



Global India Dialogue Series

**"INDIA AND INDIAN DIASPORA IN EAST AFRICA:
PAST EXPERIENCES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES"**

Lecture discussion

by:

Dr. Gijsbert Oonk

Erasmus University, Netherlands

Organised by:

**Organisation for Diaspora Initiatives (ODI), New Delhi
(www.odi.in)**

Supported by:



**HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

In global India, Diaspora is a major visible Indian entity. When India is reorganizing its global engagement as an emergent power, its dialogue with Indian Diaspora is its major foreign policy strategy. However, since its Diaspora is diverse- old (which went as indentured workers and traders), new (as in the west), high skilled (as in Europe and North America) and low skilled (as in the Persian Gulf), the potential role of its Diaspora as a partner in engagement of India is diverse. Indian Diaspora in East Africa is largely a business community and is an old Diaspora in the region.

This Diaspora is African in its economic and political identity, through it still has cultural Indianness left. They are integrated African citizen, still they are like 'heritage resources' for the host and home countries. They are a 'cultural capital' in bilateral relations of India with East African countries. Though the experiences of Indian Diaspora and Indian policy in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania had been diverse, it is important to understand and assess their potential as a 'heritage resource' in bilateral relations of India and East African countries.

The Diaspora is a non-governmental resource and organizes itself as a civil society. This programme intends to engage Indian think tanks and civil society to make them aware of these emerging engagements and understand its impact on India and the host societies.

Dr. Gijbert Oonk, who is one of the world's leading researchers on Indian Diaspora in East Africa and specializes in business, migration and citizenship and economic history. His research and teaching activities are in the field of Global History, especially African and Indian History. His lecture was on India and Indian Diaspora in East Africa focusing on the past experiences and future challenges.

This interaction is a part of the series of international dialogue which Organization of Diaspora Initiatives (www.odi.in) is organizing to interact, analyze and understand the determinants, dimensions and impact of India's global engagement on foreign policies and domestic developmental issues and role of Diaspora in that. The programme is being supported by Heinrich Boll Foundation.

Prof. Ajay Dubey

School of International Studies, JNU

President, ODI

ABOUT ODI

Organization for Diaspora Initiatives (ODI) is working to understand the status and role of Diasporic communities across the globe– both in domestic and international context. It maps the emerging roles, networks and operations of different Diasporic communities as a resource in the international civil society space as well as in the host and the home countries. ODI interacts and links various Diasporic communities to ensure a voice and place for large number of communities who feel disempowered under a water tight state based international system. ODI attempts to understand Diasporas by comparing and contrasting their experiences. In this comparative framework, Indian Diasporas, which developed its networks and organizations in the last two decades, is a prime focus of study, both in historical and contemporary perspectives. The head office of ODI is located in New Delhi, India. It has several sister organizations registered in many countries. It includes people and organizations of Indian and non-Indian origin. It has a biannual refereed research journal *Diasporas Studies* published by Routledge, U.K. It organizes and participates in conferences, seminars and other interactive activities of Indian and other Diasporas which lead to the developments in terms of Diaspora policy, role of Diaspora in the development of India and role of Diaspora in global linkages of India. It is actively engaged in researching and publishing books, journal and occasional papers on Indian and other Diasporas. It takes up comparative research projects on different aspects of Diasporas, including on Diaspora policies of different countries, utilization of Diasporas as resource by the host countries, the role of Diasporas in development and nation building and the impacts of globalisation on Diasporic networks, organisations and movements. ODI was started by a group of academics, policy makers, media and business professionals which is a non-profit, non-political, educational and cultural organization. ODI also has an MOU with Ministry of Overseas Indians, Government of India, as a research, publication, conference and knowledge partner on Indian Diaspora issues.

INDIA AND THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN EAST AFRICA: PAST EXPERIENCES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

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Summary

Evidence from the World Bank and PEW research centre suggests that the remittances flows from the Indian Diaspora in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda to India are low. This lecture explores the possible causes that underlie the ambivalent relations and outlook of the Indian Diaspora in East Africa with India. I will argue that the most plausible explanation lies in the dynamics of the historical migration patterns, the colonial post-colonial contexts, the emergence of new African states and the changing economic connections in the Indian Ocean region in the last 150 years.

South Asians share a long, intensive and diverse history with Arab and Swahili traders in the Indian Ocean Region. Despite this century long interaction, it would take until the second half of thenineteenth century before South Asians started to settle on the East African coast. Slowly they became a small but significant minority in East Africa. For a short period in the 1920s, politicians and intellectuals in India and the United Kingdom debated whether East Africa should become the 'America of the Hindu' or a White Man's Country. In the 1960s, the emerging African states started to 'Africanise' the economy and political spheres. The Indian minorities were eventually expelled from Uganda and many fled from Kenya and Tanzania as well. They did not return to India, but settled in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. For most of these 'twice migrants' in the Indian diaspora, East Africa is their home, not India.

The literature on diasporas tends to highlight the importance of the motherland. This is seen as the migrants' umbilical cord to their homeland. It would seem extraordinary that migrants would cut off this relationship, but this is exactly what happened in the case of Indian settlers in East Africa. Initially, India was primarily important as a source of business connections and served as a pool for new recruits for East African firms. Furthermore, it was an important reservoir for marriage partners, which served as an important marker of purity within the Indian network. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the South Asians in East Africa, the image of the Indian Subcontinent changed between the 1880s and 1960s from being the beloved 'mother' to a familiar but mystified other. Interestingly, however, there is some sketchy evidence that the recent efforts made by the Government of India through its Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) to connect with the Indian Diaspora in East Africa have had some positive results in renewing the old ties.

Introduction¹

In this lecture, I will explore some possible reasons that might explain the ambivalent relations and attitude of the Indian Diaspora in East Africa with India. I will argue that the most plausible explanation lies in the dynamics of the historical migration patterns and economic ties in the Indian Ocean region in the last 150 years.

These patterns can be described in four phases:

- (1) **Monsoon Trade:** First, we introduce the general migration history of Indians in East Africa. In this section, the focus will be on the absence of Indian women in East Africa and the process of circular migration as a consequence of the monsoon trade.
- (2) **Family Ties:** This is followed in the second section by the life histories of early Indian migrants who settled in East Africa between 1880 and 1920. Here, the main aim is to show how Indian families in East Africa literally lived in two worlds: India and East Africa.
- (3) **Economic and Political Detachment.** This dual life changed in the period after the 1920s, when Indian businessmen increasingly settled with their wives and families. In the period between 1920 and 1960, we see a shift in the economic and social orientation of Indian migrants from India to Africa and the UK.
- (4) **Results and Future Challenges:** In the last section, I provide some possible explanations for this shift and the changing attitude. This will also include some preliminary data related to remittances from East African Indians to India.

(1) Monsoon Trade in the Indian Ocean

In the nineteenth century, trade between South Asia and East Africa was constrained by the rhythm of the monsoons. From November to March, the beautiful dhows sailed from West India to East Africa, making the return journey between April and October. The trade in textiles, ivory and spices was profitable, but dangerous. Many traders did not return home safely. The rough sea, pirates, and various diseases claimed the lives of many traders and early adventurers.²

¹The research was made possible by the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO) in collaboration with the History Department of Erasmus University Rotterdam. I interviewed 132 Hindu businessmen, 89 Muslim businessmen, 8 Sikhs, four Goans and two Parsis in the period between 1999-2004, including a year's fieldwork between July 2002 and July 2003. Over the last few years (2004-2010), I increasingly interviewed friends and relatives of Asian African business families 'overseas', mostly in the United Kingdom, Mauritius and USA. However, I also continued to visit my contacts in East Africa during return trips, wedding parties and holidays. From 2006-2009, the well known Karimjee Jivanjee family sponsored the research and writing of their family business. See also G. Oonk: *The Karimjee Jivanjee Family. Merchant Princes of East Africa, 1800-2000, Amsterdam: Pallas 2009*. In addition, some parts of this argument and the text presented here were included earlier in: G. Oonk, *Settled Strangers. Asian Business Elites in East Africa 1800-2000*, Sage, Delhi 2013. This paper was written as part of being honorary affiliate of the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa (CISA), University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg, South Africa.

²See for this early period the notable works of M.N. Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders. The Swahili Coast, India, Portugal in the Early Modern Area*, Baltimore and London, 1998; K.N. Chaudhury, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean. An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge 1985 and by the same author, *Asia Before Europe. Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge, 1990. S. Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: the Indian Ocean themes in South Asia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 2006. A. Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean*, C. Hurst & Co, London 2010. Edward Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, Oxford 2014. One of the best books on India and East is still: R.G. Gregory, *India and East Africa, A History of Race Relations within the British Empire 1890-1939*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1971. Recently some new scholars have entered the field. Most notably: Sana Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya. The Politics of Diaspora*, Harvard University Press 2015 and Ned Bertz, *Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean: Transnational Histories of Race and Urban Space in Tanzania*, University of Hawaii Press 2015.

Often they did not intend to settle permanently. Around 1875, the British Consul of Zanzibar, Sir Barte Frere, emphasised:

They (the Indians, G.O.) never take their families to Africa; the head of house of business always remains in India, and their books are balanced periodically in India. The house in Africa is merely a branch house, though many of those people will assure you and they give very good evidence of the fact, that they have had branches in Africa for 300 years, and possibly for much more.³

In other words, it was often not the head of the family who made the first exploration in East Africa. Nor was it the eldest son. Even after they had made several profitable journeys to and from India, they would not settle in East Africa. A process of circular migration and slow settlement indicates that only those who were successful remained in East Africa and eventually settled with their wives and families. Despite the economic attractions and the cautious process of settlement, many South Asians did not find what they were looking for or failed in East Africa and went back to India (Markovits 1999).⁴ From the business family's perspective in Gujarat, East Africa was a new opportunity that arose in the late nineteenth century. For today's 'self-made' Asian African business tycoons, the founding father lay at the basis of a new entrepreneurial era.

The British representative in Zanzibar, Sir Bartle Frere, observed in 1873:

Arriving at his future scene of business with little beyond credentials of his fellow castemen, after perhaps a brief apprenticeship in some older firms, he starts a shop of his own with goods advanced on credit by some large house, and after a few years, when he has made a little money, generally returns home to marry, to make fresh business connections, and then comes back to Africa to repeat, on a large scale.⁵

This may have been the pattern followed by many South Asians in East Africa. In the second half of the nineteenth century, European traders and officials realised that most of the trade in Zanzibar and along the East African coast was in the hands of South Asians. But after proving to be unsuccessful, they did settle in East Africa.

(2) Family Ties and Early Settlement:

Initially, the family business would operate as a transnational family firm. A good example is that of the Damordas family. Keshavji Damordas remembered:

My grandfather had all kinds of connections with Bombay, Porbandar and Muscat. In Porbandar we had some relatives who looked after the interests of my grandfather. In the same way, he had his brother-in-law in Bombay, who looked after the family business interest at that place. Now, whoever cashed the hundi in say Dar es Salaam, they could travel to Bombay or Porbandar and get the money there and then. Within the family trust, we would arrange the balances. That went on for a long time. In

³ Bartle Frere, Extracts from the evidence taken before the select Committee of the House of Commons, Colonial Office, 1887. See also Richard Burton, *Zanzibar City*, (London, 1872), pp 329-335. The first volume of Cynthia Salvadori's fieldwork account: *We Came in Dhows*, (Nairobi, 1996), contains several oral testimonies of families that kept trading branches in Bombay and other places in India as well.

⁴ Earlier, Claude Markovits (1999) made a strong case against the idea of permanent settlement. He argues that the majority of Indian migrants in the nineteenth century were not permanent migrants, but temporary migrants. Claude Markovits, *Indian Merchant Networks outside India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Preliminary Survey*, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Oct., 1999), 883-911

⁵ Memo by Sir Bartle Frere, Correspondence 1856, p.101 (Colonial Office).

fact, we made a lot of money on the commission of writing and cashing hundis next to our trading activities.

It was only in the late nineteenth century that some Indian traders started to settle in Zanzibar and on the East African Coast. These early Indian settlers are now seen as the pioneers of many South Asian family business houses in East Africa, such as that of Nanji Damordas. At the age of ten, he arrived with his father who was going to look after some business opportunities in Zanzibar.

Most of these early migrants were asked to join the flourishing family businesses or to assist in the businesses of community members. Initially, they travelled back and forth to India, but gradually they settled in East Africa and invited their brothers and sisters, wives and children to join them. They also shifted the head of the family to East Africa. The accounts were settled in East Africa not in India.

The most important point here is that the family business was represented by family members in various cities in various parts of the world. These networks existed because of the thriving active communal relations and marriage patterns. Some family members had migrated to East Africa, whereas others did not leave India and looked after the 'Indian' part of the business interest, including real estate and land. The family and community relations were reinforced by the activities of traders and messengers who often made a trip once a year in the name of the family eldest to be updated on the family business.

However, after settling with their wives, many Hindu Lohana in East Africa were very reluctant to make the journey to India once again. In those days, some migrants visited India 'when it was really necessary', for example to attend marriages or funerals or because of the immediate health problems of family members. Many of my elderly informants in East Africa do not recall their fathers and grandfathers visiting India often, except for the following reasons: to find a suitable bride, to get medical treatment, to retire and to have a peaceful life back home, and have their ashes scattered above the Ganges.

The Muslims settled with their families earlier than the Hindus owing to the Hindu taboo on travel overseas. Upper caste Hindu men considered Africa to be 'alien' and 'unsafe' for women and believed that women would be better cared for if they stayed behind in their own extended households in India. Owing to the economic and social uncertainty in East Africa, most Hindu women remained behind in India to look after their parents-in-law, children and property and to supervise their children's education. Unmarried Hindu men generally went back to India to marry, while their wives stayed behind from the beginning with the men making frequent trips back and forth. Otherwise, the women came to the East African Coast for a few years, returning to India for childbirth, where they generally remained for ten to twenty years until their children had finished their education.

The Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Bargash, must have been aware of this as he encouraged Hindus to bring their wives to his realm. In the early 1880s, he is reported to have sent his private vessel to welcome the first Hindu woman in Zanzibar and gave her a reward of Shs 250. As a pledge of his good intentions, he promised to turn Zanzibar's Old Fort into a residence for the wives of merchants and offered to equip it with water pipes fitted with silver taps to ensure that Hindu women need never appear in public.

This occurred precisely at the time when the Hindu community in Gujarat revolted successfully against Brahmin priests and religious customs which were cramping their mercantile activities and making overseas commerce difficult. All these activities paved the way for Hindu migrants and settlers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A new (in fact very old) world was to be discovered.

After the family business proved successful in East Africa, there was a tendency to bring the family-eldest, the brothers and sisters over to East Africa. In short, the first generation of Indian businessmen was born in India and maintained a strong economic and social bond with India. They sought their wives in India. They had property and business there and they often chose to retire in Gujarat or, like Nanji Damordar, to reproduce their ‘Indian’ style in East Africa. Although Indians in East Africa did not visit India very often, their homeland was still an important point of reference. Charity connection: the family of Damordas built a small school and an orphanage, and the well-known Madhvani and Mehta families contributed to similar projects in Gujarat. These examples show that India was still in the hearts of these businessmen, even when they were unable to visit India in person.

Table 1: South Asian settlers on the East African Coast between 1870-1901

TOWN	1870			1887				1901			
Religion:	Muslim	Hindu	Total	Muslim	Hindu	Other	Total	Muslim	Hindu	Other	Total
Bagamoyo/ Saadani	137	54	191	592	31		623	929	25	5	959
Dar es Salaam	53	52	105	92	15		107	631	301	132	1.064
Kilwa (& Mungano)	197	33	230	212	40		252	293	71	14	373
Lindi/ Mikindani				202	90		292	218	117	9	344
Mombasa	142	30	172								
Zanzibar	2.350	200	2.550	2.389	618	79	3.086				
TOTALS											

Sources: *Adm. Report Zanzibar, Annex I1870 [Kirk to Widdenburn, 18th July 1870] FO, confidential print 44/1936, 22-23; Census of British Indian subjects in the Dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar, [Major McDonald to Foreign Office] FO 19 December 1887, FO 84/1854; Annual Report, 1901-02, GCA Annual Report.*

Table 1 shows the number of South Asians in coastal cities and Zanzibar. It does not include the growing number of indentured Indian labourers who helped build the Uganda Railway between 1895-1914.⁶ The table follows the categories of the census. The category ‘others’ consists of small numbers of Parsis, Sikhs, Goans and Memons. It is clear that the vast concentration of South Asians in East Africa settled in Zanzibar. Unfortunately we have very little information about the ratio between men and women. But the above analysis as well as the oral history reveals that Muslims tended to settle earlier with their wives and children than Hindus. This may explain the fact that the number of Hindu migrants is statistically lower than the number of Muslims. In short, however, settlement was slow and fluid. Circular migration was prevalent and the head of the family remained in Gujarat.

⁶ A total of more than 37,000. See R.G. Gregory, *Quest for Equality. Asian Politics in East Africa, 1900-1967*, Oriental Blackswan 1993, 3.

A probable explanation for the difference between Hindus and Muslims is as follows: the Muslims settled with their families earlier than the Hindus owing to the Hindu taboo on travel overseas. Uppercaste Hindu men considered Africa to be 'alien' and 'unsafe' for women. They believed that women would be better cared for if they stayed behind in their own extended households in India. Owing to the economic and social uncertainty in East Africa, most Hindu women remained behind in India to look after their parents-in-law, children and property and to supervise their children's education. Unmarried Hindu men generally went back to India to marry and their wives stayed behind from the beginning, with the men making frequent trips back and forth. Otherwise, the women came to the East African Coast for a few years, returning to India for childbirth, where they generally remained for 10-20 years until their children had finished their education.

This all leaves enough room to suggest that the Indian Ocean connection between Gujarat and East Africa was very fluid. The rhythm of the monsoon trade made it fluid in itself. But the process of migration, the travel to and from India for trade, marriage, childbirth, security and many other things sustains the argument of the importance of circular migration, temporary migration and only accidental settlement. This would gradually change, especially after the 1920s.

(3) Economic and Political Detachment.

In the period between 1920 and 1960, two major changes occurred. Firstly, there was the emergence of a preference for marrying Hindu women brought up in East Africa, rather than women brought up in India. Consequently, caste boundaries were crossed to find partners [mainly Patels and Shahs]. The fact that Hindus allowed the constraints of caste boundaries to be broken illustrates the change which took place as the Indian community became socially more oriented towards East Africa. To be more precise: they were more oriented towards Indians in East Africa. Initially, however, the demand for Hindu women from India was still great, as there were twice as many Hindu men as Hindu women in East Africa.

Secondly, India became less important as the business partner of Indian settlers in East Africa. They tended to focus more on East Africa, the UK and Japan. India lost out on the international competition in the textile industry to Japan and to a lesser extent to Europe. Its general market share in East Africa diminished dramatically and it became less important as a major export destination. This was the result of two major economic developments. India lost its economic momentum toward becoming a major industrial nation, while East Africa took its initial promising steps towards industrialisation, in which Indians played an important role. East Africa tried to produce its own textiles. In this period, a growing number of Asians in East Africa were educated in so-called 'Indian schools' in East Africa, where teaching up to fourth standard was in Gujarati and thereafter in English. A growing number of Asian East Africans were therefore fluent in both Gujarati and English. For them, the step towards further education in the United Kingdom was relatively small. A number of well-off students attended colleges and universities in the United Kingdom. This meant that they developed a strong sense of the English language and European culture, whilst remaining 'Indian' in outlook and religion. Ultimately, this shift towards the West is reflected in the images these businessmen developed about businessmen in India.

Number of South Asians in East Africa, 1921-2000.

Year/Country	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	Zanzibar
1921	25,253	5,200	10,209	13,772
1931	43,623	14,150	25,144	15,247
1939	46,897	17,300	25,000	15,500
1962	175,000	77,500	92,000	20,000
1969	140,000	75,000	85,000	
1972	105,000	1,000	52,000	
1984	50,000	1,000	30,000	
1995/2000	100,000	12,000	90,000	

Sources: G. Oonk: *Asians in East Africa. Images, Histories and Portraits*, SCA production 2004, 53.

Not only was there less demand for Indian women raised in India, some offspring of pioneering families noted a remarkable change in the quality of products coming from India. Broadly speaking, most agreed that the quality of Indian produce had deteriorated, especially after the Second World War. This process of deterioration started in the 1930s. It is especially well illustrated in the case of textiles. Khangas, shirts, saris and cloth were once imported from India, but after the 1930s, Japanese textile producers took over the East African market. Most of the informants recalled that the Japanese were able to offer better quality textiles at a cheaper rate. Their products were better finished, dyed and manufactured than products from India. Another plus point was that the Japanese were said to be ‘very ambitious’, whereas the Indian industrialists had become too ‘arrogant and unreliable’.

In my view, it is not surprising that Asian businessmen in East Africa developed a new image of India and businessmen in India during this period. Almost without exception, informants spoke negatively of India, and in one way or the other, they sought legitimization for the fact that Asian East Africans did not want to do business with India. They did not want to retire or settle there and, they did not trust an Indian from India. Many of these views were the result of experiences. For example, as one Hindu informant stated:

There is very little honesty in India. They cheat, they send you excellent samples, and if you buy, they send an inferior quality. Or when a shipment of them arrives, you will find out that they have sent less than you had agreed on. At the same time, when we want to do export there, there are so many amendments. You get tired. We don’t have this with other countries, like South Africa, England, and Canada and America. We stopped trading with India. In life, you have to avoid unnecessary headaches don’t you?

In a second interview, he added:

You see, my parents and grandparents had family members in India. So, we knew there was someone to rely on. Someone who took care of the ‘Indian’ side of the business, but now Bwana, we have no one there. Who can you trust if you have no one there?⁷

⁷ Interview in Dar es Salaam, November 2002. This is not to say that family members are, in fact, reliable. This informant was cheated by two of his half-brothers and lost a huge part of his business in the early 1980s. In the late 1950s, Morris noted that the Indian African said: ‘Do not go into partnership with your brother (from India, G.O.). He is sure to cheat you’ Morris, 785.

The changing social orientation (in terms of family and marriage patterns) towards East Africa between 1920 and 1960 reinforced the idea that the Gujarati community in East Africa was different from the Gujarati community in India. This was in sharp contrast to the previous period, when Indian imports in East Africa were still important and most Indian families in East Africa had some family members in India to look after their overseas business. Despite the fact that family and community ties with Gujarat were weakening, some South Asians in East Africa continued to deal with businessmen in India. However, over the years, they realised that something had changed. A Gujarati from India was no longer the same as a Gujarati from East Africa. Eventually, the two groups became as distinct as ‘the difference between chalk and cheese’. Another informant told me that:

I am more comfortable to do business with a Gujarati from East Africa than a Gujarati in India. Especially when we talk on the ‘phone. As a rule, I would take someone’s word for it. Normally eight out of ten times this doesn’t go wrong, nevertheless with Gujaratis in India eight out of ten times this goes wrong (sic). (...) For example, we dealt with various business houses in India and also with houses owned by Gujaratis. There was one case in which there were certain deals which could not be documented, and basically we had a verbal agreement. And in the end there was a difference on what we agreed to. This would not happen with most of the Gujaratis from East Africa. There would be an unwritten, unspoken understanding of mutual trust.⁸

Many South Asians in East Africa expressed the opinion that Gujaratis from East Africa were more civilized, more reliable and more exposed to modern life than Gujaratis in India. This was often attributed to the higher standard of education that East African Gujaratis enjoyed in East Africa and the UK. They said that they experienced more transparency among Indians in East Africa than among Gujaratis from India during the various rounds of consultations before finalising a deal. Often they attributed this transparency to a higher standard of education. Of course, there may be other reasons for this experience that have nothing to do with education. However, in the interviews, differences in education were mentioned by many, often in conjunction with ‘civilization’, as a main cause of differences. For example:

You see, they don’t know how to speak properly. They, in India, are crude, rougher than we are. When our parents arrived in East Africa, we were with the British; and they educated us. So we learned how to speak, how to dress. This is lacking there, especially in the villages.⁹

Besides the role of education and the exposure to a more ‘Western lifestyle’, another argument was given:

Our Indian African culture is different. Indians in India are more competitive; they are sharper, better equipped in the negotiation process. They have to be, because of the bigger population. When we do business with them, we get screwed. There is a lot of mistrust in our community against Indian Indians. You know, we have a saying that if you make a deal with an Indian Indian, and shake hands with him, you better start counting your fingers...¹⁰

⁸ Anonymous informant, December 2003.

⁹ Anonymous informant, February 2001.

¹⁰ Anonymous informant, March 2003. Note that this quote portrays Indian Indians as superior in significant respects, which runs counter to the argument from education.

This is undeniable evidence that second generation Indians had developed a remarkably different perception of Gujaratis in India. They constructed an image of a dissimilar overseas community, which they perceived as no longer part of their own community. Gujaratis in India were seen as ‘untrustworthy’, ‘unreliable’ and ‘uncivilized’, whereas Gujarati East Africans had adjusted to a more ‘Western’ lifestyle. This is reflected in their ‘suit and tie’ Western dress, written business agreements in English and the discontinuation of the practice of reading Gujarati newspapers and magazines. Bharat, for example, did not subscribe to any of the Gujarati newspapers or magazines. His English was fluent and he kept his business correspondence in English. Sometimes, when he wrote to his father, he did make the effort to formulate at least a few sentences in Gujarati. Yet although he could speak Gujarati, like other Gujarati businessmen of this second generation of Asian Africans (born between 1920-1960), he spoke Gujarati that was sometimes peppered with English words. At home, he sometimes spoke Gujarati with his wife and children, but whereas his wife would mostly answer him in Gujarati, his children might answer in English. India had become a foreign nation to the children. Indeed, they had only visited India once, as tourists.

In this section, I have shown that part of the current generation of Asian Africans do not trust Gujarati businessmen from Gujarat. They have developed a negative image of Indians in India and have consequently severed ties. Gujaratis in Gujarat are seen as ‘unreliable’, ‘uncivilized’ and ‘untrustworthy’. This change of perception can be explained as follows. There can be no doubt that Gujaratis in East Africa developed a preference for Indian marriage partners raised in East Africa who knew ‘their *African* culture’. Asians in Africa felt that they were more and better educated in East Africa and Europe, principally in the UK. They had developed an interest in a European lifestyle. As a trading minority, they were exposed to African and European culture, rather than that of Gujarat. However, there is no denying that their cultural roots originated in Gujarat. Subsequent to this shift in social attitude, their interest in doing business with India diminished as Europe became the most important export market.

These conclusions raise questions about the importance of the concept of the ‘diaspora’, particularly with respect to the importance that migrants attach to the motherland. In my view, the notion of the motherland loses its importance (whether invented, imagined or real) if the link is not reinforced by economic or social incentives. By taking a bottom-up approach and understanding the informants’ arguments, it becomes clear that migrants, more easily than is thought in the diaspora literature, gradually cease to think about their roots as a source of recognition, identification and appreciation.

This process of detachment from the motherland is shown clearly by the fact that Asian Africans are reluctant to do business with fellow Gujaratis in India, who are not regarded as members of the same community. There is no ethnic business network or natural trust in this trading diaspora. Ethnic trading networks are created, but may also fall apart. Within these networks, trust has to be earned and mutual aid has to be developed, over time through experience. Within these networks a ‘good name’ is just as easily lost as gained. It is thus evident how migrant traders may cut ties with their motherland.¹¹

Political changes

Calls for self-rule grew louder in East Africa after India gained independence from Great Britain in 1947. The freedom struggles of India became a role model for other British colonies. During the struggle for Independence in East Africa, the South Asians in East Africa had to reposition themselves. Most were convinced that East Africa was their home.

The ultimate yardstick for commitment and loyalty emerged on the eve of African Independence. Asians in East Africa had to decide whether they would take up African (Tanzanian, Ugandan or Kenyan) citizenship or not. Accepting local citizenship would be the ultimate proof that Asian Africans were committed to the new African nations. Some South Asians, however, doubted whether African citizenship would protect their citizen and property rights in the long term. They feared that continuing Africanisation of the economy would ultimately be at the expense of South Asians in East Africa. Moreover, accepting local citizenship implied that the Asian Africans had to give up their British subject status.

In addition, we will also notice that taking up Indian citizenship was not an option. The first president of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, encouraged South Asians in East Africa to settle permanently in Africa and to align with the Africans and the African Independence movement. Furthermore, the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, stated that the South Asians living in East Africa could not expect protection from the Indian Government. He voiced the opinion that they were currently neither Indians nor Africans, but guests in the African countries and if the Africans did not want them, they should pack their bags and leave. He advised them to settle permanently in Africa and to align themselves with the interests of the Africans and the African independence movement. He was also quick to add that India had to solve its own problems first, before thinking about others.¹²

This is in sharp contrast with the current position of the Indian Government that actively reconnects with its diaspora. Some of the South Asians in Africa followed Nehru's advice. In Kenya, Makhan Singh led the first general strike in Nairobi in 1950 and he was alleged to have taken part in the Mau Mau revolt, which lasted from 1952 to 1960.¹³ When Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of the independence movement in Kenya, was brought to trial in 1952, he was defended by P.G. Pinto, an Indian lawyer residing in Kenya. He was also placed in detention from 1954 to 1958 on Manda Island.¹⁴

Independence of East African countries

The constitutions of the Independent East African states (Tanzania 1961, Uganda 1962, Kenya 1963) gave those South Asians who were not automatically citizens by virtue of their birth [one of the parents as well as the applicant have to be born locally] an option to register as citizens within a grace period of two years. However, if they chose to do so, they could retain the status of a British subject or a British protected person. With this status, under British law and international law, they could demand the protection of the British Government in foreign countries. At times – but not always – this status included the right to travel to the United Kingdom (on a visa basis). At the same time, they were given the right to have a

¹² M.C. Lall, *India's Missed Opportunity. India's Relationship with the Non Resident Indians*, Ashgate Aldershot 2001, 96–100.

¹³ Z. Patel, *Unquiet: The Life and Times of Makhan Singh*, Nairobi 2006.

¹⁴ H. Tinker, *The Banyan Tree. Overseas Emigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 124–125.

British passport and with it the right to enter and live in the United Kingdom.¹⁵ An important decision was to be made. The basic choice was between three options.

First, they could become an East African (Ugandan, Kenya or Tanzanian) citizen. This would grant them voting rights and enable them to obtain local trading licences. Nevertheless, it was foreseeable that in the near future, it would be more problematic to travel to the United Kingdom (and Europe) on an African passport than on a British passport. In addition, South Asians realised that accepting African citizenship might not be sufficient to force citizenship rights and protection of their properties. In other words, if they wished to stay and keep their businesses in East Africa, they were inclined to accept local citizenship. Nevertheless, there were enough ambiguities that made them insecure and hesitant. Luckily, the British government had negotiated an option for them to register as citizens within a grace period of two years.¹⁶

The second option was to remain a British subject. Many Asian Africans may have preferred this possibility. They supported the Independence of African states in East Africa. They wished to continue their businesses, pay taxes, raise their families and continue the economic development of the countries they lived in. They therefore needed a reliable prospect that they could continue the life they had lived, including access to trading licences. However, remaining a British Subject would give them some extra advantages which were important to them. It would give them access to education in the United Kingdom. The South Asian higher and middle classes realised that the standard of higher education in East Africa was low. Many elite Asians therefore used to send their children to private schools in the United Kingdom. In addition, remaining a British subject would also give these groups access to healthcare in the United Kingdom and health insurance. This was not yet available at the same standards in East Africa. Last but not least, British subjects could easily travel throughout the Commonwealth and that made them probably the first real ‘world citizens’.

The third option was to remain undefined. Often this was not a conscious choice, but it happened to those who did not make up their minds. These people often remained active in the informal sector of East Africa.

The choice between being a ‘British Subject’ or an African citizen was a ‘coin flip’. Many South Asians used the grace period of two years, but were still undecided. Eventually, most families decided to take a mixed stand in the citizenship issue. Some male members would take up local citizenship, while many women and younger brothers decided to remain British Subjects. In that sense, they could acquire trading licences and continue their local business, whilst enjoying healthcare and education for their children in the United Kingdom.¹⁷ The full consequences associated with these various citizenship options were often fascinating and had huge implications. For example, in some families it was decided that the man of the house would take up local citizenship, while the woman would remain a British subject. In due course, this enabled the woman to travel to Britain easily. If the woman was pregnant on a visit to the United Kingdom and her baby was born in the United

¹⁵ However, because of the steady influx of migrants from the Caribbean, the British Government decided to restrict entry into the UK by announcing an annual quota of 1,500 men and their families per year. This proved to be far too small in the eyes of Asian Africans, especially after 1967 when the Kenyan and Tanzanian Governments started to ‘Africanise’ their economies and more and more South Asians wanted to leave. Hugh Tinker, *The Banyan Tree. Overseas Emigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 134.

¹⁷ Hugh Tinker, *Separate and Unequal: India and the Indians in the British Commonwealth 1920-1950* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976). Hugh Tinker, *The Banyan Tree* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). M.C. Lall, *India's Missed Opportunity. India's relation with the Non Resident Indians* (Singapore: Ashgate).

Kingdom, the child would automatically become a full British citizen. This child would then be raised in East Africa, but had free access to British education and healthcare. Therefore, it became very common for a South Asian African family to have members with African citizenship, members who were British subjects and those who were British citizens, all with different sets of rights and duties.¹⁸

While the South Asian communities in East Africa were discussing and negotiating their options, the new African states were under strong pressure from their societies to Africanise the economy and civil service. This resulted in a number of discriminatory schemes in East African countries, which introduced various systems of work permits and only allowed 'non-Africans' to take jobs that African citizens could not fulfil. There was a particular shortage of managerial and organisational skills. South Asian civil servants (whether they were citizens or not) were pushed out of their jobs to be replaced by Africans. Therefore, most South Asians preferred to keep their options open until the last few months of this period of grace. Legally, they had the right to do so, but the governments and African citizens of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda regarded this inaction as an expression of a lack of faith in them and their nations. As a result, these governments introduced periodic administrative embargoes.¹⁹ In addition, the issuing of trading licences became a matter of concern for the South Asian community in East Africa. The renewal of trading licences for only one or two years created economic insecurity. Moreover, the process of renewal was not transparent. Hence, it was open to corruption and so led to more uncertainty.²⁰ The South Asians in East Africa therefore made sure that they set up escape routes. African politicians as well as the African societies were aware of these routes, making them more critical about the loyalty of Asians in East Africa. For them the question was: were these new citizens investors or exploiters.

Whatever decision the Asian Africans made, taking up local citizenship did not guarantee protection by the state. The property rights and physical security of South Asians were attacked to varying degrees during the 1960s and early 1970s, regardless of their civic status. The governments of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda gradually took control of the economy and nationalised the majority of the principal economic sectors, including foreign banks, insurance companies, important industries such as textiles and import/export firms. While this nationalisation was not directed against the South Asians specifically, they were nevertheless hit extremely hard.

Africanisation of economic sectors, often at the expense of South Asian Businesses

In Tanzania, the Arusha Declaration of 1967 legitimised the nationalisation of the main economic institutions, such as the banks and insurance companies and certain industries.

¹⁸ In my sample of 76 Asian African families, who settled in East Africa before the 1920s, more than 90 percent have multiple passports in their families. Similar observation can be found in: Herzig, P., *South Asians in Kenya. Gender, Generation and Changing Identities in Diaspora*, Munster 2006

¹⁹ Hugh Tinker, *Separate and Unequal: India and the Indians in the British Commonwealth 1920–1950* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976). Hugh Tinker, *The Banyan Tree. Overseas Emigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). M.C. Lall, *India's Missed Opportunity. India's Relation with the Non Resident Indians* (Singapore: Ashgate).

²⁰ James Brennan nicely shows how during the anti-colonial nationalist movement, Indians were frequently targeted as primary obstacles to development and African self-improvement. Brennan, J., "Blood enemies: exploitation and urban citizenship in the nationalist political thought of Tanzania, 1958-1975." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 47.3 (2006): 387-411, 404.

Most of the legislation had a negative effect on the economic performance of the South Asian community.²¹ The Acquisition of Buildings Act of April 1971 in Tanzania was another piece of legislation that had a detrimental effect on the South Asians, again whether they were citizens or not. The experience of the Karimjee Jivanjee family is just one example. Although the family's sisal estates were not nationalised, numerous family-owned buildings in Dar es Salaam and Tanga were. Almost overnight, the family lost more than 35 buildings and houses in Dar es Salaam. This figure does not include the buildings in Tanga, Moshi, Arusha, Mwanza, Mtwara, Lindi and in many other places (probably more than fifteen). In many cases, the Karimjees became tenants of the Registrar of Buildings or the National Housing Corporation. They had to rent buildings that they had previously owned. However, the new landlord was unable to maintain the buildings to even the most basic standard and some buildings fell into disrepair within months. The administrative procedures for managing the nationalised properties were complex and multifaceted. Ironically, in some cases the Office of the Registrar of Buildings requested the Karimjee Jivanjee family to assist in specifying the administrative procedures, by providing contracts regarding the responsibilities for tenants and owners, for example.²²

In Kenya, the overall approach taken by the government focused on the need to build a strong indigenous class of traders, bankers, and industrialists. However, the promotion of indigenous businesses was often at the expense of the development of South Asians and it became increasingly difficult for them to renew their trading licences, obtain permits for new ventures or receive government loans.²³

Uganda's Africanisation programme initially followed the Kenyan approach, before switching to an approach closer to the Tanzanian one in the early 1970s. The 1969 Immigration and Trade Licensing Acts were modelled after the Kenyan Acts of the same name and had the same objective. All non-citizens were required to obtain work permits. Certain trades could not be undertaken by non-citizens, including beer, cigarettes, soft drinks, motor vehicles and essential foodstuffs.

Expulsion

Then, in January 1971, General Idi Amin staged a successful coup against President Milton Obote. Most people in Uganda, South Asians, Africans and Europeans alike, initially welcomed the transition. The South Asians particularly welcomed it because they believed that Amin would reduce the extent of the anti-Asian campaign. However, their hopes were short-lived. Little more than a year later, on 5 August 1972, Amin, now President, gave his 'Asian Farewell Speech'. In this speech, he gave the Asians 90 days to pack up and leave. He made no distinction between citizens and non-citizens. His major argument was that British Asians had come to build the railway, but this had now been completed. In this speech, as well as earlier ones, he accused the Asians of 'economic sabotage' of the country. In his view, they were not willing to invest, they were removing resources. The problem with such accusations is obviously that they cannot be proved to be either true or false. However, evidence for these allegations should have been brought before an independent Ugandan

²¹ Kjell J. Havnevik, *Tanzania. The Limits to Development from Above*, Nordiska Afrika institutet, Motola 1993.

²² Oonk, *The Karimjee Jivanjee Family*, Amsterdam: Pallas Publications, 2009. For other examples see the biography of Andy Chande at www.andychande.com (accessed 15-06-2014).

²³ David Himbara, *Kenyan Capitalists, the State and Development*, East African Education Publishers, Nairobi 1994. Hugh Tinker, *The Banyan Tree. Overseas Emigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, 130.

court. Moreover, the situation is more complex than Amin suggested. The railway was finished, but many of those who had come to help construct it had later found a living as traders and artisans. Others had not come to build the railway, but to work as colonial civil servants.

Now, every South Asian knew that they had to leave the country. Their houses, shops and other properties were in danger as well as their physical and emotional wellbeing, not least because of Amin's control of the military. Within the last few weeks of the ultimatum period, some 50,000 Asians left with just hand baggage and no more than £55 in cash. In 1973, no more than 1,000 South Asians were left in Uganda. To most South Asians in Uganda, their expulsion came as a complete surprise. Initially, many who had heard the Asian farewell speech or read about it in the papers simply did not believe that it would become a reality. Even those whose Ugandan citizenship had appeared fully established found that they were required to produce fresh evidence, which was eventually rejected. Even the Ismaili community and the Madhvani and Mehta families, who owned famous business houses and had a long history in Uganda, were deprived of their citizenship.

When the first groups of South Asians who had been resident in or citizens of Uganda fled to the United Kingdom, USA, Canada and elsewhere, the South Asians in Kenya and Tanzania came to believe that their businesses and lives could also be at risk. Despite the fact that neither Kenya nor Tanzania had adopted the Ugandan approach, political and economic insecurity in these countries also caused massive emigration, and about half of their total South Asian populations left. Some South Asian business families in Kenya and Tanzania decided to keep one or two family members in the newly independent states to look after their (nationalised) properties and businesses. In some exceptional cases, the people left behind became the managers (state employees) of their former properties.²⁴ In short, most of the family members left the country, leaving behind only one or two 'die hards'.²⁵ Those who departed would endeavour build a new life in the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, and elsewhere. In short, approximately 280,000 Asian Africans migrated from East Africa to other parts of the world.

4. Results and Future Challenges

Nowadays, many Asian African families have family members in up to twelve different countries. Individual members may have acquired local citizenship. Each year, I receive a directory with the physical addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of several transnational Asian African families. In 2010, one such directory contained about 70 main family entries for one family (often not including the names of spouses and children) and twelve entries related to businesses. Twenty-eight entries are in the United Kingdom; twenty-three entries are in Mauritius; seven entries are in Tanzania, South Africa and Egypt; seven entries are in the USA; six entries are in Germany, Belgium and France; and three entries are in Dubai. More often than not, family members have received local citizenship and, in most cases, carry the passport of their local country of citizenship. In such directories, there are very few entries in India. As we saw in previous paragraphs, this is mainly due to the specific history of South Asians in East Africa. Firstly, they shifted their economic orientation from India to East Africa and the United Kingdom. India became a less important trading partner in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, they also developed a preference for marriages

²⁴ See, for example, the biography of Andy Chande at www.andychande.com (accessed 15-06-2014).

²⁵ G. Oonk, *The Karimjee Jivanjee Family*, Amsterdam: Pallas Publications, 2009.

within the Asian African community. In short, there was no need to visit India to get married. The initial dynamics of circular migration came to an end and the Asian in East Africa became settled strangers.²⁶ This process was reinforced at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s when about half of the Asian population in East Africa left the continent as a result of the Africanisation project and the expulsion of Asians in East Africa, especially from Uganda under General Idi Amin. As we have seen, South Asians were not allowed to migrate to India at that time. Many of my informants felt disappointed because of this. They expected the Indian Government to step in and provide refuge for them. However, the Indian Government argued that they could not do much because most overseas Indians in East Africa were either local citizens or British protected persons, but not Indian citizens.

Nevertheless, the Indian government revised its policy towards the overseas Indians in the early years of this century. In 2004, it established the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) which is a dynamic, young and interactive ministry, dedicated to the many Indian nationals living abroad in. Its main aim was to connect the Indian Diaspora community with its motherland in order to build partnerships with the diaspora. On a global scale, it is a no brainer to state that this has been a successful project. In a relatively short period, India has become a major receiver of remittances – with a total of \$69 billion according to the World Bank.²⁷ Nevertheless, regarding East Africa, the Indian government tends to overestimate the importance of Indian ‘diasporic feelings’. In its recently published Report of the High Level Commission, it states that ‘Since India achieved Independence, overseas Indians have been returning to seek their roots and explore new avenues and sectors for mutual beneficial interaction from investment to the transfer of economic skills and technology, to outright philanthropy and charitable work. This trend has become more marked in the last decade, as the Indian economy has opened up, giving rise to a new range of opportunities for emerging generations’.²⁸ In fact, this is far from the truth and more the consequence of wishful thinking. The main aim of the commission is to explore the possibilities of improving the relationship between India and ‘Persons of Indian Origin’ [PIO] and ‘Non Resident Indians overseas [NRI]’. This is obviously the result of the Indian Government’s disappointment in the role that it feels PIOs and NRIs have played until now. However, if we take a brief look at the remittances received from East Africa, a different picture emerges. Around 100,000 people of Indian origin live in Kenya, for example. Most of them are among the top five percent richest people of the country in terms of income and wealth. However, they do not send any remittances to India. In Uganda there are around 20,000 Asians of Indian origin, but here again they do not send any remittances to India. The picture for Tanzania is slightly different. The 80,000 Asians in Tanzania send around USD five million to India. In short, the big picture is that the economic orientation of South Asians in East Africa is not towards India. India may still be an important cultural mirror, but its economic importance is not relevant for Asian Africans. This is mainly because most of the Settled Strangers do not have any family members left in the motherland. For them, the umbilicalcord with India has been cut.²⁹

²⁶ Gijsbert Oonk, *Settled Strangers. Asian Business Elites in East Africa (1800-2000)*, Sage 2013.

²⁷ World Bank 2012 figures.

²⁸ The Indian High Level Commission, *Report on the Indian Diaspora*. See also: Lal, *India’s Missed Opportunity*, London: Ashgate 2001.

²⁹ The bulk of this research was carried out between 1999 and 2003. At that time, the Indian economy was already booming. The Indian government tried to attract Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) to start investing in India by offering dual citizenship and attractive banking and investment schemes. Initially, the ‘old migrants’ were very reluctant to take up these options. Nevertheless, after 2008, an increasing number of Asian Africans are trying to

Elsewhere I have argued that, eventually, the South Asians in East Africa developed into a transnational Asian-African community. Their social capital was firmly based on a *triple heritage*: (a) being born into a South Asian family and learning Asian family and business values, the importance of the extended family and the tradition of respect for the eldest therein; (b) being born in East Africa, knowing the African culture, but also being aware of the experience of alienation and expulsion of Asians from Africa; and (c) being educated in the West or in Westernised educational institutions, which enabled the settlers to learn about Western culture and become part of the 'Western world', including through acculturation in Western dress and eating and drinking habits.³⁰

This 'triple heritage' is deeply rooted in the Asian-African community of settled strangers. Indeed, it is part of their unwritten history, part of their undefined identity that is neither 'Indian' nor 'African' or 'British'. Nevertheless, this fascinating heritage is part of a strong oral history with no reference to national histories, museums or sites of remembrance.³¹ This history is talked about with pride and, at times, with reluctance. There is pride when these families tell their stories of their ancestors who 'came in dhows' and when they elaborate on the 'Asian contribution' to East African history in terms of charities, their role in the Independence movements and their contributions as major employers and tax payers. There is some hesitation, however, when the impact of the nationalisation of houses, buildings and industries on themselves as Asian-African families, as well on East African countries as a whole, are highlighted. Indeed, the bitter stories of expulsion and the loss of property and securities are heartbreaking. Nevertheless, these issues were not a central theme here.

There is an interesting paradox in the consciousness of a 'triple heritage'. On the one hand it has a strongly binding character, where people share the same histories, ideas and experiences and go through the same process of migration, settlement and orientation towards their new, sometimes hostile, environment. On the other hand, the history of their expulsion, and therefore being spread all over the world, makes it difficult to re-connect to the people sharing these histories. The paradox is that being scattered across the globe has become a 'bonding' part of that history and identity. Eventually, the 'triple heritage' consisted of a unique combination of experiences, habits, and tools that became useful in the globalised world. For instance, knowledge of English and Swahili, as well as Gujarati, made it possible to bridge the gap between the Western world and Africa and India. But the issue is not only the 'language'; it also includes awareness of religious and caste differences and food and clothing habits, as well as respect for nuances and differences. This heritage has facilitated global trading activities. South Asian Africans have become a globalised community in a globalised world. India is an important part of that heritage, but certainly not the only part.

capitalise on these new possibilities. India may become a new reliable business partner, but from the Asian African family's perspective, there still has to be a family member present in India to look after the 'Indian' part of the business.

³⁰ The term 'triple heritage' is taken from: Warah, Rasna, *Triple Heritage. A Journey to Self Discovery* (Nairobi 1998).

³¹ There are a few important exceptions. The Kenyan National Museums organised a successful exhibition: the Asian African Heritage: Identity and History in the year 2000 that lasted for several years. In fact, this was the first time that the term 'Asian African' was used by the Asian-African community. The curator of the exhibition was Dr Sultan H. Somjee, who should be credited with using the term 'Asian African'. See also other professional storytellers like V.S. Naipaul, who wrote his famous *A Bend in the River* in 1979, and M.G. Vassanji, whose *The Gunny Sack*, published in 2009.

DISCUSSION REPORT AT IIC

The observations/ comments/ issues and questions shared during the lecture:-

Ambassador Virendra Gupta appreciated the genesis of the evolution of Indian migration as traced by Prof. Oonk. He initiated by saying that Dr. Gijsbert Oonk in his presentation has raised several relevant issues. First he pointed towards the representation of South Asian Diaspora. Quoting his personal experience in Tanzania, he referred that the first thing he encountered was change in attitude-which he regarded as Indian Diaspora and what those people were not willing to regard as Indian Diaspora particularly the Muslim Indian Diaspora. They were majority in Tanzania. Many of them migrated to Tanzania before partition, not prepared to understand that they were Indian migrants or part of Indian Diaspora. Those people were dominant in business. India was number five trading partner and the challenge was to bring it to position of number one, so major challenge was to bring those people into the Indian Diaspora category. According to him these distinction are rather artificial. People abroad are varied to the idea of coming from a different geographical region and South Asia fits much better into their understanding as compared to more constraint definition of country state. In response to Oonk's statement regarding country's relation with Diaspora, he said that this all began under Nehru's leadership, with lot of constraints during that time, including financial constraints, but it is a fact, even in Africa, that we did open our institutions of higher education for developing countries students particularly. So, we did manage to collaborate a great deal with African countries and major beneficiary of these programme were Indian Diaspora. In fact in East Africa, there were lots of people from Indian Diaspora who sent their children to India during 60's and 70's for higher studies. He referred to the question of identity, whether the migrant community are able to integrate into the host country that has become a very volatile topic of discussion. In the context of Indian Diaspora in Africa, he stated that Indian government does not have any problem in assertion of their host countries identities by them. Ambassador Gupta also pointed out, by quoting his experience in Tanzania, that there are incidences which seems to challenge the established notion of socio-anthropological identity. He also mentioned that may be because of several reasons- insecurities, wanting to be accepted, to be a part of socio-economic milieu of that country,- there are people who are beginning to question the basic established notion of socio-anthropological identity, which according to him is a good thing. Lastly, he extended the point made by Prof. Dubey about the role played by India Diaspora or Indian Diaspora becoming a major factor in foreign policy making though he pointed that our policies are still conditioned to old thinking. He pointed out that though we cherished the fact that Indian Diaspora is doing good, but we still are not been able to factor that into our policy making. He concluded by saying that we have certainly moving there but have not arrived yet.

Ambassador Manju Seth gave her observations by saying that traditional East Africa included three countries but now it includes twenty countries according to United Nations. She talked about Francophone East African countries (Madagascar, Comoros, Mayotte) Indian Diaspora, which she says are very different from Anglophone East African countries. According to her, Indian Diaspora in these countries are having mixed culture due to intermingling between them and natives. Indian Diaspora traces their ancestry to the slave trade of the colonial French empire and the numbers of slaves were very few but there were next indentured labour. Though by the fifth generation, it has become very French in their outlook. But they are still seen as distinct or strangers. Because outwardly they follow French customs but at home they practice their Indian tradition. These people have very strong urge

to connect to India. As far as the island reunion is concerned, it has a huge Indian Diaspora, around forty percent but with lots of inter mixing with all other diasporic migrants of all countries, so their culture and people over there are mixed and fascinating. Many of these Indian Diaspora are in active politics as well as in top government jobs, thus a force to reckon with. In fact she added that in last two Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, Indian government has responded to this Francophone Indian Diaspora. But she added that as far as Indian government wants regarding the remittances, they are mostly in politics or in government jobs, so it become difficult, but slowly this development is also taking place.

Prof. S N Malakar started by raising concern over the conceptualization of the word Diaspora. He stated that the word Diaspora is not very concise, some time we say Diaspora, sometime PIO, sometime Indian migrants or overseas Indians, according to him what term is used should be the main point of reference. He pointed out that how migration has taken place must be taken into consideration, while dealing with assimilation and integration process. For example indentured laborers assimilation or integration process would be different than those went as traders. Thus wave of migration will determine the integration and assimilation process. Second point which was raised by Prof. Malakar, was that Indians are having multiple identities, thus along with integration with the host country, Indians integrate within themselves, having different religion, castes which is different identity itself. Along with that he said region, religion identities and being endogamous is also problem in integration of the Indian Diaspora. Thirdly, he added that one should keep in mind the interest of host country. Why Africans are skeptic about Indians, due to capital plight of their economy, it should thus kept in mind that host country should also get benefitted out of that.

Ruchita Beri referred to the point of Monsoon Trade as mentioned in the presentation by Dr. Oonk. She said that role of monsoon in connecting India with Africa is important. She also referred about the project Mausam started by government for reconnecting with the communities of Indian Ocean. She further questioned about the role played by the colonial rulers to bringing the Indian traders to Africa. She also asked regarding the issue of identity of Indians in East Africa whether they still consider themselves as Indians. Thirdly, in regard to connection between politics and economic leadership, she questioned that whether India is a monolithic lot or there are pockets of Indians who do not like to be linked with home country. As Oonk in his presentation, showed that in Tanzania and Kenya Indianness is less and they are not interested in connecting with India.

Nivedita Ray brought forward the point made by the Oonk with regard to two issues-economic-political detachment and cultural connectedness which are crucial to identity. Economically and politically Indian Diaspora wants to detach with India whereas culturally they want to attach with India. She questioned how this kind of status gives them a positioning within the host country. This delinking with Indian economically and politically and linking with them culturally thus, had created animosity and raised several issues. This particular issue of identity still remained an important factor when linkages of India with African countries come into picture. In this context she questioned Dr. Oonk whether there was a difference in perception of African government or people towards Indian diaspora? She continued that now African government have lot of flexibility in using Diaspora as a factor in strengthening relations, may be because African countries now trying to linkup with their own Diaspora. She raised the point that there is difference in perception regarding Indian Diaspora between African government and among the native people. She also points out that in fact business linkages are also very much linked to the cultural factor. She made a point that while stating about a conference she attended titled 'African Investors in India and Indian

Investors in Africa’, in which it was observed that African investors were only the Indians i.e. African Indians were the ones who were making investment in India which was very interesting to point out which indicate that there are association linkages but how we build upon those association are more important.

Dr. J.M. Moosa pointed out the fact raised by Dr. Oonk regarding Indian Ocean as a space of vibrancy, which many communities made use of this vibrant case before the coming of Europeans and one of such community taking advantage of it was Goans. They made use of the opportunity of Indian Ocean & went to Zanzibar and other mainland. When Ugandan railway was constructed they went on to take new positions in job across the new cities. But they were not British subject rather the Portuguese subjects. So in a way they were migrating across imperial boundaries. There were many push & pull factors for bringing on their better life. Goa itself is very much contested in a way that how it was integrated with India. They networked with several others and even across territories & thus have become global.

Dr. Bijay Pratihari talked about the migration during colonial period which was mainly because of construction of railways and beside the trade facilities. But he added the fact that though it was due to the colonial forces but migration during the later period has also increased rather than decline despite of the discriminatory action taken place such as Africanization. He also focused on contribution of Indian Diaspora as an important factor. He questioned that do identity is antithetical to integration. And secondly that is East African Indian Diaspora become an assets according to Indian policy or they are interested only in dollar Diaspora.

Prof. Gijsbert Oonk in response to the questions related to the inclusion of migration history in the text books, said that the texts are very Eurocentric which is related to building empires. Therefore the local history remains unrecorded. Legal integration is part of East Africa. Mixing is very much there. The importance for Diaspora studies should not make the study field appear as political minority identities but to view it as “History of Encounter”. Thus history of encounters intercede identity politics.

On the issue of Policy focus he explained that debate on Asian African get PIO facility and African business person don’t. The concepts of Nationality and business might downplay balance in business which needs to be addressed. India can develop a dynamic Diaspora policy as in other parts of the world is being developed. As Ireland has its Diaspora policy.

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HEINRICH BOLL FOUNDATION

The Heinrich Böll Stiftung / Foundation (HBF) is the Green Political foundation from Germany, affiliated to the "Greens/Alliance '90" political party represented the Germany's federal parliament. Headquartered in Berlin, and with 30 international office today, hbs conducts and supports civic educational activities and projects worldwide.

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