INDIA AND MAURITIUS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

India and Mauritius are the two countries, which share much in common. Mauritius is usually referred as "little India beyond the sea" in the Indian Ocean region, which has assumed much significance in recent years. India and Mauritius are not only ethnically one but the problems they face with, they stand together are very much similar. Both belong to the 3rd world, forming part of the non-aligned block and in international commitments too. Their lands profess the same ideology.

Keywords: - common, stand, ethnically

Introduction

Both have striking similarities in their heterogonous, ethnic, social, cultural and physical characteristics. Moreover, it is Mauritius alone where the people of Indian origin are in majority and in power.[1]

As already known that India and Mauritius have more similarities than dissimilarities especially in their social, political, economical and cultural system. To analyse its system correctly here, it becomes necessary to explain their systems separately and the information has been collected about their systems. Hence, firstly, let us discuss the Indian system and later Mauritian systems.

INDIA

Geographical Condition

The world's seventh largest country in area, India covers an area of 32,87,263[2]sq km, extending from the snow-covered Himalayan heights to the tropical rain forests of the south. India stands apart from the rest of Asia, marked off as it is by mountains and the sea, which give the

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[11] Prasad, Sunil., (2000), *India and Mauritius: Relationship of Two Countries,* Chanakya Publication, Delhi. P.1.

[2] Provisional as on 31 March 1982.

country a distinct geographical entity. Bounded by the Great Himalayas in the north, it stretches southwards and at the Tropic of Cancer, tapers off into the Indian Ocean between the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west.[3]

The India mainland (excepting the island groups of Andaman-Nicobar, and Lakshadweep, in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea) lies between 8 and 37 North and 68 and 97 east, the topic of cancer roughly dividing the landmass into two equal parts.[4]

Lying entirely in the northern hemisphere, the mainland extends between latitudes 8°4' and 37°6' north, longitudes 68°7' and 97°25' east and measures about 3,214 km from north to south between the extreme latitudes and about 2,933 km from east to west between the extreme longitudes. It has a land frontier of about 15,200 km. The total length of the coastline of the mainland, Lakshadweep Islands and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, is 7,516.6 km.[5]The coastline of over 3,500 miles along the Arabian Sea in the west and the Bay of Bengal in the east, the two arms of the Indian Ocean, has only sporadically remained active in trade or communication.[6]

Climate

India has a variety of climate sub-divisions[7] because it is situated in south Asia, a disinvesting characteristic of South Asia's Climate is the prevalence of monsoon.[8]India's climate is also affected by two seasonal winds – the north-east monsoon and the south-west monsoon. The north-east monsoon commonly known as winter monsoon blows from land to sea whereas south-west monsoon known as summer monsoon blows from sea to land after crossing the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The south-west monsoon brings most of the rainfall during the year in the country.[9]

The climate of India may be broadly described as topical monsoon type. There are four seasons: (1) Winter: January – February (2) Hot weather: March – May (3) Rainy South-western monsoon: June – September (4) Post Monsoon (north-east monsoon) in the Southern Peninsula (October – December)[10]

[3] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2006), *India 2006 a Reference Annual*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, India. p.1.

[4]Tirtha, Ranjit. andKishanGopal., (1996), *Geography of India,* Rawat Publication, New Delhi. p.5.

[5] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2006), op.cit., p.1.

[6]Tirtha, Ranjit. andKishanGopal., (1996), op.cit., p.5.

[7] Turner, Barry., (2004), *The Statesman's Year Book*, Palgrave, U.K. p.815

[8]Tirtha, Ranjit. andKishanGopal., (1996), op.cit., p.5.

[9] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2006), op.cit., p.1.

[10] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2003), *India 2002 a Reference Annual*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, India. p.49.

Population

India's population is rich with diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Ethnic groups are those based on a sense of common ancestry, while cultural groups can be either made up of people of different ethnic origins who share a common language, or of ethnic groups with some customs and beliefs in common, such as castes of a particular locality. The other peoples of the Indian subcontinent, including the inhabitants of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka, share the diverse ethnic and cultural origins of the people of India. [11]

India's population as on 1 March 2001 stood at 1028 million (532.1 million males and 496.4 million females). India accounts for a meager 2.4 per cent of the world surface area of 135.79 million sq km. yet, it supports and sustains a shopping 16.7 per cent of the world population.[12] The population of India, which at the turn of the twentieth century was around 238.4 million, increased to reach 1,028 million at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The population of India as recorded at each decennial census from 1901 has grown steadily except for a decrease during 1911-21.[13]

History

[11]*Encarta Reference Library 2004*., Microsoft Corporation.

[12] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2006), op.cit., pp. 7-8.

[13]*Ibid*., pp. 7-8.

India's history begins not with independence from colonial occupation in 1947, but more than 4,500 years earlier, when the name India referred to the entire subcontinent, including present-day Pakistan and Bangladesh. The earliest of India's known civilizations, the Indus Valley civilization (about 2500 to 1700 BC), was known for its highly specialized artefacts and stretched throughout northern India. Another early culture—the Vedic culture—dates from approximately 1500 BC and is considered one of the sources for India's predominantly Hindu culture and for the foundation of several important philosophical traditions. India has been subject to influxes of peoples throughout its history, some coming under arms to loot and conquer, others moving in to trade and settle. India was able to absorb the impact of these intrusions because it was able to assimilate or tolerate foreign ideas and people. Outsiders who came to India during the course of its history include the Greeks under Alexander the Great, the Kushānas from Central Asia, the Mongols under Genghis Khan, Muslim traders and invaders from the Middle East and Central Asia, and finally the British and other Europeans[14].

British rule in India began in the ad 1700s. Foreign domination engendered Indian nationalism, which eventually led to India winning its independence in 1947. Split from Pakistan at independence, India

[14]*Encarta Reference Library 2004*., Microsoft Corporation.

struggled with its Muslim neighbour over border differences and Hindu-Muslim relations. India and Pakistan still conflict over the Jammu and Kashmir region, parts of which are also occupied by China. India's federal political system, a democracy for more than 50 years, has demonstrated a remarkable resilience in resolving domestic and international crises. India has grown since independence to have great influence on Asia and a massive world presence. Since that time India has developed into a vibrant democracy, making slow but steady progress in development[15].

Government and Political Condition

India is a republic and comprises a union of 28 states and 7 union territories.[16] India a union of states is a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic with a parliamentary system of government. The republic is governed in terms of the constitution, which was adopted by constituent assembly on 26 November 1949 and came into force 26 January 1950.[17]

The Republic of India is a federal republic, governed under a constitution and incorporating various features of the constitutional systems of the United Kingdom, the United States, and other democracies. The power of the government

[15]*Ibid.*

[16] Turner, Barry., (2004), *The Statesman's Year Book*, Palgrave, U.K. p.815.

[17] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2003), *India 2002 a Reference Annual*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, India. p.25.

is separated into three branches: executive, parliament, and a judiciary headed by a Supreme Court. India is a union of states, but its federalism is slightly different. The central government has power over the states, including the power to redraw state boundaries, but the states, many of which have large populations sharing a common language, culture, and history, have an identity that is in some ways more significant than that of the country as a whole.

Executive: President of India is constitutional head of the executive of the union.[18] The president's major political responsibility is to select the prime minister, although that choice is circumscribed by a constantly evolving set of conventions. An electoral college consisting of the elected members of the national and state legislatures elects the president for a five-year term. The president is eligible for successive terms[19]. The vice president is elected in the same manner as the president and assumes the role of the president if the president is incapacitated or otherwise unable to perform his or her duties.

A council of ministers, or cabinet, is headed by a prime minister and wields executive power at the national level. The president upon the advice of the prime minister selects the council, which is

[18]*Ibid.*, p.25.

[19] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed., (2006), op.cit., pp. 27-28.

responsible to parliament.[20] There is a constitutionally fixed division of responsibilities between national and state governments, so that the national government has exclusive powers over areas such as foreign affairs, while the states are responsible for health-care systems and agricultural development, among other areas. Some areas are the joint responsibility of both the national and state governments, such as education.

Legislature: The constitution vests national legislative power in a parliament of two houses: the LokSabha (House of the People), the lower house, and the RajyaSabha (Council of States), the upper house. The LokSabha consists of 545 members directly elected by universal adult suffrage, except for two members who are appointed by the president to represent the Anglo-Indian community. The number of seats allocated to each state and union territory is proportional to its population. The term of the LokSabha is limited to five years, but the president may dissolve the house upon the advice of the prime minister, or upon defeat of major legislation proposed by the government. A provision of the constitution that was intended to expire after ten years, but which has been consistently extended, allocates reserved seats to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to their share of the population.[21]

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[20]*Ibid*., p.28.

[21] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2006),op.cit., p. 29.

Members of the RajyaSabha are elected by the members of the state legislative assemblies, except for 12 presidential appointees who have special knowledge or practical experience in literature, the arts, science, or social services. The elected members are chosen by a system of proportional representation for a six-year term.[22]

Judiciary: Judicial authority in India is exercised through a system of national courts administering the laws of the republic and the states. All senior judges are appointees of the executive branch of the government, with their independence guaranteed by a variety of safeguards. Noteworthy among these safeguards is a provision requiring a two-thirds vote of parliament to remove a judge from office. The highest court is the Supreme Court; all Supreme Court judges serve until a retirement age of 65. The top court at the state level is called the High Court; members of the Supreme Court are selected from among justices of the High Courts. Judges of the High Courts are in turn selected from subordinate courts operating at the district level. Important judicial posts at the district level are filled by members of the administrative service.

Political Parties: Political parties play an important role in India's democracy. For many years a centrist national party known as the Congress Party was the most powerful political party in

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[22]*Ibid*., p. 29.

India that Established in 1885. The Congress, also known since 1977 as the Congress (I) Party, significantly declined in popular support in the 1990s after allegations of corruption.[23]   India's two major socialist parties evolved out of the Janata (People's) Party. The Janata was a coalition of opposition parties formed in 1977 to defeat the Congress Party and abolish emergency rule, a set of extraordinary provisions restricting democratic freedoms that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had instituted in 1975. After winning the 1977 elections and repealing the emergency laws, the coalition fractured in 1979. Its primary successors are the Janata Dal (People's Party), a secular, socialist party appealing to lower caste and Muslim voters, and the BharatiyaJanata (Indian People's) Party (BJP), which promotes Hindu nationalism and supports socialistic economic goals. The BJP became the largest single party in the LokSabha in 1996 and retained that position in the 1998 and 1999 elections.[i24]

The far left of the political spectrum is occupied by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which draws support from urban and rural labourers. This party has been in power in the state of West Bengal since the 1977 election but is a force in only two other states, Kerala and Tripura. The more moderate Communist Party of India has been gradually losing its share of

voters but remains a significant participant in coalition politics. The newest national party, the BahujanSamaj (Society's Majority) Party, draws on the support of the scheduled caste population.[25]

Regional parties are of major importance in many states, including Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and several smaller states, particularly in the northeast. These regional parties deliberately focus on support of particular people of a particular state and thus have no ambition of extending their reach to other states. They elect a significant number of members of parliament, and many have been included in coalition governments by forming alliances with larger parties.[26]   At present there is a new group of parties called UPA

(United Progressive Alliance) is in power that has maximum members of congress (i) party.

Very recently, we are watching a striking change in Indian Political Party System.   A new political party named AamAadmi Party (AAP) formed in 2013. Some people are starting saying about this party, "it is the fastest party of India". This party has rightly proved this saying and got 28 seats in Delhi VidhanSabha Election in dec, 2013.

Social Structure

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[23]*Encarta Reference Library 2004*., Microsoft Corporation.

[24]*Ibid*.

[25]*Ibid*.

[26]*Encarta Reference Library 2004*., Microsoft Corporation.

India is a large country and the home of a long and rich civilization. It has often amazed and intrigued the rest of the world by the infinite variety of casts and creeds, a tradition of religious to a capacity for survival and by the maintenance of its himself tradition natured by moral teachings, wisdom and rich culture stretching back thousands of years, in many respects, model for our present age. She demonstrates the great significance - to the success of the country - of freedom, democracy and the co-existence of diverse religious and ethnic communities based on equal rights and status. Our country has achieved for itself a place amongst the world's major industrial powers, its agriculture is self-sufficient and its achievements in the scientific and cultural fields are outstanding

Language: There are two great language families on the Indian subcontinent: the Indo-Iranian (or Indo-Aryan) branch of the Indo-European language family, most of which are spoken in the north, and the Dravidian languages, most of which are spoken in the south. The other major language groups are the Sino-Tibetan languages along the Himalayan ridge, with many languages spoken by few people, and the Austro-Asiatic languages of some tribal peoples. All these language families stretch far back in history and have influenced one another over centuries.[27]

Though Indian official language is Hindi; English also has official status[28]. For use in certain official capacities, presently constitution recognizes twenty-two Scheduled Languages- Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu, Bodo, Methili, Dogri, Santhali. Four major language families include officially 112 "mother tongues," each with 10,000 or more speakers; thirty-three languages spoken by 1 million or more persons. Total number of languages and dialects varies depending on source and how counted; between 179 and 188 languages and between forty-nine and 544 dialects have been tabulated; census respondents in 1961 provided names for 1,652 different "mother tongues."

Religion: Religion has been a source of knowledge about human brings; it has provided values and norms; and it has given rise to transcendental nations, which go beyond the temporal and spatial. Durkheim and Weher wrote on religion. Durkheim referred to religions as a factor, which contributed to social solidarity in pre-literates society and social integration in more complex ones. According to Max Weber, religion is responsible for bringing about change in society.[29]

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[28] Turner, Barry., (2004), *The Statesman's Year Book*, Palgrave, U.K. p.817.

[29]Venugopal, C.N., (1998), *Religion and Indian Society: A Sociological Perspective,* Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi. p.89.

[27]*Ibid*.

Religion is very important in India, with deep historical root Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, called the Indian religions, were born here. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and the Bahai faith arrived here from abroad at different point of time during the last two millennia.

About 75 percent of Indians are Hindus. Significant differences exist within this Hindu majority, arising not only out of divisions of caste, but also out of differing religious beliefs. About 12 percent of the Indian population practices Islam, which also is divided into several different communities. The major division in the Muslim population is between Sunni and Shia branches. India's other major religious groups include Christians (6 percent of the population), Sikhs (2 percent), Buddhists (0.7 percent), Jains (0.4 percent), a small number of Zoroastrians (or Parsis), and a few thousand Jews.[30]

Culture: Culture is the pivotal point, which generates and characterizes all the social forms and behavioural patterns throughout the history of society. A sociological understanding of the unitive and basic nature of culture proves essential to the understanding of the nature of social relations, mass politics and the nature of social movements in the society.[31]India's

culture landscape can be to a kaleidoscope revealing the interplay of several religious, sects, creeds, and Lang eyes, races and ethic groups. The diversity and the complexity of these cultural groups remain virtually unmatched by any other major country. Cultural from a variety of sources: Hindu, Buddhist, Greek, Persian, Islamic, and British have left their disincline imprints and transformed the cultural landscape.[32]

The life of Indians is centered in the family. Extended families often live together, with two or more adult generations, or brothers, sharing a house. In much of the countryside, neighbouring houses share a wall, so from the street one sees a continuous wall pierced by doorways.[33]India's culture which blossomed more than 3000 years ago, has given successive generations of Indians or mind-set, a value system, and a way of life, which has been retained with markable continuity like enduring imprints on Indian consciousness, despite the passage of time, repealed foreign invasions, and the enormous growth in population. It gives to Indian as well as to people of Indian origin a unique personality today, as it has done in the past.[34]

Education and Health

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[30]*Encarta Reference Library 2004*., Microsoft Corporation.

[31] Roy, Girish Chandra., (1976), *Indian Culture the Tradition of Non-Violence and Social Change in India,* Ajanta Publication, Delhi. p.1

[32]Tirtha, Ranjit. andKishanGopal., (1996), *Geography of India,* Rawat Publication, New Delhi. p.48

[33]*Encarta Reference Library 2004*., Microsoft Corporation.

[34]Khilnani, R.K., (2000), *Restructuring India's Foreign Policy,* Commonwealth, New Delhi. P.1

Education: India's official goal for education since independence in 1947 has been to ensure compulsory education for all up to age 14. A lack of money and effort put into primary education, however, has hampered the achievement of that goal. At independence 25 percent of males and 8 percent of females were literate. In 2003 those figures had been raised to 68 percent of males and 41 percent of females 55 percent of the overall population. The government invests comparatively more in secondary and tertiary schools, particularly colleges and universities. There was no serious political demand for primary education until the 1990s, when a grassroots movement arose to organize volunteers and conduct campaigns for universal adult literacy.[35]

Health: Life expectancy at birth was 64 years in 2003, compared with 32 years in 1941. The infant mortality rate is still high at about 60 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003, down from about 150 per 1,000 live births in the late 1940s. Smallpox was eradicated in the 1970s, and deaths on a large scale due to cholera, influenza, and other similar diseases have also been eliminated. Malaria and tuberculosis occur at much reduced rates, but new drug-resistant varieties are cause for concern. While the numbers of cases of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were few in the mid-1990s, the number of people with the virus that causes AIDS had exploded by then, with some estimates of more than 1 million infected. Efforts to check the spread of the disease, particularly prevalent among prostitutes in major cities and among drug users in some of the northeastern areas, have not been very effective. Malnutrition remains a serious problem, despite the gradually increasing amount of grain available per capita (rice, wheat, and grains such as millet remain the major food source of most Indians). Public sanitation facilities are not adequate, and in most areas, including most towns, smaller cities, and the countryside, are almost nonexistent.

MAURITIUS

Mauritius Geographical Condition

The republic of Mauritius comprising the island of Mauritius and Rodrigues together with the Agalega Island and the CargadosCarajos Shoals, lies in the Indian Ocean 800 km East of Madagascar. The island of Mauritius covers 1,865 sq. km. (720 sq. miles) in area.[36] It is volcanic island, consisting of a plain rising from the north-east to the highest point on the island Piton de la Rivie're Noire (827m. above sea-level) in the south west, interspersed by abrupt volcanic peaks and gorges, and is almost completely surrounded by a coral reef. Including Rodrigues and its other

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[35]*Encarta Reference Library 2004*., Microsoft Corporation.

[36] Kapoor, R., (2004), *Social Mobility and the Caste System of the Indo-Mauritius,* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Delhi.p.84

islands, the republic occupies a land area of 2,040 sq. km.(788 sq. miles).[37]

Climate: The climate is maritime and subtropical and generally quite humid[38] with the highest temperature of 25ºC on the plateau and 31ºC on the coast during summer and the lowest temperature of 13ºC on the plateau and 19ºC on the coast during winter.[39]It has two distinct seasons, additionally, the warm dry coastal areas contrast with the cool rainy interior. Mauritius and Rodrigues are vulnerable to cyclones, particularly between September and May.

Population: The Mauritian population is ethnically very diverse. There are white, black, brown and yellow races, which conveniently mingle with each other.[40]

The population of Mauritius, a mosaic of races and cultures, traces its roots to such diverse places as Europe, Africa, Madagascar, India and China. The various population groups co-exist side by side making Mauritius a perfect example of social harmony in the world. In Mauritius the Indian origin persons constitute 68 per cent of the total population (52 per cent

Hindus and 16.6 per cent Muslims).[41] The French is 1 per cent, while the Chinese community is 3 per cent and the African-origin Creole community 28 per cent of total population. The population of the Republic of Mauritius was enumerated at 1,179,137 at July 2002 Census and (excluding Agalega and the CargadosCarajosShaolas) was officially estimated at 1,222,811 in mid-2003, giving a density of 599.4 inhabitants per sq. km. During 1990-2002 the population increased at an average annual rate of only 1.1 per cent owing, in part, to higher emigration and a decline in birth rate. Almost 42 per cent of the population resides in the urban area extending from Port Louis (the capital and business center) on the northwest coast, to cure pipe in the island's center.[42]

History

The history of Mauritius is the story of successive waves of people, from all corners of the world, being dawn or brought to this small isolated island. The motivations or circumstances that brought people to Mauritius reflect many of the profound historical forces of the modern world.[43] Although, it has been settled for less than 400 years, the Arabs before the 10th century, the Malays in 1440s, and the Portuguese in the early 1500s probably

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[37] Mauritius, South of the Sahara, (2005), Europa Publication. p.741

[38] Bowman, Larry W., (1991), *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean,* Westview Press, London. p.4

[39]*Diplomatist,* Vol. 7, No. 3, May-June, 2003., p. 64

[40] Kumar, Sudarshan., ed. , (2000), Pioneer of Prosperity, AntrashtriyaSahyogParishad, Mayank Printers, Delhi. p.137.

[41]*Mauritius Centre for Excellence,* (2005), Republic of Mauritius. p.8. Website: SBMONLINE.com

[42] Mauritius, South of the Sahara,(2005), Europa Publication. p.741

[43] Bowman, Larry W., (1991), *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean,* West View Press, London. p.8.

visited Mauritius. Mauritius had no original inhabitant when it was discovered by the Portuguese in the 10th century. The first recorded year of the discovery Mauritius is 1505.[44]The Dutch, who named it for Maurice of Nassau, then Stealth older of the Netherlands, occupied it in 1598.

The Dutch first settled this uninhabited island of Mauritius in 1638. After being abandoned by the Dutch, it passed to the French in 1715 and was subsequently wrested by the British in 1810.[45] After the abolition of slavery in 1833, the British brought in large number of indentured labourers from various parts of India to work in the sugar plantations of Mauritius.[46] It is estimated that about half a million indentured labourers were brought into Mauritius between 1834 and the early part of the 20th century, about two-thirds of whom stayed on in Mauritius. A brief stopover by Gandhiji en route to India from South Africa (from 29 October to 15 November 1901) greatly influenced the social and political awakening of the Indian community in Mauritius. As a tribute to Gandhiji, the National Day of Mauritius is celebrated on 12th March, the day that the Dandi March was launched. Mauritius

gained independence in 1968 and became a Republic in 1992.[47]

Mauritius was granted independence on March 12, 1968. The Mauritius Labour Party (MLP), headed by Sir SeewoosagurRamgoolam, governed Mauritius during the first 14 years of independence. The opposition Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM) gained strength throughout the 1970s and in 1982 swept to power, under the leadership of AneroodJugnauth. Ousted from the MMM in a power struggle, Jugnauth formed a new party, the Mauritian Socialist Movement (MSM), which, in alliance with the MLP, won a parliamentary majority in 1983. Jugnauth's coalition was reelected in 1987 and 1991.

In 1992, Mauritius became a republic[48] and the Mauritian National Assembly elected CassamUteaen as president. In December 1995 legislative elections the MSM was unanimously voted out in favour of a coalition of the MLP and the MMM. NavinRamgoolam, leader of the MLP and son of sirSeewoosagurRamgoolam, replaced Jugnauth as prime minister. The MLP-MMM coalition fell apart in 1997. In September 2000, a MSM-MMM coalition swept legislative elections, and Jugnauth became prime minister once again, as agreed by the alliance, while Paul Berenger

[44] Kapoor, R., (2004), *Social Mobility and the Caste System of the Indo-Mauritius,* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Delhi.p.88

[45]Brautigam, Deborah, " Institutions Economic Reforms and Democratic Consolidation in Mauritius", *Comparative Politics,* October 1997, p.48

[46] http://en.wikipedia.org

[47] Mauritius Country Note, *Ministry of External Affairs,* January, 2005.

[48] Turner, Barry., (2004), *The Statesman's Year Book*, Palgrave, U.K. p.1120.

was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and minister of finance[49].

In February 2000, president Uteem resigned and after his resignation twice the national assembly had already passed him to act as interim president, as it his deputy Chettiar also resigned and the chief justice of the Supreme Court, AriangaPillay. On 25th February Karl Offman of the MSM was elected president at an extraordinary session of the National Assembly, which is boycotted by opposition deputies. Offman was not to remain in office for the full five-year term, but to relinquish the presidency to Jugnauth in October 2003 and Deputy Prime Minister Paul Berenger became the first non-Hindu prime minister of the country.

Government and Political Condition of Mauritius

Mauritius is a vibrant modern democracy where there is complete freedom of thought, belief, speech and movement. The legislative, the judiciary and the executive are independent of each other. Free and fair elections are held and there is universal suffrage from the age of 18. All religions, often antagonistic and intolerant of each other in other parts of the world co-exist and flourish unhindered by any public or private authorities.

Mauritius has a unicameral Legislature composed of a maximum of 70 members, elected through universal suffrage.[50]

Government: From 1968 through 1991 Mauritius was a Constitutional Monarchy; executive power was nominally vested in the British monarch, as represented by a governor general. In March 1992 the country became a republic.[51] After 1992, Mauritius has chosen the path of parliamentary democracy that based on the Westminster model.[52] The constitution ensured separation of power between the legislature, executive and judiciary. Under the 1992 constitution, the head of the state is a president, elected to a five hear term by legislature. The president appoints a prime minister (traditionally, the leader of the majority party in the legislature), who is the chief executive and becomes the head of the government. The legislative body is the national assembly. Which has a term of five years, comprises the speaker, 62 members elected by universal adult suffrage, a maximum of eight additional members and the Attorney general (if not an elected member).

Political Condition: Mauritius has a multiparty democracy and due to this Mauritian politics are vibrant and characterized by coalition and alliance

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[49]*Ibid*., p.1121.

[50] Mauritius Country Note, *Ministry of External Affairs,* January, 2005.

[51] Kapoor, R., (2004), *Social Mobility and the Caste System of the Indo-Mauritius,* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Delhi. p.108

[52] Bowman, Larry W., (1991), op.cit., p.68.

building. All parties are centrist and reflect a national consensus that supports democratic politics and a relatively open economy with a strong private sector.[53]SeewoosagurRamgoolam had brought Mauritius to independence in 1968 and led the nation from his position as head of the Mauritius Labour Party (MLP) until 1992[54] and returned to power in 1995. Election in September 2000 saw the re-emergence of MSM-MMM as a winning alliance, as the coalition garnered 51.7 per cent of the vote and Sir AneroodJugnauth once again became the Prime Minister in September, 2003 in keeping with the campaign promise which forged the coalition, Jugnauth stepped down from office and Deputy Prime Minister Paul Raymond Berenger became Prime Minister. Once month later, Sir AneroodJugnauth was sworn in as President of the Republic. Berenger became the first catholic, Franco-Mauritian to head of the Government.

In, 2005 again election held and after the result Mr. Naveen Ramgoolam sworn the PM of Mauritius, he got 38 seats.[55] After his victory in recent poll the new Prime Minister of Mauritius, former opposition leader, Naveen Ramgoolam on 5th of august 2005 said that he will give focus on sugar sector and job creation. [56]

Social Structure

Nicknamed by the media "Africa's little tiger", Mauritius is a small ethnically heterogeneous island nation.[57] Mauritian society is noteworthy for their extraordinary diversity. Over the centuries, people of several linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds have come to Mauritius from Europe, Africa, India and East Asia. [58] Europeans arrived as adventures, conquerors and agents or builders of empires. African people were brought to Mauritius as slaves. Indians came as indentured labourers. The Chinese arrived as free immigrants, leaving behind depressed economic conditions in China and seeking commercial opportunities throughout the Indian Ocean region.[59] Because there were no indigenous Mauritians, all can trace their ancestry to an immigrant past. The fact that no group can claim to be the "real" Mauritians has been small blessing for the development of a modern Mauritian State. Yet most Mauritians are aware of where they (both as individuals and as members of groups) fit into the overall mix of Mauritian society.

[53]*Mauritius Centre for Excellence,* (2005), op.cit., p.10.

[54] Miles. William F.S.,ed., "The Politics of Language equilibrium in a multilingual society Mauritius", *Comparative Politics,* vol. 32, no. 2,January 2000.p.220.

[55]*Aaj Varanasi*, July 26, 2005, Varanasi

[56]*The Hindu*, July 26, 2005., Delhi.

[57]Brautigam, Deborah, " Institutions Economic Reforms and Democratic Consolidation in Mauritius", *Comparative Politics,* October 1997, p.45

[58] Bowman, Larry W., (1991), *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean,* West View Press, London. p.42

[59]*Ibid*., p.8

Language: Language is perhaps the most complex and perplexing aspect of the Mauritian social mosaic. This intricacy derives from the number of languages spoken combined with the uses of which they are put and the socio-political connotations they bear. Philip Baker and Peter Stein, scholars studying language use in Mauritius, have found that English is associated with "knowledge", French with "culture", Creole with "egalitarianism", and other languages, "ancestral heritage". Consequently, although Creole is the most widely spoken language in the country, French predominates in the media, and English is the official language of government and school instruction.[60]

The languages brought by Indian indentured workers and merchants are also spoken in Mauritius, including Bhojpuri, Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi and Gujrati. The Chinese who came to Mauritius generally speak Hakka or Cantonese. Muslims speak Arabic or Urdu. Mauritius is a multi-lingual society and because of this Mauritian radio has two channels, one of which broadcasts in English, French and Creole and other in Indian and Chinese languages.[61] Because of this mix of cultures and languages, Mauritians are multi-lingual. A person might speak Bhojpuri at home, French to a supervisor at work, English to a Government official and Creole to friends.[62]

Religion: Religion is manifested in the form of ritualistic rites, mythological demonstrations, faith in super human being or objects, which is the core element of any religion.[63] Mauritian society is noteworthy for its high degree of religious tolerance. Mauritians often share in the observance of religious groups other than their own. In part as a result of the multiplicity of religions, Mauritius has more than twenty national holidays. In addition, the Government grants subsidies to all major religious groups according to their membership. According to 2000 census, 52 per cent of the population is Hindu, 26 per cent Roman Catholic, 16.6 per cent Muslims and 2.3 per cent Protestant, 3.1 per cent belonged to other groups.[64] Mauritius is a multi-religious and secular country. Due to this democratic characteristics people of all religions enjoy the free practiced of their religion. Everybody give full respect to other's religion. No religion is considered low as all religions have equal respect.

People have their own places of worships. Most Hindus have a religious symbol of the idol of a Hindu deity outside their house. Muslims go to nearby mosques and attendance at churches on weekends is also high. The Muslims of the islands are

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[60] "Ethnicity Religion and Language", www.countrystudies.us/mauritius.

[61] "Communication with Mauritius", www.settlement.org/cp/english/m/common.

[62]*Ibid.*

[63] Kapoor, R., (2004), op.cit., p.269.

[64]*http://www.cia.gov*

highly organized into about 70 mosques. Although there are some sectional differences like Sunnies, Sias, the Meimons and Surtees, they maintain a common front affecting the community as a whole.

Though Hindus are not organized like others faiths. Its most popular form is the Sanatan Dharma. Since the beginning of 20th century, however, the reform movement of the Arya Samaj has attracted large number of Hindus. Christianity is also very popular in Mauritius but the percentage of the people is very less than Hindus.

Culture: The culture of a country is the accumulated intellectual, spiritual and emotional wealth of the nation. As a mode of action and thought, it involves itself during the community life over centuries and embracing experience, triumphs, success, failure and decline. In a way it includes the unconscious and subconscious mind of a nation to determine and govern the conscious efforts of that nation. It is resultant of the madness and the wisdom of the nation as a whole. Pastness of the present and present of the past precisely constitutes what may be called the culture of economy.[65]Pastness of the present and the present of the past, particularly the art of making good deeds of the past, alive in present is of great significance.[66] Mauritius

is a multi-cultural country.[67] Its society is made up of several races. The island had no aboriginal inhabitant. It has settlers of different ethnic groups. It can be called as the nation of immigrants, who live peacefully side-by-side in spite of their difference of culture. All the Mauritian have maintained their culture till today.

When we talk about culture it covers all the things like the way people dress themselves, the way of eating, the customs that followed by them, the way of celebrating festivals and the way of marrying. In Mauritius we will find that there are many ways of doing above things. Even in same religion we find that there is tremendous gap between their culture. Thought culturally, they showed themselves that they belonged to a particular country but they love to be called Mauritian rather than Indian, French, African or Chinese. In spite of having different cultures they live happily with one another and feel good to share other's culture and customs. They enjoyed Sega dance. Sega is one of the cultural pleasures to be enjoyed in Mauritius. The Sega is a dance, which originated from the ritual music of Madagascar and the mainland of Africa.

The wearing style of a Mauritian can tell us that from which culture she/he is belonges to, and which customs they follow. Men of Mauritius usually wear European suits on ceremonial occasion, Muslims wear Kurta-

[65] Prasad, Sunil., (2000), *India and Mauritius: Relationship of Two Countries,* Chanakya Publication, Delhi. p.141.

[66]*Ibid*., p.141.

[67] "Ethnicity, Religion and Language"www.countrystudies.us/mauritius

Pajama and Fez cap. Hindus wear Dhoti-Kurta and Safa (cotton head cover). Women of Mauritius wear variety of dresses; working women generally wear European dresses. Nowadays, Hindustani SalwarKameez is gaining popularity. Elderly Hindu women are mostly seen in sarees. Chinese traditional women wear Pyjama-like dress and Muslim women wear long gowns, and Salwarwith a head cover.

Celebration of festivals in Mauritius clearly expresses the culture of Mauritian people. All the Mauritian celebrate maximum festivals together throughout the year.[68] Hindu, Muslim, Chinese and Christian festivals are followed very enthusiastically. The island passes through different festive colours and moods throughout the year. Some occasions like New Year, Chinese Spring festivals, MahaShivaratri, Pire-Laval and Diwali have attained the status of national festival. They are enjoyed and celebrated by the majority of Mauritians. The Mauritian Broadcasting Corporation gives special programmes on the occasion of different festivals on TV and Radio.[69]

Education and Health

Mauritius has an extensive social security network. Education is free. Enrolment rules at the primary and secondary levels in 1997 were 107 per cent and 54 per cent respectively. There is also a free health care system. Various social security systems such as old-age pension, basic widows pension, basic invalid pension and other non-contributory social benefits exist to cater for the needy. There are programmes to address social issues and poverty alleviation. Nearly 50 per cent of Government budget is spent on social sectors.

The education system in Mauritius is basically inherited from the British colonial administration.[70]After independence, the 1971-75 national Plan stressed the need to change the educational system and increase the health facilities. Because of its need in national development Mauritius Government started to train the people in vocational courses so that people soon realise the objective of economic development.[71] Government also realised the need of free primary education for all and for this they made only those policies that increased the number of students in primary educational. And the result of those policies is this that in 2002 the adult literacy rate reached on 84.3 per cent (males 88.2 per cent and females 80.5 per cent). In a few years this number will cross the 90 per cent of total population. At present, there is 1070 institutions, 2474 teachers and 37483 students at pre-primary level and 289 institutions, 5741 teachers, 126,226 students at primary level. At secondary level the number of institutions

[68]*The Times of India*, May 8, 2005, New Delhi.

[69]Chattopadhyay, Anjana., (1994), *Mauritius Today,* Khama Publication, New Delhi. pp. 100-101.

[70]Vadilal, Dagli., ed., (1977), *Mauritius,* Commerce Publication Division, Mumbai. p.15.

[71]Teelock, Vijaylakshmi., (2001), *Mauritius History from its beginning to Modern Times,* Moka, Mauritius. pp. 408-409.

are 176, teachers are 6,396 and the numbers of students are 105,827. When we talk about technical and vocational education the numbers of institutions are 126, teachers-578 and students-8488 (Source: UN, Human Development Report).

Table 2.1: Health Details of Mauritius

Details	1968	1998
Number of live births (in number)	24,413	18,744
Infant mortality under 1 year of age (in number)	1,681	364
Birth Rate per 100 (in percentage)	31	16.7
Death Rate (in percentage)	9	6.8

Complied from Ministry of Health Report for 1968 and 1998.[72]

After independence the most common health problems that were facing by Mauritian people were anaemia (among women), tuberculosis, malnutrition. There were also poisoning due to insecticides. The Ministry of Health had much of the responsibility of caring for the sick and establishing a primary health care system because the health facilities were very poor during that time. But following data will show that Mauritius has developed a lot in case of health facilities. It is the objective of the newly formed Government to bring health services in the medium terms to level comparable to those of newly industrialised countries with the reorganisation of the public health case delivery system[73].

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[1] Provisional as on 31 March 1982.

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[1] Turner, Barry., (2004), The Statesman's Year Book, Palgrave, U.K. p.815

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[1]Ibid., p.25.

[1] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed., (2006), op.cit., pp. 27-28.

[1]Ibid., p.28.

[1] Research, Reference and Training Division., ed.,(2006),op.cit., p. 29.

[1]Ibid., p. 29.

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[1]Ibid.

[1]Ibid.

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[1] Bowman, Larry W., (1991), op.cit., p.68.

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