

NEW ZEALAND SOUTH ASIA CENTRE



Indian Migration to the Pacific and Indian Ocean States

A workshop organised by the New Zealand India Research Institute
and the New Zealand South Asia Centre

15 April 2015

Venue: Room 208, Macmillan Brown Centre,
University of Canterbury,
Christchurch



**New Zealand
India Research Institute**
Te Pūtahi Rangahau o Inia ki Aotearoa

PROGRAMME

9 AM - 9.15 AM

Welcome

Jane Buckingham, University of Canterbury

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, Victoria University of Wellington

9.15 AM – 10.15 AM

Session 1: Early migration and settlement: Australia

Chair: Heather Goodall, University of Technology, Sydney

1. Margaret Allen, University of Adelaide, “Indian migration to Australia, push, pull and resistance”.
2. Kama Mclean, University of New South Wales, “Naming Charlie: Streamlining British Indian Identities in White Australia, 1901-1940”.

10.15 AM – 10.30 AM

Tea/Coffee

10.30 AM – 12.30 PM

Session 2: Early migration and settlement: New Zealand

Chair: Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, Victoria University of Wellington

3. Todd Nachowitz, University of Waikato, “Earliest Indian Presence in Aotearoa (1769-1809) and Settlement according to the New Zealand Census (1861-2013)”.
4. Michael Roche and Sita Venkateswar, Massey University, “Indian migration to New Zealand in the early 1920s: deciphering the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920”.

12.30 PM – 1.30 PM

Lunch

1.30 PM – 2.30 PM

Session 3: Recent migrants: New Zealand

Chair: Edwina Pio, Auckland University of Technology

5. Robyn Andrews, Massey University, “The Invisible Indian migrant: Anglo-Indians in New Zealand”.
6. Alison Booth, Auckland University of Technology, “The Impact of Immigration Policy on Indian Arts in New Zealand”.

2.30PM – 4.00 PM

Session 4: Migrant Health

Chair: Sita Venkateswar, Massey University

7. Jane Buckingham, University of Canterbury, "Indenture and the Indian experience of Leprosy on Makogai Island, Fiji".
8. Hannah Bailly, University of Otago, "Perceptions of Health and the Body Among South Asian Migrants to New Zealand's South Island".
9. Arindam Basu, University of Canterbury, "The Sea of Poppies Effect- Ibis Trilogy as a Metaphor for Migrant Health issues for the Indian Diaspora".

4.00 PM – 4.15 PM

Tea/Coffee

4.15 PM – 5.45 PM

Session 5: Gender and politics

Chair: Jane Buckingham, University of Canterbury

10. Edwina Pio, AUT, "Ahimsa?! Diasporic daughters of India in Fiji".
11. Devleena Ghosh & Heather Goodall, University of Technology, Sydney, "Affective politics beyond the nation: Komalam and Ronald Craig".
12. Heather Goodall, University of Technology, Sydney, "Choosing sides: T.D. Kundan, Indian civilians and Indonesian Independence".

4.45 PM – 6.00 PM

Summing up and vote of thanks

Jane Buckingham

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay

6.30 PM

Dinner at Tandoori Palace [71 Ilam Road, Upper Riccarton, Christchurch]

ABSTRACTS

“Indian migration to Australia, push, pull and resistance”

Prof Margaret Allen (Gender Studies)
University of Adelaide, South Australia

Abstract:

In the late nineteenth century there were some unsuccessful moves towards introducing indentured labour to work in the tropical areas of Australia, where it was believed that the White Man could not work. Although Indian indentured workers worked in Africa and in a number of locations around Oceania and the Pacific, the white Australian settlers firmly rebuffed such attempts. Rather Indians, mostly single men, travelled to Australia independently from the 1880s to work in various industries, including the sugar industry, outback transport and as shopkeepers and hawkers. Some other Indian immigrants were formerly indentured workers to French and British colonies and moved as family groups. These movements were facilitated by ethnic, religious and imperial networks. From the 1890s the growth of colonial and subsequently national immigration restriction legislation impeded further growth in Australia's Indian population and indeed it declined. However Indians resident in Australia sought to resist the White Australia Policy and to exploit policy changes. This paper sets out to explore the diverse experiences and tenacity of Australia's Indian population during the period c1880-1940s.

“The Invisible Indian migrant: Anglo-Indians in New Zealand”

Dr Robyn Andrews (Social Anthropology)
Massey University, New Zealand.

Abstract:

The Anglo-Indian community is an ethnically and culturally hybrid Indian minority of colonial origin, whose members are English-speaking, Christian, and primarily urban dwellers. Since India gained its independence from Britain Anglo-Indians have migrated in large numbers, mainly to English-speaking Commonwealth countries, including New Zealand. Surprisingly most scholarly accounts of Indian migrants in New Zealand omit this group. The relative invisibility of Anglo-Indians in New Zealand scholarship contrasts sharply with my personal experiences of meeting many Anglo-Indians in New Zealand. In addition, when carrying out fieldwork in India I very frequently hear accounts of Anglo-Indian friends, relatives and work colleagues now living in New Zealand. This has led to a project exploring aspects of the lacuna. In this paper I present a brief overview of the accounts of Indian migrants in New Zealand, including the few that do include Anglo-Indians – McMenamin's and McCabe's works in particular. I also outline the methods I plan to employ in the project which seeks to remedy the paradox I have observed, in order to paint a more complete and inclusive historical and contemporary picture of Anglo-Indians in New Zealand.

“Perceptions of Health and the Body Among South Asian Migrants to New Zealand’s South Island”

Hannah Bailly (MA candidate; Anthropology & Archaeology)
University of Otago, New Zealand

Abstract:

Although New Zealand is increasingly becoming a multicultural nation, Western Biomedicine remains the dominant form of healthcare available. The aim of my research is to consider the extent to which biomedical treatment meets the healthcare needs of people of South Asian descent living in New Zealand’s South Island. According to Arthur Kleinman (1978), the efficacy of healing often depends on the understanding between doctor and patient. This understanding is based not only on language and communication, but explanatory models of illness and disease, which are culturally mediated. Although Biomedicine has a long-standing presence in the Indian sub-continent, traditional Ayurveda continues to be taught and practiced both independently and alongside Western medicine, promoting a pluralistic approach. Through my qualitative interviews, I hope to find out whether there might be a greater need for medical pluralism in New Zealand than currently exists. For this workshop, I will present findings from a work-in-progress MA thesis, which draws predominantly from interviews with recent migrants to Dunedin. A common theme emerging from the data is a tendency to self-medicate with home remedies passed down from parents or grandparents before taking pharmaceutical medicine or visiting a GP. Home remedies, usually consisting of herbs or spices, are considered ‘natural’ and ‘safe’ whereas pharmaceutical drugs are ‘chemical’ and have ‘side effects’. These findings are consistent with much of the overseas literature.

“The Sea of Poppies Effect: Ibis Trilogy as a Metaphor for Migrant Health issues for the Indian Diaspora”

Dr Arindam Basu (Health Sciences)
University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to examine the state of well-being of Indian migrants across historical time points and examine the thesis that the issues of deception, disappointment, and resultant stress and its toll on the health and well-being of the migrants from the Indian subcontinent and the diaspora settled abroad has continued and continues. The presenter will use the metaphor of Ibis trilogy, particularly that of the Sea of Poppies by Amitav Ghosh and studies on the wellness of the Indian immigrants in United States and in the Pacific on their wellness. As can be seen in this continuum, across time points, a common motif of deception and resultant disappointment has given rise to stresses and this has subsequently reflected in the erosion of healthy immigrant effects as seen in Indian migrants in the Pacific. These themes will be discussed in the light of Ibis trilogy and corroborated with statistics from New Zealand Indian community health studies.

“The Impact of Immigration Policy on Indian Arts in New Zealand”

Dr Alison Booth (Event Management)
Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Abstract:

Changes in NZ's immigration policy (2003) have resulted in the recent growth and diversity of New Zealand's Indian population by 48% since 2006, with the majority Auckland based (Friesen, 2008; Statistics New Zealand, 2013). It appears that the diversity of the Indian diaspora under which by the immigration policy has operated in direct opposition to the current cultural policy, which has reduced support to communities, centralized control of cultural production, and sought to recruit ethnicity as a feature of the pursuit of tourist dollars. Tensions arise within the growing populous reflecting the diverse nature of the diaspora migration experience and cultural differences within the Indian subcontinent. This study considers the growing market for events targeting the Indian community presented by producers inside and outside of the community. Who has access to government funding is an emotive topic. Not all feel they get supported on an equal platform. This is compounded when government support of 'cultural' events for their own political and economic development; the local Indian community is left in a tricky situation and riddled with tension. This study aims to unpack some of the complexities this current situation.

“Indenture and the Indian experience of Leprosy on Makogai Island, Fiji”

Dr Jane Buckingham (History)
University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Abstract:

The Central Leprosy Hospital on the Fijian Island of Makogai received patients of many ethnicities and from many localities across the British south-west Pacific. Yet from the years 1911 to 1969, Indians comprised the largest single ethnic group. They were almost all indentured labourers, brought to Fiji to work on sugar plantations, or their descendants. Drawing on archival records, this paper explores Indian identity on Makogai. On one hand, the experience of Indian patients was shaped by an ambiguous connection to place, plus the stigma and mechanisms of indenture. On the other, they shared with fellow patients the stigma of leprosy and the experience of the disease and isolation.

**“Affective politics beyond the nation:
Komalam and Ronald Craig”**

A/Prof Devleena Ghosh (Social Inquiry) & **Prof Heather Goodall** (History)
University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

Abstract:

The people to people connections between Australia and India just before and after the Second World War were complex and subtle. The White Australia policy, India's independence movement and Cold War politics meant that many of these connections happened under the radar of official governmental policies. In this presentation, I narrate one such story of Indians and Australians that begins with a girls' school in Delhi and ends in a suburb in Sydney and which demonstrates the richness of such untold micro-histories.

**“Choosing sides? T.D. Kundan, Indian mobility
and Indonesian Independence”**

Prof Heather Goodall (History)
University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

Abstract:

Movements of Indian merchants have a long history but one which does not fit easily into what are often oversimplified characteristics of merchant diasporas. This paper explores the complex role taken by T.D. Kundan, a Sindhi merchant and resident of the port city of Surabaya in eastern Java, during and after the struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-49. Surabaya was the site of an iconic battle in the narrative of Indonesian independence from the Dutch, in October and November 1945, which is commemorated as "Heroes Day" on November 10 each year in solemn ceremonies around the country. Ironically, this battle was fought not by the Dutch but by the British who were leading the SE Asian Command to accept Japanese surrender and to manage the 'restoration' of civilian rule. Most of the troops under British command, thrown into the bitter fighting against Indonesian nationalists, were in fact Indian. This paper draws on Indian and Indonesian accounts to explore the impact of the Battle on Indian civilians in Surabaya and in particular to trace the role played by Kundan, who was a close friend of the Indonesian nationalist leaders as well being in touch with the many of the Indian troops who had been brought to the city by the British. In exploring Kundan's role, the paper raises questions about the characteristics ascribed to Indian merchants abroad and – more generally – to diasporic communities.

“Naming Charlie: Streamlining British Indian Identities in White Australia, 1901-1940”

A/Prof Kama Maclean (History)
University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Abstract:

This paper looks at the construction of Indian identities in White Australia, with particular reference to the politics of naming. It traces through archival and photographic sources the histories of two hawkers in New South Wales, Hindoo Charlie and Indian Charlie. The paper examines the deployment of generic naming strategies and the awkward acceptance of those names by the hawkers as a site of the tensions inherent in negotiating the terrain of White Australia in the early twentieth century.



From the album of L. G. Watt, 'Indian Charlie and his Pipe – Harwood Island Punt.
State Records, New South Wales. August 11, 1929.

“Earliest Indian Presence in Aotearoa (1769-1809) and Settlement according to the New Zealand Census (1861-2013)”

Todd Nachowitz (PhD Candidate; Political Science & Public Policy)
University of Waikato, New Zealand

Abstract:

The earliest Indian presence in Aotearoa has been poorly known, with recent research pegging the date of first known incidence to 1809, with a Bengali *lashkar* who jumped shipped in the Bay of Islands. My recent PhD research now documents the earliest known presence of Indians in Aotearoa to 1769, along with the very first vessels of European exploration to Aotearoa. Likewise, the earliest known presence of Indian settlement, as reported in the New Zealand Census, was earlier thought to be the six Indian males reported in the Census of 1881. In this presentation I uncover earlier occurrence dating back to 1861. This presentation documents these findings, and charts Indian growth according to the New Zealand Census to the present day.

“Ahimsa?! Diasporic daughters of India in Fiji”

Prof Edwina Pio (Management, School of Business & Law)
Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Abstract:

Ahimsa, variously translated as non-violence, non-harming, compassion, not-to-injure in thought, word and deed, has been a key facet of the Indian psyche. Mahatma Gandhi was a strong and earnest advocate of ahimsa and many of his followers campaigned for ahimsa. This paper will look at the diasporic daughters of India in Fiji through the lens of ahimsa. Small numbers of Indian women in Fiji, as compared to Indian men, had severe consequences for the lived-through experiences in the sugar plantations. The lives of these women, fragmented by indenture, will be showcased through the tensions of violence and non-violence, emancipation and restraint, honour and dishonour, resistance and submission, as they served the sugar barons and the Indian men. Largely forgotten in official records, William Winstanley Pearson, was in many ways responsible for the official stopping of indentured labour to Fiji. Pearson, greatly influenced by Gandhi, visited Fiji and his writings described the violence that flourished in Fiji with its accompanying victimisation and vulnerability of diasporic Indian women. While the sacredness of ahimsa was flaunted, the shadow side of himsa or violence was wielded in Fiji. Archival material, extensive conversations with Fiji Indians and an Indian epistemology, form the basis of this analysis of diasporic daughters of India in Fiji. Despite a strong belief in the virtue of ahimsa for many Indians, it is an unfortunate reality that the situation of diasporic daughters of India is still mirrored in the lives of contemporary Indian women in India, as well as in the countries where diasporic Indians live.

“Indian migration to New Zealand in the early 1920s: deciphering the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920”

Prof Michael Roche and Dr Sita Venkateswar
(People, Environment and Planning)
Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Abstract:

Under the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1920 potential Indian migrants had to pass a language test to enter New Zealand. They were also required to provide a photograph and other details for a certificate of registration which enabled them to re-enter the Dominion within a three year period. Drawing on a selection of immigration files relating to arrivals in Auckland of the Indian men in question, this paper arguably poses as many questions as it asks. However, preliminary exploration of the archives does reveal some new information on mobility patterns of early migrants to New Zealand. The portrait photographs included with the certificates adds a human dimension to a discussion that elsewhere has usually been couched in terms of numbers of arrivals. This piece of legislation intended to restrict Indian immigration can, ironically, now be interrogated to reveal more about the first generation of post-World War One Indian migrants to New Zealand.