



AAPRAVASI GHAT

World Heritage Site



VISIT TO AAPRAVASI GHAT WORLD HERITAGE SITE EDUCATION KIT FOR TEACHERS



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



INTERNATIONAL MONUMENTS FUND
EDUCATION • PARTNERSHIP • INNOVATION

Aapravasi Ghat

inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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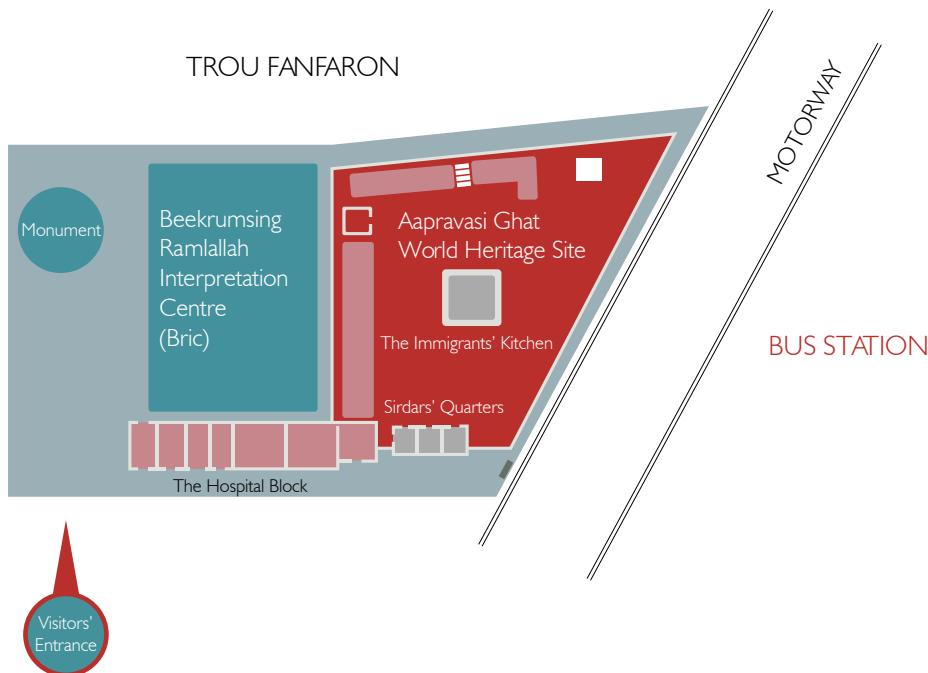


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NOTE TO TEACHERS

This Education Kit has been developed to provide information to teachers of primary and secondary schools in the context of their visit with students to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site.

The visit at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site includes a visit of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (45 mins) and a visit of the Aapravasi Ghat (20 mins).



The Education Kit provides essential information to teachers to document and to conduct activities in class or on site before, during and after the visit of the World Heritage site.

The first part of this education kit proposes activities to be performed with students before, during or after the visit to the World Heritage Site to enhance and complement their knowledge of the site.

The second part presents the historical background of the World Heritage Site and explains the reasons for its inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2006.

► How to use this kit

- Use the activities proposed in this education kit to work with the students in class, at World Heritage Site or at home; ideally visit the World Heritage Site before undertaking the activities to familiarize yourself with the Aapravasi Ghat.
- Select, modify or add new activities according to your students' interests and how much time you will have at the World Heritage Site where the visit's duration is estimated at about one hour.
- Prior booking to visit the Aapravasi Ghat is essential. Booking can be made on 217 7770 or by email to outreach.agtf@intnet.mu. Please specify:
 - the date and time of your visit;
 - the number of visitors (the maximum carrying capacity of site at one time is eighty people; may the number of visitors exceeds 80, arrangements can be made to visit other places in Port Louis to divide the visitors in smaller groups).
 - A contact name and number.
- Guided visits are performed on demand in groups of 20 people maximum.
- The education kit may be used in conjunction with other resources available for download on our website www.aapravasighat.org

OVERVIEW

► Aims

- To develop student knowledge and understanding of the history and experience of indentured immigration.
- To appreciate that indentured immigration has contributed to the constitution of today's Mauritian population composed of a great variety of people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- To understand the concept of World Heritage and why the Aapravasi Ghat became a World Heritage Site.
- To understand the impact of indenture as an international phenomenon.
- To understand the role of the immigration depot and the function of its different features.

► Skills

- Gathering information from texts and data to interpret history and understand the various surviving structures on site.
- Learning about specific events in Mauritius and world history.
- Assimilating historical data and situate them in time.
- Understanding the values underpinning a range of historical interpretations.
- Reading and analyzing visual documents.
- Communicating ideas verbally.
- Working in groups.

► Key concepts

Immigrant, indentured immigration, Immigration Depot, archival records, history, archaeology, origins, tradition, tangible and intangible Heritage, historic site, UNESCO, World Heritage, Outstanding Universal Value, preservation, conservation, restoration, culture, diversity, influences, multicultural, identity.

ACTIVITIES FOR CLASSROOM OR HOME

► Pre-visit to the site:before the arrival at the Immigration Depot

Several activities could be performed before you visit the site to engage the students in the topic.

Reconstituting the historical background of the site

- Students could be asked what they know about the site and their answers could be noted on the board and be regrouped per category to create meaning and conclude on a brief presentation of the history of the site.
- A few key questions could be asked:
 - What is an immigrant?
 - What is indenture?
 - What and where is the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site?
 - What is the Great Experiment with indentured labour?
- Build up the chronology of the history of Mauritius to situate the indentured period in time.
- Students can create an illustrative time line from the indenture period to nowadays.

Understanding the role of the Aapravasi Ghat as an Immigration Depot

- Make copies of the immigrant ticket (page 10) for students to fill it in in class.
- Undertake activities/games upon copies of the pictures, maps and other materials downloaded from our website.
- Perform drawing and painting activities reproducing pictures related to the indenture period.
- Students could be invited to walk in the footsteps of an indentured immigrant and recreate the sequence from the departure in the immigrant's country of origin to the distribution in the sugar estates.

Understanding the indentured experience

- Invite students to undertake research on their family's origin and share their family's histories in class.
- Read a story to students about one person's experience of coming to Mauritius.
- Invite someone such as an historian, a staff member of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund or an elderly person for example to speak in class about this topic.
- Invite students to record someone who explains the experience of indenture or of living in sugar camps.
- Encourage students to gather information on indenture or on the site from the press and create a scrap book with relevant articles.
- Show a film on Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site's history. This film is available from the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund on request.

► Visit at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site: Arrival at the Immigration Depot

Guided visit

On request, guided visits of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (45 mins) followed by the visit of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site (20 mins) are available on booking on 217 7770. Arrangements for a guided visit on a specific historical aspect or activity can be made prior to your visit.

Self-guided visit

You may guide your students to a visit of the Interpretation Centre and of the World Heritage Site. The number of students per group should not exceed 20. Teachers and accompanying adults are responsible for the behaviour of groups throughout the visit and should be in a supervisory role at all times.

Site regulations

- Prior booking is highly recommended.
- Groups should not exceed 20 people and be at all times under the supervision of an adult.
- Food and drinks are not allowed.

- Bags can be kept in the Interpretation Centre.
- Students are not allowed to run, push, yell or intrude on the rights of other visitors to enjoy the World Heritage Site. Students are expected to listen carefully to instructions and focus on set activities.
- Walking, leaning or sitting on remaining structures is not allowed.
- Photography is allowed only at World Heritage Site and not allowed in the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre.

► Post-visit activities: leaving the Immigration Depot

- Activities retracing the different steps followed by an indentured immigrant could be performed (illustrative timeline, drama, drawing and painting etc.)
- A plan of the site with empty spaces at relevant locations could be filled in to present the different processing stages followed by an immigrant at the Immigration Depot.
- Discover other indentured sites in Mauritius such as Vagrant Depot in Grande Rivière North West, Quarantine stations in Flat Island and in Pointe aux Canonniers, Immigrants' barracks in Trianon and in Union Vale to name a few.
- Compose their family trees based on sources of information including birth, death and marriage certificates, family members' stories, photographs and family's archives.
- Invite students to present in class an object evocative of their family history.
- Students could produce a book or a drama on an immigration story.
- Visit of a sugar estate.
- Visit other cultural institutions presenting documents on indentured immigration.
- Invite students to perform research to find the definitions of human sciences such as archaeology, oral history, history, anthropology helping in the discovery of our past.
- Activities based on the work in the sugar cane fields: explaining the tasks previously performed by the indentured labourers based on illustrations or presence of related tools and objects; a person could be invited to explain and share his/her work experience with the students.
- Use the school quiz as an activity in class (downloadable from our website).

MATERIAL FOR ACTIVITIES

► Immigrant Ticket

Old Immigrant's Ticket
—□—
SHIP's No. 1284

IMMIGRANT OF 18

Name

Father's Name

Immigrant No

Present Age

Where from

Date of Arrival

If married, to whom

Stature

Immigration office, 188.....

CHIEF CLERK



BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Aapravasi Ghat historical site is an important symbol of Mauritian identity since the ancestors of more than 70% of today's Mauritian population arrived on the island through this immigration depot.

► The indenture period in Mauritius (1834 - 1910)

The British Parliament's decision to abolish slavery in its colonies in 1833 led to the setting up of a new system of recruitment called indenture. In Mauritius, even before the abolition of slavery on 1st February 1835, planters called for labourers as the sugar industry expanded rapidly.

A definition of Indentured Labourer

An indentured labourer was a free man or woman who signed a contract to work away from his/her homeland for an employer for a specified period of time, generally for five years.

The British colonial Government wanted to evaluate the viability of this new system. The "Great Experiment" was launched in Mauritius as a test case. The Great Experiment officially started when the Atlas arrived from India with 36 indentured labourers on board on 2 November 1834.

Between 1839 and 1842, the emigration of indentured labourers from India was suspended as a result of the abuse to which the earliest contract workers in Mauritius were subjected.

Indentured immigration reached its peak years between the 1843 and 1865 to respond to the increasing needs of the sugar industry making of Mauritius, the most productive sugar colony (7% of the world's sugar) in the British Empire around 1845.

Indentured immigration declined as from 1870s and came to a formal end in 1910.

The Outstanding Universal Value of the Aapravasi Ghat was defined as follows at the time of its inscription on the World Heritage List of UNESCO:

'Aapravasi Ghat, as the first site chosen by the British Government in 1834 for the 'Great Experiment' in the use of indentured, rather than slave labour, is strongly associated with memories of almost half a million indentured labourers moving from India to Mauritius to work on sugar cane plantations or to be transshipped to other parts of the World.'

(WHC-06/30.COM/19; Decision 30 COM 8B.33)

► The role of the Immigration Depot

Before the construction of the Aapravasi Ghat in Trou Fanfaron, several buildings were used as depots to receive indentured labourers.

The Aapravasi Ghat was constructed in 1849 to improve the management of indentured immigration. The depot was enlarged in the 1850s and 1860s to receive the increasing flow of immigrants. By 1860, the immigration depot was extended to a carrying capacity of 600 immigrants.

In 1864, the railway line separated the depot in two distinct parts: one side received the newly arrived immigrants and the other was devoted to the management of immigrants already under contract or about to leave the territory on termination of their engagement.

From 1849 to 1910, the Aapravasi Ghat played a central role in the day-to-day functioning of the indentured labour system and in the lives of these immigrants and their descendants in Mauritius.

Under the supervision of the Protector of Immigrants, the role of Aapravasi Ghat immigration office was to:

- Receive newly arrived labourers.
- Enforce sanitary regulations.
- Register new labour contracts and their renewal.
- Deliver tickets and passes to immigrants.
- Allocate labourers to sugar estates or public works projects.
- Supervise workers returning to their homeland.

- Record personal information about individuals charged with vagrancy.
- Receive taxes and fees paid by indentured workers.
- Issue immigrants' civil status documents.
- Record indentured workers' complaints.
- Remit the money workers wanted to send to their homeland.
- Inspect and report on conditions on sugar estates.

► Being an Immigrant at the Immigration Depot

Immigrants arrived in Mauritius after a journey on board a ship that generally took eight to ten weeks.

When the immigrants arrived, they were inspected by the medical officer. If a case of contagious disease was found on board the ship, the passengers were sent to quarantine stations such as Flat Island, an islet located 12 kms off the north coast of Mauritius.

If immigrants were healthy, they disembarked at the Immigration Depot then referred to as "Coolie Depot" where all indentured immigrants completed the administrative procedures that permitted them to live and work in Mauritius. The Immigration Depot staff registered the personal details of each immigrant. In 1865, a photographic unit was created and a photographer took two portrait photos of each immigrant. One was attached to the immigrant's ticket while the second photo was retained in the records office of the Aapravasi Ghat. These documents are now kept at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

Immigrants usually stayed about two days at the Aapravasi Ghat to complete all administrative procedures. Once these procedures were completed, indentured immigrants were distributed to sugar estates. Planters or sirdars came to the Aapravasi Ghat to pay the transportation costs of their new employees, and were given their certificates of engagement. A few days later, planters received the tickets of their indentured employees.

► Origins of Immigrants

The majority of Indentured Labourers came from India (97.5%) but they also came from China, South East Asia, Madagascar and East Africa.

Malagasy, Comorian and Chinese labourers were introduced when the British government of India suspended immigration to Mauritius from 1839 to 1842, and also between 1855 and 1860, when the demand for workers was exceptionally high.

Unsuccessful attempts to introduce Indian labourers in Mauritius were made as early as 1826. Large scale indentured labour migration began in 1834. Most Indian indentured labourers were embarked at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Most of the Indian indentured immigrants came from Bihar (40%); Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu (31%); Bengal and Uttar Pradesh (20%); and Maharashtra (9%).

Nearly half a million immigrants climbed up the steps of the Aapravasi Ghat between 1849 and 1910. For this reason, the site is an important tangible evidence of the peopling of Mauritius and of the shaping process of modern Mauritian identity.

► Chronology

- 1820s Beginning of the indentured labour system under private auspices
- 1834 Abolition of slavery in British colonies
- 1839 Suspension of Indian labour immigration
- 1842 Indentured immigration resumed under government control
- 1849 Aapravasi Ghat becomes operational
- 1849-1865 Peak years of indentured immigration to Mauritius
- 1853-1859 Expansion and improvement of the Aapravasi Ghat
- 1864 Construction of a railway line through the Aapravasi Ghat
- 1910 Indentured Immigration to Mauritius formally ended
- 1938 The post of Protector of Immigrants was abolished
- 1950 The Aapravasi Ghat became the Public Assistance Department
- 1970 Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, visited the Aapravasi Ghat
- 1976 Transfer of the Immigration Records to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute
- 1987 The “Coolie Ghat” was listed as a National Monument
- 1989 The former Immigration Depot was renamed Aapravasi Ghat
- 2001 Creation of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund
2nd November was declared a public holiday
- 2004 Beginning of the Aapravasi Ghat Conservation Project
- 2002-2004 Archaeological research at Aapravasi Ghat
- 2004 Koichiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO, visited the site
- 2005 A nomination dossier to inscribe the Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage list was submitted to UNESCO
- 2006 The Aapravasi Ghat was inscribed on UNESCO’s list of World Heritage Sites



CONTACT DETAILS

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