

Indenture – The Great Experiment

Mauritius is the site of the first large-scale use of indentured labour in the modern world.

Between the 1830s and 1910, more than 462,000 people arrived in Mauritius to start a new life. They came from China, the Comoros, India, Madagascar, Mozambique, Southeast Asia and Yemen where they signed contracts as *indentured labourers* to work on the colony's sugar estates.

Two-thirds of these indentured labourers remained permanently in Mauritius. The other one-third returned to their homeland or migrated to other lands.

Approximately 70% of modern Mauritians are descendants of these indentured labourers.

The success of the Mauritian experiment led to the migration of a total of more than 2.2 million indentured labourers around the world, including the Caribbean, South America, the South Pacific and Southeast Asia.