Chapter 1
Indians in South Africa: Reflections on the Historical Evolution of Indians, 1860s to the 21st Century

Shanta Balgobind Singh
ORCID ID: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9469-6552

Abstract
The South African Indians were first brought as slaves to the Cape Colony in the seventeenth century. They were mixed with other captives from Sri Lanka, South-East Asia, and Macao, among other diverse places, and their common religion, Islam, would later lead to their being classified as 'Cape Malays.' However, historians tend to date the origins of a recognizable Indian community to their arrival in Durban on 16 November 1860 on the ship S.S Truro, which carried the first indentured laborers who would work on the cane fields of the Natal Colony (Hand & Pujolràs-Noguer 2018). In South Africa researchers have approached the topic of Indian indentureship and settlement in many ways. While their initial recruitment had been for work in the plantations, Indian labour was also later distributed to the railways, dockyards, coal mines, municipal services and domestic employment. Even though they were not happy with the racist laws and taxes, only about 23% of Natal Indians had returned to India by 1911, when the much-abused indenture was finally terminated. Indians in South Africa remain an important part of the country's culture and diversity. Since the 1860s, the Indian community in South Africa has succeeded, progressed and contributed to every sector of life in the country. This chapter provides a brief description of the people of Indian origin, social, economic and political evolution amongst the different generations of Indians, shocks and disruption of family, kinship and community life and the different political strategy used over time to advance the needs of the community and the politics of collaboration and resistance to the colonial and apartheid regimes.

The chapter identifies the third generation to be more advanced in life, with advancement in technology, cyber-communications and a western way of life. Despite the success of this generation, they have left behind a segment of their counterparts who live in dire straits. Their hopes are narrowed in the Reconstruction and Development Programme housing estates. It is perhaps in the sixth generation that the community may enjoy stable political, social and economic advancement in the country.

Key words: Indians, South Africa, race, indenture, South Africa

The Arrival of Indians within a South African Context

South Africans of Indian origin comprise a heterogeneous community notable by diverse origins, languages, and religious beliefs. The first Indians arrived as slaves in South Africa during the Dutch colonial era, in 1684. A conservative calculation based strictly on records shows over 16 300 slaves from the Indian subcontinent were brought to the Cape. In the decades 1690 to 1725, over 80% of the slaves were Indians. This practice continued until the end of slavery in 1838. They made up the majority of slaves that came from the Far East and were by the 1880s totally integrated into the Cape White and Coloured communities.

A next wave of migration from India began in the middle of the 19th century, when thousands of Indians were brought to work on the sugar plantations in South Africa. On 16 November 1860, a group of 342 Indians, comprising men, women and children, arrived at the port city of Durban on board the S.S. Truro. They were the first of 384 such arrivals of 'human cargo' containing as many as 152 184 people that were shipped to South Africa over the next 51 years. Of them 62% were men, 25% women and 13% children. Two thirds of these emigrants were from the then Madras Presidency, Mysore, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal (The Indian Diaspora 2000:76). The initial purpose of importing Indians was to tend the sugarcane and sisal plantations of the British settlers. Their settlement and distribution across the Natal colony were staggered and subject to the economic conditions of the entire British Empire and its relationship to other imperialist forces. Between 1874 and 1911, a further 364 ships brought with them approximately one third of Natal's total immigrant Indian population (Henning 1993).

Figure 1: Map of India (Source: Google Maps)

In 1869, the first batch of 'passenger Indians' arrived in Durban. The appellation 'passenger Indians' refers to Indian immigrant traders, artisans,

teachers, and shop assistants alert to new opportunities in the Natal colony, who paid their own passage. These 'free Indians' came from India, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and other places. However, emigration was stopped in 1914. Between the two categories of Indian settlement, it was marked by distinct caste, class, religious and cultural differences. Hence, the assertion that Indian presence in the country is homogenous by nature can be debated.

In South Africa, researchers have approached the topic of Indian indentureship and settlement in a variety of ways (Bhana & Pachai 1984; Meer 1980; Sawant 1994; Henning 1993; Badassy 2005; Desai & Vahed 2010) that exposed the realities of the hardships that Indian indentured labourers had to endure. Meer (1980) summarises the role of the Sardar and the colonial employer as exploitative and manipulative. She points out that,

> opportunities for the frugal comfort were few for the standard practice was to work the labourers from dawn to sunset, Sundays included. Having provided the workers with rations and secured their labour, the planters were insensitive to all else. Their main concern was to economize labour. They saved on rations by reducing them to half on the slightest pretext, by replacing the portion of the stipulated rice with mealie meal, and meeting their complaints by arguing that mealie-meal was better for them, and by refusing rations to non-working women and children, though they were entitled to these by law. They saw their workers as a crucial but vexatious part of the estate's productive equipment, draining for all sorts of unnecessary concession at their expense. They refused them permission to leave the estates, begrudged them their wages and devised ingenious means to deprive them of these, with justice through a rate of fines.

Bhana and Pachai (1984) later strengthened Meer's (1980) analysis by also noting that,

> the indentured Indian had a harder time adapting and adjusting to new realities and circumstances. The documents recapture incidents of misery that accompanied indenture. The conditions were harsh and restrictive in many cases, not too far removed from slavery. There are complaints of low wages, long hours, low rations, and inadequate

attention to social and medical needs and of beatings. The system worked heedless of human feelings.

The indentured labourers had to endure this misery until their contract expired after five years.

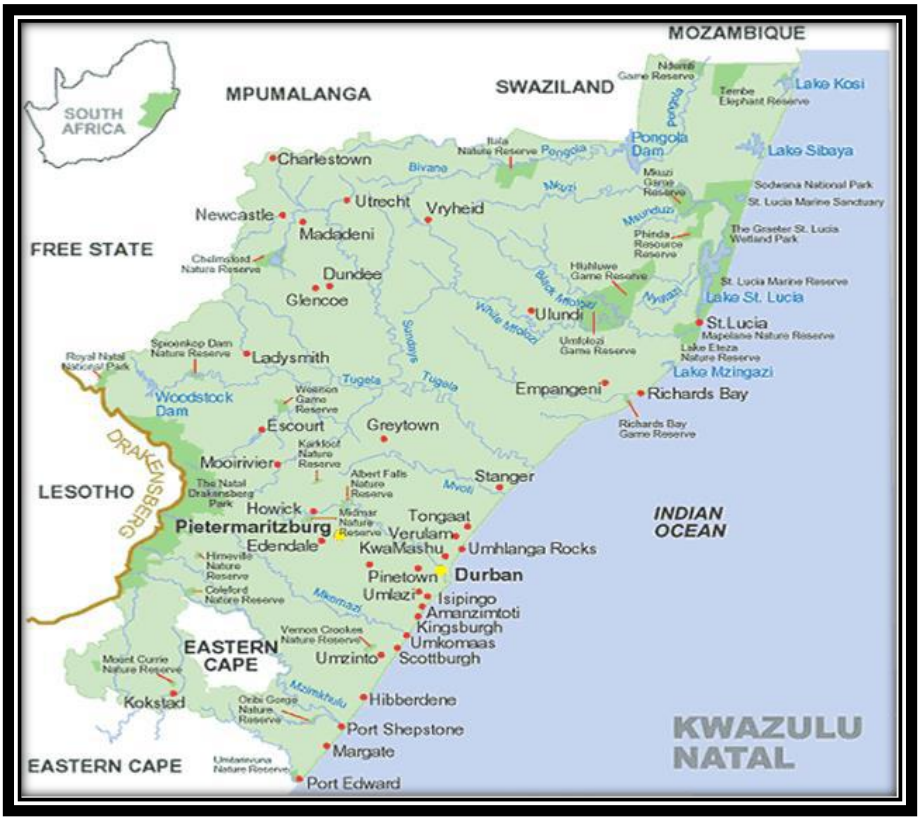

Figure 2: Map of KwaZulu-Natal indicating predominately Indian Areas (Source: Google Maps)

While their initial recruitment had been for work on the plantations, Indian labour was also later deployed to the railways, dockyards, coal mines, municipal services and domestic employment. Even though they were not

happy with the racist laws and taxes, only about 23% of Natal Indians had returned to India by 1911, when the much-abused indenture was finally terminated. Many of the Indians had acquired little plots of land and became kitchen gardeners and hawkers, retailing their produce to the White community. In a nutshell, the Indian ancestors had to overcome many challenges. Initially, they had to submit themselves to hard labour and servitude without due appreciation. That was followed by mindless racial oppression and abuse (*The Indian Diaspora* 2000:77-87).

Post-indenture

After 1917, the majority of the labourers remained in the country and became landowners on Durban's east coast and the hinterland, engaging in diverse economic activities. Being free from the brutality expressed through indenture, they eventually started to settle into family life. This is illustrated by the birth rate within the community.

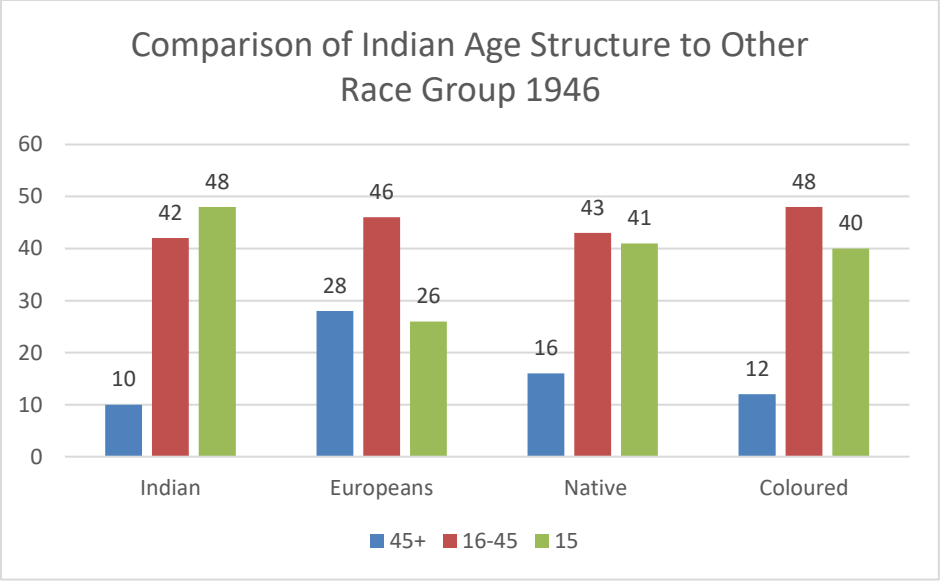

Figure 3: Indian Age Structure Compared to other Race Groups in 1946 (Source: Adapted from Burrows 1947:7)

By 1936 there were 219 925 Indians in South Africa, half of whom were born in the country. A later census undertaken by Burrows (1947) illustrates that this generation of Indians reproduced themselves phenomenally within a short period of time, as depicted in the Graph above.

When the graph is analysed, it illustrates that 48% of the Indian population were below 15 years old, with 42% falling in the 16 to 45-year category and 10% at 46 and above. This statistic illustrates the youthfulness amongst the community. When compared to the whites, Indians had a rapid birth rate whose youthful population exceeded the whites by 22%. With such population growth, families had to seek the comfort of adequate food, shelter and clothing. Clairwood, Riverside, Cato Manor and small towns such as Verulam, Tongaat and Stanger were settlement areas to the north and south of Durban, and Pietermaritzburg to the west. Some even drifted into the hinterland to find livelihood opportunities.

Given the attrition of the birth rate amongst whites, youthful, energetic and enthusiasm to advance beyond the exploits of sugar cultivation experienced by their ancestors, this second generation sought to do much better than their forbears. They increasingly engaged in unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled work in the various economic sectors emerging in the colonial economy. With African labour being more readily available for unskilled work by 1946, only 22% of the Indian population participated in the agricultural economy. A vast number participated in semi-skilled and skilled work activities within the economy. Some of the sectors that provided employment were the domestic sector, transport, industry, mining and commerce.

Table 1: Occupational Structure for the Periods 1936 – 1951

Occupation	1936	1946	1951
Other	1.9	13.8	14
Transport	4	5.5	5.8
Personal Service Domestic	11.5	9.4	8.6
Commerce	15.4	13.8	14,.4
Mining	1.9	1	1
Industry	23.1	30	30
Agriculture	34.5	24.4	22,.9

(Source: Adapted from Burrows 1947:13)

The decline in agricultural activity and the constant employment opportunities presenting itself in the industrial sector can be noted from Table 1. Indians excelled in blue-collar work such as processing chemical, stone and clay, leather, printing, vehicle maintenance and boat building, furniture, textile industries, artisanal trades and operation of mechanical means of production, forming a stable source of labour for the burgeoning white capitalists. Their intelligence, dexterity and commitment to work were recognised by the capitalist class as a reservoir of skilled labour to support their capitalist needs; hence, increasing dependence on their labour. The plight of domestic workers, which comprised a large segment of the indentured women dominated this sector.

With some degree of economic stability through participation in the colonial economy, the once indentured had become more aware of the need to advance themselves. In a quest to advance themselves, emphasis was placed on the educational needs, social welfare, community amenities, places of worship and political and economic organisation. The economic organisation for this generation can be viewed from the sale of their labour in order to seek value for money. For instance, Indians joined labour movements such as the Natal Liquor and Catering, Furniture Workers Industrial Union, South African Typographical Union, Amalgamated Engineering Union and several workplace committees. Participation in organised labour activities and conscientisation on just labour practices made this generation more aware to sell their labour at a cost so that they could eke out a living free of poverty and economic insecurity. This period was characterised by a quest for social, economic and political advancement.

Political Conscientisation and Asserting Indian Presence in the Colony

Although the indentured were regarded as docile compliers of the whims and fancies of white masters, there are instances when they challenged the atrocities meted out to them. Some were humiliatingly beaten in public to deter others from standing up to their masters. Many had their food rations cut as a punitive measure. Despite this indignity the indentured rose to the occasion when Gandhi arrived in the colony in 1893. Gandhi enjoined all Indians to non-violently protest against discriminatory legislations levelled against them. His non-violent approach managed to abolish many discriminatory laws, which lessened

the punitive measures taken to regulate movement and penetration of Indians in the colony. Within a year of Gandhi's arrival, the Natal Indian Congress was formed to champion the political life of Indians. The Natal Indian congress lead to the formation of the Transvaal British Indian Association (TBIA – 1903), the Cape British Indian Council (CBIC – before 1917), and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC – 1919) (SAHO – 2021a). Upon Gandhi's departure from the colony in 1914, the Natal Indian Congress began to fragment, with various factions emerging to represent the Indian question. For example, the Colonial-born Indian Settlers Association amalgamated with the Natal Indian Congress to form the Natal Indian Association. The Natal Indian Association was dominated by the wealthy class, divided by religion and ethnic affiliation and known to take a soft approach against the colonialists for enacting harsh laws preventing their movement and settlement in the colony. The Natal Indian Association took less decisive measures to pressure the colonial government, resulting in matters concerning the deteriorating effects of political, economic and social marginalisation on the Indian community. It was characterised by letter writing, petitions, delegations and promises that never materialised to address the challenges affecting the Indian community.

Amidst the power wrangle and virtual collapse of the Natal Indian Association, the Indian question had a shot from a group of young intellectuals and radicals who enlightened themselves on the politics of the day and questioning the social order in the country and out of it. This grouping was called radical due to their militant position for change to improve the plight of Indians. The Indian working class were conscientised on the factory floor on their contribution to the political economy of their labour work to advance capitalist interest. This awareness mustered much support for actions to be taken in improving working conditions. They formed the Anti-Segregation Council and ousted the 'old guards' to provide new vitality to the Indian question (Kuper 1960:48-49), continuing in the name of the Natal Indian Congress. Despite this, the way in which this era of Indian politics was played out was on a two-pronged rod. Opposition to the *Pegging Act* in 1943, which forbade Indian penetration in the colony lead to a disagreement by the Association and Congress on the approach to be used in challenging this law. The Organisation operated as a conservative group comprising elites with an approach founded on negotiations, conciliation and compromise, whilst the Congress was more radical comprising businessmen, intellectuals, professional men, and trade unionists from both the passenger and indentured classes (Kuper 1960:51). The congress perceived that

their political course can only be fulfilled if they formed alliances with other liberation movements. Female participation in the politics of Indian presence in the colony was hardly felt. It was only in 1956 that the congress opened its membership to women considered intellectuals and enlightened. The participation of women in some quarters was scorned at due to the patriarchal nature of the Indian family system.

Whilst the political conundrum dominated this era, the devastation of the *Groups Areas Act* (RSA 1950) presented a major setback for the Indian community when the Afrikaner Nationalist Party came into power in 1948, which pursued racial segregation more aggressively.

Figure 4: Distance between Durban Metropolitan Area with Chatsworth and Phoenix (Source: Google Maps)

With the dawn of the era of apartheid, segregation was enforced by the forced removal of Indians located near and those owning properties on land designated for whites only. By the 1950s, Indians were well settled into family, work and community life in certain geographical areas.

In Durban, the largest settlements of Indians in Riverside, Cato Manor, Mayville, Magazine Barracks, Block AK central Durban, the Bluff and Clairwood were uprooted and resettled in the township of Chatsworth. Chatsworth was the first racial settlement established in the city, in terms of apartheid's Group Areas Act. Communities were separated from temples, mosques, burial sites, and community facilities, all of which are known to contribute to community social organisation and associational life (Maharaj 1994:3).

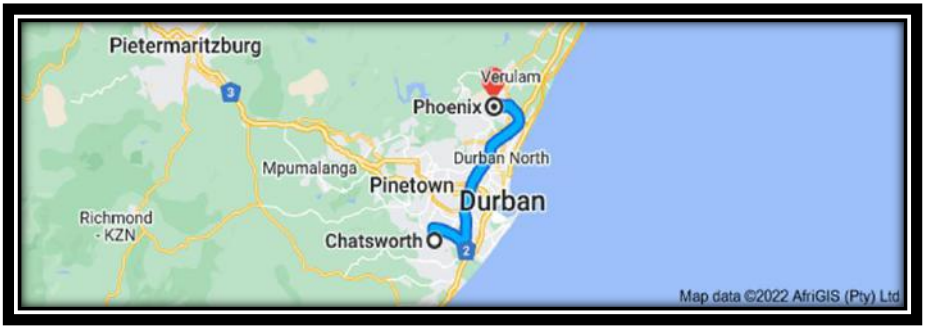

Figure 5: Two Predominantly Indian Areas, Chatsworth and Phoenix Approximately 50 km (Source AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd)

In Johannesburg, *The Group Areas Act of 1950* resulted in the establishment of the area that was needed to house the Indian population forcibly removed from the south-western part of Johannesburg. In Johannesburg, Indians had been living in various suburbs in and around the area in varying numbers, for decades. In towns such as Turffontein little pockets forming small communities had taken root, while in others there were larger communities, such as in Fordsburg, Doornfontein, Vrededorp, Sophiatown, Newclare and other areas. During apartheid, these people were asked to move to racially segregated Indian areas provided for them like Lenasia, Laudium and Azaadville.

Lenasia, often called Lenz, is a suburb south of Soweto in the Gauteng province, South Africa, originally created to house Indians. It is part of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. Lenasia is approximately 35 kilometres southwest of the Johannesburg Central Business District and 45 kilometres south of the Sandton Central Business District.

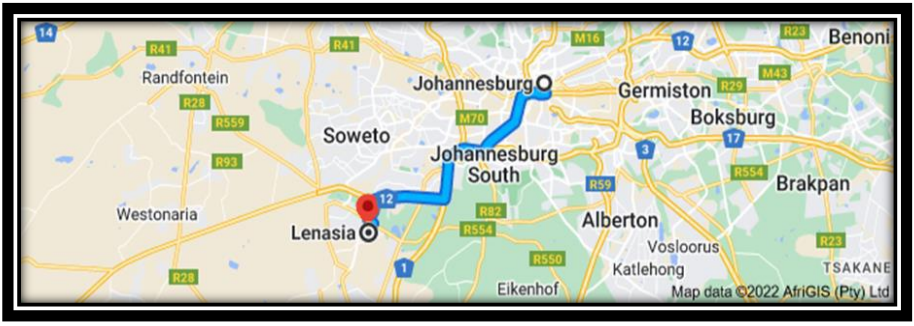

Figure 6: Map Showing the Distance Between Johannesburg and Lenasia about 30 km (Source AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd)

Just before the *Groups Areas Act* RSA 1950 (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: 1995), the 1949 Durban riots placed a damper on the future of Indians in the country. The riots were racially perpetrated between Black Africans and Indians, with over 142 people being killed. Among them were 87 Africans, 50 Indians, one white and four unclassified people. A further 1 087 persons were injured – 541 Africans, 503 Indians, 32 whites and 11 Coloureds. Buildings that were completely destroyed in the riots included 247 houses, 58 shops and one factory, while other properties that were damaged numbered 1 000 houses, over 600 shops and two factories (SAHO 2022b).

The apartheid regime's notorious *Group Areas Act* was first implemented, not surprisingly, in the Natal Colony, causing great trauma of being uprooted, displaced and resettled into monolithic and socially sterile public housing estates in different parts of South Africa's towns and cities (Khan 2013:153). According to the South African Institute for Race Relations Survey in 1981, some 23 227 families' social, economic and political assets were uprooted, displaced and resettled. However, those of the indentured classes experienced the greatest trauma of being uprooted, displaced and resettled in

different parts of South African towns and cities (SAIRR Survey 1981:220). Indian families were the greatest victims of forced removals in Natal. In Durban, the largest settlements of Indians in Riverside, Cato Manor, Mayville, Magazine Barracks, Block AK Central Durban, the Bluff and Clairwood were uprooted and resettled in the township of Chatsworth. The wealthy bought land in segregated racial suburbs and built their own homes, amenities or rented apartments. This resulted in a class divide within the community, with the majority of the working-class Indians being confined to a township labour reserve.

Post Relocation and Resettlement

Relocation to townships, renting apartments and owning property came with its own challenges. Those confined to township life had many socio-economic and political challenges to surmount. Township life meant physical hardship such as transport costs, increased travel time and a breakdown in social networks, community organisation and lack of social cohesiveness. The biggest impact was the size of the households to accommodate large families, the aged and the disabled. Many were council renting housing schemes and due to unemployment, many fell arrears in their rental. The cost of energy and water also extended the household budget. Victims of relocation were once again challenged to fulfil their socio-economic needs. Amenities such as places of worship, community halls, creches, preschools and vernacular venues were absent, presenting a threat to social, cultural and communal life. It is in this context that the third generation of Indians were raised.

In 1961, Indians became a permanent part of the South African population administered by a Department of Indian Affairs managed by a white minister. This was met with mixed reactions and the South African Indian Congress opposed the formation of the department as it meant to pursue segregation and control. The South African Indian Organisation, on the other hand, supported a collaborative relationship with the Nationalist government. Hence both the South African Indian Council and Congress were divided on the basis of participation and collaboration and resistance. Notwithstanding opposition to the co-option of Indians into the apartheid structure, further attempts were made by the government to ensure this. This time round it was through government-appointed representatives (SAHO Online 1 2022c). Those who served, collaborated with the government for certain privileges,

concessions and rewards for themselves and the community. As far as the representatives making headway in addressing the challenges faced by Indians, not much was achieved for the ordinary person. The South African Indian Organisation virtually witnessed no significant improvement on the plight of majority of the Indians. In response, the Natal Indian Congress was revived in 1971 to challenge participation in elections that do not support universal franchise and a unitary state. The revival of the Natal Indian Congress was at the expense of many of its leaders being incarcerated, banned, going into exile and under house arrests. Given the grassroots support within the working classes, the Natal Indian Congress continued to enjoy significant support to raise issues concerning the community and broader socio-political and economic issues which it attempted to address.

The power of ordinary people played out heavily against the Nationalist government in its attempts to set up a tricameral parliament with three different houses for whites, Coloureds and Indians. The South African Indian Council agreed to participate through elections so that the Indian House of Parliament is represented. This resulted in a political furore, with the mass mobilisation of Indians taking place in townships, towns, suburbs and cities. A well-organised political conscientisation process spread throughout these spaces. A national campaign was undertaken not to vote in the Tricameral elections. To provide a glimpse of the campaign, opposition to the Tricameral government, which sought to co-opt the Indian vote, was accorded strong opposition within the community. Fatima Meer, a staunch anti-apartheid activist, had the following to say at the NIC branch in Ladysmith on 1 August 1984:

> We don't want this constitution … our reasons for not wanting it in terms of two categories. We don't want it for ideological reasons, and we don't want it for practical reasons. Ideologically we do not want this constitution, because it is a constitution which is straight-jacketed within the framework of apartheid. It is a racist constitution. We are being asked to vote as a race, as Indians; we are being asked to vote for Indians and then we are asked to sit in an Indian house and talk about Indian things.

Meer also strongly articulated her thoughts on race relations defining coloured, Indian and African as blacks.

> We are South Africans, we are not simply Indians, we are not simply Coloureds; we are also a black people, part and parcel of the disenfranchised oppressed black majority of this country.

NICs position on the Tricameral Government brought the community closer to the mass democratic and liberation movement that was forming within the country. According to Bhana and Pachia (1984), some 297 040 Indians out of a population of 350 000 eligible voters registered to vote in the SAIC elections. However, on the day of the election, only 10,5% of the registered voters cast their ballot. They observed that in the Indian suburb of Fordsburg, Johannesburg, the percentage poll was 1,75%. Despite this humiliating turnout, the Minister of Internal Affairs declared that the government would look upon the SAIC 'as the only representative body that exists today on a national level that would serve the interests of community' (Bhana & Pachia 1984). In 1982, Amichand Rajbansi became the Chairperson of the South African Indian Council in the Tricameral Party.

The success of the anti-SAIC needs to be attributed to the many youth in the townships and suburbs who offered political conscientisation by door knocking in different Black localities. Many were arrested by the state security branch and humiliated. University students mobilised themselves in neighbourhoods and conscientised their communities on the political atrocities of the apartheid government and the need to look at the global political picture of the political happenings in the country. With the advent of television in this period, the state-controlled audio-visual media often misrepresented the atrocities meted out to shack dwellers and the homeless in cities and towns. The *Fiat Lux*, an official state-owned magazine, provided insights into resources invested for Indian community upliftment.

Notwithstanding the political contestations in Indian politics, the SAIC endorsed development plans based on the notorious *Group Areas Act* (1950). Newlands to the northwest of the city and Phoenix was zoned for Indian residential areas. Phoenix was developed in 1985, with 22 050 housing units made up entirely, or in part, of single detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplex units and blocks of flats of between one and three storeys, mainly for sub-economic and lower-income residents (Bailey 1987:153-159). Phoenix, was home for Mahatma Gandhi were for decades black Africans lived in harmony. Some Indians have rented out parts of their farms for African housing and provided much-needed services to the area. The ravishes of the violence

claimed the lives of 52 people. It was concluded that the violence was planned, premeditated, and involved deep collusion between state, African landlords and poverty-stricken African tenants (Hughes 1987:333). The Indo-African riot killed 52 people (*New York Times* 1985), and homes and shops were looted and set alight. Gandhi's home and a school that bore his wife's name were also destroyed. Almost 1 500 families were displaced and housed in the new Phoenix township (Moodley 2020).

More recently, on 15 July 2021, there was a nationwide riot resulting in 354 deaths. In Phoenix alone, 36 people were killed, including 33 black Africans. When compared to national death tolls, the Phoenix area constitutes one in ten deaths (*Africa News* 2021; Nonyukela 2021). This mayhem, which has been dubbed as the 'Phoenix Massacre the Indian Minister of External Affairs' raised the issue of safety of people of Indian origin with the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, who provided an assurance that the government would try and bring order at its very best (Wikipedia 2021**).**

The Born-Free Generation

In the 1980s, apartheid rule became ungovernable, due to mass rent, service delivery and consumer boycotts. There were also boycotts of products manufactured by companies with a poor track of labour relations. On 20 August 1983, the United Democratic Front was formed in Cape Town after a meeting with 565 delegates (SAHO Online 2022d). The UDF functioned as an umbrella organisation with a broad range of affiliates, including over 300 youth organisations, more than 80 civic associations and nearly 50 student organisations. Trade unions and women's organisations also constituted part of the UDF. This was a new liberation organisation which had a more militant cultural emerging, which led to the conglomeration of many civic, youth, student, worker, women, and faith-based organisations and other organisations. In Natal, the relationship between Inkatha and the UDF was politically strained, resulting in thousands of people being killed through ongoing violence between the two organisations. The apartheid state responded violently by suppressing the general unrest in the country, resulting in arresting large numbers of people under its security legislations. Most leaders of the UDF were arrested, restricted and in some instances murdered between 1984 to 1987. Despite this repression, the UDF had almost 2,5 million registered members. In a bid to curb the political

violence, the apartheid state began conscripting young white males into the military, which met with objections from the End Conscription campaigners. Within the Indian community, volunteers were solicited for paramilitary training.

This period was a time when the third generation of Indians were growing up amidst political turmoil. Whilst the resistance politics was gaining ground in the Indian community, the collaborative Tricameral Government began to win favours for the Indian community. New, low-income housing estates, upgraded schools, teaching resources, community amenities, infra-structure, markets and many other facilities were solicited from the state. Although no study has been undertaken on the extent of favours won for the Indian community by illegitimate political representation, support for the SAIC was a precondition to qualify for these basic human resources, according to some observers.

The first multiparty agreement on the desirability of a negotiated settlement was the 1991 National Peace Accord, consolidated later that year by the establishment of the multiparty Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). This period was characterised by negotiations for a democratic government. It was also a battleground for different political formations to represent citizens' views in the country as talks continued on the transition to democracy and mechanisms to achieve this. New political parties emerged to participate in the first democratic elections. As far as the Indian community is concerned, the Minority Front led by Amichand Rajbansi was formed in 1993, and in the first democratic elections received 13 333 votes, with no represent-tation in the National Assembly (Wikipedia 2022). Many Indian political stalwarts engaged in liberation politics secured lucrative ministerial posts at different levels of government. This led to a major brain drain in the com-munity, with little leadership to champion the socio-political and economic interests of the Indian community. Seven Indians were elected to serve in Nelson Mandela's cabinet, together with three deputy ministers (Pradhan 2009:134). In 1994, 42 Indians were appointed in different high-ranking political positions and portfolios, whilst a significant number also held key political positions at different levels of government.

As mentioned earlier, before the first democratic elections, there were internecine political violence in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Many in the rural area were afflicted by this violence and they migrated closer to suburbs and towns, squatting on valuable land. Many of these informal settlements were

erected adjacent to designated Indian suburbs. In Cato Manor, houses built for Indians were invaded by those fleeing from poverty and political violence (Gigaba & Maharaj 1995). The burgeoning informal settlements led to a decline in property values, which the Indian community had strived towards over three generations. The housing crisis amongst the Indians was not ameliorated, resulting in many taking up housing opportunities in the government-sponsored Reconstruction and Development Programme, which predominantly comprise poor black Africans and Indians. The pace of housing development has not been up to speed since democracy, whilst many rented outbuildings, flats and backyard shacks in established residential suburbs. Amongst wealthier Indians, relocation to gated communities has been a trend, given the current surge in crime rates.

The context outlined in this section provides insight into the back-ground around which the current generation is growing up. Dubbed 'born-frees', this generation is characterised by wide gaps in wealth and social advantage. Amongst the more affluent, good education, stable family life and access to economic resources have advantaged them, compared to their counterparts. Many have migrated abroad and across provinces to eke out a better quality of living. Amongst the disadvantaged, much is needed to assist them to advance them in the socio-economic spheres of life. A new generation amongst the disadvantaged will grow up in the Reconstruction and Development suburbs around the cities and provinces that are predominantly black African.

Conclusion

This chapter provided insight into the evolution of Indians since their arrival in the country since colonial times. The socio-economic and political life of the indentured Indians was characterised by exploitation, social engineering and marginalisation. Despite these impediments, the community has advanced itself in the different spheres of life simultaneously through collusion and resistance. A bifurcated political approach won favours for the development of the community and at the same time provided a political voice against the system of colonialism and apartheid. Organised political voice against an unjust system contributed to a new heritage of pride for the sacrifices made by their forbears. It is at the altar of resilience brought upon by exploitation, abuse and dehumanising experiences that they developed a sense of hope in a

democratic society.

There are winners and losers in the history of Indians and there are those that are still on the margins of poverty, due to the impact of vicious socio-economic and political polices of the past which continues to leave a trail of fractured families and kinship ties and a sense of community. Since the time of their forebears, the Indian community faced a variety of socio-political shocks in its evolution. The scars of these shocks and imbalances in its evolution have deep roots and segments of its community have not recovered from the past. Remnants of the baggage of the past continue to remind them of their forbears. In the democratic society, Indians enjoy all liberties as citizens. Despite these, there are insecurities about the social stability of the country, due to occasional race-related violence. This insecurity has been transferred to the present generation of Indians, although they enjoy full citizenship and liberties. The present generation may be classed as the 'cyber-aged' generation, who are technologically savvy and equipped to meet challenges as they are growing up in 21st century. Whilst this may be so, many descendants in this generation are at risk, as the country has not developed as anticipated for them to experience the rewards of the investments made by their ancestors in this alien land. Although the Indian community in South Africa has succeeded, progressed and contributed to every sector of South African life since the 1860s, for many descendants, the Indian enquiry will not be answered until the generations to come are nurtured to overcome the intergenerational transmission of their historical disadvantage.

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Professor Shanta Balgobind Singh
Criminology and Forensic Studies
School of Applied Human Sciences
Howard College Campus
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban, South Africa
Singhsb@ukzn.ac.za