, the ERS and the Blue print for factory closure. Ultimately, some 385 hectares would be needed. Of these 385 hectares (952.7 *arpents*), some 300 hectares (742.4 *arpents*) would be transferred to the employees after deducting roads, green spaces etc and at a market value of Rs. 13.5 M per hectare (2.475 *arpents*), some Rs. 4.05 billion of value would be transferred to the employees. The successful implementation of the VRS and land compensation is to be completed by 2012.

## 6.6.2 Assessing the Livelihood of the VRS 2 Beneficiaries

### 6.6.2.1 Data and Sampling Technique

This part of the Study assesses the livelihood of the VRS beneficiaries after the sugar reforms. We seek to understand how the changing productive and labour market structures, brought about by the EU sugar regime, affect the family and community relations of the VRS beneficiaries.

The focus was primarily on VRS II beneficiaries for the simple reason that sugarcane workers who benefited from VRS I in 2001 have now reached the age of 60 or more and are within their normal retirement period. Beneficiaries of VRS II are middle-aged workers who benefited from the scheme in 2007 and 2008. Our sample includes beneficiaries from various regions of the country and from different sugar estates.

The sample was designed in such a way as to allow for age, gender, length of service, occupation and remaining life-hood span of the individuals. The stratified sample is obtained by independently selecting a separate sub-sample from each population *stratum*. The population is divided into different groups based on characteristics such as gender, age, occupation and location of the respondent. To determine the sample size, three criteria are specified namely the level of precision, the level of confidence or risk, and the degree of variability in the attributes being measured.<sup>259</sup>

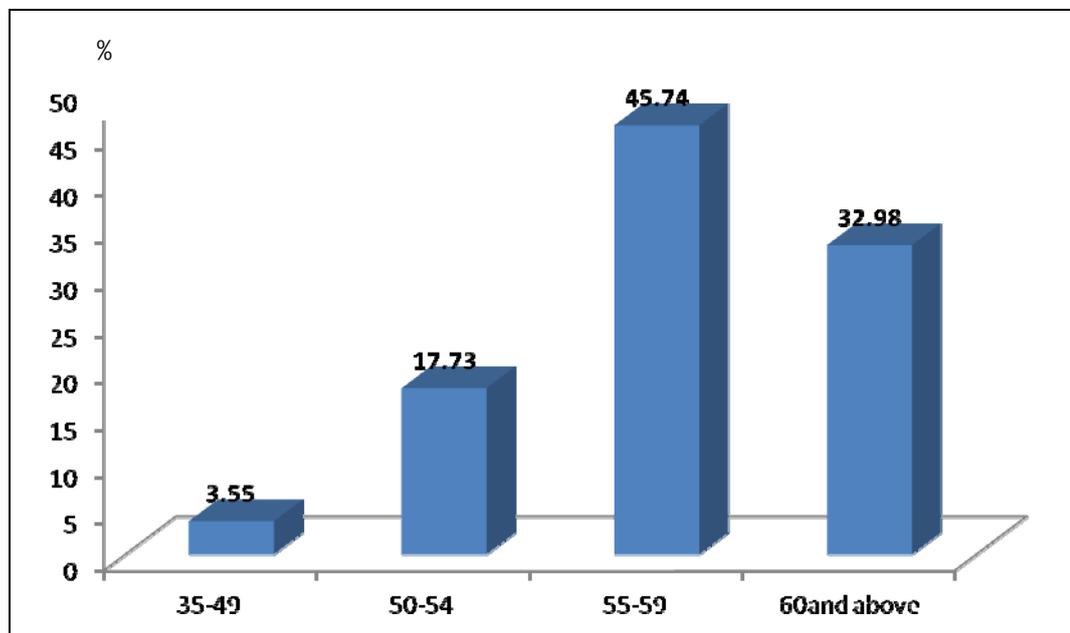
Assume that we do not know the variability in the proportion of VRS beneficiaries; therefore, assume *proportion* = 0.5 (maximum variability). Furthermore, suppose we desire a 90 per cent confidence level and  $e = \pm 5$  per cent is the level of precision. The resulting sample size is then 272. We use 5 per cent for the level of precision since it was expensive, time consuming and often impractical to visit the VRS beneficiaries. Most of them live in the rural regions and near the sugar estates. Long-distance travelling, as well as difficulties in looking for the VRS beneficiaries, increased the cost of the survey. In fact, our data set thus covers 283 sugar-cane workers, which is representative of the total population of VRS II beneficiaries.

A questionnaire was designed to assess the livelihood of the VRS II beneficiaries before and after the reforms. The survey instrument was divided into different sections. The first section concentrates on the general profile of the respondent, including his/her age group, sex, region where he/she lives, his/her family size, number of dependent children and family support available, as well as the profile of the respondent's children and parents. The second section covers the last occupation of the respondent in the Sugar Industry and the third section includes their present activity or occupation and their daily/ monthly expenses, as well as the amount and use of compensation and land which they obtained together with training received in different fields. The fourth section analyses the social and psychological dimension of the Scheme by analyzing the community life of the VRS beneficiaries. Lastly, they were asked to give some general comments on the Sugar Industry, lifestyle of workers and the VRS package in the face of the EU sugar reforms.

6.6.2.2 Profile of VRS Beneficiaries

From Figure 6.1 below, we note that the majority of the VRS II beneficiaries were between 55 and 59 years old, 45.7 per cent of our respondents were within that age group. 17.7 per cent were between 50 and 54 years, while 3.6 per cent was within the age bracket of 35 to 49 years. Further, 33 per cent of the beneficiaries are now 60 and above.

Figure 6.1: Age Profile of Respondents

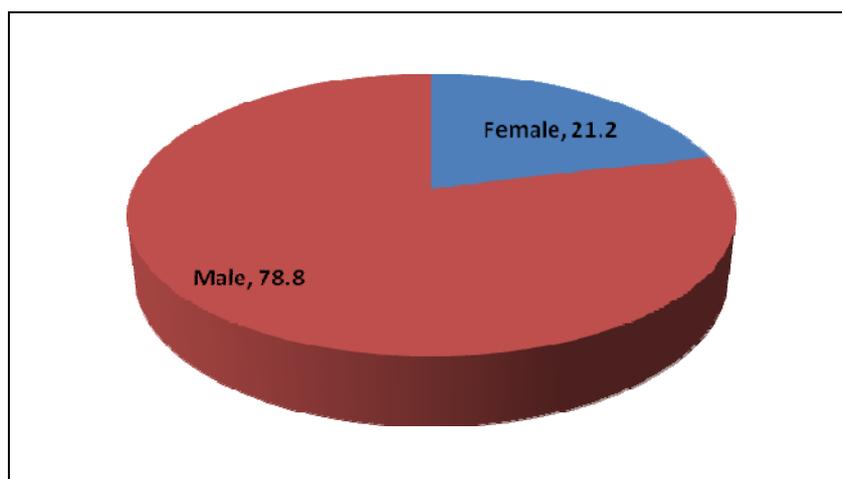


A breakdown by gender reveals that 10 per cent of the female VRS beneficiaries are below 50 years, while male beneficiaries below 50 years represent only 1.8 per cent of our sample (see Table 32). In fact this confirms that under VRS II, women retire younger 45 or 50 years as opposed to 50 or 55 years for men.

Age Group	Female (%)	Male (%)
<50	10.0	1.8
50-55	33.3	22.1
56-60	45.0	47.7
>60	11.7	28.4

In addition, from Figure 6.2, male respondents form 78.8 per cent of our sample and around 21 per cent are women.

Figure 6.2: VRS Respondents by Gender



We also observe that 87 per cent of the VRS beneficiaries are married and 6 per cent are widowed. From a gender perspective, 57 per cent of the female beneficiaries are married while 10 per cent are single and 20 per cent are widowed. 8 per cent are divorced while 5 per cent are separated.

With respect to their family size, we observe that most of the VRS beneficiaries (around 37.5 per cent) have 1 to 3 family members. For the others, around 25 per cent have a household size of four, whilst 16 per cent and 7 per cent have respectively 5 and 6 family members in all. Around 5 per cent have a household size of 7 people. In addition, 48 per cent of the respondents have 1 to 2 dependent family members and around 20 per cent and 10 per cent have 3 and 4 dependents, respectively. This can be shown by the following table.

Household Size	Per cent (%)	Dependent Family Members	Percent (%)
1	2.5	0	8.1
2	12.4	1	25.4
3	22.6	2	22.6
4	25.1	3	20.5
5	16.3	4	9.9
6	7.4	5	1.1
7	4.9	6	1.1
8	3.2	>7	1.2
>8	5.8		

From Figure 6.3 below, we note that 81 per cent of the beneficiaries attended school and they were also asked the level of education which they have attained. This is shown in Table 34 where we observe a high per centage (48 per cent) have passed C.P.E. and completed education.

Figure 6.3: Educational Background of the VRS Beneficiaries

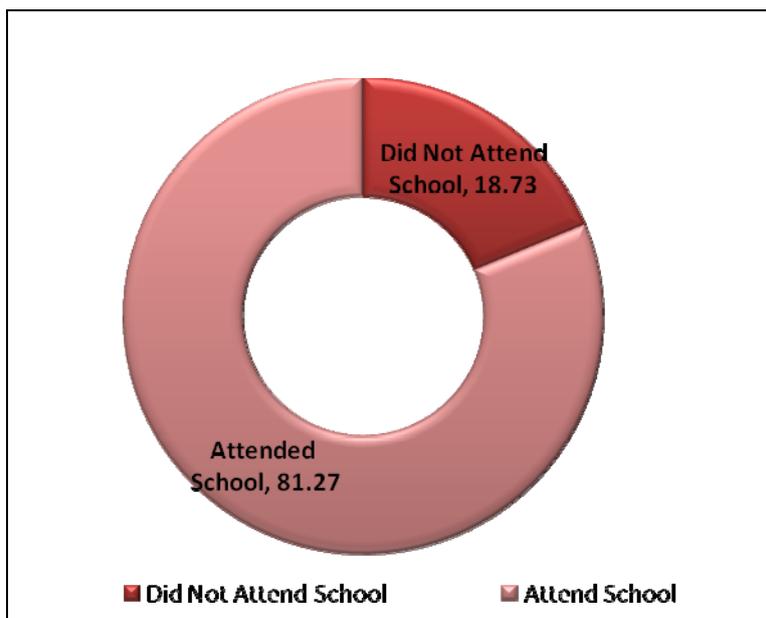
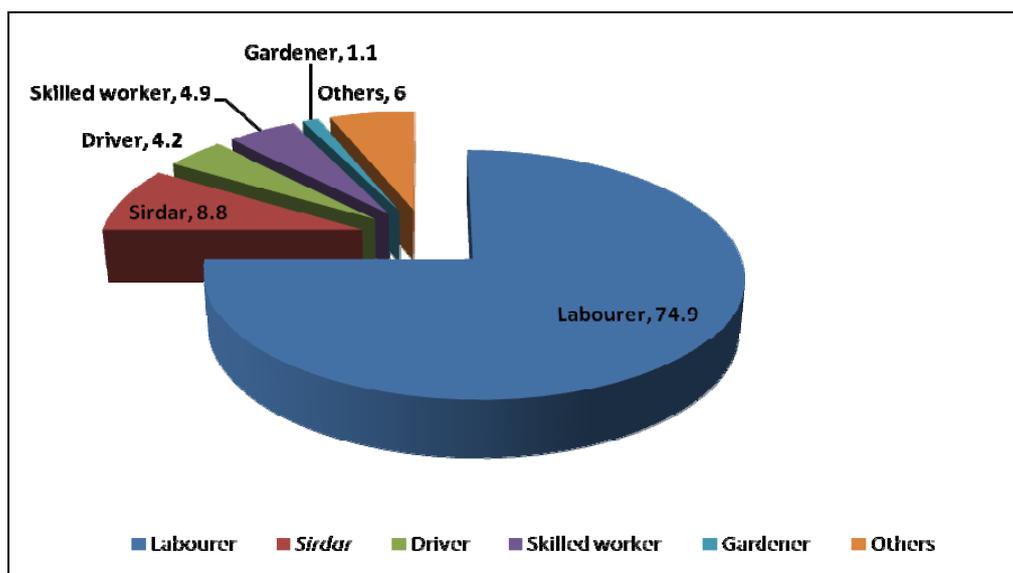


Table 34 Educational Background of VRS Beneficiaries

Education	%
<b>Primary Education</b>	
Std 1-Std 5	32.9
Std 6 - Passed	48.1
<b>Secondary Education</b>	
Form 1	3.2
Form 2	2.3
Form 3	4.2
Form 4	5.3
SC - Failed	1.1
SC - Passed	2.5

Our survey also demonstrates that around 75 per cent of the respondents were previously labourers, around 9 per cent were *sirdars*, 5 per cent were skilled workers, whilst 4.2 per cent were drivers. This is shown by Figure 6.4 below.

Figure 6.4: Previous Occupations of the VRS Beneficiaries



It was also noted that 50 per cent of female VRS beneficiaries were the bread winner of the family, while 94 per cent of male beneficiaries were the head of households. Female head of households represent a large share of the sample, which implies that their wages obtained in the Sugar Industry play an important role for their family. From Table 35, we note that most of the VRS beneficiaries (around 47 per cent) earned between Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 7,000 while around 24 per cent were in the income range of Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 9,000. Those earning more than Rs. 9,000 made up of around 12.5 per cent of the sample and 9.5 per cent were in the lowest income bracket of less than Rs. 5,000.

Table 35 Salary before the VRS

	Frequency	Percent
Salary < 5000	27	9.5
5000 < Salary < 7000	132	46.6
7000 < Salary < 9000	69	24.4
9000 < Salary < 12000	28	9.9
> 12000	5	3.6

Further, we study the average wage obtained as per the different occupations of the workers (Table 36). On average, *sirdars* earn much more than the other categories of workers and the lowest pay was registered by labourers. In fact the salary of the *sirdars* was 1.5 times higher than that of the labourer. Drivers on average were earning Rs. 8,750 and a skilled worker's wage was Rs. 8,668. In addition, we find that the female VRS beneficiaries were all labourers and their average wage was Rs. 4,814 which is much lower than a male labourer earning Rs. 6,398.

Table 36 Salary before the VRS by Occupation

Salary Before VRS	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Driver	10	8750	4563	3000	20000
Gardener	3	7133	231	7000	7400
Labourer	201	6263	1575	2000	17000
<i>Sirdar</i>	23	9557	1919	7000	15000
Skilled worker	14	8668	2696	5700	15000

### 6.6.2.3 Occupational Mobility

The Study also investigates the occupation of the parents and grandparents of the VRS beneficiaries (see Tables 37 and 38 below).

Grandfather's Job	Number	Percentage	Grandmother's Job	Number	Percentage
Labourer	69	24.4	Labourer	34	12.0
Planter	3	1.1	Gardener	1	0.4
Gardener	1	0.4	Housewife	43	15.2
Unspecified	199	70.3	Unspecified	201	71.0
Others	11	3.9	Others	4	1.4
Total	283	100.0	Total	283	100.0

Father's Job	Frequency	Percent	Mother's Job	Frequency	Percent
Labourer	191	67.5	Labourer	148	52.3
Planter	2	0.7	Planter	1	0.4
Gardener	6	2.1	Housewife	120	42.4
Others	84	29.7	Servant	3	1.1
Total	283	100.0	Others	11	3.9
			Total	283	100.0

We note that for their grandfather was essentially labourer, while the grandmother was either labourer or housewife. For their parents, we observe that for 67.5 per cent and 52.3 per cent of the respondents, their fathers and mothers were labourers, respectively. It can be said therefore that the present VRS beneficiaries have taken up the work of their parents which may not necessarily be the case of their children, as seen by Table 39.

From the survey, 33.6 per cent of respondents do not have working children, while 31.8 per cent have 1 child working and 24 per cent have 2 working children in the family. 7 per cent and 2.5 per cent have respectively 3 and 4 working children. The more the number of working children, the better it may be for the VRS beneficiaries in terms of income and a better standard of living. For those respondents who have children of working age, they were asked for more information on the occupation on their first and second child. This is shown in Table 39 below.

	Where does your first child work?		Where does your second child work?	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Skilled Worker	44	21.9	22	14.8
Unskilled Worker	34	16.9	15	10.1
Planter	3	1.5	4	2.7
Labourer	5	2.5	2	1.3
Student	10	5.0	12	8.1
Factory Worker (EPZ Type)	8	4.0	4	2.7
Salesman/clerical/storekeeper/fire-fighter/policeman	22	10.9	15	10.1
Teacher/Inspector (Education Sector)	9	4.5	4	2.7
Asst. manager	2	1.0	1	0.7
Professional (accountant/Engineers)	15	7.5	7	4.7
Call Centre	1	0.5	3	2.0
No fixed job	3	1.5	1	0.7
Others	12	6.0	9	6.0
Unemployed	33	16.4	50	33.6

We observe that for 21.9 per cent of the VRS beneficiaries, their first child is a skilled worker and further 7.5 per cent of their children are professionals. For around 11 per cent of them, their first child work as salesman/clerical/policeman/fire-fighter but 16.4 per cent of the first child are unemployed. It is also noted that around only 4 per cent of either the first or the second child works as planter or labourer. We further note that for a large per centage (42.8 per cent), the first child is manual worker, showing that for most of them, they have been able to secure only an unskilled job with a relatively low pay. Their children have not been able to move to a higher ladder in terms of occupation and income category. Unemployment seems very much more pronounced for the second child.

In fact, grouping the skilled worker, unskilled worker, planter, labourer, factory worker and 'no fixed job', as manual worker, we find that 48.3 % of the respondents' first child is in a manual job. Further, if we include the categories 'others' and unemployed as manual workers, then the per centage go to 70.6 %. Thus, it indicates that out of 10 agricultural workers, 7 have their first child as manual worker, revealing a lack of upward social mobility.

#### 6.6.2.4 Landownership by Parents and Grandparents

Further, we also analyse landownership by parents and grandparents of the VRS beneficiaries. Table 40 is a cross-tabulation on landownership. We argue that 24.4 per cent of the respondents' grandparents possess land, while 52.3 per cent of the beneficiaries' parents have a plot of land. Landownership is an important factor that has caused many to work on the sugarcane fields. However, in the sample, we also note that for many their family did not possess land. This can also explain the reason behind the favourable reception of the VRS package by the sugarcane workers, since the package includes, not only cash compensation, but also a plot of land. In the Mauritian context, land acquisition is an important asset and represents for the elderly, in particular, an undeniable achievement for their hard work on the estates. From Table 40, 51.2% of the labourers currently own a plot of land.

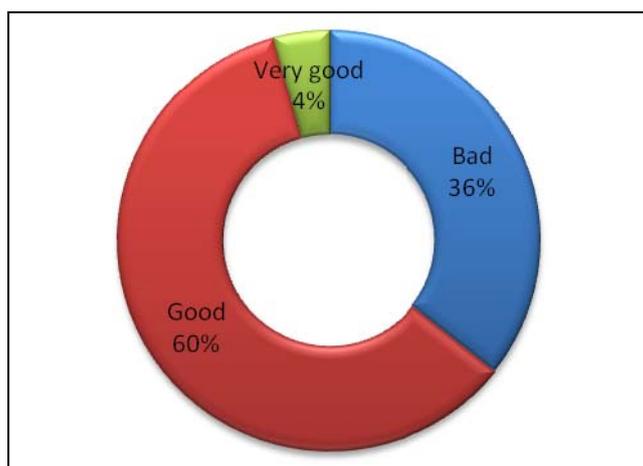
			Did your parents have land?		Total
			Yes	No	
Did your grandparents have land?	Yes	Count	53	16	69
		% within. Did your grandparents have land?	76.8%	23.2%	100.0%
		% within. Did your parents have land?	35.8%	11.9%	24.4%
	No	Count	75	104	179
		% within. Did your grandparents have land?	41.9%	58.1%	100.0%
		% within. Did your parents have land?	50.7%	77.6%	63.3%

Do you possess any land?	Male Beneficiaries		Female Beneficiaries		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	114	51.1	31	51.7	145	51.2
No	99	44.4	26	43.3	125	44.2
Unspecified	10	4.5	3	5.0	13	4.6
Total	223	100.0	60	100.0	283	100.0

#### 6.6.2.5 Working Conditions on the Sugar Estates

Around 64 per cent of the VRS beneficiaries seem to like their job on the sugar estates, while 36 per cent did not like their working conditions (see Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Perceived Working Conditions on the Sugar Estates



For those 36 per cent, the following explanations were given. For 32 per cent, the nature of the work was highly stressful and 43 per cent argue that they were more stressed because of the low salary. Almost 28 per cent of the respondents claim that the working-time was not appropriate and 33 per cent state that the work-load was cumbersome and difficult to manage. Further around 25 per cent argue that there were extensive pressure from the *sirdars*. All these factors led to a very stressful working environment for the sugar-cane workers. As far as their physical health is concerned, for many working on the sugar estates was not easy. For 34 per cent of the respondents, the nature of the work on the estates affected their physical health and for around 31 per cent and 34 per cent of them the working-hours and the heavy work-load were respectively significant elements affecting their health conditions. For around 16 per cent of the VRS beneficiaries, their physical health was also affected by insufficient time for eating either for lunch-time or short breaks.

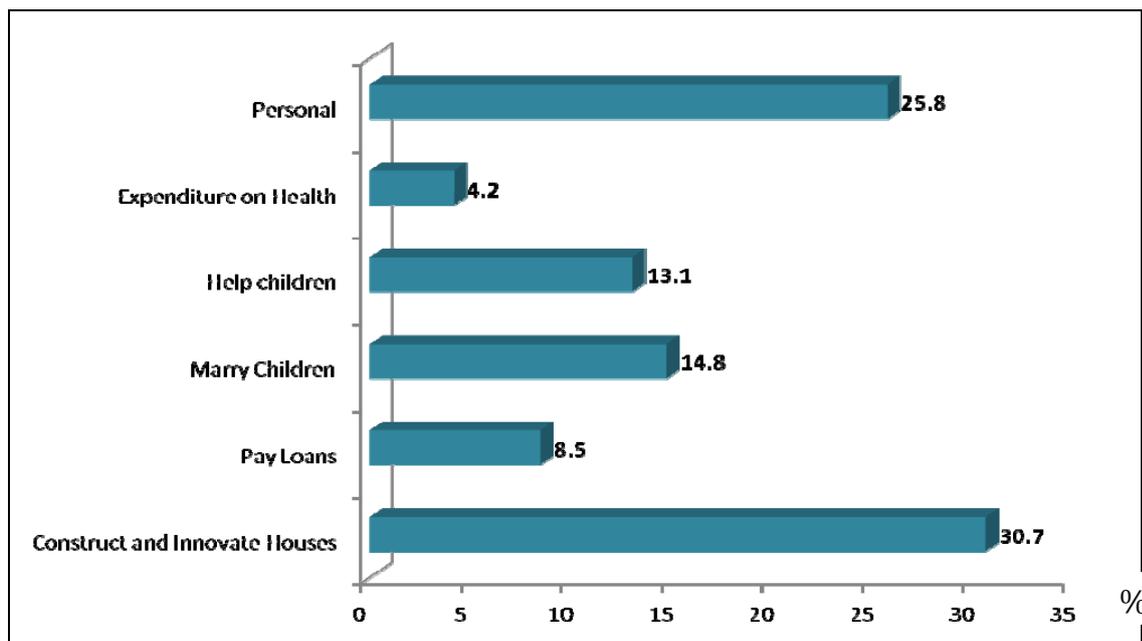
Further, we observe that the health conditions of women workers were as much affected as those of their male counterparts (Table 42). We note that a higher per centage of women (42 per cent) claim that they now have pains and 5 per cent went through operations compared to 2 per cent for men.

Impact on Health	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Not Affected	79	35.4	6	10
Operation	5	2.2	3	5
Sick	29	13	8	13.3
Tired	51	22.9	11	18.3
Pains	43	19.3	25	41.7
Others	16	7.2	7	11.7

#### 6.6.2.6. Cash Compensation and Land

In addition, when receiving their cash compensation, we note that only 54 per cent of them have saved their money. The 46 per cent, who spent their money, have used it for different purposes. This can be shown in Figure 6.6:

Figure 6.6: Use of Cash Compensation

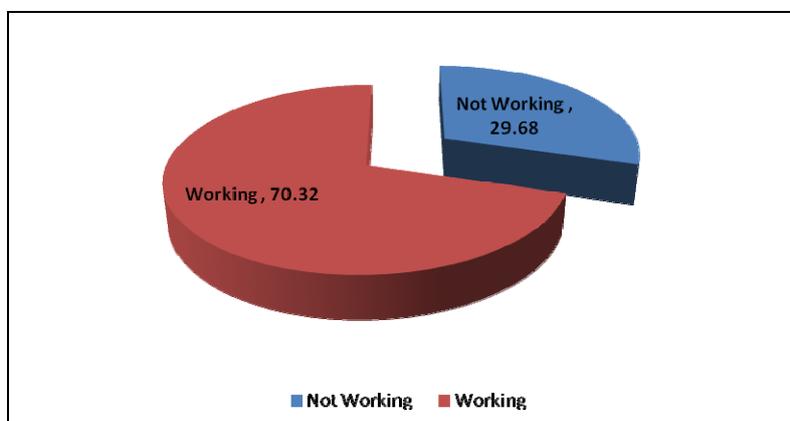


With regard to the land, which they were entitled to, under the VRS, around 89 per cent of the surveyed respondents have not yet obtained their plots of land at the time of the survey. For the 11 per cent who have received their land, most of them (78 per cent) are not aware of the type of land they obtained. Around 8 per cent and 14 per cent of them received respectively agricultural and residential land. The land has more often been given to children (for 4.9 per cent of the respondents) or been used for cultivation (2.1 per cent) or can still be used for house construction (1.8 per cent) and 1.1 per cent of the beneficiaries sold the land.

#### 6.6.2.7 Present Activities and Income

In addition, we also investigate on their present activities and income of the beneficiaries after the VRS (see Figure 6.7 and Table 43). Our results show that 70 per cent of the beneficiaries are actually working and many of them are women. 78 per cent of women have re-entered the labour market, compared to 68 per cent for men. This may confirm the earlier age of voluntary retirement by female sugar workers relative to the male workers, and often these women are widowed and are the heads of households; so they need to have an important source of income, essentially if they have to cater for their dependent children.<sup>260</sup>

Figure 6.7: Employment Status of the VRS Beneficiaries



Employment	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Not Working	71	31.8	13	21.7
Working	152	68.2	47	78.3

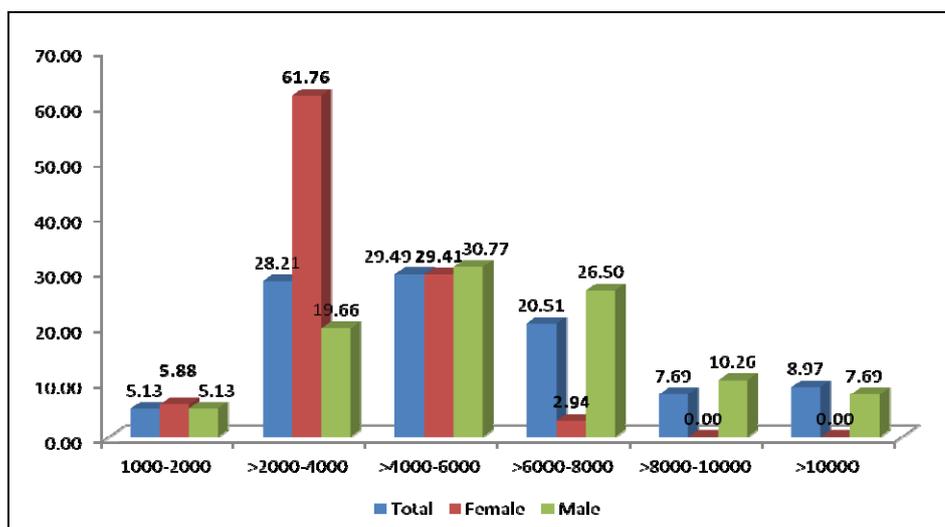
We observe that 45 per cent of the VRS beneficiaries were working with contractors of sugar estates and 31 per cent were actually casual workers on the same sugar estates where they were working before the VRS (see Table 44). 11.8 per cent were self-employed and around 5 per cent were working with different planters. Adopting a gender perception, we note that 80 per cent of the women were working with contractors of the sugar estates and only 4.4 per cent are self-employed compared to 14 per cent for men. Around 9 per cent of women were working with other planters while 3 per cent of men engage in a similar activity.

Overall, in the end, 76.4% of all the labourers, after having taken the VRS package, found themselves working over again on the sugar estates as casual labourers, no longer enjoying the wages and benefits of the permanent employees.

Present Occupation	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
On contract with sugar estates	59	39.3	2	4.4
With planters	5	3.3	4	8.9
With contractors of sugar estates	52	34.7	36	80
Self-employed	21	14	2	4.4
Others	13	8.7	1	2.2

Further, we analyse the income of the VRS beneficiaries after having accepted the Scheme (see Figure 6.8 below). We see that, now, most of them have moved in the lower-income bracket of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 6,000 after the reform which makes them worse off than before the VRS. Women, in particular, are more affected since around 62 per cent of them are now in the income group Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 4,000. Men (29.4 per cent), in turn, found themselves more in the income category of Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 6,000 and that around 17 per cent of them earned more than Rs. 8,000.

Figure 6.8: Income of the VRS Beneficiaries after the Scheme



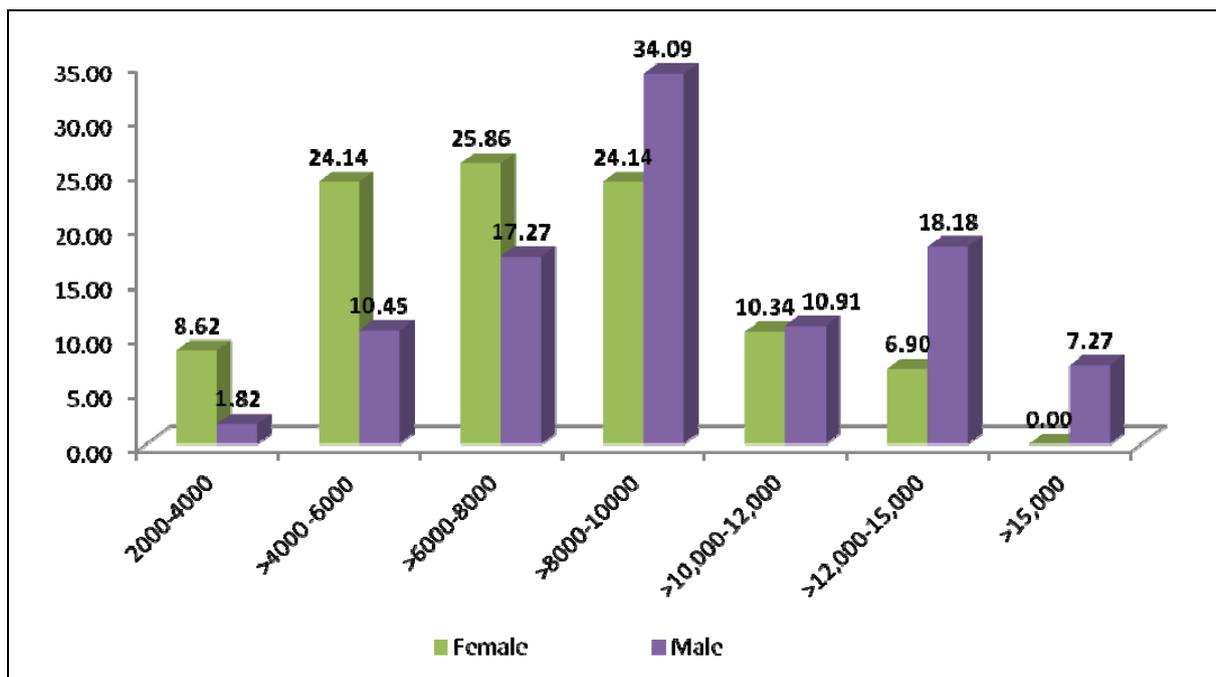
#### 6.6.2.8 Expenditure

Similarly, we also analyse the expenses of the VRS beneficiaries. It was observed, from Table 45, that 10.4 per cent of them spend only between Rs. 2,000 - Rs. 4,000 per month. However, for most of them expenditure exceeds their present income. For around 35 per cent of the respondents, their expenses are in excess of Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 6,000 while for the majority (around 58 per cent) expenditure is in the bracket of Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000. Expenditure even exceeds Rs. 10,000 for 46 per cent of the beneficiaries. Based on a comparison with their salary before the VRS in Table 45, we note that most of them have a salary between Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 7,000 which shows that by far expenditure exceeds income earned of most of the beneficiaries in our sample. These results are in line with a previous study on VRS beneficiaries for Mauritius.<sup>261</sup> Expenditure was concentrated mainly on food, water, electricity and phone bills as well as transport costs.

Expenses (rs)	Female Beneficiaries	Male Beneficiaries	All Beneficiaries
2000-4000	8.6	1.8	3.2
>4000-6000	24.1	10.5	13.4
>6000-8000	25.9	17.3	19.1
>8000-10000	24.1	34.1	32.0
>10,000-12,000	10.3	10.9	10.8
>12,000-15,000	6.9	18.2	15.8
>15,000	0.00	7.3	5.8

We also analyse differences in expenditure pattern by gender (Figure 6.9 below) and note that most of them (25 per cent) spent more than Rs. 6,000 and less than Rs. 8,000 and 24 per cent have an expenditure bracket of Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 6,000. Male beneficiaries are more likely to spend between Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000 which is much higher than that of their female counterparts.

Figure 6.9: Expenditure by Gender



6.6.2.9 Training

Under the VRS II, many also benefitted from training programmes. From our sample, we observe that around 62 per cent were entitled to a training programme, but only 29 per cent attended the training sessions, whilst 38 per cent were not interested in any training. This can be shown by Figure 6.10 below.

Figure 6.10: Training

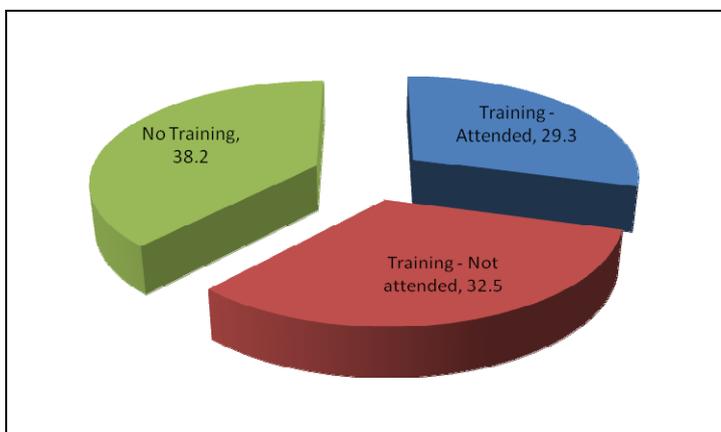


Table 46 Training from a Gender Perspective

Training	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
No Training	81	36.3	27	45
Didn't Attend Training	70	31.4	22	36.7
Yes	72	32.3	11	18.3

From Table 46, we note that 45 per cent of women did not benefit from training and 36 per cent did not attend the training sessions, while only 18 per cent were trained in their preferred activity. It is also observed that 32 per cent of male beneficiaries benefitted from training. The different types of training obtained can be shown in Table 47. Most of the VRS beneficiaries (around 22 per cent) received training in gardening, followed by training in cooking, and around 3.2 per cent were interested in plumbing. For those who chose training, they wanted to learn something new or even broaden their existing knowledge, especially in the field of agriculture. For around 17 per cent of them, the training was beneficial and helped them in their daily activities and also to enhance their present work. Overall, the training provided seems not to have satisfied the objective of re-skilling as defined in MAAS.

Type of Training Received	Percent
Gardening	22.2
Rearing of animals	1.8
Cooking	4.9
Mechanic	0.4
Plumbing	3.2
Others	5.3

#### 6.6.2.10 Social Dimension of the VRS

The last aspect which our survey covers is the psychological and social dimension of the Scheme. We investigated more in their social network and essentially their other VRS beneficiaries living in the locality. For most of them (around 80 per cent), they still meet their VRS counterparts and for around 40 per cent of them, they meet their friends on a daily basis. For 11 per cent, they get together only one to three times per month, while for 10.6 per cent of the respondents, they see their friends at work, that is five days a week, since they are still employed as casual workers on the sugar estates. They were also asked to how the closure of factories has affected the daily life of their local community and its people. From their viewpoint, closures of shops and businesses have only been moderately affected. For around 7 per cent of the respondents, there is a lack of social activities in the locality and no gathering place to meet their friends. We also investigated their drinking and smoking habits. We explored whether with the VRS, they have more time for themselves, and it this may have led to a rise in the consumption of alcohol and cigarettes. Though the responses to our questions may be biased, since we may not have an honest response, we could however, note that there could have been a rise in alcohol and cigarettes consumption after the VRS. The impact of VRS on community life and on the drinking and smoking habits of the beneficiaries needs to be studied in a more elaborate manner.

#### 6.6.2.11 Views on the VRS Package

We also analyse their attitudes and thoughts on the VRS package and on the future of the Sugar Industry. 85 per cent of them think that it was a good decision to accept the VRS for a number of reasons. Moreover, there is a higher per centage of women (35%) than men (9.4%) who found that the decision to accept VRS was not good, as per Table 48.

		Gender		Total	
		Male	Female		
Was it a good decision to accept VRS?	Yes	Count	202	39	241
		% within Gender	90.60%	65.00%	85.20%
	No	Count	21	21	42
		% within Gender	9.40%	35.00%	14.80%
Total		Count	223	60	283

	% within Gender	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
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Different reasons have also been specified by those who thought that they should not have taken the VRS. These are shown in Table 49.

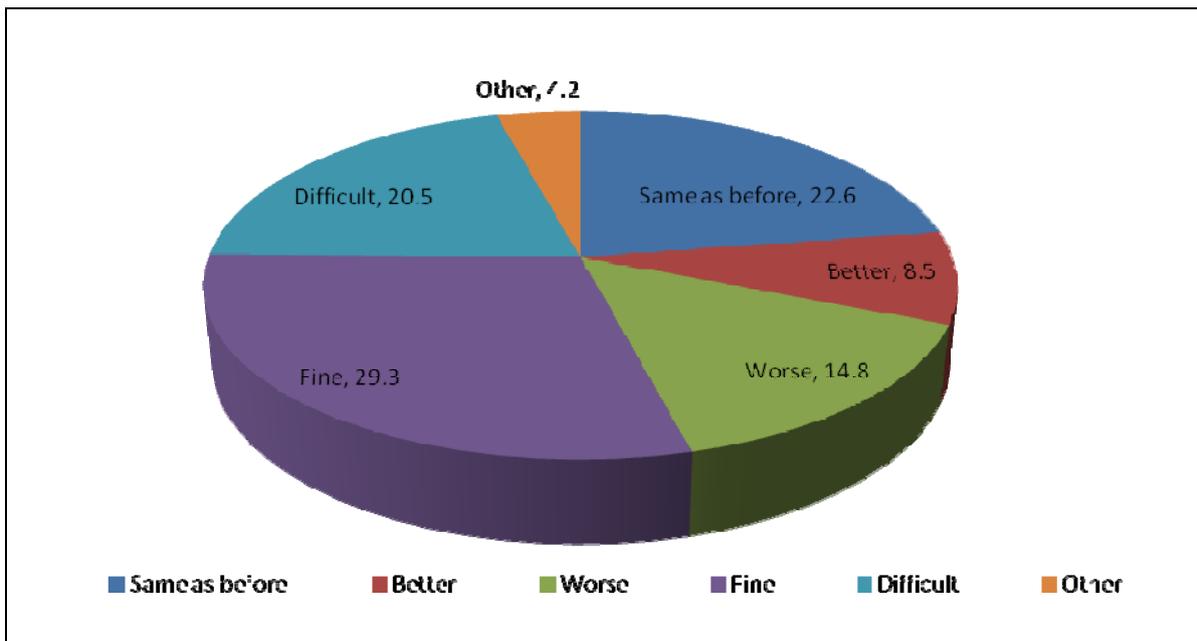
Good Decision to Accept the VRS	%	Not a Good Decision to Accept the VRS	%
To be landowner	11.0	Already spent all money	2.5
Age factor	27.9	Not same facility as before	2.1
To get the money	21.6	Working conditions worse now	0.7
Work becoming tougher	5.7	No other option available	4.6
No other option available	6.4	Others	3.9
No one to help me	0.7		
Health factor	10.2		
Others	3.2		

We note that for 28 per cent of them, the VRS package was a blessing because of their age and 22 per cent found the cash compensation an interesting financial package. Also, being a landowner is an important factor which makes the VRS attractive for 11 per cent of the respondents. In addition, working on the sugar estates has not been an easy job; the working conditions, as seen above, have had a negative impact on the health status of many. Their deteriorating health has been a significant element for many (10 per cent in the sample) in accepting the VRS. The VRS has not been a good thing for many since they have already spent all the money (2.5 per cent of the respondents), or they do not obtain the same facility as before (2.1 per cent of the respondents), and for around 5 per cent of them, they had no choice than to accept the scheme; in other words, they had no other option made available to them.

An analysis of the response by job shows that the higher income groups are more likely to find that it was a good decision to accept VRS; in particular, 100% of the *sirdars* and the skilled workers do think so.

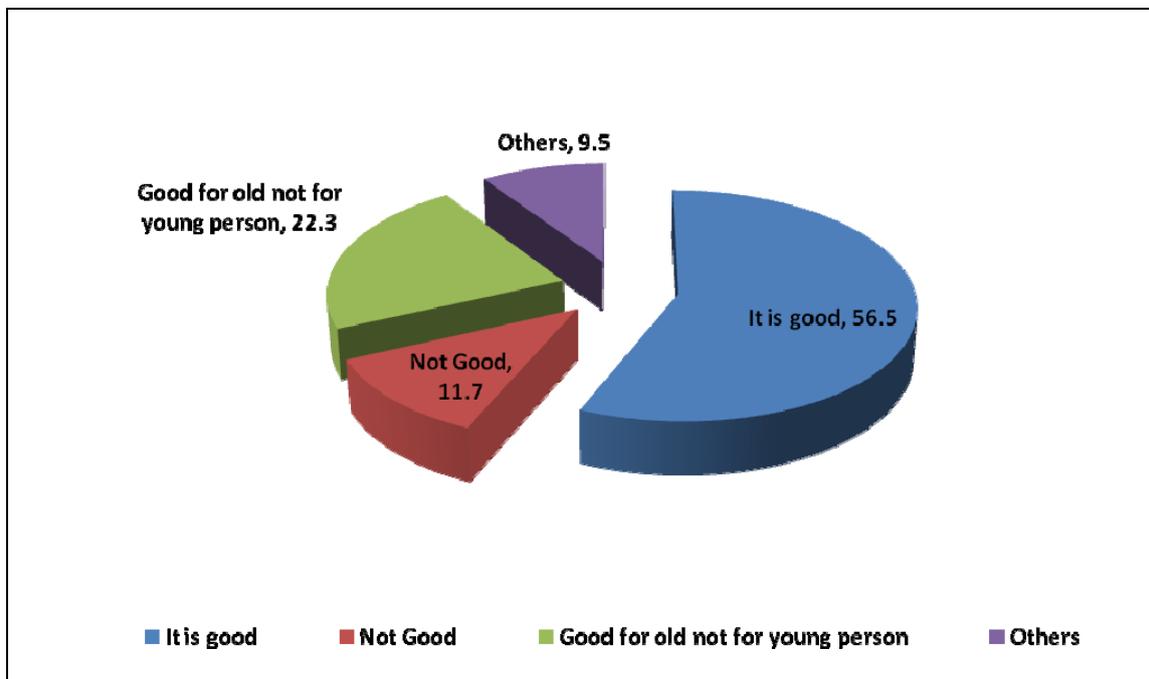
We also analyse their living conditions after the Scheme and we observe that 22.6 per cent of the respondents have the same standard of living as before and 8.5 per cent are even better off (see Figure 6.11); 29.3 per cent find that life is fine. For 20.5 per cent of them, they face difficulties having a decent living standard because of the fixed compensation and rising inflation, namely rising food prices. For around 15 per cent, life is worse after the VRS, it is difficult for them to manage.

Figure 6.11: Life after the VRS



Further, we note that 56.5 per cent of the respondents believe that the VRS is a good package but 22.3 per cent argue that it is appropriate essentially for the old people, and not necessarily for the younger workers. 11.7 per cent state that the VRS is not a beneficial scheme. This is shown in figure 6.12.

Figure 6.12: Opinion on the VRS Package



## 6.7 The Cheap Labour Policy of the Post-Independence Period

### 6.7.1 The Export Processing Zone (EPZ)

In 1970, the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) was established in Mauritius and the Export Processing Zone Act was passed. The Act provided major incentives to manufacturers catering for foreign markets. Moreover, firms within the EPZs equally benefited from the availability of cheap labour which came from unemployed workers and women who were outside the labour force at that time.<sup>262</sup> In his paper, Ali Zafar elaborated as follows

*“According to interviews with textile executives located in the EPZ, 80 per cent of workers in the EPZs in the 1980s were women. The rate has decreased somewhat in the 1990’s and 2000’s, but women continue to be more than 60 per cent of the workers in the zones. The lower wages that were paid to the workers in the EPZs in the early years allowed the firms to accumulate capital and reinvest the earnings into the firm’s expansion.”*

History has repeated itself. About one hundred and thirty years ago, the plantocracy recruited indentured labourers from a vast reservoir of cheap labour found in British India. As a result, the plantocracy accumulated capital which was partly siphoned off to financiers/ investors abroad (Britain and France mainly) and partly reinvested in modernising the sugar factories. The new dimension, this time, lies in the fact that the reservoir of cheap labour came from within Mauritius: women and the unemployed. As argued in chapter 5, unemployment and poverty were the direct consequences of policies of free trade by British Imperial Government and of cheap labour policy of the Colonial Government and the plantocracy.

For this process of capital accumulation to be successful, there was a need to control the labour force and, even to coerce it into accepting special working conditions applicable in the EPZ and not applicable in other sectors of the economy. Certain key features of the EPZ Act of 1970 are highlighted to illustrate the point.

Firstly, the notorious policy of ‘double-cut’ for absenteeism which was prevalent in the Sugar Industry during the period of indentured labour was introduced in the EPZ Act. It stipulated:

*“An employee who without his employer’s consent or without good and sufficient case absents himself from work on a day which immediately proceeds or follows a public holiday, shall forfeit one normal day’s pay in the next following week or if he is entitled to paid holidays the amount which would have been accrued to him in respect of the next ensuing paid holiday.”<sup>263</sup>*

Secondly, new legislation, not in line with existing legislation and practice, was included on the issue of severance allowance and termination of service. Section 14, paragraph 18 stipulated

*“When an employee reckons not less than three years continuous service with an employer and his services are terminated, he shall be entitled to receive compensation which shall be equivalent to not less than two weeks’ wages for each year of service he reckons with an employer.”<sup>264</sup>*

The Legislation prevalent in other sectors of the economy provided for the payment of severance allowance after twelve months of continuous service with an employer. With respect to termination of service, section 14 paragraph 9, stipulated that

*“The provisions of the termination of contracts of service ordinance 1963 shall not apply to any contract of employment between an employee and his employer.”*

Thirdly, the working week for workers of EPZ was of forty-five hours duration and overtime work for ten hours was, in practice, made compulsory. The Act provided for the following clauses:

a) *“An Employee shall not be made to work overtime for more than ten hours per week.*

- b) *An employee may be required to work for more than the normal number of hours on any day other than a public holiday and no payment for overtime shall thereupon accrue to the employee if the number of hours of actual work in the week does not exceed forty-five."*

Overtime work was made compulsory on the one hand, and worse still, was payable only after a working week of forty-five hours. In many sectors of the economy, overtime work was paid on a daily basis where necessary. Ali Zafar summed up succinctly the situation prevailing at that time in the EPZ:

*"Firms within the EPZ were subject to general labour laws (including minimum wages) but were free to fire workers, to demand compulsory overtime work, and to penalise workers heavily for absenteeism."*<sup>265</sup>

There is no doubt that with the establishment of the EPZ in the 1970s and its expansion in the 1980s, unemployment was reduced considerably and the economy benefited substantially, with the growth rate of the EPZ's value added being close to 30 per cent annually between 1983 and 1988. Moreover, employment fluctuates over the years. But the major issue is that this was done in a manner similar to the growth of the Sugar Industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries whereby the workers' share in the wealth created was minimal and their working conditions were such that it was to a certain extent like coercible labour.

The Export Oriented Enterprises (as the EPZ is to be known as from 2006) employed, by March 2001, 93,218 workers of whom 30,783 and 62,435 were respectively males and females, giving a ratio of nearly 1:2 in favour of female workers. With the restructuring of the sector, there were many redundancies so that by June 2009, there were 58,066 workers of whom 24,451 and 33,615 were respectively males and females, giving a ratio of 1:14 or 5:7 in favour of female workers. Of the 35,000 workers made redundant, about 29,000 were women and about 6,000 were men. Thus women are the most vulnerable group in the labour force in that sector.

In the process of restructuring, wages went up compared to the 1980s; but nevertheless, in the textile sector, monthly wages in March 2002 went down from Rs. 7,039 to Rs. 6,236 in March 2008 in real terms (using 2001 as base year). The wages reached its March 2002 level in March 2009. As wages go up, the share of females in the labour force in this sector goes down. The obvious question is: "What happens to the 35,000 workers made redundant and, in particular, to the 29,000 women?"

#### 6.7.2 Migrant Labour

There are essentially three sets of problems faced by migrant labour. Firstly, the dormitories provided to the migrant workers are awful and the established criteria are not respected. Secondly, in certain cases, working conditions are not respected. Thirdly, very often migrant workers have two contracts; one which they get in their country of origin which usually provides very favourable conditions (e.g. wages); then another contract which is the real one, and which they have in Mauritius.

Whilst it is rather difficult for the State to intervene in the third problem mentioned above, it is indeed disturbing that Mauritius, having had the experience of both the labour of enslaved people and indentured labour, should allow the awful conditions to prevail. Migrant workers represent an asset to employers because of their understandable 'flexibility' to work many hours in a given week, as opposed to Mauritian workers.

It is the duty of the State not to allow conditions prevailing under indenture period to be reproduced, if only on a limited scale, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 6.8 The Cooperative Movement after independence

### 6.8.1 The Initial Phase

In the first years following Independence, it seems that the cooperative movement evolved along the path it had developed over the previous few years. Initially, there was some progress in the number of Cooperative Societies and their membership as shown in Table 50.<sup>266</sup>

	1970-1971		1971-1972		1972-1973	
	Societies No.	Members No.	Societies No.	Members No.	Societies No.	Members No.
Mauritius						
<i>Secondary Societies</i>	6	682	9	755	9	796
<i>Primary Societies</i>	304	34198	338	37881	373	42881
Rodrigues						
<i>Primary Societies</i>	32	4671	33	5403	38	5460
<i>Total</i>	342	39551	380	44039	420	49137

Between 1971 and 1973, there was an increase in the number of cooperative societies and in the membership respectively of 22.8% and 24.23%.

Moreover, the report did not convey any information on the functioning and management of the societies. By June 1983, the Ministry of Information and Cooperatives produced a White Paper in Cooperative Development which provided a good insight in the cooperative movement at that time and which made bold proposals, which, it seems, were not implemented. At that time, the cooperative movement was facing a credibility gap, as it had a tarnished public image. There were four proposals:<sup>267</sup>

- i. The cooperative movement should gradually reduce its dependence on Government support and eventually develop a self-reliant people's cooperative movement;
- ii. It should not be the domain of a privileged few;
- iii. It should promote workers' cooperatives, including the involvement of the unemployed;
- iv. The cooperative movement should no longer stick to single-purpose, small and unviable societies. Instead, it should develop multi-purpose societies which provide an integrated range of goods and services.

For the success in the implementation of these proposals, there was a need for a change in the attitudes/mind-set of all co-operators and equally, there should be structural changes in the cooperative movement.

Moreover, in the key secondary societies, the Mauritius Cooperative Union Ltd (MCU) and the Mauritius Cooperative Central Bank Ltd (MCCB), the constitution of the board of management and their internal management showed serious shortcomings. For the MCU, an Executive Committee under the general control of a Central Committee constituted its management structure. The representatives of the Cooperative Credit Societies, elected at the Annual General Assembly, were often the Secretaries of the Societies who were paid employees. Thus these paid employees or Secretaries wielded power of decision at the highest level of management, whilst they had no right to vote in their society. Further, "the paid employees or secretaries, who became Directors of the Union, have their books of accounts sometimes audited by the Union staff, i.e. their own employees".<sup>268</sup>

In a similar manner, at the MCCB Board of Management, the Secretaries of Cooperative Credit Societies were very much represented. And there was the obvious conflict of interests, since the

Secretaries of the societies became “both the Directors of the bank and the Executors of the bank’s policies at field level and a kind of middlemen of the bank’s broker”.<sup>269</sup>

It is beyond imagination that such obvious threats to the proper running of the MCU and MCCB did prevail for so long. There were still other factors which hampered the development of the cooperative movement: the existence of many small cooperative societies designed to cater for a single service, scant interest from the members, absence of proper planning and of scientific management. Although thereafter there would be general positive development in the number of cooperative societies and their membership, on the other hand, the inherent shortcomings of the MCCB, together with other management problems, would, in the end, bring about the collapse of the Mauritius Cooperative Central Bank Ltd.

#### 6.8.2 The Collapse of the MCCB

In December 1993, a Commission of Enquiry was set up to inquire into the operations and management of the former Mauritius Cooperative Central Bank, with Mr. Yip Tong as unique member.

The findings of the Commission of Enquiry revealed major shortcomings on the part of the General Manager and the Board of Management.<sup>270</sup> Since his appointment, the General Manager had a policy to increase massively the loans/advances portfolio of the Bank. To do so, he admitted Associate Members as opposed to Cooperative Society Members; yet the Bank’s rules did not provide for the admission of such Associate Members. The Commission noted that:

*“A small credit financing strategy was overnight converted into a full fledged banking institution. Existing systems and procedures were totally inadequate and existing staff incompetent to deal with assessment, control and monitoring of the huge loans granted in the period. As a result operating results were damaging with accumulated losses of Rs 71.4 million incurred on 29 February, 1992”.*

Moreover, there were glaring malpractices on the part of Management and on the part of some Directors, who were members of the Board of Management. Some of these malpractices were:

- i. As early as 1988, the Bank of Mauritius report was highly critical of the Bank’s systems and procedures. “Besides, advances aggregating Rs. 16 million are sub-standard or show major irregularities, such as lack of proper sanction, drawings allowed for in excess of sanctioned limits, inadequate security...”<sup>271</sup>
- ii. The General Manager did not give due consideration to the auditor’s report. He even had the auditors for 1990/91 replaced at a Special General Meeting. Another firm of auditors expressed their unwillingness to continue as auditors.
- iii. Some members and Chairman of the Board of Directors had some special, if not privileged treatment and made matters worse. Thus, there was the practice of paying commissions by the bank up to 1992, though they were generally not welcome by the banking sector. The commission highlighted “... substantial commissions were paid to the same person, a one time director of the bank, over the years”.<sup>272</sup> Further the Commission noted that two past Chairman had taken substantial loans and facilities from the Bank.

By 1995, the Government decided to close the MCCB. By then, the impact of the failure of the MCCB did much harm to the cooperative movement, causing discouragement among co-operators and the public at large. As far back as 1983, in the White Paper on Cooperative Development, it was stated that the cooperative movement had already a bad name; the collapse of the MCCB could only worsen further the image of the cooperative movement.

Moreover, since 1991 there has been a marked tendency for the percentage of planters who were members of Cooperative Credit Societies to decrease progressively. Table 51 highlights that trend.

Table 51 Distribution of planters and CCS planters\* over the years

Year	No. of planters	CCS planters*	
		No.	%
1985	34,634	24,832	71.7
1990	34,130	23,714	69.5
1991	33,148	22,534	68.0
1995-96	29,323	17,941	61.2
2000-01	28,461	14,245	50.1
2005	26,898	13,001	48.3
2007	24,342	11,641	47.8
2009	21,498	9,919	46.1

Source: SIFB Annual Reports  
 \* CCS planters are planters who are members of a Cooperative Credit Society

Table 51 reveals that, firstly, the number of sugarcane planters has been decreasing substantially from 34,634 in 1985 to 21,498 in 2009; there has been a decrease of 38 %. Secondly, the number of CCS planters has been decreasing in similar manner. From 71.7 % of the planters being in CCS in 1985, the percentage has dropped to 46.1 %, i.e. less than 50 %. There are several reasons for this decrease; the collapse of the MCCB would be only one of these at a given point in time.

### 6.8.3 The survival and revival of the Cooperative Movement

In spite of various problems the cooperative movement kept on functioning; the number of Primary Cooperative Societies during the period 2003-2006 kept on increasing progressively from 416 to 461.<sup>273</sup> Similarly, the membership increased from 138,446 to 142,972. As at end June 2006, the Primary Cooperative Societies were prevalent in many economic activities: agricultural marketing, credit, fishing, pig-rearing and marketing, tea credit and marketing, livestock, mechanisation, consumer stores, credit unions, bus-ownership and housing.

And there were some cases of successful cooperative societies which received coverage in the publication 'The passion of the people: Successful Cooperative Experiences in Africa' (2008), by the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Center (COPAC). It is worth mentioning briefly the three cases covered in that publication: Medine Camp de Masque Cooperative Credit Society, Vacoas Popular Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Limited and Fair Price Cooperative Stores.<sup>274</sup> All these three cases represent interesting features according to each case.

In the case of the Fair Price Cooperative stores, it is frankly written that "The history of nepotism and patronage in former cooperative stores is a lesson well learned by the federation."<sup>275</sup> There is a concern that the next generation of cooperation is not being produced; hence there is an urgent need in education at grass roots level as well as in the formal education system.

As far as the Vacoas Popular Multi-Purpose Cooperative society is concerned, it ensures that any surplus generated remains in the cooperative. Moreover, it regrets that it does not receive support from the cooperative division in the Ministry.

The Medine Camp de Masque Cooperative Credit Society had a long history in the traditional sugar sector. It was formed in February 15, 1914. Its members are mainly small-scale, part-time planters with less than one hectare (i.e. about 2.3 *arpents*) of land and its main activities are loans, procurement and marketing. The society gets involved in the community and further helps its own members by contributing to the setting up of an Information and Technology Centre as well as a cooperative store. Moreover, strong family ties tend to influence the choice of people to occupy certain key positions like the post of Secretary. Thus, it is written that "for example, the secretary of the cooperative is the third generation cooperative member (his grandfather was one of the founding members and his father was a secretary for years as well) and remembers growing up in the cooperative." Whilst "growing up in the cooperative" certainly helps, on the other hand, family ties have been found to be a threat to proper functioning of cooperative societies in the past.

#### 6.8.4 Successes and New Perspectives

It is appropriate to note that, as at December 2010, there are 918 cooperative societies in Mauritius and Rodrigues operating in 30 different sectors, with a turnover of Rs. 4.5 billion and total membership of 159,853.<sup>276</sup> In particular, the cooperative sector marked a significant contribution in certain areas. In agricultural production, it caters for 75 % of onion production, 40 % of potato production, 70 % of fresh green vegetables, 10 % of sugar production. In national bus transport, its contribution is 40 %.

Cooperative spirit can be used, to different degrees in various aspects of economic and social life. In the modern world of globalization, where threats from big enterprises/companies from within, and from transnational enterprises from without, there is the potential to cooperate and transform these threats into opportunities. As far back as 1963, Balogh and Bennett mentioned that two sugar factories were run on a cooperative basis to some extent for their milling operations. More recently, in the distribution sector, some medium 'supermarkets' have grouped together and have been ordering their goods as a big purchasing unit. This has helped them to obtain cheaper prices for their goods and has created conditions for them to compete with the 'big' supermarkets.

In the sugar sector, small planters grouped in cooperatives are being encouraged to undergo a Fair Trade Certification process, which provides for a premium of US\$ 60 per ton of sugar. There is a joint project involving OIM group (The Consultants for Fair Trade), Ministry of Business, Enterprises and Cooperatives, Ministry of Agro Industry, Mauritius Sugar Syndicate and Mauritius Sugar Authority which aims at having a greater number of small planters choosing to produce their sugar cane, by adhering to the norms and standards of Fair Trade Certification, and eventually to increase total production of Fair Trade sugar and its consequent Fair Trade premium.

Equally important is the fact that the planters will be empowered through their cooperative societies to be involved in sustainable and community development.

The Fair Trade Certification provides the following benefits:

- i. Stable price of sugar - US\$ 150 per ton;
- ii. Fair Trade Premium for Community Development Programmes - US\$ 60 per ton of sugar produced;
- iii. Empowerment of planters and workers.

In Phase 1 of the project, five Cooperative Credit Societies obtained their Fair Trade Certification in October 2009; they produced 3,000 tons; thus, they received US\$ 180,000 premium, i.e. approx. Rs. 5,400,000.

In Phase 2, 27 CCS have been certified by June 2011, producing 12,990 Metric Tons. The 32 CCS have received Fair Trade Premium of US\$ 271,533 as at July 2011. The Mauritius Sugar Authority covered the accreditation cost of Rs. 325,000. The Fair Trade sugar sold as at July 2011 was 4,525 Metric tons.

Sustainable development is one of the criteria used by Fair Trade; in Mauritius, for example, the use of gramoxone is prohibited and the planters involved agreed to abide by this criterion. Also, there is an auditing of internal management of all cooperative societies so that, in turn, Good Governance is being encouraged.

Thus, both the cooperative movement and the small planters will benefit from the Fair Trade Initiative.

### 6.9 The Labour Struggles of the Post-Independence Period and the New Labour Systems

#### 6.9.1 Post Independence Labour Struggles

The conditions facing Mauritius on the eve of Independence were favourable, not surprisingly, to the development of some major struggles of the labouring classes in the 1970s; other political developments on the part of the Government and the emergence of new political forces/parties,

the main one being the Mouvement Militant Mauricien, contributed significantly to these struggles, in some way or the other.

The level of unemployment and of poverty was very pronounced in the early years of Independent Mauritius; there was a policy of wage freeze in the early 1970s. As a consequence, there was a policy of some resistance on the part of the working class. In the early 1970s, there were strikes on a small scale in different economic sectors like the tea industry, the sack factory, the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and the power sector (Central Electricity Board).<sup>277</sup>

Moreover, as opposed to the 1930s, there already existed Trade Unions and Federations of Trade Unions so that new Trade Unions Federation, the General Workers Federation (GWF), faced some resistance on the part of the former prevailing in various sectors of the economy, including the Sugar Industry.

The State reacted to the situation by adopting a mixture of anti-democratic and repressive legislations such as the Public Order Act of 1970 on the one hand, and attempts to solve problems, on the other hand. Moreover, the former did not prevent the development of major strikes in 1971 by the workers under the leadership of the new Trade Unions and their Federation. For example, there was a major strike of the Public Transport (by bus) Employees in 1971 which was declared illegal by the State. Moreover, the State appointed a Judge, Mr. D. Ramphul, to study the various issues relating to the strike.

In his Report, released on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1971, Mr. D. Ramphul declared that the strike was legal and awarded an increase of 15% in the wages of the workers in Public Transport Sector; he criticised the Ministry of Labour for not managing properly the chain of events.<sup>278</sup>

Similarly, in November 1971, the dockers obtained an increase of 12% in their wages, following strikes organised by them.<sup>279</sup> And the Plantation Workers Union, grouping the 'old' Trade Unions of Labourers and Artisans of the Sugar Industry, campaigned for the implementation of this decision for the workers of the Sugar Industry. And effectively, this decision was implemented, for all sectors of the economy, including the public service.

With the growing discontent among the workers, the Government amended the "Trade Disputes Ordinance" of 1954, with a view to rendering it difficult to hold a strike. Further, the Special Mobile Force was called in to disembark goods in the harbour during a strike by dockers.<sup>280</sup>

By December 1971, a strike started by the Dockers led to a general strike involving many key sectors of the economy: Public Transport, the CEB and the Sugar Industry, amongst others. The State declared a state of emergency and the Riot Unit of the Police Force intervened to break up many public gatherings. And the general strike was called off with many Trade Union leaders of GWF put in prison.

In fact in 1971, there were 19 work stoppages involving 25,845 workers, with 142,916 man days lost.<sup>281</sup> The aftermath of these strikes of 1971 was harsh for the workers, in particular, and for the population at large in so far that certain basic democratic rights were being threatened and even denied.

C. Bhagirutty wrote:

*« Cette vague de répression allait laisser des séquelles des années après, quand le gouvernement vota deux lois iniques, le Public Order Act (POA) qui interdit les rassemblements publics sans autorisation préalable de la police et l'Industrial Relations Act (IRA) véritable écharde dans les pieds du mouvement syndical, puisqu'il rend toute grève pratiquement illégale par de longues et fastidieuses procédures bureaucratiques. »*<sup>282</sup>

In a nutshell, that brief description of the POA and the IRA sums up the fundamental issues at stake. Moreover, the repressive legislation was not sufficient to nip in the bud the willingness of the workers to keep on with their struggles for decent wages and appropriate working conditions. Thus, in 1973, there were 9 work stoppages involving 29,738 workers, with 88,588 man days lost.<sup>283</sup>

In that year, “a long standing issue on the question of non-recognition of workers as permanent and pensionable employees by the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA) resulted in a strike by the Plantation Workers Union in 1973. As a result of this strike, an agreement was reached with the MSPA to the effect that daily-paid workers, after a period of twelve months, should be considered as permanent employees and thus be covered by the Sugar Industry Pension Fund.”<sup>284</sup>

In fact, the Plantation Workers Union succeeded in winning some improvements in their working conditions and various fringe benefits. In the second half of the 1970s, there were many work stoppages, involving many workers, as highlighted in Table 52 below.

Year	No. of Stoppages	No. of Workers Involved	No. of Man Days Lost
1975	69	88,075	124,586
1976	86	67,841	114,716
1977	41	9,629	11,644
1978	33	42,813	46,571
1979	29	64,698	373,058
1980	7	3,760	12,548

In 1978 and 1979, the Plantation Workers’ Union on the one hand, the Sugar Industry Labourers Union (SILU) and the Union of Artisans of the Sugar Industry (UASI) of the GWF, went on strike. In 1978 and 1979, the Plantation Workers Union went on strike to protest against the closure of the sugar factories Solitude and Réunion and to have improvement in various working conditions of the labourers and artisans of the Sugar Industry. The PWU succeeded in winning over some of the demanded improvements. Thereafter, the SILU and UASI started a campaign and a strike on the following issues: the recognition of them as Trade Unions by MSPA, an increase in wages to compensate for rise in cost of living, against the closure of sugar factories, a five-day week for labourers and a 40-hour week for artisans and for a productivity bonus.<sup>286</sup>

The Trade Union leaders went on hunger strike. In the end, a deal was struck between the Trade Unions and the Government; but, meanwhile, 2000 workers lost their jobs because of the strike and some Trade Union leaders were arrested.

Industrial Relations in the Sugar Industry were very often questioned by the Trade Unions; it seemed that till then, the sugar oligarchy found it hard to envisage industrial relations in new perspectives, whereby workers would be treated as human beings with basic human rights, and expecting decent wages and working conditions. Mr. Balogh’s and Bennett’s views were still relevant.<sup>287</sup>

Another sector where workers were unhappy and went on strike was the Export Processing Zone (EPZ). The EPZ represented a sector where since the 1970s, the Government applied a policy of particularly cheap labour, with rather restrictive legislation concerning overtime and the notorious ‘double-cut’ system of the period of indentured labour. The Government wanted to reassure the investors in that sector, both foreign and local, but at the expense of the workers. Thus, in 1985, as a result of mistreatment of two female workers, there was a one-day strike; the State decided to send the Special Mobile Force to the sites of work. Similarly, in January 1989, the workers of the EPZ demonstrated against the closure of factories and the Riot Unit of the Police Force was sent and the workers were attacked.<sup>288</sup> It seemed that Trade Union leaders of the Trade Union Federation, FTU, had to give up their struggle on the one hand, and thereafter, there were hardly any strike in the sector.

By the 1990s and 2000s, there were no work stoppages involving a significant number of workers. Moreover, it is of importance to note that, after sometime, political parties, once in power, tend to ignore the legitimate aspirations of the workers as expressed by their Trade Unions. As a result, there is a split between the political party and the Trade Union with which the party was linked previously. The Plantation Workers Union took a decision to sever links with the Labour Party in 1981.

C. Bhagirutty explained:

*«Après un cheminement long de 43 ans avec le Parti Travailleiste, le syndicat décida de prendre ses distances du parti qui, à ses yeux, ne représentait plus les aspirations légitimes des travailleurs comme indiqué dans une lettre que le président de la PWU adressa au secrétaire-général du P.Tr le 24 avril 1981, énumérant les raisons de la désaffiliation. »<sup>289</sup>*

Similarly, quite some years later, the General Workers Federation would sever its links with the MMM.

### 6.9.2 Labour Legislation and Labour System

The Labour Legislation and Labour System prevailing in the 1970s was that set up during the colonial period. During the 1950s and the 1960s, there were some positive developments in the enactment of some labour legislation. In particular, there were firstly the Trade Dispute Ordinance (GN 36) of 1954 which provided for the unrestricted right to strike, except for employees in essential services. Then, secondly, the Trade Union Ordinance of 1965 provided for the right to declare a strike if there is a deadlock at the level of negotiations/conciliation.

The enactment of the Industrial Relations Act of 1974 unfortunately turned the clock backwards in terms of certain basic rights of workers, especially the right to strike, when compared to the legislations of 1954 and 1965. Two examples would suffice to illustrate the point. Section 92 rendered the right to strike ineffective, since the Trade Union concerned had to give a notice of 21 days to the Minister of Labour who, in turn, could refer the case to the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal. The latter could take sometimes two years to sort out the matter. Further, Section 102 provided for severe penal measures against those who called for, or who participated in, an 'illegal' strike: fines and terms of imprisonment up to one year.

In its report in 1983, the Select Committee on the Industrial Relations Act wrote:

- i. *“The unanimous opinion of the witnesses before your committee was that the Industrial Relations Act had hindered the development of harmonious industrial relations in Mauritius and had been the root-cause of increased antagonism between employers and employees.”<sup>290</sup> Among the witnesses, there were the main trade union federations.*
- ii. *Through the compulsory intervention of third parties, the Industrial Relations Act has discouraged negotiation between social partners and brought about a breakdown of communication.”*
- iii. *“More generally, Your Committee are of the opinion that the Industrial Relations Act is based on fundamentally anti-democratic options, constraining the basic right of workers to organise themselves as a socio-economic force not only for the achievement of better terms and conditions of employment, but also in the process of the economic development of the country as a whole. Your Committee consider the Industrial Relations Act to be a piece of repressive legislation which creates in the individual worker a feeling of fear - fear of being dismissed, victimised and imprisoned on the sole ground that he has striven for better conditions of life.”*

For an industrial relation system to be fair and reasonable, all disputes should, in the first place, be the subject of negotiation between the Trade Union and the employer; i.e. there must be collective bargaining. The Committee highlighted that “Your Committee feel that the introduction of effective bargaining procedures coupled with expedition and effective conciliatory machinery should result in peaceful settlement of disputes, thereby lessening recourse to strike actions as a method of dispute settlement.”<sup>291</sup>

The Committee considered the right to strike as a fundamental Human Right. Thus it wrote:

*“Your Committee strongly consider that, irrespective of the nature and functions of industrial relations machinery, the right to strike should, as a fundamental human right, remain the ultimate weapon of the worker in the furtherance of his rights.”*

The Select Committee made recommendations for a new approach to the industrial relations system and proposed a new legislation to be called ‘Trade Unions and Labour Relations Act’.

However, there was no follow up to the Report of the Select Committee. It was only in 2008 that the Industrial Relations Act would no longer be on the Statutes Book, and it was replaced by the Employment Relations Act of 2008.

It is appropriate to note that, in 1975, the Labour Act<sup>292</sup> was passed and dealt with essentially the rights of the labouring classes. In particular, the Termination of Contracts of Service Board (TCSB) was established within the framework of the Labour Act. That board had the power to enquire into any 'economic' redundancy and make recommendations. It provided for a safeguard for the workers against arbitrary redundancy; but the most common criticism against the TCSB is that it may take a long time before making a recommendation. The Labour Act was replaced by the Employment Rights Act in 2008 and the TCSB had been done away with altogether.

The Employment Relations Act has brought about some improvements in Industrial Relations Legislation. It no longer imposes compulsory arbitration, as used to be the case with the Industrial Relations Act, and it provides for collective bargaining. It reintroduced in some way the right to strike, and provided for instantaneous strike under certain conditions. Section 76 of Part 7, subsection (2) stipulates:<sup>293</sup>

*“Notwithstanding subsection (1), a worker shall have the right to strike where -*

- a) The strike relates to a major health and safety issue that may jeopardise the life and security of any worker, unless the worker has been transferred forthwith to another workplace which is safe and without risks to health; or*
- b) More than 50% of the workers of an enterprise have not been paid remuneration within the prescribed period,*

*and the Minister has been notified and remedial action has not been taken by the employer within a reasonable delay fixed by the Minister.”*

This right of instantaneous strike, as defined by Section 76, is obviously most appropriate, especially in the light of recent labour relations crisis in the sector of Business Process Outsourcing. Overall, the Employment Relations Act provides for the right to negotiate and make provision for conciliation and mediation through the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation. The Employment Rights Act has introduced flexibility, as defined, for example, by normal working hours in Section 14. One feature of this 'flexibility' is particularly detrimental to the worker, when it deals with overtime Section 14, Subsection (2) reads as follows,<sup>294</sup>

*“A worker other than a part-time worker or a watchperson and an employer may agree that the worker works in excess of the stipulated hours without added remuneration, if the number of hours covered in a fortnight does not exceed 90 hours, or such lesser number of hours as may be specified in an agreement.”*

And this is even worse than in the Export Processing Zone when, after having worked for 45 hours, a worker is entitled to added remuneration for working in excess of the stipulated hours. The approach is the same old approach of cost reduction to the advantage of the employer, and at the expense of the worker. Moreover, such legislation does present problems at the level of implementation: at a given place of work, those workers, having started to work before 2008, had an old contract with a different notion of overtime, when compared to the workers who started to work after 2008. And this state of affairs is tantamount to discriminatory practice at one workplace.

Further, there is the gloomy side to the mediation process; in practice, it happens that no conclusion is reached and there is no decision taken. In the field of work related to information and communication technology, and, in particular, in Business Process Outsourcing, there is an entirely new system of organisation of work, for which no legal framework has been defined yet. And, as revealed in the recent crisis in a company involved in BPO, the basic rights and dignity of the employees were not respected. Many employees did not receive their wages/ salaries for months. The relationship between the employers and employees is such that there have been reports in the press of major abuses by the employers. There are international norms and standards which are not respected. The employees have had to go on hunger strike to have their basic rights respected to a certain extent.

This state of affairs is very disturbing in the year 2011 when the workers' rights are considered as Human Rights. One is tempted to compare this with the past. Call centres, the main activity of BPO, represent problems linked to Occupational Health and Safety. Some of these problems are:<sup>295</sup>

- i. Occupational stress like visual fatigue and vocal fatigue;
- ii. Working postures; musculo skeletal disorders;
- iii. Noise related problems like hearing/ acoustic shock.

Given the very specific demands on the employees, the work organisation has to take them on board. For example, the intensity of work in call centres requires that regular rest/breaks away from telephone are essential to protect the health of employees. The absence of a legal framework to regulate the working conditions of employees and the absence of fair Industrial Relations is a matter of concern. In this new sector in the age of information and communication technology, by not defining an appropriate legal framework for Industrial Relations and the organisation of work, is the State allowing the companies to yet again accumulate capital at the expense of the employees?

Although the TCSB was criticised at the level of implementation (e.g. it may take one year to reach a decision), the spirit underlying the TCSB should not be done away with. According to the Employment Rights Act Section 37.4, termination of contract has been facilitated, which is tantamount to be granting a license to employers to fire. Reasons for a closure should be given so that the State may ensure that such a closure is not merely an excuse for the exodus of capital. The TCSB made legal provision for reinstatement in case of unfair redundancy, but the Employment Rights Act does not. By so doing, the State is creating conditions which cause labour to become a commodity as in the old days of slavery and indenture.

Similarly, in the period 1982/83, the *Code Napoléon* was amended so that when a factory is closed, priority should be given to the payment of wages and salaries to workers. But later, this decision was reversed. The recent case of workers going on a hunger strike to ensure the payment of a few months of wages in the BPO sector is a consequence of that decision-reversal.

Another major issue facing the labouring classes is the retirement gratuity, whenever there is a factory closure. With respect to export-oriented enterprises, factory closure tends to be a major issue for the labouring classes. A worker may find himself/herself having worked for five factories in his/her working-life. Each time, the factory closes down; the worker loses his/her retirement gratuity. The latter is paid only at the time of retirement. But then, at that time, the worker might have worked for a short time at the factory, say five years, and then obtains retirement gratuity only for these five years. The State needs to look into the matter (See Chapter 7).

## 6.10 Landownership and Income Distribution

### 6.10.1 Landownership

The ownership and distribution of sugar cane lands during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century give an indication of the extent to which wealth is distributed among the various categories of persons involved in the Sugar Industry.

According to the Agricultural Census carried out in 1940,<sup>296</sup> the distribution of the sugarcane lands by acreage is given in the Table 53 below.

Districts	Estates with Mill		Estates without Mill		Total on Estates	Total off Estates	Grand Total
	Estate Plantation	Planters on Estates	Estate Plantation	Planters on Estates			
Pamplemousses	2540	253	2021	247	5062	3872	8934
Rivière du Rempart	2320	63	1656	59	4097	2217	6315

Flacq	2458	1241	3574	944	8216	3667	11883
Moka	2772	48	1466	0	4286	2109	6395
Plaines Wilhems	1364	362	1081	8	2814	1919	4732
Black River	264	37	1361	0	1662	198	1859
Savanne	5404	599	1403	0	7406	1290	8696
Grand-Port	5466	441	3570	293	9770	2429	12199
Port Louis						32	32
Total	22588	3043	16132	1550	43313	17732	61045
Percentage	15	2	11	1	29	12	40

Thus, approximately 29% of the land was owned by planters and 71.0 % belonged to the sugar estates. Moreover, there were 149 estates of varying areas, as indicated in the Table 54 below.<sup>297</sup>

Acreage ( <i>Arpents</i> )	Estates No.	Percentage	Cumulative %
Less than 100	16	10.7%	10.7%
100 - 200	26	17.5%	28.2%
200 - 401	36	24.2%	52.4%
401 - 801	32	21.5%	73.9%
801 - 1602	26	17.4%	91.3%
Greater than 1602	13	8.7%	100.0%
Total	149	100.0%	

It is of interest to note that in 1930, out of 166 estates, 62 were of less than 200 *arpents* (81 hectares), i.e. 37.3%, whilst in 1940, the corresponding per centage was 28.1%. Moreover, 7 estates, i.e. 4.2% were greater than 1602 *arpents* (642 hectares), whilst, in 1940, the corresponding per centage was 8.7%. The tendency showed clearly the decrease of small-sized estates and the increase of large-sized ones, confirming the trend towards merging of sugar estates or concentration of landownership in fewer hands.

Moreover, the distribution of landownership (off estates) by the small planters reveals the predominance of small acreage, as per Table 55. 91.3% of the small planters had holdings of less than 5 *arpents* (2 hectares).

\* 1 *arpent* = 0.404 hectare; 1 hectare = 2.475 *arpents*

Size of Holding ( <i>Arpents</i> )	Planters No.	Percentage	Cumulative %
0.1 - 1	8263	58.1%	58.1%
1.1 - 5.01	4716	33.2%	91.3%
5.11 - 10.01	675	4.7%	96.0%
10.11 - 20.03	277	1.9%	97.9%
20.13 - 40.06	153	1.1%	99.0%
40.16 - 100.14	98	0.7%	99.7%
100.24 - 300.41	40	0.3%	100.0%
Greater than 300.41	1	0.0%	100.0%
Total	14223	100.0%	

The national average holding per head was 3.1 *arpents* (1.3 hectares). The extent of cane cultivation by the Indian planters showed that there were some estate owners in their midst with a total *arpents* of 5522.6 (2232 hectares), with one estate having a factory.

Districts	Indian Cultivation		Indian Estates	Total Indian Cane Cultivation	Percentage of Total Cane Cultivation
	On Estates	Off Estates			
Pamplemousses	479	3528		4007	18
Rivière du Rempart	122	1974	110	2205	14
Flacq	2175	3163	1175	6514	22
Moka	44	1670	74	1787	11
Plaines Wilhems	369	1698		2067	18
Black River	37	73		110	2
Savanne	565	1091	83	1739	8
Grand-Port	618	2282	791	3691	12
Port Louis		3		3	4
Total	4409	15482	2232	22123	
Percentage	8	28	4	40	15

Thus, using data from Table 57 as well, 14,223 small planters owned 38,310.8 *arpents* (15483 hectares), giving an average of 2.7 *arpents* per planter. Moreover, there were 11 estate owners who owned 5522.6 *arpents* (2232 hectares), giving an average of 502.1 *arpents* (203 hectares) estate owner. By 1940, the social stratification among Indian 'planters' became very pronounced, with a few wealthy ones. The distribution of the size of estate is of interest.

Size of Estate ( <i>Arpents</i> )	Number of Owners
100 - 200	4
200 - 401	2
401 - 801	3
801 - 1602	2
Total	11

Among the two very big estate owners, one owned a factory. Moreover, in 1930, there were 21 estates owned by Indians<sup>298</sup>; the drop to 11 in 1940 could be explained by the impact of the depression of the 1930s.

Table 58 Number of Cane Planters in Different Size Classes of Holdings and Estates 1946 <sup>299</sup>			
<i>Data compiled from Cane Sales Contracts registered at the Central Board and Information supplied by the Deputy Registrar Co-operative Credit Societies.</i>			
A. Small Planters cultivating between:	No. of Planters	%	Cumulative %
0.1 - 5.0 <i>arpents</i>	12,253	91.2%	91.2%
5.1 - 10.0	417	3.1%	94.3%
10.1 - 20.0	307	2.3%	96.6%
20.1 - 50.0	210	1.6%	98.1%
50.1 - 100.0	114	0.9%	99.0%
Total	13,301	99.0%	99.0%
B. Large Planters cultivating between:	No. of Planters	%	Cumulative %
100.1 - 200.0 <i>arpents</i>	49	0.4%	99.3%
200.1 - 500.0	41	0.3%	99.6%
500.1 - 1000.0	14	0.1%	99.7%
1000.1 - 6000.0	5	0.0%	99.8%
Total	109	0.8%	99.8%
C. Estates (with factory) cultivating between:	No. of Planters	%	Cumulative %
1000.1 - 2000.0 <i>arpents</i>	16	0.1%	99.9%
2000.1 - 3000.0	8	0.1%	100.0%
3000.1 - 4000.0	3	0.0%	100.0%
4000.1 - 5000.0			100.0%
5000.1 - 6000.0	2	0.0%	100.0%
Total	29	0.2%	100.0%
Grand Total	13,439	100.0%	
<i>Note: 1 hectare = 2.475 arpents. The data as contained in the report are reproduced here.</i>			

By 1946, the pattern of sugar cane landownership by small planters was rather similar to that of 1940, with 92.1% owning 5 *arpents* or less. Moreover, there was a decrease in the total number of planters from 14,223 to 13,301. But, there was an increase in the number of planters owning between 20 *arpents* and 100 *arpents* to 324, from approximately 251 in 1940.

The up-to-date trends and tendencies are highlighted in Table 59.<sup>300</sup>

Table 59 Distribution of Land among Planters for 1985 - 2009

Acreage of Land ( <i>Arpents</i> )	Number of Planters				
	1985	1990	2000-01	2005	2009
Up to 1.2	17,447	20,052	15,408	14,572	11,489
1.2 - 2.4	14,524	7,108	7,058	6,447	5,347
2.4 - 4.7	1,867	4,210	3,599	3,458	2,835
4.7 - 11.8	587	2,100	1,823	1,893	1440
11.8 - 23.7	138	412	364	340	245
23.7 - 236.9	71	221	150	127	98
Above 236.9		27	45	50	38
Millers*			14	11	6
Total	34,634	34,130	28,461	26,898	21,498

\*The SIFB reports do not give the breakdown for 'millers' for 1985 and 1990; they are included in 'Above 236.9'. Moreover, for 2000-01, 2005 & 2009, the extent of land owned by millers is not given.

It is very much evident that the number of sugar cane planters has been decreasing consistently as from 1990 overall, as well as in all categories of acreage of land.

#### 6.10.2 Income Distribution

As data on income distribution for the population of Mauritius are not published, the best source of information on the issue is the Household Budget Survey carried out by the Central Statistics Office at regular five-year intervals. The last such survey was carried out in 2006/2007. A national random sample of 6,720 households was selected and it should provide a reliable estimate of income distribution for the whole population.

Table 60 gives the income distribution obtained from the Household Budget Surveys for 1996/1997, 2001/2002 and 2006/2007 and helps to grasp the evolution of income distribution during the period 1996 to 2007.

The share of income between 1996/97 and 2006/07 tends to be the same. Thus, as an example, 65.7 % of households who had 37.7 % of total income in 1996/97; in 2006/ 2007, 68.5 % of households had 40.7 % of total income. Moreover, the data for 2001/2002 would give a different picture; Table 61 gives the details.

Table 60 Income Distribution based on HBS<sup>301</sup>

Monthly Household Disposable Income (Rs.)	HBS 1996/97				HBS 2006/07			
	Households (%)	Cumulative %	Total Income (%)	Cumulative %	Households (%)	Cumulative %	Total Income (%)	Cumulative %
Less than 5000	23.7	23.7	7.6	7.6	6.5	6.5	1.2	1.2
5000 - 10000	42.0	65.7	30.1	37.7	20.4	26.9	8.3	9.5
10000-14000	15.6	81.3	17.9	55.6	20.4	47.3	12.7	22.2
14000-16000	4.7	86.0	6.9	62.5	9.1	56.4	7.2	29.3
16000-20000	5.3	91.3	9.2	71.7	12.1	68.5	11.3	40.7
20000 - 25000	3.2	94.5	7.0	78.7	10.5	79.0	12.3	53.0
25000 - 30000	2.1	96.6	5.5	84.2	6.5	85.5	9.4	62.3
30000-40000	1.8	98.4	6.0	90.2	6.7	92.3	12.2	74.5
40000&Above	1.6	100.0	9.8	100.0	7.7	100.0	25.5	100.0
Percentage	100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0	

Monthly Household Disposable Income (Rs.)	HBS 2001/02			
	Households (%)	Cumulative %	Total Income (%)	Cumulative %
Less than 5000	10.2	10.2	2.4	2.4
5000 - 10000	32.4	42.6	17.3	19.7
10000 - 14000	21.0	63.6	17.4	37.1
14000 - 16000	7.3	70.9	7.6	44.7
16000 - 20000	9.8	80.7	12.2	56.9
20000 - 25000	7.6	88.3	11.8	68.7
25000 - 30000	4.4	92.7	8.5	77.2
30000 - 40000	4.0	96.7	9.6	86.8
40000 & Above	3.3	100.0	13.2	100.0
Percentage	100.0		100.0	

The income share of different income groups gives a more precise idea of the inequalities prevailing in income distribution. The following presentation gives the income share of the lowest earning 20% of households and the highest earning 20% of households for 1996/1997, 2001/2002 and 2006/2007.

	1996/1997	2001/2002	2006/2007
1. Percentage of Income going to:			
<i>lowest 20% of households</i>	5.9	6.4	6.1
<i>highest 20% of households</i>	46.2	44.6	45.7
2. Gini Coefficient (A measure of inequality)	0.387	0.371	0.388

In 2006/2007, the lowest earning 20% of households have a share of 6.1 % of total income, whilst the highest earning 20% of households have a share of 45.7%, which is 7.5 times that of the lowest earning 20% of households. In 1996/1997, that ratio was still worse being 7.8.

Overall, inequality in income distribution is 'measured' by the Gini coefficient. When there is perfect equality, i.e., 20% of the households have a share of 20% of income, the coefficient would be equal to 0. When it is equal to 1, this indicates the worst inequality in income distribution possible.

Thus the inequality in income distribution in 2006/2007, with Gini coefficient 0.388, became worse than in 2001/2002 when the Gini coefficient was 0.371.

Moreover, the various indicators of income and expenditure given below reveal that between 2001/2002 and 2006/2007, there was "no significant change, after adjusting for inflation"<sup>304</sup> in average monthly income.

Table 63 Income & Expenditure

Table 63 Income & Expenditure			
Base year 1996/97 = 100			
Indicators of Income & Expenditure	1996/97	2001/02	2006/07
CPI	100	132.9	178.3
Average Monthly Household Income	10179	14232	19083
Average Monthly Household Real Income	10179	10709	10703
Median Monthly Household Income	7870	11150	14640
Median Monthly Household Real Income	7870	8390	8211
Average Monthly Household Expenditure	8609	11390	15238
Average Monthly Household Real Expenditure	8609	8570	8546
Median Monthly Household Expenditure	6209	8154	11054
Median Monthly Household Real Expenditure	6209	6135	6200

When the inequalities in income distribution become more severe, then, more often than not, this state of affairs leads to poverty. In Mauritius, there is no official poverty line; moreover, a relative poverty line defined as half the median salary is commonly used. With this definition applies to an adult, we have the following data.<sup>305</sup>

Table 64 Poverty

Table 64 Poverty			
Indicators	1996/1997	2001/2002	2006/2007
Poverty Line	Rs. 2,004	Rs. 2,804	Rs. 3,818
Estimated number of poor households	23,800	23,700	26,900
Proportion of poor households	8.7	7.7	8
Estimated number of poor persons	92,700	93,200	106,100
Proportion of poor persons	8.2	7.8	8.7

Whilst the proportion of poor households decreased from 8.7% in 1996/1997 to 8.0% in 2001/2002, that of poor persons increased from 8.2% to 8.7%; this data indicates that, though there was a drop in 2001/2002, there is a tendency for an increase in poverty in Mauritius.

Increase in poverty tends to produce certain behavioural patterns. Thus, the monthly household consumption expenditure (expressed as a percentage of total expenditure) shows a consistent increase for the consumption of alcoholic beverages and tobacco from 8.9% in 1996/1997, to 9.1% and 9.5% respectively in 2001/2002 and 2006/07.

### 6.11 Concluding Remarks

When Mauritius became independent in 1968, the economy grew as part of the overall Colonial Empire which produced an extreme international specialisation rendering it vulnerable and fragile. In particular, the economy was very much dependent on the preferential trade provided by the British Colonial Power. Large-scale unemployment and poverty were the symptoms of that fragility. On the other hand, the process of social stratification, which has been taking place since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, produced a new bourgeoisie from among the emerging planter class, the new elite and the new business community. Today, this bourgeoisie controls State power. Further, the country is 'imprisoned' to a certain extent by its history. The sugar oligarchy still controls the Sugar Industry and has extended its control to some extent to the tourist sector, export-oriented industries and financial services.

The economic diversification which took place after Independence was a success; the mono-crop economy has been transformed into five pillars which allowed Mauritius to adapt to threats and changing circumstances on the international and local scenes. A number of authors have agreed on the fact that the economic diversification has been a major success. Further, although major progress has been achieved in the field of Education, Health and Social Security, there are still major problems. Yet, we have more than 100,000 poor persons out of a population of 1.2 millions, i.e. representing about 8 % of the population. Why is this so?

The Cooperative sector is an area which could have helped in economic diversification and genuine empowerment of the labouring classes. But poor internal management and corruption have prevented a significant take-off of the cooperative movement. Yet it could have helped enormously in the struggle against poverty, social exclusion and in job creation. From Dr. M. Curé to Balogh, suggestions were made to enhance the cooperative movement. Attempts to set up a sugar factory run on a cooperative basis in the 1980s failed because of the resistance of vested interests. In India, there is such a factory in Maharashtra which produces yearly 6,000,000 metric tons of sugar. The State and the new elite failed in respect to the setting up of a sugar estate by small planters on a cooperative basis.

Environmental degradation has been a major problem since the Dutch and French colonial periods. With the rapid development of the Sugar Industry in the nineteenth century, the destruction of forests has had a major impact on water supply which is a major problem nowadays. Post-independence industrialisation and the increasing traffic intensity made matters worse. Some mitigation of that long process of environmental degradation is now taking place.

The economic and social structure of Mauritian society has not fundamentally changed from the point of view of labouring classes: though there is a larger multi-ethnic bourgeoisie, and a larger multi-ethnic middle-class, yet the economic and social structures are such that wealth and, more generally, the ownership of means of production (land, banks, trade/commerce, factories etc.) has been restricted to a rather small minority involving both the old and new bourgeoisie. The value and belief systems of colonial society and, in general, of Capitalism have permeated the minds of the new bourgeoisie, of the political elite, of the new middle class and even, to some extent, of the population at large. As a result, the strategy for development has been such that the economic and social structures have been consolidated and the root causes of unemployment and poverty have not been tackled. The old system, reformed to a certain extent, prevails, together with its obvious limitations like acute material disparity/ inequality between the social classes, social exclusion, corruption and poverty. The basic rights of the labouring classes as workers are still not being given due recognition. In particular, labour is being treated more and more as a mere commodity. The tendency is that workers are not considered as human beings, but as mere factors of production.

Admittedly, Mauritius being a small Archipelago Republic, there are constraints to its development. But, there are possibilities which should have been explored and which need to be explored, at least to mitigate the problems facing the labouring classes and the poor.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“What was achieved fascinated subsequent generations who attempted both to romanticise the founders of the empire and invest all of them with qualities they never possessed...Drake, Morgan and American pioneers were endowed with such contemporary virtues as manly courage, fortitude, comradeship and a love of adventure for its own sake, and the ruthless pursuit of profit was under played or left unmentioned. This was a distortion both of the men and their motives, but an attractive one which, during this century, has been given a new lease of life through Hollywood’s popular swash buckling movies [...]”<sup>306</sup>*

### 7.1 Conclusion

Slavery and the indentured labour system in Mauritius were developed and sustained by Colonial Powers: the Dutch, the French and the British. Profit brought the first colonisers to Mauritius and has dominated life ever since.<sup>307</sup> There has been a striking continuity underlying the process of colonisation by each of the colonial powers: on the one hand, the development of specific economic and social structures and, on the other hand, economic exploitation and social oppression and exclusion. A rigid class and racial hierarchy was established.

A turning point was reached in the 1830s with the legal abolition of slavery and the importation of indentured labour from British India. Not only the trauma of slavery, but also the harsh conditions of apprenticeship and of abolition contributed to the leaving of sugar estates by ex-enslaved people. They were paid very low wages based on those of indentured labour and they lost the housing facilities and the land which they had been cultivating for decades. They could not reconcile their newly-acquired ‘legal’ freedom with their loss of basic necessities like land and housing. They were excluded from the new Capitalist System, and most of them earned a meagre living by fishing with primitive equipment and by working as stevedores, drivers and artisans. Many were somewhat permanently unemployed, forming a lumpen proletariat living on the margin of the plantation (sugar) economy.<sup>308</sup>

Moreover, the subservience of the economy to the British Colonial Empire with (amongst others) its free trade policy and adoption of the cheap labour policy and the frequent economic depressions in the international economy and in Mauritius led to a growing lumpenproletariat, together with unemployed ex-indentured labourers. Under such circumstances, other sectors of the economy would progressively come under the fold of very cheap labour, excluding those used to working for somewhat higher wages. Unemployment and poverty were very much prevalent by the last third of the nineteenth century and in the major part of the twentieth century.

Epidemics of cholera and malaria, together with cyclones, would make matters worse for the labouring classes and the growing lumpenproletariat; so much so, that the Royal Commission of Enquiry of 1909 expressed concern about the level of poverty and about the amount of government relief to the poor. Nevertheless, the plantocracy kept on pressing for the importation of indentured labour to sustain its cheap labour policy, creating further unemployment and poverty. And the Colonial State caused further impoverishment of the labouring classes and the poor by levying heavy taxes on them. And the Royal Commission essentially recommended measures in favour of the plantocracy, with hardly any for the labouring classes and the poor.

By then, the internal dynamics of the economic system, through the need to modernise the Sugar Industry to face international competition, created the conditions for the parcellisation of land. In the process, those excluded from the plantation economy did not, and could hardly, become buyers. On the other hand, those mainly from the ex-indentured labourers, the job contractors, the *sirdars*, the traders, the middlemen would become small landowners. A new social class of small and medium planters was born and a new business community and elite was in the making. The emergence of this new social class did not fundamentally have a major impact on the prevailing large lumpenproletariat and generally on the poor. The overall social structure would prevail, except with this new transformation: the plantocracy and the Colonial State would continue to be the supreme powers.

Another major turning point in the historical development of Mauritius was the unparalleled resistance of the labouring classes (especially in the 1930s and 1940s) to the oppressive and exploitative system: the strikes and marches of the labourers and small planters of 1937, the strike of the dockers and labourers of 1938 and the strikes and marches of the labourers in 1943. Preceding these events, the Mauritius Labour Party was founded in 1936 by Dr. Maurice Curé, assisted soon afterwards by Emmanuel Anquetil. The Colonial State would react with a mix of approaches: repression, divide and rule tactics and accommodation.

A host of changes would follow in various aspects of the society. A new era of Industrial Relations was ushered in, measures to help the small planters class especially in its relation to the sugar oligarchy were put into practice, major constitutional developments, including universal suffrage in 1959, took place. On the societal level, a new bourgeoisie/elite emerged. Experts were sent by the British Imperial Government to study the economic and social state of affairs and to make recommendations: Meade, Titmuss and Balogh. The Colonial Power in the end controlled the situation and created conditions, with the help of the elite and the business community, to grant Independence to Mauritius. But, the perennial problems of unemployment and poverty were still prevalent. Social exclusion had become a permanent feature of Mauritius; economic power was still concentrated in the hands of the sugar oligarchy, whilst the new bourgeoisie stepped to the shoes of the Colonial Power and made its way slowly into the world of business. An entrenched economic and social system developed and nurtured over more than two centuries, prevailed.

During the post-Independence period, major changes took place: economic diversification, development of educational facilities like free secondary education and the setting up of public universities, expansion and improvement of the public health system as well as the private one, development of wide-ranging social security system. Moreover, fundamental changes to the economic and social structure did not materialise. Whilst economic power remains concentrated in a small minority, including the new and the old bourgeoisie, political power is controlled by the new bourgeoisie.

Depending on the prevalence of economic boom or depression, the labouring classes face alternate conditions of relative well-being or very hard times. Unemployment and poverty, admittedly on smaller scale than in the 1960s, are prevalent, so much so that social exclusion has not been eradicated. On the contrary, with ultra liberal economic policies and the international economic crisis, inequality is on the increase; factory closures are more frequent and poverty and social exclusion are still entrenched in Mauritian society.

Colonialism, together with slavery and indentured labour, has had consequences of a systemic nature. The policies of the post-Independence era have, only to a limited extent, succeeded in mitigating these consequences. But still, cheap labour policy has been adhered to; in new sectors, like BPO, and in new privatised services, like cleaning, working conditions are awful and, in the latter case, very low wages (about Rs. 3500) prevail. No doubt, improvements have been made in the economic and social fields. But the old capitalist system, reformed to a certain extent, still prevails with its obvious limitations like acute material disparity between the social classes, social exclusion, corruption and poverty.

## 7.2 Recommendations

In the light of the analysis carried out in this Study and in the light of the diagnosis of the prevailing problems and issues, the recommendation made here demand a major shift in attitude towards economic and social development. But there is an urgent need to provide compensation for reparation of social ills and problems in the making during more than two centuries.

1. The Colonial Powers, Holland, France and Britain, must be asked by the Government of Mauritius to pay compensation for implementing the slave system, and later the indenture system, and thus bringing underdevelopment for the majority of the people of Mauritius.
2. The Creation of a Special Fund to be Managed Independently of the Yearly Budgetary Exercise: Some of the sources of the Fund would be the revenues obtained by increasing the Corporate Tax from 15% to 20%. The decrease of Corporate Tax from 30% to 15% over

the last few years was exaggerated. Equally, another source of the fund would be a 2% tax on profits of the banks which have benefitted a lot from various policy decisions lately\*.

3. **Decent Wage For Decent Work:** We should remember that slavery and indentured labour were, amongst other things, labour systems. There should be an overhaul of the labour system. Firstly, a decent wage for decent work policy should be adopted. Whilst the notion of a decent wage will be defined in different sectors of the economy through consultation with labour and capital, the notion of decent work has been defined by the International Labour Office as far back as 1999.<sup>309</sup> It includes, *inter alia*,
  - i. rights at work whether in the formal or informal economy;
  - ii. the obligation to promote the possibilities of work;
  - iii. protection against vulnerability and contingency arising from unemployment, loss of livelihood, sickness or old age;
  - iv. social dialogue.
4. **Migrant Labour:** Review the conditions of migrant labour and their implementation, especially the non-respect of conditions relating to dormitories as well as conditions relating to site of work.
5. **Gender Policies:** Women and the unemployed are being targeted as reservoirs of cheap labour. Discriminatory wage rates against women and generally occupational segregation should be done away with. Economic structuring, as it has occurred in the Sugar Industry and in the EPZ, is characterized by redundancy, low incomes/wages and high levels of insecurity. Whilst both men and women do suffer from this state of affairs, women workers are much more likely to be the victims.
6. **Re-skilling:** As far as the export-oriented enterprises, which are being restructured, are concerned, there is now a new trend (e.g. in UK) for enterprises to provide the training required for the re-skilling of the workers. Workers concerned should not be made redundant but should be provided with appropriate training.
7. **New Emerging Sectors and the BPO:** The setting up of enterprises in emerging new sectors, the workers should not have very harsh working conditions as has been the case in BPO. For enterprises involved in BPO, given the new type of work environment and new health hazards, there is an urgent need for defining the appropriate legal framework to ensure decent wages and working conditions for the workers.
8. **A Paradigm Shift - Cooperative Development:** The influence of the State since the inception of the cooperative movement and of the new elite espousing values and practice contrary to cooperative principles and values have had a negative effect on the cooperative movement. There is a need to adopt a new approach to cooperative development. Cooperative development, which respects the cooperative values and principles, as defined by the International Cooperative Alliance<sup>310</sup>, provides for a genuine empowerment of everyone, and certainly the poor and the needy ones. In 1966, the International Labour Organisation adopted the Cooperatives (Developing Countries) Recommendation, 1966 (No. 127), which called for Governments to aid cooperatives without affecting their independence. We recommend that:
  - i. the State introduces the teaching of cooperative values and cooperative principles in the school curriculum;
  - ii. given that cooperative savings existed at schools in the past, the Government and other educational authorities should re-introduce the school savings project to enhance cooperative spirit and to put into practice cooperative values and principles;

- iii. in view of the international financial and economic crisis, and given the international competition, and given the small size of the economy of Mauritius, Government should take the initiative to suggest and encourage the cooperative approach in business, to varying degrees, to face increasing challenges and threats.

The population at large and the Trade Unions in particular, should be made aware of the potential for development and for genuine empowerment of everyone concerned, through cooperatives. The potential to take into consideration the social dimension of economic development and to get the community more involved can be materialised in the medium- and long-term. In Singapore, about 50% of the consumer sector is controlled by cooperatives. Further, the cooperative movement could be more effective in bringing community involvement in dealing with the environmental problem, especially in the context of the project *Maurice Ile Durable*.

Ultimately, the Cooperative Sector should be able to co-exist effectively together with the Public and Private Sectors. For this to be possible, there is a need for a new leadership which adheres to cooperative values and principles.

9. **Low-Cost Housing:** More low-cost housing on the model used in Valetta, should be implemented. Four hundred and four hectares (1000 *arpents*) out of the eight hundred and eight hectares (2000 *arpents*) to be provided by MSPA could be used for that purpose. It is understood that, so far, only 162 hectares (400 *arpents*) have been used.
10. **Land for Descendants of Employees of Railway Lines at time of Closure of Railways and for Dockers at the time of Opening up of Bulk Sugar Terminal:** The Sugar Industry has had to go through major phases of restructuring during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The latest one, involving MAAS, provides amongst other things, for compensation in cash and in kind to employees. Each employee is entitled to a plot of land of seven perches. The laudable initiative is most welcome. Moreover, in the not too distant past, the Sugar Industry underwent other phases of restructuring, when the railway lines were closed in the 1960s and when exports in bulk sugar were initiated in the late 1970s, then, the employees have had only cash compensation. Additionally, given the poor plight of their descendants and especially among the descendants of dockers, we recommend that the descendants of each employee should be given a plot of land (per employee at that time), in the spirit of the compensation in cash and in kind currently applicable in the Sugar Industry.
11. **Labour Market and Employment:** Recruitment and selection of employees both in the public sector, and in the private, should be made according to merit. For this policy to be effective, there must be openness in the recruitment exercise so that the broad public is kept aware of all steps and procedures involved well in advance.
12. **New Social Contract:** There is a need to define a new social contract in Mauritius, whereby the labouring classes are not considered as mere factors of production, with certain obligation/duties, but as human beings with fundamental rights and participating fully in wealth creation of the country. The State should do the needful, in terms both of introducing new appropriate legislation, and of contributing in the development of a new mind-set both in the public and private sectors. The State should further give due consideration to better communication with the people at large and to making the public sector more responsive and welcoming in the provision of various services to the population at large. The private sector must not restrict itself to an eternal cost-cutting exercise in its factories at the expense of Health, Safety and Welfare of the labouring classes.

In the fight against poverty and social exclusion and other consequences of slavery and indenture, action should be taken in the employment sector, especially in the private sector and, in particular, in the sector of the export-oriented enterprises. We recommend the following measures:

- i. The Employment Rights Act should be amended so that there is not a license to 'hire and fire'.

- ii. Whenever there are no valid reasons for economic redundancy, the Law should be amended to provide for reinstatement of the redundant workers. The Law, as it stands, does not do so, so that the Industrial Court cannot give its ruling for the reinstatement of the workers in such circumstances.
- iii. There is a need to be inspired by Dr. Curé's struggle for a minimum wage. There is a minimum prescribed wage rate which prevails in each sector, but there is no minimum wage across the sectors. A minimum wage should be introduced.
- iv. The *Code Napoléon* is to be amended so that, whenever there is a factory closure, first priority should be given to the payment of wages and salaries of all employees.
- v. Workers should be paid for their overtime work on a daily basis, not after forty-five or ninety hours of work.
- vi. The tendency for many workers is to have been employed for more than one factory during their working life, possibly by as many as four/five factories. As explained in Chapter 6, the worker ends up with a very small gratuity retirement arising out of his/her last employment. We recommend that the Government introduces a portable retirement gratuity by creating a Special Fund. Each time a factory closes, the employer should place in that Special Fund the entire retirement gratuity to which the redundant workers are entitled. Thus, by the time of his/her retirement, the worker would obtain his/her due as gratuity retirement.
- vii. The right to strike by workers should be considered as a fundamental Human Right. The possibility of incorporating this right in the Constitution should be given serious consideration.

The above recommendations would ensure, to some extent, that workers are not treated as mere commodities, but as human beings with their basic rights and dignity. This, in turn, would represent a major step towards severing the links with the remnants of slavery and indenture, when workers were not considered as human beings but mere factors of production.

13. Land: Land, being a valuable scarce resource, the management of it should be done with transparency so as to ensure that the people of Mauritius derive the maximum benefits. This includes access to beaches, as well as the lease and sale of State Lands. As far back as Ordinance 18 of 1874, there was provision for the sales of Crown Lands by public auction and the granting of leases of such lands by either public competition or private contract. And it prohibited the grant of 'jouissances' limited or unlimited. The spirit underlying this Ordinance should underlie any contemporary legislation.

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According to the classic ‘value of marginal product’ theory of the wage of a worker, slave or free, wages are defined as follows:

$$w_t = \frac{\partial f_t}{\partial L} P_t \quad (1)$$

where  $f_t$  is the total sugar production,  $w_t$  is wage at time  $t$ ,  $P_t$  is price of the commodity produced at time  $t$ ,  $L$  is labour, and  $\frac{\partial f_t}{\partial L}$  is the marginal product of labour. In other words, wages at time  $t$  are equal to the value of marginal product of labour or the result of multiplying the number of units produced at the margin by the price at time  $t$  of a unit of that output. Wages are evidently not an issue in a slave system so instead we will account for shadow wage which is a measure of the exploitation of the slave’s labour by the owner.

Since the value of the slave is the present value of the wages expropriated (net of upkeep and monitoring costs) we can write the expression for the value of the slave as follows:

$$NPV_{t=k} = \sum_{t=k}^{t=L} \frac{\left[ \frac{\partial f_t}{\partial L} P_t - U_t \right]}{(1 + \delta)^{t-k}} \quad (2)$$

where  $t=L$  is the years the slave will be used that is the effective useful life of the slave. The  $U_t$  term is defined as upkeep costs in time  $t$  and the discount term  $\delta$  defines the rate of time preference, where current investment and borrowing is traded off against future consumption. However, there are several types of uncertainty, which take the form of transaction cost discounts, to the value of a slave. The first, easily incorporated into equation 2 above, is uncertainty about commodity prices  $P_t$ . Secondly, owners were concerned about the possibility of slave revolts in groups, or escapes, either of which were likely to make the slave unavailable for service. Consequently, this form of uncertainty takes the form of a probability distribution defined over a discrete outcome set: either a slave continues in service, or is lost forever, due to escape or participation in a rebellion. Finally, there is uncertainty over the prospect of the abolition of slavery. Again, the form of the outcome is discrete, with a high probability that abolition will not occur, and some small probability that it will occur in any given year. Like escape, however, abolition is forever: if it occurs, the value of the slave is lost.

To capture this logic in terms of a discount for the likelihoods of escape or emancipation, consider the following equation:

$$[1-E_s] * [1-E_m] = [1-E_m-E_s+(E_m*E_s)] \quad (3)$$

where  $E_s$  and  $E_m$  are Boolean operators, taking the value “true” (1) if the slave escapes or is emancipated, respectively. It is difficult to analyze such an equation probabilistically since each separate occurrence of escape or emancipation would constitute a separate event (e.g. “escape in year 7” is different from “escape in year 13”). So, we will make two simplifying assumptions: (1) We will only consider the case where the slave neither escapes nor is emancipated over his entire useful life; and (2) the likelihood function can be described as the product of a sequence of independent probabilities. With these assumptions, the risk discount factor for escape/emancipation can be written as a likelihood function:

$$\prod_{t=k}^L (P_{es,t} P_{em,t}) = (P_{es,k} P_{em,k}) \times (P_{es,k+1} P_{em,k+1}) \dots \times (P_{es,L} P_{em,L}) \quad (4)$$

A simple example reveals just how sensitive this discount factor is to even small changes in the subjective assessment of the ‘safety’ of an investment in slaves. Imagine that a potential slave-buyer believes that the chances of a successful escape are zero, and that emancipation is

impossible. Then there is no risk discount at all, and equation 2 describes the value of the slave. But then suppose that the prospective buyer learns new information and decides that the probability of escape is actually 0.001 in any given year, and that the probability of emancipation is also 0.001. What is the discount? From equation 4, we know that it is  $(P_{es}P_{em})_{L-k}$ . Imagine that the slave is expected to have a useful life of 10 years; then the discount is  $(0.999*0.999)^{10}=0.98$ . This means that the prospective buyer who believes that the chances of either emancipation or escape are low will pay very nearly the full value of the expected marginal product of the labour of the slave. What if the slave has a 30-year expected useful life? The discount then would be  $(0.999*0.999)^{30}=0.94$ . A 5% discount for the total risk of escape or emancipation would influence the price.

The fully-elaborated model of value of slave will be as follows:

$$ENPV_{t=k} = \sum_{t=k}^{t=L} [P_{es,t} P_{em,t}]^{t-k} \frac{\left[ \frac{\partial f_t}{\partial L} P_t - U_t \right]}{(I + \delta)^{t-k}} \quad (5)$$

where ENPV is expected net present value.

The model captures the potential sources of variation in the present value of slave-ownership that one would expect to observe. The easiest, in economic terms, are the ‘price of output’ and ‘marginal product of labour’ variables. If the price of sugar, or the productivity of slaves working in sugar, rises then the price of slaves is expected to rise also. The time rate of discount represents the opportunity cost of the labour tied up in labour assets.

The interesting feature of the model is the impact on asset prices of the probability that slavery will be abolished. Even a small risk of abolition had to be taken extremely seriously because it affected the value of the entire future income stream. If an individual changed their expectations, even slightly, about the persistence of the slave regime, the amount they would pay for their slave would also shift. A rational individual would then buy a slave if the expected present value of slave-labour exceeded the price at which slaves could be purchased at auction. In terms of the model,  $P_{em}$  would be greater under the British rule than before with the near abolition of slavery. This, in turn, would imply that, *ceteris paribus*, EPV also increased. On the other hand, if abolition seemed unlikely, then  $P_{em}$  would have remained essentially constant over time with, *ceteris paribus*, no change in EPV.

Appendix 2

An Analysis of Slave Prices (Breakdown by Different Occupations)

Inprice	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
InSugarOutput	0.175 (12.110)***	0.164 (11.420)****	-0.063 (0.580)
Age	0.045 (14.500)***	0.044 (14.190)***	0.046 (16.470)***
Age2	-0.001 (20.120)***	-0.001 (19.740)***	-0.001 (22.260)***
Sex	0.125 (6.670)***	0.128 (6.860)***	0.106 (6.730)***
CDM	0.196 (6.860)***	0.189 (6.590)***	0.148 (5.880)***
Malagasy	0.130 (4.380)***	0.131 (4.420)***	0.102 (3.910)***
Mozambique	0.087 (3.070)***	0.083 (2.920)***	0.064 (2.520)**
Invalide	-0.608 (2.000)**	-0.610 (1.930)*	-0.760 (2.710)***
Domestique	0.033 (0.840)	0.036 (0.930)	0.025 (0.820)
Equarisseur	0.265 (2.610)***	0.279 (2.730)***	0.179 (2.890)***
Pioche	-0.119 (3.370)***	-0.119 (3.420)***	-0.147 (5.110)***
Manoeuvre	0.088 (1.690)*	0.080 (1.550)	0.037 (0.830)
Cuisinier	0.195 (3.360)***	0.198 (3.450)***	0.198 (4.570)***
Macon	0.138 (2.840)***	0.136 (2.810)***	0.175 (4.230)***
Gardien	-0.252 (3.950)***	-0.267 (4.150)***	-0.316 (5.470)***
Commandeur	0.276 (4.760)***	0.280 (4.890)***	0.211 (4.240)***
Charpentier	0.260 (5.220)***	0.261 (5.300)***	0.240 (6.030)***
Charretier	-0.030 (0.650)	-0.025 (0.540)	0.054 (1.470)
Blanchisseur	0.151 (2.340)**	0.153 (2.360)**	0.079 (1.570)
Calfat	0.458 (8.270)***	0.407 (6.990)***	0.422 (8.150)***

Cloutier	0.392	0.360	0.257
	(5.750)***	(5.000)***	(3.920)***
Cordonnier	0.200	0.178	0.071
	(2.190)**	(1.990)**	(1.090)
Forgeron	0.276	0.262	0.288
	(2.890)***	(2.840)***	(3.650)***
Gardien de troupeaux	-0.246	-0.251	-0.272
	(3.380)***	(3.510)***	(4.760)***
Matelot	0.367	0.342	0.276
	(4.700)***	(4.280)***	(4.120)***
Menuisier	0.362	0.365	0.339
	(4.590)***	(4.610)***	(4.630)***
Natteuse	-0.003	0.000	-0.066
	(0.030)	(0.000)	(0.750)
Palfrenier	-0.037	-0.029	-0.095
	(0.390)	(0.310)	(1.070)
Pecheur	0.063	0.072	0.032
	(0.820)	(0.940)	(0.520)
Scieur	0.361	0.372	0.133
	(4.580)***	(4.740)***	(2.490)**
Sucrier	0.235	0.251	0.176
	(3.220)***	(3.460)***	(3.260)***
Couturier	0.289	0.305	0.222
	(4.010)***	(4.170)***	(3.570)***
Quarter 2		0.011	-0.025
		(0.460)	(1.330)
Quarter 3		0.019	0.030
		(0.900)	(1.600)
Quarter 4		0.139	0.038
		(6.670)***	(1.820)*
Year 1824			-0.080
			0.630
Year 1825			-0.382
			(2.860)***
Year 1826			-0.291
			(4.060)***
Year 1827			0.064
			(0.820)
Year 1828			0.469
			(7.550)***
Year 1829			0.401
			(7.610)***
Year 1830			0.342
			(6.690)***
Year 1831			0.141

			(2.860)***
Year 1832			-0.039
			(0.760)
Year 1833			-0.308
			(6.150)***
Year 1834			-0.389
			(7.680)***
Year 1835			-0.598
			(8.800)***
Constant	3.001	3.082	5.496
	(19.250)***	(19.650)***	(4.810)***
R-Squared	0.372	0.379	0.590
Number of Observations	5511	5511	5511

Notes: (a) \* significant at 10 per cent; \*\* significant at 5 per cent; \*\*\* significant at 1 per cent

(b) Absolute T-statistics are reported in parentheses after correcting for potential heteroscedasticity.

Appendix 3

An Analysis of Slave Prices (Breakdown by Occupation Categories)

Inprice	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
lnSugarOutput	0.175 (12.070)***	0.163 (11.310)***	-0.115 (1.080)
Age	0.050 (16.120)***	0.049 (15.840)***	0.051 (18.280)***
Age2	-0.001 (21.630)***	-0.001 (21.280)***	-0.001 (24.050)***
Sex	0.140 (7.810)***	0.142 (7.990)***	0.125 (8.300)***
CDM	0.197 (6.790)***	0.190 (6.560)***	0.150 (5.850)***
Malagasy	0.111 (3.680)***	0.111 (3.710)***	0.081 (3.050)***
Mozambique	0.076 (2.650)***	0.071 (2.490)**	0.048 (1.870)*
Invalide	-0.497 (1.590)	-0.497 (1.530)	-0.631 (2.190)**
Factory Workers	0.298 (15.510)***	0.293 (15.250)***	0.289 (18.380)***
Domestic Workers	0.168 (9.280)***	0.172 (9.460)***	0.177 (11.600)***
Quarter 2		0.005 (0.230)	-0.033 (1.740)*
Quarter 3		0.007 (0.350)	0.018 (0.940)
Quarter 4		0.134 (6.350)***	0.037 (1.780)*
Year 1824			-0.037 (0.290)
Year 1825			-0.367 (2.750)***
Year 1826			-0.208 (2.930)***
Year 1827			0.116 (1.490)
Year 1828			0.519 (8.490)***
Year 1829			0.472 (9.390)***
Year 1830			0.421 (8.870)***

Year 1831			0.232
			(5.170)***
Year 1832			0.034
			(0.710)
Year 1833			-0.221
			(4.770)***
Year 1834			-0.308
			(6.620)***
Year 1835			-0.554
			(8.100)***
Constant	2.823	2.921	5.766
	(18.460)***	(19.050)***	(5.140)***
R-Squared	0.351	0.359	0.572
Number of Observations	5511	5511	5511

Notes: (a) \* significant at 10 per cent; \*\* significant at 5 per cent; \*\*\* significant at 1 per cent

(b) Absolute T-statistics are reported in parentheses after correcting for potential heteroscedasticity.

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# **A SCRAMBLE FOR SOULS: MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN POST-EMANCIPATION MAURITIUS (1840-1895) AND ITS IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

MNA	Mauritius National Archives
Archives S. Sp.	Archives de la Congrégation du Saint Esprit. 30, rue Lhomond, Paris.
Archives Evêché	Evêché de Port Louis. Ile Maurice. (Private Archives)

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1840, Mauritius, formerly Isle de France, already had a complex history which was to become more complex with the Indians - Hindus and Muslims - and the Chinese being added to the ex-slaves mainly of Malagasy or African origin, to the Coloured people, the Whites. Among these last ones, were some of French origin and colonists in the country, the others being British and new administrators of the island; they were to form a population in search of its identity and to see imposing one which would be imposed upon them by the dominant racial oligarchy. It is within this complex socio-political system that the Church would have to integrate itself.

Research on missionary intervention in Mauritius has progressed rather slowly,<sup>1</sup> but it has recently gained momentum within scholarly and public discourse, exploring the role played by missionaries in the immediate post-emancipation period and its impact on contemporary Mauritian society. Indeed, the years 1860-1895 were marked by dynamic exertions on the part of the Catholic and Protestant Churches to bring the former apprentices and indentured immigrants within the pale of their respective churches.

This study begins with a brief survey of missionary interventions during the pre-emancipation period, when the majority of the population were non-Christians although Catholicism was the only official religion. Next, the missionaries are discussed in terms of their unique role as intermediaries between the Colonial Authorities and the colonized peoples through evangelization. This is followed by special attention being paid to the areas of Education and Public Health in which the missions made their greatest impact, but where the State's concern for promoting basic literacy and numeracy, the Church's interest in indoctrination and practical training, and the people's wish could never be fully reconciled.

Finally, the third consequence of the missionary experience concerns the relationship between Church and State. The controversial issue of collaboration between missionaries and colonial enterprise in Mauritius or the dominant oligarchy is discussed. For any but the most anticlerical of scholars today, however, relations between the two forces can be seen to range from close collaboration to open conflict; and how we assess the dominant tendency of any particular Church will depend on the empirical historical record, as well as the ideological outlook of the particular researcher.

## CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND TO CATHOLIC MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

### 1.1 Prelude to Catholic missionary movement

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century and part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, France had developed a '*régime de chrétienté*, and spurred by the Gallicanist trend, Catholicism was raised up to the status of a State Church. Consequently, Catholicism was theoretically the only official religion practised in the Colony during French occupation. That situation stemmed from the status of that religion in France, where it was the State religion. In practice, however, the majority of the inhabitants in the Colony, as a matter of fact, were non-Christians.

The intellectual and spiritual development of slaves, the overwhelming majority of the population at that time, was almost entirely neglected. Although the *Code Noir* prescribed the compulsory conversion of slaves to Catholicism,<sup>2</sup> the Lazarist missionaries in Isle de France, for pastoral reasons, boldly discarded that legally-binding obligation<sup>3</sup>, without in the least suffering political interference or being disturbed by the Colonial Authorities. Indeed, the *Code Noir*, as Amédée Nagapen remarked, drew an idealized picture of the religious life of the slave, not easily achievable in practice. On the one hand, the slaves who were unloaded from the vessels of the slave traders had their own religion. Plunged brutally into the slave system of Isle de France and forced to fight for a painful survival in a French-speaking foreign society, they were quickly stripped of their language, their religion, their habits, in short, of their culture. Moreover, factors such as the mode of life of the masters, their daily needs for manpower, the requirements of the Sunday drudgeries, the impossibility of sanctioning the delinquents, made it impossible to abide to the decrees of the *Code Noir*.

On the other hand, the missionaries, in practice, adopted different standards, more pastoral principles in conformity with their conviction that faith is a gift of God, a supernatural grace. Consequently, ignoring the rules of the *Code Noir* which ordered the baptism of the slaves and Catholic religious instruction, the Clergy of Isle de France initially took care of catechism and then of the ceremony of baptism, depending on the dispositions of the catechumen. Above all, they took care not to baptize inconsiderately slaves who then generally precipitated in cohabitation, could not receive the sacrament of marriage.<sup>4</sup>

For obvious reasons, in Isle de France, there existed neither mass catechizing nor mass Christianisation, still less mass administration of baptisms.<sup>5</sup>

So, as regards to the slave population, in spite of the legislation in force, the majority were not Christians. The Government just had to rest content with the existing situation.

It must be noted that Roman Catholic missionary enthusiasm waned at the dawn of the eighteenth century, following the traumatic experience of the French Revolution.

Yet, by the 1830s, following the changing attitudes of the planting community and during the amelioration period, some local Catholic priests started catechism with the slaves. Nagapen outlined the work of Father Déroulède in the 1830s among the slave population. At the opening of a new Church at Flacq in 1832, *Le Cernéen* of 27 September rejoiced that both the inhabitants and their slaves should be able to receive a religious instruction.

But despite all these efforts, it could scarcely be expected that Christianity would have made much progress among the slaves, given that they met with such harsh treatment at the hands of men professedly Christian, or that the prayers which they were compelled to offer up every evening for the welfare of their masters could not have been uttered with much sincerity.<sup>6</sup>

#### The Indian Catholic slaves

Historical documents record with certainty that the Indian slaves were integrated into the burgeoning Mauritian population as far back as 1729. From 1729 to 1731, the vessels of the French East India Company landed no less than 3,300 slaves on the two islands of whom 2,000 had been captured in Madagascar, 1,000 along the various coasts of Africa and 300 in India.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of

their country of origin, they were all designated under the generic name of 'Blacks', including those of India.

### Legal theory and missionary practice

Although the *Code Noir* prescribed the baptism of slaves, in their field-work, however, the Lazarist priests followed different norms, pastoral ones, in keeping with the God-given grace of faith. Thus, whilst the royal *Code Noir* set forth that the slaves should be baptized and instructed in the Catholic religion, the local Clergy carried out religious teaching first and administered baptism afterwards, depending on the disposition of the applicant.

The priests were never in any hurry to admit a catechumen slave to baptism. Thus, in spite of the introduction of slaves to the Isle de France as early as 1722, Mr. Borthon, the Apostolic Vice-Prefect, did not confer baptism on any slave before 1725. On 11<sup>th</sup> March of that year, he baptized the very first slave couple and on that same day, he blessed their union in matrimony.<sup>8</sup> The Lazarists, as a rule, would admit into the Church through baptism only those who had given evidence of their willingness and determination to abide by the Church's moral teaching. Because of the promiscuity attendant on slavery, they would baptise adults, when these were imported, on condition that they could settle down in matrimony, monogamous and indissoluble.<sup>9</sup> They therefore fostered the ideal of married family life for the youths, a policy backed by the French East India Company, albeit not for the same reason: Young people who were married would not think of marooning.

As regards to the period of probation and instruction undergone by Indian catechumens, it would vary. In any case, the request to convert to Christianity came in the wake of an irresistible process of depersonalization. Usually, the Hindu slaves, many of them Gentoos from Bengal (unconquered as yet by the English), were first rigged out by their masters with a French name or nickname that ripped off their external Hindu personality. Next, they were per force subdued to an un-Indian way of life, fed on the slave diet (manioc and so on), clad with the coarse blue denim, holding on to the Creole patois for communication and survival, and prevented by the local environment from professing their ancestral faith. Stripped, to that extent, of their cultural identity, the Indians would look towards Catholicism, the official and exclusive religion. The young male adults would turn all the more easily to Christianity as through scarcity of Indian women, they were left with no alternative but to marry female slaves of other ethnic groups. The Indian children, in all events, were christened in infancy, like all slave-born children, and as is the traditional practice in Catholic families. Musleem Jumeer goes so far as to state that:

*"The civil status registers of the early years of colonisation of the island show the existence of the island show the existence of a great number of Indian female slaves who have their new-born babies christened."*<sup>10</sup>

On 19 July 1760, Mr. Le Tellier, a Lazarist priest of St. François of Assisi Parish, administered the sacrament of baptism to eight children, all slaves of Le Page, an inhabitant of Flacq. One of them was an Indian baby-boy, Vincent, *illegitimate child of Louise, Indian slave, born a month ago*. It is worth noting that all Indian slave-born children - according to public records, Civil Status registers, censuses and elsewhere - are categorised as Creole slave (native slaves). As a result, within the span of one or at most two generations, the latter had suffered a total loss of whatever link they have might maintained with their Indian origins.

To revert to the implementation of the *Code Noir*, stress should also be laid on the local practice that was a far cry from the legal prescriptions. Thus, as the Law prohibited official marriages between White and Black partners (Art. 9), concubinary unions prevailed, with no penal sanction. On the other hand, on Sundays, those Catholic Indian slaves were expected to attend mass and religious instruction, or the religious function on the owner's estate. In fact, hardly any Indian slave could benefit from such facilities. *Corvées* had to be performed on Sundays and religious Holidays. Besides, their occupation as domestic servants precluded them from benefiting from such legal weekly rest. Room-cleaning, cooking, serving at table allowed no break, not even on Sundays.

Clearly, the legal framework and the social environment encompassed those Indian men and women in such a tight set-up that an infallible course of events led them - many of them understandably, and all their offsprings invariably - to the Catholic Church.

How numerous were they? It is difficult to have an exact, or even an approximate figure, of the number of Indian slaves especially, since this early phase of local religious life remains shrouded in a misty lack of documentation. Moreover, the historian needs to be wary of the pitfalls of Christian names that are unreliable indicators of Catholic membership. Furthermore, the Catholic profile of the Indian slaves is very slight, as the latter are, all in all, but a marginal element of the slave population of Mauritius over the period 1722-1735.

## 1.2 Restructuring of the Church after 1840

The mid-nineteenth century represented a turning point in the History of the Church in Mauritius. Apart from the various social changes taking place in the country (abolition of slavery and apprenticeship), there was also a need for a Catholic revival. If the Roman Catholic Church could embark on such a revival, it was largely owing to the zeal and personality of Mgr. Collier who happened to be the right man at the right time.

During the century-long presence of the Benedictines in Mauritius, the episcopate of Bishop William Bernard Allen Collier (1841-1863) stands out remarkably, as the period during which the Catholic Church experienced a conspicuous spiritual regeneration; this revitalization that contrasted with the lethargy that it had endured over the first three decades of British colonization.

Undoubtedly, the lasting impact of Bishop Collier's episcopate sprang from a pastoral plan that he had already been actually conceived, although nowhere formulated on paper. It probably originated right from the time he was designated the Vicar Apostolic of Mauritius.

The outline of his policy can be sketchily drawn around the following guide-marks:

- reading the signs of the time;
- recruitment of Clergy;
- founding of new parishes;
- introduction of religious congregations;
- lay apostolate;
- Fund-raising measures.

### Reading the signs of the time

As soon as he set foot on the island, he became aware of the real nature of the motley population; religious life was a mere veneer of Catholicism. The majority of the population was formed by the large class of former slaves recently emancipated. In that impoverished and illiterate community, tens of thousands were not even baptised; educational institutions for boys as well as girls were really scarce.

Besides, he was quick to observe a few trends that were gradually modifying the profile of the colony, especially the influx of Indian immigrants working on the ever-expanding sugar plantations. Similarly, he was attentive to the repeated calls from the small dependency of Rodrigues, and as soon as he could spare a priest, he began the evangelization of the neighbouring island.

Furthermore, as time elapsed, conflicts arose between the Government and the Church. On these occasions, Bishop Collier's reactions enable us to picture his views on the State-Church relationship.

In order to effectively bring the Gospel to such a large and multicoloured population, the bishop needed collaborators, especially priests. So, his primary concern was to recruit missionaries from abroad.

## Recruitment of the Clergy

An adequate number of suitable priests was of paramount importance to evangelize the inhabitants of the colony. When he embarked for Mauritius on board the *Tanjore* in 1841, he took along with him an English Benedictine, Dom Stanislas Giles, an Irish priest, John Larkan, another one from Savoy, the Abbé Rovey, and Jacques Desiré Laval, a French missionary, whose priestly ministry was to operate a real transformation of minds and hearts and to cause the Christian faith to take root in an enduring way in Catholic families.<sup>11</sup> On his arrival, the Bishop had found eight priests in the Colony. However, without losing time, he had to interdict, three of them and soon afterwards, two others left the island.

Bishop Collier was but two years in Mauritius when he decided to return to Europe on a recruiting spree (1843-1845). His mission was a fruitful one. He was able to enlist eight priests, of whom six were Irishmen and two Belgians. One of the Belgians, the Abbé Xavier Masuy, proved a most successful apostle of the educated white classes. Later, the Bishop was successful in bringing in other Belgian priests, such as the Reverend Paquet, and the Reverend Frederick Muijhe.<sup>12</sup>

Then as from 1846, through a liberalising step taken by Downing Street, he was able to admit alien priests as well, even those of French nationality. At his request, the Holy Ghost Congregation of Father F. M. Paul Libermann<sup>13</sup> started sending missionaries to the island. When he finally left Mauritius in 1862, his Clergy had reached the impressive total of 35.

Better still, as from 1860, non-British priests were authorised to apply for naturalization. This process, initiated by Bishop Collier had far-reaching consequences over the following decades and on the future of Catholicism in the Colony. Henceforth, the "Open Sesame" enabled alien priests to freely undertake missionary work in Mauritius and to earn their salaries from the Public Treasury. From that time to the end of the nineteenth century, over 94 alien priests - all of them Frenchmen save two Belgians and two Italians - thus took advantage of legislation to apply for, and to obtain, their naturalization as British subjects in Mauritius.<sup>14</sup>

With the increasing number of priests, the educated classes - White Voltaireans and Gallican Catholics, as well as Coloureds with an inclination for Protestantism - were brought back to the Catholic fold. A few priests, like the Abbé Xavier Masuy,<sup>15</sup> dedicated themselves with success to that apostolate. Furthermore, the Black maids and servants who were being evangelized by Father Laval, in turn evangelized their white employers.

## Clergy for the Future

In order to provide the colony with an adequate Clergy in the future, Bishop Collier launched a three-pronged strategy:

First, he cautiously observed the attempts of Father Libermann to provide "British born" priests to Mauritius. On 19 February 1842, only five months after his landing in the colony, he stated his intention of directing English or Irish seminarians to Paris, with the hope that some of them would join the missionary institute of Father Libermann.<sup>16</sup>

During his trip across Europe (1843-1845), he applied for seminarians from Baltimore, who would be trained in the French novitiate of Fr. Libermann.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, Fr. Libermann, around that period, contemplated the opening of a branch of his Congregation in Ireland and in England. But that wish did not materialise.

Later, in 1849, Bishop Collier entertained the project of sending four young Irishmen, then studying at the Benedictine Douai Abbey in France, to Fr. Libermann, in the hope that they would enter his novitiate.<sup>18</sup>

In 1853, Father Laval suggested the recruitment from the seminary in Rome of British subjects from Malta who would enter the Holy Ghost Congregation and could thus be sent to Mauritius.<sup>19</sup> But no real thought was ever given to that possibility.

So, all in all, none of the above endeavours ever materialised!

The second point of Collier's strategy was directed towards Ireland. During his visits to Europe (1843-1845 and 1850-1851), he called at the *All Hallows* missionary seminary in Ireland, where he presented his requests. The steps which he took met with some success. He enlisted several students for the colony. As a matter of fact, of those enlisted, only six in all actually came to work in the Diocese. He also addressed similar pleas to *Saint-Patrick's College, County Carlow*. There, as well, he made several recruits, but after their ordination, they all opted out and went to minister elsewhere.

However, during his episcopate, thanks to his negotiations, sixteen Irish priests came to Mauritius, although only seven out of that number actually worked for more than seven years in the Colony.<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, he set up bursaries to finance the studies of the Irish seminarians. The funds for that purpose had to be raised in the Colony. However, the Bishop also applied to the Colonial Government to bear those expenses.<sup>21</sup>

Strangely enough, while Bishop Collier was striving hard to enlist European missionaries for his Diocese, at no time seemingly did the idea of indigenous vocations strike him. Yet, worldwide, a process of recruiting and training youngsters in mission territories had already been triggered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Benedictines in Mauritius, however, seemed to have remained impervious to such an eventuality throughout a century of their presence in the Colony.

Paradoxically, the Protestant Government in Downing Street positively imagined the feasibility of young Mauritians being selected and trained for the priesthood. In his despatch to the Governor, the Secretary of State for the Colonies hazarded the view that such a project should be presented to Bishop Collier.<sup>22</sup>

### Establishment of new parishes

As regards places of worship, Bishop Collier succeeded in materializing that chapter of his pastoral policy.

In 1841, there existed only five parishes. With the increase in population, a good number of villages were, therefore, far away from the parish centres, and the faithful in those rural areas forcefully petitioned for extra parish churches. As soon as he had recruited a handful of additional priests, he therefore set up new parishes.

With the arrival of more and more priests, Bishop Collier was in a position to set up additional parishes in various disadvantaged districts. Thus, by 1846, his Clergy had increased to 12 and he established 3 new parishes (St. Philomena's, Poudre d'Or; St. John's, Quatre Bornes; St James, Souillac). Ten years later, there were 15 priests in the Colony, and in 1861, they numbered 35. Consequently, two other parishes were established in 1849: Holy Ghost, Rivière Sèche; and Holy Saviour, Bambous; in 1859, another one: St. Augustine, Black River, and finally in 1862, that of Notre Dame de la Salette, Grand Bay.<sup>23</sup>

### Religious Congregations

Right from the start, Bishop Collier considered what valuable assets religious congregations would prove to be in the implementation of his pastoral policy.

His first connection occurred fortuitously. After his Episcopal ordination in Rome on 3 May, 1840, he made a stopover in Paris, where he was informed of the burgeoning institute set up by Francois-Marie Pascal Libermann, the Congregation of the *Saint-Coeur-de-Marie*, with the aim of sending missionaries to French colonies. Clerverly and successfully, Collier volunteered to act as the Bishop Protector that the nascent institute was in need of. Thus, for the ordination to the priesthood of the founder F.M.P. Libermann and of the first contingent of his followers, Bishop Collier was the one who granted the canonical Dimissory Letters. Astutely enough, as Bishop Protector, Collier had anticipated the coming to Mauritius of those missionaries. On that score, he experienced real disappointment, as Libermann dispatched his religious priests to other African mission territories. Still, Collier welcomed to the colony the very first missionary of that religious institute, Father Jacques Désiré Laval, and a few years later a string of other Holy Ghost missionaries.<sup>24</sup> Better still, from 1841, the *Holy Ghost Congregation* had unflinchingly sent to the country over a hundred religious

missionaries, from France, Britain or Ireland, who kept involving themselves in a wide range of pastoral activities, from parish duties to educational, catechetical and other occupations.

Another male congregation that Collier welcomed into the Diocese was the *De la Salle Brothers*. Both Bishops Slater and Morris had unsuccessfully tried to bring the teaching Order into the Colony. The Reverend J.-D. Laval and X. Masuy, for their part, together with the Saint-Vincent de Paul Society, succeeded in enlisting these religious from Reunion Island and thus satisfactorily answered Bishop Collier's expectations. The first De la Salle community landed on 8 December 1859. They straightaway opened a free primary school in Port Louis, followed by other primary and secondary schools over the island. They operated a breakthrough in the educational field for youths, by organising evening classes, technical courses, boarding schools and especially, by initiating joint school ventures, whereby paid boarding-schools financed the running of free primary schools.<sup>25</sup>

The Prelate was also fortunate to obtain nuns for the colony, as a result of attained only after knocking in vain at several European doors. In any case, on 8 September 1845, he landed at Port Louis, accompanied by three priests and eight Loreto nuns from Ireland. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Teresa Ball had inaugurated in Ireland a branch (Loreto) of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded by Mary Ward in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When in 1844, Bishop Collier visited Rathfarnham, Teresa Ball was inspiring the community with such a missionary zeal that eight of the nuns readily volunteered to expatriate themselves and to devote themselves to the education of Mauritian girls. In the colony, the Loreto nuns embarked on a pioneering enterprise and their influence on the education of girls, both Catholic and non-Catholics, as well as on subsequent family life, can hardly be exaggerated. This influence was all the stronger as for over a century on other religious congregation ran high schools for girls and even the Government did not open its first college for girls until 1951.<sup>26</sup>

Now Bishop Collier's pioneering drive now led him to found a local congregation of nuns, that of the Bon-et-Perpétuel-Secours.<sup>27</sup> At one time, as he carried out parish work in Port Louis, he had been the spiritual director of a young Mauritian woman, twenty-five years old, Caroline Lenferna de Laresles. He helped her mature her vocation, entrusted her to the Loreto nuns for her noviciate and received her religious vows in 1850. She had taken her name of Marie Augustine. The Bishop confided to her care the burgeoning diocesan congregation. As he was sailing to Europe, he appointed the able Reverend Xavier Masuy Chaplain of the institute.

A number of young Mauritian women joined the community, which prospered under the holy and charismatic leadership of Marie Augustine. The co-founders wanted the nuns to look after the poorest and most destitute. She thus opened a variety of charitable institutions, previously unknown: hospitals, hospices and infirmaries for the sick and for the old people, crèches for abandoned babies, orphanages for boys and girls, a Lazar-house for lepers and, above all, free primary schools for boys and girls in many localities.

With the encouragement and support of the Bishop, the diocesan congregation went on thriving, benefactors assisted with contributions, novices steadily applied for admission to that life consecration, dedication and poverty. Even the Government Authorities paid tribute to the exemplary and dedicated work of these nuns.

Sadly, the behaviour of the two following Benedictines Bishops turned out to be abusively detrimental to the developing and delicate congregation.

Bishop Collier's episcopate might have been enriched with an extra congregation that of the *Filles de Marie*, a Diocesan Institute of the neighbouring Reunion Island, founded by Marie Magdeleine de la Croix. Assuredly, all parties concerned wanted a foundation in Mauritius. That wish, however, did not materialise owing to an intractable attitude on the part of a stubborn Collier. Just as he held full authority over the Bon-et-Perpétuel-Secours Congregation, a Diocesan body, he obstinately demanded that he similarly be the undisputed superior of the Filles de Marie in Mauritius in lieu of the canonical and appropriate superior, the Head of the Church in Reunion. Only after Collier had resigned as Bishop of Port Louis were the *Filles de Marie* able to set up their first convent in Port Louis.<sup>28</sup>

For the sake of accuracy, mention should be made of the presence of the French community of Sainte-Marie-de-la-Famille which contributed positively in the field of education from 1860 to 1887. Those nuns had been called to Mauritius by the Reverend Julien Pierre Le Boucher, an experienced

educationist. Although Bishop Collier had authorized them to stay in his Diocese; in point of fact, he unaccountably and disdainfully ignored them and their positive apostolate as well.<sup>29</sup>

### Lay associations

No lay associations had existed before the administration of Bishop Collier.

During the 1840 decade, several religious groups came into being, backed up by the Clergy. One that did not lack originality was undoubtedly the *Association Chrétienne*, founded by Tristan Bardet in 1848. The latter, a laureate of the Royal College of Port Louis, subsequently studied for the priesthood at Oscott Seminary in England.

Clearly, the most popular associations were the confraternities that sprang from the midst of the communities motivated by Father J.-D. Laval and his fellow-missionaries as from 1846. These associations, firmly structured and regulated, assuredly energized the Christian way of life of those neophytes. Lads and men followed the banner of Saint Joseph; young ladies those of Sainte Cecilia or Sainte Lupercile. Married women and mothers gathered around Sainte Anne. A great number of faithful joined the Association of the Rosary. For those black men and women determined to place themselves among the élite of the community, and they were enlisted in the Confrérie du Saint-Scapulaire.

In the Cathedral Parish, Port Louis, Father Laval and his missionaries established the Arche-confrérie de Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, directly affiliated with the head office of that international confraternity in Paris.

Father Laval also initiated a fairly far-reaching enterprise: a relief fund. He wanted the poor ex-slaves to be aware that around them were to be found still poorer fellow creatures. So the faithful set up a *Caisse de Charité*, to which they contributed in a spirit of solidarity and from which they helped out victims of cyclones, fire and other disasters or they helped finance funeral costs.<sup>30</sup>

Indisputably, the organisation that was the most widespread and actually the most efficient one was the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. The first conference was formed in Port Louis in 1855, and steadily reached the various parishes. Those conferences gave an opportunity to upper class laymen to be involved in charitable activities. On the advice of Father Laval, the Vincentians invested significantly in primary schools for the benefit of the popular classes.<sup>31</sup>

Bishop Collier encouraged the appearance and expansion of a set of Marian confraternities. Thus, the Bon-Secours Sisters, with the active support of the Bishop, developed in the country the Arche-confrérie de Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette. By 1872, that pious association included over 800 members.

Worthy of mention was the concerted and successful petitions to the Colonial Government of an array of influential laymen over the 1840 decade. These people were not members of any informal religious body. Still, by their addresses to Downing Street and their simultaneous overseas media campaigns, they skilfully and successfully submitted the grievances and expectations of the Mauritian Catholics. An outcome of such bold steps was, among others, the permission for foreign priests to come and work in Mauritius. This liberal measure enabled Bishop Collier to enlist a steady flow of Holy Ghost and other European missionaries.<sup>32</sup>

### Fund-raising measures

Bishop Collier was continually confronted with a distressing want of funds. In fact, money problems have really been a feature of all Catholic Bishops in Mauritius, Benedictines as well as others.

The development of Catholicism entailed the building of new churches in the capital as well as in the rural districts. To that end, Bishop Collier set up a *Comité chargé de l'œuvre de la construction de nouvelles églises catholiques au Port-Louis*. He nominated to that committee meritorious notables, assisted by a dedicated team of *Dames de Charité*.<sup>33</sup> The latter organised yearly fund-raising activities, charity bazaars, various collections. The proceeds enabled Bishop Collier to buy several plots of land and to help finance building sites.

However, the large scale enterprise of Bishop Collier that engulfed inordinately large sums was actually the building of the Episcopal palace. Unquestionably, the head of the Catholic Church needed a self-contained apartment as well as a diocesan central office<sup>34</sup>. As the construction of the Bishop's house spanned over four years (1849-1853), money grew scarce. The Bishop embarked on a string of savings and financial cuts that might undoubtedly have caused some harm to a few pastoral activities. It should also be observed that from the start, rightly or wrongly, there were dissident views, some of which were vocally expressed in local newspapers.<sup>35</sup>

## CHAPTER 2 AN APPRAISAL OF MISSIONARY INTERVENTION IN POST-EMANCIPATION MAURITIUS

Any study of missionary history must consider the fact that many Christian missionaries overseas were surprisingly ill-prepared for their work. This is not to say that these evangelists were lacking in zeal or determination or to ignore that some of them contributed, in some ways, toward the development of the country. But in general those who accepted the call to the colonies knew little about the societies they hoped to redeem from "barbarism."

### Evangelization of the ex-apprentices: its implications

The major change in the profile of the Catholic Church under Bishop Collier was clearly the conversion of the emancipated slaves, the free Creoles and the Coloured people. As from his arrival in 1841, he assigned that community to Father J.-D. Laval, who, after five months in the Colony, expressed his concerns in relation to the mission among the ex-apprentices in a letter to Galais:

*"This unfortunate colony is in a pitiful state. There are some eighty thousand Blacks on the island and I am alone to care for them. Half of them are not baptized, even those who are, live like idolaters. Very few get married in the church. They take and leave one another several times; they are given to drunkenness and impurity and all kinds of pleasures of the flesh. They have been snubbed so often that they no longer go to church, they rarely call a priest to administer the last sacraments to the dying. Most of them know nothing of their religion; they cannot even make the sign of the cross."*<sup>36</sup>

The neglect and abandonment of the ex-apprentices by the Clergy angered both Father Laval and Bishop Collier. In October of 1841, the Bishop informed Libermann, the Superior and founder of the missionary of the Holy Heart of Mary, that:

*"I could not imagine that a Christian country could end up in such a state of moral degradation. The Europeans sometimes ignore their religion, but the people here are absolutely like the inhabitants of China or Kamtchatka. How could it be otherwise? No one has ever given them the least consideration. They have been forsaken like beasts of burden."*<sup>37</sup>

Father Laval had thus identified the challenges which he faced and concluded that he was in unfamiliar territory. He expressed his concern in a letter to his uncle in July 1842:

*"One can find oneself in circumstances that are not found in France nor in other countries and one does not know how to behave. These are cases which have never been spoken of in theologies, and one hopes for the best, for I have no-one to consult since we have never taken care of the poor and unfortunate Black population."*<sup>38</sup>

### But how did Father Laval overcome the challenges of his ministry?

Without a specific plan, Father Laval was forced to play it by ear. He evangelized the ex-slaves in his own unique way by devising plans and strategies as the need arose. His lifestyle and personality would greatly influence the decision of the ex-apprentices to convert to Christianity. From the very beginning, Father Laval went against the norm. Instead of living with his fellow-priests at the presbytery in Port Louis, he felt that there was a need for him to be amid the people he came to serve. To him, the presbytery was confined and he knew that the ex-slaves were hesitant to come there. At his instigation, Bishop Collier erected a wooden shack to accommodate Laval's "*dear black children*". It was approximately 32 square metres and it became the Centre for his mission. Father Laval set up his own room at one end of this "hut".

### Communication Problems

Fr. Laval was faced a communication problem because he could not converse in Creole. During the first three years of his ministry, he spent time at the school for the emancipated slaves; he took notes on their vocabulary, their figures of speech and their cultures.<sup>39</sup> This decision played an important role in the conversion of the emancipated slaves. He could now communicate more effectively. This drew the Blacks closer to Jacques Laval who assimilated into the black society - he lived in a hut, he avoided contact with the Whites and he spoke their dialect.

### Shortage of Priests

The lack of priests was by far the greatest impediment of Fr. Laval's ministry. Government's antipathy towards French priests was a major obstacle to evangelization. Since French priests were not allowed on the island, the Church had to recruit them from other parts of Europe, but the majority of them did not speak French and their ministry was confined to baptisms and funerals. The problem was so severe that even the Protestants argued the cause:

*"It is, in our opinion, an unjust and absurd restriction; it is a blow to religious liberty for by imposing English priests, that is, men who will never speak French well, one removes from the apostolic see all prestige and all efficiency. We Protestants admit freely that we would revolt against an order which imposes priests who speak English."*<sup>40</sup>

From 1841-1853, out of 33 priests whom Bishop Collier had enlisted since 1841, only 14 were active in 1853: 8 British, 2 Belgians and 4 French Spiritans. A parish priest was thus responsible for 7 to 8,000 souls.

### Lack of priests generates lay participation

The shortage of priests was a major cause for the change in the lives of the ex-slaves. Fr. Laval set out on a unique journey which revolutionized and revived the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century. By involving lay participants, Fr. Laval based his method of evangelization on four pastoral practices that a century later, would be endorsed and propounded by The Second Vatican Council:

- Indigenous catechists: lay men and women, many of them married couples, many of them former slaves and virtually illiterate, but thoroughly well-catechized;
- The setting up of innumerable small Christian communities;
- The evangelization of the ex-slaves by the ex-slaves;
- A network of places of gathering and of worship.

Laval saw what no one else had before him - that the ex-slaves were called to act as apostles in the Church by virtue of their baptism. He felt that these people ought to live in small Christian communities in order to live their faith and to fulfil the obligations of their baptism. To further increase their interest in the faith, Fr. Laval and the Spiritan brothers grouped them in confraternities according to sex and age.<sup>41</sup>

In front of the immensity of the task, and not being able to be everywhere, Fr. Laval chose lay men and women, many of them married couples, many of them former slaves and virtually illiterate; his colleagues and he himself directed and supported the apostolate of these lay collaborators who proved to be devoted and competent.<sup>42</sup> However, whether the catechists had an understanding of what they had to preach, and the fact that they would endeavour to spread the same message to the catechumens, is not certain.

The Counselors had the responsibility of the sick and the catechists that of the catechumens. To facilitate their work, Father Laval will draft for their benefit the "Small Catechism" (*petit catéchisme*) which presented, in a simple vocabulary full of imagery, the essentials of the Christian faith. So, slowly, the ex-apprentices were called to participate in a more and more direct way in the life and in the mission of the Church.

The former slaves' antagonism towards the Whites caused them to be suspicious of Fr. Laval when he first arrived. To overcome this, he sought them, first of all, in their homes where he even heard their confessions. Houses and huts in and around Port Louis, as well as in other parts of the island, were used for catechism and to pray. Some of these centres became makeshift chapels in which mass was celebrated. As more people flocked to catechism classes, the small chapels were extended and eventually, they became large churches. These chapels were built in such haste that many of them were destroyed by cyclones, due to their weak construction. They were later rebuilt of stone.

By April 1847, ten chapels were under construction in the neighbourhood of Port Louis, and by 1848, there were forty. In the following years, chapels were built in rural districts also. The ex-slaves contributed by providing as much land and material as they could while those who were poor donated of their labour.

### Impact of Lay Auxiliaries on the Community

Over the years, the involvement of the lay auxiliaries shaped the religious, social and in a small way economic structure of Mauritius and the names of at least sixty of them have survived.<sup>43</sup> These disciples of Laval went to every corner of the island in order to evangelize the ex-slaves population. At the end of March 1846, Le Vavas seur wrote: "*The black population outside Port Louis is totally abandoned.*"<sup>44</sup> However with the help of the auxiliaries, Fr. Lambert was able to report at the end of 1852: "*The farthest districts have seen the light; the greater part of the work is done.*"<sup>45</sup> All praise must go to the catechists who were "immensely useful". To Fr. O'Dwyer they were indispensable:

*"I am convinced that a priest, with the help of well organised catechists, would be more useful than two priests without catechists. His flock would be better instructed, the sick better cared for, and the scandals would be stopped sooner; there would be more order and regularity in the parish."*<sup>46</sup>

The contribution of the auxiliaries to Fr. Laval's ministry was immense in terms of impact on the Mauritian community. They became the link between Fr. Laval and the ex-apprentices who became Christians. By involving the lay participants, Fr. Laval had given the ex-slaves responsibility which helped to improve their self image.

### Breaking down barriers

Father Laval's ministry to the ex-slaves was especially productive because he did not approach them as one who was superior to them, as most white people did at that time; instead, he became like one of them in poverty. His lifestyle, his paternal affection and his sermons were directed towards restoring the pride and confidence of the ex-apprentices. One of the ways in which he did this was by crossing a boundary forbidden by the Whites. Besides living and speaking like the ex-slaves, Fr. Laval also entered their homes. This behaviour was seen as an affront to the Whites, but the ex-slaves were honoured that a white man should come into their homes.

### The Fruits of Laval's Ministry

Being in contact with ex-slaves on a human cultural level was considered as a betrayal of the whole White society of the island.<sup>47</sup> Regardless of this, Father Laval's popularity filtered through the multitude of ethnic origins of Mauritians - Europeans, Africans, Indians, Malaysians, Malagasy and Chinese. His success is reflected in the diversity of the first converts, their different races, ages and sex and the different trades in which they engaged. Fr. Laval had already baptized thirty young illegitimate children, when on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 1841, four catechumens were received to the Church by Bishop Collier. They were Cassimir, an Indian aged 70, René Baton-Brède, an African from the Mozambique Coast, Pierrot Hiescomah, a fisherman and Marie Calou, a washerwoman. The last two, natives of Madagascar, soon after their baptism received the sacrament of marriage. On the following Friday, Michel Tablier, a mason originally from Malaysia married a Creole dressmaker, Sophie Fanchette, while the maid of the presbytery - a native of Madagascar - married Charles Congo. These two had been living in *de facto* relationship for years. On the same day, a carpenter native of the Comoros Islands married a creole dressmaker.<sup>48</sup>

In May 1847, 3,000 people were converted; of these 1,400 received communions. In December of the same year, 7,000 were converted and two masses had to be said for the ex-apprentices on Sundays. Between 1847-48, Jacques Laval and his colleagues baptized approximately 600 adults: 300 Madagascans, 170 Mozambiques, 75 Creoles, 40 Indians, 20 Malaysians or Chinese and 20 converts from the Seychelles. These figures are, however, deceiving for the majority of converts were Creoles, already baptized when they were young. Marriage Registers show that at the time 1,500 people, two-thirds of them Creoles were married by the missionaries.<sup>49</sup>

Yet, despite Laval's success, it seems that many of the converts were Christians by name only as he himself acknowledges it:

*"...the players and drinkers have abandoned religion entirely for some time, they no longer go to the confession, they have absented themselves from the communion table, and they live, as they did, in all sorts of dirty and horrible habits. All that they have retained of religion, is attendance at mass on Sundays, and very often miss it [...] and the rosary is hung on a nail in their home or perhaps has been lost for some time."*<sup>50</sup>

The ex-apprentices were mostly illiterate (10 apprentices out of an estimated population of 70,000 were reportedly able to read and write in 1836)<sup>51</sup> but the majority had very good memories. Whether or not they understood what they were memorizing would probably have depended on the individual's ability to do so. Overall, Fr. Laval found it difficult to teach these illiterate and ignorant men and women *"who did not know their right hand from their left"* and whose minds were not used to stimulation, and that is why he prepared the simple catechism in order to make religion accessible to the ex-slaves.<sup>52</sup>

He advised his missionaries to also teach the faith simply and to reflect their virtuous lifestyle, when doing so as the apostles did because:

*"...if you reason with these poor people, they will want to reason too; you will even teach them to argue about what you said and this will be a disaster."*<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, it can be argued that Fr. Laval was more interested in saving the souls of the ex-apprentices rather than in awakening their class consciousness in order to lead them into the mainstream of Mauritian society. Although the ex-slaves and the coloured population represented a political threat to the White society for they outnumbered them nine to one, they never made any demands on the Government and Father Laval never pressed them to do so. The Creole society of pre-Emancipation Mauritius was highly segmented where race was concerned, and remained for another century, the fundamental factor. Society was pyramidal in structure with the white - descendants of French colonists and some British occupying the apex - and the slave at the broad bottom and the Coloured people in between<sup>54</sup>. This situation was never questioned by Father Laval.

## 2.2 The Indian Mission: attempts at evangelizing the Indian Immigrants

Well before the French Revolution in the 18th century, Indians had come to the colony either as slaves or as freemen. At the British conquest of 1810, a great number of them were already Catholics.

In the wake of the abolition of slavery and the expansion of the Sugar Cane Industry, an ever increasing number of extra workers were needed. So, the British started the introduction of indentured labour from India (1829-1923). In 1861, the Indian immigrants had reached a total of 192,634 of a population of 310,050 inhabitants.

In such circumstance, Bishop Collier applied for Jesuit missionaries. In 1861, the first two missionaries landed from Trichinopoly, India: Fathers Francis Roy s.j. (of Brahmin origin in India) and Lawrence Puccinelli s.j. (of Italian origin). They arrived in 1861 and established the Indian Mission at Nabob Street (Saint-Francois Xavier Street) at Plaine Verte. For the beginning, Father Laval gave him one of his best catechists and laic auxiliary, Emilien Pierre.

The Indian Mission that the Bishop established in 1861 had to cater for a wide variety of Indian communities in Mauritius:

- The Indian Catholic families who came from Pondichery before the French Revolution and who very often were traditionally Catholic from India and who were concentrated at Camp des Malabars at Plaine Verte;
- The Catholic Indian immigrants who came with the other indentured labourers after the abolition of slavery;
- The Indian indentured labourers who married young Catholic girls and who embraced Catholicism;
- And finally the large mass of indentured labourers.<sup>55</sup>

The demographic burden which the Indian population represented, following the continued arrivals of the coolies in the country and which was to increase further, once the favourable conditions would encourage its natural increase locally, explained the decision of Mgr. Collier. The two Jesuit missionaries "found an Indian population amounting to 192,000 souls, entirely pagan, dispersed on the various sugar estates"<sup>56</sup> and the suburbs of Port Louis East. Father Boudou gave the following figures for 1871 which are equally significant:

"Out a total of 316,042 inhabitants, Mauritius had 216,258 people of pure Indian origin. As opposed to 81,739 Catholics and 6,165 Protestants of all denominations, there are to this date, 132,652 pagans, 41,575 Mahomedans, not to mention those who have not mentioned their religion, who number 51,955."<sup>57</sup>

With regard to the statistics of 1851 (see table below), established according to religious faiths, it is easy to notice the evolution of the Indian mission in 1891. Although we note, from the beginning, the "prodigious success" of the missionaries, the difficulty of getting in touch with indentured labourers because of their dispersal on the sugar estates and their work schedules, suggest that their 'success' with the Indians was more real in Port Louis than anywhere else. However, Indo-Creoles at Camp des Malabars were more easily converted because of their mixed origins than the Indian immigrants, less inclined to lose their identity by adopting a faith that was perceived as Western and that was not well-tolerated.<sup>58</sup> Those who, comparatively, accepted more easily to be converted were the Tamils.

Mauritius (1846-1891)				
Years	General Population	Indians	Total	Sources
1846	102217	56245	158462	Mauritius Census Report, 1901, Appendix I.
1851	102827	77996	180823	<i>Ibid.</i>
1861	117416	192634	310050	<i>Ibid.</i>
1871	99784	216258	316042	<i>Ibid.</i>
1881	110881	248993	359874	<i>Ibid.</i>
1891	114668	255920	370588	<i>Ibid.</i>

*Source:* Toussaint Auguste. 1972. *Histoire des Mascareignes*. Paris: Berger-Levrault, p. 335

### 2.3 The Chinese Mission

It was at the Parish of St. Vincent of Paul at Pailles - which was under the responsibility of the Lazarists for some time<sup>59</sup> - that the Chinese mission was born with certain rights and duties attached to it:

*"I do not approve that a priest baptizes, admits in the First Communion or marries a member of the Chinese population, without consulting in advance the Chinese missionary who is exclusively responsible for this portion of the herd and who, by being in charge, is able to gather all the information which caution will make necessary."*<sup>60</sup>

The suspicion of Mgr. Scarisbrick that "*baptisms were given too rapidly*" that he attributed to "*an enthusiasm that needed to be corrected*" did not correspond to the ill-founded reactions of the missionary evoking that "*his efforts have been useless to date, that he had no hope for the future [...]*."<sup>61</sup> The deception was that these missionaries would withdraw, leaving the Chinese mission to depend solely on the apostolic fervour of Mother Barthélémy and a few catechists.<sup>62</sup> Numerous testimonies gave evidence of the popularity of this nun and the privileged place that she held in the hearts of the Chinese Community. Yet, it seems that this was not sufficient to provoke a decisive surge of conversions among an ethnic group who, at that time, was more involved in the trading business than in metaphysical interrogation.<sup>63</sup> However, the Chinese Catholics gradually increased, and they progressively participated to the life of their parish.

### 2.4 Catholic ideology on education

Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church has played an important role in the development of education, not only in Mauritius, but also in other places of the world. Although the 80,000 inhabitants of the Colony in 1810 were nominally attached to the Church of Rome, because no other religion was recognised by the State, there was no great attempt by the Roman Catholic Church to provide education in Mauritius. It is only in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century that this interest in promoting education was to be aroused. Should we consider this lack of interest as arising from the indifference of the previous Bishops faced with a process of de-Christianisation which was already at work since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when being an intellectual was associated to the feeling of anti-clericalism?

Didier Colson's picture of Mgr. Slater and Mgr. Morris is far from being a flattering one

*"[...] the twenty years of muddle of Mgr. Slater [...]. The Government of Mgr. Morris idle in the deficiencies all the more obvious as his energies turned him more to protect his tranquillity than to answer the needs of the time."*<sup>64</sup>

Should we see the interest in opening schools in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a reaction to the removal of all restrictions in 1836, thereby providing the opportunity for the Dissenters and Protestants to build schools in the country?

Indeed, with the coming of Reverend Lebrun and other religious groups, the Roman Catholic felt threatened. In his book *Le Diocèse de Port Louis* J. Mamet wrote:

*"Faced with primary schools opened by the Government and by Anglican or Methodists, Ministers, all entrusted to a Protestant staff exclusively, not a single Catholic... the most pressing need of Mauritius is the religious instruction."*<sup>65</sup>

However the Roman Catholic religion would benefit more from the removal of the restrictions in 1836 and would set up more schools than the other religious bodies.

*"The Roman Catholic Church takes the lion's share in the competition with the Anglican Church thanks to the local support of elites, worried of granting to their children quality instruction at school and the principles of the faith at the same time."*<sup>66</sup>

### The Church And State In Education

In any consideration of the progress of popular education, not only in Mauritius but throughout the whole of the British Empire in the nineteenth century, the work of the Church and Missions holds the highest place. The phenomenon of priests and monks engaged in educational work is familiar in both European and British educational history, but in Mauritius, as well as in the whole of the British Empire, where secular benefaction was comparatively small and ineffective, the contribution of religious bodies can hardly be overstated.

When in 1836, the Secretary of State refused to sanction the arbitrary restrictions placed on education, the Government of Mauritius was forced to pass a law ordering that it would henceforth be lawful to establish schools *"without the previous licence or sanction of the Governor"* and *"without any control or superintendence"* because *"restrictions on the right of teaching scholars in the private schools are unnecessary and burdensome and tend to obstruct the progress of education"* in the island.<sup>67</sup>

By 1843, a number of schools had been opened by private agencies and by the Government. There were, at that time, five Government schools in Port Louis, one at Pamplemousses and one at Grand Bay. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had two schools in Port Louis and four in the provinces. The Mico Trustees had three in Port Louis and seven in the country. The London Missionary Society had four schools in Port Louis and one district school.<sup>68</sup> Another school was established and supported by Lady Gomm, the Governor's wife, at Réduit.

In 1842, it was announced that the Parliamentary grant then made to the Mico schools would cease. The imminence of the withdrawal of the Parliamentary grant in 1845 increased the need for an ordered System of Education. It was in 1843 that the Mico schools were handed over to the state, which undertook to support them entirely. However, it seems that much of their usefulness, however, had been impaired by petty sectarian rivalry. The Roman Catholic and Anglican Authorities objected to losing control over education, and were anxious to found schools of their own. Anxiety to found schools appears to have been motivated more in a spirit of rivalry than to have been regulated by any sound principle.

The attitude of the Catholic Church in Mauritius seems to have been typical of the general Catholic traditions of education, in that, at first, it concentrated its efforts on the education of the elite to the exclusion of the masses. In Mauritius, the Catholic Clergy had identified themselves too much with the interests of the ruling White community and were at first slow in taking an active interest in the education of the masses. The Catholic authorities began to pay attention to the education of the lower classes only when their supremacy was threatened by the work of Lebrun. Moreover, the allocation of the Parliamentary grant had excluded the Catholic Church and served to exacerbate the ill-feeling between Church and State in education.

### Initiation of the Grant-in-Aid

The conditions under which Indian immigrants were contracted to work on the sugar estates made no provision for the education of their children. By 1851, however, it was clear that large numbers of Indians were settling down in the island after the expiration of their contract. The harmful consequence upon society of a large population of children growing up in a "savage" state, forced itself upon Governor Higginson, who, in 1851, drew the attention of both the Local and the British Governments to their destitution, and the need to improve their state through education. But if it was difficult to induce the ex-apprentices to have their children instructed, it was almost impossible to persuade Indian parents to send their children to school. This, according to Higginson, could only be effected by a system of compulsory education. The matter was taken up in 1855 and, in the following year, grants-in-aid were offered to Denominational Schools. Ordinance No. 6 of 1856 stated, in the preamble,

*"that a large portion of the inhabitants of the colony being, in consequence of the extremely limited number of schools established, deprived of the means of procuring Elementary Education, it was expedient to provide for the furtherance of such Education by Grants from the Public Treasury"*.

This measure served a very useful purpose. In the first place, it smoothed over some of the difficulties which religion presented to the introduction of compulsory education; secondly, in stimulating the religious bodies to establish schools, it relieved Government of some of the onus of providing for the great increase in the number of primary school pupils that would result from this; and finally, it introduced a measure of control over denominational schools.

### Antagonism of Church and State in Education

After the conquest of the island, the maintenance of the Roman Catholic religion was guaranteed to the inhabitants by the Articles of the Act of capitulation. For many years subsequently, the fact that the island was Roman Catholic in religion was fully recognised; a liberal and tolerant spirit pervaded the administration. But it had become quite clear, after 1850, that the Local Government had embarked on a policy of anglicizing and protestantising the island. A more intolerant spirit succeeded. On the one hand, the Roman Catholic religion, the French language, and French manners, were cherished as badges of nationality. On the other hand, as Governor Gordon recorded:

*"The Roman Catholic Church, instead of being recognized as the prevailing religion of the country, was treated as a tolerated sect to be repressed and checked. The Government Schools, if not made, at least became engines of proselytism; and converts to Protestantism obtained a favour which those who adhered to their religion looked for in vain. In connection with this it is worth remarking that almost all the natives of the island who hold any considerable office under Government are protestant members of Catholic families".*

The Catholics felt that the ultimate object of the grant-in-aid system was to supplement and, in time partly, supersede the Government System of Education. It became clear to the Catholics that the Government was trying to gain control of the whole System of Education.

It was felt that the Grant-in-aid schools were put by no means on an equal footing as the Government schools. Instead of permitting, as they had hoped, the Grant-in-aid system to keep pace with the increase of the Aided Schools, the Local Government did just the contrary: the annual amount of the Grant-in-aid remained fixed at Rs. 90,000; and consequently, with the creation of more schools, each particular school received an amount much lower than that to which it was entitled. This naturally discouraged both the Managers and the school masters and prevented the further increase of Grant-in-aid schools. The Catholic community was further incensed, when the Government did not honour its undertaking in the appointment of an independent Inspector of Roman Catholic schools. The Grant-in-aid schools, having attained an importance nearly equal to that of the Government schools as to the number of children under instruction, the Superintendent of Schools could no longer perform alone the whole work of inspection and two Officers, termed "Assistant Inspectors", were appointed to do part of his work under his supervision and guidance.

But as the Government and the G.I.A. schools viewed each other as natural rivals. The supporters of the G.I.A. schools applied for, and were granted, the administrative separation of the two systems.<sup>69</sup> In reality, however, no change took place except in words. The Superintendent of Schools continued to exercise his authority over both sets of schools; the two Assistant Inspectors of Schools were both called Inspectors of Schools, but they remained subordinate Officers of the Superintendent.

For some time, the Catholics made little outward show of resistance. But with the foundation of the "Union Catholique" in the 1870s, a more militant attitude prevailed, and Catholics were determined to attack the principle of neutral education on which the Government schools were based.<sup>70</sup>

Neutral education was justified in Government schools on the grounds that where pupils of one school were of different creeds, Government could not possibly base its teaching on the tenets of one particular creed, without becoming guilty of proselytism. Hence, the necessity of abstaining altogether from teaching religion.

From 1877 to 1882, a "conscience clause" was introduced into the conditions under which the Aided schools received grants, which caused an increase in the number of pupils. On the other hand, the fact that no provision had been made for religious instruction in the Government schools was

detrimental to those schools. Arrangements were, therefore, made for priests of any Christian Denomination to give religious instruction to Government schools for one hour a week, and half an hour was allowed daily for the preparation of work set in connection with such instruction. This removed the disadvantages concerning religious instruction under which the Government schools had laboured.

## 2.5 Church contribution in Public Health

The varied contributions of the Catholic Church in Mauritius were very much appreciated by the British Government, given that the natural or epidemic calamities were very frequent during the period 1840-1895 and that the unlimited dedication of the Sisters of Charity at first, and who were later joined by the Filles de Marie, can never be questioned.

Consequently, if cyclones have always been frequent in Mauritius, the sanitary and social questions have never arisen with more acuteness than in the period of indenture. The British administration would never have praised Mère Augustine and the Filles de Marie, and would not have entrusted to them the responsibility of a number of hospitals, if it had not had the proof of the quality and quantity of services rendered by these nuns.

The Church, through its congregations, administered directly a number of orphanages, asylums for the olds and even a leper-house.<sup>71</sup>

In a period when poverty was as hard as usual (otherwise more) for the poor men, the management of similar works completed what the missionaries, in the service of the most deprived, were achieving in other fields. The traditions of evangelic charity of the Church were present in Mauritius and, certainly also, that of the charity of the rich.

## 2.6 Church attitude towards African and Malagasy Cultural practices

African and Malagasy cultural practices, very frequent at that time, were considered as superstitious practices that needed to be discarded by those who were converted to Catholicism, as shown by the fears of Mgr. Meurin:

*"Unfortunate events which have occurred in Mauritius, these last weeks, have revealed to us the upsetting fact that part of our dear children are full of superstitious beliefs. We consider it our duty to educate them on this subject and to enumerate to them the empty observances and the superstitious customs which exist in our Diocese so that they understand the insignificance and stop practising them"*<sup>72</sup>

In fact, these practices, commonly known as the "Petit Albert" were illegal and those who were found guilty of practising them, were exposed to capital punishment.

## CHAPTER 3 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND POWER

The questions of religion, political control and social conflict, all form an undefined web which we must often tear apart for the sake of analysis. The foreign missionaries were servants of God, but they were also partners of the white elite and Colonial Administrators. Their converts became children of God who had to renounce some of their customs for the sake of Redemption. The Colonial State could not subsist without the services of its religious devotees; yet it could never wholly bind them to apply their labour to its cause.

The search for a simple formula to determine whether a particular mission served the interests of the State more than the indigenous society, or *vice-versa*, is obviously a futile one. Although, from a distance, we can make out the pattern clearly enough and can see the non-contradictory relationship between Western Christianity and Western Colonialism, from close up, the pattern is far more intricate, and even parallel threads would occasionally diverge.

### 3.1 Colonial Administrators and Missionaries

Compared with State-Church relationships during the French period, the British colonial policy on religion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century shows a strange volte-face.

On the one hand, the Colonial Authorities, from the moment of conquest, repeatedly stated that the island would, in no circumstances, return to France. So there could be no link whatsoever between the Church in Mauritius and the Archbishop of Paris. That accounted, in part, for the reluctance of the British to allow into the Colony priests of French nationality. Besides, they overtly and shamelessly professed to be a Protestant Government. Consequently, Catholic prelates and priests were time and again slighted, as pre-eminence, precedence or privileges were granted rather to the Clergy of the Established Church, although the Anglicans were only a few hundreds, whereas the Catholics totalled over 100,000. But the rationale behind such policies was that the colonizers were "a Protestant people and Government".<sup>73</sup> However, it should also be noted that if the Colonial Governors, subordinate officers, were prone to act as petty potentates, the Ministers at Downing Street, as a rule, displayed a good deal of fair play, even to the extent, at times, of disowning the British Governors of Mauritius.<sup>74</sup>

On the other hand, the Colonial Office strove to foster harmonious relations between the heads of the Civil Administration and of the Church in the Colony, while in the same breath emphasizing the distinction between Civil Authority and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. Contrary to the French period, when the State had the upper hand over the Church, Whitehall directed the Colonial Governors not to meddle in spiritual matters and not to hinder the religious Heads in the Church's organisation and management.

Better still, Whitehall requested the Court of Rome to grant to the Colony an ecclesiastical superior holding a higher rank than the traditional position of Apostolic Prefect. The Holy See readily complied with Whitehall's wishes, by taking two immediate steps. First, it created an Apostolic Vicariate encompassing a vast area of the Southern Hemisphere, comprising Saint-Helena Island, South Africa, Madagascar, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Australia and New Zealand. Secondly, at the head of that immense ecclesiastical organization, Pope Pius VII, himself a Benedictine monk, appointed an English Benedictine, Edward Slater, who was at that time staying in Rome, as the Apostolic Vicar. He received the Episcopal consecration in Rome in June 1818. Fifteen years later, on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1832, his successor, Dom William Placid Morris, chosen by Dr James Bramston, Vicar Apostolic for London, was ordained a Bishop at St. Edmund's College, Old Hall, Ware. He too was a Benedictine.

Three established Christian religions received grants from the Public Treasury: the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England and the Church of Scotland.

Historically, the subsidisation of the Roman Catholic Church was a heritage from the French Concordat. In any case, the British Government passed legislation regulating subsidies and grants allocated to the three above Churches,<sup>75</sup> while no grant was made to the other denominations of Christian faith.

The Colonial Treasury adopted different scales of salaries for the Roman Catholic Church and for the Established Church (Church of England). Generally, while the non-British-born Catholic priests earned £150 per annum, the British-born earned £200, the British Anglican Clergymen earned varying grants from the Colonial Treasury (£510, £400, £300).<sup>76</sup> However, for Clergymen of the Established Church, the Governor would present the following request to Earl Grey, Secretary of State:

*"I should not hesitate to propose that two efficient Clergymen of moderate expectations should be sent out upon a salary of £300 per annum each...But I could not hold out such a stipend as being adequate for the decent support of a minister of the Establishment."*<sup>77</sup>

In 1878, the *Union Catholique de L'Île Maurice* petitioned the Earl of Derby for more adequate grants, more in line with the generosity which the Anglican Diocese was favoured with, but the Secretary maintained the status quo.

Over the decades, the Colonial Government granted preferential treatment to the Church of England.

That the Anglican community should be granted favours because it was part and parcel of the Established Church seemed to be the result of an underlying reasoning of the colonial religious policy that stood no discussion. Protestant Governors were so persuaded of that postulate that they did not hesitate to mention it in their correspondence to the Colonial Office.

A case in point related to the table of precedence. The Secretary of State, Earl Grey, having queried the list of precedence, Governor Anderson boldly stated that "*the Protestant must take precedence of the Roman Catholic Bishop vide reasons stated in Dispatch accompanying.*"<sup>78</sup> The Governor's argumentation was that:

*"In respect to the Protestant and Roman Catholic Bishops, I have considered that, however desirous we may be to pay every due respect to the Roman Catholic Prelate, yet as a Protestant people and Government that we ought to give precedence to the prelate of our own Established Church; and I do not think that this distinction could be justly felt offensive or derogatory to the Roman Catholics, presuming, as I do, that, on such a question, could it arise with them, they would adopt the same principle and course."*<sup>79</sup>

### 3.2 The Catholic Church and the Anglican Church

Describing the unpleasant coexistence between Anglicans and Catholics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Anglican historian Ghislain Emmanuel summed up the relationships between the two religious communities thus:

*"Against this background of political upheaval, one of the saddest images that emerged was the constant bickering between the leaders of the two main Christian bodies. The main areas of contention were: (i) the respective status of the bishops; (ii) marriage law; (iii) educational policy; (iv) ecclesiastical grants."*<sup>80</sup>

Regarding the order of precedence of the Heads of the two Dioceses, in due course the Colonial Office determined that the rank between them would go by seniority of appointment.

Throughout the colonial period, the British Government granted freedom of religion to the population. Thus, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, besides the Catholic Church, with its long-standing history that dated back as 1721 and its status of official religion under French rule, Anglicanism gained ground from the British occupation in 1810 onwards. Given the British Government's policy of freedom of religion, a wide spectrum of Christian denominations operated in the Colony. However, that freedom entailed respect of the rights of individuals to practise their own faith. A corollary resulting from the above related to the circumspection in the methods of carrying out evangelization, without proselytization by the other groups.

As for criticisms of Protestantism, they abound in the correspondence, as exemplified by the following statement which is representative of the common tone of the Catholics with regard to the Protestants:

*"At first we meet in front of us the numerous missionaries of fault, who, strong of the Protestant Government, sow everywhere the rye grass in the field of the head of the family. It is strange, Sirs, that the hatred inoculated against Catholicism by these false apostles who have only the lie to fight the truth and make it pass all the better in these pagan souls, given that they transport it by the vehicle of money, so known, so popular to it. Little scrupulous on the means, they often buy some adherence for some cents, less still for some tobacco leaves, or a little opium. And urged to magnify of figures the reports which they send to the biblical societies, they baptize most of the time without giving to their neophytes the slightest instruction. Our missionaries, on the contrary, more exact observers of the regulations..."<sup>81</sup>*

This rivalry was particular true when it came to the Government schools, where Protestant teachers were seen by the Catholics as wolves in the sheepfold, that harmed the Catholic children who were entrusted to them. It was to check such a terrible plague that the creation of Catholic Primary Schools was fervently advocatged, while the St. Louis College, then St Joseph College was to compete with the Royal College.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One significant fact about the occurrence of most Truth Commissions, held throughout the world, is that what previous generations would likely have been forgotten or suppressed, is today discussed and dissected in public forums. Obviously, the Truth and Justice Commission cannot, by itself, repair the legacies of trauma and deprivation that slavery and indenture have left, but it has created clear, undeniable public records of what occurred - records that provide an essential buffer against the inevitable tendencies to deny, extenuate, and forget. Perhaps most importantly, TJC offers the one thing that victims of gross Human Rights abuse almost universally cite as their most pressing need: the opportunity to have their stories heard and their injuries acknowledged.

The quest for retrospective Justice is a global phenomenon, with a crowd of different groups claiming for some form of recognition or material reparation for historical injuries. In Mauritius, some socio-political groups have entertained reparations claims, especially in the form of monetary compensation but is that the solution? An examination of the different examples of retrospective justice initiatives from around the world would surely reveal that, while each case is unique, the most successful generally combine three elements: formal acknowledgement of an offence; a commitment to truth telling, to ensure that the relevant facts are uncovered, discussed, and properly memorialized; and the making of some form of amends in the present to give material substance to expressions of regret and responsibility.

The challenge, of course, is not only to understand the sources of our current problems but also to devise ways to make the situation better.

This is the task of retrospective Justice. The last twenty years, in particular, have witnessed the emergence of an international consensus on the importance of confronting traumatic histories, as well as the creation of a variety of modalities and mechanisms for doing so. These approaches include, not only the payment of monetary reparations (the focus of the current slavery reparations debate in Mauritius), but also international tribunals, formal apologies, truth commissions, the creation of public memorials and days of remembrance, educational initiatives, and a wide variety of other non-monetary reparations programs. Although these different approaches, as well as some of the specific circumstances in which they have been or might be used are debatable, what is important to bear in mind is that there is no magical formula for righting historical wrongs.

From what has been witnessed elsewhere, retrospective Justice is a messy and imperfect business, and societies and institutions that undertake it should do so with humility and a clear-eyed recognition of the inadequacy of any reparative program to restore what was taken away. Yet, looking at the experience of other societies that have confronted (or failed to confront) legacies of historical injustice - at the contrasting experiences of West Germany, East Germany, and Japan following World War II; at the operation of Truth Commissions in South Africa and elsewhere; at the bitter controversies generated by the Turkish Government's denial of the Armenian genocide or by the Australian Government's refusal to apologize to Aboriginal children for being abducted from their families as part of a State-sponsored forced assimilation policy - there seems good reason to believe that communities that face their histories tend to emerge stronger than those that choose the path of denial and evasion.

### Acknowledgement

While different people may have different opinions about the propriety and value of an institutional apology, we believe that it is incumbent on the Church, as a minimum, to acknowledge formally and publicly the benefits that the Church derived from the institution of slavery. This was done in 2006, during the mass of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2006 commemorating the Abolition of Slavery at the Church of Notre-Dame du Grand Pouvoir at Vieux Grand-Port. Mgr Maurice E. Piat, c.s.s.p, Bishop of the Diocese of Port Louis, has expressed an apology of the Catholic Church for having been linked to slavery in History. He has also recognized the contribution of Creoles to the Church of Mauritius. The Church has also accepted that it is the missionary work of Father Laval and his collaborators<sup>82</sup> that has consolidated the Church through the centuries. Yet with institutions as with individuals, taking responsibility for an offence entails more than expressing remorse for past conduct; it also requires a commitment to doing better in the future.

### **Tell the truth in all its complexity**

We cannot change the past but we can reconcile ourselves with our past so as to have a better future. Every confrontation with historical injustice begins with establishing and upholding the Truth, against the inevitable tendencies to deny, extenuate, and forget. The appointment of the TJC and the various public programs it has organised has certainly done a great deal to create awareness of a history that had been largely erased from the collective memory of our country. Yet, there is more to be done.

Therefore we recommend that the Government:

- encourage the Church in being more open about its history and allowing access to its archives to researchers before these disappear forever. This can only be achieved by providing assistance in the conservation of church repositories<sup>83</sup>;
- commission a new history of the Mauritius that is not compartmentalized by ethnic considerations to replace the currently available text, which makes virtually no reference to role (both positive and negative) played by the Church in the forging of Mauritian society;
- lend its support and assistance to other institutions that might be considering undertaking similar investigations.

### **Social Responsibility**

Like other great historical crimes, slavery had profound consequences. The most fundamental was racism - the enduring stigma borne by darker-skinned people. But the institution left other legacies as well, including vast gaps of wealth and poverty, privilege and deprivation.

The Government should

- provide assistance to the various Catholic organizations in their fight aiming at empowering the poor and extremely poor people, irrespective of religion or creed, culture or tradition, background or region and sex;
- use the resources of the Church to help ensure a quality education for needy children;
- expand opportunities for those disadvantaged by the legacies of slavery by creating special scholarships;
- recognise and promote the Creole language within the Church and at a national level so as to provide a sense of cultural identity to the descendants of slaves and Creoles in general.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### Lettres autographes ayant trait à Sainte-Croix entre 1848-1859

Caisse de charité établie à la chapelle de la Sainte-Croix en janvier 1851

Provincial du Père Pellerin, curé de Sainte-Croix

Article 1: Une caisse est établie à la chapelle de la Sainte-Croix pour le soulagement de nos frères qui se trouveraient dans le besoin: cette caisse sera formée et entretenue par une quête qui aura lieu tous les dimanches à la messe du dimanche: on recevra aussi les offrandes particulières qui seront présentées.

Nos frères de Roche Bois, Ste. Famille, St. Michel, enfoncement des Prêtres, St. Jean Baptiste Terre Rouge, Tombeau, chapelle de la Nativité, auront droit de recourir à la caisse.

Article 2: Cette caisse sera tenue par un trésorier choisi parmi les hommes de la persévérance, qui jouiront de l'estime général, tous les 1<sup>er</sup> dimanches du mois ils rendront compte au Père de ce qui aura été reçu et dépensé.

Article 3: On nommera les conseillers et conseillères deux, pour chaque quartier

Article 4: Les fonctions des conseillers et conseillères seront:

- 1<sup>er</sup> de recevoir les demandes qui seront faites pour obtenir des secours;
- 2<sup>e</sup> de s'assurer que ces demandes sont justes;
- 3<sup>e</sup> de porter les secours accordés et de donner en même temps des consolations et de bons conseils;
- 4<sup>e</sup> enfin de faire la quête le dimanche, de la compter et de la verser dans la caisse

Ces fonctions des conseillers exigent les personnes les plus pieuses et les plus charitables de la persévérance, aussi un conseiller qui tomberait dans une faute grave sera cassé et remplacé immédiatement.

Article 5: Ces secours accordés aux frères qui sont dans le besoin seront de leur faire quelque petites aumônes, pour leur fournir de la nourriture, un peu de sucre quand ils sont malades; on ne donnera rien pour les frais de médecins ainsi que pour les médicaments

Article 6: La caisse ne fournira rien pour les enterrements, excepté le cas où il y aurait besoin d'une caisse qui alors sera fournie en bois blanc.

Article 7: Le Père aura la surveillance générale: il veillera avec le plus grand soin à ce que le trésorier et les conseillers et conseillères remplissent bien leurs fonctions: jamais la caisse ne pourra être déposée entre ses mains: il ne fera par lui-même aucune aumône, il recevra toujours aux conseillers et conseillères tous les dimanches il rendra toujours compte à la messe de ce qui aura été reçu et dépensé pendant le mois.

Noms des conseillers et conseillères	
Trésorier	Eugène Marie
Sainte Famille	Victor Mahomet Aimé Aglué
Saint Michel S. Sepuletre?	Marie Jeanne Victorine Bossue Frère Valsin Moustapha
Saint Jean Baptiste Valée des Prêtres	Mélanie Bemist
Sainte-Croix	Eugene Marie Marcellin
Tombeaux	Frère du Bout Colas

## APPENDIX 2

Il faut voir qu'une grande partie de la population catholique descend des affranchis de 1838 et que, sauf une portion qui forme une classe plus élevée, elle est encore illettrée et ignorante. Il est inutile de lui mettre des livres entre les mains et les prédications faites en français ne sont que très imparfaitement comprises de pauvres gens dont le langage est un grossier patois. La génération nouvelle prend un certain vernis superficiel de civilisation, mais elle n'est pas christianisée comme il faudrait: les prêtres, les catéchistes, les œuvres font défaut.

Si toute la population d'origine africaine est convertie, ou, pour parler plus exactement, baptisée, il n'en est pas ainsi de celle d'origine asiatique, indienne principalement, qui forme près de deux-tiers de la population totale. Celle-là est mahométane, hindoue ou bouddhiste [...] La civilisation chrétienne se l'assimilerait graduellement si un apostolat approprié s'exerçait à son égard.

Sait-on combien il y a de missionnaires, pour nos 260,000 Indiens? Deux! Encore la nécessité d'aider le clergé paroissial les détourne-t-elle souvent de leur œuvre particulière. Et, pour cet élément si important, il n'y a pas une école spéciale!

Ainsi donc, le personnel ecclésiastique rétribué par l'Etat serait à peine suffisant pour les colons d'origine européenne; et les populations introduites de l'Afrique et de l'Inde ne sont évangélisées que d'une manière incomplète ou ne le sont pas du tout.

Puisque l'Etat a charge d'âmes dès lors qu'il a entrepris de pourvoir aux besoins matériels de l'Eglise, c'est à lui qu'incombe la responsabilité de cette situation. Il ne saurait en tout cas échapper aux conséquences qu'elle engendre. Lorsqu'une dépression morale se produit, la compression matérielle doit inévitablement se faire sentir. Tout ce qui est économisé sur le clergé sera dépensé avec usure pour la police, la magistrature et les prisons, on verra la décadence aboutir à la ruine.

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## Translation

It is necessary to see that a large part of the Catholic population are descendants of the emancipated slaves of 1838 and that, except for a portion which forms a higher class, they are still illiterate and ignorant. It is useless to put books between their hands and for preaching to be in French; this is only very imperfectly understood by poor people whose language is a rough dialect. The new generation takes a certain superficial varnish of civilization, but it is not Christianized as it should be: the priests, the catechists, the works are lacking.

If all the population of African origin is converted, or, more precisely, baptized, it is not the case for the population of Asian origin, mainly Indian, which represent two-thirds of the total population. That one is a Mohammedan, an Indian or a Buddhist

Christian civilization would assimilate them gradually if an appropriate apostolate was practised towards them. Do we know how many missionaries there are, for our 260,000 Indians? Two! Still the necessity of helping the parochial Clergy often diverts them from this particular work. And, this such an important factor, there is no special school! Thus, the ecclesiastical staff remunerated by the State would be hardly sufficient for the colonists of European origin; and the populations introduced from Africa and India are evangelized either in an incomplete way or not at all.

Since the State has the responsibility of souls and since it undertook to provide with the material needs of the Church, it is on it that falls the responsibility of this situation. It cannot escape, in any event, the consequences which it engenders. When a moral depression occurs, the material compression inevitably has to be felt. All the effort that is spared on the Clergy will be made by the police, the judiciary and the prisons, as we shall see the decline end in the ruin.

### APPENDIX 3 - Statistics

Isle de France (1766-1810)					
Years	Whites	Freemen	Slaves	Slaves	Sources
1766	1998	-	18100	20098	Archives Nationales
1767	3163	587	15027	18777	
1776	3431	1199	25154	29784	
1777	3434	1173	25154	29761	
1782	3844	1418	28244	33506	
1787	4372	2235	33832	40439	
1788	4457	2456	35915	42828	
1797	6237	3703	49080	59020	
1807	6489	5912	55367	67768	
1809	6227	7133	55422	68782	

Source: Toussaint Auguste. 1972. *Histoire des Mascareignes*. Paris : Berger-Levrault, p. 335

Mauritius (1817-1835)					
Years	Whites	Freemen	Slaves	Slaves	Sources
1817	7375	10979	79493	97847	D'Unienville, III, tab. 19.
1825	8009	14831	63432	86272	<i>Ibid.</i> III, tab. 37.
1830	8135	18019	65672	91826	<i>Ibid.</i> III, tab. 51.
	Whites and Free		Manumissions		
1835	29612		61045		Mauritius Blue Book, 1835, pp. 322-323.

Source: Toussaint Auguste. 1972. *Histoire des Mascareignes*. Paris : Berger-Levrault, p. 335

Mauritius (1846-1891)				
Years	General Population	Indians	Total	Sources
1846	102217	56245	158462	Mauritius Census Report, 1901, Appendix I.
1851	102827	77996	180823	<i>Ibid.</i>
1861	117416	192634	310050	<i>Ibid.</i>
1871	99784	216258	316042	<i>Ibid.</i>
1881	110881	248993	359874	<i>Ibid.</i>
1891	114668	255920	370588	<i>Ibid.</i>
<i>Source:</i> Toussaint Auguste. 1972. <i>Histoire des Mascareignes</i> . Paris: Berger-Levrault, p. 335				

Number of individuals belonging to the African race who have been instructed, baptized and married in the town of Port Louis from 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1842 to the 30 <sup>th</sup> June 1847			
Baptisms		Marriages	
Of Children	6,363	968	or 1,936
Of Adults well instructed	798	individuals	
Total number of baptisms	7,161		

*Source:* Private Archives of the Diocese of Port Louis. Letter from Mgr. Allen Collier, Vicar Apostolic, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated July 1847 in *Letter Book II* 1845-1850.

Returns of baptisms, marriages & deaths of the population from 1 <sup>st</sup> January to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 1847	
Baptisms	658
Marriages	161
Burials	327
Total	1,146

*Source:* Private Archives of the Diocese of Port Louis. Letter from Mgr. Allen Collier, Vicar Apostolic, to T. M. Randall, Stipendiary Magistrate dated 3 Sept 1847 in *Letter Book II* 1845-1850.

- <sup>1</sup> This may be explained by the dispersal of Church documents in different European repositories and to the limited accessibility to the Private Archives of the Catholic Church.
- <sup>2</sup> *Lettres Patentes (Code Noir) de 1723*: Article 1<sup>er</sup>: « Tous les esclaves...seront instruits dans la religion catholique, apostolique et romaine, et baptisés...»
- <sup>3</sup> Nagapen, Amédée. *Histoire de l'Eglise - Isle de France - Ile Maurice*. Chapter 6: 'L'évangélisation des esclaves.'
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 14-5.
- <sup>5</sup> Nagapen, Amédée. (1989). *Le Catholicisme des Esclaves*. Diocèse de Port Louis.
- <sup>6</sup> Beaton Patrick, *Creoles and Coolies or Five Years in the Mauritius*, p. 78.
- <sup>7</sup> Lougnon Albert. 1934. *Correspondance du Conseil Supérieur de Bourbon et de la Compagnie des Indes. 22 janvier 1724-30 décembre 1731*. G. Daudé, Réunion. p. XXXVI (introduction).
- <sup>8</sup> Adolphe Harold. 1966. *Les Archives Démographiques de L'Île Maurice - Registres paroissiaux et d'état civil, 1721-1810*. Mauritius Archives Publication, No. 9. Port Louis. pp. 65 & 80.
- <sup>9</sup> Nagapen Amédée, *op. cit.*
- <sup>10</sup> Jumeer Musleem. *Les Affranchis et les Indiens libres à L'Île de France au XVIII siècle (1721-1803)*. Thèse de Doctorat de 3<sup>e</sup> cycle. p. 107.
- <sup>11</sup> Michel, Joseph. 1976. *Le Père Jacques Laval, le 'Saint' de L'Île Maurice, 1803-1864*. Beauchesne, Paris.
- <sup>12</sup> MNA. SA 70 - Letter of Bishop Thomas Grant - Time 26, 1861 - Despatch No. 454.
- <sup>13</sup> In 1840, the *Congrégation du Saint-Cœur de Marie*, founded by François Marie Paul Libermann, was approved by the Holy See, and Bishop W. B. A. Collier o.s.b. as its protector. Thus, Father Laval and his first fellow-missionaries in Mauritius belonged to the Congregation. However, in 1848, the latter merged with the *Congrégation du Saint-Esprit* and *Propaganda Fide* decreed that the joint institute would be called *Congrégation du Saint-Esprit* (Holy Ghost Congregation). Father Libermann and his first batch of missionaries were ordained to the priesthood in Europe through dismissory letters from Bishop Collier.
- <sup>14</sup> Nagapen, Amédée. 1892. *La naturalisation du Père J.-D. Laval et des missionnaires spiritains - Un volet de la politique coloniale britannique à L'Île Maurice*. Diocèse de Port Louis, pp. 82-95.
- <sup>15</sup> MNA. *Le Cernéen* No. 1938 - July 1845; *Le Cernéen* - No. 1970 - 13th September 1845.
- <sup>16</sup> Notes et Documents - Venerable François Marie-Paul Libermann. Volume 3. Paris, 1933, p. 475.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 116-117, 124-126, 153-160, 206.
- <sup>18</sup> Koren H. c.s.s-p. 1982. *Les Spiritains, Trois siècle d'histoire religieuse et missionnaire*. Beauchesne, Paris. P. 317, 409.
- <sup>19</sup> Notes et Documents - Venerable François Marie-Paul Libermann. Volume 3. Paris, 1933, p. 475.
- <sup>20</sup> Archives S. Sp. Boite No. 26. Dossiers A. Lettres 1835-1864 (especially letters of 14 November 1841, 4 June 1847, 16 December, 1849; 28 August 1853).
- <sup>21</sup> Nagapen, Amédée. *La naturalisation du Père J.-D. Laval...* - Appendix II, 'Le clergé irlandais séculier à l'île Maurice', pp. 139-140.
- <sup>22</sup> Public Record Office. CO 326 -no. 344 - The case of two seminarians who were studying in Dublin.
- <sup>23</sup> MNA SA 69 - Bishop Thomas Grant of Southwark, London, informed the Colonial Office that 3 Irish students enlisted for Mauritius had dropped out, but that 3 others were studying at All Hallows', Dublin, with a view to proceeding to Mauritius after their ordination.
- <sup>24</sup> MNA. SA.
- <sup>25</sup> Nagapen Amédée. 1847. *La Fondation du Diocèse de Port Louis*, p. 121.
- <sup>26</sup> Nagapen Amédée. 1892. *La Naturalisation du Père J.-D. Laval et de ses missionnaires spiritains - Un volet de la politique coloniale britannique à L'Île Maurice*. Diocèse de Port Louis, pp. 82-95.
- <sup>27</sup> Nagapen Amédée. 1977. *Le centenaire du Collège Saint Joseph 1877-1977*. Diocèse de Port Louis.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 111. See also M. S. Rivière. No Man is and Island, Editions de l'Océan Indien, 2008.
- <sup>29</sup> Thorel Théodore o.f.m., *Mère Marie-Augustine, Fondatrice des Sœurs de Charité de Notre Dame du Bon et Perpetuel Secours*. Port Louis, 1939.
- <sup>30</sup> Dussercle Roger R.P. c.s.sp., *Histoire d'une Fondation, Mère Marie Madeleine de la Croix et la Congrégation des Filles de Marie*, Saint Denis, Réunion - Port Louis, pp. 157-162.
- <sup>31</sup> Nagapen Amédée. 1892. *La Naturalisation du Père J.-D. Laval et de ses missionnaires spiritains - Un volet de la politique coloniale britannique à L'Île Maurice*. Diocèse de Port Louis, Ch. IX, 'Un premier pétitionnaire : L'abbé Le Boucher', pp. 51-60.
- <sup>32</sup> See Appendix 1 Caisse de charité établie à la chapelle de Sainte-Croix en janvier 1851.
- <sup>33</sup> Nagapen, Amédée. 1980. *La société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul à L'Île Maurice, 1855-1980 - Les origines*. Port Louis.
- <sup>34</sup> Nagapen, Amédée. 1947. *La Fondation du Diocèse de Port Louis*, pp. 126-128.
- <sup>35</sup> *Le Mauricien* - No. 1747 -16 January 1846; No. 1804 - 29 May 1846.
- <sup>36</sup> Nagapen Amédée, *Histoire de L'Eglise - Isle de France - Ile Maurice* - 1721-1968, p. 120-121.
- <sup>37</sup> *Le Mauricien* - No. 2194 - 29 November 1848 - signed *Un chrétien*; No. 2198 8 December 1848 ; No. 2200 - 13 December 1848; No. 2201 - 15 December 1848; No. 2202 - 18 December 1848. A sharp but ill-natured letter, signed *Un chrétien*.
- <sup>38</sup> Lecuyer, J. C.s.sp. 1978. *Extraits de sa correspondance*. Paris : Editions Beauchesne. pp. 38-42.

- <sup>37</sup> Letter from Mgr. Collier to J. Heptonstall, Procurator of the Benedictine mission dated 31 October 1841 and letter of 23 July 1842 to Letard in Michel, Joseph. 1976. *Le Père Jacques Laval, le 'Saint' de L'Île Maurice, 1803-1864*. Beauchesne, Paris. p. 107.
- <sup>38</sup> Letter of 23 July 1842 from Laval to his uncle, A.M. Laval in Lecuyer, J. C.s.sp. 1978. *Extraits de sa correspondance*. Paris : Editions Beauchesne. p. 44.
- <sup>39</sup> Michel J., *op. cit.* p. 127.
- <sup>40</sup> Michel J., p. 344.
- <sup>41</sup> Piat M. E., « Le Père Laval et sa méthode d'évangélisation, » in *Souvenir Magazine*, (September 1993) p. 11.
- <sup>42</sup> Michel, J. (1976). *Le Père Jacques Laval, le Saint de L'Île Maurice 1803-1864*, Beauchesne : Parisp. p. 140.
- <sup>43</sup> Michel, Joseph. 1988. *De l'esclavage à l'apostolat : les auxiliaires laïcs du Bienheureux Jacques Laval apôtre de l'Île Maurice*, Editions Beauchesne, Paris. Index page.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- <sup>47</sup> Fitzsimmons, J. 1972. *Jacques Désiré Laval. The 'Saint' of Mauritius*. Dublin: Orell Mount, p. 52.
- <sup>48</sup> Parish register of Port Louis in Michel, Joseph. 1988. *De l'esclavage à l'apostolat : Les auxiliaires laïcs du Bienheureux Jacques Laval apôtre de l'Île Maurice*, Editions Beauchesne, Paris, pp. 101-102.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>50</sup> Transcriptions of Laval's notes
- <sup>51</sup> Nwulia M.D.E. 1981. *The History of Slavery in Mauritius and the Seychelles, 180-1875*. London: Associated University Press.
- <sup>52</sup> Lecuyer, *Extraits*, p. 100.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.
- <sup>54</sup> Teelock V. (1988), *Bitter Sugar*, MGI, Moka.
- <sup>55</sup> Amédée Nagapen, *Histoire de l'Eglise - Ile de France - Ile Maurice - 1721-1968*, pp. 118-119.
- <sup>56</sup> Dethise E. Notes Dactylographiées. p. 4.
- <sup>57</sup> Boudon Adrien. 1940. *Les Jésuites à Madagascar au XIXe siècle*. 2 vol. Paris : Beauchesne. p. 215.
- <sup>58</sup> *Letter Book 1872-1886 VI*. Letter of 14.9.1879.
- <sup>59</sup> *Letter Book 1872-1886 VI*. Letter from the Bishop of Port Louis, W. B. Scarisbrick to Revd. Father tienne, Superior General of the Lazarists 18 Octobre 1872. pp. 5-6.
- <sup>60</sup> « Je n'approuve pas qu'un curé baptise, admette à la première communion ou marie un membre de la population chinoise, sans à l'avance s'entendre avec le missionnaire Chinois qui seul est responsable de cette portion du troupeau et qui en étant chargé est à même de prendre tous les renseignements que la prudence rendra nécessaire. » *Letter Book 1872-1886 VI*. Letter to the Clergy dated 10 March 1877.
- <sup>61</sup> *Letter Book 1872-1886 VI*. Letter of Mgr. Scarisbrick dated 3 March 1875.
- <sup>62</sup> *Letter Book 1872-1886 VI*. Letter of 30 September 1882.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>64</sup> "...les vingt ans de gabegie de Mgr Slater... Le gouvernement de Mgr Morris indolent aux carences d'autant plus manifestes que ses énergies le tournaient plus à sauvegarder sa tranquillité qu'à répondre à la nécessité de l'heure" in Colson Didier. 1986. *Approche de la pratique missionnaire catholique à L'île Maurice entre 1840-1895*. pp. 224-225.
- <sup>65</sup> «En face des écoles primaires ouvertes par le gouvernement et par les Ministres Anglicans ou Méthodistes, toutes confiées à un personnel exclusivement protestant, pas une seule Catholique...le besoin le plus pressant de Maurice est l'instruction religieuse» in Mamet J. 1947. *Le Diocèse de Port Louis*.
- <sup>66</sup> «L'Eglise catholique se taille la part du lion dans la compétition qui l'opposait à l'Eglise Anglicane grâce au soutien des élites locales, soucieux d'impartir à leurs enfants à la fois une instruction scolaire de qualité et les principes de la foi» in Arno T. et Orian C.1986. *Ile Maurice - une société multiraciale*, Paris: Edition de l'Harmattan p. 114.
- <sup>67</sup> MNA. *Mauritius Government Gazette*, Ordinance No. 52 of 1836.
- <sup>68</sup> See M. S. Rivière, *No Man is an Island*, *op. cit.*
- <sup>69</sup> A separation established by Law and always maintained in principle, but which had for a time been made, in practice, to yield to financial considerations.
- <sup>70</sup> See "Rapport sur Les Ecoles Primaires" issued by the "Union Catholique" in October 1878.
- <sup>71</sup> Mamet Mgr. 1947. *Le Diocèse de Port Louis*, p. 149.
- Nagapen A. *Moulin à Poudre au Service des malades*.
- <sup>72</sup> « De malheureux événements survenus à Maurice, pendant ces dernières semaines nous ont révélé le fait bien désolant qu'une partie de nos chers enfants est encore imbuë de croyances superstitieuses. Nous estimons de notre devoir de les instruire sur ce sujet, et de leur énumérer les vaines observances et usages superstitieux qui existent dans notre diocèse afin qu'ils en comprennent la futilité et cessent de les pratiquer. » *La Gazette Pastorale de Maurice* no. 2 - 29 janvier 1888 - Sur la superstition. *Bulletin Général* - t. 14 - p. 679.
- <sup>73</sup> MNA. SD 37. Dispatch No. 31 of the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1849, from Sir William Anderson to Lord Grey.
- <sup>74</sup> MNA. SA 8. (Separate) Dispatch of 30th November 1825.
- <sup>75</sup> MNA. Ecclesiastical Grants Ordinance, Cap. 83 of the Laws of Mauritius.

<sup>76</sup> Emmanuel Ghislain. 1975. *Diocese of Mauritius*. Port Louis. pp. 66-72.

<sup>77</sup> MNA. SD 32. Dispatch No. 31 of 12 February 1848 from W. M. Gomm to Earl Grey.

<sup>78</sup> MNA. SD 37. Dispatch No. 31 of 14 August, 1849 from Governor Anderson to Earl Grey.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Emmanuel Ghislain. 1975. *Diocese of Mauritius 1810-1873*. Port Louis. pp. 151-152.

<sup>81</sup> « D'abord nous rencontrons devant nous les nombreux missionnaires de l'erreur, qui, forts du Gouvernement protestant, sèment de toute part l'ivraie dans le champ du Père de Famille. C'est étrange, Messieurs, que la haine inoculée contre le Catholicisme par ces faux apôtres qui n'ont que le mensonge pour combattre la vérité et le font d'autant mieux passer dans ces âmes païennes, qu'ils le transportent par le véhicule de l'argent, si connu, si recherché par elle. Peu scrupuleux sur les moyens, ils achètent souvent une adhésion quelconque pour quelques sous, moins encore pour quelques feuilles de tabac, ou un peu d'opium. Et pressés de grossir de chiffres les rapports qu'ils envoient aux sociétés bibliques, ils baptisent la plupart du temps sans donner à leurs néophytes la moindre instruction. Nos missionnaires, au contraire, plus exacts observateurs des règlements... » *Letter Book 1872-1886 VI*. Lettre du 30.9.1882 de Mgr Scarisbrick à la Propagation de la Foi. Cf. également lettre du 17.9.1879.

<sup>82</sup> The ex-apprentices themselves contributed to the conversion of other ex-apprentices to Catholicism.

<sup>83</sup> Indeed, these invaluable documents have either been lost or are experiencing physical damage and that is why the Church is reluctant to open its archives to the public.

# THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MAURITIUS

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Executive Summary

Mauritius is a country which has known the worse forms of injustice during its 400 years of history, marked by slavery and its aftermath and the indentured labour system. That this country is now considered as one of the most *avant-gardiste* in the field of Social Justice is in itself a great feat.

Much water has, however, passed under the bridge to achieve this level, although much remains to be done to correct inequalities inherited from our colonial past.

Slavery, which was practised during the Dutch occupation, was marked by the worse forms of ill-treatment to human beings. The treatment meted out to slaves is at the root of revolts. These contributed to the abandonment of the island by the Dutch colonists in 1710.

During the French occupation, which lasted for almost a century 1715-1810, the practice of slavery was legalized following the enactment of the *Lettres Patentes* framed under the *Code Noir* of 1685 and 1723. Slavery, which is now officially recognized as a crime against humanity, was practised in its cruellest form. Treated as beasts of burden, if not as movables, slaves could be sold, hired out and transferred to the heirs and successors of their owners. Classified legally as movables, they were listed after horses and draught animals in the register of the assets of their owners.

Assigned to hard manual labour during long hours, slaves received no wages for their labour, had no legal personality and could not possess anything. Most slaves had no rights to family life. Slaves had no right to surnames, but to first names only, given by the owner. Slavery was marked by the denigration of African and Malagasy culture and the subsequent loss of this identity.

The laws governing slaves conferred upon the masters wide powers to punish men and women alike for the slightest offence. A special enactment was provided for the punishment of runaway slaves. This took the form of mutilation and even entailed the execution of the slave after a third offence. Of course, no appeal for any unjustified action of the master was accented.

Slaves could not assemble, nor be found in possession of any offensive weapons. The decision of the French National Assembly *Convention* to abolish slavery in 1794 was not even communicated to the slave population. Refusal to abolish slavery led to the breakdown of relations between Isle de France and the Metropole.

### British Occupation

The slavery regime continued during the first part of the British occupation until its abolition in 1835. Slavery was not marked by any uprising, contrary to what happened in Haiti. This passivity may be attributed to the most stringent laws in force to control slave movement in Isle de France.

After the abolition of slavery in 1835, a great injustice was done to slaves, when their masters decided to do without their services on a phase to phase basis in the wake of the arrival of indentured workers. Some 32,000 slaves, '*esclaves de plantation*', were thrown out of work for one reason or another.

No rehabilitation plan was mooted either and they, thus, took refuge in the outskirts of Port Louis and on the periphery of coastal villages for a living. Many settled on the coasts where the presence of fish and marine products was sufficient to ward off famine. Their descendants are still to be found among such people.

During the French occupation, under the *Gouvernement Royal*, a law was passed to ensure better treatment for emancipated slaves and people of colour *loi de l'Emancipation* of 1767. This new class of citizens could henceforth own property, maintain slaves, but could not receive any donation or be given any property by way of succession. They had to pay special respect to the white men for these to prove their superiority as human beings. It was not before the enactment of Ordinance 57 of 1829 that the free people were put on a par with their white counterparts in the Parish Registers and could accede to the succession of their natural parents and receive any

donations made to them. This was the beginning of some recognition of non-white persons in Mauritian history.

As regards ex-slaves left stranded after the abolition of slavery, this liberation was more a poison chalice. With the arrival of indentured labour from India, they lost all hopes of employment. Housed in ramshackle premises, they were easy victims of epidemics which occurred in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were largely decimated. It is estimated that the cholera and the malaria epidemics of 1854 and 1867, and onwards, carried away half the population of ex-slaves.

Although the British Government compensated the owners of slaves for their liberation, it failed to put forward any rehabilitation plan to take them out of their state of absolute poverty. This is considered as a great injustice to a class of helpless people on the grounds of pure racism, in as much that they no longer formed part of the plantation economy, i.e. sugar production.

The advent of indentured labourers, who came from India and who were themselves subject to some of the worst forms of ill-treatment, is another landmark. The history of Indian immigrants is a tale of injustice and misery. Leaving his wife and children behind, the Indian labourer was made to work odd hours in extraneous conditions. Poorly-housed in Sugar Estate Camps, devoid of elementary amenities, he received part of his wages in cash and part in kind. From his monthly pittance of Rs. 5, he had to save Rs. 1 to pay off his return voyage.

His movement was confined to the estate and he had no right to pay visit to a friend or attend a funeral outside the estate boundaries. In case of default, he was caught and housed at the Vagrant Depot in Grand River North West and tried under the Law of rogues and vagabonds and he suffered corporal punishment.

Fortunately, the Indian immigrant found in Alphonse Von De Plevitz a friend who showed marked sympathy to their cause. He was appalled by the treatment meted out to Indian labourers. Although married to a Franco-Mauritian girl, whose parents own an estate at Nouvelle Découverte, he encouraged them to put up a petition to Queen Victoria to redress the wrong done to them. The petition received 9401 signatures. The British Government reacted positively and appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into their complaints and to make appropriate recommendations. This was the first quest for Justice in Mauritian history. The findings and recommendations which ensued went a long way to put a stop to the inhuman treatment meted out to a community of individuals.

### **Political Reform**

Although ex-slaves, people of colour and Indian immigrants represented around 90% of the population, they had no say in the affairs of the country. In 1885, a new Constitution came into force providing for the election of 10 members of the Legislative Council, hitherto largely dominated by British officials, land proprietors and merchants. But these elections were not democratic in the form of voting which was restricted to only 3% of the population and based on specific criteria.

In 1909, another Commission was mandated by the British Government to inquire into the critical financial situation of the colony, after the passage of the violent cyclone of 1892 and the conditions prevailing on the labour market. The Commission recommended the cessation of the Indian immigration but observed that, in spite of the fact that Indian immigrants and their descendants represented around ⅔ of the colony's population, they had no representatives in the Legislative Council. The Commission recommended the restoration of all civil rights to indentured labourers and their descendants.

In order to facilitate the upkeep of plantations of the newly-acquired land by the small planting community, the Commission recommended the setting up of village banks better known as co-operative credit societies.

The Constitution of 1885 remained in force up to 1948, when the conditions set for voting insisted only on the ability to sign one's name in any language spoken or written in the colony. It is under this Constitution that voting rights was first conferred on women. The new Constitution allowed 27% of the population to take part and knelled the monopoly of the oligarchy in the Legislative Assembly.

### The Advent of Trade Unions and Social Unrest

Much before the constitution of the 1948, there was widespread discontent in the country and the advent of Trade Union Organizations helped to prepare the ground for better conditions in the Sugar Industry. The Labour Movement was officially launched in 1936 in Port Louis amidst 30,000 militants. In 1937, a riot took place at Union Flacq where labourers and small cane planters assembled to voice their grievances. While attempting to penetrate on the premises of the sugar factory, shots were fired and there were 4 casualties. A Commission of Inquiry, headed by the Procureur General Hooper, was appointed which brought about certain measures to guarantee the marketing of cane by small planters 'the Cane Sale and Purchase Ordinance of 1939' and the recognition of Trade Union Organisations and improved working conditions and the pay of artisans and labourers.

A similar riot occurred in 1943 protesting against conditions of work and pay on sugar estates, in view of rocketing prices of consumer goods. This also culminated in a loss of life, including one pregnant woman named Anjalay Coopen. Further measures to improve conditions of the labouring class were recommended by an Inquiry Commission headed by the then Colonial Secretary, Mr. S. Moody. The Commission recommended, *inter alia*, the setting up of Industrial and Arbitration Tribunal and an increase of wages by 10%.

Before 1940, apart from limited health care services, provided by Government through hospitals and dispensaries, poor people lived very much as they did in the days of the 'survival of the fittest.' Infant mortality was high, while life expectancy was short. Although a Poor Law Office was created as far back as 1904, it was not until 1940 that a Public Assistance Department was set up to help the needy. More primary schools were created in order to ensure basic education for the labouring class, workers and artisans.

In the field of constitutional reform, things moved fast in the wake of the policy of decolonization. In 1958, adult suffrage was conferred with a new Constitution. This paved the way for greater Social Justice. Legislation guaranteeing employment, protection against unjustified dismissal, safety and security of workers were ensured. In 1950, the old aged pension was granted to senior citizens who reached the age of 60. It amounted to Rs. 22.50 per month as opposed to Rs. 3,200 per month nowadays.

### The era of independence

The advent of Independence in 1968 marked a new departure in Social Justice and equal opportunities for each and every one. Social Justice was reinforced in specific clauses in the Constitution which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, colour, gender, caste, public opinion, etc. Any citizen feeling aggrieved by dispossession of his rights can appeal to various institutions set up, such as the Ombudsman, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), the Appeal Tribunal, as regards appointments and promotions in the Civil Service, the Human Rights Commission, quite apart from any complaints which may be lodged through the competent Law Court.

Various legislations have been enacted to guarantee equal rights between men and women. Besides, a special Ministry has been set up for Women's Rights Child Development and Family Welfare.

Certain sections of the population, mostly descendants of slaves, have not been able to benefit from the process of development, and now rank among the less enviable class in the Mauritian society in terms of education, employment and social status. The Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Development has been set up with funds, both from the public and private sectors, to offer assistance to this class of citizens and ensure better housing conditions, proper schooling and various other support social services.

While assistance to the poor and needy was reinforced, a National Pension Scheme was created in 1976, guaranteeing revenue to non-government officers on retirement. During the same year, free education was extended to all students attending secondary schools. Improved standards of living through higher wages, health care and support services have resulted in life expectancy, which was 59 for man and 62 for woman in 1962, increasing to 69.6 for a man and 76.8 for a woman in 2010.

**Findings and Recommendations:**

1. The Equal Opportunity Act should come into force. Its implementation will go a long way towards guarantying equal rights for citizens, irrespective of ethnic, political, sex and religious appertenances.
2. Certain categories of workers who are self-employed do not always contribute to the National Pension Scheme, and may in their old age find themselves in difficult conditions. A special scheme should be devised to market them contribute to their pension scheme.
3. In spite of their defects, co-operative organizations proved to be essential tools to extirpate small producers, whether in the field of agriculture and livestock. Fishermen, pig breeders cannot be left to fend for themselves. The habit of thrift and saving is not one of the virtues of people of slave descents. This situation results in many of them falling into the grip of unscrupulous middle men and usurers. Throughout the world, credit unions, whether community-based or industry-based, have proved that they can inculcate the habit of saving and provide short-term credit at concessionary rates to their members in times of dire need. However, the setting up of such organisations and their management cannot be left to people who are hardly literate. The assistance of dedicated social workers, co-operative development officers are essential to see to it that the affairs of such co-operatives are run on a sound basis.
4. A new class of psycho-sociologists and social workers generally should be employed to cater for the people residing on housing estates and in such other areas where poverty is rampant. A special class of trainers in small business enterprises should be appointed to support an emerging class of small entrepreneurs in the management of their ventures in order to avoid pit-falls.
5. Often linked with charity work, social work and psychological and sociological support are essential elements to bring about a new mind-set of people living in housing estates and in similar milieux. Efforts should be made to give social work its proper standing, including adequate remuneration, and to recognize voluntary work as worthwhile. Voluntary work should be encouraged among Mauritian citizens, and especially among young people.
6. Programmes, aimed at adding value to manual and technical jobs, must be further developed and encouraged as too much emphasis is laid on white collar jobs in Mauritius. In addition, entrepreneurship and subsistence farming should be further encouraged. In this connection, land settlement schemes for farming, livestock keeping, including pig breeding, should be made available.
7. All Government services should provide an 'ethnic sensitive service', be it in the hospitals, the police department and in government offices. Officers should be trained for better public relations to this effect.
8. Recruitment practices must be reviewed in the Public, Parastatal and the Private Sector so as to ensure that such exercises are solely based on merit and qualifications. A Parastatal Appointment and Appeal Tribunal should be instituted in line with the Civil Service Appeal Tribunal for public officers.
9. Stricter anti-racist laws should be passed in order to check racist associations/ statements/ creating hatred for any ethnic group.
10. The Certificate of Primary Education curriculum should be reviewed so that every student, at the end of the cycle of primary education, has a certificate: the possibility of a 'vocational' certificate at primary level should be seriously studied.
11. The model of *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) delivered by technical schools in countries like France, Australia, etc. should be adopted, thereby ensuring quality work by artisans and other private skilled workers

12. A review of the present electoral boundaries must be undertaken in order to ensure the better representation of ethnic minorities.
13. Under-representation of ethnic minorities at this level of Parliament and at Cabinet levels is a cause of frustration and may lead to political instability.
14. Some functions of the Public Service Commission, the Local Government Service Commission and the Discipline Forces Commission should be revisited. The practice of delegation of powers through the appointment of minor grade officers to different Ministries continues to give rise to frustration and has resulted in the exclusion of Creole minorities, in particular.
15. The abolition of the Best Loser System should only be envisaged in the context of an overall review of the Constitution which would ensure a fair and equal representation of ethnic minorities.
16. The 'Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individuals', embodied in Section 2 of the Constitution, should be amended to include economic, social and cultural rights also.
17. Aggressive campaigns on the promotion Human Rights should continue to be carried out through various media, including media and school, so that the population is aware and learns the importance of respecting its fundamental rights. Similarly, Consumer Laws should be tightened to provide sufficient protection to consumers, and sensitization campaigns should be carried out to empower the population with consumer protection knowledge.
18. The promotion of multiculturalism should be encouraged as it helps to maintain national unity. Such a policy will undoubtedly further help the Mauritian nation to strengthen a common civic culture, based on the values of freedom, belonging, patriotism, and of human rights, while encouraging intercultural exchange.
19. With regard to the relationship between politics and religion, Government and political parties should not be associated with religious bodies. In this way, the Government will be protected against undue interference from religious organizations.
20. Freedom of expression should continue to be encouraged and liberalisation of television channels should be considered.
21. Regarding housing estates, put up by the C.H.A where 19,400 householders reside-roughly 125,000 individuals - there exists a serious problem of overcrowding. For instance, a 3-room apartment can sometimes accommodate as many as 12 individuals. Besides, many of the housing estates do not provide amenities such as playgrounds, kindergarten and do not have any community hall. This is not conducive to the welfare of the young generation who tend to be idle and demotivated.
22. The present rate of old age pension should be revised, specially for those reaching the age of 70 or more. The present rate of Rs. 3,200, allocated to people without resources, is a cause of extreme poverty, especially for those who do not enjoy any retirement benefits. This rate should be upgraded to Rs. 4,000
23. Certain housing estates (residences) have been constructed with asbestos, a substance known as a serious health hazard. Such houses should be pulled down on a phase to phase basis, and new apartments allocated to such residents.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Meaning and Relevance in the context of the Social Justice Project

*Social justice is what faces you in the morning. It is the awaking in a house with adequate water supply, cooking facilities and sanitation. It is the ability to nourish his children and send them to school and where their education not only equips them for employment, but reinforces their knowledge and understanding of inhabitants of their cultural inheritance. It is the prospect of genuine employment and good health: a life of choices and opportunity free from discrimination.<sup>1</sup>*

#### Brief historical background

Social justice is a concept which is quite new in the history of mankind. Before the beginning of the 19th century, much of Mankind lived in what Charles Darwin termed as the rule of the survival of the fittest. The poor and the weak had to fend for themselves in a hostile world, just as in the animal kingdom. It was the world of kings and princes and chieftains who had the Divine Rights to treat their subjects according to their whims. People were deemed to have no rights but obligations. Obligations to produce one's own food, and other necessities to wage war, and to pay taxes.

The concept of Human Rights was developed in the mid eighteenth century, with the surge of a generation of thinkers and humanists. In France, the *Siècle des Lumières* in the mid-18th century, saw the emergence of reformers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Camille Desmoulins, all precursors of the French Revolution of 1789 which led to the proclamation of Human Rights which later on became the basis for the universal Declaration of Human Rights. But it was not before the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that the concept of a more egalitarian society was mooted by powerful thinkers like Le Comte Henri de St. Simon, Charles Fourier Robert Owen and Louis Blanc. All these precursors dreamt of a more egalitarian society where the concept of liberty, equality and fraternity would not be mere slogans.<sup>2</sup> They were the pioneers of the co-operative movement and socialist ideas. But much water would, however, to pass under the bridge before the rights of the poor and the down-trodden would be a priority of the Government in power.

*"The central ideas of socialism have their roots in man's perennial discontent in search of the condition of his existence. They reflect his desire to overcome scarcity, inequality and social strife and longing for justice and happiness. The search for a better world the Golden Age, the Kingdom of God, Utopia to Communism is western ideas that have embodied these instinctive drives."*

But these quests for a better world emerged much later.<sup>3</sup>

Most religions preach that the search for a better world is in the kingdom of God that is after death. Karma in Hinduism, paradise for Christianity and Islam clearly demonstrate that salvation is not on this earth. Religion is therefore a powerful tool to prevent people questioning the established order.<sup>4</sup>

These religious dogmas, which were questioned in the sixteenth century by reformers of the Christian church like Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox all have led men to inquire and explore rather than to accept and paved the way for reform leading to a more egalitarian society.

#### 2.1 Clash of civilization and colonial mentality

Ironically it was not necessary in the wake of this new mindset that Europe embarked on the conquest of new lands and clashed with the indigenous people in the Americas, Africa and the Far East. These people according to Aimé Césaire who had the misfortune to be on their way, were considered as inferior beings. The history of emerging Colonial Powers is littered with genocides, atrocities and humiliation and remained unwritten for long. Voltaire in his *Essais sur les races* in 1756 describes the people of Black Africa as half savages and mentally deficient, in short of inferior beings. The *Code Noir* of 1685 under Colbert, Minister of Louis XIV, to manage slaves in the newly-acquired colonies is a typical case of the bias ideas of the black people generally. Slaves captured

on the African continent were legally assimilated as movables which could be sold rented and transferred as any belonging to heirs and successors.<sup>5</sup>

Ironically, the *Code Noir* was enacted to render the treatment of slaves more humane, as opposed to the treatment meted out to slaves by the Dutch and the Spanish in their newly-acquired colonies.

But the driving force behind the *Code Noir* was, not to evangelize people in the newly-acquired territories as the Papal Bull of Nicolas 11 stipulates, but to help in acquiring the much-needed raw materials, and tropical products for their rising economies. Slavery, slave trade and coolie trade and indentured labour systems were all intricately linked with the object in view.

\*Bernardin de St Pierre, the celebrated French novelist, who revisited Mauritius, the then Isle de France in 1768, has rightly said:

*"I do not know whether coffee or sugar is necessary ingredients for the welfare of Europe, but one thing I know is that these two products have been responsible for the great human suffering for these two regions of the world. America has been depopulated in order to obtain a land for their cultivation; Africa has been depopulated in order to have people to care for their cultivation."*<sup>6\*</sup>

### 3. SOCIAL JUSTICE DURING THE DUTCH AND FRENCH PERIOD

Mauritius, an island ideally situated in the sea routes leading to India and the Far East, has inherited a long colonial history starting with the Dutch occupation in 1638 which ended only in 1968, in the wake of the decolonization of the British Empire. The Dutch outpost was set up, not for strategic reasons necessarily, but for exploitation of the untouched rich ebony forests. With the Dutch colonists, administrators and a small standing army, the first Malagasy slaves. The population rarely exceeded 300 individuals. Many of the slaves chose to elope in the thick forests as they disliked the idea of being exposed to ill-treatment by their masters. In the absence of any law governing slavery, the Dutch administrators showed extreme cruelty and on two occasions, in 1695 and 1706, the slaves revolted. Their moves were cruelly repressed, but the surge for justice had its first imprints during the Dutch occupation. Harassment by maroon slaves was the main reason for the abandonment of the island by the Dutch in 1710.<sup>7</sup>

Surprisingly, during the whole French and British colonial era, there has not been any uprising of the slave population, although these individuals outnumbered their white masters by 10 to 1. The reason behind this was the stringent laws governing slave movement and the strong application of the *Code Noir* concerning behaviour of the slaves.<sup>8</sup>

Although slaves *per se* were not assimilated as human beings, but as mere movables, surprisingly they had to be baptized as Roman Catholics. As such, they were not expected to work on Sundays and public holidays. Slaves would not receive any pay for their labour but were only housed, fed and provided with clothing twice yearly.<sup>9</sup> Slavery saw the dislocation of family life as husband and wife did not cohabit in the same house, but in different places of the domaine.

The French colonial period is undoubtedly the darkest period in Mauritian history, when it comes to the ill-treatment inflicted on human beings, to keep the slave population at bay. All rights conferred on slave-masters under the *Code* as enacted by the *Letters Patents* in 1723 were fully implemented; corporal punishment, mutilations for the slightest offences and the death penalty were the rule. Over the years, several clauses of the *Code Noir* were amended to reinforce control on slave labour and to act as deterrent against marooning which has always been a scourge for the authorities.<sup>10</sup>

The Law governing Emancipation passed in 1767, however, allowed for a more humane treatment of free people of colour and emancipated slaves. This new category of individuals could buy land, keep slaves, but could not in any way benefit from donations and grants by their natural white parents and had to show respect to white individuals. No emancipated individual could carry any offensive weapon either, and they had to pay due respect, when in contact with white people.<sup>11</sup>

In 1794, in the wake of the French Revolution, the Convention proclaimed that all men were created equal under the sacrosanct principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. While the slaves of Haiti, availing of the Convention's decision, managed to free themselves under Toussaint Louverture leadership, no move for freedom took place in the then Isle de France. The slaves' masters put up a strong resistance at the idea that their slaves could be set free and no move by the Convention could make them agree, so that a detachment of soldiers and emissaries of the French National Assembly were compelled to retreat in the face of fierce opposition. Isle de France thus became a breakaway colony.<sup>12</sup>

The decision of the *Assemblée Nationale* in France to grant the right to vote to all citizens, including free People of Colour, is characterized by a *flou juridique*, a legal void for this category of individual who, in principle, should henceforth enjoy all rights and privileges conferred upon white citizens, but this decision was challenged by the Whites of Isle de France who rejected the idea of having People of Colour being elected to sit at the National Assembly. Otherwise, this is a period marked by the acquisition of land by the free People of Colour who could henceforth have their children registered in the same Birth and Death Registers *registres paroissiaux*. Relations between Whites and Coloured People remain strained for over a century; this would reach its peak only in 1911, when a riot was avoided after the Election held in the same year between the factions of Armand Enouf, Member for the Plaines Wilhems District and Eugène Laurent Member for Port Louis.<sup>13</sup>

However, with the advent of Napoleon Bonaparte in power in 1802, slavery was reintroduced and many of the privileges conferred to free People of Colour abolished. The *Code Decaën* did not tolerate any bonding whatsoever between the White people and their Coloured counterparts. As far as inheritance was concerned, children born of mixed unions would not be allowed to make a claim or inherit any property from a white parent, even when the latter had left no direct heirs nor could a free person receive a donation either by will or notarial act.<sup>14</sup>

The refusal to abolish slavery is one of the root causes of the defeat of French forces in 1810, as the standing army was reduced to its minimum, while no free people nor slaves could be called upon to form part of a militia for fear of any uprising once armed.

## 4. SOCIAL JUSTICE DURING EARLY BRITISH OCCUPATION (1810-1968)

The British occupation which lasted from 1810 to 1968 was characterized by a series of measures destined to create a more egalitarian society, but things did not move fast in that direction for diverse reasons.

4.1 Although slavery was abolished in 1807 in Britain and slave trade in 1813, the British showed leniency towards the French *colons* who had decided to stay in Isle de France in as much that the treaty of capitulation of the 3rd of December 1810 had guaranteed that their land property would not be confiscated, they were thus allowed to import slaves to look after the sugar plantations. But following strong lobby from the Anti-Slavery Society who argued that Mauritius should not benefit from preferential prices for its sugars on the London Market as slave trade was still being practiced; illegal slave trade was brought to an end in 1827.

### 4.2 Protest for artisans, laborers and small planters and the advent of trade union

It was not before 1936 that the Mauritian society witnessed new configuration and consciousness of workers conditions. This occurred with the advent of the introduction of trade unions and the foundation of the Labour Party by Dr. Maurice Curé and Emmanuel Anquetil. This was perhaps the direct result of very low wages, vagrancy and indifference of the Government of the day more inclined towards the interest of sugar barons. Several strikes by workers struck the island claiming justice causing loss of life and damage of property. Protests also came from small planters as it had become difficult to survive with the meager revenue from the cultivation of sugarcane. In the absence of regulations concerning purchase and sale of cane in different factory areas, a drastic cut of 50% on the price of cane belonging to the *Uba* variety was effected. This added fire to the flame.

The Labour Party campaign had a tremendous impact on the mindset of the people, and it was the first time that an open confrontation took place between sugar barons and the masses which culminated into mass protest at l'Union Flacq where an angry crowd wanted to damage the factory. All the labour disturbances and protests culminated in the setting up of the Hooper Commission which published its Report in March 1938. Similarly, the Moody Report was published in 1943 to shed light on the reasons of labour unrest which occurred at Belle Vue Harel in the same year. It was during the confrontation of labourers and police that Anjalay Coopen and 3 other workers were shot dead. The Commission headed by Moody recommended legislation governing the purchase and sale of cane, the setting up of Industrial and Arbitration Tribunal and an increase in wages up to 10%. The first half of last century was thus marked by labour consciousness and opened the way for more social reform and better bargaining power of the labouring class including artisans and general workers.

### 4.3 Political reform

In 1885, an important event took place in the democratic field when free elections were held. But unfortunately, voting rights were restricted to only a few persons, as stringent conditions regarding property, rent and revenue debarred some 96% of the population from taking part. The result is that only the sugar barons and a few members of the Coloured community could vote. The Constitution of 1885 (Pope Hennessy Reform) continued up to 1948. Needless to say, the great majority of descendants of Indian immigrants and descendants of ex-slaves were debarred from taking any active part in politics.

Further, the riots of 1937 demonstrated clearly the resentment existing between the White plutocracy and the Coloured people. This is also another desire to enfranchise part of the population from the grip of the white plutocracy. In spite of the restrictions imposed by the *vote sensitaire*, a new elite emerged in the Indian community. At the Elections of 1936, 2 Indo-Mauritians, namely Rajcoomar Gajadur in Flacq and Dunputh Lallah in Savanne, were elected

## 5. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE 1940S TILL INDEPENDENCE

### *Introduction*

This period in the history of Mauritius witnessed a drastic change in the way the British Government viewed its colonies and their inhabitants. Following the publication of the Hooper Report in 1938 and the passing of the Colonial and Development Welfare Act 1940, major changes took place in the field of education, housing, and healthcare. These decisions also laid down the foundations of the Mauritian Welfare State.

Following the cyclone of 1892, the Sugar Industry was seriously hit and in need of capital for reconsolidation and expansion. Request for assistance from the United Kingdom met with reticence. In 1909, however, the Colonial Office appointed a three man Commission headed by Sir Frank Swettenham to enquire into the financial situation of the country and all problems connected with labour and immigration. The Commission submitted various recommendations and showed its apprehension concerning the idea that in spite of the overwhelming majority of people of Indian origin in the colony. These were not represented in the legislature. It is the Royal Commission of 1909 which recommended the cessation of labour recruitment from India. This marked a new era in Mauritian history. The First World War (1914-1918) did not slow down the fighting spirit of the emerging class of politicians which, hitherto, comprised the Indian elite.

### 5.1 The laying of the Foundation of a more egalitarian society

In their manifesto of 1948, the Labour Party already had plans to introduce Social Security, Old Age Pension, compulsory education, low-cost housing and expansion of co-operatives for small planters. Further reforms in education and health services were also advocated.

Indeed, this period in the history of Mauritius saw the beginning of a more humane society through constitutional reforms and the involvement of several intellectual elite dedicated for the cause of workers, artisans and small planters in Mauritius.

For the first time in the history of the island, elections were held in 1959 on the basis of universal suffrage. This marked an era of emancipation of the whole population in the fight for social justice.

In the field of healthcare, malaria had practically been eradicated which was taking a huge toll on the population. There was a marked balance between economic power in the hands of the plutocracy and political power in the hands of the population at large.

The first breakthrough in the field of education was brought about by the Education Act of 1941, when the administration of schools, primary, secondary, aided and non-aided were centralized. A common VI<sup>th</sup> standard examination was introduced and, under the pressure of the political class, primary education was expanded which paved the way for the enrolment of nearly of all children, although in many areas primary schools were non-existent. The country also witnessed the establishment of the University of Mauritius in 1965. Furthermore, following the cyclone *Carole*, a new housing policy for the poor was implemented which provided housing facilities to the most needy. Many of the measures taken to reinforce Social Justice were inspired by reports submitted by two famous economists, namely Meade and Titmuss.

## 6. REVIEW OF POST 1968 SOCIAL MEASURES

**In the field of health, housing, education, income maintenance and social security/ Measures taken by the government in order to maintain Social Justice in Mauritius.**

### Introduction

Measures taken by the State in the area of health, housing, education, social security and employment have been great landmarks in Mauritian History. What is remarkable is that all successive Governments which have been in office since Independence, while striving hard towards economic consolidation and expansion, have at the same time never relegated the poor and the vulnerable to the periphery of society. This philosophy has contributed tremendously to Social Justice and improved the overall quality of life of the people.

Long before the Second World War, a wind of change was blowing in the British Empire and a more humane approach for the old and vulnerable class was advocated. This was in line with the growing influence of the British Labour Party under Ramsey Mac Donald and others.

Some of the measures for the better care of the poorer section of the community in power in Britain were advocated in some colonies including Mauritius. Already a Poor Law Office was created in 1904.

### 6.1 Overall Achievements

One of the most remarkable features characterizing post-Independence Mauritius is its set philosophical basis of policy-making, inspired by Fabians and the ethical Socialism of today. However, as from 2005, major structural changes took place in the vision and application of Social Justice in the wake of global changes in the political, social and economic configuration.

Fundamentally, there have been profound structural changes on the level of the economy as well - Mauritius has been able to move from an agricultural economy based solely on sugar, to new areas such as Tourism, export processing, fish processing, financial services and Communication Technology.

### 6.2 Keynesian Economics, Fabianism and the Welfare State

The carving of Social Justice in Mauritius was the direct result of the political philosophy of the Founding Fathers of Mauritian Democracy. In times of economic recession, characterized by massive unemployment, people were given unproductive jobs just to help stay out of absolute poverty and keep the economy running. Major political figures, such as Maurice Curé, founder of the Labour Party, Emmanuel Anquetil, Guy Rozemont and Dr. S. Ramgoolam the country's first Prime Minister, profoundly influenced policies towards Social Justice

### 6.3 Achievements in the field of Health

Providing a good health care is one of the means of preventing poverty through the prevention of sickness. The Government Medical Service has its origins in the provision of medical care under the Poor Law. Prior to Independence, there were 8 general hospitals, with 1642 beds and 46 dispensaries. There also existed 24 sugar estate dispensaries, with a total capacity of 494 beds. Over time, the sugar estate hospitals were phased out and in 1991, the Government Medical Service had four Regional Hospitals, five District Hospitals and four Specialized Hospitals. Private and Public Health Care also exist side by side; the former is serviced by about 50% of the physicians in the country.

Today, Mauritius has a highly developed free health service, modelled mainly on the British system. However, the disease profile has changed - from the diseases of poverty, such as malaria to the diseases of affluence, such as hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Following Independence, high priority was given to preventive health and primary health care, including ante-natal and maternal health care. Moreover, much attention was also given to supplying of clean drinking water and proper disposal of human waste and the collection of refuse both in urban and rural areas.

Government today provides a comprehensive, high-tech health service free of charge to the population. This serves as a basis for giving social wages to the poor and vulnerable since despite low wages, people are able to maintain an optimal health, as the health service is free and efficient on demand. Amongst others, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life carries out measures for the promotion of health which includes the prevention of diseases; the treatment of diseases; a controlling practice of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, and providing facilities for the training of paramedical personnel.

### 6.4 Achievements in the field of Housing

Housing is another sector which has greatly contributed to the quality of life of vulnerable groups. Mauritius, being a small tropical island with limited availability of space, is prone to cyclonic weather, and this has had a bearing on the policies of the Government. Following the cyclone 'Carole', the Central Housing Authority was established in November 1960. It has to this day built 19,440 low-cost and cyclone-proof houses. The Mauritius Housing Corporation (MHC), which was set up in 1963, catered for the housing of the middle classes. Initially assisted by a loan from the Commonwealth Development Corporation, and loans from local Insurance Companies, it started operating as a Private Limited Company in 1989 to become a major player in the provision of loan facilities in the construction sector.

In 1972, the MHC launched the Exceptional Savings Scheme, and then the *Plan Epargne Logement* (PEL) in 1988, to encourage savings for the purpose of the construction of a house. A new Savings Scheme was launched in 2009 - the Junior PEL Savings Scheme with a unique package of benefits designed for babies and children of up to the age of 18. Since 1986, as part of its programme to help lower income groups, the MHC has been offering them government-sponsored loans.

To date, the MHC Ltd proudly claims to have helped more than 75,000 families in Mauritius and Rodrigues to become house-owners.

The National Housing Development Company (NHDC) was set up in March 1991 to plan and implement a National Social Housing Programme with special consideration for the most vulnerable groups in Mauritian Society. To date, some 12,000 housing units have already been constructed, with a total investment of about 4 billion Rupees. In addition to the costs of constructing the housing units, Government provides land and all the infrastructural facilities, such as roads, electricity, water supply and sewage facilities. Provision is also made for open space and green areas in these housing complexes, with the possibility of nurseries, schools and community centres. In order to achieve the goal of providing each family with a decent housing unit in Mauritius, the Government intends to build another 10,000 housing units for the poor and the vulnerable.

## 6.5 Achievements in the field of Education

After the country achieved Independence, it is observed that the different National Development Plans of 1971-75; 1975-80; 1980-82; 1984-986; 1988-1990; 1992-1994, all stressed the need for an Education System geared towards the socio-economic needs of the country. The first National Development Plan, which coincided with the implantation of the Export Processing Zone in the country, emphasized the need to move from academic to more Technical and Vocational Orientations. Under the formal recommendation of the UNESCO/UNDP for Curriculum Development, Teacher Education and Research, the Mauritius Institute of Education was established in 1973. Secondary Education was made free in 1976, after which the Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA) was established. Tertiary Education became free in 1988.

Three important Commissions on Education need to be mentioned under this review: The Glover Report (1978); the White Paper on Education (1984) and the Ramdoyal Report (1990).

The Glover Report (1978) reviewed the post-primary and secondary sectors. It identified various problems, including infrastructure, overcrowding in schools, lack of equipment, poorly-qualified teachers, the language issue and private tuition. The White Paper (1984) stressed the efficiency of the Education System and underlined the high number of failures at the Primary level and the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E). The White Paper also gave clear indications that those C.P.E drop-outs could follow technical and vocational courses. Finally, the Ramdoyal Report (1990) considered issues discussed under previous reports, but also dealt with the problem of private tuition and the pre-primary sector.

Despite several debates, plans and Commissions on Education, two main issues remained unsolved: too much academic orientation and a considerable number of drop-outs from the system.

The 1991 Education Sector Master Plan (ESMP) was a breakthrough in modernising the Education System, making it more adaptable to future needs. The main thrust was on the streamlining of C.P.E failures towards Vocational Training which provided a solution to the high drop-out rate. Unfortunately, one of the most important recommendations of making nine-year schooling compulsory was not put into practice.

The Social Fabric Study<sup>1</sup> observed that, in spite of efforts to expand, outcomes of the System remained modest and were mostly to the benefit of advantageous groups. S. Bunwaree<sup>2</sup> repeatedly laid stress on the importance of Cultural Capital in scholastic achievement, which includes linguistic competence, literacy in the home, reading habits, availability of reading materials etc. She argues that this is what makes the Education System less equitable, especially for the disadvantaged groups.

In March 1998, another plan for the Education Sector was published: Action Plan on Education (1998) which revealed great similarities with the previous plan published in 1991. However, some positive points were: decentralization, compulsory nine-year schooling and the elimination of exclusion in school.

One of the darkest spots in Primary Education is the 'rat race' to secure admission in 'star secondary schools' in Mauritius. However, in 2002, the ranking system was abolished and a new grading system was used instead. Nevertheless, 'pressure' put on students is indeed very high to seek admission in a 'good' secondary school.

In an effort to deal with the problem of C.P.E and school drop-outs, the Government came with the concept of inclusive Education: the ZEP (Zone Education Prioritaire) schools where several measure were taken to improve the performance of pupils from poorer sections of Mauritian society. Till now, the results have been rather 'mixed'.

The Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008 - 2020<sup>3</sup>, published in 2009, is a very elaborative document depicting the Government's firm intention to bring about fundamental reforms in Education. Two key words are: creativity and innovation as the basis of reforms which are essential for meeting the needs of a growing economy. The plan covers all sectors: Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary, Technical and Vocational and Tertiary. Focus has also been put on major

pillars of a good Education System, namely Increased Access, Improved Quality and Morally-Binding Equity.

With the implementation of this plan, the Government is determined to realize its objectives: to achieve excellence by promoting an effective and efficient Training System that is inclusive, integrated, comprehensive and holistic.

## **6.6 Achievements in the field of Income Maintenance and Social Security**

Social Security has its origins in the Poor Laws of Colonial Mauritius, all enacted under the guidance and approval of the Colonial Office. It was under the pressure of the Labour Party that much legislation came into force in the Colony in this field.

Although many measures were gradually taken at the beginning of the 1950s, with the means-tested Old Age Pension at the age of 60, Family Allowance in 1961, the most important piece of legislation was the National Pensions Act 1976 which introduced Social Insurance for Private Sector employees, through payment of contributions and the payment of pensions on a universal basis. Other important measures are: the Unemployment Hardship Relief Act 1983, the Employees' Welfare Fund Act, 1991 and the National Savings Fund Act, 1995. Unemployment hardship relief provided assistance to unemployed heads of households. The Employees' Welfare Fund was created for the welfare of all employees from the Private and Public Sectors.

In a spirit of growing concern for vulnerable groups, several measures were taken in favour of the elderly, the disabled and abandoned children.

As at date, the Social Security Scheme under the National Pensions Act 1976 has the following coverage: Universal (Non-Contributory) Benefits; Social Insurance (Contributory Benefits) and Compensation for injured workers. This Act provided a comprehensive Pension Scheme for the protection of all categories of people.

Universal Benefits comprise Basic Retirement; Basic Widow's Pension; Basic Invalid's Pension; Basic Orphan's Pension; Guardian's Allowance; Child's Allowance; Inmate's Allowance; Carer's Allowance for Beneficiaries of Basic Retirement Pension and Carer's Allowance for Beneficiaries of Basic Invalid's Pension.

Contributory Benefits comprise Contributory Retirement Pension; Contributory Widow's Pension; Contributory Invalid's Pension and Contributory Orphan's Pension.

Compensation for injured workers (or their dependents) is normally paid to workers who are injured on duty. It is also known as Industrial Injury Benefits. Such compensation comprises Industrial Injury Allowance; Disablement Benefit; Survivor's Pension; Dependent's Pension and Orphan's Industrial Injury Allowance.

Universal Benefits are paid in a spirit of Social Justice, and despite pressure from international Institutions to do away with some of the measures in times of depression, the Government has maintained them. For example, in the case of Basic Retirement Pensions, at one stage of policy-making, it was decided to target it, but subsequently, it was reinstated. Social Security Benefits absorb the biggest chunk of Welfare spending.

## **6.7 Greater Social Justice fostered through the Trade Union Movement**

At the origin of employment policy in Mauritius is the pressure put on the Colonial Government by the general working-class consciousness and the growth of Trade Unions, especially after the Second World War.

In 1965, there were about a hundred Unions registered in Mauritius, as opposed to only about 25 in 1948.<sup>4</sup> The first Law which revolutionized labour / employment relations in Mauritius was the Security of Employment (Sugar Industry) Ordinance which came into force in November 1963. It was a measure against growing unemployment which provided for work by employers in the Sugar Industry and provided for employment during the intercrop season. The Act was further amended in 1966 to consolidate provision of work during the intercrop season.

The second Law which revolutionized Employment Relations and the protection of workers is the Termination of Contract of Service Ordinance which came into force in November 1963. This Law provided for the payment of a severance allowance to a workers whose employment is terminated by an employer.

Wages Councils for both agricultural and non-agricultural workers were set up to review the quantum of wages and the application of their recommendations did contribute immensely to the increase of wages and the improvement of the standard of living.

Regulations were also made in relation to termination of contract by the Industrial Relations Act (IRA) 1973 and the Labour Act 1975. The Export Processing Zone Act was passed in 1970 for employees in the Export Processing Zone Sector. This Act was replaced by the Industrial Expansion Act (IEA) 1993.

Termination of contract of Public Sector workers was regulated by special regulations for the Public Service and the Constitution and which were enforced by special bodies such as the Civil Service Industrial Relations Commission and the Civil Service Arbitration Board. In all cases, the burden of proof of dismissal rests with the employer.

In 1988, the Employment of Disabled Persons Act came into force. This Act provided for the employment of disabled persons. During the same year, the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act which regulated health, safety and welfare standards in the work environment came into force.

The two most recent pieces of legislation in the field of Employment in Mauritius are the Employment Rights Act 2008 and the Employment Relations Act, 2008, which came to replace the former Labour Act, 1975 and the Industrial Relations Act of 1973 respectively. These Acts came in at a crucial moment in the history of the island in order to respond to the new work environment, as a result of forces of globalization.

However, there have been widespread protests against these two Laws from Trade Unions since 2008 and recently, Government has agreed to make amendments to the Acts. Nevertheless, many positive results have come up such as registration of Trade Unions for officers of the Fire Services Department and the Prisons Department.

## 7. ETHNIC BALANCING POLITICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### *Introduction*

The present Mauritian society, which is a vibrant democracy, is the result of several economic, social forces which have interacted together over time. Given its complex ethnic composition, when it comes to democracy and politics, Social Justice should be one of the cornerstones for peaceful development. To achieve this end, the *modus operandi* is to use what is specific to Mauritius: 'ethnic balancing' - so that all ethnic groups feel 'comfortable, secure and included'. This technique was successfully used and in contemporary times, it is an essential tool for anyone wishing to achieve success in the field of politics.

### 7.1 Ethnic Origins of the Population of Mauritius

Mauritius is a land of migrants. When the Dutch landed in 1598, the island was uninhabited. It is only the French colonisers who decided to settle permanently on the island. They brought in slaves from Madagascar, from mainland Africa and India. When the British took over the island, there was already some form of a 'Mauritian Society' which took shape as a result of nearly a century of interaction of various people namely the Whites, the Coloured and people of slave descent from Africa and Madagascar.

Vijaya Teelock,<sup>1</sup> while describing the demography of Mauritius at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, mentions a huge increase in the size of free people. The authorities at that time could not prevent intermarriage between Whites and non-Whites, despite laws against that. It is important to note

that since then, there has been a considerable intermixture of Africans, Malagasy, Malays, Indians from Malabar Coast, Bengal and Madras and the Whites themselves.

## 7.2 Political Consciousness of Ethnic Group

After the abolition of slavery, the arrival, gradual settlement and assimilation of Indians immigrants in the new 'Mauritian Society' already made Mauritius a 'melting pot' in the Indian Ocean. Despite racial intermixture, there were clear categories in the population of Mauritius: the Whites, the Indians, the ex- slaves and the Coloured. Rémy Ollier, a person of mixed white and Indian origin, was seen as the first great leader of the Coloured population.

## 7.3 The Class Struggle

The establishment of the Labour Party by Dr. Maurice Curé in 1936 was a breakthrough in the fight for Justice by artisans, general workers, labourers and small planters the latter being mostly Indians. The strikes which followed shortly afterwards sowed the seeds for a Constitutional Reform which ultimately led to the Independence and the birth of a new multiracial and multicultural democratic country.

Following the unprecedented success of the Labour Party at a rally held on 1 May 1938, there appeared a determination on the part of workers and artisans to put a stop to injustices meted to them. On the plutocracy side, there was an effort to stop the awakening of the proletariat. Dr. Curé became the main target of newspapers and a private radio who were supporters of the oligarchy. Varma<sup>6</sup>, has described in detail the injustices meted out to Dr Curé: how the money he collected from labourers could not be deposited in a bank account; how a Law was passed to inquire into the activities of 'Société de Bienfaisance'; the boycott of the newspaper *Le Peuple Mauricien*; how the money collected from workers was confiscated; and the manner in which his appeal against the judgement of the Supreme Court was rejected by the Privy Council. Such a state of things simply describes the tug-of-war between capitalists who were backed by the Colonial Government and the Labourites.

## 7.4 The New Constitution and the First Popular Elections of 1948

In the wake of the policy of decolonisation in the British Empire, a request for better representation of the masses met with a more favourable response by the United Kingdom. Regarding Mauritius, a new Constitution was adopted, after which the first popular elections were held in 1948. During the elections, the Labour party defeated the traditional Conservative Party. Dr. S. Ramgoolam, Guy Rozemeont, Edgar Milien and R. Seeneevassen were among those who won the day. This marked the end of 63 years of Conservative rule. According to Varma<sup>7</sup>, this was a period when all separatist tendencies based on ethnicity, race and religion, were replaced by a sense of patriotism inspired by a class struggle.

## 7.5 Ethnic struggle and the threat of Communalism inspired by the Parti Mauricien

The Conservatoire defeat in the 1948 elections was a clear signal of popular support for the Labour Party. The *Parti Mauricien*, later on *Parti Mauricien Social Democrate*, used a political strategy by branding the whole Hindu population as communalists and, at the same time, asking all non-Hindus to unite. The political awakening of the Indo-Mauritians was interpreted as the rise of Indian Nationalism. The opposition expected the Indo-Mauritians to join them in a common front against what was termed as a Hindu-dominated Labour Party, the aim being to create a rift between Guy Rozemont and Dr. Ramgoolam. The PMSD thus weakened the Labour Party, by using the communal argument, and it championed the cause of all minorities, including the Muslims. This part of the history of Mauritius is perhaps the darkest in terms of national unity and nation-building.

## 7.6 Ethnicity, Political Parties , the Constitution and Independence

After attempts towards the formation of all-Party Government fail, the country was clearly divided in two blocks: One in favour of Independence and the other against. During the 1967 elections, 44 % of the electorate in the country voted against Independence. It was Gaëtan Duval's *Parti Mauricien* who rallied most of the Christians backed by the white plutocracy political grouping of some capitalists and its allies: The Tamil United Party and the Muslim United Party. The 1967 elections

were, in reality, an ethnic exercise which did not help forge national unity for a country set to achieve Independence soon. With the fear of ethnic domination, many people, mostly Christians, started leaving the country for fear of persecution and the retaliation from the Hindu Community.

### 7.7 Post-Independence Elections: An ethno-political game

The aftermath of the 1967 elections, which had as its main theme, ethnic strife has left deep scars in the Mauritian electorate. Kadima Denis and Roukaya Kasenally<sup>8</sup> have analysed the various political formations and coalitions in relation to the elections that have taken place after 1968. The paradox is that all political parties openly preach national unity but actually play ethnic games to achieve power. This ethnic game, which can be easily traced back to the pre-Independence period, continues as every political block tries to show how 'national' a party it is and their leader a '*rassembleur*', that is someone successful in bringing together people of various ethnic backgrounds, but the reality is far from this. The scars of ethnic identities can still be seen in the choice of candidates in the constituencies which they wish to represent in the Legislative Assembly.

## 8. CLAIMS OF INJUSTICES IN THE COUNTRY: POVERTY AND EXCLUSION

### Introduction

The track record of Mauritius in the field of Social Justice is a really impressive one. It has won recognition the world over. Contrary to the opinion of Meade<sup>1</sup> and Titmus<sup>2</sup>, Mauritius has made it a success. One of the cornerstones of success is undoubtedly the peaceful coexistence of the various ethnic groups in a vibrant democracy. Fabian Socialism, inspired by the British Labour Party, even prior to Independence, has had a tremendous influence on policy-making, and all Governments to date have openly professed economic growth with Social Justice.

However, sadly, as is usually observed in several democracies, there are cries of Injustice, the voice of which has become louder during the past two decades. These cries of Injustice have come mainly from the Creoles who feel that they are disproportionately represented in the main stream of power.

### 8.1 Major structural Changes in Mauritian Society

Mauritius has been traditionally an agricultural economy based on sugarcane cultivation. When Meade and Titmus painted a very bleak picture of the future of Mauritius, the decision-makers, with the help of international institutions, helped move the country from a mono-cultural economy to one with several pillars, each substantially contributing to the national growth. The implantation of the Export Processing Zone, the Tourism Industry, the Financial Services Sector, the Fish Hub, Information and Communication Technologies Sectors has brought profound changes in the society. In terms of efforts, one must acknowledge the contribution of all Mauritians, irrespective of their ethnic background. Indeed, the review of the Social Policies since Independence bears testimony to this commitment. While many multicultural countries have fallen apart, or are beset by conflicts, Mauritian multiculturalism has been spared from such situations.

In its development, Mauritius has also constantly adapted to the changes in the global economy. While initially, it was the Keynesian 'demand side management' of the economy, since 1983 there has been a gradual shift towards a 'supply side management' of the economy. Market forces have come into play, along with development, in order to encourage investment and earn foreign exchange earnings. While the Government has continuously been consulting various parties in national decision-making, market forces have also been contributing to 'the trickle down effects' in the lives of people. In fact, there has been a gradual liberalization of the economy since the mid 1980s which was accelerated after 2005.

## 8.2 Social, Economic and Political Rights guaranteed by the Constitution

The Constitution of Mauritius enshrines the rights of people to diversity in terms of religion, culture and politics, irrespective of race, ethnicity and caste. It is important to note that our Constitution has neither a preamble nor a declaration of policy. After evoking the State in Chapter 1, it jumps straightaway to the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. Such order in the tabulation of the Chapters reflects the importance of guaranteeing such rights in democracy.

Social Benefits are shared by all citizens. In addition, there are several institutions which have been set up to guarantee social, economic and political rights of citizens of Mauritius, as already mentioned. The Judiciary in Mauritius operates in a fair and independent manner.

Except for the January 1968 riots between Creoles and Muslims, which lasted for about a week, where about 20 people were killed and 220 injured and which necessitated the intervention of British Troops, the country has not since lived through any major social upheaval.

## 8.3 Cries of Injustice in the Republic of Mauritius - The Chagos Saga

The Chagos Archipelago was part of the outer islands of the Colony of Mauritius. However, in the wake of an independent Mauritius, the British, contrary to U.N resolution regarding the dismantling of territories of any future State, decided to separate the Chagos Archipelago as part and parcel of the Colony of Mauritius. The Chagos Archipelago, very much like Rodrigues, Agalega, was inhabited by people of slave descent who laboured in the Coconut and Fishing industry in extremious conditions. The decision of the then Colonial Office to sever connections with the Mauritius mainland is a dark spot in Colonial History of the British Empire. As a consequence of the British decision, in 1970, thousands of them were deported to Seychelles and to Mauritius. They were uprooted from their motherland Peros Bahnos and Salomon Islands in the Chagos Archipelago, Diego Garcia. Following an agreement between USA and UK, shortly afterwards, Diego Garcia was ceded to USA for the establishment of a military base with sophisticated armaments. In 1972, the British Government paid a sum of 650,000 pounds sterling to the Mauritian Government destined for the displaced Chagossians. In 1982, the UK Government paid a further sum of Rs. 100 million to the Chagossians.

The Chagossians are the descendants of slaves from Madagascar and Mozambique and were brought there by the French between 1780 and 1828 and by the British in the 1840s and 1850s.

The exiled Chagossians are today dispersed in Mauritius, Seychelles and the U.K. It was in 2002 that the Chagossians, who are presumed to be *de facto* British citizens, were allowed in the UK. These people, on their own, have fought to return to their native island and are presently awaiting the decision of the European Court of Justice for Human Rights over their right to return in their homeland. The tragedy is that it is nearly after 40 years that the Government of Mauritius has challenged Britain's decision to excise part of its territory. The argument is that the Chagos Archipelago was ceded to Britain in exchange for the rejection of certain proposals concerning the mode of electoral representation in a matter of long-standing debate.

In Mauritius, most of the Chagossians who were living in Cité Ilois, Baie du Tombeau, have sold their property and left for the UK. Presently, there are about 150 families only in Mauritius.

## 8.4 The 'Malaise Creole' : The Social Exclusion of the Creole Community

The term 'Malaise Creole' was used for the first time by the Creole Catholic priest Father Roger Cerveau in the year 1993. He used the term to describe a situation where the Creole community, particularly the Afro-Creoles descendents of slaves, were not able to integrate the mainstream of Mauritian society in terms of education, health services, employment and housing. Their situation, in comparison with other ethnic groups, was relatively bad and it was felt that something should have been done about it. In the words of Sewlyn Rayan<sup>3</sup>:

*" Creoles are the most economically and politically marginalized group in Mauritius. They are the dockers, the fishermen, the lorry's assistants, home and construction workers and in some cases lower level clerks and factotum in the public and private sector."*

The Malaise Creole had also to do with the history of the Creoles: the dispossession and suffering associated with slavery and the aftermath of it, the consequences of which can be seen in the persistence of poverty, social problems and political marginalization.

Despite the panoply of measures to bring about Social Justice in the country by successive Governments, widespread discontent persists in the Creole milieu. The malaise also had certain physical and spatial characteristics. Social Housing Projects across the State are now better known as the *cités* and over the years of their existence, some of these popular residences have become breeding grounds for all sorts of problems besetting Mauritian Society: unemployment, poverty, delinquency, prostitution, child abuse, criminality etc.

### 8.5 The 'Kaya' Episode and the Creole Community

Despite the numerous measures taken to ensure the social citizenship of Mauritians at times, for both the rich and poor, the country witnessed the 'Kaya Episode', the open expression of the 'malaise Creole' which struck the Mauritian Society. Violent protests against the singer's death in doubtful circumstances was an expression of the 'Otherness' and the 'inability to integrate' the mainstream of Mauritian Society. Conscious of the wide discontent of the Creole community, the Government decided to bring further certain measures to improve the situation: the introduction of Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP schools), poverty eradication programmes, such as *Anou Dibout Ensam* and a Trust Fund for the Vulnerable and reinforce measures for housing accessibility. The creation of a separate a Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Development, to look after the poorest of the poorest of Mauritian society, is undoubtedly a powerful effort towards the eradication of absolute poverty.

### 8.6 Further explanations of the Exclusion of the Creole Community

There have been several interpretations of this state of affairs for this ethnic group, but many psycho-anthropologists and historians trace it back to slavery and its aftermath. The treatment which they were subjected to and their deculturalization appear to be deeply ingrained in their sub-consciousness. W. Devore and E. Schlesinger<sup>4</sup> have strongly argued that the past affects, and gives shape to, problems manifested in the present. Such non-conscious phenomena affect individual functioning and become a source of strain, discord and strife.

Other studies have also been done in the context of a deep insight of the psycho- sociological problems of Creoles in Mauritius and are contained in this report.

#### 8.6.1 The protection of women's rights

The Colony of Mauritius made history when it extended voting rights to women in 1948, at that time when such rights were not even in force in many Western democracies. Over the years, women were empowered; as legal persons, they can act independently of their spouses in matter concerning business, property acquisition, child custody, following Ordinance 50 of 1949 which provides for separate regime of goods and property. Men and women enjoy the same rights under the Constitution and the Law; and the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare promote the rights of women. We can also appreciate the efforts made to change patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men both in the family unit and in society; and to empower women and promote gender equality and equity.

Nevertheless, these efforts need to be intensified through comprehensive awareness raising and educational campaigns, as sexist advertising, gender job classifications, gender prejudices are still very much present. Women continue to play subordinate roles in society and societal discrimination continues.

Even if the Law prohibits rape, including spousal rape, rape is still widespread. Many victims choose not to report such cases to the police because of cultural pressures and fear of retaliation. Similarly, the Law criminalizes domestic violence, but it is still a major problem in the country. The Ministry for Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare is leaving no stone unturned to create awareness against domestic violence and child abuse.

Abortion in Mauritius is criminalized in all circumstances, including when the mother's life is at risk, and when the pregnancy is the result of rape - Article 235 of the Criminal Code. Punitive measures, imposed on women undergoing abortion, must be removed and a review of the circumstances in which abortion could be permitted must be undertaken. Sexual and reproductive health services must be more widely available in Mauritius and reproductive health education and services must be reviewed. Similarly, birth control measures should be made more readily accessible to poorer segments of the population.

#### **8.6.2 Legal protection and services for disabled people**

Persons with disabilities are no longer neglected as in the past. Now, there is an increased awareness of their needs and the Law prohibits discrimination against people with physical, intellectual, sensory and mental disabilities in the fields of employment, education, health care and in various other services. According to the Law, organizations employing more than 35 persons have to allocate at least 3 percent of their positions to disabled persons. It must also be stressed that disabled persons qualify for financial assistance by the State. Specialized schools are run to rehabilitate them and make them enjoy, as far as possible, a normal life.

Government services generally enforced this Law and such initiatives must be widely encouraged in the Private Sector. Programs are also effectively implemented by the State to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to information and communications. If progress is noted in this field, such positive practices need to be further encouraged both in the Public Sector and State institutions.

#### **8.6.3 Revision of the Constitution**

With regard to the Constitution, there is a need to revisit some Sections, as they do not presently meet the needs of a true democratic society. Indeed, more than 43 years have elapsed since Independence and public opinion is that a revision must be undertaken. An example is in Chapter 2 of the Constitution which provides for the guarantee of civil and political rights, and this Chapter may be amended to include guarantees of economic, social and cultural rights. Although not explicitly enshrined in the Constitution, they are widespread in practice. Such amendments will go a long way towards making Mauritius a sophisticated democracy as regards representation of minority groups.

The Best Loser System has so far ensured an adequate representation of ethnic minorities in the National Assembly, but there is a heated debate on this issue. Various proposals have been made to replace ethnic denomination in the first schedule of the Constitution. The elimination of the best loser system is far from making unanimity. This can only be viewed in the context of an overall review of the Constitution which would ensure better representation of all segments of the population.

#### **8.6.4 Role and freedom of speech and press**

Even though the Constitution and Law provide for freedom of speech and of the press, most Governments in power do not necessarily respect all such rights sometimes. If it is true that the independent media are able to express a variety of views which has lately been criticised and blamed.

Furthermore, the Government-owned and sole domestic television network, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), seems to be primarily viewed as a propaganda tool by the opposition. Cries have been raised against abuse of the MBC as a tool in favour of the party in power, and these cries should not remain unheard. The practice of the MBC to provide an extensive coverage of politicians attending various functions, including socio-religious ones, and the diffusion of large segments of their speeches in its news bulletin should be discouraged.

## 9. CLAIMS OF GLOBALIZATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE END OF AN ERA IN MAURITIUS

### Post-2005 Revolutionary Measures in the Administration of Social Justice

#### Introduction

Mauritius has moved from a period characterized by the absence of Social Justice, as was the case during the period of slavery (1721-1839) to a situation where Social Justice has become the very essence of a democratic society. Around the 1980's, when the liberalization of the economy took shape, there was a marked improvement of the lives of the people. However, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 had profound global consequences on the economic, social and cultural profile of nations: Mauritius was no exception. The old concept of Social Democracy had to be reinvented and this new approach so essential to adapt to the widespread changes as it is seen in the socio-economic policies of the Government of the day.

#### 9.1 Some landmarks of Neo-Liberalism and Reduction of Social Protection in Mauritius

Mauritius had fallen in the clutches of the International Monetary Fund during the late 1970s and early 1980s as a result of growing balance of payments deficits and stagnation of the economy. The country had to go through a structural adjustment programme where food subsidies had been reduced and wages were held below the rate of inflation. In 1983, a Sales Tax of 5% was introduced to raise Government revenue. In 1998, the Value Added Tax (VAT) at the rate of 10% was introduced in replace of the sales tax. Shortly afterwards, in 2000, the VAT was increased by 50%, bringing the rate to 15%, while its applicability was extended to services as well. The paradox about Value Added Tax is that it is paid by even the poorest of the poor.

#### 9.2 Income Tax Rates

Taxation is a financial charge imposed on the individual by the State mainly to raise revenue in order to be able to pay for the provision of public goods and services. Taxation also serves the purpose of redistribution of income from the rich to the poor. In the process of the gradual liberalization of the economy, there has also been an income taxation revolution: from a top marginal rate of income tax of 70% in 1982-83 to 35% in 1985-86. In 1999-2000, it was still decreased to 28%, and finally in 2005, it was brought down to a flat rate of 15%, a figure on a par with the Value Added Tax. (VAT). This rate probably helped in making Mauritius the 17<sup>th</sup> most business-friendly country in the world. Higher rate of taxation has the effect of discouraging investment, thereby in increasing unemployment. This strategy seems to have had positive results so far.

#### 9.3 The Year of the Great Divide: 2006

People in Mauritius are now jealous of the rights and privileges acquired since the country achieved Independence. Any attempt to strip people of their acquired rights and privileges tends to give rise to widespread discontent.

The 2006- 2007 Budget, which advocated the abolition of certain social measures due to financial constraints, was considered in some quarters as a departure from Social Justice Policy.

Widespread protests from all sectors, including Trade Union leaders, came in as a result of the abolition of subsidies on rice and flour; the end of the school feeding programme; the elimination of the 50% fees paid by the Government to students sitting for School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations; the introduction of the National Residential Property Tax; the end of tax concessions on revenue declaration; retirement at the age of 65; the introduction of taxes on interests received on savings in a bank. All these measures directly contributed to the pauperization of middle classes and the stigmatization of the lower and working classes.

In brief, this was a set of policy measures taken in line with global integration in a Neo-Liberal environment and as a result, the welfare and social protection measures were now funded to a large extent by the middle and lower classes. At this stage of policy-making, poverty and social

exclusion were rediscovered and the State's strategy to deal with them also changed. In the wake of the improvement in the financial situation of the country, however, some measures relating to food subsidies, assistance to students belonging to the lower income groups and other measures concerning payment of Old Age Pension and tax on interest received on savings have been withdrawn.

## 10. NEW APPROACHES: EMPOWERMENT, INCLUSION AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

### Introduction

Despite efforts made to initiate and reinforce measures to combat Social Injustice within a socio-democratic environment, poverty, social exclusion and other social ills still persist in several parts of the world. Mauritius is no exception. Many people continue to live in poverty and in deprived conditions, despite the rising standard of living of the average Mauritian. The Government of the day has not remained insensitive to this situation, and several measures are being initiated to reinforce Social Justice.

### 10.1 Poverty in Mauritius

Following rapid progress on the economic and social fronts in the 1980s and 1990s, there were visible signs of a better standard of living for the average Mauritian.

Various Ministries were involved directly and indirectly in programmes aiming at reducing social exclusion and alleviating poverty. In addition, several Local Authorities, Cooperative Societies, and NGOs and grassroots organizations made efforts towards poverty alleviation. Despite, efforts made between 1985 and 2005, absolute poverty still exists.

The 1999 riots also confirmed the "malaise Creole" where one ethnic group felt disproportionately represented in institutions and various spheres of activity.

According to the Central Statistics Office<sup>2</sup>, Mauritius has about 23,700 poor households, with a population of about 93,200 poor persons. Although there is no official poverty line in Mauritius, there have been several attempts to quantify poverty.

### 10.2 Post February 1999 Poverty Alleviation Programmes

After the February 1999 riots, involving the death of a Creole pop singer in police cells in mysterious circumstances, Government adopted a new approach to alleviate poverty. This was a participatory approach where the poor were empowered with relevant skills to get out of the poverty trap. Various programmes were adopted along these lines.

### 10.3 Other welfare measures destined to encourage a new class of *entrepreneurs*

In 1999, the *Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups* (TRSIVG) was set up and operated under the *aegis* of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. A sum of Rs. 500 million was earmarked for the financing of community development projects, micro credit schemes and loans to needy students and improvement on housing infrastructure.

The *Anou Diboute Ensam* (ANDE) programme, funded by the European Union, to the tune of Rs.100 million, focused on social infrastructural, income generating and technical assistance projects. This lasted between 1999 and 2004. However, both projects seem to have yielded mitigated results due to lack of support by social workers.

Similarly, the Rural Diversification Programme (RDP) of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) had two components: *Micro Enterprise and Micro- Finance Development and Community Development* which focussed on land irrigation and in the fisheries sector.

In the year 2006, the Government embarked on an Empowerment Programme spread over a period of five years to the tune of Rs. 5 billion. The National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) superseded the Empowerment Programme in 2008. In the same year, the Eradication of Absolute Poverty (EAP) Programme to the tune of Rs. 395 million was voted in the Budget. This aimed at providing outreach facilities in the 229 pockets of poverty identified in the country in terms of increasing access and equity in education, health, environment etc.

The *La Valette* very low cost integrated housing project is an example of the new approach in the reduction of absolute poverty and the Foundation intends to go ahead with five similar projects in several parts of the island. However, although the annual payment is very low (less than a thousand rupees) nearly 30% of the beneficiaries do not care to honour their engagement.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an established policy whereby companies in Mauritius have the legal obligation to contribute 2% of their profit after tax towards CSR- listed activities. However, there seems to be many constraints in its implementation<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, as highlighted in the survey report of the Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF) in April 2011, the MEF argues that the Government's approach to CSR differs from the generally-accepted voluntary definition of CSR by reiterating the fact that "*CSR is voluntary and cannot be governed by legislation*" and by arguing the fact that the "*regulatory requirements are somewhat tedious*".

In order to tackle the problem of extreme poverty and seek permanent solutions for a new approach in the poor milieu, a separate Ministry has been created. The Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Development is the new organ which is responsible for coordinating and monitoring funds made available by private companies to the tune of 2% of their profit after tax. This will account for quite a substantial amount of funds to be collected for implementation of short-and long-term projects.

The new Ministry should invariably work in close collaboration with all stake-holders so that a judicious use of funds is made available.

It is felt that in the long run that people who have for generations been left in absolute poverty will come to realise thanks to the new structural approach of their problems that they should live in the new social order if they wish to be extirpated from their present state of poverty and social distress.

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VOLUME 4

**HISTORY, ECONOMY,  
SOCIETY AND MEMORY**

Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys

**PART IX**

**RODRIGUES, CHAGOS, AGALEGA AND  
ST. BRANDON**



## PART IX

# RODRIGUES, CHAGOS, AGALEGA AND ST. BRANDON

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|--|--|
| 18. Rodrigues Island within the Republic of Mauritius                      | <i>Aurèle André</i>  |
| 19. Coloured Population in Rodrigues                                       | <i>Serge Rivière</i>   |
| 20. Slavery and its legacies in Rodrigues                                  | <i>Sophie Le Chartier</i>  |
| 21. Health of Slaves and their Descendants                                 | <i>Abdullah G. Dustagheer</i><br><i>Vakil Rajcoomar</i><br><i>Dr. Nagamah Gopauloo</i> |
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| 24. Agalega, No More a Lesser Dependency                                   | <i>Louis Herve Sylva</i><br><i>&amp; Dwarkapesad Jawaheer</i>                          |

# RODRIGUES ISLAND WITHIN THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

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3. Finally, to all the members of the working group for their contributions and inputs to the document.

The present report, done by a group of Rodriguans, aims at presenting, in an objective way, how the population of Rodrigues sees their past traumatic history, how they are coping with the present and how they envisage the future of the next generations. It is, indeed, an attempt to revisit the history of the island from the days of slavery to present time from a Rodriguan perspective. It is hoped that the recommendations of this report will be integrated in the National Policy and implemented as soon as possible so that in 2030, every single person born in Rodrigues in 2011(18 - 19 yrs old by then) is able to benefit from the plethora of opportunities offered by his/her fatherland to develop to his/her full potential in a totally liberalised world.

*« Nous n'héritons pas la terre de nos parents, nous l'empruntons à nos enfants. »*

(Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Terre des Hommes*, 1939)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Situated nearly in the middle of the Indian Ocean, East-North-East of Mauritius, Rodrigues is the last firm, hospitable land towards the Eastern coast of Australia. Due to its geographical position, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the time when the European Colonial power games for control of the Indian Ocean, particularly by the French and the British, Rodrigues played an important role in the political and economic destiny of the Mascarenes, namely Mauritius and Reunion. In fact, Rodrigues became, for a very short time, the theatre of the power game between the British and the French Colonial powers at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but unfortunately History seems to have forgotten the role played by Rodrigues and, consequently, succeeding Colonial Powers and national political powers up to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century neglected Rodrigues and its inhabitants.

In 1845, more than 35 years after the British colonised Rodrigues, Captain W. Kelly of the *H.M.S Conway* wrote:

*"It is lamentable to see any colony or dependency of a colony belonging to a country like Great Britain so utterly neglected. If the island of Rodriguez is worth keeping possession of, which it unquestionably is from its position, surely it should not be debarred from all the blessings and privileges of the mother country."*

### *Methodology*

The Working Group met the first time on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 at Mont Plaisir Multipurpose Cultural Centre in the presence of Mr. Jacques David, Commissioner of the Truth and Justice Commission.

The terms of reference were to present the Rodrigues' Case to the Truth and Justice Commission, accompanied by recommendations to be implemented in the final national document.

A series of meetings, seven in all, was scheduled to:

1. Brainstorm the above terms of reference;
2. Divide the work load and assignment among the members;
3. Undertake Research works and writing of the documents;
4. Complete Editing by the Team Leader.

Schedule of Meetings:

Meeting Dates	Place
23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2011	Mont Plaisir Multipurpose Cultural Centre (MPMC)
3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2011	MPMC
10 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	Araucaria Community School
17 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	François Leguat Reserve
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011	Araucaria Community School
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2011	Araucaria Community School
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2011	Araucaria Community School

## Division of Work-load and Assignment:

NAME	ASSIGNMENT
Mrs. Arlette Perrine Begue	Autonomy, Land issues, Agriculture
Mr. Jacques Edouard	Slavery and its stigmas
Mrs. Vinolia Ramanitrarivo & Ms. Lovena St Pierre	Education, Unemployment
Mr. Karl Allas & Mr. Rosaire Perrine	Culture and Religion
Mr. Aurèle Anquetil André	Heritage, Economy, Tourism, Communication, Rodrigues, Part of Mauritius?
Mr. Henrico Louis	Secretary: Notes of meetings and coordinator of meetings

## 2. COLONISATION

### 2.1 French Supremacy

The first serious attempt at colonisation took place in 1691 by small group of French Huguenots led by Francois Leguat but they all abandoned Rodrigues in 1693.

The second attempt at colonisation was spear-headed by the French, but this time, it was decided by the Conseil Supérieur de l'Île Bourbon in 1725 in the name of the French East Indian Company. This attempt did not last long because of the isolation of Rodrigues and its difficult port-access. However, a small contingent of slaves under the supervision of Julien Tafforet, whose main occupation was to harvest tortoises in Rodrigues, stationed in Rodrigues for just under one year. Once more the island was abandoned, but the Directors of the Company took care to forbid the removal of tortoises, which they reserved for the requirements of vessels returning from India. In order to regulate the trade of tortoises from Rodrigues, Mahé de Labourdonnais created a small establishment for the sole purpose of gathering tortoises in readiness for shipment. The establishment consisted of a few soldiers, lascars and slaves. It would appear that the relationship between the White Settlers and the slaves was always under great strain and that "marronnage" was a regular practice.

In 1761, when Alexandre Gui arrived for the observation of the Transit of Venus, there were the French Officer in Charge, a surgeon and corporal (all three Europeans) and 12 to 15 blacks, natives of Madagascar or India, most of whom were slaves belonging to the Company. There were also 22 freemen. However, in 1767, Rodrigues, now retroceded to the French Crown, had a very small slave population of five and Yves Mathurin Jullienne.

Permanent settlement in Rodrigues could be said to have started with the arrival Legros and Fremont in 1792, followed by Michel Gorry in 1793. They came after the French Revolution to start fishing-posts and do commerce with Mauritius. In 1794, Philibert Marragon arrived as Civil Agent with his wife, his mother-in-law and his slaves.

Shortly afterwards in 1798, instructions arrived from authorities in Ile de France, regarding the land concessions, namely 100 *arpents* per married couple and 50 *arpents* for each child on their arrival at Rodrigues.

Marragon was definitely not an easy character and his relationship with the slave'-owners was always on edge. Rivalries among them were rampant. It appeared also that Marragon was very concerned about the ratio of slaves and masters - slaves largely outnumbered masters. In his letters to the authorities in Mauritius, he was always complaining about the behaviour of the slaves. For him the slaves of the other settlers, particularly those of Lambert Gautier, whom he considered to be "*de mauvais sujets rebut de l'Isle de France*" or "*Mauvais sujets, marrons, etc., qui ont fait les dégats dont on se plaint*", were constant sources of trouble. Marragon accused the "marrons" of theft and criminal burning of crops and forests.

One important decision that needs to be noted is that upon his arrival at Isle de France, General Decaen immediately decided to evacuate the settlers from Rodrigues to counter the British influence. He was convinced and he was right that the British found in Rodrigues a source of supply for their ships on blockade duty around Isle de France. As leprosy was becoming a real threat at Isle de France at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the *arrêt* of 30<sup>th</sup> July 1800 made provision for segregation in special asylums of persons affected:

*" Those amongst the persons affected who shall be found to be incurable, shall, by the first opportunity, be sent to a place that shall be fixed, the colony shall see to their being settled, and to their keeping and maintenance during the period of six months". (Acticle VI of the Arrêt).*

General Decaen thought that Rodrigues would be ideal place and that would also scare the British away.

For the interest of Isle France and Bourbon, Rodrigues would have been sacrificed and turned into an asylum for the lepers.

### *2.2 First attempt of Slave Revolution in Rodrigues*

Marragon conducted a survey of the population of Rodrigues in 1804. He thus established that there were 82 slaves belonging to five colonists and their families operating on the Island. There were 32 who originated from Mozambique, 18 from Madagascar and 24 born in Rodrigues.

In 1806, the Slaves plotted to take the Schooner of Germain Le Gros to escape to Madagascar or India. The plot was uncovered and the culprits severely punished. This is a stark indication of the harshness of the lives of the slaves under the French administration. In an island so isolated as Rodrigues, the masters could do whatever they wished and one can imagine the vulnerability of a servile population. Marragon mentioned in his letters that Slaves were still fettered:

*« Les Noirs du Citoyen Gautier toujours marrons, ayant rencontré un Noir et deux négresses du Citoyen Rochetaing aux environs de son habitation, ont entraîné avec eux le Noir, après avoir ôté un collier que son maître lui avait fait mettre: les deux négresses qui avaient aussi des fers, n'ayant pu en être délivrées, ils les ont renvoyés de peur que la lenteur de leur marche ne les fît prendre. »*

The fate of the slaves did not improve under the British rule. After the signing of The Treaty of Paris (30 May 1814), which was proclaimed in Mauritius on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, Bourbon was restored to France, while Isle de France and its Dependencies, especially Rodrigues, and Les Seychelles came under the British rule

### *2.3. British Rule*

British presence in Rodrigues dated back to 1761 when at least 12 ships of the English navy were manoeuvring in the waters around Rodrigues, waiting for the forces from Europe to conquer Isle de France. The forces never came and after having taken Rodrigues as hostage for a few months, they departed to Madras. Finally, the British were back in the Rodrigues waters as early as 1794 to start the blockade on Isle de France and in 1809, in a second attack, Isle de France capitulated. Rodrigues thus played a critical role in the future destiny of the Mascarene archipelago.

It is to be noted that Robert Farquhar, who administered Bourbon Island after its capitulation to the British, travelled to Rodrigues just before the expedition against Isle de France got underway. He promised the inhabitants of Rodrigues that a Government Agent would be appointed to look after their interests, "in the same manner as in the French times". Obviously, Robert Farquhar was very active on the diplomatic front and succeeded in winning the allegiance of the people of Rodrigues.

### *2.4. Robert Farquhar's False Promise*

Governor Farquhar never appointed a Government Representative to Rodrigues as he had told them he would. A number of historians think that this was intentional, a loophole left for some slave trading which could be officially ignored so long as there was not a local authority to report its existence. Was it just a case of indecision or was the neglect intentional? Abandoned by the French, the arrival of the British gave the people of Rodrigues a glimpse of hope but that as well also fizzled out rapidly. Instead, in preparing the Slavery Abolition Act, the British, anticipating the potential problems of its implementation, thought that Rodrigues would be an ideal place for the reforming of those slaves of notoriously bad characters. However there is no indication that this measure was ever implemented like Decaen's leper island.

Rodrigues remained without any official rule for more than 30 years. One could imagine that everybody could have done anything without being reprimanded.

## **2.5 British Colonial Rule (1809 -1968)**

When the islands became British, slave trading became automatically illegal and preventive measures were devised. However, because there no official government.

Representative in Rodrigues, these measures would remain ineffective. Rodrigues was thus under the first few years of British rule a land with no law at all. So if any of the settlers took some liberties, who would stand in the way? The possibility that the settlers engaged themselves in illegal of slave trading cannot be wholly discarded.

The registration of slaves that was compulsory by the Order in Council of 24<sup>th</sup> September 1814, was only partly applied to Rodrigues in 1820, but no official registration was done.

This situation brings into light Farquhar's obstinence not to appoint an Official Government Representative in Rodrigues. There are evidences that a network of illegal slaves trade was going on between the coast of Africa to Seychelles, and thence to Rodrigues. Farquhar, after much ado, although he was convinced that Rodrigues would not be worth much to the British without slaves, Farquhar appointed Robert Pye as Government Agent in Rodrigues. Pye reported on the slave situation in 1821 but for reasons unknown, his return on slaves was never registered in the Slave Registration Office in Port Louis. In fact, the slaves of Rodrigues were only officially registered in 1827, at the request of the Eastern Enquiry Commissioners, who held that many of these slaves had a just claim to freedom, having been introduced into the island after the 1814 Order. Unfortunately, these slaves were not set free.

The first official visit of a Governor of Mauritius took place 71 years after the British conquest of the Mascarene Archipelago. F. Napier-Broome, Lieutenant-Governor accompanied by his wife, Lady Barker, visited Rodrigues from the 26<sup>th</sup> June to the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1881. Lady Barker, a very prolific writer, referred to Rodrigues as "a most distressful dependency of Mauritius".

### 3. SLAVERY IN RODRIGUES

Slavery is said to have been different in Rodrigues. Slaves, were better treated and cared for, more through fear because they outnumbered the settlers.

Interestingly enough, the particularity of Rodrigues is that slaves and masters arrived at the same time. We learn thus from historians that the first slaves arrived in Rodrigues in 1736, when the first establishment was in place to collect land tortoises. It is to be noted that in 1725, Julian Tafforet landed on the island, accompanied by four men, presumably four slaves, but they only stayed a few months. It is not recorded whether slaves gave birth to children at that time. We only know that the first white Rodriguan was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1752, of the first European woman to land in Rodrigues. Jeanne Francoise de Rancars was the wife of the Officer in charge of the establishment, Vincent Francois Martenne de Puvigné.

At that period, Alexandre Gui Pingré, an Astronomer on mission to observe the first transit of Venus, noted 15 slaves, natives of Madagascar and India. A Census carried out by Philibert Marragon in 1804 revealed 24 slaves, born in Rodrigues.

According to Bertuchi, a good number of slaves were from Madagascar and the East Coast of Africa. The inhabitants cultivated manioc, coffee, mountain rice, tobacco, citrus, mango and sweet potatoes. They also reared sheep, pigs, turkeys, and fowls of all descriptions. Some cattle ran wild.

The slaves from Africa were more strongly-built and more amenable to work than the Malgaches, who often escaped, although they were more intelligent. At sunrise, these slaves were awakened and sent to work till sunset. Their nourishment consisted of boiled maize or manioc. It was the custom to give each slave a shirt on New Year's Day. There are no details about the punishment of slaves. Some said that it was rather cruel. If a woman had to be punished, the husband was ordered to inflict it. To contract marriage, the slave had to obtain the permission of his master, who rarely refused it. They seemed to have preferred the idea of marrying women a good deal older than themselves.

It was almost one hundred years later that the authorities seemed to care about the conditions of slaves in Rodrigues. In 1830 Captain Lyons was asked to report on the state, condition and appearance of the slave population in Rodrigues. Lyons found slaves well-clothed and well-fed, having great facility to catch fish, keeping pigs and poultry which they fed on manioc.

Slavery was abolished by an Act of Parliament on the 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1833. Slaves were to remain with their masters for a period of 5 years as apprentices. It is only towards the end of the period of apprenticeship (1839) that Special Justice C. Anderson was appointed to report on the conditions of apprentices. He sent six days in Rodrigues.

Anderson reported that apprentices in Rodrigues were working longer hours than the Law allowed; their clothing was inadequate and their huts miserable, but they were well-fed, and extensive ground was allotted to them.

He concluded that Rodrigues was over-populated. Its only revenue was derived from fisheries. He fixed the hours at which work was to begin and to end. Wages were to be paid at the rate of 3 rupees per month.

#### *3.1 Illegal Slave Trade*

By the Treaty of Paris, proclaimed in Mauritius on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 1814, Bourbon was restored to France and Isle de France and its dependencies; Rodrigues and the Seychelles were to remain under British rule.

Slave trading was thus illegal at that time. On the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1814, slave-owners were obliged by law to submit returns of their slaves every three years. Robert Farquhar, Governor

of Mauritius, did not deliberately appoint a Government Representative to Rodrigues, as he promised the Rodriguans during the British blockade of Isle de France in 1809. This was to allow illegal slave trade to continue, with no local authorities to report it. It was only in 1820 that he appointed a youngman Thomas Robert Pye, a Lieutenant of the Marines, who participated in the attack on Bourbon. His mission was to register the slaves in Rodrigues, to keep an exact account of all arrivals and departures of ships, to see their logs and their papers. He resided at Baie Lascars in the quarters vacated by the British army, but he soon moved uphill on the former Rochetaing's concession at Mon Plaisir.

### *3.2 Abolition of Slavery*

While Honoré Eudes, a settler of Rodrigues as from 1820, was visiting Mauritius, he was charged by the Government to proclaim, on his return to Rodrigues, total freedom for all slaves on the Island of Rodrigues. Honoré Eudes did so on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1839, the day of his arrival in Rodrigues. Interestingly Honoré Eudes offered to his slaves two options; either, firstly, they returned to Mauritius, or secondly, money, food, alcoholic drinks, the right to cultivate freely a plot of his land for their own benefit. The slaves agreed to the second option but shortly afterwards, they deserted the master's concession and took refuge in the interior of the island to enjoy their freedom. It was clear that the ex-slaves wanted to be as far as possible from their past masters.

For the first time, the liberated slaves had a sense of belonging, and they indeed made the best of it. They could easily squat on a piece of land, help themselves to the runaway cattle, catch their own fish, and till as much land as they wanted. There was nothing to stop them from doing so. Charles Lenferna attempt's to interfere with this new mode of living of the ex-slaves prompted the Government to send a magistrate, H. M. Self, to Rodrigues in June 1841. Yet, no official Government Representative was appointed. It was only after the wreck of the good ship *Oxford* (1<sup>st</sup> September 1843) that forced the Governor of Mauritius to send a corporal and five constables to Rodrigues. Sir John Marshall, Captain of Her Majesty's frigate *Isis*, was given a special commission to act as Magistrate and Judge surrogate of Rodrigues.

Colonisation of Rodrigues resumed after a period of military occupation, and settlers came from Mauritius with slaves from Mozambique coast and the East coast of Madagascar. Some of the settlers were involved in direct slave trade, through the East Africa/Seychelles network, although the practice was prohibited under British Law.

### *3.3 Ex-slaves after abolition*

After the abolition of slavery, some estate-owners returned to Mauritius because of the state of lawlessness prejudicial to the whole island.

However, a number of new people from Mauritius, tempted by the opportunity thus created, moved to Rodrigues mainly to establish fisheries. The master fishermen employed people of dubious characters, ex-convicts, and some of them came straight from jail.

Blacks from Mauritius complained to have been shipped by the Police to Rodrigues without any formal contracts of service. Furthermore, those who were on a one-year contract could not afford a passage back to Mauritius. They were perpetually in debt and forced against the Law to remain in their employers' service.

There were no shops at that time. Each employer had a store of his own. He supplied his men on credit at extortionate prices.

Dupont wrote that the sale of Crown Lands started around 1850. Settlers, most of them emancipated slaves, opted for a lease because perhaps they lacked financial means. This had the devastating effect of accelerated deforestation. Forest covers were systematically cleared to make room for the cultivation of cash crop, such as coffee, indigo and cotton, and stapled food such as wheat, rice, potato, vegetables, sweet potatoes, maize and beans.

Traditionally, Rodriguans ate maize that they produced, and very little rice. This was most probably due to their African origins and also because of very few contacts with the Asian subcontinent.

According to Bertuchi, by 1843, the population of the island had risen to 500, only one-fifth of which were females. Owing to this preponderance of males, great immorality prevailed. Each woman had three or four husbands, in some cases as many as six. The children, however, were harmoniously brought up together; the favoured husband at the time exercised the role of father to all of them.

A few White Creoles from Mauritius and Bourbon came and settled on the island and intermarried with the Blacks, which accounts for a section of the population being of a "café au lait" colour. Interestingly, some of the settlers were descendants of the French who had been expelled from settlement at Fort Dauphin in Madagascar.

Other White Creoles married Whites like themselves, which accounts for a number of inhabitants who are, in appearance, Europeans, except that in their habits and customs through prolonged stay have espoused those of the Blacks.

The bulk of the population consists of Negroes who were originally imported as slaves from Madagascar and the East coast of Africa through Mauritius. They were not as black as the Guinea Negroes; the majority have deep brown velvety skin. Their hair is of a very deep black, woolly and curly, their noses short and fairly flat, and the eyes black. Their protruding thick red lips allow one to admire a magnificent row of snow-white teeth. Their arms are longish and thin, and their legs look rather weak and thin. The average height of the men is 5ft. 6 inches. They are very strong, although their outward appearance does not give this impression. It is a marvel how physically strong they are, considering the food they live on. The children of both sexes commence work at a very early age.

The native had his plot of land; he grew maize, manioc, beans, sweet potatoes and vegetables and his own tobacco. He rears sheep, goats, cattle, pigs and fowls. Wood for fuel is nearby, whilst water was procured from rivulets and springs. Fruit trees abounded everywhere. The fat from the pigs was melted and used for cooking. The man went out in his boat and fished all day, or went out to the opposite end of the island and fished the whole week, and came back to his little straw hut in the mountains on Saturdays to find his wife and children left at home, to look after the plantation and the fowls. He brought with him enough salted fish to last at least a whole week.

They had no rent to pay, as their houses were built by themselves of local wood, and latanier leaves and barks, and lasted for many years. They had only to buy sugar, tea and clothes, and they could easily procure these from the proceeds of fish, fowls, and goats, and so on. Those who did not own their plots of land rented it from the Government. The rent per acre was only three shillings per annum, and two acres were sufficient to produce enough food to ensure a livelihood for a family of five to six persons.

During the week-ends, when the men were back with their families, one heard the constant sound of the tom-toms, the concertinas, and merry mixed voices of the family and friends. On Sundays, they did their best to go to Church. Very few of the natives ever missed the Sunday Church service.

Marriage is good example of the strong attachment that the natives had with church. If a man wanted to take unto himself a wife, he chose her and married her. They lived together and they worked together. When they had collected a few animals and had saved some money, and were in a position to stage a feast, they then underwent religious and civil ceremonies of marriage.

H. M. Self reported in 1841 that he had found liberated slaves entirely self-supporting from the produce of their cultivation and the livestock they raised. They squatted unlawfully on the Crown Lands.

### 3.4 Stigmas of slavery

Slavery has been recognised and condemned as a crime to Humanity. This inhumane practice has left lasting stigmas on the lives of its promoters and particularly on the lives of the victims. It is needless to go into great details about the general and lasting collateral damages that Slavery had caused in the History of Humanity; the following will suffice:

1. Rodrigues was important to the French Colonialists because of the reservoir of free animal proteins; namely, an abundance of tortoises. The massive exploitation resulted in the extinction of practically the totality of the endemic fauna and some of the unique flora of the island. What did Rodrigues get in return? The French wanted to turn Rodrigues into an asylum for people having contracted highly contagious diseases such as leprosy or into an ideal place to exile criminals, trouble-makers and revolutionaries to.
2. Rodrigues was left without any official Government Representative for more than 30 years, with the complicity of the British Governors who deliberately turned a blind eye on the illegal slave trade. Rodrigues had high expectations with the arrival of the British, but they were very quickly disappointed and disillusioned, for nothing was done to improve their living conditions.
3. Rodrigues played a critical role in the destiny of the Mascarene Archipelago in 1809-1810. This historical truth was yet again brushed aside as Rodrigues was forgotten. However, as soon as trouble started in Mauritius, Rodrigues came into the picture. To enjoy the peace of mind in Mauritius, trouble-makers were exiled to Rodrigues and those inflicted with deadly cholera were sent to Rodrigues.
4. The posting of Public Officers from Mauritius to Rodrigues was considered to be a punishment by the incumbents. As obedient servants of the Government, they had to serve but did so happily. Some of them went further, indulging into unfair trading, perpetuating the exploitation of the Rodriguans and thus forgoing what they were expected to do in Rodrigues. This situation affected the relationship between Mauritius and Rodrigues, thereby giving rise to a strong perception that Mauritians are Neo-Colonialists in Rodrigues.
5. The way Rodrigues had been treated made it obvious that neither the French nor the British believed that Rodrigues could have a reasonable future. At every opportunity, the Rodriguan people were made to believe that there was no future for Rodrigues. Hence, recommendations had been made on several occasions to evacuate the island or to encourage massive emigration. This attitude towards Rodrigues had untold effect on the psychological make-up of the people of Rodrigues, to the extent that the sense of unworthiness still prevails today amongst the population. There has been bred a fear for adventure and calculated risk-taking.
6. Furthermore, from a White European perspective, Rodriguans were seen as a lazy and slow people. They doubted whether Rodriguans could make it above the level of a primitive society, let alone making the Secondary School leaving grade. Today, this has been proved wrong, but we must ensure that no encouragement is ever given to those obscure and spiteful forces.
7. Unfair trading practices: Exploitation through supply on credit at extortionate prices. This stigma is still present today, whereby Rodriguans have not been able to shake off the perpetual need to be indebted.
8. Alcoholism: After the abolition of slavery, wages included spirit "Iarak", as during slavery, spirits were included in the food distributed.
9. A form of polygamy was condoned, not to say forced on the population of Rodrigues. This practice may have encouraged prostitution. In Rodrigues, prostitution is mainly referred to as women having more than one partner. It may also be the root cause of the growing number of single-parent family (*fille-mères*).

### 3.2 Recommendations

1. Encourage Research Fellows from Rodrigues and Mauritius to relook at the way Mauritius and Rodrigues history was written.
2. Increase the number of opportunities now available regarding education so that more Rodriguans could get access to Tertiary Education.
3. Economically, Rodrigues lagged behind because historical circumstances forced it to be a late starter. Of course, there have been a number of affirmative actions towards helping Rodrigues to catch up and to make up for the lost time. Today there is the will, the design and the plan to kick-off of the economic development of Rodrigues, but the means for a real take-off are seriously lacking.

## 4. RODRIGUES' ADMINISTRATION

The first Police Magistrate under British rule, Blaise Bacy, arrived in Rodrigues in December 1843, 34 years after the colonisation of the Island. From the outset, he raised questions of education for the children, health care, safety at sea, lighthouse, among others. In 1845, the population of Rodrigues was 323, of which 240 descended from the old slave population and were generally of African parentage, the 83 others came from the old free population. M. Chapotte, a Frenchman, was the only alien.

The future of Rodrigues once more came into focus when the epidemic cholera struck Mauritius in 1854 and 1856. The Secretary of State suggested Rodrigues as a quarantine station. Fortunately, the project never materialised and once more, Rodrigues was saved from the consequences of colonial's drastic decisions.

The first six-beds Hospital was only set up by Police Magistrate Messiter in 1861. Messiter also created the first post office. Formal primary education started in 1865 under George Jenner, with 13 girls and 14 boys under the tutorship of a Schoolmaster and a Schoolmistress - Mr. and Mrs. Corson but it closed a month later to reopen shortly afterwards under the tutorship of Mr. and Mrs. Lalande. Coincidentally the first secondary school to be officially registered in Rodrigues was in 1961, nearly 100 years after the beginning of Primary Education.

### 4.1 Human Settlement

The first human settlement on Rodrigues took place in 1691 and lasted for just under three years. The second attempt of settlement was in 1725 but did not really last long (December 1725 to June 1726). Until the arrival of Mahé Labourdonnais, as Governor of the Isle de France, passing ships regularly stopped over in Rodrigues to harvest tortoises which were then abundant in Mauritius. Labourdonnais decided to control the tortoise trade in Rodrigues by creating a small establishment under the leadership of Oscal from 1736 at Rodrigues for the sole purpose of gathering tortoises in readiness for shipment. The small establishment consisted of a few soldiers, lascars and slaves.

Twenty-five years later, in 1761, Alexandre Gui Pingré wrote that the population consisted of the French Officer-in-Charge, a Surgeon and a Corporal, both Europeans, and 12 to 15 Black/s, natives from Madagascar or India. There were also a number of freemen. By the time of the 'retrocession' of Rodrigues from the East Indian Company to the French Crown in 1767, there were only five slaves in Rodrigues.

From then on, the population of Rodrigues dwindled until the arrival of Germain Le Gros in September 1792. In fact, it could be said that permanent human settlement in Rodrigues was provoked, when news of the French Revolution reached Isle de France. The news created such pandemonium that a number of people decided to leave the Isle de France, and some first went over to Rodrigues to have a look at the island. Most of them immediately gave up any idea of settling.

The first French Civil Agent to rule over Rodrigues was Philibert Marragon from 1794 to 1809. He died on Rodrigues in 1826 at the age of 76. Marragon carried out a Census of the population of Rodrigues in 1804, and there were 22 Europeans and 82 slaves.

The land lords of Rodrigues in 1804 were Marragon with 400 *arpents*, including 100 *arpents* under cultivation; Le Gros 100 *arpents* 25 cultivated, Gorry 70 cultivated and Rochetaing 350 *arpents* 70 cultivated. There were thus 850 *arpents* of land concessions of which 265 were under cultivation to sustain the livelihood of a population of 104.

### 4.2. The People of Rodrigues

In a paper published in 1971, 'Notes et Etudes Documentaires', 28 mai 1971, No. 3794), Louis Dollot wrote:

*“A la différence de Maurice, cette population (de Rodrigues) est très homogène. Avec un pourcentage de 85%, les Noirs créoles constituent l’ethnie dominante de sorte que, si la Réunion paraît plutôt «européenne» et Maurice «asiatique», Rodrigues est nettement «africaine».*

*“Since the day Mauritius attained the status of an independent nation, Rodrigues has, of course, shed its status of a dependency. Under the new Constitution, the smaller island is now “part” of Mauritius. Politically, it is fully integrated. Physically, it cannot be. Ethnically it is thought to stay the same as long as one could to imagine. Economically, however, if the destinies of Rodrigues are to remain linked with those of Mauritius, the Rodriguan problem must be studied in greater depth and in more detail than has been done in the new Mauritius 4-Year Plan for Social and Economic Development. The plan provides a capital expenditure programme estimated to cost 32.5 million rupees in the four years ending on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1975. This is roughly 2.3 million rupees more annually than in the last three years. (Alfred North-Coombes)*

There has been an erroneous and widespread perception that the Rodriguans, particularly the descendants of ex-slaves, led as lazy a life as they could. However, Alexandre Gui Pingré, way back in 1761, had this to say about the slaves, when they set out to work: *“Il fallait arracher les ouvriers du travail pour les faire manger et dormir.”*

Quite often, owing to extreme climatic conditions on the island, the Rodriguans have had to face near starvation. They had learnt to eat anything that was available; namely wild fruit, snails etc. Over the years, they have become a resilient people. They can put in long and sustained efforts when necessary. They do not like to be hurried or bullied in doing things quickly. In fact, as they have been for so long masters of their time and property, they have developed a great sense of freedom in their actions and also demonstrated an innate pride.

There is thus a case to revisit the ‘lazy’ tag that the past masters have stuck on the Rodriguans. This brings us to look at the stigmas left by the inhumane practice of slavery.

## 5. FROM TOTAL NEGLECT TO FORGETFULNESS (OR EITHER WAY)

Compared to Mauritius and Reunion, Rodrigues never knew the development of a colonial plantation economy, even though there have been several attempts to grow tobacco, cotton, coffee etc. Isolated and away from the main trade routes, the island of Rodrigues was just a stopover for infrequent vessels.

From a land of abundance, Rodrigues is now relegated amongst the first three Small Oceanic Islands (Rodrigues 94%, Norfolk Island 94% and Ascension Island 91%) in the world, where the natural biodiversity is the most devastated.

Isaac Balfour, a Botanist, referred to Rodrigues as a barren land in the 1870s, some 180 years after the first settlers enjoyed to the fullest the natural resources of Rodrigues in 1691. Once an idyllic place, fertile valleys, potable fresh water, pure and healthy air, the land that saw the evolution of an amazing mega-fauna (exceptionally beautiful though strange birds, Solitaire and reptiles - giant tortoises and lizards) is now a depleted and desolate place. The exploiters have gone and in their memory, the atrocity caused to Rodrigues has been completely forgotten.

Rodrigues is probably amongst the first few places in the world with a colonialist past and a dependency of Mauritius that has been most neglected. A glance through the scarce historical literature and records on Rodrigues strongly confirmed the above statement, namely:

In *“The Island of Rodrigues”* by Alfred North-Coombes (1971), the author wrote as an introduction;

*“Though I was born and educated in Mauritius and went to the College of Agriculture there before going to University in England, I cannot recall anyone at school or within the family circle ever mentioning the island of Rodrigues. I cannot recall our lecturer in agriculture, who knew Rodrigues well and indeed had established a branch of the Department of Agriculture there, ever mentioning the island in the course of his lectures [...]”*

In *Rodrigues, La Troisième Ile des Mascareignes* by Jean-Michel Jauze (1998), the author wrote as an ‘avant-propos’:

*«L’archipel des Mascareignes comprend trois îles: la Réunion, Maurice et Rodrigues. Or si les deux premières qui sont également les plus grandes (2512 km<sup>2</sup> et 2100 km<sup>2</sup>, contre uniquement 110 km<sup>2</sup>) sont relativement bien connues, il est assez curieux de constater qu’en cette fin de 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, la troisième demeure encore bien souvent ignorée.»*

In *«La Petite Mascareigne»* by Lilian Berthelot (2002), the author wrote in her ‘avant-propos’:

*“La petite Mascareigne comprend ainsi deux parties:*

1. *(a) une description de l’existence des esclaves, des apprentis et des libres, (b) la correspondance de personnages illustrant l’existence à Rodrigues entre 1795 et 1843, et quelques événements marquants de la vie du peuple rodriguais, après le 19<sup>e</sup> siècle et, finalement,*
2. *Une chronologie, sans doute perfectible, qui retrace l’avancée de Rodrigues de son état de dépendance négligée au statut de l’autonomie.*
3. *Faire mieux connaître l’histoire de Rodrigues - aux Rodriguais et aux Mauriciens, surtout, et de surcroît aux étudiants et chercheurs : c’est là mon souhait.»*

Rodrigues suffered an abject neglect for most of its known history. It came under consideration only at the whim and will of the masters of the time. Having suffered terrible losses by the French stationed at Isle de France, the British decided to use Rodrigues as an assembly point for its Navy in 1809 to conquer Isle de France and Isle Bourbon. Even though Rodrigues played such a critical role in the Anglo-French struggles for supremacy in the Indian Ocean during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, between 1793 and 1811, Rodrigues was forgotten shortly afterwards and never got any recognition. The slaves, brought in by the French and the British, were left stranded on the island, with no basic support whatsoever for their livelihood. Naturally located right in the track of tropical cyclones and also prone to long periods of drought, the population of Rodrigues have experienced serious times of famine in its very short human history.

At other times, Rodrigues was often considered as a land of exile, an island of punishment. In 1804, Governor Isidore Decean wanted to turn the island into a camp for lepers. In 1832, under the British rule, Rodrigues was designated as a land for the deportation of the undesirable slaves with a bad reputation and as a quarantine station for people affected by cholera. There is no evidence, though that these measures were ever implemented. But still the idea was evoked and the perception that Rodrigues did not really have the capacity to sustain a viable economy was enunciated.

The lepers from Mauritius and Reunion were finally shipped to Diego Garcia and later to Curieuse Island in the Seychelles.

However, on two occasions, Rodrigues became the land of exile for two turbulent and undesirable politicians, Antoine de Rivaltz de Saint-Antoine in 1768, and Emmanuel Anquetil in 1938.

It is inconceivable today to imagine how the colonialists sat down and shared among them the morsels. Following the Treaty of Paris (30<sup>th</sup> May, 1814) which was proclaimed in Mauritius on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, Bourbon was restored to France. The then Isle de France and its dependencies, especially Rodrigues, and the Seychelles came under British rule.

For some obscure reasons, Governor Farquhar did not appoint a Government Representative to Rodrigues. In fact, he failed to hold his promise to the Rodriguans. Alfred North-Coombes inferred that perhaps, Farquhar's decision was intentionale, *"a loophole left for some slave trading which could be officially ignored so long as there was not a local authority to report its existence. Perhaps Rodrigues, as so often before and after, was simply forgotten."*

Furthermore, the administration of the island, when it came, was chaotic. For instance, declarations of births and deaths, and publications and celebrations of marriages in Rodrigues, were first made compulsory from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1857. However, it was only in 1890 that a Civil Status Office was created in Rodrigues. This infers that from 1857 to 1883, year when the Police Magistrate was given the powers to validate any will or contract of marriage certified as genuine, all acts so authenticated prior to that year were in fact illegal. Legally, the people of Rodrigues did not officially exist until 1883. There is thus a case to be made to research the History of Rodrigues from the official abolition of slavery in 1835 to 1883, to find out what really happened to the people of Rodrigues during that particular period.

This perception of Rodrigues as a land of exile and punishment had been exacerbated by both an officious policy on the part of the authorities in Mauritius, and the behaviour of a majority of public officers from Mauritius during their tour of duty and service in Rodrigues.

In its human history, the first popular consultation was in 1967 compared to Mauritius where a Legislative Council, with an elected minority, was set up in 1885. As early as 1915, a serious representation was made by Rodriguans by sending a memorial to H. M. the King of England. The memorial pointed out that Rodrigues had not been included as an Electoral District in the 1885 Constitution, although it had a population larger than that of the Black River District in Mauritius, which had one. It was unfortunate that no decision was ever taken on this issue due to the lack of consideration or, more to the point, the lie of Sir John Chancellor to the Secretary of State. In fact, the King was never advised of the

representation of the Rodriguans. Decisions, most of the time, indecisions continued to be taken in Port-Louis and implemented.

## 6. DESTRUCTION OF HERITAGE IN RODRIGUES

Untold damages have been done to the natural, historical, cultural, social and physical heritage in Rodrigues over the past three hundred years or so.

However, Rodriguans never gave up and they entertain, hope as a people, and rightly so that one day they shall overcome. The days of reckoning are ever so close. Rodrigues is probably among the last firm land to experience the impact of human. This is very good news because the first settlers left a number of records of how Rodrigues was before human settlement. There is thus a case to be made to study Rodrigues as a Rosetta Stone to understand the impact of human settlement on insular territories and the findings could be used to partly restore the natural biodiversity on other islands in the world. Rodrigues could be a test-case and a model for small island restoration in the world.

A number of Historical Buildings have been destroyed by cyclones, but no efforts of reconstructions and restorations were undertaken to protect the heritage of the island. Some of the buildings fell into ruins, due to a lack of fund to repair and restore them, and also due to lack of the official policies. Recently, an old building which used to house the Maternity Ward at Port Mathurin was entirely pulled down without any reaction either from the authorities or the civil society. The old Health Centre at Mont Lubin was left to rot and, with it, the whole history of health care in Rodrigues. The public garden in Port Mathurin, with its tennis court and other leisure facilities, was scrapped to make way for the New Administration Building. Yet again, a whole piece of Rodriguan social and cultural history was swept away for good. It must be pointed out that since the demise of the public garden, Port Mathurin has no proper green space left. The lack of systematic town and country planning is the main cause of this situation and even today, decisions regarding buildings and development projects are left solely to the whims of the authorities that be, and are still being one on a piecemeal basis.

However, among the bleakness of this situation, there are also some positive undertakings, the old administration and the Residence have been restored and are now maintained properly. Mauritius Telecom is looking after one of the old buildings built by the Eastern Telegraphic Company way back at the beginning of 1900. Sadly, one of the buildings which used to be the ETC Manager's Lodge and housed the first Hotel of Rodrigues - Relais Pointe Venus - was burnt down, thus making room for the New Pointe Venus Hotel. The officers' mess, though under the responsibility of the Government was left unattended and has been vandalized to the ground. The kitchen of the officers' mess is currently being used by the MBC for its Television signals transmission.

Pointe Venus (first appeared on the Rodrigues map in 1876) is an important location in the scientific history of Rodrigues as the place where the scientific expedition observed the second transit of Venus in 1874. There are today no indication of this historical event, but quite wrongly the commemorative plaque that stands there, concerns the observation of the first transit of Venus by Alexandre Gui Pingré in 1761. The locals used to call the place "Battery" because of the presence of surveillance canons set-up there during the colonial days. The location of the surveillance canons have not been traced so far.

### Natural Heritage:

The limestone region of the South West of Rodrigues (Plaine Corail and Plaine Caverne) is unique in this part of the Indian Ocean, among the Mascarenes Archipelago. There is thus an urgent need to create a heritage trust within the RRA in Rodrigues whereby the civil society, the public and private sectors would all be represented to draw up a master plan for the management, conservation and restoration of the area. Among the 30 known limestone caves, two of them are show caves; Caverne Patates run by the a public company - Discovery Rodrigues and Grande Caverne by a private company - Francois Leguat Ltd. Ten of the caves

are situated within the Francois Leguat Reserve at Anse Quitar and are therefore being protected from vandalism, but for the others, there is no surveillance at all. The caves are often very important storage of historical informational and thus prime locations for scientific research, particularly in the field of palaeontology, palaeoecology, geology, ecobotany and geomorphology.

Caves are considered to be mysterious places and in Rodrigues, they have been rather well-preserved until now because Rodriguans superstitiously believe that the caves are home to all sorts of spiritual monsters. Indeed, gradually, the caves are beginning to reveal their embedded secrets in ways of critical scientific information on the Natural History of Rodrigues and thus very important for the laudable efforts of reconstruction of the island natural biodiversity. The scientific expeditions to Rodrigues first by Alexandre Gui Pingré in 1761 (250 years in 2011) to observe the 1<sup>st</sup> Transit of Venus, and more importantly, the 1874 one which also coincided with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Transit of Venus provide enough evidences on the karst area of Rodrigues. Unfortunately, nothing substantial in matters of legislation has been done to protect the area.

This scientific undertaking with the collaboration of national and international academies and universities should be encouraged and supported, as it is believed that Rodrigues could be a Rosetta stone in the endeavour to understand the impact of human activities on small oceanic islands. Francois Leguat Ltd. is spearheading research projects in multi-disciplinary subjects; ranging from palaeontology, palaeoecology, geology, climatology, zoology, botany etc.

Rodrigues is blessed with a complete fringing reef and the surface area of the lagoon is more than twice the surface area of the island. Even though there has been massive exploitation of the lagoon resources, it is reckoned that more than 90% of the coral reef is in a good healthy condition. The decision to set-up a marine reserve, the South-East Marine Park Agency is a very commendable undertaking and will certainly help to preserve the marine resources within the lagoon.

## 7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISLAND

Since the very beginning of human settlement in Rodrigues, the economy has been essentially based on the primary trilogy; cultivation, stock-breeding and fishing. Rodrigues' economy is solely an auto-subsistence practice which is on the decline year in year out. From the days of the first permanent settlement until 1995, the economic development was limited to a form of subsistence agriculture and fishing. Massive deforestation took place to make land available for agriculture and stock-breeding and considering the topography, no serious measures were implemented to contain the top soil of the slopes. Consequently, erosion was rampant and the fertility of the soil degraded rapidly. Furthermore, the eroded materials were carried downstream and had a devastating silting effect on the lagoon. There is a clear case of mismanagement of natural resources without a well-thought integrated and sustainable development plan.

Way back in the 1930s, Mr. Henry Martin initiated the terracing operation in Rodrigues. But it was Philip Hotchin who undertook a major terracing operation in the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, the terracing were not managed properly; animals, particularly cattle, were allowed outside the cattle walk into the agricultural land, the leases selling the rock to the owner of mechanized stone crusher thus amplifying the erosion effect and the acceleration of the impoverishment of the soil.

After more than 220 years of agricultural practice in Rodrigues, the agricultural community still depends on the dwindling climate situation to ensure a good harvest.

The degradation process was left to deteriorate year in year out, without any serious and sustainable measures to curb its effects. Many reports have been written with sound proposals but unfortunately, most of the time they have not been implemented.

A report entitled 'Development Strategy for Rodrigues', initiated in 1993 by the government of Mauritius and financed by the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), concluded in very strong but realistic terms, namely:

*« Rodrigues, tel qu'il apparaît actuellement, ne présente pas une économie viable. Il produit uniquement une faible part de ce dont il a besoin et a recours massivement aux importations afin de nourrir sa population et de soutenir son activité économique. Le déficit de sa balance commerciale est en augmentation constante et doit être soutenu par le Budget National ainsi que par le transfert de l'aide internationale. »*

### 7.1 Commerce

After the departure of the white settlers, commerce on the island came into the hands of Asian settlers; Chinese and Indians. They set-up an all one-sided barter and credit system. The imbalance of the trade was flagrant and the exploitation excruciating. Acacia seed was the great barter commodity, and on Saturday, the day chosen for the barter transactions, procession of men, women and children made their way to Port Mathurin, all carrying sacks of acacia. In exchange, they received cloth, soap, oil, sugar, rice, tea or rum. Fishermen received tackle and gear and sometime the rent of a boat in exchange for fish at a predetermined price, which was always much under the real selling price.

In 1893, J. Pilot, the Audit Examiner made a proposal to establish a branch of the Savings Bank in Rodrigues. The proposal was turned down by the Governor on the ground that only 127 persons out of a population of 570 had expressed themselves in favour of the Bank. At the time, the population of Rodrigues was nearing 2500. In 1908 -1909, a series of administrative measures of interest to the community in Rodrigues were taken by the Auditor General and one of these measures was the establishment of the Post Office Savings Bank. The private first Commercial Bank, namely; a branch of Barclays Bank International Limited was established in Rodrigues on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1967.

A first attempt to set up Cooperative Society was made in 1917 but the first Cooperative Society, (Trefles Cooperative Credit Society), was established in Rodrigues in 1924 under the *aegis* of Geoffrey Corbett, the agricultural superintendent. However, it was only in 1938 that the Cooperative Societies really took off and by the 1950s, there were 21 societies in existence, including 7 Schools Saving Banks. The Cooperative Societies have still a bright future in Rodrigues but a lot has had difficulties due to bad management.

Today, there are a number of Commercial Banks operating in Rodrigues and a branch of the Development Bank of Mauritius, thus more opportunities to access financial assistance.

#### 7.1.1 Recommendations

1. Empowering the Rodriguan to develop a saving culture;
2. Encouraging Foreign Direct Investment;
3. Strengthening the private sector through SMES.

#### 7.2 Fisheries

The Fishing Industry was originally mostly in the hands of white settlers, but gradually free men took over the trade to establish a number of fishing-posts all over the coast around the island. Each fishing-post would employ 12 to 20 men. The owner of the fishery provided boats and tackle, housing and food for the men. The fish caught was salted and dried. The gross returns were shared on a "50:50" basis, between the owner and the fishermen who received their share in cash.

With the proliferation of fishing-posts all over the island and also the damaging effect caused by the net fishing, fish started to become scarce. Consequently in 1917, net-fishing was banned. Fishing was limited to line and fish pots. However, the prohibition order was not effective because the shrewd and cunning Chinese traders decided to engineer a network of illegal fishing which was far more destructive than legal fishing. The Government had no other alternative but to revert back to the original system but by that time the Chinese Traders had entire control on the Fishing Industry in Rodrigues.

Before prohibition of net-fishing, the returns from the Fishing Industry went mainly to the native Rodriguans. With prohibition, the illegal catches were bought by the Chinese Traders at ridiculously low prices and the fishermen were forced to buy their consumer goods on credit at the Chinese shops. Obviously, this trade was always in favour of the Chinese who exploited the fishermen.

The result is that a few people made a lot of money in the Fisheries Industry, while the majority of the fishermen get poorer and poorer, while the fish stock gets smaller and smaller. To ensure that fish will always be available for local consumption, thus ensuring food security and also to develop the plan sea food hub, a number of measures have been taken by all the stakeholders, namely:

1. The creation and delimitation of four marine reserves in the lagoon of Rodrigues.
2. A marine park (South-East Marine Park Agency) has been created.
3. Alternative jobs will be provided for ex-fishers.
4. Fishermen are being trained to practise off-lagoon fishing.

#### 7.2.1 Recommendations

1. Ensure the continuous support of the National and Regional Authorities.
2. Encourage fishermen to become more professional.
3. Encourage foreign investors to invest in the fishing and aquaculture sectors in Rodrigues.
4. To develop the Port of Port Mathurin so that it caters for the future development of Rodrigues.

### 7.3 Is there an economic future for Rodrigues?

The emancipation of Slaves and land Issues

Rapport de C. Anderson - Archives de l'île Maurice. Ref. V3/2 PP. 67-74

*"L'émancipation des esclaves eut lieu à l'île Maurice et dans ses dépendances en 1834. Mais ils furent tenus de travailler encore cinq années chez leur ancien maître comme «apprentis labourers», travailleurs en apprentissage. Ce rapport est celui d'un fonctionnaire colonial, venu s'assurer à l'île Rodrigues des conditions faites aux apprentis. Il comporte en outre des données intéressantes sur l'économie de l'île qui permettent à l'auteur de conclure à la possibilité de faire de Rodrigues le fournisseur attitré de l'île Maurice en poisson et produits d'élevage. En ce qui concerne l'état d'avancement de la colonisation de l'île, les chiffres fournis par le rapport permettent de dire que celle-ci est encore assez peu développée. Le cheptel est peu nombreux, les productions végétales juste suffisantes. Or, le décompte des apprentis fournit le total de 127 adultes dont 99 occupés aux travaux agricoles, auxquels s'ajoutent 42 enfants et 13 hommes libres. C'est dire que la population totale de l'île ne doit même pas atteindre 300 habitants à cette date.» (1838)*

*"On the three first mentioned Establishments namely, Madam Pison, Messrs Bessiere & Husson formerly Mr. Gory and Mr. Eudes, the working hours of the apprentices have been carried for beyond legal time, and they have only received half of their clothing since the commencement of the apprenticeship. They and their children have, however, been well-fed and extensive garden ground is allotted to them, but their general comfort has been entirely neglected. Their huts are miserable and medical attendance, and even hospitals, are unknown on all the establishments of this island.*

*To prevent the continuation of illegal labour, I minutely explained to the apprentices the nature of their rights in every respect, and I strongly represented to the different managers the consequences of the infraction of the law."*

Anderson recommended that the cultivation of land in Rodrigues be abandoned and that the entire island be devoted to animal rearing particularly cattle.

*"I am perfectly aware that the present proprietors have not sufficient energy to attempt a change of system, and that they are incapable of conducting an undertaking of this nature, but if the plan which I have suggested should ever be acted upon, under proper direction, I have no doubt that Rodrigues, instead of remaining comparatively useless, would in a few years become a most valuable possession by rendering Mauritius in a great degree independent of Madagascar for supplies of cattle."*

Obviously, the recommendations of Anderson were never applied, the apprentices, when freed from their proprietors, moved as far as possible from their past masters to squat Crown Lands, particularly in the interior part of the island. Consequently, the subsistence farming system started and still perdures today.

*"To Mauritius, Rodrigues might in many ways be made most valuable; as a sanatorium - a rendez-vous for ships in time of war - a source whence a large supply of food might be obtained - etc, this dependency might become an acquisition of much importance." (W. Morrison 1863-64)*

W. Morrison recommended an interesting proposal on management of concessions and Crown Land in Rodrigues:

*"I would then strongly recommend that steps be taken to put en regle the proprietors who have received concessions - to parcel out crown land and*

*dispose of them at prices which may enable the local population to purchase them."*

This recommendation was not implemented and thus add to a succession of recommendations that stayed and rot in the drawers of Government Offices (*Ieskelet dan Iarmwar*).

Agriculture never sustainably took off in Rodrigues because the many reports written over the years were either never implemented, or because of mismanagement and lack of proper monitoring. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Rodrigues was hit by a successive number of tropical cyclones and long periods of drought and as a relief measure, the Government of Mauritius decided to massively employ labourers to carry out menial tasks. All of a sudden, agricultural lands were deserted and every young man's aspiration was to have a job in the Public Sector. The stigma emerging during slavery that tilling the land was a demeaning job.

Decision in the late 1960s and early 1970s to massive employ labourers by the Government as a relief measure, due to climatic catastrophes, has instilled in the mind of the Rodriguans "une mentalité d'assistés". This mentality still perdures as everybody's aim is to secure a job in the Public Sector thus ensuring a retirement pension.

However, there have been tremendous efforts made to empower the Rodriguans to develop entrepreneurship through Cooperative Societies, but most of them failed because there was not enough efficient mentoring.

Today, things are looking a bit brighter because more and more young Rodriguans are literate and a growing number is opting for Tertiary Education. There are more training facilities available both in the academic and technical fields, but acces to financial supports is still very difficult.

Over and above the development of sustainable agriculture, stock-breeding and fishing, over the past twenty years, Rodrigues has seen the emergence of significant development in Tourism and arts & crafts. However, it is only very recently that the Rodriguans have been made aware of the concept of integrated and sustainable development. Fortunately, better late than never; there is an integrated approach to development in Rodrigues.

## 8. EDUCATION

It is undeniable that education is the key to development. The present level and type of development in Rodrigues simply reflects, to a large extent, the insufficient consideration given to the education of the inhabitants of Rodrigues. It is also a fact that, for years, the type of education dispensed in the island was alien to the inhabitants, with a curriculum that absolutely abstracted the daily living realities of Rodrigues. Everything was foreign to the islanders, as if the brain-washing practice of degrading the culture of the colonised or dependents was a sure mean of asserting the hegemony of the rulers.

From the available historical literature on the History of Rodrigues, it is thus crystal clear that the education of the inhabitants of remote Rodrigues seemed not to have been a major concern to the rulers of Mauritius in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.

In 1845, Captain W. Kelly of *HMS Conway* reported that:

*"All attempts to colonize Rodrigues and render it of use to Mauritius, must fail, if some provision be not made for religious and the education of the children; in our days, these are requisites that will not be dispensed with in a British colony."*

The population of Rodrigues was then 323 of which 240 descended from the old slave population and were generally of African descent.

Kelly pursued to state the following:

*"It is lamentable to see any colony or dependency of a colony belonging to a country like Great Britain so utterly neglected. If the island of Rodrigues is worth keeping possession of, which it unquestionably is from its position, surely it should not be debarred from all the blessings and privileges of the mother country."*

### 1. State Primary Schools

It was only 57 years after the colonisation of Rodrigues that the first primary school was set up with 27 pupils in 1866. Magistrate Jenner opened the first school in Port Mathurin in a building situated on lot 25 at the corner of Jenner and Gordon Streets. Classes started on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1866, but due to a controversy between Jenner and the schoolmaster, the school was closed down a month after but reopened a few days after under a new school master, Desiré Lalande. His wife Ninka was a teacher as well.

A second State School was opened at St. Gabriel in 1882 and closed down in 1932, when Latannier School opened.

The Port Mathurin School was transferred to Baie Lascar in 1951 in huts vacated by the army.

To relieve Port Mathurin from the pressure of a fast-growing number of pupils, Oyster Bay School opened in 1958. From then on the Government has taken an active role in Primary Education in Rodrigues and the following schools have been erected:

1. Roche Bon Dieu School;
2. Grand la fouche Corail;
3. Mangue School;
4. Batatran School;
5. Araucaria Community School at Mont Lubin two years ago.

While, in the old days, small children had to walk long distance to attend classes, today schools are closer to their homes and they are being provided with free transport as well.

## ***2. Church Primary Schools***

The initiatives of the Roman Catholic missionaries greatly contributed to the expansion of Primary Education throughout the island. Father J. N. Pivault, who was Rector of the Parish of La Ferme from 1905 to 1915, played a major role in setting up Primary Education in the region. He founded the first church school at Rivière Cocos in 1906, but the school was closed down in 1918, while La Ferme School became an aided School. It is to be noted that Logis Tolbize and his son Jean Baptiste Tolbize played a major role in the development of La Ferme. The School of La Ferme was placed under the care of the Congregation of the Filles de Marie who arrived in Rodrigues on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 1920.

The School of Rivière Cocos was reopened by Father Wolff in 1945/46, with the precious help of Bertin Spéville and Family.

In 1932, Father Simon opened the School of Latanniers and the School of Brulé which started in 1924, closed down and all the pupils were transferred to the Lataniers School. Incidentally the Government School of St. Gabriel was also transferred to Latanniers in 1933. The Church pursued the development of Primary Education with the new School in Brulé in 1955-56 under the leadership of Father Ronald Gandy and ten years later, the Dom Bosco School at Petit Gabriel was inaugurated.

According to Alfred North-Coombes in 1971,

*"From the point of view of mental development, the Rodriguan has been judged harshly right through its history. There are too many people, I believe, who still think that the Rodriguan cannot be taken much above the level of a primitive society."*

This clearly illustrates a general paternalistic attitude toward Rodrigues but today, this has been proved to be an absolute fallacy, considering the number of Rodriguans who have successfully gone through Tertiary Education and have even left their marks in practically all the spheres of national hierarchy.

What Rodrigues badly needs is the right opportunities for his own personal development.

## ***3. Relations between Education (Knowledge), Culture and Religion***

It is a recognised fact that everywhere in the world, where colonialism has had a strong hold, the cultures of the colonialists have dominated those of the colonised. In the case of Rodrigues, the dominant culture has been the Western one, with more emphasis on the French culture. This implied a complete denial of the cultures of the descendants of slaves.

*"Avoir de la culture" - être cultivé signifiait des savoirs encyclopédiques (d'après les Assises des Ecoles Catholiques en 1995).* Thus the Churches in Rodrigues have, in some way, denied the African Culture. Dancing the "sega tambour", a deep expression of the Afro-Malagasy cultural roots, was considered as provocative and lewd by the Church Authorities.

The underlying principle behind the teaching of religious practice and the acquisition of knowledge was to instil in the minds of the Rodriguans that "black" is bad, forbidden and negative. For example, some common expressions such as "*ale dan nwar dan lanfer, to leker nwar*" are still in use today. In the Catechism Manual, God was depicted as white with blue eyes and the devil as black with pointed horns and a tail.

The slave descendants, with a dark complexion, were thus given very little consideration. They were not even allowed to occupy front pews, reserved for the 'middle or higher socio-economic classes - the people with lighter complexion' in Churches.

Such humiliation was tolerated, thus giving rise to low self-esteem among many of the inhabitants, so much so that they developed a real aversion and shame for their own pigmentation. And to quote R. Ramdoyal, "*they grew to hate, despise and to be ashamed of their own pigmentation, origin and culture*".

#### ***4. The State Role in Education development in Rodrigues***

Even though the first Primary School was started in 1861, it was only in 1913 that Rodrigues had the first visit of a School Inspector. Three major decisions were taken then, namely:

1. A grant-in-aid to the schools.
2. An alignment of the curriculum on the national level.
3. Woodwork at Port Mathurin School, Gardening at St. Gabriel School and Hygiene in both schools for half an hour every week.

The fact that the curriculum was supposed to be the same as in Mauritius, pupils who had passed the 6<sup>th</sup> Standard had to be sent to Mauritius to take examinations in History and Geography, if they wanted to sit for the Junior Scholarship Examination. At least one student, Paul Cyril Stephen, had to go to Mauritius to sit for the examination in December 1928.

Way back in 1923, Magistrate Watlace Hanning raised the question of the grant of two scholarships, one for boys and one for girls, for the education of Rodriguans at secondary level. The proposal was turned down. In 1938, Magistrate Le Roy proposed the institution of a secondary scholarship for Rodriguan students, tenable at a convent or brothers' school in Mauritius. The proposal was opposed by the National Direction of Education, with a counter proposal in favour of farm school scholarship, Rodrigues being so essentially agricultural. Six cadetships were thus created in 1946 for training at the Agricultural Experimental Station at Oyster Bay. It was only in 1956 that two scholarships were awarded to Rodriguan Students to pursue Secondary Education in the State Schools in Mauritius.

Up to about the 1950s, education in Rodrigues was available only at the primary level. It may be said to have aimed simply at providing a meagre measure of education as a means of lifting the primitive population from a state of complete illiteracy.

After leaving school, the young Rodriguans gradually forgot what had been taught, there being no opportunity, nor any need to practise or improve their knowledge. As no attempts were even made to provide newspapers, radio, libraries except the Sunday Church services to the inhabitants, it was not surprising that they reverted back, in the course of time, to a state of illiteracy.

In 1947, Paul Henri, the Assistant Director of Education, visited Rodrigues and reported a very good school attendance, over 70% comparing favourably with Mauritius. One of his recommendations officially inaugurated the "Rodriganisation" of the Education System in Rodrigues.

"The need of staffing the schools with Rodriguans as born teachers". This process had been started by Father Ronald Gandy in 1941, when he started to train Rodriguans to become teachers by teaching them English.

Even though the recommendation of Paul Henri was a milestone in the development of education on the island, he did not then think that Rodriguan candidates should be sent straight to the Teachers Training College in Mauritius, where he felt they would be out of their depth. Initially their training should begin in Rodrigues itself at the post primary stage. Two grades, Pupil Teacher and Student Teacher were created and they were to be given extra training in English language, Mathematics and initiation into teaching method. They should spend two years as pupil teacher and if successful promoted to student teacher for an extra two years before being admitted to the Teachers Training College to become a full

fledged primary school teacher. In 1953, four places were set aside for Rodriguan candidates at the Teachers Training College.

### *5. Secondary School Education*

The Anglican church under the direction of Reverend Father Wilfrid Cathan spearheaded secondary school education in 1926. From then on the Roman Catholic Church through the tandem Fathers Wolf and Gandy also accompanied young Rodriguans to acquire knowledge beyond primary level.

In 1955, H. F. Kynaston, director of Education visited Rodrigues and was so impressed by what he saw in terms of progress. He immediately recommended that the churches applied for the registration of their endeavours. St Barnabas College was registered as a secondary school on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1961, incidentally 100 yrs after the first primary school was set up in 1861. St Louis College was registered on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1962.

The two secondary schools were managed separately by the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches until 1974 when they merged to become Rodrigues College.

The first State Secondary School was set up at Marechal in 1977 after the implementation of national free secondary education. The free education policy liberalised access to secondary education and consequently to date there are five state secondary schools in Rodrigues. By 2012, the new state secondary school will be operational in Terre Rouge.

### *6. Tertiary Education*

Up to now, Rodriguans students who wish to pursue their education beyond secondary level have to go either to Mauritius or elsewhere. A number of scholarships are available to Rodriguans. Very recently, with the development of distant learning, a growing number of Rodriguans are pursuing their education at tertiary level. In the 1990s there was an attempt to establish an "Antenne Universitaire" in Rodrigues but it did not last long.

There are talks about the setting up of the first university in Rodrigues by 2012, and it appears that the time is ripe for such a project.

### *7. Education Policy in Rodrigues*

Some 220 years after the permanent human settlement in Rodrigues and more than 150 years since the setting up of the first Primary School, and despite the numerous reforms in education, Rodrigues is still not sufficiently present in the school curricula. This point is highlighted by all the reports in particular "Les Assises des Ecoles Catholiques de Rodrigues 1995". Even though enormous effort has been made by the Commission of Education (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) to correct this anomaly, the fact remains that decisions regarding education still rest with the National Government in Port-Louis, the school curricula are still alien to the Rodriguans.

For the Rodriguans, the major concern is still whether the present Educational System, the curricula and the type of education dispensed to our children meet the latter's needs. There is a general consensus that the present Education System is not appropriate to equip the younger generation for future responsibilities in the Rodriguans society because it totally makes abstract of the core history and culture of the island. There is, therefore, an urgent need to revisit the whole Educational System in Rodrigues, by aligning it more with the Rodriguan realities.

## 8. Pre-vocational Departments

### Introduction and General Remarks

Rodrigues was named after the Portuguese explorer Diego Rodrigues, is the smallest of the Mascarene Islands and a dependency of Mauritius. With a peak elevation of approximately 355 metres (1165 ft), it is located 560 km (348 mi) East of Mauritius island, in the middle of the Indian Ocean. It is 109 km<sup>2</sup> (43 sq miles) in size, and surrounded by coral reefs. The capital of the island is Port Mathurin. As of 2006, the island's population was about 40,000. The main language is Rodriguan Creole, while French and English are spoken or understood by some of the inhabitants. The main religion is Roman Catholicism, with a small minorities of other religions. Most of the inhabitants are of mixed African and French descent. The main industries are handicraft, farming, fishing and tourism. In 1968, Rodrigues was joined with Mauritius when it achieved Independence; it achieved an autonomous status in 2002 and during the same year, the island was made the seat of the Roman Apostolic of Rodrigues. The Catholic Church has a key position in the social life of the country and is at the basis of community development

In education, Rodrigues suffers all the evils present in the Mauritian system, compounded by the fact that their students, being 90% Creole, have more difficulty in adapting to the examination-performing mindset of the Ministry of Education in Mauritius; it controls policy and practice in Rodrigues very closely, by means of a plethora of directives and paperwork. For these reasons, the education team decided to treat Rodrigues as a separate entity, and, as was the case in Mauritius, the inquiry took the form of a teacher's questionnaire, followed by a Focus Group Discussion with the students, dealing with similar themes.

There are five Secondary Schools in Rodrigues- all of them house pre-vocational streams. It was decided to visit all of them. Infrastructurally, the schools varied widely, from the lush sophistication of Maréchal College to the rather grim basics of Brûlée, but once more, it proved evident that good teaching was independent of infrastructure, and that with pre-vocational students an ounce of kindness and devotion was worth a bushel of educational theory, since the happiest children and most successful teaching were not always discovered in the finest surroundings.

Every school was co-educational, and the teachers were practically all Creole, and consequently Christian. All, except one, were qualified, with a teacher's diploma following an SC or HSC, and all, except one, were fairly well-experienced. There were no graduates in this group - in itself this is of interest - obviously the best-qualified teachers, in Rodrigues as in Mauritius, are reserved for the 'high fliers', those students with the best chances of academic success. It is also perhaps worth noting that these teachers were restricted to the PVE streams, and had no responsibilities with mainstream students. We noted, in most places, a tendency to segregate the PVE students, by restricting their access to school facilities, and by situating their classrooms at a distance from the others, isolated from the rest of the school. This is surely not the best way to ensure their social inclusion.

Most teachers were matter-of-fact about descent from slave labour, though during the focused group discussions (FGD's), we did not observe that this same attitude was handed down to the students, who, for the most part, seemed confused by the question, or rather not to have given the subject any consideration. The ambiguity of response to this question must raise speculation as to how exactly they are taught to look upon themselves, and the extent to which a specifically Rodriguan identity is recognised and respected in Rodrigues. In schools (whether in Mauritius or Rodrigues), Creole children seemed often unaware of their mainly slave ancestry- neither were they aware of the contribution of their ancestors to the economic development of these islands. This report will follow the general outline of the Questionnaire, with interspersions from the FDGs, where relevant.

## SECTION A. CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

As with many answers to the questionnaire, one notes that perfect corroboration of a response does not always make perfect sense. Time and again, one sees how everyone could agree on point A, but when it comes to explaining or illustrating the point in B, half the respondents showed that they had not understood the question or were unfamiliar with the concept. This point was particularly well illustrated in answers to this section of the questionnaire.

Thus, nearly everyone thought that the History of Rodrigues should form part of the PVE curriculum for many good reasons, and although everyone said they knew the difference between a curriculum and a syllabus, when pressed to explain what they understood by a curriculum, there was little correlation in their answers.

It is hardly reassuring that most teachers thought that the PVE syllabus was relevant to the lives of their students, since they could not agree on its composition. It was the same with 'critical thinking': the majority of respondents claimed to understand the term, but less than a third of them used the concept in the classroom. Indeed, given the proportion of these students (as it transpired during the guided group discussions) who cannot read, it is difficult to see how critical thinking in these classrooms can be encouraged through functional literary skills, reading comprehension or whatever, as claimed by the teachers. These students simply did not read, many because they could not adapt to the mainstream education system after 10 years formal education! Fewer than 1 in 10 could be easily identified as 'slow learners', the others were victims of poor teaching, indiscipline, absence of home stimulation, etc. In some cases being debarred from the library, they had no access to any reading material at all, except for the local newspapers!

The same goes for the teacher's guide. Obviously, it does not fit the needs of most PVE teachers or students, and like so much paperwork at this level, it should be considered as a huge waste of time and money.

Again, although there is formal assessment at the end of the Form 1 programme, and every teacher claimed to use continuous assessment with these students, there is no real remedial programme. This is possibly the saddest indicator on the questionnaire, for one may well ask: what is the point of the one without the other?

The great majority of teachers knew about the proposed Form 3 National Exams, but did not think their students would be able to pass it, being 'educationally backward'.

Most telling in this section were the answers to Section 9, in view of the fact that nearly 100% of respondents were Creole. Only 4 agreed that the teaching material contained racial/ethnic bias (once again clearly disagreeing with their students in the FGDs). In addition, every teacher agreed with the next 4 propositions, that:

- PVE students were poor performers at C.P.E.;
- they came mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- most PVE parents are not interested in their children's studies; and
- they have very little chance to find a job in the labour market.

According to the students in the FGDs, the curriculum, as planned, written and expedited from the MIE, seems to be largely besides the point. They are not being taught what interests them, nor what they need for their future. Too many tests and assessments only serve to further exclude them - they get three more years of failure to add to the disasters of the primary schooling. Neither materials nor examinations seem to take account of these students capacities and expectations.

One cause of all these problems could be that the entire approach to teaching these students is too academic, in the absence organised extra-curricular activity, which most teachers agree is the case. Mgr. Alain Harel, Bishop of Rodrigues, strongly backed this viewpoint, insisting on a return to basics in these sections, forgetting the programme and testing, and aiming-rather at basic literacy for all.

## SECTION B. LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTIC ISSUES

It was obvious that PVE students have very little chances of ever becoming properly functional in English, given the quality of language teaching they have to endure.

Clearly, the teachers considered the choice of the medium of instruction to be important, and 100% of them used Creole as the medium of instruction in the PVE classroom. Given this, it follows that the English text-books, written for these students, are generally too difficult for them (as indeed may be the case for some of the teachers as well), and that their communication skills in English may be below average. Even in French, which after all is a language more commonly spoken in Rodrigues), most teachers consider their students' performance to be 'below average'. Neither is it any surprise to learn that the students use Creole 100% of the time to communicate amongst themselves both inside and outside the classroom.

Most teachers thought that Creole, as a language of support/ medium of instruction, would make Maths and Technical Subjects easier, help these students to acquire basic concepts more easily, and, in the long run, improve their achievements. It would also help them to communicate better with their teachers (as indeed it does at the moment), and the formal teaching of Creole would facilitate the teaching/learning process. As to whether it would constitute a form of cultural reparation, opinions were divided, with a small majority of respondents agreeing to the proposition.

Three-quarters of teachers agreed that the use of Creole as a formal language would improve students' overall results. Here, teachers and students differed, for the majority of students in the FGDs insisted on the maintenance of English as the main medium of instruction. They wanted the recognition of Creole as their ancestral language, on a par with the other ancestral languages recognised in Mauritius, and they wanted to use it freely for facilitating the teaching process. But they were very aware of the danger of abandoning English as the medium of instruction, and the effect of this would have on their future social mobility.

## SECTION C. GENDER EQUALITY

Society in Rodrigues is more homogenous than in Mauritius, hence the tensions of inter-racial and inter-communal relations are relatively absent. Rodrigues has its problems, but these are poverty, neglect and under-development by Mauritius, as well as violence, and are always compounded by the more sophisticated social evils of alcohol and substance abuse. It is difficult for gender equality to flourish in this milieu, and it is nevertheless heartening to see that so many teachers are open to the idea, and prepared to learn more. However, gender equality needs some special attention in Rodrigues, as indeed it does even more so in Mauritius, possibly because strong women in Rodrigues anchor many families, and are mainly responsible for the upbringing of their children and grandchildren.

The first question in this Section clearly caused some problems, since the great majority of teachers thought boys and girls did enjoy the same rights in society, yet the answer to the next question showed that they had interpreted the question in the strictly legal sense. Although everyone, without exception, agreed that it was an important function of the school to promote gender equality, the response to the next question was essentially the same as for Mauritius; no such directive from the Ministry in Mauritius had ever been received.

Most teachers admitted that they were not familiar with the term 'gender friendly school'. When pressed for further details, most teachers chose not to answer the question. On the next question, most agreed that teachers had 'very little knowledge about what is meant by gender bias in textbooks', and the great majority agreed that teacher training did not provide enough information about gender equality within the school set-up. The same proportion agreed that gender equality was about more than mere numbers. Most hopefully, everyone disagreed that gender equality was not important for PVE students.

In the case of a mixed-class scenario, most teachers disagreed that boys tended to dominate the scene, and most teachers thought it untrue that boys did not have enough opportunity to study 'girlie' subjects. The same proportion disagreed that girls were not given enough opportunity to

study subjects like Agriculture, Design and Communication, etc. The majority of teachers disagreed that girls did not generally participate in sports, and this reflects the basically healthy outlook of most Rodrigans, where walking is still the commonest form of transport, and most food is home-grown. The last two questions in this Section were probably badly worded for the Rodriguan context, where we should have remembered that 90% of the population is of slave descent.

#### SECTION D. TEACHER/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

Most pre-voc teachers we spoke to gave indications of being sympathetic to their students and willing to work for their welfare. However, their answers to the questionnaire revealed some rocky areas in the relationship.

On whether teachers were aware of the choices offered to their students after 3 years of PVE, they showed that they were aware of a number of possibilities, but none that were very interesting, or offering any real opportunity for successful employment. It looks as if these students are being taught as 'rejects' of a system, and their future prospects are as 'rejects' of Society.

During the FGDs, one wanted to weep at their humility and low expectations- these children have not been encouraged to dream: A boring list of plumbers, electricians and waiters, with only the occasional hotel entertainer. Have they ever sat down to review the possibilities available (are there any?) or build a vision of what could be done? An occasional child was more specific, and spoke of 'refrigeration technician' or 'CID officer', obviously inspired by a family member or acquaintance. There were almost no artists, musicians, or sportsmen. These children live in the real world.

The next question, dealing with the relationship between teacher and students in the PVE classroom, revealed this as 'difficult' by a small majority, though half of the respondents preferred not to elaborate by giving reasons as to why this was the case. Obviously, the good teachers talk to the students and try to build a climate of confidence - without which any sort of teaching is impossible - the majority claimed that they did in fact do so, and ran through a comprehensive list of issues they discussed with them.

The depressing conclusion was that nearly all the teachers were convinced that these students are lazy and disinterested in studies, and insufficiently integrated into the mainstream because there is little possibility of interaction between PVE and mainstream students. They also said that teachers of the mainstream are not interested in the PVE streams, and this may well be the case, from what we saw during our visits, both in Rodrigues and Mauritius.

This last answer highlighted one of the main problems mentioned by the students during the FGDs: that of the treatment meted out to them by some teachers and students of the mainstream - this ranks from disparaging remarks to insulting language, restrictions on the use of school facilities, and even access to things like the library, specialist rooms and labs, gym and playing areas. What students wanted, unanimously, was respect, consideration and equitable treatment from the schools in which they found themselves. In the FGDs, they all asked for: more sporting facilities, better-organised sports. 'Creative subjects like Art, Music, Drama.' They wanted access to all school facilities, and more facilities on offer. Above all, they wanted respect from other Staff and students of the 'mainstream' sections, and an end to disrespectful/abusive language.

Many teachers seem kindly disposed towards these students, but are untrained and insufficiently experienced. These are challenging students that would call on the skills of the most experienced teachers. Fortunately, it transpired that many PVE teachers were aware of these issues: most of them disagreed that their students were more undisciplined than the others, and everyone agreed for the need of these children to meet more frequently with social workers, educational counsellors and psychologists.

Tellingly, most teachers seemed unaware of a school policy about bullying, harassment and violent language, although students in the FGDs frequently complained of all three. For starters, their experiences of Primary Schooling was a litany of horrors. Some of this beggars belief; inevitably, one found it difficult at times to believe ones ears. A long list of bad teaching practices compounded unethical, even cruel treatment of the young. Those who reported good, conscientious teachers were an absolute minority, in many places completely absent as these children denounced beatings in the classroom with 'rotin bazar', sticks, dusters, chalk, and what have you. Compounded with verbal abuse and the use of extraordinary epithets to a captive audience. Apart

from the violence, some really bad teaching, as has to be the case when a child with a normal I.Q. fails the C.P.E. twice over, and still cannot read three years later! If this is indeed true, whose sense of identity can survive such treatment? And more importantly, what can be done to stop this, at once? After the trials of life in the Primary Schools, they all agreed that the pre-vocational class was preferable, even in those schools which were not obviously child-friendly, inclusive or well-organised.

Happily, a majority of teachers declared themselves satisfied with their jobs. Some complained of lack of materials, encouragement, coaching and support for teachers as well as students.

## SECTION E. HOME/SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

This Section highlighted one of the main 'grey areas' in PVE education both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues: very few teachers seem prepared to assume the role of social worker, as well as educator, and liaise with the parents of their students, who in many cases are struggling with the problems of a dysfunctional family, in addition to the basic poverty and ignorance that beset too many Creole families. Significantly, the majority of teachers said that any form of communication with these parents was rare.

An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that the 'cultural background' of a student is not necessarily the same as an 'ethnic background', and the same proportion agreed that problems could arise through an insufficient understanding of the students' cultural background by the teacher. Significantly, everyone agreed that the text-books and curriculum ignored this element.

Most teachers thought that parents of PVE students did not come to the school often, unsurprisingly, in view of the attitudes displayed to their children by teachers and students of the mainstream, and (one suspects) by the school administration. In fact, apart from collecting reports and occasionally attending meetings, as well as mandatory visits 'for disciplinary problems', few of these parents ever came to the school.

Half of the teachers consulted thought that these parents did not sufficiently encourage their children to come to school regularly, and it followed that everyone thought that they had very low aspirations for their children. This dovetailed with the responses students gave in the FGDs, when one remarked the relative absence of hope and career ambitions. It is sad to see such realism in children of this age, but they have probably had all idealism knocked out of them long ago.

Everyone thought that there was insufficient communication between the PTA and PVE parents, unsurprisingly since half of them thought that PVE parents were not part of the PTA. Teachers were divided as to whether or not a data base exists on these parents, although obviously this is an important point.

The final question dealt with the sense of History and identity of these students and with how easily they could relate to them. Significantly, most teachers thought this was not possible, mainly because of the entire absence of these topics on the curriculum.

This last issue raised - that of a Rodriguan sense of history and identity - would appear crucial to the work of the Commission: for we may well ask ourselves what is the main purpose of Education, if it is not to give the young a strong sense of identity and purpose in life, and liberate them from the hereditary constraints of History? And how can this be done, by these teachers, and in these classrooms, bound, as they are, by the often illogical directives coming from Mauritius?

### *RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION*

Following a short survey of the pre-vocational classes in all Secondary Schools in Rodrigues, these are our recommendations, inasmuch as they apply specifically to this sector, although some of them will obviously work well in the main Secondary Department:

1. The quality of teachers recruited at both Primary and Secondary levels, and the training they receive. Many of the issues we uncovered were linked to this failing - including that of the amount of violence at Primary level reported by these students. If true, it would seem that too many Primary teachers are unfit for teaching. A certain amount of indifference, and even cruelty, towards low-achieving pupils was easily discernible in the workings of the

Secondary Schools we visited: how else can one qualify the segregation practised in some of them, and the extraordinary limits imposed on students and even teachers of the Pre-Vocational Departments? Where children are being taught to read (by non-English speaking teachers who have passed an HSC, but without a training) without access to any suitable books or a library, where Music and Art, Drama and Dance are practically inexistent on the syllabus - although Rodrigues abounds in natural beauty and local folklore - where Sports and Physical Education are so restricted, although within a population of obviously physically-gifted individuals, one can only conclude that Education itself is not serving its purpose. As with other sectors, some experienced and better-qualified candidates should be included in each batch, and ways found of attracting such people to apply for teaching posts in Rodrigues.

2. The Teacher's training syllabus should include such well-established concepts as 'whole class teaching' and 'child-centred learning', and teachers should be taught to encourage students to use critical thinking in the classroom as well as in exams. The teachers role as guides and counsellors must be emphasised, particularly for pupils who are lower academic achievers. In the case of children from a socially disadvantaged background, the need to meet and interact with the parents/ responsible parties should be stressed.
3. There is need of a revised syllabus for Pre-Vocational Departments in all schools (including those in Mauritius), but with a section on the History and Culture of Rodrigues. Text-books and student workbooks should accord more with the cultural and ethnic background of Rodrigues. A new Teachers' guide is necessary, one which will include new and creative teaching methods, while cutting down on the amount of paperwork that moves between the two territories. Many teachers complained about the amount of useless information that they were regularly required to produce and reproduce on demand, and the sheer volume of testing that went on. We need to find ways of reducing emphasis on assessments and tests, except informally, as a means of encouraging pupils and documenting their progress, instead of eliminating them. New subjects should take into account the sea, Rodriguan History, the Geography of the island and fishing, as well as the practice of animal husbandry which has always existed on the island.
4. It is important to have a running 'Remedial Programme' so that all pupils (except the most disabled) can stay together with the class. There are different ways of doing this, but one should aim at basic literacy by the third year of Primary Schooling. Pre-vocational students should have achieved this in practically all cases by the end of the first year. If Primary Education is successful the need for Pre-vocational classes will fall - eventually they will contain only those children with real learning difficulties who are in need of specialised teaching, which will have to be addressed. Eventually, a single Pre-vocational Department will probably suffice for Rodrigues.
5. **End segregation of these Departments** within the schools-whether in sitting of the classrooms, access to facilities, and the treatment accorded to Pre-vocational teachers and students by the denizens of the mainstream. All school areas and facilities should be held in common, and a common practice and discipline applied to all. This should include the mutual respect that should characterise relations between the Departments.
6. **A great deal of attention must be paid as to how English and French are taught, how Creole will be taught in the future, and how the teaching of Creole can best be used to improve the teaching of English.** The standard of English practised by many teachers in Rodrigues, as well as in Mauritius, is probably inadequate for this purpose. One must bear in mind that most Pre-vocational students do not want to replace English or French with Creole.
7. **A module on 'family life' and 'sex education' should be included in the Teachers Training course in Mauritius, with a strong, practical component on 'gender equality'.**

## 9. COMMUNICATIONS

### 9.1. *Postal Services*

The first Post Office was established in Rodrigues by Administrator Edward Stevens Messiter who appointed himself as Postmaster as well in 1860. It is to be noted that the Post was the only link with the outside world until the advent of telegraphic services by the E.T.C. (Eastern Telegraph Company) on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1901.

At least two Administrators of Rodrigues had sought separate postage stamps for the dependency. In 1901, E. R. Macmillan proposed the diagonal overprint "Rodrigues" on the stamps of Mauritius.

In March 1923, Magistrate W. Hanning suggested a separate postage stamp for the Dependency. He rather fantastically estimated the revenue therefrom at Rs.1,000,000 to Rs.1,500,000. He did not mention "Stamp Collectors". The annual revenue from postage stamps sold at Rodrigues at that time was Rs.500 per annum. His Excellency could not approve.

On 15<sup>th</sup> November 1929, during his second term of office, Hanning "charged" again. Special Rodrigues Postage Stamps should bring in between Rs.500,000 to Rs.1,000,000.

He was informed by Postmaster General that Rodrigues, being a dependency of Mauritius, could not have a postal system of its own. He said that he was not asking for a separate postal system, but for a separate stamps issue.

1. In 1880, the Seychelles Islands, although a dependency of Mauritius, were allowed to have their stamps issue. They only made a separate colony only in 1903.
2. In 1890, the Cayman Islands had their postage stamps, although they were and are still (1929), a dependency of Jamaica.
3. In 1922, Barbuda, a dependency of Antigua, with a population of only 900, was visited by a severe cyclone which wrought havoc. A Public Relief Fund was subscribed to and Barbuda was allowed to have a stamps issue of its own. Similar distresses happened at Rodrigues.

### 9.2. *Recommendation:*

A plea is therefore made for the National Authorities to allow the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to work on a proposal for Rodrigues to issue its own stamps in the near future.

### 9.3. *Telecommunications*

Regarding electronic communications and the internet, it is unthinkable that Rodrigues, at the beginning of the third millennium, is still lagging far behind. Recently, there has been encouraging signs that new development will take place in this sector, but Rodriguans, due to numerous unfulfilled promises, now take all these good intentions from the political authorities with a pinch of salt.

Rodrigues was first connected to the outside world in 1901 by the Eastern Telegraphic Company. In fact, Rodrigues played a role of great importance in the development of the British System of Communication. This was the extension of the submarine telegraph cable from Mauritius to Australia and China *via* Rodrigues and the Cocos-Keeling Islands. The whole Eastern extension all the way to China and Australia was known as "The Australasia and China Telegraph Company. The first official cable that went through from Magistrate, R. E Macmillan, was a message to the Governor of Mauritius on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1901, transmitting an expression of loyalty to the Crown on behalf of all Rodriguans.

Since then, communication has improved in Rodrigues, but we are still light years away, when compared to the development within the Republic.

*9.4. Recommendations:*

1. That no effort be spared by all parties concerned to bring Rodrigues up to date with modern communication.
2. To equip young Rodrigues with the technical know-how in the field of Information Technology.

## 10. RODRIGUES - CULTURE

### *10.1. Historical Background*

Rodrigues played a critical role in the Anglo-French struggles for supremacy in the Indian Ocean during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars between 1793 and 1811. Considered as a dependency of Mauritius in the colonial era, Rodrigues is part of the State of Mauritius since Independence (1968) and, as such, was referred as the Tenth District with the other nine districts of mainland Mauritius. Rodriguans voted for the first time in 1967 National Elections, which was also crucial for the Independence of Mauritius; practically, all the Rodriguans under strong advice of Sir Gaetan Duval, voted against the Independence project and favoured the 'Parti Mauricien Social Democrat' ((PMSD) ideology of integration with Great-Britain.

When the Labour Party (the Parti de L'Indépendance) under the leadership of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam won the elections for Independence, the Rodriguans strongly opposed that the National Flag be raised in Rodrigues on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1968, the day Mauritius became independent. There was a great resistance and soldiers from the mainland were deployed to maintain Law and Order in Rodrigues.

All these did not favour of Rodriguans themselves. Consequently, no development projects were initiated and Rodrigues was first left in the hands of a Civil Magistrate. Then from the early 1970s, Civil Commissioners were appointed to run the Rodrigues Administration. The "Mauvais Sujets" of the Public Service in Mauritius were exiled to Rodrigues as punishment. This practice naturally created a highly conflicting situation between the Public Officers and the population because the Public Officers did not perform their duties as they were supposed to do. The fright of the Independence nurtured by the PMSD resulted in a major brain-drain in Rodrigues. A sizeable number of Rodriguans mostly Civil Servants, those of European origin, migrated to Australia in the early 1970s.

At that time, few Rodriguans were employed in the Public Service. The majority of the population was farmers and fishers. They exported to mainland Mauritius, farm products such as red beans, onions, garlic and live animals and marine products, such as salted fish and dried octopuses. In those days, Rodrigues was considered as the "greniers de Maurice". Unfortunately a number of successive devastating tropical cyclones in the late 1960, followed by a very severe drought in the early 1970s, totally fragilised the Rodrigues' economy, and consequently the Government had no other alternative but to employ practically the farmers as labourers in the Public Service Thus a new mentality was installed in the Rodriguan society, whereby all Rodriguans have ever since aspired was to have a job in the Public Service because salaries were not linked to productivity, but simply attendance. It was, therefore, easier to work as Civil Servants than being self-employed. What was meant to be just a measure to alleviate a harsh situation became the norm. The very foundation of work culture was altered for good.

### *10.2 Religion*

Rodriguans are of mixed origin and fall into two distinct groups; the descendants of the first European settlers and the descendants of the first European settlers, and those of African and Malagasy descents who were ex-slaves on the sugar estates in Mauritius. As Rodrigues never undertook the extensive plantation culture, this explains why the Indian indentured labour never took roots in Rodrigues. The population stands about 37000 and is predominantly Christians, the majority of whom are Roman Catholics. There are a small community of Anglicans, legacy from the British Colonial rule and an even smaller community of Hindus and Muslims who were amongst the latest to arrive in Rodrigues as traders in the late 1890s. The Chinese traders also arrived around this period, but they right at the start fully-integrated the "Creole" community by marrying Rodriguan women. Churches are well attended on Sundays, and it is the main regular occasion for Rodriguans to dress up on an island where leisure activities are rare.

### *10.3. Folklore - Traditional Dances*

It is natural to greet everybody in the streets in the friendliest way. The Rodriguan is generally honest and has a quiet disposition and slow to anger.

The Sega "Tambour" is good indicator of the Rodriguan temperament. It is among others a vehicle of approbation or disapprobation of the conduct or attitude of a member of a family, thus constituting a sort of social judgement from which there is no escape for the guilty.

The Sega Tambour is the island's unique folkloric dance performed by Rodriguans to celebrate special occasions. Sega Tambour is the traditional form of music and dance found exclusively in Rodrigues. It is one of the forms of music and dance representative of the Cultural Identity of the inhabitants of Rodrigues. As most of the segas of the Indian Ocean Islands, the Sega Tambour took birth within the slave population of Rodrigues and is reminiscent of African and Malagasy musical traditions. With many contributions from other population groups, the sega tambour evolved into a unique form of music. It has been adopted by the whole population without distinction of ethnic origins.

The Sega "Tambour" continued to be practised on the same land. It is to be noted that the Sega "Tambour" is different from other segas in the Indian Ocean Islands. It has its own originality, particularly when it comes to musical rhythm, beats and dances, despite having the same name. The principle underlying the Sega "Tambour" is that the male partner does not have a fixed female partner, everybody dances at the same time. Male and female partners are always trying to out-dance each other.

The lyrics, simple and vivid, narrate the daily realities of the local life. In the past, it was quite common to sing a refrain freshly and spontaneously composed, to make fun of the physical aspect of an individual and laugh at the misfortunes and misdemeanours of one's daily life, and to mock people of light and easy virtues.

The Sega "Tambour" costume, important for the female partners only, is a long swaying dress usually with sleeves and a tight belt around the hip. All the female dancers wear petticoat with a perfect bun. The male dances are dressed in patent leather shoes, pleated trousers and silk shirts and usually the colourful motifs match those of the female dress.

To invite the female dancer, the man holds out his white handkerchief in her direction.

The "Tambour" is the main musical instrument for the Sega "Tambour". The latter is made with dried and cured goat skin glued on a circular wooden frame. It is often accompanied with a "Triang", a musical instrument made of steel stem folded in triangular shape and a short steel rod served to hit the base of the "Triang". The "Bobre" reminiscent of the "African Calbasse musical instrument" is also used. It is made of a wooden arched by a metallic string with half a coconut shell attached at the wooden arch.

### *10.4. Sega "Tambour" - Singers, Dancers and Musicians*

The performance of the Sega "Tambour" is a very well-structured activity, even though it might look disorganised to foreign onlookers. The main actors are the singers, dancers and musicians.

The musicians have to first ensure that the "Tambours" are ready and fine-tuned for the performance. The "Tambour" is warmed on an open fire until the skin is optimally stretched out the circular wooden frame. The action of warming the "Tambour" complicated and delicate task because too much heat on the whole skin surface or on part of it could damage the instrument. In fact, the action of warming is done simultaneously with gentle tapping on the skin by connoisseurs listening attentively to the emitting sounds. Once the right sound is obtained the "Tambour" is said to be ready for the musical performance. For a good performance it is imperative to have at least two "Tambours" as this ensures continuity in the performance.

The singers will either sing already known songs but also will compose new songs spontaneously depending on the event being celebrated. There is always a main singer who will start the singing and a chorus then repeat the same words after him or her. The first line of the song is always sang "a capella" so that everybody could hear the words and also the underlying message.

Traditionally, there were no readymade songs; they were made up as the performance unfolded. The composition of the songs usually geared to the personality's present, social concerns, natural catastrophes, nature conservation, and so on. The singers will, therefore, communicate through their songs issues that are affecting the lives of the population for all concerned to hear. Hence, the Sega "Tambour" is a powerful way to communicate the state of mind of the population to the authority.

The dancers will come in only when the "Tambours" call them, and it is the female dancer who starts by inviting the male partner with rhythmically moving her hips while quickly in successive small steps and flipping, flapping and swinging her dress/skirt which she holds with both hands. The male dancer will reply to the invitation with wide opened arms in rapid circular movements accompanying the female dancer up the down the room. After a couple of minutes or less, a second male dancer will move in challenging the first one who, by this time, is showing signs of fatigue because of the frantically rhythm of the Sega "Tambour". The first male dancer will give up after a few seconds thus accepting defeat and the sega will go on along the same lines.

The mixed population in Rodrigues has also given rise to a form of cross-breeding musical tradition commonly known on the island as "Musique Traditionnelle".

The "Musique Traditionnelle" is practised with the accordion, Triang, Wooden Chest and recently the "Tambour" has been integrated in the music. In fact, the population has adapted the old European folk music and dances such as the Quadille, Waltz, Mazurka, Polka, and Scottish. These dances and music were brought in by the French.

The introduction of gramophone, records players, tape recorders and even the advent of the radio somehow overshadowed the "Musique Traditionnelle" and the Sega "Tambour" to such a point that it was thought that these two musical traditions would die a natural death. Fortunately, this never happened and in the mid-1970s a group of young people decided to revive the traditional music customs. Today, the natural transmission mechanism, whereby the tradition is handed by the parents to the children, is functioning again and the ever-increasing recognition of the "Musique Traditionnelle" beyond the local borders is very encouraging, thus ensuring its perennality.

#### **10.5. Food**

The staple food of Rodriguans was originally composed of maize, sweet potatoes, manioc, fish and beans. Rice and meat were consumed only on special festive occasions. Due to the devastating effects of cyclones and long periods of droughts, the relief measures, implemented by the government to alleviate the hardship of the population and the progress in education, less and less Rodriguans cultivated the land resulting in a sharp reduction in the staple food production. Furthermore, tilling the land was considered by many as a devilish curse on the people to such a point that the hoe was commonly known as the "Devil's Pen". Consequently, all these factors combined resulted in a significant shift in the eating habits of the Rodriguan people. Imported rice took over from maize as the staple food, and today maize is a luxury.

#### **10.6. Recommendations:**

1. That the Rodrigues' culture should find its place in the school curriculum.
2. To encourage the cultural and artistic creations of talented Rodriguans.
3. The setting up of a Cultural Museum in Rodrigues.
4. To encourage young Rodriguan academics to carry out cultural research.

## 11. RODRIGUES' AUTONOMY AND ITS LIMITATIONS

### 11.1. INTRODUCTION

Rodrigues, the smallest of the Mascarenes Islands in the Indian Ocean, having been severely exploited and neglected by the different colonial powers over nearly four centuries, has known a very slow development since its discovery in 1528 by the Portuguese pilot Diogo Rodriguez. It has been successively ruled by the French (1630-1810) and British (1810-1968) until its integration within the Mauritian territory with the advent of the latter's Independence in 1968. Over the succeeding centuries, the island underwent a few institutional changes which did not answer the population's needs and aspirations. The most fervent and popular claim of its people had been the island's autonomy, which was subsequently granted after 20 years of struggle. Constitutional amendments and appropriate legislation were required and were unanimously voted for in the National Assembly by all the country's political parties represented therein on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2001. However, while this decentralized System of Government has undisputedly proved to be the instrument that better answered the people's aspirations so far, it has rapidly demonstrated numerous limitations which gave way to recurrent political instabilities, as well as regular conflicts with the Central Government.

### 11.2. INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION

#### 11.2.1 *Cinderella*

Rodrigues has always expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of its development in this part of the world, as compared to its other sister islands. The disparities were so obvious compared to the rest of the world that she has been ever since named "Cinderella of the Mascarenes" and "The Sugarless Mascarenes". Such labels were not bound to please the poor, but proud Rodrigues, and the island will not stop urging for better consideration from its different political masters.

#### 11.2.2 *Economic plunder and neglect*

Due to its very small surface area of 110km<sup>2</sup>, including the numerous islets, as well as its geographical isolation, ex-centered from the major commercial routes, as well as the regular severe climate conditions that it faced, throughout the colonial times Rodrigues did not attract numerous settlers to set up a solid Private Sector Development, as was the case in Mauritius. Many came in prospection and due to administrative neglect and indecisions, left for Mauritius. The Colonial Administrations, both under the French and British rule, never had a clear roadmap for the island's future but, instead more than once, considered that the island was best suited as a land of exile or quarantine, where undesired trouble-makers such as political opponents, prisoners and patients suffering of dangerous diseases could be sent. It was also a land for plunder. Its abundant tortoises were massively exploited to feed the population of mainland Mauritius and navigators until complete extinction and its most delicious bird "Le Solitaire" did not know a different fate. The Rodriguan producers in the Agricultural and Fisheries sectors were outrageously exploited mainly through a barter system resulting in the enrichment of the more powerful forces at the expense of its inhabitants. As for the British, it was interested in Rodrigues only as a strategic base to defeat the French and conquer Mauritius. The slave trade continued in Rodrigues well after it was made illegal in the colony and the slaves were liberated only 4 years and 4 months after those in Mauritius had already undergone apprenticeship and been set free. Throughout the Colonial Rule, Rodrigues remained underdeveloped but nevertheless managed, through hard work in agriculture and fishing, to be considered as the granary of Mauritius as far back as 1867 and even later in 1970s before it was stopped by long periods of drought and severe cyclones.

### 11.3 DEPENDENCY, FRANCHISE, INTEGRATION AND REVOLT.

As a British Colony, Rodrigues became a dependency of Mauritius in 1815. It obtained its representation in the Council of Government as an Electoral District in 1967 when the Rodriguan people voted for the first time as the 21<sup>st</sup> constituency of Mauritius. As early as 1915, a petition was sent to the King George V in 1915, claiming for a Rodrigues to be an Electoral Constituency but as usual, nothing happened. A judicial battle was staged in the 1960s challenging the validity of previous elections when Rodrigues was set aside. Finally in 1967, after Constitutional Talks towards Independence where all quarters of Mauritius sat around the table for negotiations without Rodrigues, it was agreed to extend the universal franchise to Rodrigues. And it was in such circumstances that Rodrigues became an integral part of Mauritius, when it became independent, and some incidents followed the aborted celebrations of the event in Port- Mathurin.

#### 11.3.1 Ministry for Rodrigues and the Rodrigues Local Council

After the advent of the Independence of Mauritius and the *de-facto* integration of Rodrigues, the island did not know the same developmental strength as its sister but experienced some timid progress, namely in the commercial sector, where history details inhuman exploitations through trade, especially the barter system and the education sector undertaken mainly by the Catholic Church. The infrastructural development remained merely non-existent. In 1976, a Ministry for Rodrigues was created and a Mauritian-born became the island's First<sup>t</sup> Minister followed by a Rodriguan in 1982. Rodrigues knew a new institutional development in 1992 in the year when Mauritius became a Republic, with the setting up of a Rodrigues Island Council. It was considered as a non-event by opponents because it was a body where all 21 members were nominated by the Minister for Rodrigues and were to act as advisers to him as one body. It was suspended in 1996. However, over 25 years, Rodriguans never stopped claiming an appropriate and distinct status within the Republic of Mauritius and asked for more administrative and political autonomy in the management of the island's of affairs. In November 2001, the Constitution was amended and the appropriate legislation introduced and voted unanimously by all political parties in the National Assembly to grant Rodrigues an autonomous status. The island became an autonomous region in the Republic on the 12 October 2002, after the first regional elections took place, shifting 46 areas of responsibilities from Central Government to a regional one in Port Mathurin.

#### 11.3.2 AUTONOMY RODRIGUES-

The announcement in 2001 by the National Government that Rodrigues will be given a degree of autonomy through a decentralised devolution of powers came as a shock, even to the elected Rodriguan politicians of the time. They complained that they were not consulted but had no choice. The perception that Rodrigues is a burden for Mauritius has not changed an iota today as opposed to stark negligence by Mauritius in the old days, Rodrigues receives practically nothing, but a few tokens to keep her within the Republic of Mauritius.

The devolution of powers can be considered to be purely cosmetic as access to finance rests sole with the Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

There is an urgent need to revisit the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act in order to translate into reality the proper meaning of decentralisation of power from Port-Louis. This could only be done with a paradigm shift that takes into consideration the particularities of the island and its people. It is believed that Rodrigues is a victim of the identity crisis that exists in Mauritius, which constitutes a base line for political, social and economic decisions.

Amidst this situation of neglect, Rodriguans have over the years developed a true resilience that has enabled them to overcome terrible hardships. Generally, the Rodriguan is easy-going, well-behaved, law-abiding, to a large extent, and respectful. He/she looks free and happy, even though he may not always have enough to eat.

Rodriguans, like any other people in the world, have the qualities and character to lead a better and more comfortable life, if they are given the right opportunities and means to do so.

There is definitely enough evidence to file a genuine case of negligence towards the successive political masters of Rodrigues over the past three centuries. There is an urgent need to get the historical facts right. This is critical for the relationship between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

### 11.3.3 *Limitations immediately experienced*

Rodrigues' accession to the status of autonomy was joyfully welcomed in the island both by those who struggled for it, and those who proposed alternatives. All the political parties ran for elections during their inauguration on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The decentralized system embodied in a body corporate labelled Rodrigues Regional Assembly (the RRA) comprises all the tenets of democracy; it is enshrined in the country's Constitution, guided by electoral rules. It has its Assembly, its executive council and its official opposition, and is in charge of 46 areas of responsibilities devolved to it. The RRA's executive arm is made up of 7 Commissioners with ministerial role.

The First limitations of the present Law guiding the autonomy were felt immediately after the very first elections, when the clear majority which emerged from the first-past-the-post system in the 6 electoral regions shrunk after the full application of proportional representation. This situation which was also due to the relatively equal strength of the then two principal political parties has impacted ever since on the conduct of Rodriguan affairs and caused major instabilities. Other limitations were also gradually experienced regarding the practicability of Rodrigues' autonomy, governed by the RRA Act 2001, and there is a general request for its amendment.

### 11.3.4 *Budgetary difficulties*

One of the most criticised problems that surfaced was the budgetary process. Regional MPs and Commissioners are of the opinion that the budget provisions, as well as its mechanisms, do not allow them to fulfill the Rodriguan people's will and their projects and programmes. The international economic situation and context are constantly being put forward to explain budgetary constraints to justify the allocations made to Rodrigues by the Central Government. Rodrigues, on its part, considers that it deserves better consideration in view, as underlined in the Section 46 of Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, of its

*"(a) physical separation from Mauritius; [... (b) omitted]; (c) its isolation from the principal national growth centres; (d) the absence of the multiplier effect from expenditures and investments (private and public) made in Mauritius; (e) Restricted opportunities for employment and career fulfillment in Rodrigues; (f) the impracticability of participation by residents of Rodrigues in the major education, cultural and sporting facilities located in Mauritius; (g) the lack of sustained development in Rodrigues; [... (h) omitted]; and (i) the special needs of Rodrigues in terms of accelerated development."*

This Section of the Law came into operation on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The regular disagreement between the different regional autonomous authorities over the quantum is explained by the fact that the capital budget allocated do not respond to the infrastructural and development needs in the island. The more so since many studies have proved that Rodrigues is the poor relative of Mauritius. A study done in 1998 concluded that 36.4% of its families lived in precariousness, and another 13.2% in "ultra-poverty". During the recent years, there was a widespread opinion that for Rodrigues to feel real integration into the nation and for its economy to thrive, Mauritius must stop displaying the same attitude as the ancient Colonial Powers, that of neglect and snobbism, and start to bridge the development gap between the two islands and lever the same level of services available in Mauritius for the island.

For political observers and practitioners, the autonomy should imply an increase in funding given the number of new institutions created with the advent of the RRA (7 Commissions excluding the Assembly House) and the new policies and expectations of the people. For many, while the institutional set-up has changed considerably, the way the budgetary allocation is decided for Rodrigues has never changed. Rodrigues' budgetary calculation is

aligned in the same principle as that of a particular Ministry, while Rodrigues is a separate island, with the same needs as those of the island of Mauritius as a whole. It is felt that, due to the constant increase in the cost of living, coupled with the growing management needs of the island, the capital budget is being down-sized each year, although that it shows an insignificant increase in figures. Over 9 years since autonomy, very few infrastructural and structural developments have been observed. The inability of the Regional Government as the main employer of the island, to invest in infrastructural development and the lack of private investors and the narrowness of the market, result in a lack of opportunities for the youth who have massively become economic refugees on mainland Mauritius.

#### *11.3.5 Other major concerns*

Rodrigues' autonomy involves power being transferred in 46 areas of responsibility, among which some concern only the administrative power, policies remaining in Mauritius. This is the case of some major portfolios such as Social Security, Education and Health among others. In such cases, a very close collaboration between the Commissioner and the Minister is required to ensure continuity in the quality and types of services delivered in both islands. However, there are some very important sectors for which Rodrigues does not have authority, such as for example Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance, and Service Commissions which remain with the Central Government. While not being claimed at all by the Rodriguans, it is felt that the total exclusion of Rodrigues' representation in those sectors, especially that of Economic Diplomacy on which Mauritius is relying more and more for its development, is not acceptable. Rodrigues feels that major negotiations for investments; agreements, loans, development prospection and other international conventions and tools are thus being made, and used solely for the benefit of mainland Mauritius.

#### *11.3.6 Growing disillusion with the system*

Other questions pertaining to the practicability of the Law guiding autonomy concern Section 30 of the Act which gives power to the Regional Authorities to introduce Bills in the Regional Assembly. None of them have ever been introduced in the RRA to date. The Rodrigues Children Council Bill, for example, has remained a dead Bill since 2004 because it was never introduced in the National Assembly as required by the Law. Rodriguans question the fact that Mauritius chooses never to give its green light for Rodrigues' request for twinning projects with other regions of friendly countries. Such silence is diversely commented on by the locals, with some viewing it as a form of mistrust, and others as a neocolonialist attitude to close all the doors for a conquered land. The latter opinion is on the rise in the island, especially with the young generation who regularly compare Rodrigues' narrowing scope and the visible accelerated development of Mauritius and its visibility at international level through economic diplomacy and international agreements and loans. Strong signals of commonness, national unity and equality must be sent out to tone down such growing feelings.

### **11.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Revisit and amend the Rodrigues Regional Act in the light of the experience acquired over the past 8 years.
2. The budgetary process must be improved and the necessary legal provisions reviewed to provide for formal consultations at specific times of the year between the designated Commissioner for Finance and the Minister for Finance. And a formal system must be set up for Rodrigues to benefit automatically during the course of the same year, of additional and proportionate funding for projects announced at national level, not included in the Regional authority's budget estimates.
3. Budget provisions must allow for a leverage of the level of service and development in Rodrigues before starting to allocate budget on a strictly per capita grant.

4. A Memorandum of Understanding must be signed between the Ministry for Finance and the RRA to address other administrative obstacles, finance not being an area of responsibility devolved.
5. Rodrigues should be present in all the national formulations of new laws and projects in order to facilitate a better integration of the island in the national developmental dynamics.
6. All Bills passed by the RRA, except in case of illegality, should be introduced in the National Assembly.
7. A Rodriguan representative must accompany the Mauritian delegations on some international missions.
8. Sectors that do not fall under the purview of the RRA should, nonetheless, provide for its inclusiveness and active participation at national level.
9. All international commitments and conventions signed by the Central Government must be discussed and applied in Rodrigues.

## 12. RODRIGUES, PART OF MAURITIUS?

It is inevitable and intellectually dishonest to make abstraction of the question: Is Rodrigues part of Mauritius? Comparing the level of development in all economic and social spheres on mainland Mauritius with that in Rodrigues, one is bound to conclude there is a great disparity. Being citizens of the same Republic, Mauritians born in Rodrigues do not enjoy equal opportunities as their fellow countrymen born in Mauritius. This is not just a matter of perception, but a stark reality. All through this document, it has been made clear that Rodrigues, throughout its human history, has been either neglected or totally forgotten by the powers that be in Mauritius.

There is a very strong feeling among Rodriguans that they are like strangers in their own country and this is even more so with the advent of the Autonomous Government.

There are a number of hypotheses to explain this absolute lack of consideration towards Rodrigues, namely:

- a. The National Government's incapacity to acknowledge the particularities of Rodrigues as a different island within the Republic of Mauritius.
- b. Mauritius considers Rodrigues as a socio-economic burden. The irony of it all is that Rodrigues is very often used by the National Government to justify its request for considerable funds from International Organisations to finance projects in Mauritius but Rodrigues gets very little of the funding.
- c. The paternalistic attitude towards Rodriguans thus makes them believe that they are second-class citizens of the Mauritian Republic.
- d. The advent of the regime of Autonomous Government was imposed without allowing enough time for transition and the proper empowerment of the Rodriguans to efficiently manage the island.
- e. The origin of the population of Rodrigues seems to be one of the core problems in the relationship between Mauritius and Rodrigues. Very often, the following comment is being voiced out for all concerned to hear: "Rodrigues is in such a state of neglect because most of the population is from African origins and if they were of Indian origins, the island would be different".

It would be unfair to stop at the above hypotheses as there have been a number of affirmative and laudable actions over the past few years, but too much depends on the political masters in power either in Rodrigues or in Mauritius. The development of reliable communications between Rodrigues and Mauritius badly needs to be reinforced as this will help to do away with the negative perception that mainland Mauritius has of Rodrigues. This will ensure that much greater, more genuine and more sustained effort is done by the Public and Private Sectors in Mauritius and Rodrigues to examine issues that are vital to the development of the island. There are signs that things are moving in the right direction, and the present report is an indication that there is a real will in Mauritius to listen to what the inhabitants of Rodrigues have to say on their own development.

## 13. CONCLUSION

Rodrigues must be seen as an asset of the Republic, and this needs to be publicly acknowledged by all Mauritian citizens. Rodrigues is also a golden opportunity for the Mauritian Republic to prove to the world that sustainable development can be successful. It is possible and much easier to implement a mode of development that increases the health or value of the existing assets without (or with minimal) destruction of other assets, and without significantly increasing the restored assets' geographic or ecological footprints.

Rodrigues has experienced a lot of strife and trial over the years but the wounds that have been inflicted on her can be healed. However, if the healing is going to be done, it must be done now. Otherwise, it may never be done at all.

The people of Rodrigues nurture the hope that things will be brighter tomorrow and will remain so for the coming generations.

To end this report, we would like to quote from "Sustainable Integrated Development Programme for Rodrigues" (SIDPR 2009) - Rodrigues in 2025 - An Enlightened View:

*"This blue-print for Rodrigues has been elaborated with the active participation of the local population during the period 2006-2008. The vision it embodies, represented by two fictitious characters below, Roland and Jeannine, whose transformed lives in 2025 are viewed as the product of a successful living and rolling integrated development process, originated from the 2007 Sustainable Integrated Development plan for Rodrigues (SIDPR).*

*As he turns 18 in 202, born from modest agricultural peasants in 2007 in the sub-humid uplands of La Ferme, is able to leverage the plethora of opportunities offered by his native land to develop to his full potential in a totally liberalised world. At the same time, Jeannine, a Generation Y yuppie, who was born in a wealthy family of traders in Port-Mathurin in 1995, is creatively collaborating with the Global ICT initiative which has reached the Rodriguan shores in a fully digitalized, broadband, and wireless Web 3.0 world.*

*The socio-economic situation prevailing in Rodrigues in 2025 that will enable the young healthy Roland to contemplate a fruitful career in a well-preserved environment, is documented in the long-term Sustainable Development Strategy, and a way to get there is detailed in the Short-term Action Plan.*

*As he seeks to further his education in a field well suited for the Rodriguan context, Roland also has the opportunity to contribute to developing the productive capacity of the Island, while continuing to uphold the highest family and cultural values, inherited from his parents. The young adult's circle of opportunities is wide and choices abound.*

*After successfully completing secondary schooling where he had the chance to learn a curriculum well suited for his Island, Roland is now faced with several alternative choices. He has the possibility to join one of the specialised, organic agricultural filieres in place in Rodrigues, which is producing highly valued and internationally-acclaimed transformed product using a unique local recipe, inherited from the ancestors. Alternatively, Roland could choose to embark on higher education in ICT so that he could one day join the local branch of Microsoft set up in Rodrigues as part of it's founder's active involvement to help remote and isolated communities collaborate with advanced countries. The local branch is headed by Jeannine and is situated in the state-of-art Technology Park at Grand Baie, with an impressive view on the aquaculture activities being undertaken in the lagoon using innovative technologies. The Rodriguan seaweed has been found to*

*possess medicinal properties and is now in high demand in Japan, the U.S.A and the Scandinavian countries.*

*Jeannine's lovely children find it hard to believe that water used to be a problem in Rodrigues. They had always thought that the abundance of "retenues collinières" situated inside the valley bottoms, and other simple but ingenious water capture devices installed on the Rodriguan houses were legacies of their ancestors. They don't believe that these devices have being designed and popularised only two decades ago. The idea that water used to be free and distributed only once every week, as opposed to continuous supply in 2025, is to them, a joke of bad taste.*

*Roland's and Jeannine's grand-mothers are neighbours and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Whilst Roland's grand-mother, who has been struggling hard to support the family in the 1950s, is still dependent on Social Aid being provided by the RRA, Jeannine's is wealthy and supported by two maids. However, both of them are equally happy and enjoy life to the full. In a peaceful land of paradise such as Rodrigues, being an elderly that is filthy rich is immaterial. In any case, the social security system in place provides adequate support to allow one to live a decent life. The two grand-mothers feel proud to live on a calm and peaceful island where societal problems are things of the past and cultural values are passionately preserved by the youths.*

*They both know that Rodrigues has been able to achieve wonders, in less than a generation, largely thanks to the promotion of good governance and democratic principles, the will to take courageous decisions, the power of new technology, and the adoption of a participatory process that is now not only a model for the rest of the world, but also being emulated in the pacific small island states. The Economic Planning and Monitoring Unit which was launched in 2007, is recognised by one and all as having played a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of Rodrigues.*

*As Roland ponders his future career, he cannot resist the temptation to be part of the vibrant tourism sector of Rodrigues. Only a year ago, in 2024, 125,000 tourists had paid a high price to experience the Rodriguan adventure. Several regional jets operate round-the-clock and keep the airport and its vicinity busy 24 hours a day. The triangular route Mauritius-Rodrigues-Reunion is a hot favourite in this part of the world and the package is being marketed aggressively to tourists visiting both Mauritius and Reunion Island. Cruise ships are also choosing Rodrigues as one of their favourite stop-overs between East and West. These ensure the regular presence of high net-worth individual on the island, who are also the main buyers of high-quality handicrafts available on the island. Tourists enjoy the idea that the local hats they are wearing are also being supplied to Disney World in Florida and Euro Disney at Marne-la Valley, France. Indeed, a few years ago, the Walt Disney Group, as part of its corporate social responsibility initiatives, agreed to outsource its supply of traditional hats to Rodrigues. The hats are used by its artists daily during one of the favourite daily shows.*

*The adoption of a few agricultural filieres and the focus on high-quality niche products and on technology, have allowed a remarkable preservation of the environment and natural resources. As Air Mauritius' mid-range airplane prepares to land at Plaine Corail, visitors are thrilled to see the island covered with crops and other plants that are driving one of the pillars of the Rodriguan economy. Hardly a plot of land can be seen as bare. The lagoon also appears impressive with marine parks and aquaculture dominating the view. Fishing boats in the outer -lagoon, are numerous and visitors can observe from the plane the interplay between small local fishing boats and*

*mid-sized Japanese vessels as they slowly approach to land their catch in the seafood hub at Pointe Monier.*

*For both Roland and Jeannine, the future looks bright. The Rodriguan Administration is no more dependent on budgetary allocations from Mauritius for its recurrent budget. However, Mauritius as well as friendly countries remain key providers of capital supporting the ongoing massive infrastructural developments, such as investments in Port-Mathurin harbour that will soon allow even larger cruise ships to berth.*

*The economy is dependent on four pillars, driven by a vibrant private sector comprising mostly SMEs operating in niche market: agricultural exports, which contribute significantly to GDP; tourism, the seafood hub and aquaculture activities; and creative online collaboration of Rodriguan ICT companies with global players through the internet-based services. Indeed, Generation Z Rodriguans have mastered software such as wikis and the new Web 3.0 and have become agile in securing lucrative contracts internationally by working collaboratively with leading companies. Rodriguan companies now form an integral part of the open-source movement of software development in a virtual universe that characterizes the world in 2025."*

## 14. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

2. At the heart of the Rodriguan problem is the inappropriateness of the Education System whereby a majority of our youngsters are eliminated and made to feel that they are losers. There is thus an urgent need to revisit the education system in Rodrigues.
3. The way forward is encourage research fellows from Rodrigues & Mauritius to relook into the way Mauritian and Rodriguans History have been written so far.
4. Capacity-building and empowerment of the Rodriguan people by giving them access to available opportunities to Tertiary Education by implementing a University project in Rodrigues.
5. Economically, Rodrigues lagged far behind Mauritius for historical circumstances that we have been debating above. There must be more affirmative actions and even an official policy of positive discrimination, when it comes to help Rodriguans catch up and make up for the lost time. Today, the will, the design and the plan are there ready to kick-off the economic development of Rodrigues. What are badly needed is the policy-decision and the means for a real take off.

In spite of all the affirmative actions taken in the past 40 to 50 years, Rodrigues is still having enormous difficulties in shaking off the shackles of the stigmas of slavery. However the hardship of life over the years has enabled the people of Rodrigues to build a strong identity, a network of solidarity, a sense of pride and an amazing capacity of resilience. The canva is, therefore, present to enable the success of an urgent plan to address the problems Rodrigues is facing in an integrated and sustainable manner.

Neglected, alienated, undesirable and forgotten throughout most of its History, Rodriguans categorically refused to give up. Rodriguans are now more than ever convinced that they have a brilliant future.

### Illiteracy and Unemployment

Before the liberalisation of Secondary Education, namely the implementation of Free Education at secondary level, illiteracy was very high in Rodrigues. Very few children had access to Secondary Schools through the Church School and the majority was left to revert back to permanent illiteracy. Parents did not see the need to help their children to pursue their education because social mobility was inexistent. Children left Primary School at a very early stage to help with the family agricultural fields, to tend domestic animals, such as goats, sheep and cows, and to join the fishing squad. They were condemned to become "ti gardien ek ti pesser". This was a vicious circle that ensnared many generations of Rodriguans. Due to the lack of proper training in agricultural management and animal husbandry, the land resources were exhausted very quickly, and combined with severe climatic disruption, production in both the agricultural and marine sectors, became poorer and poorer year in and year out. On the other hand, the demographic level of the island exploded, meaning that there were more people to feed.

Faced with this catastrophic situation, a number of recommendations for the development of the island were made by Government Officials, but their implementations when it happened failed to meet the challenges because of lack of funds and proper monitoring.

Alfred North-Coombes summarised the Rodrigues' situation as follows in 1971:

*"Since the day Mauritius attained the status of an independent nation, Rodrigues has, of course, shed its status of dependency. Under the New Constitution the smaller island is now a "part" of Mauritius. Politically, it is fully integrated. Physically, it cannot be. Ethnically, it is likely to remain very much as it is now, for as long as one can care to imagine. Economically, however, if the destinies of Rodrigues are to remain linked with those of Mauritius, the Rodriguan problem must be studied in greater depth and in more*

*detail than has been done in the New Mauritius 4-Year Plan for Social and Economic Development. The plan provides a capital expenditure estimated to cost 32.5 million rupees in the four years ending on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1975. This is roughly 2.3 million rupees more annually than in the last three years."*

Obviously, mainland Mauritius was preoccupied with its own development and, therefore, somehow did not feel the need to consider the situation of Rodrigues, as it should have been. Hence, no serious efforts were made to empower the people of Rodrigues. In fact, Mauritius only tried to do the minimum required for the upkeep of Rodrigues.

The only way to make the case of Rodrigues heard was through political representation, and in 1976 the first significant local political party to challenge the Government of Mauritius was formed. Unemployment was then rampant in Rodrigues. A growing number of young Rodriguans had been educated at least to the secondary level, and the hope of better paid and satisfying jobs was practically inexistent. This provoked mass migration to Mauritius and this trend is continuing to this day.

Even though there had been some encouraging measures to reorganise the productive sectors of Rodrigues, the traditional agricultural and fishing trades are on the verge of bankruptcy, due to lack of organised export markets. The Tourism Industry is facing huge difficulties to develop in a sustainable manner because of the constraints of air and sea access. Industrialisation never took off. New technologies are still inaccessible to Rodriguans. This situation is not conducive to potential investors in Rodrigues and, hence, Rodrigues is still under a regime of maintenance development with the devastating effect of considerable brain-drain every year.

Encouraging literate young people to invest the productive sectors, such as agriculture and fishing, has failed for many reasons, namely:

1. Agriculture is not profitable because it is till dependent on the dwindling climatic conditions, for instance no irrigation system is available in Rodrigues.
2. Practically everybody aims at securing a job in the Public Services.
3. Mechanisation of agriculture is still in its infancy and ran by the Government Authorities; thus most of the time, it is unreliable.
4. The soil is getting poorer and poorer due to lack of proper management.
5. The non-implementation or the lack of a systematic land-use planning.
6. The common land syndrome is a major handicap to development in Rodrigues.
7. Unwarranted political interference and corruption in every sphere of development in Rodrigues.

We are, therefore, left with an explosive situation and if nothing is done immediately, Rodrigues will constitute a major headache for the Republic of Mauritius and a liability to its own population.

# THE 'COLOURED POPULATION' OF RODRIGUES

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## THE 'COLOURED POPULATION' OF RODRIGUES

### 1. SLOW COLONISATION

Any historical sketch of the colonisation of the island of Rodrigues sets it apart, and highlights its differences, from Isle de France/Mauritius. Clearly, there were several aborted attempts by the French to colonise the island before 1750, when a "small permanent colony" was established.<sup>1</sup> During his well-documented visit, Abbé Pingré found 100 people living on Rodrigues, including about ten Frenchmen, although from those 100 must be deducted the two crews of small French ships.<sup>2</sup> In 1803, General Decaen ordered the few colonists and their slaves to evacuate the island, for fear of a British invasion that subsequently took place in 1809, through a landing at Anse aux Anglais. Neglected under the French authorities, Rodrigues was to witness a period of 'start-stop-start' colonisation under the British, as agriculturalists and fishermen from Mauritius made their way over to the small island. In his excellent study, J.-F. Dupon declared: "After a period of military occupation, the colonization of the island, thenceforth British, was to start anew, led by colonists from Mauritius who used slaves from the coast of Mozambique and the East Coast of Madagascar."<sup>3</sup>

### 2. EARLY EUROPEAN 'WHITE' SETTLERS

Philibert Marragon, who arrived in Rodrigues on 12 May, 1794, with his wife, Marie Jeanne Elisabeth Guillon de Neuville, and his mother-in-law, settled above Oyster Bay. He soon took possession of 400 *arpents* at Les *Soupirs*, on a hill between Oyster Bay and Mont Charlot, a property and plantation which he named *L'Orangerie*.<sup>4</sup> Marragon's grave, and his wife's, can still be visited today at *L'Orangerie* where he lived till his death in 1826. His daughter, Séraphine, born there on 30 July, 1802, lived with her parents until 1826, after she had married a businessman from Port Louis, Charles Pierre François Pison. She became the owner of *L'Orangerie* in 1826, had 66 slaves and 17 free children. When she left for Mauritius, she gave permission to her slaves to live on her land, *Jardin Mamzelle* that became a squatting area for emancipated slaves.<sup>5</sup> Séraphine Pison died at La Chaumière, Savanne, in 1892.

When Marragon carried out his first Census in 1804, he found 82 slaves and 22 'Whites' on Rodrigues, of whom at least half - or 11 - were of mixed blood. The following Table is borrowed from Alfred North-Coombes' seminal work, *The Island of Rodrigues*:<sup>6</sup>

	Marragon	Le Gros	Gorry	Rochetaing	Bréhinier	Total
HOUSEHOLD (Individuals)	6	1	1	13	1	22
LAND (arpents) conceded	400	100	-	350	-	850
cultivated	100	25	70	70	-	265
SLAVES						
Mozambique	8	-	9	12	3	32
Malagasy	7	1	5	3	2	18
Talinga	4	1	-	-	-	5
Guinea	1	-	-	-	-	1
Malay	-	1	-	-	-	1
Bengaly	-	1	-	-	-	1
Born at Rodrigues	17	2	5	-	-	24
<b>TOTAL SLAVES</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>82</b>

From Marragon's Census (1804), we know that another early settler, who came from Bourbon, *via* Mauritius, was: E. Rochetaing, a fifty-five-year old, who took with him Marie, a *mulâtresse libre*, and her daughter. He was given a concession of 350 *arpents*, which he called 'Mon Plaisir'; it lay between Malartic, Mont-Lubin and St. Gabriel.<sup>7</sup> Germain Le Gros, who landed in 1792, with his partner, Frémont, was a master mariner and engaged in fishing. They settled on

the Northern foot of 'Le Piton' on 100 *arpents*, part of 'Les Soupirs'; this was later handed down to Séraphine Marragon. In 1812, Le Gros owned the boat *La Séraphine*, a schooner and did so until 1816, when Marragon took over.<sup>8</sup> For his part, Michel Gorry made his living from the land rather than the sea; he had settled at Oyster Bay, with Roger and Boulerot, both fishermen. When they left for Isle de France, Gorry moved up country to a property called 'Les Choux'; there, he first grew indigo but, later, confined his activities to growing only what satisfied his family's needs. Early settlers, who relied on fishing for their livelihood, included D. Raffin who settled in 1803 and started a fishery, with 20 slaves, as well as Lecloud and Gautier.<sup>9</sup> Lecloud had arrived earlier than Raffin with 16 slaves.

Most of the early colonists were of European origins and regarded themselves as 'Whites', but it is known that several were *métis* themselves or cohabited with female slaves or *mulâtresses*, as was the case with Rostaing. Commenting on the relatively 'recent populating' of Rodrigues, Dupon wrote: "Some of these colonists engaged in, for some time, a direct slave trade and disregarded the British legislation."<sup>10</sup> Marragon and Rochetaing were probably the only true 'Whites' in Rodrigues' history. Statistics provided by Dupon put the population, during the early years of British colonization, as follows:

1820: 200 (Source: *Almanach of Mauritius*)

1827: 123 (*Ibid.*)

1845: 495 (*Ibid.*)

1861: 699 (Fr. François, Catholic Missionary)

1862: 756 (*Ibid.*)<sup>11</sup>

From those statistics, Dupon concludes: "This assessment allows, one can see, little room for true colonists and their descendants, at most about ten families."<sup>12</sup> North-Coombes put the population in 1809 at 41 slaves and 8 other residents,<sup>13</sup> while Baron d'Unienville declared, in 1830, that Rodrigues was capable of receiving a much larger population, and that it was essential for the Government to send a surveyor there to establish concessions.<sup>14</sup>

At the very start of the Government's policy of granting land concessions, between 1815 and 1830, those only rarely surpassed 350 acres, or 135 *hectares*. Subsequently, they were limited to about 108 acres. Because Rodrigues did not share in the sugar cane boom of Mauritius, it ceased to be of interest to the British Authorities very early in the history of colonization. The small settlement under Marragon (1794-1796), who had the title of *Agent Civil de la République* (1794), led to a semblance of colonization because of the British threat, but it really started in 1825, with the arrival of C.T. Hoart, as Government Surveyor. His Report has been discussed at length by North-Coombes, who saw it as "the first of its kind", for it proposed the division of the 'Oriental' side of the island into 78 plots of 108 *arpents* (112 acres). Hoart also recommended that those plots be granted to "deserving families from Mauritius, who had the means of bringing them into cultivation."<sup>15</sup> The population of Rodrigues in 1826 was put at 123 by Hoart, and divided as follows:<sup>16</sup>

	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	Total
Europeans	7	5	8	-	20
Freed	2	1	-	-	3
Slaves	49	28	12	11	100

In his chronology, Antoine Chelin has highlighted a most important arrival at Port Mathurin on 20 October, 1843: that of John Henderson, the first Brigadier of Police and, later on, the Police Magistrate.<sup>17</sup> Accompanied by five constables, he landed from the *Isis* (Captain John Marshall).<sup>18</sup> This was to mark the beginning of some kind of Law and Order on Rodrigues. Five years earlier,

Special Justice C. Anderson was dispatched by the Governor of Mauritius to gather information on Rodrigues. He spent six days and reported the following establishments:

- (i) *Madame Pipon's, [Marragon's daughter, who was then owner of L'Orangerie] with 66 slaves and 17 free children.*
- (ii) *Messrs. Bessière and Husson's, on land formerly belonging to Gorry, with 36 slaves and 17 free children.*
- (iii) *Mr. Eudes', at Grand Baie and Sygangue, with 19 slaves and 8 free children.*

*Ninety-nine of these slaves were predial. In addition, Gabriel Bégué, who had settled on the land now forming part of the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Gabriel, had 4 predials; a certain Jean Marie had one and, likewise, Gonnet who had in addition 13 free men employed in his fishing establishment. The apprentices were working longer hours than the law allowed, their clothing were inadequate and their huts miserable, but they were well fed and extensive ground was allotted to them.*<sup>19</sup>

Another settler, Charles Lenferna de Laresle, Mrs. Pipon's bailiff, returned to Rodrigues, after a stay in Mauritius, and opened a fishery with Furcy Labour who lived at 'Les Soupirs' in the 1840s.<sup>20</sup>

Table 2 has already drawn attention to the gender imbalance that prevailed in Rodrigues, especially among slaves, from the start; Bertuchi, who visited the island much later in the 1920s, remarked that in the early days, "great immorality prevailed. Each woman had three or four husbands, in some cases as many as six. The children were brought up together, the husband in power at the time exercising the role of father to all."<sup>21</sup> Many descendants of slaves took to the hills after the Abolition of Slavery (proclaimed and diffused in Mauritius and Rodrigues in 1839) and became known both as 'Montagnards', and, according to Dupon, also as 'planteurs', 'habitants', 'laboureurs', 'piti nation', "désinane vénielle, beaucoup moins péjorative que celle franchement insultante de 'mouzambique'." <sup>22</sup> Several of the descendants of 'Whites' or *métis*, whom we interviewed, used the word *Zabitants* for descendants of slaves, but they did not mean any insult by it.

As for families of European or French descent, Dupon notes in 1967: "Though extremely spread out, they are represented by a small number of names, common in Réunion, and perhaps also in Mauritius: Roussety, Bégué, Rivière, Meunier, Legoff, Perrine, Lévêque."<sup>23</sup> We know some of the dates when the early settlers bearing European names, emigrated from Mauritius, or from elsewhere, to Rodrigues: Charles Weder (before 1827); Mathieu Roussety, a master-fisherman and trader (about 1842); his brother Auguste Roussety (1844); Jean-Marie Meunier (about 1840); Zéline Labour (about 1840); Bercy Labour, with four young children (1845); Désiré Calamel (1845); Charlotte and Marie-Louise Perrine (1846); Marie-Jeanne Geneviève, with a daughter (1846); Ferdinand Bonnelle (1846); Clodimir and Emilien Jean (1846); Louis François, his wife and five children (1848); Pierre Raffault (1848); the Legoff, Lévêque, Ithier, Castel and Allas families (later than the 1840s).<sup>24</sup> Descendants of the early *Café au lait* settlers, as they are known, or *Rouges* - because they grow red in the sun - gladly recall the adventures of their pioneer ancestors (see below for some families). Parish Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths draw attention to the evolution of *Rouge* families. Gabriel Bégué, the ancestor of a powerful landed family, settled in 1825 on land now forming part of the Parish of St. Gabriel, which was bought or acquired, in a part-exchange deal, by the visiting priest, Father Thevaux (Parish priest from November 1850 to May 1851). He erected a "latanier hut 50 ft. long by 24 ft. wide", a primitive Church which became known as St. Gabriel from "the owner's name" - the Saint being later declared the patron saint of Rodrigues.<sup>25</sup>

There is much evidence, oral and written, to indicate that cohabitation between 'Whites' and descendants of slaves and 'mulâtresses' was common, not least because of the infrequent visits of priests to Rodrigues. Father Thevaux celebrated 50 marriages and baptized 400 individuals during his six-month stay in 1850. In December 1848, Brigadier Henderson had noted that when *H.M.S. Isis* called at Port Mathurin in 1844, its chaplain Rev. Mr. Brown offered to baptize and marry locals, but that "there were then only five married couples on the island, the inhabitants being reluctant to have their marriage ceremony performed by any civil commissary or magistrate."

<sup>26</sup> A.J. Bertuchi concludes from information that he gathered at first hand: "A few white Creoles from Mauritius and Bourbon came to settle on the island and intermarried with the blacks, which accounts for a section of the population being of a 'café au lait' colour. Some of these settlers were the descendants of the French who had been expelled from the settlement of Port-Dauphin, in Madagascar." <sup>27</sup> Descendants of 'White' families, today, also point out that many of early ancestors intermarried. Indeed, Bertuchi adds that "other Whites married Whites, which explains that they are, in appearance, like Europeans, except in their habits and customs which, through a prolonged stay, have merged into those of the blacks." <sup>28</sup>

Emigration of 'mixed-blood' or 'White' families appears to have slowed down as the nineteenth century wore on. <sup>29</sup> From his analysis of statistics available, Dupon was able to assess that "if one examined the origins of deceased people, one noticed that, from 1860 to 1865, 40% to 50% were born in Mauritius [...] However, from 1870 to 1875, this percentage dropped to 10%." <sup>30</sup> Moreover, Rodrigues seems to have missed out altogether on Indian emigration and Indentured Labour in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1962, the first official Census that allowed individuals to declare their belonging to a community, indicated that of a total population of 18,333 inhabitants, 117 deemed themselves to be Hindus and 378 Chinese.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, early Indian and Chinese emigrants to Rodrigues had blended well with the Creole Mass through intermarriage. Early Chinese and Indian settlers were actively engaged in Commerce and Trade, a "system of barter and credit [that was] all one-sided", according to Bertuchi. For example, Acacia seeds, collected and used for this barter, were exchanged against the necessities of life. <sup>32</sup> While the arriving Mohammedans retained their religion, North-Coombes explains that "most of the Chinese have now embraced Christianity, either as Anglicans or as Roman Catholics, and most of them now regard themselves as Rodriguans. Many of them have married native Rodriguans and live very happily with them." <sup>33</sup>

### 3. EDUCATION

The role of the Catholic, Anglican, or other Christian, Churches was significant in moulding the population of Rodrigues into an entity. Though not always unified at the start, the population is now showing less signs of communalism than Mauritius. Dupon warns us, though, to look for divergences and nuances:

*"The relative homogeneity of the population has not, for all that, excluded nuances. Fr. François remarked in 1862: "The population is divided into two perfectly distinct classes: the indigenous people or farmers, scattered here and there, can be numbered at 400 over the spread of the Mountain, and the fishermen who have mostly come from Mauritius and work for about twenty small bosses, small mulattoes or blacks; the latter number about 300 and live on the coast." <sup>34</sup>*

According to the first Catholic priest, Fr. F. Thevaux, 1850, some 11 years after the Abolition of Slavery had been announced in Rodrigues, there were 350 non-baptised individuals, and a hundred 'Catholic' Mauritians who had come to trade in salt fish. <sup>35</sup> In his Chapter, 'The Churches and the Schools', Alfred North-Coombes has adequately discussed the contribution of Churches (Catholic and Anglican, to begin with) to this 'brassage' of the Rodriguan population. <sup>36</sup> The role of Father Thevaux in assuaging the jealousy and animosity of the "twenty or so master fishermen, who ran the fisheries all around the coast," cannot be overstressed. Several 'Rouge' inhabitants we spoke to, stressed the vital contribution of the Catholic Church to the development of schools and colleges. In 1843, a former court usher, Mr. Christopher Mann, and Mrs. Henderson, the wife of the Brigadier of Police, were the only teachers. By 1866, a school-master and a school-mistress had been appointed. <sup>37</sup> From October 1866 to August 1867, Father Frédéric Muylhe, a Belgian priest, ran the Government school but insisted on 'Catholic prayers being said at the start and at the end of the day. Little wonder that he was recalled to Mauritius, after causing much conflict with the authorities. In September 1869, Fr. Emile Hilaire became the first 'curé' of Rodrigues and greatly developed the Parish of St. Gabriel. <sup>38</sup> From then on, schools began to flourish; the Church of England College of St. Barnabas and the Catholic College of St. Louis were the culmination of much hard work, when they were registered on 13 December, 1961 and 12 April, 1962 respectively, before merging to become the Rodrigues College. Prior to the creation of St. Barnabas and St. Louis Colleges, young Rodriguans had to do their secondary schooling in Mauritius. Above all, what

the Christian Churches did was to promote education for *all* Rodriguans, irrespective of colour or creed, thereby working towards greater homogeneity and interculturalism among the people.

Over the years, a small Protestant/Anglican community had emerged. As early as August 1876, Anglicans petitioned the Mauritian Government for a clergyman to be sent to Rodrigues. Early Anglican families included such *métis* as the Waterstones, Vandorous, Bennetts and Capdors, among others.<sup>39</sup> Some had been descendants of British officers; others still were shipwrecked and decided to stay on the island, such as William Vandorous. One or two came as clergymen, as was the case with William Waterstone and C.A. Capdor, in 1881.<sup>40</sup> Bishop Peter Royston visited Rodrigues in 1881, and afterwards, a catechist, Edward Francis, was sent in March 1883, to be followed, in March 1886, by Pierre Edmé Gellé who had been a missionary in Madagascar.<sup>41</sup> What is apparent from any sojourn in Rodrigues today is that 'Montagnards' and 'Rouges', and 'Anglicans', other Christians, and Catholics cohabit in peaceful harmony; hence, religion has been more of 'cement', than a source of disunity, in Rodrigues between classes and communities. As for 'nuances' and 'hidden prejudices', these are only detectable to the sharp-eyed observer, such as Dupon who comments: "Aujourd'hui encore, les éléments asiatiques mis à part, de subtiles nuances distinguent les Rodriguais et d'une façon générale, les plus clairs d'entre eux, de fait souvent pêcheurs, qui allient parfois les yeux bleus de quelque ancêtre picard à une peau bien pigmentée, professent un amical mépris à l'endroit des plus sombres, ceux de l'intérieur [...]"<sup>42</sup> And, while nowadays habitations of both groups show a remarkable similarity, when Bertuchi visited the island in the 1920s, he noticed that some of the inhabitants' houses were made of vacoas, acacia poles and latanier palm leaves, while "the more prosperous construct[ed] their houses entirely of wood." These had wooden floors, which became the fashion, on account of the Rodriguans' passion for dancing.<sup>43</sup> For all the homogenization sought and achieved through religion, and the democratic ideals of some of the people, the scars of slavery remained in the early colonization period even if slaves, according to individuals spoken to during the research trip, were well treated by such owners as Marragon and Séraphine Pipon. In fact, Marragon was so kind to his workers that Rochetaing "complained bitterly about Marragon's attitude and the lawlessness of his run-away slaves."<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. PRESENT DESCENDANTS OF EARLY 'WHITE' OR *MÉTIS* SETTLERS IN RODRIGUES

A number of structured interviews were conducted in Rodrigues and will be analysed separately and summarized in Chapter 7. In addition, during a research trip, a number of descendants of early settlers were spoken to in order to determine: (a) How their ancestors and they saw Rodriguan society in the past and today? (b) What information they could shed on the 'Coloured Population' in the nineteenth century and at present? (c) Whether they felt that slavery and its abolition had left an indelible mark on Rodriguan customs and lifestyles? The individuals interviewed in this context will be referred to as 'X., Y., Z.'

##### 4.1. A member of the Ithier family

The Ithiers came to Rodrigues from Mauritius, and it is likely that the first Ithier to do so was Victor, who accompanied Beyts on the *Hattonbum* which arrived at Port Mathurin on 19 August, 1888, after an unusually long passage of 19 days.<sup>45</sup> The speaker [hereafter X.] stressed that his great-grandfather may have come from Brittany, and was the father of Jean-Baptiste Ithier, who married Miss Eva Hombrasing. They had thirteen children. Whilst the ancestor [Victor] is said to have been a sea captain, Jean-Baptiste Ithier had settled on a concession of 14/15 *arpents* at *La Ferme*,<sup>46</sup> where the family still owns land today. X., the interviewed person, pointed out that his own father was a pastoralist and agriculturalist who owned a farm called 'La Ferme Piments' at *La Ferme*, land which, on his father's death in 1976, was divided between his children whom he had by a Miss Meunier - another very common 'Rouge' name in Rodrigues. The Ithier family, from Jean-Baptiste onwards, grew such crops as maize, haricots, vegetables, as well as keeping cattle. They originally had, in their employ, descendants of previous slaves, all freed since the family did not settle at *La Ferme* until the 1880s.

A brother of Jean-Baptiste's, Bonnet Ithier, left for Mauritius early on and settled in the Flacq District; he is buried at St. Julien Cemetery. There is a 'Camp Ithier' in the vicinity of Flacq/Trou d'Eau Douce, that is said by X. to be connected with the Rodriguan branch of the

Ithiers. Some of Jean-Baptiste's daughters were well-educated and became teachers at the local *La Ferme* primary school, but the more common practice, in olden days, was to encourage children to abandon their primary schooling to work on the farms, tending to the crops and animals. This was the case for the individual interviewed. There were no *débouchés* for students other than work, and few could go to Mauritius to pursue their studies. The Ithiers are also reported to have rented extra Government land in the days of Jean-Baptiste Ithier, to grow additional crops which were transported to Mauritius for sale. In Mauritius, it is likely that the Ithiers owned land in the Beau-Bassin, as well as the Flacq Districts. Large 'White/Coloured' families were the order of the day; the interviewee's father also had 13 children, as had his father before him.

X. also pointed out that, at the time of his grandfather and father (born in 1912, he died in 1976), one tended to marry other 'White' individuals, i.e. intermarry; for example, of the five daughters of Jean-Baptiste's, two married Ithier cousins, one a Roussety, another married an Albert, and so on. 'Mulâtres', he regarded as pejorative, and despite X. acknowledging the existence of cohabitation with 'darker' women, he stressed that a 'mésalliance' was, at the time of Jean-Baptiste, considered taboo. Such pejorative terms as 'Mozambique' and 'Chevrette grillée' were used, in the old days, for the 'Montagnards', but are no longer in common usage. At *La Ferme*, the 'White' families have always been the: Roussety, Ithier, Meunier, Bouton, Allas families, among others, all agriculturalists. Unable to travel to Mauritius for their secondary education such families had their children taught privately or publicly until the end of the primary schooling. Many members of the Ithier family, in the early twentieth century, knew how to read and write from an early age - perhaps because they were taught by their elders, notably aunts of the interviewee. The Church also fostered education among the families.

As for the descendants of freed slaves, they were treated as domestics, given the right to build their own homes on the family's land, as well as grow their own vegetables. Because 'White/Coloured' families were fond of food, domestics were hired to prepare copious meals and to work in the fields, and were remunerated per day's work. They were not looked upon as inferiors, nor were they exploited. All Ithiers owned various-sized plots and used workers who were descendants of slaves, but these were well treated. Slavery has, in the interviewee's viewpoint, left little impact on the psyche of the Rodriguan population today.

Emigration to Mauritius has already been referred to. The interviewee's parents left for Mauritius, with their youngest daughter, and died there. Other Ithiers have emigrated to Australia (mainly Melbourne), while a number remained at *La Ferme*. The lack of good positions and the attractions of Mauritius and Australia are seen by the interviewee as reasons for this; he himself spent over twenty years in France. A niece of the interviewee is living in Malvern, Victoria, Australia as is her father. So it is that the lure of distant climes was too strong for even the most reasonably comfortable pastoralist families of Rodrigues. This constitutes a change, since Bertuchi observed, in the 1920s, that Rodriguans were "quite averse to emigration [...] Not all the tales of a thousand Eldorados will make leave their little isle." <sup>47</sup>

#### 4.2. A member of the Gontran[d] family [whom we shall call Y.]

Y. is a former teacher and a highly respected member of the Port Mathurin community, a writer and local historian. Interviewed at his house, he stressed the importance of Rodriguan 'séga' and accordion music as a unifying factor that was inherited from both slavery and French colonists. Explaining who the 'Gens de la Montagne' or 'Zhabitants' were, he indicated that many freed slaves were offered the opportunity to return to Mauritius, but that they refused, preferring to squat on some high lands. Mme Pipon's slaves [Séraphine Pipon, nee Marragon] were reportedly in that position, but chose to stay on *Jardin Mamzelle*, after her departure, cultivating maize and manioc, and living in huts. The terms used for descendants of slaves, 'Zhabitants' and 'Montagnards' or even 'Noirs', Y. sees as not pejorative, while the 'Whites' were described as 'Zens la Kotte', 'Café au lait' or 'Mulâtres, the latter being a more offensive appellation. 'Bène Mozambiques' was not used in a 'nasty' way, to begin with, but became pejorative. 'Zens la kotte' were originally fishermen or marine carpenters.

Some areas were exclusively 'White', such as sections of Port Mathurin, but many were mixed, for example Oyster Bay or Rivière Cocos and Anse Mourouk. The Catholic [and to a lesser extent, the Anglican] Church is perceived by Y. as having cemented the population, by creating

primary schools open to all, and through other forms of education, music and French. Catholic priests are said to have banned Kreol, at one time, from the Church, and Fr. Thevaux's role is said by Y. to have been crucial in developing education and in the spread of Christianity. Some 'Gens clairs' married one another, but many men were tempted by cohabitation and by 'Sega Tambours' in the hills, which were decried by the Church, because of ensuing rampaging immorality and the births of illegitimate children. Hence, priests kept a watchful eye, and 'White' men became more secretive. Yet, all along, families, who were of 'café au lait' complexion, thought it unacceptable for their young people to marry outside their community, an indication that prejudices did exist in the nineteenth century, according to Y.

Y.'s ancestors, the Gontrans [also spelt Gontrands] came from Brittany, *via* Mauritius. Ferdinand Gontrand, the ancestor, arrived with Father Hilaire in September 1869, when the latter took up his post as the first *curé* of Rodrigues, in what became a parish of the Diocese of Port Louis.<sup>48</sup> When he left Rodrigues for good in September 1880, Fr. Hilaire donated his properties to Ferdinand Gontrand; no title deed had been issued when the land was surveyed in 1878.<sup>49</sup> The Gontrands continued to occupy the land, known even today as 'Concession Gontrand', until an instrument of acquisition was granted on 13 September, 1894, by the Registrar General's Department of Mauritius, to Mr. Ferdinand Gontrand and his heirs.<sup>50</sup> Y.'s father saw himself as being of Breton origins, but Ferdinand Gontrand married Palmyre Colette, a *métisse* of Mozambique origins, with whom he begat 12 children, 8 boys and 4 daughters - large 'White' families being the order of the day at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the sons, Elysée, fought at the Battle of the Marne for the British in World War I.

The 'Zens de la Kotte' had money, being mainly owners of fisheries. Cohabitation, started by 'Ségas Tambours', led to many illegitimate children being born out of wedlock and outside the community, but Y. stressed that they were recognized and accepted by their fathers. 'Rouges', he explained, came from the fact that 'Café au lait' men would go fishing and be scorched by the sun. The Catholic priests practised discrimination in the 1890s, so the story went, when the front benches were all allocated in Church to the 'Rouges'. Illegitimate children were baptised on Fridays and given the names of their fathers to avoid future incestuous relationships, likely on a small island. Many descendants of 'White' settlers went off to fight in the First World War (1914-1918), while Y.'s father took part in World War II. Several Gontrands continued to live at St. Gabriel, on the 'Gontrand Concession', or 'sous le vent', as it was known. Yet, others had fishing posts at *Anse Baleine*, where they also bred goats.

The Gontrand children did not go to school until 1906, when a primary establishment was built at Rivière Cocos. At Port Mathurin, where some Gontrands set up fisheries, the girls were educated at home, and it is known that Ferdinand Gontrand, a 'Choir boy' to Fr. Hilaire, had been taught to read and write in the 1870s. Ferdinand died before the First World War, and his wife Palmyre in 1937 - she had been married religiously to him. Their children and descendants were listed by Y. as follows (m: married):

1. Elizène, m. Charles François (7 children)
2. Léonard, m. Yeyette François (8 children)
3. Ferdinand Achille, (born 1907), m. Louise Pierre (7 children)
4. Emile, m. Olivia Raffault of Oyster Bay (8 children)
5. Roger, m. Léonida Allas (9 children)
6. Madeline, m. a Roussety (3 children)
7. Mabelle, m. first an Elysée; then a Meunier (10 children)
8. Fernand, m. Olive Ismaël (of Persian descent) (6 children)
9. Ida, m. Noë Meunier (10 children)
10. Abel, m. Edith Roussety (11 children)
11. and, 12. Elysée and Élie died young.

Intermarriage within the 'Rouges' is illustrated by this, but marriage to *métis* is also brought out. To support such large families, 'White' men had to fish, as well as set up plantations. The son of Elizène, Fernand, acquired land on *Ile aux Chats*, where a little maize was cultivated. The 'Rouges' employed 'black workers' as domestics and labourers, but treated them well, feeding them and allowing them to grow their own crops. Rice was a special treat for all and was served only once a week on Sundays, on account of it having to be imported. Domestics were paid wages on a daily basis, and often workers were given a loan of the masters' boats to go fishing. The 'Montagnards', through the system of 'barter', traded in maize and crops to the shopkeepers (Indians or Chinese) in return for other goods. Y. pointed out that this was very much to the advantage of shopkeepers.

In his youth, Y. stated, slavery was not an issue, nor discussed much. Freed slaves, who came from Mauritius after Abolition in 1839, were fishermen. They lived or survived through work, even though their skills were limited: 'Rouges' later often referred to the work of descendants of slaves as sloppy, and the phrase 'travail Zhabitants' has survived to designate 'unsatisfactory work'. 'Rouges' were not just fishermen and pastoralists; a few were excellent carpenters, as for 'Ton. Bébert Rose', who built some excellent colonial homes at Port Mathurin. Other members of the Rose family had cattle at *Baie du Nord* or *Baie aux Huîtres*, while also repairing and building 'pirogues'.

#### 4.3. A Member of the Castel family (called Z.)

Several members of the Castel family have gained prominence in Rodriguan society; North-Coombes indicated that they arrived in Rodrigues from Mauritius, as *métis*, later than the early settlers. Z. indicated, during the interview, that increasingly, divisions ('cloisons') between communities were disappearing, as the young generation intermarries, so that 'Rouges' and darker-skinned individuals set up homes together. He identified social and economic factors as the chief causes of this, and since the majority of Rodriguans are *métis*, it is not surprising that social prejudices have not survived. He used another expression to describe the 'Montagnards': the 'Gens de la Campagne'. Areas, where non- 'campagnards' are numerous, include: *La Ferme*, Port Mathurin, *Anse aux Anglais*, *Baie aux Huîtres*, *Camp du Roi*.

Trade and Port Mathurin can account for the visible wealth in some areas. Yet, many descendants of freed slaves worked 'under the yoke of early colonialists', namely rich merchants. When they succeeded in freeing themselves from this yoke, they took refuge in the hills, either to become 'their own masters', or to 'lord over others'. However, today, in schools, divisions are not noticeable and a certain 'fellowship' prevails. Workers nowadays share jobs in hand without any reticence, and at a social level, there are few problems. Balls attract people from all communities. In this, the Catholic and Anglican Churches have played a prominent role, the *Centre Carrefour*, run by the Church, attracts all types of persons, although 'Montagnards', often 'pale skinned' but 'disadvantaged', attend more regularly. 'Campagnards' have the legal rights to enjoy fertile lands in the mountains, but they pay a lease - 'bail' - (about Rs 400 per year) that is renewed every so many years (20 years in most cases).

One major source of concern is illiteracy among the 'Campagnards'; many still do not send their children to school, as used to be the case in the past. Others earnestly wish their children to have a good education, but the latter have great difficulties in going to and from school, walking long distances. Since 1990, education has made huge strides, but a criticism that is frequently voiced is: "If Rodrigues were a Hindu colony, the population would be taken better care of." The amount of money spent on libraries by the Mauritian Government is ludicrous; the collections do not allow for project work or research by school children. Hence, Rodriguan adolescents struggle to reach the same standard as their Mauritian counterparts, through no fault of their dedicated teachers. The Kreol language is unanimously accepted by all communities; hence, the fight is won in this respect. It is a strong unifying element. Most children also love French and work hard at it, but they are not as proficient in English as Mauritian children.<sup>51</sup> The previous snobbishness, associated with French, as displayed by 'Rouges' families, is fast disappearing.

For all their willingness to progress, Rodriguan children manifestly lag behind their Mauritian counterparts at secondary level, because of a scarcity of resources, facilities, equipment and funds. Z. underlined the fact that 'Gens de la Campagne' often appear more conscious,

nowadays, of the importance of education than 'Gens Clairs'; the reverse was true in olden days. Rodrigues forms more professionals - e.g. teachers and doctors - than it needs; returning to one's island after University studies is not a common practice. Scholarship winners (Laureates) often stay on abroad; the few doctors who return are not recognized for what they are worth by visiting Mauritian professionals and either feel neglected, or are unable to keep abreast of new techniques. After a while, Z. assumes, they are discouraged.

#### 4.4. Impact of slavery

Slavery, it would appear, has not left an indelible imprint on the psyche or character of descendants of slaves. X., Y. and Z. pointed out that, rarely - if ever - had he heard 'Campagnards' state: "I am a descendant of slaves." Local historians do not dwell on slavery, and no one seems to discuss at length the implications of the 'Truth and Justice Commission'. Artists in Rodrigues even look at slavery with a pinch of salt and have published amusing tales concerning freed slaves, according to Z. As for local politicians, they do not put undue emphasis on communalism or the legacy of slavery. For all that, to a candid observer on a visit, Rodrigues *does* suffer considerably in its present infrastructures (social, physical and educational) <sup>52</sup> from the fact that it has been, and is largely, a 'Creole' island blighted by its past. Would the island lag so far behind, if it had been populated by large numbers of Hindu/Moslem labourers, or indeed 'White' colonists? It is manifest that Rodrigues has missed out on 'Indentured labour' and, hence, it is more than a little neglected. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will take some time to set those reversals right, but the people of Rodrigues remain generally optimistic about their future and are 'grands débrouillards'. The present and the future are of greater concern to them, justifiably, than the past. One of our recommendations, however, is that in the field of Education and literacy, the Government of Mauritius, and of Rodrigues, ought to do more for the island and, by treating it as a special case, we should invest a great deal more in the dependency's educational infrastructures (see Recommendations).

#### 5. RODRIGUES: LANDOWNERSHIP

The Project Teams, working on Projects (a) on 'Land', and (b) on Rodrigues, will present its own separate findings on the two issues. Our concern here is to include a few details about the 'Coloured Population' borrowed from the *Recueil de documents pour servir à l'histoire de Rodrigues* (1969). <sup>53</sup> The list of land concessions on Rodrigues from 1817 to 1871 mentions herein the following individuals of 'Coloured' origins. Reference is to M.N.A. File R/R2. Obvious French 'White' and British names are excluded.

##### Land Concessions

Vol. 24 No.	Names	Dates	Descriptions/sites
68	Germain <u>Legros</u>	29.9.1820	3 sites of 108 <i>Arpents</i> , <i>Anse-aux-Anglais</i> and <i>l'Hermitage</i> .
140	<u>Delaître</u> (substituted to M. Rochetaing who abandoned the place)	14.8.1817	<i>Trois-Ilots</i> , 2 sites of 108 <i>Arpents</i> in Rodrigues.
Vol. 25 No. 100	Dame Avice, wife of <u>Chenard</u>	21.7.1830	A site of 108 <i>Arpents</i> at <i>Anse-aux-Cannes</i> ; 'pêcherie' at <i>Islet-aux-Insectes</i> .
No. 103	Gabriel <u>Bègue</u>	27.8.1829	3 sites totaling 324 <i>Arpents</i> on Rodrigues.

85	Antoine <u>Charles</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 1882 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
86	Albert <u>Haoust</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 1638 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
88	Emma <u>Félicité</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 3333 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
89	George <u>Edouard</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 2935 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
90	Pierre <u>Raffaut</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 4836 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
91	Ozélie <u>Carel</u>	29.6.1866	Plot of 1870 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
111	Marie Rose <u>Portalis</u>	13.10.1866	Plot of 2987 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
112	Marie Aurore Claire <u>Winters</u>	13.10.1866	Plot of 1846 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
141	Charles <u>François</u>	31.7.1867	Plot of 8404 sq. yards, Oyster Bay.
152	Albert <u>Haoust</u> ; Joseph <u>Berton</u> ; Fernand <u>Bonelle</u>	16.9.1867	Plot of 400 acres, Rodrigues.
165	Marie Palmyre <u>François</u>	20.12.1867	Plot of 3863 acres, <i>Trèfle</i> , Rodrigues.

No. Vol. 30	Names	Dates	Descriptions/sites
198	Béline <u>Médecis</u>	18.2.1869	Plot of 2472 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
200	Ozélie <u>Clarel</u>	28.4.1869	Plot of 25 acres, <i>Trèfle</i> , Rodrigues.
201	Ozélie <u>Clarel</u>	28.4.1869	Plot of 60 7/10 acres, <i>Montagne François</i> .
208	Désiré and Ninka <u>Lalande</u>	31.12.1869	Plot of 100 acres, <i>Diamond Bay</i> .
219	Messrs. <u>Télescourt</u> and <u>Lauricourt</u> , Jean Félix	3.5.1871	Plot of 1972 sq.yards, Port Mathurin.
220	<i>Ibid.</i>	3.5.1871	Plot of 3944 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
221	Ernest <u>Allas</u>	3.5.1871	Plot of 937 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.
223	Jean Evenor <u>Meunier</u>	3.5.1871	Plot of 3289 sq. yards, Port Mathurin.

At the M.N.A., one also finds the following details under 'Rodrigues Land Concessions' (1845), *Extracted* from the books 'Domaine', Archives Office, 1845' (TB 6/4).

No. 162, F. 197	<u>Duessy</u> , Wm.	25.1.1821	216 <i>Arpents</i> in <i>Anse East North East</i> .
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Of special interest are the following details concerning the Marragon family:

No. 160, F. 182	Mr. <u>Marragon</u>	29.9.1820	324 <i>Arpents</i> and the 'jouissance' of <i>Îlot aux Fous</i> and <i>Îlot aux Crabes</i> for a fishing establishment.
No. 161, F. 183	Mad <sup>e</sup> <u>Marragon</u>	29.9.1820	216 <i>Arpents</i> at <i>Baie aux Huitres</i> .

In his short introduction to this table, J.-F. Dupon commented: "De 1817 à 1830, les concessions de terres, qui s'ajoutent aux cessions en jouissance des îlots du lagon, sont de 108 arpents (environ 43,2 hectares ou multiples de 108 arpents à l'exception d'un employé du gouvernement (250 arpents)". He adds that small concessions multiplied at Port Mathurin, measuring ½ hectare or 1/10 hectare, which shows a real development of this urban agglomeration.<sup>54</sup> Finally, it is to be noted that on 31 December, 1869, George Jenner, who had replaced Edward Stevens Messiter, as Police Magistrate on 14 May, 1862, received a land concession of 24 6/10 acres at *Bambou*, Rodrigues, while Thomas Morris [John Morris' descendant] was also granted a concession of 15 acres at *Bambou* on 31 December, 1869. In his analysis of the economy of Rodrigues, Dupon observed in 1967:

*"As for lands appropriated, they represent about 1/7<sup>th</sup> of all cultivated land, and if one were to exclude the Catholic Church which, with about 40 hectares, was by far the biggest landowner on the island, and less than 10 owners who had 5 to 10 hectares each, the average property would be well below 2 arpents. The Napoleonic Code, as applied to Mauritius, was partly responsible for this division of land [...]"<sup>55</sup>*

As for the 'squatting system', we leave it to the 'Land' and 'Rodrigues' teams to discuss this at length. One major contributor to legalizing the system was Georges Jenner, Magistrate. North-Coombes explains:

*"As regards land, Jenner, unlike his predecessors, limited the inhabitants' practice of occupying crown lands as they pleased, and succeeded in inducing the Government to take positive action. The result of this was that a number of so-called "squatters" became owners of land on easy terms of payment, though as yet no rent was exacted from those who continued to cultivate crown land on verbal leases." <sup>56</sup>*

Today, the entire system of 'leases' has been developed and legalized; less resentment prevails, and the gap between landowners and 'lease holders' has narrowed.<sup>57</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> *Recueil de documents pour servir à l'histoire de Rodrigues, Mauritius Archives Publications*, No. 10, Port Louis : Coquet, 1969, p. 7.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>3</sup> 'L'île Rodrigues: Expérience de développement d'un milieu tropical dans l'Archipel des Mascareignes', in *Extrait des Annales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Aix*, Tome XLII (1967), p. 10.  
References are to this bound, re-typed, copy - our translation.
- <sup>4</sup> Alfred North-Coombes, *The Island of Rodrigues*, First edition 1971; revised edition 2001 (Mauritius: Book Printing Services Ltd.), p. 56.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61. See also L.J. Paul, *La Police à Rodrigues*, Roche Bois: High Quality, 2000.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55. According to Bertuchi (*The Island of Rodrigues*, London: 1923), Le Gros left his seven slaves in his will (1840) to Louise "dite Le Gros" and his property 'Les Soupirs' to Séraphine Pipon (p. 26).
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58. Raffin gave his name to a spot known today as 'Anse Raffin'.
- <sup>10</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 10 - our translation.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11 - our translation.
- <sup>13</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
- <sup>14</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- <sup>15</sup> G.O. No. 25, dated 15.3.1826, quoted by A. North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- <sup>17</sup> A. Chellin, *Une île et son passé*, Réunion : CRI, 1989, p. 236.
- <sup>18</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 82. In 1845, there were 324 inhabitants of whom 84 were 'White/Coloured'.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- <sup>21</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- <sup>22</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 12. *The Planters and Commercial Gazette* of 19 July, 1877, showed ample prejudice when it said of the 'zhabitants': "It is difficult to shake the inhabitants of Rodrigues from their torpor and nonchalance [...] They are contented to plant the maize and manioc necessary for their own consumption, but besides that, they wish to work neither for themselves, nor for others."
- <sup>23</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 12 - our translation.
- <sup>24</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 271. One of the most eminent 'Coloured' *métis* of Rodrigues in the early days was Blaise Pacy who replaced Marshall as Police Chief; he arrived in December 1843 and was a man "of strict integrity" (*Ibid.*, p. 84).
- <sup>25</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- <sup>27</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>29</sup> A 'Report on Crownland and Forests at Rodrigues' (1880) noted that 103 people had left because "there was no [economic] security for them and their families."
- <sup>30</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 11. *The Planters and Commercial Gazette* of 19 July, 1881, encouraged Mauritian settlers to emigrate: "The population is very limited and the soil rich and fertile, and it can easily be cultivated." By 1883, there were 1,581 inhabitants, and in 1884, 1,636, in 1890, 2,010.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>32</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- <sup>33</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
- <sup>34</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 11 - our translation.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>36</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 22 ff.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227. In July 1881, the Bishop of Mauritius, Mgr. Peter Royston, celebrated at least 14 baptisms; the *Planters and Commercial Gazette* reported that one of the children of the pilot at Port Mathurin, M. Vandorous, took the name *Euryalus*, in memory of the ship that had brought Sir Napier Broome and Lady Barker, in June 1881, to Rodrigues (15.7.1881). The school at St. Gabriel opened in 1881.
- <sup>39</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242. The first full-time official Anglican priest in charge of the Parish of St. Barnabas was J. W. Courtes Lavers from 26.7.1903 to 29.2.1908.
- <sup>42</sup> Dupon, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- <sup>43</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- <sup>44</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- <sup>45</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
- <sup>46</sup> *La Ferme* was developed as from 1890.
- <sup>47</sup> Bertuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- <sup>48</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>51</sup> The first scholarships to enable young Rodriguans to attend secondary schools in Mauritius were offered in 1938, as suggested by Le Roy.

<sup>52</sup> A report by A. Boucherat on 31 May, 1886, deplored the fact that: "During the bad season, December to April, Rodrigues is literally shut out from the rest of the civilized world. Hope something will be done to change this state of affairs." Thankfully, the network of roads is now much improved and adequate.

<sup>53</sup> Edited by J.F. Dupon, *Mauritius Archives Publications*, No. 10, Port Louis: Coquet, 1969.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>55</sup> Dupon, *L'Île Rodrigues* [...], p. 15 - our translation.

<sup>56</sup> North-Coombes, *op. cit.*, p. 96. See also Dupon, *L'Île Rodrigues*, p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> In 1885, writing in the *Planters and Commercial Gazette* (21.5.1885), a 'Gentleman' deplored the 'barter system' and proclaimed: "The unfortunate small cultivators and producers of the island must be delivered from the chains of a monopoly which amounts to absolute tyranny."

# SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACIES IN RODRIGUES

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## INTRODUCTION

This report is based essentially on the analysis of fieldnotes and oral interviews which were conducted during field research in Rodrigues in 2010. Fieldwork was carried out in the context of the Oral History of Descendants of Slaves Project commissioned by the TJC. This report should therefore be read in conjunction with the Oral History Project. This report is based on a judgement sample of eight respondents that is equivalent to half of the testimonies collected.

The transcripts were analysed in line with the objectives of this research. Relevant extracts of informants' testimonies are included in support of the analysis. These extracts are in the language used in the interviews followed by a translation in English.

This document should be seen as a complement to the information provided in other reports with the aim of building a comprehensive picture of the impact of slavery in Rodrigues.

The history of island remains unknown to many people (including Mauritians and Rodriguans), with Mauritian History taking precedence over that of Rodrigues. This report aims at adding to our knowledge of slavery, its sequels and legacies in contemporary Rodrigues.

In this respect, this document focuses on the impact of slavery on contemporary Rodriguan society.

## SLAVERY IN RODRIGUES

Agriculture and fishing were high-intensity in terms of human labour. Hence, when the colonisers settled, they introduced slaves as domestic and agricultural labourers. The slaves were first introduced under the French colonisation. Berthelot (2002, p. 65) wrote that:

*"[...] Le doc no. 16 datant de 1769 décrit la colonie comme étant composée d'un commandant et sa famille, de son gendre M. De Julienne, d'un chirurgien, un caporal et d'un groupe de 'noirs' [originaires de Madagascar ou des Indes] esclaves de la compagnie auxquels se joignent quelques libres [...]"*

(Eng. trans: the document No. 16 dating to 1769 describes the colony as composed of a commander and his family, of his son-in-law, Mr. De Julienne, a surgeon, a corporal and of a group of 'blacks' [natives of Madagascar or India] slaves of the Company as well as some freed).

Since there were no sugar plantations in Rodrigues, during interviews, respondents stated that the slaves in Rodrigues were agricultural labourers and breeders, they 'in aranz zot ti lakaz nourri zot zanimu'<sup>1</sup> (Eng. rans. Built sheds and reared animals) and were plito konsidere kom domestik<sup>2</sup> (Eng. rarns. Were considered as domestic workers). Their statement is sustained by historians who wrote that the 'Blacks' in Rodrigues were planters and breeders.<sup>3</sup>

The slaves outnumbered the *Colons* as Berthelot (2002, p. 6) explains; in August 1767, there were 5 slaves and in November 1767, 7 slaves and 16 free Indians were recorded. The slaves' experiences in Rodrigues differed from the practice of slavery in other colonies including Mauritius:

*"[...] mai esklav la li pa esklav ensener...ti 1 esklav mai zot ti trait zot esklav difereramen...nou p dir esklavaz ti bien e bel presen dan rodrigues osi mai li pa ti mem form ki esklavaz a moris ou a madagascar ou a la reunion [...]"*<sup>4</sup>

(Eng. trans: But the slaves were not chained [...] there were slaves but were treated differently [...] we saying that slaves were also present in Rodrigues but it was not of the same nature as slavery in Mauritius or Madagascar or Reunion).

One of the correspondences referred to in Berthelot (2002, p. 8) illustrated that, even if slavery in Rodrigues is perceived as having been mild and rather humane, the slaves experienced oppression and servitude. They were '*des Noirs brutes sans vices ; il sera facile de les soumettre au travail*

*nécessaire*' (Eng. trans. Brute Blacks without flaws; it will be easy to subject them to the necessary work).

Indeed, they were governed by the *Code Noir*, 1723, that explicitly objectified them as the property of their masters. The slaves were not human beings and thus did not have any human rights. The latter, the Freed population and Coloured People, did not enjoy the same status and privileges as the *Colons* who were the only Citizens.

The correspondences cited by the author also revealed that, although in the oral interviews, the slaves were conceived as enjoying freedom of movement and as not being enchained, yet, they were not free to move all over the place and sometimes they even wore chains, as illustrated in the extract below:

*"[...] Les Noirs du citoyen Gauthier toujours marrons, ayant rencontré un Noir et deux négresses du citoyen Rochetaing aux environs de son habitation ont entraîné avec eux le Noir, après avoir ôté un collier que son maître lui avait fait mettre : les deux négresses qui avaient aussi des fers, n'ayant pu être délivrées, ils les ont renvoyées de peur que la lenteur de leur marche ne les fît prendre [...]"*

(Eng. trans: The Blacks of Citizen Gauthier always maroon, having met a Black and two Negroes of Citizen Rochetaing in the whereabouts of his property hauled the Black with them after removing the collar which his master made him wear: the two negroes who had chains as well, not having been able to be freed, they sent them back for fear that because of their slowness, they would be caught).

What they conceived as freedom of movement was, in fact, a form of maroonage or vagrancy, although for most of the informants, there were no maroon slaves or 'vagrant slaves' in Rodrigues. Maroonage on the island was different compared to Mauritius in that the maroons did not hurl themselves by hurling themselves off a mountain or a cliff and it was rather similar to vagrancy. The slaves were vagrant for a few days and then came back.

The origins of the local popular term *esklav libre* (Eng. trans. Free Slaves) is rooted in this common perception that in Rodrigues there were 'free slaves'. They were free in the sense that they were not physically enchained. Nonetheless, they were slaves because they were mentally enchained and legally, as per the *Code Noir*, they were the property of their masters. Hence, by Law, they were slaves and mentally, they internalised their slave status.

*«[...] esklav zot ban anglai in amen zot dan 1 bato apar e ler zon desan zon zot de lamain lib zot de lipied lib sa v dir dan moris ena dimun in vin avek la sen dan la mein [...]"<sup>5</sup>*

(Eng. trans: slaves whom the British brought them in a separate boat when they landed, had both their hands free, both feet were free which means in Mauritius, there are people who arrived with their hands chained)".

*«[...] wi parski tou nwar a lepok dapre listwar tou person de la ras noir eter esklav parski ti enan 1 kod nwar ki dapre listwar dir nou...toute person non ras blans noir eter esklav [...]"<sup>6</sup>*

(Eng. trans: yes because in the past according to History, all people belonging to the Black race were slaves because there was a Black Code that, according to history, tells us...all people that are not of the White race Blacks are slaves)".

*«[...] oun dir mwa ban esklav ti vin lib non ? Wi exactemen; ek ki zot ti melnaz ek ban zot pa ti ensene? non non zot pa ti ensene [...]"<sup>7</sup>*

(Eng. trans: you told me the slaves arrived free ? yes exactly, did they mix and they were not enchained? No, no, they were not enchained)".

This popular perception of 'free slaves' might be consequential to the fact that Rodriguans do not seem to distinguish between the 'Blacks' who arrived as slaves and those that arrived as Liberated Africans after the abolition of slavery in 1835 (and in 1839 in Rodrigues). In keeping with historians, after the death of Marragon in 1826 and until 1843, the island was abandoned without any administration, and hence there are not records of the number of Liberated Africans who landed during this period.

In conformity with Berthelot (2002) and the testimonies gathered, vagrancy was the main cause of social disorder on the island and underpinned the tensions between Marragon and the other *colons* especially Rochetaing and Gauthier. There were hostilities between the *colons* and Marragon because of a lack of harmony, and the former considered that the latter treated the slaves too humanely and was too lenient.

The respondents such as Ben represented Marragon as a *bon maître* (Eng. trans. Good Slave-Master) who treated his slaves humanely, compared to the other local masters, and especially Rochetaing and Gauthier who were represented as Cruel Slave-Masters North-Coombes (1971, p.59) supported these representations:

*"[...] things did not go smoothly between Rochetaing and Marragon. Rochetaing complained bitterly about Marragon's attitude and the lawlessness of his runaway slaves. He says Marragon grew manioc to feed the cattle which he sold to the British and that his slaves appeared to have been brought to Rodrigues only 'to be fattened [...] later Rochetaing petitioned the authorities to remove him on the grounds of old age [...]"*.

In instances of maroonage, the Article 31 of the *Code Noire* stipulated that the slave who went maroon for one month had an ear cut and a shoulder marked with a Fleur de Lys. If the slave went maroon a second time, he/she had a hallow of the knee cut and the other elbow marked with a Fleur de Lys. The third time, it was death penalty.

Philibert Marragon, with his wife settled on the island as Civil Agent of the French Government. He officially administered the island until the French ceded the country to the British. After the Lieutenant-Colonel Henry S. Keating took possession of the island in August 1809, Marragon swore an oath of allegiance to the British and, in 1810, he was promoted Major. From 1810 to 1820, he unofficially administered the island.<sup>8</sup>

During British colonisation, even if slavery was proclaimed illegal since 1807 in all British colonies, more slaves were introduced to Mauritius. Berthelot (2002, pp.14-17) recorded that on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1809 there were 41 slaves of whom seven belonged to Le Gros and more than 20 to Marragon. The Indians were repatriated to Bombay. In 1826, there were 20 Europeans, 3 Freed and 100 Slaves (49 men and 28 women) on the island. These figures indicate an increase of 59% slaves in 17 years, as a result of births and the introduction of new slaves. In 1838, at the abolition of slavery, the number of apprentices and the total population amounted to 127 and 300 respectively.<sup>9</sup>

The names of the slave-masters are still present in the collective memory of the Rodriguans. It seems that the local population keep alive the memory of the *Colons* rather than that of the slaves.

The local residents have a high respect for Maragon especially. It is believed that he was buried with his slaves, but only his grave was renovated and a monument erected in his memory. The probable location of the tomb of the slaves is marked with stones. No archaeological digging was undertaken to find out whether his slaves were indeed buried with him.

However, given that Colonial Rules forbade slaves to be buried in a cemetery and most of all, not with their master, in a Whites' cemetery, it is most likely, as mentioned by Rosange, that the slaves were buried in an old cemetery named by the elders *Montagn Simtier* (Eng. trans. Cemetery Mountain) located near Union. An archaeological survey has to be carried out to ascertain whether this potential heritage site can be listed as national heritage.

One of the reasons why the Rodriguans perpetuate the legacy and memory of the slave-masters might be that slavery was not as harsh and cruel as in the other islands of the Mascarenes. The

slaves were not tortured and did not want to be emancipated. Another reason might be that there is no history of maroonage on the island, as in metropolitan Mauritius, and there are no 'slave hero' stories. Consequently, there are no myths, legends and local history of resistance with which the Rodriguans can identify.

## POST-INDEPENDENCE

The pre-and post-Independence period are still living memories in Rodrigues for various reasons. Firstly, it was a key historical moment that had a major impact on the socio-political relationships with Mauritius. Secondly, Rodrigues was against Independence and pressed her case to remain a British colony. This political choice already indicated divergent political directions and the willingness of Rodriguans that their country be considered as a separate entity from its sister island. This aspiration for autonomy is at the core of political debates even now. Thirdly, the fact that the Rodriguans were discarded from the Colonial Assembly debates on the Constitution of 1958 was a sign of the long marginalisation of the island. Fourthly, this period correlates with the emergence of a Rodriguan consciousness and the building of Rodriguan national identity.

The historical events associated with Independence are still alive in the Rodriguan collective memory. The local population irrespective of the religio-ethnic affiliation identify with their local History. This shared History is the founding-stone of this strong and deeply rooted Rodriguan consciousness. The testimonies uncovered a common perception and feeling that Rodriguans have historically been ostracised and that their island has been neglected, marginalised and kept in an underdeveloped State by the British Colonial Government and, subsequently by the various Mauritian Governments.

Ben and Noel testified that in 1967, Rodriguans voted for the PMSD. Guy Olivry and Clément Rousty gathered 96% of the votes<sup>10</sup>. In 1968, they protested against Independence and were pro-PMSD, as they believed in the Party's propaganda that Independence would lead to Hindu hegemony to the detriment of the 'Creoles' and General Population category. They claimed that if the Indo-Mauritians came to power, in other words, if the Labour Party won the elections, English and French would be removed from academic schools, and they would close the Catholic Churches. On the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1969, the national flag was raised in Rodrigues.

Testimonies and historiographies stress the fact that from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rodrigues was chiefly a land of exile. Most probably, because of its spatial characteristics, and particularly because of its remoteness, the country was conceived as an ideal 'refugee land'.

Even if, on the one hand, the island's climatic conditions, topography and geographical location and isolation did not deter the 'refugees', on the other hand, because of these natural characteristics, Rodrigues was, for most of the time, uninhabited and occasionally a land of temporary settlement. It was, for a long time, considered as being uninhabitable.

The various unfruitful colonising attempts were factors that heralded the obstacles to the country's development. Despite the fact that these natural and environmental features preserved and protected the island from external influences, they deterred the inflow of external investment that hampered its economic development.

Its natural landscape and localisation, combined with the national politico-economic orientations of the Republic, kept the island, for a long time, in a state of dependency and underdevelopment. It is only at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the economy of the island underwent fundamental changes with Tourism and particularly Eco-Tourism becoming a third economic pillar.

Nevertheless, the country is still largely economically dependent on metropolitan Mauritius, and compared to Mauritius, Rodrigues is poor economically. The United Nations Development Programme (2009) reported that the incidence of poverty in the land (3.6%) is well above the national average (9.7%). Indeed, as per the Central Statistics Office (2001, p. 250) data, the average household income in Rodrigues is 6,622 rupees, while in Mauritius, the average is 10,323 rupees, a difference of 3,701 rupees.

It is a vulnerable small developing island with, as UNDP reported a low relative development index, facing problems of inadequate access to clean, drinkable water and disposal of solid water that do not fully comply with the norms of the World Health Organisation. In terms of energy supply, the Organisation has stated that the island is still greatly dependent on imports of fossil fuel.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES (See Table 1)

Rodrigues, like almost all former slave colonies, is a land of immigration that was built on the Diasporic movements of Africans, Europeans, Chinese and Indians during the Colonial and Post-Colonial era. Although from an etic perspective, Rodriguan society is perceived as homogenous because of the predominance of African and Malagasy Diasporas, from an emic stand, ethnic variations can be observed based on phenotype and socio-economic differences.

In line with what Jean Michel Jauze asserts (1998), compared to the other islands constituting the Mascarenes, Rodrigues is *la plus Créole des trois îles* (Eng. trans. The most Creole of the tree islands) because she presents *les traits les moins altérés de cette culture Créole ancienne* (Eng. trans. Least altered traits of this ancient Creole culture).

On the one hand, colonialism in Rodrigues was not of the same nature as in its sister island, since the former experienced different degrees of domination, 'Europeanisation' and experiences of settlement and cultural patterns. On the other hand, its remoteness and its isolation from the main inter-continental migratory movement from Europe and India, until the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, protected the island from the impact of modernisation and globalisation. Consequently, Rodrigues was, for a long time, a closed system, to some degree self-sufficient, and thus did not undergo the aversive processes of acculturation and deculturation.

The ethnic stratification of Rodriguan society differs from that of Mauritian society because of differing migratory histories. The present local cosmopolitan composition is the product, and the window, of the island's peculiar settlement History.

The local population can be divided into four ethnic groups namely: 'Black' Rodriguans, 'Mulattoes', Chinese and Asians (Muslims and Indians). These taxonomic categories are founded on the folk categorisation; in other words, how the Rodriguans categorise themselves.

The Rodriguans of Asian origins (Indians, Muslims and Chinese) are in a minority on the island. As historians have pointed out, the indentured-ship system was not implemented in Rodrigues, and the island was not on the migratory route of the Asians. Jauze (1998) proposes two reasons for the insignificant presence of the Indian Diaspora in Rodrigues despite its proximity to Mauritius. Firstly, there was no massive and constant immigration of Mauritians to Rodrigues and, secondly, the indentured labour system was introduced in the main sugar plantation colonies of the Mascarenes.

Historians date the arrival of the Chinese and Muslims traders on the Rodriguan shores at around the 1890s that coincide with the first exodus of the Chinese immigrants from Mauritius to the African continent and other countries. Consequently, these traders most probably came from Mauritius where they were considered as 'aliens'. Facing racial discrimination and nepotism, they went to another refugee land.

Each ethnic group has peculiar categorical characteristics that function as descriptors and membership markers. These markers play a core role in self-identity and social identity construction that regulate inter-group and outer-group negotiations during social interactions. Religious affiliation, skin colour and ethno-spatial organisation are indicators of the heterogeneity of Rodrigues.

Rodriguan society is born from *métissage* (Eng. trans. Cross-breeding) especially African and European miscegenation. The meeting of these cultures resulted in cultural cross-fertilisation and mixing that constitute contemporary Rodriguan culture.

For Ben, gender imbalances, with the number of women exceeding the number of men, meant that 'White' men had priority over Black men for access to women. For a long time, children born out of illegitimate relationships were baptised on a different day (on Fridays) than the legitimate children (who were baptised on Sundays) and the former were, often, not declared by their biological fathers.

Indeed, the population imbalance between the slaves and the *Colons*, with the former outnumbering the *Colons* and the lack of *Colon* women, might surely have encouraged inter-racial sexual relationships and cross-breeding, even if the *Code Noir* and successive colonial legislations such as the *Code Decaen* forbade such relationships. Although the island was administered by the *Code Noir*, since Rodrigues was isolated from Mauritius, the application of the *Code Noir* was, surely, loose, and it was not applied to the letter.

The interviews revealed with the exception of some instances of cross-breeding, that the 'colour bar' system prevailed on the island after the abolition of slavery and until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The island was divided between the dark-skinned Rodriguans living inland, and the light-skinned people residing along the coast. This division was maintained by endogamous marriage as in the past marriage based on colour was the norm. The light-skinned Rodriguans married within their immediate social network and cousin marriages were common practice.

However, recently, inter-racial mixing has become more frequent and has contributed to the breaking down of these colour barriers and to the emergence of a hybrid phenotype. Socio-economic developments and westernisation have furthered exogamous marriage that subsequently influenced the local macro-system such as the local stratification system and the national identity construction. The local residents consider themselves as Rodriguan Creoles.

As stated by Ben, this shift in marriage patterns results from changes in the social and economic profile of the island. Rodrigues was a self-subsistent agrarian society and by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it gradually entered the free market capitalist system, following the diversification of its economy. The local economy is currently relying on the agricultural sector, the construction sector and the commercial sector that are the main employers, as indicated below.

Capitalism brought a shift in the local occupational pattern from a traditional one, based on diversified foraging, to a more complex one based on the division of labour and technological production. The capitalist mode of production, similarly, led to changes in the local stratification system with the introduction of a more complex social class stratification.

Even though the Rodriguans are more and more dependent on the market economy, arable land is still available, especially in the interior part of the island, and hence most of the *zabitan* continue their farming activities for personal consumption and for sales to supplement their income.

Rodriguan society is becoming more complex, being divided along socio-economic lines (job status, educational achievements and financial ranking) as well as biophysical appearance. Although racial divisions are disappearing, skin-colour is still salient in social interactions. The inflow of Mauritians and foreign settlers is adding to this internal diversity.

Unfortunately, accurate statistics are not available on the number of Mauritians and foreigners residing in Rodrigues. The Central Statistics (2000) provide aggregate data on the number of Mauritians and foreign visitors who number 35,749 and 72 respectively.

Consequently, occupational status and social class are the main criteria in spouse choice, as marriage is conceived as an opportunity of upward socio-economic mobility. As Luc has indicated, socio-economic criteria underpin inter-ethnic marriage. A 'Mulatto' man will marry a 'Black intellectual' woman but not one who is inferior to him. However, an 'intellectual Black' woman will marry a 'Mulatto' who is not as 'intellectual' as her.

In the first instance, Black women achievers represent upward socio-economic mobility and marriage will ensure that the man will climb up the social ladder. In the second instance, for women to marry a light-skinned man is conceived as a social promotion, whether the man is a social achiever or not. This stereotypical perception and conception of Whiteness as being superior to

Blackness is a sequel of slavery, whereby Whiteness is portrayed in positive terms, since it is associated with purity, with to evil, ugliness and failure.

In popular perception, the real slave descendants are the Black Rodriguans living inland, who are farmers and planters. They are also commonly referred to as *zabitan* (Eng. trans. Native). The light-skinned residents are considered as the real descendants of the *Colons* who are pejoratively referred to as *demi kle* (Eng. trans. Half-key) or *Zens la kot* (Eng. trans. Coastal people) and who are fishermen. The local term *demi-kle*, as Ben explained, referred to fair-skinned Rodriguans born out or cross-breeding.

This biophysical categorisation of the local population is substantiated by Jauze (1998, p.20):

*“L’existence de trois phénotypes, les ‘Noirs’ agriculteurs de l’intérieur, les ‘Rouges’ de la côte, pêcheurs en majorité et les ‘Asiatiques’ [Chinois ou Musulmans] commerçants de profession qui constituent de ce fait ‘la couche privilégiée de la société rodriguaise’. La provenance ethnique, l’activité exercée et la répartition spatiale sont intrinsèquement liés. Sous l’action de métissages de plus en plus fréquente un phénotype supplémentaire émerge progressivement.»*

(Eng. trans: The existence of three phenotypes, the 'Black' farmers of the interior, the 'Red' of the coast, fishermen for the majority and the 'Asians' [Chinese or Muslims] traders of profession who constitute the 'privileged group of Rodriguan society'. The ethnic origins, the professional activity and the spatial distribution are intrinsically connected. Following more frequent interbreeding, an additional phenotype appears gradually).

Irrespective of the different ancestral origins, the local residents identify themselves primarily as Rodriguans, because of their strong national identity resulting from a deeply-anchored Rodriguan consciousness. Their secondary identification is to their religious group; either they are Catholics or Muslims or Hindus. In fact, whilst Mauritian, primary identification tends to be to their religio-ethnic community, such an identification process is non-existent in Rodrigues because there are no 'communal' divisions (in the Mauritian sense of the word) in Rodriguan society.

However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new form of social division is emerging, based on political divisions. This socio-political division is threatening social cohesion and unity. Following the General Elections of 2010, many interviewees stated that the metropolitan political system is negatively affecting the local political system, with local politicians adopting the same political behaviour as their Mauritian coreligionists; for example, some mentioned that politicians bought the elections, which implies that corruption has entered Rodriguan society. Patronage, as well, is becoming common practice, especially in the Public Sector. Such practice and limited employment opportunities encourage young Rodriguans to migrate to Mauritius and abroad.

## RELIGION AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

According to Jauze (1998, p. 25), the population's growth from 1871 was fast and constant, and from 1982, it experienced a downward shift. As from 1996, the growth stabilised. At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009, the local population was estimated to be 37,774.<sup>11</sup> Roman Catholicism remains the main religious group, with the majority of the population being of African descent, European descent and of mixed African and European descent. There is a minority of Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists.

Even if Roman Catholicism is the main religion on the island, traditional spiritual practices and customs of Afro-Malagasy origins are still present. These customs are legacies of slaves that have survived and are still perpetuated in parallel to Roman Catholic ones.

In metropolitan Mauritius, these rites and traditional practices are almost extinct for various reasons, such as exposure to a European value system, limited generational transmission and a religious campaign from official religions, mainly Catholics, Hindus and Muslims. In Rodrigues, since the island was, for a long time, a closed and self-sufficient system, to some degree protected from

Eurocentric influences and precepts, these ancestral precepts and traditions have survived and were transmitted to the successive generations.

For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that her elders were practitioners of witchcraft and this knowledge was transmitted to the present generation. Her father was known to be a sorcerer and healer who taught her some practices and rituals that she perpetuates.

Although the Law of 1846 proclaimed these spiritual customs (sorcery and traditional spiritual healing) as illegal, in the popular imagination, they are not conceived as deviant cults. They are overt practices, and all Rodriguans know the names of the *deviner* (Eng. trans. Fortune-tellers) and of the *gueriser* (Eng. trans. healers).

Another traditional practice is traditional medicine that is still deeply-rooted in Rodriguan society. Many Rodriguans adhere to Biomedicine and almost all of them have knowledge of traditional medicine. Some have basic knowledge of the most common herbs and body manipulations whilst others are more knowledgeable in the different healing practices.

The traditional medical system include healing with, firstly, medicinal plants; secondly, body manipulations such as *krake* (Eng. trans. Cracking), *drese* (Eng. trans. Set up) and *frote* (Eng. trans. Rubbing); thirdly *pas* (Eng. trans. Passes) and *mark* (Eng. trans. Marks), and fourthly with magical acts, including prayers and the use of talisman.

All these traditional practices and this knowledge are threatened by occidental medicine, official religious institutions and Eurocentric value systems. Under the impact of globalisation and modernisation, these traditional value systems and cultural systems are undergoing transformations.

For example, following industrialisation, supernatural occurrences like werewolves, *matapan* and other supernatural appearances are rare and disappearing.

One respondent even mentioned that for him, Biomedicine and these traditional practices are not legacies of slavery but rather sequels that hamper modernisation and social progress. For him, these traditions and rituals are like superstitious beliefs that are still present in Rodriguan society, such as the existence of *malmor* (Eng. trans. Vagrant spirits) and other superstitions like placing a broom in-front of the bedroom door at night to chase away evil spirits. The people who perpetuate such superstitious practices are somewhat mentally enslaved people.

Some people perceive these traditions as being inconsistent with modernisation and industrialisation. Based on such perceptions, it can be stipulated that for the latter, they are chains that mentally and psychologically enslave them. This enslavement holds them back and prevents them from seizing opportunities, as they keep them in slavery. For others, they constitute their heritage and are intrinsic to their family origins. They are proud of their heritage on which they construct their Self and social identities.

Part of the island's natural and architectural heritage is already lost with the extinction of animal species (tortoises, Solitary, birds, fish stock) and the destruction of traditional constructions. With the disappearance of these traditions, it is now a component of the local cultural and intangible heritage that is being lost. Therefore, all these traditional forms of knowledge, myths and legends that constitute the local folklore have to be recorded before they go into oblivion. The local cultural and intangible heritage has to be preserved, as it is inherent to the construction of the Rodriguan identity and Nationalism.

## SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

### Ethno-Spatial Organisation

Rodriguans interviewed stated that, after the abolition of slavery and when the *colons* departed from the island, they left their slaves behind and the latter settled on the inland. Historians, such as Berthelot (2002), have corroborated this settlement movement. She reported that, after the abolition of the Apprenticeship System in Rodrigues on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1839, the apprentices left the estates to settle in the inland.

This local internal settlement movement is different to the settlement of the ex-slaves in its sister country. In metropolitan Mauritius, the former slaves left the sugar estates to settle along the coast, since the rural regions were difficult to access and the *Colons* were concentrated in the urbanised part of the island like the Plaine Wilhems (the malaria epidemic, as well, impacted on the residential settlement of the *Colons*). In Rodrigues, the internal migratory movement was reverse; the *Colons* lived on the coast that was more developed, while the inner lands were wooded and not easy to access.

Furthermore, in Rodrigues, there was no *morcellement* movement as in Mauritius but there was a form of ethnic residential segregation based on skin colour (which is an overt sign of ethnic differences), with each group occupying a specific space. This internal settlement movement is seen as a legacy of slavery that forged the contemporary spatial organisation of Rodrigues whereby the 'Black' Rodriguans who are presumably of slave descent still live inland and the fair skinned Rodriguans, presumably descendants of *Colons*, live along the coast. The Rodriguans of Asian, as indicated by Ben, settled in Corail.

It forged the present development of urbanisation on the island and residential development. The houses and retail shops are concentrated in the commercial space of the villages. There are villages separated by expanses of land used as arable land and pasture groundland. There are residential buildings, as well, that are dispersed in between these agglomerations.

Open spaces are still available, and it seems the population enjoys freedom of movement. Fortunately, few plots of land are fenced, and gated residential developments are not, yet, part of the landscape. Rodriguans value open space and this 'natural' lifestyle.

In fact, while in Mauritius buildings are constructed close to one another and people tend to live in apartments, the construction patterns are different in Rodrigues. The residences are individual housing units built on large plots of land and the houses are constructed far from each other.

However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this ethno-spatial residential organisation is undergoing changes. As mentioned earlier, with *Métissage*, colour barriers gradually broke down and, subsequently, this spatial organisation is disappearing.

Information on landowners diverged but a common point came out of the interviews that the present landowners are of slave descent, whilst the other Rodriguans do not live on private land but on State Land.

On one hand, MacDonell testified that two families are the main landowners in the island, namely the Finiss Family of Rodriguan origins and the Malherbe Family of Mauritian origins and there are few private landowners.

The private landowners are, according to Ben and MacDonell, the slaves' descendants whose ancestors received land from their masters when the latter left the country after the abolition of slavery. The slaves passed the land on to their descendants.

On the other hand, Jean Noel stated that land in Rodrigues is largely agricultural State Land. Residential and private land is limited. Christophe also confirmed that the young generations are facing problems buying and/or leasing land for construction. A causal relationship can be drawn between the expansion of construction and the increase in the stock of residential buildings and the difficulties to access residential land.

The Central Statistics Office (2003) estimated that the stock of residential buildings increased by 1,400 or 17.7% between 1990 and 2000. There are approximately 8,651 buildings, with nearly 400 storeyed residential or partly residential constructions. The housing structures and amenities have improved, with most houses constructed in concrete and 85.9% houses connected to piped water network and 94.6% to electricity.

However, some basic amenities are still missing. Sixty-seven percent of the households are served by pit latrines, 3% only with other types of toilet and some do not even have toilet facilities. Fifteen percent do not have a bathroom and 63% still use ash-pits as method of refuse disposal.

It is most probable that after the abolition of slavery and the Apprenticeship System, the freed slaves had access to land, and later on, they were registered as landowners. Whilst in Mauritius, the freed slaves lost their land (either they sold it for a meagre sum of money or were dispossessed of their land, as they did not have land deeds to prove their ownership); in Rodrigues the situation was different.

Indeed, the local residents were foragers and thus were dependent on land for their subsistence. Land was, and still is one of the main natural and income-generating resources (the other being the surrounding sea). They are conscious of the importance of landownership and for generations, they have developed and nurtured a symbiotic relationship with land.

The Rodriguans are not landless, since most of them have access to land. Until now, they have preserved their rights and opportunities to occupy and utilise land through kinship, including the transmission of land rights through inheritance and within families, and land allocation by the State. However, the island is not protected from the current global housing crisis and the economic and financial downturn. Land is the new *or vert* (Eng. trans. Green Gold) and is a luxury asset.

Many Rodriguan landowners are selling their properties to Mauritians and even Europeans of Mauritian nationality<sup>12</sup>. Living in relative poverty, and upward economic mobility being limited on the island, property sales are a means for them to have access to money capital and to vertical mobility. Some Rodriguans view with suspicion the acquisition of local land by non-Rodriguans.

## EMIGRATION OF RODRIGUANS

The emigration of Rodriguans to Mauritius, Australia and other European countries is not a contemporary migratory movement. It dates back to post-Independence, when Sir Gaetan Duval, Leader of the PMSD, encouraged the mass exodus of Mauritian 'Creoles', and particularly 'the Coloured Bourgeoisie', because of lack of employment opportunities, social unrest caused by tensions between the two main ethnic groups (Creoles and Indo-Mauritians) and the riots of 1968. This state psychosis and socio-economic tensions conjointly encouraged the emigration of the 'Coloured Population'.

Employment opportunities were the main reason underlying the emigration of Rodriguans to foreign lands. Dupon (1969) observed a mass departure of young Rodriguans to metropolitan Mauritius and Australia in view of a better and prosperous future.

Young Rodriguans still nourish this perception fuelled by socio-economic conjunctures and limited opportunities of social and economic mobility. As Noel has stated, employment opportunities and Tertiary Education are the main reasons underlying emigration of young Rodriguans. Those who go to University often do not return because they do not find a job in their home country and if they find a job, they are underpaid.

Net migration figures for the island of Rodrigues uncovered gender imbalances, with women who leave the country outnumbering males. For 1983 to 1990, figures indicated that more females (-150) left Rodrigues than males (-100). The 1990-2000 data showed an overrepresentation of women emigrants (-625), while males returned back to their homeland (+19).<sup>13</sup>

Only a rough interpretation of these figures can be provided because of the lack of official disaggregated data on the causes of this emigration of women. Building on Boswell (2006, p.158) social pressures, such as unplanned early pregnancy,<sup>14</sup> and socio-economic inequalities (looking for

a job), are two reasons to come to Mauritius. However, it should be pointed out that these figures included Rodriguans that migrated for educational reasons; to attend Tertiary Institutions.

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

According to Noel, the 'Black' Rodriguans made an effort to send their children to school, while the 'Mulatto' relied on patronage for the children to find a job and, hence, did not motivate them to be academic achievers. Their children could easily find a work in the Marine sector and in the Cable and Wireless (former Mauritius Telecommunication).

The Digest of Educational Statistics (2010) reported a significant improvement at the Higher School Certificate level in Rodrigues and it is probable that the latter continued their Tertiary Education in Mauritius. Unfortunately, enrolment statistics of Rodriguans were not available. (See Table 3)

## FAMILY AND GENDER RELATIONS (See Table 2)

Rodriguan society is at the sub-surface patriarchal, even though, at the surface, it seems matriarchal. As Noel has pointed out, the Rodriguan family is patrilocal since it is considered that it is the role of the father to protect and defend his family. In the inland, particularly, families live on large plots of land and, hence, children tend to build their houses around their fathers' residences. When they get married, they favour extend family patterns.

According to Aurèle, before getting married the future husband should build a house for his future wife. Property ownership is proof that the man will be able to provide for his family and guarantee their security. House ownership can be seen as a rite of passage that functions as proof of manhood.

It is common practice for Rodriguan men to have extra-conjugal relationships. The male interviewees stated that often men go *dan post* (Eng. trans. to post). This expression is used to designate that men go to see their mistress. It is derived from the expression to go 'to the fishing station'. In other words, instead of going fishing, in fact, they go to their mistress's place.

There are various stories surrounding these relationships. One of them is about the belief that mistresses use sorcery *pou gard enn zom* (Eng. trans. keep their lovers). They give the man a concoction to drink; this is named *potion dir wi* (Eng. trans. potion to say yes) to ensure that their lovers 'Say Yes' to all their demands. Hence, the men neither eat nor drink at their mistresses' place for fear of sorcery.

However, it should be pointed out that serial monogamy concerns both men and women, although extra-conjugal relationship is widespread amongst the men.

Mauritians tend to have a negative stereotypical representation of Rodriguan women as having multiple sexual partners and of being of loose character or 'easy girls'. As Boswell (2006, p. 158) has observed, the early sexual life of Rodriguan girls is often attributed to their precocious nature, thus undermining other social and economic inequalities. Such analysis is a primordialising of the sexual behaviours and sexuality of these girls and implies that they are naturally precocious.

The role of women is still conceived in domestic terms since their role is limited to the private sphere of the family. Facing relative poverty, women have no other choice but to work to supplement the family budget. Although more women have entered the public space of work and are active employees, the majority of women are currently housewives as indicated in the statistics below.

*" [...] missier ki bizin amen kas lakaz se inpe sa e en tifi si li al travay se en mover zafer mai heursemen avek ledikasion sa in sanzer e se inpe sa [...]"<sup>15</sup>*

(Eng. trans. The man should bring money homes it is somewhat like that if a girls works it is a bad thing fortunately with education it changed somewhat)."

The gender socialisation of children perpetuates traditional patriarchal values, norms and ideologies of marriage, domesticity and subordination. Girls are socialised in the traditional patriarchal dogma that they should get married and be housewives.

In the past, approximately ten years back, the academic education of Rodriguan girls was not a priority. They were given access to basic education to develop their numeracy and literacy skills sufficiently for them to acquire the basic skills to perform their housewife duties. Even though now more girls have access to education, the educational statistics show that from the first year of the Secondary Cycle (Form 1) up to the fifth year of Secondary Education (Form 5), girls outnumber boys. But, as from Form 5 and at Tertiary Level, boys exceed girls in number. At University Level, there are 50% less girls that continue their Tertiary Studies.

The gender differences at S.C, H.S.C and Tertiary Level might be attributed to various reasons such as low educational achievement of girls and High School dropouts of girls, following teenage pregnancy. To continue their Tertiary Studies, Rodriguans come to Mauritius and young girls and their parents might be reluctant to do so. They might perceive the relocation to Mauritius as too risky and socially unacceptable for a girl.

Furthermore, Tertiary Education is at a considerable cost (University fees, board and lodging, purchase of material and transport costs) and families might not have the financial means to meet these expenses. In such instances, often, the academic education of boys takes precedence over that of girls, to the detriment of the latter.

Statistics for 2000 revealed a substantial increase of 21% in the literacy rate. Literacy increased from 56.5% in 1998 to 68.1% in 2000. The rate for women was slightly higher than that for men with 68.5% for women compared to 67.7% for men. There was no gender disparity for the lower-age groups up to 44 years of age. The disparity was greater for those aged 55 years of age and above (males 3.5% and females 29.5%).

This disparity resulted from gender discrimination in terms of access to academic education. It should be pointed that almost all Rodriguans are literate in French and are numerate, with the exception of the elders who are not as literate as their grandchildren because during their childhood, some of them did not attend school.

Although they did not go to school, they can read and write basic French as they acquired basic literacy skills through informal education, such as training courses provided by the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, almost all Rodriguans speak French. According to Ben, the Church played a core role in the literacy education of the elderly population by providing prayer books that were, and are, in French; people learned to read and write through these books.

**Table 1**  
**Composition of Local Population**

Category	Characteristics	Arrival Period
Rodriguans of African origins ('Black' Rodriguans)	African phenotype. Endogamy and intra-racial marriage long preferred marriage pattern. They are Roman Catholics. They live in the interior land are farmers and herdsman.	Ancestors came during French and British Colonisation.
Rodriguans of European origins (Mulattoes)	Fair-skinned people. Endogamy and intra-racial marriage long preferred marriage pattern. They live along the coast and are fishermen. They are Roman Catholics.	Ancestors came during French and British Colonisation.
Rodriguans of Chinese origins	Chinese phenotype. They are owners of retail shops. They are either Roman Catholics and/or Buddhists.	Arrived in around 1890 as traders.
Rodriguans of Islamic faith	They are owners of retail shops. Their dressing code often acts as marker.	Came as traders, most probably during pre- and post-Independence.
Rodriguans of Indian origins	Usually followers Hinduism.	Most probably during pre- and post-Independence.
Mauritians		Immigrated during the 20 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> centuries.
Europeans		Immigrated during the 20 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> centuries.

**Table 2**  
**Resident Population 12 years of age and over by current activity status and gender for the year 2000**

Gender	Currently Active			Not currently Active		
	Total	Employed	Household Duties	Retired	Studies	Total
Male	9,659	7,831	113	1,028	1,787	3,464
Female	4,846	3,213	6,049	95	1,769	8,711

Source: Central Statistics Office (2001, p. 16)

**Table 3**  
**Residential population, from 2 years of age and over, by educational attainment and gender for the year 2000**

Educational attainment	Male	Female
Nil and Pre-primary	2,584	3,038
Standard I-VI but not passed C.P.E	9,415	9,336
Passed C.P.E	797	607
Forms I-III	1,576	1,626
Forms IV-V but not passed S.C.	1,305	1,448
Passed S.C. or equivalent	940	852
Passed H.S.C. or equivalent	212	183
University degree or equivalent	78	34
Not stated	22	9

Notes: S.C. refers to School Certificate and H.S.C. means High School Certificate  
Source: Central Statistics Office (2001, p. 45)

## CONCLUSION

Slavery has had an impact on the life experiences of the Rodriguans and is still influencing their lives. For those who conceive their descent in positive terms and as a heritage of resistance to oppression, they seized life opportunities for social and economic mobility to improve their lives. Those who conceive their slave ancestry in negative terms, are still mentally and psychologically enslaved. In their perceptions, hard work and low-paid jobs are a modern form of slavery, and refusing this form of enslavement is a means to rebel against the institutions and express one's resentment for the Social Establishment.

Rodriguans still bear the weight of their Colonial History and of their past historical development, and especially their Political History. The present socio-economic situation is the result of years of repression and ostracism from the preceding Governments that maintained the island in a State of underdevelopment. The local population is currently experiencing the triple burden of their past (slave ancestry, Colonial and Post-colonial political orientation and socio-economic poverty) and the current social and economic crisis exacerbates their already vulnerable state.

In their sub-consciousness, the 'Blacks' who belong to the African Diaspora are of slave descent because 'slave blood' flows in their veins, as it flows in the veins of the Africans who were the main source of servile labour. Even if they recognise their slave ancestry, unlike some Mauritians who claim their identification to Africa as their motherland, such identification process is non-existent in Rodrigues. Their identification with their African Diaspora is rather cultural and physiological, and there is no longing for an imaginary motherland.

There is a strong national identity that is the product of groups' self-identification process. The primary identification as Rodriguans is a result of the absence of ethnic group competition, tensions, power struggles and inequalities. For the local residents, Rodrigues is their motherland since it is their native country and that of their immediate elders. Their religious identity and identification as slave descendants are subordinate identities that have meaningful meanings in the construction of Rodriguans self-definition.

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<sup>1</sup> TJC/10/SLC/IN/AA 10/T/AnseQuitor/14August2010, line 140.

<sup>2</sup> TJC/10/SLC/IN/BG 1/T/PortMathurin/10August2010, line 45.

<sup>3</sup> Berthelot (2002, p. 4).

<sup>4</sup> TJC/10/SLC/IN/MM 2/T/MontagneDuSables/10August2010, line 158.

<sup>5</sup> TJC/10/SLC/IN/AA 10/T/AnseQuitor/14August2010, lines 207-209.

<sup>6</sup> TJC/10/SLC/IN/MM 2/T/MontagneDuSables/10August2010, lines 67-72.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, lines 60-63.

<sup>8</sup> Berthelot (2002).

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Appendix 3 for an extract of C. Anderson report on apprentices in the dependencies of Mauritius Island extracted from Dupon (1961, pp. 81-83).

<sup>10</sup> Berthelot (2002, p. 189).

<sup>11</sup> Central Statistics Office (2010).

<sup>12</sup> As at 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011, 28 adverts of land on slaves in Rodrigues were recorded on the website of *L'Express Property*.

<sup>13</sup> Central Statistics Office (2000, p. 49).

<sup>14</sup> As indicated, in 1996, the Family Protection Unit reported that out of 695 live births, 296 were from youths aged 15-24 years of the same age.

<sup>15</sup> TJC/10/SLC/IN/NC 6/T/BassinMartin/12August 2010, lines 135-136.

# HEALTH OF SLAVES AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early times, Rodrigues had the reputation of being a healthy island with a relief and topography that spared it from the epidemics that afflicted Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The plight of Rodrigues on public health matters started deteriorating with the influx of migrants between the two islands and visiting ships during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Epidemic diseases were inadvertently introduced. Later, tuberculosis, as well as water and faecal-borne diseases, became widespread as a result of poor housing and sanitation, and a lack of safe drinking water, exacerbated by rapid population growth in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The staple foods of the Rodriguans were maize and manioc, supplemented with beans, fish (fresh and salted) and livestock produce, with very little fruits and vegetables. They faced famine situations several times due cyclones and droughts, when they survived on sweet potatoes, roots and wild fruits, while they waited for food supplies from Mauritius. In the latter part of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, rice was introduced in the diet, followed by wheat flour (for bread-making). Rum and wine drinking was prevalent. The availability of safe drinking water was always a problem.

Rodriguans have always relied on traditional medicine, namely medicinal plants. The availability of such plants is linked with the terrestrial biodiversity which plays a key role in the livelihoods of many people. Perception of mistrust in the medical service provided by Mauritian doctors prevailed through a lack of understanding or the indifference to the population. A survey (1994) on the traditional pharmacopoeia in Rodrigues, has identified 193 medicinal plants currently used by the population of Rodrigues to treat some 93 diseases.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) in Rodrigues were generally lower than those in Mauritius, due to the multiple epidemics (particularly malaria) that afflicted the latter. In those days, Rodrigues was relatively spared of the scourges, although water and sanitation problems perpetuated high morbidity and mortality affecting mostly children. This trend was reversed after the mid 1950s, when IMR in Mauritius decreased dramatically, mainly due to the eradication of malaria and other public health measures. IMRs, as well as the nutritional status of children on both islands, are now very close.

During the last three decades, the aetiology of diseases has shifted from those of typical infectious and parasitic origin, to diseases more related to the lifestyle just as in Mauritius. The pattern now is predominantly that of heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes and obesity. This is linked to a changing lifestyle, such as overconsumption and dietary imbalance, decreasing physical exercise level and alcoholism, more or less reflecting the health situation in Mauritius.

Our recommendations are the same as for Mauritius. However, the geographical, economic, social and cultural specificities of Rodrigues should be taken into consideration in the formulation of a Health Policy.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the heart of the Indian Ocean, at latitude 19°43' S and longitude 63°25' E, Rodrigues Island stretches over a surface area of 108 square km. About 650 km to the North-East of Mauritius, it is the part of Africa that is closest to Australia. Born from volcanic activity between 1.3 and 1.5 million years ago, the island (18 km long, 8 km wide) is the smallest of the Mascarene Archipelago.

Rodrigues is a mountainous, volcanic island, with a succession of valleys plunging to the 300 square km lagoon, whilst meandering through steep escarpments and terraced fields towards its 80-km coastline, with an enthralling though accessible relief. The island enjoys a tropical climate with temperatures varying between 28 and 35°C during the Southern summer, which coincides with the cyclonic season (November to April) and between 18 and 27°C in winter. The Island had been hit by several crippling cyclones between 1863 and 1963 (North-Coombes 1971).

Under the French, the inhabitants consisted of a small garrison and a small number of slaves and freemen. When the British took possession of the island in 1809, there were about a hundred inhabitants (including 41 slaves). In 1810, Rodrigues was used as the launching pad for the victorious assault on Isle de France, renamed Mauritius, pursuant to the terms of the Vienna Treaty in 1815. Under British Administration, the slave trade became illegal as from 1814, although it was privately tolerated for some time in Rodrigues. It was only in 1820 that a resident Government Agent was appointed for Rodrigues and started the registration of slaves. In 1826, the total population was 123, consisting of 100 slaves, 20 Europeans and 3 freed persons. (North-Coombes 1971).

The British occupants were favourable to the settlement in Rodrigues and encouraged the agricultural development of the island to the extent that it became the “attic” of Mauritius.

Communication, road and schooling infrastructures were set up at a relatively slow pace. The island was linked to Mauritius by means of the telegraph in 1901, which made communication much easier. Traditionally linked to Mauritius by sea (Port-Mathurin being the main harbour), Rodrigues took a leap into modernity in 1972 when the first Air Mauritius flight landed at Plaine Corail.

There was no local official administration of Rodrigues until 1846 when the first Police magistrate was appointed. The people of the island voted for the first time in 1967 in the historic poll for the Independence of Mauritius and its outer islands. Rodrigues is represented at the National Assembly in Port Louis since that date. After Independence, Rodrigues was administered by a Resident Commissioner who coordinated the activities of the various Ministries and Departments. In 2002, the National Assembly unanimously voted in favour of a constitutional law granting an autonomous status to Rodrigues regarding its internal affairs and bringing about the devolution of certain administrative and political powers. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly was established following elections. The local Executive has the same powers as a Regional Government presided by a Chief Commissioner, who is the direct interlocutor of the Prime Minister and of the Central Government regarding Rodriguan affairs.

Since the arrival of the first European settlers in the era of French colonization, certain traces have survived over the generations. The predominance of African and Malagasy blood in the mix is explained by a wave of settlement following the abolition of slavery by the British Colonial Administration in 1835.

Before Independence in 1968, Mauritius did not show much interest in Rodrigues and the first comprehensive publication on the latter came out in 1923 (Bertuchi, in North-Coombes 1971). Information on the health and disease situation in Rodrigues during the colonial times was scattered and patchy. Therefore, this report only attempts to provide a brief overview of the situation in Rodrigues.

## 2. FOOD SUPPLIES AND NUTRITION

### 2.1 FOOD SUPPLIES

#### 2.1.1 French Period (1720 - 1810)

##### Earlier period

In 1691, when the French explorer and naturalist François Leguat and his companions established themselves near Port Mathurin, there was an abundance of local foods; viz. birds and birds' eggs, fish of all kinds, eels, crabs, lobsters and oysters, tortoises and turtles, palm and latanier cabbages, melons, water-melons, other fruits and various vegetables. From the palms and lataniers, they made alcoholic beverages like toddy and arrack. They also ate smoked flesh of a dugong (a large marine mammal) (North-Coombes 1971).

##### Giant tortoises and the Solitaire

Before the arrival of Europeans at the Mascarene Islands, there was an abundance of giant tortoises. In Rodrigues, these reptiles had also colonised most of the small islands dotting the reef platform around the main island. This fabulous development was favoured by the isolated position of these islands, and the absence of man and natural enemies. However, tortoises were killed for food and oil. They were brought onboard ships because they could go without food or water for up to six months, meaning they could be killed for fresh meat at any time and provide an insurance against scurvy (North-Coombes 1971).

During the French period, from 1720, the tortoises were plundered and thousands were exported to Isle de France (Mauritius) with each shipment, for their meat and oil, for local consumption and for visiting ships. By the 1760s, tortoises were already scarce in Rodrigues and virtually disappeared by 1795 (North-Coombes 1971).

The Solitaire was a species of large apterous bird, unique to Rodrigues, so named because, though initially abundant in Rodrigues, it was seldom seen in the company of other birds of the same species. The birds were ruthlessly slaughtered, and by the time of Pingré's visit (1761), the bird had virtually disappeared and became extinct soon after (North-Coombes 1971).

##### Staple foods

During the French settlement period (1792-1809), maize was the main stand-by crop for the inhabitants. They grew wheat for bread-making from seeds brought from Isle de France. Coconuts from Diego Garcia were planted at Port Mathurin. There was no game on the island and the rabbit and guinea fowl were probably introduced at that time. There was no important agricultural or commercial activity, except tortoise exploitation and some small-scale cultivation (maize, wheat, manioc, coffee) and fishing. Manioc was mainly used to fatten cattle. Ships called for fresh water, wood, *latanier* cabbages, fish, tortoises and oysters (North-Coombes 1971).

According to Philibert Marragon's Census of 1804, the crops cultivated were: wheat, maize, rice, manioc, coffee, some tobacco and fruit trees - mostly citrus and a few mango trees. The farm animals, included ducks, pigs, goats and some cattle. The pigs and goats, cats and some cattle ran wild. At that time, there were a total of 82 black slaves (mainly from Mozambique, Madagascar and born in Rodrigues) and five white land owners (North-Coombes 1971).

### 2.1.2 The British Period (1810 - 1968)

#### Food production and export during the 1830s

During that period, there were only about 125 to 250 inhabitants on the Island. In 1838, Justice C. Anderson reported that grain and root crops produced were only sufficient to meet the food needs of apprentices, and the large numbers of pigs and poultry. Salted fish, pigs and poultry were exported. There were also cattle, goats and sheep, but they were never exported and appeared to be left in the wild. He concluded that the Island was well-suited for grazing farms, and proposed that its development be reoriented to produce cattle for export to Mauritius and render the latter, to a great degree, independent of Madagascar for its meat supplies. However, following massive deforestation by the settlers and successive droughts, this proposition got nowhere (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Slave emancipation

In Rodrigues, when the slaves were set free on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1839, the men were offered a monthly wage of 3 *piastres*, and the women 2 *piastres*, as much free food as they could consume according to custom already established, i.e. 1½ pounds of salted fish per week, two *coujarons* of spirits as before, and the liberty of cultivating their small gardens. They unanimously accepted these conditions (North-Coombes 1971).

However, the liberated slaves did not remain long in the employment of their past masters and left to go into the interior of the island where they squatted without authority on their garden plots or on land belonging to the Crown. They also helped themselves to meat from cattle, which had been free-ranging for years, as well as to pigs or game which they come across. A number of the “squatters” eventually became owners on soft terms in 1865 (North-Coombes 1971).

In June 1841, Magistrate H.M. Self, sent from Mauritius to enquire into some civil cases, found the people (both Rodriguans and the labourers brought from Mauritius for fishing) rather happy. Pay was reasonable, food plentiful, consisting mainly of manioc (the staple food) with a ration of rice on Sundays. In fact, the liberated slaves did not work for others; they were entirely self-supporting from the produce of their cultivation and the livestock which they raised, plus the odd fish and wild cattle (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Food production and exports during the 1850s

During the 1850s, the staple crops were “haricots” (beans), maize, manioc, sweet potatoes, rice, yams and pumpkins, which formed the principal nourishment of the 324 inhabitants and were cultivated in small quantities. These were supplemented with fish, eggs, poultry, wild guinea fowls, pigs and goats. There were also some cattle, asses, sheep and large number of pigs and dogs (the latter being a nuisance since they destroyed animals and poultry) on the island. The exported products of Rodrigues consisted mainly of salted fish, livestock and beans. Only one landowner did larger-scale cultivation and planted coffee, lime, oranges and other kinds of fruits (North-Coombes 1971).

#### The truck system and indebtedness

There were no shops on the island at that time. Each employer had a store of his own from which he supplied his men on credit, at extortionate prices. The workers were thus perpetually in debt and forced against the Law to remain in their employers’ service until the debt had been cancelled - which was hardly ever possible (North-Coombes 1971).

The truck system, in which those employed by the master-fishermen were trapped, made them so indebted to their masters that they never received wages and were little more than slaves to them. There was an abuse of the truck system (in the 1860s) which had been prevalent from the start of

employment of free labour, after the liberation of the slaves. The contract between employers and labour allowed wages to be “payable in merchandise so that when the servant is disposed to intemperance, two bottles of rum issued to him in six-penny grogs pay his wages for one month and five days”. Many labourers got into debt as they were unable to resist the grog. The cost of goods was anything between 150 and 300 percent higher than in Mauritius; except for rice which was 75 to 100 percent higher (North-Coombes 1971).

The Rodriguan was always short of money and bought virtually everything on credit. It had to be given, because everything depended upon the timely arrival of the trading vessel to carry the island’s products to Mauritius. The island was so poor that there was virtually no cash flow at all. Rodriguans were exploited by the six shopkeepers and the trading ship-owner using the truck system (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Cyclones and near famine

In January and February 1876, Rodrigues was struck by the worst cyclone season of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with four cyclones in two months. The island was recovering well until April 1878, when another dreadful cyclone struck, followed by drought that destroyed the crops of maize and manioc, as well as other crops. The mountaineers had no food left; they lived on wild fruits, and roots, on cabbage palms and *songes*. Shopkeepers refused to sell their rice stocks when Government supplies were exhausted in January 1879; then, they were forced by the Magistrate to sell one-fifth of their stock. Children became emaciated; many people suffered from sores and dysentery. In December 1880, as a result of poor crops and deficient rainfall, a famine became imminent. People were surviving and had to rely on sweet potatoes and *songe*. Emergency rice supplies were sent from Mauritius. Those too poor to pay were put employed in road-building and sanitary works (North-Coombes 1971).

Before 1873, rice was sent from Mauritius in small quantities. The inhabitants had to pay cash for these purchases, or they obtained the rice in payment for road works. After the cyclone of 1886, the quantity of rice sent was increased, and its distribution was made on fairly liberal terms. In a land where there was normally little or no cash flow, this led to indebtedness. As from 1890 to 1901, payment for rice had to be made in cash or in return for labour on public works, and in no case were issues to be made on credit (North-Coombes 1971).

In 1890, a certain prosperity was becoming evident among the inhabitants. This was brought about almost entirely by the start of cultivation of tobacco for export to Mauritius. (Tobacco had always been grown in Rodrigues for local consumption). This improved the cash flow of the island (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Food insecurity

In times of scarcity, the Rodriguans eat anything available that can be consumed, wild fruit, and even snails. In the old days, when *latanier* palms were still plentiful, the cabbage was eaten. *Lataniers* became scarce after the prolonged drought of 1928. In the pre-ETC<sup>1</sup> days, it could be weeks before a ship would bring an emergency supply of rice, and the inhabitants often had nothing at all to eat; fortunately, the resources of the sea helped out. In the course of their history, Rodriguans have often endured famine conditions, under which any other people would have rebelled (North-Coombes 1971).

During the 1930s, a portion of leased crown lands was planted with manioc as a food reserve to tie over the people during the annual dry season. School gardens were established at La Ferme and Lataniers. The seasonal dry period at the end of 1933 extended into the main growing season of

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Telegraph Company, including Cable and Wireless Limited.

1934. The usual plea for assistance was made to Mauritius during the food shortage. This food insecurity was attributed to the increasing population, but was, in fact, due to a lack of objectives and policies as problems had been dealt with in a piecemeal manner as they arose (North-Coombes 1971).

Food stocks had fallen so low in 1943 that food cards had to be issued, and even sugar had to be rationed. In 1943, the standing crop of maize of the whole Riviere Coco area, the only one to come to maturity at the time, was requisitioned by the Magistrate. This enabled the islanders to live through the most critical period of its war-time food problems (North-Coombes 1971).

Except for the food rationing and the impossibility of obtaining some consumer goods, the Second World War did not affect Rodrigues adversely. In fact, the wages of troops stationed on the island, the remittances from Rodriguan men serving overseas and various contracts for supplies (such as meat, fish and eggs) brought about an unprecedented cash flow. Due to import difficulties, excellent local substitutes for bacon and ham were produced for the English people on the Island; oil was extracted from groundnuts; local butter and cheese were made, and seaweed was used as vegetables (North-Coombes 1971).

In 1947, the island sustained great devastation caused by 4 cyclones in a month, followed by scanty rainfall, with considerable crop destruction. Imported food supplies were regularly available, and destitution was minimised by the distribution of money grants and relief work by the Government and from charitable sources (MHD 1947). This was followed by an almost continuous drought in 1949, which resulted in the failure of practically all food crops and a scarcity of fodder. The majority of inhabitants had to buy food imported from Mauritius at a high cost. People, deriving an income mainly from fishing and traditional pig-rearing, were underfed (MHD 1949).

However, Rodrigues continued to export food products to Mauritius from 1961 to 1970, which included cattle, sheep and goats, poultry, pigs, onions and garlic, and salted fish and octopus (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Fish scarcity

Already in 1916, there was a scarcity of fish in the lagoon, resulting in smaller catches; this drop was attributed to excessive net-fishing. Total prohibition of net-fishing was enforced from 1920, but fraud was rife. The fish was salted with salt (not brine) for preservation. It was later realised that the main cause of fish scarcity was not net-fishing but the construction of coral parks on the reefs, and net-fishing prohibition was lifted in June 1939 (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Citrus and *limon*

Although citrus plants had been introduced in Rodrigues since the mid-1750s, the island began to have a good reputation for its *citrons* by 1845 and in 1874 it was growing spontaneously. The leaves and rind of fruit were used in preparing tisanes for various maladies. The *citron doux*, which is a variety of "rough lemon", and the *petit limon* gradually spread practically over the whole island in the 1930s. The fruits were in great favour, both locally and for export to Mauritius, where they were often pickled for sale in shops. Every Rodriguan planted a *limon* tree near his hut and looked upon a full-grown tree as a source of income. The plantation of other types of citrus (orange, lime, lemon and grapefruit) was also tried at Oyster Bay with seeds from Barkly Station (Mauritius). As a result of the citrus canker disease, the agricultural staff embarked on a citrus eradication campaign (by uprooting and burning the contaminated plants) that failed, due to inadequate sensitisation, and lack of staff and proper control. However, there was much opposition to the agricultural staff and the three years that the campaign lasted caused a good deal of hardship and much heartache, since almost every mountaineer had his citrus plants by his hut. Some of them actually lived

exclusively on the income which they derived from the sale of the fruits. They were never offered any compensation for that loss (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Changes in diet

The staple diet is still the yellow flint maize which, after crushing and sifting, is boiled, either plain or mixed with rice.<sup>2</sup> This is eaten by itself or with some beans, curry, greens, or salted fish. In older days, the Rodriguans lived on manioc in the dry season, after the maize supply had been exhausted. From 1927, when manioc was so severely attacked by die-back disease that it was virtually wiped out, the inhabitants fell back on sweet potatoes. The Rodriguan is not very fond of sweet potato which leaves an empty feeling, even immediately after a meal. He usually feeds it to his pigs, with maize bran. However, in hard times, a few pieces of sweet potato often formed the sole food of a large section of the population for weeks on end. Up to the 1940s, rice was still considered as something of a luxury, to be consumed when there was nothing else, after cyclones or droughts, and on Sundays and feast days, when it was eaten with either meat curry or fresh fish. Incidentally, the term 'curry' is very loosely used to apply to any cooked relish to eat with boiled maize. Rodriguans had no milk or consumed only goat's milk (North-Coombes 1971).

A comparison of data between the periods 1953-55 and 1965-67, shows that Rodriguans ate more flour and rice, drank more wine and beer but less spirits, used more soap, dressed better, and made greater use of motor vehicles. The consumption of rice, flour and cooking oil increased by half during that period. Rodriguans tend to consume more flour and polished rice as a substitute for a traditional maize diet, as a result of decreasing maize cultivation (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Alcohol consumption

Most Rodriguans used to have a fairly temperate character; those engaged in fishing were generally more prone to liquor than the farmers. On Saturdays, most of the men like a tot of rum or two, even if this had to be obtained on credit. Since Mauritius has had its own brewery, the consumption of spirits in Rodrigues has fallen. The inhabitants now consume appreciable quantities of beer and cheap Mauritian fruit wine. These are now distributed all over the island, even in the highlands (North-Coombes 1971).

## 2.2 NUTRITION STATUS AND DEFICIENCY DISEASES

In 1830, at the request of Governor Colville, Captain J. Lyons reported that slaves on several establishments were "being well clothed and fed; having a great facility of catching fish; besides the thriving state of the manioc, enabling them to keep pigs and poultry" (North-Coombes 1971).

In 1838, C. Anderson reported that apprentices were working longer hours than the Law allowed, their clothing was inadequate and their huts miserable, but they were well fed, and extensive garden ground was allotted to them. In 1838, after the abolition of slavery, the population consisted of a few whites, 127 apprentices and 142 children (North-Coombes 1971, Kuczynski 1949).

In 1949, the standard of nutrition was not as good as it was in 1948. In 1962, it was noted that illegitimacy rates and birth rates were high and that many of the children were malnourished. Parental ignorance of a proper diet led to high incidence of *kwashiorkor*. The worst cases were admitted (19 during the year), but the mild cases were very numerous and were treated with milk given at the dispensaries or social services (MHD 1949, 1962).

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<sup>2</sup> One cup rice for three cups of maize brought to the boil and then cooked on a very gentle fire.

In the late 1960s, the black Rodriguan men were described as being about 168 centimetres tall, with disproportionately long and thin arms and legs. They were much stronger than they looked. The Whites were more powerfully built, and generally their features closely resembled those of Europeans. They too were strong, but they aged prematurely and more quickly than the Blacks (North-Coombes 1971).

#### Anaemia

Anaemia in Rodrigues did not seem to be as common as it was in Mauritius during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, probably due to the fact that the Rodriguans' diet always contained a fair amount of animal foods, including fish. However, there was a fair amount of anaemia on the island during the 1930s, and the cause was thought to be nutritional, as well as *ankylostomiasis* (MHD1933-35). However, surveys done in 1995 and 2004, revealed higher levels of anaemia among Rodriguan children than among Mauritian children (MOH/UNICEF 1996, MOHQL 2006).

#### Avitaminosis

In 1934, apart from imported cases of beriberi (brought in by returning emigrants from Réunion), there were few cases of a scurvy-like condition, characterized by a sore tongue, dryness of the skin and eruptions. Bleeding from the gums was present in a few cases; the disease undoubtedly resulted from a lack of fresh fruits and vegetables which followed the drought or a cyclone. People with Beriberi completely recovered in 1935 (MHD 1934-35).

#### Nutritional status

Rodriguan children have always shown a better nutritional status (based on anthropometric measures) than Mauritian children in surveys carried out from 1985 onwards, despite the fact that Rodrigues has higher infant mortality rates for the same period. Table 1 shows that Rodriguan children were consistently taller, heavier and less thin than Mauritian children for the period studied. That observation still holds good even when the Rodriguan children are compared with Mauritian Creole children in the survey for which those data were disaggregated (MOH/UNICEF 1988, MOH/UNICEF/WHO 1996, MOHQL 2006)

Table 1: Comparison of the nutritional status of Rodriguan and Mauritian children

Year of survey	Age group (years)	Percent Underweight (Low weight-for-age)		Percent Stunted (Low height-for-age)		Percent Wasted (Low weight-for-height)	
		Rod.	Maur.	Rod.	Maur.	Rod.	Maur.
1985 (a)	0-5	12.0	23.9 (T) 18.8 (C)	17.5	21.5 (T) 24.7 (C)	4.9	16.2 (T) 11.2 (C)
1995 (b)	0-5	9.6	16.4	10.2	9.6	9.0	15.0
2004 (c)	5-11	1.2	3.4	0.6	1.0	6.3	11.3

Note: (T) = Total children in Mauritius sample; (C) = Creole children in Mauritius sample.

Sources: (a) MOH/UNICEF (1988); (b) MOH/UNICEF/WHO (1996); (c) MOHQL (2006)

According to a 2004 survey, overweight plus obesity levels amongst Rodriguan children, aged 5-11 years and 12-19 years, were slightly less than among Mauritian children, but were the same (56%) amongst adults 20-49 years (MOHQL 2006).

### 3. DISEASE PATTERN

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Rodrigues had the reputation of being a healthy island. Governor Napier-Broome after a visit to Rodrigues in 1881 concluded that the island was a healthy place (North-Coombes 1971).

When the British (under H. Keating) took possession of Rodrigues from the French in 1809 and started the blockade of Isle de France, the island was used as a convalescent station for its seamen because it was 'particularly adapted for the recovery of those suffering from scorbutic disease, debility and other disorders incident to seamen', and a hospital was built for seamen at Port Mathurin (North-Coombes 1971).

Rodrigues was twice identified to be used as quarantine stations for people affected by two dreaded diseases from Mauritius; in 1800 for lepers and in 1856 for immigrant labourers arriving from India with cholera. Fortunately for the Rodriguans, both ideas were never executed (North-Coombes 1971).

However, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, more immigrants arrived and more ships visited the Island, bringing with them various infectious diseases that were already prevalent on the surrounding islands (mainly Mauritius and Réunion, and India).

### 3.1 LEPROSY

In 1876, H.E. Desmarais reported on the spread of leprosy on the island (North-Coombes 1971). The leprosy situation on the island was considered to be satisfactory with 22 known cases in 1933-34. There was a positive attitude of the population and they were keen to follow treatment with satisfactory results. A number of cases continued to be treated locally until the 1960s and few advanced cases were sent to Powder Mills leprosarium in Mauritius. (MHD 1933-35, 1962).

### 3.2 TYPHOID

Typhoid was of exogenous origin. The first typhoid epidemic outbreak occurred at Port Mathurin in April 1880; there were many deaths. A Medical Officer was despatched from the Civil Hospital, Port Louis, and a hospital was opened in a private house and then transferred to a building to treat the cases. From now on, Rodrigues was to have a hospital of sorts and a resident Medical Officer. The outbreak was followed by sanitary measures: cleaning up of the village and water supply at Grande Rivière, and a scavenging service introduced. All pit latrines were filled and a bucket system introduced with disposal at sea (North-Coombes 1971).

In 1921, a severe epidemic of typhoid hit the island and twice as many people died than in the previous year (North-Coombes 1971). There was outbreak in 1934 causing many deaths, but it disappeared 1935. All cases were treated at hospital. Mass anti-typhoid vaccination (T.A.B. vaccine) was being carried out (including in schools) during the 1930s accompanied by Health Education to improve hygienic practices and sanitation. (MHD 1934).

### 3.3 MEASLES

In 1888, measles were first introduced in Rodrigues from Mauritius (where an epidemic already existed) by a ship passenger (North-Coombes 1971). Measles were not seen for some time; an epidemic outbreak occurred in January 1949 and lasted until June 1949, causing two deaths (MHD 1949).

### 3.4 MALARIA

Rodrigues was free of the malaria parasite vector, the *Anopheles* mosquito. A survey done in 1923 by McGregor found no *Anopheles* mosquito and this was confirmed by another island-wide survey carried out in 1934. Malaria occurred only among persons coming from Mauritius, India and other malarious places. All cases seen in 1934 were imported from Réunion and totally recovered in 1935. (MHD 1934-35).

### 3.5 PLAGUE

A threat of the plague being introduced into Rodrigues was real. In early 1900s, the plague was afflicting Mauritius and a quarantine period of six days was enforced for arriving ships. Incidentally, a case of the plague did get into island through a passenger in 1907; prompt action was taken and the disease successfully prevented from gaining a foothold in the dependency (North-Coombes 1971).

### 3.6 INFLUENZA

In 1890, the island was hit by a severe influenza epidemic that impacted on agricultural production. Seasonal sporadic outbreaks occurred through the 1960s (North-Coombes 1971, MHD 1933-34, 1949, 1962).

This seemed to be the commonest disease on the island, to which Rodriguans appeared particularly susceptible. Any sudden change in climatic conditions was liable to cause a small epidemic with frequent pulmonary complications. During the winter months, influenza levied a heavy toll among the newborn (MHD 1933-34, 1949, 1962).

### 3.7 PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS

Pulmonary tuberculosis was the commonest cause of death on the island in the 1930s, having caused 21 deaths in 1933. The number of actual cases in 1934 was half that of 1933. It was the commonest cause of deaths among the adult population between 20 and 50 years. In 1962 only three new patients discovered and tuberculosis was found to be on the decline (MHD 1933-34, 1962).

### 3.8 DYSENTERY

Bacillary dysentery was endemic on the island in the 1930s, with sporadic outbreaks causing death mostly among aged persons and debilitated children. There was an outbreak in 1934, but it disappeared in the following year. A mass Health Education campaign to improve hygienic practices and sanitation was being carried out. There was an epidemic outbreak of amoebic dysentery in 1962 (MHD 1934, MHD 1962).

### 3.9 CATARRHAL JAUNDICE (HEPATITIS A)

This disease appeared in Rodrigues in 1934 and was due to extensive soil pollution. It was transmitted as a result of poor hygiene or by eating contaminated food (MHD 1934).

### 3.10 CHICKEN POX

A few sporadic cases occurred in 1933. A fairly extensive outbreak occurred in 1934, affecting mostly children with pulmonary complications and high fever present in a few. It occurred mostly in Port Mathurin and a few hamlets up the hills (MHD 1933-34). An outbreak occurred in 1947 (MHD 1947).

### 3.11 POLIOMYELITIS

In January 1949, the Island was visited by two concurrent epidemics, viz. *poliomyelitis* and measles. The former was hitherto unknown in Rodrigues. The polio disease was introduced into the Island by a healthy carrier coming from Mauritius and quickly grew into an epidemic which swept over the Island until it finally disappeared on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, following public health measures; no sporadic case encountered until end 1949 (MHD 1949).

### 3.12 VENEREAL DISEASES

The prevalence of venereal diseases (*syphilis* and *gonorrhoea*) was generally low but a marked increase was noted in 1949 and kept increasing through the 1960s (MHD 1933-34, 1949, 1962).

### 3.13 FAECAL-BORNE DISEASES

Soil pollution on the island was extensive. Even today, the houses on the hills have no toilets since as a night soil service this would be impossible; so people use the maize field or odd stone as substitutes. When heavy rainfalls, the streams below are polluted and the inhabitants are exposed to contamination, especially *gastroenteritis*, dysentery and worms, all of which are endemic. There were frequent epidemic outbreaks of *gastroenteritis* with sporadic cases every year particularly during the heavy rainy season January-February; it was a common cause of death among children, especially the malnourished ones. In 1934, 328 cases were reported, with 24 deaths. In 1961, it was the first cause of death with 65 dead. In 1967, 1210 cases of *gastroenteritis* were reported for the year; in the very wet, heavy cyclonic period of January-March 1968, 2300 cases were reported (MHD 1934, MHD 1967, North-Coombes 1971).

It can be said that every man, woman and child on the island was heavily infected with *Ascaris lumbricoides*. In the 1930s, heavy infections with round-worms (*ascariasis*) was quite common causing toxæmia and exhaustion; deaths occurred only in children. *Ankylostomiasis* were also on the increase. They were treated with vermifuge free or charge. However, Rodriguans also used the extract from the leaves of *Chenopodium sp.*, although this practice was discouraged by health workers (MHD 1933-35). Still in 1962, practically all children of the poorer classes were infested with *Ascaris*. No hookworms were found (MHD 1962).

### 3.14 "1934: THE YEAR OF EPIDEMICS"

The year of 1934 was known as "the year of epidemics" in Rodrigues. During that year, the island was visited by no less than six epidemics, a cyclone, and a partial famine. The drought resulted in an acute economic situation which had a profound effect on the health of the population. During the early months, there was an extensive epidemic of *gastroenteritis* that was aggravated by inadequate diet. (MHD 1934).

687 emigrants returned from Réunion, bringing with them numerous cases of beriberi and malaria, and introduced into the Island diseases like typhoid fever, bacillary dysentery and measles, all of which were not present in 1933. This was followed by outbreaks of typhoid fever, bacillary dysentery and catarrhal jaundice; and lastly the seasonal influenza outbreaks with an epidemic of chickenpox to close the unhappy series. An epidemic of measles, several cases of which were among the returned emigrants, was fortunately avoided by quarantine measures (MHD 1934).

All this caused a dramatic increase in the death rate from 12.7 during the previous year to 20.8. 15 deaths were among those returning from Réunion. Deaths from typhoid fever, bacillary dysentery, beriberi, and cirrhosis of liver (the result of catarrhal jaundice) were unknown in 1933, with increased fatalities from *gastroenteritis*, post-typhoid tuberculosis, and marasmus and debility (MHD 1934).

### 3.15 HEALTH OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

The most common health problems found in the children of the three primary schools on the island during the 1930s were by far dental caries (nearly 25%), followed by tonsillitis, scabies and worm infestation (less than 5% respectively). Dental caries were most common among children below six to seven years of age, i.e. during the first dentition. The children were generally clean, which is a fairly good indication of the habits of the average Rodriguan. The general condition and state of development of two-thirds of children was qualified as "excellent", and the term was only used in

the case of children in splendid physical condition. (MHD 1933). In 1947, the standard of health and cleanliness of pupils was considered to be good. The spreading of scabies was due to poor housing and overcrowding as a result of large families, as well as poor washing facilities; treatment was given at school (MHD 1947).

### 3.16 PRESENT DISEASE PATTERN

Over the years, all the health parameters for Rodrigues have caught up with the trends in Mauritius. For example, Infant Mortality Rates, as a sensitive indicator of health in a population, have improved markedly from a high of 59.6 per thousand live births in 1975 to 14.0 in 2010, compared to figures of 48.7 per thousand in 1975 and 12.4 per thousand in 2010 for Mauritius. Life expectancies recorded in 2008 for Rodrigues were: Male: 70.7, Female 76.4 and Mauritius: Male: 69.2, Female: 76.1.

During the last three decades, the aetiology of diseases has shifted from the typical infectious and parasitic origin to diseases more connected with the lifestyle as in Mauritius. The pattern is now predominantly of the heart, and other, diseases of the circulatory system, responsible for 35.9 % of all deaths in 2008. Cancer and neoplasm accounted for 19.9%, diabetes and other endocrine, nutritional and metabolic disorders 18.9% and accidents and other consequences of external causes took another 5.3%, totalling a staggering 80%.

The 2004 Non-Communicable Diseases Survey and the trends in NCDs and their risk factor prevalence during the period 1992-2004 confirm the above trends (MOHQL 2006a):

- The age-standardised prevalence of diabetes in the Rodriguan population aged 20-74 years was 9.4% (7.0% in males, 10.7% in females). The prevalence in 1992 was 8.1% and in 1999 this prevalence had increased to 10.9%.
- Obesity i.e. (BMI > 30) was found in 23% of the Rodriguan population aged 20-74 years and another 33% were overweight (25 < BMI ≤ 30).

Prevalence of obesity among females (28.6%) was more than twice that of males (13.5%). Obesity prevalence had remained almost unchanged during the period 1992-1999 at around 19.5%. Overweight prevalence has remained around 32-33% during the period 1992 to 2004

- The prevalence of hypertension in 2004 in participants aged 20-74 years was 34.1% in males, 32.4% in females and 32.8% in both sexes.

The hypertension prevalence rates in males were slightly higher than those in females during the period 1992 to 2004 (Table 6). When males and females are taken together, a 11% decrease is noted in the prevalence from 1999 to 2004.

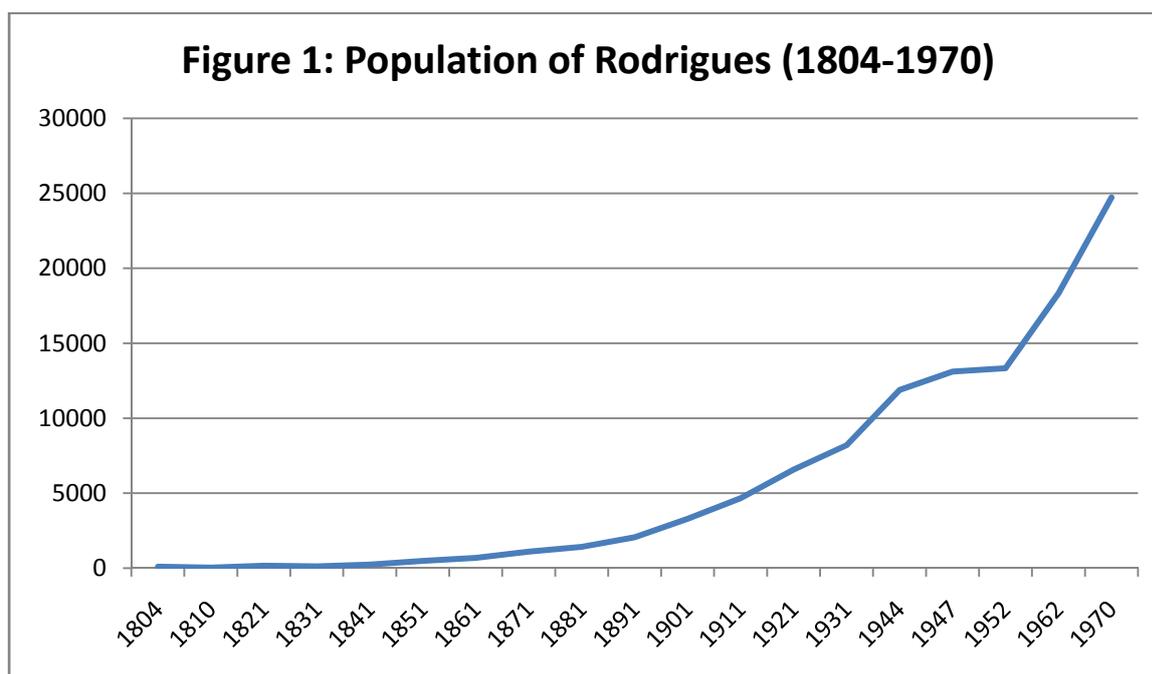
## 4. HEALTH AND LIVING CONDITIONS

### 4.1 POPULATION AND VITAL STATISTICS

The pristine Island of Rodrigues was visited off and on by travellers, without mooring ground for long-term settlement. Under the French, the inhabitants consisted of a small garrison and a small number of slaves and freemen. When the British took possession of the island in 1809, there were 3 French planters and between 60-70 slaves. Table 1 shows the population in 1826 (North-Coombes 1971).

	Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Whites	7	5	8	.....
Free	2	1	.....	.....
Slaves	49	28	12	11
Total	58	34	20	11

The population of Rodrigues increased with some fluctuations from about 100 in 1804 to about 700 in 1861. Then, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an exponential population increase, except for the Second World War period, reaching to 25,000 in 1970 (See Figure 1).



Source: North-Coombes (1971) Appendix 10.

The British occupants were favourable to settlement in Rodrigues. The population of the island started growing slowly when demands for lands by those residing in Mauritius to settle down with some slaves were met. The censuses of 1851 and 1944 recorded population sizes of 495 and 11,885 respectively. Table 2 shows the comparative vital rates for Mauritius and Rodrigues for selected years between 1975 and 2010.

Table 2: Vital Rates: Mauritius-Rodrigues, 1975-2010

Year	Crude Birth Rate		Crude Death Rate		Infant Mortality Rate		Still Birth Rate	
	Mau	Rod	Mau	Rod	Mau	Rod	Mau	Rod
1975	24.8	43.4	8	8.1	48.7	59.6	40	26.3
1980	26.6	44	7.1	8.6	32.3	57.1	24.3	24.7
1985	18.8	28.5	6.8	6.1	23.8	51.9	19.5	18.2
1990	21.3	23.7	6.7	5.8	19.9	40.7	15.7	19
1995	18.2	20.9	6.7	4.8	19.6	20.6	14.8	3.2
2000	16.9	22.2	6.8	5.1	15.8	23.5	13.4	8.3
2005	14.9	24.6	7	6.2	13.2	20.6	9.6	17.3
2010	11.5	18.9	7.2	6.3	12.4	14	6.6	11.1

Note: Caution has to be exercised in interpreting figures for Rodrigues as the small numbers can give rise to wide fluctuations.

It is to be noted that during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Infant Mortality Rates in Mauritius were generally higher than those in Rodrigues due to the multiple epidemics (particularly malaria) that afflicted the former. In those days, Rodrigues was relatively spared of the scourges. This trend was reversed after the mid 1950s when IMR in Mauritius decreased dramatically, mainly due to the eradication of malaria and other public health measures. In Rodrigues, water and sanitation problems perpetuated high morbidity and mortality affecting mostly children.

#### 4.2 HEALTH SERVICES

Health services in the island were quasi-inexistent under French Administration and, at the early phase, much of British Administration. The most common form of remedy resorted to by the descendents of slaves and free citizens were mainly traditional medicine, particularly herbal medicine.

In June 1841, Magistrate H.M. Self recommended that the establishment of an official authority in the island. This had become an urgent necessity for various reasons. First, the great change brought about in the social state of the island by the emancipation of the slave population, their unlawful squatting on unalienated Crown Lands, and the social problems arising from the growing number of workers employed on contract from Mauritius; secondly, the unlawful and reprehensible conduct of crews of visiting ships, mostly of American whalers who paid no heed to any law in the absence of any recognised authority and did a lot of harm to Rodrigues. Eventually Ordinance No.7 of 1843 was issued “for the purpose of forming at the island of Rodrigues a Judicial and Police Establishment” and the first Police Magistrate landed on the island on December 1843 (North-Coombes 1971).

The conditions of slavery in Rodrigues had, on the whole, been less harsh than in Mauritius. Work started at seven in the morning and lasted till four in the afternoon. During the rest time of the day, known as *la berloque*, they were free to do as they pleased and cultivate their small patches of garden up in the hills. Their work was not hard but it was compulsory labour. Punishment for desertion or negligence was severe and painful; thus, for absence without leave, it was fifty strokes of the whip, administered in small doses but with a firm hand (North-Coombes 1971).

#### 4.2.1 Hospitals

The first hospital in Rodrigues, if one excludes the army hospital during the occupation by British forces from 1809 to 1812, was opened at Port Mathurin by Messiterin 1861; it contained 6 beds. There was no doctor on the island then and the place served mostly to accommodate poor inhabitants and distressed seamen. It is not known when it was closed down. The next hospital was opened as a temporary emergency hospital (in a rented house) in 1880, during the first typhoid epidemic. In 1891, a new hospital was built at Mont Lubin (with 12 beds) and as from 1895, Port Mathurin had only a dispensary. Finally, a new hospital was opened in Port Mathurin on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1919 with 16 beds; a maternity ward was added in 1947. In the 1950s, the hospital, which had become too small for the population, was condemned. A modern well-equipped hospital, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, erected at Crève Coeur, was inaugurated on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1959. This included an out-patient service, a maternity ward, male and female wards, an operating theatre, an X-ray block, a pathology laboratory, a pharmacy, a store and an administrative block (North-Coombes 1971).

At the end of 2008, there were 14 Community Health Centres. These provide basic services including treatment of common diseases and injuries, maternal and child care and family planning. Two Health Centres at Mont Lubin and La Ferme operate as mini-hospitals on 24-hour service with 54 beds and providing minor facilities including deliveries. Complicated maternity cases and caesarean operations are dealt with at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

During the last decade major improvements were made through the setting up of a new Physiotherapy Unit(2001), Haemodialysis Unit with 4 dialysis machines and 1 water treatment plant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in June 2002, a new X-Ray heavy duty unit with highly sophisticated X-Ray machine installed and operational in 2010 and the Non-Communicable Diseases Programme strengthened. A nutritionist is now posted in Rodrigues.

Two private pharmacies operate in Port-Mathurin.

#### 4.2.2 Health Personnel

At the end of 2008, there were 18 doctors in Rodrigues with a ratio of one for 2.094 inhabitants (Island of Mauritius: 1: 876). Qualified nurses numbered 155 at the end of 2008 with a ratio of 1:243 inhabitants, and 2 dentists for the island.

Most of the paramedical and manual workers are Rodriguans. The Medical Health Officers/Senior Medical Health Officers are posted on a tour of duty from the Ministry of Health establishment. In addition, there are specialists in the fields of General Medicine, Surgery, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Paediatrics, Orthopaedics and Anaesthesia are posted on a full-time basis. Specialists in other fields such as Dermatology, ENT and other specialities are sent on tour of duty on a quarterly basis.

#### 4.3 SANITARY CONDITIONS

The Medical and Health Department Report of 1934 can be considered as a watershed in the understanding of health and living conditions prevailing in Rodrigues until the mid-1960s.

*“There is no disease worth mentioning whose development, the climate could be held to favour, and the inhabitants, once past the infant critical stage, can expect to live to a ripe old age.”*

Alfred North-Coombes

The relief and topography of the island are such that Rodrigues was spared the epidemics of diseases that afflicted Mauritius in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, shortage of domestic water supply has plagued the people in Rodrigues and contributed to a host of water-borne diseases, with children as the prime victims. In 1934, 21 out of 24 deaths (87.5%) due to *gastroenteritis* were among children less than three years old. The most common diseases prevailing among children were: *gastroenteritis*, (24.2%), marasmus and debility, (14.7%), acute bronchitis and broncho-pneumonia, (11.6%), (around 50%). Safe and regular disposal of human excreta was a major problem that contributed to perpetual infestation of *Ankylostomiasis*. Bacillary dysentery was endemic. Pit latrines are still in usage.

In Port Mathurin, the inhabitants could ill-afford the night-soil fee service, whereas the pit-latrines are not suitable because of the low sea-level water table. Annual exposure to cyclones worsened sanitary conditions.

In the early days, water supply from rivers was abundant and clean at most times (except after heavy rains). In the 1890s, a small dam was erected up Grande Rivière valley and pipes were laid for distribution of water to Port Mathurin. This water became muddy after cyclones and floods, and was polluted by human habitation at the dam. In 1971, Port Mathurin drinking water still had to be filtered and boiled (North-Coombes 1971).

## 5. TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Rodriguans have always relied on traditional medicine, namely medicinal plants. The availability of such plants is linked with the terrestrial biodiversity which plays a key role in the livelihoods of many people. Besides the collection of leaves of the endemic vacoa (*Pandanus heterocarpus*) for the production of handicrafts, for sale mainly to tourists, several endemic species are noted for their medicinal properties. The most commonly used endemic plants for medicinal purposes are *bois gandine* (*Mathurina pendulifera*) and *affouche à petites feuilles* (*Ficus reflexa*).<sup>3</sup> In their survey (1994) on the traditional pharmacopoeia in Rodrigues, Gurib-Fakim and Gueho have identified 193 medicinal plants currently used to treat some 93 diseases, by the population of Rodrigues.

According to Lelio Roussety, traditional medicine “*primait alors dans les moeurs*”, considering the rugged topography of Rodrigues. Despite its small size, 110 square kilometres, it has never been easy for sick people to walk for example from Patate Theophile to Mont Lubin or from Rivière Cocos on the other pole of Port Mathurin to La Ferme to seek medical help. Thus, they had no choice but to have recourse to *tisanes* which had been used for generations.

### 5.1 RELIANCE ON ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES

Rodriguans depended almost entirely on traditional medicine until the late 1960s. The medical service was practically not existent or rudimentary and difficult to access by all the inhabitants of Rodrigues. Hospitals and dispensaries were at Mont Lubin, Port Mathurin, La Ferme especially to those living on the hills, in valleys and gorges. Up to the late 1960s, child birth was the affair of the traditional midwives who were called upon at any time of the day or night. They would walk kilometres to perform this benevolent duty. The *sages-femmes* (Midwives) without qualifications, but with knowledge and skills acquired from elders, while assisting them in childbirth, assumed the responsibility of child delivery. They depended wholly on traditional medicine and especially *tisanes* and oil for the recovery of the mother and in baby care. (pp. 90-91). According to Roussety, midwives had multifarious skills which they performed for the community and they were generally paid in kind. Besides child delivery, they were also herbalists, *guérisseuses*, as well as dress- and mattress-makers. Although babies were vaccinated against smallpox and diphtheria, mothers used, and continue to use, *tisanes* to cure ‘tambave’, as was the case in Mauritius. Women knew the secrets of preparing the *tisane* against ‘tambave’. The infusion of the same plants also provide relief from gas or *balonnement* and allergies that produce skin eruptions and also against itching.

Roussety gives a list of plants used as *tisanes*, commonly resorted to in the absence of medical accessibility or ineffectiveness of medicines prescribed by doctors. Infusion, decoction and cataplasm or poultices are commonly used. The infusion of *citronelle* mixed with ginger and honey is used against influenza; the infusion of *saponaire blanc* against colic; the infusion of *cassepunte* is said to be an excellent remedy for fever; the infusion of *ayapana*, together with mint leaves, to find relief from *balonnement* or gas; the bark of the filao is boiled together with the tender leaves of pomegranate to cure diarrhoea and dysentery. And, as is the practice in Mauritius, the roots of the coconut tree is boiled and taken as *rafraïchi* to cure inflammation of the stomach and intestines, caused by excessive consumption of spicy food, intake of alcoholic drinks or due to excess heat or cold in the body. The *petit trefle* and the *jean-robert* are also infused to find relief from inflammation. Cough elixir, namely from *baume du perou*, is also prepared and kept. Like Mauritians, Rodriguans also use a number of plants in the form of poultice on wounds, injuries and swellings. Infusion of plants in baths is commonly used to cure skin infections and allergies. A bath with the infusion of leaves of the *poc poc* creeper, mixed with crude sea salt, is highly

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<sup>3</sup> Rodrigues, volcanic island, situated at latitude in the cyclone belt, has a warm wet season lasted from November to April and a cool dry season from May to October which explains the availability of only some 4000 ha of forest and some 2500 ha of arable land including pasture. Some parts of the coastal area are very dry and often subjected to drought.

recommended to cure scabies and skin allergies. The infusion of tamarind leaves is commonly used as a gargle for sore throat.

Rodriguans also use animal fat and oil against a number of ailments. Melted chicken, as well as mutton fat, is applied in the case of mumps. For headache, Rodriguans have a number of remedies: the head is massaged with castor oil and is covered with the leaves of *palma christi*.

In the past, when the service of the doctor was not always available, Roussety says that in the absence of the doctor, especially in times of epidemics, the services of “des docteurs sans souliers” that is “guérisseurs et herboristes” were highly solicited. Roussety says “ Faute de mieux on ne crie pas charlatanisme ou superstition. D’ailleurs, la médecine traditionnelle a toujours tenu une place importante dans la vie de la population. Du point de vue psychologique, pratique et charismatique, l’on ne peut nier que beaucoup de gens dans la souffrance ont été ainsi soulagés et guéris.» In desperate situations, the inhabitants often had recourse to sorcerers and the ‘titalberniens’, especially when helplessly left stranded with agonizing pains in the crevices of hills and valleys. According to Sam Lingayah who carried out a sociological study in Rodrigues in 2003, their services are still highly prized.<sup>4</sup>

## 5.2 CONTINUED RELIANCE ON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

In his study of social exclusion in Rodrigues (2003), Sam Lingayah, states that the difficulty of reaching hospitals and dispensaries or health centres have caused many Rodriguans to continue to rely heavily on herbal medicines and trust in God, Jesus, for relief and recovery from sicknesses and diseases. The study based on intensive fieldwork provides deep insight into the health conditions of Rodriguans and their lack of faith in the formal medical services that are available to them on the island. The author shows deep concern on the rudimentary service provided by the state and the powerlessness of the majority of the Rodriguans. He qualifies the system as ‘inhumane’ and helplessness of the sick, the disabled and the old as an ugly scar on the Mauritian Welfare State. Perception of mistrust in the medical service provided by Mauritian doctors prevailed through a lack of understanding or total indifference. The sick, especially the old and the handicapped, find it very difficult to have access to the existing medical services. Despite the recent introduction of an ambulance service, they have to depend on the generosity of neighbours. Lingayah adds , “ ...family solidarity and community support are still strong in some parts of Rodrigues.”

Cases documented by Lingayah , through informants in Rodrigues, gave reasons for reliance and trust in traditional medicines. Doctors generally prescribe medicines that are ineffective and often not related to the disease. Misdiagnosis and prescription of wrong medicines are also current. Victims blame doctors for their deteriorating health conditions aggravated by unemployment and poverty and the continuing inaccessibility to hospital care. This causes loss of faith in the health services in Rodrigues. One of his informants blamed a Mauritian doctor who administered drops for her eye and said that she was waiting for deliverance in death. Lingayah cites the case of an 84 years old man suffering from high blood pressure, partially blind and disabled, with limited mobility and severe skin problems, for which he had not sought hospital treatment. He was using the traditional herbal medicine but the wife-carer said it was not really effective. “Mo ena confiance dans Jeji”. Faith in religion was their only hope.

A 57-year-old fisherman who had a stroke was bedridden and suffered speech impairment. “There had been no physiotherapy since discharged from hospital”. Similarly, a woman paralysed with stroke said, “There has been no physiotherapy since she was discharged from hospital at Creve Coeur...”. She was advised to do her own physiotherapy. Her hospital outpatient appointment was six-monthly. Having lost confidence in hospital treatment, she saw the appointment as a waste of

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<sup>4</sup> Sam Lingayah is a sociologist and experienced social worker in London. He is author of *Social Welfare in Mauritius*.

time...Doctors repeated the same medications and asked her to return home. The author was informed that a homemade concoction of local herbal medicine was administered to her, instead of the tablets from hospital.

Recourse to traditional medicine is common. Diabetes, strokes, high blood pressure are very common among the Rodriguan population. It is observed that many people, especially those living on the hilly part of the island, become disabled after the first stroke itself for lack of adequate treatment and poor supervision of patients in hospitals. A 60-year-old woman was so discouraged with hospital treatment that she stopped taking medications prescribed by doctors and her son had to try using herbal medicines to cure his mother.

Lingayah writes: “ In my view, it is the prohibitive expenditure involved in seeing a good doctor and meeting the bills for medicines that encourage the poor to resort to traditional and herbal medicines.” (p. 90) The overwhelming majority of his informants found health services in Rodrigues unsatisfactory and of very poor quality. Moreover, the medications prescribed were perceived as ineffective, for instance panadol tablets are systematically prescribed for all diseases, even for serious conditions. Many medications are available at the hospital pharmacy and patients need to buy them from the chemist. Ineffective medications and the high cost of procuring better ones from the chemist cause many patients to resort to herbal remedies.

Roussety says that the problems of access to medical facilities were due to the distance from hospital, and this was the main factor for relying on traditional herbal medicine in Rodrigues. On the other hand, Lingayah says that “many sociological factors”, namely “poverty and powerlessness, among others, drive people to rely on the inexpensive traditional herbal medicines, many of which have proved ineffective as compared to modern conventional medications.” Both views are valid, given that Roussety provides an ethnographic account of life in Rodrigues aiming at preserving memories and Lingayah “a diagnostic and analytical investigation based on a critical and radical sociological perspective” aiming at “stimulating debates on social problems ... approaching an unacceptable condition in any society in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

Although Roussety writes mainly about the past and his account may be tinged with subjectivity. As a Rodriguan, he writes on the basis of lived experiences and close interactions with fellow countrymen. His ‘temoignages’ contain the social history of Rodrigues. However, the use of traditional medicine should also be seen from the cultural point of view. North-Coombes<sup>5</sup> writing on *Citrons*, says: “Furthermore, the native Rodriguans developed a natural urge to consume the fruit, whose dietetic properties he had discovered in the course of time.” (p. 208) He quotes Balfour<sup>6</sup> who calls the fruit *Citrus medica*, “the leaves and the rind of the fruit are used in preparing tisanes for various maladies”.

Similarly, Rodriguans have adopted several other plants, the medicinal virtues of which they discovered over time; for instance, “la barbe maye” is valued as excellent *rafraïchi*. They also concocted several recipes for medications, the most celebrated elixir is the mixture of *eau de vie* with an equal amount of lime juice and much honey for relief from respiratory problems. Traditional medicine is used in parallel with modern medicine.

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<sup>5</sup> “By 1845, Rodrigues was “getting a reputation for its citrons” North-Coombes, *The Island of Rodrigues*, 1971, p. 208.

<sup>6</sup> *The Botany of Rodrigues*, Balfour.

### 5.3 CONCLUSION

The original vegetation of Rodrigues has been destroyed by human activity so much so that Rodrigues ranks among the most environmentally degraded place in the world. There is an ongoing decline in the use of traditional varieties of crops as well as endemic plants, due to the tendency to cross-hybridise local species with introduced varieties, and represents a major threat to medicinal plants as well (Tatayah, 2007).

Other threats include change in land use pattern which impacts on the ecosystems. Invasive alien species such as the *“piquant loulou”, jamrosa, bois d’oiseau, vieille fille, ravernale”* constitute another major threat to terrestrial biodiversity and threaten the native vegetation, even in the “well-intended management measures of the reforestation programme in view of protecting watersheds and prevent soil erosion”(Tatayah 2007). Overgrazing, indiscriminate collection of plants for handicrafts and medicinal use also threaten the survival local species. The increasing globalisation of consumption patterns is also leading to the gradual replacement of diverse crop and medicinal varieties.

The importance of medicinal and artisanal plants in the lives of Rodriguans can be gauged from projects such as the one on sustainable use of endemic plants awarded to UNDP/GEF SGP. This project involved developing an area with plants used by villagers for medicinal and artisanal purposes, which aimed at propagating these plants which are inextricably linked with the livelihoods of the inhabitants

## 6. CONCLUSION

In the early times, Rodrigues had the reputation of being a healthy island with a relief and topography that spared it of the epidemics that afflicted Mauritius in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the French Administration, the island was sparsely populated and not much interest was shown for settlement and development, except for exploitation (plundering) of the abundant tortoise population. The British began to take a keener interest of the island by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the appointment of a magistrate.

The plight of Rodrigues on public health matters started deteriorating with the influx of migrants between the two islands and visiting ships during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Epidemic diseases (like leprosy, typhoid, measles, influenza, and poliomyelitis) were inadvertently introduced. Later, tuberculosis as well as water and faecal-borne diseases (like dysentery, enteritis, ascariasis, ankylostomiasis, etc.) became widespread as a result of poor housing and sanitation, and lack of safe drinking water, exacerbated by rapid population growth in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The staple foods of the Rodriguans were maize and manioc supplemented with beans, fish (fresh and salted) and livestock produce, with very little fruits and vegetables. They faced famine situations several times due to cyclones and droughts, when they survived on sweet potatoes, roots and wild fruits, while they have to wait for food supplies from Mauritius. In the latter part of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, rice was introduced in the diet followed by wheat flour (for bread making). Rum and wine drinking was prevalent. The availability of safe drinking water was always a problem.

Rodriguans have always relied on traditional medicine, namely medicinal plants. The availability of such plants is linked with the terrestrial biodiversity which plays a key role in the livelihoods of many people. Perception of mistrust in the medical service provided by Mauritian doctors prevailed through lack of understanding or indifference to the population. A survey (1994) on the traditional pharmacopoeia in Rodrigues, has identified 193 medicinal plants currently used to treat some 93 diseases, by the population of Rodrigues.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) in Rodrigues were generally lower than those in Mauritius due to the multiple epidemics (particularly malaria) that afflicted the latter. In those days, Rodrigues was relatively spared from the scourges, although water and sanitation problems perpetuated high morbidity and mortality affecting mostly children. This trend was reversed after the mid 1950s, when IMR in Mauritius decreased dramatically, mainly due to the eradication of malaria and other public health measures. IMRs, as well as the nutritional status of children on both islands, are now very close.

During the last three decades, the aetiology of diseases has shifted from the typical infectious and parasitic origin to diseases more related to lifestyle as in Mauritius. The pattern now is predominantly that of heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes and obesity. This is linked to the changing lifestyle, such as overconsumption and dietary imbalance, decreasing physical exercise level and alcoholism, more or less reflecting the health situation in Mauritius.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the present disease pattern of Rodriguans is more or less similar to that found in Mauritius, the same recommendations as for Mauritius apply to Rodrigues.

However, the specific geographical, economic, social and cultural aspects of Rodrigues should be taken into consideration in the formulation of a Health Policy.

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# THE PLIGHT OF THE CHAGOSSIANS

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## Geographic Location of the Chagos Archipelago

The Chagos Archipelago is a chain of some 65 small coral islands in the Indian Ocean, about half-way between Africa and Indonesia, seven degrees South of the Equator. The total area of the atoll is 65.6 sq miles and the lagoon area is 47.9 sq miles. Diego Garcia, which is the largest island, covers 17sq miles. Some of the other smaller islands are Peros Banhos, the Salomon Islands, the Three Brothers, the Egmont Islands, Six Islands and Eagle Islands. The climate is hot and humid, and tempered by sea breezes. The soil is very fertile and the seas around the islands are rich in fish and a variety of marine resources. In view of its unique Fauna and Flora, the Archipelago should be preserved in its natural state for generations to come

Arab seafarers briefly visited the islands in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but the Portuguese were first Europeans to discover them in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There were no permanent inhabitants then. The Portuguese gave the name 'Diego Garcia' to the main island, but did not establish any settlement. The history of the Archipelago is closely associated with that of the Seychelles which were discovered by the Portuguese during the same period.

## Emergence of a Chagossian Community

In 1778, French colonists were given permission to develop coconut plantations in the Chagos islands on condition that they also established a leper colony there. Slaves were brought in from Madagascar, Mozambique and Senegal. As they were hard workers, the coconut palm plantations flourished. The Archipelago remained a French colony until it was ceded to the United Kingdom in the Treaty of Paris (1814).

Some after, the islands were taken by British colonists. The Archipelago was administered by the colonial Government in Mauritius until 1965. Seychelles was detached from Mauritius jurisdiction in 1903 and became a separate colony. With the abolition of slavery in 1835, the slaves were freed and became the plantation owners. As the demand for coconut oil kept rising in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in both Europe and the Indian subcontinent, the British turned to India for cheap labour. Indian indentured labourers, and their families, were thus brought in from Mauritius and the Seychelles. The workers were paid mostly in goods and services and also in cash which was used to enable them to travel to Mauritius by the supply ship and buy goods. The voyage lasted six days.

The ship came at intervals, bringing mail and supplies and collecting the coconut crop. The working and living conditions were generally acceptable. The workers received free housing, medical care, food rations, education and religious facilities. In Diego Garcia, each family had its own house and plot of land on which to grow fruit and vegetables and rear poultry. The men enjoyed traditional fishing and there was lobster in abundance.

Gradually, the Chagossian people evolved their own culture in terms of food, music and religion and their own distinctive Creole language, based on a French-based Creole dialect. The social system was matriarchal. The majority of the islanders were Christian. With the inevitable growth of the population, some of the other islands like Peros Banhos and the Salomon islands were also settled. Throughout their recorded history, the plantations in the Archipelago had a population of approximately 1,000 individuals, two-thirds of whom lived in Diego Garcia. A peak of 1,142 persons was recorded in 1953. Those workers, born in the Archipelago, were referred as '*Ilois*', a French word meaning 'Islanders' but, in the 1990s, they adopted the name 'Chagossians'. Visits from Diego Garcia to the islands were not easy as Diego Garcia was some 100 miles away. But it was thousands of miles away, in the metropolitan capital, that an unexpected and tragic decision was taken. The unique and peaceful way of life of the Chagossian community came to a dramatic end, following a decision taken in London in 8<sup>th</sup> November 1965 for the excision of Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius. That decision has had tremendous and serious consequences for the Chagossian community and these far-reaching consequences are still being felt today.

## The Strategic Importance of Diego Garcia

During the Cold War, the United States decided to establish a military base in the Indian Ocean to keep the USSR and China from threatening the Arabian Gulf. The US opted for the uninhabited Aldabra Atoll, but the British Government preferred to avoid confrontation with ecologists, as Aldabra was home to a rare breed of giant turtles and so offered Diego Garcia, even though it was inhabited. Later, British politicians, diplomats and civil servants began a campaign "to maintain the pretence that there were no permanent inhabitants on Chagos."

As early as 1969, the French Naval Lieutenant La Fontaine made a thorough survey of the Chagos Bay and recorded a possible strategic value of Diego Garcia. From 1881 to 1888, Diego Garcia was the location of two coal stations for steamships crossing the Indian Ocean. The strategic situation of Diego Garcia, about 3,400 miles from the Cape of Good Hope, 2,600 miles from North West Cape, Australia, 2,200 miles from Berbera, Somalia, and its proximity with the Maldives and India was gradually recognised by the UK and US. During the World War II, Diego Garcia proved to be a valuable naval port of call and became more prominent after the war, especially after the withdrawal of the British forces from the region following the independence of India (1947) and other colonies. Later, the Gulf crisis, the Kuwait, Iraq and the Afghanistan wars contributed further to the strategic importance of Diego as a military base for the US. Evidence laid out before the Select Committee on the Excision of the Chagos Archipelago, set up by the Mauritius Government in 1982, shows that the UK and US were in close consultation over the choice of Diego Garcia as a joint naval base for more than a year before the excision order.

## Decision of the British Government on the Excision

The long association of Chagos Archipelago with Mauritius came to an end on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1965, with the coming into force of the British Indian Ocean Territory. It originally included not only Chagos Archipelago, but also Farquhar Islands, Aldabra Group and Desroches Islands which formed part of the British colony of Seychelles. However, Seychelles carried out successful negotiations for its independence on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1976 and also for the return of the three groups of islands.

Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister, appeared before the Select Committee on Chagos in 1982 and made the following statement which was recorded in the Select Committee's Report:

*"He declared that the eventual excision of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius never appeared on the agenda of the Constitutional talks nor was it ever brought for discussion in*

*Mauritius prior to the conference. It was only, while the talks were on that he had two private meetings with the British Authorities; one, at 10, Downing Street where the British Government's decision to grant independence to Mauritius was communicated to him by the then Prime Minister, and the second, on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1965, in one of the committee rooms of Lancaster House where he was, for the first time, informed by the Secretary of State, Mr. Anthony Greenwood, of the United Kingdom's intention of detaching the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius.*

*Sir Seewoosagur declared that he accepted the excision, in principle, as (i) he felt he had no legal instrument to prohibit the United Kingdom Government from exercising the powers conferred upon it by the Colonial Boundaries Act 1895, which powers could not be resisted even by India when the partition of this country took place before its independence (ii) he could not then assess the strategic importance of the archipelago which consisted of islands very remote from Mauritius and virtually unknown to most Mauritians and (iii) it was concretely expressed to him that the islands would be used as a communications centre and not as a military base."*

The population in Mauritius was apprised officially of the excision on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1965, when the British Secretary of State made the following statement in the House of Commons in reply to a Parliamentary Question:

*"With the agreement of the Governments of Mauritius and the Seychelles new arrangements for the administrations of certain islands were introduced by an Order in Council made on the 8<sup>th</sup> November. The islands are the Chagos Archipelago, some 1,200 miles north-east of Mauritius, and Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches in the Western Indian Ocean. Their population are approximately 1,000, 100, 172 and 112 respectively. The Chagos Archipelago was formerly administered by the Government of Mauritius and the other three islands by that of the Seychelles. The islands will be called the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) and will be administered by a Commissioner. It is intended that the islands will be available for the construction of defence facilities by the British and the U.S. Governments, but no firm plans have yet been made by either Government. Compensation will be paid as appropriate."*

## Compensation

The British Government excised the Chagos Archipelago, despite UN Resolution 2066 of 1965 which instructed Britain to take no action which would dismember the territory of Mauritius and violate its territorial integrity. The British Government undertook to provide to Mauritius, following the excision of the Chagos Archipelago, grants amounting to £3 million for expenditure on development projects in Mauritius. It also undertook to compensate the company 'Moulinie Co.' which could not exploit the copra plantations anymore and meet the resettlement costs of inhabitants who could no longer remain there.

It is confirmed that an amount of £3 million was paid by the British Government in the financial year 1965/1966 and credited to Capital Revenue, item 'Sale of Chagos Islands'. There is no information on the basis on which that sum was arrived at. Later, on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1972 the British Government effected a second payment of £650,000 for the 'Resettlement Scheme'. In 1982, a full and final payment of £4 was made by UK.

## US/UK Agreement on Diego

In 1966, the US and the UK signed an 'Exchange of Notes' which permitted the US to use the BIOT for defence purposes for 50 years (ending in December 2016), followed by a 20-year optional extension. The US did not pay any amount to the British Government. However, it gave the British a US \$ 14 million discount on the acquisition of Polaris submarine nuclear missiles.

In March 1971, the US Navy forces arrived in Diego Garcia to start the construction of a communication station and an airfield. They closed the plantation business in Diego. Plantation workers and their families were relocated to plantations in Peros Bahnos and Salomon islands. Some were transported to the Seychelles and Mauritius. In 1972, the UK decided to close the plantations throughout the Chagos and deported the workers and their families to Mauritius and Seychelles. No

exact figures are available for the number of Chagossians deported to Mauritius and Seychelles. However, in 1972/1973, the UK Government decided to grant £65,000 for resettlement purposes. The number of families was quoted as 426 i.e. 1,151 individuals who were due for compensation. However, in 1982, the *Ilois* Trust Fund Board arrived at a figure of 1,579 individuals.

As a matter of fact, the process of eviction started in 1967, when the UK stopped the regular supply ship and the return and new inflow of workers. Plantation workers were forced to abandon their homes. Life became miserable for them, when they were uprooted and shipped to Mauritius on board the 'M.V. Nordvoer' in 1971/1972. They had very little belongings with them. The final voyage of 'Nordvoer' was effected on May 1973, transporting 8 men, 9 women and 29 children from Peros Banhos. The displacement from the Chagos was complete.

## Living Conditions in Mauritius - Prosser Report

After a sea voyage of six days in traumatic and appalling conditions, the exiles, who travelled in batches, were left stranded at the quayside in Port-Louis. They were confused and frightened and had to fend for themselves by living in slums and huts. As Mauritius was facing a high rate of unemployment, it was extremely difficult for them to find work and earn a living. To make matters worse, they had no formal education and were not fluent in the local language. Life was hell to many. They experienced feelings of vulnerability, powerlessness, injustice and isolation, together with a social, cultural, psychological and economic marginalisation as a result of their expulsion. There were a number of suicide cases and some became alcoholics and drug addicts as their families suffered from malnutrition, but others benefitted from social welfare and were gradually integrated the local community.

It was only in 1976 that the British Government decided to send Mr. A.R.G Prosser, Adviser on Social Development in the Ministry of Overseas Development, to propose a plan for the resettlement of the *Ilois* community. He acknowledged that the *Ilois* were living in deplorable conditions and called for urgent action. His main recommendations were:

- a) The immediate setting up of a Resettlement Committee with proper staffing;
- b) The setting up of an occupational training scheme for the unemployed;
- c) Employment of a full-time social worker to counsel the *Ilois* community;
- d) A housing scheme for all *Ilois* families.

## Cash Payments

Unfortunately, the *Ilois* community was divided on the issue of housing, as shown in a survey by the Ministry of Social Security in 1977, and finally, the Government of Mauritius decided to effect cash compensation to all *Ilois* irrespective of their date of arrival. The following payments were made in March 1978:

	Rs.	Total
351 children under 5	1,000	351,000
459 children between 5 and 11	1,200	550,800
474 children between 11 and 18	1,500	711,000
1081 adults	7,590	8,204,790
109 old age pensioners (additional)	250	27,250
71 females with children (additional)	250	<u>17,750</u>
TOTAL		<u>9,862,590</u>
Amount available (including interest)		11,167,604
Amount paid		<u>9,862,580</u>
BALANCE		<u>1,305,014</u>

According to the survey of the Ministry of Social Security (1977), the following families were scattered in various localities:

Locality	No. of families	Under 5	5-12	12-18	Adults	Over 60
Baie du Tombeau	5	3	7	3	7	-
Bois Marchand	2	-	1	-	5	-
Beau-Bassin	9	3	6	15	22	3
Cassis	94	67	82	49	181	17
Cité la Cure	22	24	27	14	64	3
Docker's Flat	40	31	48	30	107	4
Grand River North West	5	1	2	5	10	-
Le Hochet	5	1	6	8	10	-
Les Salines	51	43	44	19	94	10
Pointe aux Sables	31	24	38	22	72	7
Pailles	16	14	8	8	22	3
Port Louis	4	3	8	1	8	2
Petite Rivière	26	14	22	28	55	5
Roche Bois	225	130	210	117	370	45
Ste. Croix	10	11	16	6	13	1
Other Areas	12	9	18	9	28	1
TOTAL	557	378	543	334	1068	102

*Note: The survey also indicated that there were 38 Ilois families in Agalega.*

The amounts paid were clearly insufficient. The British Government agreed in 1982 to allocate to the Chagossians, through the *Ilois* Trust Fund £4 million as 'Full and Final Resettlement', on the condition that they sign a document that they renounce their right to return to their homeland. They refused and, after further negotiations with the UK, most received some combination of land, housing and cash payments, totalling Rs. 55,000 for each adult.

## Legal Battle

The living conditions of the Chagossians in the different suburbs of Port-Louis are still to be improved. The younger generation finds it easier than the older generation to adapt to the Mauritian way of life. The latest figures indicate they number approximately 4,700, with some 600 living in Seychelles. Quite a number of Chagossians were given British passports and left for the UK. The single largest concentration is in Crawley, West Sussex. In 1983, some leading Chagossian members formed a group called 'Chagos Refugee Group' to defend the rights of the Chagossians to return to their homeland. The group started a national and international campaign to promote the Chagossian cause. The campaign gradually gained momentum as the international Press, Human Rights groups, academia, conservation groups, film-makers etc. stood up for the Chagossian cause.

Under the dynamic leadership of Olivier Bancoult, a Chagossian, a case was lodged at the High Court in UK, arguing that the decision to expel the Chagossians from the Archipelago was unlawful. That was the start of a long-running legal battle. In November 2000, the High Court gave a landmark ruling in favour of the Chagossians. It ruled that the decision by the British Government to expel the Chagossians from their homeland was unlawful. During the following year, the British Government decided to carry out a feasibility study into human resettlement of the islands. It concluded, in June 2002, that it would be difficult, precarious and costly and evoked the possibility of natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, tsunamis etc. However, a US resettlement expert, Mr. Jonathan Jenness, qualified the conclusions as 'erroneous'.

Unexpectedly, on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004, 'Orders in Council' were passed in London, banning anyone from setting foot on the Chagos Islands. Clearly, the 'Orders in Council' were issued to counteract the High Court ruling of 2000.

The legal battle continued, with the High Court overturning, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2006, the 'Orders in Council' of 2004. The British Government appealed to the Court of Appeal and lost a year later. It then took the appeal to the House of Lords where the Law Lords ruled in October 2008 by a majority of three-to-two to allow the Government's appeal.

The determination of the Chagos Refugee Group, backed by an 'All Party Parliamentary Group on Chagos', established in London in 2008, to fight against the injustice caused to the Chagossian community by the British Government, led them to file a case at the European Court of Human Rights. The British Government decided, in 2010, to contest the case, instead of seeking a friendly settlement. The case is still pending at the European Court of Human Rights. The Chagos Refugee Group also filed a case before a US Court in 2001 against the US Government. Not much came of it under the Bush Administration. There may be hope under the Obama Administration.

## Visit to Family Graves in 2006

An emotional homecoming for some 100 elderly Chagossians, who had wanted for a long time to visit the graves of family members, took place in March 2006. They travelled on board the *Mauritius Trochetia*. Feelings of nostalgia ran very high, when the Chagossians set foot on the islands after their eviction some 33 years ago. The visit, which lasted ten days, was given extensive coverage in Mauritius and beyond.

## Marine Protected Area

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, the British Government went ahead with its proposal to declare the Chagos waters a 'Marine Protected Area' (MPA), hoping to prevent any form of human resettlement, fishing and extractive industry activities. The uniqueness of Chagos waters needs to be underlined. The reserve covers 545,000 sq. kms around the Archipelago. It is the world's largest coral atoll, containing some of the world's healthiest coral reefs and the cleanest seawater. It is one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world.

The Mauritius Government has lodged a formal objection to the British Government on the MPA and considered its decision as illegal. The Government of Mauritius has decided to take up the matter before the UN International Tribunal on the Law of the sea. Proceedings will start shortly.

## Hope for the Future

The dream of the Chagossian community is to go back to their homeland as soon as possible. The Government and people of Mauritius are very supportive of the difficult and long-drawn struggle undertaken by the Chagossian community who deserve the utmost respect and admiration of the entire international community. The unflinching determination of the Mauritius Government in this regard is reflected in the following extract from the Government Programme 2010-2015:

*"Government will intensify its action to defend the right to effectively exercise sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and explore all options available to ensure its early return to Mauritius and the resettlement of the Archipelago."*

The fire of hope in the Chagossian community and, indeed, in the entire Mauritius population will continue to be kept burning until the final battle is won, thus paving the way for a new life and a new destiny for the Chagossian community, and for Mauritius to fully exercise its legitimate sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

# COLONIAL TORT: THE CHAGOS ISLANDERS' EXPERIENCE OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Chagos Archipelago is situated approximately 1,200 miles North East of the Republic of Mauritius and South of India. It is a group of seven atolls named: Diego Garcia the largest landmass, Peros Banhos, Salomon Islands, Egmont or Six Islands, Three Brothers including Eagle Islands, Danger Island and Nelsons Island.

The Archipelago was formally administered by the British Crown Colony of Mauritius until 8<sup>th</sup> November 1965 when it was unlawfully excised by the United Kingdom from the Mauritian territory<sup>1</sup> and was established as a British overseas territory.

When Mauritius was granted self-governance in 1968, one year later, the Archipelago was officially part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, and since from 1971, Diego Garcia has been a United States Military Base. In 2010, the United Kingdom declared the Archipelago of approximately 54,400 sq km as a marine reserve.

The history of the Chagos Islanders, also named Chagossians and commonly known as *Ilois* (Eng. trans. Islanders) in Mauritius, has been under-researched. While colonialism and post-colonialism in Mauritius Island has been systematically researched, there is limited documentation on the history of the Chagossians that, until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has been overlooked.

With the exception of a number of ethnographic writings, such as the narrations of Father Dussercle, anthropological works of Vine (2009) and Jeffery (2010) and a few official documents, research publications are limited.

Since 2001, following the high coverage of the Chagossians' litigation, much research from different perspectives (anthropological, international politics, human rights and historical) has been conducted on the Chagossian experience of exile to furnish documentation pertaining to the Chagossian court case.

While many people, including Mauritians, ignored the detailed history of the Chagos Archipelago, contemporary researchers are now attempting to remedy this historical oversight by unravelling the intricacies of the excision of the Chagos and to place the Chagossian history within Colonial historiographies.

This report aims at documenting the Chagossians' experience of forced displacement and their resettlement in Mauritius focusing on the impact of forced relocation on the current social, cultural, material and economic situation of the Islanders. The document is divided into three chapters:

The first chapter details the colonisation of the Chagos focusing on the settlement of the islands and on the living and working conditions of the islanders under British colonisation with emphasis being placed on cultural patterns, spatial organisation and occupation.

The second chapter details the excision of the Chagos from Mauritius and their resettlement in Mauritius, focusing on the main historical events and underpinnings of this geo-political decision.

The third chapter focuses on the social, cultural, material and economic impact of forced displacement and resettlement in Mauritian society, with special mention of their right to return.

## **Methodology and Treatment of data**

This report is based on secondary sources exclusively, because the transcriptions of the interviews of the Chagossians, conducted in the context of the Oral History of the Descendants of Slaves, were not available at the time of data compilation. Consequently, the voices of the Chagos islanders are, unfortunately, not included in this document.

The testimonies of the Chagos Islanders would have been a valuable source of information on their life-experiences, viewed from their own perspective and expressed in their own words. Moreover, their interviews would have provided insight into their feelings and perceptions of their life history and their experience of exile and resettlement.

Given the short time for documentary research and to draft this report (two weeks only), I have not been able to do an in-depth archival research. I relied on the books and dissertations available in the Library of the University of Mauritius and on the articles accessed from online academic journals.

In the document I recurrently refer to four main sources of information: the Report of the Selection Committee (1983); the ethnographic writing of Dussercle (1934); the report of D'Unienville (2002), and the anthropological article of Jeffery (2007).

This report is not an in-depth analysis of the Chagossians' experience but rather complements the information provided in the other reports, with the aim of building a

comprehensive picture of the impact of forced displacement and resettlement on the latter. Hence, it should be read in conjunction with the Oral History project and other TJC reports on the Chagos Archipelago, since topics covered in these documents are not included in the present document.

## 2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO

The history of the Chagos Archipelago and the Mascarenes islands are interrelated. In fact, their history forms an integral part of the history of colonialism. The geo-political history of the United States of America and of the United Kingdom greatly impacted on, and played a decisive role in, shaping the historical path of the Chagos and Mauritius as well. (For a historical account of French colonisation of the Chagos Archipelago, see other reports).

### British Colonisation

The Chagos was a Crown colony administered by the Seychelles but in 1903, it was attached to Mauritius as a dependency, whilst the Seychelles Archipelago was detached from Mauritius. From that moment until the excision of the Chagos from Mauritius, a metropole-satellite relationship was established between the two islands.

The Archipelago was a Mauritian dependency and, thus, was under the administration of the Mauritian Colonial Government. Under Farquhar's governorship, more land concessions were granted on the atolls, such as in Peros Banhos, Trois Frères, Eagle and Salomon Islands, for the expansion of copra production. The establishment of more coconut plantations meant the introduction of more slaves on the island from Mauritius and the development of the Archipelago's social, economic and infrastructural structures.

Just as in Metropolitan Mauritius, the Chagossian population was a slave population in majority and they built the Archipelago and its economic sector and social fabric. The Free Coloureds and settlers were in a minority on the islands. The historians report that during the first half of the British colonisation, the copra production was prosperous and even though copra exportation was the main economic pillar, the economy diversified.

During slavery and after the abolition of slavery in 1835, the coconut plantation and copra production including the manufacture of other by-products was the main employment sector. The slaves worked in the Fishing Industry and the production of guano, timber and tortoise as well.

The Ilois Support Trust writes that in 1826, the Baron d'Unienville, Chief Archivist of Mauritius, reported that the Chagos was a bountiful Archipelago and he observed that:

*«...L'île produit beaucoup de cocos, elle ne manque pas non plus de bois, tels que [t]atamaka, bois blanc bon pour pirogues, bois à brûler; elle abonde en poisons, tortues, oiseaux de mer, poules sauvages...<sup>2</sup> »*

(Eng. trans: the island produces many coconuts, wood was not scarce, such as Tatamaka, White wood good [in the construction] of boats, firewood; fishes, tortoises, water birds, wild hens are abundant).

The slave census of 1826 estimates the slave population in the Chagos Archipelago to be approximately 351 people. Even though these figures are not accurate, yet, they give an estimation of the slave population at the beginning of the British colonisation<sup>3</sup>.

In accordance with Valéran (1999), the application of the *Code Noir stricto sensu* in the Chagos failed. For example, she observes that the Christianisation of the slaves was not systematic. However, she writes that in 1838, after the visit of Charles Anderson to Chagos, the latter reported that the treatment of slaves was too harsh, but their workload in the coconut plantation was lighter than in the sugar plantocracy.

Since the colony was remote, approximately 15 days travel by sea in times of windy weather, the application of the *Code* was loose and was left to the discretion of the administrators of the coconut plantations who were the representatives of the Colonial Government as well.

Table 1: Population Distribution in the Chagos Archipelago as at 1921			
Islands	General Population	Indo-Mauritian	Other Indians
Eagle Island	86.26%	12.98% <sup>3</sup>	0.76%
Diego Garcia	89.66%	9.89%	0.45%
Salomon Island	93.01%	6.99%	-
Peros Banhos	82.57%	17.14%	0.29%
Sources: Census Enumeration made in the Colony of Mauritius and Dependencies, 31 <sup>st</sup> March 1931.			

After the abolition of slavery, Indian indentured labourers were brought to the island as additional source of labour to work in the plantations, but the indentured population was not as substantial as in Metropolitan Mauritius. Thus, as at 1921, demographic distribution in the Archipelago was enumerated as such:

None of the sources read documented the Apprenticeship period in the Archipelago with the exception of Vine (2009) who writes that the Apprenticeship System brought little change to the living and working conditions, with the exception of the daily work tasks and the introduction of Indian immigrants. Vine's book entitled *Island of Shame* is a valuable source of ethnographic data on the Chagos Archipelago.

Dussercle (1984, p.146) gives more information on the religio-ethnic profile of the local population composed of 'Afro-Creoles' and people of European origins who are Roman Catholics, Chagossians of Indian origins who abide to Hinduism and one of Islamic faith.

The Roman Catholics were in majority but, with the exception of few anecdotes, he does not provide information on whether or not the Muslims and Indians practised their religion.

*« ...car il m'est revenu qu'elle avait pris part ou tout du moins assisté à une danse sur le feu... »<sup>4</sup>*

(Eng. trans: Because I remembered that she had taken part or rather assisted to a fire dance)

The Report of the Select Committee (1983) is a valuable source of information on the social and political evolution of the Chagos under the British colonisation, and especially on the main historical events during the pre-Independence period of Mauritius, uncovering that because of its strategic geographical location in the Indian Ocean, Diego Garcia was bound to play a pre-eminent role in modern Geo-politics.

### Living and working condition after the abolition of slavery

The ethnographic writing of Dussercle (1934) is a rich source of information on the life of the Islanders.

However, his accounts as a priest and a settler should be read with a critical eye as they are permeated with negative racial representations at times.

These value loaded representations document the racist prejudices that the colonisers cultivated against the locals who were considered as 'uncivilised' and on the racist imperialist underpinnings of the European missionaries in the colonies as reflected in the above extract:

*« ...comme elles ont besoin, de cette vie, de ce salut, de ce sauvetage divin, nos âmes, mais [...] leurs âmes, à ceux-là qui sont seuls [...] le fait de l'isolement et de l'instinct d'indépendance surtout en matière de morale, pourraient bien replonger dans une moralité dégradante... »<sup>5</sup>*

(Eng. trans: As they need, of this life, this salvation, this divine rescue, our souls, but...their souls, to those who are alone...the fact of the isolation and of the instinct independence especially regarding morality, could indeed drive back into a degrading morality)

He describes the islanders as being primitive, native, cultivating atavistic and endemic laziness<sup>6</sup>. These negative stereotypical observations from the writer provide evidence that the author describes the islands from a Eurocentric and imperialist matrix. He considers, as a priest, Christian Western value systems as superior to the inhabitants' ancestral values and customs.

The spatial distribution and population settlement pattern conjointly indicate an appropriation of the islands by the local population. There was no morcellement movement in the Archipelago and accommodation was somewhat similar to the plantation camps settlement in metropolitan Mauritius.

In addition, although there was no urbanisation plan, Dussercle's writings point to some degree of spatial planning and organisation with

*trois rangées de cases en feuilles de cocotier s'alignant sur deux semblants de rues entre la résidence et le cimetière<sup>7</sup>*

(Eng. trans: three rows of houses made of coconut leaves aligned along two semblance of streets between the residence and the cemetery)

In keeping with D'Unienville (2002) and Vine (2009), accommodation was free and the plantation owners provided the labourers with free construction materials to build a shelter. The latter did not purchase land and were granted land to settle free of charge.

The working conditions, as well, were somewhat similar to that of the estate workers in Mauritius, although the nature of the work was different. The plantation owners provided their workers with basic food rations, clothing, free accommodation, minimum wages and free basic health services. Gender division of labour, hierarchical power relations and labour oppression were identified.

To supplement their daily ration, the Islanders fished and cultivated vegetables. The local residents, therefore, were horticulturalists<sup>8</sup> and lived, to some degree, a self-sufficient lifestyle.

Besides these similarities, the work of the coconut workers was different from the sugar cane workers, and it is described as 'light work' and the skills required were different.

Based on the various writings (Valéran, 1999; Jeffery, 2007; Vine, 2009), the local residents' occupations were diversified. They reared livestock, cultivated land and fished for subsistence. However, the presence of retail shops implies that they were not completely self-sufficient and relied on the market economy. They purchased commodities that were not produced locally and that were imported from Mauritius such as milk, sugar and clothing.

This self-sufficient lifestyle is one component of the local social organisation. Two other proofs that the Chagossian society was socially organised are the development of the local educational and health systems.

In accordance with Valéran (1999) and Vine (2009), before 1953, schooling was made available by the Catholic Church and in 1953, the Government opened a school that was closed in 1959. Basic health care was available on Diego Garcia, but for more serious illnesses, Chagossians came to Mauritius.

The inhabitants' lives revolved around the coconut plantations that were the main source of employment. During their free time, it seems that they did not have much entertainment since, apparently, some games were not allowed on the islands like playing cards.

Les cartes, défendues, mais qu'ils introduisent à l'insçu de l'administration<sup>9</sup>

(Eng. trans. Cards were not allowed but they were introduced without the administration knowing).

With the authorisation of the plantation owners, they organised Sega parties for various occasions to celebrate:

*...il y a le séga navire, c'est celui que l'on danse après le départ du bateau pour remercier le ciel, sans doute, de tous les bienfaits apportés. Il y a aussi le séga bananée ; celui la, c'est pour le jour de l'an, que l'on fait suivre de danser français...<sup>10</sup>*

(Eng. trans: there is sega ship, it is the one that we dance after the departure of the boat to thank Heaven, doubtless, for all the goods brought. There is also a new-year sega; this one is for the new eve, that is followed French dance.)

In keeping with Dussercle (1934), partying without the authorities' approval was illegal and was perceived as debauchery because people abused alcohol and misbehaved:

*« ...Mais de leur avoir dit qu'ils ne savaient pas s'amuser 'comme du monde', comme des personnes convenables et qui se respectent, cela leur a donné un coup de fouet...Ce qu'il y a de mauvais, c'est que d'abord cela se passe toujours le soir, dans les bois...De plus il faut boire ; en temps ordinaire, on boit du vin qui fait faire la tête virer, et quand la tête n'y est plus...on peut s'imaginer ce que cela devient. C'est alors que Satan conduit le bal...<sup>11</sup>*

(Eng. trans: But to have told them that they did not know how to have fun 'like everyone', as suitable persons and who show self-respect, it lashed them...What is of bad, is first that it is always in the evening, in woods...Furthermore it is necessary to drink; under normal circumstances, we drink wine that makes them dizzy and when they lose their heads...we can imagine what it is like. It is then that Satan enjoys)

They were allowed to organise Sega nights under the supervision of the administrator and until eight o'clock in the evening only, which implies that they were not free and were subjugated.

It corroborates the public narratives of the Islanders who remained in the Archipelago after deportations and that are reproduced in Jeffery (2007) work. These oral narratives picture life in their homeland as harsh, and they were dominated by the Colonial Power and were oppressed.

The priest's description also provides information on the local social and cultural life. It informs us, firstly, that alcohol was available on the islands that caused social disorder.

As in Metropolitan Mauritius, alcohol was inherent to plantation life. Secondly, that the Islanders developed their own insular culture consisting of their distinctive artistic assets, culinary traditions and folk healing and spiritual practices.

Dussercle (1934) also writes that on the Archipelago there were healers and sorcerers that were a threat to Catholicism and social order. Even if Islanders were Roman Catholics, in parallel, they practised their folk religion born from a syncretism of Animism, Catholicism and Hinduism. The local administration disapproved of these folk beliefs and through proselytism and preaching, they tried to fight these practices but the local inhabitants perpetuated and transmitted these traditional knowledge to the younger generations:

*« ...Le Rosaire, le chapelet...n'est ce pas là l'occasion toute trouvée de leur administrer une petite causerie sur leur tabiz et leurs gris-gris...ce sont des sachets content des clous de girofle enveloppés dans de la poussière de tabac ; des dents de rat ; du poil d'ânon pris sur le dos de la bête à l'endroit où se dessine la croix est appelé pour cette raison la croix bourrique...ce que l'on appelle corde la fouche, un talisman quelconque que l'on attache au bras pour conserver ou obtenir la santé ; et puis, des bouts de papier graisseux sur lesquels s'effacent dans l'huile odorabonde et qui generis des signes cabalistiques extrait du livre de petit ou de grand Albert des formules du Coran écrit en Arabe, des prières baroques à la sainte croix... »<sup>12</sup>*

(Eng. trans: The Rosary, the rosary...is it not there the opportunity to administer them a small talk on their talisman and their amulets...they are bags containing cloves wrapped in some tobacco dust; teeth of rats; hairs of ass foal taken on the back of the animal where a cross is outlined named, for that reason the ass cross...what we call thread la fouche, a talisman that we wrap around to the arm to preserve or obtain health; and then, greasy scraps of paper on which fade in smelly oil...cabalistic signs extracts from the book Petit and Grand Albert, formulae from the Koran written in Arabic, baroque prayers to the holy cross)

His description illustrates the complex belief system impregnated with supernatural and spiritual practices that are often pejoratively perceived and rationalised as superstitions.

The local social dysfunctions and problems were often put down to the sorcerer and to these folk systems. The presence of a sorcerer is also sustained by Jeffrey (2007, p.959) who publishes, in her article, the testimony of a Chagossians testifying the practice of voodoo on the islands.

In fact, the ethnographic writings (Dussercle, 1934 & Jeffrey 2007) reveal that the Islanders constructed a rich culture from Diasporic cultural cross- fertilisation and diffusion to form what is now designated as Chagossian Creole culture.

They developed a rich oral tradition which took the form of folktales and songs as medium of transmission of knowledge and as 'a means of making history'<sup>13</sup>. It seems that the Chagossian society did not develop a structured written system, and thus oral narratives were a means of communication and transmission of their life-experiences and individual life histories.

A collective memory was created out of these oral narratives that, through a Eurocentric matrix, were conceived as gossips. For example, Dussercle (1934, p.37) narrates his encounter with a local resident who sung his sadness of being separated from his wife and family:

*« ...et pour me montrer combien son chagrin était grand à cause de l'absence de ses enfants il s'en va décrocher sous la toiture de la case un bobre africain avec lequel il s'accompagne pour me dire ses malheurs... »*

(Eng. trans: And to show me how much his sorrow was great because of the absence of his children he takes down from under the roof of his house an African bobre that he uses to tell me his misfortunes).

This anecdote exemplifies the existence of a musical tradition that is inherent to oral tradition and that had a psycho-emotional function as well. Singing had a therapeutic effect. What the author calls *palabres* (Eng. trans. gossips) that is a belittling term in the Western cultural world, in the African culture *palabres* is part of their custom and serves

social functions; they maintain social cohesion and order and are a mean of socialising in a culture where collectivism primes over individualism.

For example, they make it possible to settle disputes and encourage debates. The delimitations between private/individual space and the public/collective space were thus blurred in the Chagossian society.

Another evidence of social organisation is the development of a form of retributive justice in which groups of islanders developed their own punishments for deviants<sup>14</sup>. It implies the existence of some customary Law, in parallel with Constitutional Civil and Statutory Laws, that regulated the lives of the Islanders.

However, these customary laws need to be researched to investigate whether there are similarities with African customary Laws such as Tribal Laws and to identify whether they are legacies of the slaves.

In addition, the Chagossian society is commonly described as being a matriarchal society because women outnumbered men. This normative essentialisation of the Chagos as matriarchal based on, solely, on demographic data can be considered as reductionist and a misnomer. Moreover, even though at the beginning of settlement, women were in a majority, according to the 1931 Census, it seems that by the mid-twentieth century, the gender differential equalised.

Furthermore, although women numerically formed a majority, it does not necessarily imply that the Chagossian society was matriarchal and that women had a dominant status and role. Other social traits have to be considered to classify Chagos as a matriarchal society, such as, non-hierarchical social organisation, consensus, balanced gender relations, non-violence, sexual freedom and other traits.

The gender distribution and other social traits, usually prevailing in patriarchal societies, prompt us to question to what extent the Chagossian society was matriarchal.

For example, based on the Dussercle's (1934) observations, *concubinage*, extramarital relationships and serial monogamy were widespread social practices.

Table 2: Sex Distribution in the Chagos Archipelago as at 1921		
Islands	Males	French
Eagle Island	56.49%	43.51%
Diego Garcia	57.30%	42.70%
Salomon Island	56.64%	43.36%
Peros Banhos	55.43%	44.57%
Sources: Census Enumeration made in the Colony of Mauritius and Dependencies, 31 <sup>st</sup> March 1931.		

They were main social problems for the priest as it was unacceptable social behaviour, that is against Catholic precepts. In addition, historical writings (Vine 2009) report gender differentials in wage pay and promotional prospects (women were underpaid and had a lower job status), incidences of violence, the socio-economic powerlessness of women, and it seems that power resided with men rather than with women.

Further research needs to be conducted on the Chagossian society to collect empirical data on, for example, gender relations, gender roles, social hierarchy and to identify how far women were autonomous agents, rather than dependents or subordinates of men to ascertain that the Chagos was a matriarchal society.

### 3. EXCISION OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO FROM MAURITIUS

The process of decolonisation started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the African region as from post second World War that correlates with the end of the British Empire<sup>15</sup>. The decision to give freedom and independence to colonial territories was not an altruist choice motivated by human rights considerations, but rather a political and economic decision.

The Government's policy to decolonise the dependent territories did not exist in a vacuum but was an outcome of national and international political ventures. According to Green (1989) and Heilein (2002), there were a number of factors: the rise in political consciousness and 'nationalism' in the colonies lobbying for self-governance and statehood, overexpansion of British territories and mis-management that led to tension and conflict in some colonies, pressure from emerging Europe and superpower rivalries led to a transfer of power to the ex-colonies.

In view of that, the Independence of Mauritius should not be considered in isolation but should be placed into a regional African context and a broader international politico-economic perspective. It appears:

Firstly, that "colonialism prevents the development of international economic co-operation, impedes the social, cultural and economic development of dependent peoples."

Secondly, that "people may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law."

Thirdly, that "the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith", the United Nations welcomed the decolonisation and independence of territories.

In this respect, the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was adopted on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1960. This declaration sets out a series of principles, intended to guide the progressive stable and peaceful independence of the colonies "based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, and of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

Yet, the Report of the Select Committee (1983) and other publications expound that the British Indian Ocean Order of 1965 was not in accordance with the UN Declaration. As per the Order, British Indian Ocean Territory is a separate colony that was initially composed of the Chagos Archipelago, the Farquhar Islands, the Aldabra Group and the Islands of Desroches. From the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1976, only the Chagos Archipelago remains British territory.

This documentation details how the excision of the Chagos from Mauritius was a violation of Resolution 6 of the above-mentioned UN Declaration, of the African Union Resolution on Diego Garcia of 1980 and of the UN General Assembly Resolution 2066 of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1965.

For example, the Resolution 2066 "notes with deep concerns that any steps taken by the administering Power to detach certain islands from the Territory of Mauritius for the purpose of establishing of a military base was in contravention of the Declaration' and 'invites administering Power to take no action that would dismember the Territory of Mauritius and violate its territorial integrity<sup>16</sup>."

However, it should be noted that the United Nations Declarations and Resolutions are not legally binding documents and that the countries considered the Great Powers,

including the U.S.A and the British, run the United Nations and thus have power to overrule the United Nations' findings.

As the organisation points out, the resolutions and declarations "represent the dynamic development of international legal norms and reflect the commitment of states to move in certain directions, abiding by certain principles." Hence, the above-mentioned declarations were only instruments for providing effective means of implementing these international principles and recommendations.

Furthermore, the UN General Assembly had no power to compel the administering powers, both the British Colonial Government and the Mauritian Labour Party to respect these agreements.

Even if the role of the 1963 Mauritian Government in the excision and deportation of the Chagossians is minimised, the Select Committee of 1983 and recent publications, uncover how, the Government of that time colluded with the British. Researchers such as Vine (2006) and Chauvek (2006) detail how, for years, the truth on the forced displacement of the Chagossians was strategically concealed and a politics of silencing prevailed.

Fortunately, in 1998, after some British Foreign Office documents were declassified and made public, and subsequently when the secrecy was removed, it became clear that the decision to dislocate and relocate the Islanders was an elaborate scheme<sup>17</sup>.

These recent findings confirm the conclusion of the Select Committee of 1983 that the Meade Commission of November 1959 were intent on the omission of the dependencies' socio-economic contributions including Rodrigues, Chagos, Agalega and St. Brando in the framing of the national social and economic development policy. This was a strategic decision and heralded the excision of the Chagos Archipelago.

The labelling of these dependencies, as 'lesser dependencies', is a symbolical representation of the marginalisation of these territories and the subsequent undervaluation of their economic potentialities. Their outright ostracism on the eve of Independence negatively affected the long-term social, economic and material development of the dependencies that were, and are until now, maintained in relative poverty.

In this testimonial to the Select Committee, Sir Seewosagur Ramgoolam, the Mauritian Prime Minister at that time, Sir Gaetan Duval, the Leader of the Opposition and other Parliamentarians who were present at the Mauritius Constitutional Conference of the 1965, reported that one of the reasons why they accepted the excision was that the British concretely expressed the view that the island would be used as a communication centre, and not as a military base, and that at no time, during the various meetings with the Secretary of State, after the constitutional talks, were they made aware of the joint British/American defence venture<sup>18</sup>.

However, these unclassified official documents reveal that, in fact, the Mauritian Government of that time and the Parliamentarians were informed of the plans of the British and United States of America, but the latter closed their eyes and 'buried their heads in the sand'.

It is evident that the Mauritian Government and delegates did not have in mind the Chagossians' welfare, but rather they were eager to defend the Mauritian interests, and especially local economic and political interests, to the detriment of its dependencies and their native population. Furthermore, the latter did not have power to negotiate with these 'Big Counties.'

Sir Seewosagur's statements are evidence enough that the sole political and economic interests of the Mauritian Government were to gain Independence and to guarantee preferential trading terms and, in this perspective, they bartered the Chagos Archipelago.

His testimony is obvious that the Government undermined the economic potential of its dependencies including Agalega and Rodrigues islands.

*"...When Sir Harold Walter questioned Sir Seewoosagur on the excision of the island the latter revealed to him that he had to make some concessions on that score as he felt that at one time at the conference, the British tended to agree to the claim of the PMSD for a referendum...the delegates wanted to excise Chagos against preferential trading terms especially sugar quota at a more remunerative terms and rice and flour from America at subsidised prices..."<sup>19</sup>*

The report also uncovers that prior to Independence, Mr. Young, the Information Officer at the British High Commission either destroyed or took over valuable documentation including correspondence between the Governor of Mauritius and the Secretary of State for the Colonies pertaining to the period immediately preceding Independence.<sup>20</sup> It seems that this deliberate or unconscious act was part of the strategy of concealment to the detriment of the reconstruction of our history, leaving sections of past undocumented.

The deportation of the Chagos Islanders should not be seen as an isolated outcome of decolonisation, but should rather be placed within a broader international perspective as an American and British geo-political strategy to expand their military power worldwide and ultimately become a world military power.

The inclusion of the Archipelago as a British Territory and the militarisation of Diego Garcia can be conceived as a perpetuation of colonialism, but under a different form. They essentialise politico-economic colonisation with these 'Great powers' maintaining and re-affirming their military and political influence. We are presently suffering from the after-effects of the American military colonisation with the current social and economic crisis and the war against terrorism.

As Vine (2009, p. 25) commented, there are widespread speculations about 'terrorism suspects' having transited through Diego Garcia. Furthermore, on the international political world, the coalition forces recalled the strategic importance of Diego Garcia in the fight against terrorism and in the Arabo-Islamic war. On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2011, Terrorism Watch published:

*"...One should bear in mind the fact that US and British bases located on the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean play the central role in the possible attack against the Islamic Republic. The army bases on the islands can accept sea vessels of all classes. In addition, there were arms systems, military hardware and commando troops deployed on the archipelago. The troops can be urgently dispatched to any location, which Washington picks. The territory of the archipelago is also used as a secret prison of the CIA. The US and British air base, one of the largest in the world, plays the most important role in the militarist plans of the two countries. The base accepts and provides technical servicing for aircraft of all types...including the 509<sup>th</sup> squadron, were deployed on the base last year for the military operation in Iraq and Afghanistan...The USA and Britain received a powerful outpost in the Indian Ocean for the struggle against the "Soviet influence"...The importance of Diego Garcia in USA's militarist plans has been demonstrated several times already. US pilots refer to the base as "aircraft carrier"...Afterwards, the base was used to lash Iraq and to conduct combat actions in Afghanistan. There are no doubts about the fact that the base will play one of the important roles in case of aggression against Iran...Alexander Mordovin, Major-General of the Russian Air Force, told Pravda.Ru that the air base on Diego-Garcia had not lost its significance after the end of the Cold War."It is really telling that the United States are strengthening their position there on the base. The base has a very important location from the point of view of strategic interests of the West - between Africa, India and Australia. The fly-in time to strike targets in the area of the Persian Gulf is minimal. From this point of view, this base is much more important than the bases in Western Europe..."It goes without saying that the neighboring states were extremely concerned about the deployment of such large military objects on Diego Garcia. Indian officials believed that the appearance of the base created a serious threat for peace in the Indian Ocean. Things have changed since then, and the base poses the largest threat to Iran as the country refuses to dance to the tunes of the West. Nearly 400 powerful bombs were sent to the base on Diego Garcia in March 2010. The bombs are*

*capable of destroying large objects under the ground. It goes about 195 high-precision Blu-110 smart bombs, and 192 2000lb Blu-117 bombs. If the USA launches a military campaign against Iran, it will have to use its strategic planes to drop the bombs on the country..."*

In his article, Nauvel (2006) analyses the various courts' rulings regarding the Chagossian litigation. In brief, the BIOT Ordinance No. 1 of 1971, also known as the Immigration Ordinance 1971, provides for the compulsory removal of the Islanders and denies them their right to return home. In 2000, British High Court of Justice quashed parts of the Ordinance and the British Government introduced an Immigration Ordinance that, on paper, allowed the Islanders to return home.

However, in 2004, the Government used the Orders in Council to enact a new Immigration Ordinance preventing non-authorised persons from entering the whole territory. The promulgation of this Order coincides with the war in Afghanistan and the Second Gulf War that started in 2001 and 2003 respectively.

Consequently, a second Judicial Review was launched in 2006 in the Divisional Court and, in 2007, in the Court of Appeal and both courts were in favour of Olivier Bancoult (the applicant). In 2008, the Foreign Commonwealth Office appealed to the House of Lords that ruled in favour of the Foreign Commonwealth Office judging that the Government had no obligation to consider the Chagossians' interests as paramount.<sup>21</sup>

Presently, the Chagossians are awaiting the ruling of the European Court of Justice for Human Rights. While the Islanders are fighting for their right to return and for compensation for their dislocation, territorial disputes and sovereignty claims underpin the Mauritian Government's legal actions. In this respect, on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Mauritius initiated proceedings against the United Kingdom under the dispute settlement provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In view of the recent political upheavals in the Arab-Islamic countries, the right of return of the Islanders is a delicate and sensitive human rights issue. We can question whether security and defence matters will not take precedence over the human rights of the Islanders again, as was the case in the ruling of the House of Lords that judged that "the Chagossians returning to the outer Chagos Islands could lawfully be displaced for the time being in the interest of defence but that there was no reason why the ban should not be lifted if circumstances changed<sup>22</sup>."

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the Great Powers are the main funders of the United Nations and most influential member states that dictate and make the laws and as such determine United Nations rulings and not the other way round.

The National Support Front for the *Ilois* (1981) enumerates how the British breached the Islanders' human and indigenous rights by using coercive, illegal and unscrupulous means to compel them to leave their home country. Firstly, the Chagossians, who were in Mauritius for personal reasons such as for medical treatment or on visit, were not allowed to go back. Before leaving the Chagos, they were not informed that would not be able to return. Secondly, in 1967, the British closed the coconut plantations and copra production and, thus, they were forced out of their jobs and had no food ration. Thirdly, the rulers stopped the supplying ship from entering the British territory. Hence, the local population relied solely on fishing and farming as means of subsistence. Fourthly, in 1971, the last inhabitants were informed that were no more entitled to remain on their land and were deported to Salomon and Peros Banhos islands. In 1972 and 1973 they were expelled from the two islands respectively to the Seychelles and Mauritius.

They were progressively and strategically driven out of their homeland and were allowed to take with them only the bare minimum. Hence, they left behind their dwellings and most of their belongings. They were destitute of their belongings and thus when they arrived in Mauritius, they were economically and materially deprived.

The various research reveals how the British Government, played on the conceptualisation of indigeneity and the settlement of the islands arguing that the Chagos Islanders are not indigenous people of the Archipelago, but are Mauritian contract workers to justify the legality of their deportation. Whereas the Chagossians battle to have their expulsion declared illegal is based on their self-identification as being indigenous people of Chagos.

This issue is still a space of a highly fraught constitutional and human rights debate. In fact, until now there is no universal fixed definition of 'indigenous'. Even the United Nations have not adopted an official definition. It remains a flexible construction with legal, social, cultural and political conceptualisations diverging. Yet, in the context of human rights issues, the United Nations' understanding of this term primes. They identify 'indigenous' people on the following criteria: (i) self-identification as indigenous people at the individual level that is accepted at community level; (ii) historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; (iii) a strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; (iv) distinct social, economic or political systems; (v) distinct language, culture and beliefs; (vi) people forming non-dominant groups of society and (vii) people desire to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive people and communities.

For the United Nations, self-identification and group identification underpin the recognition of a local inhabitants as indigenous population. Hence, building on their approach, the Chagoassian population meets all these criteria to be considered as indigenous people of the Chagos Archipelago.

At the end of colonisation, the local population was one mainly of Afro-Malagasy origins with a minority of people of South Indian origins. The labour force (composed of Freed slaves and Indian indentured labourers) outnumbered the plantation owners of European descent. In this closed insular society, it seems that population migratory movements were rather stable; the in-ward and out-ward migration of people was not as massive and diversified as in metropolitan Mauritius. Hence, it is most probable that ethnic cross-breeding was frequent and that the present Islanders were born out of miscegenation.

As indigenous people of the Chagos, their rights, as spelt out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, adopted in 2007 should be respected and promoted. They also have the right to claim reparation for the discriminations, prejudices and sufferings which they are presently experiencing following historic and contemporary injustices as a result of, *inter alia*, their colonisation, forced displacement and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development and return to their homeland.

#### 4. IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT OF THE CHAGOS ISLANDERS

The Chagossians were doubly victimised in that they were illegally dislocated from their homeland, and when they arrived in their host country, there was no resettlement strategy plan to accommodate them. Although the Mauritian Government received a financial compensation of £ 650,000 from the British Government for the resettlement of the displaced Chagossians, however, the Government did not have any resettlement strategy.

When the Islanders landed on Mauritius, there was no infrastructure to receive them and no plan of social and economic integration such as no housing programme and employment ventures. Subsequently, they fell into gross poverty and since then, they were maintained in this spiral of impoverishment. In 1978, they received a financial compensation on condition that they should abandon their right to return to their homeland. However, the Chagossians in Seychelles did not receive any compensation.

In actual fact, 1,500 to 2,000 resourceless and powerless Chagosians were dumped in Mauritius. They were socially, economically and materially disadvantaged and the recent research findings reveal that they have not been empowered to get out of poverty. For example, they do not secure an income, a safe job and social welfare. They constitute the 'working poor' class.

The present generations are still suffering from the negative aftermath of this unplanned resettlement, they live in absolute poverty and constitute the most vulnerable and deprived group. Vine (2006) confirms, most Chagossians received no resettlement assistance and quickly fell into poverty. Three decades later, most of these Chagossians, currently more than 5,000 individuals, remain impoverished in Mauritius and Seychelles<sup>23</sup>.

In 1976, Prosser was despatched to Mauritius to carry a situational analysis of the Islanders and advised the Government on the resettlement of the latter. The National Support Front for the *Ilois* (1981) observes that Prosser was contradictory on the housing and living conditions of the Islanders, stating that they were 'reasonably well settled' and finally concluding that they 'were living in deplorable conditions'<sup>24</sup>. He advised the Mauritian Government on the resettlement of the Islanders but the Government ignored his recommendations.

Instead of implementing the recommendations made in Prosser's Report regarding housing, occupational, training and welfare schemes, the Government instead chose to give financial compensation to the Islanders. In 1978, each Chagossian received approximately £ 550 but, following inflation, this sum was insignificant. Out of 557 families who registered, 341 opted for housing rehabilitation and 213 for cash compensation. The Report of the National Support Front for the *Ilois* gives ample details on this matter.

Furthermore, it seems that Prosser was not objective in that his observations were not representative of the Islanders' voices, especially regarding their return to their homeland and their integration into Mauritian society. He interviewed the Chagossians' leaders only and the latter might not necessarily be representative of all the voices, but rather of a sample of them. In addition, the leaders' narratives might be politicised and thus biased.

Actually, the current public narratives reveal that most Chagossians do not want to integrate with Mauritian society that belies Prosser's stipulation that the latter wish to assimilate. Although the 'Others' (referring to the non-Chagossians), tend to integrate the Islanders with the Mauritian Creoles, especially the Afro-Mauritian Creoles, the Islanders claim to be a distinct socio-cultural entity and desire to preserve their distinctiveness. Besides, they are actively lobbying for their right to return and this again discredits Prosser's assertion that the Chagossians do not wish to return to their islands.

A study carried out by Francois Botte, a social worker (cited in National Support Front for the *Ilois*, 1981) dresses another and more authentic picture of the living and social

conditions of the Islanders based on empirical facts. She describes the harsh and inhumane living conditions, with limited employment opportunities because of lack of employable skills. They were, and still, are vulnerable to social exclusion and ailments, especially prostitution, alcoholism, high level of school dropouts and low academic achievement among the children and socio-cultural ostracism<sup>25</sup>.

She uncovers that, firstly, the latter never integrated into Mauritian society and that the social, economic, cultural conditions in which they were living worsen. Secondly, consequent to displacement they experienced another trend of life that negatively affected the majority of the displaced. Thirdly, they were nostalgic of their homeland with 77% of them expressing their wish to return to the Chagos<sup>26</sup>.

All the reports published centre on the social, economic and material conditions of the Chagossians for their integration. None focuses on the cultural impact of forced displacement and resettlement on the latter and on identity construction with the exception of Jeffery (2007) who studied the representation of homeland amongst the Chagossians.

In his article, Vine (2006, p. 21) explains how researchers employed a model developed by scholars working with the World Bank for documenting the impact of involuntary displacement and calculate monetary compensation. This holistic model researched the negative economic, material, psychological, physical, social and cultural consequences of forced expulsion.

In 2005, they published the research findings in a report entitled '*Dérasiné: the expulsion and impoverishment of the Chagossian people*' and developed 10 dimensions to characterise the Chagossians' impoverishment: (1) traumatic expulsion; (2) joblessness; (3) economic and social-psychological marginalisation; (4) homelessness; (5) landlessness and lost common property; (6) food insecurity and malnutrition; (7) increased morbidity and mortality; (8) socio-cultural fragmentation; (9) educational deprivation, and (10) ethnic discrimination.

Given that the report provides a detailed analysis of their findings, I shall not expound on all these findings and shall briefly develop on some issues in line with the TJC scope of investigation.

## Land Dispossession

The Chagossians forced dislocation and resettlement is a history of land, and property and resources dispossession. The latter were deprived of their rights to property ownership, physical integrity and decent living and housing conditions.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and on the Rights of Indigenous people unequivocally state that, firstly, everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others and no-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property. Secondly, indigenous people have the right to the lands, territories and resources that they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired. They have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

Human rights were recognised to be inherent in a peoples' dignity and as being equal, unalienable, universal and indivisible. Hence, it is the duty of States to ensure that the human rights of all people, both citizens and refugees, are respected and promoted.

Dussercle (1934) and D'Unienville (2002) divulge that the administrators of the plantations were also representatives of the Colonial Government on the islands, and thus many duties were conferred upon them such as keeping birth, death and marriage records and land transactions. The Colonial Government was kept informed of the land occupations, natality and mortality rates for census records and for the good administration of the island.

D'Unienville (2002) provides valuable information on the property rights of the Chagossians. Regarding land acquisition, he states that people chose the land they wanted to occupy that the Administrator registered. Although they did not purchase the land (there was no money transaction), nonetheless they owned the land they acquired. Later the transaction was made public; it was publicly known that he/she was landowner. Islanders occupied land of approximately 75 toises on which they constructed their house and practised farming (they cultivated land and reared livestock).

*"...The lands, which were there to be taken and which were indeed so taken by the Chagossians, were not part of the domaine public (public domain) and were susceptible de possession (susceptible to ownership). They were never prevented from taking those lands nor did they have to obtain the permission of anyone to occupy same. The owners of the islands and in any event their representatives were, at all material times, fully aware that the Chagossians, either were occupying these lands as owners or were choosing these lands to occupy as owners...because the chagossians were at all material times owners of the said lands and never renounced any of their rights thereon..."<sup>27</sup>*

Once they were landowners, the property was transmitted to other generations through inheritance and when the Chagossians were deported to Mauritius, they did not voluntarily renounce their rights on their land. They were illegally stripped of their land, houses, belongings and resources.

The lawyer further stressed that until its excision from Mauritius (from 1965 to 1971), the Chagos Archipelago was subject to the Civil Code of 1894 and Constitution of 1964 that governed the Mauritian territory. Hence, in 1965, Mauritian Law on property was still applicable in the Chagos. In keeping with the Law, the Islanders' property rights were transferred in three ways: by obligation and/or prescription and/or succession.

He identifies one main difficulty in proving their landownership since they have no title-deeds for the land they occupy. Without these deeds, it is impossible to prove their ownership 'by way of effect of obligations'. Hence, it is essential:

*"...to analyse whether the conditions for acquisition by prescription are met, which would in turn determine whether or not the Chagossians were full owners (with the prerogatives of usus, fructus and abusus) of the lands they occupied or just mere occupiers (with the prerogatives of usus and fructus). This would also determine the nature and extent of the property rights transmitted from generation to generation of Chagossians by way of succession..."<sup>28</sup>*

He concludes that the Chagossians were fully-fledged property-owners that were forcefully removed from their land and thus were deprived of the three prerogatives of their property rights listed above and also of their right to have a domicile.

Based on his conclusion, when the Chagossians were exiled to Mauritius, they were deprived of their ownership prerogatives and of a decent household. From property owners, they became tenants and even homeless. In Mauritius, they fell into poverty and were ghettoised in the slums of Port Louis. They even experienced multiple dislocations, such as when they were moved to the Dockers Flats, and were then moved to the North and South ends of the District of Port Louis.

Their lives were disrupted and their dislocation impacted negatively on their lifestyle and ways of living that changed drastically. For example, in Chagos it was spacious, and in Mauritius they were dumped in overpopulated slums where presently, there is a lack of space. The regions where they live were identified as forming the poorest areas of the island facing various social problems as collateral consequences of poverty.

## Social and Economic Impoverishment

When the Islanders were relocated to Mauritius, the British promised a house and employment to the latter. However, in fact, when they arrived in the land, Mauritius was at a stage of social and economic restructuring. Hence, the social and economic integration of the Islanders was not a Government's priority, and it can even be said that the Islanders added to the Government's burden.

Furthermore, given that the Chagossians worked in the coconut plantations and production, their skills did not meet the Mauritian skills demand. They did not possess employable skills for neither the textile production nor the Sugar Industry nor the Tourism sector that were the three main economic pillars. Thus, they were classified as unskilled workers and there was no training programme to recycle the Islanders for them to be employable.

The 1970s was a period of economic transformations and upheavals. At the beginning of the 1970s, the Mauritian Government adopted a diversification programme, with the setting up of the Export Processing Zone and the development of the Tourism sector. Mauritius was a mono-crop economy but following the down turn in sugar exportation, demographic explosion (high population growth) and economic downturn, the Government had to diversify its economy. However, by the end of the 1970s, the economic situation worsened following the rise in petroleum prices and the end of the sugar boom. Consequently, the balance of payment deficit steadily rose, and this led Government to approach the International Monetary Fund and adopt the structural adjustment.

Jeffery (2007) wrote that:

*"...When the Chagos islanders arrived in Mauritius during the 1960s and early 1970s, Mauritius was already experiencing high unemployment, high population growth, and over-reliance on the sugarcane industry (Bowman 1991: 112-13), an industry in which Chagossians had no prior experience. In addition, the Mauritian economy was characterized by domination by Mauritians of European and Asian descent, preferential employment of members of one's own family or ethnic group, and negative racial stereotypes of Afro-Creoles (Boswell 2006; Eriksen 1998: 62-7; Mauritius Research Council 1999: 10, 60). No resettlement or employment programmes were put in place to assist the Chagossians' integration in Mauritius, and many Chagossian families subsequently faced chronic homelessness, unemployment, and poverty" (see Botte 1980; Walker 1986).*

Building on her analysis, when the Islanders landed in Mauritius, they were unemployed, and only in 1978 and 1982, and they receive financial compensation. It seems that in 1982, some received a plot of land in Pointe aux Sables and Baie du Tombeau and each adult and child was granted 56,000 rupees and 28,000 rupees respectively. The compensation they received was insignificant, as it was not enough for them to settle and start building a decent life. Under pressure, the Government chose the easy way to deal with the Chagossians' situation, instead of developing a programme of integration and resettlement. In a way, they bought the latter's silence.

In fact, it can be said that the Islanders were coerced into accepting this compensation, since they were made to sign a pledge whereby they give up their right to return to their homeland in exchange for the compensation. The Government acted in a dubious, illegal and unethical way since the Islanders were not informed of the implications of their actions and were deceived into signing the document. We can even question whether they were illiterate and understood the conditions of the pledge.

In the Chagos, they lived a self-sufficient life and they did not rely on the capitalist market to sustain a living. Hence, they did not suffer from starvation and were able to meet their family's basic needs. They lived a simple life and were not familiar with the implications of living in a complex Consumer society. Mauritius is a modern economy that relies essentially on the market economy, whereas Chagos was a post-modern country

where, that relied on a semi-capitalist and semi-subsistence economy. Hence, the Mauritian lifestyle, and especially the urban life, differed greatly from that in the Chagos.

Accordingly, the deportation of the Islanders negatively affected their living standard, since when they arrived on the island, they relied completely on the market economy to meet their family needs and secure food. They lacked financial means to afford a proper and decent living standard and to meet their basic needs. Furthermore, they were socially and economically marginalised and constituted a class of *lumpenproletariat* (lowest and most degrading social stratum). Unemployment and poor living conditions conjointly resulted in the Chagossian impoverishment and socio-economic exclusion.

The Islanders are still experiencing poor living and working conditions and socio-economic marginalisation. The new generations are disadvantaged from birth, and thus we can say that there is a generational transmission of impoverishment and marginalisation. Vine (2006) describes the Islanders situation in Mauritius as 'sever and chronic impoverishment' that "has extended beyond economic poverty to include material, physical, psychological, social and cultural impoverishment."

## Cultural Stock

The Chagossians were also deprived of their indigenous identity and their cultural rights when they were deported to Mauritius and forced to assimilate to the Mauritian Creole social group (General Population demographic category). They are integrated into the Afro-Creole Mauritians because of their biophysical appearance and, consequently, they are doubly victimised. They are doubly discriminated against because of their origins, and they experience discriminations because of their group categorisation.

Although 'Others' (non-Chagossians) catalogue them as Creoles, they identify themselves as a distinct group with their own specificities that act as group descriptor. These descriptors contribute to portray the Chagossians as a separate social and cultural entity. For example, they have distinct customs, traditions, mores and values that differ from the Mauritians.

Building on Jeffery's (2007) study, it can be propounded that the displaced Chagossians romanticised and standardised collective historical narratives, and their constructions and representations of their homeland and return to their home country<sup>29</sup> form part of their cultural stock. Their culture is a legacy of their experience of displacement and resettlement in that their right of return and the romanticisation of their homeland are the result of their exile, impoverishment, marginalisation and oppression in their host country.

The researcher also expounds on the politicisation of the displaced Chagossian oral narratives and songs that are instruments of their political and legal struggles. They have socio-political functions and thus should not convey public representations that could hamper, and have detrimental impacts on, their legal actions.

*"...Romanticized portrayals of life on the Chagos Archipelago have been used effectively to elicit political, legal, financial, institutional, and moral support from diverse outsiders...How Chagos is remembered and represented by public representatives such as singer-songwriters and community leaders is politically important for the Chagossian struggle in exile. Critical engagement with the problems of the colonial Chagos Archipelago, which used to find an outlet through a vibrant tradition of musical composition, is no longer appropriate because of the detrimental effects such negative portrayals of Chagos could have on the Chagossian struggle for the right to return and on Chagossian unity, optimism, and activism..."<sup>30</sup>*

The displaced Chagossians share some cultural traits with the Mauritians but also show distinct cultural traits that are symbolically represented in their oral narratives. Their collective identification, longing for the home country and a desire to return to their

homeland as well, constitute their distinctiveness and are inherent to their group and self-identity construction.

This 'mythico-historical' and longing for the homeland are peculiar to Disaporic and displaced population groups. Their relocation in Mauritius led to cultural loss and cultural mutation, leading, in turn, to differences between the displaced Chagossians' culture and the homeland culture. Jeffery (2007) reveals how the representations of the displaced Islanders and those who remained in the Chagos differ. These discrepancies can be conceived as an enrichment of the Chagossian culture.

The Islanders' collective memory is a social construction based on their interpretation and reconstruction of their past; with the present influencing their reminiscences and reconstructions of their past. Their experience of displacement and resettlement is perceived as a shared experience with 'others' (other Islanders) experience being conceived as 'my' experience (personal experience) as well. The distinction between the 'others' (other Chagossians) and 'me' (personal) are blurred as the collective experience primes over the individual experiences.

Romantisation of homeland and 'collective memory of loss' are inherent in the displaced cultural identity construction and this self-identification can be considered as a surviving mechanism. Their longing and desire to return help them to face their present reality of impoverishment. For them life in the Chagos will be better than their current life in Mauritius. For example, in Mauritius they are ostracised whereas in the Chagos, they will be at home. This longing has psycho-emotional underpinnings and social functions in that it maintains strong group cohesion and helps the Islanders to face their harsh reality.

Culture is not bounded within country boundaries and is not fixed. The Islanders arrived in Mauritius with their cultural assets such as a strong musical culture that they transformed through their encounters, experiences and power relationships to develop what can be named the displaced Chagossian culture. This displaced culture plays a central role in their struggles for their rights to be respected and for reparation for breach of rights.

In fact, as Jeffery (2007) exposed, that their public narratives and especially *chansons engagés* (Eng. trans. engaged song) have helped to secure international mobilisation and sensitise the world about their plight and their experience. They have adapted their cultural assets to their current displaced situation and ensured the survival of some of their cultural traits. Their use of their cultural assets and their oral narratives are a means to pass on their message to create awareness and to make their voices heard.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Chagossians are a population in exile. They are descendants of slaves and Indian indentured labourers that were sent to the Chagos Archipelago as plantation workers under colonialism. The successive generations native of the islands peopled the Chagos and evolved into an insular society with distinct social and cultural systems, including a distinctive Creole language and valuable cultural system born from cultural diffusion.

At the end of Colonialism, the British rulers forced them to leave their homeland. They experienced multiple historical victimisations and discriminations. Firstly, they experienced forced and involuntary dislocation and, secondly, they were stripped of their right to return in a coercive way.

The Chagos Islanders are fighting for their right to return to their homeland, professing they are indigenous of Chagos, based on their self and collective identification to the Archipelago, their attachment to their islands and claiming their cultural distinctiveness as *Ilois*. Their attachment to their land is inherent in their collective memory and is passed on through public narratives across generations.

The Chagossian population is a discrete socio-cultural unit, constructed through successive settlement movements during Colonialism and common living and working

conditions. Their shared the experience of deportation, and resettlement and impoverishment in their host country led to the Islanders forming a close and distinct socio-cultural group with intrinsic and distinct customs, traditions and dialect. They forge a collective identity and a group consciousness based on these experiences.

All the research conducted discloses that in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Mauritius, this population continues to be an underclass and vulnerable citizens who bear the burden of their forced and illegal displacement and resettlement. They live in relative poverty and experience multiple impoverishments and multiple victimisations. The latter continue to endure the negative aftermath of historical patterns of socio-economic exclusion and discriminations and of the denial of their human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR (2002)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Appendix A: Detailed List of Slaves in the Chagos Archipelago as per the 1826 Slave Census .

<sup>4</sup> Dussercle (1934, p. 26).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* (1934, p. 2).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Dussercle (1934, p. 104).

<sup>8</sup> Term refers to people who obtain their food by low intensity farming.

<sup>9</sup> Dussercle (1934, p. 67).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>13</sup> Jeffery (2007, p. 951).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 956.

<sup>15</sup> Heilein (2002).

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.un.org/documents/>

<sup>17</sup> Nauvel (2006).

<sup>18</sup> Report Select Committee (1983, p. 10).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Vine (2009, p. 24).

<sup>22</sup> <http://chagosrefugeegroup.net>

<sup>23</sup> Vine (2006, p. 21).

<sup>24</sup> National Support Front for the *Ilois* (1981, pp. 7-8).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> D'Unienville (2002, p. 9)

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>29</sup> Jeffery (2007, p. 951).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 961-962.

# AGALEGA, NO MORE A LESSER DEPENDENCY

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## INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, the Truth and Justice Commission, through Mr. Jacques David, Commissioner, and Mrs. Colette Le Chartier, Research Coordinator, entrusted me with a study on Agalega. The Aims and Objectives and Terms of Reference were:

*“PROPOSED PROJECT PROPOSAL: AGALEGA*

*Aims and Objective:*

*To make a historical, social, economic, cultural, and land use study of Agalega from the end of slavery to date.*

*Terms of Reference:*

*To study the historical, social, cultural, economic, land situation of Agalega.*

*To study the conditions of living of the inhabitants.*

*To make an assessment of the present situation.*

*To propose recommendations in connection with Section C above.”*

Given that I was sent by the Roman Catholic Education Authority in 1971, to found Agalega primary schools, nominated by the Government of Mauritius as Resident Manager in 1983 and Chairman of Outer Islands Development Corporation Board in 1992, Agalega is not unfamiliar to me. I was not reluctant to accept the proposal, as a service to the Commission, and specially to the people of this territory of Mauritius.

Luckily, Mr. Dwarkapersad Jawaheer, who was employed by the Outer Islands Development Corporation, as Purchasing and Marketing Officer, and who was also a member of Outer Islands Development Corporation Board, willingly accepted to join me in this project.

The remoteness of Agalega, the restricted availability of transport to visit the Islands, the limited accessibility of documents and the time constraint to complete the study, were our principal difficulties. Fortunately, I had a chance to spend 3 days in Agalega from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> March 2011. The bad weather did not help much in my observations but did not prevent me to note the infrastructural development on both islands and the material progress of the inhabitants. However, much has to be done in the field of human development.

The Collective Agreement between the Corporation and the Employees of the OI DC residing at Agalega, effective since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 (Doc. II attached) is a reference to the significant progress made by the authorities, to put Agalegans in line with their Mauritian counterparts regarding conditions of work. Still Agalega is different to Mauritius in many respects. The environment and living conditions are specific. Money does not make a man happy. There is a feeling of dissatisfaction among the small population of 300 inhabitants. Nevertheless, they are passionate about their Islands and leaving it is not easy. An in-depth social study should be carried out to analyse the feelings of the inhabitants, as there is much to be done in the field of social events, and this present study is far from exhaustive. To carry out a more thorough study, one will have to spend at least three months on both islands, the interval between the visits of two ships, using this report as a base.

## 1. GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

1.1 Agalega, an atoll situated at about 1,100 Kms North of Mauritius and 563 Kms South of Seychelles, latitude 10° 25' South and longitude 56° 35 East (Appendix II), is made up of two small islands, the North and the South, Tamarind and Avocado-shaped respectively. Separated by a narrow stretch of about 2 Kms channel formed by reefs on two sides, it is crossed by foot, with ankle deep of water, and occasionally by a trailer drawn by tractor at low tide; by boat at high tide, and it is impracticable when the sea is rough. (Appendix 1) Formerly, the channel was crossed by carriage/cart pulled by horses, or by boat equipped with oars or sails.

Photo 1 Today, Crossing the channel (*La Passe*) by an outboard, from one island to another



1.2 The bravest of Captains has always feared to approach the coast due to the unpredictable change of the wind and waves. On the other hand, the coral barrier, acting as a close protection belt to the islands, was so feared by sailors, because of the surf and swells that they considered Agalega a pitfall to avoid. Furthermore, it lies in the region of the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone and is not spared by cyclones. (*Document 1; Agalega The Way Ahead*, by D.Burranchobay 4.4).

Photo 2 'SS. Wajao' engulfed by the waves in 1933 at Port Ste. Rita in the South



1.3 However, Man likes challenges; he will eventually achieve his aim. Thus, following the wreckage of *SS. Wajao* in 1933, Port Sainte Rita, in the South, was transferred to the North during the same year. This port was blessed by Mgr. James Leen in 1936, and is named Port St. James. The channel, in the coral reef, was enlarged to ferry passengers and for embarkation and disembarkation manoeuvres.

Photo 3 Jetty of Port St. James



1.4 Only privileged witnesses like birds can tell the story of ancient visitors. Nevertheless, they cannot disclose whether the Malays, the Arabs or the Portuguese were lucky enough to set foot on one of the islands before the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

1.5 In spite of some speculations, it is commonly accepted that in 1501, the famous navigator, Juan de Nova, nicknamed Gallego, who was employed by the Portuguese, discovered the islands and dedicated them to his homeland, Galicia (*Galice* in French). This is why Father Dussercle, in his famous book *Agalega Petite Île*, named its inhabitants “*Agaliciens*”. The local people accepted it and made reference to this appellation publicly (Appendix IIIA, IIIB). By a decision, in Parliament, of the late James Burty David, former Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, the inhabitants of Agalega are now called *Agaléens/ Agaleans*.

Photo 4 A fresco at Lafourche made in 2010, by Mr. Felix, a Secondary school teacher



## 2. EARLY SETTLEMENT IN AGALEGA

2.1 Two centuries after its discovery, there were some unsuccessful attempts by the French to settle in Agalega. The approach to the islands, with the encircling reef barrier, was too hazardous and the distance from Mauritius too far.

2.2 In 1799, Dr. Carosin obtained the permission to open an establishment in Agalega. He sent a European sailor accompanied by a “*Black*” to prospect the Islands, but they were left there on their own, without any support. Three years later, Dr. Carosin returned to France and he managed to repatriate his European prospector, completely depressed, to Isle de France. No mention was made of his companion, the first slave, sent there.

2.3 On 19 August 1808, 'Sieur Laurent Barbé obtained a provisional authority from General Decaen to found a settlement on the island (Appendix IVa). The concession was ratified on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1820 by the English Governor Farquhar (Appendix IVb).

2.4 On 26 September of same year, Mr. Caillou de Rosemond, as first Manager of Agalega Islands, and thirty slaves originating from Madagascar, Mozambique and Isle de France, left Port-Louis on board *Le Tailvent* bound for Agalega. They reached their destination after eight days of navigation, but landed six days later, due to the difficulties which they encountered to negotiate their way through the reefs in an inclement sea. As soon as they settled, the thirty slaves started to toil in the coconut field for the production of oil, with much satisfaction, under the supervision of Mr. Lefranc.

Mr. C. de Rosemond died on 2 November 1814. Later in 1835, Mr. Leduc, the then Manager, found a skull in North Island which he associated with Mr. Rosemond. He erected a monument in South Island in memory of the first Manager and founder of the colony, died on Agalega (Appendix V). Other administrative staffs who died on the Islands were also buried in this area. This place is called “*Cimetière Blanc*” and by tradition, is reserved for administrative staff only or for “*mistresses and/or natural children*” of staff. Before the death of Mr. Caillou de Rosemond, a cemetery, “*Cimetière Noir*”, was created, formerly for slaves, and it is today the common burial place for all workers.

Both cemeteries are found in the South island. There is also one in the North, open to all.

During that period, the Islands have known three Administrators who maintained discipline, with the help of their “*Commandeurs*” (foremen, also acting as disciplinary force) and controlled the slaves according to the set rules. The *Code Noir* was applied. Consequently, the whole population was baptised as Catholic and was given a Christian name.

2.4.1 As in all societies, some people are prone to transgress the Law or to disobey orders given by administrators; a few, at that time, who vindicated their rights and were considered as activists, were punished. Their punishment was perceived as a deterrent to their peers. Depending on their offence, they either were sent to prison or they received twenty-five lashes, or both concurrently (Ref. 3, for a picture of a Whip).

This is why the village where the public punishment was inflicted is still called ‘Vingt-Cinq’ (twenty-five). Some people want to change this name in order to blot out the unhappy memories of slavery. Others insist that it is important to keep history alive. Most inhabitants have no opinion. A consensus thereon is needed (Doc III TJC 99- 102 Créole Version).

Photo 5 Old prison with 6 cells



Photo 6 Actual Police station equipped with police cells



2.5 In 1832, Mr. L. Barbé entered into partnership with Le Comte de St. Aulaire and others. Agalega became “*Société d’Agaléga Limited*”. At that time, some 100 slaves were attached to the coconut establishment, and later 200 were. The Administration had already been entrusted to Mr. Auguste Leduc since 1827.

Under the administration of Leduc, the slaves and their children were happy, healthy and well fed; this was officially reported on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1828, by Captain Greville, Commanding Officer of Corvette *L’Espoir* to H.E the Governor of Mauritius, witnessed by Dr. John, travelling on board the same vessel. Law and order were well maintained (*Agaléga Petite Île, Livre II*). The reports of different visiting Magistrates corroborated with the observations of the Captains of different vessels (Appendix VI).

2.6 The acquired rights of the slaves were respected. They gave full satisfaction in the production of coconuts and its by-products, in spite of hard and primitive work. The copra crusher presented here was used to extract oil and was turned with a transversal pole pushed by five men/women, in place of donkeys.

## 2.7

Photo 7 Part of Oil extractor still found in the South



## 3. ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

3.1 The Emancipation Bill, passed in the House of Commons in July 1833, led to the abolition of slavery, in February 1835.

3.2 As soon as Mr. Leduc, the Administrator/Manager (*Régisseur*), received the “Bill”, he gathered the whole population and communicated the historical event to each and every one. From then on, there were no slaves and no one belonged to a master. He explained to the working population their rights and duties, stipulated by the Bill, as free men and women. No whip would be used but discipline would be maintained. Same punishment (except the whip), would be maintained for those who were found guilty of severe breach of the Law. The case and punishment would be registered in a book and presented to the visiting Magistrate for control.

3.3 The liberated slaves were told that they were not forced to work for the establishment. As against other parts of the world, Agalega has no other source of earning money; so no work, no pay. Before becoming fully-fledged workers, as carpenters, blacksmiths..., they were considered as apprentices. All workers, men and women, would have to enter into a contract with the establishment and would be allowed to return to Mauritius at the end of their contract, if they so wished. However, these men and women knew little of working conditions elsewhere, apart from Agalega, which they considered as their homeland by adoption, their children being born on these islands. The land remained the property of the establishment.

3.4 They were so well considered by Mr. Leduc, who had a really humane approach to them, that they welcomed their new status and did not want to leave the islands. They were free to work and grow their own vegetables on a plot of land allocated to them. Fish was abundant. Rations of rice, pulses, oil and salt were maintained, and they were paid according to their work. They all decided to stay (Appendix VI; also 4.3).

Photo 8 Monument in memory of the slaves	Photo 9 Plate unveiled by late Hon. Min. James Burty David
	

#### 4. TRANSITION PERIOD

4.1 Freedom was liberty for some and unconditioned liberation for others. At the beginning of emancipation in Agalega, abuses were more frequent than self-control. It took the Manager much tact and patience to educate the workers, to bring them to upgrade their living condition and to devote more time to their families. For some, the freedom of movement during weekends from one island to another was the main source of abuse. As corrective measures, after consultation with the working population, a working week of 45 hours, divided into five days, was reconsidered, and the hours redistributed over 6 working days. On Saturdays (half-day) and Sundays, Mr. Leduc encouraged the couples to devote themselves to their families and embellish their environment, as well as take care of their homes and children. They were allowed to do extra duties, such as planting maize, after working hours, in order to better their new social and economical situations. All workers agreed, with enthusiasm, to the Manager's proposals. The Manager also explained to them that they could strictly abide by the articles set by the *Bill* and refuse all other advantages. To alleviate their burden, donkeys were introduced to turn the oil extractor. A new mode of living thus started on the islands. Men and women were no longer attached to their masters, but to their families. Mr. Leduc taught moral values through Catechism, in the absence of priest, organised an infirmary, built houses with block of corals for his administration, thatched huts for labourers and other workers, workshop for skilled workers; a real establishment village was created with religious and social life. It was the dawn of a new culture.

The 'Camp' for labourers and other workers/apprentices, called '*Camp Noir*' (Appendix VII: *Le Mauricien* June 1982) was separated from that of administrative staff, called '*Camp Blanc*'. Up to the late 1990's, *Camp Blanc* was a restricted zone after 6.00 p.m.

4.2 On a special mission to Agalega in June 1838, Judge Anderson gave an excellent report on how the Islands were administered by Auguste Leduc. He confirmed that discipline was well administered and adhered to. Unwarranted punishment was not inflicted on the workers. The houses were in good condition. Moreover, Management gave proper clothes to the children.

4.3 The visiting Judge found it important to explain again to the workers their rights, in detail, but they wanted no change in their weekly rations of food, as part of their wages and their working conditions as agreed with the Manager. In such conditions, concluded Judge Anderson, there was no way that the workers would apply to leave Agalega, after the end of their contracts, and this was to the credit of the Management (Appendix VI). The whole population was then 230, including 73 children born on the Islands.

## 5. MISMANAGEMENT LEADS TO SOCIAL CONFLICT

- 5.1 Unfortunately, in April 1839, Auguste Leduc, who was considered by his workers, as a father, had to leave Agalega to visit his family in France. He recommended Eugène Pallière, one of his assistants, to replace him temporarily. The proprietors approved the proposition, given that Eugène Pallière knew the workers and was acquainted with the administration of Leduc.
- 5.2 Change of a Manager often brings a change in administration and a subordinate wants to prove that he can give a better performance than his former Chief. This principle works when the one who steps in, masters his job perfectly, is loyal to his job and knows how to manage a society by putting the people first. Thus, the choice of a Manager is a determining factor for the welfare and prosperity of workers, especially in remote Agalega.
- 5.3 Eugène Pallière asked the help of his brother Pierre, Administrator (*Régisseur*) of Agalega from 1819 to 1827, (before the abolition of slavery). The arrival of the brother changed the social atmosphere completely. Pierre Pallière refused to stay in the North in the role of a *Commandeur* and joined his brother Eugène in the South. Both took advantage of the situation, as in the time of slavery. The result was catastrophic. The workers felt oppressed. The production suffered much and North Island was badly neglected.
- 5.4 Eugène Pallière acted as a tyrant, ordered all the workers with their families, to move to South Island, with their belongings, including their hens and pigs. The population, just freed from slavery, was reluctant to work under pressure. Most of them wanted to leave the islands in order to free themselves from what they considered as a reintroduction of slavery.
- 5.5 To recover the confidence and sympathy of his men, Eugène Pallière, without any plan or consultation with the proprietors, increased considerably the wages of all the workers, as a bribe. However, the production remained unchanged to the detriment of the establishment.
- 5.6 Young and inexperienced workers were privileged and were given posts of responsibility as team leaders (*Commandeurs*). Management, on credit and without control, sold alcoholic drinks, thus leading to a lack of discipline and morality and social unrest was installed.
- 5.7 Repression is not a method to maintain Law and Order. Everything turned topsy-turvy. Eugène Pallière kept a pistol on him to protect himself. The inhabitants grew weary of the life they had. In unison, they claimed their right to go to Mauritius on the first arriving ship. All the rehabilitation work done by the former Manager was lost.
- 5.8 By that time, August Leduc had become a shareholder of Agaléga Société Ltd. He set foot again on the Islands on 30 January 1841. His former workers, who found in him much hope to redress the awkward situation, greeted him with much enthusiasm, except the two Pallières.
- 5.8 The situation was not clear for Mr. Leduc. While Mr. Aullaire, a shareholder in the Company, entrusted him with the Management of the Islands in writing, Mr. Barbé, another shareholder, asked him in another letter to support Mr. Pallière, whom he maintained in his post as Manager.
- 5.9 This confusing situation and the stubbornness of Laurent Barbé led his partners Leduc and St. Aullaire to sell their shares. With no more interests in Agalega, Leduc sailed to Mauritius on 15 December 1841, to the great dismay of his former workers. They begged him to send a ship from Mauritius on, or about, August 1841, at the end of their engagement. But Leduc had no more say in the chaotic situation on Agalega, and his representations in Mauritius, to the concerned authorities, in favour of the labourers, were of no avail. The emancipated population organized itself and took the serious decision to vacate the land, to which it was attached.

## 6. INDENTURED LABOURERS

- 6.1 The products of the islands were no longer flourishing. Felix Barbé, the son of Laurent Barbé, and other partners of the Company had no alternative but to sack the Pallières brothers. They were replaced by Mr. Gonard in 1842.
- 6.2 Meanwhile, the movement towards Mauritius continued. Only a few families, mostly those with children born in Agalega, were left behind.
- 6.3 The constant movement of workers to and from Agalega was a source of concern to Management. A shortage of workers was felt. Indian immigrants who had arrived in Mauritius, as indentured labourers, were recruited to work in Agalega, on the same contractual basis as their counterparts there. They received their rations of rice, pulse, oil, salt as part of their wages. They bought other necessities in the only shop of the establishment, owned by the company.
- 6.4 Those Indo-Mauritians adapted themselves on the Islands. They contributed much in the production of copra. A few were married, or cohabited with, the local women. They adopted the Catholic religion for their children, and some died in Agalega.

Today we come across such names as Meness Mootoo, Marday, Petchaye Poulay, Sababady, Soopramanien etc. In the South, there is a place called "*kas gounn*", where workers of Muslim faith used to celebrate their feast-days and there is still a family bearing the name of Mamode in the North (Ref. Names in Doc. III of TJC).

## 7. FROM PRIVATE COMPANY TO CORPORATION

- 7.1 Before and after the British occupation of Mauritius, Agalega was under a grant of “*Jouissance*” made to Mr. Eugène Laurent Barbé (Appendix IVb: *La Gazette des Iles*, No. 17, décembre 1987). The responsibility for the administration of the settlement was vested in him. He, in turn, delegated his rights and duties to the different Managers (*Administrateurs/Régisseurs*) on the spot.
- 7.2 In 1865, the owner of the *jouissance* was given the option of changing his holdings into grants in perpetuity or making cash payments on certain conditions.
- Agalega thus passed on for perpetuity to the heirs of Mr. Laurent Barbé claimed by his daughter-in-law and her three grand children.
- 7.3 In 1934 ‘La Compagnie d’Agaléga’ was formed. It is obvious that, as a Company, the land belonged to a group of persons, and not to an individual.
- 7.4 In 1961, the Company was sold to ‘Diego Co. Ltd.’
- 7.5 In 1962, the Islands were sold and became ‘Chagos Agalega Co. Ltd’. A third of the Company belonged to a Seychellois, Paul Moulinié, another third to Rogers Co., together with the Colonial Steamship Co. Ltd., and the remaining third was owned by a group of Seychellois. Thus, the Company was registered in Mauritius as a foreign company and administered by a Seychellois Manager under the Mauritian jurisdiction (Doc. I, *Agalega The Way Ahead* by D. Burrenchobhay 4.7 - 4.9).
- 7.6 In 1976, with the acquisition of the Islands by the Government, Agalega Corporation was formed and managed by Mauritians.
- 7.7 Since 1983, Agalega became OUTER ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (OIDC) and is governed by a Board, the OUTER ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT BOARD (OIDB), now under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands. No individual or group of persons is proprietor of land on Agalega. The whole Island is actually a State land.

## 8. LAW AND ORDER

### 8.1 Law and Order

Before Mauritius became independent, Agalega was considered as a lesser dependency. A Magistrate, who had the power not only to see if the population observed Law and Order, but also to verify if it was correctly administered, visited it on an annual basis. He went through the perusal of all administrative books, checked the accuracy of weights and measures, and even inflicted fines on the Manager, if needs be. The Manager was also reprimanded for arbitrary or excessively severe punishment inflicted on workers. In the absence of a magistrate, a maximum of three days imprisonment, by the Resident Manager, was allowed. Insolence and insubordination were considered as serious in order to secure respect for the Manager (to be compared as a Contempt of Court). On the other hand, inadequate punishment was rectified and those who were found guilty of severe faults were sent in prison to Mauritius. It is to be noted that no legal assistance was available on the islands for the accused.

In 1904, Administrative arrangements were reviewed by the Colonial Government and the "Administrateur" (Manager) was allowed "to impose a sentence of imprisonment of not more than six days for insolence and insubordination. He could detain disturbers of peace, and those whose conduct was likely to lead to that, until the danger of disturbance was over. He could hear cases of 'praedial' larceny and impose fines not exceeding ten rupees. Particulars of all cases must be entered in a register, which must be submitted to the magistrate on his next visit". (Doc I, *Agalega The Way Ahead* by D. Burrenchobay 5.8 Document I)

- 8.1.2 Most offenses were due to theft, family squabbles, drunkenness, wounds and blows and some rare disputes led to serious fight. Cases of rape were most often reported as elopements. It was considered as breaking news and *the talk of the village* that gave rise to sudden row between parents of both parties and then was heard no more. When it involved a member of administrative staff or other outstanding officers, the case was never reported as such, as if '*droit de cuissage*' was implicitly accepted or imposed.
- 8.1.3 Before the arrival of the Police, the Resident Manager was responsible for Law and Order with the help of his '*Commandeurs*' who often acted as bouncers. The community on the islands was used to that practice. Very often, cases of family affair were brought before the Manager for conciliation.
- 8.1.4 It happened, not so long ago, that when a woman wanted to express her grudge against someone else, she vented her aggressiveness on dogs. Thus, she gave her dog strange names such as: Zamiodan (*ami aux dents/ friend only by smiling*), foupamal (*Je m'en fou / careless*), volersavon (*voleur de savon/ soap theft*), Veillerzaction (*curieux ou espion/curious or spy*) zalou, (*jaloux/jealous*). Pabliémoi (*fais toi attention à moi/mind you*), zolirob (*jolie robe/nice dress*), grogra (*gros et gras/big and fat*), etc... Dogs were considered as members of the family. Males were castrated to control reproduction.
- 8.1.5 With Independence, Agalega is no more a lesser dependency, but part of Mauritius.
- 8.1.6 The police arrived in Agalega in the early 1980's and all criminal and civil cases are now taken charge of by them. "*Commandeurs*" became officially foremen in June 2006, following the signature of the Collective Agreement between Outer Islands Development Corporation and the employees of the OI DC residing at Agalega.
- 8.1.7 Unfortunately, cases of brutality, involving Police Officers against inhabitants, did happen (Appendices VIII & IX). In such a small community, the Resident Manager should represent the highest authority on the Island, and a *modus operandi* be found to protect the inhabitants and the interests of the Republic in certain cases.
- 8.1.8 With a population of 302 inhabitants (*Ref. NO. 9; Appendix XVI*) including 10 police, 6 SMF, 6 Coast Guards, the ratio of police to inhabitants is 1:19 (Including the Coast Guard as inhabitants).

Photo 10 'Vingt-Cing' Village North



Photo 11 'La Fourche' Village North



Photo 12 'Ste. Rita' Village South



## SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AGALEGA AFTER ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

There are three distinct villages on the two islands of Agalega, which cover a total area of about 26 Km<sup>2</sup>.

- 8.2.1 The main village, with the largest population is 'Vingt-Cinq,' in the North, where the principal administration and the airstrip are found. 'La Fourche' village is also situated in the North and is important for its Port (Port St. James). The third village is 'Ste. Rita' in the South. Life is influenced by the environmental activities in each village.
- 8.2.2 From the very beginning, Mr. Leduc taught moral values through Catechism, in the absence of priest, set up an infirmary, built houses with blocks of corals for administration, workshops for skilled workers, thatched houses as *camp* for labourers. With the oil-extracting machine, the *calorifer* (barn to dry coconut for copra) an establishment village was created with its activities and social life (Ref. 4.1). His good Management brought peace, harmony and social justice to the establishment. However, a soft kind of semi-slavery was maintained, with an Administrator as the only Master after God, because of the remoteness of the islands. (Ref. 4.1 to 4.3). His social and religious work was, however, interrupted by his immediate successors (Ref. 5.1 to 5.7).
- 8.2.3 Coming from different cultures, Madagascar, Africa, Mauritius, India, the Seychelles (workers/labourers since 1925), and France, the people use as their language of communication Creole as in most French colonies. Agaleans use a few particular words, which are not in use in Mauritian Creole, picked by their proximity with Seychellois and old French masters, ( *enkuri* for direction, *abou* for succeeded, *bosoir* for a single man/woman without steady family life, *ranmafan* for hot sweet drink made of hot water and grilled rice, *gobergé* for eating and drinking merrily etc...) Today, the '*Kreol Morisien*' language is strengthening through the constant visit of the Agaleans to Mauritius and the presence of different Departments of Government employees on the Island (Education, Health, Meteorological officers, Post Office and Police). With this new generation, there is practically no difference between Mauritian Kreol and the Agalean dialect.
- 8.2.4 Influenced by the Seychellois on the Islands and by Seychelles Radio, the *Sega* sung by the parents has a typical beat and is accompanied with the harmonica, *triangle*, *guitar* and *ravanne*, whereas the new generation is influenced by the modern trends such as *Rap*, *Reggae* and *Seggae*. Programmes of MBC Radio and TV are now received on both Islands. Almost all families possess a Radio, a TV and a video set.
- 8.2.5 In March 2011, some Mauritian artists gave a concert in Agalega. They were accompanied by a group named "*Zenfan locéan*", a few young Agalean descendants residing in Mauritius. Some musical instruments and audio-sets are left in the Community Hall of North Island, built as a refugee centre in case of natural calamities. There is no qualified technician to maintain these instruments.
- 8.2.6 Culture and tradition are also found in traditional meals. The typical Agalean food is called "*Seraz*", cooked with coconut juice, as in some Indian regions, Seychelles, Diego Garcia and other coconut islands. Fish and/or other sea products accompanied their daily plates of rice. Turtles, birds and their eggs, which were much appreciated in the past, are banned today for the preservation of the species. Local drinks "*Bacca*" made from fruit or pulse fermentation, often prepared in spite of prohibition by Law.

Photo 13 Mauritian and Agalean artists performing in Agalega May 2011



Photo 14 Refugee centre, (Arche de Noé) in the North, in case of natural calamities



- 8.2.7 Alcohol is on the rise on both islands, regardless of age and sex. The youth's exposure to it is extremely worrying. All private selling points should be regulated. Dependence on alcohol is another form of insidious voluntary slavery (Ref.8.4.9).
- 8.2.8 Agalega had a matriarchal community not long ago, because polyandry was tacitly accepted, due to the fact that the male population exceeded the female one. The mother was the only one who could ascertain, without confusion, that all the children belonged to her. Therefore, she had the full control of her family. It was a common discreet practice that, with the consent of the husband, a second man (*noir bosoir* Ref 8.24) was accepted in the family. This additional man contributed considerably by fishing and with his weekly ration of food. In return, the woman attended to his daily chores and other intimate needs.

Up to late nineteen seventies, apart from the Manager, his assistants and the outstanding staff (Meteorological officers, nurses) only a few men were educated, especially those coming from Mauritius or Seychelles. Even the ‘Commandeurs’ had a basic notion of counting and reading. However, during the administration of Leduc, he started what he called a school for children. It was simply private tuition on a part-time basis. During the administration of Mr. Volcy Monier (1922- 1949), he opened a small school and some basic reading and counting were taught to the children. Mr. V. Monier was also instrumental in introducing a nursery for babies in the three villages during working hours, while the mothers were at work (*Agalega Petite Île* p.192). He favoured social, Christian and family life (*Agaléga Petite Île* pp.186, 187) and he managed to keep his community happy and contented.

8.2.9 A fully-fledged RCA teacher, helped by his wife, and recruited by the Catholic Church, founded the South and the North school on a solid basis, in January 1972 (Appendix X). Apart from dispensing full-time education, both acted as social workers and organised religious, social and cultural activities. As from 1978 at least one pupil, each year, with a good pass in Primary School Leaving Certificate attended a Secondary school in Mauritius. This project was supported by the Catholic Church and later, based on CPE results, the OI DC offered a scholarship to the best boy and the best girl. In 1976 and 1978, the Agalega school had a result of 100% passes in Primary School Leaving Certificate. In 2001, 13 students were attending Secondary Schools in Mauritius. Unfortunately, some left well before the completion of the secondary cycle for want of means, difficulties to integrate the school environment, homesickness, among other reasons” (Ref. Appendix XI Report on mission to Agalega April 2001, by Mr. Judex Viramalay, Assistant Director and Mr. Balakrisna Nirsimloo, Primary School Inspector).

8.2.10 Today there are a Pre-Primary school in the North

A Primary School on each Island;

A Medco Secondary School in the North covering Forms I to III and catering for three years Prevocational classes.

Some 13 students are actually attending Secondary School in Mauritius. They are partly subsidised by the OI DC and live with foster parents.

Photo 15 Nursery North	Photo 16 Jacques Le Chartier Primary School	Photo 17 MEDCO Secondary School
		

8.2.11 Some pupils who have attended Agalega Primary School and who have successfully completed secondary classes in Mauritius are today Administrative Staff of OI DC in Agalega.

8.2.12 The cultural life of a population is linked, to a large extent, to religion. The population is Christian by tradition. The inhabitants have always celebrated Christian festivities such as Christmas, Pentecost, Ascension, Assumption etc.

8.2.13 Father Malaval, a Jesuit, was the first missionary to visit the island in 1837. The visit of the priests, at that time, was not regular due to transport difficulties and the remoteness of the islands. However, the administrators and / or other members of the administrative

staff organised the Sunday Assembly in chapels on both islands and took charge of basic religious instruction and traditions (Ref. TJC Hearing of Mr. Soopramanien NO. 579 to 596).

- 8.2.14 Today, we have two nuns to assist the community. A Catholic Priest visits the population at least once yearly on special occasions. A couple belonging to the Pentcostal sect “Mission” canvassed the population through their neophytes. There is a Church on each island and a grotto at ‘La Fourche’. This Grotto serves as a bearing to incoming ships. Furthermore, the outstanding Mauritian staff, which is almost non-Christian, has a “Mandir”(Hindu temple) in the North (Ref. TJC hearing NO.602)

Photo 18 Sacré Coeur North Chapel	Photo 19 Mission ‘Voix de la délivrance’	Photo 20 Voice of Hindu temple
		

- 8.2.15 There was much ado among the population about the decoration of the temple with the Voice of Hindu buntings on Maha Shivaratree Day in 2011 and the wearing of VOH T-shirts by some of the devotees present. That celebration coincided with the arrival of *SS. Mauritius Pride*, on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 and a team of Indian workers to place a radar system at ‘La Fourche’ for coast and sea watch, especially in connection with pirates.

### Services in Agalega

- 8.3.1 Communication: Agalega has a particular variable Population Census, because the inhabitants used to work on contract and at its completion, they returned to Mauritius for various reasons. The main ones work in health, especially in maternity, and shopping especially for shoes and clothes. A few send their children to Mauritius for Secondary Studies and try to place them under the guardianship of close relatives. O IDC provides free passages to these students, when available. Thus, the school population fluctuates with the arrival of each ships or planes visiting the Islands.

8.3.2

Photo 21 Tristan Carver, Resident Manager and Emmanuel Jasmin, ODC employee busy preparing for disembarkation of passengers from *SS. Mauritius Pride* (2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011)



*From hold to saloon (8.3.3).*

- 8.3.3 Free passage by ship is provided to workers and their families. A full chapter on passage facilities is present in 2008 Collective Agreement .(Doc. II, Art. 4.4)
- 8.3.4 In the past, labourers travelled in the hold of the ship reserved for animals or guano on their way to Mauritius. They even slept on guano coming from Farquhar Is. Today, a comfortable saloon or cabin is offered to them.
- 8.3.5 On each island, there is a mini bus for the transportation of workers and the inhabitants to attend other activities.
- 8.3.6 A boat ferrying passengers between the two islands is available on a schedule of times, depending on tides.
- 8.3.7 Recently, the firm *Emtel* donated a cell phone to each adult and a bicycle to each child under 18. Prams were also given to babies and wheel-chairs to handicapped.

Photo 22 Child on bicycle



- 8.3.8 Health: There is a dispensary operated by a nurse on South Island and a hospital in the North with a charge nurse, a nurse and a doctor. In cases of emergencies patients are sent to Mauritius by the Police plane, *Dornier*.
- 8.3.9 For approximately ten years, only one case of death was registered on the island. He was an Agalean on a visit to his native land. He drowned at 'La Passe'. Patients are sent to Mauritius for in-depth treatment and those who were seriously ill, passed away there.

Photo 23 Air strip in North Island



- 8.3.10 Since 2005 only one woman has given birth to a baby girl in North Island Hospital, whereas, during this same lapse of time, 16 males and 8 females were born in Mauritius (Ref. XVIa). This is viewed with much concern by the population, as in future there will be no real Agalean born.

The residents, through the 'Island Council' and the group 'Amis d'Agaléga' have made representations to remedy the situation. On the one hand, there is a real risk of exposing the expected mother to deliver in the local hospital, without the same pre-natal treatment and facilities this exist in Mauritius, on the other hand a solution should be found to equip the hospital accordingly. On several occasions, the Agaleans have raised their voices publicly to protest against the situation of Health, among others, in Agalega (Annex XII A, B, press cuttings). The General Manager of OI DC has recently applied to the Ministry of Local Government & Outer Islands to find a solution to this social problem (Appendix XIII Letter from GM. OI DC).

Photo 24 North Hospital



Photo 25 Young disabled children

Three cases of handicapped children existed on the island. The three boys under 12 (two brothers in the South and one boy in the North) cannot stand on their feet, due to genetic disorders most probably caused by consanguinity. On the extreme left is one of the two brothers at Ste. Rita Village in the South.



- 8.3.11 Education. (Ref. 8.2.8/ 8.2.9). The children of Agalega do not benefit from the same facilities as exist in Rodrigues and Mauritius. Their insularity does not mean that they cannot adapt to normal education (8.2.10). They have the same potential which needs to be developed, as other children of the Republic. Good examination results in the nineteen seventies prove this. Special attention, according to their environment and their needs, should be given to them and support from the Ministry of Education in Mauritius (Ref. Appendix XI Report of visiting inspectors).
- 8.3.12 A Post Office exists on the Island and was inaugurated on 10 July 2002. It is *de facto* an agent of MPCB Bank. At the same time, Mauritian currency has reappeared in Agalega.
- 8.3.13 The shop of each island, which is an essential service, is now operating on a five-day basis, instead of one or two days weekly.

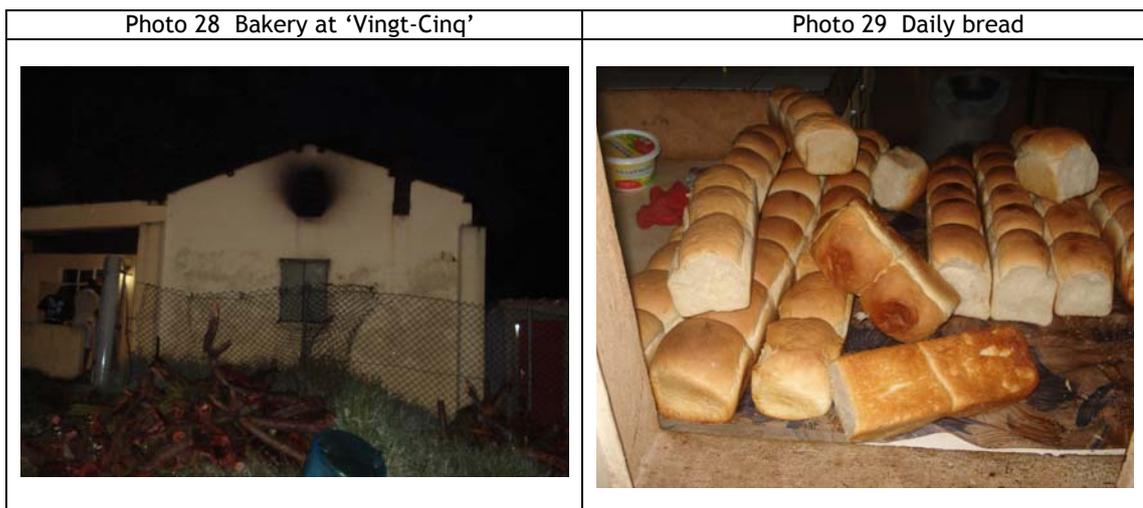
Photo 26 Post Office North Island



Photo 27 Shop North Island



## 8.3.14 A bakery at 'Vingt Cinq' provides bread for both islands.



8.3.15. Police was introduced in early 1980's and there is a Police Station on each island. The Coast Guards are posted at 'La Fourche' Village and will be equipped soon by a radar (Coastal Surveillance Radar System) installed by Indian Engineers for Coast and Sea watching, especially to track pirates (Ref. 8.1.6 to 8.1.8)

## Economic situation in Agalega

8.4.1 Much is being done these days to alleviate the sufferings of the residents. Even recently (1990s), rations of food were distributed weekly to workers on contract, as stipulated as far back in the 1877 regulations to govern the employment of labourers. Normal weekly rations for a worker on the establishment list, irrespective of whether it is a man, woman or child was as follow:

- (i) 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> lbs of rice and or flour. (To be delivered in the proportion of available stock)
- (ii) Salt at the rate of 125 grams;
- (iii) 1 pound of lentils or dhal or peas as available;
- (iv) 2 bottles of edible oil per month.

(Appendix XIV: Agreement between O IDC as Employer and the recruit as Employer)

8.4.2 All workers were considered as labourers. In 1975, in addition to the weekly rations, their monthly salary was:

Men: Rs. 50 against Rs. 25 in 1973

Women: Rs. 32 against Rs. 13 in 1973

Children (Both sex above 10 years old):

Rs. 15 to Rs. 18 against Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 in 1973.

(Doc. 1: *Agalega The Way Ahead* by D. Burrenchobay, 3.30)

8.4.3 At that time life on the Islands suited the needs of permanent residents, who depended on only basic things to live. Fish was abundant and they lived on the weekly rations received, and shopping was not a big issue (Ref.8.2.7). They were completely detached from material things. They possessed nothing except some rustic furniture, which accompanied them in their trips to and from Mauritius.

During same period, unemployment in Mauritius attracted workers to Agalega, regardless of the primitive living conditions. But after some time of observation and compliance, on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1981, while the Seychellois Manager was on leave in the Seychelles, a petition with 28 signatures and 113 finger prints, was sent to the Prime Minister of Mauritius and copied to the Commissioner of Police and to the Chairman of the then Agalega Corporation, through the Director of Meteorological Services. The petitioners asked the Mauritian authorities to consider the security, working conditions and salaries, and the social, cultural and welfare situation of the inhabitants of the Island. They also asked that the Minister of Rodrigues be their representative in Parliament and that, in future, they could have the right to vote. (Appendix XV; Copy of petition) This was a historical event. It backed up the recommendations of Burrenchobay Report of 1975, *Agalega: the Way Ahead* (Copy of document I attached for ease of reference). It was the first time that the oppressed people of Agalega, as a team, helped by Mauritian workers, dared to face administration, and petitioned the authorities in Mauritius. The Prime Minister's Office replied favorably on most issues through the Director of Meteo (Appendix XV).

- 8.4.4 In 1995, there was a revision of their salaries and workers, from General Purpose workers to drivers, were considered to form part of the establishment on Agalega Islands. Their salaries ranged from Rs. 2,530 to Rs. 5,300 (Ref. Appendix XVb). Then, later, cash was given in lieu of ration (Ref. Addendum of Appendix XIV) and the right to vote was acquired. Concrete houses have been built on both islands. Primary and secondary schools are made available with more teachers (Ref. 8.2.9).

Today, helped by some social groups and organizations, especially the Syndicate Jack Bizlall and the Lawyer Dev Ramano, the young generation have become aware of their rights. Following a representation made by the Employees of the OI DC residing at Agalega to the Outer Islands Development Corporation, a Collective Agreement was reached on the whole question of work on the islands, with details. A giant step forward was thus made. At last, Agalean workers are on a par with their counterparts in Mauritius, in line with PRB. The basic salary now ranges from Rs 6,300 to Rs 19,500. (Ref. Art 3 of Agreement Doc. II) They are even allowed to apply for transfer to other parastatal corporations, whenever opportunities exist (Ag. 2.28). The Classification of employees and their job specifications are inserted (p 2-3) and salary scales listed accordingly (p. 5-6). Job description is also attached. (Document II; A complete copy of award attached for ease of reference).

- 8.4.5 In March 2011, 60 families signed a lease for land and houses. (For conditions, cf. Art. 4.3; Page 12 of Award). The land remains a State property. The lease is for 20 years. This was long overdue. (Ref. TJC Hearing NO 645 - 685).

Photo 30 Signature of a lease for housing



8.4.6 Apart from bicycles donated to children by Emtel, many motor cycles can be seen on both Islands. As employee of a Parastatal body or a worker is allowed a grant through the Civil Service Mutual Aid Bank. Workers take advantage of this offer, but most of them spend their money blindly.

Photo 31 Brand new motor cycle



- 8.4.7 As there is no unemployment, there is no real problem of money, except for those who have contacted loans.
- 8.4.8 There are small shops '*Tabagie-like*' to sell cakes, sweets and other candies coming from Mauritius. Even sandwiches (*pain fourré*) and noodles can be found in some places.
- 8.4.9 Alcoholic drinks can also be obtained, at late hours, outside the shops. This practice leads to many social problems. Police and Management should remedy it (Ref. 8.2.8).
- 8.4.10 Fishing for sale and for export to Mauritius by the residents and some outstanding staff, is becoming a common feature. This is a second source of income for Agaleans. However, exploitation of the local people mostly by Mauritians, should be avoided. A barter system is in practice through this method. OI DC should devise ways and means to regulate this situation. Furthermore, the lagoon is being depleted by over exploitation. Octopus is the first to suffer.

9. POPULATION CENSUS ON AGALEGA APRIL 2011

Particulars	Male	Female	
0 - 5 yrs	21	17	
5- 10	19	18	
10 -15	28	14	
15-18	09	05	
18 - Above	115	56	
Total	<u>192</u>	<u>110</u>	G.Total= <u>302*</u>

\*312 including 37 males and 06 females Mauritian officers working in Agalega.

(Annex XVIa; XVIb)

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1.1 Human promotion and community development rehabilitate the individual and his family in his dignity and upgrade the status of the population. To reach this goal, Integral Education, training, communication, information and participation in the development are the Key Concepts.

10.1.2 The Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, OI DC, Island Council, 'Les Amis d'Agalega' and 'Mouvement Diocésain, 1<sup>er</sup> février' and/or other interested parties/stakeholders (Civil Aviation, Education, Health, Meteorological Officers, the Police, Telecom Officers and others) should coordinate their efforts for an integrated development in Agalega.

The Resident Manager has a prominent role to play and should be referred to as the Representative of the Government on the Islands. His participation and that of the representative of the inhabitants are important to motivate action. A workshop or a round table thereon, with all stakeholders *in situ*, would help.

### 10.2 Incentive for a comeback

10.2.1 Agaleans have never possessed any land or houses on Agalega, so dispossession does not apply. In his statement in front of the TJC, on 18 August 2010, Mr. Soopramanien said that the Agaleans are not in search of money as compensation but of social services as Mauritians (TJC Hearing NO.381 - 396). However, Agalean descendants, who have been deported, and want to come back to be reinstated and recover their rights of earning their living on what they consider their *mother land*, or the land of their ancestors, should be given priority in contractual work according to their competence especially in the field of fishing, construction, agriculture, cultural and social activities etc. (Ref statement of Gino Alfred & Co. on 18/08/10. No.126, 155, 166, 252, 353, 391). An addendum can be made to the note on Article 3.10, p. 8 of Collective Agreement (Document II) as follow: *This is not an agreement to exclude employees residing in the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues. It should be applied on the basis of priority of consideration to interested and eventually qualified Agaleans and/ or Agalean descent residing outside Agalega.*

10.2.2 4.3.2 of C.A (Doc. II) will automatically apply:

*“ In the event any employee who has not been issued with a residence would wish to construct his house, he shall be entitled to a lease of residential plot of land, a housing loan deductible from his loan account for the construction of his house, and the cost price for the purchase of building materials”.*

10.2.3 As there is no *Home* for elders in Agalega, housing should be made available, on a humanitarian basis, to old and faithful retired workers of the Corporation, who are not entitled to a lease, to have a residence in Agalega close to their children. One or two are, indeed, in a destitute condition in Mauritius. The Ministry of Social Security, through their representative in the Legislative Assembly, could attend to this issue.

### 10.3 Education and Training

10.3.1 The basis of all development is Education. Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Schools exist on the Islands (Ref.8.2.9). A proper screening should be made before sending teachers to Agalega. Even if they receive re-location allowance, as do other Government officers, they should be properly briefed before assuming their duties, equipped and sustained by the Ministry of Education. On the islands, they should meet on a regular basis to support each other in their duties and socially. They are the *artisans* of the progress of Agalega. Much could be done through them. Some are doing very well. Frequent visits of Officials of Parent Ministry would be appreciated. A special case should be made to recruit Teaching

Assistants among Agaleans (Doc. II 3.9), with special training in Mauritius, as it was the case in the past for Rodrigues.

10.3.2 A common Parent Teachers Association of the three institutions combined would be beneficial. As it is actually the case, motivation must come from the schools' administration.

10.3.3 Scholarships for students in further studies in Mauritius and for upgrading the capacities of the employees in Agalega, should be envisaged. Beneficiaries should be strictly Agaleans or of Agalean descent. A proviso to serve Agalega for a given period should be inserted in an agreement between the provider and the beneficiaries.

The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, OIIC should look into it for the provision of an annual budget.

10.3.4. Training in related fields should be given to interested candidates to implement recommendations of the C.A. Award 2009 (Art. 3.9, Doc. II):

*“Efforts should be made to create added value polyvalent jobs to cater for environment protection, meteorological surveillance, fire fighting, the conservation of fish, birds and other animals, food protection, energy alternatives, leisure activities, training on the job, agricultural development, social activities, human rights, protection of historical sites, land allocations, engineering works, etc. Note: employees who show interest in these particular fields shall be given facilities to learn and to perform additional duties in the above relevant fields...”*

Furthermore, training in handicraft (coconut shells, fibre...), Home Economics, Leadership (formation of formators) and in all other fields aimed at boosting up the progress of the persons and the community, would be of the utmost importance and restore the dignity and confidence of the Agaleans.

10.3.5 To facilitate visits to both Islands, training in basic Hospitality Management would be an important contribution to the host families and to the island. This will facilitate local visits from one island to another for those who have no family or relatives on the visited island and will provide great support to visitors and officers on official visits to Agalega. At present, the Resident Manager caters for all visiting officials during the hectic time when the ship is in Port. In March /April 2011, the Resident Manager had to cater for some 40 visitors, and provide board and lodging for them, as there is no hotel or hostel on both Islands.

10.3.6 Training in Hospitality Management is a prelude to *Table d'hôte, Bed and Breakfast Hostels, Restaurants on a small scale basis.* (Ref.10.9.3)

An in-depth study must be carried out before introducing Tourism on a large scale, because of the sensitive ecosystem of the islands. A fishing stopover station is preferable. Consultation with the inhabitants, prior to any project, is fundamental.

10.3.7 In relation to 10.3.4, Organisations such as EWF, NEF, CSR, Women Entrepreneurs, etc. should be tapped. OIIC should be fully involved. The OIIC, the Island Council, 'Les Amis d'Agaléga' and the 'Comité Diocésain, 1<sup>er</sup> février' and all stakeholders, should work together for its implementation and monitoring, pending a Master Plan.

10.3.8 History of Agalega should be taught from Primary level onwards. The book of Father Dussercle *Agaléga Petite Île* is an excellent manual for secondary students.

10.3.9 A museum, with what is left of the ancient establishment and families, will be a living memory of traditions and culture, and an open book of history.

(Ex. ‘marmite quinze’, measures and scales for weekly food ration, ‘la cloche l’appel’, Radio “Sailor”, anchors of ancient ships wrecked on the coast of Agalega, Blackmith tools etc.).

Ancient buildings should also be repaired and furniture refurbished.

Photo 32 Ancient Teacher’s house	Photo 33 Ancient Administration building.
	

In the near future, Education and Training should introduce a Village Council in each village, elected by the residents for the residents.

#### 10.4. Health

- 10.4.1 Modernity is not exempt from difficulties. Not long ago, daily work performed in the coconut fields, as at home, was enough to replace physical exercise. The population was kept healthy. Today, with modern trends, physical exercises is necessary in all lifestyles.
- 10.4.2 The sophisticated apparatus for physical exercise, in the Tsunami Centre (‘Arche de Noé’. Ref picture 8.2.6) is under-utilised. No qualified physical instructor is available on both Islands. An Officer of the Police/ SMF/Coast Guard and or any outstanding staff with a good knowledge in the concerned fields, can certainly help, pending the arrival of an official instructor. It is important to train two Agaleans in this field and later, they can become Physical Instructors at schools during school hours and attend to others in the afternoon, on a roster basis.
- 10.4.3 Medical care is an important issue in Agalega and much has been said thereon. It is true that the population on the islands amount to some 300 persons only. Investment in human resources should not be exaggerated. However, where life is concerned, in order to preserve it, all facilities should available, regardless of money. The question of maternity is a complex one (Ref statement of Mr. Gino Alfred & Co. on 18/08/10. NO.189) An in-depth study is imperative to see to it. An incentive to increase the birth-rate in Agalega is recommended in the Collective Agreement of November 2009 (Doc. II 4.7.4/5) (Ref. 8.3.9).
- 10.4.4 Support from the ‘Society for Aid to Children Inoperable in Mauritius’ (SACIM) could be sought for the three handicapped children (Ref. 8.3.9).
- 10.4.5 Water tanks, to collect rainwater, have been installed, especially for kitchen purposes. Pigeons soil the roofs of the houses and are sources of streptococci. They should be eradicated, especially where they flocked in the South. In case of drought, water pumped from wells is utilised. Poultry-keeping on large scale should be kept away from this source of water.

Both islands are infested with mosquitoes and rats (Appendix V 8.4.3). With the help of the Medical Staff, a proper sustainable campaign to keep the environment clean is urgently required. There is a close interaction between Health and the environment.

## 10.5 Agriculture

10.5.1 Vegetables must be selected very carefully in Agalega, because of the poor sandy soil and climatic conditions prevailing. Actually, pests have spread all over the islands, and chemicals should not be used because of the fragility of the eco-system.

However, pumpkin, greens, lettuces, creepers etc. can be grown in particular conditions. An Agricultural Officer of *AREU* is setting up a Food Program in Agalega

An intensive training program, adapted to the island conditions, and starting at school level, could be launched. Very often, experts learn through the experience of local people. The contribution and advice of elders, with their experience of Agalega, should thus be sought, and plots of land, on a symbolic rental basis, could be allocated to interested families, for gardening and/or farming.

Photo 34 Plant covered with pests



10.5.2 *Bassin Capucin*, the only pool in the North, can be exploited for farming, especially the breeding of ducks. A place in the South called *tranche*, can also be exploited. Training in this connection is needed.

Photo 35 *Bassin Capucin* in the North (also Appendix NO. I; 3)



10.5.3 Seychelles expertise could be sought in farming. Sharing between Agaleans and Seychellois in different fields would be beneficial.

#### 10.6 Environment

People are usually moody, living with a dull environment, whereas a good environment makes the inhabitants cheerful and enthusiastic. With intense cleaning and planning, Agalega could become a natural garden.

10.6.1 Empty bottles, plastic, rusting iron sheets, old vehicles and thick bushes where mosquitoes and rodents nest can be seen here and there, on both islands, in spite of the goodwill of the administration (Appendix XII A).

A proper campaign to preserve the environment is imperative.

A cleaning campaign for a better Agalega may bring the inhabitants together and arouse their sense of civics duty and patriotism.

10.6.2 An 'Agalega Day/Week' involving all Departments on the islands, can be organised to clean up Agalega, as a form of social activity. It can culminate with Independence Day and end with a Sports day and a Public performance by local artists.

10.6.3 There are different coconut fields with different names. Their delimitation, with their proper names, will be a practical exercise in pedagogy to teach the History of Agalega to all the population, particularly young students. Names of streets and avenues should also be marked. This measure will reinstate the dignity of the people: from *Camp Noir* to *Avenue*, from *hut* to *bungalow*.

Photo 36 A bungalow in the South



10.6.4 Motor cycles, vehicles and the supply of power on the islands are sources of pollution. To reduce the high consumption of FUEL and thus emission of CO<sub>2</sub>, wind-powered energy and photovoltaic would help. Coconut oil, as FUEL, helps to reduce the importation of petrol in Agalega, but further studies should be done on how to control pollution.

Photo 37 Photovoltaic system at Civil Aviation, Metereological Station and Telecom



!0.6.5 Relatively speaking, Agalega should have the same privileges, in relevant fields, as Mauritius and Rodrigues (Ref. Gino Alfred Statement on 18/08/2010 N0.108 to 115; and Soopramanien No.310 - 313). This is why Gino Alfred in his hearing of 18/08/2011, claimed to name Mauritius as an Archipelago (Ref. Gino Statement on 18/08/2010 N0.697 to 703).

## 10.7 Security

- 10.7.1 A Refugee Centre has been constructed in the North. Another in South island will be constructed soon. The population should be briefed from time to time, on how Management will proceed and what is expected from them, in the event of a tsunami, a cyclone or other calamities. The contribution of the Police and Coast Guard should be guaranteed well in advance.
- 10.7.2 Jetty at Port St. James is important. A study should be undertaken to devise safety measures for disembarking and embarking passengers. It is a blood-curdling manoeuvre for new visitors, especially when sea is rough. There must be an alternative disembarking point somewhere in the South, in case of an emergency. Consultation with the locals is essential.
- 10.7.3 As there are no traffic signs on the island, all drivers, including motorcyclists, should follow a Code of Conduct. Police should take its role seriously to prevent accidents. With the increasing number of motorcycles, the establishment of this Code of Conduct in the absence of road signs, is very important. All owners of motorcycles should be obliged to follow these instructions.

## 10.8 Sport and Culture

- 10.8.1 (Ref. 10.3.1-2) Sport is one of the best means to fight anti-social habits. Drinking is on the rise. Boys and girls are prone to early sexuality. Idleness and lack of education are the main causes of this.
- 10.8.2 All facilities should be given to outdoor and indoor activities. The Ministry of Sport and Culture should extend its activities on Agalega, a territory of Mauritius. Agaleans could represent Mauritius in some athletic fields and in swimming, if given proper training.
- 10.8.3 With the help of the Coast Guard and the elders, regatta should be introduced. This will allow youngsters to develop their skills in canoeing, sailing, rowing, as their elders did. This practice will also help to develop skill in case of shortage of fuel or any breakdown or shortages on the island.
- 10.8.4 There are many talented artists in Agalega. Like diamond, they need polishing. Training in all fields is needed.
- 10.8.5 Musical and sound system instruments are available in the Refugee Centre. Training to operate and maintain these instruments is needed.
- 10.8.6 Singing, Slam, sketches, Drama, Theatre are new avenues to exploit. This will contribute to fight against social ills and boost up the personalities and discipline of many young people.
- 10.8.7 Police Officers could provide important help in the field of indoor and outdoor games. The fitness apparatus in the Tsunami Centre could be then best utilised under their guidance.

## 10.9. Services

- 10.9.1 During the dry season, bush fire is frequent in Agalega. The local male workers used to control fires in an archaic method, which is dangerous and time-consuming. With the increased storage of gas and fuel on the islands for different services, especially Jet Fuel for Civil Aviation and petrol and gas for Meteorological Station, and the local Management, security measures should be reinforced.

It is highly recommended that qualified Fire Officers from Mauritius should train young volunteers on Agalega. Discipline, drill and maintenance of equipment, sanctioned by a test, should be included. Successful candidates could wear uniforms. This would not give them

the right to neglect or abandon their employment with the OI DC. A roster system and a work arrangement should be established between the OI DC and those concerned (Doc. II 3.9).

- 10.9.2 At present, in Agalega, there is only one qualified skipper, trained in Mauritius. With the development of the Islands and the promotion of the self-esteem of the workers, more skilled boatmen/skippers are needed, especially to work on the embarkation and disembarkation exercises. Training is given at Naval School of Mauritius. Interested candidates could be sent there for training. Working arrangements, as indicated above, could be negotiated with Management.
- 10.9.3 Facilities should be available, in Polytechnic School, *Ecole hôtelière* etc., to follow courses in fields likely to help Agalega.
- 10.9.4 More and more visitors from Mauritius are keen to visit this remote Mauritian territory. No hotel, restaurant or *Table d'Hôte* exist because this was thought to be of no avail. With modern communication and access facilities, a system of restaurants or Bed and Breakfast will soon become necessary. This will also be useful for residents on visits to another island or to Officers on duty. Training courses should be made available to interested parties (Ref.10.3.4).

## 10.10 Religion and social

- 10.10.1 Religion is not only a question of spirituality, but it also helps in the promotion of Integral Human Development.
- 10.10.2 Since the very beginning of the development of Agalega, the Catholic Church was present, and it has helped to introduce religious and moral values to the people (Soopramanien statement of 18/08/2010 N0,579 to 603). The remoteness of the island did not allow the Diocese to send a permanent priest, but Missionaries were sent, as and when possible.

In 1972, the two schools on Agalega were set upon a permanent basis by the Roman Catholic Education Authority, with the help of the Mauritian Government. The couple of teachers, who were sent, and their successors also catered for upgrading the social life, sporting and cultural activities. Today, the presence of two nuns is vital to family counseling and house-keeping.

- 10.10.3 As 100% of the Agaleans are Christians the presence of the Church should play an important roll in the development of the population. As it has a long experience in the field of training and in Human Development, facilities should be given to the Church to assist in the development of the islanders and their islands. On application, the Bishop of Port-Louis can send couples or qualified trainers for a certain period, in agreement with the OI DC to conduct training courses on Leadership and Community Development. All projects should be done in consultation with the residents. The PRO of the OI DC has a prominent role to play in the field of diffusing information about, and in the monitoring of projects.

## 10.11 Discipline

- 10.11.1 The implementation of a good Code of Conduct is a sign of good Management. A whole detailed chapter (Doc II; N0.5 P. 20-24), referring to Disciplinary Procedures, is inserted in the Collective Agreement signed on 24 November 2009 between the OI DC and the Employees of the OI DC residing at Agalega. But still, the inhabitants would like to have a visiting Magistrate occasionally on Agalega to hear Police Cases, instead of transferring the presumed accused to Mauritius for trial (TJC hearing; Soopramanien No. 354 - 376).

## 10.12 Economy

- 10.12.1 With the sudden and unexpected rise in salaries, due to a long struggle since February 1981 (Ref. *Pétition des habitants d'Agaléga*, Appendix XV), some families have entered into a

spiral of uncontrolled consumption. As employees of the Corporation, they are now entitled to obtain loans from the Mutual Aid. Motorcycles, TV and Video sets, Refrigerators, Washing Machines and other domestic appliances, are bought on hire purchase at any cost. Some families have even their own generators, in case of power cuts. A Counselor in Consumer's Protection is needed, to advise the population properly.

- 10.12.2 In the event of producing handicrafts with local materials, and other by-products derived from coconut trees, and/or sea shells, a Cooperative Craft Industry could be opened and articles sent to Mauritius for sale. The O IDC can open a shop for Agalega craft products. SMIDO can sustain such projects. A O IDC Public Relations Officer, together with the Purchasing and Marketing Officer, should be put to work.
- 10.12.3 Selling cakes, sandwiches and drinks are sold here and there on both islands. The setting up of small businesses is of interest to some families. The shops, run by the O IDC, can later become a cooperative shop run by Agaleans. Training of the whole population in a Credit Union Society is very important.
- 10.12.4 Now that currency is present on the island and that modern trends are not a secret through TV, hairdressing, dressmaking, shoemaking courses could be run by resource persons found on the islands. Those interested can also follow courses in Mauritius (Doc. II 3.9; 4.4.7). These issues are important for the construction of a stable society.
- 10.12.5 Those coming events will certainly bring more students to Mauritius. The O IDC should continue to make provision for them and for those who come on medical grounds. The PRO will have much to do.
- 10.12.6 It is the dream of some Agaleans to find, one day, one of theirs occupying a permanent posts in the Office of the O IDC in Port Louis. With proper training and qualifications, it is obvious that this dream will, eventually, become reality. The Collective Agreement of 2009 stipulates:

*"The Corporation shall set down an employment application list. Any resident interested to work for the O IDC shall submit his application accordingly. This registration unit will serve the purpose of an employment bureau. Recruitment on the O IDC establishment shall be made from that list. Otherwise the names of the applicants may be communicated to other employers" (Doc. II; 2.2.5).*

The term 'any resident' should be extended to 'any Agaleans or Agalean descendants'.

## CONCLUSION

Agalega has a bright future ahead. The residents may hold the key to their own success, but alone, they will never succeed. All stakeholders, including the elected Members of Constituency No. 3, Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, the OIIC/OIDB, the Island Council, 'L'Association Les Amis d'Agaléga', the Church ('Mouvement Diocésain 1<sup>er</sup> février'), and all other groups or individuals who have an interest in Agalega, should join together to work towards a Master Plan for a modern Agalega (Ref,10.1.2).

The award, taking effect from 1 July 2008, has brought a new impetus to the working population. A material change has occurred in the life of every family. It is now an excellent opportunity to start a new style of living with moral values, work discipline, focus on training and Education for the promotion of each and every individual, the family and the community. It is therefore imperative that training be given at all levels and that all avenues in Mauritius be explored. It is possible to achieve great progress in consultation with the residents. All developments and projects on both islands should be made known to the population, and their participation encouraged, wherever possible, in order to avoid any doubt or confusion and even retaliation. The time will come when the residents will take in hand the development of their own islands through a Village Council System. Until then, support from stakeholders is necessary.

To preserve the memory of a community, it would be appreciated if a Museum could be initiated on the island, showing the ancient ways of living in Agalega, including, old tools, cooking utensils, fishing implements, ancient means of transport etc. and archival documents pertaining to establishments, and others aspects, since settlement. Genealogical research is also highly recommended.

It should be remembered that a Report on OIIC in January 1996 stipulated that:

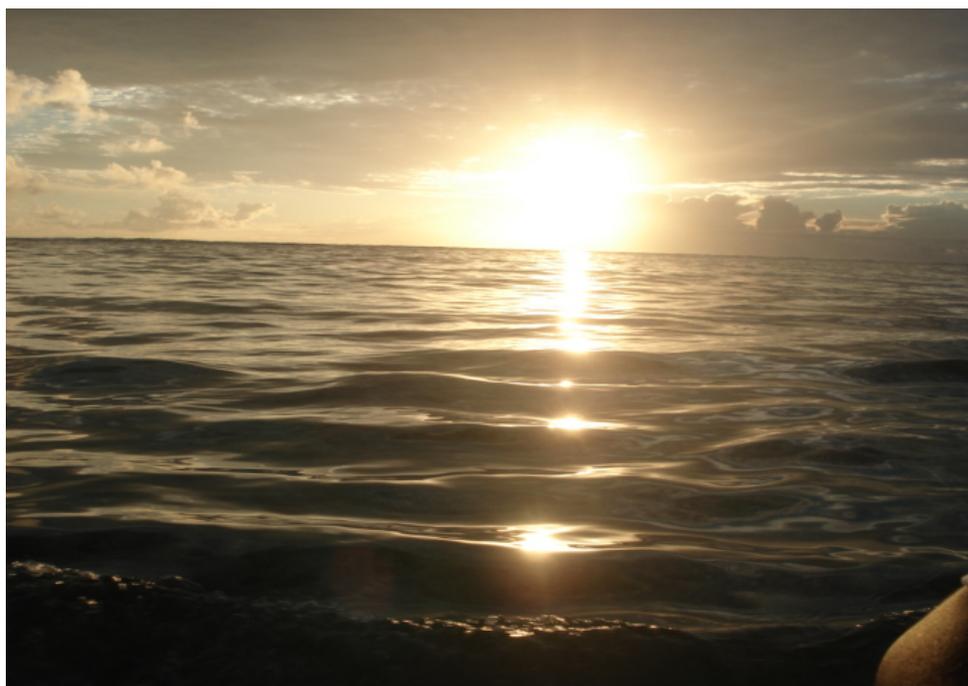
*"Agalega has a fragile eco-system that requires a balanced development that would not bear undue stress on the environment. Development should, therefore, be strictly controlled, the more so that in the long term, the two islands would be at risk because of the universal effect of global warming resulting from the depletion of the ozone layer.*

*The island should be envisaged as an outpost, with activities limited to agriculture, forestry, livestock and fishing. There is, however, some scope for a minimum level of tourism on the islands."*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Where Agalega is concerned, those who are in possession of important information/documents or have helped in some ways or other, and have never visited this Mauritian territory, are more curious to know what life is like on a coconut Island with sand, sun and sea. So, in return, they ask for more information than they give. They have already been thanked in person. We recommend to them the book “Agaléga Petite Île” written by Father Roger Dussercle C.S.SP.

However, we would like to put on record some persons and Organizations who have given their time, help and knowledge to help us complete this Report which is, by no means, exhaustive. Mr. P.L.S.Dwarka Davay, General Manager OI DC and his staff; Mr. Dev Ramano for documents and valuable advice; Mrs. Sharon Jacquin-Ng for documents and research work; Mr. Christian Carver, Resident Manager, and Mr. Emmanuel Jasmin for their hospitality in Agalega; Messrs. Lewis and Steeve Clarisse for their oral memories, especially for the names given to coconut fields associated with Ancient Administrators, and names given to dogs related to specific social situations; Mr. Gino Alfred for sharing information; Mr. Robert Agatine for his support; the inhabitants of Agalega who did not spare their time to share information with us on their Islands. The list is not exhaustive, but we should like to put on record the help and motivation given to us by the staff of Truth and Justice Commission.



**VOLUME 4**

**HISTORY, ECONOMY,  
SOCIETY AND MEMORY**

**Research Reports,  
Technical Studies and Surveys**

**PART X**

**PRESERVING THE NATION'S MEMORY**



# SAUVEGARDE DU PATRIMOINE DOCUMENTAIRE DE L'ÎLE MAURICE

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Toutes les personnes interviewées dans les institutions visitées, qui n'ont guère ménagé leur temps ni leurs efforts : leurs réponses constituent la substance même de ce rapport.

Corinne FOREST, Patrick DRACK, Satyendra PEERTHUM et Burty FRANÇOIS, également missionnés par la Commission, pour leur aide attentionnée et l'agrément toujours vif de nos discussions.

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Et tous les miens, amis et parents où qu'ils se trouvent, pour leur confiance et leur soutien inaltérables.

## 1 MISSION DE LA TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION

### 1.1 Question posée

---

La mission qui nous a été confiée par le Pr Alex BORAINÉ, Président de la Truth and Justice Commission, le 17/2/2011<sup>1</sup> portait les attendus suivants:

1. *To undertake a survey of the state of conservation of documents at selected institutions as per ANNEX 1<sup>2</sup> and make proposals for conservation and digitalization of documents in appropriate building.*
2. *To submit a report on the nature and type of documents involved, the dangers facing the documents and the long term and short term preventive measures to be considered.*
3. *From the above assessment, to devise the functions of a future Conservation Institute.*

### 1.2 Compréhension de la mission

#### 1.2.1 Approche globale

##### 1.2.1.1 Objets concernés

Notre lettre de mission ne précise ni à quels types, ni à quelle période chronologique de documents elle s'applique. Il s'agit donc, selon notre compréhension, d'une enquête archivistique globale s'appliquant aux documents conservés par les administrations et organismes apparentés, les entreprises privées ou les particuliers du pays.

#### A - Qu'est-ce qu'un «document»?

La définition du «document» dans la norme internationale ISAD(G),<sup>3</sup> référence en matière d'archivistique, est très large et oriente vers la gestion de l'information plutôt que vers celle du support qui la contient:

*Information portée sur un support, indépendamment de la nature de celui-ci.*

La définition du «document d'archives», qui complète la précédente dans la norme, fait intervenir une personne morale ou physique dans l'exercice de son activité:

*Information portée sur un support, indépendamment de la nature de celui-ci, et créée ou reçue par une personne physique ou morale dans l'exercice de son activité.*

Cette norme, édictée notamment pour prendre en compte les documents électroniques, d'apparition récente et par essence dématérialisés,<sup>4</sup> s'applique aux archives privées (on ne précise pas de quel type de «personne» il s'agit ni du cadre dans lequel elle émet et reçoit le document). Elle se place, au terme d'une longue évolution, en rupture avec l'archivistique traditionnelle, telle qu'elle affleure encore dans les législations nationales dont KETELAAR a fait l'inventaire:<sup>5</sup> cet auteur recommandait alors de se dégager des définitions reposant sur la valeur de témoignage historique, sur la forme adoptée par les documents d'archives et sur leur support.

Si l'on pousse cette définition à son terme logique, tout objet finit par devenir archive, y compris les objets du quotidien appartenant à des particuliers.<sup>6</sup> Ce cadre conceptuel serait évidemment trop large pour la mission de trois mois qui nous était assignée, d'autant qu'il convient également d'y ajouter:

- les imprimés (livres, périodiques,<sup>7</sup> etc.)

- et les documents sonores et audiovisuels conservés dans les bibliothèques.<sup>8</sup>

Par ailleurs, il s'agissait de travailler en complémentarité avec Corinne FOREST, dont la mission pour la *Truth and Justice Commission* concerne les musées de Maurice et les artefacts qu'ils conservent.

Nous proposons donc de prendre en compte pour notre mission:

- les documents écrits ou figurés, sur un support papier ou électronique;
- les documents sonores ou audiovisuels.

Cette approche large des documents nous amène à parler de «patrimoine documentaire» plutôt que de «patrimoine écrit» que nous jugeons trop restrictif.

#### B - Bornes chronologiques

L'histoire documentaire de Maurice commence avec l'arrivée des colonisateurs européens et sa date de «démarrage» est aisément déterminée.

Comment définir le terme de notre étude sur les documents «anciens»?

- Les règles bibliographiques internationales recommandent de parler de «livres anciens» pour un pays jusqu'à l'apparition de sa première bibliographie nationale; pour la France, par exemple, on retient la date de 1811.

La première bibliographie mauricienne de qualité scientifique est celle de TOUSSAINT,<sup>9</sup> éditée en 1956, et qui couvre la période 1502-1954.

- Par ailleurs, la loi sur les archives à Maurice<sup>10</sup> prévoit un délai de communication au public, unique de 30 ans.

La mise en corrélation de ces deux dates nous oriente vers une approche «large» des bornes chronologiques à adopter:

- Pour les archives, le début du 18<sup>e</sup> s. avec les premiers documents coloniaux censément conservés aux Archives nationales; le début des années 1980 pour les archives contemporaines communicables au public.
- Pour les livres et imprimés, des tous débuts de l'imprimerie mauricienne en 1767<sup>11</sup> à la date butoir de 1954.

#### 1.2.1.2 Élargir le cercle des institutions visitées

##### A - Visites prévues

Munis de ce nouvel encadrement conceptuel, il fallait en arriver à la pratique et en tester la validité sur les institutions de conservation mauriciennes.

À l'issue de discussions avec Mmes Vijaya TEELock (Vice-Présidente de la *Truth and Justice Commission*) et Colette LE CHARTIER (Directrice de la Recherche de la *Truth and Justice Commission*), nous avons demandé à étendre le cadre général de la mission, en augmentant le nombre d'institutions visitées. Cela nous fut accordé: les institutions visitées se montant désormais à quatorze, pour chacune desquelles des lettres de créance nominatives nous furent confiées, à remettre en mains propres au responsable(s) désigné(s) du Service de conservation:<sup>12</sup>

- Visites effectuées
  - Archives nationales (Coromandel);
  - Bibliothèque Carnegie (Curepipe);
  - Bibliothèque nationale (Port-Louis);
  - Cour Suprême de la République de Maurice (Port-Louis);
  - Évêché de Port-Louis (Port-Louis);
  - Hôpital psychiatrique Brown-Séguard (Beau-Bassin);
  - *Mahatma Gandhi Institute* - MGI (Moka);
  - *Mauritius Museums Council* (Port-Louis);
  - MSIRI (Réduit);
  - Musée de la Photographie (Port-Louis);
  - *Registrar General* (Port-Louis);
  - *Registrar of Civil Status* (Port-Louis).
- Carences constatées
  - Chambre d'Agriculture (*Port-Louis*);
  - *Mauritius Commercial Bank* - MCB (Port-Louis).

## B - Visites omises

Il avait été également évoqué avec la *Truth and Justice Commission* d'effectuer une visite aux archives du *Prime Minister's Office*. En dépit de l'intercession de M. Alain GORDON-GENTIL, Conseiller culturel auprès du Premier Ministre, il ne nous fut pas possible d'obtenir satisfaction.<sup>13</sup>

Il aurait également pu être intéressant de visiter, si nous en avons eu le temps:

- ⤴ la Bibliothèque municipale de Port-Louis, qui détenait, à la fin des années 1960, un riche fonds<sup>14</sup> de partitions musicales et de programmes de théâtre et de concerts anciens.
- ⤴ Des fonds d'érudits mauriciens qui sont en danger de dispersion, vu l'âge de leurs détenteurs : Mmes LY TIO FANE, M. Rivaltz QUENETTE, M. Guy ROUILLARD (SHIM), etc.
- ⤴ Des bibliothèques privées connues dans l'île pour leur richesse: Mme Lorraine LAGESSE, M. Roger LINCOLN, M. Raymond D'UNIENVILLE, etc.

### 1.2.1.3 Sauver ce qui peut l'être

Dès nos premières visites et prises de contact avec les responsables de Services de conservation, il nous est apparu que la mission initialement prévue ne cadrerait pas exactement aux réalités et attentes rencontrées des visités:

- les questions de conservation préventive et d'analyse des risques étaient, certes, cruciales mais notre compétence et le temps qui nous était alloué (trois mois) ne nous permettaient guère d'approche ni d'inventaire exhaustifs.
- Plus urgents nous sont apparus:
  - ⤴ les défauts de versement aux Archives nationales pour la période britannique et post-Indépendance,
  - ⤴ le désintérêt pour les archives intermédiaires, même anciennes, constatation confirmée par la visite de deux dépôts d'archives en particulièrement mauvais état de conservation,<sup>15</sup>
  - ⤴ les approximations constatées dans l'application du *National Archive Act 2000*.
  - ⤴ Les «pertes» et disparitions de livres et de documents dans les bibliothèques patrimoniales.

Dans ces conditions, en plein accord avec l'équipe scientifique de la *Truth and Justice Commission*, nous avons pris le parti d'aborder la question de la préservation des documents anciens de façon plus large que celle axée uniquement sur la conservation préventive ou curative, en nous posant les questions suivantes:

- l'utilité sociale de la conservation des documents, notamment des points de vue de la bonne gouvernance et de l'accès du Citoyen mauricien à l'information.
- La reconstitution du patrimoine national dilapidé, par deux voies conjointes: les récupérations auprès de leurs propriétaires actuels, une fois retracés; les compléments apportés aux fonds existants grâce à la collaboration internationale.

## 1.2.2 Sources et méthode

### 1.2.2.1 Choix d'un questionnaire semi-ouvert

Il nous est apparu, dès nos premières visites, qu'il était temps de procéder à une évaluation globale et homogène du mode de gestion, des aspirations et des objectifs des directeurs de lieux de conservation de documents anciens, fonds d'archives et livres imprimés confondus.<sup>16</sup>

Cette approche avait les objectifs suivants:

- Établir un *arrêté à date* de l'état des fonds, des méthodes de conservation et d'indexation, du degré de compétence des personnels, des moyens mis en œuvre par les services.
- Évaluer les besoins, exprimés ou latents.
- Comprendre les attentes des dirigeants des services.

La technique du questionnaire semi-ouvert, déjà employée avec succès dans l'étude des politiques culturelles à Maurice,<sup>17</sup> pouvait être ici utilisée avec profit:

- période de temps resserrée,
- unicité de l'enquêteur.

Après validation de la forme et de la teneur du questionnaire<sup>18</sup> par l'équipe scientifique de la *Truth and Justice Commission*, nous l'avons diffusé par courriel aux directeurs de services auxquels nous avons transmis nos lettres de créance nominatives.

Nous recommandions, qu'une fois choisis, le ou les interlocuteurs de référence (qui n'étaient pas toujours le Directeur ou la Directrice de l'institution visitée), nous puissions présenter le questionnaire en personne. Cela garantissait une bonne compréhension des enjeux et du vocabulaire, souvent assez techniques et la meilleure homogénéité des questions posées dans le temps et entre interviewés.

### 1.2.2.2 Étendre les sources d'information à la presse mauricienne

Nous avons été surpris de l'importance accordée par la presse mauricienne à tout ce qui touche à la gestion du patrimoine documentaire (en comparaison, le patrimoine bâti et les musées y semblent bien moins traités).

Cela tient sans doute aux «grandes manœuvres» qui eurent lieu dans le domaine du patrimoine documentaire lors de la création de la Bibliothèque nationale à la fin des années 1990 et aux abondants relais médiatiques dont put alors bénéficier (et bénéficie toujours) Yves CHAN KAM LON, son directeur.

Nous avons donc dépouillé un échantillon significatif de la presse mauricienne sur le sujet depuis les années 1990 jusqu'à aujourd'hui.<sup>19</sup> Une fois les références complétées avec les textes intégraux, trouvés sur Internet (disponibles depuis 2000 seulement) et dans diverses publications,<sup>20</sup> nous disposons de séries significatives pour les journaux: *Le Mauricien*, *Weekend*, *L'Express* et *L'Express du Dimanche*.

### 1.2.2.3 Constituer une base de connaissances à jour

Les recherches complémentaires effectuées pour cette mission ont mis en relief l'abondance de la littérature disponible et la vivacité des débats sur les questions de conservation, de numérisation, d'archives et de documents d'archives.

Il faudrait, selon nous, revoir assez profondément la Législation mauricienne en la matière et constituer sans tarder un corps d'archivistes et de bibliothécaires mauriciens rompus aux nouvelles technologies de la conservation: il nous a donc paru indispensable de créer une bibliothèque numé-

rique accessible à tous gracieusement sur le Web,<sup>21</sup> dont tous les éléments seront librement réutilisables, et dans laquelle on trouvera:

- les textes juridiques et réglementaires mauriciens,
- les textes réglementaires et normatifs des principaux pays étrangers et des institutions de conservation internationales,
- les articles et essais qui nous paraissent importants en matière de conservation, d'archives, de numérisation, d'informatique documentaire, etc. classés de façon thématique, par pays et par institutions,
- une base de données des principales institutions mauriciennes et internationales (avec leurs coordonnées complètes et l'adresse URL de leur site Web) en matière d'archives, de conservation, de normes, d'aide au développement et de politiques de préservation du patrimoine,
- une base de données libre de droits contenant les notices bibliographiques citées dans le présent rapport et dont nous autorisons la libre réutilisation.

Cette base de données pourrait servir de noyau et point de départ à la documentation du cursus de conservation dont la création est prévue dans le cadre de notre mission.

### 1.3 Déroulement de la mission

#### 1.3.1 Réception

Nous avons reçu un accueil très positif et courtois de nos interlocuteurs, qui se sont volontiers soumis au questionnaire, rempli avec notre aide en leur compagnie. La bibliothécaire du MSIRI, Mme Rosemay NG KEE KWONG, très occupée, a préféré compléter le questionnaire par ses propres moyens, puis nous l'adresser par courriel en requérant l'anonymat de ses réponses, ce qui était prévu.

Quant aux questions auxquelles notre première rencontre n'avait pu permettre de répondre, elles nous ont été transmises ultérieurement. Le taux de réponse à ces questions complémentaires a été cependant nettement moins bon.<sup>22</sup>

#### 1.3.2 Visite ne figurant pas dans ce rapport

Une visite ne nous paraît pas cadrer avec les objectifs de notre mission et a donc été omise.

##### 1.3.2.1 Mauritius Museums Council

Le *Mauritius Museums Council* est un organisme para-public créé en 2000<sup>23</sup> afin de développer les musées mauriciens et concevoir une politique muséale nationale.

C'est sans doute la présence du *Mauritius Museums Council* dans les locaux du *Mauritius Institute*<sup>24</sup> à Port-Louis qui a incité la *Truth and Justice Commission* à placer cette institution muséale dans la liste de nos affectations; en effet, le *Mauritius Institute* fut le lieu d'une bibliothèque publique dont la presque totalité des fonds anciens fut transférée à la Bibliothèque nationale lors de son installation,<sup>25</sup> ce qui entraîna, après quelques hésitations,<sup>26</sup> sa fermeture définitive au public.

Les livres demeurés au *Mauritius Institute* sont d'un médiocre intérêt pour notre étude:

- un fond de bibliothèque *de prêt* comprenant des romans, des essais, des ouvrages encyclopédiques, etc. qui n'ont pas été considérés comme *Mauritiana* et n'ont donc pas été transférés à la Bibliothèque nationale. Selon Yves CHAN KAM LON, ces livres devraient prochainement être versés à diverses bibliothèques scolaires de l'île.
- Un fonds relatif aux sciences naturelles, d'usage courant pour la recherche et la gestion des collections de sciences naturelles du *National History Museum* de Port-Louis.
- Un fonds - que nous jugeons obsolète - d'ouvrages encyclopédiques d'histoire de l'art (dictionnaires, «beaux-livres», etc.) d'usage courant pour quelques conservateurs des musées d'art et d'histoire de l'île.

Nous ne prendrons donc en considération le *Mauritius Institute* que pour les années précédant 2000, à propos de son ancienne collection de *Mauritiana* - et tout particulièrement des vols qui l'affectèrent massivement.<sup>27</sup>

### 1.3.3 Deux carences constatées

#### 1.3.3.1 Chambre d'Agriculture

L'importance des fonds de la Chambre d'Agriculture, association de droit privé créée en 1853, est à l'image exacte de la prééminence de la culture sucrière pour l'économie de l'île Maurice durant la seconde moitié du 19<sup>e</sup> s. et tout le 20<sup>e</sup> s. Il s'agit, pour ce que nous avons pu en apprendre, de documents d'administration (conseils d'administration, publications internes), d'ouvrages de botanique, de courriers avec des sociétés savantes outre-mer, de photographies, etc.

Les circonstances dans lesquelles les instances de la Chambre d'Agriculture ont refusé de nous recevoir paraissent conjoncturelles. Ayant pris contact avec M. Jocelyn KWOK, Secrétaire Général de la Chambre, le 26/02/2011, alors même qu'il allait s'absenter de l'île pour une mission, nous n'avons pu, à son retour, obtenir de rendez-vous avec lui ni avec le Président de la Chambre d'Agriculture, M. Thierry MERVEN, malgré plusieurs appels téléphoniques et deux visites en personne auprès de son secrétariat.

La raison invoquée de ces retards répétés, aboutissant au refus, était que l'archiviste de la Chambre d'Agriculture était absente en congé-maladie. La Chambre d'Agriculture n'a pas donné suite à notre demande et nous avons dû adresser un constat de carence à M. KWOK, le 18/04/2011.<sup>28</sup>

#### 1.3.3.2 *Mauritius Commercial Bank* (MCB)

Les archives de la MCB, principale banque de la République de Maurice et protagoniste majeur de l'économie régionale, sont de deux ordres:

- des archives de gestion courante ou intermédiaires, dont nous avons appris qu'elles n'étaient conservées que pour le temps strictement prévu par la loi mauricienne<sup>29</sup> puis détruites - et cela depuis la fondation de la banque, en 1836.
- des archives historiques, constituées principalement par M. Jean-Marie HURON, puis, dans une moindre mesure, par son successeur et actuel conservateur du Musée du Blue Penny, M. Emmanuel RICHON.

Leur richesse paraît importante mais reste inconnue, vu que les visites se font au compte-goutte, au bon vouloir du Conservateur.

Il semblerait que certaines d'entre elles sont exposées au Musée du Blue Penny, d'autres dans les couloirs et salles de réception de la banque (notamment la Salle du Conseil), d'autres enfin dans un dépôt d'archives situé au Caudan de Port-Louis (dont les équipements et les conditions de conservation nous restent également inconnus).

Nous avons appris, au second semestre de 2010, l'achat par la MCB d'archives privées: le fonds LE-CLÉZIO;<sup>30</sup> nous souhaitons obtenir des précisions de la banque sur ses modalités d'acquisition, de conservation, de dépouillement, d'indexation et sur les motivations de son démembrement, survenu à l'occasion de cette acquisition.

Sur la recommandation de la *Truth and Justice Commission*, dûment doté de lettres de créance nominatives, nous avons pris contact avec M. Philippe FORGET, Vice-Président de la MCB, le 26/2/2011<sup>31</sup> et lui avons alors adressé notre questionnaire. Sur le point de s'absenter de l'île Maurice, M. Philippe FORGET nous a fait savoir oralement qu'il recommandait, en son absence, de prendre contact avec M. Emmanuel RICHON, conservateur du *Blue Penny Museum* et archiviste des fonds anciens de la banque. Nous avons donc fait suivre notre questionnaire à ce dernier le 03/03/2011.<sup>32</sup>

Notre prise de contact téléphonique (environ vingt minutes, le 04/03/2011) avec M. Emmanuel RICHON aboutit à un refus clair et net de recevoir toute visite de notre part.

Dans ce contexte, nous avons préféré, en accord collégial avec nos supérieurs hiérarchiques de la *Truth and Justice Commission*, attendre le retour de M. Philippe FORGET. Nous avons, auparavant rédigé un compte-rendu de notre conversation avec M. Emmanuel RICHON<sup>33</sup> que nous lui avons adressé, avec mise en copie à M. Philippe FORGET.

Notre rencontre avec M. Philippe FORGET le 05/04/2011, brève mais courtoise, fut l'occasion de lui présenter notre mission et de lui remettre, comme prévu avec notre hiérarchie, les lettres de créance de la *Truth and Justice Commission*; cette visite ne fut malheureusement pas suivie d'effet et nous nous vîmes donc contraints de lui adresser un constat de carence, le 18/04/2011.<sup>34</sup>

### Approche historique

Sans minimiser l'importance des facteurs de détérioration externes<sup>35</sup> (climat, facteurs biologiques, etc.), nous souhaitons avant tout préciser les facteurs *fonctionnels* et *humains* expliquant l'état actuel des documents anciens dans l'île.

## 2 ÉPOQUE COLONIALE

L'enquête menée dans les principales institutions de conservation de documents anciens de la République de Maurice, ainsi que nos lectures sur l'histoire et la conservation des documents mauriciens, mettent en relief le caractère précaire, car constamment menacé, du patrimoine documentaire mauricien, et ce dès ses origines.

### 2.1 Archives: éclipses à répétition

Auguste TOUSSAINT,<sup>36</sup> l'archiviste infatigable de l'île Maurice entre 1941 et 1971, a retracé les vicissitudes des archives publiques de la colonie de façon aussi précise que possible, vu les dispersions auxquelles elles ont été soumises.

La synthèse que nous pouvons tirer de son ouvrage,<sup>37</sup> qui a le grand mérite d'associer les archives à leurs institutions d'origine,<sup>38</sup> est la suivante.

#### 2.1.1 Période française

##### 2.1.1.1 Compagnie des Indes

Des archives de la Seconde Compagnie des Indes Orientales (1719-1763), il ne reste quasiment rien et ce qui subsiste se trouve dans les archives françaises: les administrateurs repartaient souvent en Métropole avec des documents afin d'aider à leur avancement et de plaider leur action. L'archivage des documents d'administration locale ne faisait pas l'objet d'une fonction bien définie, étant assuré par le Greffier du Conseil Provincial (1734 - devient Conseil Supérieur en 1734, déplacé à l'île de France en 1735).

##### 2.1.1.2 Rétablissement de l'autorité du Roi de France

Une fois l'autorité du Roi de France établie après la dissolution de la Seconde Compagnie des Indes Orientales, l'île de France acquiert plus d'importance comme siège du pouvoir colonial dans les Mascareignes et au-delà (1775 - Administration des Comptoirs de l'Inde durant la Guerre d'Indépendance américaine; 1785 - Chef-lieu de tous les établissements français au delà du Cap de Bonne Espérance, ce qu'elle demeure jusqu'en 1810).

Parallèlement, par une Ordonnance sur le Gouvernement civil des Mascareignes de septembre 1766, son administration est partagée entre un Gouverneur, à la tête de l'administration militaire et un Intendant à la tête de l'administration civile et de la justice. Le principe de gestion constant des archives publiques est alors celui de la conservation dans les greffes de leurs administrations respectives.

Une administration locale se développe également à l'île de France (1753 - La Commune, embryon d'administration locale; 1762 - Syndics de quartiers).

Le création à Versailles (France) du Dépôt des Chartes des colonies<sup>39</sup> auprès du bureau des Archives de la Marine et des Colonies (édit royal de juin 1766) modifie quelque peu la gestion et la conservation des actes officiels : l'administration locale a désormais l'obligation d'y faire déposer les actes civils et administratifs principaux (état-civil, arrêts et jugements des tribunaux coloniaux, actes notariés, hypothèques, etc.). Le Dépôt des Chartes des Colonies délivre des copies d'actes aux intéressés, sur présentation de justificatifs.

##### 2.1.1.3 Révolution et Empire

La période de la Révolution et de l'Empire fait entrer les archives publiques de l'île dans une défaillance dont elles ne sortiront réellement qu'à la fin du 19<sup>e</sup> s. Les facteurs de dissociation sont les suivants:

- L'établissement de l'Assemblée Coloniale aboutit à la nomination d'un Secrétaire-archiviste en son sein (avril 1790) : dorénavant, les archives publiques sont éclatées entre: le Secrétaire-archiviste (administration intérieure), l'Intendance (administration extérieure) et les greffes des cours de justice (archives judiciaires et d'état-civil).

- Le Consulat rétablit peu ou prou la situation antérieure et abolit les institutions républicaines (1803). Un Gouverneur est en charge de l'administration militaire, un Préfet colonial de l'administration intérieure et un Commissaire de Justice de la justice. Toutes les archives de l'Assemblée Coloniale sont versées en vrac dans les bureaux du Préfet colonial qui hérite également d'archives administratives disparates.
- Au moment de la prise de l'île par les Britanniques, la division des fonds est à son comble: archives administratives et des assemblées auprès du Préfet colonial; archives judiciaires aux Greffes des cours; archives administratives locales auprès des Commissaires civils (qui ont succédé aux Municipalités).

Cette dissociation administrative, les transferts répétés de fonds d'archives entre services très souvent refondus, les difficultés de la navigation maritime (Blocus britannique) qui empêchent de fait la copie des actes en double et, donc, leur conservation en Métropole, les priorités du moment (la guerre contre les Britanniques) occasionnent de grands dommages.

### 2.1.2 Période britannique

La transition de l'administration française à celle du vainqueur britannique fut également dommageable aux archives publiques:

- Lors de son départ de la colonie (1810), le Gouverneur français DECAEN avait extrait de nombreux documents des archives administratives pour pouvoir rendre des comptes à son administration de tutelle, la Marine. Ils sont désormais conservés dans un fonds privé de la Bibliothèque de Caen (France).<sup>40</sup>
- DECAEN confie le reste des archives de son administration à un Commissaire à la Marine, M. MARROU, qui les entrepose sur sa propriété agricole de l'île Maurice. Cette situation dérogatoire dure près de cinq ans puisque les Britanniques ne nomment le Baron d'UNIENVILLE comme Archiviste colonial, qu'en mai 1815. Ce dernier n'a aucune compétence particulière en matière d'archives et sa fonction principale est de compiler les statistiques de la colonie.<sup>41</sup> Sa charge est abolie en 1833.
- À son départ, en 1817, le Gouverneur britannique FARQUHAR démembre les archives de la colonie à des fins personnelles (défense de son action à Maurice) et géopolitiques (renseignements sur Madagascar de nature à faciliter sa conquête par les Britanniques). Ces fonds sont depuis conservés à la British Library (Londres).<sup>42</sup>
- Auguste TOUSSAINT insiste sur la continuité administrative entre Français et Britanniques, notamment du point de vue des hommes en place et de la langue; on assiste pourtant, selon lui, à partir de 1833, à un véritable désastre archivistique: il faudra attendre 1893 et la restauration de la charge d'Archiviste colonial pour que la tendance s'inverse quelque peu.

Des déprédations irrémédiables ont alors été commises: la Commission des archives (établie en 1880) a procédé à de nombreuses épurations dans les fonds de l'époque française; ce qui en subsistait a été agrégé en collections arbitraires,<sup>43</sup> moyennant de nouvelles épurations, puis dissocié de tout contexte et relié en volumes par les condamnés des Prisons de Port-Louis.

À dater de la loi de 1893, les Archives recréées héritent de fonctions et de fonds supplémentaires, notamment, en 1893, du Dépôt légal des livres.<sup>44</sup>

### 2.1.3 Œuvre d'Auguste TOUSSAINT (1941-1971)

Le plus important travail d'inventaire sur les fonds des archives et des bibliothèques<sup>45</sup> de l'île Maurice a été accompli par Auguste TOUSSAINT (1911-1987), infatigable Directeur de la Bibliothèque Carnegie (1932-1941), puis des Archives nationales de Maurice de (1941-1971). Il en est de même de l'armature érudite ou scientifique en matière historique dans la région des Mascareignes (fondation de l'Association Historique Internationale de l'Océan Indien - AHIOI en 1960) et de son travail sur les routes maritimes à l'époque française.

Nous sommes, pourtant, bien en peine de trouver sa biographie et le détail de l'œuvre qu'il a accomplie. Tentons donc, hors de sa bibliographie,<sup>46</sup> une évaluation de son rôle pour le patrimoine documentaire mauricien.

Ce qui est clair, c'est qu'il envisagea toujours la protection du patrimoine documentaire comme un tout indissociable, ce qui était fonctionnellement conforme à sa charge: les Archives nationales étaient dépositaires du dépôt légal des livres depuis 1893 (donc de la plupart des *Mauritiana*), recevaient des dons privés, conservaient de nombreux journaux anciens, etc. Dans un rapport<sup>47</sup> rédigé en 1959 avec trois autres bibliothécaires, Auguste TOUSSAINT appelait à la création d'une Bibliothèque nationale à partir des fonds du *Mauritius Institute*, à l'établissement d'un organisme national supervisant toutes les bibliothèques et au développement conjoint d'une association professionnelle assurant la formation de ses membres. Ce rapport resta lettre morte.<sup>48</sup>

S'agissant des archives, voici le travail visionnaire dont nous pouvons créditer Auguste TOUSSAINT:

- 1942 - Dépôt des archives des Greffes des cours de justice.
- 1952 - Ordonnance sur les Archives nationales<sup>49</sup> - Extension du dépôt légal aux périodiques.
- 1954 - En accord avec Yves PÉROTIN, alors Directeur des Archives Départementales de La Réunion, projet d'inventaires parallèles, selon un découpage chronologique synchrone.
- 1955 - Dépôt des fonds notariaux (minutes notariales et répertoires).
- c. 1960 - Versement des premiers registres paroissiaux provenant de l'état-civil (*Civil Status Office*).
- c. 1960 - Microfilmage, avec l'aide de la France, des fonds de la période française.<sup>50</sup> Photocopies et photostats.
- c. 1965 - Abandon du projet d'inventaires parallèles avec les Archives départementales de La Réunion, faute de crédits et de personnel;<sup>51</sup> déliassage fastidieux des volumes constitués au cours du 19<sup>e</sup> s. par les prisonniers et tentative de reconstitution des fonds selon leur administration émettrice.

Le travail d'Auguste TOUSSAINT est toujours présent, bien qu'à l'état dégradé, dans l'organisation actuelle des Archives nationales de Maurice, en particulier dans le lettrage des séries (qui diffère du système de classification français en deux lettres) et dans la mise en valeur de la continuité entre les deux administrations coloniales française et britannique (alors qu'à La Réunion les inventaires sont différenciés selon le pouvoir colonial en exercice).

Les critiques que l'on peut apporter à l'œuvre d'Auguste TOUSSAINT sont de plusieurs ordres:

1. Une orientation idéologique, sensible dans certains de ses livres publiés à Maurice,<sup>52</sup> au début de sa carrière du moins.
2. La constitution d'un *Musée des archives* par extraction de certaines archives de l'époque française (ce qui, somme toute, n'est pas trop critiquable étant donné le caractère déjà démembré des fonds depuis le 19<sup>e</sup> s.).
3. Surtout, étant donné la polarisation de ses intérêts d'historien pour la période française de l'île Maurice, un certain désintérêt pour les archives de la colonie à l'époque britannique, conservées depuis son mandat dans un dépôt humide à Vacoas.

## 2.2 Livres : Bibliothèques d'érudits locaux

### 2.2.1 Une colonie de lettrés et d'érudits

L'importance du patrimoine imprimé mauricien a été beaucoup et précocement vantée.<sup>53</sup> l'île est équipée dès 1767 d'une imprimerie autonome<sup>54</sup> et dotée dès la période française d'une presse périodique jugée exemplaire par sa précocité puis par sa liberté de ton à l'époque britannique.<sup>55</sup> Elle est aussi le siège d'une certaine activité littéraire dès la fin de la période française, en Français puis en Créole.<sup>56</sup> Les loisirs dont jouissent les élites francophones, une tradition frondeuse de sociétés savantes ou littéraires et leur ardent militantisme politico-linguistique<sup>57</sup> expliquent l'importance des bibliothèques privées et des cabinets de lecture dans l'île.

Nous avons pu étudier,<sup>58</sup> grâce aux registres de comptes conservés dans les archives privées de l'habitation Labourdonnais, quelques achats de livres reliés à une librairie française (1858). Malgré le caractère très partiel de cette commande du maître de céans, Christian William WIEHE, on est frappé par la variété de ses intérêts, par l'actualité de ses lectures et surtout par l'abondance des ouvrages commandés - et encore ne s'agit-il que de l'une des deux langues parlées par Christian WIEHE.<sup>59</sup>

En droite ligne de l'érudition historique européenne, on assiste à la constitution de recueils de textes historiques relatifs aux Mascareignes par des érudits locaux,<sup>60</sup> qui profitent de leurs voyages pour compiler des documents se trouvant dans les archives et bibliothèques des Métropoles. Un mouvement d'érudits bibliographes est également constaté au tournant du 20<sup>e</sup> s.

## 2.2.2 Bibliothèques patrimoniales issues de fonds privés

### 2.2.2.1 Mauritius Institute (Port-Louis)

Le *Mauritius Institute*, dont l'histoire est d'abord celle d'un Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle<sup>61</sup> créé par quelques membres fondateurs de la Société des Arts et Sciences, Charles TELFAIR, Louis BOUTON et Julien DESJARDINS, reçut en héritage plusieurs collections et bibliothèques, dont celle d'Adrien D'EPINAY. Initialement ouverts au Collège Royal et uniquement réservés aux membres de la Société Royale des Arts et Sciences, le musée et sa bibliothèque vivaient faute de moyens avant que le Gouverneur Sir Arthur PAYRE n'accède à une demande de la Société Royale (1878) d'étendre les objectifs du Musée et d'en faire une institution librement accessible au public. Une Ordonnance (1880) établit l'institution, le terrain est promptement réquisitionné à Port-Louis, le bâtiment inauguré (décembre 1884) et les ouvrages de la bibliothèque transférés en janvier 1885. La bibliothèque n'ouvrit cependant au public qu'en 1901, après avoir reçu en don les 9,000 ouvrages de la bibliothèque de l'avocat et politicien mauricien Sir Virgil NAZ.

Anthony CHEKE<sup>62</sup> raconte la triste décadence du *Mauritius Institute* à la fin du 20<sup>e</sup> s.: la cause principale en fut que le Gouvernement Colonial déposséda<sup>63</sup> le Conseil d'administration du *Mauritius Institute*, jusque-là indépendant, de la capacité de nommer le Directeur, le Bibliothécaire et le Conservateur de l'institution.

### 2.2.2.2 Bibliothèque Carnegie (Curepipe)

La Bibliothèque Carnegie<sup>64</sup> de Curepipe, second véritable exemple de bibliothèque publique conservant un riche patrimoine documentaire créé dans l'île,<sup>65</sup> est le résultat d'un don de la Fondation Andrew Carnegie.<sup>66</sup>

Les conditions statutaires mises au développement d'une Bibliothèque Carnegie étaient que la Municipalité démontre son utilité, fournisse gracieusement le site, procure annuellement au moins 10% du coût de sa construction pour en assurer l'entretien et assure un service gratuit à tous ses lecteurs. Une pétition, initiative d'un simple citoyen, Ross BAIN, rallia 117 habitants de Curepipe, donnant lieu à un versement de 1,800 £ (soit \$ 9,000 US) de la part de la Fondation Carnegie et au vote, par le Conseil Municipal de Curepipe, d'une dotation annuelle de 2,000 Rs; la première pierre fut posée en juin 1917 et la bibliothèque, bâtie selon un cahier des charges strictement codifié par la Fondation, fut inaugurée en janvier 1920.

Curepipe, ville nouvelle peuplée de la population fortunée ayant fui Port-Louis après l'épidémie de malaria de 1867<sup>67</sup> recelait plusieurs gisements de bibliophilie et d'érudition. Les donations<sup>68</sup> affluèrent, quelques achats furent accomplis<sup>69</sup>, base du fonds de *Mauritiana* de la Bibliothèque Carnegie (lui octroyant une spécialisation sur l'histoire de l'esclavage, de Maurice et de Madagascar).

Malgré quelques hésitations sur le mode de catalogage des ouvrages et les ravages d'un cyclone<sup>70</sup> qui affectèrent le fonctionnement de la bibliothèque, l'essayiste et historien de la littérature Camille de RAUVILLE<sup>71</sup> (en charge entre 1964 et 1974) lui donna une ampleur nouvelle, adopta la classification décimale Dewey et étendit les espaces de stockage disponibles.

### 3 APRES L'INDEPENDANCE (1968-)

L'insularité de Maurice et la fierté d'avoir surmonté bien des obstacles dans l'histoire récente donnent lieu à un discours auto-louangeur: la liberté d'une presse périodique vantée pour son impartialité, le niveau d'éducation, la qualité de l'accueil, la prospérité du pays sont souvent mis en avant. Maurice est ainsi «le bon élève de l'Afrique».

En est-il de même pour la conservation de son patrimoine documentaire?

Penchons-nous sur quelques exemples significatifs d'atteintes au patrimoine depuis l'Indépendance du pays.

#### 3.1 Archives privées démantelées

Nous traiterons, dans un prochain chapitre,<sup>72</sup> du cas des Archives nationales, que nous avons visitées. Évoquons maintenant les mouvements qui affectent les archives en mains privées.

Les archives privées de Maurice sont dans une situation critique: la polarisation de la plupart des «historiens»<sup>73</sup> locaux pour la généalogie de leurs ancêtres d'origine française explique que, faute de véritable intérêt, des pans entiers de l'historiographie ne puissent dorénavant plus être étudiés à Maurice, une fois anéantis les fonds d'archives requis pour leur étude: registres d'esclaves ou d'engagés, archives industrielles, archives des compagnies sucrières et des banques, archives photographiques, etc.

La propension actuelle des familles mauriciennes à démembrer leurs fonds familiaux est, à ce titre, alarmante : ces derniers recèlent souvent des documents publics ou des exemplaires uniques de documents d'intérêt national.<sup>74</sup>

Cette dilapidation est, semble-t-il, coutumière et a connu des précédents, notamment dans le domaine des archives photographiques, détruites en abondance dans les années 1980-2000.<sup>75</sup>

##### 3.1.1 Démembrement du Fonds LECLÉZIO (2010)

Le cas tout récent (second semestre 2010) de la dispersion des archives LECLÉZIO nous paraît un exemple de ce qui devra être dorénavant évité.

Plusieurs membres de la famille LECLÉZIO (notamment Mme Clotilde BAISSAC DE BOUCHERVILLE,<sup>76</sup> née LECLÉZIO), contactèrent Mme Nelly ARDILL, Présidente en exercice de SOS Patrimoine en Péril<sup>77</sup>, pour qu'elle les aide à vendre les archives de sa famille, dont elle était dépositaire.

Les cinq boîtes, constituant un fonds d'archives cohérent et construit sur plusieurs générations, contenaient des documents de valeur historique et patrimoniale majeure, notamment sur la prise de l'île par les Britanniques en 1810: ce fonds incluait les papiers du Procureur Général Nicolas FOISY, personnage ayant joué un rôle de premier plan dans la reddition de 1810.<sup>78</sup>

Nous connaissons le contenu de la boîte acquise par M. Didier MERLE, qui nous en a aimablement communiqué l'inventaire.<sup>79</sup> Tel que nous pouvons le reconstituer, le fonds d'archives complet comprenait:

- les papiers du Procureur Général Nicolas FOISY : papiers personnels, histoire de l'île de France (manuscrit inédit);
- la série, qui semble complète pour la fin du 18<sup>e</sup> s., des *Annonces des îles*;<sup>80</sup>
- d'autres séries de périodiques rares de la période française;
- les papiers de Sir Eugène LECLÉZIO, Chef-Juge;
- les archives assez complètes de la sucrerie de Mapou avec notamment plusieurs registres d'engagisme, c. 1848;
- des livres de tenue de compte relatifs au commerce maritime c. 1820;
- des actes officiels de la Colonie sous la Révolution française.

Ce fonds d'archives ne fut pas préalablement proposé aux Archives nationales de Maurice,<sup>81</sup> ni soumis aux services du Ministère des Arts et de la Culture qui auraient sans doute pu prendre des mesures conservatoires<sup>82</sup> si des moyens financiers avaient été débloqués pour cela.

Mme Nelly ARDILL, Présidente de SOS Patrimoine en Pêril, procéda aux médiations nécessaires et exposa ces archives à la vente à l'occasion d'au moins une «foire aux vieux papiers»: la MCB se montra intéressée et acquit quatre boîtes d'archives sur les cinq.

Cette opération nous paraît singulièrement critiquable d'un double point de vue archivistique et patrimonial :

- la règle essentielle de la conservation de l'unité du fonds d'archives<sup>83</sup> ne fut pas respectée puisque les cinq boîtes, qui constituaient initialement un fonds homogène, furent démembrées (quatre à la MCB, une à M. Didier MERLE, divers documents extraits à d'autres acquéreurs institutionnels, dont l'*Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund*);<sup>84</sup> à notre connaissance, aucun inventaire global ne semble non plus avoir été réalisé, ni aucune numérisation de sauvetage, même partielle ;
- la politique de la MCB en matière d'archives étant inconnue, rien ne s'oppose à ce que la part du fonds LECLÉZIO qu'elle a acquise soit à son tour revendue, en tout ou partie, donc de nouveau démembrée;
- M. Didier MERLE, a acquis la cinquième boîte et l'a partagée avec un co-acquéreur, M. Damien MAMET, selon un processus parfaitement aléatoire (de type «distribution de cartes à jouer»), aboutissant à la division de séries de périodiques anciens jusque-là cohérentes (d'où une nouvelle déperdition de la valeur historique et documentaire du fonds);
- c'est Mme Nelly ARDILL, Présidente d'une association de défense du patrimoine mauricien qui s'est prêtée à l'opération, en tant qu'intermédiaire; cela dénote, *a minima*, de l'incompréhension quant aux enjeux essentiels de la protection du patrimoine.

### 3.1.2 Dispersion d'une série de Vèle KADRESSEN<sup>85</sup> (2011)

Un brocanteur français installé en 2010 à l'île Maurice, M. Jean-Baptiste URBINI,<sup>86</sup> nous a contactés en janvier 2011; lors de notre prise de contact, il nous a déclaré avoir acheté une série complète et constituant un fonds cohérent (négatifs et tirages), au photographe de presse mauricien Vèle KADRESSEN<sup>87</sup> (né en 1932).

Il s'agissait de plusieurs séries de clichés «couvrant» les émeutes raciales survenues à Maurice en 1968<sup>88</sup> avec notamment: l'intervention des troupes britanniques (hélicoptère, troupes, armes saisies aux manifestants), la présence de figures historiques de Maurice (Gaëtan DUVAL), les barricades, les manifestants, etc.

M. URBINI nous a déclaré avoir cédé à un particulier britannique la plus grande partie du fonds et avoir gardé pour lui un certain nombre de clichés intéressants «pour leur valeur esthétique». Il semble avoir fait réaliser un tirage complet de la série, que nous avons vu exposé récemment (mars 2011) chez un antiquaire de Curepipe.

Il s'agit également d'un cas de démembrement de fonds d'intérêt historique national, ces événements restant méconnus et n'ayant reçu que fort peu d'échos dans la presse mauricienne, moins encore internationale.

M. KADRESSEN déclarait, dans son interview au *Matinal* de 2007, détenir encore plus de 100,000 négatifs. Il serait essentiel d'envisager leur conservation et leur indexation en compagnie de leur auteur en dégageant un financement suffisant pour ce faire.

## 3.2 Bibliothèques : désastres et sauvetages

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Des bibliothèques privées évoquées ci-dessus, il ne reste aujourd'hui que des lambeaux épars: les détériorations du climat, de l'humidité et des insectes certes l'expliquent, mais plus encore le jeu des partages successoraux et le manque d'intérêt constant de leurs propriétaires, qu'il s'agisse de particuliers ou d'institutions.

### 3.2.1 Mauritius Institute

#### 3.2.1.1 Désastre patrimonial annoncé

Depuis la veille de l'Indépendance, la situation institutionnelle du *Mauritius Institute* était devenue intenable, le Gouvernement ayant retiré à la Société Royale des Arts et Sciences la nomination du Directeur et de ses deux Conservateurs spécialisés (musée et bibliothèque). Malgré les appels au secours du Directeur, le Botaniste sri-lankais, Deva D. TIRVENGADUM,<sup>89</sup> avant son départ vers le Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris, le *board* ne sut lui trouver de successeur.

#### 3.2.1.2 Transferts de sauvetage au MSIRI

En 1982, constatant l'incurie des responsables de la bibliothèque et les vols qui y étaient perpétrés, la Société Royale des Arts et Sciences décida de retirer de la garde du *Mauritius Institute* la totalité des ouvrages de sa collection pour les verser dans le fonds de la bibliothèque du MSIRI,<sup>90</sup> à Réduit, dans de meilleures conditions de conservation.

On y trouve notamment les papiers Doyen :<sup>91</sup> ce fonds est issu de recherches dans les archives locales avant leur «réorganisation» en volumes arbitraires, ce qui en fait un témoignage archivistique crucial. Dans les dernières années, la Société Royale des Arts et Sciences, sous l'impulsion de Jean-Alain LALOUETTE et de la bibliothécaire du MSIRI, Rosemay NG KEE KWONG, a achevé sa numérisation intégrale et a engagé sa retranscription.

### 3.2.2 Vols à Carnegie

Dans un article<sup>92</sup> retentissant paru dans le journal *Week-end* en avril 2006, la romancière et journaliste Shenaz PATEL «mettait les pieds dans le plat» en dénonçant, comme principal obstacle à la défense du patrimoine des livres à Maurice, l'incurie du Gouvernement mauricien lui-même.

Elle développait particulièrement le cas de la Bibliothèque Carnegie, dont les fonds anciens attiraient toujours les convoitises:

*«De nombreux collectionneurs peuvent en attester: on peut trouver, à l'étranger, des livres mauriciens que des collectionneurs de livres anciens s'arrachent à prix d'or. Des mines d'informations sur le passé et la vie de notre île, dont nous sommes, nous Mauriciens, privés.»*

*Des personnes travaillant pour des collectionneurs attestent par exemple avoir pu voir récemment, dans une bibliothèque publique à La Réunion, des ouvrages uniques portant encore le sceau de la bibliothèque Carnegie de Curepipe.»*

La presse s'empara de l'affaire et mena son enquête<sup>93</sup> avec l'aide bienveillante de Belinda RAMNAUTH, la bibliothécaire de Carnegie.<sup>94</sup> En 1972, trois ouvrages disparus étaient de grande valeur historique et bibliophile.<sup>95</sup> Nous n'avons pas trouvé, dans la presse mauricienne, trace ultérieure de récupération de ces trois ouvrages.

### 3.2.3 *Mauritiana* d'Outre-Mer

La presse locale se fait souvent l'écho - bien piètre consolation à l'incurie régnant dans les organismes de conservation - de Mauriciens ou d'étrangers attentifs, outre-mer, à la sauvegarde du patrimoine national mauricien.

#### 3.2.3.1 Exil des *Mauritiana* d'André de CHAPUISET LE MERLE

Cas extrême de «sauvetage» puisqu'elle fut entièrement exportée hors de Maurice, la bibliothèque d'André de CHAPUISET LE MERLE (1898-1966) fut cédée à la *National Library of Australia* (NLA) en 1968,<sup>96</sup> où elle est maintenant conservée dans des conditions optimales, cataloguée<sup>97</sup> et en voie de numérisation.

Cette collection de 4,500 items environ fut constituée au cours de sa vie par cet érudit mauricien<sup>98</sup> et comprend des documents variés (livres, cartes, timbres, numismatique, etc.), des éditions rares (notamment des poètes Robert-Édward HART et Malcolm de CHAZAL) et quelques manuscrits té-

moins des débuts de la littérature francophone dans l'Océan Indien (Barthélemy HUET DE FROBERVILLE). Le désir de ce collectionneur était que ce fonds lui survive en étant correctement conservé et même étendu; et, s'il devait être vendu, qu'il le soit de préférence à un membre de sa famille également bibliophile, aux Archives nationales de Maurice (alors dirigées par Auguste TOUSSAINT) ou à la Société Royale des Arts et Sciences (dont les collections alors déposées au *Mauritius Institute* contenaient des fonds érudits).

Après sa mort, le fonds fut proposé à l'Université de Maurice alors naissante qui ne donna pas suite. C'est le marchand de livres anciens d'Oxford (Grande-Bretagne) EM LAWSON and Company<sup>99</sup> qui se chargea de la transaction de vente à la NLA, à un moment où l'immigration mauricienne vers l'Australie était importante.<sup>100</sup>

### 3.2.3.2 Larry BOWMAN

Un universitaire états-unien à la retraite, Larry BOWMAN,<sup>101</sup> ancien Directeur du Département d'Études africaines contemporaines à l'Université du Connecticut, avait acquis, au cours de sa carrière, une belle bibliothèque sur la région de l'Océan Indien et particulièrement sur Maurice (1,300 titres).

Désireux de vendre sa collection, il l'avait inventoriée et présentée sur son propre site Web. L'université de New-York (NYU), acquit la totalité de la collection, moins 300 livres en doublon.

Il était initialement dans l'intention de Larry BOWMAN de céder toute, ou partie, de sa bibliothèque à des institutions de conservation mauriciennes; mais des questions de logistique, la crainte de complications lors de la transaction et celle de voir ces ouvrages moins bien conservés l'en dissuadèrent.<sup>102</sup>

### 3.2.3.3 Richard LESAGE

Un bibliothécaire d'origine mauricienne travaillant à la *Widener Library* (Université de Harvard), Richard LESAGE,<sup>103</sup> est particulièrement chargé de la numérisation des fonds de son établissement. Son espoir est de pouvoir numériser un jour les documents relatifs à Maurice (50 ouvrages de la collection de sa bibliothèque l'ont déjà été par Google) mais surtout la totalité des archives du pays - ce qui serait impraticable sans l'aide d'organisations ou de grandes firmes internationales.<sup>104</sup>

## 4 VISITES

Commençons par résumer les résultats de notre enquête pour chaque établissement visité, tentons en une première synthèse et décrivons leur évolution récente.

### 4.1 Archives nationales (Coromandel)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	01/03/2011, Bâtiment des Archives nationales (Zone industrielle de Coromandel)
Personnes rencontrées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M. Roland CHUNG SAM WAN, <i>Officer in charge</i></li> <li>• Mme Razeeah DOOKHAN, Conservatrice</li> <li>• Mme Diana BABLEE, Responsable de la numérisation</li> <li>• Mme Lata TEKA, <i>Records Officer</i> chargée de la numérisation</li> </ul>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui mais refus de le signer: à ce jour, le questionnaire, pourtant rempli collégialement et dans le respect des débats, n'est revêtu de la signature d'aucune des personnes interrogées.
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Non
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oui : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Lois sur les Archives (1893 et 1999);</li> <li>◦ Contrat de numérisation avec l'entreprise privée DCDM; documents techniques sur la numérisation; détail du matériel informatique;</li> <li>◦ Budgets, fréquentation du public;</li> <li>◦ Détail de la qualification du personnel;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Non: Aucune réponse malgré relances.</li> </ul>

#### 4.1.1 Compte-rendu de visite

Nous avons été reçu par le Directeur intérimaire, M. CHUNG SAM WAN, et le personnel d'encadrement des Archives nationales au complet et avons pu constater combien il était soucieux d'offrir, avec son équipe, un discours cohérent et sans aspérités à ses visiteurs.

Malgré nos demandes, les personnes rencontrées n'ont pas désiré signer le questionnaire, comme cela est pourtant prévu; nous avons accepté de le leur photocopier, une fois rempli.<sup>105</sup> Nous n'avons pas non plus reçu de réponse à nos demandes de renseignements complémentaires, malgré deux relances et un appel direct à Mme Diana BABLEE, qui nous a conseillé de nous en référer exclusivement à M. CHUNG SAM WAN.

##### 4.1.1.1 Encadrement des Archives nationales - Qualifications

Le corps de direction des Archives nationales est constitué d'un 'Deputy Director' intérimaire,<sup>106</sup> et de trois cadres dont les postes correspondent à des secteurs différents:

- Une conservatrice (depuis 2007), est en charge des fonds anciens;
- Records Management, des fonds contemporains et des documents électroniques ;
- Une archiviste en charge de la numérisation.

##### 4.1.1.2 Lieux de conservation

Le bâtiment principal des Archives nationales, une ancienne usine, se trouve dans la zone industrielle de Coromandel, en retrait d'une route très fréquentée, polluée et bruyante. Il est immédiatement environné:

- d'une boîte de nuit (qui fait des essais de sonorisation en pleine journée et qui a déjà pris feu);
- d'un entrepôt de matériaux de construction où sont conservés des produits inflammables (solvants, matériaux de revêtement, etc.);
- d'une usine de peinture et, plus généralement, d'industries très polluantes,<sup>107</sup> en sus de la pollution automobile ;
- Récemment encore, des *pétards* et des *feux d'artifice* étaient entreposés à l'étage supérieur de celui des Archives nationales.

Les deux niveaux occupés par les Archives nationales, très hauts de plafond, ne sont pas climatisés, mais simplement ventilés par des claustras qui laissent passer la pollution, la poussière et une part de la lumière et de la chaleur extérieures. Les magasins, situés principalement au premier étage (la salle de lecture et les ateliers techniques se trouvent au rez-de-chaussée), sont donc en prise directe avec les agressions extérieures; y sont conservés: 150,000 documents sur 3 km linéaires en 2010, soit une situation de saturation puisque 98% des réserves sont occupés. Il est question que les Archives nationales louent le 2<sup>e</sup> étage du bâtiment, actuellement inoccupé.

Les documents sont entreposés sur des rayonnages métalliques à claire-voie qui paraissent solides. Ils sont le plus souvent conditionnés dans des chemises ou des boîtes qui semblent en bon état. Les minutes notariales ont conservé, pour une part, leur emballage d'origine.

Les experts étrangers successifs, notamment Claire DEKLE<sup>108</sup> (États-Unis, octobre 2010) et Hervé CHÉRADAME<sup>109</sup> (France, janvier 2011), ont mis en relief la progression des agents biologiques menaçant les documents des Archives nationales.

Or, selon le 'Deputy Director', par interim, 1% seulement des documents est actuellement touché, notamment au Minutier des notaires, l'état de conservation des autres documents allant de «très bon» (timbres, monnaies, actes notariés du 20<sup>e</sup> s.) à «moyen» (la plus grande partie des fonds), en passant par «bon» (manuscrits, papiers désacidifiés).

Les Archives nationales disposent également d'un autre magasin de plus petite taille à Port-Louis, rue Bissoondoyal; y sont conservés, sous la responsabilité particulière de Mme TEKA, les *records* contemporains, soit: 20,000 pièces et 1 km linéaire évoluant annuellement à raison de 5,000 pièces et 100 m. linéaires. La plus grande partie de ces *records* a été transférée d'un dépôt situé dans le périmètre de la *Military Special Force* à Vacoas dans lequel les conditions de conservation étaient déplorables, du fait de l'humidité notamment.

#### 4.1.1.3 Variété des documents conservés

L'étendue des documents conservés aux Archives nationales est vaste. La diversité de ces types documentaires donne une complexité particulière à la mission des Archives nationales :

- documents administratifs des époques coloniales française et britannique (18<sup>e</sup> - 20<sup>e</sup> s.),
- documents administratifs contemporains, notamment des *records* sous forme de *listings* et de supports informatiques,
- minutes et registres notariaux,
- ouvrages imprimés entrés par dépôt légal, après 1999,<sup>110</sup>
- cartes en plans (dépôt légal),
- archives privées déposées à temps ou données,
- documents figurés (estampes, photographies, etc.), sceaux et numismatique (timbres, billets de banque, pièces de monnaies),
- documents audiovisuels (dépôt légal): films, enregistrements sonores.
- Les Archives nationales ont également reçu pour mission de collecter et conserver la mémoire orale mauricienne et de la diffuser, sous la forme de documentaires notamment, (atelier de réalisation documentaire intégré dirigé, jusque récemment, par M.KOREEMUN).

#### 4.1.1.4 Missions prévues au National Archive Act 2000

Le *National Archives Act 2000* prévoit pour les Archives nationales un certain nombre de missions, notamment :

- La collecte et la conservation<sup>111</sup> des archives publiques auprès des Ministères, services administratifs et corps para-étatiques: cette mission, assignée à Mme Lata TEKA, est ardue car certains grands corps de l'État mauricien ne se sentent nullement contraints par cet article de la loi.

Les archives publiques qui ont pu être collectées sont évaluées par un *Appraisal Committee*<sup>112</sup> chargé de donner ses directives d'épuration pour chaque fonds. Il est constitué de représentants des archives, d'historiens professionnels ou d'amateurs.

- La communication des archives au public:<sup>113</sup> selon la législation en vigueur, un délai de communication uniforme de 30 ans<sup>114</sup> est d'emblée appliqué aux archives publiques, même celles qui mettent en jeu la vie privée des citoyens.<sup>115</sup> Vu les difficultés à collecter les archives contemporaines, la question ne se pose, à dire vrai, même pas.<sup>116</sup> Un pouvoir discrétionnaire permet au responsable des Archives nationales de décider de ne pas communiquer des documents à un citoyen en faisant la demande, s'il les juge trop sensibles (*sensitive*).<sup>117</sup>
- L'inventaire<sup>118</sup> général des documents conservés à des fins de communication au public : il existe, selon le Directeur intérimaire, des inventaires manuscrits, imprimés ou dactylographiés depuis 1815. Ils ne sont consultables que dans la salle de lecture et pas encore informatisés (ni numérisés).

Certains inventaires spécialisés sont également tenus à jour : cartes et plans, *Special Materials* ;<sup>119</sup> des index provenant des services versants peuvent également aider aux recherches: lois et règlements, *Blue Books* (sous l'administration coloniale britannique), etc.

- le dépôt légal des livres et périodiques,<sup>120</sup> en un seul exemplaire depuis 1999 puisque la Bibliothèque nationale a récupéré le plus clair de cette prérogative et a obtenu le transfert dans ses fonds de la totalité des livres et périodiques jusque-là conservés aux Archives nationales au titre du dépôt légal: la collection conservée aux Archives nationales est donc complète depuis 1999 seulement.

#### 4.1.1.5 Restauration

La préservation<sup>121</sup> des documents conservés est une mission importante des Archives nationales : une *Conservation Unit* est prévue par la loi,<sup>122</sup> supervisée par Mme DOOKHAN et chargée de la « conservation préventive, de la restauration et de la conservation des contenus»; elle est établie au rez-de-chaussée des Archives nationales avec trois employés.<sup>123</sup> Elle dispose d'un matériel moderne que nous avons vu en état de marche:

- deux appareils de lamination par film plastique en grande largeur (la plus récente est un don de la République de Chine qui a également formé le personnel à cette technique de février à mai 2001) ;<sup>124</sup>
- une machine de comblage par repulpage (bain de cellulose permettant de reconstituer les lacunes du papier manquant) et ses claies de séchage ;
- des bancs de reliure et le matériel associé (massicot, etc.).

La lamination des documents anciens à chaud, que nous avons vu réaliser lors de notre visite est décrite dans la littérature spécialisée<sup>125</sup> et rejetée dans les établissements de conservation d'Occident depuis plus de *quinze ans* : il est donc surprenant qu'une technique de restauration non réversible et le plus souvent destructrice soit toujours employée aux Archives nationales de Maurice.

Il ne semble pas exister de procédure et les documents choisis sont ceux qui ont été signalés par le public, des institutions, etc.

#### 4.1.1.6 Microfilmage

La reproduction mécanique des documents, à laquelle un local est dédié au rez-de-chaussée du bâtiment (*Reprographic Unit*), fut entreprise dès l'époque d'Auguste TOUSSAINT (*photostats* dont la conservation est devenue précaire, clichés photographiques).

Le microfilmage, pour lequel un service particulier fut établi au début des années 1970, a notamment donné lieu aux actions suivantes:

- Dans les années 1960, première collaboration avec la France dans le microfilmage des fonds de la période coloniale. On ignore à Maurice où se trouvent les doubles offerts par la France.
- En 1972, la société ONE (Organisation Normale des Entreprises, directeur: M. Joseph Lucien MAUJEAN) fut chargée du microfilmage des actes d'état-civil de l'époque française.<sup>126</sup>
- Dans les années 1980, l'Église de Jésus-Christ des Saints des Derniers Jours (Mormons) a obtenu de pouvoir microfilmer les registres paroissiaux.
- En 1996, la France aide au microfilmage des documents de l'époque française;<sup>127</sup> ils sont conservés au CAOM d'Aix-en-Provence et seront disponibles en ligne au premier semestre 2012. On a perdu trace des doubles offerts à Maurice.
- En 2001, le rapport de l'Audit<sup>128</sup> pointait que, faute d'entretien et de local adéquat, le matériel de microfilmage était inopérant.

Il en était alors de même avec le matériel de reprographie.

Nous n'avons pu visiter le local de microfilmage ni constater l'état de fonctionnement des matériels.

#### 4.1.1.7 Numérisation - Conservation des documents numériques

##### A - Historique des numérisations

L'historique de la numérisation aux Archives nationales s'établit ainsi:

- Dès 2002, quelques essais de numérisation sont entrepris sur des cartes géographiques aux Archives nationales, provoquant l'intérêt de la presse locale<sup>129</sup> qui s'en fait largement l'écho.
- En 2008, à l'initiative d'un amateur mauricien de France féru de généalogie, Gérard-Yves HEERAMAN,<sup>130</sup> une formation est dispensée, par ses soins, à ses frais et sur son matériel, au personnel des Archives nationales. A son départ, il fait également don de son banc de numérisation étalonné mais peine à trouver des successeurs bénévoles sur place: son action reste donc lettre morte et seule une petite partie de l'état-civil est numérisée par M.HEERAMAN, dans une qualité photographique insuffisante, semble-t-il.
- En 2009, un service de numérisation a été établi aux Archives nationales, puis placé sous la responsabilité de Diana BABLEE.
- En 2011, grâce à l'intercession d'Alain GORDON-GENTIL, Conseiller auprès du Premier Ministre, une association privée de généalogistes mauriciens, le Centre de Généalogie Maurice-Rodrigues (CGMR), obtient le droit de procéder à des numérisations aux Archives nationales.<sup>131</sup>

##### B - Renseignements lacunaires

Nous n'avons pu obtenir des Archives nationales, malgré nos demandes :

- ni les spécifications techniques des opérations de numérisation en cours ; nous avons brièvement parlé avec l'opérateur de la Société TNT Document Services : la numérisation est effectuée sur un banc professionnel avec une définition de 300 DPI et donne lieu à des documents enregistrés au format JPEG.
- Ni les spécifications techniques du logiciel de gestion des documents une fois numérisés. Nous avons appris qu'il s'agit d'une base de données spécifique, construite autour du logiciel bureautique Microsoft Access par la Société de services informatiques DCDM et qu'elle comprend, pour chaque item numérisé : la cote du document et trois champs alphanumériques d'indexation libres et sans vocabulaire contrôlé.

- Ni le détail du contrat passé avec les deux prestataires de services en charge de la numérisation (DCDM et TNT Document Services), après appel d'offres, semble-t-il.

#### C - Spécifications insuffisantes

Nous sommes surpris de ces spécifications :

- la définition de la prise de vue est inférieure d'un quart à ce qui est généralement recommandé.<sup>132</sup>
- L'indexation de la notice est pauvre et l'absence de vocabulaire contrôlé pour les mots-clés constitue une lacune; il existe pourtant pléthore de documentations sur le sujet, notamment sur la norme de description des documents d'archives EAD,<sup>133</sup> plébiscitée par les services d'archives dans le monde et devenue le standard en la matière.
- L'existence de logiciels *Open Source* et librement disponibles<sup>134</sup> aurait dû dispenser les Archives nationales de faire réaliser un logiciel spécifique, dont le coût (développement - déploiement - maintenance) est prohibitif.
- La notion d'interopérabilité des catalogues a paru inconnue de nos interlocuteurs; en l'état, les indexations de documents numérisés ne pourront être échangées avec d'autres services d'archives qu'au prix de transformations *manuelles* fastidieuses. Il en va de même de leur publication croisée sur les catalogues en ligne, ce qui compromet leur utilité à court terme.

Nous avons évoqué auprès de nos interlocuteurs la conservation des archives numériques, que le projet d'*e-administration* (déployé et mis en place fin 2011) risque de faire affluer aux Archives nationales; ils ne semblent pas être conscients des enjeux techniques de cette situation inédite.

#### D - L'audit national de 2011

Le rapport de l'Audit national de la République de Maurice pour 2011<sup>135</sup> nous donne plusieurs précisions :

- sur le montant de l'opération (près de 18 Millions de Rs. dont près de 10 Millions étaient déjà engagés en décembre 2010 alors que le travail mis en regard est très insuffisant);
- sur les irrégularités de livraison et les lacunes dans le suivi du projet de la part des responsables des Archives nationales (notamment à propos du logiciel, livré avec 32 semaines de retard);
- et sur le retard considérable de la numérisation elle-même qui aurait dû être achevée en mai 2012 et ne le sera de toute évidence pas: 26% seulement des pages ont été numérisées.

Le rapport d'audit incite le Gouvernement à une action judiciaire contre la société attributaire du contrat et qui a, selon lui, failli à ses devoirs. La réponse du Ministre de la Culture semble aller dans le même sens.

#### 4.1.2 Quelques remarques

##### 4.1.2.1 Dégradation durable

L'état actuel des Archives nationales est le résultat d'une évolution inexorable et les voix n'ont pas manqué, dès les années 1980, pour appeler à un meilleur traitement de la mémoire du pays dans la presse, chez les intellectuels ou à la tribune de l'Assemblée nationale.<sup>136</sup>

#### A - L'audit national de 2001

En 2001, le National Audit Office émettait un rapport<sup>137</sup> cinglant sur les Archives nationales : il pointait les nombreux manquements à leur mission,<sup>138</sup> aux normes de conservation<sup>139</sup> et les retards mis à appliquer les règlements en vigueur.<sup>140</sup>

L'Audit décrivait lui aussi une situation préoccupante d'hémorragie du personnel, menaçant de rendre le service inefficace :

*13 posts, representing more than one-third of the establishment for the year 2000-01, were vacant as of December 2001. This could affect the smooth running of the NA.*

Depuis la dépossession d'une grande partie de leurs fonds (tous les imprimés et périodiques du dépôt légal) par la Bibliothèque nationale, en 1999-2000, les Archives nationales avaient, en effet, perdu beaucoup du prestige dont elles jouissaient sous Auguste TOUSSAINT, même si ce dernier estimait déjà, dans les années 50 ne pouvoir vraiment mener son action faute de crédits suffisants.<sup>141</sup>

## B - Suites en politique

Le rapport d'audit provoqua une prise de conscience nationale, avec un pic en 2001-2002 : dans une lettre-ouverte<sup>142</sup> abondamment relayée par la presse,<sup>143</sup> Lindsey COLLEN (membre du parti d'extrême-gauche Lalit) s'adressait à Motee RAMDASS (Ministre de la Culture) et dénonçait l'évolution déplorable de l'état des fonds du 18<sup>e</sup> s. aux Archives nationales (notamment celles de l'esclavage) et l'impossibilité de pouvoir écrire l'histoire politique, sociale et syndicale du pays au 20<sup>e</sup> s. faute de versements des administrations aux Archives nationales.

L'archiviste d'alors, M. Gheendut SUNECHUR, qui avait engagé dans la presse, dès sa nomination, une démarche pédagogique de longue haleine,<sup>144</sup> entreprenait alors d'expliquer son action à la tête du service, mettait en avant ses avancées technologiques ; il rassurait ainsi la presse<sup>145</sup> et le public.

### 4.1.2.2 Itinérance

L'histoire contemporaine des Archives nationales est marquée par l'itinérance, situation nocive pour tous les documents et signe, selon nous, d'un désintérêt persistant des autorités politiques.

- Depuis le 19<sup>e</sup> s., les Archives nationales se trouvaient au *Registrar Building* (emplacement actuel de l'*Emmanuel Anquetil Building*) ;
- Années 1970 : après la destruction de l'ancien *Registrar Building*, les Archives nationales sont éclatées en plusieurs localisations distinctes et leurs fonds dispersés selon leur date et leur origine : dans un bâtiment proche du *Cinéma Vénus*, dans un autre proche de *Neetoo Industries* (Coromandel), à l'*Hôtel Sunray* (Coromandel).

Les archives de la Cour Suprême sont, pour leur part, déposées aux Prisons de Port-Louis et les archives contemporaines dans le bâtiment de Vacoas déjà évoqué.

- 1983: déménagement dans le bâtiment actuel de Coromandel, ancienne usine qui appartient à la *Development Bank of Mauritius* (DBM).
- 1993: le Ministre de la Culture, Mookhesswar CHOONEE, annonce le déménagement imminent des archives dans les locaux désaffectés de l'ancienne prison pour délinquants juvéniles de Borstal;
- 1999: le Ministre Joseph TSANG MAN KIN évoque leur déménagement prochain à Réduit, dans le même bâtiment (à construire) que la Bibliothèque nationale: c'est le lancement du grand projet de *Culture House*, inscrit au budget du Gouvernement pendant vingt ans, mais jamais commencé.<sup>146</sup>
- 2010: le Ministre de l'Éducation nationale, Vasant BUNWAREE, annonce<sup>147</sup> que ses services ont trouvé un nouveau point de chute pour les Archives nationales, à Chebel (ancien bâtiment industriel de *BeachWear* propriété de la *State Investment Corporation*). Le déménagement serait imminent car le bail des locaux actuels de Coromandel arrive à expiration en avril 2010.
- 2011: le Directeur intérimaire des Archives nationales évoque devant nous l'extension probable de son service au 3<sup>e</sup> étage du bâtiment actuel.

- 2011: Yves CHAN KAM LON, ancien Directeur de la Bibliothèque nationale, croit, quant à lui, à un déménagement prochain des Archives nationales et de la Bibliothèque nationale dans des locaux uniques, ceux de la *Culture House*, à construire à Moka, selon ses propres plans.

#### 4.1.2.3 Lacunes

Une fois pointés la constance de ces mauvais traitements depuis quarante ans, nous restons aussi préoccupé de l'inexorable dégradation des compétences du personnel des Archives nationales : le savoir d'Auguste TOUSSAINT n'a guère fait souche dans son service et les Archives nationales, exaltées sous son mandat, sont ensuite passées au second plan derrière la Bibliothèque nationale (qui, beaucoup mieux médiatisée, attire les éléments les plus prometteurs et a constitué autour d'elle tout un «écosystème» de formations et d'organismes professionnels valorisants).

Or, l'effritement des compétences compromet l'efficacité du travail et la capacité de l'encadrement à anticiper les évolutions à venir, particulièrement pour les nouvelles technologies.

L'inadéquation du *National Archive Act* et la situation d'intérim prolongée à la tête des Archives nationales alimentent l'impuissance de ce grand service à s'imposer face aux politiques afin de leur réclamer, comme cela est stipulé dans la loi, le versement des fonds de leurs administrations.

Durable paraît donc la faiblesse de cette institution régaliennne, pourtant garante du droit des citoyens mauriciens à connaître leur passé et à mieux maîtriser la gestion de leur présent.

#### Bibliothèque Carnegie (Curepipe)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	14/03/2011, Bibliothèque Carnegie (Curepipe): salle de lecture, bâtiments de la conservation, nouveau dépôt
Personnes rencontrées	Mme Belinda RAMNAUTH, Directrice et Conservatrice en chef
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Oui: Budget de la bibliothèque Livret sur l'histoire des bibliothèques municipales à Maurice (1969)
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	Aucune

#### 4.1.3 Compte-rendu de visite

##### 4.1.3.1 Efficace gestion des fonds contemporains

La conservatrice de la Bibliothèque Carnegie de Curepipe, Mme Belinda RAMNAUTH, nous a très bien reçu et sa compétence en matière de bibliothéconomie,<sup>148</sup> la ténacité qu'elle démontre à la tête de son établissement depuis 1991, malgré bien des vicissitudes,<sup>149</sup> son humilité et son désir d'apprendre forcent le respect.

De fait, sous sa direction, la Bibliothèque Carnegie a complété ses collections (50,000 items), consolidé son excellente fréquentation,<sup>150</sup> obtenu l'appui des autorités locales (construction d'un dépôt additionnel à l'arrière du bâtiment, qui hébergera également les Archives municipales de Curepipe) et consolidé ses crédits à la hausse.

Une politique de coédition permet de valoriser les fonds historiques de la bibliothèque, ainsi que des expositions périodiques<sup>151</sup> ou diverses manifestations de «sports cérébraux» (quiz, concours d'élocution, etc.). De nouvelles sections ont été ouvertes: *American Corner* financé par l'Ambassade des États-Unis, Internet café, section Jeunes particulièrement bien fournie en ouvrages.

L'informatisation (logiciel australien AMLIB<sup>152</sup> depuis 2008, pas encore accessible aux lecteurs, ni sur Internet) et la numérisation (à partir de fin 2011, programme gouvernemental) paraissent en bonne voie. La sécurité des documents les plus précieux est assurée par des règlements internes<sup>153</sup> bien appliqués et des dérogations accordées sur avis de la Directrice, par la Municipalité uniquement.

#### 4.1.3.2 Difficultés pour les fonds anciens

La gestion des fonds anciens de la Bibliothèque Carnegie<sup>154</sup> semble occasionner plus de difficultés: Mme RAMNAUTH se sent moins bien outillée en cette matière,<sup>155</sup> évoque des conditions de conservation médiocres (manque d'espace, climatisation insuffisante, pas de service de restauration formé, humidité dans la salle de lecture) et appelle de ses vœux une institution centrale dispensatrice de compétences à Maurice («hôpital pour livres abîmés»).

De fait, nous avons pu constater lors de notre visite:

- que l'inventaire des collections patrimoniales de la bibliothèque n'a pas encore été informatisé, alors qu'il existe sous forme de fiches d'époque et de registres d'entrée (*Accession Book*).
- Que les conditions de conservation des livres anciens sont inadéquates:
  - ⤴ beaucoup d'ouvrages anciens de grande valeur<sup>156</sup> sont conservés à plat dans les armoires vitrées poussiéreuses de la coursive de la salle de lecture, sans climatisation ni dés-humidification.
  - ⤴ La collection des ouvrages concernant Madagascar a dû être déplacée pour permettre l'installation de l'*American Corner*: ils se trouvent maintenant en plein passage, dans la section enfantine de la bibliothèque.
- Que la hiérarchie de valeurs entre documents anciens de valeur et documents plus récents semble inadaptée :
  - ⤴ Des ouvrages tardifs, des transcriptions ou des compilations d'intérêt inégal (notamment les manuscrits de Saint-Elme LE DUC) sont conservés en sécurité dans le bureau de la Directrice, alors que d'autres devraient y figurer de préférence.
  - ⤴ Des reproductions de photographies anciennes sont confondues avec des originaux.
- Que la nouvelle aile offre des conditions de conservation inadéquates pour les archives anciennes de la Municipalité :
  - ⤴ Trop forte luminosité.
  - ⤴ Inondation quand la pluie est forte (c'était le cas lors de notre visite).
  - ⤴ Espace trop étroit pour contenir les archives tout entières, avec une organisation de l'espace très biscornue.

#### 4.1.4 Quelques remarques

Il est dommage de voir les capacités professionnelles et l'énergie de Mme RAMNAUTH achopper sur les points, somme toute techniques, de la préservation du patrimoine ancien de son établissement.

Elle pourra s'y consacrer, une fois accomplis les efforts nécessaires<sup>157</sup> pour sauver ce qui doit l'être et rétablir la Bibliothèque Carnegie à son ancien rôle de bibliothèque patrimoniale, puisque le fonctionnement courant de la bibliothèque est désormais bien rôdé.

## 4.2 Bibliothèque nationale (Port-Louis)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25/02/2011, Bibliothèque Nationale (Port-Louis), Rencontre avec le Directeur</li> <li>• 07/03/2011, Bibliothèque Nationale (Port-Louis), Visite en compagnie du Directeur</li> <li>• 21/03/2011, Bibliothèque Nationale (Port-Louis) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Brève rencontre avec le Directeur</li> <li>◦ Visite de la salle de conservation des périodiques</li> <li>◦ Évaluation de la saisie informatique dans le catalogue en ligne</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Personnes rencontrées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M. Yves CHAN KAM LON, Directeur</li> <li>• Appariteurs de la Salle de lecture</li> <li>• Opérateur de micrographie</li> </ul>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés ?	Oui : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textes réglementaires sur la Bibliothèque nationale et les Archives nationales</li> <li>• Rapports annuels de la bibliothèque de 1999 à 2009</li> <li>• Divers documents commémoratifs</li> <li>• Rapports d'experts internationaux</li> </ul>
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	Oui, à deux reprises : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8/03/2011 et 31/03/2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Matériel et logiciels informatiques de catalogage; qualifications du personnel.</li> <li>◦ Réponses parfaitement satisfaisantes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 13/05/2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Détails ponctuels sur la numérisation des journaux.</li> <li>◦ Aucune réponse.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 4.2.1 Compte-rendu de visites

Nous avons rencontré le Directeur de la Bibliothèque nationale, à trois reprises (25 février 2011; 7 et 21 mars 2011): il nous a reçu avec la plus grande courtoisie, sans ménager son temps ni ses efforts.<sup>158</sup> Nous avons rencontré quelques membres du personnel de la Bibliothèque nationale de façon épisodique seulement.

Partie-prenante du projet de Bibliothèque nationale dès ses prémices,<sup>159</sup> œuvrant à sa naissance, il n'est nommé au poste de Directeur qu'en avril 1999, six mois à peine avant l'ouverture. Il fait alors preuve d'une intense activité afin que l'installation des locaux, l'acquisition des fonds (notamment les *Mauritiana* issus du Mauritius Institute et des Archives nationales), le recrutement des personnels soient prêts dans les temps.<sup>160</sup>

La mission du Directeur ne s'arrête pas à la mise en place de la Bibliothèque nationale, à sa dotation en ouvrages, à la publication de la bibliographie nationale mauricienne (en 2002, grâce à un réseau de bibliothèques interconnectées), à la lecture pour tous<sup>161</sup> et à l'organisation optimale du fonctionnement de son établissement: soucieux de pérenniser son action, il contribue à mettre en place :

- Des cursus de formation en bibliothéconomie à l'UoM<sup>162</sup> qui ont porté leurs fruits puisque plusieurs doctorants y sont actuellement inscrits. La tentative d'y associer les archivistes a malheureusement échoué pour des raisons de rivalités professionnelles, semble-t-il.
- La LIA, association des bibliothécaires mauriciens,<sup>163</sup> qu'il préside plusieurs années de suite; elle vise notamment à rationaliser la profession, à la doter de statuts et d'une grille salariale cohérents.

#### 4.2.1.1 Politique d'accession

Malgré la faiblesse chronique des crédits alloués à la Bibliothèque nationale, la tâche fut de constituer de toutes pièces sa collection puis de l'enrichir.

### A - *Mauritiana* et dépôt légal

Selon les directives de l'UNESCO, une des fonctions primordiales de toute bibliothèque nationale est de réaliser la bibliographie courante du pays<sup>164</sup> et de conserver la production complète des ouvrages paraissant dans le pays et, secondairement, sur le pays.

Cette tâche fut rapidement menée à la Bibliothèque nationale puisque, dès 2000, les fonds du dépôt légal mauricien jusque-là conservés aux Archives nationales et les *Mauritiana* du *Mauritius Institute* y étaient transférés.<sup>165</sup> Une fois le dépôt légal reçu (400 entrées par an), la série complète des *Mauritiana* publiés à Maurice (ouvrages et périodiques) est dorénavant conservée à la Bibliothèque nationale. Il n'en va probablement pas de même avec les ouvrages publiés sur Maurice à l'étranger, faute de crédits d'acquisition suffisants.

Grâce à la constitution d'un catalogue collectif des bibliothèques mauriciennes et l'aide de grands établissements d'Occident (Bibliothèque Nationale de France et *British Library* en Grande-Bretagne), la bibliographie courante mauricienne fut promptement achevée (tâche accomplie en 2002 sous forme imprimée ;<sup>166</sup> en 2005 pour la mise en ligne du catalogue collectif - OPAC).<sup>167</sup>

### B - Collections privées

La seconde voie d'accès privilégiée fut celle des donations par des particuliers: Yves CHAN KAM LON a évoqué auprès de nous les réseaux auxquels il appartient et ses relations dans toutes les communautés du pays comme une source importante d'enrichissement des collections de la Bibliothèque nationale.

Cette politique, appuyée par des appels du Ministre de la Culture d'alors, Joseph TSANG MAN KIN,<sup>168</sup> porta rapidement ses fruits puisque l'année suivant l'ouverture de la Bibliothèque nationale, l'accèsion de ces collections<sup>169</sup> était déjà réalisée ou prévue:

- Acquisés
  - Sir Harilal VAGHJEE, ancien Speaker de la Chambre, par l'entremise de Rivaltz QUENETTE;
  - Harold WALTER, ancien Ministre du Travail;
  - Abhimanyu UNNUTH, romancier;
  - Somduth BUCKORY, politicien;
  - Sir Satcam BOOLELL, député et ancien Ministre de l'Agriculture.
- Intentions fermes
  - Mgr. Amédée NAGAPEN, Vicaire général;
  - Guy ROUILLARD, alors Président de la SHIM.

Auxquelles vinrent s'ajouter :

- le fonds du propriétaire du label musical Neptune, M. FOO FAT<sup>170</sup> (disques 33 tours de 1979 et magnétophone utilisé pour enregistrer le ségadier TIFRÈRE).
- Les écrits d'auteurs mauriciens : l'auteure, éditorialiste et plasticienne Jeanne GERVALL-AROUFF.
- Les archives de la *Society of Financial Analysts of Mauritius*.<sup>171</sup>
- Des fonds de politiciens et de diplomates: James BURTY-DAVID; Dhunvir SADASING; le Ministre et poète Joseph TSANG MAN KIN ; le diplomate et écrivain Raymond CHASLE.
- en 2007, le fonds de l'entomologiste d'origine mauricienne, Alfred ORIAN<sup>172</sup> (500 ouvrages spécialisés et de nombreux spécimens d'insectes en cours de restauration et de consolidation à l'UoM).

Cette politique d'acquisitions s'appliqua également aux périodiques:

- la bibliothèque de la Municipalité de Port-Louis donna tous ses journaux anciens;
- le *Mahatma Gandhi Institute* donna les périodiques conservés depuis 1975;
- le journal *l'Express* donna la totalité de ses numéros anciens.

Les documents audiovisuels, prévus au dépôt légal (trois exemplaires sont conservés dans un local spécial, sous clé et atmosphère contrôlée) ont également fait l'objet de donations : le Centre

Charles Baudelaire (maintenant Centre Culturel Français) a ainsi déposé la totalité de sa collection de films sur cassettes VHS, ainsi que le magnétoscope adéquat pour les lire, puisque cette technologie est obsolète.

La salle de lecture de la Bibliothèque nationale où sont conservés tous les usuels se ressent de cette origine disparate: par exemple, les ouvrages d'histoire y vont du meilleur (courte série de la revue *Annales* en 1960) à des ouvrages vulgarisateurs et dépassés ; l'historiographie la plus récente est absente, effet probable du manque de crédits.

#### C - Institutions internationales

Le fonds de la Bibliothèque nationale est complété par des collections d'institutions internationales ou de pays donateurs: CEE, ONU, Banque mondiale, République populaire de Chine, FMI, etc.

Ces collections, accessibles en usuels dans la salle de lecture, présentent un intérêt variable: par exemple, les ouvrages originaires de Chine sont en chinois mandarin, langue peu courante dans le lectorat Mauricien.

##### 4.2.1.2 «Knowledge Hub»

La seconde mission de la Bibliothèque nationale, abondamment mise en relief lors de son inauguration, était de servir de *Knowledge Hub* (carrefour des connaissances) dont Maurice avait grand besoin pour affirmer son rôle de *Tigre de l'Océan Indien*.

La Bibliothèque nationale devenait ainsi un maillon essentiel de la croissance du pays, en cours de reconversion dans les nouvelles technologies de la connaissance et un complément essentiel de l'élévation du niveau d'enseignement de la population.

#### A - Travailler en réseaux

La première étape passait par une mise en réseau des bibliothèques et centres de documentation du pays sous la tutelle de la Bibliothèque nationale: dès 2000, fut établi un répertoire de ces établissements qui préfigurait un *Union Catalogue*,<sup>173</sup> grâce auquel tout document disponible dans l'un des services pourrait être prêté dans un autre (système de prêt inter-bibliothèques). De cette façon, la Bibliothèque nationale s'affirmait pôle de compétences<sup>174</sup> dans le domaine documentaire et pouvait également offrir son aide technique aux grands services de l'État.

#### B - Dossiers thématiques

Le rôle de centre national de documentation développé alors est encore assuré quotidiennement : des dossiers thématiques sont constitués de coupures extraites de la presse mauricienne uniquement, photocopiées puis assemblées manuellement, ce qui est, selon nous, trop limitatif. Ces dossiers de presse jouissent d'une bonne consultation par les lecteurs.

#### C - Informatisation du catalogue

L'informatisation du catalogue de la Bibliothèque nationale suivit de peu et allait dans le sens d'une dissémination du savoir, puisque ses notices furent rapidement accessibles sur l'Internet.

Le logiciel états-unien *Unicorn Library Management System / SIRSI 2003*,<sup>175</sup> acquis en 2004,<sup>176</sup> déployé en 2005, est accessible dans la salle de lecture en Intranet puis sur le Web. En 2004, la Bibliothèque nationale remporta l'*ICT Award* (catégorie: *Parastatal Bodies*).

Ce logiciel de catalogage ne semble pas avoir connu de mises à jour depuis lors, malgré un contrat de maintenance annuel important.<sup>177</sup>

L'équipement informatique actuel du service est bon: 25 postes dont 18 reliés en réseau; en 2010, la République populaire de Chine a doté la salle de lecture d'une quinzaine d'ordinateurs de bureau performants fonctionnant en réseau local (système d'exploitation Linux Ubuntu).

#### D - Formation du personnel - Certification

L'évolution conjointe de ces différents systèmes et la complexité qui en résulte nécessitent une formation continue du personnel, assurée en France, en Inde et en Afrique du Sud. La Bibliothèque nationale a également incité à engager une démarche de qualité: la certification ISO 9001 a été obtenue en 2004<sup>178</sup> pour la gestion de la satisfaction des usagers.

### E - Lecture pour tous

En amont, dès 2003, le directeur a promu le livre dans des manifestations organisées à Maurice et à Rodrigues et où il présente des ouvrages éducatifs ou de loisir (*Festival du Livre*). Ces manifestations remportent un grand succès populaire, contribuent à apporter la culture et la lecture aux plus démunis et aux populations isolées (Rodrigues).

#### 4.2.1.3 Conservation

### A - Déménagement toujours ajourné

Il n'y a toujours pas de bâtiment digne des collections et des résultats acquis : malgré les promesses, la *Culture House*, n'a jamais vu le jour.

Le temporaire est donc devenu définitif et il était question, lors de notre entrevue, de louer également le 4<sup>e</sup> étage du bâtiment occupé à Port-Louis afin de donner un peu d'espace à des dépôts combles.

### B - Densité critique

Les livres et périodiques sont dans une situation de conservation critique, selon les termes du Directeur, confirmés par plusieurs experts et par nos soins:

- la climatisation des dépôts est insuffisante, vu l'entassement des ouvrages qui ne facilite pas la circulation d'air; la certification ISO implique le contrôle de l'hygrométrie, de la luminosité et de la température mais paraît inopérante, devant l'encombrement des magasins.
- Les périodiques, même récents, conservés dans une salle spéciale attenante à la salle de lecture, sont dans un état déplorable : la climatisation ne paraît pas suffisante; le manque de tablettes intermédiaires provoque le cisaillement des reliures par le milieu, puis la dispersion du papier-journal; les reliures désagrégées ne sont pas restaurées; certains volumes, pourtant interdits de communication, sont malgré tout transmis aux lecteurs.<sup>179</sup>
- Les conditions de travail du personnel sont difficiles: l'espace entre les travées est trop faible et le dégagement insuffisant pour tirer les reliures des rayonnages sans les endommager.
- Le bâtiment lui-même n'est pas sûr (il s'agit d'un immeuble de bureaux avec des commerces de plain-pied sur la rue): par exemple, une pizzeria au rez-de-chaussée constitue un risque sérieux d'incendie.

### C - Atelier de restauration et de reliure

Un atelier de reliure avec trois restaurateurs diplômés a été installé en 2000. Il est doté d'équipements assez rudimentaires (pas de machine à repulper ou de traitement par dés-acidification, par exemple). Des experts étrangers en résidence<sup>180</sup> dispensent des cours de formation aux restaurateurs du pays tout entier en se servant des facilités octroyées par la Bibliothèque nationale.

### D - Microfilmage

Afin de moins solliciter les documents originaux, la Bibliothèque nationale a entrepris depuis 2002 de microfilmer les périodiques anciens ;<sup>181</sup> les microfilms (60 rouleaux, soit environ 37,000 pages microfilmées) sont correctement conservés dans le local abritant les documents audiovisuels; le personnel qui en est chargé paraît compétent et déclare cliquer jusqu'à 2,000 pages par jour.

Nous n'avons pu vérifier si ces microfilms étaient consultables (ni comment); nous en déduisons que ce sont des originaux, jamais dupliqués et que le Directeur est bien avisé de ne pas les laisser accessibles aux usagers de la bibliothèque.

### E - Numérisation?

Yves CHAN KAM LON, Directeur de la Bibliothèque nationale trouve la numérisation moins fiable et pérenne que le microfilmage:

«Q. Il a été question d'une aide de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie ?

*R. C'est un projet présenté l'année dernière, pour numériser les journaux en français des pays francophones. [...] Attention, c'est de la numérisation, ce n'est pas le microfilmage. La différence, c'est que le microfilmage c'est pour la préservation. Cela se fait dans toutes les BN du monde et ce support peut durer plus de cent ans. Alors que la numérisation ne dure pas dans le temps. Ce n'est pas la solution pour la préservation mais pour la dissémination de l'information. Cela signifie aussi que l'utilisateur n'a plus besoin de manipuler le journal papier et l'abîmer davantage.»<sup>182</sup>*

Cette opinion, peut-être sujette à caution depuis la généralisation des dépôts numériques dans les grandes bibliothèques d'Occident, n'est pas contradictoire avec la poursuite du microfilmage: une opération aisée et relativement peu coûteuse peut faire passer d'un support à l'autre.

#### 4.2.2 Quelques remarques

##### 4.2.2.1 À livre ouvert

L'étude du cas de la Bibliothèque nationale est facilitée car:

- il s'agit d'un organisme de création récente (1996, acte de fondation ;<sup>183</sup> 1999, inauguration dans des locaux temporaires) et la problématique, trop souvent invoquée à Maurice, de «l'héritage» ne s'y applique donc pas ;<sup>184</sup>
- la Bibliothèque nationale n'a connu qu'un seul directeur depuis son installation, personnalité médiatique, qui a littéralement porté le projet de sa conception jusqu'à sa naissance;
- la gestion rigoureuse appliquée à la Bibliothèque nationale, le contrôle méthodique de ses opérations, l'abondance d'une documentation de qualité font que nous n'avons rencontré aucune difficulté à connaître son mode de fonctionnement, ses attentes et les facteurs externes qui restreignent son développement.

##### 4.2.2.2 Bibliothécaires organisés

Tous les experts mauriciens<sup>185</sup> ou administrateurs britanniques<sup>186</sup> appelés à se pencher, depuis la fin des années 1950, sur la situation des bibliothèques mauriciennes arrivaient aux mêmes conclusions:<sup>187</sup>

- Il était indispensable de fonder un grand organisme chargé de la bibliographie nationale mauricienne, de la préservation des fonds anciens et de la tutelle de toutes les bibliothèques de l'île;
- Cet organisme devait être adossé à une puissante association professionnelle nationale de bibliothécaires.

##### 4.2.2.3 Aspects critiquables

Néanmoins, certains aspects apparaissent préoccupants.

#### A - Saisies dans le catalogue informatisé

Un simple sondage dans le catalogue informatisé nous révèle des errements qu'il conviendra de corriger:

- La saisie des notices bibliographiques dans le catalogue est très souvent fautive ; elle varie considérablement suivant le lieu de sa saisie (échanges de notices entre bibliothèques).<sup>188</sup>
- même chose pour la liste des auteurs;
- même chose pour l'indexation des notices par mots-clés, qui paraît très en deçà du nombre de livres effectivement entrés.
- Les notices n'indiquent pas l'état de conservation des ouvrages, information pourtant cruciale s'agissant de leur communicabilité ou de la planification de leur restauration.

## B - Où sont les documents les plus anciens ?

Nous avons demandé à Yves CHAN KAM LON de nous présenter les documents les plus anciens en sa détention (des périodiques de la fin du 18<sup>e</sup> s.) car nous avons constaté que les exemplaires figurant en rayonnage étaient, en réalité, des photocopies reliées.

Cela n'a pas été possible et l'original qui nous fut apporté n'était pas celui que nous avons demandé. Nous avons ensuite pris connaissance de l'armoire où sont entreposés les documents les plus anciens : quatre petits cartons seulement, quasiment vides.

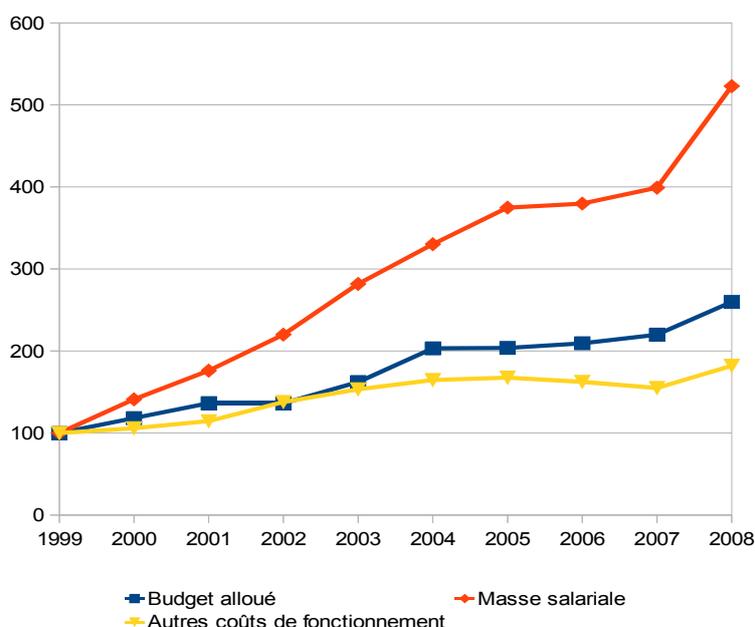
Il nous paraît souhaitable d'approfondir cet aspect des choses et de procéder à un recensement des documents les plus anciens (et donc les plus précieux).

## C - Gestion des priorités - Risques de dérive

Nous sommes enfin fondé à nous interroger sur quelques priorités de la Bibliothèque nationale:

- la revue de presse est bien tenue et assez consultée; en revanche, l'indexation des ouvrages laisse beaucoup à désirer alors que les journaux mauriciens (et internationaux), accessibles sur le Web, peuvent désormais faire l'objet de recherches et de synthèses automatiques.
- les rayonnages de la salle des périodiques devraient être améliorés de toute urgence (pour un coût assez modique) ; en revanche, l'Ambassade de Chine offre une quinzaine d'ordinateurs flambants-neufs qui sont sous-employés (nous ne leur avons jamais vu plus de trois utilisateurs au cours de nos visites).
- La Bibliothèque nationale a obtenu une certification ISO 9001 pour la qualité de son service aux usagers (qui est prévenant et rapide) ; en revanche, livres et périodiques sont entassés dans les dépôts et il n'y a jamais assez d'argent pour acheter des ouvrages de référence à jour.
- La masse salariale de la Bibliothèque nationale représentait 33% de son budget en 2000; elle se montait à 66% en 2008 ; en revanche, les frais de fonctionnement (par exemple, les crédits d'acquisition), ont, quant à eux, végété durant toute la période.<sup>189</sup>

Illustration 1 BN: Budget total - Salaires - Fonctionnement (Base 100 en 1999)



Notre sentiment est que la Bibliothèque nationale, parée à ses débuts de toutes les vertus rénovatrices mais trop chichement dotée par le Gouvernement, n'a sans doute pas su proportionner ses ambitions à ses moyens. Toute l'information scientifique et technique est désormais accessible en

ligne sur Internet, constamment à jour et accessible aux entreprises ou aux institutions; c'est maintenant la base privilégiée de tout «*Knowledge Hub*» et cela rend inutiles les efforts en ce sens de la Bibliothèque nationale, jamais probants, faute de moyens.

La Bibliothèque nationale semble avoir eu du mal à choisir entre ses deux missions initiales, tellement antithétiques en période de pénurie: celle de centre de conservation patrimoniale et celle de centre de veille technologique. Il nous paraîtrait souhaitable, au point où nous nous trouvons, de clarifier cette ambiguïté et d'élaguer ce qui doit l'être en faveur d'une approche plus strictement patrimoniale.

### 4.3 Cour Suprême de la République de Maurice (Port-Louis)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	07/04/2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dépôt intermédiaire des archives (arrière-cour de la Cour Suprême)</li> <li>• Bureaux du Greffe de la Cour Suprême</li> <li>• Dépôt des archives rue Lislet-Geoffroy (dernier étage)</li> <li>• Cave de la rue Lislet-Geoffroy</li> </ul>
Personnes rencontrées	M. Abdool Majeed JEENATHALLY, <i>Chief Court Officer</i>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Aucun
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	Aucune

#### 4.3.1 Compte-rendu de visite

##### 4.3.1.1 Gestion efficace du Greffe

Nous avons constaté grâce à l'aide efficace et compétente de M. Abdool Majeed JEENATHALLY, *Chief Court Officer*, que la gestion du Greffe était satisfaisante, vu les moyens disponibles.

Les archives de la Cour Suprême, Tribunal de Grande Instance, sont constituées de deux types principaux de documents:

- des dossiers d'affaires, classés en séries,<sup>190</sup> contenant une grande variété de documents et d'artefacts : pièces de procédure, dépositions, preuves matérielles (objets divers issus des enquêtes de police), etc.
- Des registres annuels par série dans lesquels sont consignées des informations succinctes sur les audiences (date, nom des parties, numéro d'identification).

Depuis 1995, la gestion des dossiers est informatisée (avec une interruption en 2002, une panne du système informatique ayant rendu inexploitable le fichier pour toute cette année): chaque dossier est indexé par un numéro séquentiel, un numéro composite et le nom des parties. Depuis 1990, environ (époque de conservation des archives « vivantes » les plus anciennes), 60,000 dossiers d'affaires sont stockés à portée et accessibles, auxquels s'ajoutent chaque année, 3,000 dossiers nouveaux (60 m linéaires).

La garantie de la vie privée est assez bien assurée: le Greffe est établi dans des bureaux exigus où toute visite est, de fait, contrôlée: ce sont surtout des avocats, des avoués ou des clerks qui les hantent, en parfaite connaissance du personnel administratif de la Cour. La consultation de pièces dans une affaire obéit, par ailleurs, à une procédure assez stricte de demande d'autorisation au *Chief Court Officer*.

La bibliothèque de la Cour Suprême, réservée aux Juges, conserve les séries reliées des arrêts de la Cour et quelques documents précieux, dont un *Code Noir*.<sup>191</sup>

##### 4.3.1.2 Quatre dépôts déficients

Nous avons pu visiter quatre dépôts où sont conservés les dossiers d'affaires:

- Bureaux du Greffe de la Cour Suprême: les registres de l'année en cours et un certain nombre de dossiers «vivants» sont présents au Greffe, dans des conditions de conservation moyennes car les lieux sont exigus.
- Dépôt intermédiaire des archives (arrière-cour de la Cour Suprême) : prolongement des bureaux du Greffe, ce dépôt est assez sommaire et regroupe les affaires courantes, notamment les divorces. Son accès paraît peu contrôlé et nous avons constaté que les parties s'y rendent assez librement pour consulter les pièces qui les concernent.

- Dépôt des archives, rue Lislet-Geoffroy:<sup>192</sup> le «nouveau dépôt» des archives, au dernier étage d'un bâtiment administratif, a permis de délester le dépôt intermédiaire; les conditions de conservation sont loin d'être optimales : le toit a fui récemment détrempant la moquette du sol, la climatisation n'est pas active sauf quand les personnels s'y trouvent, les travées sont trop étroites, et il reste, en vrac dans de grands sacs, un grand nombre d'archives à disposer dans les travées qui sont déjà presque pleines. Par ailleurs, la protection du dépôt est bonne (portes grillagées).
- La cave de la rue Lislet-Geoffroy est, quant à elle, un vrai pourrissoir d'archives:<sup>193</sup> les documents les plus anciens (registres du 19<sup>e</sup> s.) sont jetés à même le sol dans un désordre indescriptible, entassés pêle-mêle avec des débris divers (par exemple une cuvette de WC), attaqués de plus par la vermine.

#### 4.3.2 Quelques remarques

L'histoire sociale, notamment celle des classes populaires,<sup>194</sup> a été nourrie dans les cinquante dernières années de la mine d'informations qu'on trouve aux archives et plus précisément dans les dossiers d'affaires judiciaires: ils nous renseignent sur des faits minuscules<sup>195</sup> et nous laissent parfois entrevoir des réalités quotidiennes, qui auraient, sinon, sombré dans l'oubli.

Lors de notre première conversation téléphonique (12/03/2011), M. le Juge Prithviraj FEKNA, *Master and Registrar* des Archives de la Cour Suprême, nous indiquait que les *pièces* des dossiers des affaires jugées étaient détruites après 40 ans, les seuls *attendus* des jugements étant consignés dans des recueils imprimés et reliés, puis informatisés.

Ce processus d'épuration des archives, parfaitement codifié par ailleurs, constitue selon nous une perte pour l'histoire du pays et devrait, dans l'intérêt des générations futures, être promptement amendé.

#### 4.4 Évêché de Port-Louis (Port-Louis)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	22/03/2011, Évêché et bâtiment annexe où sont conservés les archives et les livres
Personnes rencontrées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheila BRELU-BRELU, Secrétaire-Archiviste</li> <li>• Dominique RAULT, Secrétaire-Documentaliste</li> </ul>
Questionnaire rempli ?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Oui : Inventaire sommaire des documents conservés à l'Évêché de Port-Louis
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	Aucune

##### 4.4.1 Compte-rendu de visite

Nous avons reçu un excellent accueil de la part des deux personnes chargées, à l'Évêché de Port-Louis, des fonds écrits patrimoniaux:

- Une archiviste à mi-temps chargée de répondre aux demandes de généalogie qui lui sont adressées (transcriptions d'actes après 1822),
- Une Secrétaire-Documentaliste qui est à la tête de la bibliothèque à laquelle on peut accéder sur simple demande.

L'influence de Mgr Amédée NAGAPEN, Vicaire général et historien de la Chrétienté à Maurice, s'est fait sentir depuis les années 1990 : un tour plus patrimonial a alors été donné aux documents anciens conservés, des colloques et des expositions<sup>196</sup> ont été organisés.

##### 4.4.1.1 Archives

Les archives sont conservées à l'étage de l'annexe de l'Évêché, dans une salle réservée à cet effet, qui paraît assez saine.

Ces documents sont très disparates:

- registres de chrétienté (naissances, mariages, décès) depuis 1822, avec quelques épaves datant du 18<sup>e</sup> s.,
- manuscrits : recueils de correspondances des évêques des 19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> s. par exemple;
- cartes, plans et documents figurés (architecture religieuse, propriétés du clergé),
- livres anciens : livres de piété, etc.
- journaux religieux publiés à Maurice jusqu'à l'époque contemporaine;
- dossiers documentaires sur l'Église de Maurice;
- archives administratives de l'Évêché.

Leur état de conservation laisse à désirer: la plupart de ces documents ont été extraits d'une cave humide dans les années 1990 et nous avons pu constater la gravité des attaques dues aux insectes. Depuis, ces documents sont régulièrement fumigés, dépoussiérés, mais le personnel, insuffisant en nombre, n'a pas assez de temps à consacrer aux archives et n'a pas reçu la formation nécessaire. La climatisation n'est pas allumée de façon permanente, seulement quand les employés sont présents.

##### 4.4.1.2 Bibliothèque

La bibliothèque, installée dans le palais épiscopal, jouit d'excellentes conditions de conservation et d'accueil pour les lecteurs (peu nombreux). Il s'agit d'un fonds contemporain de taille réduite (100 m linéaires avec seulement quelques documents patrimoniaux) doublé d'un centre de documentation sur l'action de l'Église à Maurice (présence d'un documentaliste à mi-temps qui complète la base de données informatiques).

#### 4.4.2 Quelques remarques

Le service des archives de l'Évêché de Port-Louis fonctionne, puisque c'est un fonds privé, selon un mode d'accès restreint: le public est seulement invité à demander communication de transcriptions d'actes généalogiques.

Un inventaire complet du fonds est nécessaire (nombreux documents empilés en vrac et encore inexploités), la numérisation des registres de chrétienté apporterait un meilleur confort de travail à Sheila BRELU-BRELU et solliciterait moins les documents dont l'état de conservation est médiocre mais stationnaire.

#### 4.5 Hôpital psychiatrique Brown-Séguard (Beau-Bassin)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	28/03/2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nouvel Hôpital Brown-Séguard (BBRH), bureaux puis salle des archives vivantes et intermédiaires</li> <li>Ward 24 de l'ancien Hôpital (BBRH) où sont conservées les archives anciennes</li> </ul>
Personnes rencontrées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M. GOOLY, Administrateur</li> <li>M. Anand Kumar SEERUTHUN, <i>senior Health Record Officer</i></li> </ul>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Oui : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historique de l'Hôpital Brown-Séguard</li> <li>Exemple de formulaire d'épuration d'une sous-série d'archives</li> </ul>
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	Aucune

##### 4.5.1 Compte-rendu de visite

La visite des archives de l'Hôpital Brown-Séguard était l'occasion d'évaluer les procédures de conservation des archives intermédiaires, dans un contexte de nécessaire protection de la vie privée.<sup>197</sup>

##### A - Gestion efficace des entrées quotidiennes

Nous avons principalement rencontré M. Anand Kumar SEERUTHUN, gestionnaire très attentif et compétent de:

- la base de données informatisée des patients (75,000 entrées), qui s'accroît à raison d'environ 5,000 entrées par an (patients internes et externes) ; cette base de données contient le numéro de référence du dossier médical de chaque patient ainsi que ses coordonnées.
- Des archives proches de son bureau qui regroupent, dans un espace de 150 m<sup>2</sup> environ, la totalité des 75,000 dossiers médicaux correspondants aux entrées « vivantes » de la base de données. Eu égard à la démographie des patients, ces dossiers remontent, jusqu'à la fin des années 1970.

L'état de conservation de ces documents est bon, malgré l'absence de climatisation ; leur classement (par numéro de dossier) est convenable. La sécurité des données paraît bien assurée : il faut faire état de son appartenance au corps médical ou administratif pour entrer dans le local d'archives. Les procédures d'épuration sont très bien définies (au niveau du Ministère de la Santé) et promptement appliquées.

La numérisation des dossiers vivants va être entreprise à la fin 2011, pour aboutir à leur dématérialisation.

##### B - Désastre patrimonial

En revanche, nous avons été choqués de l'état de conservation des « archives anciennes » (avant 1970, dont M. SEERUTHUN n'a pas la charge) et que nous avons visitées dans l'aile ancienne de l'hôpital (Ward 24).<sup>198</sup>

Ces archives de provenances très diverses (Hôpital Brown-Séguard, autres hôpitaux du Nord du pays, Ministère de la Santé) sont conservées dans un triste état, en attente d'être épurées. Selon leur origine, elles ont subi un sort plus ou moins critique : si celles de l'Hôpital Brown-Séguard sont placées sur des rayonnages, celles des autres administrations sont déversées à terre, pêle-mêle, ce qui nous a même empêché de pénétrer dans le dépôt.

Ces archives nous paraissent représenter un sérieux risque sanitaire pour les malades tout proches (le Ward 24 se trouve au milieu des autres pavillons) : une telle accumulation de cellulose attire la

vermine et constitue un risque d'incendie. Enfin, la confidentialité des données n'est nullement préservée.

#### 4.5.2 Quelques remarques

Nous avons été convaincu du professionnalisme avec lequel les entrées médicales sont saisies à l'Hôpital Brown-Séguard ; la gestion des dossiers médicaux, pourtant « rustique », ne laisse guère non plus à désirer, même du point de vue de la protection de la vie privée. En revanche, il est urgent d'intervenir pour sauver ce qui peut l'être des archives entassées au *Ward 24* - mais peut-être est-il déjà trop tard car les séries, versées en vrac, ont été éclatées et les documents irrémédiablement détériorés.

L'hôpital Brown-Séguard, qui date de plus d'un siècle,<sup>199</sup> nous paraît une bonne illustration du mélange des genres qui occasionne tant de dommages aux documents anciens à Maurice : procédures saines de gestion courante, aucune sensibilité ni formation du personnel aux questions patrimoniales.

#### 4.6 Mahatma Gandhi Institute - MGI (Moka)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	10/03/2011, Bureaux et bibliothèque du MGI à Moka
Personnes rencontrées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mme Nagamah GOPAULOO, <i>Head of School of Mauritian and Area Studies</i></li> <li>• M. Suryadan CAHOOLESSAR, <i>Head of Library and Archives</i></li> <li>• M. Vishawanaden GOVINDEN, Chargé de Cours et responsable des archives de l'Engagisme au MGI</li> </ul>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Non
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Oui: Budgets et fréquentation des archives; règlement intérieur applicable aux archives de l'Engagisme ; détail du matériel informatique.</li> <li>⤴ Non: aucune réponse malgré relance.</li> </ul>

##### 4.6.1 Compte-rendu de visite

Nous avons été reçu par plusieurs responsables du *Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI)*:<sup>200</sup> la présidente de la séance, une universitaire (Mme GOPAULOO), était accompagnée du responsable de la bibliothèque et des archives de l'institut (M. CAHOOLESSAR) et du responsable du fonds des archives et du musée de l'engagisme indien (M. GOVINDEN).

Le MGI est un institut à vocation essentiellement éducative (5 établissements d'enseignement, principalement primaire et secondaire), puis culturelle (galerie d'exposition, auditorium) fondé en 1970 à Maurice et financé conjointement par le Gouvernement mauricien et la République d'Inde.

##### 4.6.1.1 Bibliothèque de l'institut

Le MGI est doté d'une importante bibliothèque (105,000 volumes alors qu'elle avait été prévue pour 40,000, 1 km linéaire environ ; avec un accroissement annuel modéré de 10 m linéaires), en cours de rénovation, et dont les fonds sont riches dans les domaines de la spiritualité et des religions.

Cette bibliothèque n'a pas spécialement vocation patrimoniale et ne conserve pas d'ouvrages anciens ni précieux. La saisie informatique de son catalogue est en cours, à partir du registre d'accès tenu à jour et des fiches accessibles au public. Quelques collections font l'objet d'une cotation spéciale et de catalogues particuliers : Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, *Mauritiana*, etc.

##### 4.6.1.2 Archives de l'engagisme indien

Selon M. GOVINDEN, c'est l'état de conservation alarmant des registres d'arrivée des ouvriers engagés « échoués » aux Archives nationales,<sup>201</sup> qui a justifié leur transfert au MGI en 1975-76.<sup>202</sup>

C'est le Dr. Huguette LY TIO FANE, archiviste des Archives nationales détachée au MGI comme *Research Assistant* qui se chargea de leur restauration, le Dr. SOOBRAYEN du MGI continuant l'inventaire amorcé avant leur transfert.

Il s'agit d'un fonds de taille moyenne (2,000 registres, 50 m linéaires), conservant des documents de différents types étagés de 1834 à 1920:

- Registres d'arrivées (1834 - 1910): 2,000 registres ;
- Certificats de mariage (1850 - 1920);
- Contrats et répartition des ouvriers engagés entre leurs employeurs (1842 - 1859) ;
- Correspondance administrative (1868 - 1920);
- Photographies d'identité des engagés (1868 - 1914): 200,000 photographies.

Ce fonds concerne:

- les engagés indiens ;
- les *Liberated Africans*, esclaves libérés des bateaux négriers arraisonnés par la Navy et alloués comme apprentis, puis comme engagés, à des propriétaires proches du pouvoir britannique à Maurice (par exemple Charles TELFAIR, propriétaire de Bel-Ombre).

Ce fonds, de par sa nature même, n'enregistre plus d'accession nouvelle. Ces documents jouissent d'un statut particulier; mis en dépôt par les Archives nationales,<sup>203</sup> ils sont:

- Préservés: fumigation tous les 4 ans, contrôle de la température et de l'hygrométrie.
- Communiqués au public selon un règlement intérieur<sup>204</sup> très restrictif et qui donne lieu à critiques, notamment de la part des universitaires: durant la restauration actuelle du musée, deux places de chercheurs seulement sont disponibles (dont une réservée à la TJC et à l'Apravasi Ghat); quatre en période normale.

C'est M. CAHOOLESSAR qui donne les autorisations, sur justificatif de recherche et de niveau d'études (supérieur au BA/Licence).

Les consultations sont très strictement supervisées par M. GOVINDEN, d'où des frictions avec certains lecteurs et institutions et des tentatives de soustraction d'informations, notamment vis-à-vis de la TJC<sup>205</sup> qui semblent heureusement résolues.<sup>206</sup>

- Indexés : base de données conçue dans les années 1980 par des experts d'Inde, réalisée sur Oracle, déployée en 1999 par SIL (*State Informatics Ltd*) et pouvant contenir, pour 100,000 immigrants à ce jour, pléthore d'informations.<sup>207</sup>

Les réticences de M. GOVINDEN à communiquer directement les documents au public, même expérimenté, se justifient par la mission mémorielle dont il se sent investi et par le risque que des consultations trop fréquentes font, selon lui, courir aux documents ; le mode normal de communication est le suivant :

1. demande écrite de consultation pour une recherche d'origines, sur communication du numéro d'engagé;
2. extrait par le MGI de la fiche de l'engagé; ce document à valeur légale, à l'instar d'un extrait d'état-civil;
3. autorisation de prendre une photographie numérique du cliché d'identité de l'engagé ou de la faire prendre par un photographe rémunéré;
4. en cas de contestation, autorisation de consulter le registre; ces contestations sont courantes, notamment dans les cas suivants:
  - sur le nom de l'engagé qui n'est pas orthographié comme celui de ses ascendants indiens ou de ses descendants mauriciens;
  - sur la caste à laquelle il disait appartenir;
  - sur sa religion originelle.

Ces archives, qui sont prévues pour une inscription au *Memory of the World* de l'UNESCO,<sup>208</sup> sont destinées à revenir prochainement dans le giron de l'État mauricien, aux Archives nationales.

#### 4.6.2 Quelques remarques

De prime abord, les archives de l'engagisme au MGI constituent un service d'état-civil destiné aux descendants des engagés indiens, c'est-à-dire la majorité de la population mauricienne: comme au *Registrar of Civil Status*, le public n'est pas admis à consulter directement les registres et se voit remettre, sur demande et justificatifs préalables, des informations juridiquement valides.

Étant donné le bon état de conservation de ce fonds,<sup>209</sup> on est tenté de penser que l'intermède durant lequel il aura été confié au MGI, organisme para-public (*parastatal body*), ne lui aura pas été nocif, bien au contraire. La comparaison avec les fonds dont nous avons constaté la dégradation au *Registrar of Civil Status*<sup>210</sup> et avec ceux des Archives nationales nous conforte dans cette opinion.

## 4.7 Musée de la Photographie (Port-Louis)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	15/03/2011
Personnes rencontrées	Les propriétaires du musée (de statut privé): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ Mme Marie-Noëlle BRÉVILLE</li> <li>▲ M. Tristan BRÉVILLE</li> </ul>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Non
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oui : Budgets, fréquentation du public.</li> <li>• Oui, réponses satisfaisantes.</li> </ul>

## 4.7.1 Compte-rendu de la visite

Nous rencontrons les deux propriétaires du musée (statut de musée privé), Mme et M. BRÉVILLE dans ses locaux, une «longère» ancienne et bien restaurée de la Rue du Vieux Conseil à Port-Louis.

## 4.7.1.1 Réserves préalables

M. BRÉVILLE se refuse, dans un premier temps, à répondre à notre questionnaire car il s'inscrit selon lui dans une longue série de telles entrevues menées par l'État mauricien et qui n'ont mené à aucun résultat tangible, tout au contraire; il fait également état du caractère nocif, selon lui, du *Mauritius Museums Council* pour la culture à Maurice. Nous le convainquons de nous répondre et il se prête alors de très bonne grâce et avec pertinence à l'exercice.

## 4.7.1.2 Expérience acquise

M. BRÉVILLE dispose d'une longue expérience de photographe et de cinéaste professionnel : diplômé de l'IDHEC en France, il a également suivi les cours de l'INA (France), a longtemps exercé le métier de «photographe pédagogue» et de metteur en image auprès du Ministère de l'Éducation de Maurice.

## 4.7.1.3 Histoire et financement

Le Musée de la photographie, collection personnelle de deux passionnés établie dans leurs deux logements successifs de Rose Hill (1966), puis de Quatre Bornes (1972), trouve sa consécration lors de son ouverture officielle en 1992 à Port-Louis dans les locaux actuels, qui appartiennent à la Municipalité.

Les difficultés n'ont pas manqué, notamment la quasi destruction du musée par deux accidents de chantier successifs (janvier et février 2008) survenus dans le bâtiment en surplomb alors en construction et pour lesquels les assurances se sont montrées, semble-t-il, peu généreuses.<sup>211</sup>

La question du financement du musée par l'État mauricien est cruciale car les visiteurs ne sont pas très nombreux (4,000 visiteurs par an en moyenne) et ne constituent d'ailleurs pas, selon M. BRÉVILLE, un réel critère de succès.<sup>212</sup>

Actuellement, le musée reçoit les dotations suivantes:

- en nature: prêt du bâtiment par la Municipalité de Port-Louis,
- Municipalité: 300,000 Rs. annuellement depuis 2006;<sup>213</sup> cette somme est jugée insuffisante par M. BRÉVILLE et devrait être au minimum de 1,2 Millions de Rs. Annuels,<sup>214</sup> sinon de 4 Millions de Rs. comme il nous le déclare lors de l'entrevue.
- État mauricien : dotation exceptionnelle de 2 Millions de Rs., prévue au budget de 2009,<sup>215</sup> mais dont nous ignorons si elle a été versée ou non.

Pour le reste, le musée vit de la revente de droits photographiques (réputés très élevés; montant inconnu) et, dans une bien moindre mesure, de sa billetterie.

#### 4.7.1.4 Collection

##### A - Politique d'acquisition

La politique d'acquisition est importante et n'a pas cessé depuis les débuts de la collection (actuellement: 1,000 items par an) :

- récupération de fonds photographiques ou cinématographiques tombés en déshérence, ou purement et simplement jetés par leurs propriétaires;
- acquisition auprès d'héritiers de fonds d'ateliers de photographes mauriciens (fonds GRANCOURT, Antoine D'ARIFAT, Joseph-Gabriel GENTIL); ces acquisitions se font plus difficiles car la concurrence des brocanteurs est vive (exemple de Jean-Baptiste URBINI à propos du fonds Vèle KADRESSEN) ;<sup>216</sup>
- dépôts par des particuliers.

##### B - Contenu

La collection est variée puisqu'elle comprend:

- des photographies sous toutes leurs formes et supports : daguerréotypes, négatifs, tirages anciens (divers procédés), tirages contemporains, reproductions de presse, etc.
- des documents de toutes sortes : livres, périodiques, affiches, timbres-postes, etc.
- de nombreux appareillages techniques liés à la photographie, à la cartographie ou au cinéma.
- Des films dont la conservation est ardue (acétates très inflammables), comprennent quelques pièces rares (documentaires d'avant-guerre du peintre de marine MÉNARDEAU).

Il est difficile à M. BRÉVILLE de nous préciser la taille de sa collection, faute d'inventaire ni même de dépouillement sommaire des fonds du musée: son évaluation oscille, au cours de l'entretien, de 1,000 m à 300 m linéaires, soit plus d'un million de documents (originaux et copies/reproductions confondus).

##### C - Conservation

Les lieux de conservation de cette collection sont multiples:

- sur place, au musée (arrière-salle correctement ventilée mais au contact de matériels électriques et dans un certain entassement),
- au domicile des BRÉVILLE à Quatre Bornes (pas visité);
- ultérieurement, une fois réunis les fonds nécessaires, dans une «chambre froide sèche» que M. BRÉVILLE prévoit de faire construire à Saint-Hubert près de Mahébourg, au plein milieu de marais sauvages (ce qui ne nous paraît pas de nature à assurer une conservation adéquate ni à faciliter son contrôle hygrométrique).

#### 4.7.1.5 Grands projets

M. BRÉVILLE évoque son projet de «Répertoire Culturel Mauricien» (RCM), débuté en 1993, dont il nous montre le fonctionnement sur l'ordinateur du musée. Il s'agit d'une base de données non relationnelle associant:

- les noms de collectionneurs mauriciens ou étrangers,
- avec les œuvres qu'ils possèdent (notice très sommaire et image photographique ou scan),
- et avec les noms et biographies très succinctes des artistes qui les ont créées.

## 4.7.2 Quelques remarques

### 4.7.2.1 Authenticité hasardeuse

L'authenticité des photos semble poser un problème, par conséquent, pour la revente de certains documents et photographies, présentés comme étant de tirages anciens.

### 4.7.2.2 Questions de définition

#### A - Musée?

Selon l'ICOM, organisme international de référence sur les musées dans le monde, la définition d'un musée est:

*«Un musée est une institution permanente sans but lucratif, au service de la société et de son développement, ouverte au public, qui acquiert, conserve, étudie, expose et transmet le patrimoine matériel et immatériel de l'humanité et de son environnement à des fins d'études, d'éducation et de délectation.»<sup>217</sup>*

Le Musée de la Photographie de Port-Louis ne nous paraît pas répondre à ces prérequis:

- il s'agit d'une « affaire familiale », de nature commerciale, dont les ressources proviennent principalement des subventions étatiques, de la revente de droits photographiques et, dans une bien moindre mesure, des entrées; M.BRÉVILLE, d'ailleurs, ne cache pas son désir de vendre sa collection et la céderait bien volontiers si l'occasion se présentait à lui et si le prix offert lui convenait;
- la conservation et l'étude des documents et artefacts conservés nous paraissent impraticables vu l'absence d'inventaire, aussi sommaire soit-il : cette lacune ne permet à personne de vraiment connaître la teneur des fonds conservés, même à ses propriétaires, nous semble-t-il.

#### B - Bibliothèque patrimoniale ?

Pour autant, s'agit-il d'une bibliothèque patrimoniale spécialisée dans le domaine photographique? Pas d'avantage puisqu'ici encore l'absence d'inventaire ou de politique de conservation et de restauration sont des lacunes rendant cette définition inadéquate.

### 4.7.2.3 Répertoire Culturel Mauricien

Le projet de Répertoire Culturel Mauricien ne nous paraît pas à la hauteur de ses ambitions:

- la réflexion préalable sur l'étendue de l'inventaire des œuvres et du répertoire d'artistes<sup>218</sup> y est indigente;
- la solution technique adoptée est sous-dimensionnée, assez mal maîtrisée (tableur Micro-soft Excel) et ne respecte pas les normes de description en vigueur;
- les œuvres collectées sont disparates et d'un intérêt souvent médiocre (exemple de la collection privée de M.TANG WAY).

Ses contours approximatifs et mouvants expliquent sans doute que ce projet, prévu pour décembre 2009 et évalué à 20 Millions de roupies,<sup>219</sup> puis déclaré par son propriétaire «cadeau à mon pays» en mai de la même année,<sup>220</sup> soit toujours inachevé en avril 2011.

### 4.7.2.4 Conclusion provisoire

La bonne volonté, l'abnégation, la passion du couple BRÉVILLE ne font pas de doute et on leur doit la sauvegarde d'une partie du patrimoine photographique mauricien.

Pour autant, beaucoup reste à faire et l'approche adoptée au Musée de la Photographie nous paraît empreinte d'un certain amateurisme (absence d'inventaire, manque de rigueur dans les techniques de conservation, stockage en vrac potentiellement dangereux pour les documents et artefacts), qui trouve son justificatif dans le sentiment d'urgence et la nécessité de faire vite afin de collecter ce patrimoine en péril, avant de le voir disparaître pour de bon.

Les autorités mauriciennes seraient avisées d'aider dorénavant le Musée de la Photographie à améliorer ses méthodes de conservation et de gestion, de l'aider à réaliser son catalogue, en contrepartie de leur financement, fort généreux depuis 2006.

#### 4.8 Registrar General (Port-Louis)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	22/03/2011, après trois rendez-vous repoussés <i>in-extremis</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Étage de l'<i>Emmanuel Anquetil Building</i> où se trouve le <i>Registrar General</i></li> </ul>
Personnes rencontrées	M. Rajandrah GOORAYAH, <i>Deputy Registrar</i>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Non
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oui : Budgets, historique du service et textes réglementaires régissant son fonctionnement interne, <i>Registrar General Act</i>, rapports annuels.</li> <li>Non : Aucune réponse malgré relance.</li> </ul>

##### 4.8.1 Compte-rendu de visite

Nous avons été reçu par M. Rajandrah GOORAYAH, *Deputy Registrar* dont la compétence et le dynamisme nous ont convaincu.

###### 4.8.1.1 Administration riche et puissante

Le *Registrar General* est une puissante administration, bien dotée en personnel (160 employés avec de bonnes qualifications), dont le rôle est crucial dans la vie sociale, juridique et patrimoniale de Maurice; il conserve en effet, sur deux étages du bâtiment Emmanuel Anquetil de Port-Louis (4<sup>e</sup> et 6<sup>e</sup> ainsi qu'une réserve de documents anciens au *MPF Building*):

- les transcriptions des actes notariés enregistrés (depuis 1804),
- les inscriptions d'hypothèques,
- diverses perceptions en faveur de l'État (par exemple, ventes et achats de véhicules),
- des actes sous seing privé : actes enregistrés, procédures en Cour, engagements et dépôts en garantie (*bonds*), testaments.

L'informatique de recherche en matière patrimoniale est performante : la base de données Oracle répertorie la localisation dans les registres de tous les actes notariés et hypothèques depuis l'origine. Il y a 50 postes de consultation pour les usagers, autant pour les employés.

La numérisation des documents pour le projet LAVIMS<sup>221</sup> va débuter prochainement.

###### 4.8.1.2 Conservation du patrimoine déficiente

Faute de sensibilisation et de formation adéquates, la conservation des documents anciens laisse en revanche beaucoup à désirer.

- L'accès direct aux actes enregistrés dans le dépôt, même les plus anciens, est libre pour tous moyennant une redevance minime;<sup>222</sup> nous avons constaté à quel point les usagers (notamment les clercs de notaires) maltraitaient les registres en les maniant sans ménagement. Le risque de vol de registres ou de pages dans les registres nous paraît également important.
- Le service de reliure et de restauration, établi de longue date, est très compétent pour le tout-venant des documents administratifs mais pas du tout au fait des techniques de restauration. Outre la plastification à chaud (*laminating*), le service utilise de la bande adhésive (*Scotch*) dont l'effet sur les documents anciens est nocif.

La plastification des index et répertoires est presque achevée; une fois plastifiés, les index seront scannés. Celle des registres va bientôt commencer en partant de 1804; or, il s'agit d'une procédure non réversible donc inadéquate du point de vue de la conservation : elle doit donc être immédiatement interrompue.

- La climatisation du dépôt était éteinte durant notre visite.

#### 4.8.2 Quelques remarques

Avec le *Registrar General* nous sommes en présence d'une administration efficace, riche, moderne et bien gérée, notamment du point de vue informatique. Pour autant, elle se concentre principalement sur la gestion de ses archives contemporaines et laisse au second plan les trésors patrimoniaux qu'elle conserve, risquant par des démarches inappropriées de les compromettre gravement.

Il nous paraît important que le Ministère de tutelle du *Registrar General*, les Finances, octroie une dotation modeste mais suffisante pour numériser en priorité ses documents les plus anciens et mette les originaux à l'abri de la manipulation des lecteurs et des atteintes de restaurations trop radicales.

#### 4.9 Registrar of Civil Status (Port-Louis)

Date(s) et lieu(x) de visite	21/03/2011, après plusieurs atterroissements ^ Étage de l' <i>Emmanuel Anquetil Building</i> où se trouve le <i>Registrar of Civil Status</i>
Personnes rencontrées	M. André LAU YU KAM, <i>Deputy Registrar</i>
Questionnaire rempli?	Oui
Documents complémentaires confiés?	Non
Questions complémentaires posées - Réponses apportées	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oui : Budgets, volumétrie des documents conservés, <i>Civil Status Act</i>.</li> <li>• Non : Aucune réponse malgré relance.</li> </ul>

##### 4.9.1 Compte-rendu de visite

Nous avons eu du mal à obtenir un rendez-vous avec les responsables de ce service : la foule des touristes étrangers venus à Maurice submerge ses capacités (79 employés, budget annuel d'environ 30 Millions de Rs.) et celles de l'officier d'état-civil principal, son *Deputy Registrar*, M. André LAU YU KAM.

###### 4.9.1.1 Documents conservés

Au nombre de ses attributions, le service détient l'état-civil mauricien et conserve deux types de documents:

- les originaux des registres, qui sont souvent présents dans les bureaux régionaux de l'état-civil (un par district) ; dans ces registres (naissances, mariages, décès), les entrées sont classés par ordre chronologique;
- les originaux des index ou répertoires donnant accès (alphabétique des noms) aux entrées des registres (numéro de registre et *folio*). Ces index sont également accessibles, jusqu'à 1861, aux Archives nationales.

L'accès aux dépôts est exclusivement réservé aux employés du service et strictement interdit au public.

###### 4.9.1.2 Système informatique

Le système informatique nominatif est à jour pour les actes postérieurs à novembre 2001, dont les copies papier sont également conservées (accroissement annuel d'environ 400 registres sous forme de listings). Sa mise à jour pour les actes des années antérieures se fait au gré des demandes par les particuliers (généalogistes ou citoyens procédant à des démarches administratives); la qualité des saisies va en diminuant à mesure que ces actes remontent dans le temps (erreurs de lecture et de retranscription).

###### 4.9.1.3 Local des registres

Le local des registres paraît sain: l'espace est vaste, le mobilier métallique de bonne qualité et adapté à la taille des registres contemporains, les documents paraissent rangés (ordre chronologique puis géographique).

On doit néanmoins signaler que la climatisation ne fonctionne que durant la journée, aux heures de bureau, et que certains employés se permettent de fumer dans le local en actionnant un ventilateur pour disperser la fumée, ce qui représente un risque critique d'incendie pour le bâtiment tout entier.

La situation est alarmante en revanche pour les registres les plus anciens (1811-1860), souvent des exemplaires uniques: placés à l'horizontale dans les travées inférieures des rayonnages (ils n'entrent pas verticalement), trop serrés, ils laissent échapper de leurs reliures démantibulées des feuilles volantes qui, par négligence, sont parfois intercalées dans d'autres registres ou traînent à même le sol.

#### 4.9.1.4 Local des index

La salle des index se trouve dans une aile différente de celle du local des registres, près de l'atelier de reliure et des guichets destinés au public, ce qui présente beaucoup d'inconvénients pour les employés du *Registrar*, contraints à de fastidieux aller-retours. Cette salle est exiguë, exposée en pleine lumière; les index, fréquemment utilisés, s'y trouvent à l'étroit, jetés pêle-mêle ou placés tête-bêche dans des meubles inadaptés (reliures anciennes démembrées). Les index abîmés continuent d'être utilisés, même quand leurs feuilles se détachent. Lors de l'une de nos visites, ils avaient été détremés par une fuite d'eau provenant du plafond: aucune mesure de protection n'avait alors été prise par le personnel.

#### 4.9.2 Quelques remarques

##### 4.9.2.1 Expérience vécue

Nous avons été récemment amenés à rechercher des pièces généalogiques pour une famille franco-mauricienne dont les souches ascendantes ont été par ailleurs bien étudiées par les érudits locaux (on dispose des arbres généalogiques de tous les ascendants de cette famille). L'objectif de cette mission était de retrouver puis de faire authentifier les actes de naissance, de mariage et de décès de tous les ascendants de la famille et des familles alliées (quatre en tout) afin de pouvoir établir une filiation continue jusqu'au primo-arrivant français.

Les 35 demandes d'actes, étagés entre les 18<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> s. ont donné lieu aux résultats suivants, après deux mois de recherche dans les index par des employés du *Registrar* (le public n'est pas autorisé à procéder aux recherches lui-même):

	Total
Oubliés dans la recherche	3%
Cote déclarée introuvable dans les index	54%
Cote trouvée dans les index	43%

Ce qui signifie que plus de la moitié des entrées des index ne put alors être trouvées compromettant donc la possibilité d'atteindre aisément les actes dans les registres correspondants.

Une fois les actes recherchés dans les registres par les employés de l'état-civil et complétés par nos soins aux Archives nationales, les résultats s'établirent finalement ainsi:

	Total
Oubliés dans la recherche	3%
Cote déclarée introuvable dans les index	26%
Document déclaré introuvable dans les registres	22%
Document trouvé dans les registres et transcrit	49%

Une recherche d'actes d'état-civil simple et couvrant une période récente (18<sup>e</sup>-20<sup>e</sup> s.) aboutit donc aux résultats suivants:

- la totalité des actes avant 1790 sont demeurés introuvables aux Archives nationales, faute d'index avant cette date;
- les index conservés à l'état-civil sont dans un tel état qu'ils laissent un bon tiers des actes sans cote et donc introuvables dans les registres;
- même quand la cote des actes est trouvée dans les index, l'état de conservation ou la perte des registres correspondants laisse un bon tiers des documents introuvables;
- en définitive, la moitié seulement des actes a pu être trouvée et retranscrite.

#### 4.9.2.2 Questions

- Que penser d'une administration d'importance nationale dont les résultats sont probants à 50%?
- Quelles conséquences peut avoir une occultation de la moitié (en moyenne) des ascendants de chaque citoyen mauricien? Quels en sont les effets, à moyen et long terme, sur la conscience nationale mauricienne?
- Ne peut-on surtout trouver des solutions (simples au demeurant) à cette situation nocive et qui s'aggrave de jour en jour?

#### 4.10 MSIRI (Réduit) : réponse par courriel

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##### 4.10.1 Confidentialité requise

Mme Rosemay NG a stipulé, dans la réponse au questionnaire qu'elle nous a faite par courriel, de son souhait que les renseignements qu'elle nous adressait restent anonymes.

Nous ne pouvons donc en faire état dans cette section mais les intégrons néanmoins, en les mêlant aux autres résultats statistiques globaux de notre enquête: ils ne peuvent plus ainsi être retracés.

## 5 FACTEURS EXPLICATIFS

### 5.1 Budgets en berne

Depuis l'Indépendance, le budget du pays alloué à la culture,<sup>223</sup> que ce soit sous la tutelle du Ministère des Arts et de la Culture (créé en 1982, subit ensuite de nombreuses vicissitudes) ou de tel autre, est resté insuffisant même s'il dépasse la courbe ascensionnelle générale du budget de l'État mauricien.

Essayons de confirmer ou d'infirmer ce fait pour les organismes de conservation du patrimoine documentaire, par l'étude des budgets que nous pouvons trouver dans les sources disponibles en ligne.<sup>224</sup>

#### 5.1.1 Étude des budgets culturels

##### 5.1.1.1 Disparité des sources

Plusieurs facteurs expliquent la difficulté à établir des séries budgétaires continues et cohérentes, donc comparables.

- Les différences de statuts entre organismes, qui aboutissent à des différences de décompte dans le budget de l'État mauricien.<sup>225</sup>
- Le changement intervenu dans la période budgétaire 2009-2010: le passage d'une période de décompte [1<sup>er</sup> juillet-30 juin] à une période [1<sup>er</sup> janvier-31 décembre] a occasionné un décompte sur une demi-année en 2009.
- Le passage en 2009 à une gestion des budgets par projets (PBB - Programme-Based Budgeting) sur base triennale a fait perdre, dans le budget, leur individualité à certains services d'État.<sup>226</sup>
- La globalisation de certaines données selon des postes de regroupement évolutifs, est préjudiciable dès qu'on souhaite comparer le budget des services avec celui de postes nationaux.<sup>227</sup>
- L'absence, sur le site Internet du Budget, de certaines données dont les pièces justificatives manquent.<sup>228</sup>

##### 5.1.1.2 Méthodologie

Nous avons conçu et renseigné une base de données des données budgétaires de la culture à Maurice, accessible en ligne, qui constitue une référence aisée et permet des comparaisons entre données réelles.

En particulier, nous avons veillé:

- à y distinguer les *évaluations des valeurs effectivement constatées*.
- À toujours y mentionner la *source* de l'information et *l'institution ou le poste* à laquelle elle s'applique.
- À y enregistrer des données *synchrones*.

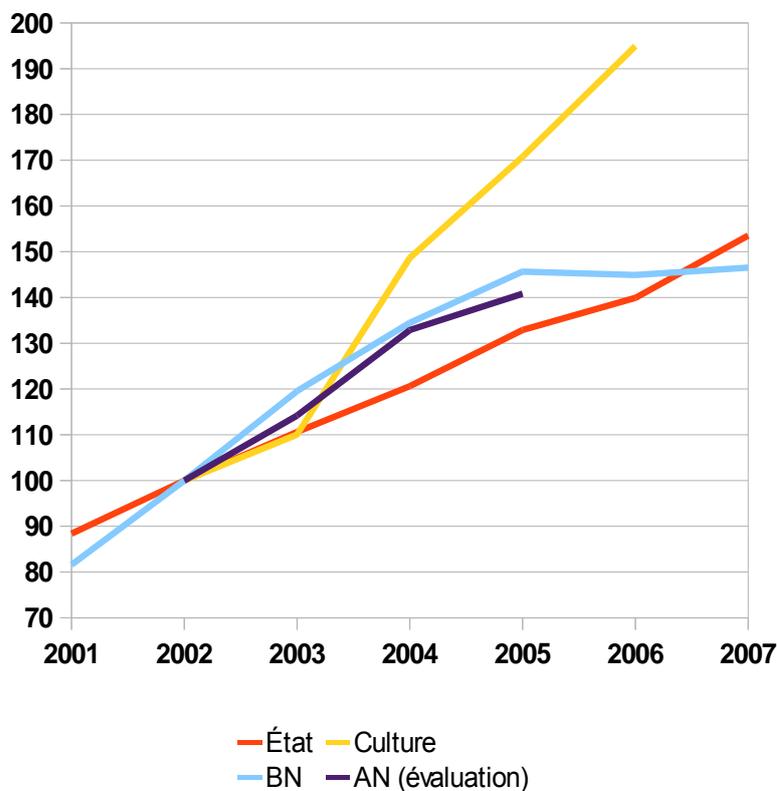
#### 5.1.2 Synthèse des résultats

##### 5.1.2.1 Augmentation générale des budgets de fonctionnement

Dans le graphique ci-dessous, on constate la hausse importante du budget du Ministère des Arts et de la Culture (qui double entre 2002 et 2006 alors que le budget de fonctionnement de l'État augmente de 40%); cet optimisme doit, cependant, être tempéré puisque l'évolution des deux orga-

nismes culturels que nous étudions (Archives nationales et Bibliothèque nationale) est loin d'être aussi prononcée (voir *infra*).

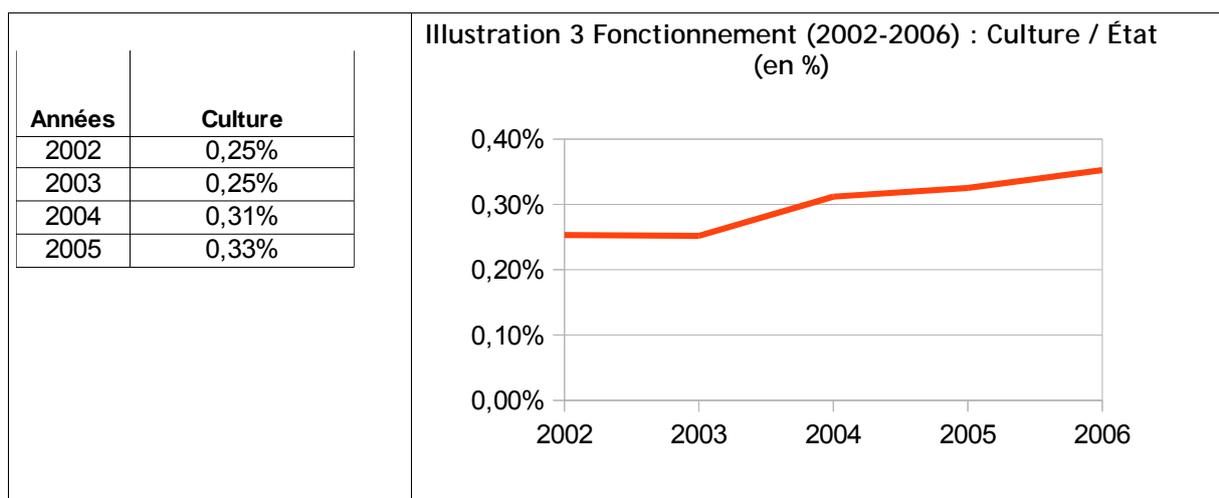
Illustration 2 Budgets de fonctionnement (Base 100 en 2002)



#### 5.1.2.2 Accroissement du budget du Ministère des Arts et de la Culture

Quand on compare les coûts de fonctionnement (dépenses de personnel + dépenses de fonctionnement) du Ministère des Arts et de la Culture avec les coûts de fonctionnement de l'État mauricien,<sup>229</sup> on constate:

- que le budget de la culture est en forte hausse,
- que cette hausse doit être mise en perspective avec la modicité des chiffres en valeur absolue: au mieux, le budget de fonctionnement du Ministère des Arts et de la Culture représente 0,35% du budget de fonctionnement de l'État - en encore, l'action du Ministère ne se limite-t-elle pas seulement aux activités culturelles ou patrimoniales, mais aussi aux cultes.

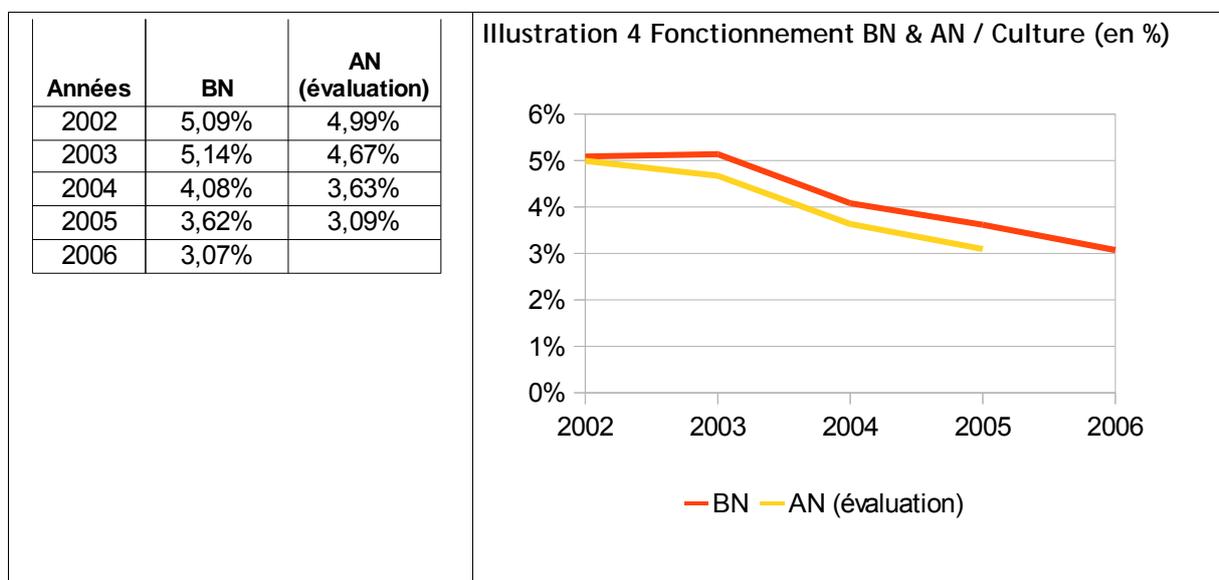


Le mandat du Ministre, Joseph TSANG MANG KIN (1995-2000), est significatif de cette faiblesse durable malgré de vastes ambitions dans le domaine du patrimoine documentaire, matérialisées par une intense activité réglementaire (notamment: la création de la Bibliothèque nationale,<sup>230</sup> la révision de la loi sur les Archives).<sup>231</sup> Mais les limites à ces réalisations sont que le projet de *Culture House*<sup>232</sup> qui devait regrouper les Archives nationales et la Bibliothèque nationale à Rose Hill, puis Moka n'a toujours pas vu le jour et est devenu depuis lors l'un des sujets favoris de la presse mauricienne.

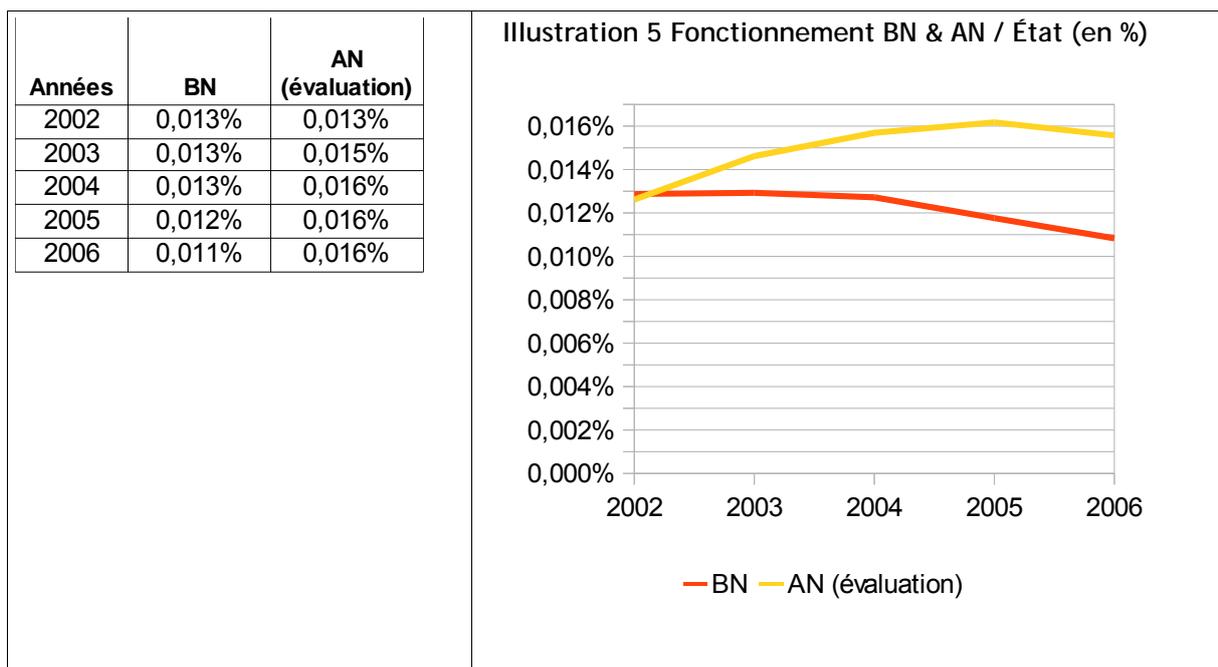
#### 5.1.2.3 Baisse relative des budgets des AN et de la BN

Quand on prend en considération les budgets de fonctionnement des Archives nationales<sup>233</sup> et de la Bibliothèque nationale,<sup>234</sup> on aboutit aux constatations suivantes:

- la part de ces budgets est infime, une fois mise en rapport à celle de l'État mauricien.
- La comparaison de ces budgets avec ceux du Ministère des Arts et de la Culture, force à constater qu'ils subissent une baisse relative importante.



Cette baisse est également notable, quand on compare ces budgets à ceux de l'État mauricien tout entier :



## 5.2 Mélange de genres

### 5.2.1 Le «fardeau» des documents anciens

Plusieurs facteurs administratifs nous paraissent de nature à mettre en péril des fonds patrimoniaux dans leur entier:

- La mixité entretenue, au sein de services purement gestionnaires (par exemple le *Registrar of Civil Status* ou le *Registrar General*), de documents à l'intérêt historique ou généalogique fondamental et de *records* contemporains;
- l'efficacité recherchée dans la gestion quotidienne des archives par les administrateurs, que viennent gêner «tous ces vieux papiers»;
- le manque de formation, de sensibilisation patrimoniale et même de motivation du personnel.

### 5.2.2 Délégations «communalistes»

La dispersion qui menace le patrimoine documentaire découle également du caractère assez communautariste («communaliste» selon le terme mauricien) de l'organisation sociale et politique du pays: des pans du patrimoine archivistique<sup>235</sup> ont été ainsi temporairement soustraits à la tutelle publique, de laquelle ils ressortissent, pourtant, selon le *National Archives Act* et la règle de l'inaliénabilité des fonds d'archives.

De telles excisions sont communes à toutes les communautés dotées de moyens financiers ou de pouvoirs sociaux-politiques - et généralement exercées à titre privé par des particuliers, des personnalités morales lucratives ou bénévoles.

Nous l'avons constaté pour le *Mahatma Gandhi Institute* (lié aux groupes de pression indo-mauriciens, qui refusent la divulgation des informations castéistes ou religieuses se trouvant dans les archives de l'engagisme).

Nous l'avons également perçu pour la *Mauritius Commercial Bank*, qui semble pour certains membres de la communauté franco-mauricienne la meilleure alternative face aux Archives nationales.

Leur justification part souvent de constatations alarmistes, selon l'enchaînement suivant:

1. les instances de conservation publiques sont réputées inefficaces;

2. les fonds relatifs à la communauté considérée n'y sont pas correctement traités ou même maltraités par suite de biais communautaires;
3. l'urgence impose des mesures qui aboutissent à cette privatisation de fait, même temporaire.

Si ces fonds d'archives sont correctement traités, une fois excisés - parfois mieux que dans les services de conservation publics - de pressantes questions pour l'intégrité du patrimoine national sont posées:

- qui contrôle ces fonds et l'usage qu'on en fait?
- Selon quelles règles sont-ils communiqués au public?
- Leur inaliénabilité ultérieure est-elle garantie?
- Leur statut juridique est-il précisément défini?
- Y a-t-il un terme à cette délégation et quand se fera leur retour dans leur cadre de conservation naturel, celui de la gestion publique?

### 5.3 Lacunes

#### 5.3.1 Expertises volatiles

Le passage éclair périodique de quelques spécialistes étrangers ne change d'ailleurs rien à l'affaire: cette coutume bien mauricienne, que moquait autrefois Yvan LAGESSE,<sup>236</sup> est en matière de gestion du patrimoine documentaire une sorte de rituel abondamment médiatisé,<sup>237</sup> pour un résultat souvent décevant - ce type d'intervention étant rarement inscrit dans la durée<sup>238</sup> et ne donnant jamais lieu à aucun suivi ultérieur sur place, condition pourtant indispensable du succès.

Que ce soit en matière de microfilmage<sup>239</sup> ou de numérisation, de conservation ou de restauration des documents anciens, la liste des visites sans lendemain est longue (ici partielle et classée en ordre chronologique inverse) :

Date	Nom de l'expert	Nationalité, institution	Compétence	Commanditaire
2011.01	Pr. Hervé CHERADAME	France Université d'Évry CICL (Arles) <sup>240</sup>	Conservation du papier Dés-acidification	Particuliers : Mme Michèle MALIVEL, M. Thierry LAGESSE et la Société d'Histoire de l'Île Maurice
2010.10	Claire DEKLE	États-Unis, Washington, DC Bibliothèque du Congrès	Bibliothéconomie Conservation	Ambassade des États-Unis
2010	Pr. Sophie WHITE	États-Unis, Indiana University of Notre Dame	Archivistique	Voyage à titre privé (mauricienne)
2009.07	Melody CHEN	États-Unis, New-York Buffalo State College (étudiante)	Bonnes pratiques de conservation et de consultation	Bibliothèque nationale
2008.07	Pr. Zawiyah BABA	Malaisie Bibliothèque nationale	Bibliothéconomie	Bibliothèque nationale
2008.07	Gérard-Yves HEERAMAN	France Généalogiste à titre privé	Numérisation	CGMR (membre fondateur)
2001.02	Équipe d'experts chinois	République de Chine	Restauration du papier (repulpage et lamination)	Archives nationales
1997.07	Julien DURUP	Seychelles	Restauration des do-	Ministère des Arts et de la

			cuments	Culture
1989	M. POPE	United States Information Service	Organisation des bibliothèques	Ambassade des États-Unis
1978	K. C. HARRISON	UNESCO	Organisation des bibliothèques	Gouvernement de Maurice
1966	Sydney HOCKEY	Administration britannique des bibliothèques pour l'Afrique	Organisation des bibliothèques	Ministère de l'Éducation

### 5.3.2 Sensibilité culturelle ou pédagogique

Nous avons, lors de notre enquête, perçu divers indices qui peuvent faire craindre une dérive technicienne ou même technocratique de l'encadrement de conservation au détriment des aspects culturels attachés au patrimoine documentaire.

Ce manque de «sensibilité culturelle» a des conséquences durables: à l'exception peut-être des deux responsables de la Bibliothèque nationale et de la Bibliothèque Carnegie et, dans une moindre mesure, de ceux des Archives nationales, aucun des dirigeants rencontrés n'a de véritable perception de ses fonds patrimoniaux comme une richesse nationale. Les services administratifs qui conservent, marginalement, des fonds anciens les considèrent même comme des obstacles à la rationalisation de leurs méthodes de gestion.

Comme leurs responsables n'en font pas ou peu état auprès du public (peu d'expositions ou de journées portes-ouvertes, un éclairage médiatique insuffisant), les chiffres de fréquentation végètent et dissuadent les politiques d'augmenter les crédits alloués.<sup>241</sup>

Il en va de même pour la perception de la valeur pédagogique de ces fonds : alors que l'histoire de Maurice commence seulement d'être enseignée dans les enseignements primaire et secondaire, il est surprenant que rien ne soit prévu pour les scolaires : un jeune mauricien ne saurait donc avoir l'idée de ce qu'est un document ancien. Ici encore, l'exemple des succès à l'étranger devrait inciter à plus de volontarisme.<sup>242</sup>

### 5.3.3 Conflits larvés

Maintenant que la multiplication par division des services de conservation s'est assagie, que leurs périmètres et prérogatives respectifs ont été définis par des lois-cadres, les discordes se sont atténuées ou plutôt déplacées sur d'autres terrains (par exemple celui des archives de l'engagisme déposées au MGI).

Il n'en a pas toujours été ainsi et l'installation de la Bibliothèque nationale en 1999 (accompagnée d'une soustraction de fonds aux Archives nationales et de la disparition pure et simple du *Mauritius Institute* comme bibliothèque) a été et reste toujours un sujet sensible. L'opposition entre la Bibliothèque nationale et les Archives a donné lieu à des passes d'armes sur les terrains judiciaire<sup>243</sup> et surtout médiatique.

Cette guerre de tranchées, dont on ressent encore les échos en questionnant les responsables, est un luxe dont se passeraient sans doute les institutions de conservation du pays, dans leur infinie précarité.

### 5.3.4 Formation insuffisante

Des cursus complets en bibliothéconomie ou en archivistique existent à l'UoM; avec l'avènement d'Internet, la documentation est à portée de mains, que ce soit en matière de conservation en climat tropical ou de normes.<sup>244</sup>

Par ailleurs, les institutions mauriciennes de conservation du patrimoine sont affiliées à une dizaine d'institutions internationales (ce que les dirigeants interrogés ont généralement omis de nous préciser), pour un budget annuel de 200,000 Rs. Environ.<sup>245</sup>

Vu la pléthore de documentations, de formations et de voyages d'études prodigués par ces organismes, on reste assez surpris de constater la persistance de tels retards à Maurice : on continue à y appliquer routinièrement des recettes abandonnées partout ailleurs, à ne pas accorder assez d'attention à ces questions pour les envisager comme évolutives ni surtout sujettes à actions concertées entre services de conservation de nature différente (archives et bibliothèques, par exemple).

Selon nous, les cursus de formation en bibliothéconomie à l'UoM, trop pauvres en matière patrimoniale, ne mettent pas assez en avant *l'unité* fondamentale des questions relatives au patrimoine documentaire ancien ou contemporain ni les problématiques de conservation, également partagées.

## RECOMMANDATIONS

Sans éducation historique ou patrimoniale dispensée aux futurs citoyens mauriciens, l'intérêt pour les documents anciens végétera longtemps dans la population. Les efforts pour sortir Maurice de son isolement académique et l'intégrer dans les circuits internationaux constitueront aussi, pour leur part, une puissante motivation à mieux traiter le patrimoine historique. Or, ces actions en amont, génératrices à terme d'une demande culturelle, n'ont pas encore vraiment trouvé leur rythme de croisière : il ne faut donc pas en attendre de résultats immédiats.

Pourtant, s'agissant du patrimoine documentaire, il est indispensable de chercher des solutions à court terme, sous peine de le voir définitivement compromis.

Notre mission doit déboucher sur des solutions faciles à déployer avec les moyens locaux, relativement peu coûteuses et donnant sans tarder des résultats tangibles. L'essentiel est donc de trouver l'enchaînement d'actions le plus logique - et ainsi le plus efficace - afin que budgets et efforts ne soient pas engagés en vain.

## 6 PRIORITES

Nos visites dans les services de conservation mauriciens et la lecture de textes d'experts missionnés pour aider les pays en développement à mener une politique patrimoniale et archivistique efficace nous incitent à recommander de porter maintenant tous les efforts sur le sauvetage des archives et de quelques fonds patrimoniaux de bibliothèques ; dans le même temps, afin d'octroyer une réelle autonomie aux responsables de la conservation, il convient de les former selon des standards internationaux.

### 6.1 Sauver les archives

Le système national des bibliothèques, bien tardivement mis en place sous le coup de rapports d'experts internationaux de plus en plus alarmistes, a acquis une vitesse de croisière et fonctionne correctement, pour sa gestion courante du moins ; grevé par des objectifs qui, selon nous, doivent passer au second plan (notamment la gestion de la connaissance, mieux assurée aujourd'hui en ligne que dans les bibliothèques publiques, surtout quand elles sont désargentées), il est assez outillé pour s'atteler à la préservation du patrimoine dont il a la charge.

#### 6.1.1 Cercles vicieux

##### 6.1.1.1 Archives d'Afrique

Les archives, en revanche, se trouvent dans une situation critique, finalement très semblable à celle que décrivaient avec tant de pénétration Karoly KECSKEMETI<sup>246</sup> expert de l'UNESCO auprès des pays du Tiers Monde ou Saliou MBAYE,<sup>247</sup> longtemps Directeur des Archives nationales du Sénégal.

Les archives des pays ex-coloniaux ont généralement rencontré les mêmes écueils:

1. Elles ont été créées par les métropoles selon le modèle qui prévalait au 19<sup>e</sup> s., celui d'archives historiques et culturelles « nobles » puis, très secondairement, comme d'efficaces gestionnaires de documents administratifs ; une fois mises en confrontation avec les nécessités pressantes du développement, leurs activités sont perçues comme peu rentables.
2. Les services d'archives constituent, donc, aux yeux de la population et de leurs gestionnaires eux-mêmes, dans leur « inutilité » immédiate, une sorte de caricature de la bureaucratie locale, dont la justification ultime consiste précisément à « noircir du papier ».
3. Enfin, prises dans le cercle vicieux de leur non-rentabilité immédiate, de leur réputation et de crédits en berne, les archives sont laissées à leur triste sort: moins efficaces, elles rendent moins de services et sont toujours plus dévalorisées aux yeux des dirigeants et de la population.

##### 6.1.1.2 Archives et *Records Management*

Encore s'agit-il ici de mieux préciser ce que l'on entend par « archives », car le terme prête à confusion, depuis l'explosion des documents administratifs dans les démocraties occidentales au début du 20<sup>e</sup> s.; on distingue en effet deux traditions archivistiques assez antagonistes:<sup>248</sup>

- la tradition continentale européenne (française ou germanique), qui accorde la primauté aux aspects historiques et culturels des archives;
- la tradition du « *records management* », apparue au début du 20<sup>e</sup> s. sur le continent nord américain, qui distingue les *archives* intéressant l'histoire, des *records* purement administratifs, dont la gestion revient en amont aux administrations émettrices<sup>249</sup> et qui fait partie intégrante de leur processus fonctionnel.

Cette seconde conception, constituée dans les années 1930, fut la mieux outillée dans les années 1980 pour faire face à l'afflux nouveau des documents électroniques, dont la gestion et la conservation posaient des problèmes inédits, notamment de masse et de péremption. Elle a donc récemment acquis, dans le domaine archivistique, un surcroît de légitimité technique et théorique.

### 6.1.2 Un outil essentiel pour l'État et la nation

Il s'agit également dans les suites recommandées à cette mission de modifier l'image rétrograde et routinière des archives, fonction essentielle pour l'État et la vie citoyenne.

#### 6.1.2.1 À quoi servent les archives?

##### A - Droit des États

Les archives des principaux royaumes européens furent constituées au Moyen-Âge et généralisées à tous les royaumes du continent au cours du 16<sup>e</sup> s. Leur objet était de conserver l'information secrète nécessaire au gouvernement et aux relations diplomatiques entre États<sup>250</sup> et surtout d'attester de leurs droits : sur les territoires (traités, titres de propriétés), sur les sources de revenus (liste de personnes assujetties à redevances), sur les prérogatives et privilèges (droits divers sur les dépendants et serviteurs).

Avec l'extension du pouvoir de l'État, cet objet initial s'est progressivement étendu à la population tout entière, sous la tutelle d'administrations spécialement établies à cet effet : l'état-civil garantit la filiation et donc la validité des successions; le cadastre, la possession des terres ; les minutes notariales et l'enregistrement de la validité des actes.

La moindre atteinte portée à l'une ou l'autre de ces garanties a des conséquences importantes sur l'organisation sociale ou politique toute entière: les archivistes sont les garants de la continuité, de l'authenticité, de l'inaliénabilité<sup>251</sup> et de l'imprescriptibilité<sup>252</sup> des archives dont ils ont la garde.<sup>253</sup>

##### B - Efficacité administrative

L'exercice de la souveraineté des États modernes est notamment garantie par l'efficacité de leurs administrations : la parfaite connaissance des dossiers, la continuité décisionnelle, la capacité à construire des projets sur le long terme et sans perte d'informations sont essentielles.

Des archives en bon état sont garantes de la pérennité de l'action gouvernementale: que dire d'un État qui referait les mêmes études et commanderait plusieurs fois les mêmes rapports parce qu'il n'a pas conservé les précédents ? Cette déperdition d'information serait-elle aussi acceptée par les tiers sollicités pour le financement de tels projets à long terme?

##### C - Mission historique

Les archives ont une mission culturelle éminente: aider les historiens à établir sur des bases incontestables, écrire, puis transmettre l'histoire de l'État, de la nation et de la société dont elles sont l'une des productions immédiates et multiformes, selon des perspectives et des problématiques toujours renouvelées.

Le cadre national, qui s'est imposé à tous les pays après les indépendances est celui dans lequel les archives culturelles et historiques sont conservées : l'histoire est donc généralement écrite dans ce cadre. Les services d'archives des pays ex-coloniaux sont néanmoins confrontés à des questions spécifiques:

- tout ou partie de leurs fonds a été transféré dans la métropole au moment des indépendances; ce qui était un souci pour les historiens d'autrefois pourrait s'être transformé en une aubaine car, y ayant été correctement classés, conservés et souvent numérisés, ces fonds sont maintenant aisément transférables aux pays autrefois sous tutelle;
- les métropoles ont souvent joué des uns contre les autres dans leurs colonies (*Divide and Rule*) : divisions entre peuples, entre religions ou entre communautés comme ce fut le cas à Maurice.

Les archives s'en ressentent et accordent souvent plus d'importance à telle ou telle composante de la société, ce qui risque de leur faire perdre une partie de leur *aura* de neutralité et de donner un biais aux sources et donc aux travaux historiques.

## D - Bonne gouvernance

Un article de synthèse<sup>254</sup> doté d'une bibliographie à jour, établit l'importance cruciale de la bonne gestion des archives étatiques (*Records and Information Management*) dans la bonne gouvernance - et donc notamment dans la capacité des pays en voie de développement à répondre aux normes que leur imposent leurs bailleurs de fonds.<sup>255</sup>

La bonne gouvernance est définie par le respect de critères désormais universellement acceptés.<sup>256</sup>

- l'obligation des États de rendre compte de leurs actions à leurs citoyens (*accountability*),
- la transparence (*transparency*),
- la confiance des citoyens dans les capacités de l'État à répondre à leurs attentes en faisant primer le droit (*public confidence and trust*).

Les archives sont en première ligne<sup>257</sup> de cette aspiration à la bonne gouvernance puisqu'elles :

1. assurent la documentation de l'action des gouvernements;
2. permettent aux administrations de rendre des comptes aux citoyens;
3. favorisent le respect de la loi;
4. protègent les droits des citoyens, la propriété et l'intégrité du territoire national;
5. permettent aux gouvernants de planifier les actions à venir;
6. protègent le patrimoine culturel de la nation pour les générations futures.

Certaines associations de Droits de l'Homme<sup>258</sup> considèrent ainsi la qualité de gestion des archives d'un pays comme un indice de sa bonne gouvernance.

Ces critères ont d'ailleurs donné lieu dans la plupart des pays développés, au tournant du 21<sup>e</sup> s., à une révision des lois sur les archives,<sup>259</sup> dans un sens concordant:

- la règle commune est la communicabilité immédiate et de plein droit des archives publiques aux citoyens, qui peuvent en commander copie à prix coûtant;
- les dérogations à cette communicabilité de plein droit sont strictement codifiées (et ne dépendent donc plus de l'arbitraire administratif s'abritant derrière le secret ou la raison d'État), les délais généralement réduits par rapport à la situation antérieure.<sup>260</sup>

### 6.1.2.2 Synthèse : les archives de Maurice

#### A - Calcul d'impact

Voici une synthèse des critères précédemment abordés sur lesquels la gestion des archives de Maurice n'est pas satisfaisante.

Nous indiquons dans ce tableau:

- Le nom du critère.
- Sa gravité avec un code à trois degrés:
  - 1: médiocre: jaune paille
  - 2: grave: rouge
  - 3: critique: brun

	Droits De l'État	Droits du citoyen	Efficacité administrative	Filiations Généalogie Histoire personnelle	Sciences humaines	Préservation du patrimoine	Indice de gravité
Non-versement des archives contemporaines	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Excisions de fonds (MGI)	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Conservation : archives coloniales anglaises	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Conservation : archives de l'état-civil	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Conservation : archives juridiques	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Opacité des fonds détenus en mains privées (contenu, gestion)	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Conservation : archives coloniales françaises	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Conservation : archives médicales	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Communicabilité déficiente des archives aux citoyens	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Conservation : périodiques à la BN	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	
<b>Indice de gravité</b>	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange

Nous calculons ainsi deux indices de gravité:

- pour chaque critère, un indice (somme de la ligne) qui permet de déterminer les manquements ayant le plus grand impact;
- pour chaque critère de gestion des archives, un indice (somme de la colonne) qui permet de voir où les manquements ont le plus de conséquences.

## B - Sauver le patrimoine des archives

Ce tableau nous permet un pilotage en finesse des priorités puisqu'il aboutit aux résultats suivants:

- Le patrimoine des archives<sup>261</sup> est sévèrement menacé et récolte l'indice de gravité le plus élevé (54); les sciences humaines (histoire, sociologie, anthropologie, etc.) sont concernées au premier chef, elles qui représentent le critère le plus chargé (22).
- à terme, c'est le non-versement des archives contemporaines (soit qu'elles soient retenues dans leurs services versants, soit qu'elles soient détruites) qui constitue la plus grande menace, équitablement partagée entre la bonne gouvernance et le patrimoine.
- Viennent ensuite les fonds contemporains dont l'état de conservation est préoccupant; les fonds de l'époque française arrivent seulement ensuite car leur mauvais état de conservation n'impacte que marginalement les droits du citoyen mauricien actuel.
- L'excision de fonds, notamment au MGI, et l'opacité de la gestion des fonds en main privées (MCB) est préoccupante, surtout du point de vue des sciences humaines.
- Les droits du citoyen et la difficulté à établir sa filiation sont également préoccupants (14).

### 6.1.3 Qui supervisera?

La restauration du patrimoine documentaire de Maurice, qui est, nous l'avons vu, une priorité impérieuse, représente une tâche de longue haleine qui ne saurait s'accommoder d'opérations effectuées dans le désordre, ni de financements épisodiques.

#### 6.1.3.1 Mécénat privé mauricien

##### A - Le mécénat du patrimoine bâti

Après les intenses destructions du patrimoine bâti public et privé à Maurice dans les dernières années du 20<sup>e</sup> s. - accompli par toutes les communautés de l'île - face auxquelles les instances tardivement mises en place<sup>262</sup> se sont toujours révélées impuissantes, un début de prise conscience nationale semble se faire jour.

Une poignée d'associations<sup>263</sup> ou de fondations<sup>264</sup> souhaitent recourir aux lois récentes sur le mécénat (CSR, *Corporate Social Responsibility*)<sup>265</sup> qui prévoient que ces dernières peuvent allouer 2% de leurs profits à des activités de bienfaisance menées par des associations dûment contrôlées. Cet apport financier semble pourtant orienté vers les actions sociales, environnementales ou éducatives (dont, en effet, des pans entiers de la population mauricienne ont grand besoin), plutôt que vers le patrimoine.

Le risque est fort, en matière culturelle comme en d'autres, de voir l'État mauricien se désengager par anticipation de ses missions, selon un accord implicite avec le secteur privé: à ce dernier, par l'entremise des fondations porteuses de projets, la charge de la restauration du bâti ancien en contrepartie des bienfaits attendus de cette rénovation.

Mais ce modèle de protection du patrimoine bâti, utilisé avec succès dans certains pays anglo-saxons, serait-il applicable au patrimoine documentaire ?

#### B - Expérience isolée

À notre connaissance, une seule action a été entreprise à ce jour: la venue en janvier 2011 d'un spécialiste français de la conservation du papier, le Pr. Hervé CHERADAME, dont le voyage de trois jours a été financé par M. Thierry LAGESSE, un des acteurs du secteur privé à Maurice.

Les conclusions<sup>266</sup> du spécialiste (qui se plaignait dans la même interview de la faible durée de sa mission) indiquent que faute de construction d'un dépôt d'archives adéquat, toute restauration lui paraît-elle vouée à l'échec:

*«En effet, une fois qu'un document a été désinfecté et désacidifié, il n'est pas vacciné, bien au contraire : il est encore plus sensible aux mauvaises conditions de stockage qu'avant et il faut donc le stocker dans un endroit sous atmosphère contrôlée. Il nous arrive de déconseiller la désinfection si les archivistes ne sont pas en mesure ensuite de les stocker convenablement. Mais si ces conditions sont remplies, vous partez pour plusieurs siècles sans nuages.»*

.

#### C - Inadéquation plausible

Le secteur privé mauricien est-il à même de prendre à sa charge les dépenses de rénovation du patrimoine documentaire (relogement, indexation, restauration)? Est-il habilité à le faire, en tant qu'acteur économique (et donc potentiellement sujet à conflits d'intérêts, s'agissant d'archives publiques contemporaines) ? Comment et par qui ses actions seront-elles supervisées puis contrôlées?

Un tel recours nous semble difficilement praticable, pour un faisceau de raisons concordantes:

- ⤴ avant tout, le coût élevé de l'opération, qui excéderait de beaucoup les possibilités du secteur privé;
- ⤴ le «retour sur investissement» moindre que pour le bâti ancien (qui acquiert de la valeur marchande une fois restauré, alors que les archives sont difficilement valorisables);
- ⤴ l'effet d'image médiocre pour les mécènes car ces «vieux papiers», souvent connotés négativement dans la population, n'intéressent guère ni ne sont de nature à donner du travail à quiconque.

#### 6.1.3.2 Aide internationale

Comme en matière de bibliothèques jusqu'à la fin des années 1990, c'est le retard pris par Maurice dans l'adoption de normes de gestion adéquates pour ses archives qui surprend.

#### A - UNESCO

Pourtant, ce ne sont pas la formation ni les aides qui manquaient pour ce faire: depuis 1949, l'UNESCO a été un agent essentiel de la réforme des archives auprès de ses États membres,<sup>267</sup> par exemple en créant en 1954 une unité de microfilmage opérant partout dans le monde. Plus récemment, le programme RAMP (Programme pour la Gestion des Documents et des Archives, lancé en mai 1979) s'est fixé pour objectifs de:

*«Favoriser, en y contribuant, la prise de conscience et la compréhension totales de la valeur et de l'utilité des documents et des archives en tant que ressources d'information de base, pour ce qui est, notamment, de la planification et du développement national et conjointement avec d'autres ressources d'information.  
Aider les États membres, sur leur demande, à organiser et à développer les systèmes et services de gestion des documents et des archives nécessaires à l'utilisation pleine et efficace de ces ressources d'information de base.»*

Ce programme donna lieu à de nombreuses publications, désormais accessibles sur Internet,<sup>268</sup> et dont l'ensemble constitue une somme inestimable de connaissances sur les questions d'organisation des services d'archives, de restauration des documents anciens,<sup>269</sup> de législation archivistique (communicabilité,<sup>270</sup> archives privées, bonnes pratiques),<sup>271</sup> et de formation (notamment par la constitution de corpus de textes archivistiques).<sup>272</sup>

Cet ensemble qui s'achève en 1986, est, c'est naturel, obsolète en matière de documents électroniques.

Parallèlement, depuis 1980, des programmes pilotes et des formations ont aidé les nations émergentes à mieux exploiter leurs archives :

- archives administratives: Indonésie, Philippines, Pérou, Soudan, etc.
- Restauration du patrimoine ancien.
- Bourses d'études et aide à la constitution d'écoles régionales ou nationales en matière d'archives.

À aucun moment, nous n'avons trouvé mention d'une quelconque demande de formation ou d'assistance technique de la part de l'administration des Archives nationales de Maurice ; pourtant, des états insulaires comparables (comme les îles Fidji) en ont tiré un excellent parti.

L'UNESCO maintient sa politique d'aide en matière d'archives grâce à son portail Web<sup>273</sup> et à l'attribution de bourses d'études. Son intérêt pour les aspects culturels liés aux archives est intact (*Memory of the World*).

## B - Banque Mondiale

La Banque mondiale entretient une antenne à Maurice<sup>274</sup> et y supervise un programme de développement pluriannuel<sup>275</sup> visant notamment à améliorer la compétitivité des entreprises locales, la liberté de commercer et les indicateurs de la pauvreté.

La Banque Mondiale favorise par ailleurs le développement des bonnes pratiques en matière d'archives gouvernementales, notamment pour les documents électroniques, dont la conservation, souvent hasardeuse dans les pays émergents, est une menace pour leur bonne gouvernance.<sup>276</sup> La Banque mondiale, elle-même dotée d'archives considérables, a adopté pour leur gestion la norme internationale ISAD (G) et en favorise la dissémination dans les pays où elle intervient, par des ateliers de formation ou des cours en ligne.

Nous n'avons trouvé aucune trace d'une telle demande d'assistance technique dans le plan d'aide de 2006, dont l'un des objets est pourtant la bonne gouvernance à Maurice.

### 6.1.3.3 État mauricien: le seul interlocuteur naturel

Nous l'avons vu, le secteur privé mauricien trouvera difficilement les ressources et l'intérêt nécessaires pour financer la sauvegarde des archives anciennes du pays.

Les financements accessibles auprès des organisations internationales sont, quant à eux, plutôt destinés au *Records Management* comme support des bonnes pratiques de gouvernement.

L'État mauricien nous paraît donc seul habilité à se consacrer à la sauvegarde du patrimoine documentaire ancien, partie inaliénable des fonds des Archives nationales. Cette mission, qui concerne les archives coloniales de la période française et de la période britannique, ainsi que les années qui suivent l'Indépendance de 1968, a plusieurs aspects dont il conviendra de fixer le meilleur ordonnancement possible.

## 6.2 Former au patrimoine documentaire

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Nous avons constaté chez plusieurs de nos interlocuteurs le désir d'apprendre à mieux gérer le patrimoine documentaire dont leurs établissements ont la garde; cet indice encourageant ne doit cependant pas faire oublier les cours qu'ils avaient suivis en de multiples occasions.

Il est tout aussi difficile, en effet, de former un conservateur du patrimoine documentaire en un stage de quelques jours à l'étranger que de prétendre le faire pour un conservateur de musée en quelques semaines: notre enquête nous amène à penser que l'apprentissage de notions comme l'*authenticité* ou l'*ancienneté* peut résulter d'une acculturation personnelle tout autant que d'un cursus académique.

Le manque d'exposition au patrimoine, le rejet des temps anciens dans leur dureté sociale et l'attirance pour les effets d'une modernité «à l'occidentale» entretiennent sans doute à Maurice une certaine distance à l'égard du passé et de ses vestiges.

Dans ces conditions, la formation des professionnels à la gestion patrimoniale de l'écrit devrait, selon nous, prendre d'autres formes que celles adoptées jusqu'à ce jour et qui n'ont guère démontré leur efficacité: cours dispensés outre-mer, ou passages-éclairés de spécialistes étrangers.

Nous recommandons donc l'approche suivante:

- établir à Maurice un cursus pluriannuel et diplômant de conservateur du patrimoine documentaire (et le cas échéant aussi: artistique); le doter de moyens qui lui permettront de s'affirmer comme une référence régionale en la matière;
- y faire venir des professeurs, réputés dans leur domaine, en résidence de plusieurs semaines et durant lesquelles; ils dispenseront leur enseignement, corrigeront les mémoires et examens, interviendront à titre d'experts opérationnels là où cela leur est demandé (notamment dans les lieux de conservation du pays);
- leur faire dispenser leurs cours, pour une part dans l'institut de formation, pour une autre dans les établissements concernés par leur enseignement (par exemple, les Archives nationales pour un spécialiste des papiers anciens) ; de cette façon, l'enseignement de l'institut aura un aspect pratique qui le rendra plus efficace pédagogiquement;
- établir une base de données bibliographique et une bibliothèque numérique à jour sur les domaines concernés ; les rendre accessibles à tous sur Internet;
- multiplier les échanges internationaux et régionaux (notamment avec La Réunion) et tenter de faire venir des étudiants étrangers afin de créer, pour plus tard, de solides réseaux d'amitié et de connaissances professionnelles;
- faire amplement connaître la mission de l'institut aux jeunes Mauriciens, favoriser ainsi des vocations.

## 7 ENCHAINEMENTS

### 7.1 Fil d'Ariane

Il est important, dans la conduite d'un tel projet, de rechercher les enchaînements les plus efficaces, en tenant compte de l'urgence des tâches à accomplir, des relations de dépendance des unes vis à vis des autres, de leur durée de réalisation probable et de la facilité avec laquelle elles peuvent être engagées (obtention de crédits, autorisations, ressources disponibles, etc.).

#### 7.1.1 Priorités et dépendances

Après notre enquête, nous avons inventorié plusieurs tâches à accomplir; les voici représentées *comme si elles ne dépendaient pas les unes des autres*, que leurs conditions préalables étaient acquises et qu'elles pouvaient débuter sans tarder:

Tâche	Début plausible (ans)	Dépendances
Numérisation des fonds anciens (archives et bibliothèques)	1	Normes adéquates Ressources en personnel
Restauration des documents anciens aux Archives nationales (tous les fonds anciens) et à la Bibliothèque nationale (périodiques),	1	Financements Déménagement Formation du personnel
Sauvegarde des fonds de la colonisation britannique et de l'Indépendance	1	Volonté politique Ressources en personnel Espace de stockage
Révision de la loi sur les Archives nationales permettant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ le versement effectif des archives publiques aux Archives nationales</li> <li>▲ le meilleur accès des citoyens aux archives publiques</li> </ul>	2	Volonté politique Formation du personnel
Formation en conservation des documents anciens	3	Accord des instances académiques Partenariats internationaux Recrutement des élèves
Déménagement des Archives nationales et de la Bibliothèque nationale dans des locaux adéquats (espace de conservation élargi, conditionnement de l'atmosphère, meilleur accueil des lecteurs),	4 <sup>277</sup>	Volonté politique Financements Inventaire préalable

Malheureusement, ces actions sont toutes assorties de conditions loin d'être remplies, notamment celles de la volonté politique et du financement.

Surtout, le déménagement des Archives et de la Bibliothèque nationale dans des locaux dotés d'assez d'espace et de conditions de conservation et de consultation adéquates ne peuvent, en l'état, être aisément planifiés: la difficulté supplémentaire est que ce déménagement constitue, selon certains experts,<sup>278</sup> un point de passage obligé pour que la restauration des fonds anciens ait la moindre efficacité et ne soit pas accomplie en pure perte.

Seule, la numérisation des fonds anciens aurait une chance de réussir sans retard, mais sa réussite dépend de la définition préalable de normes adéquates (qui ne sont pas acquises à ce jour) et de priorités au plan national.

Les actions envisagées ne paraissent donc pas prêtes d'être accomplies de sitôt et toute action entreprise sans planification concertée serait contre-productive.

#### 7.1.2 Gérer les manques

Nous avons été frappé de l'opacité qui entoure le patrimoine documentaire mauricien:

- les pertes et vols ayant longtemps affecté les collections;

- l'inadéquation ou le manque d'outils de recherche aux Archives nationales;
- un certain manque de fiabilité (Bibliothèque nationale) ou l'absence (Bibliothèque Carnegie) d'inventaires du patrimoine ancien des bibliothèques;
- la fermeture des collections et fonds privés.

Par ailleurs, les actions envisagées plus haut nécessitent toutes, pour être efficaces:

- une évaluation précise des fonds auxquelles elles s'appliquent : un déménagement, par exemple, ne saurait être engagé sans liste préalable des fonds concernés qui permette d'attester ensuite que rien n'a été perdu ou endommagé.
- Une approche *intégrée* au plan national, afin de coordonner les ressources (limitées) et de fixer des priorités globales (restauration, par exemple).

### 7.1.3 Récolement général du patrimoine documentaire

Nous recommandons donc d'effectuer, avant toute autre démarche, un récolement général des documents anciens à Maurice, selon une démarche que nous détaillons ci-dessous. Un récolement est:

*Vérification systématique, dans un service d'archives ou une bibliothèque de ses fonds et collections consistant à dresser dans l'ordre des magasins et des rayonnages la liste des articles qui y sont conservés ou qui manquent par rapport aux instruments de recherche existants.*

Ce récolement permettra d'avoir une évaluation fiable :

- des fonds actuellement conservés dans les archives publiques, les collections (publiques et privées) et les bibliothèques publiques du pays;
- des pertes subies par le patrimoine mauricien;
- des urgences de restauration ou de numérisation.

Ce récolement aura plusieurs effets positifs:

- asseoir la gestion du patrimoine documentaire sur des bases enfin assainies et servir de pierre de touche à une gestion dorénavant rigoureuse car contrôlée,
- récupérer une partie des fonds disparus,
- publier un inventaire fiable et actualisé des fonds pour les chercheurs mauriciens ou étrangers;
- permettre de piloter la numérisation et la restauration des fonds anciens sur la base d'un arbitrage national intégré;
- former une équipe de spécialistes dont les compétences, une fois qu'ils auront achevé leur mission de récolement, seront ensuite utiles aux services existants.

## 7.2 Approche intégrée

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### 7.2.1 Actions

Nous avons établi ci-dessous la liste des actions à entreprendre; pour chacune d'entre elles, nous portons également:

- l'urgence [Urg.] de l'entreprendre (1 = urgent, 4 = peut attendre),
- la faisabilité [Fais.] de l'entreprise (1 = facile, 4 = difficile),
- les actions qui doivent la précéder afin de lui donner les meilleures chances de réussite,
- le domaine auquel cette action est rattachée.

Nous détaillons ces actions dans le prochain chapitre et suivantes.

Action	Urg. (1-4)	Fais. (1-4)	Précurseurs	Domaine
Institut de formation du patrimoine documentaire (et artistique)	1	2	-	Arc Bib (Mus)
Récolement national du patrimoine documentaire	1	2	-	Arc Bib
Trouver des financements	1	3	-	Arc Bib
Trouver un nouveau lieu pour les AN	1	4	Trouver des financements	Arc
Trouver un nouveau lieu pour la BN	1	4	Trouver des financements	Bib
Amender la loi sur les archives	2	1	-	Arc
Arbitrage national (Comité) : numérisation et restauration	2	1	Récolement Amender la loi sur les archives	Arc Bib
Restauration des périodiques à la BN	2	2	Déménagement de la BN Arbitrage national (Comité)	Bib
Définition de normes nationales de numérisation	2	2	Arbitrage national (Comité)	Arc Bib
Réécrire la loi sur les archives dans le sens de droits étendus pour les citoyens	2	3	-	Arc
Établir une politique nationale de Records Management	2	3	Créer des « missions archives » auprès des administrations	Arc
Restauration des documents anciens aux AN	2	3	Déménagement des AN Arbitrage national (Comité)	Arc
Déménagement des Archives nationales (AN)	2	3	Récolement Trouver un nouveau lieu	Arc
Déménagement de la Bibliothèque nationale (BN)	2	3	Récolement Trouver un nouveau lieu	Bib
Créer des « missions archives » auprès des administrations	2	3	Amender la loi sur les archives	Arc
Sauver le patrimoine des archives aux 19 <sup>e</sup> et 20 <sup>e</sup> s.	2	4	Amender la loi sur les archives Créer des « missions archives » auprès des administrations	Arc
Meilleure gestion du patrimoine à Carnegie	3	2	Récolement	Bib
Numérisations à la BN	3	2	Récolement Arbitrage national (Comité) Définition de normes nationales	Bib
Renforcer le contrôle sur les archives privées	3	3	Amender la loi sur les archives	Arc
Numérisations aux AN	3	3	Récolement Arbitrage national (Comité) Définition de normes nationales	Arc
Microfilmage à la BN	4	1	Arbitrage national (Comité)	Bib

### 7.2.2 Gestion de projet

Nous avons choisi d'adopter, pour la description du plan d'action à engager, une approche de type «gestion de projet» qui nous semble la mieux appropriée pour le mener à son terme et qui cadre avec les nouvelles directives budgétaires aux administrations publiques (PBB).<sup>279</sup>

Cela consiste notamment:

- à diviser les opérations en *modules*, *sous-modules* et *actions* afin de mieux les décrire (intervenants requis, ressources nécessaires, commentaires), les dater (date de début, date de fin prévue) et les quantifier (durée, coût estimatif).

NB. Nous avons arbitrairement fait débiter les projets au 1er janvier 2012.

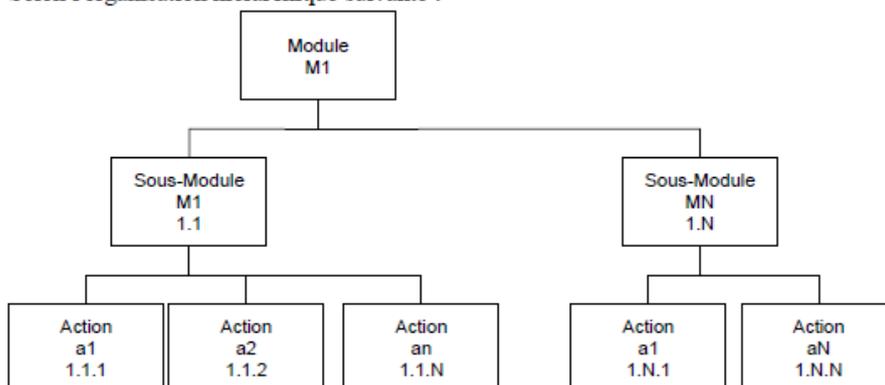
- À sélectionner pour ce faire un outil de gestion de projet très répandu, gratuit et libre de droits : GanttProject,<sup>280</sup> logiciel Open Source, gratuit et multi-plateformes (Windows, Linux et MacOS), qui de surcroît permet:
  - des échanges de fichiers avec les logiciels standard du marché (notamment Microsoft Project, les tableurs [format csv] et les navigateurs Internet [format xml]);
  - une publication immédiate sur le Web [format html] de toutes les données saisies.
- À prévoir d'emblée une gestion collaborative du travail : dans la perspective d'une équipe travaillant à des projets complexes et dont la réalisation doit être promptement achevée, il est crucial de pouvoir suivre l'état d'avancement des travaux, détecter les goulots d'étranglement et réaffecter dynamiquement les ressources là où elles sont le plus utiles.

### 7.2.3 Conventions adoptées

Dans la suite de ce rapport, nous avons adopté les conventions suivantes:

<b>M</b>	Module
<b>m</b>	Sous-module
<b>a</b>	Action

Selon l'organisation hiérarchique suivante :



*Dessin 1: Organisation hiérarchique du projet*

Nous avons choisi de subdiviser le projet en **aires distinctes**, afin de procéder à des regroupements de types variés, notamment budgétaires :

<b>ADM</b>	Décision administrative ou politique
<b>ARC</b>	Archives
<b>BIB</b>	Bibliothèques
<b>FOR</b>	Formation
<b>INV</b>	Inventaire ou Récolement
<b>IT</b>	Informatique
<b>NUM</b>	Numérisation
<b>STF</b>	Recrutements (Staff)

Les colonnes des tableaux de tâches insérées dans le corps du présent rapport sont les suivantes :

<b>1</b>	Titre du module, du sous-module ou de l'action
<b>2</b>	Notes, commentaires (colonne présente si renseignés seulement)
<b>3</b>	Aire d'activité
<b>4</b>	Date de début planifiée
<b>5</b>	Date de fin planifiée
<b>6</b>	Durée planifiée en jours

Nous avons choisi de subdiviser le projet en aires distinctes, afin de procéder à des regroupements de types variés, notamment budgétaires:

Les colonnes des tableaux de tâches insérées dans le corps du présent rapport sont les suivantes:

## 8 PLAN D'ACTION

### M-1. Mener un récolement national

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Le récolement national du patrimoine documentaire,<sup>281</sup> dont les objectifs ont été décrits plus haut,<sup>282</sup> a vocation à être mené périodiquement (selon un calendrier fixé à l'avance ou à l'occasion d'une évolution extérieure),<sup>283</sup> sous une forme générale (celle que nous recommandons) ou partielle.

Il s'agit donc de concevoir et d'établir un cadre durable d'intervention, applicable sur demande, même quand l'équipe chargée de sa première itération aura été dispersée.

#### m-1.1. Préparer le récolement

La réalisation du récolement nécessite une préparation minutieuse du point de vue réglementaire et administratif (budgets, cadre légal), conceptuel (bornes chronologiques, fonds concernés) et des sources nécessaires à l'établissement de l'inventaire «théorique» préalable.

Cette phase fera l'objet d'une mission préparatoire attribuée à une seule personne, le chef de projet. Elle sera faite une seule fois (pour le premier récolement national) et donnera lieu à la rédaction d'un manuel de procédures et d'un recueil des sources disponibles. Ces documents serviront de base aux récolements ultérieurs et pourront, le cas échéant, être amendés en fonction des circonstances. Les normes choisies, les méthodes recommandées et l'outil informatique sélectionné lors de cette phase préparatoire garantiront la pérennité du travail accompli à l'occasion de ce premier récolement et sa reproductibilité ultérieure.

Mission préparatoire au récolement			02/01/12	10/03/12	50
<b>Organiser la mission de préfiguration</b>			02/01/12	27/01/12	19
Assurer un budget		POL	02/01/12	14/01/12	10
Recruter un chef de projet		STF	16/01/12	26/01/12	8
Mission de préfiguration lancée		INV	26/01/12	27/01/12	1
<b>Amender la législation sur les archives</b>			02/01/12	10/03/12	50
Établir un comité de réflexion sur le patrimoine archivistique	Qui pourrait également être une refonte de l'Archives Advisory Council (étendre ses prérogatives aux archives privées)	STF	02/01/12	28/01/12	20
Amender le National Archive Act 2000 dans le sens d'un renforcement du contrôle	- Augmenter les pouvoirs du Directeur des AN en matière de contrôle (ventes, droit de photographie) - Établir des restrictions à l'exportation	POL	30/01/12	10/03/12	30
<b>Concevoir le récolement</b>			27/01/12	07/02/12	7
Définir le cadre conceptuel : Le patrimoine écrit, qu'est-ce que c'est ?		INV	27/01/12	01/02/12	3
Définir le cadre légal de l'inventaire	- Pouvoirs de l'équipe d'inventaire - Étendue d'action	INV	01/02/12	03/02/12	2
Normes d'indexation			03/02/12	07/02/12	2
Préciser les normes d'indexation		ARC	03/02/12	04/02/12	1
Préciser les normes d'indexation		BIB	06/02/12	07/02/12	1
<b>Collecter les sources du récolement</b>			07/02/12	06/03/12	20
À Maurice			07/02/12	21/02/12	10
Inventaires papier ou numérisés			07/02/12	16/02/12	7
Inventorier les inventaires papier ou numérisés à MUR	Archives nationales Papiers Doyen (partie encore manuelle)	ARC	07/02/12	14/02/12	5
Inventorier les inventaires papier ou numérisés à MUR	Bibliothèque nationale : catalogue inter-bibliothèques Maurinus Institute Bibliothèque Carnegie : registres d'entrée non informatisés	BIB	14/02/12	16/02/12	2
Notices numériques			16/02/12	21/02/12	3
Inventorier les inventaires numériques dans les lieux de conservation mauriciens	Papiers Doyen	ARC	16/02/12	17/02/12	1
Inventorier les inventaires numériques dans les lieux de conservation mauriciens	Bibliothèque Nationale : catalogue inter-bibliothèques (avec réserves)	BIB	17/02/12	21/02/12	2
À l'étranger, notices numériques accessibles			21/02/12	02/03/12	8
Rechercher les institutions détenant des notices informatiques récupérables	CAOM (Norme EAD) Archives nationales de France (Norme EAD) British Library (fonds FARQUHAR) Bibliothèque de Caen (fonds DECAEN)	ARC	21/02/12	24/02/12	3
Rechercher les institutions détenant des notices informatiques récupérables		BIB	24/02/12	28/02/12	2
Obtenir les accords de réutilisation de ces notices		INV	28/02/12	02/03/12	3
Sources diverses (inventaires imprimés et édités)			02/03/12	06/03/12	2
Inventorier les inventaires imprimés	Ouvrages d'Auguste TOUSSAINT (Routes maritimes, Bibliographie, Administration française) Thèse d'Harold ADOLPHE Thèses d'École des Chartes	ARC	02/03/12	03/03/12	1
Inventorier les inventaires imprimés	Bibliographie d'Auguste TOUSSAINT	BIB	05/03/12	06/03/12	1
<b>Établir le cadre technique du récolement</b>			21/02/12	03/03/12	9
Définir les prérequis du logiciel d'inventaire (normes)		INV	21/02/12	28/02/12	5
Rechercher les logiciels adéquats	On favorisera : les logiciels fonctionnant selon les normes internationales (EAD), Open Source et Libres.	IT	21/02/12	24/02/12	3
Rechercher sur place les prestataires techniques pour l'hébergement / déploiement		IT	28/02/12	03/03/12	4

#### a-1.1.1. Assurer les conditions de la mission préparatoire

Il convient d'assurer, pour la phase préparatoire au récolement :

- ✦ un budget adéquat,
- ✦ le recrutement du chef de projet en charge, seul employé dans un premier temps,
- ✦ le cadre d'intervention du chef de projet,
- ✦ le cadre d'intervention de l'équipe qui le rejoindra ultérieurement.

#### a-1.1.2. Concevoir le cadre conceptuel du récolement

L'organisation du récolement demande une étape préalable de réflexion et d'arbitrages sur :

- le périmètre même du récolement : partiel ou national?
- L'étendue chronologique des documents concernés, qui pourrait être moins large que celle adoptée pour le présent rapport (18<sup>e</sup> s. - fin du 20<sup>e</sup> s.);
- les types de documents concernés (évident pour les archives et les bibliothèques, moins pour les documents audiovisuels, par exemple);
- les lieux de conservation et les détenteurs de documents concernés à Maurice: services publics de conservation, services administratifs versants (qui souvent n'ont pas versé depuis longtemps), corps para-étatiques (*idem*), mais aussi détenteurs privés.

Ce travail de réflexion préalable sera l'occasion de réaliser un tout premier relevé national des fonds anciens en se fondant sur diverses sources anciennes.<sup>284</sup>

- Là où les normes employées pour le classement et l'indexation des archives et des bibliothèques en fonction de plusieurs critères : adéquation, adaptabilité à Maurice, diffusion internationale, documentation et formations aisément disponibles, interopérabilité<sup>285</sup> avec les récolements et inventaires réalisés par ailleurs.

#### a-1.1.3. Assurer le cadre réglementaire du récolement

Le récolement s'appliquera, en premier lieu, aux établissements de conservation publics. Il devra donc être un projet national doté de tous les appuis et autorisations nécessaires (sauf-conduits).

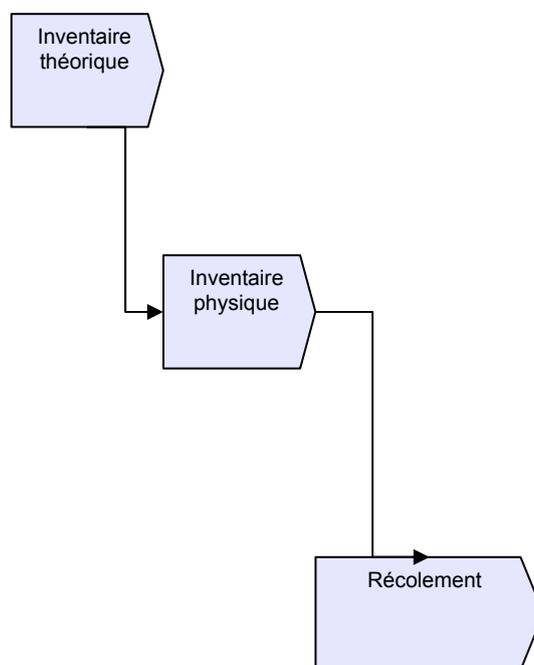
Nous conseillons d'établir un Comité de réflexion sur le patrimoine documentaire ancien qui ferait des recommandations et renforcerait le support étatique en matière de fonds privés<sup>286</sup> (amendement au *National Archives Act 2000*):

- Obligation pour tous les détenteurs de fonds privés de les déclarer au Comité et de déposer l'inventaire sommaire ou détaillé de leur fonds.
- Possibilité pour le Comité de demander l'accès à un fonds privé puis de procéder à son classement comme «trésor national», avec contraintes de détention ou de cession pour son détenteur.
- Comme préalable à une vente (aux enchères ou privée), obligation pour les détenteurs de fonds privés d'en présenter le détail (montant, inventaire des documents concernés, acquéreur potentiel) au Comité ; délai raisonnable accordé au Comité pour préempter le fonds, l'inventorier et le numériser en tout ou partie, etc.
- Obligation pour les détenteurs de fonds privés de laisser plein accès à l'équipe de récolement, sur demande préalable et dans des délais raisonnables prescrits par la loi.

#### a-1.1.4. Rechercher et valider les sources du futur inventaire «théorique»

##### Enchaînements

La réalisation d'un «inventaire théorique» des fonds concernés, dans leur localisation et leurs bornes chronologiques), précède «l'inventaire physique» des fonds et lui sert ensuite de pierre de touche pour constituer, une fois comparés, le récolement proprement dit.



De cette façon:

- ⤴ on pourra comparer ce qui existait (de façon cumulative, à des dates variables, selon les sources employées)<sup>287</sup> à ce qui subsiste maintenant dans les lieux de conservation locaux.
- ⤴ On s'attachera à rechercher les causes des déficits constatés; si ces causes sont corrigibles (vols, oublis de restitution, etc.), on tentera de leur apporter des solutions graduées auxquelles on donnera la publicité nécessaire: approche amiable du dernier détenteur et demande de restitution - déclaration de vol aux autorités locales - signalement de vol aux autorités internationales compétentes.<sup>288</sup>

##### Nécessaire intervention manuelle

Il sera nécessaire de procéder de façon manuelle à cette inventaire théorique, pour les raisons suivantes:

- ⤴ Lacunes: un tel inventaire général manque aux Archives nationales sous une forme aisément récupérable (informatisée); ce sera donc l'occasion de saisir pour la première fois cet inventaire sous forme informatique (base de données).
- ⤴ Saisie déficiente: la saisie du catalogue général de la Bibliothèque nationale<sup>289</sup> est déficiente.

Nous favorisons donc une recherche dans les catalogues en ligne des grandes bibliothèques d'Occident et le téléchargement puis le basculement<sup>290</sup> de leurs notices dans le logiciel d'inventaire choisi, plutôt que la récupération de celles qui figurent au catalogue de la Bibliothèque nationale.

##### Documents uniquement conservés à l'étranger

Quelles sont les limites géographiques de cet inventaire «théorique»? En particulier, les lieux de conservation à l'étranger doivent-ils y être inclus, ce qui accroîtra le travail nécessaire?

En effet, cela sous-entend que l'inventaire concerne des ouvrages et périodiques également les documents conservés *sur* Maurice à l'étranger. Telle fut l'approche d'Auguste TOUSSAINT dans sa *Bi-*

*bliographie* de 1956. Elle se justifie selon nous *a fortiori* aujourd'hui puisque depuis de nombreux documents ont disparu à Maurice et ne sont désormais plus conservés qu'à l'étranger, soit à titre d'exemplaires (cas des livres<sup>291</sup> et périodiques), soit à titre de doubles (cas des archives : microfilms<sup>292</sup> et numérisations).<sup>293</sup>

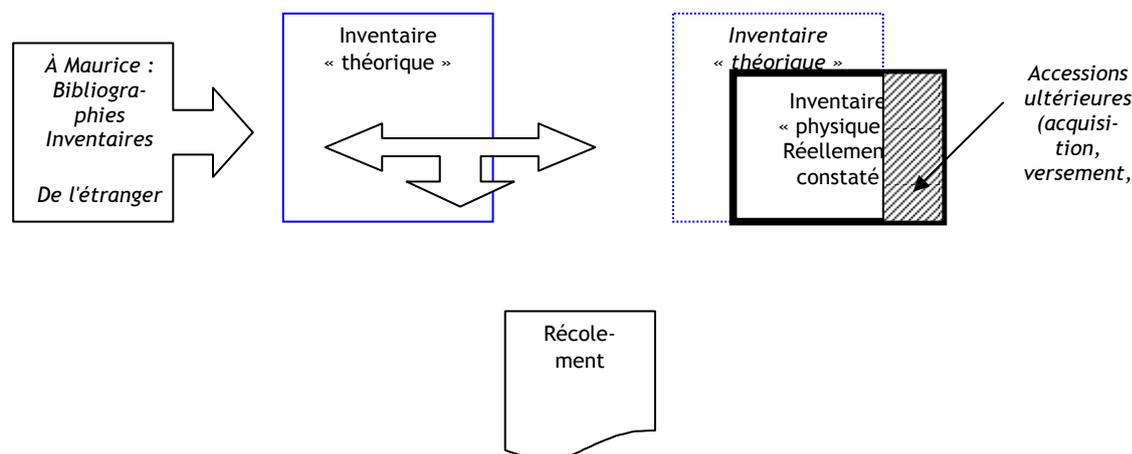
Voici les trois phases du processus de récolement, avec leurs caractéristiques:

Type	À Maurice	À l'étranger
Inventaire théorique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Inventaires disponibles dans les services de conservation</li> <li>⤴ Bibliographies (voir pError! Bookmark not defined.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Inventaires informatisés ou manuscrits faisant mention d'exemplaires conservés (livres)</li> <li>⤴ Doubles (microfilms ou numérisations)</li> </ul>
Inventaire réel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Services de conservation publics (Services versants publics et parapublics)</li> <li>⤴ (Fonds privés)</li> </ul>	<i>On part du principe que les inventaires sont exacts et que les documents qui y figurent sont correctement conservés.</i>
Récolement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Indication et localisation des documents présents et de leur état de conservation</li> <li>⤴ Mention des déficits, recherche de leur cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Mention de tous les documents numérisés accessibles (en déficit ou non à Maurice)</li> <li>⤴ Mention des déficits à Maurice accessibles à l'étranger</li> </ul>

D'où les conséquences suivantes sur la masse de travail à accomplir; on saisira dans cet inventaire «théorique»:

- ⤴ des documents qui n'ont jamais figuré à Maurice (ce que nous saurons d'emblée grâce à la Bibliographie d'Auguste TOUSSAINT) mais qui y figurent peut-être maintenant (peu probable sauf à la Bibliothèque nationale : acquisitions, donations, etc.);
- ⤴ des documents qui figuraient autrefois dans les centres de conservation mauriciens mais qui en ont disparu.

Ainsi, comme l'inventaire «théorique» précède l'inventaire «physique», il n'est pas possible, lors de ce *premier* récolement national, de préjuger de la présence ou du déficit d'un document à Maurice, d'où le surcroît de travail.



Les cas suivants sont possibles:

Types	Rapport avec Maurice	Conservation à Maurice	Conservation à l'étranger (institution ou particulier)	Inventaire théorique ?
Livres et périodiques	Publiés à Maurice Concernant Maurice	Conservé ou perdu	Numérisé	Télécharger Répertoire
			Non numérisé	Demander copie Répertoire
Document d'archives microfilmé, pas numérisé	Émis à Maurice Relatifs à Maurice (administrations coloniales)		Double conservé (microfilm)	Demander copie et autorisation de numériser Numériser
Document d'archives numérisé			Double conservé (microfilm + numérisation)	Télécharger Répertoire

On ne visera pas forcément à l'exhaustivité des exemplaires conservés à l'étranger: on ne citera que l'exemplaire le plus accessible ou le plus commode du point de vue de son exploitation ; on favorisera ainsi:<sup>294</sup>

Type d'exemplaire conservé à l'étranger	Supports							
	Numériques							Non numériques
	PDF + texte intégré	Autre format e-book <sup>295</sup>	PDF seul <sup>296</sup>	En ligne + recherche <sup>297</sup>	Image seule <sup>298</sup>	En ligne sans recherche	Notice téléchargeable <sup>299</sup>	
Électronique numérisé téléchargeable	1	2	3		4			
Électronique non téléchargeable				5		6		
Microfilm non encore numérisé								7
Exemplaire papier non encore numérisé							8	

#### Base de données des sources de l'inventaire «théorique»

On établira une base de données des sources utiles à l'inventaire «théorique» (une fois: trouvées, hiérarchisées et évaluées) avec les informations suivantes, ce qui permettra de préparer leur exploitation ultérieure:

Information	Complément d'information	Commentaires, Exemples
Identification de la source		Notice bibliographique, nom libre
Référence interne		Référence unique arbitraire attribuée par le chef de projet
Localisation		Information permettant de retrouver la source sans ambiguïté (cote, référence, URL, etc.)
Support		Papier Microfilm Informatique
Mode d'enregistrement		<i>Par facilité de traitement croissante :</i> Manuscrit Exemplaire dactylographié Exemplaire imprimé Scan image (OCR <sup>300</sup> impossible) Scan image (OCR possible) Texte informatique brut Texte informatique exploitable après traitements (document Microsoft Word, page Web) Texte informatique balisé (XML), retraitement possible Base de données consultable en ligne seulement (par exemple catalogue de bibliothèque)

		Base de données téléchargeable ou à disposition (données immédiatement disponibles)
Détenteur		Nom de l'institution Droits d'exploitation de la source, coût d'acquisition
Accessibilité		<i>Par accessibilité décroissante</i> Source détenue (numérique, original, photocopie, etc.) Source accessible Source difficilement accessible (opérations nécessaires)
Informations contenues dans la source	Description libre	
	Unités d'information présentes	Par exemple : cote du fonds, emplacement, volume, descriptif physique, état de conservation, pedigree, etc.
	Fonds concernés	Par exemple : nom de l'institution de conservation, cote, etc.
	Qualité	Estimation de la fiabilité de chaque unité
Traitements nécessaires avant son exploitation	Procédure détaillée	Détail des opérations nécessaires avant de pouvoir intégrer les informations de la source dans le logiciel de récolement. Par exemple : scanning, ressaisie manuelle, OCR, nettoyage de fichier, etc.
	Force de travail nécessaire	Évaluation du temps et du nombre de personnes nécessaires à l'exploitation optimale de la source.
	Coût estimatif	Déduit de l'item précédent.

#### a-1.1.5. Établir l'environnement informatique du récolement

Une fois le cadre du récolement choisi (voir a-1.1.2), on disposera d'une première grille pour la sélection du logiciel nécessaire.

On procédera :

1. à une présélection de tous les logiciels disponibles, répondant à ces normes,
2. à une étude approfondie de leur fonctionnalités, de leurs coûts directs ou induits (prix, coût de maintenance), de leurs références installées,
3. à des tests sur les versions de démonstration demandées à leurs éditeurs.

On favorisera les logiciels Open Source (souvent libres et gratuits de surcroît), multi-plateformes, développés ou soutenus par des institutions académiques ou des ONG. On établira une liste de préchoix avec le détail des raisons invoquées pour cette sélection.

Par ailleurs on établira un cahier des charges d'installation pour aborder des prestataires locaux, afin d'obtenir une évaluation du coût du déploiement, de l'hébergement éventuel et de la maintenance du logiciel.

On décrira enfin l'environnement technique nécessaire au fonctionnement du logiciel et on en demandera une cotation à plusieurs prestataires informatiques locaux.

#### m-1.2. Mettre en place le récolement

Une fois la mission de préparation achevée et ses recommandations et procédures édictées, on passera à la phase de mise en place du récolement.

Mise en place technique et administrative du récolement		12/03/12	22/02/13	249
<b>Personnel et budget</b>		12/03/12	25/05/12	54
Valider le budget défini par la mission préparatoire	ADM	12/03/12	31/03/12	15
Choisir puis recruter un chef de projet	STF	02/04/12	14/04/12	10
Définir le nombre de personnes nécessaires	STF	16/04/12	18/04/12	2
Définir le profil des postes	STF	18/04/12	25/04/12	5
Valider et assurer le budget des salaires	STF	25/04/12	23/05/12	20
Possibilité de recruter une équipe	STF	23/05/12	25/05/12	2
<b>Choisir puis déployer le logiciel de récolement</b>		16/04/12	17/07/12	66
Choisir le logiciel de gestion	IT	16/04/12	28/04/12	10
Désigner le prestataire de services informatiques	IT	30/04/12	26/05/12	20
Déployer le logiciel d'inventaire		28/05/12	17/07/12	36
Installation technique	IT	28/05/12	23/06/12	20
Paramétrage	IT	25/06/12	07/07/12	10
Tests d'utilisation et de charge	IT	09/07/12	14/07/12	5
Recette du logiciel	IT	16/07/12	17/07/12	1
<b>Recruter l'équipe de récolement et la former</b>		25/05/12	21/02/13	194
Recrutement de l'équipe		25/05/12	02/02/13	181
Procéder aux recrutements	STF	25/05/12	01/02/13	180
Équipe de récolement recrutée	STF	01/02/13	02/02/13	1
Installer l'équipe		25/05/12	21/02/13	194
Trouver des locaux	ADM	25/05/12	22/06/12	20
Doter l'équipe de son équipement de bureau	ADM	22/06/12	20/07/12	20
Doter l'équipe de son équipement informatique	ADM	22/06/12	17/08/12	40
Équipe installée	INV	04/02/13	05/02/13	1
Former l'équipe aux méthodes d'inventaire et au maniement des outils informatiques	FOR	05/02/13	21/02/13	12
S'assurer un correspondant et un bureau dans chaque institution de conservation à MUR	INV	25/05/12	06/07/12	30

#### a-1.2.1. Valider le projet prévu

La première phase aura permis de définir un budget prévisionnel pour les recrutements et les investissements nécessaires au récolement (notamment le coût des logiciels et matériels informatiques).

Le chef de projet de la phase préparatoire s'assurera, avant de quitter ses fonctions:

- ✦ de l'étendue du récolement : notamment s'il s'agit d'un récolement national ou partiel, avec la liste des services et institutions à visiter;
- ✦ de la possibilité d'obtenir les budgets prévus de la part des autorités.

La seconde phase donnera lieu à une mission de chef de projet, recruté à cet effet (qui sera de préférence celui de la phase 1).

#### a-1.2.2. Acquérir et déployer les outils informatiques

Grâce au cahier des charges réalisé lors de la première phase, on procédera:

- ✦ à l'acquisition du logiciel de récolement et de l'environnement technique nécessaire (serveur, système d'exploitation, sauvegarde, imprimantes, etc.).
- ✦ À l'installation du logiciel sur son environnement d'exploitation.
- ✦ Au paramétrage du logiciel et aux tests requis (tests de charge notamment).
- ✦ À la recette du logiciel choisi et de son environnement d'exploitation.
- ✦ À l'acquisition puis à la recette des matériels informatiques nécessaires pour l'équipe de récolement: postes de saisie (matériel, système d'exploitation, logiciels bureautiques, etc.), imprimantes, réseau local, etc.

#### a-1.2.3. Recruter l'équipe de récolement

Une fois le chef de projet en place, il procédera au recrutement des *Research Assistants* au récolement qui seront de préférence:

- ✦ anciens étudiants en bibliothéconomie ou en histoire de l'UoM (niveau Licence), secondairement, en langues, parlant et écrivant bien le français, l'anglais et le Kreol.
- ✦ Bien outillés en informatique (bureautique, maniement des logiciels de catalogage et notions de base de données).

#### a-1.2.4. Assurer la formation des membres de l'équipe

La première phase aura donné lieu à la rédaction d'un descriptif précis des opérations de récolement et de leurs sources. L'acquisition du logiciel de récolement donnera lieu à une collecte de

documentation qui sera synthétisée par le chef de projet en un manuel de prise en mains du logiciel.

Le chef de projet formera alors, sur des cas pratiques, les membres de l'équipe, entre-temps embauchés:

- Objectifs de la mission.
- Procédure et moyens mis en place. Phases du projet.
- Utilisation du logiciel de récolement.
- Méthode d'inventaire «théorique» à partir des sources sélectionnées à la Phase 1.
- Méthode d'inventaire physique.
- Établissement du récolement.

Une fois l'équipe formée, on s'assurera par ailleurs, dans chaque service de conservation à visiter:

- ✧ d'un correspondant durable et disponible selon un calendrier convenu,
- ✧ d'un bureau disponible à demeure, doté d'un accès Internet haut-débit.

Récolement proprement dit		22/02/13	28/12/13	221		
<b>Saisir l'inventaire théorique : Intégrer les sources collectées dans le logiciel</b>						
Sources papier collectées			22/02/13	16/05/13	59	
Numériser les sources papier			22/02/13	29/03/13	25	
Les transférer (OCR ou manuellement) dans le logiciel d'inventaire		INV	22/02/13	29/03/13	25	
Notices numériques			01/03/13	29/03/13	20	
Transférer les notices numériques dans le logiciel d'inventaire, les y vérifier			29/03/13	16/05/13	34	
Transférer les notices numériques dans le logiciel d'inventaire		BIB	29/03/13	02/05/13	24	
Inventaire théorique achevé		ARC	02/05/13	16/05/13	10	
Procéder au récolement : demander communication de chaque cote figurant à l'inventaire			02/05/13	03/05/13	1	
Dépôts d'archives			16/05/13	31/10/13	120	
Procéder au récolement : Dépôts publics			16/05/13	31/10/13	120	
Archives nationales		SI PRÉSENTE Indiquer sur la notice du document : - sa cote effective dans le dépôt en question - son état de conservation apparent Coller sur le document une étiquette à codes-barres infalsifiable		16/05/13	31/10/13	120
Registres de l'état civil		SI ABSENTE L'indiquer dans l'inventaire Chercher un justificatif et le porter dans l'inventaire (préi. vol)	ARC	16/05/13	05/09/13	80
Registres Général			ARC	16/05/13	13/06/13	20
Archives de l'engagement au MGI			ARC	13/06/13	25/07/13	30
Autres			ARC	25/07/13	05/09/13	30
Procéder au récolement : Dépôts privés			ARC	05/09/13	31/10/13	40
Musée de la Photographie		SI PRÉSENTE Indiquer sur la notice du document : - sa cote effective dans le dépôt en question - son état de conservation apparent		11/07/13	31/10/13	80
Evêché de Port-Louis		SI ABSENTE L'indiquer dans l'inventaire Chercher un justificatif et le porter dans l'inventaire (préi. vol)	ARC	11/07/13	22/08/13	30
Autres			ARC	22/08/13	05/09/13	10
Bibliothèques			ARC	05/09/13	31/10/13	40
Bibliothèque nationale		SI PRÉSENTE Indiquer sur la notice du document : - sa cote effective dans le dépôt en question - son état de conservation apparent Coller sur le document une étiquette à codes-barres infalsifiable		16/05/13	17/10/13	110
Bibliothèque Carnegie		SI ABSENTE L'indiquer dans l'inventaire Chercher un justificatif et le porter dans l'inventaire (préi. vol)	BIB	16/05/13	11/07/13	40
Fonds privés			BIB	11/07/13	22/08/13	30
Récolement achevé			BIB	22/08/13	17/10/13	40
Recommandations				31/10/13	01/11/13	1
Mission achevée, dispersion de l'équipe				01/11/13	27/12/13	40
				27/12/13	28/12/13	1

### m-1.3. Procéder au récolement

Voici les opérations préalables au récolement:

#### a-1.3.1. Saisir l'inventaire «théorique»

Toute l'équipe de récolement est d'abord affectée à la collecte physique et à la saisie dans le logiciel des sources de l'inventaire «théorique» relevées à la Phase 1.

Voici les actions à entreprendre:

1. Sélectionner et hiérarchiser les sources adéquates au périmètre de la mission définie au point
2. Répartir les traitements entre membres de l'équipe.
3. Procéder à la saisie ou au transfert des informations dans le logiciel de récolement.

- ⤴ Pour les livres et périodiques des bibliothèques, basculer de préférence les notices depuis les catalogues de bibliothèques en ligne; ne reporter depuis les inventaires locaux que la cote de chacun des exemplaires de l'ouvrage ou du périodique à indexer.
  - ⤴ Pour les documents d'archives, reporter les indications de contenu provenant de recueils de sources ou d'inventaires, mauriciens ou étrangers (si des doubles ont été réalisés ailleurs et dépouillés). Indiquer leur cote dans le dépôt de Maurice.
4. Faire très régulièrement vérifier par un tiers la qualité de la saisie des notices.
  5. Évaluer le degré d'avancement de la saisie de l'inventaire «théorique» pour chaque fonds et en établir des états périodiques.
  6. Engager les opérations de récolement au fur et à mesure que chaque fonds est intégralement inventorié (à définir car on peut, pour les besoins de l'organisation, affecter les ressources successivement à l'inventaire «théorique» puis seulement à l'inventaire physique).

#### Voici les opérations préalables au récolement de chaque service de conservation

##### **a-1.3.2.** Planifier le récolement avec le responsable de chaque service

Afin de ne pas empêcher les activités normales de chaque service concerné (l'inventaire physique interdira temporairement, pour chaque local, la communication des documents), on établira un calendrier prévisionnel d'intervention, en pleine concertation avec les responsables de la conservation.

##### **a-1.3.3.** Décrire précisément chaque local et ses composants

On visitera au préalable chaque local où se trouvent les documents et on y effectuera les actions suivantes:

1. Établissement d'un plan à l'échelle avec: le détail du local et des rangements qui le composent.
2. Numérotation du local (dépôt - local);<sup>301</sup> de ses emplacements (épis<sup>302</sup> - travées<sup>303</sup> - tablettes);<sup>304</sup> on fixera des étiquettes à codes barres indéchirables et indécollables à chacun de ces éléments. C'est ce codage en 5 blocs numériques qui permettra une localisation précise lors de l'inventaire physique.
3. Mesure du métrage linéaire et report sur le plan du local.
4. Relevé des conditions de conservation du local: climatisation, température, hygrométrie, risques d'incendie et protections, etc.

#### Voici les opérations lors du récolement proprement dit

Le ou les opérateurs (un binôme est recommandé) se munissent d'un ordinateur sur lequel se trouve le logiciel de récolement et « peignent » les documents de la totalité des travées de chaque local, qui aura été préalablement interdit de communication.

##### **a-1.3.4.** [Archives] Traiter les articles conservés en séquences homogènes

- ⤴ L'opérateur de saisie commence par subdiviser les épis en séquences homogènes<sup>305</sup> qui constituent une unité de saisie (pouvant donc comprendre plusieurs cartons ou registres).
- ⤴ Il renseigne les cotes extrêmes constatées dans la séquence.
- ⤴ Il renseigne:
  - l'état de conservation des conditionnements,
  - l'état de conservation des documents,
  - l'état du classement de ces documents (qui peuvent ne pas avoir été classés),
  - un commentaire libre.

##### **a-1.3.5.** [Bibliothèques] Traiter les articles par unité documentaire

- ⤴ L'opérateur de saisie indique la cote portée sur l'ouvrage physiquement présent: le logiciel la recherche dans l'inventaire «théorique» pré-saisi et doit normalement l'y trouver; si ce n'est pas le cas, l'opérateur crée la fiche de l'ouvrage dans le logiciel.
- ⤴ Il renseigne la localisation précise de l'ouvrage.

- ⤴ Il renseigne:
  - la nature de l'ouvrage: original ou copie,
  - l'état de conservation de l'ouvrage, les atteintes détectables (papier endommagé, encre corrosive, insectes, champignons, etc.),
  - un commentaire libre.

#### a-1.3.6. Consigner chaque déficit constaté

Les déficits sont détectés par comparaison de l'inventaire physique avec l'inventaire «théorique»: une seconde visite est alors planifiée, en compagnie du responsable du dépôt, pour partir en quête de chaque item manquant:

- ⤴ dans une bibliothèque, recherche des «fantômes»<sup>306</sup> ou des mentions dans le registre d'emprunts indiquant un livre prêté. L'emprunteur est alors consigné dans le logiciel pour réclamation ultérieure.
- ⤴ Détection des items mal cotés.
- ⤴ Recherche à proximité (livre déclassé, tombé du rayonnage, etc.).
- ⤴ Recherche dans un autre local (préférable une fois que tous les locaux de l'institution auront été récochés).

#### a-1.3.7. Rédiger un procès-verbal de récolement

Le rapport de synthèse du local visité comprendra:

1. Une description générale des locaux de conservation (avec plan joint) comprenant également une note sur les mesures de sécurité et de conservation constatées.
2. Un descriptif *global* du taux d'occupation du local, de l'état de classement des fonds, des déficits constatés.
3. Une description analytique des fonds dans l'ordre topographique au sein du local.

#### Voici les opérations ultérieures

#### a-1.3.8. Rédiger des recommandations

Le récolement aura établi la plupart des informations utiles à la meilleure conservation préventive des documents:

- ⤴ taux de remplissage du local;
- ⤴ déficits constatés, justifiés ou non ;
- ⤴ état de conservation des conditionnements [archives];
- ⤴ état de conservation des documents;
- ⤴ présence d'agents de destruction.

Ces indicateurs donneront lieu à un rapport pour chaque local et à des recommandations d'urgence décroissante quant à:

- ⤴ l'amélioration de ces conditions générales de sécurité et de conservation;
- ⤴ les traitements préventifs à opérer : désinsectisation, remplacement des conditionnements, etc.; on pourra, selon la méthodologie intégrée recommandée par l'*Open Planets Foundation*,<sup>307</sup> pratiquer conjointement l'évaluation des risques et la planification des opérations de conservation à mener;
- ⤴ les campagnes de restauration ou de numérisation à effectuer.

#### a-1.3.9. Dissémination de l'expérience acquise

Une fois toutes les recommandations édictées et le dossier général de récolement rédigé et soumis, l'équipe de récolement pourra être dissoute.

Nous recommandons, cependant, que l'expérience acquise ne soit pas perdue en prenant les mesures suivantes:

- ⤴ consolider le corpus de connaissances, de références et de procédures acquises lors du récolement en le rendant accessible sur Internet.
- ⤴ Établir une périodicité aux récolements partiels ou généraux.

- ⤴ Disséminer les membres de l'équipe de récolement dans les différents services de conservation, ministères ou administrations centrales mauriciens, qui bénéficieront ainsi de l'expérience acquise.

Cette dissémination du savoir archivistique concorde avec nos recommandations sur la numérisation et sur la rénovation des Archives nationales (création de «missions» auprès des administrations centrales, besoin de personnes compétentes).

## M-2. Numériser à bon escient

Nous avons pu constater que la numérisation des documents anciens se faisait (ou non) en ordre dispersé, sans que des normes aient été établies, ni l'interopérabilité des données garantie.

Cela nous engage à recommander:<sup>308</sup>

- ⤴ la création d'un Comité national de pilotage de la numérisation regroupant les responsables des services concernés, des assistants mauriciens et des spécialistes mauriciens ou étrangers de la question, missionnés à cet effet.
- ⤴ Une synergie entre l'équipe de récolement et les personnes chargées de la numérisation dans chacun des services.

### m-2.1. Établir de bonnes pratiques en numérisation

#### a-2.1.1. Définir les normes applicables à la numérisation

Il existe une très abondante littérature accessible par le Web sur les bonnes pratiques de numérisation des documents:<sup>309</sup> la certitude est désormais acquise que le stockage numérique constitue une solution pérenne, économique et sûre pour les documents patrimoniaux<sup>310</sup> et électroniques<sup>311</sup> à l'instar du microfilmage, technologie qu'elle est en passe de supplanter. Plusieurs sites dédiés aident les institutions de conservation à faire ce saut technologique et fournissent des méthodologies éprouvées.<sup>312</sup> Les solutions techniques maintenant rentabilisées paraissent peu coûteuses: le coût unitaire du stockage informatique en ligne, par exemple, a considérablement baissé.

L'unification en amont de la plupart des catalogues informatiques de biens culturels, autour de la norme de description EAD est également un puissant facteur de normalisation pour la numérisation car l'interopérabilité des catalogues des notices rend aussi nécessaire celle des documents numérisés qui leur sont liés.

Il ne devrait donc pas être trop difficile de consolider les connaissances existantes et de les appliquer à Maurice: l'expertise est maintenant abordable et aisément accessible.

#### a-2.1.2. Établir un Comité de pilotage national de numérisation

À Maurice, la numérisation est pratiquée par plusieurs instances ou personnes dispersées:

- ⤴ des unités spécialisées au sein de quelques institutions publiques (par exemple les Archives nationales), internationales (par exemple l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie) ou privées (par exemple le MSIRI avec la numérisation des Papiers Doyen);
- ⤴ dans le domaine généalogique surtout, de «bonnes volontés» individuelles regroupées en associations<sup>313</sup> aux contours assez changeants, quelquefois minées par des querelles personnelles, peu outillées et assez inexpérimentées;
- ⤴ les équipes du projet d'*e-governance* qui se met en place à la fin 2011.<sup>314</sup>

Les écueils d'une telle dispersion sont les suivants:

- ⤴ le cloisonnement des connaissances et des expériences, alors qu'il conviendrait d'adopter une démarche intégrée : les normes techniques ne sont ni connues, ni appliquées, le statut juridique des documents numérisés est ambigu, etc.
- ⤴ La numérisation répétée et inutile des mêmes ouvrages, généralement disponibles dans les fonds des grandes bibliothèques en ligne.

La création d'un Comité de pilotage national de la numérisation, consultatif et doté de pouvoirs incitatifs (par exemple: en accordant des crédits d'équipement, en autorisant ou non l'accès aux fonds à numériser,<sup>315</sup> en édictant des normes et en vérifiant leur application, etc.), permettrait de rationaliser ces opérations qui progressent actuellement en ordre dispersé.

## m-2.2. Piloter la numérisation au plan national

Pilotage de la numérisation au plan national			03/05/13	01/01/14	173
Former l'équipe de récolement à la numérisation			03/05/13	11/05/13	6
Former l'équipe d'inventaire à la numérisation et à l'indexation		FOR	03/05/13	10/05/13	5
Équipe de numérisation opérationnelle		NUM	10/05/13	11/05/13	1
Inventorier les sources reproduites ou numérisées			31/07/13	20/11/13	80
Inventorier les microfilms accessibles, en obtenir l'accès puis les numériser			31/07/13	20/11/13	80
Maurice			04/09/13	25/09/13	15
Inventorier les microfilms disponibles à MUR		ARC	04/09/13	25/09/13	15
Inventorier les microfilms disponibles à MUR		BIB	19/09/13	25/09/13	4
Étranger			31/07/13	25/09/13	40
Inventorier les microfilms disponibles à l'étranger (institutions)		ARC	28/08/13	25/09/13	20
Inventorier les microfilms disponibles à l'étranger (autres institutions)		ARC	31/07/13	25/09/13	40
Reporter en numérique les microfilms disponibles, après autorisation des détenteurs		NUM	25/09/13	20/11/13	40
Inventorier des sources de documents déjà numérisés, en obtenir l'accès			04/09/13	30/10/13	40
Dans les institutions de conservation à l'étranger			04/09/13	30/10/13	40
Inventorier les ouvrages ou périodiques numérisés disponibles en ligne		BIB	04/09/13	20/09/13	12
Inventorier les documents d'archives numérisés disponibles en ligne		ARC	04/09/13	30/10/13	40
Chez les particuliers détenant des actes numérisés et acceptant de les transmettre			04/09/13	30/10/13	40
Inventorier les documents d'archives numérisés disponibles chez des particuliers		ARC	04/09/13	30/10/13	40
			Pour chaque lot de documents : - Évaluer la qualité technique de la numérisation - Évaluer la qualité de la cotation (la compléter au besoin)		
Traiter les documents numérisés préalablement collectés et numérisés			20/11/13	01/01/14	30
Regrouper les documents déjà numérisés à MUR		NUM	20/11/13	04/12/13	10
Rattacher les documents numérisés aux notices de l'inventaire théorique**		INV	04/12/13	01/01/14	20
Arbitrer sur les numérisations de sauvetage			11/12/13	01/01/14	15

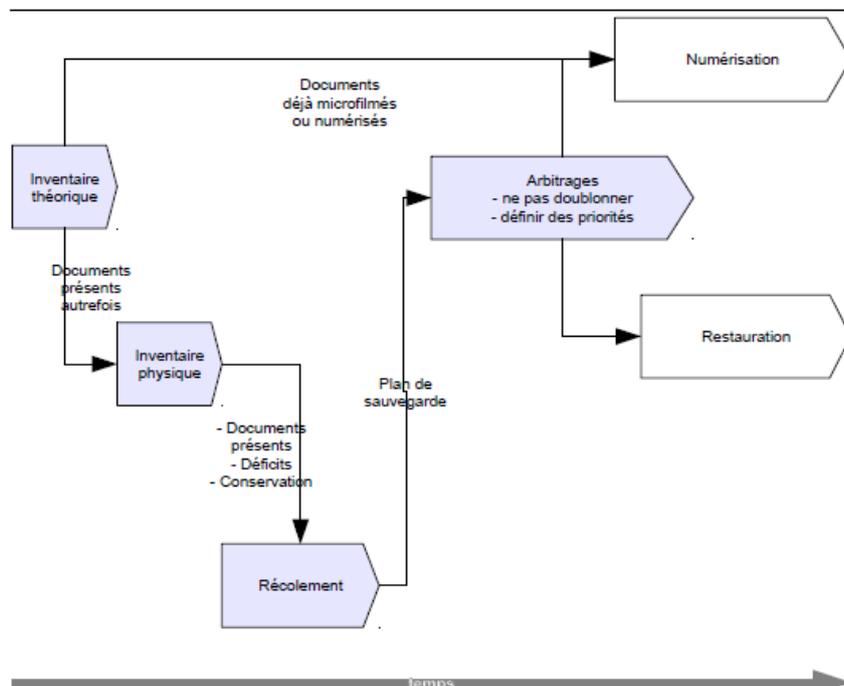
## a-2.2.1. Inscription des documents numérisés dans les inventaires de récolement

La constitution d'une base de données des sources numériques sur Maurice<sup>316</sup> aura permis une première évaluation des besoins en numérisation (en montrant ce qui manque).

L'équipe de récolement travaillera ensuite à l'inventaire «théorique»<sup>317</sup> et renseignera une base de données des documents numérisés; elle procédera à un regroupement de ces derniers dans un répertoire central (*repository*), après négociations avec leurs détenteurs: documents mauriciens numérisés (institutions mauriciennes, étrangères et provenant de particuliers), documents sur Maurice. La qualité de chaque document numérisé sera évaluée (définition, qualité de la prise de vue, précision du contexte, etc.)

Cette base de données sera ensuite mise en concordance avec l'inventaire «théorique», lui-même ultérieurement confronté à l'inventaire physique lors du récolement.

## M-3. Éviter de faire le travail en double



Dessin 2: Enchaînement des opérations (en bleu : interventions de l'équipe de récolement)

On disposera, à l'issue des opérations de récolement:

- ✧ si le récolement est total: d'un état précis et exhaustif de tous les documents conservés à Maurice (ou en déficit) déjà numérisés;
- ✧ si le récolement est partiel: d'un état précis, pour chaque établissement de conservation visité, des documents présents ou en déficit déjà numérisés.
- ✧ Dans les deux cas, le récolement aboutira à un état des documents dont la conservation est compromise.

Ces informations, une fois recoupées, permettront:

- ✧ de numériser en priorité les documents dont la conservation est compromise;
- ✧ de ne pas numériser deux fois le même document, ce qui aura également pour bénéfice d'économiser les efforts et de ménager les documents.

#### M-4. Enseigner la conservation du patrimoine

##### Une institution de plus?

La présente mission de la *Truth and Justice Commission* prévoit la création d'un Institut de Conservation.

Or, nous avons été frappé de constater au cours de notre enquête la déficience de certains services, notamment dans le domaine muséal. Nous avouons donc quelques réticences à recommander la création d'un nouvel organisme national de conservation du patrimoine documentaire - que nous jugeons pourtant indispensable à terme : le risque serait grand en effet de le voir aller au-devant des mêmes écueils que ses prédécesseurs, alors qu'un succès rapide sera décisif pour la survie même du patrimoine documentaire mauricien.

Il nous paraît plus efficace de créer à l'*University of Mauritius* (UoM) un Master professionnel en conservation du patrimoine documentaire,<sup>318</sup> quitte à créer l'Institut de Conservation dans un deuxième temps.

##### Avantages attendus d'un rattachement à l'UoM

Le rattachement à l'UoM aurait, selon nous, les avantages suivants:

- ✧ se couler dans une organisation administrative fonctionnelle éprouvée;
- ✧ pouvoir se connecter avec les deux cursus existants de bibliothéconomie-archivistique et de gestion du patrimoine;
- ✧ pouvoir donner une professionnalisation utile aux étudiants en Histoire qui n'ont actuellement guère de débouchés faute d'enseignement généralisé de cette discipline aux enfants du pays;
- ✧ bénéficier des compétences et des équipements scientifiques disponibles sur le campus (chimie, mycologie, entomologie, etc.) ou à proximité (MSIRI à Réduit).

Formation à la conservation des documents anciens (UoM)			2002/12	02/10/14	683	
Préfiguration			2002/12	25/12/12	221	
Organiser l'armature institutionnelle du cursus (UoM)			2002/12	04/08/12	120	
Établir un projet proposal			FOR 2002/12	17/03/12	20	
Prendre contact avec l'administration de l'UoM			FOR 19/03/12	14/04/12	20	
Obtenir l'accord de principe de l'UoM			FOR 16/04/12	07/07/12	60	
Accord de l'UoM obtenu			FOR 09/07/12	10/07/12	1	
Fixer les modalités administratives du cursus			FOR 09/07/12	04/08/12	20	
Obtenir des collaborations internationales en matière pédagogique				10/07/12	02/10/12	60
Prendre contact avec les organismes étrangers de conservation et d'enseignement			FOR 10/07/12	07/08/12	20	
Organiser la venue des enseignants étrangers			STF 10/07/12	02/10/12	60	
Établir le programme pédagogique du cursus			FOR 02/10/12	25/12/12	60	
Recruter des enseignants sur place				10/07/12	19/03/13	180
Obtenir des collaborations avec d'autres cursus de l'UoM		Sciences naturelles : Biologie, Entomologie Sciences humaines : Histoire, Relations internationales, Langues	STF 10/07/12	21/08/12	30	
Prendre contact avec les responsables des institutions de conservation à MQR			STF 10/07/12	07/08/12	20	
Recruter des professeurs occasionnels dans d'autres cercles professionnels			STF 10/07/12	19/03/13	180	
Le cursus est opérationnel			FOR 19/03/13	20/03/13	1	
Faire connaître le cursus		Étudiants d'autres cursus non professionnels à l'UoM Professionnels en poste dans les organismes de conservation du pays	FOR 20/03/13	12/06/13	60	
Recruter les étudiants			FOR 12/06/13	07/08/13	40	
La première génération d'étudiants en conservation est formée			FOR 01/10/14	02/10/14	1	

#### m-4.1. Préfigurer le cursus de formation

##### a-4.1.1. Organiser l'armature institutionnelle du cursus

Il convient d'abord de convaincre l'UoM de la validité d'un tel cursus, ce qui pourrait prendre plusieurs années: un projet préliminaire (*project proposal*) sera rédigé et soumis aux instances de l'Université afin d'obtenir son accord de principe. Il contiendra:

- ⤴ une présentation de ses motifs, du degré d'étude préalable requis et du grade obtenu à l'issue de ce cursus,
- ⤴ un descriptif préliminaire des enseignements (contenu, durée générale, matière enseignée et durée annuelle de chaque cours),
- ⤴ le type des étudiants attendus; élèves de l'UoM mais aussi: professionnels du patrimoine actuellement en poste et désireux de se perfectionner; auditeurs libres (accès payant),
- ⤴ les avantages attendus pour les étudiants à suivre un tel cursus (notamment leurs débouchés professionnels),
- ⤴ les collaborations académiques internationales prévues,
- ⤴ les collaborations locales prévues: par exemple, travaux pratiques et visites dans les centres de conservation mauriciens.

##### a-4.1.2. S'assurer de collaborations internationales

Une fois l'accord de principe de l'UoM obtenu, on recherchera les collaborations académiques susceptibles de lui apporter les compétences nécessaires ; nous envisageons des *master-classes* avec des professeurs étrangers en résidence pour des sessions de cours de quelques semaines afin de compléter l'enseignement des professeurs et maîtres assistants recrutés localement. Ces professeurs étrangers dispenseraient leur enseignement et procéderaient à la correction des examens dont ils auraient établi le programme.

Voici quelques pistes de recrutements, qui pourraient de surcroît bénéficier de financements internationaux ou au titre de la coopération entre états:

Enseignement	Recrutement du corps professoral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Archivistique (Ancien Régime et époque contemporaine)</li> <li>⤴ Diplomatique (Ancien Régime et époque contemporaine)</li> <li>⤴ Histoire du livre</li> <li>⤴ Histoire des bibliothèques</li> </ul>	Professeurs issus des établissements d'enseignement spécialisés : l'École nationale des Chartes (France), par exemple
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Histoire des institutions coloniales</li> <li>⤴ Histoire culturelle des colonies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Historiens, Historiens de la Culture</li> <li>⤴ Archivistes en charge des fonds spécialisés des Métropoles (CAOM, PRO)</li> <li>⤴ Conservateurs en charge des fonds d'archives des pays post-coloniaux (La Réunion)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Conservation des archives et des bibliothèques</li> <li>⤴ Méthodes de restauration des documents</li> <li>⤴ Menaces contre les documents anciens</li> </ul>	Spécialistes : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ chercheurs des instituts spécialisés,</li> <li>⤴ techniciens des ateliers de restauration dans les institutions de conservation,</li> <li>⤴ scientifiques : entomologistes, botanistes, etc.</li> <li>⤴ architectes spécialisés.</li> </ul>
Cours de gestion et de conservation spécialisés : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Photographie ancienne</li> <li>⤴ Supports audio</li> <li>⤴ Images animées</li> <li>⤴ Patrimoine immatériel</li> </ul>	Spécialistes du domaine recrutés dans les institutions de conservation ou les centres de recherches académiques.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Déploiement de projets informatiques patrimoniaux (catalogues de fonds, sites Web culturels, etc.)</li> <li>⤴ Interopérabilité des collections numériques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Chefs de projets informatiques des institutions de conservation</li> <li>⤴ Réalisateurs multimédia dans le domaine</li> </ul>
Gestion des documents d'archives numériques	Conservateurs des fonds contemporains
Application de l'informatique aux recherches en sciences humaines	Enseignants spécialisés

#### a-4.1.3. Établir un programme pédagogique

Une fois les accords de principe obtenus des institutions et des professeurs pressentis, on procédera, par un jeu d'allers-retours, à l'harmonisation de leurs enseignements respectifs.

On arrivera ainsi à la définition d'un cadre pédagogique:

- ⤴ conditions d'intervention des enseignants: rémunération et logement, matériel nécessaire, visites souhaitées (par exemple, dans les institutions de conservation locales);
- ⤴ durée générale du cursus,
- ⤴ détail de chaque enseignement: professeur, durée du cours, programme sommaire.

#### m-4.2. Recruter les enseignants résidents

On aura quelques difficultés à recruter des enseignants locaux<sup>319</sup> dans les premières années du cursus du moins; notre espoir est que cela devienne plus facile au fur et à mesure de l'élévation du niveau des compétences, sous l'effet du cursus précisément.

On pourra cependant recruter d'emblée:

- des scientifiques spécialistes dans l'étude des agents de destruction: entomologistes et botanistes,
- des maîtres assistants en Sciences humaines chargés d'assurer les cours d'histoire locale ou coloniale.

### m-4.3. Ouvrir le cursus

La phase de préparation du cursus étant achevée, un dossier récapitulatif sera soumis à l'UoM pour approbation.<sup>320</sup>

Une fois celle-ci obtenue, il s'agira:

- ⤴ d'aider l'UoM à préparer les dossiers de recrutement et de définition du contenu du cursus,
- ⤴ de préparer un dossier de présentation pour les étudiants et les professionnels du secteur désireux de parfaire leur expérience professionnelle,
- ⤴ de prendre contact avec les institutions et le corps professoral étrangers afin de leur confirmer leur enseignement et de fixer avec eux les conditions de leur venue,
- ⤴ de mettre en place la documentation en ligne sur le cursus (site Web de l'UoM),
- ⤴ de recruter les étudiants.

### M-5. Rénover la loi sur les Archives

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Nous recommandons une révision de la loi sur les archives (*National Archives Act 2000*); cette opération, dont nous ignorons à ce stade le cheminement institutionnel, pourrait se faire en trois temps:

1. lors de la phase préparatoire au récolement, amendements réglementaires au *National Archives Act* dans le sens du renforcement des contrôles sur les archives en mains privées (voir p769);
2. lors de la réorganisation de la numérisation au plan national, établissement d'un Comité de pilotage national de la numérisation; selon qu'il s'agira d'une extension des prérogatives du *National Archives Advisory Committee* ou de la création d'une institution nouvelle, les implications seront différentes du point de vue du travail législatif.
3. Enfin, une réforme de plus grande ampleur, qui nécessitera l'intervention du législateur.

Cette dernière réforme devrait s'attacher, selon nous:

- ⤴ à faire de la communication de plein droit des archives publiques aux citoyens mauriciens la règle de base en précisant les types de documents sujets à délais de communication;
- ⤴ à réduire, par conséquent, les prérogatives des dirigeants des Archives nationales en matière de communication au public et notamment les interdictions, souvent non motivées;
- ⤴ à augmenter le budget alloué aux Archives nationales et à le sécuriser sur le moyen terme;
- ⤴ à établir dans les ministères et les administrations centrales des «missions d'archives» dont les responsables seraient dotés de suffisamment de pouvoirs et offriraient assez de garanties pour les inciter à effectivement verser les documents qu'ils retiennent;
- ⤴ à renforcer le pouvoir des Archives nationales en matière de contrôle des fonds d'archives privées;
- ⤴ à ramener dans le giron des Archives nationales les fonds actuellement excisés (MGI).

## 9 CONCLUSION

Les insectes, les champignons, les moisissures, l'acidité du papier, les encres corrosives, l'humidité ambiante, la chaleur excessive, les cyclones sont depuis longtemps désignés comme les ennemis du patrimoine documentaire de l'île Maurice. Leur nocivité, sournoise ou catastrophique, mais toujours menaçante, est inévitablement associée, dans le discours de la plupart des interlocuteurs mauriciens, à une accusation implicite de maltraitance contre «nos archives» ou «notre histoire» - autant dire les archives de la communauté à laquelle ils appartiennent.

Telles ne sont pourtant pas les constatations de notre enquête: le patrimoine écrit mauricien est fort compromis mais nous n'avons jamais décelé d'action concertée malfaisante à son encontre; bien au contraire, des efforts louables se font jour. Les conditions de conservation des documents sont souvent inadéquates et favorisent les agents de destruction biologiques ou climatiques; mais, ici encore, point d'intentionnalité décelable.

Nous sommes, quant à nous, convaincus de la primauté des causes humaines dans cette évolution: manque de formation et de motivation des gestionnaires, réticences des services versants, budgets rétrécis et carences déontologiques des détenteurs privés sont, selon nous, les raisons primordiales de cet état de fait, malgré quelques bonnes volontés.

Or, il semble qu'une nouvelle approche culturelle fleurisse dans le pays: la valorisation touristique des monuments, des musées et des sites, l'histoire de la nation qui commence à être enseignée aux enfants mauriciens, sont les signes encourageants d'une autonomie culturelle revendiquée.

Le temps paraît donc advenu d'une sauvegarde coordonnée du patrimoine documentaire: puissent les solutions ici recommandées, sensées et rapidement applicables, ainsi que la constitution d'un corps de conservateurs instruits aux normes internationales, trouver une application rapide et durable.

2011 - Hôpital Brown-Séguard: le *Ward 24*



2011 Archives de la Cour suprême: nouveau dépôt



2011 Archives de la Cour suprême: cave



- 1 Alex Boraine to Stéphane Sinclair, "Post of Consultant - Truth and Justice Commission," Contrat, February 17, 2011.
- 2 Les institutions prévues à l'Annexe 1 du contrat de mission sont: 1.National Archives ; 2.Civil Status Office ; 3.National Library ; 4.Museum Council ; 5.Archives de L'Évêché ; 6.Registrar General. Selected Government repositories [sans précision]
- 3 ICA, ISAD(G): norme générale et internationale de description archivistique: adoptée par le Comité sur les normes de description, Stockholm, Suède, 19-22 septembre 2000., Norme internationale, Standards (Paris: International Council on Archives, 2000).

- 4 Luciana Duranti, "Pour une diplomatie des documents électroniques," Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes 161, no. 2 (2003): 603-623.
- 5 Voir les différentes conceptions nationales dans: Ketelaar, *Législation et réglementation en matière d'archives et de gestion des documents: une étude RAMP accompagnée de principes directeurs*, 1-9.
- 6 Michel Melot, "Axe théorique: L'archive et ses fonctions" (présenté à the Archives et Transdisciplinarité, quelles relations au bénéfice de la construction des savoirs?, IUFM de Paris: Pôle National de Ressources Patrimoine-Archives, 2004), 4-6.
- «Les archives [...] peuvent être à la fois matérielles et virtuelles. Elles sont fortement corrélées aux individus car elles sont le prolongement de l'activité de chacun d'entre nous. Elles leur sont également extérieures car elles s'inscrivent sur un support. La position des archives par rapport au patrimoine équivaut à celle de la langue. Celle-ci fait partie de chacun d'entre nous mais son intérêt est de nous permettre de nous comprendre. L'archive n'est pas un produit fini. Elle a une vertu performative : elle peut obliger le comportement social. [...] Les archives connaissent également une extension conceptuelle. Il convient de travailler à définir ce qui peut faire archive : tout peut être archive mais il est impossible de tout conserver. Par le passé, c'est l'écrit qui faisait autorité pour constituer les archives. Aujourd'hui, elles intègrent l'audiovisuel et l'électronique. Elles deviennent insaisissables. L'état civil, le cadastre et les minutes notariales constituent les trois piliers des archives. De nombreux autres éléments sont cependant également conservés. Cela peut être le cas d'objets de la vie quotidienne. Les archives ne doivent pas être réservées aux administrations ou aux entreprises.»
- 7 Selon la norme AFNOR:
- «Un périodique est une publication en série, dotée d'un titre unique, dont les livraisons généralement composées de plusieurs articles répertoriés dans un sommaire, se succèdent chronologiquement, à des intervalles en principe réguliers.»
- 8 L'histoire de l'écrit à Maurice commençant avec l'arrivée des colonisateurs européens, nous sommes dispensés de traiter de supports autres que ceux qu'ils utilisèrent (pensons à l'épigraphie et aux supports variés que l'on trouve dans les musées d'archéologie). Il ne reste, à Maurice, aucune trace écrite ni archéologique du passage de navigateurs avant celui des navigateurs hollandais: la mention (très hypothétique) de l'île figure seulement dans des ouvrages de géographie et de navigation arabes du Moyen-Âge. Ses découvreurs hollandais firent état de tablettes de cire, dont ils reproduisirent maladroitement quelques exemples - mais il n'en reste plus aucune trace tangible. Voir: Vijaya Teelock, *Mauritian History* (Moka: Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, 2009), pp. 22-24.
- 9 Toussaint, *Bibliography of Mauritius (1502-1954), Covering the Printed Record, Manuscripts, Archivalia and Cartographic Material*.
- 10 Republic of Mauritius, *The National Archives Act 2000*.
- 11 Toussaint, *Early Printing in Mauritius, Réunion, Madagascar and the Seychelles*, 16, sq.  
Aucun lieu de conservation à Maurice ne conserve de documents aussi anciens à notre connaissance, la plupart ayant disparu ou ayant été dérobés, exportés puis achetés outre-mer par des bibliophiles peu scrupuleux.
- 12 Par ordre alphabétique. On trouvera ci-dessous le détail des dates de visites et des personnes rencontrées.
- 13 Alain Gordon-Gentil to Stéphane Sinclair, "Re: Lettres de créance", March 10, 2011.
- 14 Commission des Bibliothécaires municipaux de l'île Maurice, *Bulletin des Bibliothèques municipales de l'île Maurice* (Océan Indien), vol. 1 (Port Louis (île Maurice): De Luxe Printing, 1969).
- 15 Ce sont: Les archives des hôpitaux du Nord et du Ministère de la Santé, entreposées en vrac dans un pavillon de l'ancien hôpital Brown-Séguard ; Les archives anciennes de la Cour Suprême dans une cave d'un bâtiment administratif de la rue Lislet Geoffroy à Port-Louis.
- 16 Évaluation globale laquelle s'était livrée, en 1978, dans un temps record et avec un résultat remarquable: Harrison, Mauritius - Libraries, Documentation and Archives Services.
- 17 Voir notamment: Peghini, "Les impasses du multiculturalisme. Politiques, industries et tourisms culturels à l'île Maurice."
- 18 Voir sa copie p. 134.
- 19 Nous avons pour cela bénéficié de l'aide de la documentation interne du journal *Le Mauricien* où nous avons consulté les dossiers: *Archives nationales, Bibliothèque nationale et Généalogie*.  
Nos remerciements chaleureux vont à:
- ▲ Dominique BELLIER, Journaliste culturelle, qui nous en donna l'idée,
  - ▲ Stéphanie FOIRET, Directrice de la documentation, qui nous ouvrit ses portes,
  - ▲ Sonia VILBRUN, Documentaliste, ainsi qu'à toute l'équipe de la Documentation pour la qualité de leur travail, la gentillesse de leur accueil et leur disponibilité.
- 20 *The National Library, Celebrating its 10th Anniversary: The National Library (Republic of Mauritius), Brief history and development (1999-2009)* (Republic of Mauritius, Port-Louis: The National Library, 2009).
- 21 Sur le modèle de la Bibliothèque Numérique Mauricienne ([www.indicos.org](http://www.indicos.org)) de Patrimoine en Partage ([www.patrimoine-en-partage.com](http://www.patrimoine-en-partage.com)), qui a pour objet de regrouper les textes historiques importants écrits sur Maurice et utiles à son histoire et de présenter le travail des chercheurs qui étudient son passé et sa société. L'accès à cette base de données répondra, bien sûr, au même calendrier que le texte du présent rapport : tant que l'accès à ce dernier sera réservé, cette base de données sera protégée par mot de passe.
- 22 Voici les services dont nous n'avons pas reçu pleine satisfaction, malgré une relance:
- Archives nationales : loi sur les archives de 1893 ; détails demandés sur la numérisation, la fréquentation du public, les qualifications académiques du personnel, le budget annuel, la composition du parc informatique, etc.
  - Mahatma Gandhi Institute: règlement intérieur applicable aux lecteurs des archives des engagés indiens.
  - Registrar of Civil Status Office: *Civil Status Act* et rapports annuels; la superficie du dépôt des registres, et sur le nombre de registres conservés.
  - Registrar General: *Registrar General Act*, décret de fonctionnement et rapports annuels ; détails sur les budgets annuels.
- 23 Republic of Mauritius, *The Mauritius Museums Council Act 2000, Revised Laws of Mauritius*, 2000.

- 24 Anthony S. Cheke, "Treasure Island. The rise and decline of a small tropical museum, the Mauritius Institute," in *Why museums matter. Avian archives in an age of extinctions*, ed. N.J. Collar, C Fischer, and Feare C.J., vol. 123, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*, 2003, 197-206.
- 25 National Library (Republic of Mauritius), Annual Report: 1999-2000, Annual Report (Port-Louis: National Library (Republic of Mauritius), 2000).
- 26 "Après une fermeture temporaire de plus de quatre mois: la bibliothèque de l'Institut de Maurice de nouveau accessible," *L'Express Dimanche* (Port-Louis, May 16, 1999).
- 27 Voir le détail ci-dessous.
- 28 Stéphane Sinclair to Jocelyn Kwok, "TJC - Mission Archives anciennes de Maurice - Constat de carence de la Chambre d'Agriculture de Maurice", April 18, 2011.
- 29 Ce qui nous paraît constituer une lacune notable pour l'histoire économique et sociale de Maurice depuis le 19<sup>e</sup> s., vu la prééminence de la *Commerciale* dans le pays. Qu'on se reporte, pour mémoire, à la politique archivistique d'une banque française de taille comparable (relativement au pays), le Crédit Lyonnais (désormais associé au Crédit Agricole) et sur l'action de sauvegarde et d'ouverture entreprise par son archiviste, Roger NOUGARET, désormais en poste à BNP-Paribas. L'ouverture des archives du Lyonnais a permis d'étudier l'histoire économique de la France au 19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> s. Voir: "Service des archives historique banque LCL", n.d., <http://www.lcl.com/fr/decouvrir-lcl/lcl-une-identite-forte/credit-lyonnais-histoire/archives-historiques.jsp>; "Roger Nougaret: 'L'archiviste: chef de projet?'" n.d., <http://aafchefdeprojet.wordpress.com/roger-nougaret>; Jean Bouvier, *Le crédit Lyonnais de 1863 à 1882. Les années de formation d'une banque de dépôt*, vol. 23, 2 vols., Af-faires et gens d'affaires (Paris, 1961).
- 30 Voir infra.
- 31 Stéphane Sinclair to Philippe A Forget, "[Enquête sur les archives mauriciennes] Prise de contact", February 26, 2011.
- 32 Stéphane Sinclair to Emmanuel Richon, "[Enquête sur les archives mauriciennes] Prise de contact", March 3, 2011.
- 33 Stéphane Sinclair to Emmanuel Richon, "[Enquête sur les archives mauriciennes] CR de notre entretien", March 4, 2011.
- 34 Stéphane Sinclair to Philippe A Forget, "TJC - Mission Archives anciennes de Maurice - Constat de carence de la Mauritius Commercial Bank", April 18, 2011.
- 35 Dont nous ne sommes pas spécialiste et qui sont similaires à ceux qu'on rencontre dans la plupart des pays tropicaux. Voir une bibliographie à jour, p. 195.
- 36 Auguste Toussaint, *L'administration Française De L'île Maurice Et Ses Archives, 1721-1810* (Port Louis, Mauritius: Imp. commerciale, 1965). Les papiers d'Auguste TOUSSAINT sont conservés au CAOM d'Aix-en-Provence (France); voir: "Exemple PLEADE - Papiers Auguste Toussaint", n.d., [http://caom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/sdx/pl/doc-tdm.xsp?id=FRDAFANCAOM\\_EDF033\\_d0e1523&fmt=tab&base=fa&root=fn=&qid=&ss=&as=&ai=](http://caom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/sdx/pl/doc-tdm.xsp?id=FRDAFANCAOM_EDF033_d0e1523&fmt=tab&base=fa&root=fn=&qid=&ss=&as=&ai=)
- 37 Qu'on complétera volontiers de deux thèses de l'École nationale des chartes: Madeleine Bioche, "L'administration royale à l'île de France (île Maurice) de 1767 à 1789" (Paris: École nationale des chartes, 1929); Rasoharinoro, "L'île de France de 1789 à 1803" (Paris: École nationale des chartes, 1964). Les thèses d'École des chartes s'accompagnent statutairement du dépouillement exhaustif des fonds d'archives concernés, d'une description des institutions émettrices et de conservation, d'un inventaire précis des fonds.
- 38 Dans un *mouvement réciproque d'élucidation* puisque Auguste TOUSSAINT trouve les archives de Maurice dans un état où les fonds ont été démembrés et reconstitués en collections arbitraires: ces bribes d'archives lui permettent donc de mieux comprendre l'organisation des administrations qui leur ont donné naissance (avec l'aide de l'archiviste départemental de La Réunion, Yves PÉROTIN).
- 39 Paul Roussier, "Le dépôt des papiers publics des colonies," *Revue d'histoire moderne* 4, no. 22 (July 1, 1929): 241-262; "L'état civil - L'Outre-Mer", n.d., <http://www.outre-mer.gouv.fr/?l-etat-civil,1741.html&artpage=3>
- 40 Camille Couderc and G. Lavalley, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Caen*, 1880.
- 41 Baron d'Unienville, *Statistique de l'île Maurice et ses dépendances, etc.* (Maurice: Typographie de The Merchants and Planters Gazette, 1885).
- 42 Royal Geographical Society (Great Britain), *The journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* (J. Murray, 1850), 75-88.
- 43 Selon une approche archivistique totalement dépassée, même à cette époque: Michel Duchein, "Le respect des fonds en archivistique. Principes théoriques et problèmes pratiques," in *Techniques modernes d'administration des archives et de gestion des documents: recueil de textes; une étude RAMP, RAMP Studies* (Paris: Unesco, 1985).
- 44 KC Harrison, *Mauritius - Libraries, Documentation and Archives Services, Restricted Technical Report, Operational Activities in the field of information* (Paris: UNESCO, June 30, 1978), 28-29. À la fin des années 1970, le dépôt légal prévoyait six exemplaires déposés:
1. au *Mauritius Institute*,
  2. à la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Maurice,
  3. à la *British Library* (Londres),
  4. à la Bibliothèque nationale (Paris),
  5. à la Bibliothèque du Congrès (Washington),
  6. aux Archives nationales de Maurice, qui assurent le bon acheminement des exemplaires destinés aux institutions de conservation précitées.
- 45 Auguste Toussaint, *Bibliography of Mauritius (1502-1954), Covering the Printed Record, Manuscripts, Archivalia and Cartographic Material* (Port Louis, Mauritius: Printed by Esclapon, 1956).
- 46 Une étude est en cours à la *Truth and Justice Commission* sur la bibliographie d'Auguste TOUSSAINT.
- 47 Auguste Toussaint, *Report of the Technical Committee on Libraries* (Port Louis, 1959).
- 48 Ce que déplore en termes très vifs Harrison, *Mauritius - Libraries, Documentation and Archives Services*, p.33.
- 49 Voir son texte intégral ci-dessous.
- 50 Accessibles aux Archives de France (Paris) dans la série 700 Mi 1 à 451 : Archives de l'île Maurice. XVIIIe-XIXe s. L'état civil de l'île Maurice est en cours de numérisation au CAOM (Aix-en-Provence, France) et sera accessible en ligne durant le 1er semestre 2012 (réponse d'Isabelle DION, Conservatrice en chef du CAOM à Stéphane SINCLAIR en avril 2011).

- 51 Toussaint, *L'administration Française De L'île Maurice Et Ses Archives, 1721-1810*, pp.8-9.
- 52 Notamment: Auguste Toussaint, *Les Missions d'Adrien d'Épinay (1830-1834)*, Société de l'histoire de l'île Maurice 3 (Port-Louis, île Maurice: General Printing & Stationery Cy, 1946).
- 53 Par exemple : Charles Darwin, *Voyage d'un naturaliste autour du monde. Les Andes, les Galapagos et l'Australie*, vol. II, 1875: *We were also surprised at seeing large booksellers' shops, with well-stored shelves; music and reading bespeak our approach to the old world of civilisation ; for in truth both Australia and America are new worlds.*
- 54 Auguste Toussaint, *Early Printing in Mauritius, Réunion, Madagascar and the Seychelles, The Spread of Printing: Eastern Hemisphere* (Amsterdam: [A. L.] van Gendt, 1969), pp.15-16.
- 55 Notamment grâce à une loi très libérale sur la presse, obtenue de haute lutte en 1832, et qui provoqua une floraison de titres au ton très offensif.
- 56 Robert Furlong and Vicram Ramharai, *La production créolophone: des origines à l'indépendance*, vol. 1, collection Timam (Paris: s.n., 2006).
- 57 Ainsi de la *Table Ovale* qui est, dans les années 1810-1830, un cercle littéraire et un ardent foyer d'opposition des élites d'origine française aux Britanniques: "La Table Ovale," *Revue historique et littéraire de l'île Maurice: Archives coloniales (1891)*: 181, sq; "La Table Ovale," *Revue historique et littéraire de l'île Maurice: Archives coloniales (1894)*: 195, sq.
- 58 Stéphane Sinclair and Johann Wiehe, Christian W. Wiehe (île Maurice, 1807-1878): *Sucre & Raffinement, Jacques Wiehe*. (Rose-Hill, île Maurice, 2010), pp.83-85. Nous avons également inventorié le dossier de factures de Christian WIEHE et de son épouse dans les années 1840-1850.
- 59 Christian Wiehe est inscrit, dans les années 1840, à un cabinet de lecture uniquement anglophone. Les cabinets de lecture payants sont les seules bibliothèques publiques accessibles avant l'ouverture au public de la bibliothèque de la Municipalité de Port-Louis (1858):
- 1816, cabinet de lecture de Baron ; cabinet de lecture de Sauvignec; les deux étant ultérieurement fusionnés.
  - 1828, *Librairie de Maurice*.
  - c. 1839, *Mauritius Literary Institution* de Francis Channel.
  - 1855, cabinet de lecture réservé aux membres de la Chambre d'Agriculture.
- 60 Et dont plusieurs sont conservés à la Bibliothèque Carnegie (Curepipe), notamment ceux de Saint-Elme LE DUC.
- 61 Cheke, "Treasure Island. The rise and decline of a small tropical museum, the Mauritius Institute."
- 62 Ibid., 200, sq.
- 63 Création d'une *Public Service Commission* en 1967.
- 64 Commission des Bibliothécaires municipaux de l'île Maurice, *Bulletin des Bibliothèques municipales de l'île Maurice*, 1:pp.9, sq.
- 65 Il existait un fonds de *Mauritiana* à la Bibliothèque Municipale de Port-Louis, ouverte au public en 1858, mais il s'agissait d'ouvrages contemporains. Voir: Commission des Bibliothécaires municipaux de l'île Maurice, *Bulletin des Bibliothèques municipales de l'île Maurice*, (Océan Indien), 1:6-7.
- 66 Robert M. Lester, *A thirty year catalog of grants, showing recipients and totals of grants made by Carnegie Corporation of New York during the period November 10, 1911 to September 30, 1941* (New York: Carnegie Corp. of New York, 1942). Andrew Carnegie, magnat de l'acier états-unien d'origine écossaise, avait fait fortune en reconditionnant les armes abandonnées de la Guerre de Sécession américaine en un usage civil, au sein de son entreprise *Carnegie Steel Company*. Prenant sa retraite en 1901, il se consacra exclusivement à l'action philanthropique déjà engagée en faveur de l'éducation, de la paix, de la science et de la diffusion de la langue et de la culture anglaises. La première bibliothèque Carnegie fut fondée dans sa ville natale de Dunfermline en Écosse (1881); aux États-Unis, à partir de 1889 (Braddock, PA), le nombre des bibliothèques Carnegie se multiplia (jusqu'à atteindre le nombre de 1,689, soit plus de la moitié des bibliothèques du pays) avec l'appui des clubs féministes, soutiens indéfectibles de l'éducation des femmes.
- 67 Auguste Toussaint, *Port-Louis, deux siècles d'histoire (1735-1935)* (Port Louis: La Typographie moderne, 1936).
- 68 Donations : Edouard ROUILLARD, le Dr. MÉNAGÉ, George ANTELME, Gabriel REGNARD; puis, après la Seconde Guerre mondiale : Camille de RAUVILLE (bibliothécaire de 1964 à 1974), Pierre de SORNAY, Philippe de KERVERN, le Consulat de France, Hector PATURAU, le Collège Labourdonnais, etc.
- 69 Notamment l'achat de la collection du sculpteur Prosper D'ÉPINAY, décédé en 1914, qui constitua le cœur des collections patrimoniales de la Bibliothèque Carnegie.
- 70 Jacques Pougnet, "Histoire - Il y a 50 ans, jour pour jour: le dimanche 28 février 1960: Le cyclone Carole dévastait l'île Maurice," *Week-end* (Port Louis, February 28, 2010).
- 71 Son apport principal est la création du concept d'indianocéanisme: Michel Beniamino, "Camille de Rauville et l'indianocéanisme," in *L'océan indien dans les littératures francophones.*, ed. Kumari R. Issur and Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing (Paris: KARTHALA Editions, 2001), 87-105.
- 72 Voir ci-dessous.
- 73 Exceptés pour les historiens de l'UoM ou du MIE, il serait sans doute plus adéquat de parler d'« érudits locaux », notamment à propos des membres de la Société d'Histoire de l'île Maurice (SHIM). L'histoire mauricienne n'est pas encore enseignée dans la totalité des classes des enseignements primaire ou secondaire.
- 74 L'usage courant, aux 18<sup>e</sup> et 19<sup>e</sup> s. était que les administrateurs quittent leur service en emportant leurs archives.
- 75 Tristan Bréville and Marie-Noëlle Bréville, "Truth and Justice Commission - Enquête sur les Archives historiques de la République de Maurice," Questionnaire imprimé, March 15, 2011.
- 76 Nous avons pu collecter des informations fiables sur cette affaire grâce à l'aide d'un des acquéreurs, M. Didier MERLE, que nous remercions : la vendeuse de fonds, désirant garder l'anonymat, n'a pu être contactée par téléphone malgré tous nos efforts.
- 77 Association bénévole «d'amis du patrimoine» à Maurice. Voir le site Web de l'association et ses objectifs: "Qui Nous Sommes", n.d., <http://www.patrimoineenperil.mu/fr/qui-nous-sommes.html>
- 78 Voir son portrait à charge dans: Evenor Hitié, *Histoire de Maurice (ancienne île de France)* (Port-Louis: Imprimerie Engelbrecht & cie, 1897).
- 79 Annexes sur CD.
- 80 Qui n'est disponible dans cette complétude et cet état à Maurice, ni à la Bibliothèque nationale, ni aux Archives nationales, ni à la Bibliothèque Carnegie.

- 81 Ce qui était, au demeurant, le droit des propriétaires. Le *National Archive Act* ne prévoit la présentation de fonds d'intérêt national aux Archives nationales que lorsqu'il y a vente aux enchères: Republic of Mauritius, The National Archives Act 2000, Revised Laws of Mauritius, 2000, Part II - 11.
- 82 Republic of Mauritius, The National Archives Act 2000, pt. II, 42, 2-(h).
- 83 Duchein, "Le respect des fonds en archivistique. Principes théoriques et problèmes pratiques."  
Voici la façon dont cet auteur édicte la règle:  
«Le respect des fonds [...] consiste à laisser groupées, sans les mélanger à d'autres, les archives (documents de toute nature) provenant d'une administration, d'un établissement ou d'une personne physique ou, morale donnée : ce qu'on appelle le fonds des archives de cette administration, de cet établissement ou de cette personne.[...] Aujourd'hui, on peut dire que - avec des nuances non négligeables - le principe du respect des fonds, ou principe de provenance, est admis universellement comme la base de l'archivistique théorique et pratique. Les critiques auxquelles il donne lieu de temps à autre ne portent, en fait, que sur telle ou telle de ses applications et non sur le principe même. On peut à bon droit considérer qu'il ne sera jamais plus remis fondamentalement en cause et qu'il constitue un acquis définitif de l'archivistique.»
- 84 Le registre d'inventaire acquis par l'AGTF a été scanné et son cliché est disponible en ligne sur le site Web de «l'inventaire» de SOS Patrimoine en Péril à l'adresse suivante: "SOS Patrimoine En Péril - Base de données", n.d., <http://www.patrimoineenperil.mu/inventaire/item.php?itemId=128>
- 85 De son vrai nom Vadivelloo KADARASEN.
- 86 Voir une présentation de ses trouvailles dans: Dominique Bellier, "Extraits des années ougandaises du peintre 'optique' Julian Stanczak," *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, November 14, 2011).
- 87 Voir son interview et une brève notice biographique dans: "Vadivelloo Kadressen, un grand monsieur de la photographie," *Le Matinal* (Port Louis, February 21, 2007).
- 88 Des bagarres d'origine crapuleuse dégénérent en affrontements communautaristes à Port-Louis, entre Créoles et Musulmans. En janvier 1968, un régiment britannique basé en Malaisie (*King's Shropshire Light Infantry* - KSLI), fut appelé par le Gouverneur pour assurer la sécurité intérieure du pays, mis sous couvre-feu.
- 89 Deva D. Tirvengadam, "Le Mauritius Institute - une institution centenaire au service de la communauté," *Bulletin du Mauritius Institute*, no. 9 (1980): 1-15.
- 90 *Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute*.
- 91 Charles-Léon DOYEN (1816-1876), professeur au Collège Royal, avait entrepris un travail de recherche approfondi afin d'écrire une histoire de l'île Maurice. Mort prématurément, ses fiches furent utiles à Albert PITOT pour son histoire de l'île en cinq volumes; ces documents furent légués à la Société Royale des Arts et Sciences de l'île Maurice en 1952.
- 92 Shenaz Patel, "Interrogations - Patrimoine en péril," *Week-end* (Port Louis, April 23, 2006). Nous reproduisons cet article *in extenso* en Annexes p186.
- 93 "Livres disparus - Carnegie lance une enquête," *Week-end* (Port Louis, May 21, 2006);  
"Patrimoine littéraire malmené à la bibliothèque Carnegie," *Week-end* (Port Louis, June 25, 2006);  
"Précisions de Solange Jauffret," *Week-end* (Port Louis, July 9, 2006).
- 94 "Patrimoine littéraire malmené à la bibliothèque Carnegie."
- 95 Il s'agit de: Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Voyage à l'île de France, à l'île de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance, etc. Avec des observations nouvelles sur la nature et sur les hommes, par un officier du roi, 2 vols.* (Amsterdam: Merlin, 1773); Jacques-Raymond de Grenier, *Mémoires de la campagne de découvertes dans les mers des Indes, par Mr le chevalier Grenier,...* où il propose une route qui abrège de 800 lieues la traversée de l'Isle-de-France à la côte de Coromandel et en Chine (Brest: R. Malassis, 1772); Émile Trouette and Joseph Hubert, *île de la réunion. Papiers de Joseph Hubert* (Saint-Denis (Réunion): impr. de G. et G. Lahuppe, 1881).
- 96 Helen Morgan, "*Tropical Island Treasure: the Mauritius Collection*," *National Library of Australia News*, July 2007; "Formed Collection - Mauritius Collection | National Library of Australia".
- 97 Le catalogue de la NLA est accessible en ligne : <http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Advanced>
- 98 Son seul ouvrage répertorié est: Andre de Chapuiset Le Merle, *Précis d'histoire de l'île Maurice (XVe au XVIIIe siècle)* (Port-Louis, île Maurice: Nouv. Impr. Coopérative, 1950).
- 99 "E. M. Lawson & Co. - Book dealer - ILAB-LILA", n.d., [http://www.ilab.org/eng/booksellers/592-e\\_m\\_lawson\\_co.html](http://www.ilab.org/eng/booksellers/592-e_m_lawson_co.html)
- 100 La communauté des Mauriciens en Australie comprenait, en 2001, plus de 17,000 personnes.
- 101 Pamela de Saint Antoine, "Includes many titles about Mauritius: Rare book collection finds new home at New York University," *Week-end* (Port Louis, July 29, 2007).
- 102 "Bowman said he had considered trying to sell the collection - or parts of it - to institutions in Mauritius or elsewhere in the Indian Ocean. "But the logistics of doing that were very difficult," he said. "It was my fantasy to sell it back into the Indian Ocean, but the problems of doing so were so daunting."  
He cited managing a sale long-distance and shipping the items overseas. The 1,121 books bought by NYU, for example, filled 29 boxes. He also said that several of the oldest and most valuable books need special care, requiring them to be kept in special collections under temperature-controlled conditions."
- 103 Pamela de Saint Antoine, "Richard Lesage: A little piece of Mauritius at Harvard University," *Week-end* (Port Louis, April 19, 2009).
- 104 On apprend que Google, qui avait été pressenti pour la numérisation des fonds mauriciens, a récemment déclaré forfait.
- 105 Nous nous sentons, jusqu'à preuve du contraire, fondé à en utiliser ici les résultats puisqu'ils reflètent, sans les déformer d'aucune façon, la teneur intégrale et le déroulement de notre entrevue.
- 106 Cette direction est intérimaire (depuis 2006) puisqu'il n'est pas archiviste (cursus de bibliothéconomie, cursus de *Records Management* en auditeur libre), ne lui permettent pas de remplir les conditions stipulées dans le *National Archives Act 2000* - Part II, Section 4 :  
"The Department shall be administered by a Director of National Archives who shall be -  
(a) a public officer ; and  
(b) an experienced archivist possessing high academic qualifications in the field of archives."

- 107 M.W. Pascoe, La pollution de l'environnement et ses effets sur les documents d'archives: une étude RAMP, RAMP Studies (Paris: Unesco - General Information Programme and UNISIST, October 1988); R Teygeler, Preservation of Archives in Tropical Climates. An annotated bibliography (Paris/The Hague/Jakarta: International Council on Archives/National Archives of the Netherlands/National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2001), <http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/boeken/tropical.html>
- 108 Pamela de Saint Antoine, "Preserving Mauritian history: U.S. Library of Congress offers tips on saving historic library collections in Mauritius," *Week-end* (Port Louis, June 12, 2011).  
Cet article est paru dans *Week-end* en juin 2011, huit mois après la visite de Mme Claire DEKLE, en octobre 2010.
- 109 Dominique Bellier, "INTERVIEW - Pr. Hervé Cheradame, chimiste spécialiste des papiers anciens : « Il faut commencer par trouver un vrai bâtiment d'archives »,» *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, February 19, 2011).  
Cette visite a même donné lieu à une intervention du leader de l'opposition parlementaire mauricienne, M Paul BÉRENGER : "Affaire MedPoint: Bérenger invite Ramgoolam à suivre l'exemple indien," *Week-end* (Port Louis, February 27, 2011).  
Voici sa déclaration :  
«Paul Bérenger explique que, « depuis des années », il s'efforce de faire comprendre que les locaux « infestés de rats et de pigeons » qui abritent jusqu'ici les Archives dans la zone industrielle de Coromandel sont « inappropriés ». Un constat qui, dit-il, vient d'être confirmé par l'expert français, le Professeur Hervé Chéradame, chimiste spécialiste des papiers anciens et président du Centre de Conservation du Livre de Arles, France, pour qui les locaux actuels des Archives nationales « favorisent la destruction des documents ».
- 110 Le dépôt légal était autrefois dévolu aux Archives nationales ; depuis la loi de 1999, c'est la Bibliothèque nationale qui en est principalement chargée, un exemplaire revenant tout de même aux Archives nationales ; la création de la Bibliothèque nationale s'est accompagnée de la soustraction de tous les fonds du dépôt légal des Archives nationales.
- 111 Republic of Mauritius, The National Archives Act 2000, pt. II - 5 (a) et (c).
- 112 Ibid., pt. III - Public Records Appraisal Committee.
- 113 Republic of Mauritius, The National Archives Act 2000, pt. II - 5 (b), (e), (g) et (m).
- 114 Seule exception, implicite : les archives notariales dont les minutes sont versées aux Archives nationales après 60 ans, soit un délai de communication cumulé de 90 ans.
- 115 Nous revenons ci-dessous sur la nécessité, selon nous, de réviser cet aspect de la Loi.
- 116 En revanche, nous notons une certaine confusion dans la façon dont le Mauritius National Archives envisage le décompte des années avant communication des documents au public puisque le Deputy Director p.i évoque en notre présence « trente années à partir de la date de dépôt » ; or, c'est inexact et il faut comprendre « trente années à partir de la date d'émission du document ou de la clôture du dossier d'affaire par son administration émettrice ».
- 117 Voici le texte de la loi :  
“(2) The Director may refuse access to any member of the public to any public archives, which he considers -  
(a) may cause -  
(i) prejudice to any other member of the public; or  
(ii) social unrest in the country; or  
(b) it is not in the public interest to permit.”
- 118 Republic of Mauritius, The National Archives Act 2000, pt. II - 5 (f).  
“The Director shall -  
(f) arrange the archives according to established principles of archival administration and prepare all the reference instruments.”
- 119 Il s'agit d'une collection de pièces dignes d'intérêt (actes, sceaux, timbres) isolées des fonds par Auguste TOUSSAINT en un « Musée des Archives ».
- 120 Republic of Mauritius, The National Archives Act 2000, pt. II - 7 (1) (a), (b), (c), (e), (g).
- 121 Ibid., pt. II - 5 (e).
- 122 Ibid., pt. II - 12.
- 123 Sans plus de précision car nous n'avons pas reçu des Archives nationales, malgré nos demandes réitérées, la liste du personnel ni de ses qualifications.
- 124 Office of the Director of Audit of the Republic of Mauritius, *Report of the Director of Audit for the year ended 30 June 2001 - Volume 1*: Financial Audit - Account of Ministries and other Offices - Ministry of Arts & Culture - 11.4 National Archives, Audit National (Port Louis: National Audit Office, 2001).
- 125 Teygeler, *Preservation of Archives in Tropical Climates. An annotated bibliography*, pp.18-19.  
“Experience shows that lamination can no longer be considered a viable preservation option for papers of enduring value (Department of Archives and History, 1997).”
- 126 Ce travail fut réalisé en grande partie mais, semble-t-il, jamais achevé, ni payé ; on a complètement perdu trace à Maurice de ces microfilms ; un entretien avec M Gérard MAUJEAN nous apprend qu'ils furent malencontreusement anéantis par un planton lors du déménagement de la société ONE.
- 127 *L'Express* Dimanche (Port Louis, August 11, 1996).
- 128 Office of the Director of Audit of the Republic of Mauritius, *Report of the Director of Audit for the year ended 30 June 2001 - Volume 1* : Financial Audit - Account of Ministries and other Offices - Ministry of Arts & Culture - 11.4 National Archive: ‘The Microfilming Laboratory was in a deplorable state - the two air conditioners were out of order since long and several items of equipment were either obsolete or not in use.’
- 129 “Les documents des Archives préservés sur ordinateur,” *L'Express* (Port Louis, May 30, 2002); “Les archives se modernisent,” *L'Express* (Port Louis, June 24, 2002); “Cartes géographiques numérisées,” *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, July 4, 2002).
- 130 Dominique Bellier, “ÉTAT CIVIL EN PERDITION: Généalogiste passionné cherche petite main pour sauver les archives,” *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, July 11, 2008).
- 131 Cercle de Généalogie Maurice - Rodrigues, “Le CGMR et les Archives de Maurice,” CGMR Info, June 2011. L'article ne précise pas les spécifications techniques de cette numérisation. Or, une évaluation, par un expert français, des clichés

- pris par cette association dans un lieu de conservation du pays indique que 28% de ses numérisations sont floues, donc inutilisables.
- 132 Un portail remarquable pour son exhaustivité: "La numérisation des fonds patrimoniaux", n.d., <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/mrt/numerisation/index.html>
- 133 "EAD: Encoded Archival Description Version 2002 Official Site (EAD Official Site, Library of Congress)", n.d., <http://www.loc.gov/ead/>;  
"Archives de France | Informatisation de la description: la DTD EAD (Encoded Archival Description)", n.d., <http://www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/gerer/classement/normes-outils/ead/>
- 134 "ICA-Atom: Open Source Archival Description Software", n.d., <http://ica-atom.org/>.
- 135 National Audit Office, Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Republic of Mauritius for the Year Ended 31 December 2010, Audit National (Port Louis: National Audit Office, 2011).  
Nous reproduisons la partie de ce rapport concernant les Archives nationales en *Annexes* p182.
- 136 Citons les articles qui nous paraissent les plus éclairants:  
Myette Ahchoon, *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, February 21, 1997);  
Nathalie Baissac Daruty, "Un avenir incertain pour nos Archives Nationales," *L'Express* (Port Louis, April 20, 1996);  
Raj Boodhoo, "Archives: une lueur d'espoir ou la perte des Mémoires?," *L'Express* (Port Louis, January 2, 2001), sec. Tribune débat et opinion.
- 137 Office of the Director of Audit of the Republic of Mauritius, Report of the Director of Audit for the year ended 30 June 2001 - Volume 1: Financial Audit - Account of Ministries and other Offices - Ministry of Arts & Culture - 11.4 National Archives. Nous reproduisons la partie concernant les Archives nationales de ce rapport d'audit en *Annexes* p176.
- 138 Notamment la préservation du patrimoine, avec la reproduction photographique d'un document attaqué par les insectes :  
*"Documents were not properly preserved and there was delay in their restoration. [...] In the context of the Cultural Exchange Program with the People's Republic of China, two experts were delegated from China National Library from 3 February to 1 May 2001, to train officers of the NA in the restoration of archival documents. At the time the project was initiated, some 30,000 records needed restoration. Given that restoration is a slow process, it will take time to restore all documents."*
- 139 "Further, according to set norms, the restored documents must be kept in conditions where the temperature is 20o C and humidity 50-60 per cent. It appears that these conditions do not prevail at the building housing the NA."
- 140 "The Archives Act No. 71 of 1952 and its regulations were repealed and replaced in August 1999, by the National Archives Act No.22 of 1999. Some two years after the proclamation of the Act on 1 February 2000, regulations have not been made. Fees were still being collected in accordance with Government Notice No. 87 of 1990, which was made under the Archives Act of 1952.  
*A Records Centre and a Film Archives Section, as prescribed in the National Archives Act 1999, have not yet been set up. The Public Records Appraisal Committee was not yet operational. The Archives Advisory Council met for the first time in February 2002."*
- 141 Toussaint, *L'administration Française de L'île Maurice et ses Archives, 1721-1810*, pp. 8-9.
- 142 Lindsey Collen to Motee Ramdass, "Deplorable Lack of Care for History of the People in the Archives," Lettre ouverte, January 3, 2002. Nous citons ce courrier en *Annexes* p. 178.
- 143 "Selon Lalit: les Archives victimes de 'criminal negligence'," *Week-end* (Port Louis, January 20, 2002); Thierry Chateau, "Les documents du 18e s. en danger," *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, January 8, 2002).
- 144 G Suneechur, "Archives: Functions of national Repositories and Uses of archival Records," *L'Express* (Port Louis, June 25, 1986).
- 145 Nazim Esoof, "Archives dépoussiérées," *L'Express* (Port Louis, April 16, 2002); "Du neuf aux Archives," *L'Express* (Port Louis, April 16, 2002); "Les archives se modernisent."
- 146 Navichandra Ramgoolam, "Speech by Dr The Honourable Navichandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister," in *National Library - Annual Report 1999-2000* (présenté à the Opening ceremony of the National Library, Port Louis: National Library (Republic of Mauritius), 1999), 50-41.  
*"The procedures for the setting up of a Culture House which will also accommodate the National Library are on the way. The land acquisition procedures are expected to be finalized by January 2000 and construction will start soon after. This, Ladies and Gentlemen, clearly shows the commitment that we attach to this prestigious project."*
- 147 "PATRIMOINE Incessamment: Archives Nationales: transfert de Coromandel à Chebel," *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, January 7, 2010).
- 148 Mme RAMNAUTH a fait des études de Géographie puis une Maîtrise de Bibliothéconomie ; a reçu une formation à la Bibliothèque nationale ; elle dispense maintenant des cours à l'UoM.
- 149 Mme RAMNAUTH évoque notamment, aux tout-débuts de son mandat :
- le sans-gêne de certains lecteurs de Curepipe, qui « se servaient » dans les réserves et ne tenaient aucun compte du règlement intérieur ;
  - les vols commis par le personnel politique municipal (voir ci-dessus) ou par les employés de la bibliothèque ;
  - le manque de crédits.
- 150 Voici les chiffres de fréquentation (recrutement sociologique très varié, surtout constitué de scolaires et d'étudiants) de la bibliothèque :
- 5,000 abonnés actifs,
  - 3,000 abonnés « dormants »,
  - 300 lecteurs par jour pour une salle de lecture de 90 places.
- 151 Par exemple sur « Malcolm de Chazal », « L'Abolition de l'esclavage » ou à l'occasion du lancement d'un livre.
- 152 "Amlib Library Management Solutions [OCLC - Amlib]", n.d., <http://www.amlib.net/>
- 153 Municipal Council of Curepipe, Curepipe Carnegie Library Act, 1982; Municipal Council of Curepipe, Curepipe Carnegie Library Regulations 1997, 1998.

- 154 Voir l'historique de leur constitution ci-dessus. Nous avons pu, pour notre part, consulter quelques menus fonds photographiques intéressants : albums privés (famille Gujadhur), clichés du club hippique, Curepipe d'autrefois (bazar, Collège Royal), etc.
- 155 Malgré son désir constant de se perfectionner en conservation des documents anciens : depuis 2009, elle a suivi, à ses propres frais, trois séminaires de formation en Italie, en Turquie et au Japon.
- 156 Notamment la collection complète et reliée de l'édition de *l'Histoire des Indes* de l'Abbé RAYNAL.
- 157 Notamment le récolement informatique des fonds anciens, qui réservera probablement de mauvaises surprises et laissera apparaître un certain nombre de manques.
- 158 Il nous a notamment confié la série complète des rapports annuels de son établissement, la législation mauricienne applicable aux bibliothèques et aux archives, des textes rétrospectifs ou d'analyse sur la Bibliothèque nationale. Nous considérons les rapports annuels comme des supports d'information pertinents à notre enquête et les utilisons donc dans le présent compte-rendu.
- 159 "Rapport du Comité adhoc (août 1993)," *Week-end* (Port-Louis, February 6, 1994).
- 160 L'ouverture de la Bibliothèque nationale sera reportée d'un trimestre, notamment à cause du refus des Archives nationales de transférer leur fonds de *Mauritiana* : "Ouverture de la Bibliothèque Nationale fin septembre," *L'Express* Dimanche (Port Louis, August 15, 1999); "Refus des Archives de transférer les documents," *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, October 12, 1999).
- 161 Organisation de festivals du livre à Maurice et à Rodrigues.
- 162 University of Mauritius - Faculty of Social Studies & Humanities - Department of Social Studies, "Diploma in Library and Information Science (P/T) - SH220", January 2010.
- 163 "Mercredi dernier: Inauguration du National Library; Présentation prochaine d'un Council of Professional Librarians Bill," *Impact News* (Port Louis, December 12, 1999); "About LIA «LIA - Library & Information Association' Blog (Republic of Mauritius)", n.d., <http://liamofmauritius.wordpress.com/about/>
- 164 Harrison, Mauritius - Libraries, Documentation and Archives Services.
- 165 National Library (Republic of Mauritius), Annual Report: 1999-2000.
- 166 Munavvar Namdarkhan, "La première bibliographie nationale de Maurice," *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, August 7, 2002).
- 167 *National Library of the Republic of Mauritius, Annual Report: 2004-2005, Annual Report* (Port-Louis: National Library (Republic of Mauritius), 2005).
- 168 "Bibliothèque Nationale: Appel ministériel au don de documents familiaux," *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, April 8, 1999).
- 169 "Donation Ceremony," *Week-end* (Port Louis, February 26, 2000).
- 170 *L'Express* (Port Louis, December 7, 1999).
- 171 "BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE: Ces livres que l'on asphyxie."
- 172 Sharon Leung, "Don de quelques 500 ouvrages appartenant au Dr Alfred Orian," *Le Mauricien* (Port Louis, January 11, 2007); *National Library of the Republic of Mauritius, Annual Report: 2007-2008, Annual Report* (Port-Louis: National Library (Republic of Mauritius), 2008).
- 173 "Projet d'un répertoire des bibliothèques," *L'Express* (Port Louis, May 22, 2000).  
Ce catalogue regroupait les établissements suivants : Bibliothèques municipales, Bibliothèques des Conseils de Districts, MSIRI, EPZDA (*Export Processing Zone Development Authority*), Media et les centres de documentation suivants : Ministères, Police, UoM, Collège des Ondes, MIE.
- 174 *National Library of the Republic of Mauritius, Annual Report: 2001-2002, Annual Report* (Port-Louis: National Library (Republic of Mauritius), 2002).
- 175 "SirsiDyNix", n.d., <http://www.sirsidyNix.com/>
- 176 Investissement initial : 2 Millions de Rs.
- 177 Frais de maintenance annuels : 410,000 Rs. Environ.
- 178 Chitra Seewooruttum, "La National Library certifiée ISO9001:2000," *Le Matinal* (Port Louis, February 23, 2005).
- 179 Expérience vécue en avril 2010 avec le journal *Le Cernéen* de 1834.
- 180 "Patrimoine documentaire. Melody Chen: La nécessité de mesures de conservation," *Week-end* (Port Louis, July 26, 2009).
- 181 Voir le tableau récapitulatif en *Annexes* sur CD.
- 182 Groëme-Harmon, "Yves Chan Kam Lon, Directeur de la Bibliothèque Nationale: «Je militerai pour que nous ayons un bâtiment.»"
- 183 Republic of Mauritius, The National Library Act 1996, Revised Laws of Mauritius, 1999.
- 184 Sauf pour les périodiques transférés depuis les Archives nationales, qui semblent en être partis en bon état et se trouvent maintenant dans un état de conservation critique.  
Voir : Aline Groëme-Harmon and Naden Chetty, "QUESTIONS A ABDOOL CADER KALLA, CHERCHEUR «Les conditions aux Archives m'écœurent»,»" *L'Express* (Port Louis, April 17, 2009).
- 185 Toussaint, Report of the Technical Committee on Libraries.
- 186 Sidney W Hockey, Development of Library Services in Mauritius: a Report Submitted to the Ministry of Education (Port Louis, January 1966), <http://liamofmauritius.files.wordpress.com/2008/12/hockey-rep-on-libs-in-mauritius-1966.pdf>; Ivor Goodacre, Confidential Report (London: British Council, 1973); Arthur Bentley, Confidential Report (London: British Council, 1977); Harrison, Mauritius - Libraries, Documentation and Archives Services.
- 187 Synthèse dans: Harrison, Mauritius - Libraries, Documentation and Archives Services.
- 188 Voici les notices saisies pour un ouvrage *identique* se trouvant en deux lieux de conservation distincts :
- #1 .....WZ 969.82  
..... Histoire de Maurice  
..... Hitié, Evenor  
1 copy available at Mahatma Gandhi Institute in MAURIT
- #2 .....WZ 969.8202  
..... Histoire de Maurice (ancienne île de France)  
..... Hitié, Evenor

1 copy available at Mahatma Gandhi Institute in MAURIT

#3 .....969.82 HIT 1897  
 .....Histoire de Maurice - (Ancienne île De France) Tome Premier  
 .....Hitie, Evenor

1 copy available at Simone de Beauvoir Public Library in STACKS

189 Source : Rapports annuels de la Bibliothèque nationale.

190 Ce sont :

- 1 : plaintes en dommages et intérêts dépassant 500,000 Rs.
- 2 : Divorces.
- 3 : Appels criminels des cours de 1<sup>e</sup> et 2<sup>e</sup> instance.
- 4 : Appels au civil.
- 5A : Motions en Cour et actes de procédure.
- 5C : Appels contre les décisions du juge en chambre (concernent la fiscalité, les corps para-étatiques, etc.)
- 5E : Référés par le juge en chambre, pétitions électorales.
- 6A : Appels criminels contre les jugements de la Cour Suprême.
- 6B : Appels contre les décisions de la Cour civile de la Cour Suprême.

191 Ensemble de textes réglant la vie des esclaves noirs dans les îles françaises sous l'Ancien-Régime. Il existe deux versions du *Code noir* : la première version a été élaborée par le ministre Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1616-1683) et fut promulguée en mars 1685 par Louis XIV ; la seconde version fut promulguée par Louis XV au mois de mars 1724.

192 Voir nos clichés ci-dessous.

193 Voir nos clichés ci-dessous.

194 Arlette Farge, *La Vie fragile* : Violence, pouvoirs et solidarités à Paris au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Points Histoire (Paris: Le Seuil - Points, 2007).

195 Arlette Farge, *Le Bracelet de parchemin* : L'Écrit sur soi, XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Le rayon des curiosités (Bayard Centurion, 2003).

196 Ainsi celle pour le 80<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du journal *La Vie Catholique*.

197 Rappelons qu'en France, par exemple, les archives médicales sont protégées par un délai de communication de 120 ans à dater de la naissance ou 25 ans à dater de la mort de la personne concernée, si ce délai est inférieur (loi du 15 juillet 2008).

198 Voir nos clichés ci-dessous.

199 Un historique succinct dans: Republic of Mauritius - Ministry of Health, "Brown-Séguard Hospital Centenary (1879-1979)" (Brown-Séguard Hospital, December 11, 1979).

200 Nous adjoignons aux résultats de cette visite la déposition de Mme Saloni DEERPALSINGH, ancienne Directrice du MGI, devant la *Truth and Justice Commission*, le 17/06/2011.

201 Ces archives provenaient des bureaux de l'Immigration et furent ensuite transférées à la Sécurité Sociale où elles servaient de référence administrative.

202 Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and Ministère des Arts et de la Culture, Proposition d'inscription d'Aapravasi Ghat sur la liste du patrimoine mondial (Port Louis, February 2005).

203 Selon un accord dont nous n'avons trouvé nulle trace écrite.

204 Dont nous n'avons pu obtenir communication et qui, contrairement aux déclarations de Mme DEERPALSINGH et de M GO-VINDEN, diffère fortement du *National Archive Act* tel qu'il est appliqué aux Archives nationales.

205 Éric Chan Wah Hak, "Auditions de la Commission concernant les archives d'immigration au MGI," interview by Vijaya Teelock et al., June 17, 2011.

206 Thierry Laurent, "Le Mahatma Gandhi Institute ouvrira ses archives à la Commission Justice et Vérité," *L'Express* (Port Louis, June 23, 2011).

207 Saloni Deerpalsigh, "Auditions de la Commission concernant les archives d'immigration au MGI," interview by Vijaya Teelock et al., June 17, 2011.

Il s'agit d'informations d'identité (numéro d'immigrant, nom, prénom, origine, caste), généalogiques (mariage, enfants), judiciaires (peines encourues) ; des liens sont ménagés vers d'autres bases de données de personnes : *Nelson Mandela Centre for African History*, Aapravasi Ghat, *Central Statistical Office*.

208 Liste des projets: "Memory of the World Projects - Communication and Information Sector's Photobank", n.d., <http://www.unesco-ci.org/photos/showgallery.php/cat/557>

209 Que nous n'avons pu constater *de visu*, M GOVINDEN n'ayant pas donné suite à notre demande de visite du dépôt. Cet état de conservation prête cependant à controverse : quelques chercheurs estiment que l'encre des registres a pâli avec le temps, sans doute du fait des fumigations avec des agents chimiques trop corrosifs.

210 Voir ci-dessous.

211 "Musée de la photographie. Réouverture du musée: le patrimoine photographique rendu accessible," *Week-end* (Port Louis, March 8, 2009);

"Vendredi après-midi: Nouvel accident sur le site de Garden Tower," *Week-end* (Port Louis, February 10, 2008).

212 Tristan Bréville to Stéphane Sinclair, "Re: Remerciements", March 17, 2011.

213 "Joyeux Anniversaire : Le Musée de la Photo légitimé pour ses 40 ans," *Week-end* (Port Louis, December 17, 2006).

214 Selon le calcul suivant : quatre personnes travaillent à temps plein sur le musée (le couple BRÉVILLE et leurs deux enfants), ce qui devrait donner, au minimum, lieu à un salaire mensuel global de 100,000 Rs. Bréville to Sinclair, "Re: Remerciements."

215 "RS. 2 M pour le musée de la photographie : 'Un pan du patrimoine mauricien préservé'," *Week-end* (Port Louis, May 24, 2009).

216 Voir ci-dessous.

217 Statuts de l'ICOM, adoptés lors de la 21<sup>e</sup> Conférence générale à Vienne (Autriche) en 2007.

218 La notion même d'artiste ne donne lieu à aucun effort d'approfondissement, malgré l'abondante littérature sur la question ; une première approche : Nathalie Heinich, Être artiste, 50 Questions (Klincksieck, 2005).

219 "RS 2 M pour le musée de la photographie : 'Un pan du patrimoine mauricien préservé'." Tristan Bréville évoque parmi ses projets, Le Répertoire Culturel Mauricien, sur support DVD. Un projet qui sera prêt d'ici décembre 2009, au coût estimé de RS 20M. Si l'État et le secteur privé contribuent à ce projet, le patrimoine culturel sera enrichi.

- 220 "Répertoire Culturel Mauricien: Tristan Bréville: 'un cadeau à mon pays'," *Week-end* (Port Louis, May 31, 2009).
- 221 *Land Administration Valuation and Integrated Mauritius Services*. Cadastre informatisé de l'île Maurice.
- 222 Au coup par coup pour les particuliers, annuelle et forfaitaire pour les études juridiques et leur personnel.
- 223 Mise au point dans: Peghini, "Les impasses du multiculturalisme. Politiques, industries et tourisimes culturels à l'île Maurice," 299, sq.
- 224 "National Budget", n.d., <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/MOFSite/menuitem.5b1d751c6156d7f4e0aad110a7b521ca/>
- 225 Certains sont des administrations étatiques dépendant directement d'un Ministère (par exemple les Archives nationales, qui dépendent du Ministère de la Culture puis du Ministère de l'Éducation, de la Culture et des Ressources humaines) donc assujettis à des comptes détaillés tant pour leurs dépenses d'investissement (*capital*) que pour leurs coûts de fonctionnement (*recurrent* = dépenses de personnel + dépenses de fonctionnement). D'autres sont des organismes parapublics (*parastatal bodies*) dont le financement par l'État prend la forme de dotations (*Grants, Subsidies and Contributions*) : par exemple, la Bibliothèque nationale. Il convient, pour avoir plus de détail, de rechercher l'information dans les documents internes à ces organismes, leurs rapports annuels par exemple.
- 226 Par exemple, les Archives nationales sont maintenant intégrées au *HRKAD Fund (Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund)* placé sous l'égide du Ministère de l'Éducation. Or, faute d'avoir obtenu des Archives nationales un budget détaillé, nous sommes dans l'incapacité d'en savoir plus pour 2010 et 2011.
- 227 Ainsi, s'agissant du budget de la Culture (notre point de comparaison essentiel), qui n'est nullement réductible :
- au budget du Ministère de la Culture, qui s'occupe également des cultes ;
  - au budget du Ministère de l'Éducation, de la Culture et des Ressources humaines, de plus grande ampleur.
  - Au budget de la fonction « *Recreational, cultural & religious services* », qui résulte de l'agrégat de postes variés appartenant à plusieurs ministères : par exemple, le Ministère de l'Éducation et celui des Sports.
- 228 Par exemple, les détails pour le Ministère de la Culture et les Archives nationales pour 2004-2005.
- 229 Entre 2002 et 2006, seules années pour lesquelles nous disposons de séries continues.
- 230 Republic of Mauritius, *The National Library Act 1996*.
- 231 Republic of Mauritius, *The National Archives Act 2000*.
- 232 Peghini, "Les impasses du multiculturalisme. Politiques, industries et tourisimes culturels à l'île Maurice," 303-304.
- 233 Évaluation extraite du Budget de Maurice en l'absence de réponse à nos questions de la part des Archives nationales.
- 234 Valeurs extraites de ses rapports annuels.
- 235 Par exemple : les archives d'arrivée des travailleurs engagés indiens et africains au MGI.
- 236 Yvan Lagesse, *Comment vivre à l'île Maurice en 25 leçons* (Cassis, île Maurice: Editions I.P.C., 1981).
- 237 Avec pour séquence invariable :
1. L'arrivée de l'expert qui réside dans l'un des hôtels du bord de mer puis est cordialement reçu dans la « meilleure société ».
  2. L'expert constate l'étendue des dégâts et fait preuve de courtoisie pour ne pas froisser ses hôtes. Il communique néanmoins ses premières impressions (sombres) et recommandations (alarmistes) au cours d'interviews ménagées dans la presse locale.
  3. L'affliction des Mauriciens devant les tristes révélations (déjà connues au demeurant) de l'expert, par l'entremise de leur presse ravie de l'aubaine de ce « marronnier ».
  4. Les formations dispensées par l'expert à la plus grande part des responsables de conservation du pays - pour peu qu'il reste plus de cinq jours - et qui occasionnent une certaine désorganisation des services concernés.
  5. Le départ de l'expert.
  6. L'oubli général, brièvement interrompu par la réception du rapport dudit expert, après quelques semaines ou quelques mois (il a d'autres engagements). Le retour à la routine, jusqu'au prochain voyage d'expert.
- 238 Ce que déclarait le Pr Hervé CHERADAME dans une interview récente : Bellier, "INTERVIEW - Pr Hervé Cheradame, chimiste spécialiste des papiers anciens : « Il faut commencer par trouver un vrai bâtiment d'archives »."
- «Pour faire une évaluation complète et sérieuse, il aurait fallu que je passe bien plus que trois jours sur place, disons trois semaines.»
- 239 Les Archives nationales ou le Ministère des Arts et de la Culture semblent avoir perdu trace de la *totalité* des microfilms réalisés avec la collaboration d'équipes étrangères.
- 240 Le Centre Inter-régional de Conservation du Livre d'Arles (France) est une entreprise privée spécialisée dans la restauration et la conservation des documents anciens ; elle a pour clients des institutions d'État, des entreprises et des particuliers.
- 241 Au contraire de ce qui se passe en France, par exemple, où les Archives départementales sont l'un des services les plus prisés du public local, avec des chiffres de fréquentation enviables, ce qui dénote une grande vivacité de l'histoire locale ou des familles. Voir l'excellente enquête menée aux Archives départementales par Lucien MIRONER : Lucien Mironer, ed., "Les publics des Archives départementales et communales. Profil et pratiques. Présentation de l'enquête et analyse des résultats," *Développement culturel* 137 (October 2001): 15; Lucien Mironer, "Les publics des Archives départementales et communales. Profil et pratiques. Présentation de l'enquête et analyse des résultats - Annexes": Florilège des entretiens de l'enquête qualitative," *Direction de l'administration générale / Département des études et de la prospective* (2003): 161; Lucien Mironer, "Les publics des Archives départementales et communales. Profil et pratiques. Présentation de l'enquête et analyse des résultats - Annexes": Tableaux détaillés des résultats et relevé des réponses aux questions ouvertes de l'enquête par sondage," *Direction de l'administration générale / Département des études et de la prospective* (2003): 143.
- 242 Morrad Benxayer, *L'action éducative et culturelle des archives; Enquête sur les services éducatifs*, Enquête (Direction des archives de France / Département des publics, 2004); Caroline Piketty, "Concevoir les archives comme porteuses de valeurs citoyennes" (présenté à *the Concevoir les archives comme porteuses de valeurs citoyennes*, IUFM de Paris-Molitor, CHAN: Pôle National de Ressources Patrimoine-Archives, 2005), 22-24.
- 243 Il a fallu une décision en Cour pour que les Archives nationales acceptent de livrer leurs fonds imprimés issus du dépôt légal.
- 244 Voir la *Bibliographie* p194 et suivantes, dont la plupart des items figurent sur Internet.
- 245 Ce sont, inscrits au Budget 2010-2011 :
- *African World Heritage Fund*,

- Association Internationale des Archives Francophones,
  - Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Record Managers,
  - Convention for Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO),
  - International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM),
  - International Council of Museums (ICOM),
  - International Council on Archives,
  - International Fund for Cultural Diversity (UNESCO),
  - World Heritage Fund.
- 246 Karoly Kecskemeti, "Archives, développement et souveraineté nationale," in *Techniques modernes d'administration des archives et de gestion des documents: recueil de textes; une étude RAMP*, RAMP Studies (Paris: Unesco, 1985), <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ramp/html/r8532f/r8532f07.htm#Archives.%20d%C3%A9veloppement%20et%20souverainet%C3%A9%20nationale>
- 247 Saliou Mbaye, "Les archives en Afrique de l'Ouest: un patrimoine en mutation," in *Conférences de l'École des chartes*, vol. 6 (Paris: École nationale des chartes, 2004), <http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/document10.html>
- 248 Robert-Henri Bautier, "Le rôle des archives: La mission des archives et les tâches des archivistes," in *Techniques modernes d'administration des archives et de gestion des documents: recueil de textes; une étude RAMP* (Paris: Unesco - General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1985); Duchein, "Le respect des fonds en archivistique. Principes théoriques et problèmes pratiques."
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- 254 Jennie Ferris, Sarah Burns, and Deena Liatsopoulos, "The problems and barriers of records and information management in Africa," in Program for the 8th Annual EGSS Conference (présenté à the Education for a Diverse World: Addressing Equity & Human Rights, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2009), 26.
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- 256 "Principaux éléments de la bonne gouvernance", n.d., [http://www.oecd.org/document/48/0,3746,fr\\_2649\\_33735\\_1814576\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/48/0,3746,fr_2649_33735_1814576_1_1_1_1,00.html)
- 257 Dagmar Parer, *Archival Legislation for Commonwealth Countries* (London: Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers, 2000), pp.1, sq.
- 258 "Blue Ribbon Campaign", n.d., <https://w2.eff.org/br/>
- 259 États-Unis : *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA, 1996) ; Afrique du Sud : *National Archives of South Africa Act* (1996) ; Grande-Bretagne : *Freedom of Information Act* (2000) ; France : loi du 17 juillet 1978 (qui crée la CADA, Commission d'Accès aux Documents Administratifs) et loi sur les Archives du 15 juillet 2008.
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- 268 "RAMP Studies", n.d., [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=4984&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4984&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)
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- 273 "About UNESCO Archives Portal", n.d., [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=5761&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5761&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)
- 274 "Mauritius", n.d., <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MAURITIUSEXTN/0,,menuPK:381980-pagePK:141159-piPK:141110-theSitePK:381974,00.html>

- Voir également le projet conjoint de la Banque mondiale avec Maurice, accessible sur ce site.
- 275 Africa Region - Southern Africa Country Department, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: Country Partnership Strategy for the Republic of Mauritius (Washington: The World Bank, October 12, 2006).
- 276 “Archives - Evidence Based Governance in the Electronic Age”, n.d., <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/EXTARCHIVES/0,,contentMDK:20035501-menuPK:64319268-pagePK:36726-piPK:437378-theSitePK:29506,00.html>
- 277 Nous ne sommes, en l'occurrence, assuré d'aucune des conditions préalables et ce délai est donc donné à titre indicatif :
- la construction de la *Culture House* est planifiée au Budget de l'État depuis 1999, de manière purement théorique ;
  - le financement et le terrain du projet ne sont pas encore acquis;
  - on ignore si les Archives nationale et la Bibliothèque nationale partageraient volontiers le même bâtiment : voir la déclaration du Directeur de la Bibliothèque nationale.
- 278 Bellier, “INTERVIEW - Pr Hervé Cheradame, chimiste spécialiste des papiers anciens: «Il faut commencer par trouver un vrai bâtiment d'archives».”
- 279 Republic of Mauritius - Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment - Budget Strategy and Management Directorate, “2010 Manual for Program-Based Budgeting (PBB)”, August 22, 2009.
- 280 Téléchargeable sur : <http://www.ganttproject.biz/>  
Nous mettrons à libre disposition tous les fichiers de gestion de projet réalisés sur GanttProject dans la base de données de référence.
- 281 Voir son planning prévisionnel, ci-dessous.
- 282 Voir ci-dessous.
- 283 Par exemple le changement à la tête d'une administration de conservation.
- 284 Toussaint, *Bibliography of Mauritius (1502-1954), Covering the Printed Record, Manuscripts, Archivalia and Cartographic Material*. Un tel relevé est de réalisation assez complexe :
- pour les archives publiques des 19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> s. en raison de leur versement déficient
  - et pour les fonds privés, souvent dispersés au gré des successions.
- 285 Voici la définition du terme par MILLER en 2000 :
- To be interoperable, one should actively be engaged in the ongoing process of ensuring that the systems, procedures and culture of an organization are managed in such a way as to maximize opportunities for exchange and re-use of information, whether internally or externally.*
- 286 Selon Eric Ketelaar, *Législation et réglementation en matière d'archives et de gestion des documents* : une étude RAMP accompagnée de principes directeurs, RAMP Studies (Paris: Unesco - General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1985), pp.15, sq. l'auteur détaille les mesures de contrôle des archives privées relevées dans les législations nationales.
- 287 Sauf pour la période contemporaine, il est peu probable que les accessions nouvelles soient très abondantes, ce qui justifie le recours à ces inventaires souvent anciens.
- 288 Maurice est signataire depuis le 27/02/1978 de la convention de l'UNESCO (1970) en matière de trafic illicite des biens culturels.  
Unesco, Convention concernant les mesures à prendre pour interdire et empêcher l'importation, l'exportation et le transfert de propriété illicites des biens culturels 1970, Actes de la Conférence générale, 1970.
- 289 Voir ci-dessus.
- 290 Selon les formats BibTex, MODS, etc. ou directement, comme cela se fait avec le logiciel Zotero ([www.zotero.org](http://www.zotero.org)).
- 291 La plupart des ouvrages des 18<sup>e</sup> et 19<sup>e</sup> s. évoquant Maurice sont accessibles sous forme numérisée. Voir la Bibliothèque Numérique Mauricienne : [www.indicos.org](http://www.indicos.org).
- 292 Par exemple aux Archives nationales de France, au CAOM, à la British Library ou dans la réserve généalogique des Mormons.
- 293 Par exemple au CAOM avec les actes d'état-civil de la période française qui seront mis en ligne au premier semestre 2012. Ou avec les documents généalogiques numérisés et détenus par des particuliers.
- 294 Les chiffres du tableau indiquent le degré de préférence, par ordre décroissant.
- 295 La plupart des formats d'e-books sont librement convertibles au format PDF avec texte indexé.
- 296 En mode image seulement, donc pas de recherche en texte libre possible. Exemple : certains textes sur Gallica.
- 297 Par exemple les périodiques australiens indexés par la NLA ; “Newspaper Home”, n.d., <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>
- 298 Certains textes sur Gallica ou sur la bibliothèque numérique de l'*Anti Slavery Society* (“Anti-Slavery - Resources”, n.d., <http://www.antislavery.org/english/resources/default.aspx>).
- 299 De préférence das un format intégrable directement dans un logiciel de gestion bibliographique, par exemple Zotero : [www.zotero.org](http://www.zotero.org)
- 300 *Optical Character Recognition* = Reconnaissance Optique de Caractères.
- 301 *Local* : « Salle de stockage des archives ».
- 302 *Épi* : « Ensemble de travées de rayonnage juxtaposées ».
- 303 *Travée* : « Ensemble de tablettes superposées comprises entre deux montants verticaux ».
- 304 *Tablette* : « Étagère sur laquelle on pose les boîtes d'archives »
- 305 *Séquence homogène* : « Ensemble d'articles cotés à la suite dans une même sous-série et dont la présentation matérielle, l'état de conservation et l'intitulé général sont identiques ».  
République française - Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Instruction pour le récolement des fonds dans les services d'archives des collectivités territoriales, 1997.
- 306 Plaquette de carton qu'on interpose dans le rayonnage à l'emplacement d'un livre emprunté.
- 307 “Open Planets Foundation | A community hub for digital preservation”, n.d., <http://www.openplanetsfoundation.org/>
- 308 Voir le planning prévisionnel ci-dessous.
- 309 Voir une bibliographie succincte sur la question
- 310 Ce qui a donné lieu à de vifs débats dans les années 1990-2000, en prévision du passage de relais entre technologies concurrentes, du microfilm à la numérisation : Stephen Chapman, Paul Conway, and Anne R. Kenney, “Digital Imaging and Preservation Microfilm: The Future of the Hybrid Approach for the Preservation of Brittle Books”, 1999.

311 Donald C Force, General Study 01 - *Past and Present Digital Preservation Projects Devoted to the Long-term Preservation of Digital Records and Digital Information*, Team Canada (Vancouver: InterPARES 3 Project, January 2009).

312 Par exemple :

- En France, un site très complet au Ministère de la Culture : “Numérisation du patrimoine culturel: informations techniques”, n.d., [http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/mrt/numerisation/fr/f\\_04.htm](http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/mrt/numerisation/fr/f_04.htm)
- Au Royaume-Uni, une association de professionnels, *Digital Preservation Coalition* : “Getting Started in Digital Preservation - all slides now available | Digital Preservation Coalition”, n.d., <http://www.dpconline.org/newsroom/latest-news/702-getting-started-all-slides-now-available>

313 Par exemple :

- le CGMR (Centre Généalogique Maurice-Rodrigues) et ses sites : “Cercle de Généalogie Maurice-Rodrigues (CGMR)”, n.d., <http://www.cgmgenealogie.org/>
- Henri MAUREL : “PAGE île MAURICE 2”, n.d., <http://henri.maurel.pagesperso-orange.fr/ilemau.htm>

314 Sur lequel nous n'avons malheureusement pu obtenir d'informations et qui porte principalement sur les documents administratifs « vivants » (*Records Management*).

315 Ce qui est, pour l'instant, le fait d'accords ponctuels ou même de passe-droits accordés par des administrateurs sans pouvoir hiérarchique direct sur les services d'archives, sans aucune condition d'exercice ni de résultats. Voir ainsi : Cercle de Généalogie Maurice - Rodrigues, “Le CGMR et les Archives de Maurice.”

316 Voir ci-dessus.

317 Voir ci-dessus.

318 Voir le planning prévisionnel ci-dessus.

319 Par exemple, aucun restaurateur d'œuvres d'art ou de documents dûment doté des qualifications académiques ou de l'expérience professionnelle requises ne réside à Maurice.

320 Cette présentation interviendra avant le mois d'août afin de pouvoir être prise en compte pour l'année universitaire suivante.

MEMORY AND REPRESENTATIONS OF SLAVERY AND  
INDENTURE IN MAURITIUS:  
TOWARDS OF THE RECOGNITION OF SLAVE AND  
INDENTURED HERITAGE IN MAURITIUS

By

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To Sunil Nosib

*«Il appartient à une Société comme la nôtre d'offrir aux travailleurs tous les renseignements nécessaires, pour les aider dans la composition d'une histoire de Maurice dont le besoin se fait sentir ; car nous devons avouer que nous ignorons généralement les faits qui se sont déroulés depuis la découverte de l'île. Il n'est pas besoin de faire ressortir qu'on a souvent, et pour des questions sérieuses, pris avantage de notre ignorance. Notre jeunesse n'a eu jusqu'ici entre les mains; que la relation de faits plus ou moins faussement racontés et dénaturés.»*

*Société Royale des Arts et des Sciences, Ile Maurice, Volume 17, 1885:71*

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report on *“Memory representations of slavery and indenture in Mauritius: towards the recognition of silent heritage”* proposed to study how slavery and indenture are depicted as historical references for almost 90% of today’s population. Representations in museums and historic sites, as symbols of slavery and indenture, were studied to appreciate the process through which expressions of memory took place and how they contribute to national recognition and the unity of the nation.

Representations are expressions of the past generated by an act of memory. As such, representations of slavery and indenture were considered within the memory process that led to the construction of a national vision of the past. In Mauritius, the memorial framework was inherited from the colonial elite who established western references in the colony. Our research first analysed the concept of heritage as understood by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences (RSAS) and by the Historical Records Committee (HRC) in the second half of the nineteenth century. These two entities were instrumental in the creation of a memorial framework at national level.

Excluded from the Elite’s consideration, representations of slavery and indenture did not form part of the memorial process before the years 2000. These years mark a shift in the memorial process: memory expanded to include the experiences of the formerly dominated population. Our research in museums specifically showed the development of representations during this period. As part of its reorganisation in 2000, the *National History Museum* in Mahébourg presents indenture as an experience leading to a positive evolution in the society. However, representations of slavery imply that ex-slaves were victims of an inhuman system and consequently, were not given the opportunity to become actors in the society. At *L’Aventure du Sucre* created in 2003 by a consortium of sugar companies, the museum discourse provides positive accounts of local history in the perspective of international context. This provides an account of the “negative” events beyond the local context and helps to conciliate a national vision of the past. In addition, it also states that the descendants of the former Elite generate a vision of the past that accepts the colonial undertakings which affected the population. In this sense, the acceptance of the past acts towards the evolution of the memorial process in museums and serves the contemporary dynamics of nation building. Ultimately, this process of conciliation leads to remember why the Mauritian society took shape and evolved to form a nation. It was interesting to compare *L’Aventure du Sucre*, a private museum, with the *Musée du Peuplement* created by the State in 2010. The *Musée du Peuplement* interprets the past to remember the positive accounts: its dynamics are very similar to those of *Aventure du Sucre* activating the positive memory to establish a new approach to the past. This approach results in the recognition of a common heritage: it is the first instance in which the heritage deriving from the population’s interactions is represented. Although we may question the quality of the display, the *Musée du peuplement* is marking a major shift in the memory process: it formulates the existence of a common heritage shaped by the various groups in action.

In the same manner, the inscription of two sites on the World Heritage List in 2006 and 2008 certainly marks a significant step in the evolution of the memorial framework. It established a formal recognition of slavery and indenture and also initiated the formulation of common national memory. In the Mauritian context, the example of the two World Heritage Sites shows how common references can be established in a multicultural society where the various segments of the population may refer to different appreciations of the past. In the instance of Le Morne and Aapravasi Ghat generally subject to ethnic considerations, the external recognition allows the establishment of commonly recognised values as they are considered beyond the national dynamics. The local values are re-interpreted beyond potential contestations or misleading considerations. As such, it encourages their general acceptance as heritage of the nation.

Our research showed that the memorial process is now taking place through new actors who are descendants of the former colonial society. The memorial framework undertakes a complete redefinition. The portrayal of National History now intends to include the memory of the majority of the population and not just a small segment of the Mauritian population. In this undertaking, the representations of slavery and indenture hold a major place as the experiences of more than 90% of the current day population.

In this respect, the Government has undertaken action to recognize the silent past of the nation. Heritage projects initiated in recent years are an interesting indicator to appreciate how the shift in the memorial process has operated. This shift may be explained by the need to preserve the past disappearing with the fast growing development but also, raises the concern to situate Mauritian culture facing globalization. Mauritius as many other countries expresses its concern to retain its cultural roots and specificity.

In this undertaking, heritage and MUSEUM MANAGEMENT play a significant role in the preservation and promotion of heritage. This report ends with considerations on MUSEUM MANAGEMENT to propose recommendations to improve management and ensure the sustainability of Mauritian heritage. The elaboration of policies for museums and heritage would be beneficial to the development of heritage in a sustainable manner and support the appropriation of heritage by the Mauritian population. The consultation with the population was identified as a main objective. It would foster an appropriate restitution of the past for the population and sustain nation building.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The recent years were marked by an unprecedented development of heritage projects in Mauritius. We may want to believe that the emerging concern for the past is related to the fast-growing urban development bringing significant changes to the society. The consequence of globalization ultimately leads to question. “Where the nation is heading?” and “on what fundamentals can we built our future?”

The projection of the nation in the future raises a number of questions relevant to our knowledge of what really defines the nation and what constitutes its identity so that it may evolve in a sustainable manner. In this instance, the statement of Melville Herskovits that *“a people without past is a people that nothing anchors in the present”*<sup>1</sup> can probably explain why for the last thirty years, research in Mauritian history has developed and also led to a focus on heritage to establish national symbols representing the roots of the nation.

The focus on heritage is particularly significant since the inscription of two Mauritian sites on UNESCO World Heritage List. This can only bring to our attention the shift in the way heritage was considered prior to the 2000s. Heritage was mostly the legacy of the Colonial Administration and heritage was mostly focusing on the history of the former *colons*. However, the heritage process turned to an under-researched part of Mauritian history, with the project of recognition of Le Morne and Aapravasi Ghat both referring to two traditionally silent episodes of Mauritian history: slavery and indenture.

These two episodes of Mauritian history are not only a subject of concern established by the Truth and Justice Commission Act of 2008, but they are also two historical facts that led to the migration of the ancestors of more than 90% of the present-day Mauritian population on the island. Through coerced migrations, these immigrants suffered inhuman treatments, annihilation of their identity and also, all were unrooted to settle in a new land where their cultural referential were not present. Encouraged by the colonial policy aiming at securing available workforce Mauritian society slowly took shape to become one of the most dynamic nation of the African continent. At the turn of the 21<sup>th</sup> century, it is thus not surprising to see Mauritian society engaging to question its past when most of the past evocative of the population has almost never been the subject of recognition and is now facing disappearance, for the benefit of modernity.

In this respect, research on heritage seemed a legitimate concern as part of the undertakings of the Truth and Justice Commission. Heritage is established through a process of memory: as the legacy of the past, it stands for symbols and values chosen by the nation. It thus represents what the nation believes to be part of its identity. Our focus on heritage ultimately aims at exploring the memory process in Mauritius in order to better appreciate according to what references and fundamentals the Mauritian nation defines itself. Our research focused on representations as expressions of memory in contemporary society and explored, in particular, expressions of slavery and indenture as the founding experience of almost the totality of the population.

Representations of the past are fundamental elements for the constitution of the nation (Anderson, 1996): they tell us how the society views its past and how slavery and indenture are perceived. The representations thus provide us with an understanding of how the past was assimilated and disseminated on a national scale. It also tells us how the various segments of the population are viewed and how their own experience are transcribed in the public space. One chief aim was to evaluate if the vision of the Other was fair and in line with factual experience, or if the representations led to a distorted image that could cause prejudices to our evolution in the society.

Ultimately, the representations of the past - transcribing a social experience - forms part of the heritage process establishing a common referential for the society that sustains its evolution. On the contrary, distorted images of the past may also constitute an obstacle. We therefore explored this question to formulate recommendations supporting a fair transcription of the memory of the past to encourage the production of images that will help a common recognition of various segments of the population and support national unity. This how this report proposes to address the consequences of slavery and indenture in Mauritius today.

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### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

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As part of our assignment, it seemed important to explore the evolution of the heritage process to understand better what constitutes the common values of the Mauritian nation. Heritage appears as a main area of focus since it is a collective expression of how the society views itself. The notion of heritage symbolises how the nation has built a social attachment with places invested with values and symbols that respond to the society's identity and memory. It did not seem possible to focus on our assignment dealing with the study of the representations of slavery and indenture, without an overall understanding of the context in which these representations were elaborated.

In this respect, the present report proposes to address the research results of the project of "Memory and Representations of Slavery and Indenture in Mauritius," based on the revised project proposal submitted on 27 June 2010. The objective of this project was to focus on the expressions of memory in the public space to assess how slavery and indenture are depicted. Through the analysis of representations, the objective was to describe how slavery and indenture are portrayed as common references for the nation. This approach assumed that representations in public space express what is considered to be a commonly-accepted vision of the past and how at an institutional level, the past is portrayed as being the commonly-accepted version of the society's experience. Museums were of particular interest since they provide a transcription of the past seen by authorities as the society's fundamentals. In museums, the past is reflected as being the official version of what constituted the society. Our objective was to establish through which process expressions of memory arose and how these memories are expressed and represented. More specifically, how do they contribute to national recognition and the unity of the nation?

The ultimate goal was to propose recommendations that would speak to the expectations of the society and propose actions encouraging fair representations of slavery and indenture. The definition of "fair representation" needs to be expressed to explain our approach. Fair representations were defined as views of the past that respond to historic veracity but also, that speak to the experiences of slaves and indentured labourers in Mauritius as generally accepted by descendants. To a certain extent, it was also essential to take into consideration the memory representations of slavery and indenture by descendants. In this respect, our research focused on expressions in the public space so that the recommendations proposed could be considered within the governmental scope of action.

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## RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES AND LIMITATIONS

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### the position of the researcher

As part of the research perspectives and limitations of the project, it seems essential to define my position as Researcher to better appreciate the point of view or interpretations expressed in this report.

The heritage topic is my main interest. I enrolled at University to study Museology, Anthropology and Archaeology and obtained qualifications<sup>2</sup> in these subjects.

I arrived in Mauritius in 2003. A year later, I had the chance to join the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund entrusted to preserve, manage and promote the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site. The institution also conducts research projects to document the history of indenture. Our daily undertakings at AGTF lead us to discuss problematic related to heritage and public perception of the past. The institution is one of its kind. Created in 2001, it is led by AGTF Board who has, throughout the years, invested in building capacity in the heritage field among the technical staff of the institution. From its early days to now, the staff has continuously gained significant experience by being involved in the various stages leading to the inscription of the Site on the World Heritage List and also, in the challenges aiming at retaining this status.

This experience showed that hardly any legislation exists to preserve, enhance or promote the heritage in Mauritius. This led to the constitution of various tools - legal and managerial - to enable the preservation of the World Heritage Site, AGTF, and also, its development. This experience also stressed the need for the development of competence in heritage management including all fields of specialisation, an emerging discipline in Mauritius, often not known as a professional field of competence. It also showed that the population and the authorities show a significant growing

interest in heritage and are becoming aware of the challenges to overcome to better manage heritage in Mauritius.

This seems important to underline this problematic resulting from experience at AGTF as the subject of this report directly relates to this professional field. This experience significantly helped to appreciate our research interest and propose recommendations. In this respect, this report is perceived as an opportunity to share this experience for interaction and for dialogue on heritage in Mauritius.

It was also for me, the chance to focus on a topic directly related to the problematic encountered in the course of my professional life. The study of the representations of slavery and indenture are currently a main subject of concern. The AGTF has engaged in the setting up of an Interpretation Centre aiming at presenting the history of the World Heritage Site and also, the experience of indenture. This subject thus directly addresses the problematic encountered at AGTF so as to fairly transcribe the historical experience to reconstruct the past and produce a vision with which the Mauritian population identifies.

#### towards the representations

This report first proposed to explore the representations of slavery and indenture in museums. In the course of our research, this objective seemed difficult to achieve in a satisfactory manner, if representations were considered as isolated items. It therefore seemed essential to consider the representations within a wider context, allowing the exploration of the dynamics that led to the creation of these representations. Our research thus expanded to focus on the overall framework within which museums were created and also, are currently functioning. The outcome of our research revealed many limitations in the way museums are managed and we felt that this aspect was a fundamental element to be reported as the improvement of MUSEUM MANAGEMENT and the establishment of a defined framework would provide a better restitution of the past in the museum space.

This also included heritage sites where much development is noted these last few years and, in particular, at Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site inscribed in 2006 and also directly referring to the history of indenture. The analysis of its recognition process showed an evolution in the representation of indenture that deserved specific focus and that also speak to the change in the way the past is perceived after the inscription of the Site on the World Heritage List.

#### studying the expressions in the public space

Museums and historic sites were the two main areas of focus, since it seemed essential to address the question of representations in the public space. This would allow for possible actions proposed through the recommendations after the completion of the Commission. In this respect, museums were particularly important as a place contributing to the national memory process, by establishing official and non-official representations of national history and take part, as public institutions, in the national construction of the past. To orientate our research towards the study of museums, our focus was on internationally recognized notion of museum as defined by the International Council of Museums (ICOM):

*"a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment."*<sup>3</sup>

Our research could not include all representations of slavery and indenture in museums. Fieldwork focused on a selection comprising of the Mauritius Institute in Port Louis, the National History Museum and the *"musée du peuplement"* located in Mahébourg, and *l'Aventure du sucre* in Beau Plan. The selection of museums relied on the fact that they do portray slavery and indenture as a constitutional element of Mauritian society. If the Mauritius Institute does not directly address memories of slavery and indenture, it seemed to be of interest as it is the oldest museum on the island and helped us understanding how museums first took shape and how the concept of museum was elaborated to better appreciate its evolution within the Mauritian context.

As such, the Museum of National History was particularly interesting since it was the first attempt to depict the National History of Mauritius, seen by a governmental agency, while the *musée du peuplement* is the most recent expression of the vision of Mauritian history by the same authorities. Similarly, the other museums seemed an essential area of study as they are the result of private initiatives. This allowed the confrontation with the museums of the public sector and led to an interesting conclusion on the perception of the past by a segment of the local community and by the governmental agencies. In our analysis, the Code of Ethics of ICOM was the reference document to assess the performance of museums and also to evaluate how they responded to the international standards.

#### methodological considerations

To approach our research topic, the methodology relied on detailed descriptions of representations of slavery and indenture in museums. This led to their analysis supported by background information on the context of museums' creation. Research in the archives and secondary sources were essential to appreciate the context of evolution of the cultural institutions and also to understand the dynamics leading to the formulation of the representations of slavery and indenture in the various museums. This report therefore proposes to address the dynamics of memory representations of slavery and indenture in their context of appearance.

This part was followed by a broader analysis of heritage dynamics to better appreciate the context in which the recognition of slavery and indenture took place. The objective is to better appreciate in which instances the restitution of the past seemed to address contemporary concern in a successful manner. This part relies on a survey polling 50 people and on the study of official documents. This also includes an analysis of MUSEUM MANAGEMENT at the Mauritius Museums Council to consider how MUSEUM MANAGEMENT and conservation could be improved to create a sustainable environment for heritage and ensure the restitution of the national past in favourable conditions.

This part led to the identification of key elements supporting the recognition of heritage related to slavery and indenture and the sustainable development of heritage. It supported the formulation of recommendations proposed for the improvement of heritage recognition and sustainability in Mauritius.

Our area of study was thus delimited to better appreciate the expressions of memory in their context of production. It was essential to limit our scope to allow fine definitions of representations and thus allowing their analysis requiring their consideration within their context of occurrence and general perspectives on museum and memory dynamics. It would have been a difficult enterprise to only focus on representations as such as they would not have led to an overall understanding of what they meant for the population or how they were generally perceived. Considering representations in their context of production was thus our approach to better analyse their meaning and also, better identify their shortcomings.

To initiate this report, the definition of two key concepts seemed essential to set a base for our research and analysis. These two key concepts were *memory* as a process required to allow the occurrence of representations of the past; and *heritage* as the general framework within which the process of memory generates expressions.

### 3. KEY CONCEPTS: MEMORY AND HERITAGE

It seemed essential to consider the concept of heritage in the light of the recent academic research focusing on the process of heritage formation and consider why an object, tangible or intangible becomes a heritage. Heritage necessarily implies that there is a common recognition which ultimately leads to local, national or international status, formal or informal.

This recognition is the result of a process that necessarily implies an act of memory. An object becomes heritage because it is remembered, thus initiating the memorial process leading to the recognition. The transformation of an object into an object of heritage is the result of - what Jean Davallon calls- the process of *memoration*. Jean Davallon refers to this expression to convey the idea that an object of heritage necessarily refers to memory. The object of heritage was invested with symbols and values that has a direct relevance to the memory shaped by the nation. Heritage is commonly recognized specifically because it makes sense for a specific entity. Indeed, an object considered by an external group would not be considered as such since one may not share the same cultural references<sup>4</sup>. This aspect is particularly interesting in Mauritius where the population is formed by groups with various cultural backgrounds. This raises the question of how to grant the status of heritage to an object when it necessarily implies that external references must be recognized to form a national entity. This aspect may also explain why we notice the absence of recognition of major historical events in the case of slavery and indenture, hardly ever considered before the years 2000 as far as heritage is concerned.

Precisely, the study of the evolution of the notion of heritage is essential if we are to understand through which process common values were elaborated and also bring to light the overall framework that activated expressions of memory representations. We therefore assumed that representations of slavery and indenture could not be isolated from an overall process that led to the construction of a national perception of the past. Especially in the case of museum, representations as museums *"must allow to give to the communities concerned the keys to understand the local history and environment (and not only focus on national history). The museum must enable us to define the image of oneself that one wishes to communicate to others"*<sup>5</sup>. In this respect, museums seemed the right place to appreciate a common vision of the past and the expressions of shared values.

To ensure an objective appreciation, the study of representations includes an understanding of the context in which representations were generated as perceptions of the past. Indeed, they are part of a process that relies on dynamics of transmission through time. This is the reason why we consider that heritage is an evolving notion: it carries social values expressing concerns of a particular period and conveys expressions of an attachment to the past serving current challenges. Representations were formulated at a given time and with time, they may no more respond to the current concerns of the society. In this respect, we may want to assume that fair representations are those recreating a link between the past and the present with which the society identifies.

In this respect, the context in which a museum is created dictates its content. Museums can be described a social space created by authorities or private entities to present a representation of the past evocative of a given period. The museum thus opens a window on an "institutional past" or on a social past which presents the commonly accepted (or not accepted) vision of the society/cultural group's past at a precise moment in time. Consequently, the representations generated earlier in time may no more address the contemporary concerns and set out a vision that fails to respond to the present expectations.

This discrepancy between visions generated in the past and current appreciations shows that the memorial process is evolving. In this section, the objective is to appreciate how the memorial process took shape to identify heritage. It seemed important to include such considerations as it allows us to understand how the memorial process evolved until today and also, consider why parts of the national history remained silent until recently.

To this end, it was interesting to analyse the concept of heritage as understood by the *Royal Society of Arts and Sciences* (RSAS) created in 1847<sup>6</sup> and by the *Historical Records Committee* (HRC) taking shape in 1883. These two entities were instrumental in the creation of a memorial framework at national level. Their actions later led to the creation of heritage institutions that

inherited their understanding of heritage. This had a direct incidence on the formulation of representations of slavery and indenture. The representations of the past were actually driven by the colonial Elite. The account on the RSAS and the HRC can help us appreciate why it is only in the recent years that public expressions of slavery or indenture were included in museums.

#### the royal society of arts and sciences (rsas)

The emergence of the notion of heritage in the colony is associated to the development of Science and Agriculture. The *Société des Sciences et des Arts de l'Isle de France*, first created in 1846, is elaborated upon the European model. The Society gathers members from the Scientific community. This Society and the Société d'Emulation created in 1805<sup>7</sup> both aim at developing science, agriculture and, to a certain extent, trade in Mauritius<sup>8</sup>. The scientific research and the promotion of the Arts progressively developed with the creation of the Société d'Histoire Naturelle<sup>9</sup> by George Cuvier, Charles Telfair and Julien Desjardins in 1828 (SRAS, 1883:42). When Queen Victoria granted the authorization to use the word "Royal" in 1847, the Société recognized as being of public utility is renamed *Society of Arts and Sciences* or *Société Royale des Sciences et des Arts*, an appellation used in both French and English until today. The Société largely contributes to the development of scientific research and to the emergence of a historical consciousness.<sup>10</sup>

The Société benefits from its international reputation, considering the composition of its members<sup>11</sup> all recognized for their confirmed scientific aptitudes. A strong collaboration is established with other societies in the world including those in European metropolis<sup>12</sup>. The activities of the society focus on natural History, Ornithology, Zoology, Biology and Botanic, and largely contributes to the development of sugar cane which has become the main economic driver as from the 1840s (Ly-Tio-Fane, 1972; Allen, 1999). One of the first reports on the activities of the society indicates that the society's purpose is to «*encourager le développement de l'agriculture dans notre colonie en général, et particulièrement, à notre seule ressource et à sa production ingénieuse*»<sup>13</sup> (SRAS, 1850:5). As such, the Society advises the agriculture sector and the colonial authorities on scientific matters (Sornay, 1950:470).

As part of its activities, the Société organised agricultural exhibitions aiming at supporting the improvement of agriculture and the industry from the end of the 1840s (SRAS, 1849). The annual exhibitions presented the best sugars, the latest inventions related to techniques used by the sugar industry, natural history specimens and products of the local and regional agriculture. These annual exhibitions are the opportunity to also present works of art made by local Artists (SRAS, 1881:111).

In 1847, the *Comité des Beaux Arts* of the Société organised an important artistic exhibition. The report of July 1848 indicates that 1,500 people visited the exhibition which lasted four days. More than 350 works of art were exhibited: paintings from Masters, oil paintings of local Artists, watercolours, drawings, daguerreotypes, engravings, busts and medals. The master paintings and those of foreign Artists represented 59% of the artistic exhibition, as against 17% of paintings of «*Créoles ou artistes résidents*» and 24% by amateurs (RSAS, 1848:103). The exhibition required important investment that did not allow the Société to renew the event the following year but the société proposed to set up a new exhibition in the years to come to allow the local Artists to produce works of art specifically for the event. The société wished to "to encourage the development and improvement of Talent among artists and of taste in the community at large" (RSAS, 1848:106).

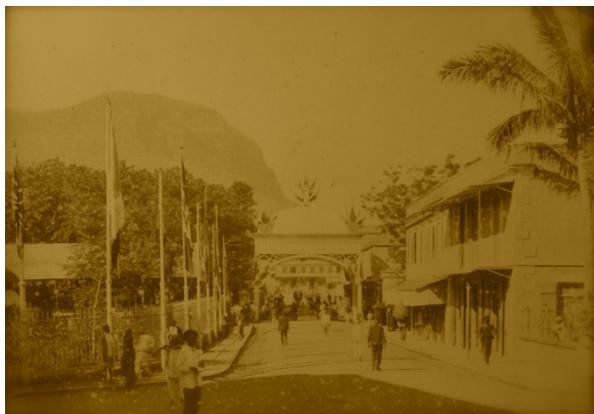
Through these exhibitions, the organisers expressed the ambition to present works of art in line with European aestheticism and corresponding to the liking of the elite. The presentation of works of art by Albert Cruyp, Jordaens, Paul Véronèse, Brueghel de Velours, Frank Hals, Canaletto or Jacques-Louis David showed the intention to promote the European aestheticism and cultural values of Western societies (RSAS, 1848:104). During this first artistic exhibition of this kind, the Société wished to encourage local artists to improve their art. The objective was to reach an ideal aestheticism based on the fundamentals of Classical art promoting the beauty and the technical feat. The ambition was to emulate local talent and act in favour of the training of novice artists as in European Academies. These artistic references appealed to the elite composed of literates and intellectuals. The elite thus took part in the cultural life of the country by promoting a Western

vision of the arts. As such, the elite also acted in favour of its prestige and positioned itself in the undertaking of the great European artistic enterprises which were references for the colonial power in place.

However, the Société could not continue these expensive initiatives. The artistic exhibitions were later incorporated in those dedicated to Science. The first one took place in 1881: an artistic exhibition was organised by the Société as part of the Inter-Colonial Exhibition taking place at the Government House, the seat of the Colonial Government. Each year, the exhibition regrouped industrial products and natural resources of Mauritius and other colonies of whose sugar *«surpassent en beauté ceux des années précédentes»* (SRAS, 1881:112). The artistic exhibition presented *«objets rares, curieux ou historiques existant à Maurice [...], quelques belles toiles de la Réunion et de Maurice, ainsi que des aquarelles»* (SRAS, 1881:112).

The exhibition focused on Mauritian objects and Artists. The Société now turned to the presentation of regional arts and promoted the local contribution. This trend became stronger as from the 1880s which were also the years seeing the emergence of a new elite among the *gens de couleur libres*. The Société then started to recognize the symbols of the local elite and, in particular, its founding figures. In its undertaking, the Société responded to the need to promote their original culture through the presentation of works of art and endorsed the role of an artistic academy to train local Artists to promote European culture as a reference for the emerging nation. In this context, their action was in line with a colonial strategy aimed at transposing the Metropolis hegemony in the Colony.

Illustration 1 Inter-colonial Exhibition held in November 1894 in Port Louis



Source: Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture

### the emergence of a local memory in the recognition of first settlers and figures of the colonial power

In the 1880s, the Société started to recognize the symbols of the local elite, marking the memorial process that led to the emergence of a local heritage. This undertaking was initiated by the intention of the Société to promote local history. Although the promotion of human sciences is not the primary mission of the Société, its participation in the cultural life of the colony was very active. As early as 1858, the members of the Société Royale expressed their intention to encourage historical research financially and intellectually. They argued that the richness of events that took place in Mauritius deserved to be researched for transmission to future generations (RSAS, 1860:217). This ambition led to the creation of a section on History and Literature within the Société on 22 June 1859 (SRAS, 1870:8). This committee proposed to recompense the members that would produce a contribution on the history of Mauritius, or scientific or literary publications (RSAS, 1860:334).

The Historical Committee of the Société met to talk about the significant events that marked the history of Mauritius and, in particular, those contributing to the development of Science. During the monthly sessions, members recalled the contributions of Scientists to local knowledge and proposed to undertake actions to recognize the importance of their work and pay homage to their memory. In the course of 1859, the Société financed the erection of two commemorative monuments and indicated its intention to pay homage to the local Scientists.

The first proposal was submitted by Mr. Liénard in a letter<sup>14</sup> sent to the President of the Société: it was to create *«un monument en forme de pyramide ayant pour but d'honorer la mémoire d'un nombre assez considérable de personnes qui ont concouru à son bien-être, en y faisant progresser l'agriculture, ou en l'enrichissant de plantes et d'animaux utiles et intéressants»* (SRAS, 1860:330). He further provided criteria that would justify the inscription of names of the monument: *« [une colonne]où l'on y inscrit que les noms de ceux qui ne sont plus, les vivants devant être expressément exclus quels que soient leurs droits à y prendre place»*. Mr. de Robillard recalls that in 1885, Liénard *«a voulu que les personnes de Maurice, qui se distingueraient dans les sciences, les arts, l'étude de l'histoire naturelle, et qui rendraient au pays des services réels, eussent après leur mort, leurs noms inscrits sur cette colonne afin que le temps et l'oubli ne vinsent pas déployer un voile sur leur mémoire»* (SRAS, 1885:25).

In his letter, François Liénard requested that the President of the Société should constitute a committee of which the *«mission serait de rechercher les noms de tous les hommes utiles qui doivent figurer sur ce monument destiné à éterniser parmi nous leur souvenir»* (SRAS, 1860:330). Liénard naturally proposed that the column be erected in the Botanical Garden in Pamplemousses, a highly symbolical place for the Société as the Botanical Garden was created in 1770 by Pierre Poivre, one of the founding figures of Natural Science in Mauritius. On the monument erected in 1861 appear the names of the famous Scientists which were, for the most, former members of the Société (Sornay, 1950:487).

The Société took action to commemorate the pioneers of Scientific Research in Mauritius through another initiative, by paying homage to Philibert de Commerson, a member of Bougainville expedition and also, one of the first Scientists who introduced Natural Science in the island. This historic character is also an emblematic figure for the Société. He expressed the intention, during his stay between 1768 and 1773, to create an Academy devoted to the study of Nature, agriculture and tropical diseases (Ly-Tio-Fane, 2003:102). Louis Bouton, Secretary and Botanist, proposed to erect a monument in memory of Commerson in 1859.<sup>15</sup> In this undertaking, the Société considered this as the best homage to his work, since the entity regrouped the necessary competence needed to appreciate the importance of his contribution:

*«This homage to the memory of a man of science, the greater part of whose labours were achieved in Mauritius, is an act of justice which can be but highly honorable to the Society, better placed than any other, to appreciate the merit and value of such labours»* (RSAS, 1860, part 2, vol. 1: 346).

The later initiatives of the Société responded to the same concern of commemorating the memory of those who contributed to the advancement of the colony. The Société, therefore, approved the erection of commemorative monuments and the creation of funeral monuments for its former members<sup>16</sup> or for those who undertook actions leading to its creation. The Société also paid homage to famous figures<sup>17</sup> and to the founding father<sup>18</sup> of the island in Pierre Poivre or Mahé de Labourdonnais whose statue was erected on the Place du Quai, in front of the Government House, on 30 August 1859 (Sornay, 1950:521). The Société later expanded its scope for action to “*de promouvoir le progrès de la science, de l'art, de l'histoire et de la littérature à Maurice*” (SRAS, 1883: 42).

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Société acted to perpetuate the memory of Scientists who worked in the colony. Monuments were erected as symbols of perpetuity of the Société but also of the scientific knowledge that it promoted. The Société thus delimited a space of memorial expression that paid homage to progress and, in particular, to the evolution of Science which was necessary for the development of the sugar industry, the major economic activity of the island. The Société ultimately created local historical references based on the recognition of the various contributions and, indirectly, highlighted the contribution of the metropolis in the island. The Société, thus, showed through its commemorative actions its concern to establish strong links between the metropolis, and positioned its actions in the continuity of the scientific activities conducted in Europe at the same period.

The Société thus created a referential background to support the elite and developed references to metropolitan models that valorised and legitimated the place of the elite in the colony. The recognition of the founding figures of the Société and of the colony set a basis for the emergence of heritage in a young society and showed that the notion of heritage was still not defined. The elite engaged in a *travail de mémoire* that focused on the extraordinary personalities who inspired intellectual admiration. However, the elite showed no interest in the ethnological heritage, referring to inferior ‘foreign’ classes -as it was the case in Europe in the same period. Nor was it interested in the built heritage already granted as a symbol of the elite, thus not requiring appropriation to legitimize their position.

The concern for legitimacy seemed omnipresent, when we note that the Société erected symbols through the construction of monuments that represented outstanding characters, historic figures or representatives of authority<sup>19</sup>. These three categories showed the need to anchor the position of the nineteenth-century elite and convey a concern for the past that focused on local realisations with reference to European markers. The memory process of the elite operated on the strength of Western references to identify local symbols. The elite developed a memory that negotiated its contribution to local history and affirmed its cultural belonging. Through this process, the elite created and instituted a local anchorage on the colonial territory.

Throughout this process, the elite selected precise memorial representations based on its experience and reduced the scope of historical events to the memory of personalities. This led to the creation of a public space of recognition where the elite signified the close relationship of political authorities with the economic power of the colony. The elite thus created a social representation of memory that was exclusively extracted from its own colonial circle of experience. The elite inscribed itself on a social project that claimed its intellectual and political predominance by codifying references to the past supported by the authorities. This led to the creation of an institutional memory prevailing over the rest of the population.

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#### the institution of a local memorial framework: the alliance of the colonial powers

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The Société was supported by the Colonial Government which allocated funds to support its subsistence. The Société understood that the colonial support was instrumental to its existence and its influence. In the same manner, the colonial power saw in its affiliation to the Société, the opportunity to share the same interests, thus getting closer to the white elite controlling the economic sector of the colony. The alliance of power can be attested in the memorial process that

privileged the Western symbols present in the recent past of the country; and also, in the recognition of historical events that showed the close relationship existing between the Colonial Authorities and the white elite.

The representative of Colonial Power also held a significant role in the Société: the Governor was the President of the Société throughout its years of existence during the colonial period. This marked deeply the conciliation existing between the two parties and ultimately, the close relationship among the elite. Together, they contributed to the development of Western culture in the memorial process. This process would lead to the recognition of an heritage defined on Western grounds. This would be the fundamental element leading to the recognition of local heritage. This would survive colonial times and last until recent years.

In this process, the Colonial Government signified its adhesion to the elite and created the image of a strong central power, allying the economic and political power. The example of the Historical Records Committee is also particularly significant in the elaboration of this memorial process. It is also important since it was created as an institutional body. Almost thirty years after its creation, it would become the *Ancient Monuments Board* and later lead to the creation of the actual National Heritage Fund.

#### the historical records committee (hrc)

The Historical Records Committee was created by Governor Pope Hennessy in 1883 as a Commission<sup>20</sup> which later became an instituted committee through Proclamation No. 146 of 1889.<sup>21</sup> This initiative shows that the notion of heritage first appeared through a colonial initiative, and that heritage was thus recognized at its base in terms of its modalities and definition.

The creation of the Historical Records Committee took place a year after the promulgation of the *Ancient Monuments Act* in Great Britain, aimed at identifying ancient monuments through an inventory and protecting the monuments from accidental or voluntary destruction (Delafons, 1997:12). In Mauritius, the Committee was "*chargé de la conservation et de l'entretien de tous les monuments et emplacements considérés comme historiques*" (Sornay, 1950:494). According to Pierre de Sornay, it was precisely the intention to preserve "*historical memory*" that motivated the Governor Pope Hennessy to create the HRC. It seems that the idea of the Committee took shape, when the Governor took cognizance of the destruction of the place where the terms of the capitulation were discussed in 1810 (Sornay, 1950:494).

The main focus of the HRC was to recognize the memory of personalities who had contributed to the constitution of Mauritius as a nation in colonial times. It is interesting to note that heritage was not so much dealing with tangible heritage then, but rather dealt with the setting up of monuments or commemoration plaques. Hence, heritage was not perceived as what we understand today by it, namely "*anything that has been transmitted from the past or handed down by tradition,*" or as "*the evidence of the past, such as historical sites, buildings, and the unspoilt natural environment, considered collectively as the inheritance of present-day society,*" but was indeed the recognition of memory and any tangible expressions of this memory.

The main focus was on historical events featuring the British and the French. The action of the Committee focused on events marking the foundation of the colony. An example was the setting up of a monument commemorating the death of soldiers during the Battle of Grand Port won by the French, who four months later, were defeated by the British. This event marked the point of origin of the British presence in Mauritius and also, the supremacy of the British over the French. The Committee commemorated this by a plaque posted on the *façade* of la Maison de Robillard; this fact recalled that the French and British Commanders were both injured during the battle and received care in the same room (Sornay, 1950). The *entente* between the British Authorities and the French elite was honoured through this commemorative action.

Considering this historical background, it is essential to consider that heritage is not so much a notion related to the recognition of a place, but rather the achievement of a personality or of a community through its experience in Mauritius. As such, it is relevant to consider that what we understand by "heritage" in Mauritius from its first expressions, is not linked to the experience of

the population at large, but rather it deals with the recognition of first *colons'* achievements on the island. It serves the position of the colony as an Oligarchy.

The pressing need to preserve heritage and a national framework is expressed through an initiative of the Historical Records Committee, to press for the elaboration of a legal framework.<sup>22</sup> The motion of M. Clément Charoux to invite the *“Government to vote an Ordinance with a view to preserve the historic buildings of the island or those recognized as such by the committee”* was unanimously accepted during the Committee meeting held on 28 September 1928.<sup>23</sup> The objective was to list identified heritage and give a legal status to 'historic buildings'.<sup>24</sup>

The Historical Records Committee had the mandate to advise the Colonial Government by recommending the recognition of objects of heritage<sup>25</sup>. The proposed Bill would later stipulate that the HRC has the mandate to *“advise generally on the maintenance of ancient monument in the Colony”*<sup>26</sup>. At this stage, the notion of heritage specifically dealt with *“the most interesting ancient monuments of the island: old forts, the coastal batteries, the ruins of Grand Port, the public buildings, the family houses nearly centenary etc. Several testimonies of our glorious past are in state of dereliction that predicts their forthcoming disappearance. To fix its memory through photography and printing before it is too late, seems to be a beneficial undertaking for the country as a whole, as part of our historic heritage would thus be preserved from oblivion”*. The letter further indicated that the objective of subscriptions was to regroup the *“most venerable souvenirs of our great ancestors”*.<sup>27</sup>

It is, indeed, a fact that most heritage preserved by the Historical Records Committee refers to tombs in memory of colonial ancestors. The list of tombs provided in Archival Records for the 1930s<sup>28</sup> refers to British or French personalities, including Governors.<sup>29</sup> The list of 'historical monuments', as described in a letter dated 17 February 1937, in fact referred to a list of 122 names. It seems that as early as 1892,<sup>30</sup> the Historical Records Committee was allocated a budget referred to as *“tombs of Governors”*.

The need to preserve the memory of French ancestors and heritage was further underlined by a letter to solicit funds from the Compagnies sucrières de Maurice dated 5 May 1933, stating that *“the Committee, by addressing the Sugar Companies of Mauritius, thought that all had attachment to the past as most date back to the French occupation period and that their Directors would not remain indifferent to these two movements which refer to historic remembrance.”*<sup>31</sup>

Although the mandate of the HRC was the result of a Government Proclamation, the Historical Records Committee denounced the lack of support from the Government which showed a *“lack of cooperation and refuses any kind of support to the committee members”* and most importantly, it underlined that *“in this country, very little interest exists for historic objects as they are abandon to dereliction”*<sup>32</sup>. This is the reason put forward by the Committee in the proceedings dated 1930 to prepare a *“list of various buildings that could be listed as historic.”*<sup>33</sup>

During the same session, the HRC indicated that the listing did not imply specific measures nor impacted on the owners as the listing consisted in posting a plaque on the building *“recalling the history of the building, of the Church or the place”* and that the Government *“would not take at its charge the maintenance of all the buildings or monuments that could be listed as historical”*. The objective was thus to indicate the historical importance to the public for the purpose of remembrance and raise consciousness. It was, therefore, an act of memory and did not aim at integrating a wider heritage framework that would serve the aim to restore or preserve the heritage for the nation, as per today's conception. The HRC undertakings focused on the commemoration of people and events.

The same proceedings dated 1930 provide with a first list of monuments identified by HRC:<sup>34</sup>

1. Hôtel du Gouvernement
2. L'ancienne Chapelle Sainte Anne
3. Le Château Mon Plaisir Pamplémousses

4. Le Château de Rivière la Chaux
5. La Cheminée et la maison de Grande Rosalie
6. La fontaine monumentale de la Place de l'Eglise
7. La fontaine Place de l'Artillerie
8. Le Tombeau Malartic
9. Les deux pierres cylindriques sur la Place de l'Eglise
10. Le Corps de Garde de Trou Fanfaron
11. L'ancien hôpital de la Grande Rivière Nord Ouest
12. Les ruines de l'ancienne Batterie du Vieux Grand Port
13. La Tour dite "hollandaise" au Vieux Grand Port
14. La Loge de la Triple Espérance
15. Les Tours Martello à la Rivière Noire
16. Les ruines de l'Ancien Arsenal
17. La Tour du moulin à poudre
18. La Chaussée Trommelin
19. Le Réduit
20. Les fortins de l'île de la Passe
21. Les ruines de la Batterie Dumas
22. L'abreuvoir de la rue Moka (formant partie de l'ancienne Boulangerie du Roy)
23. Les tombes ou monuments commémoratifs:
  1. Du Gouverneur Smith à Port-Louis
  2. Le Cenotaphe à la mémoire du Colonel Joseph Yates, Port-Louis
  3. De Commerson
  4. Du Prince Candien
  5. Du Colonel Draper à Rivière Noire
  6. De Stadamaïa Petite Rivière
  7. De Monseigneur Buenavita aux Pamplemousses
  8. Du Gouverneur Magon de Saint Piliier aux Pamplemousses
  9. De Papeneuse à Eau Coulée Curepipe

If we examine this list, 36% of the proposed listed heritage refers to commemorative monuments. The comparison with the figures for 1944 also shows a large proportion of heritage devoted to commemorative purpose which reaches 42% in total.<sup>35</sup>

Illustration 2 listed heritage per categories established in 1930s-1940s

Year	Religious buildings	Buildings		Ruins		Tombs and cemeteries	Commemorative monuments	Items of civil works	
		Civil	Military	Batteries	Fortifications			Fountain	Canal
1930	3%	23%	7%	7%	13%	33%	3%	10%	-
1944	-	26%	13%	6%	9%	21%	21%	3%	3%

Sources:  
MNA: X18/1 - List of Historic Monuments identified by the Historical Records Committee, 1829;  
Ordinance no. 8 of 1944 entitled the Ancient Monuments Ordinance, 1944.

This table shows the predominance of the identification of heritage as a commemorative object. The memory process is activated by the white elite and instituted by the Colonial Authorities. It is also directly related to places and sites referring to their experience in Mauritius. Concurrently, the references to slavery and indenture are totally discarded from recognition, as the memorial process is activated by the higher class of the society. However, it is precisely, at this period, that the working classes started to be represented in the political life of the country, but their action does not enter memory problematics but rather their social recognition.

The memorial process leads, in the 1930s, to the creation of a legal framework expressing the intention to include heritage in the General Policy of the Government. The Legislative allow us to explore further the place devoted to heritage by the authorities as a means to recognize sections of the society and also understand the continuity in the perception of the heritage object, at a time when the representations of the past took shape in dedicated institutions such as museums.

## 4. THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF HERITAGE: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL MEMORY FRAMEWORK

The institutionalisation of heritage marks the ratification of the actions of the Historical Records Committee and also, the national establishment of the memorial framework developed by the elite. It is precisely the HRC that acted towards the creation of an appropriate Legislation for heritage. The discussions to elaborate a legal framework took place at the heart of the HRC. In 1937, the President of the Historical Records Committee (HRC) wrote to the Colonial Secretary to comment on a proposed draft Ordinance entitled *"Bill to provide for the protection and preservation of ancient monuments"*. This would materialize in the Proclamation of the Ordinance No. 19 of 1938, entitled the *Ancient Monuments Preservation Ordinance*. The notion of *National Monument* is at an embryo stage. The Bill defines the concept of *Ancient Monument* and expresses for the first time the recognition of a common heritage for the colonial nation.

The Ordinance established the process of listing monuments in the schedule that were

*"any structure or erection, monument, or part or remains of a monument, or any object the preservation of which is a matter of public interest by reason of the historic, architectural, traditional, artistic, or archaeological interest attaching thereto, and the site of any such monument or of any remains thereof, and any part of the adjoining land which may be required for the purpose of fencing, covering in, or otherwise preserving the monument from injury, and also includes the means of access thereto."*

This shows that the local process is highly inspired by the European example and makes provision for a local recognition because it constitutes European references in the colony. The legislation will be elaborated further with the Ordinance no 8 of 1944 *"to provide for the preservation of ancient monuments and places or areas of historical or other interest"*. As far as our undertaking is concerned, this historical overview of the development of the notion of heritage in Mauritius does not only tell us how heritage was defined and considered; it also tells us how heritage was managed at the level of Government. The Historical Records Committee was operating under the colonial government and as far the archival records testified, it seems that not much funds were allocated hence it reduced the actions of the committee composed of educated members forming part of the Elite. The focus was on the preservation of heritage that related to the historical background and origins of this segment of the population. This shows that the framework dynamics were not inclined to consider the lower classes which had no representatives nor mediators transmitting their potential intentions. Mauritius was ruled by an Oligarchy generating the heritage process to their benefits. The Elite responded to a colonial strategy aiming at establishing an extension of Europe in the colony.

The study of the notion of heritage provided with an overall picture of the memorial framework established in Mauritius. The analysis of the proceedings of the RSAS and the Historical Records Committee gave us a full insight on the perception of heritage by the Oligarchy. We can better appreciate who formulated the representations of the past and also why they took shape or on the contrary, why they never materialised. In the same manner, we would not be in a position to appreciate the absence or the scarcity of representations of slavery and indenture today if we did not try to understand in what circumstances the first museum was created on the island.

### The Mauritius Institute

*"Le musée est un des lieux qui donnent la plus haute idée de l'homme."* André Malraux

The creation of the Mauritius Institute is the result of the heritage process led by the Elite. The museum came into existence through the initiative of the *Royal Society of Arts and Sciences*. It shows how the *Société* has implanted a Natural History Museum in the colony according to the same heritage dynamics attested in Europe in the same period. The account on the Mauritius Institute help us appreciating how heritage was inherited from the colonial Elite and later in the report, we

will consider what is the impact today on the appropriation of heritage by the former dominated population.

### establishing the european hegemony

The project of Mauritius Institute originated in 1826, when Charles Telfair launched the idea of a colonial museum and invited the Zoologist Julien Desjardins and the Botanist Louis Bouton to donate their collections to the State. At this point in time, the Colonial Authorities did not show any interest in this proposal. Finally in 1842, Julien Desjardins established a museum in one of the wings of the Royal College of Port Louis, a symbolic place of excellence for the white elite (Cheke, 2003:198).

At the end of the 1870s, the Royal Society proposed to gather the library and the Natural History collections in one place. This project of an Institute was finally supported by the Colonial Authorities whose representative, Governor Sir George Bowen, laid the first stone on 23 November 1880. The Mauritius Institute came into existence through the Proclamation of the Ordinance No. 19 of 1880 to promote the Arts, Sciences, Literature and Philosophy, in order to educate and entertain the public. The Mauritius Institute opened its doors during the Colonial Exhibition in 1884 (Cheke, 2003: 199). Its objective was to regroup the Collection of the Desjardins Museum established in 1842 in the Royal College in Port Louis and other National History Collections and the library in one location. As the minutes of proceedings of the Royal Society of Arts and Science state:

*The new building to be set up "doit contenir le Muséum Desjardin, la bibliothèque publique et donner aussi asile aux différentes sociétés de la colonie qui adhèrent au règlement qui sera préparé bientôt afin de les rassembler pour certaines questions, en une fédération qui aura le titre de 'Mauritius Institute'" (SRAS, 1884:95).*

The exhibition of December 1884 marked the inauguration of the Mauritius Institute (SRAS, 1886:192). The minutes of proceedings report that it was the first time that an exhibition was held for eight days and that it attracted more than 20,000 visitors, including 4,045 children for which entrance was free. The entrance fees were brought down to a low price in order to « *permettre à toutes les classes de la société de bénéficier d'une solennité aussi instructive* » (SRAS, 1886:196).

The Mauritius Institute regrouped the collections of Julien Desjardins, a Botanist who collected a number of National History specimens from Mauritius, two paintings representing "Raphael and the Fornarina" by Van Der Burhne and "Passage of Que" by Washington, given by Edgar de Rochecouste. The objective, with the acquisition of this paintings, was to develop a compete gallery of portraits similar to European Museums, to "*développer le goût des arts dans notre petit pays*" (SRAS, 1885: Vol.17:73).

The creation of the Mauritius Institute was a national project conveying the ambitions of the Scientists, the cultural elite and the Colonial Authorities to gather in one location all the expressions of 'knowledge' as per European standards, with a view to sharing this knowledge. This is very clear in the statement of Julien Desjardins regarding the Constitution of what was to become the Mauritius Institute:

*"A des distances infinies. il faut don de compléter le titre, il faut arriver à faire connaître à nos compatriotes qui ne peuvent aller admirer au foyer même des lumières, les merveilles qui y sont accumulées. Pour cela, il faut mettre à exécution mon idée, faire les démarches nécessaires auprès des autorités pour y arriver, et l'on dira peut-être plus tard: que si le père a doté son pays d'un riche Muséum, le fils y a fait germer et fleurir, après bien de vaines tentatives, le goût et la culture de la peinture". (SRAS, 1883, vol. 12:75)*

This statement of Julien Desjardins underscores the ambition to establish a European concept of culture as a fundamental reference for the country. We could also understand indirectly that the project was initiated by the Franco-Mauritian elite, thus claiming their position of pioneers on the island, in opposition to the British newcomers. However, both shared the same objective, to establish the European model as a fundamental reference. In these words, the colony was to

become an extension of the European metropolis, as expressed through the statement of Governor Pope Hennessy, Chairman of the SRAS:

*“A notre époque, dans toutes les villes d'Europe qui ont une certaine importance, aussi bien que dans l'Inde et dans toutes les colonies anglaises, on a établi des Muséums dont quelques-uns sont très beaux, entre autres ceux de Melbourne et de Sydney. M. Daruty, qui les a visités, les a beaucoup admirés. Celui de Sydney, pour son administration, son entretien et son accroissement, dépense annuellement £13,000. L'histoire naturelle de nos jours est enseignée dans les collèges en Europe ; les directeurs ont formé, pour cet objet, des Museums Scholars. Il est bon et utile que la jeunesse apprenne à connaître toutes les beautés et les richesses que le Créateur a réunies sur le globe où il nous a placés. La Faune marine de Maurice est très riche et pourrait, à elle seule, fournir bien des éléments pour enrichir le Muséum et le rendre plus intéressant, surtout pour les étrangers qui le visitent” (SRAS, 1885, vol. 17: 73).*

Pope Hennessy's ambitions was to provide Mauritius with cultural opportunities corresponding to the Imperial enterprises, already established in other colonies. The cultural policy responded to a European archetype of knowledge, is considered as another expression of British Imperialism.

The intention was to recreate the European model in Mauritius and seemed very clear:

*“There is in Europe no town containing a considerable population, which does not possess a Library, and often, a Museum. Why should Mauritius, now so important by her commerce, her agriculture, her wealth and her population represented by men of great intelligence and governed by an enlightened chief, not do what her position and the condition in which she is placed imperiously demand?”<sup>36</sup> (RSAS, 1860:347)*

The institution is the archetype of Natural History Museums developed outside Europe in the nineteenth century (Gob et Drouguet, 2004). The dissemination of the European concept of Culture and its application in various colonies can refer to what Richard Grove calls 'green imperialism'.<sup>37</sup>

Its establishment followed the same process: a scientific society donates its collections to the authorities which ensure in exchange that free access is given to the largest audience to promote the Sciences and Education for the public. However, museums are mostly visited by the Elite. It is similarly the case in Mauritius where during its first five years of existence, the Museum Desjardins received only slightly more than 4,000 visitors or 2.5% of the total population at the time. Probably, 45% of the 10,000 visitors formed part of the 'General Population' including the white and Creole elite who were the only ones to have access to the Royal College (Toussaint, 1972; Cheke, 2003:198).

About forty years later, the Colonial Authorities stated their intention to open the new Institute to all. In a letter sent to the President of the Royal Society, Governor Bowen mentioned that the role of the Royal Society and of the Government was to encourage the creation of places of knowledge aiming at educating “toutes les classes de notre population mixte» and supported the Royal Society in its actions that would allow to « élever la morale et la capacité intellectuelle de toutes les composantes de la population»<sup>38</sup> (SRAS, 1883:44). His support was motivated by the conviction that nothing could be accomplished without education: “Sans morale et sans culture intellectuelle, la vie locale est incertaine, et les meilleures intentions des institutions politiques fonctionneront sans résultat »<sup>39</sup> (SRAS, 1883:44). The Governor ended his letter by inviting the Royal Society to support the Colonial Authorities in the project of increasing the number of reading places and libraries offering access to all.

The Mauritius Institute was established according to the European model of Natural History Museum: the Institute adopted the same functioning system by assembling the local scientific competences, the same categories of classifications and the European conservation norms and presents Natural History Collections from the local fauna and flora, from Madagascar, from the South of Africa and the neighbouring islands (Cheke, 2003). This Corpus of collections indicated the intention to document the local and regional environment and to make of the Museum, a place of exception. This national project absorbed the resources of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences

which worked towards the enrichment of collections of the only museum in the colony until 1900. At this date, a Committee of Directors, composed mainly of scientists among which a representative of the Royal Society, was created. This Committee was set up under the aegis of the Colonial Secretary, thus marking the shift to the colonial control and a change of status for the Institute (Cheke, 2003:200).

#### symbol of cohesion among the elite

The Institute received increasing financial assistance from the Colonial Power whose measures in favour of the promotion and the conservation of Heritage became more and more important. The colonial support granted to the institution gave the opportunity to reinforce the alliance with the Franco-Mauritian elite on various aspects: it allowed the dissemination of European culture as a sign of adhesion to the economic elite. Together, they undertake a common national project to establish an image of cohesion among the elite.

Evidence in support of this statement can be found in the Colonial Authorities' action in favour of the recognition of one of the founders of the Royal Society. The Colonial Power, through the Historical Records Committee, recognized officially the local contribution to the national project by inscribing the name of Julien Desjardins at the entrance of the building. This gesture aimed, at first glance, to pay homage to the action of one of the founders of the Society. However, Julien Desjardins was mainly a figure representing the sugar elite who opposed the abolition of slavery. Like most Planters, Desjardins was not in favour of ending slavery. As early as the 1820s, the Colonial Power attempted to implement laws to improve the living conditions of the slaves. These laws condemned all forms of bad treatment reported to the Protector of Slaves (Allen, 2001). Desjardins was accused. A report stated the following facts:

*"Notorious for harsh and cruel treatment of his slaves either by himself or his brother, the overseer. The complaints against them are more numerous than any other planter on the island and they are also notorious for opposing the slave laws with impudent effrontery and grossly insulting those charged with their execution."*<sup>40</sup>(Teelock, 1998:117)

The overwhelming influence of the Planters over the judicial and economical powers and on the District councils did not allow the Protector of Slaves, in charge of implementing the laws, to conduct his work successfully. The complaints only rarely reached the end of the judicial process, as the Lawyers acted in favour of the Planters and only supported "*just and founded*" cases reported by Slaves (Teelock, 1998:117). Through the same process, the condemnation of Desjardins was discarded in 1831.

This aspect of the life of Desjardins does not seem to have dissuaded the colonial authorities to pay homage to his actions in favour of the recognition of natural science and the promotion of knowledge. The colonial authorities retained the positive contribution of Desjardins and discarded the tensions that threatened the relations between the colonial and Planters' Elite. In this undertaking, the colonial power satisfies the need to mark the end of tensions with the sugar Elite after the abolition of slavery.

#### towards the consolidation of the elite omnipresence through the constitution of a local history

The motivation behind the creation of the Mauritius Institute was to establish a *place of exception* marking the European hegemony in the colony. It also signifies that the Elite wanted to create cultural institutions similar to the European model and was culturally rooted in western Empires ruling indisputably over the colony. This is also perceptible through the commemorative dynamics. In early years, the memory process operates to acknowledge the actions of the Elite in favour of the progress of the colony and creates a sense of belonging for them on the island. The memorial process primarily confirms the implantation of the colonial Elite and transposes the European references in the colony. These dynamics serves the legitimation - and affirmation - of their position. This process is soon consolidated by the expansion of the memory scope to signify the

Elite's omnipresence in the constitution of the island: the Elite naturally inscribe its contribution in a depiction of the National History.

This is also perceptible through the commemorative dynamics aimed at recognizing the local contribution of the elite. This is instrumental in the legitimating - and affirming - their position in the society. If there was a concern to consolidate a link with their homeland or country of origin, the memorial process seemed primarily intended to serve the implantation of the elite in the colony. In early years, the memory process operated to acknowledge the actions of the elite in favour of the progress of the colony and created a sense of belonging to the island. This process was soon consolidated by the expansion of the memory scope to signify the omnipresence of the elite in the constitution of the island: the elite wanted to inscribe its contribution through a depiction of the National History.

Illustration 3 Plaque commemorating the Battle of Grand Port  
*The plaque placed by the Historical Records Committee in 1896 by recalling that the French and British Commanders, wounded during the fight, were both treated in the same location.*



Source: C. Forest, TJC

## 5. REPRESENTING NATIONAL HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC SPACE: THE NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM - MAHÉBOURG

By the second half of the twentieth century, the setting up of the naval museum and later, the National History museum shows a specific object of concern: there is a need to portray the national history at national and international level. The establishment of the Mahébourg museum appears as an outcome of the memorial process taking shape with the SRAS and HRC. The memorial process is evolving to organise isolated events into a national representation of the past. As such, it confirms primarily the omnipresence of the Elite in the colony. Ultimately, it shows how the colonial State visualizes its past.

The museum takes shape as the combination of a major place of heritage where a depiction of the life of the colons is presented. The Elite create a link with the past by the evocation of its own experience. The museum institutes a national vision of history seen by western eyes. Only recently, the museography evolved to integrate more information on slavery and indenture and enabled an analysis of how the Museums Council perceives the experience of the former “dominated” population.

The study of Mahébourg museum offers an interesting insight as the first museum depicting the National History. Considering this, our purpose was to explore how the representations of slavery and indenture were integrated and how they were portrayed. In this undertaking, it seemed important to initiate our research by a short evolution of the museum to better appreciate the current vision of the National History elaborated upon the legacy of the colonial perception of the past.

### Historical background

#### the implantation of the museum in a historic building: the legacy of the colonial way of life

The choice of the building where a museum is set up is never meaningless. Representations of the past in most instances are presented in a meaningful location which stands as a reference for a nation or a group. The *Maison de Robillard* or *Château de Rivière La Chaux* was probably constructed by Granière de Kerlavant Family in 1770.<sup>41</sup> The house was donated to Gertrude de Robillard in the second half of the eighteenth century. The building was one of the finest places where balls and receptions were held for the Elite re-creating the social atmosphere of the European countries. The house belonged to the Commandant of the District of Grand Port, Jean de Robillard. For many years, the *Château de Rivière-La-Chaux* was the residence of Commanders.

Besides the *mundane* life of the elite, the house was also the location of an historical event during Ile de la Passe Battle of 1810, when the French defeated the British just before their formal capitulation of the island. The British Commander, Nesbit Josiah Willoughby, and his French alter-ego, Guy Victor Duperré, were both transported to the Château de Rivière La Chaux to receive medical care. This event was commemorated in 1896 by the Historical Records Committee which placed a plaque on the façade of the building.

The *Maison de Robillard* was part of the overall military and organisational system as the place of residence for the District Commanders.<sup>42</sup> It was also a place where the former rulers and the new-established British elite had the opportunity to develop courteous relations through formal events. In the event of Ile-de-la-Passe Battle, the residence became a symbol of the *entente cordiale* between the French and the British - thus echoing the situation in the new British colony, where the former *colons* of Isle de France retained the economic power, while the British ruled politically. In these circumstances, the white elite required British support to develop the colony in a favourable manner.

The event of Ile-de-la-Passe battle encouraged the Historical Records Committee to recognize the *Château de Rivière La Chaux* as a place of heritage by including it in the first list of Ancient

Monument in 1929<sup>43</sup> submitted to the Government in the context of the preparation of the Ancient Monument Bill of 1938. However, the *Chateau* is not included in the schedule of the National Heritage of Mauritius of the 2003 National Heritage Act. It is thus not listed despite the recommendation of the Historical Records committee dated early 1930 when the owner, the Belgian Naturalist Nemours Gheude, encountered difficulties to maintain the place and tried to raise funds by opening the place to the public. The Chateau was finally announced on auction in the press in 1936. However, the auction was not successful and despite its proposed status of Ancient Monument, the house did not receive specific attention until the end of the Second World War when the Government finally acquired it in 1950 to convert it into a Naval Museum.

The Museum was named "*Musée des Souvenirs Historiques et Navals*". The display consisted in the presentation of the remaining parts of the sail ships involved in the Battle of Grand Port and other items found in the waters of Mahébourg, when M. Austen, Port Engineer, conducted works to remove all vestiges of the battle in the mid-1930s.<sup>44</sup> The Museum also presented the furniture and objects of the room where the two enemy Commanders received care. Later, the bedroom of Mahé de Labourdonnais was recreated and a collection of porcelain from the East India Company were displayed. Most collections evoked the naval past of Mauritius and the way the colons lived.<sup>45</sup>

Illustration 4 Maison Robillard in the 1960s



Source: British National Archives: INF10/235, British Empire Collection of photographs Architecture, 1950s.

### The establishment of social time through representations of history

It is interesting to note that the *Musée des Souvenirs Historiques et Navals*, established in 1950,<sup>46</sup> refers to *Historical Souvenirs* stressing the need to remember the past. This is based on the principle that the museum exists principally to its display. The objective was to evoke the memory of the past through the presence of objects, but it seems that not much effort went into analyzing or documenting better the collections.

The Museum became the *National History Museum* in 2000, following a Cabinet decision of 17 March 2000 to present to the National Assembly the *Mauritius Museums Council Bill* to "*provide for the establishment of a Mauritius Museums Council for the formulation of policies pertaining to national or specialised museums; development, promotion and maintenance of national or specialised museums; and organisation of activities in the field of museology.*"

The Museum of National History was inaugurated on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2000. It currently presents a chronological evolution of the history of Mauritius from the Dutch period to the end of the British rule.

PART 3: French period: naval events

PART 1: Dutch period

PART 2: French period: way of life (evocation of slavery)
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Sketch of the display on the ground floor

PART 5: British period up to (Displays on slavery and indenture)

PART 4: Temporary exhibition space
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Sketch of the display on the first floor

The representation of National History is based on the evocation of the colonial experience through the collections. The social time - that we define as the recognition in the public sphere of the articulation of the national history - focuses on the life of the *colons* in the colony and related events. Other segments of the population are hardly represented. A rough estimation shows that 75% of the displays - excluding the temporary exhibition space- deal with the white elite's experience in Mauritius, while 25% present information concerns the former dominated population's past.

The main reason for this unbalanced representation probably lies in the fact that the Museum evolved as a result of the desire to present events that marked the lives of the *colons* on the island. The Museum was instigated by the white elite wishing to present, in a symbolic location, most objects saved from destruction by Mr. Austen. The Museum thus became a place devoted to the actions of the white elite which led the colony: their position of power enabled them to set up a public institution that transcribed their vision of the history of the island. The Museum is therefore a continuation of the concept of museum initiated with the Mauritius Institute, where the European vision supersedes.

The Museum of National History responds to the objective of a traditional museum of history highlighting the main battles and events induced by the ruling segment of the population. It is thus a good example of how the people in power engaged in the creation of museums and indirectly, legitimated their position at the head of the State. It is only after the year 2000 that the display was reviewed to integrate representations of slavery and indenture to allow a better appreciation of the Mauritian history.

### Representations of slavery and indenture

The first evocation of slavery appears in Part 1 where the focus is on the first navigators and the Dutch settlement, with a focus on the East India Company. The display also presents the Dodo as an extinct bird. This section is devoted to the Dutch experience and most the display explains the discovery of Mauritius, the settlement of the Dutch and their way of life on the island.

### A hierarchy of figures

#### RULING FIGURES

More interesting is Part 2 where the objective is to present the French period and the way of life of the French *Colons*. The overall presentation respects a chronological organisation that starts with the Act of "prise de possession" of the island in 1715, marking the settlement of the French. The room depicts the role of the main French figures, especially Labourdonnais, the first French Governor, Abbé de la Caille, Pierre Poivre, Lapérouse, the Amiral Pierre André de Suffren and Malartic, to name a few.

### Dominated figures

Besides the portrayal of personalities, the first implantation of people of Indian origin and of slavery are also presented through various exhibits. A *palanquin* is exhibited to recall how the conditions of transport were rudimentary and also, to show the role of slaves and a workforce recruited on contract in the early days of the colony. This also suggests how they were integrated into the society. The exhibit evokes the role of the *Rangan* who was a palanquin carrier and among the first labourers under contract brought to Mauritius. The text specifies that most of the indentured Tamil labourers were employed as Masons or Carpenters; and that people of Indian origin also engaged in other professions, such as Blacksmith, workers, *Coolies* (meaning *homme de peine*) and *Lascars* defined as Sailors.

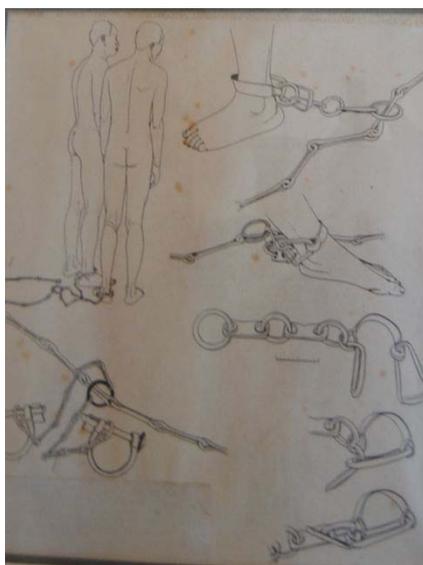
The presentation of the various sections of the population is striking; on one side are the personalities and leading figures of the island, while the other segments of the population under French rule are presented from a professional point of view. The parallel between the functions of each shows how the colony was organised and how the society had to function towards the development of the island, especially through the use of contracts to recruit people from India and through slavery. This underlines the position of the people as being dominated by the French *colons* described through well-known accounts.

Illustration 5 Illustrations of punishments given to slaves



Source: C. Forest, TJC

Illustration 6 Les Fers for Slaves



Source: C. Forest, TJC

But who is a slave?

The presentation of slavery is based on information from a scientific point of view, providing key dates and within the framework of the overall context of slavery in French colonies. This point of view offers a good historical understanding of how slavery evolved through time in Mauritius. It also allows visitors to grasp slavery chronologically within the history of Mauritius. The display presents:

- the first aborted abolition
- the *Code Noir*
- the *Camp des Noirs*
- 

Information provides an overview of slavery in Mauritius, starting with the first abolition of slavery during the French Revolution. However, it was not a success as the Colonial Assembly refused to abolish slavery in Mauritius, and it was legally re-established by Napoléon I. The presentation of the overall framework of slavery continues with information on the *Code Noir*, used in all French colonies to regulate slavery. The overall presentation of slavery ends with a depiction of where the slaves were living and in what kind of lodgings.

Following this presentation, the visitor has an understanding of how slavery functioned. However, it is to be noted that most representations of slavery mainly focus on the inhuman treatment that slaves received, thus underlining their legal position. When drawing a parallel with indenture or the first engagements, it is striking to see that it is the system of slavery that is referred to, rather than the experiences of the slaves as such. If little information is available in the archives, the positions that slaves held or how they took part in the functioning of the society are not expressed, although the active part that indentured labourers took in the society at that period is described. The episode of slavery is hardly individualised and does not transcribe the people's experience and thus, the Museum discourse makes a clear difference between slavery, where the focus is on the binding system, and indenture, depicted as an active contribution.

#### THE DEEP TRAUMA OF SLAVERY

The study of the discourse on slavery in the second room underlines the focus on the system of slavery, rather than on the experiences of the slaves. The part on slavery is in line with a general scientific discourse but does not transcribe the individual experiences of slaves in the Mauritian context: The presentation of slavery deals with:

- The punishment given to slaves (Noirs)
- The torment of the collar
- The whip
- Transport on the ships
- The slave trade

The institution of slavery is explained and we are provided with a clear description of the harsh treatment slaves had to endure. There is no individualisation of the slave as there is for the indentured workers, for which the cultural practice of *marche sur le feu* or a description of the jobs which they did are depicted in detail. Slavery is treated in a very different manner by referring to its modalities and by showing its trauma. This vision lacks the perspectives of the life of the slaves and how the conditions of slaves evolved in Mauritius. The possibility of being emancipated or a positive experience of a slave do not form part of the display which distorts the discourse describing slavery and indenture.

Indenture, or *engagement*, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is largely referred to when in fact, the portion of people coming as indentured, mainly from India, did not constitute the majority of the "dominated" population and were in much smaller number than slaves.

no future for slaves and ex-slaves

a negative past annihilating individuals

Further traumas imposed on slaves are depicted in Room 5, where the following elements are presented:

- A showcase provides details on the chains of the slaves;
- A showcase presents ankle fetters.

The discourse on slavery focuses on the traumas experienced by the slaves. The two showcases presented above, in room 5, do not directly address the storyline of the display dealing with British Mauritius. In this section of the Museum, the showcases are part of an overall presentation of the population of Mauritius, but does not present the slaves: the showcases only present the traumas which they went through.

Emancipation is also presented as a negative event in history and as only benefitting the rich and powerful: *“the abolition, proclaimed in 1835 in all the British colonies, eventually proved to be more beneficial to the masters than to the slaves, since the period of apprenticeship that followed was strangely identical to slavery, as the fundamental human rights were still being flouted.”*

According to the Museum discourse, slaves had no chance to escape their fate. The discourse focuses on the characteristics of slavery and fails to present - although it is done for others- who were the slaves and what they engaged in, after the abolition of slavery.

#### **Slaves are victims and not actors in the society**

A neighbouring showcase is devoted to the “Ancient trades” and presents how the “Indians” could engage in other economic and professional activities at the end of their contracts. Thus, many of them started new businesses or remained on sugar estates to work. They also became carters, hawkers, farmers, barbers, green grocers etc.

The parallel between the showcases on slavery and the experiences of the ex-indentured is unavoidable, considering their physical location. One statement is striking: The ex-indentured labourers evolved to access higher economic positions in society, while the slaves remained apprentices, thus ex-slaves, with no possible future, according to the Museum discourse.

In this part of the display that aims at presenting the early British period, an anachronistic parallel is drawn between the situation of emancipated slaves - the presentation is limited to the period of apprenticeship (1835-1839) - and the evolution of the ex-indentured labourers who started to settle and be independent through the acquisition of land mainly, in the 1860s-70s (indenture ended in 1910).

Not only is the parallel chronologically not justified, but the situation of the slaves after apprenticeship is not even referred to, while information on the evolution of indentured labourers provides clear indications of the activity they engaged in.<sup>47</sup>

#### **Slavery and indenture, the unavoidable comparison**

Considering this part of the display, one may wonder why placing slavery and indenture side by side: the general impression is that the experience of slavery was negative and indenture, positive. This display ultimately suggests that the portion of the population that suffered slavery never recovered from its traumas as they were bound - whatever liberty they were offered - to remain slaves. No evolution or progression of their status is possible according to the museum discourse.

This is particularly striking, especially when displayed next to a showcase presenting the lives of the indentured labourers after the end of their contract. The discourse is precise and shows how they managed to evolve in the society by engaging in other activities.

### The ex-indentured worker, a Heroic Figure

The presentation on slavery stops with emancipation that did not offer many opportunities to slaves. However, the discourse related to the experiences of indentured labourers continues further to conclude with the portrait of Duraisamy Vandayar (1862-1905), who is presented as one of the *"finest masterpiece of Mauritian heritage"*.

Duraisamy Vandayar was a trader and a "wealthy man" who succeeded in his professional life. He is presented as heroic figure, painted according to the principles followed by the traditional portraits of eminent personalities, before the advent of photography. The presentation of this heroic figure implicitly refers to the experience of indenture, since it serves as a conclusion to the line of discourse relating to the "Indians". The portrait is given the same consideration as the portraits of the Governors presented in the same room. The display implicitly suggests that the ascension of the ex-indentured in society led to dominant positions at the head of the State.

On the contrary, the experience of slavery and post-slavery stops with emancipation which did not offer many opportunities: according to the Museum discourse, it seems that the slaves population only experienced trauma. While the discourse on the evolution of people of Indian origin presents a favourable outcome, by showing the portrait of Mr. Vandayar, no such equivalent heroic figure is represented to convey the possible evolution of ex-slaves as individuals during the post-slavery period. This is even more striking when the portrait of Duraisamy Vandayar is displayed in a prime location, suggesting that his success reached the highest rank of the society as a wealthy merchant.

The experiences of the ex-slaves are ultimately depicted as unproductive for the society, since the evolution of the ex-slaves in society is not referred to. The experience of slavery is represented as a non-evolutional process, where the ex-slaves remained trapped in a fixed status, and where they were not empowered to evolve positively. The Museum discourse also fails to portray a positive experience of an individual - although it does for indenture- thus reducing the experience of slavery to a trauma, with no possible evolution for the ex-slaves.

Such portrayal may not be voluntary. However, it certainly conveys a general perception or, even, a stereotype. Further attention could have been given to the fact that slavery was not a straightforward experience for all and that ex-slaves also evolved to achieve a different social status and engaged in other activities. This representation of slavery has the effect of underlining how the experience of indentured labourers was positive and resulted in the "heroisation" of indentured labourers who managed to evolve positively, while the slaves had no future.

This leads to the conclusion that there was no outcome of slavery nor any future for the ex-slaves. The conditions of slaves are thus portrayed as one of no accomplishment and an inability to progress in the society. Only the traumas of the bad treatment remains the subject of focus, thus failing to show other aspects of slavery and how slaves later evolved to lead different in new lives.

### Perceptions and limitations of Mauritian history representations

#### The rule of representativity

The figure of the indentured labourer is represented as an active contributor to the sugar industry and the cultural life in a section on British Mauritius that also includes the presentation of people from other cultural backgrounds. The portrait of Log Choisanne (1706-1874), the initiator of the Chinese presence in Mauritius, is integrated into the display to represent the Chinese segment of the population, while information is also provided on Muslim merchants and other aspects of the Muslim community.

The Museum responds to the general policy of representativity, aiming to devote an equivalent space to the various cultural groups in order to establish an "ethnic" and "religious" balance. We may question this point of view in the context of the Museum's representations, since it ultimately

implies an unfair comparison between the various segments of the population who did not go through the same experiences in Mauritius. Each immigrated either through coerced or voluntary migrations, at different periods and lived in various contexts of life and had a diverse status. The experience of the past is thus not unanimous and cannot be drawn up as a straight line which would lead to the representations of stereotypes, thus failing to convey the idea that the experiences of all Mauritians towards the past are not equivalent.

#### **Personalisation of history: history through the prism of the individual accomplishment**

Such focus on the achievements of individuals (also portrayed through the presentation of busts of former Governors) or of a community, reduces the scope for understanding by visitors who cannot contextualise the representations within a broader context. For foreigners, this may lead to the visualisation of a small window on Mauritian History, as they do not have the knowledge of a local context to interpret what they see. From this point of view, the Museum does not actually transcribe an overall vision of Mauritian History. On the contrary, a Mauritian visitor may have the opportunity to relate to the objects in a broader perspective, but representations only lead to a focus on individuals or items serving the purpose of community's representation, when the presentation of their experiences in Mauritius could have provided a better appreciation of Mauritian specificity.

We may thus question the opportunities provided to visitors to help their interpretation of museum objects. In this instance, the general perception is that only "patches" of history are presented through personal accomplishments of figures complemented by views of Mauritius in the nineteenth century and by photographs of heritage buildings and few illustrations of the sugar industry. The general perception is that the display does not provide a coherent approach linking museum objects together. This results in creating a distance between the objects and visitors. The distance between the museum object and the visitors is a core element since in museums; the display ultimately addresses ways to reduce this distance by proposing elements allowing the visitors to understand by himself what he is given to see. On the second floor, we may want to question the core theme around which the display was organised and for which purpose. This question is fundamental since the original organisation of the display was maintained conveying specific messages while new elements were added to provide an additional layer of information that does not relate to the original display orientation. This may have deserved an overall re-organisation to better convey messages to visitors. A reorganisation would question what would be the best tools to allow a clear interpretation of history by visitors and avoid a scattered view.

#### **Nurturing stereotypes**

The presentation of the 'various types of Mauritius', drawn by Alfred Richard that depict the nineteenth-century vision of the Mauritian population is a good example. The drawings depict a set of 8 framed lithographs presenting examples of professions in British Mauritius:

- The vagrant (ex-slave);
- The wife of the small owner (of African origin);
- The Indian labourer;
- The Constable;
- The Chinese *Marchand*;
- "Marmite" or the Malagasy drover;
- The small owner (goods in a cart - African type);
- The Parsi trader.

Illustration 7 Wife of small owner



Source: Alfred Richard

Illustration 8 Small Owner



The fact that the lithographs of Richard are presented next to information on slavery and indenture is misleading. In this respect, the two sets of information - Richard's lithographs and showcases on slavery and indenture - do not address the same objective. Richard's lithographs refer to the way Europeans perceived the Mauritian population, while the showcases present a historical account of slavery and indenture. The two exhibits, therefore, relate to two different visions that would require a better organisation to be fully appreciated. Throughout this section of the Museum, we may want to consider what message is to be conveyed and for whom? Such questioning would assist in the elaboration of a better-constructed Museum discourse to convey clear messages.

The current perception, when one visits the second floor, is the absence of a line of evolution - not so much for the representation of the "Indian" experience - but for the other segments of the population. Therefore, the representation, presented in the absence of context of evolution, provides us with a scattered view of the Mauritian people, creating a segmentation of the different "types" of Mauritians. Therefore, the display fails to present a vision of the nation that was formed on the basis of common motives to settle in Mauritius.

We may also argue that the depiction of the various "types" conveys the idea of diversity. However, the display encourages a comparative perspective between individuals in the colonial context, thus failing to show the evolution of the society as a whole. We may want to consider the creation of a display that would express this intention to focus on diversity to better transcribe the rich cultural heritage of Mauritians and also provide hints of the ways in which unity led to the creation of an independent nation.

#### **The museum discourse and the notion of National History in Mahébourg museum**

The visit of the Museum ends with the section on the events relating to the Battle of Grand Port and other naval historical facts during the British and the French periods. This section provides an insight to transition between the French and the British periods in the colonial context, following the second part on the French period.

The configuration of the building does not allow the presentation of a linear history of Mauritius. However, when visitors enter this section, there is a clear understanding of the period referred to, thanks to the organisation of the display that presents the context leading to the establishment of a British colony in Mauritius.

At the end of the visit, visitors leave the Museum with a vision of colonial Mauritius. In this respect, this also leads to the question of what is the notion of National History in the Museum of Mahébourg?

The display is devoted to the presentation of the colonial history of Mauritius seen through the eyes of the white elite. The Museum of National History represents how the colonial elite evolved and lived in colonial Mauritius before the emergence of a ruling elite among the formerly dominated population. The notion of National History at Mahébourg refers to the genesis of the Mauritian nation from its beginnings to the early nineteenth century.

The Museum of National History thus addresses a fundamental part of Mauritian history that certainly deserves preservation and recognition. Nowadays, the notion of National History would deserve further attention, and should include the history of Mauritius from the early nineteenth century to the present day. However, we may want to discard the idea of including this recent part of Mauritian history in the present National History Museum which has its own overall theme.

## 5. EXPRESSING SLAVERY AND INDENTURE

The Mahébourg Museum was reorganised in the early 2000s and was certainly the Museum where the first representations of slavery and indenture were portrayed. Our research showed that it is precisely at this period that a concern for the representation of slavery and indenture started to emerge. The initiative of the National History Museum is commendable, in that it tries to recognize two silent episodes of Mauritian history but it was mostly directed in museums by the vision of the White elite. However, it is interesting to note that the need to raise consciousness of slavery and indenture was not only a Governmental concern. It was also supported by private initiatives during the same period. The chief example was the creation of "*L'Aventure du sucre*" which today is the most frequently visited Museum in Mauritius.

### From the National History Museum to *Aventure du sucre*: the formulation of the untold background of *aventure du sucre*

Inaugurated on 28 October 2002, *L'Aventure du Sucre* is the second private initiative that aimed at setting up a museum<sup>48</sup> and is considered as the first project of its kind in Mauritius by its instigators (Gufflet, 2003:4). The Museum is the result of the collaboration of Constance and La Gaité Sugar Estate Company Ltd., Deep River Beau Champ Ltd. and the Beau Plan Sugar Estate Company Ltd. The three sugar industry Companies joined forces to create *L'Aventure du Sucre*, presenting the history of the sugar industry in Mauritius and the evolution of its technologies. The idea emerged from the intention to convert Beau Plan Sugar Factory, closed on 22 July 1999 as a result of the centralisation of sugar production, into a museum, an initiative of Mr. Aldo Vallet, Chairman of the Company Sugar World Ltd.

The main purpose of the Museum is to evoke the history of Mauritius through the evolution of the sugar industry. For the instigators of the project, the history of Mauritius developed around the sugar industry (Fauque, 2002:6). This central theme is, thus, the opportunity to present an overview of how the country evolved. This shift marks a significant evolution in the way the history of Mauritius is approached. In museums created at an earlier date, the vision was focused on the lives of the former *colons* and not on a common binding dynamism leading to the creation of today's Mauritian society. The creation of *L'Aventure du Sucre* thus marks the emergence of a different vision of the past, especially when this vision was initiated by the descendants of the first inhabitants of the island and also, its former rulers.

According to literature, the concept was to create mainly a cultural and leisure place where the visitor can learn and entertained. The objective was also to preserve the memory of the sugar industry that largely contributed to the shaping of Mauritian identity. For Sugarworld Ltd., this states the need to promote History among Mauritians and tourists (Gufflet, 2003:5). The main motivation is also to develop Cultural Tourism and Eco-Tourism and provide new offerings to tourists, as the Tourism Industry is mainly centered on Mauritius as a place for beach and sea. Their aim is thus to convey that the country has a rich culture and to promote a "new image of Mauritius" as a cultural destination (Gufflet, 2003:8). Not only would *L'Aventure du Sucre* be a place of history, but it is also ideally located to attract a large number of visitors, since the converted factory is near the Pamplemousses Gardens that receive more than 220 000 visitors in 2002 (*Week-End*, 2002).

The project thus supports a new conception of the Museum in Mauritius by associating economic concerns with the need to promote Mauritian history in a wider perspective. The overall approach is presented as a philanthropic undertaking by the former sugar barons who wish to share a common heritage:

*"Trois groupes sucriers se sont réunis pour recréer l'Aventure du sucre [...] fruit de l'investissement de promoteurs privés issus du monde sucrier qui l'ont voulue et imaginée au service de tous, l'Aventure du sucre met en valeur l'âme mauricienne derrière le terme apparemment tout simple de "sucre". (Fauque, 2002:6)*

However, Sugarworld Ltd. does not deny that there are economic challenges, considering that the project involved an investment of 75 millions (l'express, 2002). *L'Aventure du Sucre* marks a major development for the notion of Museum in Mauritius. It is the result of concerted efforts from investors from the sugar industry who involved various competences, including Researchers, Historians, Architects, Interior Designers etc., to create a major cultural space devoted to the history of Mauritius. To achieve this goal, the creators remind us that they wished to achieve high standards in order to "fill in a gap"<sup>49</sup> in Mauritius, where no structure was devoted to the history of the sugar industry.

### The benefits of rupture

The concept of *L'Aventure du Sucre* is very much inspired by the project of *Stella Matutina*, initiated by Bernard Bachman, Museologist, which was a former sugar factory closed in 1978. The factory of Stella was converted into a Museum in 1991, with the support of the President of Reunion region (Vaxelaire, 2006). The concept of *L'Aventure du Sucre* is therefore not new, but inspired by similar enterprise aimed at converting former flourishing industrial sites into a tourist orientated places where the memory of the former economic forces is kept alive and where education becomes one of the main objectives.

In Reunion Island, *Stella Matutina* was one of the first initiatives to preserve the memory of the local industry and thus, a cultural place was defined as a Museum aimed at promoting and preserving the local past for the public. It is interesting to note that the word 'Museum' was deliberately banned from the marketing and promotional strategies of *L'Aventure du Sucre*. The Management of *L'Aventure du Sucre* explains that the notion of 'Museum' is not positive in Mauritius, as it is perceived as a static environment reserved for the elite. According to *Aventure du Sucre* Management Team, the notion of 'Museum' itself is an 'obstacle' to encouraging visits by Mauritians who are not actively exposed to cultural offers (Gufflet, 2003:11).

This viewpoint is open to debate as, on the contrary, foreign tourists may have difficulties identifying the nature of the place and questioning motivation to visit. Besides, Mauritians are not given the opportunity to associate the place with the concept of Museum. They, therefore, cannot appreciate in what ways modern Museums now address visitors in a totally new approach. *L'Aventure du Sucre* can be described as a profit-making *Museum* according to the definition of ICOM.<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note that its founders chose to change its appellation to prevent any affiliation with local or international Museums - thus discarding any continuity between the traditional Museums and *L'Aventure du Sucre* which is promoted as a more *democratic* place devoted to education for all.

*L'Aventure du Sucre* also creates a rupture with the past of the White Elite visible at Mahébourg or at the Mauritius Institute for example. The *Aventure du Sucre* detaches itself from any association with the former white Elite who established the first cultural institutions in Mauritius. The creators of *L'Aventure du Sucre* are the direct descendants of the white Elite and represent the former oligarchy of planters. However, they mark a rupture with their past: it is the first time that the descendants of Planters take the initiative to talk about slavery and indenture. The establishment of a rupture conveys the intention to reconstruct an objective vision of the past and ultimately, contribute to the national interest. The opening of the museum created a rupture in many ways: it offered a new vision of history based on academic justifications, involved substantive investments in culture and set out a new concept of *cultural place* devoted to local history.

### The museum experience: an overwhelming amount of information available

The visit of the museum is divided in eight main parts:

Part 1. Mysterious entrance;

Part 2. For a sugar taste ("Pour un goût sucré");

Part 3. "A l'ombre de la cheminée: le pavillon de l'histoire" [Eng: In the shade of the chimney: the History Pavillon];

Part 4. From cane to juice ("De la canne au jus");

Part 5. "Le pavillon des technologies" [Eng: The History Pavillon];

Part 6. From juice to sugar;

Part 7. Different types of soils;

Part 8. Sugar routes.

The Museum's storyline covers the entire scope of Mauritian History. It starts with the presentation of the geological formation of the island of Mauritius followed by first settlements. The first section ends with a chronology of events that marked the last four centuries on the island. The section on 'origins' is followed by an account of the importance of the sugar market considering that sugar was a refined good in Europe since 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Mauritius was not yet a sugar producer. This section stresses the shift from a scarce and refined good, reserved for the elite, to its consumption spreading among the population at large. This section only presents an overview of the use of sugar in Europe and describes as such, the main market destination of the sugar produced in Mauritius. It also presents sugar as a product from a European perspective. This section tends to valorise the contribution of Mauritius in the production of sugar, by stressing that sugar was a prestigious product that Mauritius was trusted to produce for the high European aristocracy.

The history section is presented after these two introductory parts and is followed by sections referring to the various technologies illustrated by machines preserved from Beau Plan factory. The final display focuses on the specificities of sugar cane. The Museum collections end with an account of the sugar routes throughout the world and its exportation from Mauritius until a recent date.

The Museum thus covers a wide scope of information, all related to the sugar industry. The concept of the Museum involved the development of a display containing an impressive amount of information available in the large space available in the former factory. This makes the Museum experience intense and demands a high degree of concentration from visitors. This is evident in the duration of the visit which exceeds an hour and a half, also the average rate of visitor concentration. The display thus passes visitors' expectations and also makes us overwhelmed by information.

The ambition to cover such a wide scope may not be the best strategy to enhance the visitors' experience. Indeed, the information deals with such a wide perspective that the core focus of conveying the essence of the Sugar Industry History may be lost. The random survey effected at *l'Aventure du Sucre* reveals that most visitors enjoyed the setting, but found that too much information was available and that it was difficult to take in a clear understanding of Mauritian History. This impression is also expressed on online forums:

*"Inconvénients: . . . dans un musée un peu trop foisonnant.*

*Les explications sont nombreuses. L'on a aménagé là un véritable musée de l'île Maurice, avec de longs textes bilingues (français/anglais) consacrés à l'histoire de l'île comme à celle du sucre, à la traite négrière comme à l'immigration indienne, à la botanique comme à l'agriculture.*

*Il y a là matière à s'instruire, le visiteur apprend par exemple que l'île qui comptait 60,000 habitants à l'arrivée des britanniques en 1810 reçut 450,000 indiens après l'abolition de l'esclavage, un apport massif de coolies qui explique que la communauté indo-mauricienne soit largement majoritaire de nos jours !*

*Mais l'abondance est excessive, il y a trop de textes, sur trop de choses, et l'on sature un peu, d'autant plus que nombre des explications données ici recourent celles*

*disponibles dans d'autres musées mauriciens (par exemple le Musée Historique de Mahébourg), ou ce que l'on aura pu découvrir de ses propres yeux au gré de ses visites.*

*Le touriste expressus aurait donc là de quoi combler entre deux séances de plages ses lacunes, en ayant une vision assez complète de l'île Maurice, mais je doute qu'il consacre alors le temps nécessaire à une visite exhaustive du musée, le touriste culturel trouvera en revanche nombre de redondances avec ce qu'il sait par ailleurs, et cette accumulation de textes n'est pas trop réussie, comme si l'on avait cherché à meubler l'espace plutôt qu'à monter un projet muséal cohérent.*

*Sans doute aurait-il mieux valu limiter le projet, et se restreindre plus au sucre, plutôt que de diluer le concept dans des digressions diverses [...]"<sup>51</sup>*

*L'Aventure du Sucre* display may have been better if it had chosen to focus on its central theme so as not to lose visitors through excessive information. This trend is also noticed in the History Section of the Museum. It has an impact on representations of slavery and indenture, since information displayed reveals the same ambition to cover the full range of information dealing with slavery and indenture. Thus, it sometimes fails to directly address the Mauritian experience and the close relation between slavery and indenture and the local context.

#### sugar industry: the federative element of society

The History Section called "A l'ombre de la cheminée" is introduced by a statement indicating that sugar, as a product and exported good, is a fundamental theme to explain the History of Mauritius. According to *L'Aventure du Sucre*, the exploitation of sugar is central to the formation of the Mauritian society:

*"C'est à l'ombre de la cheminée que s'est développée la vie historique et sociale de l'île". A chimney was "l'assurance d'un foyer de travail, d'une protection, d'un lieu d'échanges et de sécurité, de la vie de dizaine de petits métiers autour de la sucrerie. La cheminée c'était l'équivalent du clocher du village".<sup>52</sup>*

This text presents a sweetened vision of the conditions of life on sugar plantations in Mauritius. This also sets aside the coerced or "free" immigration waves to Mauritius. This statement waters down the conditions and experiences of slaves and indentured labourers in Mauritius. The vision presented here does not refer to the negative aspect of coerced recruitment and places the sugar industry as a major element contributing to the constitution of the society.

By underlining the predominant position of the Sugar Industry, it legitimates the initiative of constituting a Museum focusing on the Sugar Industry and sets aside the negative implications of slavery and indenture. The historical events and context, that brought the slaves or indentured labourers to Mauritius, are set aside to retain the 'positive contribution' of the Sugar Industry. This positive view helps to position the Museum within the Mauritian social context as a federative cultural place.

In this section, the role of the sugar aristocracy is also implicitly referred to as a binding element for the society. The plantocracy is referred to as a group wishing to offer protection. This vision discards the main objectives of the planters to recruit cheap labour to respond to industrial requirements. The discourse here focuses on an ideal interpretation of history where the sugar industry is central to the constitution of the nation. According to this vision, it has thus contributed to federate the different components of the society to constitute a nation. This introduction thus highlights the intention of the museum to retain positive accounts of the past: the main one being that the sugar industry was a federative element in the constitution of Mauritian society.

Slavery and indenture are referred to in the last part of the introduction entitled "À l'ombre de la cheminée" or "In the shade of the chimney". The shade may indirectly refer to the difficulties encountered by the dominated population throughout the History of the Sugar Industry.

## SLAVERY: A SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT

The representations of slavery and indenture are presented in the History section - Part 3 - entitled "*À l'ombre de la cheminée: le pavillon de l'histoire*". Slavery and indenture are presented within the large scope of Mauritian History, stretching from the Dutch settlement to nowadays. Representations of slavery and indenture account for 1.6% of the Museum and 10.5% of the section on the History of Mauritius.

The discourse is chronological: slavery is first referred to in the section presenting the first development of the island. The status of slaves is explained through the presentation of the *Code Noir* and '*Patent Letters*'. This is the introduction to a small section devoted to the History of Slavery in Mauritius, illustrated by texts and two screens showing a film on slavery in Mauritius elaborated by Claude Fauque, Museologist, in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, the University of Mauritius and UNESCO Slavery Route Project.

The story-line refers to:

1. the chasing of slaves in their countries of origin;
2. the acquisition of slaves on the African Coast;
3. the transportation of slaves;
4. the selling of slaves;
5. the health obligations of the masters towards the slaves;
6. slavery in Mauritius as forming part of a global economic system;
7. the institutional texts for slavery - *Code Noir* of Louis XV for Caribbean and *Patent Letters* of 1723 for Isle de France;
8. *Marronnage* in Isle de France;
9. the abolition of slavery and the setting up of the Slave Route project by UNESCO to construct the base of a common future.

In the film, the History of Slavery is presented from Antiquity to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This chronological approach supports a clear understanding of the nature of slavery and also of its presence in Mauritius, as this section is well documented and illustrated in respect of academic expectations. Slavery is presented as a global phenomenon and the Mauritian experience is considered from an international perspective. This discourse helps to understand the global phenomenon of slavery and ensures the quality of discourse; justifications are given for presenting in such details, the experience of slavery.

This display provides a scientific account of slavery that addresses facts versus memory. By resorting to a scientific discourse, the Museum responds favourably to the need to refer to slavery as a historical fact and serves a clear educational purpose. The scientific approach creates a clear link between the past and the present. This scientific discourse objectively supports the formulation of a traumatic experience. This is particularly important as the discourse on slavery refers to the inhuman conditions of the slaves and may give raise to emotional considerations, leading to contemporary demands. The scientific discourse is thus instrumental in formulating slavery as a historical fact. This stand discards personal misleading appreciations of slavery. In this respect, the scientific discourse recreates a clear link with the past. It helps to consider slavery with objectivity and sets a basis for the process of acceptation of slavery as a historical fact and as forming part of the nation's past. The trauma would need to be formulated to offer the opportunity to contemporary generations to accept and appropriate in a positive manner this part of their History.

### The local insight: a positive account on slavery

Slavery also appears in other sections which evoke indirectly the relationship between the slaves and their masters. A panel located in the section devoted to the advent of the Sugar Industry cites the example of Charles Telfair as an 'exemplary entrepreneur'. The introduction of the plough by Telfair in the sugar cane fields is presented as a major improvement in cane cultivation: *"Two years after, he [Charles Telfair] had already 120 arpents of sugar canes cultivated with the plough that his delighted slaves picturesquely called 'pioche b ef."*

The text indicates that to create an emulation among slaves, he [Charles Telfair] instituted plough competition in which the winners were *"largely celebrated by all"* dixit Telfair.

The example of Telfair highlights his actions in favour of slaves. These initiatives are depicted with emphasis on his intentions to ease the work of slaves during cultivation. Telfair is an emblematic character in the sense that he allowed his slaves to learn to read and write *"so as to enable them to read the Bible and write"*. *"Mr. Telfair is the only person in the Colony who permits elementary instruction to be given to his slaves"* (*Anti-Slavery Reporter*, No. 87, August 20, 1831). The conditions on Telfair's sugar estate are described as an 'exception' in the same report of 1831, in which the case of 220 complaints of slaves against their Masters are reported. Indeed, the action of Charles Telfair, Secretary to the former Governor Farquhar, is confirmed by Vicars who states that he *"has instituted schools for the children, and encouraged the pious exertions of different missionaries on his estates"* (*Vicars*, 1830:13).<sup>53</sup> Telfair also wrote *'Some Account of the State of Slavery at Mauritius since the British Occupation in 1810; in refutation of anonymous charges promulgated against Government and that colony'* in 1830, in response to the reports of the *Anti-slavery Monthly Reporter* that reported the death of 65,000 *"Black human beings have been put to death by a hundred holders of sugar estates in six years"* and *"the sheets of the Reporter containing accusations against Mauritius and Myself [Telfair]"* (Telfair, 1830:i).

Telfair refutes the accusations of the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* and presents himself as a fervent proponent of the improvement of the conditions of the Slaves:

*"Had the author given one redeeming fact, one observation, one argument, calculated to benefit the Slave, or to accelerate his physical, moral, or religious improvement, I should have been disposed patiently to meet the obloquy lavished on me; because something would have been done towards the completion of my favourite object, through a long period of life - the bettering of the condition of the Slave"* (Telfair, 1830:v).

He also advocated that his purpose was to contribute to the amelioration of slaves' conditions for the benefit of all - Slaves and Planters - considering the forthcoming abolition of Slavery:

*"I cannot longer remain in obscurity and silence. I am already at the bar of the public; and from them I expect a verdict that will cover my accusers with shame; and perhaps, will hasten the annihilation of that fraternity of which they appear to be convenient members. Lucky would be such a result for the cause they ostensibly advocate - happy for the Slave, who would thus be relieved from one great obstacle to his moral and religious melioration, which must precede his right to freedom- happy for the Master, who would feel security among men instructed in the truths of morality and religion, instead of beings immersed in brutal ignorance. Then, I should scarcely regret being exposed to the attack; because I should have a return for my labours."* (Telfair, 1830: vi)

According to Telfair, his actions have been largely criticised because they did not seem to be in line with the tradition by which Slaves were treated. His contribution was seen as a threat, rather than a positive undertaking:

*"My situation, indeed, is singular. The only reproach I have experienced in this Colony, was - that the measures I put in practise, for the improvement of my Slaves, were calculated to produce a rapid, hazardous, and fearful revolution. Some of the Planters*

*complained that I was adding the irresistible power of intellect to the preponderating physical force of the Negroes, and sad consequences were predicted; while, on the contrary, my anonymous assailant in London, contends, that my efforts have tended to brutalize and to destroy the slave population.” (Telfair, 1830: viii, ix)*

He further argues that *“the Slave has been raised, in many respects, to the rank of a European labourer; and he often possesses greater comforts, while his irksome toil has been changed into an easy task; indeed, nine-tenths of human labour have been replaced by eighty steam engines and sugar mills, by implements of agriculture of all kinds, and by beasts of burden, of which not less than 30,000 have been imported within five years, and nearly 11,000 since January 1829. the religious, moral and physical condition of the Slave has also advanced more rapidly, and already has attained a greater elevation than in any other colony during an equal time.” (Telfair, 1830:xi)*

The account presented in *L’Aventure du Sucre* support the actions of Telfair who asserts that:

*“It will be seen that my Slaves had, and have, better food and more abundantly supplied, better clothing and less occasion for it, better cottages, better bedding, better furniture, more recreations, and more money, than the home labourer.” (Telfair, 1830:xiii)*

This representation of slavery through the actions of Telfair present not only a positive account of the experience of slavery, but also illustrates how the *Masters* could contribute to the improvement of the conditions of Slaves. This representation highlights a positive relation between the ‘dominated’ and the ‘dominant’. This is in line with the position of the Museum founders to show the positive contributions, besides the historical facts based on accounts of the indisputable inhuman experiences endured by the Slaves. It thus serves the general discourse, underlining the positive contribution of the Sugar Industry in binding all segments of the population to form a nation.

**indenture: a process derived from the abolition of slavery and the need of the sugar industry**

The discourse on indenture is inspired by the same vein: the display provides us with a scientific account leading from the abolition of slavery to the establishment of a new system of recruitment called *indenture*. Mahébourg National History Museum’s representations failed to portray a clear evolutive process. At *L’Aventure du Sucre*, the process of evolution is clearly transcribed to help an overall understanding of the Mauritian experience. What we identified as Section 12, clearly states the mutation experienced by the society after the abolition of slavery. The discourse is organised as follows:

#### 12. A new organisation

- Abolition of slavery;
- A society in mutation;
- The question of compensation;
- The devotion towards Père Laval;
- The social problems;
- New immigrants.

This part introduces a film on indenture to which a space equivalent to the section on slavery is dedicated. The film on indenture provides us with the experience of indentured immigrants from a scientific point of view. The discourse carefully transcribes historical facts supported by archival evidence. The film is complemented by the following panels introduced by the title *Indenture*:

- Panel 1: Recruitment and immigrant tickets – pre-indenture;
- Panel 2: Suspension of immigration between 1838-1842;
- Panel 3: As from 2 November 1834, transport India – Mauritius;

- Panel 4: About families;
- Panel 5: Arrival and recruitment by the sirdars and planters;
- Panel 6: Definition of the contract;
- Panel 7: End of indenture: emergence of villages and “petits planteurs”;
- Panel 8: The sugar estates;
- Panel 9: Work in sugar cane fields.

The panels -as in the case of slavery - provide an additional layer of information fully detailed. It also stresses the contribution of the Planters in these terms:

*“Les anciens propriétaires sucriers ont non seulement permis la construction des temples et des autels près des sucreries, mais ils y contribueront en y apportant une aide matérielle.”*

The few experiences of Planters allowing the setting up of temples on sugar estates become here a general statement. The display recalls only the positive element and once more - as it did for slavery- stressing not only the positive contribution of Planters, but also the existence of a *close* relationship between the Planters and the indentured labourers, even though the Planters are portrayed as the ruling *Aristocracy*, thanks to whom slaves or indentured labourers could evolve favourably. Planters are, in this sense, those opening a window on a better life for the dominated segments of the population.

#### A positivist discourse

We may argue that this provides a positivist account of the slave and indentured experience, but we should also underline the hidden intention to create a vision of the past that does not divide, but rather intends to unite. Through the display of *Aventure du Sucre*, the process of *memoration* is interesting as it provides with a scientific approach thus annihilating all misinterpretation and indirectly implies an acceptance of the drifts of the sugar industry, ex-recruiters of slaves and indentured labourers. The scientific account largely contributes to the creation of a link between the past and the present that provides an objective insight of the experiences of the current population. It sustains the contribution of each in the formation of the Mauritian society.

This is further supported by the intention to situate the Mauritian experience within international historical context. It certainly helps a better appreciation of the local history within the broader 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century context and ultimately places the Mauritian experience as a consequence of worldwide phenomenon. This helps to minimize the focus on the “negative” past that could lead to social divisions and offers a perspective to better appreciate the local past. This process is particularly important since the recognition of a “negative” past is instrumental in allowing the evolution of mentalities and serves the development of a national history that can ultimately receive general acceptance.

There is in the undertaking of *L’Aventure du Sucre* a process of recognition that never took place before. The *Aventure du Sucre* is the first museum to devote a full space to the experience of slavery and indenture in the perspective of the evolution of Mauritian society. This helps to provide references for the *memoration* process by expressing the untold and accepting the “dark side” of the sugar industry. In this respect, the museum is a place of reference serving a vision of unity. This is attested by the conclusion part of the section on history entitled “*Et tous forment un peuple*”.

#### Appropriation and reconciliation: constructing a common vision of the past

The example of *L’Aventure du Sucre* shows how the descendants of the former oligarchy choose to formulate the past. Their stand is to provide positive accounts of local history in the perspective of international context. This provides an account of the “negative” events outside the local context that helps to conciliate a national vision of the past. Ultimately, this process of conciliation leads to remember why the Mauritian society took shape and evolved to form a nation.

This example also shows how the memorial process inherited from the colonial authorities has developed. The memorial process recognizes other segments of the population and remembers how

their experiences have contributed to shape the nation. The memory process is no more excluding the contributions of the population as a whole but expresses a vision in which all segments interacted and shows how experiences were interlinked in the making of a society. In addition, it also states that the descendants of the former Elite generate a vision of the past that accepts the colonial undertakings which affected the population. In this sense, the acceptance of the past acted towards the evolution of the memorial process in museums and led to serve the contemporary dynamics of nation building.

### Le musée du peuplement

Similarly, it was interesting to consider how the descendants of the former dominated population appropriated the past to shape a memorial framework. Our research showed the emergence of a new conception of the past in the 2000s with the creation or reorganisation of museums. It is precisely in these years that the Mahébourg Museum was renamed *National History Museum* and that *L'Aventure du Sucre* was created.

To this analysis, it seemed important to add the contribution of the *Musée du Peuplement*. The museum is located in Mahébourg, at Pointe Canon. It is the most recent expression of a vision of National History. It was set up as part of the celebration of the bicentenary of the battle of Grand Port in 2010. The museum was open as part of the celebration activities and generated a significant number of visitors making this undertaking a real success.

The museum is composed of two parts: a building houses a permanent exhibition presenting the history of Mauritius from the Dutch period to nowadays. This section is complemented by an outdoor section called "*village historique*" composed of reconstitutions featuring human figures providing several *tableaux* of past Mauritian life.

The organisation of the display in the permanent exhibition is problematic on various accounts. The presentation of Mauritian history is elaborated upon the combination of several panels prepared for former temporary exhibitions. It also includes exhibits acquired from *Mauritian Heritage*, a private exhibition space formerly located in La Gaulette that no longer exists. In addition to this, large paintings depicting sceneries are displayed to create cohesion between the exhibition panels and exhibits. The panels, exhibits and large paintings are combined and displayed in the various sections composing the museum. The main impression when entering the exhibition is an overwhelming availability of information not necessarily related to one another.

The relation between the exhibits is problematic: they were all initially conceived to address the core line of specific temporary exhibitions. All the display elements were assembled to form the *Musée du peuplement*. The current presentation relies on elements not originally elaborated to address the purpose of the museum and consequently, fails to respect an overall coherence. The reorganisation of exhibits from three different exhibitions assembled together impacts on the quality. It results in the perception of a scattered presentation of national history where a core line of discourse would have ensured coherence and conveyed clear messages.

Slavery and indenture are illustrated through the evocation of Le Morne Cultural Landscape and Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Sites. The presentation highlights positive contributions: it shows how the slaves resisted their condition and how indentured labourers engaged in plantation work to later evolve in society. These representations are associated to general information on slavery and indenture formerly presented in *Mauritian Heritage*. It provides a general account on slavery and indenture systems. However, each event is presented in dedicated sections which are not related to one another by a transition. Each section thus provides an insight on a specific aspect of Mauritian history. The flow of information is therefore not elaborated according to a core line of evolution but rather offers insights on the experiences of the various cultural groups. The lack of transitions between each part is detrimental to an overall understanding of how the various groups interacted to shape the Mauritian nation.

The "ethnic" segmentation in the display questions the notion of national history. Traditionally, the Mauritian society is divided in segments. This was the policy of the colonial authorities who

differentiated the various cultural segments in distinct categories. This supported the policy of representativeness which is still in force today. However, we may wonder if this approach serves favourably a national vision of Mauritius; especially in this instance where the display focuses specifically on national history seen through the representations of each segment of the population.

National history is represented through panels and contemporary paintings that do not present an authentic account of Mauritian history. The various large size paintings depict various sceneries portraying a contemporary vision of the past but are not actually productions of the past: they are as such an interpretation and not an objective account of the past. This questions the notion of authenticity as the permanent exhibition area is a contemporary creation. The information provided on panels is counterbalanced by the various interpretations of the past. In this respect, it is subject to subjective appreciations of what the past may have been. It is further complemented by the *village historique* sceneries which are an interpretation of how the slaves or indentured labourers may have lived. In this sense, it may be misleading as it does not rely on authentic evidence of the past but rather on a subjective interpretation. This is the reason why we may want to call the *Musée du peuplement*, a cultural park, as it is not in line with the traditional definition of *museum*:

*"a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment."*<sup>54</sup>

The *Musée du peuplement* provides with interpretations of the past produced in 2010. The institution is not as such a museum as museum collections are not conserved nor exhibited. We may want to consider that it is a space devoted to interpretation. In this respect, it is particularly interesting to appreciate how the past is perceived. In this instance, slavery and indenture are referred to as difficult experiences but the outcome is positive: the ex-slaves and indentured labourers have managed to engage in new lives.

The *Musée du peuplement* interprets the past to remember the positive accounts: its dynamics are very similar to those of *Aventure du Sucre* activating the positive memory to establish a new approach to the past. This approach results in the recognition of a common heritage: it is the first instance in which the heritage deriving from the population's interactions is represented. Although we may question the authenticity of the display, the *Musée du peuplement* is marking a major shift in the memory process: it formulates the existence of a common heritage shaped by the various groups in action. The *Boutique Chinoise* or *séga* become the emblem of Mauritian identity because they are identified as elements forming part of Mauritian culture. *Séga* is presented in a reconstitution of the *Village historique* and shows a silent aspect of the slaves' lives in museums.

The *Boutique Chinoise* is reconstituted besides the life on sugar estates. It is the element retained to symbolize the major role of the Chinese descent population in the economic and social development of society. Both representations are relevant examples of how retracing the origin of heritage brings to light the cultural inputs brought by the slave population, retailers and small traders and how they contributed to the creation of a national heritage ultimately leading to the shaping of Mauritian culture.

Illustration 9 *"Boutique chinoise" or Chinese shop*



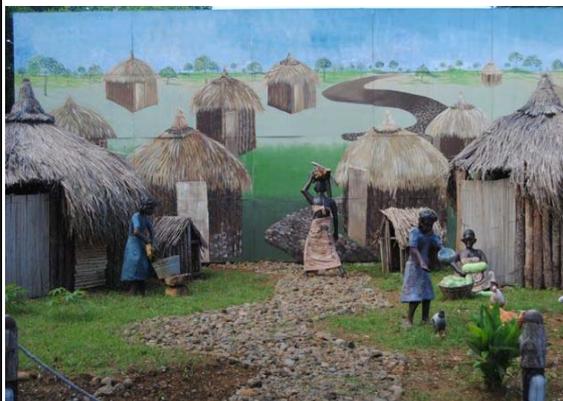
Illustration 10 Segua Dancing by slaves



Illustration 11 Planter's house



Illustration 12 Slave village



Source: Corinne Forest, TJC

### The need for a national history: the emergence of a new memorial framework representative of the majority

Through tangible representations of the past, the *Musée du peuplement* establishes roots for Mauritian culture: in the *Village historique*, representations identify a clear legacy, from the origins of heritage to its contemporary expressions. This link allows the population to relate to the past and activate a process leading to the legitimization of their past experiences. This process probably explains the significant success of the *Musée du peuplement* as part of the celebration of the battle of Grand Port: the audience was provided with tools empowering the appropriation of the past. This marks a shift in the memorial process and shows that the appropriation of national history is in process.

The memorial framework in museums was inherited from the colonial Elite thus discarded the former dominated population and did not speak to the majority's aspirations. The memorial process is now taking place through new actors who are descendants of the lower classes of the society. The memorial framework undertakes a complete redefinition. The portrayal of National History now intends to include the memory of the majority of the population and not just a small segment of the Mauritian population. In this undertaking, the representations of slavery and indenture hold a major place as the experiences of more than 90% of the current day population.

### Towards the national and international recognition of slavery and indenture

This shift in the memorial process is particularly noticeable since the years 2000. The account of the Government programme delivered on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2000 confirms the intention of the Government to "*foster cultural values of the Mauritian community*". In the programme, the section dealing with the cultural policy announces the creation of a Mauritian Cultural Centre "*with the aim of promoting and cementing National Unity*".

The promotion of culture is presented as a main priority and the Government takes initiatives aiming at fostering the image of a national unity. This objective materialises through the renaming of Mahébourg Museum as the *National History Museum*. This marks the appropriation and the recognition of colonial history together with the intention to establish cultural references for all. The shift in the memorial process is in action. It is marked by significant initiatives such as declaring 1st February as a public holiday "*to commemorate the abolition of slavery*" and 2nd November as "*the termination of indentured labour*"<sup>55</sup>. The President further mentions that "*a programme of activities will be elaborated to highlight the maximised through the promotion of local folklore, traditions and theatrical performances*".

In the address of the President of the Republic on Friday 29 July 2005, the Government programme reaffirms the intention to head towards the creation of a common cultural entity:

*"In order to face oncoming challenges, to reverse the current socio-economic decline and to deliver on Government's commitment to economic efficiency, equity and social justice, the very first and crucial step will be to rally all Mauritians around a national project to garner all our willpower and energy to shape a prosperous national where our unique cultural mix is a source of pride and inspiration rather than a platform for compartmentalizing the nation".*

The actions proposed to achieve this goal in the culture sector are as follows:

*"Our historical heritage is of great value and is in need of greater understanding, promotion and dissemination. In this context a Genealogy Institute and an Immigration Museum will be set up. Government will also regroup the National Archives, the National Art Gallery and the National Library under one roof. In order to address issues pertaining to historical grievances, government will set up a Truth and Justice Commission to establish the facts regarding slavery and indentured labourers and to make recommendations with respect to reparations for the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers".*

The Government programme clearly states the need for the recognition of a common past to support the concept of National Unity. The establishment of the Truth and Justice Commission is in this respect a measure showing the concern to think about the Society and its past. The Commission conveys that the Government feels the need to establish a clear link to the past and institute a common cultural framework that serves the reflection around a core question: who are we as Mauritians ? It forms part of overall considerations aiming at establishing the roots of the nation to face future challenges and ensure the sustainable development of the Mauritian nation.

### **Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne : a change in perspective**

The Government has taken action to recognize the silent past of the nation. Heritage projects initiated in recent years are an interesting indicator to appreciate how the shift in the memorial process has operated. This shift may be explained by the need to preserve the past disappearing with the fast growing development but also, raises the concern to situate Mauritian culture facing globalization. Mauritius as many other countries expresses its concern to retain its cultural roots and specificity. In part, it results in turning to the documentation of under researched aspects of Mauritian history to better appreciate Mauritian culture.

In this undertaking, slavery and indenture were a major focus. The government engaged in proposing the nomination of the Le Morne and Aapravasi Ghat on UNESCO World Heritage List. The Aapravasi Ghat is a former Immigration Depot where almost 70% of the ancestors of the current day population arrived as indentured labourers. Mauritius is the place where the British chose to evaluate a new system of recruitment called *indenture* after the abolition of slavery in 1833. On international scale, the outstanding experience of Mauritius as the test case to evaluate the viability of the indenture labour system makes of Aapravasi Ghat, the international symbol of indentured labour in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As such, the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006.

Le Morne Cultural Landscape is the symbol of resistance against slavery. Naturally difficult to access, it provided a place of shelter for the maroon slaves escaping the colonial oppressors during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Le Morne has become an international symbol of resistance against slavery. Indeed, large numbers of slaves were brought to Mauritius which was an important stopover in the Eastern slave trade. In 2008, Le Morne cultural landscape was internationally recognized as a World Heritage Site.

With the inscription of the two sites on the World Heritage List, Mauritius changed the vision of the past inherited from the colonial Elite. The past is no more the prerogative of a small portion of the population. The memorial process now works towards the appropriation of the history of the majority of the population and institutes fundamental references relating to their identity and origins. This process shows the importance of establishing roots in a land of migrations where most of the ancestors of the population came through coerced migrations. As immigrants - slaves or indentured labourers - references to their homeland or cultural background were absent in the colony. Both slaves and indentured labourers had to recreate a cultural environment serving their well-being through the affirmation of their position in society.

The experiences of slavery and indenture were particularly traumatic. It involved the annihilation of the individual's identity in the case of slavery and for indentured labourers, the involvement in harsh working conditions to survive. The collective memory remembers slavery and indenture as a negative experience. Both parties engaged in these experiences were ever hardly considered nor recognized by the colonial authorities in the memory process: there was no place for them in the colonial contribution bringing western knowledge and education. Memory was dictated at institutional level by the Elite who systematically ignored the positive contribution of ex-slaves or ex-indentured labourers and failed to recognize their cultural identity.

Today, the memorial shift retains positive accounts of slaves and indentured labourers. Through the recognition of Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne, the memory process operated through historical justifications enabling the appreciation of the scope of slavery and indenture as historical facts not only related to the local context, but also inscribing itself in an international perspective. This certainly encourages the memorial process to focus on positive contributions. Locally, Aapravasi

Ghat can be identified as a place of origin for indentured labourers as they first landed at the Immigration Depot to enter Mauritius. Similarly, Le Morne is considered as a place of refuge for Maroon slaves and in the contemporary context, became a symbol of resistance. Both World Heritage Sites reconstruct the idea that both sections of the population were forgotten but not silent, and have in fact largely contributed to the formation of a pacific and dynamic society.

In this case, slavery and indenture take a tangible shape through the symbols of Le Morne and Apravasi Ghat. Each experience has a dedicated memorial space where both experiences can be formulated and recognized for the first time at national and international level. The status of World Heritage Site allowed an equal recognition. This status requires factual justifications for inscription which leads the memorial process to rely on facts and objectivity. This may not discard passionate debates on the state of slavery or indenture but ultimately leads to unequivocal recognition at institutional level.

We may also argue that both sites can be perceived as an “ethnic” heritage: slavery is associated with the Creole segment of the population while indenture refers to the Mauritians of Indian origin. Opting for World Heritage Status allows recognition by an external apparatus and supports the legitimation of this national heritage outside the national boundaries. The recognition generated by an international body thus reinforces the importance of this heritage and ultimately encourages the adhesion of the entire population. The presence of two World Heritage Sites on the national territory establishes an emblem of what constitutes the Mauritian history and identity. Their authenticity or meaning may be contested but still their status as emblem of Mauritian society is not challenged.<sup>56</sup>

The inscription of the two sites is certainly marking a significant step in the constitution of Mauritian memory. It established a formal recognition of slavery and indenture and also initiated the formulation of common national memory. In the Mauritian context, the example of the two World Heritage Sites shows how common references to the past can be established in a multicultural society where the various segments of the population may refer to different appreciations of the past. In the instance of Le Morne and Apravasi Ghat generally subject to ethnic considerations, the external recognition allows the establishment of values beyond the national dynamics. The local values generated by the two sites in the Mauritian context are modified when they are considered by an external regard. The local values are re-interpreted beyond potential contestations or misleading considerations. As such, it encourages their general acceptance.

This also shows that the values invested in the two sites were not established. It is their recognition as World Heritage Sites that anchored their meaning in the Mauritian context. In a multicultural society, the ethnic considerations arise. The international recognition thus allows the negotiation of the values attributed to sites and prepares for a common acceptance of the proposed heritage because it has international values that transcend the Mauritian context.

## 6. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON REPRESENTATIONS OF SLAVERY AND INDENTURE

### Establishing common references in a multicultural society : key questions

Our research on representations of slavery and indenture in museums and at historic sites showed that common values were elaborated in the current Mauritian context. However, the memorial process leads to the establishment of values that may be challenged. Indeed, the multicultural society regroups an *ensemble* of people from various cultural background that lived different experiences in Mauritius. It is precisely this experience that gives meaning to their presence. This experience thus requires legitimacy and acceptance from the other components of the society. These dynamics trigger a reflection on how best to represent and recognize the contribution of the Other and establish a fair balance?

Since the 2000s, the Government has promoted a policy of representativity of the various cultural groups by, for instance, the creation of cultural centres. In the wide literature referring to multiculturalism, the Government’s undertaking is challenged on one main account: the policy of

promoting specific cultural groups to recognize their contribution also leads to acknowledge a division in the society. Various authors argue that reinforcing the differences may ultimately lead to division rather than to unity. However, we may want to believe that there cannot be national unity without recognition of the Mauritian diversity. This seems to constitute the backbone of the nation as the Mauritian nation would have never existed, if the various waves of migration had not reached the island. It is the richness brought by immigrants that gave raise to the constitution of a nation.

### The elaboration of a national policy for culture and heritage

The Aapravasi Ghat stands for a symbol of immigration to Mauritius: the immigration depot received indentured labourers mainly arriving from India. The site can be considered as point of origin for the descendants of indentured labourers. In the same manner, Le Morne is a reference for descendants of slaves who were brought to Mauritius from the Dutch period until the abolition of slavery in the colony in 1835. Both refer to two major waves of immigration to the island and establish references to explain the origins Mauritian society. The World Heritage Sites anchor references that are essential to establish continuity from arrival of immigrants to their descendants today. The link to the past helps considering that both segments of the population were actually instrumental in the shaping of the society and legitimates their presence.

Although they may be perceived as “ethnic” symbols, the example of the World Heritage Sites shows how it is possible to formulate common values within the local context. Had there not been an international framework of recognition, the values attributed to the World Heritage Sites may not have been fixed and understood as a common reference for the nation. To some extent, the local interpretation includes the tendency to reduce heritage, the intangible in particular, to ethnic representativeness and in these instances, this perception closes the door for the appropriation of heritage by the overall population. If an object of heritage is only perceived as an ethnic recognition, it fails to address the cultural significance of heritage and prevents legitimation. In this respect, the local dynamics would benefit from the elaboration of a framework for culture and heritage that would establish commonly accepted values. It would include a vision for National Heritage helping to recreate a link between the population and its heritage. A policy on heritage and culture seems essential to assist the population in the appropriation of the past which ultimately contributes to national unity. The Government programme 2005-2010<sup>57</sup> specifically addresses this problematic:

*“Our cultural pluralism has always been a source of great pride. Government will focus on reinforcing our multiculturalism, on celebrating our cultural and linguistic diversity as well as our multiple identities. Government will not follow the past practice of compartmentalising and fragmenting our social fabric, and will instead implement policies aimed at promoting national unity”.*

### Public consultation: a key to sustainable development of heritage

In the course of our research, we attempted to find answers in a document stating a general policy for culture and heritage. The outcome was not successful. Intentions and objectives are formulated but are not inscribed in an overall policy ensuring an integrated approach to heritage. Considering that the memorial process was always established by the colonial Elite until recently, we believe that the Mauritians themselves hold the answers to what they believe are the common values of the Mauritian society. Our survey revealed that the perception of heritage does not necessarily meet the nature of heritage in place. Indeed, the highest rates defined Mauritian heritage as *séga* music (20%) and Mauritian cuisine (16%). Archaeological and World Heritage Sites come in third position and museums, next to last. Considering this, we may want to think that the Mauritian population still feels that their heritage - mainly intangible- is not represented in museums or in cultural spaces. For 42% of the people polled, Mauritian history was not well represented in museums. This tells us that the past reconstructed in museums may not meet the expectations of Mauritians and thus discards appropriation.

However, we noted that there is an interest in Mauritian heritage for the majority of the people polled. Eight six percent also thinks that heritage contributes to the valorisation of the Mauritian

culture. An unanimous thought was that heritage does contribute to national unity for 100% of the interviewees. This survey shows that heritage does have a role to play in the constitution of common references for the nation according to Mauritians. Our research raises a number of problematic to achieve this goal among which the need for the population to appropriate its heritage. The survey revealed that there is a discrepancy between what the population identifies as a prime heritage and what is recognized as such. The survey reveals that the population identifies as heritage, objects symbolizing the cultural interactions of the various cultural groups. It is precisely representations of cultural syncretisation that are hardly ever present in museums when the audience would identify with such representations.

In this instance, a cultural and heritage policy responding to the population's aspirations seems essential to insert heritage in social dynamics. In this respect, the consultation with the population is a condition to ensure a sustainable approach to heritage appropriation and development.

### Considerations on national history in museums

Our research revealed that the appropriation of the past by the population is in process. However, this process takes place if the population is provided with tools allowing their appropriation of the past. The appropriation of the population cannot be considered as an isolated process but as a mechanism forming part of a memory process activated by actions of the State or private entities.

In this respect, it was essential to focus on museums to appreciate the opportunities given to the audience for the appropriation and recognition of its past. In museums, we noticed that scientific legitimization played a major role in understanding slavery and indenture: it helps the formulation of the population's experiences and legitimates the presence of each segment in the society. For these reasons, the scientific discourse in museums seems to best serve the purpose of common acceptance. The scientific objectivity allows the institution of a strong link between the past and present that is the condition for appropriation. The process of appropriation is necessary to shape an overall memorial framework. We may question the selection of past representations in some instances but our research showed that the choices were made to transcribe positive contributions that will serve the advancement of the society. This shows the intention to discard uncomfortable debates questioning the presence of other cultural groups. It rather promotes the legitimization of their presence to constitute a national entity.

We also noticed that there is a national history of Mauritius but it is immersed in other display objectives. This is detrimental to the quality of the past reconstructed. Messages are superimposed and do not focus on a deep reflection on how to best reconstruct a national history. The National History museum in Mahébourg is the remnant part of the colonial past and as such, presents the contribution of the colonial Elite to the national history. *Le Musée du peuplement* is an interesting initiative as it produces contemporary depictions of the past that leads to the recognition of intangible heritage. However, it fails to represent the interactions that led to the formation of a unified society. *L'Aventure du Sucre* was also presented an interesting account of national history but it was merged with the history of sugar as a central theme and largely expanded the scope of national history to details creating a confusing environment for non-experimanted visitors.

These initiatives clearly showed that there was a need for National History in which the representations of slavery and indenture play a central role as the evocation of the majority of the population's past. Throughout our research, we noted that representations of slavery and indenture only represent a small portion of the total of public space available in Mauritian Museums. The list of museums visited and considered within this report is as follows:

- The 'Postal Museum';
- The 'Blue Penny Museum';
- *L'Aventure du Sucre*;
- The 'Mauritius Institute';
- The 'National History Museum';

- The 'Folk Museum of Indian Immigration' (closed - visited in 2005 and 2006);
- The *Musée du peuplement*.

This selection was chosen in view of the potential presence of representations of slavery and indenture. In most institutions, the representations are part of an overall display guided by core themes that are not directly addressing the experiences of slavery and indenture:

- The Postal Museum presents the development of the postal services from the Dutch period to the British period and refers to the experience of slavery through the evocation of the Black Postmen or Slaves delivering mail to the inhabitants.
- *L'Aventure du Sucre* is devoted to the History of the Sugar Industry in Mauritius;
- The 'National History Museum' refers to the experience of the *colons* on the island;
- The 'Blue Penny Museum' focused on philately and on the Mauritius Commercial Bank collection masterpieces;
- The 'Mauritius Institute' is the oldest museum on the island and refers to Natural History in Mauritius and in the Indian Ocean Region;
- The 'Folk Museum of Indian Immigration' focuses on the migration of Mauritians of Indian origins;
- the *Musée du peuplement* is a contemporary account of the various migrations.

Our research shows that slavery does not have a dedicated space for expression, when indenture is largely considered. We may want to consider that 70% of the Mauritian population are descendants of indentured labourers, while above 30% are related to the experience of slavery. In this perspective, the voice of the majority can explain the presence of a museum namely the *Folk Museum*, devoted to the history of the Indian origin segment of the population. The *Folk Museum* was set up to depict the immigration of the ancestors of people of - Indian origin to Mauritius. The Folk Museum is part of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute founded in 1970, two years after Independence, by the Government of Mauritius in collaboration the Indian Government. The aims of the Institute is to "*provide the academic and cultural basis for the promotion, consolidation and dissemination of the Indian traditions*" and "*contribute to a developing Mauritian culture by creating an awareness of the richness of the Mauritian heritage*"<sup>58</sup>. The general concept behind the creation of the MGI is to promote the Indian culture. However, it is not the only area of focus. Mauritian Studies are also part of its programme and promote the need for interaction between various cultural heritages.

However, we may question the place of the other cultural groups: the experience of slavery or even commercial merchants who migrated to Mauritius are hardly referred to. In fact, we come to a statement that only the former elite or the current group leading the country have managed to set up spaces representing their history and their experience on the island. Considering the multicultural background of Mauritius, it is interesting to envisage a museum that would restore, on factual ground, the experiences of all the components of society. The Government proposed, on several instances, the creation of a Museum of Immigration. This concept would deserve further attention so as to define how the experiences of all could be depicted?

The interaction existing between the various cultural backgrounds of Mauritius would be an instrumental element in showing the cohesion of society. What is more, the presentation of common cultural references, such as Mauritian cuisine or *séga* dancing, seem essential to establish the fact that there are not only differences and diversity - there is also a unity. The elaboration of such a museum would require an integrated approach to define the key concepts of the museum and also, ensure that the past restored speaks to Mauritians.

### The creation of a museum of immigration

Indeed, immigration is the common experience of all segments of the population. The creation of a museum of immigration - proposed in the 2005 Government programme - would offer the

opportunity to retrace the experiences of all Mauritians and most important, would address how each wave of migration has settled and interacted with other segments of the population. This would provide an account on how the society was formed and evolved - as a whole - to form the nation. The proposal for a museum of immigration also lies on the opportunity to show how the diversity has operated to create specific social and cultural expressions - such as *séga*- which are hallmarks of Mauritian culture.

The intention would be to rely on scientific discourse to recreate a firm link with the past that can bring an understanding of the current day Mauritian society. We may also want to retain in this initiative the benefits of presenting elements in a wider perspective to underscore the Mauritian experience and establish clear references to the past. Indeed, the perspective brought by the international context offers a vision outside the compound of local dynamics and helps in the establishment of an overall understanding of the local experience. The local experience is appreciated within a larger framework already established and recognized. In this respect, it helps to highlight the essence of local experiences and the existence of national values.

What is more, we firmly believe that such undertaking also requires effective management and maintenance resulting from the establishment of a cultural and heritage policy. Indeed the restitution of the past to society also supposes optimal managerial framework to ensure sustainability. This is also instrumental in the preservation of collections constituting a major part of Mauritian heritage. This is the reason why this report also includes MUSEUM MANAGEMENT considerations. The improvement of MUSEUM MANAGEMENT would certainly be an answer to the appropriate formulation of National History.

## **Museum management: a key to optimal restitution of the past**

### **The Mauritius Institute: an overview**

This part of the report focuses on the Mauritius Museums Council management to better appreciate how museums are managed and how collections are conserved. Several audit reports and recommendations of experts were formulated in the past to improve the functioning of museums. The Mauritius Museums Council (MMC) was established in 2000 to replace the Mauritius Institute Advisory Council (1985). The institution was founded in 1880 as the Mauritius Institute and its objectives were

*“to establish and incorporate a public institute, a public museum, and a public library for the purpose of promoting the general study and cultivation of the various branches and departments of arts, sciences, literature and philosophy. The Mauritius Institute functioned as a national scientific and cultural institution mainly dedicated to carrying out research and disseminating knowledge. Several learned societies were incorporated within the Mauritius Institute in the past.”<sup>59</sup>*

Nowadays, the Mauritius Institute has developed to be responsible for the management and the development of the Mauritius Museums Council, an institution created to coordinate and oversee the activities in the National and Specialised Museums. The public library section is not referred to in the new objectives formulated in 2000 and the mission was redefined as

*“to collect, preserve and use in a sustainable manner the Mauritian cultural heritage for the purpose of developing interest and pride in; increasing knowledge and understanding of; and promoting appreciation and respect for the heritage throughout the republic of mauritius and internationally”.*

The MMC was created to focus on Museum Management. To respond favourably to this mandate, the MMC works to fulfil the following objectives:

1. lead and encourage the formulation of policies in the field of Museology;
2. develop, maintain and promote national and specialised museums;

3. conduct and control the affairs of national or specialised museums and coordinate their activities and the services which they provide;
4. develop and maintain a National Collection, as well as keep and maintain a National Register of objects and specimens in the National Collection;
5. promote the continuous flow of information to the public regarding the professional activities, programmes and projects of the Council and National or Specialised Museums;
6. promote the use of the resources available at National and Specialised Museums for educational purposes and for research.

These objectives were guided by the vision of the MMC *“to be a centre of excellence in the quest for and dissemination of knowledge on the collective memory and in the preservation of the cultural and natural heritages of the people of the Republic of Mauritius and to be a source of inspiration for posterity”*.

The MMC's Board has the mandate to oversee:

1. National Museums, namely the Natural History Museum in Port Louis and the National History Museum in Mahébourg;
2. Specialised Museums namely:
  - Sir SSR Memorial Centre for Culture, Port Louis;
  - Robert Edward-Hart Memorial Museum, Souillac;
  - Sookdeo Bissoondoyal Memorial Museum, Tyack;
  - Frederik Hendrik Museum, Vieux Grand Port;
  - Postal Museum, Port Louis;
  - Museum of Indian Immigration, Moka.
3. The MMC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Millennium Monument at Wootun.

The vision and objectives of the MMC were indicators to evaluate how museums and their collections are managed in the current context and consequently, to propose recommendations for the improvement of MUSEUM MANAGEMENT. Indeed, although the MMC was established eleven years ago, it seems that the heritage it was entrusted to manage is currently at threat on various accounts.

### The threats to national heritage

The Mauritius Museums Council was a topic of concern on several occasions. The minutes of proceedings of the National Assembly in 1996 notify that:

*“On a constaté que le taux de décomposition des documents originaux, des spécimens zoologiques et des objets en métal était important.”*<sup>60</sup>

The Audit Report for the year 2001<sup>61</sup> also draws attention to the fact that:

1. *“The Board of the Mauritius Museums Council was constituted only in March 2001. Section 23 (2) of the Act stipulates that the Council shall, within one year of the date of coming into force of the Act, offer the officers serving the Department, the opportunity of being transferred to the Council. However, no such offer has been made.*
2. *There is no clearly defined policy for the acquisition of exhibits. I was informed, by the Ministry, that the Council is presently working on a collection policy, which will include acquisition.*
3. *Recording of collections was not satisfactory. It was difficult to ensure completeness.*
4. *Museum collections were not properly conserved, protected and maintained. The MI is not equipped with a conservation laboratory/workshop.*

5. *The MI has a collection of some 90 paintings. In 1987, the paintings were examined by an expert from the Victoria and Albert Museum of London, who reported that the paintings were "still salvageable and well worth conserving". The paintings were not adequately protected and they were instead exposed to light, humidity, dust and even at times rainwater. Also, there are no adequate facilities for displaying, storing and conserving these paintings.*
6. *Under a 'convention de financement' signed with the French Government, 33 paintings belonging to the Institute were restored by a French Restorer during the period July 1995 to August 2000. At the time of audit, some 60 paintings were still awaiting restoration, of which 35 required major restoration works.*
7. *During an inventory carried out by the MI in 1993, 11 paintings were found missing. In November 2001, the Ministry informed me that three of them have been located and searches are still going on for the remaining ones".*

Following these statements, a visit took place on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 at the Mauritius Institute to assess how the Mauritius Museums Council had progressed to offer a better management and conservation of its collections and also, appreciate the resources at hand to allow improvement.

### Cataloguing of museum collections

Good MUSEUM MANAGEMENT requires the instauration of basic managerial tools. The main tool is the cataloguing of collections which includes measures to operate the legal entry of collections in the museum, the documentation of objects and ensures their appropriate conservation by referring to recommendations for conservation and to the documentation on collections' restoration.

Our first objective was to evaluate the cataloguing system in place at MMC as it is the base of MUSEUM MANAGEMENT. In 2000, an inventory of all the museums' collections (under the purview of MMC) was established on paper sheets. One copy of the inventory is kept at the Mauritius Institute and a second copy in the museum concerned. The inventory consists of individual record sheets per object which are kept in a library specifically devoted to collections management.

The A4 catalogue sheet regroups the following index:

Date

Inventory records Sr. No. ....

1. Object Description
  1. Object category/species
  2. object name
  3. local name/title
  4. material
  5. dimensions
  6. condition
2. Object Management
  1. Museum Department
  2. current accession No.
  3. acquisition method
  4. acquisition date
  5. acquisition source
  6. permanent location
3. History of the object
  1. producer
  2. place and date of production
  3. locality of collecting
  4. collection/expedition
  5. collection field No.
4. Documentation

1. related accession No.
2. catalogue No.
3. conservation/restoration file
4. loan
5. image
6. others

This sheet regroups the main data constituting a professional collection inventory. However, it is problematic on several accounts:

- the Museum does not possess an Entry Book consigning all entries of Museum Collections;
- the quality of the description is poor and does not allow to retrace the object in the collections;
- the description does not include a photograph of the object instrumental in providing evidence of its presence and allow its identification; this is particularly important in case of loss or theft as it allows judicial enquiry;
- the inventory sheets are not secured and kept as isolated sheets in a file referring to specific museums;
- the quality of information available would require further study and details as most of the inventory sheets are not complete and only contain few information;
- such inventory renders cross-checking difficult; matching the sheets with objects may be problematic considering the quality of information;
- the denomination of the objects are confusing and would deserve the elaboration of a proper arborescence establishing proper denominations. This would ensure that an item is always designated in the same manner and not by several different names;
- in general, the information provided is very basic and no other references to further documentation is available;
- there is no computerisation of the inventory that would tremendously help Collections Management.

Overall, the documentation systems fail to address the basic requirements of Collections Management. There is, nowadays, a standard documentation system agreed by Museum Professionals throughout the world. At the MMC, the objects or group of objects are not catalogued in an Entry Book. This is particularly problematic as the archaeological collections kept at MMC are only catalogued by Archaeologists and do not officially enter collections through the Entry Book.

The Entry Book marks the entry of an object in the Museum Collections. Whether it is a gift, purchase, loan or enquiry, the object is recorded on a numbered Entry Form which is completed in the presence of the donor or vendor who then signs to certify that it is a correct record and thus signifies that the object was not acquired illegally. The purpose of the Entry Form is both to acknowledge receipt of the object and to ensure that information from the donor is not lost before a full record is made.

It seems that there is confusion between the role of the entry book and the accession register when both registers have a different function. The accession ledger at MMC seemed to be a combination of Entry book and accessioning data when each should be separated registers. The ledger does not provide with a description of the object which can be problematic to identify objects in collections. In the context of the MMC entrusted to manage several museums, the creation of an entry book and accession register per museum would certainly encourage the improvement of collections management.

The action of accessioning marks the formal acceptance of all acquisitions (including gift, purchase, or bequest) into the museum collection. Each object or group of objects, to be kept by the museum

is entered in the accession register: it is the most important part of the documentation system. It has three main functions:

- It assigns a unique number to each object;
- It describes each object;
- It gives the history and provenance of each object.

The register constitutes the original document consigning accession. A copy of the accession register must be created and kept in another place so that information is duplicated to reduce the risk of disappearing. In this process, an ICOM number or accession number is attributed to the object and inscribed in black ink on the object. However, it seemed that not all objects had the accession number inscribed.

This accession process is complemented by the creation of a permanent label attached to each object bearing the permanent identity number. To ensure an optimal collections management, the accession number is also entered in the Entry Book so that correspondence can be made and the object can be retraced. The cataloguing is completed by a card catalogue assigned to each object. The card catalogue consists of individual cards kept in catalogue number order in a metal card-drawer or on a computer program.

At MMC, the Curator informed that the elaboration of cards is currently in process. The cards presented to us contained the required the generally agreed index information but again, we filled in with little or vague information. It should contain seven elements:

- the name of the Museum;
- the identity number;
- the name of object-classification;
- the entry method (donation, find, purchase or lender);
- the source of entry (donor, vendor or lender);
- the date of entry;
- the history of object.

During our visit, it was only possible to assess the quality of the card catalogue based on few examples as the exercise was in process. However, we noted that the card catalogue was also elaborated on separate sheets and kept in files. This is particularly problematic when it involves collections management as this implies that there is at present no reference catalogue in place. Indeed, the inventory sheets do not provide accurate information to ensure appropriate management and the card catalogue is not yet completed.

This is particularly problematic on one main account: the basic tool for collections management is not established. This does not provide the MMC the capacity to ensure optimal management of collections and also, does not consign firmly the existence of the objects in the museum's collections. This means that if any object is lost, stolen or destroyed, the MMC would be in a difficult position to state that loss, theft or destruction actually took place. This does neither empower the MMC to establish a system that would prevent such thing to happen.

This supports the statement of the audit report - published ten years ago- stating that "*Recording of collections was not satisfactory. It was difficult to ensure completeness*". The analysis of the collections management clearly showed that the system in place does not respond to the basic requirements established worldwide for MUSEUM MANAGEMENT.

This is problematic when the MMC is entrusted to keep a total of 37,000 objects in its storage areas and 3,000 on display. The personnel deplore the absence of a computerised system that would help them in the daily management of collections. Indeed, the management of collections presented in various locations would require the establishment of a catalogue for all museums placed under the

responsibility of the MMC. The absence of a computerised system makes the tasks of the personnel very difficult especially when the staff is not specialised in this field.

The interview of the staff revealed that the technical staff had no training in collection management. The Curator and the Conservation have a scientific background respectively in biology and chemistry. Considering that museology is a specialised professional field, it is difficult to expect that the staff be empowered to achieve the completion of the cataloguing. Cataloguing is the basic element allowing an optimal management of museum collections and requires a specific training by experienced professionals.

In this respect, this also raises the need to have resources specifically trained in museology. The staff at MMC informed that they received a training in preventive conservation when the priority - also underlined by the audit report of 2001 - is to ensure that the personnel be trained in collection management. At present, the staff is not in a position to address the shortcomings related to collections management as they were not trained to receive the basic knowledge of MUSEUM MANAGEMENT.

The recommendations for improving the collections management would be:

- to create an entry book starting with new collections entering the museums, mainly to avoid confusion and the consignment of approximate information leading to confusion;
  - to maintain the accession register and improve its content by adding a description of the objects;
  - to create an arborescence of terms to designate objects in a systematic manner by the appropriate terms and ensure that identical objects are referred to by using the same terms; such arborescence is available in museum collections management softwares and are also available on the internet through ICOM or AFRICOM's websites;
  - to acquire a software for collections management that will allow the combination of information contained in the inventory sheets and in the card catalogue as it is the case in most museums today. Indeed, the software automatically generates individual cards for collections objects;
  - to ensure that all objects are photographed; the photographs would thus be included in the software;
  - to train the staff in collections management as a main priority;
  - to enlist the services of professional Museologist / Curator to ensure capacity building and sustainable collections management;
- to empower technical and scientific staff trained in collections management with sufficient executive power to ensure the progress of work.

### The collections policy

The issue of collections management is also raised when examining the collections policy. The collections policy is the indispensable document addressing the museum policy in terms of collections management. The collections policy can be defined as follows:

*"Statement of the subject matter of a collection, its temporal and geographical range and limits and any criteria as to material, conditions, size, quality, relevance or other factors for inclusion in the collection, together with terms, procedures and forms under which acquisition (gift, loan, bequest, purchase) or deaccessioning may occur, conditions of ownership, ethical commitments and uses of the collection". (Lord and Lord, 2002:498)*

The collections policy of the MMC is a six page document that only provides with an overview of:

- the types of collections;
- accessioning process;
- inventory sheet and card index;
- de-accessioning.

The MMC collections policy cannot be considered as a professionally elaborated document. The first page provides with a broad introduction. Generally, the collections policy states the purposes of the collections policy for the museum and also, its mission statement.

This is generally followed by a description of the collections available in the museum(s). The paragraph on "types" is referring to the nature of the collections that the Mauritius Museums Council - including all the museums under its purview-is entrusted to preserve and manage. The purpose of this part is to state the number of objects, in total or per museums, falling under its responsibility. It also fails to describe precisely the nature of the collections kept by the MMC.

The standard collections policy generally presents as its first part all the elements related to the acquisition of collections. In MMC's collections policy, we note general considerations on questions to be addressed when considering acquiring an object but the collections policy fails to:

- address whether the MMC accepts acquisition by donation, bequest, purchase or transfer;
- define who is the authority giving the right to acquire collections or objects;
- establish criteria for evaluating the acquisition of objects in each museums;

This is problematic as the person or committee responsible for acquisition does not have the basic elements required to evaluate whether an object is worth acquiring. This would include, in general instances, a chronological range, geographical delimitations, criteria for discarding objects, materials, size (if relevant) and quality of the objects, and the relevance to the existing collections. This is generally part of the collections policy to ensure coherence in the collections and also, the consolidation of the significance of the existing collections. The criteria also ensure that the objects are not acquired illegally.

- Establish the existence of an Entry Book.

In the second part, standard collection policy provides with guidelines for accession into the permanent collection. In MMC's collections policy, this part only refers to the accession number and states that the objects will be examined by the Conservator before being catalogued by the Curator. It does not mention:

- that accession is the means by which objects are to be kept permanently unless deaccessioning or disposal process (to be included in the collections policy) take place;
- that the eligibility relies on a set of criteria;
- who is the authority allowing accessioning;
- the nature of the catalogue records;
- that each object should be documented.

The documentation part is indispensable. It states in which documents the information about the objects should be consigned and also, indicates that written records should provide a summary of why the object was acquired and accessioned. The collections policy should also mention that the records will document the decision process including how the acquisition criteria were applied. The MMC's collections policy only mentions the inventory sheet and the card index. It ends by two

paragraphs on de-accessioning. This section only provides a definition of de-accession and a general principle. However, it would need to address the following issues:

- authority for de-accession;
- the guidelines for de-accession of purchase, gifts and bequests;
- de-accession procedure;
- conditions for de-accession by destruction;
- the procedure following disposal.

The six page document of MMC does not take into consideration the loans and deposits of objects from other museums, public institutions or private collectors. This section should be added to the present collections policy to address:

- the process for incoming loans and deposits;
- the guidelines for outgoing loans meaning the objects that could possibly be lent to other institutions;
- the authority regulating loans and deposits.

What is more, the MMC's collections policy fails to address major elements regarding the collecting guidelines, the collections care, the access to collections and ethics. Therefore, it would be recommended to consider the following elements to produce a professional collections policy for MMC:

- general rules for collecting;
- collecting procedures;
- collecting area;
- collections care including:
  - conservation rules and policy;
  - object condition reports;
  - restoration guidelines, criteria for approval of restorations and documentation of restorations;
- access to collections;
- ethics.

In conclusion, the collections policy does not provide the necessary framework for an optimal management of collections. This confirms why the core process for collections management is not in place. This is problematic regarding the points mentioned earlier but also, raises another major issue: the collections policy does not include a conservation policy for collections. This ultimately questions one of the core missions of MMC to conserve the collections when in fact, the collections policy does not address how collections should be conserved and does not either provide a conservation policy for national collections.

### Conservation issues at the Mauritius Institute

The conservation issues at the Mauritius Institute require specific attention. During our visit, we noted the absence of a conservation policy instrumental in ensuring that national collections are kept according to best standards. This situation requires urgent attention especially when the deterioration of collections was already noted in official documents in 1996 and 2001: this was more than ten years ago<sup>62</sup>. Considering this, our main concern was to evaluate whether an improvement could be noted.

In the permanent exhibition area, we noted that the basic rules of conservation are not in place. This includes guidelines for conservation of collections and the establishment of indicators. The indicators for conservation are the monitoring of temperature and relative humidity which indicate whether the conservation environment is stable. The variations in temperature (T) and relative humidity (RH) are the main factors of damage and decay. This is the reason why a thermo-hygrometer - measuring both T and RH rate - is generally placed where collections are present.

At the Mauritius Institute, the museum galleries are equipped with thermo-hygrometers. However, the RH and T are not measured in the storage area. This is problematic since it does not allow the monitoring of the collections' environment although natural history collections are fragile and require specific care. Indeed, the natural history collections are particularly vulnerable when they are exposed to UV, high temperature and high relative humidity. The general guidelines for their conservation recommend that:

- filters or curtains be installed to block natural light;
- natural history collections should not be exposed to lights producing more than 50 lux;
- soft ventilation be available in showcase;
- showcases and collections be cleaned regularly to avoid dust deposits leading to the development of micro-organisms and moistures;
- national history collections should be kept in environment with low temperature and controlled Relative Humidity.

These basic norms could not be identified in the permanent exhibition area. What is more, the figures for RH and T provided by MMC were also a major subject of concern. The average rates are 52.5% of relative humidity and 28°C. To ensure optimal conservation, the temperature should not exceed 30°C in the galleries. Considering that the figures indicate the average rate per year, we can imagine that the temperature can easily reach higher figures in the summer. Tropical countries like Mauritius, 22-28°C would be the appropriate temperature which should not exceed 30°C.

Regarding the RH, the same remark applies when the norm recommends a percentage below 55%. The norms recommend that the relative humidity does not exceed 60% especially concerning natural history specimens considered as very fragile objects. Unfortunately, we could not appreciate the extent of variations which would have indicated the maximum rates. Considering these two elements, the recommendations for conservation in the galleries would be to:

- install air conditioning system with filters preventing the intrusion of city pollution;
- ensure that UV are filtered;
- ban the use of bulbs producing more than 50 lux; an alternative would be to monitor closely the exposition of natural history specimens to light through the respect of the commonly recognized calculation system for the emanation of lux<sup>63</sup>. Natural history specimens are considered to be very sensitive objects. The norm is 150.000 lux.hours and it should not go beyond 200 000 lux.hours/ year;
- the display of objects should take into consideration their fragility and individual requirements for conservation.

Another shortcoming was the conservation of objects in the storage areas. The MI has three storage areas. The objects are kept according to their nature in three different places:

- Natural History Collections 40 m<sup>2</sup>;
- Paintings- 30 m<sup>2</sup>;
- Section for the Wet Collection - 50 m<sup>2</sup>.

We noticed that the basic rules of conservation were not in place:

1. no air conditioning to monitor high temperatures;
2. no thermo-hygrometer measures the rate of relative humidity or temperature in every storage space when these are the two basic indicators of conservation;
3. the storage area is not protected by a false ceiling to close the space;
4. the preventive conservation norms establishing the measures to better preserve objects in storage areas are not in place;
5. objects are often accumulated and not properly maintained by devoting enough space;
6. The organisation of the storage area does not consider the separation of fragile objects from those requiring less attention;
7. fragile objects are exposed to daylight producing high rates of ultra violet thus impacting negatively on the preservation of their original colours and on their internal organic structure;
8. there is no guidelines establishing access to collections nor space devoted to the study or conservation of collections.

What is more, the storage area is located in random places where the space was made available. There is no clear policy for the storage area. The general statement is that a conservation policy is required urgently to ensure the preservation of the most important museum collection in Mauritius now facing threats.

## CONCLUSION

The issue of Heritage Management is a main object of concern. The management of heritage is instrumental to ensure its preservation and also, the restitution of the past to the population. In this section on general recommendations, it seems essential to recommend the setting up a national policy for heritage and museums. This is the core document addressing the vision, the goals and the proposed orientations for the future. A policy document stands for the starting point to the elaboration and implementation of an integrated management for museums and heritage. The present management certainly requires improvement and also, the support of expertise in the field. Indeed, heritage and MUSEUM MANAGEMENT are two specialised field of competence and should rely on appropriate professional resources to ensure the sustainability of heritage.

The elaboration of a policy document would also be the opportunity to consult the population on its vision of heritage. The integration of consultation results would also activate the process of appropriation by the population. The heritage and representations of the past should indeed meet the adhesion of the population to contribute to nation building. The same process could apply to museums. A reflection on the nature and content of museums could also be initiated as our research showed that most museums were inherited from the colonial initiative and recent museums demonstrated that there is an ambition to depict national history but core questions are not necessarily addressed. One main question would be how to represent national history? And for whom?

In recent years, Mauritian nation has shown a growing interest for heritage. It materialized through the development of heritage projects and the constitution of various entities promoting the preservation of heritage. This concern shows that the nation is in demand for the preservation of its past and for the recognition of national past. In the present configuration, heritage could offer keys to the population to promote their identity in a context of globalisation and reinforce the national identity.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of this report, we attempted to raise a number of issues related to museums and heritage in general to produce recommendations. The following section summarizes the points raised in this report and formulates recommendations aiming at proposing elements for the recognition and the sustainability of heritage and museums in Mauritius.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HERITAGE IN GENERAL

### The need for national policies

- The creation of a policy for heritage - cultural and natural- tangible and intangible- would set the base for the development of an integrated management of heritage in Mauritius;
- The population should be consulted to consider their vision of heritage considering Mauritian diversity. The creation of a green paper fostering consultations with all segments of the population would be an initiative enabling to gather views on values invested in heritage by all Mauritians;
- The policy for heritage would support the reinforcement of the legislation for the protection and promotion of museum collections and heritage - this to allow an optimal management and also the integration of existing policies for tourism, environmental or cultural policies.
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### The need for trained resources and professional management

- The current management of museums and heritage sites showed the necessity to consolidate, if not create, a strong technical pool empowered to preserve, manage and promote heritage;
- Training of all staff and capacity building to create a national technical pool of technicians in heritage field and MUSEUM MANAGEMENT and conservation;
- The administrative management of heritage institutions should be complemented by strong technical competence to optimize the functioning of the institutions; it would also ensure the sustainability of heritage institutions and an optimal preservation of national heritage;
- Heritage and museums need to be managed by a scientific and technical personal having clear knowledge and experience in this field. Such institutions would benefit from a better development and organisation by empowering the technical and scientific staff to become managers of such institutions instead of the traditional administrative line of authority not versed in such specialised fields;
- Revalorization of the heritage field by providing better conditions to employers: there should be a valorisation of technical and scientific staff as they are the appropriate resources to manage heritage places or museums and thus leading to an optimal management of resources and a better management of heritage sites and museums;
- To consolidate an integrated management system for heritage led by a pool of technicians centralizing all heritage data and ensuring the coherence of projects undertaken for effective results and optimize resource management.

### The need for research and the promotion of history

- Privilege a scientific approach for the documentation of heritage and museum collections in order to recreate a link to the past; the scientific approach supports the appropriation of the past by the population at large;
- Promote history and other disciplines involved in heritage documentation and research to provide the nation with scientific vision of the past thus allowing the dissemination of knowledge.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MUSEUMS

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- A national policy for museums is strongly felt to set out objectives and guidelines for MUSEUM MANAGEMENT;
- To create a national inventory of all heritage collections and sites accessible to all by using latest software technologies adapted to heritage and museum environment;
- Proper research schemes should be established for the study and documentation of museum collections; full documentation on museum collections should be established to help their interpretation, their presentation to the public in the perspective of their historical context and allow to retrace their provenance for better monitoring and management;
- Consolidate the existing structures for museum and heritage management by providing professional training leading to certifications in the field of heritage management and museology rather than creating new institutions;
- Establish a communication policy to respond to public expectations: regular audience surveys, publications of the catalogue of collections, publication on the museums and their main masterpieces, creation of website.
- Establish a communication strategy for all museums to better promote their collection and also, disseminate knowledge as stated in ICOM definition of museum as a fundamental role for museums as they are established with public funds and present national collections, therefore, they should serve the public interest by having a dynamic public programme and educational activities attracting visitors from all walks of life.
- The creation of a National Museum of Immigration is proposed to anchor the origins of the Mauritian nation and provide a nationwide sense of belonging;
- Engage a reflection on the notion of national history. This could lead to consider the establishment of the following exhibition spaces to support the restitution of the national past to the population:
  - Museum focusing on anthropology including intangible heritage;
  - Interpretation centre on indenture at Aapravasi Ghat WHS;
  - Interpretation centre on slavery at Le Morne.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MAURITIUS MUSEUMS COUNCIL

The following recommendations could be made regarding MUSEUM MANAGEMENT at the Mauritius Museums Council:

- Elaboration of a collections policy;

- Elaboration of a conservation policy including restoration policy;
- Setting up a professional collections management system responding to international norms;
- Computerize catalogues and use a museum collection management software;
- Training of the staff in collection management in priority;
- Organisation of workshops and trainings in Mauritius with other professionals to foster capacity building;
- Establish a national professional network helping the development of capacity building;
- Establish a detailed documentation on collections including detailed documentation of their acquisition, descriptions and photographs.
- Conduct systematic research on collections to expand existing documentation;
- Publication of a catalogue of collections also available on website.

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- <sup>1</sup> *L'Héritage du noir. Mythe et réalité*, Présence africaine: Paris; 1966:212.
- <sup>2</sup> After an A-level in literature and philosophy, I engaged in studies in heritage. I enrolled at *Ecole du Louvre* in Paris where the main subjects of study were history of arts, archaeology, and museology including heritage management and conservation. Concurrently, I was a Student at University where I obtained a degree and an MA in archaeology (specialised in ethno-archaeology). I had the opportunity to conciliate my two fields of interest by enrolling in a DEA at the National History Museum in Paris offering a course in anthropology aiming at interpreting, documenting and managing museum collections from oral societies in Africa, America and Oceania.
- <sup>3</sup> ICOM Code of Ethics, 1989, article 2.
- <sup>4</sup> "Aucun élément patrimonial n'a de sens en dehors de l'attachement des sociétés intéressées"; André Chastel, 1994.
- <sup>5</sup> Le musée "doit aussi permettre de donner aux communautés concernées des clefs de lectures de l'histoire et de l'environnement locaux (ne pas seulement s'attacher à l'Histoire nationale). Le musée doit permettre de définir l'image de soi que l'on veut communiquer vers l'extérieur". (Bouttiaux et Centrale, 2007)
- <sup>6</sup> The *Royal Society of Arts and Sciences* aimed at promoting sciences, agriculture and Arts (Sornay, 1950:470).
- <sup>7</sup> The activities of the Société de l'Emulation did not last very long. The Société mainly focused on the promotion of Science and Agriculture under the impulsion of Governor Farquhar, also a member until his departure in 1823 (Sornay, 1950:469).
- <sup>8</sup> (Sornay 1950, 469)
- <sup>9</sup> The Société d'Histoire Naturelle is founded in August 1820 and established in Collège Royal (SRAS, 1886:33-34).
- <sup>10</sup> (Sornay 1950, 470)
- <sup>11</sup> The members were: Charles Telfair, Botanist; Julien Desjardins and François Liénard, Zoologists; H. Bousquet, Meteorologist, Wenceslas Bojer, Botanist; Edward Newton, Ornithologist, among others (Sornay, 1950; Cheke, 2003:198).
- <sup>12</sup> The Société has regular correspondence with the *Conseil de l'Association pour l'avancement des sciences*, the Royal Society of New South Galle, Smithsonian Society of Washington, the British Museum (SRAS, 1883) among others associations and other similar organisations. The Société also sends representatives in various international events: in 1878, three members visit the Universal Exhibition in Paris (SRAS, 1883:14). The Société has numerous collaborators and correspondences confirm its international network.
- <sup>13</sup> Traduction de « *Promote improvement in our colonial cultivation generally but more particularly in that of our only staple and its intelligent manufacture* »; *Transactions of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences*, volume 2, Part 1, 1850, page 5.
- <sup>14</sup> The letter is dated 11 March 1859.
- <sup>15</sup> Proposal was made during the session held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1859.
- <sup>16</sup> During the session held on 8 April 1880, members were informed that the funeral monuments created in memory of Louis Bouton, Botanist and former member of the Société, would be « *achevé le mois prochain* » (SRAS, 1884, vol. 14: 8). The monument was built in the Cemetery in Pamplemousses and financed by the Société (SRAS, 1883:55).
- <sup>17</sup> In 1878, a member of the Société, Mr. Coriolis, proposed that a monument be erected in memory of Bernardin de Saint Pierre (SRAS, 1883:27).
- <sup>18</sup> The name of Pierre Poivre appears on the column of Liénard but no monument commemorating his memory was erected before 1993. As early as 1878, Mr. Daruty expressed his surprise concerning the absence of a bust of Pierre Poivre at the Botanical Garden (SRAS, 1883:32).
- <sup>19</sup> Statues of Queen Victoria and Governor Sir William Stevenson were erected in the premises of Government House in 1897 et 1867 respectively (Sornay, 1950:522).
- <sup>20</sup> *Procès verbal de la séance du 14 avril 1890*, MNA, X18/2
- <sup>21</sup> Letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May and 19 August 1933, MNA, X18/1.
- <sup>22</sup> Mauritius National Archives, Letter from the Historical Records Committee dated 26 September 1928, X18/1.
- <sup>23</sup> *Procès verbal de la séance tenue à l'institut le vendredi 28 septembre 1928*, MNA, X18/1.
- <sup>24</sup> Séance du mercredi 25 septembre 1935 tenue à l'hôtel de ville de Port-Louis, MNA, X18/1.

- <sup>25</sup> *Procès verbal de la séance tenue à l'institut le vendredi 26 juillet 1929 à 15 heures*, MNA, X18/1.
- <sup>26</sup> MNA, Ancient Monument Draft Bill, Article 3, letter dated 15 October 1937 from the Acting Colonial Secretary, X18/1.
- <sup>27</sup> *Avis* dated 1933, MNA, X 18/1.
- <sup>28</sup> List not dated, MNA, X 18/1; letter dated 27 February 1930 from Secretary of HRC, MNA, X18/1.
- <sup>29</sup> The list includes among others: Sir Lionel Smith (1842); M.F. Menassier, épouse de Charpentier de A.F. Cossigny, supérieur du Roi et capitaine d'Infanterie 1780; Joseph Pierre Xavier Renault de St Germain Chevalier de Saint Louis; Francis Henry Sherridan, late Treasurer and Paymaster General of this island; Sir William Stevenson Gouverneur, Victims of Cyclone of 1892 du Cimetière Bois Marchand et du Cimetière de l'Ouest; P. Commerson, célèbre naturaliste.
- <sup>30</sup> According to the proceedings No. 8 dated 22 February 1892, it seems that the Commission was entrusted to manage the sum of MRU 200 per year (item 36 sub-item 42 of the budget) designated in the budget as "Tombs of Governors". MNA, X18/2.
- <sup>31</sup> Letter dated 5 May 1933 to Monsieur le Magistrat E.D. By the Secretary of the Historical Records Committee, MNA, X18/1. Translated from French.
- <sup>32</sup> *Procès verbal de la séance du mercredi 18 juin 1930*, MNA, X18/1.
- <sup>33</sup> *Procès verbal de la séance tenue à l'institut le mercredi 30 avril 1930*, MNA, X18/1.
- <sup>34</sup> The Colonial Office invited the HRC to submit a list of historic monuments that the HRC wishes to list in a letter dated 19 July 1929, no 49301/28, MNA, X18/1.
- <sup>35</sup> The tombs and cemeteries are considered as commemorative monuments in this report.
- <sup>36</sup> *Transactions of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences*, Part 2, Volume 1, 1860, page 347.
- <sup>37</sup> Richard Grove, 1996, *Green imperialism: colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860*; Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>38</sup> Extrait de la lettre du Gouverneur Bower adressée à Virgil Naz, Président de la Société des Sciences et des Arts:
- « It should be the object of all of us to encourage the formation in Mauritius of Mechanics' Institutes, reading rooms, public libraries for the instruction of all classes of our mixed population. The interest which I take in the institutions of this kind is founded on the conviction that without moral and mental culture, the fabric of domestic life is unsecure, and the apparently finest guarantees of political institutions are of little avail. The most formidable impediments of civilization and national progress are ignorance and the evil which ignorance induces. I trust that I shall have your support and aid in my efforts to establish gradually in this as in the Australian colonies popular libraries and reading rooms, calculated to raise the moral and intellectual tone of all sections of the people, and to breath a right spirit into them. This would be a patriotic work well worthy of the Royal Society of Mauritius. »* (*Transactions of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences*, Volume 13, 1883, page 44).
- <sup>39</sup> Cf. Footnote No. 14.
- <sup>40</sup> Teelock, 1998:117; Cas de Thomas et sa mère Emilie, 13 septembre 1834, CO 172/35, Nos 51 et 52.
- <sup>41</sup> Berthelot, 2000:52.
- <sup>42</sup> Berthelot, 2000:52.
- <sup>43</sup> *Letter from the Historical Records Committee to the Colonial Office dated 19 July 1929*, no 49301/28, MNA, X18/1
- <sup>44</sup> Sornay, 1995:206.
- <sup>45</sup> Berthelot, 2000:52-53.
- <sup>46</sup> Timothy L. Gall, Jeneen M. Hobby, Gale Group; *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Africa*; Volume 2 of Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nation, the University of Michigan, Thomson Gale, 2007.
- <sup>47</sup> The text mentions that: "In 1851, 50% of the carters, 39.4% of the hawkers, 31.8% of the shopkeepers and 28.6% of the laundry men were Indians". National History Museum, Mahébourg, Room 5.
- <sup>48</sup> The first private museum was the Blue Penny museum located at Caudan Waterfront.
- <sup>49</sup> "Comblen un vide" (Gufflet, 2003:8).
- <sup>50</sup> Considering this, I will refer to *Aventure du Sucre* as a *Museum* in this report.
- <sup>51</sup> From Madmike - L'Aventure du sucre ne manque pas de sel; [http://www.ciao.fr/L\\_aventure\\_du\\_sucr\\_e\\_Ile\\_Maurice\\_Avis\\_865286](http://www.ciao.fr/L_aventure_du_sucr_e_Ile_Maurice_Avis_865286); 15 october 2005.