

## Other Countries of Africa





*Bugala or Dhow in which the Indians reached the shores of Mombasa*



*Indian workers surveying land after laying tracks, in Kenya. 31,983 workers went from India to Kenya between August 1896 to December 1901. 2,493 died in the construction, that is, four workers died for each mile of railway line laid; more than 38 dying every month during the entire six years. A further 6,454 workers became invalid*



*Jamaatkhana, Uganda*

## Introduction

Various parts of the vast African continent have played host to Indian settlers in modern times for almost a hundred and fifty years. They found themselves transplanted there, whether voluntarily or otherwise, mainly following the British colonial empire's extension into the numerous constituent countries of Africa. This chapter deals only with the status of the Indian Diaspora in one region of what is usually referred to as 'Black Africa' or 'Africa South of the Sahara'. Owing to the special characteristics of the history of PIOs and NRIs in what was once the East African Community - comprising of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania - it is the Diaspora in those three countries that forms the subject matter of the first part of this chapter. As the Indian presence in South Africa has been considered separately in the High Level Committee's report, it will not be discussed here. Nor will other parts of Black Africa be dealt with as the size and the current status of the Indian Diaspora in those countries do not warrant detailed consideration. However, we end this chapter with brief notes on the Indian settlers and their descendents in many of those countries. A comparative table about them is on the next page. The Maghreb region of North Africa, with its independent Arab states and with the limited Indian presence in them, is also outside the purview of this chapter.

### A Brief Sketch of Indian Emigration to East Africa

- 8.2. Most accounts of the Indian presence in East Africa normally start with a reference to *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. Written during the first century A.D. by an anonymous author, this epic work is a kind of merchants' guide to the Western Indian Ocean. From this and other such writings, it is evident that Indian merchants had been plying their trade through the Indian Ocean during the days of ancient Babylon. They had even established trading posts along the coast of East Africa. But these historical facts are not of any direct relevance to a discussion of the Indian Diaspora that is to be found in this region during the contemporary period.
- 8.3. As in South Africa, the saga of the Indian settlers in East Africa is a mixture of success and frustration. Their induction into this part of the burgeoning British empire of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

**Table 8.1: The Indian Diaspora in other countries of Africa**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>PIOs</b>	<b>NRIs</b>	<b>Stateless</b>	<b>% of Population</b>
1	<b>Algeria</b>	30,200,000	5	40	Nil	Insignificant
2	<b>Angola</b>	12,000,000	45	250	Nil	Insignificant
3	<b>Benin</b>	4,590,000	450	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
4	<b>Botswana</b>	1,500,000	3,000	6,000	Nil	0.66
5	<b>Cameroon</b>	15,863,000	250	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
6	<b>Cape Verde</b>	437,500	4	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
7	<b>Chad</b>	7,068,300	125	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
8	<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	16,000,000	30	270	Nil	Insignificant
9	<b>Djibouti</b>	460,000	280	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
10	<b>Eritrea</b>	3,317,611	30	1,723	Nil	Insignificant
11	<b>Ethiopia</b>	63,500,000	34	700	Nil	Insignificant
12	<b>Gambia</b>	1,200,000	135	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
13	<b>Ghana</b>	19,400,000	2,000	1,800	Nil	Insignificant
14	<b>G' Bissau</b>	1,315,822	25	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
15	<b>Kenya</b>	28,600,000	85,000	15,000	2,500	0.36
16	<b>Madagascar</b>	14,800,000	25,000	3,000	1,000	Insignificant
17	<b>Mali</b>	10,109,000	20	Nil	Nil	Insignificant
18	<b>Mauritius</b>	1,186,000	704,640	11,116	Nil	60.35
19	<b>Mozambique</b>	16,500,000	20,000	870	Nil	0.13
20	<b>Namibia</b>	1,700,000	32	78	Nil	Insignificant
21	<b>Nigeria</b>	125,000,000	8,000	17,000	Nil	Insignificant
22	<b>Réunion</b>	709,468	220,000	55	Nil	31.00
23	<b>Senegal</b>	9,000,000	13	8	Nil	Insignificant
24	<b>Seychelles</b>	81,000	2,000	3,000	Nil	6.10
25	<b>Sudan</b>	29,000,000	300	1,200	Nil	Insignificant
26	<b>Tanzania</b>	32,000,000	85,000	5,000	Nil	0.28
27	<b>Tunisia</b>	9,200,000	Nil	70	Nil	Insignificant
28	<b>Uganda</b>	21,500,000	7,000	5,000	Nil	Insignificant
29	<b>Zambia</b>	10,200,000	1,000	3,000	Nil	Insignificant
30	<b>Zimbabwe</b>	11,900,000	15,000	1,200	Nil	0.10

Note: The figures reproduced in this table are based mainly on inputs that the Committee had received from Indian Missions and Posts abroad.

began in the late 1860s with the export of over 30,000 Indians – mostly Sikhs from the Punjab – on three year contracts to provide labour for various public works. [There is some doubt about the exact number: 37,747 Indians, according to Professor Robert G. Gregory, an internationally recognized authority on this region; but only 31,983 according to the National Museum of Kenya!] They were recruited to help open the interior of that vast and thinly populated territory whose extensive resources had yet to be fully explored and tapped. The jungle had to be cleared and tracks laid for a railway line of over 580 miles from the port city of Mombasa on the Kenyan coast, all the way to Uganda’s distant capital of Kampala, nestling on the shores of Lake Victoria. There was also an important geopolitical motivation involved in this. It was felt that with Uganda’s pre-eminent status as source of the River Nile, whoever controlled its upper riparian waters, could easily control the Sudan and Egypt. In that way, the sea route through the Suez Canal to India, “the brightest jewel of the British crown”, could also be safeguarded.

- 8.4. The hardy Sikhs, with their indomitable spirit, earned for themselves the title of *kala singhas* (or black lions) for their courage. Several thousands died as they ventured into the thick forests, teeming with lions and other wild animals, while others returned to India on the expiry of their contracts. Only some 7,000 chose to remain behind.
- 8.5. Meanwhile, with expanding economic opportunities, they were joined by large numbers of ‘free’ emigrants, both Hindu and Muslim, mainly from the Gujarat coast. These enterprising persons were the counterparts of the ‘passenger Indians’ of South Africa. In the following decades, they too played their part in opening up the interior - by setting up little trading posts far from the White-occupied urban centres. They are credited with having thus converted East Africa from a traditional barter society into a money economy.
- 8.6. Only Tanganyika, now called Tanzania, (and the Sultanate of Zanzibar) had escaped the British colonial net. A latecomer to the European partition of Africa, Germany made amends for itself after it was admitted to the comity of great nations. During the ‘Scramble for Africa’ in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a rebellious and unwilling Tanganyika became part of the new German Empire, which then imposed its will on this territory with ‘blood and iron’, crushing every sign of rebellion. As Julius Nyerere wrote in his *Freedom and Unity*, no less than 120,000 natives were slaughtered by the colonial administration to suppress the Maji Maji rebellion of 1905. Germany’s defeat in the First World War resulted in the League of Nations awarding Tanganyika to Britain with the mandate to lead it on to eventual independence. But that was far from the mind of the new occupying power, which also resisted every sign of revolt. As in neighbouring Kenya and Uganda, Indian settlers followed the British colonists into Tanganyika, this time mainly from the Sultanate of Zanzibar, which had for long years boasted of a large Indian presence.

### **PIO Activities During the British Colonial Period**

- 8.7. Wedged-in between the ruling Whites and the numerous indigenous Blacks, the emerging socio-political and economic situation of the Indians was a delicate one in the various countries of East

Africa to which they had migrated. Accordingly, Indian political leaders consistently followed the policy of advising them to integrate themselves in their newly adopted homelands, so as to be accepted completely by the native population. For his part, Jawaharlal Nehru never tired of advising them to become nationals of their countries of permanent domicile and to make common cause with the indigenous people. In the event, this had resulted in their adopting British citizenship throughout the three countries of East Africa during the colonial period, even though they had continued to retain their Indian lifestyle and did not mix freely with the African Blacks. It had equally meant their adopting the nationality of their respective countries of residence when each of them attained independence.

- 8.8. The Indian community grew in numbers and became more prosperous. As early as 1900, the first step was taken in Asian political activity by the formation of the Mombasa Indian Association on the initiative of L.M.Savle, who was known as 'a fiery Maratha who hunted elephants and ran a small business'. He was joined in this enterprise by three of the wealthiest Indian businessmen in East Africa – Allidina Visram and the brothers Alibhoy and Tayabali Jeevanjee. In the following years, similar associations were formed in Nairobi and nearly all the urban centres of Kenya. The PIOs of Uganda and Tanganyika followed these examples and started their own organisations in other parts of East Africa, though the latter were not as numerous as the ones in Kenya. The year 1914 saw the establishment in Mombasa, of the East African Indian National Congress with branches in the two other countries.
- 8.9. In the years following World War I, a new batch of younger and better educated PIOs, lead by Manilal Ambalal Desai, encouraged and instigated the indigenous Africans to join them in their political 'quest for equality'. This soon resulted in the formation of the Kikuyu Central Association in 1924. A foundation had thus been laid for joint action against the colonial powers.
- 8.10. Meanwhile, the PIOs had opened another front in the struggle for humane treatment by forming trade unions. Makhan Singh and Pio Gama Pinto were the two outstanding leaders of this movement, which soon included the Black Africans. The establishment, in 1935, of the Labour Trade Union of Kenya (LTUK) set the stage for the first successful combination of Indians and Black Africans in the fight for their rights on the labour front. It was not only in Kenya that such joint action was being launched. It was also to be found in the other two countries of East Africa.
- 8.11. Very soon, a third instrument of resistance was forged, namely, an increasingly articulate and combative Fourth Estate. Single-sheet newspapers had been published initially, in Gujarati, to keep the Indian community informed and alive to the injustices being heaped on them. In later years, these rudimentary papers were overtaken by English language ones, which aimed at reaching out to a European readership and thus bringing to its attention the inequitous treatment that was being meted out to both the Indian emigrants as well as the indigenous Blacks. Pranalal Sheth, Chanan Singh, Fitzval de Souza and Pio Gama Pinto were some of the heroes of this journalistic movement. Among them, the last-named (who was assassinated in later years for reasons that



were never publicised) cooperated with African leaders like Oginga Odinga, Tom Mboya and James Gichuru in founding the Kiswahili organ *Sauti ya Kanu* (Voice of KANU).

- 8.12. The British planters, ensconced in their White Highlands, and the colonial administrators of the three East African territories were not amused by the multiple efforts of the Indians to form, along with the Blacks, a common front of resistance against them. They blamed the PIOs for their role in contributing to the political awakening of the indigenous Africans by introducing them to the latent power of journalism and organised labour. The striving of the Indians for a more meaningful political role for themselves and for the Blacks had played no small part in frustrating a Colonial Office plan to grant self-government to the Whites of East Africa. Such a decision may have resulted in establishing a regime that could have evolved, in time, into a clone of apartheid South Africa. Consistent and vigorous attempts were made to create dissension between the two non-White communities – perhaps not on the scale perfected in South Africa, but sufficient to create mutual animosities. Unfortunately, the socio-cultural aloofness of the PIOs and the intellectual hauteur displayed by some of them, provided a handy weapon to the Whites. The latter accused the PIOs of ‘make-believe cocktail integration’ with the Blacks; cast aspersions on their business practices; and advised the Africans to question their real motives. At one stage, a rumour was spread that the hidden agenda of the Indians was to carve out an independent Indian territory in East Africa - an idea that a liberal-minded Englishman had apparently broached at one time as expiation for the East India Company’s misdeeds in India! A good example of White strategy was to be found in a British Government White Paper of 1923, which declared that Kenya was primarily an African territory and that it was the considered opinion of His Majesty’s Government ‘that the interests of the African natives must be paramount’.
- 8.13. Nevertheless, all the White expressions of sympathy for the indigenous Blacks did not, in the long run, achieve their desired objective. By 1950, the cup of African resentment was overflowing. Beginning in 1952, it manifested itself in Kenya in the form of the Mau rebellion that was spearheaded by the Kikuyus. Solemn oaths of bloody vengeance against the Whites were administered at secret meetings, followed by numerous acts of murder and carnage directed against the White settlers. It was a critical moment for the Indians who had now become greatly worried about the future course of Kenya. Most of them appear to have sympathised with the Kikuyus, even if they kept out of any personal involvement in the raging violence. On the other hand, some of them volunteered to join the Home Guards and the Police Reserve to participate in the suppression of the Mau Mau. Considerable credit must be given to Apa Pant, independent India’s first Commissioner in Nairobi, and to Pio Gama Pinto, both of whom had won the confidence of Kikuyu leaders like Jomo Kenyatta and Senior Chief Koinange, that the Blacks did not vent their anger against the Indian community in Kenya. Though the Mau Mau movement was finally suppressed, it had set the independence clock ticking. An emaciated Britain, already suffering from post-World War blues, soon agreed to let go of its grasp on its colonies in East Africa.

## Post-independence Developments in East Africa

- 8.14. In retrospect, one may wonder whether the colonial ploy of *divide et impere* had succeeded. Or maybe the separate paths for independence taken by the Blacks and the Indians of East Africa were a result of their innate temperamental differences. The three countries of this region finally became independent in the early 1960s.
- 8.15. The transition was relatively peaceful for the PIOs in Tanzania under the wise leadership of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere who was determined to build a harmonious multi-racial society. With his conviction that *ujamaa* or ‘familyhood’ must be the basis of his philosophy of African Socialism, like Mandela he denounced all forms of racial discrimination. If he initiated a limited form of affirmative action in the first three years of his country’s independence, it was only to ensure that its predominant population of Blacks would have adequate representation in the civil services. But by 1964 he had already discarded this policy, declaring that ‘it would be quite wrong for us to discriminate between Tanzania citizens on any grounds other than those of character and ability to do specific tasks’. Meanwhile, he had already nominated Asian leaders like the Hon. A. Y. A. Karimjee and Amir Jamal to important official positions soon after becoming Prime Minister of independent Tanganyika in December 1961.
- 8.16. But the situation was more complicated in Kenya. While the Kikuyus of that country had launched the Mau Mau movement in October 1952 to hasten the transition to freedom, the Indians had held back from it due to their negative reaction to the violence that was being perpetrated. When Kenya finally became independent in 1963, with their memories still fresh with the movement’s excesses, the PIOs decided to hedge their bets by not converting *en masse* to the Kenyan citizenship to which they were entitled. Instead, they formed long queues outside the offices of the British consular representatives to reaffirm their existing British nationality, a fact which confirmed to radical Africans that the loyalty of these permanent immigrants to their adopted land was suspect. As many as 82,000 PIOs obtained British passports while less than 50,000 became Kenyan citizens.
- 8.17. Some of them seem to have wondered whether much of the later resentment against them could have been avoided if they had swung solidly to the African side. In any case, the Blacks found it difficult to countenance the sight of the principal bazaars of Nairobi displaying the names of so many Indian-owned shops even after the country’s political independence. The impatient new African government immediately launched a programme of Kenyanisation. When it realised that there were enough Indians with Kenyan citizenship to frustrate African aspirations, the government switched to a policy of Africanisation – which meant the cancellation or non-renewal of trading licences to non-Blacks, whatever their nationality. Affirmative action in favour of the Blacks was apparent in every aspect of socio-economic life: in trade, the award of contracts, appointments to government jobs, and many other such spheres. President Kenyatta’s repeated exhortations to PIOs at public meetings to ‘pack up and go’ were taken literally and many with British passports departed hastily to start a new life in the UK or North America.

- 8.18. The Government of India's reaction to the unfortunate chain of events in Kenya was the subject of a stormy debate in the Lok Sabha on 16 March 1970. Explaining the official position, Shri Surendra Pal Singh, Deputy Minister for External Affairs, told Parliament that India's responsibility was restricted only to such of the PIOs as were Indian citizens. In other words, it was restricted only to the NRIs. As for those who were either Kenyans or British by nationality, Nairobi and London were required, under international law, to look after their interests. India should not be expected to allow them free entry into the country. He added that PIOs who had been rendered stateless for one reason or other were also clearly the concern of their country of domicile.
- 8.19. Shri Singh then added that what he had said so far was only the legal position. But there was also a moral or emotional aspect to this question. India had to tread softly in determining its response so as not to be accused of being either a 'nosy Parker or indifferent'. Delhi could have no quarrel with the policy of Africanisation as it was in Kenya's national interest; it was also technically non-discriminatory between different races. This stand was similar to what India had taken in the case of Burma. But the Government of India had made representations to Kenya to implement its nationalisation policies in a humane manner as the PIOs had been in Kenya for several generations and had made valuable contributions to its development.
- 8.20. On the other hand, the question of British PIOs was very complex, as London had passed the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1968, which had restricted entry into the U.K. to only those British passport holders who could conclusively prove a 'continuing relationship' with Britain. This stipulation meant that either of the parents or one of the grand parents of a person aspiring for free entry into Britain must have been born in Britain. Obviously, such a condition could not be satisfied by most of the PIOs in Kenya. Shri Surendra Pal Singh informed the Lok Sabha that the British Government had been told categorically that it was solely responsible for safeguarding the interests of British PIOs, including their free entry into Britain. And when London pleaded that this would cause social problems and, therefore, only a phased entry programme could be entertained by it, India asked Whitehall to increase its annual quota for such entries, as well as to liberalise other provisions such as the definition of 'family'. Meanwhile, the Indian High Commission in Nairobi had been authorised to issue visas quite freely to British PIOs, so that they could await in India their turn in the quota queue.
- 8.21. An even more serious crisis erupted in Uganda in the early 1970s when Idi Amin ousted President Milton Obote after a military coup. On 9 August 1972, he announced the issue of a decree expelling, within 90 days, all persons of Asian origin who were citizens of the U.K., India, Pakistan or Bangladesh. Ten days later, he decreed that even Ugandan citizens of Asian origin were also to be expelled. The ensuing Indian *démarches* with Kampala were on the same lines as in the earlier case of Kenya. External Affairs Minister Sardar Swaran Singh apprised the Lok Sabha on 4 September 1972 of the discussions that had taken place with the Ugandan Government. India expected it to enable our NRIs (who then numbered about 4,000) to leave the country 'under conditions conforming to humane and equitable standards under international law and usage.

Their honour and safety and the security of their property was the responsibility of the Ugandan Government'. He also informed the Lok Sabha that, simultaneously, the strength of our High Commission in Kampala had been increased, so that it could render effective assistance to our nationals.

- 8.22. As regards the PIOs of British nationality, with the precedent of Kenya before it, the U.K. Government accepted full responsibility for all the 'Asians' in Uganda holding British passports. By then, because of India's partition in 1947, the appellation of 'Asians' had become mandatory to describe people originating in what was formerly the British Empire in India.
- 8.23. It is worth noting here that by the early 1960s, when the British colonies of Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda finally gained their independence, there were over 360,000 'Asians' in East Africa. Today, the Indian Diaspora in East Africa does not even touch a figure of 200,000. Of them, a hundred thousand persons are to be found in Kenya, not more than 80 to 85 thousand in Tanzania, and barely 12 to 14 thousand in Uganda.
- 8.24. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the PIOs of Kenya have been able to overcome the challenges of Africanisation by diversifying from their former, almost-total involvement in petty business and trade, into other occupations, industry, and various professional sectors, thus constituting an important part of the country's economy. The situation in Tanganyika is not as comfortable as in Kenya. Its Asian population continues to lead a peaceful though not a very prosperous existence. After the nightmare of Idi Amin's regime, the Asians of Uganda have been reluctant to respond to the present, Museveni government's overtures to them to return to the country and regain their lost possessions. Having settled down and prospered in countries of their second migration, they are reluctant to go back. Those few who have done so, seem to have gone there only to regain and quickly dispose of their former properties, and to return once more to their current permanent homes after that. Only the Madhvani and the Mehta families, who had played a major role in Uganda's economy in pre-Idi Amin days, have apparently revived some of their activities in the country.

### **Demands and Expectations of the Diaspora**

- 8.25. The High Level Committee was not able to visit all the three countries of East Africa in the course of its tours to familiarise itself with the problems and difficulties faced by members of the Indian Diaspora in various parts of the world. However, during its visit to Kenya, representative members of the local Indian community placed before the Committee the following demands and expectations. We are persuaded that a similar list would be forthcoming from the Diasporas in Tanzania and Uganda as the basic conditions of their existence in the three countries of East Africa currently share many common characteristics:
- (1) There is no interest among the PIOs of east Africa to acquire dual citizenship. In fact, they feel such a status would only cast doubts on their loyalty to the countries of their permanent domicile.

- (2) A number of senior citizens among these PIOs are keen to return to India, to pass their sunset years in the land of their ancestors. They would be grateful if the regulations for the re-acquisition of Indian citizenship could be amended so that this process can be completed within a short period.
  - (3) The fee for the acquisition of a PIO Card should be reduced significantly. An attractive brochure setting out the special facilities that such a card would make available should be prepared and widely circulated for the information of prospective applicants.
  - (4) A widespread complaint brought to the Committee's notice was about the harsh treatment accorded to PIOs visiting India by our customs and immigration authorities.
  - (5) Similar protests were heard from them relating to bureaucratic hassles relating to their investments in India. It was suggested that the position could be improved if a single-window investment clearance facility is set up in each state.
  - (6) Many PIOs would like to send their children to India for education in Indian institutions. In this context, our High Commissioner in Nairobi has suggested that the HRD Ministry could, with the help of EdCIL, craft and execute a strategic plan to meet this demand. It would be very helpful if an attractive booklet is prepared with comprehensive information regarding the courses of study available at various educational institutes in India, their fee structure, the minimum eligibility qualifications and other admission requirements, the timetable for submitting applications for admission and other such details.
  - (7) In view of the exorbitant local cost of suitable health care, many PIOs would like to avail themselves of the medical facilities existing in various prestigious hospitals in India. To facilitate this, a detailed publication or CD-Rom containing relevant details should be produced and become accessible to PIOs through all the Indian diplomatic and consular missions abroad.
  - (8) Considering the immense interest of the PIOs in Indian classical music and dance, one or more Indian Cultural Centres should be established in east Africa. Suitably qualified and experienced artists should be deputed to these centres to train PIO children in various disciplines of Indian dance and music, both vocal and instrumental.
- 8.26. The Committee's responses to these demands and expectations would be found in Chapter 38 entitled 'Conclusions and Recommendations'.
- 8.27. As indicated by us in the introductory part of this chapter, brief notes have been added below to describe the limited presence of the Diaspora in many of the other countries of Africa.
- 8.28. Very few of our nationals migrated to most of those countries for a variety of reasons. Many of them were not part of the former British colonial empire. The abolition of slavery by Britain in 1834 and the introduction by it of a new system of indentured labour did not therefore affect

them immediately, except to a comparatively limited extent. Induction of Indian labour into the non-British colonies started only after their former metropolitan countries had successfully negotiated an agreement with the British government enabling them to acquire Indian labour from British India. Some of those countries were so far away from India that hardly any Indians ventured out to them voluntarily. And then there were African countries where the opportunities for settlement did not seem attractive enough for our people to go there for permanent settlement.

- 8.29. As stated earlier, we have excluded the Maghreb region from the purview of this chapter. We have, however, covered statistics of the local Indian communities in two of them – Algeria and Tunisia - in the comparative table presented earlier. We have done so to illustrate the fact that in former non-British colonies, where the official language and the administrative regime were unfamiliar to our people, not many Indians thought of going there. Needless to say, these additional factors also influenced the limited voluntary Indian migration to the colonies of the Dutch and the Portuguese.

## **Angola**

- 8.30. Bordering on the western coast of the African continent, this vast and mineral-rich former Belgian colony has had few permanent Indian settlers in it. Angola's enormous distance from India, as well as its unfamiliar local environment must have discouraged potential migrants. Even after the country's independence in 1975, the continuing civil war conditions in it have served as a disincentive for migration.

## **Botswana**

- 8.31. A few Indian families, mainly Gujarati Muslims, migrated from South Africa to Botswana in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Initially engaged in general trading, they gradually built up big businesses by purchasing dealerships for international products, and also successfully investing in property. Most of them acquired local citizenship. This was possible as Botswana permits expatriates with over ten years' residence in the country to apply for permanent residence status and citizenship. A number of Indians who went to the country more recently have also become Botswanans. Some of them have taken an active part in politics. While no PIO has so far won any election to the Botswana Parliament, one of them has become a Nominated Member of its Parliament.
- 8.32. The discovery of diamonds and their mining from the late 1960s saw the beginning of a sustained economic boom in Botswana. This attracted many more PIOs to this country. Both professionals and businessmen arrived there from several African countries, especially South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and even from Kenya and Uganda. The Botswana Government does not encourage immigration of foreign labour. But with its shortage of skilled manpower, it started recruiting Indian experts directly from India from the late 1980s – teachers, doctors, engineers and civil servants. The Indian community is well respected in Botswana for its business acumen and its

reputation for hard work. The political leadership and the higher bureaucracy are appreciative of its contribution towards the development of the country.

- 8.33. With the growth of the community, a number of region-based community associations have sprung up. There is already a Hindu temple in Gaborone, and another in Selebi Phikwe. A gurudwara and a mosque have also been built in the capital city. Plans have been made for the construction of a *Swaminarayan* temple, a *Sai Baba* Centre, a *Venkateswara* Temple and an ISKCON Centre at various sites in Botswana.

## Cape Verde

- 8.34. There are four Catholic priests of Indian origin in Cape Verde. They were originally from Portuguese Goa. They had gone to Cape Verde in the 1950s when both Goa and Cape Verde were Portuguese colonies.

## Côte d'Ivoire

- 8.35. There are only a very small number of Indians in this country. They started arriving in Côte d'Ivoire, which was then a French colony, about 30 years ago. They appear to have gone there because of the political instability prevailing at that time in some other African countries in which they had been based earlier. Many of them were traders in textiles and household goods. Others owned shops for electric and electronic goods, or household effects.
- 8.36. Some qualified persons have also gone there more recently from India to man technical and management positions in locally based companies owned by NRIs living in a third country. A few are employed in multilateral organisations like the African Development Bank, which also has on its staff, PIOs who are citizens of other African countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe.

## Djibouti

- 8.37. There are around a hundred French nationals of Indian origin in Djibouti. This territory guarded for France, during colonial days, the entrance to the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aden. As for the remaining 180 or so PIOs in this country, they are mainly from Gujarat. Most of them are small traders or are employees of various commercial establishments. There are few expatriate Indians here in senior official positions.
- 8.38. India has had an Honorary Consul in Djibouti since 1969. Mr. S. J. Kothari, a long-term resident who owned a shipping enterprise, and had authored a number of books about this country, was the first person to hold this post. His son is the current Honorary Consul for India.

## Eritrea

- 8.39. Eritrea was formerly part of the Ethiopian Empire. After a punishing civil war that went on for thirty years, it declared its independence in May 1993. A short period of friendly relations was followed by further conflict with Ethiopia. With this kind of troubled history, it was not surprising



that the Indian community in Eritrea had dwindled from its original pre-war strength of 2,000 - consisting mostly of schoolteachers and Gujarati businessmen - to a mere thirty, all of whom have acquired Eritrean citizenship.

- 8.40. Recently, however, more Indians have gone to Eritrea as the government and some commercial establishments have been recruiting teachers, professors, technical personnel and other experts. Many of them are working in various ministries of the Eritrean government, or in the country's Central Bank, besides the 40 Professors at the University of Asmara. Some other NRIs are on the staff of the FAO. The number of NRIs in this country has now reached almost 400. Added to them are 1,323 Indian troops who are part of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. But their exact number in each of the two countries at any given time would of course depend on operational requirements determined by the United Nations.

## **Ethiopia**

- 8.41. The Indian community in Ethiopia had at one time reached a figure of 2,500. General Rawley had been loaned by India to set up a Military Academy for Ethiopia. A large number of Indians had been employed between the late sixties and the nineties on a contractual basis to teach in the country's primary and secondary schools. But with the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie by Colonel Mengistu, the new communist regime introduced a policy of "Ethiopianisation" which meant that foreigners were not allowed to teach in Ethiopian schools. Consequently, all the teachers and a large number of Indian businessmen moved to other destinations. Only a few Indians remained behind, among whom were those who had settled down in the country for more than three generations.
- 8.42. Presently, there are only around 700 Indians residing in Ethiopia. Around a hundred of them are businessmen. Mainly from Gujarat, they work as commission agents of various import-export companies. Another 150 are professors who teach in the Defence Ministry's Engineering College and in various faculties of leading Ethiopian universities and other institutions of higher learning. Six of them teach in the Civil Services College, a prestigious institution under the Prime Minister's Office that is similar to our Administrative Staff College. As many as 15 Indian professionals are on the staff of various UN agencies in Addis Ababa. With the renewed Indian presence in Ethiopia, an Indian Association and a Hindu Mahajan have been established. They jointly celebrate various Indian festivals. Indian businessmen run two of the three Indian restaurants in Addis Ababa. Several Indian PSUs - TCIL, WAPCOS, RITES, ICT, etc. have won a number of contracts. Their officials in Ethiopia enjoy a good rapport with their local counterparts. All in all, Ethiopians hold the Indian community in high esteem.

## **Gambia**

- 8.43. Gambia has in it a small presence of PIOs and NRIs who are engaged in diverse professions such as doctors, pharmacists, businessmen and skilled workers. In the total Indian community of 135 persons, there are as many as fifteen children under the age of fourteen.



## Ghana

- 8.44. In a country of 19.4 billion inhabitants, Ghana has a relatively small Indian community of barely 4,000 persons. Some of them have acquired Ghanaian citizenship, which is generally granted without any discrimination. Most members of the local Indian Diaspora are well off. They are either independent businessmen with branches also in neighbouring countries, or employees of various local companies. However, many of them have been badly affected by Ghana's recent economic problems. With the fall in the international prices of its main export items of gold and cocoa beans, and with the accompanying rise in the prices of its imports of crude oil and other petroleum products, the exchange rate of the local *cida* has crashed *vis à vis* hard currencies. This has adversely affected the independent Indian businessmen, along with everyone else who had been involved in foreign trade.
- 8.45. The Indian Diaspora in this country has been quite active socially. In Accra, it has set up an Indian Association and an Indian Social Centre, both of which function from the premises of an Indian temple that has been constructed by the community in Accra. Various social and cultural programmes are organised there, as well as festivals to mark important religious days. Every Thursday and Sunday, community members gather there for *kirtans* and *poojas*. The temple also hosts a Yoga Centre and Radhasoami (Beas) *satsangs*. There is no Indian school in Ghana. Well-to-do Indian families send their children to the Ghana International School, while others prefer less expensive schools. Some members of the Indian community even send their children to India or to some other country for their education.
- 8.46. Social interaction between the Diaspora and the local people is fairly widespread. There are partnerships between them in some business deals and also some mixed marriages. Ghanaians freely attend Indian social and cultural functions. The Indian community makes occasional donations to various worthy causes. The mainstream Ghanaians are quite appreciative of the role being played by them in the overall development of the country, and also for their culture and understanding towards others.

## Guinea Bissau

- 8.47. In Guinea Bissau, there are only five PIO families. Two of them are in retail trade and one owns a pharmacy, while the remaining two have been working with local NGOs on short-term contracts.

## Madagascar

- 8.48. Madagascar was known as Malagache when it was a French colony. As far back as 1900, predominantly Gujarati Indians from the Saurashtra region had arrived in small sailing boats at the port of Hahajanga, located in the northwestern part of this island. Some of them had also gone there from Zanzibar. The initial influx into this island was predominantly Muslim, consisting of Khojas, Ismailis and Daoudi Bohras. A small number of Hindus also followed them, but they

went to other parts of Madagascar. By 1950, the community had spread to practically every nook and corner of the country. Apart from five families who had carried their prosperity with them, most of the others were initially just about able to make both ends meet as traders and general merchants. After the country's independence in June 1960, the French bureaucracy stayed back and so did their commercial enterprises. With the wholesale nationalisation of private industries after the revolutions of 1972-75, they were compelled to leave. A gaping void ensued in the country's bureaucracy, its trade and its commerce. But the local Indian Diaspora was in no position to step in immediately, as most of the Indians were then illiterate. Nevertheless, they were gradually able to seize the opportunity that had come their way and, in time, they became a force to reckon with in the trade and commerce of Madagascar. It is generally believed that approximately 50-60% of the country's economy is in their hands. The unfortunate consequence of this prosperity is that, whenever there is political or social unrest in the country, PIOs become an easy target for unruly demonstrators.

- 8.49. With little interest in the bureaucracy or local politics, the Indian community maintains a low profile socially, while zealously guarding its culture and languages. It has no other problems in this country. But those members of the community who are stateless persons constantly pressurise the government of Madagascar to grant them local citizenship. Foreign nationals can easily acquire Malagasy nationality if they are married to a local citizen, whereupon their children automatically acquire local citizenship. But this regulation provides little solace to stateless persons.

## **Mozambique**

- 8.50. The Indian connection with Mozambique dates back to at least the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Muslim traders from the Malabar region of India had been part of the local commercial establishment long before the arrival there of the Portuguese colonists. Vasco da Gama found some Hindu traders in this country when he visited it in 1499. With the establishment of Portuguese power on the Malabar Coast of India, the Portuguese began to favour the idea of Indian migration to east Africa. Many Goans, especially Catholics, were taken to Mozambique to serve there as petty officials, soldiers or ecclesiastics. Some Hindus from the other Portuguese possessions in India went there voluntarily as traders.
- 8.51. In 1961, when the Government of India liberated Goa, Daman and Diu from Portuguese rule, Salazar ordered that Indian nationals in Mozambique should be consigned to concentration camps for six months. All their bank accounts and properties in Mozambique were sealed under his orders. The persecution of the Indians in this country came to an end only after the fall of the Salazar dictatorship. On 25 June 1975, Mozambique finally attained its independence.
- 8.52. The Indian Diaspora in Mozambique is currently estimated to number around 20,000 persons, of whom fewer than 900 are NRIs. Despite their presence in this country for several centuries and the adverse circumstances that they had to face under Portuguese rule, they have retained their

distinct culture, traditions, attire and also their Indian lifestyle. Both Hindus and Muslims celebrate their various festivals with the same pomp and gaiety as is done in India.

## **Namibia**

- 8.53. Namibia has a very small Indian community. Before its independence in 1990, apartheid South Africa had defied the UN Trusteeship Council's repeated resolutions to grant independence to this territory. Instead, it had insisted on regarding Namibia as part of its administrative jurisdiction, designating it as its 'Southwest Africa' province. It had not permitted PIOs and NRIs even to visit Namibia, leave aside settling down in it. Under exceptional circumstances, however, a South African of Indian origin, Mr. Navin Morar, had managed to go there with his family. They had been allowed to remain in the country.
- 8.54. After Namibia's independence in March 1990, President Sam Nujoma's government revoked the earlier restrictive immigration policy. Thereupon, South Africans of Indian origin and also Indian citizens began visiting the country in search of trading and employment opportunities. Finding the living conditions amenable and the business climate lucrative, some of them settled down there on a permanent basis. As of now, there is in Namibia an Indian community consisting of about 40 families, out of which 22 are Indian citizens and the rest are South Africans or nationals of some other country. Of them, about 12 families are engaged in business and trading activities, while the others are employed as teachers, doctors, engineers, etc. Most of them reside in the capital city of Windhoek.

## **Nigeria**

- 8.55. Sindhis were the first to arrive in Nigeria in the early part of the last century. They had gone there to explore for business opportunities. With their hard work and shrewd business acumen, they succeeded in gradually gaining a firm foothold in the country. Initially, they were primarily engaged in trading. But gradually, while still retaining their interest in trading, they also ventured into other fields like manufacturing and professional services. In succeeding decades, they made substantial investments in Nigeria, aggregating more than US\$ 4 billion. In this way, they engaged themselves actively in the textiles sector, as well as in pharmaceuticals, fishing and various engineering industries.
- 8.56. The Government of Nigeria follows a liberal and non-discriminatory policy in the grant of citizenship to resident foreign nationals. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are as many as 8,000 Nigerians of Indian origin in this country.
- 8.57. Starting from the 1970s, the Nigerian government and also several private sector agencies began to hire a large number of Indian doctors, teachers, engineers and other professionals to assist them. Towards the end of the 1980s, many of the Indian experts decided to return to India when, with the substantial reduction in the country's oil revenues, the country began to face severe economic problems. In spite of this, there are still as many as 17,000 NRIs in Nigeria.

## Senegal

8.58. Formerly part of the French possessions in Africa, Senegal became independent in June 1960. There is a very small Indian community in this country – thirteen PIOs and eight NRIs. Two Sindhi families have been living here since 1947. Single-shop owners, they import handicrafts and other such articles for sale in their own souvenir shops or those of others. They are financially well off, but can by no means be regarded as prosperous. The only other members of the Indian community in Senegal are executives connected with a textile mill and a paint factory belonging to the UB group of companies.

## Seychelles

8.59. Seychelles is a tiny island nation of 81,000 people in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The Indian Diaspora in it constitutes a little over 6% of the country's population. Almost equally divided between NRIs and PIOs, it is clearly identifiable among the indigenous people of African origin and the European whites who had decided to settle down in Seychelles after its independence in 1976. The PIOs in this country consist mainly of first and second generation Seychellois, plus a smaller number of third generation persons. Among PIOs of the older generations are many that have totally adopted the indigenous culture. Some of them even have local spouses. Among them are several that have set up construction companies in the island. They employ hundreds of NRIs, as well as Indo-Seychellois, to work as contract labour on their construction jobs.

8.60. The Bank of Baroda has had a branch in Seychelles since 1978. Airtel, a local subsidiary of Bharati Telecom of India, was established there in 1997. Another Indian firm has a contract to maintain the Seychelles Public Transport system, which mainly plies Tata buses. A large number of NRI professionals consisting of engineers, chartered accountants, teachers and computer experts are employed in the hotels, banks, parastatals and various ministries of the Seychelles government. Indian doctors keep the health services running. The Heinz Indian Ocean Tuna factory employs a large number of NRI labourers.

8.61. Overall, it is believed that more than 10% of the population of Seychelles has some Indian roots. Many local shops cater to the needs of the Diaspora by stocking Indian consumer items. The community has established a Hindu temple that is run by the *Hindu Kovil Sangam*. There is also here an Indo-Seychelles Friendship Association and a Hindu Council of Seychelles. But the relative prosperity of the community is possibly responsible for the nascent anti-foreigner sentiment in the country. This was evident during the recent presidential elections. A natural consequence has been the growing PIO concerns relating to their life, their property and their earnings – concerns heightened by the fact that repatriation of local earnings to India is difficult due to the country's shortage of foreign exchange.

## Sudan

8.62. The history of the Indian community in Sudan goes back to about a hundred years when the first

Indian family arrived in Port Sudan. Almost the entire Diaspora in this country is from Saurashtra. Most of them are inter-related by marriage. In Sudan, there are also a little over a thousand NRIs. They work in the local sugar companies and in other establishments as engineers or skilled workers. Otherwise, the community mostly consists of small traders and businessmen. A vast majority of the Indian Diaspora is able to afford only a modest livelihood, while some can even be regarded as poor.

## Zambia

- 8.63. Unlike South Africa or East Africa, there was no requirement for indentured labour in Zambia, which was known as Northern Rhodesia in British colonial times. This territory was then regarded as poor and backward, with few or no attractions for any prospective British or Indian settlers. Its extensive copper deposits had yet to be discovered. But adventurous Indians from Gujarat who had ventured out in search of trading opportunities arrived there in 1905 through coastal Bechuanaland (now Malawi) to settle down in the northwestern part of Rhodesia. The initial wave of pioneering settlers was mostly of Muslims, but Hindu traders soon joined them. Gradually, both communities made their way to Lusaka, to settle down in the region's administrative capital.
- 8.64. Even educated Indians were not then eligible for employment in the civil service of the colonial administration. Before the settlers could get involved in trading, they often had to begin life in their new country as gardeners, tailors or in some other such occupation. Only gradually were they able to revert to their traditional occupation of trading, whereupon with patient diligence, they were able to make their presence felt in the local market. But economic prosperity was still a distant dream. It came to them many years later - in fact, after Zambia attained its independence in 1964 and started looking towards India for material and moral support.
- 8.65. Thereafter, the Indian community began to play a meaningful role in the Zambian economy. Trading was still their primary occupation. Some of them became wholesalers. A large number of shops all over Zambia began to be run by them. Others took up occupations like banking, farming and mining. The influence of Indian expatriate professionals also became visible in Zambia, especially in the fields of medicine and education.
- 8.66. Meanwhile, about 10,000 Indians had adopted Zambian citizenship. There are currently four Indo-Zambian Members of Parliament. Three of them have held ministerial positions until recently. The fourth is currently Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry. On the whole, however, the role of the Diaspora in the country's politics is not very substantial due to its small number. But its members have been a useful source of election funding for the party in power.

## Zimbabwe

- 8.67. Indians started arriving in Southern Rhodesia about the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their further immigration was restricted after 1923 when the colony became a self-governing territory under