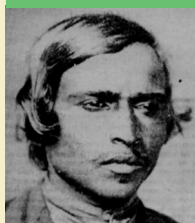




Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund NEWSLETTER

Volume I No.6

2 NOVEMBER 2008



Moheet Ramgoolam



Beebeejaun



Tiong Kan



Yawanekeh



Lolytah



Permall

MGI Immigration Archives



(Courtesy of Le Matinal)

THE HISTORIC VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF UNESCO IN PARIS IN OCTOBER 2008

Dr. The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, meeting Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, at the meeting of the UNESCO Executive Board in Paris on 14th October 2008 where he thanked UNESCO for the inscriptions of the Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List

V.I.P VISITORS TO THE AAPRAVASI GHAT IN 2007 - 2008



(AGTF Collection)

Mr Olabiyi Yai, Chairman of the UNESCO Board

"Visite très émouvante devant le témoignage vivant et bien entretenu d'une part très importante de l'histoire de Maurice, mais aussi de l'humanité entière. Que ce devoir de mémoire, accompli par l'inscription de ce lieu sur la liste du patrimoine de l'UNESCO soit pour nous une raison supplémentaire d'apprendre à vivre ensemble. La République de Maurice a montré le chemin, souhaitons que beaucoup d'autres lui emboîtent le pas. Merci." 2nd February 2008

The Honourable Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India

"It was a unique experience to visit this site where 173 years ago, the first batch of indentured labourers arrived on 2.11.1834. They had in one way made their contribution to build up modern Mauritius. My respectful homage to them." 18th December 2007



(AGTF Collection)



(AGTF Collection)

Mr Moussa Iye, Chief of the Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

"C'est toujours émouvant de visiter un lieu de mémoire, si chargé d'histoire de souffrances mais aussi de résistance." 9th September 2008

EDITORIAL

On 2nd November 2008, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund is commemorating the 174th anniversary of the arrival of the indentured labourers in Mauritius. Our built heritage is an important witness of the past. The preservation and valorisation of heritage sites are primordial for the construction of a common/unified Mauritian identity and for the development of a deeper knowledge of Mauritian history. The Aapravasi Ghat Site is a tangible and paramount symbol of Mauritian identity since the ancestors of the majority of the present-day Mauritian population arrived on the island through this immigrant depot.

In July 2006, the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List was a matter of national and international honour and prestige because finally Mauritius was placed on the international cultural heritage map. Now two years later, Le Morne Brabant Mountain has been declared a World Heritage Site at the 32nd meeting of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee in Quebec, Canada.

The Aapravasi Ghat is considered by the World Heritage Committee to be:

"directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance"

As a World Heritage Site, the Aapravasi Ghat does not only belong to the Mauritian people, but also to humanity. It is a unique site which embodies the highest values of mankind. As a lieu de mémoire, it is playing a crucial role in bolstering our national unity and preserving our cultural values. Thus, the Aapravasi Ghat is a powerful symbol and forms a cornerstone of our Mauritian cultural heritage.

During the last few years, the Mauritian government has given greater consideration to saving and preserving this unique heritage site. Between 2004 and 2007, under the direction of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and with the firm support of the then Ministry of Arts and Culture, the Aapravasi Ghat Conservation Project was implemented with a view of preserving this site of national, regional and international importance for future generations.

It is worth noting that this year the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund with the full support of relevant stakeholders undertook the drafting of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) to declare the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site Buffer Zone has a protected heritage area, the implementation of the Signage Project, complete the Vagrants' Database Project and most of the conservation works on site. Furthermore, AGTF has almost finalised its Visitor Management Plan and a draft of Risk Preparedness Plan, continues with research on indenture and on the buffer zone, and prepares the inscription of the Immigration Depot's on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

During this financial year, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund are actively working on several priority projects such as the setting up of the Beeckrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre, the completion of the PPG, of the Visitor Management Plan and of the Risk Preparedness Plan. Our institution will also carry on research on the history of indenture in Mauritius and in other countries to document the extent of the indenture phenomenon as recommended by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund is committed to fulfill its mission statement and promoting the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site as a local, regional and international cultural heritage site.



Adinarain Hutchamah
Vice-Chairperson
Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

2 November 2008

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC



The President of the Republic of Mauritius

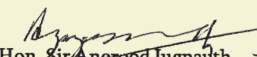


I am thankful to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for associating me with the publication of this newsletter on the occasion of the 174th anniversary of the arrival of indentured labourers in Mauritius.

The arrival of the first Indian immigrants is, in fact, a major historical event which has greatly influenced the course of Mauritian history and has been instrumental in shaping our present society. Nearly half a million immigrants arrived from India in the 19th century to work as Indentured Labourers and today we take it as a pride that the Aapravasi Ghat which has been recognised as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO serves as a monument to remind us of our origins, the struggle of our ancestors and their sacrifices in the economic and social development of the country.

The history of Indian immigrants in Mauritius bears testimony to the fact that they strived hard to keep alive the torch of their creed and culture. The early immigrants bequeathed to the successive generations this legacy which serves as an inspiration to realize far greater achievements. It is now up to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to organize events and invite Mauritians and the younger generations to learn about their history.

I wish the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund full success in its mission to promote the site as a national, regional and international memorial site.



The Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth,
G.C.S.K., K.C.M.G., Q.C.
President of the Republic

14 October 2008

PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Each year the commemoration of this anniversary reminds us of a particularly poignant episode of our country's history. It is an occasion to pay tribute to those hardy women and men who, with courage and tenacity, contributed in laying the foundations of the socio-economic and cultural development of this country.

The influx of indentured labourers, mainly from the Indian sub-continent, changed the demographic and ethnic configuration of the country in a lasting manner. It also gave considerable impetus to the economic development of the island.

We have learnt to be proud of our history which is an abiding source of inspiration for us, a very rich one that has bequeathed us a cultural heritage to which we are so attached.

With its recognition as a World Heritage Site, the Aapravasi Ghat will figure increasingly on the itinerary of visitors to the island.

It is now up to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to make the most of this iconic monument which has been entrusted to it and to pursue the excellent work it has done so far.

Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, G.C.S.K
Prime Minister

07 October 2008

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

I am pleased to be associated with the publication of the AGTF Newsletter on the occasion of the commemoration of the 174th anniversary of the arrival of indentured labourers in Mauritius.

In the wake of the abolition of slavery, the recruitment of indentured labour from India, China, South-East Asia, Madagascar and East-Africa, to work in British colonies, has been aptly described

*as a **Great Experiment**. Mauritius which turned out to be the biggest consumer of that labour witnessed a drastic transformation of its demographic set up while the cultural panorama found itself getting significantly impregnated with a peculiar tinge of indianness as the bulk of those workers hailed from the Indian sub-continent.*

Indentured labour gave a new lease of life to the sugar industry. But simultaneously it also brought to our shores a bunch of rich faiths and cultures, several millennia old, which sowed the seeds of great universal values of tolerance, mutual understanding, love, cooperation, brotherhood and peace which continue to characterize the average Mauritian to this day. On the other hand while the sinews, sweat and toil of the labourers were developing their country of adoption, their rich and colourful cultural practices were steadily spreading and growing roots on this far flung island.

It is a matter of great satisfaction and legitimate pride that Government, set about to save the Aapravasi Ghat from certain annihilation. Timely and appropriate action coupled with the efforts of quite a few dedicated individuals, bodies and stakeholders led ultimately to the successful nomination of the site on the UNESCO prestigious list of World Heritage Sites. Barely two years afterwards, the same determination led to the inscription of Le Morne Cultural Landscape as World Heritage Site in recognition of the sacrifice of the community of slaves during the French period of our history.

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund deserves to be commended for the excellent work being done to protect and consolidate further the site which remains a paramount symbol of Mauritian identity since the majority of present day Mauritians draw ancestry from the indentured labourers.

I conclude with the wish that all Mauritians, particularly the youth, make it a point to visit the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site in order to inspire themselves from this most important surviving monument of the indentured labour system.



Hon Dr. Vasant K. BUNWAREE
Minister

10 October 2008

LORD MAYOR'S MESSAGE



The second November of every year is now a public holiday but with a difference. This is a day of remembrance and commemoration of the arrival of indentured Indian labourers for the first time in Mauritius.

Aapravasi Ghat, now world heritage site, had witnessed, 174 years back, the arrival of these labourers. The site had been part of their awe, their pitiful conditions, their hope and, above all, their courage. With time, justice has been done, the reward has been rightly granted. The site has been recognised by the international community as a heritage site to be protected and preserved in line with the **Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage** adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972.

As Lord Mayor of Port Louis and as Chairperson of the Buffer Zone Management Committee, I must say that it is a matter of great pride for the Municipal Council of Port Louis to have been closely associated with the project of having the Aapravasi Ghat inscribed as world heritage. It is also a great responsibility for this Council to ensure that this site, so tangible with the history of the Indian immigrants and their involvement in nation building in Mauritius, be preserved for future generations. Our duty, our responsibility, with regard to development in this particularly sensitive area, lies in being very wise in policies and decisions without hindering development.

It is my wish that all stakeholders combine their efforts to protect and preserve our first world heritage site, an event which has gone down in history, and come up with the right incentives to make it a highly rated tourist attraction.

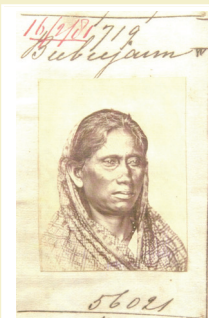
Jean Fritz Marcello Thomas, MSK
Lord Mayor of Port Louis

21 October 2008

PROFILE OF AN IMMIGRANT

Beebeejaun (Immigrant No.56021) was a female labourer from northern India who embarked for Mauritius at the Indian port of Calcutta in September 1845. She was 18 years old, an adherent to the Muslim faith and arrived alone in Mauritius on 30th October 1845.

Beebeejaun was sent to work on a sugar estate in Rivière du Rempart as a field labourer. Her photo was taken at the Immigration Depot or the Aapravasi Ghat in 1881. She lived her entire life in the district of Rivière du Rempart and died at Plaine des Roches in 1903 at the age of 75.



Picture Courtesy of the
Beebeejaun Family of
Plaine des Roches

Solemnity of 2nd November

Since 835 AD, the Christian world has been celebrating All Soul's Day (La Toussaint in French) on the 2nd November. It follows All Saint's Day which is celebrated on 1st November.

One thousand but one year later, with the abolition of slavery in 1834, the arrival of indentured labourers gained place in Mauritius and to mark this great population

movement, 2nd November is proclaimed a public holiday.

All Soul's Day and Indentured Labourer's Day have one thing in common: we commemorate the departed.

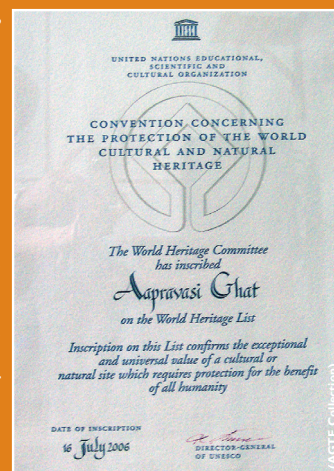
According to historians, more than sixty-eight percent of the descendants of the present population (Hindus, Muslims, Chinese and Christians) passed through the Immigration Depot and the regions around the remnants of the Aapravasi Ghat buildings.

Since the existing complex with its sixteen wharf steps was founded in 1849 and we are commemorating the 174th anniversary of the arrival of the indentured labourers, there is a 'historical black hole' of 15 years. However, it is believed that initially the immigrants were landing near the imposing Roger's Building. Further researches will definitely solve the mystery, but it takes a lot of funds and guts to undertake such daring ventures. Investments in this sector; cultural heritage, will not only create awareness of our past but will also boost the economy. World Bank rates Bermuda economy as No 1 in the GNI, Gross National Income, and 50% higher than US. They have museums to acquaint the visitors to the mysteries of the oceans, South Africa is another example with its Robben Island.

With Le Morne Brabant as our second World Heritage Site, we can definitely widen our scope by extending our activities. Heritage trail does not have to be confined to buffer zones. France opened its doors to heritage sites on September 21 and 22, *Journées du Patrimoine*, with entrance fees between € 2 and 12 (Le Figaro, 21 September 08) and the event was a great success.

The fusion of Culture to the Ministry of Education is viewed with great solemnity. It will mark the end of cultural hegemony. As it is, popular belief often does not adequately associate the Ghat to its universal value. The school is where our children can start with the understanding that history is the evolution of our *arc-en-ciel nation* and Aapravasi Ghat offers the first sixteen steps to that thesis.

Mr Raju Mohit
Officer-in-Charge
Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund



The Aapravasi Ghat
World Heritage Site Certificate

The Challenge for Our Imaginaries

Dr Khal Torabully, International Scholar and Poet

I wish to thank, once again, Mr Raju Mohit and the entire team of the Aapravasi Ghat for asking me to pen another article for their newsletter on the auspicious day of November 2, 2008.

Last year, in the same context, I was asked to appraise of the venues open to the Aapravasi Ghat. And readily, I underlined the necessary conjunction between the Ghat and Le Morne, in view of nation building in Mauritius, based on the Humanism of the Diverse evolved here, and for a better dialogue between slavery and indentured paradigms in the frame of a mosaic approach of memory and current transmigration trends, all with a deep impact on the shaping of present human societies.

Therefore, now that two sites have been inscribed on such a small island, a challenge is before us, I mean, it is already at hand.

Let us muse upon it.

Memories are never so simple

When Ali Moussa Iye visited the island last month, I wrote an article asking each Mauritian to weigh the value of the coming of the Head of the Intercultural Dialogue section of UNESCO to this land where humanities met in the wake of the Taylorisation of the globe. We exchanged on the necessity of carving a mental and humanistic attitude towards the symbolical teachings of the Ghat and Le Morne, that is, one fraught with openness, in order to avoid falling into the pitfalls of sectarian views and binary oppositions of "we/they".

Already, in the eighties, we propounded for this open approach on a multiethnic island, as History cannot be used as a pretext to divide and oppose people, who, basically were made to bear the brunt of two inhumane systems of labour: *Cale d'étoiles*, the founding text of coolitude, readily charted the coolie's odyssey without closing an eye on the slaves' plight, as both systems, whatever their own specific vicissitudes, were linked, as they responded to the colonial economic system of those dark times. I dedicated a text to L.S. Senghor :

Coolitude: petites mains des colonies; vous avez été marchandise et, nous, marchandage, ou inversement .Coolitude : parce que mes pays foisonnent de nouvelles traces de mémoire. Et si des gestes nègres sont venus à nos mains en tranchant des cannes, il nous reste encore des craquements et des danses de doigts habitués au tabla que la ravanne a souvent harmonisé d'un grand cri des cœurs à la dérive .

Coolitude : parce que je suis créole de mon cordage, je suis indien de mon mât, je suis européen de la vergue, je suis mauricien de ma quête et français de mon exil. Je ne serai toujours ailleurs qu'en moi-même parce que je ne peux qu'imaginer ma terre natale. Mes terres natales ? ⁽¹⁾.

As will be inferred, the idea of reconciliation, which is a main theme of the Slave Route of Unesco, was clearly voiced here.

Furthermore, I talked of the necessity of "A sharing of memories" in December 2006 to Mr Iye, an idea he found of profound significance for Mauritius. The Mauritian press voiced out this project. I also asked historians, namely Jocelyn Chan Low, member of the scientific committee of the Slave Route, on the island to set up a framework for a comparative study between indentured and slavery, the key notes of which had been laid down in the article "Coolitude" ⁽²⁾. This project, to my delight, seems to be taking course at the University of Mauritius. And last, but not least, The Institute for Cultural Diversity has been reactivated by the

Mauritian government, as the direct offspring of a broader policy for articulating memories, cultures, imaginaries, identities and Histories in this region.

Memories are to their full when articulated

For some 20 years, we have been promoting an articulation of those

two memories that shape up our present History, with so many teachings for the island and beyond, as slavery and the indentured have deeply altered the course of History and human demography and sociology in so many lands and spaces.

In the Indian Ocean, where globalization started, and went on for many centuries, with the maritime Silk route and the land Silk route, linking India, China and other lands to Arabian cultural and commercial networks, before crossing the Middle East to the Mediterranean mainland, it has been established that regular exchanges between the Ancient Greek and Roman worlds and the mythical East and their fabulous riches have always been in the minds of seafarers and traders. In the same Ocean, the Coolie system which was to experiment a modern form of labour based on the contract, which harbingers most of contemporary labour relations, was developed. And the Ghat, in Mauritius, was central in this "Great Experiment", as the British termed it. So the Ghat bears a special importance not only for Mauritius, as it will set out challenging paradigms of Diversity ⁽³⁾, but for the whole world. I sincerely believe that from here, the articulation of Histories will come out, giving to the Indian Ocean the substantiality necessary to engage in a cross-narrative with the Atlantic, a "character" already determined by discourses of diverse sorts, and make of our island a world destination for intellectual and cultural tourism.

Therefore, the challenge of our imaginaries, shaped by indentured and slavery, bears the promises of wider avenues and impact, and the Mauritian authorities as well as all of us will have to bear in mind that our sites, inscribed on the World Heritage List, will have to live up to their contents and expectations, those which UNESCO holds to our mirror : thinking our identities in a culture of peace and diversity.

Bordeaux, 11/10/08

Footnote :

(1) Khal Torabully, *Cale d'étoiles*, Azalées éditions, La Réunion, 1992.

(2) "Coolitude", Notre Librairie, n° 128, CLEF, Paris, décembre 1996.

(3) Dr Ali Moussa Iye rightly asserted, during his visit, that Indians accounted for 13% slaves, and Africans, as we know were also coolies or indentured, cutting short to revisionist theories which supported that "Indians were indentured and Africans were slaves", in a schematic view of History, reminding us, if needs be, that History cannot be viewed through the prism of our fantasies, turning a deaf ear on its astounding and challenging complexities. We clearly stand for the dialogue between Le Morne and the Ghat



Dr Khal Torabully

The Progeny of Indentured Laborers

Prof. Soodursun Jugessur, G.O.S.K, Pro-Chancellor, University of Mauritius

For generations to come we will be carrying the genes of our ancestors. One thing that we should be proud of is that these genes carry memories of millennia of a civilization that marked human history. It is a history where we have been, for most of us, more of the exploited than the exploiters. And it is a history where the human mind soared to great heights in the search for happiness living in tune with nature!

The values and qualities that stay embedded in these genes do goad us towards the need to strive to keep climbing up the evolutionary ladder. However, these qualities and values come as motivators to our life only if the physical and social environment is appropriate. Nature and Nurture are always in competition with each other!

Ancestral Values

Our ancestors who migrated here under very hard conditions had a wealth of qualities and values that needs to be revived in different forms but with the essential elements still present. The main one is **solidarity**. They understood the basics of mutual love and support. Once they embarked on the same ship, they had to forget their differences and pool their physical, social and spiritual forces



A Hand-written Ramayana in Kaithi Script
which belonged to the ancestor of Dr. Chintamunee
who came to Mauritius as an indentured labourer in 1843

together so as to face the new world in which they were implanted. They understood that only mutual support could keep them alive and progressive.

They had a high level of **forbearance**, and were prepared to work hard to improve their lot and that of their children. They had the

spirit of **sacrifice, frugality and thrift** that enabled them to save for the rainy day, and even to use their small savings to acquire land and property. **Honesty and integrity** were ingrained in most of them, and they believed in the validity of promises made. No written contracts existed between the members of the community, for most of them were illiterate, and believed in the promises made. **Forgiveness** was another of their qualities, for they knew they had to share the same surroundings for long. A high sense of **compassion** also enabled them to understand the feelings and problems of their colleagues and family members, and contributed to a cohesion that kept their spirits in such times of adversity.

Competing forces of Nature and Nurture

Our inherited qualities get swept in the field where neither the parents, nor the members of society, are conscious of the need to preserve them, and the need to take necessary action to ensure their survival. The home, the school, the society, and the nutrition and health facilities we have, all contribute towards the survival or demise of those qualities and values.

Today we experience more of the demise of these inherited qualities than their survival. Most of the present generation, mainly the youth, has unconsciously embraced a culture that is alien to our ancestral culture. Those who still preserve those ancestral values and qualities are often at a loss, feeling helpless in the speedy current of western consumerism and materialism that mark this age. Without realizing that in the process we are contributing to the slow destruction of the human race!

Culture can change from place to place, and from time to time, but the essential qualities and values have to remain. Unfortunately, even these are changing because of the pressure of western consumerism and materialism. The educational system that stresses more on the acquisition of professional skills, the audio-visual media, the impact of TV, Bollywood and Hollywood, are all contributing towards a new culture of individualism, and disregard for the social needs.

The descendants of the indentured labourers are now carried away in that stream, unmindful of the impact of such life on global survival.

In the face of global financial crisis, global warming and climate change, global spread of pandemics and natural and man-made calamities, it is therefore incumbent on us to review our pattern of development. We need to bring back the essential values and ensure that our acts do not negatively affect nature and the surroundings. So did our ancestors!

Views on the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site

It is really a mark of honour for me to be associated with the publication of a newsletter by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to commemorate the 174th anniversary of the arrival of indentured labourers in Mauritius.

The Aapravasi Ghat, which is a symbol of Mauritian Identity and a World Heritage Site, acknowledges a living testimony of the historical bonds between India and Mauritius. Through their remarkable sacrifice and unflinching determination, our indentured labourers and their descendants invested inextricable efforts to fashion our cultural heritage.

The indentured labourers and their descendants have undoubtedly contributed effectively to socio-economic and cultural areas like Religion, Family Systems, Dance, Music, Education, Art, Drama and Festivals.

In my opinion, the evolution of our cultural heritage as established by our ancestors is a realistic indication of national reconciliation and nation building. Cultural Heritage preservation forms the basis for all forms of excellence.

So let us cherish and treasure this most prized legacy in remembrance of the cultural contribution of our ancestors to further promote the objectives of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund locally and overseas.

On this unforgettable annual commemoration, I wish to express life long success to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site.

Rajendra Thodda
Board Member

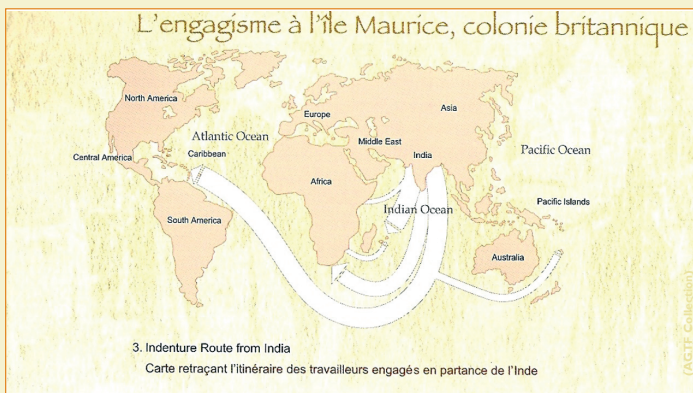
Along The Indentured Labour Route

Associate Professor Dr Vijayalakshmi Teelock, G.O.S.K
Head of the History and Political Science Department, University of Mauritius

The Indentured Labour Route Project (ILRP) has been discussed at various levels over the years but little concrete action has so far taken place. The Prime Minister Dr. Ramgoolam, during his visit to UNESCO, discussed this project with a view to having this accepted as one of UNESCO's Cultural Routes. It is hoped with UNESCO's support (but even without it); a network of institutions, individuals, scholars, artists can be created. This article is intended to stimulate discussion about this project and contribute to its conceptualisation.

The ILRP is different from the many other initiatives that have started and that I would label as 'diasporic initiatives' in that it attempts to be all inclusive. By this, I mean that all those who underwent this phenomenon need to be part of it, not just those originating from a particular country or continent. It must not be ethno-centric, but instead contribute to building and increasing both self-awareness and awareness of the uniqueness of the societies created by indenture. The unity will come out of understanding, sharing ideas about our indentured history and heritage which is very much a history of the working peoples of the world in the 19th century and an analysis of their situation today. It is therefore also a 'class'-based concept which is currently absent from most other concepts or studies i.e; such as diasporic/cultural studies (Indian, African, Creole or Chinese diaspora).

When one mentions the ILRP, one thinks immediately of UNESCO's Slave Route Project. But the ILRP should not try to replicate the Slave Route project. This has been heavily dominated by Atlantic Ocean agenda, in conception, in perspective, in approaches and methodologies and the Indian Ocean has been neglected in more ways than one. It has become clear to scholars of the Indian Ocean region today that the Indian Ocean is unique and Atlantic models cannot be adopted for the Indian Ocean. We need to devise our own 'models', if models are indeed required. The recent Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute (ZIORI) conference held in Zanzibar in August this year was the first conference ever to have been held with a strong Indian Ocean perspective, regrouping historians, anthropologists, artists, political scientists of the Indian Ocean region. More such events need to be organised. This need is felt by the people within these countries. The desire to meet, to share and compare experiences can take many forms, be it in music, dance, art forms, histories, family histories etc. This is evident from the proliferation of websites where photos of 'old grandmothers' jewellery, family photos, sugar plantation memoirs, diasporic stories, family histories are exchanged daily. However, these shared experiences are imbued with a sadness of a time gone by. Often too, stories are told 'with a vengeance' by people who feel they have been wronged somehow and betrayed by the governments that took their forefathers there. We cannot remain impassive to the situation of descendants of indentured labourers in Guyana, Fiji and Malaysia.



Map of the World showing the Different Countries where Indentured Labourers were introduced between 1834 and 1924

Who should be on the ILRP? If one admits countries solely on the narrow definition of indenture in the 19th century, then many countries will not be eligible. Historically speaking, although the indenture system is the rationale for the creation of an ILRP, other countries having had recourse to migrant contract labour where a coercive element existed should be allowed. This coercive element may have existed in recruitment procedures, may be inbuilt in the contracts labourers signed or in terms of restrictions on the mobility of workers on plantations, or even consist of the violence that existed on plantations etc. Furthermore, as this type of migrant contract labour is at the foundation of the emergence of modern world economic system emerging in the 19th century and which has continued up to today, these are added reasons why other countries should be allowed to join. In this perspective, countries with such diverse histories as Mozambique, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Peru and Hawaii will find a place in it, in addition to those we are already familiar with.

Of all these countries, Mauritius is the ideal country to spearhead this project. Geographically-speaking it is at the epicentre of this indentured world, between Fiji (Pacific) and the African continent. Historically, it has been created out of multiple migrations, forced and voluntary. The opportunities presented for cross cultural study, for cross-labour system study (slavery, apprentice labour, liberated Africans labour, convict labour, etc) are vast. Thirdly, it has also received the largest contingent of indentured labourers having migrated in the post-slavery period in the 19th century. Within Mauritius and institutionally, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund is the ideal institution to spearhead this project as to my knowledge it is the *only institution in the world* dedicated to furthering the history and heritage of *all* indentured immigrants and its descendants. No other institution has such a specific focus and yet at the same time, is all-encompassing in including all the cultural groups that inhabit Mauritius today.

15 October 2008

The Unknown Immigrant

Poem of Abhimanyu Unnuth translated by Ramesh Ramdoyal

'History turning a blind eye bore him not witness; History standing mute told not his full story; He who first had watered this land with his sweat; And turned stone into green fields of gold; The first immigrant He, son of this land; He was mine, he was yours, he was our very own'.



Lohengadoo,
An Indian Vagrant



Lallamayan,
An Indian Vagrant

AGTF projects for 2008-2009

Since the inscription of the site on the World Heritage List in July 2006, the AGTF has undertaken a number of projects stated in the Management Plan aiming at retaining and promoting the Outstanding Universal Value of the site.

The projects require a multi-disciplinary approach and expertise in heritage management to implement actions and regulations responding to the standards of international organisations. These projects have been designed to contribute to the sustainable development of cultural tourism and heritage.

For instance, the interpretation centre will offer tools to better understand the experience of nearly 80% of our ancestors and also of those two million indentured labourers who have left their homeland to settle in an unknown country. The interpretation centre will focus on the Outstanding Universal Value of the site and state the significant position of Mauritius in the history of Humanity during the 19th century. It will also depict the economic and commercial evolution around the site that is still perceptible today in the buffer zone. Indeed, this zone has been delimited to retain the relevant historical context in which the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site has evolved through time.

The Planning Policy Guidance for the buffer zone will encourage investment in heritage and cultural tourism and aim at reviving and retaining Mauritian authenticity through tangible actions.

Besides these major projects, the AGTF team has taken part in the project initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources to inscribe the archival testimonies related to the Immigration Depot on the Memory of the World Register. In this undertaking, the AGTF research unit also wishes to document unknown aspects of history by undertaking research in the archival records and also extend our knowledge of indentured immigration to experiences in other countries.

Our objective is to share this knowledge through publications and through a dynamic public programme for all types of audience and especially for the youngest for whom a school kit has been designed. The projects conducted by AGTF hope to encourage the transmission of knowledge and the promotion of our history to ensure the preservation of our heritage in the future.

Corinne Forest
Head of Technical Unit

Conservation & Restoration of Aapravasi Ghat

Devendra Singh Sood
Assistant Superintending Archaeological Engineer,
Archaeological Survey of India

Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site is a historic place which gives us a sense of wonder and makes us want to know more about the people and Culture. It has architectural, aesthetic, historic, documentary, archaeological and symbolic values. The Conservation Project of the Aapravasi Ghat was launched in 2004 with the aim to preserve the features relating to the authenticity of the site. The conservation work was carried out in line with the inscription of Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List. The main conservation object is to remove the modern renovation works carried in the late 1990's and conserve the archaeological features.



Mr Devendra Singh Sood

Thus the modern addition and incompatible material used have been removed and archeological excavations were carried out in first phase, to expose the original features of the site. Traditional techniques to prepare the material were used in the second phase to conserve the historical and archaeological features. The main material used for conservation work at the Aapravasi Ghat consists of lime mortar. This is prepared after deep historical research and chemical testing of the remaining original lime mortar on the site. Basalt stone and wood are the other materials used for conservation.

In 2008 the Hospital building, Immigrant shed, Kitchen, New shed area and Privies are being conserved and strengthened scientifically by lime pointing, edging of lime plaster, restoration of drain, consolidation of Tar felt and strengthening of lime wash. Archaeological excavations to



Monitoring of conservation work by Mr. Sood

analyse the foundations of the wall in the privies area have been carried out after removal of modern cement concrete from the floor. The cement pointing and modern paint layers on the walls of the privies area have also been removed and water tightened with fresh traditional lime mortar. Natural agent such as salt, available in original mortar has also been removed to stop further decay.

Conservation is a continuous process. Hence engaged workers have also been trained for future maintenance of Aapravasi Ghat.

Exhibition on Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site & Le Morne World Heritage site at Universal College

Parents, teachers and students of Universal College were enthusiastic to learn about both the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site and its Buffer Zone and Le Morne World Heritage Site during the open days organised by the above mentioned school on the 16th, 17th and 18th September 2008. Many interesting questions were asked to Ms Sarika Ramjeeawon, Heritage Guide from Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund who was present on that occasion. Six exhibits on Le Morne and fourteen on Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site were displayed to sensitize the people from the North about the indentured labourers and slaves and the miseries endured during those days. Among these exhibits were also exposed projects of pupils from Departments of Art and Design, Computer, Sociology, Design and Communication, French, English, Travel and Tourism, Science and Mathematics.



(Picture Courtesy of Mr. Dinand)

Bhuruth Dinand, Board Member

Comments on the forthcoming Planning Policy Guidance for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site Buffer Zone.

**Prof Karel Bakker, Head of the Department of Architecture,
University of Pretoria, South Africa**

The Aapravasi Ghat has since 2006 been a member of the family of World Heritage sites around the world. The urban area in which it is located has been designated as a protective Buffer Zone that is the setting for the Core Zone and that will ensure that the authenticity and integrity of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Core Zone will remain intact. This Buffer Zone is characterised as an important historic urban landscape. The World Heritage Site is being managed according to the vision, policies and guidelines contained in the Management Plan of the site –one of the tools being drafted for the site includes the Planning Policy Guidance, which is focussed on controlling development in a manner that will allow for responsible use of the resource and to sustain the cultural

continued use of an historic area that the tangible heritage (buildings, monuments, structures, vegetation) and intangible heritage (cultural rituals, practices, use, events and so on) can continue into the future. Judicious management of a historic area will allow for re-use and careful adaptation of buildings and places for current use, while protecting the qualities and authenticity of the area.



Prof. Karel Bakker



Prof. Karel Bakker during the workshop organised by the AGTF with stakeholders in relation with PPG

The Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site is a historic area with a rich heritage, recognised as reflecting the urban origins of Port Louis and containing heritage resources of great cultural importance, including historic streets, religious places, the market, the port, public spaces and public and private buildings.

The development vision for the area is that, while the Buffer Zones of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site must continuously provide a suitable setting for the Aapravasi Ghat, it will be a quality urban area with a high level of heritage authenticity and integrity in terms of the historic urban form, scale, grain, space structure and architecture. Additionally, the area is a mixed-use urban sector that, through various means, can be improved to become a vibrant, robust urban area with a specific focus on heritage quality and a potential for growth and densification. Through increased urban management that includes heritage management, the area is set to be a quality environment where the existing urban functions can thrive, but where new functions can also be introduced, to provide a vibrant place where the current tourism industry can diversify to embrace a cultural component.

and heritage significance of the built environment and associated cultural activity for future generations.

Historic urban landscapes are not only important transmitters of the way in which our ancestors have shaped a built environment through various cultural endeavours, they are also important components of a country's economy. Many countries around the world have realised the enormous importance of conserving historic cities as memories of their past, as well as being important components in the growing global cultural tourism economy.

At the 16th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, held in Quebec City, Canada in the first week of October 2008, the President of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Mr Francesco Bandarin, identified various threats to the preservation of historic urban cities, inter alia the lack of management of change. In current heritage management practice it is accepted that historic urban areas are not frozen to development or frozen in time as museums - on the contrary, it is through the

The Planning Policy Guidance for the area will guide future development and densification proposals, and will be accompanied by a Heritage Management Plan, in which property owners can get guidance on the manner in which properties in the Buffer Zone can be conserved through various means. Development proposals will be screened by the National Heritage Fund and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund before being put forward for a Permit. The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site Stakeholder Forum has been constituted to allow for constant interaction between property owners, urban stakeholders, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and the relevant governmental authorities.



The Port area in the French period (left) and the same area today with the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, surrounded by the Buffer Zones 1 and 2 (right).



Events organised by AGTF in 2008

Commemoration Ceremony at Vagrant Depot, Grand River North West



On Thursday, 21 February 2008, the AGTF organized a ceremony to commemorate the 144th anniversary of the opening of the Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West. The Vagrant Depot is one of the most important indenture sites in the country. It was declared a national monument in 1958 by Governor Sir Robert Scott.

To mark the event, nearby secondary school students were invited. The students participated in an interactive session with historians present. AGTF newsletter and Aapravasi Ghat pamphlets were distributed to the students.

Indira Gyaram
Coordinator

Heritage Week at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site



Culture and Le Caudan Waterfront Ltd organised an open Heritage Week between the 18 and 25 April 2008. Proposed activities focused on the theme of 'Religious Sites and Practices'. The objective of the heritage week was to encourage the discovery of the historic and heritage values of the Aapravasi Ghat and its Buffer Zones. Thus the following activities were proposed to the public:

- Guided visits at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site.
- The projection of films on the history of the Aapravasi Ghat and indenture in Mauritius.
- Guided visits to the national monuments such as the Labourdonnais Hospital and to religious sites such as the Jumma Mosque found in the Buffer Zone.
- An exhibition on the Aapravasi Ghat and its Buffer Zone at Barkly's Wharf at the Caudan Waterfront.

More than 600 visitors visited the site and more than 1,000 individuals viewed exhibition on the Buffer Zone.

Indira Gyaram
Coordinator

2nd Anniversary of the Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List



Speech by the
Hon. Mahendra Gowressoo,
former Minister of Arts and Culture

The Aapravasi Ghat was inscribed on the World Heritage List of the UNESCO on the 16th July 2006 during the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee held at Vilnius in Lithuania.

It was an opportunity for the AGTF to hand over certificates to participants who followed a training session on photogrammetry techniques for the documentation of historic buildings along with ARCIA.

In addition, the AGTF launched a competition for people above 18 years aiming at encouraging awareness on the Aapravasi Ghat and indenture.

To commemorate the 2nd anniversary of the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List, the AGTF organised an official ceremony on Wednesday, 16 July 2008 in the ex STC building.

The local TV and radio presented various quiz and programs on the Aapravasi Ghat.

Natasha Kheddoo
Research Assistant

Student Work Experience Programme 2008

Between 2 June and 18 July 2008, eight students from the University of Mauritius followed the Student Work Experience Programme at the AGTF. Miss



A. Appadoo, Miss M. Boodhoo, Miss S. Rajcoomar, Miss N. Abdullakhan, Mr. Y. Karimullah, Miss H. D. Kisthoo, Mr. F. C. Marie and Miss A. Panchoo were involved in the following AGTF activities and projects:

- Guided visits of the Site
- Conservation of artifacts
- The Socio-Economic Survey in the Aapravasi Ghat Buffer Zone
- Archival research
- Documentation of the Labourdonnais Hospital
- 2nd Anniversary commemorating the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on UNESCO's World Heritage List

AGTF Research Unit

Documentation of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site Buffer Zone



Outline of the Buffer Zone

The buffer zone is an area delimitating a specific location possessing a unique vulnerable characteristic and providing the said location with an additional layer of protection. Its extent is determined by the importance of the characteristic to be protected. For the Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site the historical, architectural and visual relationships between the site and its surroundings is very important.

The main purpose of setting up a Buffer Zone is to minimise the impact of developmental pressure on the World Heritage Site, while improving the attraction of the area for visitors and enhancing the quality of living in the area. The implementation of these measures remains the responsibility of the Municipal Council of Port Louis, with the collaboration of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and the National Heritage Fund.

In order to effectively preserve the area, it is important to conduct architectural surveys and carry out technical and historical studies to determine the elements needing protection or urgent attention. Various projects have been launched to this effect.

Listing & Categorisation

Two hundred and fifty five (255) buildings in the Buffer Zone were identified and given a unique identification code between December 2007 and January 2008. In addition, the list comprises information on ownership of buildings, their date of construction and uses among other things. This information was combined with that of the historical research and the architectural study. The aim of this study

was to identify the criteria determining heritage value of buildings in the area. Among these criteria are the age and state of conservation of the building, the historical and architectural values and its value as part of an architectural or historical ensemble.

Following this exercise, the buildings were graded by Nicholas Clarke, South African Consultant to the AGTF in January 2008 as being either Grade I (63 buildings), II (38 buildings), III (34 buildings) or NONE (124 buildings) value. The grading will determine the degree of protection and control required for the building. GRADE I buildings will require a high level of control with the minimum amount of structural change. On the other hand, NO GRADE buildings will be allowed more scope for structural changes as long as those changes are in line with the vision of the PPG and adhere to the architectural genre of its surroundings.

Photographic Survey

A photographic survey was carried out in January 2008 by ARCIA. It was aimed at providing a visual record of all the



Photographic Survey: Interaction between Consultants and Local Participants

260 buildings in the Buffer Zone and is being used as a benchmark in the preservation of the heritage value of the area. The photographs will also be helpful in the study of the architectural genres of the area and the typical transition between the different periods apparent in the urban landscape of the oldest part of Port Louis.

Through the updating and maintenance of the record, the institutions involved in the management of the Buffer Zone will thus be able to monitor the development of the area and ensure the preservation of its heritage value and its authenticity and integrity. Part of these projects also involved the training of technical staff from the AGTF, the NHF and the Ministry of Housing and Lands to ensure that these techniques could be applied for the updating of the present records.

Maurina Soodin
Researcher

Outreach Programmes in schools

In line with its mission to create awareness and promote the Aapravasi Ghat and the history of the site, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund proposed several Outreach Programmes in different primary schools of Mauritius. The programme aimed mainly at the pupils of the Certificate of Primary Education as their curriculum comprises also the study of the indenture period. Moreover this also constituted an opportunity to carry out post tests for students in the schools that had already visited the site. CPE students represent in fact about 56 % of the total number of visitors annually on site.

Seventeen primary schools in all the four educational zones were identified throughout the island.

The pupils were exposed to an interactive presentation of about 40 minutes and made aware of the meaning and importance of Heritage, World heritage, the Aapravasi Ghat, the need to preserve heritage and its benefits. The presentation was followed by a short film on the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site.

In addition information were provided to teachers to supplement their classroom teachings. Brochures of the Aapravasi Ghat World heritage site were further distributed among the pupils. The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund hopes to extend this programme to more schools beginning January 2009.

Vickram Mugon
Researcher

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund would like to thank the following members of the AGTF Newsletter Editorial Committee for their help and contribution:

Mr A. Hutchamah
Chairman of the Committee

Mr B. Dinand
Mr M. Jhummun
Mr R. Mohit
Mrs C. Ramah
Mr S. Peerthum
Mr V. Mugon
Ms N. Kheddo

Training at the Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund

Photogrammetry

The recording of buildings in the Apravasi Ghat World Heritage Site Buffer Zone is a first step towards the protection of heritage. As part of the harmonising of development of buildings or infrastructure within the Buffer Zone of Apravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, a photogrammetry project was initiated by the Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund in collaboration with the National Heritage Fund on 16th January 2008. This project aimed at the collection of detailed documentation on the buildings located in the Apravasi Ghat Buffer Zone.



Mr. J. Jooste and his team at the AGTF

Photogrammetry involves the measuring of objects using photographs and other forms of electronic imagery such as satellite pictures to determine geometric properties. It is commonly used for various purposes that include disaster management in cases of flood, earthquake, landslide, forest fire, etc. It is also used for coal

field monitoring, town planning, utility mapping, tax assessment, flood mapping, forest fire mapping, mining, volcanic damage assessment etc.

A team of six individuals led by Mr. J. Jooste, Director of ARCIA Consulting Ltd. from South Africa undertook field work for two weeks in the Port Louis city centre. The National Heritage Fund participated in this photogrammetry project through the involvement of two officers and in contributing in the cost for the project. The outcomes of the survey consist of:

- DVDs containing colour photos of all the buildings and structures located in the Apravasi Ghat Buffer Zone;
- data sheets on all the buildings and structures; and
- a comprehensive documentation of the architecture within the Buffer Zone.

Following this data collecting process, a gradation exercise is essential to determine the heritage value of the buildings in the Buffer Zone of Apravasi Ghat. This exercise is a priority in order to complete the Planning Policy Guidance for the Buffer Zone of Apravasi Ghat. The PPG will act as a deterrent to the wild mushrooming of irregular infrastructure that ultimately affects the authenticity of this historic landscape. The idea is to promote such development within the delimited area that is in line with the preservation and conservation of this World Heritage Site.

Dr. Anwar Janoo
Technical Consultant,
National Heritage Fund

The Socio Economic Survey

Public consultation constitutes one of the key components towards the elaboration of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). As such a Socio Economic Survey was carried out so as to know the profile, the requirements and expectations of different stakeholders living or doing business in the Buffer Zone.



Ms. N. Kheddo of AGTF carrying out Survey at the Port Louis Central Market

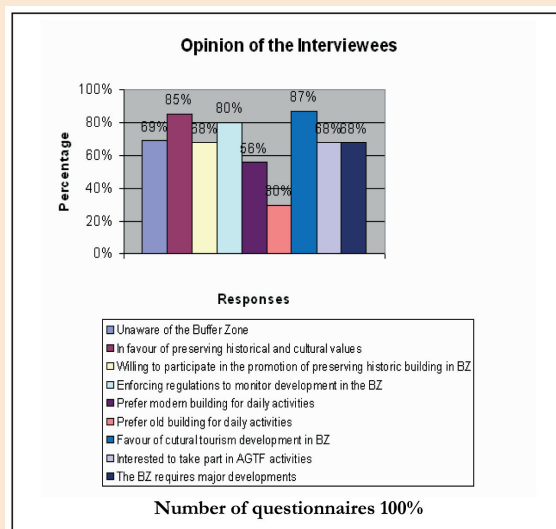
One of the objectives of this survey is to set up a network to facilitate communication and consultation with the local communities and provide them with information about mechanisms designated for the management of the World Heritage Site and its Buffer Zone.

A 3 page questionnaire was designed to address issues related to the AGWHS Management. It included all the elements which the local people of the Buffer Zone has to deal with during their daily activities. The questionnaire comprised both the social and economic facets of the life of the local population.

Two hundred questionnaires were filled in. Targeted interviewees were mostly those involved in sectors like trade, hardware goods, textile, fast food, transport, civil service and street vendors.

The survey revealed that:

- 91% of the interviewees spend their whole day in the Buffer Zone.
- 58% of them are self employed.
- 36% are employees and majority of them has their own business or possess the buildings in the Buffer Zone.
- Regarding the architectural aspect of buildings, 18% respondents said they are of average grade and 7.5% think they are weak.
- The streetscape, urban quality and the pedestrian access were thought to be very weak for the majority of the people.
- 69% are not aware of the existence of the Buffer Zone.



- 85% are in favour of preserving the historic buildings.
- 80% respondents reacted positively towards the enforcement of regulations to monitor development in the Buffer Zone.
- 87% supported the initiative to have cultural tourism development in the region.
- 56% of the public opinion has shown preference for modern buildings versus 30% who are in favour of old buildings.
- 68% of the interviewees still feel that the Buffer Zone requires major development.
- 68% would be interested to participate in activities organized by the AGTF

The analysis of the survey identified major trends and orientations inherent to the Buffer Zone population. The collected information will be useful in the preparation of the PPG, the development strategies and measures to be undertaken to be enforced in the Buffer Zone in the future.

Natasha Kheddo
Research Assistant

Outcome of Surveys on Heritage Economics: the contribution of heritage in the sustainable development

In the last thirty years, heritage in western countries has focused on new opportunities to respond to the requirements of economical and urban development and has attracted major investments in the rehabilitation and conservation of heritage buildings. The various governmental policies and the expansion of investments in heritage have led to conduct surveys on heritage economics. The results of these surveys revealed that in countries such as Canada or the USA, heritage is a reliable source of benefits and that the enhancement of heritage in cities has contributed to:

- improve competitiveness of revitalized historic downtowns;
- increase the value of individual heritage properties as the latter perform better than average in the real estate market
- attract high quality business and luxury retail trade
- to invest in prestige or special locations of high amenity value;
- improve quality of life in neighbourhoods
- increase property tax revenues from renovated buildings;
- increase activity in the building supplies and construction sectors;
- increase tourism revenues;
- to have a geographic focus for increased cultural activities and cultural industries
- improve competitiveness for locations/settings for the film and television industries;
- to enhance business for professional services in conservation/rehabilitation;
- improve and enhance local employment opportunities in several sectors;
- explore the possibilities of converting redundant buildings to affordable housing;
- Save and re-use the resources embodied in the existing building stock;
- reduce flow of waste materials to landfill sites from demolished structures;
- curb urban sprawl and the cost of related new infrastructure;
- Enhance community and civic pride
- Improve the image and prestige of a city/country; and
- develop sustainable economical environment

Heritage can indeed play a vital economic role especially in heritage tourism which has been identified by professionals as a top ranking source of economic benefits. Reports of the World Tourism Organisation and the programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States led by UNESCO consider cultural tourism as a major opportunity to develop the tourism industry in a sustainable manner. The World Heritage Sites in Mauritius could play a significant role in the development of cultural tourism as the World Heritage Status attracts twice more visitors and guarantees a superior quality. According to surveys on heritage economics, a World Heritage Site is a nodal tourist attraction that also has a positive impact on its surroundings by encouraging the development of new businesses and the investment in heritage rehabilitation and conservation that benefit to the country's economy, image and prestige.

Corinne Forest
Head of Technical Unit

A perspective on Cultural Heritage

The definition of cultural heritage can be quite contentious and it can be subject to different interpretation. However, in general cultural heritage is defined as the evidence of mankind achievements and its relationships with the world. Cultural heritage is hence the legacy of a nation, a community and to a group of people. Consequently, it stands for a common heritage that embodies locally, nationally or universally shared values like the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site listed in 2006.

It is understood that the concept of heritage is not preset, but is rather created by a community who attaches values to some objects, rites, languages, lifestyles, historic sites and to monuments. As such, cultural heritage is evocative of people's identities and plays a major role in shaping a common ground for a community. It contributes to the creation of common social bounds which are non-negligible in a multicultural society like Mauritius. In this perspective, Heritage is part of education and its preservation can be the motor for the regeneration of social, economic and cultural resources in a society.

Heritage demarks itself from the discipline of History which aim is to recompose and analyse facts and events of the past. Heritage is interested in how this past can be conserved and interpreted for the benefit of the present and future society. The objective is to refer to the common values onto which our society was created and to nurture these values to ensure a sustainable evolution of our nation. As such, Heritage is our bequest from the past, what we live with today, and what we want to transmit to the future generations in terms of memories, values and norms.

Cultural Heritage preservation brings about many benefits, ranging from societal, personal and economical enrichment. It is hence the aim of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to identify and preserve not only the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, but also other sites in Mauritius which are deemed to be directly linked with the indentured system. Those cultural heritages form part of our identity as a whole.

Renganaden Andiapen
Research Assistant

COMMENTS OF VISITORS AT THE AAPRAVASI GHAT WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN 2008 (Compiled by Kiran C. Jankee)

"Memories of that period still create nostalgia and sympathy".

V.B.Bajaj - India - 04.08.08

"Walking on the steps of my great grandparents is very moving.

You are doing a very important work-Keep going!"

Treva Solanki - UK - 13.08.08

"Thank you for preserving this historical place. I feel a great sadness to be aware of how one human can treat another. We hope that man will never be treated in a sub-human way ever again. This is my hope and prayer.-Good luck Mauritius. Love".

Battoo Family - Canada - 21.08.08

"Historical place kept very carefully. So this is like a national Heritage for Indians".

Prof. Vishnath Rao Gaikwad - Maharashtra, India - 06.09.08

Aapravasi Ghat - Oral History and Intangible Heritage

The Interview of Mr. Narsimooloo of Cottage

At the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, through the project entitled 'From VRS to Indenture: Lifestories of sugar Cane Workers', important and valuable information on the indentured labourers and their descendants have been collected through the various interviews carried out with senior citizens. One of our interviewees, Mr. Balram Narsimooloo, an 87-year-old resident of Cottage, a village in Rivière du Rempart district, has provided valuable information on the living and working conditions of sugar cane workers in Mauritius during the mid-twentieth century.

During the 1920s, Mr. Narsimooloo started working on Labourdonnais Sugar Estate as a carter and shortly after, at the age of twenty-two, he became a sirdar on the same estate. He explained that it was very common practice for estate owners to exploit their workers who were underpaid for the amount of work they did. However, Mr. Narsimooloo also emphasized that the workers were able to organize themselves and resist their exploitation and the harsh treatment

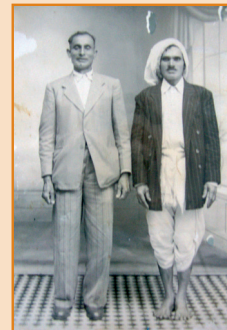


Interview with Mr Narsimooloo by K. C Jankee

which was inflicted upon them by the estate managers and owners. He mentioned this was thanks largely to the fact that there was a great sense of brotherhood and friendship among the sugarcane workers who lived in the estate camps and in the villages.

Mr. Narsimooloo stated that he remembered seeing and interacting with some of the last indentured labourers who came to Mauritius

during the early 1920s. After their term of service, during the 1930s and 1940s, they resided at Cottage, Antoinette, Labourdonnais and Forbach. He noted that the Indian immigrants were very hard workers and they toiled in the fields from sunrise to sunset without a word of complaint. The men wore only a 'dhoti', tied a piece of cloth around their heads and they would not allow anyone to disturb them while they were working.



Mr Narsimooloo (left) with his father Mr Venkatasmy Narsimooloo during the 1940's (Picture Courtesy of the Narsimooloo Family)

Mr. Narsimooloo also remembered the labour strikes of 1943 and the Belle Vue Harel Massacre where several sugar workers lost their lives and were seriously injured in a confrontation with the local colonial police. He also described the cremation of Anjalay Coopen and her fallen companions at Cottage. Mr. Narsimooloo provided details about the early work of Hurryparsad Ramnarain, the famous trade Unionist, during the 1930s and 1940s with the sugar cane workers of Labourdonnais, Belle Vue Harel and Forbach Sugar Estates.

Mr. Narsimooloo also described the difficult living and working conditions of Indo-Mauritian sugarcane workers during World War II. He spoke about the scarcity of rice, flour and dhal and as a result, rice was being cultivated in some areas of Rivière du Rempart district.

Kiran Chuttoo Jankee
Research Assistant

The Inscription of the Immigration Archives on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

At the time of the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on UNESCO's World Heritage List, the World Heritage Committee (WHC 06/30) recommended that Mauritius: "Consider the possibility of inscribing the Aapravasi Ghat archives for UNESCO's Memory of the World Register"



Research Assistants at the Mauritius National Archives

Following this recommendation, the Mauritius Memory of the World Committee was set up by the Ministry of Arts and Culture in May 2008. AGTF, in collaboration with its Parent Ministry and the National Heritage Fund, initiated a project for the detailed inventory and analysis of all the archival records related to the history of Aapravasi Ghat and indentured immigration at the Mauritius National Archives.

The Research Assistants, namely Stephan Karghoo, Alvina Gopaulen, Lorna Soobrayen and Savina Aunund have as such already catalogued more than 1,300 archival volumes.

The nomination dossier is expected to be submitted by March 2009 to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre in Paris for consideration by the World Heritage Committee

The inscription of the Immigration Archives on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register will be a clear international recognition of the unique historical and heritage value of these Mauritian historical documents.

Satyendra Peerthum
Researcher



AAPRAVASI GHAT WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Open from Monday to Saturday
from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Closed on Sundays and public holidays
Free entrance

THE AGWHS DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

s
Open from Monday to Friday
from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Chinese and Magalasy Indentured Labourers and Liberated Africans in 19th Century Mauritius

Each year, during the 2nd November national commemoration ceremony, a lot of emphasis tends to be placed on the indentured labourers who came from the Indian subcontinent, while those who come from China, Madagascar, Mozambique, the Comoro Islands, South-East Asia, Reunion Island and Aden (in present-day Yemen) are almost forgotten. It should be remembered that these particular indentured workers consisted around 5%, or more than 20,000, of the number of indentured workers who set foot on Mauritian soil between 1834 and 1910.

THE CHINESE LABOURERS

Between 1837 and 1843, more than 3,000 Chinese indentured labourers were introduced into Mauritius. They were adult male labourers between 20 and 40 years old from south eastern China and were embarked at Macao, Penang and Singapore. Between the 1860s and 1880s, hundreds of Chinese labourers arrived in Mauritius and were processed at the Aapravasi Ghat. Eventually, many of them rejected estate labour and left the sugar plantations.

Dozens of these indentured labourers were arrested as vagrants and sent to the Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West. Furthermore, dozens more were deported through the Aapravasi Ghat and sent back to south-east China as incorrigible vagrants. It is interesting to note that each the Wah-Lien, a Sino-Mauritian organization, has a commemoration ceremony in memory of the Chinese indentured labourers at a Chinese pagoda at Les Salines in Port Louis.

THE MALAGASIES AND OTHERS

Between 1839 and 1857, 3607 Malagasy indentured labourers were recruited in Tamatave, Tanarive, Mahajunga, and Fort Dauphin to work on the sugar plantations of Mauritius. Between the 1860s and 1880s, several hundred Malagasy indentured as well as free immigrants came to work in Mauritius. During the second half of the 1800s, most of these labourers belonged to the Christian faith and had Christian names.

The Indentured workers also came from Aden, in present-day Yemen, and Réunion Island. During the 1850s and 1860s, more than 500 indentured labourers were brought from Aden, located at the entrance of the Red Sea. Between the 1860s and 1880s, more than 1,000 indentured workers of Indian origin also came from Réunion Island to work on the sugar estates of Mauritius.

THE LIBERATED AFRICANS

Between 1839 and 1857, 320 Mozambican indentured labourers as well as 206 Comorian indentured labourers were introduced into British Mauritius. During the 1860s and the 1870s, hundreds of indentured and free immigrants from the Comoro Islands and Mozambique also came to Mauritius and passed through the Aapravasi Ghat.

Between 1856 and 1869, 2365 Liberated Africans, or ex-slaves from Madagascar, the Comoro Islands and Mozambique, were landed and processed at the Aapravasi Ghat. They were given a new status as



Liberated Africans on a Sugar Estate in Mid-19th Century British Mauritius

indentured labourers and served 5-year contracts. Eventually, they became free citizens of the colony of British Mauritius.

The bio-data and pictures of thousands of these indentured labourers can be found at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Immigration Archives as well as the Mauritius National Archives. Most of them remained in Mauritius and today, there are thousands of their descendants who are Mauritian citizens.

Satyendra Peerthum
Researcher

Visit with Senior Citizens

Senior citizens represent a large section of the growing number of visitors to the Aapravasi Ghat. Our elderly people have a special interest as well as deep emotional attachment to the site. It reminds them of the hardships, toils and sacrifices of our ancestors.

The climbing of the symbolical sixteen steps proves to be one of the most poignant moments of the visit. Our elders bow in reverence to the place which is not less than sacred to them.

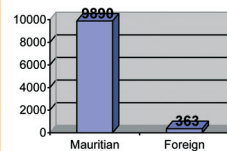


Guided visit by Mrs L. Pydatalli

The stones of the Aapravasi Ghat are more than stones. They are imbued with the memories of our ancestors and it is indeed a great pleasure for me to share these rich and valuable memories with our elders.

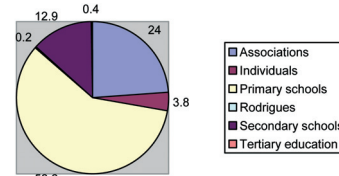
Lutchmee Pydatalli
Field Guide

1. Portion of Foreign and Mauritian visitors from January to October 2008



The 10,232 visitors came to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site from January to October 2008 among which 96.6% visitors were Mauritian and 3.6%, foreigners mainly from France (38.6%) and India (32%).

2. Profile of Mauritian visitors (%) from January to October 2008



Total of Mauritian visitors: 9890 from January to October 2008

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Mr. Satyendra Peerthum	Researcher
Mr. Vickram Mugon	Researcher
Ms. Maurina Soodin	Researcher
Mr. Renganaden Andiapien	Research Assistant
Ms. Jeewamba Ramlagan	Research Assistant (On Study Leave)
Mrs. Kiran Chuttoo Jankee	Research Assistant
Ms. Natasha Kheddoo	Research Assistant
Mrs. Lutchemee Pydatalli	Field Guide
Ms. Sarika Ramjeeawon	Heritage Guide
Ms. Pavisha Beedasy	Heritage Guide

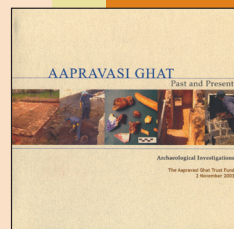
General Workers

Mr. Chandraduth Greedharee	Mason
Mr. Deeneshkumar Gangaram	Mason
Mr. Louis Headley Rameyad	Mason
Mr. Vivekanand Seechurn	Carpenter
Mr. Mohesh Sharma Ramdhony	Carpenter
Mr. Mooroooga Pillay	Stonecutter
Mr. Kishan Doorgathian	General Worker
Mr. Mohunparsad Bahadoor	General Worker
Mr. Rashid Bugel	General Worker
Mr. Mahendranath Ramchurn	General Worker
Mr. Ravind Ramdass Basoodelsing	General Worker
Mr. Sanand Gowressoo	General Worker
Mr. Subhir Ramsurrun	General Worker
Mr. Suchit Ramparsad	General Worker
Mr. Varun Sharma Badoo	General Worker
Mr. Thierry Chaton	Helper to stonecutter
Mr. Vishal Beetnah	Watchman
Mr. Dhanoookdharee	Watchman
Mr. Vivekanand Mulloo	Watchman



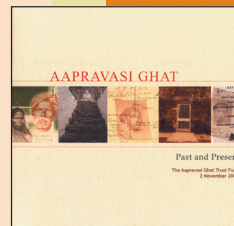
AAPRAVASI GHAT TRUST FUND
Ex-DWC Building, Quay Street, Port Louis.
Phone: 217-3156/8/9 Fax: 217-2481
Website : www.aapravasighat.org
Email: aapravasi@intnet.mu

ON SALE AT THE AAPRAVASI GHAT TRUST FUND OFFICE



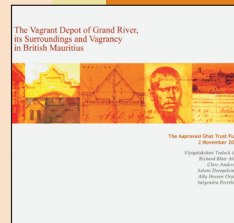
**The Aapravasi Ghat:
Past and Present:
Archaeological
Investigations (2003)**

Price: Rs. 100



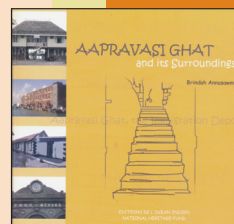
**The Aapravasi Ghat:
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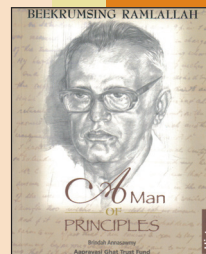
**The Vagrant Depot of
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Vagrancy
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British Mauritius
(2004)**

Price: Rs. 250



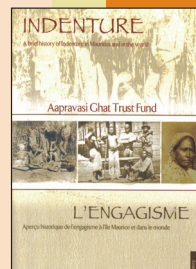
**Aapravasi Ghat and its
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Brindah Annasawmy
(2006)**

Price: Rs. 150



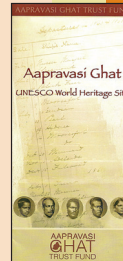
**Beeckrumsing Ramlallah:
A Man of Principles**

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**Indenture: A Brief History of
Indenture in Mauritius
and in the World (2007)**

Price: Rs. 50



**Brochure of the Aapravasi Ghat
World Heritage Site
available at the AGTF Office**