

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND CULTIVATION OF
MODERN STANDARD HINDI IN MAURITIUS

by

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Abstract

As the title indicates, the thesis is concerned with the establishment and cultivation of modern standard Hindi (KhB.) in Mauritius. It treats, by way of background, the history and nature of Indian immigration to Mauritius in the 19th century and the spread and development of the Indian community there. The linguistic and cultural position of the immigrants is considered in detail. Against this background the introduction and establishment of KhB. is investigated, initially up to 1935, having particular regard to educational and religious developments, especially the opening of schools, the visits of M.K.Gandhi and M.Doctor, the foundation of the Arya Samaj, its linguistic and missionary activity and the reaction it provoked among orthodox Hindus. Account is also taken of the various individuals in Mauritius who were instrumental in effecting its establishment. The period 1935-1950 is then examined in detail and attention paid to the personalities, institutions and processes which were responsible for the further cultivation of KhB. especially the Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā (H.P.S.), B.Bissoondoyal and the effect of Government policy towards oriental languages. A similar examination is made of the period 1950 to the present day where particular attention is paid to the Arya Samaj, the H.P.S., the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh, the Pariṣad, the Hindi film, the role of broadcasting, and Government educational policies. A substantial section of the thesis is devoted to a critical survey of the entire corpus of Mauritian Hindi literature treated by genre: drama, poetry, essay and general works, the short story and the novel. Finally some assessment is offered of the present position of Hindi in multilingual Mauritius. The thesis begins with an introduction which considers all previous work in the field, of which there is little, and concludes with a bibliography.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Introduction	vii
CHAPTER ONE - Indian Immigration to Mauritius and the Circumstances of the Immigrants.	1
1. Indian immigration to Mauritius and the background of the immigrants	1
2. Economic and social conditions of the early immigrants	9
3. Educational and cultural conditions of the early immigrants	17
4. Educational and cultural conditions in the last quarter of the 19th century	23
a. Indian education	23
b. The growth of villages and the acceleration of cultural progress	26
c. Hindi manuscripts	31
d. The linguistic situation of the Indian community at 1900	32
CHAPTER TWO - The Establishment of KhB. Between 1900 and 1935	43
1. M.K.Gandhi	43
2. The Arya Samaj in Mauritius and its early contribution to KhB.	44
a. The <u>Satyārth Prakāś</u>	44
b. Manilal Doctor and KhB.	45
c. Foundation of the Arya Samaj	48
d. Svami Munglanand Puri	50
e. Dr. Cirañjīv Bhardwāj and Sumaṅglī Devī	51
f. Svami Svatantranand and Hindi	52

3.	The Arya Samaj, the orthodox reaction and KhB.	54
a.	The role of the <u>Rāmcaritmānas</u> in the progress of KhB.	54
b.	Pandit Kashinath and KhB.	55
c.	Impact of the conflict between the Arya Samaj and the Sanātan Dharma on KhB.	57
4.	Kunwar Maharaj Singh and the progress of KhB.	59
5.	The dawnings of Mauritian KhB. literature	61
6.	Religious and cultural contacts with India	63
a.	Birth centenary celebration of Svami Dayanand in Mauritius	63
b.	Visits of cultural leaders from India	64
c.	Return from India of trained Indo-Mauritian missionaries	66
d.	Foundation of the Mauritius Hindu Maha Sabha	66
7.	Progress of KhB. in the later years of the period	67
a.	The birth of secular Hindi	67
b.	The progress of Hindi journalism	68
c.	The course of KhB. in the early 1930's	69
d.	The Indian stage and the Indian sound-film	71
8.	The linguistic position of the Indo-Mauritian community in 1935	73
CHAPTER THREE - The Cultivation of KhB. in Mauritius 1935 to 1950		80
1.	The year 1935	80
2.	The Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā	81
3.	The Arya Samaj	85
4.	Basdeo Bissoondoyal	86
5.	Other writers	91
6.	Hindi journalism	92
7.	The events of the late 1940's	92
8.	Government policy towards the teaching of oriental languages	94

CHAPTER FOUR - The Progress of KhB., 1950 to the Present	100
1. Political developments	100
2. Government policy	101
a. Recruitment and Hindi teacher-training at the T.T.C.	101
b. Accelerated increase of KhB. teaching in primary schools	103
3. The <u>baithkā</u> schools and the literacy centres	108
4. The linguistic clash	110
5. Introduction of KhB. Hindi teaching in State secondary schools	112
6. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute	116
7. Visits of distinguished personalities from abroad	121
8. The Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā and KhB.	122
9. The Arya Samaj and KhB.	126
10. The Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh	131
11. The Hindī Pariṣad	133
12. Basdeo Bissoondoyal	135
13. Mauritian KhB. literature after 1950	136
14. The role of sound-broadcasting and the television	137
15. Indian music and KhB.	141
16. Second World Hindi Conference, August 1976	144
CHAPTER FIVE - A General Outline of Mauritian Hindi Literature up to 1980	153
1. The Hindi drama	153
a. The Mauritian Hindi stage	153
b. Published Hindi plays	162
2. Mauritian Hindi poetry	172
a. Pre-independence poetry	172
b. Post-independence poetry	190
3. The Hindi essay and general works	226
4. The short story	232
5. The Hindi novel	259

CHAPTER SIX - An Assessment of the Present Position of Modern Standard Hindi in Mauritius	291
APPENDICES	
I Arrivals and departures of Indian immigrants 1834 to 1912	299
II Extract from the <u>Hindusthānī</u> (1913)	301
III Extract from the <u>Ārya Patrikā</u> (1924)	302
IV Extract from <u>Śiśu Bodh</u> , Part III	303
V Formal letter of wedding-invitation (1917)	304
VI Article from the <u>Āryoday</u>	305
VII List of Hindi newspapers founded and published in Mauritius	307
VIII Lesson from <u>Navīn Hindī</u> , Part V	310
IX Lesson from M.G.I. primer, Part IV	314
X Article from <u>Vasant</u> by S.Khodabux	317
XI Article from <u>Vasant</u> by M.Chintamunnee	319
XII Extract from M.Mohit, <u>Ārya Sabhā Mārisās kā itihās</u>	321
XIII Extract of article from <u>Anurāg</u> by K.Kowlessur	322
XIV Extract from I.Nundlall, <u>Bhārat kī saṅgīt kalā</u>	324
XV English translation of S.Bhuckory's <u>Maurisās kī sr̥ṣṭi</u>	327
XVI Extract from B.Bissoondoyal, <u>Racnāvalī</u>	330
XVII Extract from S.Rambarn <u>Cācā Rāṅgulām kē saṃsmaṇ</u>	332
XVIII List of small miscellaneous works	334
XIX Text of M.Chintamunnee's short stories <u>Ādarś pitā</u> and <u>Dharamvīr kī udārtā</u>	335
XX Text of M.Chintamunnee's short stories <u>Nirdhan</u> <u>Sāhityakār</u> and <u>Vatan kī roṭī</u>	341
XXI Extract from P.Ramsharan, <u>Mārisās kī lok kathāē</u>	342
XXII Extract from A.Unnut, <u>Insān aur maśīn</u>	344
BIBLIOGRAPHY	346

INTRODUCTION

The present thesis is the outcome of research conducted in both London and Mauritius between 1979 and 1984. The research had two primary objects: the investigation of the factors, processes, personalities and agencies which were instrumental in establishing modern standard Hindi in Mauritius (Chapters One to Four), and the examination and assessment of the Hindi literary works which were produced by Mauritians up to the year 1980 (Chapter Five). The methodology is historical and literary. In the context of Mauritius this requires some explanation. The multicultural nature of Mauritian society is well-known, and the complexity of its multi-lingualism has been described in general terms by others,¹ but the precise nature of this linguistic complexity has yet to be fully investigated and presents a formidable but fertile field for socio-linguistic research. One of the most significant developments in the linguistic sciences in recent years has been the emergence of socio-linguistics as an important discipline in its own right. Language usage has rightly come to be treated in a more rigorous, theoretical and methodological manner than had hitherto been the case. While this is a welcome development, it has meant that, in this particular case, Hindi had either to be treated fully within the discipline of socio-linguistics, a considerable task given the diversity of Mauritian society, its multi-lingualism and constant code-switching, or else using a more traditional, historical and literary methodology, since no single dissertation could hope to encompass both approaches, especially in the absence of an established body of socio-linguistic research.² The decision to adopt the second approach was, therefore, deliberate, and made in the awareness that, in concentrating on what may be termed the internal dimensions of Hindi in Mauritius, statements regarding its external relationships must necessarily be provisional, conjectural and less rigorous than would have been wished. In the light of this, the concluding section on the present position of Hindi

in Mauritius, which was felt necessary for the sake of completeness, is to be regarded as tentative.

The principal justification for making this choice of approach was that the important task of researching in detail and documenting fully the history of modern standard Hindi in Mauritius had not yet been done, although this is not to deny the usefulness of the works of Bhuckory and Ray which are discussed below. Similarly the Hindi literature of Mauritius was in need of a critical review beyond the scope of the cursory surveys of Chintamunnee. There was too an urgency about this work. Much of the early history of Hindi in Mauritius was unrecorded, and could only be established from the memories of those who were able to recall the situation in earlier periods. This then was considered to be more than enough justification for adopting this approach and undertaking the present research.

A further reason, however, lay in the fact that the author of this dissertation had himself been closely involved with the development of Hindi in Mauritius, it might be said, from the time that he began to learn Hindi in his Mauritian primary school in 1925, although a serious interest did not develop until 1937. After taking Hindi in the London External Degree in 1951, he was fully active in the work of the Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā, being a member of the Executive Council and Vice-President of the Sabhā for some ten years and serving as Chairman of both the Education Committee and of the Examination Board. This period also involved travelling to all parts of the Island at weekends, attending School Anniversaries, speaking in public and broadcasting on the radio. All of this was done in his spare time while being a member of the Civil Service, but in 1966 he was appointed to the Ministry of Education where he was able to continue his work for Hindi as part of his professional duties. From 1970 he served as Educational Attaché in the Mauritian High Commission in London. This intimate first-hand experience of the subject at all levels has proved invaluable, as did the ready access to all the available materials and relevant individuals during the period of research conducted in Mauritius. There has, nevertheless, been a constant awareness of the dangers inherent in a participant writing about the events of which

he was a part, and this awareness, it is believed, has enabled the author to preserve the necessary objectivity that such a study as this requires.

As already indicated some initial work has been done on certain aspects of the present subject. The first work was Hindi in Mauritius (Port-Louis, 1967) by Somdath Bhuckory. That this is only an outline sketch of the history of Hindi in Mauritius is made clear by the author when he writes in the preface: "I may add that I have touched upon relevant items instead of writing exhaustively on them. I must confess that mine is not the work of a research scholar. In other words, I have provided the pointers for specialised studies suitable for a different public." Bhuckory's style is concise and his survey of the events from the commencement of Indian immigration until the mid-1960s swift. After this brief survey of the history of Hindi in Mauritius, Bhuckory mentions the names of newspapers, books and authors, although without any assessment of their merits or influence, except for one chapter which is devoted to the Rāmāyaṇa of Tulsīdās and the Satyārth Prakāś and their role in Mauritius. Since his work covers only up to the mid 1960s, the works and writers of the last fifteen years or so have not been discussed.

The second work is J.N.Ray's Mārīśas mē Hindī bhāṣā kā saṃkṣipt itihās (New Delhi, 1970), which differs from Bhuckory's work in that it deals not only with the history of Hindi in Mauritius, but, as Dinkar has said in the foreword, 'it is also a full cultural history of the Indians in Mauritius'. There is, therefore, much material which is not directly relevant to the present theme. The treatment of Hindi is, perhaps, more that of a story than a history, being discursive and anecdotal, as is appropriate for the intended readership of students at Paricay level (equivalent to G.C.E. 'O' level). It is fuller but less coherent than Bhuckory's survey, and certain aspects are treated in detail. Overall, however, it is unanalytical and uncritical, and contains an element of exhortation. As its title indicates, the scope of the book does not encompass literature.

With regard to Mauritian Hindi literature, apart from the references in Bhuckory's work, and a very brief chapter on the subject in Bhuckory's Hindī sāhitya kā paricay, there is only Chintamunnee's short essay Mauriśas kā Hindī sāhitya in Mauriśas kā Hindī sāhitya tathā anya nibandh (Port-Louis, 1972). This is a useful short survey, although limited by space and by the fact that much has been written since the essay itself.

This then is the totality of previous work on the history of modern standard Hindi in Mauritius and its literature. It has provided a valuable starting point for this study, and, in some places, somewhat more than just a starting point. Particular gratitude is due to the authors, not only for their works, but also for their generosity in both time and comment in the conduct of the present research. This corpus, however, as will be apparent, does not in any sense constitute a scholarly treatment of the subject, nor was it meant to. It was to attempt to meet the need for a scholarly, critical and analytical study of the subject up to 1980 that the present work was undertaken.

In the present thesis, the transliteration from Devanāgarī into Roman script follows the conventional method generally adopted by Western writers. The names of very well-known institutions or establishments (e.g. Arya Samaj) have not been diacritically marked, whereas names derived from them have been (e.g. Ārya Samājīs). Less known organisations (e.g. Sanātan dharma) have been diacritically marked without being underlined. Well-known proper names too have been neither underlined nor marked (e.g. Gandhi, Subas Candra Bose). Indo-Mauritian names appear in their Roman spellings as current in Mauritius which often differ markedly from standard transliterated forms. The name 'Mauritius' has been spelt differently in various Hindi titles and has been transliterated accordingly.

The abbreviations used in the course of this work are:

- D.A.V. : Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College (in Mauritius);
H.P.S. : Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā;
KhB. : Khaṛī Bolī;
M.A. : Mauritius Archives;
M.G.I. : Mahatma Gandhi Institute;
M.I.E. : Mauritius Institute of Education;
T.T.C. : Teachers' Training College

In conclusion, it falls to me to acknowledge the assistance and help that I have received in the course of this research. I am very grateful to Dr. R.Snell who looked at all my drafts painstakingly and made useful suggestions. I wish to thank cordially Mr. M.Chintamunnee the present Head of the Hindi Department at the M.G.I., Mauritius, who supplied me promptly with material within his reach whenever I approached him for such assistance. Finally, I am deeply indebted to my wife Sarasvati who has made great sacrifices on my behalf all through the years I have been fully engaged on this work.

Notes

1. Burton Benedict, Indians in a plural society: a report on Mauritius (Colonial Office; Colonial Research Studies No.34) H.M.S.O., London, 1961; Mauritius. The problems of a plural society (London, 1965); Richard K. Barz, 'The Cultural Significance of Hindi in Mauritius', South Asia, New Series, Vol.III, No.1 (1980).
2. A beginning has been made as can be seen from the following, although they are not all strictly socio-linguistic: Richard K. Barz, op.cit.; Philip Baker, 'The language situation in Mauritius with special reference to Mauritian Creole', African Languages Review VIII (1969), 89; The Contribution of non-francophone immigrants to the lexicon of Mauritius Creole, Ph.D. thesis presented to London University (1980); Nicole Zuber Domingue, Bhojpuri and Creole in Mauritius, Ph.D. thesis presented to Texas University (1975).

CHAPTER ONE

INDIAN IMMIGRATION TO MAURITIUS AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE IMMIGRANTS UNTIL 1900

This first chapter provides an outline of Indian immigration to Mauritius and a description of the economic, social, educational and cultural conditions of the Indian immigrants until 1900. Although this subject has been dealt with at much greater length elsewhere¹ than would be appropriate here, such an account provides an indispensable preliminary to understanding the development of KhB. Hindi in Mauritius in the 20th. century.

1. Indian immigration to Mauritius and the background of the immigrants

Through most of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth century, the great majority of the work-force on sugar-cane plantations in Mauritius and the other sugar colonies, consisted of slaves imported from Africa. In 1839, six years after the statutory termination of slavery in British colonies (in French colonies slavery was abolished in 1848), a proclamation was promulgated by Governor Sir William Nicolay in Mauritius making all forms of forced labour illegal.² The great majority of the emancipated African slaves numbering some 30,000 who were then serving a period of apprenticeship resolutely downed their tools and left the plantations. Africa was now closed to the planting interest in the sugar colonies, and the French plantocracy of Mauritius were, from the mid 1830s, eagerly turning towards India for a new plantation labour-force. The necessary legal procedure was laid down by the Government of Mauritius to operate the recruitment of agricultural labourers and their importation from India, under the provisions of a bonded immigration agreed with the Government of India. Except for short interruptions (e.g. a ban on Indian immigration existed from 1839 to 1842), indentured Indian labour

flowed continually to Mauritius, in certain years in very large numbers, from 1834 onwards, spanning over two-thirds of a century. The entire immigration period can be conveniently divided into two: 1834 to 1857, the year of the Indian Mutiny (immigration under indenture began in 1837); and 1858 to 1900.

At the outset of the immigration period, the Indian population constituted but a tiny fraction of the total population.³ Between 1834 and 1840, 25,403 Indian immigrants (24,442 males and 961 females) landed in Port-Louis, out of whom 1098 (1042 males and 56 females) departed for India during the same period, and of the remaining 24,305, about 18,000 constituted the sugar plantation labour-force of Mauritius.⁴ Year by year, as emigration continued, the Indian element of the Mauritian population increased apace. A table showing arrivals and departures of Indian immigrants from 1834 to 1912 is at Appendix 1.

The Indian immigrants who disembarked in Mauritius and the other sugar colonies in the early stages of immigration comprised people of various castes and different back-grounds, and the causes of emigration varied throughout the long course of Indian immigration.

The planting interest of Mauritius and the other sugar colonies appointed recruiting agents in India, and the latter who were duly licensed illegally established a network of touts known as arkāṭiās (maistrīs in South India)⁵ whose job was to stimulate and urge immigration as best they could, and to assist in luring away unwilling subjects into the waiting ships.⁶ Every intending immigrant, however, had to appear before an officer designated by the Government of India where he declared that he was an agricultural worker willing to go abroad to take up agricultural work; the emigration agent accompanying him was required to produce the written terms of contract. The length of service was five years (termed 'industrial residence') renewable if the immigrant so desired. He had to be returned to his port of departure upon expiry of his five-year contract, unless he opted for its renewal. The arkāṭiās and the maistrīs very often painted to the prospective immigrants an entirely false picture

of the places emigrants were proceeding to and of the employment waiting for them there. In the later stages of immigration, the Government of India was to describe this deception as 'fraudulent statements made by the recruiter'.⁷ This was a major flaw in the recruiting system which statutory provisions could hardly hold in check.

In the early phases, the recruiters working for Mauritius drew their immigrants chiefly from three sources: metropolitan Calcutta and its environs, the hilly districts of Chota Nagpur and regions to the West and East of Benares. The entire emigration movement from the North was handled by the port of Calcutta.

Calcutta, then the metropolis of India was teeming with the idle, the down-and-out and the unemployed including scores of simple, docile, hard-working rustics who had been attracted to the big city by the prospect of casual work as burden-carriers (coolies). The great majority were from Bihar and Eastern U.P. There were among those roaming about employees of Europeans who were departing on leave or retirement - errand boys, domestic-servants, cooks and cooks' assistants (massalcīs), grooms and coachmen - and hosts of others such as hawkers, barbers, peons, ex-policemen, pujārīs, dancing-girls and their male attendants, street-musicians and entertainers fallen on bad days, prostitutes, pickpockets and thieves. A large number of such people 'were swept into the Emigration Agent's net. He was supposed to check their muscles, and to inspect their hands for evidence of manual toil. But the Agent needed to fill his ship, and if the vessel were delayed demurrage fees must be paid, so nobody looked too closely at the hands of the itinerant musician or the barber who had been cozened into going overseas'.⁸ At a later period, the cities of Madras and Bombay supplied a similar kind of emigration.

Chota Nagpur, the hilly region 200 to 300 miles from Calcutta, where the present States of Bengal, Orissa and Bihar meet, forming a borderland of the river Ganges, was part of what in the early days was known as Maha Kantara, the wilderness into which the invading Indo-Aryans and the Mughals never successfully penetrated. It was an area of semi-aborigines hardly touched by the concept of Hinduism and the caste-system, and the inhabitants consisting of three tribes - Oraons, Mundas and Santals - were known as dhangars (hill-men). In general, they were illiterate,

slovenly of habits with hardly any dietary taboos. Until the mid 1760s, they thrived fairly well on a system of agriculture operated in their own way, but when in 1765, as part of Bihar, Chota Nagpur was leased to the East India Company, the local rajah was stripped of most of his prerogatives including magisterial powers. In the course of the second decade of the nineteenth century, this region was brought completely under the sway of State power and subjected to a ruthless exploitation. By deceitful means, many speculators succeeded in gradually appropriating large tracts of land and ousting the aborigines. Apart from rent, thikadars (Hindi thekedār or thikedār) imposed on the cultivators several kinds of taxes⁹ which reduced them to semi-starvation and utter poverty. The 'thikadars' paid for their contracts to the non-resident landlords who on their turn were responsible for tax to the State Government.

Many of the agricultural workers and dispossessed cultivators finding no alternative turned kāmiās that is bond-servants engaging themselves and their children, through a written bond (Saunknāmā) to work in the fields of the money-lenders for an indefinite period. It was nothing less than a cruel system of slavery, sometimes more grinding than that which immigrants encountered in the sugar colonies. Braving the atrocious punishment, if they were caught, kāmiās were often running away from that unending exploitation and bondage. From the 1820s onwards, numbers of Chota Nagpur hill-coolies, unable to subsist in their own surroundings, began to move down to the plains in search of employment, in a state of destitution. In the early thirties, their distress caught the attention of the recruiting agents for the sugar colonies. In fact, in the early years of indentured emigration, the dhangars, principally those from the districts of Singhbhum, Ranchi, Lohardagar, Manbhum and Hazaribagh, were enlisted in substantial numbers, and 'if we estimate that from two-fifths to one-half of the emigrants were dhangars, this might be reasonably accurate'.¹⁰ Planters in Mauritius found them a simple, docile folk, easily induced to work long hours patiently and hard and contented with scanty rewards. They were particularly suitable for labour involving the clearing of woods - a quality which rendered them useful to the work on Mauritian plantations especially in the early years of the sugar industry. In the course of the 1850s, however, the recruitment of the dhangars went on decreasing more and more, and by 1860

it was discontinued. This was due partly to the relatively heavy mortality of the hill-coolies at the embarkation depot in Calcutta and during sea-passage, although the majority were men and women of good physique,¹¹ and partly to the availability of work from the early 1860s, in the tea-plantation of the Duars on the Bengal-Bhutan border and in Assam.

While the aboriginal borderland of Chota Nagpur furnished about one-half of the immigrants in the early stages, the other half was supplied, firstly, to a limited extent, by regions to the West of Benares - Lucknow, Allahabad, Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur etc. and, secondly, in vast numbers, by areas in the districts of Bihar to the North and East of Benares - Arrah, Ballia, Chapra, Ghazipur, Muzaffarpur, Champaram, Shahabad, Patna, Gaya etc. The immigrants comprised people belonging to many castes; those of the agricultural castes (Koyrī, Kurmī) were in the majority, while people of the higher castes (Brahman, Kshatriya, Rajput) were least in number. In the thirties and thereafter, the Bihari peasants had a very strong incentive to emigrate: like the labourers of Chota Nagpur, they were smarting under the merciless domination of rapacious landowners. Theirs was a life of ignorance and grinding poverty, primarily an outcome of heartless oppression and exploitation, which in a not very distant future was to become the geist that permeates the novels of Premchand. Then came the 'awful famine' of the early 1840s in Upper India which provided a sudden further incentive towards emigration; hundreds moved on to Bihar including some coming from as far west as Delhi, and from there 'were persuaded to embark'.¹² The Biharis who constituted the great bulk of the emigrants hailed from Bhojpuri-speaking districts of the sub-continent (Arrah in particular supplied a large number), and it was chiefly emigrants from these areas during both the earlier and later phases of immigration, not the dhangars, who carried with them the Hindu and Muslim scriptures.

Emigration in significant numbers from South India did not take place until half a decade after it had begun in the North of the sub-continent. There were several reasons which stimulated emigration from South India. As in the North, unemployment was rife. In fact, all over India, owing

primarily to British policy, the first 75 years of the 19th century witnessed a steady decline of the Indian cloth manufacturing industries. As a consequence, more and more of the Indian factory workers - weavers, spinners, dyers and others - were thrown out of work. In the 1830s, M. Martin, the historian observed that 'many thousands of the natives who a short time ago derived a livelihood from the growth of cotton and the manufacture of cotton goods, are without bread....'.¹³ Numbers of these unemployed natives drifted to the cities in desperate search of work, others sought agricultural employment where the wage was already at almost starvation level. Christopher Bidon, Emigration Agent at Madras, writing in 1843, stated '...the emigrants appear to have collected at Madras and drawn from the provinces expressly for the purpose of proceeding to Mauritius...'.¹⁴

Another important factor which provided a strong incentive to emigration from South India was the evil of untouchability which, even more than in the North, operated as a combined form of social and economic oppression. About a fifth of the population of India south of the river Krishna in Andhra Pradesh, was composed of the so-called pariahs. They were landless labourers, a kind of slave, and by their labour alone a great part of Madras Presidency was cultivated. The Tracts have recorded that '...they are employed in all kinds of agricultural labour, rice tillage and the sugar-cane without the intermission of a single day, so long as their masters can find employment for them. They have no particular hours they can call their own, nor any day in the week set apart for rest or devotion'.¹⁵ They were tied to the master's soil, as it were, and any slave who attempted to run away was severely punished; yet numbers of these South-Indian slaves took the risk and fled from the grip of the upper castes to seek freedom from incessant toil and unbearable oppression. The majority of the enlisted emigrants arriving at the ports of Cochin,¹⁶ on the Malabar coast, Madras and Pondicherry, bound to Mauritius and elsewhere, were these slaves of the soil belonging to the 'untouchable' castes. Emigration, in a sense, was a teacher of self-respect. As a writer of the Census of India was to observe in 1911, this outgoing emigration, more than anything else, 'has helped the Indian paraiyan to realise that cultivation of his high caste neighbour's land

for a handful of rice is not all that life has to offer'.¹⁷ Apart from these so-called untouchables and the former factory-workers, there were people of other castes and categories among the emigrants from South India: toddymen, jewellers, discharged sepoy, potters, domestic servants etc.

During the 1840s and the second half of the last century, the places of origin of South Indian immigrants who arrived in Mauritius were principally: the Malabar Coast which in the early days supplied some recruits from the aboriginal tribes such as the Puliars and the Mandavars, the counterparts to the dhangars, Trichinopoly (this district supplied the largest number from South India), Madurai, Tanjore, Salem, Chittoor, Chingleput, Bellary, Nellore, Coimbatore, Travancore, Bangalore, South Arcot, and some Telegu districts in Andhra Pradesh - Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Vizagapatam, Masulipatnam and Vizianagaram. Throughout the years of immigration, both indentured and non-regulated emigration from South India to Mauritius had never been on a scale as substantial as from the North. In the 1880s for example, 60% of the Madras emigrants proceeded to Ceylon, about 30% to Burma, nearly two per cent. to the Straits Settlements and just over three per cent. to Mauritius; Natal and the Caribbean received the remainder.¹⁸ In fact, South Indian emigrants to Mauritius numbered just about a third of the emigrants originating from North India and the environs of Bombay - a population balance which has remained nearly constant thereafter. It is also significant that while emigration from North India contained about 16% of Muslims, that from the South was almost entirely Hindu.

The later phases of immigration to Mauritius can be reckoned from the late fifties, in the wake of the Indian Mutiny, and the early sixties. Quite a few in North India were in haste to leave their respective localities because they dreaded arrest and deportation to Port Blair, as rebels of the Mutiny. Ruthless landlordism, the insatiable greed of money-lenders, starvation agricultural wages,¹⁹ long spells of demoralising unemployment - these were among the main factors which continued to provide strong incentives for emigration from both North and South India. Furthermore, crop failures often resulting in serious famines served, as

in the earlier years, to precipitate departures in larger numbers. In fact, there was a correlation between the years of very poor harvest and heavy immigration: for example, during the year 1859 to 1861, which saw failing crops and famine in the North-Western Provinces (later known as United Provinces), there were massive arrivals in Mauritius. The total of 44,397 in 1859 was the highest reached in the 80 years of indenture. Acute scarcity and famine in Bihar in 1865-6, 1873-5, likewise caused emigration to escalate.

The majority of emigrants who landed in Port-Louis from the early periods of emigration originated, as stated above, from the vast region between Lucknow and Patna, particularly the Bhojpuri-speaking districts of Bihar. In the early sixties, however, following the great scarcity in the North-Western Provinces and recruiters' activities in the areas around Benares, not less than 21% of emigrants embarking at Calcutta and bound for Mauritius were from these regions, the rest being from the Bengal Presidency, mostly from Bihar (Bengal Presidency then included Bihar).²⁰ In the remaining years of the sixties, the proportion of recruits from the North-Western Provinces went on increasing steadily. In the seventies and eighties, although immigration to Mauritius had begun to slacken off, the North-Western Provinces produced about three times as many emigrants as Bihar.²¹ This new pattern of emigration to Mauritius persisted increasingly in the 1880s and the rest of the immigration period. A little after the turn of the century, the United Provinces including the districts of Fyzabad, Basti and Gonda supplied about 62% of the recruits, the Central Provinces 17%, the Punjab provided eight per cent. (this did not include any Sikhs) whilst only six per cent. came from Bihar.²² The principal reason was that from the 1880s onwards, the Biharis were finding attractive work in the industries opening in Calcutta and in the jute fields of Eastern Bengal. The strong incentive which had stimulated the emigration of the earlier period was now lost. In fact, the great bulk of indentured immigration to sugar colonies had taken place before the year 1880, and the arrivals thereafter in Mauritius until the early years of our century were very small. Of all the colonies, Mauritius had been the biggest consumer of North-Indian labour. In the early phases, the balance of the Mauritian population had been shifting and inchoate,

but by 1871 the population was composed of 216,258 Indians and 99,784 Creoles chiefly of African origin, and this population balance in which the Indian element represented over two-thirds of the whole has remained constant thereafter.²³

The Indian emigration to Mauritius, particularly from the North of the sub-continent, was marked by a striking disproportion of women to men. The Indian population in Mauritius in 1861, for example, totalled 192,634; of these, males numbered 141,615 and females 51,014, that is the males were almost three times the females.²⁴ With changing trends in immigration, however, the percentage of females among immigrants increased, although throughout the remaining period of immigration, it never attained a satisfactory level. As a result, for many years, on several estate camps, social evils such as sodomy and polyandry dogged the lives of Indian workers, in addition to the economic hardship which fell to their lot. The morality of an estate camp must have compared very unfavourably with that of an Indian village.

In the later phases of emigration, the quality of the emigrants improved considerably. Medical examination at the ports of embarkation became much more thorough, as a consequence of which numbers of intending immigrants who would have been passed on in former years were rejected on medical grounds. Among those who were going were second-time immigrants leaving with their families and friends, and many others included high-caste Hindus who were used to relatively good social conditions, and were emigrating with their families to their new abode overseas for permanent settlement. Some of the latter, like many others before, carried with them a number of the manuscript scriptures which eventually circulated far and wide in Mauritius and very much influenced the lives of its inhabitants.

2. Economic and social conditions of the early immigrants

This section examines briefly the economic and social conditions of the early immigrants the harshness of which produced the suffering that was to become a prominent subject in later Mauritian Hindi literature.

Planters in Mauritius and elsewhere were aware that the early immigrants included a relatively high proportion of people who were not agricultural workers by calling, but, all the same, on the great majority of estates, they were not given a period of familiarisation. The prevailing system of labour was task-based; work began at four or five in the morning, after a compulsory roll-call in assembly-lines, and lasted until about four in the afternoon with one hour for lunch. But it was only the strong and the skilled who could finish by four; a good number of the early immigrants, weak and unskilled as they were, worked till after sunset to complete their tasks. A few occasionally left after a day's work without having been able to finish, and in all such cases no wage at all was paid for the amount of work already done.

Mauritius unlike a few other sugar colonies had no slack days. Even Sunday was not a complete rest-day. Workers were required by the French plantocracy to perform on that day unpaid *corvée* duties such as were exacted from French peasants in the eighteenth century (before 1776). In Mauritius the labourers were engaged not only on scavenging jobs around the plantation dwellings and the factory, but also on menial work in the mansions of the employers. Some planters even used unpaid *corvée* for cane-field work just as on week-days. In theory, Sunday work was to be only of two hours' duration and not to continue after eight in the morning, but in practice it was made much longer.

Day after day, the Indians worked under unrelenting pressure. Harvest-time when the factory operated almost night and day was the most arduous season of the year. But even when crop-time was over, work hardly slowed down for the labourers: apart from the usual inter-crop work, new land was cleared and cultivated, and volcanic boulders great and small were rolled by human hands and stacked into pyramids inside and between the fields.

Absence from work or from the plantation, for whatever reason, was strictly discountenanced and very severely punished. Debility and exhaustion often caused by unceasingly strenuous working predisposed the Indian labourers to illness; nor was the condition of the plantation dwellings, many of which had before accommodated the African slaves, in any way conducive to health: ventilation was poor, there being no window

in almost all the huts; some of the lodgings were out of repair; a number of them were overcrowded; pigs and goats and poultry wandered around and sometimes in the huts; heaps of garbage lying about festered in the sun and polluted the air until a shower of rain carried the filth and poisoned the neighbouring streams.²⁵ Malaria was rampant, especially in the low-lying areas. Plantation-hospitals, in general, gave but casual and callous treatment, and were generally known as places of death. In such circumstances, absence from work due to illness was not infrequent and, more often, the helpless coolie could not inform the authorities concerned. To punish these absences, the Franco-Mauritian planters had invented a powerful device which became a distinctive feature of the Mauritian indentured labour from as far back as 1839, and that was the 'double cut'. It meant that if a labourer absented himself from work on one day, he lost two days' wages. If a labourer employed at 10 shillings (Rs.5.) a month worked for ten days of the month and absented himself, without authorised leave, for the remaining 16 working days, he would earn 3 shillings 10 pence but incur a fine of 12 shillings 4 pence, thus leaving him indebted to the planter for the amount of 8 shillings 6 pence. To repay this debt, he would have to labour for the employer for 22 days without receiving remuneration. Loss of wages also caused corresponding loss of rations. Thomy Hugon in his Sketch on Immigration (1856-57) has stated that some planters would deliberately employ more labour than needed and would pretend to be careless about absences, so that they could later strictly impose fines and reduce their wages' bills. The 'double cut' acquired statutory force under the provisions of Mauritius Ordinance 22 of 1847. This much dreaded deterrent, heinous as it was, survived the strictures of several Secretaries of State for the Colonies, even the investigations and Report of the Mauritius Royal Commission (1872-75), appointed to inquire into the treatment of immigrants in Mauritius, and was not abolished until 1909 when indentured labour in Mauritius was coming to an end. The penalty for absences from work was not limited to the imposition of fines: should a person who had been absent from work for two weeks be unable to prove cause of absence to the satisfaction of the employer, he was liable to be arrested, tried by the Stipendiary Magistrate and given three months'

imprisonment. Absence from the plantation for three days without leave also entailed trial in Court and three months in jail. A few of the labourers driven to despair under continuing pressure put an end to their sufferings by committing suicide.

The Indenture System in Mauritius was nothing less than a system of modified slavery, an autocratic, capitalistic regime in which it was the end product and the material gains which counted, and, as time and again stressed in Mauritian Hindi writings, not the real people who were involved in producing such gains. But the Franco-Mauritian planters of the nineteenth century, perhaps, cannot be reproached too severely: they had possessed slaves not long before, and it was rather too much to expect them to change their despotic habits overnight when they came in control of free men. Unfortunately for all concerned, the Mauritian planting interest proved to be obdurately obscurantist, and accepted industrial reform only when it was forced on them by statutory enactment. In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, they never really abandoned the attitudes which they had acquired as slave-masters. For example many estates kept workers' pay in arrears, at least for one month but more often for a period of two to three months or more. Napoleon Savy, a Creole advocate of Mauritius, giving evidence before a Committee of Investigation in 1858 stated that, on some estates, wages were up to six months in arrears. The Mauritius Royal Commission reported that in 1868 on two Mauritian estates pay was seven months in arrears; on two other estates it was eight months in arrears, and in another two six months behind. There were five estates in which no pay had been given for five months and fifteen where pay was four months overdue (i.e. 13% of the estates were in arrears with pay). Although there was some improvement in 1871, there were still 15 estates where wages were withheld for three months or more.²⁶ Had the wages (about Rs.5. per month in addition to weekly rations of about the same value) been paid regularly, without the cuts and fines so despotically imposed, the Indian labourers, in general, could have been better off than in India. Apart from some workers who were thrifty to a fault, it was only the privileged few - the sirdars (foremen) and agents currying favour with the planters - who thrived in relative prosperity. Another lingering vestige of slavery was the occasional practice of inflicting physical chastisement on labourers;

this was a further grievance which cast a slur on the Indenture System during many years of its existence. The Royal Commissioners reporting on this matter stated that 'assaults on immigrants are of common occurrence, and on some estates they have been subjected to systematic and continued ill-treatment'.²⁷ Although the Indians were, in general, docile, there were several cases of retaliatory assaults with fatal consequences to employers. With the exodus of a large number of time-expired immigrants from the estate camps to surrounding hamlets and villages, and the emergence of small social and cultural organisations centred around the baithkā, both inside and outside the plantations, however, this hateful and degrading practice became less and less frequent, until it died out in the early years of our century.

One distressing feature of the Indenture System was the iniquitous and inhuman treatment meted out to time-expired immigrants, also known as Old Immigrants, over many years of its history. In the early phases about one-quarter of the time-expired immigrants returned to India (return passages were abolished in 1853). Some of the others used to leave the estate camps to settle in neighbouring hamlets and villages. Except in certain years when there were plenty of new arrivals from India, the planters used to apply all the pressure they could, including the use of the police, to get time-expired workers to re-indenture, because the cost to them of 'free labourers', over whom the plantation lost much of its grip, was much higher than that of indentured labourers. Everything possible was done to render conditions difficult for the time-expired immigrant who did not wish to re-indenture. Wherever he lived and whenever he moved residence, he had to declare to the police his new occupation and his new address. He had to be in possession of a 'pass' (livret as in the neighbouring French island of La Réunion) with his photograph thereon, the replacement of which in case of loss involved a fee of £1. If found in a district outside that mentioned on his portrait-ticket, he was liable to arrest by the Police (Mauritius, the size of the Isle of Wight, was divided into eight districts), and if he was found, at any time, to be without employment or if he could not prove his occupation to the satisfaction of the Police, he was deemed to be a 'vagrant' under the provision of Ordinance 6 of 1838 (made more stringent by Labour Ordinance 1867) and liable to arrest by the Police and prosecution in Court. The Old Immigrants freed from the bondage of indenture were setting up on their own as carters, small traders,

market-gardeners, small land-holders and casual labourers seeking well-paid agricultural jobs. Numerous people engaged in such callings could not help having a few slack days now and then. Numbers of the time-expired immigrants got arrested and convicted, because there was 'in the minds of many officials a distrust of the genuineness of any employment which an Indian may adopt on his own account'.²⁸ In the sixties these convictions escalated at an alarming rate. For example, between 1864 and 1868, following Police harassment and arrests, 33,801 Indians were convicted of vagrancy and sent to jail (this represented about 14% of the male Indian population).²⁹ Deploring the massive and indiscriminate arrests of the Indians, Thomy Hugon (1847 to 1859), perhaps the only Protector of Immigrants who performed his duties conscientiously without being subject to the unhealthy influence of the planting interest, had written earlier in his above-mentioned Sketch on Immigration that there were twenty or thirty thousand in Mauritius outside the plantations whom the planters insisted on branding as 'vagrants'; and 'their peaceful behaviour and industrious habits are unappreciated', he added. Governor Stevenson taking cognizance of the Protector's Sketch recorded in a marginal note against the above observations 'Nothing is more unjust or shortsighted than to regard these men as vagrants or to complain of their being allowed to remain on the island'.³⁰ The Committee set up in 1871 to inquire into the practices of the Police by Governor Gordon who was determined to set things right in Mauritius, censured the Police regarding their activities towards the Indians, particularly the time-expired residents. The Mauritius Royal Commission likewise, in its report, was severely critical of the Police, and, following instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the vagrant hunts were completely prohibited.

In theory, there was a machinery available for the redress of the Indian workers' grievances. It was constituted chiefly by three bodies - the office of the Protector of Immigrants (set up since 1842), the Police and the law-court presided over by the Stipendiary Magistrate. The majority of the officers who successively held the office of Protector, opting for an easy life, sided with the all-powerful planters, often

assisting them indirectly in punishing and repressing the immigrants. 'The title of Protector being given to the head of the Immigration Department is calculated to mislead immigrants as much as it has misled us', observed the Royal Commissioners who urged the 'complete reform' of the Immigration Office and the introduction of officials speaking Hindustani.³¹ The Police were a submissive friend and supporter of the planters, almost throughout the Immigration period, particularly during the years preceding the investigations of the Committee for Inquiry into Police practices and of the Mauritius Royal Commission. For a long time, they remained, as shown above, a terror to the Indian immigrants. The Report of the Royal Commissioners criticizing the Police stated that 'the recklessness of the police in making arrests was only to be equalled by that of the Magistrates in condemning those arrested'. The stipendiary Magistrates, some of whom were Franco-Mauritians, went along with the Indenture System. In the great majority of cases brought by planters against their labourers, the Court decided in favour of plaintiffs. There were just a few cases where workers sued their employers, but these had not much of a chance. Besides, the Indians were often handicapped by their inability to make themselves understood in Court. Interpreters were used but it appears that the latter often garbled the evidence against the defendants if they had not been sufficiently bribed. It was not until the time of Governor Phayre in the 1870s that a few Tamil and Hindustani speaking Stipendiary magistrates were recruited from India. The convictions against the Indians remained, nonetheless, unusually high. As late as in the opening years of our century, Edward Bateson who had been a Stipendiary Magistrate in Mauritius (1901-1903) when asked: 'You were really placed for the convenience of the employer?' replied 'I was a machine for sending people to prison'.³² In fact, the administrative system, as it existed in Mauritius during the major part of the immigration period afforded no choice to the Indian worker: he had to accept whatever came his way; there was no real means of redress. Sir Arthur Phayre, a sympathetic governor, declared (1877) 'If the Indians were not a very long-suffering people, the way they have been treated.....would long ago have caused serious general disturbances.'³³

An unflinching champion of the cause of the Indians was Adolphe de Plevitz, grandson of a Polish noble born in Paris, who came to Mauritius in 1859. Through marriage, he became the proprietor of Nouvelle-Découverte Sugar Estate in Mauritius. His estate was free: labourers were not required to indenture, and wages were reasonable and regularly paid. He organized a petition on behalf of the Old Immigrants. It is reported that this petition was translated into KhB. in the Kaithī script and Tamil and circulated all over the island³⁴ (the translations are now untraceable). Signed and marked by 9,401 Indians, the petition was presented by de Plevitz to Governor Gordon on 6th June, 1871. He followed the petition by a pamphlet entitled Observations on the Petition (3rd August) in which he was trenchantly critical of the abuses in the treatment of the Indians. The infuriated planters addressed to the Governor a petition signed by 950 'Mauriciens' demanding that de Plevitz be expelled from Mauritius for disloyalty to the State, but Governor Gordon rejected their petition.

The following year, the Governor set up a Committee to inquire into the conduct of the Police. Their report which appeared on the 13th July, 1872, amongst other things, severely criticized the Vagrancy law as enforced by the Police and the Stipendiary Court. It also censured the Protector's neglect of duty.

Building on the foundation of the Police Enquiry and the Old Immigrants' petition accompanied by de Plevitz's Observations, Governor Gordon wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking for the setting up of a Royal Commission to investigate the treatment of Indian Immigrants in Mauritius (a similar Commission had investigated conditions in British Guiana the year before (1871)). The Secretary of State responding to this request appointed a three-member Royal Commission.

A number of sittings spread over a period of 18 months were held. De Plevitz was heard at length and was closely questioned with regard to his statements as contained in his Observations. The contents of the Old Immigrants' petition were scrutinized in the light of extensive investigations carried out in the island. Planters' representatives were heard and their views carefully recorded.

The Report which followed (April 1875) was a colossal historical document, more comprehensive than its British Guiana counterpart, and 'it remains the basic document on the Indians in Mauritius; and because it is so comprehensive, most scholars have not looked beyond its pages for their information'.³⁵

The Royal Commissioners condemning the Police, the Stipendiary law-court, the Immigration Office and the planters' regime, made comprehensive recommendations for the reform of abuses and setting things right in Mauritius. Based on the recommendations and the observations of the Secretary of State, a new Labour Bill was drafted and after a stormy session in the Mauritius Legislature, it finally emerged as the new Labour Ordinance No.12 of 1878. This new Labour statute improved the lot of the Indian workers in Mauritius, and as Gordon said in later years (he had resigned as Governor of Mauritius in 1875), 'it worked an enormous amount of good'.³⁶

3. Educational and cultural conditions of the early immigrants

As mentioned above, the great majority of the early immigrants were illiterate, and economic conditions were so harsh that educational and cultural considerations hardly arose amidst their struggle for survival. Among the early arrivals, there were small numbers of boys and girls of school-going age, but until the 1850s (the Indian population in 1851 numbered 77,996),³⁷ hardly any thought had been given by the Government of Mauritius to the education of these children who, very probably, had not attended any state-school in India either. In Mauritius, many of them went to part-time voluntary vernacular schools not recognized by Government, about which information is scanty.³⁸

The first administrator to take an earnest interest in the education of the Indians in Mauritius was Governor Higginson (1851-1857). In 1852, an experimental school was opened in Savanne district to teach Indian children through their own vernaculars, but the attempt proved abortive for lack of parental support. The same year, the colour-bar in Mauritian education was abolished, and the Royal College (the first Grammar School in Mauritius) for the first time admitted non-Europeans.

Two years later (1854), the Mauritius Church Association proposed to the Governor that schools be opened with their collaboration, first in Port-Louis, and then elsewhere in the island to teach Indian children English and the Indian vernaculars, Tamil in particular. The Governor, who believed that Indian children should be taught through their own vernaculars, welcomed the idea and suggested that teachers be recruited from India, but the project never developed, as it did not meet with the approval of the Education Committee of the Council of Government. The truth was that the French plantocracy strongly represented on the Council of Government was averse to the progress of Indian vernaculars, especially if this were to happen at the expense of French - an attitude which they retain to this day but which has suffered, from time to time, considerable reverses over the last thirty years of the 20th century.

Pursuing his plan for the education of his subjects, Governor Higginson set up a Special Committee (1855) on the Education of Children. The investigations and report of this Committee throw much light on the educational situation as it existed at the time. Out of 23,500 French and African Creole children of learning age, 5,500 were obtaining a primary and secondary education, whereas 18,000 (consisting of African Creoles) were obtaining no education at all. There were, furthermore, 5,500 Indian children of learning age who also received no instruction at all in any state or state-aided school.³⁹ A great number of Indian boys forming chokrās' (boys') gangs provided cheap labour to a congeries of 200 sugar-estates on the island, while some others, too young for field-work, wandered about on estate camps, wild and dirty and sometimes unclad, a nuisance to all around.

The Commission of 1855 unanimously reported that the African Creoles and Indians were indifferent to education. Reports⁴⁰ in years to come, as well as actual facts, were to indicate that whilst the Indians in general were unenthusiastic and sometimes even suspicious of an education through European languages which stressed cultural and religious values alien to their own, they evinced a keen appreciation of an education given through their own vernaculars and associated with their own cultural roots. With the passage of time, however, the Indians became a more settled community, and while retaining much of their cultural

heritage, they got over some of their former scruples and prejudices, and adapted themselves more and more to their composite Mauritian surroundings.

The Commission recommended compulsory education for children between six and twelve years of age. An Ordinance (No.21 of 1857) was enacted, but it provided, however, that 'the French language shall be the medium of instruction'. The East India Company objected to Indians being compelled to study through a foreign language. It was felt, moreover, that compulsory education was alien to the culture of the Indians. The Ordinance lapsed after three years, for lack of confirmation.⁴¹

Another recommendation of the Commission advocated mixed schooling of Indian and Creole children. However well-intentioned the recommendation was, its implementation in the early years proved short-sighted. Creoles, particularly the French Creoles, disapproved of their children sitting in the class beside the children of their servants and labourers. A few of the Creole school-masters did everything they could to discourage Indian children from attending their schools.⁴² Furthermore, French which was the medium of instruction for Creole children was unnatural to the Indians.

It was held in certain quarters that the creation of separate schools would perpetuate the division of races and encourage atavistic habits in the Indians, but, nonetheless, for practical purposes, separate schools had to be opened for Indian children (the first Indian schools dated from the 1860s). Year by year, the number of these schools fluctuated, especially as wooden school-buildings were vulnerable to the hurricanes which visited Mauritius. For example, there were, in 1862, nine Indian schools (two Government and seven grant-aided); in 1864, the number increased to 26 and the following year to 30. The need was felt for more Indian schools and more teachers. J. Comber Browne, F.R.G.S., the Superintendent of Government Schools and Inspector of grant-aided schools, in his Annual Report for 1865 wrote that 'with so palpable a desire among the Indians for education, were suitable appliances at hand, schools might be increased in much more rapid succession'.⁴³ In 1867,

the number of Indian schools in the island increased to 41. In March 1868, a hurricane destroyed some of the schools and they were not replaced; as a result of this and of poor attendance (harvest-time was particularly marked by absences from school), the schools were reduced to 29 towards the end of 1868. When the Mauritius Royal Commission arrived in 1872, they found 33 Creole and 22 Indian schools including four grant-aided.⁴⁴

Indian schools were vernacular schools in the sense that Bhojpuri and Tamil were used as the medium of instruction. There were just a few exceptions where the emphasis was on teaching the vernacular languages. In the majority of them, the vernaculars were used chiefly as the medium of instruction for elementary English and French and ciphering. The instruction was part-time. After three hours at school, the Indian child proceeded to his place of work on the plantation. The teachers, all of them untrained, were not very proficient in their own vernaculars, the less so in English and French, and progress was further handicapped by the dearth of vernacular books, and by the fact that classes were often composed of pupils belonging to two or more linguistic groups. It is reported⁴⁵ that the Bhojpuri then used in the class-rooms was mixed with some KhB. to sound more prestigious. As KhB. in the Kaithī script of Bihar never got into print, there was hardly any Hindi reader in the class-rooms either in the State Indian schools or in private classes, prior to the last quarter of the 19th century.

With a view to improving the standard of teaching in Indian schools, a collateral branch was established in the Creole Normal School in 1873 for the training of Indian teachers. In the practising training school for Indians, there were three sections: Hindustani in Persian characters, Hindi KhB. in the Kaithi script and Tamil. The Normal school closed down in 1876 to re-open in 1902 (the section for women re-opened in 1903), but the collateral Indian section did not resume until about half a century later.

The school-attendance of Indian children in Indian schools and elsewhere (a few Indian children also attended Creole schools) was very

poor. The census taken on the 11th April, 1871 showed that out of 21,035 Indian boys between the ages of five and fourteen, the average daily school-attendance during the same month was 794, that is 3.7% of the total, and out of 18,077 girls of the same age-group, the average daily attendance was not more than 35.⁴⁶ An attendance which was very low by 1861 had declined further over the 1860s. This bad record somewhat contradicts the above statement of the Superintendent of schools made in his Annual Report for 1865 praising the Indians' desire for education, although there were, in fact, various factors which discouraged their regular school-attendance. These included the bad weather often prevailing in the island during the hurricane season (January to end of March), the opportunity during harvest-time (over 5 months of the year) for the chokrās to earn a better remuneration so as to supplement the very meagre family income, and finally the necessity for some boys and girls to stay at home to watch over babies and younger children while parents were at work. Notwithstanding these obstacles, official reports of the 1860s and the years which followed described their performance at school as commendable.

There were on several estate camps humble vernacular part-time schools run on a voluntary basis. Certain employers tolerated and even sometimes partially supported such schools, while others frowned on their activities. The Indian boys and girls who learnt from the gurus were taught the vernaculars and the scriptures, principally the Hanumān Cālīsā and the Rāmcaritmānas, and many of them did not attend Government schools. The Superintendent of Schools in his report for 1876 stated that 'of the 11,785 children attending Government and grant-schools, not more than 2,829 belong to the coolie or ex-coolie population. About as many more are believed to be under the teaching of heathens, connected more or less with idol temples erected on, or near sugar estates'.⁴⁷

Notwithstanding this rather unfavourable observation by the Superintendent of schools on the humble vernacular estate school, it lived for the best part of the immigration period in the nineteenth century and well into the early decades of the twentieth, to fulfil a significant role in the preservation of Indian vernaculars.

The language used in the gurus' class was similar to that in the State Indian school, that is, essentially Bhojpuri with some KhB. added in the case of Hindi. The gurus, however, used to teach the vernacular itself and not use it as a medium for explaining European languages. The teaching of KhB. throughout the 19th century, it appears, remained very elementary: the learning of alphabets, the spelling and writing (in slates and sanded floors) of names of objects of every-day life, formation of short sentences (in the Kaithī script), counting of numbers etc. The more important part of the gurus' teaching, however, was that associated with the scriptures primarily the Hanumān Cālīsā and the Rāmcaritmānas, available as manuscripts in the Kaithī script. In fact, until the early years of our own century when KhB. arriving from India assumed a more distinct place in Indo-mauritian society, the language of literate and semi-literate Indo-mauritians who had benefited from gurus' teachings remained primarily Bhojpuri blended with some KhB. and Avadhi vocabulary.

There were a few other factors which fostered linguistic and cultural growth in the early phases of immigration. Large numbers of coolies settled arbitrarily on the same plantations and moving within limited areas persistently spoke their own mother-tongue among themselves. It is apparent both from the present situation and from reminiscences that the minority languages - Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Punjabi, Bengali and Oriya - must have given way to Bhojpuri, the language of the majority, except in a very few areas where Bhojpuri lost to Tamil and Telegu. The preservation of the Oriental languages, Bhojpuri in particular, was, in a sense, assisted by the inability to make use of educational facilities, and in some places by the lack of such facilities, which meant that the children did not learn an alien language at school. Also, the Indians, in general, in spite of the disproportionate number of women in their midst, did not marry African Creole women, which precluded one possible way of a quicker spread of Creole patois in the plantation dwelling lines. Furthermore, because Indian women hardly received any instruction in Government schools, the great majority of Indian mothers spoke only the vernaculars to their children.

4. Educational and cultural conditions in the last quarter of the 19th. century

a. Indian education

The field of Indian education in the first decade of the period under review was dominated by the formulation and implementation of Governor Sir Arthur Phayre's policy. Although Indian school-attendance improved slightly in the seventies, it was still absurdly low: in 1874, out of 28,103 Indian children aged between six and twelve, only 1,584 were at school, that is 5.6% (as compared with 3.7% in 1871).⁴⁸ Phayre planned to better this situation, to make Indian education much more effectual, and to give the Indians something of their own cultural heritage. Like Governor Higginson in the 1850's he believed that Indian children should be educated in their own vernaculars. In 1877, Government established, as a pilot scheme, four vernacular schools of the Indian village type to benefit primarily children living on estate camps. There was 'a mat for the children and a cushion for the teacher',⁴⁹ who received Rs.40. per month (this was lower than the salary in other state schools). There was to be 'secular instruction only'.⁵⁰ The average number of pupils in every school was 30 including a few Muslims, and the main languages taught were Hindi (KhB.) in the Kaithī script, and Hindustani in Persian characters, Marathi and Tamil (some ciphering was also taught in two of the schools). It was considered that a full programme would establish about 150 schools in different parts of the island. The Superintendent of Schools J. Comber Browne implemented the pilot scheme unenthusiastically and the Education Committee of the Council of Government was openly critical of it. After a month of their opening, however, the four schools were 'immediately filled with as many Indian children as could be accommodated'.⁵¹ Governor Phayre further declared that it would be wasteful to teach the Indian children English, because, he thought, it was a language they would not use. Time has invalidated this view however: Indo-Mauritians, in general, sharing as they do with others the administrative and political life of the country have found that a knowledge of English is a vital part of their education.

In December 1878, Phayre was transferred from Mauritius. In May 1880, following requests from parents and some pressure from Reverend W.

Wright, Supervisor of the vernacular schools, and in keeping with Phayre's policy, a fifth vernacular school was opened by Government in the same district as the other four (Grand-Port). Apart from Hindi and Hindustani, a little English was included in the curriculum of this vernacular school.

The Department of Education, headed by J. Comber Browne, supported by the Council of Government, gave priority to the use of English, and in consequence frowned on vernacular development and looked on this Government expenditure as unjustifiable. In 1880, Government appointed a Special Committee on State Indian Vernacular schools to report on progress made, attendance, and also whether the experiment had so far been successful enough to warrant their continuance. The Committee made a detailed report to the Colonial Secretary, Mauritius, stating amongst other things: 'We are bound to state that when we proceeded to visit these schools, we were not prepared to find them so good and so well organised. The children, generally, were young, but appeared happy and cheerful.... They would compare favourably with any schools of the same class in India.... We have arrived at the conclusion that the vernacular schools under the directions of Reverend W. Wright have been so far a success.' Contradictorily and beyond their terms of reference, however, the Committee concluded 'We are unanimously of opinion that continuance of the experiment would be of no advantage.' The reason they adduced was that 'Indian immigrants have adopted the Creole patois to communicate among themselves.... The Hindoo children will nearly all settle down in Mauritius and gradually merge into the general population. They will thus have but few opportunities of using their own vernaculars which will gradually be forgotten.'⁵² It would be unreasonable to attach any blame to the Committee for an opinion expressed over a century ago about the linguistic and cultural future of the Indians in Mauritius, but the history of the Indians in their new abode and the cultivation of their vernaculars, Hindi in particular, has to a good extent, proved the incorrectness of their prediction, although it is true that Creole, the French-African patois remains the link-language through the multi-racial population.

Despite the protest of Reverend W. Wright who petitioned the Secretary of State, and to the disappointment of many Indian parents, the five vernacular schools were closed by the end of 1881, and as recommended by the

Committee 'amalgamated'⁵³ with other State schools. This was the end of Government vernacular education in Mauritius in the nineteenth century, and there was to be hardly any change in this policy until the investigations and report of Kunwar (later Sir) Maharaj Singh in the third decade of the twentieth century. It is significant that the attitude of the Government of Mauritius towards Indian vernaculars in the closing decades of the nineteenth century coincided with that prevalent in India where Government willing to promote the use of English by all means was lending but little support to Indian vernaculars.

The State vernacular schools, undergoing a process of amalgamation, became the nucleus of the Second-Grade schools opened in 1883. The existing Indian schools were also restyled Second-Grade schools. In 1896 there were 31 Second-Grade schools of which eight were half-time; these were principally for Indian children but open to all.⁵⁴ In fact several of them were mixed, that is, attended by both Creole and Indian pupils. Indian children, particularly those in towns and villages (they constituted a little less than half of the total school age Indian population) growing more and more acquainted with the Creole patois were increasingly attending Creole schools, in some of them in considerable numbers, although a few Creole masters still resented Indian attendance. The distinction between Indian and Creole schools was every day becoming less and less noticeable, and as the nineteenth century drew to its close, the mixed school became more and more the common feature in the primary education of the Government of Mauritius.

It is important to remember, however, that the Indian school population, consisting principally of boys, although increasing over the last quarter of the nineteenth century, still remained well under 14% of the school-going age children (in Trinidad, just over 19% and in British Guiana 20% of the Indian children were at school during the same period). In 1896, out of 52,000 Indian children between five and sixteen years of age in Mauritius, there were altogether 5,566 children at school of whom 656 were girls.⁵⁵ Apart from the Creole patois, intelligible to the majority, and a smattering of English and French acquired by a few, the speech of the immigrants and their descendants at that period remained predominantly the vernaculars, Bhojpuri in particular.

While dealing with the educational conditions of the immigrants and their descendants, it would be apt to mention that at the time the Royal Commissioners visited Mauritius, there was at the Royal College (the best grammar school where the boys of the elite were educated) a Professor of Hindustani. He was Reverend W. Wright.⁵⁶ The objective of establishing such a chair was, it appears, to teach the French Creoles who attended the school the language of a high proportion of the people who served the island. The chair, however, was not long-lived.

b. The growth of villages and the acceleration of cultural progress

An important social development that assisted considerably in generating cultural progress among the Indians during this period was the growth and expansion of hamlets and villages beyond the areas of sugar plantations. There were several factors which promoted an exodus from the estate camps and a settlement in dwelling places which were, in a large measure, free from the inhuman grip of the plantation, although still under its shadow. Already in the mid-fifties, a few estates had parcelled out small portions of their lands (this was known as 'le petit morcellement') and small plots of half an acre or a little more or less had been purchased mostly by the Old Immigrants who were moving out of the estates. Between 1862 and 1871, Government sold or rented, mostly to Old Immigrants, about 120 acres of Crown land.⁵⁷ In the mid-seventies, as a consequence of floods and droughts, several estates falling in financial difficulties discharged indentured immigrants in order to sign on new arrivals from India at lower wages. Some of these freed immigrants bought or rented 'morcellements' of land, and like many others set up on their own. The 1870s and the years that followed saw a further emergence of small cane-planters and market gardeners. Several estates parcelled out some of their lands on a larger scale than in the 1850s (this was known as 'le grand morcellement') with a consequent extension of villages in the peripheral parts of the plantations. An ever-increasing rural small-holder class of Indians was coming into existence.

The estate population was fast diminishing. In the past, police vagrant-hunts and massive Court prosecutions had inexorably forced many time-expired Indians into re-indenture: it was, in a sense, a system maintained by force, but the hunts had been completely stopped after the visit of the Royal Commissioners. The majority of indentured labourers,

on the expiry of indenture, were turning their back to the estate and settling in villages with friends and relatives. This process went on and on until many of the camps were almost depleted. The estates and factories too were being rationalized: from a congeries of 200 estates in 1850 to 50 in about 1910. The number of employees living with their families on estate camps fell from 68,586 in 1879 to 39,749 in 1901, that is, well over half of the Indian population was living outside the plantation camps at the turn of the century (in 1921 the proportion of Indian population outside the estate camps was about five-sixths of the total).⁵⁸

The cultural influences which, in a large measure, remained suppressed and stifled under the constraints of estate camps began to flower in the village communities which were spreading increasingly all over the island. It must be mentioned, however, that while in many estates cultural activities were restricted because they were considered deleterious to the interest of the plantation, on a few of them the management was benign and occasionally even supported certain such activities, particularly in the later periods of immigration. Although originally informal and unplanned, such activities became gradually more institutionalised and played an increasingly important part in the cultural and social life of Indo-Mauritians. In the earlier days, members of the local Indian associations used to assemble in private homes, but later a community centre called baiṭhkā, generally consisting of a thatched hall with an average floor capacity for 50 to 75 people, was erected in a central place on the estate or the village. In later years, the baiṭhkā was roofed with iron sheets, and in more modern times it has been enlarged and built of concrete. The membership was composed of male adults and adolescents, and did not include women until the advent of the Arya Samaj in the second decade of the present century. Baiṭhkās grew up as fast as hamlets and villages, and a few localities had more than one. On occasions such as weddings and funerals, the baiṭhkā association assisted the members concerned on a co-operative basis. The association also operated a Panchayat system which, though not officially recognised, was held in high regard by the whole village.

Among the main roles of the baiṭhkā, however, was the running of a part-time voluntary vernacular school for both boys and girls (every afternoon or twice or thrice per week) which fulfilled not only an educational but a religious and cultural function as well. The teachers called gurus were the few literates or semi-literates of the estate or village. The subjects taught during the period concerned were principally Tamil, or KhB. in the Kaithī script, especially the latter. The Muslims taught Urdu in madrasahs. A few of the gurus taught in their own homes. No tuition fees were charged. The motto of all the Hindi schools in the island was Rāma gati dehu sumati (the path of Rāma leads to righteousness).⁵⁹ The language spoken at the baiṭhkā by teachers, pupils and occasional visitors was Bhojpuri, admixed with some KhB., sometimes intercalated with a few Creole words. Once every week, on Thursdays (guruvar- the day of the guru) in some schools, a ceremony took place known as pāṭī pūjā ('worship of the slate'). A manuscript copy of the Rāmcaritmānas, neatly wrapped up in cloth, as well as pupils' slates, well cleaned, would be laid on a small altar improvised in the classroom. The pupils' offerings - boiled rice, bananas, coconut, camphor, flowers, etc. - would be laid on the same altar. The guru would be neatly dressed, wearing a ṭīkā and carrying the cane in his hand. As the boys and girls would reverently prostrate themselves before the altar, the guru would touch their backs with his cane. This was known as chaṛī vardān ('blessing with the cane'). Prayers would then be said communally by teacher and pupils.⁶⁰

Through the last quarter of the 19th century, the teaching of KhB. in both State Indian schools and gurus' classes seems to have continued to be very elementary. This is indicated by glimpses we can catch in the official education reports which appeared during that time. The Report on State Indian Schools (1873) from the Government Superintendent explains that the Indian children attending Cluny Estate School '...display unusual intelligence...and [they] translated readily to me such words as the following from their own language into English and Creole:

ṭopī.....hat.....sapo
ghar.....house.....lacase
gāy.....cow.....vasse
ghoṛā.....horse.....souval

They also rendered into the three languages numerals up to fifty...'.⁶¹
Likewise, the Report of the Special Committee on Indian Vernacular Schools, 1880, gives a little information about the kind of teaching that existed in the five schools established under Governor Phayre's pilot scheme. With regard to KhB., it states in the case of two of the schools that 'Hindee is taught'. In one of them, some children were learning the alphabets while the more advanced were taught grammar (probably at a very elementary level). Referring to a third school, the Report informs us that 'teaching included Nagri, Tamil, Mahratta - no grammar taught'.⁶² The mention of KhB. in 'Nagri' script here appears for the first time in an education report of the late 19th century.

It is further significant that the same report mentions that 'books were neat and clean' in one of the three schools where KhB. was being taught. Whether manuscripts in the Kaithī script or school-books printed in Devanāgarī are meant, is not clear from the brief report. The teaching in the pilot schools was 'based on school-books in use in Bengal and Madras',⁶³ and it is possible that, being Government-sponsored, primers in the Devanāgarī script had been obtained from India, but such books are untraceable.

The teaching in those schools embraced not only very elementary KhB. but also reading and recitation from Kaithī manuscripts of the Hanumān Cālīsā and the Rāmcāritmānas, particularly the latter. Education in these humble schools, at that period, culminated (it was a sort of graduation) in the ability to read and chant the Rāmcāritmānas and to explain the verses in Bhojpuri. There were special occasions celebrated at the baiṭhkā school, attended by men and women of the estate or village, when the advanced pupils would chant and explain, to the admiration of all the audience. The advanced students taught the Rāmcāritmānas to others, and, through the process of learning from each other, these Rāmāyaṇīs, as they were called, grew in number especially in the villages

over the last quarter of the 19th century and the decades which followed. Several Hindu missionaries, Hindi teachers and Hindi protagonists in years to come stemmed from this class of Rāmcaritmānas readers.

Weddings and festivals, and the field of entertainment, especially in hamlets and villages, provided recurrent influences that stimulated cultural development during the closing years of the 19th century and the years which followed. Untrammelled by restrictions of plantation life, wedding ceremonies grew much more elaborate. There was plenty of singing and dancing especially by the women folk, before, during and after the wedding, spreading over a week or more. The wedding songs were all in Bhojpuri and it is clear that the rich oral traditions of Bhojpuri were preserved and cultivated as they are today in Mauritius.

The Hindi stage too, crude as it was in the last years of the 19th century exerted a significant cultural influence. Among the plays usually staged were Indra Sabhā and Rām Līlā. The Rāmcaritmānas chapter most popular for stage adaptation at that time was Aranya, especially the part dealing with the 14 year banishment, the devotion of the princes to the ascetics in the forest, the abduction of Sītā, the ignominious end of Rāvaṇa, and Rāma's triumphant return to Ayodhya. Scripts of such plays are untraceable, but it is reported that the dialogues were a mixture of Bhojpuri, KhB. and Avadhi. Some Telegus and Tamils too used to stage Rām-Līlā in their own vernaculars.

In the days when other forms of entertainment were scarce, the stage-plays attracted a large audience from near and far. They were staged on occasions such as weddings, festivals, the birth of a child in well-to-do families etc. They achieved, in general, a deep impact on the audience, and unconsciously promoted significant cultural growth.

The birhā (usually sung by the Ahīr caste) too was very popular throughout this period, and until the late 1920s. Singing in a high pitch, with finger-tips applied to his ears, as if to summon all his concentration, and often bursting forth unexpectedly on public gatherings, the birhā-singer rarely failed to capture the attention of the audience. As an expression

of grief, this lyric struck a sad note (birhā is derived from Sanskrit viraha).

The Indians, in general, were a religious-minded people, and the frequent celebration of various kinds of kathās in baiṭhkās and private homes gave expression to this religious feeling. The kathā in Mauritius was primarily a religious discourse based on Hindu orthodox scriptures - the Mahābhārata, life and precepts of Satyanārāyaṇ Svāmī, the puranic legends such as those compiled by Lallujī Lāl in his Premśāgar, the Rāmcaritmānas etc. The Āihākhaṇḍ also formed the theme of a kathā, although less frequently. The Śrimad Bhāgavat Kathā, generally celebrated over seven days, took place once or twice per year at the baiṭhkā or the temple of the locality, before a considerable audience. Gītā-kathā did not come before the early years of the twentieth century.

It is reported that KhB. was occasionally used in the closing years of the 19th century by Brahmin priests officiating at the kathā ceremony, including a few originating from the North-West provinces. They would explain to the audience that the solemnity of the kathā called for the use of KhB., the language of the gods, and not Bhojpuri familiarly used at home. This use of KhB. in some kathās however faulty and ungrammatical, together with the occurrence of a KhB. diction in ritual songs and folk songs which the immigrants had brought from their villages of origin in India, can be said to have been among the factors which constituted its early unconscious beginnings in Mauritius during the last years of the 19th century.

c. Hindi manuscripts

While the kathās imparted to the Indians, in general, a small amount of spiritual instruction, there was very little reading material circulating for the benefit of those whose knowledge of reading was confined to the vernaculars. Hindi books printed in Devanāgarī had not reached Mauritius as yet; there were only the manuscripts introduced by the immigrants. These manuscripts from North-Indian areas were not original writings but copies, in the Kaithī script, of what were mostly religious texts of the sub-continent, including the Rāmcaritmānas (of which the majority of the manuscripts contained only one or two chapters). As the need for these books was felt more and more in the island, some of them were reproduced by

the literate immigrants and their sons.⁶⁴ A few Hindus of the Śivnārāyaṇī sect held manuscript treatises of their own tradition, including the Śabd Granth Vilās,⁶⁵ while the Kabīr Panthīs circulated copies of the Bījak amongst themselves. Tamil manuscript writings are also traceable in Mauritius, including a few beautifully written on processed coconut leaves.⁶⁶ It is very unfortunate that hitherto the Government of Mauritius has not devoted enough attention to the conservation of these manuscripts, although the necessary mechanisms at both administrative and professional levels are not lacking. The H.P.S., has been able, however, to collect and conserve a certain number of these works which are available today for examination at their Nemnarain Gupt library. These works are: Arjun-Gītā, Yam-Gītā, Viṣṇu-Purāṇ, Gorakh-Śatak, Hanumān-Cālīsā, Hanumān-Bāhuk, Dvārkaṅpurī Māhātmya, Bandī-Mocan, Śrī Rādhā-Anugraha, Rāmcāritmānas. Apart from these manuscripts, there are in the possession of a few Indo-Mauritian families manuscript writings such as Lalujī Lāl's Prem Sāgar, and other works bearing no title.

Quite a few of the Hindi manuscripts have, through bad conservation, deteriorated beyond legibility. Even those which are still in a good state of conservation are not easily intelligible to modern Hindi readers, in general, owing to dissimilarities between the Kaithī and Devanāgarī scripts, and also because the occasional deviations from the original in the course of transcription have here and there obscured their meaning. Now they are of interest primarily to research scholars and students of philology. While they remained in use for upwards of half a century, however, they played a significant role in that they underpinned Indian culture and Indian education in Mauritius.

d. The linguistic situation of the Indian community at 1900

When the Indian immigrants arrived in the course of the 19th century, Creole as a lingua franca was already firmly established in Mauritius. It was a French-based language with an admixture of African (especially East African) and Malagasy vocabulary. It was the medium through which the Franco-Mauritian planters had addressed their slaves and the means of communication amongst the slaves themselves, as well as the language of the streets and markets. It was the same Creole patois which the

French foremen and overseers used in order to communicate with their Indian workers in the fields and factories. English was the language in which the business of government was conducted, French the language of the Franco-Mauritians, the Catholic Church, and cultured society in general including free African Creoles who took pride in cultivating the cultural pattern of the French bourgeoisie. English and French were also the languages taught in primary schools and to the privileged few in secondary institutions. This linguistic situation must have appeared complicated to the Indian immigrants, especially in the early stages of immigration, although the structural simplicity of Creole was very probably a help in enabling them to acquire a working-knowledge of the language without too much difficulty. The introduction of Indian languages in the island, however, rendered more complex a linguistic situation which was complicated already.

The language of the great majority of Indian immigrants arriving since 1834 was Bhojpuri. There must have been small dialectal differences in the Bhojpuri spoken by Biharis hailing from different parts of the vast province of Bihar, and somewhat wider differences in the Bhojpuri of the Biharis and that of the immigrants originating from the North-Western Provinces. The arbitrary settlement of immigrants on estate camps, with mobility confined to limited areas, led, it must be conjectured, to a homogenization of the Indian community, and parallel with this movement their dialectal differences too, must have undergone a process of homogenization. The consequence was the evolution of a more or less standardized and mutually intelligible language, a unified Bhojpuri, spoken by a people who had grown socially and culturally very much analogous. It was the beginning of the formation of the Mauritian Bhojpuri of today, not identical to any one single Bhojpuri dialect in India. Such was the language of the communities which then settled in the hamlets and villages which were fast expanding in the peripheral parts of sugar estates. Freed from the restrictions of plantation life, the immigrants were now receptive to the religious and cultural forms flowing from a rich and resurgent Bhojpuri oral culture.

It is significant that while the language of the majority was Bhojpuri, what boys and girls were taught in the state schools, madrasahs and private gurus' classes was not Bhojpuri but KhB. in the Kaithi and

Persian scripts. In fact, literacy and vernacular education presented a problem to Bhojpuri-speakers, because Bhojpuri was not a written language, nor was it regarded as being suitable to be so, and formal education thus, of necessity, had to be in KhB., the language perceived to have both literary and cultural prestige, whether as Hindi or Urdu. It was towards KhB., therefore, that they looked for their educated and cultured modes of expression; there was no hope of Bhojpuri ever achieving this for them. On the other hand, had Bhojpuri been a prestigious written language with an established written literature, the Bhojpuri-speakers, like the Telegus and Tamils, would have continued to cultivate their own language, and KhB. would have stood no chance whatever in Mauritius.

It could then be argued that the primary impetus towards KhB. derived from the demands of literacy on the speakers of a non-written language, in part made more pressing by well-intentioned initiatives to introduce vernacular education. Although, therefore, it might be tempting to apply a model of cultural 'sanskritization' to the situation, regarding KhB. as a more prestigious mode of expression for a consciously 'sanskritizing', upward aspiring community, this would almost certainly be a mistake in the 19th. century. While there is a sense in which such a hypothesis might be valid in the 20th. century, it would be safer to regard KhB. not so much as 'prestigious', but rather simply as 'written' during the 19th. century. It would seem that the model of 'sanskritization' is only appropriate in hierarchical competitive societies, and that was not the case in Mauritius.

The approach to KhB. by Bhojpuri speakers was facilitated by the fact that the two languages are cognate. Although in terms of linguistic genetics, the two are independent siblings, neither deriving from the other, yet they are descended 'from the same ancestor' and 'are closely akin in grammar and vocabulary'.⁶⁷ There must also have been a residual but passive knowledge of KhB. amongst some of the immigrants.

There is every reason to believe that by 1900, the general pattern of Mauritian Bhojpuri spoken all over the island was already firmly set. It had already lost in some measure to Creole: it incorporated by that time numerous Creole words which made it distinctly Mauritian and not very intelligible to any Bhojpuri speaker from India. It is unfortunate,

however, that because of the oral nature of Bhojpuri, examples of the language prevalent at that time are not available. The minority languages had already lost much to Bhojpuri, although Tamil and Telegu, especially Tamil continued to flourish in a few areas inhabited in the majority by South Indian immigrants. Most of the Indians were by that time more or less able to converse intercommunally in Creole, although their phonetics were affected by the respective Indian languages they spoke. This can, in some measure, still be seen today from the speech of the few Indo-Mauritians born in the turn of the century or a little before.

In considering the linguistic situation of the Indian community in Mauritius at 1900, it is also important to examine their attitude towards learning the two European languages prestigiously used in the country, namely English and French. In the last quarter of the 19th century, some progressive Indian parents were growing more and more conscious of the fact that social and economic advancement in Mauritius required English and French qualifications much more than those in oriental languages. In the opening years of our century, there already existed a small number of boys and girls with a smattering in English and French, and an increasing number of parents who regarded English and French as the essential languages of academic education for their children, with KhB. or some other oriental language as that of religion and culture. This is a feeling which has persisted thereafter among a large proportion of Indo-Mauritian parents.

On the linguistic horizon at 1900, there appeared very little from which one could forecast the future of KhB. in Mauritius. The very elementary but fairly steady instruction in KhB. through the second half of the nineteenth century together with the occasional use of the language by officiating priests in the course of kathās during the last years of the century, gave KhB. a certain footing among Indo-Mauritians. But this footing was decidedly too exiguous to have been able to indicate what was going to be the future course of the language in the island.

NOTES

1. Indian immigration and the background of the immigrants have been dealt with extensively, amongst others, by: H.Tinker, A New System of Slavery, (Oxford University Press, 1974); P.Saha, Emigration of Indian Labour (1834-1900), (Delhi, 1970); I.M.Cumpston, Indians Overseas in British Territories, 1834-1854, O.U.P., (London, 1953), all of which contain substantial bibliographies.
2. In Mauritius, a proclamation of Governor Nicolay made it known that after 31st March, 1839, all compulsory labour would be discontinued and all apprentices (they were slaves prior to 1833) would be liberated.
3. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Indian element in the Mauritian population was 10%. Out of a total population of 60,000, 50,000 were slaves of whom 6,000 were from India, principally from the south of the sub-continent. The main oriental language spoken on the island until the arrival of the Bhojpuri-speaking Biharis in the 1830s, was Tamil.
4. Information regarding the number of employees in the sugar industry has been obtained through the kind offices of the Chamber of Agriculture, Port-Louis.
5. Arkāṭiās is apparently derived from Arkāṭ (Arcot), in South India and maistrīs from Hindi mistrī (master).
6. Before a Committee appointed to inquire about the hill-coolies with effect from 1st August 1838, Longueville Clarke, a distinguished barrister of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, gave evidence on 8.10.1838, as follows: 'We [Clarke and David Hare, a contemporary] proceeded to the house and found two brijabassis [watchmen] with clubs (lattees)... We went up a narrow staircase at the top of which was a door which was shut... We crossed over a terrace....and at the end of it there were two or three rooms, the door of one of which was fastened... As soon as we got on the terrace there was a great cry of "Dohae, Dohae, Dohae". I bid one of the brijabassis open the door... The door was opened and I suppose nearly one hundred, or upwards of a hundred

persons rushed out... They flung themselves at Mr.Hare's feet and mine, crying out "Dohae..." I then got Mr.Hare, who speaks the language very well, to single out a man. He said he had been locked up, and he had been beaten, and that he would not go to Mauritius and he would sooner have his throat cut than go...' Extract from H. Tinker, op.cit., p.66.

7. Idem, p.116.

8. Idem, p.51.

9. The following were among the various types of taxes imposed by thikadars:

'When the oppressor wants a horse, the kol must pay; when he desires a palki, the kols have to pay, and afterwards to bear him therein. They must pay for his musicians, for his milch cows, for his pan. Does someone die in his house? he taxes; is a child born? again a tax; is there a marriage or a puja? a tax; is he found guilty at cutchery (court-house) and sentenced to be punished the kol must pay the fine. Or does a death occur in the house of the kol? the poor man must pay a fine; is a child born, is a son or daughter married, the poor kol is still taxed. And this plundering, punishing, robbing system goes on till the kol runs away. These unjust people not only take away everything in the house, but even force the kols to borrow, that they may not obtain what they want, reminding one of Sydney Smith's account of the poor man taxed from his birth to his coffin.'

Source: Tracts, Vol.334, The Kols of Chota Nagpur, page 11, India Office Library.

10. (i) H.Tinker, op.cit., p.49. (ii) Several families in Mauritius bear the surname Dhongoor or Dhingoor, which appears to be a distorted spelling of dhangar. To this day, some descendants of the dhangars are identifiable from their physical traits around Rose-Belle and Union-Park in the south-east of Mauritius.

11. Referring to newly arrived 11,549 Indian immigrants (9,709 males and 1,840 females) by the boat Apolline, Charles Anderson the Protector of Immigrants commented (to G.F.Dick, Colonial Secretary Mauritius on 27.4.1844) that they were of 'the most superior description of both sexes. Nearly all the men are of the Dhangur or Hill-Coolie caste...' Source: correspondence addressed by Protector C. Anderson to Colonial Secretary G.F.Dick, dated 27.4.1844, M.A.

12. (i) T.Hugon, Sketch on Immigration, a series of notes submitted to the Governor of Mauritius between 14 December, 1857 and 9 March, 1858, in manuscript, M.A., paras 54-6.
(ii) H.Tinker, op.cit., p.54.
13. M.Martin, History of the British Colonies (London, 1834), (Vol.1, p.217).
14. (i) Judicial and Legislative Committee Misc. Papers (Emig.) General, Indian Correspondence, Memorandum etc. 1842-1859, Vol.V, Extract from Fort St. George Public Diary to Consultation, 28 February, 1943 (India Office Library, London).
(ii) P.Saha, op.cit., p.60.
15. Tracts 148, pages 16-18 (India Office Library, London).
16. On 11th July, 1838, the Principal Collector of Malabar informed the Madras Council that during the last week of June, Mr.Tyack, an Emigration Agent for Mauritius, came to his station (Malabar) and succeeded in prevailing upon a number of Chermars (slaves of the soil) to proceed to Cochin for the purpose of embarking for Mauritius.
17. Census of India, 1911 (India Office Library, London).
18. Towards the end of the 19th century, there was an accelerated emigration (regulated and non-regulated) from South India: while 2,187 came to Mauritius in 1900, emigrants who went to Natal, Straits Settlements, Burma and Ceylon under regulated and non-regulated emigration numbered 25,622 in 1899 and 494,990 in 1900. Source: H.Tinker, op.cit., Table 3:2, p.57.
19. A zamindar of Bihar stated in the 1860s that he employed more than 30,000 people on his estate, and only his best labourers could earn two to three rupees per month. They lived on inferior grams and never tasted rice. Source: General Department (Emigration), November 1862, No.34 (India Office Library, London).
20. P.Saha, op.cit., p.29.
21. Ibid., p.30, note 4.
22. H.Tinker, op.cit., p.58.
23. Ibid., p.56.

24. Mauritius Census, 1861, M.A.
25. Report of the Mauritius Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the treatment of immigrants in Mauritius (1872-1875), (Cmd. 1115 of 1875), para.2094.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Mauritius Police Enquiry Report, 13th July, 1872, M.A., p.99.
29. H.Tinker, op.cit., p.108.
30. T.Hugon, op.cit.
31. Report of the Mauritius Royal Commission, op.cit.
32. Sanderson Report, p.374, also quoted by H.Tinker in A New System of Slavery, p.310.
33. H.Tinker, 'Arthur Phayre in Mauritius 1874-78: Social policy and Economic reality', in Southeast Asian History and Historiography; essays presented to D.G.E.Hall (Ithaca, N.Y. 1976), p.70.
34. Somdath Bhuckory, Hindi in Mauritius (Port-Louis, 1967), p.37.
35. H.Tinker, op.cit., p.250.
36. Ibid., p.258.
37. Population Census, M.A.
38. It appears that the first voluntary Indian school in Mauritius was opened in Port-Louis by an Indian named Savrimoutou in 1823, before the advent of indentured immigration. The language taught was Tamil. Source: A.R.Mannick, The Development of a plural society, p.45.
39. Report of the Special Committee on Education, 1855.
40. Examples of such reports are:
 - (i) Report on Elementary schools in Mauritius supported and assisted by Government for 1865, para.47, M.A.; and
 - (ii) Despatch of Governor Phayre to Secretary of State Carnavon, 14th August, 1877, M.A.

41. To this day, education is not, by law, compulsory in Mauritius, but almost 99% of school-going age children do attend school.
42. One example was what used to take place at Rose-Belle Government School, as late as the 1870s. The master of that school, Robert Vilbro, eager to fill his school with the children of estate overseers and managers, used to mark Indian children absent even when they were present, in order to get their names off his registers. To scare them away, he sometimes smeared the Indian pupils' mouths with grease; he knew Indians had religious objections to the use of grease. Source: H.Tinker, 'Arthur Phayre in Mauritius 1874-78', op.cit., p.71.
43. Report on Government and State-aided elementary schools in Mauritius for 1865, para 47, M.A.
44. Ibid., for 1871 - M.A.
45. The writer of this thesis gathered the information from his grandfather (the latter's father arrived as an immigrant in 1857), born in Mauritius in 1860 and deceased in 1939.
46. Returns of Census taken in Mauritius on 11.4.1887, M.A.
47. Report on Government and State-aided schools for 1876, M.A.
48. H.Tinker, 'Arthur Phayre in Mauritius, 1874-1878: Social Policy and Economic Reality', op.cit., p.69.
49. Ibid., p.71.
50. Ibid., p.69.
51. Ibid., p.71.
52. Report of the Special Committee on Indian Vernacular Schools, 1880, M.A.
53. Ibid.
54. Report on Government and grant-aided schools for 1896, M.A.
55. Ibid; P.Saha, op.cit., p.126.
56. Report of the Mauritius Royal Commissioners (1872-1875), op.cit., para.3097.
57. Ramoo Sooriamoorthy, Les Tamouls à l'Ile Maurice, (Port-Louis, 1977), p.133.

58. H.Tinker, A New System of Slavery, op.cit., pp.234, 370.
59. It is reported that a few estate employers, inquisitive about the meaning of Rām gati dehu sumati were explained by baiṭhkā teachers that it was an invocation praying for assiduity and loyalty in one's work on the sugar plantation!
60. The pāṭī pūjā prayer in the Hindi schools was:

Sar sar, sar sar, sanjhā kālī
Sone rupe Girvar-Dhārī
Jo jāne Girvar ke bheva
Nitya uṭhe pūje Ganpat deva
Ganpat pūje kā karīje
Pahle phūl vināyak dīje
Dosar kā Sarosatī dīje
Tīsar kā Mahādev
Cauthe guru pāv parihe
Guru pāve pāve asīs
Guru catiyā jīye lākh baris
Lākh baris ke saṇḍe khuṇḍe [?]
Guru dvāre barse cāndī
Akharmandī
Vidyā ke phal baiṭhal khāya

Many of the schools adopted a shorter version of this prayer.
Translation: It is the evening twilight. Kṛṣṇa is here decked with gold. People to whom the mysteries of Kṛṣṇa have been revealed would, every morning, on rising, worship Ganeś. But how to worship Ganeś? Firstly, offer your flowers to God (vināyak), secondly to Sarasvatī, thirdly to Mahādev, and finally prostrate yourselves at the feet of the guru to seek his blessings. Those blessed by the guru live very long (a thousand years). You have been only digging and delving a thousand years, but with the guru's blessings, you will acquire wealth and wisdom. All people who acquire knowledge live comfortably (sit and eat).

61. Report on Government and Government-aided schools for 1873, M.A.
62. Report of Special Committee on Indian Vernacular Schools, 1880, M.A.
63. H.Tinker, 'Arthur Phayre in Mauritius, 1874-1878', op.cit.

64. Among those who reproduced manuscripts of Rāmcaritmānas in Mauritius were: Jalim Ravidas (his manuscript of the Sundar Kāṇḍ dated 1840 is conserved by the Nemnarain Gupt library of the H.P.S.), Nuckcheddy Mahton, Bhagvat Nundoo, Ramguttee, Ramnath Gossaye, Bunwaree and Goodarsing Vishnudayal. The last two were among the very few who transcribed the seven chapters in one volume and their manuscripts are today the possessions of the families concerned. The others transcribed one or two chapters. One sheet from the copy made by immigrant Bunwaree (he was from Ballia) was presented to Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, on the occasion of her first visit to Mauritius (1970).
65. A manuscript of the Śabd Graṅth Vilās was seen in the possession of Sammat Lal Bajnath of Quinze Arpents, Flacq, born in 1890, whom the writer of this thesis interviewed at his home on the 28th March, 1981. He could read fluently the Kaithī script of this manuscript. He also sang on that day Bhojpuri songs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, besides reciting Hindi class-prayers dating from the early years of our century.
66. Two Tamil manuscripts on processed coconut leaves are in the possession of the writer of this thesis, donated to him in February 1981 by Singa Nursigadoo, Souillac, Mauritius. The theme of the writings is prediction of people's future.
67. Richard K. Barz, 'The Cultural Significance of Hindi in Mauritius' (South Asia, New Series, Vol.III, No.1 (1980)).

CHAPTER TWO

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF KhB. BETWEEN 1900 AND 1935

This chapter traces diachronically the progress of KhB. during the first thirty-five years of the twentieth century. Among the events that mark this period are the visits of M.K.Gandhi and Manilal Doctor and their impact on the people of Mauritius, particularly, the Indo-Mauritian community; the foundation of the Arya Samaj and its far-reaching linguistic, educational, social and cultural effects; the conflict between the Arya Samaj and the orthodox Sanātan Dharma and its results; the increasing contact with India, and the circulation of printed Devanāgarī newspapers and books, the Satyārth Prakāś and the Rāmcāritmānas in particular.

1. M.K.Gandhi

The first year of the century was marked in Mauritius by the visit of M.K.Gandhi. He was on his way from South Africa back to India. He landed in Port-Louis on the 30th October, 1901, and stayed in Mauritius until the steamer cleared port on the 19th November, 1901.¹ It was a visit which proved socially, culturally and politically important.

Despite the absence of telephone and radio, cars and buses (Mauritius had its first car on 23rd December, 1903, and buses did not appear before 1922), news of his arrival spread fast. During his three-week stay, Gandhi, according to his own statement in his autobiography The Story of my Experiment with Truth acquainted himself fairly well with the local conditions.² He met numbers of people, the Indians in particular, including those in villages and estate camps. Gandhi, who did not know Bhojpuri, addressed them in KhB. They were intelligible to each other, although, very probably, KhB. might have seemed somewhat distant to most of them. He addressed big enthusiastic gatherings in

the districts of Rivière-du-Rempart and Moka, and also spoke to many people individually. At a reception given for him in Port-Louis, one week before he embarked, he addressed a gathering composed of Muslim, Tamil and other Asiatic traders, Indian immigrants and others in his own mother tongue, Gujarati.³ Gandhi's KhB. speeches from the public platform and elsewhere form a landmark in the history of KhB. in Mauritius. It was the first time in the island that Indian immigrants and their descendants listened to speeches in this language from a person of the calibre of M.K.Gandhi, who could speak good English as well. Amongst other things, Gandhi laid emphasis on the education of children, the need for all communities to live together harmoniously and the participation of Indians in local politics. Out of a total population of 373,336 in 1901 the Indians numbered 259,086, that is, over two thirds, and yet they took no share at all in the political life of the country.⁴

Two years after Gandhi's visit a small group of progressive Hindus founded the Arya Samaj, but this first foundation proved abortive.

2. The Arya Samaj in Mauritius and its early contribution to KhB.

a. The Satyārth Prakāś

Around the turn of the century, the Satyārth Prakāś of Svami Dayanand reached Mauritius. There were, it appears, among Punjabi soldiers and jail workers posted in Mauritius, a few Ārya Samājīs. Through their contact and influence, a small group of progressive Indo-Mauritians, eager to know more about the tenets of the Arya Samaj, came in possession of Svami Dayanand's Satyārth Prakāś.

This was the first important KhB. book printed in Devanagari to come into the hands of Indians in Mauritius. Most of those who could then read, however, were acquainted with the Kaithī script, and in the early years of our century, many of them, therefore, learnt the Devanāgarī script to be able to read the Satyārth Prakāś, just as in the second half of the nineteenth century, scores of people had learnt

the Kaithī script to read the manuscripts of the Rāmcaritmānas. The Satyārth Prakāś which is read to this day in many Indo-Mauritian homes, by Ārya Samājīs in particular, constituted a significant milestone in the history of KhB. in Mauritius, although this work is too sanskritized to have been well understood in the island in the opening years of the century.

b. Manilal Doctor and KhB.

Urged by M.K.Gandhi to visit Mauritius and work for the welfare of the Indians in this country, Manilal Maganlal Doctor, who had qualified as a barrister in Bombay, and had also been called to the bar in London, arrived in Mauritius in October 1907. He was then twenty-six. On the 16th, he took the usual oath at the Supreme Court, Port-Louis, to practice as a lawyer. He was the first Indian lawyer to practice in Mauritius. There was plenty of work for him: defending the Indians in the law-courts where, generally speaking, they were treated with undue severity, as well as social and political work directed towards their welfare and advancement.

To speak more effectively for the cause of the Indians in Mauritius Manilal (as the people called him) launched, with the financial support of the Indian traders, the Hindusthānī, a weekly and later a daily newspaper, the first issue of which came out on the 15th March, 1909. The paper appeared for some time in English and Gujarati, and later changed to English and KhB. The first Hindi newspaper of Mauritius was born. The contents of the Hindi columns often included articles on Hindu festivals and other aspects of Indian culture, news and reports, and criticisms of the severe economic conditions to which the Indians were subjected. While only few of the Indians could read French newspapers, despite the fact that their dialects were interlarded with Franco-Mauritian or French-Creole words',⁵ a certain number of them could read and understand the Khaṛī Bolī of the Hindusthānī. The local character of some of the articles engendered much interest, and the readers often discussed the substance amongst themselves. Thus, during the early years of the twentieth century, the Hindusthānī which gave to Mauritius its first local Hindi prose in the Devanāgarī script, made a useful contribution towards the growth of KhB.

The KhB. printed in the Hindusthānī, as can be observed from Appendix II (copy of an article from the Hindusthānī issue of the 2nd March, 1913), hardly contains any Perso-Arabic vocabulary. Typical of the Mauritian KhB. Hindi prose in the early years of the century, however, the language leaves much to be desired in several places.⁶ In fact, there were very few people in Mauritius in the first and second decades of the twentieth century who could contribute articles written in a fairly good KhB.⁷

Manilal was a powerful speaker on the public platform. The first big public meeting he held in Mauritius was in the village of Tyack which adjoins several sugar estates in the south of the island. The large gathering consisted mostly of Indo-Mauritian workers. In the course of the meeting, he strongly attacked the abuses of the indenture system and severely criticized the inhumanity of the French plantocracy. It was a speech which fired the imagination of the enthusiastic crowd. In the seventies of the last century, Adolphe de Plevitz had fearlessly denounced their oppressors, and after him it was the first time they heard such a powerful voice raised in their defence. Manilal who was Gujarati-speaking addressed the crowd in KhB. Never before in Mauritius had the language been used for political speeches. On previous occasions, KhB. had been used on a very small scale for educational and religious purposes, but now they heard the language being spoken from the public platform as a medium for expressing grievances and formulating demands. He delivered such political speeches frequently during his four-year stay.

Bhojpuri speakers not only understood KhB., but towards the end of the first decade when the Arya Samaj was founded, some were even speaking it occasionally, although admixed with Bhojpuri. The use of KhB. was beginning to be looked upon by Indians in general as a sign of education and prestige. It was not only the occasional medium of expression of the Brahmin priests, but now they also associated it with the name of M.K.Gandhi and Manilal Doctor; it was the language of the Satyārth Prakāś, for some the new Hindu bible, and also of the Hindusthānī, the paper which championed their cause. For many years, a number of Indo-Mauritians called KhB. by the prestigious name of bhāṣā.

Reports of gross maltreatment of Indian workers poured in at Manilal's office in Rue de L'Eglise, Port Louis. Manilal travelled indefatigably over the length and breadth of the country. He had a few active followers in almost all the districts. He visited hamlets, villages and, with employers' permission, a few estate camps too; he talked to the people, investigated their grievances, and endeavoured to intervene on their behalf with the authorities concerned.

Manilal was in great demand with the Indian community all over the country. They invited him to their festivals and other social gatherings frequently, and, on such occasions, he addressed meetings large and small on the subject of Hinduism and Indian culture in general. In all political and social gatherings, Manilal 'always spoke in Hindi',⁸ and, therefore, while striving for the economical and political welfare and general uplift of the Indians in very difficult circumstances, he indirectly assisted the cultivation of KhB.

Like his friend and preceptor M.K.Gandhi, Manilal urged the Indians to devote more attention to the education of their sons and daughters. Through the influence of his speeches, and his contact with the people, more Indian children were sent to state schools, and more voluntary schools, Hindi classes in particular, were opened during his stay and thereafter, especially in hamlets and villages where the ex-indentured workers had settled. Many Hindi schools, however, continued to teach KhB. in the Kaithī script, and a few years were to elapse before Kaithī was to be completely displaced by Devanāgarī.

Following an application from the Chamber of Agriculture (the organisation of the French planters in Mauritius) for a loan and a resolution passed by the Council of Government inviting the appointment of a Commission to investigate and report upon the conditions of the colony, a Royal Commission arrived in 1909. By that time, Manilal was well acquainted with the conditions of the Indians in Mauritius. He gave evidence before the Commission showing the hardships to which Indian workers were subjected in the colony, and made several suggestions

to the Royal Commissioners. Concerning the educational plan, he suggested that an Indian language be included as one of the principal subjects in the school curriculum. Manilal, as well as the other Indians who went before the Commission, was supported by the 'Action Libérale', a Creole political movement which had been set up to fight the reactionary sugar-planting interest.⁹ The Royal Commission in 1909, however, ignored Manilal's suggestion regarding the teaching of oriental languages in state-schools. In fact, the teaching of oriental languages, as subsidiary subjects, by teachers employed on a part-time basis, was a matter which had to await the mid-twenties of this century, whilst teaching on a full-time basis, as Manilal suggested to the Royal Commission, was lying in a much more distant future.

Following a recommendation of the Royal Commission, however, the infamous 'double cut' of wages which had afflicted indentured labourers over the previous 70 years was at last abolished.

A further improvement in the conditions of the Indo-Mauritians took place three years later with the enactment by Government of the Indian Marriages Amendment Ordinance No.28 of 1912, making provisions to the effect that duly authorised unpaid Civil Status Officers (the majority of those who were appointed were Hindu priests) could celebrate Indian civil marriages 'à domicile' and that the marriage could be registered in 'English, Hindustani [Urdu], Hindi or Tamil'. The latter clause authorising the use of KhB. and other oriental languages in Civil Status documents was significant, as it indicated the position of oriental languages as then viewed officially (Marathi and Telegu were not considered important enough for this purpose).

c. Foundation of the Arya Samaj

Manilal's work brought about a general awakening amongst the Indians of Mauritius. Workers on sugar plantations growing more and more conscious of their rights were becoming less and less subservient. The Franco-Mauritian employers viewed the situation with concern. They

represented Manilal as an agitator bent on destroying good industrial relations, and they endeavoured to stem his movement in every way possible. Hooligans, including Indo-Mauritians, apparently hired by the employers, now and then appeared on the scene of some of his public meetings and created disturbances. Small holders of estate-lands who supported Manilal were threatened with discontinuation of their tenancy if they did not immediately withdraw such support. In fact, towards the end of his stay in Mauritius (four years after his arrival), Manilal saw his following considerably reduced.

Manilal was not deterred, however. He continued his activities as courageously as ever. In order to consolidate the progress which had been achieved, and to ensure continuity of social and cultural advancement among the Indians, he formally founded the Arya Samaj on the 17th April, 1910, with the collaboration of some Sikh soldiers and Punjabi jail warders, and a few progressive Indo-Mauritians. The time was ripe in Mauritius for the precepts of Arya Samaj to be accepted and followed by a number of people. The Satyārth Prakāś as well as the Hindusthānī had helped to prepare the way. The greed and other failings of many Brahmin priests, the expounders of Sanātan Dharma, the orthodox Hindu religion to which most Hindus belonged before the coming of the Arya Samaj, had already done a certain amount of damage to the old religion. The Arya Samaj, therefore, quickly attracted enthusiastic followers, including the great majority of the so-called low-caste Hindus who had previously been looked down on by the higher castes. This organisation has proved to be a firm cultural and religious establishment that flourishes to this day in Mauritius. It has throughout the years of its existence devoted sedulous attention to the cultivation of KhB. which the Ārya Samājīs sometimes zealously call Ārya bhāṣā.

Manilal also founded an association named 'Young Men's Hindu Association' to help and advise Hindu parents in matters relating to the education of their children.

Manilal Doctor left Mauritius on 23rd September, 1911. He donated his Hindi press to the Arya Samaj which started in the same year the publication of their Hindi and English fortnightly, the Ārya

Patrikā. He retired to Bombay and lived in obscurity for the rest of his life. But he was not forgotten by Mauritius. The Government invited him to join in the celebrations held in Mauritius when India became a Republic in February 1950. H.Tinker has described Manilal as 'the first-and only-Indian to try to exert political leverage.... but in reality he was a tragi-comic figure who was unable to achieve anything of substance'.¹⁰ In fact, both in the political and the public sphere (e.g. increased Indian participation in the public services), Manilal attained nothing, and he departed from Mauritius 'smarting with humiliation'.¹¹ But in the social and cultural field, it would be unreasonable to ignore his performance. His appeal, which was never sectarian, had an impact on Indo-Mauritians as a whole. His contribution was enhanced by the strengthening of cultural identity among the Indians of Mauritius, and the foundation of the Arya Samaj and their Hindi weekly which lives to this day.

d. Svami Munglanand Puri

The period under review is marked by the arrival of a relatively large number of scholars and Hindi protagonists who visited Mauritius from India under the auspices of the Arya Samaj and the Sanātan Dharma. They preached and lectured actively amidst Indo-Mauritians who held them in high respect, and in most cases the medium of expression from the platform and for daily familiar discourse was good KhB. After Gandhi and Manilal, the first of this long line of scholars to arrive in Mauritius was Svami Munglanand Puri.

Indo-Mauritians, especially the great majority of immigrants' descendants saw a Svami in orange-coloured garb for the first time. He stayed for less than a year, but he travelled extensively to areas inhabited by Hindus and lectured indefatigably. He spoke a perfect KhB. A few Mauritians born at the turn of the century or a little before can still remember his impressive Hindi speeches. When the Svami returned to India, he published articles on Mauritius in the Hindi paper Maryādā.¹² Premchand, a supporter of this paper, probably read those articles. In Mānsarovar Part II, there is a reference to Mauritius in the story entitled Sūdra (Allahabad, 1977, p.331).

Among those who sustained the influence of Svami Munglanand Puri in Mauritius was Atmaram Visvanath (later known as Pandit Atmaram), a Hindi writer of Marathi origin who later became an important exponent of KhB. in the island.

e. Dr. Cirañjīv Bhardwāj and Sumaṅglī Devī

With a view to ensuring the continuity of his work in Mauritius, Manilal Doctor solicited an Indian friend of his, Dr. C. Bhardwāj F.R.C.S., a surgeon qualified in England and a Sanskrit scholar closely associated with the Punjab Pratinidhi Sabha Lahore, to come and work in Mauritius. In December 1911, Bhardwāj, accompanied by his wife Sumaṅglī Devī and their two children arrived in Mauritius. He had written commentaries on the Vedas in the Vedic magazine then published in Sanskrit and Hindi by Gurukul Kangri, and it is reported that Leo Tolstoy took much interest in those articles.¹³ A translation of Swami Dayanand's Satyārth Prakāś into English was also amongst his writings.

Dr. Bhardwāj was an effective KhB. speaker, and in Mauritius he lectured regularly from the Arya Samaj platform to large assemblies. The orthodox Brahmin priests sent to him a deputation exhorting him to refrain from criticizing the Sanātan Dharma and to stop preaching the Vedas and the tenets of the Arya Samaj, as, according to them, this could do nobody any good in Mauritius. But when he ignored their representations, they picketed his surgery. He left Port-Louis and settled with his family in the suburban town of Vacoas where the population has always been progressive and predominantly Hindu. On their arrival in Vacoas, early in 1912, Dr. Bhardwāj and his wife opened a part-time school where they both taught Hindi every evening to well-attended classes.¹⁴ The school of Bhardwāj and his wife, the first KhB. school run on scientific and methodical lines in Mauritius, considerably increased proficiency in this subject in the town of Vacoas. After the classes, almost every evening, the couple preached the Vedic religion, that is the version of the Arya Samaj, to small gatherings.

Sumaṅglī Devī was not only a teacher but also a good speaker from the public platform. In fact, she was the first Indian woman to speak in public gatherings in Mauritius. The example set by her resulted in

many Indian women especially those of Ārya Samājī families entering social work. In Vacoas, Indian women formed an association which met regularly. The language of the meetings was mostly KhB., although at that stage it must have been inevitably mixed with a certain amount of Bhojpuri. The activities of the Ārya Samājī women of Vacoas were later copied by several other localities.

During the stay of Bhardwāj and his family, the Arya Samāj bought land in Port-Louis and built their first head-quarters. The association was officially registered under the name of the 'Ārya Paropkārīṇī Sabhā' in 1913. Under the guidance of the couple, about forty more Arya Samāj branches were established in various parts of the country, with Hindi schools attached to some of them. Bhardwāj also assisted the Arya Samāj in editing the Ārya Patrikā.

The couple did not involve themselves in the political and economic affairs of the island, and, throughout their stay, they concentrated on the dissemination of Vedic tenets of the Arya Samāj and the teaching of good KhB. Bhardwāj's medical practice was only a side-line. They stayed for two and a half years but before they left, they arranged with the Punjab Pratinidhi Sabha to send to Mauritius another missionary. Svami Svatantranand arrived shortly before their departure.

In assessing the work of Bhardwāj and his influence on the cultivation of KhB., one must also take into account the role he played in training local people to manage the affairs of the Arya Sabha. During his stay in Mauritius, he discovered among his trainees one young extraordinary talent. He was Kashinath Kistoe (later known as Pandit Kashinath) who, through his personal recommendation, was placed at the D.A.V. College, Lahore, to pursue studies in order to become an Arya Samāj missionary in Mauritius. Bhardwāj and his wife raised further the cultural consciousness of Indo-Mauritians, in general, and gave them a taste of good KhB. Moreover, they left on Vacoas a permanent Ārya Samājī imprint and a KhB.-speaking tradition amongst many of its Hindu inhabitants.

f. Svami Svatantranand and Hindi

Tall, stalwart and energetic, Svami Svatantranand arrived in

Mauritius in 1914 to work under the aegis of the Arya Samaj. He was a Sanskrit scholar very zealous about the teaching of KhB. and the spread of Vedic knowledge. Together with Bhardwāj and his wife, the Svami toured the island, the rural areas in particular, and established contact with the Indo-Mauritian masses. On the departure of Bhardwāj and his family the same year, he began his work in earnest.

Svami Svatantranand laid particular stress on the teachings of Svami Dayanand as expounded in the Satyārth Prakāś. Since the turn of the century, the Satyārth Prakāś had reached some Ārya Samājī families and societies, but its circulation was still very limited. Many more copies of this book were ordered from India during this period. An objective of the Svami was to promote further its study, but as a knowledge of KhB. was an essential pre-requisite for reading and understanding it, he assisted the Arya Samaj in every possible way in opening evening schools for the teaching of KhB. Under his guidance, a number of additional Arya Samaj branches affiliated to Head Quarters in Port-Louis were established. Several of these branches conducted Hindi schools. He further encouraged the formation of groups for the careful study of this treatise. The svami travelled all over the country, sometimes on foot, and people gathered in large numbers including Sanātan Dharmīs to listen to an eloquent KhB. speaker. During his stay in Mauritius from 1914 to early 1916, much progress was made in popularizing KhB., especially among Ārya Samājīs. Describing his own work in Mauritius, Svami Svatantranand has written as follows: "Together with the preaching of the tenets of the Arya Samaj, I have emphasized the learning of Ārya bhāṣā. When I went to Mauritius in 1914, I opened Hindi schools in the Arya Samaj branches. The aim was then to enable Ārya Samājīs to read the Satyārth Prakāś. The Sanātanī Hindus, too, then [vying with the Ārya Samājīs] opened Hindi schools. The outcome was that Indians in Mauritius acquired a knowledge of Hindi.'¹⁵ This statement rather overrates the achievement, especially when we take into account the fact that in the second decade of this century Ārya Samājīs numbered well under a quarter of the Hindu population of the island. Without doubt, however, Svami Svatantranand's work was influential in spreading KhB.

Like Bhardwāj, Svami Svatantranand trained several Indo-Mauritians for the advancement of the Arya Samaj in the island. Among the people who were influenced most by him were some working-class youngsters, faithful followers who applied themselves closely under his guidance to the study of Vedic Hinduism and KhB. A few of them later became missionaries of the Arya Samaj, travelling to various parts of the country and spreading Vedic teachings in a KhB. spoken spontaneously although not always correctly.¹⁶

The Svami revisited Mauritius with Manilal in 1950, and in his public addresses, he expressed much pleasure and satisfaction on seeing the economic, political and cultural progress of the Indians in Mauritius. He is remembered gratefully to this day in the island.

3. The Arya Samaj, the orthodox reaction and KhB.

a. The role of the Rāmcaritmānas in the progress of KhB.

One important event in this period was the arrival from India of the Rāmcaritmānas in printed Devanāgarī towards the middle of the second decade. The printed book contained the original Avadhi verses of Tulsīdās with the paraphrase of all the verses in standard KhB. prose. The Kaithī script which had been in use throughout the immigration period in the 19th century had already lost some importance by the introduction, at the turn of the century, of the printed Satyārth Prakāś followed by newspapers, the Hindusthānī (1909-1913) and the Ārya Patrikā (1911-1913) in the Devanāgarī script too, and now with the coming of the complement to the Satyārth Prakāś - the Rāmcaritmānas in print - Kaithī virtually received a finishing blow. Henceforth, KhB. prose and poetry in *the* Devanāgarī script was going to progress steadily. While the Ārya Samājīs were reading and expounding the Satyārth Prakāś, many more, the Sanātanī Hindus, were chanting the verses of Tulsīdās and interpreting their meaning by means of the KhB. prose set against all the verses in the new text. In previous years, the explanation of the Avadhi verses in Rāmcaritmānas sittings had been invariably through Bhojpuri, but now with the availability of the printed text, and also to vie with the Ārya Samājīs, the Sanātan Dharmīs made more and more use of KhB. in the

Rāmcāritmānas sittings going on all over the country. The tradition has continued, and the use of Bhojpuri instead of KhB. in a Rāmcāritmānas sitting today strikes Indo-Mauritians as something rather unusual. There is no doubt that in the early decades of this century, KhB. progressed a good deal in Mauritius through frequent and extensive use of the Satyārth Prakāś and the Rāmcāritmānas, particularly the latter.

b. Pandit Kashinath and KhB.

Svami Svatantranand was preparing to leave Mauritius in 1916 when Kashinath Kistoe returned from India. He had since 1912 been studying English, Hindi, Sanskrit and the Vedic religion at the D.A.V. College, Lahore. He was the first Indo-Mauritian missionary of the Mauritius Arya Samaj, educated in India, to take over from an Indian missionary. Dedicated and very able, Pandit Kashinath was going to tread in the footsteps of Dr. Bhardwāj and Svami Svatantranand, and from 1916 onwards he became not only the principal missionary of the Arya Samaj, but also a good teacher and a very influential protagonist of KhB. in the island, and latterly the editor of the Arya Samaj weekly paper as well.

The second and third and early fourth decades of our century were a period of religious discussions and refutations, sometimes very heated, between the Arya Samājīs and the Sanātan Dharmīs of Mauritius. The language of all the discourses was KhB., and they were attended by large gatherings. Pandit Kashinath often participated in the discussions. He argued with courtesy and extraordinary ability, and in all the contests, either polemics in papers or contentious dissertations in public gatherings, he proved to be a formidable opponent. Although of Bengali origin, he had a very good command of KhB., and all members of his family also used the language with natural ease and fluency. He was a good singer and harmonium player too, and in the course of social and religious functions, members of the audience would often make requests for his songs.

When the Arya Patrikā, the Hindi and English organ of the Arya Samaj, reappeared as a weekly in 1924, after it had closed down in 1913, Pandit Kashinath became its first editor. Under his editorship, the Arya Patrikā carried articles on a variety of topics - disputations

between the two rival Hindu religious parties, criticisms of the planting interest, matters of moral and cultural significance, local news etc. - and attained a respectable standard.

The editorials of the paper often showed examples of an easy, concise and idiomatic KhB. with an occasional smack of Bhojpuri. The language and style of the Ārya Patrikā, issued in the twenties (Appendix III), particularly that of the editorials compares favourably with that of the Hindusthānī and illustrates to some extent the headway Mauritian KhB. had made over the previous decade.

In spite of this progress, the language of the Ārya Patrikā in the twenties, especially that of the contributors, with its occasional use of an unusually sanskritized diction¹⁷ and the grammatical errors appearing from time to time, indicated that KhB. in Mauritius was undergoing a process of development through the normal stages of mistakes and growing pains, much as it was in India during the Dvivedi period.

Pandit Kashinath taught evening Hindi classes methodically and with much zeal, in contrast with the desultory teaching going on then in the numerous baiṭhkās of the island. He conducted Hindi teacher-training classes too. A few people who are still working in Mauritian schools owe to him their teacher-training and knowledge of KhB.

Commissioned by the Arya Samaj, Pandit Kashinath produced three Hindi readers - Śiśu Bodh Parts I, II, III, and a short geography of Mauritius for Hindi schools, especially those running under the supervision of the Arya Samaj. He was the second author to have produced such KhB. primers in Mauritius, the first having been Atmaram Vishvanath in the twenties. Published in 1935, Pandit Kashinath's readers stand among the early examples of Mauritian Hindi prose for children in Mauritius. A few of these readers which are out of print are still to be found in the country. At Appendix IV is an extract from the second edition of Śiśu Bodh, Part III, printed in 1945.

Pandit Kashinath's impact was great. Some of the young people who came under his influence, later became pillars of the Arya Samaj and

advocates of Hindi. Amongst them is Mohunlal Mohit, whose book Ārya Sabhā Maurīśas kā itihās was published by Ārya Sabhā Maurīśas (Ajmer, India, 1972, 184 pages), and who has been the President of this organization since 1967. Pandit Kashinath, who died in 1947, remained active as a missionary, a teacher and Hindi protagonist for a little under three decades.

c. Impact of the conflict between the Arya Samaj and the Sanātan Dharma on KhB.

The second decade of the present century marked the beginning of trenchant attacks of the Arya Samaj on the doctrines and traditions of the orthodox Sanātan Dharma, with ensuing gains both to the Arya Samaj and the Ārya bhāṣā'. The Arya Samaj had, in fact, many organized opportunities of criticizing the beliefs of the Sanātan Dharma. They held at their headquarters in Port-Louis a weekly meeting with a programme comprising short talks and study of the scriptures (Satyārth Prakāś, the Vedas etc.). They celebrated in private homes with friends and relatives the various saṅskāras as prescribed by Svami Dayanand's Saṅskār Vidhi, and more frequently in baithkās and private homes the havan yajña. These were occasions for the free use of KhB. and strictures on puranic beliefs and ways of life which they often ridiculed as superstitious. The Sanātan Dharmīs too, in their Rāmcaritmānas sittings and other religious gatherings (Satnārāyan Svāmī kī Kathā, Bhagavad Gītā, Śrimad Bhāgavata etc.) did not spare the Ārya Samājīs: they branded them as nāstik (atheists) and, endeavouring to outshine them, frequently laid aside Bhojpuri and took to KhB., and occasionally to Sanskrit which the officiating priests knew the audience did not understand. Bhojpuri was, in fact, losing in the process, and the Ārya Samājīs emphasizing more and more the use of Ārya bhāṣā even called Bhojpuri 'boorish' (moṭiyā). This strife between the two parties, reminiscent of that which occurred in India during the last quarter of the 19th century, led to polemics in newspapers in English and Hindi, and to open acrimonious confrontation in public debates. It spread over the best part of two to three decades.

There were three major public debates (Śāstrārth) between the two parties confronting each other, one in 1911, the second two years later, and the third in 1933 in the village of Lalmati attended by 25,000 people. The enthusiastic crowds were interested not only in the arguments put forward, but in the KhB. oratorical powers of the contestants. A fourth public debate was organized to take place in Vacoas in 1934, but when thousands converged on this town, the police apprehensive of an outbreak of violence stopped the debate from taking place by detaining the debaters and ordering approaching crowds to return home. The police did not interfere, however, with the sermon, lasting until midnight, of an Arya Samaj missionary amidst 18,000 people who had already assembled in the pavilion erected for the occasion.¹⁸ In fact, it was a period in Mauritius when religious controversies became the talk of the day. Discussions spread into estate-camps too, but it appears that estate employers hardly discouraged these arguments, probably hoping that differences could assist in hampering Indian unity against the planting interest.

The polemics injected some vitality into KhB. journalism. The Sanatanists founded the Oriental Gazette (1912-1914), a daily at first and a weekly later, to curb the Arya Samaj movement. Like the Hindusthānī (1909-1913) and the Ārya Patrikā (1911-1913), it was published in English and KhB.

The later years of the second decade until the mid-twenties saw a lull in the rivalry between the two religious parties. It is significant that the Ārya Patrikā reappeared in 1924 when the tension had made itself felt again (this time it appeared as a weekly). The Mauritius Indian Times (1920-1924) a daily in English and Hindi, and the Mauritius Mitra (1924-1932) another English-Hindi daily had both a puranic bias, although they published the views of both parties in English and KhB. In the early thirties, the Sanātan Dharmīs founded another weekly, the Sanātan Dharmārk (1933-1942) published in English, French and KhB., primarily to champion their cause. The Arya Samaj, on the other hand, founded a second weekly, the Ārya Vīr (1929-1945) also published in English and KhB.

The controversies in the papers aroused the interest of readers in general, and, as a consequence, more and more people subscribed to the papers. The first decades of the present century saw an improvement of public transport which, amongst other things, brought about an improved postal service throughout the country. As a result, the circulation of Hindi papers in hamlets and villages and even in the estate camps became moderately good.

The disputations and polemics were resulting, amongst other things, in new gains to the Arya Samaj, and a more frequent shifting from Bhojpuri to KhB., however unnatural it sounded occasionally. The formation of a Mauritian KhB. was well on its way, and Ārya Samājīs were principally the people who were accelerating the progress. In fact, 'you could immediately tell who were the Ārya Samājīs, because they always insisted on speaking Hindi. Through this insistence and by force of example, others too spoke Hindi, and in this manner more and more people acquired the Hindi-speaking habit. As a result, there was not a single Bhojpuri-speaking person left who did not understand and speak Hindi, however faulty his Hindi from the grammatical point of view.'¹⁹ This statement of J.N.Roy in his book Mārīśas mē Hindī bhāṣā kā saṅkṣipt itihās is exaggerated, but it is undoubtedly true that the long competition between the two parties strengthened the ranks of the Arya Samaj, energised KhB. and assisted considerably in popularising the language.

4. Kunwar Maharaj Singh and the progress of KhB.

While KhB. was progressing, chiefly through the work of the Arya Samaj, certain events happened which led to a change of government policy towards Indian vernaculars. In the boom of the 1920's, the sugar industry was expanding in Mauritius, and several estates were running short of labour. Indentured Indian emigration had stopped since 1915, and a deputation from Mauritius to the Government of India resulted in a renewal of labour emigration on a small scale and on a temporary basis, on the explicit condition that emigration on a permanent basis would be subject to the investigation and report of an official of the Indian Civil Service. A tiny spurt of immigrants arrived in 1923-1924. This time, however, it was free not indentured

immigration - the realisation of a dream cherished by such humanitarian and justice-seeking British administrators as Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in the 1870's and Sir Arthur Gordon, Governor of Mauritius (1871-1875). In accordance with the agreement reached, Kunwar (later Sir) Maharaj Singh arrived in 1924 to investigate the conditions of Indians in Mauritius.

During his six-week stay, Maharaj Singh visited hamlets, villages and estate camps, and he received the visits of a number of people at his office in Port-Louis. He used KhB. as a means of communication most of the time. He was given three public receptions by Indo-Mauritians,²⁰ and on each occasion, the reception address and his reply was in KhB.

In the days Maharaj Singh visited Mauritius, KhB. enjoyed but little prestige in the eyes of the European and African Creole population, and even a few of the English and French-speaking Indo-Mauritians disowned it as a rather uncivilized and rustic element.²¹ The use of KhB. by Maharaj Singh, an Oxford graduate, an aristocratic Indian Christian visiting the island in an official capacity, brought to the language a dignity it had not known before.

After careful investigations, Maharaj Singh affirmed in his report that the system of employment of the sugar estates in Mauritius was vicious and wrongful, and he advised against any further emigration. This advice was accepted. The long story of labour emigration from India had finally come to its close. Following several requests from Indo-Mauritians, he further recommended that Indian languages be taught in the primary schools of Mauritius. This was accepted and implemented too. In some of the primary schools, the teaching of oriental languages, principally Hindi and Urdu, was started, for half an hour per week, to be increased in later years both in frequency and duration. This was a landmark in the history of government policy towards Indian vernaculars. After the closing of vernacular schools in 1881, it was the first time that Government established the teaching of oriental languages in state and state-aided primary schools in areas where the Indian population preponderated.

5. The dawning of Mauritian KhB. literature

At this stage, it is appropriate to turn to local KhB. writings published during the period under review. So far, printed Hindi works to reach the hands of Mauritians had been principally the Satyārth Prakāś, the Rāmcāritmānas, the Hanumān Cālīsā, the Gītā, a few of the 18 Purānas, the Mahābhārata (the last three works comprising Sanskrit verses with KhB. paraphrase), short stories of Premcand and others. All this literature available in the Mauritian book-shops had been imported from India. In the twenties and the decade that followed, however, there were sporadic attempts at creative writings on the part of several Indo-Mauritians, and a few of them succeeded in producing works of some literary merit.

The first flower of Mauritian Hindi literature was the Kuṇḍaliyā (1923) consisting of 111 six-line stanzas written by Lakshminarain Caturvedi 'Raspunj'. The author who was of Bihari origin settled in Mauritius in 1921 at the age of 42. The KhB. of Raspunj's poetry, as seen in the Kuṇḍaliyā bears the stamp of Braj, Bhojpuri and Avadhi. The theme of the work is based on the social evils of contemporary society. His other major work was the Śatābdī Saroj (1935), a long poem which portrayed the life and sufferings of the Indian immigrants in Mauritius. With a theme of this kind, and a diction less difficult than that of the Kuṇḍaliyā, and a vocabulary embodying Creole words which had spontaneously passed into Mauritian Bhojpuri, Śatābdī Saroj was both thematically and linguistically Mauritian. It is unfortunate that Raspunj's works which had been printed in India are out of print and not traceable today (Raspunj has been discussed at greater length in chapter five).

A contemporary of 'Raspunj' to write KhB. poetry was a Muslim Indo-Mauritian, Janab Mohammad who became known for a long poem written on the subject of the cyclone which devastated Mauritius in 1892. He is remembered to this day by the name of 'Miājjī Siklon'. Like most of the KhB. works of this period, his poetry is both out of print and unobtainable.

Among the earliest exponents of Mauritian KhB. prose was Pandit Atmaram. Born in India in 1881, he settled in Mauritius in 1912. He published about 14 books, large and small, a few of which were in Marathi and English. His major KhB. works were Maurīśas kā Itihās (1921) and Hindu-Maurīśas (1936), both printed in India. Of these two, the one which achieved wider circulation and popularity was Maurīśas kā Itihās. In 1924, it went through a second revised edition (500 copies) of 275 pages. Written in plain KhB., it was a faithful record of the general history of Mauritius with the history of Indians in Mauritius forming an integral part of it. By virtue of its language and topic, therefore, Maurīśas kā Itihās was congenial to the majority of Indo-Mauritians, and its patrons included those who could not read KhB. with much ease. This book in general makes pleasant reading, although in several places we come across phrases and expressions which are quaint and ungrammatical by modern KhB. standards, and a style which is rather cumbersome.²² Hindū Maurīśas portrays the Hindus as a community, their temples and social institutions in the island. Among his minor KhB. works are: Maurīśas mē Bhagvān (1925); Śivājī; Lakśmī Bāī, and three Hindi primers.

While the influence of Bhojpuri can be traced in most of the writings of the period under review, including formal letters of invitation (Appendix V), it is almost entirely absent from the works of Pandit Atmaram whose mother-tongue was Marathi. All the works of Atmaram are out of print and only a few of his works are held today by some Indo-Mauritian families.

Atmaram's KhB. works were among the first Mauritian KhB. prose narratives to be read by Mauritians, and, as such, they were historically important, especially as they were produced at a time when the language and style of Mauritian KhB. was still at a formative stage.

During the period under review, another Hindi protagonist, J. Seegobin, a doctor of medicine produced a primer entitled Svāsthya Śikṣā (Port-Louis, 1935), particularly for children learning Hindi in part-time Arya Samaj schools. But like most KhB. works of the period, it is out of print.

6. Religious and cultural contacts with India

a. Birth centenary celebration of Svami Dayanand in Mauritius (1925)

A few of the writings mentioned above appeared during some of the very eventful years in the social and cultural history of Mauritius. With the boom of the sugar industry, the 1920's were prosperous times in the island.²³ In 1925, the Mauritius Arya Sabha like the Arya Samaj in India and elsewhere, celebrated the birth centenary of Svami Dayanand with enthusiasm and ceremony. An all-Mauritius essay competition in KhB. was held on this occasion, the subject being the life and teachings of Svami Dayanand. It aroused much interest and written essays from a large number of competitors were received by the Arya Samaj, the organizers of the competition. The International Aryan League, Delhi, at the request of the Mauritius Arya Samaj, sent to Mauritius Mehtā Jaiminī, in order to enliven the celebrations. He was a 65 year old lawyer and graduate who had translated the Satyārth Prakāś from Hindi into Persian, and who had a good command of English and KhB. People who had listened to him in Mauritius in 1925 describe him as a highly erudite person and a formidable KhB. speaker.

The celebrations took place principally at the Arya Samaj headquarters, Port-Louis, and lasted two days. They were attended by a huge assembly of Indo-Mauritians including Sanātan Dharmīs hailing from all parts of the island. The programme comprised Hindi speeches and songs centering around the life and teachings of Svami Dayanand. The best Mauritian exponents of KhB. addressed the assembly.²⁴ But the outstanding feature of the occasion was the contribution of Mehtā Jaiminī. On both days of the celebration, he spoke at length on Vedic culture and the tenets of the Arya Samaj. The address was dotted with English sayings and statements expressing the views of eminent Western thinkers and writers about Svami Dayanand. It was a remarkable delivery in a flawless KhB., and the acclaiming crowd drank in his speech. During his nine months' stay in Mauritius, he travelled extensively and addressed his audience in KhB. He attracted large gatherings everywhere, and gave altogether 260 talks on economic, social and cultural matters. By the time he left Mauritius, the majority of Indo-Mauritians had had a chance of listening to him. He also contributed several articles in

KhB. to the Mauritius Ārya Patrikā.²⁵ Although he did not actively participate in debates with the Sanātan Dharmīs, he shed light on various controversial religious matters of the day.

Under his guidance, an association of youngsters named 'Ārya Kumār Sabhā' was founded in April 1925, with the object of promoting Ārya bhāṣā along with Vedic religion and culture among the younger Indo-Mauritians. This association remained intermittently active thereafter, and continues to thrive to this day.

The numerous public speeches of Mehtā Jaiminī over his nine-month stay in Mauritius not only brought KhB. nearer to the Indo-Mauritians, but also enhanced its prestige amongst the hundreds who listened to him including English and French-speaking Indo-Mauritians of the younger generation who were inclined to look down on Hindi. The impact on the latter was felt all the more, as only the previous year, the KhB. speeches of Kunwar Maharaj Singh had influenced them in the same direction.

b. Visits of cultural leaders from India

While Mehtā Jaiminī was touring Mauritius on behalf of the Arya Samaj, the Sanātan Dharmīs who had the advantage of more funds at their disposal were not idle. They sponsored visits to Mauritius of several Indian personalities learned in the puranic doctrines and very proficient in Hindi and Sanskrit. The most distinguished amongst them were: Rāmśaran Śāstrī; Bansī Rām; Kanhaiyā Lāl Miśra, a singer-preacher and Rāmcaritmānas specialist who stayed in Mauritius a few years and introduced into Indo-Mauritian Rāmcaritmānas sittings new methods of chanting and interpretation in KhB., as practised in parts of contemporary Northern India. But the most outstanding of them all was Rāmgovind Trivedī, a journalist and Vedānta Śāstrī who had translated the Rigveda into Hindi. He was proficient in English too. He arrived in 1928 and during his three-year stay, he opened about a dozen Gītā centres, and taught Hindi and Sanskrit to a few Indo-Mauritians notably Sreenarain Jugdutt who later became a remarkable cultural leader and a very influential Hindi protagonist. Although a Sanātan Dharmī, Trivedī

strongly advocated the unity of the two main Hindu religious bodies in Mauritius.

The presence of these luminaries from India meant that Mauritius became a busy cultural centre in the mid 1920's, although the island had not yet received the benefits of broadcasting technology. It is significant too, that the majority of the visitors while being exponents of KhB. were not Bhojpuri-speaking, and their cultural work among Indo-Mauritians assisted much in further popularising KhB. throughout the island.

In accordance with their policy of keeping a preacher posted in every overseas branch, the International Aryan League, Delhi, sent to Mauritius Svami Vijnananand who arrived early in 1926, shortly after Jaiminī's departure. He worked in the island for about seven years. His activity brought to the Ārya Samājīs and to Indo-Mauritians in general, a new experience. In numerous localities, including Port-Louis, he organized from time to time beautiful processions (nagarkīrtan) of men, women and children who marched through the streets singing in chorus and waving banners inscribed with 'Om'.²⁶ The following is an extract of one of the hymns chanted in the processions of that time:

Sārī duniyā jagāyī Dayānand ne
Dhūm jag mē macāyī Dayānand ne
Sārī duniyā ajñāt kī rāt thī
Jñāna jyoti jagāyī Dayānand ne

The language of these hymns contrasted with that of the lyrics sung in hamlets and villages in the last quarter of the 19th century and the opening years of the 20th: while the lyrics sung in the latter period were in Bhojpuri, those of the Arya Samaj in the twenties and thereafter were purely in KhB.

Many men and women coming from neighbouring places joined the hundreds of the locality and enhanced the impressiveness of the processions.²⁷ The language of familiar discourse among the participants during the march of the procession was often KhB. In fact, these processions brought KhB. into the streets of the island. A sermon was

preached before or after the march.

Most of the Sanātan Dharmīs too were now discarding Bhojpuri and switching on to KhB. for hymns and lyrics of formal religious occasions.

c. Return from India of trained Indo-Mauritian missionaries

Cultural activity in the ranks of the Arya Samaj had hitherto been guided primarily by missionaries from India, although by the early 1920's there was already a small group of locally-trained preachers. Pandit Kashinath who had come back home from India in 1916 was so far the only Indo-Mauritian trained in India to serve in Mauritius, but in the mid-twenties several Indo-Mauritians who had been studying Hindi, Sanskrit, English and the Vedic religion at the D.A.V., Lahore, under the sponsorship of the Mauritius Arya Sabha returned to the island, on completion of their studies.²⁸ By that time, several of the distinguished Indian visitors were still culturally active in the island. Among the newly-arrived, the most valuable asset to Mauritius was Pandit Benymadho Sutteeram. He remained active as an Arya Samaj missionary for over 25 years. A number of Indo-Mauritians have learnt Hindi and Sanskrit from him. A distinguished scholar, a journalist, Pandit Benymadho (as he was called) possessed admirable powers of KhB. oratory. His services as a convincing KhB. public speaker were sometimes sought by candidates during election campaigns.

d. Foundation of the Mauritius Hindu Maha Sabha

The period under review continued to be dominated by cultural, social and educational competition between the Arya Samaj and the orthodox Sanātan Dharma. In 1925, with the collaboration of a few of the distinguished guests from India, the Sanātan Dharmīs founded the Mauritius Hindu Maha Sabha. This society often worked in association with the Gītā Maṇḍal founded in 1920 in order to propagate the puranic teachings of the Sanātan Dharma. In 1933, the Hindu Maha Sabha published the Sanātan Dharmārḱ (1933-1942). In the early 1970's, they

initiated the teaching of Sanskrit at different levels in a few centres which are operating to this day. With the collaboration of the Śrī Gītā Rāmāyaṇa Parīkṣā Samiti, Rishikesh, India, they also established in Mauritius collaborative annual examinations at various levels in the Gītā and the Rāmcaritmānas. In 1981, for example, 70 of the candidates presented by them passed the Samiti's Sanskrit examinations, and one passed the London G.C.E. Ordinary Level in that subject. The same year 76 Indo-Mauritian candidates were successful at the Gītā and 123 at the Rāmcaritmānas examinations. The medium of teaching at the centres and that of the examinations is KhB. Hindi.²⁹

7. Progress of KhB. in the later years of the period

a. The birth of secular Hindi

While the Sanātan Dharma and the Arya Samaj were both busy strengthening their ranks and teaching a KhB. Hindi in connection with the dissemination of their doctrines, a few advocates of Hindi in the north of Mauritius, predominantly the Bhagat brothers, set up the Tilak Vidyālaya in 1926, for the propagation of Hindi language and literature, on a secular basis. The organizers aimed at making it a centre for the coordination of the dissemination of Hindi in the whole country, not merely a school for teaching the language. Nine years later, the Tilak Vidyālaya was to be registered under the new name Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā, and reorganized on a national scale. A new chapter was to open in the history of Mauritian KhB. Hindi.

It is significant that the very year the Tilak Vidyālaya was founded, Basdeo Bissoondoyal, a Primary Government School teacher and a contributor to the Hindi section of the Ārya Patrikā, started an evening Hindi school for adolescents and adults on the premises of St. Julien Village school where he was already posted as a 'general purposes' teacher. It was the first time that an Indo-Mauritian with a good command of English and French was teaching a Hindi class. He applied to Hindi teaching the professionalism of a trained teacher

of English and French classes. The Hindi teaching was free of charge. The example of Basdeo Bissoondoyal was later followed by a few others, notably by Sreenarain Jugdutt, the English and French scholar who had learnt Hindi from Rāmgovind Trivedī.

The part-time school of Bissoondoyal was in fact the harbinger of a great movement in Mauritius: Bissoondoyal was to pursue higher studies in India in the near future and to return home in 1939 to initiate a considerable cultural movement which was to *greatly benefit* KhB. in the island and to inject new life into the cultural consciousness of Indo-Mauritians.

b. The progress of Hindi journalism

While prospects for the cultivation of secular Hindi were looming bright, all was not well with the Mauritius Arya Sabha. The late 1920's saw a split within their ranks of management: some of the executive members seceded, formed a new party called the Ārya Pratinidhi Sabhā, and installed a new press called the Shradhanand Press in Port-Louis. By the standards of that time, it was an excellent press, adequate for the printing of both newspapers and books; and its installation considerably improved the scope and quality of KhB. printing. Several Hindi lovers who had written very small middling works of no importance endeavoured to get them printed for their own satisfaction. The Shradhanand Press printed a weekly, the Ārya Vīr in English and Hindi. Under the editorship of the able Pandit Kashinath, this newspaper, although born of dissension, proved to be one of the best Hindi papers of that time. From the period of the Hindusthānī (1904-1914) to the time of the Ārya Vīr (1929-1945), Hindi journalism in Mauritius had acquired valuable experience and achieved appreciable progress in language, style and general presentation. The other Arya Samaj party, now called the Ārya Parokkārīṇī Sabhā published separately in English, French and Hindi a weekly paper which changed its name from Ārya Patrikā to Jāgriti.

By the end of the third decade, the ruptured ranks of the Arya Samaj underwent a further dissension. The evils of the caste system

had not spared even the organization of the Arya Samaj: in 1930, most of the so-called low-caste Hindus withdrew from the two parties and founded a party of their own which they officially registered as Arya Ravived Pracāriṇī Sabhā, with nearly the same aims and objects as the two other parties.

These differences were partly responsible for the serious financial difficulties which eventually led the Ārya Paropkāriṇī Sabhā and the Ārya Pratinidhi Sabhā to combine their weeklies, which from 1945 to 1950 appeared jointly under the name of Ārya-Vīr-Jāgriti. In 1950 when these two parties became reconciled, Ārya-Vīr-Jāgriti was replaced by the English-Hindi weekly Āryoday which remains to this day the organ of the Mauritius Ārya Sabhā.

The Hindi medium of the Āryoday has improved over the years, and today when quite a few new contributors, several of them educated in Indian universities, have come on the scene, the KhB. Hindi published in this paper, generally speaking, is good modern standard Hindi.

c. The course of KhB. in the early 1930's

The prosperity of the 1920's was quickly followed by the slump of the late 1920's extending into the 1930's. Also, at the general elections of 1931, Hindu candidates were badly defeated. In the religious and cultural sphere, however, Indo-Mauritians continued their activities enthusiastically. The year 1933 saw the celebration of two cultural events which, amongst other things, raised the prestige of KhB. and assisted further in nourishing its roots in the island.

The two main Arya Samaj bodies celebrated Svami Dayanand's 50th death anniversary (Nirvāṇ-Ardh-Śatābdī) on the 16th October of that year. There was a 10,000 strong 'nagarkīrtan' marching in the streets of Port-Louis with several groups reciting Sanskrit prayers and chanting lyrics purely in KhB. There were special addresses in KhB. including one from H. Levieux, a Franco-Mauritian medical doctor. There were, besides, two well-subscribed public competitions - one in Indian vocal music and the

other in Hindi poetry-composition - which 'infused new life into the Hindi world' [of Mauritius].³⁰

The second event celebrated in the village of L'Avenir, Moka, was perhaps of greater interest in the social and cultural conditions of Mauritius. It was a two-day literary conference organized by the Ārya Pratinidhi Sabhā, attracting large numbers of people from far and near. What was significant about that conference was that it epitomized both the culture of the East and that of the West: the platform accommodated some of the best cultural leaders of the country and the deliveries embraced six languages - English, French, Tamil, Telegu, KhB., and Sanskrit. Obscure to all except a few pundits, the Sanskrit address formed, as it were, the mantra of the occasion, ^{The use of Sanskrit,} in a sense, symbolised what the Ārya Samaj stood for.

One noteworthy feature of the conference was that it included a women's section. A one-hour cultural programme in KhB. was presented by some women headed by Mrs. Gayasingh, known as 'Bhagvati Mata' who a few years later (1939) published a collection of 44 Hindi wedding-songs entitled Vivāh Maṅgal.³¹

The conference of 1933 held in a spirit of collaboration, tolerance and harmony was unprecedented in the linguistic and literary history of Mauritius. It redounded to the credit of Ārya bhāṣā, but more than this, it assisted in earning for it a sympathetic recognition among its linguistic neighbours. It is unfortunate that the good example it set has subsequently been ignored, as literary conferences in the years which followed have been mostly exclusive.

It would be appropriate at this stage to turn to the teaching of KhB., as it existed in state and voluntary schools, towards the end of the period under view. In 1935, out of 126 state and state-aided schools, Hindi was being taught in 48.³² But this teaching was little more than in name: K. Maharaj Singh's recommendation in the mid 1920's had been followed, as described above, by half-an-hour's teaching, once per week, in a few schools, and there was a certain improvement in

this field thereafter. However, Government policy had hitherto shown no positive scheme to promote further Indian languages and Indian culture as part of the school curriculum. On the other hand, voluntary part-time schools were on the increase: Arya Samaj officially reckoned 15 to 20 schools. The Sanātan Dharma had as many schools attached to some of their temples. There existed, besides, by 1935, a number of Hindi part-time schools run by unaffiliated baithkās and private individuals. In the great majority of these voluntary schools, teaching was free of charge.

The major weakness in the teaching of oriental languages, including Hindi, in government and voluntary schools, however, was that the teachers, unlike the teachers of English and French, were both untrained and not adequately competent in their subject. It was the Arya Sabha which broke new ground in this respect: in 1935, they initiated a part-time Hindi teacher-training course at Mesnil, Phoenix, for Arya Samaj and other Hindi teachers of the island.³³ These courses, in some measure, improved the quality of teaching in voluntary schools, and 'Hindi progressed in all the villages, and people took to learning the language with more interest'.³⁴ The Arya Samaj had probably not intended this training course to act also as a reminder to Government that training of Government oriental language teachers was overdue, but if they had so intended it, the hint was ineffectual as Government seemed to have taken but little notice of it. In fact, Government training was not to be undertaken before the late 1940's when the enlargement of franchise brought to the Indian community for the first time considerable political power.

d. The Indian stage and the Indian sound-film

Much before this change took place in the political situation, however, the arrival in Mauritius of two mass-media brought about a social upheaval in the lives of Mauritians, particularly those of Indian origin. They were the Indian stage and the Indian sound-film, especially the latter. Both these media have assisted in promoting the cultivation of KhB., the stage in a limited measure and the sound-film to a considerable degree.

Theatrical companies from India visited Mauritius in the second decade and the early twenties of our century. The second visit left on Mauritius an indelible impress. The programme consisted of vocal and instrumental music, dancing and short plays in KhB. The performances staged all over the island attracted large audiences, and some of them are remembered nostalgically to this day by a few elderly people.³⁵

The shows of the Indian troupes stimulated the formation of local theatrical companies and, until the early forties, numerous Hindi plays were staged, amidst packed audiences, by rival companies in both urban and rural areas. These stage representations encouraged the growth of spoken KhB. among Indo-Mauritians in general, and especially among the inhabitants of rural areas of the island (the Indo-Mauritian stage has been dealt with in Chapter Five).

Hindi sound-films made their appearance in Mauritius in the early thirties.³⁶ It was an event of tremendous cultural significance. The films with their songs were very popular, especially at a time when other forms of entertainment were scarce and, both in urban and rural areas, they attracted big audiences, including a few people outside the Indo-Mauritian community.

Ever since the turn of the century, Mauritian KhB. had been going through a process of growth, cultivation and spread and, therefore, when the Hindi sound-film with a standard Hindi dialogue arrived in the early thirties, Indo-Mauritians in general, both in towns and in villages, had already acquired a *sufficient* understanding of the language to be able to enjoy it as an element almost intrinsic to their cultural milieu.

Over the last 50 years, and until now, the Indian film has in Mauritius enjoyed a popularity which has never been on the wane,³⁷ and today with regular exhibition on the television screen, it has become even a closer part of Indo-Mauritian home-life. Hindus and Muslims enjoy the films alike. Some western-educated Indo-Mauritians who rather disapprove of the plot of some Indian films because they feel that a few of the incidents are not authentic enough, still view the films to be able to enjoy the beautiful standard Hindi dialogue.

The Indian films have had their impact on Mauritian KhB. literature too: the theme and language of the early stories and novels reflect their influence, and stage performance to this day finds in the Indian films a potent source of inspiration.

The Mauritian audience of the Indian sound-films is much on the increase. The Hindi film will doubtlessly remain an influential feeder of KhB. and of the cultural links with the sub-continent. Equally, it will continue to strengthen Indo-Mauritian cultural identity as well as the composite culture of the island. As with many of the future developments that have been anticipated in this chapter, the seeds were sown in the period 1900-1935 which has just been reviewed.

8. The linguistic position of the Indo-Mauritian community in 1935

The generalised culture of the Indo-Mauritians at the turn of the century was broadly that to be found in the Bhojpuri speaking areas of India which had become to some extent homogenised and Mauritianised, as had Bhojpuri itself. This was the culture into which the Indo-Mauritian children were born, and it gave a degree of cultural identity to the community. By 1935 this culture and the identity that it imparted had come under attack on three fronts. It was attacked at the level of its colloquial base by Creole, and at different levels by Western culture and also by Indian culture.

In the mid-thirties, Indo-Mauritians spoke Bhojpuri and Creole, but more Creole than Bhojpuri in the urban areas. Many spoke French occasionally, and English was reserved for formal occasions. There now existed in the towns a generation of young people who could hardly speak Bhojpuri: some of them had a passive knowledge of it, and there were some who could hardly understand it at all. In a number of Indo-Mauritian homes, both in towns and in villages, Bhojpuri co-existed with Creole, and there was frequent shifting from one to the other, more to Creole in the towns and to Bhojpuri in the rural areas. In many families, while the mother spoke Bhojpuri, the father spoke Creole. Overall Creole was on the increase to the detriment of Bhojpuri, assisted by the smallness of the island, and this process continued throughout the period under review.

From 1900 to 1935 the Indo-Mauritians were increasingly subject to the influence of Western culture and Western values. This resulted, particularly in the towns, in a degree of cultural ambiguity. Already there were many Indo-Mauritians who had imbibed French culture and who had an excellent command of French. Indeed, a few of them ranked among the best French scholars of the island, and were, to all intents and purposes, 'brown Frenchmen'.³⁸

Bhojpuri had declined not only as a spoken language of daily familiar conversation. Until the turn of the century, it had been the language of religion and culture in the Indo-Mauritian community, except for the few occasions when the Brahmin priests used KhB. in solemnizing the kathā. By 1935, however, it had been completely ousted from this position: instead, it was KhB. which was now the language of religion and certain levels of culture and ceremonial among both Ārya Samājīs and Sanātan Dharmīs.

Subjected to continuing losses in this way, Bhojpuri was looked down upon not only by the increasing Ārya Samājī population, but also by the Sanātan Dharmīs who had long grown aware of its limitations and lack of dignity, in a manner that they had never felt until the early years of the century.

While Bhojpuri had lost and Creole had gained, KhB. had progressed steadily through the eventful years of the period under review. Generally speaking, by 1935, Indo-Mauritians, particularly those of North-Indian descent, had acquired a passive knowledge of the language. The great majority could understand it, and large numbers could speak it although incorrectly. There were a few, however, who had a good command of the language. These included some of the so-called brown Frenchmen or brown Europeans, and, among the Indian community these persons were held in much higher regard than those who had a good command of only English and French. KhB. on its own did not carry the same prestige, nor was a qualification in this subject of any economic value by the year 1935. But the greatest gain of KhB., however, was that by 1935, as stated above, it had already firmly established itself as the language of religion and formal culture among Indo-Mauritians, and as such enjoyed a prestigious position in the island.

This establishment of KhB. had taken place over a relatively short period. Indo-Mauritians, both Hindus and Muslims, oddly enough, had started regarding KhB., not Bhojpuri, as their 'mother tongue' giving their language as either Hindi or Urdu so that Bhojpuri does not appear on the census. It was one thing to encourage KhB., another to deride Bhojpuri which, in fact, provided the foundations to the only 'indigenous' Indian culture in Mauritius. Again the model of sanskritization fails because the impetus towards KhB. came not from within the community but from without, with the proselytization of Hindu and Hindi militancy and the reaction it provoked. The only real awakening of interest in KhB. spontaneously within the community at a popular level was, for the most part, due to the Hindi film. Nevertheless the period 1900 to 1935 marks the real establishment of KhB. in Mauritius and its further progress will be traced in the next chapter.

Notes

1. M.K.Gandhi was travelling by the S.S. Nowshera bound for Bombay, from Natal, South Africa, via Mauritius.
2. M.K.Gandhi, The Story of my Experiment with Truth (Ahmedabad, India, 1963), p.136.
3. This was the only speech of M.K.Gandhi in Gujarati; all the other speeches were delivered in either KhB. or English.
4. Population Census, 1901, M.A.
5. Hindusthānī, the English and Hindi weekly (issue of the 2nd March, 1913). 'Interlarded with Franco-Mauritian or French-Creole words' occurring in an article of this issue had been said with regard to the Bhojpuri spoken in Mauritius, but it applied to the other languages viz. Tamil, Telegu, Gujarati, Marathi, etc., as well. There are only two copies of the Hindusthānī preserved at the Archives of Mauritius - one is an issue of its first day, that is 15th March, 1909, and the other an issue of the 2nd March, 1913 (the Hindusthānī closed down in 1913).
6. Numerous grammatical errors can be found in Appendix I particularly with regard to the ne construction.
7. One of the contributors of the Hindusthānī was L.Bissoondoyal, father of B.Bissoondoyal, the Mauritian writer. The former later contributed to the Ārya Patrikā too. Another contributor of note, an Indian-educated contemporary of L.Bissoondoyal was Devdat Sharma who had a relatively good command of KhB.
8. S.Bhuckory, Hindi in Mauritius (Port-Louis, 1967), p.44.
9. The Action Libérale included among its members Edouard (later Sir) Nairac, an influential Franco-mauritian lawyer who later became the Chief Justice of Mauritius.
10. H.Tinker, Mauritius: Cultural Marginalism and Political Control: from Coolie Immigrant to Indo-Mauritian; paper for discussion on 16.3.1977, at the S.O.A.S.

11. H.Tinker, 'Odd Man Out: the loneliness of the Indian Colonial Politician: the career of Manilal Doctor'; Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, January 1974.
12. The writer of this thesis is indebted for this information to B.Bissoondoyal. Unfortunately, he was not able to supply the dates of issue of the particular numbers carrying the Svami's articles on Mauritius.
13. The information was obtained through the good offices of the Mauritius Arya Sabha. They could not, however, give specific details concerning the particular issues of the Vedic magazine which published Dr. Bhardwāj's articles.
14. The father-in-law of the writer of this thesis, J.Dunputh (b. 1895, d. 1966) who in after years became the President of Vacoas Arya Samaj, narrated to him his memories of the Hindi class of Dr.Bhardwāj. On one occasion, Dr.Bhardwāj instructed him how to locate his tongue in the proper position (Dr.Bhardwāj actually facilitated the process by touching Mr.Dunputh's tongue) to be able to produce the guttural and nasal sound of the last letter of the k row.
15. Svami Svatantranand, Videśō mē ek sāl, p.89, cited in Lakśminārāin Gupt, Hindī bhāṣā aur sāhitya ko Ārya Samāj kī den (Lucknow, 1960), p.247.
16. Among those who sustained the influence of SVami Svatantranand were Shankar Ramkhelavon and Jugnandan Nundlall who were also good singers. They later became well-known missionaries of the Mauritius Arya Sabha.
17. Examples of unusually sanskritized diction in an article entitled 'How to earn a good name in life' contained in the issue of the Ārya Patrikā of the 14th November, 1924, are: bhakṣyābhakṣaya (the edible and the inedible) and śītoṣṇādi (cold, heat, etc.).
18. A comprehensive account of the religious debates is given in Mohunlal Mohit's Ārya Sabhā Maurīśas kā Itihās (Ajmer, India, 1973), pp.39-45.
19. J.N.Roy, Mārīśas mē Hindī bhāṣā kā saṃkṣipt itihās (New Delhi, 1970), pp.87-88. J.N.Roy is also the author of several English works including Mauritius in Transition (Allahabad, 1960).

20. The three public receptions were in the following places:
(i) Rittoo School, St. Julien, Flacq; (ii) Aryan Vedic School, Vacoas Plaines-Wilhems; and (iii) Rose-Belle Shivalaya, Grand-Port. One of the Indo-Mauritians who cherishes memories of conversation with K. Maharaj Singh is B.Bissoondoyal.
21. The late S.Jugdutt, a Hindi protagonist of Mauritius related to the writer of this thesis that a couple of Indo-Mauritian friends sitting beside him in a railway-carriage asked him to close the Hindi book he was reading when they saw some Creoles entering the same compartment. This was approximately towards the end of the 1920's, and indicates the embarrassment felt by some towards things Indian.
22. Numerous grammatical errors are to be found, which is indicative of the lack of standardization at this period.
23. The price of raw sugar, per hundredweight, in London was 11 shs. in 1910, 58 shs. in 1920, 6shs.7d. in 1930 and 4 shs.8d in 1935. Source: Noel Deerr, The History of Sugar (London, Vol.II, 1950).
24. Among Indo-Mauritians who spoke from the platform on that occasion were: Jagat Ray Trivedi, Pandit Gaya Singh (President of the Reception Committee), Pandit Shankar Sharma, Pandit Kashinath and Pandit Ramawad Sharma, reputed for a polished and faultless KhB.
25. The Ārya Patrikā published an English article entitled 'Cursory view of Śhrī Mehtā Jaiminī B.A.LLB', in Novebmer 1925, shortly before his departure from Mauritius.
26. The following were among the localities where processions were organized during Svami Vijnananand's stay in Mauritius: Belle-Rose, Bon-Accueil, L'Espérance, Mahebourg, Lalmati, St.Julien, Rivière-du-Rempart, Pamplemousses, Goodlands, Vacoas, Chemin-Grenier, Triolet and Port-Louis.
27. M.Mohit, op.cit., p.27.
28. Among those who returned to Mauritius by the mid 1920's, on completion of studies at the D.A.V. Lahore were: Pandit Ramlakhan (he is now 99 years of age); Pandit Benymadho Sutteeram; and Pandit Sahdev Pandijī.

29. The statistics have been obtained through the kind offices of the Mauritius Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation which operates in association with the Mauritius Hindu Maha Sabha.
30. M.Mohit, op.cit., p.29.
31. Mrs. Bhagvati Devi (Mrs.Gayasingh), Vivāh Maṅgal (Port-Louis, last edition 1978).
32. A.Beejadhur, Les Indiens à L'Ile Maurice, p.92.
33. The part-time training courses were run on behalf of Arya Sabha by S.Jugdutt.
34. M.Mohit, 'Māriśas mē Ārya Samāj kī Hindi sevā'; Smārikā (Delhi, 1976) published on the occasion of the Second World Hindi Conference, 1976, p.55.
35. One of the artists of the group which arrived in the 1920's, Badrī Prasād, a harmonium-player is still remembered in Mauritius as a master musician.
36. The first Hindi sound-film shown in Mauritius was 'Bombaiṇī Mohinī' in 1932. This was followed shortly after by another popular film entitled 'Vīr Abhimanyu'.
37. A few South-Indian films are occasionally received in Mauritius. Most of the films, however, are Hindi films from Bombay, India, and just a few from Pakistan. But the KhB. dialogue of the Pakistani films is hardly distinguishable from that of the Indian films.
38. It is significant that the first history of the Indians in Mauritius to be written by the descendant of an Indian immigrant was published in French - A.Beejadhur, Les Indiens à L'Ile Maurice (Port-Louis, 1935).

CHAPTER THREE

THE CULTIVATION OF KhB. IN MAURITIUS 1935 TO 1950

This chapter considers the position of KhB. during the years 1935-50, and examines the events, personalities and institutions which were instrumental in encouraging its cultivation. This was a critical period during which Creole further consolidated its position as a lingua franca, thereby restricting Bhojpuri at a colloquial level, and KhB. established a broader base and became a much more prestigious language to use on formal as well as religious occasions for many Indo-Mauritians.

1. The year 1935

1935 was a notable year for Mauritius and the Indo-Mauritians. Port-Louis celebrated its bicentenary. The Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā was officially registered. Dr. (later Sir) Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, who was later to head the Labour Party, lead the country to Independence and become Head of State, returned to Mauritius, having completed medical studies in London. Finally 1935 was the centenary of Indian immigration to Mauritius.

This centenary was marked in various ways: Anauth Beejadhur, editor of the French newspaper Advance, published his book Les Indiens à L'Ile Maurice; Lakshminarain Caturvedi, an Indian who had immigrated to Mauritius in 1922 at the age of 42, produced as mentioned above Śatābdī Saroj, a long narrative Hindi poem in dohās and caupāīs; and Governor Jackson speaking of the Indians in Mauritius said: 'Mauritius owes much to the Indians. More than two-thirds of the people are of Indian descent and it is their presence in the Colony which has made possible the intensive development which places Mauritius among the most highly productive areas in the Empire.'

The occasion itself was commemorated by a monument, erected in the grounds of the Arya Sabha because the Municipality of Port Louis had not

felt able to allocate space in the Jardin de Compagnie, near Government House, where there are a number of other historical monuments. Before an audience of about a thousand people, various speeches were made emphasising the valuable contribution of the Indians to the prosperity of Mauritius, and the need to educate both girls and boys, to live harmoniously with other races and to have pride in oriental languages and Indian culture. Ironically all the speeches were in English, and the only sentence in an oriental language came from an Englishman, John de Lingen Kilbern, an English master at the Royal College, Curepipe, who had translated part of the Gītā into English. In the course of his speech he delighted the audience by saying: Bhaiyo, apnā dharm mat choro. Choro mat apnā dharm. Jo kuch uttam saccāī hai, so āp logō hī ke dharm mē hai." It is testimony to the considerable progress made by KhB. during this period that, had the celebrations taken place fifteen years later, most of the speeches would have been in KhB.

2. The Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā

One of the principal institutions in part responsible for the progress of KhB. during these years was the Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā (H.P.S.). Originally, as stated above, this had been the Tilak Vidyālay which, in 1935, extended the range of its activities and registered itself with this new name as a cultural, educational and social institute. An important aspect of this move was that it put one of the main thrusts of the propagation of KhB. and Hindi literature on an entirely secular basis, thereby greatly widening its impact.

During this period the H.P.S. had three main objectives. The first was to establish a sound organisation for the propagation and cultivation of KhB. which it advocated should be learnt by all whose mother tongue it was: Hindi being regarded as a key to Indian culture. The second objective was to ensure, as far as possible, that the teaching of KhB. and some Hindi literature served to lay the foundation of a good education. The leaders of the H.P.S. constantly emphasised that it was not enough to learn Hindi because it was a mother tongue, rather it had to be learnt to build or improve character and to produce

good citizens. The third objective was to ensure that Hindi was not isolated from English and French. On the one hand it wished to see Hindi in the same position as French in Government primary education, while, on the other hand, it advocated that Hindi teachers and students should also learn French and English.

The H.P.S. was, and still is, governed by a Committee of Management, also called the Executive Committee, consisting of twelve members elected by a general assembly of persons hailing from all parts of the country. There were sub-committees dealing with education, the library and the property of the Institute. Prominent on the executive were three notable figures: Oma Shankar Geerjanan (known as Pandit Geerjanan), Srinarain Jugdutt (known as Pandit Srinivas Jugdutt), and Jay Narayan Roy. These three formed the very active and effective working unit of the H.P.S., together with the capable and dedicated General Secretary Suraj Mangar Bhagat who served the H.P.S. from its early beginnings in the twenties until his death in the late seventies.

Pandit Geerjanan graduated at Benares University and returned to Mauritius in 1932 with a Hindi speaking Indian wife. Srinivas Jugdutt was educated at the best grammar school in Mauritius and he was considered at this period as the only person in Mauritius who could write and speak English, French and Hindi with equal facility. J.N.Roy returned to Mauritius in 1937 with the degrees of M.A., LL.B. from the University of Allahabad where he had been studying since 1925. Not only did he become a member of the Executive Committee, but he was soon elected President of the H.P.S., a position he occupied until his retirement in the early seventies. J.N.Roy is considered a good writer in both English and Hindi, and he became editor of the Hindi weekly Janatā in 1948, the same year in which he was elected to the Legislative Assembly.

From 1937 these three constituted the spearhead of the H.P.S.'s work. Jugdutt died in 1958, but the other two continued to work unremittingly until the early seventies. They were men of considerable stature and widely respected in Mauritius. While totally dedicated to the advancement of KhB., they constantly stressed that Hindi students should not neglect English and French. In addition to his social and

cultural contribution, and to his powers as a public speaker, Jugdutt was also highly regarded as a Hindi teacher. He used to teach Hindi individually or in small groups mostly in the evenings and always free of charge. He brought to this a professionalism and vitality that had hitherto only been seen in the teaching of French and English. Indeed it was the fact that these very well educated men who were accomplished in highly prestigious French and English should be such powerful advocates of KhB. that led many to reconsider their attitude to KhB. and to begin to learn it properly. In consequence it became more and more prestigious in the Indo-Mauritian community to know Hindi as well as English and French.

In pursuing its objectives, one of the principal activities of the H.P.S. in the early years of its existence was actively to encourage the opening of late afternoon voluntary Hindi schools at the primary level all over the island. Members of the Executive Committee and ordinary members of the H.P.S. would travel to various parts of the country, the rural areas in particular, and establish contacts with a view to organizing the teaching of KhB. in those places. The establishment of local committees, vidyā samitis did much to ensure the proper running of the schools. Such new schools, and some of the existing baithkā schools, were affiliated to the H.P.S. In the early thirties there were some 25 to 30 affiliated schools but the number steadily increased so that today the H.P.S. reckons there are 256 primary schools and 4 secondary schools affiliated to it.

Affiliation entitled the schools to certain services from the H.P.S. These were inspection and advice - important because most of the teachers in the early years were untrained - examination of the pupils at the end of the year in accordance with the prescribed syllabus of the Society - some of the schools ran all six primary classes - and finally collaboration in the celebration of the school anniversary which took place after the examinations. As the number of schools increased, it became necessary for the H.P.S. to appoint a full-time adviser, inspector and examiner for the schools. He was Nemnarain Gupt who travelled all over Mauritius keeping contact with the affiliated schools and encouraging the opening of new ones. The library of the H.P.S. has been named the

Nemnarain Gupt Hindi Library to commemorate his important contribution to the work of the H.P.S.

These affiliated part-time voluntary schools were free, and since they received no subsidy, they could not pay the teachers any salary, although some did receive a nominal allowance. The schools depended for funds on contributions, and especially those made at the anniversary celebration at which the appeal for funds was one of the most important speeches. These anniversary celebrations, which took place on Sundays, were significant cultural events in the villages. Preparation of the children's Hindi programme - one- or two-act plays, conversations, short speeches, recitations etc. - began several days before the event. The celebrations were well-attended, especially by parents eager to see their children participating in the programme and receiving their certificates from an important person. The other main feature of the celebration was the delivery of speeches in Hindi by distinguished guests, among whom were often the Commissioner for the Government of India and the Member for the particular constituency. From 1935 onwards Jugdutt, Geerjanan and Roy, each of whom was an excellent speaker, attended Hindi school anniversaries and addressed gatherings, sometimes of over 500 people, almost every Sunday. Before them KhB. speeches from the platform, delivered by Ārya Samāji and Sanātan Dharmī priests, had become very stereotyped. These three, however, adjusting their speeches to the occasion and the educational level of the audience, brought into their KhB. speeches the vitality and dignity of Western speakers. Sunday after Sunday the audiences in various localities listened to them with attention and interest. There can be little doubt that not only did the schools themselves make a major contribution to the propagation of KhB., but these annual functions also played an important part in encouraging the cultivation of KhB. at least at a formal level.

The teaching of Hindi under the aegis of the H.P.S. until the early forties was confined to the primary level. In order to promote the study of Hindi literature, the Society established in 1946 a connection with an examining body, the Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan of Allahabad, and set up an examination called Paricay, involving a syllabus of Hindi language

and literature at secondary level. This examination was established in collaboration with the Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan especially for Mauritius. The literature prescribed in the early years included Maithilī Śaraṇ Gupta's Bhārat Bhāratī and the Aranya Kāṇḍ of the Rāmcaritmānas. The Paricay, which can be equated in standard to at least G.C.E. O level, was the forerunner of other collaborative examinations the H.P.S. was to institute. In 1946 some 36 candidates sat the Paricay, of whom 17 were successful, and the number of candidates entering the examination increased considerably year by year thereafter. The same year the Society built their first head-quarters at Long-Mountain village (called Dhārā-Nagrī by them), and thus came into existence Hindī Bhavan one of the main centres of co-ordination for Hindi teaching in the island.

3. The Arya Samaj

The H.P.S. undoubtedly made a considerable contribution both to the teaching of KhB., and to raising its prestige among the Indo-Mauritians, but it was not the only institution active in this field throughout this period. The Arya Samaj in the early thirties had between 15 and 20 part-time Hindi schools under their aegis, most of which ran all six primary classes. This organization has considerably extended *its* field of education, and today *it* reckon^s over 250 part-time Hindi schools under *its* management. *The Arya Samaj* have also under their direction one secondary school, the D.A.V. in Port-Louis, with Hindi and Sanskrit among the subjects of its curriculum. In 1947, just a year after the H.P.S. had set up the Paricay, the Arya Samaj instituted in Mauritius four all-India examinations - Siddhānt Ratna, Siddhānt Bhūṣan, Siddhānt Śāstrī and Ved Vācaspati, the medium of these doctrinal examinations being KhB. Hindi. Seven years later, when many boys and girls had already passed the above examinations, the Arya Samaj replaced them with four other all-India collaborative examinations (the seat of the examining body is in Ajmer) oriented, at a higher level, towards the study of the Vedas and other Vedic Hindu scriptures - Vidyā Vinod, Vidyā Ratna, Vidyā Viśārad and Vidyā Vācaspati, which are held to this day. These religious examinations involve a certain amount of Hindi language and literature as well, and, therefore, they have helped not only in spreading a knowledge of the Vedic

tenets subscribed to by the Arya Samaj, but in further raising the level of KhB., particularly in its written form. At present, a number of Hindi teachers, especially those teaching in the Arya Samaj schools are holders of the Vidyā Vācaspati qualification.

4. Basdeo Bissoondoyal

During more than a decade of the period under consideration, the Indo-Mauritian community benefited considerably from the activity of a Hindu missionary. He was Basdeo Bissoondoyal who returned to Mauritius in 1939 upon completing higher academic studies in India. He had graduated with a First Class at Punjab University where his subjects included Hindi and Sanskrit, and he obtained a Master's degree in English at Calcutta. Like the rest of his family (his grand-father Gudarsingh, an immigrant had transcribed the entire Rāmcaritmānas), he is remarkably well-disciplined and systematic, and to this day, when he is past 75, his powers of oratory in English and Hindi are extraordinary.

The benefits of his mission were not only religious and cultural but linguistic too. In fact, the linguistic aspect of his work was so far-reaching that it was termed a third Hindi movement in the island. Among the early speeches which marked him as an intellectual of high calibre was one he delivered in English on 'India and the World' in 1941 at the town-hall of Curepipe, before a 1,000-strong audience including Dr. (later Sir) Seewoosagar Ramgoolam and other important persons. The speech was subsequently translated into KhB., and copies were distributed both in India and in Mauritius (about 1,000 copies were distributed in Mauritius).

Towards the end of the same year, B.Bissoondoyal organized with the collaboration of the H.P.S. a one-day Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan. The conference chaired by O.S.Geerjanan held in the hall of Cinéma des Familles, Port-Louis, was attended by about 8,000 people hailing from all parts of the island. Among the speakers were a few of the best Hindi protagonists of the day.¹ Their themes ranged from the history of KhB. in Mauritius

dating from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards to topics of Indian culture including the role played by the Rāmcaritmānas in strengthening the inner religious and cultural life of the Indo-Mauritian community. Indian vocal music too was an item on the agenda with songs especially selected for the occasion. A prominent feature of the conference was its exhibition of Hindi books, newspapers etc., including the four Vedas, the 18 purāṇas and manuscript copies in Kaithī script of several works, primarily the Rāmcaritmānas and Lallūjī Lāl's Prem Sāgar, some of which had been brought from India and others reproduced in Mauritius. There were also paintings from Muslim and Hindu Indo-Mauritian artists. The exhibition remained open for several days. The Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan of 1941, the first of its kind in Mauritius, awakened a new pride in KhB., enhanced its prestige and stimulated further interest in Hindi language and literature.

Through his speeches and organization, B.Bissoondoyal injected new life into the Indo-Mauritian celebration of religious and cultural festivals, e.g. Holī, Divalī, Gaṅgā-Snān etc.² His activities revitalized Indo-Mauritian cultural bodies. In the early 1940's, some of the best Indo-Mauritian musicians of the time (they were then all at an amateur level) grouped themselves into a Saṅgīt Samāj (an association of musicians) with B.Bissoondoyal himself as honorary chairman.³ The members also included people of Tamil, Telegu and Marathi origin. The language of the lyrics, however, was always KhB. The activity of the Saṅgīt Samāj which operated for the best part of the forties improved the quality of Indo-Mauritian music of the day. Furthermore, the songs of the better artists induced many young people not only to learn to sing but also to learn KhB. Hindi so as to understand better the lyrics of their songs. These lyrics were obtained from books imported from India and a few were composed by Indo-Mauritian Hindi protagonists. The singers had frequent opportunities of rendering their songs, one of which was the occasion of B.Bissoondoyal's pracār (sermons).

One of the finest achievements of B.Bissoondoyal was the celebration of the Vedic ritual, the Mahāyajña. It was celebrated in Port-Louis in

December 1943, and it firmly established his position as a prominent cultural leader and a foremost protagonist of KhB. Hindi in Mauritius. Prepared and organized several months before, this function achieved a record attendance of 60,000 from towns and villages, including a great number of Western-educated Hindus. Bissoondoyal's body of smart Svayam Sevaks (volunteers), in shorts and Gandhi cap, assisted in maintaining order and discipline. The main item which followed the havan yajña in which several priests participated was the one-hour sermon of B.Bissoondoyal centering principally on Indo-Mauritian welfare and the message of the Vedas and the Gītā. It was one of the most remarkable Hindi orations ever delivered in Mauritius, and 'one is thrilled at the thought how his words had the effect of magic on the gigantic crowd'.⁵ Never before in Mauritius had plain colloquial KhB. Hindi been used on a similar occasion with so much force and dynamism.

Much more significant than anything else to the cause of Hinduism and for the cultivation of KhB. was the activity of B.Bissoondoyal as a preacher and a teacher throughout the 1940's. His sermons delivered two or three times or more every month attracted crowds of men and women (700 to 800 people or more every time). Although the Bissoondoyal family is Ārya Samājī by faith, B.Bissoondoyal's mission far from being sectarian, embraced Hinduism on a broader basis, and his sermons were attended by both Ārya Samājīs and Sanātan Dharmīs. Also, his movement was one of the very few in Mauritius which involved enthusiastic women's associations in both urban and rural areas. During this period, the Bhagavad Gītā with commentaries in KhB. became a frequent theme of B.Bissoondoyal's gatherings. Readings from the Gītā increased among Indo-Mauritians, and this text with KhB. paraphrase found its way into many more Hindu homes. Throughout the 1940's, well-attended gatherings responded heartily to his orations delivered in a plain, clear, conversational, persuasive and flawless KhB. In fact, 'his language electrified the whole country as he toured every nook and corner of the island'.⁶ Several new terms and expressions enriching Mauritian KhB., dating from the forties and thereafter, were first introduced by

Bissoondoyal and other Indo-Mauritian leaders.⁷ Likewise, during the same period, Hindi names were given to several places bearing English and French names, although most of these Hindi names are very little used today.⁸

In the course of the 1940's, B.Bissoondoyal's speeches became more and more vehemently critical of Government policy towards Indo-Mauritians. He was thrice convicted of incitement and jailed - an event which served only to enhance his popularity, especially among Indo-Mauritians.

In 1947, B.Bissoondoyal, through his widespread influence among the Indo-Mauritian community, *did something* which approximated to Gandhi's Satyāgraha in India. He exhorted Indo-Mauritians to stop attending races on the last day of the horse-racing season of the year in Port-Louis, because these were then derogatorily called Les courses Malbares, i.e. races for the Indians. The boycott was complete. Thus, 'the philosopher and scholar, Basdeo Bissoondoyal who learnt the technique of Gandhi during his stay in India brought about an unprecedented unity among Indo-Mauritians.'⁹

B.Bissoondoyal's work as a Hindi class-teacher assisted much in the propagation of KhB. on a secular basis. His residence in Port-Louis, open to all Mauritians desirous of free Hindi tuition, turned into a popular and well-attended centre for the study of Hindi and Hinduism. His students included many who had received an elitist English and French-medium education. The vitality and professionalism which he brought to his Hindi class yielded quick results. In fact, several Indo-Mauritian writers of today have been B.Bissoondoyal's students in the past.¹⁰

After he had taught in Port-Louis for some time, B.Bissoondoyal decentralised his Hindi teaching by putting his advanced students in charge of part-time voluntary schools which were opened in various parts of the island including distant hamlets and villages. In 1946, in the course of a well-attended festival celebration, he had announced that it was intended to open 300 part-time Hindi schools in addition to those of the H.P.S. and the Arya Sabha.¹¹ The Bissoondoyal schools as they were called, opened in quick succession. Some of them had the six primary classes, each class consisting of an average of 25 to 30 pupils. In 1941,

B.Bissoondoyal had written Adhyāpak Sahcar ('the teacher's companion') on important points of Hindi grammar and composition - the first such work ever to be produced by an Indo-Mauritian - followed in 1943-1944 by seven Hindi primers which went through several editions, and a short grammar (Laghu Vyākaraṇ). Almost simultaneously with the primers, B.Bissoondoyal had produced Vyavahār Prakāś Uttamottam kathāō kā saṅgrah containing 30 short stories for the late primary and early secondary level. In addition, B.Bissoondoyal also published Hindi without tears, a small book of grammar and composition, in three parts, intended for students who knew English and French (1,000 copies of each part). These texts were prescribed in all his schools and used elsewhere too. In later years, however, most of the Bissoondoyal schools were entrusted to the care and direction of the Arya Sabha or the H.P.S.

The late 1940's saw a major event which gave a boost to KhB. In 1948, when elections based on an enlarged franchise were held, election candidates and their agents made use of the language from the political platform on an unprecedented scale (a little Bhojpuri was also used). The late S.Bissoondoyal, the missionary's younger brother who also stood as a candidate had a good command of English, French and Hindi. He used to address the electorate in three languages: Creole, French and Hindi. B.Bissoondoyal fully supported his brother, and some of the Hindi speeches he made on his behalf, including a few which displayed a talent for ferocious rhetoric, were models of oratory. S.Bissoondoyal was elected at the head of the list in one of the electoral districts.

The very year S.Bissoondoyal was elected to the Legislative Council, the two brothers founded a fortnightly paper, the Zamānā published in English, French and Hindi. In 1952, articles in Marathi also appeared; never before had any other Mauritian paper published anything in this language. The Zamānā carried articles on current affairs, including social and political comment, and occasional contributions on the subject of Hinduism. This paper ceased to appear in 1977, the year S.Bissoondoyal died, but during the 29 years of its existence, it served oriental languages well, Hindi in particular, and assisted towards the formation of an educated Hindi-reading public.

In the course of the 1940's, B.Bissoondoyal further published in Hindi

✓ a number of tracts and pamphlets including Frāns mē Bhārat, Manilāl Dākṭar, Dr.C.Bhardvāj, Mahātmā Buddha etc. (Port-Louis, 1,000 copies each). During the same period and thereafter, B.Bissoondoyal also contributed frequently to several Hindi newspapers of India including Dharmyug, Ājkal, Sāptāhik Hindustān, Kalyāṇ (of Kerala), Ved Vāṇī (of Punjab), and the Sanskrit newspaper Bhavitavyam (of Nagpur). From the early fifties, he grew less active as a missionary, and devoted much more time to serious academic and religious writings (the works of B.Bissoondoyal are discussed in Chapter 5). Without any doubt, Bissoondoyal's Hindi movement made a vital contribution to the cultivation of KhB. in Mauritius during this period.

5. Other writers

Apart from B.Bissoondoyal's publications, a few works of literary merit also appeared during this period. In 1941, Jay Narayan Roy produced Jīvan Saṅginī, a four-act play which was published on his behalf in Mauritius by the H.P.S. (2,000 copies). Brajendra Kumar Bhagat 'Madhukar' published three collections of his poems in India - Madhupark (1948), Vīr Gāthā and Rāginī (1949); each collection contained over 50 poems. The above Hindi works which achieved a moderately good circulation were well received by the KhB. reading public in Mauritius (the writings of J.N.Roy and Madhukar have been discussed in chapter 5).

Besides these major works, several less significant works of little literary merit were produced by lesser writers. Among these were: Koyal kī kūk, a collection of Hindi songs by Manilal Kanhaya (1935); a translation into KhB. of a few French poems of the Franco-Mauritian poet Robert Edward-Hart (1937-1938); Bhakti Prakāś, a short treatise on devotion and worship by Gopicand Chuttur, a primary school head-master (1937); Vīr Kṛṣṇa Itihās Mañjarī, a short story about Kṛṣṇa by Pandit Gayasingh (1938); Śivrātri aur Jyoti Liṅg, a tract on the Śivrātri festival by Nursing Das, the editor of Sanātan Dharmārk (1941). These works and others printed in Mauritius and circulated modestly (about 300 to 400 copies in each case) are today out of print and mostly out of circulation. They were historically important, however, as they indicated that creative writings in KhB. Hindi had begun to be produced by some ordinary people as well as well-known writers.¹²

6. Hindi Journalism

Printed KhB. during these years embraced Hindi newspapers as well, a few of them being contemporaneous whilst others appeared at different times of the period. Those which have not been already mentioned above are: Durgā (1937), a literary paper of the H.P.S. appearing occasionally, with a circulation limited mostly to members of the Society and in a cyclostyled form; Māsik Ciṭṭhī (1942-50, 10,000 copies of each number), a war-time monthly published by the Public Relations Office of the Government of Mauritius; Sainik (1946-1947) 1,000 copies per issue), a monthly founded by the Bissoondoyal brothers, the forerunner to Zamānā, mentioned above; Janatā (1948-1982, 500 copies per number) a bi-weekly at first and a weekly later. The first editor of Janatā was J.N.Roy who was also then an elected member of the Legislative Council.

Indo-Mauritian readers, in general, mostly turn to English and French for current news, and, therefore, Hindi newspapers have to face severe competition with the wide range of locally produced and imported newspapers and magazines in these two languages, French in particular. There has never been, besides, an adequate number of trained Hindi journalists to feed the papers. Consequently, from the foundation of the first Mauritian Hindi newspaper (Hindusthānī, 1909), right through the years of this century, the lifespan of Hindi papers, very much like that of many Hindi papers of the last century in India, has been relatively short. The one exception has been the Āryoday (1,000 copies per number) which was founded in 1911 under the name of the Maurīsas Ārya Patrikā, and published to this day. The Āryoday seems likely to survive since it is under the institutional protection of the Arya Samaj. This paper is written in good standard Hindi. (In Appendix VI is an article from the 11th September 1981 issue of the Āryoday). Two other papers had a longer life than most: the Zamānā (1948-1977) and the Janatā (1948-1982). In Appendix VII is a list of Hindi newspapers founded and published hitherto in Mauritius.

7. The events of the late 1940's

Among the factors which greatly assisted the cultivation of KhB. in the forties, especially in the late years of that decade, were certain events which provided a powerful stimulus to cultural activity in baithkās and elsewhere. These events were the Independence of India (1947), the

subsequent declaration of the Indian Government making Hindi their official language, the opening of an Indian Commission in Port-Louis, and the return of a Hindu majority to the Legislative Council for the first time (1948) in the history of Mauritius. The showing of Indian films imported in ever-increasing numbers continued to exercise a beneficial influence on Mauritian KhB. Frequent recitations and chantings from the Lorikāin, Kunwar Vijaymal, Ālhā Khaṇḍ, and the Rāmcaritmānas with jhāl (cymbals) and ḍholak (drums), often followed by KhB. commentaries, strongly enhanced the cultural character of the baithkā meetings all over the country. The new atmosphere also infused more life into the voluntary part-time schools of the baithkās some of which had begun to teach Hindi literature at a secondary level. In fact, the closing years of the first half of our century mark one of the transitional stages in the cultivation of standard Hindi in Mauritius: the gradual passing away of the language consciousness in general, and the emergence of a keener interest in the literature embedded therein. Among the authors studied in the late forties and fifties and thereafter were: Mīrā, Sūr, Kabīr, Tulsīdās, Maithilī Śaraṇ Gupta, Pant, Mahādevī Varmā, Devkīnandan Khattrī (Candrakāntā and Candrakāntā Santati), Jaysaṅkar Prasād, Premcand, Sudarśan, Upendranāth Aśk, Jainendra Kumār, Rāmkumār Varmā etc. The examinations set up by the H.P.S. with the collaboration of the Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, Allahabad, were also instrumental in engendering more interest in Hindi literature.

As the first Commissioner for India (Dharam Yaś Dev) arrived in 1948, hamlets and villages scattered all over Mauritius as well as urban areas organized in turn receptions which took the best part of the year. 'People turned up in their thousands to welcome him and receive his message in Hindi.'¹³ These receptions were often combined with the programme of Hindi school anniversaries which now attracted larger gatherings. To this day, the presence of the Commissioner for India (now High Commissioner) and his Hindi address remains a much appreciated feature of most cultural functions held by Indo-Mauritians.

The Indian Commission, as it opened in 1948, provided amongst other things, valuable cultural services. There was a good library with plenty of books in English and oriental languages, principally Hindi. Documentary

films in English and Hindi were shown regularly in the urban and rural areas including the distant hamlets. Annual cultural scholarships of the Government of India open to all Mauritians offered courses in Indian institutes in a variety of subjects including Hindi literature and Indian music. Ever since its advent, the Indian Commission, which has a serious competitor in the French embassy, has fulfilled its role with remarkable efficiency: it has over the last three and a half decades actively provided many services which have not only tightened the bond between the two countries, but have also fostered the growth of Indian culture and solidly underpinned the foundations of KhB. Hindi in Mauritius.

8. Government policy towards the teaching of oriental languages

It would be appropriate at this stage to turn to Government policy towards the teaching of oriental languages in state schools during the period under review. As stated above, in 1935, Hindi was being taught in 48 Government and Government-aided schools; this represented under one-third of the total number of such schools. All Hindi students of the school were taught together in one class, regardless of age and attainment - a practice which continued, although not universally, until the late 1940's. Government had in 1931 appointed, on a part-time basis, a retired primary school head-master (S.Daby) to inspect Hindi classes (a part-time Urdu Inspector A.G.A.Raman had also been appointed). Upon occasional requests from parents to school head-masters, followed by the Inspectors' investigations, these two oriental languages were introduced in new schools, at the rate of eight to ten yearly in the case of Hindi, wherever Government considered it was justified.

It should be emphasized here that up till the late 1940's, there was no competition between Hindi and Urdu. Almost all Mauritians who learnt KhB. Hindi were Hindus and nearly all who learnt Urdu were Muslims. It is significant, however, that while, during the years under review, the propagation of Hindi continued to grow more and more secular, the dissemination of Urdu taking place through the teaching of the mosque-directed madrasahs still remained chiefly geared to the study of Islam.

In 1939, Government appointed a young primary school head-master (S.Narain) as part-time Hindi Inspector, in addition to his normal duties. He visited Hindi classes once every week, sometimes travelling together with the Urdu Inspector to the same school. In the early forties, amidst the activities of the H.P.S., the Arya Sabha and of B.Bissoondoyal, requests from parents and local Hindu societies for the introduction of Hindi in state schools became more frequent. Other linguistic groups - Tamils, Telegus, and Marathis - were claiming that their languages too should figure on the school curriculum. The new Hindi Inspector, a good pedagogue, drew the attention of Government to the perfunctory nature of his visits to schools numbering over 65 and to the desultory teaching going on in most of these schools. He advised that a full-time Hindi Inspector be appointed. In fact, the Hindi teaching by voluntary bodies in several baiṭhkās of the island was then more effective than that of some of the schools under State-direction.

It was in such circumstances that in 1941, Government appointed W.E.F.Ward, the Director of Education to investigate the teaching of oriental languages and to report. The gist of his recommendations is reflected in the following extract from his report: 'I am unmoved by the plea that justice requires that each linguistic group be provided (at Government expense) with instruction in its own language...I recommend, therefore, though with some reluctance - that neither Hindi, Urdu or Tamil nor any other Indian language be either taught or inspected at Government expense, but that these communities provide their own teaching if they want it, as other communities already do.' Ward's official attitude towards the teaching of oriental languages in state schools recalls that of J. Comber Browne, Superintendent of Schools in Mauritius in the 1870's and early 1880's. J.E.Meade, the economics expert, in his report some two decades later, was to express identical views on this matter.¹⁴

The publication of Ward's report caused indignation in the Indo-Mauritian community. There were public demonstrations and a walk-out from a talk given by Ward. Dr. (later Sir) Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, then

a nominee, protested in the Legislative Council, and advocated that oriental language teaching be continued and introduced further in state schools on a regular basis.

Had Ward's recommendations concerning the teaching of oriental languages been implemented, the part-time teaching which already existed in state schools, inadequate as it was, would have had to be discontinued. Government, however, deemed it wise not to take action on these recommendations. In 1943, a 10,000 strong petition organized by B.Bissoondoyal and his followers, urging the introduction of oriental language-teaching in all Government and Government-aided schools on the same basis as English and French, reached the Colonial Secretary. In the face of public pressure, Government acted with discretion. A Select Committee was set up in the same year to examine the Ward Report so far as it concerned the State-teaching of oriental languages and to report thereon. Their findings, contradicting those of Ward, but rather restrained in character, were to the effect that '...it is clear that the Indian community are deeply attached to the teaching of Indian languages, but we are of the opinion that the Government should continue the teaching of Indian languages and should as soon as possible make such improvements as are reasonably possible.'¹⁵

Notwithstanding the recommendations of the Select Committee, nothing much took place in the domain of oriental languages until the late 1940's. In 1947, a new Constitution (the first for 62 years) came into force. It extended the franchise based on a simple literacy test to all persons who were not otherwise qualified. The officially recognized languages for assessing literacy were: English, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu, Chinese, and the Creole patois commonly in use in the island. It further provided that the mother tongue should be taught by State schools. The general elections held the following year returned a majority of representatives of rural areas who strongly believed that there could be no proper education without teaching of the mother tongue. As pointed out above, Mauritian Hindus and Muslims of north-Indian origin to this

day regard Hindi and Urdu respectively as their mother tongue and not Bhojpuri. The new Government, in order to fulfil the provisions of the Constitution, decided, in the first instance, to recruit an expert from India for the training of teachers of oriental languages, especially Hindi, and the teaching of Indian culture. In June 1949, Rām Prakāś M.A., the Indian expert arrived to assume this post.

At the request of the Department of Education, R.Prakāś carried out a survey of oriental languages in Mauritius and submitted a report. Government after studying it decided to introduce oriental languages in schools, on a regular basis. The initial emphasis was on Hindi and Urdu.

The following year saw a significant event: the beginning of Government recruitment for Hindi teacher-training. 60 were selected through an entrance test conducted by R.Prakāś in which several hundred candidates had participated. Most of the successful candidates had already passed the Paricay of the H.P.S. or one of the examinations of the Arya Samaj. They received from R.Prakāś and S.Gungadin, a contemporary primary school Inspector, a five-month intensive training in Hindi language and literature, teaching methodology and educational psychology. Thus was permanently established at the Teachers' Training College in 1950, a branch for oriental language teacher-training, collateral with that existing, since the turn of the century, for the training of 'General-Purpose' teachers (for general subjects including English and French).

When the training of the 60 student-teachers was completed, it was expected that they would be employed soon after. Contrary to normal practice, however, they were made to wait for several months before they were appointed part-time. Three years later, in March 1954, these 60 part-time Hindi teachers were appointed full-time. This appointment on a full-time basis signalled that Government had now changed their attitude towards state teaching of Indian languages and Indian culture: it was a far cry from the intransigence and negative policy of the previous years. In 1956, the Department of Education actually began the practice of yearly recruitment and training, which marked the commencement of the period when Hindi teaching in schools 'was taken seriously at long last by teachers as well as by Government'.¹⁶

Notes

1. Among the speakers on the occasion of the Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan in 1941 were: O.S.Geerjanan, Chairman of the conference, B. Bissoondoyal, the organizer, S.Narain, and S.Jugdutt. The person in charge of the exhibition was Nemnarain Gupt 'Guruji'.
2. B.Bissoondoyal's organization of Gaṅgā-Snān on the beach of Belle-Mare in 1942, where crowds of men, women and children assembled to participate and to listen to him, has gone in the cultural history of Mauritius as a memorable event.
3. The Chairman and Secretary were Mahadev Chunun and Pardooman Issury respectively. They were the most popular vocalists of the day.
4. One of the best vocalists of the Saṅgīt Samāj was someone who by origin was a Telegu South-Indian and, by calling, a Government school Hindi teacher. He was Ramsamy Toolsy who later became a member of the Executive Committee of the Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā.
5. S.Bhuckory, op.cit., p.60.
6. Ibid., p.59.
7. Examples of vocabulary introduced by B.Bissoondoyal and others in formal and familiar Mauritian KhB. are: Mauriśasiya for Mauritian; dhvanivardhak for loud-speaker; prabandh kartrī kameṭī for organizing committee; uttīrṇ, anuṭīrṇ, pratīṣṭhā ke sāth utīrṇ, for passed, failed and passed with merit respectively were first used in Mauritius in the anniversaries of voluntary Hindi schools.
8. Examples of such names are: Dhārā-Nagrī, Bṛndāban, Ṛṣi-Nagar, Māyāpurī, given to places known as Long-Mountain, Palma, Engrais-Martial, Mahebourg.
9. London Stamp Bulletin, 1969, Gandhi Centenary issue. The writer of the thesis saw a cutting in the possession of B.Bissoondoyal.

10. Among B.Bissoondoyal's students were S.Bhuckory, the Hindi poet and writer and Dr.I.Nundall, Education Officer (Indian music).
11. The occasion was a Saṅkrānti festival celebrated on the grounds of Camp-Fouquereaux temple. It was attended by about 1,000 people.
12. The writer of this thesis has not been able to trace all the small works mentioned. He is indebted to B.Bissoondoyal for providing information about them.
13. S.Bhuckory, op.cit., p.67.
14. J.E.Meade and others, Report on the Economic and Social Structure of Mauritius, Sessional Paper No.7 of 1960, Chapter 8, para 24.
15. Report of the Select Committee on the Ward Report on Education, Government Printing, 1943, p.4.
16. S.Bhuckory, op.cit., p.61.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROGRESS OF KhB., 1950 TO THE PRESENT

This chapter traces the considerable progress KhB. has made in Mauritius between 1950 and the present day, and again examines the institutions, influences and personalities who have contributed to this progress. The question of the present position of KhB. is left to the concluding chapter, however, and, although mention is made of literary developments, the literature itself produced in Mauritian KhB. is treated in the next chapter.

1. Political developments

The 1950's saw two general elections, the first in 1953 and the second based on universal suffrage in 1959, and they both returned a preponderating Indo-Mauritian element to the Legislative Council. As in the election campaign of 1948, several candidates and their agents often used Hindi and Bhojपुरi in addressing meetings of the rural electorate.

In 1954, S.Bissoondoyal, the elected member laid a motion before the Legislative Council to the effect that '...the Education Department as run at present is doing a great harm to the public'. This motion led to a four-day Council debate which involved the participation of representatives of rural areas and others who advocated State-teaching of oriental languages on a regular basis. The same year, S.Bissoondoyal tabled another motion concerning State-subsidies to religions. Hitherto only the Christian church received subsidies from the State. The new concept that all professed religions must receive equal consideration won the general approval of the Council and the necessary legislation was subsequently enacted whereby the Hindu religion too became a State

beneficiary. S.Bissoondoyal's popularity was much on the increase, particularly among Indo-Mauritians. In 1958, just one year before the general elections, he established the Independent Forward Bloc, a political party appealing on frankly Hindu communal lines, reminiscent of the Jan Sañgh in India.

The late 1950's when the Ministerial System was set up, and the early sixties when the general elections took place (1963) witnessed several constitutional and administrative changes devolving further responsibilities of self-government on Mauritians. During the same period, Wages Councils for Agricultural and other Workers were constituted, and the enforcement of their Orders very much improved the living conditions of the working class. This indirectly brought about an increased cultural activity in baiṭhkās and elsewhere.

While the nation in general was still in this mood of euphoria, the Labour Government, campaigning for Independence, held general elections in 1967 one year before the expiry of their mandate, and won another clear victory at the poll. In 1968, Mauritius acceded to Independence. The Legislative Assembly and the Council of Ministers (called Legislative Council and Executive Council respectively prior to 1964) were now composed mostly of members who owed their seats to the suffrage of the rural areas where oriental languages, KhB. Hindi in particular were cherished, to a greater or a lesser degree, although Bhojpuri was the spoken medium alongside Creole.

2. Government Policy

a. Recruitment and Hindi teacher-training at the T.T.C.

In the years which immediately preceded and followed Independence, the Primary school building programme was stepped up. The annual recruitment to the Oriental Section of the Teachers' Training College (known as T.T.C.) from 1956 was fed mostly by the yearly successes at the H.P.S. and the Arya Sabha examinations, particularly the former. In 1956, when more than 400 boys and girls had already passed the Paricay over the preceding decade, the H.P.S. instituted the

Prathamā, an all-India examination equated to at least the G.C.E. Advanced Level in Hindi, again in collaboration with the Hindī Sāhitya Sammelān, Allahabad. Between 1956 and 1963, many candidates recruited for training were Prathamā holders. From 1963 and 1965 onwards, when the H.P.S. established their two highest collaborative examinations - the Madhyamā (B.A. level in Hindi) and Uttamā (M.A. level in Hindi) respectively, the recruits have also included holders of these qualifications. In recent years, when the competition has grown much keener, an English language qualification too has been made compulsory. About 40 to 50 have been recruited annually, a little more in the earlier years. Contrary to its practice since 1956, however, Government has not recruited Hindi teachers in the last few years, one reason being apparently over-recruitment in the previous years.

At the T.T.C., Hindi teachers were trained by R.Prakāś assisted by a few others. In 1966, with the increasing number of trainees, an Education Officer was also posted at the Oriental Section to assist him in the teacher-training duties. A certain amount of the instruction intended for 'general-Purpose' students, including some English and French, also formed part of the curriculum. The same year, with a view to providing refresher, vacation and promotion courses to in-service staff, an expert educationalist, Nandlāl Jośī M.A. was recruited, on loan from the Ministry of Education, India. N.Jośī who served in Mauritius up to 1968 also carried out on-the-spot supervision of Hindi teaching in primary schools. In the mid-sixties, expert educationalists were also recruited from the Ministry of Education, India, for the training of Urdu, Tamil and Telegu teachers. For a number of years, a notable event at the T.T.C. was an annual exhibition chiefly of Hindi teachers' projects, teaching-aids mostly prepared by the teachers themselves, meritorious works and drawings by pupils etc. This exhibition reflected the progress made through systematic teaching of Hindi as well as the potential of the primary school pupils. The one-year training at the T.T.C. which included extra-mural activity such as creative writing and study of literature, stage-plays etc., contributed significantly, especially during the fifties and sixties

under the guidance of R.Prakāś, to the steady progress and formation of Hindi teachers.

All the Hindi teachers posted in the Government and Government-aided schools, however, were not qualified and trained. A number of them were extra-teaching assistants (E.T.A.'s as they were called) who provided some assistance to regular teachers, especially in crowded classes. As from the late fifties onwards, and especially during the years preceding Independence, a number of candidates (mostly from rural areas) obtained employment as E.T.A.'s by bringing pressure to bear upon the elected members of their respective constituencies. Many of these candidates had been unsuccessful at the competitive recruitment test of the T.T.C., and a few of them were completely unsuitable. In general, as from the second half of this century, employment in schools, perhaps more than the language's prestige in society, has provided the strongest motivation for serious studies in Hindi.

At the primary level, the yearly recruitment and training of Hindi teachers combined with full-time teaching of the subject, meant the beginning of a new chapter in the history of KhB. Each class now received half-an-hour of organized attention daily, although, until the mid-sixties, many teachers were still untrained E.T.A.'s. The part-time practice continued only in about a dozen schools with African preponderance in the school population, but in 1967 (the year of the general elections), the part-time teaching in those schools was also superseded by a full-time curriculum. The duration of the Hindi class-period was further increased in the early seventies to bring it in line with the teaching of English and French.

b. Accelerated increase of KhB. teaching in primary schools

The yearly recruitment and training of Hindi teachers brought about an accelerated introduction of Hindi in primary schools, particularly from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies. In February 1965, out of 209 schools (157 Government and 52 Aided), Hindi was being taught in 102

schools (91 Government and 11 Aided), i.e. in nearly 49% of the schools. There were 118 Hindi teachers including 14 women. Out of a total of 127,621 Primary school-children, 47,206 were learning Hindi, i.e. about 37%.¹ In fact, the number of children of North-Indian origin who did not learn Hindi in primary schools was negligible. Seven years later, out of 240 schools, Hindi was being taught in 222 schools, i.e. in over 90% (the few years preceding and following Independence had witnessed the highest rate of increase), and the number of teachers had risen to 531, i.e. most of the schools had two Hindi teachers and a few more than two. In 1981, there were 268 Government and Government-aided Primary schools, and Hindi was being taught in 255 of them, i.e. in just over 95% of them; out of a total school-population of 130,145, there were 54,443 learning Hindi, i.e. about 42%. The number of teachers had risen further to 930 (563 male and 367 female), i.e. many schools had more than three teachers. The table below illustrates by way of comparison the position regarding the teaching of the other oriental languages in primary schools in 1981.²

<u>Language</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
Hindi	54,443	255	930	563	367
Urdu	18,200	175	451	276	175
Tamil	8,185	174	230	124	106
Telegu	3,060	90	130	64	66
Marathi	2,132	60	83	42	41
Mandarin	1,454	8	11	1	10
Arabic	-	9	9	6	3

Ever since the teaching of Hindi and other oriental languages began in Government and Government-aided Primary schools, there had been no end-of-year examination in these subjects. In 1963, however, partly as an inducement to both pupils and teachers, and in order to improve the quality of teaching, the Ministry of Education set up a uniform national Sixth Standard (the highest form of the Mauritian Primary school)

examination in Hindi and Urdu for all these schools. This was followed the year after by the introduction of internal examinations in these two subjects for all the other classes of the Primary school.

This accelerated increase of KhB. teaching in primary schools meant that year by year more boys and girls who had completed the primary stage were getting ready for the secondary level in Hindi language and literature. In fact, prior to 1964 when the H.P.S. modified the entry qualification to the Paricay, the great majority of candidates who entered for this examination were students who had learnt Hindi up to the primary school Sixth Standard (an alternative qualification was the Sixth Standard certificate of a baiṭhkā school).

The considerable extension of Hindi teaching in primary schools in the late fifties and the sixties called for a corresponding extension of the supervisory staff. From 1949 to 1966, the supervision had been carried out by R.Prakāś and the part-time Hindi Inspector, but owing to the large number of schools to be inspected, the inspections of these two officers were not much more than perfunctory. In 1966, therefore, the part-time Hindi Inspector was appointed on a full-time basis, and to assist him in the performance of his duties, an Assistant Inspector was also attached to the Oriental Section. It was felt, however, that inspections still fell short of being adequate, and to improve supervision and guidance further, ten Assistant Supervisors were appointed (four in 1966 and six soon after Independence). The latter served under the Hindi Inspector and the Assistant Inspector who were renamed Senior Supervisor and Supervisor respectively. These appointments and the new distribution of duties brought the supervisory work in Hindi more in line with that which already existed for English and French. In addition to the above supervisory staff, there are at present two Senior Education Officers posted at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, known as the M.G.I. (this latter has absorbed the Oriental Section of the T.T.C.), to train Hindi teachers and to perform such other duties as are allied to the teaching of Hindi in Government and Government-aided Primary and Secondary schools.

All these developments in Primary school Government policy took place principally during the first two decades of the second half of our century. It is significant that Government changed its policy regarding oriental languages only when the extension of franchise in the late forties brought to the legislature a rural representation in overwhelming majority. In the course of the 1960's, when Mauritius was nearing accession to Independence, oriental languages, KhB. in particular, were rapidly gaining an established place in the State primary school curriculum. Together with English and French, KhB. had received full recognition at the primary level, not a mere grudging recognition.

Despite the comprehensive organization outlined above, class-room Hindi-teaching was still hampered by the lack of appropriate teaching material. For several years, a set of four primers from India entitled Rāṣṭra Bhāṣā had been in use. Apart from certain themes of universal interest, they were based on the history and geography of India and the social and cultural values of the sub-continent; the pictures they contained were in black and white. In 1958, however, R.Prakāś in collaboration with a few Hindi teachers posted in the primary schools, set about preparing a new series of Hindi readers which they entitled Navīn Hindī. The same year, they produced Part I, and in the course of the following year Parts II to VI. These readers were printed in India. Primers were also produced by the Indian educationalists for Urdu and Telegu students.

Navīn Hindī supplied a long felt educational need in the field of Hindi. For the first time in Mauritius, Hindi pupils at primary level were provided with class-books comparable to those in English and French, showing attractive pictures in colour, and, to some extent, based on the history, geography, ecology and society of their own country; they also contained many lessons of universal interest. These readers written in a simple and straightforward standard Hindi, intelligible to the children for whom they were intended, served throughout the period they were in use (from the late 1950's to the mid 1970's) as a very appropriate means of giving education through

the medium of Hindi. They were also welcomed by a large number of voluntary baithkā schools, especially those under the aegis of the H.P.S. (In Appendix VIII is an extract from Part V of Navīn Hindī.) During the years which followed the mid-seventies, Navīn Hindī was gradually replaced in primary schools by material produced by the M.G.I., although there are a few primary schools still making use of it in some classes, chiefly in standards IV and V. In 1974, Gaṅgādatta Śarmā, a primary-school Hindi text-book expert arrived from India. He did not actually produce any text-book, although he ran courses at the M.G.I. on text-book production, and provided useful guidance to the Production Unit of the Institute. It is unfortunate that the M.G.I. material intended to replace Navīn Hindī is not yet similarly printed and illustrated and is still for the *most* part in a cyclostyled form.

The M.G.I. material, however, is an improvement on that of Navīn Hindī. In the late 1950's, the transition from Rāṣṭra bhāṣā to Navīn Hindī had proved a welcome change. But after the lapse of nearly two decades, Hindi teachers, in general, were taking the view that Navīn Hindī contained too many lessons of universal interest, and that some of them could be advantageously replaced by other lessons geared more to Mauritian culture and to the Mauritian way of life. This was an outlook which was in keeping with the developments in education following the accession of the country to Independence. The lessons prepared by the M.G.I. provide much more local colour than the primers they have replaced. (In Appendix IX is one lesson from Book IV produced by the M.G.I.)

Furthermore, Hindi teachers argued that the language of Navīn Hindī although not difficult was still a little too sanskritized for the Primary level. In fact, from the second half of our century, as Mauritian KhB. progressed it became more direct and colloquial and lost some of its former affectations and over-sanskritizations. In the late 1960's and thereafter, Mauritian KhB. was enriched by a new influence: Bhojpuri idiom and vocabulary hitherto utilized only at colloquial level was now being tapped increasingly by the younger

generation of KhB. writers of the island, particularly in narrative prose. (The development of the Mauritian KhB. style has been treated in greater detail in chapter 5.)

3. The baiṭhkā schools and the literacy centres

The substantial progress in the State teaching of KhB. Hindi favourably affected the part-time baiṭhkā schools in general. A considerable number of them adopted the government syllabus and the government text-books. Many of the government teachers taught in the baiṭhkā schools in the late afternoon, and thus, these humble schools benefited from the guidance of teachers who had received systematic training. The tuition of the baiṭhkā schools continued to be free for all students, although, in many cases, the gurus were given small allowances by the local societies responsible for the schools. Throughout their existence spanning nearly a century, the baiṭhkā schools had hardly received any encouragement or appreciation from Government. From the late forties, however, they received a measure of moral support from elected representatives who frequently attended their functions especially the school anniversaries. The Government which acceded to power after Independence, unlike most of the previous Governments, it appears, took the view that the baiṭhkā schools in their own humble way had over the years fulfilled a task which constituted a valuable contribution to the educational work of the State. In July 1976, Government granted to baiṭhkā schools and to madrasahs financial assistance in the form of a monthly allowance of Rs.100. to every teacher responsible for a class of 30 pupils or more at Primary or Secondary level. This popular measure relieved many small societies of financial worries, and it applied to all the vernacular groups including Marathi, Telegu and Tamil. Urdu and Hindi schools, however, benefited most. The Arya Sabha, the H.P.S. and the Ārya Ravi Ved Pracāriṇī Sabhā run between the three of them well over 500 part-time Hindi schools, and many of them have more than two teachers each. An allowance of Rs.100. per month represents in many cases about one-sixth of the monthly salary the teacher draws

from Government.

The subsidizing of baiṭhkā schools has not proved an unmixed blessing, however. There have been abuses - lax teaching and absenteeism, fictitious entries etc. in a few schools, and these are not easily detectable by the officers of the Ministry of Education.³ Financial assistance has, besides, in several cases led to a slackening off of anniversary celebrations which, in the past, were stimulating cultural programmes as well as raising the required funds. It is noteworthy that, in general, during the years the baiṭhkā schools were fending for themselves single-handed, they prospered culturally and educationally, but when a much needed financial assistance has been supplied, several of them have sunk into a lethargic state and lost much of their former strength to guide and to educate.

Since the late fifties and early sixties when the majority of the State schools started teaching oriental languages, Urdu and Hindi in particular, nearly on the same footing as English and French, the need for the primary section of the baiṭhkā Hindi school has been felt less and less. Indeed, many parents have ever since been less keen on sending their children to the baiṭhkā school. Quite a few of these part-time voluntary schools, however, have adapted themselves to the changing conditions: they have shifted their emphasis from the primary to the secondary level. Many of them today conduct courses for the examinations of the Arya Sabha and the H.P.S., especially the latter. Instruction at primary level also continues in a number of the baiṭhkā schools of the island.

Like the baiṭhkā schools, Adult Education and Literacy Centres have played a role in promoting education through KhB. Hindi, although in a much smaller measure. Ever since the 1950's, the Department of Education and the Local Government Authorities have, from time to time, run courses for adults and adolescents through the medium of KhB. In the mid-sixties, for example, such a course was operated every afternoon on the site of a Government Primary school, in the vicinity of a tea-estate; the objective was to impart through Hindi a functional literacy related principally to the growing and milling of

tea-crops.⁴ Another example was the course organized by the Municipality of Port-Louis in the seventies, intended primarily for students who were offering Hindi at the Cambridge School Certificate or the London G.C.E. Ordinary Level. It is significant that a few of the literacy courses were run during the period when the right to vote depended upon a literacy test and universal franchise was still lying in the future.

4. The linguistic clash

Notwithstanding the progress made by KhB. in Mauritius, it does not rank yet among class subjects which count in the annual competitive classification for admission to secondary schools. In 1978, a linguistic clash occurred involving French and oriental languages, but before analysing this clash, it would be appropriate to examine the background. Every year, the Primary school Sixth Standard examination (renamed the Certificate of Primary Education) was followed by the Junior Scholarship examination which determined the competitive classification and the admission to good secondary schools. The interval between these two examinations being just a few days, however, the Scholarship examination placed severe constraints on boys and girls under 12 years of age. The Mauritius Institute of Education (the M.I.E.) recommended, therefore, that the Scholarship examination be abolished, leaving classification for admission to secondary schools to be determined by the results of the C.P.E. examination. This recommendation was accepted for implementation by the Ministry of Education.

In the normal course of events, the majority of Indo-Mauritian pupils, Hindu and Muslim, constituting more than half of the Primary school population, learn an oriental language (either Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu or Marathi) in Forms I, II, III and IV of the Primary level. But owing to the fact that oriental languages do not count in determining rank in the classification for admission to secondary schools, the interest of both pupils and parents tends to flag in Primary forms V and VI. Year in year out, this attitude results in a waste of resources, as services - class-teaching, books, furniture,

class-rooms etc. - are very much underused. The M.I.E. submitted a plan, therefore, to remedy this weakness. They proposed that the compulsory subjects at the C.P.E. should continue to be English, Mathematics, Geography and French, that is, failure in any one of these subjects would fail a candidate in the examination as a whole. They further laid down, however, that should the candidate score higher marks in Hindi or any other oriental language than in French, then the score in the oriental language instead of that in French would be counted in calculating the total marks obtained at the examination. The plan of the M.I.E. was greeted with the general appreciation and acceptance of the Mauritian nation in general. Strong objection came, however, from the Catholic Church. Monseigneur Margeot, Head of the Catholic Church headed a strong movement of French protagonists protesting vehemently against the plan of the M.I.E. It appears that they received the implicit support of the French Embassy. They advocated that the change proposed was of a major dimension: that many primary school pupils not of Indian origin might also wish to offer an oriental language as a subject and, therefore, there should be a moratorium of about six years to allow them to do so. The P.M.S.D. (Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate), the other party to the Coalition Government of the day did not lend its support whole-heartedly, and the Labour Party apparently apprehensive of a rupture of the coalition, and anxious to avoid a clash with the powerful Catholic Church yielded under the pressure. There were gatherings and demonstrations on the part of Indo-Mauritians, and protests in newspapers but all to no avail.⁵

It would be appropriate to underline here that among Indo-Mauritians who have received an elitist English and French orientated education, there is a handful who believe that oriental languages hardly serve any useful purpose in Mauritius. Indeed, they feel that the systematic study of KhB. or any other oriental language encumbers a child unnecessarily and that a trilingual environment - English, French and one oriental language - must inevitably reduce his educational capacities. They hold that a dual-language basis is just

what the country can reasonably manage, if national competence and efficiency is to be maintained. Furthermore, invoking loyalty and allegiance to the country of adoption, these few Indo-Mauritians to this day look on KhB. and other oriental languages as alien to their culture. They argue they can remain Hindus and take pride in Indo-Mauritian culture without being necessarily involved in the active study of KhB. or any other oriental language (many of them know some Bhojpuri). This small category, therefore, implicitly sympathized with the view of the Catholic Church. The bulk of the Indo-Mauritians and some other people outside the Indian community, however, blamed the Government for taking no action on a plan which, consonant with the cultural aspirations of the majority of Indo-Mauritians, aimed at redressing the weakness of the oriental language as a class-subject and assigning to it a reasonable status. Whether the plan of the M.I.E. will be implemented or the question raised again after a lapse of time, is a matter which lies in the future.

5. Introduction of KhB. Hindi teaching in State Secondary schools

Since the early fifties, lectures on Indian culture to classes of mixed religious denominations formed part of courses at the State Secondary schools, but the teaching of oriental languages remained confined to Primary schools. In the fifties and sixties and thereafter, voluntary bodies like the H.P.S., as well as influential Hindi protagonists, from time to time pressed Government to initiate the teaching of Hindi in State Secondary schools. Government had long been hesitant over this matter, one reason being obviously the multiplicity of oriental languages in Mauritius - a factor which in the past had delayed the extension of Hindi teaching in State Primary schools. The pressure on Government, however, continued increasingly. In 1973, amidst a large gathering, at the municipal theatre of Port-Louis in honour of Sivmañgal Singh Suman, then visiting Mauritius, the Prime Minister of the day (Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam) finally announced that his Government was going to introduce Hindi in all State Secondary and Junior Secondary schools. The following year, the plan was actually implemented and Hindi began to be taught at

State Secondary level. By that time, Hindi was already being taught in several private secondary schools, and the H.P.S. had, a decade previously, established the Madhyamā and the Uttamā examinations of a degree standard in Hindi which scores of candidates had sat and passed. The introduction of Hindi into the State Secondary school curriculum in 1974, although significant in itself, therefore, was nothing more than the belated extension of a process which had already been delayed too long. This process appeared the more dilatory especially in view of the fact that the beginning of full-time teaching of the subject at primary level went back no less than 20 years.

Today Hindi is taught in all the eight State secondary schools and the 16 Junior Secondary schools. Urdu is also taught in some of them. There are 40 private colleges which teach oriental languages including Hindi. Students in Hindi classes include a few non-Hindus. The table below sets out the numerical strength of students following courses in the various oriental languages at the Secondary school of the M.G.I. (this institute teaches all the oriental languages relevant to Mauritius, except Gujarati) in 1982 when the total number of students attending the school was 925:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>	<u>Forms</u>	<u>No. of teachers</u>
Hindi	256	I to VI	3
Urdu	53	I to VI	2
Tamil	21	I to V	1
Telegu	13	I to IV	1
Marathi	5	I	1
Mandarin	55	I to V	2
Sanskrit	10	I to IV	1
	<u>413</u>		<u>11</u>

The majority of the Indo-Mauritian boys and girls attending the M.G.I. and the other Secondary schools take KhB. Hindi as a subject. The same is true of all the private Secondary schools where oriental

languages are taught. In the rural areas, where many of the private secondary schools are to be found, students taking oriental languages are far more numerous. In 1981, the position relating to the numbers of students who were learning oriental languages in 40 private secondary schools was as follows: Hindi, 8,188; Urdu, 877; Arabic, 2,575; Tamil, 45; Mandarin, 71; Sanskrit, 53 (Telegu and Marathi were not being taught in the private secondary schools).⁶

Most of the students who take Hindi or another oriental language at the secondary level passed in that subject at the C.P.E. without having to learn it very seriously. More amongst them look on the oriental language as a matter of cultural study, not so much as a serious academic subject in secondary education. The situation is unlikely to change as long as Hindi and the other oriental languages do not acquire an improved status at the C.P.E.

Following the introduction of Hindi into the State Secondary school curriculum in 1974, the subject was first examined at the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (A level) in 1976, at the instance of the Government of Mauritius. In 1979, six sat and all of them obtained a Principal pass, i.e. A. level; the following year eight sat of whom seven obtained a Principal pass. In the Cambridge H.S.C. examination, the numbers are so small as to be meaningless at present. That a Mauritian candidate, however, can take Hindi or another oriental language as one of his three Principal subjects at the H.S.C. and run for the State scholarship competition, while the same subject taken at the lower end of the ladder, i.e. in the C.P.E. cannot count towards his admission to a secondary school is nothing short of paradoxical.

In the G.C.E. of the London Board, the entries and successes at A level are far more substantial, one reason being that the examinees include many private candidates who have chiefly an education restricted to Hindi language and literature, with a little knowledge of English and French. The passes in 1979 and 1980 were respectively 171 out of

182 entries, and 74 out of 94 entries of whom 89 actually sat. The following year, owing to a further reduced entry, the passes dropped to 44 (48 had entered of whom 46 actually sat). The entries and passes at the G.C.E. O level, followed a similar pattern of progressive drop (the respective passes in the same three years were 298 out of 336 entries, 191 out of 219 entries of whom 205 actually sat, and 106 out of 116 entries of whom 111 actually sat).⁷

It appears that the main reason for this substantial drop in the Hindi entries at the G.C.E. of the London Board was the discontinuation in the late seventies of the annual Government recruitment and training of Hindi teachers. The economic incentive had thus been considerably weakened. The majority of those who continued to prepare for the examination were mostly people genuinely interested in Hindi literature or who for some academic reason required an additional A level qualification. Obviously, there could be only a modest number of such people.

The drop in the number of entries, however, was confined to the G.C.E. of the London Board. Since the introduction of Hindi in the State Secondary school curriculum in 1974, entries for Hindi at the Cambridge School Certificate (Ordinary Level) had not only increased gradually but had progressively achieved better examination results, as shown by the table below:⁸

	<u>Entries in Hindi</u>	<u>Successes</u>
1978:	947	%
1979:	1131 (1089 sat)	80.6 of examinees
1980:	1099	87.8
1981:	1119	90.3

A number of the candidates taking Hindi as a subject also offer Hinduism as an additional subject (Hinduism as a subject for the Cambridge School Certificate was introduced in 1979 at the same time as Islamic Religion and Culture, at the request of the Government of

Mauritius). There are quite a few who take Hinduism as a subject without Hindi. The passes in Hinduism were 204 out of an entry of 284 for 1979, 397 out of an entry of 483 in 1980, and 649 out of an entry of 914 in 1981; those in Islamic Religion and Culture in the same years were 18, 56 and 110 out of respective entries of 20, 79 and 150.

As there is no degree level teaching in Hindi in Mauritius most of the Indo-Mauritian Hindi graduates who are actually employed by the Ministry of Education, pursued their higher studies in India. Of late, the M.G.I. has been envisaging the creation of a degree course in Hindi, but it appears that the plan has now been shelved partly because of the limited prospects of employment for Hindi graduates in Mauritius.

In the mid-seventies, Government was already faced with the problem of unemployment of Mauritian graduates, chiefly from Indian universities. In 1977, unlike many other developing parts of the world, the Government of Mauritius made Secondary and University education free with regard to tuition fees. Teachers' emoluments in private Secondary schools became thenceforth payable by Government, and staffing requirements, including graduate staff, were determined by the size of the school population. To provide employment to a good many of the unemployed graduates and also to give a boost to Hindi and Urdu in view of the increasing number of students in these two subjects particularly the former, Government allocated to every private secondary school teaching these subjects one additional graduate in each of the two subjects, over and above their normal entitlement. This was a much appreciated measure, and it redounded to the advantage of Government particularly in a year when the nation was about to go to the poll.

6. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute

Throughout the previous quarter of the century, oriental languages and Indian culture had been steadily progressing in Mauritius.

All the same, it was obvious that linguistically and culturally, Indo-Mauritians did not enjoy a position compatible with their being a majority in the population. It was primarily to combat this imbalance against oriental languages and Indian culture that the Mahatma Gandhi Institute was established with massive financial support from the Government of India. As an institution of knowledge and learning for oriental languages and culture, outside the sub-continent, it is unique. With its secondary school, its school of Mauritian, Asian and African studies, its school of Indian music, its department of fine arts, its spacious auditorium etc. - all housed in a block of magnificent buildings in a setting of verdant fields and mountains, the M.G.I. is a prestigious centre. The Institute is run by a statutory board of trustees the majority of whom are elected members of the Government of Mauritius, and a Director appointed by Government and responsible to the Board. In 1976, it served as a venue for the Second World Hindi Conference.

The nucleus of the M.G.I. was the part-time school of Indian Music and Dance, founded in 1964 with the technical and financial support of the Government of India, and integrated with the Institute in the early seventies when the latter was still in its planning and building stage.⁹ The M.G.I. runs full-time courses, up to degree level, of Indian instrumental and vocal classical music (Northern style) and dance (both Northern and Southern styles), including folk-dance. The students include members of various ethnic groups and the medium of instruction is English and Hindi. The teachers in the early years were mostly Indians, but they have been gradually replaced by Indo-Mauritians many of whom graduated in Indian universities, as beneficiaries of scholarships from the Government of India. There are also part-time music courses which have proved beneficial especially to house-wives. Examiners from India are invited every year, and their presence at the Institute is also the occasion for well-attended, free, public, professional performances of Indian classical music in the auditorium of the Institute.

The M.G.I. has also a school of painting, with teachers trained mostly in India. There is, besides, an annual painting competition

at both Primary and Secondary school level under the aegis of the M.G.I.

The School of Mauritian, Asian and African Studies which forms part of the Institute aims primarily at linguistic, cultural and educational research and advancement. A rich fund of unwritten Bhojpuri folk-lore (songs, recitations, tales, etc.), tape-recorded from elderly Indo-Mauritian men and women living mostly in rural parts of the island has been of late among their valuable cultural collections. The department of Hindi printing is attached to the School. The M.G.I. owns a good Hindi as well as an English and French press. The Hindi press prints literary works, class-books and courses for the M.G.I. and other State schools, but its regular production is Vasant, the only regular Hindi literary monthly magazine of Mauritius, set up in March 1978. Amongst other articles, it carries poems, short stories, serials of novels etc., and constitutes a readily available medium for the publication of works especially those of Mauritian Hindi writers. This monthly has a full-time editorial staff of one editor (A.Unnuth) and two sub-editors (R.Dhurandar and P.Nema), and it attains a standard which can sustain comparison with that of good literary magazines of India. It enjoys a circulation of about 1,000 copies every month including overseas subscribers. In Appendix X is an article from the October 1981 issue. It is a short story entitled Gharaundā (toy-house) by an Indo-Mauritian Muslim girl, Safina Khodabux, a young writer. The language is simple, fluent, standard KhB. with a colloquial flavour. Although the writer received her first instruction in a madrasah, it is noteworthy that her language is Hindi with only such Persian and Arabic words as have currently passed into Mauritian KhB. Hindi. In Appendix XI is a second article from the same issue bearing the title Maurīśas mē Bhojpurī sāhitya by M.Chintamunnee, another Indo-Mauritian, the present head of the Hindi department at the M.G.I. Spontaneous, well-turned, dignified, flowing smoothly, a little sanskritized, the language is modern standard Hindi at its best.

The Secondary school of the M.G.I. teaches, in all its forms,

besides oriental languages, the usual subjects taught at Secondary level. Of all the State schools, however, it has the strongest emphasis on oriental languages and, as shown above, it is the only one where, with the exception of Gujarati, all the oriental languages relevant to Mauritian life - Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu and Mandarin - are taught. Indian and Indo-Mauritian culture being central to the education disseminated by the M.G.I., the school lays due emphasis on the teaching of Hinduism and Islamic Religion and Culture as part of its curriculum. As stated above, these two subjects were introduced at the Cambridge School Certificate in 1979, and as illustrated by the figures which have been quoted, the response from candidates has been quick and keen. Unfortunately, the material hitherto available for the teaching of Hinduism is still rather inadequate, nor are there enough qualified teachers for all the classes.

The training school for Primary school teachers of oriental languages, as already mentioned above, also forms an integral part of the Institute (the training of Primary school 'General-Purpose' teachers, on the other hand, has been taken over from the former T.T.C. by the Mauritius Institute of Education).

The Production Unit is a very important section of the M.G.I. Oriental language material answering the cultural and academic needs of students is prepared by the Unit for schools at Primary and Secondary level. Class lesson material in Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi and Mandarin is regularly supplied to schools, including private Secondary schools, although most of this material is still in a cyclostyled form. Through the regular provision of uniform, good quality material, and adequate collaboration between the Unit and the teaching staff concerned, an overall co-ordination has been established for the teaching of oriental languages, particularly standard Hindi, all over the country - a condition so essential if standard Hindi or any other oriental language is to flourish in Mauritius.

Apart from daily classes, the M.G.I. has also a few extra-mural courses in Indian music and oriental languages, Hindi in particular. There is in Hindi, on a part-time basis, a one-year introductory course,

a one-year intermediate course, and a two-year certificate course which attains the standard of the G.C.E. O level. There are also extra-mural courses to assist students taking Hindi at the Cambridge and London A level and the H.P.S. - Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, Allahabad higher collaborative examinations.

In 1982, the M.G.I. extended their activity by adding Bhojpuri to their branches of research and instruction. In Mauritius, Bhojpuri is spoken by about a third of the total population.¹⁰ But in spite of its importance, it is only from the 1960's that it has received some sort of recognition in the island. Some of the younger Indo-Mauritian KhB. writers have now and then borrowed from its idiom and vocabulary. A little literature too, especially drama for the stage, has been composed in Bhojpuri.¹¹ Wedding songs in Bhojpuri have been recorded by the School of Mauritian, Asian and African Studies of the M.G.I., and the records have been widely circulated in the island.¹² But the most significant event which has given importance to Bhojpuri in Mauritius has been the creation, last year, of a Department of Bhojpuri within the M.G.I. Indo-Mauritian cultural leaders are worried that if Bhojpuri is not revitalized more effectively, the language and the culture associated with it, might die away in the coming decades. Furthermore, it is considered that 'if there were to be a drastic reduction in the number of people using Mauritian Bhojpuri in daily life, it is unlikely that enough cultural impetus would remain for the survival of standard Hindi in the island. The two languages must move along together, and the fate of one will determine that of the other.'¹³ It is, therefore, primarily to preserve the rich Bhojpuri tradition and culture, and to underpin KhB. Hindi in Mauritius that the M.G.I. has established a Bhojpuri Department.

The library of the Institute is staffed with qualified and trained librarians, but, while the stock of English and French books is adequate, oriental titles were, until recently, in short supply, which was a serious shortcoming especially when the objectives of the Institute are taken into account.¹⁴

It is the cherished hope of Mauritians, Indo-Mauritians in particular,

that the M.G.I. will increasingly become an effective machinery in assisting the cultivation of Mauritian, Asian and African studies as an integral part of education at all levels. It is felt, however, by many that, since its inception, the M.G.I. has not moved enough in this direction. The inadequacy, it appears, arises from a defect at the very source and fountain-head of the Institute. Most of the members of the Board of Trustees governing the Institute are politicians whose main objective is not linguistic and cultural promotion, nor were, until recently, the administrative heads of the M.G.I., who are mostly educated in British and European universities, protagonists of oriental languages and culture. As a result, the academic and educational interests of the Institute have now and then been subordinated to the exigencies of politics. With a change of Government in 1982, a new Director, Uttama Bissoondoyal, formerly head of the Education Department at the M.I.E., well-known for his sound oriental as well as western background, has been appointed, and it is expected that the new director will provide a fresh impetus and orientation, and infuse new life into the Institute.

7. Visits of distinguished personalities from abroad

Since the foundation of the M.G.I., its auditorium has become a venue for lectures and talks by visiting lecturers and distinguished visitors from abroad, especially from the sub-continent. This cultural benefit, however, has been enjoyed by Mauritius not only since the foundation of the M.G.I., but frequently enough from the early decades of our century. Among the cultural ambassadors who have visited the island during the period under review, there have been many Hindi personalities from India who have made a lasting impression upon Indo-Mauritians. The visits from India grew more and more frequent after the late 1940's when the Government of Mauritius sponsored the visits of some of these personalities who belonged mostly to the world of art and literature. A few visits and tours received the sponsorship of the Government of India too. Hindi journalists and writers such as Yaśpāl Jain (1965), Rāmdhārī Siṃh Dinkar (he visited Mauritius twice),

Śivmaṅgal Siṃh Suman (he came thrice), Yaśpāl, Dharmvīr Bhāratī, Kamleśvar (editor of Sārikā), and Jainendra Kumār arrived in the island from time to time. They travelled extensively over the country, and under the aegis of the H.P.S., the Arya Sabha, the Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh (founded in 1961), the Hindī Pariṣad (founded in 1963), and other associations, they addressed enthusiastic and attentive gatherings of several thousand people. The influence of these meetings on the cultivation of KhB. and its prestige in the country has been considerable.

Special meetings of Hindi writers are also organized on such occasions, a few privately and others publicly by the Hindi societies. The objective is to enable Indo-Mauritian writers and poets including young talent to meet and talk to Hindi personalities known internationally for their writings.

8. The Hindī Pracāriṇī Sabhā and KhB.

At this stage, it would be appropriate to turn again to the principal institutions which have been in a large measure responsible for the progress of KhB. in Mauritius and examine their activities during this period.

The H.P.S. saw some of its most fruitful years in the fifties and thereafter. When Nemnarain Gupt, the H.P.S. inspector died in 1955 after 20 years of devoted service, the H.P.S. instituted a system whereby certain members of the society, mostly qualified and experienced Hindi teachers would, on an honorary basis, supervise and examine the part-time affiliated Hindi schools in their respective localities. To co-ordinate the work of supervision and examination, the H.P.S. subsequently set up a Board of Examiners (Parīkṣā Borḍ) composed of a chairman (a member of the Executive Committee) and the 25 to 30 supervisors/examiners operating in various districts of the country.¹⁵ It met quarterly, examined and discussed reports including problems, if any, encountered by the schools, and how best they could be solved. The Parīkṣā Borḍ kept the Executive Committee posted with

the progress and development of the schools, and sought their advice whenever necessary. The work of the Board thus brought about a valuable co-ordination and a great measure of uniformity in the teaching of the voluntary schools affiliated to the H.P.S. To this day, the Parīkṣā Borḍ continues to operate on the same lines.

Through the 1950's and the 1960's, the numerical strength of the schools supervised and examined by the H.P.S. increased gradually, although in certain urban areas school attendance decreased. In 1970, there were about 18,000 students in those schools,¹⁶ and by 1981 in 260 schools, the number stood at well over 20,000. Students learning standard Hindi in Government and Government-Aided schools in the same year numbered 54,443, i.e. the students in the affiliated schools of the H.P.S. were just a little below two-fifths of those catered for by Government.¹⁷

✓ The highest form in most of the affiliated schools was and still is the Sixth Standard (Chatvī kakṣā) and a great many of those who passed this examination prepared next for the Paricay of the H.P.S. In the early years, the results of the Paricay were rather disappointing (nearly 50% of the entry used to fail), and the cause ascribed to this was the wide gap existing between the syllabuses of the two examinations. The H.P.S., therefore, decided in 1964 to intercalate, between these two stages, an intermediate examination called Praveśikā, administered locally by the Educational Committee of the H.P.S. (members of the Educational Committee also sat on the Parīkṣā Borḍ), purely in Hindi grammar and language, and, thenceforth, candidates entering for the Paricay were required to have passed the Praveśikā or G.C.E. O level in Hindi, an entry requirement valid to this day. The Praveśikā which solidly underpins the Paricay and the other collaborative examinations remains a popular course of study and, as shown by the table below, it is heavily entered for:

<u>Praveśikā</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Entry</u>	<u>Passed</u>
	1964	438	309
	1969	2,184	1,190
	1974	1,517	867
	1979	1,610	859

The learning of Hindi and Hindi literature at secondary level continued to be motivated by the prospect of employment as Hindi teachers in Government service. The entry for the collaborative examinations of the H.P.S. - Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, Allahabad, has often risen and fallen with the prospects of such employment as shown below by the table of entry and results, at different stages, until 1980:

<u>Paricay</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Entry</u>	<u>Passes</u>
	1951	72	32
	1956	95	33
	1961	252	134
	1966	647	285
	1971	1,509	1,180
	1976	848	677
	1980	671	333
<u>Prathamā</u>	1956	67	31
	1961	77	38
	1966	233	143
	1971	1,002	815
	1976	885	662
	1980	560	431
<u>Madhyamā</u>	1963	18	4
	1968	235	139
	1973	459	218
	1978	652	449
	1980	402	295
<u>Uttamā</u>	1965	2	2
first part	1970	110	70
	1975	384	263
	1980	340	130

<u>Uttamā</u>	1965	1	1
second part	1970	15	15
	1975	123	70
	1980	79	67

It will be seen from the above that the increased rate of recruitment by the T.T.C. from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies corresponded with high examination entry around the same period. In the late seventies, recruitment by the Ministry of Education slackened off and then stopped; the effect of this is reflected in the reduced entry by the end of the decade.¹⁸

It is true that gainful employment in schools has been the prime motivation for Hindi studies at secondary level, but, all the same, as stated above, it would be correct to say that some candidates including house-wives sitting for the examinations ranging from Paricay to Uttamā make of a Hindi education an end in itself rather than a means of obtaining employment.

With a view to assisting students to prepare for the Praveśikā and the four secondary examinations of the H.P.S., there are centres of part-time instruction in several parts of the island, but the main centre is the one run at the headquarters of the H.P.S. at Long Mountain. Every Sunday morning, about 800 students studying for these Hindi examinations arrive there, many of them from remote places, and receive instruction from some of the best Hindi teachers of the island. The latter are given nominal allowances but the students, like those attending the affiliated primary schools, receive free tuition.

In the course of the 1960's when the higher secondary Hindi examinations were being set up, the H.P.S. with the collaboration of the Sastā Sāhitya Maṇḍal Publication, New Delhi, assisted the local Education Committees (Vidyā samitis) to build up small libraries of Hindi books in the affiliated schools.¹⁹

These activities aside, the H.P.S. has several other opportunities to work for the intellectual and moral welfare of the country and to keep alive its cultural relationship with the people, especially the

Indo-Mauritian element. In certain years, the H.P.S. organizes a Hindi week marked by talks over the radio and T.V., plays on the stage, short literary programmes in various parts of the country etc. - a tradition established by the H.P.S. in July-August 1963 when the first celebration took place. There is every year the celebration of Hindi day, a tradition begun in 1966 when the H.P.S. proclaimed Tulsī Jayantī as Hindi day. Also, towards the end of every year, the H.P.S. celebrate at their headquarters, amidst a vast concourse of people including numerous students and their parents, their convocation of the year when certificates and prizes are given away, a literary programme is held, newly arrived Hindi personalities are given a reception etc.

For a quarter of a century, the headquarters of the H.P.S. was housed in the Hindī Bhavan, a rather modest building with a small library. But in the late 1960's the organisation moved into the new Hindī Bhavan, commensurate with their increased status. It is a modern prestigious centre with social hall, a big library, lecture rooms, office and other amenities, built on the same extensive grounds at Long Mountain. The H.P.S. owns a quantity of landed property much of which has been donated by Hindi-loving benefactors. It is at present governed by a new committee of management presided over by Bholanath Shumbhoo whose Hindi background is enriched by a good knowledge of English and French.²⁰ The sound sense of organization of the H.P.S. coupled with their sustained sense of purpose has, over the years, enabled them to disseminate standard Hindi in a manner which has been unique. In fact, it can justly be claimed that in the task of spreading education and culture through secular Hindi language and literature, and in performing a role which has contributed considerably to the growth of modern standard Hindi in Mauritius, they remain, as a body, unsurpassed.

9. The Arya Samaj and KhB.

The Arya Samaj, the reformist, missionary organisation, continued to be very active during this period, although their teaching of KhB. bore all the time the imprint of religion. The coalescence of the two separate Arya Samaj bodies in the fifties was marked by a gradual

increase in the establishment of local branches which today number around 300 some of which are to be found on sugar estates and in hamlets in the remotest parts of the island. Each branch reckons a membership which approximates to at least one-third to one-quarter of the population of its locality, and enjoys the active support and allegiance of a substantial portion of that membership. Fifteen to twenty of these branches enrol women exclusively. A few minority groups, Telegus and Marathis in particular, administer a few of the branches and, by virtue of being Ārya Samājis, mostly use Ārya bhāṣā for their proceedings, just like all other Arya Samaj branches.

Almost all the branches have a temple. Meetings of the members are fairly regular, and their agenda includes the solemnization of a havan yajña at almost every meeting, which is usually followed by a talk by the officiating priest in KhB. centering on some aspect of the teachings of the Arya Samaj.

The 300 branches run between themselves, as stated above, over 250 part-time schools at primary level, a few of which are exclusively for girls. Like the part-time schools of the H.P.S., the majority of them comprise the six primary classes with an average total attendance of 75 or more, that is, the Arya Samaj and the H.P.S., along with the Ārya Ravi Ved Pracāriṇī Sabhā which teaches about 2,000 students, are handling altogether a little under four-fifths of the total number of Hindi students catered for by Government and Government-aided schools.

As already mentioned above, it is felt by some that, in view of the regular teaching of Hindi in Government and Government-aided primary schools since the mid-fifties, the teaching of secular Hindi in voluntary part-time schools is not as important as originally envisaged. The Arya Samaj in Mauritius can justly claim, however, that since the education they impart is of a religious nature, their part-time Hindi schools still have a significant role to play in moulding the lives of the boys and girls who attend them.

Like the Mauritius Arya Sabha, the Ārya Ravi Ved Pracāriṇī Sabhā caters for Hindi education at the secondary level, although their curriculum and their teaching at this level is much more secular in

character. Since 1973, they have been running seven centres, each attended by 40 to 50 students where instruction is given for the all-India Rāṣṭra-bhāṣā Pracār Samiti, Vardha, Hindi examinations, principally Hindī-prāthamik, Hindī-Ratna and Hindī Ācārya, ranging from G.C.E. O level to degree standard in Hindi language and literature.

For many years now, the Mauritius Arya Samaj has annually celebrated their Vidyā divas which is in some measure equivalent to the yearly Convocation day celebration of the H.P.S. On that day, before a gathering of three to four thousand people including enthusiastic parents and students, certificates and prizes are given away, and several personalities address the gathering primarily to encourage the students and to highlight the teachings of Svami Dayanand. The language used throughout the celebration is strictly Ārya bhāṣā.

In order to group and organize adolescents and the younger generation, especially the western educated, Arya Samaj in 1967 founded the Ārya Yuvak Saṅgh, 20 branches of which exist today in various parts of the island. Their functions and celebrations, especially when they celebrate jointly, achieve good attendance. For example, their conference on the occasion of the Mauritius Arya Samaj Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1970, held on the premises of the D.A.V., attracted a crowd of about 10,000 men and women. The medium used in their proceedings is Hindi and English. Since November 1971, the Ārya Yuvak Saṅgh publish a three-monthly Vedic Journal in English, French and Hindi.

One of the most significant factors which influenced the propagation of KhB. in the 1950s and thereafter has been the frequent visits from India and elsewhere of numerous dignitaries. A few of these arrived independently or on the invitation of the Arya Samaj, and the others were normal postings to the Mauritius Arya Samaj by the International Aryan League, Delhi.²¹

Amongst these personalities, special mention must be made of Svami Dhruvanand. He brought about in Mauritius Arya Sabha a unity which proved to be solid and lasting, and imparted to Āryoday, the society's

weekly organ then in an ailing state, a new lease of life principally by increasing its body of subscribers from 700 to 1800. He often stayed with ordinary people including Sanātan Dharmīs, and frequently addressed well-attended gatherings, all over the island, with a clear, direct, forceful and convincing KhB. delivery which rarely failed to capture the attention of his entire audience. He was a keen Hindi protagonist²² and his four-year stay was influential in reinforcing the position of the language among Indo-Mauritians.

In 1970, the Arya Samaj in Mauritius celebrated their Diamond Jubilee. Svami Vidyanand Videh had been especially delegated by the International Aryan League to participate in the 12 day-celebration. The event was inaugurated in the town of Curepipe-Road, the very locality where in 1903 K.Lallah had made the first attempt to found the Arya Samaj but which had proved abortive. Besides the solemnization of a havan yajña on that day, there were talks in KhB. to depict the hard struggle, the set-backs and the achievements of Arya Samaj in Mauritius since its foundation in 1910. In the course of the Diamond Jubilee celebration, there was also a joint well-attended function of the Arya Sabha and the Ārya Ravi Ved Pracāriṇi Sabhā at the seat of the latter association. On the last day of the celebration, in keeping with the tradition of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius, a procession of 30,000 people hailing from different parts of the country marched through the streets and delightfully impressed the city of Port-Louis. There were 20 to 25 Arya Samaj rural centres which also celebrated, and Indo-Mauritian participation including numbers of Sanātan Dharmīs was extensive.

All the speeches, except the official speech of the Acting Prime Minister (Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo) delivered at the Arya Sabha headquarters were in KhB. It is significant that at the same spot 35 years previously, the centenary of the Indian Immigration to Mauritius had been observed by a programme conducted entirely in English.

Following the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the Arya Samaj, and before his return to India, Svami Vidyanand Videh was invited to preach to gatherings in several Sanatan Dharma temples. He was also

welcomed by the Muslim association of Port-Louis where amidst a packed audience of Muslims and Hindus, cultural leaders (including maulavis) and elected politicians, he delivered in KhB. a sermon which pleased all immensely.

The celebration of the Diamond Jubilee was followed three years later by the appearance of the book Ārya Sabhā Mārisās kā itihās (Ajmer, India, 1973, 184 pp.), published by Mauritius Arya Sabha and written by their President Mohunlal Mohit. About 2,000 copies of this book have been circulated in Mauritius. Born in 1902, M.Mohit has witnessed and lived most of the history of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius, and his book is to this day the best on the subject. While, on the one hand, it constitutes a faithful record of the history of Arya Samaj from its foundation (1910) to the early seventies, on the other hand, written, as it is, in a simple, direct and fluent style, it stands as a landmark in the history of modern standard Hindi in Mauritius. In Appendix XII is an extract from M.Mohit's work.

The early seventies were, as a matter of fact, an eventful period in the history of Mauritius Arya Samaj. In 1974, one year before the Arya Samaj centenary celebration took place in Bombay, the twelfth International Arya Samaj conference was held in Mauritius. The first Arya Samaj conference which took place in Delhi in 1927 and the conferences which followed until the late sixties had all been of a national character, but the eleventh conference held in Rajasthan in 1972, presided over by the Prime Minister of Mauritius, was held on an international basis. The twelfth Arya Samaj conference from the 24th to 26th August, 1974 in Mauritius, again of an international character was the first to take place outside the sub-continent; it was attended by 1,200 delegates - 700 from India and the rest being representatives from the Arya Samaj of South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Guyana, Fiji, Thailand, Malaysia and Burma. The two Arya Samaj bodies of Mauritius - Maurīśās Ārya Sabhā and Ārya Ravi Ved Pracāriṇī Sabhā collaborated in the celebration.

The Government of Mauritius duly participated. The Governor-General (Sir Rahman Osman) as the representative of the Queen addressed the gathering in both KhB. and English.

There were six conferences including two on poetry and education within the main conference. All the conferences, in some way or other, amongst other things, laid some stress on the significant role of Ārya bhāṣā. The Chairman of the poetry conference (Kṣemcand Suman), for example, in the course of his address underlined that 'cultural awakening along with the advancement of Hindi resulting from the work of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius has eventually achieved the Independence of this country'. This was obviously an exaggerated statement, but it clearly showed the considerable importance which the Arya Samaj, as an international body, was attaching to the role of Ārya bhāṣā. The main conference passed eight resolutions one of which was to the effect that 'taking into account, amongst other things, the fact that the numerical strength of people using Hindi in the world is over 400 million, the United Nations be asked to include Hindi among the languages approved for use at the U.N.'.

Several delegates of the Conference were welcomed by Arya Samaj branches in rural areas. There were talks and interviews on the radio and television too, almost all of them being conducted in KhB.

On the last day, there took place in Port-Louis a 20,000 strong street-procession of men and women including the delegates. The conference closed in the night of the same day with a beautiful thanksgiving KhB. speech from Svamī Ananda. Apart from its emphasis on the teaching and organization of Arya Samaj, the 12th International Arya Samaj conference further enhanced the prestige of KhB. amongst the people of Mauritius including western-educated Indo-Mauritians.

10. The Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh

The cultivation and dissemination of KhB. Hindi in Mauritius owes a great deal to the activity of both the Arya Samaj and the H.P.S., but during the period under review two new institutions were established which, in a sense, transcended these two organisations. They were the Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh founded in 1961 and the Hindī Pariṣad established in 1963. In the early sixties, a number of Hindi lovers had been for several

years studying the Hindi literature imported from India. But in the field of creative writings, apart from the works of B.Bissoondoyal and the few writings of J.N.Roy, Madhukar, M.Chintamunnee and others, very little of any literary merit had been produced. In fact, by the end of the fifties, it appeared as if KhB. Hindi had reached a point of stagnation: boys and girls had passed examinations and studied literature; some of them had been employed as Hindi teachers in the Government service. But this seemed to be the end of the road. There was little incentive for creative writing in KhB. Hindi, and the little that was produced more often remained unpublished principally for lack of technical facilities and adequate patronage. It was to provide this vital incentive which was so much lacking that the Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh, and not long after the Hindī Pariṣad were established. These two young organisations picked up from where the two old institutions seemed to have come to a standstill.

In December 1961, a few Mauritian Hindi protagonists, under the patronage of Dr. (later Sir) Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, set up the Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh. The prime objectives of this association of Hindi writers were to enable Hindi writers to meet and exchange views, to encourage young artists in writing and staging Hindi plays, and to assist them in the publication of works of literary merit.

The president of the association of Hindi writers was and still is Dharamvir Ghura, an Assistant Hindi Supervisor for primary schools in the Ministry of Education who retired recently.²³ The vice-president is M.Chintamunnee, head of the Hindi department at the M.G.I., and the secretary is Indradeo Bhola, a Hindi teacher in the Ministry of Education. The association reckons about 75 members, and membership is restricted to Hindi writers including those who have not yet published any works.

The association of Mauritian Hindi writers holds regular meetings at two-monthly intervals. They run a yearly literary competition embracing various forms of Hindi literature - poetry, essay, short story etc. involving a fairly large number of competitors. They also organize every

year a poets' conference which takes place in a public garden or on one of the Mauritian beaches, attended by four to five hundred people. The poems which are recited as well as the literary talks which are given on this occasion are sometimes published by the association in either printed or cyclostyled form.

Through the sixties, the Hindī Lekhak Saᅅgh celebrated annually the birth - anniversary of one of the well-known Hindi writers of India, such as Bhāratendu Hariścandra, Jay Śaᅅkar Prasād, Mahādevī Varmā etc., and the celebration attracted every time an interested audience of two to three hundred people. During the same period and thereafter, members of the association occasionally broadcast talks on the local radio relating to Hindi literature composed both by Indian and by Mauritian writers. Another popular yearly event celebrated to this day by the Hindī Lekhak Saᅅgh is the anniversary of their own association - a literary day amidst a gathering of about a thousand people including Hindi writers and enthusiastic Hindi-lovers and other Indo-Mauritians who lend passive support to the movement.

The association has been fairly active in the field of Hindi publications. In 1965, they set up a fortnightly paper, the Bāl Sakhā intended primarily for children, in order to supply a need long felt in Mauritius, but owing to the lack of adequate facilities, it was short-lived. They continue, however, to publish, from time to time, several short writings on behalf of Hindi writers, particularly their own members.²⁴

11. The Hindī Pariᅅad

The Hindī Lekhak Saᅅgh had been in existence just over a year, when some other Hindi protagonists set up the Hindī Pariᅅad in Port-Louis primarily to encourage and promote creative Hindi writing. At the outset, the Port-Louis Pariᅅad was local in character, but later eighteen such societies were established in various parts of the country, altogether forming a National Hindī Pariᅅad.

The Port-Louis Pariᅅad constituted by some 75 to 100 members of both sexes was presided over by Somdath Bhuckory, a barrister-at-law and Hindi

poet, and the secretary was Thakurdutt Pandey, an Education Officer in the Hindi department of the M.G.I. and a Hindi writer. The Pariṣad societies subsequently set up were chaired and managed by other Hindi enthusiasts.²⁵ After the establishment of these eighteen societies which like the one of Port-Louis reckoned each a membership of 75 to 100, a Pariṣad central committee was set up in Port-Louis composed of representatives from the various societies to ensure co-ordination and some degree of uniformity in the proceedings of all the societies.

The Pariṣad was unique. While the work of other Hindi organisations was mostly confined to the promotion of Hindi language and of Hindi literature produced by Indian writers, and the propagation of religious Hindi, the Pariṣads through their regular gatherings and their radio programmes urged advanced Hindi students to turn to creative writing. In the course of the Pariṣad meetings in Port-Louis and elsewhere, young writers often read out their poems, short stories and other writings before an audience which included relatively experienced writers. Critical appreciation was then expressed, more often praising the young writers and encouraging them in their further pursuits. As a nursery for young talent, the Pariṣad was reminiscent of the Panjābī Adabī Saṅgat and the Halqā-e-Arbāb-e-Zauq, two associations in present day Lahore devoted to the promotion of Panjabi and Urdu respectively. It was not always possible to avoid the pitfall of the authors writing principally to impress one another within the Pariṣad; in some cases, the language tended to be deliberately sanskritized, self-conscious and unnatural. This was a transitional stage, however, which gradually passed, as opportunities to publish the works for a reading public became more and more available. Desanskritization was here an influence of public taste on the writers' style. In 1969, in order to encourage creative writing further, the Pariṣad set up a quarterly literary magazine called the Anurāg which, amongst other articles, published poems, essays, biographical sketches, reviews of Hindi works, the great majority of which were produced by Indo-Mauritian writers. (In Appendix XIII is the extract of an article from the issue of July 1976.) After eight years of regular publication, however, the magazine ceased to appear in 1977, not very long before the M.G.I. launched its monthly literary magazine, the Vasant, published to this day.

In the late seventies, the Pariṣad ceased to exist. It had, however, in a good measure, fulfilled its objective. During the fourteen years of its existence, it contributed vitally in assisting the steady and continued growth of an ability for the literary expression of national sensitivity. Several good Hindi Mauritian writers of today have been, in part, products of the Pariṣad.²⁶ As far back as 1967 when Dinkar visited Mauritius, he observed in the course of a public address that, outside India, Mauritius was the only country which was creating an overseas Hindi literature (Pravāsī Hindī sāhitya) of which the Hindi world could be justly proud.

12. B.Bissoondoyal

While dealing with the institutions and agencies whose activities have contributed considerably towards the development of standard modern Hindi in Mauritius, it is also appropriate to portray the role played by B.Bissoondoyal during the period under consideration, for there is no doubt that, in view of his remarkable activity as a preacher, teacher and writer, and its deep impact on the Indo-Mauritian community, he not only stands in a class by himself, but he can be regarded as constituting over a number of years an effective linguistic and cultural movement. While during the period 1939 to 1950, his services took principally the shape of active preaching from the platform, his contribution in the ensuing years towards the cultivation of KhB. lies much more in his work as a voluminous Hindi prose writer, particularly as an essayist.²⁷ Through his speeches and writings in Hindi, English and French, B.Bissoondoyal has in a good measure succeeded in bringing the West to the East and the East to the West: this is perhaps, his greatest contribution. His Hindi writings have been well received by the Mauritian public, which is no mean achievement in Mauritius where Hindi works, in general, have never been able to compete with much success against English and French writings (the qualities of B.Bissoondoyal as an essayist are discussed in Chapter 5).

13. Mauritian KhB. literature after 1950

While B.Bissoondoyal produced a substantial amount of excellent KhB. literature principally in the form of the essay, younger writers promoted other forms of literature - drama, the short story, poetry and the novel. In fact, the period under review has seen the creation of a relatively voluminous Mauritian KhB. literature most of which has come into existence within the last 15 years, that is, after Mauritius acceded to Independence in 1968. Much of the work which appeared before Independence is distinct from the post-Independence composition in its outlook and expression. In almost every form of Mauritian KhB. literature, there are a few writings which can sustain comparison not only with those of India, but, if properly translated, with those of the writers of other nations. In the late 1970's, two Indo-Mauritian Hindi writers were honoured in India: S.Bhuckory was awarded the Viśva Hindī puraskār together with very distinguished personalities from other countries, and B.Bissoondoyal received the Sāhitya Vācaspati. The Bhojpuri culture which Mauritius inherited from the majority of the Indian immigrants, and the Western element which has gone into the formation of the writers' background, are clearly two of the factors which have influenced Mauritian KhB. writings. In fact, Mauritian KhB. literature is, in a large measure, a product of the native soil of Mauritius, not a mere parody or extension of that of the sub-continent.

The KhB. literature of Mauritius, however, is not a commodity which is sought after by Mauritians in the same manner as English and French writings. While a KhB. Hindi readership exists it is not large nor is it interested enough to promote adequately KhB. literature. General Indo-Mauritian support for local KhB. literature is existent but it is passive. Apart from a few of the works, most of the writings have had only one edition; and those which have run through more than one are mostly writings which have been read more in India than in Mauritius. In the sub-continent, there is a living interest in KhB. literature including Pravāsi sāhitya (overseas literature), partly because KhB. Hindi is both the official language of

India and their lingua franca. In Mauritius, it is neither the one nor the other and, therefore, except for those who love the language and the literature genuinely (these are not very numerous), interest in this literature is, generally speaking, sustained by the notion that it is an expression of national sensitivity through a medium which is also the prestigious vehicle of their formal culture. There are also a few whose interest in the literature is determined by the amount of assistance it can provide in passing Hindi examinations.²⁸

A certain amount of Mauritian KhB. literature has been translated in Russia and Germany and in non-Hindi-speaking areas of the sub-continent. Some Mauritian KhB. writers have found it expedient to have their works translated into English and French to reach not only people outside the Indo-Mauritian community but also those Indo-Mauritians who find themselves more at ease with these two European languages than with KhB. (the various forms of Mauritian KhB. literature have been dealt with at length in Chapter 5).²⁹

14. The role of sound-broadcasting and the television

The history of sound broadcasting in Mauritius dates from the late thirties. KhB. was the first oriental language to be introduced as a mass medium of communication in the course of the Second World War. This broadcasting assumed the shape primarily of news in KhB. and recorded light and classical Indian music. In the mid-forties, O.S.Geerjanaan was appointed Indian programme organizer at the Mauritius Broadcasting Station (later Corporation). Under his organization, it did not take long for the Hindi radio programme, still inchoate, to undergo a considerable change for the better. The entertainment became much more varied; apart from news in Hindi, and recorded music - an item which often involved a long list of 'requests' from listeners all over the country - there were live vocal music from local singers, jokes and anecdotes, short plays³⁰ in Hindi and Urdu, poetry recitation, literary and cultural items including freelance presentations, special Indian festival programmes, interviews with Hindi-speaking personalities

from India etc. The opportunity to present programmes at the broadcasting station was a strong incentive, and many Indo-Mauritians of both sexes improved their KhB. with regard to style and grammatical correctness in order to be able to produce items acceptable to the Indian programme organizer. There were, besides, in the fifties and sixties several radio courses for the benefit of Hindi students run by teachers a few of whom were Education Officers of the Ministry of Education.³¹

Geerjanan served the Indian section of the M.B.S. for over 20 years,³² a period during which his name became a household word in Indo-Mauritian homes. His presentation was highly popular, and scores of housewives would eagerly switch on the radio every day at 5 p.m. for the one-hour Indian programme. The great majority of homes in Mauritius owned a radio set, be it even a transistor radio or merely a pocket radio. The daily programme brought KhB. into thousands of homes including the urban areas where the spoken language was predominantly Creole, and where KhB. was just a little understood. In fact, for nearly a quarter of a century, the daily Indian programme was one of the potent factors which solidly underpinned the position of KhB. and its cultural associations.

In the past and until the late sixties, the air-time allocated to programmes in KhB. and the minority oriental languages was about one-third of that allotted to European languages (English and French). In March 1969, the percentage of air-time assigned to the various languages in use at the M.B.C. was as follows:³³

	%
European (French: 60.2%; English: 9.8%)	70
Hindustani (no distinction being made between Hindi and Urdu)	23.8
Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Gujarati	3.2
Chinese (Hakka and Cantonese together)	1.8
Creole	0.2
Arabic (two five-minute koran readings)	0.1
Mixed (interview of hospital-patients who spoke in different languages)	0.9
	<hr/> 100.0

As a consequence of an increase in the aggregate air-time from 112 hours in 1969 to 121½ hours in 1982, and the repeated requests from Indo-Mauritian quarters for the extension of Indian programmes, the latter have been allotted extra air-time, and today programmes in oriental languages take up 35% of the total air-time as compared with 27% in 1969.³⁴ A few modifications have been made in air-time allocation recently as a result of which more time has been assigned to Creole and Bhojpuri, the principal means of informal discourse in the island.

The television was introduced in Mauritius in 1964. Just as has happened elsewhere, sound-broadcasting programmes were diminished in importance and appeal. All the same, the Hindi section of the sound-broadcasting still provides several programmes popular with Indo-Mauritian homes, such as devotional music and news in Hindi every morning, Vedvānī and Divyadr̥ṣṭi (both religious and cultural talks), Sāz aur āvāz (musical), Sargam,³⁵ Bālakō kī phulvārī (children's programmes in basic KhB.), besides a few other programmes presented by free-lance artists. The music programmes, such as Dr.Nundlall's Sargam, consisting of Indian classical music and occasional illustrative talks have now for years been serving KhB. along with music.

The introduction of the television in Mauritius in 1964 brought an entirely new dimension. At the outset, the oriental languages altogether received half an hour per week for presentation of cultural programmes. In 1969, the percentage distribution of television time with regard to languages was as follows:³⁶

European (English: 51.1%; French: 40.8%)	91.9
Hindi, Urdu, Bhojpuri	6.0
Mixed (family planning programme, multilingual)	0.7
Creole	0.7
Other (light classical songs by German and other artists)	0.7
	<hr/>
	100.0

Although to this day, there are no regular T.V. programmes in Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Gujarati and Chinese, these languages are used infrequently in special programmes marking the respective festivals of these minority groups.

The time allocated to the Indian programmes was obviously inadequate. This was gradually increased in accordance with the cultural needs and aspirations of the country, and as and when suitable programmes for television presentation became available. Such programmes were generally imported from India or obtained from the Office of the Commissioner for the Government of India. In January 1982, out of a weekly total of 45½ hours' television time, the European (French and English) programmes which are enjoyed by all Mauritians, in general, were allotted 33½ hours and the Indian programmes 12 hours, that is, 74% and 26% respectively of the aggregate time. A few alterations effected recently have assigned a little more time to Creole and Bhojpuri.

There is an Indian programme on the T.V. every afternoon. Apart from 15 minutes' news in KhB. and Bhojpuri, there are 45 minutes of entertainment involving use of both Bhojpuri and KhB. With the introduction of the colour T.V. in the mid-seventies, the T.V. programmes have of course grown far more attractive. There are literary and cultural Indian programmes at both amateur and professional levels: Indian music from amateur musical groups hailing from various parts of the island; shows by music students especially those of the M.G.I.;³⁷ instrumental, vocal music and dance by professionals; Indian song (especially Hindi and Urdu) competitions organized by the M.B.C., encouraging hidden talents to come forward; poetry symposiums in Urdu and Hindi, more often in the latter;³⁸ dramas in Bhojpuri and KhB. some of which form part of the yearly festival of drama sponsored by the Ministry of youth and sports and held on a competitive basis; a few Hindi plays presented occasionally by the crew of Air-India during their stop-overs in Mauritius; interviews in KhB. with personalities from India, etc. Several of the above items, while providing entertainment, not only inculcate a passive knowledge of KhB. but motivate many Mauritians, especially the Indo-Mauritian element to learn more and more KhB. which is the main vehicle of expression in these programmes.

Twice a week (Thursday and Saturday), apart from the usual one-hour programme, there has been, since the early seventies, a two and a half hour Indian film on the television screen. These films with their KhB. dialogue are viewed, as already pointed out, by thousands of families with keen interest. Indo-Mauritian families not owning a television set are not very numerous. A number of homes now own 'video' sets too, which has further increased the viewing of Hindi feature films. In a few poor areas of the island, village and district councils and sugar estate authorities have provided television sets in the village halls where television can be viewed communally. Several KhB. songs of the films grow so popular that they are occasionally published in the French dailies of the island in transliterated Roman script; and among the singers of these songs are a few Creole youths of African origin too. Doubtlessly, among the vehicles of entertainment, the film will continue to remain the most influential in the cultivation of KhB.

15. Indian music and KhB.

The Saṅgīt Samāj, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was influential through the forties in encouraging the practice of Indian music and indirectly the study of KhB. Most of the members of the music association had known two worlds: the world before the coming of the Indian sound-film in 1933 and the one which followed the advent of these films. Before 1933, most of these singers depended for the tunes of their songs on gramophone records, folk-songs and on their own resourcefulness. With the coming of the Indian sound-film, however, a new wealth of tunes, ready made, became available. Many of the songs, including religious ones, were learnt verbatim from the screen, and often sung to audiences who greatly liked to hear them. A few of the singers set film hit-tunes to KhB. compositions of their own or written by various other people, centering on Rām and Kṛṣṇa bhakti, Svami Dayanand, social reforms and the importance of mātr̥-bhāṣā (the mother-tongue). These songs were frequently sung on occasions such as Hindi school anniversaries, weddings, nagarkīrtans (processions), pracār (sermons), festivals, song-competitions which attracted crowds, and to other social gatherings. Dozens of vocalists, including persons of South-Indian

origin, endeavoured to polish their KhB. and improve their Devanāgarī script, in order to understand better the purport of their songs and to transcribe them reasonably well. In fact this process of imitating, composing, singing, listening to songs and studying the language of the lyrics, ushered in Mauritius a new epoch in vocal North-Indian music. The practice of light Indian music, however amateurish, as it spread over the island, disseminated in its wake a better understanding of KhB. not only among the educated but among the masses of Indo-Mauritians all over the country.

In the course of the forties, the religious rigidity of the Arya Samaj and the Orthodox Sanātan Dharma was undergoing a welcome change. The same singer could now freely sing both Ārya Samajī and puranic songs in the functions of the two sects without fear of being excommunicated. As a consequence, the Hindi composer-singer, no longer cramped by former sectarian restrictions could express himself with a freedom which contributed towards creating a more wholesome atmosphere wherein not only music but KhB. could continue to thrive.

The learning and practising of Indian music through the imitation of film songs continued unchanged until the late fifties. In the early sixties, however, there was the beginning of a change in this trend, when in their overall new policy towards oriental languages and culture, the Government introduced Indian music for the first time in the Education system of Mauritius at both primary and secondary level (European music had been already for several years on the secondary school curriculum). In 1961, Dr.I.Nundlall, the beneficiary of an Indian scholarship, who had two years previously returned to Mauritius on completion of his music studies in India, was appointed Education Officer (Music) in the Ministry of Education. At the Teachers' Training College for Primary schools, Indian music was made part of the course of study, and as 'Indian music in education involves use of Hindi to a very great extent', the introduction of this subject was 'in the interest of the language too'.³⁹ Several of the 'General-Purpose' students (Indo-Mauritians in particular) following the course, 'who did not know Hindi at the outset, were very keen to learn songs in Hindi. By the end of the one-year course, most were able to understand and even converse in Hindi. Some started learning the language

in order to sing better'.⁴⁰ In primary and secondary schools, including a few private secondary schools, for whom Dr. Nundlall wrote Hindi songs appropriate to their needs, the approach was made through Hindi in transliterated Roman script.

For some time, urged by many Indo-Mauritians, the Commission for India in Mauritius, had been endeavouring with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education, Mauritius, to establish in the island a School of Indian Music and Dance subsidized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. In 1964, the project materialised. It was an afternoon school with about 200 students, mostly adolescents and adults including housewives, and a few were of non-Indian origin. Although the traditional contents of classical song lyrics include elements of Braj and other dialects, the interpretation of those lyrics and all the class-teaching took place in KhB. and English. Indian classical dance and instrumental music were likewise taught in these two languages. The students of the school occasionally gave shows and ballets on the television and in the theatres. Thus about 200 students were in constant contact with Hindi and Hindi-speaking people in the school, on the stage and off the stage. In fact, the School of Indian Music and Dance, taught by Mr. and Mrs. Nand Kishore from India served music well and, in a good measure, KhB. too, until its integration with the M.G.I. in the early seventies.

The sixties which saw a good deal of development and progress in Indian music in Mauritius also witnessed several concert-tours by professional artists from India. Most of the musical programmes involved the use of KhB.

The decade which followed witnessed an important event in the field of both Indian music and KhB. In the late sixties, Dr. I. Nundlall broadcast from the M.B.C. a series of talks on Indian music much appreciated by the public. He collected these talks in a 115 page book entitled Bhārat kī saṅgīt kalā, which he published in 1972 (Port-Louis, 1,000 copies), the first work of its kind to appear in Mauritius. The author has circulated this treatise among his friends, students, music lovers and in music departments in various parts of the world. While it is a

valuable treatise, appreciated in Indian music circles in Mauritius and India, it is also, from the linguistic viewpoint, a significant event in the history of KhB. The language, somewhat sanskritized, is terse, polished and well-turned. In Appendix XIV is an extract from Dr.Nundlall's work.

16. Second World Hindi Conference, August 1976

One of the most important cultural events which enhanced the prestige of Hindi and assisted in consolidating its position in Mauritius during the period under review was the Second World Hindi Conference held from the 28th to 30th August, 1976. The venue of the Conference was the M.G.I. Apart from representatives of Mauritius, there were delegates, including 169 from the subcontinent, from a number of countries where Hindi is cultivated or studied in some form or other.⁴¹ The Conference was attended on and off by 2,500 people.

M.K.Gandhi, during his visit to Mauritius in 1901 had urged Indo-Mauritians to devote more attention to education and to participate in the political life of the country. It was appropriate, therefore, that, three-quarters of a century later, a World Hindi Conference should have been held in a centre bearing his name, hosted by a Government predominantly Indo-Mauritian in composition.

There are some 30 parts of the world where Hindi is cultivated, in a few of them purely at an academic level, in some in a literary and cultural form, and in several others as a means of communication too. It is significant that when a venue had to be selected for holding a World Hindi Conference outside India (the First World Hindi Conference was held in Nagpur, 1975) for the first time, the choice fell on Mauritius. Such a choice was prompted by several factors. Mauritius is one of the few lands outside India where people of Indian origin, the majority of whom hail from the Hindi area, preponderate over the other elements of the population. The Government of Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam was very sympathetic to the cause of Hindi (the present Government of Mauritius encourages the continued cultivation of Bhojpuri as well) and had volunteered to host the conference. Mauritius had shown much interest

in the First World Hindi Conference at Nagpur: the five-day Conference had been presided over by the Prime Minister of Mauritius, and the Mauritian delegation had included a troupe of 22 Indo-Mauritian actors who staged Dharamvīr Bhāratī's Andhā yug. At both voluntary and Government level, Mauritius was ahead of most other countries outside India in the cultivation and dissemination of Hindi language and literature. It was one of the few countries outside India where Hindi was firmly ensconced as a cultural language amongst many people of Indian origin, and, in some measure, as a means of communication too. Furthermore, Mauritius had by 1976 already produced a certain amount of Mauritian Hindi literature (the production continued in the years which followed), being one of the very few places to have achieved this outside the sub-continent.⁴² Finally, outside the sub-continent wherever Indians have settled Mauritius is, so far, the only country to possess a prestigious centre like the M.G.I. which not only teaches oriental languages and fine arts but constitutes an effective co-ordinating and underpinning mechanism for the cultivation of these subjects at all levels of education throughout the island.

During its three-day session, the Conference discussed primarily the six following matters: a form for an international style of Hindi; Hindi as the medium of mass-communication; the use of mass-media - the radio, television, film etc. for the propagation of Hindi; the role of voluntary bodies (e.g. the Arya Sabha, the H.P.S., the Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh, the Pariṣad, etc.) in the dissemination of KhB.; the foundation of a World Hindi Institute; the introduction of Hindi at the U.N. as one of their approved languages: a resolution was passed unanimously by the Conference that, in view of the fact that Hindi is the third language of the world from the numerical strength of people speaking it, a motion be placed before the U.N. to give to Hindi the same status accorded to the other languages already in use in their Assembly.

The Hindi Conference also gave some thought to the oriental languages of the minority groups - Urdu, Tamil, Telegu and Marathi - as well as to Chinese, and to the two main languages of Mauritius,

English and French, stressing the need of a healthy relationship amongst linguistic neighbours.

The conference closed on the night of the 30th August with a Hindi poetry conference, in the auditorium of the M.G.I., attended by some 300 people. Before the delegates left Mauritius, several of them had an opportunity of attending the receptions which some rural areas had organized for them.

The benefits resulting from the Second World Hindi Conference in Mauritius have been manifold. Two years before (August 1974), the Twelfth International Arya Samaj Conference had been held in Mauritius with its characteristic stress on religion; the Second World Hindi Conference, however, redressed the balance between sectarian and secular Hindi, and set Mauritius conspicuously on the Hindi map of the world. The exchange of views amongst delegates of various countries imparted to Hindi an international dimension, and it strengthened further the international Hindi brotherhood already established by the First World Hindi Conference at Nagpur. The Conference further led to a better awareness of the general problems facing the cultivation of Hindi in various parts of the world and the possible ways and means of resolving them. Some of these ideas as well as the history of the various forms of Hindi literature in Mauritius are embodied in Smārikā, the 174-page publication which appeared on the same occasion, containing messages and articles the majority of which have been written by Indo-Mauritians. One of the greatest cultural benefits accruing from the Second World Hindi Conference in Mauritius, however, was the sense of cultural unity it helped to create in the multi-lingual society of Mauritius. It brought Mauritian communities in contact with the delegates and also more closely with each other. Furthermore, it helped to reinforce in Mauritius, especially among people of non-Indian origin, the idea that the continued cultivation of oriental languages and Asian culture can contribute appreciably to the wealth and harmony of the eclectic and composite culture of Mauritius.

Notes

1. S.Bhuckory, Hindi in Mauritius (Port-Louis, 1967), p.120.
2. The statistics have been kindly supplied by the Ministry of Education, Mauritius. The figures quoted with regard to teachers employed by the Ministry do not include E.T.A.'s.
3. The information concerning irregularities in a few of the baiṭhkā schools was obtained confidentially from Mr.M.N.Varma, Principal Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Mauritius.
4. This literacy centre made use of a classroom of Dagotière Government primary school. The Hindi class was supervised and examined by the writer of the thesis who was then Acting Principal Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Education.
5. Among protests in newspapers were articles in English in the local press by Somdath Bhuckory. One article in Hindi by Abhimanyu Unnuth in the issue of 15th to 21st August, 1982 of Dharmyug deprecated the defeatism of the Government in power regarding this matter.
6. The information regarding the teaching of oriental languages at the M.G.I. and in private secondary schools has been provided through the good offices of the M.G.I.
7. The information regarding the London G.C.E. examinations has been kindly supplied by the Schools Department, University of London.
8. Hindi has been examined in Mauritius at the Cambridge School Certificate since 1940. The S.C. entry for that year was 265; one candidate took Hindi and passed. The figures relating to the S.C. and H.S.C. examinations have been kindly supplied by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.
9. From 1964 to the early 1970s, before its integration with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the School of Indian Music and Dance was run by a statutory executive committee presided over by Sir

Veerasamy Ringadoo, a senior Minister of the Government of the day. Dr.I.Nundlall Education Officer (Music) was the Vice-President. The writer of this thesis was the secretary to the Committee from 1967 to 1970. The teachers of the school were Nand Kishore and his wife Kamal Kirtikar, two Indians appointed by the Government of India.

10. The Europa yearbook of 1978; a World Survey (London, 1978), II, 908.
11. For example, in 1979, a Bhojpuri one-act play entitled Sab tarak par was written by M.Chintamunnee. It was staged at the M.G.I. on the occasion of the celebration of Bhojpuri-day.
12. A record of eight Bhojpuri wedding-songs made by the M.G.I. and given the name of Svarṇ-cakra was launched by the Institute on 15.11.1980.
13. J.N.Roy, Mārīśas mē Hindī bhāṣā kā saṁkṣipt itihās, pp.176-77, quoted by R.K.Barz in his article 'The Cultural Significance of Hindi in Mauritius' in South Asia, New Series, Vol.III, No.1 (1980).
14. Until recently, the Hindi works of Basdeo Bissoondoyal, the well-known Indo-Mauritian Hindi author, for example, were not all available at the library.
15. In the 1960s until 1970, the Parīkṣā Borḍ was chaired by the writer of this thesis. The seat of the Board was the Mauritius College in Curepipe, owned by J.N.Roy (the use of this accommodation was free of charge).
16. J.N.Roy, Mārīśas mē Hindī bhāṣā kā saṁkṣipt itihās (New Delhi, 1970) p.134, also quoted by Richard K. Barz in 'The cultural significance of Hindi in Mauritius' - South Asia, New Series, Vol. III, No.1 (1980).
17. Statistics concerning the numerical strength of students learning Hindi in State Primary schools were kindly supplied by the Ministry of Education.

18. Statistics relating to the entry and results of the collaborative examinations of the H.P.S. - Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, Allahabad, have been obtained through the good offices of the H.P.S.
19. The idea of building small libraries in the voluntary affiliated schools germinated with the two-week visit to Mauritius of Yaśpāl Jain, the General Secretary of the Sastā Sāhitya Maṇḍal, New Delhi.
20. Following the retirement of J.N.Roy in the late seventies and before B.Shumbhoo was elected, the President was D.Rughoo, a senior civil servant.
21. Among such arrivals were: Svamī Narayananand (4 months in 1952); Svamī Anand Bhikṣu (5 months in 1954); Svami Dhruvanand (1957-1961); Svamī Abhedanand who arrived in Mauritius in January 1961 and died in the island in July 1961; Mahatma Anand Svamī (3 months in 1962); Svami Akhilanand (1963-1967); Pandit Usharbudh M.A., D.Litt. (16 days in 1969), then a professor of Sanskrit at Minnosota University, whose mission in Mauritius was to research Indo-Mauritian culture, on behalf of his University; Dr.Satyaprakāś (10 days in 1969), a science professor at Allahabad university whose talks centred on the harmonious correlation existing between the operation of modern science and Vedic theism; Svami Vidyanand Videh (about two months in 1970); Svami Anand (1974); Svami Divyanand (late 1970s to early 1980s); and others.
22. In 1960, the writer of this thesis while acting as a host to Svami Dhruvanand for a few days had the privilege of living in his company and understanding his thoughts and way of life.

In the course of his address on the Convocation day of the H.P.S. in December 1959, referring to Girdhari Bhagat (1895-1960) who had donated all his property - a few acres planted with sugar-cane - to the H.P.S., the Svami said: 'Loḡ sanyāsiyō ke darśan ke liye pyāse rahte hāi, parantu māi us puruṣ kā darśan karnā cāhtā hū jinhō ne apnī sārī sampati Hindī ke pracār ke liye dān de dī hai.'
23. D.Ghura who retired in 1982 was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to the Ministry of Education, Mauritius.

24. The principal works hitherto published by the Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh are: D.Ghura, Ārya Samāj, a booklet (Port-Louis, 1963); M. Chintamunnee, Lok prīya gīt, a small collection of lyrics (Port-Louis, 1966); M.Chintamunnee, Hindī ke ādhār-stambh, a handbook listing up to 1966 all Hindi publications including newspapers and memorable dates in the history of Hindi in Mauritius (Port-Louis, 1966); Naye aṅkur, six very short stories by different authors, (Port-Louis, 1967); Gāndhī smṛti, a collection of 17 essays on the occasion of Gandhi Centenary celebration (Port-Louis, 1969); Indradev Bhola, Vardān, a small collection of poems (Port-Louis, 1972); Surbhit udyān, a collection of a few essays, poems and very short stories by different authors (Port-Louis, 1972); Vishnudat Madhu, Hāsya vāṭikā, a booklet of Hindi humour (Port-Louis, 1973); Moti Torel, Śādī se ābādī nahī barbādī, the Hindu wedding in Mauritius, the customs before and after the event, the marriage ceremony etc., with the author's observations (Port-Louis, 1974, 67 pp.).
25. For example, the chairman of the Pariṣad in the rural town of Quatre-Bornes in the late sixties until 1970, was the writer of this thesis; another Pariṣad in the town of Vacoas, some three miles away, was chaired by Dr. Ishwurdutt Nundlall, Education Officer (Indian Music) in the Ministry of Education.
26. Among Hindi writers who were, in part, products of the Pariṣad was Bhanumati Nagdan whose main work is Minisṭar, a collection of 17 short stories (Delhi, 1981).
27. The principal Hindi works of B.Bissoondoyal from 1950 onwards are: Mārīśas kā paricay (a history of Mauritius under French rule; Port-Louis, 1954, 72 pp.); Viṣṇudayāl racnāvālī, an anthology of the author's literary writings (essays) to commemorate his 20 years' work (1939-59) as a Hindu missionary in Mauritius (Ajmer, India, 1959; 210 pp.); Dictionary (French into Hindi; Port-Louis, 1962; 121 pp.); Translation into Hindi of Bernadin de St. Pierre's French novel Paul et Virginie (New Delhi, 1963), to mark the 150th birthday anniversary of the French writer celebrated in 1964. It is reported to have proved popular in India; Viṣṇudayāl lekhāvalī (39 essays

on a variety of subjects; from title-page to p.10 printed in Port-Louis, the rest in Ajmer, India, 1964; 298 pp.); Viṣṇudayāl nibandhāvalī, essays, Port-Louis; 22 chapters, 188 pp.); Jorj (Alexandre Dumas' French novel Georges associated with Mauritius; a small portion at the outset is reproduced in the author's own words, but most of it is a translation into Hindi; Port-Louis, 1968; 72 pp.); Bāpū, a collection of B.Bissoondoyal's speeches delivered on his tour of the island in the year of M.K.Gandhi's birth centenary (Port-Louis, 1970, 92 pp.); Ved bhagvān bole (comments and elucidations on the Vedas; Delhi, 1978; 135 pp.); Gītā kā adbhut sandeś (Delhi, 1978; 206 pp.); Vedō ke anupam vicār (Delhi, 1980; 101 pp.).

28. The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate has prescribed Ek bīghā pyār, a novel by the Indo-Mauritian writer Abhimanyu Unnuth as one of the Hindi literature texts for the School Certificate.
29. Somdath Bhuckory has translated into English his Hindi book Gaṅgā kī pukār (Port-Louis, 1972) which narrates his travels in India. The English version is entitled The Call of the Ganges.
30. For several years in the forties and fifties, the writer of this thesis, sometimes guided by S.Jugdutt, presented on the occasion of Premchand's birth anniversary, a play adapted from one of his short stories, e.g., Iśvarīya nyāya, Durgā kā mandir, Mantra, Mahā tīrth, Beṭī kā dhan etc.
31. Among those who ran radio courses for Hindi students in the fifties and sixties were the following: Rani Jugdutt, Devbanslal Ramnauth, Moonishwurlall Chintamunee, Minakshi Prakash, Thakurdutt Pandey.
32. O.S.Geerjanaan retired in the mid-sixties. He was awarded the M.B.E. for his meritorious services.
33. The figures are based on statistics quoted by Philip Baker in his paper entitled 'The language situation in Mauritius with special

reference to Mauritian Creole', African Languages Review VIII
(1969), 89.

34. The statistics relating to sound-broadcasting and television for 1982 have been obtained through the kind offices of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation.
35. 'Sargam' a weekly programme of Indian classical music has been presented by Dr.I.Nundlall for the last 15 years.
36. Philip Baker, op.cit.
37. In the late sixties and early seventies, shows were presented on the T.V. by the students of the School of Indian Music and Dance, before its integration with the M.G.I. in the mid-seventies.
38. There is an occasional symposium of Hindi poetry entitled Āyām presented on the T.V. by Abhimanyu Unnuth, the Hindi writer.
39. Dr.I.Nundlall, 'Preservation and development of Hindi through Indian music and songs', 1982 (an unpublished paper).
40. Ibid.
41. Among the countries which sent delegates to the Second World Hindi Conference in Mauritius were: The Malagasy Republic, Kenya, Malaysia, Thailand, Tanzania, Zambia, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Japan, The German Democratic Republic, The Federal Republic of West Germany, The United States of America, France, United Kingdom and India.
42. 'In teaching, disseminating and enriching Hindi, and in producing a new Hindi literature, Mauritius has made a praiseworthy contribution.' This is quoted from a message of Karan Singh (then Minister of Health and Family Planning) dated 26.7.1976 published in Smārikā, 28-30 August, 1976, Mārīśas, Dvitiya viśva Hindī sammelan (Second World Hindi Conference).

CHAPTER FIVE

A GENERAL OUTLINE OF MAURITIAN HINDI LITERATURE UP TO 1980

The present chapter traces the development of Mauritian Hindi literature up to 1980 by genre, dealing in turn with drama, poetry, the essay and general works, the short story, and finally the novel.

1. The Hindi Drama

a. The Mauritian Hindi stage

The tradition of popular drama has existed among Indo-Mauritians from about the second decade of the present century. The popular dramas of the early decades of the twentieth century drew their material from the Rāmcaritmānas, the Mahābhārata and puranic sources, and assumed chiefly the forms of Rām Līlā, Kṛṣṇa Līlā and Indrasabhā. Popular short stories and legends (story-telling was then a favourite entertainment) also provided material for acting out on the stage. The writers of the sketches were Hindu priests, baiṭhkā teachers and a few literate members of the community. In accordance with the usual dramatic convention, the roles of women were played by men suitably dressed. Indo-Mauritians of South Indian origin also used to stage plays in the early decades of this century, Rām Līlās in particular, with Bharat nāṭyam dances sometimes forming part of the action. The languages used by them were Tamil and Telegu.

The stage for these popular dramas was often makeshift, a platform erected in the grounds of a baiṭhkā, a temple or some other location. The acting itself although amateurish and unsophisticated often achieved a deep emotional impact on the audience, particularly in the rural areas. In an age when other forms of recreation were scarce, these popular plays

with their songs and dances provided attractive entertainment. Some of these performances were not simply local, since spectators, men, women and children, would walk several miles from the surrounding neighbourhood to see them. The staging of plays such as the Rām Līlā and the Indrasabhā had, by the time of the first world war, become a frequent event in festivals and Hindu weddings where they were considered particularly prestigious. There were about 80 small amateur bodies who undertook the staging of such performances on these occasions.¹

It is unfortunate that the scripts of such performances are no longer extant, as many of the actors were illiterate and knew their parts by heart, thus having no need for a script. These popular plays were, in fact, composed for an unsophisticated level of acting and in no sense were intended as literary works. It is reported that the language used in most of the plays was a simple, often incorrect KhB. with an admixture of Bhojpuri. Although the līlās emerge sporadically in the form of dramas in the cultural life of Indo-Mauritians, they have, by and large, been discontinued as a living tradition in Mauritius.

There were three factors which stimulated the Hindi stage in Mauritius in the twenties and the years that followed. The first was the arrival of theatrical companies from India and their performances all over the Island (they had already visited Mauritius in the previous decade). These companies were mostly from Bombay and they brought to the island the influence of the Parsi stage which had begun to produce Hindi plays in India around the end of the first decade of our century. Their plays which were meant mostly to provide entertainment for the ordinary people, embodied plenty of songs and dances. The second factor was the continuing spread and cultivation of KhB., and the third was the arrival on the Mauritian market of printed Hindi literature, including dramas, which superseded what Kaithī manuscripts there were.

Various theatrical groups were established, some from the nucleus of the former popular drama groups, and these had more commercial than cultural objectives, although none of these groups were to survive for

very long. Few of the plays performed from the twenties to the fifties have been published, and Indo-Mauritians remember little about them or their authors. There are some who can recall the performance in 1924 in the village of Triolet of Bhāratendu's Satya Hariścandra, and two other plays, Sūrdās and Sāvitri-Satyavān. In 1926 a social drama, Mālin kī laṛkī, was performed several times, and, in 1928, a romantic drama, Candrahār, was staged. In the late twenties, one of the companies produced and performed on several occasions the play Pākjād parī, a romantic drama influenced by the commercial Parsi stage. It seems that little was performed during the thirties, and it was not until 1940 that two romantic plays were performed entitled Līlāvati and Prem kī duniyā. The latter continued to entertain the public until 1945. Other plays to be staged during the forties included Śarīf ḍākū, (1941); Feroz Gulnār, a Hindustani version of Romeo and Juliet; two religious plays, Kṛṣṇa avatār and Bhakta Sūrdās; Bhāratendu's Candrāvalī (1941); Khvāb-i hastī (the story of a prince to the accompaniment of songs and music); Atīr-i hiraṣ (a play depicting the consequences of excessive greed); Alī Bābā (1942); Dīvān-jāde (a story of plentiful wealth); Tagore's Vardān; Śravan Kumār; and Sītā haraṇ, based on the episode in the Rāmcaritmānas. The last three plays were staged on several occasions between 1946 and 1950 before audiences of between 500 and 1,000 people.

The standard of performance from the mid twenties until 1950 represented a continuing improvement over that of the former popular dramas. The players were still untrained, but they had a better command of KhB. which enabled them to produce on occasions at least a good rhetorical if not a great dramatic effect. Although the plays were uneven in quality, a few of them did apparently rise on occasions to a reasonable dramatic and literary standard. In the early forties, however, notwithstanding occasionally playing before full houses (often in cinema halls), the local theatrical companies were already beginning to experience difficulties owing to a shortage of funds, and the continuing unwillingness of Hindu girls to act on the stage. Moreover the Indian film shows that began to take place all over the Island from

the thirties had rendered live stage performances less of an attraction. The theatrical companies therefore began to be wound up so that, by the late forties hardly any of them were left.

Not long after the advent of the radio in the early forties, Hindi protagonists began increasingly to broadcast short Hindi plays from the Mauritian Broadcasting Station. Among such broadcasters were J.N.Roy, B.K.Bhagat 'Madhukar', Shivgovind Sharma, Somdath Bhuckory, D.K.Janki and L.P.Ramyead. The broadcasting material included sketches composed by the broadcasters, published one-act plays by Indian playwrights and adaptations from short stories of Indian writers, Premchand in particular. The Indian dramatists who apparently influenced the Indo-Mauritian broadcasters in some degree were Upendranāth Aśk, Udayśaṅkar Bhaṭṭ and Rāmkumār Varmā, while Western literature, the short plays of G.B.Shaw particularly, it appears, influenced the Western educated broadcasters of Hindi drama. The radio, of course, required a different technique, and the broadcasters received some guidance from O.Geerjanan who was in charge of Indian programmes at the M.B.S. from the mid forties.

Towards the end of the fifth decade, when the local theatrical companies had been virtually wound up, the living Hindi stage passed into the hands of various cultural associations and a few enthusiastic Hindi protagonists. Cultural objectives now replaced commercial aims. In the early fifties, L.P.Ramyead staged a sketch of his own entitled Merā totā before a packed cinema-hall at Chemin-Grenier. In 1951 B.K.Bhagat 'Madhukar' staged Ādarś beṭī, a one-act play of his own, before a capacity audience in the Cinema des Familles of Port-Louis in aid of a charity.² In 1954 Ajanta Arts, a cultural association founded by Abhimanyu Unnuth in 1952, staged Parivartan, a satirical social drama, before a capacity local audience in the hall of the Maheśvarnāth temple at Triolet. Between 1954 and 1960 Abhimanyu Unnuth staged about a dozen more Hindi plays. In 1956 J.Kalicharan staged Bhāratendu's political satire Andhera-nagarī at the village social centre of Brisée Verdière. Over five hundred people, mainly from the locality, attended this performance. Also in the fifties and thereafter, short sketches were performed on stage by the boys and girls of the voluntary schools,

especially on the occasion of the school anniversary.

In 1961, Mauritius joined India and other parts of the world in celebrating the birth centenary of Rabindranath Tagore. Besides talks, interviews and local publications, Mauritius staged several plays in English, French and Hindi, mostly adaptations from Tagore's stories (the Hindi and English adaptations were obtained from the High Commission of India). Among the Hindi plays performed were Citra, Malinī, Vardān, Dāk-ghar and Visarjan. Also within the Tagore celebrations, R.Kowlessur produced a social and cultural play of his own entitled Sūryoday in the municipal theatre of Port-Louis. Among the capacity audience was the then Prime Minister who requested that the play be repeated.

In the summer of 1963, within the Hindi week celebration organized by the H.P.S., the Hindī lekhak saṅgh held a one-day drama festival at which four short plays were staged: Śarāratī bahin, a humorous social play produced by the Goodlands Kalāniketan group, Pariṇām, a social and psychological play produced by the Bon Accueil Rāmakṛṣṇa Saṅgh, Rādhā, Udayśankar Bhaṭṭ's lyrical drama produced by the Triolet Prabhāt Saṅgh, and Śikārī, a social drama produced by the Bambous Youth Club. Although not held on a competitive basis, these plays reached a fairly acceptable standard from both a literary and a dramatic point of view. In the following year, 1964, the oriental group at the Teachers' Training College (T.T.C.) under the direction of Rām Prakāś, the T.T.C. expert from India, produced and staged at the T.T.C. two plays, Kalaṅk rekhā, a political drama, and Gaddhā, a social comedy (in 1949 the T.T.C. had successfully staged Baṅsurīvālā, a play built round a cultural and legendary theme). The auditorium of the T.T.C. was filled with Hindi teachers, officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and guests. The colloquial idiomatic Hindi, the creation of dramatic situations and the general construction of the plays acted at the T.T.C. in 1964 brought new hope to the Mauritian Hindi stage.

As from 1964 when television was introduced into Mauritius, Hindi plays, including those of Abhimanyu Unnuth, the majority of which are unpublished, have been shown from time to time. Short plays with the participation of school boys and girls - sketches based on moral stories,

legends, Kṛṣṇa līlās etc. - were occasionally presented in the late sixties and seventies by Sita Ramyeed and others. Bhojpuri plays too were shown and continue to be popular; their theme often reflects cultural values cherished more by Indo-Mauritians living in the rural areas. For example, Sita Ramyeed's unpublished Bhojpuri play Bidāyī, portraying the feelings and emotions of an Indo-Mauritian family on the sending off of a bride after the wedding, centres on a theme which would not be that of a KhB. play because the subject is one deeply rooted in the living experience of the Bhojpuri speaking population. The standard of the short one-act Hindi plays shown on television is quite acceptable and they are enjoyed by thousands of families.

From the mid sixties to the end of the decade hardly any plays were performed on the living stage. The seventies, however, opened with the Hindi Pariṣad celebrating their eighth anniversary by staging Upendranāth Aśk's drama Bebāt kī bāt in the municipal theatre of Port-Louis. The production was well done. Admission to the theatre, as in most of the performances during the preceding decade, was by invitation. The audience comprised nearly a thousand people, a good number of whom were able genuinely to appreciate the literary style as well as the dramatic merit of the play. The same year, 1971, to mark the anniversary of the Pariṣad, Hindi plays were also performed in rural areas, while, in the municipal theatre in Port-Louis, the Arnova cultural circle produced Jaysāṅkar Prasād's drama Dhruvsvāmiṇī. Two performances of this play before a fairly responsive audience indicated that, at least for a number of Indo-Mauritians, the education and training in KhB., and in theatre, had reached the point where a literary style of drama in a sanskritized language was able to be appreciated.

The year 1972 was a turning point in the Mauritian Hindi stage. For the first time the Hindi stage acquired Government sponsorship: a Hindi drama training course was organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports under the direction of playwrights and producers of experience, A.Unnuth, M.Chintamunnee, T.Pandey, R.Kowlessur, and D.K.Janki. Associations and individuals interested in acting were invited to attend. In the

training process three one-act plays were performed.

It should be emphasized here that although Hindi plays had been occasionally and increasingly staged since the second decade of our century, yet the Indo-Mauritian community had not, until the early 1970's, evolved a tradition sufficiently well established to ensure the future of the Hindi drama in the island. The Hindi drama of India had exercised a strong influence on the Hindi drama of Mauritius, but it could not be said that the latter was part of a larger movement based in India (the Hindi stage in India until the end of the 1940's was itself an ailing body). As portrayed above, several factors had, from early times, assisted in creating and nurturing the Indo-Mauritian drama: the desire of the Indian immigrants to reproduce the religious litās performed in their former villages; the repeated visits of theatrical companies from India; the study, as a form of literature, of the works of Indian playwrights by Indo-Mauritians including those studying in India; the staging of Hindi plays written mostly by Indian authors and of Indo-Mauritian adaptations of Hindi stories produced by Indian writers; the spread and progress of KhB. among the Indo-Mauritians; and finally, but very much to be reckoned with, the study of English and French plays as a form of literature in schools and elsewhere, and the strong and sustained influence of the English and French stage, particularly the latter (Mauritius has now for many years received the yearly visit of a professional dramatic group from Paris). These factors notwithstanding, the Indo-Mauritian Hindi stage in the early 1970's, although existent, was still a body lacking organization and strength, and requiring institutional involvement to save it from deterioration and to infuse into it life and strength for the future. In 1973, the Government of Mauritius declared Hindi, Urdu and the other Indian languages of the island (Tamil, Telegu, Marathi) approved languages, like English and French, for dramas presented on a competitive basis within the annual drama festival organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.³ In India the Government had, likewise, in the early years following Independence, established institutional help and control to save an ailing Hindi stage (the Indian Academy of Dramatic Arts in Delhi and the India People's Theatre Association [IPTA] in Bombay had been set up in the early 1950's).

Participation in the drama festival meant, amongst other things, that the Hindi stage would from then on enjoy all the benefits of Government sponsorship, including financial assistance. In 1973, the Government recruited from India two drama experts, Mohan Maharṣi and Mrs. Maharṣi, to provide training for the Hindi stage. Shortly after their arrival they ran a two-week intensive course, after which the trainees staged under their direction the first act of Mohan Rākeś's Aṣāṛh kā ek din, in which they performed very effectively. Under the expert guidance of the Maharṣis, a long-term drama training scheme for oriental languages was prepared and implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The island-wide on-the-spot training in Hindi drama began in 1973, followed by training relative to the other oriental languages in the ensuing years. In accordance with the organisation set up, dramatic groups in both urban and rural areas enjoy through the year the benefit of the guidance and supervision of drama experts and specialist officers assigned to the respective languages. All the plays produced by these groups in various parts of the island are staged publicly under the auspices of the Ministry and a panel of judges appointed by the ministry select the best plays for the award of prizes. The prizes awarded in a public televised ceremony include awards for the best three plays, for the best actor, for the best actress and for the best producer.

The first Hindi drama festival organised by the Ministry under the above scheme took place in 1973. 22 Hindi plays competed, out of which the best four (in later years it was to be three) were selected. These four were Tīn apāhij, the first act of Mohan Rākeś's Adhe-adhūre, Mīthā ber and Klārk kī maut, the last two being unpublished plays by Abhimanyu Unnuth on the social life of Mauritius. All four plays reached a respectable standard. The new technique and the new direction taught by the drama experts as well as the advantages of performing on a stage more professional than amateur infused new life into Hindi drama. In December 1973 a drama group produced on the stage of the prestigious Triveni Club buildings,⁴ under the direction of Mohan Maharṣi, Dh.V. Bhāratī's verse-drama Andhā yug, and in May 1974 a second performance of the same play took place at the

Plaza Theatre Rose-Hill before a capacity audience amongst whom was the author who was visiting Mauritius at the time.

The year 1975 saw the first World Hindi Conference held at Nagpur, and the Triveni dramatic group were invited together with the delegates to stage Andhā yug at Nagpur. Although this Hindi play had been performed several times before in India, the Indo-Mauritian version of it impressed the delegates and the audience. It was subtly different from the Indian version: the play was the same, the language the same, but it was a representation which, with regard to pronunciation and the manner of expression, bore the imprint of the composite culture of Mauritius. The Indo-Mauritian pronunciation of KhB. Hindi is affected by speech habits formed through the use of English, French and Creole, particularly the last two, and the manner of expression, in many cases, is often influenced by French mannerisms. Several actors in that group had had a certain amount of previous experience of the English and French stage.

In 1975 Mauritius suffered extensive damage from cyclone Gervaise, and the Triveni dramatic group under M.Maharṣi's direction gave five performances of Andhā yug in Mauritius to raise money for the Prime Minister's Cyclone Gervaise Fund. Shortly after this, the same group performed the whole of Aṣāṛh kā ek din at the Plaza theatre. In the audience was Kamaleśvar, the editor of Sārikā, who praised the performance highly.

The Maharṣis continued to train Indo-Mauritian students in the dramatic arts until they left in 1977. Training was continued from 1977 to 1979 by another drama expert, Rāmṁrīsiṁh, and, since 1980, a few Indo-Mauritians have been undergoing training at the National School of Drama and the Asian Theatre Institute in New Delhi.⁵

Over the last few years, the Hindi drama festival has been attracting some 50 to 60 Hindi plays every year (12 to 15 plays are produced in Urdu). About 500 boys and girls are involved in the performance of these plays, and some 800 people watch them on the stage. The televised final, consisting of the best three plays, is seen by thousands of families, including a number of keenly interested and critical viewers. The

standard of the award winners in the last years has been praiseworthy, and a few of the first prize winners have attained a memorable literary and dramatic quality.

One of the main objectives of the Government of Mauritius in holding the annual drama festival in oriental languages alongside English and French is to "preserve the oriental languages and Indian culture in Mauritius".⁶ The festival offers the oriental languages opportunities equal to English and French. In fact, on the stage of the drama festival, a good actor in a Hindi play can, through his performance, win the same acclaim and kudos as a good actor in an English and French play. In this way, the annual festival has not only raised the prestige of Hindi and the other oriental languages, but it has also brought linguistic neighbours closer together. In 1981, for example, the second best actor award for Hindi drama was won by a boy of South Indian, Telegu, origin. In the same year, a Hindu boy received the best actor award for the Urdu drama. This free participation in stage activities has contributed to removing language barriers and enhancing respect and appreciation for others' languages and cultures.

Hindi drama has, therefore, made considerable progress since the early twenties in Mauritius. In view of the relatively large number of participants in the annual drama festival, there is need for more and more stageable plays, especially those steeped in the native idiom and culture of the land. It is to be hoped that playwrights, Indo-Mauritians in particular, will compose more such dramas in the future.

b. Published Hindi plays

The history of Hindi drama in Mauritius has up to the present been more a history of unpublished plays, short sketches and performances rather than one of plays published to be read as literature. In reviewing the published Hindi dramatic literature in Mauritius, therefore, there are only the following plays to consider:

J.N.Roy	<u>Jīvan saṅginī</u>	(1941)
B.K.Bhagat	<u>Ādarś beṭī</u> and <u>Nav-jīvan</u>	(1951)
T.Pandey	<u>Pāñc ekāñkī</u> and <u>Eksapnā</u>	(1972)
H.Liladhar	<u>Anokhe atithi</u>	(1974)
Abhimanyu Unnuth	<u>Virodh</u>	(1977)
M.Chintamunnee	Three Hindi and one Bhojpuri one act plays	(late '70s)
Astanand Sadasingh	<u>Tū tū māi māi</u>	(now untraceable)

Of these plays only those of Chintamunnee and B.K.Bhagat's Ādarś beṭī have been performed on the stage.

J.N.Roy's Jīvan saṅginī is a three act play, each act being of four scenes. It was published in 1941 by the H.P.S. on behalf of the author. This full length play is the first published by an Indo-Mauritian. With the exception of Virodh, the other published dramas are one-act plays. After the prose writings of Pandit Atmaram in the twenties and thirties, and a few very short stories in the papers, hardly any literary work had appeared in KhB. in Mauritius until the H.P.S. published Jīvan saṅginī in 1941. Its publication, therefore, marked a significant event in Mauritian Hindi and its literature. The work is now out of print.

Jīvan saṅginī centres round a social problem that confronted the Indo-Mauritian community of the day. It is reminiscent of some of the so-called 'problem plays' (samasyānāṭak) produced in India during the period. While in these, however, educated Indian girls encounter difficulties of adjustment to a conventional Hindu marriage, in Jīvan saṅginī a highly educated middle-class young man finds it almost impossible to adjust to an uneducated wife. Kailāś, on returning home to Mauritius after completing law studies in England, looks down on his uneducated wife and leaves for India where he hopes to marry one Miss Mehtā. The plan falls through, however, and Kailāś obtains a job as an unimportant clerk, subsisting only with difficulty. Meanwhile, in Mauritius, his wife Uṣā studies, becomes educated and earns a name in society. She proceeds to India, wins over her husband and brings him back to Mauritius. Through her encouragement and endeavours Kailāś is elected at the general elections.

The underlying problem, that of the disparity in educational standards between boys and girls, was certainly real enough at the time, although today it is scarcely a relevant issue.⁷ In this respect, therefore, Jīvan saṅginī can properly be considered realistic. But the resolution of the problem in the story is frankly idealistic, an act of symbolic social exhortation, and, in this respect, the play can be regarded as realistically idealistic, much in line with the tenor of many of Premchand's works. The language of the play is colloquial, and its dialogues are natural and spontaneous. Within the limits just discussed, the characters are credible and alive, human reactions and the realities of Mauritian society are handled perceptively, and the play is dramatically well structured. It is unfortunate that Jīvan saṅginī, stageable as it is, has never been performed.

Ādarś beṭī is a collection of two one-act plays, one bearing the name of the book, and the other entitled Nav-jīvan, published by the H.P.S. in 1951 on behalf of the author B.K.Bhagat 'Madhukar'.

Ādarś beṭī is a four scene one-act play which relates the story of an ideal Hindu girl who bears the tribulations which befall her with fortitude and resignation. When Suśīlā's brother Raghuvīr and his wife, following a pancayat decision, leave the parental home to live on their own, Suśīlā works hard to supplement the reduced household income. When the father dies shortly after, she not only runs the household, but makes monthly repayments of a loan her father had taken from Caudharī, the village headman. The latter, admiring her virtues, asks her to marry his son. She accepts.

This highly idealistic play was staged in Port-Louis in 1951. At the end of each scene there is a song, and, although the lyrics succeed in some degree in giving expression to the prevailing mood in the play, it also results in the play being lyrically overburdened. This reflects, in some measure, the influence of the Hindi film. The play also suffers from improbabilities, various artificialities and excessive didacticism, all of which detract from the dramatic effect of the play.⁸

Nav-jīvan is a three scene one-act play which portrays the weaknesses of a Western-educated barrister who goes astray. On his return to Mauritius from law studies in England, Vijaykumār looks down on his wife Rāmā who has been educated in an Indian way. He falls victim to the wiles of Līlā who has also returned from studying in England. Angry at his bad conduct, Vijaykumār's father withholds financial support. Eventually, Līlā turns him out, exclaiming: "I never loved you, I loved only your money, get out you idiot". Vijaykumār decides to commit suicide. He goes to the sea, but as he is preparing to throw himself from the clifftops, his wife Rāmā and her brother arrive and save him from death.

As in Ādarś beṭī, Bhagat contrasts in Nav-jīvan the virtues of the long-suffering Indian woman, educated in an Indian way, with the weaknesses of those educated in a Western manner. The play is highly idealistic, moralistic and didactic. It too suffers from improbabilities. The terms of Līlā's rejection of Vijaykumār are culturally improbable and the clifftop scene is beyond credibility. As each scene is set in a different location it would be difficult to stage, and it too is overburdened with songs. The language of Nav-jīvan is good standard KhB., and, although it is too polished for natural conversation, it does not suffer from the floridity and artificiality of the language in Ādarś beṭī. Despite their not inconsiderable shortcomings, however, these plays, both with regard to characterisation and to structure, are not without merit.

It may be observed here that Suśīlā in Ādarś beṭī and Rāmā in Nav-jīvan are both evocative of Uṣā in J.N.Roy's Jīvan saṅginī. The three of them have been educated in Mauritius in an Indian way, and all three tread the path of righteousness and exercise a healthy influence over the lives of others (in Jīvan saṅginī, as portrayed above, it is in the setting of India that the play's social crisis is resolved). Līlā in Nav-jīvan, on the other hand, receives a western education; she takes to the wrong ways of life and leads Vijaykumār to the brink of disaster from which he is saved only just in time by his wife Rāmā. This disruptive effect of a Western education, especially on women, as compared with an

Indian education, is a typical Indian theme, and it is noteworthy that both J.N.Roy and Madhukar, two Indo-Mauritian writers, seem to be sharing this view with Indian writers, at least in the context of the works under review.

Pāñc ekāñkī by T.Pandey is a collection of five one-act plays and Ek sapnā is a very short one-scene sketch consisting of a conversation between two people regarding the position accorded to a guru in a cultured society and the high principles characterising the path of righteousness.

The themes of these five plays, Dīpak, Kanyādān, Kaliyug kā bāp, Sivil mārij, and Bujh gayā dīpak, have much in common. They all portray unhappiness and tension in husband and wife relationships, due primarily to the unhealthy interference of the wife's parents. In Sivil mārij, Śobhā and Śaṅkar, her husband, are always bickering because he keeps deferring their civil marriage; her parents advise her secretly how she should behave in order to get him to agree to the civil marriage early and bring him under her complete domination. In Kanyādān, Satī, the only daughter of a wealthy man, advised by her parents urges her husband to live with her at her parent's home which he, a philosophy professor, declines to do. The story of Kaliyug kā bāp is almost identical but culminates in a row between the husband and his father-in-law. In Bujh gayā dīpak the tension of the relationship assumes its most monstrous form: Śaśi, misled by her parents, poisons her husband so that they may all share the death gratuity among themselves.

Pandey's plays contain much that is both unnatural and highly improbable. In places the dialogue consists of long didactic speeches.⁹ As plays they are as unconvincing as they are undramatic. On the other hand, they are written in a beautiful Hindi, and this, together with the high thinking expressed by some of the characters, partially redeems their lack of dramatic value.

Anokhe atithi is a collection by H.Liladhar of two one-act plays, the first bearing the name of the collection, the second entitled Asahāy kā saharā. Each play consists of just one scene.

Anokhe atithi is based on the Śabri episode in the Rāmcaritmānas with certain innovations and modifications. The message of the play is about caste and the climax is reached when Rām explains that only the dust from the feet of low-born Śabri can purify the Brahmins' well. Śabri, Rām declares, though called 'low-born' belongs, through her way of life, to a high caste, thus implying that caste is determined by one's way of life and not by birth. The play is well suited for performance, and has both dramatic and literary quality. The main characters, although deriving much of their force from the legendary episode, are convincing and alive, and, notwithstanding the brevity of the play, the suspense is well maintained. The dialogue is appropriate to the theme, expressed in a Hindi which is natural and spontaneous.

Asahāy kā sahārā deals, on the one hand, with the exploitation to which agricultural labourers in certain parts of the island were sometimes subjected a few decades ago, and, on the other, with the high moral values of a true friendship between Sureś, an agricultural labourer, and Rameś, a school-teacher. Sureś is out to kill a sirdar who has been cheating him and other labourers of a considerable part of their wages over a period of time. Rameś, apprised of this, intervenes between Sureś and the sirdar who confesses his guilt and promises to mend his ways. Rameś gives his friend a gift of money to tide him over, and the sirdar, embracing Sureś and begging forgiveness, presents him with his wrist-watch.

This play is much less satisfactory than the previous one: it has a ponderous and unbalanced beginning, the behaviour of some of the characters is unconvincing and contrived, and there is a strangeness in the language. The dialogue gains in conversational tone through the use of some Bhojpuri vocabulary,¹⁰ but occasionally there are sudden unaccountable shifts of register as the diction jumps from the colloquial to the sanskritic.¹¹ It is, nonetheless, a stageable play.

It was, however, the publication of Virodh by Abhimanyu Unnuth in 1977 that marked a real step forward in the development of Mauritian Hindi drama. Virodh is a three-act political drama which is thoroughly modern

in inspiration. By the time Unnuth had published Virodh, he had already to his credit eight novels, a collection of poems and several unpublished plays. An active producer and promoter of modern drama, he had by that date also presented a number of his unpublished plays on radio and television.

Virodh centres around the political evils, as seen by the playwright, that confronted the people of Mauritius in the late 1970's. The play opens with a meeting of two unemployed persons (Siṃhal and Ketu) in a public park; they are awaiting a friend (Māsā), a trade-union leader who is seeking an interview with a state minister to obtain work for all of them. Itinerant newspaper vendors are hawking their papers across the park, but the newspapers, containing chiefly the Prime Minister's pictures and the blandishments of government policy, are silent about the miseries of the ordinary people. A tourist happens to cross the park, and as he unsuccessfully tries to put a tip into Ketu's hands, the two friends explain to him that to make himself understood, he should speak in Hindi the language of the land; and, as he moves away, the two friends converse about the shocking abuses in the wake of tourism in Mauritius. The conversation of Siṃhal and Ketu also convey an idea of the misgovernment of the country: unemployment is rising, nepotism is rife, civil rights are denied, State hospitals lack the required medicine and equipment, etc.

Meanwhile, Māsā returns with disappointing news. He also informs them that a massive hostile demonstration (Virodh) organized by the Workers' Union is gathering in front of the minister's office. They decide to join the demonstration. As the plot progresses, emphasis is laid on the idea that temporizing half-hearted measures on the part of the people will remain ineffectual, and that something radical and drastic must be done to change the attitude of the Government in power.

As Ahmāte the minister concerned is scuttling away furtively across the park to catch a taxi to go to the air-port (he is proceeding on mission to the United States, although he returned from China only the day before), he is stopped by one Chailā, president of a village council

in his constituency, who has been delegated to meet him. He listens reluctantly to the grievances of the villagers, but by offering him a job in the town, he buys him off at the villagers' expense. Māsā and his two friends are subsequently arrested by the police for taking part in the demonstration, but Ahmāte intercedes for them. He buys them off too by offering them work in his ministry and weans them away from support to the trade union.

The political problems depicted in this play were real enough in the late 1970's, although they are not the issues of today. Since the publication of Virodh, six years ago, the Government has changed twice in Mauritius. As a drama, however, Virodh is a work of surpassing merit. The plot is authentic and convincing; human reactions are handled sensitively and realistically. The main characters including Māsā, the trade-union organizer, Chailā the village representative and Ahmāte the State minister, are not merely the characters of a play, but real people. The dialogue consisting of very short sentences, sometimes just a few words, in perfectly colloquial Hindi considerably enhances the dramatic effect. In fact, in the short and compact setting of a three-act play, Virodh very vividly represents the political situation of the country, as envisaged by the author.

It would not be inappropriate to underline here, however, that although Virodh is a drama of considerable literary and dramatic value, the strong view taken by the playwright about the misgovernment which prevailed in the country is somewhat overstated. Misgovernment there probably was, but not to the vast extent portrayed by Unnuth. Such an exaggeration makes Virodh less than totally authentic. This flaw in the author's outlook is redeemed, however, by the literary and dramatic quality of the play. Structured as it is, it is very well suited for performance on the stage. It represents a land-mark, and a fairly high stage of achievement in the progress of Mauritian Hindi drama.

Finally, M.Chintamunnee, the present Head of the Hindi Department at the M.G.I., had been presenting short Hindi plays on the radio and the

television since the 1940s, but the great majority of them have remained unpublished. In the 1970's, under the aegis of the M.G.I., he produced for the benefit of secondary school students four one-act plays, three in Hindi and one in Bhojpuri, made available in cyclostyled form. These one-act plays are: Ham ek haī, Sone kā hiraṇ, Sab tarāk par (in Bhojpuri), and Bare ghar kī beṭī.

Ham ek haī is a one-scene sketch suited both for performance on the stage and as reading material. It is a well constructed play centering round the theme of love and unity between the various communities which group together to form the Mauritian nation. Remy, a Christian boy has Hindu and Muslim friends amongst whom are Sunīl and Harūn. These friends mix well, visit each other and attend each other's festival gatherings. Michel, Remy's father, encourages this inter-community friendship, and he succeeds in bringing home to his wife that love for one's neighbour, the fundamental teaching of Christianity, is vital to our life, and that we are human beings (insān) in the first place, and Christians, Hindus and Muslims only afterwards. This is a good example of the role played by Mauritian Hindi literature in the building of a Mauritian entity. The conversational language, flowing with natural ease, enhances the dramatic effect of the sketch.

Sone kā hiraṇ, another one-scene sketch, is based on the episode of the Aranya kāṇḍ of the Rāmcaritmānas, set in the Daṇḍak forest. The plot deals with the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇ. This sketch composed in 1978 is valuable as reading as well as acting material. In fact, it has been acted several times on the school stage by Secondary school children. The language is polished KhB. but colloquial.

Sab tarāk par is a two-scene one-act play by Chintamunnee. Like the previous two plays, it is intended to serve as reading as well as acting material for schools. It is one of the very few well-structured Bhojpuri plays written by an Indo-Mauritian. The theme of the play centres round preparations prior to a wedding in a working-class Indo-Mauritian family, and on the episodes following the wedding in a joint family system where the daughter-in-law, a modern girl, faces a mother-in-

law of the older generation. The action of the play is swift, and the plot as it progresses, takes a few unexpected turns.

Chintamunnee whose formative years were spent mostly in rural areas has developed his characters successfully. He has in this Bhojpuri play created a set of distinct and real people of a type that all Mauritians have met some time or other, particularly in the rural areas. Bansi, the bridegroom, the care-free, boisterous and debonair young labourer is a familiar figure of the Mauritian country-side. Mālā, the bride, appears in the second scene, and the short conversation she has with her newly-married husband privately, winning him over to her idea of spending two weeks at her parents' place, and, thereafter, living on their own in rented accommodation, impinges on the reader/audience so well that she instantly becomes for us an unforgettable character - the keen-witted (Bhojpuri: Carbāñkin), tactful and scheming daughter-in-law the author has intended her to be.

A salient feature of Sab tarak par is the rich humour which permeates both scenes of the play. The language is Mauritian Bhojpuri which is 'like Mauritian Creole, a linguistic product of Mauritian cultural life'.¹² This drama was staged at the M.G.I. before a packed audience by members of the Production Unit, at a Bhojpuri night held on the 26th September, 1979.

Barē ghar kī beṭī is a three-scene one-act play adapted from the short story of Premcand bearing the same title. This social drama portrays the pattern of Indian life in the early years of the century among people who can be described as belonging to the lower middle class. It highlights the evils of the dowry system, and particularly the unhappy consequences of the joint family system as well as the love and tenderness which holds such a family together. Śrīkañṭh after his wedding continues to live with his wife, Ānandī, in the same house as his father, Benīmādhav and his brother, Lālbihārī. A discussion between Ānandī and Lālbihārī leads to a violent quarrel between the two. Śrīkañṭh threatens to leave his father's house together with his wife. Benīmādhav

is deeply grieved and beseeches his son to forgive his brother. Meanwhile, Lālbihārī bursting into tears begs forgiveness as he prepares to leave the house even before his elder brother does so. Śrīkaṇṭh and Ānandī, deeply moved, forgive Lālbihārī and entreat him not to leave the house. Amidst the shedding of tears and the expressions of love, a quick reconciliation takes place and Benīmādhav thanks God for saving the joint family.

The drawbacks of the joint family system, as depicted in the story and the play, are real enough. But the episodes forming the climax of the narrative have been idealized, much in line with the majority of Premcand's earlier works. Chintamunnee's play, like the story, therefore, can be regarded as realistically idealistic.

Chintamunnee's characterisation in this drama is convincing and does not detract from that of the original story. The action too follows the same fast pattern of the original. In fact, the playwright has dramatised the whole story, and particularly the climax sensitively and authentically. Barē ghar kī beṭī has been staged twice in Mauritius: the first time in 1971 on the end-of-year convocation day of the H.P.S., and the second time in 1980 by the students of the M.G.I. as part of ^{the} Premcand centenary celebration.

2. Mauritian Hindi Poetry

a) Pre-Independence Poetry

The history of printed Hindi poetry in Mauritius can be traced from the first and second decades of the present century. Short KhB. poems were published from time to time in newspapers: Hindusthānī (1909-1913), Ārya Patrikā (1911-1913) and Oriental Gazette (1912-1914), and they continued to be published occasionally in Hindi papers during the years that followed.¹³

The first book of Hindi poems to appear in Mauritius was Raspuñj kuṇḍaliyā in 1923. The author was Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Caturvedī, also known

as Dvijrāj Rāmṭahal. His pen-name was Raspuñj. He arrived in Mauritius from Bihar in 1921, at the age of 32, and stayed for 23 years. There are 111 kuṇḍaliyās in this collection, and Raspuñj uses them as a platform to attack the social evils of his day, and to edify and instruct the reader. Typical is the following example in which the reader is exhorted never to give in when beset by difficulties:

"Though there are hundreds of obstacles on the path of noble deeds,
Yet is the courageous always ready to face them boldly.
He feels an inner urge, a marvellous courage to advance.
Until the aim is achieved,
Says Raspuñj, such a person
Overcomes thousands of obstacles and tastes the sweet fruit of
his effort."

Raspuñj kuṇḍaliyā, p.10.

He looked on himself as a saviour of Hinduism among the Indians of Mauritius. His role as a spiritual leader, as he saw it, is described in the stanza which follows:

"In the overseas island of Mauritius is Rāmṭahal Dvijrāj
Who is daily serving as a priest in accordance with the tenets of
Hinduism.
He has guided the overseas Indians on the path of Hinduism,
Large numbers would have otherwise been converted to Christianity,
Says Raspuñj who has preached in a special manner
And saved their religion by propagating the kathās and the purāṇas." ¹⁴

Raspuñj kuṇḍaliyā, p.38

The language of these poems is a mixture of a somewhat sanskritised KhB. with Braj, Avadhi and a little Bhojpuri, a medium which was not easily understood by Indo-Mauritians, especially at a time when KhB. was still at an early stage of cultivation.

Contemporary with Raspuñj was the Urdu poet Janāb Muḥammad, a resident of Long Mountain village, a predominantly Hindu area. He wrote

in KhB. and in the Devanāgarī script a long poem on the cyclone which devastated Mauritius in 1892, a work for which he is still remembered to this day by the name of 'Miājī Siklon' (siklon is Creole for cyclone).

The language of Miājī Siklon in this poem, unlike that of Raspuñj, is plain KhB. as shown by the following lines which convey at the same time the gist of the poem:

Mahalo-makān havelī, hue cūr-cūr the /
Aur darakhtō ko rakh diyā jaṛ se ukhāṛ ke //
Kāpā pahāṛo-jaṅgal sab us ke śor se /
Maurīśas ko cūr kar diyā ekdam marora ke //

"Mansions and houses were all levelled to the ground.
It uprooted and prostrated the trees.
Mountains and forests shook with its bluster,
It crushed Mauritius to pieces."¹⁵

After the publication of Raspuñj's work and Muḥammad's poem in the twenties, no substantial contribution to Hindi poetry was published in Mauritius until 1935. In this year Raspuñj published Śatābdī Saroj, a long narrative poem in commemoration of the centenary of Indian immigration to Mauritius. In caupāīs and dohās, it narrates the tribulations of the Indian immigrants and their descendants whose lot was to toil endlessly on the sugar estates.

The language of Śatābdī Saroj was different from that of Raspuñj kuṇḍaliyā in that it was much nearer to KhB., and, significantly, it contained an admixture of Bhojpuri and Creole vocabulary. In this it can claim to be a truly Mauritian poem, the first of its kind, and a type of Hindi that was to undergo further development through the prose fiction of Abhimanyu Unnuth and others in years to come. The following is an example from the poem of Creole and Bhojpuri usage:

Jangal kāṭ kiyo maidānā / khet banāye sahit sīvānā //
Upal biṭor sajāye sīmā / khā kar dāl bhāt aru pīmā //
Ganne kī ho phasal tayārī / kāṭ dhoi mūlā mē ḍārī //
Per pār kar rāb banāī /

The word sīvānā is from French/Creole sillon, a furrow; pīmā is from piment a chilly and mūlā from moulin, a factory. Per pār is Bhojpuri for crushing or milling.

"They cleared the forests, they prepared and ploughed the land.
They collected stones and made roads, eating pulses, rice and chillies.
As the harvest was ready, they would cut and carry the canes to
the factory,
And grind them to prepare its syrup."

Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Caturvedī was an orthodox Hindu priest (Sanātan dharm) and when visiting his patrons in order to perform religious ceremonies he would often recite some of his poems. A few of his poems were also published in the Sanātan Dharmārkh (1933-1942). One of his poems was published in the Janatā (1948-1982) in 1949 on the occasion of his death.

In the late forties, following the Independence of India, the declaration of Hindi as her official language, the opening of a Commission for India in Port-Louis and the return to the Legislative Council of a majority of Indo-Mauritians, cultural and national pride was running high in Mauritius, especially amongst the Indo-Mauritians. It was in circumstances like these that Brajendra Kumar Bhagat, who used the pen-name 'Madhukar', published in India a collection of over 50 rhyming poems entitled Madhupark. It was well received by the Hindi reading public in Mauritius, especially as several of the poems reflected accurately the spirit of the times. This collection illustrates well the qualities of his early poetry. For example, the following lines occur in one of the poems entitled Pathik se:

E pathik baṛhā cal sīnā tān /
Cāhe āñdhī ho yā tūfān //
Cāhe ghan ghor ghaṭā chāē, barsāt se bāṛh utar jāē /
Caṭṭān se pānī ṭakrāē, e pathik baṛhā cal sīnā tān //
.
.

Cāhe khāī khaṇḍar āvē, rāhō mē kāṭe bhar jāvē /
Pairō mē chāle paṛ jāvē, e pathik baṛhā cal sīnā tān //
Cāhe vṛksō kī kvārī ho, phūlō se bharī phūlvārī ho /
R̥ tu rajnī pyārī pyārī ho, e pathik baṛhā cal sīnā tān //

"Oh ye traveller, walk on courageously,
Be there a dust-storm or a hurricane.
Even though the sky is overcast with thick clouds, and the rains
bring down floods,
Even though the waters dash against the rocks, oh ye traveller
walk on courageously.
.
.
Whether ditches and ravines handicap your journey, with thorns
besetting your path,
And your feet become all blistered,
Or whether your way is bordered with trees and flower-gardens,
And the weather and the night are pleasant, oh ye traveller
walk on courageously."

The concrete words and phrases such as ghan-ghor ghaṭā, khāī-khaṇḍar etc. assist in making the poem vivid and sharply evocative. The broad vowels, especially those in the third and fourth lines with their onomatopoeic effect, are equally effective in conveying to the reader a fearsome atmosphere of immensity, and the poet exhorts the traveller to walk on undeterred. Madhupark was followed a year later (1949) by two more collections, Vīr Gāthā and Rāgīnī, and four years later in 1953 Madhukar produced a further collection of over 50 poems entitled Madhukarī, in which there occur in addition a few poems in Bhojpuri. The subject matter of these poems is very wide ranging and varied: patriotism, social themes (he often attacks social evils, especially of Mauritian society), devotional, philosophical and political topics, Nature, love, emotions, etc. Being amongst the first to compose Hindi verse in Mauritius, Madhukar had before him the entire field of possible subjects untouched by previous Indo-Mauritian writers, and this wealth of topics manifests itself in Madhupark and the

other collections. Some of the poems testify to his ability to shift easily from the mundane to the transcendental in which he often excels, especially with lyrics of a personal character. Below is an extract from Bhakt ke Bhagvān (p.5 in Madhukarī) which is illustrative of this quality of his poetry:

"With the longing to commune with you, oh God your devotees arrive,
And after offering two flowers at your feet with devotion, they depart.
.
.
Your presence is felt in the flow of the Gaṅgā and the Jamunā,
In the sun, the moon and the stars.
Holding the plate of devotion, oh God, your devotees arrive,
And after offering two flowers at your feet they depart.
In the human smile you abide
And in the humming of Madhukar's songs;
Holding the human lute, oh God, your devotees arrive,
And after offering two flowers at your feet with devotion, they depart."

The general motif in this four-line stanza lyric - one of devotion and worship - although commonplace in Hindi poetry, has been treated by Madhukar in a manner which is not only not banal but succeeds in being relaxed, intimate, and feelingly evocative.

Madhukar has drawn inspiration from Sūrdās, Tulsīdās, Raskhān, Kabīr, Mīrā and others, and, amongst modern poets, he greatly admired Sohanlāl Dvivedī and Rāmdhārīsiṃh Dinkar. His poems are lyrical, intended to be sung, and with him lyrical poetry became established in Mauritian KhB. literature. This began in Mauritius a decade after lyrical Hindi poetry had flourished in India during her age of Romanticism from 1918 to 1938. In the late forties and throughout the fifties and thereafter too, Madhukar had many opportunities of singing his lyrics amidst all kinds of Mauritian gatherings including the frequent anniversaries of the voluntary Hindi schools and at election campaign meetings often attended by massive turn-outs of people who applauded his lyrics which he termed 'election chutneys'

especially prepared for the occasion. Like the lyrics of Sohanlāl Dvivedī in India, many of his poems gave vent to patriotic outbursts. This was something new in the cultural and political life of Mauritius, and ordinary people greatly enjoyed listening to him especially as many of his songs were adapted to popular Indian film tunes.

The language of Madhukar's lyrics is simple and direct KhB., neither sanskritised, nor drawing much on Perso-Arabic vocabulary. In 1981 Madhukar stated: 'I write not for pundits, but for the common people, in the language of the people. I aim at writing in verse the kind of language Premchand wrote in prose.'¹⁶ In fact Madhukar was amongst the very first in Mauritius to use KhB. in a natural way for literary purposes - in his case verse - from the outset of his career. Because he wrote in a simple language his work was accessible to the ordinary people, but his claim that his KhB. Hindi represented the language of the people was obviously not justified. His writings, however, became a source of encouragement for younger writers, and represented a considerable step forward both in consolidating the position of KhB. and also in laying the foundations of a Mauritian Hindi poetic literature.

The decade that followed, 1953-1963, saw the publication of a number of collections that were all significant in their own way during this formative period. In 1955 Hariprasad Risal Mishra published a collection of 26 songs entitled Bhajan Mālā. A few of the songs are devotional bhajans, others centre on the social evils of the day, including the plight of Indo-Mauritian women. The simple KhB. of the songs encouraged the wide circulation it enjoyed among amateur singers and others. The following is an extract from one of the 26 lyrics:

Jhūṭh hai yah sansār bābā /
Jag mē koī nahī hai apnā karle khūb vicār /
Ant samay koī saṅg na jāve bhrāt pitā sut nār //
Jhūṭh....
Raṅg rāgīlī cīj dekh kyō phāsā huā hai yār /
Pal bhar mē sab nahī dikhē ge jin se kartā pyār //
Jhūṭh....
.

"This is a false world, my dear!

Remember that nobody is yours in this world.

Nobody will depart this life together with you, neither brother,
father, son nor wife.

This is a false world....

Why are you enamoured of these glittering things?

you are just a captive my friend.

In a twinkling, all things you are in love with will sink out of sight.

This is a false world...."

The author seems to have had some scientific knowledge of Indian classical music. He has specified the rāga (melodic mode) on which each lyric is based (the above lyric, for example, is based on rāga Dhanāśrī). Such information, however, was not of much use then to Indo-Mauritian singers whose knowledge of music was confined to light vocal music at an amateur level. The other publication of H.R.Mishra was Chand Vāṭikā, a short treatise on Hindi metres. He first very briefly defines the metre in prose, and then gives an example of it. The following is his illustration of the metre called Savaiyā: 'every line of the Savaiyā metre consists of 26 syllables - eight anapaests with two short syllables at the end of the line. For example:

Manavā tum kyō iṭhlāya rahā

kuch śoc vicār nahī kartā ab /

Tav jīvan bīt calā jag mē,

lakh carṁ sikūṛ rahe tumare sab //

Paśuō kar cām bikāt cale,

X nar carṁ bikāt nahī tumare tab,

Kuch śoc bhalā apnī karṇī,

hari se kah neh lagāya śakhā kab // "

"Oh little self, why do you assume swaggering airs,

have you now ceased reflecting upon things,

your time in this world is already spent,

you are now wrinkled all over.

Animals will leave behind their hide for sale,

but human skin cannot be sold out profitably.

Please do ponder over your actions,

where and when did you last praise your Maker."

H.R.Mishra has likewise illustrated other metres of Hindi poetry - harigītikā, caupāī, rucirā etc. In 1960 Moonishwurlall Chintamunnee published Pratham Kiran, a small collection of poems dwelling on the new hopes within the fields of language and culture. In the following year Vishnudat Madhu published a small collection entitled Ravi Raśmi which dealt mainly with social topics of the day. Although in no sense a significant contribution, it was regarded as a praiseworthy effort in a period of experimentation (this collection is now unobtainable).

In the same year, 1961, M.Chintamunnee produced his collection Śāntiniketan kī or, containing a long poem of the same title and four short ones, to commemorate the centenary of Tagore (Port-Louis, 1961, 13 pp., 1,000 copies). One of the short poems, Prārthnā, is a translation of a devotional song from Gītāñjali, one of very few translations to find a place in Mauritian KhB. literature. It truly captures the spirit of the original. But the work which makes this collection important is the poem Śāntiniketan kī or. It narrates the journey of a traveller who, like Bunyan's pilgrim, fights with great faith the sensual and material obstacles and temptations which beset his way, and eventually succeeds in reaching his destination, Śāntiniketan, with a copy of Gītāñjali in his hand. He is welcomed to a group where Tagore is expounding the treasures of Gītāñjali. Chintamunnee, like Nirālā in India, breaking the bondage of rhyme and metre, adopted a free style in composing this poem. In fact, this work marked the beginning of the use of blank verse in Mauritian Hindi poetry, a feature more and more in evidence in the late sixties and the post-Independence years. Another distinctive characteristic of this collection is the author's conscious and felicitous use of words, including Sanskrit loan words in current use. The following closing lines from Śāntiniketan kī or depict the quality of the language as well as the early experiment with blank verse:

Darvāzā punaḥ band ho gayā /
Bah rahā thā mand samīr
A rahī thī bhītar se
Gurudev kī amar vāṇī

Baras rahī thī gyān kī vāriś
Gītāñjali vīṇā ke mṛdu tārō ke
Madhu ras se viśva naḡar gūñj uṭhā
Māno ektā rāḡ kā nirjhar chūṭ rahā
Śānti ras sudhā śāntiniketān se
Jagtī tal par ṭapak rahā thā /

"The door closed again.

A gentle breeze was blowing

And from inside was coming

Gurudev's immortal voice.

It was the rain of knowledge

The whole world resounded with the melodious tunes

Proceeding from the sweet strings of the lute of Gītāñjali,

As if the song of universality had been suddenly released.

The nectar of peace was dripping from Śāntiniketān

To the ground of our world below."

In 1963, Mauritian Hindi poetic literature was further enriched by the publication in India of four more collections by Madhukar, Amar sandeś, Guñjan, Hamārā deś and Ras rañḡ, each containing over 50 rhyming poems. In the early sixties, Mauritius was in the throes of the struggle for Independence. Madhukar's themes were as wide-ranging and varied as before, but these latest works were distinguished by an appeal to a sense of sacrifice and patriotism, eulogies to the then leader of the nation, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, and tributes of praise to the Hindi language. These four collections represent a marked improvement on his publications between 1948 and 1953. His diction is more felicitous, the relationship between sound and sense happier, and his poetic thought is more subtle and effective. In a few of the songs, rhyme is magnificently used, both to create an atmosphere of solemnity, and also to impart a finality, a completeness, to a particular line of thought, while, at the same time, preserving the easy-going and near conversational flow which is the general distinctive trait of Madhukar's poetry. The lines quoted below from Amar sandeś are illustrative of this quality of his poetry:

Kadam baṛhātā cal re sāthī, kadam baṛhātā cal,

.
.

Āj gulāmī ke bandhan ko toṛ phoṛ ke cal,

Re sāthī! kadam baṛhātā cal //

Āndhra pradeśī aur bihārī baṅgālī hāi hindū /

Bambaiyā, tāmīl, gujarātī, panjābī hāi hindū //

Jāti pāṭi ke mahāśatru ko jaldī āj kucal /

Re sāthī! kadam baṛhātā cal //

.

Lakṣya sāmne jhānk rahā hai, phurtī se ab cal /

Re sāthī! kadam baṛhātā cal //

.
.

"Walk, my Comrade, keep going forward.

Today tear asunder and shake off the fetters of
bondage and walk along

My comrade! keep going forward.

The Āndhrapradeśī, the Bihārī, the Bengālī are all Hindus,
Those from Bombay, the Tamils, the Gujaratis, the Punjābīs
are all Hindus.

Today subdue the vile evils of the caste system

My comrade! keep going forward.

.

The destination is near at hand, hurry

My comrade! keep going forward."

Several of Madhukar's poems published in the sixties have about them a quality which recalls some of the Chāyāvād verse of Mahādevī Varmā, Nirālā and others. For example, in Guñjan he sings in the following strain:

"I burn so that I may get effaced,
Just as oil burns in a lamp to annihilate itself.

Hidden in smiles are clouds of misery,
Transformed into tears they will pour down
 and wash away the collyrium round the eyes.
I laugh so that I may cry."

The year 1966 saw the first Hindi poetry conference, organised not by the Indo-Mauritian Hindi writers who had formally established an association in 1961, but by the Indian Cultural Association. This association comprised mainly members with an elitist English and French medium education, and the fact that it was they who were organising the conference to celebrate their own 30th anniversary was evidence of the position that Hindi was then beginning to enjoy. The six poets who participated were V. Madhu, G.R. Mishra, R. Kowlessur, M. Chintamunnee, Madhukar and Somdath Bhuckory. The emphasis of the poems delivered from the platform was on patriotism. They contained impassioned calls to the youth of the land and tributes in praise of Hindi. The Independence of Mauritius was only two years ahead, and patriotic outbursts expressed in simple verse or any other form enjoyed a popular vogue. An example of such an outburst in verse could be seen in V. Madhu's contribution which opened as follows:

"Heroes of the land, sons of righteousness, come along
 young heroes, come along,
Come along heroes, let us break asunder the fetters of bondage.
Lay aside all self-interest, stand up and advance,
Our duty is service and defence of the mother-land,
 Mauritius is our own."

There was in some of the poems much exaggeration and emotionalism, but there was sober and good poetry too. Typical of the latter is this extract from Bhuckory's Jay Hindī:

"To us is dear the Hindi language,
As greatly loved as our own mother.
To us is dear the Hindi language,
As dear as our own motherland.

Our purpose is to learn this language,
Our duty is to keep it living,

If we wish to honour it,
Speak Hindi, then, speak Hindi!"

The refrain from R.Kowlessur's poem Hindī hamārī hai is quite explicit about the real linguistic position of the majority of Indo-Mauritians:

"You say that Hindi is yours,
But it is English that you learn.
You say that Hindi is your mother,
But it is Creole that you speak."

The language of all the poets, with the exception of G.R.Mishra's was unelaborate Hindi. His poem entitled He mātr bhūmi was highly sanskritized and could not have been readily understood. The Indian Cultural Association published the poems that had been recited in a booklet entitled Kavi Sammelan, and in the preface S.Bhuckory wrote: "Let it be remembered that, at the present time, Hindi literature in Mauritius is still lisping like a child and toddling on its feet".

That same year, in 1966, the H.P.S. published Sudhā Kalāś, a collection of 15 poems by Jayrud Dosia to whom the Society had awarded the Madodri Ramlal Bhagat literary prize in the previous year.¹⁷ These poems, some of which are in rhyme and use several metrical forms new to Indo-Mauritian poetry,¹⁸ and some of which are in blank verse, deal mainly with Nature and with social comment. While parts of some of the poems in Sudhā Kalāś sound strained and unnatural, both in diction and in thought, other verses in this collection reveal a genuine poetic sensibility. Dosia's language in some of the poems is sanskritized, in places heavily. The following, an extract from Hindī bandanā, one of the 15 poems in Sudhā Kalāś portray, in some measure, his poetic thought and language:

Jananī Hindī, Jananī Hindī
sursari-sī var de /
Sakal viśva jan kaṇṭh-kaṇṭh mē
nij vāṇī bhar de //
Mātr-vihīn vikal śīśuō ke
sir par kar dhar de /
Cintit kyō santān rahe, mā
sab cintā har de //

.
.
Ātur bhakt sajāye pūjā thāl
Khaṛe mandir ke prāṅgan /
Jananī darśan de bhaktō ko,
Sanmati kā var de¹⁹
.
.

"Mother Hindī, oh mother Hindī
Like the Gaṅgā, shower on us your blessings.
Fill the entire world with your voice.
Lay your hands on the heads
of the orphan and cheerless children.
Why should your children remain so worried, mother,
banish all their cares.

The anxious devotee with an adorned puja plate
Stands in the forecourt of the temple.
Oh mother grant an appearance to your devotees,
Bless them with your light."

The next major event was the publication in 1967 of Mujhe kuch kahnā hai by Somdath Bhuckory. Bhuckory had been brought up in a rural area, and his mother tongue was Bhojpuri. He qualified as a barrister-at-Law of the Middle Temple in 1954. He has excellent Hindi as well as English and French. He has published twelve works in all in English and Hindi. His English writings include Hindi in Mauritius (1967). In Hindi, he has written Hindī sahitya kī ek jhānkī consisting of six of his talks broadcast on the M.B.C. in the late fifties; Mujhe kuch kahnā hai, a collection of 50 poems (1967, Port-Louis, 500 copies); Bīc mē bahtī dhārā, a collection of 50 poems (1971, Port-Louis, 500 copies); Gaṅgā kī pukār (1972) an account of his travels in India; Hindī sahitya kā paricay, published by H.P.S. (1979, Delhi, 2,000 copies). Bhuckory also has to his credit several unpublished plays and short stories, some of which were written before he left Mauritius in 1950 for his law studies in London.

Although Bhuckory is Western educated, he speaks and writes a flawless Hindi, but unlike Dipcand Beeharry and others who have also written in both Hindi and English, he keeps his Hindi free from anglicisms. He writes Hindi prose and poetry regularly, particularly poetry. Like other Hindi poets he writes poetry because he feels a strong urge to do so, and because there is a section of the Indo-Mauritian public which appreciates Hindi poetry and loves to read or listen to it. When writing on technical matters, however, such as Local Government, or The Constitution of Mauritius, he prefers to use English.²⁰

The thematic spectrum of Mujhe kuch kahnā hai, Bhuckory's first published collection, embraces a fairly wide range of social (including the humorous and the ironic) economic and philosophical topics, besides a few compositions which touch on Nature. Two of the poems are in praise of Hindi. Unlike his contemporaries, Bhuckory hardly touches on political issues. The poems, broadly, fall into two categories: those which are in some sense universal, and those which relate to Mauritius, its scenery and its people. A few of the poems constitute an expression of the cultural links between India and Mauritius. Bhuckory utilises rhyme in only a few poems, the majority being in blank verse. While the poetry of Madhukar is lyrical, that of Bhuckory is intended to be recited and not sung. Both poets have used a simple diction intelligible to ordinary people, but with regard to the unity of sound and sense, the creativity of imagery and the depth of poetic thought and feeling, Bhuckory stands in a class by himself.

The unification of the sense with the sound is a strong and distinctive feature of Bhuckory's poetry. It is achieved by a variety of methods: the use of appropriate onomatopoeic words, including concrete words and details, and words with strong sensuous strength, fittingness and effective vowel endings; a proper ordering of words and phrases; and the observance of pauses in just the right place, amidst smoothly flowing verses. An example of this are the eleven lines of the last stanza of Pravāsī kā Bhārat (No.44) given below:

Bhārat ham pravāsiyō kā,
Aur kahā hai basā huā?

Rām-Kṛṣṇ kī gāthāō mē,
Budh-Gāndhī ke nāmō mē,
Javāhar-Indirā ke kāmō mē,
Daddā-Dinkar kī kavītāō mē,
Aur,
Hind mahāsāgar kī laharō mē
Un laharō mē
Jo Bhārat mātā ke pairō ko cūmke
Atī hai Mauriśas mā kī gōd mē jhumne.²¹

"For us the overseas settlers
Where is India situated?
She is in the stories of Ram and Kṛṣṇ,
In the names of Buddha and Gandhi
In the performance of Javahar and Indira,
In the poems of grand-father Dinkar,
And,
In the waves of the Indian ocean
Those very waves
Which after kissing the feet of mother India
Come to sway to and fro in the lap of mother Mauritius."

This unity of sense and sound is further aided by a diction which is concise, straightforward and never pretentiously elevated. With this simple unostentatious language, he often achieves a genuine individual expression for a genuine individual experience.

Another feature of Bhuckory's poetry is the presence of a healthy imagery. He often creates surprisingly fresh, vivid, suggestive and apposite images out of the commonplace and familiar. Just one example of this is in the penultimate four line stanza of Vismṛti (No.22) where the poet describes the reflection of the setting sun on the waves rolling on the sea-shore, or in the following twelve-line final stanza of Hindī Divas (No.49) wherein the poet paints a moving and remarkably vivid picture of Sarasvati bringing under her care lāḍlī Hindī to be affectionately received by those awaiting her arrival:

"When mother Sarasvatī has arrived today
Bringing to our midst beloved Hindi,
Worn out and wearied with travelling from
so far away,
Why should we not
Join together to give her a welcome?
We have spent our life-time at the
feet of Lakṣmī,
Let us now give a hearty welcome
to Sarasvatī,
And take beloved Hindi in our own lap.
Let us not delay, the time for her
send-off will soon arrive.
The journey of this pedestrian is
incomplete still;
Which other places she is going to,
we do not know,
But what is certain is that she
will visit every home."

The imagery in many of the poems derives from the depth and sensitivity of poetic thought and feeling which effects a total integrative transformation of all that is contained within the poems and which characterises so much of Bhuckory's poetry.

Unfortunately, however, some of the poems are excessively short, a brevity which discourages recitation. Further, although the poems are, in general, marked by a spontaneity of expression - a quality which contributes to their literary merit - in some the language is so close to a chatty, conversational KhB. that they sound more like prose passages. But there can be no doubt that some of the poems in Mujhe kuch kahnā hai are of a very high order. They were not only amongst the best works produced up to that time, 1967, but they represent a major step forward in the developing maturity of Mauritian Hindi poetry. Among such poems are Maurīśas kī sṛṣṭi, (No.2), Vismṛti (No.22), Dhartī kī pukār (No.34), Bālō kī uljhan (No.39), Gāndhī ṭopī (No.43), Pravāsī kā bhārat (No.44),

Trivenī (No.47), and Hindī Divas (No.49), all of which are very impressive.

Of these poems, special mention must be made of Mauriśas kī sr̥ṣṭi. Indo-Mauritians, in general, and some people outside the Indo-Mauritian community too have through translations into English and French, greatly admired this poem. Through an extraordinary flight of fancy, the poet describes the creation of Mauritius out of the fragment of a star falling from the firmament into the Indian ocean, and out of a detached piece of the broken heart of India which swam across the seas. In August 1966, when the town of Port-Louis was proclaimed a city, an Indian ballet based on the story of this poem was staged as part of the celebration.²² The following year when an international exhibition ('Expo' 1967) was held in Canada, Mauritius included this ballet as part of the Mauritian contribution to the cultural programme presented at the 'Expo'²³ and for the benefit of people who did not understand Hindi, the original was translated by the poet himself into English and French. (In Appendix XV is the author's English translation.)²⁴ This poem was also recited on the local radio and in front of Mauritian gatherings. It redounded to the credit of Hindi, and contributed in raising its prestige among Mauritians in general. S.Bhuckory has on formal occasions recited several of his poems in India, including Gāndhī ṭopī.

In 1967, when Bhuckory's Mujhe kuch kahnā hai appeared, Madhukar by far the most prolific of Indo-Mauritian poets published the selection Bande mātaram, and this was followed the year after by three more collections: Raṅbherī, Ek kahānī kulī kī and Svarājya gītāñjali. Some of this poetry extols the hard work of the long-suffering Indian immigrants and their descendants, and the relentless fight of Mauritian leaders in the struggle for Independence. Other poems of these collections express jubilation upon gaining Independence in March 1968, the determination to preserve it and the hope of enjoying a better life. These feelings are expressed particularly in the poems contained in Svarāj gītāñjali. The following lines are just two examples:

"Independence will elevate us all.
Independence will bring us happiness.
The poor will now enjoy proper food,
Adequate housing and new clothing.
There will be food and provisions in every house,
Independence will elevate us all."

Janatā kā Svapna (Svarājya Gītāñjali), p.6.

"The land of Mauritius is dancing for joy
Oh dear motherland!
The fetters of bondage have been cut asunder,
Our destiny has awoken,
And the hearts of all of us
Are filled with joy."

Bārah Mārc (Svarājya Gītāñjali), p.3.

b. Post-Independence poetry

The post-Independence years, especially the first decade, witnessed the production of poetry at a more accelerated pace than before. Jubilation and exclamations of joy upon the accession to Independence went on for some time; patriotism continued to break into song. These feelings were reflected in the stream of Hindi writings which followed, both published and unpublished. But this mood of euphoria did not last for long. Independence could not produce all the results which some people had expected; many legitimate hopes were disappointed, and in many quarters, people were becoming disenchanted with the glamour of Independence. In the years which followed this event, therefore, Hindi literature in Mauritius, especially poetry, was marked increasingly by frustration and disappointment.

Before discussing the merits of the poetry produced in the post-Independence period, it would be appropriate to examine briefly the sources of inspiration of the Mauritian poets, particularly of the younger generation. Mauritian Hindi poetry in general has been lagging very far

behind that which is composed in India in technique and quality. In fact, in his preface to Abhimanyu Unnuth's poetry collection entitled Nāgphanī mē uljhī sāsē (1977), Jaymaṅgal Siṃh 'Suman' writes that, 'with respect to both substance and technique, the majority of Hindi writers of Mauritius have on the one hand adopted the tenor (bhāv) of the Dvivedī period, while, on the other they have been influenced by modern literary usage (prayog)'. It appears that among Indian poets who have influenced Mauritian Hindi poets of today have been Sohanlāl Dvivedī (the exponent of patriotic songs), Rāmdhārī Siṃh 'Dinkar', Ajñeya (the foremost creator of the 'modern lyric', nayī kavītā) and Gajānan Mādhav 'Muktibodh'. The symbolic structure so often seen in the post-Independence poetry of Mauritius is strongly evocative of the symbolism which characterises much of the poetry of these last two Indian poets.

The younger Mauritian Hindi poets who are mostly Hindi teachers by calling emerged in the mid 1960's and thereafter. The great majority of them have received a Hindi education and have passed the collaborative examinations of the H.P.S./Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, Allahabad. Through their own studies and their teaching of secondary classes, most of these young poets have been able to acquaint themselves with Hindi poetry, in general, ranging from the Bhakti period to the modern schools. The syllabuses for these courses of study (Paricay (O level), Prathamā (A level), Madhyamā (B.A. level) and Uttamā (M.A. level)) from the lowest to the highest stage involve at least five years of study, and embrace many of the authors of the three principal periods of Hindi literature.

Most of the Mauritian Hindi poets have at some time or other sustained the influence and inspiration of these main streams. The younger generation of writers have also drawn inspiration from the more experienced national poets like Madhukar and Bhuckory. Furthermore, the post-Independence years witnessed increased visits of writers from India, including Hindi poets, and such visits have encouraged, inspired and influenced the younger poets.

Apart from a few works of major importance, which will be discussed later, there was a relatively large number of very small poetry collections

produced by the younger poets in the early 1970's. Among these were principally: M.Bachavat, Maurīśas kī Hindī kavītā (Calcutta, 1970); G.Rangu, Maurīśas mē baṛh (Mauritius, 1971); L.Basram, Ravi anśu (Mauritius, 1972); J.Kalicharan, Pratham reśmī (Mauritius, 1972); K.Lalbihari, Māi hū kalyugī Bhagvān (Mauritius, 1972); G.Raghubar, Alag Baserā (Mauritius, 1972); R.Rama, Hṛday kī nidhi (Mauritius, 1972); I.Bhola, Vardān (Mauritius, 1972); P.Bihari, Abhiśāp (Mauritius, 1973); V.Madhu, Hāsya vāṭikā (Mauritius, 1973); Citranjan Thakur, Muhabbat kī rātō mē (Mauritius, 1973); Maurīśas Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh, Surbhit udyān (Mauritius, 1973); H.Sundar, Cetnā and Cunautī (Mauritius, 1973 and 1979); G.Dhanookcand, Kāvya kali (Mauritius, 1974); Miss K.K.Ragpath, Vīṇā Vādinī (Mauritius, 1974); Sāhitya Saṅgam, Taraṅgiṇī (an anthology of 49 poems by eight poets, Mauritius, 1976).²⁵ Most of these collections are unobtainable; in general, however, what is extant displays an indifferent poetic quality. Indeed, some of the poems hardly rise above what can be described as the lumbering, banal and platitudinous. The three extracts given below are examples:

(i) Mere nikalne se bhartī hai tijorī /
Tab bhī asantoṣī ban karte corī //
Hṛdaya mē uṭhtī haī bhīṣaṇ taraṅgē /
Viśva ke kaṇ-kaṇ mē bhartī umaṅgē
Hṛday kī nidhi p.17

"If we go out we can fill our coffer
Yet the discontented take to stealing,
Frightful caprices rise in the mind,
Every corner of the world is filled with zeal."

(ii) E! mere miṭṭī kā śer
Ucchal kūḍ kar huā kyō ḍher?
Viśva - ban mē tū ek vīr,
Kāyartā se kyō bahā nīr?
Kyā bheriyō ne lāṭhī māri?
Kyā gardabhō ne ṭāṅg calāyī?
Dharm-saṃskṛti pyārī pūch
Kaṇ-kaṇ hotī kyō chūch?

Ravi Anśu p.21

"Oh my lion made of clay
Has your restlessness and agitation
brought you enormous gains?
In the forest of this world
you are a valiant man,
Why have you through cowardice
shed tears?
Have you been attacked by the wolves?
Have the asses knocked you with their legs?"

(The last two lines are so obscure that they are hardly translatable.)

(iii) Maī ne aurat dekhī
Aurat kā pyār dekhā
Aurat ke pyār mē maī ne
Ek ajīb sī bhūk dekhī
Dhan yauvan
Mardyan rūp kī
Sab kī sabhī
Sahmī sahmī
Voh na jamī /

Maī hū kalyuḡī Bhagvān p.34

"I have seen women
I have known the love of women
In the love of women
I have seen a strange greed
For riches, youth
Manly form."²⁶

(Again the last two lines are too obscure to be properly translated.)

In the three examples cited above, the rhyme is forced in some of the lines. It is obvious that in places (e.g. the last two lines of stanzas (ii) and (iii) above) the poet is struggling, without success, to meet the requirements of his own rhyme-scheme. Some of the words used are inane and inapposite in their present context (e.g. ḡher, pūch, chūch in stanza (ii)). Poetic thought and feeling are almost non-existent. At that

stage of Mauritian KhB. literature, however, the quality of what was being produced was perhaps less significant than the fact that a number of young people, new-comers on the scene, were making an attempt at creative writing with gusto and enthusiasm.

The above very small collections also contain several poems which, in places, show glimpses of poetic quality. Indeed, a few of them even display some literary merit. Below are examples of this category:

- (i) Miṭṭī ke putle mē jān milī
 Mastiṣk mē gyān milā
 Adharō par hāsī-muskān milī
 Svarō mē madhur gān milā
 Jīvātmā ke rahne kā sundar
 śārīrik makān milā /
 Is jag mē mānav jāti ko
 adbhut vardān milā //

Vardān p.7

"Life was breathed into the image of clay,
The brain was given knowledge,
The lips were given smiles and laughter,
The voice was given sweet songs,
Our life and soul was housed in this beautiful body.
The human kind in this world has been granted a
 marvellous boon."

- (ii) Amṛt bhāṣā Hindī
 dev gaṇ kī vāṇī hai /
 Ḥamāre dharm, saṃskṛti kī
 amiṭ nīśānī hai //
 Is dev vāṇī mē
 bharā anmol gyān hai /
 Hindī se hī huā
 Hinduō kā kalyāṇ hai //

Hindī na hotī to
 hamārī saṃskṛti mar jatī
Pūjā-arcnā gair
 bhāṣā mē kī jatī //
Hamāre pūrvajō ne
 Hindī kī rakṣā kī
Gāv-gāv, baiṭhak baiṭhak
Hindī kī kakṣā kī //

Surbhit Udyan p.45.

"The sweet Hindi language
 is the tongue of the gods.
It is the indelible mark
 of our religion and culture.
This tongue of the gods
 enshrines valuable knowledge.
It is Hindi itself
 which has promoted the welfare of the Hindus.
If Hindi had not been here
 our culture would have died away.
Our religious ceremonies and worship
 would have been performed in a foreign language.
Indeed, our ancestors
 preserved Hindi.
In every village, in every baiṭhkā
They held a Hindi class."

These last two passages like the three which preceded them are in rhyme, too, but with a difference. One is relieved to shift from poor to relatively good poetry; instead of discordant sounds, the music here is spontaneous, smooth and soft. One factor to which this is due is the happy diction of the last two selections. It is simple and straightforward but appropriate. The broad long soft ā as well as the long ī occurring frequently through passage (ii) above, for example, are phonologically effective. (At the same time it is interesting to note the poet's deliberate or unconscious use of the Arabic loan-word

gair in the otherwise Sanskritic context of line 6. His reference to a 'foreign language' is perhaps to English, which is not infrequently used by some young Western-educated Hindus for the interpretation of Sanskrit verses used in religious ceremonies.)

Turning now to major works, one of the most important which appeared during the period under review was Nāgphanī mē uljhī sāsē (1977) by A.Unnuth. This collection of 40 poems in blank verse was published in Delhi. Unnuth had previously published several poems in newspapers and magazines both in India and in Mauritius. By the time this publication appeared, the author had already published a three-act play, six novels and two books of short stories. In fact, in the pages of Unnuth's prose-fiction, the reader can catch here and there glimpses of Unnuth, the poet. In an interview to the Hindi weekly Janatā (1948-1982) published in Mauritius, he stated that he writes poetry by way of relaxation.

The themes of this collection epitomize the atrocious ill-treatment of Indian immigrants and their descendants in Mauritius, their long sufferings and what the author considers their unrewarded contribution to the prosperity of the country. Like his novel Lāl Pasīnā, published in the same year, it is a permanent memorial to a miserable life of heartless exploitation, unending hardship, tears and sorrow. The rosy promises made to the workers to cozen them into immigrating to the sugar colony were never kept:

"You told me that day
Ask for the moon,
I will bring it for you.
Disappearing in the dark nights
You re-appeared on the night of the full moon,
Holding a big bowl in your hand
Its water
Carrying the moon's reflection."

Cād kī parchaī p.25

Deception and injustice have continued to this day. The past was

ghastly, the present only promises a grim future.

Unnuth's poems, in some measure, recall Raspuñj's Śatābdī Saroj published about half a century previously. Unnuth's setting like that of Raspuñj, is the island of Mauritius with its agricultural industry, and its poor workers engaged without respite in the capitalistic production of sugar. He describes his abode as a land where

"
 storms blow
Now and then.
The very foundation of man
Is shaken.
And yet
The billows crashing against the cliffs
Never tire
Of singing the songs of struggle.
My country is an island
I love
My country.
" Phir bhī p.8

In the opening lines of Gūṅgā Itihās (p.42), he paints a picture which is unmistakably the landscape of Mauritius:

"In one hand a sugar-cane
In the other a bill-hook
Sweat on the fore-head.
 "

The poems in this collection can be roughly classified in two categories: the longer poems in general have a historical vein, and represent an expression of the author's feelings about the life of Mauritian workers from the period of Indian immigration to the present day; and the shorter poems are mostly vehicles for severe criticism aimed at authorities and individuals who have directed the destinies of these workers.

With an extraordinary sensibility and a profound sympathy evocative of Premchand, Unnuth has succinctly portrayed the sufferings of the agricultural workers and the inequality and injustice to which they have been subjected over the years down to the present day. In Kāle māthe kā safed sonā (p.23), he writes:

"Oh my guest
I identify myself with the violet-coloured sugar canes.
.
Oh my brother
My relationship
Is with the canè-crusher
And with the injuries inflicted by the whip.
.
Under the rocks heaped in the fields,
Reminding us of the coolies
Lies the history of my forbears
Which is a forbidden chapter."

Despite all his sufferings and his unending labour, the worker has no share in the fruit of his toil, and impatiently the poet questions:

"The light which belongs to my cottage
Why is it clenched in your fist."

Anphūlā kāktas p.18

and, in the same vein he painfully enquires:

"Carter returning from the fields
Why is your cart empty,
Which vermin
Has eaten away
Your share of the harvest?"

Bojh p.36.

Writhing with pain, the victim exclaims in despair:

"When your thirst is quenched
After swimming in the flood of my sweat

Then loosen
The rope fastened to my back,
For it has penetrated
Half an inch inside my flesh."

Rassī kā niśān p.45

This process of destruction has been continuous and

"Every other moment
The blue sea
Keeps turning red.
Every other moment
Life undergoes destruction.
Self-respect is destroyed.
Every other moment."

Har dūsre kṣaṇ p.33.

Unnuth's short poems are characterised by a poignant sarcasm and a bitter irony. They are quick sharp thrusts, and what is remarkable is that under cover of a symbolic structure, he delivers a few of them with seeming ingenuousness. Expostulating with officials and individuals who have been siding with unjust and exploiting employers, the poet protests that

"The day the sun
Had to bear witness on behalf of the workers,
There was no day-break.
It was reported
That at the party given by the employer
The sun had had a few drinks too many."

Sūraj kī gavahī p.4

He has no patience with conceited middle-class persons. Addressing himself to them he says:

"Your claim that
You are performing the most difficult task
For the advancement of the country
Is in my estimation not valid.
Lay aside considering progress and lack of progress,
Like me, come out in search of employment,
And then tell me which is the most arduous job."

Kitnā Kaṭhin p.10

In various places, Unnuth expresses the disappointment and frustration characteristic of the poetry of the post-Independence period. He deprecates the Government policies which, in his view, have not created better conditions of life:

"From the leaking roof of the past
My present
Is dripping
To the bottomless vessel
Of my future."

Vartmān p.38

Unnuth protests vehemently against the oppressive methods operated by the sugar planters but, as in his novel Lāl Pasīnā, he holds the workers themselves and their descendants partly responsible for the tribulations which have befallen them in Mauritius. He feels that their attitude of submissiveness and tolerance has not changed very much to this day. He rounds on them affectionately:

"Saying 'pardon him'
You allowed Vibhīṣaṇ to go unpunished.
Saying 'let him come'
You have allowed Jaycand to come in.
Saying 'release me' you now
Want your tightly held neck
To be released."

Aur Ab p.52

The use of the Bhojpuri phrases jayedē (pardon him) and āye de (let him come) in this short poem associates it closely with the ordinary people about whom it is written.

A few of the poems in the collection Nāgphanī mē uljhī sāsē, like his novel Lāl Pasīnā, accentuate Unnuth's dignity and self-respect when confronted with problems and temptations. It is an attitude which recalls the proud outlook of Nirala. In the poem Khālī peṭ (p.1), Unnuth asks almost remonstratingly:

"You gave man an empty stomach,
It was well done.
But there is one question, oh destiny,
To people with an empty stomach
Why did you give knees?
Why did you give them hands to stretch out?"

As do Lāl Pasīnā and a few of his other novels, these poems extol the dignity of the peasantry.

Until the mid-seventies, the character and standard of Mauritian Hindi poetry was determined principally by Madhukar and Bhuckory who remained the dominant names in this field of literature, but when Unnuth published Nāgphanī mē uljhī sāsē in 1977, he created a new dimension. His poetic thought and feeling was not of a lesser order: but what made him different from his two predecessors was the quality of his language and his manner of expression. While both Madhukar and Bhuckory composed poetry comprehensible to ordinary people, Unnuth produced poetry with a highly symbolic structure in a diction which generally incorporates both Sanskritic and Perso-Arabic vocabulary. It was a clear break with the past.

While Unnuth's language in this collection is in general Sanskritized, the diction of a few of his short poems has shown that he can at will shift from the recondite to statements of the utmost simplicity. Sūraj kī gavāhī (p.4), Cād kī parchāī (p.25), Girvī sundartā (p.55), for instance, express deep symbolic thoughts in an almost prose-like and conversational diction. The poet's control, however, is sure: the easy conversational

tone carrying profundities of meaning, however colloquial it becomes, is never allowed to become chatty.

The salient feature of Unnuth's language is its great conciseness. The language of the poet, compressed throughout, reveals great ability in the use of appropriate and felicitous vocabulary. He fully expresses his emotion and thought not only musically, but with an economy and force unequalled before in Mauritian Hindi poetry. This can be illustrated by the poem Gūṅgā itihās (p.42):

".....
In the eyes
The darkness of a dormant volcano,
In the stomach an empty well,
The lungs in shreds,
Suffocated,
A pawned soul,
The present patched up
A history made up of twelve chapters."

In the above passage as elsewhere, the poet uses in very short lines concrete and physical words with much precision. In the phrases 'A pawned soul' and 'The present patched up', he has successfully objectified the abstract.

The imagery of Unnuth's poetry in this collection, frequently intensified by palpable phrases, is fresh, vivid and richly suggestive. Although it is often the startling imagery of a savage persecution, it is never forced or inappropriate. In fact, the diction and the sound and movement of his lines operating integrally succeed very often in creating superb images in most of the poems. Lambī uṛān ke bād (p.19), one of the short poems which provides predominantly emotive images may be cited as an illustration of this quality:

Panjarō ke bane pinjare se
Mukti pākar mudattō ke bandī panchī ne
Jis ṭhaur par lambī uṛān ke bād

Pahūc kar sāsē lī
Vah manjar nahī, banjar thā /

"The bird released after a long captivity
From a cage made of skeletons,
Found that the spot where it lighted after a long flight
To breathe some respite
Was not a ear of corn but a barren land."

In common with all the poems in this collection, the above has been composed in blank verse. It is, however, as musical as any conventionally rhyming stanza. Phrases like panjarō ke bane pinjare se, mudattō ke bandī, lambī urān ke bād, sāsē lī, banjar thā, evoke pictures which are as fresh and vivid as those produced by the colours of a skilful artist.

The general tone permeating Unnuth's poetry in this collection is one of suffocation and distress. The poet seems to be struggling hard to find a way out of this impenetrable darkness, but he has no hope of ever seeing a light to guide him to a better destiny. In fact, this collection, on the whole, strikes a note of despair and hopelessness. The outlook, evocative of some of the Chāyāvād poetry of Mahadevi Varma, is pessimistic. Addressing himself to the carter in Bojh (p.36), he explains:

"...my load is heavy
It is the bundle of my pains.
The journey will be long
And to unload it
We have to reach another Hiroshima.
Carter, why have you grown quiet,
Do you know any other place
In this world where
I can unload my burden?"

Like his novel Lāl Pasīnā which appeared in the same year (1977), Nāgphanī mē uljhī sāsē is devoted to the weal and woe of the ordinary people, but while Lāl Pasīnā written in a simple and direct KhB. is

accessible to ordinary people, the poetry collection is in general too Sanskritized and its symbolic structure too sophisticated to be within their understanding. It is written about them but not for them. Although this collection has already gone through a third edition, most sales have been in India and its distribution in Mauritius has been low. The thoughts in Unnuth's poetry are movingly poetic and the feelings are remarkably profound, but the thematic spectrum of the collection under review lacks variety. There is no doubt, however, that Nāgphanī mē uljhī sāsē is a valuable and enduring contribution to the KhB. literature of Mauritius and to Hindi literature in general.

The very year Unnuth's poetry collection had appeared, the Mauritius Association of Hindi Writers published in cyclostyled form (500 copies) a selection of 29 poems composed by Moonishwurlall Chintamunnee, under the title of Sahmī sahmī sī avāz. Like his former major work Śantiniketan kī or, this collection is written mostly in blank verse.

The 29 poems in Sahmī sahmī sī avāz fall broadly into two categories: some of the poems have a social and political relevance and the others are concerned with philosophical issues and the spiritual values of life. From the general tone of this collection as well as the specific subjects of several of the poems, a substantial part of this work could be subsumed under the title of 'progressive' poetry, though without the Marxist connotations this term has in Indian Hindi poetry.

For many years now, M.Chintamunnee has been a cultural leader of the Indo-Mauritian community. Several of the poems are solemn patriotic exhortations to the youth of the land and to Mauritians in general. In Deś ke yuvakō se (p.26), he says:

"Take a vow that to the mother-land
You will dedicate body, mind, riches and everything else.
Young people, promote the welfare of our society,
Take upon yourselves the misery of others."

There is the same powerful call in Āge barhnā hai tum ko (p.27), Rote adharō ko gīt mile (poem 10) and others. An elements of didacticism is present in these poems, but it is acceptable and dignified.

There are a few poems similar to the above where the author expresses a pragmatic view of life. This is exemplified in Sandarbh hīn (p.15) where he writes:

"I have said
It is emotion
Which misleads.
How can you perceive
And assess
The truth of today
When you are laying aside
Reality
To fall for
Ideals.
....."

The expression in such poems, however, has also a poetic, not merely an informative value.

One of the salient features of Chintamunnee's collection, in common with the rest of post-Independence poetry, is an emphasis on feelings of depression, frustration and disorientation. Painfully and impatiently he exclaims:

"Assurances! assurances! assurances!
They (the leaders) give us assurances!
Yes, nothing more than assurances!
Although
In the market
The price of every commodity
Compared with former prices
Has doubled, trebled
And quadrupled.
But assurances,
These are cheap, aren't they?
Will the song of expectation
Of the golden rule of Rām
Be left sticking in our throats?
.

The patches darned
To our rags
Will these too be opened?
Then what shall we wear?
Will you please answer?
Assurances! assurances! assurances!"

Sīye peband p.7

As he insists moving forward together with his friends, light completely fades away:

"Darkness as thick as coal-tar
Crept in
And day-light
Continued to stay on strike.
Still, with perseverance
And loyalty
We moved forward
And still
We are moving forward
Whither
We know not."

Rośnī kī haṛtāl p.8

(The English word 'coal-tar' used by the poet has passed into both Creole and Bhojpuri.) In the view of the poet, this feeling of disorientation has even invaded the precincts of the Hindi language. He asks with a sense of disquiet:

"This language
Too
Has it now come
Within the compass
Of the political idiom?
Or
Is it still

A living
And intimate possession
Of the majority of the people."²⁷

Post-Independence frustration is further expressed in Chintamunnee's satirical compositions. Examples of these are: Jo tokū kãṭā bove (p.1) and Netā kā avatār (p.24). The title of the former is borrowed from Kabir's Jo tokū kãṭā bove, bove tū phūl, but while Kabir echoes Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, Chintamunnee's composition is a satire levelled at self-seeking politicians and also at those gullible people who have too readily accepted their deceitful ways. Netā kā avatār also directed against conceited politicians of the Post-Independence period concludes with the lines:

".....
...we know this much,
That we have come (to this earth)
As incarnations of leaders."

In his compositions centering on post-Independence social, economic and political matters, including causes of poverty, Chintamunnee does not show any feelings of petulance, and unlike a few contemporaries, he does not indulge in over-emotional and vehement assertions, and yet his feelings are powerfully conveyed. He achieves depth without turbulence.

Sahmī sahmī sī avāz comprises, amongst others, poems pointing to the path of righteousness and service. Dardō ko sahlāyā (p.6), Yadi antarikṣ rotī hotā (p.30) belong to this category. There is one long narrative poem entitled Śāntiniketan ek dr̥ṣṭi (pp.12-13) evocative of his composition Śāntiniketan kī or (1961). It depicts beautifully the greatness of Shantiniketan set amidst peaceful natural surroundings: it is the fount of sound knowledge, music, love and beauty; its teachings are based on the principles of truth, service and beauty (Satyam, Śivam, Sundaram) highly cherished by Gurudev (Rabindranath Tagore).

The collection also contains poems which centre around themes which are philosophical, universal, timeless and placeless. Among these

are Kāgaz kī nāv (p.14), Chūchā astitva (p.16) and Aur ek vyākaraṇ (p.21). These poems illustrate, among other qualities, Chintamunnee's power of description. Given below as an example is Kāgaz kī nāv which like the poetry of the Chāyāvādins in India is symbolic in its imagery:

"I didn't see
and I didn't hear
the cries at the time of my birth;
But more than once
in life
a smile flickered on my lips and
vanished into discouragement,
Because I had found
that the world
is a bottomless deep
and living,
a boat made of paper;
Still it is for me a thing of wonder
that the boat is undisintegrated
and that it hasn't sunk." 28

Why has not the boat, that is, human life, sunk or disintegrated in the ocean of samsāra (the ocean of the world), is a question deliberately left unanswered by the poet. With force and beauty, he is sharing an experience with others, but the reply has to come from within the reader/listener himself.

Among Chintamunnee's philosophical poems dwelling on the spiritual values of life, a special mention must be made of Bāpū phir āvo ek bār (p.28). This long poem an extract of which is given below, like several others, incorporates the author's poetic skill and other elements of the finest writing:

Yahā dalit-dukhiyō ke
Trātā kahā?
Kaun yahā pōchegā vivaś aśrukaṇ
asahāy janō ke?

He yug ke nayanō kā tārā
Jan jīvan ko nav ālok dene ke hetu
Phir lelo avatār
Bāpū phir āvo ek vār /
Aj viśva mē svārthatā,
Pṛthaktā
Aur kṣudratā kā phail rahā hai aṅgār
Satya kī sattā miṭ rahī hai
Pīritō kī sahāytā chin rahī hai
Sampati kī sattā ke āge
Raūdā jā rahā hai ātmā kā saṃsār
Bāpū phir āvo ek vār /

"Here, where is
The supporter of the poor and the down-trodden?
Who will here wipe away the tears of the lonesome and
helpless people?
Oh the apple of the eye of our era,
To provide new light to the life of the people,
Be incarnated again,
Bapu do come once again.
In the world of today, the fire of selfishness,
Aloofness,
And wickedness is spreading fast.
The existence of truth is being wiped out,
The suffering are being deprived of assistance.
Material wealth is all predominant
And the spiritual world is being trampled upon.
Bapu do come once again."

There is nothing new in the subject-matter of this poem. So much has been written about it before that it can be called almost common-place, but in the hands of Chintamunnee, it has acquired a distinctive individuality, and one of the main reasons is that the poet has written with such genuine sincerity. Phrases like dalit dukhiyō ke trātā,

vivaś aśrukaṇ asahāy janō ke, nayanō kā tārā, phir lelo avatār, Bāpū
phir āvo ek vār, are all simple and straightforward, forceful and moving.
The verses of this poem are rhymeless as are most of his post-Independence
poems, but it is dignified and its musicality gains greatly from the
vowel sounds.

A particular feature of the poetry of Chintamunnee in this
collection is the plain, succinct, sensitive and suggestive nature of
his language. In a few of the poems, he achieves depth and sensibility,
and a sharp and meaningful imagery while still retaining a language which
is simple and even colloquial. This is in contrast with the difficult
language used by Unnuth in Nāgphanī mē uljhī sāsē. The poem which
follows gives an illustration of Chintamunnee's language where it verges
on the colloquial without sacrificing depth of meaning:

Peṛ kī
Alag alag śākhā par
Baiṭhe the do pakṣī -
Prem aur śānti
Ek din
Donō ek sath uṛ gaye /
Vah peṛ sūnā sūnā sā
Lagne lagā
Socā -
Yah abhyāgat-se āye
Aur anāgat-se cale gaye
Lenā to dūr
Bahut kuch dekar
Cale gaye /

Do pakṣī (p.23)

"On two separate branches
Of a tree
Two birds were perching -
Love and Peace.
One day

The two of them flew away together
That tree
Looked so desolate -
It said to itself -
These two came like guests
And they have gone away as if they never came.
Far from receiving
They have given a good deal
Before going away."

The above verses, like Chintamunnee's verses elsewhere, have a musical quality too. As we read through or listen to his verses, we become aware of a note of deep sincerity about them: there is no poetic affectation, no straining of any kind. The clarity is remarkable. Chintamunnee has the 'rare gift of opening the paths through which he perceives the world to those who will give thoughtful attention to his poems.'²⁹ It is unfortunate that Sahmī sahmī sī āvāz which is Chintamunnee's only poetry collection, has hitherto been left in a cyclostyled form, and its distribution in Mauritius has remained low.

In the penultimate poem of this collection, the poet expresses his awareness of the existence of hard-hearted and evil-minded people who are bent on destroying others. He considers that

"After the error committed at Hiroshima
You are uselessly
Wandering about in the world
In quest of benevolent people."

Pāṣāṅṅō se bhare jagat p.31

But, as a whole, the poems are characterized by a tone of progressivism and optimism. From the midst of sufferings and tribulations, Chintamunnee perceives the germination of a new hope and a new life. He rounds off the collection by striking a note of promise for the future, telling his fellow-travellers:

"I have still to give
To flickering lamps
The gift of life.
I still have to create
A new world.
From the palms of these hands
The fruit of creativity
Is still to be distilled."

Apne sahayātriyō se p.33

Apart from the poetry of Unnuth and Chintamunnee and the previously mentioned small collections, the other major works which have appeared in the field of poetry during the post-Independence period (until 1980) are: Bīc mē bahtī dhārā, a collection of 50 poems by S.Bhuckory (Port-Louis, 1971); Pravāsī svar, an anthology of 55 poems (five from each of 11 poets) published by the Hindī Pariṣad (Port-Louis, 1971); five collections by Madhukar between 1969 and 1973: Madhukalaś, Madhuvan, Rasvantī, Madhumās and Madhucakra, all published in India, and each containing not less than 50 poems; Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā, an anthology of 41 poems from 12 poets published by the M.G.I. (Port-Louis, 1975); and Niśā with eight poems and Puśpāñjali, a collection of 19 poems for children by Thakurdutt Pandey, published in Benares in 1973 and 1974. Of these major works, Pravāsī svar and Mārīśas kī Hindī Kavītā are the most significant, because they are, in a sense, representative of the general quality and standard which Mauritian Hindi poetry attained in the 1970's.

Although published in Mauritius in 1971, S.Bhuckory's collection Bīc mē bahtī dhārā was ready for publication by 1968, as stated by the author in the preface to the book. Like Mujhe kuch kahnā hai (1967), it contains 50 poems, and the themes are as varied as those of the former publication. The opening poems of the collection, including Virakti (p.16), Yād bhar (p.18) and Manzil kahā (p.21), express movingly the pains and sorrows of parting and bereavement. These poems partly reflect Bhuckory's personal feelings on the bereavement he suffered in June and July 1966: his mother and his elder brother had passed away within an interval of just a few days.

A couple of the poems (Sañkrānti mē Holī, p.67; Karphū p.92) are based on the communal riot which occurred in Mauritius in January 1968, only a few weeks before the country acceded to Independence. These two poems have a slight political bias, but otherwise Bhuckory has avoided political themes.

A few poems catch the mood that reverberated through newly Independent Mauritius and express patriotic outbursts:

"What does it matter if our country is small?
It is a remarkable confluence of four (cultures)
Where unity has been achieved out of diversity
Where the entire world lies within a jug."

Hai deś hamārā choṭā to kyā p.37

Bīc mē bahtī dhārā like Mujhe kuch kahnā hai contains several poems of Nature. The poet revels in the natural beauties which enrich the landscape of Mauritius, and he gives expression to them through verses imbued with poetic thought and feeling. The following extract is an example:

"The play
Of Nature
Is strange -
The verdant hues come rushing
From inside
Like a restless maiden
To see and to hear
The rumble of the thunder,
The flashes of the lightning
And the drizzling of the rain."

Hariyālī phir āyī p.31

A number of the poems dwell on philosophy and the spiritual values of life. Such poems are both provocative and instructive. This can be exemplified by the poem Śivam-sundaram in which the poet tells us in an unassuming language about two trees in his courtyard, one called Śivam and

the other Sundaram. Śivam produced fruit, Sundaram flowers. Neighbours advised that the flower-tree be removed and replaced by another fruit-tree, but

"In our thinking
Both could thrive together;
Fruit and flowers
Are pleasing even to gods,
Why then should we separate
Sundaram from Śivam."

In December 1966, Bhuckory (b.1921) visited India for the first time. The collection under review contains graphic pictures of his impressions of India, embodied in the poems Pratham darśan (p.49), Kaśmīr (pp.50-51), Tāj Mahal (pp.52-53) and Gaṅgā Mayyā (pp.54-55).

The present collection is entirely in blank verse. Bhuckory's poetic skill and power of description which attained a high standard in his pre-Independence poetry, and which has already been discussed, manifests itself in this post-Independence work in a form that is even more developed.

Most of Madhukar's post-Independence collections were published not later than the 1970's, yet the majority of them are gradually going out of circulation in Mauritius. Extracts of the works with regard to both the pre-Independence and the post-Independence periods as well as some of the books are held by the Mauritius Archives and the M.G.I. and a few protagonists of Mauritian Hindi literature. The subject-matter of his post-Independence poetry is as varied and wide-ranging as that which was published before Independence, but except for one or two aspects characteristic of the poetry published in the years which followed Independence, Madhukar's themes remained almost the same as before the accession to Independence. Although he had hardly any new themes to offer, the post-Independence collections include many of his finest works; in fact, Rasvantī published in 1970 and containing some of the best poems in Mauritian Hindi is one of the masterpieces of post-Independence poetry. Madhukar's descriptive power and his skill as a poet are at their best in this collection. The following composition from Rasvantī (p.2) entitled

Madhur milan kī rīt is an example:

Ap bulāē maī nahī avū, kaisī hai yah prīt sakhī rī
Madhur milan kī rīt?

Iśk bharī vah rāt sohānī āj satāti mujh ko,
Rah rah kar ke bāt purānī yād dilātī mujh ko,
Ap pilāē maī nahī pīlū kaisī hai yah prīt sakhī rī
Madhur milan kī rīt?

Sūraj kī kīraṇō ne apne ācal ko sarkāyā,
Sāgar ke cancal laharō mē apnā mūh chupāyā
Ap sulāē maī nahī soū kaisī hai yah prīt sakhī rī
Madhur milan kī rīt?

Parvat kī godī mē baiṭhī kalī-kalī muskāyī
Mast havā kī jhōkō mē lī gītō ne aṅgaṛāyī
Ap gavāē maī nahī gāvū kaisī hai yah prīt sakhī rī
Madhur milan kī rīt?

Ap jahā haī vahī samajh lē merā sundar sapnā
Cāhē to ṭhukrā dē cāhē mujhe banā lē apnā
Ap manāē māi nahī mānū kaisī hai yah prīt sakhī rī
Madhur milan kī rīt?

The manner of a sweet union

"That you should call and that I should not come,
What kind of love is this, sweetheart,
Is this the manner of a sweet union?

That pleasant night of love torments me to this day,
Time and again it recalls to me the past.
That you should make me drink and that I should not drink,
What kind of love is this, sweetheart?
Is this the manner of a sweet union?

The rays of the sun have spread out their hem,
They have hidden their face in the restless billows of the ocean,
That you should make me sleep and that I should not sleep,
What kind of love is this, sweetheart?
Is this the manner of a sweet union?

Sitting on the lap of the mountain, every bud has smiled,
The songs stretch out into the gusts of the intoxicated wind.
That you should make me sing and that I should not sing,
What kind of love is this sweetheart?

Is this the manner of a sweet union?

Where you are, take it that there lies my beautiful dream,
Reject me or accept me just as you wish.

That you should seek to be reconciled with me and that I
should refuse,

What kind of love is this, sweetheart?

Is this the manner of a sweet union?"

During the post-Independence period when most of his contemporaries shifted to blank verse, Madhukar continued to write verse in rhyme. His poems as already shown are lyrical. In the above composition, the phrase madhur milan kī rīt constitutes the refrain (sthāyī) which the poet would sing twice or more times over again at the end of each of the four couplets (antarā). Madhukar's lyrical songs, however, are not based on classical melodic modes (rāgas) but on popular Indian film-tunes and Indo-Mauritian folk-songs. He would throughout the song observe the rhythm (laya) but not the time phrases (tāla).

This song successfully portrays a personal feeling of love and devotion. Its structure, the quality of its diction, its soft and flowing music - all contribute to impart to it a reflective, meditative and nostalgic atmosphere. It also contains phrases that have strong sensuous and physical properties, for example, āp pilāē maī nahī pīlū, ap sulāē maī nahī soū, etc.

An essential feature of this poem, like many poems of Madhukar, is that the rhyme functions in an entirely unobtrusive manner. The poet has not made use of any rhyming word simply by virtue of its property as sound similarity. The composition is as free, spontaneous and natural as the poems produced in rhymeless verse by Bhuckory, Chintamunnee and others (in just a few rare instances Madhukar's verse is strained in an apparent effort to meet the requirements of a rhyme pattern).³⁰

Love and parting continued through the 1970's to be one of Madhukar's favourite themes. This subject-matter is seen again in his lyric Bajtī sahnāī bidā karo which was one of the poems he contributed to Pravāsī Svar (1971), the anthology compiled by the Hindī Pariṣad. In emotive terms, the bride says to those who are standing around:

"My lover has come to take me
In a palanquin of light.
My friends, send me off cheerfully
To the accompaniment of the clarionet.
I am leaving today
Dear friends, please forgive me."

As in the pre-Independence period, Madhukar has taken much delight in singing devotional verses. Jīne kā vardān dījiye, a short three-stanza poem forming part of the contribution to Pravāsī Svar in 1971, opens with the following lines:

"I am desirous of nothing
Only grant me the boon of living.
I am frightened of death
Oh God, give me your refuge."

The general tone of this poem is evocative of Bhakt ke Bhagvān in Madhukarī (1953).

Madhukar's post-Independence poetry shares with that of Chintamunnee the element of optimism and progressivism as well as that of disappointment. This is exemplified in poems, such as Mujhe har samay kām se kām and Deś kī khātir kām karēge contributed to Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā, the anthology compiled by the M.G.I. in 1975 (pp.10-11).

Zealous for his country's freedom and rights, Madhukar is incensed at the conduct of certain post-Independence political leaders. In common with several contemporary poets, he expresses feelings of discontent and frustration:

"Standing on the [political] platform
They have bragged a good deal,
Infatuated by their seats
They have forgotten all their promises,
The life of the people
Has now become impossible."

Kahiye ki āj bhī p.12

The general tenor of this long poem, one of bitter disappointment, is almost the impatient exclamation of a leftist poet. It is a far cry from the exuberant mood of the Madhukar who had accompanied with his songs the struggle for Independence.

The major poems contained in Pravāsī Svar and Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā come from Madhukar, S.Bhuckory, A.Unnuth and M.Chintamunnee. The other poets who have contributed to Pravāsī Svar are: R.Kowlessur (he was one of the six poets who participated in the first Hindi poetry conference, 1966), T.Pandey, J.Kalicharan, H.Sita, I.Bhola, M.Hurdyal and M.Brijmohun. Apart from Kowlessur, these poets were relative new-comers on the scene, although their poetry in Pravāsī Svar attained a reasonably good quality and promised well for the future. The themes of these seven poets were primarily social and philosophical and the poetry of Nature. The following extract from Niṣṭhur Jagat (p.91), one of the five poems contributed by M.Brijmohun (b.1943) can be considered to be fairly well representative of the quality of the minor poems of the collection. It also takes a pragmatic view of life, characteristic of post-Independence poetry:

Niṣṭhur jag! yahā koī nahī apnā hai /
Koī apnā hai yah socnā ek sapnā hai
Vajra hṛday jag, kisī ke dukh se
Dukhit nahī hotā /
Kisī kī vednā sun, hās detā hai
Nahī rotā hai
Sab hai svārthī patthar hṛday
Vikal vednā vyākul nahī kar. pātā /

Hṛday nahī patthar hai
Bhalā kaise samajh saktā, koī vyathā kisī kī /

"Ruthless world! here nobody is mine
It is in vain to think that anybody is mine,
The very hard-hearted world is not grieved
By the grief of anybody.
It only laughs on hearing of anybody's suffering
It is never moved to cry,
They are all selfish and hard-hearted,
Crippling grief [of others] does not upset them,
Theirs is not a heart but a stone,
After all, how can one understand the distress of others?"

This is a good example of a blank verse which is colloquial and spontaneous but at the same time musical and controlled. Of the new-comers who contributed to Pravāsī Svar, however, special mention must be made of H. Sita whose poems include Rajñī bālā, a composition of deep sensibility and exquisite beauty, a mystical work belonging to something of a dream-world. It is conceived after the fashion of Chāyāvād poetry in India: it portrays an indelible picture of night personified as a richly-dressed, bejewelled, charming and attractive young person, in a passionate and furtive quest of her lover. Addressing her, the poet says:

" Why are you agitated with so much love, oh youthful Rajñī?
With such a form, with such excessive beauty,
Within your eye-lids a weight of supernatural love,
Your hair-locks perfumed with the essence of youthfulness,
Languid and adolescent,
To whom are you going to give your love, dear?
Hiding here and there in the dark clouds,
Fearfully and hesitatingly halting now and then,
Shy and excited,
Intoxicated with passion and seized with fear,
Whom are you going to meet, oh youthful Rajñī?"

Wearing bracelets round your wrist, salves round the eyes,
And red on your lips where are you off to my friend?
Bearing in your eye-lids such a thirst of love
And in your heart such passionate longing,
To which region are you bound, oh youthful Rajnī?
Why are you agitated with so much love, oh youthful Rajnī?"

Harinarain Sitā is also the author of the poem Adhūrā gīt (Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā, p.28), another short poem of exquisite beauty, deeply felt. With its symbolic image of the lute, the interruption of the song as the strings break and its expression of sorrow and tears, it is strongly reminiscent of Mahādevī Varmā's poetry in Nihār. For his small collection entitled Prabhāt, the H.P.S. had awarded Sita the Madodrī Rāmlāl Bhagat literary prize in 1966.

Apart from the contributions made by the more experienced poets, Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā contains minor poems mostly by poets who were newly arrived in the field of Mauritian Hindi poetry. These newcomers were: H.Sita, M.Brijmohun, I.Bhola, T.Pandey, S.Sibarat, N.Dussoye, P.Nema, M.Ramjeeavon; the first four had also contributed to Pravāsī Svar. One notable feature about the compositions of these new poets is that their standard of achievement, in general, is higher than that of their counterparts in Pravāsī Svar published four years previously. This can be illustrated, among others, by the humorous and picturesque poem of P.Nema quoted hereunder:

Kālā sindūr

Agni ke sāt phere lagākar
Admī
Apnī maut kā janājā uṭhā letā hai
Aur zindagī bhar
Kisī kabrastān kī talās mẽ
Bhaṭaktā rah jātā hai
Kyō ki
Antim bhāvar
Jis rāh par nikaltī hai

Vah barf se jaldī hī ḍhak jātī hai,
Aur
Khatm bhi ho jātī hai
Apnī manzil se pahle /

Mārīśas ki Hindī kavītā p.53

The black vermilion

"Going around the fire seven times
Man
Picks up his burial-coffin,
And throughout his life
Keeps wandering about
In search of a grave-yard,
Because
The road on which
The last round converges
Gets quickly covered with snow,
And
All trace of it is lost
Before it can reach its destination."

This poem of Nema (sub-editor of the literary magazine Vasant) is spontaneous in its expression, but like much uncontrolled blank verse the language is so close to a chatty KhB. that it almost sounds like a prose passage. The quality attained by the younger poets can be further illustrated by the following poem from M.Ramjeeavon (b.1952) expressing the poet's view of the position of Hindi:

Hindī: kahā se kahā

Parsō
Hindī
Meri saṃskṛti kī bhāṣā thī
Bapautī thī
Matṛ bhāṣā thī /

Kal
Yah 'naukarī' kī bhāṣā ho gaī
'Roṭī' kī bhāṣā ho gaī
Āj
yah 'voṭ' kī bhāṣī ho gaī /
Āne vālā kal
Kaun sī saṃjñā degī?

Mārīśas kī hindī kavītā p.64

"The day before yesterday
Hindi
Was the language of my culture;
It was my heritage,
It was my mother-tongue.
Yesterday
It became the language for employment;
It became the language for earning one's living.
Today
It has become the language for vote-catching
And tomorrow
What will it become?"

Alongside Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā, a third poetry anthology was compiled in the mid 1970's. This was Taraṅgiṇī, a collection of 49 poems by eight poets published in Mauritius by a Hindi association, the Sāhitya Saṅgam. But while the two anthologies discussed above were representative of the general contemporary standard and quality of poetry, Taraṅgiṇī was not. It was a praiseworthy attempt at poetic compositions by nine young poets, all new-comers on the scene of Mauritian Hindi poetry. Their themes were varied. Many of these 49 poems do not have much poetic quality; some, however, do display promise as may be seen in the following extract from Udbodhan (Awakening, p.23), a popular subject-matter with post-Independence poets:

O manuj ke nav tan
O deś kā sarv dhan
Kandhō par rahe terā yah vatan
Kabhī na ho is kā patan /

Bhar de tū rag-rag mē jān
Baṛhne mē terī amiṭ hai śān
O bhāvī rāṣṭra kī santān
Baṛhe jā! baṛhe jā! tū javān /

"Oh the young of mankind
Oh the entire wealth of the country,
May this your home-land rest on your shoulders,
May it ever be kept from a downfall.

Breathe life into it,
In marching forward, your ability is transcendent,
Oh ye children of the nation of tomorrow
March along! march along! young people."

Or from V.Guriya's Kavi (p.63):

Mīṭhī nīnd mē jab sotī hai sansār /
Tārō bharī rāt mē tab kartā hai koī bihār /
Prakṛti ke kaṇ-kaṇ se kartā vah pyār /
Dhartī, ambar sabhī haī us ke yār /
Śabdō se sā jo kar āh apne dil kā /
Sunātā hai duniyā ko apnī kahānī /
Par kise pasand hai gam kī śahnāī /
Kaun samjhegā ek kavī kī duhāī /

"When the world is plunged in sweet slumber
When some are enjoying walks under star-lit skies,
Then he [the poet] is taking delight in every object of
this world,
Earth, heaven, they are all his friends.

Expressing with words the sighs of his heart
He narrates his stories to the world.
But who cares for the melancholic tunes of the clarionet,
Who can understand the entreaties of a poet."

The promise displayed in some of the poetry of this anthology is also apparent in M.Jeebodh's Sālan ke vṛkṣ (Meat plants, p.81), a poem written with symbolic imagery, a favourite fashion in post-Independence poetry:

Sālan ke vṛkṣ

Ham sab vṛkṣ haī
Sālan ke vṛkṣ
Rakt ke vṛkṣ
Asthiyō ke vṛkṣ haī
Ham aise vṛkṣ haī
 Jin kī gandh aur jaṛē
 Itnī viṣailī haī
 Ki ās-pās ke vṛkṣ
 Sās nahī le sakte haī
Ham vṛkṣō ko mārne vāle vṛkṣ haī

" Meat plants

We are all trees,
We are meat trees,
We are blood trees,
We are bone trees,
We are such trees
 The smell and root of which
 Are so poisonous
 That surrounding trees get choked;
We are such trees that kill other trees."

Udbodhan which is patriotically addressed to the youth of the land makes fairly pleasant reading. It is composed within a rhyme scheme, but is not very rhythmic. In terms of its metrical construction, it reads almost like free verse. On the other hand, Kavi is much more rhythmic and, consistent with its subject-matter, its diction is poetic; its rhyme too is effective. Sālan ke vṛkṣ expresses in a colloquial tone the malevolence of man through a symbolic structure which is impressive. The two short stanzas of this composition give the impression of rhyme through repetition of certain words, but it is, however, not true rhyme.

Finally we can note one collection of poetry which was composed for children. The pre-Independence period had hardly produced any children's

poetry, but in 1974, T.Pandey published Puṣpāñjali (Bāl kavitā saṅgraha), a collection of 19 poems of this category. This publication supplied, in some measure, a need which had long been felt in the country (the previous year, T.Pandey had published Niśā two poems of which had already appeared in Pravāsī Svar).

The subject-matter of the poems centres principally on prayers to God, motherly love, good citizenship, love and service for one's country, the message of certain Hindu festivals and the love for Hindi.

Although Pandey has intended this selection for the benefit of children, a few of the poems are too long for young readers, and the vocabulary in places is not simple enough for Mauritian children. In general, however, it is a fairly good selection for children at late primary and early secondary stages.

The poetry produced during the post-Independence years and earlier enjoyed a readership which can roughly be classified into four categories. One, Hindi teachers in general and students including many of those who prepare for the annual collaborative examinations of the H.P.S./Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan Allahabad, the Arya Samaj examinations, and the Hindi examinations of the London and Cambridge Boards (students entering for these examinations every year altogether number approximately 4,000)³¹. Two, a small elitist group of Indo-Mauritians, including some knowing English and French as well, who are interested in literature in general. Three, a small public in India who apparently enjoy reading a few Mauritian poets especially Madhukar, S.Bhuckory and A.Unnuth. Finally, there is the mass of Indo-Mauritian passive supporters of Hindi who take a casual interest in listening to recitations in Kavi sammelans, on the radio and television (most of this audience understand the poetry recitations only imperfectly). Kavi sammelans including those organized by the Mauritius Association of Hindi writers are few and far between, but there are occasional recitations on the local radio, and a monthly (sometimes more frequently) broadcast television programme entitled Āyām run by A.Unnuth, which gives to Mauritians in general an opportunity to listen to Hindi poetry. The Hindi poets also enjoy a limited following and readership through the publication of their short compositions in

the Vasant the monthly magazine of the M.G.I. which publishes literary works regularly.

By the end of the 1970's, a substantial amount of Mauritian Hindi poetry had been produced, some of which had merit. Young writers had increasingly made use of verse for social and political comment. In fact, by the late 1970's, verse had clearly established a dominance over other forms of Hindi literature, although a certain amount of what had been composed was getting more and more dated and out of circulation. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Hindi poetry in Mauritius has today reached a healthy stage of development, and, as a whole, it is versatile and expressive, and has become an indigenous branch of Mauritian Hindi literature.

The Hindi essay and general works

The Hindi essay has not developed in any major way in Mauritius, and is dealt with in this section in conjunction with other general works. The main Hindi essays hitherto published are: three prose collections by B.Bissoondoyal: Racnāvalī (Ajmer, 1959, 210 pages); Lekhāvalī (Ajmer, 1964, 298 pages); Nibandhāvalī (Port-Louis, 1967, 187 pages); Jīvan-pradīp (Port-Louis, 1966), a collection of 14 essays by Prasad Ganpat; Gāndhī smṛti (Port-Louis, 1970), a booklet of essays published by the Maurīśas Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh, on the occasion of M.K.Gandhi's birth centenary; Motī nibandh mālā (Port-Louis, 1972) containing 20 short essays by Shivlāl Moti; Maurīśas kā Hindī sāhitya tathā anya nibandh (Port-Louis, 1972, 70 pages) containing one long essay and three short essays by M.Chintamunnee; Surbhit udyān (Triolet, Mauritius, 1973), a booklet of six short essays, poems and short stories published by the Maurīśas Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh. Two thousand copies of each of the above works of Bissoondoyal were printed, most being distributed in Mauritius. The other works enjoyed a distribution mostly within Mauritius of 500 copies each.

Among B.Bissoondoyal's Hindi essays well thought of in Mauritius and elsewhere are: Ādhyātmik Bhārat (pp.3-11 Racnāvalī), Ved aur

Vikāsvād (pp.37-47, Lekhāvalī), Manharan Maurīśas (pp.59-62 Lekhavalī), Frēc Lekhak Volter kā dārśnik koś (pp.147-153 Nibandhāvalī), Manuṣya ātmā hai (pp.137-147 Nibandhāvalī). In Appendix XVI is an extract from Manuṣya ātmā hai.

The main topics of B.Bissoondoyal's essays and commentaries are the Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata, the Gītā, the Upaniṣads, the Vedas and the culture of India past and present. Through his command of English, French, Hindi and Sanskrit and his steady literary work over the years in these languages, he has, in some measure, succeeded in bringing to Eastern- and Western-oriented readers the benefit of cultural interchange.³² He has been a Hindu missionary since the early 1940's and it is, above all, to religion that he has devoted the greatest attention. In his collections of Hindi essays and in particular in his commentaries on the Vedas, Ved Bhagvān Bole (Delhi, 1978), Bissoondoyal frequently discusses philosophical concepts such as non-attachment, transmigration, action, devotion, knowledge, nature, oversoul, Vedic trinity, world-tree, revelation etc. These essays are well documented and are obviously the products of painstaking research. The substance of some of them is esoteric and of value to those who are seeking knowledge or material for research in religion and philosophy. Most of the essays, through their general tone and manner of expression, have a capacity to make the reader reflect deeply. In fact, Bissoondoyal emerges from his essays and commentaries, as critic, essayist, historian, thinker and theologian, all in one.

The essays and commentaries of Bissoondoyal constitute a wealth of essayistic prose. His language is modern standard Hindi and, consonant with the topics he is writing on, it is, in general, grave, dignified, and not infrequently somewhat sanskritized. Just as some of the novels of A.Unnuth show modern standard Hindi at its best, so do the essays and commentaries of B.Bissoondoyal.

The other essays, mentioned above, apart from those of M.Chintamunnee,

belong to a very different category. While they are enjoyable reading for ordinary readers, they are, at the same time, suitable for students of late primary and secondary level. P.Ganpat and S.Moti, both Hindi teachers, and the writers who have contributed to Gāndhī smṛti and Surbhit udyān have written in easy standard Hindi on such diverse subjects as health, friendship, happiness and misery, the dodo, the sugar-cane harvest in Mauritius, the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth to Mauritius, and Mahatma Gandhi. A collection of 22 essays entitled Citrañ^{jīvan}(an)mūlyā, originally written in English by Dr.K. Hazareesingh the former Director of the M.G.I., is also suitable for Hindi students, up to the G.C.E. O level. These essays were translated into Hindi by an Indian writer Gyān Sauñkariyā, and, therefore, strictly speaking, do not form an integral part of Mauritian Hindi literature.

The few essays of M.Chintamunnee including the one contributed to Surbhit udyān deserve more attention than the works described in the foregoing paragraph. His long essay entitled Maurīśas kā Hindī sāhitya (pp.7-35 of his above-mentioned booklet) is a concise composition covering in very brief outline the cultural and literary activities of Indian immigrants and their descendants from the initial stages of immigration to the early 1970's. This essay, particularly the part which portrays the early times, is evidently the product of careful research, and, furthermore, what is equally significant is that it is the first essay ever to be written on the subject. His language is standard modern Hindi, well-turned and flowing with natural ease. Chintamunnee's essays have doubtlessly made a valuable, although small, contribution to the development of this particular genre of Hindi literature, as well as assisting towards the consolidation of Mauritian KhB. Hindi prose as a style.

The above-mentioned essays aside, there is one small biographical work entitled Mārīśasīya jansevak Sukhdev Viṣṇudayāl (Delhi, 1979, 46 pp.) published by G.Gangaram, an Indo-Mauritian. It is a collection of biographical portraits in memory of Sukhdev Viṣṇudayāl (known in Mauritius as Sookdeo Bissoondoyal) who died in 1977 (Bissoondoyal has been discussed in Chapter Four). The writers are: B.Bissoondoyal, the elder brother of the late S.Bissoondoyal (pp.11-29); D.Kanhya (pp.30-34);

R.Janki (p.35); Mrs. K. Kumari Radhakrishan (pp.36-40); and R.Radhakrishan (pp.41-46). The contributions cover several aspects of S.Bissoondoyal's life as a teacher, writer, journalist and politician (he had been a state minister in the latter part of his career). The article of Mrs.Radhakrishan deals with his travels abroad.

The contributors to this biographical work are people who were all very close to S.Bissoondoyal and actively supported his political movement. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the general tenor of the portraits is rather partisan and one-sided: they read more like tributes and encomiums than as the impartial and critical appraisal of a career. These articles, however, portray at the same time several personal traits of S.Bissoondoyal and, in general, they are both interesting and enjoyable. Their language is good standard Hindi.

Another work called Cācā Rāngulām ke saṃsaraṇ by Suresh Rambarn reveals, mostly through anecdotes and extracts of his important speeches and messages, glimpses of the long career and way of life of Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, the former Prime Minister and the present Governor-General of Mauritius. Rambarn lives in a remote rural area of Mauritius, and his language is a good example of simple KhB. Hindi portraying the life of an unassuming man. (In Appendix XVII is an extract from the book).

This work is, however, one of unmixed praise. It emphasizes only the good side of Sir Seewoosagar as a statesman, a medical doctor and a man. Rambarn does not seem to remember any one of his weaknesses or mistakes, and this biased representation imparts to the writing an imbalance even greater than that which characterises the portraits on Bissoondoyal. The book was edited by Lalanprasād Vyās in India.

An autobiographical booklet of B.Bissoondoyal entitled Merī koṭhriyā can be appropriately mentioned at this stage (Port-Louis, 1954, 126 pages). The author gives therein a brief account of his life, activity and experience in Mauritius before he left for his studies in India in the early thirties, as well as the new experience he gathered while

studying in Lahore and afterwards in Calcutta. The language is conversational and his manner of expression is cordial and intimate. It is unfortunate, however, that both the typography and the presentation, like a few other Hindi books of B.Bissoondoyal, are not very attractive, and its circulation in Mauritius seems to have been low.

The present chapter deals with Mauritian KhB. literature in five different genres: drama, poetry, the essay, the short story and the novel. There are quite a few published miscellaneous works, some of them small, however, which cannot be subsumed under anyone of these five genres. They have, therefore, been classified as general works.

Among the works of B.Bissoondoyal, there are several which can be appropriately classified as general works. These appear in Note 27 of Chapter Four which lists the main Hindi works he produced after 1950. One of them is a small 121 page French into Hindi dictionary (Port-Louis, 1962). This work was meant for the use of French-speaking people outside the Indo-Mauritian community and also for that of many educated Indo-Mauritians who know French better than Hindi. In India, English is one of the linguistic neighbours of Hindi, but Mauritius is the only part of the world where a large number of the population know Hindi as well as French. Hence it was natural that such a dictionary should emerge in this part of the world.

The majority of the general works appeared in the course of the last decade. In 1970, the H.P.S. published J.N.Roy's Mārīśas mē Hindī bhāṣā kā saṃkṣipt itihās (N. Delhi) which has been discussed in the introduction to this thesis. In the same year, Anirud Dwarka, then a member of the Executive Committee of the H.P.S., published Jagārnā kī jīt (Calcutta, 1970) (the word jagārnā of African or Malagasy origin means 'uncivilized man' and it was used derogatively about the Indian immigrant in Mauritius in the early years of this century). It is a very brief outline history of the Indian immigrants and their descendants, touching upon their successful struggle against Christian missionary pressures, the commendable part played by Hindu women in the preservation of

language and culture, the role of the Rāmcaritmānas, the activity of the orthodox Sanātan dharma and the Arya Samaj, the impact of Creole on KhB. Hindi and Bhojpuri (the author expresses some original views on this matter), and, finally, it extols the far-reaching work of the H.P.S. In 1972, S.Bhuckory published in Port-Louis Gaᅅgā kī pukār, an account of his travels in India. In fluent style, plain prose, warm, friendly and personal manner of narration, it is a brilliant piece of travelogue. This work has been translated into English by the author and published under the title of Call of the Ganges). The same year Dr.I.Nundlall published his Bhārat kī sangīt kalā which has already been discussed in Chapter Four. The year which followed saw the appearance of two works: Ārya Samāj Mauriśas kā itihās by M.Mohit also discussed in Chapter Four, and Dāktar Sar Śivsāgar Rāmgulām kī Rājasthān yātrā by P.Ramsharan (Delhi, 1973, 112 pages). The latter work briefly surveys the history of Mauritius from the early times of settlement by the Portuguese and the Dutch to the period of British sovereignty and the Independence of the country. This includes the immigration of Indians to Mauritius and their life on the island. The book then expatiates on the history of the Arya Sabha from its foundation in the first decade of the century culminating in its active participation in the 11th International Conference in Rajasthan presided over by the then Prime Minister of Mauritius. After perusing this work, one cannot help feeling that its title is a misnomer: it is much more a treatise on the Arya Samaj, their work and achievement in Mauritius, with the conference in Rajasthan just forming a peripheral aspect of it. Like his other Hindi works, it exemplifies the use by the author of a KhB. prose which is both simple and faultless. The following year (1974), P.Ramsharan published another work. It was Mauriśas kī lok kathāē which will be discussed later in this chapter. This was followed by Amar Prem published in Delhi in 1977. It is a recreation of Bernadin de St. Pierre's lachrymose French novel Paul et Virginie entirely set in Mauritius. Its style is colloquial with the flavour of an original work. Most educated Indo-Mauritians who wish to read this novel would very probably prefer the original French version which is readily available in all the public libraries, and therefore the circulation of this book in Mauritius is

expected to be low. Amar Prem, however, is reported to have found a modest circle of readers in India, and this work is a good example of Indo-Mauritian contribution to Hindi reading material of the sub-continent, particularly from the early 1970's.

Among the general Mauritian Hindi words produced in the last decade, one of the most important was Hindī Sāhitya kā paricay by S.Bhuckory. This is one of the prescribed texts for the Paricay collaborative examination of the H.P.S./Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, Allahabad. Side by side with the history of Hindi literature produced by the sub-continent, this book carries the history of Mauritian Hindi literature. It is probably the only history of Hindi literature to do this at the present time.

A few more general works, less important than those discussed above were published in the course of the 1970's, and these have been listed in Appendix XVIII.

The short story

The Hindi story in its oral form was originally brought to Mauritius by Indian immigrants from North India, particularly the rural districts of Bihar. In an age and place where entertainment was scarce, story-telling was immensely popular. The written Mauritian Hindi story, however, does not antedate the 1930's. Just as the short story in India represents a new development based on western models, rather than a formalization of vernacular story-telling traditions, so the beginnings of the kahānī in Mauritius in the 1930's cannot be linked too closely with earlier oral narratives. The Sanātan Dharmārk (1933-1942), the weekly organ of the orthodox Hindu point of view which appeared in English, French and Hindi published a few very short Hindi stories. Durgā (1937), a paper of the H.P.S. cyclostyled from a handwritten text and circulating among some members of this society and their friends, occasionally carried a few such stories. Jāgriti (1939-1945), a weekly organ of the Arya Samaj also appearing in English, French and Hindi, as well as Vasant (late 1940's) established by Pandit O.S.Geerjanan, published a few Hindi short stories periodically. It would be perhaps more appropriate to describe most of the narratives published in those papers as anecdotes rather than short stories. Their theme was moral, emphasizing rectitude and righteousness, and the general tone was didactic.

Among the earliest short stories extant today are two of the five very short stories of M.Chintamunnee which appeared in the Vartmān (1953-54) in 1953. One is entitled Ādarś pitā and the other Dharamvīr kī udārtā. The former has an Indian setting: it narrates the visit of Subas Candra Bose to a person's house to inform him that of his two sons serving in his army, one has been killed on the battle-field. While Bose holds the father in close embrace, the latter, a patriot, bursts into tears of joy and pride. Dharamvīr kī udārtā dwells on the generosity and compassion of Dharamvīr who brings to his home a young woman, Indumati, made homeless by the death of her husband, a friend of his, to live together with his wife and two children, as a member of his family. The other three short stories of Chintamunnee also treated ethical themes. The language employed in these short stories, containing an admixture of Perso-Arabic vocabulary, is modern KhB. Hindi with literary promise, although in places it is somewhat stilted, and the dialogue occasionally inclines towards the artificial. This could have been partly due to the influence of the Hindi films then reaching Mauritius in ever-increasing numbers. In Appendix XIX are copies of these two short stories in the hand of the author himself.

The 1960's like the preceding years saw now and then the publication of short stories. They appeared in Āryoday, then the weekly and today the fortnightly newspaper of the Arya Samaj, and in Navjīvan (1960-1964) which had been established by S.M.Bhagat the General Secretary of the H.P.S. In 1963, a new-comer in the field of Hindi literature, Ishwardutt Aliman, produced a few short stories on themes which included love and uprightness of conduct, and entitled his collection Nayī kahāniyā.³³ Aliman's stories which have almost gone out of circulation today, like most of the short stories of that time are generally held to display little literary merit. The authors of these narratives were not much concerned with the requirements of characterization and plot, but their works constituted nonetheless important beginnings and formed the basis for the development of the Mauritian Hindi story in the later decades.

Alongside the publication of short stories in newspapers, several

Hindi exponents occasionally broadcast from the M.B.C. short stories and 'song-stories', (gītō bhārī kahāniyā) that is stories which incorporated songs.³⁴ The songs used were mostly selections from Hindi films. The Hindi 'song-stories' were very popular with listeners.

The first significant event in the history of the Mauritian short story was the publication in 1967 of Naye aṅkur, a six story collection by the Mauritius Association of Hindi writers. Manautī by Moti Torel concerns Hindu men and women who neglected the teachings of their own religion and made offerings on the occasion of the Muslim Tāziā celebrated in commemoration of the martyrs Ḥasan and Ḥusain. On being reprimanded afterwards by a Hindu priest, they promised to attend regularly their own religious meetings. Dāruṇ abhiśāp by M.Chintamunnee emphasizes the good example set by the uncle of Virendra: eschewing lavish celebrations, he spent the minimum he reasonably could on the wedding of his daughter Cetnā, and instead he set up a public library in his village and at the same time initiated an education fund. This was in contradiction to the conventional ways of his society where debts were often incurred for lavish wedding receptions. Pasīne kī kamāī by Dharmvir Ghura Govido portrays the unhappiness of cane-field labourers who were exploited by extortionate foremen. It further depicts the contentment and peace in poor workers' homes. The subject-matter of the other stories was: fulfilment of a childhood pledge; the pain and suspense of expectation; and the fruit of hard work and devoted service.

The language of these stories, in general, is good modern KhB. Hindi. One can detect in places the influence of Premchand's evocative and allusive style, especially in such description of Nature as is found in the following passage from Pratīkṣā by Keshavdutt Chintamunnee:

'It was the month of December. The hot season was at its peak. The god of wind was still and silent. The sun-god as if in a rage was spitting out burning embers. The doors and windows of all houses were open, and yet there was no air in motion inside. Many people were sitting under the dense trees of their yard, but there too the heat was intolerable. Not even a dry leaf stirred on the trees. In

this burning atmosphere, Keval was sitting in an arm-chair in his room, his gaze fixed towards the road. He was expecting somebody and looked very upset.'

As this story proceeds, it is evocative of Premchand's story Durgā kā mandir where Brajnāth anxiously expects a friend to turn up to make the refund of a loan.

Most of these stories, although written in good modern Hindi, will hardly stand scrutiny with regard to the requirements of the technique of the short story: there is not much depiction of character in them and hardly any trace of planned structure. Nonetheless, Naye aṅkur is historically an important collection, in that it was the first venture of its kind. Professor Nandlāl Jośī, an Indian expert then attached to the Oriental Section of the Teachers' Training College (now integrated with the M.G.I.) wrote in its preface: 'Although the literary critic will not find in these stories the developed technique of the short story, yet [with the publication of Naye aṅkur] the short story decidedly finds a place in the garden of Mauritian [Hindi] literature.'

In the 1960's and thereafter, apart from Premchand who remained the favourite, the works of several other Indian short story writers were sought after by Mauritian Hindi-lovers and students, notably the stories of Jaysaṅkar Prasād, Jainendra Kumār (his most popular stories were Apnā parāyā, Patnī, Pāzeb), Kauśik, Badrināth Sudarśan and Upendranāth Aśk (his most popular story was Jhāḱ aur muskān).

The same year that Naye aṅkur appeared (1967), M.Chintamunnee published 12 short stories in the Congress newspaper. In fact, like the stories contained in Naye aṅkur, they looked more like anecdotes than short stories. Each was published in full in separate issues of the Congress. The Congress editor wanted a very short story illustrating a problem of the day, with a possible solution suggested or implied in the brief narrative. Such stories were well received by the public. The themes of these stories were characteristically: frugality in daily living and investment in Government Savings schemes, poverty and unemployment in the beautiful island of Mauritius, the role of fearless

and progressive writers, the unwillingness of the rich to promote publication of literary works of writers for the good of the country, and the ill-treatment of poor workers by a selfish and callous middle-class. Chintamunnee's stories in the Congress like some of those in Naye Añkur were highly didactic, and one or two of them suffer from certain improbabilities of plot. In Maurīśas-bhūṣaṇ, one of the twelve stories, the protagonist Dineś a writer of progressive views disliked servile adherence to conventional pursuits. The theme of his books was the intolerable condition of workers, their hopes and their hard struggle against unrelenting capitalist exploitation. He was indicted for incitement, his books were seized, and he was prosecuted by the police. In the Law Court, he fearlessly denounced the Government of the day exclaiming: "Undue advantage is taken of the ignorance and poverty of the workers, how vile and hateful is this? What sort of exploitation is this?" He was sentenced to imprisonment. Dineś dies suddenly (it is not clear from the narrative whether it was while he was serving his term of imprisonment or afterwards). He became a martyr and a national hero.

A few of these stories shed light on significant problems of the day. In Nirdhan sāhityakār, the narration deals with the problem of publication encountered by writers of Hindi literature. In this story, Dhaneśvar a Hindi writer is advised by some friends to approach a few wealthy people for the publication of his works. The latter praised his writings but 'when he appealed to them for some financial assistance, they pointed out that they already subscribed to schools and temples. "Is that not enough", they asked. "What benefit would society derive from the publication of literature".'

Chintamunnee's KhB. in the short stories is clear and simple. It flows with natural ease. It is, however, possible to discern a difference in style between his earlier and his later work. While the language of his stories which were published in the Vartmān (1953-54), fourteen years before, included words of Perso-Arabic origin, that of the stories in the Congress (1967) has hardly any. The language of the narrative in the Vartmān was somewhat florid, that of the 12 stories

in the Congress is sober, concise and dignified. The style of the latter is also characterised by a more consciously literary KhB. rather than straightforward colloquial narrative. In Appendix XX is a copy of two of the short stories entitled Nirdhan s̄hityakār and Vatan kī roṭī. From the quality of the KhB. in Naye Aṅkur and in the 12 short stories of Chintamunnee, it was obvious that the stage of development in the authors' medium of expression was far ahead of their craft in this form of art.

The first major figure as a short story-writer, however, was Dipchand Beeharry who graduated from London University. He read modern languages and classics - English, French, Latin and Greek. In India, he obtained a Master's degree in English, with distinction at Benares University. He also studied in Shantiniketan. He acquired his knowledge of Hindi chiefly through subsidiary studies in Benares. Beeharry also read law, and was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple, London. Besides his works in Hindi, he is the author of three novels in English - Touch of Happiness, Three women and a President and That others might live - and of stories and essays in English and French. His Hindi works are: Sāgar pār (Port-Louis, 1972), a collection of seven short stories; Svarg mẽ kyā rakhā hai (Delhi, 1978), a collection of 12 stories including revised versions of three of the stories which had appeared in Sāgar pār; Masīhe narak jīte hāi, a novel (Delhi, 1980, 128 pages). A Hindi translation of his English novel That others might live by Yogendra Sarmā, an Indian writer, was published in Delhi in 1981 and also circulated in Mauritius.

Born and bred in a town, Beeharry, unlike the majority of Indo-Mauritian Hindi writers, hardly speaks any Bhojpuri. In 1972, when he wrote Sāgar pār, his first collection of Hindi stories, he was the first Indo-Mauritian well-read in English and French literature to write short stories in KhB. All his predecessors were people whose education had centred primarily on Hindi. In his preface to Sāgar pār, Beeharry has explained: 'While writing in Hindi, I have experienced not only joy but also pride. I am proud I have been able to publish

a work in a language which is the medium of expression of the majority of people in this country.... The ordinary people, teachers and writers are all endeavouring to keep this language alive, and it is my ardent wish to make a contribution towards the same objective.' Although the above statement conveys the motivation of Beeharry, it is a rather over-optimistic view of the position of KhB. Hindi in Mauritius.

The short stories of Beeharry right from the start in 1972 evidence his excellent grasp of the craft of story-telling. His stories in the collection Sāgar pār were the first proper Mauritian Hindi stories to exist, and also the first to be able to bear comparison with good short stories of writers in other parts of the world. Sāgar pār and the other short story collection entitled Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai published in 1978 clearly display western influence: Beeharry's wealth of realistic details reminds us of Gustave Flaubert; the suspense and mystery in some of his stories is reminiscent of Guy de Maupassant; and the touches of sensuality manifesting here and there are somewhat evocative of D.H.Lawrence. A few of the stories in Sāgar pār make use of a flash-back technique hitherto unfamiliar in the Mauritian KhB. story (although already well established in the Kahānī in India). In fact, all the essential factors inherent in the craft of the short story - the right manner of telling a story, character portrayal, development of plot and the handling of human situations - are to be found in Beeharry's stories.

The stories of Beeharry centre round some of the contemporary problems of society - the struggle of agricultural and other workers, class disunity, the possible ways and means of uniting people and creating a national entity, youth and student unrest and vandalism, and the unhealthy outcome of subjection to irrational conventions. The stories include love stories with psychological implications and also stories which portray the unflinching efforts of Indian immigrants and their descendants in the preservation of their language and culture. One of the stories in the collection Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai bearing the same title has been narrated against a background of strong fantasy (a poet in his dream goes to paradise and meets St. Peter in an attempt to

recover his lost inspiration). Like much good literature, many of the stories are intended not only to entertain readers but, as he himself has put it in his preface to Sāgar pār, 'to light a torch for the enlightenment of human society'.

Beeharry is one of the few highly educated Indo-Mauritians who have deprecated the distrust and aloofness between the different elements of the Mauritian population, and he has advocated a closer unity so as to realise a greater national entity. In the story Sāgar pār which appears in the collection of the same name, and also in Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai, Jaydīp, a hard-working and studious adolescent falls in love with Aline, a girl of African origin, but his parents supported by friends and relatives remonstrate with him, urging him to break with her. Jaydīp finds himself in a very difficult situation, and sadly he ruminates over this matter: 'This is the demand of society. The peace and happiness of an individual hardly count in the face of established customs and conventions. For nearly a hundred years now, people of Indian and African origin have been living side by side in Mauritius. But, all the same, the poison of doubt and distrust has kept apart these two elements of humankind. The barrier of religion and politics stands in between these two groups, a barrier deliberately erected for years, so that the Government can for ever stay in the hands of a few very wealthy people. Of course, there exists among the people a strong movement to break down these walls of obstruction. But for the movement to succeed, we need people ready to jump over the barriers of social convention and forge ahead hand in hand.' Sad and frustrated, Jaydīp then proceeds overseas for higher studies.

As can be seen from this quotation, the element of didacticism is strong in these stories. Beeharry who was a politician at one stage of his career was an advocate of the unity of all workers regardless of their origin as a source of strength against capitalist oppression. In one of the stories entitled Hathiyār appearing both in Sāgar pār and Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai a character, Polo, of African origin says to a peasant of Indian background: 'No force, no amount of violence can destroy the relationship existing between the two of us. This remains

in fact our weapon (hathiyār). You work in the cane-field and I work in the factory. But both of us are workers. The feeling of one worker can be understood only by another worker. It is in our unity that lies our salvation.'

Like most Indo-Mauritian Hindi writers, Beeharry perceives in the suffering of the Indian immigrants of the nineteenth century a fertile ground for creative writings. Guruji, one of the stories in Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai, is inspired by such a theme. In this story a baithkā is burnt down by the Estate authorities as a potential source of agitation.

Generally speaking, Beeharry's prose style in Sāgar pār is less than satisfactory. Here and there are phrases and expressions which reflect English thought constructions and sound like anglicisms or literal translations from English. It was the first time that such anglicisms appeared in printed KhB. in Mauritius.³⁵ Apart from anglicisms, we find in certain places expressions which are unusual in KhB., due partly to the use of Arabic and Persian words which have not passed into common usage in Mauritian Hindi.³⁶ These features result in a certain awkwardness in Beeharry's prose. This applies especially to two stories in the collection - Sāgar pār bearing the title of the collection and Hathiyār. In the years that followed the publication of this collection, however, it would appear that Beeharry himself grew aware of these defects, for he has considerably remedied them in his second story collection in 1978 in which he has republished with several amendments of language three of the stories, including the two above-named, which had appeared in Sāgar Pār in 1972.

These short-comings notwithstanding, there are in places in the course of the narrative in Sāgar pār several passages which display Beeharry's considerable power of description. This can be exemplified by the following passage from Hathiyār (republished in Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai):

'Very dense clouds pervaded the skies. One could hear the sound of foamy torrents rushing all around. Fruit and flowers and trees

growing in the yard had already been damaged by the winds. With much difficulty, Mijū reached the main road of the village. On both sides, there was deep gaping darkness, and even his hand Mijū could not see.....

Mijū knew well where the hut of Polo was situated, but because of the flood and the darkness, he had to stop several times as he proceeded on his way. The rain had subsided a little. All of a sudden, a flash of lightning cleaving the bosom of the night crashed against the neighbouring rocks. It was at that moment that he caught sight of Polo's hut. He went straight in that direction. He was about to step into the courtyard of the hut when a sound reached his ears. It was a well-known voice, and yet at that moment Mijū could not tell whose voice it was. Just then, unexpectedly, another flash of lightning like the blade of a sword tore the darkness asunder and illumined the whole atmosphere.'

The year Sāgar pār was published also saw the publication of two stories by Premcand Bulī - Cirāg, and Tūfān - but these were held to be of little literary merit and are unobtainable today.

In 1973, six years after their publication of Naye aṅkur, the Mauritius Association of Hindi Writers published Surbhit udyān (Triolet, Mauritius, 500 copies, 96 pages) which has already been mentioned above. Together with essays and poems, it contains seven short stories. Most of the seven authors of these stories were people who had been educated in Hindi and had a working knowledge of English and French. Like Naye aṅkur, Surbhit udyān was significant in the history of the Mauritian Hindi short story, because, although still experimental in character, it attested the progress this genre had made in the hands of people educated mainly in Hindi. The progress achieved was principally in the advancement of the craft of story-telling, but with regard to language, Naye aṅkur is written, as already stated, in good standard Hindi, and Surbhit udyān hardly excelled it.

One of the seven stories, Mṛg kuṇḍ, by K.Chintamunnee, is mythical and especially suitable for children. It beautifully depicts

Trou-aux-cerfs, the crater of an extinct volcano, a beauty-spot of Mauritius, as the sacrificial pit of the gods in the early years when Indian immigration to Mauritius was still lying in the future. Kulī, by I.Bhola is more a biographical portrait than a short story. It portrays the boyhood of Seewoosagar Ramgoolam (descendant of a coolie) who later became the Prime Minister of Mauritius, and delineates the early circumstances which inspired him to decide that on completion of his studies he would work for his community and for his country. Śahnāī by Shobhna Dashrath and Nirās premī by Laldev Anchraj are love stories. In both of them consideration of caste and class differences brings unhappiness to lovers. Kaisī Divālī by Sonalal Nemdhari is a story of re-marriage, bickerings, and desertion. Satyavan Pirthi's Anokhī yātrā is unsuccessful, being both unauthentic and melodramatic. A child in a young mother's arms accidentally swallows a 25 cent coin and dies instantly of suffocation, and a youth (Rāj by name) seated by the mother, who had generously but imprudently given this money to the child, seized with anguish and remorse, there and then puts an end to his own life. The theme of the seventh story Hāth pāv bhī bik gaye by Krishna Lalbihari is gambling on horse-races.

The seven stories are of uneven quality. The story of Lalbihari is particularly successful. His story dwells on the gambling habit of two friends, both married, its disastrous consequences, their determination at the end to conquer this evil and their eventual triumph. Lalbihari's language which is standard KhB. Hindi reveals in places the influence of Bhojpuri.

Almost contemporary with Surbhit udyān was Suniti Alliar's short story Do śarīr ek ātmā. This story, which enjoyed a low circulation is not obtainable today.

Towards the same period, the Hindi Teachers' Association of Triolet published Parakh, a collection of nine short stories, on behalf of the author Brijlal Ramdin (56 pages; n.d.). The predominant theme of two of these stories - Lāl Cunrī and Ghāyal premī - is unrequited love. Parakh bearing the title of the collection is a sad

narrative about a young woman who is abandoned by the man who debauches her but is eventually united to the youth who loved her from the beginning. Carhtī umar is a moving love story in which a student innocently falls in love with her teacher. Saudā is the story of a marriage-bargain in which a millionaire unsuccessfully bargains for the marriage of his daughter who is already the mother of a baby. The subject-matter of the other five stories is: conjugal jealousy and its disastrous consequences (in Sandeh), bigamy and the fatal results of wife-beating (in Daurtī arthī), revenge (in Pratiśodh a prisoner breaks out of prison, kidnaps the wife of a C.I.D. officer, and when questioned on being re-arrested states that the fire of revenge is still burning in his heart), and finally a street beggar's desperate thirst for attention and affection (in Sneh kā bhūkhā).

This small collection makes enjoyable reading. Although the narratives are shorter than is usual in the short story genre, yet Ramdin's plots in some of these stories are well defined. A few characters, for example, Kisnā in Sneh kā bhūkhā, Manmohun in Sandeh, Sālinī in Carhtī umar, Bansī in Lāl Cunrī, are distinctly portrayed. Also, while Surbhit udyān (1973) showed an improvement on the anecdote-like Naye aṅkur (1967) with respect to form and content of the story, Parakh (c.1974) represents in some degree a further advance on Surbhit udyān in the same regard. Like the two previous collections, Parakh is written in standard modern Hindi. In fact, Ramdin's work can be regarded as the forerunner of some of the excellent stories which were to appear a few years later in Maurīśas kī Hindī kahanī (1976), the anthology published by the M.G.I. Notwithstanding a few implausibilities which occur here and there in Ramdin's stories, they are, in general, sensitive, realistic and authentic. This is exemplified, amongst others, by the following brief summary of the story of Kisnā the beggar in Sneh kā bhūkhā (p.20):

Kisnā a paralytic from birth, was a street-beggar. Dressed in rags, he looked haggard with eyes deep in their sockets and cheeks sunken. A well-dressed young man with a brief case in the hand used to pass by every morning. He would stop for a moment, put a five-cent

coin in Kisnā's hand, and at the same time ask him 'How are you?'. The love and charity of this young man aroused in Kisnā feelings of profound joy and gratitude. After a lapse of time, however, the generous youth was no longer to be seen.

One Sunday, Kisnā had taken shelter from the rain in the verandah of La Flore Orientale (a luxurious restaurant of Port-Louis). Catching sight of his benefactor coming out of the restaurant in company, he tried hard to attract his benefactor's attention. The young man looked once towards Kisnā but just ignored him. As he was getting into his car, Kisnā, no longer able to contain himself, pressed forward on his crutch, held his arm and said: 'Do you remember, sir, you used to come every day and ask me how I was...' Varmā (that was the youth's name) shook off his arm; his companion pushed Kisnā so hard that his crutch was flung down and Kisnā himself was left lying on the ground several feet away. The car drove off. It was drizzling and the love-thirsty Kisnā was bursting into sobs.

Mauritius, like most other countries, has a tradition for folk-tales. Almost concurrently with the publication of Parakh, Prahlād Ramsharan (Education Officer, Hindi, Ministry of Education, Mauritius), published Mārisās kī lok kathāē, a collection of 15 folk-tales (Delhi, 1974, 108 pages). This was the first publication of its kind, and it has found a reading public both in Mauritius and in India. It has now run through a third edition of 2,000 copies, the first and second edition having been of 3,000 and 2,000 respectively. This work was translated into German in 1979 (Verlag Philipp Reclam jun Leipzig, tr. Margot Gatzlaff), and the first edition issued by the German publishers ran to 20,000 copies. The title of this collection ('The folk-tales of Mauritius') is, in a sense, a misnomer, because while Mauritius has a rich fund of tales of African, Chinese and European (mainly French) origin as well, Ramsharan's book is only a collection of Indo-Mauritian folk-tales.

Of these 15 folk-tales, 10 have a Mauritian setting and background, four are known in Bihar in slightly different versions (this is specified by the author in his preface), and one narrates a story about

a king, a queen and their children represented at the end of the tale as the sun, the moon and the stars respectively.

Some of the tales of this collection contain a few elements associated with folk-tales brought to Mauritius by Bihari emigrants. In fact, Ramsharan in his preface to the book writes that, during the years of his studies in India, he heard in the neighbourhood of Bihar dozens of folk-tales which his mother used to relate to him in Mauritius when he was a child. In the attribution of personal nature to animals and birds, several of these tales are evocative of the fables of La Fontaine and also of some of the episodes in Hitopadeśa and Pañcatantra. For his collection of folk-tales, Ramsharan was awarded a prize by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, India.

As folk-tales, these stories are all legendary, and although both the language and the subject-matter render them quite suitable for children, yet they have been so well narrated that, like Charles Kingsley's The Heroes, they have found a reading public which includes a substantial proportion of adults as well.

The language of Māriśas kī lok kathāē is not only unsanskritized but plain and simple and a fitting medium for the understanding of young readers as well as adults. It is remarkable how well this unsophisticated language has succeeded in vividly portraying the extraordinary flights of imagination in all the 15 tales of the collection. (In Appendix XXI is an extract from the tale entitled Siṃh aur ḍoḍo). In fact, the simple language and the near-conversational style as well as the manner of narration altogether combine to evoke strongly the homely atmosphere of story-telling sessions amidst Indo-Mauritian families and their neighbours in the early decades of our century.

Apart from school-readers and Māriśas kī lok kathāē, Mauritian KhB. Hindi writings have produced very few stories for children. The only other known collection in this class of writing is Vyavahār prakāś uttamottam kathāō kā saṅgrah which had been published by B.Bissoondoyal in the early 1940's (n.p., n.d.). It contains 30 anecdotes written

in plain Hindi. These stories are interesting, and having regard to the instruction they convey, they are of educational value at late primary level. For example, Per aur pakṣī (p.6) explains that anger is harmful and what one should do to keep oneself from it; Jo degā use milegā (p.21) narrates R.Tagore's story from the Gītāñjali of the beggar who gave away a grain of corn, and in the evening of the same day found a gram of gold in the alms he had collected on that day; Bhaktvar Tulsīdās (p.25) depicts an incident portraying the greatness and humility of the author of the Rāmcaritmānas; Udārcit Bhāratīya mazdūr (p.39) tells the tale of a generous Indian labourer who volunteers to advance a fifty-rupee loan to his employer suddenly fallen in straitened circumstances and declines to draw up a documentary promise to repay. This reader was used in the 40's and 50's together with other primers in some 250 voluntary Hindi schools of Bissoondoyal and in some other schools as well. It is unfortunate, however, that it has now gone out of print and almost out of circulation.

The 1970's were marked by much progress in the development of the Mauritian KhB. kahānī. After Sāgar pār (1972; Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai, the collection by the same author published in 1978, has been discussed along with Sāgar pār), Surbhit udyān (1973), Parakh (c.1974) and Mārīśas kī lok kathāē (1974), the most significant event of the decade in this genre of literature was the publication by the M.G.I. in 1976 of Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī. This was just one year after the publication of their anthology entitled Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā.

Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī contains 12 stories, written by 12 different Indo-Mauritian authors. Some of the writers - Ramdev Dhurandar, Krishna Lalbiharri, Pujanand Nema, Mahesh Ramjiavon, Narainpat Dussoy, Sonalal Nemdhari and Abhimanyu Unnuth were already known from their writings but the others - Mohunlal Dayal, Pushpa Bamma, Hemraz Sundar, Astanand Sadasingh and Bhanumati Nagdan were newcomers on the literary scene. The main themes in the majority of these 12 stories consist mostly of events taken by the writers from the life around them and the problems of contemporary society; and these events and problems have been portrayed with a candour and sincerity hitherto

unfamiliar in Mauritian KhB. prose fiction.

These 12 stories of Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī have an uneven literary quality. Dr.K.Hazaresingh, the former director of the M.G.I. has stated in its preface that the narratives in this collection reflect the history of the Mauritian KhB. short story: while some of them come from story-writers 'just past the stage of infancy, others are evidence of a mature literary excellence'. In fact, these stories may be roughly classified in three categories. Four of them - Ovarṭāim by K.Lalbihari concerning the exploitation of manual workers, Syāhī by M.Dayal throwing light on the corruption of officers responsible for public appointments, Dhuvē kī uṭhṭī lakīr by H.Sundar illustrating the difficulties encountered by Hindi writers in the circulation of their works, and Tūfān ke bād by M.Ramjiavon about cyclonic weather and its aftermath in Mauritius - do not possess much literary merit. They all have the usual length of the short story genre and are written in good standard Hindi, but they do not display the essential qualities that make a short story successful: their plots in general are vague, the narrative is nebulous in places, the stories tend to lumber along, and most of the characters are shadowy and do not impinge on the reader. Lalbihari's Overtāim falls much below the good story (Hāth pāv bhī bik gaye) he produced three years before in Surbhit udyān. M.Ramjiavon has made a commendable contribution in Mārīśas kī Hindī kavītā but his Tūfān ke bād in Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī hardly contains any story and reads more like an essay.

The second category comprises stories which proved popular and can be described as successful. Ādherī suraṅg mē by R.Dhurandar and Cūśan fīs by N.Dussoy are stories which centre around the plight and the low prestige of Hindi in Mauritius. Nayā safar sahne kā by P.Nema and A.K. sīs-sā (A.K. 600) by Miss P.Bamma depict the exploitation and dehumanization of Road Transport and knitwear factory workers respectively. Antim mināṭ by A.Sadasingh concentrates on the feelings of human beings faced with the last few moments of life, and Pascātāp portrays the remorse and fears of a bride pregnant from a pre-marital relationship. The plots of these stories are well-defined, the interest

is sustained throughout, the descriptions are vivid and the characters make a lasting impression. Among such characters are: the Hindi teacher in Ādherī suraṅg mē, who was deeply pained at the humiliating remarks he often heard being made about Hindi and the teaching of Hindi ('he had become a spectacle [tamāśa] in his own society'); Hariā, the bus-driver and Dube the bus-conductor in Nayā safar sahne kā, who walked three or four miles after their work to arrive home between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. every night, and Śubo the adolescent girl who laboured hard in the knitwear factory and sometimes dreamed of a future happy married life.

There is a good deal of sensitive and authentic writing in the stories of this category. AK. sīs-sā by P.Bumma who as shown above was a new-comer on the scene may be quoted as an example. 'A.K. 600' was in this story the identity of Śubo the Floreal knitwear factory employee (all the girls employed in the factory were identified by numbers attached to them, not by their names). Her parents eventually decided to arrange her marriage and the prospective bridegroom's parents were invited to see her. For the previous four years of her life, Śubo had been, as it were, part of the production equipment of the factory, but the day came when the real Śubo was resuscitated, and 'that was the day when those people came to see her with the hope of making her the bride of their son. She had had a bath in water boiled with tulsī leaves. ... For the first time [in her life] she had bought a hair-shampoo, ... Her long black hair began to shine. Normally, she dresses her hair once every day, and she plaits it without undoing the tangles. How on earth can she find time daily for so much attention!

She appeared before the visitors well adorned and dressed in a [full-length] pink sari measuring five feet and three inches.

A great deal was spoken that day. Śubo does not remember everything that was said, but the boy's father did ask:

"The girl stays at home, doesn't she?"

"No brother, she works in the factory. She is more than an eldest son to me", replied Śubo's father.

At that moment, Śubo experienced a feeling of shyness, pain and pride - shyness at what her father said, pain upon her fate, and a false pride in she knew not what.

"Does the girl work in the factory? Good God", gasped the boy's mother in amazement. She was going to add something more, but upon the husband beckoning to her, she composed herself....'

After they had left, Śubo knew that the proposed marriage arrangement was going to fall through, 'but unsteady youthfulness would not permit her to accept it; she had already begun to adorn the temple of her heart with the dream of a bright future, and she nourished that dream for a week until the negotiator turned up (with a negative reply).
.....

The writer concludes with the reflection that 'the life of Śubo contributes to the flow of history. With industrial imports and exports, Government earnings will increase. The papers will publish: Mauritius is progressing. But will any mention be ever made of progress in the lives of girls like Śubo?'

The writer succeeds in eliciting the reader's sympathy for Śubo, and all along in this story we share emotionally in the happiness and trial of her life.

The language of the above story like that of the others in Māriśas kī Hindī kahanī is good modern standard Hindi. Bamma's style is fluent, lively, approaching nearly the flavour of the colloquial. The use of Bhojpuri in the dialogue between Śubo and her colleague Rehana in the factory enhances the realistic atmosphere of the narrative.

The third category embraces the remaining two stories: Anubandhan by Mrs. B.Nagdan and Zahar aur davā by A.Unnuth. Both these stories possess considerable literary merit: they are magnificent pieces of talented writing and make a most powerful impact. In both cases, the story is beautifully told and extraordinarily well-constructed. The reader is not merely a passive spectator of the incidents described therein but a vicarious participator in them.

As these two stories mark the high point in the Mauritian Hindi short story, it will be appropriate to examine them in detail. All through, B.Nagdan's story remains authentic, sensitive and realistic. In Anubandhan, Vilās, a young woman who becomes the wife of Avnīś through an arranged marriage narrates the story of her life. Before her marriage, she had secretly loved Svapnil who subsequently left Mauritius and settled in England. Right from the beginning, B.Nagdan keeps her reader in suspense and plays on his curiosity. What strikes the reader first and foremost is the high sensitivity of Vilās, her great capacity of love controlled all through, however, by her high sense of morality and righteousness. The writer manifests a profound knowledge of female psychology while, in the course of the story, she makes a subtle approach to the deeper levels of the soul of a woman in love. In pathetic terms, Vilās relates the anguish of her wedlock:

'I was not in love with Avnīś..... At the outset, even his touch was unpleasant. I was restless in his arms. True, sometimes imagining Svapnil's presence, I would make love to him, but then, I know not how he would come to understand it, and letting go hold of me with a jerk, he would say: "Vilās, your body is surely in my arms, but I know your mind is somewhere else". He would then walk to the balcony, whilst I would cry, quiet and helpless. How could I explain to him that the heart has a world of its own. The sacred fire of the wedding ceremony, the reciting of mantras and meaningless rituals cannot change it.....'

One afternoon, on his return from the office, Avnīś informed Vilās that Svapnil, just back from England, had paid him a visit. The day after Svapnil's visit to Avnīś, while the latter and his two children were away, the door-bell rang, and there was the same Svapnil Vilās had last seen 14 years before.

"A thrill went through me", continues Vilās. "I stood speechless for a moment".

"Do you recognize me?" he asked smiling.

"Can anyone forget oneself?" I was about to ask, but my heart was beating so fast that, unable to speak, I just joined my hands. Svapnil held my hands in his, and just like that walked with me inside. That was the first time he had touched me. How different was that touch from that of Avnīś and how intoxicating!

The final meeting between Svapnil and Vilās takes place on the beach, (Avnīś was away attending an important meeting), where he informed her he was returning to England. Svapnil courageously asked her whether she loved him. After a moment of silence, she gave vent to her feelings, but before doing so, she explains in the narrative the state of her mind:

'Keeping quiet, I stared at the waves. With full force, they rolled on to the shore, crashed and were forced to trace their way back. My situation was somewhat similar. All my life, I had been crying and pining for the coming of a particular moment; I had been thirsting until that day to hear the utterance of certain words and now, upon hearing them, should I retreat?'

Like A.Unnuth, B.Nagdan has here used Nature not as an opportunity for conventional descriptions, but as a means of portraying human mood. For a moment, Vilās felt like beginning a new life with Svapnil, but she struggled with herself and conquered this feeling. It was the triumph of moral propriety over emotion. The writer makes full use of this incident to reveal deeper levels of her protagonist's character. Anubandhan may be a 'moral' story but its morality emerges from inner conflict and character and not from the explicit didacticism of the author.³⁷

In Zahar aur davā, Unnuth also makes his point in a final denouement, but it is subtly expressed and is more psychological than moral. The story concerns a well-to-do middle-aged man who had a young mistress with whom he was infatuated, although everyone but he knew she shared her favours with others. He was the father of a twenty year old son and a daughter. The daughter had left on holiday, and his wife was ill in hospital.

Sophia the attractive mistress arrived in the father's absence and

was met by the son. The main part of the narrative is concerned with the mental, emotional and sexual reactions of these two who are thus brought together. In titillating detail, the movements and reactions of the couple are portrayed with considerable realism. The son is the narrator and the story concludes with the entry of the father when he, the son, has Sophia in his arms. The sight was a considerable shock to the father, but in the son's view it was a realization that he should have made long before, and was both a poison and a cure.

The story is extremely well-written with considerable descriptive power. As with Anubandhan, the greater part of the story is a soliloquy, but they both have a colloquial flavour. Unnuth, unlike Nagdan, makes use occasionally of a more Urdu vocabulary (kaśiś, nihāyat, hasīn etc.) but this enhances rather than impairs the effectiveness of Unnuth's narrative.

As previously stated, the language of the stories contained in Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī is, in general, good modern standard Hindi but what distinguishes it from any previous narrative prose is that it bears the stamp of a Mauritian idiom in a manner no previous work had done. Apart from a little Bhojpuri dialogue which includes a few Creole words, the contributors to this collection have frequently incorporated in a spontaneous manner terms and phrases commonly used in Mauritian Bhojpuri.³⁸ Furthermore, they have coined a few words, verbs in particular, from Mauritian Bhojpuri adjectives (e.g. ākhaī ke kor kuch jādā hī kariyā gaye, "the corners of the eyes have turned blacker). The relatively frequent incorporation of this Bhojpuri diction including Bhojpuri neologisms mark Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī as well as Unnuth's novel Lāl Pasinā published the same year (1976) as works which have revolutionized Mauritian literary KhB. and, in some measure, made it distinctly Mauritian (a few Indo-Mauritian writers tend to follow the same pattern). Yet its affinity with the KhB. of India is close enough for Mauritian KhB. literature to be accepted and digested, as it were, as an integral part of an international whole.

The year in which the M.G.I. published Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī also

saw the publication of A. Unnuth's 13 story-collection entitled Khāmosī ke cītkār (Delhi, 1976), which is without question the best collection of Hindi short stories to be published to date. It incorporates Zahar aur davā which the writer contributed to the publication of the M.G.I. Like Mārīśas kī Hindī kahānī, Khāmosī ke cītkār found a reading public, although modest, both in India and in Mauritius. The stories predominantly touch on social and political themes which in this collection include the profligacy of spiritual leaders (Hindu priests), the extravagance and hollowness often encountered in middle-class people, and alleged Government maladministration resulting in the deterioration of standard of living. A few stories treat psychological and universal situations with a skill which reveals a deep understanding of human nature. There is a satirical vein, too, in some of these stories, in places mild, in places bitter.

Some of the stories in Khāmosī ke cītkār are very well structured and end with a denouement which is both effective and satisfying. Māthe kā ṭīkā exemplifies this category. Sudān, Manīn and Manhar, three unemployed youths went to steal tomatoes in the middle of the night from the field of Sumiā, a courtesan of the village. The door of Sumiā's house opened and in the dim light, they saw a man who looked like someone they knew coming out. The three crouched on the ground, but in the dark, this man, as he was hurrying away, hurtled against Sudān and fell head foremost against a low stone-wall and injured himself. The next morning, as agreed, Sudān called on a neighbour Śīlā to help with the building of an altar for a religious ceremony. He asked the priest where it should be located whereupon the priest who was looking down busy collecting together the various articles necessary for the puja raised his head and, to his utter amazement, Sudan saw that in place of the sandal head-mark (ṭīkā), the forehead of the priest bore two white pieces of elastoplast. The man who was living a superficially respectable life by day was leading a lecherous life by night.

In a few other stories of this collection, the emphasis is not so much on the story and plot, but primarily on the portrayal of the social

and political circumstances of the country, as viewed by the author. This divergence of attention and emphasis may detract from the coherence and the momentum of the narrative. Rāt kī pārṭī ke bād (p.140), for example, is principally a vivid canvas of the life of certain middle-class families - their extravagance, hollowness, superficiality and moral impropriety. Kolāhal (p.150) graphically represents the political situation in a bitter satirical vein: the aftermath of Independence and Government maladministration including the escalating cost of living, rising unemployment and general inefficiency and artificiality in Government circles. These stories may be interesting for their social and political comment, but they are less than satisfactory as representatives of the genre, lacking an adequate structure.

The few stories bearing a psychological import are among the best of the collection. Two good examples, apart from Zahar aur davā are: Khāmośī ke citkār (p.20) which bears the title of the collection and Nayī talās (p.57). In the former, actress Chāyā is unhappily married to Rākeś, a medical doctor. She is in love with Cānd, a producer at the theatre where she works. She has discovered that the root cause of all her misery is her 'fear'. Smarting with pain, she gives vent to her feelings: 'Cānd! to this day, I have been a victim of fear; I have been afraid of society, of my relations, of this and of that; I have been afraid all the time even of my own shadow... But now I am determined not to be scared of anything. It is fear which is the greatest obstacle on the path of human life, especially for the female sex. It is fear which has deprived me of everything - of every kind of authority, of every desire (fulfilment of) and of every happiness... Rākeś is a very good doctor and a very good man, but if God has not made him a 'whole' (sampūrṇ) man, why should I blame my fate for it?'

In spite of her new resolve, Chāyā remains silent and depressed, but the moment Cānd declares his love for her, she is transformed and becomes a new woman, a new actress.

Nayī talās tells the story of a hotel-waiter Emile, who feels miserably suppressed and stifled by the artificialities and the atmosphere

of bondage prevailing in his place of work. One day feeling overwhelmed by these pressures, he breaks out of the hotel, as if from a prison, and runs away as fast as he can. He runs on and on towards a new horizon in an attempt to lose his former self and to discover himself anew.

Several stories in this collection display poetic touches which reveal the poet and the painter in Unnuth. To illustrate this, two brief examples can be quoted from Vāpasī sūraj kī: (i) 'memories, whether they are of happiness or sorrow, whenever they come, they bring pain together' (p.43); (ii) 'In the middle of the ocean, beyond the reefs, a boat with a white sail moved along, cleaving the evening twilight, and proceeding towards an unknown destination. The sea-birds flew along together' (p.45). It is significant, however, that these descriptions wherever they occur in the stories are never just superficially imposed but perfectly integrated with the narrative. They are good examples of the descriptive and the narrative being welded together to achieve an organic unity. As in Zahar aur davā, the language of all the other stories is standard modern Hindi at its best. Unnuth's Hindi continues to be intermixed with a Perso-Arabic vocabulary, and his dialogue occasionally draws from the French, Creole and Bhojpuri idiom.

Almost simultaneously with Khamośī ke cītkār, Unnuth published Insān aur maśīn (Delhi, 1976), a collection of 44 anecdotes, reminiscent, in some degree, of the stories of M.Chintamunnee which had appeared in the Congress about 10 years previously. It was the first publication of its kind in Mauritian KhB., nor has there been anything similar published since. Nearly half of these anecdotes are thematically political. With caustic and humourous satire, irony and sarcasm, most of these stories depict the untruth, corruption, abuse of power, superciliousness and deceit, as seen by the author in the mid 1970's in many of the Mauritian ministers of State and their senior officers. In fact, in the seventies, especially in the second part of the decade, a political situation was establishing itself in Mauritius which could in several ways become an easy target of biting satirical writings. Two of Unnuth's anecdotes within this category can be briefly quoted here to express his views regarding these matters. In Vidur kī sāg (pp.79-80), Duryodhan accepts an invitation to the place

of Vidur, a poor and ordinary person. Just when he is preparing to go to Vidur's place, Karn arrives and reminds him that he has, since the previous week, already accepted an invitation to his place for the same day. Thereupon, Duryodhan explains to him that at the present time (just before the general elections) it is politically important that he should give the general impression in the country that his first care goes to the poor and ordinary people, although, after being elected, he can fool them for a long time. In Pramān patra (pp.37-39), an unemployed person enters the office of an Employment Exchange Manager with a live hare in a closed basket. He has learnt that a hare given as a gift to the manager is more effective than an academic certificate in securing a job. At first the manager tells him off, but he smiles a little on finding that the basket contains a live hare brought for him.

'Let me see the hare', he says. He then authoritatively takes the basket from the person's hands and peeps inside, when the hare suddenly slips out, jumps over the window and leaps outside.

'You get out of here', shouts the manager.

'What about my employment, sir?'

'Your hare has run away.'

A few of the anecdotes bear on social problems, and they have been treated with the same incisive satirical humour and irony. Examples of these are Ḍhang kā capṛā (pp.15-16; this satirises the insistence on the use of the neck-tie on formal occasions) and Apnā raṅg (pp.26-27). In the latter, a boy called Śām very dark of complexion, lived in Gokul and, together with Kṛṣṇ, he was one of the shepherd boys tending the same herds of cattle. Kṛṣṇ loved him much, but whenever he played his flute, Śām would move away from him as if in disapproval. One day, the boys divided themselves in two teams in order to play a game. Śām and Kṛṣṇ happened to be placed in the same team. At once, Śām walked over disdainfully to the other team. When he was asked the reason for doing so, he answered angrily: 'Kṛṣṇ is dark. I do not like his colour. All the boys were very surprised at this reply, but Kṛṣṇ laughed heartily;

later, he said to Balrām: 'There are many people in this world who cannot see their own colour'. The writer's ironical amusement is apparent here: he is obviously mocking those Mauritians who are obsessed with a false sense of dignity and are trying to climb socially by disowning their own.

A third category can be described as referring to economic problems. Mutthī mē band ujālā (pp.9-10) which is evocative of the author's poem Anphūlā kākṭas, Mazbūr tūsī huī īkh (pp.57-58), Dūdh (pp.63-64), Maśīn kī mṛtyu (pp.81-82), Raṅg (pp.99-100), belong to this category. They portray principally the rapacity and tyranny of employers and the ruthless exploitation of ordinary workers. Two or three of these anecdotes including Maśīn kī mṛtyu, have a historical or quasi-historical theme. Like the author's novel Lāl Pasīnā, they depict the ceaseless labour of the Indian agricultural workers and their great sufferings. Maśīn kī mṛtu, for instance, conveys through a very brief sketch a remarkably vivid and brilliant picture of the pathetic conditions of the agricultural workers: Sonālāl, together with others was harvesting sugar-cane under a scorching sun. He was sweating profusely (the doctor had warned him that he needed treatment for anaemia). Thoughts of his wife came to him - she had been admitted to hospital only the day before; memories of his child that died three months previously haunted him. Completely exhausted, Sonālāl collapsed on a pile of harvested canes and died. The harvest had been particularly good that year, but the increased prosperity of the employers never meant any change in the condition of the workers. 'Why should a lush verdure still mean a drought for us?' was a question raised in a baiṭhkā meeting some two days before Sonālāl died.

There are among the anecdotes three which are drawn from the episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. They are Dhṛtarāṣṭra aur Śakuni ke bīc, Eklavya, and Udghāṭan (the proposed inauguration of a legendary bridge from Kanyā kumārī to Laṅkā).

The remaining stories in Insān aur maśīn do not form a single homogeneous group and cannot be classified. They are just interesting fictional narratives telling a story for its own sake. Examples of this category are: Aur jab battī jalī (p.21) and Faislā (p.61).

The majority of the anecdotes are instructive in character, but Unnuth is never explicitly didactic, and the messages they convey are implicit. In fact, different readers might derive different messages, especially from such anecdotes as Karvāhaṭ bīyar kī (p.67) and Cārā (p.69) in which the message is so indirect as to be almost obscure.

These 44 stories contained in Insān aur maśīn have been written, like other stories of Unnuth, in a flawless modern standard Hindi. Befitting anecdotes, the language and style of this collection is particularly concise, taut and crisp, and its quality has been enhanced by occasional poetic touches and the use in places of a Perso-Arabic vocabulary. (At Appendix XXII is a copy of one of the anecdotes entitled Apne log.) More than anywhere else in his writings, Unnuth has made use of English words and phrases, such as are sometimes found in modern Indian Hindi (e.g. yū geṭ āuṭ fram hīya p.39; pojiśan p.73; authoriṭeṭiv ṭon p.88). He has in this collection drawn from French and Bhojpuri idiom too, although very sparingly.

Before the eighth decade of the century drew to its close, the Hindi short story was fairly well established as a genre in Mauritius. Several factors have assisted in consolidating its position, but the most significant event has been the foundation in March 1978 of the Vasant, the monthly Hindi literary magazine of the M.G.I. which, under the editorship of A.Unnuth, has provided a ready medium for the publication of creative writings and supplied a want long felt in the island. Short stories by several Indo-Mauritian writers were also contributed through the 1970's to well-known newspapers in India.³⁹

The Hindi novel

The history of the Hindi novel in Mauritius dates from the 1960's. The first attempt in this genre was made by K.Lalbihari who in 1960 wrote a 20 page novelette entitled Pahlā kadam which he designated a laghu upanyās. It is the story of two youthful persons passionately in love but unable to get married for social reasons. The hero of the story, utterly dejected, retires into seclusion, and ruminates over his misfortune and the defeat of his first step (pahlā kadam) in life. It is a theme which displays the influence of the Indian film. By the time Lalbihari was writing Pahlā kadam, the Hindi novel of India was already popular in Mauritius. It is unfortunate that Pahlā kadam (published in Mauritius), which constituted a first step in the field of the Mauritian Hindi novel, is now unobtainable.⁴⁰

Before proceeding with the history of the Hindi novel in Mauritius, it would be appropriate to assess briefly the influence of Indian novelists over the Hindi reading public and the potential Hindi writers of Mauritius. Premchand's short stories and novels remained the most popular and most widely read among Indo-Mauritians. Godān and his other novels became fairly well known among Hindi circles. Premchand apart, Devki Nandan Khatrī (Candrakāntā and Candrakāntā santati) enjoyed some vogue with readers of Hindi. Among the other Hindi writers who enjoyed a measure of popularity amongst a modest circle of Mauritian readers were Jainendra Kumār (Sunītā, Tyāgpatra, Kalyāṇī), Upendranāth Aśk (the Cetan novels - Girtī divārē and Šahar mē ghūmtā āinā), Catursen Śāstrī (Hṛday kī pyās), Dharmavīr Bhāratī (Gunāhō kā devatā and Sūraj kā sātvā ghorā), Nareś Mehtā (Yah path bandhu thā), Nirmal Varmā (Ve din) and Yaśpāl (Dādā kāmreḍ), etc.

While Hindi poetry and the short story have flourished in recent years, Mauritius can boast only two Hindi novelists whose works have attained a standard of excellence. They are Abhimanyu Unnuth (eleven novels up to 1980) and Dipchand Beeharry (one novel). Another promising Indo-Mauritian Hindi novelist is Ramdev Dhurandar, Assistant editor of

Vasant at the M.G.I., parts of whose novel Sahme hue sac were serialised in Vasant in 1981. In 1975, Vishnudat Madhu, who already had a few Hindi poems to his credit, published in Mauritius Phaṭ gayī dhartī, a one-hundred page novel which did not much impress its modest circle of readers. It was the story of two lovers who got married despite strong parental objections; the heroine experienced much unhappiness especially when she discovered that her father-in-law was engaged in a 'black-market' business. It is very much 'like a cheap film story and the language is ungrammatical and inelegant'.⁴¹

The history of the Hindi novel in Mauritius, is, therefore, primarily the history of the works of A. Unnuth in this domain of literature. His novels can be roughly classified in five categories. Six of them are social novels: Cauthā prāṇī (written in 1967, serialised in Ājkal [1969-1970] and first published in 1974); Aur nadī bahtī rahī (1970); Ek bīghā pyār (1972); Jam gayā sūraj (1973); Taptī dopaharī (1977) and Śephālī (1979). Tīsre kināre par (1976) is a social romance. Lāl Pasīnā is historical. Āndolan has a political import. Finally, Kuhāse kā dayrā (1978) and Hartāl kal hogī (1979) are socio-political (in 1981, Unnuth wrote another socio-political novel, Cun cun cunāv). By the time Unnuth wrote his first novel in 1967, he was already the author of several short stories and more than two dozen dramas. Some of the latter had been presented on the Mauritian radio and television and staged amidst well-attended gatherings. Cauthā prāṇī was the first proper Hindi novel to be written by an Indo-Mauritian, and it is reported to have been well received in India, firstly by the readers of Ājkal and latterly more generally when subsequently published in book form. In the course of the 1970's, Unnuth rose rapidly to prominence as a novelist, not only in Mauritius but among the literary circles of the Indian sub-continent. All his novels do not of course attain the same degree of excellence, but all of them have been considered good enough to obtain publication from reputable publishers in India.

Since the novels of Unnuth constitute by far the largest corpus of Mauritian Hindi literature, it will not be possible to treat them in any detail. It is proposed, therefore, to discuss the novels and

Unnuth's craft in general terms, and then to examine his best known novel, Lāl pasīnā, in greater detail.

The geographical setting of Unnuth's novels comprises the humble rural areas of Mauritius - sugar-estate dwellings, villages and remote hamlets peopled by unsophisticated agricultural workers, fishermen, farmers, school-teachers, etc.⁴² For example, in Cauthā prāñī, Mādhav the young farmer leaves his village to go and study in Israel, but on completion of his studies, he returns home and continues as before to cherish the values of rural life. In a conversation with Vīñā, the girl he loves, Mādhav says (some time before he leaves for Israel):

'.....I attach importance neither to the wealth [of my parents] nor to the education [I have received]. With my academic qualifications, I could obtain a job in the Government, but to me the real joy of life is to be found amidst these verdant surroundings of Nature. I feel it is in the warm lap of the earth that lies the real significance of life' (Cauthā prāñī, p.76). The story of Ek bīghā pyār unrolls its events entirely in the country-side except for a brief glimpse of the town when Som is tried in court for beating up the rich man Jogiā suspected of maliciously setting fire to his vegetable plantation which was ready for harvest. In Kuhāse kā dayrā, the setting shifts from the village to the town only occasionally when Sīdhū, the state minister's agent travels from his village home to visit the minister in the urban area where he, Sīdhū, is eventually assassinated. In Śephālī, a substantial part of the story takes place on the beach and amidst rural surroundings. Similarly, Aur nadī bahtī rahī, Jam gayā sūraj, Tīsre kināre par, Lāl pasīnā, as well as almost all of the other novels are set in estate dwellings, hamlets and villages. With regard to the period of time, Lāl pasīnā, the only historical novel, is set in the immigration period of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th, whereas the other novels are all set in more modern times.

All of Unnuth's novels portray, amongst other themes, the

unceasing labour and sufferings, integrity and righteousness of the agricultural workers and their considerable contribution towards the prosperity of Mauritius. The author emphasizes in almost all his works the fact that improvements in Mauritian agricultural productions do not bring about better living standards among the workers. In Cauthā prāṇī, when Vīnā remarks to her father, Siparsād, that labourers in spite of their very hard work do not make any appreciable progress in life, the latter replies: 'Man does not attain greatness only by earning material wealth, dear daughter! Labourers who irrigate the field with their sweat are great in their own right' (p.48). The novels of Unnuth have enhanced, as have several works of Premcand and other writers, the image of the peasantry. In fact, Unnuth who is country-born and bred is a writer who draws his inspiration primarily from the life of the rural working class. As he himself pointed out in the course of a conversation with the writer of this thesis, his works vivify the country-side and the peasantry, and he is not a bourgeois writer.⁴³

Social criticism is a significant component in the social novels of Unnuth. They depict social conditions among rural inhabitants, especially agricultural workers, but the author rarely touches on the society that exists beyond these rural confines, and wherever he has done so the resulting picture is only faint. These social novels (e.g. Aur nadī bahtī rahī and Ek bīghā pyār), however, are highly imbued with love. It is a love which assumes two forms: the profound love and loyalty binding man and woman, and the love relationship existing between peasants and the small plots of land they cultivate. Notwithstanding the love and contentment in the homes of the peasants, theirs is a life of bitter struggle often evocative of the poignant circumstances surrounding Horī's life in Premcand's Godān. In fact, the village or hamlet which Unnuth realistically creates resembles to some extent the home of Premcand's characters.

The social and socio-political novels raise as part of the main story, however, a number of grievances and problems that are

characteristically Mauritian. The drawbacks resulting from tourism, for instance, are strongly emphasized (nearly a whole chapter is devoted to this topic in Kuhāse kā dayrā, pp.27-31) - long stretches of the beaches have been monopolised, prostitution has grown apace, the best meat and fish are collected for the hotels to feed the tourists, and various other amenities which were formerly available to Mauritians are now denied them. Mauritius enjoys far more public holidays than many other parts of the world (most of the religious festivals have been designated public holidays) and the author criticises this system as uncivic and unpatriotic. Many Mauritians especially the poor workers are addicted to strong alcoholic drinks, including the local rum, and the author has severely condemned the intemperate use of alcohol, calling it the enemy of mankind. He is satirically critical of the caste system and the semi-literate orthodox Hindu priests who support it for their own selfish ends. In most of the novels, he chastises the arrogance, greed and licentiousness of the middle-class who are constantly exploiting the poor and hard-working agricultural workers. He has not spared the Police: while they are strict with petty offenders, they dare not prosecute the influential of the locality who often seriously contravene the law. Among other social comments in his novels is the author's strong conviction regarding the teaching and progress of Hindi in Mauritius. He has strongly stressed the fact that 'if adequate fees had been charged for Hindi tuition, then Hindi would have advanced further than it has done so far [in Mauritius]' (Kuhāse kā dayrā, p.32).

In the political and socio-political novels (four out of twelve), Unnuth has deprecated the evils, as they seemed to him, resulting from the politics of the day. These are principally: nepotism and opportunism which are responsible for much of the dissatisfaction and acrimony among the people; the political exploitation of the caste system among Hindus and the resulting disunity among Indo-Mauritians; the inefficiency and self-centredness of the personalities at the helm of Government, as a consequence of which the rich grow richer and the poor poorer; and the general insecurity in the country which has engendered a sense of rivalry, restlessness and fear. These political comments have been made very strongly in Kuhāse kā dayrā (pp.48-49) where Rūplāl Bhagat, an elderly,

honest and generous person conversing with Dhaneś, a school-teacher, ingenuously rounds off his conversation by saying (in Bhojpuri) 'has God too joined this lot [the Government of the day] against us?' A similar tone underlies the other three novels - Āndolan, Hartāl kal hogī and Cun cun cunāv (1981). The political comments of Unnuth, however well-intentioned and sincere they may be, tend to be in places exaggerated and over-emphasized.

A. Unnuth is a story-teller of remarkable talent. From the beginning to the end, the majority of his stories are enjoyable, fresh and interesting. The winding up of almost every chapter is an invitation to read on to the next. The reader is not merely a passive spectator of the events but participates emotionally in them. There is a great deal of the unexpected in his story: the author is arousing curiosity all the time. At any stage where the reader's suspense is likely to weaken, he invokes it anew. This can be illustrated by an example from Cauthā prāṇī: a stage is reached, well before the end of the story, when the reader feels that the struggle is nearly over and that the hero Mādhav is going to fulfil his wish of marrying Vīṇā the heroine. But the author counteracts this expectation by interposing an incident which renders the reader as curious as before. Vīṇā's mother Śārandhā, on her death-bed, exhorts her not to harbour the hope of marrying Mādhav, as Candansīṃh, Kṣatriya by caste, would never agree to his son marrying the daughter of a Mahtō, the agricultural caste.

Unnuth can be described as a realistic writer. His novels display fidelity of representation, truth to nature and insistence upon details. In the course of his narration, the author resorts to a few poetic touches and very brief descriptions of natural landscapes. Unnuth the poet and the artist speaks through the novels from time to time. He is a painter too, and has held several exhibitions of his paintings. The description of natural scenery, in the course of the story is, however, rarely for its own sake; he has recourse to it to portray a human mood or to conjure up an atmosphere. The following is an example from Ek bīghā pyār (p.105): 'Flamboyant flowers on either side of the road were due to appear not before two and a half to three months' time. Then

the road would be bordered by a red velvety carpet, as it were, and, for tourists, it would become a road leading to paradise. But to the two brothers, this road was already the way to paradise. What Som felt exactly we do not know, but to Hīrā it was indeed the way to heaven. His plantation itself was the region of supreme bliss.' We may further illustrate the same point with another quotation from Kuhāse kā dayrā (p.80): 'Walking along the road bordered with flamboyant trees, Dhaneś was absorbed in the contemplation of the blood-red flamboyant flowers. These were blossoms which boosted the morale of human beings. Pervading the whole island from one end to the other, they not only welcomed the advent of the new year but their gorgeous colours induced the hard-working to become ready for harder work still...'

Unnuth's novels incorporate magnificent pieces of descriptive, realistic and authentic writing which considerably enhance their value. One example is the following from Śephālī (pp.68-69):

'The beach at Blue-bay. Being a week-day, the place was pleasantly quiet; we were the only two persons on that spacious beach. We had our bathing costumes on. A cool breeze was blowing; it made us shiver, and with the tickling it produced, Śephālī was running about like a crazy person, throwing around handfuls of sand. Taking sand with both her hands, she smeared my body with it, and when I picked up sand and ran after her, she took to her heels. She kept running until she was breathless. As I stumbled, she stumbled too and fell on top of me. Resting her head on my chest, she kept panting for several minutes.

She was a better swimmer than I was. When I asked her who taught her to swim, she said it was the cyclone. "You've never been the victim of a cyclone, and so you've never needed to become a good swimmer", she said.

She smiled and, cutting across the waves, she swam in the water. Sitting on the sand, I watched her as she went tearing through the water. When she had swum a long way out, she called to me: "Aśit, come here".

She kept calling to me as she went on swimming against the waves,

and at last when I saw that she had gone much further than I could reach, I stepped out of the sand and jumped into the water. Struggle as I would with my arms and legs, I could not cover the gap between the two of us. Acknowledging defeat, I said to her:

"Śephālī, come back."

"Come and take me back."

"You've gone too far and I cannot come there."

"You can, just try. Do not be scared. You won't drown. I am here stopping the waves."

"I am not afraid of drowning."

Bracing all my remaining strength, I carried on towards her. Fighting against the waves, I went on and on. Amidst the groaning and hissing waves, a sound reached my ears:

"Aśit, je t'aime."

That very night, Śephālī tickling my ears with her breath said to me:

"You are the first person to have heard me say this."

"What?"

"I love you."

As we read through Unnuth's novels, lively narrations like the one above, free from stereotyped use of language strengthen our impression of authenticity and enhance the value of the story.

The not infrequent creation of psychological situations, a few of them intense, in the course of the narrative is not the least of the factors which heighten the effect of Unnuth's story. Such situations integrated into the story bring about moments of extraordinary beauty. The following is an example (Ek bīghā pyār, p.84): Karuṇā marvelling at the courage of Hīrā the cripple who is among the best agricultural labourers of the village expresses her thoughts in a soliloquy reported to the reader as follows: 'Pondering over this matter [Hīrā's field-work] it dawned on her that working [in the field] by the side of this

courageous man would be indeed a joy. She thought that if she could ever have such an opportunity in her life, she would surely avail herself of it. That would be the happiest moment of her life. She kept indulging in this kind of thinking, although people around her still looked on her as an artless and half-witted girl'. Similar psychological situations were less frequent in Unnuth's earlier novels.

An element of surprise and mystery is another feature which characterises the plot of most of Unnuth's novels. This is supplied, amongst other factors, by a few of the very brief portrayals of Nature, the numerous unexpected turns of the story and the concealed emotion in certain characters. Instances of concealed emotion creating mystery are illustrated by the behaviour of such characters as Karuṇā in Ek bīghā pyār and Kṛṣṇāvatī in Aur nadī bahtī rahī. The atmosphere of surprise and mystery, wherever it occurs, suspends for a brief moment the time sequence and creates a beauty over which the reader cannot help brooding even while he moves ahead with the continuing action of the plot.

Unnuth takes an ethical position in the majority of his novels. He is, however, never explicitly didactic or over-instructive; the message is never forced on the reader but implied, and it is up to the reader to interpret not only what has been said but also what has been left unsaid. In the course of a conversation the writer of this thesis had with him, he said: 'I have displayed all the parts of the game, but, as in a jigsaw puzzle, I want to give everyone the opportunity of fitting them together by himself'. He added: 'I have given a full-cream milk to my readers, and they are free to use it for any products in the manner they deem appropriate'. Keśav Gopāl Niḡam, Chief Editor of Ājkal, observing the reaction of readers when Cauthā prāṇī was serialised in his paper (1969-1970) said that the novel had moved many a reader to tears. Unnuth remarked that such was not his intention, and it appeared to him that many of the readers had missed the message he wishes to convey through this novel, that is, the example set by Vīṇā, the teenage agricultural worker who, in the face of adverse

circumstances, struggles unflinchingly on, caters to the needs of the family, and eventually fulfils her dearest wish of marrying her beloved Mādhav. In fact, every one of the novels has an instructive message implied in the story, although the author never puts it to the fore. Another example of such a message is in Ek bīghā pyār in which the main protagonist Hīrā is a cripple and an asthmatic. He is, however, loving and considerate. Ignoring his physical infirmity, he proves to be one of the most efficient agricultural workers of his village. Tribulations befall him: his one acre of vegetable-plantation ready to be harvested is completely destroyed by arson; his brother Som is arrested by the police for beating up Jogiā suspected of the foul deed. Hīrā is sorrow-stricken but not conquered by adversity. Indomitable, he struggles on and eventually emerges happy and successful. A further example of this implicit didacticism can be quoted from Śephālī. Śephālī is one of those unfortunate women who are driven by hard circumstances to take to prostitution. It is a life which ultimately brings her grief and depression. Down and out, she attempts to commit suicide, but is foiled by her former boyfriend Aśit who discovers her whereabouts and has her rushed to hospital in a state of unconsciousness. After this narrow escape, she comes in contact with Dharm, a friend of Aśit who invites her to Mukti-path, a centre of prayer and meditation. The sermon and the devotional hymns (bhajans) at Mukti-path have a deep impact on her. Immersed in this spiritual atmosphere, she turns over a new leaf. One of the main themes of the meditation which becomes an integral part of Śephālī's new life is: 'Bestow your love on elements from which the moment of separation never comes, elements which are untouched by death.' (p.126).

The plots of Unnuth's novels are, in general, organized and well-structured with justifiable internal logic. They are closely knit and rarely leave loose ends. Almost every action in his plot counts; it is economical and spare. Generally speaking, it is a quick-moving plot, not slow, tortuous or convoluted. The writer's attention, moreover, is not monopolised by the sequence of events, and as the story progresses, he makes use of all possible opportunities to display motivation and develop character. Several of the novels have sub-plots, and these are interwoven with the main action in such a way that

they become integral parts of the work and form together an organic unity. One example of such a sub-plot is that which is constituted by the relationship between Dhaneś (the protagonist of the novel) and Nīrā and her parents in Kuhāse kā dayrā. Most of Unnuth's plots can sustain intelligent questionings and are, as a rule, convincing. In touch with what is great and noble in life, they express genuine values and stimulate thought.

Some of the situations Unnuth creates in his novels about the life of the ordinary country people, sometimes contrasted with the self-centred behaviour of the town-dwellers, are not infrequently idealistic, but never impractically idealistic, hollow or untrue. Gopal Ray, the Indian critic and author of Godān, adhyayan kī samasyāē, in a book review which appeared shortly after the publication of Ek bīghā pyār (1972), expressed appreciation of the practical idealism of Unnuth as displayed in Ek bīghā pyār, and criticised idealistic Hindi novels (ādarśvādī upanyās), in general, describing them as empty and untrue.⁴⁴

As a rule, Unnuth does not sacrifice the plot for the benefit of his story, characterization or any other component of the novel. All the same, one may point to a few inconsistencies in the plots of the novels. Examples of these are: in Cauthā prāṇī, on the death of Siparsād, the head of the household, the second daughter, Bindu, is taken by Dādā, an uncle of the late Siparsād, a well-to-do planter to live under his roof. The grand-father makes arrangements to continue her secondary education. The rest of the family, according to the story, however, live in dire poverty and, at one time, they are brought to the brink of starvation. This seeming indifference of Dādā to his nephew's family is an improbability in the plot. It is too much to ask the reader to believe that Dādā should have taken one of the daughters to live at his place and to continue her secondary education, while at the same time remaining utterly indifferent to the rest of the family. Similarly, in Ek bīghā pyār, Karuṇā, one of the main characters, is represented as a completely illiterate person. She cannot even sign her name. She affixes her cross in lieu of a signature when the postman delivers a telegram to her. Yet this

person holds (at pp.104, 105) a conversation which is profound and highly intelligent: this is inconsistent with her complete illiteracy. The level of conversation could have been acceptable to the reader even if she had obtained only a little Hindi education at her local baiṭhkā. But presented as it has been, this episode strains our willing suspension of disbelief beyond reasonable limits. Even Kuhāse kā dayrā (1978) which is among his latest novels is not entirely free from implausibilities. One of the main characters of this novel is Śānti who is in fact among the most convincing creations of Unnuth, but towards the end of the novel, the writer has idealised her too highly. She and Bhisam, the son of a planter had loved each other, but for social reasons their marriage did not take place, and Śānti's marriage was arranged instead with Śīdhū, a political agent. After the untimely death of the latter (Śīdhū is assassinated in a political embroilment), Bhisam again proposes to Śānti, but she turns him down. That this young widow should throw away her chances of marrying Bhisam, that she should at the same time encourage Dhaneś the school-teacher who she knew took a keen interest in her to wed Nīrā the girl whom Dhaneś loved but who had left him and gone overseas, sounds rather improbable and not very convincing. This is an example where the plot has been sacrificed for character portrayal and both have lost in the process.

Characterization is a strong feature in the novels of Unnuth. His handling and development of characters reveal a keen eye for detail, great sensitivity and a profound understanding of human nature. He is intimately familiar with rural life, and what he says about the majority of his characters emanates from experience, not from external study of their conditions. The majority of his novels display a fundamental concern with aspects of human personality and character. Very often the strong suspense which he builds successfully all through his stories is dependent not only on the sequence of events, but on situations created by motivation and character. In fact, many of the episodes in the stories are bound up with the depicting of character. There are also concise and effective direct character sketches like the following (Kuhāse kā dayrā, p.39):

'It is true that Dhaneś was in the habit of praising Rūplāl Bhagat now and then, but his praise was never empty adulation... He had frequently been told that Bhagat was the most compassionate person of the village, and there were also things which he had seen for himself all along. He had seen with his own eyes that Bhagat had defrayed all expenses for the weddings of two poor girls of the locality. He had had a baiṭhkā built on his own land which he then donated to the local society. The body of the husband of the old lady Koṇḍe might not have reached the churchyard if Bhagat had not sold his last two goats.' The writer also tells the reader in the course of the story that for all his compassion and religious bent (Bhagat often chanted the Rāmāyaṇ and the Alhā), Bhagat was addicted to ganjā smoking and that his personal hygiene sometimes left much to be desired.

In general, Unnuth develops his characters realistically, and allows them to assume the burden of the novel. His characters are not two-dimensional. Hīrā in Ek bīghā pyār is considerate and compassionate and although a cripple, he is among the best agricultural labourers of his village; but he adheres blindly to conventions and can hardly adapt himself to change. Som, his brother is no less kind-hearted and industrious, but he is impulsive, short-tempered and often aggressive. Dhaneś in Kuhāse kā dayrā is a virtuous character, but all the same shows at times signs of weakness: several days after a friend's death, he hardly recovers from affliction; he loves Nīrā and when Śānti becomes a widow, he takes a keen interest in her, but he is unable to make up his mind about whom he should marry. In the course of a conversation which the writer of this thesis had with the novelist (on 19th February, 1981), he stated: 'I endeavour to present human beings, not supermen, amidst other human beings'.

Whereas the portrayal of the rural peasants has been made with realism and sympathy, Unnuth has not done much justice to the middle-class who are with very few exceptions represented in his novels as self-seeking, inconsiderate, arrogant, oppressive and profligate. For example, in Ek bīghā pyār, Jogiā the rich man lives a lecherous life and sets fire to a vegetable plantation ready for harvest. In Kuhāse kā dayrā, Bhisam, the son of a wealthy planter, is conceited, self-indulgent and truculent.

One of the traits which characterises some of the people in Unnuth's novels is a tremendous capacity for unselfish love and consideration for each other. In Ek bīghā pyār, when Karuṇā (a homeless adolescent whom Hīra, Som and their sister Vimlā had brought to live with them as a member of the family) is insistently asked what gift she would like to receive, she replies: 'I want to receive what I have been hitherto receiving in this house... I wish to see evermore a smile on the lips of the three of you.' (p.104).

There is no doubt that Unnuth has drawn highly idealised portraits of some of his characters, a few of the women in particular. These characters may be termed realistically idealistic. They are in fact people whom we do meet in life but only rarely.

The novelist has through his great ability to develop character-interest created a number of people, alive and authentic, each distinctly characterised, whom a reader will remember for a long time to come: Vīṇā and Mādhav in Cauthā prāṇī, Kṛṣṇāvatī in Aur nadī bahtī rahī, Som, Hīra and Karuṇā in Ek bīghā pyār, Dharmen and Lālman in Jam gayā sūraj, Śāntī, Bhagat and Dhaneś in Kuhāse kā dayrā, Rākeś in Tīsre kināre par, Kīsen and Madan in Lāl pasīnā, Śephālī, Aśit and Dharmen in Śephālī, are creations which can compare with some of the best literary creations of Eastern and Western writers. A few of Unnuth's minor characters may not be too well developed, but the reader feels that most of them are credible - a factor which tends to convey a feeling of reality.

Unnuth writes excellent Hindi verse as exemplified by his collections of poems, Nāgphanī mē uljhī samsē, but his real talent lies in prose. In the late forties and fifties, the language of his radio plays and dramas was still somewhat stilted and unnatural, but with increasing experience, his style became both flexible and elegant, and by the time he was writing Cauthā prāṇī, he had already demonstrated considerable mastery over KhB. Hindi. His language in Cauthā prāṇī and the other novels which followed in quick succession, has a natural quality. His vocabulary draws moderately from both Sanskritic and Perso-Arabic sources, but does not contain loan-words which have not passed into Mauritian KhB. Hindi. Unnuth has the feel of the artist for the appropriate word.

Although his Hindi prose possesses the remarkable concinnity of a literary style, yet it is still colloquial. Unnuth's language in the novels appears as spontaneous natural language, narrating a story about ordinary unsophisticated people. In fact, the effect of realism in his stories is heightened by the use of a simple and smoothly moving prose. In a conversation with the writer of the thesis, the novelist emphasized that a spoken language and a language as used in prose fiction should not be fundamentally different.

A salient feature of Unnuth's diction, especially in the novels which appeared after Cauthā prāṇī is its conciseness. The following is an example where the succinct has combined with the picturesque to produce an extraordinary effect:

Nadī adhsūkhī thī. Nīce ke patthar haḍḍiyō kī tarah dikhāī
paṛ rahe the. Apnī alhaṛ aur mustānī cāl bhūlkar vah kisī rogī
kī tarah dhīre dhīre bahī jā rahī thī - ṭhīk som ke vicārō kī tarah.

'The river was half-dry. The stones in the river-bed assumed the appearance of bones. Forgetting its carefree and wanton motion, it moved slowly along like a sick person - just like the thoughts of Som'. (Ek bīghā pyār, p.60)

There are pithy aphoristic expressions occurring frequently in the course of the narrative, further enriching the quality of the diction.

The development of Unnuth's diction marks a significant stage in the cultivation of modern standard Hindi in Mauritius. Several young writers like Ramdev Dhurandar, Poojanan Nema and others have been clearly influenced by him. Firstly, Unnuth's fiction has given birth to a prose possessing an elegance which can compare with that of the best prose writers in India. Secondly, it is marked by a trait which distinguishes it from Hindi fiction written in India, namely the use of Mauritian Bhojpuri particularly in dialogue passages. The example which follows illustrates Unnuth's use of Bhojpuri in a dialogue; the character Durpad speaks in Bhojpuri but is answered in KhB. by Som.

- Durpad: Kamar ṭūṭ gayal .
(My waist is broken)
- Som: Cācī, to tum itnā adhik kām kartī hī kyō ho?
(After all, Auntie, why do you work so hard?)
- Durpad: Kām nā karab ta khāb kā beṭā?
(If I don't work, what shall I eat, my son?)
- Som: Sarkar jo detī hai .
(But Government gives [a pension])
- Durpad: Ū baīs rupyā se admī ke jīvan jāya?
(Can one live on twenty-two rupees?) Ek bīghā pyār, p.41.

The following quotation exemplifies Unnuth's use of Creole. (Creole expressions are here given in bold type):

Mo cī don lī tū!...vah sālte merā sabhī kuch lekar us Marsel ke beṭe ke sāth bhāg gayī... **Bilē batā**, aur to aur, mujhe jalāne ke liye vah donō Ah-kī kī dūkan ke pās hī ghar lekar rah rahe hāī.

'I had given everything to her!... That filthy woman has taken all my things and eloped with the son of Marcel... As if that was not enough, the two of them have rented accommodation just near the shop of Ah-kee so as to provoke my jealousy.'

(Kuhāse kā dayrā, p.125).

The diction of Unnuth's novels, therefore, is modern standard Hindi with a little admixture of Mauritian Bhojpuri. He was the first to have used Mauritian Bhojpuri idiom and vocabulary to make KhB. Hindi more spontaneous and familiar to Mauritian readers (this combination is parallel to the use of Prakrit dialects in the dialogues of Sanskrit dramas), and the example has been followed by several promising Indo-Mauritian writers. Unnuth has himself time and again stated that by virtue of his language and the themes of his writings, he is an Indo-Mauritian Hindi writer, not an Indian Hindi writer. His novels which are popular in Mauritius have been appreciated in India, and the introduction of a little Mauritian Bhojpuri in the manner explained above does not appear to have handicapped the novel-reading public in India.

Out of all Unnuth's novels, there is one that can be regarded as a literary masterpiece and a culmination of the development of KhB. in Mauritius. This is Lāl pasīnā (1977). It is the most substantial of the novels (388 pages) and was published in India. This novel was launched in Delhi at the end of 1977, amidst a gathering of writers and other literary people presided over by the then President of the Janatā party, Candraśekhara, and attended by both the Ministers of Education of India and Mauritius. Before discussing in detail Unnuth's most successful novel, however, it is necessary to examine Dipchand Beeharry's novel Masīthe narak jīte haī which is the only other Hindi novel apart from those of Unnuth. Beeharry published this work in 1980 (Delhi, 128 pages). It narrates the life-story of Kailās, a medical doctor who devotes his life to the service of the people through both his medical work and his social and political activity. Outside his main occupation, he finds but little time for family life. His wife Ansūyā is very unhappy; she repeatedly remonstrates with him for almost neglecting her and their little son Anil. Besides, his close friendship with his colleague, Dr. Nandī, an attractive Indo-Mauritian girl who studied medicine together with him in India exacerbates Ansūyā's feeling of distrust towards him. One afternoon, when Kailās does not return home from hospital in time, as he promised to do, Ansūyā, together with Anil, goes away from his house leaving a short letter behind. Kailās is much upset when he arrives home. A few days after, he learns that Ansūyā is in India, visiting Sāntiniketan and other places of pilgrimage including āśrams where she intends to spend ten to twelve months, but, in fact, she never reappears in the story. With the assistance of his friend Mukund, an influential trade-union man, Kailās gets more deeply involved in politics. He resigns his appointment as a Government medical officer, goes into private practice, and freely devotes much more time to the social and political campaign which preceded the Independence of Mauritius in 1968. His close friend Dr. Nandi exhorts him to beware the pitfalls of a political career - the politician is acclaimed by the people like a prophet,

but the day he makes a mistake, 'they uproot him like a withered tree and throw him away on a pile of debris or they burn him up like dry leaves' (p.126).

In the absence of his wife Ansūyā, Kailās sometimes goes out with Nandī. The love-scene between the two of them on the attractive Mauritian sea-beach of Blue-Bay evokes some western writings, particularly certain episodes in D.H.Lawrence's Sons and Lovers. Nandī discovers, however, that Kailās does not wish to get further entangled in a love affair with her. Accepting the situation as it is, she wisely turns over a new leaf and, together with Mukund, gives Kailās all the encouragement she can in the fulfilment of his political ambition. Assisted by his friends, Kailās stands as a candidate in the forthcoming general elections. He participates actively in the election campaign and faces the prospects of his new career with courage and confidence. The story ends with this vivid picture of Kailās vowed to a new life of dedication and service.

In the course of the story, the author swerves from the main action at a certain stage to give a brief account of the social, educational, political and economic situation of Mauritius, particularly with regard to Indo-Mauritians in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. Seen in the perspective of the whole work, this account (pp.65-67) appears as an independent sketch rather than an integral part of the novel. From its general tone, Bihārī's MasīThe narak jīte haī can be classified as socio-political.

Beeharry, as a story-teller, has the ability of taking his reader along with him in this novel. He makes in the course of the narration, frequent use of the flash-back technique; in fact in some parts of the novel these flash-backs occur so frequently that some readers may find it difficult to keep pace with the time and place sequence. In the latter part of the story, the author has made an effective use of the dream-device (p.87): Kailās appearing before a Commission of Enquiry is required to answer charges made against him. The discipline and correctness of the legal proceedings, the courageous retorts of Kailās including a few

pithy expressions are impressive, especially as, during the greater part of the proceedings, the reader is unaware that this is a dream, until Kailās wakes up with a start, to fall asleep again a few minutes later when the dream continues.

There is a concentration on just a few characters: Kailās, the medical doctor, Nandī the other medical doctor and Mukund the trade-union man and friend of Kailās. Ansūyā, the wife of Kailās whose conduct has a deep impact on his life, and Anī the maid-servant who is aware of everything which is going on in his house, are not drawn sharply enough. In fact, from the nature of the story, Ansūyā is a character with great potentialities; the author establishes her to some extent in the initial chapters but not enough to realise her fully. Even Anil, the little beloved son of Kailās is rather a shadowy character. All the other minor characters - the mother of Kailās, the parents of Ansūyā etc. remain in the shadows too and can hardly be remembered by the reader. Kailās, Nandī and Mukund, however, particularly the two former are distinctly drawn: they are living people.

By the time Beeharry wrote Masīhe narak jīte haī, he was already the author of four fairly popular English novels. The Hindi novel here under review can, to a good extent, stand intelligent questionings, but it suffers from a few inconsistencies of plot. One example of these inconsistencies is Kailās's reaction when he is questioned by the police a few days after Ansūyā has been missing. Asked to identify a sari and a letter bearing the signature of Ansūyā (it is the same letter which she had left behind on leaving his house), picked up from the beach, he replies that somebody might have stolen the sari and the letter from his house and left them on the beach, or he might have inadvertently dropped the letter on the beach when he went there for a walk. Such an explanation is rather implausible and contrived.

The diction of Beeharry's Masīhe narak jīte haī is, on the whole, standard modern Hindi. The author, has, however, made occasional use

of some Perso-Arabic words which sound far-fetched and unnatural, especially to Mauritian readers, and for which there are simple and effective equivalents.⁴⁵ This work lacks, in places, the fluency, smoothness and natural flow which characterizes Unnuth's novels published in the course of the 1970's. To this date, however, Beeharry remains the only Indo-Mauritian with an elitist English and French medium education to have published Hindi prose fiction, and, notwithstanding the above shortcomings, his language in this novel is, in general, fairly expressive and sensitive, and produces passages of considerable literary effect.

In this novel, Beeharry delineates, in the course of the story, a picture of Mauritian society in the years which immediately preceded the Independence of the island - the virtues and failings of the people, the social and political evils which hindered the progress of the nation, and, without being over-didactic, he emphasizes through Dr.Kailās the ways and means of eradicating disease among the common people and improving their living standards (p.128). Kailās embodies the ideal of dedication and service for the people, and it is through his self-sacrifice that we catch the elevating message of this novel.

Having discussed Beeharry's novel as well as having dealt with Unnuth's work in general terms, it is now possible to examine in detail Lāl pasīnā, generally regarded as Unnuth's masterpiece.

Lāl pasīnā is based on the history of the Indian immigrants who were cozened into immigrating to Mauritius with rosy promises of wealth and gold. When Unnuth began to write this novel in 1977, there was not much material available with regard to the circumstances of the immigrants in Mauritius in the 19th century (the books of K.Hazareesingh and A.Beejadhur on the Indians in Mauritius are written in general terms). Unnuth travelled across the country during the course of several weeks and interviewed about a hundred Indo-Mauritians born in the last quarter of the 19th century and early years of the 20th, and gathered a mass of information on the subject. It is principally this first-hand information, obtained through personal

interviews, which has gone into the framework of the historical novel, Lāl pasīnā.

The life of the immigrants was engrossed in the struggle over two questions which were vitally important to them: the economic struggle for survival and the preservation of their religion and culture. Lāl pasīnā is an epitome of this dual struggle. It voices powerfully the feelings of all the people involved in this dual drama.

The story of Lāl pasīnā is very revealing of the skill with which Unnuth can tell a story. It unfolds at the same time historical facts little known before the appearance of this novel. The author portrays graphically the relentless oppression of the Franco-Mauritian sugar-planting interest and the crushing tribulations of the long-suffering Indian immigrants. The story which spans nearly three generations is briefly as follows. Kundan, Mangrū and others sentenced to imprisonment mostly for labour offences, some of them quite trifling, were subjected to a treatment so severe that it often resulted in the death of several of them. Kundan made good his escape and on the bank of a river met Kisan a bold 19 year old youth with whose help he obtained accommodation and work on the neighbouring sugar-estate. Kundan together with another labourer, Jatan, taught Hindi and held Rāmāyaṇ and Alhā sittings in the estate dwellings, and when the estate authorities warned them to stop this activity, they continued it in secret.

The savagely inhuman treatment of employees displayed the workings of a ruthlessly callous and oppressive capitalistic system. The picture of the ill-treatment as portrayed in this novel is full and detailed. The majority of the labourers were made to work from sunrise to sunset. Workers were often required to perform labours, unequal to human strength, like the drawing of loaded carts. One day's absence was penalised with the deduction of two day's wages. Profuse swearing and cursing and beating up of labourers by foremen, sometimes with fatal consequences, became the order of the day.⁴⁶ The food rations allocated to workers were often withheld for trifling offences and in any case were often unfit for consumption.

The mobility of estate-camp dwellers was severely restricted. Employers were making shameless attempts on the chastity of women on the estate-camps and several women had committed suicide.

Despite his father's disapproval, Kisan joined Kundan in actively teaching Hindi and organizing resistance to the employers (they often walked to neighbouring camps at night in secret). Kundan explained to Kisan's father 'what you call the right path, brother Raghu, is in fact the path of cowardice' (p.44). Pondering over the prevailing situation, Kundan concluded that Raghu was in fact not a coward, but just one of the many helpless individuals of the estate camp whose hands, as it were, 'had been caught under heavy stones, and for fear of hurting and bleeding them, they preferred to stay motionless, and would not even endeavour to pull them out very slowly (p.44). The criminals, Kisan said to himself, were not only the employers but his own people who were unmanly, fearful and impotent. It was unthinkable, said Kisan and his friends, that the produce of the labourers' sweat and blood should not be shared with them but go entirely to the very few 'who do not sweat at all, who come [to the field] driven in horse-carriages and leave in palanquins' (p.64). While secretly organizing resistance, they felt increasingly that decisive measures were imperative: 'not the gentle tap [ṭhak ṭhak] of the jeweller, but the hard blow [khatāṅg] of the blacksmith' (p.210).

The estate authorities sensed with suspicion and concern the growing unity among the workers. Labourers were much less submissive on sites of work, and foremen were scared to wield their sticks as before for hurrying on the work. To punish the workers, the employers ordered Kisan and a number of workers to discontinue the occupation of a three-acre plot of land which the latter had reclaimed and had been cultivating for over 20 years. The labourers refused to move out, as this land contained not only their vegetable plantation but was also the site of their temple dedicated to Kālī Māī. The Protector of Immigrants, called to the spot, advised the labourers to quit the land. To the Protector's surprise, the latter categorically rejected his advice. The Estate resorted to violence: while Kisan was moving forward to appease his angry followers, he was shot dead by an estate foreman.⁴⁷

The organisation of resistance was continued by Kisan's son, Madan, who had all the courage, stern determination and the organizing spirit of his father. He sought the counsel of a turban-wearing lawyer (obviously a reference to Manilāl Doctor) and the law-court decided that the labourers had a legal right to continue the occupation of the land concerned. The first step of Madan was the organisation of a strike against the estate. The estate authorities appealed to Madan and his followers to return to work, but they proved obdurate. Subsequently a cyclone destroyed all the vegetables on the three-acre plot of land. No estate would give them any work. While they were brought to the brink of starvation one of the workers Vivek, without anybody's knowledge broke into the store-house of the estate. Madan and a friend Farīd suspecting his whereabouts proceeded to the estate. Madan was severely beaten up, and as a result of the injuries he sustained, he became totally blind. But undeterred by blindness, he continued his work of organizing the workers, and after a considerable tour of the baiṭhkās, he returns home to great popular acclaim and to the boundless joy of his beloved Mīrā, which brings the story to a close.

Lāl pasīnā, therefore, is a historico-romantic amalgam. The imaginative side of the novel is closely interwoven with the historical. The love-life of Kisan, Vivek, Philippe and Andréa and the others, the touching relationship between Puṣpā and her husband Mangrū who died in jail, the manner in which Puṣpā recognized her husband's loin-cloth which Kundan had brought from jail, and particularly the love between Madan and Mīrā in the closing chapters of the story, are episodes which Unnuth has successfully fused with the historical aspect of the novel, to produce a remarkable and original coalescence. Lāl pasīnā is rich in dialogues too. These are not literary but colloquial and authentic dialogues which considerably heighten the sense of realism of the story. Since its publication, this novel has been translated into Malayalam and Oriya in India and into Russian by Leningrad University.

Notwithstanding the high literary standard of Lāl pasīnā, its story and plot is not entirely free from short-comings and inconsistencies. A

few of the situations are emotionally exaggerated and over-idealised. For example, in chapter three of Part II of the story, the reader is told of a meeting, on the premises of a temple, attended by 100,000 demonstrators hailing from thirty sugar estates, out of whom 60,000 are arrested by the police. Although a novelist is not always bound by the chains of historical truth, such a statement places too great a demand on the suspension of a reader's disbelief, especially when it is remembered that by the end of the first decade of our century, the train was the only means of long-distance transport in Mauritius.

Also, for all its excellence, Lāl pasīnā is entirely one-sided. It is a blast against capitalistic ideology of production and exploitation (and it is not surprising that Leningrad University has had it translated into Russian). Whereas the author narrates with much verve the hard work, industry and patient suffering of the workers and their contribution to the prosperity of Mauritius, he paints the employers completely black, and he has nothing to say about their contribution to the economic advancement of Mauritius. Many of the Indian immigrants who arrived in Mauritius had fled from the ruthless oppression of Indian landlords, but the novelist is silent about this, nor does he shed any light on the fact that a number of the immigrants were 'returnees', that is, people who had gone back to India on the expiration of their term of indenture and were by choice returning with their families, friends and relatives to settle in Mauritius permanently.

On the whole, however, Lāl pasīnā is a novel of considerable literary merit. Coherent and well-structured, evocative of the sensitivity and depth of feeling in Premchand and the revelation of suffering in Nirālā, it has a tremendous impact on the Hindi-reading public in general. Inculcating the ideals of dedication and service, this work looks hopefully into the future: Kundan, Kisan and Madan, like other notable literary creations, lived and died not only for themselves and the people around them, but also for succeeding generations.

The language of Lāl pasīnā is a literary Hindi prose, free from learned Sanskritisms. It is remarkably precise and sensitive and its

simplicity has made it as congenial as its subject-matter to a wide Hindi-reading public. There is no doubt that this novel produced in 1977 by the descendant of an indentured immigrant who arrived in Mauritius in the last century represents the culmination of the cultivation of KhB. in Mauritius both as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the creative expression of national sensitivity.

Notes

1. Mahesh Ramjiavon, 'Mārisās kā Hindī raᅅgmañc', in Smārikā issued on the occasion of the Second World Hindi Conference held in Mauritius (Delhi, 1976), p.19. The writer of this thesis had the opportunity of attending many of the plays mentioned in this article.
2. The play was staged under the patronage of Mrs. Mohinī Devī Dev, wife of the Commissioner for the Government of India, in support of the Ramakrishna mission orphanage, Mauritius.
3. The annual drama festival under Government sponsorship with respect to English and French had been taking place from the early 1950's.
4. The Triveni is one of the largest Indo-Mauritian cultural associations of Mauritius.
5. In 1980, there were three students being trained at the National School of Drama and the Asian Theatre Institute, New Delhi, two in Hindi drama and one in Marathi drama.
6. Quoted by Mrs.Kumar, Drama Officer in the Ministry of Youth and Sports (she had been trained at the National School of Drama and the Asian Theatre Institute, New Delhi) in the course of an interview the writer of this thesis had with her at her office on the 20th January, 1982.
7. In the late 1930's and early 1940's, J.N.Roy the author of Jīvan Saᅅginī published several English articles on Mauritian newspapers exhorting Indo-Mauritian families to give early attention to female education.
8. For example, in the first scene, a violent quarrel breaks out one night between Raghuvīr and his parents; Suśīlā, Raghuvīr's sister, an adolescent threatens to leave the house alone, and is

only stopped from doing so by her father. That a girl of this age should be prepared to carry out such a threat at night is very improbable in a Hindu family in Mauritius (the improbability was still greater in the early 1950's). Also, in part of her conversation with her mother and later with Caudharī, the village headman, Suśīlā almost appears to be teaching them moral lessons. In places, the dialogue is too polished and florid to be part of a natural conversation.

9. Examples of such didactic speeches are at pp. 22 (speech of Ṛṣi), 44 (speech of Dev), 47 (speech of Mā), 78 (speech of Śaṅkar) in Pāñc ekānkī ek sapnā (Benares, 1972).
10. Such Bhojpuri vocabulary may include certain Creole loans, such as the word lāpeś (from French La pêche) in the following sentence:
Ek din donō ne āpas mē salāh maśvirā kar gāv kī sīmā par
bahtī nadī mē lāpeś karne gaye. (ne has been incorrectly
used with intransitive verb jana.) p.31, speech of Vyakti.
11. An example of Sanskritized speech is:
Lekin guru jī ne to śikṣā dī hai ki jo vyakti va samāj duṣṭō
kā dalan kar duṣṭtā kā nivāraṇ kar sajjantā, sahrdayatā va
nyāya kī sattā sthāpit kartā hai vahī jāgrūk aur kartavyaniṣṭh
hai.
P.46, speech of Sureś:
12. Richard K. Barz, 'The cultural significance of Hindi in Mauritius',
op.cit., p.4. The following are two examples from Chintamunnee's
drama illustrating the impact of Creole/French on Bhojpuri in
Mauritius:
(i) Bajār se legum cāhiṃ liyāne ke, ghare ta buskuy wo nay bā.
Tr. You must bring vegetables from the market; we don't have
even biscuits in the house.
Legum and buskuy are derived from French/Creole légumes
(vegetables) and biscuit respectively.
(ii) Jāke dekh lakujin [la cuisine] mē hoi.
Tr. Go and see, she must be in the kitchen.

13. Among those who in later years published short poems in the Janatā (1948-1982) were R.Tivari, H.Gupta and K.T.Gaurishankar.
14. For another example of the Kuṇḍaliyās of Raspuñj, see M. Chintamunnee, Mauriśas kā Hindī sāhitya tathā anya nibandh (Port-Louis, 1972, p.8).
15. The poem is now unobtainable. The stanza quoted is from M. Chintamunnee, op.cit., p.9. Original versions have been quoted in this chapter alongside the English translation in all cases where the intention is to depict linguistic qualities as well as descriptive power.
16. This statement was made by Madhukar in the course of an interview with the writer of this thesis on the 11th December, 1981.
17. Late Maḍodri Ramlal Bhagat was the wife of Ramlal Bhagat, one of the founder members of the H.P.S. The prize has been awarded annually since 1965 to the best literary entry.
18. The metres used by Dosia in Sudhā kalaś are: rolā, gītikā, lāvnī, hariḡītikā, etc.
19. Another example of Dosia's poetry is quoted in M.Chintamunnee, op.cit., p.13.
20. S.Bhuckory's English writings are principally: Local Government in Mauritius - The Local Government Ordinance and Urban Authorities (Port-Louis, 1964); Hindi in Mauritius (Port-Louis, 1967); An Outline of Local Government (Port-Louis, 1969); Our Constitution (Port-Louis, 1971).
21. In 1967, when the Mauritius Arya Sabha invited the Hindi writers of Mauritius to meet the distinguished Indian poets Dinkar and Suman who were on a visit to Mauritius, Bhuckory recited before an immense gathering his poem Pravāsī kā Bhārat in the last stanza of which occurs the name of Dinkar. When Bhuckory had composed this poem, little had he imagined that he would one day recite it in the presence of Dinkar himself.
22. The music score of the ballet choreographed by Mr. and Mrs. Nand Kishore, then teachers of the School of Indian Music and Dance in

- Mauritius, was written by Dr.I.Nundlall, Education Officer in the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.
23. The ballet at the Expo in Canada was performed by Mrs. Padma Ghurburrun, an Indo-Mauritian.
24. English and French translations of Mauriśas kī sṛṣṭi appear in S.Bhuckory, Hindi in Mauritius, op.cit., pp.175-180.
25. These very small works are reported to have been printed in Mauritius. The writer of this thesis has obtained extracts of several of them through the good offices of the M.G.I. As many of them are now unobtainable, however, it is not known where exactly in Mauritius they were printed.
26. The form mardyan is obscure but is presumed to be connected with mard 'man'.
27. Another poem depicting the relationship between Hindi and politics during the post-Independence period is Hindi: Kahā se kahā by Mahesh Ramjiavon contained in Māriśas kī Hindī kavita (Port-Louis, 1975).
28. The translation is from an unpublished paper entitled 'Book review: Sahamī sahamī sī āvāz - the hesitant voice' (1976) by R.K.Barz, Senior Lecturer in Hindi, Australian National University, Canberra.
29. R.K.Barz, op.cit.
30. One example of strained rhyme can be seen at line two of the last stanza of lyric entitled Mere mānas mē ramā karo (p.7 in Pravāsī-svar). The stanza reads as follows:

Meri rāhō mē khāī hai
Kaisī mujh se rusvāī hai
Mere añcal kī chāyā mē
Chaliyā se mere milā karo
Maī āj yahā se jatī hū
Mujh ko pyāre tum kṣamā karo /

Line 2 above seems to be rather 'forced': the words rusvāī hai are inapposite in the context and have been apparently brought in to rhyme with khāī hai in the first line.

31. The annual entries for the Cambridge School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate together with the London G.C.E. at Ordinary and Advanced levels average 1200 to 1300. (The candidates who annually sit the H.P.S. and Arya Sabha collaborative examinations are just under 3000.)
32. The English works of B.Bissoondoyal are: Eternal India (Bombay, 1959); Hindu Scriptures (London, 1961); India in French literature (London, 1967); The Arya Samaj Introduced (Delhi, 1966); The Truth about Mauritius (Bombay, 1967); The Message of the Four Vedas (Delhi, 1973); India in World Literature (London, 1976); Mahatma Gandhi: A New Approach (Bombay, 1981, second edition); and his French writings are: L'Inde Eternelle (Lyon, 1953); Les Hindous et Leurs Livres Sacrés (Paris, 1965); Deux Indiens Illustres Dayanand et Gandhi (Paris, 1968); La Littérature Hindoue (Pondicherry, 1972); Le Rig Veda (Pondicherry, 1974).
33. The title does not imply any specific connection with the so-called Nayī-kahānī movement in India.
34. Among those who presented programmes of stories and song-stories at the Mauritius Broadcasting Station (now Corporation) in the 1940's and 1950's were Messrs. Servansing, B.M.Bhagat, S.Bhuckory (Bhuckory's programmes included Tyāg kī Jyoti presented on the occasion of the Divali festival in 1945), Shewgovind Sharma, J.N.Roy (Roy's programmes included the short story Bevafā in 1953), M.Chintamunnee (among Chintamunnee's programmes was the story Bīte din in 1957), Mrs. Hurbai Rajabalee, Dharamvir Ghura and Dipcand Beeharry.
35. Examples of these anglicisms are: Ganne kī katnī abhī bahut dūr thī (here the use of dūr to describe time rather than space follows English usage); us ke bacce jo ātāk ke māre apnī mā se cipakkar baiṭhe the rone lage [here the dislocation of the verb rone loge from its subject bacce suggests an underlying English syntactical construction] (pp. 2 and 3 in story entitled Hathiyār in Sāgar pār).

36. Examples are: (i) Phir merā rāz khul jāyagā; (ii) Cārpāī par bacce gappē laṛā rahe the (pp. 5 and 7 in story entitled Hathiyār in Sāgar pār). In editions of the stories appearing in Svarg mē kyā rakhā hai, the author has amended the two above to Tab merā bhed khul jāyagā and Veh [bacce] āpas mē mast the aur khilkhilā rahe the.
37. Bhanumati Nagdan's mother-tongue is Gujarati and, like Dipcand Beeharry, she hardly speaks any Bhojpuri. She has some knowledge of English and French. In 1981, she published a collection of 17 stories, including Anubandhan, entitled Minisṭar. In the early 1970's, she had been awarded the Madodrī Rāmlāl Bhagat prize by the H.P.S. for a literary entry consisting of a set of short stories that included the one bearing the title of Minisṭar.
38. Examples of Bhojpuri terms and phrases found in Mārīśas kī kahānī are: pati ke chalal-banal par (while the husband was still able to work and earn), p.20; kanyā lizīn mē kām kartī hai? (does the girl work in the factory?) [lizīn is from French l'usine], p.27; pāntar sīmā mē akele-dukele āte ho (you come all alone along a secluded way), p.38; [sīmā is derived from French/Creole chemin]; aṅkhō ke kor kuch jādā hi kariyā gaye hai (the corners of the eyes have turned blacker), p.38; andhāre-parāte (at day-break), p.41; and bothā (wet through), p.43.
39. Among such stories are: Abhimanyu Unnuth, Ṭṭṭā pahiyā, Dharamyug, March 1972; Man rakṣā, Sāptāhik Hindustān, August 1972; Golī kī avāz, Kādambinī, August 1979; and Ghaṭāṭop andherā, Sārikā, March 1981. Ramdev Dhurandar, Punarvās, Dharamyug, March 1972; Pratiphal, Dharamyug, February 1973; Sāmayik Prahār, Dharamyug, October 1974; Parājay Bodh, Dharamyug, serialised in March/April 1977. Poojanan Nema, Talās, Mālinī, December 1974; Vikalp, Sārikā, February 1976; Bhanumati Nagdan, Anubandhan, Anurāg, August 1974.

40. K.Lalbihari is also the author of the short story Hāth pāv bhī bik gaye contributed to Surbhit Udyān in 1973. As previously stated, this story attains an excellent standard.
41. While in Mauritius, the writer of this thesis was not able to procure a copy of this novel which is out of print. The quotation was the opinion expressed to him by the office of Vasant at the M.G.I. in March 1981. Bhanumati Nagdan, authoress of Ministar (1981), a 17 short story collection, was severely critical of this work in a book review which appeared in Anurāg (issue of April to July 1976, p.43), the quarterly organ of the Parīṣad (Anurāg appeared in Mauritius from 1969 to 1977).
42. The setting of a few of Unnuth's stories is somewhat evocative of Phaṇīśvarnāth 'Reṇu''s Mailā āncal (1954), the 'regional' novel which depicts life in a poverty-stricken village of Bihar.
43. Unnuth made this statement in the course of a conversation with the writer of this thesis at the M.G.I. on the 23rd April, 1981 (his words were 'merī racnāō mē gāv zindā hai').
44. The information regarding Gopal Ray's criticism of idealistic Hindi novels was obtained in the course of a conversation at the M.G.I. with A.Unnuth who could not remember the exact source reference.
45. Two examples are the following: (i) Pulis ko yadi hādsā mālum huā (p.28) (instead of the common Hindi word durghatnā), and (ii) Chuṭṭī lene kī nasihat sahī lagne lagī (p.128) (instead of the common Arabic word salāh or Hindi word sammati).
46. Franco-Mauritian employers taking the law into their own hands shot or hanged several people as a form of punishment. The author also narrates the case of a pregnant woman who was shot by a white employer when she spat on his face because he had hanged her husband from a tree (p.50).
47. This incident recalls Premchand's Raṅgbhūmi in which the hero deprived of his plot of land refuses to quit his hut and is shot as he tries to pacify his angry supporters.

CHAPTER SIX

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT POSITION OF MODERN STANDARD HINDI
IN MAURITIUS

This chapter offers an assessment of the present position of KhB. Hindi in Mauritius. As was stated in the Introduction, in the absence of an established body of socio-linguistic research, certain statements have had to be made on the basis of personal impressions, observation and experience, but, in spite of this, some such assessment is clearly required to complete the present study.

Starting from the teaching of KhB. in schools, it has first to be said that, now that Hindi and the other oriental languages are being taught in official schools with the same professional approach as English and French, the need for supplementary teaching in the part-time schools run by voluntary bodies that played such an important role in the past is today felt less and less, especially where the courses are run on a secular basis. Quite a few of these voluntary schools, however, have of late shifted their emphasis to the teaching of Secondary level courses which are popular and well-subscribed. It is generally considered that the standard of teaching in many of the 500 or so voluntary schools run by the Arya Sabha and the H.P.S., and still operating at a Primary level, is not entirely satisfactory, although it must be said that the Arya Sabha schools which claim that they have a religious role to play are less open to scrutiny and, therefore, it is difficult to form an accurate judgement. It has already been observed in previous chapters that the role of these baithkā schools is now diminished and, furthermore, since Government subsidy became available, the enthusiasm that used to characterise the supporting communities is much less in evidence.

Hindi and the other oriental languages relevant to Mauritian life are taught in the great majority of Government Primary schools. The comparative position of the different languages at primary level for the year 1981-82 is set out in the table below.

	Mandarin	Arabic	Marathi	Telugu	Tamil	Urdu	Hindi
No. of schools in which taught	8	9	60	90	174	175	255
No. of pupils learning the subject	1454	-	2132	3060	8185	18200	54443
No. of teachers teaching the subject	11	9	83	130	230	451	930

Out of a total school-population of about 130,000, over 54,000 were learning Hindi, i.e. just over 41%. About 95% of children of North-Indian origin learn Hindi, especially in the lower classes. It can be seen from this that, when considered in conjunction with the voluntary schools, there is adequate provision for the teaching of Hindi at the Primary level.

Notwithstanding the adequacy of provision for Hindi teaching, the Hindi protagonists of Mauritius have so far failed to have it made an academic school subject to be taken on an elective basis on a par with English and French in the Primary School Leaving Examination, which is the entry to State and State-aided Secondary schools. This has meant that Hindi and other oriental subjects tend to be regarded by students and parents alike as being of religious and cultural interest, but not as being academically important in terms of the syllabus. They treat it, therefore, as being of secondary importance. Hindi is taught in most of the State Secondary and Junior Secondary Schools, but the teaching and the progress of pupils is handicapped by the fact that, generally speaking, it has not been studied seriously at the primary level for the above reason. Another consequence of its reduced academic standing at Primary level is that the percentage of students offering Hindi and the other oriental languages at the Secondary level is lower than that

at the Primary level. In 1981 at the M.G.I., for example, out of a total of 560 Indo-Mauritians (the total school intake was 925), 163 did not study an oriental language, and many of those who were studying it were doing so out of cultural interest. A similar situation obtains in other Secondary schools. Apart from the lack of incentive at Primary level, another reason for diminished interest at Secondary level lies in the present lack of any opportunity to pursue the subject for a degree in Mauritius. When the M.G.I. was founded in 1970, one of the objectives was to create an establishment that would constitute a starting-point for the promotion of Asian studies which would eventually be integrated into higher education. But as matters stand at present, the prospects of oriental languages ever being pursued at a tertiary level are poor. Nonetheless, there is every year a high number of entries in Hindi from Secondary schools for the London G.C.E. and the Cambridge School Certificate.

The principal constraint, however, on the further progress of KhB. Hindi in Mauritius is its position vis-à-vis the other prevalent languages. Creole, and, to a lesser extent, Bhojpuri and French, are spoken household languages in Mauritius. KhB. Hindi is not in general a household language, nor is it likely ever to become one. It is used as a medium of familiar discourse in very few families and, on restricted occasions, between certain educated Hindus including Ārya Samājīs who would themselves often have at least three other truly spoken languages in common. R.K.Barz, following J.N.Ray, sees the relationship between KhB. Hindi and Bhojpuri in Mauritius to be symbiotic, with Bhojpuri supplying the living spoken base, and KhB. providing the literary prestige and respectability of a cultural tradition. Barz does not believe that standard Hindi could survive a drastic reduction in the number of Bhojpuri speakers and sees the fate of both languages to be interlinked. Barz also points out that an exactly parallel situation exists in Fiji.¹ The oriental languages of the minority groups in Mauritius, Marathi in particular, have, in a limited measure, lost to Bhojpuri and KhB. Hindi. They are used mostly on a few formal occasions like religious festivals. English remains the official language and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future (it is

also used as a means of communication by some educated Mauritians, especially Indo-Mauritians), whereas French stays unchallenged as the general language of cultured and polished Mauritian society.

Barz's observations about the relationship between standard Hindi and Bhojpuri in Mauritius certainly accord with personal experience and would be found generally acceptable, although unproven in the absence of adequate research findings. Equally unproven is his suggestion that the decline of Bhojpuri in the face of Creole has begun to level out and the number of speakers of Mauritian Bhojpuri has stabilized at around a third of the population, that is, about 290,000. Certainly, there has been a recent upsurge of interest in Bhojpuri with a Department of Bhojpuri being established last year at the M.G.I., charged with the task of collecting Bhojpuri folk-lore, investigating the various features of Mauritian Bhojpuri, and examining its relationship to standard Hindi and its place in the life of Mauritius. Bhojpuri dramas have been performed, records of folk-songs produced and a mass of Bhojpuri folk-lore (songs, prayer-recitations, tales, etc.) in danger of extinction have been tape-recorded. The work is only at an initial stage, and there is a great deal yet to be done. The supporters of Mauritian Bhojpuri hope that in the near future it will find a place in the curriculum of Secondary schools. Whatever the outcome of all this activity, it is clear that a strong base of spoken Bhojpuri is a vital underpinning for KhB. Hindi in Mauritius.

The position, then, of modern standard Hindi in Mauritius is as a medium for formal, religious and cultural discourse, and as a vehicle of literary expression, and it is as such that it is firmly established among the numerically predominant Hindus of North Indian origin. In religious discourse, Hindi is the language of the platform; it is used to expound various scriptures, and it is the medium of expression for rituals and hymns and other traditional cultural values. It is, of course, the Ārya bhāṣā, the preferred language of the Arya Samaj. Many cultural functions among Indo-Mauritians, including the anniversaries of Hindi schools, are conducted in Hindi and, of course, Hindi plays are often performed. Creative writings in Hindi continue to appear, especially in the field of poetry and the short story. No

Hindi newspapers survive today, since Mauritians generally prefer to read their news in English and French, but the fortnightly Aryoday of the Arya Samaj, and the monthly Vasant, the literary periodical of the M.G.I. seem likely to continue to flourish since they both enjoy institutional support. There are a number of libraries that hold Hindi books, with small collections in village libraries organized by the Vidyā samitis, and collections in municipal libraries, the libraries of the M.G.I., the Arya Sabha and the H.P.S., and in the well-stocked library of the Indian High Commission, which also supplies Hindi newspapers, magazines and periodicals. These libraries serve a modest circle of Hindi readers.

It is important, however, not to exaggerate the extent of Hindi readership. Although the number of people who know and understand KhB. Hindi in Mauritius is now considerable, this knowledge is essentially passive and not of the kind to produce an active readership. In consequence, as with newspapers, there is not much demand in Mauritius for Hindi literature, whether imported or local. As was illustrated in the previous chapter, there has been a considerable amount of creative writing in Hindi by Indo-Mauritians, especially from the early 1970s, but the distribution of these works has been low and not very encouraging for the authors. The majority of works go through only one modest edition, while a few, printed in India, are read more by Indian than by Mauritian readers.

But if the habit of reading Hindi has not yet developed, the habit of watching and listening has. Cinemas showing current Hindi films attract large audiences, and the Indian films shown at least twice a week on television are enjoyed by thousands of families. Both local television and radio devote part of their daily broadcasting to news and entertainment in KhB. Hindi. The film, television and radio are therefore the media through which standard Hindi makes its greatest and widest impact in Mauritius.

It is not enough, however, solely to describe the position of Hindi without at the same time offering some assessment of how it is

perceived - how people feel about it - although this is a much more difficult area to explore and express. Without appreciating something of the depth of the hold that KhB. Hindi has among many Indo-Mauritians, as opposed to the extent to which they use it, it is impossible to see why and how Hindi has found a place and maintained it on a linguistically very over-crowded island. There are, perhaps, two aspects to be considered, that of prestige, and that of cultural identity. As shown above, the two most prestigious languages in Mauritius are, unquestionably, English, the official language, and French, the language of social distinction, but amongst a substantial body of Indo-Mauritians, standard Hindi is also prestigious, although not in the same way or to the same degree as French or English. The contexts in which it is used in Mauritius are essentially prestigious, and those who have command of it are held in high regard, particularly if they combine it with proficiency in French and English. That is one aspect. The second and probably more potent aspect is that very many Indo-Mauritians feel Hindi to be a living connection with their cultural origins and the source of their values and identity. This powerful symbolic value is difficult to illustrate, but one example is that, in some quarters, there are circumstances when a Hindi education, as opposed to a 'Western' education, can be an important factor in deciding between girls as potential marriage partners. Here Hindi symbolises the Indian ideal of womanhood and wifely virtues in contrast to the more risky Western attitudes (the same criterion does not apply to boys). It could also be the potentiality of this symbolism that causes some in Mauritius, including a few Indo-Mauritians, to view with alarm the activities of the Indian High Commission in its efforts to propagate Hindi, since they feel this might prevent Indo-Mauritians from identifying fully with the land of their adoption. To most people, however, this is a mistaken worry, because Indo-Mauritians look towards India for their past, not for their future.

It remains to consider Tinker's statement that in Mauritius 'in what is predominantly an overseas Indian community, the Indians remain cultural beggars'.² He refers to the failure of Indians to Indianise their life-style and he points particularly to language and religion. It must be strange for a political scientist that when the Indo-Mauritians

were numerically and politically dominant, they never politicised 'Indianness'. In Mauritius Hindi has never been politicised and was never part of the plank of any political party. Hindi has only marginally impinged on the political. When Hindi offered the prospects of jobs as Hindi teachers, there is no doubt that political considerations entered into some appointments, and when the Hindi movement was looking particularly strong, politicians lost no time in cultivating it to their own advantage, to the point that the anniversary of Indo-Mauritian Hindi Writers in 1982 was attended by more politicians than Hindi writers. Using Srinivas's terminology, to 'Indianise' one's life style is to 'sanskritise'. Although the process of cultural sanskritization was not considered the sole motivation for the early establishment of standard Hindi in Mauritius, there is no doubt that it could in some measure be applied to the movement of the Arya Samaj and to the linguistic response of Hindu orthodoxy to the challenge of the Arya Samaj, as well as to certain other later developments, although not as the sole cause. But should this limited and restricted sanskritisation merit the term 'cultural beggary'? Tinker seems to have ignored the second major process Srinivas found within the dynamism of Indian society, namely Westernisation. The two may operate together in the vast sub-continent, but, in Mauritius, Westernisation has been the dominant process, and, as Srinivas has shown, Westernisation is no less Indian than sanskritisation as a sociological process. Tinker's characterisation of Indo-Mauritian society is remarkably reminiscent of Westernised Indian society in certain parts of the sub-continent. In Mauritius, standard Hindi occupies its own restricted, specialised but important place in the cultural and linguistic ecology of the country: that its protagonists have chosen to cultivate it within these boundaries and without violating this balance should hardly lay them open to the opprobrium of being called 'cultural beggars'.

In conclusion, then, having examined the situation of modern standard Hindi in Mauritius, it has become clear that the cultivation of Hindi and its literature could be taken a great deal further without disrupting any other element in the composite culture of Mauritius: indeed, if one were to seek a single phrase to express the present position, it would have to be 'Dillī abhī dūr hai'.

Notes

1. In his article, The Cultural Significance of Hindi in Mauritius, R.K.Barz has further explained that in Fiji the Hindi vernacular known as Fiji Hindi developed out of social interaction between immigrants hailing from east-central Uttar Pradesh, just as in Mauritius a unified Bhojpuri developed from the blending of the various Bhojpuri dialects spoken by immigrants arriving from different parts of the Bhojpuri-speaking areas. He has also underlined that in Fiji, as in Mauritius, standard Hindi is taught in schools and used as the language of journalism, formal discourse and religion, but is not a household language; and again, just as in Mauritius Bhojpuri constitutes a solid foundation for standard Hindi, so does Fiji Hindi underpin it in the Fiji islands. In Fiji, however, Hindi does not face the encroachment of Creole.
2. Tinker, H., Mauritius: Cultural Marginalism and Political Control: from Coolie Immigrant to Indo-Mauritian (a confidential paper discussed at SOAS, University of London, on 16.3.1977).

APPENDIX I

Source: Mauritius by Allister Macmillan

MAURITIUS

There can be little doubt that much of the uneasiness in the labour market at the present time is due to this [i.e. refusal of Africans to continue agricultural work on sugar plantations].

Fortunately for the planters, on the abolition of slavery it was found possible to substitute Asiatic for African labour.

The first Indian immigrants amounting to seventy in all, were introduced in 1834, and from 1834 to 1845 a further addition of 83,073 was made. The number introduced into the colony each year will be seen from the table given below, as extracted from The Mauritius Almanac for the year 1813.

Arrivals and Departures of Indian Immigrants, 1834 to 1912

Year	Arrivals		Departures		Year	Arrivals		Departures	
	Males	Females	Males	Females		Males	Females	Males	Females
1834	75	-	4	-	1874	4,818	2,234	2,874	1,201
1835	1,182	72	25	1	1875	1,996	923	2,368	1,055
1836	3,639	184	187	3	1876	330	172	2,354	917
1837	6,939	353	114	20	1877	1,528	659	1,794	623
1838	11,567	241	148	6	1878	3,203	1,623	1,835	527
1839	933	102	170	3	1879	2,013	1,066	1,926	629
1840	170	9	394	23	1880	371	213	1,731	614
1841	499	43	995	94	1881	-	-	1,180	371
1842	73	10	2,021	94	1882	805	436	1,466	397
1843	30,218	4,307	2,884	108	1883	1,283	632	1,766	640
1844	9,709	1,840	2,312	149	1884	4,450	1,939	1,362	491
1845	8,918	2,053	1,492	170	1885	246	112	2,891	1,110
1846	5,718	1,621	2,556	204	1886	511	235	1,649	671
1847	5,174	656	1,651	133	1887	191	73	1,707	643

Cont.....

Year	Arrivals		Departures		Year	Arrivals		Departures	
	Males	Females	Males	Females		Males	Females	Males	Females
1848	4,739	656	2,639	376	1888	482	231	1,283	448
1849	6,378	1,047	4,298	594	1889	3,244	1,298	990	329
1850	8,436	1,594	3,283	442	1890	2,152	873	827	228
1851	8,257	1,763	2,895	374	1891	713	278	716	184
1852	13,671	3,814	2,034	392	1892	-	-	1,129	349
1853	9,877	2,267	1,767	261	1893	353	132	1,197	457
1854	14,995	3,489	3,166	509	1894	758	268	754	214
1855	9,645	3,270	3,702	565	1895	1,249	485	860	275
1856	9,130	3,523	4,220	677	1896	593	208	858	297
1857	8,640	4,085	3,794	809	1897	314	112	671	248
1858	20,932	9,014	6,707	1,458	1898	-	-	842	264
1859	31,643	12,754	4,146	971	1899	-	-	564	182
1860	9,070	4,216	2,290	543	1900	2,094	796	858	293
1861	10,232	3,753	1,786	471	1901	3,265	1,309	469	162
1862	7,440	2,453	1,752	460	1902	1,875	690	462	186
1863	3,667	1,587	2,553	667	1903	374	134	383	140
1864	5,626	1,926	2,692	721	1904	1,513	544	413	148
1865	14,910	5,373	2,854	667	1905	534	186	314	105
1866	3,702	1,894	2,925	890	1906	463	155	435	180
1867	317	33	2,571	827	1907	439	147	366	145
1868	1,968	640	1,880	664	1908	-	-	775	266
1869	1,182	590	1,684	636	1909	-	-	512	174
1870	2,831	1,245	2,172	670	1910	397	135	403	182
1871	2,318	974	2,369	705	1911	-	-	364	127
1872	4,015	1,759	2,788	1,031	1912	-	-	338	119
1873	5,226	2,388	2,160	875					

The system of immigration at first adopted was not carried on under Government control, the only action taken by the authorities being to insist upon intending emigrants appearing before a magistrate in India in order to ascertain whether they thoroughly understood the conditions of their contracts and were emigrating entirely of their own accord.

Appendix II

सत्य होली

अब होली ही होली [...].¹

होली ही एक उत्सव है जो कि सभी उत्सवों से विशेष आनन्द देने वाली है. इस होली के दिन बाल वृद्ध और युवक स्त्री पुरुष सभी आनन्द में आ जाते हैं यहाँ तक कि धूम मचाते. अगर शोक है तो यह है कि जो होली शास्त्र और प्रमाणाँ से है उसे त्याग वाम मार्ग से प्रचलित तथा राक्षसी होली मनाई जाती है. मेरे² समझ में तो होली इस तरह करना चाहिये जैसे पंचांग [...]. आदि समय के अनुसार अर्थात् [...]. चौथी अवस्था में अन्न अध [...]. अन्न और अनेक प्रकारके समिधा जैसे चन्दन पीपल अमरादि के और सुगंधित द्रव्य जैसे कस्तूरी केसरादि सामान आठ दिन पहले से ही एकत्र करे और फाल्गुण की पूर्णमा को बड़ा भांग [?] देव यज्ञ और हवन करे सुन्दर बेदी बना कर चार यज्ञ जैसे यज्ञ का प्रमाण है, ब्रम्हा, ऋत्विज, होता और आचार्य ये मिल कर वेद मंत्रों से यज्ञ हवन करे और, नये अन्न से उत्तमोत्तम पकवान बना विद्वानों को भोजन करवा और कर ईश्वर के³ भक्ति में मगन हो परमात्मा प्रार्थना पूर्वक उपकार माने कि हे परमात्मा ! आप की कृपा से हम इस वर्ष को आनन्द पूर्वक व्यतीत किये और आपका दिया हुआ यह अन्न को स्वीकार किये अब और भी यह करें ताकि आगामी होली में और भी सुगंधित द्रव्यों से करें सुख को प्राप्त हो⁴

1. Sequence of dots within square brackets indicates illegible words.
2. Possessive adjective mere has been incorrectly used with feminine substantive samajh.
3. Possessive article ke has been incorrectly used with feminine substantive bhakti.
4. From the last sentence of this extract from the Hindusthānī, it would appear that in the early years of our century when the ne construction was already well established in the KhB. Hindi of the sub-continent, it had not yet come in current use in Mauritian Hindi. In fact the whole passage is rambling, poorly constructed and occasionally obscure.

सुमार्ग उसे हम कहते हैं जिस में चलने से हमारे शारीरिक मानसिक आत्मिक बल की उन्नति हो.¹

शारीरिक बल की उन्नति करनेका सब से प्रथम उपाय ब्रह्मचर्य सेवन है. क्या हनुमान, भीष्म पीतामह, अर्जुण, स्वामी दयानन्द आदि २ ब्रह्मचारियों का अनन्त बल की महिमा से छुपी है ? इन ब्रह्मचारियों ने अपना बल से आश्चर्यकारी कार्य कर ब्रह्मचर्य की शक्ति संसार में प्रसिद्ध कर दिये हैं. क्या ! जब हम उनलोगों का रहस्यमय जीवन का पाठ करते हैं तो हमारी आत्मा नहीं चाहती है कि हम भी वैसा बनें ? क्या ! ऐसा हम नहीं बन सकते हैं ? उनलोगों में हम से क्या विशेषता थी ? जैसे वे मनुष्य थे वैसे हम किन्तु प्यारे भाईयों !² विशेषता उन में यह पायी जाती है कि वे ब्रह्मचर्य को पालन किये थे³ और हमने भ्रष्ट किया है.

1. Graphic irregularity of i-kāra falling between components of consonant cluster (i.e. मानसिक instead of मान्सिक, आत्मिक instead of आत्मिक).
2. Nasality (and incorrect use of long ī) in bhāīō, for vocative bhāio.
3. Agreement of the participle kiye with ve as subject ignores the requirement for the ne construction (unless non-finite participial usage is to be understood).

मूर्खों पर नीतिकारों की राय ।

APPENDIX IV

१—विद्यार्थियो ! तुम सदैव दुराग्रही मूर्ख होने से बचने का प्रयत्न करना । क्योंकि विद्वानों ने मूर्खों की निन्दा पुस्तकों में इस प्रकार की है कि—अबोध बालक को भी अगर कोई समझाने चाहे तो उसे सहज से कुछ समझाया जा सकता है और शिक्षित बुद्धिमान वातक प्रत्येक बात को बहुत धुंगम से ही समझ लेता है, परन्तु जिस मनुष्य में कुछ थोड़ा सा अज्ञान है, जिमपर वह अहंकार के मारे चूर रहता है, ऐसे ज्ञान-लब्धु दुराग्रही हठी मूर्खों को चार वेद के ज्ञाता ब्रह्मा भी नहीं समझा सकते हैं ।

२—यदि परिश्रम से बालू को पेरा जाय तो सम्भव है कि तेल निकल सकता है । और अत्यन्त तृपित प्राणी, मृगतृष्णा के निकट जाकर अपनी प्यास को बुझा सकता है । यदि जंगलों में सींग वाला खरगोश हूँदा जाय तो वह भी सम्भव है कि मिल सके । इतनी असम्भव बातों को भी नीतिकारों ने सम्भव कर माना है । परन्तु हठी मूर्खों को ज्ञान के प्रकाश में लाना कहते हैं कि टेढ़ी खीर ही है ।

३—कोई एक वस्तु पर जिस समय अग्नि का प्रकोप होत है तो उस समय मनुष्य पानी से शान्त कर सकता है । जब कड़ा धूप हो तो हम छत के नीचे रहकर धूप के ताप से बच सकते हैं । उन्मत्त दार्थी को अंकुश से अपने वश में कर सकते हैं । दुष्ट बैल और गधे को डण्डे से सीधा कर लिया जाता है । साँप जब किसी आदमी को डंस देवे तो दवाइयों या मन्त्रों से बीप उतारा जा सकता है । परन्तु मूर्खों के लिये शास्त्र वैसा ही है जैसा अन्धे के लिये दर्पण ।

इस लिये विद्यार्थियो ! तुम लोग बचपनसे ही लिखने पढ़ने का खूब अभ्यास करो ताकि तुम सब बड़े होओगे तो सारासार ग्रहण करने की तुम में निर्मल बुद्धि होगी । जैसे बून्दबून्द से तालाव भरता है, वैसे ही नित्य के विद्याभ्यास से मनुष्य विद्वान बनता है ।

— शब्दार्थ —

अबोध-बोधरहित, शिक्षित-पढ़ा लिखा, प्रत्येक बात-हरेक बात, अहंकार-अभिमान, चूर-भरपूर, तृपित-प्यासा, मृगतृष्णा-धूप में जलज्ञान, दर्पण-ऐनक ।

श्रीगणेशायनमः

श्लोक ० हे रघो रवे चन्द्र मङ्गल बुधा वावस्यतिर्भीर्गव ॥
शुक्राधानमून गुरु केतु सकला वायश्च ताश गणाः ॥
जगन् जोग महर्त्त दंड करणा माशाब्द पक्षर्त्तवः ॥
पर्वाद्यास्तिथयश्च रात्रि दिवशाः सन्ध्या चिरं पातवः ॥

1. सिद्धि श्री सकल गुणा गणा सम्पन्न महा मेरु समान धिर निज दुल
2. कमल दिवाकर धर्मधुरन्धर नाम उदित मान्यवर महाशय
3. श्रीचतुर्त्वाङ्गुलायः व केहंघोलायः वायव्या शशित जीको पत्रे
4. लिखि रेखेल बिलाज सान्चियेसे श्रीकीसुनमृतों का तरफसे
5. कोठानु कोटि प्रणाम यथा योग्य प्रेम परिपूर्णा नित्य प्रति दिनके
6. सविनयके साथ निवेदन आपके पदाब्जुजमें पहुंचे वारम्बार
दोहा * हरि इच्छा आनन्द इत . जानहु सब विधि तात

रहत निरंतर तव कुशल आठ पहर दिन रात १
महाशयजीको विदित होय कि आषाढ शुक्लपक्ष तिथि पंचमी ५
रविवार अंग्रेजी तारिख चौबीस जून 24. 6. 17 को हमारे कन्या का
शुभ विवाहोत्सव है. अतएव कोटिशः प्रार्थना है कि आपको यह
विजे युक्त निमन्त्रण आनन्द पूर्वक स्विकार होम. आशा है कि आप
जकर से कृपा करके पधारियेगा कि जिस्में हमारे मंडपका सोभा हो
और हमारे सभा मंडली विभूषित होय * दोहा * *

जिमि नकोर संतत सुखी. रहत निहारे चन्द
तिमि निज दर्शन देखके. किजै जोहि आनन्द २
सो. मम मन अति अभिलाष. तात तवानन दर्शकी
सत्य कहत शिव साखि. जिमि नकोर नन्दूहिं नहै ?
आगे ज्यादे निवेदन शुभम भवतू

आपका दर्शनाभिलाषी

श्रीकीसुनमृतों 16. 6. 17



मोरिशस में आर्यसमाज के प्रचार-कार्य

उदय नारायण गंगू बी० ए०

सन् १९१० से अब तक आर्य समाज ने इस टापू में वैदिक धर्म के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए प्रशंसनीय कार्य किया है। भारत से साधु-सम्रासी आते रहे और हमें वैदिक संस्कृति का ज्ञान कराने रहे। यदि आज भी कोई सज्जन आर्य समाज को एक नवीन सम्प्रदाय अथवा नया धर्म समझने का दुःसाहस करे तो उस भाग्यवान को दूर से ही नमस्कार कर देना चाहिए। बीसवीं शताब्दी के नवम दशक में यह कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं कि आर्य समाज वह संस्था है जिसका जन्म सनातन वैदिक धर्म की जन-जन तक पहुंचाने के लिए हुआ था।

आर्य-जगत वेद को ईश्वरीय ज्ञान मानता है। वेदज्ञ विद्वानों ने दर्शाया है कि वेद-मार्ग पर चल कर ही मानव का कल्याण हो सकता है। इसी भावना से प्रेरित होकर वेदों का पढ़ना-पढ़ाना, सुनना-सुनाना सच्चा आर्य समाजी सपना धर्म मानता है। खेद की बात है कि मोरिशसीय आर्य समाज का वैदिक प्रचार अब मन्द पड़ने लगा है। इसके कई कारणों में से एक कारण है—आर्य समाज का समय के साथ न चलना। समय के साथ न चलने का अनिप्राय है—प्रचार के आधुनिक साधनों से काम न लेना।

इस समय आर्य समाज केवल मंच से प्रचार करता है। मंच से प्रचार करने की बड़ी विशेषता रही है। इसमें प्रचारक तथा जनता का सम्बन्ध आमने-सामने का होता है। यदि सुवक्ता विद्वान द्वारा नाटकीय और मनोवैज्ञानिक रूप में विषय को प्रस्तुत किया जाय तो मंच के द्वारा प्रचार बड़ा ही सफल होगा है। आर्य समाज के प्रारम्भिक प्रचारकों ने इसी मंच से प्रचार कर के सफलता प्राप्त की थी। परन्तु आज के संदर्भ में मंचीय प्रचार कमजोर पड़ गया है, क्योंकि वर्तमान समय में प्रचारक के सामने केवल मुट्ठी भर श्रोता ही आते हैं। अधिकांश श्रोता तो रेडियो और टेलीविजन के सामने बैठे रहते हैं। इसलिए आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि अब प्रचार घर-घर पहुंचे। यह अभी ही सकता है जब प्रचार के आधुनिक साधनों से काम लिया जाय।

प्रेस अथवा समाचार पत्र

प्रेस प्रचार का एक महत्वपूर्ण साधन है। प्रेस की सहायता से एक व्यक्ति अथवा समूह के विचारों को बहुत ही शीघ्र जनसाधारण तक पहुंचाया जा सकता है। प्रेस के द्वारा यह कार्य पुस्तकों, लेखों और समाचार-पत्रों के द्वारा किया जाता है। लगभग प्रत्येक समाज में समाचार-पत्रों के कथन को सबसे अधिक प्रामाणिक और निष्पक्ष समझा जाता है। इसीलिए इनमें दिये गये सुझावों को शीघ्र ही ग्रहण कर लिया जाता है। मोरिशसीय जनता के लिए पत्रों पर लेख अंग्रेजी, फ्रेंच और हिन्दी में प्रकाशित होने चाहिए। जिन समाचार-पत्रों को ग्राहक-संख्या अधिक हो, उनपर लेख अवश्य ही आने चाहिए। आर्य सभा मंदिर-निर्माण के लिए रुपये दान करती है। आज मंदिरों के दरवाजे अक्सर बन्द दिखाई पड़ते हैं। क्या ही अच्छा होता यदि वे रुपये प्रचार में व्यय किये जाते।

रेडियो - टेलीविजन

रेडियो और टेलीविजन प्रचार का सबसे आधुनिक साधन है। अपने पचास वर्षों के इतिहास में रेडियो ने इतना महत्वपूर्ण स्थान ग्रहण कर लिया है कि इसे प्रचार का सर्वोत्तम साधन समझा

दुधवार ता० ११ सितम्बर १९५१

जाने लगा है। स्थानीय रेडियो-टेलीविजन से अन्य सम्प्रदायों के धार्मिक कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत होते रहते हैं। जिन सम्प्रदायों के अनुयायियों को उँगलियों पर गिना जा सकता है, उनको भी पर्याप्त समय दिया जाता है। पिछली जन गणना के अनुसार धार्मिक समाजियों की संख्या एक लाख से अधिक बताई गई है। क्या उनको अपने धार्मिक कार्यक्रम के लिए रेडियो-टेली-विजन पर समय नहीं मिलेगा? प्रतिमास में धार्मिक समाज का कोई न कोई पर्व आता ही रहता है। उस अवसर पर वैदिक धर्म पर आधारित गोष्ठियाँ, संगीत, परिसम्वाद, झलकियाँ, भाषण और वाक्ता प्रस्तुत कर सकते हैं। इस कार्य के लिए सभा को बजट तैयार करना चाहिए ताकि योग्य व्यक्ति इस ओर ध्यान दे सकें।

शिक्षा

वर्तमान युग में शिक्षा को भी प्रचार के एक महत्वपूर्ण साधन के रूप में देखा जाता है। यहाँ कारण है कि कई सरकारों द्वारा पाठ्यक्रम में ऐसे विषयों को सम्मिलित करने पर जोर देते हैं जो सरकार द्वारा किये गये कार्यों का प्रचार कर सकें। राज्य द्वारा ऐसी पुस्तकों को मान्यता दी जाती है, जो सरकारी नीति की प्रशंसा करती हों। हमारी धार्मिक सामाजिक पाठशालाओं में शिक्षा दीर्घपूर्ण है, क्योंकि यह शिक्षा हमारे धर्म पर आधारित नहीं है। फलतः धार्मिक समाज से पढ़कर निकलने वाले छात्रों में वैदिक धर्म की छाप नहीं होती। धार्मिक सभा को उचित शिक्षा के लिए योजना बनानी पड़ेगी। ऐसा प्रशिक्षण केंद्र खोलना पड़ेगा जहाँ से योग्य पंडित-पुरोहित बनने का प्रशिक्षण मिल सके। दुर्भाग्य है कि सभा ने अब तक इस क्षेत्र में ध्यान नहीं दिया है।

यदि उपर्युक्त सुझावों पर ध्यान दिया गया तो प्रचार-कार्य की गति तीव्र हो सकती है। प्रचार-कार्य में लगे सेवकों को भी पर्याप्त प्रोत्साहन मिलना चाहिए। अन्यथा तन-मन लगाकर कार्य करने वालों का अभाव खटकता रहेगा। इस कार्य में जात देने वालों को धार्मिक कठिनाइयों से निश्चित कर देना चाहिए।

APPENDIX VII

Hindi newspapers in Mauritius

- Hindusthānī: established by Manilāl Doctor in 1909. First (1909-1913) appeared in Gujarati and English, later in Hindi and English. At the outset it appeared weekly and later daily. It ceased to appear in 1913.
- Maurīśas Ārya patrikā: established by the Ārya Samaj in 1911 with the (1911-1913) Hindi press donated by Manilāl Doctor. It appeared (1924-1940) fortnightly in Hindi and English. It ceased to appear in 1913. It reappeared in 1924 as a weekly and existed until 1940.
- The Oriental Gazette: established by S.Ramloll, Attorney-at-law in (1912-1914) 1912, principally to support the orthodox Sanātan dharma. It appeared in Hindi and English, daily at the outset and weekly later. It ceased to appear in 1914.
- Mauritius Indian Times: established in 1920 by supporters of the (1920-1924) Sanātan dharma. It appeared daily in English, French and Hindi. It ceased to appear in 1924.
- Mauritius mitra: established in 1924 by supporters of the Sanātan (1924-1932) dharma. It appeared daily in English, French and Hindi. It ceased to appear in 1932.
- Alaṅkāṛ: established in 1927. It appeared monthly in (1927) English and Hindi. It was very short-lived.
- Ārya vīr: established in 1929 by Ārya Pratinidhi Sabhā. It (1929-1945) appeared weekly in English and Hindi. It ceased to appear in 1945.

- Sanātan dharmārk: established in 1933 by the Hindu Mahā Sabhā. It (1933-1942) appeared weekly in English, French and Hindi. It ceased to appear in 1942.
- Sanātan dharma patrikā: established after 1942 to replace Sanātan dharmārk but was very short-lived.
- Jāgriti: established in 1939 by the Ārya Paropkārīṇī Sabhā. (1939-1945) It appeared in English, French and Hindi. It ceased to appear in 1945.
- Māsik ciṭṭhī: established by the Public Relations Office of the (1942-1950) Government of Mauritius in 1942. It appeared monthly in Hindi, through the entire period of the Second World War. It ceased to appear in 1950.
- Ārya-vīr-Jāgriti: established jointly in 1939 by the Ārya Pratinidhi (1945-1950) Sabhā and the Ārya Paropkārīṇī Sabhā. It appeared weekly in English and Hindi. It ceased to appear in 1950.
- Sainik: established by B.Bucktowarsingh. It appeared (1946-1947) occasionally in Hindi between 1946 and 1947.
- Vasant: established by O.S.Geerjanan. It appeared quarterly in Hindi in the late 1940's.
- Durgā: hand-written paper of the H.P.S. It circulated among some members of the organization in the late 1940's.
- Janatā: established in 1948 by a company run by a board (1948-1982) of governors.
- Zamānā: established in 1948 by S.Bissoondoyal. It (1948-1977) appeared fortnightly in English, French, Hindi and as from 1952, occasionally, in Marathi too. It ceased to appear in 1977.
- Āryoday: established in 1950 by the Arya Samaj. It appeared (1950-to-date) weekly in Hindi for many years until recently when it became a fortnightly.

- Vartamān:
(1953-1958) established in 1953 by R.Tivari. It appeared weekly in Hindi until 1958.
- Mazdūr:
(1956-1959) established in 1953 by R.Baboolall. It appeared occasionally in English, French and Hindi. It ceased to appear in 1959.
- Divālī Sandeś:
(1955-1959) established in 1955 by M.Mohit, president of the Arya Samaj, Mauritius. It appeared in Hindi once yearly for five consecutive years.
- Navjīvan:
(1960-1964) established in 1960 by S.M.Bhagat, General Secretary of the H.P.S. It appeared in Hindi fortnightly at first and weekly later. It ceased to appear in 1964.
- Samājvād:
(1960-1961) established in 1960 by S.Sharma. It appeared in Hindi weekly until 1961.
- Anurāg:
(1960-1961?) established by D.Sharma. It appeared in Hindi quarterly until 1961 (?).
- Congress:
(1964-1967?) established in 1964 by S.Sharma. It appeared in Hindi weekly until 1967 (?).
- Bāl-sakhā:
(1965) established by Hindī Lekhak Saṅgh in August 1965. It appeared in Hindi occasionally until October 1965.
- Dhārmik sevā śivir:
(1968) established in July 1968 by Svamī Kṛṣṇānand. It appeared in Hindi occasionally. It was short-lived.
- Anurāg:
(1969-1977) re-established in 1969 by Hindī Pariṣad. It appeared in Hindi quarterly until 1977.
- Vasant:
(1977-to-date) established in 1977 by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. It appears in Hindi monthly.

Most of the information used in the preparation of this list is derived from M.Chintamunnee, Hindī ke ādhār-stambh (Port-Louis, 1966).

APPENDIX VIII

११—संतुलित भोजन

हमारा जीवन वायु, जल और भोजन पर आधारित है। वायु और जल ईश्वर की कृपा से बिना परिश्रम किए मिल जाते हैं। भोजन के लिए परिश्रम करना पड़ता है। खेल-कूद, सोच-विचार, पढ़ाई-लिखाई सब प्रकार के काम करने की शक्ति प्राप्त करने के लिए अच्छे भोजन की आवश्यकता होती है।

अच्छे भोजन में विटामिन अथवा पोषक तत्व होने चाहिए। ऐसा भोजन शरीर में गरमी तथा शक्ति उत्पन्न करता है। शरीर की टूट-फूट की मरम्मत करता है। बढ़ने में सहायता करता है। शरीर को स्वस्थ, बलिष्ठ, सुन्दर और रोग रहित रखता है।

मिला जुला भोजन स्वास्थ्य के लिए अधिक लाभदायक है। निम्नलिखित पांच वर्गों में से प्रत्येक वर्ग से उचित मात्रा में रसि अनुसार खाद्य पदार्थ छांट कर संतुलित भोजन करना चाहिए।

शरीर की मांस पेशियाँ बनाने और उनका जो भाग

नष्ट हो जाता है, उसकी मरम्मत के लिए प्रोटीन की आवश्यकता होती है। यह गेहूँ, दूध, दही, पनीर, मटर, फली, दाल, फल और पत्तेदार सब्जियों में पाई जाती है।

हड्डियों एवं दांतों को मजबूत बनाने के लिए कैल्शियम की आवश्यकता होती है। यह दूध, दही, पनीर, हरे शाक, सूखे फल और दाल में पाई जाती है। साधारण नमक भोजन को स्वादिष्ट बनाता है और स्वास्थ्य के लिए आवश्यक है।

शक्ति उत्पन्न करने के लिए चावल, दाल, रोटी, अनाज, आलू, शाक, चीनी, फल, मधु, खजूर आदि सूखे फल खाने चाहिए।

शरीर को गरम रखने के लिए मक्खन, घी, मलाई, तेल, मारगरीन आदि स्निग्ध पदार्थ सेवन करने चाहिए।

उत्तम रक्त कोष बनाने के लिए, बीमारी से बचने के लिए पालक, चौलाई, बन्दगोभी आदि पत्तेदार सब्जी, प्याज, टमाटर, रसोले फल, विशेषकर नींबू, सन्तरा आदि खाना लाभदायक है।

प्रतिदिन एक ही तरह का भोजन करने से लाभ नहीं होता। ऋतु और रुचि अनुसार अदल बदल कर संतुलित



भोजन करने से पेट साफ़ रहता है । रुधिर संचार बना रहता है । खाज खुजली नहीं होती । मन प्रसन्न रहता है ।

शरीर भगवान् का मन्दिर है। टूटे-फूटे मन्दिर में जैसे भगवान् की मूर्ति शोभा नहीं बेती वैसे ही बीमार शरीर में आत्मा जिसे परमात्मा भी कहते हैं, सुखी नहीं रहती।

(रूप सुधा)

—०—

पाठ 16

कटनी

सितंबर का महीना था। कटनी के दिन थे। राजू ने अपने साथी, विमल से बहुत बार कहा था— आजकल कटनी हो रही है। कभी खेत पर आ जाना। हम मीठे-मीठे गन्ने खाएँगे।

शनिवार था। विमल लगभग नौ बजे राजू के घर पहुँचा। राजू ने विमल को देखा। वह दौड़कर विमल के पास गया और उसे खेत में ले गया।

मौसम अच्छा था। कड़ी धूप थी, लेकिन हवा चल रही थी। बीच-बीच में हलके बादल भी छा जाते थे। राजू के बड़े भाई के हाथ में गँडासा था। वे गन्ने काट रहे थे। वे एक लाली पूरी करके रुके। थोड़ी देर तक उन्होंने कसर सीधी की, थोड़ा पानी पिया, फिर वे काम में लग गए।

खेत के किनारे एक बैलगाड़ी थी। एक मजदूर गाड़ी पर गन्ने लाद रहा था। राजू के पिता पंजे-के-पंजे गन्ने सड़क के किनारे रख रहे थे। जब गाड़ी कारखाने चली गई, तो मजदूर ने भी गन्ने काटना शुरू किया। राजू के पिता लाली में अगौरे इकट्ठे करने लगे।

राजू और विमल मीठे-मीठे गन्ने छीलकर खाने लगे। विमल ने कुछ अच्छे-अच्छे गन्ने भी इकट्ठे किए। राजू के पिता ने कहा— अब धूप बहुत तेज हो रही है। तुम दोनों घर जाओ।

राजू और विमल गन्ने चूसते हुए खेत से निकल आए। विमल बहुत प्रसन्न था।

1. पढ़ो और समझो _____

सितंबर, कटनी, आजकल, गजना, लगभग,
सौसस, गँडासा, सज़दूर, पंजे-के-पंजे, कारखाना, अगौर,
इकट्ठा ।

2. पूर्ण भूतकाल में लिखो _____

- (i) राजू ने तुरुहारे बारे में बहुत बार कहा था । (कहना)
 (ii) सुझे उसने एक बार _____। (बुलाना)
 (iii) अध्यापक ने यह बात कई बार _____। (समझाना)
 (iv) मैंने तुरुहे उसका पता बार-बार _____। (बताना)

3. पढ़ो, समझो और पूरा करो _____

- (i) दृष्ट्या हो तो कभी भी आ जाना ।
 (ii) जल जी चाहे तब चले _____।
 (iii) काम करके सो _____।
 (iv) सवेरे जल्दी उठ _____।
 (v) काम आते ही चढ़ _____।

4. पढ़ो, समझो और लिखो _____

- (i) उसने पानी पिया । (पीना)
 (ii) रुन्होंने रोटी _____। (खाना)
 (iii) बेटी ने चाय _____। (लेना)

- (iv) बेटे ने झूलती —। (चखना)
(v) सोहन ने ईस —। (चूसना)
(vi) उसा ने आस —। (खाना)

5. नीचे दिष्ट गद्य उदाहरण के अनुसार लिखो —

- (i) राजू और विसल गन्ने चूसते हुँ खेत से निकले । (चूसना)
(ii) अजय और विजय गीत — — घर में आउ । (गाना)
(iii) सोहन और असर — — मैदान में आउ । (दौड़ना)
(iv) मुन्ना और मुन्नी — — कमरे से निकले । (रोना)

6. पढ़ो, समझो और लिखो —

- (i) विसल लगभग नौ बजे राजू के घर पहुँचा ।
(ii) मैं बारह बजे के — आप के घर आऊँगा ।
(iii) पिता जी तीन बजे के — लौटेंगे ।
(iv) सकान बनाने में नाना के — पचास हजार रुपये खर्च हुँ।
(v) उसका सकान — पूरा हो चुका है ।

7. पढ़ो, समझो और लिखो —

- (i) रसेब अट्ठी कहानी सुनाता है ।

कल उसने एक अट्ठी कहानी सुनाई ।

- (ii) यह पुस्तक सोहन की है ।

— यह मुझे पढ़ने को दी है ।

समुद्र की लहरें कभी चीत्कर कर उठतीं कभी कराह उठतीं। राकेश सिगरेट के कश दर बसा लिये जा रहा था। उस के मूस और नाक से निकले धुएँ कमरे में विद्रोह करते से लग रहे थे। सामने के सोफे पर सुपमा बैठी थी। दोनों अपनी अपनी समय की धड़कनें गिनते हुए अपने जीवन के मय बड़े सस्पेंस को जी रहे थे। राकेश चहलकदमी कर रहा था। कमरे को छुआ-घार होने से बचाने के लिए वह दीवार के पास पहुँचा और रस्सी खींच कर वे निसान क्लाइड को ऊपर उठा दिया। सिड़की से नीचे की ओर देखा। अर्द्ध अपने नये पलाई-मो एअर-कंडीशन-मोअर में लान की बड़ी हुई घास काटे जा रहा था। मोअर की आवाज समुद्र नाद के साथ अजीब कोलाहल पैदा कर रही थी। राकेश को ये समिथित आवाजें खल रहीं थीं। सिड़की को बन्द करना भी उस से नहीं हो पा रहा था क्योंकि कमरे में पहले ही से उमस थी।

सुपमा काऊच पर बैठी कभी राकेश की ओर देखती तो कभी दीवार की सेल्फ रिवाइडिंग घड़ी की ओर, और उसकी हर टक-टिक के साथ अपने हृदय की धड़कनों को सुनने लग जाती। उसे प्रतीत हो रहा था कि वह कपड़ों की दुकान में काम करने वाली सुपमा के भीतर कैद थी। सुपमा कैद थी राकेश के भीतर उस के अपने ही धन-वान मालिक के बेटे की कैद में और राकेश कैद था अपने बाप के इस दो मंजिले बंगले में। यहाँ तक कि यह सुन्दर बंगला भी उसे मुक्त नहीं दिखाई पड़ रहा था। वह भी बन्द था राकेश के बाप की मुट्ठी में। काऊच से उठ कर वह सिड़की के पास पहुँची। बाहर की ओर भाँका। एक ओर उफनता हुआ समुद्र था। ज्वार-भाटों के बीच खलबली थी। प्रवालरेखा के उस पार से पाल वाली नौकाएँ प्रलयंकर लहरों के बीच किनारे का रास्ता ढूँढ रही थीं। दूसरी ओर भाँके के पेटों से होते हुए शहर को जाने वाला मुनसान रास्ता था। राकेश के पास पहुँच कर उगने धीरे से काने स्वर में पूछा।

—तुम्हें अब भी विश्वास है कि जीत तुम्हारी होगी?

राकेश ने रोनसोन लाईटर से सिगरेट मुलगाते हुए ओटोमेटिक ढंग से सिर हिला-कर हाँसी भर दी। सुपमा लम्बी साँस लेकर अपनी जगह पर जा बैठी। बाहर से लान-मोअर और समुद्र का गर्जन बढ़ता ही जा रहा था। सुपमा ने अपने दोनों हाथों से कानों को बन्द कर लिया फिर भी आवाज सुनाई पड़ती ही रही। कानों से हाथों को हटा कर उसने अर्द्ध बन्द कर ली। कुछ देर तक उसी तरह रहने के बाद उस ने राकेश की ओर देखते हुए कहा।

—तुम्हें तो डर लग रहा है।

राकेश की चहलकदमी रुक गयी। क्षण भर को सुपमा की ओर देखने के बाद वह छोटी सी मेज के पास पहुँचा। उसके कमल में बैठते हुए उसने उसकी बांह धामे उसे अपनी ओर खींच लिया। वह खिच गयी। उसके दाहिने कान के पास अपने हाँठों को ले जाते हुए बोला।

—डर किस बात का?

—कहीं हमारी हार हो गयी तो?

—हमारी हार क्यों होने लगी?

—अगर तुम्हारे पिता जी पंडित जी से पहले ही पहुँच जायें तो?

योंही कुछ देर तक दोनों एक दूसरे के प्रश्नों के उत्तर प्रश्नों ही से देते रहे। अन्त में सुपमा के माथे पर लटकती बालों की लट हटाते हुए राकेश ने कहा।

—जीवन में निराशावादी होकर जीना दुश्वार है।

यह कह कर वह सुद निराशावाद स्थानों में खो गया।

जिस समय वह मन्दिर के पुजारी से बातें कर रहा था उस समय उसका बाप भी वहीं था। आँवेस में उस के साथ उस का बाप भी बहुत कुछ कह गया था। वे उसके पिता के अन्तिम वाक्य थे जो उस के कानों में पूँज रहे थे। उमने दाँत पिसते हुए कहा था।

—अपनी नौकरानी को रानी बनाने की बात? जीते जी नहीं। मेरे बंगले में तुम गंधर्व विवाह की बात सोच सकते हो! इस साहस के लिए तुम्हें दाय देना है पर

घरौंदा

*

सफीना खोदावहस

मेरी ओर से यह सुन लो कि मैं वहाँ तुम्हारे पण्डित से पहले पहुँच कर तुम्हारे गेन को बसेड़ा बना दूँगा।

वह अपने बाप की भाँदा को अच्छी तरह समझता था। वह यह भी जानता था कि उस का बाप अगर चाहे तो दुनिया को नारंगी की तरह छील सकता है। सुपमा के बालों को चूमते हुए उस ने कहा।

—पंडित जी आते ही होंगे। शहर के सब से कुशल लाइवर को वहाँ छोड़ आया है।

—पर शहर की सब से तेज दौड़ने वाली मोटर तो तुम्हारे बाप के पास है।

सुपमा के इस वाक्य ने राकेश को काऊच पर से उठ जाने को विवश कर दिया। सुपमा उसे भारी कदमों से चलकर सिड़की के पास जाते देखती रही। उसे सिगरेट जलाते देख वह समझ गयी कि शहर की ओर से आने वाला रास्ता अब भी मुक्तान था। सिगरेट का पहला बदा लिये हुए जब वह सुपमा की ओर मुड़ा उस समय चेहरे का रंग ऐसा लग रहा था मानों किसी ने उसे एक गहरी नींद से जगा दिया हो। सूर्य का प्रकाश उस की दाँयी कमपटी पर होने के कारण उस के चेहरे की चिन्ता और अधीरता स्पष्ट थीं। सुपमा ने सामने की नीली दीवार की ओर देखा। सूर्य किरणें प्रोजेक्टर की तरह राकेश और उसकी अपनी

मसात प्राणका को दीवार पर प्रदर्शित करती सी प्रतीत हो रही थी। वह बँठी रही अपनी हर धड़कन को धामे।

मोटर की आवाज—सी कई आवाज हुई। सुपमा और राकेश दोनों एक साथ खिड़की के पास पहुँचे। लम्बा रास्ता अब भी समझाम की तरह सुनसान था। वही खलने वाली नीरवता। समुद्र की लहरें अब भी उसी तरह चिल्लाये जा रही थीं। दोनों इस गर्जन के आदि थे लेकिन आज तो सभी कुछ व्यग कर रहे—लेग रहे थे। इधर दो वर्षों से दोनों एक साथ समुद्र के कोलाहल को सुनते आ रहे थे। इस तट तक के सभी गर्जन एक—से थे। सभी में प्यार का हास था, आज वहीं सब कुछ व्यग के ठहाने की तरह लग रहे थे।

सुपमा लौट कर अपनी जगह पर बैठ गयी। राकेश बिन कुछ कहे कोने के फिज के पास पहुँचा। कोका—कोला की दो बोतलें निकालीं। फिज भ्रॉफ होने के कारण बोतलों को जितनी ठंडी होनी चाहिए थी, उतनी नहीं थी। उस ने बोतल सुपमा के सामने वाली छोटी—सी मेज पर रखी और दूसरी के साथ कमरे से बाहर हो गया। जीने उतरते हुए उस के कदमों की चन्द आहटें मिलती रहीं फिर मोझर और ज्वार भाटे की आवाज जोरदार हुई और पर्शों की आहट बन्द हो गयी। सुपमा अपनी धड़कनों को गिनती—सुनती बँठी रही। उस के चेहरे पर पसीना आने लगा था। बहुत कुछ सोचते रहने वाली सुपमा आज कुछ भी नहीं सोच पा रही थी। भतीत के खयालों में जीने वाली सुपमा आज वर्तमान के बन्धन में इस कदर जकड़ी हुई थी कि साँस लेना दुश्वार हो रहा था। वर्तमान उस से भविष्य का प्रश्न कर रहा था।

—प्राये क्या होगा ?

अर्थ से अर्थ की प्रासंका ने उसे कपा दिया। अपने स्थान से उठ कर वह राकेश की तरह चहलकदमी करने लगी। बाहर का माहौल अब भी कोलाहलमय था। लहरें अब भी कराह रही थीं। मोझर अब भी परंपरा रहा था। समुद्र में उपल—पुधल थी। नावें डोलती दिखाई पड़ रही थीं। नीचे हरी घास के गलीचे से होते हुए राकेश की ओर जाते दिखाई पड़ा। उस के हाथ में

अब भी कोला—कोका की बोतल थीं। राफेद बालू पर पहुँच कर वह बैठ गया। सुपमा को अपने से अधिक चिन्ता राकेश के लिए हो रही थी। वह अपने ही को सभी अर्थों का कारण समझने को विवश थी। वह जानती थी कि राकेश का बाप यह! पहुँचते ही अपने साथ लाये दो तीन अन्य व्यक्तियों द्वारा राकेश को एक बच्चे की तरह उठवा कर अपनी मोटर में बँठा लेगा। जाते—जाते सुपमा की ओर देखते हुए यह कह जायेगा।

—तुम्हारा सेल समाप्त हो गया। कल से तुम्हारी नौकरी बन्द।

दूसरे ही दिन राकेश को विवश मारीशस छोड़ना ही पड़ेगा क्योंकि अपने बाप के सामने पच्चीस का होकर भी वह सदा तीन—चार वर्ष का बच्चा ही रहता है। राकेश को पहले—पहल तो वह इस बात के लिए समझाती रह गयी थी कि उसे अपनी योग्यता का तो भी खयाल करना है। राकेश हँस कर रह जाता है। उस समय सुपमा हैसियत की माद दिलाती हुई उसे अपने से दूर करना चाहती थी! आज वह खुद उसके प्रति निकट पहुँच जाने की कोशिश में उसे अपने में साहस लाने की बात कहती रहती है। राकेश किसी एक मदि व्यक्ति की तरह कठिनाई के साथ कहता कि वह सभी कुछ कर सकता है पर अपने बाप का सामना उससे न हो सकेगा। कभी उसे किसी बच्चे की तरह समझाती हुई सुपमा कहती।

—पिता जी उन लोगों में थोड़े ही हैं जिन्हें दलील द्वारा फुकाया या मनाया जा सके।

—वे प्यार से जीते जा सकते हैं।

—प्यार से दूसरों को जीतने की शक्ति अब रही कहीं। सभी बुद्धि और शक्ति तो तुम्हें जीतने में लगा दी।

—तो फिर करे तो क्या ?

—एक उपाय है।

—वह क्या ? सुपमा ने प्राशा भरे स्वर में पूछा था।

—हम दोनों का विवाह ! यही एक दाव है जिस में पिता जी अपनी हार मानने को विवश हो जायेंगे।

—तुम तो सम्भव को असम्भव कह कर असम्भव को सम्भव बता रहे हो। निराश भरे स्वर में सुपमा बोली थी।

—नहीं सुपमा ! यही हो कर रहेगा। बहुत सोचने के बाद मैं इस नतीजे पर पहुँचा हूँ।

वह खिड़की से हट कर कोने में पहुँची। वही नीले रंग का सोफा जिस पर पहले बार वह राकेश की बगल में बँठी थी। उस ने अपने शरीर को इनतौप पिहलो के सहारे छोड़ दिया। उसे अपनी सुन्दर साड़ी का तनिक भी खयाल नहीं था और अपने शरीर का तो इस से भी कम। वह अपने आप से बातें करती रही। वह अपने आप से कुछ भी कह रही थी। उसका एक शब्द भी उस की समझ में नहीं आ पा रहा था। उसने अपने आप को भकभोरा फिर भी बात उस की समझ से बाहर ही रही। उसे अपनी हँसी सुनाई पड़ी। हेरत में पढ़ कर उसने जल्दी से अपना हेण्ड बाग खोला और उस के छोटे से झाड़ने में अपनी सूत देखी। उसका अनुमान ठीक ही था। वह बिल्कुल नहीं हँस रही थी फिर भी उसे अपनी हँसी की आवाज सुनाई पड़ी थी। वह डर गयी। खिड़की के पास पहुँच कर समुद्र की ओर देखा। राकेश बालू पर बँठे एकटक शहर की ओर देख रहा था जिस ओर से मोटर आने की सम्भावना थी। सागर चिल्ला रहा था पहले से भी जोरदार गर्जन के साथ। सुपमा ने आवाज देकर राकेश को लौटाना चाहा पर उसकी आवाज उसी के भीतर की गहराई में खोकर रह गयी।

सोफे पर दोबारा बँठती हुई उस ने मन ही मन बहुत सारी प्रार्थनाएँ कर डालीं। उसने अपनी ही आवाज सुनी।

—मैं सोचती हूँ सभी कुछ अच्छी तरह.....

—और अगर पंडित जी से पहले.....

यह भी उसी की प्रचुरी आवाज थी। वह उसी नीले सोफे पर बँठी थी, जिस पर उस दिन भी बँठी थी जब राकेश उसे अपनी आँखों से खामे और पीये जा रहा था। उस समय वह मिनी स्कर्ट में थी। राकेश को अपलक अपनी ओर देखते पा कर उसने हल्की मुस्कान के साथ अपने एक पैर पर दूसरे पैर को रख लिया था पर राकेश की आँखों के मंगारे बुभ नहीं पा रहे थे। सुपमा ने उसी मुस्कान के साथ घीरे से कहा था।

—शादी के बाद । *

APPENDIX XI

मोरिशस

में

भोजपुरी साहित्य

*

मुनीश्वरलाल चिन्तामणि

आजकल पूर्व प्राथमिक स्तर पर क्रियाशीलता की शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में अधिकधिक बल दिया जा रहा है। यह प्रयत्न किया जा रहा है कि क्रियाशील धीरे-धीरे मोरिशसीय साहित्य में महत्वपूर्ण स्थान प्राप्त करे। पिछले दशक में यहाँ जो क्रियाशील उपन्यास, कहानी-संग्रह, नाटक, कविता-संग्रह आदि प्रकाशित हुए हैं वे इस बात का प्रमाण हैं। क्या यही बात भोजपुरी के सम्बन्ध में भी कही जा सकती है?

अपने पिछले लेख में मैंने पूर्व प्राथमिक शिक्षा में भोजपुरी की स्थान दिलाने की बात पर विचार किया। प्रस्तुत लेख में हम भोजपुरी में साहित्य-सृजन की वर्तमान स्थिति तथा आगे के लिए सम्भावनाओं पर उपलब्ध सामग्रियों के आधार पर विचार करेंगे।

सर्वप्रथम हम लोक-साहित्य के संरक्षण तथा अध्ययन के क्षेत्र में हुए कार्य का उल्लेख करेंगे।

सन् १९६६ — “मधुकलश” — ब्रजेन्द्र भगत “मधुकर”।

सन् १९७० — “मोरिशस की भोजपुरी” — रामेश्वर श्रोरी।

सन् १९७४ — “सनातनी विवाह के गीत” — पं० बौद्धनाथ रामनाथ पाण्डे।

“मधुकलश” में मधुकर ने मोरिशस में गाये जाने वाले भजन, व्याह के गीत, सोहर, बिरहा, भूषण, वारहमासा आदि लोक गीतों के संकलन के साथ कुछ नये गीत भी दिए हैं जो स्वयं उनके लिखे हुए हैं। डा० रामधारीसिंह “दिनकर” के अनुसार “मधुकलश” लोक संस्कृति की दृष्टि से बहुत ही अच्छा ग्रन्थ है। यह मोरिशस के हिन्दुओं और भोजपुर के निवासियों के बीच सम्पर्क स्थापित करता है।” दरअसल इन लोक-गीतों में धानन्द-उल्लास ही नहीं बल्कि प्यार-मस्ती, शौर्य, बिरह-वेदना आदि अनेक मनोरम चित्र सजाए गए हैं।

स्वर्गीय डा० रामेश्वर श्रोरी ने अपने शोध-प्रबंध “मोरिशस की भोजपुरी” में भूमिका के रूप में मोरिशस का संक्षिप्त भौतिक, ऐतिहासिक एवं सामाजिक परिचय दिया है। प्रथम अध्याय में भाषा सम्पर्क से उत्पन्न भाषागत परिवर्तन का संज्ञानात्मक विवेचन किया गया है। दूसरे से पाँचवें अध्याय में क्रमशः मोरिशसीय भोजपुरी के ध्वनि, पद, शब्द-समूह तथा वाक्य विन्यास का सोधाहरण विप्लवण भाषाशास्त्र के आधार पर किया गया है। परिशिष्ट में शोधकर्ता ने सहायक ग्रन्थों की सूची के प्रतिरिक्त वाक्त्रियों, लोक कथाओं तथा लोक गीतों के रूप में मोरिशसीय भोजपुरी के नमूने भी दिये हैं। मोरिशसीय भोजपुरी पर प्रथम शोध-प्रबंध लिख कर श्रोरी जी ने जिस धर्म और साहस का परिचय दिया है वह हमारे लिए अनुकरणीय है। पं० बौद्धनाथ रामनाथ पाण्डे जी की पुस्तिका “सनातनीय विवाह के गीत” में विवाह के अवसर पर गाए जाने वाले गीत संकलित हैं। इस में “तिलक”, “हरदी”, “हवन”, “द्वारपूजा”, “परछावन”, “पुरठाई” के गीतों के अलावा व्याह के समय, समधी के भोजन करते समय,

कोहबर जाने के समय के गीत आदि लोक साहित्य की खास चीजें मिलती हैं।

यब हम प्रकाशित मौलिक रचनाओं के सम्बन्ध में विचार करेंगे।

सन् १९६३ — “पुरहू मोसा के सनेस” ब्रजेन्द्र भगत “मधुकर”।

सन् १९६७ — “स्वरजवा मिलके रही” ब्रज भूषण माधुर।

सन् १९७१ — “भोजपुरी लोकगीत” ब्रजेन्द्र भगत “मधुकर”।

सन् १९७२ — “भोजपुरी गीत” रुद्रदत्त पोखन।

सन् १९७६ — “भोजपुरी विशेषांक” वसंत भासिक पत्रिका।

ब्रजेन्द्र भगत “मधुकर” ने अपनी “रस-रंग” नामक पुस्तक में हिन्दी कविताओं के साथ-साथ भोजपुरी गीतों का संकलन “पुरहू मोसा के सनेस” शीर्षक के अंतर्गत किया है। इस में उनके तरह सरत गीत हैं:- अरे हिमालय गरज रहल बा, पुरहू मोसा के अलाप, डाक्टर रागुमलाम, नवजवान से, पुरहू मोसा के सनेस, छब्वीस जनवरी, हिन्दी की महिमा भोजपुरी में, तिरबेनी की जय जय, वहिनी लोगन से, बनाने, सोरजवा मिलके रही, जल्दी करादे गबनवा राम और बापू जग के पार लगवलन।

मधुकर जी ने इन गीतों को सार्वजनिक जुटाओं में गाया है और जनता ने इन का आस्वादन किया है। इन गीतों की एक और विशेषता यह है कि वे हमें सामाजिक स्थिति का दिग्दर्शन भी कराते हैं।

ब्रजभूषण माधुर ने अपनी पुस्तक “रख बेरी” के दूसरे भाग में भोजपुरी गीतों को “स्वरजवा मिलके रही” शीर्षक के अंतर्गत संकलित किया है। कवि ने स्वराज आंदोलन के दिनों में — अरे आजादी जगा रहल बा, सोरजवा मिलके रही, आजादी के बिरहा, धरती भागत बा बलिदान आदि गीतों को गाकर जन सामान्य के बीच इन्हें प्रचलित

किया। इस में सन्देह नहीं कि राष्ट्रीय जागरण की दृष्टि से इन गीतों का ग्रपना महत्व है।

“भोजपुरी लोक-गीत” इन्द्र अगत ‘मधुकर’ के स्वरचित गीत है जो लोकगीत की धुनों के आधार पर लिखे गए हैं। ये उनकी ‘मधुमास’ पुस्तक में हिन्दी कविताओं के साद-साय संकलित हैं। मधुकर जी ने बगाने, पटुआ, तूम का पैसा, फामिशी प्लानिंग, फूटल पसीयवा हमार, होरी नय जवनवा आदि गीतों को लिखकर यहाँ सामाजिक नवजागरण लाने का प्रयास किया है।

“भोजपुरी-गीत” इन्द्र अगत के अठारह भोजपुरी गीतों का एक संग्रह है। गायक होने के नाते अपनी रचनाओं को गाकर उन्होंने जनसाधारण में इन्हें लोकप्रिय बनाया है। उनके अधिकतर गीतों में जहाँ भोजपुरी की माधुरी छलकती है वहाँ ‘कलजुगी नाम पर मरे जा’, ‘भीद से उठ हो’, ‘आज के तहनवा’ आदि गीतों में आज का उवार लहराता है।

अक्टूबर १९७६ में महात्मा गांधी संस्थान ने अपनी साहित्यिक पत्रिका “वसंत” का एक भोजपुरी विशेषांक प्रकाशित किया। संस्थान के निदेशक डा. के. हजारीसिंह ने अपने सम्पादन में हमारा ध्यान इस बात की ओर आकृष्ट किया है कि भोजपुरी और हिन्दी के अचार-दसार में संस्थान ने पिछले दशक में हर सम्भव प्रयत्न किया है। और चूँकि भोजपुरी हमारी अस्मिता और गौरव की भाषा है इस वहाँ फलने-फूलने का नातावरण तैयार करना होगा। इसी उद्देश्य को ध्यान में रखकर संस्थान ने भोजपुरी साहित्यिक प्रतियोगिता तथा भोजपुरी समारोह का आयोजन किया था।

इस विशेषांक में प्रकाशित भोजपुरी लेख, निवध, कहानी, कविता, एकांकी आदि पढ़कर हम भोजपुरी में साहित्य सृजन की सम्भावनाओं का अनुमान लगा सकते हैं। ये रचनाएँ रोचक तो हैं ही, साथ ही वे मौखिक भोजपुरी साहित्य के नए मिजाज भी सूचना देती हैं। यह बड़ी बात है कि भोजपुरी के गद्य साहित्य के विकास के लिए लोगों में वैचनी है।

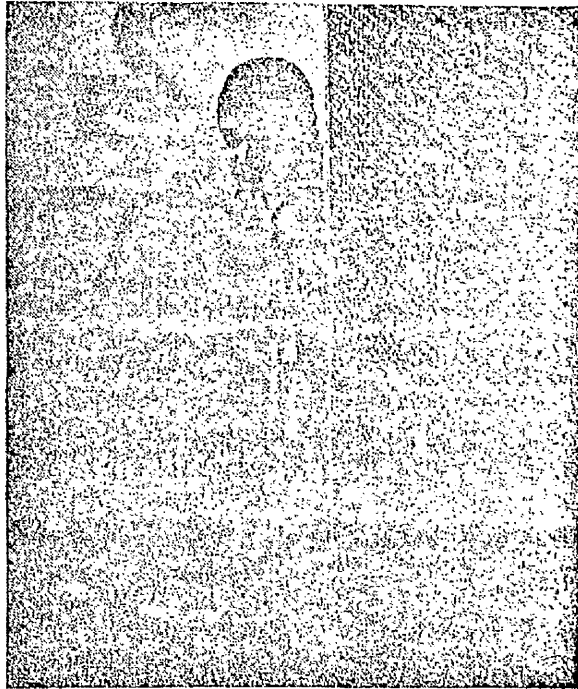
भोजपुरी साहित्य सृजन के सम्बन्ध में और एक दो बातों का उल्लेख करना अप्रासंगिक न होगा। भोजपुरी के विकास में मोरिदास की हिन्दी पत्र-पत्रिकाओं का भी योगदान रहा है। ‘नवजीवन’, ‘जनता’, ‘समाजवाद’ आदि पत्रों में समय-समय पर भोजपुरी में लेख, कविताएँ, गीत आदि प्रकाशित होते रहे।

भोजपुरी नाटक के क्षेत्र में भी हमारे लेखक पीछे नहीं रहे। उनके नाटक स्थानीय टेलिविजन, रेडियो तथा रंगमंच पर खेले जाते रहे हैं। जहाँ तक लेखन एवं प्रकाशन की सम्भावनाओं का प्रश्न है हम यह कह सकते हैं कि भोजपुरी एकांकियों का एक संग्रह और बच्चों के लिए मोरिदास की लोक-कथाओं तथा मौखिक कहानियों, गीतों,

कविताओं आदि के संग्रह लेखकों के संयुक्त प्रयत्न से तैयार किये जा सकते हैं।

निष्कर्ष के रूप में हम यह कह सकते हैं कि अब तक मोरिदास में न केवल भोजपुरी लोक-साहित्य के संकलन, संरक्षण तथा अध्ययन की दिशा में कुछ कार्य किया गया है, बल्कि मौखिक रचनाओं का प्रकाशन भी हुआ है। किन्तु प्रकाशित पुस्तकों की सूची हमें यह सूचित करती है कि अभी मोरिदास के भोजपुरी साहित्य को एक लम्बी यात्रा तय करनी है। आज आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि कहानी, निवध, एकांकी, उपन्यास, संस्मरण आदि भोजपुरी गद्य साहित्य की कमी की पूर्ति के लिए यथा सम्भव प्रयत्न किया जाय।

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अध्याय सात

कन्या पाठशाला 'मेनो-फेनिक्स'

सन् १९२८ ई० को शुभस्थान मेनो-फेनिक्स में स्व० श्री रतन रामदीन जी के विशेष उद्योग से कन्या पाठशाला का काम शुरू हुआ। श्री रतन रामदीन जी ने भूमि दी, उसी भूमि पर कन्या पाठशाला का भवन श्री आर्य प्रतिनिधि सभा के योगदान से बना। प्रारम्भ में कन्या पाठशाला चलाने में बड़ी कठिनाई होती थी, क्योंकि हमारे पौराणिक भाई कन्याओं को पढ़ाने में संकोच करते थे। स्त्री-शूद्र को विद्या से वंचित रखने का गुण्डम का भूत-भ्रम मिर पर था।

परन्तु कर्मवीर आर्य पुरुषों ने अपनी-अपनी कन्याओं को पाठशाला भेजा और अध्यापन कार्य शुरू हुआ। प्रारम्भ में अध्यापन कार्य स्वयं पण्डित काशीनाथ जी ने सम्भाला, क्योंकि उस समय रित्रियां प्रायः अशिक्षित थीं, इसीलिए अध्यापिका का अभाव था। पण्डित काशीनाथ जी के कठिन परिश्रम से चार-पांच वर्षों की अवधि में ही कन्याओं ने लेख और पाठ में अच्छी उन्नति करली। वार्षिकोत्सवों पर कन्याओं के भाषण एवं शिक्षा सम्बन्धी प्रश्नोत्तरों को सुनकर पोपडम का सिर झुका और पौराणिक भाइयों ने भी रहस्य समझा। कन्या पाठशाला के वार्षिकोत्सव में जब पं० काशीनाथ जी ने प्राचीन आर्य महिलाओं के आदर्श जीवन और शिक्षा के महत्त्व पर युक्तिसंगत ओजस्वी भाषण दिया, तो श्रोताओं ने मुक्त कंठ से उनको साधुवाद दिया। जब पण्डित जी ने वर्तमान अशिक्षित भारतीय महिलाओं की दान-दक्षिणा का कारुणिक-चित्रांकन मार्मिक शब्दों में वर्णन किया तो श्रोताजनों ने सजल नेत्रों से अपनी-अपनी पिछली भ्रम-भूलों पर मौन पश्चाताप प्रकट किया। साथ ही कन्याओं को शिक्षित बनाने का व्रत लिया। आगामी चार वर्षों में विद्यालय में पढ़नेवाली छात्राओं की संख्या दुगुनी होगई। उनकी लिखाई-पढ़ाई के साथ गिलाई और कमीदा के प्रसारण ने मोरिघन में मार्ग दर्शन का काम किया। आगामी एक दशक में अनेक कन्या-पाठशालाएं इस प्रदेश में खुल गई हैं।

मोरिशस में हिन्दी शिक्षा

रविशंकर कौलेशर

हमारा देश 'मोरिशस', हिन्द महासागर में, एक छोटा सा द्वीप है। इसका क्षेत्रफल ७१० वर्ग-मील है। अन्य द्वीपों के मुकाबले यह बहुत छोटा है। हमारे पूर्वज भारत, चीन, फ्रांस, इंग्लैण्ड तथा अफ्रीका से आकर इस देश में बसे थे। उन ही की सन्तानें आज हम लगभग आठ लाख की संख्या में हैं। हमारी जनता में सर्वाधिक संख्या भारतीयों की है, जिनकी भाषा, रीति-रिवाज, धर्म तथा संस्कृति सब भारतवासियों ही के समान हैं। कदाचित् इन्हीं सब बातों को देखकर जब विदेशी यात्री, विशेषकर भारतवासी, इस टापू में आते हैं तो निस्संकोच कह उठते हैं कि यह तो समुद्रपारीय एक लघु भारत ही है।

धर्म तथा संस्कृति के अनुयायियों के विचार से मोरिशस में हिन्द, मुस्लिम, बौद्ध तथा ईसाई हैं। यहाँ की लोक-भाषा का नाम 'क्रिमोल' है। यह फ्रेंच भाषा का अपभ्रंश रूप है। सभी धर्मों तथा संस्कृतियों के लोग इस भाषा में ही अधिकतर व्यवहार करते हैं। यह एक प्रकार से सर्वव्यावहारिक भाषा है। इस भाषा का प्रभाव हमारी श्रेष्ठ भोजपुरी पर भी पड़ा है। मोरिशसीय भोजपुरी तथा भारतीय भोजपुरी में इसी के कारण भारी अन्तर आ गया है।

यहाँ ११ भाषाएँ प्रचलित हैं। पूर्वीय भाषाएँ — भोजपुरी, हिन्दी, उर्दू, तमिल, तेलुगू, मराठी, गुजराती तथा चीनी, पश्चिमीय भाषाएँ — क्रिमोल, फ्रेंच तथा अंग्रेज़ी।

मोरिशसीय हिन्दू जनता की हिन्दी में ग्राम तथा नगर के विचार से कुछ अन्तर आ गया है। ग्रामीण जन अपने घर में जो भोजपुरी बोलते हैं उस में सर्वनाम, विभक्तियाँ तथा क्रियाएँ तो हिन्दी ही होती हैं पर शेष शब्द क्रिमोल से लिये होते हैं। जैसे — लाताब पर कुयेर रख द, अर्थात् मेज़ पर चम्मच रख दो। ग्राम के सभा-समाजों में, कथा-वार्ताओं में अपना सत्संगों में ठेठ हिन्दी बोली जाती है, जिस में व्याकरण के नियमों पर ध्यान नहीं के बराबर दिया जाता है।

नगर के अधिकांश लोग अपने घर में क्रिमोल, फ्रेंच अथवा अंग्रेज़ी ही बोलते हैं। कुछ अपवाद भी हैं — ग्रामों से आकर नगरों में बसे हुए लोग क्रिमोल मिश्रित भोजपुरी पति-पत्नी अथवा बड़े बुजुर्गों से बोल लेते हैं। पर युवक-युवतियों तथा बेटे-बेटियों से तो वे ऊपर कथित भाषाएँ ही बोलते हैं। नगरों के सभा-समाजों में तथा सत्संगों में मिश्रित भोजपुरी के अलावा कहीं-कहीं पर हिन्दी भी बोली जाती है। ग्रामों की अपेक्षा नगरों में हिन्दी का प्रचार बहुत कम हुआ है। कारण कदाचित् यही होगा कि यहाँ के अधिकांश लोग सरकारी एवं गैरसरकारी दफ्तरों में काम करने वाले होते हैं, इसी लिए वे अपने बच्चों को अंग्रेज़ी तथा फ्रेंच शिक्षा दिलाने में अधिक ध्यान देते हैं।

इस ऊपर कह आये हैं कि हम मोरिशसीय हिन्दुओं के पूर्वज भारत से आकर इस देश में बसे थे। वे यहाँ अकेले नहीं आये थे बरन् अपने साथ

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धर्म, भारतीय संस्कृति तथा भारतीय भाषा के रूप में थी। उस समय हमारे पूर्वज गुलाम बनकर आये थे। यहां के उद्योगपतियों के अधीन वे मजदूरी करते थे। वेतन उन्हें बहुत कम मिलता था। सारा दिन कठिन परिश्रम करके वे घर आते थे। उस समय की कठोर परिस्थितियों के मारे हुए होने पर भी जिस तौर तरीके से उन महान् तपस्वियों ने अपने धर्म, संस्कृति तथा भाषा की रक्षा की, उस का बयान करने से तथा आज की स्थिति से उसकी तुलना करने पर किसी भी सहृदय के आश्चर्य का ठिकाना न रहेगा। दिन भर के कठिन परिश्रम से थके-मांटे जब शाम को या राति को वे घर आते तो पास-पड़ोस के लोगों को इकट्ठा करके टिमटिमाते दीपक के प्रकाश में एक-आध घण्टे हस्तलिखित रामायण की चर्चा करते तथा अपने बालक-बालिकाओं को नगरी अक्षरों का बोध कराते थे।

अवकाश के समय, खुले मैदान में वृत्तों के तले, कभी धरती पर, कभी चटाई पर, बैठकर हमारे पूर्वज हिन्दी की शिक्षा देते थे उन लोगों में बड़े विद्वान्-महात्मा तो न होते थे परन्तु जो कुछ उन्हें बोध था वही पर्याप्त था मातृ-भाषा की रक्षा के लिए। उस समय के विद्यार्थी अक्षर बोध हो जाने के बाद दानलीला, हनुमान चानीसा और बाद में रामायण तथा आल्हा उदल का सस्वर पाठ करन लग जाते थे। इस प्रकार इन हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थों के नित्य पठन-पाठन से उन्हें शब्दों का अर्थ और पंक्तियों का आशय बहुत संघर्ष के बाद समझ में आ जाता था।

धीरे-धीरे घर से निकलकर, मैदान और पेड़ों के तले से गुजरकर घास-फूस से बनी छोटी बैठकों में शिक्षा कार्य पहुँचा। बैठकों में शिक्षा कार्य भारम्भ हो जाने से लाभ यह हुआ कि अधिक संख्या में बालक-बालिकाएँ हिन्दी शिक्षा प्राप्त करने लगीं।

बीसवीं शताब्दी के प्रथम चरण में भारत से कुछ विद्वान् हमारे प्रवासी पूर्वजों की दयनीय दशा के निरीक्षणार्थ समय-समय पर यहां आने लगे। इनमें निम्न महानुभावों के नाम उल्लेखनीय हैं— मोहनदास करमचन्द गांधी, मणिलाल डाक्टर, कुँवर सर महाराजसिंह, डाक्टर भरद्वाज, स्वामी स्वतन्त्रानन्द, मेहता जैमिनी। मणिलाल डाक्टर के परिश्रम से मोरिशस में आर्य समाज की स्थापना हुई। इस के बाद हिन्दी शिक्षा के प्रचार कार्य में एक नये उत्साह का आविर्भाव हुआ। यह कहना असंगत न होगा कि आर्य समाज की स्थापना से पूर्व सनातन धर्मावलम्बी पंडितों द्वारा हिन्दी शिक्षण कार्य चलता रहा। परन्तु आर्य समाज की स्थापना होने से क्या सनातनियों क्या आर्य समाजियों को कार्य करने की नई चेतना तथा प्रभूत प्रेरणा मिली। ग्राम और नगरों में हिन्दी पाठशालाएँ अधिक संख्या में खुलने लग गईं। पाठ्यक्रम में कुछ परिवर्तन हुआ। भारत में कृपी पुस्तिकाएँ मँगवाकर पढ़ाई जाने लगीं। उस समय व्याकरण के नियमों पर बिलकुल ध्यान न दिया जाता था, फिर भी पर्याप्त संख्या में लोग हिन्दी सीखने तथा बोलने का प्रयास करने लगे। एक प्रकार से आर्य-समाजियों और सनातनियों में वह, इस क्षेत्र में, एक डोढ़ का समय था।

कुछ काल बाद सन् १९२६ में हिन्दी प्रचारिणी सभा की स्थापना हुई। इस के द्वारा तिलक विद्यालय के नाम से एक हिन्दी पाठशाला खुली। यही पाठशाला आगे चलकर १९४६ में 'हिन्दी-भवन' के नाम से प्रसिद्ध हुई। १९२६ और १९४० के बीच कुछ मोरिशसीय विद्यार्थियों को भारत में जाकर शिक्षा प्राप्त करने की सुविधा मिली जिनमें पंडित काशीनाथ, पंडित उमाशंकर गिरजानन, श्री जयनारायण राय तथा पंडित वासुदेव विष्णुदयाल जी थे। ये सज्जन जब भारत से उच्च शिक्षा प्राप्त कर के मोरिशस लौटे तो हिन्दी भाषा प्रसार का एक नया भान्दोलन शुरु हुआ। हिन्दी इनका सहयोग पाकर आगे बढ़ने लगी।

श्रद्धाञ्जलि

संगीत गगन का एक मितारा वृक्ष गया। पण्डित ओंकार नाथ ठाकुर की मृत्यु २६ डिसेम्बर १९६७ की रात हेद बजे बंबई के एक अस्पताल में हुई। भारत के प्रधान मंत्री श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी ने इन शब्दों में अपनी श्रद्धाञ्जलि भेंट की :—

“पण्डित ओंकारनाथ ठाकुर की मृत्यु का समाचार सुनकर मुझे बहुत ही दुख हुआ। वे हमारे समय के अति महान कलाकारों में से एक थे। पण्डित जी कुशल संगीतज्ञ के साथ साथ मर्नापि और धुरन्धर विद्वान भी थे। उनकी मधुर गम्भीर आवाज़ और उनका ओजस्वी व्यक्तित्व संगीत संसार में ५० साल तक शासन करता रहा। हमारे बीच से उठ तो गए परन्तु अपनी क्षार आधुनिक ज़ेल्सी पर छोड़ गए”। इस शोक सन्देश को सुन कर सभी सुनने वालों की आँखों में आँसू भर आए। पण्डित जी के एक दो शिष्य बेहोश गिर पड़े। ऐसे महान कलाकार के सम्बन्ध में आप को दो एक शब्द कह देना अपना कर्तव्य समझता हूँ।

पं० ओंकारनाथ ठाकुर जी का जन्म भाजग्राम बड़ीदा में २४ जून १८९७ में हुआ। उनके माता पिता बहुत ही गरीब थे ६ साल की उम्र में पास पड़ोस के घरों में छोटे मोटे काम करके अपने माँ बाप की सहायता करते थे। संगीत उनके संस्कार में था। १३ साल की उम्र में पं० विष्णु दिगम्बर पल्लुपकर से संगीत शिक्षा पाने के लिये बम्बई गन्धर्व महाविद्यालय में भरती हो गए। साथ साथ संस्कृत और अंग्रेज़ी की भी शिक्षा पाने रहे। ६ साल के अन्दर अन्दर इतनी प्रगति हुई कि पं० विष्णु

द्विगम्बर ने उनको लाहौर गन्धर्व विद्यालय के मुख्य अध्यापक के पद पर नियुक्त किया। उसी ख्याति द्वाराजल की तरह चार्गे और फिल गई। पद्म. एम. वा. ने उनके गीतों के रिकॉर्ड बनाये। रेडियो पर और मंच पर भी उनका प्रोग्राम निरन्तर होता रहा। कुछ ही दिनों में उनको अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय ख्याति प्राप्त हुई। "फ्लोरिन्स इन्टरनेस्योनल म्यूजिक कॉन्फरन्स" में भाग लेने के लिये प्रथम बार विदेश यात्रा १९३३ में की। उसके पश्चात् यूरोप, अमेरिका, यू. एस. एम. आर. इत्यादि की यात्रा की। १९५३ में बर्लिन पीस कौंसिल ने आप को निमन्त्रित किया। इस प्रकार अनेक बार आप अपने भारगर्भित भाषण से और अपने शास्त्रीय संगीत से विदेशियों पर अपना प्रभाव जमाया। आपने लेख और किताबों द्वारा भी संगीत का प्रचार किया। प्रभाव भारती उनकी सब से मशहूर पुस्तक है।

बनारस विश्वविद्यालय के संगीत विभाग के मुख्य अध्येत के ताने आप ३० स्थान तक संगीत सेवा करने रहे। भारतीय सरकार ने १९५५ में आप को पद्मश्री की पदवी से सम्मानित किया। १९४० में कलकत्ता संस्कृत कालेज ने आपको संगीत मार्तण्ड की पदवी से विभूषित किया और नेपाल के नरेश ने १९३० में आप को संगीत महामहोपाध्याय की पदवी दी। धारणा के विश्वविद्यालय की ओर से आप को संगीत सम्राट की पदवी मिली।

ऐसे महान कलाकार की सेवा करने का शुभ अवसर मुझे १९५३ में मिला। मैं लखनऊ से मगरी जा रहा था जंग के द्विधे में उधो ही प्रवेश किया पंडित श्रीकारनाथ ठाकुर के ऊपर सेरी नगर पड़ी। अभी तक मैंने सिर्फ उनकी तस्वीर देखी थी। अब स्वाज्ञातकार होने पर एक क्षण के लिये मैं मौन रह गया। इस पर उन्होंने बहुत सुन्दर अंग्रेजी में मुझ से कहा

आप बैठ तो जाइये त्रेण चालू हो चुका । मेरे मुह से इतना निकला "आप ही पंडित श्रींकारनाथ ठाकुर हैं न? उनकी भव्य मूर्ति पर एक मुस्कान छा गयी और अपने लम्बे सफेद लुंगराले बाल से आच्छादित दिव्य मुस्तागचिन्द्र से हाथी का संकेत किया । मैं उनके चरणों में अनायास जा लिपटा और मेरे नेत्रों में खुशी के आँसू भर आये । अपने नेत्र जल से उनके चरण धोये । मेरी इस भक्ति को देख कर वह गदगद हो गए और जब मैंने कहा कि मैं मोंगिशस से संगीत शिक्षा के लिये भारत आया हूँ तो उनकी श्रद्धा मेरे प्रति हुई । त्रेण के डिब्बे में सिर्फ हम दोनों थे । मसूरी तक बातचीत करते हुए यात्रा की । फिर मसूरी में दो महीने तक उनके सम्पर्क में रहकर कुछ राग ज्ञान प्राप्त किया । इस मुलाक़ात को मैं अपने विद्यार्थी जीवन की एक अनमोल घड़ी समझता हूँ ।

व्यक्तित्व, विद्वाना, संगीत, सेवाभाव, तपनता ये सब एक ही व्यक्ति में पाना असाधारण बात है । ऐसे ही एक विचित्र विभूति पं० श्रींकारनाथ ठाकुर जी थे, जिसके इस संसार से उठ जाने पर सभी का क्लेश होना स्वाभाविक है, क्योंकि इस कमी की पूर्ति शायद ही हो सके ।

इश्वर पं० श्रींकारनाथ की आत्मा को शान्ति और सद्गति प्रदान करे ।



APPENDIX XV

The Creation of Mauritius

(Translation of Maurīśas kī sṛṣṭi)

Leaving the whole world behind
From where has come the giver of my birth, the sustainer of my life
In the midst of the Indian Ocean, under the blue sky
Wearing a sari of sugar cane, wearing a chain of mountains?

It has come from the sky above,
It has come from the deep of the sea,
It has come from beyond the waves,
It has come from a world of dreams.

I

It has come from the sky above,
From a world of dreams,
From the maternal granny's children,
From the abode of Uncle Moon.

The deep dark night
Had spread its veil all over,
The sky was wrapped in silence
And nothing stirred in the world down below.

A star fell from the sky
And its pieces disappeared in space
But one piece, escaping from somewhere,
Fell into the ocean.

And by a decree of Fate
It began to change day by day
And in course of time became
The star of the Indian Ocean.

II

It has come from the deep of the sea,
From a world of dreams,
Who has brought it up with so much care
From the depth of the ocean?

In a region of the deep sea
There was a quite strange kingdom
And in the glitter of the court
A pearl was reigning supreme.

It was the verdict of the court
That to hide itself was a sin:
It had to come out of the deep sea
To sparkle above.

And by a decree of Fate
It began to change day by day
And in course of time became
The Pearl of the Indian Ocean.

III

It has come from beyond the waves,
From a world of dreams,
From the lap of the Himalayas,
From the flow of the Ganges.

The prisoner that Mother India was
Had quite a miserable fate:
She had no wedding bangles in her arms
But had chain in her ankles.

The trials and tribulations of evil days
Broke her heart into pieces
And to this side came floating
A piece of that heart.

And by a decree of Fate
It began to change day by day
And in a course of time became
A little India beyond the seas.

अध्याय १६ मनुष्य आत्मा है

हम वस्तुतः आत्मा हैं, यह कथन बार बार पुष्टि पा रहा है। कुछ साल पहले एक अमेरिकी महिला ने बताया था कि किसी युग में अन्यत्र रहती थी। १९६५ में उसी अमेरिका का एक ११ वर्षीय बालक अपने अध्यापकों को बार बार आश्चर्य चकित कर रहा था। उसे अनि शीघ्र बड़ी कक्षा में भेजना पड़ा। 'लाइफ' नाम वाली पत्रिका की दि० १२ जुलाई के अंक में उस के बारे में एक सचित्र लेख दिया गया है। लेख का शीर्षक है "अर्वाचीन अस्तु।" बालक कहता है कि इटली के कवि दान्ते का मत ठीक था कि वे वस्तुएं सुन्दर हैं जो ईश्वर के समान होती हैं। ऐसे विचित्र प्रतिभा वाले व्यक्तियों का आगमन सिद्ध करता है कि पुनर्जन्म होता है। हम भी मानते हैं कि ईश्वर सुन्दर है। वह साथ साथ सत्य और शिव है।

यह बालक भारतमित्र एमर्सन की चर्चा करता है। वह यह भविष्यद्वाणी कर रहा है, यदि धर्मोद्देशक न बनेंगे गणितज्ञ होंगे।*

क्या आर्ष प्रश्नोंमें स्पष्ट रूपसे कहा भी गया है कि मानव आत्मा है? वेद सेचठिया आर्ष ग्रंथ है ही नहीं। उस यजुर्वेद के अंतिम या ४०वें

"o' Beauty", thinks the 11-year-old boy Mike Grost, "consists of things that are like God. That's what Dante believed. That's why medieval and Renaissance paintings are beautiful."

O If I don't become a priest I'll almost surely be a mathematician.—MIKE GROST

अध्याय के मंत्र में जो साथ साथ ईशोपनिषद् का तृतीय मंत्र है बताया गया है कि जो लोग अपने मन में आत्मा की मत्ता नहीं मानते इस अस्वीकृतिके कारण मर जाते हैं और प्रकाशमें शून्य जगत्में विचलते हैं।

यह श्री राजगोपालाचारी का किया गया अर्थ है। वे समझते हैं कि यदि आत्मा का केवल शरीर विद्यमान है तब केवल आनन्द का उपभोग करना शेष रह जाता है और वह भी भौतिक न कि आध्यात्मिक आनन्द। जिसे यह आनन्द लुटने का अवसर मिलेगा × जो हमारे प्रकार के आनन्द से वंचित है उसे मरा हुआ समझिये।

मृतक से जो हैं वे विज्ञान के चमत्कार के कारण सुखी में कह उठते हैं, हम आत्मा विहीन हैं !

विज्ञान ने जो प्रगति की है उस पर आधुनिक संसार गर्व कर रहा है। असाध्य रोगों का अब इलाज होने लगा है। बार बार बताया जा रहा है कि रोगों के अभाव ने भी विश्व की जनसंख्या बढ़ायी है। मनुष्य दीर्घजीवी होता जा रहा है।

दुनिया किसी भी दिशा में उन्नति करे तो धिवेकी जन को हर्ष ही होता है। फिर भी वर्तमान संसार की चाल में अकारण ही रोष उत्पन्न नहीं होता है। आज कल आचार को तिलांजलि देकर लोग आगे बढ़ना चाहते हैं। वे खुल्लम खुला कह उठते हैं कि आत्मा की अब चर्चा नहीं करनी चाहिए।

× "Those who (in their minds) do away with their souls and go about wandering in sunless worlds, dense darkness over-hanging."

If man has only a body and no surviving soul, there can be no values—only pleasure and pleasure—producing objects remain. Shall we hang on to life for these?

—C. Rajagopalachari, in SWARAJYA

APPENDIX XVII

□□

चाचा रामगुलाम के हृदय में पूजा-पाठ के प्रति बड़ी आस्था है। रामायण, गीता, उपनिषद् तथा वेद उनके प्रिय धर्मग्रन्थ हैं। अपने अवकाश के मध्य धार्मिक ग्रन्थों का अध्ययन वे करते रहते हैं। अनगिनत समारोहों में चाचा को संस्कृत के श्लोकों को बोलते हुए भी सुना गया है। हवन-यज्ञ तथा कथा सुनने और पूजा करने में उनकी बहुत रुचि है। हर वर्ष नियमित रूप से पूजा-पाठ, दान-दक्षिणा देना उनकी आदत है।

महा शिवरात्रि के अवसर पर वे गंगा-नालाच अवश्य जाते हैं और राजधानी पोर्ट लुई में आयोजित शिवरात्रि जुलूम में अवश्य भाग लेते हैं तथा पूजा के लिए अंधरे मुंह विष्णु-क्षेत्र मंदिर में जाते हैं।

□□

डा० शिवसागर रामगुलाम वचपन से ही मेधावी रहे हैं। अपनी माध्यमिक शिक्षा प्राप्त करने के बाद शिवसागर १४ वर्षों के लिए इंग्लैंड पहुँचे। लन्दन में उन्होंने अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय जीवन का अध्ययन किया। विश्व के हर कोने की खबरों को

बहुत दिलचस्पी के साथ वे मुनते थे। राजनीति, साहित्य तथा भाषा के क्षेत्र में उनकी विशेष रुचि थी। उन्हीं दिनों उनकी भेंट टैगोर, इलियट आदि विभूतियों से भी हुई थी।

लन्दन में रहकर, उन दिनों चाचा रामगुलाम सिर्फ डाक्टरों का ही अध्ययन नहीं करते थे, बल्कि अपने अवकाश के समय लेख लिखा करते थे। और यह बात उल्लेखनीय है कि जितने भी लेख लिखे सभी प्रकाशित हुए। अपनी पढ़ाई का खर्चा भी वे लेखों से प्राप्त पारिश्रमिक से कर लेते थे।

इसी तरह १९३५ में मॉरिंगस लीडने पर मित्रों की सहायता से उन्होंने इंडिया कल्चरल एसोसियेशन की नींव डाली। इस एसोसियेशन की ओर से एक पत्रिका 'इंडिया कल्चरल रिव्यू' नाम से निकलती थी जिसमें प्रायः डा० रामगुलाम के स्वतंत्रता-संग्राम-सम्बन्धी लेख छपने रहते थे। आज भी यह किमीने छिद्रा नहीं है कि चाचा कलम के अत्यन्त धनी हैं। स्वतन्त्रता से पहले उनके राजनीतिक, सामाजिक तथा साहित्यिक लेखों ने मॉरिंगस के स्वतन्त्रता-संग्राम को बहुत सहायता प्रदान की है।

Appendix XVIII

Additional miscellaneous works are as follows: Ramdhan Puran, four booklets - Maurīśas Ārya Samāj kā itihās; Sanskār vidhi kā sandeś; Vedik dharm kā camatkār; Vedik samāj kā itihās; Maurīśas kā itihās (Mauritius, early 1970's); Benimadho Ramkhelavon, Jñān jyoti (Mauritius, 1972), a booklet which interprets in KhB. Hindi seven Sanskrit mantras from the Upaniṣads; Shivgulam Moti Torel, Śādī se ābādī nahī barbādī (Bombay, 1974), portrays the Hindu wedding in Mauritius, the customary celebrations before and after the event involving debts incurred by the parties concerned, and expresses the author's observations and suggestions. Dr.K.Hazareesingh, Maurīśas mē bhāratīyō kā itihās (Delhi, 1976) (tr. from English by A.Unnuth); Hamāre tyohār (M.G.I., 1978) depicts the Indian festivals observed by Indo-Mauritians.

आदर्श पिता

“नेताजी आप क्या खुश खबरी लाये हैं? क्या मेरे बेटों ने कुछ अच्छे काम किये हैं?” यह कहते हुए प्रताप के पिता सुभाष बाबू के पास आये।

आज आशाओं का चमन लहलहा उठा। नेताजी आज उसके घर को पवित्र कर दिया, उसका मुँह चमकने लगा, जैसे जलता हुआ दीपक मुझे हुए को जला देता है। “शेखर तो संकुशल है और आज्ञा हिन्दू फौज के साथ दिल्ली की ओर बढ़ रहा है, लेकिन प्रताप ने दिल्ली के रास्ते में अपनी जान दे दी।” नेताजी की इन बातों को सुनकर प्रताप के मुँह पिता की रगरग में बिजली सी दौड़ गई और अपने वतन के प्रति प्रगाढ़ प्रेम इसे अनुभव हुआ। भारत माँ को गुलामी की जंजीर से छुड़ाने के लिये यदि वह भी कुछ पाता तो उसका जीवन सार्थक हो जाता। लेकिन बहापे और रोग ने उसे मजबूर कर दिया आज प्रताप का शहीद होना उसके लिये एक गौरव की बात थी। वह अपने प्रताप से कितना प्यार करता था, लेकिन उसके कलेजे का टुकड़ा कहा गया? उसने सोचा कि देश शक्तों को वतन के खातिर मर-मिटना ही अच्छा है। उसकी आँखों में आंसू थे।

नेताजी भारी व्यक्तित्व वाले पुरुष थे। उन्होंने आगे बढ़कर प्रताप के बाप को बाले से लगाया और कहा — “रोइये मत, प्रताप मरा नहीं बल्कि अमर हो गया है।” मुँहने गहरी साँस लेते हुए कहा: — “नेताजी, ये आंसू गम के नहीं, खुशी के हैं। क्या? वह पिता खुश नसीब नहीं, जिसका यह चिराग है, जिसने उसका जीवन रोशन किया। प्रताप से मुझे यही उम्मीद थी।”

सुभाष चन्द्र बोस बाबू ने औजपूर्ण शब्दों में कहा — “प्रताप ने भारत माँ के लिये अपना सर्वस्व निष्ठावर कर दिया। वतन उसके लिये मौत से भी प्यारा था। आज आपके प्रताप ने इन्सानियत का सन से बड़ा फर्ज अदा कर दिया। इसी तरह हर एक नौजवान से यह आशा की जाती है कि वह अपने उद्देश्य पर कायम रहे, तबले ही गंजील तक न पहुँच सके। माँ हमें पुकार रही है। माँ का वह दुःख अनभिज्ञ नौजवानों से देखा नहीं जाता और वे खुशी-खुशी से मैदान में जान देने तथा वीर गति प्राप्त करने के लिये तैयार हैं।”

जय हिन्द।”
बेताजी और उनके साथियों के जाने के कुछ मिनटों
बाद - - - - - प्रताप के पिता अपने कमरे की ओर जा ही रहा
था कि इतने में उसका दृष्टान्त दीवार पर के दंगे हुए फोटो
पर आकृष्ट हुआ। वह प्रताप की माँ का फोटो है। वह
बूढ़ा-चेंदरे के निकट आया और आँखों से नीर बहाते हुए
कहा :— “काश, अगर आज तू यहाँ होती तो अंबरभ
अपने प्रताप की याद में आँसू बहाती, लेकिन साव-ही-साव
प्रसन्न भी होती।”

— मुजीश्वरलाल चिन्तामणि

I wrote this short story in 1953. It was
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M. Chintamani

11/11/81

धर्मवीर की उदारता

दीवार प्यड़ीने साढ़े दस बजाये । अबी तक धर्मवीर घर नही लौटा । युवक धर्मवीर प्रातः से निक्लकर काम पर जाता और शाम को करीब चार बजे लौटता । उसका प्माह सरोज देवी के साथ हुआ था । वह स्कूल का अध्यापक था ।

पड़ोसी आराम की नींद सो रहे थे । ग्यारह बज गये मगर पतिदेव का कुछ पता नही । एक अनिष्ट के भय से सरोज रोने लगी । उस का दिल धड़कने लगा । उसकी आँखों में अन नींद कहाँ ?

थोड़ी देर बाद एक मोटर का हार्न सुनाई दिया । तुरन्त द्वार पर आकर वह खड़ी हो गई । मोटर से एक युवक और एक युवती उतरे । सरोजने युवक को पहचान लिया — वह था उसका पतिदेव , लेकिन वह युवती थी कौन ?

उसे यह बात मालूम न थी । सन्देहने निराशा उत्पन्न की । निराशा आई । वह निराशा न थी , बलिक निराशा की पराकाष्ठा थी । उन की

(ii)

आँखों में आँसू आ गए। क्रोध पानी होकर
बहने लगा।

* * * *

दस साल बीत गये।

इन्दुमती बच्चों को पाठशाला भोजने के लिए
तैयार कर रही थी, उसी वक्त सरोज आकर उससे
कहा — “सुना है कुध, तुम्हारे भाईजी को स्कूल
का हेडमास्टर बना दिया गया है। अब तो अका
वेतन भी बढ़ चला है।” सरोज अपने पतिदेव,
धर्मवीर को उन्नति करते देख बहुत प्रसन्न थी।”

इन्दुमती — “भला भगवान्, भैया जैसे
आदमी पर कृपा-दृष्टि न रखेगा तो फिर
किस पर रखेगा? वह मेरे लिये आदमी नहीं
बल्कि देवता है, मेरे पति का स्वर्गवास होने
ही इन्होंने मुझे शरण दी। नजाने में अभी
कहाँ-कहाँ ढोकर खानी रहती। मेरे न तो
कोई माता या पिता और न भाई भी थे। मेरे
स्वामी की मृत्यु के बाद, मेरा कोई न रहा।
आपके पतिदेव ने मुझे पर जो गृहस्थान किया है,

(iii)

यह मरने दम तक नहीं झुलूँगी। यदि इसी तरह आप
लोगों के बाल-बच्चों की सेवा में मेरा जीवन निज
जायगा तो यह मेरे लिए सौभाग्य की बात होगी..।”

तभी घूरा ने कहा — “फूफी, देखो शीया मेरी
लेखनी नहीं देना चाहती है।”

इन्दुमती — “अरे भाई! कब तक तुम लोग इस
तरह लड़ने रहोगे। बेटा घूरा! क्या तुने अपने पिता

के समान एक दिन हमदर्द और सुशिक्षित बनने
के लिए कभी सोचा है ?”

घूरा — “मैं वकील बनूँगा फूफी।”

इन्दुमती — “शाकाश बेटा। शीला बेटी ला, भाई
की लेखनी दे दे।”

सरोज — “इन लोगों के स्कूल जाने का वक्त
हो गया है।”

इन्दुमती — “अच्छा भाभी! मैं इन लोगों को
स्कूल पहुँचाकर शीया ही आजानूँगी।”

सरोजने मुस्करा कर कहा — “शोक से जाओ।

शायद पोट - लुइस की शान-शोभा देखकर

• तुम्हारी तकीयत हरी हो जायगी, विप्लव का

(IV)

हृदय - कमल खिल उठेगा । देखो, लौहते वक्त
पण्डित तिवारीजी के यहाँ से एक 'वर्तमान'
लेती आना ।”

“जी आजी ।” यह कहती हुई इन्दुमती बच्चों
को साथ लिए स्कूल की ओर जाने लगी ।

— मुनीश्वर लाल चिन्तामणि

बुधवार ८ मार्च १९६७

कहानी

निर्धन

साहित्यकार

धनेश्वर निर्धन था / पर था साहित्यकार। अपनी तरल अवस्था में उस ने अपने को कहादियां, वी-तीन उप-वास, कवितार्थ तथा विकच आदि लिख आते थे। समाचार-पत्रों पर उस के एक वी लेख छप चुके थे / लेकिन इससे उस को सन्तोष नहीं हुआ / उस का विचार था कि एक दिन वह अपनी सारी रचनाओं को प्रकाशित करता कर अपनी सौर अभिलाषा की पूर्ति करेगा। किंतु दुर्भाग्यवश ऐसा अवसर उस के जीवन में कभी नहीं आया / निर्धनता की चक्की में वह पीसता ही गया। धनेश्वर आशावादी था। हिन्दी भाषा का वह अन्धा ज्ञान रखता था / अत्रिजी में वह 'स्टेड्डे सिक्स' पास था। एक बार एक मिल की सलाह मानकर वह एक-दो घनघान व्यक्तियों से मिलने गया। उन के सामने उस ने अपने गीतों को गाकर सुनाया।

"भीत सरल है। भाषा सुन्दर है तथा भाव ऊंचे हैं।" उस की रचनाओं की प्रशंसा में लोगों ने यही कहा / पर कवि अपनी रचनाओं को जनता के धारों में कैसे पहुंचाया? उस ने जब आर्थिक सहायता के लिये विवेक किया तो अगर जनता ने यही बता-या कि पाठ्यालाओं तथा मन्दिरो के निर्माण के लिय जो दान हम देते आ रहे हैं क्या पर्याप्त नहीं है? साहित्य प्रकाशन से आलिर समाज को क्या लाभ होगा?

साहित्यकार को इन बातों से निराशा नहीं हुई। इतनी शीघ्रता से जीवन में वह हार मानने वाला नहीं था। प्रबल: वह सोचता था जब मैं कमाने लंगूंगा तो अपने पेट काट कर डूबूँ ऐसे क्वार्कना जिन से अपनी रचनाओं को प्रकाशित करा सकूंगा। पर एक रात निराशा के काले बादलों ने उस के जीवन की आकाश को ढक लिया। अग्नि का प्रकोप हुआ। उस की कोपडी में आग लग गई। उस की जल मुश्किल से बच पाई। उस की कला जल रही थी; उस के गीत जल रहे थे; उस की आयार्थ जल रही थीं / और वह देलता रहा।

बुधवार १ मार्च १९६७

कहानी

वतन की रोटी

लेखक- मुनीश्वरनाथ कित्तामणि

मेरा मित्र खरेन्द्र जी लखनौ उदाज के द्वारा विज्ञापित जा रहा था। विद्वार्थ के लिए मैं भी पोर-छुई अन्दरगाह पहुंचा / खरेन्द्र स्कूल सरट्रिकेट पास है। दो वर्षों से लगातार को-शिक्षा करने पर भी उसे अपने वतन में कोई नौकरी नहीं मिली। बहुत कठिनाई के साथ उसे एक 'वायवर' मिठा खिल से विज्ञापित पहुंचाने पर एक नौकरी मिलने की सम्भावना थी। मातृ भूमि की सेवा करता उस के जीवन का उद्देश्य था। किन्तु उस की आशाओं पर पानी फिर गया। शायद विदेश जाकर वह कभी नहीं लौटगा धिकार नहीं रहा। मॉरिगस के एक लोकगीत की आवाज लखनौदेते स्नोर के एक होटल से आ रही थी। इस गीत के सुर खरेन्द्र के हृदय को ऐसे छू रहे थे जैसे कोई हलके नश्वर की नाक से खाली के पुराने घाघ छुरेद रहा हो। उदास गीत किसी शान्त मीठ को मांति घोर घोर रहा था।

मैं ने कहा-खरेन्द्र तुम्हारी कमी हमें बहुत खटकती / तुम अपनी मातृ भूमि में वापिस कब आओगे? मुझे मालूम है तुम्हें अपने देश के प्रति कितना प्यार है।"

खरेन्द्र ने उत्तर दिया- 'हां माई! मुझे अपना देश अब भी प्यार है / इस की सुन्दर-सुन्दर पहाडियां और इस के लखनौले हुए गले के लेन क्या मुलायि जा सकते हैं / पर अब मेरे लिये मोरिशस की सुन्दरता पर चुकी है / जोधिका की लोक में विजायत जा रहा हूँ / मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि दरिद्रता और बेकारी ने हमारे देश का सम्पूर्ण सौन्दर्य छिन लिया है और उस के चेहरे पर गला-नक रेखायें खींचि दी हैं।"

मुझ से कुछ कहते नहीं बना और मैं उस की ओर एक टुक देखता रहा। उस के माथे पर होसला तथा साइस की गहरी लकीरें थीं / पापी पेट के कारण वह वतन से दूर जा रहा था।

APPENDIX XXI

००० सिंह और डोडो

बहुत समय पहले की बात है। उस समय टापू पर कोई आदमी नहीं रहता था। वहाँ जंगल ही जंगल था। तरह-तरह के पशु-पक्षी और जीव-जन्तु जंगल में रहते थे। पशु-पक्षियों की रक्षा एक वनदेवी करती थी। वही टापू की रखवाली करती थी।

उन दिनों वन में कोई हिंसक पशु नहीं थे। एक बूढ़ा सिंह था, पर वह शाकाहारी बन गया था। वही जानवरों का राजा समझा जाता था। जानवरों में खरगोश भी थे जो बहुत बड़े-बड़े होते थे। वे वृक्षों पर भी चढ़ा करते थे। हिरन की भी अनेक जातियां थीं। उनके सींग बहुत लम्बे होते थे।

परन्तु जंगल में सबसे विचित्र पक्षी डोडो था। डोडो का शरीर बहुत बड़ा था। उसके पंख छोटे होते थे। उसके शरीर पर भूरे रंग के पंख थे। डोडो की चौंच चपटी और कुछ टेढ़ी होती थी। उसके पैर छोटे-छोटे और झिल्लीदार होते थे। भारी होने के कारण वह अन्य पक्षियों के समान उड़ नहीं सकता था। इसलिए उसका नाम डोडो पड़ गया था। डोडो का अर्थ 'सोना' होता है।

ये पशु-पक्षी बड़े सुख से रह रहे थे। इन्हें किसीका डर नहीं था। एक दिन टापू पर कुछ नाविक उतरे। उनके कन्धों पर बन्दूकें थीं। उन्होंने जंगल में प्रवेश कर पशु-पक्षियों का शिकार करना आरम्भ किया। सारे जंगल में आतंक फैल गया। जानवर अपने-अपने प्राण बचाकर भागे।

डोडो बेचारा भागने में असमर्थ रहा। वह भारी शरीर वाला पक्षी था। नाविकों ने डोडो को आलसी पक्षी समझा। वे उसपर टूट पड़े। नाविकों ने बड़ी संख्या में डोडो पक्षियों का शिकार किया और अपनी नाव पर वापस चले गए।

बचे हुए डोडो पक्षियों ने अपने प्रियजनों को ग पाकर विलाप करना प्रारम्भ किया। उन्होंने

अपनी फरियाद वनदेवी को सुनाई। वनदेवी ने जानवरों की सभा बुलाई। सब पशु-पक्षी अपने-अपने आसन पर बैठ गए और विचार होने लगा।

डोडो पक्षियों का नेता बोला—“हत्यारे नाविकों के डर से हमारा जीना दूभर हो गया है। आप हमारी रक्षा कीजिए। यही हमारी आपसे प्रार्थना है।”

वनदेवी को डोडो पक्षियों की दशा पर दया आई। उसने कहा—“तुम इसकी चिन्ता मत करो। मैं तुम्हारी रक्षा का प्रबन्ध करूंगी।”

वनदेवी ने सिंह के आसन की ओर देखा। उसे बड़ा आश्चर्य हुआ। सिंह का आसन खाली था। वह सभा में उपस्थित नहीं था। वनदेवी ने सिंह को बुलाने के लिए एक दूत को भेजा।

कुछ समय के बाद दूत के साथ सिंह ने सभा में प्रवेश किया। आते ही वह अपने आसन पर बैठ गया। सभा में देर से आने के लिए उसने वनदेवी से क्षमा-याचना की।

वनदेवी ने सिंह से कहा—“तुम सब जानवरों के ही नहीं बल्कि सारे जंगल के राजा हो। तुम्हारे रहते हुए किसीको कष्ट नहीं होना चाहिए। आज डोडो पक्षियों पर विपत्ति आई है। तुम्हें उनकी रक्षा करनी होगी।”

सिंह वनदेवी की बात नहीं टाल सकता था। वह नम्र होकर बोला—“मैं आपको वचन देता हूँ कि आज से डोडो पक्षियों की पूर्ण रक्षा होगी।”

सिंह की प्रतिज्ञा सुनकर सब पशु-पक्षी अत्यन्त प्रसन्न हुए। वनदेवी ने सिंह को पुनः सम्बोधित किया—“अपनी प्रतिज्ञा याद रखना। जिस दिन प्रतिज्ञा भंग होगी तुम्हें कठोर दण्ड दिया जाएगा।”

इसके बाद सभा समाप्त हो गई। सब जानवर अपने-अपने घर चले गए।

उस दिन से डोडो निश्चिन्त होकर और पशु-पक्षियों के समान घूमा करते।

सिंह और डोडो / 52

अपने लोग



शहर में पहुँचे उसका सातवाँ दिन था।

—गाँव में वस जिन्दगी भर ईख ही काटते रह जाओगे।

किसी की इसी बात पर वह गाँव छोड़ आया था। वहाँ अगर गन्ने काटने का काम भी उसे मिल जाता तो वह इधर नहीं आता। सात दिन से उसने कोई सात सौ दरवाजे खटखटाये।

नीकरी कहीं नहीं थी।

जिस पन्द्रह रुपये के साथ वह शहर पहुँचा था वह तो चार ही दिन बाद समाप्त हो गया था। अपनी कलाई घड़ी बेच कर उसने जो ३० रुपये पाये थे उसी का पन्द्रह रुपया उसकी जेब में था।

गलियों के चक्कर काटने के बाद वह उसी भाग की एक बेंच पर जा बैठा जहाँ उसकी रातें बीती थीं। बेंच पर पहले से एक आदमी बैठा हुआ था। कुछ दूरी पर की दूसरी पत्थर की बेंच पर कालिज के दो विद्यार्थी बैठे हुए थे। लड़की का फाक ठीक सामने के फूल के रंग का था।

वह औरत आज भी उसी तरह सैलानियों की तलाश में सामने से गुजर गयी। कुछ देर बाद उसकी बगल में बैठे हुए आदमी ने उसकी ओर देखकर उससे पूछा।

६८

—गाँव से आये हो न ?

—हाँ ।

—नीकरी की तलाश में ?

—हाँ ।

—नीकरी तुम्हें मिल सकती है ।

उसे अपने कानों पर विश्वास नहीं हुआ । आदमी ने आगे कहा ।

—पच्चीस रुपये चाहिए ।

—घेरे पास केवल पन्द्रह हैं ।

सौदा तय होकर रहा । उसने आदमी को पन्द्रह रुपये दे दिये । आदमी ने जेब से एक अधमैला लिफाफा निकाल कर उसकी ओर बढ़ा दिया ।

—इस पते पर पहुँच कर तुम चिट्ठी मैनेजर को दे देना । उसी वक़्त नीकरी मिल जायेगी ।

चिट्ठी लेकर वह दौड़ गया । कई गलियों के चक्कर काटने के बाद उसे भालूम हुआ कि लिफाफे पर जो पता था उस नाम की न तो गली थी ग़ाहर में और न ही कोई कारखाना । लेकिन लिफाफा खाली नहीं था । उसके भीतर कुछ था जरूर । उसने लिफाफे को फाड़ा । छोटे से कागज़ का टुकड़ा था जिस पर लिखा हुआ था ।—यार मुझे माफ़ करना । घर पर बीमार पत्नी और तीन बच्चे हैं जिनके लिए यह धंधा करना पड़ता है । इस धंधे के अलावा मैं भी तुम्हारी ही तरह बेकार हूँ ।—

उसे जोरों की भूख लगी थी पर बेचने के लिए कुछ नहीं था ।



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