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GRFDT

Global Research Forum on
Diaspora and Transnationalism



Roots and Routes disseminates latest information on
research and policy development in Diaspora and transnationalism

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Editor's Message



I would like to share a happy news that GRFDT website has been getting increasing viewership especially from the Europe and US as divulged by our website map. The global reach and presence of GRFDT's virtual presence is very heartening news to all of us.

GRFDT provides an interdisciplinary platform to scholars to share their view. This issue covers an event "Suicidal behaviour among Malaysian Indian' by Prof. T. Maniam, Professor at the Department of Psychiatry of National University of Malaysia was held on 25th September, 2014. The talk touched upon various socio-economic and psychological issues related to the high suicide rate among the Indian ethnic community in Malaysia.

This edition carries two interesting interviews, one with Dr. Omar H. Ali and the other with Prof. T. Marimuthu. While Dr. Ali's interview touched upon many unfamiliar things related to the spread of African diaspora in Asian countries and assimilation and other issues, the interview with Prof. T. Marimuthu talked about the transitional challenges of Indian ethnic community in Malaysia.

The well-crafted review of the book 'Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses' by Ms. Monika Bisht highlights the merits and grey areas of the book. We feel elated to apprise you all that GRFDT members namely Ms. Monika Bisht and Mr. Rakesh Ranjan participated and presented their papers in the International seminar on 'Migration, Care Economy and Development' at the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala in this month.

On Behalf of the GRFDT, we convey our heartfelt congratulations to GRFDT member Mr. Vinod Sartape who has been awarded with the Central European University's Budapest Foundation Scholarship in pursuit of his Ph.D. The 'global update' section of the news letter carries a variety of news items and announcements to check out, to share, and to respond....

Do send us your comments and fresh ideas....
Have a Good Reading!!!!

Dr. Mahalingam M

Issue Editor

GRFDT Seminar

Suicidal behaviour among Malaysian Indian

The GRFDT talk on 'Suicidal behaviour among Malaysian Indian' by Prof. T. Maniam, Professor at the Department of Psychiatry of National University of Malaysia was held on 25th September, 2014. He initially spoke about the contours of Malaysian multi-cultural society. Malaysia is a multicultural Southeast Asian country of 30 million people. The major ethnic groups are Malays, Chinese, Indians (8%) and the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak. Later, he focused on the theme of the talk. He argued that Malaysian Indians have higher rates of suicidal behaviour (which includes suicidal ideas, plans, attempts and completed suicides), than any other ethnic groups in Malaysia. He collected his data for his study in Cameron Highlands of Malaysia where the suicidal rate of Indians is very high. He argued that while there is considerable misclassification of suicide statistics in Malaysia all studies, past and recent; almost unanimously agree that people of Indian descent have disproportionately high rates of suicide. The prevalence of high suicide rate is due to social distress compounded with mental distress. Further, he added that the cultural factors also trigger suicidal tendency. For instance, the values like 'shame' and 'family honour' can be considered one of the propelling factors. He pointed out that the suicides are high both among Indian males and females in Malaysia. The women generally committed suicide due to genetic problem, isolation, domestic violence and failure of self-choice marriages etc. It may be postulated that the relative absence of a strong social prohibition against suicidal behaviour are important contributory factors too. Further, he explained that the rate of



committing suicide is very high among the Hindu Indians as compared to other religious group of Indian community. He also suggested some of the protective factors like strengthening close family bonds among members, reposing religious faith and improving various support systems of the community. Even though the 'Department of Suicidal Attempt' has been functioning to mitigate the issue, as the regulatory framework is weak and has ineffective mechanisms, it could not make a head way to resolve the issue. And also, the government of Malaysia is passive about seeking the root-cause and the reduction of increasing suicidal behaviour of Indian



ethnic minority community given the ethnicity based public policies. At last, the talk was followed by a discussion. Participants have shared their observation, comments and queries. There were few questions on the causes of the increasing rate of suicidal cases in Malaysia and how would it be different from India. He showed tables and other quantifications to substantiate his arguments. The guest was overwhelmed by the interesting questions from participants. It was an enriching talk which broadened the perspective of Malaysian Indian community. Finally, the talk ended with a vote of thanks by Dr Sadananada Sahoo, Convener, GRFDT and followed by dinner.

The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean world requires an understanding of the history of East Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Islam : **Dr. Omar H. Ali**

'Diasporic lenses' is a helpful way of framing things. I think looking at things in diasporic terms is an important move away from the nation-state fixation of the past century and a half; it is a move towards interconnections across regions and the world in ways that are more helpful both analytically and at a basic human level, says **Dr. Omar H. Ali**, Associate Professor of Comparative African Diaspora History, African American & African Diaspora Studies Program (AADS), The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in an interview with **Dr. Sadananda Sahoo**, editor, Roots and Routes.



Sadananda Sahoo: We often see the history of diasporas are synonymous with the history of marginality. Even though some diasporas have come up over the time, African diaspora remain in the margins in most parts of the globe. How do you perceive such phenomenon?

Omar H. Ali: Race is a function of power. Those who have power determine the categories of superiority/inferiority. The fact that most black people in the world continue to be economically and politically marginalized has to do with history and the making of the modern world, which is the product of European imperialism and colonization starting in the sixteenth century. And while the issue of marginality affects all people and therefore not just black people, the disproportionate number of black people who are poor and marginalized in the world calls for particular attention. So, as Haile Selassie said, and Bob Marley sang:

"Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior
Is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned
Everywhere is war."

Sadananda Sahoo: How inclusive is the term African diaspora when there is such great diversity within the African nation states in terms of political-economic development, cultural differences, conflicting relationship between diaspora and home state etc?

Omar H. Ali: The African Diaspora is the free and forced migration of Africans and their descendants across the world. Although Africans and their descendants continue to migrate across the globe today, approximately four million people dispersed across the Indian Ocean between the second and the twentieth centuries, and about eleven million dispersed (or spread) across the Atlantic between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The term should be understood as capturing the global dispersion of Africans, however much of how most people think about the African Diaspora is focused on the Atlantic world, to the exclusion of the Indian Ocean world (not to mention the Mediterranean world). Long before Africans migrated across the Atlantic, they were migrating on their own volition or by force within Africa itself and across the Indian Ocean world. The different areas of the global African Diaspora are certainly different from each other and really challenge the notion of nation-states by suggesting fluidity and flows of people, products, and ideas (among many other things) that transcend official boundaries. The fact is that nation-states were largely imposed over ordinary people as a way of controlling resources .

Sadananda Sahoo: Do you perceive that the recent transnational African diaspora identity has any impact on the pan-African identity among the African nation states? There has been visible jubilation among the people of blacks after Obama won the presidential election.

Omar H. Ali: I'm not sure that the notion of diaspora has been embraced or is even known within Africa beyond small circles of people (which is also true outside of Africa). It is, generally speaking, a term that academics use; it is not so much part of the language outside of scholarly circles at this point. By contrast, Pan-Africanism has a longer history as a term and is used among many more people. I think it is unclear to what extent the Diaspora term has impacted on the ways in which African nation states, or rather people in African states, think about themselves and others of African origin across the world. President Obama's election in 2008 (and subsequent re-election) brought enormous pride to black people (indeed many more than just black people) across the globe. I, like so many other people, did not imagine this possible in my lifetime, which makes me think that there are perhaps other unimaginable things that could happen within our lifetimes. I'm being optimistic, of course. But why not? Optimism is not in opposition to realism. In fact, I think optimism allows for possibilities, even if small. I will take that any day over pure cynicism.

Sadananda Sahoo: The African Union in World Bank collaboration has initiated 'African Diaspora Development' programme. Do you think such programmes will yield any result? How is it perceived by the African countries?

Omar H. Ali: I hope such efforts yield results for poor people, and not just administrators and authorities in charge of the programs. Another way of putting this is that it is an interesting development which could lead to substantive changes. I do not know how the particular phrasing of the collaboration is being perceived by African countries (or, rather, the best-known voices within those countries).

Sadananda Sahoo: In one of your article you mentioned "Historically, Africans and their descendants in the Indian Ocean world tended to have greater social mobility due to Islamic laws and societal conventions that incorporated the children of enslaved women into the homes of slaveholders as free kin." What could be the reason for this emancipation or greater social mobility for not translating into the political and economic domains? For example Africans in the Indian Ocean world today are seriously marginalised and not visible in both political and economic arena as it in the case of United States of America and elsewhere.

Omar H. Ali: First of all, while there are a number of prominent black figures in the United States (from the Obamas to others of their class, such as Collin Powell, or even billionaires, such as Oprah Winfrey) the majority of black people in the U.S. are poor—very poor—and politically marginalized. There is an excellent paper by Dr. Lenora Fulani entitled "The Development Line" (which can be found online) that discusses this. Her argument is that we need to engage the issue of human development as a way for black people (all marginalized people) to become more powerful. Focusing on 'race' alone will only get you so far. Using performance and play as tools for development have been very successful in this national sector. So while there are structural macro-economic and political factors to be engaged, we cannot leave out the issue of human development as part of the mix. If you look at the history of the U.S., there has always been a small black middle-class but most black people in the country have not yet been fully integrated (despite the Civil Rights legal gains of the 1960s). Are there more possibilities for people of African descent in the U.S. than in South Asia? I would say most definitely, but there is much work to do on this side of the globe. The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean world has a different history. Going back to the seventeenth century, for instance in India, the system of military slavery in which Africans were enslaved and taken to South Asia where they worked as soldiers, allowed for social mobility in large part because of Islamic conventions. While we can point to a person like Malik Ambar, an Ethiopian who was enslaved as a child and then ends up in India, where he will become de facto ruler of the Sultanate of Ahmednagar, demonstrates such social mobility, there were many other Africans in the Indian Ocean who did not rise through the ranks but lived out their lives in marginalized conditions. There are efforts to gain rights among African communities in India, but it is a very difficult fight, since these Siddi communities are relatively-speaking so small and little-known.

Sadananda Sahoo: Barring few research works, including yours, there has not been much scholarship on Black diasporas in Indian Ocean area. Do you think this is due to their invisibility and marginality in the society?

Omar H. Ali: I think there is increasing attention being paid to the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean world, for instance the African Diaspora exhibits at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem from three years ago and the subsequent shows in New York regarding African Elites in India, which is now heading towards India, but it certainly is a lesser-known area of the global African Diaspora. Part of this has to do with the greater Part of this has

to do with the greater assimilation of Africans into those societies (for example, the children of black concubines were free and took on the names of their fathers and adopted their cultures and languages). Another part, which is more current, is that scholars of the Black Atlantic are either unaware of or intimidated about learning in greater detail about this part of the world in order to teach it and incorporate it into their own research--to be ultimately transmitted to the wider public through textbooks, popular articles, and (down the line perhaps) documentaries, and movies. The issue is one of 'otherness' or 'foreignness'; most scholars tend to stick with the areas that they are most familiar with. The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean world requires an understanding of the history of East Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Islam. It's less a question of capacity, and more a question of intimidation to delve into very different geographical areas, histories, and cultures. The sources are Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, among others. This is very different than studying the Atlantic, which can be studied with English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese to a very large extent--languages with which many Atlantic scholars are familiar with. Delving into the Indian Ocean for these Atlantic-based scholars requires a willingness to stretch in a number of ways. The good news is that we have some good tools to make such a stretch more possible--namely the exhibit online on "The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World" by the Schomburg Center. It's a great place to start.

Sadananda Sahoo: There has been increasing diaspora identity across the globe, it sounds like the world is full of diasporas with increasing transnational networks. How do you visualise the world unfolding before us in the next 10-20 years and its ramification in social, political, economic and cultural arena?

Omar H. Ali: This is a fascinating question. Ten to twenty years is a blip of time in world history. If you were to ask the question of the next 100-200, or better yet, 1,000 to 2,000 years, assuming our species does not destroy itself and the world by that time, I think we might see some visually significant changes, accompanied by very different concepts become the new norm. Perhaps our world will be so obviously intermixed and our concepts of race and other forms of identity so undermined that we will ... I don't have the answer. I do hope for the best, for a world in which poverty is eradicated and that creativity is actively encouraged, a world in which our priority is our collective human development and growth, joy, and happiness. A world in which we might say to each other, 'There was a time when our species did such terrible things to each other and other creatures on earth. I'm so glad we don't do that anymore.' Now that's optimistic!

Sadananda Sahoo: Do you think there is a greater need for research focus on grasping the changes through diasporic lenses?

Omar H. Ali: 'Diasporic lenses' is a helpful way of framing things. I think looking at things in diasporic terms is an important move away from the nation-state fixation of the past century and a half; it is a move towards interconnections across regions and the world in ways that are more helpful both analytically and at a basic human level (as in finding commonalities with other people from other parts of the world). I also think, or suspect, that the diasporic lens will be replaced with new ways of seeing and being down the line. What they are, I do not know, but certainly diaspora helps us see the great fluidity and flow of people, products, ideas, and practices across the world and across time. For now, it's a useful conceptual tool (even if there is no consensus on what 'diaspora' even is) to work with in understanding the world.

Sadananda Sahoo: You have been a prolific writer, great teacher and also a serious researcher, what suggestions do you wish to give to the young researchers working on diaspora issues?

Omar H. Ali: Pursue everything that you're interested in and don't worry about not knowing something before jumping into it; by jumping into things, you learn, so go ahead and jump! And if you have any trouble jumping, e-mail me at ohali@uncg.edu and I will be your biggest cheerleader. By supporting each other to try new things, we grow ... and remember to have fun!

Dr. Omar H. Ali is Associate Professor of Comparative African Diaspora History and Director of Graduate Studies in the African American Studies Program at UNCG. A graduate of the London School of Economics and Political Science, he studied ethnography at the School of Oriental and African Studies before receiving his Ph.D. in history from Columbia University. He is the author of two forthcoming books, *Islam in the Indian Ocean World: A Documentary History* (Bedford St. Martin's) and *Malik Ambar: Abyssinian Defender of India's Deccan* (Oxford University Press). A recipient of an Excellence in Teaching Award and a Chancellor's Recognition of Contributions to the UNCG Community, Ali serves on the History Academic Advisory Committee of the College Board and is a Road Scholar for the North Carolina Humanities Council, lecturing on "The Many Faces of Islam." Most recently, he was Lead Scholar for the Council's Summer Institute, "Muslim Journeys." A former visiting Fulbright professor of history and anthropology at Universidad Nacional de Colombia and Library Scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University, Ali has appeared on CNN, NPR, PBS, and Al Jazeera.

There is a lack of serious and comprehensive studies on the contemporary Malaysian Indians whose problems have changed from rural poverty to urban poverty: **Prof. T. Marimuthu**

Majority of Indians are now in the urban areas, with a significant percentage living in the squatter areas of the urban centres. Therefore, the focus now is on the urban poverty of the Indians, says **Prof. T. Marimuthu** in an interview with **Dr. M. Mahalingam**, Issue Editor of Roots and Routes.



M. Mahalingam: Since you are a well-known scholar on education, an appropriate question to ask would be that, what are the necessary steps to be taken for enhancing the human capital of Malaysian Indian community?

T. Marimuthu: The major avenue for the development of the human capital of Malaysian Indians is through Education and Training. The vast majority of Indian children go through the public education system for eleven years after which those who are less academically inclined are provided vocational training by publicly funded institutions.

M. Mahalingam: You have described the Tamil school education system as the 'Cinderella of the Malaysian education system.' Is that still the case?

T. Marimuthu: The Tamil schools in the Malaysian Education system was described as the Cinderella of the Education system owing to historical reasons in the 1960's. The majority of the schools are located in the plantations, with poor infrastructural facilities. Many lacked proper toilets, canteens, playing fields, science labs and computer rooms.

A significant percentage of teachers were temporary teachers and this affected the process of teaching and learning. The majority of the children who attended these schools came from poor homes which also influenced their academic achievement. The Drop-out Report in 1973 described Tamil Schools as the "smallest and poorest" with the highest drop-out rate as compared to other language schools. Since the Drop-out Report in 1973, several educational strategies have been implemented to upgrade the physical and educational quality of these schools.

In the diagnostic exam conducted after six years a significant percentage did not fare well. It is estimated that about 30% of the school children were underachievers. The efforts of the government, the MIC and the NGOs in the last four decades have upgraded the achievement of the Tamil schools to a level almost equal to that of the achievements of National and Chinese school pupils.

M. Mahalingam: The image of Malaysian Indian community is at its low ebb due to poor socio-economic indicators. According to you, what are the drastic steps of the present Malaysian government to address it?

T. Marimuthu: Several socio-economic indicators show that the Indians are better off than the Bumiputera community in terms of poverty, per capita income and other social indicators. The majority of Indians (80%) are now in the urban areas, with a significant percentage living in the squatter areas of the urban centres. Therefore, the focus now is on the urban poverty of the Indians. The Government has set up special committees to look after some of the socio-economic issues. Those who live in the squatter areas of the urban centres face many problems such as proper housing, employment opportunities and lack other amenities. These are the low-income families whose youth is involved in anti-social activities such as drug abuse and gang related criminal activities.

M. Mahalingam: It has been observed that there was a rural-urban divide amongst the Indian community in Malaysia. Does this divide still persist or not?

T. Marimuthu: The influence of this divide has somewhat reduced owing to the migration of the Indian population to the urban areas.

M. Mahalingam: What are the initiatives taken by MIC in the field of education for Malaysian Indians?

T. Marimuthu: The main contribution of MIC in the field of education is to upgrade the quality of education in Tamil schools. This is because over 50% of the Tamil children are enrolled in these schools. Several programmes have been initiated towards this goal such as improving the infrastructure facilities, rebuilding or renovating dilapidated buildings, conducting seminars and conferences for teachers and headmasters, counselling sessions for parents and pupils, free supplementary texts for exam classes and tuition programmes. For higher education, MIC through the Maju Institute of Educational Development (MIED) has established two higher educational institutions namely, TAFE College, which is a technical and vocational institution and a university named Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology, (AIMST University). So far 20,000 graduates from TAFE and about 3,000 graduates from AIMST University which includes 1,000 medical doctors, have been produced by these two institutions. MIED has also provided loans for students in institutions of higher education. It has provided RM119 millions for 9888 students in the fields of medicine, dentistry, engineering, civil aviation, business studies, information technology, law and accounting.

M. Mahalingam: In your view, what are the contributions of the Malaysian Indian Congress to Malaysia in general and Malaysian Indian community in particular?

T. Marimuthu: MIC was formed in 1946 to espouse the political rights of the Indian community in a soon to be an independent nation – Malaya achieved its independence in 1957. It has been the major partner in the Barisan government representing the Indians since 1955. It has been the custodian of the Indian community representing their interests in politics, education, economy, religion and culture.

M. Mahalingam: What is the role of Malaysian Indian middle class in the modern, globalised economy of Malaysia?

T. Marimuthu: The Malaysian middle class Indians are mainly professionals and businessmen and are benefitting from the development that has accrued to the nation through globalisation and modernisation. Altruism and volunteerism is emerging amongst these middle classes through their participation in NGO's for the social development of the less fortunate Malaysians.

M. Mahalingam: There have been many research studies about Indian community in Malaysia. According to you, what are the gaps that exist in these studies?

T. Marimuthu: The earlier studies in the 1960's and 1970's focussed on the immigration and settlement of Indians in the country, ethnography profile of plantation workers, trade Union movement, educational status of Indian children, political involvement and other socio-economic issues. I cannot provide a critical review but I note a lack of serious and comprehensive study on the Indians whose problems have changed from rural poverty and the problems of plantation workers to issues of urban poverty, crime amongst the Indian youths, drug abuse, life in squatter areas, increasing suicide and divorce rates, resulting in single parent families and other socio-economic problems. These are some of the areas that need serious research studies.

Tan Sri Professor **Dr. T. Marimuthu** is now an Adjunct Professor at the School of Education and Cognitive Sciences, Asia e University, Kuala Lumpur. He was formerly the Chairman of Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology University in Kedah, Malaysia, professor of Social Psychology of Education and the Deputy Dean at the Faculty of Education, member of the University Senate and Head of the Department of Social Foundations during his career in the University of Malaya from 1970 till 1990. He was a Fulbright Scholar at Stanford University, California and the University of Chicago, USA and has been a consultant to various international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank on educational and parliamentary matters. He is the author of several books and articles in the field of sociology of education. He entered into politics in the 1990s and subsequently was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. He was then elected to the Senate, holding office from 1996 to 2002, and serving as the Chairman of the International Relations committee of the Malaysian Parliament and as President of the Senators Club.

Jayaram N. (ed.) (2011). Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses. Oxford University Press. © Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0-19-807146-4.

Mobility of people is continuous phenomena in the world which is instrumental in the formation of a diaspora. From expulsion to trade and business, from labour-migration to skilled and technocrats, the movement of Indians have prominence in different processes of formation of Indian diaspora. Notably, mobility of Indians has variations with respect to time, space and nature, since history. Therefore, there are multiplicities of meaning, nature and processes of Indian-diaspora. The diversity within Indian society has immense contribution into diversity in Indian diaspora. Today, the term 'Indian diaspora' has become much popularized but has been using uncritically everywhere without undergoing the heterogeneity in its nature and processes. India has a long history of international-migration and labour-migration has been continuing since pre-colonial period. A large number of Indians has been emigrated to various countries historically either under kangani system or through trade, business and marriage system.

The book is a collection of essays which deals with the issues and debates within the Indian diaspora and explores the diversities within it. It consists of four broad themes namely: Regional Diasporas, Caste and Diasporic Communities, Gender and Identity in the Diaspora, India and Indian Diaspora with the relative articles.

The book explores the nature and manifestation of institutional and socio-cultural diversities in the Indian diaspora. The authors have discussed the process of diaspora from Northern part of India i. e.; Sikh diaspora to Southern region i. e.; Tamil diaspora, in this book. The Sikh and the Tamil Diasporas are the prominent regional Diasporas. Broadly, it provides understanding of 'India out of India' and throws comparative perspectives. The book highlights various aspects of Indian communities and the dynamics of religion, caste, gender and identity construction at the individual level as well as at the community level. The book brings the issues of processes of assimilation, integration and the formation of multiple identities amongst diasporic communities, including the rediscovery of regional and linguistic diversities. Some of the essays also discuss on the state's policies and their effects on

the diasporic communities.

Paramjit S. Judge and Ravindra K. Jain have discussed about the Sikh diaspora, mainly the historical processes of Sikh diaspora. A diaspora community can be considered profoundly when it does contribute into either home or host-country in any manner. Punjab is receiving huge remittances from the host-countries. Today, the economic empowerment of families back home can be easily noticed through the remittances from abroad. Also, the huge property and land-ownership indicate the investment back home.

The authors talk about the social changes in native regions of Punjab due to the immigration of Sikh diaspora. All these social and economic changes should be critically understood under the notion of caste, culture, religion and year of migration of the diaspora which are the major indicators of diversity. The social and economic lives of NRIs' families have to be considered in relevance of diaspora process. The number of propertiers and land-owners in Punjab has been increasing and this is because, the outflow of money has been utilized in the materialistic lifestyle. A huge expenditure can be noticed on the celebration of marriages, festivals and family functions back home in Punjab. Mainly, the life-style of NRIs' families back home and their social status are also debatable issues in discussing their socio-cultural scenario in the present context. Does it influence on the education of the children back home also? It is very difficult to answer but the educational scenario of Punjab is not good. Also, the change in role of gender in Sikh Diaspora is very important to understand in the present context.

The second segment deals with the Indian diaspora in Malaysia which shows the diversity in the diaspora locale. The Indian community is the third largest communities (Census, 2002). The essay talks about the how the Indian communities evolved in early 19th century in Malaysia and how they have settled their livelihoods within these years. The contribution of Indians into various segments of economy is remarkable in Malaysia. The bulk of Indian immigrants entered into Malaysia under the indentured system.

Later, through Kangani System, the Indian labourers involved into plantation industry. The article discussed the engagement of Indians into plantation industry and how they have been treated in this sector. The spatial and

social isolation of the plantation sector was resulted greater cohesion and solidarity among them but it affects their limited mobility towards the mainstream society. The question on multiple identities of Indians is a debatable one. The division of Indian communities is not only based on caste, culture, religion only but also, according to their occupational pattern and the hierarchy of the work-pattern in the society. The struggle for assimilation and integration in distinct culture and society can be observed through the social movements. The attachment with culture and religion can also be noticed through the temples, festivals and day-to-day practices.

Among the South Indian communities, the Tamils are the major in numbers residing in Malaysia. According to the Census, 2000, the Indian diaspora in Malaysia numbering 1.7 million, constituted 7.7 per cent of total population. The author talked about the role of political parties mainly to safeguard the interests of the middle-class professionals –lawyers, doctors and businessmen etc. The role of Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) and other Indian ethnic parties are important political parties to safeguard the interests of Indian communities in Malaysia. The author could have discussed the social changes within the Indian communities in Malaysia and the role of homeland in raising the issues of Malaysian Indians.

The next article discusses the 'Indian diaspora in Overseas Territories of France'. The French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique also have significant presence of Indian communities. Notably, the author has discussed the cultural life of Franco-phone diaspora of Reunion, Guadalupe and Martinique and, therefore, it is the first book which talks about all these issues. The Indians in these overseas territories of France are an important component of the extraordinary diversity of the Indian diaspora. In France, during 1848, the slavery was abolished and this led to the demand for plantation labourers from India. Barring Gujaratis and Bohras in Reunion, all the other people of Indian (PIOs) are descendents of indentured labour or slaves. The labourers were maltreated by the employers at their work-place. Pondicherry was the main base of the French colonial settlements in India. The author mentions about the cultural capital of Indians in French that there are various Hindu temples of Kali, Shiva and Madurai Veeran and so on.

The third segment is based on the 'Case studies of Diasporic Communities' which deals mainly the Jews and Jain Diasporas. The Jews of Cochin, one of the migrant communities of Kerala, were clustered around seven synagogues in and around Cochin. Ginnu Zacharia Oommen

has discussed the caste conflicts between Mirachi Jews and Sephardi Jews in Spain and Portugal. Mirazchi groups pushed to the periphery due to the Israeli 'dispersion policy'. They are socially marginalized community in Israel despite staying there for nearly six decades till now. The author discussed the Jews issues which are very less in number across the world. Although the numerical strength is very less but the Jews attracted the attention on various socio-cultural issues worldwide. There should be some policy suggestions for the marginalized communities. In the next essay, the author discussed the issues of Jains and their participation in business sector. They are mainly in Southeast Asian countries of Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. The social and cultural capitals of Jains are missing in the discussion. Also, the author should have discussed the social institutions like class, marriage and family functions in host-countries.

Further, the author discusses about gender of various countries in different context. Gender issues are vibrant issues in the present context for every community. Since last many years, the change in gender issues can be seen in private as well as public patriarchal system. A very complex set of patriarchal tradition influences South Asian women's lives in the diaspora. The issue of identity for any community is very important both in home as well as host land.

The present book presents the various diaspora issues through different social and cultural prisms. The title of the book is very appropriate. Basically, it explores the Indian diaspora in different countries and enriches knowledge on the different types and processes of Indian diaspora. It gives detailed and in-depth understanding about the Indian diaspora. This book is significant in explaining the major characteristics of host countries which really attracted a large chunk of the Indians. The essays provide valuable contents by experienced and esteemed authors. However, the author, at least, should have provided the historical outlines of the gender development in context of Indian society. The major delimitation of this book is that it does not provide the policy recommendations.

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The international Seminar on 'Migration, Care Economy and Development' organized by Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Report by Monika Bisht and Rakesh Ranjan

The international seminar on 'Migration, Care Economy and Development' was held on September, 17-19, 2014 at the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. It was jointly organised by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai and the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore. The seminar was organised in honour of Professor K C Zachariah, a pioneer scholar of migration studies, on his 90th birthday, with an aim of discussing all the dimensions of migration with greater precision. He has dedicated his whole life on migration related research and studies and has motivated many scholars both in India and abroad to take up migration research. The seminar was started with inaugural session in which inaugural address Prof. V. S. Achuthanandan, Leader of Opposition, Kerala Legislative Assembly. The three-day seminar covered nine different themes on migration such as Migration and Climate Change, Migration and Care Economy, Migration and tribal issues, Challenges of migration, Gulf migration, Social cost of migration, Institutional Strengthening of the Office of the Labour Attaches, Migration and development, Migration and Remittances, Alumni of the short-term training of methods and approaches to research on migration

issues, Diaspora and Beyond, Student/Skilled migration, Policy informing Workshop on EURANET, Social Networks and cultural perspectives of migration, Migration and development- a regional perspective, Migration, Migrants and labour markets, Migration and Human Rights, Internal Migration. Each session covered three parallel sessions on different themes. There were nearly 170 papers presented by scholars from India and abroad. Many books were launched on the occasion such as; India Migration Report 2014 edited by Prof. IrudayaRajan, Kerala Migration Survey by Centre for Development Studies and Researching International Migration, jointly authored by Prof. K C Zachariah and Prof. Irudaya Rajan.



GRFDT member Vinod Sartape has been awarded the Central European University's Budapest Foundation Scholarship

Vinod Sartape, member of GRFDT has been awarded the Central European University's Budapest Foundation Scholarship for the Doctoral programme in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology. His PhD work will be on the 'Indian DIaspora in the United Kingdom' particularly focusing on the mechanisms through which caste has been reproduced and the different forms it has taken within the Indian Diaspora".

The Budapest Foundation has been established in the

year 1991 with the aim to provide the maintenance of Közép-Európai Egyetem (Central European University,) carrying out educational and research activities, including external teaching as well. CEU, the institution registered as a university in the state of New York that had won the "Absolute Charter" which is operated in Hungary by the Foundation".

Forthcoming GRFDT Event

Researching Themes on Assimilation and Return through Portrayal of Indian Diaspora in Indian Cinema

Dr. Anjali Sahay, Associate Professor, Department of Political, Legal, and International Studies and Program Director International Studies, Director Model UN, Gannon University, Erie, PA

Abstract

Two phases are considered most important in a migrant's life: a movement to a new country and a return back to their home country if they choose to do so. Both movements beset with choices and adjustments. While both are choices related to mostly economic and political reasons, adjustments usually related to social and economic ones. Return; Assimilation; and Re-Assimilation are themes that are very important themes in the study of migration and diaspora. Within this context this paper is an attempt to tie in these themes as portrayed in mainstream Indian cinema to realities associated with this in a migrant's life. The medium of cinema is an important one as no other country in the world churns out as many cel-

luloid productions as the combined movie industries in India. Popularly dubbed as Bollywood, Tollywood, Kollywood, and other Hollywood inspired named it is fairly intriguing to explore its portrayal of its diaspora on the big screen.

This paper will explore various themes related to Indian Diaspora in the social, economic, and political spheres. Socially, the themes that have been played out are related to 2nd and 3rd generation assimilation problems and cultural adaptation of two cultures and the ensuing confusions. Economically, some of the themes that have been touched upon are return migration and re-assimilation into home country and society. Within the Return context, sub-themes such as reasons for return; development of the home country; and job opportunities are discussed within the economic realm. Politically, there is a serious paucity of research within cinema in bringing out political debates on immigration or difficulties in the visa process.

International Conference on "New Directions in Indian Ocean Studies"

February 26-28 2015

The Osmania University Centre for International Programmes (OUCIP) proposes to organize an international conference on what is new and innovative in Indian Ocean studies in February 2015 in Hyderabad, India.

With increasing concerns for environment, climate change, natural calamities, and biodiversity, scholars across disciplines are moving towards Ocean Studies. The oceanic turn in sciences and humanities will be critical to shaping a new world order in the twenty-first century. The recent upsurge in Indian Ocean Studies is part of this phenomenon. It is obvious that this field has moved beyond its traditional 'marginal studies' to a

global discourse involving natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

A growing body of multi disciplinary Ocean Studies has brought within its fold fascinating new dimensions from the Indian Ocean region. This new knowledge will influence both policy and practice in this region.

Proposals should arrive in MS Word, Times New Roman, 12 Font, and include a title, the name of the author/coauthor, institutional affiliation, postal address, and email contact information. The conference is open to all disciplines. Scholars, researchers and students are invited to submit proposals by November 10, 2014, to ouciprogrammes@gmail.com.

We invite Students, Researchers and Faculty Members to submit a small write up of their achievements and awards to the editor. It will provide the scholars a platform to connect with peer groups working on themes related to Diaspora and Transnationalism. Information related to seminar/conferences/events can be sent to the Editor at: editor@grfddt.com