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**THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICE OF
PURATTASI AS A MEANS TO SOCIAL
IDENTITY FORMATION IN
SOUTH AFRICA**



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The Religious Practice of Purattasi as a Means to Social Identity in South Africa

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2003

DEDICATION

I humbly dedicate this work to my late Father, Rajee Mannoo Govender, my mother, Kannama Govender and my late mother-in-law, Rajamah Govender and my late younger brother Sukananda Govender.

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hereby declare that the dissertation entitled:

The Religious Practice of Purattasi as a means to Social Identity Formation in South Africa.

is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other university.



SIGNATURE

5 : 12 : 2003

DATE

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I wish to confirm that I have abided by the terms and conditions stipulated in the scholarship agreement, and that the National Research Foundation is absolved of any responsibility with regard to this scholarship. The opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

PREFACE

The Indian diaspora has now more than ever before exported the inhabitants of the sub-continent to very many countries in the world. They are presently to be found settled in far-off places like Alaska, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, the United States of America, England, Canada and elsewhere. By far the largest group that had emigrated under the tri-partite patronage of South Africa, India and Britain between 1860 and 1911 to South Africa were a mixture of Hindus, Christians and Muslims representing the four major Indian language groups of Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Gujarati. The indentured, in no small measure, played a significant part in drastically uplifting the economy of Natal as efficient and hardworking labourers in the sugarcane farms, the coalfields of Northern Natal and in the wattle farms of the mist belt of the Midlands of Natal. No doubt, in some cases their working conditions were extremely trying and painfully difficult; but they triumphed. They were not willing to remain in their immigrant servitude. After their contract, as is now, patently well known that in about 140 years they have reached against all odds. They are world recognized in nearly all fields where human endeavour calls for the best. They have produced renowned academics and artisans and are visible wherever excellence is the benchmark. After 1994 they have integrated with ease within the South African plural society without abandoning their language, culture, traditions, belief systems, dietary habits and the distinct dress of the women in particular and the men in general. Undoubtedly their inborn patience and tolerance and the ability to change and adapt within a multi-religious and multi-ethical milieu is a humble credit to their forbearance.

KR Govender

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CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH DESIGN & INTRODUCTION

1.1 Title of Thesis

The Religious Practice of Purattasi as a Means to Social Identity Formation in South Africa

1.2 Supervisor of Thesis

Prof. P. Kumar: School of Religion & Culture- University of Durban-Westville

1.3 Background of the Research Topic

The descendents of the South African Hindus practice Purattasi, a religious festival, which has its roots in South India. This festival is observed in South Africa in the month Purattasi, which falls between mid-September and mid-October every year. The Purattasi festival is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, one of the Holy Trinity, who comes to the rescue whenever the world is in turmoil; to save human beings he incarnates himself on earth. The observance of Purattasi has been transmitted both orally and by participation, to their children by their parents.

In the Bhagavad-Gita the Supreme Lord says:

*yada yada hi dharmasya
glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanam adharmasya
tadatmanam srijamy aham (4:7).*

'Whenever and wherever, there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion – at that time I descend myself (1991:226).

According to His Divine Grace, Swami Prabhupada (1991: 228) states:

Lord Vishnu again says to Arjuna the son of Prtha:

paritrawaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma- samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge (4.8).

'To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to re-establish the principles of religion, I myself appear, millennium after millennium'.

Many South African Hindu devotees make the pilgrimage to Tirupathi, a world famous temple of the Tirumala Hills in Andra Pradesh, to offer prayers at the shrine of Lord Venkateswara. The devotees who have their vows fulfilled offer their hair on their heads as a penance. The history of this festival is significant both in its literary sources as well as in the practices. However, of singular importance is the meaning this festival has for the Hindus in South Africa.

Although, Purattasi has been observed for nearly 140 years or more in South Africa, its social significance both within the Hindu society as well as in the larger South African society has not been explained sufficiently. The scope of this study will be limited to the Greytown-Pietermaritzburg area in the midlands of KwaZulu Natal and will include South and North Indians of the Hindu Community.

1.4 Aims of Thesis

The main aim of this thesis is to show the link between social identities within a religiously pluralist society. This will be achieved by using the religious practice of the Hindus, namely Purattasi, as a case study.

1.5 Motivation for the Research

South Africa is a multifaceted country composed of many cultures, many religious affiliations, many political ideologies and all this within a multitude of ethnic identities and cultures. Each ethnic group contributes to a large or a small degree to a rich kaleidoscopic divergent South African nation – a nation, which is aptly referred to as a “Rainbow Nation”. Each ethnic and sub-ethnic group has its language, its own religion, its own customs and

traditions, code of conduct, dress and dietary habits. In this large diversified community live the Tamil and Telugu speaking Hindus, whose forbears emigrated from the Indian subcontinent. The areas from where the majority of the Indians came from are the Madras Presidency, Agra and Oudh provinces and the Bengal Presidency. The initial immigrants came from the Madras Presidency, which is now called Tamil Nadu. Madras Presidency included both Tamil regions and Telegu regions

Some of the Tamil and Telugu speaking Hindus in South Africa observe the same religious festivals that fall during this month. Such a minority has survived comfortably during the pre 1994 era and now it survives in a post 1994 democratic society without losing its ethnicity and identity, its vibrant Vaisnava tradition and its devout religiosity.

A pluralistic society lends itself to many issues of identity formation; issues of social integration; racial tension; political affiliation; academic attainment; social upward mobility; acculturation; education, and employment. Further, stress is felt due to proselytization of other religious affiliates who offer seemingly a much more lucrative position within their religions. There are many indigenous ethnic groups in South Africa, such as the Cape Nguni, the Zulu of KwaZulu Natal, the Swazi, the Sothos, the Venda and Tsonga (Hammond-Tooke 1989: 59), the Cape Malays, the Coloured and the people of European descent and a few East Asians. In the midst of them, lives this small Hindu group. The Indian ethnic group is further polarized and divided. There is the Gujarati, the Hindi, Tamil, Telugu language groups, and the Indian Muslims. In addition to this subdivision, religious subdivisions occur. We have the Saivites, the Vaisnavas, the Shaktas, the Hare Krishna Movement, the Ramakrishna Movement, the Andra Maha Sabha, the Arya Samaj, the Gujarati Vedic Society, the Christians and their subdivisions and there are a few others amongst the Indians. This list is undoubtedly not exhaustive.

When people are alienated from their own belief systems, culture and traditions by extraneous influences, identity issues loom large threatening the matrix of an ancient civilization.

It may be necessary to look at why the Indian, particularly the indentured Indian, came to the country. The researcher intends to focus on the Natal situation in the mid nineteenth century

of the Common Era. In 1851 the introduction of Indian labour into Natal was proposed by the English farmers, who had already begun to experiment with the cultivation of sugarcane. While these discussions were going on, there arrived in this country the first Indian by the name of Babu Naidoo on board the brig Lavinia on Sunday, March 1855, from Mauritius. He was employed by the Clarkson's as a domestic servant (Kuppusami & Pillay 1978: 37).

It was a momentous occasion both for the Indians and for the White farmers when the barque Truro landed in the Durban harbour on Friday 16 November 1860 from the port city of Madras, the capital of present Tamil Nadu. The Truro was closely followed by Belvedere from Calcutta now Kolkata. The Belvedere brought the first load of immigrants who spoke Hindi from the port city of Calcutta. The Natal Mercury of the day described the arrival of the Indians thus:

As the swarthy hordes came pouring out of the boat's hold, laughing, jabbering, staring about them with well-satisfied expression of self-complacency in their faces, they hardly realised the idea one had formed regarding them and their faculties. They were queer, comical, foreign-looking, and very oriental like crowd. The men with their huge Muslim turbans, bare scraggy shin bones, and coloured garments; the women with their flashing eyes, long disheveled pitchy hair, with their half covered well-formed figures, and their keen inquisitive glares, the children with their meager, intelligent, cute and humorous countenances mounted on bodies of unconscionable fragility, were all evidently being of a different race and kind from any we have yet seen either in Africa or England (Bulpin 1958:252).

These immigrants were now in an unknown land, amongst unknown people of a different culture, tradition and belief system and on the one hand there was the hunter-gathers and on the other hand the colonists from England who brought with them into Natal a new system of agriculture. They have now introduced sugarcane cultivation in a small acreage of land. According to Chattopadhyaya (1970: 1):

'The opening up of the African Interior was followed closely by its colonists, by European powers who lost no time in setting themselves to exploit to the fullest extent the economic resources of their respective, newly carved-out colonies in Africa. In

the British colonies in Africa, British economic interests demanded the employment of labourers from abroad, preferably from India, where cheap and efficient labour might be recruited.'

Thus, when the colonists began sugarcane farming they obviously attempted to engage the services of the local indigenous, mainly Zulu people, to work on these farms. Efforts to get them to be gainfully employed in a settled environment had failed. The attempt by the colonists failed because they (the farmers) were not conversant with the cultural habits of the Zulu people. On the other hand, the Zulus were not initially able to understand the workings of the British monetary system. They, the Zulus, 'sustained' themselves by bartering, hunting, and gathering: most of their needs were provided by nature. Their women were generally the ones who grew a few crops such as millet, maize, pumpkins and sweet potatoes. Their cattle provided them with milk from which they made sour milk (i.e. *maas* - sour milk in Zulu), and occasionally they ate meat. Hunting also provided them with venison. The men generally were engaged in building their huts, hunting, cattle herding and fighting in skirmishes with neighbouring tribes.

Therefore, to subjugate the Zulus to a disciplined time-based agrarian lifestyle was not easy. The chief difficulty of getting unskilled labour was that the Zulu was unwilling to work regularly. This unwillingness to work led the Secretary of State for the colonies, Mr. Cloete, to write on Monday 31 January 1848:

"The black or kafir population which is gradually concentrating itself within this district, is so determinedly averse to all the continued labour enforced under white discipline that none of them are to be relied on in the formation of any public works (Ferguson-Davie, 1977: 1).

Further difficulties were encountered in the employment of the local people, Captain Struben commented:

"When Natives have been in service for four or five months, however pressing may be their Master's circumstances, however earnest his entreaty for them to remain at their post, they will be off for six weeks or two months together to revisit their native

kraals and resume their native habits. The former is perhaps deserted at the most critical time; or if the settler be engaged in trade no sooner does the kafir become expert at it then his time is up and he is gone" (Ferguson-Davie, 1977: 1).

It is undoubtedly clear that it was a formidable task to get the Zulus to work for long periods of time in a sustained way on the sugarcane fields. In respect of recruitment of local labour, they were so obstinately averse to engagements for prolonged terms of service and capricious and fitful in their habits.

To sum up for the coming of the Indians to Natal the Hon. H.C. Shepstone, the Secretary for the Native Affairs told the Wragg Commission, twenty-five years later:

I do not think it would be wise to legislate with a view to force natives to come to work with or without inducement. I think that great risk would attend the endeavour to force them to work. The coolies were brought here because we could not rely upon the Natives for any length of time, and I do not think that you could rely upon them for more than one year (Ferguson-Davie 1977: 2).

Now that the indentured Indians' presence was a fact in Natal and that the progress of the sugarcane farming community was assured by the yearly increased output of sugar, other stresses weighed heavily on the immigrants. Despite the fact that slavery was abolished in 1834 by Britain, a new form of slavery came into being either wittingly or unwittingly whether overtly or covertly its manifestation is significant. This new system of slavery had already a large labour force in Mauritius, South Africa (Natal), the West Indies, British Guyana and several smaller countries (Roy 1985:79). The returnees reported to the Indian Government of the long hours of service – from sunrise to sunset. Flogging of workers for trivial reasons and excessive pay deduction for absenteeism (Davenport 1977: 117) was not uncommon. This kind of ill treatment may have been common along the coast but it was not prevalent in the Midlands of Natal. The Tamil, Telegu and Hindi 'grimit' must have worked long hours; they did enjoy the respect of their employers. They were not ruthless hard taskmasters.

This type of slave labour is further elaborated by Roy (1983: 79):

However, Lal has demonstrated that the recruits (forced into indenture by hard times at home) came from a full range of Indian society both Hindu and Muslim, and in the first case, not only from higher castes but also predominantly from the lowest ones (untouchables)'.

Notwithstanding the obstacles placed on the path of progress in the form of repressive and oppressive legislation the indentured immigrant made tremendous progress. Stuart states in the *African Chronicle*:

“...no country can ultimately prosper, which attempts to repress an unenfranchised minority” (1925: 1).

From domestic workers, barmen, waiters, clerks, sugarcane field workers, wattle plantation workers, mineworkers they made great sacrifices to educate their children. Great emphasis is placed on education which, translates into upward social mobility. Unfortunately post 1994, a new disguised form of job discrimination is subtly and sometimes covertly sneaking into this plural society. In the pre 1994 years it was called 'Job Reservation', which gave preference to whites and not to the “previously disadvantages community”. I posit that the Indian will once again make sacrifices and triumph. In this respect many Indians took the offer of plots of lands, as gifts after indenture, and today we have thousands of their descendents (all born here) in our midst, a large proportion of whom are educated and own freehold property, and yet, by the stroke of a pen restrictions were placed upon their freedom. In such drastic measures madness lies, for no country cannot succeed, nor can any empire endure unless based on justice for all its citizens in equal measure and not of the Orwellian kind.

The least one can say of South Africa, is that the transition into a democratic government can largely be attributed to the statesmanship of the now world renowned former president Dr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and the determined combined will of the people to avoid at all cost any form of anarchy thereafter. This determination to progress is only for the provision of a better future for its younger generation to enjoy. It is also a political blessing that South Africa became a democratic country when it reached some kind of maturity. Other African countries like Kenya took to remove the Colonist too early only to suffer from its own

incapabilities and immaturity. Thus such countries are still far from any form of economical growth nor has their infrastructure improved. Their immaturity, greed, and autocratic leaderships is and will continue to be their undoing unless they have the will to remove any impediments that are on their way to self sufficiency and progress.

1.6 Subject of Study

The descendents of South African Hindus, the Telugu speaking and Tamil speaking Hindus in particular who arrived in this country as indentured labourers observed amongst many other festivals such as fire-walking, Thaipoozum, Kavady, Gengaiamman Pooja and fasting in the month of Purattasi which falls during mid-September and mid-October every year. In the name Purattasi- 'asi' means gracious boon; 'purratu' means falling upon again. The word fasting is a misnomer and is used incorrectly because during Purattasi the adherents abstain from eating non-vegetarian foods, smoking and the consumption of alcohol and observe strict cleanliness of the body and devote much of their time daily in thinking of the Divine. A ritual prayer is conducted on Saturday according to the individual family's choice.

Some areas that will be examined are:

- 1.6.1 The social and religious origins of Purattasi in South Africa;
- 1.6.2 The social implications of certain practices associated with Purattasi, e.g. the efficacies of fasting amongst Hindus;
- 1.6.3 The prevalence of the observation of Purattasi amongst the Hindus;
- 1.6.4 The prevalence of the observation of Purattasi amongst the Gujarati, Hindi
- 1.6.5 An explanation of the social significance of Purattasi within the Hindu community.

The social origins of the observance of the festival during Purattasi are noticeable by a minority group. Not all Tamil and Telugu speaking Hindus adhere to the practice of "fasting". The other linguistic groups observe other religious festivals that fall in the month of Purattasi.

The efficaciousness of “fasting” and abstention from consuming non-vegetarian foods and the meritorious effects of a disciplined behaviour is one of the aspects that need to be examined.

The researcher will attempt to examine the frequency of rituals observed during the auspicious month of Purattasi.

Another pertinent aspect of the observance of the religious festivals is to explore the unifying factors that strengthen social identity formation among this the Tamil/Telegu minority social group. The significance of Purattasi and the part it plays in the lives of the devotees of Vishnu will be explored with a view to a better understanding of why Purattasi is observed. The reasons for abstaining from eating meat or its by-products are due to its symbolism, which will be studied in the chapters that follow.

1.7 Theoretical Approach

The working hypothesis of this research is that there is a relationship between religious practice and belief system and how people perceive themselves as distinct from others. Durkheim’s functional analysis of ritual and solidarity within a community recognizes this. Much of sociology of religious scholarship by the subsequent generation of scholars pursued the theoretical approach suggested by Durkheim. Scholars such as Geertz subsequently suggested that ritual does not necessarily enhance social solidarity among people along ethnicity, religion and so on. The most recent studies in South Africa on social identities suggest plurality of identities along different social lines (Zeygeya 2001). No analyses is yet available on social identities *vis a vis* religion in South Africa. This study seeks to bridge this gap.

1.8 Conclusion

After providing an introduction to this thesis, together with its aims, objectives, hypothesis and rationale, and theoretical approach, I will now move onto the next chapter. In chapter two, I will address the issue of Puratassi as a representation of the Hindu World. I will discuss the following issues, its origins in India and its beginnings in South Africa; the extent

of its observance in South Africa; its religious worldview; its social and psychological implications; its symbolism, and its practices.

CHAPTER TWO

PURATTASI AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HINDU WORLD VIEW

2.1 Background of Parattasi: Its Relationship to some Festivals

The South Indians who came to Natal in the latter half of the 19th century of the Common Era were from agricultural villages or 'taluks'; they were from Tindivanam, Gingee, Salem, Chittor, Vellore, Mandakatathur, Periyakaram, Madras (Chennai) Chengleput, Thiruvannamalai, Polur, Nandavanam and such places in Tamil Nadu and Andra Pradesh. As soon as the "Coolies"¹ landed in South Africa, they began to worship and observe cultural and religious rites and rituals that they pursued in their own villages in South India. Hinduism is not a dogmatic religion codified in a particular format like Christianity or Islam. Therefore, many variations and deviations are prevalent today in the many rituals that are performed by Hindus. They find adequate expression within typically religious, faith-oriented practices such as prayers, devotions, performance of rituals and the reading of the sacred texts.

Kumar rightly says:

'Hinduism is something that has grown through several centuries and perhaps many millennia and includes a vast range of beliefs, customs and practices that have been part of the sub-continent' (2000: 32).

¹ *Coolie*: The word coolie has been used with much circumspection. In Tamil a person who makes an honest living by doing simple jobs such as running errands or carrying baggage is referred to as a Cooliekaran. When the word was used by the English descendants in a derogatory term referring to an Indian, it became distasteful and reprehensible to the Indian.

Most of the South Indians came from castes other than the Brahmin caste group. The then, Natal Government did not encourage the immigrations of the Brahmins to Natal for fear of belonging to an educated caste. Another reason is that majority of the Brahmins were to some extent educated not only in affairs of religion but also in other fields. They owned land and therefore, were presumably relatively wealthy, and did not find the need to emigrate.

Many local temples have been built in the last few decades. The Sri Siva Subrahmanyau and Mariamman Temples in Pietermaritzburg have commenced to build a R2.5 million temple in Northdale, an Indian apartheid suburb of Pietermaritzburg. Negotiations are underway to bring builders and sculptors from South India to complete this undertaking.

Much of the religious rites, rituals and myths were transmitted orally either in the form of stories or through dance-dramas such as the 'Terukhuttam'. The older generation who had the gift and the art of story telling and the gift of memorizing the stories as they had heard them continue to disseminate these myths to all those who are willing to listen.

Some such stories were about sufferings and the eventual triumph of the Pandavas; the exploits of Arjuna in the story Pavalakodi; the adventures of Krishna; stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharatham. The Terukkothu¹ dance dramas were held on Saturday evenings and continued throughout the night at temple grounds or in villages or estates. The stories enacted were similar to Kathakali of Kerala. These stories were from a variety of Hindu mythology "full of high sentiments and theoretical gore". The characters were gods and demons, lords and ladies, sages, saints and soldiers. Nearly, all these dramas ended with a moral lesson and that lesson is that good *dharma* always overcomes evil (*adharma*).

Other places where these dance-dramas took place was in Cool Air, Dalton through the sponsorship of the patron of the arts the elder Maistry who owned a substantial portion of the land in Cool Air which today is a small Indian township built to accommodate the Indians displaced from surrounding wattle farms. These dramas were also enacted in Ahrens near Greytown, Harden Heights Wattle Company Estate, and Crowe's farm near Seven Oaks. A large

number of Hindus were indentured at Harden Heights and Ravensworth. The audience enjoyed these dance-dramas. While there was fun, frolic and enjoyment, much of the myths were transmitted to the people. There were much criticisms and reviews of these dramas by those who were conversant with the stories and literate in Tamil and Telugu.

The exploits of Krishna, the Pandavas and Arjuna were quite popular. These dramas had their own ethos handed down from generation to generation. One of the dominant themes of these dance dramas is to emphasise the importance of festivals such as Parattasi. In a similar fashion religious practices were conveyed to the people orally, by observation or participation. It soon became apparent to them that some of their religious practices and customs needed modification to suit the new place of their existence. These "modifications" becomes obvious when one observes the minor and in some cases major differences in the practice of rituals during Purattasi.

The largest number of the Tamil and Telugu Hindus were from non- Brahmin castes:

'...the greatest majority of the Hindus in South Africa came from the non-Brahmanical castes. They, however, shared the worldview of the Brahmins' (Kumar 2000: 15).

Specifically, in South Africa, the majority of the Tamils and Telugus still cling to their caste surnames: the Govenders, the Naidoos, the Naidus, the Moodleys, the Pillays (one is of a higher caste than the other), the scheduled castes like the Pariahs, Malas and Madigas. A number of Hindus who do not have caste- surnames are suspected to belong to the Pariahs.

Those who came from an agricultural background worshipped their village deities (*gramadevatas*) and home deities (*kuladaivums*) as they have done in their native villages in India. They continued to worship their tutelary gods such as Mariamman, Muniswaran, Madurai Veeran, Gengaiamman, Draupadiamman (consort of the Pandava brothers) and Ankalesvari. Mariamman and Draupadiamman are Tamil in origin while Ankalesvari and Gengaiamman are Telugu in origin.

Due to the rapid urbanization of the Indians, Hindus have adapted and made changes in their religious beliefs. The observation of Pongal (boiling over) in Tamil and Ponghedi in Telugu during the month of Thai (mid January to mid February) which occurs after the inauspicious month of Marghazhi (mid December to mid January) is not so widely celebrated in South Africa, because it is not relevant to the people as it is to the farming community in South India.

Many of the rituals are non-agamic, a particular branch of Hindu rituals. Rituals may have taken an agamic route if more Brahmins who were knowledgeable in the Vedic Shastras were encouraged to immigrate to this country by the local authorities during the years 1860-1911. Agamic refers to: "that which has come down", i.e. traditional religious teachings, contained in non-Vedic texts and thus distinguished from Vedic texts of the Brahmanic schools (Stutley 1977: 4).

Many festivals that are observed during Purattasi are conducted in the non-agamic tradition because a family or an individual practices the rituals according to their own inclination. The linguistic barriers further affect the mode of worship. Very few indeed are proficient in Tamil, Telugu or Sanskrit. Even those who are literate in their mother tongue are not able to conduct the ritual according to the principles of Vedic Agamas.

Kumar (1993: 71) affirms:

The Vaishnava tradition draws its ritual tradition from two sources: (1) the Pancharata Agamas, and (2) the Vaikhansa Agamas, ...the former is more widespread. It is followed in South India...(and) particularly in Kashmir. The Vaikhansa Agamas is "followed in temples such as Srivenkatesvara Temple (Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh) and Sri Padmanabha Temple (Kerala).

During Purattasi in Tamil Nadu at the Opiliappan Koil:

Several festivals in accordance with Vaikhansa Agama and Vadakalai Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya are celebrated. Brahmostava in Purattasi tops the list (Moorthy 1991: 73).

At Tirukkailur there is the Ulaganatha Perumal the fifth incarnation of Sri Mahavishnu well known to Vaishnavites. It has one of the tallest 'gopurams' (towers) of approximately 64 metres in height. It is believed that when Poygai Alvar, Putattar Alvar and Peyalvar met at this temple one rainy night they sang in praise of Srimannarayana. Their devotional songs of love for Lord Vishnu became part of a compendium known as the Nalayira Divya Prabhandam, a collection of four thousand verses. This book is translated into English as the Divine Treatise. At Kanyakumari, the Virgin Goddess-Parvathi, in the month of Purattasi Navarathri (nine nights) is celebrated to commemorate the death of Bana, the evil king of Kaliyuga. Kanyakumari lies at the extreme southern tip of Tamil Nadu. It is here that the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial was built in 1956 and on the second of every October the moon shines through a tiny opening onto a spot where the urn containing the ashes of Gandhi was kept before its immersion into the sea on the twelfth of January 1948. Here also the Vivekanda memorial was built in 1970, seventy-seven years after his famous speech at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in America.

Traditionally, the Saivites have a larger following in the South. The Vaishnavites being the minority group supposed to come from the north (of India) were naturally forced to adhere to the worship of Siva, whenever there was a king who supported the Saiva faith. In South Africa, the Tamils and Telugus wear the Vaishnavite sect mark in the geometrical shape of 'u'. The sect-mark is drawn in white using edible lime. The central vertical mark is drawn in either vermillion or red -a mixture of edible lime and tumeric powder, which gives it the red colour. This sect mark distinguishes the Vaishnavite from the other sects.

The bridegroom wears this sect mark during a marriage. The eldest son who does the ritual for his mother or the youngest son for his father also wears it during the commencement of the funeral rites. This sect mark ('namam' in Tamil) is also worn on Saturdays during the Purattasi month. As an example the devotee who is obliged to perform the Muniswaran (Savite) "prayer" in most cases also observes the festivals that occur during Purattasi.

In view of the apparent similarities, there is a subtle discrimination that is not so distinguishable in South Africa as it is pronounced in Tamil Nadu amongst the Savites, the Saktas, the Vadakali Vaishnavites and the Tenkali Vaishnavites.

2.2 Building of Temples in the Early Days

The temples and the land surrounding it came under the jurisdiction of the local Brahmins who because of their religious education and ranked the highest caste, performed the daily rituals as defined by brahminical injunctions (Kumar 2002: 15).

Since the majority of the Tamils and Telugus belonged to a non- brahmanical caste, they were able to create and perpetuate in South Africa a blend of both non-brahmanical and brahmanical elements. Despite the fact that the emigration from India of Brahmins was not encouraged, M.R.K. Sashtri, a Brahmin wrote to the Protector in Natal on 7 March 1903 seeking employment in the colony. He was 24 years old conversant in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, English and some Hindustani languages. He was able to use a typewriter and had knowledge of shorthand, wheteher he succeeded or not is not known.

In the absence of royal patronage many Hindus took it upon themselves to seek help from land-owners to obtain land to erect their temples. Indians who owned land either donated some land for the building of a temple or bought a plot of land or built their own private temples.

Yengi Venketsami purchased the land and built the Puntan's Hill Shree Ramulu Temple; Doobar and Naransamy donated land to build the Verulam Shiva Subrahmanya Alayam; Haripundan and S. Monangi bought the land to build the Isinembe Shree Harisuob Vishnu Temple in Stanger. Soobiah Pillay built his own temple, the Umzinto Shree Vishnu Temple in 1883; a private temple was erected by Reddy in Dromore Road in Cator Manor; the Govender family built their temple

C1900; Ramnathar Pillay built his own temple in Umzinto; Murugas Naicker built his private temple in Richborough Road, the Ganesa Temple; K.R. Pillay built his own temple in 1919 in Redhill called the Columbine Road Shree Subrahmanya Temple, the Shive Subrahmanya Temple in Pampanyoni is on K.N. Reddy's farm; Reginald Linkar donated land to build the Melrose Shree Shiva Subrahmanya Temple along the Sandspuit River in Johannesburg, this temple was built by Kandasamy Pillay in 1899, Kandasamy Modley built the Marimen Temple on the Kapri Kotri estate in 1870; Munkal Naidoo's Seaview Vishnu Temple built in 1904 by Ramjee; on the K.N. Reddy's farm in the Broadvale Shree Shiva Subrahmanya Temple built by Verdan Naicker; on Ramsamy Moodley's farm in Darnall is the Moodley's Shiva Subrahmanya Temple built by Parsathi Naicker; the private shrine of Kama Govender is the New India Vishnu Temple in Sandfields in Tongaat built by Sobha and sculpted by Behari.

The Shree Vaithianatha Easvarar Alayan, in Umgeni Road caters for three sects of Hinduism, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktism which are reflected in the three main temple buildings. The first temple is the Swami Alayam, the second is dedicated to Vishnu and his consort, Sarasvathi and the third is consecrated to Mariamrnan. Lord Ganesha is housed in the Moolasthanam (Ranctum Sanctorum). The yearly prayer to Ganesha is in Vinayaka Sathurthi. The Saivite temple contains the Sivalingam and the prayer observed is Sivarathri.

The third deity to be venerated is the Commander in Chief of the Devas, Lord Muruga with his consorts Valli and Deivayanai. Kavadi is the main annual festival celebrated. On the right hand side of the first icon is Thayanayagiarmman. The annual for her is Aadi Velli and Navarathri festival. The second icon is Nadarajan (Siva) in his cosmic dance aspect- Thandava is a process of creation, preservation and dissolution. Nadaraja Abishegam is also celebrated at this temple.

The second temple is the Vishnu Alayam. The sculptured icon of Vishnu is in the sanctum sanctorum. The most important annual festival associated with Vishnu is Puratassi.

The third temple is consecrated for Mariamman. The yearly ritual observed is Kanji Kasuthal, which means worshipping with the offering of porridge (Kuzh is porridge in Tamil).

Narayana Pather -1882 -donated two pieces of land for the development of the temple in Umgeni Road.

The white land owners donated land and in some cases even financed the building of a Hindu temple. Such donors were the Tongaat Sugar Company, Reynold Brothers Sugar Estate, R. Armstrong and Edward Saunders. In some cases land was set aside for a temple, but it still remained the property of the owner. Such white people who generously provided the land was the Angus family of Ravensworth Estate, the Hill family of the farm "Came" situated along the R53 Road near Seven Oaks, the Harden Heights Wattle Company, the Union Co- operative Bark and Sugar Mill in Dalton.

A number of experienced temple builders from India were entrusted to build some of these beautiful temples, although not so resplendent as those in India. The local indentured Indians were not financially in position to bring from India the best sculptors and stone masons similar to that which is happening in America, where the Hindu diaspora who have "members of the Muthia Sthapathy's family who have been temple architects in Tamil Nadu for eighteen generations (Linda 1999: 389). Since Venkatesvara Temple's consecration in 1976 it has become the largest pilgrimage center in the United States. The temple is a social institution besides being a religious one. Subrahmanian also says that the temples provide economic sustenance to many specialists: stone masons, carpenters, jewelers, goldsmiths, sculptors, artists, painters, textilers and other industrial activities.

In some ways in South Africa the building of temples meant that employment was provided to benefit those capable of doing the specialized work culminating in an institution for social

communion within the Hindu diaspora. The temples also provided a neutral venue to promote the advancement of the people in the various fields be it socio- economic, educational or religious:

‘... temple is more than a religious institution! It is a cultural center -a place for dialogue for Indian adults to reaffirm their heritage -for their children to discover who they are -for all Americans as a reminder of the diversity that has shapes’ (Linda 1999: 391).

Temples help the "preservation and transmission of cultural values for future generations." The Venkatesvara Temple in Penn Hills not only caters for the religious aspect of the devotees but also provides a variety of languages, dance forms, culture and religious music. The Umgeni Temple on the Umgeni Road in Durban also provides social activities like the teaching of Bharata Natayam to aspiring students. The Pietermaritzburg Sri Siva Subrahmanya Temple offers devotees on Sundays the opportunity to congregate to offer congregational prayer and sometimes "talks" are presented and every Wednesday, which provides for the senior citizens a place to meet to socialize.

The increase in the Indian Hindu population resulted in their emigration from the Point in Durban to the Umbilo and Umgeni Road areas. Narayana Pather and Koo Ramasamy Naicker donated three acres of land on which three temples were built to devotees of Siva, Vishnu and Sakti on 18 June 1883. The temple was built by Kothanar Ramasamy Pillay and Alaga Pillay built the Vishnu Sanithanam and Moolasthanam and in 1952 the Krishna Kalyana Mandabam was completed.

The main festivals celebrated in this temple every year are the Tamil New Year, Chitraparuvam Kavadi Mariammman kanji puja, Purattasi, Navarathri, Krishna Jayanthi, Rarnnavami, Sivarathri, Vinayagar Sathurthi, Karthigai Deepam and Aruthira Darisanam (Padayachee 1996: 15).

2.3 Major Temples and Locations

Tamils are specific and assert that wherever there is no temple people should not live in that vicinity - i.e. *Kovil illa uril kudi irruka vandam* (Ramanathan 1999: 82, Subrahmanian 1993: 303). This proverb is also well known by many Tamils in South Africa. Therefore, wherever the Tamil and Telugu Hindus settled they proceeded to build a temple above and beyond their domestic shrines, they remembered this proverb. In many cases "the dominance of village deities (*Kariya daivam*), may be symbolised with nothing more than a trident (*sulam*), a stone or a tree (Ramanathan 1999: 83) or in some cases as in Natal an ant heap. The Mount Edgecombe Mariamaan Temple was constructed over an anthill in 1890. Today, the anthill is over two metres tall.

In Greytown, a Tamil family has an anthill on their front lawn. The anthill seems to "grow" around a fir tree. The lady of the house whom the researcher interviewed is more involved in the decoration and care of the anthill. She also showed the researcher a few holes around the anthill, which she said were "the seven sisters." The husband seems to be tolerant of her views and comments. Since she was vague about the "seven sisters" the researcher presumes that they would be commonly known as Poleramma, Ankamma, Muthyalamma, Dilli Polasi, Bangaramma, Mathamma and Renuka.

Subrahmanian (1973: 83) says, that the

"most primitive is represented by the village gods who use blood sacrifice and devil dances."

He goes further to say that

"every unknown and unseen danger had a religious base for the primitive mind" (1973: 83)

In South Africa shaman-diviners (poosaris) in many cases request animal sacrifices especially for Mariamman (Uramma or Ambal) the Mother Goddess (Ramanathan 1982: 83). Others who observe the Mariamman ritual offer animal sacrifices. A new trend that is gaining momentum amongst the affluent class is to conduct the Mariamman ritual without the animal sacrifice. Living in a plural society may be the reason to avoid such animal sacrifices or it may be due to the infliction of cruelty to the animals that the devotee cannot tolerate or bear to witness.

Tiruvalluvar used the Venba metre to succinctly say:

The whole world clasps its hands in reverence before one who kills not and who shuns meat eating (Chapter 26, Couplet 260 p.80).

In another couplet (Chapter 26, Couplet 251 p.78) he says:

Can he who fattens on the flesh of animals, ever understand the rule of love?

Tannun perukkar kut tanpiritun unpan enganam alum arul.

Most of the temples in Natal are found along the coastal belt where the majority of the "girimmit" Indians settled. A few temples were built wherever pockets of Indians lived especially in the Midlands of and Northern Natal. The Midland Hindus worked mostly for farmers. Only in the early sixties did sugarcane cultivation appear, which meant that many farmers in the Noodsberg, Dalton, New Hanover, Seven Oaks, Kranskop and Mudén removed much of their wattle plantations to grow sugarcane. Mudén where oranges were grown now began to remove their orange groves to be replaced by sugarcane.

In the coal mining areas like Dundee, Ladysmith, Burnside and Hloban, Indians worked in the mines. In such places temples were built according to the people's economic means. The Dundee,

Balasubramany Temple built in 1910 by K.R. Pillay is of a much higher quality than the wood and iron structures elsewhere in that part of KwaZulu Natal.

Some temples were built on private white farms like in Ravensworth Estate where the Perumalsami and Mariamman Temple built at the turn of the century still stands despite the fact that nobody lives on the Estate. It is a large but simple wood and iron structure. Mainly Tamil people who were indentured on that estate built the temple. The devotees used beautiful sculptured Kavadies. During the month of Adi (July-August) Mariamman "prayers" were observed with the sacrifice of animals, and during Purattasi the adherents did their Saturday ritual cum prayer at the temple.

At Harden Heights the original large temple was burnt down many years ago. It was replaced by a very small wood and iron temple. It is at this temple precinct, an 80 year old interviewee said that a Periasamy danced the Terukoothu on top of a wooden platform built many metres high above the ground. The dance depicted Arjuna's (one of the Pandava brothers) exploits. There is a quaint little temple on the "came farm" owned by the late T.E.B. Hill, now owned by his daughter Joan Dutton. This temple is about 80 years old and was built by Chinnasamy Govender and Chengan Govender. Here the main festival celebrated was Mariamman Kanji Pooja with an animal sacrifice. The researcher was told by the interviewee that the animal was killed and the meat prepared elsewhere and not on the temple grounds.

When the Dalton Union Co-operative wattle bark and sugar mill was being built, a large number of Indian workers from the north coast sugar mills were employed. Under the insistence and guidance of Mr Bapanna V. Naidoo, a modest asbestos temple with a small hall was built. The Divine Life Society group headed by B. V. Naidoo conducted its satsangs regularly in this temple. Later when the Indians moved to Cool Air a few kilometres away from Union-Co- op settlement, Mr B.V. Naidoo was instrumental in obtaining some land from the Cool Air Town

Council and erected a larger brick building with a simple dome. Here Kavadi, Mariamman and Purattasi are observed. No animal sacrifices are offered at this temple.

A private temple was built by the late Mr and Mrs Kuppasamy some thirty-five years ago in Greytown. People from far a-field came to the temple to offer their prayers. Kavadi, Mariamman Kanj Pooja and Purattasi are observed annually. A chariot is drawn on one of the Saturdays in the month of Puratassi.

A very large temple built by the Hindus of Greytown is situated in Cathcart Street. This Shri Vishnu Mandir Vidya Prachami Sabha has grown from its humble wood and iron beginning in 1910. A Baboo Dakka Singh donated the land. The first trustees were Soba Balwanth, Kanai, Pitham Maharaj and Roopai. In 1926, a mother tongue school was established at the temple with pundit Haribarath Maharaj doubling as the first Hindi School Teacher. The temple is now involved in the celebration of numerous Hindu festivals.

Recently a Tamil and Telugu group, the Saiva Sithantha Sabay, which began in 1985 has embarked on building an ashram. Mr Yega Moodley is the leader of the group. They celebrate the Tamil New Year and Deepavali. This ashram will cater for visiting scholars and it would have a yoga and meditation centre and a library.

2.4 Some major Temples that observe Purattasi in KwaZulu Natal:

1. The Mount Edgecombe Emperumal Temple built in 1875, the icons of Vishnu and Laksmi are in the main sanctum sanctorum. Such paired images of Gods and Goddesses are represented in various ways in pillars and murthis. Symbols are often used to show their special qualities. During the early years a tirunal was arranged for the people over three days. Many stalls were set

up to sell different wares. A Terukkothu was enacted to keep the people who came from far and wide entertained during the night.

2. The Sri Siva Subrahmanya and Mariamman Temple built by K. Rayer, K. Mudliar and A. Mudliar in 1890. This temple is situated at the corner of Longmarket Street and William Street in Pietermaritzburg. Among the many religious rituals that are observed the main ones are Fire-walking on Good Fridays, Mariamman pooja in the month of Adi (July-August) and Purattasi (September-October). Since the arrival of priests from India and Sri Lanka much wanted improvements have been made. The daily visitors to the temple who come to have the almanac (panjchangkam) read or to "do" a prayer or circumambulate the navagarahs (the nine planets) to remove obstacles from the devotee's future endeavours or to have their new or second hand car blessed, or arrange for a "temple" wedding to be conducted and so forth. The sculptures on the domes (sikharas) have been painted unsympathetically in garish colours, which, needs to be regularly repainted or touched up. Some fine works of art of aesthetic beauty have become unsightly.

3. Cato Manor Shree Muthilinganatha Easparar Alayam is on the Bellair Road in Durban. The major religious functions celebrated at this temple are Kavadi, Mariamman, Gengaimman and Sivarathri. There are eight temples on this road (Diesel 1993: 29). One of the great injustices of the apartheid era was to evict the Indian market gardeners under the Group Areas Act to proclaim Cato Manor as a white area. It never turned out to be a white area. Cator Manor became desolate, homes and lands stood vandalized and became a home to homeless vagrants.

4. The Illovo Shree Vishnu Temple was built in 1934 by Kamsalu Moonsamy. A chariot was drawn through the village of Illovo on every Easter Saturday. Purattasi is an annual celebration at this temple.

5. The Narainsamy Temple on the Inanda Road in Newlands in Durban was built by Kistappa Reddy where the main festivals are Kavadi, Purattasi and Visakam, are observed.
6. The Umzinto Shree Vishnu Temple was constructed in 1883 by the owner Soobiah Pillay. The main festival is the Mariamman festival which is celebrated in April or May and Purattasi.
7. The Greenwood Park Shree Ranganathar Temple was built in Park Station Road in 1903. The Purattasi prayers are observed every year at this temple.
8. The Klipfontein Emperumal Temple was the first Vishnu Temple and others dedicated to Gengaimman, Mariamman and Siva to be built in 1906 by the Bala brothers from Tongaat. The cost was borne by the Tongaat Sugar Company, which regularly donates food during the chariot festival during Purattasi. Tamil and Telugu Hindus who belong to the Vaishnavite and Saivite traditions observe these festivals.
9. The Inyaninga Shree Mariaman Temple was built in 1876 by the community. It was a wood and iron structure. In 1939, a bigger temple was built by the community with money and land given by the Tongaat Sugar Company.
10. The New Guelderland Emperumal Temple is a wood and iron building established by K. Munian in 1920. The Sugar Estate built the Shree Emperumal and Mariammen Temples in 1958. The main festivals celebrated are Purattasi and Mariammen.

11. The Rajoo Chetty Shree Vishnu Temple is situated in Sparks Road in Durban. Its iconography was sculptured by Marimuthu and Punjanathan who came to Durban in 1947 to work on the Umbilo Temple at Second River. The important festival observed here is Purattasi.

12. The Fountainhead Shree Venketasvara Davastanum Temple was built on the farm of the same name, off the Umkomas River, in a wood and iron building. The main festivals observed are Gengaiamman and Purattasi.

In India temples, the arts, sages, poets and scholars were under the patronage of the kings and rulers of the land. In fact kings sought to have many scholars visiting their kingdom to enrich their scholars. Kampan who wrote the Ramayana in Tamil, Auvai the sister of Tiruvalluvar who wrote Thirukkural were such scholars. It is only in India and particularly in the south that the King leaves his throne to welcome such great poets and scholars and sages.

2.5 The Religious Worldview of Hindus

In what follows I will attempt to an understanding of the Hindu worldview vis a vis the festival of Parattasi. Parattasi is often described both as a festival and also ritual. In my discussions I found it useful to describe it as a festival as Parattasi involves not only the various rituals performed during the days of fasting but also the celebration of the deity, Vishnu, on the final day. The festival in question involves both restraints and various observances. The *yamas* and *niyamas* "restraints and observances" are a means to control the vitarkas, the evil thoughts. There are many such yamas. Practicing ahimsa (non injury) to all living creatures and that all life is sacred is the foundation of Hinduism. The disciplinary code of conduct and behaviour during the month of Purattasi is laudable.

Temple worship, repetition of God's name, listening to religious discourses, and participating in temple festivals are some of the ways of expressing one's devotion to God.

There are a number of codes of moral conduct that a Hindu should practice despite the truth that these are inherent in human beings. Hinduism is culturally bound by tradition particularly its religious culture. Thus, in India and to some extent in South Africa, in every village, town or city or in the shelter of a tree alongside a road there is a place to offer one's prayer; whether it is for a safe journey, or the removal of an obstacle that hinders one's progress. In the same view in every village, hamlet, town or city there is a Rishi, a Sadhu, a Pulavar, a Kavi Yogi or an Acharya to minister to the laity on the philosophy, psychology and phenomenon of Hinduism whether it is Vaishnavism, Saivism, or any other sects of Hinduism.

According to the 'Hinduism Today' (1996: 6):

"Hindu culture is the pristine embodiment of a profound philosophy."

Its religious worldview falters and finds it very difficult to maintain and obey or go against the laws of nature. I believe that one cannot enjoy sweetness if one has not tasted bitterness.

These ethical and moral values, are many, but a few to highlight the essence of Hindu teaching are: non-stealing, patience, compassion, truthfulness, divine conduct, steadfastness, honesty, charity, worship, development of spiritual way of life, recitation of God's name, purity of mind, body and speech, inner contentment, scripture reading and listening, honouring vows, and practicing austerities.

The Hindu religion is fundamentally grounded upon "its vision of human destiny, of the world and God." The Vaidika Dharma allows for different forms of worship and prayer: emancipations are derived from Vedic insight that all are non-separate from God.

Hindus believe in human destiny. Man is the highest form of God's creation, "divine in nature and unique in destiny" (Hinduism Today 1995: 23). Man is obligated to avoid sin (paapam), escaping from sin (saapam) observing the Law (saasana), and following the modes of moral and ethical conduct (saastra) (Hinduism Today January 1995:23).

Every human being makes every effort to avoid committing a sin because he has been endowed with a rationality to differentiate between godliness and unrighteousness given the fact that he has a free will to make decisions based on age old wisdom of great seers and sages for his own good and for his own salvation.

Most religions deal with the fundamental issue of whether the individual is free to determine his salvation or whether he is totally dependent on the sovereign will of God.

Hindus believe that the soul will ultimately become one with God. Through the Karmic law of cause and effect the individual designs and maps out his own destiny. Hindus believe that the soul reincarnates until all the Karmas are removed. Karmas can be positive, i.e. good (punya), holy, meritorious or negative, i.e. bad (karmadosha), sinful, evil, devious, devoid of devotion. So one is righteous or good, by doing virtuous work or actions, or bad by engaging in unrighteous or immoral actions.

From an early age Hindu children are taught to respect their parents. They are taught that their parents are their first god (Annum Pithavum munneri daivam) (Kondrai Venthana, Verse 1). All

elders are to be respected. This fundamental injunction is one of the cornerstones of Hindu culture. Therefore, throughout their lives their children honour and show their love and respect for their parents. An endearing factor that pervades the Hindu culture is that children very seldom send their parents to be cared for in an old age home. Nonetheless, recently due to the breakup of the joint family system; and due to the fact that both husband and wife are gainfully employed, they have little time to care for their parents especially when they become a "burden" to their children because of illness or just because they have become old and frail.

According to Hindu culture children are taught from an early age never to refer to anyone older than them by name. They are taught to refer to them as so and so's brother, mother, father or grandfather. In Tamil the name of the elder sister is 'akka'; the elder brother is 'anna' and his wife is 'anni'. This form of respect is ever so slowly disappearing from the Hindu way of life. Prostrating at the feet of elders especially swamis and sadhus is a must. Brides and bridegrooms also prostrate at the feet of their parents only during the wedding ceremony.

It is inculcated in Hindu children to show respect for books: they are not to touch any book with their feet or to sit on them. Children are taught not to throw things to another individual and to keep away from elders when the elders are together.

Women cook for one extra person for the unexpected guest. Women do not allow any male to sit next to them or entertain any other male even if he is her husband's friend in their homes when they are alone.

Another lovely custom is to put one's palms together when greeting another person. This custom is lost to the western handshake. A guest is always offered some water or any other liquid refreshment like cool drinks, tea, or coffee as soon as he or she is seated and then later something to eat is offered to the visitor. This cultural tradition still exists today amongst the Hindus.

There is a proverb in Tamil freely translated by the writer runs like this: 'He who comes in search of you at your home; you are duty bound to go to him with some water' as an offering to at least quench his thirst.

One injunction especially directed at women is to dress modestly at all times. In South Africa, largely influenced by westernization and acculturation, dress codes have changed. Many women old enough to have children of a marriageable or married children, wear blue jeans even when visiting temples or when offering their prayers at their own homes. Some temples have notices displayed requesting women to dress modestly.

However, the ultimate value is to be God fearing, respectful and to live a dignified divine life.

2.6 Purattasi and its Symbolism

All religions make use of symbols. It is this symbolism, which matters. Religions, which do not write their symbols invariably, carve them or draw them. Symbols are subject to a variety of interpretations depending entirely on the adherents understanding of the meaning of the symbol. Hinduism, by and large, allows for the individuals own interpretation. The symbols used in Purattasi period of worship have been generally handed down from generation to generation mainly through participation. Participants do not understand the meaning of the symbols used because as one is aware that in Hinduism there is no dogma, no specific "book" dictating the manner of worship in a particular format.

Symbols are signs expressing the invisible by means of the visible or sensuous representations. Without the help of physical symbols, it is practically impossible to communicate about subtle psychological exchanges and physical experience. The widespread use of symbols has therefore become prevalent in all cultures.

Thus, it can be seen that symbols are there for communication purposes. Hindus use many devices to communicate with God. Dance, music, dance-dramas and so forth are used to aid them to be in tune with God. God's omnipresence in all things on earth forms mental symbolic images of the invisible Lord. Swami Sivananda, the founder of the Divine Life Society in India 'saw' God in every human being. He personified God in the form of a human being.

In the context of Parattasi, there are eight types of murthis: Those carved out of stone; those that are carved out of wood; those that have been fashioned out of metal; those that are made out of sandal paste; painted on a wall; carved out of precious stone and those images conceived in the mind.

Symbols are sacred images of gods and goddesses represented in many ways. These symbols show their special qualities. Verbal aids called mantras are used at every ritual. The repetition of a mantra is said to create vibrations, which aid concentration and raise the spirituality in people. For example the syllable AUM is used as an invocation on its own and sometimes it is combined with other mantras. The Hindus find it much easier to concentrate via symbols on their God.

Clifford Geertz (1926: 6) made many of these ideas more explicit and concrete in his treatment of ritual. He described religion as a system of symbols that rouse people's emotions and inspiration by creating coherent conceptions of the general order of existence.

Hindus make use of symbols extensively in all their activities whether it during the Purattasi festival, weddings or other rites of passage, and other festivals be it Pongal -a thanksgiving harvest prayer which falls in the Tamil month of Thai (mid January to mid February). Such symbolic expressions are centred on flowers, numbers, icons, pictures, paintings, dance, colour,

shape, stones and plants -the Tulasi (basil) is especially sacred to Vishnu. The Tulasi plant is generally found growing in the front porch of many Hindu homes.

Like rocks or trees, ritual acts and sounds may be provided with meaning, but they do not require meanings and do not exist for meaning's sake.

Anthills in some cases provide some symbolic socio-ritual meaning to the Hindus. Worship at anthills, rocks and mountains (Mount for Vishnu) with flowers, tumeric powder paste goes beyond the outward physical mode of veneration. The researcher posits that Hindus also know that the objects of outward show of veneration and devotion of such symbols are not God but merely a tool for a deeper meaning.

Symbols are used because they are bound by time, space and causation. To reach the state of pure consciousness, material, verbal, or mental symbols are required. The symbols are visual experience of that which is formless and that has no attributes.

Worship of the image or the use of the icon symbolizing the ideal is the first step; then comes the repetition of the *Vishnusahasrama*, which is the holiest of the *stotras* among devotees (throughout their lives and more particularly during Puratasi together with the *Lalitasahasrama*) and is prescribed by the bhakti tradition and the singing of the divine glory, the next step is mental worship, the last being to feel and realize: "I am He." So the rungs in the ladder to attain the divine are the use of substitute, which may be a picture of a written symbol, a statue, a *yantra* or a verbal symbol.

It is believed that the repetition of “Om Narayanaya” with deep faith and steadfast devotion will confer Mantra Siddhi on the devotee. The *Vishmusahasranama* is the thousand names of Lord Vishnu and the *Lalitasahasranama* is in praise of the Divine Mother. *Sri Vishmusahasranama* is part of the *Santi Parva* of the Mahabharata. It is held that the *Vishmusahasranama* was composed by Sanka, one of the Kumaras (eternally living Youths) and was transmitted to Bhisma who recited it in the presence of Sri Krishna to the Pandavas.

From Brahma a sound called *Anahata Nada* arose. It is the Paramatma (the supreme essence) i.e., Brahman the eternal principle and not the Jivatma (the individual soul) who hears the sound. From this sound issued forth the sacred syllable, AUM, which manifests itself into speech in the form of the Vedas. This sound (*Sabda*) is a Parabrahman, the Supreme Being. It is the hidden meaning of all *mantras*. The three letter sounds A. U. M. refers to the three states of wakefulness, dream and dreamless sleep, Bhuh, Bhuvah and Suvah.

“Om Soham”, “Aham Brahmasmi” are Moksha Mantras which help the devotee to attain self-realisation. “Om Sri Ramaya Namah”, “Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya” are *Saguna mantras* with visualization of forms which will enable one to attain Saguna (with attributes) realization first out then the *Nirguna* (without attributes) realization. Chanting of mantras generates potent spiritual waves or divine energy, which destroys the microbes present in the body.

This Great God (Siva) appeared at the beginning of this age, Kaliyugam, in the form of the sound AUM (*Pranava*), which as the symbol of the Absolute is a sacred symbol. From the vibrations of the sound AUM the Lord conceived the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. The Great God then taught these Vedas to Brahma who created this universe with this supreme knowledge received by Him. This means that the Vedas existed even before the creation of our universe.

"A" represents the physical plane,

"U" represents the mental and astral plane, the world of intelligent spirits, all heavens,

"M" represents the whole deep sleep state, and all that is beyond the reach of the intellect.

Clifford Geertz (1975:90) affirms that religion is:

‘A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivation in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence; and these conceptions are such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations are seen uniquely realistic’.

Symbols are subject to a wide variety of interpretation dependent entirely on the adherents understanding of the meaning of the symbol and Hinduism allows for such a margin of understanding.

In the Tiruvoimohi of Nammalwar (1.1.5) it is affirmed:

"The devotees, according to their desires, inclinations and their understanding think of God and worship Him in various ways. The gods who are thus worshipped do not fail to fulfill their devotees' wishes, but it is supreme being imminent in the gods, who is real and acts through them."

2.7 Vishnu as the Ultimate Reality

Parattasi festival revolves around the worship of Vishnu as the main deity. Vaishnavism (worship of Vishnu) is a monotheistic system, which maintains that Vishnu is the Ultimate Reality. Monotheism refers to the doctrine that there is but only one God. Vaishnavism believes

in the existence of Vishnu as the one God, the Saviour of human kind. Within this idea lies the concept of incarnation of Vishnu who is born in every yuga to return human beings to Vishnu Dharma.

Ancestrally the Vaisnavites have been told that Vaishnavism originated when the Lord Himself related the origin of Vaishnavism to Goddess Laksmi, his ever present consort and then to the angel Visvakshena.

The six hymns in the Rig Veda are all praise of Vishnu. "The Rig Veda is considered to be the oldest religious literature of the world." In these hymns He is referred to as being a close friend of Indra and as an enemy of Vritra the "demonised power of obstruction. Vritra according to some scholars is closely related to the climatical patterns on earth. The extreme changes in weather that made it difficult for human beings to survive may have been personified as Vritra.

Vaishnavism is a philosophy of religion with theological doctrines, which are founded on sound philosophical theories enunciated in the Upanisads. Philosophy in a very broad sense refers to the widespread directive that offers an enlightened explanation of a religion. Hence, Vaisnavites' aim is to attain liberation, which can be attainable only after death when the soul merges with the Ultimate Reality which the Vaisnavites believe dwells in His celestial home, Vaikuntha.

Vaishnavism revolves around the worship of a personal God Narayana-Vishnu. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas show no difference between the two names. The constant repetition of the Divine mantra "Om Narayanaya" and the chanting of the Vishnu Sahasranama by the devotees during the month of Purattasi is a form of adulation for the Divine. The singing of the Sahasranama, the one thousand descriptive names of the Lord, aims to bring the devotees closer to the ultimate reality.

Some scholars believe that the Lord who is Narayana is Dravidian in origin. The name Nar-ay-an when decomposed means one "who was supposed to lie or reside in water". In Tamil Nir (Nar) means "water", ay means to lie in a place and refers to the masculine gender and the name

Narayana appears for the first time in the Sathapatha Brahmana where He (Vishnu) is referred as God and not as a human being. Vaisnavites regard moksha of the advaita philosophies of less importance than that of the "bliss of external devotion". Moksha is not a state of existence of the soul, nor of non-existence, nor non-consciousness. It is a perfect freedom, an indescribably non-differentiation, a closeness to the Divine within oneself.

The Vaisnavites categorize souls at different levels of attainment after death: Salokya is sharing the world of God; Samipya is to lie near God; Sarupya, "likeness to God"; and Sayujya, union with Gods". Jivan muktas are great souls who leave their place in heaven to take a human birth and later return (to their original abode).

There are five schools of philosophy in Vaishnavism the Ramanuja, the Madhava, the Nimbarka, the Vallabha and the Chaitanya schools of philosophy. One of the earliest schools was the Panacharatra in South India. Ramanuja partly based his philosophy on the Panacharattras. The Panacharattras are a collection of tales and fables made up of five books compiled by Vishnusarman.

The main philosophical movement for this study is the Ramanuja philosophy. Ramanuja was the first to formalize the thought and worship of South Indian. The Bhakti movement was started by the devotional mystics, the Alvars. His philosophy of qualified monism, Vishishtadvaita asserts that although everything is indeed united with God, there are "real differences between God and the soul and the world". Although the different systems established by the different architects of the five schools of philosophy, have their own special features they do have some common principles. It is obvious that all of them advocate, no doubt, devotion to Vishnu; helping fellow beings without prejudice or partially on condition they follow the doctrine of Loka Kalyanam (Vaishnavacara Nirnayam).

According to the teaching of Ramanuja Vaishnavism is a religion which teaches man how to love the whole world of humanity. He selected seventy four of his Sisyaas as teachers of Vaishnavism in order to spread his philosophy all over Bharatadesa.

Presumably all religions accept the eternity of the soul and uphold its divinity. Each one of the souls is granted a body, which perishes after its purpose is done. Every soul is the architect of its own life and enjoys the fruit of its own good acts or suffers because of its evil acts. The purpose of religious observances is to liberate the soul from bondage through faith, knowledge and good conduct.

All living things are equal and sacred as conceived by Hinduism because the embodied souls are potentially divine. Therefore, no one has the right to cut short the life of one's own life nor the life of any other creature. It follows then that the eating of their flesh is abhorrent to the true devotee.

In order to atone for their (devotee's lapse) some of the devotees will go to great lengths follow a strict vegetarian diet while reciting or listening to the one thousand Divine name of Vishnu that is the Vishnu Sahasranama Stotra. This invocation brings out the universality of the Divine. This stotra helps the devotee to get closer to God. The "Bhakti" form of worship hinges on the advocacy of repeating Vishnu's name all the time. Chit, the soul (aththuma- in Tamil) is by nature pure. It is contaminated by karma from time to time but it can be freed from contamination by the repetition of Vishnu's name. It is therefore unambiguous that human beings are born good, free from evil pretensions, free from all desires. This earthly material world of pleasure and indulgence to satisfy the gross body accumulates defilements. Through karma or through the millstone of inheritance from his/her past lives and because of his ignorance he is reborn again and again. In this way he takes part in creation. When the aththuma (soul) joins with the pradhana or achit or matter his soul's inalienable right is to escape from karma and ignorance, through God's grace and by the recovery of knowledge.

When this happens the soul, which has neither birth nor death is emancipated from the cycle of births and deaths and from earthly affairs. Karma, thus, means good actions and bad actions. The good is clarified in this regard by the Vishnu-Dharma.

It is now understandable that through the mercy of the Lord one can be redeemed from one's bad karmic actions upon one's death. In order to realise 'videha mukti' one surrenders totally to God. Surrender to God is referred to as *prapanna*. If a devotee knowingly or unknowingly commits a sin then the *prapanna* has to wholeheartedly give himself to God's mercy again by another act of *prapatti* that is by making amends for the sins that were committed by him.

2.8 Characteristics of a Vishnu Devotee (Vaishnava)

A Vishnu devotee (Vaishnava) is recognised by two essential features, which are external Bahya laksana and internal Antar laksana. The internal features as stated in the scriptures are leaves of the tulasi and lotus seeds hung around the neck, the insignia of the sankha (conch) the chakra (discus) on the upper arms and the presence of the namam or Urdvapundran. The details are of the namam worn by the Vishnu devotee are listed thus:

- a) On the forehead
- b) On the navel
- c) On the chest or the sternum
- d) On the throat
- e) On the right side of the abdomen
- f) On the right upper arm
- g) On the right shoulder and neck
- h) On the left side of the abdomen
- i) On the upper arm
- j) On the left shoulder and left side of the neck
- k) On the lower back and
- l) On the back of the neck.

The three compulsory areas where the namam is to be marked are on the forehead, lower neck and lower back. The use of Sanka, Cakra and the Namam are not only the symbols and Amsas of

Vishnu, but they also refer to the three incarnations of Vishnu: Narasimha, Rama and Krishna as it is stated in the Sampradaya tradition.

The devotees of Vishnu have certain identity features. The internal identification is *laksna*, which is the detachment from objects of pleasure and pain and the determined devotion to the *Astaksari* mantra.

2.9 Religious Sect Marks

Many people call them caste-marks whereas in reality they are "religious sect marks". The colour of these sect religious marks varies: white for Brahmins, red for Kshatriyas, yellow for Vaisyas and black for Sudras. The Vaishnavites believe that the *namam* represents the Lord's feet. In the first two stanzas of *Tiruvaymoli*, Nammalvar speaks of wearing the Lord's feet on his forehead.

The mark of a Vaishnavite follower is drawn on the forehead. However, there are many variations among the sub-sects. "The three marks of the Vaishnavas or Saivas relates to the number three representing Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra; the sacred symbol A. U. M., the three worlds, the three *gunas* (Jagadeesan, 1989:100).

The *namam* is either in the shape of a "Y" or a "U". Those that wear the Y shaped *namam* belong to the Tenkalai sect and the U shaped *namam* belong to the Vadakalai sect. The Tenkalais are the southern Vaishnava group, while the Vadakalais are from the north. Generally, there is a rift between the Tenkalais and vadakalais leading to strong doctrinal differences. Those opposing views are as Jagadeesan (1989: 23) puts it that the "two outer marks should be one inch apart and that the yellow or red streak in the middle should bisect the vertical streaks in between the space and it is called *Sri Churnam*".

"Sri / Lakshmi" in the form of the use of tumeric powder is said to be the Lord's favourite colour. In South Africa the devotees wear the religious sect mark with the centre streak in either red or

orange or yellow. Red among the colours is associated with moksa and yellow is associated with knowledge. The Sri Churnam is not worn on occasions of pollution because it stands for Lakshmi or Sri Lakshmi is said to be absent from the home during the period of pollution. Pollution generally pertains to birth of a child, death in the family and particularly during menstruation. In Tamil pollution is '*Thizhppu*'.

Widows usually wear a crescent-shaped white streak between the eyebrows and put a small red dot above the middle of the white mark. An interesting practice is that the Smarthas who are devoted to the Lord of the Venkatam Hills also wears the namam on their foreheads on Saturdays in the month of Purattasi (Jagadeesan 1989:108).

2.10 The Practices & Rules of Purattasi

The various practices of the festival of Parattasi entails following of a set of rules very diligently. These rules provide us an insight into the worldview of those who participate in the festival of Parattasi. In Tamil, the Sanskrit word, '*dharma*' is '*aram*'. '*Aram*' has a broader meaning. It means justice, virtue, conduct according to the Shastras, charity or alms-giving, the duty prescribed for one's personal rank, nature, the characteristics of animals and the inherent qualities of plants.

To satisfy the norms described by the emotional qualities of the word '*aram*', the good that the individuals conduct, nurtures to envelope the whole society: the individual's conduct is part of the entire society. Simplistically, the individual makes up the society. A devoted Vaishnava believes in and cultivates '*aram*' (dharma) as being the most important party of his daily life. Good is identified by good conduct. What is of value is that no amount of knowledge, which fails to promote right conduct, is of any use. This maxim holds true more so even today in a world torn apart by ethnic strife, religious intolerance and political differences.

Insofar as religious intolerance is concerned, religion has not been a unifying factor; it has not held together the different faiths. Religious hatred has caused strife and stress in many parts of the world. A religion supported by wisdom and tolerance accepts other persuasions as part of the human socio-religious fabric of any community or nation.

During the Purattasi month the adherents heed the injunctions taught in the Mahabharata, which explains that philosophical knowledge would not be of any use if it does not develop good character. The observance of some religious duties, which does not develop good character is of no use also. It is of great value if during the time of abstinence the individual reads or listens to religious teachings of knowledgeable teachers. In Purattasi the devotees of Lord Venkatesvara would find it of profound moral and ethical value to set high standards of honesty, compassion and charity. To speak the truth, and to cause no injury in word or in deed to others are the corner stones of Vaishnava dharma. Dharma during the month of Purattasi is directed towards the inner cleansing of the individual in preparation towards a more devotional life.

The Tirukkural written by Tiruvalluvar concerns itself on the ethical behaviour of the householder and that of the religious ascetic. The householder who is part of society is expected to be responsible and to be charitable. The overall good that the individual does will benefit the society to which he/she belongs. The well-being of the society protects the well-being of the individual and vice-versa. It is a symbiotic relationship.

The most important aspect of Vaishnavism is that its dharma is the resolute faith that only Vishnu is the saviour. This means that a devoted Vaishnava should not worship any other deity other than Vishnu. The hymns of the Alvars emphasise this axiom.

'Mattramor daivam uladenru lrupparodu uttrilen.'

Vishnu is the Supreme Deity and He alone is capable of granting moksa.

The exclusive devotion to Vishnu does not mean that it must lead to condemnation of other deities since the veneration of other deities constitute the glories of Vishnu. Knowing this philosophic truth, the Vaishnava must develop tolerance for other religious faiths and thus respect the deities of other beliefs. Toleration is the highest virtue of a devoted Vaishnava: a true devotee is dearest to Vishnu. In addition to toleration a Viashnava should be compassionate towards all living beings. Tolerance in Hinduism is an unparalleled virtue.

To be humanitarian to all living beings; to be merciful to all life; to "feel" for others is to be compassionate. Only when an individual "feels" for others we can safely say that there is "aram" (dharma) in him. Therefore, it is our birth right to do our duty to make sure that not only during the month of Purattasi but throughout our life that we conduct our well being in light of our dharma.

The aim of allieanating should be directed towards the achievement of an end and that aspiration is '*aram, porul, inbam and vidu*'. In Sanskrit these goals are dharma, *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa* respectively: in English the closest translation is virtue, wealth, pleasure and liberation. Ethically, human beings are counted on to lead a virtuous life, acquire material affluence through honourable means and to enjoy these material possessions with the society and in the end having enjoyed those worldly pleasures to give up all of these and then go in search of the ultimate goal, moksa or liberation.

Since, the belief in Hinduism that "service to mankind is service to God": service without motivation or desire whatsoever is the highest teaching of Dharma. Non-reciprocal service to uphold the spirituality of a society in order that they continue to sustain themselves while their

mortal life lasts on earth is one of the ways towards liberation. When human-beings realize that death is not the end to the soul's experience, they begin to search for the final liberation.

Whether it is Vaishnavism or Saivism or any other religious belief the fundamental truth is "God is love." The Matsya Purana mentions that the Sun-God (Surya) is to be worshipped for health, Agni for wealth, Siva for knowledge and Vishnu for Moksa because liberation is the highest goal for human-beings, greater eminence is given to Vishnu. In Vedic times, the sun, Suryanarayana came to be identified with Vishnu as striding across the sky. Vishnu as the Sun is also praised by the Rig Veda in the morning, the Yajur Veda at mid-day and the Samaveda in the evening. The association of the sun with the Supreme-being is corroborated in the Aditya Hirudayam a human praising of Vishnu was recited by Sri Rama himself on the battlefield according to the instructions of sage Agastya, before he renewed the fight with Ravana.

The sun as it is described in this hymn is said to be Vishnu, Siva, Skanda, Prajapathi, Indra, Kubera, Kala, Yama, Chandra and Varuna.

The ethical principles of virtue such as truthfulness, benevolence and non-violence and not coveting the material wealth of others are integral part of a Vaishnava devotee. To be emotionally felt at the joy of the progress of others, the good that others are enjoying and also to feel unhappiness and sadness at the suffering of others points to a person who is devoted to God. To show sympathy, to 'feel' for others especially in Purattasi, to a small measure, focuses on the individual who is devoted to the service of humanity. These noble virtues like in Buddhism dhamma (dharma) refers to the "Teaching" or the "Truth" known as eight fold path, i.e. right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

Truth is one of the highest of the noble virtues. Ordinarily to speak the truth is a simply an essential quality taught to individuals at a very early age; but in its wider connotation the concept of Satya (truth) is the caring for all living things as their antaratma, all the souls are amsa of the Lord, therefore, a devotee treats others as equals he does not wish ill-will towards anyone even when insulted, offended or slandered nor be disturbed, he should show pity for those who have sinned out of ignorance. Should a sin be committed against a pious person; the holy person should feel that it is a punishment for the wrong he has done in his previous life. The belief is that one's karma has to be removed wither by bearing its effects or by accepting the punishment.

Our previous karmic conduct determines our punishment or reward in this present earthly life. What is right conduct is relative because each pre-colonial religious society practiced what was right in terms of that particular community. It is, for example, right conduct in some communities to ruthlessly "mass" butcher an animal whilst in some communities it is acceptable to turn cannibal just for a short period to appease and cure an "illness" whether the "illness" is cured or not after the consumption of human flesh is another matter entirely. Thus right conduct is relative, Vaishnava dharma states clearly that it is the individual's duty as a part of the whole to work assiduously towards the common welfare of the whole community. The way which an individual conducts himself/herself is an indication of the way the society conducts itself.

Another characteristic of a Vaishnava is to be brave. The notion of death is always uncertain. To be brave knowing that one has to leave the impermanent world, the Vaishnava has the unshakeable faith that God is the Saviour. Once the devotee surrenders to the grace of God to attain liberation, then, there is no need to be afraid of death.

Complete surrender (Prapatti) as a path to God is open to all individuals irrespective of caste, creed or status: it is absolute self-surrender to God. The worshipper of Vishnu came from all

walks of life; caste did not matter. Love of God, at heart, and godly ways of outward living such as reverence for all life, had united them all into one family. Tirupanalvar who sang Amalanadipiran, Maranenambi whose funeral rites were performed by Periya Nambi one of the teachers of Ramanuja, Vilancholaip-pillai who taught Tiruvaymoli to the acharya Tiruraymolip-pillai, were all low castes.

Prapatti is a direct means of attaining liberation (moksha). The Visistadvaita Vedanta, bhakti-yoga and prapatti-yoga are the two essential means of achieving moksa. While Bhakti-yoga is an arduous discipline confined to individuals capable of maintaining such a discipline to attain moksa, prapatti is an easier path unrestricted by caste, creed and status of the devotee. Prapatti means complete surrender to God as the sole refuge. To have absolute faith in God as our one and only Saviour is the firm belief of Vaishnavas.

Vaishnavas associate themselves with those who have faith in their religion and avoid those who do not have faith in Vishnu but it would be more valuable if the devotee educates them, i.e. those who do not have faith in Vishnu educated with a deep love for Him to accept the truth that material pleasures and sensual pleasures are not acceptable to Vaishnava dharma.

2.11 Significance of the Purattasi Month

The Thiruvonum or the Saravana Natchaththiragam is the particular star coinciding with the date of the birth of the Lord Venkateswara in the month of Purattasi. The Tamil month of Purattasi and Chitrai are very important for worship of Surya, the Sun-God known as Surya-narayana who is the ruler over the regions of the sun and moon.

Purattasi or Poorva Proshtapatha is the beginning of the first four months of Chatur Masam Viratham. Saints will adopt some types of Viratham. They guide and tell people about the Vedas, the Agamas and Puranas. Hence, the month of Purattasi is when the Lord's incarnations begins.

Purattasi is also the birth month of the apostle of compassion, Ramaligar Swamigal of Chidambaram where the Vadalur shrine is to be found. He was born on Sunday 21 Purattasi 1823. He is also famous for having said:

Yellorum inbutru iruppathuve allamal Verondrurn ariyan paraparam.

The Saturdays in the month of Purattasi are religiously auspicious and significant to the planet Saturn (Sani in Tamil) who is black in colour. Lord Vishnu is the presiding deity of water as well as the preserver of all human beings, animals, plants and the universe. In helping the Divine, in the divinisation of the mankind, Saturn is ready to become an obstacle to persons averse towards the Divine and prone to bodily comforts. On the other hand he is bound to bless the devotees of Vishnu as Venkatesa and Ayyappa. Therefore, devotees observe virathams on Saturdays by worshipping these deities in the special modes prescribed for His worship.

The Purattasi festival is dedicated to Lord Vishnu who is referred to as Venkataswara or Perumalsami. According to the Puranas it is believed that Vishnu, one of the Trimurthis (the Holy Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) comes to the rescue of human beings whenever the world is in turmoil. In order to save mankind He incarnates Himself on earth.

According to Vaishnavites there is only one God. He is Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, creating, preserving and desolving the universe. Vishnu is the symbol of perpetual life and preservation of that which exists on earth and in the universe.

Since Saturdays is MahaVishnu's favourite day in the month of Purattasi, the devotee is supposed to perform his puja during the day and night, beginning on the first Saturday in the month of Purattasi and continue till the month. Some devotees refer to the deity at Tirupathi as Subrahmanyan. He is also called Balaji. The name Balan and Kumaran refer to Subramanyan. The holy spirit at Tirupathi is called Swami Pushkrani. Swami refers to Guhan. Hence, one of his six famous shrines in "Am Padai veedu" (in Tamil) is known as: Swami Malai. This deity "Subramanya" is worshipped by Vaishnavas as Vishnu.

2.12 The Seasons

Unlike South Africa where we have four seasons beginning with spring in September the Hindus in India have six seasons beginning with the month of Chitrai (April-May). These Hindu seasons are Vasantha, Greeshma, Varsha, Sarad, Hermantha and Sisira. These seasons symbolically correspond with human life on earth and that is childhood, youth, adulthood, old age, death and rebirth. Thus numerous festivals and Viratas and other spiritual and material deeds are to be done at their proper time according to the season when nature adds its force for the fruition of the deeds. In southern India, spring season is between mid-April and mid-June and the rainy season falls in months of Aavani and Purattasi. Aavani falls between August and September. In southern India the seasons (kalam) are further graded into cold season (kulirkalam), dewy season (panikalam), hard season (kadung kalam), hot season (uirumakalam), rainy season (marikalam), sowing season (vithaippukalam), summer (muthuvenirkalam), windy season (kattukalam).

In South Africa panikalam refers to the cold winter season, particularly in the midlands of Natal, which extends from Ixopo to Kranskop where frost falls between June and August; sometimes snow also falls on the Karkkloof Hills, which brings about sudden cold spells into the Midlands. While food production goes on damage by floods present during this month, festivals during this period are earth orientated and nature bound.

In the Vinayaka Chaturthy festival images made of earth are worshipped and then immersed in the rivers or dams/tanks and the sea. Thus, the worship of the earth element in the rainy season is obviously very significant to the Hindus.

The rainy season hinders people from activities pertaining to their livelihood. They, therefore, engage themselves profitably in the study of the scriptures. Sravanam Day is the day of initiation into such scriptural studies. Some of the festivals observed in India is the Onam festival of Kerala, Nagapanchami of Rajasthan, Teej and Raksha bandan of the northern provinces during This Varsha Ritu.

2.13 The Sun

The sun (Suriyan) was the god of light, truth, purity and honour. He removes darkness (evil) and gives life and sustains all living things on earth. He represents the elemental forces; he is a benevolent deity. The development of Sanram or the solar cult in India was started by the ancients.

In Vedic times, the sun was identified with Vishnu (Suranarayana) striding across the sky. He is formless and He is also known by many forms and names. In the Bhagavata Purana He is known as Suryanarayana who is worshipped in Suryankoil in India. Among the six theistic religions established by Adisankara, viz., Sauram, Saktham, Ganapatyam, Kaumaram, Saivam and Vaishnavism all are devoted to the worship of the sun, the mother goddess, Viriyaka, Subramanya, Siva and Vishnu – i.e. ancient gods of the panchayatana system.

The influence of the stars (Natchaththiram) acting through the planets (Kiragam) on our bodies, patterns our characters and destiny. Many rituals in the life of a Hindu is chartered by Varas, Thithis and Nakshatras, which steer human beings towards a higher and nobler life.

The sun (Surian), moon (Santhiran), and the stars (Natchaththiram) all have an influence on the earth, the human beings and all other life forms. It is in this respect that we find the inter-relationship between Science and Religion. The ancients believed that the stars were able to wipe off the evil effects of sin, "Nakshatrat Papa Haranam" which was their axiom. Papa or sin is any deed that brings about the downfall of spirituality of the Atman. These deeds can be thought, word, deed or action (Skandanarayan, 1985:32).

2.14 The Moon

The lunar year has its twelve months named after the star-groups -that is facing the full moon every month. Due to this the influence of the Sun and Moon at these times is felt by man. Actions executed under these solar and lunar influences result in reactions known as Karampala.

The Rishi's decreed that good should be done on these days to rid ourselves of sin and attain virtue and direct ourselves towards the Divine and in so doing fulfil our life's mission in concordance with the Daiva Sankalpam (Divine will).

The moon has two fortnightly stages of growth and decay. The waxing moon encourages the material outlooks of many by entrancing him over the beauties of nature. The waning moon does the opposite by concealing the temporal and phenomenal beauty.

2.15 Purattasi Ritual conducted at Home on Saturday

Since Purattasi is a sacred month, the cleanliness and tidiness of the home is given priority. All the rooms are thoroughly cleaned, curtains washed, floors cleaned. All utensils set-aside particularly for the Purattasi prayer is washed. Flower garlands made of marigold and mango leaves adorn especially the front and back door.

The use of clean clothes on this day is a must for all members of the household. Vilakkus (lamps) and other lamps and brassware cleaned and polished on Fridays preceding the Saturday the adherents observe the prayer.

On the Saturday morning on the day of the prayer the women and young girls draw the auspicious diagram known as Kolam in Tamil in front of the house. The ground is swept, smeared with cow-dung and when dry the Kolam is drawn not any pattern, but a pattern that is in keeping with the prayer. In South Africa mealie-meal is used while in India rice-flour is used to draw the impairment design. Stark (1982a: 22) says that these auspicious diagrams confirms the prayer area. However, so strong is the tendency in Indian culture to link together both a space and time the sacred and profane that the area is not devoted exclusively to religious purposes.

The greater part of the day is spent in the preparation of the vegetarian dishes. Cakes made with ground pea-dholl fried in oil is prepared other palakarams (gul-gula -small balls of flour with lentils inside are fried in oil) are prepared. Mavilakku made of rich flour and fashioned

into a lamp is prepared also.

Just before the prayer begins every male member of the family wears a Vaishnavite namam on his forehead. The female members wear a red dot called pottu or bottu on their foreheads between their eyebrows.

On Saturdays during the time of the ritual the devotee is expected to chant a mantra like the Sri Venkata Puka Kalapam or Sri Venkatesa Dvadasa Nama Stotram while ringing the bell. Sandalwood paste is applied to all four sides of the aspensorium containing the tirtham (holy water). Flour is used to sprinkle the tirtham on the devotees and on the floor for the purpose of purification. The short form of the "Puka Kalapa" is for the convenience of those who want to do the Purattasi puja on Saturdays. Sweet (curd) rice is distributed to the devotees after performing the puja is symbolic to offering it to Vishnu. The first letters of the Ashtothra combine to form the "Mahamantra" or the Sri Venkatachalapathi.

The namam is also marked on a board or on a mirror and placed in the area where the prayer is to be conducted and where the vegetarian foods and sweetmeats are offered. It would be naive that one should believe that God will come down to earth and consume the food. In the same vein, the placing of flowers at burial grounds does not mean that the dead will come to enjoy the fragrance of the flowers.

Cooked sweet rice (satham) and whole gram (kadil) together with fruit, betel leaves and betel (araca) nuts, and a coconut are used. Some sweatmeats and three types of fruit (especially bananas, oranges, apples) are placed on a banana leaf in front of the altar in the prayer room or wherever the family prays daily.

Prepared dishes, coconut and fruit are first taken outside the house placed on the kolam, which has to be drawn on the ground using ground rice or mealie-meal. Some camphor is lit and the coconut is broken. The Theebakalsum, which holds the burning camphor is turned three times in a clockwise direction in front of the offering by the male head of the family and placed on the

kolam. Thereafter, the devotees bow their heads with both palms held together in humility and in supplication to the Lord and apply holy ash (Thiruneer/vibuthi) on their foreheads. Thereafter, all the members of the family pray by singing sthothrams dedicated to and in praise of Lord Venkateswara. The singing of the sthothram in unison with devotion and reverence, is undoubtedly, to create the spiritual vibrations and love for the God in whom they believe. If this is not possible, i.e. singing in unison sthothram then the devotee who is capable of singing the sthothram recites hymns himself or herself.

Then the family proceeds from the outside into the house where the final prayer is observed. The singing of the prayer continues and at intervals the congregation invokes the Lord by calling out *Govinda! Govinda!* or *Shankataharana Govinda, Venkata Ramana Govinda*. Lamps made of clay with burning camphor in them are placed at intervals from the outside of the home to the prayer place inside the house.

In the prayer room another coconut is broken again. Burning camphor in the Theebakalsum is turned again clockwise around the murthis three times while the singing of the appropriate prayer is continued. Some families sing bhajans, which are generally very inspiring. It lightens the heart and gives peace and serenity to the mind. Sublime satisfaction is attained when one's thoughts are turned towards God.

Thereafter, the family enjoys the milk, fruits and vegetarian food. This sharing of food symbolises the togetherness and communalism of the devotees.

It is also unique and prevalent in Hinduism that God is worshipped in the androgynous form. Each of the Trimurthis have a consort: Brahma has Sarasvathi, the Goddess of knowledge; Vishnu has Laksmi, the Goddess of material wealth and Siva has Parvathi, the Goddess of benevolence and destruction.

Since dharma is an important aspect of the Hindu religious deed, food is given to those in need of sustenance and to pray for peace and harmony in the world. It is also considered auspicious

when a known visitor, or unknown visitor or a beggar arrives at the home where the Purattasi prayer is observed. It is believed by the householder and the family that God arrives at home in many disguises and forms –who are we to know how he tests our sincere devotions and supplications to him.

2.16 Fasting & Abstentions

All Hindu fasts are religious, domestic and communal affairs where whole families observe these fasts and abstentions as part of their way of having communion with God. Purattasi fasts and ¹abstentions has become a way of life of the Hindus. It also is infectious in that neighbours and families communicate with one another about rituals that has to be conducted during this period.

Most of the adherents of Purattasi observe the ritual as a communal activity particularly in the urbanised areas and in the farming communities it is a familial gathering to celebrate the numerous festivals that occur during the Purattasi month of fasts and abstinence.

Harish Johari (1998: 115) defines fasts as follows:

‘Food fasts can be divided into three categories, based on the motivation for undertaking the fast. Purification fasts are undertaken to cleanse the system, as a "tonic". Healing fasts are undertaken to rid the system of a specific disorder. Austerity fasts are undertaken solely for the purpose of denial of bodily urges, exemplified by the prolonged fasts practiced by yogis’.

There are many types of fasts and abstentions. The complete dry fast is observed when the devotee does not take any food or liquid over many hours whether it is over twelve hours, twenty-four hours or more. The choice is left entirely in the hands of the devotee; this decision is the devotee's own.

Then there are those devotees who will fast by having some fresh fruit juice not the tinned or bottled variety in order to maintain the fluid balance of the body during the period of abstinence.

There are some who will offer vegetable after it is thoroughly washed and cleaned to the family deity (istadevata) and then they are eaten in the evening without salt or sugar. Some subsist for on a glass of milk and a fruit for the day. Some eat only once a day some soft food with hardly any salt or oil after sunset after the daily evening prayer offered at the Kamakshi villiku.

There are those who will not eat any meat, fish, poultry, eggs or their by-products during certain days of the week. Most Tamils and Telegus also light a lamp called Kamakshi villuku (light of the Goddess, Kamakshi or popularly known among Tamils as "God lamp"). This lighting of the lamp is done both in the morning and in the evening. Usually a range of deities, namely, Ganesa, Siva, Murugan, Lakshmi, and Sarasvati are invoked at these daily rituals. Generally the women of the household are more 'god' orientated than the men. Women seem to be more afraid of the danger that lurks for not having propitiating the gods.

In Hindi-speaking homes, worship of Siva is followed on Mondays, Hanuman worship on Tuesdays, Wednesday is an open day for any deity, Thursday Sarasvati and others and on Friday Lakshmi.

Locally, in South Africa, Hanuman enjoys Scottish whisky and a generous, if not more than a plateful of braaivleis whether it is beef or mutton is immaterial; the shamans will enjoy what fills the hundi (a container that is used to collect the money that the devotees give).

According to Skandamarayan (1985: 12-16) Sundays is named after the sun Surayanarayana. Hinduism enjoins upon all to see the Divinity in all created things. He says that worship of any Deity is three-fold: mental, vocal and active or physical. For some Parayanam -the continuous singing mantras or songs is actually vocal prayers. The physical prayer is in the Surya Namaskara. Monday is named after the moon, the worship of the Mother Goddess Gowri is invaluable. Generally the integrated of Gowri Sankar or Uma Mahaeswara is worshipped. Prayers offered to Siva and Parvati either at home or at temples is beneficial for a happy family life. He (Skandamarayan) says if a new moon falls on a Monday it is sacred for women to worship the Aswatha, i.e. the Tree of Life found in the temple grounds.

Tuesdays is Murugan' s day. Muruga is the son of Siva. Mars rules over Tuesday and is called Angaraka who controls the ego in human beings. Muruga destroys all egoism. Tuesday is also known as Mangala Viratham which is essential to marital bliss thus they the devotees observe their vows. "In his human form", it is said "Agaraka, the planetary deity belongs to Barawaja Gotra and the ruler is Avanti Desa.

Wednesday, ruled by Mercury, controls the intellect in human beings. "In the vast universe, intellect is all powerful like the three strides of Maha Vishnu -Vishnumayam is the universe. Chanting Vishnu Sahasranama and visit to the temple is one way of observing the Viratham on Wednesdays.

Thursday is ruled by Jupiter the largest planet in our solar system "He is a powerful planet; equally so is its Lord Brihaspathi the preceptor of the Devas or Divine Forces and of humankind". Thursday is set aside for the worship of great saints, sages and great world teachers living or dead. "Brihaspathi is the son of Brahma, He belongs to Angirasa Gotra and is ruled by Sindhu Desai".

Fridays, ruled by Sukra or Venus is favoured by women because Sukra is the God of Love. Women worship the powerful Devi who fends off the Asuras with the grace of the Divine Mother. Oil bath, new clothes are important in worshipping Sukra Vara Viratharns by women wanting a happy home. Lalitha Sahasranama Parayana, worship of Devi and visit to temples is essential. "Sukra is the son of sage Brighu and is the ruler of Gowda Desai as well as Ganahala".

Saturdays, is ruled by Saturn. It directs the destiny of human beings. He blesses the devotees of Vishnu as Venkatesa, Ayyappa and so forth. Devotees generally observe virithams on Saturdays and worship Him. Saturn or Sani Deva belongs to the Kasyapa Gotra and is the ruler of Saurashtra Desha.

Keeping away from any flesh of animals, poultry and eggs and fish is not fasting. To fast means to go hungry for a specific period of time. In the Purattasi month devotees enjoy a vegetarian diet during the entire month or part of the month. This is not fasting but, obviously, plain abstention from eating flesh of animals, poultry, eggs, fish and their by-products is a prerequisite requirement during the observance of Purattasi.

When one fasts, one goes hungry for a selected period of time to suit one's constitution; it is improper to tell all and sundry that one is fasting. Fasting is an intensely personal ritual and as such must be respected by the observer of such a personal penance and /or discipline.

Large numbers of devotees of Lord Vishnu particularly the elderly and more especially the women do not eat anything until after the late afternoon ritual offering of vegetable foods, milk and sweet-meats to the deity are completed .

Many of the women of the family will tie a white cloth around the faces below the eyes to keep any saliva falling on the food while it is being prepared. Saliva is considered very polluting by the Hindus.

Ekadasi means the eleventh day of a fortnight. All the Ekhadasis, all 24 of them are sacred to a devout Hindu. Fasting and prayer are observed on the Ekadasi day. He/she spends his/her time in worshipping Govinda with flowers, fruits, incense and chanting of Vedic hymns. He is required to fast day and night and spend his time in thinking of God. It is the day most sacred to Vishnu. Vaishnavas and Madhvas during this fast do not perform the "annual ceremonies" to appease the manes of their departed forefathers. The Vaishnavas regard the Mukkoti or Vaikuntha Ekadasi most holy, which occurs in December-January (The Tamil month of Marghazhi).

This day of the bright fortnight of the Marghazhi portrays the female deity in the Brahmanda Purana -thus Ekadasi is feminine. It is also, as a legend, that Nammalvar attained Vaikuntha on this Mukkoti Ekadasi. Mukkoti Ekadasi is actually a shortened form of Muppattu Mukkoti Ekadasi. Nammalvar is a Vaisnavi saint. In all Vaishnava temples ten days before and ten days

after the Mukkoti Ekadasi is sacred to the Tenkalai Vaishnavas, since Tiruvaymoli, it is believed to have been recited in the Ranganatha temple in Srirangam on these days in Tamilnadu.

Malaya Amavasa is when the sun and the moon are conjoined once every month. On this day in the month of Purattasi when the sun enters the sign Kanniyirasi (Virgo) the manes leave Yamakandam (the world of Yamakandadharmaraja) to occupy the homes of their descendants on earth. In Sanskrit it is said:

*Kanya yate yatha surye pitaras
Tishtanti sve grihe*

The fortnight before the new moon in the month of Purattasi is auspicious for the remembrance of the manes. The manes continue to remain in the home till the ceremonies are performed until the sun enters the sign Vichachhika (Scorpio). Ekadasi falls on the eleventh day after the full moon. Fasting, i.e. is going without food, is important not only for the Vaishnavites but also for the Shaktas, Saivites, Murugan devotees and the Ganapathi followers. Fasting on Ekadasi is considered very holy. Fasting on this day is considered to cleanse the body externally and internally.

This cleansing purifies the senses; the mind and the intellect; it develops ones devotion to the Lord; it makes the individual humble, gentle and polite thereby it develops the devotee's spirituality. According to astrology even the planetary positions are believed to cooperate with the individual to awaken the subtle energies in the individual. Further, medically it gives the body rest. It helps to balance all the systems of the body.

By its own nature the body itself tries to rectify and bring back to normalcy the source of the defects. The over indulgence in salty foods and oily foods which, is commonly aggressively marketed by fast food outlets to pander to the taste buds of the consumer is unhealthy. Any flesh of an animal eaten can be detrimental to one's health. The consumer is not aware of the diseases that are carried by the animal before it is slaughtered for consumption.

2.17 Pollution

In Grhyasutras it is said that a student must not look at a woman who is in her monthly sickness. How does the student get to know that the woman is menstruating is pertinent. The Agni Purana also says that women should not touch anything during the time she is menstruating. The Kumara Purana says anyone talking to her or eating anything offered by her is polluted. While the Vamana Purana considers any sexual intercourse with her during this time is a terrible sin.

The Brhaddharma Purana forbids the women to participate in the funeral ceremonies on death of another, her very presence is undesirable. The Vishnu and Garuda Puranas dictate that the monthly cycle of a woman serves as a precondition of procreation. There are also many rites that are observed and traditions that are followed. Even today in South Africa the researcher knows of a young family who when their daughter "came of age" conducted a ritual that was observed by many Tamils and Telugus from the time when they first arrived into this country in 1860. The ritual, in a single statement, meant seclusion in a symbolic hut made of branches and leaves. Many tribes also consider the first menstruation as unclean and polluting. However, the emancipation of women does not preclude them from taking part in all kinds of physical activities. The individual has the choice of whether to participate in an activity or not.

The wife is excluded from the sacrifice when she is menstruating: the ritual must be postponed or somehow performed without her. Taittiriya Brahmana (T.B. 3.7.1.9) states that half of the sacrifice dies if it is performed when she is menstruating. For, according to the official mythic context, the menstrual blood is regarded as impure and dangerous because it was the result of Indra's curse. ...Women, the bearers of the discharge, the curse, the danger, and the impurity - were in turn subjected to severe restrictions.

In South Africa when a female in the household is in her monthly cyclic state of "impurity" then any ritual or prayer is either postponed to a later date or the female is excluded from the

devotional function. It is said that the embarrassed young lady is subjected to much humiliation when other female relatives purportedly ask pointed questions as to why she is absent.

Even in any form of Indian dance be it Bharatanatyam or Kuchipudi menstruation is considered impure. In South Africa whether menstruating girls are allowed to enter temples, perform religious rites and rituals or perform a dance is a moot point and subject to further study.

Saliva and blood are highly polluting substances in the ritual sphere. Birth, menstruation and death should be isolated from the ritually clean places, objects and persons. Menstruating young girls must be undoubtedly uncomfortable and subjected to much embarrassment when performing intricate devotional performances much to their derision are not allowed to touch the flowers, the cymbals or the *tattakulli* (stick used to strike a block of wood) which guides the rhythmic beating of the dancer's feet. Thus obviously the audience is now aware that the girl is menstruating. Persona; privacy is 'lost.'

A male teacher from the *icai vellala* explains: No one must not touch the *talam*. The monthly course is impure and the *talam* is holy. Now the girls take class and dance on those days, but they are really prohibited. Just as one should not do *puja* on those days, so one should not dance.

Many of the young dancers in South Africa are put on stage long before they are ready to make a public appearance. They are forced to perform at weddings and so on while many either cannot speak or understand the Tamil or Telugu language. Thus the emotional portrayal of a mythical figure is lost.

The term *nitya* ('obligatory') denotes rituals, which must be performed everyday, such as the bath taken every morning by the orthodox house-holder. The term *naimittika* ('occasional' or 'periodical') denotes rituals, which must be performed on certain occasion, such as the bath taken by the menstruating women on the fourth day of her cycle. In Tamil custom the days beginning from the death of a family member and thereafter is considered as polluted until the sixteenth day memorial service is completed. Some, in fact, many orthodox families do not observe any prayer

ritual be it Mariamman Kanji puja, Purattasi or Deepavali. Death is always regarded as extremely polluting (thizhppu -in Tamil). The researcher presumes that because pollution results in the fact that soon as rigor mortis sets in putrefactions begins immediately, this in turn gives rise to diseases especially in a hot country like South India. Therefore, it must be insisted that those who attend a funeral, on reaching home immediately have a bath in order to wash away any contagious and infectious diseases that the corpse may have spread.

Kumar (2000: 35) says:

‘Within the context of the Vedic ritual and also later on in the context of the temple worship, the Hindu society has always seen it as auspicious a man and a woman to be jointly patrons of the ritual, except those rituals which are specific to a man. In that sense, the man who patronises a ritual is normally accompanied by his wife’.

In the same vein whose pollution is concerned Bowan (1998: 77) also categorically says:

‘As with other traditions, menstruation is seen as making them impure and therefore unfit for the role of a ritual specialist.’

In many societies other than in the Hindu Society pollution was seen as a curse. David Hammond-Tooke (1989: 91) finds amongst the Zulus that those who are widowed, who had an abortion or miscarriage, persons who have handled a corpse, twins and those who have completed a long course are polluted -The Sotho as 'heat', the Zulu as 'darkness' or 'dirt'. Junod (1910: 56) gives the five major causes of pollution: the menstrual flow, the lochia, sickness, death and the birth of twins amongst the Tsonga". He also says that the birth of twins is serious because it effects the cosmic forces particularly rain.

Kumar (2000: 49) further elaborates that:

‘Blood in association with menstruation is seen as polluting and hence even today traditional follow certain rules which include not participating in family activities, such as cooking and communal activities, such as staying away from temples and rituals during the period of menstruation. As such menstruating becomes taboo in the society. Such menstruation taboos are embedded in the Hindu ritual texts such as the Rig Veda Samhita’

On the other hand Kumar posits that the widowed are considered ritually impure and hence not to be present at auspicious ceremonies. They are considered to be messengers of bad luck.

2.18 Social and Psychological Dimensions of Purattasi

The social structure, social function, social control and societal changes are studied by sociologists. Societal change may be the rapid urbanization of Indians in South Africa. The migration of Indians from a rural farming community are due to various inviting pull factors that ultimately creates a social change in the life style and belief systems. Life styles change because of rapid westernization in technology, industrialization, education, eating habits, dress codes, domestic life style, employment opportunities for themselves and their children. An example of life style change is that more and more women have careers, drive their own cars, while the domestic chores are left to the hired maids. Women also hold senior managerial positions.

Sociology of religions has dealt with social institutions or systems of beliefs and practices of rituals like Purattasi by the Tamil and Telugu Hindus. For these sociology scholars, religion is the social groupings created in response to the divine initiative: the church, temple, synagogue, and the religious sect.

The elements of social groups include the hierarchy between the layman and the devotees. These components are the forms that worship like Purattasi, education, temple administration, its

growth and change and its proliferation throughout the Hindu world which are noticeable in its activities.

The preaching of a religion is to be noticed as a practice, as a new social order or group, an influence upon society's acceptance or rejection by a part of the society. They affect what can or what cannot be heard; industrialization and urbanization have a bearing on any society whether developing or developed.

One of the implicit roles of religion is social control, which means that religion can be used to manipulate any society. Marxist sociology, long since overtaken by more accurate and more subtle analysis, remains powerful among historians, and it is influenced by no means confined to those of it; fragments of class struggle theories and economic determination are found inquisitively embedded in the work of distinguished scholars who at the moral plane in them, need to satisfy their wish to be thought as a "deep" loving crowd and affluent society.

Geographically it is the 'culture of religion' which appears to be the main factor influencing levels of religious practice in towns. Levels of religious practice do not follow the size, social composition, its rate of growth of the town. The problems of how people live together may have some implications for religious institutions.

This is true in multi-cultural, pluri-linguistic and multi-religious contexts, where one also interacts beyond traditional values and beliefs -in the public sphere so to speak. Durkheim says that religion as a social means, has served for many people as the foundation of collective life because religion is social and primarily concerned with ideals of society, it is able to check individual and selfish tendencies (Smit 2003: 1). All this is done in the name of religion, gods,

goddesses, rites, rituals, beliefs and religious objects, which come out of man's social life from his inter-relationship with other people.

Max Weber says that sociology is the search for the causes of social action: action results in behaviour to which the individual attaches meaning and social action is meaningful in that it takes account of the behaviour of others (Yinger 1957: 17).

There are also "functional prerequisites." A society cannot exist if it does not make provision, amongst other needs, religious needs which needs maybe satisfied by a 'shared' system of beliefs, by religion that helps society to integrate. Every aspect of religion depends on its beliefs, rites, rituals, spiritual leadership, modes of worship, types of dress and dietary habits. These aspects, obviously differ from religion to religion. For example, the Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Gujarati speaking Hindus observe different types of religious modes of worship. The auspiciousness of certain days of the week, or a particular month like Purattasi in which a number of propitious days are found may lend themselves to different modes of worship.

Durkheim says that religion is a "social phenomenon". As such, we come to understand that religion pervades the whole social life (Glock 1976: 35). In nearly all 'primitive' societies religion is a social institution. In Dravidian religion stones, trees, snakes, fear of the evil eye persisted and is also noticeable to a little extent today.

In the early Dravidian primitive society for example should two children die it became customary to roll the third child in dirt to deceive the evil spirits. This custom is not prevalent in South Africa but names such as Kuppusami, Karappai are given to children to forestall the evil eye from causing any damage to the child.

Religion is just as much social and cultural as is society from a sociological point of view. The adherents of a particular tradition have specific conceptions of what is to be taken to be genuinely spiritual and/or what constitutes the realm of Godliness. Shamanic religious culture involves the performance of rituals by 'non-specialists and part-time specialists.

The relations between religion and 'the world' the degree of monotheism varies very much from Confucianism to Judaism. In Confucianism the world was regarded as an "immanent sacred harmony." In Buddhism, the world is regarded as a 'psychological condition' from which the adherent seeks to escape. In Islam there is a coincidence of the social and religious ethics. The worldly sphere is enclosed within the religious sphere. It has been religion of evangelization by converting individuals to widen its social and cultural scope.

Hindus accept no divisions between the believer and unbeliever. Every path leads to Him (God or Reality); there can be as many paths to Him as the number of humans, in fact for all sentient beings. For every being is differently constituted, with different capacities and needs, and can follow only a path appropriate to him or her. Thus, it gives opportunity for any religion to be accepted within the Hindu pantheon. In many traditional societies, no matter how religious or non-religious they might be, they seem to participate in religious actions often involuntarily and unconsciously.

Hindus are not the only ethnic group to undergo cultural changes: the Africans have become more and more westernized not only in their dress but also in the use of English as a first language when speaking to other ethnic groups. But like the Indian, they consciously or unconsciously use their mother-tongue when communicating within their on linguistic group.

Where other spheres of religious experience are weakened; methods of prayer, sacrifice and methods of worship are strengthened by privatization. Privatization is the freedom of a person to choose his religion and practice it in his own way, as is the case of Hinduism. Freedom of choice means tolerance by the others. Tolerance is an attitude of mind and indicates a virtue bordering on the graceful acceptance of the different and even the hostile.

Its psychological dimensions aim to understand living beings, and to do this they need to take into account of the religious dimensions. Perhaps, one has to look at the rituals performed during the Purattasi month by the practitioners, who observe the many festivals that occur during this Purattasi month. The dedication and fervour of the adherents account for the experience of the religious persons. The inner satisfaction that the devotee experiences after the ritual is completed may be psychologically fulfilling.

Although most Hindus do not seem to know the meaning of the ritual activities that they observe, it does not mean that no meaning can be attributed to the Hindu ritual. The ritual act in many festivals are the same or at least similar. But they take on different meanings in different festivals and occasions.

This is true of Purattasi where the ritual observed is fundamentally the same but the rituals vary in the way it is conducted by individual families. Each family observes the ritual according to the teachings handed down from generation to generation within the same family by the elders. Some assert that all ritual behaviour is a result of ordinary socialization, others claim that it is an archetypical need generated by the collective unconscious; others again assert that all religiosity basically develops as a result of hidden emotional needs stemming from an early age.

Religion has become an important interest for the social scientists and psychology Religion is distinguished "as the effect of both personal and socially derived response" (Naidoo 2002: .2).

Human beings express needs and other psychological peculiarity. Religious rituals offer possibilities for a person not only to think about God, but also to experience oneself in a real meeting with a partner. In Hinduism there is a one-to-one communication with God in the way the devotee assiduously performs his rituals in the belief that God will accept his 'love' for Him.

Patram puspam phalam toyam
yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahrtam
asnarni prayatatmanah
(Prabhupada 1991: 487).

If one offers me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.

Religious rituals performed faithfully, in most cases by the women, spawns an unambiguous involvement in with the one-to-one attachment to God, the absolute ultimate reality. In order to describe the psychological conditions during rituals one must pay attention to at least two dimensions: the participators internal emotional dynamics and the participators interaction with the surrounding religious culture. In Hinduism one has direct communication with God almighty, there is no need to go *via* an intermediary.

Industrialization resulted in families being scattered. This resulted in the end of the old fashioned extended family under the patriarchal system, where every member of this large household had clear-cut instructions to do certain chores, analogous to a beehive. The break-up of the extended family into smaller nuclear family further resulted in the loss of the collective wisdom of the elders of the family comprising of great grandparents, parents, elder sons and daughters.

This disintegration often resulted in psychological trauma for the parents in particular and the family as a whole. In a Hindu extended family, religious functions, culture, language, rites and

rituals were all actively undertaken. In such a joint family system the family members loved and cared for one another. If conflicts or strong differences of opinion arose the elders automatically gave guidance and counseled the members involved in such disputes to have amicably resolved.

Unlike the westerners where the child often at about eighteen years are asked to leave home and fend for themselves, the Hindu parents from the time of the birth of their child begin to develop an eternal bond.

2.19 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have discussed Purattasi as a representation of the Hindu worldview. I began by providing an analysis of the origins of Purattasi in India and its development in South Africa. Secondly I analysed the extent of its observances in South Africa in the major temples and locations. Thereafter, I provided a religious worldview of Prattasi by examining how it understands society and its essential elements such as human destiny and morals. I then analysed its social and psychological dimensions and the use of symbolism. Finally, I discussed its practices and rules by focusing on themes such as abstentions and pollution. In my next Chapter I will analyse Purattasi in the context of change and continuity.

NOTES

1. The tamarind tree (*tamaridus indicus*) is sacred to Vishnu.
2. The basil plant (Tulasi) is considered sacred and defined as one of the consorts of Vishnu.
3. The black basil plant (tulasi) (*ocinum americanum* or *labinate*) is sacred to Ksishna.
4. The light coloured basil (*ocinum gratissmum*) is sacred to Rama. (Hindu Diaspora: Global Perspectives. 1999:111).

5. **Mavilakku:** This is a traditional hand moulded lamp using rich ough and jaggery. Instaed of oil, ghee(clarified butter) is used to ligt wick made of cotton wool. After the puja is complete the lamp is distributed as prasadam amongst all those present at the place of worship.

6. **Garlands:** There a large variety of garlands made using fresh flowers for use at different functions. Certain garlands are made for particular deities. Marigold flowers atre generally used on the Staurday Puratassi festivities are observerd.

7. **Prasadam:** Prasadam is an offering of either vibhutu, kungamun or holy ash which is placed on the forehead of the devotees. Edibles such as fruits, mavillakku, ghee, sweet rice. Panchamritham consisting of five ingredients: fruits, jaggery, rose water, honey and milk are also distributed.

8. In Tamil the betel leaf is vettliai or thambulam and betel-nut is pakku. The betel-nut is actually areca nut from a palm tree. Narayana, in his 12th century A.D. treatise, the Hitopadesa (Book of Good Counsels), has said that ‘the betel-nut is bitter, hot, sweet, spicy, binding, alkaline, a demulcent, an astringent, a foe to the evils of the intestine, giving the chewers a fragrance of breath to the lips a crimson red; a kindler of lovesflame... Praise to the Gods for the good betel! There be thirteen virtues given, to meet in one thing blended, even in happy heaven.” Sushrata, the patriarch of Indian surgery (2nd century A.D.) has expressed similar views on the virtues of tambula!

Abdul Razzak, a Persian traveler in the kingdom of Vijayanagara (1443) has described it in these words: “This masticator lightens up the countenance... It relieves hunger, stimulates the organs of gigestion, disinfects the breath and strengthens the teeth...”

It is used in nearly all Hindu rituals and religious observances are also given to women guests at weddings.

9. It is believed that when Thulasi leaves are added to boiling water and sanctified with Vishnu mantras and given as prasadam or thitham, it purifies both the mind and the body. It uplifts the inner spirit with Divine Grace of Goddess Lakshmi or Sri.

10. *Puratassi* – the root *vet* means *papa* (sin) and “*Kadapathi*” mean “He who removes.” Hence the name for the Lord Kadapathi.

11. The chanting of the Sthuthi Navagraha Sthothram removes all sins and obstacles due to his unfavourable position in the horoscope and bestows the grace of God on the devotee. Sthuthi means prayer. Navagraha refers to the nine planets. Nave means nine and graha means obstacles. Sthothram means songs or hymns.

12. The names of Vishnu: The thousand names describing Lord Vishnu delineate the Divine manifestations providing the devotee with clear indications arising from the known to the unknown. Contemplations upon the Divine manifestations can deepen our faith in, broaden our devotion to and strengthen our understanding of the all pervading Reality (Vishnu) (Swami Chinmayananda, 1993:1).

13. The Infinite is approached by the devotees through love and by philosophers through meditation and contemplation (Vichaara). The devotees approach the Divine through their heart, the philosopher through reason and logic. Whichever way they take to reach the Ultimate Reality. The repetition of the Sahasranama helps them to obtain peace and spiritual upliftment.

CHAPTER 3

PURATTASI: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

3.1 Rituals

Rituals are physical religious customs of performing rites and ceremonies. Rituals and ceremonies are found in all religions. Rituals help the devotees to reach a higher philosophical plane towards God. In Tamil there is a saying:

“...without the husk, the rice will not germinate around them.” (Rangarajan 2000: 8)

Thus, ritualism helps maintain the vitality of the religion. Ritualism also helps people of different intellectual and emotional make up to attempt to reach God. According to Sadhu Rangarajan rites and rituals have an important place in the Hindu way of life since they bring health, welfare and happiness not only to the person performing them, but also to all people (Ibid.).

In order to understand any abstract concept is indeed difficult. Therefore, a simple technique is used by parents of Hindu background to teach their children that they should worship the mother first for obvious reasons, then the father, then their teacher (guru). These are the tangible concepts. Then the child is introduced to the esoteric nature of the Ultimate Reality.

During the Purattasi month the ritual of cleaning the house thoroughly, decorating of the front yard, or porch with kolan; the gathering of flowers which is placed at the shrine; the washing, decorating and the lighting of the lamp by the women is steeped in culture and tradition gathered over many ages.

The installation of the Lord called Anga Nyaasa is a ceremony that affirms that the form of Vishnu is finally realized as one Infinite Reality without names or forms. After the Anga Nyaasa

the devotees work themselves up into a divine mood of peace and purity (Swami Chinmayananda, 1983:8).

Spiritual exercises and austerities may differ but the goal is the same. God's grace is the ultimate goal. Human beings achieve it in different ways. Some may take the path of Ramabhakti other Krishnabhakti. Each individual takes an avenue best suited to him or her.

There are many monthly rituals conducted in temples and there are many domestic rituals. Poet-saint Tiru-Jnana Sambandhar who was also known as Aludaiya Pillaiyar, the son who had been saved, instructs that in the month of Saiva devotees should be fed; Sarasvati poojas has to be done and ayudha puja (symbolic of the labour) has to be observed (Arunaehalam n.d.: 59).

Rituals have a calming effect on the devotees. In times of distress it is natural for people to go to God, to seek some form of help. It is in times like these that people take vows: should the adversity be relieved the promise is ritually completed. These rituals are performed by the lay people. Rituals are external manifestations of the devotees longing to please God! Rituals are not the same. They differ from ceremony to ceremony. The rituals fashioned for Kavadi is dissimilar to that of the Mariamman Kanji offering or the death ritual or ancestor worship during the Purattasi month.

Rituals are daily acts of worship to revere God on a physical plane. Rituals also have a material side other than the ceremonial ritual offerings. Flowers, food, fruits, silver pieces resembling body parts are also offered to complete the vow taken. Rituals are slavishly performed in a climate that is not relevant to modernity. Very few conduct the ancient puberty rite and ritual for girls nor the Upanyana ritual for boys is performed when the teacher "initiates" the boy into one of the three 'twice-born' castes.

3.2 Changes in Practice/Observance of Rituals (Local Appropriations & New Innovations)

The celebration of the Purattasi festival within the South Africa milieu has been adapted in a number of ways to accommodate the local manifestations of the ritual amongst the adherents of Vaishnavism. Most Tamil and Telugu Hindus perform many rituals that give them some kind of power. Some of these rituals can be done alone without an audience. Such rituals are like lighting the "lamp," performing homage to the sun god Suryanarayana early in the mornings. Many of the others are participatory devotees engaged in the preparation and execution of the ritual. For example in Purattasi every member is involved in the ritual that has to be successfully completed before sunset.

The fast itself during Purattasi is subject to each family's own arrangements. Many devotees will not "do" the prayer if they are in bereavement. It is considered a form of pollution ('thizhppu' in Tamil). In fact other religious rituals like the Mariamman Kanji pooja or the timiti ritual to appease the goddess Draupadi on Good Fridays.

In this country especially in KwaZulu/Natal and in India and Sri Lanka devotees walk through fire to emulate goddess Draupadiamman. According to an interviewee Regash Govender, thirty-three years old, who has been fire walking for the last eighteen years and only, missed the ritual on two occasions. The first time he did not take part in the ceremony was when his wife was pregnant and the second time was when his aunt was pregnant; paternal grandfather's younger brother's wife. He could not observe the ritual because of pollution, as pregnancies and death are considered to be defiling.

He says, "When I was a youngster my mother told me that I must walk around the "fire" in order to cleanse myself if I want to prosper in life. I decided to do that. So that Good Friday I walked from the river to the Mariamman Temple in Pietermaritzburg. When I got to the pit I walked around the pit and then when I saw a gap amongst the other devotees I just walked over the embers until I reached the other side. My parents who were outside were called by friends to fetch me. Since then I continued to walk the fire.

I do not go into a trance. I am fully conscious of what is happening. While I am walking on the fire I am aware of the intense heat. For the next few days I feel the heat. Family elders ask me to wrap banana leaves around my feet to remove the heat from my feet.”

The preliminary preparation begins ten days, i.e. Good Friday. The strict prohibitions are:

1. No meat to consume before, during and after the ceremony
2. No consumption of alcohol.
3. No smoking of cigarettes, tobacco, etc.
4. No carnal knowledge.
5. Control of anger.

What the devotee should do:

1. Be calm.
2. Be deeply spiritual.
3. Concentrate on the mother goddess, Draupadi.
4. Maintain cleanliness of thought, word and deed.
5. Keep away from anything that may be polluting.
6. Sleep on the floor, which has been sprinkled with tumeric mixed in water.

The devotee's family should:

1. Maintain the same vigorous spiritual attitude.
2. Maintain a “fast.” Consume only vegetarian foods.
3. Maintain celibacy.
4. Keep the home spiritually and physically clean.
5. Pray to the mother goddess for forgiveness and request for help for the devotee.

If a devotee gets burnt, which has happened, then it is attributed to non-focus of the devotee on spiritual activity and possible misdemeanor of failing to keep to the stringent restrictions.

Some families will abstain from consuming meat and its byproducts only on Saturday. Their reason being that the work situation makes it difficult to abstain from eating meat. Generally,

those the writer interviewed, the men found it difficult to maintain the rigid fast. The women were more fastidious than men. While in some cases the men were meticulous in their penance.

Some families "fasted" for the first week only and concluded their observation on the first Saturday of the month. Once again it is to avoid the tediousness of the month long fast. It became obvious that in this case it was more to assuage more the male component of the family. This, religious discipline has failed compounded by the parents inability to teach their children the efficacy of fasting if it be only for health reasons.

Some families would fast for the entire month and even beyond a week or two. These families are staunch adherents of the bhakti aspects of their spirituality.

The three major principles or gunas are sattvic, rajasic and tamasic foods. Milk and its byproducts, cereals such as maize, wheat, oat meal, fruit and vegetables, brown sugar, honey, coconut, dried ginger, carrots and potatoes are also good, they are generally calming foods. Sattvic foods are soothing, controlling the senses and creates a balance in the body.

Rajasic foods cause anger, passion, and nervousness. The foods that create rajasic qualities are such foods as fried foods, junk foods, spices likes, chillies, onions, pickles, tamarind and beverages, coffee, tea and cocoa.

Red meats, alcohol, garlic, onions and soft drinks cause laziness, tiredness and listlessness. These are tamasic foods. Today with so many fast food outlets catering for the taste buds are loaded with salt and spices. To find vegetarian food outlets is not easy. In Pietermaritzburg Kara Nichas and the Hare Krishna restaurant at the temple in Chatsworth are worthy of being mentioned. Children and teenagers are attracted to these rajasic and tamasic foods, which are sold in school tuck shops.

Yet nearly every restaurant and fast food outlet, which are conveniently sited in every town, suburb and village and city, sell food that are non-vegetarian. Economics is the main ingredient that maps out the eating habits of the people.

Food is an important constituent for one's good health. Dieticians offer a variety of diets to help in the retention of good health. It is indeed a controversial issue but nutritious diet is a form of good therapy. For different health problems different diets are encouraged. There is a cholesterol-lowering diet which tells you which foods that can be eaten freely and which foods that can be consumed moderately. This lists foods that are low in cholesterol and foods that are high in cholesterol. Foods high in cholesterol are no good for people who have a heart disease. There are also diets for eczema, diabetes, obesity and depression.

It is well known that nutrition and good healthy diet go hand in hand. It has also been researched that a healthy diet can protect the brain (Weil 2003: 50). No one diet is cure-all diet. Age, sex, race are indicus that the nutritionist considers prior to giving advice on a proposed nutrition plan.

Some changes that have become noticeable are the kolam, which is seldom drawn by hand using rice flower. These kolams are painted mostly in white using oil paints. The designs are not relevant to the ritual, which is performed.

In families that do not have the ability to sing any of the poetic songs sung by the Alvars, the simplest is the constant repetition of the maha mantra Aum Namō Narayanaya, which the devotee renders. In some cases taped songs are played throughout the month and particularly during the Saturdays. The use of tape recordings is due mainly to the loss of the mother-tongue language. Mother-tongue medium schools were depleted because the English language became the communication between the races and to use a better adjective it became the "bread and butter" language. In education, English became the medium of instruction unlike the White schools, which had three branches in the school system. The English medium school which, catered for the English-speaking children, the Afrikaans medium schools that catered for the Afrikaners. Then there were the dual-medium schools, which catered for the English speaking White and the Afrikaans speaking white.

Much later in the 1960s Afrikaans was introduced in the Indian Schools up to the matriculation level. When the House of Delegates took over the Indian Education, mother-tongue languages

were introduced to be taught at Indian schools and at tertiary level. Mother-tongue languages play an indispensable role in the propagation and sustenance of culture and religions. Language is an integral part of a people's birthright.

The playing of recorded songs and music at festivals maybe encouraging to maintain the people's language, culture and religion. Over time the playing of recorded music may become a South African Tamil/Telugu institutionalized ritual part of the ethos or part of the Hindu milieu.

Further, noticeable adaptation that seems to be very South African and fast taking hold on the community is the failure of devotees clasping both their palms together in veneration of a person when greetings are offered, or when in prayer or in ritual worship. The older generation greets one another with clasped palms. Yet again here it seems to be a euro-centric influence where it is easier to shake hands or during worship to keep one's hands held together in front of one's person.

The researcher has noticed that many devotees especially the young men remove their shoes but not their socks from their feet. It is customary for the devotees whether worshipping at home or temple to wash their feet or at least rinse their feet with cold water before the prayer commences.

The story of Draupadi of the Mahabaratham begins with her being accepted by the Panjacha Pandava brothers as their wife. Draupadi was only allegorically their wife. (When Arjuna brought her to his mother he said, "Mother I brought a fruit." Without looking she told him that he should share the fruit with his brothers; thus, she was shared amongst them in the figurative sense). The Panjacha Pandava brothers are Yudhisthira, the eldest, referred to in Tamil as Dharma Raja because he upheld dharma as the supreme conduct, Arjun, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva. When they lost their kingdom wealth and subjects and finally lost Draupadi they suffered the ultimate humility. When Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kavrava cousins, won the game of dice by crookery and deceit, ordered Draupadi to be disrobed: but by the transcendent will of Lord Krishna she was unable to be disrobed.

Oral literature heard from the writer's father and Tamil school teachers is thus: Draupadi because she could not stand the humiliation vowed that the day Duryodhana is killed in the battle field she would sit astride him, break his ribs and use it to comb her hair. From that day of her public disgrace in the royal court of Duryodhana she was left ungroomed.

On the eighteenth day of the eighteen days war on the vast plains of Kuruksetra, Duryodhana fell at the hands of Arjuna. This great Bharata War is referred to as '*pathinetta poru*' (eighteen in Tamil is pattinettu and war is por).

When the advisory went down, Draupadi ran up to him to fulfill her vow, Lord Krishna appealed to her not to sit astride a fallen warrior (Duryodhana) because it would be very unbecoming of such a chaste being to do that. She then sat next to him and concluded her vow.

Thus combing and tying of Draupadi's hair on the third day of the fire-walking ceremony is symbolic of what happened on the fateful eighteenth day of the Kuruksetra War.

The Walking over the burning embers on Good Friday by the votary is to beseech the goddess to cool her temper and protect her subjects. She also walked through the fire to prove her physical chastity and her mental purity. She is the heroine of the Mahabharatam.

No religion can divorce itself from ritualism. Every religion has its own ceremonial ritual based on its own pro forma. The Christians have their own ritual and so do Islam and Judaism. Every religion is subjected to ritual practices and then the esoteric philosophies, which are of a "higher" level than one has to look at the rituals performed by the Christians, the Muslims and the African Traditional Religions. Rituals are a part of human beings initial concrete communion with the Absolute Reality. The Blacks observe elaborate rituals when it comes to the worship of their ancestors, disease, pollution and weddings. These rituals may be viewed with disfavour by the Church because it does not conform to the Church's article of faith.

In Hinduism rituals are more common and more visible, all rites of passage are based on rituals. From the times of conception of the child up until the time of death and after, ritual worship has to be done to the manes.

During Purattasi Mahalaya Amavasa day is celebrated with great devotion to propitiate the manes. Rituals performed during this auspicious month specifically on the Saturday the prayer is being offered begins with the ritual of making or arranging of the statue of the elephant-headed god Vinayaka also fondly referred to as Pillayar, Ganapati and popularly known as Ganesa, is a source of inspiration to the devotee. The washing of the murthi and then anointing them with sandalwood paste, tumeric (*circuma longa*) paste and garlands is a ritual in homes and whenever a festival, or an observation is to take place. The temple ritual is called abishêgampannugai in Tamil. To conduct any ritual at home or at a temple the resident priest 'purogithan' supplies the devotees a list of materials to have in readiness for the devotional ritual observation.

Spices such as tumeric powder, betel leaves and areca nuts, fruits mainly bananas, oranges and apples, fresh incense sticks, camphor, red or white cotton thread, oils such as coconut oil, sweet oil, castor oil, milk and clarified butter (ghee), flowers and money are to be provided. All these are used in varying combination and mixtures and offered to the deities and to Perumalsami (Venkateswara) during Purattasi.

In the Vishnu Purna the manner in which Vishnu is to be worshipped is told by Aurva to Sagra and the duties of the four castes singly and severally, and also how to worship Him in times of distress is outlined.

Aurva adds that:

He who pleases Vishnu obtains all terrestrial enjoyments; heaven and a place in heaven; and what is best of all, final liberation. (Visnu Purana 1989: 419)

In Hinduism moksha, when all earthly desires are destroyed, is accepted especially during the final sannyasi stage of one's earthly existence. Kumar says that in Hinduism ritual is still

practiced because of the need to perform ritual activity in order to achieve something whether it is a mundane result... or the ultimate goal of release (Moksha) from worldly attachments (2000: 23).

The ultimate aim of a Hindu is to attain redemption. The researcher has had the experience of listening to the aged, the frail and the infirm loudly proclaiming their wish to be taken away from this temporal world.

Hindus generally observe their domestic rituals daily. Most devout Hindus set aside a particular part of their homes for the observance of their religious paraphernalia, others set aside a corner to conduct their rituals, and others use the area where the kamakshivelukku is placed, for their communion with the divine. Others have small rooms built, attached from the main building, to keep their murthis and in which rooms they observe their daily prayer. All these arrangements are made to accommodate their religious duties.

The nine ways to worship Lord Venkateswara according to the Bhagavata-Purana begins with Shrananam that is listening to religious stories which attracts both adults and children. For children it is the commencement of their spiritual life. For adults it is the psychological strengthening of their progress towards a deeper devotion to God.

This is followed by kirtanam, which is the singing of the Sri Vishnu Sahasranama (the thousand names of Vishnu). The Stotra is not set to music: it is chanting of verses in praise of the deity either individually or congregationally either in the home or in the temple.

Thirdly it is Smaranam, which refers to the thinking of God followed by Padasevanam that is self-surrender at the feet of God. The rest of the modes of worship is archana: greetings, Vandanam: obeisance to God; dasyam: service to God; Sathyam: moving with God as one would do with a friend and finally Atma-Nivedanam which is the offering of oneself to God.

The worshipper also offers material things such as flowers, (pushpam); cooked rice (satham), and fruits (pazham). Thereafter, the satham and fruits are eaten by the worshipper and his/her

family and friends. This food is prasadam (blessed food). A very important fire worship is performed during weddings and at homes for special reasons. This ritual is referred to as Yegium/Homa Havan. The Havan ritual is conducted by priests who are trained from an early age to conduct such a ritual. Most of these rituals are elaborate complex sacrifices made to the Agni the 'god of fire.' Therefore, they are performed by priests. This ritual today is performed by priests from Sri Lanka and India. This sacrifice is believed to bring out the power of gods and nature through fire.

Another popular ritual communally observed in South Africa is Kavadi. Those who "carry" the Kavadi on their shoulders do so to fulfill a vow that they have taken. Vows are specifically taken in times of distress and ill health. The Thai Pusam (January-February) Kavadi is a Tamil festival but nowadays because of its popularity it is attracting Hindi, Telugu and Gujarati Hindus. Kavadi is a festival acknowledging the presence of Murukan. The devotee's dance is frenzy. Murukan is always associated with ritualistic worship and sacrifice. Wherever Kavadi is observed ritual dances are a feature. In South Africa it is said that the devotee is in a trance. This could be attributed to intense devotional fervour or it may be a psychological manifestation.

Another ritual fervently observed every Good Friday at the Sri Siva and Subrahmanya Marriamman Temples is the annual Thimeri (fire-walking festival). This festival was also observed in many other temples in Natal. For example, it was observed in Hattingspruit.

The observance of Thimeri on Good Fridays annually is in honor of Draupadi Amman. It is ritual penance. Originally the Tamil and Telegu Hindus were the main groups that took part in the Thimeri ritual held at the temples. The Telegu Hindus because of their affinity to the Tamils by tradition, custom and by marriage also joined in observing this ritual. Nowadays the Hindi and Gujarati Hindus take part also.

Kumar in his essay: Religious institutions: Ritual and Power Dynamics in India says that religious institutions function as the custodians of authority that sanction a particular religious experience, the various myths and symbols, the ritual traditions, the doctrines, and scriptures (2000: 22).

Some such institutions in this country, which maintained and nurtured the religious heritage brought from their native places of origin. These institutions helped in no small measure to uplift those who worked very long hours for their “masters.” In the beginning the oral tradition of imparting religious knowledge played a significant function in their lives. Then the mother-tongue schools built entirely by the community also reinforced the work of the organizations.

The Sithivrnayaga Sivasathana Thava Sungam of Durban was founded in 1907. The Saiva Samaya Bhakti Bhajanai Group was established in Pietermaritzburg. The Hindu Maha Sabha was constituted in Pietermaritzburg in 1912 as a counter response to a Christian proselytization. The Natal Vedic Society also founded in 1912 is to be found at 12 Carlisle Street Durban. It has offices and a hall.

Its main mission is to support South African Tamils in their endeavours to understand themselves and fellow citizens in a non-racial society.

Some of their objectives are to:

1. Promote and preserve the Tamil language, culture and serve as a guardian of the Tamil Culture.
2. Provide a Research and Reference Service to promote Tamil Culture.

A few years later in 1914 the Hindu Tamil Institute was founded. The Andhra Maha Sabha was founded in 1931. In 1933 the Pathmajuranni Andhra Sabha was established in Clairwood, an Indian suburb, a few kilometers South of Durban along the Old South Coast Road. An endearing fact is that it made available bursaries for students especially those who could not afford to further their studies. Many other religious institutions were established which propagated and strengthened the local people's belief systems.

The sixteen important forms of Pillayar are: Bala Ganapati, Taruna Ganapati, Bhakta Ganapati, Vira Ganapati, Shakti Ganapati, Dhawaja Ganapati, Sidhi Ganapati, Ucchistha Ganapati,

Vignaraja, Kshipra Ganapati, Heramba Ganapati, Lakshmi Ganapati, Maha Ganapati, Vijaya (Bhuvanesha) Ganapati, Nritta Ganapati and Urdhiva Ganapati.

3.3 Local Structures that have facilitated the Practice of these Rituals

3.3.1 Mother Tongue Schools

Mother-tongue schools whether state run or privately ssponsored by community-based organizations is to be reinforced by these who inherited the language. It is only through the mother-tongue language that anyone would appreciate the nuances of the culture, ritual and tradition. Language is the bedrock of any culture.

In plural societies many languages and dialects are becoming extinct because:

1. They are not spoken.
2. The dominant language submerges them.
3. They are part of the minority language.
4. They are globally subjugated by the English language.
5. Sometimes the use of mother-tongue language like Tamil, Telugu or Hindi creates embarrassment for the user.

While this may be so, religion is intrinsically interwoven within one's language. Language is vital to religious understanding. Perhaps the researcher may posit that when it comes to religion, language is vital to the understanding of rites, rituals and the singing of stotrams (prayer).

There are men and women of all the linguistic groups that have relentlessly assisted to promote the Indian languages; they created organizations to uplift their communities through the teaching of their languages.

A fine example of such an effort was used by a number of organizations. The Tamil Protective Association of Pietermaritzburg continues to teach Tamil. The Merebank Tamil School Society

and the Hindu Youngmen's Association popularly known by its acronym H.Y.M.A. this association runs a Tamil school. It participates in eisteddfods, advances Tamil. The centenary commemoration will be held in 2005.

The Tamil Protective Association fondly known as T.P.A. is now in Newholmes, an Indian suburb of Pietermaritzburg. It originated in Pentrich also a suburb of Pietermaritzburg. The Association moved when the Indians were moved out from there by the Groups Areas Act of 1950. Sterling work is being done in the teaching of Tamil and advancing of the Tamil culture. The TPA Pietermaritzburg Primary School is at 25 Aintree Road in Newholmes.

To promote the Telugu language a number of community based institutions took up the challenge. In order to overcome the nescience in this community, mother-tongue schools were institutionalized especially in the Durban area.

In 1912 the Tongaat Hindu Samarasa Bodha Andra Association built a temple on a plot of land given by Mahaluxmi Desai. In 1915 the Tongaat Andhra Patsala was inaugurated to teach Telugu. A Varadacharyulu was brought from Andhra Pradesh to teach Telugu. The Pathmajuranni constituted in 1933, organised patasalas to teach Telugu.

In Mount Partiridge in Pietermaritzburg where Indians lived and worked at the Sutherlands Tannery and shoe factories formed the Tamil Education Society. This society actively took part in Tamil Eisteddfods in Durban. When the society was dissolved because of the Group Areas Act the Indians moved to Northdale the Siva Nyana Sabha started a Tamil School. The Tamil language was given unqualified support.

The Saiva Sithantha Sungam situated at 71-73 Veerappa Road in Northdale came into being in 1937. Now it has twenty-five branches throughout the country with its headquarters at 37 Derby Street, Durban. The Pietermaritzburg branch owns a temple and a hall, which was opened in 1980. Its primary activity is the teaching of Tamil to children. It conducts Tamil classes in the evening for adults. Its main concern is to further the Tamil language, culture and religion. It also helps in teaching singing and music. The representatives of the Sungam observe the

Purattasi rituals and other festivals but the organization is more inclined towards Saiva philosophy.

The Tamil language and belief system is disseminated in Greytown by the Saiva Sithantha Sabay and Ashram. The Sabay is affiliated to the Saiva Sithantha Kazhagaun of Merebank in Durban. The founder in 1958 was Swami Chinmayananda of Merebank. The spiritual head now is Swami Premananda also of Merebank. Its alliances are with branches in Phoenix, Bonella, Queensburgh and Unit 5 in Chatsworth. Originally it started off as the Tamil-Telugu Society in 1983. In 1985 it established itself as the Saiva Sithantha Saby and Ashram. One Sabay is building an Ashram at 28 Sargeaunt Street. The Ashram is nearing completion. One of the committee members teaches the language at the state primary school. It plays a supportive role in conducting memorial services and renders its services at religious functions. The individual members observe the Purattasi festival and some of the Saiva rituals.

In the early 1940's of the Common Era Nadasen Satchidanandan while he was principal of the Harden Heights Government Aided School taught Tamil to the children of the workers. Many of his pupils were quite proficient in Tamil. One of them was able to write in Tamil to his grandfather in Tamil Nadu. After his transfer to the Notingham Road Government Aided Primary School, P. Moonsamy continued as a Tamil teacher in the evenings.

A number of Tamil and Telugu institutions throughout the country from the turn of the last century felt it expedient to:

1. Teach the language to propagate it,
2. Educate the people in their religion,
3. Teach the Tevarama and the Nalayira Divyaprabandham,
4. Build temples,
5. Build ashrams,
6. Teach song and music,
7. Conduct classes for adults,
8. Participate in Eisteddfods,
9. Conduct prayer services,

10. Play a supporting role in the community.
11. Disseminate Tamil and Telugu information and literature through books, pamphlets, leaflets and newspapers like the Tamil Guardian,
12. Keep in touch with the cultural base in India,
13. Offer bursaries to students to study in India,
14. Teach Indian dance and music,
15. Bring Kathakali, Bharatanatyam, Odissi and Kathak and Kuchipudi dance forms to South Africa from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh,
16. Bring well-known Karnatic singers and musicians,
17. Hold every year the Swami Thyagaraja Festival,
18. Protect the image of Hinduism.

All these ambitious aims were achieved by the indomitable efforts of a number of dedicated men and women of every village, suburb or estate.

On 22 May 1999 the South African Teachers' Association was inaugurated! Its philosophy is to:

1. Create a new dimension towards promoting Tamil.
2. Welcome "peace loving" people of all linguistic groups.
3. Help in nation building.

The chief editor and co-ordinator of the Association, A.M. Pillay believes that Tamil must be alleviated to a position that it deserves. He is confident that the Association will vigorously do just that.

3.3.2 The Extended Family

The South African Indian situation has changed and is changing to meet the challenges of the onset of the new innovative and demanding technology. To be in the mainstream of this technology is to educate oneself. Once armed with such skills as information technology and so

on economics rears its head. To achieve ones pecuniary ambitions the search for employment is ranked first in the schedule of priorities.

The children tend to leave home as soon as a job is found. They leave the family home to take their positions in their chosen fields far from their home base. Employment is the originator of the Hindu Diaspora. Survival depends on obtaining a good career, there after vertical mobility becomes their foremost ambition. Migration to new parts within the country and outside the country is quite common amongst the Hindus today. Recently the media, both print and visual, has underlined the "poaching" of skilled artisans in all fields by first world countries. Much talk is going on debating the brain drain issue. The siphoning off of skilled people is undoubtedly detrimental to the health of the country.

To counteract the pull is to create sound economic foundation and create job opportunities for all. The Hindu Diaspora has to be taken into account to stem the drain. The lucrative economic breaks elsewhere, are the primary architect in making of the extended family system.

Whenever the Hindu leaves his birth place he takes with him his spiritual values; his religion; his rites and rituals. He joins people of the same belief-systems, dietary habits, customs and traditions. They maintain cultural ties with their families and pass on their spiritual knowledge to their children. Their spiritual consciousness strengthens them to fend for themselves in alien lands and cultures. In their association with people with like religious interests they preserve all that is Hindu to whichever place they had emigrated they become sharply aware of the plurality of the society. Most countries are plural societies other than South Africa these are such countries as Great Britain, France, Netherlands, Germany, The United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The Hindu Diaspora has created a new ethnic ethos in the country of adoption. They have built schools and temples where they worship their favourite deity. Grand festivals are held. They observe popular rituals like Vinyaka, Chaturthi, Swaratri, Navaratri, Kavadi, Mariamman kanju pooja, Deepavali, Purattasi, New Year during the course of the year.

To sustain them in foreign lands they keep in touch with their religious affiliations by importing musical instruments, books, music recordings, spices, murthis, clothing and cooking utensils. They teach their children Indian art forms like Kathak, Kathakali, Bharatanatyam and Odissi. They maintain their dietary habits and the women generally maintain their Hindu dress code.

Another side to the extended families religious ties is that the younger generation living in a plural society are emotionally asphyxiated by the First worlds materialistic ambitions to amass wealth and at the same time maintain the Hindu religious vision of doing ones duty to ones parents and ones society and ones country.

Although the extended family is prevalent in this country the blood bond is still a strong adhesive in keeping the family together, it does not have the security of a joint family; there is no emotional support. The sons are still natural heirs of the family home while married daughters belong to their husband's family to which they must identify without losing their attachment for their siblings and parents.

In many cases the daughters have taken care of her parents: her husband is more tolerant of her parents while the daughters-in-law are not obliging nor obligated. The non-attachment may be the result of a psychological ambivalence because of her husband's preoccupation with his mother. Since the wife was most of the time left out in the decision-making mechanism she may tend to become aloof, unsympathetic and garrulous.

Nevertheless, the extended family keeps in close touch with all members of the kinship group in a number of ways:

- 1) Communicating with one and another by telephone, e-mail or letter.
- 2) Meeting at functions: weddings, religious ceremonies, funerals, special occasions
- 3) Death, illness and so on bring all the family members together and any bitterness of the past is forgotten.
- 4) Good kinship relationship is the basis for a sound family foundation especially in a nuclear entity.

3.3.3 Close Knit Communities

The immigrant Hindus on their arrival in this country were placed on sugar estates along the coast and on wattle estates and farms; and on dairy farms in the midlands of Natal especially in the Pietermaritzburg area, Cramond, Clan Syndicate T.M. Mackenzie Estate, New Hanover, Dalton, Fawn Leas, Onehouse Wattle Company, Ravensworth estate, Ashendon Farm, Harden Heights Wattle Estate, "Came" Farm, Seven Oaks, Fairfield Estate and Greytown. All these estates and farms are off the R33, which connects Pietermaritzburg to Greytown.

On these holdings indentured Hindu labourers were concentrated in barracks in the main and the sirdar probably had his own house a little away from the rest of his workers. Large barracks were found in the Ravensworth Estate and Harden Heights. In Ravensworth Estate, sometime in the 1930s separate dwellings were built for the Indians by the owners, W.L.E. Angus, one of the owners of the estate. He also built individual dwellings for his Black labourers in 1945 using Italian prisoners of war.

In Harden Heights the barracks housed a large number of the Indian labourers comprising mainly of Hindus. The majority were Tamil speaking Hindus and not more than five Hindi-speaking Hindus live there. Lots of the Hindus belonged to the scheduled class (vide passes). Those who came later in the period 1900 to 1911 were mainly of the higher caste groups: the Telugu Reddy family came with their children from Andra Pradesh. His sons name was Narisimul, Rama Reddy who worked all his life on the wattle plantations felling and stripping the trees. All his children were well conversant in the Telugu and Tamil language. The Tamils who came were all literate in the Tamil language, religion and culture.

One of them was Moonsamy Moodley from Gingee, which is on the major road connecting Thirurannamalai and Tindivanam. Another immigrant Yellappa Govender also came from the area. These stalwarts propagated and taught the philosophical aspects of Vaishnavite and Saivite religion to the people living there. They did not observe any of the Mariammam, rituals. They may have participated in the Kavadi festival. The tiny little temple after the earlier one was burnt down, is still there. A Tamil school was started and classes were conducted in the

evenings at private homes and later when a Government Aided Indian School was built classes were held in the evenings. One of the early teachers P. Moonsamy amongst others who taught Tamil to the children.

The Purattasi month was observed by most of the Hindus, the chariot was drawn in and around the compact Indian settlement. Other rituals like the Kavadi, Mariamman Kanji puja were observed. Such festivals like Deepavali were enjoyed with great relish.

On the Ravensworth Estate nearby a similar way of life existed. The immigrant population was much larger. All of them worked in the wattle plantations. They dried the wattle bark and railed it to other areas to be made into tannin, which was used to soften animal skins. In this estate they built a Mariamman Temple. This temple is a little more than a hundred years. Much of the paintings on glass of deities were imported from India. Kavadi was carried on a grand style. A large number of the carefully crafted were at this temple right up to early 1960s Common Era. Marin Kanji prayers were held every year with animal sacrifices. This ritual was a communal affair. Purattasi was observed at the temple with all the residents participating since all the people were Tamil speaking Hindus.

A Tamil school was run and many youngsters of 1910 and 1920 years of the Common Era learnt Tamil. One of the outstanding students who were fluent in Tamil was Nagappam Govender. He did not teach Tamils to others. Much later a Kistapper Govender, son of an indentured Indian Munian of Polar taught Tamil and English in the mid 1940s.

The Onehouse Wattle Company in Slenside Fawnlees near Dalton housed the Indians in a compact barracks not much activity is propagate the language and culture emanated from there.

Other pockets of Hindus who lived around these areas were self-sufficient and promoted the Hindu religions but not the Tamil language.

Close knit communities such as these and those of Pentrich and Sutherlands of Pietermaritzburg played a significant role in nurturing the Tamil culture and language. In such communities'

tradition, culture, language and religion created unity and security. They identified with one another: these were much common ground for such a relationship.

A number of features characterized close-knit communities:

1. There was security.
2. There was commonality.
3. Fears were allayed.
4. In times of distress – pregnancy, childbirth, illness, death – help you resources was there.
5. Material sustenance was provided.
6. An advice desk was always close at hand.
7. Education was a common priority.
8. Individual religious needs were provided.
9. There was a common ethno-social identity.
10. There was always someone to take up the “matter.”
11. There was safety in numbers.
12. Family functions such as weddings became a social function for all.
13. The close-knit community was intrinsically interwoven.

Close-knit communities essentially kept, the Hinduness amongst the Hindus and in the larger context the Indianness in the Indian. Indians, generally, find common ground to intermingle amongst themselves. They are:

1. Religion
2. Culture
3. Language
4. Dress
5. Food Preference
6. Mannerisms
7. Ethnicity
8. Community

3.4 Issues Related to Pluralism (Conversion)

Dr S Radhakrishnan one of the world renowned philosophers of the modern period and former President of India, emphasized that the intolerance of narrow monotheism is written in letters of blood across the history of man from the time when the tribes of Israel burst into the aggressive wars against people of alien cults. They invoke divine sanction for cruelties inflicted on the conquered. The spirit of old Israel is inherited by Christianity and Islam (:).

Both Christianity and Islam being missionary religions suffer from a complex that their religions are superior to all other religions. The difference between Hinduism and Christianity and Islam is that Hinduism is mystical and metaphysical while the others are founded prophetic religions. Hinduism is sustained by Dharma: a concept difficult to be translated into any other language other than the Indian languages. Fundamentally Dharma is humanity bound duty of seeing good, being good, and doing good to all living creatures on this earth.

Asoka an Indian emperor in upholding Dharma maintained that all religions must be tolerated and that none must be despised.

When Hindus take their sacred vows during the auspicious time of marriage, the couple takes those vows very seriously and pray that in time to come both husband and wife would become one in thought word and deed: that one will become part of the other in the same, in mutual and Androgynous form as Siva and Sakti appear.

According to Kumar, "somewhere down the road the Hindu society, like most religious communities, sanctified the institution of marriage and made the union between a man and a woman a life long relationship" .

Harold G. Caword asserts that:

Well before the advent of Christianity and Islam in the West, India was clearly experiencing...Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism... perhaps as early as the arrival of Jesus' disciple Thomas in the first century C.E. (1995: 23).

Then Thomas must have been one of the first evangelists in Southern India. He must without doubt witnessed first hand some of the domestic, village and temple rituals that were performed by the Hindus.

A.U.S. Christian magazine produced an article that pronounced that Hindus "a significant minority whose influence extends far beyond their actual numbers" (1994: 26). This fear meant that Christians feel that their religion was being threatened.

Its concern was whether Hindus will change the increasingly pluralistic American in it is unclear. This article also shows how the International Mission in New York City have "targeted" Gujaratis. One of the evangelist of the mission agencies network for North America Project aimed at 100 000 Hindus in his Detroit Michigan area. He told the potential clients to empty his "God Shelf" of all other Gods and Goddesses, and to put Jesus alone. He was not ready to be saved (1994: 26).

In the same volume the free-lance author of the article Stain Guthrie says that it "made me think a little bit more than I had that Hindus are really not our antagonists or our enemies, but are also searching for the truth and care about society" (Ibid.)

Rational thinkers know that Hinduism is no threat to other religions because of its tolerance. Peter Pereira an Indian belonging to the United Methodist Church openly tells you about their approach to get a Hindu to convert to Christianity. He says: "witnessing to Hindus is not possible. Friendship evangelism is the best thing" (Ibid.).

3.5 Issues Related to Urbanization and the Dispersal of Close Knit Communities (Intermarriages)

Close knit communities that existed on the sugar estates and on the wattle farms began to disintegrate. In the beginning it was individual families who immigrated to the urban and peri-urban areas. As the children became educated in English they found that there was no employment opportunities on the farms. The only outlets that they had were to be employed as clerks, supervisors and machine minders and such like allied workers.

Opportunities existed in the towns for those who were proficient in English. The attraction of the towns affording many jobs in many fields, were there for the taking. The Indian was also conscious of the value of education and upward mobility and they were not prepared to remain servile and domesticated to remain as hewers of wood and carriers of water.

Some of the attractive pull factors that can be considered which lured the Indian from his close knit community are:

1. The existence of educational facilities: primary, secondary and tertiary facilities,
2. The employment opportunities,
3. The existence of health care centers,
4. The access to sporting facilities,
5. Better living conditions,
6. A higher wage structure,
7. Excess to religious and cultural activities, and
8. The opportunities for career advancement.

The close-knit communities due to the urban attraction:

1. Fragmented,
2. The young and the economically active people left their communities,
3. The competition for "good" jobs was greater than in their native places,

4. Their social life was limited to what the communities could provide,
5. Their existence became mundane and routine, and
6. Little challenges presented themselves.

The young men left first for the towns and were cared for by their relations who were already there. Entire families left their estate communities. They were followed by their kith and kin. These kinship families often settled close to one another.

These settlements gave rise to Indian suburbs like Pentrich, Northdale, Sutherlands, Mount Partridge, Raisethorpe, Mountainrise, Allandale, Copesville, in Pietermaritzburg; Isipingo Beach, Isipingo Hills, and such like Indian suburbs. Much later in the latter half of the last century the Indians were by law removed and settled in "state housing schemes" like the greater Chatsworth made up of Marianhill, Shallcross, Umhlatuzana, Merebank, Phoenix to name a few in that part of KwaZulu/Natal.

Small communities in the Midlands of KwaZulu/Natal were also uprooted and resettled in such residential areas like Coolair in Dalton. A vibrant Indian community in New Hanover was forcibly removed by the Group Areas Act of 1950. The New Hanover Government Aided Indian School initially built by Indians closed down because of this fact. Once this Indian township, Coolair came into existence, Indians left the surrounding insular farm communities.

They left because:

1. They could purchase their homes. The Indian deemed it necessary to own his own home. Owning a home was the most important thing in their lives. Further, there was no guarantee that they would be allowed to live on the farms after retirement. In most cases the farm owner needed the house for a new replacement.

2. Security became a major concern on these farms and added to their exodus to urban areas.

Wherever they settled, however small the community might have been, schools, community halls, temples, churches and recreational facilities were built. Mother tongue education was provided by the state schools, or by religious institutions, or by private individuals, or concerned organizations for the propagation of language and culture.

Now these suburbs provided for the cultural, religious and educational needs in particular for the citizens of these plural communities. While close-knit communities fell apart, new communities arose in urban and peri-urban areas. Although they function as an Indian community kinship, relationships have become dislocated. New relationships were formed, new bonds emerged new behavioural manifestations were experienced, new religious practices and teachings were ventilated.

A new multifaceted, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious plural society took root. Families that lived side by side with their own strong "neighbour-family" relationships came to be scattered from within and without the new emerging society. The familiar territory is shaped by the variegated cultures that have been effectively assembled together by political expediency.

Before the birth of the new democratic Republic of South Africa there were a few mixed marriages mainly between Indian men and Coloured women and there were also Indian-White intermarriages.

The Coloured people are largely the result of liaison between White men and Black women from the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape of Good Hope on 6th April 1652. The Coloured people, as a parallel example, akin to the Anglo-Indians of Indian. The Anglo-Indians are the off-springs of British fathers and Indian mothers. Another example is the mulatto of Mozambique and the American Negro whose fathers is generally as American White.

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s special laws were enacted in this country just to keep the Whites from getting enamored by non-White women especially Black women. However, such decrees were broken wittingly or unwittingly by the four major racial groups in South Africa. Nonetheless the "yellow press" in KwaZulu Natal thrived on these transgressions and increased its circulation mostly amongst the non-White population. Many police hours were wasted by then men in blue in attempting to protect the morals, dignity and pride of the White people.

After 1994 many mixed marriages took place between the different racial groups in this country. One White-Indian couple the researcher interviewed made interesting comments.

The Indian woman Manikar (not her real name) said that the marriage provides for her and her two children quite adequately, and that she would not divorce her husband for she vowed that only death would part them. She has no problems in so far as culture is concerned because they understand that they come from different backgrounds. Her husband who studied to become a Christian converted to Hinduism because he could not stand the taunts that he was subjected to during his study to become a pastor under the tutelage of a certain well-known Christian in the Gauteng.

The husband said that he was always welcome amongst the Hindus. They treated him no different from their own kind. On the other hand he would not take his "Indian" wife to a "White" function unless they were specifically invited for fear of stares and snide remarks.

The woman's parents have not accepted her marriage to Leon (not his real name) and have disowned her. Leon's mother and other members of his family have accepted Manika without any reservations.

Yet another point of view from a White Christian who married a Hindu woman says that he was turned off by a Catholic priest telling him to live in fear of the Lord. He says that religiously he is a spiritual person and that he has no difficulties in raising his children as Hindus (Hinduism 1994:25).

Another White male who married an Indian woman said that Indian women do the “wifely” chores for their husbands and children such as washing, ironing, cooking and caring for their homes.

A White woman who married an Indian said that Indian men take home-building seriously and that it is their duty to provide for their family.

There was a time when it was anathema amongst Indians to intermarry amongst themselves. An example is that it was taboo for a Hindi Hindu to marry a Tamil or Telegu Hindu. The reason being language and culture not much religion.

It was frowned upon even now for a Non-Muslim woman to marry a Muslim man. In fact the Muslim community will be up in arms if such integration took place or the parents will completely disown the son. However, it is acceptable for a Muslim man to marry a Hindu woman as long as she converts to Islam.

To quote Neha (not her real name) of America, a Hindu who fell in love with a Muslim and who would have married him had it not been for the pressure he placed on her to convert to Islam, the children had to be Muslims and he stopped her from enjoying social activities. She was not able to take such intolerance and at last:

“To girls of her age she suggests: Think before you leap into an inter-religious relationship. Don’t do it if you can’t be honest to those around you and yourself.”
(Hinduism Today 1994:25),

She continues to say,

“after what I’ve been through, I know religion matters.” (1994: 25)

Similar kind of pressure is brought to bear on Hindus in an intermarriage situation with Indian Christians. The convert's sinister motive is to convert the entire Hindu family.

The researcher interviewed a close friend who was a staunch Hindu who assisted temples, took part in Kavady, helped at temple functions converted to Christianity because his daughter married a Christian convert. His wife and his other children still remain Hindus. Not much tension have risen between the different members in the same family due mainly to the Hindu tolerance and to accept one's wish as long as one is happy.

Another young woman from Falls Church in Virginia in the USA, says as Manika asserted:

"I base inter-religious marriage on strength of the person.

If society says no, but the couple is confident of what they want in life, then by all means they should be married. But if they aren't sure of themselves, they shouldn't get married" (Hinduism Today 1994: 25).

On the other hand one mother from Houston, Texas, USA says,

"intermarriages are quite common now" (Hinduism Today 1994: 25).

Her children are brought up with a blend of Hinduism and Christian principles but the children have Christian names and none of them a Hindu name.

In so far as names are concerned in Hinduism the child is given a name at the naming ceremony while the Christian child is christened at a christening ceremony, the implication being that the child is made a Christian.

Another Hindu who married an Indian Christian says:

"I believe your faith is your way of life. If your partner shares the same faith, you share a common philosophy in which you can bring up your children. I have many friends that

had mixed marriages, which broke after ten or twelve years. Their children didn't know who or what they were. Besides material wealth and education what else do we have to give children but religion." (Hinduism Today 1994: 25)

It is obvious that there are many hurdles and obstacles that have to be surmounted between couples in intermarriages. Some say that:

"It is an issue of mixed emotions, mixed cultures, mixed philosophies." (Hinduism Today 1994: 25)

The difficulties facing mixed marriages are not only emotions, customs and attitude to life but also religion. Hinduism being a tolerant religion accepts other faiths quite easily. Therefore, under pressure, Hinduism will give way to other religious beliefs-systems. India from earliest times have given sanctuary and succor to many religion such as the Syrian Christians of Kerla, the Parsees, the Zoroastrians, the Buddhists, the Jains, Christians. It was one of the earliest plural societies. Radhakrishnan quite succinctly said:

"Hinduism is wholly free from the strange obsession of faiths that acceptance of a particular religious metaphysic is necessary for salvation, and non-acceptance thereof is heinous sin meriting eternal punishment in hell." (Radhakrishnan 2002: 19)

He further adds that:

"Hersy-hunting, the favorite game of many religions is singularly absent from Hinduism." (Ibid.)

The researcher has pointed out earlier about some of the difficulties faced by intermarriage unions. Questions as to what religion does the child of such a marriage follow, would it be the father's or the mother's? How does the child react amongst his friends at school or social functions especially when disparaging remarks are leveled at him or her.

Whatever the rational of intermarriages may be between the races, freedom of association has not been forfeited. However, culture, customs, traditions and belief-systems grounded in many years cannot be easily removed. Changes and adaptations will be undercurrent in intermarriages.

Today intermarriages are more often than not "love marriages" as opposed to the arranged marriages amongst Indians. In arranged marriages such values as to the character of the "girl" and the "boy" are important. Education, social standing, economics were considered. These marriages took place without question from the bride and bridegroom and lasted a life time.

Hindus take their sacred vows during the auspicious time of marriage. The couple take these vows very seriously and pray that in time to come both husband and wife would become one in thought, word and deed: that one becomes a part of the other somewhat androgynous.

Kumar says that:

"...somewhat down the road the Hindu society, like most religious communities, sanctified the institution of marriage and made the union between a man and women a life long relationship."(2000: 23)

Inter-religion, inter-cultural and inter-racial marriages begin in most cases after a few years when pressures come to bear on the couple due to their upbringing. In Hindu marriages specifically those of the "arranged" type and also of "love" marriage it took a real battering to go as far as to have the marriage annulled.

The reasons for such a marriage foundation to withstand such a hammering are many. To begin it is religion: "my vows taken on the day of my marriage in the "presence" of God and guests cannot be broken."

Secondly it is social norms: how will society judge me. Thirdly, my family: what would they think of me. Fourthly my children: What would happen to them. Finally in exasperation: it is my fate! It is my karma. These reasons nearly always keep the marriage going. The brunt of

atrocities is suffered by the female counterpart whose is biologically physically weaker. Whether she is a wage earner or not, does not matter.

A male educator married a female lawyer. For the crudest and silliest of reasons he abused her and tragically both put on a false courageous and happy front at all functions they attended. The marriage persists to continue despite the fact that there is nothing between them. It is only a façade, an outward appearance that all is well.

Today's openness in the schools, the university and the workplace brought about a new dimension where the couple fall in love and then marry. The educational achievements of the Indian youth has created an Indian Diaspora where Indians are leaving their homes to work elsewhere in the country and many emigrate to mainly New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. Many have taken employment in England and the Middle East to enjoy a better economic life.

The myth that joint-family system will remain has been shattered. The children, girls and boys are leaving their homes at the first opportunity to seek better jobs and opportunities and are very capable of fending for themselves. Indian girls were largely sheltered by family and parents have now removed the shackles that kept them home-based. They are now up and about taking care of themselves in the employment sector. The Indian Diaspora is a reality in this country when upward mobility and cross-border barriers have been successfully removed by the past 1994 democratic dispersion demarcating the beginning of a new era in the history of the Republic of South Africa.



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CHAPTER 4

PURATTASI: SOCIAL IDENTITY & CONSTRUCTION

4.1 Oral Tradition & Social Identity

Much of the festival of Parattasi is based on oral tradition and rules that are formulated within the community. The rules of rituals related to Parattasi are such that they provide for prohibitions and adhering to a set way of life that is supposed to be conducive for spiritual growth during the time of the festival. On the level of the society these various rules, though based on orality, are entrenched in society and have a two fold effect: firstly, these rules enforce a life-style that distinguishes them from the rest of society; secondly, by doing so the rules provide for the formation of social identity in relation to the rest of the society.

In the Harden Heights Wattle Company estate there were a large number of indentured Hindus who worked in the wattle plantations and in the “box factory” that manufactured boxes for fruits and tomatoes.

The researcher has experienced the discussion and debates that had taken place between two emigrants. Both were proficient in the Tamil language, culture and traditions. More often than not their arguments were well attended by other male audience. Much of their debates were quotes from Tamil scholars such as Mahakaviyogi Barathi, the Kamban Ramayana, and the Mahabharatham. The avid audience was able to gather information to add to their own knowledge since most of them were not literate in the Tamil language. These two elderly men were Moonsamy Mudlair, the sirdar and Yellappa Govender the “engine boiler” room attendant.

In the same estate in the early 1900’s the researcher was told by the late Surayanarayan Reddy whose father Ram Reddy had arrived on indenture at Harden Heights; that every Sunday

morning most of the children and men assembled at the local temple to listen to discourses delivered by the elders on a variety of subjects. The children were kept entertained with stories from the scriptures and myths.

Mrs Ram Reddy spoke Telugu fluently and was able to narrate the Ramayana to the audience especially the woman. Her son Sarayanarayan continued the tradition.

These Sunday morning gatherings became a pattern. A neighbouring Hindi family, because they lived in the same barracks could speak Tamil quite fluently while Mrs Mudliar could speak Telugu (she was a Naidoo) Tamil and Hindustani very fluently.

In those days the members of the community were intimately close to one another. Good neighbourliness was given priority. In the event of a dispute, which was inevitable, the elders came to the rescue to restore peace and order. Generally every one participated in community functions, such as weddings, religious festivals, home based or temple based. In times of illness or death all the people assisted in one or many ways to alleviate the suffering of the family.

Mr Reddy also told the researcher that there was a man who was able to teach one of the Terrukathu dance dramas to his students. Apparently he was meticulous in pronunciation of the Tamil words and was precise in the way he taught the dancer to perform his part. Many dance-dramas were enacted by his students to the delight of his well attended audience. This man was not able to read nor write Tamil. He had learnt to recite these stories having learnt it "by heart" in his native village in India.

The researcher also had first hand experience of the oral tradition from his mother Kannama who was not able to read or write Tamil but was able to read English. She listened to her father Chinnasamy Govender who was proficient in Tamil. Practically every evening she would put the writer and his younger sister to sleep by telling them bed time stories such as Praglada, Raja Harichandra, Raja Desingh, Kovilan and Kanagie and so on. On the same estate there lived a Moonsamy Govender who emigrated from Tamilnadu. In his old age he regularly visited the

researcher's family and as a routine told them many stories to the delight of the researcher's mother and her children. He too was not literate in the Tamil language.

The rest of the families as was customary gathered and socialized during weddings, religious social functions. They identified with one another and bonded together quite easily. The children played a significant role in keeping all the families united. It was this commonness of language, religion and culture that maintained the Indian Hindu identity. The dominant theme in these various functions and occasions of the community is the conducive behaviour for spiritual growth. In the context of Parattasi festival, the various functions of the community emphasis on these rules is made through drama, prayers, and other forms so that the community learns to understand the importance of maintaining the culture of their forebears.

4.2 Social Identity Formations within a Religiously Pluralist Society

According to Romanucci -Ross, and De Vos:

"In a contemporary world of complex societies; identity is increasingly expressed in ethnic terms" (1995: 12).

In a religiously pluralistic society such as ours where Hindus make up a part of the society, identity becomes an issue. It is marked by Hindu ethnic identity. The Hindus easily identify themselves in their religiosity. Even in public congregational prayer or temple assembly they find some form of commonality. However, further identification makers are to be found amongst the Hindus themselves. They ethnically identify themselves with their language and religious affiliations. Many have associated themselves to the neo-Hindu organisations.

On August 5, 1905, the Arya Samajists, Bhai Paramand visited South Africa, and stayed for about five months. During his times he started a Hindu Reform Society, and Hindu Young Men's Association. His main aim was to spread the "vedic religion, culture and philosophy" (Kumar, 2000: 129 -130).

Svami Shankarand followed in 1908. He was not only committed to the awakening of "religious consciousness," among the Hindus in South Africa, but also to preventing them from converting to Christianity and Islam (Kumar, 2000: 129 -130).

"Kinsmen" are regarded by South African Hindus as of primary importance for the purpose of deriving social value and status in the community, religious pervasion's were allowed to dominate if elders with "more knowledge" dictated these religious terms (Naidoo, 1990 : 56).

It is also true according to Naidoo, that men in particular who are able to perform certain religious rituals were regarded as "knowledgeable." In the Tamil and Telugu tradition men in the main, performed the rituals at religious functions especially the performance of the Homa ceremony; a ritual that centering around a sacrificial fire. In the case of the Purattasi festival women played a significant dominant role in the preparation and arrangement of the items for the afternoon ritual. The fact that hardly any Brahmins or gurus who were able to transmit the philosophical aspect came to this country to teach the immigrant Indian created a lacuna.

To fill this vacuum other religions in their persuasive proselytization, were able to lure many Hindus to their own institutions. To stop such an erosion the Arya Samajists played a notable role by creating a new social identity amongst the Hindi Hindu, the Gujarati Hindu and the Tamil Hindi and the Telugu Hindu. Languages were the social identity marker.

The Hare Krishna Movement "identify themselves as Traditional (Sanatana) Hindus." (Kumar, 2000: 177) But once Caitanya began his rather ecstatic and devotional wave, people became attracted to his movement. Largely he provided dynamism to the Hindu life in the content of Muslim dominance. People across the caste barriers could identify with his devotional religion as opposed to pure ritualism (Kumar, 2000: 177).

ISKCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness) has built a beautiful temple in Chatsworth, the sprawling Indian township, built by pro- apartheid government many years ago. It is the largest temple in Africa financed mainly by the contribution of the Indians. The temple has been built on 1,6188 hectares with a seating capacity of 1800 in its main hall.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad president said that

The religious tradition that ISKCON represents is the oldest and purest in its approach to life in the world, all respect should be shown to this great and noble work (Back to Godhead, June 1983: 19).

The Movement advocates pure vegetarianism. Its restaurant in Chatsworth sells not only vegetarian foods but also books containing vegetarian recipes. ISKCON vigorously encourages people "Thou Shalt Not Kill" It says that not only is meat-eating unhealthy, uneconomical, and unkind, but all the world's major religions condemn it.

It was founded as a movement by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who identifies itself with Krsna (Visnu) The Supreme Personality of Godhead. Large number of books about the Movement and on Krsna are written. The movement has attracted peoples from all walks of life. Its main mahamantra is:

Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Hare Hare

The main thrust of the movement is to make the Bhagavatam readily available to the layman. According to its writings:

‘Combat the false teachings of bogus yogis, gurus, and "incarnations," who appear like a tidal wave of falsity in the modern ages, both in India and the West (Back to Godhead June 1983: 52).

Organisations such as Arya Samaj and the Hare Krishna movement have in their own way attempted to instill the Hindu way of life. Such activities of the religious organizations have assisted the South African Hindus to derive their social identity through their religious and cultural rituals. As an example, a Tamil Vaishnavite will without hesitation support the movement in ritual ceremony or join the Chariot procession of the Hare Krishnas that is held annually along the beachfront of Durban every year. The marker that identifies the devotees is their personal appearance in white clothes, a caste mark on their nose bridge and the men with their shaven heads with a tuft of hair on the back of their heads. They can also be seen as groups pounding the streets of many cities in the world chanting the Mahamantra. Hindus as such easily identify themselves with them.

The Saiva Siddhantha Movement "has broad and cosmopolitan principles which is found in the Kanda -Purana:

"Whosoever may worship thee in whatsoever aspect, Thou wilt present thyself as such, and grant him grace. To those who understand Thee alright, Thou wouldst grant beauty gracefully I adore such a Deity" (Pandit D Savariroyan, 1986: 54).

In South Africa, as Kumar observes, there are those Saivites who consider themselves as Hindus but perform the rituals pertaining to Lord Visnu, Hanuman and Mariamman, but whose central interest is Siva. The Tamils who generally worship Muruga also observe the rituals during the month of Purattasi. Then there are those who consider themselves Saivites and that Siva is the Ultimate Reality. They combine ritual and philosophical modes of worship. The Lingam is central to their worship. Then thirdly there are those who worship Siva in his "anionic form" And they proclaim to be a ritualistic. These devotees of Siva attach themselves to the South Indian Saiva tradition. (Kumar, 2000: 143)

There are sixty-three Saiva poet-saints well known for their devotion. Some of the Saiva Samayacharairs are Thirujnaana Sambandar, Thirunaavukku-Arasar Sundarmurthi, Manickavasagar, and Kaaraikkaal Ammayar, a women Saiva saint and Kannappa Naayanaar.

The Natal Tamil Vedic Society has brought out a valuable book; the Naalvar Thirumurai Thirattu in 1975.

There are twelve devotional and fourteen dialectical canons in the Saiva tradition of the Tamils. The devotional canons are known as Panniru Tirumurai of which the Peria Puranam written by Sekkizhar is the twelfth which has 4253 verses. The poet named it Tiruthondar Puranam (Legend of the Holy Servitors) - i.e. the lives of these Jivanmuktas (saints) who had no ego of any kind.

The lives of these sixty three Saiva Saints makes interesting reading, their lives also lifts one to higher levels of devotion: that there is more to this earthly material life than meets the senses.

The Divine Life Society head quartered in Reservoir Hills on Mountbatten Drive is the South African Centre for all activities. Sometimes in 1948 V Srinivasen visited Svami Swananda in Rishikesh in India. In 1949 he started the Divine Life Society in Durban. The philosophical aspects of Hinduism were not found by the common man. The Divine Life Society offered an outlet for those seeking logical thoughts. Ritual aspects were contextualized to take its rightful place within the philosophical mode of Hinduism. Children were not neglected. Books, pamphlets and discussions were designed to assist foster Hinduism amongst them. Many avenues and approaches were designed to help Hindu children to enjoy their unqualified heritage.

On the other hand help in many forms were given to other people especially the indigenous people in the form of feeding schemes, building of schools and the donation of desks, medical clinics. Today it stands a proud movement of the work done by Svami Sahajananda the disciple of Svami Sivananda and the devotees, who gave much of their expertise and manual labour to construct buildings. Their social responsibility is to be recognised for the invaluable service they are rendering to all communities in this our plural society.

4.3 Purattasi as a Mode of Representing Social Identity

Tamil and Telegu Hindus come together with greater attachment to one another especially during the month of Purattasi when the devotees worship Lord Visnu with profound fervor. During this month it brings fractured families together, it brings friends and foes alike to the place of worship. All of them worship single mindedly. It is also noticeable that there is a sense of calmness, a sense of purpose and a sense of devotion. These social functions bring together people of divergent views with one common aspiration.

Tamil and Telegus' of antiquary are earth based. Thus they see God in every creature and refer the earth as Bûmidevi, Goddess Earth. Hindus teach their children to literally walk on this earth as softly as possible in order to cause no pain to Bûmidevi.

Recently this year during the Purattasi the writer was intrigued to see many Hindus actively participating in the devotions at the Sri Siva Subrahmanya Alayam in Longmarket Street in Pietermaritzburg. Most visible were two Hindi brothers who were at the forefront of the activities at the temple. On the basis of language there is if not distinct, but a subtle obstacle, however the obstruction is most often sublimated by religion. Religion is the foundation on which Hindu identity is built. As in India where there are many festivals unique to a particular state or community like the Pongal, the Mahalaya Amavasa, Avani Avittam of Tamilnadu, Ramlila in Uttar Pradesh, Ganes Chaturthy in Maharashtra, Durga Pooja in Bengal, Onam in Kerala, there are also festivals in South Africa related to particular areas. Purattasi is pan - South Africa Mariamman Kanji Pooja and firewalking is more visible in the Siva Subrahmanya Alayam. The Brakevillage temple in Tongaat is noted for its Kavadi celebrations.

According to Kumar the traditional world view (in the sense of their general Hindu identity and belief in God), is affirmed more on the social level (2000: 226). He continues to posit that "the traditional categories, such as caste, affiliated to a denominational organisation, affiliated to a temple, and so on are becoming less meaningful" (Ibid.). From the time of arrival of the S.S.Truro up to almost just after the second half of the last century, caste and language played a dominant role in the identity of the Indian. The younger generation post 1960, found that caste

and language were artificial meaningless barriers to their own social milieu. Parents on the other hand relented and gave in to their children's choice of partner.

... Even though each family or individuals may have different ways of living their religious life, what matters is the language identity and the overhaul Indian cultural identity. Language identity and cultural Identity are intrusive. (Ibid.)

Language and culture go hand in hand. There is rapport between Tamil and Telegu in terms of language and culture. Both linguistic groups have reciprocity that is generic to them. Many Telegus are well-versed and well-schooled in the Tamil language and culture. Language is no hindrance to their belief-systems nor identity as Hindus in a society as diverse in culture, religion, language and tradition in South Africa.

Language like Tamil, fosters its own language and cultural identity. Recently the International Conference on Tamil Culture was held in Durban on 15-17 December 2001, where renowned scholars like Pon Kothandaraman, the Vice-Chancellor of University of Madras attended and delivered the key-note address. This assembly of Tamils created its own ethos, its own ethnic identity. The organizers were the South African Tamil Federation.

Many social and religious functions are attended by all devotees devoid of caste or status. It's the social functions such as these that help to create an identity. This identity goes a little further in that it becomes infectious: even those who are reluctant to continue to fast. The researcher observed through interviews that there are some men who find it burdensome to abstain and some families accommodate them by breaking their fast after the first Saturday ritual while in some homes the women continue their "fast" for the whole month. These exceptions are not the rule.

Hindus who are not particularly conversant with philosophical modes of worship engage in many rituals. Some are held to thank God for agricultural activities such as Pongal, some rituals are conducted for purificatory purposes after death, or after the onset of the first menses of a young girl, some for the worship of the manes, during Purattasi.

The majority of Indians in a plural society identify themselves according to their religious affiliation, then by their mother-tongue language and cultural ties and traditional way of life -i.e. "... their ethnic group participation, family ties" (McCready 1983: 182).

Purattasi is one such religious avenue that Hindus identify themselves with as being one of a particular ethnic group. The socialization activity amongst themselves strengthens their traditional connection. The social functions during this period are further strengthened by their ethnic ties.

In the first instance, on their first arrival in this country they were drawn together by family ties. Once that bond had been made then there was some safety in a foreign land. The second affiliation was the attachment to people from the same village. These bonds of identity was supplemented by language relationship. If the immigrant spoke the same mother-tongue language it created an affinity for one another.

Language is an integral component of a people's culture and tradition and well-being. The intensity with which it is protected, nurtured and fostered, strengthens a community's culture. Once a language is destroyed, then the very culture of that 'nation' is destroyed.

The mother-tongue language of the Indians, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati and Hindi has over the year lost favour amongst the adherents themselves. They felt that English was the "bread and butter language." Sometimes towards the last quarter of the last century mother-tongue language was introduced for the Indians by the House of Delegates. Again there was few applicants in the schools and at the University of Durban Westville where Indian languages were taught by local

academics and academics from India. Soon this department was down. Those who studied there created their own identity based on language, then religion and lastly ethnic affiliation.

George De Vos asserts that:

The cultural basis for social groupings in society are varied. Kinship networks are a major form of grouping, very often operate horizontally as forms of reciprocal marital exchange. Other Groupings, such as class and caste, are stratified vertically, with emphasis on status of an individual or a group with respect to other persons or groups (1995: 16).

Caste is the prerogative of Indian sub-continent introduced by the mythological Aryan invades through the Hindu Kush. Caste first born out of wedlock to propionate colour. The northerners are no doubt much fair in complexion than the southerners. Once labour was subdivided into the clean and the unclean, casteism took a firm foothold in India. In South Africa apartheid was conceived on the basis of colour. Black was ugly and inferior, white was pure and superior. As in India the Brahmins are generally fairer and well-schooled and "learned" in the sastras and religious rituals and philosophy. Thus they protected their well being in keeping some of the knowledge to themselves. In European countries wealth crated its own divisive "apartheid."

Human beings are generally gregarious. They identify themselves easily with their own kind. They empathise with their own kind. Their oneness is due to many factors: dietary habits, dress codes, behavior patterns, religious affiliation, language, music and so on; there is also another cohesive force and that is other than culture and tradition, familial ties and village ties.

People will not inadvertently group themselves. They will congregate amongst themselves because of common affinity. Ethnicity is one of the primary cohesive forces. In so far as "reciprocal marital exchange" it was and to a limited extent somewhat now noticeable amongst Indian. Amongst the Tamils and the Telugus although frowned up by family the younger brother can marry the elder sisters' daughter but never the children of sisters' or children of brothers'

marry, as it would be considered as incest. Marriage within the same caste is permissible, within the same jathi is permissible. Today these restrictions are of no consequence since the so-called 'love marriages' has taken precedence. Parental search for a suitable bride although not uncommon is fast lost to the choice made by the children themselves. Parents have little say in the choice of their children's partners. Further study in this regard may be of value to the discerning student and reader.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The arrival of the Hindus to Natal to work in the sugar cane fields along the coastal belt of the province brought Hinduism to this country. Now the Hindu Diaspora has resulted in its spread throughout South Africa and other parts of the world wherever the South African Hindu has settled in search of better employment opportunities. They have, especially those who observe the Purattasi rituals, which falls between mid-September and mid-October, taken this religious ritual with them to the country they have settled. Their children will continue to maintain this tradition.

This Vaishnava ritual of abstaining from all forms of meat and its by-products during the Purattasi month is regularly observed every year by large numbers of South Indian Hindus.

This month is also noted for the observance of numerous other rituals like Purattasi Brahmotsava, Sarasvati puja, Maharlaya Amavasya, Pitrpaksa and Navarati. According to the Brahmotsava:

Is a basic festival enjoined by the Sastras. The festival bear the name 'Brahmotsava' to commemorate the first Utsavam of the Lord of Tirumalai which was conducted by Brahma, the Lord of Creation as per Varaha Purana (Ramesan, 1981:154).

One Brahmotsava festival is conducted in Purattasi and the other in Mukkoti Dvadasi. Pitrpak is also observed especially by the Hindi speaking Hindus and the Tamil and Telugu speaking Hindus who offer their prayers. Much emphasis is placed on the observation of Sarasvati puja which is a domestic ritual but devotees also gather at temples to observe the ritual Purattasi. Children are encouraged to worship Sarasvati because she is the goddess of learning.

Avahanam is the installation ceremony of the deity on books placed for her worship and the ceremony to send her off is known as visrajanam.

Originally the Hindu emigrant brought their rituals and observations to their country from their villages from where they came. It is patently clear that these festivals were observed in their places of origin. These festivals have become apart of the Hindu religious culture in South Africa.

The extent of its observation in South Africa is wide spread. It is observed in nearly all temples and private homes. It has become a major social event in that there is much social interaction between families. They generally consult with one another on the Saturday that the prayer is to be done. Many affluent families go to great length to observe the festival. It has become an occasion for the devotees to say "I am fasting", whenever they are invited to eat something. Somehow during this month the price of vegetables seem to become a little expensive and this is attributed to the fact that people are fasting. Non Hindu shop owners also advertise "specials" for Purattasi. It seems that they also are aware of the Hindu practice of observing Purattasi.

In the Sri Siva Subrahmanya and Mariamman Temple the main prayer on the Saturday the Purattasi prayer is held in the Sri Siva Subrahmanya temple by the congregation with the singing of hymns extolling the virtues of Lord Vishnu in the afternoon. At the altar a variety of fruit and prepared sweetmeats are placed before the deity. The prayer is led by the resident Sri Lankan priests and assistants.

Other temples also observe a Purattasi as is noted elsewhere. In some villages and towns like Greytown, the chariot is drawn by the devotees mainly along the streets where Indians are settled in their "township." Many households offer fruits on to the "chariot" as a token of their devotion to Lord Vishnu. The chariot is drawn by a motor vehicle accompanied by loud music and song recorded in India in audio-cassettes and in compact discs. This practice is not wide spread because of the Hindu Diaspora.

Inter-linguistic marriages also helped to spread the Purattasi festival amongst the Hindus especially where the husband is Tamil or Telugu speaking Hindu. The writer also observed two young university students who dressed in the Hindu traditional habit ardently taking part in the Purattasi and Sarasvati puja. There were also other Hindus who participated in the festivities. Wherever Hindus have settled some form of their religious traditions are followed even in the smallest villages or farmsteads. Purattasi is observed at the domestic level and at the local temple.

Society seems to enjoy a relationship between the Absolute Reality and itself. Human beings recognize and realize that there is more to this earthly life than its material attachments. They identify all their rituals as part of their search for the ultimate destiny. Rituals become part of their daily religious traditions. It makes the devotee contemplate and meditate on life hereafter. In Hinduism this four stages of life leads one to the final destiny: the first being encourages one to educate oneself; the second stage is for one to lead a domestic life; the third stage is for one to meditate on God and to rid oneself of all material wealth and the final state is complete renunciation where one leads a life completely immersed in God. These Purusharthas are artha, kama, dharma and moksha.

Religious rituals are there to nurture good values in the devotees. The maximum “see good, be good and do good” holds true for all people and all religions teaching this truth. In Hinduism it is good service to man is service to god. A classic example is Swami Sivananda himself and his disciple Swami Sahajananda of the Divine Life Society, Mountbatten Drive Reservoir Hills, which is continuing its service.

During Purattasi the Hindu devotee eats only a vegetarian diet for it has been acclaimed to be most conducive to spiritual and psychic advancement (Singh, 1986:166). During the month the devotees take as far as possible Sattvic foods.

Mananeeya Laxman S Bhide quotes as follows:

A common place of worship is essential for the survival and betterment of the society. Hindu sages have developed the temple concept to elevate mind and soul in the process of sublimation of the individual (Shakti, 2003: 41).

He continues to quote:

The temple, which is deemed to be a common place, pure and sacred in nature with no tongue of selfish motive...as such capable of training the wavering mind to concentrate and realize the oneness with the outer world (Ibid.).

He says there is a sense of dignity for belonging to this oneness and that there is an urge for a search into the mystery of the universe and that the world is unique and to achieve the concept of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".

Psychologically Purattasi holds people to get together, forget any differences of opinion, hatred, jealousy, greed and such-like characteristics. It makes people live together in harmony and meditate on the higher goals in life. In order to come to terms with the vast unknown people engage in prayer as individuals, at homes and at temples. Prayer helps sustain people always.

Generally prayer is an individual thing. Congregational prayer is to assist one another in creating some sort of religious fervour amongst the devotees. Congregational prayer is infectious. It creates a better understanding of others; it promotes to make this world a safer place for all that live on it be it human beings, animals and plants. In times of strife that is prevalent in many parts of the world today, one wonders whether religion is playing a significant part to curb animosity and conflict. Religious fanaticism is dangerous for it keeps the world on the brink of warfare. The major religions of the world: Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Zorasterism, and Confucianism, all emphasise the theme of unrighteousness.

The Purattasi ritual of "fasting" is governed by simple but effective rules. Firstly abstentions regarding meat, not eating out of home as far as possible, not eating any food that contain eggs

for example: thus the devotee does not eat biscuits, cakes and even bread. The use of utensils specifically set aside for the preparation of food. Many devotees will not attend functions such as weddings, parties or visit friends for fear breaking their "fast".

At any rate the families and Hindus do not conduct any weddings during Purattasi. Some will not even discuss wedding arrangement. The consumption of alcohol, a social disease, is not consumed for the sake of maintaining purity and discipline. Many also abstain from smoking. The women steadfastly make sure that purifactory rules are strictly adhered. The Hindu mother plays a significant role nurturing and sustaining the religion. They are the "religious" cornerstones in the family. They teach their children their religion and in that way give their direction on maintaining a healthy way of life. They are the ones who perpetuate their culture and religious norms.

Another rule that is of importance is the advocacy of good thoughts, good action, and good dharma: to keep the mind as pure as possible by uttering the thousand names of Vishnu at all times.

There are changes in the way the festival is conducted in temples and in the homes of the devotees. Purattasi is not observed as is observed in the South Indian temples. Changes are unique to the South African situation. As an example chariots in India are drawn by devotees but here they are drawn by motor vehicles and the chariots are made of metal.

The recitation of the Suprabhatham daily is done in temples by the priests. The Sri Venkateswara Suprabhatam is sung as follows:

- (a) Suprabhatam (waking the Lord from sleep) consisting of twenty-nine slokas;
- (b) Stotras (hymns to the Lord) consisting of eleven slokas;
- (c) Prapatti (surrender to the Lord) consisting of sixteen stanzas; and
- (d) Mangalasaana (a prayer of the Lord's glory consisting of fourteen stanzas, thus making altogether a total (of) seventy slokas (Ramesan, 1981:131).

The 'Sattumurai' is the recitation of Tamil Prabandham of the Alvars (Ramesan, 1981:131). Those who know the Nalayira prabandhan in Tamil or Telugu recite it; but because the new generation are not taught their mother-tongue which would have given them the opportunity to not only learn the language but also be able to recite hymns in their own language.

The older generation who know the Nalayira Prabandham recite it at these Vaishinava rituals. Now that there are the Sri Lankan gurukuls they recite these hymns at the temples.

The sandhis (food offering) are wide spread at nearly all Hindu rituals. Vegetarian foods are prepared and offered first to the deity then it is taken by devotees as prasadam. The older generation used to wrap a cloth around their mouths and nose to avoid polluting the food preparation. This practice is not a common sight today.

Thus, I conclude by reaffirming my hypothesis that religious rituals, such as Purattasi, forms the foundation of social identities.

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SOME OF THE INDIAN IMMIGRANTS FROM INDIA WHO CAME TO THE UMVOTI AND NEW HANOVER COUNTY AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

SER	DEPARTURE MADRAS	ARRIVAL PORT HAYAL	REG. No.	NAME	SEX	AGE	CASTE	PLACE OF ORIGIN	VILLAGE	EMPLOYER	FARM/ESTATE	FATHER	MOTHER
UMVOTI	-	"29 AUGUST 1878"	18284	VENKATARAMMOODOO	M	37	EDAYA	CHINGLEPUT	CONJIVERAM	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	CONARU	-
CARNATIC I	-	"11 NOVEMBER 1878"	22056	KAMA RAMAKA	F	18	KAMMA	NORTH ARCOT	CHANDRAGIRI	-	-	-	-
CARNATIC I	-	"11 NOVEMBER 1879"	22056	KAMA RAMA	M	18	KAMMA	N ARCOT	CHANDRAGIRI	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	VENKATASAMI NAIDU	-
S.S. CONGELLA	-	"8 DECEMBER 1890"	44524	PATCHAPPEN MUNIEN	M	25	VANNA	N ARCOT	CAVERIPAKAM	-	-	-	-
S.S. CONGELLA	-	-	44525	THAYI MUNUSAWMY	F	18	VANNA	N ARCOT	WALLAJAPET	-	-	-	MUNUSAWMY
CONGELLA XIX	-	"2 JUNE 1895"	58884	VENKATA	M	20	NAIDU	CUDDAH	-	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	THIRUPA	-
CONGELLA XIX	-	"2 JUNE 1895"	-	CHELLAN	M	18	GOUNDEN	CHINGLEPUT	UTRAMALLUR	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
S.S. PONGOLA	-	"21 MAY 1897"	87009	CHENGAN	M	5	VANNA	NORTH ARCOT	POLLUR	T.E.B. HILL	"CAME" SEVEN OAKS	-	-
-	-	-	87008	GANGAMMA	F	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	THOPPAI
S.S. PONGOLA 28th	-	"05 JUNE 1898"	73019	AMMAN CHENGAN	F	28	VANNA	N ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
S.S. PONGOLA	-	"5 JUNE 1898"	73018	PACHAIAPPA GOUNDEN	M	25	VELLALA	N ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	RAMASAMY
S.S. UMLAZI	"8 APRIL 1898"	"26 APRIL 1898"	72387	JAGANNATHAN NAIDU	M	23	KAMA	-	-	W.L'E. ANGUS	RAVENSWORTH	-	-
-	-	-	72388	APPASAMI	M	25	MODELI	-	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	MUTHUSAMI	M	24	PILLAI	MADURA	PARAMGORDY	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	LACHMANNA	M	20	KAVARI	-	GUJYATAM	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	MUNESAMI	M	3	KAVARI	NORTH ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
-	-	"15 MARCH 1898"	7 29	MUNIAN	M	30	PARIA	CHINGLEPUT	PONAMALLEE	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	-	"30 OCTOBER 1900"	81805	MUNESAMY ODAYAN	N	22	VELLALA	N ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	MUTHU ODAYAN
S.S. UMLAZI	-	"14 JANUARY"	129404	Y. SUNDARI	F	20	MALA	VELLORE	IMAMALA	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	-	"30 APRIL 1900"	81770	NILAKANTA PILLAI	M	20	KURNAM	N ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	-	"26 APRIL 1900"	81808	ABBOY	M	14	VANNA	NORTH ARCOT	MANDAKOTATHUR	T.E.B. HILL	"CAME" SEVEN OAKS	-	PACHAPPEN
S.S. UMLAZI	"18 MAY 1901"	-	8844	ANNAMALAY	M	22	VANNA	-	POLLUR	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	-	-	88709	VIASAMY GOUNDEN	M	25	-	-	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	88710	SANTHY SUBRAYEN	M	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	88442	CUPPEN	M	28	EDAYA	-	KADALODY	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"18 MAY 1903"	-	88446	VARADAPPA NAIK	M	26	BARBER	SOUTH ARCOT	VALATHI	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	98033	DAVARAPALLA CHINNAH	M	25	MADIGA	KISTNA	NANDALUGU	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	98034	GARIAPUDY GURAYADU	M	25	MADIGA	KISTNA	NANDALUGU	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	98852	NARSIGADU	M	16	MALA	NORTH ARCOT	NAKKINIPALAYAM	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"1 SEPTEMBER 1904"	-	107247	SAKA VENKADU	M	22	MALA	KISTNA	ARATHAMUR	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"12 MARCH 1904"	-	104058	KISTA GOUNDEN	M	25	VANNA	NORTH ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI 34	-	"12 OCTOBER 1904"	107457	MUCHU RAMASAMY	M	22	MUTHURASI	-	KRISHNA	-	-	-	-
-	-	"16 JANUARY 1905"	11280	BURRI VENKATA SUBBIAH	M	25	YEDIGA	GUNTUR	BAPATLA	-	-	-	-
S.S. CONGELLA	"24 OCTOBER 1905"	-	110698	CHINNAMMAL	F	28	PARIA	CHINGLEPUT	VALLAPANDAL	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	110678	MURUGAN	M	20	PARIA	-	YEDATAMBUTHUR	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"17 FEBRUARY"	-	112737	N. SUBBI	M	19	MADIGA	GODAVARY	VALLUR	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"28 FEBRUARY 1905"	-	112782	C. VENAMMA	F	19	TELAGA	VIZAGAPATHAM	ANAKAPALLI	-	-	-	-
-	-	"27 JANUARY 1905"	112467	PETLA LATCHAMMA	M	21	KONDADHORA	VIZAGAPATHAM	GOLGONDA	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	112458	MITTAMINATHA NARASIAH	M	18	BALLIA	CUDDAH	PANTORI	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	112466	A. APPADU	M	32	MADIGA	VIZAGAPATHAM	BALIPETA	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	112522	CHENADU	M	30	MALA	NALLORE	MADAYG	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"8 FEBRUARY 1905"	-	118118	SAVERI ANTHONY	M	19	PARIA	MADRAS (CHENNAI)	EGMORE	COMMERCIAL HOTEL	GREYTOWN	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"9 MARCH 1905"	-	119053	CHINNAN	M	20	VANNA	NORTH ARCOT	POLLUR	T.E.B. HILL	"CAME" SEVEN OAKS	KUPPA GOUNDEN	MURUGAN BROTHER
S.S. UMLAZI	-	"08 MARCH 1905"	119054	CHINNASAMY RAMASAMY	M	22	VANNA	N ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	-	-	126200	ATTA URU NARAYADU	M	20	VANNA	NORTH ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
-	"5 DECEMBER 1905"	-	123634	RAGAVAMMAL	F	32	MALA	NELLORE	NARUPUR	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
UMLAZI 25th	-	"28 DECEMBER 1905"	128854	MUNEN NAICKEN	M	26	VETTAKARAN	N ARCOT	POLLUR	-	-	-	-
UMLAZI 25th	-	"28 DECEMBER 1905"	128855	PATCHIYAMMA MUNIEN	F	20	VETTAKARAN	N ARCOT	PERIYAKARAM	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"8 APRIL 1905"	-	123534	RAGAVAMMAL	F	25	BALLIA	NORTH ARCOT	RUNGEMPT	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
-	"8 OCTOBER 1905"	-	127983	K. MANIKKAM	M	18	REDDY	GUNTUR	MANGALAGIRY	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"15 OCTOBER 1905"	-	127822	RAKAYYA GOUNDEN	M	25	VELLALA	CUMBATORE	SEMBADAPALLAY	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
-	"7 JUNE 1905"	-	124757	GORLA APPADU	M	21	KAPU	GANJAM	GORLAPETA	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	"9 APRIL 1905"	-	123143	RENGEN	M	24	CHINGLEPUT (TALUQ)	CONJEEVERAM	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-	-
-	"24 OCTOBER 1905"	-	127749	P. KOTTIAH	M	26	KAMMA	GUNTUR	PONNICKALLU	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
-	"3 JUNE 1905"	-	108017	ASUDU SUBAREDDI	M	25	REDDI	KISTNA	BATHA PUDI	-	-	-	-
S.S. UMLAZI	-	"15 MARCH 1910"	141682	THANGAVALLU VIRASAMY	M	25	VANNA	N ARCOT	LALAPETTAI	-	-	-	-
-	"21 JULY 1911"	-	151845	VENKAPATHI	M	18	PALAYAZA	NORTH ARCOT	KALULUR	W.L'E. ANGUS	RAVENSWORTH	-	-
-	-	-	152058	PERIAGENGAN	M	30	PARIA	CHITTOR	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	152061	NAYAMUTHOO	M	9.5	PARIA	-	NASAMPALLI	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	152082	ANANANI	M	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	152059	MUTHAMMA	F	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	152080	VENKESAMY	M	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	152083	MUTHAN	M	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	152084	MURU AMMAL	M	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	152085	MUNESAMY	M	5	-	SALEM	ATTM	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	151844	RAMAN NAIDU	M	28	KAMA	CHITTOR	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	151839	MAHIKAN GOPALA ODAYER	M	19	OGAMBA	-	-	G.N PERFECT	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	BAKKISAN	M	22	PARIA	-	MOOKKOLATHOOR	W.L'E. ANGUS	RAVENSWORTH	-	-
-	"14 MAY 1905"	-	140366	LATCHMY RAMAN	F	19	EDIYA	SOUTH ARCOT	PADITTIRAM	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-
-	"18 FEBRUARY 1905"	-	112822	C. CHENNAIDU	M	30	MALA	NELLORE	MADAYGINTA	HARDEN HEIGHTS WATTLE Co.	-	-	-

- NOTE 1:** 119053 Chinnan and Chinnasamy not related but lived Opposite one another in Pollur. Chinnan's correct name is Chinnan Kuppa Gounden. Caste: Iyer. Chinnasamy married Balasamy Rajamah & Chinnan (aka Kattian) the younger.
- NOTE 2:** Chinnasamy is the first cousin of Chengan (87009) and Gengamma (87008). Chinnasamy's father was Ramasamy Gounden and Thopal was his brother. The father of Chengan & Gengamma: Gengamma's son was R.M. Govender father of K.R. Govender whose mother is Kannamma daughter of Chinnasamy Govender.
- NOTE 3:** 152061, 152082, 152059, 152080, 152063, 15084 one family. Father Arigagan.
- NOTE 4:** 118118 Saveri/Anthony came as a special general servant. Worked for Commercial Hotel, Greytown
- NOTE 5:** 128854 Murtan Naicken married 128855 Patchiyamma Murien. In their old age they lived in Ravensworth Estate with son Kistappen Govender (surname changed to Govender)
- NOTE 6:** Moonesamy Mullar indentured! Greytown married Adimah (Naidoo): Eldest daughter Vethanayagiamel (Rajamah)

Indentured Indians Employed by the Harden Heights Wattle Company

DEPOT No. <u>2,358</u>	SHIP No. <u>367</u>	FORM No. 44.
		HEALTH CLASS.
WOMAN'S		
EMIGRATION PASS.		
S.S. "UMKUZ"		
MADRAS, 9 th Mar. 1905.		
Name ...	<u>Dasari Latchum</u>	112785
Father's Name ...	<u>G. Subbadu</u>	
Age ...	<u>23</u> years	
Caste ...	<u>Yadu</u>	
Height ...	<u>5</u> feet <u>...</u> inches	
Name of next-of-kin ...	<u>Father</u>	
If married, to whom ...		
District ...	<u>Nellore</u>	
Taluq ...	<u>...</u>	
Village ...	<u>Gangaputur</u>	
Bodily marks ...	<u>Callus mark on left fore arm</u> <u>...</u>	
Occupation in India ...		

Certified that we have examined and passed the above-named woman as fit to emigrate; that she is free from all bodily and mental disease; and that she has been vaccinated since engaging to emigrate.

Surgeon Superintendent, _____ Depot Surgeon.

Certified that the woman above described has appeared before us with her guardian, No. _____ and has been engaged by us on behalf of the Government of Natal as willing to proceed to that country to work for hire, and that we have explained to her all matters concerning her engagement and duties.

Emigration Agents for the Government of Natal.

Permitted to proceed as in a fit state of health to undertake the voyage to Natal, and on the assurance given by the Government of Natal that the above-mentioned emigrant will be allowed to land.

FORM No. 44.

Depôt No.

2481

No.

43

HEALTH CLASS.

MEN'S
EMIGRATION PASS.

S. S. 1001 AZIP

MADRAS, 16th May

1901

Name ...

Vardappa Naik

86446

Father's Name ...

Rangai

Age ...

26 Years

Caste ...

Barber

Height ...

5 Feet 5 Inches

Name of next-of-kin ...

Marina Naik Brother

If married, to whom ...

J. A. J. D.

District ...

Tindivanam

Taluq ...

Valathi

Village ...

Bodily marks ...

Wound in front of rt. Shoulder

Scar on rt. side of forehead

Occupation in India ...

Field Labourer

Certified that we have examined and passed the above-named man as fit to emigrate; that he is free from all bodily and mental disease; and that he has been vaccinated since engaging to emigrate.

Surgeon Superintendent.

Depôt Surgeon.

Certified that the man above described has appeared before us with his guardian, No. and has been engaged by us on behalf of the Government of Natal as willing to proceed to that country to work for hire, and that we have explained to him all matters concerning his engagement and duties.

D. W. D. Pres.
Emigration Agents for Natal

CONDITIONS.

are not willing to return to India shall remain in Natal under indentures to be from time to time entered into: provided that each term of new indentured service shall be for 2 years: and provided further that the rate of wages for each year of indentured service after that provided by this contract shall be £ 1.17 6 per month for the first year, £ 2/- per month for the second year, £ 2.2.6 per month for the third year, £ 2 1/5 per month for the fourth year, and £ 2.7.6 per month for the fifth and each succeeding year.

Such servants as may return to India after the completion, of any term of new indentured service shall be provided with a free passage.

Those that remain in the Colony and pay the residentia' tax shall be considered to have abandoned their right to a free return passage.

Free Rations as mentioned below :—

1 1/2 lb. Rice daily, or in lieu thereof, 2 lbs. Maize Meal, three days in the week.

2 lbs. Dholi, Monthly.

2 lbs. Salt-fish „

1 lb. Ghee or Oil „

1 lb. Salt „

Suitable lodgings and Medical care will be supplied and if the abovementioned estate is sold, alienated, or transferred to another person or succeeded to by another person before the expiration of this Contract the servant shall serve such other person according to the terms of this contract, such new Employers being held bound towards him in all the stipulations and obligations incumbent upon the Employer so replaced by him.

No 6981



UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

loc 4963.



CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE.

OFFICE OF THE

12-10-1950

PROTECTOR OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS

DURBAN, NATAL.

OCTOBER

1950.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that

VEERASAMY

Indian Immigrant No. 133938 duly completed his term of
 indentures on the 1st NOVEMBER 1946 in terms of
 Indian Immigration ACT 17 OF 1945
 and is released from his obligation to perform further service in this Province
 under indenture.

Bearer's Name VEERASAMYAge 63 yrs.Height 5 feet 6 inches.Bodily Marks ROUND SCAR ON PINE

[Signature]
 Asst. Protector of Indian Immigrants, Natal.

Left Thumb Print.

Right Thumb Print.





From S. ANTHONY, Waiter,

c/o Greytown Hotel, GREYTOWN, Natal.

To KANAGAMALL,

No. 22 Perumall Reddy Street,

EGMORE,

MADRAS, INDIA.



Standing (L to R): Munichy Chinnabboo from Eklasapuram, Banglore Colonial No. 134142.

Seated: Saveri Anthony, Colonial No. 116118. Arrived on SS Umkuzi in 1905. Indentured at Greytown and was employed by the Commercial Hotel.



The Anthonys with their son Alec. Alec (17:07:1920 – 29:08:1988)

Joined the SAPS in 1948 and retired on 30 June 1987. His eldest son E M Anthony is the present Principal of the Greytown Primary School.

Mon. Alex. Daniel F.R.P.
Not. S.
Grey Hair.

Bust of late Gentleman Coloured,
Bust of Mrs Daniel Coloured.

Lady.

Complexion. Fair.

Hair. Black.

Blouse Pink.

Saree. Maroon & White stripes.

N.B. Jewelry or mark.

Complexion. Fair.

Suit. Grey.

ie. Maroon.

on hole

17/3/21

रघुवीर,

6-12-0

உள்ளுறுத்தல் 0-40

Am 20.12.

F. M. Govindaraj Mudaliar

17/3/1931

Free Translation of a
Letter from Madras written to S Daniels (Anthony)

We have received your registered letter together with a Postal
Order of ten pounds sterling. I have bought your books.

English Primer	2.	0.	0.
Kankattu vithay	2.	0.	0.
Ladies "sewing" book	1.	4.	0.
Arda		6.	0.

Tamil Primer			
....	1.	0.	0.
TOTAL	6.	12.	0.
Balance	6.	8.	0.
Registered Post		4.	0.

Please reply as soon as possible to place further order.

Yours ...

P.K. Govindaraj Mudliar
(Medical Hall, P. O. Box 459
Vepery, Madras (Chennai))

[illegible]

A free translation of a
Letter from Madras (Chennai)
written by Arokiasamy younger brother of Saveri Daniels

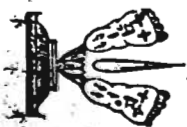
By the Grace of Jesus dear Anna (elder brother) and Anni (elder brother's wife). We are all well. We hope that you Anna, Anni and the children are also well. I received your letter. We pray that we will be able to meet you here in Madras. You left us when I was five years old. Now we are grown up. Now there is nobody for us. You are the only God for us. Please come to Madras (Chennai). I am not employed. Our sister Valanlani, I heard has passed on. Her three children are under our care. Their father is also late. Please send something to help us.

Your brother, Arokiasamy.

[illegible]

K.R.GOVENDER COLLECTION

A LETTER IN TAMIL CURSIVE WRITING FROM
A RELATION TO SAVERI ANTHONY: COLONIAL
NUMBER 116118



ஸ்ரீ ராஜ்யம்.

தருமண விஞ்ஞாபனம்.

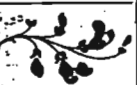
மகா-நா-ஸ்ரீ

அவர்கட்கு.

ஐயா, எம்பெருமான் திருவருள் கூட்டுதலால் நிகழும் 1916-வா பிப்ரவரியார் 6-உ.கஞ்சு சரியான் இராகுத் தனுவைதாய் 2-உ-சனியார், சீதய நகரத்திரம், அயிர்த சித்தியோகமுங் கூடிய சபதின் தில் மலை 8 மணிக்கு மேல் 9 மணிக்குள் அன் னிகா ல்கனத் தில்,

வாணியம்பாடி, ம-1, நா-ஸ்ரீ வெங்கம்ண கவுண்டர் குமாரரும், எனது அதிபிதிபு முள்ள கனம்

யெல்லப்ப கவுண்டருக்கும்,



ம-நா-ஸ்ரீ வி. முருகே பிள்ளை அவர்கள் சகோதரர், வி. எல்லப், பிள்ளை குமாரத்தி சொளபாக்கியவதி பவழக்கொடி அம்முருக்கும்.

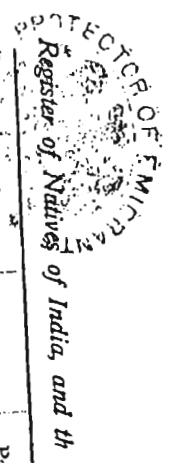
கிரேடவன் கோர்டன் ஸ்டீட்டிஸ் என்னு னிரவறத்தில் நடக்கும் 'லவாககப்புகூர்த்ததிற்கும்' அனாத சார்ந்த சடங்குகட்கும், தாங்களும் தங்கலிஷ்டபந்து குடும்ப மித்திர சகிதராய் இரண்டு நாள் முன்னுதரக விஜயஞ் செய்து தம்பதிகளை ஆசீர்வதிக்கும்படி கேட்டுக் கொள்ளும்.

இங்ஙனம் அடியேன்

செ. பக்திரி செட்டி.

தங்கள் வருகைக்கு அன்புடன் எதிர்பார்த்திருக்கும் தங்களன்பன் வி. முருகேசட்பிள்ளை.

ஸ்ரீ கருஷ்ண லிவாச பிரஸ் 518 பாவமார்கெட் ஸ்டீட் மேரிட்ஸ்பர்க்.



Register of Natives of India, and those engaged to proceed by Sea out of India under the Provisions of Chapter XIV of Act XXI of 1883, as amended.

16 September 1905	1	Date.	Persons engaged.
16	2	Number.	
S. Anthony	3	Name.	
Sawyer	4	Father's name.	
	5	Name.	Dependents.
	6	Relationship to persons engaged.	
male	7	Sex.	Particulars of person engaged and their dependents.
19 yrs	8	Age.	
Special Genl. Servant	9	Occupation.	Particulars of residence of person engaged and their dependents.
Madras	10	District.	
Egmore	11	Taluk.	
N: 3 Perumal Reddy	12	Name and residence.	Heirs of persons engaged and their dependents.
Kannan	13	Father's Name.	
N: 3 Perumal Reddy	14	Relationship.	
Aunt	15	Country for which engaged and port of disembarkation.	Terms of agreement.
Colony of Natal Durban.	16	Name of ship and date fixed for departure.	
Ilukuzi 30.9.05	17	Period for which engaged.	
5 years.	18	Nature of work.	Person by whom engaged.
Special Genl. Servant for the Commercial Hotel, Durban	19	Rate of wages.	
£1/5 rising 2/6 to 3/0 each year	20	Provision made for the health and comfort of the persons engaged, and their dependents, during the period of engagement.	
Provision made by the Indian Immigration Trust Board of Natal.	21	Conditions as to repatriation at the end of the period of engagement.	Residence.
Vide paras. 1 and 2 of the conditions printed on the reverse.	22	Name.	
Messrs. Parry & Co.	23	Father's name.	
Emigration Agents for the Government of Natal.	24	Occupation.	Person by whom engaged.
Madras.	25	District.	
Do.	26	Taluk.	
Do.	27	Village.	Remarks.
+ 50/3 (2 8.0.05)	28	Signature, mark, finger or thumb impression of the persons engaged and of their dependents.	
6. 6. 56 d/ 23. 6. '05	29	Protector's letter (number and date.)	
	30		
	31		
	32		

Prescribed in my presence,
Protector of Emigrants.



Sirdar Periya Gengadu, S.no. 615

Mr. Angus is my employer. He asked me if I could get 50 Indians to work under him. The concession given me by my employer was:

1. That I will be paid a bonus (as soon as I arrive in Natal) of 2s. 6d. on every Coolie I take.

2. That I will be paid a commission of one shilling per month on each of my Coolies till the expiration of their indenture.

These being very liberal concessions I left Natal with a strong determination. Many a time on board the steamer, I thought myself that I'll soon become a rich man if I only take 100 to 200 emigrants. On going to my village, I saw the present state of affairs and soon realised the position. I at once gave up all my hopes. All my thoughts and plans turned out to be a mere dream. I was really astonished to see my close relations and intimate friends holding aloof. Vernacular pamphlets announcing the arrival of one hundred Natal sirdars to take away all the villagers to an unknown country were distributed to the public. The public believed all that was stated in the pamphlets. No one cared to what I said. I did not remain in one place. I went to 5 or 6 villages in my Taluk but without effect. I had no licence. I cannot therefore publicly recruit Coolies. Rumours were afloat that some sirdars were killed. All these put me in great fear. I could not eat. I had no sleep. I cursed the day on which I left Natal. In the meantime some 15 men who were negotiating with me privately to emigrate changed their minds and absconded at Ramapuram railway station. This made the situation worse. The villagers began to suspect me. The village magistrate put a guard on me. I was more or less a state prisoner like. Seeing all these difficulties, I begged of my wife to go with me to Natal. After a deliberate consideration she agreed. She also influenced 3 Indians. I became sick on account of the worry on all sides. I do not think I weigh half as much as I weighed in Natal. If I go to Natal, I am sure I will regain my weight. I hate Indian climate. I want to go to Natal soon.

NHC/12/56/83

~~12/12/1919~~ 12/12/1919

FEE PAID.
BEDRAG BETAL



EDNA & E. M. GEFURS
Grafisch, Capetown

Revenus Inkom

A 73765

PROVINSIE NATAL—

11

Registrar, Cape Town
Registrar, Port Elizabeth
Registrar, Grahamstown
Registrar, East London
Registrar, Durban

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.
REGISTER OF BIRTHS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE PROVINCE OF NATAL— 'N AFSKRIF VAN GEBORTE VAN INDIËSE IMMIGRANTE IN DIE PROVINSE VAN NATAL.
SCHEDULE F, LAW No. 25 OF 1891.

(To be filled in by the holder of the entry as finally amended.)

3	4	5	6	7	8
Name of Immigrant	Sex	Parents' Names Name and Surname	Parents' Numbers Old and New	Place of Birth	Place of Residence

1911
ADINAH F
MOONIAMAH 19294/22058 CB
LABOURER HARDEN HEIGHTS
17th (Stained)
E. A. JENSEN
SENCOE
1919

1911

Part of the original entry as shown in the original.

Durban 1911

15-0-1891

Durban

1838
1919

NAME OF SHIP:	CONGELLA XIX
PORT OF DEPARTURE:	MADRAS
DATE OF ARRIVAL:	02 JUNE 1895
COLONIAL NO:	58984
NAME:	CHELLAN
FATHERS NAME:	GOVINEN GOUNDEN
AGE:	18
SEX:	MALE
CASTE:	GOUNDEN
DISTRICT:	CHINGLEPUT
VILLAGE:	UTRAMALLUR, ANAPOLIEM
COMMENTS:	

NAME OF SHIP:	JMVOTI
PORT OF DEPARTURE:	MADRAS
DATE OF ARRIVAL:	29 AUGUST 1876
COLONIAL NO:	19294
NAME:	VENKATARAMMOODOO
FATHERS NAME:	CONAREE
AGE:	37
SEX:	MALE
CASTE:	SHEPHERD
DISTRICT:	CHINGLEPUT
VILLAGE:	CONJAVERAM, KUPPUM,
COMMENTS:	

NAME OF SHIP:	CARNATIC I
PORT OF DEPARTURE:	MADRAS
DATE OF ARRIVAL:	11 NOVEMBER 1879
COLONIAL NO:	22058
NAME:	KAMMA RAMAḲA
FATHERS NAME:	VENKATASAMI NAIDU
AGE:	18
SEX:	FEMALE
CASTE:	KAMMA
DISTRICT:	NORTH ARCOT
VILLAGE:	CHANDRA GIRI, THAMALCHERIVOO, PONGOLA

806/371742 A.

20/63/722.

G.P.S. 27638—1962-63—500-200. S.

I.D. No. 800/371742A

Revenue/Inkomste 196.

99953

PERSON
IDENTITYPAID.
TAAL.

IE

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

'N AFSKRIF UIT REGISTER VAN GEBOORTES VAN INDIËRIMMIGRANTE IN
DIE PROVINSIE NATAL—SKEDULE F. WET No. 25 VAN 1891.

(Hierdie sertifikaat is volgens die Inskrywing soos finaal gewyslg.)

A COPY FROM REGISTER OF
PROVINCE OF NATAL

(This certificate is in the)

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Parents' Names. Name van ouers.	Parents' Official Numbers. Offisiële nommers van ouers.	Indentured of Free. Ingeboek of vry.	Father's Occupation. Beroep van vader.	Parents' Residence. Woonplek van ouers.	When Registered. Wanneer geregi- streer.	Remarks, Signature of Registrar, etc. Opmerkings, handtekening van Registrateur, ens.
	125349/125350		CB. HANDYMAN.	KEYTOWN.	5 th JUNE, 1958.	J. M. NAIDOO.
VETHANAYAGIEMAL	103731					
58984/19294/22058						

Certified a true copy.
Gesertifiseer as 'n ware afskrif.

R. R. R. R.
Protector of Indian Immigrants.—Beskermervan Indiërimmigrante.

Durban

19

Parents' Population Reg. No.
Ouers se PersoonshommerFather.
VaderMother.
Moeder

CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL

ADIMAH'S ELDEST DAUGHTER

INLAND REVENUE.
BINNELANDSE INKOMSTE.

18045

119/37

Revenue/Inkomste 193. (D.I. 117.)

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA. BIRTH REGISTER

UNIE VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

No. _____

R. 2762
Nº 54205

PASS TO INDIANS
PAS VIR INDIËRS



Born in the Province of Natal.
In die Provinsie Natal Gebore.

This is to certify that

Hierby word ~~getuig~~ ^{getuig} dat dit

VENKETSESHI

Colonial Born, is at liberty to dispose of ^{HIS} services.
in die Kolonie gebore, vrystaan om ^{te} verhuur.

Father's Name
Naam van Vader

MUCHU RAMSAMY

No. 107457

Mother's Name
Naam van Moeder

Y. SUNDARI

No. 129404

Sex
Geslag

MALE

Age

20 YEARS

Height

GROWING

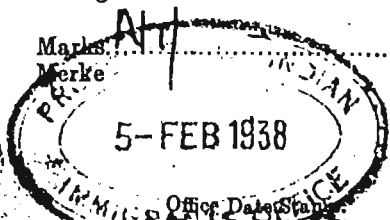
Outdated

16 FEB 1937

Length

Marks
Merke

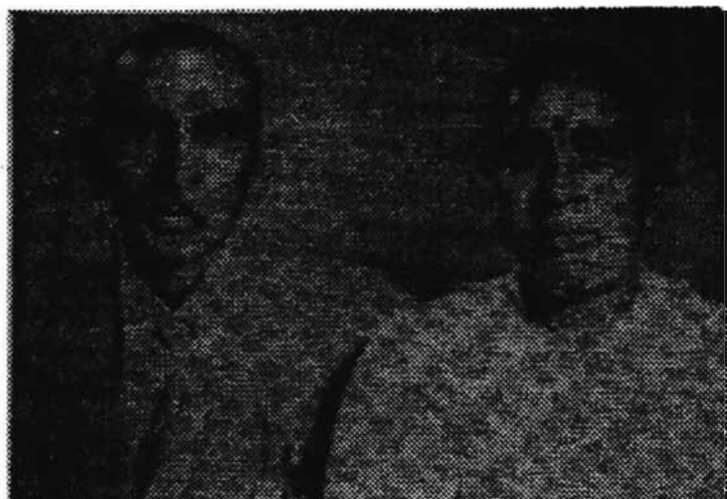
AT



[Signature]

Protector of Indian Immigrants.

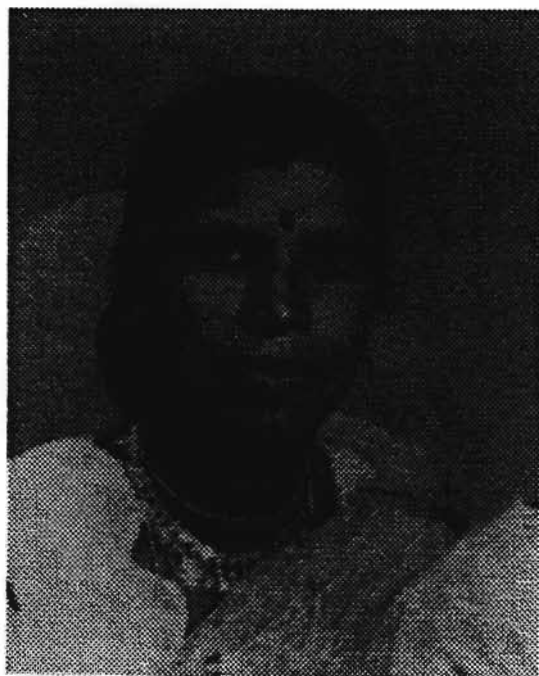
Name of Ship	Umzinto 34
Ship label	QN
Port of Departure	Madras (Chennai)
Date of Arrival	12:10:1904
Indenture No.	107457
Name of Immigrant	Muchu Ramsamy
Next of Kin	M. Laksmanna
Age	22
Gender	Male
Caste	Muthu
Height	5 feet 11 inches



Chinnasamy Ramasamy Gounden
Colonial Number 119054
Date of arrival 06:03:1906
Ship : S S Umfuli
Age : 22 years
Caste : Vannia
District: North Arcot
Village : Polur

Balamani Rajamah Gounden
Father : Pachaippa
Date of arrival : 05:06:1898
Ship : S S Pongola
Caste : Vellala
Age : 25 years
District : North Arcot
Village : Polur

Standing: Balamani Rajamah Gounden's third grandson's wife Thainagee Govender with her daughter Kovila and son Preglathan.

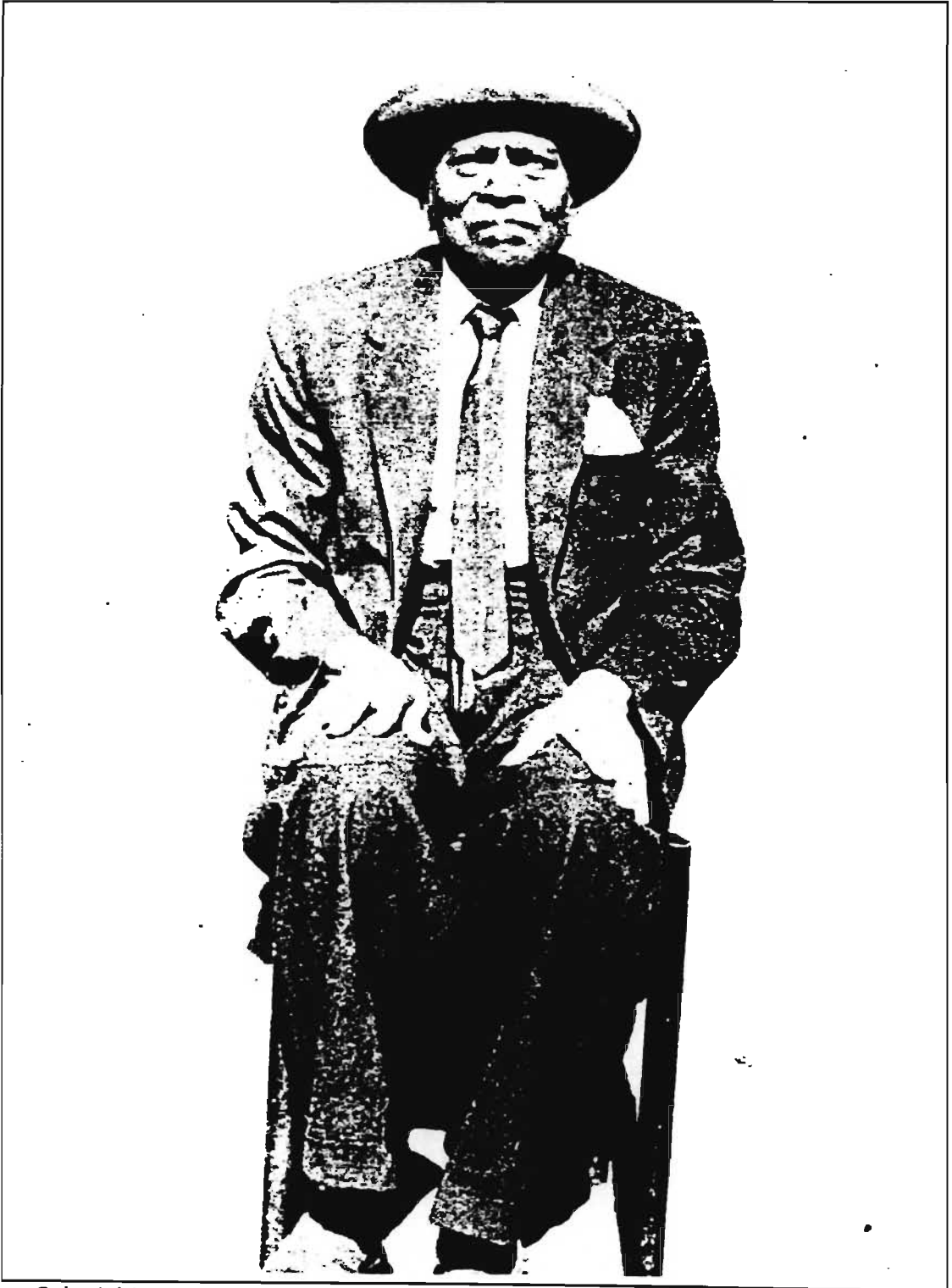


Kannama second daughter of Chinnasamy and Balamani Rajamah. Now 83 years old. Thainagee is Kannama's eldest daughter-in-law.



The House Behind the lady on the roof of a new building
is the home of Ramasamy the father of Chinnasamy
Colonial No.: 119054; Ship S S Umfuli; date of arrival 6 March 1906

Chinnian Kuppa Gounden (aka Kattian)



Colonial No.: 119053: Ship SS Umfuli; date of arrival in Natal 6 March 1906
His correct name is Chinnian Kuppa Iyer. He came with Chinnasamy Ramasamy on
the same ship from Polur, Tamilnadu. He worked for T. E. B Hill "Came"
In Seven Oaks then for a small holding in Greytown where he grew vegetables for
the local market.

(K R Govender collection)

Union of South Africa.
Inland Revenue.
CURRENT YEAR

G. S. R.

LICENCE

No. 1831

£3.

Licence or Pass.
INDIAN.

ACT 17 of 1902. ACT 2 of 1905.
and ACT 39 of 1905.

OFFICIAL DATA STAMP

District Registration No. 56

Full Name... *Chinnian* Immigr. No. *119053*

Father's Name... *Coopper*

Residence... *Cause River 094*

Sex *M* Age *31* Height *5'* Bodily Marks

... he having paid the sum of Three Pounds Sterling, as required by
the above-mentioned Acts.

This Licence or Pass expires on the 30th June, 1914 and must then be renewed.

Husband or wife... */* No.

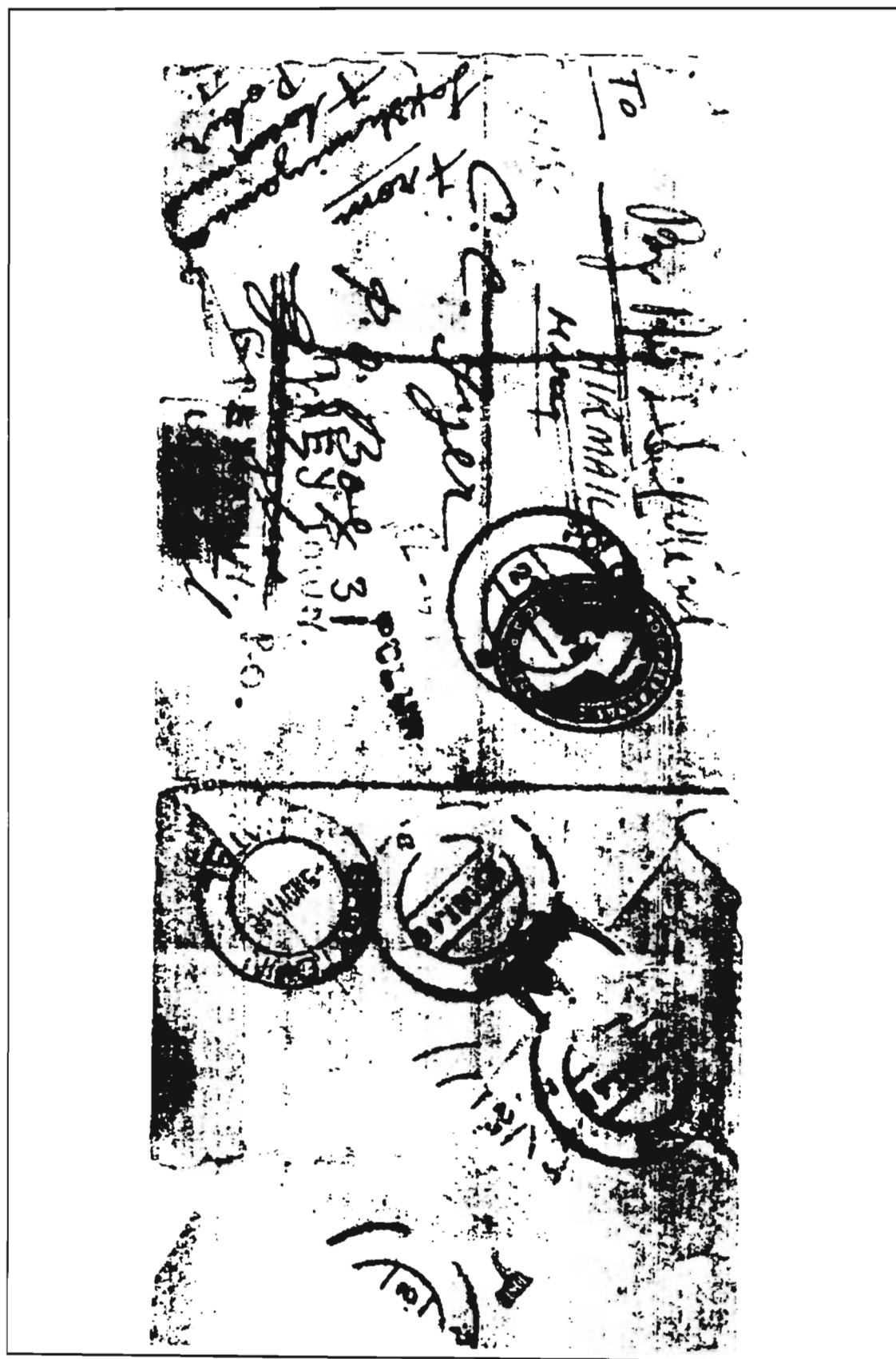
Children's names: Col. No. Ser. Ag.

Applied for free Pass
on the 14/12/16

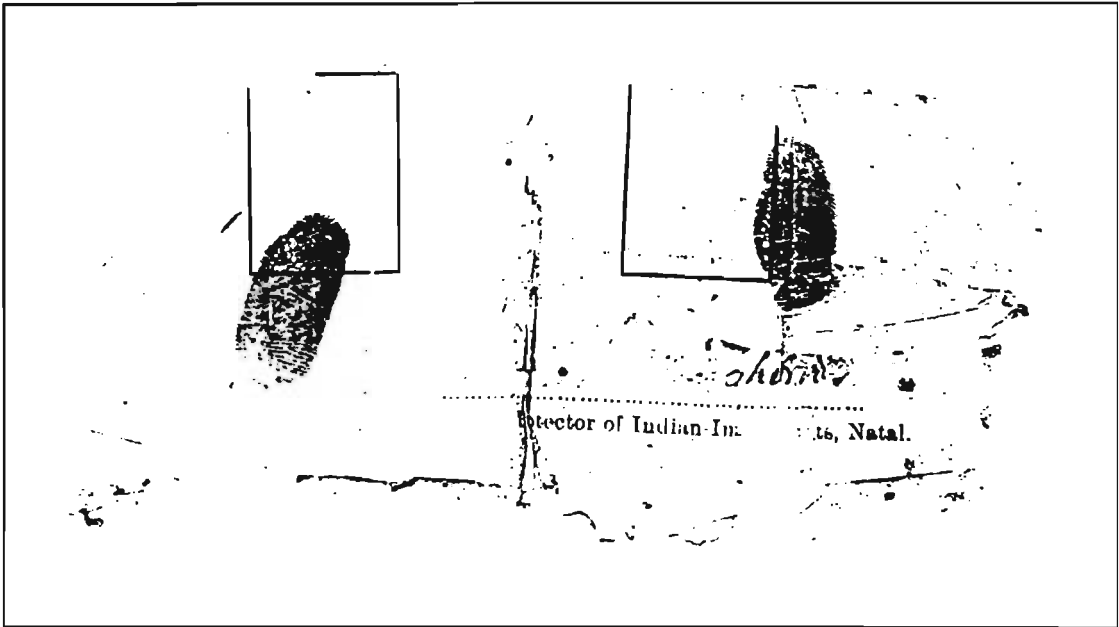
No. of last pass. *164*

Where issued... *Greytown*
W. J. R. R. R.
Receiver of Revenue

NOTE.—This Licence or Pass should be produced at the time of next payment.



(K R Govender collection)



Gangamma's thumb prints
(K.R. Govender collection)



This is the verandah from which Chinnasamy Ramsamy walked out in Polur in 1906 to
emmigrate to Natal with Chinnian (aka Kattian)
(K.R. Govender collection)



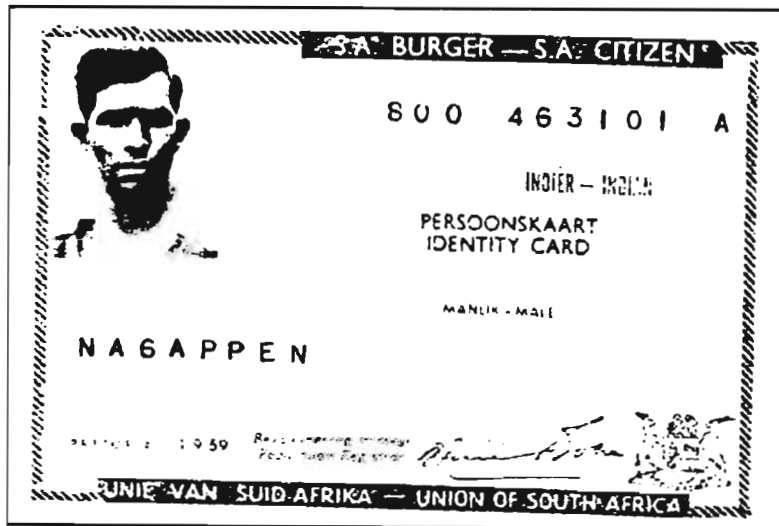
Chengan Govenden, colonial number 67009. Ship: S.S. Pongola. Date of arrival: 21 May 1897
brother of Gangamma 67008, mother of R. Manoo Govender 30:07:1913 – 5:09:2000.
Chengan Gounden and Gangamma Goundens parents were



Mr Karupan Govender and his wife Mrs Muniyammah
behind their home in W.L 'E' Angus' Ravensworth Estate



Mr Karupan Govender



born 1911

Mr Nagappen Govender thier son who married
Chinnasamy Ramasamy's eldest daughter



Chinnasamy Ramsamy's sisters' grandson
(1984) in Polur Tamilnadu

K.R. Govender collection



Chinnasamy Ramsamy's youngest sister
Mannama Gounden in Adamangalam with
the writer in 1984 in Polur Tamilnadu



Chengan (67009) and Gangamma's, youngest brother in Polur Tamilnadu (1984) on his left is saroja Ammal related to Chinnasamy Chinnian (aka Chinnian Cuppan / Kattian Iyer, son of Thopa. Thopa was the brother of Ramasamy. Thopa's son Chengan and Gangamma Ramsamy's children were Chinnasamy the eldest and Mannama the youngest of Polur tamilnadu.

Mr Pakkari from India., first indentured at a farm near Cedera. After indenture he worked for a Mr Rancken on the R33 to Greytown. The farm was called Post Kotri. The word Kotri, freely translated refers to a farm. In those days this farm was used as a "Post Office". Then he worked for the Meyers on the farm Ashendon

An interesting episode in his life is that when Mr Meyer was thrown off his horse he dislocated his hip. After much medical assistance he was still unable to go horseback riding to supervise his labourers. After much persuasion he allowed

himself to be massaged by Mr Pakkari. After about two weeks he was on his horse again. For his assistance he was gifted a tea set. The writer vouches for his ability to massage dislocated limbs. He was just good.



The W.L.'E Angus Family Ravensworth Estate was run by the Angus' from Scotland since 1860. W.L.'E Angus stuttered but yet he was apparently the finest singer of hymns at the quaint little St. Annes church on the estate. His brother was Frank and sister Thora. His only son, Tony emmigrated to New Zealand in 1964.

The Angus' and the Mackenzies were the first to bring black wattle seeds and grow them on their Estate at Ravensworth, (Angus) Cramond (Mackenzie and Noodsberg (GuyL'Estrange). To process the wattle bark to finally produce tannin to cure leather in Sutherlands in Pietermaritzburg, two mills were opened one at dalton (Matatane in Zulu) and one at Schroeders (Emhlalane in Zulu) where a small settlement of Indians began in order to process the bark.

A number of these farmers had groves of bamboo growing on their farms. The bamboos were used to grow wattle and pine seedlings. On the Ravensworth Estate, Harden Heights and Ashendon farms

They operated a number of "gulavarns" to transport wattle timber from the wattle plantations to the mills established at railway sidings. The word "gulavarn" is the Zulu word derived from the tamil word gulavandi. (a carriage made from iron running on rails drawn by a span of 12, 14 or 16 oxen or mules. Mules were used on the Ravensworth estate.

Kattumaram in Tamil is catamaran in English

Arisi in Tamil is unhusked rice

Satham is cooked rice ready for eating

Nellu is unhusked and growing rice

Pongal is the rice boiled in milk used as an offering to God and manes, commonly known as sweet rice.

Pittu is a rice or millet or mealie-meal confectionary in Tamil now it is Puttu in Zulu



Painting by H.B. of Indian women working on a Wattle plantation
(Courtesy of Evylyn Newmarch. Greytown)



Indian men working in a Wattle plantation most probably on W.L.'E. Ravensworth Estate.
(courtesy of The National Cultural Museum, Pretoria)

Greytown Indian School Advisory Board.

The general Indian public are hereby informed that the Greytown Indian School has been opened on November 3rd 1926 and the services of an able teacher has been obtained. We hereby also thank all Indians and others who have rendered assistance to enable us to successfully resuscitate the School.

Some uninformed members of our community are endeavouring to destroy the good work that has been accomplished. By their activities they are endangering the future welfare of our children and also that of the community.

For the benefit of those children who live far from Greytown it is our intention to establish an hostel in the near future where they may be lodged and fed. For further particulars apply to Secretary P. O. Box 20 Greytown.

We are,

S. P. Chetty, Chairman.

G. G. Vanmari } Joint Secretaries.
- B. Gureal }

H. B. Maharaj | Treasurers.
Gagadar Sing |

ગ્રેટાઝન ઇન્ડિયન સ્કૂલ એડવૈસરી બોર્ડ

सर्व साधारण को सुचित किया जाता है, कि ग्रेटाऊन का इंडियन स्कूल ता. ३ नवेम्बर १९२६ को खुल गया है, और पाठशाला (स्कूल) में विद्यार्थियों को शिक्षा देने के लिये एक योग्य अध्यापक भी मिल गया है। हम लोग उन समस्त भारत वासियों और दूसरे सज्जन पुरुषों को भी धन्यवाद देते हैं, जो लोग हम सब को पाठशाला (स्कूल) के कार्य में सफलता प्राप्त करने के लिये सहायता प्रदान किये हैं।

हमारे समाज के कोई कोई भाई जिसका नाम विदित नहीं है, स्कूल के उत्तम कार्य को, जो पुरा हुआ है, उसको नष्ट करने के लिये उपाय कर रहे हैं। वे अपने चालाकियोंसे हमारे लड़कों के वो सर्व साधारण के भी भविष्यत उपकार (भलाई) के खतरे में डाल रहे हैं।

जो लड़के ग्रेटाउनसे दूर रहते हैं उनके भलाई (उपकार) के लिये हम लोगों की ईरादा है कि भविष्य में एक अतिथि-सेवाकालय स्थापन की जाय, जहाँ पर वे रह गये वे भोजन इत्यादिक कर सकें। हमारे प्रतिनिधि आपसे मुलाकात करेंगे और हमारे सब हेंश को आपसे वर्णन करेंगे। दूसरा माहितिओं के लिये पुछो: मंत्री, नोक्ष २० ग्रेटाउन.

मखडीय,

एस. पी. चेठा सभापति.

जी. जी. घनमाली और श्री. गुरुल

संयुक्त मंत्री.

एच. बी. महाराज और गजाधर सिंग

कोषाध्यक्ष.

கிரேய்ட்டு இத்தியன் ஸ்கூல் போதக குட்டம்.

இதனால் பொதுமக்களுக்கு தறிக்கப்பட்டது: கடக்கும் 1926ஆம் ஆண்டில் 3௨ முதற்கொண்டு கிளையிலும் இத்தியை பாடசாலை ஆரம்பிப்பதற்குப் பத்திரிகையாளரும் அனுமதிப்பட்டுக் கிடந்தது. இஃது பாடசாலைகளில் முதற்குறிக்கப்பட்ட இத்தியைக் கற்றுக் கொடுக்கும் முதலாவது ஆண்டு கிளையிலும்.

நாமது நான்மருத்தனது மார்து ஸிஸர் இடத்து செய்குவை கசிப்பதற்காக முயன் தவருங்கூறும். அவர்களு
செய்வால், நாமது பச்சையா வினி. முயன்றிருந்தாலும் நான்மருத்தன் உபகாவலம் பலவின்படுத்தி வருங்கூ
றும்.

பெரியவருக்கு வெளியேத்தலும் தேவாலயம் கிழிப்போன்றின் பின்னால் தங்கியிருப்பதன்மே லுந்
இருப்பினும் கதையின் முடிவாகியிருக்கிறது. கிழித்தல்: கலியாணி, தயார் பெட்டி 20, கெண்டவன்
புறம் கிழித்தல், கெண்டவன்.

தலைவர் அவர்கள்.

என. டி. நெட்டி அபாஷாணி.

ഉ.വ. കാഞ്ചനം

[illegible]

உட்டு வாசியத்தினால்

21.1. 19. 1960

കർകാദ്യം നിൽ

מחמדיהם ופיהם יתקדשו

THE OFFICIALS OF THE GREYTOWN AND DISTRICT
INDIAN ASSOCIATION

request the pleasure of the company of

Mr. Daniel

at a Reception to be given in honour of

The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C.,

First Agent to the Government of India,

in the TOWN HALL, GREYTOWN

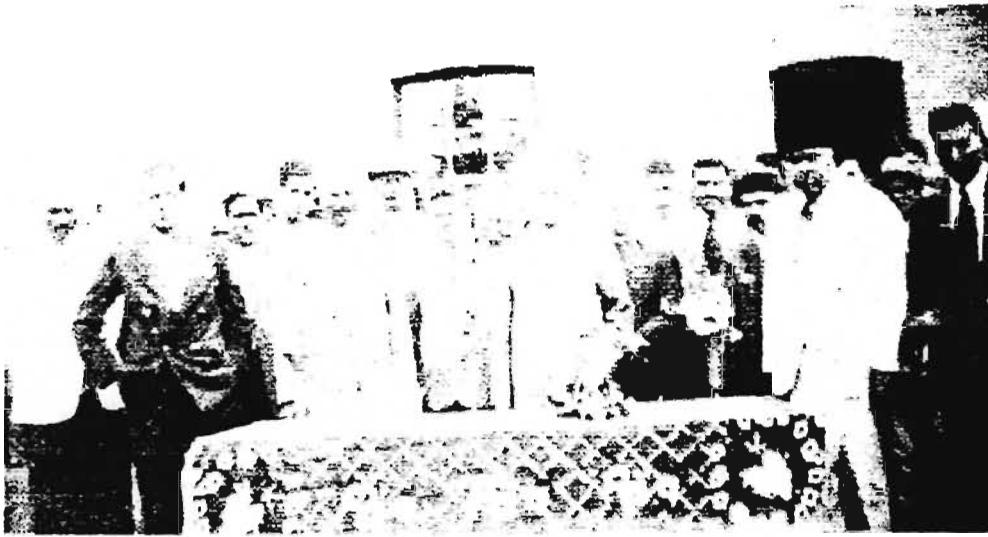
(BELL STREET ENTRANCE), on

SUNDAY, 18th SEPTEMBER, 1927, at 11 A.M.

M. E. LAKHI, President,

G. G. VANMARIE, Joint

SEMAIL SULIMAN, Secretaries.

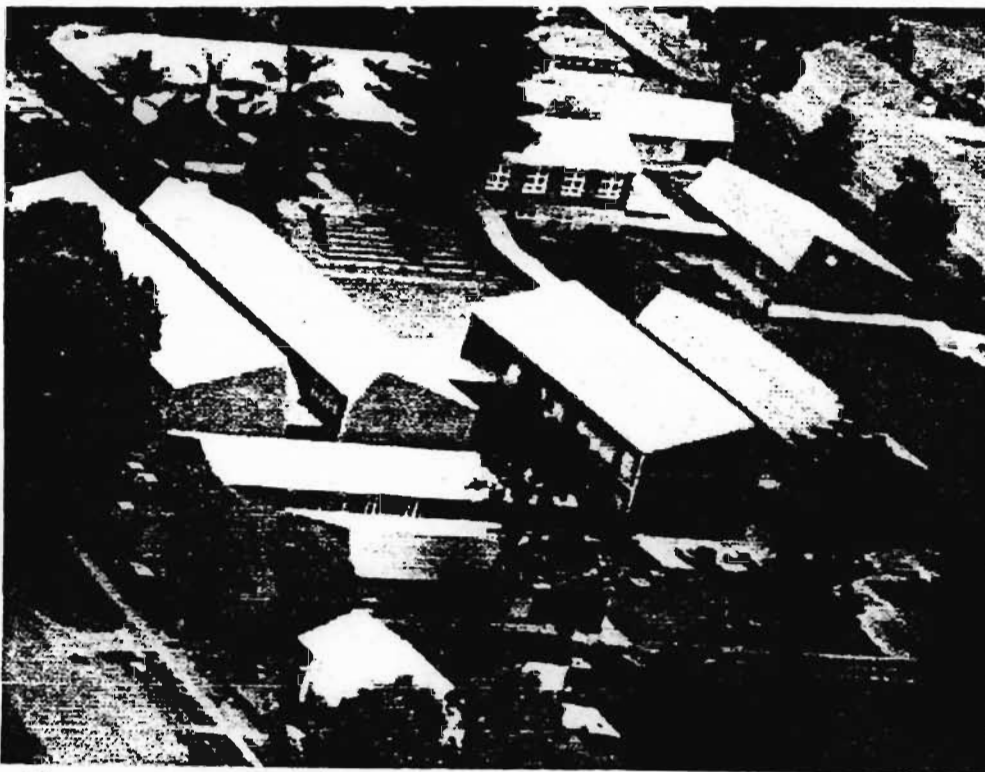


THE RT. HON. V.S.S. SASTRI, P.C., WITH HIS PERSONAL PRIVATE SECRETARY, P. KODANDA RAO, WITH MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD AND THE PUBLIC AT THE SRI VISHNU MANDIR HALL IN 1926 IN GREYTOWN. (Greytown Primary School 75th Anniversary Brochure -2003)

THIS STONE WAS Laid BY
 HE HONOURABLE PRINCELY STATE AGENT-GENERAL FOR INDIA.
 THE BUILDING IS DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE OF THE UPLIFT
 OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN SUBJECTS, BUILT FROM FUNDS
 SUBSCRIBED BY THE INDIAN RESIDENTS OF GREYTOWN AND UNVOTI
 COUNTY, THE DECIDE HAVING BEEN AROUSED BY THE ENERGIES
 OF HE WHOSE HAND PLACED THIS STONE IN POSITION WITH A
 DIVINE BLESSING

NOVEMBER 24th 1926

PRESENT SCHOOL - 2003



Photograph: Courtesy of PANNAR, Greytown

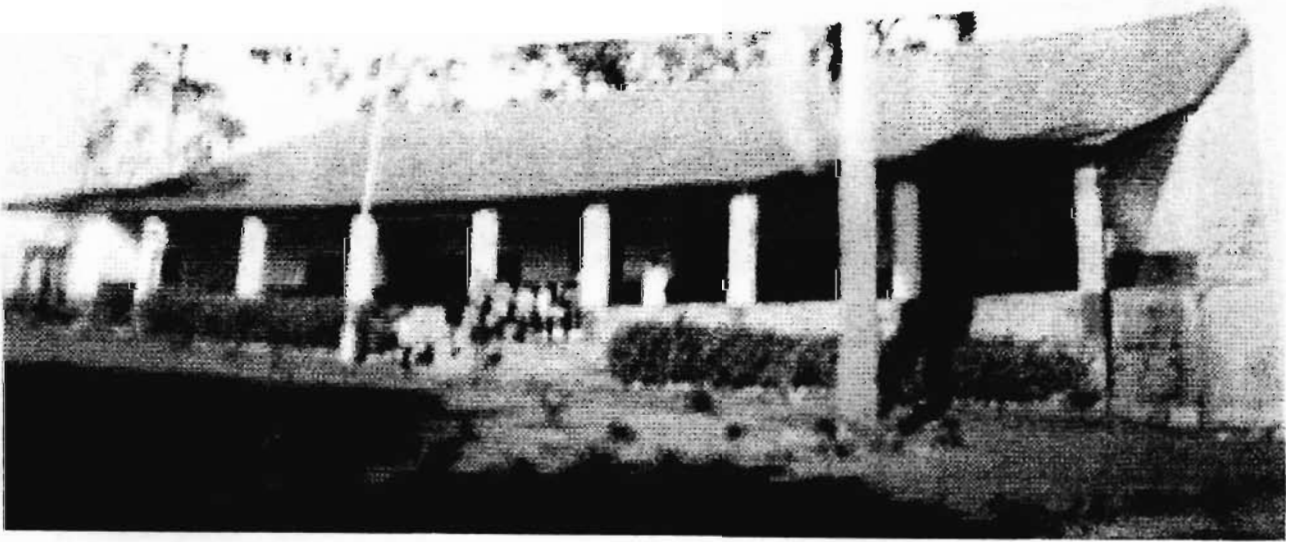


K.R. Govender Collection

Srinivasa Sastri and his personal secretary Kodanda Rao and the Greytown Primary School officials in front of the foundation stone laid by Srinivasa Sastri in November 1928.



Middle Row 2nd is the mother of Chinnian Cuppa Iyer(Father of Late Bobby Iyer). First row Right is Saroja Ammal(neice of C C Iyer – owner of a flower bazzar in Polur Tamilnadu).



Harden Heights Government-aided Indian Primary School.



This school was founded by Anthony Timothy Simon David and his wife, Faith David.

**Photographed - 1960
Courtesy: A Jagesar**

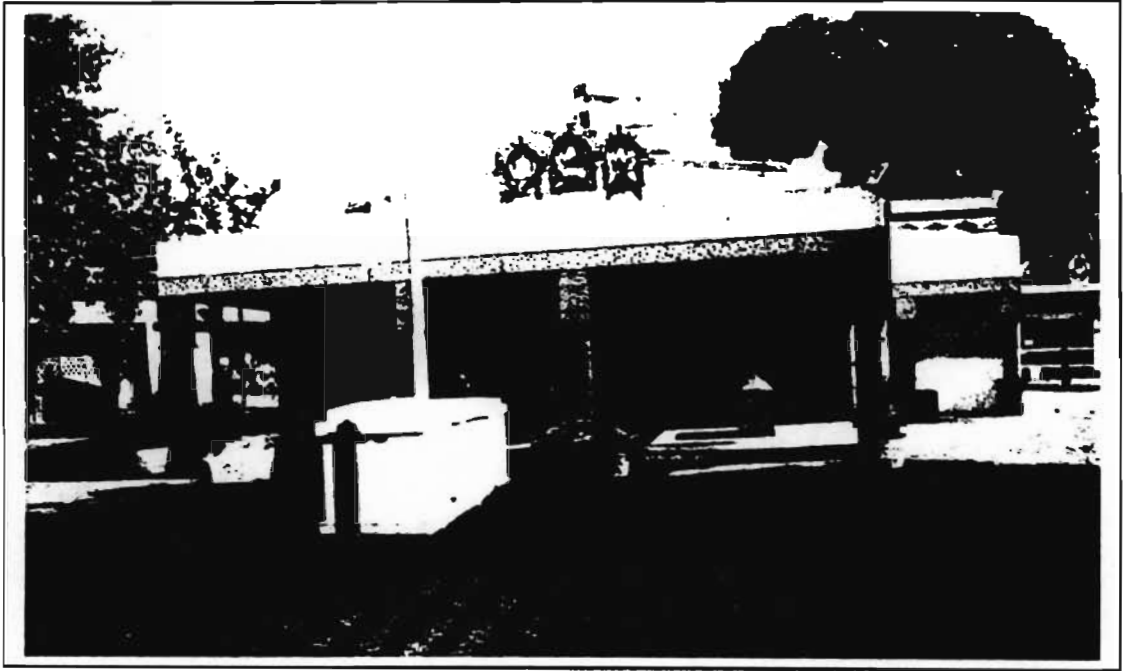
According to oral literature and the Log Book of the school, they had arrived from Ladysmith at New Hanover on the R33, later proceeded to the Harden Heights Wattle Company and settled there in 1930. Mr A T S David was employed as a painter by the Harden Heights Wattle Company.

His little tin shack school was accepted by the Natal Education Department and on the 1 August 1934, the first pupil to be admitted was Vethanayagiemal Rajamah Mudliar.

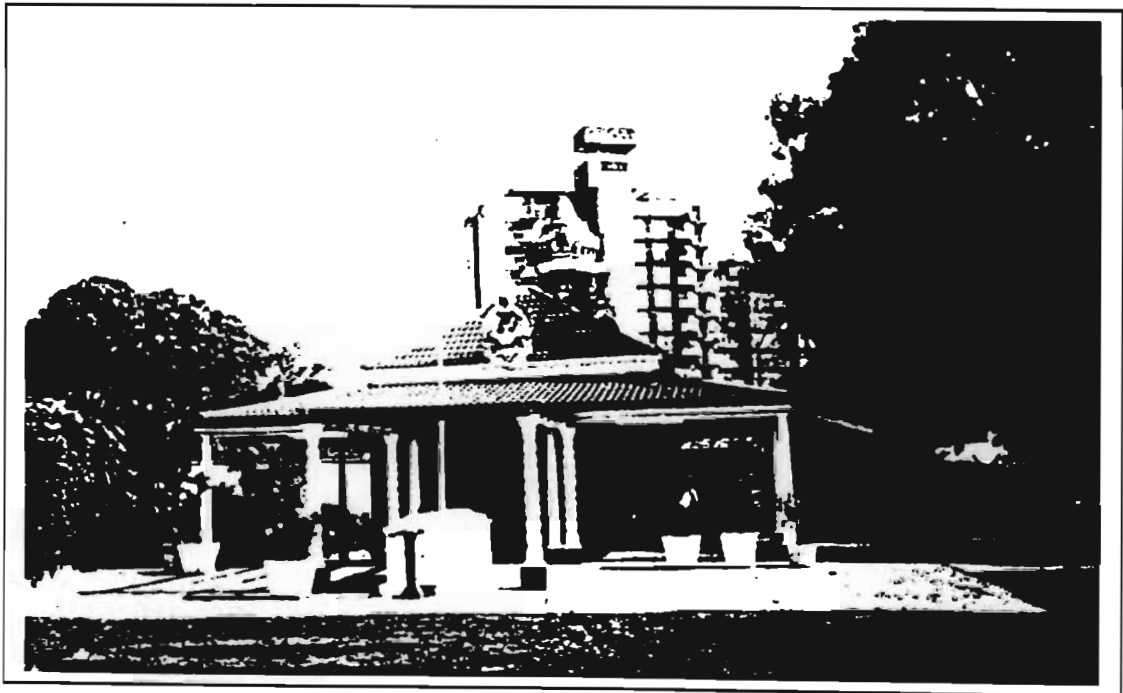
Her father was Munsamy Mudliar from Gingee, Tamilnadu who was indentured at Greytown. His wife was Adimah, whose parents also came from India. After his indentureship, he went to Harden Heights Wattle Company and rose to become the Sidar of the box company. His granddaughter is Thainaigee Govender of Greytown.



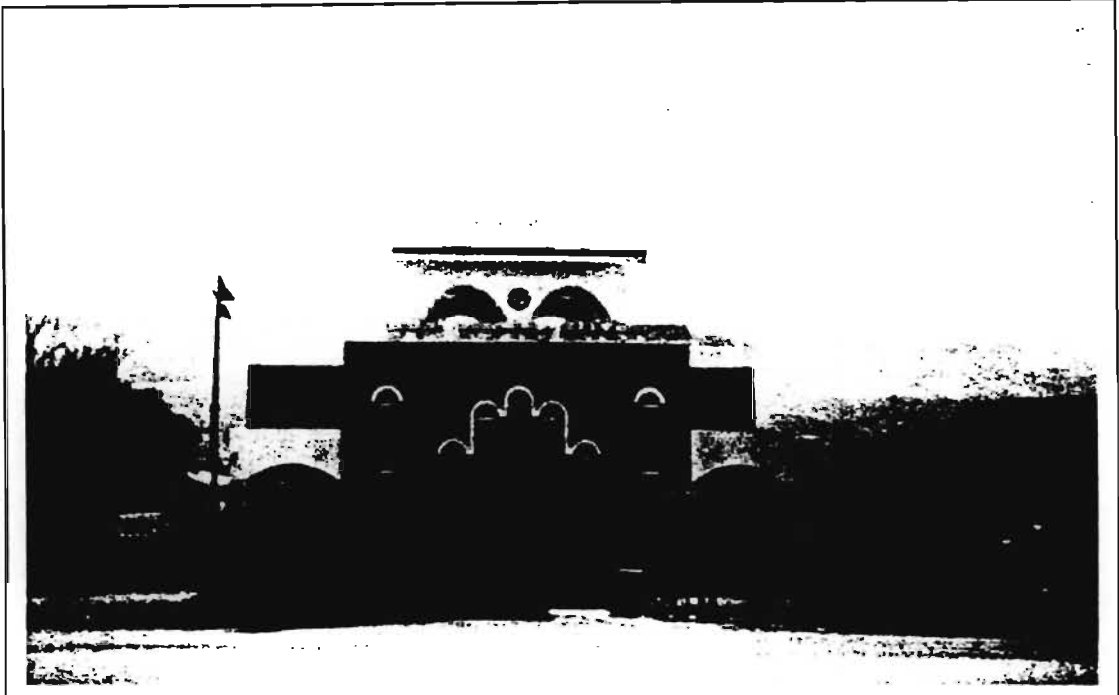
Sir Kunvar Maharaj Singh and Kunvarani Maharaj Singh visited the Harden Heights Govt. Aided Indian School in August 1934 in recognition of the indentured peoples' aspirations towards educating their children. He planted a fir tree on the north side of the school in remembrance of his historic visit. This tree was felled in 1970. The school closed officially school in December 1983.



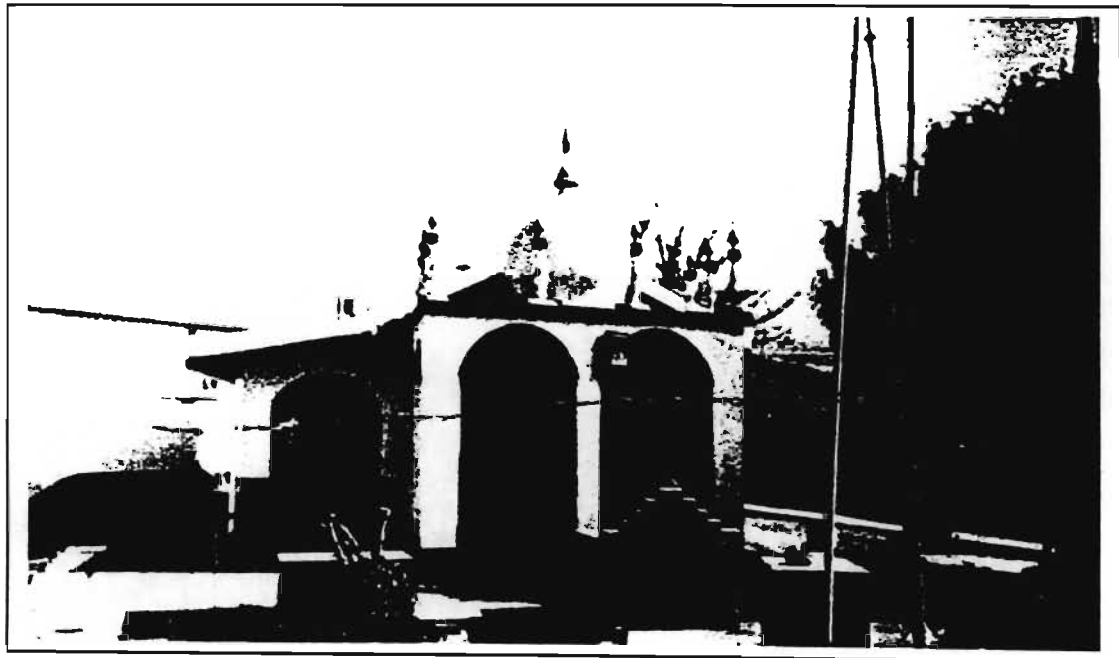
Sri Siva Subrahmanya Temple
Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg
(Photograph by Mr K R govender)



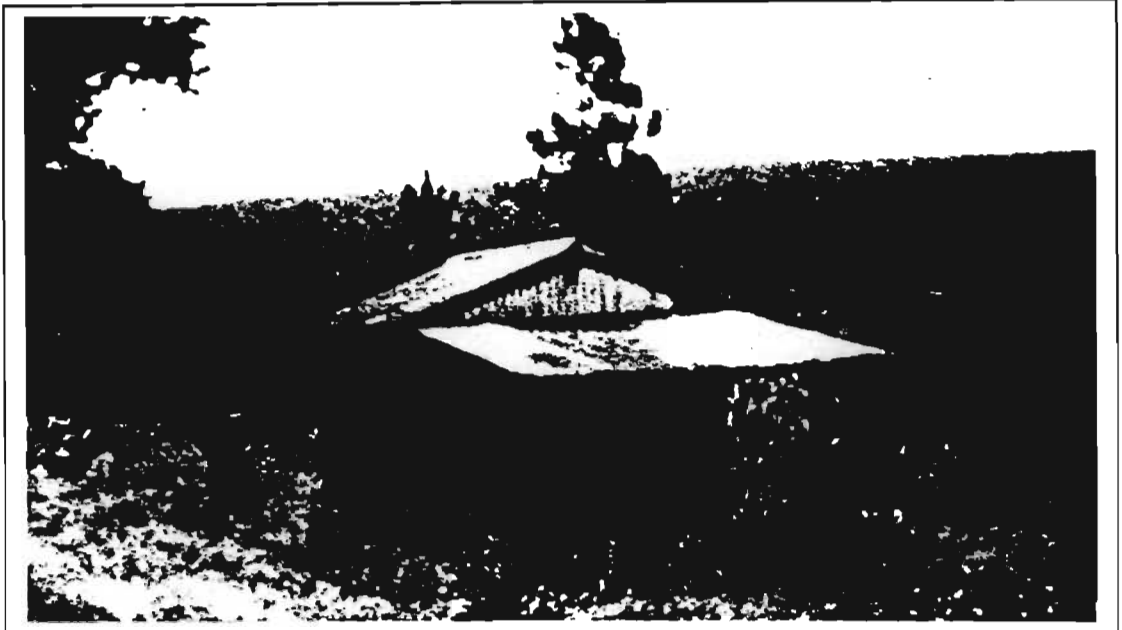
Mariemman Temple
Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg
(Photograph by Mr K R govender)



Sri Vishnu Mandir
Cathcart Street, Greytown
(Photograpgh by Mr K R govender)



Kuppusamy Mariamman Temple Greytown:
Private Temple built by Kuppusamy on his premises.
It was built about 30 years ago.
(Photograpgh by Mr K R govender)



Harden Heights Mariamman Temple
which replaced the original that was burnt down
(Photograph by Mr K R Govender)

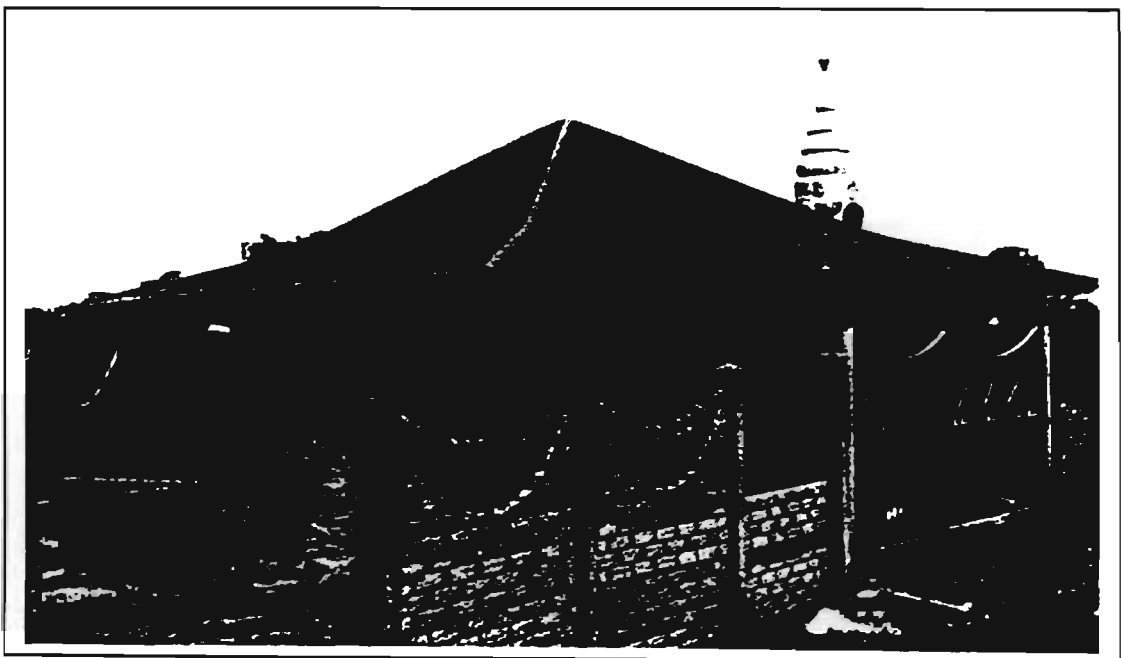


Ravensworth Mariamman and Perumalsami Temple
Built by the Indentured Indians. This Temple is more than 100 years old.
Presently there are no Indians living on this estate.
(Photographs by MR K R Govender)



Dalton Temple

Built by workers who were enlisted by the Dalton Sugar Mill
from the North Coast Sugar Mills.
(Photograph by Mr K R govender)



Cool Air Temple in Dalton

Built about 1970
(Photograph by Mr K R govender)



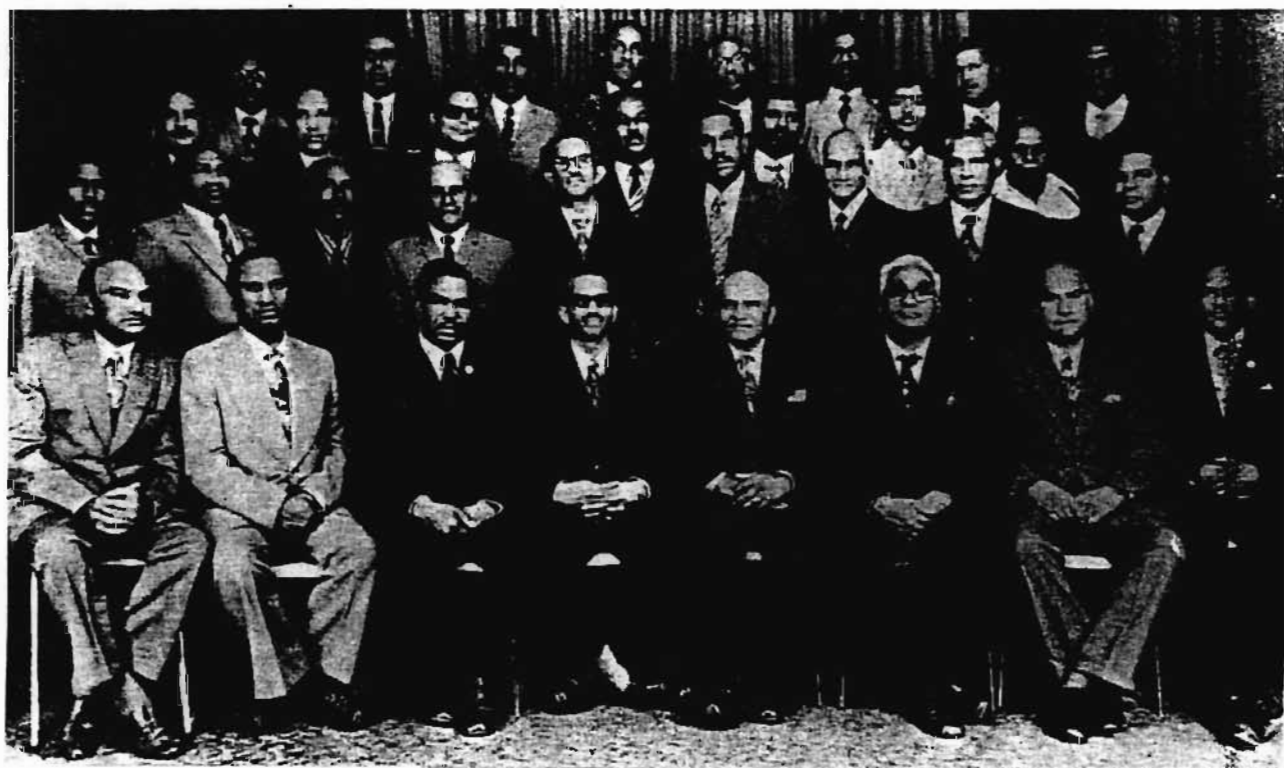
"Came" Mariamman Temple
built in 1930 by Chinnasamy and Chengen Govender,
immigrants from Polur, Tamilnadu
(Photograph by Mr K R Govender)



**STRI SIVA SOOBARAMONIAR AND MARRIAMEN TEMPLES
OFFICIALS — 1956-57**

Standing: Messrs R C Pillay (Hon Auditor); N Moodley (Priest); Robin Padayachee (Committee); N P Padayachee (Committee); Steven Padayachee (Committee); M B Naidoo (Committee); R G Naidoo (Committee); K R Naidoo (Committee); V Govender (Priest); M C Padayachee (Committee)

Seated: Messrs S R Pillay (Jt Hon Secretary); K K Moodley (Chairman); N S Padayachi (Trustee); T M Padayachee (Vice-Chairman); M Nadesan Govender (Jt Hon Secretary)



**STRI SIVA SOOBARAMONIAR AND MARRIAMEN TEMPLES
OFFICIALS — 1973-74**

Back row; left to right: Messrs S Moodley; C M Govender; S P Naicker; S Pillay; G G Naidoo; V M Naidoo; D Reddy; N Padayachee

Third row; left to right: Messrs M Pillay; L S Moodley; S Pillay; M Chetty; P K Moodley; S M Reddy; S Pillay (Priest)

Second row; left to right: Messrs P Pillay; P M Pillay; M Naicker (Sthanigar); M G Govender (Sthanigar); S A Reddy (Vice-Chairman); R M Govender (Vice-Chairman); K R Pillay (Vice-Chairman); K D Maistry (Hall Manager); G S Naicker (Vice-Chairman)

Front row; seated; left to right: Messrs P R Padayachee (Trustee); B K Moodley (Trustee); A P Pillay (Treasurer); G Naidoo (Secretary); K N Naidoo (Chairman); N P Padayachee (Trustee); M R Naidoo (Trustee); S N Reddy (Auditor)

R M Govender

custodian of Ravensworth Marriamman temple 1932 to September 2000. His Mother Gangamma (67008) died when he was 2 years old. She died of shock, when she saw blood on the footpath she was using. His father, Munsamy (81805) died when he was 4 years old. He was brought up by his uncle Chengan (67009). R M Govender had only his mothers thumb prints.

**Ponnusamy Moodley**

son of Manikam Gopala Odayer

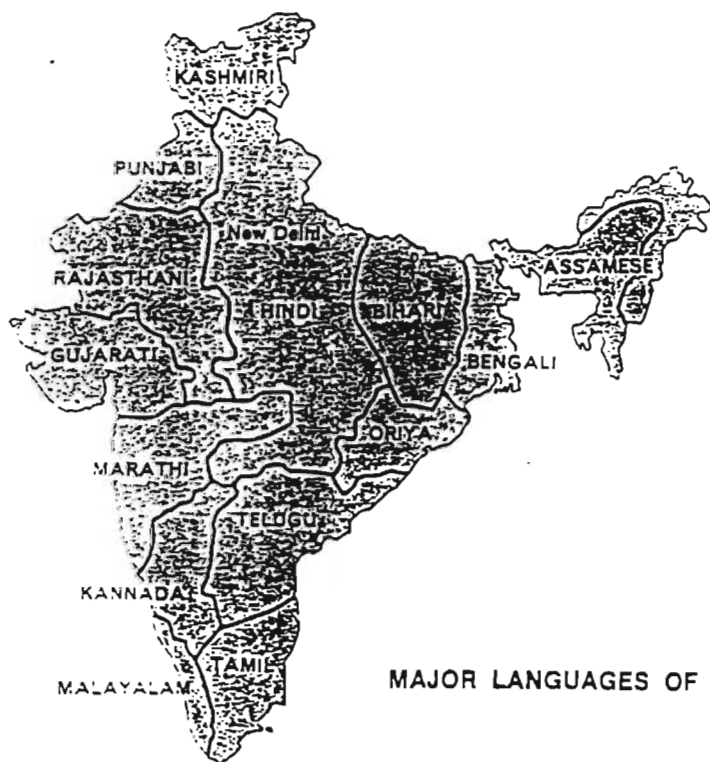
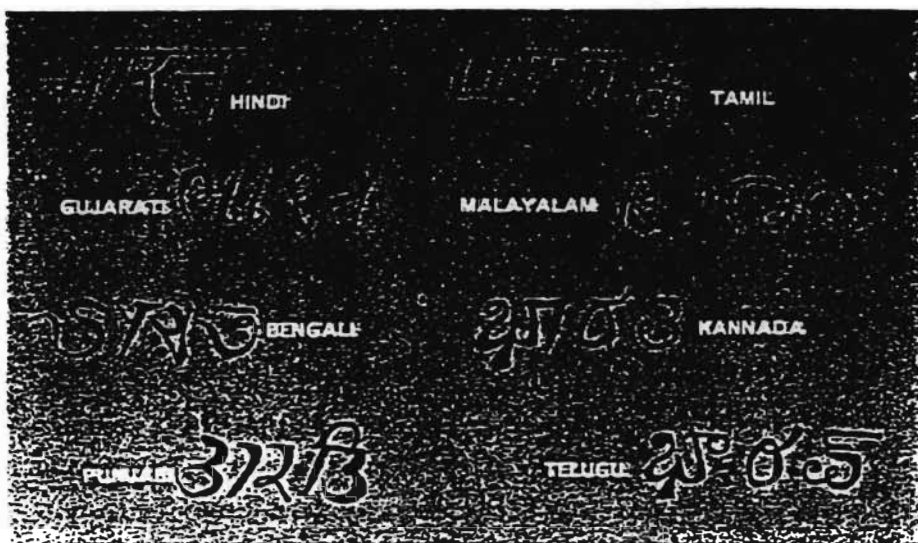
**Kistappen Govender**

son of Municam Sevai Naicker (128954) and Patchiyamma Munian (128955)



LANGUAGE diversity

Indians call their land "Bharat."
Here "Bharat" is written in eight
Indian languages.

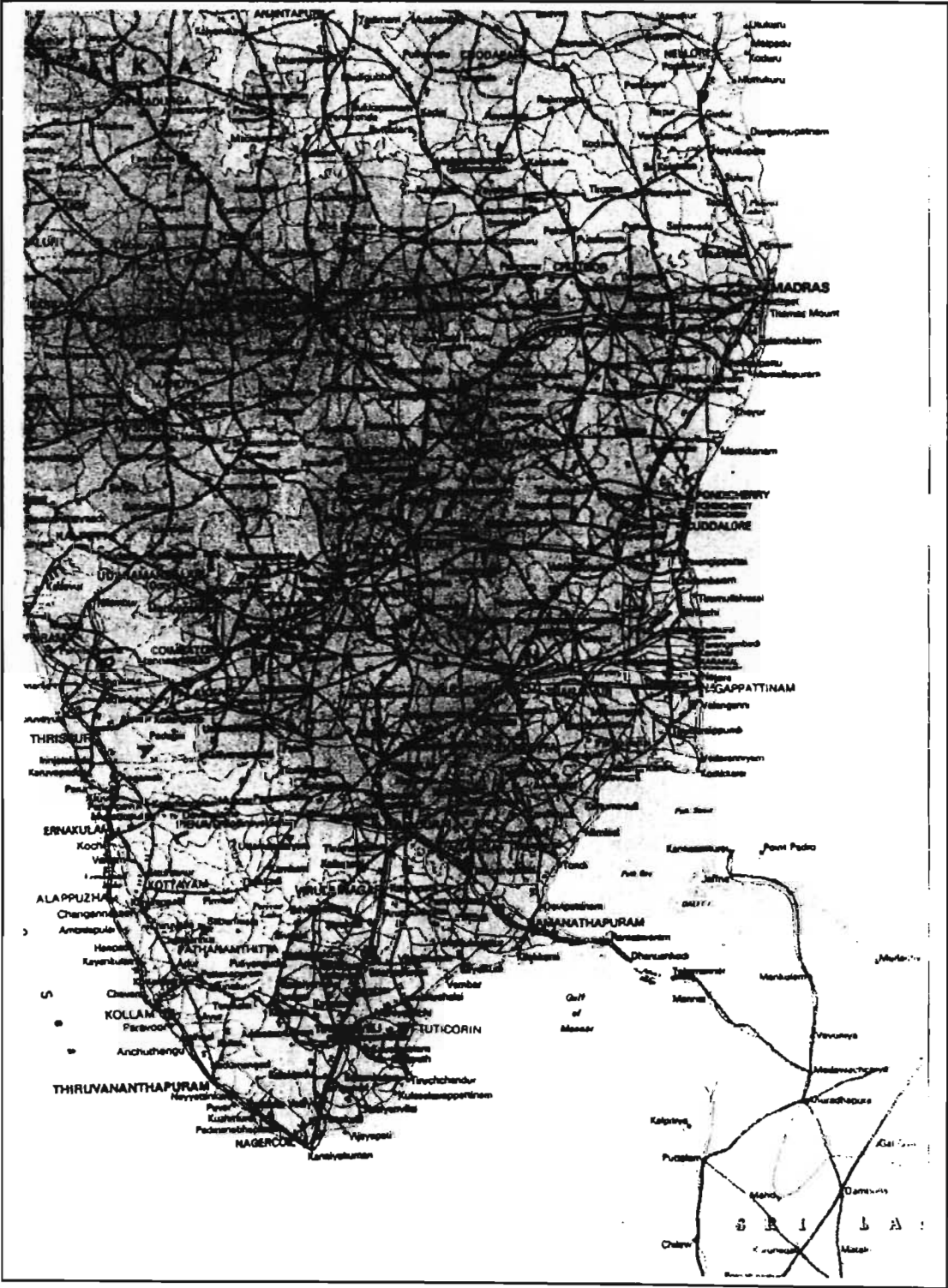


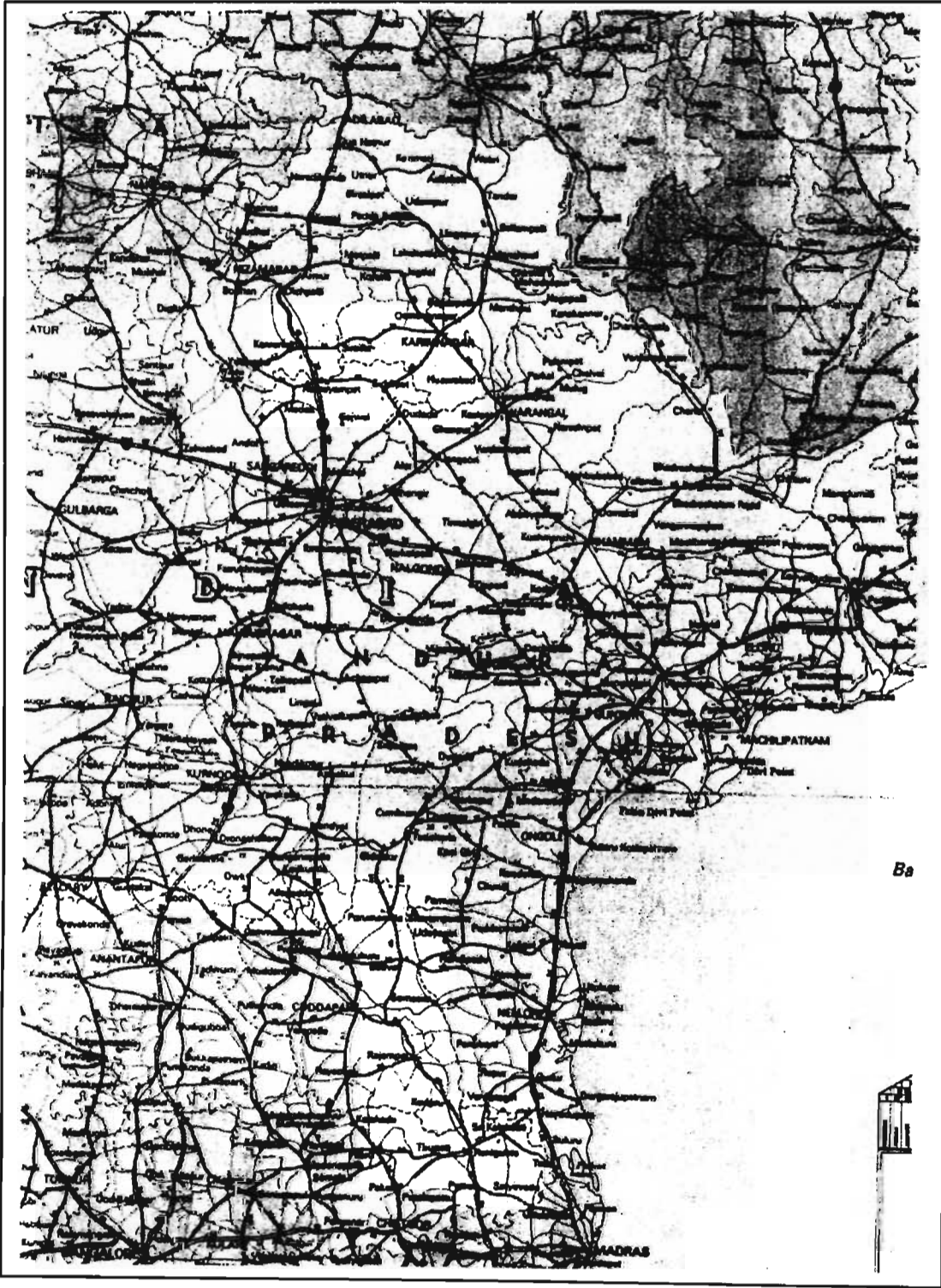
MAJOR LANGUAGES OF INDIA



photography by K.R.Govender.

These jundha's (flags in Hindi and Kodi in Tamil) are identity markers. The jundha s indicate that the owners of these homes are Hindi-speaking people living a predominantly non-Indian residential area.





Ba