

Social Empowerment Initiative and Experience among Indian Diaspora in Mauritius

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Indian Diaspora constituting around sixty-seven percent of the population has a decisive presence in contemporary Mauritius. Indian Diaspora in Mauritius should be regarded for more than one reason, as unique and distinctive. They wield greater significance in the country since the introduction of literacy-based voting in 1948. Politically they have been successful in maintaining a democratic, inclusive and secular government on the island. Diversity and pluralism in an inclusive framework has been one of the greatest achievements of the PIOs in the region.

In Mauritius, all ethnic groups have grown in terms of income, education and health indicators. Although there is evidence of poverty, social exclusion and marginalization of certain groups (mainly the Creole population and also Hindus with lower income status), the resource profile of ethnic groups in Mauritius is higher and capable of producing harmony if there are conflicting situations. Today the Indian Diaspora has achieved great socio-political and economic status in Mauritius. Within two or three generations, many of these plantation workers prospered, becoming landowners, and sending their children to Europe to acquire expensive professional qualifications which has helped them to achieve positions of political influence and economic power in several instances. The strength of the Mauritian experience is that while ethnic groups seem to retain a strong sense of ethnic identity, they do recognize the benefits of co-existence and sharing.

In the above perspective, the paper will look at Indian Diaspora in the wider societal context of Mauritius. Then it will look at social empowerment initiatives undertaken among Indian Diaspora. Finally, it will analyze the experience of this community with regard to its social empowerment.

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