INDENTURED INDIANS IN NATAL, 1860-1902: A STUDY BASED ON SHIP'S LISTS

by

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CHAPTER I

Introduction: About the Study

The Durban office of what was formerly part of the Department of Indian Affairs, has in its possession 91 volumes of ship's lists for the total of 152 184 indentured Indians who came to Natal between 1860 and 1911. Each of the 384 ship's registers has against individual entries information about the person's names, caste or religion, age, physical markings if any, and places of origin in the form of village, thanna (police circle), and zillah (district). The entire set of documents was microfilmed with the aid of a grant from the University of Durban-Westville (UDW). *

Once the initial grant had been secured from the university, a computer-related programme was devised to retrieve the information. The 384 ship's registers were divided into 26 chronologically arranged groups alphabetically ordered from A to Z. Each group was assigned a two-letter symbol. For example, in the A group consisting of 6 445 persons who arrived between 1860 and 1866 in 20 ships, the first ship, the Truro, was labelled AA; the second ship, the Belvedere, was labelled AB; the third ship was assigned AC, and so on down the list until the twentieth ship, the Isabella Hercus, was given the symbol AT. And thus all the ship's registers were grouped, and each one assigned a two-letter symbol.

The A group conveniently ended at 1866, when a severe depression in the colony made further importation of indentured Indians impossible. It was resumed in 1874, and did not stop until July 1911. The later batches of arrivals were grouped into periods of 2 to 3 years, and, in the 1890s and 1900s when importation was heavy, into single years.

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* The microfilms are in the possession of the library at the University of Durban-Westville.

Indeed, the heavy immigration in 1906 made it necessary to divide that year into two groups. Care was taken in each instance not to allocate too many individuals per group so as to make analysis manageable. On the average there are 6 000 persons per group. There are, however, smaller and larger groups ranging from 2 487 to 8 206. Since chronology was the main basis of grouping, Madras and Calcutta ships were not separated.

Colonial numbers appear on the ship's register for each and every indentured person including accompanying children. The colonial numbers for wives and children followed immediately those of the husbands. These numbers are extremely helpful in locating the individuals within the ship's registers and the chronology. The first person on the Truro was assigned the colonial number 1, and the last individual on the ship was given number 342. The first person on the register of the next ship, the Belvedere, was assigned 343. And so colonial numbers were assigned cumulatively one register after the next. The very last number for the final ship's register in July 1911 was 152 184. Madras and Calcutta ships were not separated for number-assignment.

The details for all the groups are shown in Table 1 below:

TABLE I

Groups and Symbols for Indentured Ship's Registers, 1860-1911

Groups	Symbols	No. of Ships	Period	Total
A	AA-AT	20	Nov. 1860 - July 1866	6 445
B	BA-BQ	17	June 1874 - Oct. 1877	8 206
C	CA-CQ	17	Oct. 1877 - Nov. 1878	6 477
D	DA-DT	20	Jan. 1879 - Dec. 1882	7 003
E	EA-ET	20	Apr. 1883 - Apr. 1885	6 601
F	FA-FT	20	Mar. 1886 - Nov. 1889	5 480
G	GA-GS	19	Feb. 1890 - Dec. 1891	7 502

Groups	Symbols	No. of Ships	Period	Total
H	HA-HQ	17	Feb. 1892 - Dec. 1893	6 147
I	IA-IR	18	Jan. 1894 - Dec. 1895	6 352
J	JA-JJ	10	Jan. 1896 - Dec. 1896	3 952
K	KA-KN	14	Jan. 1897 - Dec. 1897	6 052
L	LA-LO	15	Jan. 1898 - Dec. 1898	5 942
M	MA-MP	16	Feb. 1899 - Dec. 1900	6 739
N	NA-NQ	17	Jan. 1901 - Dec. 1901	7 346
O	OA-OP	16	Jan. 1902 - Dec. 1902	6 491
P	PA-PN	14	Jan. 1903 - Dec. 1903	5 117
Q	QA-QR	18	Jan. 1904 - Dec. 1904	7 691
R	RA-RK	11	Jan. 1905 - June 1905	4 836
S	SA-SG	7	July 1905 - Dec. 1905	3 078
T	TA-TM	13	Jan. 1906 - June 1906	6 141
U	UA-UL	12	July 1906 - Dec. 1906	5 512
V	VA-VP	16	Jan. 1907 - Dec. 1907	6 489
W	WA-WG	7	Jan. 1908 - Dec. 1908	3 173
X	XA-XG	7	Jan. 1909 - Nov. 1909	2 487
Y	YA-YL	12	Jan. 1910 - Nov. 1909	5 860
Z	ZA-ZK*	11	Jan. 1911 - July 1911	5 065
26	AA-ZK	384	1860 - 1911	152 184

The grouping process having been completed, the next step was to transfer the information on the microfilm onto specially prepared forms, a copy of which appears on the next page. One form was used per passenger.

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* The ship Umzinto LIII is this group called both at the Calcutta and Madras ports of embarkation.

REG NUMBER		
NAME	Name 1	
	Name 2	
	Name 3	
FATHER'S NAME	Name 1	
	Name 2	
	Name 3	
AGE		
SEX		
CASTE		
HEIGHT	FEET	
	INCHES	
ORIGIN	VILLAGE	
	THANNA	
	DISTRICT ZILLAH	
MARKINGS		
REMARKS		
EMPLOYER		

The colonial or registration number was entered on the form, and all the other details on the individual were transcribed from the ship's register to the form. Additional information gathered from such other sources as the Employers' Registers in the Natal Archives was also entered. Individuals who migrated as families were identified. Where there was information on the subsequent movements of the individuals, it was entered in the remarks column. Some typical entries with dates, if known, would be: "Returned to India," "Given licence to leave colony," "Death by accident," "Destitute - was returned to India," and so on.

As soon as the information gathering was completed register by register for each group, it was fed into the computer. In the initial stages of the data capture process, the Hawlett-Packard 1 000 computer was used. The system's storage capacity was limited, however. Analysis with massive information involving a long period was not possible. It was decided therefore to transfer the data to the ICL computer, whose capacity for handling voluminous data was known. A programme was devised which could be analysed by means of the SPSS.

By March 1986, all the ship's registers up to an including group O had been processed. The total number of names processed up to that point should have been 96 735, but stands at 95 382 according to the computer. The discrepancy must be attributed to error in data capture. The information is stored on magnetic tapes. There are, in addition, print-out sheets for all the ships up to the O batch containing information as data-captured. All groups from A to O are properly bound, and are available to researchers and others.

This study is about the analyses of the 95 382 names processed. What kind of patterns do they yield for the period 1860 to 1902 in the various categories of information retrieved? And what is the historical significance of the patterns revealed?

These questions have relevance for both India and for colonial Natal. Many questions are raised, and the study does not provide answers to all of them. Nevertheless, the descriptions and analyses that follow throw much light on the indentured system as it manifested itself in Natal between 1860 and 1902. It bridges somewhat the gap in historiographical knowledge, although much remains to be done.

Chapter 2 deals with the indentured system as a whole, and the specific circumstances that brought indentured immigrants to Natal. The global perspective of the outward migrations of Indians cannot be ignored. Chapters 3 and 4 clearly point to the importance of the Indian backgrounds of the immigrants. In chapter 3, the places of origin, especially those who came to Natal, are examined; and in chapter 4 caste and religion are vital components in the socio-economic backgrounds of the emigrating Indians. Those factors are important in the discussion of employers and employment in Natal in chapter 5. Chapter 6 concludes with comments about the overall significance of the study.

A word of caution must be sounded about the computer-related analysis. A historian unfamiliar with "computer-ology" is often at the mercy of those who draw up programmes. He can outline in broad terms his objectives, and he can explain the kind of analysis he wants. He is told what is possible and what is not possible. He is not in a position to question the experts. This researcher was told that with such a massive body of information, certain kind of analyses were not possible. The computer took about one-half day to produce frequency counts of quantifiable data like numbers of males and females, age and height distributions, caste and religion distributions, and so on. But the programme was not designed (and could not be designed given the volume) to correlate and cross-correlate categories of information. So, for example, sex distribution could not be correlated to caste, places of

origin, or employment. Similarly, caste/religious distribution could not be correlated to places of origin. So, the opportunity exists for a more versatile programme in the future that might yield analyses in its many permutations. It would help for the historian who wants to do so to be more computer-wise.

CHAPTER 2

Natal's Immigrants Under the Indentured System

Natal's indentured immigrants from 1860 to 1911 were part of the nearly $1^{1}/_{4}$ million Indians who migrated abroad as labourers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This movement of individuals was not as massive in proportion to that of the emigrants from Europe who went in their millions to the New World in the same period. Rather its significance lies in the unique set of circumstances that saw the migration of labourers to mainly British parts of the world. It is related to the growth and expansion of capitalism; and more specifically, to the abolition of slavery in the British empire. This chapter is concerned largely with the way in which the indentured system was established, and the circumstances that surround the coming of indentured Indians to Natal. The nature and composition of the indentured Indians to Natal will be discussed at some length.

A ban was imposed in 1807 on slave trade in the British empire. Mauritius, which was acquired by the British in 1810, was required to observe the ban in 1811. The illegal importation of slaves in Mauritius and other British colonies continued, however. In 1834, a year after the emancipation of all slaves in British possessions, the slave population was as follows: 311 070 in Jamaica, 82 824 in Demarara, 20 657 in Trinidad, and 67 619 in Mauritius. The West Indian planters received £20 million in compensation, while their Mauritian counterpart received £2 million.

The British government created safequards against new forms of slavery. Stipendiary judges were expected to ensure fairplay in the employers' treatment of ex-slave labourers. However, these "busha" magistrates were far too much under the sway of former masters and overseers to be of great help. Local legislatures passed laws to prevent abuses. But the

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exploitation of labourers continued. As Tinker points out, "the employers found ways to bend even their own laws more completely to their own purposes."[1] The liberated slaves showed little inclination to continue working on the plantations in any event.

The newly devised apprentice system was little different from the earlier slave system. It was "neither full slavery nor full freedom," as Saha states.[2] The former slaves perceived the system in these terms, and preferred employment or self-employment that was in no way directly connected with their previous status. There was, therefore, a labour shortage especially among sugar planters, and it reached crisis proportions. A ready supply of cheap labour force was necessary in the day-to-day work involved in the production of sugar. Weeding, hoeing, and fertilising were necessary parts of the intense preparation of soil six weeks before the planting of cane. In harvesting and milling too, intensive labour was necessary.

Worried planters searched for alternative sources of labour. Jamaica imported nearly 300 white immigrants, mainly Scotch from Britain between 1834 and 1835; British Guiana introduced white labourers from England, Ireland, Portugal, and Brazil; China too was considered, and indeed Trinidad introduced a few Chinese in the 1850s. As for Africa, this continent was too closely associated with slavery to be a significant source of labour. So the planters turned their attention to India. The experiment with Indian indentured labourers in Mauritius impressed the planters.

The planters in Mauritius had experimented with slaves and convicts from India between 1815 and 1837, but when they realised that sugar was going to be the island's single-most important crop, they thought about hiring contract labourers from India. The first such contract workers were recruited in the ports of Madras and Calcutta in 1829. Some

Chinese recruits from Singapore too arrived. The Colonial Office agreed to Mauritius's importation of Dhangars or "Hill Coolies" from Chota Nagpur. The Dhangars had worked in producing indigo, and were thought to be suitable for sugar plantation labour. The first batch of Dhangars arrived in 1834 on condition that their return passages to India were ensured. However, abuses occurred in recruitment, in transportation, and on the plantations, which led the Government of India to stop the scheme in 1839. By that date, over 26 000 labourers had been introduced in Mauritius, of whom only about 1 000 were women.[3]

The Mauritian experiment led ultimately to the widespread use of indentured labour by other sugar-producing areas. Since it was discovered that abuses resulted mainly through insufficient controls, strict regulations were enacted before the labour traffic was allowed to resume. Act 15 of 1842 repealed the 1839 Act, and provided, among others, for the appointment of an Emigration Agent to handle consignment and other matters at the ports of embarkation, and a Protector of Emigrants to safeguard the interests of the recruits. Act 21 of 1844 lifted the prohibition against emigration to British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica. The prohibition against emigration having been lifted, 12 territories received indentured labourers by 1865.[4]

The conditions under which emigration took place from 1844 to its termination in the early decades of the twentieth century, were revised from time to time as and when abuses occurred. The Government of India quickly learned that a way to stop the abuses was to suspend emigration to the offending colony. In 1856, for example, the Mauritian government neglected ship-loads of Indians before they disembarked, and as a result many of them died. A suspension of all emigration was imposed, and was only lifted when the Mauritian appointed a Protector of Immigrants to ensure that such neglect would not happen again. This action against

Mauritius soon became a general practice, enshrined in Act 19 of 1856, and its use or the threat of its use was an effective weapon wielded by the Government of India to ensure compliance. In the early decades, anti-slavery groups, and more specifically the Aborigines Protection Society (founded in 1837), kept a watch over the indentured labour traffic to report on abuses. Their activities made the Government of India vigilant about abuses in the system.

How did the system operate? Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay were designated as ports of embarkation for all indentured emigrants. Bombay was discontinued in 1865, and thereafter only Calcutta and Madras were used. Karikal and Pondichery served as ports of embarkation for Indian emigrants to the French colonies, the British consul acting as Protector as from 1870. The French Indian ports cleared some 49 890 emigrants between 1842 and 1916, officially at any rate.[5]

Except for Natal which received two-thirds of the emigrants from South India, Calcutta remained the major port of embarkation throughout the period. As mentioned earlier, the law required the appointment of Emigration Agents by the importing colony. Mauritius appointed an agent who served minor Caribbean islands as well. British Guiana and Jamaica had their own agents at Calcutta only. When Natal became an importer in 1860, it sent its Postmaster General W M Collins as an Emigration Agent. Later the agent serving British Guiana also served Natal.

The length of the contract was a protracted point of dispute. The Colonial Office was in favour of 3 years, but the planters wanted a longer period of service. In 1862, five-year periods were sanctioned with the option of a second term of indenture. Employers cleverly linked the period of "industrial residence" with the issue of sponsoring return passages. Should the indentured person be entitled to a return passage after 5 or 10 years of service? The Colonial

Office favoured 5, but the Government of India argued for 10. In the end, it was agreed that the individual was entitled to a return passage after he had served the optional second five-year of "industrial residence." But colonial legislatures often attached conditions of the "fine-print" variety to escape the obligation. Trinidad, for example, gave free return passages to those eligible only if they were claimed within 18 months of their becoming available. Mauritius abolished the return passages as early as 1853. In Natal, indentured individuals could commute their return passages for crown land. About 52 took advantage of this provision before it was abolished in 1874.[6]

The ratio of female to male was a serious issue from the very beginning. Employers generally preferred single males who would serve out their indentures and return. Recruitment of whole families too was frowned upon. Whatever other reasons they may have had against female indentured persons, employers worried at the beginning about how useful women were as labourers. Attitudes certainly changed among Natal's employers in the 1890s when it was discovered that the vulnerability of women could be used to the planters' advantage.[7] Besides, women worked extremely well in some sectors. The Government of India recognised the evils associated with womenless communities of single males, and attempted to correct it. In the 1850s, legislation provided for 25% female component. For Mauritius, the percentage of women was fixed at 40 in 1860, which the planters considered as too high especially since it was difficult to recruit single women in North India, Act 13 of 1864 stipulated a ration of 75 men to 25 women, but the ratio of 60 to 40 stipulated by Secretary of State Sir Strafford Northcote in July 1868 remained the standard proportion throughout the indentured period. There is much controversy about the deceitful ways in which the required 40% of women was made up. Stories abound about single women being lured to emigration depots. In some instances, "depot marriages" took place to avoid suspicions about single, young girls.[8]

The single-most important issue about the indentured system, one that caused much controversy and in the end was responsible also for its demise, was recruitment. At the heart of the question is the extent of free choice exercised by the recruits. Did the recruits willingly decide to migrate? If so, how much deception was used? If not, what was the nature and extent of coerciveness in their decision? An examination of the recruitment system should yield some clarity.

Acts 5 and 33 of 1837 by the Government of India laid down recruitment procedures. The Emigration Agents were responsible for the recruitment of labourers. But the actual recruiting was done by individuals hired by them. Early in the 1860s, the system was revised. A subagent was appointed in large district towns. Jews, Armenians, Indian Christians, Euro-asians or Europeans usually acted as subagents. A subagent's job was to print circulars and provide identification badges for local recruiters. In addition, he had to make sure that recruits appeared before local magistrates to testify that they had willingly registered to be emigrants.

The subagents hired licensed recruiters. A subdepot, which was divided into a large and a small unit, was run by a head recruiter, who may have several recruiters working under him. Lal found that Muslims and high-caste Hindus predominated among the recruiters. For the Benares district between 1882 and 1892, the Muslim recruiters were made up of Pathans, Sheikhs, Saiyids, Moghuls, and Hajams; and among the Hindus were Banias, Kayasths, Brahmins, Thakurs and Chhatris.[9]

But it was not the licensed recruiters who were the most important agents in the actual process of recruitment. It was the "arkatis" or "arkatias" who made up the backbone of the recruitment system. Who were the "arkatis"? In his study on Fiji Indians, Lal found that "chaukidars" (guards) and "patwaris" (record keepers) were among the unlicensed

recruiters in the United Provinces. But probably all castes and classes were involved.[10] As illegal operators, they had the advantage of being answerable to nobody. They had considerable knowledge of the local environment, and preferred to operate within its radius. The "arkatis" kept a sharp lookout for people who were in financial distress or in other ways down on their luck. They frequented markets, caravanserais, railway stations, bazaars and temples —— , or any other such places were people might gather and casually reveal their plights in idle chatter.

It would be difficult to say at what level of recruitment abuses occurred most frequently. But in the vast recruitment machinery, the arkatis were pivotally important. The whole operation had to succeed or fail with them, and they were not above resorting to underhanded methods. Charges against them have ranged from kidnapping to misrepresentation of the facts. While kidnapping occurred in rare instances, misrepresentation probably happened fairly routinely. Recruits were unfamiliar about the system or the physical whereabouts of the places to which they had agreed to go."Arkatis" may just fail to mention that a sea journey was involved. Unsuspecting recruits may discover this at the port depot; at that point they may find it impossible to opt out because the recruiters were demanding payments for expenses incurred.

Credulity among the recruits also played a role in their own deception. Recruiters carefully instructed the recruits to answer the magistrate in a particular way. The recruits went along with the idea without fully realising that they were subverting the very process that was intended to protect them.[11]

Fraud and deception was prevalent. There was discrepancy between the numbers obtained by colonial recruiters, highly organised, and those obtained through an amorphous and informal network of middlemen in the interior. In spite of the pervasiveness of deception, indentured emigration cannot be

regarded as forced migration. Despite misrepresentations, many informally came into possession of information by which they rated some places as good and others as bad. Even if they acted on false information, the point is that they acted at all to migrate rather than stay at home. Correct and reliable information could, of course have made the difference between the decision to go or not to go. But the volume of the traffic suggests that it was not the most crucial factor in the final decision. The crucial factor surely lay in the socio-economic circumstance, and it is in this area that the debate can yield meaningful answers.

Once recruited, the emigrants were taken to a subdepot. Recruiters, legal and illegal, were usually paid per head. The head recruiters were paid contractually, adjustments being made for costs of transport to the port deport. They received no money for a rejected recruit, and only 50% for the absconding recruit. At the subdepot, the recruits were well taken care of. Caste differences were observed. They were examined medically, and those found unsuitable released. The journey began after about two weeks. Lal in his study on Fiji Indians found that totally 55,7% of those bound for Calcutta between 1893 and 1900 were rejected. Just over 15% deserted.[12]

The journey from the subdepot to the port of embarkation, known as "chalan," could take up to 14 days, depending on the distance to be covered. It was completed by rail and on foot. In the early days when the journey was entirely on foot it could take as long as 30 to 40 days. The recruiter, or his assistant known as "chaprasis," accompanied the recruits. Decoys were usually planted among the recruits to dissuade people who might be having second thoughts about emigrating.

At the port depot in Calcutta, there were at one time in the 1880s some 10 agencies. The Emigration Deports were

located at Bhownipur for Mauritian passengers, Garden Reach for British Guiana, Ballygunj and Chitpur for others. Usually, the facilities were shared by the various agencies at different times in the year. The Emigration Agent and the manager were white. The rest of the staff were Indians. The deports had a high wall. Staff were housed in a bungalow; and barrack facilities existed for at least two ship-load of passengers. The barracks varied in size andlayout, but minimum basic facilities were required by law, and these were usually met. Males, females, and married couples were separately housed. Latrines and hospital sheds too were separated by sex. Cooking sheds were provided. Before 1859, there were no depots in Madras City. After that date, Mauritian passengers were located at Veperey. This depot was inadequate, and so another was sited at Royapurum in 1867. For Mauritius, Vizagapatam was such an important source of labour recruitment that a subagency was opened in 1871. For southern districts like Tanjore and Trichinopoly, subdepots were established at Rajamundry, some 300 miles from Madras City. Natal, Malaya, and Fiji also had depot facilities. Natal and Fiji shared the facilities; and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Malaya shared a different set of depot facilities.[13]

The newly arrived individuals were required to bathe soon upon arrival, and were given a new set of clothing. Their old clothes were washed and returned to them. An Indian doctor inspected the males, and an Indian nurse did the same for the female recruits. Sight and hearing were checked; but the recruits were most closely checked for signs of venereal diseases. In the early days of the system women were given a superficial medical examination so as not to scare them off, but by the end of the nineteenth century, they too were given a thorough examination. After this initial round of inspection, medical examination was performed by the depot surgeon and the government doctor appointed by the Protector of Emigrants. These medical officers were finally responsible for clearing the recruits with certifi-

cates of good health. The examination process took three to four days.[14] The figures supplied by Lal for his study give an indication of the thoroughness of the inspection. Between 1881 and 1900, 41,2% were rejected. The high percentage suggests that there was less vigilance in screening procedures at the subdepots. Reduction by desertion for the same period was 11,8%; and a further 7,4% were unwilling to continue, or were claimed by relatives.[15]

Agreement was reached among the various agencies on the most convenient times of departure to the diverse destinations so as to take advantage of the best weather conditions. In the beginning, September and February were reserved for the West Indies and Fiji respectively. Ships leaving for Mauritius and Natal would depart at any time outside of those two months, although in the 1870s when traffic to Mauritius was heavy, there was shipment throughout the year. Towards the end of the indentured period when steam passenger ships were introduced, winter and early spring was reserved for Fiji, summer and autumn for British Guiana and Trinidad, and early winter for Jamaica.

The Government of India stipulated strict rules for ships transporting the emigrants. By the 1850s, 72 cubic feet of space was to be allocated for every adult passenger. After the disaster of the Shah Allum in 1859 in which 399 people perished, stricter provisions were made to ensure adequate lifeboats and fire appliances. By the 1870s, the rules on safety measures were pretty comprehensive. In time, ships became bigger (over 16 000 tons from the 1880s) and better. Steamer service was introduced for Mauritius and Natal in 1857, and for the West Indies in 1872, although even in the 1890s, there were a few ships operating under sails. By 1908 there were 12 steamships and 1 sailing ship leaving from Calcutta.

An 1855 booklet spelt out instruction to be followed by the

ship's surgeon. Precise rules were established regarding vaccination, sick bays, rationing scales, daily bathing in warm lattitudes, and so on. The doctor on the ships bound for Mauritius and Malaya was often an Indian or a Euroasian. But after early tragedies, doctors were appointed from Britain. They were paid 8 shillings for each person landed alive in the early years; after 1857, the fee was increased to 10 shillings for the first voyage, 11 shillings for the second, and 12 shillings for the third and subsequent voyages. They were assisted by two componders. Single women were placed in the rear of the ship, married couple with children amidship, and single males in the front. At first, the emigrants slept on platforms, later in two-tier bunks.

Despite all the precautions, things could and did go wrong. Before the steamships made their appearance a voyage took from 90 to 120 days; sailboats from Calcutta to Jamaica took 180 days, but only 84 days to Natal, and 70 days to Mauritius and Reunion. This was a long time for an average of between 300 to 550 passengers to spend in confined circumstances. Illnesses and diseases were bound to occur. Mortality was high in the early days. Of the 40 318 persons who went to Mauritius between 1842 to 1843, 1 251 died during the middle passage, 293 soon after landing, and 6 107 upon entering service.[16] The mortality rates decreased quite dramatically after steamship voyages came into being, which reduced the time taken for journeys by 50%.

One of the consequences of the long voyages was to create a bond of friendship among people who were strangers to one another before they embarked. As "jehajibhais" (shipmates), they developed a solidarity known as "bhaiacharaya" (brotherhood), which lessened the fear of the unknown, and strengthened ties that could help them in the future. Such bonds cut across caste and religious barriers. A new identity was already in the making. As a Pariah told a Brahmin, "I have taken off my caste and left it with the Port Officer. I

won't put it on again till I come back."[17]

So far the discussion has centred around the indentured system. Migration occurred also through recruitment organised privately. Such endeavours began at about the same time as the indentured system. This private system is known as the "kangany" system. It operated for about 40 years before the Government of India accommodated it legislatively, thereby exercising a measure of control over it. The "kankani" (a Tamil headman) or the "maistry" as for Burma emigrants, undertook recruitment of labourers required by tea, coffee, and rubber plantations. The "kankani" hired subagents known as "silara," who recruited mainly among the Pariah caste in the south. The "kangany" system was confined entirely to South India. Between 1852 and 1937, $2^{1}/_{2}$ million persons went to Burma; between 1834 and 1938, $1^{1}/_{2}$ million persons went to Ceylon; and a quarter million South Indians went to Malaya between 1860 and 1938. Under the "kangany" system recruitment of whole families, especially after 1890, was encouraged.[18]

The indentured system was formally ended in 1917, although a handful of emigrants went to Mauritius in 1923-1924. The system was questioned from the beginning. Criticism mounted over the years. Complaints against abuses were numerous. Official inquiries were conducted. The Government of India tended to take a "neutral" stand, although such a position tended to favour the employers. The emigration was of little help to India itself, although doubtless many suffering from famines, scarcities, and droughts were offered some relief The Viceroy was more inclined to be critical. This was especially true of Lord Curzon who was the Viceroy between 1898 and 1905.[19]

The sources of termination may vary from colony to colony, and no doubt local circumstances within some of them had as

much to do with the termination as the opposition in India. Indians themselves were persistently critical of the indentured system in the first decades of the twentieth century. Their criticism led to two major investigations within three years of each other. The Sanderson committee of 1910 misread the strength of the opposition and argued for the modification of the system; the McNeill-Lal committee of 1913 was critical of the system. There was mounting evidence that the system was inherently bad; and even before it was officially terminated in 1917, recruitment had ground to a halt.[20]

By 1917, about $1^{1}/_{4}$ million Indians had gone to various parts of the world as indentured labourers. The number to the West Indies totalled 534 109, distributed in the following way: British Guiana 238 909; Trinidad 143 939; Jamaica 36 412; Surinam 34 304; Windward Islands (Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia) 10 026; Martinique 25 519; and Goudeloupe 4 500. Of the total of 534 109 about 149 054 returned to India.[21]

Mauritius, the nineteenth century "sugar bowl" in the Indian Ocean received the largest number of indentured Indians. The Geoghegan Report calculated that Mauritius had received 351 401 between 1842 and 1870. If one adds about 30 000 Indians who went to Mauritius before 1842, the number up to 1870 would then be over 380 000.[22] This figure corresponds with 387 121 computed by a Mauritian scholar.[23] A further 78 897 Indians went to Mauritius as indentured labourers from 1871 forward. The total, then, stands at 466 018.[24] From the statistics available, 168 747 or 36% returned to India.[35] The French island in the Indian Ocean, Reunion, received 118 000 indentured Indians, but a substantial number, 88 000, returned between 1835 and 1900.[26]

Indentured Indians were introduced late in Fiji. It was started in 1879, and by the time importation was stopped in 1916, 87 voyages had brought 60 533 Indians to this

South Pacific island. All contracts were ended in 1920.[27]

Finally, Natal received 152 184 indentured immigrants between 1860 and 1911. Of these, just over 23% returned to India by the time importation was stopped. However, if one includes those of the original immigrants who left between 1911 and 1929, the figure almost doubles to 42%. In Natal's case, about 9% of those terminating their contracts went to other parts of southern Africa. The rest of this chapter deals with Natal's indentured Indians between 1860 and 1902.

Natal

Natal discovered in the 1850s that the soil and climate were ideal for growing sugar. By the middle of the decade, white farmers believed that sugar could become the mainstay of the colonial economy. And no doubt it was believed that the resident black population, the Zulus, would willingly become wage labourers. The Zulus were pastoralists and farmers who showed little interest in becoming wage earners. In any event, as a pre-industrial group of individuals they would require time to adjust as labourers within a capitalist mode of production, which is what the sugar plantation system was. The problem was to secure plantation labour immediately. If Natal's sugar farmers decided in the end to use indentured form of labour, they saw decided advantages in it. Such a system made for easier control, especially if the labourers were from a foreign land. Natal's planters knew that the indentured system worked well in Mauritius, and there was reason to believe it would work in Natal as well.

The Natal government prevailed upon Sir George Grey, the Cape governor visiting Natal in 1855, to take up the matter with the British colonial authorities. There was a little delay in finalising matters, but in the end the Natal Legislative Council enacted Laws 13, 14 and 15 to establish

the necessary conditions to satisfy the Government of India. Act 33 of 1860 by the Government of India cleared the way for the introduction of indentured Indians. As mentioned earlier, Postmaster General W M Collins was sent to India in 1860 to act as Emigration Act.[28] The first two ship-loads of indentured Indians arrived in November 1860, one each from Madras and Calcutta.

The first group of indentured immigrants arrived between 1860 and 1866, as stated in chapter 1. A depression in the colony temporarily halted the importation. When conditions improved, the importation was resumed in 1874. The Natal government complied with the Government of India's directive for tighter controls, one of which was to appoint a salaried official to look after the interests of the immigrants, who, after the Mauritian fashion was designated the Protector of Indian Immigrants. The importation continued from then until it was finally stopped in July 1911. The last 10 years brought nearly one-third of the total of 152 184.

The sample discussed here covers the period 1860 to 1902. During that period, 168 ship's voyages brought 59 662 passengers from the Madras City port; and 88 ship's voyages from the port of Calcutta landed 35 720 indentured immigrants. (See Table 2) The combined total of passengers between 1876 and 1902 was 91 798. 477 died on the voyages in 26 years (See Table 3). The average mortality rate for 26 years was 0,5%. The highest death rate was in 1881 when the rate stood at 1,5%. Mortality rate was higher in the early years: between 1876 and 1884, the rate exceeded 1% on five occasions. As conditions improved on the voyages, so too did the survival rate. After 1885, as Table 3 shows, the rate of mortality did not exceed 1%.

The tables on sex distribution show that males predominated in both the Madras and Calcutta batches. Table 4 for Madras passengers shows that for every 65% of males, there were 28%

females. The ratio for 1883-85, 72% male to 24% female, was particularly uneven. Low male percentages are recorded for 1899-1900 and 1902 only because the unknown component is unusually high for these years. The average male to female ratio for Calcutta passengers, as Table 5 shows, was 62% to 27%, with the 1890s showing particularly favourable ratios. However, when one combines Madras and Calcutta passengers, the fluctuations tend to even out. The ratio according to Table 6 is 63% male to 27% female. Graphs 1, 2, and 3 illustrate well the proportions. The statistics show that the 60 to 40 ratio the Government of India hoped to maintain did not materialise in Natal's case. The indentured Indians experienced a shortage of women throughout the period.

Family recruitment, as mentioned earlier, was increasingly discouraged from the 1890s. An examination of Table 7 for Madras shows that 17,6% of all the passengers were between the ages of 1 to 9. Those between the ages of 10 and 14 would also have been accompanying children, so that totally, 19,6% came as part of a family. Some came with both parents, and others with single parents. The percentage of accompanying children is particularly high during 1899-1900. (See Table 7). Similarly, for Calcutta passengers 14,7% were between the ages 1 to 9, and 2,3% between the ages 10 to 14 (See Table 8), and the percentage of accompanying children was very high in 1899-1900. For both Madras and Calcutta, then, 18,3% were accompanying children. If one adds the number of married couples in the sample without children (the computer retrieval of this information was not possible), then the family component of the total of 95 382 between 1860 and 1902, is about 20%. Migration in family groups was reasonably high, despite official discouragement.

Nevertheless, recruitment efforts went towards finding young males between the ages of 18 and 30. Table 7 for Madras shows that this category made up 64% of the total; and for Calcutta passengers, it made up over 72% (See Table 8).

The percentages around the ages 20, 25 and 30 tend to cluster. One suspects that both recruits and recruiters rounded off the ages, especially if such rounded figures were likely to increase the recruits' chances of being accepted as emigrants. The age category 31 to 35 made up 7,4% for Madras and 2,7% for Calcutta passengers. Those beyond 36, averaged 2,6% for Madras and 1,2% for Calcutta. There are fluctuations in age categories outside of the 15 to 30 range, and these are no doubt related to varying recruitment patterns from year to year. More would obviously have to be known about sources of recruitment to explain the fluctuations. (See Graph 4).

Two other categories of physical characteristics are height and markings. The majority of recorded heights fall between 156 and 170 cms. For Madras passengers, the figure is 54,5% ((see Table 9), and for Calcutta passengers it is 44,6% (see Table 10). Graph 5 presents the height distribution by graphic illustration. No information was available about heights and statures for nineteenth century Indians, nationally or regionally; but the figures presented here are likely to correlate with the general statistics in India.

The ship's lists carefully noted in many instances the physical markings of the Natal immigrants. It was not possible to tabulate the information because it is uneven and unknown for most years. The physical markings are related to disease, religious beliefs, healing or personal adornment. By far the largest are related to injuries. In the disease-related category, the statistics for people with pock-marked faces appear for every year between 1860 and 1902. They are particularly numerous for the early years. Nearly 13% of the 65% recorded with physical markings among the Madras group (1860-1866) had pock marks; and for the Calcutta group in the same period, nearly 11% of the 78% recorded with physical markings had faces scarred by smallpox. Smallpox epidemics were widespread in India, and the areas from which the indentured Indians were drawn were not free from them.

The incidence of smallpox epidemics in India was higher in the early period (1870-90), than in the period after 1890.[29] There are fewer people with pock-marked faces in the later years of the sample.

Among the Madras passengers between 1860 and 1866, there was a high percentage with "godna" marks, indicating religious or caste significance. Cicatrix marks were sometimes the result of healing procedures, and the sample had many of these. Tatoo marks on all parts of the body were numerous for both the Madras and Calcutta passengers. But by far the largest category of physical markings was that of scars. Scars on abdomen, arms, backs, bellies, cheeks, chests, chins, collar-bones, elbows, eyebrows, forehead, knees, legs, neck, nose, shoulders, spine, temples, thighs, and throat appear with regular frequency. Doubtless most of them were left by injuries, but the frequency with which they occurred on the left or right side of the body suggests that in some instances at least, the scars may have religious or caste significance.

Three other categories of information —— namely, districts of origin, caste and religion, and employers —— are important in relation to their socio-economic contexts. They require full discussions, and will be treated separately in the next three chapters.

TABLE 2

VOYAGES AND PASSENGERS FROM MADRAS AND CALCUTTA, 1860-1902

SYMBOL	DATE	MADRAS		CALCUTTA	
		SHIPS	PASSENGERS	SHIPS	PASSENGERS
A	Nov. 1860 - July 1866	17	5 456	3	990
B	June 1874 - Oct. 1877	-	-	17	8 206
C	Oct. 1877 - Nov. 1878	13	4 753	4	1 723
D	Jan. 1879 - Dec. 1882	13	3 945	7	3 077
E	April 1883 - April 1885	13	3 515	7	3 179
F	Mar. 1886 - Nov. 1889	18	4 782	2	699
G	Feb. 1890 - Dec. 1891	11	4 482	8	3 020
H	Feb. 1892 - Dec. 1893	12	4 527	5	1 620
I	Jan. 1894 - Dec. 1895	11	3 529	7	2 786
J	Jan. 1896 - Dec. 1896	5	1 977	5	1 785
K	Jan. 1897 - Dec. 1897	7	3 130	7	2 922
L	Jan. 1898 - Dec. 1898	10	4 079	5	1 201
M	Feb. 1899 - Dec. 1900	12	5 169	4	1 570
N	Jan. 1901 - Dec. 1901	15	6 199	2	816
O	Jan. 1902 - Dec. 1902	11	4 119	5	2 126
T O T A L S		168	59 662	88	35 720

TABLE 3

BIRTHS AND DEATHS ON EMIGRANT SHIPS TO NATAL 1876-1902

YEAR	NO OF SHIPS	EMBARKED	BIRTHS	DEATHS	LANDED
1876	3	1 154	8	15	1 147
1877	6	2 276	17	24	2 263
1878	14	5 321	13	36	5 298
1879	3	1 119	0	3	1 116
1880	5	1 686	2	15	1 673
1881	7	2 641	11	40	2 612
1882	5	1 627	11	12	1 626
1883	7	2 420	8	24	2 404
1884	9	2 985	10	32	2 963
1885	4	1 248	2	11	1 239
1886	1	226	1	-	227
1887	4	942	1	2	941
1888	4	944	-	2	942
1889	10	3 380	6	17	3 369
1890	11	4 416	8	16	4 408
1891-2	8	3 187	4	8	3 183
1892-3	9	2 886	5	11	2 880
1893-4	8	2 643	2	12	2 633
1894-5	9	3 443	10	7	3 450
1896	10	3 971	10	20	3 951
1897	14	6 042	17	8	6 051
1898	15	5 924	4	15	5 939
1899	4	1 286	1	4	1 290
1900	12	5 420	13	15	5 435
1901	17	13 822	6	52	13 874
1902	16	10 789	16	76	10 865

Source: Reports of Protector of Indian Immigrants, 1876-1902

TABLE 4

SEX DISTRIBUTION

MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

		NUMBERS			PERCENTAGES		
DATE	TOTAL	UNKNOWN	MALE	FEMALE	UNKNOWN	MALE	FEMALE
1860-66	5 456	46	3 793	1 617	0,9	69,5	29,6
1874-77	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1877-78	4 753	51	3 274	1 428	1,1	68,9	30,0
1879-82	3 945	36	2 725	1 184	0,9	69,1	30,0
1883-85	3 515	118	2 545	852	3,4	72,4	24,2
1886-89	4 782	12	3 345	1 425	0,3	69,9	29,8
1890-91	4 482	195	2 839	1 448	4,4	63,3	32,3
1892-93	4 527	113	2 981	1 433	2,5	65,8	31,7
1894-95	3 529	240	2 264	1 025	6,8	64,2	29,0
1896	1 977	5	1 389	583	0,2	70,3	29,5
1897	3 130	87	2 058	985	2,8	65,7	31,5
1898	4 079	479	2 459	1 141	11,7	60,3	28,0
1899-1900	5 169	1 248	2 783	1 138	24,2	53,8	22,0
1901	6 199	725	3 829	1 645	11,7	61,8	26,5
1902	4 119	868	2 315	936	21,1	56,2	22,7
TOTAL	59 662	4 223	38 599	16 840	6,57%	65,09%	28,34%

TABLE 5

SEX DISTRIBUTION

CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

		NUMBERS			PERCENTAGES		
DATE	TOTAL	UNKNOWN	MALE	FEMALE	UNKNOWN	MALE	FEMALE
1860-66	990	2	759	229	0,2	76,7	23,1
1874-77	8 206	164	5 684	2 358	2,0	69,3	28,7
1877-78	1 723	646	729	348	37,5	42,3	20,2
1879-82	3 077	29	2 150	898	0,9	69,9	29,2
1883-85	3 179	24	2 219	936	0,8	69,8	29,4
1886-89	699	1	461	237	0,1	66,0	33,9
1890-91	3 020	30	2 066	924	1,0	68,4	30,6
1892-93	1 620	17	1 066	537	1,0	65,8	33,2
1894-95	2 786	416	1 619	751	14,9	58,1	27,0
1896	1 785	5	1 217	563	0,3	68,2	31,5
1897	2 922	103	1 963	856	3,5	67,2	29,3
1898	1 201	205	690	306	17,0	57,5	25,5
1899-1900	1 570	383	861	326	24,4	54,8	20,8
1901	816	147	424	245	18,0	52,0	30,0
1902	2 126	710	966	450	33,4	45,4	21,2
TOTAL	35 720	2 882	22 874	9 964	10,34%	62,09%	27,57%

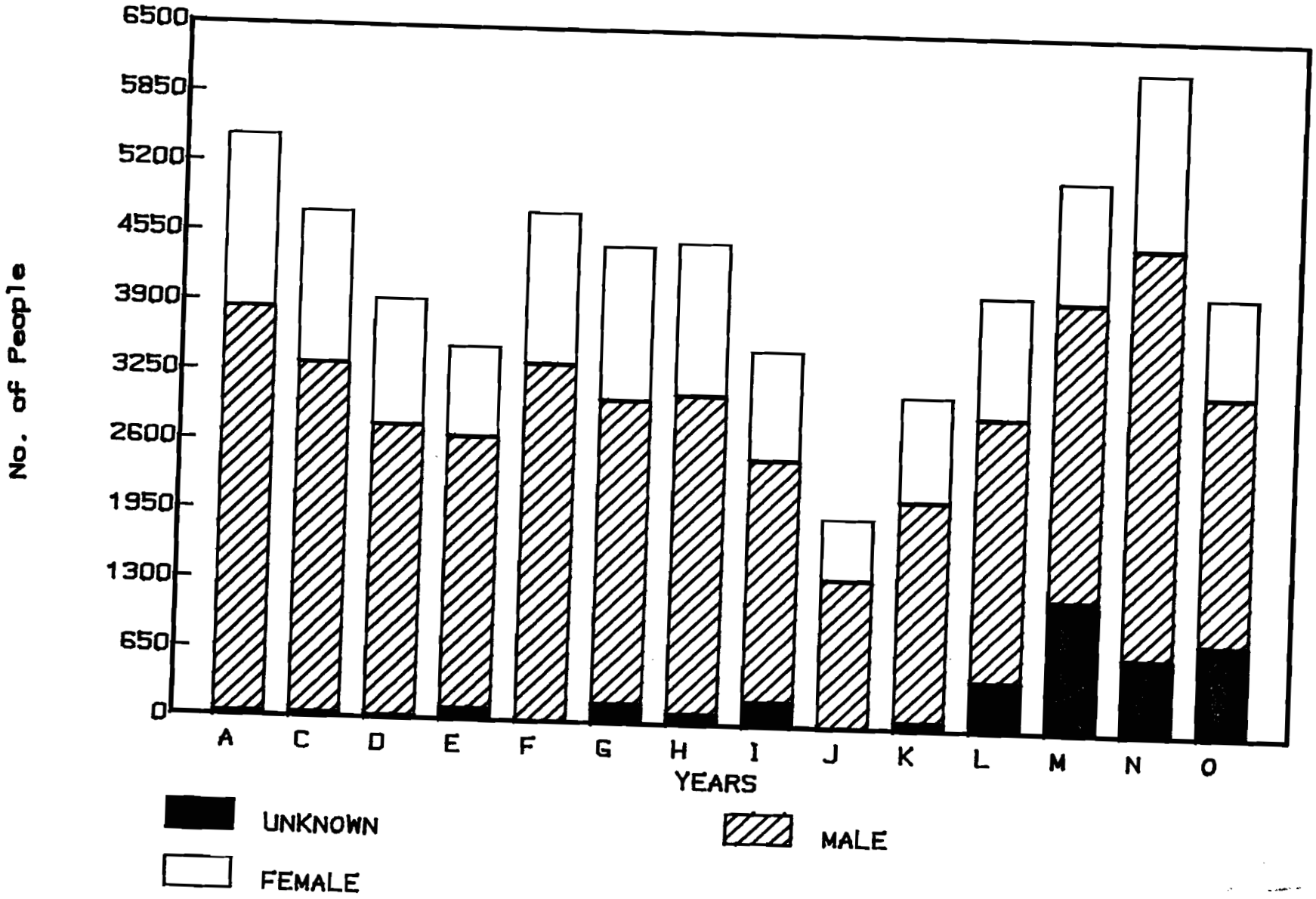
TABLE 6

SEX DISTRIBUTION

MADRAS AND CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

		NUMBERS			PERCENTAGES		
DATE	TOTAL	UNKNOWN	MALE	FEMALE	UNKNOWN	MALE	FEMALE
1860-66	6 446	48	4 552	1 846	0,55	73,10	26,35
1874-77	8 206	164	5 684	2 358	2,0	69,3	28,7
1877-78	6 476	697	4 003	1 776	19,3	55,6	25,10
1879-82	7 022	65	4 875	2 082	0,9	69,5	29,6
1883-85	6 694	142	4 764	1 788	2,10	71,10	26,8
1886-89	5 481	13	3 806	1 662	0,2	67,95	31,85
1890-91	7 502	225	4 905	2 372	2,7	65,85	31,45
1892-93	6 147	130	4 047	1 970	1,75	65,8	32,45
1894-95	6 315	656	3 883	1 776	10,85	61,15	28,0
1896	3 762	10	2 606	1 146	0,25	69,25	30,5
1897	6 052	190	4 021	1 841	3,15	66,45	30,4
1898	5 280	684	3 149	1 447	14,35	58,90	26,75
1899-1900	6 739	1 631	3 644	1 464	24,30	54,30	21,40
1901	7 015	872	4 253	1 890	14,85	56,9	28,25
1902	6 245	1 578	3 281	1 386	27,25	50,8	21,95
TOTAL	95 382	7 105	61 473	26 804	8,3%	63,73%	27,97%

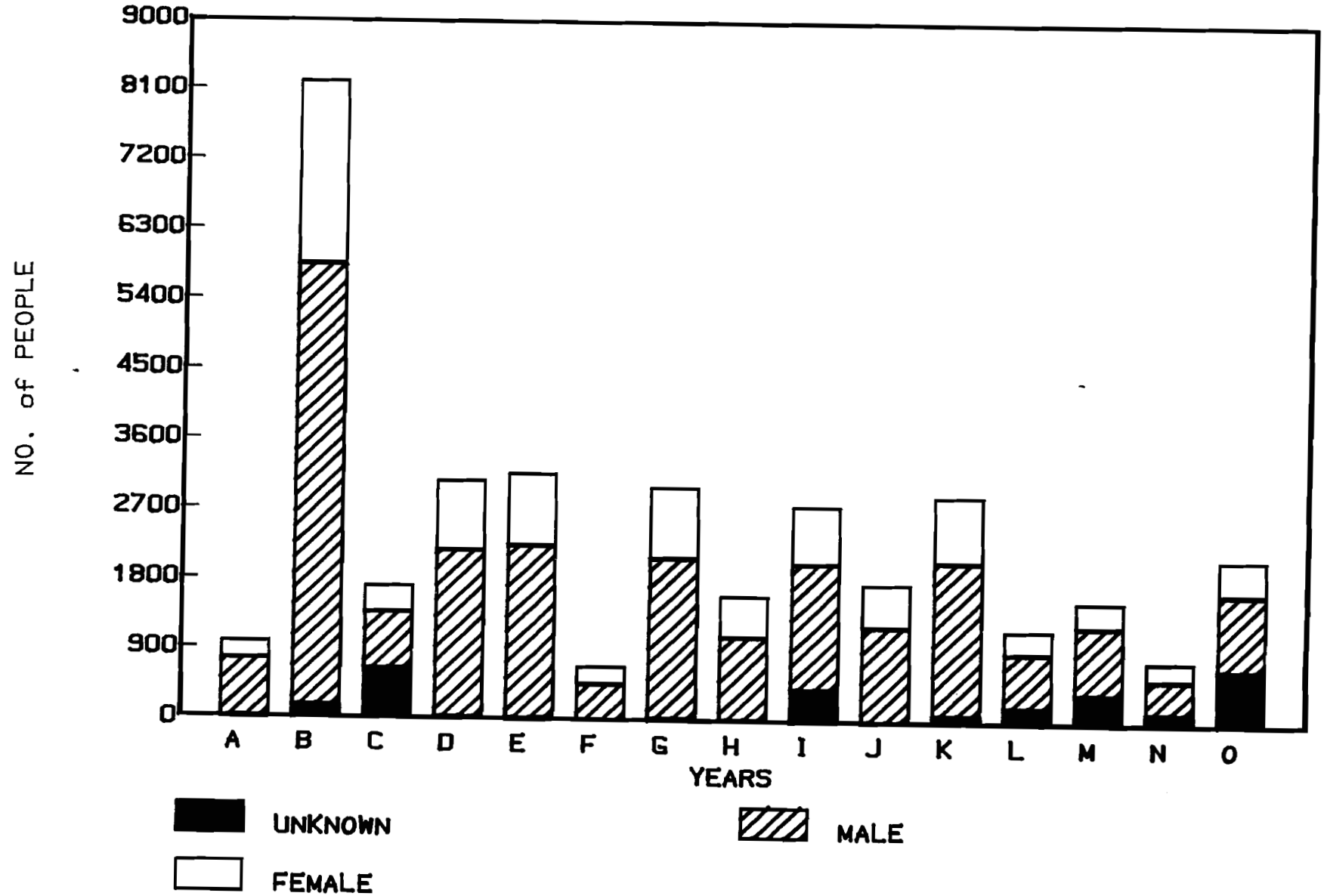
M: SEX DISTRIBUTION



GRAPH I

C: SEX DISTRIBUTION

KEY	
A	1860-66
B	1874-77
C	1877-78
D	1879-82
E	1883-85
F	1886-89
G	1890-91
H	1892-93
I	1894-95
J	1896
K	1897
L	1898
M	1899-1900
N	1901
O	1902

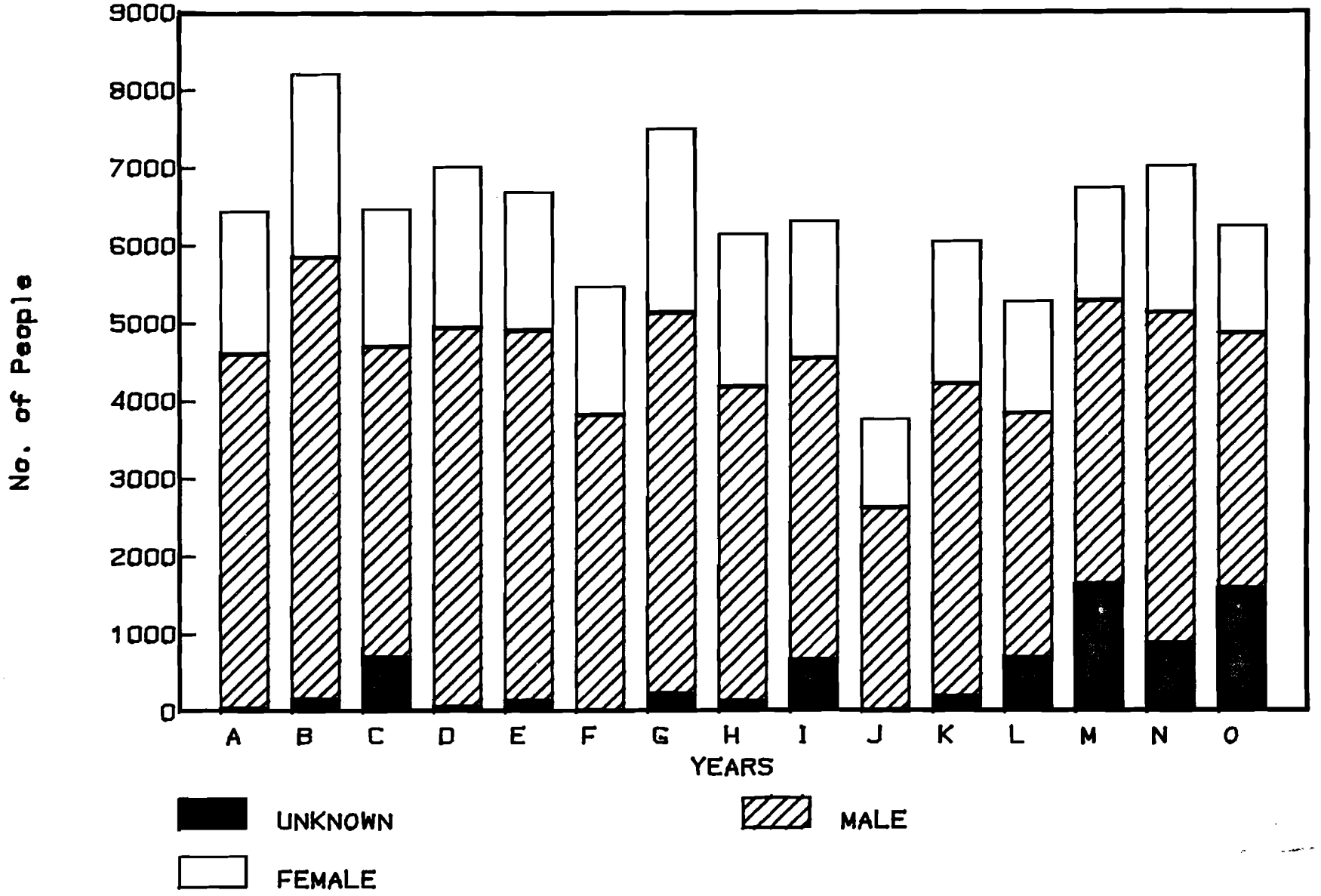


GRAPH 2

M & C: SEX DISTRIBUTION

KEY

A	1860-66
B	1874-77
C	1877-78
D	1879-82
E	1883-85
F	1886-89
G	1890-91
H	1892-93
I	1894-95
J	1896
K	1897
L	1898
M	1899-1900
N	1901
O	1902



GRAPH 3

TABLE 7

AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGE)

AGE	TOTAL AVE	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	2,97	1,5	-	1,0	0,8	2,8	0,2	4,3	2,4	6,4	-	-	-	-	2,2	20,1
1 - 9	17,6	12,7	-	11,6	10,3	10,9	14,8	17,3	17,3	14,9	17,3	20,4	27,6	36,3	23,2	11,7
10 - 14	2,3	4,8	-	5,0	4,2	3,6	1,7	1,7	1,6	1,8	2,4	1,7	1,6	1,5	1,2	1,4
15	0,5	1,0	-	0,9	0,8	0,6	0,4	0,4	0,1	0,1	0,4	0,3	0,3	1,6	0,4	0,4
16	1,1	1,2	-	0,5	0,7	0,8	2,3	1,5	0,7	0,4	1,1	1,1	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,6
17	1,2	1,6	-	0,4	0,2	1,0	1,9	1,6	0,6	0,4	0,7	1,8	1,4	2,3	1,7	1,2
18	4,6	3,2	-	2,3	6,6	6,7	7,2	5,9	3,3	3,7	2,9	4,4	4,2	5,0	4,4	4,6
19	3,6	4,0	-	1,9	3,0	5,0	5,4	4,1	3,0	3,1	2,6	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,9	4,8
20	8,7	6,7	-	6,5	8,6	12,4	10,9	9,8	9,5	9,2	7,7	5,9	7,4	7,6	9,3	9,8
21	2,6	2,8	-	1,9	2,0	4,5	3,6	3,1	3,9	2,9	1,7	2,2	1,6	1,9	2,1	2,3
22	6,6	5,9	-	4,2	5,6	8,5	8,0	6,0	7,3	9,5	7,2	5,7	6,4	5,0	7,0	5,9
23	3,98	4,7	-	2,9	3,8	3,1	3,3	4,2	5,9	4,9	4,8	4,3	4,1	3,0	4,0	2,8
24	4,3	4,9	-	3,3	2,9	5,1	3,6	3,2	5,7	5,8	5,3	5,3	4,5	3,5	3,6	3,6
25	10,0	7,9	-	10,7	11,4	10,0	8,8	10,3	10,4	10,4	13,1	10,5	10,6	8,0	9,6	8,5
26	3,8	3,6	-	3,0	4,7	2,8	3,0	2,9	4,9	3,6	5,4	5,5	3,5	2,5	4,3	2,5
27	2,6	4,7	-	2,0	1,2	1,1	2,5	2,8	3,5	2,4	2,8	3,5	2,6	2,0	3,0	2,2
28	5,1	6,8	-	4,3	7,1	3,9	5,2	4,9	5,0	4,9	7,1	6,1	5,6	3,3	3,7	3,1
29	0,7	1,1	-	1,6	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,8	1,0	0,6	0,4	1,3	0,7	0,5	0,8	1,0
30	7,6	9,1	-	10,6	11,1	6,3	8,3	7,7	6,8	7,1	8,6	7,3	7,2	5,9	6,3	4,7
31	0,1	-	-	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	-	0,1	0,2	0,1	-	0,1	0,2
32	1,95	2,5	-	2,7	3,5	2,1	1,7	1,2	1,5	2,0	1,6	2,4	1,8	1,4	1,9	1,1
33	0,9	1,0	-	0,9	1,7	0,4	1,0	1,0	1,0	0,5	0,5	1,1	1,0	0,9	0,9	0,6
34	0,7	1,5	-	1,9	0,7	0,7	0,9	0,7	0,5	0,3	0,2	1,2	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,7
35	3,7	3,1	-	7,2	5,2	3,4	2,7	3,3	2,7	4,4	5,2	3,8	2,5	3,3	2,8	2,2
36	0,5	1,0	-	2,3	0,6	0,7	0,3	0,2	0,1	0,1	-	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,3	0,4
37	0,2	0,5	-	1,0	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	-	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,4	0,2
38	0,5	0,9	-	2,1	1,0	0,9	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,1	-	0,2	-	0,2	0,5	0,6
39	0,1	0,1	-	1,0	0,2	-	-	0,1	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	0,1	0,1
40	0,6	1,1	-	2,7	0,5	1,3	0,4	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,3
41	0,02	-	-	0,2	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
42	0,1	0,2	-	0,8	-	0,3	-	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
43	0,02	0,1	-	0,1	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
44	0,03	0,1	-	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	0,2	0,4	-	1,2	0,1	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,1	-	0,2	0,1	0,2	-	-	-
46 +	0,3	1,1	-	0,3	0,2	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,5	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,1	-

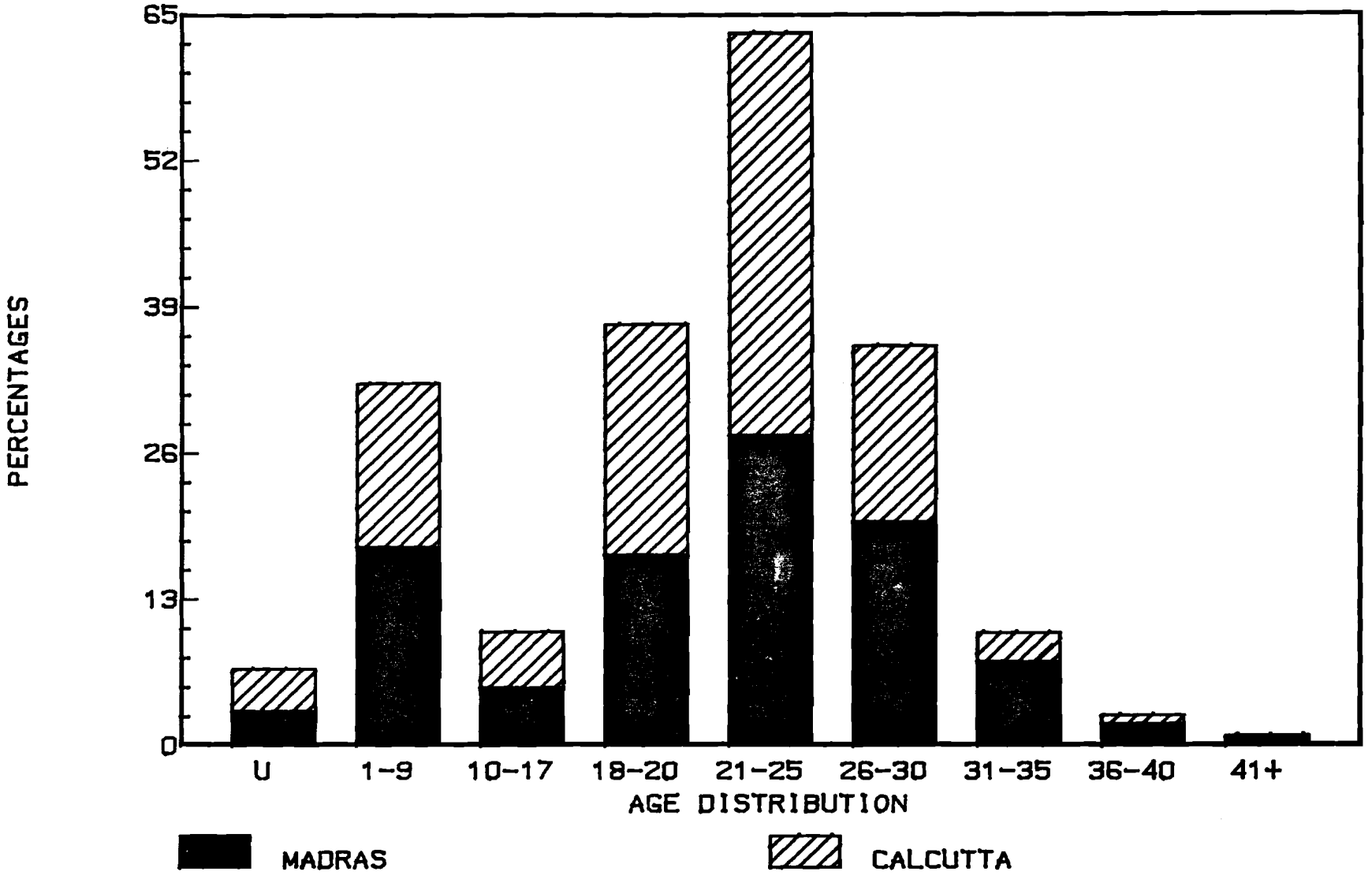
TABLE 8

AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGES)

A G E	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	3,9	0,7	2,6	6,7	1,5	0,2	0,1	0,8	1,0	14,1	-	-	-	-	-	31,2
1 - 9	14,7	9,1	14,0	14,7	8,4	13,9	16,3	14,6	14,3	13,1	8,7	7,8	19,5	29,8	27,6	8,7
10 - 14	2,0	5,1	1,7	2,9	2,2	3,3	2,8	1,8	1,5	1,8	1,2	0,8	1,0	0,7	2,2	1,4
15	0,5	2,7	0,4	0,7	0,3	0,4	0,3	0,2	0,1	0,1	-	0,2	0,1	0,3	0,9	0,1
16	1,1	4,5	0,9	0,8	0,2	0,6	0,7	0,7	1,0	0,7	1,1	0,1	0,7	0,9	2,7	1,3
17	1,5	3,7	0,8	0,5	0,3	0,3	1,7	1,0	1,7	0,8	0,8	0,4	0,5	1,7	3,7	3,9
18	3,9	6,1	3,5	2,9	1,7	1,7	3,1	3,3	4,1	3,4	4,4	2,5	4,2	5,5	5,9	5,8
19	2,8	3,9	3,8	1,7	2,1	2,5	1,4	2,3	2,2	1,8	2,5	3,0	2,0	3,8	5,3	3,7
20	13,9	6,3	10,0	9,9	18,2	13,8	15,2	18,0	16,4	14,0	15,9	18,2	16,3	14,6	10,7	11,1
21	3,5	4,0	4,5	2,3	3,8	4,3	3,3	2,9	3,8	3,1	2,9	4,4	2,3	3,2	4,3	2,9
22	10,7	5,6	7,8	8,3	14,4	11,7	10,0	13,0	11,1	10,3	13,0	16,5	16,0	8,2	8,5	6,6
23	3,6	2,8	4,4	4,4	3,4	2,8	5,2	3,6	3,0	3,1	3,0	5,9	4,0	3,2	2,9	2,3
24	7,1	3,1	6,8	7,1	7,4	5,5	5,4	6,7	6,8	7,9	11,0	11,7	9,6	7,8	5,5	3,5
25	10,98	4,3	8,6	11,0	15,4	14,3	11,4	14,2	11,0	12,1	15,2	13,2	9,9	8,4	8,0	7,7
26	4,6	4,7	6,4	4,6	4,4	3,8	3,3	3,4	4,6	4,2	7,8	6,1	5,7	3,4	3,8	3,0
27	2,2	4,8	4,0	1,3	2,3	2,1	1,1	1,7	2,8	1,8	2,5	1,8	1,7	2,0	1,5	1,7
28	3,9	5,5	4,0	6,0	3,8	4,5	5,2	3,9	4,3	3,4	5,0	3,5	2,8	2,7	2,6	1,7
29	0,97	2,6	2,4	1,7	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	1,5	0,4	0,8	0,8	0,4	0,8	0,6	0,3
30	4,1	4,6	6,0	5,6	6,3	5,8	7,6	4,2	5,5	2,4	3,3	2,2	1,9	1,7	2,3	1,9
31	0,2	1,2	0,1	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,1	-	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	-	-
32	0,9	2,7	1,9	0,9	0,9	1,5	2,6	0,8	1,0	0,5	0,4	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1
33	0,2	0,7	0,9	0,3	0,3	0,3	-	0,1	0,1	0,1	-	0,1	-	0,3	-	-
34	0,4	1,1	1,4	0,5	0,4	0,6	0,6	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	-	0,1
35	0,96	1,7	0,7	2,7	1,1	1,8	1,3	1,2	0,9	0,5	-	0,2	0,4	0,5	0,9	0,5
36	0,3	1,4	0,6	0,5	0,2	0,4	-	0,1	0,1	-	0,2	0,1	0,1	-	-	0,2
37	0,1	0,7	0,4	0,2	-	0,2	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,1	-	-
38	0,3	1,9	0,3	0,7	0,2	0,3	-	0,1	0,1	0,1	-	-	-	0,1	0,1	-
39	0,01	0,8	0,1	0,4	-	0,1	-	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40	0,2	1,2	0,2	0,1	0,4	0,9	-	0,3	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	0,1	0,1
41	0,02	0,2	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
42	0,05	0,4	0,1	-	0,1	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
43	0,04	0,2	-	0,1	0,1	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,1	-	-
44	0,02	0,1	-	0,1	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	0,09	0,2	-	0,1	-	0,7	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	0,2	-	-	-
46 +	0,1	0,3	-	0,1	0,1	0,3	0,4	0,1	0,2	0,1	-	-	0,2	0,1	-	-

M & C: AGE DISTRIBUTION



GRAPH 4

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION OF HEIGHT AMONG MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGES)

HEIGHT (cm)	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	25,9	50,1	-	16,6	13,5	18,3	21,5	26,0	21,7	23,5	17,6	24,7	28,7	36,5	26,9	36,9
30 - 130	0,5	0,5	-	2,1	2,2	0,9	-	0,3	0,2	0,5	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1
131 - 135	0,5	0,5	-	1,6	1,2	0,7	0,3	0,5	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,1	0,2	-	0,1
136 - 140	0,95	0,3	-	1,7	1,7	1,9	1,2	0,9	1,4	1,0	0,4	0,3	0,8	0,6	0,3	0,8
141 - 145	3,6	0,5	-	3,3	3,6	5,0	3,4	2,3	2,6	4,0	1,8	3,4	2,0	7,7	4,1	6,0
146 - 150	4,9	1,1	-	8,4	8,1	8,4	8,2	7,3	3,3	4,1	2,3	3,0	2,4	1,9	4,0	9,6
151 - 155	6,7	4,0	-	11,6	13,3	8,4	7,4	10,1	3,3	5,7	1,6	3,8	4,0	7,3	5,6	8,1
156 - 160	17,6	11,1	-	16,5	19,3	20,7	20,2	16,4	9,3	20,5	19,6	21,6	38,2	8,1	5,5	19,5
161 - 165	21,8	15,0	-	20,8	19,4	19,4	19,0	20,6	23,9	17,3	11,7	16,2	15,4	31,5	44,3	30,5
166 - 170	15,1	10,0	-	12,8	12,0	11,2	12,3	13,6	27,8	22,4	37,0	23,5	6,3	4,9	10,2	6,9
171 - 175	3,5	4,2	-	3,6	3,7	3,5	3,8	3,9	5,2	6,4	7,1	3,0	1,6	0,9	1,0	1,1
176 - 180	0,6	1,1	-	0,6	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,3	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,2
181 - 185	0,07	0,4	-	0,2	0,3	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
186 - 190	0,03	0,3	-	-	-	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
191 and over	0,2	0,5	-	-	-	-	0,1	0,2	1,1	0,3	0,5	-	-	-	-	-

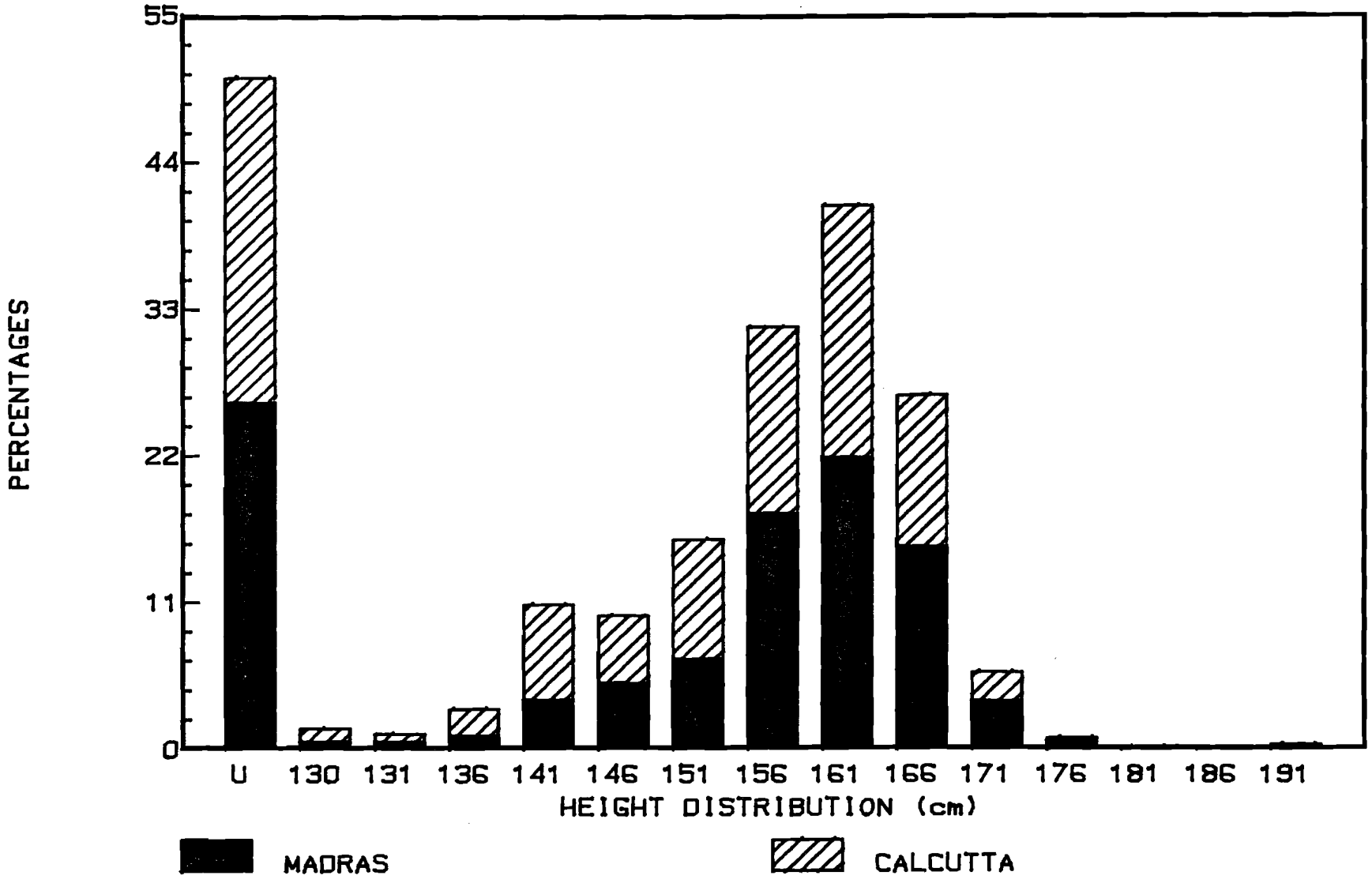
TABLE 10

DISTRIBUTION OF HEIGHT AMONG CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGES)

HEIGHT (cm)	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	24,5	-	27,0	31,7	25,0	24,1	24,6	30,3	21,5	32,8	11,4	8,6	23,4	31,1	27,8	47,6
30 - 130	1,1	-	0,4	0,7	0,3	0,4	2,5	2,0	1,5	2,0	3,9	0,3	0,4	0,2	0,3	0,6
131 - 135	0,7	-	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,5	1,8	2,7	1,1	0,7	1,5	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,3	0,2
136 - 140	2,1	-	1,4	1,4	2,0	1,8	1,1	4,0	2,3	2,5	7,8	1,6	0,6	2,0	1,9	1,1
141 - 145	7,3	-	4,6	4,8	5,0	5,3	5,2	2,4	1,6	8,7	15,9	10,7	11,6	8,1	13,1	4,7
146 - 150	5,2	-	8,3	9,1	8,6	10,1	7,0	2,4	1,4	3,4	5,1	4,2	3,8	0,7	0,4	8,1
151 - 155	9,1	-	10,9	11,2	11,6	8,9	7,8	4,0	1,2	7,6	6,3	11,9	18,2	5,5	9,0	21,8
156 - 160	14,1	-	16,5	16,5	16,2	17,8	14,9	8,2	3,5	14,7	20,8	22,8	19,1	18,8	4,0	17,8
161 - 165	19,0	-	16,7	14,3	16,5	18,3	23,2	28,7	20,7	17,3	8,6	6,7	21,0	29,4	38,0	26,1
166 - 170	11,5	-	8,8	7,7	9,6	9,3	7,9	12,6	41,2	19,0	15,3	27,8	1,3	3,8	4,9	2,5
171 - 175	2,3	-	2,7	1,7	3,6	2,8	2,7	1,5	3,3	4,9	2,8	4,8	0,4	0,1	-	0,2
176 - 180	0,3	-	1,0	0,4	0,7	0,8	0,6	0,3	-	0,2	0,2	0,1	-	-	-	0,1
181 - 185	0,04	-	0,4	-	0,1	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
186 - 190	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
191 and over	0,2	-	0,2	0,3	-	-	0,1	0,7	0,9	0,4	0,6	0,2	-	-	0,1	-

M & C: HEIGHT DISTRIBUTION



GRAPH 5

NOTES

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CHAPTER 3

Places of Origin: Zillahs, Tahsils/Taluks, and Towns.

British India was over one million square miles in extent at the turn of the century, and consisted of eight large provinces and five smaller areas of administration. The population in 1901 was just under 232 million, more or less evenly divided between males and females. Those areas not directly controlled by the British, were in the hands of the Indians themselves. There were 700 Indian States of varying sizes covering 770 000 square miles, and they were inhabited in 1901 by a population of over 62 million.[1]

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part describes the major areas from which Natal's indentured immigrants were drawn; the second part deals with the zillahs (districts), tahsils/taluks, and towns from which the emigrants came; and the third part is concerned with the actual data on geographical sources in our sample.

The three principal areas that constituted the sources of indentured migration were the Madras Presidency, the United Provinces of Agra and Ough, and the Bengal Presidency in which only Bihar featured prominently. (See Map 1) Even though these areas individually constituted massive expanses of land of great diversity, there are nevertheless characteristics at these provincial levels that will shed much light on the local conditions pertinent to our study.

The Madras Presidency

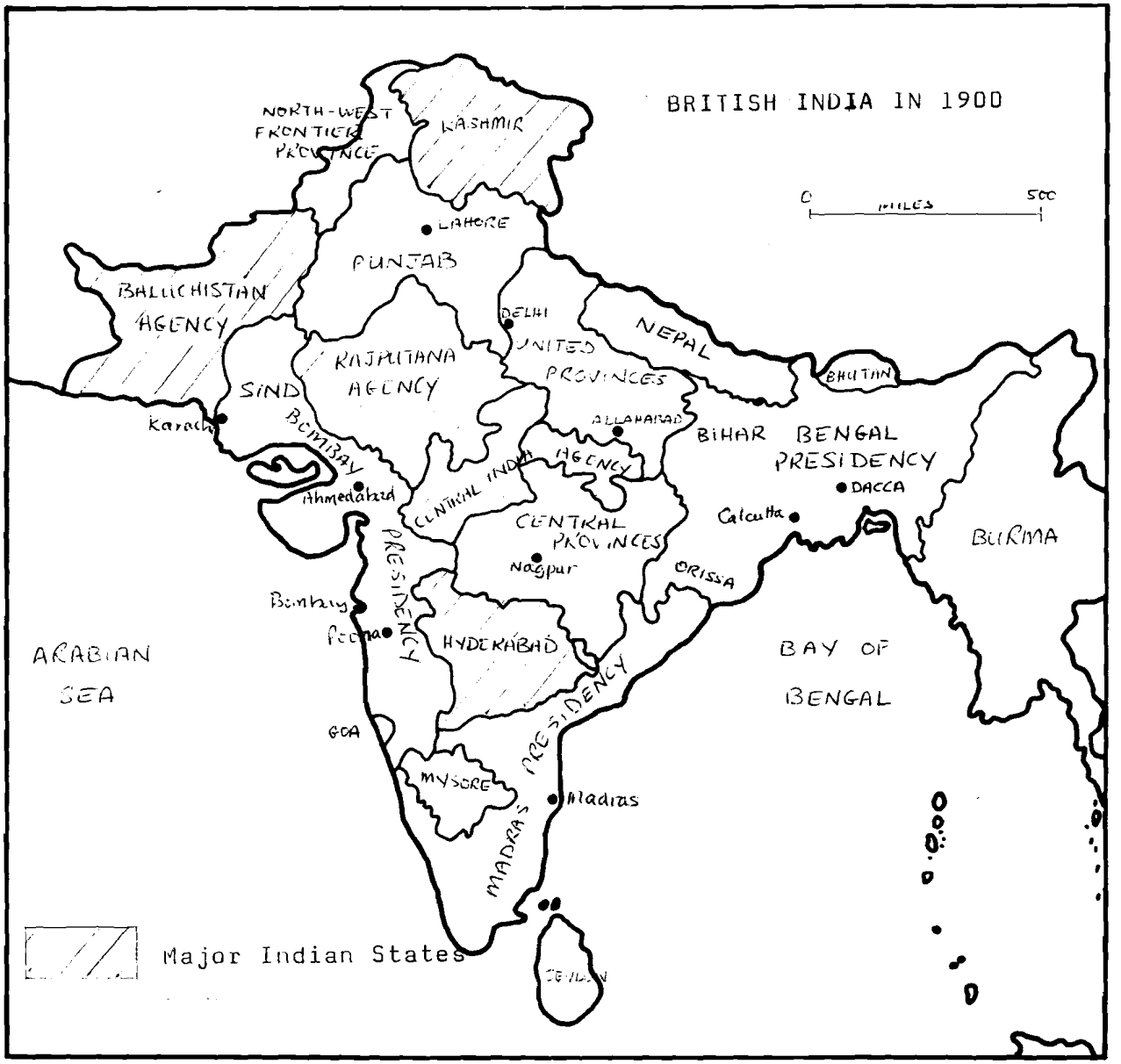
The Madras Presidency,[2] from which two-thirds of Natal's indentured labourers came, is a vast area covering 141 705 square miles. On the west it is bounded by the Indian Ocean, and on the east by the Bay of Bengal; and its northern boundary runs from Hyderabad on the west to the Central

Provinces and Orissa on the east, touching briefly the southernmost boundary of the Bombay Presidency. It has three great rivers, namely the Godavari, Kistna, and Cauvery, running through it. The first two rise 50 miles in the Bombay Presidency and flow for 800 miles across the peninsula. Cauvery rises in the Western Ghats in the Coorg, and passes eastwards into the Bay of Bengal. The presidency has no great lakes; and while it has 1 700 miles of sea coast, there are no great harbours except Madras City, which is also the capital.

The presidency was divided in 1901 into 22 districts which were further divided into 84 subdivisions, 231 taluks, 657 firkas, and 55 000 villages. The largest district was Vizagapatam, covering 17 200 square miles and consisting of 2 900 000 people in 1901. The average size of the districts was 7 036 square miles, and the average population was just over 1 800 000. The districts on the west coast had high density of population, Tanjore being the most thickly populated with 605 persons per square mile.

In 1901, the presidency's population was 38 209 436 of whom 89% lived in villages, whose average size was about 600 persons. Madras, Madura, and Trichinopoly were the only 3 cities with populations over 100 000; 8 towns had populations in excess of 50 000 individuals. Tamil and Telugu were the predominant languages in the presidency, with 15 million and 14 million speakers respectively. Malayalam was confined to the west coast of Malabar district; Kanarese speakers were to be found in the upland regions bordering Mysore, and Oriya was spoken mainly in the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam. Hindustani speakers made up a small percentage (2%) and a variety of smaller languages and dialects were spoken by the balance of the population.

Hindus predominated in the presidency with 89%, trailed by Muslims and Christians who made up 6% and 3% respectively


BRITISH INDIA IN 1900
0 MILES 500
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE
KASHMIR
LAHORE
PUNJAB
BALUCHISTAN AGENCY
DELHI
UNITED PROVINCES
NEPAL
BHUTAN
RAJPUTANA AGENCY
SIND
Karachi
BOMBAY
ALLAHABAD
BIHAR
BENGAL PRESIDENCY
DACCA
Ahmedabad
CENTRAL INDIA AGENCY
Calcutta
CENTRAL PROVINCES
BURMA
Nagpur
ORISSA
PRESIDENCY
Bombay
Poona
HYDERABAD
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
GOA
MYSORE
PRESIDENCY
Madras
MADRAS
Major Indian States
CEYLON

MAP 1

in 1901. The balance of 2% was made up from among Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and animists. The Muslims, who were almost all Sunnis, were most numerous in South Kanara, Ganjam, Tanjore, and Nilgiris. Beyond these major castes there was a prolific subdivision of castes and subcastes. Despite the apparent rigidity of the social structure, it was possible for a member of one caste to rise above its traditional station. Statistics showed that 25% of the Pariahs and 12% of the Malas had risen from predial serfdom to land ownership. 60% of the Brahmins had foresaken their traditional priestly calling to become farmers.

Although Islam does not tolerate caste distinctions, caste-like structures existed among the Muslims too. By tradition, Muslims divided themselves into immigrants, mixture of immigrant stock and Hindu women, and native converts. The Shaikhs, the Saiyids, and the Pathans regarded themselves as superior to native converts in the presidency like Mappillas and Labbais because of their original immigrant heritage.

If such a high percentage of the presidency's population was rural-based, it is not surprising that 71% of the people in 1901 should have been supported by agriculture. Land tenure was of two basic types. In the zamindari system, tax was imposed on an individual or the community owning an estate, and occupying a position like that of a landlord. In the ryotwari system, the revenue was imposed upon individuals who were the actual occupants of the land. A zamindar paid the state share of the taxation, and retained the balance for himself. (The jagirs and inam systems of tenure had features similar to the zamindari system). The ryot (peasant) in the ryotwari system paid direct to the state. The impact of the revised land revenue system will be discussed in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to note that in the Madras Presidency, 29% of the cultivated land was under the zamindari system, and 47% under the ryotwari system.

The presidency's staple food crops were rice, cholam, cambu, and ragi. Over 15% of the cultivated areas also produced commercial crops like cotton, oilseeds, gingelly, castor, ground nuts, indigo, sugar cane, tobacco, spices, tea and coffee. Some 7% of the population was engaged in the preparation of food, drinks, and dress. Textile workers amounted to 4%. Those engaged in mining minerals, commerce, and the professions made up a very small percentage.

The Gazetteer of India recorded that famines and other natural disasters occurred nine times in the post-1850 period in South India. The most severe was the Great Famine of 1876-8. Districts in the Deccan as well as those in the presidency were affected. Nellore, Chingleput, Salem, and Coimbattore were affected in the famine that lasted 22 months. Some $3^{3}/_{4}$ million people perished. There were three major famines in the 1890s, but they were not as serious as the 1876-8 Great Famine. By then, the development of the railways had made relief work easier.

United Provinces of Agra and Oudh

The Province of Agra, founded in 1834, was 83 198 square miles in extent, while that of Oudh, founded in 1856, covered 23 966 square miles.[3] (They will be referred to as United Provinces hereinafter). In the north, they were bounded by Tibet. Nepal bordered on the north-east, while in the east and south-east the region was bounded by four Bengal districts. To the south lay two of the Chota Nagpur states in the Central Provinces; and to the west were the Punjab and the Rajputana Agency.

The United Provinces (UP) had four distinct tracts, namely, the Himalayan, the sub-Himalayan, the Indo-Gangetic Plain, and the Central Indian hill tract. By far the largest was the Indo-Gangetic Plain, which made up over one-half of the UP. To the west of the great plain were 13 districts in the

Doab (the area between the Ganges and the Jamuna Rivers); in the centre lay 12 districts; and in the east were to be found 5 districts. The UP had 9 divisions in 1901, each with a population of between 5 to 6 million. There were 48 districts, each one with an average population of one million. In 1901, the districts were subdivided into 217 tahsils and numerous smaller divisions known as parganas.

The total population of the UP in 1901 was nearly 48 million, with density ranging from 95 persons to the square mile in the Himalayan tract to 718 in the eastern part of the Gangetic Plain. 89% of the people lived in rural areas, over one-half of whom were located in villages varying in sizes between 500 and 2 000 people. Seven major towns or cities had a population over 100 000, the largest of which was Lucknow, which in 1901 had a population of 264 049. It was followed by Benares, Cawnpore (Kanpur), Agra, Allahabad, Bereilly, and Meerut. Medium-sized towns (under 100 000) numbered 30, while small towns (between 10 000 and 20 000) amounted to 70 in 1901.

Western Hindi, Eastern Hindi and Bihari were the three main languages of the UP. In the Hills, Central Pahari was spoken, but there were languages that were foreign to the UP, such as Bengali, Nepali and English. In 1901, 85% were Hindus, 14% Muslim, and 0,6% Christians. There were also Jains, Aryas, and Sikhs.

As in the Madras Presidency, a hierarchical caste structure existed. In the UP, the eight most numerous castes were: Chamars (12%), Brahmins (9,8%), Ahirs (7,9%), Rajputs (7%), Pasis (2,5%), Kahars (2,5%), and Lodhas (2%). Among the Muslims, the most numerous caste-like groups were the Shaikhs (2,7%), Pathans (1,6%), Saiyids (0,5%), and Mughals (0,1%). Muslims with Hindu caste names were Rajputs, Behna, Nai, Teli, and Darzi. The Julahas and the Fakirs, also of Hindu origin, were numerous.

Just over 31 million people (or 66%) depended on agriculture in the UP, of whom 75% were tenants, 14% field labourers, and 11% landlords. The land tenure was zamindari generally, although in the eastern parts the land tenure resembled the ryotwari system. In non-agricultural occupations, 14% were engaged in factory work, and 3,7% were involved in the production of textile fabrics and dress.

Wheat (18%), rice (14%), gram (13%), and barley (10%) made up the staple crops; and commercially viable crops were: sesame, mustard, castor, cotton, hemp and opium. Cane sugar was grown in places like Bareilly, Gorakhpore (Gorakpur), and Benares, but made up only 3% of the commercial crop. Weaving and dyeing were important industries, with castes like Koiris (Hindus) and Julahas (Muslims) being the chief weavers. Brass- and copper-making and pottery too were important in the UP.

The UP was periodically affected by natural disasters. Scarcities and famines occurred. These natural events were partly responsible for the massive internal and external movements of the UP people. In the 1890s, 800 000 people are said to have moved to other parts of India, and over 100 000 abroad as indentured Indians.

Bihar

Bihar was one of the four subdivisions in the largest and most populous region in British India in 1901, namely the Bengal Presidency.[4] The other three were Bengal proper, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa. Its population in 1901 was nearly $78^{1}/_{2}$ million, with 95% being rurally based. Bihar, from which Natal's immigrants came, occupied the north-western quarter of the presidency, and was organised into two divisions.

Bihar's population in 1901 was $24^{1}/_{4}$ million. Patna Division consisted of $15^{1}/_{2}$ million people with 35 towns and 34 169

villages, while the Bhagalpur Division had a population of $8^{3}/_{4}$ million with 15 towns and 21 656 villages. While there were 63% Hindus and 33% Muslims for the presidency as a whole, Hindus were numerous in Bihar. The two major languages in the presidency were Bengali spoken by 53% of the people, and Hindi (including Bihari) spoken by 34% of the inhabitants.

As for the Hindu caste system, the Ahirs, Brahmins, Chamars, Kayasths, and Telis were to be found almost everywhere in the presidency. The Ahirs were the most numerous with a population of 4 million in 1901. However, castes like Rajputs, Kurmis, Koiris, Dosadhs, and Babhans were to be found in Bihar only.

Rice was the single-most important food crop in a presidency in which 71% of the people depended on agriculture. Jute was an important commercial crop; and the Bengal coal mines produced 83% of the total coal output in India. Cotton and silk goods were produced, but machine-made goods from Europe had a serious impact upon India's export trade. As The Imperial Gazetteer of India recorded, "The introduction of machinery in Europe has not only killed the export trade, but has flooded the country with cheap piecegoods and seriously crippled the weaving industry."[5]

Finally, over one-half of Bihar was liable to famine. These were serious crop failures in 1874 and in 1896-97, and the consequences of these natural disasters were widely felt.

Geographical Sources for Natal's Indians

Those among Natal's indentured Indians who were recruited from districts in the Madras Presidency embarked at Madras City port have been referred to as Madras Passengers in Table 11. Those recruited in the UP and Bihar, and who embarked at the port of Calcutta have for convenience been called Calcutta Passengers. (See Table 13) The places of origin

incorporate names of zillahs (districts), taluks/tahsil, towns, and thannas. Often the name of the town was the same as that of zillah and thanna. A taluk, as for example in Arcot, bore the same name as the zillah. Names of places were entered into the computer as they appeared in the ship's lists. Districts were not separated from taluks for fear of misidentifying places. Hence, there are some anomalies in the tables. For example, in Table 11 for Madras Passenger, North and South Arcot are combined, but nine taluks within these two districts are entered separately. Nevertheless, a pattern of geographic distribution does appear. It should also be pointed out that the villages are too numerous and diverse to add up to significant percentages in the frequency counts. Hence village names do not appear in the tables.

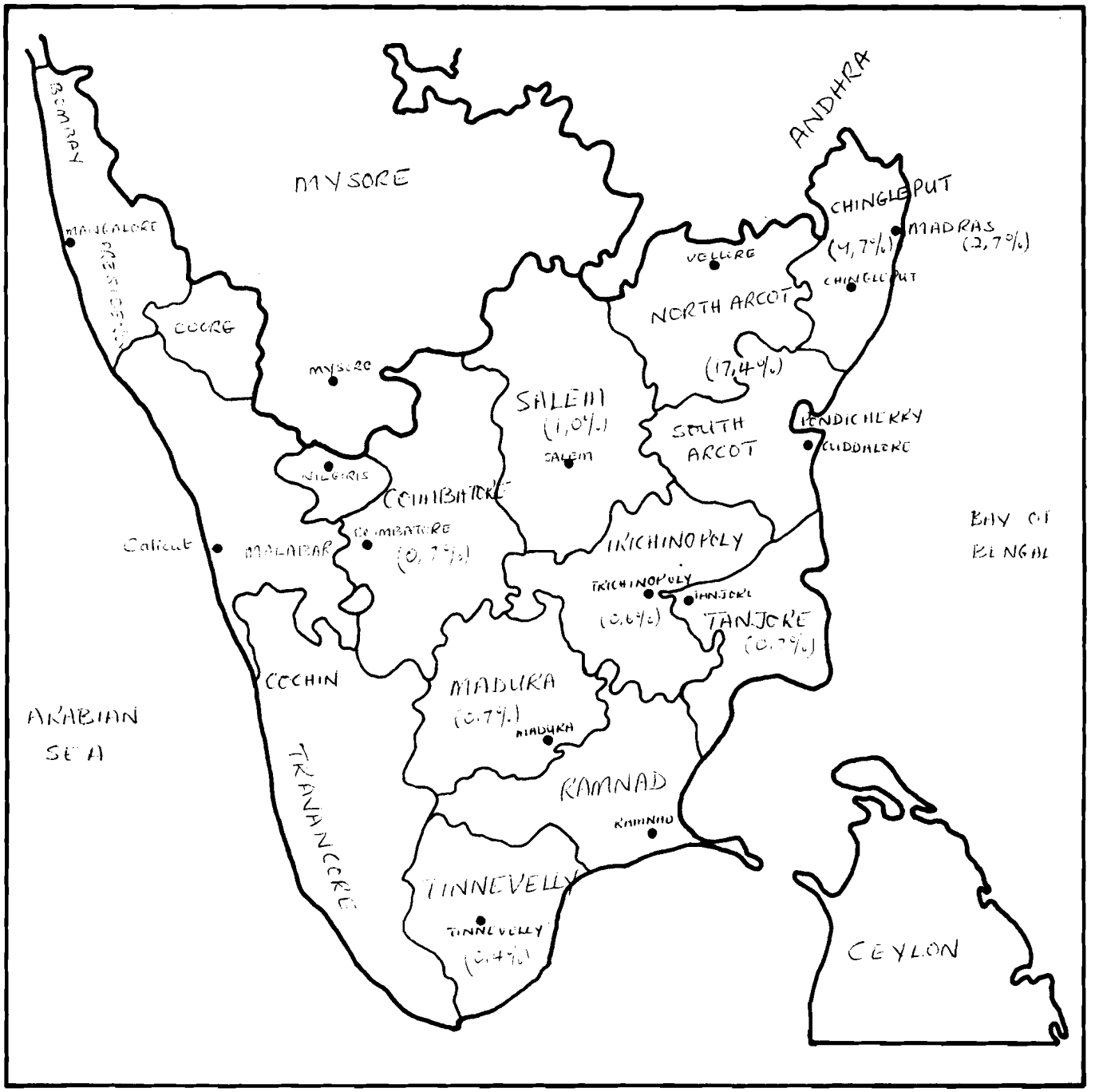
It should also be noted, further, that the place names as they appear in the tables have been taken verbatim from the ship's lists. No attempt has been made to standardise the names of places. The modern version of the spelling is placed in brackets after the original place names.

(a) Madras Passengers

The places in North and South Arcot supplied 24% of the total of 59 662 in Table 11. The North Arcot taluks that appear in the table are Arnee, Chittoor, Gudiyatam, Poloor, Tirutani, Vellore, Wallajah and Wandewash. On the average the taluk population in 1901 was 180 000. The district itself had a population of nearly $2^{1}/_{4}$ million in 1901. Some of the major towns were: Chittoor, Vellore, Gudiyatam, Tirupati, Walajapet, and Arcot. Chittoor, the district headquarters, had a population of 10 893 in 1901. Hindus made up 94% of the district's population, while Muslim and Christian made up 5% and 1% respectively in 1901. Tamil was spoken by 56% and Telugu by 39% of the residents. The most numerous Tamil castes in 1901 were: Palli, Pariah, and

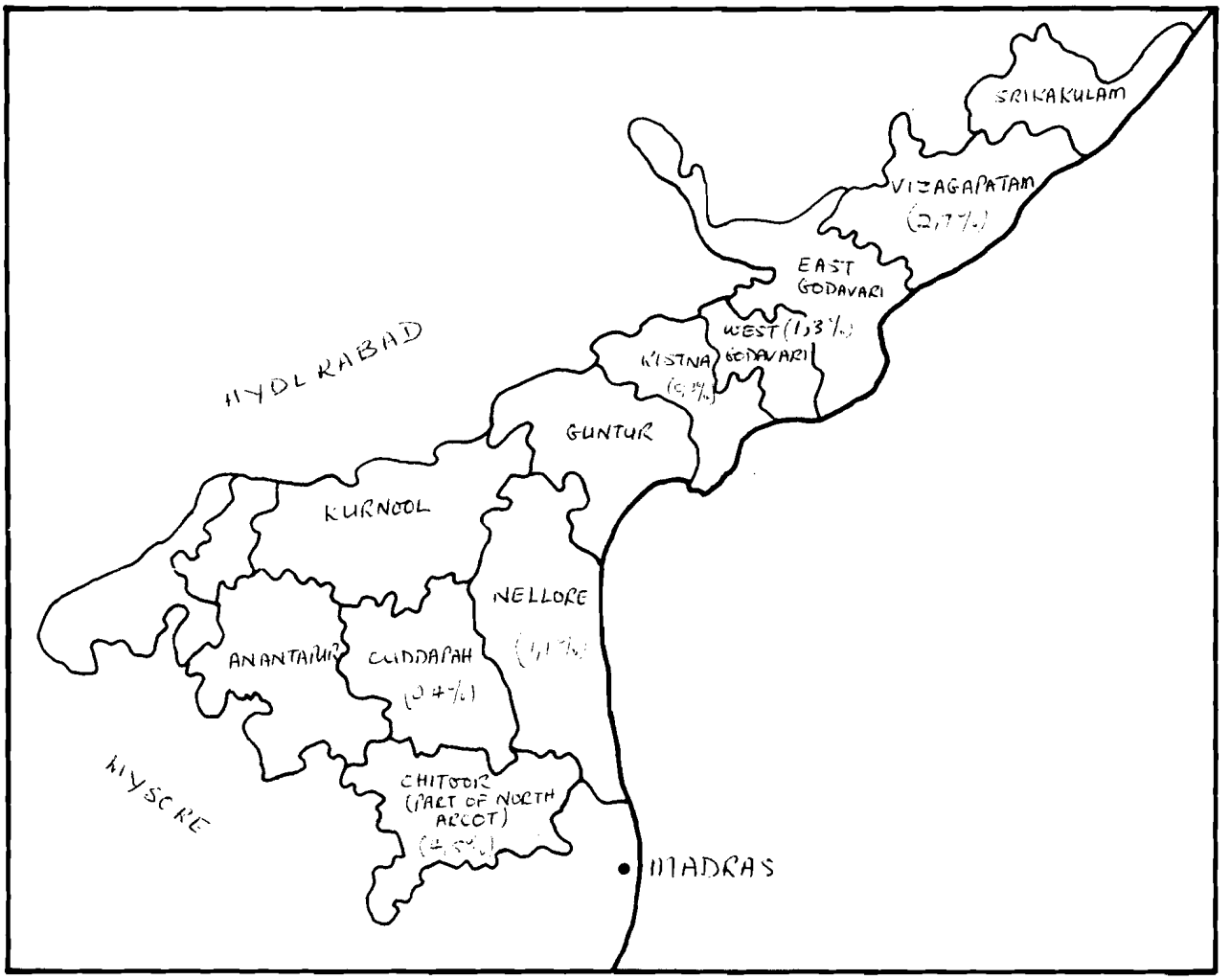
MAP 2

MADRAS PRESIDENCY : TAMIL-SPEAKING SOUTH



MAP 3

MADRAS PRESIDENCY: TELUGU-SPEAKING NORTH (ANDHRA)



Vellala. The leading Telugu castes were: Kapu, Mala, Balija, and Kamma. Among the Muslims were Shaikhs and Labbias.[6]

For the district South Arcot, whose population in 1901 was over $2\frac{1}{4}$ million, three taluks are reflected in Table 11. These are Cuddalore, Tinivanam and Villipuram, whose average population in 1901 was over 300 000. (Cuddalore is also a major town in the district). 94% of the population was made up of Hindus, while Muslims, Jains, and Christians constituted the balance of 6%. A predominantly Tamil-speaking district, the main Tamil castes were: Palli, Pariah, Vellala, and Idaiyan. There were also small numbers of Telugu castes like Kapu, Kamma, Balija, Komati (trader), Odde (earth-worker), and Chakkiliyan (cobbler). The Chettis were the chief trading caste in this predominantly agricultural district.[7]

The district of Chingleput supplied nearly 10% of the Madras passengers to Natal. This densely populated district on the east coast had a population of 1 312 212 in 1901 with an average of 767 persons per square mile. All its six taluks appear in Table 11: Chingleput, Conjievaram, Madurantakam, Ponner (Ponneri), Trivellore (Tiruvallur ?), and Sydaput (Saidapet). Hindus made up 96% of the population in 1901, while Muslims and Christians constituted about 2% each. Three-quarters of the population spoke Tamil, and the remaining one-quarter spoke Telugu. The two largest Tamil castes, Pariahs (24%), and Pallis (20%), were agricultural labourers mainly. Agriculture, chiefly under the ryotwari system, was the district's economic mainstay. There was, however, some trade around cotton, silk-weaving and leather-tanning. A devastating famine in 1876-78 may well have stimulated internal and external migrations.[8]

Madras City was a large supplier of Natal's indentured immigrants. This Chingleput district had over one-half

TABLE 11

PLACES OF ORIGIN FOR MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGES)

PLACES	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	15,2	8,6	-	72,3	32,8	5,4	0,4	7,9	2,2	7,5	0,7	7,7	12,3	19,4	12,2	23,1
Arcot, North & South	4,6	3,0	-	1,8	0,6	1,4	1,2	3,0	9,5	6,8	9,4	2,1	5,4	5,5	9,4	5,4
Arnee	1,7	-	-	1,6	0,6	0,6	0,7	1,7	1,9	2,3	4,6	0,8	2,0	0,7	4,3	2,5
Athur	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,5	0,5	0,3	-	-	-
Bangalore	0,5	1,4	-	0,9	1,2	1,2	0,8	0,4	0,3	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	0,2
Bellary	0,2	0,4	-	-	1,6	0,4	-	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bobbilli	0,8	-	-	-	-	0,5	1,4	0,4	-	-	0,6	6,7	1,2	0,4	-	0,4
Cassimode	0,1	-	-	-	-	1,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chingleput	2,4	13,6	-	1,9	1,3	0,7	1,4	1,5	3,4	1,6	1,4	0,6	1,3	1,9	2,1	0,5
Chittoor	4,5	40,1	-	1,0	0,7	0,5	0,8	0,6	1,5	1,8	1,4	2,1	1,3	0,6	5,9	4,1
Coimbatore	0,4	-	-	-	0,6	2,1	1,3	0,6	0,4	0,4	-	-	-	0,2	-	0,4
Conjievaram	2,4	-	-	2,4	1,6	0,7	1,6	1,5	4,1	2,1	3,0	0,8	2,1	7,5	4,8	1,4
Cuddalore	0,6	2,2	-	-	-	0,3	0,7	-	-	-	1,6	0,4	3,0	0,5	0,2	-
Cuddapah	0,4	1,4	-	0,4	0,5	0,3	-	-	-	0,6	0,5	-	-	-	0,3	2,0
Erode	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	-	-	0,4	2,6	-	-	-	0,3	-
Ganjam	0,3	2,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	-	1,5	0,3	0,2	-	-
Godavery	*0,5*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	1,6	1,8	1,4	0,3	0,7	0,4	0,3
Gonda	*1,2*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,9	8,2	2,8	1,5	3,0	1,0
Gudiyatam	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	0,7	-	1,1	0,5	0,9	0,5	0,7	-	1,0	0,9
Kistna	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	0,9	-	-	1,2	0,4	0,9
Madras	2,7	21,2	-	3,6	5,9	1,3	1,3	1,0	0,8	0,8	0,7	-	-	-	0,2	0,7
Madura	0,7	0,7	-	-	0,7	1,7	0,6	0,5	1,7	1,1	1,0	-	0,6	0,4	0,4	0,5
Madurantakam	2,1	-	-	-	-	0,4	2,0	1,9	3,6	3,8	2,3	1,8	4,0	2,9	5,0	1,6
Mysore	0,4	5,5	-	-	-	0,4	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nagery	0,4	-	-	0,3	0,4	-	0,2	0,6	1,3	0,4	0,6	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,3	-
Nellore	1,1	-	-	1,0	1,6	0,5	0,8	1,0	2,5	0,6	-	0,4	0,6	3,2	1,1	2,3
Palakonda	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	1,8	0,8	-	-	-	-	1,4	1,2	-	0,5
Pedapore	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,4	2,2	0,5	3,0	0,5	0,4
Poloor	3,9	-	-	0,8	0,5	0,5	0,7	1,4	6,9	6,2	4,9	1,9	7,3	2,1	9,9	11,5
Ponneri	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	0,3	0,6	0,5	-	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,8	0,5
Rajamundry	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,1	0,4	0,2	0,3	-
Salem	0,7	2,2	-	-	0,3	1,0	0,7	1,0	0,7	0,4	-	1,0	0,8	-	0,4	0,9
Sydaput	1,0	-	-	-	-	-	1,4	1,0	2,8	0,6	0,7	0,9	2,0	1,0	2,5	1,2
Tanjore	0,7	1,3	-	-	0,7	1,6	1,7	1,4	0,4	0,5	0,8	-	0,7	0,2	0,3	0,2
Tindivanam	1,4	-	-	-	-	-	0,7	0,9	2,3	1,4	3,2	1,4	3,6	3,3	1,7	0,4
Tinnevelly	0,4	-	-	-	-	0,7	0,6	0,3	0,8	1,3	0,9	-	-	-	-	0,6
Tirutani	0,5	-	-	0,2	-	-	0,2	-	0,6	0,3	1,6	1,2	0,3	-	2,2	0,6
Trichinopoly	0,6	1,3	-	0,3	1,0	-	2,1	0,6	0,7	0,8	1,0	0,5	0,5	-	-	-
Trivellore	1,4	-	-	-	0,8	0,5	-	0,8	3,2	1,3	0,6	0,7	2,9	5,5	2,1	1,2
Vellore	1,5	0,2	-	2,5	1,7	1,3	-	1,8	2,3	1,8	2,2	1,9	1,3	0,4	1,5	1,7
Villupuram	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,7	-	-	-
Vizagapatam	1,5	0,7	-	-	1,3	2,7	-	0,5	0,9	1,9	1,6	4,6	3,3	1,6	0,3	1,2
Wallajah	2,4	-	-	0,3	-	0,6	-	0,7	2,3	3,6	6,8	2,6	3,6	2,6	7,0	3,4
Wandewash	2,3	-	-	-	0,7	0,3	-	0,8	3,7	5,3	4,1	1,3	6,3	0,8	5,1	3,6
Trinamalai	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,6	0,8	-	0,4	6,7	2,0	1,4
T O T A L S	59662	5456	-	4753	3945	3515	4782	4482	4527	3529	1977	3130	4079	6199	5169	4119

TABLE 12

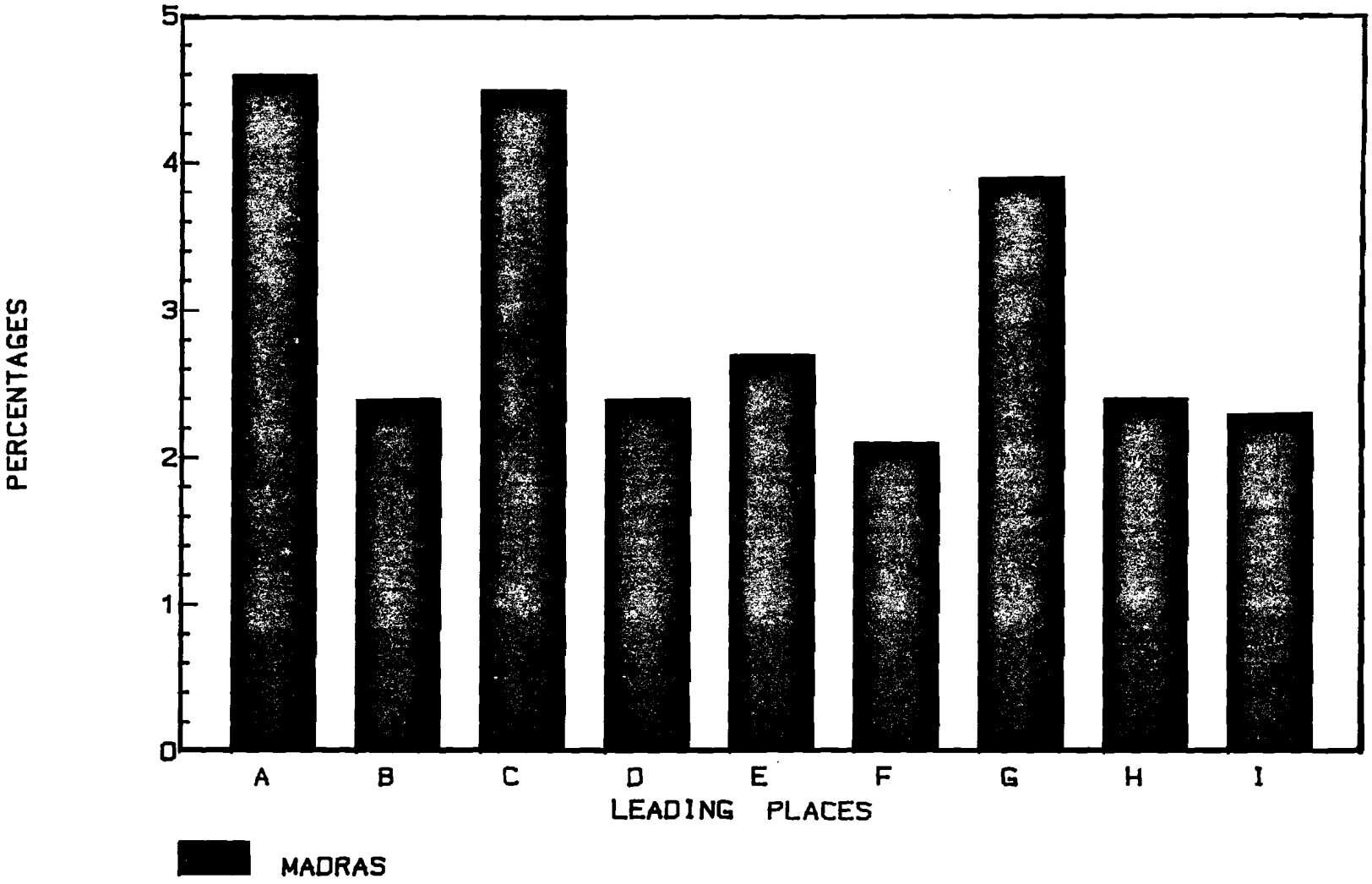
LEADING PLACES OF ORIGIN FOR MADRAS PASSENGERS 1860-1902

PLACES	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
ARCOT	4,6	3,0	-	1,8	0,6	1,4	1,2	3,0	9,5	6,8	9,4	2,1	5,4	5,5	9,4	5,4
CHINGLEPUT	2,4	13,6	-	1,9	1,3	0,7	1,4	1,5	3,4	1,6	1,4	0,6	1,3	1,9	2,1	0,5
CHITTOOR	4,5	40,1	-	1,0	0,7	0,5	0,8	0,6	1,5	1,8	1,4	2,1	1,3	0,6	5,9	4,1
CONJIEVARAM	2,4	-	-	2,4	1,6	0,7	1,6	1,5	4,1	2,1	3,0	0,8	2,1	7,5	4,8	1,4
MADRAS	2,7	21,2	-	3,6	5,9	1,3	1,3	1,0	0,8	0,8	0,7	-	-	-	0,2	0,7
MADURANTAKAM	2,1	-	-	-	-	0,4	2,0	1,9	3,6	3,8	2,3	1,8	4,0	2,9	5,0	1,6
POLOOR	3,9	-	-	0,8	0,5	0,5	0,7	1,4	6,9	6,2	4,9	1,9	7,3	2,1	9,9	11,5
WALLAJAH	2,4	-	-	0,3	-	0,6	-	0,7	2,3	3,6	6,8	2,6	3,6	2,6	7,0	3,4
WANDEWASH	2,3	-	-	-	0,7	0,3	-	0,8	3,7	5,3	4,1	1,3	6,3	0,8	5,1	3,6

M: LEADING PLACES

KEY

A ARCOT
B CHINGLEPUT
C CHITTOOR
D CONJIEVARAM
E MADRAS
F MADURANTAKAM
G POLOOR
H WALLAJAH
I WANDEWASH



GRAPH 6

million population in 1901, made up of 81% Hindus, 11% Muslims, and 8% Christians. Tamil was the language of 75% of the inhabitants, while Telugu that of the remaining 25%. Pariahs, Vellalas, and Pallis worked as labourers in the fifth-most important port of India. The Telugu Balija caste made up an important merchant class in the city. The Vaniyans (oil pressers) were substantial in numbers, as were the Brahmins.[9]

The district of Vizagapatam, from which 2,7% of all Madras passengers to Natal came between 1860 and 1902, is one of the largest in India. Spread over 17 222 square miles, its population of 2 933 650 in 1901, lived in 12 towns and 12 032 villages. The town of Vizagapatam was one among the dozen towns, a district headquarters, with a population of 40 892 in 1901. Three of the 23 taluks in the district are reflected in Table 11. These are Bobbili, Palakonda, and Vizagapatam. Telugu is the predominant language in the district which consisted of 99% Hindus in 1901. The main Telugu castes were: Kapus, Velamas, and Telagas, the majority of whom were agriculturalists. Malas and Gollas, also numerous, were field labourers and shepherds. Rice was the staple crop in this district, making up 32% of the food crop. Some sugar cane was also grown.[10]

The north-eastern coastal Telugu-speaking district of Godavari consisted of 12 taluks, two of which, Peddapore (Peddaporum) and Rajamundry, appear in Table 11. From Godavari itself, 1,2% of Natal's immigrants came. The district's population was over $2^{1}/_{4}$ million in 1901, 97% of the people being Hindus. 73% of the district's residents depended on agriculture, and the cultivating castes among the Telugus were: Kapu, Mala, Indiga (a toddy-drawing caste), and Kamma. Rice was the chief crop, although some sugar cane was grown commercially.[11]

Nellore is another coastal district, whose population in 1901 was nearly $1^{1}/_{2}$ million. Nellore was also a town and a

taluk. In 1901, 90% of the district's people were Hindus, 6% Muslims, and 4% Christians. Telugu was the language of 93% of the people. And the leading Telugu castes in the district were: Kapu, Kamma, Mala, and Golla. Nellore's economy was somewhat more diversified, although the dependence on agriculture was apparent. Leather-work, weaving, bangle-making, and cattle-breeding were among the other forms of economic activity.[12]

Salem and Athur (Atur) are two taluks that appear in Table 11. They fall within the Salem district whose population in 1901 was about $2\frac{1}{4}$ million. Salem was also one of the 11 towns in the district. In 1901, Tamil was spoken by 71% of the people, and Telugu by 19% of the inhabitants. 96% of the population in 1901 was made up of Hindus, Muslims and Christians constituting 3% and 0,9% respectively. The major castes were: Palli, Vellalan, Pariah, and Kurumban (shepherds). An agricultural district like so many other districts in the presidency, it was also a chief exporter of cattle.[13]

The districts of Coimbatore, Ganjam, Kistna, Tanjore, Tinnevelly, and Trichinopoly are minor sources of Natal's indentured immigrants. Hindus made up the predominant religious group in these districts. In Tinnevelly, Christians made up 8% of the population. And in the town of Cuddapah in the Coimbatore district, 50% of the population was Muslim. In all the districts agriculture was the basis of the economy, and the population was predominantly rural, except in Tinnevelly, where 23% of the population was urban. Coimbatore and Ganjam were Telugu-speaking with the usual Telugu castes, while Tanjore, Tinnevelly, and Trichinopoly were Tamil-speaking with Tamil castes. In Coimbatore, the Vellala caste constituted 31% of the population. In all the Tamil districts, the percentage of the Pariah caste was very high, as it was the case for other castes like Pallan and Palli. The dominant Telugu castes were Kappu or Reddi, Balija, Chakkiliyan and Odde.

Among the Muslims, there was the same caste-like structure as in other districts. Shaikhs, Saiyids and Pathans differentiated themselves from Labbais and others.[14]

Banglore and Mysore reflected in Table 11, were not part of the Madras Presidency. Since migrants usually were required to give home districts, it is likely that recruits were enlisted far away from home. Gonda, however, was located in the UP far in the north, and its presence in Table 11 seems difficult to explain.

Table 11 shows that the percentages of immigrants from places like Chingleput, Chittoor, Madras, Mysore and Salem were high in the early years. As the indentured system became established, recruitment no doubt became more systematic. Hence, the pattern of recruitment became more evenly balanced. Of course, the fluctuations are related to conditions in the different areas, and there are unfortunately no statistics to correlate the variations to the specific places in the sample.

(b) Calcutta Passengers

In discussing the places of origin of the Calcutta passengers, it would be convenient to separate the UP and Bihar. Patterns of geographic and caste distribution would be illustrated more clearly in that way.

(i) United Provinces of Agra and Oudh

Of the 44 place names that appear in Table 13, nearly two-thirds are from the UP. The four leading districts were Azimghur (Azamgarh), Bustee (Basti), Ghazeepore (Ghazipur) and Gonda.* Totally, they supplied over 27% of the Calcutta

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* For the sake of consistency the spellings of places as they appeared on the ship's lists, as in the case of the Madras Presidency, are used. The modern spellings of the names are given in bracket.

passengers between 1860 and 1902. These districts run in a line from the east to the north-east. (See Map 4)

Azimghur's population in 1901 was over $1\frac{1}{2}$ million, residing in 12 towns and 4 658 villages. Hindus made up 86% of the population and Muslim amounted to 14% in 1901. Bihari was spoken by 94% of the people. The caste pattern was different from that in the Madras Presidency. Chamars were most numerous (16,8%), followed by Ahirs (14%), Brahmins (7%), Rajputs or Chhatris (6%). Bhars (labourers), Koiris, Bhuinars (agriculturalists), Lunias (saltpetre workers), and Banias were also numerous. Julahas and Shaikhs among the Muslims were more or less evenly divided with 3,5% each. Pathans numbered 1,7%. Agriculture supported 60%. The largest landholders in the district were Rajputs (33%), Bhuinars (17%), and Brahmins (10%).[15]

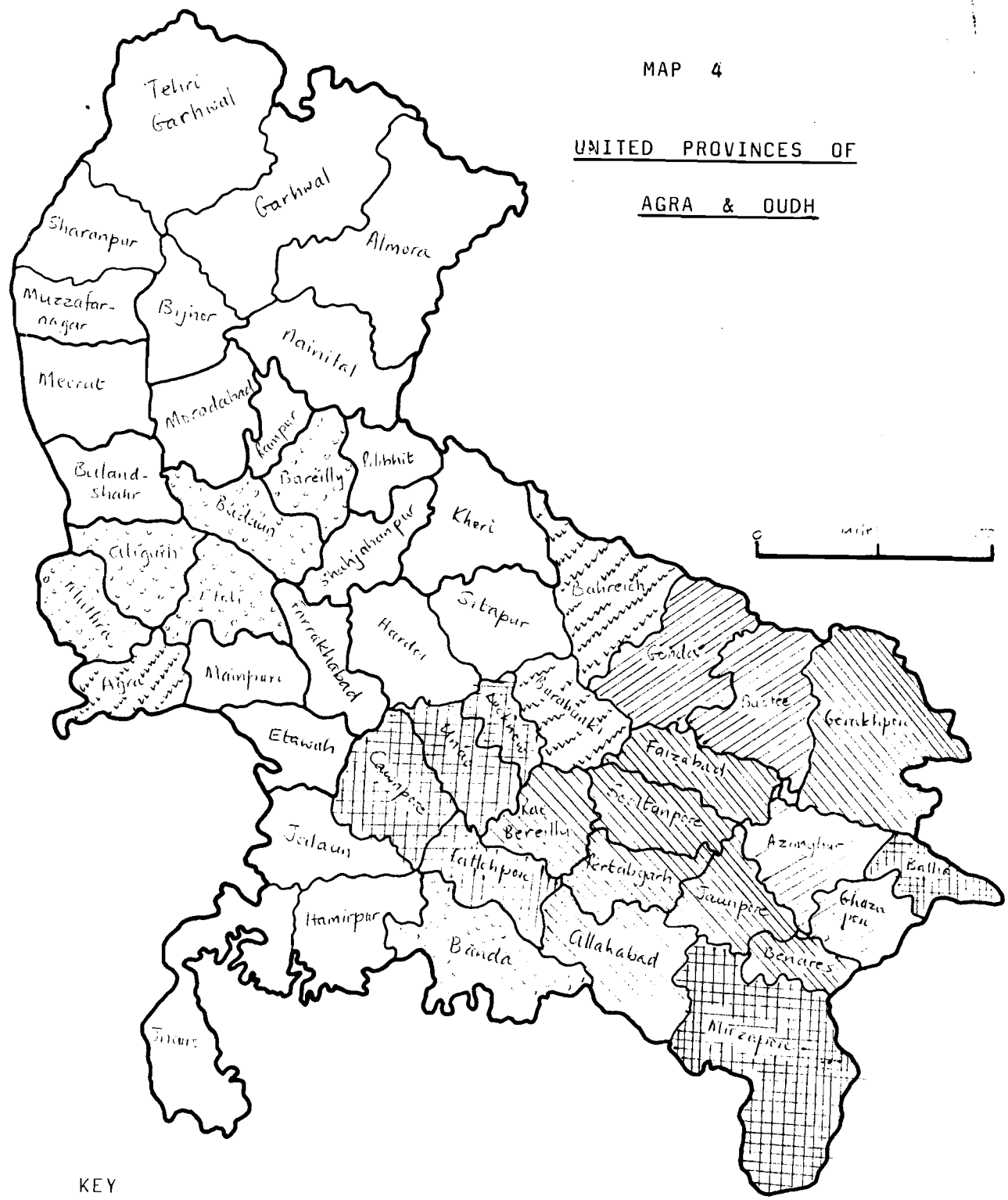
Bustee (Basti) district's population in 1901 was 1 846 153. One of the tahsils bore the same name as the district. Hindus made up 84% of the population, and the Muslims 14% in this district which was almost entirely Bihari-speaking. The five leading castes were Chamars (15%), Brahmins (10%), Ahirs (10%), and Kurmi (8%). Not quite as numerous were: Banias, Rajputs, Kahars, Kewats, and Bhars. Among the Muslims, the caste-like structures were: Shaikhs, Julahars, Pathans and Muslim Rajputs. 66% of the population lived off agriculture. Ahirs, Kurmis, and Chamars were large cultivators, but two-thirds of the land was owned by Brahmins and Rajputs. The caste Koiri was noted for its skill in weaving.[16]

Hindus made up 90% of the population from among the population of 913 818 in 1901 in Ghazeepore (Ghazipur). The balance were Muslims. And Bhojpuri, a dialect of Bihari, was the tongue of 97% of the district's inhabitants. Ahirs, Chamars, Rajputs or Chhatris, Koiris, Brahmins, Bhars, Bhuinhars, and Binds were the most numerous castes. Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhuinhars owned two-thirds of the land in a district in

MAP 4

UNITED PROVINCES OF

AGRA & OUDH



KEY

	OVER 7%
	3 1 8%
	7 7 %
	2, 1 %
	1, 2 %

which 71% of the people relied upon agriculture for a livelihood.[17]

Just to the south of Nepal was Gonda. Its population of 1 403 195 in 1901 was organised around 8 towns and 2 760 villages. 85% were Hindus and 15% Muslims in 1901. Awadhi was the dominant language. Brahmins, who owned 29% of the land, made up 18% of the district's population. Other numerous castes were: Ahirs, Koiris, Kurmis, Rajputs, Kahars, Muraos (market-gardeners), and Banias. There were also Muslim Rajputs, who owned 12% of the land. Other Muslim groups were considerably smaller in numbers, and these were: Shaikhs, Pathans, and Julahas. The Kurmis, Muraos, and Kachhis were reputedly good tenants who cultivated 14% of the land. This district supplied large numbers of indentured emigrants for the West Indies, Fiji, and Natal.[18]

The next group of districts from which Natal's immigrants came lay in a north-south axis in the UP, with Gorakhpore (Gorakpur) to the north and Allahabad to the south. On the average 2,8% of the Calcutta passengers came from this group of districts which included: Gorakhpore (Gorakpur), Faizabad (Fyzabad), Sooltanpore (Sultanpur), Jaunpore (Jaunpur), Benares, Pertabgarh, Rae Bereilly (Rae Bareli), and Allahabad. In all except Gorakpore and Benares, in which Bihari is the main language, Awadhi is spoken. And close to 90% of the population was Hindu in 1901. In 4 of the 8 districts Chamars are the leading caste; in two of them Brahmins are the most numerous. But the leading castes were to be found in all of them, and these were: Chamars, Brahmins, Ahirs, Kurmis, Rajputs, Kewats, Muraos, Pasis, Bhars, Banias, Koiris, and Kachhis. Brahmins, Bhuinars and Rajputs were traditionally the landowners. The Rajputs owned 50% of the land in Faizabad, and 90% in Sooltanpore, and Pertabgarh. Rajputs, Lodhas, Kurmis, and Muraos were regarded as good cultivators. Among the Muslims, were Saiyids, Shaiks, Pathans and Julahas. In Jaunpore, Saiyids, Shaiks, and Bania were large landholders.

TABLE 13

PLACES OF ORIGIN FOR CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGES)

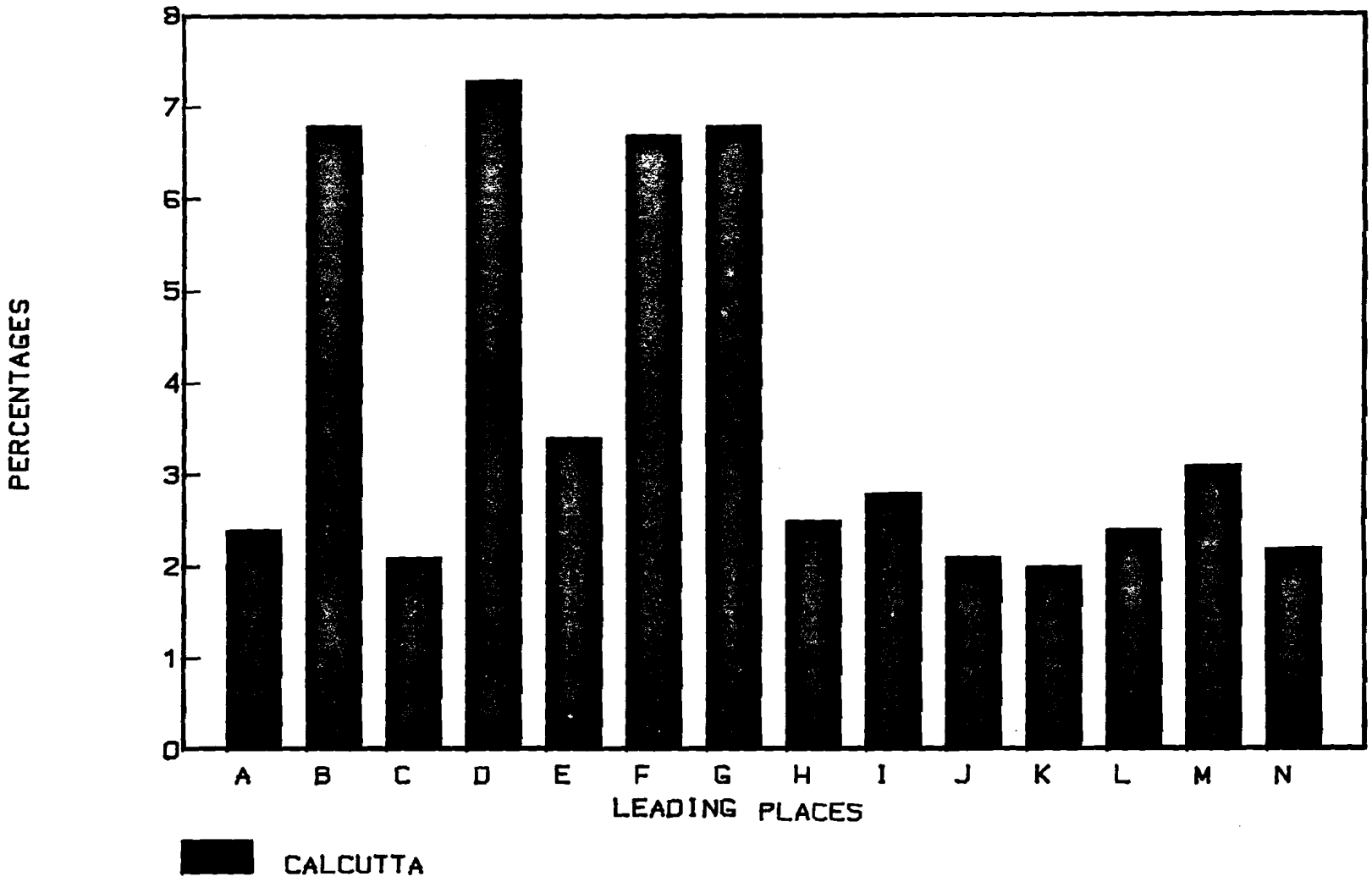
PLACES	Total Ave.	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	11,1	0,5	5,8	7,6	13,7	0,8	0,6	0,7	1,1	14,8	0,7	5,5	32,6	26,6	18,3	37,0
Agra	0,5	-	-	-	2,8	0,6	-	-	1,1	-	-	0,3	-	0,6	1,6	0,8
Aligurh	0,3	-	0,9	-	1,5	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	1,0	-	-	-
Allahabad	2,4	-	-	1,2	3,2	3,2	2,6	3,6	1,4	2,2	5,3	4,8	2,8	3,0	2,0	1,0
Arrah	1,7	12,8	2,1	-	3,2	4,2	3,4	-	-	-	-	0,5	-	-	-	-
Azimghur	6,8	7,5	6,0	14,5	2,0	4,7	3,3	10,4	15,9	7,0	8,0	7,3	4,3	2,2	5,9	2,3
Badaon	0,2	-	-	-	0,6	0,5	-	0,4	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bahraich	0,8	-	1,0	-	-	0,6	-	1,8	0,7	1,4	1,6	0,7	-	2,6	1,1	-
Ballia	1,3	-	-	-	0,4	-	-	3,7	5,9	1,9	2,1	1,6	-	1,1	1,6	1,5
Bancoorah	0,1	2,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Banda	0,2	-	1,0	-	0,3	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,8	-	-
Barabunki	0,8	-	1,7	-	0,8	0,5	-	1,6	1,3	1,8	1,8	0,3	-	1,0	-	0,8
Benares	2,1	3,2	1,7	5,0	2,3	2,6	3,4	3,3	2,2	1,9	1,6	1,2	-	1,2	1,2	1,1
Bharatpore	0,2	-	0,2	-	2,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bustee	7,3	-	9,0	2,1	0,7	3,9	10,0	7,6	7,7	4,5	12,1	10,2	9,4	7,9	11,0	12,9
Cawnpore	1,3	-	1,2	-	2,0	0,3	1,9	1,6	1,4	1,4	2,5	1,7	0,8	1,7	2,1	0,7
Chupra	0,4	2,9	1,7	-	0,6	1,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dahabad	0,1	-	-	1,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Etah	0,2	-	-	-	0,9	0,9	-	-	-	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Etawah	0,2	-	0,4	-	0,3	-	-	0,8	-	0,3	-	-	-	1,0	-	-
Faizabad	3,4	-	3,2	3,6	1,4	2,7	5,7	4,0	4,0	6,0	4,5	4,4	2,0	3,1	5,0	1,9
Futtehpore	1,0	-	0,5	-	1,1	-	-	0,7	0,6	1,4	1,5	2,0	3,3	2,0	1,1	0,8
Ganjam	1,0	-	0,3	-	-	14,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ghazeepore	6,7	10,0	6,4	25,2	3,1	4,9	13,6	6,0	9,3	6,2	5,5	2,8	1,8	1,5	1,5	3,2
Gonda	6,8	-	4,4	-	2,0	2,2	5,4	7,1	3,3	6,9	9,6	12,4	8,5	11,7	21,3	6,9
Goruckpore	2,5	3,8	5,0	5,7	1,4	1,9	2,1	2,7	4,1	2,9	3,9	4,0	1,7	-	-	1,0
Gya	1,8	7,4	5,8	1,8	2,2	3,8	3,6	0,4	0,6	-	-	-	0,8	-	-	0,5
Hazareebag	0,4	4,9	0,2	-	-	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jaunpore	2,8	2,5	2,3	2,8	3,2	2,3	2,7	3,3	4,5	3,2	2,8	3,9	1,2	3,5	2,2	2,1
Lucknow	1,6	4,9	1,2	4,1	1,4	0,5	1,4	2,1	1,2	1,6	1,1	1,1	1,2	2,4	-	0,5
Mirzapore	1,3	2,2	0,8	-	1,1	1,3	2,9	1,9	0,7	1,4	1,2	1,0	-	0,9	1,3	2,2
Monghyr	0,4	3,0	1,8	-	-	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mozafferpore	0,3	-	-	-	0,8	1,2	-	0,5	0,7	-	0,7	0,4	-	-	-	-
Muthra	0,3	-	-	-	3,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nepal	0,1	-	-	-	-	1,2	-	-	-	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Patna	2,1	4,5	5,6	2,2	4,0	4,8	2,0	1,1	1,8	1,1	1,0	0,7	-	-	1,6	1,6
Pertabgurh	2,0	-	0,1	-	1,1	1,4	2,8	3,4	2,9	2,8	3,5	2,4	3,5	2,9	1,2	1,7
Poorooleean	0,8	12,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rae Bereilly	2,4	-	1,5	0,6	3,7	1,6	2,2	3,5	3,8	3,4	3,0	2,6	3,9	4,5	2,9	1,9
Sarun	0,6	-	0,1	-	0,8	0,8	1,3	1,5	2,2	0,4	0,8	1,0	-	-	-	-
Sahabad	3,1	-	1,0	1,4	3,5	3,3	6,7	2,7	3,5	4,7	2,6	4,1	1,7	3,1	2,7	5,3
Sooltanpore	2,2	-	2,1	3,3	1,5	2,4	3,0	3,4	3,8	3,1	2,2	2,9	1,5	2,6	-	2,4
Tirhoot	0,2	-	2,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unao	1,2	-	0,5	-	0,8	0,9	-	1,6	1,4	3,0	2,5	2,4	1,8	2,7	-	0,6
Vizagapatam	0,1	-	0,8	-	-	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
T O T A L		990	8206	1723	3077	3179	699	3020	1620	2786	1785	2922	1201	1570	816	2126

TABLE 14

LEADING PLACES OF ORIGIN FOR CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

PLACES	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Allahabad	2,4	-	-	1,2	3,2	3,2	2,6	3,6	1,4	2,2	5,3	4,8	2,8	3,0	2,0	1,0
Azimguhr	6,8	7,5	6,0	14,5	2,0	4,7	3,3	10,4	15,9	7,0	8,0	7,3	4,3	2,2	5,9	2,3
Benares	2,1	3,2	1,7	5,0	2,3	2,6	3,4	3,3	2,2	1,9	1,6	1,2	-	1,2	1,2	1,1
Bustee	7,3	-	9,0	2,1	0,7	3,9	10,0	7,6	7,7	4,5	12,1	10,2	9,4	7,9	11,0	12,9
Faizabad	3,4	-	3,2	3,6	1,4	2,7	5,7	4,0	4,0	6,0	4,5	4,4	2,0	3,1	5,0	1,9
Ghazeepore	6,7	10,0	6,4	25,2	3,1	4,9	13,6	6,0	9,3	6,2	5,5	2,8	1,8	1,5	1,5	3,2
Gonda	6,8	-	4,4	-	2,0	2,2	5,4	7,1	3,3	6,9	9,6	12,4	8,5	11,7	21,3	6,9
Goruckpore	2,5	3,8	5,0	3,7	1,4	1,9	2,1	2,7	4,1	2,9	3,9	4,0	1,7	-	-	1,0
Jaunpore	2,8	2,5	2,3	2,8	3,2	2,3	2,7	3,3	4,5	3,2	2,8	3,9	1,2	3,5	2,2	2,1
Patna	2,1	4,5	5,6	2,2	4,0	4,8	2,0	1,1	1,8	1,1	1,0	0,7	-	-	1,6	1,6
Pertabgurh	2,0	-	0,1	-	1,1	1,4	2,8	3,4	2,9	2,8	3,5	2,4	3,5	2,9	1,2	1,7
Rae Bereilly	2,4	-	1,5	0,6	3,7	1,6	2,2	3,5	0,8	3,4	3,0	2,6	3,9	4,5	2,9	1,9
Sahabad	3,1	-	1,0	1,4	3,5	3,3	6,7	2,7	3,5	4,7	2,6	4,1	1,7	3,1	2,7	5,3
Sooltanpore	2,2	-	2,1	3,3	1,5	2,4	3,0	3,4	3,8	3,1	2,2	2,9	1,5	2,6	-	1,4

C: LEADING PLACES



GRAPH 7

Gujars in Rae Bereilly and Behnas (cotton-carders) in Gorakhpore were also among the Muslim groups.[19]

The UP districts from which over 7,7% of the Natal immigrants came were Ballir, Mirzapore (Mirzapur), Fattehpore (Fatehpur), Cawnpore (Kanpur), Unao, and Lucknow. These districts surrounded the eight districts discussed above. The recruitment of the indentured Indians was much less intense in these districts. The largest was Cawnpore and the smallest was Fattehpore. Hindus predominated in all, except in Lucknow where the Muslim population was 20%. Bihari was the main language in Mirzapore, but in all the others Awadhi was the major language of the people. The caste structure among the Hindus was the same as in other UP districts. In most of the provinces, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, with over 70% being supported by it. However, in Lucknow, only 52% depended on agriculture for their livelihood.[20]

Agra, Barabanki (Bara Banki), Bahraich, Banda, Muthra (Mathura), Aligurh (Aligarh), Etah (Etawah), and Budaun are also reflected in Table 13. The percentage of emigrants drawn from these areas were small in our sample, but they do indicate how wide the recruitment circle was.

(ii) Bihar

Nearly 11% of the Calcutta passengers came from the Bihar region. The districts most prominent were Sahabad (Shahabad), Patna, Gya (Gaya), Sarun (Saran), Mozafferpore (Muzaffarpur), Monghyr, and Hazareebag (Hazaribagh). (See Map 5) Arrah and Chupra were parts of Sahabad and Sarun respectively. The population of these seven districts in 1901 was over 14 million. There were 36 towns and 39 677 villages. 63% of the population was Hindu and 33% Muslim for the whole of the Bengal Presidency in 1901. However, for Bihar itself, the religious breakdown was 82% Hindus and

18% Muslims. The Magahi dialect of Bihari was spoken among Hindus and Awadhi was spoken among the Muslims by and large.[21]

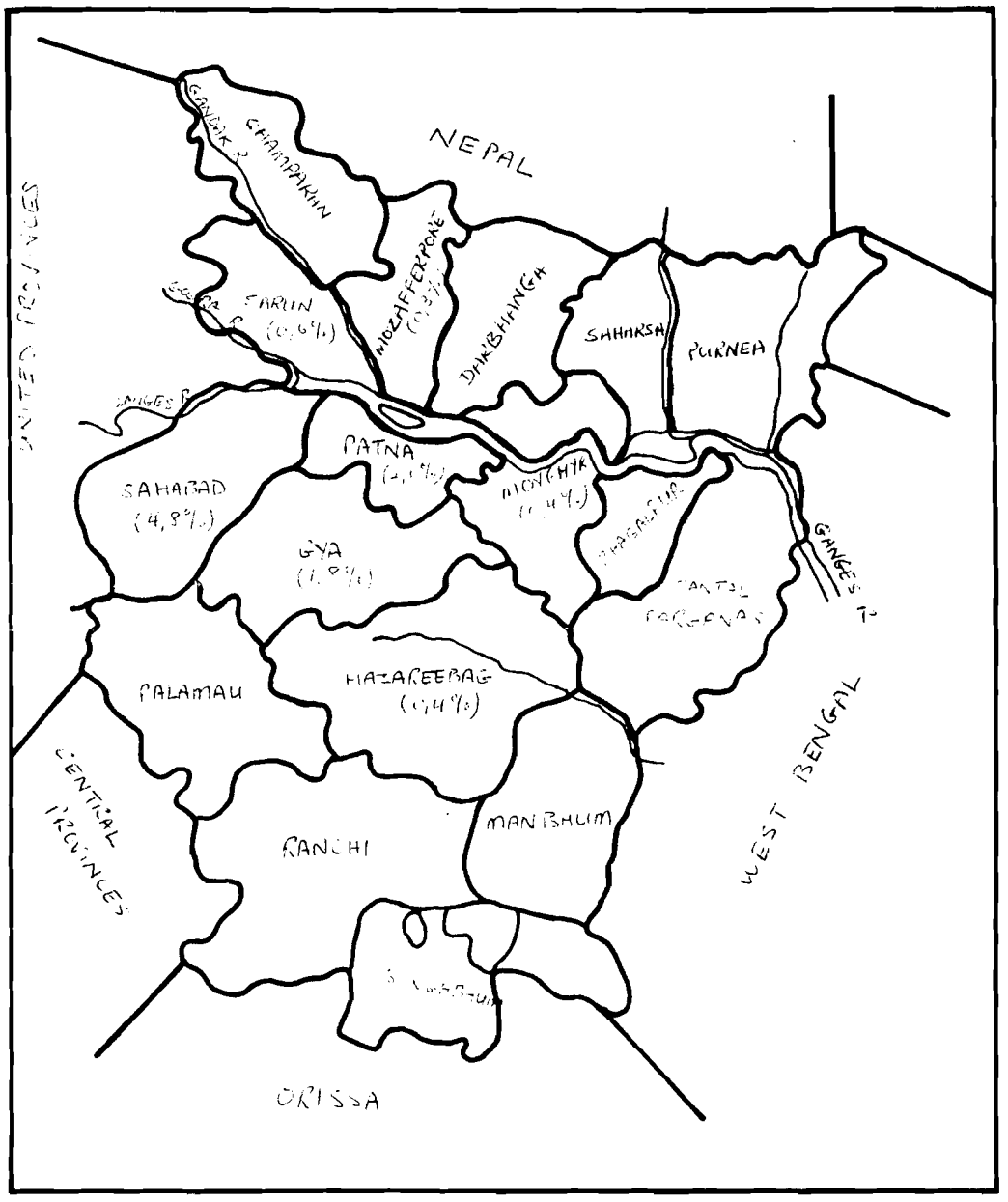
The average population for the seven districts mentioned above was about 2 million in 1901. The population density was incredibly high in Sarun: 800 persons per square mile. The dialects of Bihari —— Bhojpuri, Maithli, or Magahi —— were in use among Hindus, although Awadhi was commondly used by the Muslims. On the average 89% were Hindus and 11% Muslims in the seven districts. In all the districts, the Ahirs or Goalas (or Gollas as in the Madras Presidency) were the most numerous. These two castes of cowherds were followed in numerical importance by other castes common to the whole region, and these were: Brahmins, Rajputs, Koiris, Chamars, Dosadhs, Babhans, Kahars, Kurmis, Kandus, and Telis. Dhanukhs, Musahars, Barhais, and Dosadhs appear to have been largely confined to Bihar. Among the Muslims, the Jolahas were common to all seven districts. There were other Muslim groups too, like Dhunias and Kunjras. Their economies were substantially agriculture-based. Some of the districts were particularly prone to famine. Sahabad appeared to be the most vulnerable. In the 1873 disaster, 75% of the rice crop was destroyed in Sahabad.[22]

Table 13 shows Dahabad and Pooroolean, which were not located. Reference to Vizagapatam, one of the Madras Presidency, may be explained by internal migration, although it certainly was farfrom the normal recruiting grounds of Calcutta passengers.

In concluding this chapter, it is apparent that the areas discussed were overwhelmingly dominated by an agrarian economy, with the bulk of the population rurally based. This was more so in the Madras Presidency than in the UP or Bihar where commerce and industry were much more substantial. In the UP, the upper castes like Brahmins, Rajputs, and Bhuinhars were large landowners. In almost every region

MAP 5

BIHAR IN BENGAL PRESIDENCY



discussed in this chapter, the people on the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy were numerous. The Chamars in the UP, the Ahirs or Goala in Bihar, and the Pariahs and Vellalans in the Madras Presidency were the most numerous. And it is these groups that also constitute the largest segment of our sample as the next chapter will show.

Notes

1 The Imperial Gazetteer of India: The Indian Empire, p. 48.

2 All information on the Madras Presidency comes from The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. 16, pp. 234-363.

3 All information on the United Provinces is drawn from The Imperial Gazatteer of India, vol. 24, pp. 132-276.

4 Information on Bihar is drawn from The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. 7, pp. 190-360, vol. 8, pp. 171-73.

5 Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 266-271.

6 Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 403-420.

7 Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 420-437.

8 Ibid., vol. 16, pp. 364-386.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., vol. 24, pp. 322-342.

11 Ibid., vol. 12, pp. 281-297.

12 Ibid., vol. 19, pp. 6-24.

13 Ibid., vol. 21, pp. 395-409.

14 Ibid., vol. 10, pp. 356-373, vol. 11, pp. 57-75, vol. 12, pp. 319-334, vol. 23, pp. 225-244, 361-380.

15 Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 154-163.

16 Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 124-132.

17 Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 222-232.

18 Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 311-319.

19 Ibid., vol. 12, pp. 331-342, 109-118; vol. 23, pp. 130-138; vol. 14, pp. 73-84; vol. 7, pp. 179-193; vol. 20, pp. 14-21; vol. 21, pp. 25-33; vol. 5, pp. 226-242.

20 Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 250-258; vol. 17, pp. 366-377; vol. 12, pp. 75-84; vol. 8, pp. 306-320; vol. 24, pp. 124-130; vol. 16, pp. 181-199.

21 Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 193-360 (for Bengal); vol. 8, pp. 171-173 (for Bihar).

22 Ibid., vol. 6, p. 5; vol. 22, pp. 186-196; vol. 20, pp. 54-70; vol. 12, pp. 194-202; vol. 22, pp. 84-93; vol. 18, pp. 93-107; vol. 17, pp. 389-403.

CHAPTER 4

The Socio-Economic Background of the Immigrants: Caste and Religion

It has often been stated in a variety of sources that the people who migrated were usually of low caste. As low caste or outcaste individuals, they were very much on the periphery of society, and had nothing but thier degradation to lose by migrating. It is true that among those who migrated were people of low caste and other individuals who were considered so degraded as not to even fit into the caste hierarchy. However, such perceptions place far too much emphasis upon the caste structure as such, and far too little on the socio-economic context within which the caste system operated. In order to understand why people of even low caste backgrounds migrated, it is necessary to examine the social and economic development in nineteenth century India that dislodged people from their traditional moorings. Those developments affected the poorest sections of the people, to be sure, but often among them were individuals of high and medium socio-economic backgrounds.

This chapter briefly examines British economic policies in the nineteenth century, and the extent to which these may be related to the caste composition of the Natal immigrants between 1860 and 1902.

Indian economic life was seriously affected by formal British imperial rule, although the impact varied from region to region. The indigenous handicraft industry was a thriving sector in eighteenth century Indian economy. India's internal markets were small, yet Indian textiles were widely sold abroad. South-east Asia, the Arab countries, and East-Africa imported textile goods from India.[1] The question is why this incipient industry declined in the nineteenth century.

While the impact of British rule, and the extent to which it undermined India's indigenous industries, are controversial subjects among scholars, there is no doubt that imperial policies had a marked influece. The introduction of British goods, especially textiles, rose substantially from £100 000 in 1813 to £18,4 million in 1896. Except in Bengal, the home markets for other parts of India were dominant; and, since there was no tariff protection, the availability of British goods on Indian markets had serious repercussions. The free access of British goods into the subcontinent devastated the Indian handicraft cotton industry. The spinning sector also experienced a serious setback, although the availability of cheaper yarn imports helped some of the local weavers. Nearly one-third of the imports of the UP was made up of cotton goods. The effect generally was to de-industrialise the indigenous economy. The Bengal Presidency, including Bihar which was part of it, was especially hard hit by western commercialism. Here, the presidency's river system facilitated the penetration of European manufactured goods, especially Lancashire cotton goods, even in the days before railroad communications became efficient. In addition, as English mills opened in India, the demand for Indian cotton fell away. By the end of the nineteenth century, industrial production in the Bengal Presidency, for example was located in foreign-owned companies.[2]

In some areas like the Bombay Presidency, the traditional handicraft industry was decentralised, and the local market stronger. Indian ownership was greater, and cotton industry centres like Ahmedabad and Sholapur became more diversified. Even these areas suffered from the penetration of foreign-made goods or goods made by foreign-owned companies in India. The rapid construction of railroad of India —— in 1913, India's 34 000 miles of railroad constituted one-half of all railways in Asia —— linked up major ports like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and European goods gradually infiltrated internal markets. As Charlesworth has pointed out, British

policies reflected the "subordination of Indian to wider imperial needs, providing too a sharp contrast with government policy in continental Europe, where tariff barriers were steadily erected."[3]

While the impact was unevenly felt, there were many parts that suffered crippling effects. Thousands of weavers and tanners became unemployed as indigenous industries collapsed. Many countryside areas too were affected. For example, Rajahmundry in the Madras Presidency experienced a gradual decline in the manufacture of the "panjam" cloth. Weavers, spinners, tanners, smelters, and others were forced into agriculture which was already crowded.[4]

Modest public and private enterpises created some employment opportunities. The tea plantations in Assam, the jute mills and coal mines in Bengal attracted workers from neighbouring regions of India. Bhatia notes that after 1901, there was a marked increase in mobility from Bihar, Orissa, the UP, Central Provinces and the Madras Presidency to Assam, Burma, Bengal, Bombay, and the Punjab.[5] Assam plantations had 3/4 million workers in 1900, the jute mills' employment stood at 110 000 labourers in 1906; and the workforce on the collieries was 100 329 persons in 1901. In addition, the railways provided work for 357 000 people in 1901. But such industrial activities were short-lived, and came too late to absorb displaced handicraftsmen. Saha maintains that only massive injection of capital into internal colonisation and industrialisation would have helped people who were dislocated, and would have made unnecessary overseas emigration. There were no such programmes, however. On the contrary, British economic policies had the effect of retarding industrialisation.[6]

While India's stunted commercial and industrial growth caused many to migrate overseas, the major cause for the emigration must be sought in agriculture. The 1891 census

recorded 61% persons to be dependent on agriculture. The dependence increased to 66% in 1901. 90% of the people lived in rural areas, so that the percentage who were directly and indirectly supported by agriculture was considerably higher. Indeed, between the two census, 1891 and 1901, the number of agricultural labourers doubled. No doubt, many of the labourers were among the landless people who increased in the 10 years after 1901.[7] It is to the dislocations then, that the study must look.

In the nineteenth century, the British introduced a land revenue system on the basis of proprietary ownership. The ideas of "property rights," and "the sanctity of contracts" created rent-receiving interests which were ultimately responsible for changes in ownership. Except for Madras, the last 40 years of the nineteenth century saw land in British India pass from agricultural classes to non-agricultural money-lenders. Credit needs among farmers, says Bhatia, "provided the money-lending classes with an opportunity to enrich themselves by acquiring hold on agricultural lands and crops and they made full use of it." Whereas in Europe, the displaced farm labourers were absorbed by the expanding industries, in India manufacturing industry was laying off workers to be "absorbed in stagnating agriculture."[8]

The two major type of land tenure, already referred to in the previous chapter, were the zamindari and ryotwari systems. Around 1900, 53% pf British India's land revenue was organised under the zamindari system. It prevailed throughout northern and central India. The ryotwari system, in which the tax was imposed upon actual occupants of the holdings, prevailed in 47% of British India in areas like Bombay, Madras, Assam and Burma.[9]

The zamindari revenue system made land a transferable commodity, prized by money-lenders for speculation. And, since

the land revenue was the single, major source of funds for the government throughout the nineteenth century —— in the 1890s it was 25% of the total revenues and receipts —— the zamindari system created enormous pressures on the small farmers already operating on borrowed capital.[10] What was the extent of the dislocation caused by the revenue system? Charlesworth thinks it was limited. He quotes a study on Benares in which 67% of the land was retained by traditionally dominant agricultural castes like Rajputs, Brahmins, and Bhuinars. Yet in Bengal, one-third of the titles changed hands in only 22 years.[11]

As Saha points out, there were many high castes among the emigrants. The landlords, often as absentee proprietors, rackrented the peasants. The middlemen collecting the taxes often sublet the land to others. Exorbitant rents left the peasants little reserve to fight off seasonal vagaries. In the UP the revenue amounted to 80% of the net assets of the land. The effect of this was to displace people.[12] Under the ryotwari revenue system, no middlemen existed. But as Saha maintains, the government's intention was to collect more revenue from the peasants than under the zamindari system. Many peasants lived below subsistence level. Their five-acre holdings on the average were uneconomic, and their rents excessive. This was the case in the Bombay and Madras presidencies. The 1880 Famine Commission reported that one-third of the landholding classes were hopelessly in debts. The other third were in debt without the prospect of ever recovering. As for the agricultural labourers, they could save nothing since their employment was seasonal. Saha concludes, "As a result, a greater part of the ryots in the recruiting areas were, to a certain extent, indebted either to the moneylenders or landlords to meet rackrent and other cesses or for seed to meet the vicissitudes of nature."[13]

It is within the context of the heightened vulnerability of the peasants and farmers that the occurrence of famines in

nineteenth century take on an added significance. Between 1858 and 1908, the years of direct British rule, famines or scarcities occurred in 20 of the 49 years. The Great Famine of 1876-78, as it was pointed out in the previous chapter, devastated large parts of India, and millions of people died.[14] British efforts to cut down on number of deaths and to bring quick relief were successful. But, as Bhatia has shown, the landless classes were the most seriously affected, among whom were agricultural labourers, weavers, and tenant cultivators. The forced pace of change as a result of the British land revenue policies, meant that those most vulnerable in the rural community were also the most seriously affected. To pay India's public debt, the policy of exporting surplus food crops was followed. Hence, when extra food crops were required during famines and scarcities, they were not available. Moreover, the British encouraged the growth of commercial crops in place of food crops. This policy benefited a few urban-based traders and rural capitalists, but it made the masses more vulnerable to the food shortages during famines, scarcities, droughts, and so on. The Indian economy improved between 1880 and 1895, foreign trade expanded, but the lower class benefited little from these trends.[15]

To sum up then, a decline occurred in indigenous industries as a result of British policies; the land revenue system affected social relationships to the point of displacing tens of thousands; and famines and scarcities affected most seriously the landless. There was, as Lal maintains, an on-going internal mobility which was greatly exacerbated by British policies. Many of these were to find their way in overseas sugar colonies as indentured emigrants. As Lal points out, nearly $1^{1}/_{2}$ millon migrants from the UP were registered in 1911 in other parts of India. The greatest internal migration was around 1900. Interestingly enough, Lal found that where there was less internal migration, there was more indentured emigration. Many of the recruits, however, registered outside of their home districts.[16]

Caste and Religions: Natal Immigrants

Nineteenth century India was overwhelmingly organised around castes. The origins of this form of segmentation go back to ancient times. It was and still is a most complex system of social relationships defying easy definitions.[17] While the traditional caste division of Brahmin, Ksattriya, Vaisya, and Sudra is in theory the basis of the caste system, this division has no "distinct and determinate existence." Rather, the caste segmentation has developed historically around the basic division into a hierarchical network of castes and sub-castes. Indian society, says The Imperial Gazetteer, had always been composed of "diverse and heterogeneous groups" with degrees of endogamous relationships, out of which the modern system developed "by natural and insensible stages."[18] Fresh castes continually made their appearance. Their evolution followed a traditional pattern: a new caste appeared, and after it accumulated a sizable number of women, a closing of rank occurred by means of endogamy. The new caste then broke off all connection with the parent stock.

Race and class around the alien and the indigenous histories became part of the fact and fiction of diverse groups' perceptions. In India, such historical circumstance gave rise to the caste system. The Indo-Aryans, ostensibly a homogeneous group invaded India in the distant past. The conquerors having few women, captured the women of the conquered people. They interbred, maintaining, however, a blood pride. When the group had sufficient number of women, its members developed caste-like endogamy. The group grew with time, and the new numbers might sally forth as conquerors, and thus repeat the whole process. In each instance, a complete amalgamation was averted because, while the conquerors took the women of others, they did not give their own women to outside groups.

Once this procedure was established, fiction was introduced

to strengthen and perpetuate through language, religion, racial pride, social and dietary customs, occupation and so on. Groups all over the world in all societies experience similar processes. In India, it developed in a unique way because of the way in which the Indian mind responded to the historical particularity of the subcontinent. The caste system developed, and soon became incorporated into the Brahminical tradition, and into the doctrine of the trans-migration of karma.[19]

The Imperial Gazetteer of India divided the various castes into seven major categories.[20] The first consisted of tribes that had become Hinduised, and integrated into the caste structure. Examples were:

UP and Bihar: Bhumij, Ahir, Dom, Dosadh
Rajputana and the Punjab: Gujar, Jat, Meo, Rajput
Bombay: Koli, Mahar
Bengal: Bagdi, Bauri, Chandal, Kaibartta, Pod, Rajbansi-Koch
Madras: Mal, Nayar, Vellala, Pariah

The second was the functional or occupational category. The caste was associated with a traditional occupation, but of course, as it often happened, new occupations had no bearing to the original caste-related occupations. In 1901, for instance, only 8% of the Chamars in Bihar were engaged in leather work; and in Bengal, two-thirds of the Kayasths, traditionally writers, were agriculturalists. The examples in this category were: Ahirs (herdsmen), Brahmins (priests), Chamars and Muchis (leather workers), Chuhras, Bhangis and Doms (scavengers), Dosadhs (village watchmen), Goalas/Gollas (milkmen), Kaibarttas and Kewats (fishermen and cultivators), Kayasths (writers), Koiri and Kachhi (market gardeners), Kumhars (potters), Pods (fishermen), and Teli (oil pressers).

The sectarian type made up the third category. The Lingayats,

ironically established themselves in the twelfth century to eliminate caste distinctions, were numerous in Bombay and southern India. The fourth category developed through inter-tribal marriages, for example, the Shagirdpeshas of Bengal. The fifth category was made up of national types, for example, Newars of Nepal, and the Marathas mainly in Bombay, and numbering 5 million in 1901. The sixth category bore the name of its original territorial home, even though its members had relocated themselves. Examples of this were: Jaunpuria, Tirhutia, and Barendra. The seventh category was formed as a result of new ceremonial practices and/or occupations. Thus, for example, the Ayodhia Kurmis set themselves apart from other Kurmis, and claimed Ksattriya origins.

While Islam accepted no caste distinctions, as was pointed out earlier, Muslims in India nevertheless tended to segment themselves in caste-like groups. Muslims did accept caste principles generally and regionally. The Muslims of Arab, Persian, Afghan or Moghal origin set themselves apart from other Muslims of local origin. A Saiyid or a Siddiqui or a Shaik considered himself "ashraf" (noble class), and different from the "ajlaf" (low people), as converts in Bengal were called. A Jolaha (weaver) did not have the same stature as a Saiyid or a Shaik. But distinctions were fluid in Islam. A well known North Indian proverb captures the fluidity, but also reflects the caste-like distinctions: "Last year I was a Jolaha, now I am a Sheikh; next year if prices rise, I shall be a Saiyid."[21] Muslim Rajputs were formerly high-caste Hindus. But the others were converted generally from lower caste Hindus, and these were: Jolaha, Darzi (tailor), Qassab (butcher), Nai (barber), Kabaria (greengrocer), Kumhar (potter), Manihar (braclet maker), Dhuniya (cotton carder), Fakir (beggar), Teli (oil presser), Dhobi (washerman), Gaddi (milkman), Dom-Mirzai (musician). Many of these were also Hindu castes.[22]

While the caste system was almost universally present in India, in Baluchistan and Burma it was "neither recognised nor known."[23] Elsewhere, however, there were in 1901, 2 400 castes and tribes in India. The leading 36 castes selectively, and their locations were:[24]

Most Provinces:	Brahmin, Dhobi, Fakir, Kachhi, Kahar, Kumhar, Lohar, Mali, Muchi, Napit or Hajjam, Saiyid, Shaik, Teli.
Northern India:	Ahir, Chamar, Gujar, Jat, Kurmi, Pasi, Pathan, Rajput.
North-eastern India:	Kayasth
Western India:	Koli
Central India:	Gadaria, Kori, Lodha
Southern India:	Kapu, Nayar, Palli, Pariah, Vekkaliga, Vellala.
Central Provinces:	Balija, Gadaria, Gond, Kewat, Kori, Lodha, Mal.
United Provinces:	Dosadh, Gadaria, Jolaha, Kewat, Koiri, Kori, Lodha.
Bengal:	Dosadh, Gadaria, Gola, Jolaha, Kewat, Koiri, Mal, Rajbansi
Assam:	Dosadh, Kewat, Koiri, Rajbansi
Madras:	Balija, Gola, Madiga, Mal.
Hyderabad:	Gola, Jolaha, Madiga, Mal.
Mysore:	Gola, Madiga.
Punjab:	Jolaha.
Rajputana:	Lodha.

Some castes were widely diffused. Brahmins, for example, range from 10% in the UP, Central India, and Rajputana to 3% in Madras, the Central Provinces, and Bengal. They were weakest in the non-Aryan areas. Chamars and Muchi in northern India have corresponding castes in southern India, namely Chakkiyam and Madiga. A large number of localised groups exist like Bhils and Gonds; and many like Doms, Dosadhs, Jats, Kaibarttas, Pods, Nayars, Pallis, Pariahs, and

Rajbansi-Koch were originally tribals who were integrated into the caste structure.[25]

With reference to Natal's indentured Indians, both the Madras and Calcutta passengers had a predominantly middling to low caste composition. There are some caste categories that indicate special skills, but the majority are associated with agriculture.

Table 15 for the Madras passengers shows castes with overwhelmingly agricultural backgrounds. (See Table 16 and Graph 8 for leading caste and religious groups). There were Tamil castes like Cavarai (Kavarai), Padiachy, Palla, Odda (Oddar, Wodda), Uppara, and Vanniah. Vanniah were reputed to be good farmers. Among the Tamil caste Pariahs predominated. They made up 20% of all castes in South India in 1901, and they lead in our sample with 14,6% of the total. The discussion earlier on districts showed that they were engaged mainly as labourers largely in agriculture but also in industrial or commercial sectors. It is not difficult to imagine that the Pariah, as lowly placed as they were in social status, would have been the most severely affected by the socio-economic changes referred to earlier. But the presence of relatively higher caste like Chetty (traders), should dispel the notion that only the poor and lowly migrated.

Among the Telugu castes, there is a high percentage of middling castes. Balija (traders or agriculturalists), and reputedly good agriculturalists like Kapu, Reddy, and Vellalan —— numerous in southern India —— are well represented in Table 15. If one assumes that the caste also reflected the occupational background, there is some diversity in the work categories represented: Chuckler and Madiga were leather-workers, Gollas were milkmen or shepherds, Dhobis were washermen, and Malas could have been farmers, fishermen or boatmen.

TABLE 15

DISTRIBUTION OF CASTES/RELIGIONS AMONG MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGES)

CASTES/ RELIGIONS	Total Ave.	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	10,7	6,5	-	33,6	4,1	5,1	0,4	4,6	2,7	7,2	0,4	7,9	13,0	24,2	12,2	23,3
Agamudi	1,6	-	-	-	3,0	2,7	2,5	1,4	1,9	2,1	1,4	0,9	1,8	0,9	2,4	1,9
Balji (Balija)	3,3	-	-	7,3	5,6	3,1	3,9	1,9	2,7	3,4	5,6	2,4	2,6	1,4	3,0	3,5
Boya	0,3	-	-	-	3,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3
Cavarai (Kavarai)	1,7	0,5	-	0,4	1,0	0,5	1,8	3,4	3,1	1,8	1,8	1,6	1,9	3,3	1,3	1,3
Chetty	0,3	-	-	0,3	0,8	0,9	0,7	0,7	-	0,5	0,7	-	-	-	0,2	-
Christian	1,3	5,5	-	0,8	2,3	1,6	0,7	1,1	0,7	0,3	1,1	-	0,3	2,1	0,3	1,5
Chuckler	0,8	-	-	-	1,2	0,7	0,3	0,8	0,9	1,5	1,6	1,8	0,6	0,8	0,4	0,7
Dhobi	1,1	-	-	0,6	1,6	0,5	1,6	1,8	1,2	1,0	1,6	0,7	0,7	0,9	0,9	1,7
Ediya	2,0	-	-	-	1,0	1,0	2,1	1,3	2,2	3,1	3,5	2,1	2,5	2,4	3,3	3,1
Gentoo	1,4	9,5	-	-	-	0,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Golla (Gowala)	1,0	-	-	-	1,6	0,4	1,1	0,6	0,5	1,0	1,4	4,0	-	1,5	0,9	1,5
Gounden (Kounden)	0,9	-	-	-	-	0,4	0,5	0,4	0,5	1,4	1,9	0,8	-	1,3	1,0	0,7
Kalla (Kallan)	0,5	-	-	-	0,7	2,1	1,9	0,5	0,5	0,9	0,9	-	-	-	-	-
Kamma	0,9	-	-	-	0,6	0,7	1,2	0,6	0,9	1,2	1,0	1,6	-	1,0	1,3	1,9
Kapu	2,5	-	-	-	0,6	1,0	3,8	0,9	0,7	3,6	3,9	10,8	-	4,9	2,1	3,3
Madiga	1,4	-	-	-	0,4	0,7	0,9	1,9	-	-	0,7	5,5	1,4	4,2	1,3	2,2
Mala	2,3	-	-	-	0,6	0,8	4,4	2,3	0,7	1,3	1,1	9,8	2,8	4,3	1,8	2,8
Malabar	3,5	48,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moodley	0,5	-	-	0,8	-	0,3	-	0,3	1,7	1,0	-	0,3	0,3	0,2	1,1	1,6
Muslim	3,0	12,0	-	4,4	4,7	4,2	1,3	1,5	2,2	2,0	1,6	1,3	1,7	0,8	1,0	3,5
Naiken (Naik) (Oddai)	0,5	-	-	-	-	0,5	0,3	1,0	0,8	0,7	-	0,5	0,8	0,8	0,7	0,7
Odda (Oddar) (Wodda)	3,8	-	-	3,5	3,0	0,3	3,1	5,4	5,3	7,7	8,3	3,4	3,3	1,7	4,9	3,9
Padiachy	1,1	-	-	-	0,6	3,5	3,1	1,0	0,7	0,3	3,5	1,1	0,8	0,6	0,5	0,3
Palla (Pallan) (Palli)	1,0	-	-	-	0,3	4,6	2,9	0,9	0,8	0,7	0,9	-	2,4	0,5	-	0,4
Pancharam (Panchama)	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,7	1,1	-	-	0,2	0,3	0,2
Pariah	14,6	2,0	-	19,3	13,7	13,1	14,7	18,4	24,0	14,6	15,6	10,9	13,8	13,5	20,1	11,2
Reddy	1,7	-	-	1,6	1,1	0,6	2,2	1,8	1,5	1,8	2,6	1,9	1,5	1,8	2,7	2,7
Shepherd	0,5	0,3	-	3,8	0,9	0,4	0,5	-	0,4	0,3	-	-	-	0,5	-	0,4
Telugu	0,7	-	-	-	0,9	2,0	1,4	-	-	0,3	-	2,2	0,8	1,2	0,9	0,6
Uppara (Wappara) (Oppara)	1,3	-	-	0,7	5,0	-	-	0,4	3,6	1,8	-	0,8	4,5	-	0,7	-
Vanniah (Vanniar)	14,3	-	-	6,8	-	8,4	12,5	17,3	25,9	20,0	21,5	11,5	19,7	15,4	27,0	14,2
Vellalan	4,4	0,3	-	2,0	-	9,5	10,1	6,9	4,3	5,2	8,3	4,7	3,9	2,7	2,6	2,7
TOTAL NO.	59662	5456	-	4753	3945	3515	4782	4482	4527	3529	1977	3130	4079	6199	5169	4119

TABLE 16

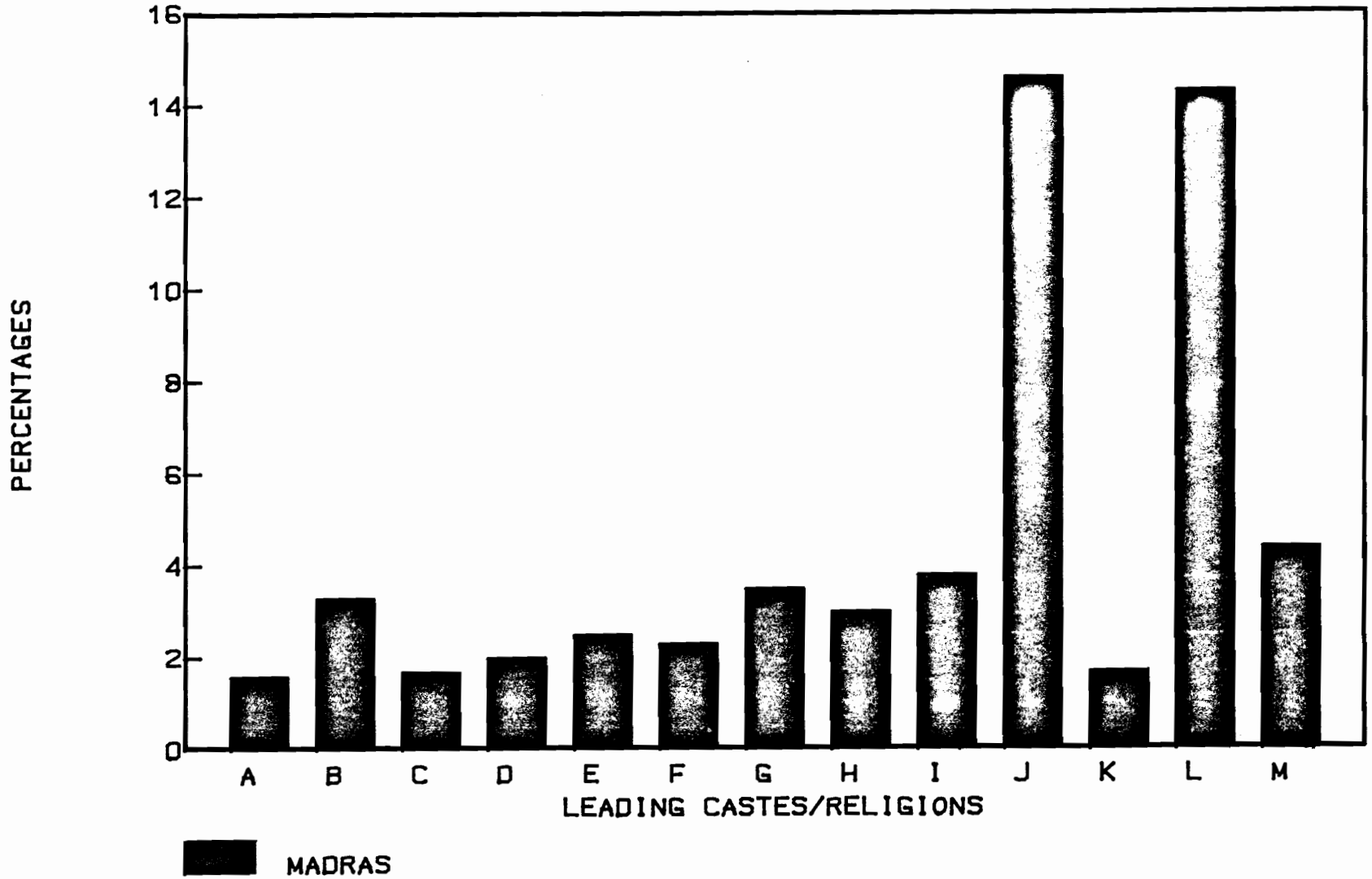
LEADING CASTES/RELIGIONS AMONG MADRAS PASSENGERS 1860-1902

CASTES/ RELIGIONS	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Agamudi	1,6	-	-	-	3,0	2,7	2,5	1,4	1,9	2,1	1,4	0,9	1,8	0,9	2,4	1,9
Balji	3,3	-	-	7,3	5,6	3,1	3,9	1,9	2,7	3,4	5,6	2,4	2,6	1,4	3,0	3,5
Cavarai	1,7	0,5	-	0,4	1,0	0,5	1,8	3,4	3,1	1,8	1,8	1,6	1,9	3,3	1,3	1,3
Ediya	2,0	-	-	-	1,0	1,0	2,1	1,3	2,2	3,1	3,5	2,1	2,5	2,4	3,3	3,1
Kapu	2,5	-	-	-	0,6	1,0	3,8	0,9	0,7	3,6	3,9	10,8	-	4,9	2,1	3,3
Mala	2,3	-	-	-	0,6	0,8	4,4	2,3	0,7	1,3	1,1	9,8	2,8	4,3	1,8	2,8
Malabar	3,5	48,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muslim	3,0	12,0	-	4,4	4,7	4,2	1,3	1,5	2,2	2,0	1,6	1,3	1,7	0,8	1,0	3,5
Odda	3,8	-	-	3,5	3,0	0,3	3,1	5,4	5,3	7,7	8,3	3,4	3,3	1,7	4,9	3,9
Pariah	14,6	2,0	-	19,3	13,7	13,1	14,7	18,4	24,0	14,6	15,6	10,9	13,8	13,5	20,1	11,2
Reddy	1,7	-	-	1,6	1,1	0,6	2,2	1,8	1,5	1,8	2,6	1,9	1,5	1,8	2,7	2,7
Vanniah	14,3	-	-	6,8	-	8,4	12,5	17,3	25,9	20,0	21,5	11,5	19,7	15,4	27,0	14,2
Vellalan	4,4	0,3	-	2,0	-	9,5	10,1	6,9	4,3	5,2	8,3	4,7	3,9	2,7	2,6	2,7

M: LEADING CASTES/RELIGIONS

KEY

A AGAMUDI
B BALJI
C CAVARAI
D EDIYA
E KAPU
F MALA
G MALABAR
H MUSLIM
I ODDA
J PARIAH
K REDDY
L VANNIAH
M VELLALAN



GRAPH 8

"Gentoos" and "Malabar" came only in the period 1860 to 1866. "Gentoos" were Telugu-speaking Hindus, the name probably being a corruption of the word "gentile" first used by the Portuguese. And "Malabar" is a generic term referring to South Indians emigrants recruited from the Malabar coast.[26] Christians were most numerous in the early batch. They made up 5,5% in the period 1860 to 1866. Some particular circumstance no doubt led to Christian recruitment in the early phase. The overall percentage for the whole period stands at 1,3%, however Christian recruitment is higher in relation to the Calcutta passengers and understandbly so. There were more Christians in South India than in North India. Nearly two-thirds of the 3 million Christians in India around 1900 were in the Madras Presidency.[27]

The Muslims in Table 15 make up 3% of the total for the period under review. Among the personal names reflected in the analysis are: "Sheiks" (who predominated), "Mahomed", and "Abdool". A handful of "Syeds" too occur in the sample. In terms of the social hierarchy among the Muslims, it seems that those with "ashraf" pedigree (the "Saiyids" and "Shaiks") were also among the sample.

There are noteworthy differences and striking similarities when the caste/religion distribution is examined among Calcutta passengers (See Tables 17, 18 and Graph 9). Chamars and Ahirs among the Calcutta passengers had their equivalents in Madras's Madiga and Golla (or Goala). Was there anything specific about their occupation that made them vulnerable to socio-economic changes in the nineteenth century? There may well have been, but such information is not available. It is clear that their occupations placed them among the poorer classes of landless people, and therefore by definition would be among the individuals who most severely suffered dislocations. Chamars and Ahirs, it has already been noted elsewhere, were the most numerous castes in the UP and Bihar. Much the same conclusion can be made among Calcutta's cultivating

castes, which were not quite as numerous as Madras's. Among the castes in Table 17 were traditional landholders, and others, who either as landholders or tenant cultivators, had the reputation of being good agriculturalists. The leading groups were Koormee (Kurmi), Koiree, Thakoor, Rajput, Koonbi (Kunbi), Jat, Kawote (Kewat), Murao, and Kachhi. Brahmins amongst them must be presumed to have been agricultralists. These castes with an agrarian background made up 22,7% of the total Natal immigrants in the Calcutta group. (In the Madras group, over 40% had an agricultural background). The discussion in chapter 4 pointed to the high percentage of landownership among Rajputs and Brahmins, among others. Their appearance among the immigrants suggests that some displacement of traditional landholders as well took place.

As in the Madras group, there were agricultural labourers among the individuals leaving from Calcutta. Bagdee, Bhur (Bhar), Noonias, and Bhooyear were workers in rural areas. Among the Calcutta passengers the non-agricultural element was more substantial than among the Madras passengers. These were: Dosadh (village watchmen), Kahar (personal servants), Kumhars (potters), Lohar (blacksmith), Moosohur (rodent catchers), Pasi (toddy-makers(, and Telee or Teli (oil pressers). The Calcutta group has a wider range of occupational backgrounds. Also, it has proportionately higher percentages of upper castes. There are many more artisans, and there appears to be a heavier concentration of urban-based individuals. In terms of the socio-cultural scale used by Lal, the bulk of the castes for both Madras and Calcutta fall into a middling agricultural and artisan class.[28]

No Christians are reflected in Table 17, which also reflects the smaller percentages (in some instances none) of Christians in the UP and Bihar. By contrast, Muslims are well represented, and this reflects their numerical strength in

the UP and Bihar. Except for 1897 (see Table 17), Muslims were in excess of 1% for the entire period between 1860 and 1902.

In summing up, the question that arises is how caste and socio-economic composition of Natal's immigrants are related specifically to the conditions with which this chapter started out. The conclusions can be made only in general terms since the lack of information makes it impossible to relate regional and local conditions specifically to our sample. At the lowest socio-economic levels, the emigrating individuals were predominantly in the agricultural labourers' category. They were the most numerous. At this level too, were individuals in the service sector like Chamars, Ahirs, Goala (Golla) and so on. At the medium level were artisans with skills; and the more numerous agricultural tenant-farmers, good cultivators, who were forced to leave through circumstances beyond their control. An at the high socio-economic level, were traditionally landholding classes, especially in the Calcutta group, who were among the Natal's immigrants. The socio-economic changes in nineteenth century British affected them all, some more than others, but the reasons for their migrations must be located in those development which came directly and indirectly in the wake of new British policies. Colonial users of indentured labourers often advised recruiting agencies to select certain types over others, and doubtless some of this happened. But in the main, recruitment was determined by who was available, and those who were available were generally the victims of forces beyond their control.

TABLE 17

DISTRIBUTION OF CASTES/RELIGIONS AMONG CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

(PERCENTAGES)

CASTES/ RELIGIONS	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877 78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	7,0	0,1	4,4	1,5	2,3	1,5	0,1	0,6	1,0	14,9	0,3	4,2	20,1	26,2	18,1	35,0
Ahir	12,2	3,9	7,7	9,6	6,5	6,4	7,9	15,7	15,8	11,4	14,8	22,0	19,9	15,5	15,0	10,7
Bagdee	0,2	2,3	1,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bania	0,2	1,0	1,0	-	0,6	0,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bhooyear	0,2	-	0,7	-	1,5	1,4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bhur	1,6	1,0	1,4	4,2	0,5	1,2	1,0	2,5	3,4	2,2	2,7	1,0	-	-	2,2	0,9
Brahmin	1,2	4,9	4,0	1,3	1,9	3,7	2,1	-	-	0,4	0,4	-	-	-	-	-
Chamar	15,8	9,5	12,6	25,5	8,5	8,5	19,0	23,1	23,9	17,5	20,7	22,4	16,7	9,2	11,4	9,1
Chutree	2,8	2,5	5,8	3,5	8,6	2,6	3,9	4,4	3,0	2,2	3,0	-	-	-	2,0	1,0
Dhobi	0,4	1,0	0,6	1,2	-	0,9	-	0,6	-	0,7	1,1	-	-	-	-	-
Dosadh	1,5	2,9	2,9	3,0	1,5	2,7	4,0	1,3	1,5	0,9	-	0,8	-	-	-	1,1
Gararee	1,8	-	1,2	0,8	1,4	1,0	2,3	2,5	1,9	2,1	2,5	2,3	3,0	2,4	2,2	1,6
Gowala	1,4	3,2	1,9	1,2	0,9	2,4	-	1,8	1,9	0,9	1,0	3,5	1,0	-	-	1,1
Jat	0,7	-	0,2	-	3,4	0,4	-	-	0,7	0,4	-	0,3	-	1,7	2,0	1,1
Kachhi	0,4	-	0,4	-	1,0	0,7	-	-	0,9	0,6	-	0,9	1,3	0,7	-	-
Kahar	4,0	2,9	3,3	2,4	3,7	2,6	7,0	4,4	4,0	3,1	3,6	6,4	3,7	3,6	5,4	3,4
Kandoo	0,2	1,0	0,6	-	-	0,4	-	-	0,9	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kawote	0,7	-	1,2	0,6	-	0,4	1,4	0,7	-	1,1	1,4	1,7	2,0	-	-	0,5
Koiree	5,6	2,6	5,3	-	4,8	5,0	7,9	8,1	7,3	8,3	10,5	4,4	3,2	6,1	5,8	4,6
Kumhar	0,4	1,3	0,9	-	0,4	1,5	-	-	0,7	0,5	0,7	0,5	-	-	-	-
Koonbi (Kunbi)	0,9	-	0,3	-	-	0,7	1,9	0,9	1,2	0,6	2,0	1,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	0,5
Kormee	5,9	5,6	5,1	3,6	4,5	3,1	5,0	5,2	5,3	4,3	5,4	10,7	11,7	8,6	5,5	4,2
Lodhe	1,8	-	1,2	2,1	2,3	0,8	1,3	2,4	0,6	2,3	2,1	3,1	3,2	3,1	1,6	0,7
Lohar	0,6	1,0	0,5	-	0,6	0,4	-	0,4	1,5	0,6	1,6	1,4	-	-	-	1,2
Mala	0,6	-	0,7	-	-	4,1	-	1,0	-	1,0	-	1,1	-	-	-	0,6
Moosohur	0,3	-	2,8	0,8	-	0,9	-	-	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muslim	5,5	12,7	12,9	7,0	18,8	12,0	2,6	2,1	1,9	1,7	1,0	0,8	2,7	3,2	2,1	1,5
Murao	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,9	0,5	1,5	1,3	2,2	1,2	2,0	-
Noonia	1,4	4,5	3,1	3,1	1,3	1,7	1,3	0,6	2,2	-	0,8	0,8	-	-	1,3	0,5
Pariah	0,1	-	-	-	-	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pausee (Pasi) (Pasee)	1,7	-	1,6	3,4	0,6	1,4	2,8	2,2	1,9	2,7	2,7	1,1	1,3	2,4	-	1,3
Rajput	2,7	4,0	1,1	-	3,8	1,8	3,1	0,6	2,5	3,2	2,9	0,5	-	4,2	4,8	7,4
Tellee	0,4	-	0,8	0,6	0,4	0,7	2,4	-	-	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thakoor	3,4	-	0,2	-	1,5	4,9	7,0	4,9	4,3	5,6	6,2	0,4	-	1,7	9,9	4,6
TOTAL NO.	35720	990	8206	1723	3077	3179	699	3020	1620	2786	1785	2922	1201	1570	816	2126

TABLE 18

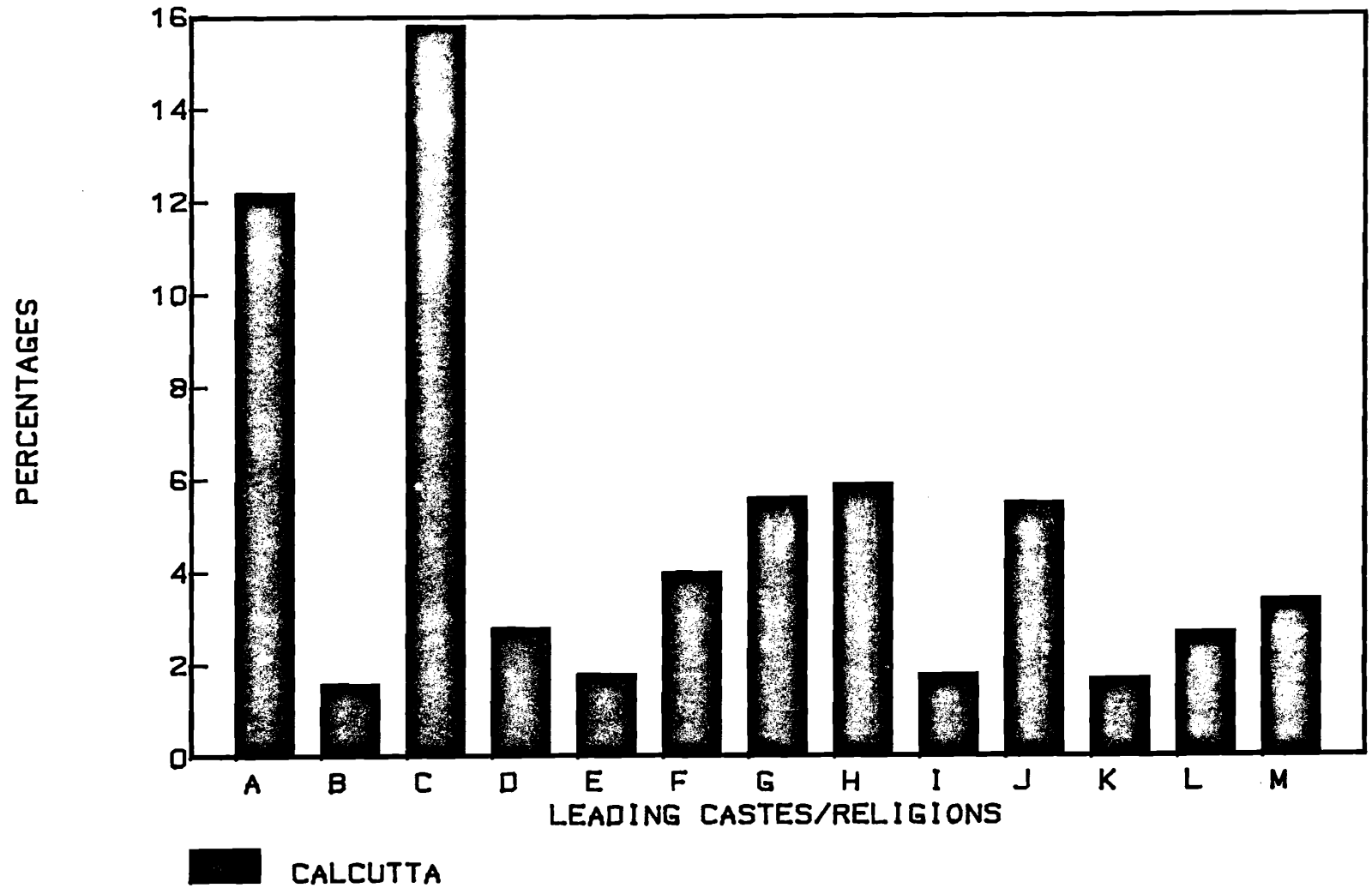
LEADING CASTES/RELIGIONS AMONG CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

CASTES/ RELIGIONS	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Ahir	12,2	3,9	7,7	9,6	6,5	6,4	7,9	15,7	15,8	11,4	14,8	22,0	19,9	15,5	15,0	10,7
Bhur	1,6	1,0	1,4	4,2	0,5	1,2	1,0	2,5	3,4	2,2	2,7	1,0	-	-	2,2	0,9
Chamar	15,8	9,5	12,6	25,5	8,5	8,5	19,0	23,1	23,9	17,5	20,7	22,4	16,7	9,2	11,4	9,1
Chutree	2,8	2,5	5,8	3,5	8,6	2,6	3,9	4,4	3,0	2,2	3,0	-	-	-	2,0	1,0
Gararee	1,8	-	1,2	0,8	1,4	1,0	2,3	2,5	1,9	2,1	2,5	2,3	3,0	2,4	2,2	1,6
Kahar	4,0	2,9	3,3	2,4	3,7	2,6	7,0	4,4	4,0	3,1	3,6	6,4	3,7	3,6	5,4	3,4
Koiree	5,6	2,6	5,3	-	4,8	5,0	7,9	8,1	7,3	8,3	10,5	4,4	3,2	6,1	5,8	4,6
Koormee	5,9	5,6	5,1	3,6	4,5	3,1	5,0	5,2	5,3	4,3	5,4	10,7	11,7	8,6	5,5	4,2
Lodhe	1,8	-	1,2	2,1	2,3	0,8	1,3	2,4	0,6	2,3	2,1	3,1	3,2	3,1	1,6	0,7
Muslim	5,5	12,7	12,9	7,0	18,8	12,0	2,6	2,1	1,9	1,7	1,0	0,8	2,7	3,2	2,1	1,5
Pausee	1,7	-	1,6	3,4	0,6	1,4	2,8	2,2	1,9	2,7	2,7	1,1	1,3	2,4	-	1,3
Rajput	2,7	4,0	1,1	-	3,8	1,8	3,1	0,6	2,5	3,2	2,9	0,5	-	4,2	4,8	7,4
Thakoor	3,4	-	0,2	-	1,5	4,9	7,0	4,9	4,3	5,6	6,2	0,4	-	1,7	9,9	4,6

C: LEADING CASTES/RELIGIONS

KEY

A AHIR
B BHUR
C CHAMAR
D CHUTREE
E GARAREE
F KAHAR
G KOIREE
H KOORMEE
I LODHE
J MUSLIM
K PAUSEE
L RAJPUT
M THAKOOR



GRAPH 9

NOTES

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2 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. 3, pp. 279, 306; Charlesworth, op. cit., pp. 34-38.

3 Charlesworth, op. cit., pp. 45, 63.

4 Saha, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

5 B M Bhatia: Famines in India: A Study in Some Aspects of the Economic History of India, 1860-1965, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963, p. 232.

6 The Imperial Gazetteer of India: The Indian Empire, 1908, vol. 3, p. 250; Saha, op. cit., pp. 63-68.

7 The Imperial Gazetteer of India: The Indian Empire: Economic, vol. 3, 1908, pp. 1-2, 248.

8 Bhatia, op. cit., pp. 20-21, 12.

9 The Imperial Gazetteer of India: The Indian Empire, vol. 4, pp. 207, 214, 236, 239.

10 Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 89, 90-91. See also Charlesworth, op. cit., p. 24.

11 Charlesworth, op. cit., p. 19.

12 Saha, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

13 Ibid., pp. 51-52, 53.

14 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. 3, pp. 476-492. All major famines are reported, with details about their consequences.

15 Bhatia, op. cit., pp. 15, 23, 134-160.

16 Lal, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

17 The definition given in The Imperial Gazetteer of India: The Indian Empire, vol. I, p. 311, is: "A caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families, bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with a specific occupation; claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community."

18 Ibid., p. 334. See also N K Dutt: Origin and Growth of Caste in India, Longman: Kegal Paul, 1931.

19 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. 1, p. 347.

20 Ibid., pp. 314-320. See also J N Bhattacharya: Hindu Castes and Sects: An Exposition of the Origins of the Hindu Caste System and the Bearing of the Sects Towards Each Other and Towards Other Religious Systems, Calcutta, 1896; G S Ghurye: Caste and Race in India, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1969.

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CHAPTER 5

The Place of Work: Employers, Workers and Conditions of Work

It was sugar, as pointed out earlier, that brought the indentured immigrants to the colonies producing this tropical crop. Plantation and milling work remained the most important form of employment throughout the indentured period in places like Mauritius, the West Indies, Reunion, Fiji, and Natal. But many hundereds of workers branched out into other forms of agricultural employment. The predominantly agrarian backgrounds of the immigrants made them particularly suitable for work related to cultivating and growing. In Natal, the indentured workers entered non-agricultural fields like railway-building and municipal services, among other things. This chapter deals with the forms of employment as reflected in the computer analysis, and conditions of work. Brief references will be made to leading employers.

In 1847, Natal colonist Edmund Morewood introduced cane plants from Mauritius. The first quantity of sugar was produced some five years later. Other persons were encouraged by the crop's potential in the colony's economy. In 1854, when the first sugar was auctioned, the crop became commercial. It held out the prospect of becoming Natal's economic mainstay. As Morewood wrote to his brother as early as 1848, "I still think that sugar will be a staple article of Natal." Among the more important questions that faced the fledgeling industry was that of labour: who was going to work on the plantations. Mauritius's experiment with Indian indentured immigrants had impressed itself upon the mind of the Natal colonial sugar farmer.[1]

But the idea to import "coolie" labour did not find unanimous favour. At the first public meeting in 1851 to discuss the issue, Morewood was among those who opposed

the introduction of indentured labourers from India. He and others like him believed that the local African population could be induced to become wage-earners on the plantations. However, in the 1850s, as Richardson has pointed out, the colonial state was unable to "confront and destroy existing mode of production among the African producers..."[2] So, those in favour of importing Indian labourers prevailed.

Sir George Grey, the Cape governor who happened to be visiting Natal in the mid-1850s, was prevailed upon to raise the matter with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It took some time before agreement was reached on the conditions under which the Government of India was prepared to allow the colony to import indentured labourers. The necessary legislation was passed in India and in Natal, and the first batch of Indians arrived in November 1860.[3]

There was opposition among certain sections of Natal's white population. The subsidisation for the scheme paid by the Natal Treasury was resented by these elements. Up-country farmers who relied on African labour were among these forces; many white residents in Pietermaritzburg too remained opposed. Planter influence over the colonial executive was resented. When responsible government was introduced in Natal in 1893, one of the first actions of the more broadly-based legislature was to eliminate the subsidy.[4]

In any event, the machinery for the importation had been established. An official known as the Coolie Agent was appointed whose task, among other things, was to allocate the newly arrived workers to employers. Many of the original petitioners in 1860 were not among the first group of employers to be allotted the imported labourers. The financial position of some of the original applicants had deteriorated since they made the application. Coolie Agent Edmund Tatham had a hard time finding alternative employers but he succeeded doing so in the end. The initial group of employers

were mixed farmers, who combined sugar with other crops like rice, cotton, coffee, and citrus fruit. They were not large employers on the whole.[5] By the time importation was stopped in July 1866, 19 shiploads had brought 6 445 labourers. Their role was crucial in stabilising the initial period of growth of the sugar industry.

The growth of the sugar industry occurred in the period after 1874. The complaints by the first group of returning immigrants, and the temporary suspension of the scheme by the Government of India, led Natal to improve and consolidate the system.[6] Natal appointed, in place of the Coolie Agent, a Protector of Indian Immigrants, whose overall purpose was to safequard the interests of the indentured workers. He was given magisterial jurisdiction to intervene between the immigrants and the employers to check abuses, and to mediate in disputes among the immigrants themselves. The Protector was required to make two visits annually to the plantations. He could register Indian marriages, and after Law 25 of 1891 was passed, he could also administer the estates of deceased Indians. The position of a Deputy Protector was created in 1882, who took over the function of estate-visiting from the Protector to relieve him from the pressure of work. In 1891, an Assistant Protector was appointed who could act in the Protector's absence.

Another innovation in 1874 was the establishment of the Indian Immigration Trust Board to handle the financial aspect of indentured importation. The Protector and the Colonial Treasurer served on the Board. The Board's composition was enlarged in 1880 to 5, of whom no more than two could be government officers. Membership became elective in 1895. Registered employers of indentured labourers elected 5 persons to serve for a term of five years. Membership was increased to 7 in 1902. The Board continued to exercise enormous influence on all matters concerning the Indian labourers. The body was dissolved in 1920.

The system having been refined and consolidated in 1870s and the 1880s,[7] the various sectors of Natal's economy set about to utilise indentured labour. Sugar growers remained throughout the most important users of indentured workers. The employers were predominantly distributed along the coastal belt, a fertile sugar growing area which included the Lower Tugela, Inanda, Umlazi, Alexandra, and Lower Umzimkulu. There was rapid growth between 1854 and 1866, thanks to good prices, low wages, and protective tariffs. The colonial state continued to protect the industry through free import schedules.[8]

In the 1860s through to the 1880s, the plantation mode of production prevailed. The agricultural part involved the cultivating and harvesting of sugar cane; and the industrial part involved the crushing of the cane, the boiling and treatment of juices in the mill, and the production of the final product. The early mills had small capacities ranging from 6 to 15 horsepower, although some like the Reunion Estate could generate up to 25 horsepower. In 1864, there were 60 mills, of which 56 were steam-driven. While the majority of the indentured workers and non-identured African labourers did unskilled work, some Indians were hired to do skilled work. The skilled work was done almost entirely by whites, many of whom came from Mauritius with some experience. The work assignment on the plantation, as Richardson has pointed out was "a racially differentiated hierarchy of skill and control..."[9] Natal's sugar had three main outlets: the Cape, which between 1852 and 1900 took 50% of the sugar; the Witwatersrand in the South African Republic after the 1880s; and the domestic market. The percentage of sugar exported ranged from 32% to 65% up to 1900.

There was a decline in production in the later decades of the nineteenth century. This was due to intensive monoculture and the consequent sapping of the coastal soil's natural fertility, the lack of capital, and natural disasters which struck the industry from time to time. The industry's

response was threefold: land consolidation, centralised milling, and injection of foreign capital. The estates became larger; and large industrial concerns with corporate structures began operating centralised milling facilities. (The central milling system, it should be pointed out, had been unsuccessfully tried in the early 1850s and later too.) With the assistance of mainly British capital, the miller-cum-planter made his appearance. Examples of such large businesses were Reynolds Bros, Ltd., founded in 1892, the Natal Estates Ltd., and Tongaat Ltd. By the 1890s, C G Smith and Co., on the south coast became one of the three major sugar-broking companies with superior milling facilities. The number of mills actually decreased between from 75 in 1877 to 37 in 1895, but the productive capacities of the smaller number increased as they became larger and more sophisticated.[10]

In the 1890s, the sugar industry became increasingly monopolistic in nature. The first refinery at South Coast Junction was floated in 1898, an enterprise that had the backing of subscribers and shareholders like Natal Estates Ltd., Tongaat Ltd., and the Smith group. The small planters did not disappear, but they operated very much in the shadow of giant companies. And, while the introduction of responsible government placed limits on the extent of the help from the colonial state, some assistance continued to be given in direct and indirect ways. For example, the colonial state supported Natal's accession to the South African Customs Union in 1898; it considered the interests of the sugar industry in its decision to promote railway construction, and, indeed, gave the industry preferential tariff rates in transporting sugar to the South African Republic.[11]

The state assisted the industry in two other ways. In 1895, the Natal legislature's decision to pass the £3 poll tax, was aimed at slowing down the rate of termination and in that way ensuring the continued supply of indentured labour. And, in opening up Zululand to white settlement in 1905, it

hoped to expand the industry into a territory that had hitherto been closed to it.

Sugar, then, made up the major portion of the 65 to 70% of the agricultural sector that employed indentured labour. The other important agricultural sector that lured the contract workers was the tea industry. Tea plants before 1875 failed to yield good crops. In 1875, J Liege Hulett, among other individuals, imported seeds from Assam. By 1891, there were 25 tea estates in the Tugela Division. Hulett's Kearsney Estate was one of the most successful. In 1890-91, his estate produced over 300 000 lb. of tea with an estimated value of £15 000. In 1903, Hulett employed 4 500 indentured workers, mainly on the tea estates but also on the sugar estates he had started in 1903. Kearsney Estate grew one million lb. of tea on 1 600 acres of land (out of a total acreage of 13 500) with the help of 1 000 Indian labourers. The Kirkly Vale Tea Estate, jointly owned by Arthur T Reynolds and W B Lyle, was second only to the Kearsney Estate. There were also other large producers of tea using indentured labourers, among whom were Hindson of Clifton Estate and Bazley Estate at Ifafa.[12] Tea picking required care and quick manipulation with the hands, and some of the recruits had experience in tea picking in Darjeeling and Assam in India.[13] Women were thought to be particularly suitable from this point of view. Perhaps even a more important consideration was that women indentured labour was cheaper and easier to control, and the tea estate owners were not above exploiting their vulnerability.[14]

Outside of sugar and tea, farmers in the interior growing a variety of food and commercial crops made increasing use of indentured labour despite their earlier opposition to it. Maize, tobacco, and beans were among some of the crops. Others were involved in animal husbandry as stockmen, shepherds, and dairymen.[15]

In industry the two sectors that employed the indentured Indians in large numbers were the Natal Government Railways (NGR), and the coal mines. Indentured labourers were attracted to the NGR because wages and working conditions were better than in the agricultural sector. An indentured male could command a wage of 20 shillings a month, and receive rations at least one-third more than the stipulated amounts. And, as Maureen Swan has pointed out, both the importance of the railway work and the state's stake in the project, made the government more alive to ensuring better working conditions for the indentured Indians.[16] The railway construction, begun in 1860 by a private company, was taken over by the Natal government in 1874. As from 1876, indentured labour was extensively used by the NGR. By 1895, 309 miles of track had been laid to reach the Transvaal border. The work that the indentured labourers did was both skilled and unskilled. Platelayers, carriage and wagon builders, porters, signalmen, breaksmen, lamp attendants were some among the skilled categories of workers. Many came with these skills upon the special request of the NGR. In 1890, according to D H Heydenrych, there were 665 indentured Indians, in contrast to 1 195 free Indians, 200 contractor's Indians with special skills, and 1 077 Africans. In 1896 the figures were as follows: 1 215 indentured workers, 813 free Indians, and 963 Africans.[17]

Coal mining in Natal went back to the 1840s. However, it was only in the late 1880s that the industry laid the proper foundation which was to see the development of over 60 mines by 1909. The industry's development was closely linked to the construction of the railroad by the NGR; and, as in sugar, British capital assisted in its expansion. The Natal government too helped in direct and indirect ways. As for the recruitment of indentured Indians, a number of requests for them was made in the 1890s. As in sugar, there was a debate about the merits and demerits of having Indians over Africans. Various kinds of arguments were made for Indians

rather than Africans, but the fact that they were "indentured" surely must have weighed heavily in the minds of those who considered forms of controls over labour to be important. There was a steady increase of indentured employment. Twelve shillings were paid for surface work and fifteen shillings for underground work. No Indian was asked to work underground without his express permission. From 1889 to 1901, as Ruth Edgecombe points out, the proportion of Indians, including free Indian labourers, increased from 9,3% to 35,4%. In 1909, they constituted 40,83% of the labourers engaged in "productive work" and 24,63% of those involved in "unproductive work." By 1909, some collieries like Dundee and West Lennoxton had more Indian than African workers. Indian women used for picking belts constituted over 3% in the early 1900s, but declined steadily after 1906. When the future of indentured immigration was in the balance in the 1900s, it was clear that Indians would be gradually replaced by Africans. The African component rose in 1909 to 54,64% and 61,58% in "productive" and "unproductive" work categories respectively.[18]

Municipalities in Natal, especially those of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, hired sizable numbers of indentured Indians in their health and sanitation departments. Except for those who were part of the city constabulary force —— and perhaps others, too —— most of the indentured municipal workers were general labourers. Indians with special skills were brought to Natal, as we saw in railway construction and tea picking. Similarly, the Natal port authorities recruited Indian boatmen experienced in handling Masulah boats and catamarans. Among the more notable of specialised category of work were the Special Servants. When it became known in Natal that people with special skills could be hired fairly cheaply in India, a variety of institutions and organisations requested for their services. Some of these were hospitals, hotels, restaurants, private clubs, dockyards and municipalties. The Special Servants worked as hospital orderlies

or compounders, cooks or waiters, policemen, clerks and interpreters. They came largely from India's urban areas, and were often educated and literate in English. Their monthly salaries were considerably higher than those of workers in agriculture or industry, varying from 30 to 100 shillings. Special Servants were conscious of their status, and were not hesitant about lodging complaints with the Protector for even slight abuses.[19]

The recorded number of employers of indentured Indians in September 1904 was 1 300.[20] And the largest eight employers for 1895 were: NGR (91 200), Natal Central Sugar Col (1 014), Reynolds Bros. (752), G S Smith (566), Reunion Estate (320), E Saunders (257), A Michel (204), and F Addison (192). Except for the first employer, the others were in sugar. Indentured Indians were used very widely all over Natal. As early as 1892, the Protector wrote in his annual report that the Indians were "employed almost throughout the length and breadth of the colony and very little is said against the importation of Asiatics."[21]

Under what conditions did the indentured Indians work in Natal? The worker on the plantations was expected to be paid 10 shillings per month in his first year of indenture, and an extra one shilling was added for every additional year of service. In addition, the employer bore the expenditure for a set of new clothing upon commencement of service, and food rations. Rations usually consisted of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of rice daily or 2 lb. maize meal three times a week and rice on the remaining days; and, on a monthly basis, 2 lb. dhall, 1 lb. salt, 2 lb. salt fish and 1lb. ghee or oil. Males under 12 and women received one-half the rations for adult males. The labourers were required to work for 6 days in a week, except on Sundays and holidays, nine hours per day. The employer was required to provide accommodation and medical service when needed.

These were the stipulated conditions. The actual conditions were difficult, although no doubt they varied from sector to sector. Generally, in the agricultural sector, coercion was built into the labour system by means of formal and informal controls. Frequently, the hours of services far exceeded the 9 hours stipulated. The sirdar constituted a key figure in formal control to ensure compliance. He had a noticeably elevated status (perhaps a person of a higher caste, or of non-indentured origin), and in Natal, his authority was symbolised by the dreaded sjambok. At the formal level, the punishment for non-compliance took various forms: flogging for truculence, demotion to women's gang for slow work, or cut in wages or rations, and non-payment for absence through illness. Informal control was usually indirect, with a system of reward and punishment built into it. Palliatives were used. Alcohol and narcotics were supplied to keep workers happy; and a rebellious spirit could mean separation from wife or female companions for a period of time, or relocation within the estate, or reallocation to another employer.[22] Women indentured workers, resented by employers in the beginning, were open to greater exploitation when their worth was belatedly recognised. Beall argues that "domestic relationship" and the "social reltions gender" were factors that made women indentured workers particularly vulnerable in the system. The were gradually phased out after 1900, and sadly had few skills with which to enter the labour market.[23]

In industries generally, the conditions were somewhat better. There were fewer collaborative structures to manipulate workers, and much less coercion than under the sirdari system in agriculture. The NGR and the coal mines relied upon incentives rather than heavy-handed authority.[24]

While the law made provision for health care, the facilities in most instances were hopelessly inadequate. The high incidence of diseases and illnesses was attributable to poor and improper sanitation. Of the 1 300 employers of indentured

labourers in September 1904, there was a high death rate among the workers of 106 of them. At the Umhloti Valley Co., the rate of death was 200 per 1 000 during the dysentery epidemic early in 1904. Even when the epidemic ended, the death rate was 91 per 1 000 in August 1904. The statistics for Tongaat Sugar Co. and Reynolds Bros. for August 1904 was 36 and 35 respectively per 1 000.[25] Chest diseases among the coal mining Indians were common. Conditions on the estates —— among them the shortage of women —— were not conducive to a happy, stable life. Men drank, quarrelled, and gambled. The avenues for relief from the drudgery of work were few. Alienation was high. This was directly related to the high incidence of suicide among indentured Indians —— it was the highest for any group in the colony, and second only to Fiji among the sugar colonies using indentured labour. The suicide rates among Natal's leading employers between 1875 to 1911 were: Reynolds Bros., 32,7%; Tongaat Sugar Co., 15,3%; NGR, 11,2%; Durban Corporation 9,2%; La Mercy Estates, 9,2%; G S Smith (Blackburn Estate), 6,1%; Cornubia/Natal Estate, 6,1%; Hawkesworth (Beneva Estate), 5,1% and Mt. Edgecombe, 5,1%.[26]

Having briefly examined the categories of employment for indentured Indians, and the conditions under which they worked, the chapter now proceeds to analyse the employer statistics provided by the compter. Table 19 gives a detailed breakdown of employers for Madras passengers, and Table 20 and Graph 10 reflect the leading employers. Similarly, Tables 21 and 22, and Graph 11 show the distribution of employers for Calcutta passengers.

It should be pointed at the outset that the percentage of unknown is very high for both Madras and Calcutta groups. Fro Madras it is 48,9% (see Table 19) and for Calcutta it is 45,5% (see Table 20). For the later years especially, the percentage unknown is extremely high. The information on employers was extracted from the 12 volumes of the Registers

TABLE 19

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYERS FOR MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

EMPLOYER	TOTAL AVE	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	48,9	87,2	-	20,2	15,5	22,7	18,4	29,9	34,7	56,5	63,3	57,7	64,0	71,0	72,6	71,2
Acutt, C & Co	0,5	-	-	0,9	2,5	3,7	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Addison, Friend	0,7	-	-	-	-	-	0,7	1,8	1,5	1,6	-	0,8	0,4	0,5	2,2	0,8
African Boating Co	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,5	-	1,1	-	-	2,0	-	-
Arbuckle, W	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	1,3	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barrow Green Estate	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,0	0,7	-	1,0
Bazley, John	0,4	-	-	-	0,3	-	0,4	0,4	1,0	0,6	1,3	-	0,6	-	-	0,4
Beneva Estates (EW Hawkesworth)	0,3	-	-	0,2	-	-	0,8	1,0	1,2	-	-	0,4	0,4	-	-	-
Binn, Henry	0,1	-	-	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blackburn Central Sugar Co (C Vause)	1,5	-	-	-	3,6	-	6,8	2,7	4,1	3,8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cato Manor Estates (G C Cato)	0,1	-	-	0,5	-	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clare Estate (B Clarence)	0,1	-	-	0,9	-	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Colliers E L Ltd	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,0	0,8	1,7	2,5	1,7	-
Cornubia Est	0,2	-	-	2,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dhotman, A & Co	0,1	-	-	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Duboissie H & Co (Maurica Est).	0,6	-	-	6,4	0,7	1,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dundee Coal Co	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,5	-	-	-	-	0,7	0,4	1,6	1,0
Effingham Est (S Crookes)	1,0	-	-	1,2	-	6,1	2,4	0,9	1,0	1,1	-	0,7	0,7	-	0,3	-
Equeeza Est (Hawkesworth B)	0,5	-	-	0,7	1,7	0,5	-	2,9	-	-	-	0,6	-	-	-	-
Harrison, H P	0,8	-	-	0,5	1,9	1,1	2,6	0,2	2,1	-	-	0,7	1,1	0,3	0,4	0,8
Hill, S & Co	0,2	-	-	-	1,0	1,6	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hill Head Est (E Mollieres)	0,1	-	-	1,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hindson, W R	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	1,1	1,3	0,8	0,3	2,7	-	0,8	-	0,6	0,4
Hitchens, C	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	1,4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hitchens & Maydon	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hulett Est (JL Hulett)	0,2	-	-	-	-	0,4	1,9	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kearsney Est (JL Hulett)	1,7	-	-	0,4	0,4	0,5	1,1	1,8	3,6	-	-	1,4	2,2	7,3	1,1	3,5
La Lucia & Muckle Neuk Est (A Michel)	1,3	-	-	2,5	-	-	3,8	2,9	2,7	2,8	2,8	0,4	-	-	-	-
La Mercy Est CB de Gersigny	1,4	-	-	-	2,1	1,2	3,4	2,0	3,5	3,8	-	1,1	1,7	-	-	0,8
Langlois Jules	0,2	-	-	2,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mayer, G C	0,15	-	-	2,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Milkwood Kraal Est (H Shire)	0,2	0,2	-	-	-	0,9	0,7	1,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Montille de R	0,16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,6	-	0,7	-	-	-	-	-

Employer continued/...

EMPLOYER	TOTAL AVE	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Natal Central Sugar Co.	4,0	-	-	-	-	6,1	11,5	10,9	8,1	9,6	-	10,0	-	-	-	-
Natal Est Ltd	1,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,0	-	6,0	3,2	3,5	3,0
Natal Govt. Railways	4,6	-	-		6,9	4,9	4,5	11,8	7,5	4,1	6,6	4,7	1,0	4,6	4,7	3,6
Natal Land & Colonisation Co (C Behrens)	0,6	-	-	4,8	3,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natal Navigation Co	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,1	2,1	-
Natal Plantation Co	0,9	-	-	4,3	7,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North, George	0,4	-	-	1,5	1,7	2,1	-	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pearse, William	0,25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,4	0,5	1,4	-	-	0,2	-	-
Polkinghorne, JA	0,4	-	-	0,3	0,8	0,4	0,5	0,8	0,7	0,9	-	0,7	-	-	-	-
Prospect Hall Est	0,8	-	-	1,5	3,4	2,1	2,8	0,4	0,6	-	-	0,7	-	-	-	-
Ottawa Est (A Wilkinson)	0,6	-	-	-	1,0	1,1	1,2	-	1,1	1,2	0,7	0,4	1,1	-	-	-
Redcliff Est (T C Milner)	0,7	1,7	-	0,9	5,2	0,7	1,4	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reunion Estate (D. de Pass)	1,2	-	-	1,4	1,7	1,5	3,7	1,6	2,1	2,5	-	0,5	0,9	0,2	0,7	0,4
Reynolds Bros.	1,95	-	-	-	-	4,1	2,9	-	-	1,1	2,0	1,9	2,6	2,8	4,8	5,1
Reynolds T & Co	0,2	-	-	1,9	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saner, CI	0,1	-	-	0,2	0,5	1,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sea Cow Lake Est (AB Kennedy)	0,3	0,8	-	-	-	-	0,6	1,2	1,0	-	-	0,6	-	-	-	-
Sherrin, AJ	0,2	-	-	0,3	1,0	1,1	-	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shire, JE	0,3	-	-	1,8	2,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Smith, GS	0,3	-	-	0,2	-	1,3	2,4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snell E & Co	0,4	-	-	-	1,2	2,3	1,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stewart, George	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,7	0,4	0,4	2,2	-	0,6	-	-	-
Tongaat Central Sugar Co (E Saunders)	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,0	-	4,9	-	-	-	-
Tongaat Estates (R Saunders)	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	0,6	-	0,9	2,5	2,4	1,7	-	4,2
Umhlanga Valley Sugar Co	0,4	-	-	-	4,4	-	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umzinto Est., Esperanza	1,3	-	-	0,2	-	-	5,6	2,8	7,2	2,9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umzimkulu Sugar Co	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,7	-	0,8	0,4	-	0,8
Virginia Sugar Est (M Cheron)	0,3	-	-	1,4	1,5	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waterloo Est (T Groom & G Johnstone)	0,6	-	-	1,6	3,5	1,1	1,3	0,7	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umhloti Central Sugar Co	0,1	-	-	1,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL 59662	89,6	5456	-	4753	3945	3515	4782	4482	4527	3529	1977	3130	4079	5169	6199	4119

TABLE 20

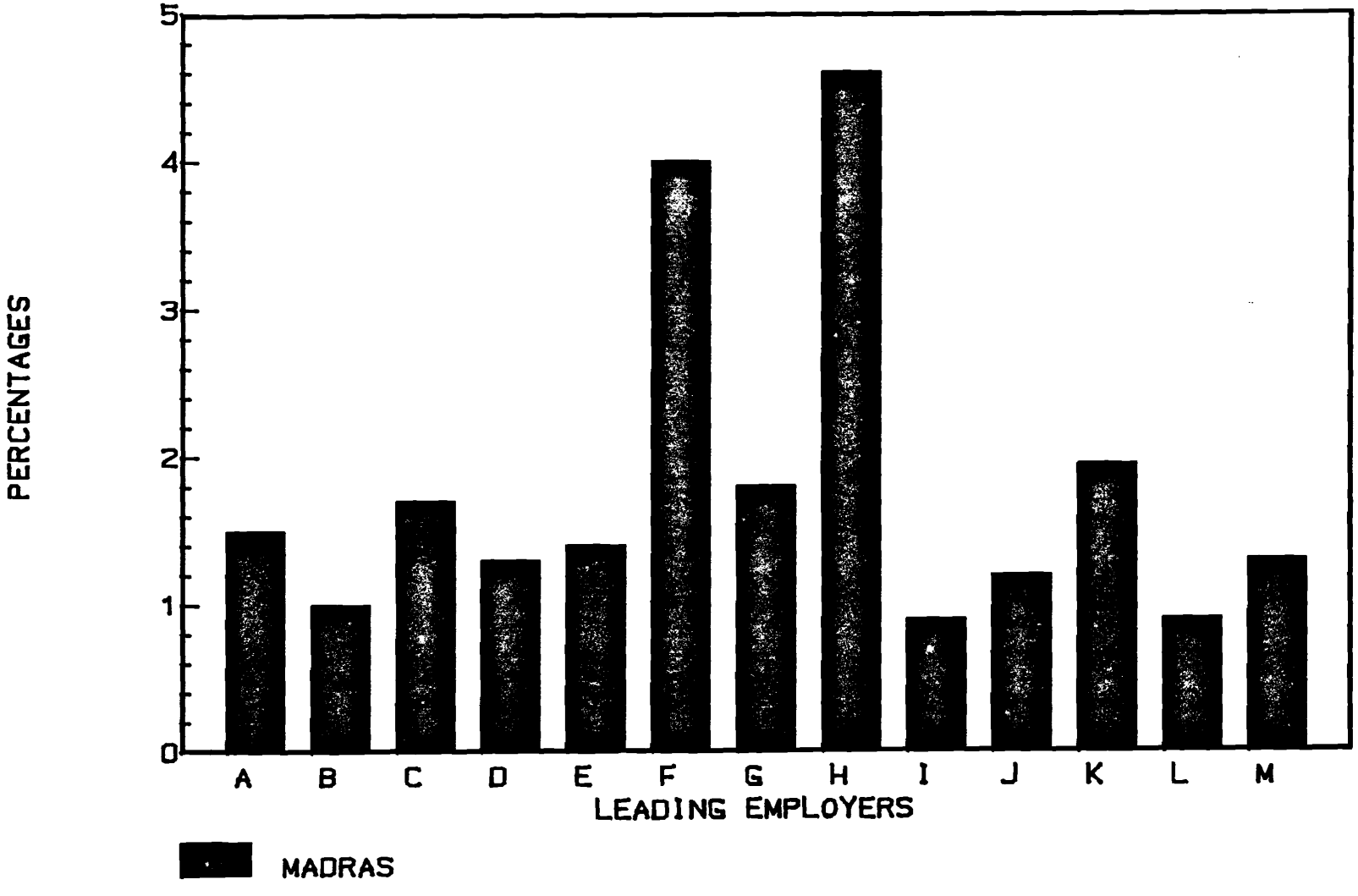
LEADING EMPLOYERS FOR MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

EMPLOYERS	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1773-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Blackburn Central Sugar Co.	1,5	-	-	-	3,6	-	6,8	2,7	4,1	3,8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Effingham Estates	1,0	-	-	1,2	-	6,1	2,4	0,9	1,0	1,1	-	0,7	0,7	-	0,3	-
Kearsney Estates	1,7	-	-	0,4	0,4	0,5	1,1	1,8	3,6	-	-	1,4	2,2	7,3	1,1	3,5
La Lucia & Muckle Neuk Estates	1,3	-	-	2,5	-	-	3,8	2,9	2,7	2,8	2,8	0,4	-	-	-	-
La Mercy Estates	1,4	-	-	-	2,1	1,2	3,4	2,0	3,5	3,8	-	1,1	1,7	-	-	0,8
Natal Central Sugar Co.	4,0	-	-	-	-	6,1	11,5	10,9	8,1	9,6	-	10,0	-	-	-	-
Natal Estates Ltd	1,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,0	-	6,0	3,2	3,5	3,0
Natal Government Railways	4,6	-	-	-	6,9	4,9	4,5	11,8	7,5	4,1	6,6	4,7	1,0	4,6	4,7	3,6
Natal Plantation Co.	0,9	-	-	4,3	7,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reunion Estates	1,2	-	-	1,4	1,7	1,5	3,7	1,6	2,1	2,5	-	0,5	0,9	0,2	0,7	0,4
Reynolds Bros.	1,95	-	-	-	-	4,1	2,9	-	-	1,1	2,0	1,9	2,6	2,8	4,8	5,1
Tongaat Estates	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	0,6	-	0,9	2,5	2,4	1,7	-	4,2
Umzinto Estates, Esperanza	1,3	-	-	0,2	-	-	5,6	2,8	7,2	2,9	-	-	-	-	-	-

M: LEADING EMPLOYERS

KEY

A BLACKBURN CENTRAL
B EFFINGHAM
C KEARSNEY
D LA LUCIA & MUCKLE NEUK
E LA MERCY
F NATAL CENTRAL
G NATAL ESTATE
H NGR
I NATAL PLANTATION
J REUNION
K REYNOLDS BROS.
L TONGAAT
M UMZINTO



GRAPH 10

of Employers for Indentured Indians in the Natal Archives. No other, single detailed source was found that lists by names and numbers employers against individual employers. Obviously, a more determined search through archival sources is going to be necessary to find out fully employers for all the indentured workers.

The point is that the incompleteness of the statistics makes it difficult to discover the patterns of employment. For example, C Acutt and Co., hired indentured labourers for 1877-78, 1879-82, 1883-85, and 1886-89, and the four sets of statistics give an average of 0,5% hired by this company. However, no statistics appear for the eleven other periods in Table 19. This does not mean that the company hired indentured labourers only in the four periods mentioned. Rather, no information was available for the other periods to feed into the computer. And so it is with virtually every other employer in Tables 19 and 21, not to mention the employers who remain unknown.

The tables are incomplete in other ways too. The massiveness of the data, and the limited space available on computer discs made it impossible to arrive at cross-correlative analyses combining variables like employer, sex, age, caste, and places of origin. Alternative programming procedures will have to be developed in the future to arrive at more refined analysis.

The agricultural sector is most heavily represented in the tables on employers. In the industrial sector, the single largest employer was the NGR. Table 19 shows that 11 employers hiring in excess of 1%, employed 20% of the workers; 14 employers hired nearly 10%; and the balance of 34 employers hired 70% of the workers. Table 21 for Calcutta passengers shows that 8 large employers were responsible for hiring nearly 19% of the labourers; 13 medium-sized employers hired 15% of all the workers; and the remaining 25 employers hired over 71% of the workers. Both sets of statistics (for Madras and Calcutta

passengers) suggest that the smaller employers predominated. Does this mean that the smaller employers collectively employed more indentured workers than the large employers? The averages for 42 years seem to suggest so. It may be different, however, if employment patterns are examined separately for each of the 15 period divisions in the tables. Then, large companies seem to predominate.

Since it is not possible to give a detailed breakdown of the employers that appear in the tables, a few of the larger concerns have been selected below for brief discussions. Statistics on the size of the labour force are usually missing in the histories of the companies. They certainly used indentured labour in a big way, and one gets an approximate idea of the size from the companies' operations. Discussion of the larger companies also illustrates the process of consolidation in the 1890s to which reference was made earlier. One already has some idea of the role of the NGR and Kearsney Estate in indentured labour from our discussion earlier.

The Blackburn Central Sugar mill had its origins when Joseph Blackburn bought a site in 1864 along the Umhlanga River. The land was divided into lots intended for coffee plantation. Coffee failed, however, and the company turned to sugar. A mill was built in 1877 on an estate with 2 210 acres reserved for cane-growing. In 1896, Blackburn was purchased by the Natal Estates Ltd.[27] Messrs Wheeler and Haddon was founded in 1876 on Effingham Estate near Avoca. It was floated in London with a capital of £25 000. The company tried coffee before turning to sugar. The company was eventually absorbed by the Natal Estates Ltd.[28] William J Campbell had hoped to grow arrowroot when he first arrived in Natal, but he eventually turned to cane-planting and milling. The estate, started in 1859, was named "Muckle Neuk" in 1861 after the place Campbell remembered in his hometown of Glasgow. Sugar machinery was imported in 1860, and by 1872, a modern mill was built by William Jnr., who had become the manager upon his father's

TABLE 21

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYERS FOR CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902

EMPLOYER	TOTAL AVE	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	45,5	67,6	19,2	20,3	20,6	21,1	24,2	23,2	28,6	52,9	59,6	54,6	69,2	65,4	79,9	76,2
Acutt, C & Co	0,7	-	1,5	1,9	1,4	4,7	-	-	-	-	0,5	-	-	-	-	-
Addison, Friend	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	2,0	1,1	1,7	-	-	1,0	-	-	-	-
Bazley, John	0,16	-	-	-	-	1,1	-	-	-	-	-	1,3	-	-	-	-
Beneva Estates (EW Hawkesworth)	0,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		0,6	1,1	0,4	-	-	-
Binn, Henry	0,2	-	3,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blackburn Central Sugar Co (C Vause)	2,4	-	-	-	0,4	9,0	8,2	2,2	10,3	5,2	1,2	-	-	-	-	-
Clare Estate (B Clarence)	0,26	-	-	3,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Colliers EL Ltd	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,8	-	-	0,7
Cornubia Est	0,28	-	0,3	3,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dhotman A & Co	0,1	-	-	2,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Duboissie H & (Maurica Est)	0,8	-	-	7,1	2,9	2,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dundee Coal Co	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,6	-	-	3,4	5,6	5,1	-	-	5,2
Durban Corp.	0,4	-	1,7	-	2,8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,2
Effingham Est (S Crookes)	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,7	-	1,9	-	-	1,0	-	-	-
Equeefa Est (Hawkesworth Bros)	0,5	-	0,8	0,8	2,5	2,1	-	-	1,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glasgow Sugar Co	0,8	-	9,3	3,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Harrison HP	0,7	-	0,8	2,0	0,6	0,5	-	2,3	1,0	0,9	-	-	-	-	2,8	-
Hill S & Co	0,3	-	0,4	2,0	-	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hill Head Est (E Mollieres)	0,15	-	1,3	0,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hindson, W R	0,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,4	0,9	1,1	-	1,4	-	-
Hulett Est (JIB Hulett)	0,2	-	-	-	-	-	3,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kearsney Est (JL Hulett)	1,4	-	0,9	-	-	0,7	-	0,7	-	4,3	-	1,7	2,8	7,8	-	1,4
La Lucia & Muckle Neuk Est (A Michel)	0,4	-	-	-	-	0,5	-	1,7	1,0	0,9	-	1,6	-	-	-	-
La Mercy Est (CB de Gersigny)	0,6	-	-	-	2,2	0,7	-	0,9	2,5	1,6	-	0,6	-	-	-	-
Langlois, Jules	0,25	-	-	3,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mayer G C	0,3	-	-	5,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Milkwood Kraal Estate (H Shire)	0,5	1,5	-	-	-	0,4	3,8	1,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natal Central Sugar Co	2,7	-	-	-	-	2,8	14,3	9,0	3,8	8,3	2,0	-	-	3,4	-	-
Natal Estates Ltd	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,7	3,0	-	9,8	1,6

Employer continued/...

EMPLOYER	TOTAL AVE	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Natal Govt. Railways	5,7	-	1,3	-	6,2	4,5	**13,8**	24,2	**7,0**	5,3	5,5	6,5	3,8	4,9	-	1,9
Natal Land & Colonisation Co (C Behrens)	0,2	-	3,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natal Plantation Co	0,9	-	3,8	5,9	3,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North, George	0,17	-	-	-	-	2,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prospect Hall Estate	0,7	-	0,3	2,1	1,0	0,7	-	1,4	2,9	0,5	2,2	-	-	-	-	-
Ottawa Estates (A Wilkinson)	0,7	2,7	0,8	1,6	1,2	-	-	1,9	-	2,0	0,6	-	-	-	-	-
Redcliff Est (TC Milner)	0,4	-	2,2	-	2,2	1,4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reunion Estate (D de Pass)	1,2	-	-	-	1,7	3,0	4,0	3,6	-	1,1	-	0,8	1,4	1,8	-	-
Reynolds Bros	1,9	-	-	-	-	5,9	-	-	-	4,7	6,2	5,3	-	6,6	-	-
Reynolds T & Co	0,9	-	-	6,3	3,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,4	-	-	-
Sea Cow Lake Estate (AB Kennedy)	0,9	4,5	2,6	-	-	-	2,8	0,8	1,0	0,7	1,3	-	-	-	-	-
Shire J E	0,1	-	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Smith G S	0,3	-	0,5	3,1	-	0,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snell E & Co	0,6	-	-	-	1,6	2,9	5,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Springfield Estates (HJ Milner)	0,2	-	3,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tongaat Central Sugar Co (E Saunders)	1,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,6	3,2	-	4,1	-	2,4
Tongaat Estates (JR Saunders)	0,7	5,9	-	-	-	-	-	0,4	2,3	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umhlanga Valley Sugar Co	0,4	-	0,7	-	2,8	2,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umzinto Estates Esperanza	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,2	2,4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umzimkulu Sugar Co	0,18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,6	1,3	0,8	-	-
Virginia Sugar Est (M Cheson)	0,6	-	2,6	1,2	4,8	1,0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waterloo Est (T Groom & G Johnstone)	0,5	-	2,0	0,9	0,7	1,2	2,2	-	1,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wilson, W	0,2	1,7	-	-	-	-	1,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL 35720	83,1	990	8206	1723	3077	3179	699	3022	1620	2786	1785	2922	1201	1570	816	2126

TABLE 22

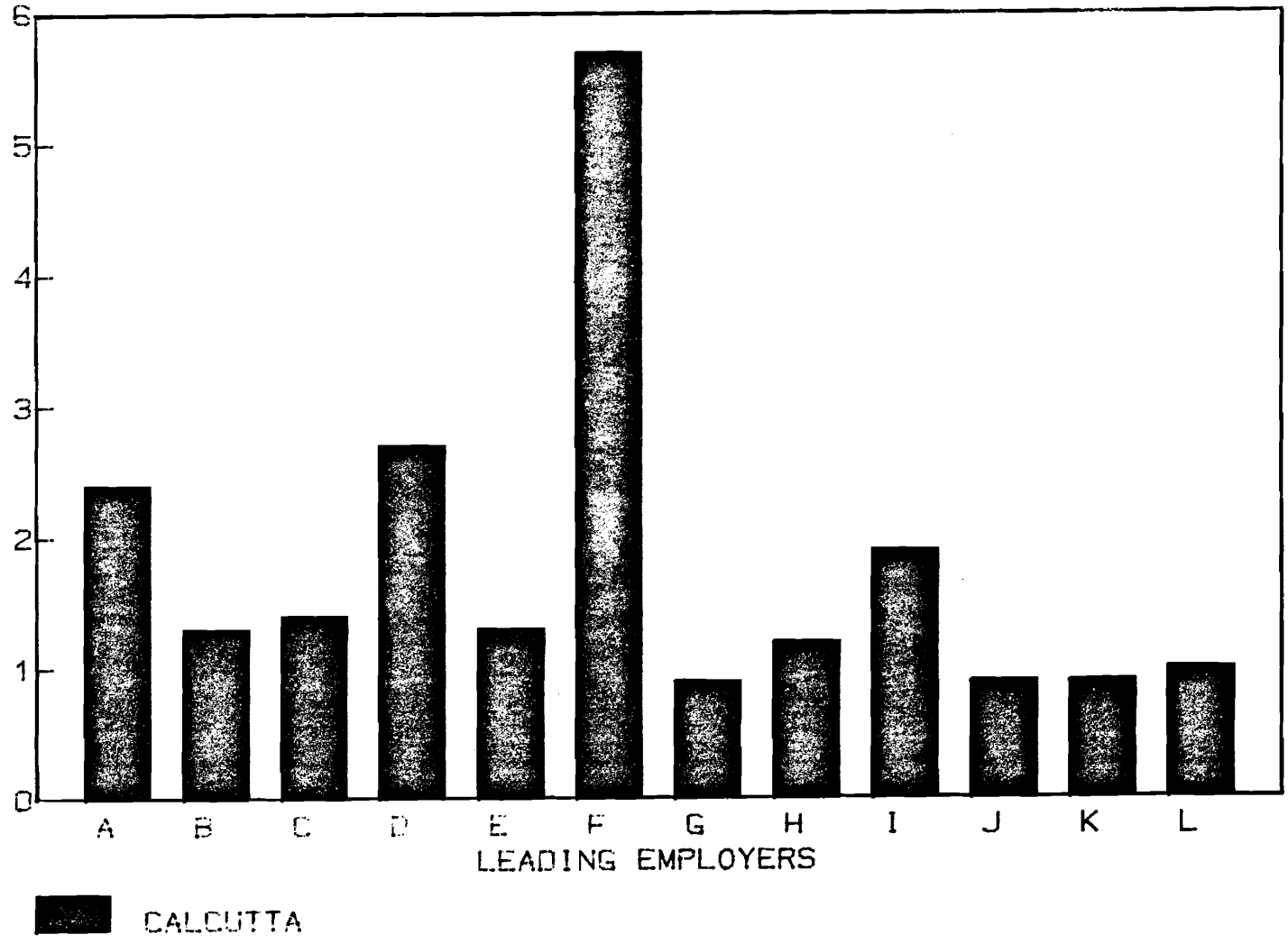
LEADING EMPLOYERS FOR CALCUTTA PASSENGERS 1860-1902

EMPLOYERS	Total Ave	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Blackburn Central Sugar Co	2,4	-	-	-	0,4	9,0	8,2	2,2	10,3	5,2	1,2	-	-	-	-	-
Dundee Coal	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,6	-	-	3,4	5,6	5,1	-	-	5,2
Kearsney Estates	1,4	-	0,9	-	-	0,7	-	0,7	-	4,3	-	1,7	2,8	7,8	-	1,4
Natal Central Sugar Co.	2,7	-	-	-	-	2,8	14,3	9,0	3,8	8,3	2,0	-	-	3,4	-	-
Natal Estates Ltd.	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,7	3,0	-	9,8	1,6
Natal Government Railways	5,7	-	1,3	-	6,2	4,5	13,8	24,2	7,0	5,3	5,5	6,5	3,8	4,9	-	1,9
Natal Plantation Co.	0,9	-	3,8	5,9	3,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reunion Estates	1,2	-	-	-	1,7	3,0	4,0	3,6	-	1,1	-	0,8	1,4	1,8	-	-
Reynolds Bros.	1,9	-	-	-	-	5,9	-	-	-	4,7	6,2	5,3	-	6,6	-	-
Reynolds, T & Co.	0,9	-	-	6,3	3,1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sea Cow Lake Estate	0,9	4,5	2,6	-	-	-	2,8	0,8	1,0	0,7	1,3	-	-	-	-	-
Tongaat Central	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,6	3,2	-	4,1	-	2,4

C: LEADING EMPLOYERS

KEY

A BLACKBURN CENTRAL
B DUNDEE COAL
C KEARSNEY
D NATAL CENTRAL
E NATAL ESTATE
F NGR
G NATAL PLANTATION
H REUNION
I REYNOLDS BROS.
J REYNOLDS, T
K SEA COW LAKE
L TONGAAT



GRAPH 11

death in 1865. Muckle Neuk changed hands several times: in 1877, it was sold to Michel and Perron; in 1893, Michel bought it; and passed it to the Umhloti Central Sugar Mill and Estates Co. Ltd. in 1897; and finally, was bought by the Tongaat Sugar Co., in 1921.[29]

Turning to the bigger firms, the Natal Central Sugar Co., Ltd., was formed in 1879. It purchased from Jules Langlois a mill with the latest machinery, together with the adjoining estate of Mt. Edgecombe, founded in 1959 or 1861, for £100 000. In August 1882, sugar cane was grown on 3 500 acres, producing 25 tons of sugar a day. Its milling facilities were located on 800 acres of land, and enjoyed such a reputation as to attract large clients. The company acquired Cornubia Sugar Estate in 1882, whose manager, Marshall Campbell, soon became the director. Campbell and his son floated in London the Natal Estates Ltd., in 1895, and began buying up neighbouring estates soon thereafter. Blackburn Estate, Saccharine Hill Estate, Milkwood Kraal, Effingham and Umtata Estates were acquired. Other estates incorporated were: Sea Cow Lake Estate, Waterloo, Phoenix, Sunderland, Auchenglas, Fountains, Hill Head, Ottawa, Redcliffe, Meadowbank, James Watson's Estate, and Newlands. The Natal Estates Ltd., founded the first sugar refinery in South Africa at South Coast Junction (later known as Rossburgh) in 1897 for £50 000.[30]

Reynolds Bros., like the Natal Estates Ltd., expanded rapidly by absorbing smaller estates. In the early days, the Reynolds brothers, Thomas and Lewis worked separately. L Reynolds bought Umzinto Sugar Co.; after Lewis's death in 1875, the company was re-named, T Reynolds and Sons. Even before Thomas Reynolds' died in June 1885, his two sons, Frank and Charles Reynolds had become active in the business. They moved to Umzinto, and in 1889 bought the Equeefa Sugar Estate. When the mill facilities were destroyed by an explosion, the operation was moved to Esperanza. A new company was floated

in 1907, with a capital of £150 000. In 1915, an up-to-date mill was opened at Sezela.[31]

The Tongaat Estates had its beginnings in 1848. When the original company was divided in 1860, James R Saunders, who had worked as a manager, acquired a share in the company's holdings. James R Saunders' son Edward took over from his father when he died in 1892. In 1895, he formed the Tongaat Sugar Co., Ltd., with the help of British capital of £15 000. The Natal Central Sugar co., assisted financially in building a mill. In 1899, Edward Saunders floated the company in Liverpool. In 1922, the Tongaat Sugar co., Ltd., bought the Umhloti Valley and Estate Co., Ltd., for £100 000.[32]

Large and small business firms, municipalities, health institutions, service-related concerns, and so on made wide use of indentured labourers. The contribution in economic terms was substantial, and the story of that contribution remains to be told. However, given a choice, indentured labourers preferred free labour for a variety of reasons, and in good economic times indentured Indians terminated their services after only one term in their hundreds. This was the primary reason for the introduction of the £3 tax referred to earlier. Table 23 shows that the rate of re-indenture was unusually high after 1906, and this is related to the depressed economic conditions in Natal during the period. The rate of re-indenture was 58% in 1910; and 70% in 1912, according to the Annual Report of the Protector of Indian Immigrants. It continued to be high until the early 1920s. By then, of course, the system was working itself out. The last contracts expired in 1933. In the post-1911 period, tea, sugar, up-country farming, and coal continued to make use of indentured labour.[33]

While the system was not liked by the workers themselves, its wide usage suggests that employers found in it a trouble-free mode of labour. There were instances of strikes and

TABLE 23

INDENTURED AND FREE INDIANS, 1884-1911

Year	Indentured	Re-indentured	Free
1884	10 496	N/A	19 217
1885	9 842	N/A	20 317
1886	7 661	N/A	21 928
1887	7 040	N/A	21 904
1888	5 703	N/A	22 659
1889	6 602	N/A	23 753
1890	12 029	N/A	23 734
1892	14 326	N/A	24 039
1893	16 051	N/A	24 459
1894	16 655	N/A	26 312
1895	16 040	N/A	30 303
1896	15 889	N/A	33 754
1897	21 066	N/A	38 792
1899	19 084	N/A	41 672
1901	25 366	N/A	47 599
1903	31 004	N/A	56 976
1904	32 153	2 223	60 123
1906	35 281	5 540	61 142
1907	33 444	7 972	61 441
1908	33 280	10 147	59 731
1910	27 028	15 749	65 917
1911 (Census)	43 888		69 304

Source: Annual Reports of the Protector of Indian Immigrants.

protests, to be sure, but they were of minor proportions throughout the period until 1913.[34] There were sufficient forms of controls to ensure compliance. The employers faced nothing as dramatic and massive as the 1913-14 strike when thousands of indentured and free Indians showed worker militancy. This militancy has been explained in a variety of ways in recent literature, about which more will be said in the concluding chapter. More pertinent here are the reasons why the indentured labour force was essentially docile despite the harsh conditions. And these are to be found in the controls themselves, the transient nature of the labour, the virtual absence of worker consciousness among individuals who came from a pre-industrial society and finally political non-representations. This is the context within which indentured labour in colonial Natal must be viewed. And the reason for the preference for indentured labourers becomes obvious.

NOTES

1 Robert F Osborne: Valiant Harvest: The Founding of the Sugar Industry, 1848-1926, Durban, 1964, p. 2. See also pp. 1-41 for early development in Natal's sugar industry.

2 Peter Richardson: "The Natal Sugar Industry, 1849-1905: An Interpretive Essay," in Bill Guest and John M Sellers (eds.): Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony: Aspects of Economic and Social History of Colonial Natal, Pietermaritzburg: Univ. of Natal Press, 1985, pp. 181-197.

3 GH, SC8/1857 and SC 4/1859, Natal Archives (NA). See also Natal Government Gazette (NGG), 17 May 1859; no. 548, vol. 11, for correspondence relating to the introduction of Indians.

4 L M Thompson: Indian Immigration Into Natal, 1860-1872 in Archives Year Book for South African History, vol. II, Pretoria, 1952, p. 70.

5 Report of the Coolie Commission, CSO, 10906/1862, NA.

6 See Report of the Coolie Commission, NGG, vol. 24, 1872.

7 Report of the Indian Immigration Commission, 1885-1887 (Wragg Commission). Pietermaritzburg, 1877, pp. 645. (See also NGG, 20 Sept., 1887, Supplement).

8 Richardson, op. cit., pp. 181-197. See also A G Choonoo: "Indentured Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1911," (M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Natal, 1967).

9 Richardson, op. cit., p. 188.

10 Ibid., 181-197.

11 Ibid.,

12 Osborn, op. cit., pp. 187, 194-195.

13 J B Brain: "Indentured and Free Indians in the Economy of Colonial Natal," in Guest and Sellers (eds.): op. cit., pp. 214-217.

14 J D Beall: "Women Under Indenture in Natal," Paper, Conference on Indentured Indians, University of Durban-Westville, October 1985.

15 Brain, op. cit., p. 215.

16 Maureen Swan: "Indentured Indians: Accommodation and Resistance 1890-1913," Paper, Conference on Indentured Indians, University of Durban-Westville, October 1985. See also M J Swan: Gandhi: The South African Experience. Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985.

17 D H Heydenrych: "Indian Railway Labour in Natal, 1876-1895: The Biggest Indian Work Force in the Colony," Historia, 31:3 (Nov. 1986): 11-20.

18 Ruth Edgecombe and Bill Guest, "An Introduction to the Pre-Union Natal Coal Industry," in Guest and Sellers (eds.), op. cit., pp. 327-328.

19 Brain, op. cit., pp. 220-221; Swan: "Indentured Indians: Accommodation and Resistance, 1890-1913," Paper, Conference on Indentured Indians, Univ. of Durban-Westville, Oct. 1985.

20 II, 1/130, 2224/1904, NA.

21 Report of the Protector of Indian Immigrants, 1892, p. A. 17.

22 Swan: "Indentured Indians...," op. cit.; M Tayal: "Indian Indentured Labour in Natal, 1890-1911," Indian Economic and Social Review, 14.4 (1978): 519-546.

23 Beall, op. cit.

24 See footnote 22.

25 II, 1/130, 2224/1904; II, 8/1, 1907; IIA/2/14, 273/1907, II, 1/152, 1298/1907 and 1430/1907, NA.

26 Surendra Bhana and Arvinkumar Bhana: "An Exploration of the Psycho-Historical Circumstances Surrounding Suicide Among Indentured Indians, 1875-1911," Paper, Conference on Indentured Indians, University of Durban-Westville, October 1985.

27 Osborn, op. cit., pp. 243-244.

28 Ibid., p. 247.

29 Ibid., pp. 222-223.

30 Ibid., pp. 78, 146-47, 151-52, 249-255.

31 Ibid., pp. 77, 322-325.

32 Ibid., pp. 77-78, 203-205.

33 Annual Reports of the Protector of Indian Immigrants, 1921 to 1934.

34 Commission of Inquiry: Re: Shire's Coolies, CSO, 615/1862, 29 March 1862, vol. 147, NA; Report of the Coolie Commission, 17 Sept., 1872; Wragg Commission, 1885-1881; Tayal: "Indian Indentured Labour in Natal, 1890-1911," Indian Economic and Social Review, 14:4 (1978): 519-546; Brain, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This study analysed 95 382 indentured Indians to Natal as they appeared on the Madras and Calcutta ship's lists from 1860 to 1902. That number represents under two-thirds of the total of 152 184 indentured persons who came to Natal until July 1911, when further importation was stopped. The major categories of information contained in the ship's lists were analysed. These included age and sex distribution, caste and/or religious affiliation, places of origin, and the pattern of employment among those whose employers were known. In all instances, an attempt was made to explain the statistics within the broad historical context in which the indentured system operated. What follows are points highlighted in the study.

The indentured system was created mainly in response to the labour crisis experienced in sugar-producing areas after the abolition of slavery. In the sense, however, that structures were created to move labour from a depressed area of the world to regions where capitalist expansion was taking place, the system was part of a larger historical development. The subcontinent of India was part of the British empire, and the imperial state actively intervened, as Marks and Richardson point out, to "shape and control labour markets" internationally. Indeed, labour itself became commoditised.[1] Indentured migration is linked with the expansion of capital, then, and the structures established to assist in the process are important in the understanding of the system. The migration to Natal must thus be understood within the context of thousands of others who went to Mauritius, Reunion, the West Indies and Fiji. By the time the export of indentured migrants was ended in 1917, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ million Indians had gone abroad to various parts of the world.

With reference specifically to the Natal composition, over two-thirds of the immigrants came from southern India, and the rest from northern India. They came from districts in the Madras Presidency, and from those in the United Provinces (UP) of Agra and Oudh, and Bihar, which was part of the Bengal Presidency. The emigrants had a predominantly rural background, which was quite normal considering that over 70% of all the inhabitants in British India in 1900 lived in villages. The rural population in 1900 for the Madras Presidency and the UP was 89% and that in Bihar was 95%. Why did the emigrants leave? This question is related to the conditions in the rural areas, and to the method of recruitment.

Regrettably no information was available on the prevailing conditions in the specific areas from which Natal's immigrants were drawn. Vast sections of the people depending on agriculture became adrift in the second half of the nineteenth century. British imperial policies, compounded by natural disasters, were responsible for uprooting thousands. British industrial policy had the effect of deindustrialising India and throwing countless number of handicraftsmen out of work; and the British land tenure policies created conditions in which peasants and farmers were driven off the land. Internal migration increased, and the consequent overflow of unabsorbed people ended up emigrating abroad.

Closely connected with the reason for the overseas migration are the circumstances surrounding recruitment methods. A lawful machinery for recruitment was created; but perhaps the larger percentage of recruitment occurred via the unlicensed arkatis, who were outside of the officially sanctioned structures. The arkatis were the ones who first provided information about the intended destinations, and the potential emigrants made a decision based upon that information. There is considerable evidence to believe that widespread misrepresentation took place. This and other forms of abuse raise

the issue whether the emigrants could be said to have exercised "free choice" in making the decision in the full sense of the phrase. The point is well taken, yet when one considers the enormous scale of the migrations, the emigrants did make the decision to travel abroad even if they were deceived about their eventual destinations. It is much more fruitful for the historian to understand why people chose to emigrate at all, because then it shifts the focus of the debate on the forces that dislocated thousands of people. A study of the socio-economic backgrounds of the emigrants reveals much.

A caste did not always reflect the occupational background of the emigrant. Brahmins, traditionally priests, were often land-owning farmers. The range of castes suggests a wide variety of skills if one accepts that caste and occupational categories coincided. Nevertheless, the leading castes indicate that the most numerous classes were the landless peasants, agricultural workers, and village service-labourers like Odda (earth workers), Chamars (leather tanners), and Dosadhs (watchmen). A great deal is often said about the predominance of individuals of low castes. To be sure, Pariahs in the Madras group, and Chamars and Ahirs in the Calcutta group were in the majority. But when one examines the whole range of caste distribution, there is a substantial percentage of upper to middling levels of caste in the sample in both the Madras and Calcutta groups. Respectable agricultural and non-agricultural castes are to be found among both groups of immigrants. The predominance of the low socio-economic classes suggests that this section of the population was most severely affected by the upheavals in nineteenth century India. Finally, while Hindus were in the majority, Christians and Muslims were also among the immigrants. In the Madras group, 1,3% were Christians, and 3% were Muslims. In the Calcutta group, no Christians showed up in the computer analysis, although there were doubtless a few; and Muslims made up 5,5%.

As for employment patterns in Natal, the sugar industry provided the highest number of jobs. Other agricultural sectors, most notably tea, also provided employment. In the industrial sector, the two leading forms of employment were in railway construction and coal mining. Working conditions were generally poor in the agricultural sector in relation to the industrial sector. A question of great importance is why indentured labour was preferred over free labour. The assurance of a regular supply of labour for a fixed period was important for employers who were yet unsure of labour sources from among the indigenous population, many of whom were lured away by the gold and diamond mining industries. But, the greater machinism of worker controls afforded by the indentured system, must surely have weighed in the consideration of this from of labour. A tightly controlled system provided employers with a docile labour force on the whole, although there were instances of protest and strikes among groups of workers.

The indentured labourers came from a pre-industrial society, and the level of worker consciousness was incipient. And, since most of them worked only for one term, their transience made organisation and leadership difficult. The foremost political organisation of the time, the Natal Indian Congress, was primarily concerned with the interests of traders. So, politically too, the growth of the indentured workers was stunted. And yet, it is they who provided industrial and political militancy in 1913-1914.

What was the reason for this militancy? Ginwala sees it in terms of the slowly developing worker consciousness among the indentured Indians which culminated around a set of historical circumstances in 1913. Swan does not believe that such worker consciousness was responsible for the action. Rather, the action must be seen in terms of a semi-politicised, pre-industrial group reacting to the call of a person from a higher social status, namely M K Gandhi. J D Beall and M D

North-Coombes place the indentured militancy within the "social and economic matrix of the system.[2]

As seminally important as these explantations are, they nevertheless point to the need for basic research on the indentured system in its many facets. For the serious scholar interested in the indentured Indians, there are 75 linear metres of archival materials in the Natal Archives that await his attention. It is hoped that this study has provided a sufficient basis to inspire scholars in the future to undertake research on the indentured system.

Notes

1 Shula Marks and Peter Richardson (eds.): International Labour Migration: Historical Perspective, London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1984, pp. 1-18; see also Colin Newbury: "Labour Migration in the Imperial Phase: An Essay in Interpretation," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 3:2 Jan. 1975): 234-256, and Daniel North-Coombes: "Indentured Labour in the Sugar Industries of Natal and Mauritius, 1834-1900," Paper, Conference on Indentured Indians, UDW, October 1985.

2 Frene N Ginwala: "Class, Consciousness and Control — Indian South Africans, 1860-1946," (Ph.D. Diss., Univ. of Oxford, 1976); M Swan: Gandhi: The South African Experience, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985, and "Indentured Indians: Accommodation and Resistance, 1890-1913," Paper, Conference on Indentured Indians, October 1985; J D Beall and M D North-Coombes: "The 1913 Disturbances in Natal: The Social and Economic Background to 'Passive Resistance,'" Journal of Natal and Zulu History, 6 (1983): 48-81.

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